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**GREAT BRITAIN AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE
EUROPEAN UNION
AT THE BEGINNING OF THE XXI CENTURY**

--- DOCTORAL THESIS ---

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2013

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RESUME

INTRODUCTION

A research topic requires in addition to a strong motivation also a multiple approach of study to achieve the planned objective. The idea of treating a subject from every possible angle to examine the relationship of Great Britain in relation to the process of the European construction seems generous enough at the first glance, but dissecting many aspects that include such a subject involves, ultimately, a very thorough and comprehensive research that shows precisely inter-linked multiple stakeholders in a complex process as, not missing contradictions and animosity to all levels. The research of the UK relationship with the EU, in the context of European construction is a process that has no end point set, even now at the beginning of the third millennium. European states belonging to the EU, have as a main feature of research their multiple international relationships from many points of view.

With this in mind, we believe that our work is part of contemporary international relations, from the title, to approach, structure and subject. Moreover, the topic itself is anchored in current UK because the relationship with the EU is still one atypical, compared to other European countries. This relationship, although overall predictable, is complex and constantly changing the way the British government deals with European partners in the EU. Our approach on this subject, has included most actual events and notes even from the beginning of 2013, also bringing a present day view and importance of the subject and the whole thesis.

Taking into account all these aspects, our approach has just set the purpose of research. Starting with the finding of facts which are still in progress at an European level. Britain has always had a really special role, as a distinguished member with several issues that were noted during the evolution of the EU. Note that the British had sufficient influence on the European Community since the early days when they were not part of the European structures founded by the six members. This indicates the recognition and the importance of the United Kingdom in Europe, the pre-accession era.

Ever since this phase, the British expressed their more visible, directly or not, not only intentions but also the ways in which membership is conceived to achieve this step, which was important and major especially in long-term effects. Highlighting this point for research purposes is present in the initial part of the work. Foreign, British diplomacy in

general have a long tradition and unanimous recognition throughout history. The mix of flexibility, well defined treaties, in parallel with their conservative strict concepts and principles that UK didn't easily made a compromise in, would make it an awkward partner for any state labeled in different situations, from a possible opponent up to the probability of a future ally. One objective of our research was to highlight the methods used by the British diplomacy at all stages of the European construction. More than any other state, the United Kingdom's foreign policy was based on a highly complex diplomacy that has used any method known in time, and even making use of some very original ones. For the Britain government, diplomacy and international relations meant the use of all opportunities to their full advantage. This approach was also manifested in the periods considered as passive by others, but which were actually waiting for the right moment when British interests could be defended and represented at the optimum level.

In the research was used much information from a Bibliography which is overwhelmingly British, and to a lesser extent unpublished archival sources, aimed at highlighting the British policy in all phases of direct relations with the EU, from the accession until the crisis of 2012. Starting with a fact from an event with a higher or lower impact, to highlight the manner in which British politicians, diplomacy or government in London managed to maximize their economic and political interests. The method is a combination of a descriptive manner - narrative with the critical analysis of the subject. The references have been used as auxiliary support for the proper analysis, including the type recorded discussions. This was possible because British historiography on the one hand, and the EU, on the other hand, shared ideas, concepts, and similar views on most issues at EU level. Since the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) to the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has been evolving as a complex organism also often sprinkled with tortuosity and controversy.

Assuming that the UK has always been interested in the economy aspects, mainly the market, and that is a nation of traders by excellence, they have used many examples of negotiations from their history, with an action narrowed for the ultimate economic purpose. The approach of the actual research was aimed to the comparison of ideas, concepts, and principles of the Britons compared to those expressed by the other European countries in the EU. Moreover, this type of exposure of ideasdebate – included British historiography

authors, focused on debate, and was extended to politicians from all parties of the UK's political scene.

The British policy towards the EU and European integration in general, in the relations with other EU countries were mostly, including (2012), different views, even within the United Kingdom, from contradictions dissenting radical expression especially in the mass media or in Parliament in London. Presenting these views was based on bibliographic sources, and was done by comparison of ideas, while also analyzing and bringing personal conclusions. This approach was preferred as a method of drafting because of the very nature of the events, developments, and the final purpose of this research.

The diachronic writing style was used sometimes through the use of information from the literature or auxiliary material to bring arguments in issuing opinions, conclusions or other assumptions. This way of working was possible because British historiography is not linear. I tried, and largely believe that I managed event correlation with conceptual developments, parallel diachronic styling, even if sometimes inherently appeared some fractures on the timeline.

In our approach, we have researched mostly chronologically, the ways in which Britain has pursued its economic and political objectives. For the pre-accession period, original documents recently declassified by the British archives were used. We chose this approach because British policies were made in various fields, but with the same concern for defending their interests:

- protection and promotion, sometimes by any means, of their market model, the way to trade, raised to the rank of a true market philosophy;
- the vision and position of UK governments in relation to their entrance into the EC, its establishment and further development of the role and participation of the United Kingdom in the European construction itself;
- the way how the political aspect led the EU market rules;
- the motivation for UK to put more weight and insisted more on the expansion of EU, instead of the institutional development as the center of Brussels aimed to;
- presenting the British policies in regard with different problems such as domestic market, various treaties signed by EU security policy and development;

- the permanent tendency of London for maintaining a special relationship with the U.S. in the North Atlantic Alliance and often in opposition to European allies and partners;
- the European construction philosophy seen from both directions: UK and other EU Member States;
- the UK interaction with the European construction, their contribution to it and the direct impact on the British economy and politics ;
- the evolution of these policies practiced by the British in the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first century ;
- the extent to which Britain's foreign policy in relation to the EU remained the same or sometimes changed, depending on political circumstances
- how did Great Britain relate to a the policy of the EU, often given different opinions and divergent actions from other Member States;
- political developments in Britain's relations with the EU, given that both the Conservatives and Labourists were in power;
- if these conditions consistently maintained a straight line of foreign policy and was adopted by the political orientation from London;

Each of the prime ministers from no. 10, Downing Street, have put a mark of their personality, more or less, in the British relations with the EU. However, a distinguished mark, was of Margaret Thatcher which was highlighted in detail in its own chapter:

- the negotiations of the Treaty of Nice;
- the widely recognized contribution of the Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, regarding policies of the EU market;
- the maintenance of a relatively steady relation to the European allies, despite a visible relationship close and special to the U.S.;

The Margaret Thatcher era is treated in a separate chapter, based on the goals proposed by the respective achievements or failures. In addition to this, difficulties in the relationship between the British Prime Minister and the EU have attracted the British name “the awkward partner”.

The Margaret Thatcher era, the evolution of domestic UK policies, must be treated taking into account the configuration of the increasingly international nature of the external events. Until then, Great Britain has allowed itself another luxury: the conservation

and the so called “splendid isolation” because they had the advantage of its geographic insularity. Since then, however, the urge of becoming more present on the continental scene was also present, and strived to become a part of a European continentalism which UK clearly disliked, but had to accept, preferring such future membership. It became quite clear that the future of European nations was the unity and the community of states. This is because, Europe was still divided into two military-political blocs, however no European country could claim that any attempt could dictate political, military, or economic power.

