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***The British Problem in the Early History of the European  
Economic Community***

***Opposition to Europe in the British  
Conservative and Labour Parties***

***1945-1975***

*Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master degree  
In British and American Studies*

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*Dedication*

**"To my parents with love"**

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Before all I thank God for the accomplishment of this work.

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## *Abstract*

The relationship between Britain and the European Union is phenomenally complex with a great opposition to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour Parties emerged since 1945.

During the history and development of the European Union, Europe saw a lack of British involvement until 1961, after refusing to sign the Treaties of Rome of 1957 for being a member of the European Economic Community. Britain then applied to join the EEC in 1961 under Harold Macmillan's Conservative Government, its application led by the Chief Negotiator Edward Heath. This application was vetoed by President de Gaulle. With de Gaulle out of power Britain finally could join in 1973. But again Labour and Conservative both found themselves divided on the issue and they held a referendum under Labour on whether to continue the UK's membership.

## Résumé

La relation entre la Grande-Bretagne et l'Union européenne est phénoménalement complexe avec une grande opposition à l'Europe dans le parti Conservateur Britannique et du parti travailliste, depuis 1945.

Au cours de l'histoire et du développement de l'Union européenne, l'Europe a vu un manque d'implication britannique jusqu'en 1961 après son refus de signer les traités de Rome de 1957 pour être membre de la Communauté économique européenne. La Grande-Bretagne a alors demandé à adhérer à la CEE en 1961 sous le gouvernement conservateur d'Harold Macmillan, et sa demande a été formulée par le négociateur en chef Edward Heath. Cette demande a été refusée par le Président de Gaulle. Avec la démission de de Gaulle, la Grande-Bretagne pourra rejoindre l'Europe en 1973. Les deux partis britannique à la fois se sont retrouvés divisés sur le problème et ils sont décidés d'effectuer un référendum sur l'opportunité de continuer à être membre de la CEE.

## ملخص

علاقة بريطانيا بالاتحاد الأوروبي هي علاقة متشابكة نظرا للمعارضة و الاختلاف اللذين يكتنهما كلا من حزب المحافظين  
البريطاني و حزب العمال منذ عام 1945

و خلال تاريخ تطور الاتحاد الأوروبي شهدت أوروبا عدم انضمام بريطانيا للمجموعة الاقتصادية الأوروبية حتى عام 1961  
بعد رفضها لتوقيع معاهدة روما 1957 حتى تكون عضوا في المجموعة

عندما تقدم هارولد ماكلان رئيس وزراء بريطانيا بالمطالبة بالانضمام إلى السوق الأوروبية المشتركة كان رفض ديغول  
حاسما وواضحا و لم تستطع الدخول بعد محاولة أخرى حتى عام 1973 بعد خروج ديغول من السلطة

لكن دخول بريطانيا الاتحاد لم يبد إعجاب حزب العمال البريطاني و أصروا بعدها على خوض استفتاء حول استمرارية عضوية  
بريطانيا في المجموعة الاقتصادية الأوروبية

### ❖ **Short introduction:**

The relationship between Britain and the European economic community was phenomenally complex with a great opposing to Europe in the British Conservative and Labour parties emerged since 1945. The work examines this relation at Britain's first stages and how the problem of opposing Europe each time has deeply divided the two major British political parties.

### ❖ **Aim of the work:**

Britain has always been a reluctant and difficult partner, and relationship between her and the European Economic Community has never been warm, and Britain remains eurosceptic.

### ❖ **Methodology:**

The work is based on:

- ✓ Books and internet articles
- ✓ Mla citation
- ✓ Foot notes (explications and citations)

### ❖ **Structure of the thesis:**

The work is divided into three chapters:

#### ❖ **Chapter1:** *The unification of Europe and Britain refusals to join*

The European continent was the theater of conflicts which brought millions of dead humans and lots of destruction, only France and Germany from 1870 to 1945 fought three times, and after the end of WWII, Europeans came to the conclusion that only economic and political

integration can secure the peace. In 1950 the British decided against participation in the Schuman plan establishing the European coal and steel community they did believe that reconciliation between France and Germany should take place soon ,and in his speech given at Zurich university prime minister Winston Churchill was clear that the pro-European sentiment he expressed in his speech was for the countries of the continent not for Britain .Britain was interested in pursuing close relations and ties with U.S and commonwealth. With the creation of the EEC Britain satisfied itself by creating a long the EFTA with other European countries.

❖ **Chapter 2:** *From separation to application.*

During the 60's, there were changes in Britain's policy toward the European integration and the British refusal to join the EEC was gradually replaced by a will to participate more actively in the EEC.This chapter examines the unsuccessful applications of 1963 and of 1967,and De Gaulle's main purposes of his use of veto against Britain .the Labour party then in opposition, spoke against the EEC ,Hugh Gaitskell once declared that joining the EEC would means the end of a thousand years of history.

And with de Gaulle out of power, Britain applied to join for a third time in 1969.

❖ **Chapter 3:** *Referendum on Britain's continued membership of EEC.*

Finally in the last chapter, as Britain joined the communities at last under the conservative government in 1973, divisions remained, and Labour opposition was committed to renegotiate membership.And in June 1975, the Wilson government having successfully

renegotiated the terms of Britain's entry into the EEC, three months earlier called a referendum on Britain's continued membership of the European Community.

## **List of abbreviations:**

CAP Common Agricultural Policy

EAEC - European Atomic Energy Community=EURATOM=CEEA

EC European Commission

ECA Economic Cooperation Agency

ECSC European Coal and Steel Community=CECA

ECU European Currency Unit (ECU)

EDC European Defence Community

EEC European Economic Community

EFTA European Free Trade Area

EMCF European Monetary Cooperation Fund

EMS European Monetary System

EPU European Payments Union

ERP European Recovery Program

EU European Union

TEU The Treaty of the European Union

EMCF European Monetary Cooperation Fund

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## **General introduction:**

The European continent was the theatre of conflicts, which brought millions of dead humans and lots of destruction, only France and Germany from the period of 1870 to 1945 fought three times and after the end of the Second World war, Europeans came to the conclusion that only economic and political integration can secure the peace.

This work examines the relationship between Britain and the European Economic Community at her first stages and how the problem of opposing Europe each time has deeply divided the two major British political parties.

The first chapter depicts the original idea that gave birth to the European unity enlisting some events and statistics. And because , Britain played an important role in the immediate postwar period.the chapter gives and examines the history of Britain's relationship to post-war Europe since It organized the relations between the USA and Europe , and In the first quarter of a century after the Second World War, two distinct periods of opposition to closer European integration were evident. The dominant theme of the first period, from 1945 to 1961, was one of scepticism, a feeling shared by the Labour government of 1945 to 1951, the Conservative governments of 1951 to 1961. In 1950, the British decided against participation in the Schuman Plan establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1952 The origins of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) can be seen not just in the ruins of World War II The question was where to start in the rebuilding of Europe in the aftermath of World War II Apart from the American money being pumped into Europe via the Marshall Plan, there was a feeling that Europe really needed to help itself .After creating the ECSC the six signed the

Treaties of Rome establishing the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Agency (Euratom).

The treaty was signed in March 1957 and came into force on 1 January 1958.

The second chapter examines the unsuccessful British applications in 1963 and 1967 and the main purposes of de Gaulle use of his veto. The risks involved for the Conservatives were obvious: the country was totally divided on the issue.

French president Charles de Gaulle strongly resisted, arguing that the UK was closer to U.S. policies than European ones, and would thus try to "sabotage" the community. Consequently, France vetoed the UK's membership bid in 1963.

The Labour Party, then in opposition, spoke against the European Communities. Party leader Hugh Gaitskell once declared that joining the European Communities would mean "the end of a thousand years of history" A second attempt was made in 1967, but it was again rejected by a de Gaulle's use of veto.

When de Gaulle stepped down from power, UK membership prospects improved. Labour party came to power, Britain applied to join for a third time in 1969. Finally in the last chapter as Britain joined the communities at last under the Conservative government in 1973 divisions remained, and the Labour opposition was committed to renegotiate membership.

In June 1975 the Wilson government having successfully renegotiated the terms of Britain's entry into the EEC, three months earlier, called a referendum to endorse continued membership. And decided to consult the electorate on the question whether the UK should remain

in the European Economic Community: Do you want the UK to remain in the EEC?" British membership of the EEC was endorsed by 67.2% of those voting, with a turnout of 64.5%.

In conclusion Britain has always been a reluctant and difficult partner and relationship between her and the European Union (EU) has never been warm. And Britain remains eurosceptic.

