



**Cytûn: Wales and
Europe Working Party**

Brexit: Where are we now? An update for faith communities

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1. Cytûn and Europe:

A note on Cytûn:

Churches Together in Wales is an ecumenical Christian organisation formed in 1990 as a successor to the former Council of Churches for Wales. It brings together the main traditional church denominations in Wales to encourage previously separate (or even hostile) groups to cooperate. Through its Policy Officer (currently Revd. Gethin Rhys) Cytûn offers its members a main liaison with the National Assembly for Wales. It publishes a regular *Policy Bulletin* to update its members of its work.



Wales and Europe Working Party (WEWP):

On the basis of a decision made in the Annual Meetings of the Union of Welsh Independent Churches in Llanuwchllyn and Bala in July 2016 (echoed in decisions by the Baptist Union of Wales and the Presbyterian Church of Wales), a Working Party was established in cooperation with Cytûn to begin considering the results of the Brexit vote.

It was formally recognised by the Cytûn Board and thus started working interdenominationally and closely with movements which share the churches' concerns. The Revd. Gethin Rhys administers the Party, with Revd. Dr Noel A Davies chairing it. The main question the Wales and Europe Working Party faced was: What sort of society do Christians want to see in Wales and in Britain following the UK leaving the European Union?

As a result, the group's main task has been to assist churches in promoting Christian witness through developing appropriate policies and structures following each step of the Brexit process. This has been done by considering which policies should have priority in the new arrangements, the role of the Welsh Assembly in the new political structures, and the priorities of the UK Government.

Also, it was recognised that as figures in the faith community, it is vital to heal the deep social rifts that became evident during the Referendum campaign. With this in mind, the group has aimed to stimulate local and national discussions to promote a deeper understanding of the matters which should attract the attention of the churches and other community bodies whilst remaining aligned with key Christian values.

Shortly after the vote, the WEWP published a list of key areas to be protected during the ongoing negotiations with the European Union:

- The status and rights of vulnerable people, the disabled, the elderly and children.
- Human Rights, especially relating to the Welsh language and ethnic minorities.
- Legislation which protects the environment and the countryside (including the livelihoods of those working in rural communities).

2. Recent developments through Cytûn:

The most recent Cytûn Brexit summary report was published in July 2017, a year after the vote to leave the European Union.



Unsurprisingly, there have been many developments with the process, the Welsh Government, and the WEWP itself.

Only those after the previous publication date have been included.

A full list of publications and links to each is available in Appendix 1.

Response to the Assembly Committees' consultation regarding the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill,

September 2017¹:

Responding to the joint consultation by the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee and the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee on the EU (Withdrawal) Bill. It focuses on the need for Christian principles to guide the negotiations to leave the EU and dealing with the impact of the legislation which may follow. It raises concerns about the potential loss of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights from domestic law, as well as the status of devolved powers in the post-Brexit UK.

– Resilience and preparedness: Assembly Consultation regarding Welsh Government preparations for Brexit²:

This response to the Welsh Government highlighted the issues of uncertainty over the 'settled status' of EU citizens residing in Wales; uncertainty regarding external funding schemes (such as the European Structural and Investment Funds); the status of the Welsh Government in

¹ Available at: <http://www.cytun.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/8.-Response-to-the-Assembly-Committees%E2%80%99-consultation-regarding-the-European-Union-Withdrawal-Bill-September-2017.pdf>

² Available at: <http://www.cytun.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/10.-Resilience-and-preparedness-Assembly-Consultation-regarding-Welsh-Government-preparations-for-Brexit.pdf>

allocating funding streams; tackling the long-term social causes of economic deprivation (such as disability) through the 'shared prosperity fund' proposed by the UK Government; worries mentioned by congregations based in farming communities about CAP payments and rural communities in general; and expressing the need for cross-party and Leave-Remain consensus for the sake of mitigating future problems.

– **Powers in the EU (Withdrawal) Bill to make subordinate legislation- Submission from the Wales & Europe Working Party of Cytûn³:**

This submission expresses additional legislative concerns and encourages the Welsh Assembly to appropriately scrutinise legislation and seek amendments where necessary.

– **Article 50 negotiations – Briefing by Cytûn's Policy Officer⁴:**

A briefing explaining the current state of negotiations with regards to Article 50.

– **UK common frameworks on agriculture and the environment: Cytûn submission 16/05/18⁵:**

The WEWP submitted this response to the Climate Change, Environment and Rural Affairs Committee to encourage the need for transparency in the implementation of legislative and non-legislative common frameworks within the Committee's remit. Rural communities' concerns about Food Geographical Indications (FGIs) are also highlighted. Overall, it is argued that the Welsh Government should lead public consultations rather than the UK or mainly English departments with little contact with the Welsh population.

– **UK/Wales Inter-governmental Agreement and the EU Withdrawal Bill: Policy Officer's briefing 21/05/18⁶:**

A briefing by Cytûn's Policy Officer about the EU (Withdrawal) Bill and the Intergovernmental Agreement, as well as potential outcomes and implications for Wales and the UK as a collective.

– **Inquiry on the Impact of Brexit on Higher and Further Education – Cytûn response⁷:**

Responding to the National Assembly's Children, Young People and Education Committee, the WEWP suggests that higher education is inherently an international activity. Concerns are raised about a potential lack of mutual recognition of qualifications through the European Economic Area; a decrease in employability prospects by reduced opportunities to study and collaborate

³ Available at: <http://www.cytun.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/11.-Powers-in-the-EU-Withdrawal-Bill-to-make-subordinate-legislation-Submission-from-the-Wales-Europe-Working-Party-of-Cyt%C3%BBn.pdf>

⁴ Available at: <http://www.cytun.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/12.-Article-50-negotiations-%E2%80%93-Briefing-by-Cyt%C3%BBn%E2%80%99s-Policy-Officer.pdf>

⁵ Available at: <http://www.cytun.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/13.-UK-common-frameworks-on-agriculture-and-the-environment-Cyt%C3%BBn-submission-16-05-18.pdf>

⁶ Available at: <http://www.cytun.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/14.-UK-Wales-Inter-governmental-Agreement-and-the-EU-Withdrawal-Bill-Policy-Officers-briefing-21-05-18.pdf>

⁷ Available at: <http://www.cytun.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/15.-Inquiry-on-the-Impact-of-Brexit-on-Higher-and-Further-Education-%E2%80%93-Cyt%C3%BBn-response.pdf>

internationally through programs like Erasmus+ (over 15,000 participated in the program in 2015-16); the possibility of the UK falling behind competitors in enabling students to study abroad; a decreased number of international students (which generated £716m of Welsh output in 2015-16) due to increased fees and potential changes in exchange rates; the loss of funding from European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs); and the status of research funding channels such as Horizon 2020.

