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## 40 Years of EU Membership: The UK, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

### Introduction

It is 40 years since the UK formally joined the European Community on 1 January 1973. To mark the anniversary, the *European Parliament Information Office in the United Kingdom* commissioned a number of experts on European integration to summarise the key events leading up to and since accession. Each has prepared a chronology and an accompanying narrative.

This anniversary comes at a time when the relationship between all facets of British society and Europe is at a crossroad. The likelihood of an in/out referendum in the years to come continues to rise, the debate on alternatives to membership and the current exercise of reviewing the balance of competences between the EU and Britain dominate the political debate and media coverage of EU affairs.

Helen Wallace has provided an overview from the British perspective. David Phinnemore, Lee McGowan, Cathal McCall and Peter McLoughlin have written about the perspective from Northern Ireland. Jo Shaw has presented the Scottish experience whilst Richard Wyn Jones and Rebecca Rumbul have summarised the key events relevant to Wales.

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