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Wilton Park



Report

**British German Forum 2016**  
**What does the EU mean to us in Britain and**  
**Germany now?**

Sunday 10 – Thursday 14 July 2016 | WP1481

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## Report

# British German Forum 2016 What does the EU mean to us in Britain and Germany now?

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The United Kingdom's unprecedented vote to leave the EU has sent shockwaves across the continent, setting Germany and Britain on different and potentially divergent trajectories. Britain will have to negotiate a new economic deal with the EU over the next few years, while Germany will have to rein in the centrifugal forces threatening the longevity of the European project – Euroscepticism, the threat of another Eurozone crisis, and an unstable European neighbourhood. How will the British-German relationship change as a result of Brexit, can it adapt to the new status quo, and what can be done to ensure that effective cooperation continues in the future?

The 31st British-German Forum focused on how both partners will deal with the Brexit decision, stem the influence of Eurosceptic parties, and deal with the humanitarian and security challenges they face. Due to the proximity of the forum to the EU referendum vote, this year's conversations dealt extensively with Brexit, asking what it means for the future of British-German relations. Key questions addressed in the course of the forum included:

- How will Britain and Germany approach the future of the EU?
- What is the future of German leadership?
- How is the European identity changing?
- What is the state of EU cohesion in this period of Euroscepticism

### Britain's place in the world after Brexit

1. Britain's vote to leave the EU came as a surprise to both British and German politicians and elites. Britain will be the first EU member state to enter the uncharted territory that comes with exiting the Union.
2. The British vote to leave the Union has placed Britain and Germany on opposite sides of the negotiating table. Germany and the other EU member states will have to balance the strategic and economic benefits of maintaining positive relations with Britain with their need to deter other member states from leaving the Union. If the EU and Germany are too quick to offer Britain the deal it wants Eurosceptic parties in other member states may be further galvanised. However, if the Union punishes Britain in exit negotiations, it risks pushing it further away.
3. Britain will not begin the formal process of leaving the EU until it has triggered Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty. Once Britain does this it will have two years to finalise the terms of its departure. Initially the 'Leave' campaign suggested that Article 50 would be triggered on the day of the result if it tipped in their favour. This hasn't happened and it is still unclear when exactly – if at all – the Article will be triggered.
4. It will be necessary for all parties to approach the negotiations objectively rather than emotionally. In its new position Britain must also be mindful of the interests of the remaining 27 EU member states when it comes to setting divorce proceedings in motion. Specifically, it must understand that failing to invoke Article 50 increases

market uncertainty and impacts investor confidence in the EU as a whole.