– **Cytûn response to UK Government consultation on Environmental Principles and Governance 02/08/18⁸:**

This document puts forward the WEWP's stance on the potential of establishing a new environmental body. It encourages respect towards the devolution settlement, as well as clarity regarding its scope and influence with the British and Welsh Governments. It suggests extensive and detailed consultation with devolved administrations, local government representatives from all four nations, as well as non-departmental public bodies before laying legislation on the matter.

– **Cytûn Response to Brexit and our Land, October 2018⁹:**

Here, the WEWP raises further concerns about climate change, environmental degradation and the potential loss of funding for farmers in the post-Brexit UK. In finding solutions for each of these issues, the document raises concerns from the public meeting held in Lampeter, as well as worries raised by rural communities, such as the protection of the Welsh language or the implementation of new funding schemes after the phasing out of the Basic Payment Scheme for farmers. Also mentioned is the mental health problems worryingly common amongst farmers, and advising a supportive method to prevent damage to those in a vulnerable position economically or personally.

⁸ Available at: <http://www.cytun.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/16.-Cyt%C3%BBn-response-to-UK-Government-consultation-on-Environmental-Principles-and-Governance-02-08-18.pdf>

⁹ Available at: <http://www.cytun.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/17.-Cyt%C3%BBn-Response-to-Brexit-and-our-Land-October-2018.pdf>

3. Why does Brexit matter for Wales?



Potential Implications:

A pressing issue for both the Welsh Government and the Welsh public has been to ascertain the true scale of the effect of leaving the European Union. Fundamentally, until a deal has been agreed and the terms of the UK withdrawal set in stone, it will be nearly impossible to gauge what impact Wales could feel as a result of Brexit. However, we have highlighted key areas which could be (and some which are already) problematic.

In 2016, Carwyn Jones said that leaving the EU will have “far-reaching implications” for the devolution settlement between Wales and Westminster.¹⁰ Under the current settlement, any laws passed by the Welsh Assembly must be compatible with European law. After Brexit, it is intended that in some key areas – such as agriculture, fisheries and the environment – UK frameworks will be established by agreement between the UK and devolved governments. However, the UK Parliament and Government retain the power to overrule the Welsh Government and Assembly if they deem it to be necessary.

Policy: Wales is responsible for applying relevant EU laws in areas such as agriculture, fisheries, rural affairs, animal welfare, food and the environment, amongst others (areas such as education and healthcare have limited European involvement). The outcome of the main negotiations will surely have an impact on policy-making in Wales, exactly how will remain unresolved until a deal is finalised.

Trade: When taken as a trading bloc, the EU is the UK’s largest trading partner, accounting for 44% of UK exports and 53% of imports.¹¹ Wales has a greater level of reliance. In 2017, exports to the EU accounted for 60.9% of Welsh exports, compared to 49.9% for the rest of the UK. This equates to

¹⁰ Full Fact, ‘What does leaving the EU mean for Wales?’, 15/07/16. (Available at fullfact.org).

¹¹ House of Commons Library, ‘Statistics on UK-EU trade’, 30/11/2018. Available at: www.parliament.uk/commons-library.

£10bn out of a total £16.5bn.¹² Of the other devolved nations, Northern Ireland is nearest with 57% of exports with the EU, while Scotland is slightly less at 49% (the same as England). 42% (£7.4bn) of 2017 Welsh imports came from the EU, less than Northern Ireland at 64% but higher than Scotland at 38%. Clearly a new trading relationship will depend on the outcome of future negotiations.

Funding: The two main sources of funding for Wales from the EU have been the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and European Structural Investments (ESIs), as well as receiving added funding from other areas such as Horizon 2020:

- **CAP:** The Common Agricultural Policy is the EU's agricultural policy designed at supporting the sector. In the EU, more than 7.3m farmers are direct beneficiaries of CAP payments, managing more than 170m hectares of farmland.¹³ The Welsh Assembly has claimed previously that CAP payments contribute around 80-90% of basic farm income in Wales.¹⁴
- **ESIF:** There are five separate funds that are described as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds, which are allocated for each Member State according to the needs of certain communities. Wales has significantly benefited compared to other areas of the UK due to 63% of the Welsh population living in the 'less developed' region of West Wales and the Valleys, receiving the most per person in Britain (€140 is five times that in England per head).¹⁵ Also, it has received the largest share of European Structural and European Regional Development Fund payments (€340m).¹⁶
- **Other:** There are also other funds that allow Member States to apply to the European Commission for funding such as Horizon 2020, with a budget of €77bn between 2014-20, aiding areas such as higher education and research.¹⁷ The UK is the second biggest recipient of the funding, with universities such as Cardiff University receiving support from the programme.
- **Other funding:** Organisations from Wales have been eligible to participate in a range of funding channels, such as Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund etc.

The most recently completed programme of structural funds (2007-13) has been claimed to have created 37,000 jobs and aided more than 18,000 enterprises in Wales.¹⁸ However, it is worth noting

¹² HOC, 'Statistics on UK-EU trade'.

¹³ House of Commons Library, 'UK funding from the EU', 28/11/2018. Available at: www.Parliament.uk/commons-library

¹⁴ Full Fact, 'What does leaving the EU mean for Wales?', 15/07/2016. Available at: <https://fullfact.org/europe/uk-leaving-eu-wales/>.