Margaret Thatcher felt that Britain was losing ground internationally, as a great power and promised a more resolute and effective defense of economic interests, political and strategic interests of Britain, worldwide.

Issues are highlighted and consequences interpreted on an economic, social and political scale to the relations with the EU the British government:

- British contribution to the construction of EU by the British market model;
- The European construction and, how and if Britain is a difficult European partner;
- The dilemma: America or Europe?
- The participation in EU budget negotiations;
- EU market liberalization;
- The policy that covers the UK and 'others'.

All these aspects have been treated based on literature and historiographical approach. An opposition of different opinions was made especially on the actions of the premier Margaret Thatcher made in relation to the EU and European integration in general.

The chapter booked for the next premiers, John Major and Tony Blair, is subdivided into two subsections, given the differences in approach of British policy towards the EU in those periods.

John Major was considered to continue the conservative policy of the legacy of Margaret Thatcher. He managed to sign the Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam under reasonable negotiations for Britain. The United Kingdom contributed to protect its interests, with all complaints received from the British parliamentary opposition.

The next prime minister, Tony Blair, with his upcoming, “New Labour” has made a contribution in addition to the relationship with the EU, often imposing their strong

footprint. The way he did this is by focusing examples of bibliographic sources, where possible, the concepts promoted by Tony Blair, to justify the political terminology “blairism”.

This subchapter deals with how Prime Minister Blair tries to apply the “New Labour” in view of the immediate and medium-term British relations with the EU. Other issues are dealt with critical analysis, which are related: the difficult but relatively balanced policy between social pressures - economic and political insider, in relation to external arrangements with the EU, meaning to improve the permanent influence of treaties and EU documents on British policy, both internally and externally.

The chapter dealing with the British relationship with the EU from 1992 to the present is actually the chapter that attempts to justify the title of the thesis. The research of the subject starts with a chapter focused on basic concepts, and also assertions and conclusions from a personal point of view.

This section aims to focus on the last period, from 1992 to present, in this form:

- realities and perspectives in relations between the UK conservative policy with the EU, and promoting EU economic interests;
- Britain's position in relation to official documents issued by the EU (Treaty of Nice, Laeken Declaration, the Treaty of Lisbon) and their influence on British government policy;
- Britain's position in the EU in relation to the political challenges - economic XXI century.
- British relations with EU developments in the context of British conservatism and the need to broaden the market in Europe;
- maintaining Britain in the EU, with the main role in decision making, but with the special demands and keeping privileges pertaining to British tradition, both on the political, legal and economic scene;
- minimizing the disadvantages of EU membership and, in parallel, maximizing the benefits of Great Britain;
- Common foreign and security policy in the light of British interests;
- The adjustment of the policies of the British government to the complexity of international relations in general.

This chapter aims to highlight the real and substantial contribution to the European construction Britabii Sea at the end of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century.

The chapter that covers the UK and European enlargement has a sub-chapter: Case Study: Romania's accession. The two sides are distinct, although in the second part is observed the interference between Romania and UK.

Basically, the first part of the chapter covers:

- Britain's position on the issue of EU enlargement by new members;
- constant attitude of Britain towards the EU enlargement, the accession of new members, especially from Eastern Europe;
- British government's position on this issue, seen by two features: the economic market and diluting Britain's leadership of France and Germany, by multiplying the number of EU members;
- The conservative vision of European integration at the beginning of XXI century, mainly the position of the Prime Minister David Cameron.

The conclusions sum up the main features of the work, and the possible development perspectives and assumptions of EU relations with Great Britain for the next period in a European and global context.

CHAPTER I

EU BEGINNINGS AND GREAT BRITAIN'S ATTITUDE

We believe that it is appropriate to begin with the summary presentation of the evolution of the EU's early moments, the foundation until early this century, including Britain's report on the European construction, following the development of the subject itself to be made in the next chapters.

The European construction, reflected as a known and dominant reality, at the beginning of the third millennium, under the name of European Union, is certainly one of the most important events in the history of Europe in the second half of the twentieth century. There are several aspects to be considered:

- its complexity from a political, economic, social and cultural point of view;
- It lasted several decades and the process is not yet complete;
- the process was developed exclusively by peaceful means, although there was constant tension between some European countries on how to create this European body;
- European Union is up until now the only step in the long European history when several European countries are not allied only against a common enemy, but for a common cause, in spite of hints that claimed that EU wanted just to counterweight the expansion and influence of some western and eastern powers.

Some historians have emphasized this point considering it fundamental in several ways. First, it is noted that Europe had two major conflicts that have unified it temporarily and partially, at least out of necessity, going right across different ideologies in the first case, respectively for the resistance over Hitler's dictatorship by almost all continent in the second case. In another conflict, the Cold War, a first for Europe, Stalin's policy determined largely the European unification for the establishment of true sustainable and supranational institutions. Retrospectively analyzing the development of Europeans sense of solidarity, starting from Salamis battle (480 BC) until today, we find a simple and conclusive explanation: "Europe has never ally for something, but against something. European unity is

felt especially against common defense over a common danger, real or imaginary, and if the danger passes, the unity passes too".¹

Initiating this very broad and ambitious project, its political, economic and geographical scale was considered a fundamental act, especially if compared to the values and the European identity, to the European space and to the spirit of the late twentieth century.

Looking back, the idea of a united Europe is not new for the second half of the twentieth century, as Napoleon's dream was to make from the European nations a sole state, this goal being a real focal point for the policy of the French emperor. Victor Hugo had a true vision of the European future, where he saw a Europe where not war will decide the big events, but some kind of "sovereign senate", like the French parliament of that time.

The draft statement of the European resistance (from France and Italy), developed at Geneva in 1944, noted: "In the period of a single generation, Europe was the epicenter of two world conflicts that, first of all, had the origin the presence of thirty sovereign state on this continent. It is important to fix this anarchy by creating a federal union among the European peoples. European Peace is the cornerstone of world peace. Only a federal union will enable German people to participate in European's life without the threat to become a danger to other European states".² It is therefore concluded that the mere existence of many people and nations in Europe could be one of the causes that generated many serious conflicts on the continent. Or, to avoid conflicts in the future, bringing these countries to a common denominator in a European Union would naturally lead to a perpetual peace.

However, for the idea of a united Europe, we believe to be more significant Winston Churchill's speech in the auditorium of the University of Zurich, on September 19, 1946. Beginning with the famous phrase, "*I want to talk to you today about the tragedy of Europe. This noble continent contains the finest and most cultivated regions of the world (...) It is the fountain of Christian faith and Christian ethics*", this iconic British politician offers a solution in perspective for Europe, "*to be as free and happy as it is Switzerland*". In his opinion, Switzerland was categorized as this: "*We must build a sort of United States of Europe. The first step is the formation of a Council of Europe. If, at first, not all European*

¹ Hagen Schulze, *Stat și națiune în istoria europeană*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2003, p. 301.

