

**Die Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft
Rhein-Main e.V.**

lädt ein zu einem Vortrag in englischer Sprache

" BREXIT: THE ENGLISH IDENTITY CRISIS AND ITS POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES"

von

Colin Munro

am Donnerstag, 14. Dezember 2017 um 19 Uhr

Ort: Ort: Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer, ParkTower-Bockenheimer Anlage 44, 60322 Frankfurt a. M.

Biographical Notes:

Chairman of UK Citizens in Austria.

Colin Munro was born in Edinburgh, educated at George Watson's College, Edinburgh University (Modern Languages) and King's College London (International Studies).

A member of the UK Diplomatic Service from 1969-2007, his postings included Deputy Head of Mission in East Berlin (1987-90), Consul General in Frankfurt (1990-93), Ambassador to Croatia (1997-2000), and secondment to the EU as Deputy High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, based in Mostar (2001). His last post (2003-07) was as UK Permanent Representative to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Vienna where he and his German wife, Gertie, now live.

He undertakes assignments as a lecturer and consultant on European security issues, and Brexit. A member of the Committee of the Austro British Association, and its "Brexit Expertenrat", in July 2018 he founded UK Citizens in Austria which is affiliated to British in Europe, the coalition of UK Citizens in Europe. He is an Associate of the Ambassador Partnership LLP, a consultancy active in mediation, training and corporate diplomacy.

He is a keen student of contemporary European history, including the issues of national and cultural identity which have resurfaced since the Fall of the Berlin Wall.

ABSTRACT: BREXIT: THE ENGLISH IDENTITY CRISIS AND ITS POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES

The vote in favour of Brexit on 23 June 2016 was a manifestation of a crisis of identity in England. The pro Brexit majority was evidence of failure by the English to come to terms with the loss of empire, and the fact that they live, not in Great Britain, but in a multinational European state, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. 62% of voters in Scotland opposed Brexit, as did all the political parties in Scotland, apart from the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) which secured 0.2% of the vote at the general election in 2017, down from 1.4% in 2015. UKIP is a misnomer. UKIP is a divisive nationalist, little Englander party. The union with Scotland is precious, because it preserves the illusion of British identity,

enabling the Prime Minister to claim that in enacting Brexit, the government is enacting the “will of the British people.” This is an absurd claim.

Scotland does not suffer from this identity crisis, although the country is deeply divided on the question of independence. The SNP polled 45% in the referendum in 2014: 50.5% in the general election in 2015, and 37% in 2017. Support for Brexit is spread across all parties including the SNP, but in none is there a pro Brexit majority. The Conservative Party revival in Scotland in 2017 did not depend on recruiting UKIP supporters. The Scottish government and parliament may well refuse “legislative consent” for a Brexit deal that does not keep the UK in the Customs union and the Single Market. There would then be a constitutional crisis. The Welsh government has joined forces with the Scottish government on this issue. 55% of voters in Northern Ireland opposed Brexit, but the largest Protestant party, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) was, and is, in favour, because they are opposed under all conceivable circumstances to Irish reunification. But, the DUP want to retain the advantages of the Customs Union and the Single Market. It clings to outdated social values and a concept of the union that is based on tribal religious affiliation. Observers such as Tony Blair and John Major, consider that the government’s dependence on the DUP for its majority in Westminster is putting the peace process set in motion by the 1998 Good Friday Agreement in jeopardy. The power sharing government in Belfast has broken down.

The UK has a weak, divided government, that is hostage to MPs who want Brexit at any price. The government and overstretched civil and diplomatic services have little capacity for anything apart from the Brexit negotiations. Except in the unlikely event of exit from Brexit the consequences could be very damaging indeed, not only for the economy, but also for the UK’s capacity to play a part, appropriate to its status as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, in European Security, broadly defined. For example, little Englanders simply have not understood, or are unwilling to accept, the importance of the EU in combating terrorism and organised crime. The armed forces are already overstretched and underfunded. The Diplomatic Service has lost credibility, to put it no higher.

The biggest English illusion however is that Brexit is a negotiation between equals, and that they can have their cake and it.

Nicht nur aus organisatorischen Gründen dürfen wir Sie bitten, Ihre verbindliche Anmeldung bis zum 11. Dezember 2017 einzureichen.

ANTWORT

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An der Veranstaltung der Deutsch-Britischen Gesellschaft Rhein-Main e. V.
am 14.12.2017 um 19 Uhr mit Colin Munro

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werde ich verbindlich teilnehmen:

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