



## European Studies

*Elixir European Studies* 140 (2020) 38706-38717

**Elixir**  
ISSN: 2229-712X

# How to Communicate and Teach the European Union After Brexit

Ivan Nachev and Elitsa Uzunova

Department of Political science, New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria.

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received: 26 March 2020;

Received in revised form:

1 May 2020;

Accepted: 11 May 2020;

#### Keywords

Brexit,

Bulgaria,

Education,

European studies.

### ABSTRACT

Brexit is a fact and Bulgarian political scientists are left to answer the question, how EU after Brexit should be communicated to citizens and especially to students. What will the impact be in the spheres of politics and economic. There is a need for political changes on our everyday life and the need of more solidarity, consensus and compromise in political decision making. Events such as Brexit are new in the EU Studies. One way to analyze them better in class is with the students engaging in the act of "making politics". This chapter explains the challenges faced by political scientists which is to ensure that the students will be provided with the necessary toolset to prepare them to be active European and global citizens.

© 2020 Elixir All rights reserved.

### Introduction

Bulgaria became an EU member state on January first 2007. It was adopted in one of the last enlargements of the EU. Although a member state for 13 years, neither the politicians nor the citizens of the country still fully grasp the possibilities of a European integration. A small part of the citizens, mainly the youth see the advantages of the full membership but a significant part remains skeptical on the EU's opportunities for its member states. These citizens are often on the brink of poverty and their standard of living is not even remotely close to the living standard of other member states of the West and North.

The economy in Bulgaria is improving since its accession to the EU, but the country's economy and standard of living continue to develop at a low pace. Bulgaria continues to be the poorest member state. There is cohesion, but low economic growth may stifle accelerating cohesion.

Bulgaria has the lowest income level in the EU. For thirteen years of EU membership, Bulgaria's income rapprochement with other Member States has not progressed. Bulgaria remains in the same relative position as the others. Moreover, no light is visible at the end of the tunnel. According to the report, Bulgaria has low growth potential, which limits the prospect of income convergence. In addition, there is a rapid increase in income inequality, which is currently "at very high levels".

The bad news for Bulgaria is long-term.

With the (non) implementation of specific EU recommendations, a number of governments have set a whole mine for the future. Most tragically, the situation in the education system is incapable of providing students with adequate skills. Access to quality education is unequal. The proportion of children who do poorly in reading, math and science by PISA standards is the highest in the EU. Children from low social classes, and especially Roma, do not have the same educational opportunities as others, including in early childhood. This has long-term consequences for their social inclusion and employment. At the same time, the number of

universities is large and there is virtually no selection in admission.

There are also mines in healthcare - limited access, poor funding, staff emigration and poor health outcomes. The data is shocking - the number of expatriate doctors every year is almost 90% of graduates. The shortage of nurses is phenomenal.

There is no progress in the fight against the shadow economy, which remains high, and at the same time the administrative burden of taxes is high. Measures to improve tax administration are still limited. Debt in the private sector continues to be a problem in Bulgaria. High corporate debt may have a negative impact on medium-term growth prospects. This problem cannot be solved until the necessary legislative measures for bankruptcy have been adopted.

Our country is in the group of countries that experience excessive economic imbalances and are placed under special surveillance.

For the most part, Bulgarian citizens do not know how decisions are made in the European Union and which institution and what opportunity it has. Often positives of European integration are transferred as positive by the government of one or the other government, and negatives from each government are transferred to the European Commission in Brussels.

Politicians still do not know well the mechanisms for decision-making in the EU, or how to lobby and represent the interests of different groups of society in different institutions. Ministers are often suspected of pursuing private or lobbying interests in defending their own positions in the EU Council. Few Bulgarians know that the Council is the place where national interests must be represented and protected, and that it is the Council which has the greatest legislative powers. That is why Bulgarian politicians often justify themselves with Brussels, not with their own incompetence and weakness in decision-making at the level of ministers of EU Member States.

Two of the basic principles of democracy - transparency and accountability-are not the favorite principles of the Bulgarian political elites.

Representatives of Bulgarian citizens in the European Parliament are rarely accountable for the work that has been done, therefore the Bulgarian citizens can hardly understand the opportunities opened participation in the EP for different groups in society.