² Henri Burgmans, *L'idee européenne, 1918-1965*, Bruges, Collège d'Europe, 1965. *Declarația rezistenței europene*, Geneva, 1944, p. 14.

countries will want to enter the EU, we need to work for the joining and unification of those countries that wish and will".³ He considered this was the only way Europeans could regain "the simple pleasures and hopes that makes life worth living". The process of creating this united Europe was described by Winston Churchill this way: *"All you need is that hundreds of millions of men and women to do good instead of evil, and to receive in return blessings instead of curses."* More surprisingly was that he proposed a partnership between France and Germany because *"there can't be a revival of Europe without a strong spiritual France and strong spiritual Germany."*⁴

³ *The Origins 1945-1957, The history of the European Union*, vezi www.historiasiglo20.org/europeantecedent2.htm, 12 martie 2012.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

CHAPTER II

MARGARET THATCHER AND GREAT BRITAIN RELATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (1979-1990)

Regarding the view towards the unification of Europe, Margaret Thatcher might simply say, "She was against!"⁵ It cannot be said anything more to this statement. Mrs. Thatcher is part of the generation that lived the World War II as a teenager. She cannot be accused of nationalism that proudly preserves the memory of the UK who stayed alone against Hitler for a year (June 1940 to June 22nd, 1941 when Hitler showed his intentions against the Soviet Union as well). The "Cold War", the existence of the "Iron Curtain" in Europe, the tacit but obvious confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact were too present and visible to be ignored. These were the European realities when Margaret Thatcher took the first term as a prime minister.

Along with taking office as prime minister of the British government, Margaret Thatcher took over and the problems they face in relation to the European Community, in full construction. Two of these were pressing and topical issues: the establishment of the European Monetary System and the British contribution to the Community budget.

Along with taking the office as prime minister of the British government, Margaret Thatcher took over the problems they faced in relation to the developing European Community. Two of these problems were urgent and topical: the establishment of the European Monetary System and the British contribution to the Community budget. During her first term, Margaret Thatcher Britain inherited the membership of Britain to the European structures formed in that time. With these structures, Britain will lead a selective and differentiated European policy, always in accordance with the common denominator which was called the defense of economic interests, especially the British market. Some authors consider that Margaret Thatcher treated Europe as a "business".⁶ Not incidentally, the chief counselor on economic issues (Alan Walters) of the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had more influence than the finance minister. On this plan also, the characteristic principles and pragmatism of the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher translate into the

⁵ *Ibidem.*

⁶ Juliet S. Thompson, Wayne C. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

foreign policy pursued by Britain during that period. Thus, when overtaking the government in 1979, Margaret Thatcher was against joining the European Monetary System by Britain, established in the same year by the Commission Jenkins.

The integration into the European Community for a state with so many conservative traditions was not an easy task. This was difficult primarily because the process was interactive demanding many compromises and readjustments, but essentially Britain was able to negotiate to its advantage, to the British people in general. This way Britain succeeded through its politicians, this time by the most representative, the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, to prevent the integration process to be seen as synonymous with the disappearance of one identity, with uniformity within the European system. Therefore, one of the most consistent critic prime ministers of the European Economic Community was the British government. She continued to criticize the European Union, in a constructive manner, including even after she was not the prime minister of British government. It cannot be said to not have support the British membership and integration in the great European project, but on the contrary. The criticism came from the fear that the reforms that have so hardly been achieved over the years during the three terms will be compromised by the European Community through what was forecasted to be a European centralized management in Brussels. These are the reasons why Margaret Thatcher continuously signaled alarm warnings whenever it seemed to be real dangers or simple inconveniences by an exclusively coordinated government in Brussels. Declared supporter of local autonomy and decentralization, Margaret Thatcher could not accept unconditionally the return to such a situation, even if this could come from the European centralized management in Brussels. Moreover, the European constraints came right in the monetary and free trade, for example those that were the most present in the British Conservative government attention of the Thatcher era. In these circumstances, the British Prime Minister said: *"I have successfully limited the influence of the state in Britain only to see it re-imposed at a European level through a super-state exerting a new dominance from Brussels"*.⁷ In order to be even more convincing, the British Prime Minister gave the example that seemed to be the most conclusive: the Soviet Union who tried for years to standardize the economic and political satellite states of Eastern Europe from its influence, and

⁷ Margaret Thatcher, *Discursul de la Bruge* din data de 20 septembrie, 1988, disponibil la <http://www.margareththacher.orgspeechesdisplydocument.asp?docid=107332>, 10 ianuarie 2011.

ultimately it did not give the desired results, but on the contrary. We give her opinion in this regard: *"It is indeed ironic that it is precisely now, when countries like the Soviet Union, who tried to run everything from the center, learn that success depends precisely on the dispersal of power and the decision-making from the center, in the Community exist countries which seem to want to go in the same exactly opposite direction."*⁸

⁸ *Ibidem.*

CHAPTER III
THE BRITISH RELATIONS WITH THE EU DURING PRIME MINISTERS JOHN
MAJOR AND TONY BLAIR

III. 1. United Kingdom and European Construction during Prime Minister John Major

The resignation of Margaret Thatcher as the prime minister and leader of the Conservatives brought John Major as a successor, on November 29, 1990. He took a difficult task for at least two reasons: it was very difficult, almost impossible (according to many historians and politicians) for the new prime minister to achieve the level reached by Margaret Thatcher both internally but more importantly externally, referring here to the British relationship with the European partners. Under another aspect, John Major had to maintain, if not even further strengthen the position gained by Britain among Western European countries.

John Major government actually starts with an attempt to make a fresh new start, especially regarding the relations with the rest of the European countries in the European Community. He had to accept the increasingly prevalent views of the British Conservatives on the nature of the great European project in the context of the British interests in relations with the European Community.

When taking the office as a prime minister of the British government, John Major was in an almost favorable position due to the fact that the UK government was positioned in the center of the European major issues debate. However, subsequent events, both internally and externally will result in the loss of the favorable position and the British influence in the first few months of John Major's mandate.

