



## UK Public Opinion on the European Union

Standard Note: SN/IA/5442

Last updated: 11 April 2012

Author: Vaughne Miller and Leonora Barclay

Section: International Affairs and Defence Section

---

According to a *Eurobarometer* survey in autumn 2009, only 30% of people in the UK thought EU membership was a good thing. This view was held by more men than women and was 2% higher than a survey six months earlier. The EU-27 average was 53%.

In reply to a question as to whether the UK benefitted from EU membership, 36% of the UK sample was positive – again an increase of 4% over the previous poll and again more men than women – compared with an EU average of 57%.

The negative attitudes towards the EU were reinforced in an Angus Reid survey in July 2011, in which 49% of Britons said that if there were a referendum on membership of the EU, they would vote against the UK remaining a member. Only 25% said that they would vote in favour of the UK staying part of the EU in a referendum. Respondents who supported UK membership of the EU tended to be younger than those who would vote to leave the EU.

As well as differences between the views of men and women, attitudes towards the EU vary from sector to sector.

This Note provides links to a selection of opinion polls showing UK views on different aspects of our membership of the European Union.

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties and is not intended to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. It should not be relied upon as being up to date; the law or policies may have changed since it was last updated; and it should not be relied upon as legal or professional advice or as a substitute for it. A suitably qualified professional should be consulted if specific advice or information is required.

This information is provided subject to [our general terms and conditions](#) which are available online or may be provided on request in hard copy. Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing with Members and their staff, but not with the general public.

## Contents

1	<b>Eurobarometer polls</b>	2
2	<b>Ipsos MORI</b>	3
3	<b>Populus</b>	4
4	<b>Gallup</b>	4
5	<b>Angus Reid polls</b>	5

### 1 Eurobarometer polls

*Eurobarometer* Public Opinion Surveys are a broad survey of public attitudes towards the EU. They have been conducted each spring and autumn since autumn 1973. Since autumn 2001 they have been conducted on behalf of the Directorate-General Press and Communication (Opinion Polls) of the European Commission.

An identical set of questions is asked of representative samples of the population aged fifteen years and over in each Member State. The regular sample in *Standard Eurobarometer* Surveys is 1,000 people per country except in Luxembourg (600) and in the United Kingdom (1,000 in Great Britain and 300 in Northern Ireland). In each Member State the survey is carried out by national institutes associated with the European Opinion Research Group, a consortium of Market and Public Opinion Research agencies, comprising INRA (EUROPE) and GFK Worldwide.

Below are links to *Standard Eurobarometer* from 1997 to 2011, including the “Key indicators and five-year trends in UK and EU sentiment” and the 2009 report on the UK.

<a href="#">1997 (spring)</a>	<a href="#">2001 (spring)</a>
<a href="#">1997 (autumn)</a>	<a href="#">2001 (autumn)</a>
<a href="#">1998 (spring)</a>	<a href="#">2002 (spring)</a>
<a href="#">1998 (autumn)</a>	<a href="#">2002 (autumn)</a>
<a href="#">1999 (spring)</a>	<a href="#">2003 (spring)</a>
<a href="#">1999 (autumn)</a>	<a href="#">2003 (autumn)</a>
<a href="#">2000 (spring)</a>	<a href="#">2004 (spring)</a>
<a href="#">2000 (autumn)</a>	<a href="#">2004 (autumn)</a>

[Five-year trends \(2004-2009\)](#)

[United Kingdom report 2009 \(\*Eurobarometer\* No. 72\)](#)

[2010 \(autumn\)](#)

[Attitudes towards the EU in the United Kingdom, March 2011](#)

[2011 \(spring\)](#)

[2011 \(autumn\)](#)

*Flash Eurobarometers* are ad hoc thematic telephone interviews conducted at the request of any service of the European Commission. *Qualitative studies* investigate in-depth the

motivations, feelings and reactions of selected social groups towards a given subject or concept in discussion groups or with non-directive interviews.<sup>1</sup>

