



THE INSIDE STORY OF BREXIT IMPETUS FOR THE KEY EVENT OF 2016

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the referendum held on 23 June 2016 in the United Kingdom that concerned UK's remaining or leaving the European Union. It analyses some factors that shaped the opinions of participants of the referendum, activated both during the election campaign, and the consciousness-shaping factors before it started. It presents a basic analysis of the results of the referendum and the positions of the main political groups. The analysis is based mainly on the press and election materials and the author's observations, mainly on the local level.

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When in 1949, George Orwell published *1984* and introduced a new term 'newspeak', which was highly political, his work became a weapon in the fight against antidemocratic and inhuman Stalinist system. He probably did not expect that newspeak was a contagious and not fatal disease. We have been using new words or terms that are supposed to simplify our everyday language and make it clearer, shorter, and better adjusted to Internet search engine window for years.

Brexit is of course a blend of two words: Britain + exit and in Polish it means the exit of the United Kingdom from the European Union¹ (further: EU). This event was highly speculated and commented on both before 23 June 2016 and afterwards².

¹ term: *Brexit*, <https://pl.wiktionary.org/wiki/Brexit>, [access: 10 October 2016].

² The term 'Brexit' delivers 144 million results in the Google search engine, and 12 million in Bing [access: 10 October 2016].

The issue seems simple at first glance. Every entity that meets certain conditions may join this organisation and leave it. Relevant procedures have been defined in Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union:

1. Any Member State may decide to withdraw from the Union in accordance with its own
2. constitutional requirements.
3. A Member State which decides to withdraw shall notify the European Council of its intention. In the light of the guidelines provided by the European Council, the Union shall negotiate and conclude an agreement with that State, setting out the arrangements for its withdrawal, taking account of the framework for its future relationship with the Union. That agreement shall be negotiated in accordance with Article 218(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It shall be concluded on behalf of the Union by the Council, acting by a qualified majority, after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament.
4. The Treaties shall cease to apply to the State in question from the date of entry into force of the withdrawal agreement or, failing that, two years after the notification referred to in paragraph 2, unless the European Council, in agreement with the Member State concerned, unanimously decides to extend this period.
5. For the purposes of paragraphs 2 and 3, the member of the European Council or of the Council representing the withdrawing Member State shall not participate in the discussions of the European Council or Council or in decisions concerning it³.

We are interested not in the process of UK's withdrawal from the EU, but the adopted procedure of arriving at Britain's decision to remain in the European Union or leave it.

The national referendum played a special role in this procedure, in which the Britons were asked one question: Should the United Kingdom (further: UK) remain a member of the European Union or leave⁴ the European Union?⁵

³ *Treaty on European Union (consolidated version)*, OJ 2016/C202/01 of 7 June 2016 r. As the text of the Treaty is not the object of our further analysis, let us explain only that the cited Article 218(3) of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union says: The Commission, or the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy where the agreement envisaged relates exclusively or principally to the common foreign and security policy, shall submit recommendations to the Council, which shall adopt a decision authorising the opening of negotiations and, depending on the subject of the agreement envisaged, nominating the Union negotiator or the head of the Union's negotiating team. OJ 2016/C202/01.

⁴ An interesting object of potential linguistic – political analysis would be the question why the word 'leave' was used and not 'withdraw' that can be found in the Treaty on European Union.

⁵ *The 2016 EU Referendum Voting Guide*, The Electoral Commission 2016, London, p.6.

Fig. 1 Ballot paper

Referendum on the United Kingdom's membership of the European Union	
Vote only once by putting a cross <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in the box next to your choice	
Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union ?	
Remain a member of the European Union	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leave the European Union	<input type="checkbox"/>

Source: The 2016 EU Referendum Voting Guide, The Electoral Commission 2016, London, p.6.

The Electoral Commission⁶ presented the basic rules of the campaign and the referendum to voters (what the referendum concerns, who may vote, how to register, and how to vote) and in its materials it highlighted the main arguments of the supporters of both options.