## **Chapter one: Unifying Europe and Britain refusal to join the European community:**

### **Introduction:**

"I wish to speak to you today about the tragedy of Europe. (...) Yet all the while there is a remedy which, if it were generally and spontaneously adopted by the great majority of people in many lands, would as if by a miracle transform the whole scene, and would in a few years make all Europe, or the greater part of it, as free and as happy as Switzerland is today. What is this sovereign remedy? It is to recreate the European Family, or as much of it as we can, and to provide it with a structure under which it can dwell in peace, in safety and in freedom. We must build a kind of United States of Europe. (...) The first step in the recreation of the European Family must be a partnership between France and Germany."<sup>1</sup>

Following the two disastrous World Wars, of the first half of the 20th century, most of European leaders became convinced that the only way to establish an eternal peace was to unite France and Germany, economically and politically.

The idea of forming a unified Europe was originally proposed by the former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill<sup>2</sup> in a speech given at Zurich University<sup>3</sup> during which he called for a kind of United States of Europe and it was considered by many people as the first and original

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<sup>1</sup> Speech given by the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill at Zurich University. Cottret, Bernard, Michael Hearn, and Antoine Mioche. Manuel de civilisation britannique: premier cycle universitaire. Rosny-sous-Bois: Bréal, 2004. 176.

<sup>2</sup> (1874-1965) British Conservative statesman; British leader during World War II; received Nobel Prize for literature in 1953.

<sup>3</sup> The University of Zurich (UZH, German: Universität Zürich), located in the city of Zurich, is the largest university in Switzerland

step towards European integration in the post war period.

In 1951 France Germany the Benelux States<sup>4</sup> and Italy signed the so called treaty of Paris establishing the European coal and steel community (ECSC) .It set up a High Authority to manage the coal and steel industries and a common assembly supported by the Germans also insist on the creation of a council of ministers made up of ministers from members from member states to counterbalance the supranational High Authority.

In march 1957 the six members<sup>5</sup> of the ECSC signed then the treaty of Rome setting up the European economic community EEC and the European atomic energy community (Euratom) .The EEC aims to create a common market Britain then refused to sign the treaty and satisfied itself by creating the European free trade association (EFTA) with the non-EEC countries.

Britain had many opportunities of joining the EEC in its formative stages. The first one was in 1950-1951, when the British government was invited by Jean Monet<sup>6</sup> to join in creating the community, and the second one in 1953-1954 then in 1957 in signing the treaty of Rome, in this chapter we will see why there was a need for unifying Europe and what made Britain refuse to join the six member states of the EEC.

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<sup>4</sup> Benelux States: economic union of three neighbouring monarchies - Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. Despite long-standing ties, each country's capital exudes its own unique charms.

<sup>5</sup> France ,Germany ,the Benelux States and Italy

<sup>6</sup> 9 November 1888 – 16 March 1979) French politicianis regarded by many as a chief architect of European Unity

## **1. Europe after World War 2:**

“Never again war in Europe”

European unity was born with the seeds of the bloody experiences of the Second World War and by the end of the war much of Europe was devastated, and a large portion of the 60 million deaths among WWII casualties were from Europe.

Most major cities had been severely damaged, other great cities including London and Rotterdam, had been seriously impaired. The region’s economic structure was ruined, and millions became homeless. Although the Dutch famine of 1944 known as the *Hongerwinter*<sup>7</sup> had decreased with an influx of aid, the general devastation of agriculture had led to conditions of near starvation in several parts of the continent, which was to be exacerbated by the particularly harsh winter of 1946-1947 in northwestern Europe. In 1947 the United States offered The Marshall plan<sup>8</sup> as a financial aid for rebuilding and creating a strong Europe, George Marshall<sup>9</sup> called on America: “It is logical that the United States should do whatever it is able to do to assist

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<sup>7</sup> The Dutch famine of 1944, known as *hongerwinter* ("Hunger winter") in Dutch. "hongerwinter." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2010. Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. 20 Jun. 2010 <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1481485/hongerwinter>>.

<sup>8</sup> A programme of funding given to Western Europe by the United States between April 1948 and December 1951.

<sup>9</sup> General of the Army George Catlett Marshall (December 31, 1880 – October 16, 1959) was an American military leader, Chief of Staff of the Army, Secretary of State, and the third Secretary of Defense

in the return of normal economic health in the world, without which there can be no political stability and no assured peace." <sup>10</sup>

It was officially called the European Recovery Program (ERP) for rebuilding and creating a stronger economic foundation for the countries of Europe.

The Marshall Plan was by no means the first U.S. aid program for post-war Europe. Already during 1945-1947, the U.S. paid out substantial financial assistance to Europe under various different schemes. In total annual amount, these payments were actually larger than the Marshall Plan itself. One key element of the Marshall Plan was to bundle existing, rival programs in a package and to identify and iron out inconsistencies. The origin of the Marshall Plan lay precisely in a crisis of the previous aid schemes.

Extreme weather conditions in Europe in 1946/47 had disrupted an already shaky system of food rationing, exacerbated a coal and power shortage, and threatened to slow down the pace of recovery in Western Europe. Faced with increasing doubts in Congress about the efficiency of existing programs, the Truman administration felt the need to come up with a unifying concept. The Marshall Plan differed from previous programs mainly in the centralized administration of aid allotments and the strengthened link with America's political agenda. Researchers currently agree that any effects of the Marshall Plan must have operated through its political conditionality, far less so through its size.

The Marshall Plan also did not bring about the immediate integration of Europe into international markets. Large external debts presented a serious obstacle to liberalization of Europe's foreign exchange markets. A British attempt in 1947 to lift capital controls triggered a

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<sup>10</sup> Heffner, Richard D. A documentary history of the United States. New York: Signet Classic, 2002. 357.

run on Britain's foreign exchange reserves, and was abandoned after six weeks. As a result, markets would not easily provide the large capital imports needed for European reconstruction. The prospect of having to finance Europe's so-called dollar gap out of U.S. aid indefinitely was instrumental in shaping the Marshall Plan. During the three years of the Plan's operation, U.S. policy temporarily turned away from the goal of implementing the Bretton Woods system. Instead, it focused on the more modest goal of liberalizing trade and payments within Europe. To this end, the European Payments Union (EPU) was established in 1950. It lifted most capital controls within Europe, and combined a European fixed exchange rate system with a first round of trade liberalization among its members .

Although itself independent of the Marshall Plan, the EPU's system of overdrafts and drawing rights was backed by ECA funds. The EPU was designed to smooth Europe's transition to full convertibility with the Bretton Woods system, and had largely achieved this goal when it was dissolved formally in 1958 .<sup>11</sup>

The founding fathers<sup>12</sup> of Europe draw up plans to build the future of the continent together to establish Europe as a zone of peace, a common expression after 1945 was "Never again" which stand for the universal desire to avoid another world war, and the people of Europe were especially committed to this and determined to prevent such bloody killing and destructions after seeing their families torn apart and their homes destroyed.<sup>13</sup>

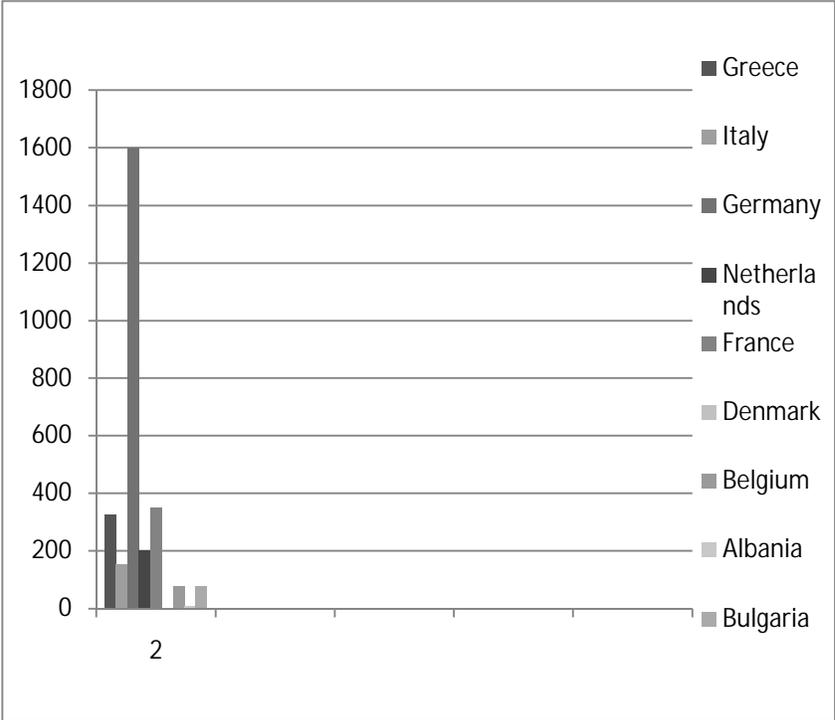
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<sup>11</sup> "The Marshall Plan, 1948-1951 | Economic History Services." [EH.Net | Economic History Services](http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/Ritschl.Marshall.Plan). 3 June 2010 <<http://eh.net/encyclopedia/article/Ritschl.Marshall.Plan>>.