5. The 'Leave' campaign suggested that once Britain triggers Article 50 it will be free to independently negotiate free trade deals with the likes of the USA, China and Australia, among others. The EU will no doubt remain an important partner for Britain, but its gaze may be set further afield in the coming years.
6. There is interest in making any Brexit deal advantageous for the EU 27 and Britain. However, Britain must understand that any deal will involve it making compromises too. Prominent 'Leave' campaigner and Foreign Minister Boris Johnson has claimed that his policy on cake is "pro having it and pro eating it", but the view from other member states, including Germany, is that no deal can go ahead without compromises being made on both sides.
7. During and after negotiations Britain will be considered a "third country" and can only be granted access to the EU single market if it is willing to accept the four freedoms - free movement of goods, free movement of services/establishment, free movement of people (including workers), and free movement of capital. Britain cannot gain access to the single market unless it is willing to allow these freedoms.
8. The "Norway model", which would grant Britain access to the single market as part of the European Economic Area (EEA), is being tipped by pundits as the most likely framework Britain will emulate in its negotiations. A Norway-style deal is considered the best case scenario by many 'Remain' voters at this stage.
9. Throughout the referendum campaign immigration was cited as one of the main concerns by 'Leave' voters. It is therefore unclear how a Norway-style arrangement would work for Britain if such a deal is predicated on acceptance of the free movement of people.
10. Britain has hinted at its desire for a "Norway+" model through which it would be able to reap the benefits of the single market without accepting all of the obligations that come with it – including freedom of movement. Many 'Leave' campaigners believe that such an agreement is attainable on the basis that Britain is more economically important than Norway. However, it is likely that Britain will have to revisit its expectations in this regard because any trade deal must be mutually beneficial.
11. Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty was designed to be punitive in order to deter member states from leaving the Union. Britain will not be able to engage in bilateral arrangements with EU member states during this period, but will have to negotiate with the Commission appointed negotiator who will represent the collective interests of the EU 27. The two year negotiation period can only be extended by unanimous agreement among the EU 27. This puts Britain in a weak negotiating position.
12. Britain is under pressure from its European partners – especially Germany and France – to trigger Article 50 and begin negotiations as soon as possible. There is a desire among key EU member states for Britain to put an end to the uncertainty, but Britain should make sure that it only initiates Article 50 once it has had preliminary discussions (not negotiations) with EU partners.
13. As a result of the Brexit vote it is inevitable that Britain will experience several years of economic and political instability. Economic growth will slow, foreign direct investment and trade will likely decrease even though exports will be cheaper, and businesses may opt to leave Britain in favour of other EU hubs that offer favourable trading conditions, such as Frankfurt and Dublin.
14. It is unclear to what extent Britain's role in the world and its relations with Germany will change after Brexit, at least while the British government's post-Brexit plan remains in the dark. If Britain and the EU negotiate a Norway-type deal, Britain will still trade with the EU and will still have to adopt many EU laws and regulations in order for its products to be compliant with EU product standards.

15. The British-EU relationship will continue to be important even after Britain has left the EU. Britain will still have a stake in the EU's security and economic issues, but will have to speak up and assert its desire to be a part of decisions on key dossiers because it will no longer be automatically included in conversations at EU level.
16. Since the beginning of the EU project Britain has been a reluctant partner. It joined in 1975 despite deep divisions in Harold Wilson's ruling Labour party, and before ratifying membership it requested concessions. Opinion polls from 1977 to the present have indicated an ambivalent view of the EU in Britain. Considering the trend indicated by polling data and the raft of crises facing the EU today it is perhaps not surprising that Britain finally opted to pull the plug on its EU membership.

### **The future of German leadership**

17. Germany sees the world today as an increasingly fragmented place, with greater levels of disorder owing to the Russian threat in Ukraine, the refugee crisis, and the rise of the Islamic State group (ISIS).
18. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall Germany has benefited considerably from the forces of globalisation, having built a formidable economy in the decades since reunification. It is only now that Germany is taking a step back and engaging in sober analysis of how the globalising influences that have allowed Germany to thrive have also resulted in many being left behind and disillusioned with this new Germany. German politicians are discovering that the narrative of EU prosperity no longer resonates in many places.
19. Germany is concerned about the growing influence of centrifugal forces in the EU and is concerned that the Brexit vote may increase the influence and attractiveness of other Eurosceptic and populist movements that are opposed to the EU model – such as France's *Front National*, the *Sweden Democrats*, Italy's *Legha Nord*, and the Netherlands' *PVV*, among others.
20. German elites want a swift invocation of Article 50 to end the period of political and economic uncertainty that the Brexit vote has delivered. Chancellor Merkel has clearly set out her stance when it comes to negotiations, stating that there will be no British *rosinenpickerei* (cherry-picking) of terms.
21. Over the last year Germany has felt that it needs responsible and committed partners that it can rely on. Germany cannot be the EU's "lonely leader", especially in the face of the many challenges ahead: Italy's referendum on constitutional reform, Hungary's referendum on refugee quotas, another potential Eurozone crisis, the Article 50 negotiations with Britain, and the continued strain the refugee crisis is placing on EU unity.
22. Traditionally Germany, France and Britain were considered the most powerful member states, able to forge consensus among the remaining members and push forward initiatives. This "tri-force" of EU leadership has lost one member making it less stable and diminishing its ability to push forward and effectively lead on EU problem-solving.
23. Germany finds it difficult to imagine that a bilateral relationship with France could deliver the same results as a Germany-France-UK trio. Germany is concerned by the domestic political situation in France and the rise of Marine le Pen's *Front National*. There is a sense that all roads now lead to Berlin as the geographic, economic and political centre of Europe.
24. Poland, Italy and Spain all represent choices for a replacement partner to the trio. However, the Weimar Triangle has looked weak in recent years and the election of Poland's far right and Eurosceptic *Law and Justice Party* means that Poland may not be the most dependable partner at the moment. Italy is headed into uncertain waters with its upcoming referendum, and Spain seems – at least for now – unwilling to step up to the plate and take a more prominent role.
25. Germany has strong political leadership in Chancellor Merkel and a position on the EU

