



# Surf City XVIII

Huntington Beach High School



European Union

Economic Agreements after Brexit  
&  
Catalonia Separation

Matthew Pugh  
Artemis Tran  
Kate Allhusen



## Welcome Letter

Dear Delegates,

On behalf of the Huntington Beach High School Model United Nations Program, we would like to welcome you to our Surf City XVIII advanced conference!

Our annual Surf City conference upholds the principles and intended purpose of the United Nations. Delegates can expect to partake in a professional, well-run debate that simulates the very issues that those at the United Nations discuss every day. Both novel and traditional ideas will be shared, challenged, and improved.

It is our hope that all delegates will receive the opportunity to enhance their research, public speaking, and communication skills as they explore the intricacies of global concerns through various perspectives, some of which may be very different from their own. We hope their experiences here give them new insight and values that they can apply outside of the realm of Model UN for the betterment of the world community.

Although we will be entertaining a new style of a virtual conference, we hope all delegates will experience a fruitful and enhancing debate. Please do not hesitate to approach our Secretariat or Staff Members with any questions or concerns that you may have throughout the day. We wish the best to all our participants and hope that they may share a fulfilling experience with us! Enjoy the conference.

Sincerely,

Summer Balentine  
*Secretary-General*

Jenna Ali  
*Secretary-General*

Kayla Hayashi  
*Secretary-General*

Hailey Holcomb  
*Secretary-General*



## Meet the Dias

### Chair 1

Hi! I'm Matthew Pugh and welcome to the European Union. I'm a senior here at HBHS and this is my fourth year in the MUN program. This program has inspired me to be a more confident speaker and a better researcher. In addition to MUN, I also play on the tennis team with HBHS as well as outside of the high school program, participate in the Robotics Club as I have done for the past several years, and volunteer with both the National Honor Society and the California Scholarship Federation. Further, I am a member of the STEM up for Youth program, a club focused on bringing STEM ideals to younger students and those less fortunate. I am also an avid outdoors person as I constantly look for ways to go outside, whether from camping and hiking or from activities like skiing. Lastly, I play the piano and have for the past twelve years. I look forward to seeing you guys in committee!

### Chair 2

Hello! My name is Artemis Tran and I'm one of your chairs for this year's EU committee. Currently, I'm a senior at HBHS and I've been in the MUN program for 4 years as of now. I've enjoyed debating a variety of topics for the past 4 years, but this is going to be my time chairing EU. In addition to MUN, I've played on the HBHS tennis team for 4 years and participated in my school Robotics team. Some of my hobbies include reading books, like Artemis Fowl, and playing video games. I'm really excited to see you guys debate and look forward to seeing the complex and well thought out solutions that you guys have made!

### Chair 3

Hi! My name is Kate Allhusen and I am one of your chairs. This is my third year in MUN and I'm a junior at HBHS. This is my first conference as a chair, but I'm excited to learn the ropes with you all. Outside of MUN, I am a part of my school's arts program as a film and television production student. I also volunteer with a local therapeutic riding program for individuals with special needs, and I enjoy helping in other programs whenever I can. I also enjoy being outside, whether its at the beach or in the mountains. I can't wait to see you all in committee, good luck!

**All Papers are due on January 2, 2020 by 11:59pm to  
[surfcitymun.eu@gmail.com](mailto:surfcitymun.eu@gmail.com)**



## Economic Agreements after Brexit

### BACKGROUND

On June 23, 2016, the United Kingdom held a nationwide referendum on the topic of whether to remain within the European Union.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the vote, 51.89 percent of voters chose to leave the European Union.<sup>2</sup> This began the process known as Brexit, shifting the nature of the UK relationship with the rest of Europe. This idea, where the UK could potentially leave the EU, first underwent consideration at the beginning of 2013 when David Cameron, the prime minister of the time, professed support for a referendum on the United Kingdom's future.<sup>3</sup> This notion was then incorporated into the conservative party's platform and presented to the European Council in 2015. Eventually, David Cameron was able to negotiate a better position for the United Kingdom within the EU in 2016, as he was able to get "special status" for the UK. This status included exemptions from participation in the eurozone, limits on migration, and changes to welfare access for European citizens.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the prime minister changed his stance on the referendum, advocating for remaining within the European Union; however, the referendum was to continue as planned. Debates between staying and leaving took the country by storm. People advocating for "Vote Leave" called for the reallocation of the UK's financial contributions to the European Union to instead support policies and welfare within the UK itself.<sup>5</sup> Comparatively, those advocating for "Stronger In" highlighted the benefits that the United Kingdom received for remaining within the EU, such as better national and international security.<sup>6</sup>

The council of the European Union formally authorized the start of Brexit negotiations in 2017 and allowed such a withdrawal process to begin, though there was no direct legislation to support such a move.<sup>7</sup> In January of 2018, they outlined the EU position for the transition. This Withdrawal Agreement would serve as the agreement between the UK and EU, shifting numerous times until the start of 2020, when the process was formally concluded.

