



The European Integration since the Post World War II Era: Challenges of Nationalism

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Abstract

The paper takes a look at the various efforts made by the European nations to bring itself together through a common economic and political policy after years of devastating conflict in order that those wars that had plagued the continent may not reoccur. The various stages which this integration project under went and successes achieved is critically assessed. It noted that nationalism – the very phenomenon that had inspired earlier wars – had crept into the European Union to cause anti-union sentiments in the face of daunting challenges which ranged from the Euro crisis, Isis terrorist attacks, Russian belligerence, to the Unions inability to tackle China's unfair practices as a member of the World Trade Organization. The height of these challenges is demonstrated in the UK's vote to leave the E.U. It concludes that the fate of the E.U will depends on post Brexit UK. If it fares better, other member States would be tempted to follow its footsteps. But if it does not, and the E.U is able to manage some of its pressing challenges, there would be greater chances for survival.

Keywords: European Integration, Post World War II, Nationalism

Introduction

Europe had a sorry history of bloody conflict characterized by sufferings and destruction. This was usually as a result of efforts to forcefully unify the various independent and dependent nations into a single whole. For example, Napoleon Bonaparte made efforts to unite the entire continent under French hegemony in the famous but futile evolution of the eighteenth century. Nazi dictatorship under Adolf Hitler also used the worst form of brutality under to bring Europe under the control of the Third Reich.

Apart from the above forceful means, European leaders had also made effort to unite the continent through peaceful negotiations. For Instance;

In 1923, the Australian leader of the Pan-European movement, Count CoudenhoveKalergi, had called for the creation of the United States of Europe. Then

on 29th September, 1929, in a now famous speech before the League of Nations Assembly in Geneva, the French Foreign Minister, Aristide Briand, with the backing of his German Counterpart, Guster Streseman, proposed the creation of a European Union within the framework of the League of Nations. The immediate aim was merely to promote closer cooperation between the States of Europe, leaving their sovereignty intact (Amadeo, 2019).

However, none of these efforts yielded any fruitful result until after the end of the World War II. By this time, Europe was exhausted, imperialist and nationalist spirit in its people especially Statesmen waned, and they were prepared to unite as at least belonging to the same continent. Europeans quickly gained consciousness of the fact that years of war had destroyed its economy, social and

political structures such that they no longer became the number one citizens of the world. Rather, their position had been taken over by the United State of America whom they once colonized and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, an area outside the scheme of things in continental Europe. Similarly, the magnitude of catastrophe unleashed by the world wars typified the horror of war and European leaders resolved never to fight themselves again. It is important to note that the World Wars were more of European affairs initially. They also suffered more from it judging from all ramifications. As a result of these, there was the desire of a peaceful continent and world where States would interact freely.

The European Union, which is a direct corollary of a new line of thought in European, passed through several stages to become a force to reckon within the world. Before the EU as we have it today came into existence, Europe had many organizations that were unrelated in aims and objectives. They included; then Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Western European Union (WEU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with members outside Europe, the Council of Europe, and the European communities. But piecemeal, the union developed from a free trade association between few states into a customs union, a common market with an economic and monetary union featuring a single currency (Euro) used by 17 countries. There is now a European parliament that makes law for the 28 member union, and a court. Today it has nearly 500 million citizens and greater than the U.S. economy in terms of its Gross Domestic Products (GDP).

It is important to note that extreme nationalist consciousness and hence, imperialism were major causes of most brutal wars on the European continent. In recent years, Donald

Tusk, the President of the European Council emphasized that, “the problem is that today, those who are cheering on nationalism in Europe, those who are betting on disintegration and conflict, will inevitably lead to an absolutely fundamental threat.(Klau,1987). It takes a look at the concept with an analysis of the means through which it can trigger anti-European sentiment. It also makes reference to the Brexit currently hovering over the European political space. This study is significant as it touches on thought provoking topical issue in Europe politics.

Method

This paper used descriptive research method and is concerned with nationalism which has crept into the European scene and fighting resolutely to destroy this painstaking establishment. The study also used historical method and went into the formative era of the organization. The study therefore relied on material from secondary sources such as textbooks, official Gazette of European Union, Newspapers and Internet. The study adopted qualitative with normative analytical perspective in the discussion of the position of the study.