Quoting the website strongerin.co.uk/voteremain, it presented the following arguments in favour of remaining in the EU:

1. Strengthening the United Kingdom through:

- Stronger economy – EU membership injects additional 91 billion pounds to the British economy every year,
- Stronger leadership on the international arena,
- Receiving more than the EU contribution amounts to – every pound spent generates approximately 10 pounds that return in the form of lower prices of imported products, higher number of jobs and level of investments;

⁶ The Electoral Commission is an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. It regulates party and election finance and sets standards and means of running campaigns and elections. The Commission is independent from the government and responsible before the Parliament; official website of The Electoral Commission: <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk> [access:11 October 2016]

2. Security reflected in:

- Curbing cross-border (international) crime – European arrest warrant and development of cooperation with regard to the judicial system,

- Joint action against terrorist threats and climate change;

3. Better quality of life:

- More jobs – 3 million jobs are connected with economic relations in the EU,

- Lower prices for families – cooperation of European economies lowers the prices in the United Kingdom, energy costs and flight fares,

- Higher trade – 200,000 British business entities cooperate with EU Member States and account for 50% of export.

‘Experts agree that jobs will be lost, prices will increase, and there will be less money for public expenditure, e.g. healthcare,’ the supporters of remaining within EU structures are warning⁷.

Presenting the position of supporters of leaving the EU, the Electoral Commission quotes the website voteleavetakecontrol.org/yourchoice and the views of this group:

1. EU law controls the migration policy of the United Kingdom – the arrival of 250,000 immigrants from EU Member States to the British Isles over the past 12 months is the effect of EU ‘free movement of people’ policy.
2. The EU is expanding – when the United Kingdom was joining the EU it had 9 members, while today it has 28 members and talks with another five potential ones are underway.
3. The United Kingdom pays to the EU budget GBP 350m per week and has no impact on the purpose on which these funds will be spent.
4. Remaining in the EU would deepen these problems and weaken the importance of the British law with regard to protection of the country’s borders against unwanted visitors.
5. Withdrawal gives a chance for regaining control of economy and trade and stopping the weekly transfer of GBP 350m to Brussels and allocating this sum to the British priorities (NHS), regaining the weakened position in international organisations, and developing friendly international relations.

‘It is safer to regain control than to maintain EU authority and transfer money to the EU every year,’ the supporters of leaving the EU claim⁸.

A referendum is a form of direct democracy that makes, however, only polarised participation in decision making possible (for or against). No wonder then that the mailboxes of UK citizens were filled with the leaflets presenting such two options that usually repeated the arguments already mentioned above⁹. It should be noted here that two special types of mail appeared as well:

1. a brochure signed by the government (HM Government),

2. on local level – letters addressed to particular persons as potential participants of the referendum sent by prominent public figures.

⁷ *The 2016 EU...*, quot. issue, p. 4.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p.5.

⁹ E.g. *5 positive reasons to Vote Leave and Take back control, or The UK and the European Union: The Facts*, in author’s collection.

In the government brochure, apart from the arguments indicated above, there were several important additional facts. First of all, its authors stressed the special status of the United Kingdom in the EU:

- remaining outside the euro area,
- preserving control over its own borders,
- independent evaluation of future political integration,
- building new relations in the EU system¹⁰.

The government reminded also that only 1 pence from every pound of collected taxes goes to the EU and brings incommensurately high benefits to the labour market and the entire economy. 'The government believes that remaining in the EU is in the best interest of the United Kingdom'¹¹.

Let us remind here that no other person than the then Prime Minister David Cameron is considered to be the author of the idea that the dispute over United Kingdom's EU membership should be resolved in a national referendum. 'Cameron is not the only irresponsible politician in Europe...'¹², experts reminded.

Within the British diplomatic offensive mentioned in the brochure, Prime Minister Cameron visited the capitals of EU Member States at the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016 and encouraged local authorities to support his concept of the EU. In December 2015, he presented in Poland his proposals concerning four fields: gaining the right to stricter control of immigration from EU Member States, setting the conditions of cooperation between members of the euro area and the countries outside it on the rules non-discriminating against the latter, strengthening competition and internal market, limiting financial commitments and increasing the independence of Member States and the role of national parliaments¹³. D. Cameron paid another visit in Warsaw focusing around these issues in February 2016¹⁴.

In the period directly preceding the referendum different information and propaganda materials were put into the mail boxes of UK residents. Apart from the leaflets popularising the views of the two sides of the dispute, there were also individual letters signed by prominent figures of the local and national political scene.