During the period of time where Brexit talks between the European Council and the British government ensued, there were several leadership changes that affected the process itself. After the referendum vote was tallied, David Cameron resigned from the prime minister position in an effort to make room for new leadership that could guide the UK through the withdrawal process.<sup>8</sup> Theresa May, his successor, had previously advocated to remain in the European Union, but she promised to see the Brexit process through to its completion. During her time as the prime minister, she created three different agreements, working with the European Council. However, all of her deals were rejected by Parliament because of a lack of consensus.<sup>9</sup> Thus, she resigned in 2019 before the completion of the withdrawal process. Boris Johnson, one of David Cameron's political rivals within the conservative party, then assumed the position of Prime Minister.<sup>10</sup> Within the European Council, President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and President of the European Council Donald Tusk oversaw the majority of the Brexit period. Both of these parties expressed their opposition to Brexit, urging the UK to stop the process; however, they pushed for the EU to approve the Brexit deal.<sup>11</sup> In 2019, German politician Ursula von der Leyen and Belgian politician Charles Michel were elected to the respective positions listed above.<sup>12</sup> This leadership change allowed for the conclusion of the



withdrawal process and shifted the focus instead to the post-Brexit relationship, with an emphasis on trade priorities.

Currently, the EU and the UK are significant trade partners. The EU is the United Kingdom's largest trading partner at the moment, accounting for forty-five percent of exports and fifty-three percent of imports.<sup>13</sup> However, in the wake of Brexit, tariffs have become a major issue. In the European Union, the UK does not have to pay EU tariffs, unlike many other countries.<sup>14</sup> With the UK announcing its own plan for tariffs to replace the current EU tariff plan, no deal has been made. If this continues to be the case, the WTO rules requiring costly tariffs and customs checks would fall into place, harming businesses and the industries in both regions. Service trade is another important component.<sup>15</sup> The EU accounts for 41 percent of all service exports from the UK, which includes financial aid, professional services, tourism, transportation, and IT.<sup>16</sup> Current EU tariffs do not restrict these services, but with the changing economic relationship, a significant gross domestic product drop could ensue between each region if a trade deal is not negotiated. The United Kingdom hopes to create trade liberalization, removing trade barriers, while the EU is becoming increasingly restrictive, placing emphasis on trade terms.<sup>17</sup> As a result, "trade between the UK and the EU would decline under all scenarios ranging from -6 percent to -28 percent for trade in value added; the less deep the agreement on the future relations, the more the trade in value added is expected to decrease," according to a World Bank study.<sup>18</sup> With the effects of COVID-19 in mind, the country's economy is expected to shrink by 11 even with an adequate trade deal.<sup>19</sup>

Another aspect that must be considered is the new trading dynamic that the EU will have with the rest of the global economy without the United Kingdom. While most forecasters assume that each EU country will be impacted by Brexit in a unique way, with asymmetric impacts, most agree that six determinants of trade - transport vehicles, machinery, electronics, textile and furniture, vegetables, foodstuff and wood, and chemicals and plastics - will be negatively affected.<sup>20</sup> Countries who export these goods, including Germany, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom among others, should consider the effects of Brexit on trade with import countries. There may be competing interests that will have to be considered during debate.

There are also dynamics of the EU27 budget. The United Kingdom contributes an estimated 8.8 billion pounds, which will need to be accounted for from other member countries.<sup>21</sup> Current economic priorities and roles within the EU27 budget must be considered so that the structure of the European Union itself can be maintained.

Another highly contentious point is the concept of a level playing field. The European Union wants fair worker's rights, competition, and economic policy.<sup>22</sup> However, the United Kingdom has refused these regulations. They want instead to regulate themselves and create their own competition policies. This is in conjunction with the United Kingdom's request to be independent of the European Court of Justice.<sup>23</sup> Other clashes have been on British priority, equal EU access, and fishing rights.

