

QTMUN 2024



British House of Commons: Brexit

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Equity Disclaimers

Throughout this committee, delegates will be engaging in complex debates and discussions covering a wide array of topics. As UTMUN seeks to provide an enriching educational experience that facilitates understanding of the implications of real-world issues, the content of our committees may involve sensitive or controversial subject matter for the purposes of academia and accuracy. We ask that delegates be respectful, professional, tactful, and diplomatic when engaging with all committee content, representing their assigned country's or character's position in an equitable manner, communicating with staff and other delegates, and responding to opposing viewpoints.

This Background Guide and the British House of Commons presents topics that may be distressing to some Delegates, including but not limited to the following: discrimination, xenophobia towards immigrants, The Troubles/Northern Ireland Conflict, polarizing/intense debates, the 2015 Syrian Refugee Crisis, and refugee crises. Great care will be taken by staff in handling any/all of these topics should they arise.

In order to foster a safe environment for all delegates, please refrain from discussing on-going violent conflicts (including the Russia-Ukraine War). Please be very mindful in discussions around refugees (especially the 2015 Syrian Refugee Crisis) and past conflicts (including the Northern Ireland Conflict). Since some representatives have had past incidents with discrimination, please ensure that you do not perpetuate discriminatory values in committee sessions, and keep your discussion strictly policy-focused.

UTMUN recognizes the sensitivity associated with many of our topics, and we encourage you to be aware of and set healthy boundaries that work for you. This may include: refraining from reading certain parts of the background guide, preparing yourself before reading this background guide, doing some self-care or seeking support after reading the background guide, or anything that can help make you feel more comfortable. We ask that all Delegates remain considerate of the boundaries that other Delegates set.

UTMUN expects that all discussions amongst delegates will remain productive and respectful of one another. If you have any equity concerns or need assistance in setting boundaries or navigating sensitive subject matter or have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or our Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at equity@utmun.org. We want you to feel safe and comfortable at UTMUN!

If you wish to switch committees after having read the content warnings for this committee, please do the following:

- a) Fill out the [UTMUN 2024 Committee Switch Request Form](#).

If you have any equity concerns, equity-based questions, or delegate conflicts, please do any of the following:

1. Email equity@utmun.org to reach Harvi Karatha or email deputy.equity@utmun.org to reach Iva Zivaljevic or reach out to me at brexit@utmun.org.
 2. Fill out the (Anonymous if preferred) [UTMUN Equity Contact Form](#).
- Notify/Ask any staff member to connect you to Harvi Karatha or [Iva Zivaljevic](#)

Model United Nations at U of T Code of Conduct

The below code of conduct applies to all attendees of UTMUN 2024 for the entire duration of the conference, and any conference-related activities (including but not limited to committee sessions, conference socials, committee breaks, and the opening and closing ceremonies).

1. Harassment and bullying in any form will not be tolerated, the nature of which includes, but is not limited to, discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, ethnicity, colour, religion, sex, age, mental and physical disabilities, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression,

a. Harassment and bullying include, but are not limited to, insulting and/or degrading language or remarks; threats and intimidation; and intentional (direct or indirect).

discrimination and/or marginalization of a group and/or individual;

i. The above prohibition on harassment, bullying, and inappropriate behaviour extends to any and all behaviour as well as written and verbal communication during the conference, including notes, conversation both during and outside committees, and general demeanour at all conference events;

ii. UTMUN reserves the right to determine what constitutes bullying and/or inappropriate behaviour toward any individual and/or group;

b. Attendees must not engage in any behaviour that constitutes physical violence or the threat of violence against any groups and/or individuals, including sexual violence and harassment, such as, but not limited to,

i. Unwelcome suggestive or indecent comments about one's appearance;

ii. Nonconsensual sexual contact and/or behaviour between any individuals and/or groups of individuals;

iii. Sexual contact or behaviour between delegates and staff members is strictly forbidden;

2. UTMUN expects all attendees to conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner at all times during the conference. Specific expectations, include, but are not limited to,

a. Attendees must, if able, contribute to the general provision of an inclusive conference and refrain from acting in a manner that restricts other attendees' capacity to learn and thrive in an intellectually stimulating environment;

b. Attendees must adhere to the dress code, which is Western business attire;

i. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis depending on the attendees' ability to adhere to the previous sub-clause;

ii. Attendees are encouraged to contact Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at equity@utmun.org with questions or concerns about the dress code or conference accessibility;

- c. Attendees must refrain from the use of cultural appropriation to represent their character and/or country, including the use of cultural dress, false accent, and any behaviour that perpetuates a national or personal stereotype;
- d. Delegates must not use music, audio recordings, graphics, or any other media at any time unless approved and requested to be shared by the Dais and/or the Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha at equity@utmun.org;
- e. Attendees must abide by instructions and/or orders given by conference staff, members;
 - i. Attendees are exempt from this above sub-clause only if the instructions and/or orders given are unreasonable or inappropriate;

3. Delegates, staff, and all other conference participants are expected to abide by Ontario and Canadian laws and Toronto by-laws, as well as rules and regulations specific to the University of Toronto. This includes, but is not limited to,

- a. Attendees, regardless of their age, are strictly prohibited from being under the influence and/or engaging in the consumption of illicit substances, such as alcohol or illicit substances for the duration of the conference;
- b. Attendees are prohibited from smoking (cigarettes or e-cigarettes, including vapes) on University of Toronto property;
- c. Attendees must refrain from engaging in vandalism and the intentional and/or reckless destruction of any public or private property, including conference spaces, venues, furniture, resources, equipment, and university buildings;
 - i. Neither UTMUN nor any representatives of UTMUN is responsible for damage inflicted by attendees to property on or off University of Toronto campus;
 - ii. Individuals will be held responsible for any damages.

4. The Secretariat reserves the right to impose restrictions on delegates and/or attendees for not adhering to/violating any of the above stipulations. Disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to,

- a. Suspension from committee, in its entirety or for a specific period of time;
- b. Removal from the conference and/or conference venue(s);
- c. Disqualification from awards;
- d. Disqualification from participation in future conference-related events.

5. UTMUN reserves the right to the final interpretation of this document.

For further clarification on UTMUN's policies regarding equity or conduct, please see this [form](#). For any questions/concerns, or any equity violations that any attendee(s) would like to raise, please contact UTMUN's Chief Equity Officer, Harvi Karatha, at equity@utmun.org or fill out this anonymous Equity Contact Form: <https://forms.gle/Psc5Luxp22T3c9Zz8>.

Letter From the Director:

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the British House of Commons! My name is Arnav Singh, and I'll be serving as your Committee Director. I'm a first-year international student from Delhi, India, pursuing studies in Rotman Commerce with a possible minor in Political Science. I've been doing Model UN for the past five years, and absolutely love the enthusiasm and passion that delegates bring at the conference. Apart from Model UN, you can find me watching Bollywood movies, visiting museums, hanging with friends or at the next running event.

On the Dais, I'm joined by exceptional individuals, with all of us committed to providing you with the best possible learning and fun Model UN experience. Your Vice Director is Lakshya Rohilla, a second-year student from Mumbai, India, pursuing a double major in Economics and Political Science alongside a minor in Statistics. His broad interests include soccer, basketball, Formula 1, and listening to music. Having participated in Model UN since high school, he looks forward to an open and passionate committee debate! We're also joined by your Moderator, Maegan Dino, a second-year student studying Political Science and Philosophy. Her interests include reading, listening to music and rewatching her favourite movies, especially Dead Poets Society and Before Sunrise. She can't wait to welcome and meet all of you, and ensure an open and collaborative committee environment.

In the committee, you've been tasked with dealing with one of the most pressing issues in British political times - Brexit, in addition to critical issues such as Climate Change and the Economy. Please don't feel intimidated by any of this, especially the length of the Background guide. This is meant to be a comprehensive resource to kickstart your research and provide a solid foundation for UK politics. The agenda is dynamic, and the future of the UK is in your hands. This is your chance to create a new template for UK-EU relations, revive the country's economic fortunes and ensure a bright future, tackling climate change.

We're very excited to welcome and see you in action in February, and in case of any questions or concerns, please reach out to us.

Yours Truly,

Arnav Singh

Director, British House of Commons

brexit@utmun.org

Introduction:

Since the 2016 Brexit Referendum, UK politics and public life have witnessed multiple crises, with 5 Prime Ministers in office in hardly 7 years. After painstakingly negotiating a Withdrawal Agreement and a Free Trade Agreement, the UK finally left the EU in 2021.¹

However, barely 3 years after leaving, the UK public seems to have reversed its views on Brexit, as polls now show that the majority wish to rejoin the EU in the face of the UK's declining economic fortunes.² Meanwhile, others are still on the fence, believing the UK could still do better outside the Union, with better control over its laws, migration, and freedom to sign Trade Agreements with the rest of the world.

A recent Advisory Referendum, called by the Government to chart a future path for EU-UK relations, has seen 43% voting in favour of rejoining, 35% for a closer relationship, and 22% for maintaining the status quo. The shocking results have led to an uproar in Parliament, with divisions across party lines, and now it is up to the MPs to choose a future path in accordance with the public's wish. In this upcoming House of Commons (HOC) session, Members of Parliament (MPs) must critically assess Brexit and the UK economy and review the current relationship between the EU-UK. Further, the MPs would need to come to an agreement on the best way forward: maintain the status quo, sign a new trade deal with the EU on the pattern of Norway or Switzerland, or the most ambitious - rejoin the EU.

Simultaneously, the House must address other critical questions on climate change, including green energy infrastructure and the transition to electric vehicles, with the recent damning report by the Climate Change Committee revealing that the UK would fail to meet its 68% emission reduction target of 2030.³

¹ Peter Barnes. 2019. "Brexit: What Happens Now?" BBC News, April 11, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-46393399>.

² Anton Spisak, and Christos Tsoukalis. 2023. "Three Years On, Brexit Casts a Long Shadow over the UK Economy." *Www.institute.global*. February 3, 2023. <https://www.institute.global/insights/geopolitics-and-security/three-years-brexit-casts-long-shadow-over-uk-economy>.

³ *BBC News*. 2023. "Climate Change Committee Says UK No Longer a World Leader," June 27, 2023, sec. Science & Environment. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-66032607>.

House of Commons

The House of Commons is the popularly elected legislative body of the British Parliament. Members of the House of Commons debate political issues and propose new laws and legislation to help and serve the British people. The Parliament's primary roles include maintaining checks and balances by holding the current Government accountable for its policies, debating and passing legislation, as well as dictating taxation policies.

The United Kingdom is divided into 650 Parliamentary Constituencies, with one elected Member of Parliament representing the people of each constituency in the House of Commons. Consequently, the current HOC consists of 650 MPs, with the Conservative Party having a majority of 353 MPs and the Labour Party in second with 196 MPs. While the Conservative and Labour parties are the largest, the Parliament also consists of other smaller parties, including the Scottish National Party, the Liberal Democrats, the Democratic Unionist Party, Sinn Fein etc.

Defintions:

UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom is a unified political union of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

BRITIAN

The UK, excluding Northern Ireland, that is, England, Scotland, and Wales are referred to as Britain.

