

## SEPARATIST REGIONS IN WESTERN EUROPE AND THEIR GEOPOLITICAL IMPACT ON THE EUROPEAN UNION

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Many Western European countries suffer from the presence of some regions that seek to secede under the influence of geopolitical changes (economic-religious-linguistic-cultural) that crystallized separatist movements throughout their history, and despite the great efforts made by the European Union towards integration and unity, the separatist regions As the Spanish (Catalonia and Basque) regions, the Italians (Veneto and Lombardy), the Belgian (Flanders), the French (Corsica) and Scotland in Britain, they have gained great momentum at the present time and achieved many gains and wide privileges, and that the secession of the regions from them will leave Significant implications for the future of the European Union and its geostrategic impact.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Regions, European Union, Separatism, Western European Countries*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Western European countries, especially those that are characterized by religious, linguistic and cultural diversity and diversity, suffer from many crises and challenges, perhaps the most prominent of which is the crisis of separatism in some of its regions, which caused the maturation of the idea of subsidiary loyalties at the expense of loyalty to the homeland, and then exacerbated the gap and conflict between these regions and central governments, which leads to the threat of national unity, and separatist tendencies for economic reasons may appear in the rich regions, which see that their bounties go to other regions of the state, and that in the event of achieving the dream of secession, they can invest those funds in the development of their regions and raise the standard of living of their residents. With the European Union seeking to achieve the optimum form of integration and unity at the political and economic levels in the European continent, these separatist movements will leave clear effects on the future of the European Union in light of the current and future geostrategic developments.

The study started from a main problem (Are there realistic motives and goals that push some regions in Western European countries towards secession? What are these motives?) There are secondary problems represented by:

- Are the motives and goals of the separatist regions in Western European countries similar?
- Will the breakaway regions have negative effects in the event of their secession from the European Union?
- What is the role of the European Union in absorbing separatist movements?

The main hypothesis of the study came about the existence of realistic motives and goals that push the regions towards achieving separation from their countries and joining the European Union. Economic factors come at the forefront of the motives, not to mention the religious, linguistic and cultural factors.

### **The Secondary Hypotheses Were As Follows**

There is a clear similarity in the goals and motives of the separatist regions in Western European countries.

- In the event of the secession of the regions, they will leave economic, political and cultural effects on their countries and the European Union, and the secession of one of the regions will encourage the rest of the regions to secede.
- The European Union rejects any separatist tendency of any of the European regions and threatens not to allow the separatist regions to enter the European Union in the future.
- The study aims to know the separatist regions in Western European countries and to identify the motives and goals that push these regions towards secession, as well as knowing the impact of the secession of these regions on the capabilities, capabilities and future of the European Union. The study was located spatially in Western European countries. As for the temporal limits, it is represented in the study of separatist movements in the twenty-first century with a study of the historical roots of these separatist movements. The study relied on more than one method of scientific research, such as the historical method, the descriptive method, and the analytical method. The study was divided into three sections with an introduction and conclusions. The first topic dealt with the concepts, motives and goals of the secessionist regions. The second topic dealt with the study of the secessionist regions in Western European countries, while the third topic dealt with the impact of the secession of regions on the European Union.

## **THE FIRST TOPIC**

### **Concepts, Motives and Goals of the Separatist Regions in Western European Countries**

The European Union includes (269) regions of different nature, whether in terms of economic, political, social development, or cultural peculiarities. European decision-making As for countries with a unitary orientation, such as France, they fear the consequences of giving platforms to the internal regions at the European regional level. In this topic, the researcher will address some concepts related to research, and the motives and objectives of the separatist regions in Western European countries, as follows

### **FIRST: SOME CONCEPTS RELATED TO THE RESEARCH**

#### **Territory**

It is a geometric part of the surface of the earth, characterized by a phenomenon or a group of geographical phenomena that give it a characteristic that distinguishes it from its neighbors, and the regional division is based on spatial units that contain distinct and consistent patterns of natural and human phenomena. The political or the political aspect of the geographical dimension, in which the geographer and the political world meet on common ground, as it is the philosophy of the political place.(1)

### **Political Territory and State**

The political region is the political unit defined by its area, borders and political powers. The political region can constitute a state, or part of the state, provided that it is defined by its geography and powers, such as smaller administrative entities with local governments, and the political region can include several independent countries, as is the case with some Regional organizations and bodies. This region is studied through the study of its constituent states. The expression “regionalism” has been used in relation to regions, and it means an emphasis on regional personality and a demand for self-rule or separation from the state.(2)

