



Flash Eurobarometer 361

CHEMICALS

SUMMARY

Fieldwork: October 2012

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This survey has been requested by the European Commission, Directorate-General Enterprise and industry and co-ordinated by Directorate-General for Communication.

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.

Flash Eurobarometer 361 - TNS Political & Social

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Chemicals

Conducted by TNS Political & Social at the request of
the European Commission,
Directorate-General Enterprise and industry

Survey co-ordinated by the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Communication
(DG COMM "Research and Speechwriting" Unit)

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INTRODUCTION

The chemicals industry is one of the largest industrial sectors in Europe and contributes to all branches of the EU economy. Although its total production value of €449 billion in 2010 represents a decrease as a result of the financial crisis, it is still a very important source of both direct and indirect employment in many regions of the EU.

Its outputs are categorised in five types of products: Petrochemicals, Basic Inorganics, Polymers, Specialities and Consumer Chemicals, which are used in three key sectors: basic chemicals which are sold within the chemical industry itself or to other industries; speciality chemicals such as paints and inks, crop protection, dyes and pigments; consumer chemicals which are sold mainly to final consumers and include soaps and detergents, perfumes and cosmetics.

The European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), an EU agency, was established in June 2007 to address increasing concerns that the existing regulatory framework did not provide sufficient protection for workers, consumers, citizens' health and the environment. The ECHA is responsible for the technical, scientific and administrative aspects of Regulation 1907/2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals (REACH).

REACH aims to ensure a high level of protection of human health and the environment from the risks that can be posed by chemicals and applies to all categories of chemical substances manufactured, imported, used as intermediates or placed on the market unless explicitly exempted. It is built on the principle that producers and importers should take responsibility for managing chemical risks and have to prove that their substances are safe before they can be placed on the market. Another key characteristic of the legislation is the Precautionary Principle to ensure risk prevention and prevent damage to human health and the environment.

Finally, REACH aims to increase consumer and investor confidence, as well as employee and community trust therefore creating a more positive business environment and a more competitive, innovative, and economically sustainable chemical industry.¹

¹ Sources of information for Introduction:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/chemicals/documents/reach/review2012/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/chemicals/files/reach/review2012/market-final-report_en.pdf

Purpose of the Flash Eurobarometer survey on Chemicals

This survey will contribute to the Commission's 2012 Review of REACH, providing information on the general public's perception and understanding of chemical substances, as well as attitudes towards their safety and awareness of regulations.

This research reports on the following:

- Public perceptions of which domestic products may contain chemical substances
- Public activity regards checking chemical ingredients are contained in domestic products, either for health or environmental reasons, prior to purchase
- Projected public behaviours towards new products if they contained new chemical substances
- Attitudes towards the safety of chemical substances within products manufactured both within and outside of the EU
- Public perception of the safety of chemical substances on the EU market today relative to how they were viewed ten years ago
- Attitudes towards the testing of new chemical substances
- Attitudes towards the role new chemical substances can play in relation to both industrial innovation and how they interact with the environment
- Perceptions of who/what is currently responsible for the safety of chemical in the EU and who/what ought to be responsible for such activity

Methodological note on the survey

The interviews were carried out by telephone (fixed-line and mobile phone) between 1-4 October 2012 with nationally representative samples of EU citizens (aged 15 and older) living in the 27 Member States. The target sample size in most countries was 1,000 interviews; in total, 25,557 interviews were conducted. Statistical results were weighted to correct for known demographic discrepancies. More details on the survey methodology can be found in the annex to this report.

In this report, the countries are represented by their official abbreviations. The abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

ABBREVIATIONS

EU27	European Union – 27 Member States
EU15	BE, IT, FR, DE, LU, NL, DK, UK, IE, PT, ES, EL, AT, SE, FI*
NMS12	BG, CZ, EE, CY, LT, LV, MT, HU, PL, RO, SL, SK**
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
CY	Republic of Cyprus
LT	Lithuania
LV	Latvia
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	The Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	The United Kingdom

* EU15 refers to the 15 countries forming the European Union before the enlargements of 2004 and 2007: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

** The NMS12 are the 12 'new Member States' which joined the European Union during the 2004 and 2007 enlargements. These are Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, the Republic of Cyprus, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia.