¹⁵ HOC, 'UK funding from the EU'.

¹⁶ HOC, 'UK funding from the EU'.

¹⁷ HOC, 'UK funding from the EU'.

¹⁸ BBC, 'What happens next with Wales' EU funding?', 2/06/2017. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-40105919>.

that the stronger percentages of the Leave vote in Wales were in parts of the regional economy that received much of the funding from the structural funds, with many raising concerns that they did not feel that funding was suitably focused on areas that needed it.

The major issue facing Wales is whether this funding received will be replicated, and if so, how. It was announced in the 2017 Conservative Party Manifesto that a Shared Prosperity Fund will be established. It is intended to replace both the European Regional Development Fund and European Social Fund, but as of the time of publication, the details of this finance have not been released.

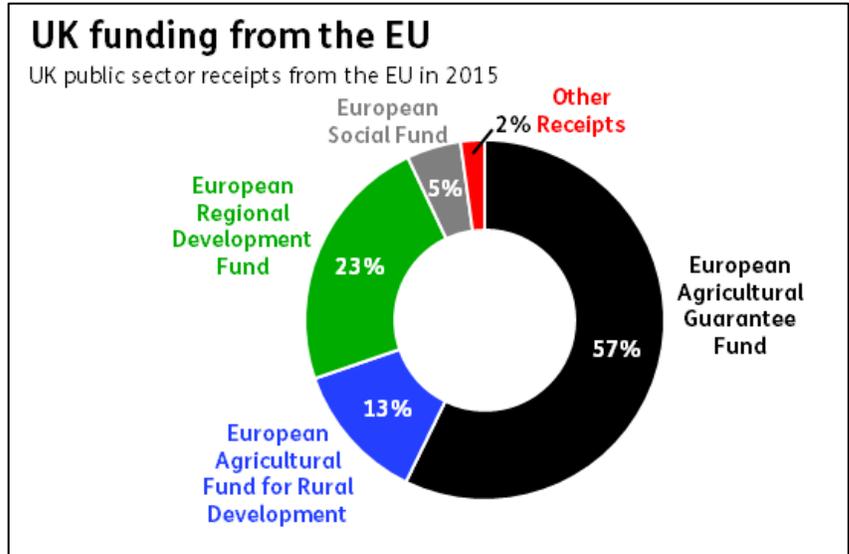


Fig. 1: UK funding from the EU. Source: HM Treasury, European Union Finances 2015 via Fullfact.org.

Recent Brexit Updates:

Since the previous edition of this report in July 2017, there have been a huge amount of developments in the Brexit process (surprisingly). Only the main events have been included for the sake of brevity, but further details are available on the Welsh or British Government websites. References to each item on this timeline are included in Appendix 3.



24th April 2018: UK-Welsh Government Intergovernmental Agreement paves the way for National Assembly consent for the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill on 15th May 2018.

6th July 2018: The Chequers Plan is negotiated within the UK Cabinet, leading to multiple resignations including Brexit Secretary David Davis.

14th November 2018: The Prime Minister announces her cabinet has approved a deal negotiated with the European Union.

25th November 2018: A special EU summit is held to discuss the deal. The Withdrawal Agreement and accompanying Political Declaration are agreed by all 27 other EU leaders.

4/5/6/7/10th December: Parliament debates the deal in the Commons.

10th December 2018: The Prime Minister announces the vote will be delayed until January. The final two days of debate are therefore postponed.

12th December 2018: Theresa May resists a confidence vote by Conservative MPs and remains as Prime Minister.

15th January 2019: The Prime Minister seeks to close the Commons debate with a final appeal to MPs to back her deal. The vote, which is a legal requirement under the 2018 EU Withdrawal Act, will then take place.

26th June 2018: The *European Union (Withdrawal) Bill* receives Royal Assent and becomes an Act of Parliament

19-20th September 2018: Salzburg Summit with EU leaders results in a mixed response to the Chequers Plan after further negotiations throughout the summer.

15th November 2018: Theresa May publishes a European Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration regarding the nature of a future relationship with the EU after further negotiations to improve upon the Chequers Plan. It leads to multiple resignations, including Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, Dominic Raab.

3rd December 2018: After the Government was found to be in Contempt of Parliament for withholding Brexit legal advice, losing three key votes, a scheduled five days of Commons' debate on the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration begin.

4th December 2018: The Welsh Assembly rejects Theresa May's Brexit agreement in a symbolic vote. Then Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said the deal was contrary to the "fundamental interests" of Wales and the UK, supporting the Plaid Cymru amendment. Conservative and UKIP AMs opposed the amendment.

11th December 2018: ECJ rules that the UK can unilaterally revoke Article 50, which would reverse the Brexit process.

9th January 2019: The House of Commons debate restarts

Theresa May suffers a historic defeat, losing the vote on her Brexit deal by 432 votes to 202. Immediately afterwards, Jeremy Corbyn calls for a motion of no confidence for the day after, which falls by only 19 votes.

29th March 2019: Brexit Day; the day the UK is currently set to leave the European Union, unless a significant political change occurs, such as the extension of Article 50.

4. The challenges facing Welsh churches:

Introduction: “Put People First Post Brexit”

As noted in the previous edition of Cytûn's Brexit report, the EU Referendum campaign highlighted many social problems that emerged alongside the concerns already expressed about funding and the like. Divisions in Welsh (and wider British) society were brought to the forefront in areas such as poverty, civic participation and attitudes between different sections of society, something which the Church in Wales recognised in their release ‘Put People First Post-Brexit’.¹⁹ Resolving these differences is vital in forging a bright future for Wales after Brexit, particularly in ensuring that fundamental rights continue to be recognised and that communities do not become fragmented by the outcomes of the vote.

A number of pressing issues have manifested themselves during the Referendum process, and these brief discussions should draw attention to why they will matter as the UK leaves the European Union.

