Ultius

Ultius, Inc.

Writing Samples

07 July, 2016

<div align="center">The Future of the European Union</div>

The European Union (EU) is an evolving multinational body composed of several different individual nations within Europe. The purpose of the present sample essay provided by Ultius is to discuss the future of the European Union, in light of recent historical and political trends that are in the process of potentially threatening the viability of this organization. The essay will begin with a brief historical overview of the European Union. Then, it will proceed to consider two crises currently facing the European Union: the first consists of the waves of immigration from the Middle East, and the second consists of the prospective departure of Great Britain from the organization. Finally, the essay will reflect on the underlying cultural trends that are shaping the future of the European Union, and what could perhaps be done in order to help ensure the long-term viability of the organization.

Historical Overview

To start with, it will be appropriate to say a few words about the origin of the European Union. According to Wilkinson, "The EU can trace its origins from the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Economic Community (EEC), formed in 1951 and 1958 respectively by the Inner Six countries of Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. . . . The European Union was established under its current name following the Maastricht Treaty" (paragraph 5). So, the European Union initially began as an economic alliance among several different nations on the European continent, and then this alliance

gradually developed to include more and more nations, with the current result of the European Union being a serious geopolitical bloc in the world today.

The economic dimension of the European Union is and has always remained one of the most important aspects of this geopolitical arrangement. As Chandler has put the matter: "Europe's monetary union is simply one of the most important experiments of our time. Can the countries whose wars against each other shaped to a large extent the past millennium, if not longer, form a sustainable monetary union without political union?" (paragraph 1). The individual constituent nations of the European Union remain sovereign and independent nations; but most of the nations within the organization have adopted the singular currency of the euro. This development has also catalyzed a move toward a more strictly political union as well, as is exemplified by the fact that some member nations of the European Union have open borders with each other. In short, the European Union has generated a sense of peace and solidarity among different nations that, even within very recent history, have had a history of going to long and bloody war against each other. Clearly, no matter how one looks at this, it has been a quite formidable accomplishment.

Crisis #1: Immigration

One of the major threats currently facing the European Union, however, consists of the waves of immigration coming from the Middle East. This has proven to be a cause of tension among the constituent nations of the European Union due to the fact that different constituent nations have different capacities for handling the influx of immigrants, as well as the fact that immigrants tend to arrive in some nations more than they do in other nations. This produces conflicts regarding the extent to which any given member of the European Union should be held responsible for providing support for the immigrants, as well as the extent to which ongoing

membership in the European Union itself is seen as beneficial from the perspective of any given constituent nation.

For example, according to the European Commission, "The Commission supported refugees in Turkey who have fled violence in both Syria and Iraq, with particular emphasis on vulnerable people living outside of camps" (paragraph 6). Many of these refugees have been showing up in Greece, which has placed significant strain on the logistical and financial capacities of that nation. Now, the European Union itself has admittedly been helping Greece with funding in this regard; but nevertheless, within Greece itself, the situation has tended to produce some resentments regarding the uneven sharing of this humanitarian burden. As a part of the European Union, Greece must respect the laws and regulations regarding refugees that apply to the organization as a whole. This could potentially prompt reflections, both in Greece and in other nations, about whether continued membership is really in each nation's best interest, or whether it would be wise to begin considering withdrawal.

This problem is also exacerbated by the fact that some nations of the European Union tend to take much more radical stances regarding the immigration crisis than do other nations. As Calamur has indicated, for example, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel has announced a extremely liberal open doors policy regarding the refugee crisis. This move, while surely noble and idealistic in its motivation, has also catalyzed significant political turmoil within the European Union, due to the fact that the leaders of many other nations do not favor such a policy, at least partly due to concerns regarding infiltration by terrorists. A move such as the one made by Merkel, then, potentially puts pressure on other leaders to follow her example, which can in turn produce a kind of resentment that disrupts the solidarity among nations on which the European Union as a whole is premised. In short, an event such as the refugee crisis could

potentially cause the individual member states to begin considering their own self-interest, at the expense of the cohesion of the European Union as a whole.

Crisis #2: Brexit

Recently, Great Britain, through a popular referendum, reached the startling decision to actually leave the European Union. This is what has come to be known as Brexit. This was a surprise to most international observers; and according to Duncan, the result went against the predictions of most polling companies in the run up to the actual vote. What would seem to be quite clear is that there were variables and resentments seething within the popular consciousness of Great Britain that went largely undetected by the experts and pundits on the subject of politics. Of course, Great Britain is one of the most powerful nations in all of Europe; and the fact that Great Britain has decided to leave the European Union potentially undermines the authority of the latter in a fairly significant way. In particular, there may be some risk that other nations will follow Great Britain's lead and decide that they, too, have had enough of the mutual responsibilities inherent in the structure of the European Union and would instead prefer to go it alone.

An interesting aspect of the Brexit event, though, is that it could possibly lead just as well to the breakup of Great Britain itself as to the breakup of the European Union. In particular, the relevant statistical evidence has indicated that the kingdoms of Northern Ireland and Scotland, as well as the city of London itself, all strongly voted to stay within the European Union, and the decision in favor of Brexit was largely carried by the rural parts of Wales and England (Roberts). So, if Great Britain in general is speaking of secession, then this could well give the individual constituent kingdoms of Great Britain their own ideas of secession as well—that is, of secession from Great Britain, in favor of independence and ongoing membership within the European

Union. This is perhaps one of the more ironic implications of the surprising decision reached by the people of Great Britain.