EUROPEAN UNION

The EU is a supranational political and economic union of 27 member states in Europe formed through the signing of the 1992 Maastricht Treaty.⁴

EUROSCEPTICISM

Skeptical or negative attitudes towards the EU and the process of European Integration, in part due to rising nationalism and the perception of the EU being undemocratic and encroaching on member states' sovereignty.

EU SINGLE MARKET

The EU Single Market, or commonly referred to as the Common Market, enables free movement of goods, services, capital and citizens of EU countries and Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein within its borders.⁵

REMAIN CAMPAIGN

Officially known as the 'Britain Stronger in Europe' group, the Remain Campaign advocated for the UK to remain an EU member in the 2016 referendum. Prominent members included PM David Cameroon & Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn.

⁴ Matthew Gabel. 2019. "European Union - the Maastricht Treaty." In Encyclopædia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-Union/The-Maastricht-Treaty>.

⁵ European Union. 2022. "Single Market." European-Union.europa.eu. 2022. https://european-union.europa.eu/priorities-and-actions/actions-topic/single-market_en.

LEAVE CAMPAIGN

Officially known as the ‘Vote Leave’ group, the Leave Campaign advocated for the UK to leave the EU, with a key agenda of ‘taking back control. Prominent campaigners included then London Mayor and later PM, Boris Johnson and UKIP party leader Nigel Farage.

UKIP

UK Independence Party led by Nigel Farage, a right-wing party with an agenda to keep the UK out of the European Union and oppose European integration.⁶

MP

Member of Parliament.

TORIES

The Conservative Party and its supporters are often called Tories.

TCA

EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

EV

Electric Vehicle.

NI

Northern Ireland

WTO

World Trade Organization

NHS

National Health Service

GBP

Great Britain Pound or British Pound Sterling, the official currency of the UK.

⁶ Michael Ray. 2019. “United Kingdom Independence Party | Policies, Leaders, & Role in Brexit.” In Encyclopædia Britannica. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Kingdom-Independence-Party>.

Historical Background:

On January 31st, 2020, the United Kingdom left the European Union 47 years after joining the EU's predecessor, the European Economic Community.⁷

The decision to leave has triggered intense debate across the UK, with fundamental questions being raised over the country's place in the world. Brexit has resulted in tremendous political upheaval over the past 7 years, with the country witnessing 5 Prime Ministers and three general elections. This begs the following question: how did the UK end up in this situation?

Before we delve into the immediate causes, it's important to elaborate on the UK's already strained relationship with the EU even before Brexit took place. The UK never completely took to European Integration the way the other members of the European Union did. While looking at the EU favourably as a pathway to peace and prosperity in Europe, the UK remained sceptical about an ever closer growing Union.

The most famous symbol of this was Margaret Thatcher's "No, no, no" in the House of Commons in October 1990 in response to further European Integration initiatives at the Rome Summit.⁸ Thus, with its ambivalent attitude, the UK, always prioritizing its independence and sovereignty, opted out of major EU integration initiatives. For example, the UK chose not to join the Schengen Area (27 nations that have adopted a common visa, border control policies and have free movement of people within their borders).⁹ The UK has its own currency, the Pound, and opted out of joining the Euro, the common currency of the 20-member Eurozone, and the Economics and Monetary Union (EMU), which regulates economic and monetary policies.¹⁰

While any one specific factor did not drive the vote for Brexit, there were multiple underlying complex issues at play, the most prominent being: *Migration, the 2008 Global Financial Crisis, the 2011 Eurozone Debt Crisis, issues over national sovereignty, and an effective political campaign run by the Leave Bloc persuading Brits to vote to leave.*

⁷ The New York Times. 2020. "Brexit Day Live Updates: U.K. 's Final Hours in the E.U.," January 31, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/world/europe/brexit-britain-eu.html>.

⁸ BBC News. n.d. "Euro Moments: Thatcher Says 'No, No, No' to Europe." <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/uk-politics-27053536>.

⁹ "Which Countries Are Not Part of the Schengen Area?" n.d. Www.axa-Schengen.com. Accessed August 8, 2023. <https://www.axa-schengen.com/en/non-schengen-countries>.

¹⁰ Troy Segal. 2019. "Why Doesn't England Use the Euro?" Investopedia. 2019. <https://www.investopedia.com/ask/answers/100314/why-doesnt-england-use-euro.asp>.

Migration

In 2004, ten Eastern European countries – Hungary, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Malta, Estonia, Poland, Latvia, Slovenia, Lithuania, and Slovakia – joined the EU.¹¹ Over the next four years, 932,000 migrants entered the UK from Eastern and Southern Europe, taking advantage of the EU's single market, which enables common mobility of goods, services, capital and people, allowing EU citizens to move and work in any of the member countries.¹² In contrast, prior to this, from 1991-2003, the UK only saw an average annual inflow of 61,000 migrants from Europe.¹³ Additionally, during the 2015 Syrian Refugee crisis, when the EU witnessed a flow of nearly 1.3 million migrants and asylum seekers, many in the British public viewed this as the EU's inability to properly manage their borders, deepening their Euroscepticism.¹⁴

Keeping with this sentiment for increased equity surrounding migration and to keep the committee a safe space all, while we have included this background information, migration is not to be debated as a factor surrounding Brexit. Instead, we ask for you to base your stances on the other economic and political factors discussed in this background guide.

Financial Crisis

Unfortunately, the 2008 financial crisis hit the UK especially hard, with unemployment rising to 8.4%, the highest since 1995 and households facing income losses.¹⁵ This fuelled negative feelings towards EU migrants amongst Brits who felt that migrants were responsible for lowering wages because they increased competition in the workforce. However, the lowered wages could more accurately be accredited to the financial crisis at hand. UK Sociologist Kenneth Plummer has equated this phenomenon to Scapegoat Theory, which refers to the tendency to blame someone else for one's own problems.¹⁶ In this case, an economic decline led to an increased feeling of group threat, wherein people become increasingly skeptical of economic competition from immigrants over resources and jobs.¹⁷

¹¹ D'Angelo, Alessio, and Eleonore Kofman. 2016. "UK: Large-Scale European Migration and the Challenge to EU Free Movement." IMISCOE Research Series, December, 175–92. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-39763-4_10.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Amanda Garret. 2019. "The Refugee Crisis, Brexit, and the Reframing of Immigration in Britain." *Www.europenowjournal.org*. August 1, 2019. <https://www.europenowjournal.org/2019/09/09/the-refugee-crisis-brexite-and-the-reframing-of-immigration-in-britain/>.

¹⁵ Office for National Statistics. 2018. "The 2008 Recession 10 Years on - Office for National Statistics." *Ons.gov.uk*. April 30, 2018.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/articles/the2008recession10yearson/2018-04-30>.

¹⁶ Administrator. 2016. "Scapegoat Theory in Social Psychology - IResearchNet." *Psychology*. January 3, 2016. <https://psychology.iresearchnet.com/social-psychology/social-psychology-theories/scapegoat-theory/>

¹⁷ Beauchamp, Zack. 2016. "Brexit Was Fueled by Irrational Xenophobia, Not Real Economic Grievances." *Vox*. June 25, 2016. <https://www.vox.com/2016/6/25/12029786/brexit-uk-eu-immigration-xenophobia>.

Support for the right-wing populist United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and its somewhat eccentric leader, Nigel Farage, grew amongst the elderly and the unskilled youth during this time, who were employed in low-paying jobs. UKIP had been advocating for the UK to leave the EU since 1993.¹⁸

The 2011 Eurozone Debt Crisis

The Eurozone debt crisis was a complicated issue subject to deep analysis in recent years. Essentially, it was caused by the inability of 5 countries in the Eurozone – Greece, Ireland, Italy, Spain, and Portugal – to pay back bondholders due to rising budget deficits, as well as a fall in revenues and slow economic growth, which left these countries at the risk of default.¹⁹

The European Central Bank (ECB) failed to foresee the crisis, and their response to it was slow since a bailout rescue package required the approval of all Eurozone member states.²⁰ Seeing the ensuing chaos, Eurosceptics branded the EU as an inefficient organization.

In the aftermath of the crisis, the UK grew more wary of joint economic initiatives between EU member states, particularly in the sphere of monetary policy. Many felt that joining the Eurozone would imply that Britain would lose its sovereignty and control over its economic policy.²¹ Right wing parties exploited this sentiment, driving into their core narrative of taking back control.²²

¹⁸ Michael Ray. 2019. "United Kingdom Independence Party | Policies, Leaders, & Role in Brexit." In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/United-Kingdom-Independence-Party>.

¹⁹ D'Angelo, Alessio, and Eleonore Kofman. 2016. "UK: Large-Scale European Migration and the Challenge to EU Free Movement." IMISCOE Research Series, December, 175–92. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-39763-4_10.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ "A Missed Opportunity? Revisiting the Euro Referendum That Never Was from a Historical Perspective." 2019. LSE BREXIT. December 3, 2019. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2019/12/03/a-missed-opportunity-revisiting-the-euro-referendum-that-never-was-from-a-historical-perspective/>

²² Emilio Casalicchio. 2020. "15 Things Vote Leave Promised on Brexit — and What It Got." POLITICO. December 24, 2020.

Political Influences

By 2012, there was growing pressure on British Prime Minister David Cameron from within his own Party to declare a referendum on leaving the EU in his campaign manifesto. This pressure manifested from concerns over how some voters were switching allegiance to UKIP and the influential presence of Eurosceptics within his own Party.²³

In 2013, Cameron succumbed to the pressures and promised a referendum if the Conservative Party was voted back into power. Unsurprisingly, the Conservatives won the election, thrusting David Cameron back into the helm as Prime Minister. At first, the UK tried to renegotiate a new deal with the EU, successfully reducing the monetary contributions the UK made to the EU, but this was not enough for the public.²⁴

Factions emerged within the Conservative Party, with many MPs in favour of leaving despite the Cabinet wishing to remain in the EU.²⁵ The Vote Remain campaign was led by David Cameron himself, with support from the leaders of several prominent political parties, including Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn. The Vote Leave campaign was led by former London Mayor and MP Boris Johnson and UKIP party leader Nigel Farage.

A driving factor behind the Vote Leave campaign was “taking back control,”²⁶ meaning that the UK should make its own decisions rather than work in accordance with the policies proposed by the European Commission. Boris Johnson floated the idea that exiting the EU would open up new opportunities for the UK to pursue new trade deals with non-EU countries and open the doors to the world.²⁷ The Leave campaign efficiently delivered its message to the masses, with Johnson going so far as to drive a red bus in London bearing the slogan, “We send the EU 350 million pounds a week, let’s fund the NHS instead.”²⁸

²³ BBC News. 2016. “EU Referendum: Countdown to the Vote,” February 20, 2016, sec. UK Politics. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-33141819>.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Emilio Casalicchio. 2020. “15 Things Vote Leave Promised on Brexit — and What It Got.” POLITICO. December 24, 2020. <https://www.politico.eu/article/15-things-uk-vote-leave-promised-on-brexite-and-what-it-got/>.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

On the other hand, the Vote Remain campaign, instead of countering the claims of the Leave campaign on immigration, the economy, and sovereignty, focused on spreading awareness of the economic risk of leaving the EU. They did not realize that the public tied economic prosperity to the issues the Leave campaign paraded.