stage that is unrivalled by any other member state. There are questions about what the future of German leadership will look like when Merkel leaves. Can she be replaced with a politician that commands the same level of respect and is able to pull EU member states together?

26. Despite Germany feeling that it is the EU's "reluctant leader", the country hasn't always seemed that reluctant to other EU member states that have watched Germany voluntarily take the lead on solving the Eurozone crisis and negotiating the EU-Turkey refugee deal. Unilateral decision-making by Germany can alienate other member states and encourage disillusionment with the EU at a national level. Germany has to be conscious of its position and ensure that it involves other member states in decision-making processes.
27. The question of German power is ambiguous for Germans and Brits alike. Germany has to be conscious of its history in Europe when reflecting on its role in the EU. Any powerful nation has to be modest and measured when cooperating with others. Germany has to ensure that its power is wielded in the European interest. There should be more open reflection on German power to ensure that this is the case in future.
28. Germany needs to build smarter coalitions within the EU to ensure there is sufficient "buy-in" for initiatives and proposed solutions. This will increase engagement of less active member states with the EU. Germany should also be careful to build consensus at home for decisions taken at the EU level – after all, citizens are stakeholders at EU as well as at national level.
29. These are dark days for the prospect of "ever closer Union". In recent years there has been a gradual re-nationalisation of EU debate away from Brussels and back towards member state capitals. This has come to a head with the Brexit vote. European citizens are not going to transfer their loyalty from their national governments to the EU easily, so there needs to be a new model for engaging European citizens and building local consensus for decisions taken at EU-level.

## **European identity**

30. Europeans share a history that on many occasions has been incredibly violent. But the EU has been a force of stabilisation and a project that has been able to "manage difference" peacefully. The diversity of Europe is a key part of the European identity – in terms of culture, language, geography and development. Despite the differences between Europeans they have come to embrace a shared set of values that have shaped what it means to be European today.
31. The European identity is stronger in Germany than in many other member states, including Britain. This is due to Germany's history and the complex layers of identification that Germans feel. The partition of the country for many years, the greater focus on regional identity, and its geographical position all encourage the development of a more European identity.
32. The Brexit vote has revealed the extent to which many feel disillusioned with the EU. At the same time the outcome of the vote has led to the emergence of Britain's first popular pro-European movement.
33. Being pro-EU and pro-European are not the same thing. A number of Eurosceptic politicians across the EU, as well as ordinary citizens accept that they are European, but object to the EU as a system of pan-European governance. Despite this it is clear that those with a strong sense of having a European identity are more in favour of the EU.
34. At the same time, over the past five or so years European populist parties have been gaining votes and the Brexit vote could serve to "prove right" prominent voices such as Marine le Pen in France or Norbert Hoffer in Austria.
35. Populist Eurosceptic parties pose an existential threat to the EU project, and their rise



signals a waning of the European identity and the need for reform.