The Eurobarometer web site can be consulted at the following address:

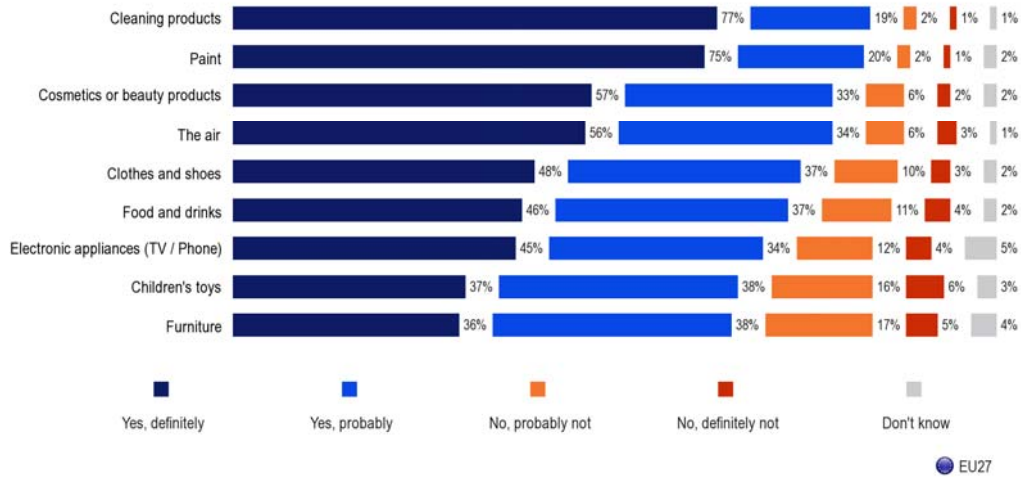
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

*We would like to take the opportunity to thank all the respondents across the continent
who gave their time to take part in this survey.*

Without their active participation, this study would simply not have been possible.

I. AWARENESS OF CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES IN EVERYDAY ITEMS

Q1. Do you think that you can find chemical substances in the following...?

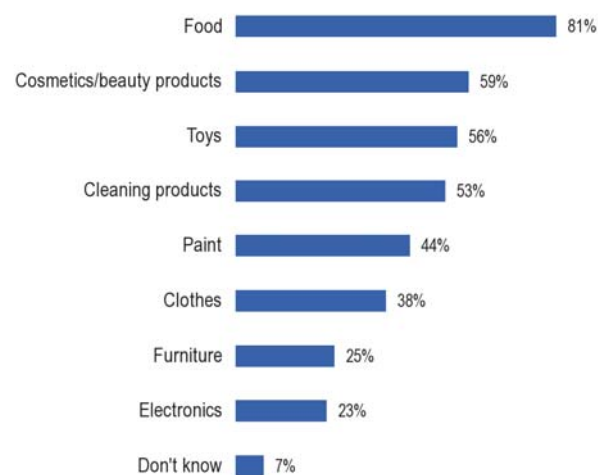


More than nine in ten respondents say that, in their opinion, cleaning products and paint contain chemical substances (96% and 95% respectively) with three-quarters or more saying that they definitely believe this (77% and 75% respectively).

Nine in ten also say that cosmetics or beauty products and the air contain chemicals, with more than half (57% and 56% respectively) expressing certainty on this issue.

Slightly fewer think that chemicals are present in clothes and shoes (85%), as well as in food and drinks (83%), while fewer than four in five mention electronic appliances (79%), children's toys (75%) and furniture (74%).

Q2. Which of the following products do you or would you check the ingredients or composition of before purchasing – for example for health reasons or to protect the environment?



