



Jean Monnet Chair Blog on Europe Competition 2017

A second Brexit referendum could be right choice

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When the UK joined the European Community in 1973, it dramatically changed whole industries, trade, the court system and the financial system. Another milestone was the declaration of the the Human Right Act in 1998, which opened the doors for and gave protection to legal and illegal immigrants.

When the World Trade Centre was attacked by terrorists on 11 September 2001, the world's attitude was changed. It triggered not only the war against terrorism in Afghanistan and Iraq but at the same time triggered multiple political crises in the Middle East. Many countries changed regimes but Syria stuck to theirs. Many bombs were dropped over Syria so that millions of Syrians fled the country to save their lives. The majority entered into Europe, among the EU, the UK was their first choice. As the bombing continued over Syria and the war continued over in Afghanistan and Iraq, it resulted in many immigrants coming to the UK.

Free movement changed the labour market across the EU and following the accession of 10 new member states in 2004, the UK was the first choice for East European workers. They entered in millions, yet at the same time there were many British people who British people migrated to Spain, France and other countries too, and therefore, migration was not one-way. However the load of migrants was pushing the capacity of the UK government system.

There were a number of statistics that were interpreted with some serious concerns, such as population, environmental impact, crime rates and, most importantly, the perceived decreased control of the local people.

On 23rd June, the British people had two choices: Leave the EU or remain in the EU. A different way to look at this referendum is whether the British people would vote for increased control at the risk or loss of financial prosperity or maintain the current financial prosperity by remaining in the EU. Ultimately, a very narrow majority voted for Brexit and won the referendum. With this result, the country was left with many possibilities. However Article 50 has been triggered and case by case negotiations are ongoing. If the UK is not allowed in the single market, that might affect the UK trade and living standard, therefore Prime Minister Theresa May is trying her best to reach a deal. If she agrees on free movement the EU will agree to single market access because trade is always supposed to be mutual.

There are quite strong demands for a second referendum but the UK government will likely not give in. Yet, if there were to be a second referendum, and made choice to remain in the EU, it may be good for the country. Overall, Brexit is not great for young generation but (seen as) great for the old. I hope the £20 billion fee to exit the EU will result in a good deal.