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This chapter examines the history of the United Kingdom’s relationship with the European integration process. The chapter dissects the long-term trends in public opinion and the more contingent, short-term factors that led to the referendum vote to leave the European Union. The UK was a late joiner and therefore unable to shape the early institutional development of the EEC. British political parties and public opinion were always ambiguous about membership and increasingly Eurosceptic from the early 1990s. Yet the UK had a significant impact on the EU’s development, in the development of the single market programme and eastward enlargement. If Brexit goes through, Britain will nevertheless maintain relations with the EU in all policy areas from agriculture to energy and foreign policy. Europeanization will remain a useful
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theoretical tool to analyse EU–UK relations even if the UK leaves the Union.

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