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The Evolution of the European Union's Values from the Treaty of Rome to the Treaty of Maastricht

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28th October 2026

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The Values of the European Union

Today, as set forth in Article 2 of the TEU, they have undergone a profound evolution throughout the historical and political development of the Communities.

The key milestones concern the gradual expansion of these values from the 1957 Treaties of Rome to the 1992 Maastricht Treaty.

Rome: Economic and Trade Integration

Maastricht: political, social, and monetary union. It establishes the fundamental values that guide the Union today.

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The Single European Act: The Political Act of the Union (then the Community)

→ It incorporates into the founding treaties the Union's policies, which essentially stem from established practice and have been clarified and formalized by the case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union.

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The Maastricht Treaty (1992) marked the birth of the European Union

The Maastricht Treaty enshrines the following political and social principles:

- **Democracy and the rule of law**
- **European citizenship**
- **Solidarity and cohesion**
- **Security and justice**

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The concept of the person as a legal entity entitled to rights, duties, and social and political protections

The concept of the person has undergone a radical transformation on the journey from Rome to Maastricht.

From the citizen as an economic factor (worker) to the recognition of the person in all their political, social, and civic dimensions.

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- The Transition of the Court of Justice

The Court of Justice of the European Union played a crucial role in the development of these two treaties. Through landmark rulings, European judges began to assert that fundamental human rights are part of the general principles of Community law, paving the way for moving beyond a purely commercial perspective.



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Van Gend & Loos (1963):

It represents a milestone in European law.

The Court expressly states that the European Economic Community constitutes a new kind of legal system in which the subjects are not only the Member States, but also individual citizens.

European law ceases to be a bureaucratic matter between governments and begins to confer rights and obligations directly on individuals.



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• Nold (1974):

The European Court clarifies the sources of inspiration for protecting the individual: in addition to the constitutional traditions of individual countries, reference must be made to the international human rights treaties to which Member States have acceded, thereby laying the groundwork for dialogue with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

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Reyners and Van Duyn (1974):

By recognizing the direct effect of the rules on free movement and the right of establishment, the Court deprives Member States of the ability to discriminate against citizens on the basis of nationality. An individual acquires concrete legal protections the moment he or she decides to cross a border within the Community.

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Defrenne II (1976):



It concerned equal pay for men and women as enshrined in Article 119 of the Treaties of Rome.

The Court held that this article has direct effect both vertically (against the State) and horizontally (in relations between private parties, such as collective or individual employment contracts).

This ruling clearly shows that the Community does not have solely an economic purpose, but also aims at social progress and the constant improvement of the living conditions of its peoples, establishing gender equality as a cornerstone of European identity.

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