Literature review

Integration

Integration refers to an instance of bringing together peoples of different backgrounds, etc, with the aim of forging a common front in a particular aspect of life. In the study under investigation it will be appropriate to view it from the backdrop of internationalism which could be properly understood with the theory of integration. The theory makes effort to explain the rationale behind State’s choice of supra-nationalism which implies an abandonment of the hallmark of statehood; sovereignty. International integration therefore means a situation whereby State institutions gives way for international ones. In this situation, sovereignty moves from

States to regional arrangements and even global. Many States eventually become one State with a single constitution, military, etc. Although it usually entails some forms of Federal structures where the States while recognizing the sovereignty and supremacy of a central government also retains certain kinds of powers.

It is however important to note that much has not been achieved in respect of complete integration except “a partial and uneasy sharing of power between States and supranational levels. States have been unwilling to give up their exclusive claim to sovereignty and have limited the power and authority of supranational authorizes. (Bosoni, 2010).”

The European Union is, arguably, the best example of an integration scheme (even if it still battles with numerous challenges). Despite earlier moves to achieve this feat, it only began in real, sense after the World War II. As pointed out earlier, the States of Europe were always at war until there was the realization that integration was the only way to put an end to it. It is important to give detailed explanation to how this lofty feat was achieved.

European Integration since 1945

As noted earlier, European States had always competed among one another even in times of peace over economic and military gains. This had been identified to be a major cause of wars on the continent. When the Second World War ended with “the deaths of around 60 million soldiers and civilians” the phrase “Never again” became a common parlance among the European Politicians and Statesmen. From then, efforts began for the integration of the continent first from the economic angle.

It is however, important to note that these moves was championed by the two arch rivals of the continent; France and Germany (France was invaded twice from the start of

the first world war to the end of the World War II). In spite of the much division which the continent witnessed with the rise of the cold war, France perceived to create a United Europe beginning with an economic cooperation with Germany.

Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, two French leaders were developing plans to carry out the notion of functionalism in Europe. This implies that wars could be averted in the future with the creation of economic linkages among the various European countries with the ultimate hope of a political Union.

In 1952, the European coal and steel community (ECSC) was created. This was through the merger of the French and German steel and coal industries that could utilize both country’s coal resources and Steel Mills (Ben, 2012). These commodities – coal and steel – were drivers of industrialization and also strategic in European recovery after the World War II. Part of Schuman’s plan was to limit the powers of the Germans, that is, its capacity to rearm since it is largely dependent on coal and steel. It is also hoped that integrating Germany into an Intergovernmental cooperation, and hence, have control over its policies, would deter future aggression since subsequent governments may not find it easy to opt out. Four other countries later joined this Union viz, Italy and the Benelux countries – Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg. These States worked together to minimize barriers to trade in coal and steel and equally coordinate their policies in this regard. It is most importantly believed that “Joint control over these key manufacturing industries would make it high on (Sic) impossible for one country to attack the other, given the difficult of gaining the resources required and the massive hit it will take on its own economy.(Renata,2018).

Also in 1952, the ECSC countries made effort to integrate their militaries under a single command and budget through a European Defense Community. But unfortunately, the French parliament refused to ratify the treaty and Britain that was a strong force refused to join. Part of the reason for this pact was to form a formidable stance against the forces of communism that had by then, ravaged the entire Eastern Europe.

In 1957, the treaty of Rome signed by the six founding States further created the European Atomic Energy community (EURATOM) to coordinate the development of Nuclear Power through synergy in research, investment and management. The treaty was also “a ticket to greater economic growth because it started to break down the barriers to trade and investment that had existed in Europe since the 1930s.”(Kemal, 2018). Also, the treaty created the European Economic Community (EEC) which could be regarded as the foundation of future European trade. It created a free trade area, customs unions, and a common market for the goods, labour, and capital of member states. To give a brief explanation, a free trade area means, as the name implies, lifting or removing tariff barriers on the movement of goods across borders. This led to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Though membership does not cut across all E.U member States except Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.

