



The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) came into being on June 18th 1981, when seven Eastern Caribbean countries signed a treaty agreeing to cooperate with each other and promote unity and solidarity among the Members. The Treaty became known as the Treaty of Basseterre, so named in honour of the capital city of St. Kitts and Nevis where it was signed.

Following the collapse of the West Indies Federation, and prior to the signing of the Treaty of Basseterre, two caretaker bodies were created: the West Indies Associated States Council of Ministers (WISA) in 1966 and the Eastern Caribbean Common Market (ECCM) in 1968.

As the islands gained their independence from Britain it became evident that there was need for a more formal arrangement to assist with their development efforts. So it was that the OECS was established. The WISA Secretariat became the central secretariat of the OECS and the ECCM, the Economic Affairs Secretariat.

In mid 1997, as a result of restructuring of the organisation the Economic Affairs Secretariat was merged into and became a Division of the OECS Secretariat in St Lucia. The OECS is now a nine member grouping comprising Antigua and Barbuda, Commonwealth of Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia and St Vincent and the Grenadines. Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands are associate members of the OECS. Treaty of Basseterre Signatories:

- Hon. Lester Bird – Antigua and Barbuda
- Hon. Eugenia Charles – Dominica
- Hon. Maurice Bishop – Grenada
- Hon. Franklyn Margetson – Montserrat
- Hon. Kennedy Simmons- St Kitts and Nevis
- Hon. Winston Cenac – St Lucia>
- Hon. Hudson Tannis – St Vincent and the Grenadines