The residents of Lincolnshire county in Eastern England received personalised letters of a famous British magnate, entrepreneur, politician, and media personality, Lord Alana Sugar¹⁵. This former member and advisor of the Labour Party wrote to the voters: 'I am writing today to ask you to vote in favour of remaining'. Like many others, he emphasised the historic importance of the referendum's decision. He pointed out that 9 in 10 economists think that withdrawal from the EU would harm the British

¹⁰ *Why the Government believes that voting to remain in the European Union is the best decision for the UK*, HM Government, [no information on the place and date of publication]

¹¹ Ibidem

¹² Jacek Pawlicki, Raj dla populistów. Rozmowa z prof. Janem Zielonką, *Newsweek*, no 25/2016, 13-19 June 2016, pp. 65-66.

¹³ Numerous news reports, e.g. <http://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-z-kraju,3/david-cameron-z-wizyta-w-polsce,601680.html>, or <http://wyborcza.pl/1,75248,19322658,wizyta-camerona-w-polsce-bez-przelomu.html> [access: 12 October 2016].

¹⁴ E.g. <http://www.polskatimes.pl/artykul/9367586,cameron-w-warszawie-premier-wielkiej-brytanii-spotkal-sie-z-jaroslawem-kaczynskim-i-beata-szydlo,id,t.html> [access: 12 October 2016]

¹⁵ Biographical note see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alan_Sugar [access: 12 October 2016]

economy and the governor of Bank of England Mark Carney warned that it would lead to economic recession. The aristocrat brought up also the previously mentioned economic and social arguments of the supporters of staying in the EU and emphasised that every vote counts, especially the one cast in favour of 'stronger, more secure, and better Britain'. The choice is simple: either certain future in the EU, or a 'leap into the unknown, risky for our economy, security and global influence'. To strengthen its argumentation, the letter featured also the opinions of other famous people: Stephanie Flenders (economist), Stephen Hawking (scholar) and Richard Branson (founder of Virgin)¹⁶.

Other efforts aiming to spread information on the referendum and its subject were also taken. For example, special meetings were organised during which experts answered the questions of the participants. One of such debates was held in Spalding (Lincolnshire county) on 23 May 2016 and the invited participants of the panel represented mainly the scientific circles (National Institute of Economic and Social Research, Cambridge University, London School of Economics). Questions could be asked personally or through a website¹⁷.

Obviously, the leaflets, brochures, guides, letters, and meetings were not the only way in which the referendum approach of residents was shaped. It can be even said that they were not the main source of information. The key factor in this regard was the own experience, knowledge, and evaluation of the condition of the British economy and social life. The specificity of the British local government was also important here, with its own historical traditions, solutions, and the basic role of elected bodies¹⁸. All these elements, and particularly the strength of individual vote influencing the line-up of elected collective bodies, caused high interest in the referendum¹⁹.

The 'governance theory' may be another approach that interprets and explains the increasing role of the society in the British political system. It is based on researcher agreement that efficiency and democracy rather strengthen than antagonise each other. Engagement of all stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of political concepts and visions increases the efficiency of action. 'Governance' refers both to the system's input (democratic procedures) and its output (efficient institutions). Governments must have legitimisation and operate within democratic and efficient procedures²⁰. Therefore, 'governance' means broadening participation, deliberation, and partnership forms in order to subjectify the citizens, create conditions conducive to the development of public dialogue, and stimulate local democracy²¹. Prompting social activity is a certain 'side effect' also of the old traditional forms of direct democracy, whose manifestation a referendum is.

If you agree with this claim, you should consistently acknowledge the influence of the press, including local sources, on shaping voter attitudes. Let us emphasise two

¹⁶ Alan Sugar, Dear (name), promoted by Will Straw on behalf of Britain Stronger In Europe (The In Campaign Ltd), both at St. Bride's House, Salisbury Square, London.EC4Y 8EH; personalised letters to residents in the author's collection.

¹⁷ Specjalne spotkanie w Spalding, które odpowie na każde Twoje pytanie odnośnie referendum, *Boston Express*, no 029/10, 20 May 2016

¹⁸ Hubert Izdebski, Michał Kulesza, *Administracja publiczna zagadnienia ogólne*, Liber, Warszawa 1998, issue 1, pp. 31-37; *Samorządy w Unii Europejskiej*, Urząd Komitetu Integracji Europejskiej, Warszawa 2007, issue 2, pp. 52-55.

¹⁹ Obviously, the importance of the referendum problematics is very high, yet the 72% turnout speaks for itself, see: Nation is torn apart..., *Daily Mirror*, 25 June 2016, pp.10-11.