During the European construction several treaties and agreements between the Member States have been signed. One of the most important was definitely Maastricht Treaty. The agreement presentation was made on December 11, 1991 and then on December 18, 1991 debates in the British Parliament were made, during which the Prime Minister John Major introduced the measures the British government did not accept. Mainly these refer to the chapter on foreign policy and social problems. This has led to the

acceptance of the agreements by most conservative Parliament members. The Prime Minister further explained that the foresights in the Treaty regarding the EU enlargement is of a positive nature because it would primarily serve British interests who were against the idea of federalism in the European Community, or the coming of new members would dilute this idea even more. It is understood that UK believed that in a European Community with several members, its vote and points of view might weigh heavier in front of its great rivals France and Germany. UK has won another point with subsidiarity principle. This issue was introduced as a legal principle.⁹

Conclusions on the Maastricht Treaty were relatively different in the France and Britain's political environments. Thus, some members of the British government emphasized that the Treaty is a document rather limited, while in Paris was another opinion. Jacques Delors said the Treaty actually boosts the future of European Community and resumes the importance on the decision to be taken to achieve monetary union and, therefore, integration can be done faster and more efficiently.¹⁰ The fact that the idea of federalism has been touched not only in the Parliament but also in the dialogue with the European mass-media was considered to be a slippage in terms of political view, maybe even a mistake. Opinion polls have given true signal and revealed serious doubts especially in Ireland, Denmark, Germany (where the idea of a Monetary Union was very unpopular) and even in France.

We believe that these presentation differences were mainly done for the public in both countries, public that periodically is the actual voters and it means everything for the politicians. In another train of thoughts, these differences have never really disappeared, it just occurred at varying degrees of expression. They come out from a major position, a concern rooted in French – American relationship, respectively the British with the Americans during the second half of the Twentieth Century. These positions were never vocal outlined, but felt permanently. We refer here to the following: France wanted a strong and independent Western Europe from all points of view, to strengthen its position over the U.S.. This was possible only through an organized compact and complex structure, mainly because France alone could not allow such a position. On the other hand, Britain has always tried to balance the leaders' positions from France and then Germany, through the special

⁹ „Hansard”, (18 Dec. 1991), cols. 275-86.

¹⁰ *Debates of the European Parliament*, in „Official Journal of the European Communities”, 12 Dec. 1991, No. 3-412232-6.

relationship U.S. has promoted with them. Therefore, the British were confident that the partnership with the U.S. traditionally operates as an unwritten law, but periodically, especially in times of crisis, came out strongly.

The definite conclusion that can be drawn from Maastricht Treaty (signed in early 1992) is that it was ultimately a compromise, but a positive one made with the wide possibilities of doing it as acceptable as possible from all points of view and by all signatory states.

In May 1992, the British government started to prepare for the European presidency. In this sense, it starts a true offensive to improve its image and to demonstrate the firmness of the implementation of the Maastricht agreements. The start of this real offensive was given to the Minister for Foreign Affairs for Europe, Tristan Garel - Jones. He gave a speech in Bonn, on May 1992, in which he more firmly asserted that the British government fully supports the Maastricht agreements and warned, at the same time, the real dangers if the treaty will not be ratified by all member states.¹¹ Besides this intervention of Tristan Garel - Jones, Queen Elizabeth II will make another one, on May 1992, delivering her first speech to the European Parliament. Alongside the symbolic meaning of her gesture, the speech wanted to emphasize the seriousness with which Great Britain treated the European Community and the European Parliament. In her own country, however, the Eurosceptics have criticized this initiative, they were even annoyed by the Queen's gesture.¹² Her speech led to a heated dispute between the British Eurosceptics and the conservative royalists.

The British Prime Minister John Major felt that the parliamentary debates over the Maastricht Treaty represents an important turning point for the European Community decentralization and a big step towards EU enlargement, which he considered imminent, starting from 12 up to 20 Member States. He knew pretty much that politicians feared the creation of a strong central government in Brussels, for this way it lefts fewer power to the national governments. The British government has taken full advantage of the unpopularity of the treaty in some countries, especially regarding the idea of federalism, propagated by Jacques Delors when he obtained the requested concessions. The rejection of the Maastricht Treaty made by referendum by the Danish people (on June, the 2nd, 1992) has

¹¹ „The Independent”, 14 mai, 1992.

¹² *Debates of the European Parliament*, in „Official Journal of the European Communities”, 12 May 1992, No. 3-418103-4.

practically strengthened the position of the British Government, especially on July 1, when it takes over the presidency of the European Community. In all other European Community countries, the results on the referendum in Denmark (rejecting the treaty with 50.7% of 49.3%) were passed as a true negative shock wave.¹³

¹³ Stephen George, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

III. 2. United Kingdom and the European construction during the Prime Minister Tony Blair (May 2nd, 1997 – June 27, 2007)

In the late twentieth century and early millennium, UK has enabled a politician to make his mark not only in British politics, but also internationally. It was Anthony Charles Lynton Blair, known as Tony Blair. He managed to bring to the Labor Party a very prestigious political career not only through its longevity, but also through what he did as a leader of the party and the leadership of the British government.

Shortly after graduation, he entered politics by joining the Labour Party in 1975. In the years that followed, he increasingly became more involved with Labour politics and became noted. A special opportunity arises for him after 12 May 1994, when Labour leader John Smith dies of a heart attack. Interim party leadership was provided by Margaret Beckett until the elections. On May 30th, 1994 Tony Blair and Gordon Brown meet at Granita restaurant in Islington and achieve a political understanding. The result of this arrangement is seen on July 21, 1994 when Tony Blair defeats John Prescott and Margaret Beckett, receiving 57 votes and so he becomes the leader of the Labour Party.¹⁴

It is the beginning of an exceptional political career for the Labour group, represented at the highest level by Tony Blair. He delivers the official speech as a leader, at the Labour Party conference on October 4th, 1994. He starts an intense political activity as an opposition party.

At the Labour Party conference in October 1996 starts another political line where Tony Blair will be the new promoter. It's about the New Labour. It launches the slogan that starts this new Labour policy: „*Our case is simple that Britain can and must be better*“.¹⁵ This slogan will work because on May 1st, 1997 Labour wins the general election and thus interrupts the Conservative long governance (18 years during the time of Prime Ministers Margaret Thatcher and John Major). To the slogan (now almost a classic), “New Labour”, the newly premier puts in another two words: “New Britain”, referring here to the clear fresh start for Britain under Labour government led by him.

¹⁴ Keith Laybourn, *Fifty Key Figures in Twentieth Century British Politics*, London, Routledge, 2002, p. 42.

¹⁵ BBC website. Dec. 18th, 2010.

Immediately after the victory, with the slogan, "New Labour, New Britain",¹⁶ Tony Blair promised unity and determination, efficiency for the future: "Unity and purpose for the future." Labour leader begins his career as a Prime Minister on May 2nd, 1997 with a majority of 179 seats in Parliament. At that time, he was the youngest prime minister since 1812. In his new position he starts to promote, from the beginning, the New Labour policy which focused on social reforms in Britain and openness to the European Union.

¹⁶ Keith Laybourn , *Fifty Key Figures in Twentieth Century British Politics*, London, Routledge, 2002, p. 46.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATIONS OF GREAT BRITAIN WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION FROM 2001 TO PRESENT – THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN CONSTRUCTION

IV. 1. Marea Britanie and the Nisa Treaty.

UK participates along with other EU Member States to all the major events that have resulted from the signing of treaties or joint statements, although its view had sometimes been distinct from other partners. At the beginning of the XXI century, the Labour government led by Tony Blair tried to meet the expectations of both the European partners and the internal ones.

