

Global Civil Society

ifs Essay



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**A Brexit view from the standpoint of an English person
living in Germany**

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It is worrying and frustrating to be a witness to the chaos and divisive events and uncertain times as well as the ensuing constitutional crisis that are taking place in the Houses of Parliament and Courts of Law for well over 3 years now, since David Cameron called a referendum in June 2016, the result of which 52% of the population voted to take Britain out of the EU. Since this time, Britain has been wrestling with [Brexit](#), the most important decision in generations.

Politics is all about numbers and if the numbers do not add up, then securing a majority is not possible. However, in the 2016 Brexit referendum, there were 700,000 British citizens who were not entitled to vote. Such discrimination really does exist against expats. It is sickening to read some British politicians saying that "the will of the people must be respected", because not all the people were allowed to express their will at all.

The adversarial system as used in the United States and Great Britain makes finding a consensus difficult. "The opacity of Britain's Brexit blinkers has been compounded by an adversarial UK political system that defies compromise, many said, preventing the government from ever arriving at a settled view of what Brexit should mean and tying its hands in talks." (The Guardian, 20th March 2019)

The rule of law does indeed matter. In our system in Great Britain, the executive is subordinate to the law and is accountable to the parliament. Parliament is accountable to the people. And yet, the Prime Minister Boris Johnson, has repeatedly said he is even prepared to break the law in order to take Great Britain out of the EU by 31st October 2019 at all costs, deal or no deal.

As I write this article, Aidan O'Neill QC, representing a group of around 75 MPs and peers led by SNP MP Joanna Cherry QC has told the Supreme Court justices sums up the case against shutting down of Parliament "The mother of parliaments has been shut down by the father of lies. Rather than allowing lies to triumph, listen to the angels of your better nature, and rule that this prorogation was unlawful." (The Guardian, 18th September). A decision as to whether this suspension was lawful will be made by the Supreme Court early next week.

Very possibly, in order to break this impasse of whether Great Britain should leave the EU or not, a more radical political solution is required. This could be a general election or even a second referendum. Through this, not the politicians, but the population would be given a clear choice of the direction of Britain and its politics.

Many thousands of jobs are at stake as many companies are very concerned about the uncertainty around Brexit. Additionally, many firms are legally required to have a headquarters within the EU. Companies are worried about losing access to the European market are consequently moving. The Brexit vote has prompted a fundamental move in expectations for the future of the City of London, with some even speculating that London could lose its place at the heart of the European financial sector. "Other areas of business affected are in finance, information technology, media, advertising, life sciences and health. The Netherlands has also been competing with Germany, France, Belgium and Ireland to attract Brexit-related moves." (Euro News, 26th August 2019)

There is also a real possibility that Scotland, so very much in favour of remaining in the EU, will host another referendum with regards to opting out of the Union of Great Britain. Increasingly, Scottish people, who voted overwhelmingly to remain in the EU in the referendum, are asking themselves if that U.K. union is worth saving anymore. "Now, with Britain due to leave the EU on 31st October, remaining part of the U.K. and holding

membership in the EU have begun to look more and more like mutually exclusive options for Scotland, rather than complementary ones.” (The Atlantic, 1st August 2019)

In recent months there has been a huge increase in the number of British people applying for German passports and thereby a qualification for dual citizenship. In doing so, citizens are simply protecting their rights. I firmly believe that staying in the EU at a time of such uncertainty and divisiveness in our world is the right step to take. I am a Remainer.

Whatever the outcome, there are many other topics such as climate change, migration and terrorism which need addressing urgently. Due to the stalemate within the Parliament and now a suspension of it, this time is not forthcoming. In any case, when a solution is found, the facts remain the same. We are still geographically part of Europe and we share a common history and the countries which make up Continental Europe are our neighbours and friends and we need one another.

References

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