

**Summary of Annie NIESSEN's Chapter  
« Le paradoxe anglais »**

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Since David Cameron's announcement for a referendum on the United Kingdom's continued membership of the European Union widely reinforced Britain's reputation as a 'eurosceptic' and difficult Member State. This Chapter explores the 'English paradox', i.e. the United Kingdom's ever-present demands for EU reforms paired with a relative compliance when it came to the ratification of the successive European treaties.

After a brief introduction summarising the general British political landscape and the 1975 referendum, Section 1 deals with the different reforms demanded by Prime Minister Cameron in order to fix the UK-EU relationship and avoid a withdrawal from the EU.

Section 2 looks back at the reforms which had already been put forward by the previous Prime Ministers, the so-called 'structural reforms'<sup>1</sup> (as opposed to the 'situational reforms'<sup>2</sup> that refer to the reforms demanded by Cameron only), during the negotiations related to the adoption of the European treaties. The ratification percentages show the comfortable majority with which each treaty, but the European Single Act, was adopted by the House of Commons despite the disagreements and demanded reforms.

Section 3 explains the British internal procedure for the ratification of the European treaties and how the specific political system involves the English paradox. A table summarises the voting results for each European treaty at the House of Commons and by the members of the political party in power.

The conclusion puts into perspective the aforementioned elements and reflects on the United Kingdom's 'eurosceptic' image.

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<sup>1</sup> See NIESSEN A., *Bidding farewell? On the assessment of the structural or situational nature of the current crisis surrounding David Cameron's prospective referendum on Britain's continued membership of the European Union*, Master Thesis, University of Liège, 2015. ORBi link: <http://orbi.ulg.ac.be/handle/2268/185895>.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*