Identity:

Brexit has formed an increasingly tribal sense of identity, something which has the potential to further divide communities already split over the vote. Professor John Curtice, writing in October (2018), noted the tendency of common discussion surrounding Brexit to describe the vote as “polarised”.²⁰ He goes further, arguing that Brexit has forged divisive ‘identity politics’, that is, identifying oneself with being a ‘Leaver’ or ‘Remainer’ with an emotional bond akin to that of a football fan. In research conducted for the paper, he recognised that 44% described themselves as a ‘very strong Remainer’, or ‘very strong Leaver’, with only 9% claiming to be a “very strong supporter of a political party”. This is one factor in the growing divisions brought to the forefront of national attention by the Brexit debate.



Considering that a key aim of the Wales and Europe Working Party was to heal some of the rifts evident during the Referendum vote campaigns, a priority must be to promote reconciliation amongst partisan camps, regardless of beliefs on Britain's exit from the European Union. Through discussions with church leaders and members of the public, certain issues have surfaced repeatedly as pressing concerns for congregations and the Welsh public in general. How these issues will be solved in post-Brexit Britain will remain

¹⁹ The Church in Wales, ‘Put People First Post Brexit’. Available at: <https://www.churchinwales.org.uk/news/2017/03/put-people-first-post-brexit-urge-bishops/> (March 2017).

²⁰ Professor John Curtice, ‘A nation of remainers and leavers? How Brexit has forged a new sense of identity’, whatukthinks.org/eu/a-nation-of-remainers-and-leavers-how-brexit-has-forged-a-new-sense-of-identity/ .

to be seen and will require cross-party consensus as well as a conciliatory attitude to aid those most in need.

Poverty and Inequality:

An important issue highlighted by the Referendum result was the inequality and disadvantage apparent in many areas in Wales which correlated significantly with the 'Leave' vote. This correlation between poverty levels, job opportunities, education and inequality with voting to leave raises questions as to why some felt governmental economic and social policies were not working for them.

Poverty is already a growing crisis both here and in the UK. According to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 710,000 people in Wales live in poverty according to the latest figures, including 185,000 children and 23% of working-age adults (this last figure is the highest for British nations).²¹ Wales has the highest rate of poverty amongst pensioners too at 18%, despite falling from 26% since 1996-7.

A visit to the UK by Professor Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights in November 2018 concluded with a concerning report (most renowned for frequently being quoted by Jeremy Corbyn in Prime Minister's Questions) about the state of poverty in the UK. He criticised problematic areas of the Universal Credit programme such as the initial 5 week wait for a payment.

With regards to Brexit, he was concerned about persisting uncertainty, quoting the IMF estimate that a no-deal Brexit could cost the UK economy between 5 and 8% of its GDP (equivalent to thousands of pounds per household).²² Already, Wales has the 'highest relative poverty rate in the United Kingdom, with almost one in four people living in relative income poverty', with 25% of jobs paying below the minimum wage.²³

Depending on the outcome of Brexit negotiations, there is a serious potential for this crisis to worsen. With this in mind, the role of faith communities as supportive in a pastoral and advisory sense has never been more vital, not to mention practical measures such as foodbanks and aiding application for 'settled' status for EU citizens living in the UK.

Bridging the generational divide:

Post-Referendum analyses were quick to acknowledge the apparent disparity between age categories and their tendency to vote a particular way. Whilst there were undoubtedly different reasons to vote a particular way for each individual, a common theme in the aftermath was a frustration for younger voters (18-24), 75%



²¹ Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 'Poverty in Wales 2018', 03/2018. Further information available at <https://www.jrf.org.uk>.

²² Professor Philip Alston, 'Statement on Visit to the United Kingdom', 16/11/18, p.3.

²³ Professor Alston, 'Statement on Visit to the UK', p.21.

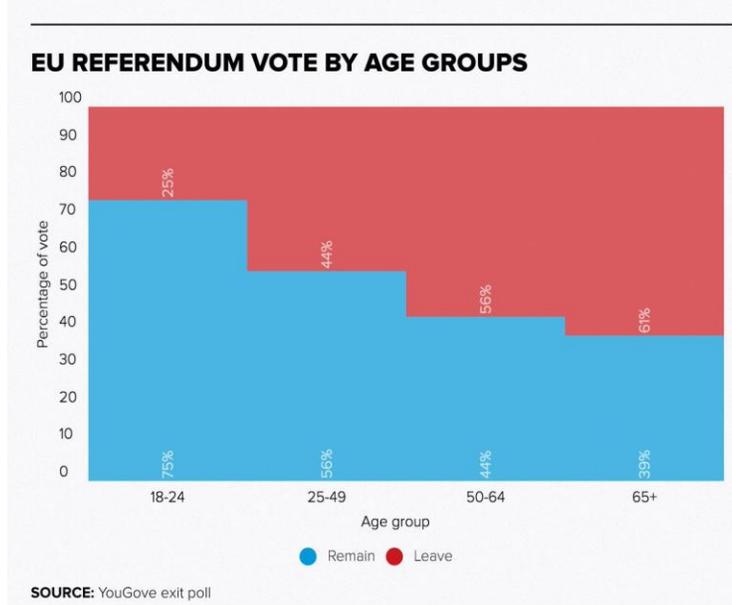


Fig. 2: Age distribution of the Brexit vote.
Source: POLITICO Europe via Twitter.

contrast, 62% of 20-24-year-olds voted Labour, and 19% for over-70s.²⁵

of whom voted for Remain that their opportunities to live and work abroad could have been limited by the vote.²⁴ Since then, this frustration has been targeted frequently at the older generations, considering that only 39% of voters over 70 voted to Remain.

Voting patterns were similarly disparate in the 2017 General Election, with different age demographics predominantly favouring one party over another, creating a bipolar distinction-of-sorts between the Conservative and Labour parties. 69% of people over-70 voted Conservative and only 22% for 20-24-year-olds. In

Without careful conciliation, frustration and a lack of understanding for one another could continue to permeate national conversation. Behind the figures, a country divided by age could cause further deep social divides at a time when unity could be needed the most.