36. Having to satisfy an increasingly discontented demos, many European member states have become reticent about cooperating on EU level dossiers geared towards achieving the greater European good at the expense of national interests. This has especially been the case on the issue of refugee quotas, where a number of member states – such as Hungary and Poland – have been unwilling to cooperate on a European level as a result of national pushback.
37. The print media also plays a key role in shaping the national or European identities of citizens in each member state. During the campaigning period for the British referendum on EU membership the tabloid press played a prominent role in pushing forward discourses that stressed national identity and pitted it against European identity. During the campaign period there was a sense that national and European identities were mutually exclusive and could not truly exist side by side.
38. Britain's position as an island that shares only one land border with another EU member state may automatically make it more predisposed to feeling less European. Germany by contrast shares 9 land borders with other European countries, making European cooperation more of a priority. In short, there is a case for saying that European geography impacts the strength of European identity.
39. Since Britain's vote to leave the EU there has been a continent-wide uptick in pro-EU sentiment in key member states – including those with established and relatively successful Eurosceptic movements – such as Austria, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy and Germany.
40. The root of weak European identity in Britain and in other member states may be weak messaging from the EU itself about what role it plays and why people should value it. In the immediate aftermath of Britain's vote to leave the EU, the most popular Google search result was "What is the EU?", indicating that people were not properly informed before voting. This revelation uncovered the need for non-partisan information about what the EU is and what function it performs. The EU also needs to demonstrate clearly to people how it benefits them in very tangible ways. If the EU can improve its messaging, it may also be able to strengthen how European people feel. The EU and its member states need to reflect on the Brexit vote and think about how the EU's communication strategy can be improved.
41. National parliaments should make efforts to better communicate their interactions with the EU at a domestic level. Commissioners should be accountable to the national parliament and justify what they have achieved in EU negotiations and why. Improving the transparency of EU processes by tying them directly to the national parliament would represent a big step forward in also justifying the EU as a democratic institution.

### **Freedom of movement and the refugee crisis**

42. The EU has dealt with flows of refugees from the Middle East, North Africa, and the Balkans, as well as other regions in its history, but never to the same extent as in 2015. The refugee crisis has now become one of the main threats to the stability of the EU project.
43. Since the beginning of the crisis Germany has discovered that its foreign policy decisions – as well as those of other member states – directly impact its domestic policy. The greater the unrest in the Middle East the greater the number of refugees Germany receives, which also impacts on Merkel's own popularity ratings. However, it is also important to note that the high numbers of refugees is also due to Merkel's "open door" policy. The German ministry of the interior has had to adopt policies that take into account both the foreign and domestic situation.
44. There has been significant domestic push-back both against Merkel's "open door policy" for refugees and the EU-Turkey refugee deal that Germany negotiated. Whether the deal was popular or not, the number of refugee arrivals has decreased significantly

since its implementation. In the last year Germany has taken a much higher number of refugees than other member states. Germany also has the highest refugee quota of all EU member states.

45. Despite German attempts to lead from the centre, the EU's refugee crisis response has lacked coherence. Sweden and Denmark began checking passports on the Oresund Bridge, while many countries along the Balkan route closed their borders to incoming refugees.
46. Germany took in approximately 1 million refugees last year, and received half a million asylum applications. Since the EU-Turkey refugee deal Germany has received approximately 50,000 refugees in 2016, a marked decrease which indicates that the deal is having the desired effects.
47. The reintroduction of border controls as a means of managing refugee flows would signal the end of the Schengen zone and be a worst case scenario for Germany. Hungary will hold a referendum in October on whether the EU should be able to mandate the resettlement of non-EU citizens to Hungary without the approval of the local sovereign parliament. There has been fragile support for refugee quotas, especially from countries in Eastern Europe such as Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. Economic incentives have helped to promote further integration within the EU, so Germany and other EU leaders should consider incentivising refugee reception, rather than making refugee quotas seem like a punitive measure
48. Upholding Schengen will depend on full EU cooperation and support for the principle of free movement. If one member state opts out and encloses itself there could be a domino effect. It will not be possible to solve the problems facing the EU if member states turn their back on the values and principles of the Union.
49. Germany needs greater co-ownership of the refugee issue and cannot be the only member state seeking solutions. It needs to work to build coalitions of committed member states at an EU level in order to ensure that the principle of burden-sharing is adhered to in both reception of refugees, and proposal of initiatives.
50. The EU needs to reflect on the way it has dealt with the refugee crisis so far and how it can learn from its mistakes. The flow of refugees will not stop any time in the near future and this will be an issue that requires a long term solution. Specifically, the EU needs to ensure that in dealing with refugees it does not contradict its own set of principles and values. The framing of the refugee crisis as a security issue rather than a humanitarian issue has meant that policy has often veered into a moral grey area – especially as regards the EU-Turkey refugee deal, FRONTEX policies, and the often aggressive defence of borders along the Balkan route. The EU must take care to balance its interests and its values.
51. By opting to leave the EU Britain will no longer be obliged to conform to EU refugee intake quotas, nor will it have to apply the EU's controversial Dublin III regulation, which requires the member state most responsible for processing the asylum application to be responsible for the refugee – this often means that the responsibility lies with the first member state refugees visit.
52. France permits Britain to operate its external border on the French side of the English Channel. This agreement may be nullified after Brexit, meaning that Britain will have to process refugee arrivals – from places like the makeshift Calais refugee camp – on home soil, should those refugees opt to cross the Channel.
53. Despite voting to leave the EU, Britain will have a vested interest in continuing to cooperate with EU partners on issues relating to the refugee crisis. The inflow of refugees to Europe will continue to be a concern to Britain even if it is no longer an EU member state. As such, Britain will want to continue to shape and engage in efforts to resolve the refugee crisis through other multilateral fora such as the United Nations, and bilateral discussions, even if it is not directly involved in EU policymaking.

