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Background Guide

European Council (Historical Committee)



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European Council: Renegotiation of the United Kingdom's terms of membership

History of the Committee

The European Council of the European Union (EU) is the council of the Heads of State or Government of the 28 EU member states, which has a summit four times per year. The European Council is based in Brussels, the capital of Belgium, where the EU's European Commission and one of the two European Parliament buildings is located (the other, main one is in Strasbourg, France).

The first meetings occurred in Paris and Bonn in 1961, while it was in 1975 that the inaugural European Council was held in Dublin.¹ In 2009, the first President of the European Council was appointed, a position held today by Donald Tusk, the former Polish Prime Minister. The European Council President and the President of the European Commission both have seats on the European Council, separate to those of the individual member states.

The European Council has nowadays adopted a policy of prioritising a long-term 'strategic agenda' for its summits², although crises such as those pertaining to Greece's debt having often dominated negotiations in recent years.

The European Council decides the overall political direction of the EU, including new areas of integration, and what speed any integration ought to be at, as well as responding to

¹ Europa.eu

² Consillium.europa.eu

medium-long term crises and instigating any major treaty reform, such as most recently, the Treaty of Lisbon, concluded in 2007.³

Germany and France continue to play a particularly active role in the European Council, as the two largest founding members of the EU that both use the euro as their currency, though all members' views are sought and all seek to further their own particular interests.

Except where the Treaties state otherwise, decisions in the Council are generally made by consensus.⁴ If one Head of Government/ State opposes a resolution, it fails to become adopted. An abstention does not, however, prevent a resolution from being passed.

The size of the Council has grown over the decades with the EU's enlargement. The current Council members are the Heads of State or Government of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, as well as the European Council President, and the European Commission President.⁵

Note: The EU is not a UN body, and the European Council is not to be confused with the Council of Europe, the latter being a Europe-wide, looser, human rights organisation, which includes countries such as Russia and Turkey as members.⁶

³ Europa.eu

⁴ Consillium.europa.eu

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ coe.int/en

Renegotiation of the United Kingdom's terms of membership

This topic will be an imagined re-enactment of the February 2016 European Council Summit in which the United Kingdom's renegotiation of its EU membership took place.

This topic background guide is written as if it has not yet occurred, though the results of the agreement which you must reach are provided in the 'What was agreed?' section.

It should be noted that in the subsequent referendum that took place on 23rd June 2016, the United Kingdom voted by 51.89% to 48.11% to leave the European Union.⁷



⁷en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_European_Union_membership_referendum,_2016

Topic History

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (also referred to here as ‘the UK’ or ‘Britain’) joined the then European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973. In 1975, a referendum took place on continued membership of the EEC, with 67.23% voting in favour.⁸

Since then, the EEC has become the European Union, with further treaties and a wider scope of powers, a right for all EU citizens to live anywhere in the EU for as long as they wish with no visa requirements (known as free movement rights), common fisheries and agriculture policies, an External Affairs taskforce, a common currency (the euro) used by 19 of the 28 member states, common crime fighting measures, such as the European Arrest Warrant, and a recent banking union.⁹

The UK has in the past negotiated formal opt-outs from the obligation of member states to one day adopt the euro as its currency, and the UK is not part of the Schengen Agreement, which provides for free travel between European countries, without any passport checks.¹⁰

Current situation and discussion of the issues

The British Prime Minister David Cameron is to hold an In/Out referendum in the UK on its continued membership of the EU, with large factions of his Conservative Party, other

⁸en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_European_Communities_membership_referendum,_1975

⁹ Europa.eu

¹⁰ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opt-outs_in_the_European_Union

parties, the British population, and the media having been advocating leaving the Union for some time.

Though betting agencies and most people believe the UK will vote to stay in, polls show that it is currently very close, with some even showing slight majority support in favour of leaving.

Britain's relationship with the EU generally can be described as pragmatic and unemotional, not overtly pro-European, but happy to stay in and take part provided it still sees membership as beneficial to itself, and provided its sovereignty is 'respected'.¹¹

In recent years, the UK's internal debate over immigration, as well as the problems in the Eurozone, have led to rising anti-EU sentiment¹², leading the Prime Minister to make his referendum pledge.

Cameron has toured Europe since the May 2015 UK General Election seeking to find common ground for reform and gain support, and now, a formal negotiation over possible reforms to the EU as a whole, or Britain's membership thereof, is due and high on the Council's agenda for 2016, paving the way for Britain's referendum.

