

PRESS RELEASE

Leadership, Strategy & Communication in Times of Crisis Using BREXIT as Example: Former BBC Journalist Michael Cole Held Lecture at FH Wien der WKW

On April 26, 2019, the long-standing correspondent of BBC TV News Michael Cole reported on his view of Brexit and its background and consequences for Europe.

Vienna, May 3, 2019 – In front of a full house, the long-standing and award-winning former BBC news correspondent Michael Cole described his view of Brexit: The consequences of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union would bring massive cuts for the British economy and population. Cole sees no more possibility for a happy end.

The UK as a deeply divided country

Michael Cole is currently experiencing the UK as a deeply divided country in which not only political parties are separated by deep trenches, but also whole families. He describes the path leading out of the EU as „to climb in trainers on the Großglockner in January” and compares the Brexit referendum in 2016 with Turkey voting on Christmas.

“Go west” mentality and dissociation from the “continent”

Michael Cole attributes the attitude of the British towards the "continent" – as the British call Europe – to geographical and historical reasons. Great Britain has always had a "Go west" mentality. The fact that the referendum was also used as a political instrument does not correspond to the political culture of the British. "Referendums stink in a mature democracy," says Cole, who describes them as measures taken by dictators.

In this context, Cole pointed out that the first referendum on Britain's membership of the European Community was held in 1975, already two years after joining the European Community. At that time, however, the political climate was clearly in favor of Europe and two-thirds of voters voted to remain in the European Community.

The role of the media

Michael Cole attributes a considerable share of the current situation to the media, especially the British yellow press: The four major tabloids The Sun, Daily Mail, Daily Express and Daily Telegraph fueled the political "anti-EU" climate and systematically destroyed the population's belief in the EU. Michael Cole therefore sees the outcome of the referendum as a dramatic consequence of this propaganda machine, which mainly aimed at the British's fear of too much immigration – a general tendency if one looks at the political shift to the right in Europe and the rest of the world.



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