Racism, prejudice and anti-immigrant sentiment:

A common concern expressed by Cytûn members was the voice given to divisive, racist and anti-immigrant sentiment given a voice in some quarters by the Referendum campaign. Additionally, many churches were worried about the potential consequences of alienating political language normalised in debates on communities. The Free Council of Wales meeting of November 2016 noted that leading British politicians were making aggressive and inappropriate comments about people from other European nation.²⁶

The topic of migration has been notorious for misinformation, something visibly brought to the fore during the Referendum campaign. Common myths have included: immigrants to the UK have a detrimental fiscal effect on the country, immigrants are less likely to be in work and are more likely to claim benefits. Full Fact continue to produce invaluable work to debunk these myths where possible. For example, the fiscal effects of immigration to the UK account to under 1% of overall GDP²⁷; that 82% of the 3.8m EU citizen population living in the UK are in

²⁴ Full Fact, 'How did young people vote in the Brexit referendum?', 23/03/2018. Available at: <https://fullfact.org/europe/how-did-young-people-vote-brexit-referendum/>.

²⁵ Ipsos Mori, 'How Britain voted in the 2017 election', 20/06/2017. Available at: <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/how-britain-voted-2017-election>.

²⁶ The free Church Council for Wales, 'Wales' free churches' concern about tone of Brexit debate'. Available at: <http://www.urcwales.org.uk/news/wales-free-churches-concern-about-tone-of-brexit-debate/> (November 2016).

²⁷ Full Fact, 'EU immigration to the UK', 23/07/2018. (Available at <http://fullfact.org/immigration/eu-migration-and-uk/>)

work (compared to 76% of the general population)²⁸; and that immigrants from the European Union contributed £4.7bn more in taxes than they received in benefits and other services in 2016-17.²⁹

Regardless of the outcomes of the Brexit negotiations, it is the responsibility of those in the faith communities to ensure that a welcoming attitude continues to be maintained. Whether impacted by the Referendum result or a natural coincidence, net EU migration fell sharply from 189,000 (2015-16) to 100,000 (2017), the lowest level recorded since 2013.³⁰

Hate Crime:

A theme of much recent reporting of religion in the media has been centred around the issue of hate crime, whether due to controversy in politics, or specific incidents affecting citizens. There are natural fluctuations, and it would be naïve to focus any particular peak or trough on the Brexit process, but in October 2018, the Home Office acknowledged there had been “spikes in hate crime following certain events such as the EU referendum and the terrorist attacks in 2017.”³¹

Police recorded 94,098 incidences of hate crime in 2017, up 17% on the year before, with the number of offences more than doubling over the last five years. While this is in part due to a better ability of police to record hate crimes, it was noted that the Referendum campaigns and vote played a part. The most common motivating factor of incidences was race (76%), with sexual orientation (12%) and religion (9%).

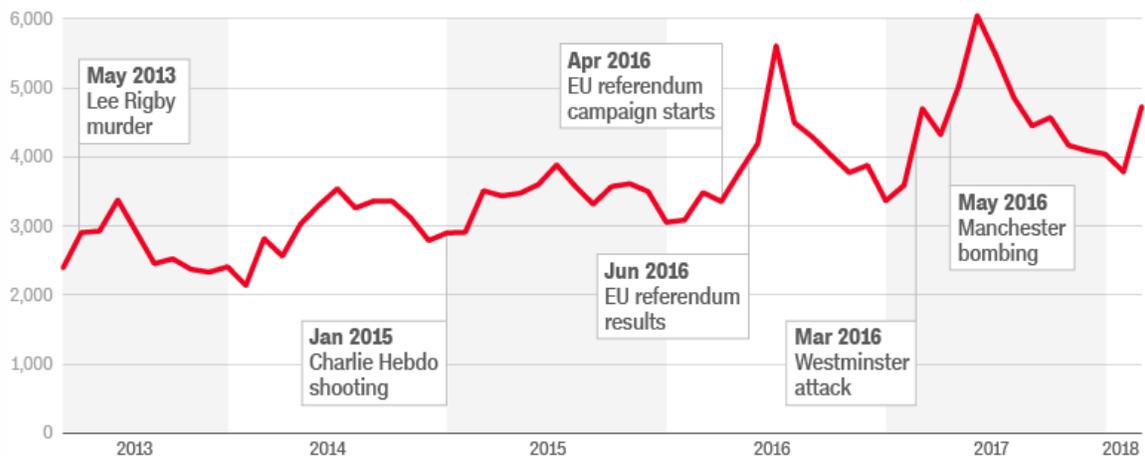


Fig. 3: Racial or religious hate crime recorded by police, April 2013- March 2018. Source: Home Office, England and Wales.

Wales has seen a rise in the number of incidences of religious hate crime over the past few years, from 93 in 2014 to 198 in 2017. This reflects the national trend of a visible rise since the 2016 Brexit vote, but it is unclear what is the causal relationship of this correlation. The figures for 2018 are not yet readily available.

²⁸ Full Fact, 'EU immigration to the UK'.

²⁹ The Policy Institute/ KCL/ The UK in a Changing Europe/ Ipsos Mori, 'Brexit misperceptions', 10/2018. Available at: <http://ukandeu.ac.uk/research-papers/brexit-misperceptions/> .

³⁰ Full Fact, 'EU immigration to the UK'.

³¹ The Guardian, 'Hate crime surge linked to Brexit and 2017 terrorist attacks', 16/10/2018. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/oct/16/hate-crime-brexit-terrorist-attacks-england-wales>.

Painting all instances with one broad stroke would be a foolish generalisation and would undoubtedly further mistrust between voters about their reasons for voting. So as to defuse the tension visible between Leave and Remain voters, whilst preventing any alienation felt by isolated xenophobic incidents, a response by faith communities must be both sensitive and inclusive.

Political disengagement and disaffection:

As the UK prepares to handle the fallout of whatever outcome falls as a result of the EU Referendum, church leaders have consistently stressed the need of its members and the wider public to be engaged with democracy to ensure their voices are adequately heard.

