

The **single market** , sometimes also called **internal market** , is one of the cornerstones of the [European Union \(EU\)](#) . It refers to the free movement of people, goods, services and capital within the EU, the so-called 'four freedoms' laid down in the [Treaty of Rome](#) . This has been achieved by eliminating barriers and simplifying existing rules so that everyone in the EU can profit from a direct access to all other Member States.

The enabling instrument for the single market was the Single European act, which came into force in July 1987. Among other things it called for:

- extending the powers of the Community in some policy areas (social policy, research, environment);
- gradually establishing the Single Market over a period up to the end of 1992, by means of a vast legislative programme involving the adoption of hundreds of directives and regulations; and
- making more frequent use of majority voting in the [Council of Ministers](#) .

EU policies in the areas of transport, competition, financial services and consumer protection underpin the Single Market.

Further information

- [European Commission - The EU Single Market](#)
- [European Commission - The Single Market Act](#)

Related concepts

- [Schengen area](#)