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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)

BACKGROUND GUIDE

Agenda 1: Preparing for the effects of a complete exit of the UK from the EU with special reference to the Irish border and the Good Friday Agreement

Agenda 2: The economic repercussions of climate change

2019



Letter from the Executive Board

Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to the United Nations Economic and Social Council at APL MUN 2019

The geopolitical scenario of our international system is currently undergoing significant changes which has political, economic and social implications on the nature of relationships between member nations of the UN as well as the international community. At the fore-front of the economic changes which greatly affect the international community, lies the UK's exit from the European Union (EU) and the looming effects of climate change.

With the recent resignation of Theresa May, and replacement by Boris Johnson, there remains a looming threat of a complete exit of the UK from the EU. Also known as a 'no deal brexit', such an exit by the UK is likely to lead to a displacement of UK-based businesses which function throughout the EU. A no deal brexit is predicted to cause a large fall in the GDP of the UK, and is expected to be detrimental to countries and nations which trade with the UK. Moreover, the exit deal of the UK, even if it does not imply a no deal brexit, is likely to include an elimination of the backstop over the Irish border. In a recent address by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the backstop is "undemocratic". In committee. Such an exit from the EU and dissolution of the Good Friday agreement have social implications which need to be assessed and addressed by the international community.

With regards to climate change, the world must note that even if all fossil fuel emissions end, suddenly, the repercussions of climate change will continue to affect billions of individuals around the world. The increased risk of natural disasters such as drought, flooding, alongside rising sea levels and extreme weather events are overwhelmingly more likely to affect individuals from underdeveloped and developing nations. Due to this, international cooperation with regards to climate change is vital to ensure that the effects on these countries do not greatly hinder their ability to develop.

As members of the Executive Board, we expect delegates of the UN Economic and Social Council to participate in discussion with a sense of accountability to their stances, and responsibilities as individual delegates. The background guide is meant to provide delegates with a basic understanding of the agenda in order to help direct their research towards the agenda, keeping in mind the mandate of ECOSOC. As the Executive Board, we expect delegates to do their research, beyond the limits of the background guide, before the commencement of the conference. Detailed research and thorough understanding will play a pivotal role in determining the underlying quality of debate. We look forward to a productive and fulfilling conference. Please feel free to reach out to any of us in case of any queries or doubts regarding the background guide, agenda, committee, or conference in general.

All the best!

Hrsh Venket | Chairperson
Pranav Ponnivalavan | Vice Chairperson

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Agenda I

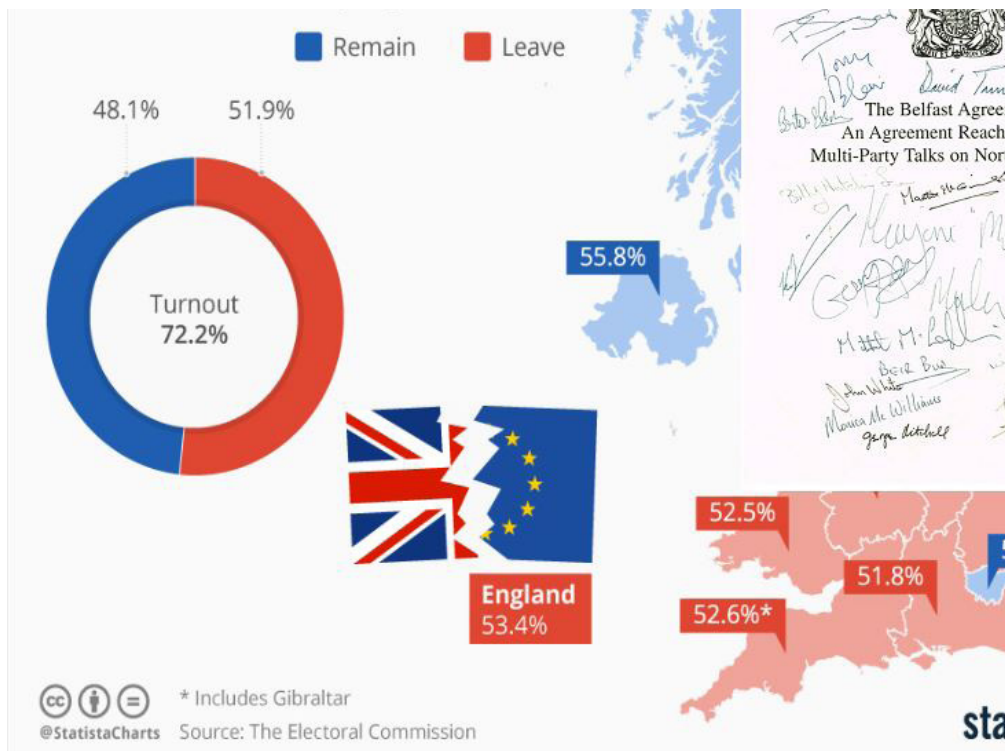
What is Brexit?