The first challenge for the UK during that period was the Treaty of Nice. In essence, this was devoted to reminiscences of Amsterdam, namely institutional issues concerning the extension because they did not settled in 1997. Mainly it is the composition of the Commission, the weighting of votes in the Council and the expansion of areas, subject to the qualified majority voting procedure. The British government took a very pragmatic, saying again, that the European institutions, namely in terms of institutional reform, must be secondary to the economic side. Tony Blair's view is updated in this respect: „[We have...] concrete proposals of the reform of the EU. This refers to a system of taxation and spending more rational if we spend less on welfare and more investment for the future; I know we can afford to cut taxes”.¹⁷

Regarding the foreign policy and the security policy of the EU, Britain was very sensitive, at least in two respects: firstly, UK wanted to preserve the special relationship with the U.S., and secondly to attenuate the roughness between France and UK, because the France would always see in Britain the so called, „Trojan horse” of the U.S. in the EU. It was still in the memory of both countries the different position that they had regarding the Iraq war (1990-1991), when Britain was favorable to the use of force and provided significant military forces under the command of U.S.. In contrast to Great Britain's position the French government, was more favorable to the use of diplomacy.

¹⁷ Tony Blair, *New Britain: My Vision of a Young Country*, Westview Press, Boulder, CO., 1997, p. 25. See also Tony Blair speech held at Millbank Tower, London, July 4th, 1996.

According to the draft of the European Constitution, then the Constitution itself, it is assigned a great importance to the military policy, specifically to the foreign and security policy of the EU (CFSP). Obviously, also containing the common defense policy. Unlike other areas, under the Constitution, military policy normative references are very specific and checked with many constraints. First, the Constitutional Treaty will replace all treaties on the CFSP line. This will be achieved by reformulating the provisions relating to the area of freedom, security and justice and allow Member States to improve their capacity to act in a common framework. The EU is motivated to have an effective foreign policy after they observed the relative inertia from the Balkan crisis and the inability to impose in the Gulf crisis.

Therefore, a common agenda of actions and measures on the external plan of EU was still missing after the Laeken declaration. Member States' strategies could match or coordinate, but could have also not been accepted, to contradict or oppose, but never actually form a single policy. EU was really a unified economic power, with great gravity in the world, but having those small but parallel proud foreign policies of the Member States, was the key of how otherwise their single values did not had the same effect, with rare exceptions (see the UK as a solid part with U.S. foreign military interventions). In fact, for British foreign policy, in particular the Prime Minister Tony Blair, had a real dilemma, even a real challenge. After September 11, 2001 all European countries in the EU were aligned with the U.S. in the fight against terrorism. Obviously, Tony Blair was leading Great Britain, based on the old reason: the special relationship with the U.S.. But after George W. Bush's statement of 29 January 2002 when he called the three Asian countries (Iran, Iraq and North Korea) as a, "axis of evil", Tony Blair was forced to decide the camp he will be in, given the negative reaction of European leaders on this statement. The danger for the U.S. to unilaterally take action was imminent. Even so, the British Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten, determined the formula "axis of evil" as a "useless simplistic expression". The choice of the British premier would materialize soon, affecting sensitive EU relations with European partners who did not want their involvement in an intervention in Asia.

Despite this delicate vulnerability, we believe that the European Union was still a great ascendancy in terms of defense and security. All of that, from the fact that all the Member States were liberal democracies and "open societies". As principle, this presumes

the states opposition to the use of force in foreign relations, especially in other similar countries. It is a concept that defines itself with the nickname, “democratic peace”.¹⁸ This concept is based on a historic finding, in the sense that history shows that never, or very rarely, liberal democracies will have armed conflicts between them. Therefore, it is a true habit, part of the so-called unwritten laws, as between EU Member states war is unthinkable. To this, all British governments have subscribed unconditionally. This can be the only issue with which the British were permanent and unconditional agreeing with the EU. Moreover, EU member states cannot conceive any war even with other non-EU countries.

These realities perceived as a certainty by each EU member state, the fact that there doesn't exist any fear that force will be used among them, made the integration more possible in the degree of cooperation. Moreover, it was noticed that if it comes to harsh measures, the use of force against other states with military implications in space outside Europe, in such cases, disputes will arise between EU Member States, that are not easily resolved by consensus. For the safety of security, EU states are charged to some extent by voluntary repayment of their sovereignty to the EU. From Britain, the one who first noticed the issue was the Prime Minister's, Tony Blair's, adviser, Robert Cooper.¹⁹

Opponents of this idea consider no need for this failure of their sovereignty because it is sufficiently protected by the umbrella of the U.S. through NATO, which offers enough protection and shelter for Europe. This situation concerns a possible threat to the EU's intercontinental plan. From this equation follows a question that concerned EU on the fact of feeling too protected and not putting in the forefront the defense and security, relying too much on NATO shield, and not exposing to a greater risk? Specifically, if the EU can afford to not using force if the other parts of the world refuses to do so? For now, the solution offered is a complete unit, a common policy in the sphere of defense and security, as this can lead to a possible deterrent to aggression against any EU member state. This is what is intended by the EU treaties. It even suggests the creation of a European structure of their own, on foreign policy, which is parallel to the UN. But it should be established as a new one. In this respect, Pierre Manent stated, “We can say that the democratic principle, after the extensive use of the nation as a tool or vehicle, abandoned it on the roadside. This

¹⁸ Marc F. Plattner, *Sovereignty and Democracy*, in „Policy Review“, no. 122, Dec 1st, 2003.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

would not be a concern if a new vehicle would be clearly available or under construction. But now this new political form is nowhere in sight.”²⁰

Based on these facts, the EU has managed to develop its own common foreign policy projects. Although it had a genuine common foreign policy, especially in the face of international challenges, the EU aims, albeit a relative measure, external actions and parallel mechanisms for cooperation through its various institutions. This occurs because in various issues of coherence, coordination is required, and very clearly, the need to deepen the accelerated process of European integration. In this process, the new constitutional treaty was called to be a major contributor, and the United Kingdom, through its government, was willing to give their view on foreign policy and the security policy of the EU. The British government is considered by law to be taken into account in this major problem, at least for the following reasons: The UK is part of the UN Security Council, NATO, the Commonwealth, the EU, plus the history of its participation in the fair position of the great world conflicts.

²⁰ Pierre Manent, *Cours familier de philosophie politique*, Paris, Fayard, 2001, p. 194.

V. 2. The United Kingdom and the Convention for a Constitution of Europe

Britain's relations with the EU at the beginning of the 21ST century, were different, at least in part from 1997 when Tony Blair the labor party came to power, with a large majority. His second term started without being completed the main promises, led by the five economic tests proposed by Gordon Brown.

