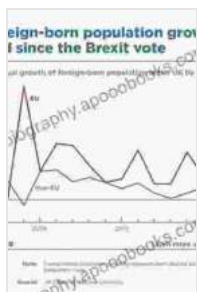


# Britain and the European Union: From 1945 to Brexit

The relationship between Britain and the European Union (EU) has been a complex and ever-evolving one. This article will explore the history of this relationship, from Britain's initial involvement in the EU's predecessor, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), to the UK's eventual withdrawal from the EU in 2020.



## Reluctant European: Britain and the European Union from 1945 to Brexit by Stephen Wall

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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## Britain's Early Involvement in the ECSC

Britain was one of the six founding members of the ECSC, which was established in 1951. The ECSC was created in the aftermath of World War II as a way to prevent future conflicts between France and Germany. The ECSC pooled the coal and steel resources of its member states under a common management, which was designed to make it impossible for any one country to dominate the others.

Britain's involvement in the ECSC was initially limited. The UK government was concerned about the loss of sovereignty that would be required to join the ECSC. However, as the ECSC proved to be a success, Britain's interest in joining the organization grew.

## **Britain's Application to Join the EEC**

In 1961, Britain applied to join the European Economic Community (EEC), which had been established in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome. The EEC was a more ambitious project than the ECSC, and it aimed to create a single market for goods, services, capital, and labor among its member states.

Britain's application to join the EEC was vetoed by France twice, once in 1963 and again in 1967. France was concerned about Britain's close ties to the United States and its reluctance to give up any sovereignty to the EEC.

## **Britain's Entry into the EEC**

In 1973, Britain finally joined the EEC after a third application. The UK government had made some concessions to France, including agreeing to accept the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The CAP was a system of subsidies for farmers that was very expensive and unpopular in Britain.

Britain's entry into the EEC was a major turning point in the country's history. It marked the UK's first formal commitment to European integration.

## **The British Eurosceptic Movement**

From the beginning, there was a significant amount of Euroscepticism in Britain. Eurosceptics argued that the EEC was undemocratic, bureaucratic,

and too expensive. They also worried that the EEC would eventually lead to a loss of British sovereignty.

The Eurosceptic movement gained strength in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1992, the Conservative government withdrew from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), which was designed to stabilize the exchange rates of the currencies of the EEC member states.

### **The Referendum on EU Membership**

In 2016, the Conservative government held a referendum on whether Britain should remain a member of the EU. The referendum was held in response to growing public pressure for a say on Britain's membership of the EU.

The referendum resulted in a vote to leave the EU, with 52% of voters supporting Brexit. The result of the referendum was a shock to many people, both in Britain and in the rest of Europe.

### **The Withdrawal Process**

The UK government triggered Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union in March 2017, which began the formal process of withdrawing from the EU. The withdrawal process was complex and difficult, and it took two years for the UK and the EU to reach a withdrawal agreement.

The UK finally left the EU on January 31, 2020. The UK is now in a transition period that will last until December 31, 2020. During this time, the UK and the EU will negotiate a new trade deal.

### **The Future of the UK-EU Relationship**

The future of the UK-EU relationship is uncertain. The two sides have not yet reached a trade deal, and there is a risk that the UK will leave the EU without a deal on December 31, 2020.

A no-deal Brexit would have a significant impact on the UK economy. It would also damage the UK's relationship with its European partners.

It is in the interests of both the UK and the EU to reach a trade deal. However, it is also clear that the two sides have very different priorities. The UK wants a deal that gives it maximum freedom to trade with the rest of the world. The EU wants a deal that protects its single market.

It is possible that the UK and the EU will be able to reach a compromise that satisfies both sides. However, it is also possible that the two sides will fail to reach a deal, and the UK will leave the EU without a deal on December 31, 2020.

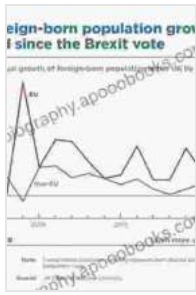
The relationship between Britain and the EU has been through many ups and downs over the years. It is a complex and ever-evolving relationship, and it is difficult to predict what the future holds. However, one thing is for sure: the UK's relationship with the EU will continue to be a major factor in British politics for many years to come.

## SEO Title:

Britain and the EU: A Complex History from 1945 to Brexit

## Alt Attribute for Image:

A map of the European Union with the United Kingdom highlighted.

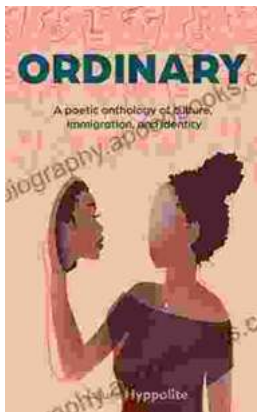


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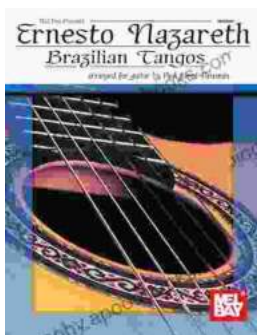
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