

M3 U5

THE EU TODAY: DEBATES, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES



THE EU IS NOT A FINISHED PROJECT. IT CONTINUES TO
EVOLVE AND FACES IMPORTANT CHALLENGES.

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES IN AN INTEGRATED EUROPE

THE EUROZONE CRISIS (2009–2015)

Between 2009 and 2015, several countries using the euro faced a serious financial and economic crisis.

WHY DID IT HAPPEN?

- Before the crisis, some countries borrowed a lot of money to cover their spending.
- When the global financial crisis hit in 2008, their economies suffered.
- Tax revenues fell, unemployment rose, and governments could not repay their debts.
- Investors lost confidence and demanded higher interest rates.

COUNTRIES MOST AFFECTED



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WHAT WERE THE CONSEQUENCES?



RECESSION

The economy shrank. Many businesses closed.



UNEMPLOYMENT

Millions of people lost their jobs, especially young people.



AUSTERITY MEASURES

To reduce debt, governments cut public spending and increased taxes.



SOCIAL IMPACT

Living conditions worsened for many people. Protests and political tensions increased.



IMPACT ON THE EU

The crisis tested the solidarity and unity of the European Union.



Because these countries share the same currency (the euro), they **cannot** print their own money or change its value to solve their problems.

WHAT DID THE EU DO?

The EU and its partners put in place several measures to try to help these countries and restore stability.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Loans were given to countries in difficulty, in return for reforms.



STRICTER RULES

New rules were created to better control public debt and budgets.



SUPPORT FOR THE ECONOMY

Investments were made to help growth, jobs and competitiveness.



STRONGER COOPERATION

EU countries cooperate more closely to prevent future crises.

WHAT WE LEARNED



The crisis showed that sharing a currency requires trust, responsibility and solidarity.

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MIGRATION AND THE MANAGEMENT OF BORDERS

Individuals migrate for many reasons, which could be:

- Because of war and conflict in their home country
- To find work in another country
- Due to political instability in their home country
- With respect to environmental issues

In 2015, Europe faced a major migration crisis.

This created disagreements between EU countries:

- How should migrants be shared between countries?
- How can borders be controlled effectively?
- How to balance humanitarian values and security concerns?