**Key indicators and five-year trends in UK and EU sentiment (in %)**

		EB61 Spring 2004	EB62 Autumn 2004	EB63 Spring 2005	EB64 Autumn 2005	EB65 Spring 2006	EB66 Autumn 2006	EB67 Spring 2007	EB68 Autumn 2007	EB69 Spring 2008	EB70 Autumn 2008	EB71 Summer 2009
Trust in the EU	UK	19	35	27	25	31	26	36	25	29	25	22
	EU	41	50	44	45	48	45	57	48	50	47	47
Trust in the European Commission	UK	26	39	31	26	28	25	29	22	24	27	22
	EU	47	52	46	46	47	48	52	50	47	47	44
Trust in the European Parliament	UK	30	39	35	27	31	25	33	25	27	27	22
	EU	54	57	52	51	52	52	56	55	52	51	48
Trust in national government	UK	19	32	31	33	30	24	34	30	24	29	21
	EU	30	34	34	31	35	30	41	34	32	34	32
Trust in national parliament	UK	25	35	36	37	36	29	41	34	27	30	17
	EU	35	38	35	35	38	33	43	35	34	34	32
Support for the euro	UK	36	31	28	28	28	29	29	24	26	28	27
	EU	60	63	59	60	59	60	63	61	60	61	61
Support for enlargement	UK	31	50	48	43	44	36	41	36	36	40	32
	EU	42	53	50	49	45	46	49	46	47	44	43
Number 1 concern of UK	UK	41 IMM	29 IMM	31 IMM	41 CRIM	41 CRIM	40 IMM	41 CRIM	44 CRIM	38 CRIM	34 EC SIT	41 EMP
	EU	16	13	14	24	24	21	24	24	20	37	49
Number 2 concern of the UK	UK	37 CRIM	28 TERR	31 CRIM	34 TERR	32 IMM	35 TERR	32 IMM	39 IMM	35 IMM	34 CRIM	31 EC SIT
	EU	26	16	23	14	14	15	15	15	11	17	42
Membership a good thing	UK	29	38	36	34	42	34	39	34	30	32	28
	EU	48	56	54	50	55	53	57	58	52	53	53
Membership has brought benefits	UK	30	39	40	37	42	39	43	37	36	39	34
	EU	47	53	55	52	54	54	59	58	54	56	56
Number of Member States		15	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	27	27	27

Key: IMM = immigration; TERR = terrorism; CRIM = crime; EC SIT= economic situation EMP = unemployment

## 2 Ipsos MORI

[“Times Election Poll - Week 3”](#), 17 April 1997 (one of the questions is on the EU)

[“Attitudes to Europe in Great Britain”](#), November 1997

[“Attitudes to the European Union”](#), January 1998

[“Business and the Euro”](#), September 1998

[“Europe: The State of Public Opinion”](#), 26 February 1999

[“Attitudes to Europe”](#), 13 June 1999

[“Attitudes Towards EMU - Survey of CBI Members”](#), 20 July 1999

[“Public Opposition to EMU Entry Has Risen Sharply”](#), 3 March 2000

[“Attitudes Towards Europe”](#), 25 June 2000

[“European Integrated Army Poll”](#), 26 November 2000

---

<sup>1</sup> See [European Commission Public Opinion](#)

["Joining The Euro"](#), 15 January 2001

["EEF Europe Survey"](#), 16 March 2001

["Britain Out" - new poll findings put politicians on the spot over EU](#)", 5 April 2001

["Satisfaction with the way the European Union is doing its job"](#), 4 July 2001

["Knowledge of and Satisfaction with Institutions"](#), 4 July 2001

["Joining The Euro: All Companies' Polls 1999-2002"](#), February 2002

["Who Still Has An Open Mind On The Euro?"](#) 25 October 2002

["Senior Business Staff On The Euro"](#), 9 January 2003

["Little Change On Euro Vote"](#), 24 January 2003

["Britain's Most Important International Relationship - trends 1969-2003"](#), 28 April 2003

["Latest Views On The Euro"](#), 26 September 2003

["The Referendum Battle"](#), 6 September 2004

["UK On Europe: Low On Knowledge, Low On Trust"](#), 20 September 2004

["Joining The Euro: If the government were to urge.."](#), 25 February 2005

["EMU Entry And EU Constitution"](#), 25 February 2005

["European Union membership – trends"](#), 24 September 2007

["EU Referendum Survey"](#), 3 March 2008

["European Union Poll"](#), 30 October 2011

["British Captains of Industry Survey"](#), 4 January 2012

["Economist/MORI January 2012 issues index"](#), 20 January 2012

### **3 Populus**

[The EU / European Constitution](#), *The Sun* 11 May 2003

[European Union](#), *The Daily Politics*, 14 June 2007

["Voting Intention and Political Attitudes"](#), 9 March 2008

[Times Poll - May 2009](#), 8 May 2009

[The Times EU Veto Survey](#), 11 December 2011

### **4 Gallup**

["A Cautious Reaction to Euro Force"](#), 30 November 2000

["EU Survey: Are Transatlantic Ties Loosening?"](#) 6 July 2004

## **5 Angus Reid polls**

“Half of Britons Believe EU Membership Has Been Bad”, 15 October 2009

“Almost Half of Britons Still Want Referendum on Lisbon Treaty”, 10 November 2009

“Britons Expect Little Change with New European Union Structure”, 30 November 2009

“Relations with the EU Will Not Change, Say Britons”, 1 December 2009

“Almost Half of Britons Would Vote to Abandon European Union”, 6 December 2010

“Half of Britons Would Vote to Leave the European Union in a Referendum”, 12 July 2011

“Most Britons Side With Cameron on EU Treaty Rejection”, 4 January 2012