EU27

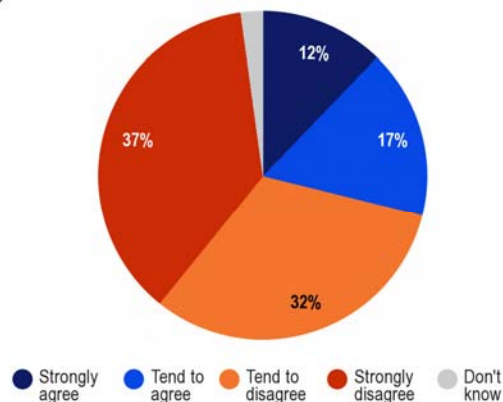
Food is the product that respondents are most likely to check, with a large majority (81%) saying that they look at the ingredients before buying. This is followed by cosmetics/beauty products, toys and cleaning products which were all mentioned by more than half of respondents (59%, 56% and 53% respectively). Fewer say that they check paint, clothes, furniture and electronics (44%, 38%, 25% and 23% respectively).

II. ATTITUDES TOWARDS CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES

--69% of Europeans disagree that it is possible to completely eliminate chemical substances from daily life--

Q6.1. Do you agree or not with each of the following statements?

It is possible to completely eliminate chemical substances from our daily life



EU27

Seven in ten (69%) respondents say that it is not possible to completely eliminate chemical substances from our daily life while 29% say that it is possible to do so.

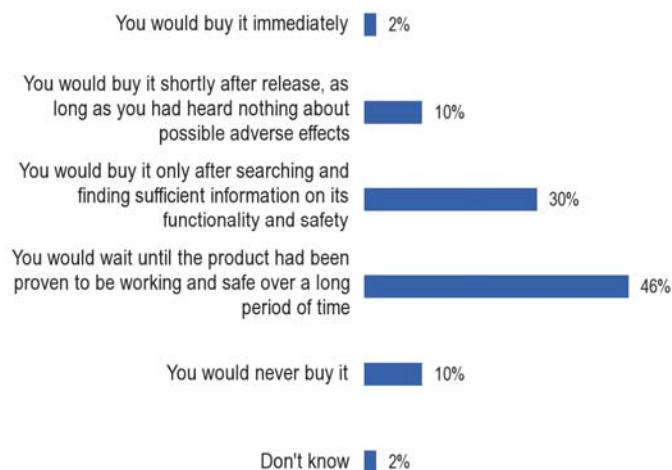
Approximately three in five (58%) of respondents agree that new chemical substances can help in reducing the use of natural resources, but a third (34%) disagree with this statement.

Opinion was divided regarding how new chemical substances can help in contributing to a better environment as although 43% of respondents agree that new chemical substances can help in this way, 52% of respondents disagree that they can help.

When asked to what extent respondents agree that new chemical substances are involved in most industrial innovations, three quarters (75%) of Europeans agree that they are involved.

-46% of Europeans would wait until a newly launched product containing new chemical substances had been proven to be working and safe over a long period of time before buying it–

Q3. Imagine that you are interested in a newly launched product containing new chemical substances. Which of the following statements best describes what you would do?

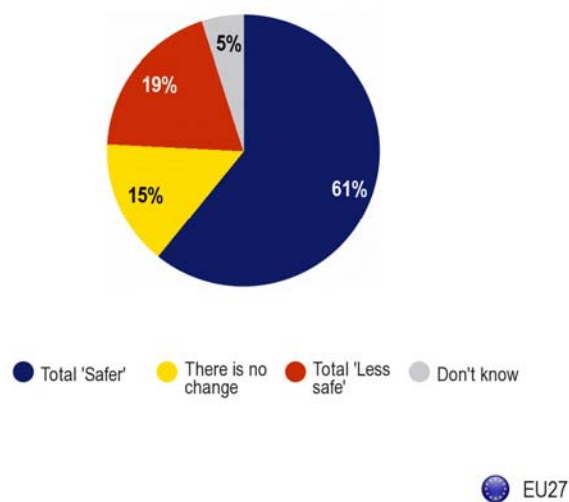


EU27

Europeans would react to a newly launched product containing new chemical substances in a range of ways: 10% would never buy it, 46% would wait until it had been proven to be working and safe over a long period of time before they would buy it, 30% say they would buy it only after searching and finding sufficient information on its functionality and safety, 10% say they would buy it shortly after release as long as they had heard nothing about possible adverse effects, and 2% say they would buy such a product immediately.

