

## Part 2: Documents to prepare for the interview

Below you will find the relevant **articles for discussion** for the interview as part of the admission procedure for the Bachelor programme European Economy and Business Management.

1. Select ONE of the three articles below!
2. Read the article carefully!
3. Prepare a short but concise summary of the main arguments of the article!
4. Prepare the answers to the questions listed above the respective article! Use the literature presented in part 1 of this brochure to prepare your answers.
5. Be ready to answer the questions and discuss the main arguments of the article during the interview without using any notes!

The interview will take around 15 minutes and will be right after your multiple choice exam. Further information (regarding room, exact time, etc.) will be communicated after the multiple choice exam!

Good luck !

## Article 1

### Interview: Article for discussion

- Read the following article and summarize it.
  - On which main areas does EU trade policy build on?
  - Which measures does the EU implement to boost employment and are they interrelated to the strategies for labour standards proposed in this article?
- Be prepared to discuss and comment on the topics mentioned above without the use of supporting documents.**

### How rising populism could shake up European elections

Senior EU source says surge in anti-European parties could create a ‘mess’ in parliament

*Jennifer Rankin in Brussels*

Fri 28 Dec 2018 00.00 GMT Last modified on Fri 28 Dec 2018 00.02 GMT

It is the biggest electoral contest in Europe, but frequently leaves many voters indifferent. Turnout in European parliament elections has been declining ever since the first votes in 1979.

Could this time be different? The next European elections will take place in May 2019, less than two months after Brexit day, and never before have the elections been labelled so decisive by so many European leaders.

During his successful run for the French presidency, Emmanuel Macron cast himself as the leader of the anti-populist, pro-EU forces. His opponents are eager to join the battle. Matteo Salvini, Italy’s deputy prime minister and leader of the anti-EU League party, declared (paywall) that the elections would be “a referendum between the Europe of the elites, of banks, of finance, of immigration and precarious work” versus “the Europe of people and labour”.

Hungary’s nationalist prime minister, Viktor Orbán, has said the vote will be a chance to say goodbye “not simply to liberal democracy ... but to the 1968 elite”.

Parties such as Salvini’s League, Alternative für Deutschland in Germany and Marine Le Pen’s National Rally are expected to do well. A recent poll showed that the National Rally, formerly the National Front, had edged ahead of Macron, with 21% support, ahead of 19% for the president’s party, La République en Marche.

In Brussels, three scenarios have been floated: a decisive surge for anti-EU parties, unexpected gains for pro-European parties and a third option of something confusing between the two. “A mess is the most likely outcome,” said one senior EU source defining this as a “grey” outcome of “progress by the populists, but still a strong majority of 400 pro-EU MEPs”.

This “mess” is likely to spell the end of the grand coalition – the two large blocs representing centre-right and centre-left, which dominate the parliament and currently hold 54% of the assembly’s 751 seats.

The centre-right European People’s party has been weakening, a result of poor performances in several countries (including France), but also splits over how to handle its Hungarian member, as the country goes backwards on democratic freedoms.

Meanwhile the centre-left Socialists and Democrats party is expected to lose seats, as its member parties continue to fare poorly across much of Europe. The S&D faction will also be hit hard by the loss of 20 Labour MEPs when the UK leaves the EU.

The fall of the grand coalition will make the next European parliament more complex, with increased horse-trading and, possibly, as many as four parties needed to pass a law. Analysts writing for Carnegie Europe suggest it will resemble the Danish or Dutch parliaments, with more parties and more coalition options.

“There is a high risk of paralysis,” said Heather Grabbe, the director of the Open Society European Policy Institute and one of the co-authors. “As more challenges come up for the European Union, it could be impossible to get legislation through the parliament. It becomes therefore harder to work through the community method [of EU lawmaking] and that is going to have a big impact.”

European elections not only determine the makeup of the parliament, one of the EU’s two “co-legislators” along with the powerful EU council of ministers. The results also help determine the division of the EU’s top jobs. In 2019, the presidencies of the European commission and European council will both be up for grabs.

European elections – in reality a series of national elections – test the temperature of domestic politics. “Many use the European elections to show a yellow or a red card to the government,” says Janis Emmanouilidis, director of studies at the European Policy Centre. He thinks gains for anti-EU parties would “create pressures at the national level” meaning that the EU’s divided 27 governments are even less likely to agree on the fraught issues of eurozone reform or migration.

