**Britain’s entry into the EEC**

*Вступление*

The United Kingdom (which also included Gibraltar) was a member state of the European Union (EU) and of its predecessor the European Communities (EC) - principally the European Economic Community (EEC) from 1 January 1973 until 31 January 2020. Since the foundation of the EEC, the UK had been an important neighbour and then leading member state, until Brexit ended 47 years (17,196 days) of membership.

Ten West European nations (not including West Germany) created the Council of Europe in 1949, the first step towards political co-operation between them, but some countries wanted to go further. The 1951 Treaty of Paris created the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which began to unite European countries economically and politically in order to secure lasting peace, after two world wars. The six founding countries were Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. In 1957, building on the success of the Coal and Steel Treaty, the six ECSC countries expanded co-operation to other economic sectors. They signed the Treaty of Rome, creating the European Economic Community (EEC), or 'Common Market'. The idea was for people, goods and services to be able to move freely across borders.

The UK was not a signatory of the three original treaties that were incorporated into what was then the European Communities, including the best known of these, the 1957 Treaty of Rome, establishing the European Economic Community (EEC).

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***Accession of the United Kingdom to the European Communities***

In the mid 1950s some changes occurred concerning the UK’s foreign policy & its relationship with the U.S. After the Suez conflict (1956) the UK had finally to accept that it could no longer assume that it was the preferred partner of the US & underwent a massive loss of trust in the special relationship with this country. Entry to the EEC was beginning to make economic sense, and Conservative PM Harold Macmillan applied to join the community in August 1961. The EEC economy had also slowed down and British membership was seen as a way to revitalize the community. However the UK's applications to join in 1963 and 1967 were vetoed by the President of France, Charles de Gaulle. De Gaulle was backed in his decision by the German leader Konrad Adenauer. Both men feared the UK was still too close to America to co-operate fully with its European partners. In essence, De Gaulle believed that ‘if admitted, Britain would act as the US Trojan Horse within the Communities’. De Gaulle was also fearful that British membership would balk his ambition to become the leader of Europe.

He also said London showed a “lack of interest” in the Common Market & would require a “radical transformation” before joining the EEC. Once de Gaulle resigned from the French presidency in 1969. Former French PM Georges Pompidou was elected as the new President. He was in favour of the EEC enlargement. On January 1, 1973 the UK had finally been accepted into Europe – well over 20 years since the project of integration had first begun. Tory PM Edward Heath is credited with taking Britain into the European Community. On June 5, 1975 a post-legislative referendum was held in the UK to gauge support for the country’s continued membership of the EEC. The electorate expressed significant support for EEC membership, with 67.2% in favour & 32.8% against. This was the first referendum that was held throughout the entire UK.

**Britain and the EEC (EU) – a marriage of no convenience**

By the 1970s, the institutions of Europe were well established, and they had not been designed with the UK’s economy in mind. Painful concessions had to be made by the British, particularly over agriculture and trade with the EEC. One of the conditions stated by E. Heath when Britain was to entry the EEC, was that ‘joining the Community does not entail a loss of national identity or an erosion of essential national sovereignty. Both Labour & the Conservatives found themselves heavily divided on the issue of the UK’s involvement in united Europe, as it was feared by many politicians that power was moving irrevocably from Westminster to Brussels. As a result, despite being a member of the European Community, Britain’s relations with its partners were far from smooth, especially in the Thatcher era. M. Thatcher demanded the repayment of part of the UK’s budget. Britain was paying more into the EC budget than it got out. So the UK demanded some of its money back as a rebate. Although this meant that Britain got a better deal, the EEC budget continued to grow rapidly, with the CAP and payments to poorer member countries. M. Thatcher also rejected plans sketched out by the European Commission President Jacques Delores for united Europe’s wide social rights. Later they were put into practice in the Social Chapter as part of the Maastricht Treaty. The Chapter Deals with: the health & safety of workers; their working conditions; their minimum wage; their rights to consultation through Working Councils, etc. The UK was the only member state to veto the Social Chapter. Another controversy was the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (EERM).

**Britain in the EU today**

EERM was a system introduced in March 1979, as part of the European Monetary System, to reduce exchange rate variability and achieve monetary stability in Europe in preparation for economic and monetary union and the introduction of a single currency. In October 1990 with much reluctance M. Thatcher gave her consent for the UK to join the EERM. Yet the UK was forced to exit the programme in 1992, after the pound sterling came under major pressure from currency speculators, including George Soros. The crash of September 16, 1992 was dubbed “Black Wednesday”. Britain’s failure to stay within the EEMR was one of the sings that John Major failed to mend fences with Europe when M. Thatcher resigned in 1992. When the Maastricht Treaty was discussed, Britain also pushed for and got an “opt out” clause for the single currency. It meant that the UK, being part of the European Community, did not participate in the single currency project. Apart from the single currency, the British were also given an opt-out for the Social Chapter. The Maastricht Treaty proved to be a long-running headache for the John Major government as he struggled to have it ratified by Parliament. A fierce debate about the Treaty also raged in the Conservative Party. The divisions over Europe were so powerful that they nearly caused the collapse of the Conservative government, tearing it almost apart.