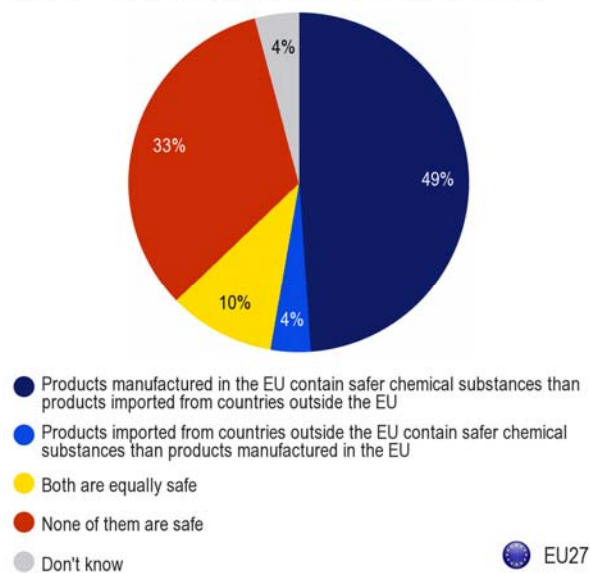
III. CONSUMER VIEW ON THE SAFETY OF CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES IN THE EU

Q5. Would you say that the chemical substances on the EU market today are safer or less safe than they were 10 years ago?



Three in five (61%) of Europeans say that the chemical substances on the EU market today are safer than they were 10 years ago. One in five (19%) say that they are less safe and 15% say that there has been no change in the level of safety over the last decade.

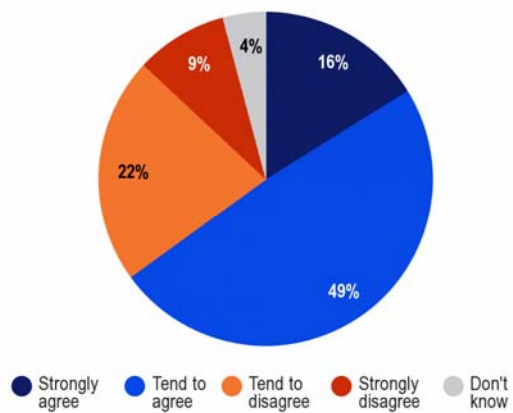
Q4. Which of the following statements best reflects your opinion...?



Half (49%) of Europeans think that EU manufactured products containing chemical substances are safer compared to those imported from outside the EU but a third (33%) say none of them are safe.

Q6.5. Do you agree or not with each of the following statements?

In the EU, any products containing new chemical substances have been properly tested

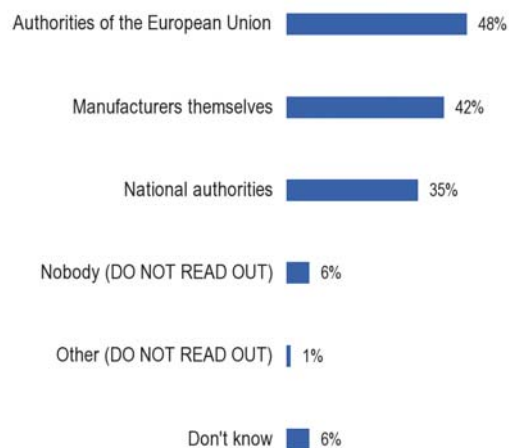


 EU27

Two thirds (65%) of Europeans agree that in the EU, products containing new chemical substances have been properly tested although three in ten (31%) of Europeans disagree that this is the case.

IV. CONSUMER VIEW ON RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING THE SAFETY OF CHEMICAL SUBSTANCES IN THE EU

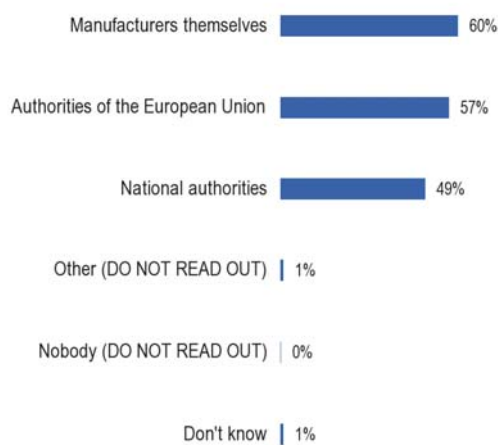
Q7. Today, in the EU, do you think that the safety of chemical substances is ensured by...?