<sup>12</sup> Konrad Adenauer (DE) Joseph Bech (LU) Johan Willem Beyen (NL) Alcide De Gasperi (IT) Jean Monnet (FR) Robert Schuman (FR) Paul-Henri Spaak (BE)

<sup>13</sup> Konrad Adenauer (DE) Joseph Bech (LU) Johan Willem Beyen (NL) Alcide De Gasperi (IT) Jean Monnet (FR) Robert Schuman (FR) Paul-Henri Spaak (BE)

When we ask how WWII affected Europe, the glib answer of course is everything and by everything about Europe today tracks to the effects of the two devastating world wars which were genuine new starts in the history of the continent. And the European Union is set up with the aim of creating as Kaczorowska says: "an ever closer union among the people of Europe" in order to end the frequent and bloody wars between neighbours as a step towards cooperation between them.<sup>14</sup>



**1. European Civilians killed during World War II**

Source: WW2 Casulties. 2010. 27 may 2010

<[http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/WW2Allied\\_Casualties.png](http://www.uncp.edu/home/rwb/WW2Allied_Casualties.png)>.

<sup>14</sup> Kaczorowska, Alina. The European Union Law. New York: Routledge, 2008.86.

<b>Country</b>	<b>Funds received in millions of Dollars</b>
Britain	3,297
Denmark	385
France	2,296
Germany	1,448
Greece	366
Italy	1,204
Netherlands	1,128

## **2. Table1: Marshall Plan Aid 1948-1951**

Source: Marshall Plan Aid 1948-1951. [www.aei.org](http://www.aei.org). 11 may 2010

<[http://www.aei.org/imgLib/20070801\\_DPOTable1.jpg](http://www.aei.org/imgLib/20070801_DPOTable1.jpg) marshall plan>.

## **2. Origins and Development:**

### **2.1. The European Coal and Steel Community:**

As Alistair Jones says: “The origins of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) can be seen not just in the ruins of World War II but really from the aftermath of World War I. The fear of repeating the same mistakes, leading to the rise of fascism in Europe, haunted many politicians (...) Mix into this the memories of two world wars fought across the European continent, and the carnage left in their aftermath. Nobody wished to endure such devastation again”.<sup>15</sup>

The ECSC idea was first proposed by French foreign minister Robert Schumann<sup>16</sup>. The ECSC was established by the Treaty of Paris which was signed in April 1951. Six countries signed up to the organisation: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany. A number of institutions were established, including the High Authority, an assembly, a council of ministers and a court of justice. Its headquarters was in Luxembourg, and the first president was Jean Monnet. The ECSC began operating from August 1952. This was a significant first for sovereign states “the idea of ceding aspects of national sovereignty to a supranational body. The ECSC could, among other things, adjust tariff barriers, abolish subsidies and fix prices. There was some national resistance but the integration of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands made the process much easier. The aim of creating a single market for coal and steel was not achieved but significant steps were taken in this area. It gave some impetus to developing the ECSC into a more diverse body -an economic community rather than dealing with specific aspects of national economies.” (Jones 12).

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<sup>15</sup> Jones, Alistair. Britain and the European Union. Edinburgh: Edinburgh university press.2007

<sup>16</sup> (1886-1963) French statesman, In 1950 he proposed the Schuman Plan to promote European economic and military unity, which led to the European Coal and Steel Community and the European Economic Community (EEC). He served as president of the EEC's consultative assembly (1958 – 60).

The Schuman Declaration<sup>17</sup> that created the ECSC had several aims:

It would mark the birth of a United States of Europe ;It would avoid wars between European members; It would encourage worldwide peace; it would transform Europe by a '*step by step*' process (building through sectoral supranational communities) leading to the unification of Europe democratically, including both East and West Europe separated by the Iron Curtain<sup>18</sup> ;It would create the world's first supranational institution and the world's first international anti-cartel agency; it would create a single market across the Community starting with the coal and steel sector, and this would revitalize the whole European economy by similar community processes

With the success of the ECSC, came the aim of establishing the European Defence Community (EDC) <sup>19</sup> created to promote co-operation on defence matters while incorporating West Germany into Western European defences. In 1952 the plan was drawn up but was not ratified. But the it never went into effect and it collapsed when it failed. <sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> (9 May 1950) is a governmental proposal by then-French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman.

<sup>18</sup> Political, military, and ideological barrier erected by the Soviet Union after World War II to seal off itself and its dependent eastern European allies from open contact with the West and other noncommunist areas. Winston Churchill employed the term in a speech in Fulton, Mo., U.S., about the division of Europe in 1946. The restrictions and the rigidity of the Iron Curtain eased slightly after Joseph Stalin's death in 1953, though the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 restored them. The Iron Curtain largely ceased to exist in 1989–90 with the communists' abandonment of one-party rule in eastern Europe.

<sup>19</sup> Was a plan proposed in 1950 by René Pleven, the French President of the Council.

<sup>20</sup> Wikipedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org>. 2010. 2010 may 2010 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schuman\\_Declaration](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schuman_Declaration)>.

## **2.2 .The Treaty of Rome and the Creation of the European Economic**

### **Community:**

Fifty-three years ago, on March 1957 the leaders of the six European states signed the treaty of Rome establishing the European coal and steel community (EEC) aimed to create a common market to promote the European economic unity and the European atomic energy (EURATOM) to develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy .<sup>21</sup>

The creation of the EEC saw the development of the institutions set up under the ECSC , thus the assembly and the court of justice for the ECSC became those for three bodies , while the high authority evolved into the commission.

The other essential agreement included into the treaty of Rome was the adoption of a Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), aimed to make the EEC self-sufficient in food production, to ensure a fair of living for the agricultural community, in particular, by increasing the individual earnings of persons working in agriculture, to ensure the availability of supplies, and to ensure that the supplies reach the consumers at reasonable price (Jones. 59).

## **2.3 Enlargements and symbols:**

### **A. Enlargements “New members”:**

In 1973 Britain joined the EEC, Ireland and Denmark also joined Britain in becoming the newest members of the community, bringing the total number of member state to nine.

The community expanded southwards with the accession of Greece in 1981 and Spain and

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<sup>21</sup> Thody, Philip. Historical Introduction to the European Union. London: Routledge, 1997. Xii Chronology.

Portugal in 1986. The Treaty of the European Union (TEU) was signed on 7 February 1992, following the collapse of the Berlin wall, followed by German unification on 3 October 1990, bringing the following components:

A common foreign security policy, closer cooperation on justice and home affairs and the creation of an economic and monetary union.<sup>22</sup>

In 1995 Austria Finland and Sweden join the European Union (EU) and in 1999: “Europe’s single currency” the EURO is officially launched and 11 EU member states adopted an official currency, forming what is known as the EURO ZONE

Since 1<sup>st</sup> may 2004, the EU comprises 25 member states .the new ones are the three Baltic Republic Estonia, Hungary and Slovenia as part of former Yugoslavia as well as Cyprus and Malta.<sup>23</sup>

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007, Romania and Bulgaria became the EU’s newest members and in the same year Slovenia adopted the euro, followed in 2008 by Cyprus and Malta then Slovakia.<sup>24</sup>

## **B. The European flag:**

The European flag is a symbol not only of the European Union but also of Europe’s identity. The circle of the gold stars symbolizes solidarity and unity between the people of the European

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<sup>22</sup> Cameron, Fraser. The future of Europe: integration and enlargement. London: Routledge, 2004. 3.

<sup>23</sup> EUROPA-THE EU at Glance-European Treaties.”EUROPA ALL “The Official Website of the European Union. Web.26 May 2010 <[http://europa.eu/abc/treaties/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/treaties/index_en.htm)>

<sup>24</sup> 7 European Union. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia. Web.26 May 2010. <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Union)>

family<sup>25</sup>. The circle contains 12 stars, and the use of the number twelve has nothing to do with the number of the member states existing in the union .twelve is the number of what is completed ,which forms a whole ,perfect and harmonious unit ,in the ancient civilization according to the bible.<sup>26</sup>

### **3.European Economic and monetary cooperation:**

The 1957 Treaty of Rome referred to the idea of a common monetary policy in Articles 103 to 108 and to the free movement of payments and capital in Articles 67 to 73. Since the end of the Second World War, the notion of a European monetary system had been a recurring theme in the manifestos of several European federalist movements. However, the idea still met with strong reservations. The treaty provisions covering monetary issues were therefore rather cautious, and neither the Commission nor the Council had any binding powers in the area of monetary coordination. The Treaty simply referred to the creation of a Monetary Committee with an advisory role. It was plain that monetary cooperation was not an urgent matter, given that the six Member States had balance of payments surpluses and the international monetary situation was stable. It appeared unrealistic to create an independent monetary system which did not include the US dollar or the pound sterling. Moreover, at the time many people thought that the move towards monetary unity in Europe could be achieved without relinquishing monetary sovereignty.