Tony Blair's ambitions to make the United Kingdom "the heart of Europe" remained just as beautiful and good intentions, and its popularity, as the projects were quickly eroded. Some European measures, although they seemed insignificant consequences, had a negative impact on the population's vision in relation to the EU. From the new passports to banning the old imperial units of measure (the system of weights and measures), from the banning of pesticides in agriculture until the cancellation of the traditional British practice not to tax the sale of children's clothing, all these caused the British to believe that their country lost quickly and surely its own national identity.

This all the more so as the new measures imposed by Brussels had too much French and German scent. In these circumstances, there was nothing surprising in the survey that showed, in 2000, that 70 percent of Britons were against the single currency and the other 46% wished to leave the EU. These percentages must be added to the 11% undecided.

There were some opinions regarding the future of the EU in the perspective of integration, this being set into a relatively equal relationship with a future super-State or a new market. There had also been presented the arguments for a future possible failure in reaching the targets they proposed by the EU:

- in the case of enlargement with new Member States, the EU would have become even more diverse, from all points of view, or, in this case, the integration process would be even more difficult and take longer;

- No country, except Germany, disagreed with the federalization ;

- little progress had been made in the institutionalization of police powers in the EU;

- policy on defense and security would not get anywhere as long as the taxpayers of the EU would not be willing to pay for it;

-slowing the decision-making process lead invariably to the community aquis not to grow.

In these situations, Tony Blair's opinion, concerning an EU with multi-speed and variable geometry, remained.

United Kingdom Euro skeptics were complaining about another danger for the British: the transformation, by judges and bureaucrats in Brussels, through legislation, of European Nations into an Euroland, "Soviet-style". It was considered, in 28 January 2002, that the EU program is a purely communist, Soviet-style collectivist one, for which reason, Mikhail Gorbachev was considered to have been right when he visited London (March 2000) and said that the EU was "the new European Soviet space". It was also considered that the specter of a super centralized State in Brussels was not desirable because in such conditions would bring to the surface the zealous nationalists from all over the EU Member States.

We believe that at a more careful analysis of the instrument of ratification by the British, the British Government acted again in the classic spirit of pragmatism, in the conditions of a favorable circumstance, in the sense that the Act itself had a more symbolic value because, owing to the negative vote of the Irish, the stake was practically null, requiring unanimity. Instead, the United Kingdom has gained a lot in terms of image in the EU, and thus substantially diminishing its negative perception.

In the immediate period, the United Kingdom will remain that very reluctant Member State when it came to compromises on European topics (Schengen, the single currency market, immigration, etc.), but with the high availability of ambivalence if its interests were at stake. Although ratified the Lisbon Treaty, the British Government was not convinced that the institutional reform of the European Union was essential holding the opinion that new membership the support of the European parliamentary elections were also possible under the configuration at the time.

When, in Brussels, the representatives of the United Kingdom would make strong dissonance towards some decisions and EU projects would be singular voices, that was true, that waved the flag that said, ' "exclusion". In the reality, the scenario of Britain's exclusion from the Union, with the tacit consent of its strategies allies was considered by British analyst Charles Grant as extreme. He believed that such ostracism of Britain could not have been accepted quite so easy by those countries who share the vision of an "atlanticist"

United Kingdom in foreign affairs, the security policy or the liberal market-oriented approach promoted economically.

IV. 3. United Kingdom-extending to the East and the problem of immigrants

Regarding the enlargement of the EU, they all agreed on a fact: the enlargement of the EU with new members would certainly have winners and losers. With the acceptance of this situation they hardened the perception that the EU is a very elitist project that takes place outside the people's consent and therefore undemocratic. That's why it clearly appeared the increasingly strong tendency that all major modifications of the treaties, as well as the expansion of the EU were to be subject to compulsory national referendum, which was difficult to achieve in practice.

Since the EU enlargement issue arises with new members, it was obvious that the British had their own vision of this situation. The British Government's position in the period after 1973 was influenced by at least two factors: political developments of the European States from Eastern Europe (especially after the historical moment of the fall of "the iron curtain") and changes in the EU, with special reference to the votes of the new Member States into the EU.

From these perspectives, the British expressed their positions concerning the enlargement of the EU with new members. Although over the years the British Government had position and attitude changes, they were however more of shape and not of content. That is because, on a permanent basis, they agreed to welcome other new members , as a matter of principle.

None of the historians and politicians could not have foreseen the events in 1989 and 1991, especially the speed and extent with which they were held. Therefore, Western European States have been suddenly confronted with a new political reality of overwhelming importance. The fall of the "iron curtain" changed Europe by abolishing and changing the ideological borders, through the emergence of new borders, new States, but also tensions and challenges that nobody could have predicted before the year 1990. For the United Kingdom, the events of 1989-1990 were not entirely a surprise, but the extent and the way they happened were. Therefore, the prospects of the enlargement of the EU with new members from the Eastern Europe was an opportunity that was not missed.

Therefore, the Conference of June 1993 in Copenhagen, a very important decision for the future of the EU was taken: it gave the go-ahead for the expansion to the East.

United Kingdom raised the problem of more effective measures for blocking the flow of immigrants, primarily of immigrant smugglers' networks. To do this, given the scale of the phenomenon, it was necessary to form a body of additional border policemen at the borders of the EU. It was preferable because involved lower costs than applying the policy for repatriation of the immigrants already in the country. The European Commission accepted these proposals from the British side.

The principle of return or repatriation of immigrants was quite difficult to apply, especially when the countries of origin refused repatriation, as well as the transit countries. United Kingdom, like Germany and Italy, was interested in the efficiency measures for solving this problem related to immigrants. To do so, preparatory work has begun for the United Kingdom to be able to make calls without being refused by the countries of origin or transit and accept the repatriation of immigrants. They could no longer have refugee status. These issues were raised at the meeting of the European Council from Seville, in June 2002.

While France and Sweden proposed the principle of using incentives for development in those countries that produce illegal immigration of labor, United Kingdom, through its Prime Minister Tony Blair, demanded penalties for those countries which refused repatriation of immigrants. Taking advantage of article 36 of the resolution of the European Council in Seville which provides that where the Council identifies, unjustified, a lack of cooperation, may, in accordance with the rules laid down in the treaties, adopt measures or positions under the common foreign and security policy, EU, but without endangering the objectives of "development cooperation ". With this last formulation, Tony Blair had to admit that its goal of giving greater powers to the European Council on the issue of combating illegal immigration had not been fully achieved and that, in fact, the agreement of Seville was, in the end, a compromise.

However, the European Council preferred the measures which limited the flow of immigration than those that lead to the eradication of the causes which caused immigrants to come in EU countries: poverty, overpopulation, political instability. A circumstance would have been, including the United Kingdom, the demographic decline as well as aging and of the population fit for work. But, regarding this issue, an article in "The Economist" had a headline titled suggestively: "Go away, we need you."