This also suggests that while Brexit is in fact something of a crisis for the European Union as a whole, it may also be the case that the decision will actually reinforce the strength of the European Union by leading other nations to repudiate a decision such as the one reached by Great Britain. This is especially the case given not only the serious internal dissensions that have emerged within Great Britain in the aftermath of the referendum, but also the logistical nightmare that would also seem to be emerging there. In essence, it is not all that simple of a matter for a nation to simply leave the European Union after becoming a part of it: the economic and political interdependencies grow and evolve in a more or less organic fashion over time, and it can be difficult or even traumatic for a nation to extricate itself from those commitments in a smooth and effective way. In short, the case of Great Britain may cause other nations to engage in copycat acts; however, it is also possible that the case will serve as deterrence for other nations by showing them how difficult life would become if they were to actually pursue a similar course of action.

Reflection on Trends

From the above discussion, a key point that can be stated is that the European Union would seem to be threatened by the phenomena of xenophobia and nationalism that have been experiencing a resurgence in these times. On the one hand, there is the case of nations wanting to close their borders to immigrants and resenting pressure to leave those borders open; and on the other, there is the go-it-alone mentality of nations such as Great Britain that leads such nations to believe that they would be better off not casting their fates in with the European common lot. The very nature of the European Union is such that it is premised on a common belief in

solidarity and cooperation, and in being stronger together than alone. If this sensibility falls apart, then the very integrity of the European Union as such would be seriously threatened.

This disconcerting cultural and political trend can also be seen, for example, within the United States: many commentators, including Chideya, have drawn parallels between the mindset animating Brexit within Europe and the mindset underlying the Trump campaign for the presidency within the United States. In both cases, people have exhibited a tendency to essentially withdraw from engagement from the broader world and to bunker down and put up fences in an effort to protect themselves and their own interests. This sort of tribalistic mentality is directly contradictory to the basic ethos and spirit of an organization such as the European Union. As such, it can be suggested here that insofar as this mentality continues to expand and find fertile ground, it is potentially a serious threat to the ongoing viability of the European Union. On the other hand, though, there is also reason to believe that as this mentality becomes more and more virulent, it may dialectically shock people back into their more rational and humanitarian senses (as it were) and lead them to once again see cooperative enterprises such as the European Union as valuable political creations that must be preserved.

Conclusion

In summary, the present essay has consisted of a discussion of the future of the European Union. The essay began with an overview of the history of the European Union, proceeded to consider two crises currently affecting the European Union, and finally reflect on what these crises say about underlying contemporary trends in politics and culture. A key conclusion that has been reached here is that today's world would seem to be marked by the resurgence of an old mindset of xenophobia and tribalism, and that such a mindset is inherently antithetical to the spirit of the European Union. The future of the European Union may thus well depend on

whether this mindset propagates itself or recedes to from whence it came over the course of the coming years.

Works Cited

Calamu, Krishnadev. "Angela Merkel's Refugee Policy." *The Atlantic.* 28 Jul. 2016. Web. 4 Aug.

2016. <http://www.theatlantic.com/news/archive/2016/07/germany-refugee-

terrorism/492011/>.

Chandler, Marc. "The Significance of the Euro: A Primer." *Business Insider.* 31 May 2011. Web.

4 Aug. 2016. <http://www.businessinsider.com/the-significance-of-the-euro-a-primer-

2011-6>.

Chideya, Farai. "What Donald Trump Loves about the Brexit." *FiveThirtyEight.* 28 Jun. 2016.

Web. 28 Jun. 2016. <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/what-donald-trump-loves-about-

the-brexit/>.

Duncan, Pamela. "How the Pollsters Got It Wrong on the EU Referendum." *Guardian.* 24 Jun.

2016. Web. 28 Jun. 2016. <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/24/how-eu-

referendum-pollsters-wrong-opinion-predict-close>.

European Commission. "Refugee Crisis in Europe." Author, 20 Jun. 2016.

<http://ec.europa.eu/echo/refugee-crisis_en>.

Roberts, J. M. "Brexit Could Lead to the Breakup of the U.K." *MarketWatch.* 24 Jun. 2016.

Web. 28 Jun. 2016. <http://www.marketwatch.com/story/why-brexit-could-lead-to-the-

breakup-of-the-united-kingdom-2016-04-24>.

Wilkinson, Michael. "What Is the EU, Why Was It Created and When Was It Formed?"

Telegraph. 22 Jun. 2016. Web. 4 Aug. 2016. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/

news/2016/06/20/what-is-the-eu-why-was-it-created-and-when-was-it-formed1/>.

Citation information

You are free to use this sample work for reference and research purposes. However, you **must cite it** and provide attribution to the author. The citation is provided below in MLA format.

Ultius, Inc. "The Future of the European Union. " *Free Writing Samples | Ultius*. 07 Jul. 2016.

Web.

If you need help with MLA style, please visit the [Ultius citation style help section](). Thanks for playing fairly.