

EUROBAROMETER 61

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2004

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

UNITED KINGDOM

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This report was produced for the European Commission's Representation in the United Kingdom.

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission.
The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

Introduction

This main report looks at UK citizens' views about various aspects of the European Union and compares them with typical attitudes held across the Union (EU15 averages) and also highlights major differences with other individual member states.

Views are assessed across the European Union and results are based on both a country-by-country view and a country-specific socio-demographic analysis within the UK that attempts to highlight both the similarities and differences by such varied factors as age, education, occupation, etc.

The main data making up this report were gathered between 20 February and 28 March 2004 and are part of wave 61 of the Standard Eurobarometer.

The UK sample

Of the UK sample, comprising 1,345 persons, 97% were British – a figure very much in line with the EU15 average with the exception of Luxembourg where of those polled more than one quarter (26%) did not have Luxemburgish identity.

In each country, a number of sampling points were chosen which would reflect the population size and density. This random sampling technique gives an accurate representation of metropolitan, urban and rural areas.

Starting addresses were selected at random and further addresses were selected as every nth address by standard random route procedures.

All interviews were face-to-face in respondents' homes.

Editorial Highlights

From the large amount of data making up EB61, three particularly significant points emerge from the UK statistics.

These relate to:

1. The level of knowledge that UK citizens have of matters European.

Eurobarometer reports have consistently shown that the level of interest in the UK towards EU affairs is usually the lowest in the Union.

There is a steady and continuing flow of evidence that this lack of interest has as one of its primary causes a basic lack of knowledge on EU affairs.

This has earned the UK the nickname of the “don’t know, don’t care” capital of Europe.

This fundamental lack of knowledge and lack of interest also combine to generate high levels of distrust in such EU Institutions as the European Parliament and the European Commission.

As will be seen throughout this report, there is substantial evidence that higher levels of education bring more awareness of the work and function of the European Union and with it a much more positive attitude.

Other hopeful indicators include the fact that 42% of UK citizens feel that there is too little media coverage of the European Union, while only 13% consider it to be too much.

Perhaps as importantly, more than a quarter of the UK poll (27%) think that such media coverage as there is presents a ‘too negative’ picture of EU affairs.

Younger people are also, generally, more open to both receiving information on the Union and have a more favourable view on the subject.

2. The level of trust that UK citizens have for the EU executive body (the Commission), compared with other more familiar bodies, notably the press.

The report looks in depth at how UK citizens trust various institutions and looks at trust levels in institutions ranging from bodies such as the army and police, to media (including press, television and radio), as well as government, companies, the United Nations, etc.

It then looks at trust levels in the nine main EU institutions or bodies. What emerges, overall, is that trust **overall** is something generally given grudgingly by UK citizens and figures are relatively low compared with EU15 averages.

The key factor is that public opinion in the UK is strongly against the concept of the European Union and there is what might be deemed a “net public distrust” in this area unequalled in the other 15 Member States with the exception of Austria. It is within this environment that deep seated and extremely negative attitudes to Europe are seen.

However higher levels of education appear to be moving the UK attitude towards EU averages and on some broad issues less connected with “old attitudes” opinion is the UK is very much in line with general EU attitudes

Within this broad scenario it is therefore particularly interesting to notice that when these two panels are compared with one another that some EU institutions generate **more** trust amongst UK citizens than domestic organisations.

Most prominent of these concern the UK press and the European Commission. Perhaps surprisingly, only 20% of UK citizens say they trust the British press compared with a noticeably higher percentage (26%) who trust the European Commission. What it shows in even starker form is that, in the UK, the ‘don’t trust’ figures for the UK press rise to 73% compared to just 39% when the question relates to the European Commission.

Accordingly, while trust levels for European institutions appear low when compared with other Member States, when examined in the context of the UK’s trust levels generally and compared with those of domestic institutions; these figures can be seen, on a relative basis, to be not as gloomy as might first appear.

3. UK citizens’ beliefs as to whether their country and, more particularly, themselves have benefited from the UK being a member of the European Union.

- A crucial statistic is that only 30% of the UK poll believed the country had benefited from EU membership. This contrasts with average figures of 47% across the EU and figures as high as 82% in Greece.
- The proportion of those believing the country has not benefited has risen from 45% to 47% over the past six months.