Both the future of the euro and migration are likely to be centre-stage during the campaign. Some suggest that framing the elections as a stark choice between the EU and anti-EU is problematic. Not only does it paper over the big differences among “pro-EU” parties, it also risks fuelling myths about what the EU does.

If the rules of the debate are set by anti-EU populists “who don’t really argue about what the EU is actually doing” but set up “straw man” arguments, that could rebound badly, said Grabbe. “It is

quite dangerous because people will end up blaming the EU for all sorts of things it is not responsible for, rather than discussing its real powers and the things that really matter.”

The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/dec/28/how-rising-populism-could-shake-up-european-elections> (download 24.1.2019)

## Article 2

### Interview: Article for discussion

- *Read the following article and summarize it.*
- *Which factors generally boost the vulnerability to poverty in the European Union?*
- *Which measures are already implemented on EU level to combat poverty? Relate these measures to the statement in the article below that government policies in the UK do not seem to decrease inequality.*

***Be prepared to discuss and comment on the topics mentioned above without the use of supporting documents.***

### **Brexit and the Irish border explained: why the headache is not going away any time soon**

24 January 2019 • 8:30am

The "Irish question" has come to the forefront of the Brexit negotiations, even though the formal discussion about the shape of Britain's future relationship with the European Union has not yet even begun.

With Theresa May's Withdrawal deal having suffered a crushing defeat in the Commons, it is still not clear which type of Brexit the UK will pursue – a no deal version in which the UK diverges from the EU model in search of global trading advantage, or the softer version in which the UK remains closely aligned with the EU – but the outcome of that choice will have profound impacts for the UK's constitutional settlement.

This is true not just for Northern Ireland and its stuttering peace process, but potentially for the way that all of the UK's other devolved constituent parts relate to each other and the political centre in Westminster.

With the help of academics, businessmen and government sources, here we look at the deep constitutional conundrum posed by Brexit for Northern Ireland, the possible solutions and the implications for the future of Britain.

#### **So what is the problem in Northern Ireland?**

The Northern Ireland peace settlement is founded on a central ambiguity: Nationalists can opt to hold Irish citizenship (and only Irish citizenship) while Unionists can remain British. In essence, Nationalists and Unionists can live together in parallel constitutional realities.

Or as the Good Friday, or Belfast Agreement, puts it, it is "the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose".

By taking Britain out of Europe, Brexit collapses this core ambiguity: when Britain leaves the European Union in March 2019, the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland will become an external border of the EU.

At that moment, the border, currently rendered invisible by the Good Friday Agreement, becomes visible. Both London, Dublin and the European Commission are agreed this would be a disaster for peace in Northern Ireland.

The problem is how to avoid this happening.

### **What is the UK solution?**

London's idea is to create an "invisible" north-south border based on what the UK government's position-paper on Northern Ireland calls a "highly streamlined customs arrangement" that would flow from a zero-tariff trade deal between the UK and the EU.

This would be combined with "technology-based solutions" to tackle other issues that arise from Britain's decision to leave the legal and regulatory umbrella thrown up by the EU's single market and customs union.

The issue of local traders – say milk producers who raise cattle in the north but process their milk in the South – would be covered by a "local trade exemption". The British argue that such trade is internationally insignificant and follows a long history of a certain amount of flexibility along the 310-mile border, which has some 300 crossing points and has always been a hotbed of local smuggling.

Through the combination of some "imaginative" thinking on the EU's part, the deployment of technology and the signing of a zero-tariff trade deal, the British have argued they can make good on a the joint pledge not to restore a "hard border" in Northern Ireland.

### **What is the problem with that?**

Put simply, according to both Dublin and Brussels, it just won't work. When the UK becomes a non-EU country, it will be free cut to trade deals with other countries like the US. That could mean, to take just one topical example, importing hormone-raised beef, genetically-modified food stuffs and chlorinated chicken from the US, all of which are currently blocked from the EU.

A free-trading Britain could also be free to seek competitive advantage by adopting less onerous standards for workers, greater state aid for businesses, laxer environmental regulation and a whole host of other regulatory aspects that impact what the EU calls the "level-playing field".

However far the UK diverges, Ireland will have no choice but to "police" the border; indeed it will be legally obliged to do so by the EU.