As a result, 51.9% voted to leave the European Union, ushering in a new era in British politics and leading the country into uncharted waters. The following day, David Cameron announced his resignation.²⁹ Ultimately, despite the Remain camp repeatedly warning people about job losses and the contraction of the economy, they failed and lost the referendum.³⁰ Many factors were at play, but it cannot be denied that the Remain camp ran a weak official campaign.³¹ They were slow to refute the false claims run by the Leave campaign, and eventually, people started believing Leave's propaganda that 350 million pounds were sent to the EU each week.³²

Following this, David Cameron resigned, followed soon by Theresa May, after failing to deliver on her promise to see Brexit through. In the words of BBC's Laura Kuennsberg, "May's reputation crashed, arguably faster than any other in modern British political times."³³ Failing to pass her Chequers Plan (a white paper detailing the UK and EU's future relationship) three times in Parliament, May resigned on 24 June 2019, offering a teary farewell.³⁴

²⁹ Rafael Behr. 2016. "How Remain Failed: The inside Story of a Doomed Campaign | Rafael Behr." The Guardian. The Guardian. July 5, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jul/05/how-remain-failed-inside-story-doomed-campaign>.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Gabriel Power. 2019. "Brexit Timeline: Key Dates in the Saga of the UK's Exit from the EU." The Week UK. The Week UK. March 19, 2019. <https://www.theweek.co.uk/100284/brexit-timeline-key-dates-in-the-uk-s-break-up-with-the-eu>.

³⁴ BBC News. 2019. "Theresa May Resigns over Brexit: What Happened?," May 24, 2019. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48379730>.

Relationship with the EU post-Brexit³⁵

Boris Johnson assumed leadership of the Party and became Prime Minister on July 24, 2019. After a deadlock in Parliament over Boris's UK-EU withdrawal bill, he made a gamble by calling another general election. The results left everyone stunned: the Party won 364 seats, pulling the largest victory the Tories have seen since Margaret Thatcher's election back in 1987.³⁶ This is key to understanding Johnson's outsized influence in the Conservative Party, British political space, and the discourse around Brexit.

Delivering on his word, the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) came into force on 1 May 2021,³⁷ avoiding a no-deal scenario. At his press conference, Johnson said the GBP 688 billion a year agreement would “protect jobs across the country and enable UK goods to be sold without tariffs and quotas in the EU market.”³⁸ For a while, both sides rejoiced, relieved at the ordeal being over. Yet, the reality remained that the deal spanning 1200+ pages was rushed through Parliament in a matter of few hours with limited parliamentary oversight and debate, leaving key loopholes. *Here is a quick overview of the TCA:*

What exactly changed after the deal?³⁹

- The UK exited the EU Single Market and Customs Union, ending the free movement of people, goods, services and capital, now subject to border checks and tariffs.
- Reduced coordination in Foreign Policy and non-EU countries' partnerships, with the exit from the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU's diplomatic wing.
- Losses to Education and Research, with the end of participation in Horizon and Erasmus programmes and reduction in EU research grants to UK academics.

³⁵ Nigel Walker. 2021. “Brexit Timeline: Events Leading to the UK’s Exit from the European Union.” UK Parliament, January. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7960/>.

³⁶ Heather Stewart, and Rowena Mason. 2019. “Boris Johnson Leads Tories to Historic General Election Win.” The Guardian, December 13, 2019, sec. Politics. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/dec/13/boris-johnson-leads-tories-historic-general-election-win>.

³⁷ “What Does the Brexit Deal Mean?” n.d. UK in a Changing Europe. <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/explainers/what-does-the-brexit-deal-mean/>.

³⁸ BBC News. 2020. “Brexit: Boris Johnson Hails Free Trade Deal with EU,” December 24, 2020, sec. UK Politics. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-55435930>.

³⁹ UK in a Changing Europe. 2023. “Where Next? The Future of the UK-Eu Relationship.” <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UKICE-Where-Next-the-Future-of-the-UK-EU-Relationship-3.pdf>.

- No mutual recognition of professional qualifications, making it harder for professionals to provide services in other EU countries unless they meet specific country requirements.
- E.g., If a lawyer wishes to provide legal services in Hungary, they would have to first meet the standards set by the country. Thus, there is a significant loss of the mobility of such services.⁴⁰
- There would be no tariffs on goods traded between the EU and the UK; however, since the exit from the Customs Union and EU VAT area, goods would be subject to additional checks at the Ireland - Northern Ireland UK border, and UK VAT & customs duties applicable, driving up costs.

What the UK gained from the deal?⁴¹

- Zero tariffs on goods between the EU and the UK, however, with a caveat.
- For free trade between the EU-UK, the specific goods must have a specific percentage produced locally, either in UK or EU countries or else they are subject to WTO barriers. This forces automobile manufacturers to produce more parts locally, thereby raising costs and leaving them more competitive compared to Chinese alternatives. This is especially concerning, putting Electric Vehicles production in the UK at risk, with Ford, Citroen, and JLR all calling for changes in the TCA, else they'll have no choice but to move production out of the UK, shelving thousands of blue-collar jobs further hurting the British middle class.⁴²
- Continued collaboration and similar regulations in critical areas such as state aid, labour standards, consumer protection, and intellectual property.
- Significant freedom to pursue trade deals and join new trading blocs since these are no longer subject to EU regulations and scrutiny. Since leaving, the UK has signed FTAs with New Zealand and Australia, while negotiations are ongoing with the US and India.
- De-regulation across some industries gives UK manufacturers a competitive advantage; however, this, at the same time, runs the risk of the UK falling behind on its environmental obligations.

⁴⁰ “The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement: An Overview.” n.d. Wwww.dentons.com. Accessed August 8, 2023.

<https://www.dentons.com/en/insights/articles/2020/december/31/the-uk-eu-trade-and-cooperation-agreement>

⁴¹ UK in a Changing Europe. 2023. “Where Next? The Future of the UK-Eu Relationship.” <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/UKICE-Where-Next-the-Future-of-the-UK-EU-Relationship-3.pdf>.

⁴² O’Carroll, Lisa, and Jasper Jolly. 2023. “Why Are Leading Carmakers Urging UK to Overhaul Brexit Deal?” The Guardian, May 17, 2023, sec. Business. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/may/17/why-is-a-leading-carmaker-urging-uk-to-overhaul-brexit-deal-stellantis>.

In summary, while the TCA provides tariff-free trade of goods, it has resulted in increased non-tariff barriers such as customs, documentation and inspection checks. Additionally, the TCA has very few provisions for trade in services which make up a great portion of the UK's economy. This has significantly impacted trade with the EU and made it harder for businesses operating from within the UK to expand.

The TCA is up for review in 2026 and every five years afterwards, and it remains to be seen if the EU and UK will expand the agreement or merely conduct a technical review of the deal.⁴³ [For more information on the TCA, visit this webpage: [The UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement](#).]

British Political Development Post Brexit to Current Day

At a time when it seemed British politics was stabilizing after the tumultuous period following Brexit, Downing Street was rocked by allegations that officials had hosted multiple parties during Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020.⁴⁴ Soon afterwards, when the Johnson government was reeling from the public outcry over the 'Partygate' scandal, Conservative Party Deputy Whip Chris Pincher resigned amid allegations that he assaulted two guests and two party MPs.⁴⁵ As it turned out, Boris Johnson already knew of the allegations when promoting Chris Pincher earlier in the year. That was the final straw in the Johnson saga. Following this, senior cabinet members, including Rishi Sunak and Sajid Javid, quit the government, and Johnson had no choice but to resign amid the uproar.⁴⁶

⁴³ "Where next for UK-EU Relations?" 2023. British Politics and Policy at LSE. May 15, 2023. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/where-next-for-uk-eu-relations>

⁴⁴ Aubrey Allegreti. 2023. "Partygate Defence Dossier: How Boris Johnson Tried to Contain a Scandal." The Guardian, March 21, 2023, sec. Politics. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/mar/21/partygate-defence-dossier-reveals-how-johnson-tried-to-contain-scandal>.

⁴⁵ "Johnson Faces Backlash for 'Failure to Act' over Chris Pincher Warnings." 2022. The Guardian. July 3, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/03/johnson-faces-backlash-for-failure-to-act-over-chris-pincher-warnings>.

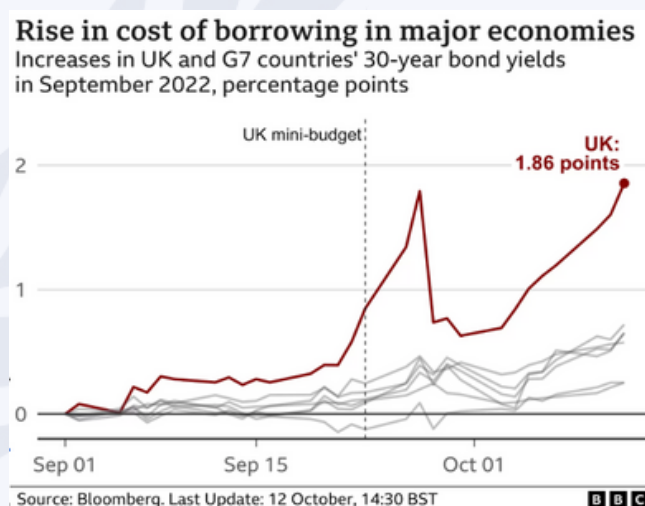
⁴⁶ Mark Landler, and Stephen Castle. 2022. "U.K. Live Updates: Liz Truss Resigns as Prime Minister." The New York Times, October 20, 2022, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/10/20/world/liz-truss-news>.

On September 5, after a tight race, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss took charge as the new Prime Minister, the fourth since 2016, riding on a campaign to tackle the UK's cost of living crisis.⁴⁷

Promising “a new approach for a new era”, Britain's new chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng unveiled a fiscal package inspired by Reagan-era trickle-down economics and Thatcherite-style policies.⁴⁸ A rise in Corporate Taxes was removed, with the base rate remaining at 19% instead of 25%; one of the lowest in the G20.⁴⁹ Income taxes on the highest income earners, those earning more than GBP 150,000 were reduced from 45% to 40%, with cuts in National insurance and Stamp Duty on real estate and removal of caps on bonuses in Banking to follow.⁵⁰

The belief was that tax cuts for corporations and the rich would spur investments and promote innovation in the economy, in a revert to 1980s-style economics. Moreover, the UK announced GBP 60 Billion in subsidies for an energy relief plan for households in view of rising energy costs. To fund all this, the Treasury announced debt borrowings of GBP 70 billion since the tax cuts would reduce revenues by up to GBP 45 Billion. Under the new plan, the UK debt-GDP ratio would increase from 80% to nearly 95% by 2026-27.⁵¹ That markets did not react to the mini-budget well would be a vast understatement.⁵²

Within minutes of Mr Kwarteng delivering his speech, the markets were in turmoil. The pound slumped to its lowest level ever against the dollar, and the interest on 30-year UK government bonds ended 1.86% higher by the end of next week, the fastest rise in the 21st century,⁵³ and nearly caused a collapse in the UK pension funds.⁵⁴



⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ BBC News. 2022b. “Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng Hails ‘New Era’ as He Unveils Tax Cuts,” September 23, 2022, sec. UK Politics. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-63005302>.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ “Britain's Chancellor Offers up a Reckless Budget, Fiscally and Politically.” n.d. The Economist. <https://www.economist.com/britain/2022/09/23/britains-chancellor-offers-up-a-reckless-budget-fiscally-and-politically>.