Source: European Parliament © European Union

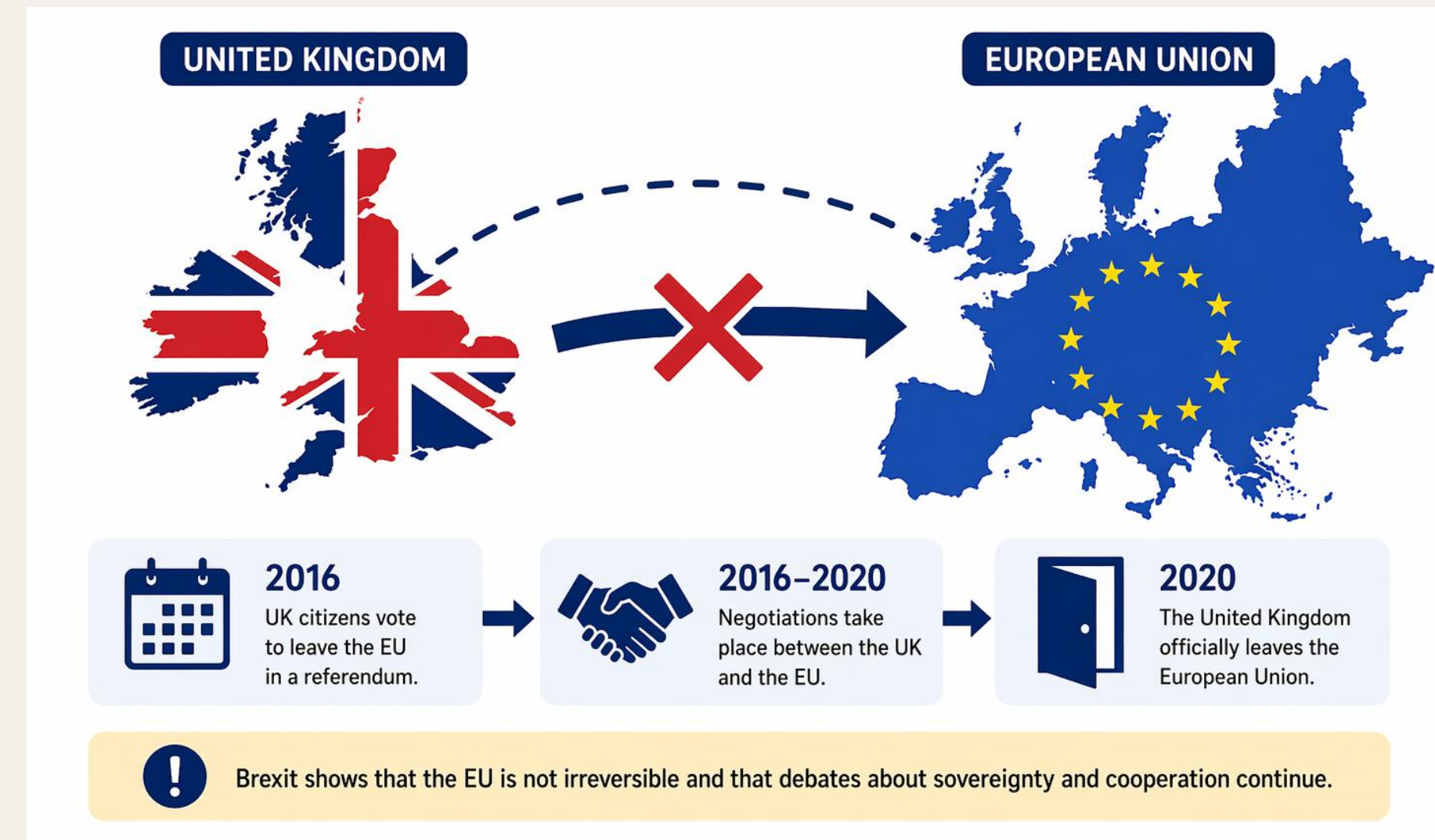
BREXIT

AND THE RISK OF "DISINTEGRATION"

Brexit raised important questions:

- Why do some citizens oppose European integration?
- What happens economically and politically when a country leaves?
- Could other countries leave in the future?

→ **This phenomenon is sometimes called the risk of European disintegration.**



THE EU AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

The EU also builds relationships with nearby countries. This is done through the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