²⁰ Lucyna Rajca, Reformy inspirowane koncepcją współzrządzenia (governance) w Anglii, in: Danuta Plecka (scientific editor), *Współczesne wyzwania administracji rządowej i samorządowej*, Toruń, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2013, p. 367.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 376.

aspects here: the opinions of politicians, particularly those concerning EU context, and the publications of popular, often high circulation, media.

Among the problems discussed and analysed in political disputes over the future of the United Kingdom in the EU, apart from the issues mentioned before, there was also the welfare policy of the UK. The British welfare system is well developed. All people legally residing in the UK are entitled to receive some support, family benefits for example. Some Britons spoke more and more loudly that the immigrants coming from EU Member States should not be entitled to receive the family benefit if their children live in their home countries. These benefits are paid to 24,000 immigrant families from EU Member States that have approximately 40,000 children altogether. Two-thirds of them, i.e. more than 25,000, are Polish children. 'There are other European countries,' Prime Minister D. Cameron said 'that, like me, do not consider it to be right to pay someone from Poland, who comes here and works hard, which I approve, a child benefit for their family in Poland.' In the heat of the debate the leader of the Conservative Party even remarked that opening the borders for Poles was a big mistake. The British Prime Minister spoke openly about the need to renegotiate the conditions of UK's EU membership. His priority was to reduce the number of economic migrants living on the British Isles, which the coalition member - the Labour Party - opposed to²².

This problem was a contentious issue not only between the supporters and opponents of Brexit, but also sparked a lot of controversy among the Poles working in the UK (which could be noticed in talks with them): the longer and more stable their status was, the higher understanding for the position represented by D. Cameron they had. Obviously, the group of Poles who left their families (children) in Poland emphasised strongly that by working in the UK and paying taxes they have earned the same privileges that other UK residents enjoy. They also highlighted that 'their' children did not burden the British budget with other costs that are connected with the state's responsibility for the upbringing and education of the young generation.

No wonder then that the attitude to this problem became, especially on the local level, where an immigrant is a colleague or neighbour, an important factor shaping the pro- and anti-EU attitudes.

Another problem of local character is crime. Reports and information on offences and crimes are an inherent element of the local and high circulation press. The analysis of such sources leads to the formulation of interesting theses. Information for a regular column in one of the many Polish language local papers, *Boston Express*, is provided, often on more than one page, by the Crown Court in Boston and Lincoln. The column is called 'Court judgements'. Among the 20 decisions described there, 9 concern the culprits with foreign-sounding names to a Briton (e.g. Kryzevicius, Motyka, Dubovskis). The described offences and crimes are divided into the following categories: drugs, theft, drinking and driving, illegal property, bad behaviour, assault, and vehicles²³. In another column 11 out of 25 decisions concerned people with foreign-sounding names (e.g. Grabowski, Kruc, Zamaliene, Krasa). This time the types of crimes were:

²² Michał Pomorski, Londyn sięga po zasiłki na polskie dzieci. Premier Cameron rozpoczyna wyborczy wyścig z populistami, *Polska. The Times*, Online edition, publication date: 8 January 2014, last update: 7 April 2014, <http://www.polskatimes.pl/arttykul/1082898,londyn-siega-po-zasilki-na-polskie-dzieci-premier-cameron-rozpoczyna-wyborczy-wyścig-z-populistami,id,t.html> [access: 15 October 2016].

²³ Wyroki sądowe, *Boston Express*, no 029/10, 20 May 2016, p. 11. In this issue there are 9 publications connected in different ways with crime and law abidance.

death threat, harassment, drinking and driving, public order disturbance, illegal possession, misbehaviour/insult, attack, damage to property, taking property without consent, failure to provide (breath test refusal)²⁴.

This information and statistics obviously do not justify too hasty formulation of too far-reaching generalisations. Of course, they do not say anything about the crime rate among the immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe, specifically in comparison with the general crime rate in the United Kingdom. The only legitimate conclusion, formulated in the form of a hypothesis out of research cautiousness, requiring further verification, is the statement that such a system of informing about the enforcement of law abidance among the people residing in the United Kingdom creates a risk of shaping dangerous social attitudes. It objectively focuses the public opinion on the presence of immigrants also in the sphere of law and order. It also provides fuel for populist and unjustified generalisations that build the attitudes of resentment and rejection. We do not know how much it influenced the beliefs of Britons that they manifested in the polling stations during the referendum, but we do know that the proportions mentioned above could raise concerns and become yet another element strengthening opposition against EU principles, including the principle of free movement of people.