The European Parliament is one of the main institutions of the European Union, often boasting that its members are directly elected by European citizens, the ergo is the most democratically legitimate of all. With an average annual budget of 1.9 billion euros, 751 MPs and thousands of employees, the institution is one of the most powerful in the EU. The Lisbon Treaty almost equalized it with the Council, making it a co-legislator in many areas, including in setting the EU budget. Parliament controls the European Commission and elects its boss. The Commission and the Council are required to consult the EP on key issues on the Union's agenda. Such political authority implies that the EP and its members must be sufficiently prepared for the task of controlling the other European institutions for their decisions.

Even less is known about the work of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. This makes citizens think that these European institutions appoint or elect people who are comfortable and close to power.

Although Bulgarian society is relatively positive about the EU, it still has a lasting effect on Euroscepticism and mistrust in the EU. Bulgarian Eurosceptic and Nationalist parties have a permanent presence in the European Parliament with 2 of 17 Bulgarian MEPs in total.

In this situation, leaving the EU as a member state when it first enlarged in 1973 presents new challenges for anyone teaching or analyzing the European Union.

## **2. How to teach and analyze the EU in this situation?**

First, we must divide the analysis into three distinct categories: the economic aspects of Brexit and their impact on the EU and Bulgarian national interests in particular; the political aspects and development of the EU's political institutions after Brexit; and last but not least, the impact on the rights and freedoms of EU citizens and in particular of Bulgarian citizens. The same goes for the problems associated with teaching the EU after Brexit.

The economic aspect of Brexit relates directly to the teaching of economic disciplines in the fields of political science, public administration, foreign trade and the common market.

The UK left the EU on 31 January. There is a short transitional period that will last until 31 December 2020.

Initially, the idea for the London and Brussels negotiators was to move beyond the Brexit date (March 29, 2019) to 21 months. However, the UK's exit from the EU has been delayed several times because of disagreements over the exit agreement. The end date of the transition period remained the same. This date is no coincidence - the current EU multiannual financial framework lasts from 2014 to the end of 2020. On 1 January, the bloc enters a new seven-year budget cycle. This has to do with the commitments that the UK would have to make to the European budget.

The Brexit Agreement states that a single extension of the transitional period of one or two years can only be undertaken with the agreement of the two parties and only until 1 July 2020. Conservatives in the UK have adopted

legislation prohibiting this, but if necessary they can be modified.

For citizens, almost nothing will change. European citizens in the UK will have the same rights as before. They will be able to apply for so-called status. EU citizenship wrap scheme before 30 June 2021. Approved applicants will receive a sedentary or pre-qualification status.

People from the Member States of the European Economic Community (EU countries, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) and Switzerland will only be able to enter the UK with an ID card and will not need short-stay visas. The United Kingdom will continue to be part of the EU's single market and of the Customs Union and will continue to apply EU law.

However, the UK will not be involved in EU decision-making but will have the opportunity to trade with third countries, which is not a right as an EU member state. British MEPs will leave the European Parliament, cabinet members will not attend EU Council meetings, nor will Prime Minister Boris Johnson attend the European Council. The United Kingdom refused to nominate a representative to the European Commission, but if it did, it would have had to leave the Commission.

The main task of the London and Brussels negotiating teams during this transitional period will be to negotiate a trade agreement to regulate relations between the UK and the Union.

What will happen to relations between the United Kingdom and the European Union after the end of the transitional period depends on the understanding of the negotiators from London and Brussels during that period.

Unless they agree on anything, the UK will have to trade with the EU under the terms agreed in 1995 by WTO members. The exception will be Northern Ireland, which under the Brexit Agreement will trade with the EU without quotas and duties on goods if there is no trade deal between London and Brussels.

The rules of the World Trade Organization are much more favorable, because certain duties on the goods.

In all likelihood, the UK will choose to become a third country, leave the Single Market and the Customs Union, set back European regulations and common rules, general surveillance and the common court. It chooses to create two regulatory spaces. This makes trouble-free trading impossible. Makes customs checks unchanged.

This will mean that there will be new trade confrontations in the fields of agriculture and production, as well as new barriers to the export of services. A trade agreement that simply abolishes customs duties could be costly for manufacturing, given how tight the UK and EU production chains are.

