Brussels: Its political history and its role in Brexit

How did Brussels become the political centre of Europe?

Brussels first started to become the political capital of Europe thanks to the treaty of Brussels, which was forged by the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Luxemborg. The treaty of Brussels was meant to show that these European countries would work together politically, economically, and militarily in the wake of World War I. It ensured the creation of a defensive pact between all the nations involved including the US and Canada and it later transformed itself into NATO. Coinciding with these developments was the fact that many western European states were also starting to establish a trading pact with each other in order to bring rival states closer together. In the 1930s, when the European states had finally implemented their idea of a common European customs pact, each member state would host institutions at a place that would resemble all the member states to host their institutions and coal industries. Robert Schuman (a French diplomat) decided that each member state would host these institutions through a system of rotation, until the permanent home city was established. However, in member states were divided as to which country would host these institutions. Belgium was the first country on the list to host the steel and coal industries of the member states although they were reluctant to do so; they decided to host them on a temporary basis. With the creation of new treaties in the 1950s establishing new political institutions such as the European Community for Atomic Energy and the European Economic Community, due to its role in hosting political institutions. This continued with the rise of the European Union and many of the member states of today had the ability to host the EU due to their political institutions. These institutions were hosted within Brussels and continued until the early 20th century. Brussels in the early 1930s thanks to the Treaty of Brussels, officially began its process of becoming the political centre of Europe.

How has the vote for Brexit negatively impacted Brussels?

-There are fears within the European Union that Brexit could lead to the unraveling of populations within other member countries that are averse to the idea of the Eu, targeting the European Union project.
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-Britain leaving the European Union could lead to a significant fiscal deficit for the EU, whereby Germany and other member states will need to donate more to the budget of the EU, which could be a cause for conflict in the future.
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-Brussels will also need to revisit its economic and immigration policies that for so long has been the key contention between member states, thus weakening the EU.

-It is clear that Brussels needs to significantly reform its policies and its approaches to certain issues, if the project is to live on and not be at risk of collapsing. These issues include the weakness of the eurozone, which has led to rising unemployment and social unrest throughout the union, the continuing of the euro crisis, if the EU decides to continue what it is doing for the Union’s political institutions. We are bound together by history, geography and common interests.

What role will Brussels play in the Brexit negotiations?

-Leading the negotiations on behalf of the European Union will be the European Commission and the 27 member states of the European Parliament, who will be responsible for the final deal on any deal that will be made. The Brexit negotiations will commence on June 19, 2017 after Britain has concluded its general election.

-There is plenty of hope that a deal will be made up until the rights of EU citizens within the UK. Theresa May has refused to guarantee the rights of EU citizens and this has led to a conflict of interests between the UK and EU.

-Ultimately, it is in Brussels that will be responsible for presenting the political positions of the EU to Britain, such as the rights of EU citizens, the exit deal by the UK, and what type of trade deal will be struck.

References

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