⁵² BBC News. 2022. “How Much Market Chaos Did the Mini-Budget Cause?” BBC News, October 17, 2022, sec. Reality Check. <https://www.bbc.com/news/63229204>

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Richard Partington. 2022. “The Mini-Budget That Broke Britain – and Liz Truss.” The Guardian. October 20, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/oct/20/the-mini-budget-that-broke-britain-and-liz-truss>.

Even worse, Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey hit out at the government, claiming he had been left blindsided with no communication about the budget beforehand.

The IMF, Goldman Sachs and Bank of America immediately expressed concerns over the costs of debt and the ability of the UK to raise more money to keep the country running.⁵⁵ The parliament was in an uproar, with new Labour Party leader Sir Keir Starmer, calling on Liz Truss to resign for crashing the economy, asking, “Why is she still here?”⁵⁶

Under immense public pressure, Kwasi Kwarteng resigned, replaced by Jeremy Hunt, who on October 17, in what the Guardian termed as the ‘biggest U-turn in modern political history’, immediately reversed all tax cuts and mini-budget plans.⁵⁷ However, at this point, Liz Truss had lost all credibility and soon followed Kwarteng, resigning on October 20, after just 45 days in office, becoming the shortest-serving Prime Minister in history.⁵⁸ This severely dented the UK’s image as a stable destination for investments, coupled with Brexit and increasing political turmoil, leaving borrowing costs higher for the rest of the fiscal year.

By the next week, a new occupant was at Number 10, Downing Street. Conservative MPs elected previous Chancellor Rishi Sunak as the new PM, the third in a year. However, with low approval ratings, a lack of trust in Tory leadership, and an economy in near-freefall, Sunak lacks the mandate to push through any major legislation.

This brings us up to date on current UK politics. The next general election is scheduled for 2024, where the Labour Party headed by Sir Keir Starmer, who already leads Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in the polls, is on track for an electoral landslide.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ “Blowing the Budget: Expert Explains Why the Conservative Mini-Budget Is so Toxic.” 2022. News Centre - University of Kent. October 2022. <https://www.kent.ac.uk/news/society/32453/blowing-the-budget-expert-explains-why-the-conservative-mini-budget-is-so-toxic>.

⁵⁶ BBC News. 2022c. “Why Are You Still Here, Keir Starmer Asks Liz Truss,” October 19, 2022, sec. UK Politics. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-63314938>.

⁵⁷ Richard Partington. 2022. “The Mini-Budget That Broke Britain – and Liz Truss.” The Guardian. October 20, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2022/oct/20/the-mini-budget-that-broke-britain-and-liz-truss>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Aubrey Allegretti, Senior political correspondent. 2023. “Labour on Course for Landslide Election Victory, Megapoll Suggests.” The Guardian, June 7, 2023, sec. Politics. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/jun/07/labour-landslide-election-victory-poll-keir-starmer-rishi-sunak-conservatives-constituency-boundaries>.

Key Issues:

Northern Ireland Deal

After the UK's exit from the EU and signing of the TCA, one key issue continues to dominate the discourse around Brexit, the Northern Ireland (NI) question.

Northern Ireland shares its border with the Republic of Ireland, and this is the only border the UK shares with an EU country. Under the Northern Ireland Protocol signed by PM Boris Johnson, border checks for inspection and documentation were set up on Northern Ireland ports for trade to pass between the UK and the EU.⁶⁰

Unusually, as it turned out, goods passing from the rest of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales), intended for Northern Ireland, were subject to these checks. This meant that a de-facto border had been created within the UK, resulting in delays and rising prices.⁶¹ This move angered the NI's Unionist Party, which supports integration with the UK. The Northern Ireland Protocol's logistics are complex, given Northern Ireland's troubled history with Britain. From 1960 to 1998, NI was in a state of political, and ethnic conflict over the country's status within the UK. The Unionists, mainly Protestants, wanted NI to remain within the UK. In contrast, the Republicans and Nationalists, mostly Catholics, wanted to leave and merge with the Republic of Ireland to form a united Ireland. The violence perpetrated by the IRA (Irish Republican Army) raged for years, with 3500 people losing their lives. The IRA were behind multiple high-profile bombing cases, including the assassination of Lord Mountbatten.

⁶⁰ Tom Edgington. 2020. "Brexit: What Is the Northern Ireland Protocol and Why Is It Needed?" BBC News, September 8, 2020, sec. Explainers. <https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-53724381>.

⁶¹ Ibid.

What does the new deal change in practice?

Under the Brexit deal, certain goods have to be checked when they enter Northern Ireland from Great Britain

The current process

- The goods are checked at ports in Northern Ireland on arrival
- They can then be moved into the Republic of Ireland once checked



The new plan

- The goods are split into two different lanes
- Goods destined for Northern Ireland go into the **Green Lane** meaning they wouldn't have to be checked and would require minimal paperwork
- Goods destined for Ireland and the EU go into the **Red Lane** and checks are carried out



Peace was brought with the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998,⁶² under which border checks and installations between NI and Ireland were removed, allowing freer movement of people between the two countries. Installation of border checks post-Brexit could have sparked outcry and protests since the Good Friday Agreement mandates open borders between the two.⁶³ Recently, the UK and EU signed the Windsor Framework, which would separate processes for goods intended for Northern Ireland and those for the EU.⁶⁴ However, many problems surrounding this separation remain unaddressed.

The Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) has boycotted the regional NI Assembly in Belfast for the past 17 months, set up as a part of the peace process of the Good Friday Agreement and rejected key provisions of the Windsor Framework. DUP leader Jeffrey Donaldson in a statement, said, “The government committed to taking action to restore our place in the UK internal market, but whilst statements and headlines have been in plentiful supply, there has been a lack of meaningful action,” after a meeting with Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Chris Heaton-Harris.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Peter Hain. 2023. “Thanks to Brexit, 25 Years On, the Good Friday Agreement Faces Its Toughest Test.” The Guardian, April 9, 2023, sec. Opinion. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/apr/09/brexit-25-years-good-friday-agreement-challenges>.

⁶⁴ Tom Edgington. 2020. “Brexit: What Is the Northern Ireland Protocol and Why Is It Needed?” BBC News, September 8, 2020, sec. Explainers. <https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-53724381>.

⁶⁵ “Ball in UK Government’s Court over Return of Stormont – Donaldson.” 2023. BreakingNews.ie. July 19, 2023. <https://www.breakingnews.ie/ireland/ball-in-governments-court-over-return-of-stormont-donaldson-1504339.html>.

Additionally, critics point out that the Framework brings marginal progress at best,⁶⁶ since goods in the green lane would still have to undergo customs and documentation checks, albeit the processing time being faster. Marks & Spencer warns that demarcating such a lane would require it to label goods intended for NI as 'not for the EU'.⁶⁷

Since it would be impractical to decide which goods would actually go to NI during manufacturing, firms are looking to use the 'not EU' label across the UK, resulting in marginal cost increases and headaches for businesses. Some firms might even withdraw sales from NI to avoid this.⁶⁸

The House of Commons must address the Northern Ireland question in view of deteriorating ties and prolonged instability caused by the DUP's refusal to convene the regional assembly. With Brexit, the delicate equilibrium and stability achieved between NI and Britain by the Good Friday Agreement is under threat. The divergence between the four nations in the UK on Brexit becomes more stark when viewed individually. In a survey, when respondents were asked if Brexit had a negative impact on the UK economy, 74% in Northern Ireland agreed, followed by 66% in Scotland, 48% in Wales compared to just 43% in England.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Mark Rainey. 2023. "Lack of Trust' Continues to Hamper Windsor Framework Progress: Donaldson." July 2023.

<https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/politics/lack-of-trust-continues-to-hamper-windsor-framework-progress-donaldson-4228214>.

⁶⁷ Harry Western. 2023. "The Windsor Framework: A Bad Deal for Northern Ireland and an Even Worse Deal for the UK - Briefings for Britain." <https://www.briefingsforbritain.co.uk/the-windsor-framework-a-bad-deal-for-northern-ireland-and-an-even-worse-deal-for-the-uk/>.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Alex Walker. 2023. "The Union Remains Divided on Brexit." UK in a Changing Europe. January 19, 2023. <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/the-union-remains-divided-on-brexite/>.

Scotland

Brexit even opened up fault lines in Scotland, as 62% of Scots voted to remain in the EU, despite the UK at large voting to leave with 51.9%.⁷⁰ This has led to disillusionment in Scotland and again fueled the campaign for independence since many believe that they'd be better off in the EU rather than outside of it in the UK. The pro-independence Scottish National Party (SNP) leader and First Minister of Scotland Humza Yousaf told the BBC, "It is the Westminster parties that continue to deny Scotland its democratic choice, and the question that we must put to them is that if this is a voluntary union they have to prove it."⁷¹

Scotland has been hit harder than the UK in labour shortages, especially since most of its industries revolve around agriculture, hospitality and meat processing, which had a sizeable amount of EU nationals working in them. Now, the SNP renewed calls for a referendum, stating that the Party would initiate talks after the scheduled General Election in 2024.⁷²

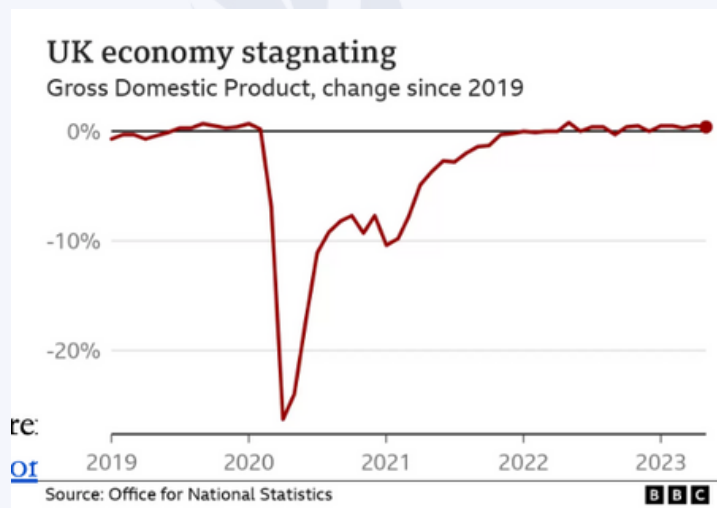
⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ BBC News. 2023. "SNP Want Indyref2 Soon after UK Election - Humza Yousaf," June 25, 2023, sec. Scotland politics. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-66012834>.

⁷² Ibid.

Economy

Over the past 3 years, the European world has undergone severe economic shocks from the COVID-19 pandemic alongside the continent’s energy crisis, and the UK is no exception. The economic crises had, till now, somewhat masked the actual impact of Brexit on the UK economy. However, the extent of the economic downturn as a direct result of Brexit is now becoming apparent.