Exporters need to prepare for border checks. There will be no mutual recognition of rules. This means that there will be no "single passport" in the banking sector. Goods entering the EU will be subject to controls.

The European Union will monitor the related elements of Northern Ireland of the Brexit deal and will not allow London to reopen the agreement "under the guise of implementing it.

Bulgaria is threatened by the levies on customs duties at Bekksit without a deal.

The United Kingdom is preceded by the most important trade issues in Bulgaria. It is ranked 10th in our exports for the period and 15th in our imports; with other words the fields in the United Kingdom in the foreign market are more

similar to those in the Netherlands or Poland. Over the last few years, the volume of trade has increased, even in the two countries, has been almost twice as high as the beginning of the decade. At this stage, the data for the trade do not indicate a significant influence on the unrepeatable and undesirable effects of Brexit.

The goods are more interesting, because it gives greater ahead which part of economy is most dangerous, in case the EU and the United Kingdom do not start the cooperation, with duty-free mode, facial treatment and open borders.

The most important goods that Bulgaria export to United Kingdom are furniture, machinery, food and nuts. From the other side, in the outside of Bulgaria from the United Kingdom, is dominated by the machines, medicaments and cars. This is a good idea to start with when it comes to the big ones, if it is not the right way to do it with a special or unstuffed whole.

Great Britain is one of the most important investments in Bulgarian economy. The data of the Bulgarian National Bank are honored at the fifth place by net investments in the countries following Austria, Gepmania and Italy.

The research shows that since the recession of 2008, the U.K.'s real wages fell by over 8% in six years after the financial crisis, followed by pay cuts and austerity packages. However, Reenen argues that this financial crisis is not in relation to migration. In fact, from his argument the migrants are not the problem. They are a part of the solution. The objective of this chapter is to examine the rationale behind the British decision to exit the European Union. At the end, we will be able to see the consequences of leaving the EU. Will it be a success or a disaster?

Many argued that the Brexit was going to affect the single market and the politics of both the EU and the U.K. When the U.K. decided to leave, both EU and UK citizens, were filled with dismay. There will be a significant effect on both parties economically and politically. So there was an argument that the issue must be performed at a constitutional level. Therefore, on the 24th of January 2017, the Supreme Court conducted a trial on the appeal of the British government and the constitutional aspects of implementing the outcome of Brexit. The decision ruled in support of the British parliament. Despite the fact that the British constitution is uncodified, the allocations of power between the respected institutions were clearly identified by the court.

Many European countries, including Bulgaria, are worried about the future travel regime for British tourists - required documents, visa regime, standards for tourist services and even lines at airports and border crossings. If Bulgaria, in addition to official data, there is an increase in the number of respected residents in the country. The UK ranks 10th in terms of visits to Bulgaria, with a part of 3.43% of all visits for foreigners in the country. This part fluctuates a lot, but its tendency is to decline. Of the total number of british arrivals to Bulgaria, more than half were targeted for holidays and excursions, a small number were formal journeys.

British tourists are interested in Bulgarian balneological centers, sea and mountain holidays, ski tourism, sightseeing tours and combined sightseeing tours.

At the same time the United Kingdom accounted for 179 thousand of a total of 6.7 million esteem for Bulgarians abroad. More than half of them fall into the category "other". The most promising of this is that Bulgarians welcome their

families and friends, who live in UK. Seasonal workers and temporary job seekers are also in this category.

However, in the case of the Brexit without a deal, Bulgaria will lose to 17 890 jobs.

British tourists are not the most important and frequent group for Bulgarian tourism. Introducing our visa regime and closing it to those who would be expelled in the future would reflect Bulgarian turism. This depends entirely on the future deal and the limited travel destination of the continent, which will be included.

All these economic aspects pose a major challenge to EU teaching, especially when Bulgarian society is not yet sufficiently convinced of the benefits of integration. Understanding these aspects will in the medium term influence the understanding of young people in Bulgaria.

### **3. What happens with political institutions**

The second group of problems is directly related to the teaching of political science. Given the lack of awareness of Bulgarian society and young people about the work of the European institutions, the teaching of political aspects and the development of EU political institutions after Brexit are another challenge.