Both the Irish government and the European Union dismiss the UK's technological solutions as "magical thinking". They say that even a "light-touch" scheme will require CCTV cameras and some manpower to carry out spot checks on the 30,000 people and 6,000 lorries that cross the border daily.

Philip Hammond, the Chancellor, recently conceded to the Commons treasury committee that such cameras would become a "legitimate target", but said that they could be set back from the border. He also pointed that fuel, tobacco and alcohol duties are not harmonised north and south, but that had not created border infrastructure.

But the Irish government is adamant that such solutions could never cope with the complexities of a border between Ireland and a fully independent UK, and warns that any infrastructure will revive border tensions and deeply divisive memories.

As one Irish official puts it: “What happens when one of those cameras gets taken down? Do you send a man to put it back up? Does that man need to be protected by another man carrying a gun? And if that camera gets taken down again, do you send a man with a gun to protect it? The reality is that any border is a hard border.”

(A recent report by the Legatum Institute, a favourite UK government think-tank, suggested using drones to police the border which EU officials held up to ridicule as proof technology could not solve the Irish border issue.)

### **So what is the Irish solution?**

The Irish solution is to make sure that regulations on both sides of the border between north and south do not diverge. This 'all-island' solution, marked out in a recent European Commission discussion document that was leaked to *The Telegraph*, would remove the need for a border, since regulations on both sides would remain the same.

As the Irish PM Leo Varadkar put it to the Irish parliament: “We think it best if the UK, either on behalf of all of the UK or on behalf of Northern Ireland, commits to regulatory equivalence, that is to say, that we will operate the same rules and regulations. Without doing that, it is almost impossible to avoid some form of hard border.”

In plain English: either the UK remains in the EU customs union and single market - something repeatedly ruled out by Theresa May because it forsakes the UK's right to an independent trade policy - or the UK carves out a special status for Northern Ireland with the UK.

### **What's the problem with that?**

Well, assuming that Mrs May is not going to commit the entire UK to remaining in the EU customs union and single market (which would obviate the point of leaving the EU at all for most Brexiters) the only option is to give Northern Ireland special status and allow it to remain inside the customs union, or take steps to that effect.

That would, to all intents and purposes, make Northern Ireland a regulatory “exclave” of the European Union, with the government in Belfast essentially required to mirror EU rules, which are in turn handed to Dublin from Brussels.

It would also, by logical extension, require a border between the UK mainland and Northern Ireland in order to preserve the legal integrity of that regulatory convergence - how else could Dublin and Brussels be sure that chlorinated chicken or unfairly subsidised steel, for example, was not illegally entering the EU?

For Unionists, who see Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom, the creation of an ‘east-west’ border would be a profound act of betrayal by the Conservative Party.

Arlene Foster, the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) has accused Mr Varadkar of being “reckless” by proposing an ‘all-island solution’, while Nigel Dodds, the party's deputy leader, has warned creating a border in the Irish Sea would be “gravely destabilising” to the UK government.

[...]

The Telegraph, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/0/brexit-irish-border-explained-headache-not-going-away-time-soon/> [download 24.1.2019)

## Article 3

### Interview: Article for discussion

- *Read the following article and summarize it.*
- *What are the main tasks / goals of the ECB?*
- *What effects on the economic development are expected from the current interest rate policy?*

***Be prepared to discuss and comment on the topics mentioned above without the use of supporting documents.***

## Competing visions of Europe are threatening to tear the union apart

***Hans Kundnani***

EU leaders have never been more divided about the very nature of the project – with Merkel, Macron and Orban split on fundamental issues

Sun 1 Jul 2018 12.00 BST

On Thursday the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, warned that the future of the EU depended on whether it could find answers to the question of migration. But as difficult as the issue of migration is, it is actually just one element of the hugely complex challenge facing the EU, which is divided along multiple, overlapping faultlines that have developed over the last decade and seem to be deepening.

The future of the European project depends not just on whether the EU can deal effectively with refugees in the Mediterranean, but also on whether it can find a way to reconcile diverging conceptions of what Europe should be.

It is above all the euro and refugee crises – which have become acute again almost simultaneously in the last couple of months – that have divided Europe along geographic and political lines. On each of the two issues, EU member states have formed different coalitions. For example, whereas Greece and Italy opposed Germany in the euro crisis, they now find themselves on the same side of the argument about migration – even as “populist” parties have come to power in Greece and Italy.