(a) Economic Growth: The UK has witnessed lacklustre growth over the past 3 years due to multiple economic shocks. In a report by KPMG, as of June 2023, the economy is still 0.5% below pre-pandemic Q4 2019 levels after shrinking 0.1% in May 2023.⁷³ Household consumption is down 2.4%, and business investment is 1.4% lower.⁷⁴ In contrast, EU member states are on track to grow 1.0% on average in 2023, and the UK remains the slowest-growing major economy in the G7.⁷⁵ One major contributor could be the hard-hit manufacturing sector, as manufacturing exports to the EU have fallen by 6.8% as compared to 2.1% with the rest of the world in recent years.⁷⁶ This has renewed calls among many businesses for the Government to consider rejoining the EU common market, if not the EU.

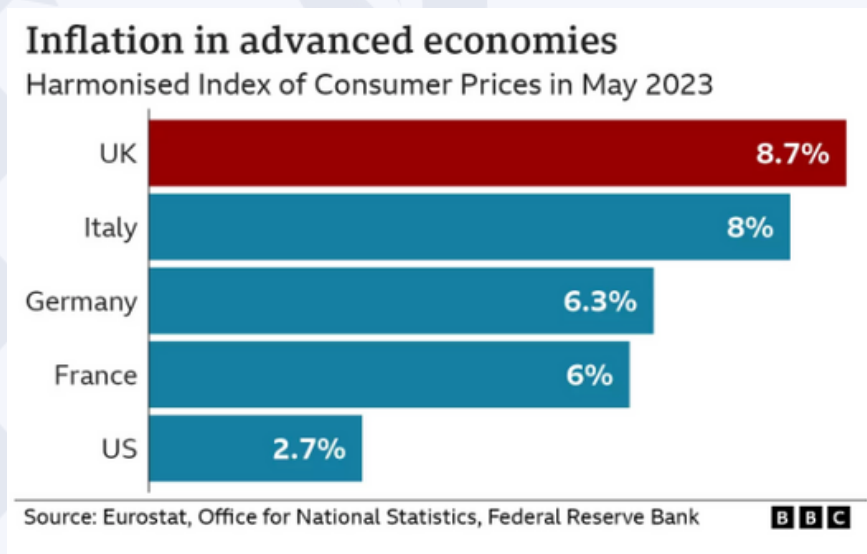
⁷³ “UK Economic Update.” 2023. <https://assets.kpmg.com/content/dam/kpmg/uk/pdf/2023/06/uk-economic-update.pdf>.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ BBC News. 2023. “UK Economy ‘Listless’ with Little Growth in Four Years,” July 13, 2023, sec. Business. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-66179998>.

⁷⁶ Anton Spisak, and Christos Tsoukalis. 2023. “Three Years On, Brexit Casts a Long Shadow over the UK Economy.” Wwww.institute.global. February 3, 2023. <https://www.institute.global/insights/geopolitics-and-security/three-years-brexit-casts-long-shadow-over-uk-economy>.

(b) Inflation: Inflation has remained stubbornly high in the UK at 8.7%, despite the Bank of England raising interest rates to the highest seen in recent years at 4.5% in May 2023.⁷⁷ Major causes of this inflation are the energy crisis which has seen power bills for UK households soar and the shortage of goods due to COVID-19 supply chain disruptions. Yet, evidence is emerging of the exact cost of the additional border checks for goods coming from the EU.⁷⁸ Researchers at the London School of Economics (LSE) have calculated that the extra red tape could have added up to GBP 250 annually to a household's food and grocery expenses, in total accounting for a quarter of the rise in food bills since 2019.⁷⁹ This has clearly exacerbated the UK's cost of living crisis, pushing many households on the brink and driving many to rely on food banks and charity.



⁷⁷ BBC News. 2023. "Is Brexit behind the UK's Inflation Shock?," June 21, 2023, sec. Business. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-65962027>.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

(c) Trade and Investments: While many point to slowing growth and inflation as an aftershock of Brexit, the record on trade and investments is mixed. Indeed, immediately after the 2021 transition period and the signing of TCA, trade between the EU and UK dipped by 40%.⁸⁰ However, overall trade volumes have now returned to earlier levels, even if prices for goods are higher.⁸¹

One might argue that trade could have grown more if not for the additional red tape that businesses have to deal with. On the flip side, since importing food products from the EU has become pricier, domestic food producers in the UK have seen their products become more competitive, with sales going up. An estimate pegged the boost to domestic food producers at GBP 5 billion.⁸²

Finally, investment had been lagging ever since the Global Financial Crisis 2008 hit the UK especially hard. Data suggests that business investment is 10% lower, primarily due to the uncertainty created around Brexit, with firms reluctant to invest until a clearer picture emerges.⁸³ One explanation for the relatively small fall in investments could be that the UK economy is primarily made up of services like Banking and Consulting, which aren't subject to stringent barriers across borders as compared to goods.⁸⁴ Moreover, not all problems with the UK economy can be pegged to Brexit, COVID-19, or the energy crisis. Some economists argue that the UK's investment in key sectors such as infrastructure, research and development, and education & health has been lagging since 2005, resulting in stagnation.⁸⁵ According to Luke Murphy, associate director for energy and climate at IPPR, "The UK is in an investment and growth doom loop. Chronic under-investment, public and private, is delivering stagnating growth and a struggling economy."⁸⁶



⁸⁰ "Why Has the UK Missed out on a Trade Boom?" 2022. Deloitte United Kingdom. May 4, 2022. <https://www2.deloitte.com/uk/en/pages/tax/articles/why-has-the-uk-missed-out-on-a-trade-boom.html>.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² David Dharshini. 2023. "What Impact Has Brexit Had on the UK Economy?" BBC News, 2023, sec. Business. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-64450882>.

⁸³ Jonathan Portes. 2023. "The Impact of Brexit on the UK Economy: Reviewing the Evidence." CEPR. July 7, 2023. <https://cepr.org/voxeu/columns/impact-brexit-uk-economy-reviewing-evidence>.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ CNBC. 2023. "UK Economy in Growth 'Doom Loop' as Business Investment Slumps Versus G7 Peers, Think Tank Says," June 22, 2023. <https://www.cnbc.com/2023/06/20/uk-economy-in-growth-doom-loop-as-investment-slumps-versus-g7-peers.html>.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

(d) Policy Responses: In response to the slowing economy, the Government and the House of Commons have few options. Alongside calls for building more houses, increasing public sector investment in health, and reforming education by spending more on research and development, calls for the wealthy to pay a one-time windfall tax have gained traction. In 2021, the independent Wealth Tax Commission recommended the Government introduce a one-time 1% wealth tax on households with more than GBP 1 Billion, which could help fund the National Health Service (NHS) and help the construction of affordable homes.⁸⁷

The idea has gained popularity, with the number of billionaires in the UK rising sharply from 147 in 2020 to 171 in 2023, possessing an average wealth of GBP 4 Billion. Another option is to fast-track current Free Trade Agreements in the works with emerging market partners in Asia, building upon recent FTAs with New Zealand and Australia.⁸⁸ Further opportunity for directing public investment lies in transforming the UK into a green economy, with an estimated GBP 1.4 Trillion required to reach net zero. This would require vast investment into transport, public infrastructure, energy, and manufacturing.⁸⁹

Climate Change

Climate change, environmental degradation and depletion of natural resources and ecosystems pose an existential threat to human civilization. The effects of climate change are already visible in the UK and worldwide, with the frequency of extreme weather events such as floods, heatwaves and droughts increasing across the board. The main cause behind the warming planet and climate change remains human activity and increasing greenhouse gas emissions.

⁸⁷ Rupert Neate, and Rupert Neate Wealth correspondent. 2023. "2% Tax on UK Rich List Families 'Could Raise £22bn a Year.'" The Guardian, May 29, 2023, sec. News. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2023/may/29/2-tax-uk-rich-list-families-raise-22bn-year-reform-inequality>.

⁸⁸ David Dharshini. 2023. "What Impact Has Brexit Had on the UK Economy?" BBC News, 2023, sec. Business. <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-64450882>.

⁸⁹ Joe Shute. 2021. "The Honest Green Guide: What 'Net Zero' Will Really Cost You." The Telegraph, October 23, 2021. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2021/10/23/honest-green-guide-net-zero-will-really-cost/>.

The UK is a contributor to climate change, emitting 417 million tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent in 2021, and the average carbon footprint is 10 tonnes per person, nearly double the global average.⁹⁰ The UK has set ambitious targets to tackle the problem; the government has committed to reducing emissions by 50% of 1990 levels by 2025 and achieving net zero emissions by 2050.⁹¹

A question left to be addressed in the UK's climate strategy is whether to pursue the goal of eliminating greenhouse emissions or follow a net zero emissions strategy. In the latter case, a net zero plan does not mean a country cannot emit greenhouse gases. In essence, emissions generated should not exceed the amount absorbed by carbon sinks. Carbon sinks absorb more greenhouse gases than they emit and include forests, oceans and developing climate technology such as artificial carbon capture systems.

In addition, as a part of its commitments under the 2015 Paris Agreement, emissions will be reduced by 68%. While the UK has made considerable progress, with emissions falling by 45% compared to 1990 levels and coal at its lowest use since 1757, a recent report reveals the UK is now lagging on its climate commitments.⁹² The Climate Change Committee (CCC), an independent body, set up to advise the Government on policies led by Lord Deben, revealed the UK would miss the 68% reduction target in 2030. "If you pass laws in order to do something and then don't provide the means, then you're failing," he told the BBC in a scathing statement.⁹³ The latest national plan – National Adaptation Programme – known as NAP3, has been called out as lacking in ambition and accused of merely repeating projects announced 2 years ago.⁹⁴

The four largest contributors to greenhouse gas in Britain are as follows: Consumer expenditure (26%), Energy (16.9%), Manufacturing (16.9%) and Transport (16.8%).⁹⁵

⁹⁰ "UK Average Footprint." n.d. [www.carbonindependent.org](https://www.carbonindependent.org/23.html). <https://www.carbonindependent.org/23.html>

⁹¹ BBC News. 2023. "Climate Change Committee Says UK No Longer a World Leader," June 27, 2023, sec. Science & Environment. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-66032607>.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ "Government's Plan to Adapt UK to Impacts of Climate Change 'Deeply Disappointing.'" n.d. Sky News. Accessed August 8, 2023. <https://news.sky.com/story/governments-plan-to-adapt-uk-to-impacts-of-climate-change-deeply-disappointing-12922588>.

⁹⁵ Office for National Statistics. 2022. "UK Environmental Accounts - Office for National Statistics." www.ons.gov.uk. June 9, 2022. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/bulletins/ukenvironmentalaccounts/2022>.