Issues of EU migrants' access to welfare payments if living in other EU countries, the EU's stated belief in 'ever closer union', the EU's directives governing the Single Market, which are widely considered to be excessive and a nuisance for businesses, and protecting the interests of Britain and other non-euro countries within the EU in the long-term, are likely to be key issues at the negotiations.

¹¹ irishtimes.com/news/world/uk/cameron-to-campaign-for-britain-in-europe-if-reforms-agreed-1.2424564

¹² euractiv.com/section/uk-europe/news/euroscepticism-on-the-rise-in-uk/

As a consensus will be required for any changes the United Kingdom wishes to achieve, the views of every single country around the table matter, leading the UK to seek to present its demands as desirable for other countries as well.

Immigration & related issues

Britain's Conservative-led Governments have since 2010 had a net immigration target of 100,000 people per year, though the target has never been met.¹³ Many view it as unrealistically as well as undesirably low, however, immigration has increasingly come to be perceived as negative in the UK, demonstrated through the rise of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) which advocates leaving the EU and restricting immigration. The party came first in the UK in the elections to the European Parliament (the Parliament of the EU) in 2014.

In the year ending March 2015, net immigration hit record highs of 330,000, representing a 28% increase on the previous year. Net migration of other EU citizens in the UK was 183,000, up 53,000 on the previous year.¹⁴ This comes in the midst of the on-going economic problems in southern European countries such as Spain, Italy and Greece, with work being the most common stated reason for coming to the UK of all new arrivals (counting both EU and non-EU nationals).

EU migrants are currently entitled to a range of in-work and out-of-work benefits in the UK after three months residency.¹⁵ The UK Government and a great many Britons believe EU migrants should have to have contributed to the UK in taxes before being able to receive any

¹³ bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-27389189

¹⁴ migrationwatchuk.org/statistics-net-migration-statistics

¹⁵ bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25134521

benefits. The British Prime Minister is seeking to gain agreement in the European Council to allow member states to restrict access to such benefits until up to four years' residency.

In February 2016, the UK had the 3rd lowest unemployment rate in the EU, at 5%. Germany, followed by the Czech Republic had lowest unemployment rates, with Malta right behind the UK. This makes these countries attractive for economic migrants, at a time when Greece's unemployment rate was recorded as 24%, and Spain's 20.4%.¹⁶

Poland

In 2004, the EU gained a wave of new member states, predominantly from Eastern Europe. The then British Government waived its right to implement transitional controls on the free movement rights of citizens of these countries, leading to mass migration from countries such as Poland. In 2014 there were 790,000 people born in Poland living in the UK, the Office for National Statistics estimated.¹⁷ Polish is today the second most widely spoken language in England after English.¹⁸

Immigration from Poland occurred rapidly, transforming many parts of the UK including Southampton and Peterborough.¹⁹ Immigration from Poland is largely viewed to have happened too quickly.²⁰ Though now over 11 years since the first arrivals, communities have adjusted and Polish communities have largely integrated well into British society, with school pupils from Poland learning English quickly and often achieving better grades than

¹⁶ statista.com/statistics/268830/unemployment-rate-in-eu-countries/

¹⁷ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poles_in_the_United_Kingdom

¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ bbc.co.uk/lookeast/content/articles/2007/12/04/poland_special_041207_feature.shtml

²⁰ telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/labour/8788109/Labour-got-it-wrong-on-immigration-says-Ed-Miliband.html

their British-born counterparts. Poles in the UK today generally enjoy a reputation of being hard workers.²¹

Nevertheless, many stereotypes of immigrants (EU and non-EU) in the UK persist amongst a minority (but significant proportion of the population), such as that immigrants to the UK are either taking jobs that British people would otherwise have had, or that they only wish to abuse Britain's welfare system, which is often deemed generous by international standards.

The UK's National Health Service (NHS) ensures free healthcare at the point of delivery, council housing is available to immigrants, and aforementioned in- and out-of-work benefits exist.