In both the Referendum and the 2017 General Election, approximately 1 in 4 people did not vote. 84% of over-70s voted in the former, compared to 59% of 20-24-year-olds. Potential reasons have been cited for why this was the case, ranging from the sympathetic, such as a disaffection with politics, to the more critical, such as apathy.

Local council and Welsh Assembly election have often seen even lower turnouts. This displays a clear lack of engagement with the political process which has the potential of leading to decisions which are not a true reflection of what the population truly would like. Understanding political disengagement also requires a careful review of the nature of political debate. Some felt the Referendum campaigns lacked (on both sides) academic, rational argument and reasonable discussion. False promises were made that have furthered the cynicism felt by some, as well as a mistrust in politicians.

Protecting human rights and environmental legislation:

Many churches have highlighted the propriety to protect the current human rights legislation and jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights and Council of Europe in the UK. As Professor Alston noted in his poverty report, losing the European Charter of Fundamental Rights will diminish the level of human rights protections currently enjoyed by the British people, and could have troublesome implications in areas such as workplace regulation and inequality.³²

In the aftermath of the Referendum, church leaders have recurrently raised the issue of retaining the environmental goals that have been achieved through EU legislation.³³ According to the religious principles of responsible and compassionate stewardship of the world, it is vital that our duties towards the planet and every living thing do not diminish in their importance.

³² Professor Alston, 'Statement on Visit to the UK', p.4.

³³ The United Reformed Church, 'Paper I10 Mission Committee: The 2017 General Election'. Available at: <http://urc.org.uk/images/MissionCouncil/May2017/I10-The-2017-General-Election-MC-May-2017.pdf> (May 2017).

Securing the rights of EU citizens:

The European Commission has consistently been clear in its aim to seek to guarantee the rights of both EU citizens in the UK and UK citizens in the EU, as well as their families.³⁴

Providing adequate assurance will confirm certainty and stability for 3.7 million EU citizens that currently reside in the UK. Furthermore, guaranteeing these rights would, the Free Churches Group said, show the UK to be principled on the importance of neighbourliness with other EU nations and safeguarding family values.³⁵

Reverend Gethin Rhys, Cytun's Policy Officer, recently sent a letter on behalf of the Wales and Europe Working Party to the German-speaking Lutheran Church in Wales and the bishops of the Catholic Church in Wales. The former had expressed a desire to aid members in registering for 'settled status', and the latter, as part of the Catholic Bishops' Conference for England and Wales, was dealing with the matter directly with the Home Office. All Cytun denominations have been made aware of the scheme

Protecting devolution:

Wales is currently responsible for implementing relevant EU laws in areas such as agriculture and the environment, so it remains to be seen what powers will be retained after negotiations have concluded. It must be noted as well that overall UK policy is certain to have implications for Wales.

Cytun's Wales and Europe Working Party's response to the Great Repeal Bill White Paper expressed the view that the departure from the EU should not, in and of itself, lead to alterations in the devolution boundary, ensuring respect of the 2011 Welsh referendum result.³⁶

Cytun has been explicit in expressing its concerns on behalf of churches in Wales that any delegated powers should be subject to sufficient oversight by the relevant legislature.

Until a clear path has been outlined for Britain's future outside of the European Union, the extent of the threat to devolution will be uncertain. With this in mind, organisations across Wales (Cytun included) will continue to monitor events closely.

³⁴ BBC, 'Ministers urged to protect right of EU citizens in UK'. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-39151755> (March 2017).

³⁵ Free Church Group, 'Referendum Response'. Available at: <http://www.buw.org.uk/free-churches-group-referendum-response/> (June 2016).

³⁶ Cytun, 'Consultation on the Great Repeal Bill and its implications for Wales, May 2017. Available at: <http://www.cytun.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/7.-Consultation-on-the-Great-Repeal-Bill-and-its-implications-for-Wales-May-2017.pdf>

Guaranteeing funding for Wales:

As aforementioned, Wales faces a significant challenge in securing the continuation of funding following Brexit that has aided particularly poorer or more rural communities significantly. Much of this funding has been centred around supporting farming communities. As promised in the October 2018 Budget, Wales was set to receive an extra £550m over the next three years to be spent where suitable for the Welsh Government, as well as a North Wales Growth Deal worth an added £120m. However, this cash injection has been dubbed “disappointing” by the Welsh Government, with many worried about further implications of Welsh finance after Brexit.³⁷

Of Wales’ 2.1 million hectares of land, farm and common land accounts for 1.8 million (88%), with the Welsh Government defining 20% of the overall Welsh population as living in rural areas.³⁸ Only Cardiff and Newport are defined as fully urbanized areas.

Since 2000, Wales has received £5.3 billion in Structural Funds and (more importantly for rural communities) the Common Agricultural Policy.³⁹ Designed to support rural parts of the European Union and farmers, this funding has offered a great deal of valuable financial aid, particularly to Wales.



The loss of CAP payments has fallen at a time of great change for the Welsh farming landscape. For example, the total labour force on Welsh farms has decreased by 5% since 2009. As a result of this change, instability and uncertainty has the potential to disrupt rural communities and agriculture in general.

Concerns were raised during the Referendum campaign that Structural Funds from the EU were not going towards funding projects that needed support. For example, the Valleys all backed a vote to leave, despite a traditional backing of Welsh Labour, which overwhelmingly backed Remain, and large investment from the European Union over the last two decades. Research undertaken by Cardiff University and YouGov discussed what was perceived as ‘white elephants and “vanity projects” that were seen to deliver little of long-term worth to local people’.⁴⁰

³⁷ BBC, ‘Budget 2018: Extra £550m for Welsh Government, chancellor says’, 29/10/2018. (Available at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-46006697>).

³⁸ Welsh Government, ‘Welsh Agricultural Statistics 2016’, 06/2018. Available at: <https://gov.wales/docs/statistics/2018/180130-welsh-agricultural-statistics-2016-ency.pdf>.

³⁹ HOC, ‘UK Funding from the EU’.