With the passage of the Withdrawal Agreement by both the United Kingdom Parliament and the EU Parliament, the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union is assured.<sup>24</sup> This bill outlines how the UK is conducting the withdrawal process, addressing policy matters such as payments to the EU. It has also prohibited the possibility of extending the transition process, even if a trade agreement is not reached.<sup>25</sup> The European Commission also issued the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland in January 2020. Agreed upon by both parties, this legislation does not establish a hard border between Ireland and Northern Ireland but





does implement a system of customs and checks.<sup>26</sup> It maintains that Northern Ireland will follow select EU regulations on agriculture and manufacturing, whereas the rest of the UK will not. The complexities of these two documents and how they played out with compromises should be heeded by delegates.

### UNITED NATIONS INVOLVEMENT

Brexit has caused many economic agreements to change, which could potentially change the economic landscape of the EU and the UK. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development did a study that estimates that the UK could risk losing up to \$32 billion, or 14%, in exports to the EU for a post no-deal Brexit. Pamela Coke-Hamilton, the Director of International Trade for UNCTAD, stated that “EU membership has its advantages to deal with non-tariff measures that even the most comprehensive agreement cannot replicate. This offers important lessons to other regions trying to deal more effectively with such non-tariff measures.”

<sup>27</sup> The UN hasn’t taken much direct action on following up on Brexit and the economic agreements that need revising. But in 2012, the UN passed A/RES/67/219 which acknowledges international migration and development in the EU. Economic agreements have to take in regard to the equal rights of workers which the EU fervently advocates for according to the resolution, which is the major reason for migration across the EU.

Additionally, the UN has created Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 to guide the objectives and general agenda of the UN. These SDGs connect closely to many of the objectives with the EU and economic implications of Brexit. While several of the SDGs can be applied, there are a few that are certainly the most involved between the partnership of the UK and the EU. SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, primarily serves to promote sustainable working conditions as well as productive economic growth for both individuals and countries. This can include many factors such as gender work equality to reduce unemployment as well as safe working conditions. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the UN has concerned itself more than ever in a post Brexit EU that workers remain safe, as well as make sure that any new economic agreements align with the SDG in improving economic growth. No matter how separated the UK is, they will inexorably still connect with the EU and the UN SDGs will greatly impact how these new economic relations will commence. The UN has also reported that no matter what kind of Brexit is done, billions dollars will be lost. Some reports show that the UK could lose upwards of 65 billion dollars per year as result of Brexit, and that EU member states such as Germany could lose 11 billion while other countries can lose 10 billion.<sup>28</sup>

SDG 17: Partnership for the Goals also plays a big role for the topic. The basic outlines of the goal is to improve overall global agreements and connections to promote the general welfare and development of all. Cooperation and collaboration is a key feature of this SDG, and the EU and UK economic agreements will inevitably fall under these factors. Influenced by this SDG, the EU and UK will firmly be encouraged by the UN to negotiate peacefully and compromise on the basis that both parties can economically benefit. With this SDG, the UN also encourages bilateral communication and transparency in order to positively introduce friendly interaction after Brexit. Hostile relations will go against SDG 17 and possibly result in the UN stepping in further to interfere.<sup>29</sup>

It is ultimately up to the EU and UK to decide the future for themselves rather than the UN. Direct involvement from the UN has been nonexistent for now and reports as well as influences are more commonplace instead.



### CASE STUDY: FRENCH FISHING RIGHTS

The right to fish in the United Kingdom waters has been and continues to be a sticking point for the Brexit deal on both sides. Specifically, the country of France is deeply involved in attempting to achieve rights for its fishing industry, with over one-quarter of France's national catch coming from Britain's fish-rich waters and upwards of ninety percent of the year's catch coming from British fishing waters for some.<sup>30</sup> With current European Union regulations, fishermen are able to enter any European Union countries' waters to catch their fish, making fishing itself a sustainable enterprise for the millions of people ingrained in France's fishing industry.<sup>31</sup> With around sixty-five fishing harbors, France has a large fishing industry, from the fishermen to the dock workers.<sup>32</sup> French mayor Frederic Cuvillier said about the issue that "they have the fish, but we have the market."<sup>33</sup> As a result, President Emmanuel Macron is unwilling to accept an unreasonable deal for the fishing industry, stating that "fishermen are for no deal."<sup>34</sup> Fishermen themselves say they would accept a compromise with the United Kingdom instead of losing access completely. However, the deal would need to heavily favor France's fishing industry overall.<sup>35</sup> The other option is a "no deal," which would have a large impact on the European Union as a whole. Without the United Kingdom waters, France would have to remove the access of other countries' fishing boats to their waters because resources would be more heavily limited.<sup>36</sup> This could have a major impact on countries like Belgium and the Netherlands who have very little national waters and minimal access to fish in their own territory.