One of the main reasons for the outcome of the UK referendum on Brexit is the high level of Euroscepticism regarding participation in supranational institutions. As mentioned above, most Bulgarian citizens do not know how decisions are made in the Union and which institution has what options. Often integration positives are transferred as positive bya the government of one or the other government, and negatives from each government are transferred to the European Commission in Brussels.

Politicians are not yet well-versed in EU decision-making mechanisms, or in how to lobby and represent the interests of different groups of society in different institutions. Ministers are often suspected of pursuing private or lobbying interests in defending their own positions in the EU Council. Few Bulgarians know that the Council is the place where national interests must be represented and protected, and that it is the Council which has the greatest legislative powers. That is why Bulgarian politicians often justify themselves with Brussels, not with their own incompetence and weakness in decision-making at the level of ministers of EU Member States.

Two of the basic principles of democracy - transparency and accountability-are not the favorite principles of the Bulgarian political elites.

Representatives of Bulgarian citizens in the European Parliament are rarely accountable for the work that has been done. For Bulgarian citizens is very difficult to understand the opportunities for participation in the EP for different groups in society.

What will happen to the EP after the United Kingdom leaves the Union and how this will affect the work of the Bulgarian MEPs is one of the issues that directly affect the topic of Bulgaria's participation in the EU governance process.

Even less is known about the work of the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. This makes citizens think that these European institutions appoint or elect people who are comfortable and close to power.

The second major challenge is the belief that there is a democracy deficit in the EU. The question is whether citizens can influence the political decision-making process. This question is directly related to the previous one, and each

teacher faces a serious challenge not only to teach what the institutions are, but also how they will handle the new situation.

Are there conditions for democracy across Europe? This issue is important for Bulgarian citizens because, by and large, they live in a country where democracy is not developed, there is no security in terms of human rights protection, authoritarian tendencies are being established and corruption is spreading on all levels of government. In the annual ranking of the NGO Reporters Without Borders, Bulgaria ranks 111th out of 180 countries.

Critics of European integration often say that the Union's political institutions have no roots in the lives and traditions of societies. Bulgarians do not trust state institutions. Most of us do not trust parties and almost all party leaders. But this should be of even greater concern - in our country parties and politicians have totally possessed the institutions and are using them for their group and personal needs. Therefore, instead of being systems of lasting, valid for all rules, the Bulgarian state institutions have become the kingdom of the double standard - what for some is allowed and protected, for others it gives problems and punishments.

More than half of Bulgarians say they trust the institutions of the European Union. According to the Eurobarometer survey data, 53% of Bulgarians show a positive attitude towards the European Union, compared to 30% who show distrust.

Bulgarian citizens retain their approval of the EU institutions and tend to rely more on them than on their national equivalents.

Over half of those surveyed - 51% trust the European Parliament, while at the same time only 13% trust the National Assembly. The trust in the European Commission is 45% (2% growth compared to the spring of 2018) and that in the national government is 22%.

Undoubtedly, it can be difficult to teach in the context of such a perception of the European Union. On the one hand, political issues lead to the conclusion of high EU support in Bulgaria, but on the other hand, the economic situation in the country reinforces Euroscepticism in the country.

#### **4. Civil rights and freedoms**

Finally, the biggest challenge to EU teaching after Brexit has to do with protecting civil and political rights. This topic is extremely important for the Bulgarian society and for young people, because the UK is a attractive destination for many young people looking for employment opportunities as well as opportunities to continue their studies at prestigious universities.

How EU citizens will be able to enter the UK after the transition period is also unclear. So far, the British government's website states that in 2021 border authorities will stop accepting the identity cards of European Economic Community citizens for entry into the country. Instead, a valid passport will be required. The date after that will be announced later.

European citizens who have been living in the United Kingdom since the end of the transitional period and who have status under the scheme will be able to use their ID cards to enter the UK at least until the end of 2025. Those who do not have such status and have not applied will have to leave by the end of June 2021.

In the long run, the status of European emigrants in the United Kingdom and domestic emigrants of EU is also unhealthy. As there are no compulsory pegging arrangements

for emigration to the EU, the exact number of cases estimated to be living in the United Kingdom is sufficient. It is estimated that around 150,000 Bulgarians will live in the UK after Brexit.