⁴⁰ <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/south-wales-valleys-brexit-vote-leave-a8021051.html>

Openness towards Europe:

Regardless of one's opinion on the European Union, continuing to portray an open and friendly attitude towards our European neighbours is vital to preventing a fracture in the community. A key issue to overcome will be the potential loss of freedom of movement, introduced by the Treaties of Maastricht and Lisbon. It could be difficult to disentangle immigration policy from what has seemingly developed into a 'symbolic idea about openness to new cultures and experiences'.⁴¹

Britain has engaged with European powers for centuries before accession to the European Union, so it is important to ensure that a lack of membership does not lead to isolation and limitations.

⁴¹ Collins, K. and O'Reilly, K. (2018) 'What does Freedom of Movement mean to British citizens living in the EU-27? Freedom, mobility and the experience of loss'. London: Goldsmiths. (Available at <https://brexitbritsabroad.com/brexit-brits-abroad-reports/>).

5. The view from Europe:

European Union:

The EU has remained consistent with their stance towards Brexit, much to the disapproval of the traditionally more Brexit-supporting media outlets like the Daily Mail, supporting negotiations but not allowing excessive concessions for the UK.

There has been a strand of thought amongst EU-27 nations that Britain has received special treatment throughout its membership, particularly with the

introduction of a rebate on their contribution to EU finances in 1985. After Brexit, with a decrease in British financial contribution there is growing concern to prevent overly-special treatment. (It is worth noting that if the UK retains some involvement in some EU programmes- which is fairly likely- like Horizon 2020, it will be expected to contribute to European Union finances to some degree). With Italy's new government ascending to power, other Eurosceptic voices across Europe could gain momentum if Britain is seen to be given an excessively favourable deal.



As of the 15th of January, the EU were said to be stunned by the extent of Theresa May's defeat in the House of Commons but confirmed there would be no further options to renegotiate, instead fearing that a No Deal Brexit could become a reality almost by accident.

Voices among member states have highlighted what is perceived as uncertainty and a total lack of clarity by Britain's political class. French European Affairs Minister Nathalie Loiseau stressed that it is still "technically possible" to delay Brexit or hold a second referendum, but the British political class needs to make a decision on what it would like to happen (and promptly).⁴²

There is little doubt that Britain is not in a position of strength with negotiations due to a lack of certainty, the door being closed on further negotiations and the deadline of the 29th of March approaching rapidly. With this instability and potential for further social and political upheaval, it is vital now more than ever to bring communities together, preventing alienation and working

⁴² Bloomberg, 'EU expresses Horror at Brexit Vote, Refuses to Reopen Deal', 15/01/2019. Available at: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-01-15/eu-expresses-horror-at-brexit-vote-but-refuses-to-reopen-deal> .

where possible with relevant authorities to guarantee adequate support for every part of society, such as with the 'settled status' scheme.

European Churches:

On the 16th of November 2018, an ecumenical conference of churches, academics and politicians was held at Lambeth Palace to consider how they would further their work together as united European churches post-Brexit. A summary of the conference noted that: "we declared together our unity as brothers and sisters in Christ and our longing to make that unity more clearly visible to the world, both for our own sake, and for the sake of a Europe which is at serious risk of division in multiple ways."

Dr Robert Innes, the Bishop in Europe, in a speech on the 11th of December 2018, responded to the postponement of the Parliamentary vote on the EU Withdrawal Agreement: "It is very bewildering for Europe. My European friends cannot understand what is going on in the UK. I find it very sad to see my country in this state of confusion." He further said that a no-deal Brexit would be "disastrous. . . We are in uncharted territory, it is hard to see where we will go now. I don't think the EU27 will renegotiate the withdrawal agreement, although the Prime Minister could get some clarifications. . . It would be irresponsible for the Government to drift towards a no deal."⁴³

With Ireland at the centre of much of the debate, the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Michael Jackson, pledged that the Church of Ireland would continue to work as a cross-border organisation: "It is the duty and the opportunity for members of the Church of Ireland . . . to continue to contribute, not least in Brussels and elsewhere, to the sorts of encounters around civic and cultural issues proffered in the EU treaties and through the European institutions."⁴⁴

Despite this apparent lack of voices from the European faith community, British bishops have persistently been vocal about the Brexit negotiating process. On the 23rd of January, for example, the Bishop of Lincoln, the Rt. Revd Christopher Lowson said: "As a nation, we have been through some fairly significant challenges over the centuries and we have found a way through them. As Christians, we believe that God will find a way forward."⁴⁵ Notably, he was one of four bishops to vote against the Prime Minister's deal in the House of Lords.

One of the most prominent voices has been that of the Most Revd Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury. He has been fairly vocal about different aspects of Brexit, raising concerns about the impact of a no-deal scenario on the poorest people in Britain⁴⁶, calling for a

⁴³ Available at: <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2018/14-december/news/uk/uk-political-chaos-over-brexit-leaves-europeans-bemused>.

⁴⁴ Available at: <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2018/14-december/news/uk/uk-political-chaos-over-brexit-leaves-europeans-bemused>.

⁴⁵ Available at: <https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2019/18-january/news/uk/put-aside-differences-to-find-a-way-through-on-brexit-bishop-lowson-tells-politicians>.

⁴⁶ Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/jan/14/justin-welby-no-deal-brexit-would-harm-poorest-uk>.

second referendum⁴⁷ or stressing the need for churches to “strive for reconciliation” against a backdrop of political infighting⁴⁸.

Despite a flurry of responses by various European churches immediately after the Referendum result was announced (which were discussed in the previous edition of this report), there have been a limited amount since. It is likely that after a final decision has been agreed that more will come.

6. Conclusion – What next?

As noted in the previous edition of this report, the Referendum has provided a “challenge that has never quite been seen before with the evident divides drawn in towns, villages, cities and communities across Wales”. This uncertainty has the potential to cause a great deal of upheaval, socially, financially and politically across the UK, depending on the outcome of the final stages of the negotiating process.

However, hope is vital in times of instability. Despite the chance of negative consequences, there are likely to be benefits and opportunities too. If we, as faith communities, are able to maintain an outward-facing warmth to the rest of Europe (and the world), membership of the European Union does not need to define our place as a nation.