The approaching referendum increased interest in the ongoing dispute over the attitude of Britons to the EU. Although referendum agitation was not strong in the central part of the United Kingdom, the newspapers, also local ones, summed up the several months long campaign and mobilised the opposing groups in their editorial comments.

In this context, the interest of immigrant circles in the referendum is understandable as their presence and future in the UK depended on the outcome of voting of its participants. Many observers claimed that withdrawal of the United Kingdom would put hundreds of thousands of Poles living and working in the UK against a wall. To make this pessimistic picture more moderate it was remarked that UK's withdrawal from the EU would lift the rule of equal treatment of the citizens of all EU Member States, which does not have to mean worse treatment. The Polish fears centred around the following issues:

1. Loss of benefits – suspension or elimination of benefits would force a large group of immigrants, especially those receiving minimum wages, to leave the UK;
2. Greater difficulty with finding a job – job permits might be introduced, the conditions of running your own business might deteriorate, or an obligation to pay ZUS (Polish social insurance) contributions might be imposed on the people working in the UK;
3. Uncertainty – connected with the need to define one's status during the two-year period of UK's withdrawal from the EU²⁵;
4. Stricter border controls – it is an obvious consequence of the liquidation of border control gates with the inscription 'UK only'²⁶.

²⁴ Wyroki sądowe. Boston, Spalding, Skegness, *Boston Express*, no 33/14, 17 June 2016, pp. 7 and 19. In this issue there are 7 publications connected with crime and law abidance.

²⁵ See: Article 50(3) of the Treaty on European Union cited before.

²⁶ Brexit coraz bardziej możliwy. Co oznaczałby dla Polaków?, *Boston Express*, no 33/14, 17 June 2016, pp. 3 and 15.

On the day of the referendum (there is no campaign silence in the United Kingdom), the local paper *Spalding Guardian* published several articles commenting on the positions of the two camps. One of them informed about the 'last appeal' of PM Cameron to Lincolnshire Residents requesting that they vote for staying in the European Union, presented in the form of a letter. Where will my family have better life? Where will my children have more opportunities? When will Britain have a stronger global position to make our citizens safer? And he responded: 'I believe that the EU reforms are the answer – the proofs of it can be seen all over Lincolnshire' (he gave the examples of robotics at the University of Lincoln co-financed from EU funds or investments of the global giant Siemens in the region). Prime Minister reminded once again that withdrawal from the EU will mean withdrawal from the common market and the risk of losing jobs and lower trade turnover. It would also mean the loss of agricultural subsidies distributed within EU agricultural policy. We will be able to improve the EU and take care of the British interests only if we remain within its structures²⁷.

On the other hand, an opposing view was also presented. This polemic became more vivid thanks to the fact that the main polemicist in the region at the end of the referendum debate turned out to be one of the former leaders of the Conservative Party, former high rank official – Work and Pensions Secretary – Iain Duncan-Smith. He emphasised during meetings with the residents of Holbeach, Chatteris and King's Lynn that people have already had enough of the primacy of the EU laws over the British ones and the peculiar dictate of the non-elected EC officials. They want to regain the control of the borders, EU Member State migration policy, establish independent laws, act for the benefit and development of the United Kingdom. 'We want to work together, members of the Labour Party, UKIP, and Conservative Party, as we all share the same concern for our country,' I. Duncan-Smith stressed. 'It is the only chance for our generation, there will be no other one.'²⁸

The paper also described the problems of Mr Roy Leycock with voting by post²⁹ and presented the thoughts and dilemmas of two immigrants from EU Member States, Lithuania and Poland. The Lithuanian was of the opinion that the United Kingdom would exit the EU (because of systemic legal differences) and establish partner relations with EU Member States on its own terms. The Pole, on the other hand, said the immigrants living for many years in the UK do not have any influence on the decision of voters and that if they decided to exit the EU, border controls would be strengthened, which also means better protection against terrorism. 'People will decide and we'll see what happens.'³⁰

Such weighted opinion free of emotional load of fear is not surprising or exceptional with regard to the unavoidable and uncontrollable events. It is connected with high self-esteem and the sense of confidence and security of these immigrant groups, especially Poles, who have been living in the UK for years, working in their profession, often on the basis of signed job contracts, and have been improving their social, professional, and family status for years. It is confirmed not only by numerous talks held with the Polish immigrants, but also by literature.

