

# Brexit

**Origins of Brexit:** The UK has suffered from Subprime crisis (2008) and debt crisis (2010) and claims that the EU is guilty: leads to Euroscepticism (from Nigel Farage leading UKIP; David Cameron, Prime Minister from 2010 to 2016 wanted to remain). A referendum to denounce the “supremacy” of the EU.

- June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2016: referendum: 51.9% Leave, 48.1% Remain: the UK is deeply divided => countryside vs city; young vs old. The referendum outcome triggered resignation of Prime Minister David Cameron and his replacement by former Home Secretary Theresa May. Now, the Prime Minister is Boris Johnson.
- 2017-2019: Negotiating Brexit. There were three postponements of the deadline.
- 31 Jan 2020 (**Exit day**) – 31 Dec 2020: Transition Period
- 24 Dec 2020: a deal has been agreed upon. The UK has left the Single Market.

## The main issues:

- Customs union  
The UK left for good the single market and customs union with an exception for the Northern Irish who will continue to partly benefit from the advantages offered by the EU. There is a free trade agreement.
- Irish border  
In 1998, the border disappeared (with the Good Friday agreement), but Brexit is threatening this peace: if it's a zone of free movement, it can cause a network of illegal goods. The temporary solution is the backstop, which allows Northern Ireland to still be a part of the EU.
- Fishing  
The main bone of contention during the transition period. Many British fishermen feel that the deal has not been beneficial for them because they have to share the sea and there are fishing quotas.

## Examples of changes:

- Mobile data: Internet free
- Booze cruise: limit importation (42L of beer and 18L of wine, cigarettes: 200/person)
- Sending parcels to the EU will include a customs declaration.
- Shortages of seasonal workers, especially in agriculture.

## The Guardian view of Brexit: a tragic national error

Positive aspects: independence regained, **sovereignty** (live under their own laws), taking back control, made by their own elected parliament, relief.

The risks: the union was good for the country and the world, government led by journalists, tensions, inequalities, failures of government (a country divided), isolationism, confuse sovereignty with power, division within the UK: the breakup of the UK (Scotland), conflicts over the details of the agreement.

## Fake news about Brexit:

The Brexit Bus: “We send the EU 350pounds a week, let’s fund our NHS instead. Let’s take back control. Vote Leave.” Declared fraudulent figure, but used to rally citizens to leave the EU.

## Brexit’s impact on the UK economy

Studies published in 2018 estimated that the economic costs of the Brexit vote were 2% of GDP

### ***Problématiques:***

What are the pros/cons of leaving the Custom Union and the Single Market for British industries and producers?

To what extent is Brexit a consequence of rising populism?

- The referendum was marked by the rise of a populism based on the desire to regain control on immigration.
- In a protectionist desire, the UK wants to reclaim national sovereignty from international institutions.

To what extent does Brexit reveal the failure of democracy?

### **Vocabulary:**

No deal Brexit : un Brexit sans accord

**Hard Brexit:** supported by many Conservative MPs, the UK decide on their policies, controls borders, splits from the EU powers (Customs Union, Single Market, Courts of Justice...) and trade deals with other countries (USA, China...), strict policy on immigration, hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

**Softer Brexit:** supported by the Labour party, the aim is to try an alignment between the EU and the UK, stay in the Customs Union and the Single Market, no trade deals on its own, no hard border, but undermines UK national democracy.

To mark the dawn of political strife : marquer l’aube d’une querelle politique

Withdrawal Agreement : accord de retrait

The Internal Market Bill : projet de loi sur le marché intérieur

Customs union : union douanière

Single/Domestic market : marché intérieur

Good Friday agreement: accord du vendredi saint

Isolationism: policy of a state to not take part of international businesses

To relieve: être soulagé

Deadline: date limite

To provide: fournir

To back out of: revenir en arrière

Member state: état member

Single currency: monnaie unique

Free trade: libre échange

EU regulations: réglementations européennes

an MEP: un député européen

Euroskeptic: euroseptique

A Brexiteer: un partisan du Brexit

To call a referendum: déclencher un referendum

To postpone = to delay: reporter

To withdraw = to pull out: retirer

WTO: World Trade Organization

To extend: prolonger

To trade: faire du commerce

Agreement, a deal: Un accord

Trade union: syndicat

Prospect: Perspective

Resignation: démission (to resign : démissionner)