Spain and France

Simultaneously, according to the BBC, there are 761,000 British people living in Spain²², many of whom are retired. Spain also spends considerably more on state-funded healthcare for Britons than the UK has to for Spaniards. Equally, the British population in France is estimated at 400,000²³, with most living in the south of France, Paris and Brittany. In this regard, it is not the case that Britain is the only country affected by mass migration within the EU, with British migrants to these countries buying up large amounts of property in small towns and in the countryside, as well as making use of their health services. While

²¹[dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2147976/Influx-Polish-children-schools-helped-improve-British-pupils-grades.html](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2147976/Influx-Polish-children-schools-helped-improve-British-pupils-grades.html)

²²[news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/in_depth/brits_abroad/html/](https://www.news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/in_depth/brits_abroad/html/)

²³diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers-pays/royaume-uni/presentation-du-royaume-uni

young British tourists in Spain often have a bad reputation for drunken behaviour and injury²⁴, Spain and France do not generally find their British populations problematic.

A minimum of 26,000 Spaniards are estimated to have moved to the UK between 2009 and the end of 2012, understood to be professional-level workers in search of jobs.

Bulgaria and Romania

Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in 2007²⁵, and transitional controls on their citizens' free movement rights to the UK, as well as most other EU countries, ended on 1st January 2014²⁶, causing fears in the lead-up to that day that the mass immigration witnessed from 2004 would repeat itself. This, however, largely has not occurred, with a hardening of the rhetoric around migration from these two countries likely deterring people from moving, believing they would not be welcomed. 22,000 people came to the UK from these two countries in 2014, making a total population of 172,000 people from the two.²⁷

The debate within the UK on immigration from Eastern Europe has caused some offence since 2013, in Romania, Bulgaria and Poland in particular, with a few thousand Poles in Britain also carrying out a strike in August 2015 to protest the scapegoating of people from their country in the UK.²⁸

²⁴dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-1262792/British-students-cause-drunken-havoc-Spanish-holiday-resort.html

²⁵ [Europa.eu](http://europa.eu)

²⁶ bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-25565302

²⁷ politicshome.com/news/uk/home-affairs/news/70095/romanian-and-bulgarian-migration-rising-ons

²⁸independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/thousands-of-polish-workers-to-take-part-in-the-first-ever-migrant-workers-strike-in-britain-10445970.html

The effect of recent events on the UK immigration debate:

Refugee crisis and situation in Calais

The war in Syria has led to a mass migration of Syrian people across Europe in search of safety. The number of people in refugee camps in Calais, France, the main entry point to the UK from mainland Europe when travelling by land and sea, was around 4-5,000 in late May 2016.²⁹ While that is only a small fraction of the total of refugees and migrants from Syria and northern Africa crossing Europe, their presence is bolstering ideas in the UK that it is a desirable country to live in. The refugees and migrants' unwillingness to claim asylum in France has led to a hardening of opinion in the UK that they are being selective in where they go, meaning they are losing their legitimacy as truly being in need of Britain's acceptance.

France and the UK continue to cooperate on the issue, though many in France are increasingly frustrated with the UK, it is not doing enough to help them with the situation. Border controls and security have been tightened at Dover, UK and Calais. The mayor of Calais has threatened to close down the port and Eurotunnel, due to the strain placed on her city by UK policy toward people in camps there.³⁰ Though this is not considered at all likely to happen, it indicates some strains in UK-French relations on this specific issue.

Moreover, the 1st January 2016 large-scale sexual assault of women in Cologne, as well as in other cities in countries such as Sweden, has further hardened UK and generally European sentiment towards refugees and migrants.³¹

²⁹ Dw.com

³⁰standard.co.uk/news/world/calais-mayor-uk-is-eldorado-for-migrants-9708372.html

³¹yougov.co.uk/news/2016/01/12/germans-attitudes-immigration-harden-following-col/

Though leaving the EU would not improve the UK's border security whatsoever (as it is not a part of the Schengen Agreement anyway) sections of the UK public believe leaving the EU would distance the UK from what they consider the 'mess' caused by migration from Syria and northern Africa.

Terrorist attacks in Paris, Nov. 2015

While there was an outpouring of solidarity for France following the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015, polls conducted in the UK in the aftermath on voting intentions in the referendum began to indicate for the first time that the UK might vote to leave.³² Continental Europe may be coming to be perceived as less safe, leading to a desire to gain distance from it.

Issues relating to intelligence sharing and cooperation arise, however, from the attacks, with EU leaders likely to hold that more cooperation in this regard is required to ensure safety in a modern, open Europe. The European Arrest Warrant allows for the rapid extradition of those arrested in one EU country to another, as well as for all EU countries' police forces to make their arrest warrants apply to the whole EU. While this aids crime fighting, there has been some considerable opposition to the UK's continued participation in the European Arrest Warrant, on the grounds of sovereignty:³³

The more likely it becomes that the UK will vote in its upcoming referendum to leave the EU, the more it is considered that concrete reforms will be required to persuade the majority to vote to stay in.