In 1997, the Labour Party with Tony Blair took office. Under Labour the UK formally subscribed to the Agreement on Social Policy. In general, T.Blair’s government pursued a “prepare and decide” stance, committed in principle to joining the single currency. In June 2003, Chancellor Gordon Brown announced that ‘the economic conditions for the UK to join it were not right.’ He concluded that the costs of joining the euro by the UK outweighed the benefits. The Labour Government promised a referendum on the issue but it was never held. By the late 1990s the strength of anti-European feeling in Britain was such that the UK Independence Party (UKIP) was born winning seats in the European Parliament for the first time. Yet it won only a single seat in parliament in 2015 elections (scoring the support of 3.8m people or 12.6% of the vote). Over the period of 1992-2002, the Uk was paying an average amount of £11bn per annum into the EU budget while receiving back £7bn in ‘aid’. Most of the money Britain receives from the EU is used to subsidise farming. So Many British economists believe the UK involvement in the EU is too costly for the state coffers.

In 2013 the UK was the third largest contributor in the EU budget – 12.4% after Germany (19.9%) and France (16.7%). 2015 statistics for the UK payments is like this: £13bn contribution into the EU budget; £4.5bn received as a rebate.

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Lately, the rebate has been used to finance the UK infrastructure projects (railway modernisation), as well as and some engineering projects (Rolls-Royce being one of them). The largest recipients of the EU money are Poland, Greece, Hungary, Portugal and Romania. Experts also believe that over 70% of UK legislation is EU-initiated. In 2010 the Conservatives returned to power. They have always been uneasy about the UK-EU relationship. In December 2011, in the wake of the financial crisis, the UK refused to sign an intergovrnmental treaty to limit government spending and borrowing of the EU countries. The treaty was initiated by Germany and France and it was put to vote at the EU council meeting. As it was a Franco-German fiscal compact, Britain refused to be part of it – David Cameron just vetoed the project. D. Cameron also made a statement that the UK would stay in the EU as long as it was in the country’s national interests. In January 2013 D.Cameron said that he wanted to renegotiate the UK’s relationship with the EU and then give people the “simple choice” between staying in under those new terms, or leaving the EU. He pledged to hold a referendum during the early part by the end of 2017 if the Conservatives win the deneral election in 2015. The referendum was one of the election manifesto promises of the Conservative Party in 2015. On February 21, 2016 after a period of difficult and long negotiations with European leaders, D. Cameron succeeded in reaching a deal over the future of British-EU relationship.

In essence the deal included:

1. Changes on benefits to EU immigrants;
2. Stronger British sovereignty;
3. Guarantees on Britain’s staying out of the Eurozone.

Commenting the deal, the Daily Telegraph thought it “astonishing” that Cameron’s “humble proposals” required such a struggle to achieve. The planned seven-year break on migrants being able to claim benefits was “small beer” to many Eurosceptics. The newspaper concluded that the negotiations “have only highlighted how absurd this dream of a totally united Europe looks” and passed its verdict on the EU: “The EU is arcane and scierotic – and the events of the past few days have proved it. It cannot adapt to suit changing circumstances or to meet the demands of political crisis.”

Или это как концовка, тут кратко

On 23 June 2016 the United Kingdom held its second referendum on membership of what had now become the European Union. This took place forty one years after the first referendum, which had resulted in a overwhelming vote to remain within the EEC . The second referendum came about after the Conservatives led by David Cameron won an unexpected small overall majority in the 2015 UK general election, which included a manifesto commitment to holding a in-out referendum on Britain’s relationship with the EU following a renegotiation which took place in the autumn and winter of 2015-16. At the same time parliament legislated for the referendum by passing the European Union Referendum Act 2015. The UK Government was in favour of a “Remain” result, although cabinet ministers were allowed to campaign on either side in a suspension of Cabinet collective responsibility, just as ministers had back in 1975. The surprise result of the referendum after a long ten-week campaign, with a narrow majority of people (52% for, 48% against) in favour of leaving the EU on a national turnout of 72%, sent shockwaves both throughout Europe and the rest of the world, causing turmoil in money markets and stock markets during the following day. David Cameron announced that he would resign as Prime Minister, and he was succeeded by Theresa May who became Prime Minister on 13 July 2016 to begin the process of the UK’s withdrawal from the EEC.