More radical was the leader of the BNP, Nick Griffin. First he remembers how much right was former British Conservative politician Enoch Powell when he held his famous speech in 1968, titled "Rivers of blood". He criticized then Britain's immigration policy and made predictions that had come true after 40 years, a real social problem for the British. Nick Griffin proposed drastic measures, even radical, like sinking the boats used by immigrants on their way to Europe.

In 2008, more than 67,000 people crossed the Mediterranean Sea trying to get into Europe, and of those, half arrived in Europe via Malta and Italy. He said: "sooner or later, the only measure that will stop immigration-and will prevent many people originating from sub-Saharan Africa to die on the path to Europe-is to be tough with those who come." Frankly, it should be [EU officials involved in combating illegal immigration n.i.] to sink several boats. Sooner or later, you will need to close the borders, otherwise you will be overwhelmed by third world ".

At the same time, however, conclusions could be drawn from the not too distant past of a Europe that had tragic experiences in dealing with the issue of foreigners, especially in racial. A certain degree or tolerance level needed to be established, at least the moral and practical reasons. Weiler invokes this necessity for the following reason: "Europe was built on the ashes resulting after the second world war, the conflict that generated the most horrible alienation toward those considered foreigners [racially n.i.]. It was an alienation that became annihilation ".

The realities of United Kingdom, with direct reference to immigrants, worried the population and made it point with the accusatory finger towards the EU. Therefore, politicians and the Government had to create a geopolitical balance policy between the British electorate wishes, which were vital in electoral campaigns, and the obligations towards the European bodies. In this perspective, they approached the events that were about to come on the EU level.

For all British Governments, those two problems, enlargement towards Eastern Europe and immigrants, that were inherently linked, could not have been dissociated for the simple reason that the entry of new States from the East of the European continent, brought a wave of less or more immigrants. In these conditions, however, the number one problem that remained was the one regarding the enlargement, because in overwhelming proportion triggered the immigration problem. European construction itself at the

beginning of the 21ST century, from the perspective of the UK, could not continue without including these two great challenges: enlargement and immigration.

IV. 4. United Kingdom and the Lisbon Treaty

An important step for the European construction has been the reformed or reform Treaty in Lisbon in 2007. It appeared as a continuation of those of Rome. There were plenty of voices who felt that a Treaty of reform was not yet opportune and, therefore, it was in fact a treaty too far in time to be taken into account since 2005. Because the institutional reform achieved by the Treaty of Nice has not been considered, at its time, bold enough to meet the expectations of the new extension of the European Union, the onset of the Millennium coincided and even spurred the decision to develop and negotiate a new Treaty.

However, among the most important "innovations" brought about by the Treaty of Nice can be mentioned the redistribution of the number of votes in the European Parliament, the Council of Ministers, the Committee of the regions, the Economic and Social Committee and the reconfiguration, amid Union enlargement from 15 to 2527 members. The constitutional reform process, launched by the ambitious statement from Laeken in December 2001, was to allow the construction of a new European Union more democratic, more transparent and more efficient, able to bring the European citizens, and primarily the young, closer to the design and the European institutions.

To do this, the statement noted the need for organizing wide debates on the future of Europe, involving not only intergovernmental actors, as so far, but also non-governmental actors, citizens, etc., and which would lead to the drafting of a new constitutional project. As such, at least in appearance, negotiations have not been held "behind closed doors", quite the contrary. European Convention on the future of Europe gathered over 100 participants, representatives of different institutional structures.

After a quite difficult and tortuous debate, the Lisbon Treaty entered into force on 1 December 2009. It was, however, a big difference between generous expectations set out in Laeken (December 2001), natural with such a document, and the realities of December 2009. There were authors that claimed that, in reality, the Treaty was considered a contrary of what was necessary at the time of the Laeken Declaration. The reproach regarded explicitly the following matters: the principles mentioned in the Laeken document relating to simplification, transparency and public debate were quickly forgotten, and the text given

was one that did not give any evidence of simplicity, transparency, but rather difficult to understand by the European citizens to whom it was directly "addressed". In addition, the document has not been submitted to a referendum except in one EU Member State, Ireland.

In this situation, the Treaty was saved, as in other situations, through a compromise. This time it was a compromise between opponents and supporters of the former Constitutional Treaty, "and some others were convinced that they had achieved what they wanted, namely, political opponents (mostly British) that have imposed their views concerning the form and the supporters that have not allowed the achievement of substantial amendments relating to content.

The new Lisbon Treaty, also known as the "Reform Treaty" provides only one amendment of treaties considered to be fundamental (Treaty on European Union and Treaty on the functioning of the European Union), as they did in their day, the treaties of Amsterdam and Nice. In addition, mainly in order to meet the objections coming from those EU Member States concerned of a possible advance in the federal Union, from the new Treaty have been suppressed all the clues that might have led to the idea that the EU might turn into a super State. That is why the term "Constitution", disappeared along with the section devoted to EU symbols (flag ,the anthem, motto). However, the new Treaty has taken over most of the innovations included in the Constitutional Treaty, institutional changes beginning more effect more on their operation.

IV. 5. United Kingdom and European Union economic crisis

Starting with the 2010 United Kingdom was confronted not only with global crisis itself, but also with its difficult relationship with EU Member States, especially those in the euro area. On the sidelines the Government led by David Cameron would have wished to be an actor in the EU in resolving the crisis, but on the other hand did not want involvement with financial support. First, the UK is experiencing one of the most difficult periods in its own financial system, although it is not part of the euro area. Thus, the burden of a huge public debt, 920,9 billion pounds respectively, accounting for 60.6 percent of GDP. In addition, although took austerity measures, however, the deficit increased in the first months of 2011.

Under these circumstances, David Cameron announced formally at the EU Summit of 23 June 2011, that would not contribute to the new package of 120 billion euros to help

Greece. The explanation seems simple: United Kingdom is not part of the eurozone, so the only other 16 EU Member States contribute, being in-game currency. The official statement was made despite the fact that Germany had announced by Chancellor Angela Merkel, before the Summit, that expected all States to participate by sharing to save Greece. This was supposed to happen through the European stabilization Mechanism, 60 billion euros, to which the United Kingdom was also committed , along with other EU Member States. With all the non-financial contribution, David Cameron said that he wanted a permanent currency, a strong euro and rising, at least for one reason: the 40% of British exports to the eurozone. The contradiction between the State's relatively paradoxical British Prime Minister and what he wanted or was in reality, one can paraphrase, adapted to the European reality, from what was said in 1971, by the State Secretary of the Treasury, John Connaly, to the Europeans ("the dollar is our currency, but your problem"), i.e., the euro is your currency, but our problem ".

British Prime Minister had, and largely failed, to carry out a genuine balancing act between policy increasingly insistent demands and even threatening in Brussels, on the one hand and the pushy voices coming from within the United Kingdom. Thus, while the representatives from Brussels were increasingly angered by Prime Minister David Cameron's position in the United Kingdom was received with applause by the conservative Euro skeptics because did not sign the new Treaty. This despite the fact that David Cameron committed to working constructively with the 27 EU States, for the use of the European institutions in realization of intergovernmental agreements.