The two most important issues facing our country

Country analysis

UK Rank	ISSUES	UK %	EU15 %	EU15 rank	High	Low
1.	Immigration	41	16	4	UK 41%	Portugal 2%
2.	Crime	37	26	2	NL 47%	Spain 10%
3.	Terrorism	25	15	5	Spain 58%	Finland 3%
4.	Healthcare system	23	15	6	Sweden 43%	Spain 3%
5	Unemployment	13	44	1	Greece 75%	UK 13%
6=	Economic situation	9	25	3	NL 41%	UK 9%
6=.	Education system	9	6	9	Lux 16%	Spain 2%
6=.	Pensions	9	10	7	Austria 25%	NL/IRL 3%
9.	Taxation	8	8	8	Belg/Fin 18%	NL 3%
10.	Housing	5	4	10	Spain 17%	D/GR 0%
11=	Public transport	3	2	12=	Austria 11%	Finland 0%
11=	Protecting environment	3	3	11	DK 11%	Port/E/NL 1%
11=	Defence/Foreign affairs	3	2	12=	Spain 5%	Lux/Port 0%
14=	Other	1	1	14=	Lux 2%	Denmark 0%
14=	DK	1	1	14=	E/IRL/Aust 2%	Greece 0%

Immigration was the most important issue facing UK citizens in the spring of 2004 and was cited by 41% of the poll. In autumn 2003, it was the second most important issue but now overtakes **crime**, which moves from first to second place.

Terrorism was rated the third most important issue and, in the survey six months previously, it was ranked fourth by the UK.

In fourth place (October 2003, third place) was the **healthcare system**.

Knowledge of the existence of European institutions

Compared with the rest of the European Union, UK knowledge levels are low and it is probable that this lack of knowledge generates high levels of mistrust.

European Parliament

More than nine out of ten (92%) of EU15 citizens had heard of the European Parliament and only in the UK (85%), Greece (88%) and Germany (89%) were figures of less than 90% recorded.

These figures remain broadly unchanged since the previous Eurobarometer 60.1 in the autumn of 2003.

European Commission

While an average of 80% of European citizens (81% in autumn 2003) had heard of the European Commission, this figure conceals variations that range from 72% in Germany and 75% in the UK (80% in autumn 2003) to 95% in Luxembourg and Finland.

Education has a noticeable bearing on this level of knowledge in the UK with 69% of the least educated saying that they had heard of the European Commission compared with 92% of those educated to age 20 or more.

Council of Ministers

Considering that the Council of Ministers together with the European Parliament and European Commission is part of the 'triumvirate' decision-making process of the European Union, it is interesting to note that only two out of three (65%) of EU15 citizens are aware of its existence. This average figure contains some substantial variations ranging from awareness levels of 92% in Sweden and 88% in Denmark to just 58% in Germany and 41% in the UK.

In fact, in the UK, 55% of those polled were not aware of the existence of the Council of Ministers compared with a European average of 31%.

The media.

Respondents were asked if the media talk too much, about the right amount, or too little about the European Union.

Country and socio-demographic analysis

	EU15 %	UK %	High
Talk too much	8	13	Greece/Spain/UK 13%
Talk about the right amount	42	31	Finland 69%
Talk too little	42	42	Netherlands 53%
Don't know	9	14	Ireland 17%

Across the European Union, there is a marked and increasing belief that the media **talk too little** about the European Union.

42% of European citizens believe that there is **too little** media coverage on this subject and, in the Netherlands and Italy, this is a belief held by at least 50% of those polled. The UK figures match the EU15 average at 42%.

Both the UK and EU15 figures show an increase since autumn 2003. In the UK, the figures have moved noticeably from 34% to 42%, while in the EU15 the figure has grown from 37% to 42%.

It is significant to note that this sentiment of **media starvation** is less keenly felt in countries such as Sweden, Finland and Denmark where, as can be noted throughout this report, there are generally high levels of both information and awareness on matters European.

On average, 42% of EU15 citizens felt that their national media coverage on the European Union was **about right** although constituent parts of this average ranged from 31% in the UK to 69% in Finland.

Respondents were then asked if the national media present the European Union too positively, objectively, or too negatively.

Country and socio-demographic analysis

	EU15 %	UK %	High
Too positively	23	11	Spain 34%
Objectively	41	34	Belgium, Finland, Denmark 57%
Too negatively	13	27	UK 27%
Don't know	23	28	Ireland 31%

The major result from this part of the survey is that, compared with just 13% of the European Union who consider that the EU is presented **too negatively**, the UK figure is more than twice this average at 27% - substantially ahead of the next highest figure from Portugal at just 18%. These figures are basically unchanged since the Eurobarometer of autumn 2003.