### **Separatist Movement**

It means the tendency of the population of a region to secede and become independent from the state to which this region belongs. The term separatist movement is given to the various political or popular activities adopted by a group calling for separation from its mother state or leaving the sovereignty of a state that it joined as a result of certain historical circumstances. There is another concept of the separatist movement and it means the movements adopted by groups of society that seek liberation with specific directions or motives with the aim of separating the land or region in which they reside from the state that controls or rules it, or at least to obtain autonomy within the framework of this state. Often the term separation refers to the social isolation of a particular group of a state’s society from the basic society of the state that governs it as a result of this group facing some social problems or sometimes social separation is imposed politically from power.(3)

### **Minorities**

They are small groups in number, or they are small groups within the political entity of the state, regardless of their political weight, and the majority of countries include minorities. The International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences defined it as a group of individuals distinguished from the rest of the individuals racially, nationally, religiously and linguistically, and they suffer from a relative lack of power and are then subject to some types of enslavement, persecution and discriminatory treatment.(4)

### **European Union**

The idea of European unity was launched after World War I, and the European project began during the Cold War with the establishment of the European Council in 1949, and in 1950 an organization was established under the title (European Defense Council) and included the countries of Western Europe (the Benelux states, France and the new West Germany), in addition to this launched The Economic Europe Project. The establishment of the Union of Western European Countries (UEO) in 1954, which included in addition to the above countries Britain, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Greece, was an attempt to create a European political cooperation organization in order to camouflage the failure of the European Defense Council, and because of the failure of the European Defense Council project. In 1954, the Union of Western European countries was established, and with the beginning of the nineties of the last century, the international community entered a new phase known as the (New World Order) phase, which cast a shadow over the European Community, and prompted it to expedite the formulation of a treaty that constituted a new qualitative leap in the history of Europe and the world, which are treaties ( Maastricht), which established the European Union on February 7, 1992 in Maastricht (Netherlands), one of the twelve member states of the European Community, which was then formed from the European Market Group

(collectively Coal, Steel and the Oratom Group) and entered into force on 1/1/1993, and under the Maastricht Treaty, Europe entered the stage of integration and integration, and then organized new European countries into membership in the European Union. On 4/25/2005, Romania and Bulgaria signed their accession to the Union. Thus, the European Union includes 27 countries until the end of 2007.(5) The European Union constituted the most advanced model of regional integration in the world, and its strength lies in the sharing of common values among member states related to the close connection with democratic principles as much as they relate to free economic exchange and social protection. There are deep political differences among the member states(), as well as the separatist tendency of a number of regions of Western European countries such as Spain, Italy, France, Belgium and the United Kingdom.

## **SECOND: THE MOTIVES FOR THE SEPARATIST TENDENCY OF THE REGIONS OF WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES**

There are a number of motives and reasons that push the regions of Western European countries with a separatist tendency to demand secession from the states they belong to, or at least achieve autonomy. These motives are:

- The researcher believes that the great economic importance of The economic grievances enjoyed by the separatist regions come at the forefront of the motives that contribute to the desire of these regions to demand secession. The economic factor has emerged as the most important justification for separatist movements in Western European countries since the end of the Cold War. , and the Flanders region in Belgium, and Scotland in the United Kingdom, and the separatist movements pay wide attention to the issues of the general fiscal deficit, low investment in infrastructure, the accumulation of government debt, and the desire to obtain more financial resources and sources of revenue, and these regions are trying to market these demands and make them Justification for secession or autonomy.
- The growth of the phenomenon of minor nationalities in the twentieth century is considered a motive in the search for minorities in Western European countries for their role in the political map of their countries, and the countries have used these minorities to achieve their gains, so they supported a minority only, and the inevitable result of this difference was the outbreak of many disputes and conflicts.(6)
- Democratic transition: The democratic transition in its transitional stages and the spread of human rights was a factor in the revival of the movement for the regions to secede.
- The regularity of minorities into political parties and movements, and they entered the arena of elections, such as the rights and freedoms movement in European countries, and many of these minorities seek to achieve social justice and achieve equality in building democracy in their countries.
- The problem of separation could be the biggest knot facing federal experiences and its reason is often historical, or it may be due to the issue of the distribution of powers, and the desire of the adversary groups in these regions to obtain greater privileges, or it may be a sense of persecution, which can be moved easily Especially if the politicians have the ability to move this file and exploit it and turn it in their favour, it remains that persecution may be a fait accompli, leaving no room for the region but to announce its separation.

- Sometimes the desire for secession is the result of the feeling of the inhabitants of the regions, who are linked by cultural, social, ethnic and historical ties, to play a greater role in the level of participation in political decision-making at the local or external level, and this necessarily pushes them to put the idea of secession before them as a pressure card that they use whenever she felt the need to grant her more privileges, or according to the political and economic changes she expected to take place in the future.
- The regions of Western Europe demanding secession or achieving self-government may be pushed by the religious, ethnic, national or political factor, and this trend is the result of the minorities constituting these regions feeling disinterested in their matter compared to the other regions of the state, which makes the residents of these regions feel differentiation with the other regions.( 7)
- Some regions with a separatist tendency possess the components of the state (natural and human), and these components may be, in many cases, equal to or superior to a number of European Union countries such as Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg.(8)
- The European Union has been promoted as a social bond that unites the peoples of Europe together, but the truth is otherwise. The European Union is not a union of peoples, but rather a union of major businesses and military forces. It has robbed peoples of the ability to participate in power, and these separatist movements are nothing but a response. He did in fact, because peoples began to look at their history before the European Union and how they used to live better.