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<sup>25</sup> EUROPA - The EU at a Glance - The Symbols of the European Union - The European Flag." *EUROPA* â "The Official Website of the European Union. Web. 26 May 2010. <[http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/symbols/emblem/index_en.htm)>.

<sup>26</sup> "Number 12 Symbolism, 12 Meaning and Numerology." *End Times Prophecy, Current Events, Christian Symbols, Numerology - RidingTheBeast.com*. Web. 26 May 2010. <<http://www.ridingthebeast.com/numbers/nu12.php#comment-box>>

In 1962, a memorandum from the European Commission on the Community's action program during the second stage of monetary union included a chapter on monetary policy. It provided for the introduction, after the transitional period, of fixed exchange rates for the currencies of the six Member States. The Commission also recommended the creation of a Committee of central bank governors, eventually set up in 1964, as well as a procedure for prior consultation on internal monetary policy. At the same time, the European Parliament was devoting some of its debates to the Community's future activities in the monetary sphere. Apart from occasional positions taken by the Monetary Committee, which had been meeting on a regular basis since 1958, or by the Action Committee for the United States of Europe, led by Jean Monnet, there were no momentous advances in this area at this time.

The first tangible attempt was made on 12 February 1969, when Raymond Barre, Vice-President of the Commission and personally responsible for economic and financial matters, sent a memorandum to the Council on the coordination of economic policy and monetary cooperation in the Community. The Plan was a direct response to the November 1968 monetary crisis in the wake of which the French franc was heavily devalued in August 1969 by 12.5 %, followed by the floating and then an upward revaluation of the German mark of 9.3 % in October 1969.

Meanwhile, the growing indebtedness of the United States was increasingly eroding the dollar's international credibility and, consequently, that of the system of fixed exchange rates laid down in 1944 under the Bretton Woods Agreements. The Barre Plan advocated measures designed to harmonise economic policy and laid down measures for mutual assistance in monetary matters in order to prevent a worsening of economic imbalances. It also defined short-term monetary support and medium-term financial assistance among the Member States.

At the Hague Summit, on 1 and 2 December 1969, a decision was taken, on a proposal from the German Chancellor and former Finance Minister, Willy Brandt, to draw up a step-by-step plan with a view to creating a European economic and monetary union. On 6 March 1970, the Council instructed the Luxembourg Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Pierre Werner, to chair a committee mandated to pinpoint the fundamental options for the gradual creation of an economic and monetary union among the six Member States.

But the international monetary climate was no longer very conducive to plans for European monetary union. The International monetary system was going through a succession of crises, ranging from a series of speculative attacks on the dollar via the introduction of a foreign exchange system in some European countries to the suspension of the dollar's convertibility into gold, which was the mainstay of the Bretton Woods system. This climate of monetary instability finally forced the European authorities to set up the European Community's own monetary system. In March 1972, the six Member States created the European currency snake, designed to guarantee a certain amount of stability by narrowing the fluctuation limits for the exchange rates between European currencies. Determined to continue on the road to economic and monetary union, the Heads of State or Government also decided, in October 1972, to create the European Monetary Cooperation Fund (EMCF).

Although the snake exchange-rate agreement managed to alleviate the 1972 European currency crisis, the relative weakness of the British pound and the Italian lira was such that they could not remain for long within the system. The Danish crown also left the agreement in June 1972 but

rejoined four months later. France, with Germany a co-founder of the snake, also had to leave it in January 1974 and again in March 1976. A new devaluation of the dollar resulted in currencies being floated in 1973, and the first oil crisis caused a rapid imbalance in the external payments of the nine Member States. Grappling for the first time for many years with a serious economic recession, the EEC Member States reacted in an uncoordinated fashion, each struggling to protect its own national economy, thereby demonstrating all the more clearly the wide disparities between them.

The failure of the currency snake was patently obvious, and the idea of an integrated monetary arrangement gained in strength. The President of the French Republic, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, who came to power in 1974, and the German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, elected in 1976, revised the idea of a common economic and monetary policy with the introduction of the European Monetary System (EMS) in July 1978 and its entry into force on 13 March 1979. The EMS<sup>27</sup> was designed to stabilise exchange rates between the currencies of the Nine around a central rate, which was in turn pegged to the European Currency Unit (ECU).<sup>28</sup>

#### **4. Britain refusals to join at her first stages:**

In 1950's ,the British government decided against participation in the Shuman plan establishing the European coal and steel community thinking that it would load to loss of national sovereignty. Few

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<sup>27</sup> European Monetary System (EMS) was an arrangement established in 1979 under the Jenkins European Commission where most nations of the European Economic Community (EEC) linked their currencies to prevent large fluctuations relative to one another

<sup>28</sup> "Economic and monetary cooperation." European NAVigator -The history of a united Europe on the Internet (videos, photos, maps, etc.). 12 Apr. 2010 <<http://www.ena.lu/economic-monetary-cooperation-020100268.html>>.

years later it also refused to sign the Treaty of Rome to be a member in the EEC.

The British contented themselves with creating the EFTA <sup>29</sup>(The European Free Trade Association) with Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland .Finland Ireland and Liechtenstein also joined later .and like the EEC the EFTA aimed to establish free trade in Western Europe but it differs in that in opposes uniform external tariffs and does not want to put members under the authority of superational institutions.<sup>30</sup>

The British government refused to participate for different reasons:

The importance of its commercial political and other relations with its colonies and former colonies most of them integrated in Commonwealth.<sup>31</sup>

To quote Ernest Bevin<sup>32</sup> was the labour foreign secretary in 1949:”our relationship with the rest of commonwealth is almost equally important than our relationship with the U.S .we must remain different in character from the other European countries .we can not totally integrate with them "and Britain at that time was not convinced that the EEC would prove successful. Still it was soon forced to admit that the six were doing better than the EFTA and in late 50s Britain realized that the UK trade links within commonwealth were on the decline (Douglas 244).The Suez affair also showed

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<sup>29</sup> EFTA was established on 3 May 1960

<sup>30</sup> EUROPEAN UNION EFTA.» 2009. EUROPA. 15 MAY 2010 <[http://europa.eu/abc/treaties/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/abc/treaties/index_en.htm)>.

<sup>31</sup> "The Treaty of Rome (1957) - The History of the European Union and European Citizenship." Historia del Siglo 20 - El sitio web de la historia del siglo XX. 09 Mar. 2010 <<http://www.historiasiglo20.org/europe/traroma.htm>>.

<sup>32</sup> Ernest Bevin (9 March 1881 – 14 April 1951) was a British Labour politician, best known for his time as Minister of Labour in the war-time coalition government, and as Foreign Secretary in the post-war Labour Government

the limits of the commonwealth's solidarity.<sup>33</sup>

### **5. The end of a great power:**

Having refused to participate in the European Economic Community (EEC), the United Kingdom became aware of the isolation it had brought on itself, especially since the special relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States cooled after the 1956 Suez crisis. The empire on which Great Britain's status as a world power had rested until the Second World War collapsed, and the political and strategic ties with the Commonwealth were relaxed. The links between the British and former colonial economies declined steadily throughout the 1960s.

Subsequently, the United Kingdom turned increasingly to Europe and the European Economic Community (EEC). The United States encouraged the United Kingdom's accession in order to counterbalance the influence of Gaullist France and prevent the Community from drifting towards protectionism.

### **Conclusion:**

Mr. Churchill did not believe that Great Britain would or should be a part of the united states of Europe; he did believe however that reconciliation between France and Germany should take place soon.

Churchill attended the Zurich conference for European unity in 1946, advocating that: "we

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<sup>33</sup> Kyle, Keith. Suez: Britain's end of Empire in the Middle East. London [u.a.: Tauris, 2003. 578.

must build a kind of United States of Europe”. However he was clear that the pro-European sentiment he expressed was for the countries of the continent, not for the UK expressing the hope that Great Britain. Also interesting in pursuing closer relations with “English speaking peoples” notably with the Americans.

During his period of leadership from October 1951 to April 1955, Churchill never advocated UK entry to the ECSC and never considered that Britain should join the European Community and according to him Britain was not part of this vision. And she was embedded in her own Empire-based partnership with the Commonwealth of Nations. But he did identify the essential constituents of the new Europe; " ... Great Britain, the British Commonwealth of Nations, mighty America must be friends and sponsors of the new Europe"

“ the first step in the recreation of the European family must be a partnership between France and Germany . . . There can be no revival of Europe without a spiritually great France and a spiritually great Germany.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Churchill speech at Zurich University

europa-web. [europa-web](http://www.europa-web.de/europa/02wwwswww/202histo/churchil.htm). may 2010 <<http://www.europa-web.de/europa/02wwwswww/202histo/churchil.htm>>.