(a) Renewable Energy: For the first time, in Q1 2023, the primary source of electricity in the UK was renewable energy at 42%, followed by fossil fuel sources like coal and gas at 33%.⁹⁶ However, progress moving forward could be slow, with energy projects facing delays in connecting to the National Grid, primarily due to technological hurdles and lack of capacity. Octopus Energy, one of the largest investors in renewable energy, told the BBC that they'd been asked to wait for 15 years to wait for a connection to the national grid.⁹⁷ Additionally, the Government lacks an overall long-term strategy to decarbonize, and it is estimated nearly five times more solar energy plants and four times more wind farms would be required to meet current targets. The private sector firms have called on the Government to speed up the process, calling for more investments in energy infrastructure to avoid delays, and stops to future projects.⁹⁸ Another aspect is nuclear energy; although the UK has committed to approve 8 new nuclear energy reactors by 2030, nearly half of the current 11 nuclear reactors will retire by 2025 with no immediate replacement. This is particularly concerning, given that nuclear power generates 15% of the UK's electricity.⁹⁹

(b) Transportation & Electric Vehicles: In 2020, PM Boris Johnson unveiled a new policy to tackle climate change - the selling of all petrol and diesel vehicles would be banned by 2035.¹⁰⁰ After this, people would be only able to purchase either hydrogen or electric vehicles.¹⁰¹ However, many are not satisfied, with the Green Party calling for the ban to be brought forward to 2030, as the current target would mean petrol and diesel vehicles would be on the road till at least 2050.

⁹⁶ Esme Stallard. 2023. "Wind Is the Main Source of UK Electricity for the First Time." BBC News, May 11, 2023, sec. Science & Environment. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-65557469>.

⁹⁷ BBC News. 2023a. "Renewable Energy Projects Worth Billions Stuck on Hold," May 10, 2023, sec. Science & Environment. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-65500339>

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ "New Parliamentary Probe into UK's Nuclear Power Strategy." 2022. UK Parliament . Committees. July 19, 2022. <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/135/science-and-technology-committee/news/172212/new-parliamentary-probe-into-uks-nuclear-power-strategy/>.

¹⁰⁰ BBC News. 2020a. "Ban on Petrol and Diesel Car Sales Brought Forward," February 4, 2020, sec. Science & Environment. <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-51366123>.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

Moreover, the key challenge remains - the widespread adoption of electric vehicles. Currently, EVs account for 32% of all new car registrations in the UK in 2022.¹⁰² The main problems faced in the transition to EVs are the need for more chargers, affordability, and battery production. There is a vast disparity in the number of EV chargers in the UK, with just 3% of chargers located in the relatively poorer North of the country compared to 31% in prosperous Greater London itself.¹⁰³

This divide lays bare income inequalities, with low-income households unable to shift to EVs. Thus there is a great need for EVs to be more affordable, which could be achieved through greater subsidies for EVs in rural and poor regions, access to financing options, and the development of a second-hand EV market. Widespread adoption of EVs and ensuring equitable access are beyond essential to achieve the UK's climate goals.

A looming threat to Britain's EV industry is that from 2024, as under the TCA, 10% tariffs would be applicable on EV trade across the two blocs if 45% of the total value of the EV does not originate in either the UK or the EU.¹⁰⁴ Currently, all EV batteries are sourced from Asia, specifically China, therefore ruling out the possibility of producing EVs locally in the short term.¹⁰⁵ This could see a rise in costs for both British and EU automakers, and the possibility of production cuts, as petrol cars would be cheaper than EVs even after subsidies if the tariff goes ahead. Stellantis, a multinational car giant, which is responsible for 14 brands, including Vauxhall and Jeep, warned the UK Government that it might have to close operations in Britain with the loss of thousands of jobs if the new 45% rule of origin came into force in 2024.¹⁰⁶ European carmakers such as Citroen warn that this rule could lead to a cost escalation of EUR 4.3 Billion over the next 3 years.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² Eskarina, and Ley. 2023. "UK Transport Sector: Achieving Net Zero Emissions by 2050." Open Access Government. March 1, 2023. <https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/uk-transport-sector-achieving-net-zero-emissions-2050/15399>

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Lisa O'Carroll. 2023. "EU Exports of Electric Cars to UK Put at Risk by Brexit Trade Deal." The Guardian, June 18, 2023, sec. Politics. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/jun/18/eu-exports-of-electric-cars-to-uk-put-at-risk-by-brexit-trade-deal>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

(c) Looming Impact of Brexit: After the UK's exit in 2021, nearly all of the EU's environmental laws, which the UK was under obligation to follow when it was a member, were simply rolled over into UK law. Under the REUL (Retained EU Laws) Bill, most of the EU laws were retained in the UK, their inclusion to be deliberated on a later date, which now stands on December 2023. It is estimated nearly 80% of the UK's environmental laws are those of the EU.¹⁰⁸

Already as many environmentalists feared, the UK has started to set lower targets than the EU and dilute laws: the recent air pollution targets set out in the 2023 Environment Improvement Plan are less ambitious than the ones mandated by the EU.¹⁰⁹ The recent UK regulations on the misuse of harmful chemicals in the environment by industries have also been criticized as lacking compared to earlier ones under the EU. While the Government has promised to come out with a new Chemical Policy in 2023, its progress seems to be stalling.¹¹⁰

More pressingly, nearly 570 EU environment laws on species and habitat protection, air pollution, and food standards would expire under the REUL law unless the Government actively chooses to keep them. The Office for Environment Protection and activists have already called on the Government to move the 2023 deadline to study the laws more closely.¹¹¹

(d) Party Positions:

i. Conservative Party: Historically, the Tories have been a champion of climate; however, over the past decade, its policies and commitments have been watered down. In fact, in 2016, then PM Theresa May dissolved the Department of Energy and Climate Change. Zac Goldsmith, the Environment Minister, resigned in June 2023, stating that the Government does not care about the environment.¹¹² Since last year, 100 new licences for oil drills in the North Sea have been approved, along with a GBP 165 million coal mine.¹¹³

¹⁰⁸ "What Does the Brexit Deal Mean for Our Environment?" n.d. Friends of the Earth. <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/system-change/what-does-brexit-deal-mean-our-environment>.

¹⁰⁹ "Has Brexit Made the UK Greener?" 2023. The Eco Experts. April 20, 2023. <https://www.theecoexperts.co.uk/blog/has-brexit-made-the-uk-greener>.

¹¹⁰ Politico Europe. 2023. "A Post-Brexit Regulatory 'Bonfire' Could Scorch UK Environmental Protections," February 18, 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/post-brexit-regulation-uk-environmental-protection-eu/>.

¹¹¹ Matt Mace. n.d. "Bonfire of Retained EU Environmental Laws Could Deliver £82bn Blow to the UK - Edie." <https://www.edie.net/>. Accessed August 8, 2023. <https://www.edie.net/bonfire-of-retained-eu-environmental-laws-could-deliver-82bn-blow-to-the-uk/>.

¹¹² Nimo Omer. 2023. "Thursday Briefing: How the Conservatives Went from 'Greenest Government Ever' to Giving up on Climate." The Guardian, July 6, 2023, sec. World news. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/06/first-edition-conservative-party-climate-crisis>.

¹¹³ Ibid.

ii. Labour Party: In June 2023, Labour revealed its ambitious Green Prosperity Plan, which includes the establishment of 'Great British Energy', a publicly owned clean energy company, a Clean Air Act, and a ban on new oil projects in the North Sea. Despite this, the Party did waver on its commitment to invest GBP 28 Billion in green energy projects, stating it would delay the plan to the second half of its would-be Government post the 2024 elections due to rising interest rates.¹¹⁴

(e) Questions to Consider:

- i. How can the UK get back on track to meet the 68% UK reduction target?
- ii. Which energy technologies should the UK invest in that are economically viable and sustainable? Are carbon capture technologies viable?
- iii. What should be the focus of the UK's climate policy - net zero emissions of greenhouse emissions be eliminated to the greatest extent possible? Should EU laws be allowed to continue, or the UK come up with its own?
- iv. How can EV's accessibility & affordability be ensured?
- v. Should Carbon Taxes be raised to pay for green energy projects?

¹¹⁴ "Labour Targets Wind Power and Planning as It Unveils Green Plan." 2023. POLITICO. June 18, 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/labour-targets-wind-power-and-planning-as-it-unveils-green-plan/>.

Current State of Affairs:

Referendum to Rejoin

It is now clear that UK Politics has been in a state of paralysis since the 2016 referendum, within a state of paralysis since 2016, with conflicts seen across and within party lines as well. Many now admit that Brexit did not deliver as intended, whether that be on the economy, migration, control and deregulation, and public support for rejoining the EU is at an all-time high at 58%.¹¹⁵ Support for rejoining had been building up steadily since 2019, when a petition to rejoin garnered 5.8 million signatures, triggering a debate in Parliament. The petition was junked at that time, stating the UK had already committed to leave.¹¹⁶

What's happening now? Here's your Opening Crisis!

Recently, another petition demanding to reverse the irreparable damage of Brexit and seeking to rejoin the EU with 10 million signatures came to Parliament. Already, pollsters had shown that nearly 2/3rd of the UK public now supported a second referendum on Brexit.¹¹⁷

The Conservative Party took everyone by surprise as they admitted the petition, and in response declared another advisory referendum would take place in a span of 4 weeks. This declaration allowed limited time for parties to campaign and truly reflect public opinion on Brexit. The flabbergasted Labour Party and SNP readily agreed to the referendum.

¹¹⁵ Jon Henley, and Michael Goodier. 2023. "Britons Who Want to Rejoin EU at Highest Levels since 2016, Survey Finds." The Guardian, June 23, 2023, sec. Politics. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2023/jun/23/britons-who-want-to-rejoin-eu-at-highest-since-2016-survey-finds>.

¹¹⁶ Deutsche Welle (www.dw.com). 2019. "Stop Brexit: Millions Sign Petition to British Government | DW | 23.03.2019." DW.COM. 2019. <https://www.dw.com/en/stop-brexit-millions-sign-petition-to-british-government/a-48023457>.

¹¹⁷ Kate Devlin. 2023. "Two-Thirds of Britons Now Support the Future Referendum on Rejoining the EU after Brexit." The Independent. January 1, 2023. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-poll-referendum-rejoin-eu-b2250813.html>

It is suspected that the Conservative Party had agreed to a referendum in light of recent polls that Labour was leading in the next General Election 2024 by 20 points. In order to cement their position and lacking other policy agendas, the Tories decided to float an advisory referendum on Brexit, which could lead to greater support for the Party among Remain voters and pressurize other parties to make a clear stand on Brexit. PM Rishi Sunak, announcing the Referendum, stated that while the Conservative Party had worked to deliver on Brexit, the leadership is practical and in touch with voter demands on a second referendum and would move ahead to chart a future path post the Referendum results.

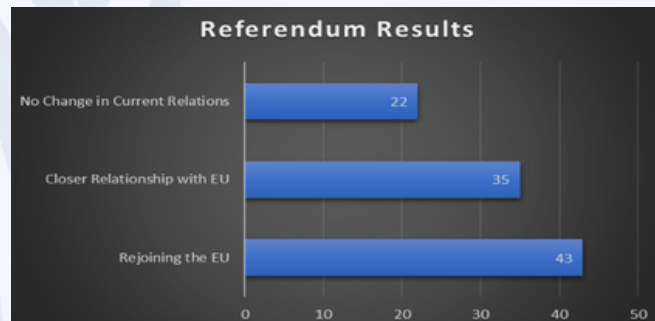
This time, instead of the classic Leave or Remain option as in the 2016 polls, voters were given a broader three-way choice: Maintain the current status quo, seek closer relations with the EU by only joining the Single Market, not the EU at large, or Rejoin the European Union.