From the foregoing, it is clear that all of the above motives effectively contributed to creating the separatist tendency of the regions of Western European countries, but the economic factor comes at the forefront of those motives, and this matter is related to the nature of the capitalist system ruling Western European countries.

### **THIRD: THE OBJECTIVES OF THE SEPARATIST REGIONS**

The separatist regions in Western European countries seek to achieve a number of goals, and these goals fall from the easiest to the most difficult, as follows

- Achieving the principle of equality: Minorities seek to achieve their desired goal of dealing according to the principle of equality in their relations with other groups. This means the recognition of the rest of the members of the community to which they belong, regardless of the characteristics that distinguish them from them, while being subject to legal equality far from discrimination.
- Achieving autonomy: The right of the separatist regions to administer their internal affairs freely and without being subject to the directives or authority of the central state. Its organized movement is working to achieve autonomy for the regions it inhabits within the country.
- Separation: Secession is the goal of the separatist regions, as well as their ultimate goal that they seek to achieve in order to preserve their ethnic, religious and linguistic identity.

- Unification of the regions: One of the goals pursued by some separatist regions in Western European countries is the unification of lands and other regions that are associated with them by common geographic components, whether national, linguistic or religious, based on the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination, improving their living conditions, raising the cultural level of the population, and organizing Social and political life on democratic foundations. Almost all of the separatist regions participate in achieving these goals, or at least part of them, according to the circumstances and data of each of these regions.

## THE SECOND TOPIC

### Separatist Regions of Western Europe

Separatism in Western European countries is not new, but it has gained broader momentum at this time. Europe has become the scene of separatists and independence movements such as those in Catalonia and the Spanish Basques, Veneto and Lombardy in Italy, Flanders in Belgium, Corsica in France and Scotland. In the United Kingdom, as follows

#### Catalonia

Catalonia is located in northeastern Spain, bordered to the north by France and Andorra, to the south by Valencia, to the east by the Mediterranean, and to the west by Aragon. Catalonia is divided into four provinces (Barcelona, Girona, Lleida and Targuana) and the population of Catalonia reached (7,600,267) million people in 2019, equivalent to (16.2%) of Spain's population of (46,934,000) people, and the population of Catalonia speaks the Catalan language, which is Old language 9) .(The Catalan movement is considered one of the most active regional separatist nationalist movements in Europe. After the death of General Franco in 1975 and the end of the dictatorship, and the assumption of power by Juan Carlos, the separatist nationalist movement began to emerge in the Spanish arena, taking advantage of the end of the military rule, which was preventing any political initiative within Spanish society.( .In 2017, the separatist movement of Catalonia took a stronger and stronger turn, as the head of the Catalan regional government announced on 9/6/2017 that a general referendum on the independence of the region would take place on 1/10/2017, and the Spanish government rejected and announced that it would obstruct any attempt for independence. Catalonia, and on September 6, 2017, the Catalan parliament passed a law specifying the basis for the referendum on the independence of Catalonia from the Spanish state. However, the region did not respond to the court's decision, and confirmed that it would hold the referendum on its specified date. However, the referendum took place on its date on 1/10/2017, and the result was that (90%) of the voters, who amounted to (43%) of the population, would like Secession from Spain and independence from it, and under the pressure of Madrid's escalatory measures, the President of Catalonia (Carlos Puigdemont) declared independence in front of the regional parliament on 10/10/2017, but postponed its implementation, saying (I accept the mandate that Catalonia should become an independent state in the form of a republic)

The Spanish Prime Minister gave Catalonia a maximum of eight days to rescind any declaration of independence, before the autonomy enjoyed by Catalonia was suspended, and on October 16, 2017, the Spanish Prime Minister's Office announced that the government would meet to activate Article 155 of the constitution Allows the central government to control Catalonia, which led to the unilateral declaration of independence by the regional parliament on 27/10/2017, with a vote of 70 members out of a total of 135 members of the Catalan parliament, and as a result, the Spanish government began implementing Article 155 of the constitution with the approval of the Senate by 214 votes to 47 against, and this included the suspension of autonomy, the dissolution of the Catalan government and the call for new regional elections on December 21, 2017.(2)

