

The 2010 UK Elections:



IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EU

Britain and the EU



- Joining the EU a “marriage of convenience” for the UK
- Not present at the creation and with a few exceptions – Edward Heath, Roy Jenkins, the Liberal Party (later Liberal Democrats) – did not share “European Ideal”.
- Relationship has been rocky:
 - Two failed applications for membership in the 1960s
 - Joined in 1973 but Labour government renegotiated terms and held a referendum on EU membership in 1975

1973-1989 (I)



- **Conservatives largely pro-EU**
 - Conservative Prime Minister Heath took Britain into EU in 1973
 - Economic integration and great free trade accorded with “Thatcherite” free market doctrine
 - Conservative governments enthusiastically supported 1985 Single European Act and completion of internal market
 - Thatcher got rebate for Britain’s EU payments in 1984 “Maggie’s Millions”
 - Political integration not on the agenda

1973-1989 (II)



- **Labour More Hostile**
 - Left of party regarded EU as “Capitalist Club”
 - Trade Unions wary that greater European economic integration would threaten their privileges
 - Pro-European leadership associated with the failure of 1964-70 and 1974-79 governments
- **SDP Breakaway**
 - Leading “Euro-Enthusiasts” led by Roy Jenkins formed breakaway Social Democratic Party in 1981
 - Formed alliance with still strongly pro-Europe Liberal Party
 - ✦ SDP/Liberal Alliance then Liberal Democrats after 1987
- **Nationalist Parties**
 - Traditionally Hostile to European integration

Since 1990 (I)



- German Reunification puts greater EUPolitical Integration back on the agenda
- Kohl-Mitterrand Bargain – Maastricht Treaty
- Thatcher and many other Conservatives appalled:
 - Sovereignty Implications
 - European Social Policy might threaten Labour relations/Labor market reforms introduced by Thatcher
 - Opposition to Common Currency
- Major succeeds Thatcher as party leader and PM and gets UK “opt-outs” in Maastricht
- Continued intra-party warfare over Europe during Major government (“the b-----s”)
- After 1997 electoral defeat Conservative party becomes unremittingly hostile to EU (except Ken Clarke)

Since 1990 (II)



- **“New” Labour learns to love the EU**
 - After Maastricht Brussels seems more sympathetic to trade union and social policy agenda than Conservative governments in London
 - Tony Blair - Younger more cosmopolitan leadership less influenced by Trade Unions
 - “Third Way” ideology brings Labour closer to European Social Democratic parties
- **Labour in Government: 1997-2010**
 - Blair and Peter Mandelson very pro EU and pro-Euro
 - Gordon Brown very skeptical of the Euro and as Chancellor (Finance Minister) made sure Britain did not join.
- **Liberal Democrats Still Love the EU More Than Anybody**
- **Nationalists Learn to Love the EU**
 - “Scotland in Europe”

The 2010 Election Result



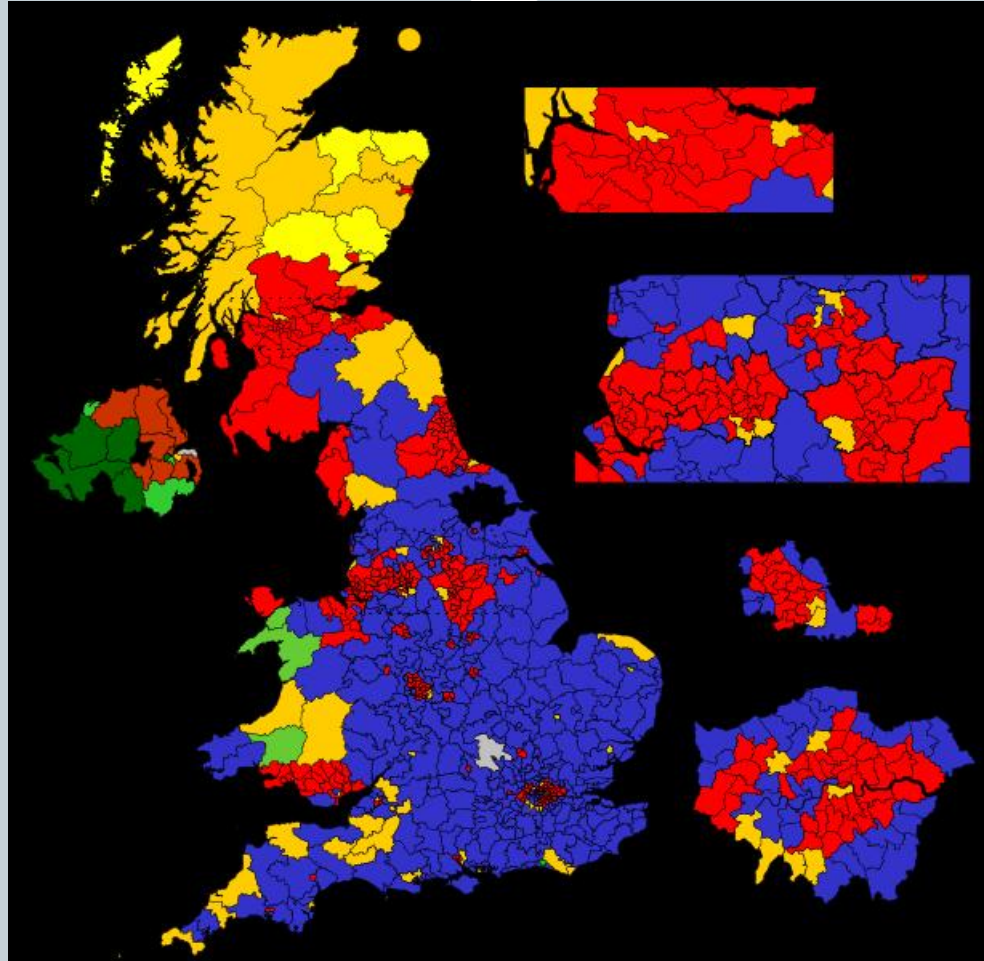
Vote Share

- CON 36.1% (+3.8)
- LAB 29.0% (-6.2)
- LD 23.0% (+1)
- OTH 11.9% (Inc. UKIP 3.1%)
- **Swing**
- **5% From LAB to CON**

Seats

- CON 306 (+97)
- LAB 258 (-91)
- LD 57 (-5)
- OTH 28
- **326 for Majority**
- **Hung Parliament**

UK Election Map 2010



Cameron-Clegg Government (I)



- EU was not a significant election issue
- Cameron very anti-EU in opposition but unlikely to strike same tone in government
- Coalition with Liberal Democrats also liberates Cameron from his Euroskeptical backbench MPs
- Fortunate for Cameron and Clegg that greater European integration and UK Euro membership are not currently on the political agenda

Cameron-Clegg Government (II)



- Cameron-Clegg Government policy likely to be similar to Brown's Labor government
- Not hostile (as many Tory MPs and party grassroots might want) but not supportive of dramatic new political or economic integrationist initiatives.
- Note Cameron's enthusiastic support for Turkish membership (traditional UK pro-expansionist policy)