³²en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opinion_polling_for_the_United_Kingdom_European_Union_membership_referendum

³³bbc.co.uk/news/uk-29928190

‘Ever closer union’

In the Treaty of Rome 1958, the first founding treaty of the EEC, it states that the signatories are ‘determined to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe’. This commitment to ‘ever closer union’ is still in effect today.³⁴

Though it is symbolic, with no specific policies encompassed in it whatsoever, it is nonetheless of great importance to UK Prime Minister David Cameron in persuading his dominantly eurosceptic party to consent to remaining in the EU. In much the same way, the symbolism is important to other EU countries as well, with the discussion and renegotiation of this matter likely to be heated, emotive and potentially capable of slowing down European integration.

However, the practicalities of any changes will be complex. Would ‘ever closer union’ cease to be applied only to the UK, or could any member state sign up to remove itself from being bound by it? This might prove popular in other member states that have traditionally opposed further integration, such as Denmark, while Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary may wish to use such an abandonment of the phrase to stall or terminate their legal obligation to eventually adopt the Euro.

The phrase, therefore, though only symbolic, is of great significance within the EU as it epitomises the notion of ‘creeping federalism’ in the eyes of those who are resistant to further European integration, while for those who celebrate the integration of European countries, it writes into law their dedication to it.

³⁴historiasiglo20.org/europe/traroma.htm

Moreover, in practice, any removal of the application of ‘ever closer union’ to the UK is unlikely to allow it to cease to abide by future EU agreements, or to be selective in adopting new EU laws and directives from then onwards (known as cherry-picking). In this regard, the significance of any such removal would itself also be symbolic, signalling to the UK that it has been heard and, crucially, that the other EU countries are willing to accept that the UK simply does not share the same level of enthusiasm for the European Project as many of them do. It can also be seen as one possible safeguard of the interests of non-euro EU member states in the long-term. It is precisely such a tacit acknowledgment and acceptance of Britain’s overriding national sentiment that might secure a UK referendum vote to remain in the European Union.

A further element of this matter is David Cameron’s aim to see the EU give greater powers to national Parliaments to block EU legislation, with the overall issue ultimately being one pertaining to national sovereignty.³⁵

Economic Governance

At the renegotiations, the UK wishes to secure explicit recognition of the reality that the euro is not the only currency of the EU. The euro has, since it was created in 1999/2002, been the official currency of the EU, referring in effect to the institutions of the Union. While most EU countries which have not adopted it already, and all new member states, are legally obliged to join the euro in the future, the UK and Denmark have opt-outs from this obligation³⁶, Sweden has circumvented joining by rendering itself ineligible on the convergence criterion, and other countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic are

³⁵cer.org.uk/insights/power-parliaments-will-camerons-eu-partners-join-his-crusade

³⁶ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/euro/adoption/euro_area/index_en.htm

predominately resistant to giving up their national currencies in favour of the single European currency.

This makes this demand fairly likely to gain significant support amongst the other countries which do not as yet, and may well never, have the euro as their currency. Such an explicit recognition would be seen to secure the position within the EU of a group of countries of which the UK is the largest, which have come to feel somewhat marginalised within the EU as a whole for not being part of this major integration.

The UK also seeks to gain safeguards that any future steps to financial union cannot be imposed upon non-euro members, and that the UK will never be made obligated to contribute to Eurozone bailout funds.