## **Basque Country**

The Basque Country is located at latitude 43 north, in the far west of the Bernese mountain range, and overlooks the Gulf of Basques, and has many names, including (Scale, Heria, Vasconia), and all these designations refer to the region divided between Spain and France, which is located in the southwest of The continent of Europe, southwest France and northern Spain, and is characterized by its mountainous nature consisting of the Pyrenees Mountains, bordered on the north by the Cantabria Sea, on the south by the region of La Rioja, on the east by Navarre, and on the west by the region of Cantabria and the region of Castile and Leon, and the area of the Basque region is (20) km<sup>2</sup> 18) km<sup>2</sup> in Spain and the rest are located in France, and the region includes several provinces: (Navarre - Alava - Gibosqua - Biscay - Labourde - Zobera), while the French section includes the marine areas in the Atlantic Bernese in France (3). map (1)

The Basque Country occupies the fourteenth place over Spain in terms of area, and Victoria is the capital of the region, which is the largest financial center in the European Atlantic axis, and has a high rate of national product compared to the population ratio of (4.7%) of the population of Spain, and the population of the Basque Country (2,170,868) people are divided between Basques, Spaniards and French, and they have a distinct history, civilization and culture. The Basque Country is characterized by great geopolitical importance, as it flourishes in the export of iron to Britain, as well as it is located at the crossroads between Spain and Europe, and its strategic location is reflected in the heavy flows recorded by the transport corridors to Europe and the rest of the peninsula.(4)

The roots of the Basque separatist movement go back to 1893, when the Basque leaders began to develop Basque nationalist feelings linked to deep religious feelings and supported by intolerant ethnic discrimination, and independence from the rest of the European peoples, especially the French and Spanish, and formed on this basis the first separatist cell called (the Basque National Party) and raised The slogan (the Basques are a distinguished European people who speak a different European language), and when the Second Spanish Republic formed the Basque Country, the first independent province, with local elections in 1936, before the outbreak of the civil war, and in light of that, the Basque Country was granted local government by the leftists, but Franco led A violent campaign against them and imposed a siege on them, arrested and tortured many of them, and prevented the Basque language. These pressures helped to give birth to a new current of national separatist feeling, which took a special form since 1960, when the idea crystallized for the first time as a student movement in opposition to General Franco, and announced ETA (ETA)) for itself (Basque separatist organization), which means Basque homeland and freedom. Despite the powers enjoyed by the region (self-rule), but the desire to obtain complete independence remained for long periods the goal sought by the separatists, especially with ETA maintaining an effective military wing.(5)

## **SECOND: THE BREAKAWAY REGIONS IN ITALY**

There is a contradiction between northern and southern Italy. The northern plain has a long history full of achievements, and despite its poverty in natural resources, its favorable climate and location close to the industrial center of Europe have had the effect of reviving the industrial spirit of its inhabitants, and therefore the migrations of the poor southern Italians continued to it, as well as flourishing In the northern region, agriculture, so this region represents the bright image of the face of Italy and the center of wealth, wealth and opportunities available, this contrasts with poverty, underdevelopment and crowding in the Italian south, and despite the efforts made to revive the south, it still did not rise to the level of the north.(6) In the middle of 1966, there were massive demonstrations by the sons of the Italian north in the city (Ponteda),

chanting for independence from Rome, after 130 years of the unification of Italy. Which includes the entire northern region, and the Italian separatists based their separatist campaign on a living reality that has been rejected in Italy for decades, and one of the features of this reality is that despite the unity of language, religion and Catholic doctrine, there is a wide gap in Italy between the cultures of the south and the north, the southerners are accused of being loving For fun (music, singing, dancing and arts) more than their love for work, production and improving their standard of living, and they are concerned that they continued to live dependent on the people of the North and their surplus production, while the Italian North achieved growth and prosperity to the extent that it became nicknamed (European Dragon), and established the largest industrial gathering In southern Europe, as for the Italian central and southern region, no significant economic progress was achieved, with the loss of European aid, which amounted to about (40) thousand billion Italian liras during the period 1984-1994 in the south, but Bad investment also caused the migration of southerners to the North as a catalyst for secession. Add to that the accusation leveled against the people of the South that they made the Italian South a nest of European and international crime and offended the reputation of the Italians all over the world. Therefore, the people of the North demand that if the separation is not completed, then at least separate Budgets and granting the North wide powers of the legislative and executive powers, and the Italians still dream of the words of Cavour, the maker of Italian unity, in which he said (We made Italy, and now we must make Italians) (7), and below are the most important separatist regions in the Italian North:-

### **Veneto Region**

The population of this region is (5) million people, and it is one of the richest Italian regions, as the region of Veneto contributes with the separatist northern Lombardy region (30%) of the gross domestic product, and this region aspires to achieve more resources by recovering half the volume of Muslim taxes To the central government, amounting to 15.5 billion euros, the Veneto regional government may consider that the central government in Rome is misusing these funds that can be used more effectively, including through partnership agreements between the regions. For these reasons, the residents of the Veneto region held a referendum to secede from the Italian central government on Sunday, 22 October 2017, and the residents of the region voted by a large majority to achieve autonomy, and the percentage of voting “yes” in favor of autonomy came by more than (98%) of the population of the region. The referendum was held under the auspices of the regional president (Luca Tsaya), who belongs to the far-right Northern League.

