The last year has proved to be a turbulent time for the European Union. Even with most of Europe on the rebound from the lingering financial crisis there is growing dissatisfaction with the current state of the union. Across the EU, eurosceptic parties have been on the upswing; nowhere has this sentiment been as strong as in Greece and the United Kingdom, albeit for very different reasons.

In January 2015, the Greek national elections returned the left-wing SYRIZA party to power in the Hellenic Parliament after years of conservative New Democracy party rule. SYRIZA, led by the fiercely anti-austerity Alexis Tsipras, is in a position to unravel the developing Troika talks concerning a third Greek bailout in the face of Greece's continuing inability to meet its financial obligations. Tsipras announced “a SYRIZA government will not respect the agreements signed by the previous government. The day after the election, there will be no memorandums, no Troika.”

The rise of SYRIZA and Tsipras’ elevation to Prime Minister seems certain to force a renegotiation of Greece’s debt program and have even renewed fears of a Greek exit from the Eurozone, also known as a Grexit. While a break with the European Union still seems unlikely, as SYRIZA has never openly supported such a move, the rejection of the previous coalition’s bailout talks will certainly lead to new controversy about the ongoing austerity program in EU. Additionally, the rejection of the Troika-structured bailout plan is likely to have real consequences for Greece. The Chief of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi, has already insisted that if Greece drops the Troika program it won’t be eligible to receive the quantitative easing funds the bank plans to distribute over the next year and a half.
One the other side of Europe, dissatisfaction with the EU is rising in the United Kingdom. While the UK is not strongly indebted to the EU like Greece, the rise of eurosceptic sentiment within the UK has been stark. The United Kingdom for Independence Party (UKIP) is outspoken in its desire to break from the EU and has generally held a high-profile campaign against integration, making the UK the most feasible state to break from Union. It has spearheaded the anti-EU movement citing the loss of sovereignty to the European parliament as a key complaint. The UKIP won 17% of the vote in the 2013 European elections making it the most prevalent eurosceptic party in the EU. It also picked up nearly 150 local council seats within the UK.

More than any other EU member, demand to leave the EU is a mainstream issue in Britain. According to a 2012 survey 56% of respondents would favor leaving the union. A eurosceptic tone is also prevalent in the larger Conservative majority as well, although not as hard-line as UKIP. A referendum on Britain’s membership in the EU is expected by 2017. Having opted out of the currency union, a British withdraw would be significantly less painful than most members. Regardless of the outcome, it is clear that there are still serious reservations about Britain’s place in the EU.

While it is uncertain what the developments in Greece and the United Kingdom mean for the future of the European Union, it is certain that there must be some level of reform to placate the growing Euroscepticism. At the moment it is likely that the Union will stick together, but if complaints are not addressed the coming years may be less optimistic. The financial crisis might be fading, but the European experiment is still being put to the test.