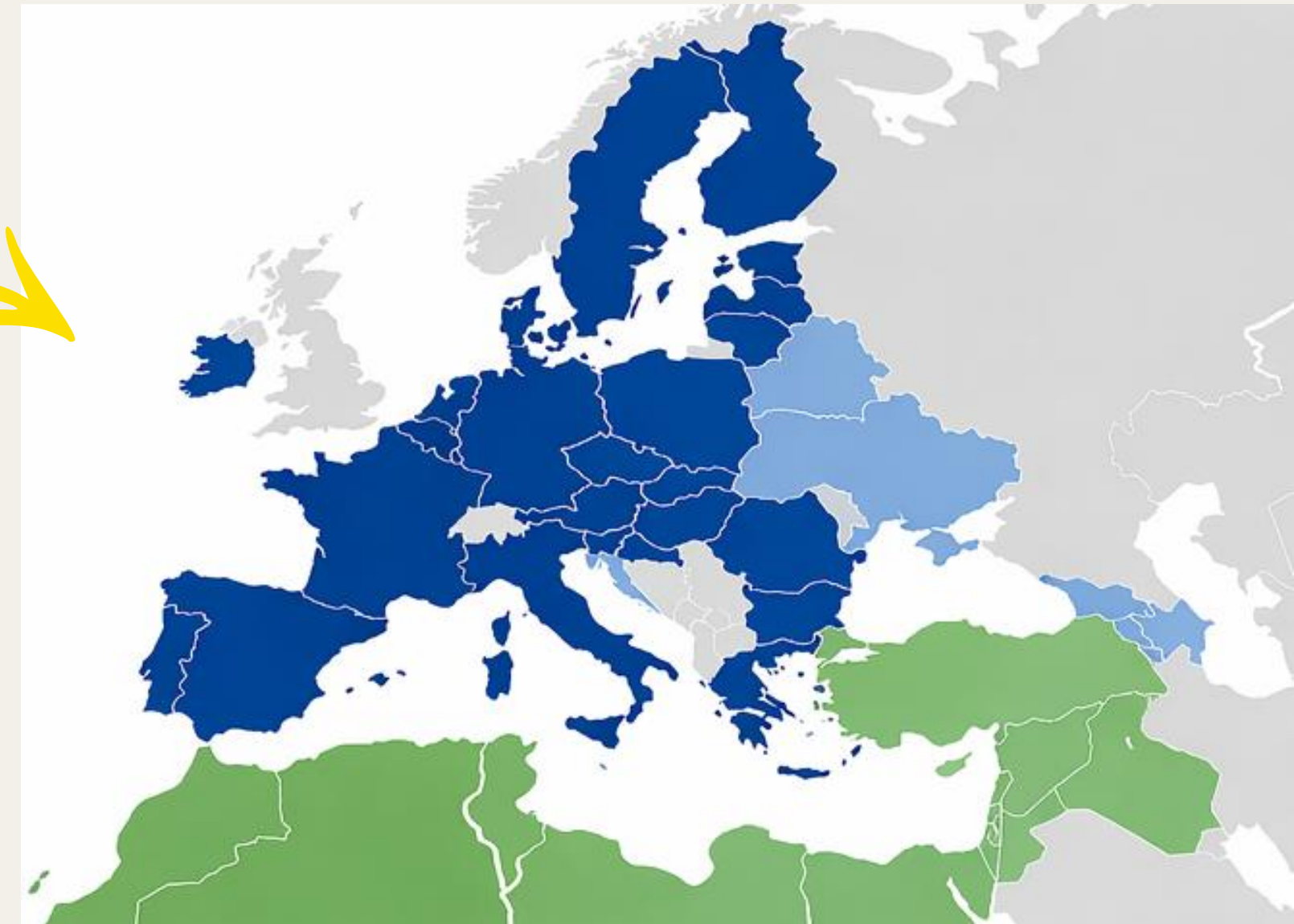
It focuses on countries which are:

- East of the EU (e.g. Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, etc.)
- South of the EU (e.g. Morocco, Tunisia, etc.)

Its goals are to:

- Promote stability, peace and human rights
- Support economic development
- Encourage political cooperation

It has evolved from a focus on economic cooperation to a stronger emphasis on stability and security.



THE EU AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Climate change

Through the Green Deal, the EU plays a leading role to:

- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Develop renewable energy

Geopolitical tensions

For example, the Russian invasion of Ukraine led to:

- Economic sanctions against Russia
- Humanitarian aid to Ukraine
- Stronger cooperation on energy and defense between member states

→ However, the EU is not unanimous in its support and this support also faces opposition.



Sources: European Parliament, EEAS © European Union

DEBATES ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE EU

Some support a greater integration:

- Stronger common defence
- More shared policies

Others prefer more national control.

Key debates include:

- Should the EU develop a common army?
- Should more countries adopt the euro?
- Should the EU continue to enlarge?
- How to make EU decisions more democratic?

→ The EU evolves through debates, crises and reforms.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THIS SEQUENCE, PLEASE REFER TO:

[HTTPS://COMMISSION.EUROPA.EU/STRATEGY-AND-POLICY/RELATIONS-UNITED-KINGDOM_EN](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/relations-uk-en)

[HTTPS://WWW.CONSILIUM.EUROPA.EU/EN/POLICIES/EUROPEAN-GREEN-DEAL/](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-green-deal/)

[HTTPS://WWW.CONSILIUM.EUROPA.EU/EN/POLICIES/EU-MIGRATION-POLICY/](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-migration-policy/)

[HTTPS://WWW.EEAS.EUROPA.EU/EEAS/EUROPEAN-NEIGHBOURHOOD-POLICY_EN](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-neighbourhood-policy_en)

[HTTPS://WWW.EUROPARL.EUROPA.EU/THINKTANK/EN/DOCUMENT/LDM_BRI\(2012\)120290](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/LDM_BRI(2012)120290)



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