At the same time, the number of British immigrants in Bulgaria is very low - about 8 thousand people.

The ratings are underestimated because only the Bulgarian students in the United Kingdom have 6-7 thousand. The regime of residence of emigrants to the United Kingdom will affect approximately 100 thousand Bulgarians. They may return to Bulgaria or intend to enter another EU member country.

#### **5. In conclusion**

Bulgaria is ahead of the EU Member States, with the least exposure to damage from the Brexit. The economy of the Germany and the Netherlands will be much more related to this and therefore to the United Kingdom. They will suffer more than Bulgarian economy, especially in the scenario, there was no favorable outcome at the time of the Brexit.

Nevertheless the relation between two countries far not insignificant. For Bulgaria it is important to have the best possible relationships even after a "divorce" without a deal. This problem so far seems almost unavoidable.

Every teacher and researcher in Bulgaria faces the serious challenge of convincing his students, students, colleagues and all citizens and political forces that the European Union is a way of preserving the nation-state and, after Brexit, needs even more solidarity, consensus and compromise in political decision making.

Processes such as Brexit which is a withdrawal process that are rather new in the European Studies, can be analysed better in class with the students engaging in the act of "doing politics". A challenge to all of the political science educators is to ensure that the students will be provided with the necessary range of skills to prepare them to be active global citizens.

We must provide our students with a creative learning environment with a co-learning and productive educational experience. European Studies is about improving students' analytical abilities. This is not referring to one methodological approach having primacy. It is about helping students analyse the political world using evidence rather than simple assertions. Understanding, for example, how data are constructed and the assumptions underlying their collection. Also understanding the limitations of that data and what it might demonstrate. Anyone involved in the teaching of Politics and IR should emphasize the aforementioned.

Role-play, simulations, writing policy briefs, oral presentations, engaging students with voter registration drives, participating in political campaigns, volunteering in civil communities, and undertaking research-led placements with the likes of local government and NGO's could reflect on how students understand politics. Thus engaging them in the political process by breaking the barriers of the classroom and teaching outside of the classroom.

Eventually such practices will give students a chance to develop ideas that could impact the political landscape. We know that young people are less interested in politics, mainly because they do not understand politics. Even when they are engaging into politics they often do not realize it because they do not understand what politics is.

#### **References**

[1] Analysis Of Research On The Potential And Opportunities For Developing Cross-Border Business Cooperation Between