A customs Union on the other hand involves a set of unified tariff put together by members of a free trade area on goods coming from a non-member state. Without these arrangements, goods from non-member state will be moved to the country with the lowest tariff and then re-exported (tariff free) to other states in the free trade area. This kind of arrangement (customs union) was created among the six state in 1969. A common market on its parts is a more inclusive

economic plan in which not only goods cross borders within the customs Union but also Labour and capital. This was also achieved by European states in the 1960s common agricultural policy. To achieve fair play in the agricultural sector was difficult since it is one of the most critical. Subsidies was given to farmers to achieve national self-sufficiency in food and this reflected across board.

It soon became apparent that economic integration cannot be achieved without an economic and monetary union in which member states economic policies will be coordinated for overall efficiency and stability. The moves began in 1969 at the Hague summit where a committee was set up under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister and finance minister of Luxembourg, Pierre Werner. Little by little, the move for a monetary union continued. In March 1979, the European monetary system gave a new dimension to this monetary union. The aim of this EMS was “to create a Zone of monetary stability in Europe as free as possible of wild currency fluctuations. It was primarily because of the volatility of exchange rates that European firms had fought shy of undertaking major, long-term investment projects in other communities, countries and had been unable to take full advantage of the common market. (George, 2019). At the height of this arrangement is the replacement of national currencies with a single European currency. Further move to achieve European currency was seen with the signing of the Maasfricht Treaty in the Dutch city of Maastricht in 1992. It was this treaty that equally renamed the European Community (EC) to the European Union (EU).

The Euro finally came into full circulation and replaced national currencies in 16 EU member states in 2002. Equally, the European Central Banks have taken over the functions of the central banks of those States. However control of this monetary policy was

very difficult since member states economies was not having the same growth rate. The annual budget of the EU had to be raised to make way for the poor member states. Although membership of the financial Union was initially restricted:

“To only those countries with enough financial stability not to jeopardize the Union. To join the unified currency, a state had to achieve a budget deficit of less than 3% of GDP a national debt of less than 60% of GDP an inflation rate no more than 1.5 percentage points above the average of the three Lowest inflation EU members and stable interest rates and national currency values(BBC NEWS,2019).”

Member states of the Euro zone which has increased to 17 had to make hard choices to meet up the above requirements with devastating results for the politicians. While some states still struggles to join the Zone others like Britain, Denmark and Sweden opted to retain their national currencies. Difficulties surrounding the design of the Union was also technically surmounted. The idea of a single currency is arguably the greatest and most difficult achievement of the European Union. Successes recorded by the EU has gravitated European States to it. From an initial six-member organisation it expanded to include all state of Western Europe with the admission of Spain and Portugal in 1986. Today the Union had expanded to include eastern European states of the former Soviet Union. In spite of stiff opposition from the Russian Federation more East European state are making efforts to join.

Perhaps it could be recalled that an attempt by Ukraine to increase trade ties with the EU as prelude to full-time membership and opposition from Russia caused the insurgency in Eastern Ukraine. Turkey has also applied for membership of the EU and

making concerted efforts to meet its conditionality which includes; Economic and political changes especially improving human rights and an end to death penalty, growth in GDP, etc amid stiff opposition across member states. Turkish contributions to the union especially as a supplement to the declining workforce in Western Europe and potential agents of democracy were less vociferous than as a source of what opponents considers Muslim infiltration of Europe (Turkey will be the only Muslim country in the EU) in the face of global Islamist radicalization. Relatively poor EU states also feared labour scarcity with the influx of large Turkish immigrants into their territories. (EU, 1945).

Organization of the European Union

The structure of the EU is responsible for its effectiveness. The activities of the Union is carried out by faceless bureaucrats sometimes regarded as Eurocrats and are concerned more with specialised problems than political issues. They are made up of 24,000 staff under the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium. The 27-member European Commission represented the States of the EU and serve a four-year term that could be renewed. The function of the Commission is detecting challenges and suggesting modalities of dealing with it. The Commission has a President who is selected from amongst the 27 individual members. Among other things, the European Commission is charged with the daily functioning of EU and also sees to the implementation of the decisions council of the European Union (formerly Council of Ministers comprising all relevant ministers).To be fully involved in the affairs of the EU, leaders of State Parties created the European Council that meet with the president of the European Commission twice every year. Without them, the EU monies is

will not flow because they have the powers in their respective state.

