

3. The UK's role in international organisations

Key Words

Veto - Ability to vote down any decision

Security Council - Major decision making body of the UN

European Commission – Appointed officials from member countries of the EU who draft policy initiatives and direct workings of the EU.

Commonwealth Charter - Document that lays down principles associated with Commonwealth membership

Agencies – Organisations and bodies that are a part of a major institution. Eg: UN or EU.

Non-governmental Organisations (NGO's) –non-profit, voluntary citizens' groups which are organised on a local, national or international level. Un by people with a common interest.

Humanitarian Crises - a singular event or a series of events that are threatening in terms of health, safety or well-being of a community or large group of people.



International Organisations:

United Nations (UN) – Established in 1945. Headquarters in New York. Members meet to decide the policy and actions to be taken by the UN. UK is a founder member. Has 193 members. One of the most important international bodies in the world.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) - Military alliance between several governments – based on the North Atlantic Treaty signed in April 1949. Based in Brussels. Member states can agree to collective defence in response to any attack. 28 member states – including the UK. Currently, operating in Afghanistan, Kosovo.

The Commonwealth: Made up of former British colonies that are now independent. Aims to develop democracy, provides aid and financial assistance, technical and education support to member countries. Commonwealth heads of government meet each year. The Queen is head of the Commonwealth. There are 53 member countries.

World Trade Organisation (WTO) – Began 1955. UK joined in 1955. Has 161 member countries. Headquarters in Geneva. The only organisation dealing with trading rules between nations.

Council of Europe: Is the continents leading human rights organisation. 47 member countries of which 28 are members of the EU. All countries agree to abide by European Convention on Human Rights. UK was a founder member

NGO's and Syria

Since 2012 the UK government has allocated over £900 million to 30 partners including NGOs and the Red Cross to meet the needs to of the population of Syria. The key outcomes of this funding were:

- Food
- Water
- Health
- Shelter
- Education

How the UK has assisted in resolving international disputes and conflict:

Mediation: Seeking a peaceful resolution to disputes and conflicts. EG: Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland.

Sanctions: The UK government operates a range of sanctions from arms embargoes and trade control restrictions to defence export policies. Normally imposed as part of a collective by bodies such as EU or UN.

Use of Force: UK armed forces have been involved in numerous military actions since 1990. Most have been working with others in alliances. Many have been controversial.

Examples where, since 1991 UK forces have been used abroad:

- 1991 – Gulf War,
- 1992-96 – UN peacekeeping Mission
- 1998 – Operation Desert Fox
- 1999 – NATO led campaign in former Rep of Yugoslavia
 - Multinational peacekeeping East Timor
 - Sierra Leone – rescuing troops
- 2001 -14 – US led campaign in Afghanistan
- 2003 – Democratic Republic of Congo
- 2003 – Invasion of Iraq
- 2011 – Military intervention in Libya



Pressure Groups & NGOs – International Campaigns:

Oxfam – developed as a response to poverty and campaigns to bring an end to global poverty.

Greenpeace – campaigns in regard to environmental issues such as climate change.

Amnesty International – campaigns on human rights issues.

Key Terms

Brexit – term created by the media which has become popularised to

European Union:

Set up in 1957 to create a common market for goods, workers, services and capital within member states. There were 6 founding members: France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. **UK joined in 1973** – along with Ireland and Denmark. Now **28 members**, 9 of

The European Parliament:

Represents all people in the EU. Its members are chosen in an election every five years where all adult citizens in the EU have the right to vote. The elected people are called MEPs – Members of European Parliament. The Parliament discusses and decides on

The European Council:

Is the voice of the EU countries. Government ministers from every EU country meet regularly to pass new EU laws. In the **European Council** all the leaders of the EU countries (Presidents, Prime Ministers or Chancellors)

The European Commission:

is made up of 28 politicians ('Commissioners'), one from each EU country. They are helped by experts, lawyers, secretaries and translators. Their job is to think about what would be best for the EU as a whole and to propose new EU laws.

The Court of Justice:

Makes sure that all EU countries stick to the laws that they have agreed on. The Court also checks that these laws respect "fundamental rights", such as the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press.



Why is Britain leaving the European Union?

A referendum - a vote in which everyone (or nearly everyone) of voting age can take part - was held on Thursday 23 June, 2016, to decide whether the UK should leave or remain in the European Union. Leave won by 51.9% to 48.1%. The referendum turnout was 71.8%, with more than 30 million people voting.

To give a reason, David Cameron (the then Prime Minister) was under pressure to hold a referendum on being part of the EU as part of the Conservative manifesto in 2015. This was to try and bring voters back to the Conservative party who may have considered voting for UKIP in that election.

After declaring the referendum, Vote Leave and Remain campaigns became politically charged, with a very ill feeling created between people of different political views which has persisted to this day. As of June 2020, the UK still has not left the EU, despite the referendum being 4 years ago.

Arguments for REMAINING in the EU

The EU has laws which make member states act responsibly towards the environment.

There are 500 million people in the EU so there is a big marketplace for European businesses.

There is a lot of competition between European businesses to keep prices low for consumers.

Everyone in the EU has the right to move freely and live anywhere in the EU without a visa.

If there is unemployment in one country, you can move to another in search of work.

European products cost less as there is no tax of their sale in the EU.

Arguments for LEAVING the EU

The free movement of workers has led to the reduction in wages as there is higher demand for jobs.

If one country using the Euro economy collapses, it affects the economy of all other countries using the Euro.

Laws can be introduced in the EU that the countries do not agree with and but they still have to be used.

Taxes from successful countries have to be used to support countries whose economies are failing.

You cannot stop people from the EU immigrating into your country if you are in the EU.

It is difficult for ordinary people to have any say in the way the EU is run.

This is a very difficult thing to discuss, as at the minute there are no 'facts' or statistics to support the UK is going to be better off economically, socially and politically outside of the EU. Many UK citizens are worried that leaving the EU leads to a lot of uncertainty, however, people who voted leave believe the UK can leave a lot of issues that the EU creates for the UK, and the money we invest in it, behind.