²⁷ Prime Minister makes last-ditch plea to Guardian readers to vote to stay in EU, *Spalding Guardian*, 23 June 2016, p. 6.

²⁸ EU poll 'a once in a generation choice', *Spalding Guardian*, 23 June 2016, p. 7.

²⁹ 'Council mistakes lost me my vote', *Spalding Guardian*, 23 June 2016, p. 6.

³⁰ Uncertainty as eastern European Spaldonians ponder referendum, *Spalding Guardian*, 23 June 2016, p. 7

'We want to work, but for the same rates and with the same rights. That is the idea of the EU,' says a Polish entrepreneur from London. Also: 'My working day usually begins at 6 a.m. and ends at 11 p.m. or midnight', 'Sometimes we cannot accept all orders. I simply must tell my clients "No, we cannot promise to do this."' He argues that the costs connected with construction would increase considerably if Poles could not work in the UK. 'Poles are a bit upset, but at the same time many people are sure that no one will force them to leave as they are needed', 'What we want are facts, statistics, and real promises on paper. We are part of this economy, a very important part', declares another Pole, a lawyer, member of the United Poles group³¹.

Different feelings were evoked on the day of the referendum by the conservative tabloid with one million copies circulation - *Daily Express* - that called out already on the front page 'Your country needs you. Vote for exit today'. Its editorial alluded, in a slightly mystical tone, to earlier statements of the supporters of withdrawal from the EU: after years of domination of Brussels, it's time to put the fate of the country into the hands of Britons, it's crucial to regain independence,' 'The result of the referendum will either be the signal for trumpeting freedom or the death bell for our nation,' 'We do not want to be EU province any more, we want to regain the position we deserve among the world's great nations and if we remain in the EU, our subjectivity would suffer, independence would be destroyed, we would be governed by sclerotic, dysfunctional Brussels bureaucrats as nothing more but a satellite of the German superstate'. Further the editors reminded about the British efforts to gain influence on the directions of EU development, which were ineffective as they were torpedoed by the Brussels 'Eurocrats'. 'The only effective veto would be to vote for exit. But EU structures are undemocratic and defence of the vision of remaining within the EU has no moral grounds as it's a natural right of every free nation to elect its authorities.' At the end the editors sum up: 'Britain is a large country, the world's fifth economy, inventor of parliamentary democracy, pioneer of industrial revolution, and winner of world wars. Remaining (in the EU - KM comment) would mean "the end of a thousand years long history", in the words of the patriotic leader of the Labour Party and Eurosceptic Hugh Gaitskell. Yet if we vote for exit, a passionate new chapter of the history of our island will continue to be written.'³²

In this spirit the last speeches of the politicians of the opposing camps were reported as well. Reporting the position of EU representatives, an opinion expressed by Jean-Claude Juncker saying that Britain would not obtain a better offer than the one it negotiated so far (by February 2016) was cited. It must remember that 'exit is exit' and there will be no return to the negotiation table. The leader of the supporters of withdrawal from the EU, Boris Johnson, said it was a tin-pot figure commenting on the opinions of the President of the European Commission.³³ Reporting the opinions of Nigel Farage, leader of the UKIP Eurosceptical, expressed during a TV debate, the newspaper quoted fragments referring primarily to patriotic feelings: 'We want to vote for Britain's regained independence. We want to vote for regaining democracy,' 'Go and do this, vote with your hearts, follow your inner voice. Be proud of this country and its people.'³⁴

³¹ Co się stanie z „polskim hydraulikiem”, jeżeli Wielka Brytania opuści UE, *Boston Express*, 033/14, 17 June 2016, pp. 12-13.

³² Vote leave to make Britain even greater, *Daily Express*, 23 June 2016, pp. 1 and 12.

³³ Macer Hall, Alison Little, It's time to be brave and stand up to these tin-pot figures, *Daily Express*, 23 June 2016, pp. 4-5.

³⁴ Macer Hall, We can be a proud, independent, democratic country, *Daily Express*, 23 June 2016, p. 4.

