

United Kingdom



The United Kingdom is made up of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. It has a long history as a major player in international affairs and fulfils an important role in the EU, UN and NATO. Many of the country's people have never been richer, but a recent international study says the UK has the second highest child poverty rate in the European Union.

UNITED KINGDOM FACTS

Population: 59.2 million (UN, 2003)

Capital: London

Major language: English

Major religion: Christianity

Life expectancy: 76 years (men), 81 years (women) (UN)

Monetary unit: 1 pound sterling = 100 pence

Main exports: Manufactured goods, chemicals, foodstuffs

Average annual income: US \$25,120 (World Bank, 2001)

Internet domain: .uk

International dialling code: +44

The UK, a leading trading power and financial center, is one of the quartet of trillion dollar economies of Western Europe. Over the past two decades the government has greatly reduced public ownership and contained the growth of social welfare programs. Agriculture is intensive, highly mechanized, and efficient by European standards, producing about 60% of food needs with only 1% of the labor force. The UK has large coal, natural gas, and oil reserves; primary energy production accounts for 10% of GDP, one of the highest shares of any industrial nation. Services, particularly banking, insurance, and business services, account by far for the largest proportion of GDP while industry continues to decline in importance.



Flag Description: blue field with the red cross of Saint George (patron saint of England) edged in white superimposed on the diagonal red cross of Saint Patrick (patron saint of Ireland), which is superimposed on the diagonal white cross of Saint Andrew (patron saint of Scotland); properly known as the Union Flag, but commonly called the Union Jack; the design and colors (especially the Blue Ensign) have been the basis for a number of other flags including other Commonwealth countries and their constituent states or provinces, as well as British overseas territories. To listen to the British national anthem go to http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/country_profiles/1038758.stm