General perceptions of the European Union and EU membership

In this section, respondents are asked about their feelings and concerns about the European Union and the benefit it brings and were asked if their country's membership of the European Union is a good thing, a bad thing or neither good nor bad.

Country and socio-demographic analysis

	UK %	EU15 %	High %
A good thing	29	48	Luxembourg 75
A bad thing	29	17	Sweden 33
Neither good nor bad	29	29	Austria 36
Don't know	13	6	UK 13

Across the European Union, nearly half of those polled (48%) felt that their country's membership of the European Union was a **good** thing. This is nearly three times as many people as the 17% who believed membership to be a **bad** thing. Six months previously, the comparable figures were 48% and 15%.

In the UK, however, an identical number of people (29%) think membership is a **good** thing as those who think it is a **bad** thing. In the autumn of 2003, the positive camp numbered 28% while those who thought membership was a '**bad thing**' totalled 29%.

Better education and age were driving forces on this issue.

Younger people in the UK were also more convinced about the benefits of membership of the EU. Additionally, while 52% of those educated to age 20 or beyond saw membership as a **good thing**, this figure falls to just 19% of those whose education had ended at age 15 or less.

Respondents were asked if their country has, on balance, benefited or not from being a member of the European Union.

Country and socio-demographic analysis

	UK %	EU15 %	High %
Benefited	30	47	Greece 82
Not benefited	47	34	Sweden 59
Don't know	23	18	Germany/UK 23

Across the Union, 47% of those polled believed that their country had **benefited** from being a member of the European Union and this figure shows a small one-percentage point increase from autumn 2003.

However, this average figure conceals substantial country-by-country variations. For example, while 82% of Greeks, 80% of the Irish and 69% of Spaniards and Luxembourgers believed that their country had **benefited** from membership of the European Union, this is a view held by just 27% of Swedes, 30% of Britons

and 38% of Austrians. Making up the 39% German poll were 42% of West Germans but only 31% of East Germans.

From the above, it can be clearly seen that opinion is very strongly divided on this issue.

From the 30% of the UK poll who believed the country had **benefited** from membership of the European Union, and which is an unchanged figure since autumn 2003, were 37% of the male poll but only 24% of the female one.

Age and education played a by now familiar role in these issues.

38% of the youngest age band believed the UK had **benefited** compared with 26% of those aged 55 or more.

The UK figures show that 57% of the most educated people believed the UK had **benefited** compared with just 20% of those who had left school at the earliest opportunity.

While 46% of students and 44% of managers believed the UK had **benefited** from membership, this figure falls to 27% of the retired, 25% of manual workers and just 16% of house persons. The proportion of those believing the UK has **not benefited** has moved from 45% to 47% over the past six months.

Respondents were asked whether the European Union conjured up for them a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image.

This question asks respondents their image of the European Union and the options possible ranged from very positive or fairly positive, through neutral to fairly negative or very negative.

The editor, for the sake of clarity and presentation, has 'bundled' the very positive and fairly positive results under the heading of '**positive**' and performed a similar exercise with the fairly negative and very negative responses to create a '**negative**' heading.

	UK %	EU15 %	High
Positive	26	43	Greece/Ireland 65%
Neutral	27	32	Netherlands 42%
Negative	37	21	Sweden 41%
Don't know	10	4	UK 10%

Only 26% of the UK poll saw the European Union in a **positive** light compared with 43% of citizens across the Union as a whole, and figures as high as 65% in Greece and Ireland.

A **negative** view of the Union is held by 21% of European citizens in general, while the figure rises to more than one in three (37%) in the UK.

These **negative** figures show an increase of three percentage points in both the UK and the EU as a whole since the poll in autumn of 2003.

High '**don't know**' figures of 10%, which are more than twice the EU15 average, are also observed in the UK.

While 21% of those aged 55 or more have a **positive** view of the European Union, this figure rises substantially to 36% of those aged 15 to 24.

When educational level is examined with regard to this attitude an even greater variation is apparent. While only 19% of those who left school at age 15 or before see the EU in a **positive** light, this figure rises to more than half (53%) of those educated to age 20 or beyond.

II.3. It is interesting to note that when UK citizens are asked questions as to how they would like to see the EU develop, their answers fall very much in line with EU15 averages.

The disparities emerge when their information base is the key element of the exercise - an area in which UK respondents are not strong.