Emphasising the historic importance of the referendum's decision the paper reminded once again its explanatory guide 'why vote leave':

1. independence – freeing Britain from the influence of Brussels bureaucracy;
2. immigration – immigrants, including those from EU Member States, flood the United Kingdom and the situation would get even worse if Turkey, Serbia and Bosnia join the EU;
3. welfare and pay – providing equal welfare to immigrants from EU Member States, required under EU laws, already costs a fortune and will be even more costly;
4. defence and security – the plans of creating European security troops would in fact weaken UK's security, which is guaranteed permanently by NATO;
5. trade and economy – common market is not a remedy for all problems, as a matter of fact it hinders the development of independent economic relations with many countries.³⁵

The biggest daily on the UK market - *Daily Telegraph* - of conservative and liberal character also summed up the ending referendum campaign³⁶. Despite fundamental differences, the sympathies of both dailies were similar. The main (page 2 and 3) material of the 'national paper of the year' was the interview with Boris Johnson under a meaningful title 'This vote is more important than my political career'. In this way the former Brussels correspondent and conservative mayor of London referred to the problem of differences within the Conservative Party concerning UK's remaining in the EU. Mr Johnson attacked fiercely the referendum campaign of his fellow party member David Cameron, labelling it as 'harmful and completely unnecessary campaign of fear', addressing at the same time various 'half-truths' and 'rubbish'. In comparison to this the supporter's campaign seemed as the essence of an obvious choice: I think we have the choice between hope and fear. This means a choice between belief in this country and doubt in our capabilities,' B. Johnson said. With regard to the problem of migration, moderating the slightly alarmist sentiment, he declared that the change is to consist mainly in Britain's gaining control over the inflow of foreigners, in a similar way to Australia. Generally, it was about bringing back state control over the law, taxes, priorities set, and the fulfilment of the will of the society³⁷.

The paper quoted also the opinions of the President of the European Commission J.C. Juncker and the French President Francois Hollande, saying that the decision of Britons to exit the EU would be final and binding and will not be subject to further negotiations, and that the implementation of Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty would have inevitable consequences³⁸.

The article published on the adjoining page, as a peculiar background, reported that in other EU Member States there were also demands of holding referendums similar to the British one on further presence of these countries in the EU³⁹.

³⁵ Five reasons to walk away, *Daily Express*, 23 June 2016, p. 5.

³⁶ Similarity of the titles is obviously only ostensible; *Daily Express* (tabloid) is published by Express Newspapers, while *Daily Telegraph* is published by Telegraph Media Group Ltd.

³⁷ Peter Dominiczak, Boris Johnson interview, 'This vote is more important than my political career', *Daily Telegraph*, no 50,102, 23 June 2016, pp. 2-3.

³⁸ Matthew Holehouse, Juncker warns Cameron: Out is out, there can be no more renegotiations, *Daily Telegraph*, no 50,102, 23 June 2016, p. 8.

³⁹ Matthew Holehouse, French, Italians and Dutch want own referendum, *Daily Telegraph*, nor 50,102, 23 June 2016, p. 9.

A short overview of the statement of a controversial Islamic imam, famous for his extremist views and support for Isis, Anjem Choudary was also published, in which he said that UK's remaining in the EU would guarantee citizens better protection against unjustified deportations⁴⁰.

In the 'Business' supplement an article appeared that seemed to be a reaction to the main economic themes of the position presented by the opponents of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU. It had a meaningful headline 'Banks' secret Brexit fallback dossier' and reminded that a group of the biggest British banks was warning that withdrawal from the EU might have serious economic consequences: destabilisation of financial and banking services, transfer of jobs to mainland Europe, and slower economic growth. Most banks opted for remaining in the EU and suggested that efficient action should be taken with regard to 'better and more efficient engagement of the British parliament in full control of EU actions'. The daily reported at the same time that banks had a secret document featuring a plan of mitigating these consequences, which even expects 'relatively better long term economic prospects of the United Kingdom'. If published, the report could 'promote financial stability' of the United Kingdom outside the EU. Nevertheless, banks support remaining in the EU (84% of members of the group TheCityUK) and increasing share in the common market (95%)⁴¹.

Also the commentaries included in this issue had visibly reassuring character, with regard to the warnings formulated by the supporters of remaining in the EU⁴².

At the end of the referendum campaign both camps had similar chances of winning and it was difficult to predict which option would win. Commentators said that non-substantial factors might tip the scales, like the weather as it was sometimes jokingly remarked. A rainy and cold day would activate more of the resolute and determined supporters of Brexit⁴³.