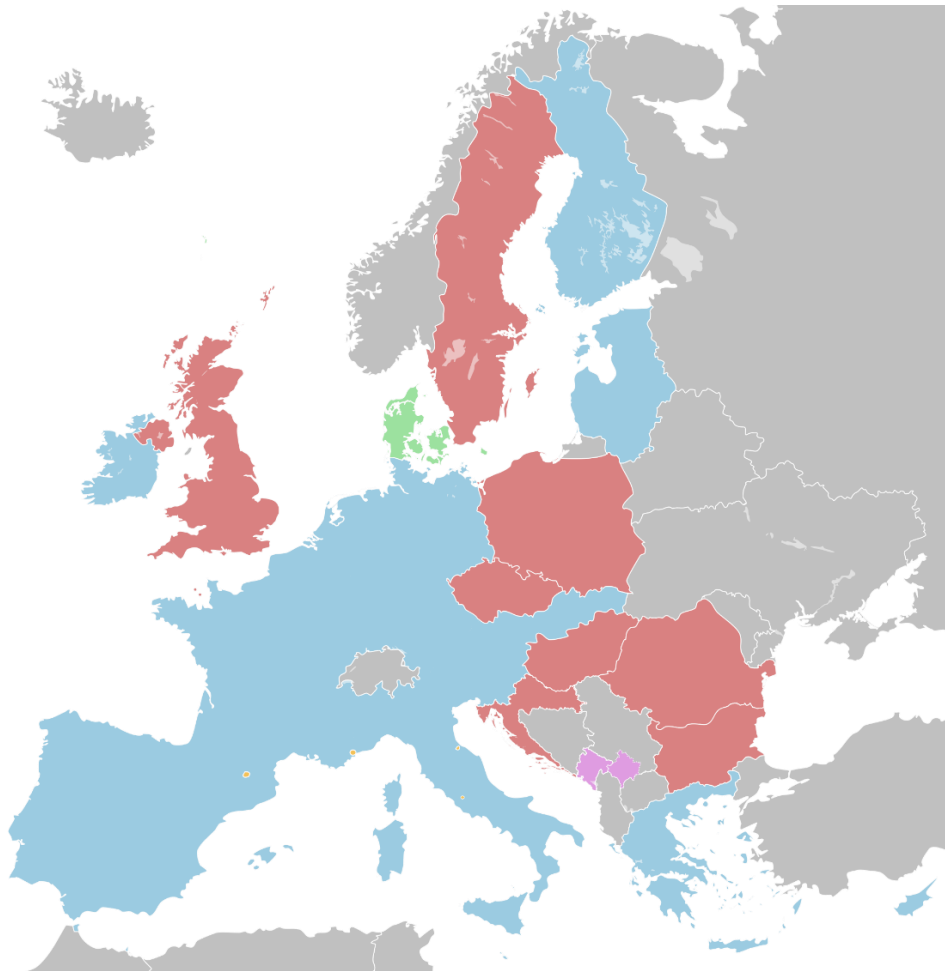
The Single Market

The EU forms a single market, in which there are no import or export tariffs. All businesses are able to trade freely across the continent, and so the rules governing the standards of products are determined on an EU level. While an individual country may set higher standards, the EU sets all minimum standards. Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein, the countries of the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) form the European Economic Area (EEA) with the EU member states, while Switzerland is also part of the Single Market.³⁷ The EU countries, as well as these other four, therefore have the free movement of money, products, and people between them, whether it involves buying something, or going to another part of the continent to live.

³⁷gov.uk/eu-eea

The UK has supported the expansion (known as the ‘completion’) of the Single Market into the digital market, wherein, for example, roaming charges within Europe for calls, SMS, and data would be abolished, as it set to occur in 2017.³⁸

The UK Government also wishes at the negotiations to see targets set for a reduction in the ‘burden’ of excessive regulation within the Single Market, which it considers harmful businesses. While the specifics of these issues will take much discussion and negotiation, these desires are likely to be supported by the other member states.



Eurozone shown in blue. Non-euro countries shown in red. Denmark (green) is non-euro, with no plans to adopt the euro, but is part of the ERM II mechanism for euro adoption.

³⁸telegraph.co.uk/technology/mobile-phones/11707837/Europe-to-abolish-mobile-roaming-charges-by-2017.html

Future

It will ultimately be up to the British people to decide whether they wish to stay or leave the European Union in light of these reforms.

With the governance of the Eurozone to make the shared currency function best, the new banking union of which the UK is already not a part, and the current commitment to ever closer union and the completion of the single market, the EU is likely to continue to integrate, though the rate of any further integration may very well vary greatly depending on these negotiations.

As anti-EU or anti-euro sentiment has been rising in many EU countries, such as Greece, Spain and Denmark, and with Eastern Europe's frustration over asylum policy since late 2015³⁹, it might be the case that the EU restricts its areas of competence so as not to continue to overstep Europe-wide popular opinion on the most commonly desired level of integration. The current mid/long-term suspension of the open borders Schengen Agreement between parts of many EU countries including Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Hungary and France suggests the EU is already back-tracking on some of its founding principles, if only temporarily.

³⁹[reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-eu-asylum-idUSKCN0XV13G](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-eu-asylum-idUSKCN0XV13G)

What was agreed?