Cytun and the Wales and Europe Working Party will continue to represent churches across Wales in responding to the policies adopted by the Welsh Assembly and the UK Parliament. Also, it will continue to engage with faith organisations across Wales, the United Kingdom, and the rest of Europe in forging strong bonds of friendship and striving to provide the best possible society for the people turning to us for guidance.

The aims of the Wales and Europe Working Party have not changed. It feels befitting here to close with the description of these guiding principles: “As leaving the European Union now becomes reality, we must support people whose lives are changed in ways that they would not have wished for,” said Dr Patrick Coyle, Chair of Cytûn. “The dissatisfaction that the referendum exposed in communities that have not benefitted from globalisation must be understood and action taken to develop those areas. The suppressed racism and xenophobia that the referendum campaign uncovered must be confronted. The Churches will need to be there with those who need comfort and encouragement and above all to be peacemakers, reconcilers.”

⁴⁷ Available at: <https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1070049/brexit-latest-news-archbishop-of-canterbury-justin-welby-people-s-vote-no-deal>.

⁴⁸ Available at: <https://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Archbishop-Justin-Welby-says-Christians-must-be-reconcilers-in-face-of-Brexit-division>.

Appendix 1: Cytûn European publications

- Submission to the House of Commons Welsh Affairs Committee, 2 September 2016.
Source:
- Submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights on the implications of Brexit on human rights, 29 September 2016
- Submission to the External Affairs and Additional Legislation Committee of the National Assembly for Wales, 24 November 2016
- Inquiry into Human Rights in Wales: Submission to the Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee by Cytûn
- Report of Cytûn's Wales and Europe Working Party, March 2017
- The UK Government's Great Repeal Bill White Paper: An initial response by Cytûn's Policy Officer, 31 March 2016
- Consultation on the Great Repeal Bill and its implications for Wales, May 2017
- Response to the Assembly Committees' consultation regarding the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill, September 2017
- One Year On: How Church leadership in Wales is responding to the Brexit vote
- Resilience and preparedness: Assembly Consultation regarding Welsh Government preparations for Brexit
- Powers in the EU (Withdrawal) Bill to make subordinate legislation Submission from the Wales & Europe Working Party of Cytûn
- Article 50 negotiations – Briefing by Cytûn's Policy Officer
- UK common frameworks on agriculture and the environment: Cytûn submission 16 05 18.
- UK/Wales Inter-governmental Agreement and the EU Withdrawal Bill: Policy Officer's briefing 21 05 18
- Inquiry on the Impact of Brexit on Higher and Further Education – Cytûn response
- Cytûn response to UK Government consultation on Environmental Principles and Governance 02 08 18
- Cytûn Response to Brexit and our Land, October 2018

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Appendix 3: Brexit Timeline and References

- **24th April 2018:** UK-Welsh Government Intergovernmental Agreement paves the way for National Assembly consent for the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill on 15th May 2018.⁴⁹
- **26th June 2018:** The *European Union (Withdrawal) Bill* receives Royal Assent and becomes an Act of Parliament.⁵⁰
- **6th July 2018:** The Chequers Plan is negotiated within the UK Cabinet, leading to multiple resignations including Brexit Secretary David Davis.⁵¹
- **19-20th September 2018:** Salzburg Summit with EU leaders results in a mixed response to the Chequers Plan after further negotiations throughout the summer.⁵²
- **14th November 2018:** The Prime Minister announces her cabinet has approved a deal negotiated with the European Union.⁵³
- **15th November 2018:** Theresa May publishes a European Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration regarding the nature of a future relationship with the EU after further negotiations to improve upon the Chequers Plan. It leads to multiple resignations, including Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, Dominic Raab.⁵⁴
- **25th November 2018:** A special EU summit is held to discuss the deal. The Withdrawal Agreement and accompanying Political Declaration are agreed by all 27 other EU leaders.
- **3rd December 2018:** After the Government was found to be in Contempt of Parliament for withholding Brexit legal advice, losing three key votes, a scheduled five days of Commons' debate on the Withdrawal Agreement and Political Declaration begin.
- **4/5/6/7/10th December:** Parliament debates the deal in the Commons.
- **4th December 2018:** The Welsh Assembly rejects Theresa May's Brexit agreement in a symbolic vote. Then Finance Secretary Mark Drakeford said the deal was contrary to the "fundamental interests" of Wales and the UK, supporting the Plaid Cymru amendment. Conservative and UKIP AMs opposed the amendment.
- **10th December 2018:** The Prime Minister announces the vote will be delayed until January, to avoid what was expected to be a substantial defeat. The final two days of debate are therefore postponed.
- **11th December 2018:** ECJ rules that the UK can unilaterally revoke Article 50, which would reverse the Brexit process.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/european-union-withdrawal-bill-agreement-between-the-uk-and-welsh-governments>

⁵⁰ Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-44615245> .

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⁵² Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/272457a4-bbef-11e8-8274-55b72926558f>.

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⁵⁵ Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-court-case-ecj-ruling-article-50-theresa-may-deal-uk-european-court-justice-latest-a8675541.html>.

- **12th December 2018:** Theresa May resists a confidence vote by Conservative MPs and remains as Prime Minister.⁵⁶
- **9th January 2019:** The House of Commons debate restarts.
- **15th January 2019:** The Prime Minister seeks to close the Commons debate with a final appeal to MPs to back her deal. The vote, which is a legal requirement under the 2018 EU Withdrawal Act, will then take place. Theresa May suffers a historic defeat, losing the vote on her Brexit deal by 432 votes to 202.⁵⁷ Immediately afterwards, Jeremy Corbyn calls for a motion of no confidence for the day after, which falls by a margin of only 19 votes.⁵⁸
- **29th March 2019:** Brexit Day; the day the UK is currently set to leave the European Union, unless a significant political change occurs, such as the extension of Article 50.

⁵⁶ Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-46547246>.

⁵⁷ Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-46885828>.

⁵⁸ Available at: <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2019/parliamentary-news-2019/commons-debate-motion-of-no-confidence-in-hm-government/>