### **Lombardy**

The population of the Italian region of Lombardy has reached (10) million, and it is one of the richest Italian regions. Sent to the central government (45) billion euros, and the region also seeks to obtain broad powers in the field of infrastructure, health, education, security and immigration, which the Northern League focuses on, but achieving these powers needs to amend the constitution, so the Lombardy region held a referendum on secession For the Italian central government on Sunday, November 1, 2017, the local population voted in the referendum in favor of autonomy and on a large scale, with a large participation giving them the possibility to negotiate with Rome, and the vote (95%) of the population of Lombardy who participated with only (40%) of the Population yes to autonomy(8).

### **THIRD: THE BREAKAWAY REGIONS IN BELGIUM**

The land of Belgium extends in northwestern Europe, south of the delta of the Rhine and the Meuse, and Belgium is a border state located in an area of friction between the Germans on one side and the French on the other side. Independent

in its current borders until 1831, Belgium is the smallest European country in relative terms, with an area of about (30) thousand km<sup>2</sup>, and a population of about (10) million people, and it was the scene of European migrations and conflicts (9). The most important separatist regions in it are.

### **The Breakaway Region of Flanders**

Belgium combined the Flemish people in the northern region of Flanders, where the Dutch or Flemish language is spread, and their proportion is about 58% of the population, and the Walloons in the Walloon region in the south of the country, where the French language is spread, and their percentage is about 33% of the population of the country, as well as 70 thousand people with German origin in the east of the country, characterized by Brussels, the capital and its surroundings and inhabited by more than (10%) of the population.() Multilingualism was a threat to Belgium because the Walloons tended to France, while the Flemish tended to the Netherlands, and the French influence was the strongest in the early years of the independence of Belgium, and then the Walloon language was the strongest, and Flemish struggled politically for a long time until they were equal in rights with the Walloons Despite their large number.(10) When you look at Belgium, it seems as if its land is dissolved across the Dutch borders in the north, the French in the south, and the Germans in the east. Only the European-stained Brussels nucleus remains, and this division in which language played a major role gives the separatist call dimensions that go beyond the abstract national aspect and most visible among the Flemish, especially from the Flemish community. The path of the right-wing Flanders party, which was one of his last statements, "We have lived for 160 years without being happy with this, so why do we not separate from each other in peace, as happened in Czechoslovakia" The Flemish people deny that we are Dutch, and the Walloons deny that we are French... who are we. and the question itself is an expression of the crisis of distinction among the Belgians, among whom opinion polls say that only (26,5%) express their pride in the Belgian affiliation unequivocally One of the main reasons for the separatist call is the gap between north and south within Belgium, which makes it necessary to transfer \$7 billion annually in economic achievements in the Belgian north to support the south. The country, while the Flemish people complain that this is being done at their expense, the Walloons complain that the neglect of their region economically is the reason for their having to live on aid. The separatist calls were confronted by a response method with sedatives and sedatives in the form of increasing the administrative powers in each region at the expense of the central authority and meeting the demands Related to the cultural, educational, intellectual and other aspects, and this is what indirectly contributed to strengthening the differences instead of melting them, and making the current call to turn Belgium into a federal federal state a serious call.(11) From the foregoing, it seems that the geopolitical differentiation, except for the economic or linguistic difference between northern and southern Belgium, is the main reason for the emergence of separatism in the Flanders region, which aspires to achieve broad development in the north.

## **FOURTH: THE BREAKAWAY REGIONS OF FRANCE**

### **Corsica Island**

It is a French island in the Mediterranean, located west of Italy, north of Sardinia, and southeast of France, between latitudes 41.20 m and 43 m in the north. Mediterranean, and precipitation is rainy on the coasts and coastal plains, and its annual amount ranges from 750 mm on the western coast. And 600 mm on the eastern coast, and more than 1000 mm in the high center where it snows in winter (12 ). Map (1), and the island of Corsica is the fourth in terms of area in the Mediterranean after the islands of Sardinia, Sicily and Cyprus, and its area is (8680) km<sup>2</sup>, while its population reached (338554) people in