The EU also has a parliament (European Parliament) though without actual powers to make laws for all of Europe. Nevertheless, it has some powers to legislate and monitor the activities of the European Commission. The budget of the Commission must be approved by them but not on item-by-item bases. The Parliament shared power with Council especially on immigration, health, employment etc. In the parliament, representatives of member states argue over issues becoming a forum for interaction. There is also the Economic and Social Committees which is an avenue for Companies, Labour Unions, and interest groups etc. to bargain an international basis. On whichever matter it deem important, the European Commission is lobbied for its approval. The European Court of Justice on its part, adjudicate dispute not just between States in the year but individual nationals of member state. Its authority is well recognised by the Treaty of Rome establishing it. The court has the power to overrule national laws that conflict with its own stipulations.

Result and Discussion

Nationalism could be viewed as a feeling of loyalty and have been proud of their country, however, it could also be considered a desire of a people usually not free or independents, to form an independent state for themselves. This concept is chiefly European due to the fact that it is tied to imperialism a policy geared towards the acquisition of overseas possessions mostly through conquest and is responsible for most of their atrocities committed by nations (Joshua, 2011).

To make ones nation great, that is, national prestige, it also have some of its core motives to include; economic gains, national defence etc. When dealing with other people outside Europe, different reason or factors might

trigger imperialism which is an offshoot of nationalism.

Europe had escaped the destructive tendencies of nationalism through a systematic and spirited mean of integration beginning in the Economic sector. Little by little 28(Croatia being the 28th in 2018) countries including all of Western Europe became fused into one powerful economic and political organisation - European Union. However, in recent years some elements within the EU are organising people along political line to oppose the Union in policies they consider and anathema to their collective interest. This was shown in some of the elections to the European Parliament in relatively recent years. The ultimate aim of this anti-European group is perhaps "to develop a transnational anti-system and anti-EU coalition, eager to ally with grassroots protesters. Their aims is to create political networks that influence the next European Parliament with the hope of dismantling the Union or transferring powers from one Brussels to capital cities." They capitalised on divisions between elites and the public, Europhiles and Euroskeptics and far right nationalism and liberalism especially in Italy, France, Germany, etc to voice anti-EU rhetorics." (Joshua, 2011).

Nationalism in the European Union is built around populism - they believe in the right, wisdom of virtues of the common people especially when champion by political party - which rose due to a low economic growth, scepticism or doubt about the ostensible gains of globalisation, inequality among members, fears about trans-border movement, population changes, and above all fears about loss of national sovereignty. The method adopted by these nationalist forces have been adopted by other moderate political parties as a means of attracting votes. Therefore for if these developments persist, Europeans may likely opts to leave



the Union in spite of the huge blow this may cause to those economies.

Trade especially with the United States is dwindling as it considers higher tariff on its automobiles. If this is done, Germany will be the greatly affected likewise other EU countries that form their supply chain. EU will of course retaliate leading to a possible trade war with the United States. (Joshua, 2011). Most EU member-states knew the implications of this development on their national economies and are getting increasingly scared of the Union.

Nationalism or nationalist sentiments has also been revoked due to the Refugee crisis that struck Europe in 2015 as a result of the Arab Spring and especially The Syrian Civil War. Others came from Iraq and Afghanistan and made headway to reach European countries like Austria, Germany. Among some of the negative effects of this refugees crisis are: Brexit in the United Kingdom, the rise of far-right political parties in Germany, Spain, France and Italy. In Eastern Europe “right-wing governments in Hungary and Poland propagate increasingly xenophobic and authoritarian policies that have brought the European Union to the brink of dissolution. The crisis pitted northern Europe against southern and the higher countries of the Continent against the poorer ones” (Jones, 2018). With this development on ground, individual countries in the European Union and Europe at large sought national rather than continental protection against these immigrants. It was one of those moments since the formation of the EU that it became done on member states that despite the efforts at ensuring full-time integration, nationalism will not be jettisoned. It could be recalled that the Schengen Agreement of 1985 created a common area (which now includes 26 countries) where members could move freely without checks. This means that if you are in one country in the zone, you

could move to others. Membership of the zone extended to non-EU States. Although the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland maintain border control even with the obligation to admits EU citizens.

