

REPORT

Implications of Brexit for EU Decision Making

Thursday 28th of November 2019
Press Club Brussels

- **The expert discussion titled "Implication of Brexit for EU Decision Making" was organised by the Think Visegrad - V4 Think Tank Platform together with EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy and took place on 28th November 2019 in Press Club Brussels. In the light of an on-going Brexit debate, this event aimed to seek answers on what impacts will the new situation have on the decision making process in the European Union after the United Kingdom will leave. What impact will the Brexit have on the traditional allies and can we predict changes in new alliances?**

The welcoming words of the event were delivered by **Zuzana Stuchlíková** (Head of Brussels Office, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy). The panel featured Daniel Naurin (Professor, University of Oslo, Norway), **Nikolett Garai** (Research Fellow, Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary) and **Vít Havelka** (Research Fellow, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, the Czech Republic). The discussion was moderated by **Orsolya Raczova** (Research Fellow, GLOBSEC, Slovakia). The event attracted nearly 35 people.

Mr **Daniel Naurin** has presented a study he conducted together with Narisong Huhe and Robert Thomson. As a political scientists, they run a statistical analysis coupled with telephone interview surveys with Member State representatives to Council preparatory bodies in 2012, 2015 and 2018. The aim of the analysis was to look at the cooperation and negotiation in the Council of the

European Union. The voting models were run with the United Kingdom in and then the United Kingdom was taken out. This offered an insights into potential losers and winners coalitions in the Council, if the United Kingdom leaves the Union. Generally, winners would be the bigger states, namely Germany, France and Poland. On the contrary, smaller states will be the ones to lose the most. As an example, he demonstrated the case of the Czech Republic. In the 2012 and 2015, the favourite partners of the Czech Republic were Sweden, Slovakia and the United Kingdom, with France laying at the bottom. Whereas in the 2018 model the most favourite partners were Slovakia, Germany and Hungary, with France on the 8th position and Poland on the 4th, UK dropping out of the list.



Ms **Nikolett Garai** has reflected on Mr Naurin's contribution. According to her understanding, the sudden drop of Sweden from the priority list of the Czech government was caused by the change of government in the Czech Republic replacing social democrats by catch-all party ANO 2011 as the main power. Further, she mentioned that in the European Union it can be observed that countries are coupling issue by issue problems. She demonstrated this on the example of Hungary. Whereas Hungary is very vocal supported of further integration in the case of defense and trade ties with Japan and Singapore, to name a few, Hungary is often labelled Eurosceptic due to the reluctance of integration in different spheres.

Mr **Vít Havelka** opened his part by referring to his policy paper titled "Implications of Brexit in EU's Decision Making for the Czech Republic," where he concluded that the fears of Brexit causing damage to the Czech Republic is unjustified as it will only slightly decrease its voting powers in QMV. However, the Eurozone will become a major player after Brexit and therefore the Czech Republic should reconsider its position. Mr Havelka further recommended to the Czech Republic to abstain from any V4 controversial activities. He sees the potential in cooperation in the Hanseatic League or within the Austerlitz format. Lastly, Mr

Havelka stressed out that the Czech Republic should be more actively participating in European Defence and Security structures as the general public is in favour of it, which could further positively impact the Czech perceptions of the EU.

To **sum up**, during the event it has been raised that the decision making environment in the EU is likely to change without the United Kingdom. Namely, more countries will seek a new coalition partners and most likely with the bigger Member States. Nevertheless, factors like a change of government might play a role or most likely the issue-by-issue approach might be the most used. Lastly, the Czech Republic should re-evaluate its position regarding the potential loss of the biggest partner in non-Eurozone countries. Interestingly, the importance of deeper integration in European Defence and Security for the Czech population has been raised.