## **Chapter 2: From Separation to Application:**

### **Introduction:**

In 1950 the British government decided against participation in Schuman plan establishing the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952.

The 1960's were a crucial decade in the history of Britain's relationship with European Economic Community .When entry was beginning to make economic sense ,Britain opened negotiations about applying for membership of EEC for the first time under Harold Macmillan in 1963 only to be knocked by General De Gaulle's veto invoking economic reasons for that.<sup>35</sup>

De Gaulle's veto was to be repeated four years later , for the same reasons when the Wilson labour government made the second attempt to join the EEC.

Things changed only with de Gaulle out of power, to be replaced by George Pompidou and Britain could enter the European economic community and this done under a conservative government ,led by the prime minister Edward Heath on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1973.

It was this mind-set together with the departure of de Gaulle from office in April 1969, and the emergence of a Conservative government under Edward Heath a year later, which shaped

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<sup>35</sup> Chalmers, Damian, and Adam Tomkins. European Union public law: text and materials. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 13

the third and successful application for membership .

## **1. First two unsuccessful applications and de Gaulle use of veto:**

### **1.1 The First application of 1963 under Conservative:**

During the 1960s, there were changes in Britain's policy toward the European integration, and the British refusal to join a European community was gradually replaced by a will to participate more actively in the European Economic Community.

Public opinion and major political parties appeared to be divided .The conservative party was more pro-Europe than the labour .<sup>36</sup>

EFTA has been characterised by some as a British means of securing EEC membership by virtue of negotiating entry as part of a trading bloc rather than as an individual nation. Whether this was the case or not, it quickly became apparent to the Macmillan<sup>37</sup> government that EFTA was not delivering as expected and that progress was constrained by its weakest member.

On 13 July 1960 the Cabinet had decided that Britain should be closer to the EEC but refused to commit to an application. A month earlier Macmillan had sent a questionnaire on the subject to all government departments. Speculation amongst the parliamentary and national party that Macmillan would launch an application for EEC membership had been common since spring

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<sup>36</sup> David Gowland, Arthur Turner and Alex Wright. Britain and European Integration Since 1945. New York: Routledge, 2009

<sup>37</sup> British politician who was prime minister from January 1957 to October 1963.

1961..agricultural exports of the Commonwealth to Britain and the position of domestic British agriculture. Macmillan's words were intended for both domestic and European consumption. These were the issues that had exercised the Cabinet. Sovereignty appears not to have been mentioned; rather, entry was presented as. a free trade exercise. Significant also was the Cabinet's insistence that Britain could 'transform' the EEC into an 'outward-looking group of nations, mindful of its responsibilities to the world as a whole'.

For the Conservative Party the issue of agriculture was of considerable political importance, but it was of equally great economic importance to the French. The decision by Macmillan to apply illustrated a basic condition in the leadership/party relationship. It is easier if a particular political party is in government to persuade its wider party to accept new policies, whilst the longer a party is in government the less its leaders depend on ideas from the grass roots and the more they adopt the views of external opinion formers.<sup>38</sup>

De Gaulle<sup>39</sup> used his Non to reject Britain's membership stating that Britain is not at its not the appropriate time for Britain to be accepted as a part of the EEC Britain applied for the first time in 1961, but unsuccessfully. The risks involved for the Conservatives were obvious: the country was totally divided on the issue. Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister at that time, entered into detailed negotiations: some commentators had a feeling that the European Community was

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<sup>38</sup> David Gowland, Arthur Turner , Alex Wright. Britain and European Integration Since 1945. New York: Routledge, 2009

<sup>39</sup> 22 November 1890 – 9 November 1970) was a French general and statesman who led the Free French Forces during World War II

negotiating its entry into the Commonwealth rather than the entry of Britain into the EEC.<sup>40</sup>

The strongest opposition came from France, taking a sceptical view of the united kingdom's relationship with the United States.

### **The United Kingdom general election of 1964 :**

Was held on 15 October 1964, more than five years after its predecessor, and thirteen years after the Conservative Party had first taken power. Both major parties had changed leaders in 1963: after the sudden death of Hugh Gaitskell, Labour chose Harold Wilson (who was then thought of as being on the party's centre left), and the Conservatives had unexpectedly chosen Alec Douglas-Home<sup>41</sup> (then the Earl of Home) as their new leader after Harold Macmillan announced his resignation (Home shortly after disclaimed his title under the Peerage Act 1963<sup>42</sup> in order to lead the party from the Commons). Macmillan's government had been increasingly unpopular in the mid-term, and Douglas-Home faced a difficult task in rebuilding the party's popularity. Wilson had begun to try to tie the Labour Party to the growing confidence of Britain in the 1960s, arguing that the technological revolution would sweep away restrictive practices on both sides of

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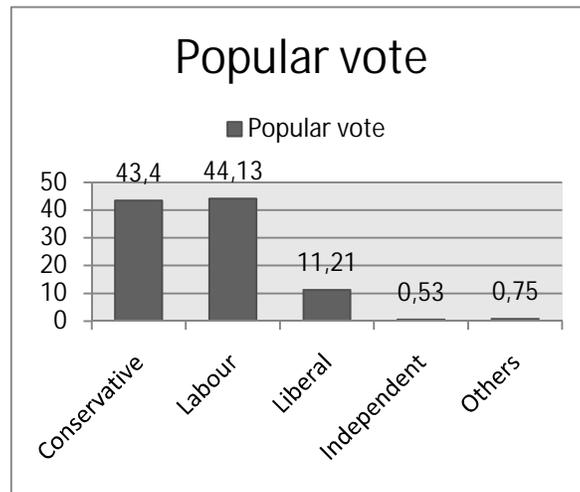
<sup>40</sup> BBC.News. De Gaulle use of veto. 2007. 18 may 2010

<[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/27/newsid\\_4187000/4187714.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/27/newsid_4187000/4187714.stm)>.

<sup>41</sup>(2 July 1903 - 9 October 1995), 14th Earl of Home from 1951 to 1963, was a British Conservative politician who served as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from October 1963 to October 1964 (as Sir Alec Douglas-Home)

<sup>42</sup>(1963 c. 48) is a significant act in the history of the British Peerage. It allowed the disclaiming of hereditary peerages, and permitted female and Scottish hereditary peers to sit in the House of Lords.

industry. This helped him secure victory with a small overall majority of four.<sup>43</sup>



### **3. Total Votes**

Source: "United Kingdom general election, 1964." Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. 14 May 2010 <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election,\\_1964](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_general_election,_1964)>.

### **1.2The second application of 1967under Labour's 1967 application:**

" Having won a narrow majority by Labour in 1964, also she was able to consolidate its grip on

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<sup>43</sup> Wikipedia.<http://en.wikipedia.org>.2010.

<[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_Kingdom\\_general\\_election,\\_1964](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_general_election,_1964)>

power when it won extra seats in the 1966 general election. Wilson's administration found itself faced, from late 1966, with growing calls for a second British application to the EEC.

The prime minister then announced the application in May 1967 and sought parliamentary approval. Some commentators saw this application as an attempt politically to trump Heath's hand, which he had been gently nurturing.

The application certainly placed the Conservative opposition in a difficult position. The ranks of the pro-Europeans within the Conservative Party had been swelled by the 1964 and 1966 general elections and it was hardly feasible, or likely, that Heath would suddenly renounce his European credentials.

The stance of the Conservatives was summarised in an internal briefing document prepared by the pro-Europeanist Gordon Pears: 'Our main concern here must be to avoid being tied too closely to the actual conduct of the negotiations and so being associated with their failure if they do fail. This assumption of failure was central to the Conservatives strategy during 1967. Apart from meaning that they must not be tarred with any blame in the event, it also encouraged them to seek to try and deflect domestic electoral attention away from Europe, increasingly to the mess that has been made of the economy and to relate this to Europe by pointing out that whatever the outcome of the negotiations, we must first put our own house in order. In other words, if the Conservatives were in power this application would stand more chance of success because the British economy would be structured in a manner that complemented an application.'

This reiterated the message of Labour's economic incompetence, which had been a core Conservative theme since 1929. This call had been flagged up by one of Heath's working committees in March. It had been suggested that the Conservatives should take the attack to Wilson, stressing the need for a reduction in government expenditure to help maintain the balance of payments and looking to develop an internal monetary policy that was less dollar reliant. The tactics were evident at the party's 1967 autumn conference, where it was deemed wrong, both politically and technically, to concentrate on Europe. That said, the conference received seventeen Europe-related resolutions: ten urging the continued search for entry; three demanding specific terms for New Zealand, agriculture and education; with four calling for alternatives to be considered.