2020, and the island of Corsica has its own language, which is the Corsican language closest to the language Italian from it to the French language, but after the dominance of the French forces on the island in the eighteenth century, they sought to dominate the media and trade, which strengthened the spread of the French language throughout the island and reduced the importance of the Corsican language, which is spoken at the present time by about (10%) only Of the island's population, in addition, there are about half of the island's population who can speak a few of them.(13) The historical roots of the Corsican problem go back to 1729, when a massive popular revolution broke out against the rule of the Republic of Genoa in Corsica, and the struggle for liberation continued for a long time and reached 26 years until it ended in 1755 AD with the signing of the independence of the island of Corsica, but this independence did not last long, after ( 14) Years of independence, occupied by the French in 1769 AD, and the reason behind this was that Corsica did not fully independent from the Republic of Genoa, and the Genoese made a deal with France to sell the island to the French in 1794 AD, which Corsicans opposed this agreement and fought a fierce resistance against the French invasion This resistance expanded to turn into a quick war (1768 - 1769) that ended with the defeat of the Corsican resistance in the Battle of Ponte Novo, and in the year 1770 AD, France formally annexed the island of Corsica to its rule, and after the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 AD and the fall of the monarchy, hopes began to revive again With the independence of the island, especially after the return of the exiled Corsican fighter to Britain (Paoli), and his call in 1794 AD for the British forces to intervene militarily to liberate the island from the French, and this was actually achieved for him, and they established the (Anglo-Corsican) kingdom that received It took place until 1796 AD, when the Spanish forces intervened in favor of France in the war on the island, forcing the British forces to withdraw from the island and the return of the French again to the island of Corsica, and during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, especially after the end of the war led by Napoleon, the subordination of the rule of the island of Corsica fluctuated between the French and the British. In 1965 the Corsican Regional Front was established, and separatist propositions began to spread among the ranks of Corsican students, and the idea of defending the Corsican language became an honorable and somewhat legitimate way to prevent foreigners (French) from settling on the island, so I secretly established the Corsican National Liberation Front, and a series of the violent incidents that amounted to (4,500) attacks on the French presence on the island, the most recent of which was the assassination of the governor of Ajaccio in 2003, but the secret armed organization (the National Liberation Front) announced in June 2014 that it gave up its weapons in order to achieve its demands (15 ). After Paris agreed to grant it autonomy among other national minorities, the separatism of the Corsicans from France still constituted the ambition of most of the island's population.

## **FIFTH: THE SEPARATIST TERRITORIES IN BRITAIN**

Talking about Scotland is related to talking about the United Kingdom, which represents a country with a constitutional monarchy, and is a federal state and consists of four regions: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, and it is governed by a parliamentary system, and the government is concentrated in London, the capital, with local governments in Each of Edinburgh, the capital of Scotland, and Belfast, the capital of Northern Ireland, and Cardiff, the capital of Wales, that is, they are autonomous regions, and we will deal with the secessionist territory of Scotland as follows:

### **The Separatist Movement in Scotland**

Scotland was an independent nation until the beginning of the eighteenth century, and as a result of the pressure of many circumstances, it joined England, which formed Britain from the countries referred to above. Attempts to 1707 AD, as Scotland was an independent state and had its own cultural, linguistic and religious identity, and the link that unites it with

Britain is the Protestant religious doctrine In 1989 the Scottish Constitutional Conference was established to develop a road map for secession from Britain, including proposals to elect a Scottish Parliament directly with broad legislative powers. Its sessions in July 1999, and with the convening of the Scottish Parliament, many ideas began to move towards demanding the declaration of the independence of Scotland. Indeed, the governments of the United Kingdom and Scotland agreed to work together to ensure the holding of a referendum on Scottish independence, and this agreement was called (the Edinburgh Agreement), which was signed on 15 October 2012. Agreeing that the referendum should have a clear legal basis, legislated by the Scottish Parliament and under Section 30 of the Scotland Act 1998 allows the referendum and question of Scottish independence to be held before the end of 2014 .Despite the success of the Scottish National Party in achieving its promise to Scottish voters to hold a referendum in 2014 on Scottish independence in agreement with the London government, the result of the referendum came against the wishes of the separatists, as (54%) of Scots voted against the independence of Scotland, and the reasons for this are due to That a large segment of the Scottish electorate believed that their “no” vote in the 2014 referendum would allow them to vote in the 2016 Brexit referendum against Brexit and defeat the pro-Brexit trend, so it can be considered that secession has always been the demand of most Scots. , but the priorities of the past were different, and therefore the current trends tend to gain independence within the European Union is more attractive than remaining as part of the United Kingdom outside the framework of the European Union.(16) Although Scotland remained part of the British crown for 300 years, the separatist spirit is rising at the hands of the Scottish National Party, as members of the Scottish National Party believe that Scotland aspires to more delegation of powers to it, and that it would be better without the intervention of the British government, As it will govern according to the wishes of the Scottish people, and invest its money according to the priorities needed by the people, and it seems that the economic engine played a major role in the growing sense of separation.(17) It seems that Catalonia is one of the most separatist regions in Western Europe, and that the separatist European regions are affected by each other, as 2017 is the year of voting for secession in many regions, despite the great development that European countries are experiencing and the enjoyment of their society With rights and freedoms, but the religious and linguistic factor, not to mention the economic factor, has an influential and effective role in the real call for secession, add to this the regional differentiation between the regions of Western European countries, which aroused the desire for secession in those regions that aspire to secession.