Then, these immigrants that landed in Italy and Greece after crossing the Mediterranean were made to remain there while the richer countries in EU negotiate quotas to be admitted into their respective countries. Efforts by the EU to ensure equality or fair share to the respective member states failed. The important thing to note here is that the various EU states had their immigration policies which mainly favours certain States (outside of European, mainly nationals of their former colonies) and discriminated some others.

The effect of the Refugee crisis ranges from criticisms against national government for admitting more of the Fiji as was the case against the government of Angela Merkel in Germany, to state to state criticisms for not admitting a fair share. Nations also feel the infiltration of radical Islamist elements into their countries. As early as 2004, there have been a terrorist attack in Madrid, London, Paris, Brussels, Nice, Berlin and other cities in Europe. These terrorist attacks had not only being catastrophic to the individual victims’ nations but the entire Union as a whole. For example “the 28 EU member states have lost around 180 billion euros in GDP terms due to terrorism between 2004 and 2016.”(Andrea, 2018). At the individual state level, there are different categories of losses. Accordingly, “the UK (€43.7 billion euros) and France (€43 billion)... This was closely followed by Spain (€40.8 billion) and then Germany (around €19 billion).”(Jones, 2018). Meanwhile in the wide coverage of these attacks made it not only a European affair but a global one with devastating psychological effect especially on those close by (within Europe). It is also of great concern

to Europeans that their citizens, especially the youths, after being radicalised travel to Iraq and Syria to fight in what they called Jihad. It is not only the image, this development portraits of the country of these jihadist (people who tend to look at the country with contempt) that matters but sometimes they return and plan further attacks on the community. Even if this is most often uncovered and frustrated, nationals live in perpetual fear and uncertainty of attacks. It is therefore reasoned that with a national emigration and immigration policy, the spate of these attacks could be minimised. However, EU immigrations laws does not help matters. Muslims emigrate into European States and make conversions. It has been proven that statistically “that the size of the Muslim community in a country matters in the issue of jihadist foreign fighters, government effort should be more oriented towards integration of these minorities in the domestic culture to avoid further radicalization or home-grown terrorism.”(Rand, 2012). It is not clear whether movement (at least within the Schengen zone) within the EU could be adequately monitored to check these occurrences. Anti-EU agitators feels this is possible if national laws on immigration supersedes.

“Brexit” a Pointer to Nationalism in the European Union

British planned departure from the European Union popularly referred to as Brexit since the United Kingdom’s referendum in 2016 and its eventual disengagement provided a clear scenario of how nationalism (on individual state level) is attempting to fully resurface in Europe. Just as for years back, the challenge of European Integration had been mainly economics and politics, globalization had evoked this spirit as it makes them have the fear of economic insecurity.

The European Union Integration style had made it easier for cross-border movement across member states (Schengen area) (Rand, 2012). This made it possible influx of job seekers from poor member states to the rich ones. This wouldn’t have caused a problem except that, in the British situation, it caused what was termed a neglect of nationals. Accordingly, there were reports of “EU nationals that moved into council flats after good, hard-working British families were evicted. About migrants working for less money, putting them out of jobs” (Rand, 2012). By this development, most UK citizens felt insecure economically and otherwise and wanted their leaders to look inwards by channeling the country’s resources to its national rather than the larger EU community. They needed to be fully in control of their economy, hence, the leave - campaign slogan ‘Take Back Control’.

It could be recalled that in 2003, the government of Toney Blair granted complete freedom of movement to 10 new states that acceded to the EU from Central and Eastern Europe, and the Baltic States plus Cyprus and Malta. This was responsible for the influx of workers into Great Britain which the leave campaigners capitalized on.

The UK also voted to leave the EU due to the adverse effects of the Eurozone’s failure to deliver growth to its 19 member States. In the light of the above, “extremely damaging fiscal policies in Frankfurt and Brussels have a direct impact on the UK. Equally, it reduces the value of the single market to the UK, as Eurozone fiscal rigidity squeezes economic growth” (Alan, 2016). The drama of economic collapse in the Eurozone frightened onlookers in Britain and destroyed the prospect of the European project’s promise of prosperity. There was disillusionment in their support for the Union and they voted to leave.