- Britain is allowed to implement a four-year freeze on in-work benefits for EU migrants in the UK. This does not apply to those already living in the UK however – only to new arrivals.
- Child benefit payments by the UK Government to non-UK EU citizens will be indexed at the rate of living costs in the country where the claimants' children live if they do not also live in the UK.
- Any single non-euro EU country can force the EU to debate Eurozone laws that the country deems problematic. This allows such legislation/regulation's implementation to be delayed. The non-euro countries cannot veto these laws though if they remain supported.
- 'It is recognised that the United Kingdom ... is not committed to further political integration in the European Union ... References to ever-closer union do not apply to the United Kingdom.'⁴⁰

Bloc Positions

Ireland, which shares a long history and the English language with the UK, and are each the only land border country of the other, is likely to be very supportive of the UK's demands, as it seeks to do all it can to avoid the UK leaving the EU. A UK exit from the EU would hurt Ireland's economy more than most countries', as well as risk flaring community tensions in

⁴⁰theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/19/camerons-eu-deal-what-he-wanted-and-what-he-got

Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK. It is also possible that were the UK to leave the EU, there might be border checks between Ireland and Northern Ireland (UK), which would be unwelcome by people on both sides. Though perhaps to a lesser extent than for Ireland, Malta's history in the British Empire and widespread use of English as a result also makes Malta likely to sympathise with the UK's demands, to ensure it stays in the Union.

The EU countries which do not have the euro as their currency (the UK, Denmark, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, and Hungary) may form a bloc on issues of economic governance of the EU, seeking to protect their interests and positions of influence within the EU in the face of possible further integration of the Eurozone forcing them to integrate further alongside the rest. That said, not every country which does not currently use the euro in the EU is opposed to it. Croatia and Romania in particular both fully intend on adopting the euro at the earliest viable opportunity, as well as Bulgaria.

On issues of EU citizens' rights in accessing in- and out-of-work benefits, Eastern European countries such as Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and the Czech Republic may be less receptive. There is the Visegrad Group, consisting of the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and Slovakia, which work together as a bloc as much as possible. Other countries, such as Germany, Greece, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium and France may also be resistant to some of these issues, but provided the core founding principles of the EU (the free movement of people, in this case) are not compromised, an agreement should be able to be reached.

Other blocs within the EU include the north versus the south on economic issues. The north approximately comprises the UK, Germany, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Austria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech

Republic, and Slovakia. They are generally more in favour of 'fiscal responsibility' and balanced budgets.

The south approximately includes Spain, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, and Italy. They tend to favour more spending to help the economy in times of economic difficulty, as they are currently experiencing.

France does not fit neatly into either category, although acts more like a southern European country economically in many ways, particularly currently, with a Socialist President.

Croatia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania also do not fit well into either category, though most of them may lean more towards the attitudes of the north.

Further strong alliances, and probable bloc cooperation exist between the Nordic countries, which are culturally very similar and share a lot of history and similar languages (Sweden, Denmark and Finland). These countries are largely sympathetic to the UK's reform agenda. The Low Countries, as they are known, (the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg) also have a high level of cooperation and are very pro-European integration – Belgium and Luxembourg in particular, the Netherlands now less so. Greece and Cyprus are also a bloc, as they share the Greek language as well as much culture and history.

Germany and France strive for agreement between each other, though in practice they come from very different economic perspectives and deeply wish for the other not to be able to dominate the EU. Nevertheless, their vision for the EU is largely identical, allowing for a likely common stance over any changes to 'ever closer union', for example. Both see the presence of the UK, a large country, as highly advantageous for themselves in moderating and reducing the overall influence of the other over the EU. Both Germany and France therefore, are very keen to accommodate the UK, so as to serve their own interests within

the EU over the other. That being the case, both have been clear that there are 'red lines' in the negotiation which they would not be willing to cross for the sake of keeping the UK. These pertain to the founding principles of the EU, though as said previously, at a time when the Schengen Agreement has been suspended by many of the pro-European countries, it is yet to be seen whether this may signal their increasing flexibility.

Such is the weight of Germany and France in the EU that their support of a policy or change is very influential over the other countries generally, though each national leader must ultimately aim to satisfy its own national interests and the citizens of their own country in their negotiations, and many would not be afraid to veto an agreement which they truly opposed.

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Further Reading:

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/feb/19/camerons-eu-deal-what-he-wanted-and-what-he-got> (States what was agreed, in relation to what David Cameron sought)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-26515129>

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Some German, French, Spanish, Polish and Italian perspectives:

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