Q. 30. The European Union already has a common security and foreign policy and a European security and defence policy. There is now a debate about how much further these should be developed. Do you tend to agree or tend to disagree with each of the following statements?

30.1 The European Union should have a rapid military reaction force that can be sent quickly to trouble spots when an international crisis occurs.

	EU15 %	UK %	High
Tend to agree	70	70	77% Belgium
Tend to disagree	19	17	33% Finland
Don't know	12	14	20% Ireland

30.2. When an international crisis occurs, European Union Member States should agree a common position.

	EU15 %	UK %	High
Tend to agree	81	73	89% Luxembourg
Tend to disagree	10	12	17% Denmark, Finland
Don't know	9	15	17% Ireland

30.3. The European Union should have its own Foreign Minister who can be the spokesperson for a common European Union position.

	EU15 %	UK %	High
Tend to agree	64	50	78% Italy
Tend to disagree	19	25	47% Sweden
Don't know	17	25	28% Portugal

30.4. The European Union should have its own seat on the United Nations Security Council.

	EU15 %	UK %	High
Tend to agree	65	50	82% Luxembourg
Tend to disagree	16	24	35% Sweden
Don't know	19	26	27% Portugal

30.5. Member States which have opted for neutrality should have a say in European Union foreign policy

	EU15 %	UK %	High
Tend to agree	50	34	79% Finland
Tend to disagree	27	33	57% Denmark
Don't know	23	33	33% UK

30.6. European Union foreign policy should be independent of United States foreign policy.

	EU15 %	UK %	High
Tend to agree	77	65	89% Finland, Sweden
Tend to disagree	10	12	13% Denmark, Austria
Don't know	14	23	23% UK

30.7. The European Union should guarantee human rights in each Member State even if this is contrary to the wishes of some Member States.

	EU15 %	UK %	High
Tend to agree	79	68	92% Finland, Sweden
Tend to disagree	8	11	12% Greece
Don't know	13	20	20% UK

30.8. The European Union should work to guarantee human rights around the world even if this is contrary to the wishes of some other countries.

	EU15 %	UK %	High
Tend to agree	76	66	87% Luxembourg, Finland
Tend to disagree	11	13	15% Belgium

Don't know	13	21	21% UK
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30.9. The European Union should have a common immigration policy towards people from outside the European Union.

	EU15 %	UK %	High
Tend to agree	71	64	79% Netherlands
Tend to disagree	15	19	27% Finland
Don't know	14	17	22% Portugal

30.10. The European Union should have a common asylum policy towards asylum seekers.

	EU15 %	UK %	High
Tend to agree	70	65	81% Netherlands
Tend to disagree	15	19	23% Finland
Don't know	15	17	23% Portugal

Q. 31. In your opinion, should decisions concerning European defence policy be taken by national government, NATO or the European Union?

	National government (in %)	NATO (in %)	European Union (in %)	Other (in %)	Don't know (in %)
B	15	17	54	1	14
DK	33	29	26	1	11
D - West	24	16	44	0	16
D - Total	25	15	44	1	16
D - East	29	9	46	1	15
GR	35	1	56	1	8
E	29	14	41	2	14
F	21	8	52	0	18
IRL	39	9	34	1	18
I	13	11	63	1	12
L	16	17	57	1	10
NL	22	21	47	1	10
A	39	10	35	2	15
P	32	8	45	1	15
FIN	41	4	49	1	5
S	40	5	45	1	9
UK	33	21	26	1	19
EU15	25	14	46	1	15

Virtually half (46%) of the EU15 sample believed decisions of this nature should be taken by the European Union. This figure is more than three times as large as those who support the NATO option and almost twice the 25% who believed decisions should be taken by the national government.

These figures are very similar to those observed in Eurobarometer 60.

The UK figure at 26%, although, together with Denmark's, the lowest in the EU, showed an increase from 23% in October 2003.

High figures supporting the EU option - in excess of 50% - are noted in France (52%), Belgium (54%), Greece (56%), Luxembourg (57%) and Italy (63%).

NATO continued to get relatively strong support from the UK and the Netherlands (21%) compared with the EU15 average of just 14%. It should be noted that the numbers of respondents selecting the 'NATO' options all fell over the six months since EB60.

At the other end of the support spectrum were figures as low as 5% in Sweden, 4% in Finland and just 1% in Greece.

