

EURO-BRITISH RELATIONS: THE KEY DATES

1952: DELEGATION AT THE ECSC

The European Coal and Steel Community was the first step towards free trade in Europe, and it was created by the future founders of the European Community - Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The UK was the first country to establish a Delegation in Luxembourg to co-operate with the organisation.

MAY 5, 1949: CREATION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

Europe's first international organisation was named after a quote by Winston Churchill, according to whom the continent from which two conflicts had sprung needed to be united to preserve the peace. Britain is among the ten founding members, and will remain a part of it. The council "advocates freedom of expression and of the media, freedom of assembly, equality, and the protection of minorities". with its greatest achievement arguably being the European Convention on Human Rights, published in 1997

JANUARY 4, 1960: CREATION OF THE EFTA

The European Free Trade Association was created by the "Outer Seven" (Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK) to contrast the European Economic Community. The deal came into effect on May 3. Today, only four members are left: Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.

1954: AGREEMENT WITH THE ECSC

On this day, Churchill's government signed an Agreement of Association with the ECSC, which came into effect on September 23, 1955.

1967: SECOND BRITISH ATTEMPT TO JOIN THE EEC

De Gaulle once again vetoed Britain's application once again, famously (and unexpectedly) saying "non" in a press conference. Only after his resignation in 1969 Britain was admitted into the community.

1961: FIRST BRITISH ATTEMPT TO JOIN THE EEC

After just one year with the EFTA, the UK tried to join the EEC (European Economic Community), but French President Charles De Gaulle (who had led the French Resistance during WWII from London) vetoed the application in 1963

JANUARY 22, 1972: TREATY OF ACCESSION

After the members' national Parliaments ratify the enlargement of the ECC, the Treaty of Accession was signed, allowing the UK, Ireland, Denmark, and Norway to join the Community on January 1, 1973 (Norway didn't ratify the agreement following a referendum). Consequently, Britain left the EFTA.

JUNE 5, 1975: MEMBERSHIP REFERENDUM

Following an electoral promise, Harold Wilson's government held the non-binding European Communities membership referendum (the first British national referendum). The "yes" votes won with 67.23% of the votes on a 65% turnout, certifying the UK's permanence in Europe.

1985: UK REBATE

Under Margaret Thatcher's government, the UK rebate was enforced, reducing British net contributions to the Community's budget by 66%.

FEBRUARY 17, 1986: SINGLE EUROPEAN ACT

On this day, the UK was among the nine countries signing the Single European Act, whose objective was to establish a single market by December 31, 1992.

1992: MAASTRICHT TREATY

Birth of the European Union. After British pressures, an opt-out option from the single currency was included in the treaty.

1997: ECONOMIC TESTS

In October, the British economy didn't pass the five necessary economic tests devised by Tony Blair's government to ascertain the UK's readiness to join the European Monetary Union - these tests related to rates, flexibility, long-term stability, the activity of the City, and general job-security. The accession to the single currency was then declined without a referendum.

2009: LISBON TREATY

When the Lisbon treaty came into effect, legal guidelines for withdrawal from the EU were formalised for the first time, with the implementation of article 50.

JUNE 23, 2016: BREXIT REFERENDUM

Following an electoral commitment by David Cameron, 51.9% of the population voted to leave the European Union.

MARCH 29, 2016: TRIGGERING OF ARTICLE 50

Two years ago, Prime Minister Theresa May triggered Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, effectively starting the legal process to withdraw from the EU.

MARCH 29, 2019: ORIGINAL BREXIT DATE

Two years after the beginning of the Article 50 procedure, today was supposed to be the leaving deadline. However, the House of Commons has rejected the withdrawal agreement twice, prompting the government to ask for an extension.

APRIL 12, 2019: NEW NO-DEAL DEADLINE

First potential Brexit date. This is the extended no-deal deadline, which Theresa May is trying to avoid.

MAY 22, 2019: RATIFIED DEAL DEADLINE

Second potential Brexit date. If the House of Commons ratifies the withdrawal agreement at 3 o'clock, this will be the definitive Brexit date.