Fishing rights have long been a longstanding source of tension between Europe and the United Kingdom. This first became an issue when the UK entered talks to join the European Committee in June of 1970.<sup>37</sup> The six countries working with the United Kingdom to create such an alliance went behind the United Kingdom's back to create a common fisheries policy, having been eager to access the fish-rich areas of Britain, Ireland, Denmark, and Norway for over 12 years.<sup>38</sup> Because of this legislation, Norway has continued to remain against joining the European Union.<sup>39</sup>

The United Kingdom, on the other hand, proposes a year-to-year negotiation of fishing quotas.<sup>40</sup> The European Union has rejected this for a number of reasons. Firstly, this would make it difficult for the fishing industry to make investment decisions. Further, without a hard line, this "deal" would act as nothing more than a method of pushing back the negotiations.<sup>41</sup> Because three-quarters of Britain's catch is sold to the EU, Britain wants to ensure economic growth in its fishing industry and support its own fishing market, which revolves around exports over country use.

More recently, Macron has come under pressure to relent on fishing, which some say is a small industry, around only one billion euros, compared to other industries like Germany's car manufacturers.<sup>42</sup> Macron, on the other hand, states that the fishing negotiations are not what is holding up an economic deal. What he wants, according to speeches, is to ensure fair competition rules because the EU itself is "not there simply to make the British prime minister happy."<sup>43</sup> This deal may be minuscule in terms of economic effects, but the common fisheries policy has been a political one for over 50 years.



## QUESTIONS

1. Consider your country policy closely including historical background and specific economic wants. What would your country be willing to give up to facilitate economic benefit in the European Union?
2. How would your country balance the bolstering of EU institutions, the budget, and trade between the EU and the UK?
3. How do you plan on promoting cooperation and movement of people to support equal workers' rights and fair working conditions?
4. Is it possible to implement the "four freedoms" of the European Union, the movement of goods, people, services, and capital, while simultaneously maintaining a fair deal for both sides?
5. What effect does your country have on the European Union? Are you a prominent force? How would this affect your outlook and goals for the future of the Brexit deal?
6. Creating a unified EU policy requires drawing from these differing viewpoints to craft a stance that is advantageous for all member states. Therefore, familiarity is necessary with these differences in policy. Is there a strategy that promotes the goals of all involved countries?





## Catalonia Separation

### BACKGROUND

As one of the wealthiest and most productive regions in Spain, Catalonia has a distinct history that dates back almost 1000 years. Catalonia was first settled in during the Middle Palaeolithic area, occupied by several Iberias and Greek Colonies, conquered by Roman and Muslim empires until it finally was put under control of the Country of Barcelona with the Kingdom of Aragon, which created the Crown of Aragon. The Country of Barcelona and the other Catalan counties adopted a common policy known as the Principality of Catalonia, developing an institutional system that severely put a limit on the power of kings. As an individual entity, Catalonia greatly developed and expanded the Crown's militaristic capabilities and trade, especially the navy. At the same time, Catalan's own culture bloomed as their language spread to more territories including Sicily, Naples, and Athens. However, the crisis of the 14th century destabilized and ended the House of Barcelona, and the ensuing Catalan Civil War decreased Catalan's political role in international affairs. The Principality of Catalonia continued to lose more individual power as the Nueva Planta Decrees were established in 1707, which banned the Catalan Constitutions and Catalan's main political institutions and rights.<sup>44</sup>

The 19th century saw the start of the Napoleonic and Carlists Wars which inevitably affected Catalonia as well. A brief period of political and economic strife due to Napoleon occupation of Spain was immediately followed by an economic flourish, turning Catalonia into a center of economic progress and industrialism. The economic success resulted in *Renaixença*, a romantic revivalist which increased nationalist sentiments spawned many workers movements, the most popular being anarchism.

