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Florence Rotarians get the latest on Brexit from FMU professor

BY JOSHUA LLOYD Morning News jlloyd@florencenews.com Jul 25, 2016



JOSHUA LLOYD/MORNING NEWS

William Daniel, a professor of political science at Francis Marion University, speaks on Brexit at the monthly Florence Rotary Club meeting on Monday, July 25, 2016 at Victors in downtown Florence.

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FLORENCE, S.C. – The majority of voters in Great Britain chose to leave the European Union earlier this year – a move commonly known as Brexit, i.e., Britain’s Exit. The ramifications for the United States remain unclear, but there’s been much speculation.

William Daniel, a professor of political science and the co-coordinator of international programs at Francis Marion University, has kept a close eye on the politics of Brexit and spoke to Florence Rotary Club members on Monday about the ever-changing face of this international quandary.

He said while Brexit is a major crisis for Europe, the blow-back on the United States hasn’t been as bad as initially feared.

“The dollar is actually stronger right now, while the pound has dropped and struggled to get back up, and the euro has stayed relatively the same,” he said. “But the U.S. markets have continued to go up, as best I can tell. Things are certainly more sunny here than previously expected.”

A common correlation pundits make with Brexit is the underlying anti-establishment rhetoric that gave rise to Republican Presidential hopeful Donald Trump. Daniel said the narratives are different, but the driving frustrations are similar.

“There’s a frustration with ‘the establishment’ – the EU has always been said to have not enough democracy, not enough real citizen involvement – that seems to be something Donald Trump would agree with,” Daniel said. “There’s also a trend of pro-country, pro-nationalism, which is a big issue in Europe, because the EU was created for the express purpose of not having nationalism and preventing the hostilities that lead to things like World War II.”

Another problem brought forward by Brexiteers is the EU’s open borders policy and the influx of refugees, specifically from the Middle East. The concern is the sharing of intelligence and America’s spot at the table when receiving national security information from Europe, especially considering Britain as America’s biggest European ally.

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Daniel said the intelligence has always been a concern in the EU, and Brexit might further exacerbate that.

"Intelligence sharing is something that has been left up to the individual countries," he said. "Each country only shares however much they want, which is usually not a lot. This has been one of the biggest problems in the EU. There's not enough communication."

Britain's new prime minister, Theresa May, has indicated that she might want to wait until next year before officially filing to leave the EU – meaning there's still a long way to go in this process.

Daniel said the full effect of Brexit might not be felt for a decade, and the discussion surrounding the EU changes day-to-day.

He said from here, the kicker will be the exit deal made between the EU and Britain.

"I think it will be sort of a 'talking from both sides of your mouth' situation to make it seem harsh to their international audience to try to quell similar movements in other countries, while at the same time trying not to create any new issues," he said. "It will be an interesting lesson in international PR, for sure."