Results:

Rejoin the EU: 43%

Closer Relations: 35%

No Change: 22%¹¹⁹



The results this time were not shocking, yet they led to more political confusion over Brexit; what would the House of Commons and political parties do now?

It must be noted that the Advisory Referendum was not legally binding. Therefore, the HOC has 3 options in front of them - Maintain the status quo, seek closer relations with the EU on a Norway-like pattern, and completely reverse Brexit to Rejoin the EU. Will you fulfil your constituents’ desires or forge a different path altogether....

¹¹⁹ These numbers are based on actual estimates collected by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. The complete findings can be found [here](https://www.institute.global): “Moving Forward: The Path to a Better Post-Brexit Relationship between the UK and the EU.” n.d. Www.institute.global. Tony Blair Institute for Global Change. Accessed August 8, 2023. <https://www.institute.global/insights/geopolitics-and-security/moving-forward-path-to-better-post-brexit-relationship-between-uk-eu>.

Party Stances

Conservative Party:

In 2019, Boris Johnson led the Tories to the largest electoral victory since Margaret Thatcher in 1987, on the slogan “Get Brexit Done.”¹²⁰ Unfortunately, a lot has changed since then. After losing 2 Prime Ministers in quick succession and public support for Brexit at an all-time low, many are now questioning what the Party actually stands for. Still, the fact remains that the Conservative Party voter base is largely driven by Brexiteers, with a recent poll stating that only 8% of Tory voters would like to rejoin the EU, compared to 63% who want to stay out.¹²¹ Additionally, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has been a Brexiteer from the start, breaking away from David Cameron to support the Leave Campaign in 2016. Even in December 2022, he ruled out seeking closer relations with the EU.¹²² Despite riding on a historic mandate to “Get Brexit Done”, the Party has many disagreements and factions, with a Left to Moderate Tory wing at loggerheads with the hardline pro-Brexit European Research Group. Recently, Senior Tory MP Tobias Ellwood came under fire for suggesting that Brexit was a mistake and revealing that privately many MPs seek a Norway-style agreement with the EU but are afraid of saying so.¹²³ Could diminishing electoral prospects and public support for the EU in the referendum make the Conservative Party pivot and adopt a softer approach, or stick to their principle Pro-Brexit Agenda?

¹²⁰ Billy Perrigo. 2019. “‘Get Brexit Done.’ The Slogan That Won Britain’s Election.” Time. December 13, 2019. <https://time.com/5749478/get-brexit-done-slogan-uk-election/>

¹²¹ UK Thinks. “Brexit and Party Support: Looking through a Different Lens.” What the UK Thinks: EU. <https://www.whatukthinks.org/eu/2023/02/03/brexit-and-party-support-looking-through-a-different-lens/>.

¹²² Henry Hill. 2022. “Here’s Why Tories Are Raging Again over Brexit – They Really Don’t Trust Rishi Sunak.” The Guardian, November 23, 2022, sec. Opinion. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/nov/23/tories-brexit-rishi-sunak-swiss-style-deal-eu-brexiteer>.

¹²³ Aubrey Allegretti Political correspondent. 2022. “Tory MP Sparks Brexiter Backlash with Call to Rejoin EU Single Market.” The Guardian, June 2, 2022, sec. Politics. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jun/02/tory-mp-brexiter-backlash-call-rejoin-eu-single-market-tobias-ellwood>.

Labour Party:

If the Tories are conflicted between a hardline or softer approach, Labour stands confused between seeking closer relations with the EU or outright calls to rejoin. Previous Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn campaigned to Remain in the EU in 2016, and in the 2019 General Elections, promised to hold a second referendum on Brexit, with an open option to rejoining the EU.¹²⁴ After the disastrous 2019 election results, the Labour leadership under Sir Keir Starmer made it clear that the Party would not seek to rejoin in the foreseeable future but rather seek closer ties and deepen the 'special relationship' between the UK and the EU. Again, Sir Keir Starmer presides over a divided house, with many pro-EU members criticizing the Party's reversal on Brexit. Most prominently, London Mayor & Labour leader Sadiq Khan told the BBC that he disagreed with the Party's stand on Brexit, explicitly stating, "The country's future is best served by being members of the single market."¹²⁵ Shadow Minister Anna McMorrin privately expressed that she hoped the UK would return to the EU single market under Labour.¹²⁶ Moreover, with public support for rejoining the EU rising, political analysts and Remain voters have criticized Labour's timid approach, stating that Labour could reap much more electoral dividends by calling for rejoining the EU single market than trying to 'make Brexit work'. A recent poll affirms this, with a full 26% of people who voted Labour in 2019 said they would be more likely to vote Liberal Democrat if they endorsed free movement and single market membership.¹²⁷ In the face of the results of the recent referendum, it remains to be seen whether the Labour Party will overcome its internal divisions and devise a coherent policy on Brexit.¹²⁸

Scottish National Party:

The SNP has perhaps the most consistent policy on Brexit, which is helped by the fact that 63% of Scotland voted to Remain in the EU. Since 2016, SNP has called for a second referendum on Brexit and firmly believes that EU membership is the best option for Scottish interests.¹²⁹ SNP Leader & First Minister Humza Yousaf has tied the demand for Scottish Independence with Brexit, stating that the UK has ignored Scotland's vote to remain.¹³⁰ In light of the recent referendum, the SNP is likely to further cement its current stand to rejoin.

¹²⁴ BBC News. 2022a. "Brexit: No Case for UK Returning to EU, Labour Leader Starmer Says," July 4, 2022, sec. UK Politics. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-62034754>.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ "Labour in Danger of Losing Votes for Being Too Pro-Brexit, Top Pollster Warns." 2023. The Independent. May 31, 2023.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-brexit-keir-starmer-poll-b2347833.html>.

¹²⁸ William Keegan. 2023. "Even Farage Says Brexit Has Failed. Why Won't Starmer?" The Guardian, May 28, 2023, sec. Business.

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/may/28/even-farage-says-brexit-has-failed-why-wont-starmer>.

¹²⁹ "What Is the SNP's Position on Rejoining the EU?" 2015. Scottish National Party. November 25, 2015. <https://www.snp.org/policies/pb-what-is-the-snp-s-position-on-rejoining-the-eu/>.

¹³⁰ BBC News. 2023c. "SNP Want Indyref2 Soon after UK Election - Humza Yousaf," June 25, 2023, sec. Scotland politics. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-66012834>.

Liberal Democrats:

The Lib Dems have remained one of the staunchest anti-Brexit parties, with the Party adopting a Stop-Brexit policy in the 2019 elections.¹³¹ However, after the election debacle, it has adopted a more cautious stance; while reaffirming to ultimately rejoin the EU, the Party has not created a roadmap for this. This was on display as Party Leader Sir Ed Davey, while promising to repair the UK's broken relationship with the EU, refused to explicitly state in an interview that the Lib Dems would campaign on rejoining the EU.¹³²

Democratic Unionist Party:

The DUP actively supported the Vote Leave campaign in 2016, under the presumption that leaving would result in closer union with the rest of Britain.¹³³ However, now many are calling the Party's stand a seismic error, with Northern Ireland bearing the brunt of the fallout from Brexit, with additional border checks even for goods coming in from the UK under the NI Protocol.¹³⁴ The DUP is yet to clear its stand on the recently negotiated Windsor Framework or a timeline to return to the Regional Assembly. Thus, it remains to be seen where the DUP stands after the referendum.

Sinn Fein:

The Irish Nationalist Party in Parliament, Sinn Fein, had long opposed Brexit, pointing out that the whole process could have implications for the peace process and Good Friday Agreement. In contrast to other parties, Sinn Fein has a unique position on Brexit, arguing that NI be given a special status within the EU and UK, allowing the whole island, that would be the Republic of Ireland, and Northern Ireland to remain within the EU, even as the rest of the UK stays out.¹³⁵

¹³¹ "Lib Dems Pledge to Revoke Brexit without Referendum." 2019. The Guardian. September 15, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2019/sep/15/lib-dems-pledge-to-revoke-brexit-without-referendum>.

¹³² "Lib Dem Leader in Fiery TV Clash with Ed Balls over Brexit." 2023. The Independent. May 13, 2023. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-gmb-ed-balls-lib-dems-davey-b2336118.html>.

¹³³ Dr Jamie Pow. 2021. "The DUP and the Protocol." UK in a Changing Europe. February 10, 2021. <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/the-dup-and-the-protocol/>.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ "Sinn Fein on Brexit." n.d. www.sinnfein.ie. <https://www.sinnfein.ie/brexit>.

Options for the HOC

1. Maintain Current Relationship with the EU

The most unpopular option of the three in the referendum was to continue the UK's relationship with the EU in its current form. This would mean that the TCA would be the only legal framework between the two for the foreseeable future, along with the Northern Ireland Protocol. Even so, many hurdles are set to arise in the TCA & NI moving forward, some of which are—

- **Rules of Origin:** As detailed under the TCA review and Climate Change section of the Background Guide, a higher proportion of EV components would need to be manufactured in the UK and EU to avoid 10% tariffs starting in 2024.¹³⁶
- **Personal Data Storage:** Many businesses store customer and client data in offshore servers, and from June 2025, the free exchange of data would expire. This essentially means it would be harder for firms to store data related to EU citizens in UK servers and vice versa,¹³⁷ which could cost companies millions of pounds each year. The EU fears the UK could diverge from its regulations on data and privacy post-2025, halting sharing of data.¹³⁸
- Cooperation on energy production and sharing and fisheries trade expire in 2026.¹³⁹
- The DUP is yet to agree on the Windsor Framework.

This is in addition to all the benefits the UK lost access to, such as recognition of professional qualifications, as detailed in the Post Brexit EU-UK relations section of the Background Guide.

¹³⁶ Lisa O'Carroll, and Jasper Jolly. 2023. "Why Are Leading Carmakers Urging UK to Overhaul Brexit Deal?" The Guardian, May 17, 2023, sec. Business. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/may/17/why-is-a-leading-carmaker-urging-uk-to-overhaul-brexit-deal-stellantis>.

¹³⁷ "The Three Deaths of EU-UK Data Adequacy." n.d. Centre for European Reform. Accessed August 8, 2023. <https://www.cer.eu/insights/three-deaths-eu-uk-data-adequacy>.

¹³⁸ "Where next for UK-EU Relations?" 2023b. British Politics and Policy at LSE. May 15, 2023. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/where-next-for-uk-eu-relations/>

¹³⁹ Ibid.

2. Closer Relations with the EU

The path forward to closer relations with the EU has three major components— Either the UK could negotiate and better the TCA by including key provisions or follow the Norway-EU relations model or a Switzerland-EU model. Having already talked of the TCA, the other two models could look like this—

- **Norway/EEA Model:** While Norway isn't an EU member state, it is a part of the European Economic Area (EEA), meaning it has full access to the EU single market: allowing the free movement of goods, services, people, and capital without any barriers. Norway is a part of the larger European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA), which includes Iceland and Liechtenstein, which also enjoy access to the single market.¹⁴⁰

A less desirable aspect of this deal is that, in return, Norway has to implement all EU regulations relating to the single market, and has no voting rights, thereby no power in how rules are drafted. This could be a sticky point since one of the major pushes behind the referendum in 2016 was that the UK would not cede more power to the EU in Brussels.¹⁴¹ Still, Norway has significant freedoms; it is exempt from the European pillars or policies on Justice, Home Affairs, Agriculture and Fisheries.¹⁴²

- **Switzerland Model:** The Swiss model is a bit more complex and painstaking to emulate, as the relationship is based on 120 bilateral agreements between the two parties, which have been in the works since 1992.¹⁴³ In this, Switzerland does not have full access to the EU single market, but only areas which have been included in the agreements. Crucially, this does not include services, and financial services is one of the important constituents of the UK economy.¹⁴⁴ Similar to Norway, Switzerland does not have a seat at the voting table in the EU.