De Gaulle's veto was to be repeated four years later when the Wilson Labour government made the second attempt to join the EEC. On this occasion, the veto was less surprising than the fact that a Labour government and Harold Wilson in particular were following in Macmillan's footsteps. The Labour Party conference in September 1962 under the leadership of Hugh Gaitskell<sup>44</sup> had strongly opposed the Macmillan application by setting out five conditions for entry which amounted to rejection of the application.

As Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer Wilson had figured prominently in parliamentary

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<sup>44</sup> (9 April 1906 – 18 January 1963) was a British Labour politician, who served in a number of Cabinet positions under various governments, and was the Leader of the Labour Party and Leader of the Opposition from 1955, until his death in 1963.

<sup>45</sup> Rollings, Neil. British Business In The Formative Years of the European Integration 1945-1973. UK: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2007

debates on the application and was particularly critical of what he regarded as the government's failure to safeguard Commonwealth interests." <sup>45</sup>

On coming to power in October 1964, there was no indication that Wilson was about to abandon either this negative stance or the domestic and international priorities with which he came to office as Prime Minister. His list of priorities included economic planning, the regeneration of Britain's links with the rest of the Commonwealth and the modernization of the British economy via science and technology.

De Gaulle's attitude to Britain was not only the result of his dislike of "*les Anglo-Saxons*". He also believed that Britain could not make up its mind whether its first loyalty, now that its empire was rapidly disappearing, was to Europe or to the United States. (McDowall 179) .

Britain felt its "special relationship"<sup>46</sup> with the United States was particularly important. It was vaguely believed that this relationship came from a common democratic tradition, and from the fact that the United States was basically Anglo-Saxon. Neither belief was wholly true, for the United States since 1783 had been a good deal more democratic than Britain, and most US citizens were not Anglo-Saxons. Even Britain's alliance with the United States was very recent.

“ In 1814 British troops had burnt down the US capital, Washington. In the middle of the

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<sup>46</sup> Churchill 's *Iron Curtain* speech “The relationship between the United Kingdom and the USA”.

nineteenth century most British took the part of the South in the American Civil War. By the end of the century the United States was openly critical of Britain's empire. However, by the early 1960s Britain was increasingly interested in joining the new European Community (EC).

Britain wanted to join the community because of the realisation that it had lost political power internationally, and because of a growing desire to play a greater part in European politics. Britain's special relationship rested almost entirely on a common language, on its wartime alliance with the United States and the Cold War which followed it. In particular it resulted from the close relationship Winston Churchill personally enjoyed with the American people".<sup>47</sup>

## **2.The successful application of 1973:**

The opening of accession negotiations by Edward Heath's<sup>48</sup> government on 30 June 1970 signalled the final British attempt to join the European Communities. The negotiations lasted from the end of June 1970 until 22 January 1972 when Edward Heath signed the accession treaty in Brussels. Following parliamentary ratification in July 1972, Britain along with Ireland and Denmark became members of the EC on 1 January 1973.

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<sup>47</sup> McDowall, David. "Britain Europe and the United States." An Illustrated History of Britain. Ed. Longman: England, 2006.178-179.

<sup>48</sup> (9 July 1916 – 17 July 2005) Conservative prime minister who took Britain into Europe and served 51 years in the House of Commons

Heath launched Britain's third application in June 1970, and just twelve days after, the Conservative party had won a general election with a thirty-seat majority. The party then had promised to open negotiations with the EEC with avoiding an overt commitment to entry; nevertheless Heath considered the result a sufficient mandate. Once again the negotiation process was drawn out, but the tone was more optimistic than previously. The view was not 'whether' but 'when' Britain would join; however, the pace of negotiations was again frustratingly slow. The government's negotiation team, initially led by Anthony Barber<sup>49</sup>, and then by Geoffrey Rippon<sup>50</sup> following the Cabinet reshuffle necessitated by the sudden death of Iain Macleod<sup>51</sup>, was keen not to portray any sense of pessimism. Rippon did admit that because the Treaty of Rome was 'four pages of principles and four hundred pages of exceptions' discussion would be tough. When pressed by elements on the Conservative Foreign Affairs Committee in November 1970 about whether Britain intended to continue thinking of alternatives to EEC membership, Rippon's response was 'that the negotiations could be harmed were Britain to sound too pessimistic about the chances of their succeeding'. The problem at this stage was that thus far the negotiations had been fact finding and there was little to report on.

Under conservative Britain could join the EEC at last. Britain joined the European Economic

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<sup>49</sup> 4 July 1920 – 16 December 2005) was a British Conservative politician who served as a member of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Barber was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer by Edward Heath in 1970 after the early death of Iain Macleod, serving in that capacity until 1974. He became Chairman of Standard Chartered Bank after retiring from front-line politics in 1974, and served from 1974 to 1987

<sup>50</sup> 28 May 1924 - 28 January 1997) British Conservative politician.

<sup>51</sup> (11 November 1913 – 20 July 1970) was a British Conservative Party politician and government minister.

Community on 1st January 1973. This was done under a Conservative Government led by Edward Heath. The chief British negotiator to entry was Geoffrey Rippon. Entry was not very popular amongst many politicians in the UK. By and large, the Labour party opposed entry to the EEC as did a number of leading Conservatives. There were a number of issues that prevented a consensus emerging.

Many people in the UK did not share Heath's vision of a European super state being created. As Britain had not been a member from the outset there were a range of policies and regulations she had to abide by as a condition to entry. Many objected to these as they felt they disadvantaged British interests.

Britain's traditional trading links with areas, such as the Commonwealth, brought penalties. Consequently, the UK's contribution to EEC funds was particularly high. Also, one of the key aspects of the EEC was the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Britain's farming industry was small but efficient and therefore she did not benefit much compared to many of the other EEC members whose agricultural industry was larger and more inefficient. This led to 'butter mountains where member states were given subsidies to develop pastoral farming only to create a surplus of produce such as milk'.<sup>52</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

After the "Non" used against her, Britain could eventually join the EEC, It was only after de

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<sup>52</sup> BBC.News. De Gaulle use of veto. 2007. 18 may 2010  
<[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/27/newsid\\_4187000/4187714.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/27/newsid_4187000/4187714.stm)

Gaulle's death in 1969 that a third application was successful in 1973 and it was conservative the pro-European party that took Britain to the EEC.

De Gaulle was very strongly opposed the idea of considering Britain a member of their EEC de Gaulle concluded: "The present common market is incompatible with the economy, as it now stands, of Britain."<sup>53</sup> He was also said to fear that English would become Europe's official language. He also saw Britain as a Trojan horse for the USA back in 1961.

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<sup>53</sup> "BBC ON THIS DAY | 27 | 1967: De Gaulle Says 'non' to Britain - Again." *BBC NEWS / News Front Page*. Web. 10 Apr. 2010. <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/27/newsid\\_4187000/4187714.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/27/newsid_4187000/4187714.stm)>.

## **Chapter three: Referendum on Britain's continued membership of the**

### **European community:**

#### **Introduction:**

In 1971 after the new French president ,George Pompidou had lifted de Gaulle's veto ,negotiations with France and other EEC partners were successfully concluded. Parliament passed the European communities act in the same year ,and on 1 January 1973 Britain finally joined the EEC .Joining the EEC in 1973 ,was not the end of the story ,in march 1974 the labour leader Harold Wilson<sup>54</sup> succeeded him as prime minister in June 1975 the Wilson government, having successfully renegotiated the original terms of Britain's entry into the EEC three months earlier, called a referendum to endorse continued membership .Wilson allowed his cabinet to support both *Yes* and *No* campaigns and the conservative party also divided over the issue and the British people with a substantial majority voted in favor of continued membership.

Despite the decision to join the European Communities, scepticism about membership prompted the Labour government to hold a referendum in 1975 on the permanence in the community. The question on the paper was:

*"Parliament has decided to consult the electorate on the question whether the UK should remain in the European Economic Community: Do you want the UK to remain in the EEC? Put a cross*

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<sup>54</sup> (11 March 1916 – 24 May 1995) British Labour politician.

<sup>55</sup>"The Referendums of 1973 and 1975." ARK Home Page. 09 Apr. 2010  
<<http://www.ark.ac.uk/elections/fref70s.htm>>.

*(X) in the appropriate box* <sup>55</sup>

British membership of the EEC was endorsed by 67.2% of those voting, with a turnout of 64.5%.

