

SPECIAL ISSUE EDITORIAL

Brexit and Its Implications for the UK and Europe

Özgür H. Çınar¹

Brexit has been recorded as one of the biggest political and economic ruptures in modern European history. On 23 June 2016, 51.89% of the public voted to leave the European Union (EU) in a referendum. This decision had profound implications not only for the United Kingdom (UK), but also for the European and world economy. Therefore, in April 2024, we addressed the impact of Brexit on Europe and the UK in a conference at the University of Greenwich. This special issue includes papers by scholars who presented their paper at the conference, as well as by authors who were unable to attend but are now contributing to this special issue.

In order to understand the Brexit process, it is first necessary to look at the UK's relationship with the EU. Joining the European Economic Community in 1973, the UK has been one of the countries that have been distant from European integration from the beginning. In particular, the evolution of the EU into a more centralised structure has raised concerns about the economic and political independence of the UK. Immigration policies, economic management and contributions to the EU budget were among the main factors that triggered the Brexit process.

After the referendum result, the Brexit process did not proceed quickly. In 2017, the UK government triggered Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty and initiated exit negotiations. Finally, the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement was signed on 31 December 2020. It was provisionally applied from 1st January 2021 and formally entered into force on 1 May 2021. However, there is a long period of uncertainty about the form and conditions of Brexit. In particular, there are fierce debates on the Northern Ireland protocol, trade agreements and immigration policies.

The first effects of Brexit have been felt in the economic sphere. It has disrupted trade, supply chains, and investment flows between the UK and EU. For example, trade volumes have declined and many international companies had to reassess their operations in Europe. Trade agreements with the EU have created new bureaucratic

¹ Special Issue Editor, Professor, University of Greenwich, School of Law and Criminology, Greenwich, London, United Kingdom. E-mail: o.h.cinar@gre.ac.uk.



obstacles, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises. Politically, Brexit has reshaped Europe's political landscape by fueling Euroscepticism and altering alliances. Brexit has also triggered some major issues within the UK. For example, Scotland expressed its desire to remain in the European Union more strongly and discussions on a new independence referendum gained momentum. In Northern Ireland, there are various tensions over trade relations with the EU.

Today, the long-term effects of Brexit are still being debated. Indeed, the UK and EU are seeking a new balance to have a new relationship to each other and a relationship with other countries in the world. This process will certainly be shaped by economic reforms, foreign policy moves and trade agreements.

In this special issue, we take a detailed look at some aspects of Brexit and examine the process behind the scenes with expert analyses. In this sense, we would like to thank each of the authors for their contribution to this special issue, and we would also like to thank Border Crossing and its editors Prof İbrahim Sirkeci and Dr B. Dilara Şeker.

Greenwich

May 2025