54. Concerns about the extent of immigration and the free movement of people – exacerbated by the refugee crisis – were widely expressed by both citizens and elites supporting Britain’s vote to leave the EU. The big challenge for British politicians will be to secure a favourable trade deal with the EU, while providing leave voters with a clear indication that something is being done about immigration levels. The fact that access to the single market is predicated on the acceptance of free movement of people will be a stumbling block. There are false expectations about what it means for Britain to “take back control”. Whatever the outcome at the end of Article 50 proceedings immigration will not and cannot stop entirely.
55. During the campaigning period for the British referendum on EU membership the tabloid press and UKIP actively pushed an anti-immigration agenda. Their treatment of economic migrants and refugees caused them to be scapegoated for the drain on public services that has been caused, to an extent, by government austerity measures.
56. Free movement of EU workers and the rapid influx of more refugees means that the rate of change in the population has been much more noticeable. The rate of change in the diversity of society impacts opinion as much as the absolute number of foreign born residents. Reports released in the aftermath of the vote showed that in areas of high immigration there is often less anti-immigration sentiment. This indicates that the issue is not necessarily immigration itself, but the perceived threat of it. It also indicates that education and greater contact between different people can help to assuage anti-immigrant sentiment.
57. There has been no official guarantee by the British government that EU citizens already resident in the UK will retain their right to remain. Diplomatic relations could be damaged if Britain revokes residency rights for EU citizens and Britain would be a far less accessible and less desirable place to live and work for EU nationals.
58. There has been a rise in reports of racially motivated hate crime in the aftermath of the Brexit vote. Reports indicated that EU citizens were largely the victims of these attacks – be they migrant workers from other EU member states, or naturalised/second generation migrants who hold British citizenship. It seems unlikely that EU migrant workers will be forced to leave Britain – although this is uncertain. If EU workers are permitted to stay it will raise the question of whether leave voters will see the noticeable change they are expecting in the make-up of British society, especially since the Brexit camp have already reneged on a number of commitments since the referendum result was announced – most prominently to deliver the “£350 million” clawed back from the EU each week to the National Health Service.

## **Foreign policy**

59. Britain, Germany and the EU are all threatened to different extents both by a rising China that is buying up European and African infrastructure, and a Russia that continues to belligerently defend its perceived sphere of influence.
60. The Brexit vote represents a break with the post-war order, and further disintegration of the EU would weaken the geopolitical and geo-economic power of all member states. We live in an era of superpowers where the main challengers to the EU’s world order – Russia and China – are single entities rather than multiple stakeholder unions. European states are much better able to negotiate and maintain an equal footing with these superpowers if they continue to work together as a single bloc.
61. Germany and the EU need to be mindful that China is strategically investing in European infrastructure. It has recently purchased ports in Greece as part of its “Belt and Road” Eurasian integration initiative. Investment on EU territory gives China leverage over Greece – one of the EU’s most economically unstable and hence manipulable member states. Other member states such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia are courting China or have already welcomed Chinese outward foreign direct investment. The EU needs to be wary of China’s “chequebook diplomacy”



and ensure that China cannot wield undue influence over the EU as a result of its investments.