Amid this turmoil, three competing visions have emerged. The first is Merkel’s idea of a “competitive” Europe. Under her “leadership” since the euro crisis began in 2010, the EU has increasingly become a vehicle for imposing market discipline on member states. It is in the name of this idea of a competitive Europe that, led by Germany, austerity has been imposed on debtor countries in the eurozone. In other words, although it is expressed in pro-European terms and involves further integration, it is essentially a neoliberal vision.

The second vision is the French president Emmanuel Macron's idea of a "*Europe qui protège*", a Europe that protects. Macron envisages an EU in which there would be greater solidarity between citizens and between member states. In practice, this means more redistribution and risk-sharing in the eurozone – the “transfer union” that Germany and other creditor countries fear. This is a centre-left vision of Europe – although in France, because Macron has implemented structural reforms in an attempt to gain credibility in Berlin, he is himself increasingly perceived as neoliberal.

The third vision is the Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán's idea of a “Christian” Europe of sovereign states. His vision first emerged in response to the attempt, led by Germany, to force EU member states to accept mandatory quotas of refugees in 2015, but it has developed into a broader critique of the European project. Orbán defines himself as an “illiberal democrat” in opposition to what he sees as the undemocratic liberalism of the EU. His vision is shared not just by the Law and Justice party government in Poland but also by far-right parties in other EU member states.

Both centrists and populists see an elemental struggle between liberalism and illiberalism taking place. But the reality is messier – as illustrated by the fact that, despite their apparent differences on the issue of migration, Merkel's “liberal” Christian Democrats and Orbán's “illiberal” Fidesz party remain in the same grouping in the European parliament, the centre-right European People's Party. Somewhere in between is the Bavarian Christian Democrats, led by the German interior minister, Horst Seehofer, who has threatened to bring down the Merkel government unless she moves further towards Orbán's vision.

Nevertheless, the differences between the three visions are real. When Macron received the Charlemagne prize in Aachen in May, he increased the pressure on Merkel, who had failed to respond to his call for eurozone reform. “In Germany, there cannot be a perpetual fetish for budget and trade surpluses, because they are achieved at the expense of others,” he said. After listening to him speak, Merkel said they would find common ground despite their differences. “That is the magic of Europe,” she said. But Orbán promptly dismissed their idea of a more integrated Europe as a “nightmare”.

Two weeks ago, Merkel finally responded to Macron and agreed to a small eurozone “fiscal capacity” – that is, a budget – as part of a much-anticipated attempt to relaunch the Franco-German relationship as a “motor” for the EU. But the Meseberg declaration was widely seen as a disappointment – the concessions that Merkel made will not do much to make the single currency sustainable. Yet even these concessions were immediately – and unsurprisingly – opposed by other northern European countries that are even more hostile to Macron's vision than Germany.

The danger is that the contradictions between the three visions will make the EU increasingly dysfunctional – exacerbating the backlash against it. Last week, the new Italian government – a coalition of the anti-establishment Five Star Movement and the far-right Lega – was so frustrated by the failure to make progress on migration that it refused to sign the conclusions of the European council. “Nothing is agreed until everything is agreed,” an Italian official said.

Italy – which is now at the centre of both the euro and refugee crises as much as Greece once was – could be the key swing state in the three-way clash of visions. There are sections of Italian society

that support each. Much of the Italian centre-right – which always supported European integration and in particular the euro as a way to impose external discipline on the country – supports Merkel’s vision of a competitive Europe. The Italian centre-left supports Macron’s vision of a “Europe that protects”. Meanwhile, the Lega shares much of Orbán’s anti-immigrant vision.

Each vision is a response to the rise of Euroscepticism in a different part of the continent and an attempt to reconnect the EU to citizens. The problem is that the visions are incompatible. What it would take to reduce Euroscepticism in the south of Europe would increase it in the north – and vice versa. Similarly, what it would take to reduce Euroscepticism in the east of Europe would increase it in the west – and vice versa. The question is whether there is a way out of this zero-sum game.

*Hans Kundnani is a senior research fellow at Chatham House and the author of The Paradox of German Power*

The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jul/01/three-competing-visions-of-europe-threatening-to-tear-union-apart> (download 24.1.2019)