
Thatcher and Europe

❶ Margaret Thatcher, leader of the opposition, during the 1975 campaign for the European Communities membership referendum. Thatcher's support was decisive in the victory of the "yes", with a majority of 67% and a turnout of 65%.



❷ Prime Minister Thatcher's speech in Bruges on 20 September 1988

Mr. Chairman, you have invited me to speak on the subject of Britain and Europe. Perhaps I should congratulate you on your courage. If you believe some of the things said and written about my views on Europe, it must seem rather like inviting Genghis Khan to speak on the virtues of peaceful coexistence! I want to start by disposing of some myths about my country, Britain, and its relationship with Europe and to do that, I must say something about the identity of Europe itself. Europe is not the creation of the Treaty of Rome. Nor is the European idea the property of any group or institution. We British are as much heirs to the legacy of European culture as any other nation. Our links to the rest of Europe, the continent of Europe, have been the dominant factor in our history. (...)

10 Too often, the history of Europe is described as a series of interminable wars and quarrels. Yet from our perspective today surely what strikes us most is our common experience. For instance, the story of how Europeans explored and colonised—and yes, without apology—civilised much of the world is an extraordinary tale of talent, skill and courage. But we British have in a very special way contributed to Europe. Over the centuries we have fought to prevent Europe from falling under the
15 dominance of a single power. We have fought and we have died for her freedom.

➤ *Using the document and your knowledge, explain how Margaret Thatcher's ideas exemplify the relationship between Britain and Europe.*