62. Britain has also courted Chinese investment for some time. Britain broke the ranks and joined the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank before any common EU position had been determined. In a post-Brexit world it is likely that Britain will pursue even closer ties with China. Britain has been accused of promoting Chinese interests in the EU – especially regarding the recent TATA steel debacle. The EU will not have to deal with Britain pushing Chinese interests in future EU discussions.
63. Britain has been one of the key players upholding the sanctions regime against Russia following its annexation of Crimea and invasion of the Donbas. Once it leaves the EU other member states who have been part of the Normandy Format may have to take greater responsibility for pushing the process forward from the EU side.
64. The EU, Germany and Britain cannot expect progress on the Russia dossier as long as sanctions are tied to the Minsk provisions to end the fighting in the Donbas. The Minsk provisions are “un-implementable” from the Ukrainian side and rely on Russia’s willingness to cooperate. Especially in the wake of Brexit and a weakened EU, Russia feels that it can wait it out, and that sanctions will eventually be withdrawn on its own terms. Relief of sanctions would set a dangerous precedent, so this is also not an option for the EU. Sanctions must therefore remain in place in the medium-term.
65. However, sanctions are only useful if they are employed strategically. If the EU tightens the screws on Russia too much and its economy continues in decline, Russia may be provoked to act unilaterally and erratically to bolster public opinion, as it has in the past. Dialogue must therefore play a key role in future relations with Russia in order to prevent dangerous misunderstandings and to demonstrate that sanctions can be lifted assuming Russia makes certain concessions.
66. Federica Mogherini’s global strategy focused on “state and societal resilience” in the EU’s Eastern Neighbourhood Policy. It is important for the EU to ensure that member states are sufficiently independent of Russia and China that they are not vulnerable to direct attempts at leveraging them, be it through foreign direct investment (FDI) or the provision of energy.
67. Germany may be a better partner for brokering talks or engaging in dialogue with Russia in the short term. Britain-Russia relations are among the worst in the EU and have deteriorated further since the inquiry over the death of Alexander Litvinenko and Sir Robert Owen’s report on the same subject, which claimed that Vladimir Putin would have personally given the order for the assassination.
68. In formulating policy towards China and Russia, EU member states need to balance their desire for lucrative investment and economic cooperation with the need to remain faithful to EU values and ensure sufficient resilience. The geo-economic power that both China and Russia project poses a risk to EU security. Protecting against this risk is no small task. The EU needs more than just “principled pragmatism” and needs to build resilience through the European Energy Union and by strengthening the OSCE’s and NATO’s presence, while engaging in a process that balances deterrence with dialogue, especially when it comes to Russia.
69. The EU must reduce its economic reliance on Russia, especially in imports of natural gas and oil. The EU does not want to end up in a weakened situation like Ukraine, where it is heavily dependent on Russian natural resources. Ensuring energy independence and resilience must be a priority for the EU in the near future.
70. The EU should build stronger bilateral relationships with China so we can better understand what it wants. The COP21 climate change agreement provides a clear opportunity for the EU and China to work more closely with each other. It will also be important for the EU to engage China on this issue in order to ensure it meets its commitments.

71. Britain may cease to be a member of the EU in the next few years, but foreign policy cooperation is one of the areas where relations between Britain, Germany and the EU will likely continue to be strong. Mogherini has hinted that Britain might not be able to cooperate on CFSP initiatives, but Britain is a permanent member of the UN Security Council, NATO, the G7 and the G20, so even if it weren't to collaborate directly with the EU, there are many other multilateral fora in which it can.