In total, over two-thirds of voters supported continued EEC membership. 67.2 percent voted Yes and 32.8 percent voted No. At council level, support for EEC membership was positively correlated with support for the Conservative Party and with average income. In contrast, poorer areas that supported Labour gave less support to the question. Approval was well above 60% in almost every council area in England and Wales, with the strongly Labour-supporting Mid Glamorgan <sup>56</sup>being the exception. Scotland and Northern Ireland gave less support to the question than the UK average.

### **1. The Hague Summit 1969 :**

On 10 July 1969, having recently taken over after the departure of General de Gaulle, the French President, Georges Pompidou<sup>57</sup>, suggested that a Summit Conference of the SixEEC countries, be held in order to discuss negotiations for the enlargement of the European Community and other issues. Pompidou was not in principle against Great Britain's joining the EEC like his predecessor. He was elected on a pro-European manifesto, he was in favour of ending the near paralysis that had characterized the Community because of some of the radical positions taken by the French president on a number of European issues.

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<sup>56</sup>A ceremonial preserved county of Wales. From 1974 until 1996, it was also an administrative county, with a county council

<sup>57</sup>French politician. He was Prime Minister of France from 1962 to 1968, holding the longest tenure in this position, and later President of the French Republic from 1969 until his death in 1974.

The Netherlands, which held the European Economic Community Presidency at the time, made the most of the occasion and called a meeting of Heads of State or Government in The Hague on 1 and 2 December 1969. France, however, in the person of its Foreign Minister, Maurice Schumann, insisted that the Hague Summit should examine the threefold policy based on completion, deepening and enlargement. The event inspired great hopes in the public and in the Community hierarchy. At the end of the meeting, the European leaders agreed on the opening of negotiations between the Community and the four applicant countries (Denmark, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Norway). In addition, the Foreign Ministers were instructed to draw up a report on how to make progress in the political unification of the Common Market.<sup>58</sup>

## **2. Labour returns to power:**

Labour returned to power again under Wilson a few weeks after the February 1974 general election, forming a minority government with Ulster Unionist support. The Conservatives were unable to form a government as they had fewer seats, even though they had received more votes. It was the first General Election since 1924 in which both main parties received less than 40% of the popular vote, and was the first of six successive General Elections in which Labour failed to reach 40% of the popular vote. In a bid for Labour to gain a majority, a second election was soon called for October 1974 in which Labour, still with Harold Wilson as leader, scraped a majority of three, gaining just 18 seats and taking their total to 319.<sup>59</sup>

## **3. The Referendum**

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<sup>58</sup> "The Hague Summit (1 and 2 December 1969)." European NAVigator â “ The history of a united Europe on the Internet (videos, photos, maps, etc.). 12 Apr. 2010 <<http://www.ena.lu/hague-summit-december-1969-022500027.html>>.

‘The referendum of 5 June 1975 was an unequal contest. Those who campaigned for Britain to stay in the EC had access to far greater financial resources than their opponents.

In addition, the umbrella organization which co-ordinated their activities, Britain in Europe, was considerably more efficient than its tiny, cash-strapped and somewhat “ramshackle” opposite number, The National Referendum Campaign. The pro-marketeters enjoyed the backing of practically the whole of the press, as well as the business and commercial world. All of the three main party leaders, Wilson, Thatcher<sup>60</sup>, who had replaced Heath in February 1975, and Jeremy Thorpe<sup>61</sup>, threw their weight – albeit with varying degrees of commitment – behind the ‘yes’ campaign. So too did the Liberal Party, the overwhelming majority of the Conservative Party and centre-right members of the Labour Party.

The pro-European camp, in other words, commanded the support of the political mainstream. As against that, the opposing side consisted of an ill-assorted coalition of political interests, riven by internal feuds and damaged by association with various extremist groups. Its principal spokesmen, Benn, Foot and Powell, were certainly high-profile personalities and effective communicators, but they were also mavericks who aroused strong negative as well as positive feelings among the public.

In the event, the referendum provided a clear endorsement of British membership of the EC.

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<sup>59</sup> David Gowland, Arthur Turner and Alex Wright. Britain and European Integration Since 1945. New York: Routledge, 2009

<sup>60</sup> British Conservative Party politician and prime minister (1979–90).

<sup>61</sup> (born 29 April 1929) is a former British Liberal politician. He was MP for North Devon from 1959 to 1979, and was leader of the Liberal Party from 1967 to 1976

This outcome was ironic, given that the initial impulse for holding one had come from anti-marketeters, who were convinced, on the basis of evidence from opinion polls, that they would win a resounding victory. On a high turnout of almost 65 per cent of the electorate, there was a two to one majority in favour of staying in the Common Market. At the time, the result of the referendum was seen by many commentators, including critics of the tactics he had employed, as a triumph for Wilson, since he had attained his main objectives of keeping Britain in the EC and the Labour Party in one piece. With the benefit of hindsight, however, it can be seen that his success was only partial and short-term. The referendum put an end neither to discord between Labour's pro- and anti-European factions nor to the corrosive national debate over British membership of the EC.

In the period following the referendum, Labour's internal quarrels over the EC reached new levels of bitterness, as the Left gradually established a dominant position within the party and drove it in an increasingly anti-European direction. The anti-marketeters refused to accept the referendum verdict as binding and, with Benn and Foot in the vanguard, set out to reverse Labour policy on Europe. In this they enjoyed a large measure of success. Labour's manifesto for the 1979 European elections listed what it regarded as the adverse consequences of EC policies for Britain, attacking the 'expensive farce' of the CAP and the UK's 'monstrously unfair' contribution to the Community budget. It called for 'tough negotiations and hard bargaining' to secure wholesale changes, including a major revision of the Treaty of Rome, and declared that if this did not happen within a reasonable period of time it might be necessary to consider whether continued EC membership was in Britain's best interests. This implied threat became explicit when the 1981 party conference passed a resolution calling for a

negotiated British withdrawal from the EC, a stance which was adopted as official Labour policy for the 1983 general election.

Not surprisingly, Labour pro-Europeans viewed these developments with a mixture of alarm, distaste and despair. They felt increasingly alienated, especially after Foot was chosen to succeed Callaghan as party leader in 1980, and in the following year the so-called 'Gang of Four', Roy Jenkins, David Owen<sup>62</sup>, Bill Rodgers<sup>63</sup> and Shirley Williams, took the dramatic decision to leave Labour and form a new political movement, the Social Democratic Party.

While dissatisfaction with Labour's new stance on Europe was by no means the only factor that precipitated their departure, it was undoubtedly the decisive one. Available evidence also suggests that their experience of crossparty collaboration during the referendum campaign in itself played a significant part in loosening ties with left-wing colleagues and paving the way for future collaboration with the Liberals.

For public opinion in general, as for Labour, the outcome of the referendum did not signal an unreserved acceptance of EC membership. As analysts of the voting have pointed out, the substantial 'yes' majority reflected a preference for the status quo rather than enthusiastic approval. Nor had the opportunity given to the electorate to express its opinion on the subject

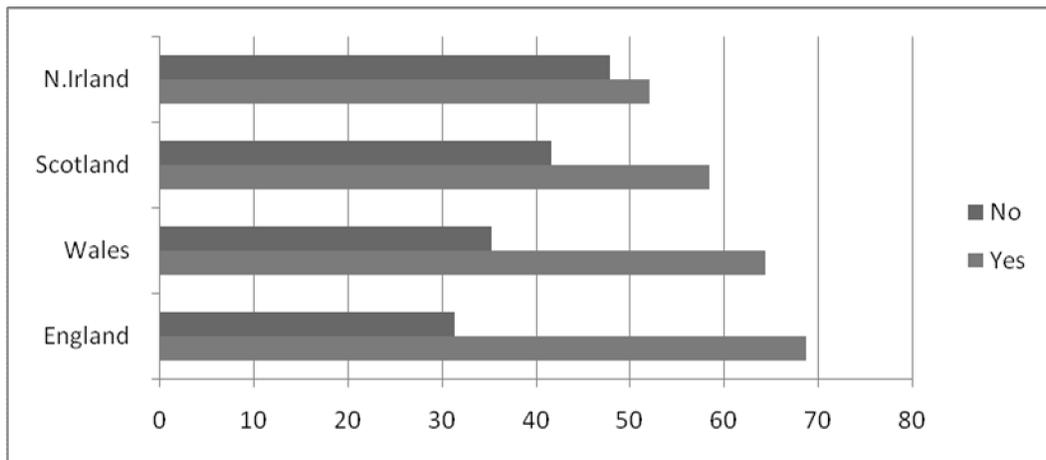
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<sup>62</sup> (born 2 July 1938) is a British politician and previous Chancellor of the University of Liverpool.