The British people also sees a new entity entirely different in economic strength and social mobile. As noted by some keen observers, the European Union is not the vigorous entity that the United Kingdom joined in 1973. Then the European Economic Community had the legitimacy of the strong economic growth which characterized the years after the Second World War. The EU of 2016 by contrast has been hit by a series of extremely damaging blows: the economic crises of 2008; the self-inflicted damage from failure to deal with the flaws of the euro following the crisis; Russian success in upsetting the post-cold war balance of power in Europe; terrorist attacks from ISIS and immense migration flows into the Union.”(Causes of BRITXIT, 2019).

Also judging from the late accession to the EEC by Britain, it becomes glaring that they did not do that to express their love for a continental project rather they did it in order to work closely with other Western European democracies and economic strongholds. Being a country that had never been outrightly conquered, the British believes more in themselves. Years of anti-EU stance couldn’t have been turned overnight when the referendum came up. As clearly figured out:

For decades, the British political class and media played an anti-EU game, where make-up stories on the horrors of the EU were plastered across the front pages of tabloid newspapers. The drip effect of forty-years of negative media coverage was difficult to reverse in a four month referendum campaign. (Treaty of Rome, 2015).

The attitude of the EU towards China’s unfair economic practices may have also contributed to Brexit in addition to the effect of globalization on the UK’s economy. China had incessantly violated the rules of the Worlds Trade Organization since it joined

in 2001 and the EU is reluctant or incapable of compelling them to do so. Businesses in the UK seem to lack the mechanism to contend with the Chinese trade design and had expected the EU to moderate their behaviour. It was therefore not surprising, (especially to the UK citizens) to see people vote to leave the Union. Expectedly, the Brexit vote had created a devastating effect on the European Integration (even if it eventually upturned by another referendum considering the current debate over to leave with or without a deal).

In the first place, no member had ever voted to leave the Union throughout the numerous years of its existence. This accounted for the huge shock to the global standing of this European project in the wake of the vote. Perhaps other member state previously uncomfortable with some of the Unions policies and standing especially the crisis in the Euro zone, immigration, etc. may decide to toll the part of Britain in the future. Just as the credibility, legitimacy of the union with regards to championing a continental integration project is becoming increasingly doubtful in some quarters, so might it ultimately lead to the disintegration of the Union. As attention is diverted from serious issues like ISIS, Russian aggression, migration flow, etc. to negotiating Brexit, anti-EU forces will be strengthened and it will require few of such events to make EU a thing of the past.

Britain’s exit will certainly affect the EU single market scheme being an economically viable nation. This may trigger the nationalist demand for the protection of local industries which is an anathema to the aims and objectives of the European Union. Moreover, Britain was a major employer of labour from the EU. Brexit therefore implies that the teeming EU workers will look elsewhere which will certainly be of great political concern to those nations. Nationalist parties

have already begun to question the right of their leaders to mortgage the future of their countries.

Ultimately, it could be said that Brexit vote has strengthened anti-immigration, and in fact, anti-EU parties across Europe. This has made the Germany chancellor, Angela Merkel announce that she will not seek reelection after her current term. It is therefore reasoned that if anti-EU parties are strengthened sufficiently in Germany and France, they could instigate an anti-EU Britain-like vote in those countries and the exit of any would have dealt a devastating blow to the Union. (Aude, 2015). Brexit vote is arguably the most devastating occurrence in EU since foundation and is likely to cause more harm than initially envisioned. Great Britain will also have its own fair share of its consequences.

Conclusion

Europe had made genuine effort to bring together all its nations so as to forge a common front economically and politically having fought bitter wars as a result of nationalism. Their leaders and people made hard choices to relinquish aspects of their sovereignty to this supranational organization. This European project had recorded enviable successes as it progressed from one stage to another amid very difficult challenges. However, certain occurrences took place in relatively recent years to challenge the Unity of this long established organization. These include the Eurozone crisis, immigration crisis, Russian aggression in Eastern Europe, etc. and these led to the rise of anti-union sentiments. As a result, Britain, one of its economic backbones voted to leave the Union in 2016 and still battles with the appropriate modality to do so. If Britain eventually leaves, it might trigger other member states to follow its step. The future of post-Brexit EU will depend on how Britain fares after it leaves. If the EU's

prosperity deteriorates and the UK increases, the likelihood of other members leaving would be anticipated. But if it doesn't and instead the union made headway without Britain, then there will be greater assurances that the union would not collapse as had already been predicted by many.

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