The 20th century saw varying losses and gains for Catalonia's independence. In 1931, the Second Spanish republic was enacted after the deposition of Alfonso XIII, which granted Catalan self-governance and their official language. However, Francisco Franco rose to power in 1936 to create the Francoist dictatorship, creating a period of harsh oppression, which cut off Spain's ties to the international world and suppressed Catalonia's independence. Once Franco died in 1975 and his regime disappeared, the Spanish Constitution created in 1978 solidified the autonomy of Catalonia and its language. Self-government returned to Catalonia in their affairs, however the 2010s have brought talks of additional independence in Catalan.<sup>45</sup>

Spain's economic crisis brought talks of Catalonia independence back into the headlines. The 2008 to 2014 Spanish financial crisis, or the Great Spanish Depression, saw Spain face great economic repercussions with high unemployment, forcing them to apply for a 100 billion euro rescue package from the European Stability Mechanism (ESM). The causes of the crisis can be traced back to the housing bubble and unsustainable high GDP growth rate, which resulted in a lax in supervision over the financial sector. Banks therefore easily hid their losses which violated the International Accounting Standards board standards and manipulated the housing market in a way that made the economy seem stable. Other fundamental problems such as a high inflation rate, raising housing prices, and a large trade deficit, among other issues, contributed to the recession in late 2008. In 2009, Spain's GDP contracted by 3.7% and by another 0.1% a year later. It did grow 0.7% in 2011, but dropped another 1.7% drop in 2012. With an already huge debt to other countries such as Greece, France and Germany, the recession only worsened the



issue. Only after the 100 billion euro rescue package was signed in 2012 did Spain begin to economically recover, reducing Spain's sovereign debt by 1%.<sup>46</sup>

Catalonia on the other hand, while affected by the crisis, quickly rebounded due to their strong economic vitality. Currently, Catalonia has a population of 7.5 million, comprising 16% of Spain's population. Furthermore, Catalonia contributes \$262.96 billion a year to Spain, making up roughly 20% of their GDP as well as 35.5% of their imports. Catalonia also pays extensive taxes to Spain- an estimated 8% of their GDP while getting minimal back in terms of public works or services. Therefore, the economic superiority and autonomy of Catalonia sets a reasonable cause for Catalonia to become a separate sovereign state.<sup>47</sup>

The contemporary Catalan independence movement began in 2009, rooted in historical nationalistic ideals and independence from the 19th and 20th century. In 2010, Partido Popular (People's Party) challenged the 2006 Statute of Autonomy in the Constitutional Court of Spain, which guaranteed the self-government of Catalonia, and outlined basic rights of the citizens. However, outcries and protests were sparked when the court ruled that the statute violated constitutional provisions. In 2013, Artur Mas, the president of the Government of Catalonia at the time, and Oriol Junqueras, the leader of the pro Catalan Independence party, Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC), drafted up the Declaration of Sovereignty and of the Right to Decide of the Catalan People. This declaration stated that the people of Catalonia have the right to decide upon their own political future on account of democracy and sovereignty. An unofficial independence referendum was held in 2014, where they asked two simple questions. If Catalonia should be a state, and if the state should be independent. A resounding 81% of those attending answered firmly yes, however there was only a 42% turnout at the event, which can represent overall low support for the cause. The Spanish Government deemed the referendum illegal because of the fact they tried to declare sovereignty, and criminal charges were issued against Mas and the other members. In 2017, another referendum attempted to be held, which was again deemed illegal by the Spanish Government. This time however, there was police action, which included tear gas and heavy police brutality, reminding some people of Franco's oppressive regime. After the referendum, Spain threatened to suspend the independence and autonomy of Catalonia with Order 155 under the Spain Constitution. Quim Torra became president of Catalonia at around the same time by a narrow margin of 66 votes to 65 votes after other candidates had been blocked by Spain, and he swore to restore independence to Catalan, causing further conflict between the two entities.<sup>48</sup>

In 2018, Carles Puigdemont, the former Catalan president, alongside many other Catalan leaders, fled the country to avoid being arrested. Many other independence leaders were sentenced to detention under accusation of rebellion, disobedience and the misuse of public funds. The Supreme Court of Spain tried 12 people for these allegations, including the former vice president Oriol Junqueras, Jordi Sanchez and Jordi Cuixart, as well as the former Speaker of the Parliament of Catalonia Carme Forcaell. A unanimous decision by the seven judges of the supreme court decided that all were guilty and 9 members of the 12 received prison sentences varying from 9-13 years for crimes of sedition. Heavy fines were inflicted upon the three others who were tried. This verdict sparked major controversy leading to massive protests across the country.<sup>49</sup>