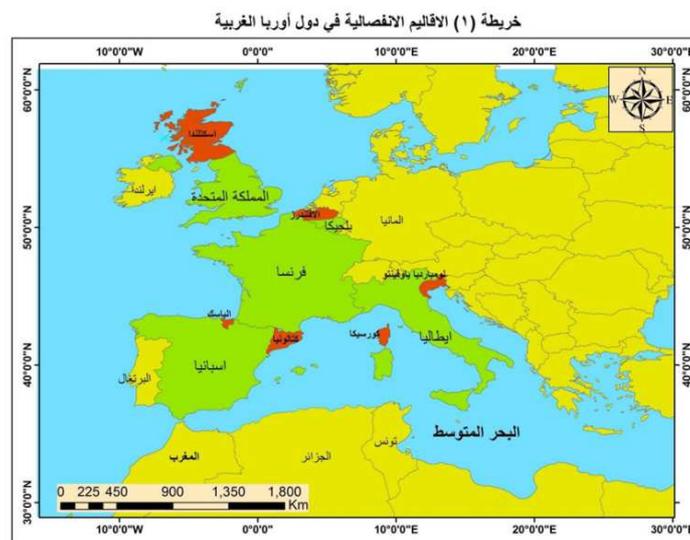


Figure 1

## THE THIRD TOPIC

### THE EFFECT OF TERRITORIAL SECESSION ON THE EUROPEAN UNION

When a region or more of the regions of Western European countries secede, this secession will have many effects on the state separated from that region, and on the European Union in general, and below are the most important effects of the secession of Western European regions:

#### **Creating Legal and Constitutional Problems**

The European Union will face a legal and constitutional problem represented in the survival of the separate regions as a state within the European Union as regions that separated from countries that are originally a member of the European Union, or their non-acceptance of their membership, and here will it be accepted in the future as a new member state after it completes all the conditions for membership, or Not accepting it as a member of the European Union at all so as not to encourage other European regions to secede, and this is evident from the statement of the Spanish Foreign Minister (José Manuel Garcia) saying, “Independent Catalonia will need to bid farewell to the European Union,” as the President of the European Commission stated ( Jose Manuel Barroso) said, “If a part of the territory of a member state decides to secede, the detached part is not a member of the European Union“.

#### **Encouraging Other Regions to Secede**

When one of the European regions secedes, it will not be the last. Rather, it will set the tone for how the European Union responds to separatist movements or those demanding autonomy in different parts of the European Union, and this will encourage other regions with sleepy nationalism that may resurface and demand secession from their countries . . .(18)Therefore, the European Union feels very threatened by the independence of the regions, especially the region of Catalonia, because the Catalan independence movement has the ability to nurture nationalism in Spain and Europe, and the secession of Catalonia will encourage other European regions to follow suit, leading to the Balkanization of Europe, and the pursuit of other regions to secede.

#### **Demanding European Countries to Withdraw from the European Union**

The matter does not stop with the demands of many Western European regions to secede from the European Union, but there are many official and partisan bodies calling for their countries to leave the European Union. The effect of the domino fall (chain interaction), the voices of ethnic and national strife have risen within the European Union demanding independence and exit from the European Union, for example, the leader of the National Front party (Marian Le Pen), who is calling for a referendum for the French people, and indicated that France has more reasons than Britain’s reasons for secession from the European Union, as the leader of the Freedom Party in the Netherlands came out to stress the need for the Dutch to take control of their affairs in their country and referred to a review of the Dutch membership report in the European Union, and the National People’s Party in Denmark welcomed the decision taken by Britain, and also did not differ The position of the Italian Northern League, which is known for its anti-immigrant position, and Germany believes that its country's economy cannot bear the burdens of the European Union after Britain's exit.(19)

### **Increasing the Chances of the Breakaway Regions at the Expense of the European Union**

The opportunities granted by the European Union to the regions increase in size when each agreement is concluded at the European level. The Treaty (Lisbon) provided wider spaces for the regions when compared to the Treaty (Maastricht), but these opportunities always remain restricted by the will of the federal governments, and what increases those opportunities is the presence of a commission The regions in the European Union, which provide the regions with means through which they can indirectly influence some legislation, in addition to being a platform for the voice of the regions to be heard, as well as for the support and support granted by the nationalist parties with separatist orientations to the central governments gives the separatist movements significant weight at the expense of European countries in particular, and the European Union in general. For example, Catalonia has a positive influence within the European Union through the Commission of European Regions, which was created specifically to allow the regions of the European Union to have their voice heard at the European level.