## **The future of British-German relations**

72. Following Britain's vote to leave the EU British-German relations will enter a new period. Both partners understand how important the other, and the challenge will be to maintain positive and productive relations once Britain formally departs.
73. It might be more difficult for Britain and Germany to engage in close bilateral relations during the Brexit negotiation period. Brexit negotiations must take place between Britain and the EU 27. Germany needs to mitigate the risk that its bilateral meetings with Britain are perceived as Germany playing "EU leader" again. EU stability may suffer if Germany is perceived to be negotiating bilaterally on issues that should concern all member states.
74. As yet no post-Brexit plan has been outlined or distributed by the British government. Current Prime Minister Theresa May has stated that "Brexit means Brexit", indicating that an "exit from Brexit" is unlikely.
75. Germany will now bear more of the burden for leading the EU forward and holding the Union together. It needs to learn from the Brexit vote and work towards EU reform that works for member states – even if that means a tiered membership system. Two years ago nobody believed that Britain would leave the EU, so Germany and committed EU member states must not bury their heads in the sand about this. The debate in European capitals is becoming increasingly dominated by self-interest rather than solidarity, so the EU needs a new model – perhaps a two or three tier EU membership system that allows opt-outs on certain issues.
76. In the future Britain will no longer be able to use the EU as a scapegoat for immigration, economic, or security issues. This may improve British-German and British-EU relationships in the long term because the public will hold British rather than EU politicians to account for failures.
77. Without Britain, Germany may have to use its weight as the largest member state to push forward initiatives at EU level. This is something it is reluctant to do given criticisms of its previous unilateral action in the EU. However, Germany will have no other choice if it cannot find strong and dependable partners that are willing to take the initiative on certain dossiers.
78. As Brexit negotiations get underway Britain has to make sure it does not aggravate the EU but treats it as a partner. British negotiators will need to understand that they need to convince all 27 member states of any desired economic deal, and that they cannot expect to be granted whatever terms they want.
79. Britain has a strong presence and influence on issues of security and foreign policy. Inside or outside the EU, international issues such as the refugee crisis, the rise of ISIS and the Ukraine crisis will affect Britain and it will want to play a role in resolving them.
80. It is only a matter of time until the EU is faced with another Eurozone crisis. The current balance between political, monetary and fiscal union is not sustainable. Germany and the EU need to ensure that there is more risk-sharing when it comes to the monetary union. Britain has a vested interest in preventing a Eurozone crisis because the emergence of one may push Brexit negotiations further down the EU's list of priorities.
81. British-German relations will become more important in the coming years because the parties will not automatically be meeting at EU level. Britain will need to be proactive in

pushing forward bilateral relations with Germany if it still wants to influence European debate. Germany will have many EU issues to deal with and Britain will have to make the effort to ensure that it has the relationship with Germany that it wants.

82. Britain will have to be careful not to irk its EU partners during Brexit negotiations. Even after Brexit the EU will continue to be one of its most – if not the most – important partner for economic and security cooperation.
83. The EU should not be unnecessarily tough on Britain and punish it for leaving the EU at risk of pushing it away. Such an approach would reflect negatively on the EU and may increase levels of disillusion among other EU member states.
84. The departure of Britain may make alliance-building at EU level more difficult. The Franco-German alliance will not be strong enough to drive the EU forward given France's economic, political, and security challenges. Germany and France will have to encourage other member states to step up to the table and take on more responsibility in the EU and engage in broader coalition building.
85. Most importantly, Britain's departure from the EU should be read as an early warning sign for further disintegration of the Union. Germany, the EU, and other committed member states, need to use the vote as a launch-pad for considering how the Union can be reformed in order to prevent further attrition.
86. Following the Brexit vote, it is important that EU member states do not shy away from difficult questions about the EU's problems. There needs to be serious debate among EU member states about what the EU means to them today, and what the future purpose and nature of the Union should be, including whether and how it should be reformed. Without tackling these fundamental questions head on, the centrifugal forces of nationalism, populism, and waning solidarity, may cause members to gradually drift apart, and by extension, for the Union to disintegrate further

**Gareth A. Davies**

Wilton Park | July 2016

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