Demonstrators reportedly clashed with many police officers violently, throwing rocks and using fire extinguishers to destroy property, and physically assaulting those standing in their way. Protests began to become larger and larger, with more and more Catalans taking to the



streets to protest: a record total of 600,000 protesters in Barcelona. Currently, the Spanish Police has announced that they have arrested 51 protesters. Quim Torra called for talks between the Catalan independence movement as well as the Spanish government, stating that these violent protests never truly represented the independence movement. However, the Prime Minister of Spain, Pedro Sanchez, had stated that Torra had not condemned the protests strongly enough and as a result, had refused to discuss with Torra about Catalan independence because it would be a violation of Spanish law.<sup>50</sup>

### **UNITED NATIONS INVOLVEMENT**

In response to the arrest of three separatists, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (UNWGAD) published a report calling for their release. The body ruled the arrest of the Catalan political leaders as violations to the rights of freedom of expression and assembly, claiming the charges were intended to coerce the leaders for their political perspectives<sup>51</sup>. The UNWGAD is a UN body which investigates arrests which may violate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Part of this declaration regulates the rights to a fair trial, the presumption of innocence, and freedom of expression of political affiliation<sup>52</sup>. However, the body relies on individual states to enact its rulings, and has no direct way of enforcing decisions<sup>53</sup>. The group also supplies mechanisms of remediating violations of article 9.1 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, prohibiting arbitrary arrests and detention<sup>54</sup>. After they published their report condemning Spain for violating human rights standards, the Spanish government responded by campaigning against the UNWGAD. In their pursuit of innocence, Spain discredited the bodies work and findings, and claimed they were partial<sup>55</sup>. Because the Catalan nationalists parties backed NATO wars and the EU, the demand for Catalan's secession is advanced as works on the Iberian peninsula are divided. Additionally, a UN Independent Expert issued a statement to Spanish authorities in 2017, urging them to enter negotiation in good faith. However, after the Spanish Government reported its plan to impose direct rule onto the region when a deadline for the end of the Catalan independence campaign was not met, he responded with claims that their decision to suspend Catalan autonomy violated the ICCPR, the Spanish Constitution, and international treaties<sup>56</sup>.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are another system of calling for peace and freedom. Many of the SDGs encompass the right to freedom of expression. The most relevant of the goals is SDG 16, which encourages nations to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.” Additionally, the tenth goal of SDG 16 is “to ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements”<sup>57</sup>. The UN body UNESCO works to promote freedom of expression along the guidelines of SDG 16, but primarily focuses on journalists safety and issues of impunity. Further, the body is working to implement indicators in creating mainstream safety and achieving the SDG.

### **The Veneto Secession**

A recent separationist movement similar to the Catalonia Separation was the movement in Venice and the surrounding area. In 2014, citizens of the Veneto regions were polled in an unofficial Venetian referendum of independence. The main question posed to voters was asking their opinion on Veneto separating from Italy to become an independent or sovereign federal republic. Shockingly, 89% of voters voted in favor of separating from Italy<sup>58</sup>. The region's 3.7



million eligible voters used a unique digital ID number to cast ballots online, and organizers estimate that over two million voters ultimately participated in the poll. They were also asked three subsequent questions surrounding membership in the EU, NATO, and the Eurozone, where a majority of voters voted in favor of rejoining the groups. On Friday night, people waving red-and-gold flags emblazoned with the Lion of St. Mark, the flag that represents the separatist movement, filled the Treviso square heralding the victory. 2,102,969 votes in favor of independence—a whopping 89 percent of all ballots cast—to 257,266 votes against.

Traditionally, the Republic of Venice was an extremely powerful country during its thousand-year lifespan between the seventh and eighteenth centuries.<sup>59</sup> A merchant republic, state traders sailed from the Adriatic Sea to the shores of Syria and Lebanon, carrying Asian silks and spices. This region produced explorers, like Marco Polo, composers, like Vivaldi, and writers, like Giacomo Casanova, showcasing its renaissance-esque strength that rivaled both Florence and Rome.<sup>60</sup> However, centuries of economic decline, with the shift in trade routes and the Napoleonic conquest shifted the power dynamics of the city-state.<sup>61</sup> After being under Austrian control for around fifty years, a short-lived Republic of San Marco declared independence in the region during the revolutions of 1848; just a year later, they surrendered back to Austria. During the Italian conquest for unification, voted in favor of annexation by the Kingdom of Italy with a tally of 647,246 votes in favor and only 69 votes against, a heavily rigged vote.<sup>62</sup> The separatist movement fell away for many years until the formation of Liga Veneta and Lega Nord, two political parties advocating for greater autonomy within the Italian government.<sup>63</sup> With under one percent of the votes, however, little had changed before the attempted secession.<sup>64</sup>