¹⁴⁰ Chris Morris. 2018. "Reality Check: What Is the Norway Model?" BBC News, October 30, 2018, sec. UK. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-46024649>.

¹⁴¹ "The Model for Brexit - Is It Norway, Switzerland, Ukraine, Turkey or Canada?" 2018. Gide Loyrette Nouel. February 26, 2018. <https://www.gide.com/en/news/the-model-for-brexit-is-it-norway-switzerland-ukraine-turkey-or-canada>.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ "Brexit: Who Wants a Swiss-Style EU Deal and What Would It Look Like?" 2022. The Guardian. November 20, 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/nov/20/brexit-who-wants-a-swiss-style-eu-deal-and-what-would-it-look-like>.

¹⁴⁴ Damien Gayle. 2015. "The Norway Option: What Is It and What Does It Mean for Britain?" The Guardian, October 28, 2015, sec. Politics. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2015/oct/28/the-norway-option-what-is-it-and-what-does-it-mean-for-britain>.

3. Rejoining the EU

By far the most popular option today, 43% of the UK wants to rejoin the EU. Not only would this, in effect, solve the Northern Ireland and Scotland problem, but even rejuvenate the UK economy. However, the UK would lose control of migration, which could be a concern in the coming years due to migration induced by climate change. There are additional hurdles as well, namely negotiating with the EU, the Eurozone and the issue of joint European Debt.

In the EU, only 7 members out of the 27 have yet to adopt the Euro as the common currency, but Bulgaria and Romania plan to do so soon.¹⁴⁵ Currently, the EU does not mandate countries to adopt the Euro, but this could change in the coming years. In this case, if the UK rejoins, it could see the possibility of having to adopt the Euro and be a part of the Eurozone in the future. This would contradict the UK's position of opting out of the Euro as early as 2001, and the Eurozone Debt Crisis was one of the primary reasons behind the UK voting to leave.¹⁴⁶

In the case of the mechanism to rejoin the EU, the UK would have to reapply as a third country under Article 49 of the European Union Treaty.¹⁴⁷ It would also need to meet the Copenhagen Criteria for joining - namely alignment with EU values, a functioning market economy and political stability guaranteeing democracy and the rule of law.

Since the UK was a member state 7 years ago, there should be no problems satisfying the criteria. Former EU chief negotiator for the UK Withdrawal Agreement and the TCA, Micheal Barnier, as recently as February 2023, stated the door for the UK to rejoin the EU 'remains open.'¹⁴⁸ With no legal hurdles left, there is only one question - is there enough political will to rejoin?

¹⁴⁵ Shobhit Seth. 2019. "Why These European Countries Don't Use the Euro." Investopedia. 2019.

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/investing/050515/why-these-european-countries-dont-use-euro.asp>.

¹⁴⁶ "Public Support Is on the Rise but the Road to Re-Joining the EU Would Not Be Smooth." 2023. British Politics and Policy at LSE. January 31, 2023. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/public-support-is-on-the-rise-but-the-road-to-re-joining-the-eu-would-not-be-smooth/>.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Soraya Ebrahimi. 2023. "Door Remains Open for UK to Rejoin EU, Says Former Brexit Negotiator Barnier." The National. February 1, 2023. <https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/uk-news/2023/02/01/door-remains-open-for-uk-to-rejoin-eu-says-former-brexit-negotiator-barnier/>.

Questions to Consider

1. What has been the overall impact of Brexit on the UK, in terms of the economy, political stability, and the cohesion of the Union?
2. Did the UK reap the benefits of Brexit? For example, has there been any gain from relatively newfound freedom to form its own laws and pursue economic relations with the world, such as Free Trade Agreements?
3. Is the current course of UK-EU relations in the form of the TCA beneficial?
4. In light of the recent referendum results, what course of action should the UK take?
5. Would it be better to move slowly and amend the TCA, join the EFTA like Norway & Switzerland models, or directly move to rejoin the EU in line with public wishes?
6. Is there a case to be made that the UK can still be better off outside the EU?
7. In the event, the UK chooses to rejoin the EU, what should be the policy on joint EU debt and joining the Eurozone?
8. How will you reconcile and compromise across political divisions and party lines, to produce an outcome that would satisfy the public and lead to a bright future for the UK?

When choosing which option you will advocate for, consider your party's stance as well as your constituents' wishes! Consider how the Key Issues (NI, Scotland, Economy, and Climate Change) affect your constituents and decide accordingly.

Committee Mechanics

1. Question Time: Right after the preliminary proceedings, MPs have the opportunity to question Government Ministers about the functioning of their department or other affairs relating to their position.

2. PMQs: The Prime Minister is liable to answer questions from MPs in the House of Commons, and usually, the Speaker will call on the Leader of the Opposition, who is permitted to ask 6 questions, followed by the leader of the second largest opposition party, who may ask 2 questions.

3. Writing Bills: In the House of Commons, delegates will write and present bills on the agenda and pass them into laws instead of UN resolutions. MPs may collaborate within their party or across party lines to form blocs and collaborate in writing a bill. A template will be provided during the first committee session for you to use while drafting bills throughout the conference.

Importantly, there is no restraint on the presentation of two or more bills relating to the same subject. Therefore, delegates can form multiple blocs, and each can introduce its bill in the chamber.¹⁴⁹ MPs who are the main contributors to the Bill would be known as Sponsors, and other MPs who strongly support the bill as Signatories.

4. Presenting the Bills¹⁵⁰: It is now time for the bill to be presented in the committee. In the First Reading, the main contributors, that is, Sponsors, of the bill would be asked to explain the bill's key provisions. The next stage would be the Second Reading, where all MPs can present their opinions and debate the bill. This includes giving speeches, discussing clauses, and questioning the sponsors.

¹⁴⁹ "Bills with the Same Purpose as Other Bills of the Same Session." n.d. UK Parliament . Parliamentary Law.

<https://erskinemay.parliament.uk/section/5244/bills-with-the-same-purpose-as-other-bills-of-the-same-session>.

¹⁵⁰ UK Parliament. 2019. "First Reading (Commons)." UK Parliament. 2019. <https://www.parliament.uk/about/how/laws/passage-bill/commons/coms-commons-first-reading/>

5. Voting Procedure¹⁵¹: After the Second Reading, the bill is put to the vote, which decides whether the Bill will proceed further to the Committee Stage, where MPs can present any proposed amendments to the clauses (proposals for change in clauses, provisions etc.). Once the Committee Stage is complete, the amended bill is put to a final vote.

Bills in the House of Commons require a simple majority to pass. To cast their vote, MPs are asked to call out in favour of ‘aye’ or against ‘no’ the bill. If one side is clearly louder than the other, the Speaker declares that the ‘ayes’ or ‘noes’ have it. However, if it is unclear, then a ‘division’, in other words, a formal vote, takes place. In case of a tie, the Speaker has the discretion to cast the tiebreaker vote.

6. House of Lords & Royal Assent: Once the bill is passed in the House of Commons, it is sent to the House of Lords, which follows a similar parliamentary structure. If the House of Lords differs on the bill, it is again sent back to the Commons for consideration. It is important to note that both Houses must agree to the exact wording of the bill. In the rare scenario when both Houses fail to come to an agreement, the bill falls. When the bill passes all the stages and both Houses agree to it, one final step remains - Royal Assent. The Monarch of the UK has to agree with the bill for it to be converted into an Act of Parliament.

7. Petitions to Parliament¹⁵²: If a petition with 100,000 signatures reaches Parliament, the House is under obligation to consider it for debate. However, it is not mandatory for the Parliament to take any action.

If you’re a little confused by all this jargon, don’t worry! We recognize that the UK Parliamentary format can be a bit difficult to grasp, and is different from what you are used to in other UN committees. The dais will go through the specific rules of procedure in committee in detail, and solve any other questions and concerns. In case of any other doubts feel free to email us at

hoc@utmun.org

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid.

Key Resources:

Below are some of the most comprehensive resources on the TCA, UK Economy and future EU-UK relations. While it is recommended to go through each of these in detail, if you are unable to do so, it'd still be highly beneficial to read them in brief to gain a deeper understanding of the entire agenda.

Detailed Information on the TCA:

1. *The TCA Proposals for Reform: British Chambers of Commerce*
2. *What does the Brexit deal mean? - UK in a changing Europe*

UK Economy:

1. *Is Brexit responsible for the UK's economic woes? | Event | PIIIE*
2. *Brexit: Winners and Losers*

Climate Change:

1. *London School of Economics: What will climate change cost the UK?*
2. *UK Climate Change Committee Reports & Findings*

Exploring the Future of EU-UK Relations

1. *Where next? the future of the UK-EU relationship*
2. *Moving Forward: The Path to a Better Post-Brexit Relationship Between the UK and the EU*

About the House of Commons

1. *House of Commons - UK Parliament*
2. *How does a bill starting in the House of Commons become a law?*

Tips for Research:

1. Read the background guide!

- While we unanimously agree it can be an intimidating document, it is ultimately a resource that helps you and gets you started. The more you relate your work to the background guide, the more on track you will be to making productive working papers and speeches!

2. Use credible sources when researching and cite your sources!

- We will be checking! Credible sources include scholarly articles, peer-reviewed papers, anecdotal work, UN/HOC/EU documents and resolutions, legal frameworks and legislations, etc. Do not feel limited by what you can and cannot research, but ensure that they are trustworthy and accurate! If you're not sure, email us and ask!

3. Position papers should be no more than two pages.

- Be concise when outlining your country's position.

4. Adhere to your character's policy in your position paper and in debate.

- You are representing a unique Member of Parliament with their own priorities and political ideologies. At the same time, you belong to a political party, so keep your party's stance in mind. The more you stay true to your character, party, and constituency's desires, the more productive and healthy debate will follow. As such, be careful who you form blocs with – they might disagree and that is okay!

5. Always keep equity in mind!

- We are dealing with some sensitive topics, so please be mindful about how you approach your country's political stance, even if it is relatively controversial. UTMUN strives to ensure the comfort of all Delegates, and you play a large part in that!

6. Engagement is key!!

- Model UN is only exciting when you talk, pass notes, form blocs, participate in writing bills, debate, etc. As intriguing as the topics may be, we still rely on you to make the conference lively, don't let us down!

8. Trust your dais.

- We are experienced and heavily-trained Model UN staff. If there is anything we can do, during the conference or otherwise, please let us know! If you are new to Model UN, please reach out to us and let us know how we can improve your UTMUN experience.

Do not hesitate to seek clarification! Please feel free to reach out to brexit@utmun.org with any questions about these tips, the background guide content, or anything else relating to the conference :)

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