Brexit is an abbreviation for "British exit," referring to the U.K.'s decision in a June 23, 2016 referendum to leave the European Union (EU). The vote's result defied expectations and roiled global markets, causing the British pound to fall to its lowest level against the dollar in 30 years. Former Prime Minister David Cameron, who called the referendum and campaigned for Britain to remain in the EU, announced his resignation the following day.

Theresa May, who replaced Cameron as leader of the Conservative party and prime minister, stepped down as party leader voluntarily on June 7, 2019, after facing severe pressure to resign. She will remain as prime minister, until the Tories declare a new leader July 22. Britain has to ratify a withdrawal agreement with the EU before leaving if it wants to avoid a chaotic "no-deal" exit. The deal May negotiated with the EU was rejected by the House of Commons three times, and she shelved plans to put it to a vote a fourth time after the changes and compromises she was willing to make angered many senior members of her party.

The new Brexit deadline is October 31, 2019.

Theresa May has since been replaced by Boris Johnson as leader of the conservative party. He is the current Prime Minister of the UK



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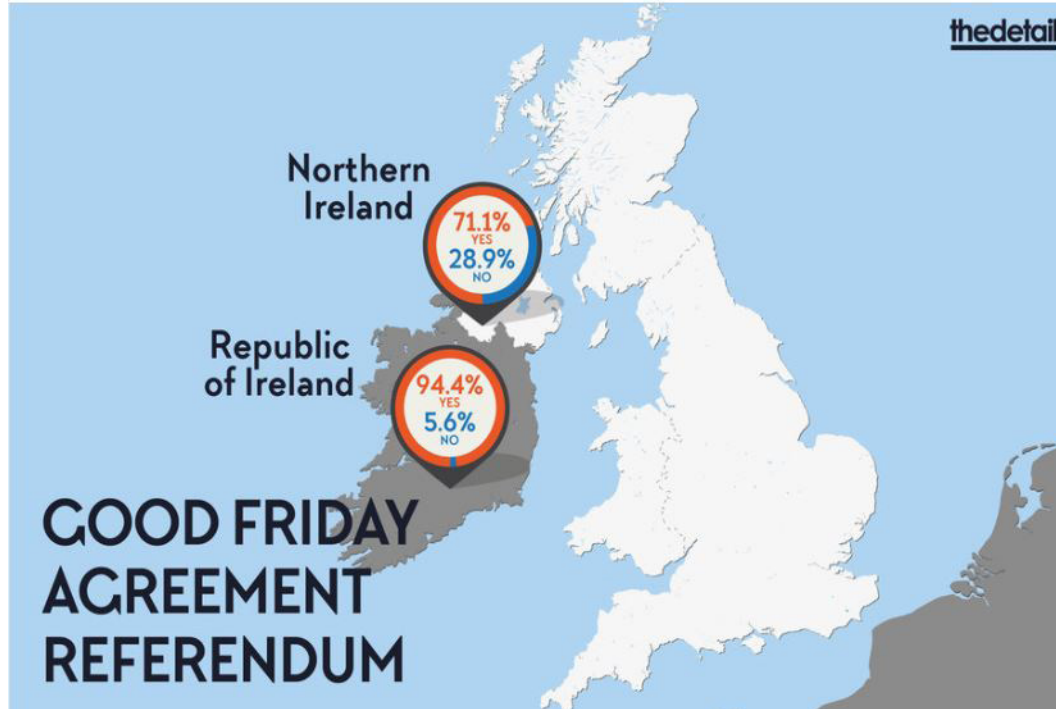
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What is the Good Friday Agreement?

On 10th April 1998, the Good Friday Agreement (or the Belfast Agreement) was signed. This agreement helped to bring to an end a period of conflict in the region, called the Troubles.

The Troubles was a period when there was a lot of violence between two groups - Republicans and Loyalists. Many people were killed in the fighting.

After years of fighting, the 1990s saw a change in the region, as the IRA announced it would stop the bombings and shootings. This gave the Unionists and Nationalists the opportunity to try to sort out their problems. It was not an easy process, and other countries got involved to help the two sides to reach a deal. In 1998 - after nearly two years of talks and 30 years of conflict - the Good Friday agreement was signed. This resulted in a new government being formed that would see power being shared between Unionists and Nationalists.



