

Britain votes for independence from European Union

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Demonstrators opposing Britain's exit from the European Union hold a protest in Parliament Square in London, England, on Saturday, June 25, 2016, following Friday's EU referendum result. AP Photo/Tim Ireland

LONDON — The European Union is a group of 28 countries in Europe. It was created 50 years ago to prevent war.

Soon the EU will have just 27 countries.

On Thursday, the United Kingdom voted to leave the EU.

A large number of people turned out to vote. Of the 46 million people signed up to vote, nearly 3 out of 4 of them cast ballots. Over half of the voters chose to leave.

"The dawn is breaking on an independent United Kingdom," said Nigel Farage. He is the leader of the UK Independence Party, which wanted to leave the EU. "Let June 23 go down in our history as our independence day!"

Next Prime Minister May Decide When To Leave

British Prime Minister David Cameron is the leader of the UK. He said he would quit by October. Cameron had led the campaign to keep Britain in the EU and called for the vote. He said the next prime minister could decide when to leave the European Union.

The countries of the EU share some laws. Most of the countries also use the same money to make trade easier. It is called the Euro. Now the United Kingdom and the EU will have to come up with new agreements on things like trade and safety. No major country has ever left the EU before. The separation could take many years to complete.

Former London Mayor Boris Johnson was the best-known official who wanted to leave the EU. He may replace Cameron as prime minister. Johnson tried to calm people's fears about the change. He described the EU as a great idea that was no longer right for Britain. He said the vote does not mean the United Kingdom will be "less united" or "less European."

Scotland May Vote Again On Independence

In 2014, Scotland voted to remain part of the UK. Many said that decision depended on the UK remaining part of the European Union. Nikola Sturgeon is a top official in the Scottish government. He said it is very likely that Scotland will vote again on independence.

The EU came out of World War II. Most European countries fought each other, and millions of soldiers and regular people were killed. With the EU, European leaders wanted to build connections between countries. They felt this was the best way to avoid war. The UK joined the EU in 1973.

The vote also showed that British people are divided. London and Scotland voted strongly for staying in the EU. In the rest of England, most people wanted to leave.

Jonathan Campbell James was at a train station in London and talked about the election. He said that democracy has grown stronger in the UK.

Outcome Was "Absolutely Disgusting"

Others expressed anger and frustration. Olivia Sangster-Bullers called the result "absolutely disgusting."

"Good luck to all of us," she said. Sangster-Bullers said life will be harder now. It will be tough to build a future for children.

Many who voted to leave are angry at the UK's leaders.

The "leave" campaign said immigrants from the EU hurt Britain. Immigrants are people who leave their home countries. In the last year, more than 1 million people from the Middle East and Africa went to the EU. The "leave" people said the immigrants cost Britain too much money. The government had to feed them and find them a place to live. They also said the immigrants' took people's jobs.

Britain and the EU also will have to search for a way to separate. For now, Britain will remain a member of the EU. Breaking up will be hard to do.