### **Creating Social and Cultural Problems**

The secession of the regions from the Western European countries that fall under the banner of the European Union leads to the creation of many social and cultural problems. For example, the Scots obtained during the half century their country spent in the European Union many benefits and gains from the European Common Market, such as freedom of movement, where he chose more than ( 230 thousand of European Union nationals reside in Scotland and it is possible to lose them in the next stage, and the right of Scottish citizens to work and study in the European Union will be curtailed, in addition to the fact that there are more than (2000) Scottish university students who participated in the ERASMUS program and in The future will not be able to their peers to benefit from this program (20), and what happened in Scotland may happen in most of the Western European regions seeking to secede from their countries and which become outside the framework of the European Union.

### **Weakening the European Union in Population**

Citizens of the territories independent of their countries that fall under the flag of the European Union will lose their European citizenship, since Article (20/1) of the Treaty on the European Union states that any person holding the nationality of a member state is a citizen of the European Union, and that the new independent state will become, by virtue of its independence, a third country in the future. It is related to the European Union, and treaties are no longer applied on its territory. The rule in the European Union indicates that if a country leaves the Union, it also leaves the mass of society (21), which weakens the European Union community and breaks it up socially, economically and politically.

### **Emergence of Economic Problems**

The breakaway regions in Western European countries will lose membership in the European Union in the event of secession, and the lack of investment by the people Companies based in these breakaway regions will be a source of concern for them, and those companies based in the breakaway regions will not be able to take advantage of the advantages of the European Union to support the idea of the single market, the European Union has lifted all import and export duties between member states, and granted freedom Movement of workers, capital and services, there are no trade barriers between member states and granting the right to any citizen to enter and reside in any member state of the European Union without restrictions, and capital is free to move between member states, so all companies in the breakaway regions will

automatically lose these benefits. With secession, they will face customs duties, forcing these companies to leave the separatist regions for other European countries, and these regions will have to bid farewell to the Central Bank (22), and as a result, there will be great material damage to people, companies, separatist regions, separated countries, and even the European Union.

### **The Growing Interests of World Powers in Europe**

The separation of European regions creates fear among the European Union countries, because in this separation great challenges are achieved for the European Union represented by competition from major countries such as China and Russia, and achieving great economic gains investing in the secession of these regions, so the European Union did not allow the independence of Catalonia and any of the other separatist regions, Because the ports (Barcelona and Targuana) will serve the Chinese commercial strategy, so we find that China supports the independence of Catalonia and other regions that are looking to secede, to achieve its commercial interests through its great project (the Ring and the Road), and Spain has realized the danger of this project to it, so it quickly announced its refusal to sign On the Chinese Silk Road plan .( 23)

### **Weakening the International Role of the European Union**

The separation of regions from the European Union has an impact on the latter's position as an active regional bloc in international politics due to the loss of important parts of its body with geographical, economic, political, diplomatic and military dimensions, and this makes the European Union less powerful in facing the challenges of major powers such as China, Russia and the United States.

### **Use of Force**

Most of the European Union countries will support the use of force against the separatist regions, as the Spanish government did with Catalonia in 2017, and with the support of the European Union countries when the latter sought to secede from Spain, no country wants to challenge its territorial integrity and the secession of parts of its country.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- The countries of Western Europe have long suffered from the crisis of the secession of the regions, and they are still suffering today from the same crisis and under new circumstances and geopolitical changes.
- The economic factor is the most effective and influential factor in the separatist tendency of the regions of Western European countries, not to mention the presence of other auxiliary and supportive factors for secession, such as cultural, historical and linguistic factors.
- The policies adopted by some governments in Western European countries in bringing minorities together at the expense of others had a clear role in fueling separatist movements, and this appears to be one of the goals of the separatist regions represented in achieving the principle of equality between societal groups.
- Despite the long stride that European countries have made in the field of rights, freedoms and urbanization, the cultural, linguistic and religious factor is still driving the political rhythm, and it seems clear in fueling the separatist tendency of some regions.

- The European Union fears and is very wary of the secession of the different regions that exploit the separatist tendency by demanding more administrative and financial powers, achieving autonomy, or secession, which will have significant effects on the future of the European Union, especially with the increasing number of regions calling for secession and which have great weight. Great economic.
- The nature of the political system in the European Union gives favorable opportunities for the regions (through the Committee of Regions in the European Union) to acquire more powers that encourage these regions to demand autonomy or secession.
- Western European countries that suffer from separatist movements, as well as the European Union, are exposed to economic, political and cultural losses that weaken the European Union in the face of major international challenges in the event of the secession of the regions.

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