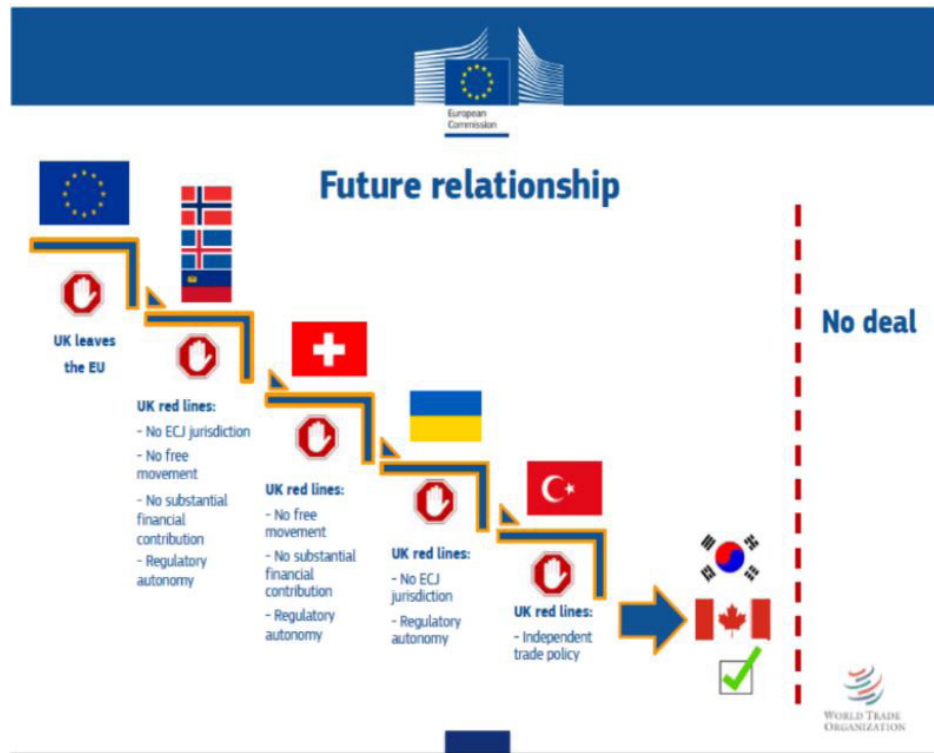
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Fun fact: Below is a chart released by the EU, explaining why the UK is likely to reach a no deal brexit. This was released during talks with Theresa May's government. Currently, the EU maintains that Theresa May's deal is the best deal that the UK can have with the EU .



Hard/Soft Brexit: This is an informal idea behind the nature of Brexit. A Soft Brexit is the idea of an exit of the UK from the EU that allows for trade deals and agreements with the European Union. An example of this is Norway, which is part of the European Economic Area (EEA). A Hard Brexit, on the other hand, is the idea of a distant relation with the EU. This idea is comparable to Switzerland's relationship with the EU.

No Deal Brexit: A no-deal Brexit would mean the UK leaving the European Union and cutting ties immediately, with no agreement in place.

WTO rules: If countries don't have free-trade agreements, they usually trade with each other under rules set by the World Trade Organization. Each country sets tariffs - or taxes - on goods entering. For example, cars passing from non-EU countries to the EU are charged 10% of their value. But tariffs on some agricultural products are much higher - dairy averages more than 35%. If the UK chooses to put no tariffs on goods from the EU, it must also have no tariffs on goods from every WTO member.

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Transition period: the transition period is intended to allow time for the UK and EU to agree their future relationship. The UK would have no say in the making of new EU laws during the transition but would have to follow all EU rules, including freedom of movement. Under Theresa May's deal the period would have lasted 21 months from 29 March 2019 to 31 December 2020 and could be extended by up to two years if both the UK and the EU wanted.

Article 50: Part of an EU treaty that sets out how member countries can leave, with a two-year timetable for leaving. Article 50 was triggered by Prime Minister Theresa May at the end of March 2017 and means the UK will leave the EU at the end of March 2019. The UK is allowed to stop the Article 50 process completely - but if it wants only to extend it, all the other EU countries must agree.

Another referendum: Some campaigners - who call their proposal the People's Vote - want to have another referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. Opponents of another vote say there is no need for it as the 2016 referendum made it clear that people wanted to leave the EU and that conducting another referendum is undemocratic, to some degree.