The weather was far from perfect on 23 June 2016: it was typically British - rainy and cold. Thus the result of the referendum was obvious: 16,141,241 of voters, i.e. 48.1% voted for UK's remaining in the EU, while 17,410,742 people, i.e. 51.9% of voters were in favour of Britain's leaving the European structures⁴⁴. Without analysing the referendum results in detail, we would like to comment on several meaningful facts. The place with the highest percentage of supporters of Brexit was Boston (mentioned in the first part), with the result of 75.6% voters supporting this option, and the place where most voters opted for staying was Gibraltar with 95.9% of voters supporting it. The region most willing to leave the EU was West Midlands (59.3% leave), and the highest number of voters willing to remain within EU structures live in Scotland (62% remain)⁴⁵. 75% of voters aged 18-25 opted for remaining in the EU, and the age group with the lowest turnout was the group 65+ (39%).

Obviously, more detailed research and analysis would have to be carried out to say whether the aged inhabitants of central and Western England determined the future of their grandchildren from London and Scotland.

⁴⁰ Laura Hughes, EU helps safeguard our rights, says radical cleric accused of backing Isis, *Daily Telegraph*, no 50,102, 23 June 2016, p. 12.

⁴¹ Tim Wallace, Banks' secret Brexit fallback dossier, *Daily Telegraph.Business*, 23 June 2016, p. 1.

⁴² *Ibidem*, p. 2

⁴³ J. Pawlicki, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

⁴⁴ All results are quoted after: Nation ..., *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ 'UK breakup is one step closer. The result of the referendum paved the way to another referendum on Scottish independence,' said Nicola Sturgeon, Prime minister of the Scottish government, Jason Beattie, Union cracked, *Daily Mirror*, 25 June 2016, p. 4.

The result of the referendum caused, however, a certain concern in the basic structures of the state and the society. There, as it was indicated above, different attitudes were shaped, which in the second part of the campaign were strongly connected with the public mood evoked by the inflow of migrants to the United Kingdom. The presence of immigrants can be seen easily there. Certain aspects of this were discussed before, and after the referendum also quite different voices were heard from the circles that previously were silent. The doubt and anxiety that appeared tried to be mitigated by the employers, especially those hiring high percentage of immigrant employees, also from EU Member States, who recognised that the functioning and success of their businesses depends on the attitude of hundreds and thousands of foreigners working in their plants, often for many years.

Explanatory letters sent to staff members were an attempt to calm down the mood. In one of such letters executives addressed all employees and declared their approach to the changes expected after the referendum. With regard to the problems of interest to us, it can be narrowed down to four points:

1. we will have to adapt our business to new conditions, both with regard to short-term and long-term decisions;
2. it will have no influence on our European/international staff that we value a lot, and all changes of migration laws that might affect our future employees will be moderate and introduced over months, or even years;
3. it is also highly probable that politicians would, in a relatively short time, find solutions that, despite our being outside EU structures, would create a framework for preserving the present status of our colleagues;
4. therefore, our plan is to stay calm, evaluate consequences step by step, and then plan actions adequate to the changing situation⁴⁶.

OVERVIEW

After preliminary analysis of such a complicated social and economic problem that United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union is, it is difficult to formulate definitive conclusions. Several remarks may be made, though:

First of all – the process of UK's withdrawal from the EU has only been initiated, the result of the referendum, although it is politically meaningful, does not yet constitute the notification specified in Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty,

Secondly – the Britons themselves must think over and understand the consequences (pluses and minuses) of objecting to the general processes of the globalisation of international life; the position of the world's fifth biggest economy does not yet guarantee success in international competition,

Thirdly – immigrants, including the ones from EU Member States, are an intrinsic element of contemporary history of the postcolonial superpower of the British Commonwealth of Nations,

⁴⁶ Flamingo Flowers' David Brown's letter to employees, without a date, sent to employees directly after the EU membership referendum, in the author's collection.

Fourthly – immigrants must accept the necessity to assimilate while keeping a right to their cultural identity⁴⁷,

Last, but not least – the attitudes of voters are influenced by various social and economic processes, and the interests of communities (nations) do not always translate into the emotions of individuals, who tend to generalise their experience.

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⁴⁷ Very interesting discussion of this topic, particularly in the context of referring during the referendum campaign to the experience of Australia, is presented by: Małgorzata Krakowiak, Droga do wielokulturowości – polityka migracyjna Australii, *Biuletyn Migracyjny-Dodatek Specjalny*, Ośrodek Badań nad Migracjami, Uniwersytet Warszawski, no 33, February 2012, pp. 5-8 and in other papers included there.

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