Amongst those Member States who appeared most inclined to let defence policy decisions be taken by their national government were the Irish, Austrians, Swedes and Finns, where figures between 39% and 41% were recorded in comparison with an EU15 average of 25%.

Q. 32. Currently, the European Council is composed of Heads of State or Heads of Government of the Member States and the President of the Commission. The presidency of the European Council is taken by each country, in turn, for a period of six months. Do you think that...?

- 1. The six-month period should be retained because it gives each Member State a chance to hold the Presidency of the European Union on a regular basis.**
- 2. The period of the Presidency should be extended because six months is too short to achieve significant results.**

Country analysis

	Retain six-month period (in %)	Extend six-month period (in %)	Don't know (in %)
B	30	53	17
DK	46	45	9
D – West	33	51	16
D – Total	31	52	17
D – East	26	56	18
GR	43	42	16
E	37	39	24
F	25	58	18
IRL	48	32	20
I	37	48	15
L	45	44	11
NL	31	58	11
A	47	36	17
P	32	46	22
FIN	42	53	5
S	42	51	8
UK	22	51	27
EU15	32	50	18

A groundswell of Union opinion to extend the existing six-month period is shown by the fact that, on average, 50% of EU15 citizens would like this term extended – a slight increase from 49% in October 2003.

While there was an average 18% 'don't know' factor across the European Union, in all fifteen Member States, with the exception of Austria, Luxembourg, Ireland, Greece and Denmark, there was a majority opting for a longer period of office for the Presidency.

Once again, the UK figures are affected by the highest 'don't know' figure, which, at 27%, is 50% higher than the EU15 average.

In the UK, 51% of those polled were in favour of extending the period, more than twice the 22% who wished it to be retained compared to 49% and 18% in EB60.

Q. 33. Currently, each Member State has the right of veto in certain areas. In the future, should a right of veto...

- 1. be retained in order to preserve essential national interests [Retained]**
- 2. be limited to a very few essential areas [Limited]**
- 3. be given up for all decisions to make the EU more efficient [Given up]**

Country analysis

	Retained (in %)	Limited (in %)	Given up (in %)	Don't know (in %)
B	35	24	18	23
DK	57	28	7	8
D – West	46	30	13	11
D – Total	47	29	13	12
D – East	51	25	12	13
GR	70	11	6	14
E	38	18	12	31
F	42	30	11	16
IRL	54	14	8	24
I	36	23	17	24
L	64	18	6	12
NL	47	27	16	11
A	64	17	6	13
P	54	17	6	24
FIN	55	27	10	8
S	54	22	14	10
UK	43	19	10	28
EU15	45	24	12	20

This question, which to be answered effectively would seem to require more than a rudimentary knowledge of EU matters, generated a high level of 'don't knows' averaging 20% across the EU. In fact, in the UK and Spain, figures of 28% and 31% respectively were noted.

Overall, however, 45% of EU15 citizens were in favour of retaining this individual right of veto in its totality compared with 41% six months before. Figures as high as 70% were observed in Greece and figures of 64% in Luxembourg and Austria. The UK figure, at 43%, is slightly below the EU15 average but still up by three percentage points from EB60.

A quarter (24%) of EU15 citizens (with contributory figures of 29% in Germany and 30% in France) felt that the veto should be limited to a very few essential areas and this view was also held by 19% of the UK poll. The UK and EU15 figures are very similar to those in autumn 2003.

Only 12% of EU15 citizens believed that the right of veto should be totally given up to make the EU more efficient.

Q. 34. The draft European Constitution sets new rules for majority voting within the European Union Council of Ministers. Which of the following are you most in favour of?

- 1. Each Member State should have one vote, regardless of its population size. [One vote]**
- 2. The number of votes per Member State should be proportional to its population size. [Number of votes proportional]**
- 3. Another solution should be found. [Another solution]**

	One vote (in %)	Number of votes proportional (in %)	Another solution (in %)	Don't know (in %)
B	48	26	9	17
DK	72	16	5	7
D - West	29	56	5	10
D - Total	32	53	5	11
D - East	42	41	5	11
GR	55	23	7	15
E	42	28	8	23
F	41	35	7	18
IRL	60	17	4	19
I	45	30	9	17
L	65	20	7	8
NL	53	31	10	7
A	63	17	9	11
P	55	22	4	20
FIN	76	18	3	3
S	68	21	7	4
UK	41	25	8	25
EU15	43	34	7	16

There was a clear preference for the option that each Member State should have one vote regardless of its population size. This option gained the support of 43% of EU15 citizens compared with the next most cited option (number of votes proportional to population), which attracted 34% of EU15 respondents.