British Prime Minister told fellow conservatives that he negotiated in good faith "Britain's interests, especially the City of London. He added: "the choice was between signing a treaty without adequate safeguards, or not to sign the Treaty. He took the decision not to sign, it was not an easy thing, but it was a good one. " Independents' Party leader, Nigel Farage, was more radical in the ratings, We're going to come out of this Union, such as the United Kingdom is the first EU country they get freedom back. "

David Cameron quickly avoided the suggestions referring to a future referendum on Britain's exit from the EU, declaring unequivocally: "our Membership to the EU is vital to our national interests. We are a nation of traders and we need a single market for trade, investment and jobs ".

Labour leaders' position was that of a really tough criticism to Prime Minister Cameron, pointing once again that Britain's position in the EU raises the risk of isolation, and especially, can have negative effects on the employment and economic growth in general. Thus, the labor leader Ed Miliband said that David Cameron has done a bad thing for Britain's interests "and accused of having abandoned Britain's interest in favor of working with the euro skeptics conservatives. Making a direct reference to the dissenting position of Nick Clegg and David Cameron, Ed Miliband added: "How can you expect to convince anyone else that it was a good result when you can't convince your assistant?". On the same tune sharp critic, Energy Secretary reminded of the saying that circulated in Brussels, Who is not invited to the table, it's on the menu ". It was a reference to the fact that if the United Kingdom ever did so, risked isolation from the EU.

It was noted that David Cameron was not supported in Brussels but by a handful of lawmakers and the Czech leader Jan Zahadil. The leader of the center right European people's Party, Joseph Daul, said about David Cameron that he acted without any consideration of EU solidarity, while former Belgian Prime Minister, liberal MEP Guy Verhofstadt, refused in protest, to speak in English in his speech at the Summit, thus explaining the gesture, and said, I will speak in my native language, because today I don't think English is a language very appropriate to use ". At the end of the speech he returned to English just to alert the British Prime Minister: "I believe that, after a few nights, David Cameron will come to the conclusion that he made the mistake of a lifetime".

There was also a mid position in this political dispute. Thus, the British Conservatoire John Baron said Prime Minister David Cameron demanded the renegotiation of Britain's relationship with the EU. Moreover, he offered a solution via the statement made for the BBC'S public radio station: "I think, fundamentally British veto should not be the end of the matter, but the beginning of a process to recalibrate our relationship with the EU."

The problems that have engulfed the EU at the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century were reflected especially in the economic plan. Nolens Volens, they affected political plan, but the British Governments have always been the most sensitive to the economic climate. Throughout this period, the United Kingdom insisted less on the terms of European institutional building, and more on policies, especially economic ones.

The financial crisis of the recent years in the EU has been used by the British Government as an opportunity in local electoral plan to justify the London position in dealing with Brussels. Not adopting the euro, the attitude of rebelliousness at certain times to partner States in the EU, especially toward France and Germany, have brought some political justification, both Government and opposition, in the face of the electorate, and so is divided as an attitude towards the EU, with direct reference to its legislation. However, the United Kingdom has its place well established in EU, from all points of view, because it is sufficiently related to everything that means the European construction in perspective. In these circumstances, with the participation of the United Kingdom in the European construction, in the early 21st century, the British Government will have, surely, its substantial contribution, but with the same reservations and own actions at EU level in order to be able to defend and to represent its interests in proper tradition of British policy.

CONCLUSIONS

Although only a few decades of the European Union, however, this great European project proved to be so complex and vast that it will go down in history in a well-defined place, regardless of its longevity. European construction in full process, at the beginning of the third millennium, it defines the very essence of the EU. Already historians and politicians consider the EU as the most complex political system, economy, culture known to date. It can be assigned to it a unique character in the history of international organizations and treaties.²¹

In this context, the UK had, from the beginning, a special role in relation to other European partners. UK's participation in the complex process of the European construction was definitive, despite the road, which was often tortuous. The difficulties UK had encountered were also caused by internal problems, as British policies represented some in this period. Two steps can be defined among UK's difficulties: first, obstacles came right from the British government, second, came the difficulties from the founding states of the European project. For the first phase, the reasons were many, but the essence lies in the British reticence to the projects initiated by Europeans. Losing the start, for Britain (of being included among the founders), the establishment of EFTA and the disappointment from the failure of this project, led to the delay of the United Kingdom of join the European community in the '50s.

European construction, according to the British government in the second half of the twentieth century had to be a process that included compelling economic conditions typically British: free trade, minimized trade barriers, free movement of labor and capital. On top of this came the political claims. Those should ensure the removal of any concerns about the supranational federation intentions of the EU trends, to have a supranational character, harming fundamental characteristics of sovereignty.

In addition to these political and economic elements, aspects of collective mental characteristics were constantly overlapping, because the British, from ordinary individuals to the representatives of the intellectual anonymous elite, wanted their traditional values to be respected by individuality itself, derived from their geographical insular pioneering spirit

²¹ Andrew Glencross, *E Pluribus Europa? Assessing the Viability of the European Union by Analogy with the Early American Republic*, în „International Social Science Review”, Vol. 84, nr. 1-2, martie, 2009.

in industrialization, classic model of the trade activities, status of a great empire builders, and the recognition of merit of being alone against a hostile Europe at least two times in history.

Regarding the UK and sustainability in the EU, the immediate and medium-term prospects, it is generally accepted that the EU embodies that new “European Dream”, who dares to suggest a new history, with special attention to quality of life, sustainability, peace and harmony.²² The great danger for the EU (and the UK), on the approach towards the full integration of all Member States, in a coherent structural and institutional state, is how it can redefine, strengthen and then assert its role and place in the global new context at the beginning of the third millennium. It is necessary to mobilize all its capabilities to counteract the forces of gravity characterized by trends (character identity crisis with reference to fundamental attributes of national sovereignty, lack a true sense of European identity, the big gap between political and economic) that could significantly dilute the very unity of the EU.

The way the EU will be able to avoid these factors of real risk of disintegration depends largely on whether it will reach full European unification or fail miserably, with consequences difficult to calculate as postponement of *sine die* of regaining a position of a dominating political and economic center.

Despite some pessimistic voices and assertions about the very future of the European Union, UK continues to prove its existence and strength not only on a EU scale, but also globally. In full process of European construction, Britain has a definite role as special as it is important; its contribution to this process is unanimously recognized. Great artisans of the EU (among who UK is accepted) are interested to justify the approach from the middle of the last century by providing insights and opportunities to make the EU, a body, strong, safe and appealing to all countries towards the beginning of the third millennium. In this context, viewed in terms of completeness, the subject of this paper is part of the contemporary Europe at the beginning of the XXI century.

²² Jeremy Rifkin, *The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*, Oxford, Polity Press, 2004., p. 6.

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