- The Republic Of Bulgaria And Former Yugoslav Republic Of Macedonia. Online: <http://bicc-sandanski.org/cip/content/view/14/12/lang,en/>
- [2] Bulgaria loses 18,000 jobs at Brexit without a deal. Retrieved from: <https://trafficnews.bg/politika/balgariia-gubi-18-000-rabotni-mesta-pri-brexit-bez-sdelka-151176/>
- [3] Bulgarians believe more in the European institutions than in the Bulgarian ones, Retrieved from: [https://www.webcafe.bg/newscafe/obshtestvo/id\\_315084849\\_Balgarite\\_vyarvat\\_poveche\\_v\\_evropeyskite\\_institutsii\\_otkolkoto\\_v\\_balgarskite](https://www.webcafe.bg/newscafe/obshtestvo/id_315084849_Balgarite_vyarvat_poveche_v_evropeyskite_institutsii_otkolkoto_v_balgarskite)
- [4] Dainov, E. (2008) *The creative & knowledge class in Sofia: Understanding the attractiveness of the metropolitan region for creative knowledge workers*. AMIDSt, University of Amsterdam.
- [5] Dainov, E., I. Nachev and V. Garnizov (2010) *Policies and strategies in Sofia: How to enhance a city's competitiveness*. AMIDSt, University of Amsterdam.
- [6] Dhingra, S., & Sampson, T. (2016). "Life after BREXIT: What are the UK's options outside the European Union?" Retrieved from: <http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/brexit01.pdf>
- [7] Direct investment flow of the UK to Bulgaria (in EUR million) by years. Retrieved from: <https://mi.government.bg/bg/themes/the-united-kingdom-of-great-britain-and-northern-ireland-238-333.html>
- [8] Economic relations between the Republic of Bulgaria and the United Kingdom. Retrieved from: <https://mi.government.bg/bg/themes/the-united-kingdom-of-great-britain-and-northern-ireland-238-333.html>
- [9] Favell, A. (2008) *Eurostars and Eurocities: Free movement and mobility in an integrating Europe*. Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.
- [10] Five models for post-Brexit UK trade. (2016). Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-eu-referendum-36639261>
- [11] Green, D. A. (2016). "Brexit and the challenges of reality." Retrieved from: <http://blogs.ft.com/david-allen-green/2016/08/01/brexit-and-thechallenges-of-reality>
- [12] Hope, C. (2017). "Commonwealth citizens should have UK visas fast-tracked after Brexit, MPs argue." Retrieved from: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/02/11/commonwealth-citizens-should-haveuk-visas-fast-tracked-brexit>
- [13] Hunt, A., & Wheeler, B. (2016). "Brexit: All you need to know about the UK leaving the EU." Retrieved from: <http://www.bbc.com/news/ukpolitics-32810887>
- [14] Martin-Brelot, H., Grossetti, M., Eckert, D., Gritsai, O. and Kovács, Z. (2010) *The spatial mobility of the creative class: a European perspective*. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* (accepted for publication volume 35.1, March 2011, electronic version in March 2010).
- [15] Nachev, I. (2004) *The political challenges facing the integration of Bulgaria into the European Union*. Papeles del Este. Universidad Complutense Madrid.
- [16] Nachev, I. (2006) *Bulgaria in European Union: Constitutional and Institutional Changes*. In: *20 Years Bulgarian Political Sciences*. Sofia. България в Европейския съюз: конституционна и институционална промяна, В: 20 години българска политология. София.
- [17] Nachev, I. (2018) *What does European Commission forbid? Myths and Realities*. In: *Truths and Lies about Facts, News and Events*. Vol.2. Ruse. Какво забранява Европейската комисия? Митове и реалности!? В: Истини и лъжи за факти, новини и събития. Т.2 Русе.
- [18] Nachev, I. (2019) *Languages and Cultures of Small and Medium Communities in The European Union*. In: *European Values: The New Constellation*. Edited by Georgy Fotev. Sofia.
- [19] Nikolov, A. (2019) *What an important economical partner for Bulgaria is Great Britain?* Retrieved from: <https://money.bg/economics/kolko-vazhen-ikonomicheskipartnyor-za-balgariya-e-velikobritaniya.html>
- [20] Stolarick, K. and R. Florida (2006) *Creativity, connections and innovation: A study of linkages in the Montréal region*. *Environment and Planning A*, 38 (10): 1799-1817.
- [21] *Trade and economic relations between Bulgaria and Great Britain*. Retrieved from: <https://export.government.bg/ianmsp/chujdi-pazari-spisak/great-britan>
- [22] Uzunova E. (2017) *Democratic Deficit In The European Union – Does It Exist? "*. In "Political analyses", Vol. 3 (2017), New Bulgarian University, Sofia. "Дефицит на демокрация в Европейския съюз – съществува ли наистина?" списание Политически анализи, брой 3, 2017.
- [23] Uzunova E. (2018) "Transparency and Accountability of EU Institutions: Challenges to Bulgaria's National Security". In "Europe: Global Threats and Integrated Security". New Bulgarian university, Sofia. Прозрачност и отчетност на институциите в ЕС: предизвикателства пред националната сигурност на България".
- [24] Uzunova E. (2018) "The lack of accountability of European Union institutions - a threat to political representation in Bulgaria" in the collection "Bulgaria and the European Union Ten Years Later - What we did?". Sofia University, Sofia. "Липсата на отчетност на институциите на ЕС- заплаха за политическото представителство в България" в сборник "България и Европейският съюз десет години по-късно – какво (не)постигнахме?"
- [25] Green, D. A. (2016). "Brexit and the challenges of reality." Retrieved from <http://blogs.ft.com/david-allen-green/2016/08/01/brexit-and-thechallenges-of-reality>
- [26] Dhingra, S., G. Ottaviano, T. Sampson, J. Van Reenen. (2016). *The consequences of Brexit for UK trade and living standards*, Centre for Economic Performance, Brexit Analysis no. 2.