In fact, only one country- Germany - had more support for the 'proportional' option with figures of 53% and 32%.

The UK, once again, had a high level of 'don't knows' as 25% but was in line with the general EU15 attitude with 41% of those polled supporting the 'one vote' concept compared with just 25% supporting the 'proportional' option.

II.4. Trust levels

In this part of Eurobarometer 61, levels of trust are analysed in two specific areas.

The first (covered by question 7) looks at the establishment within Member State and assesses the trust level that people have in organisations such as the police, the army, the judiciary and the media by broad categories such as radio, press, etc.

Respondents were then asked which bodies and institutions they trusted.

The press

Country analysis

	EU15 (in %)	UK (in %)	High
Trust	46	20	61% Spain
Don't trust	47	73	73% UK
Don't know	7	7	11% Portugal

The level of trust that UK citizens have of the press is startlingly low at 20%, although up from the 17% in October 2003. This figure is less than half the EU15 average of 46% (44% in October 2003) and less than a third of that in Spain, where the figure reaches 61%.

Another interesting factor is that the UK poll is definite in its lack of trust in the press and the 'don't know' factor is the lowest of all these fifteen instances. The 'don't trust' figure in the UK therefore emerges at 73% - nearly three out of four citizens.

Radio

Country analysis

	EU15 (in %)	UK (in %)	High
Trust	63	59	80% Finland
Don't trust	28	29	39% Greece
Don't know	9	13	15% Italy

Radio had a relatively high level of trust across the Union and 59% of the UK poll trusted radio – a figure not far removed from the EU15 average of 63%.

These figures are virtually unchanged since autumn 2003.

Television

Country analysis

	EU15 (in %)	UK (in %)	High
Trust	54	54	74% Ireland
Don't trust	40	37	54% Italy
Don't know	6	9	9% Italy, UK

The UK and EU15 averages for people trusting in television are the same at 54% and both sets of figures are unchanged since October 2003.

Political parties

Country analysis

	EU15 (in %)	UK (in %)	High
Trust	16	10	32% Denmark
Don't trust	76	78	81% Germany
Don't know	9	12	14% Luxembourg

Across the Union, more than three-quarters of those polled did not trust political parties and this produces figures of 76% for the EU15, 78% for the UK and 81% in Germany.

These figures are virtually unchanged since Eurobarometer 60 in autumn 2003.

National government

Country analysis

	EU15 (in %)	UK (in %)	High
Trust	30	19	61% Luxembourg
Don't trust	61	69	69% UK
Don't know	9	12	12% UK

61% of EU15 citizens said that they did not trust their government, with the highest constituent figure of 69% being recorded in the UK. These figures are both one-percentage point higher than those noted in the previous October.

In fact, in the UK, the increase in the 'don't know' factor from 9% to 12% is mirrored by a significant fall in the trust factor from 24% to 19%.

The European Union

Country analysis

	EU15 (in %)	UK (in %)	High
Trust	41	19	68% Greece
Don't trust	42	55	65% Sweden
Don't know	17	26	26% UK

The European Union has the notable distinction of being trusted on average by more EU15 citizens than trusted either their national governments or national parliaments.

However, the 'don't trust' figure at 42% is still marginally greater than the 41% trust figure and there is a 'don't know' factor of 17%.

These figures are all unchanged since October 2003.

Lack of knowledge of matters European is reflected in the fact that one in four (26%) of the UK poll were unable to answer this question.

Accordingly, while the 'don't trust' figure at 55% is smaller than comparative UK figures relating to the government and parliament, the 'trust' factor is very small at just 19% - less than a third of the 68% 'trust' factor accorded to the European Union by the Greek poll.

Over the past six months, the UK's 'don't know' factor has increased from 22% to 26%, while the 'trust' factor has slipped marginally from 20% to 19% and the 'don't trust' from 58% to 55%.

European Commission

	EU15 (in %)	UK (in %)	High
Trust	47	26	Luxembourg 66%
Don't trust	29	39	UK/Sweden 39%
Don't know	23	35	UK 35%

Barely a quarter of the UK poll (26%) trusted the European Commission and this figure is the same as it was in autumn 2003, while the EU15 average has increased by one percentage point from 46%.

The UK also had exceptionally 'don't know' figures of 35% (an increase from 30% over the previous six months).