In the same year the poll was conducted, police arrested 24 separatists of Veneto, who were allegedly planning on seizing St. Mark's Square in order to declare a Venetian republic.<sup>65</sup> Similarly to Catalonia, one of the primary reasons separatists were able to amass such a strong following was because of financial distress in their respective countries. At the height of the European debt crisis and the Great Recession, the Italian GDP dropped nearly 10%; however, Veneto was able to remain the third wealth-producing region in Italy.<sup>66</sup> While the Venetian GDP is a huge producer of wealth in Italy, the region's limited legislative autonomy hinders it from making any true progress in separating from the nation. In 2006, the Italian Electorate rejected constitutional reforms that would permit the Veneto region to develop more power, as the electorate feared the effect regional power would have on national unity. Additionally, if the region were to separate, it would rank 7th in per-capita European GDPs.<sup>67</sup> Separationists also argued that nearly \$30 billion is paid out annually more in taxes, than received in government benefits by citizens of the region<sup>68</sup>. While supporters claim to be peaceful, a constitutional law expert, Gaetano Azzariti, deemed the movement to be meaningless and illegal.<sup>69</sup> Despite the public outcries for independence, the referendum has failed to see success in the 5 times in 40 years, due to low voter turnout<sup>70</sup>.



### QUESTIONS

7. Consider your historical country policy in relation to both Spain and Barcelona. Would your country be willing to give up a productive region if the populace required it?
8. Are there any parallels between your country's history and the Catalan independence movement?
9. Is there any legislation within the European Union or any statements made by the Council of the European Union that can provide a legal framework for Catalan independence?
10. Are there any similar situations that have occurred within Europe recently regarding the independence of a state from the government? Look at the separation of Kosovo from Serbia. How can a situation as atrocious as this one be prevented?
11. Spain has imprisoned the leaders of the Catalan independence movement, arguably breaking the Geneva Accords. Consider how a country or the European Union as a whole can prosecute Spain for such a crime.
12. Has Spain broken the international covenant on civil and political rights? How has Spain regressed upon both the sustainable development goals, which were signed unanimously in 2015, and the United Nations Charter?





## Endnotes

1. [https://www.bbc.com/news/politics/eu\\_referendum/results](https://www.bbc.com/news/politics/eu_referendum/results)
2. [https://www.bbc.com/news/politics/eu\\_referendum/results](https://www.bbc.com/news/politics/eu_referendum/results)
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-50838994>
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-35616768>
5. [http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/why\\_vote\\_leave.html](http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/why_vote_leave.html)
6. <https://www.essential-business.pt/2019/01/18/brexit-stronger-together/>
7. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-uk-after-referendum/>
8. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/24/david-cameron-resigns-after-uk-votes-to-leave-european-union>
9. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-48379730>
10. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/boris-johnson>
11. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/06/26/joint-letter-of-presidents-donald-tusk-and-jean-claude-junker-on-the-upcoming-g20-summit/>
12. <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-european-leaders-pick-germany-defense-minister-ursula-von-der-leyen-to-lead-commission-charles-michel-council/>
13. [https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7851/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20UK%20exports%20to,%25%20of%20all%20UK%20imports\),&text=The%20UK%20had%20an%20overall,billion%20on%20trade%20in%20goods.](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-7851/#:~:text=In%202019%2C%20UK%20exports%20to,%25%20of%20all%20UK%20imports),&text=The%20UK%20had%20an%20overall,billion%20on%20trade%20in%20goods.)
14. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-05-19/u-k-sets-out-post-brexit-tariffs-plan-cutting-import-duties>
15. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/how-britain-and-the-eu-would-trade-under-wto-rules/2020/02/03/1470a694-467c-11ea-a91ab-ce439aa5c7c1\\_story/?arc404=true](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/how-britain-and-the-eu-would-trade-under-wto-rules/2020/02/03/1470a694-467c-11ea-a91ab-ce439aa5c7c1_story/?arc404=true)
16. <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8586/CBP-8586.pdf>
17. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26781230?seq=1>
18. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2902394](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2902394)
19. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/11/economy/uk-coronavirus-brexit-business/index.html>
20. <https://medium.com/@rchen8/the-economic-impact-of-brexit-on-uk-and-eu-trade-464dd090f92e>
21. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/governmentpublicsectorandtaxes/publicsectorfinance/articles/theukcontributiontotheeubudget/2017-10-31#:~:text=HM%20Treasury%20also%20publishes%20figures,to%20be%20C2%A38.9%20billion.>
22. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_1968](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1968)
23. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA\\_20\\_104](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_20_104)
24. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/european-union-and-united-kingdom-forging-new-partnership/eu-uk-withdrawal-agreement\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/european-union-and-united-kingdom-forging-new-partnership/eu-uk-withdrawal-agreement_en)
25. <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/brexit-transition-period>
26. <https://www.bbc.com/news/explainers-53724381>
27. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/02/1058131>
28. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal8>
29. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/globalpartnerships/>
30. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-54526145>
31. [https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp_en)
32. <https://frenchfoodintheus.org/1907>
33. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1365479/brexit-news-fisheries-uk-eu-french-market-trade-talks-michel-barnier-spt>
34. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-france-exclusive/exclusive-macron-lays-ground-for-netting-brexit-compromise-on-fisheries-idUSKBN2781P3>
35. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-eu-france/macron-says-french-fisherman-accept-situation-will-change-after-brexit-idUKKBN2711W4>
36. <https://www.france24.com/en/20201009-brexit-eu-and-uk-in-choppy-waters-over-fishing-rights>
37. <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinetpapers/themes/eec-britains-late-entry.htm>
38. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/114/the-common-fisheries-policy-origins-and-development>
39. <https://www.euronews.com/2013/03/29/norway-and-the-eu>
40. <https://www.euronews.com/2020/11/27/britain-to-reject-eu-offer-to-return-18-of-fish-caught-in-uk-waters>
41. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/sep/30/britain-offers-eu-fishing-concession-brexit-sweetener>
42. <https://fr.reuters.com/article/uk-britain-eu-autos-germany-idUSKCN1PA173>
43. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-talks-latest-michel-barnier-boris-johnson-no-point-eu-b1078542.html>



44. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Catalonia#Contemporary\\_period\\_\(1939%E2%80%93present\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Catalonia#Contemporary_period_(1939%E2%80%93present))
45. ibid
46. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008%E2%80%932014\\_Spanish\\_financial\\_crisis#:~:text=The%202008%E2%80%932014%20Spanish%20financial,financial%20crisis%20of%202007%E2%80%932008.&text=The%20main%20cause%20of%20Spain's,unsustainably%20high%20GDP%20growth%20rate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008%E2%80%932014_Spanish_financial_crisis#:~:text=The%202008%E2%80%932014%20Spanish%20financial,financial%20crisis%20of%202007%E2%80%932008.&text=The%20main%20cause%20of%20Spain's,unsustainably%20high%20GDP%20growth%20rate)
47. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/02/catalonia-important-spain-economy-greater-role-size>
48. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalan\\_independence\\_movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalan_independence_movement)
49. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29478415>
50. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalan\\_declaration\\_of\\_independence#:~:text=The%20Catalan%20declaration%20of%20independence,the%20founding%20of%20an%20independent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalan_declaration_of_independence#:~:text=The%20Catalan%20declaration%20of%20independence,the%20founding%20of%20an%20independent)
51. <https://unpo.org/members/21920>
52. <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2019/07/12/cata-j12.html>
53. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/29/carles-puigdemont-welcomes-un-panel-report-on-jailed-catalan-separatists>
54. <https://unpo.org/members/21920>
55. <https://unpo.org/members/21920>
56. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=22295>
57. <https://ifex.org/sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-what-role-for-freedom-of-expression/>
58. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/03/europes-latest-secession-movement-venice/284562/>
59. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/03/europes-latest-secession-movement-venice/284562/>
60. <https://www.biography.com/explorer/marco-polo>
61. <https://nomadcapitalist.com/2016/08/26/economic-collapse-rise-fall-venice/>
62. <https://www.ohio.edu/chastain/rz/venrev.htm>
63. <https://www.thelocal.it/20180118/political-cheat-sheet-understanding-italys-northern-league>
64. <https://www.thelocal.it/20180118/political-cheat-sheet-understanding-italys-northern-league>
65. <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/europe-new-countries/>
66. <http://statistica.regione.veneto.it/ENG/Pubblicazioni/RapportoStatistico2013/Numeri.html>
67. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/03/europes-latest-secession-movement-venice/284562/>
68. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/04/19/venice-italy-secession/7563295/>
69. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2014/04/19/venice-italy-secession/7563295/>
70. <https://www.ft.com/content/2c045b78-1514-11ea-9ee4-11f260415385>