

## Britain's Brussels Syndrome

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1 **LONDON** The basic tenet of *The Daily Mail* is that Britain is not what it was (true enough, it isn't) and that it would go a long way toward recovering its gritty greatness without wind farms, safety obsessions, green lunacy, overregulation and — above all — the European Union with its meddling bureaucrats.

2 The formula works. *The Daily Mail* is the best bad newspaper in the world. It hits every chauvinistic British button with eerie precision. Its mix of sex, celebrities, scandal and Brussels-baiting has something of the yucky addictiveness of the Kardashians. The paper boasts a weekday circulation of almost 1.6 million, rising to close to 2.5 million on Saturdays. It also has a wildly successful Web site, Mail Online — but that's another story.

3 My concern here is not with *The Mail's* journalistic brilliance — no paper is more maddeningly readable — but with what its obsessions say about where Britain is headed with its acute Brussels Syndrome. *The Mail* wants Britain out of the 28-nation European Union. So does the only daily that outsells it, *The Sun*. For both papers, Europe is a sort of Soviet Union-lite with plans to regulate everything from female quotas in boardrooms to your doctor's hours. This is a nation where the agenda of the mass circulation tabloids weighs heavy.



4 17, the E.U. is a tough sell these days. It is dominated by Germany, a nation uneasy about dominance. It includes France, a nation that has turned malaise into a fetish. Its southern littoral is an economic horror show. Its more than 500 million citizens feel underconsulted and overpatronized.

5 It is a divided club, with 17 members in the euro zone and 11 members outside. Inside the euro zone, the agony of the euro has demanded a federalizing push — the currency's salvation but also the direction many non-euro-zone countries (chiefly Britain) do not want to go. As for the Union's great achievements, like say, peace on a borderless continent, they are oh-so 20th-century.

6 Yet none of this quite explains the revulsion served up by *The Mail*. The other day there was this headline: "I was born a British citizen, and want to die as one. But unless our gutless leaders stand up to Brussels, I won't be able to."

7 The article was about a possible plan — the verb "may" is a favorite when it comes to sinister E.U. aims that seldom materialize — to stamp the Union flag on British birth certificates. It was signed Stephen Glover. Glover! I worked with him

in the 20th century at Oxford on the university magazine, *Isis*. He seemed a reasonable, affable chap. Well, I thought, if Glover now lives in fear of being gouged of his inner Briton by Brussels apparatchiks<sup>1)</sup>, perhaps the danger is real.

8 Visions of that blue-and-gold E.U. flag smothering this sceptered isle and its vestigial grit loomed before dissipating: It's all complete nonsense, of course. Britain, a member for 40 years now, needs the E.U. and vice versa. About half of British exports go to the Union. Millions of jobs are tied to it. Foreign investors choose Britain because of its access to the single European market. Parts of Britain's growing auto industry would leave if Britain exited. The United States would be very grumpy. Banks that have made the City Europe's financial hub would find a Britain outside the E.U. "much less attractive" and migrate over time, as the co-C.E.O.'s of Goldman Sachs International put it in *The Times of London*.

9 And what of all the Britons who take for granted their right to retire in the Dordogne, or the more than 2.3 million people from the E.U. making the British economy tick from city to farm? Dame Helen Alexander, the chancellor of Southampton University, said: "Anyone who comes here knows we need to be part of something powerful in the world, not some tiny little country in the corner."

10 Not so, insists Nigel Farage, the leader of the thriving U.K. Independence Party (UKIP), who tells me *The Mail* underestimates the ghastly truth ("75 percent of our life is governed from the E.U."), compares a supranational Europe to Yugoslavia, mocks Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservative Party ("They used to talk enterprise and success, now they talk gay marriage and wind farms"), and declares Britain in Europe "a square peg in a round hole."

11 "Nobody wants it," he declares.

12 We will see. Cameron has called for an in-or-out referendum, likely in 2017, in part as a tactic to head off UKIP.

13 21, as *The Mail* rails on, Union Jacks multiply over Britain, with its royal baby, Olympic triumphs and the rest. They fly over a nation that has never looked so European. Malaise-weary French people find work. So do Poles and Italians.

14 What *The Mail* hates is not Brussels, but this Britain. Nations have shot themselves in the foot before out of some vague anger. It could well happen here. Britain will exit Europe sans return ticket — in which case I plan to exit Britain on the same terms.

adapted from *International Herald Tribune*, 2013

noot 1 apparatchik: an official or bureaucrat of the Russian Communist Party or Russian government

## Tekst 5 Britain's Brussels Syndrome

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- 1p 15 Which of the following about *The Daily Mail* is in line with paragraphs 1 and 2?
- A It has lost its impartiality and accuracy.
  - B It no longer publishes articles on Britain's political role in the EU.
  - C It successfully targets readers of the lower classes.
  - D It thrives on nostalgia and shallowness.
- 1p 16 What is the main idea discussed in paragraph 3?
- A the disproportionate British preoccupation with European interference
  - B the populist sentiment that is becoming mainstream in British politics
  - C the sickening influence of the European Union on life in Britain
  - D *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail* spreading communist-type propaganda
- 1p 17 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 4?
- A Consequently
  - B Incomprehensibly
  - C Nevertheless
  - D True
  - E Ultimately
- 1p 18 Which of the following applies to Britain, according to paragraphs 4 and 5?
- A It opposes financial programmes designed to help the economically weaker member states.
  - B It rejects a strategy of doing justice to both euro-zone and non-euro-zone countries.
  - C It resists a centralised Europe that frustrates the national policies of individual members.
  - D It threatens to leave the European Union if forced to replace its own currency.
- 1p 19 What is the author's intention in paragraphs 6 and 7?
- A to challenge the idea of further integration of Britain in a single European state
  - B to demonstrate that innovative ideas are smothered by red tape and bureaucracy
  - C to expose a former fellow student as a reporter fuelling anti-EU sentiments
  - D to substantiate his view that *The Daily Mail* is exaggerating the role of the EU
- 1p 20 Citeer een zin uit alinea 8 of 9 die beschouwd kan worden als de kern van deze twee alinea's.  
Citeer de eerste twee woorden van deze zin.

- 1p 21 Which of the following fits the gap in paragraph 13?  
A Furthermore  
B Indeed  
C Meanwhile  
D Nevertheless  
E Thus
- 1p 22 “What *The Mail* hates is not Brussels, but this Britain.” (alinea 14)  
Welke zinsnede in alinea 10-14 illustreert de betekenis van het woord “this”?
- 1p 23 Which of the following is meant ironically in the article?  
A “*The Daily Mail* is the best bad newspaper in the world.” (paragraph 2)  
B “regulate everything from female quotas in boardrooms to your doctor’s hours” (paragraph 3)  
C “Its southern littoral is an economic horror show.” (paragraph 4)  
D “As for the Union’s great achievements, like say, peace on a borderless continent, they are oh-so 20th-century.” (paragraph 5)  
E “and declares Britain in Europe ‘a square peg in a round hole’” (paragraph 10)

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**Bronvermelding**

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.