<sup>63</sup> William Thomas Rodgers, Baron Rodgers of Quarry Bank, PC (born Liverpool 28 October 1928), usually known as William Rodgers but also often known as Bill Rodgers, was one of the "Gang of Four" of senior British Labour Party politicians who defected to form the Social Democratic Party (SDP). He subsequently helped to lead the SDP into the merger that formed the Liberal Democrats, and later served as that party's leader in the House of Lords.

completely dispelled a widespread feeling that the decision to join the Common Market lacked popular legitimacy.

In this connection, great play continued to be made with Heath's much-quoted undertaking that he would only take Britain into the EC 'with the full-hearted consent of Parliament and the people.'<sup>64</sup>



### **3.1975 Referendum on EEC membership**

Source: history-learning. Referendum 1975 . 18 may 2010

<[http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/1975\\_referendum\\_EEC.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/1975_referendum_EEC.htm) >.

### **4. "Yes" and "No" campaigns:**

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<sup>64</sup> Gowland, David, Arthur Turner, and Alex Wright. Britain and European integration since 1945: on the sidelines. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2010. 84.

#### **4.1. Yes campaign:**

The "Yes" campaign was supported by Wilson and most of the cabinet, including Denis Healey<sup>65</sup>, the Chancellor of the Exchequer; James Callaghan, the Foreign Secretary; and Roy Jenkins<sup>66</sup>, the Home Secretary. It was also supported by the majority of the Conservative Party, by its newly-elected leader Margaret Thatcher, the Liberal Party, the Social Democratic and Labour Party, the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland<sup>67</sup> and by the Vanguard Progressive Unionist Party.

#### **4.2.No campaign :**

The "No" campaign consisted mainly of the left of the Labour party, including cabinet ministers such as Tony Benn<sup>68</sup>, the Secretary of State for Industry, Michael Foot<sup>69</sup>, Peter Shore and Barbara Castle and many Labour backbenchers. Some members of the right of the Conservative Party also

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<sup>65</sup> Born 30 August 1917) is a British Labour politician, who served as Secretary of State for Defence from 1964 to 1970 and Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1974 to 1979.

<sup>66</sup>(11 November 1920 – 5 January 2003) was a British politician. Once prominent as a Labour Member of Parliament (MP) and government minister in the 1960s and 1970s, he became the first (and so far only) British President of the European Commission (1977–81).

<sup>67</sup>A liberal, and nonsectarian political party in Northern Ireland. It is Northern Ireland's fifth-largest party overall, with seven seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly and one in the House of Commons.

<sup>68</sup>Anthony Neil Wedgwood Benn (born 3 April 1925), formerly 2nd Viscount Stansgate, is a British Labour Party politician, former Cabinet Minister and the current President of the Stop the War Coalition

<sup>69</sup>(23 July 1913 – 3 March 2010) was a British Labour politician and writer, who was a Member of Parliament from 1945 to 1955 and from a by-election in 1960 until 1992. He was also the Leader of the Opposition from 1980 to 1983

campaigned for "No". Most of the Ulster Unionist Party supported the "No" campaign, most prominently the former Conservative minister Enoch Powell. Ian Paisley of the Democratic Unionist Party publicly supported the "No" campaign. The campaign also attracted support from the extreme right, such as the National Front, and the extreme left such as the Communist Party of Great Britain. The Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru<sup>70</sup> were also in the "No" campaign.

At a one day Labour party conference on 26 April 1975, the Labour membership rejected continuing EEC membership. Tony Benn, a leader of the "No" campaign said "We have had a conference and the decision is clear". "It is very clear that there now must be a move for the Labour Party to campaign." The majority of the Labour Party leadership was strongly for continuing membership, and the margin of the party vote was not a surprise, since only seven of forty-six trade unions present at the conference supported EEC membership. Prior to the conference the party had decided that if the conference voted by a margin of 2:1 or more in favour of a particular option it would then proactively support that position in the referendum campaign, otherwise the "party machine" would remain neutral. It is reputed that the delegation from one particular trade union did not in fact vote according to their Trade Union mandate. These votes that made the difference between the party simply declaring that its policy was anti EC, and proactively campaigning for a No vote.

At the time, high unemployment was widely blamed by EEC opponents on the Common Market, the impact of European imports on Britain's economy. Shirley Williams, speaking for the

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<sup>70</sup> Plaid is the party for the people of Wales.

"Yes" campaign said "It's much better than we had feared, but not quite as good as we had hoped." <sup>71</sup>

## **Conclusion:**

The late 70s were marked by hesitations, and also conflicts on the budget (which was getting worse because of the oil crisis). Britain slowed down the pace of progress in the EU. In the mid-80s (in 1984 precisely) things changed. Britain started activating Thatcher's approach to the EU.

A single European Act was signed in 1985 by the UK, which gave Parliament more say in legislation and organized the market. Thatcher wanted deregulation and market opening. Britain's opposition focused mainly on sovereignty, tax organization and social legislation. Thatcher's departure was partly caused by its reluctant approach to Europe and the euro. John Major opposed the Maastricht treaty on some points, and Britain was offered the right not to join the euro. It's an opt-out of the euro. On the social chapter, an opt-in protocol was also created so that Britain was not forced to be in. It was said that there was unanimity only when Britain does not use its veto. Britain left the exchange rate mechanism after Maastricht. John Major faced eurosceptics in his country.

The European elections in 1994 weakened Major and the Conservatives. There was a very low

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<sup>71</sup> Wikipedia. <http://org.June.2010.2010>

<[http://en.wikioedia.org/wiki/United\\_Kingdom\\_Communities\\_Membership\\_referendum,\\_1974](http://en.wikioedia.org/wiki/United_Kingdom_Communities_Membership_referendum,_1974)>

turn-out (only 36.2%). The Tories won 18 seats, Labour 62. The rebellion of eurosceptics made Major's government more fragile.

## **General conclusion:**

The British have never been terribly popular members of the European Union. Long before they joined, many continentals thought them too different to be constructive members of what was then the European Economic Community (EEC). In January 1963 General de Gaulle held a press conference to set out his reasons for vetoing Harold Macmillan's application for membership. Some, though not all of his arguments, still resonate today.

One of the most striking features both of contemporary British politics and of Britain's attitude towards European integration is the emergence of a phenomenon termed Euroscepticism. This phenomenon has deeply divided the two major British political parties, with the Labour Party splitting over European policy in the 1980s and the Conservative Party emerging from the 1990s gravely wounded. This study is concerned with the impact of scepticism, both on the parties themselves and through them on Britain's policy towards Europe. In addition, it is concerned with how we can account for the ebb and flow of opposition to Britain's involvement in the European integration project in the period since the Second World War.

Though it was the Conservative Party that took the United Kingdom into the EU (then the European Communities), many Conservatives subsequently became hostile to the EU. One of the earliest groups formed to specifically oppose UK involvement in Europe was the initially Conservative Party-based Anti-Common Market League. Conversely, much of the opposition to Britain's EU membership used to come from Labour Party politicians and trade unionists fearful

that bloc membership would impede socialism. However, many in the Labour Party subsequently came to welcome the EU. This shift largely took place in the 1980s during the period of Margaret Thatcher's premiership, when she aggressively pursued right-wing policies whilst Jacques Delors in his role as President of the European Commission emphasized the idea of a "social Europe", particularly in his speech to the 1988 TUC congress.

Although the (Conservative) British government of the time was, in principle, favorable to the creation of the European Communities, it did not become a founding member. However, after some years, trade with European Communities ended up accounting for more of Britain's trade than with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which had been established (in part) as an alternative to the European Communities. Britain therefore reconsidered its policy, moving closer to the EEC and opening accession negotiations in 1961.

The two main political parties in Britain, the governing Labour Party and the opposition Conservative Party, both have within them a broad spectrum of views concerning the European Union. However, the majority of Conservatives are typically Eurosceptic whilst most Labour Party members are usually more in favor on the issue.

The euro remains as the main issue in British politics now. They are more and more eurosceptics, and Euroscepticism played an important part in the general elections in 2001. The management of the euro is a difficult exercise for the government, which is committed to organize a referendum. But there is a large majority against the euro (66%), though 45% of the people believe that the UK will join the euro within 5 years and 75% within 10 years. The Labour

Cabinet is divided on whether or not the referendum should be postponed after the other general elections

Now in use worldwide, the term 'Euroscepticism' was coined in the 1980s by the British media as they reported on the various stand-offs between the Thatcher government and the European Commission. Since then in Britain the term has become associated especially with so-called 'hard Eurosceptics', i.e. persons who demand dissolution of the European Union, or at least complete withdrawal of their member state. British groups that are critical only of aspects of the EU (such as the 'Euro No' campaign which wants the UK to remain out of the Monetary Union) stress that they do not consider themselves 'Eurosceptic'. The more radical groups, on the other hand, tend to embrace the term as a badge of honor.

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