Single market: A system that enables goods, services, people and capital (money) to move between all 28 EU member states, as well as Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland. Countries in the single market apply many common rules and standards.

Customs union: A trade agreement under which two or more countries do not put tariffs (taxes) on goods coming in from other countries in the union. The countries also decide to set the same tariff on goods entering from outside the union. The EU customs union includes EU member states and some small non-EU members and forbids members from negotiating trade agreements separately from the EU. Instead trade agreements are negotiated collectively.

Free-trade agreement: A deal between countries to reduce, but not necessarily eliminate, trade barriers. These barriers include import or export taxes (tariffs), quotas or licences that limit imports, and differing regulations on things such as safety or hygiene or labelling. The aim is to increase trade in goods and services.

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Withdrawal agreement: Theresa May agreed a deal with the EU on the terms of the UK's departure. It included how much money the UK must pay to the EU as a settlement, details of the transition period, and citizens' rights. It also covered the so-called "backstop", which ensures that no hard border exists between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland after Brexit even if there is no deal on the future relationship in place by the end of the transition period. So-called 'meaningful votes' have been held on Theresa May's deal three times. On all three occasions, MPs rejected the deal.

Backstop: Currently, there are no border posts, physical barriers or checks on people or goods crossing the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The backstop is a measure in the withdrawal agreement, between Theresa May and the EU, which is designed to ensure that continues after the UK leaves the EU. It comes into effect only if the deal deciding the future relationship between the UK and EU is not agreed by the end of the transition period (31 December 2020). Until the deal on the future relationship is done, the backstop would keep the UK effectively inside the EU's customs union but with Northern Ireland also conforming to some rules of the single market. Critics say a different status for Northern Ireland could threaten the existence of the United Kingdom and fear that the backstop could become permanent.

Free movement: One of the four freedoms associated with the single market is free movement of people. This lets EU citizens travel, live, study and work in any member country. There can be no discrimination in access to public services and benefits.

Divorce bill: The money the UK agrees to pay to the EU as part of a Brexit deal. Under Theresa May's deal it was widely expected to total about £39bn, to be paid over a number of years. It was based on the UK's share of EU budgets up to 2020 as well as continuing liabilities such as EU civil servants' pensions

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Agenda 2

What are economic repercussions?

Economic repercussions are the economic effects of an event or action. In the case of climate change, the economic repercussions that are most apparent are the effects of increasing occurrences of droughts and floods, alongside those of rising sea levels.

In the case of droughts, one must consider the effects on businesses and on households, wherein a lack of supply of water leads to an increase in the price of water. Thereby, this leads to great levels of income inequality such that access determines the ability of individuals to work. Furthermore, this often leads to a fall in the growth of a nation. Notable examples of the negative effects of drought include Cape Town, South Africa and Chennai, India.

Further, the effects of floods and rising sea levels on economies include those of damage to infrastructure. This often leads to a high increase in homeless populations and those in need to medical and financial aid. An example of a nation affected greatly by floods (following a devastating earthquake) is Haiti. At the same time, nations such as Japan, as a nation which is highly prone to earthquakes and flooding, have developed their infrastructure such that the effects of such disasters, on the nation, are minimised.

At the same time we must evaluate the direct effect of the change in temperature on the economy. Unlike more extreme cases such as droughts and floods, these effects are more difficult to effectively identify. Changes in temperature can affect industries: agriculture, finance, and marketing. Variation in temperature also affects labour productivity. In some cases it may affect the GDP of a nation.

TOP CLIMATE CHANGE CONCERNS BY REGION

	Droughts or water shortages	Severe weather, like floods or intense storms	Long periods of unusually hot weather	Rising Sea Levels
LATIN AMERICA	59%	21%	12%	5%
AFRICA	59%	18%	16%	3%
U.S.	50%	16%	11%	17%
ASIA/ PACIFIC	41%	34%	13%	6%
MIDDLE EAST	38%	24%	19%	5%
EUROPE	35%	27%	8%	15%
GLOBAL	44%	25%	14%	6%

Note: Russia and Ukraine not included in Europe region.

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Additional links:

<https://unfccc.int/annualreport>

<https://www.ipcc.ch/>

https://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/ja/ja_dale002.pdf

<https://www.worldwildlife.org/threats/effects-of-climate-change>

<https://germanwatch.org/sites/germanwatch.org/files/publication/20432.pdf>

(Note: the background guide is not a UN recognised source, but is simply to give delegates a direction for their research)

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