EU27

Views are divided on who currently has responsibility for ensuring the safety of chemical substances: 48% think that the authorities of the European Union hold that power, 42% think it is currently carried out by the manufacturers themselves and a third (35%) think it is carried out by the national authorities.

Q8. And who do you think should be responsible for ensuring the safety of chemical substances on the EU market?



 EU27

When asked to state who Europeans think should ensure the safety of chemical substances on the EU market, aggregate results for the 27 Member States show that three fifths (60%) think that the manufacturers themselves should have that role. Slightly fewer (57%) say that it should be done by the authorities of the European Union whilst around a half (49%) say that the national authorities should ensure the safety of chemical substances in the EU.

ANNEXES



FLASH EUROBAROMETER 361

“Chemicals”

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Between the 1 and the 4 of October 2012, TNS Political & Social, a consortium created between TNS political & social, TNS UK and TNS opinion, carried out the survey FLASH EUROBAROMETER 361 about “Chemicals”.

This survey has been requested by the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General Enterprise and industry. It is a general public survey co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication (“Research and Speechwriting” Unit). The FLASH EUROBAROMETER 361 covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, resident in each of the 27 Member States and aged 15 years and over. All interviews were carried using the TNS e-Call center (our centralized CATI system). In every country respondents were called both on fixed lines and mobile phones. The basic sample design applied in all states is multi-stage random (probability). In each household, the respondent was drawn at random following the “last birthday rule”.

TNS has developed its own RDD sample generation capabilities based on using contact telephone numbers from responders to random probability or random location face to face surveys, such as Eurobarometer, as seed numbers. The approach works because the seed number identifies a working block of telephone numbers and reduces the volume of numbers generated that will be ineffective. The seed numbers are stratified by NUTS2 region and urbanisation to approximate a geographically representative sample. From each seed number the required sample of numbers are generated by randomly replacing the last two digits. The sample is then screened against business databases in order to exclude as many of these numbers as possible before going into field. This approach is consistent across all countries.

A comparison between the sample and the universe was carried out. The Universe description was derived from the national statistics office. The weighting procedure, using marginal and intercellular weighting, was carried out based on this Universe description. Gender, age, region, social class and the vote in the referendum on the Stability Treaty were introduced in the iteration procedure.

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

**Statistical Margins due to the sampling process
(at the 95% level of confidence)**

various sample sizes are in rows

various observed results are in columns

	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	
N=50	6,0	8,3	9,9	11,1	12,0	12,7	13,2	13,6	13,8	13,9	N=50
N=500	1,9	2,6	3,1	3,5	3,8	4,0	4,2	4,3	4,4	4,4	N=500
N=1000	1,4	1,9	2,2	2,5	2,7	2,8	3,0	3,0	3,1	3,1	N=1000
N=1500	1,1	1,5	1,8	2,0	2,2	2,3	2,4	2,5	2,5	2,5	N=1500
N=2000	1,0	1,3	1,6	1,8	1,9	2,0	2,1	2,1	2,2	2,2	N=2000
N=3000	0,8	1,1	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,6	1,7	1,8	1,8	1,8	N=3000
N=4000	0,7	0,9	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	N=4000
N=5000	0,6	0,8	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,3	1,4	1,4	1,4	N=5000
N=6000	0,6	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,3	1,3	N=6000
N=7000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,2	1,2	N=7000
N=7500	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=7500
N=8000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=8000
N=9000	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=9000
N=10000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=10000
N=11000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=11000
N=12000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=12000
N=13000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	N=13000
N=14000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=14000
N=15000	0,3	0,5	0,6	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=15000
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	

ABBR.	COUNTRIES	INSTITUTES	N° INTERVIEWS	FIELDWORK DATES		POPULATION 15+
BE	Belgium	TNS Dimarso	1.007	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	8.939.546
BG	Bulgaria	TNS BBSS	1.006	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	6.537.510
CZ	Czech Rep.	TNS Aisa s.r.o	1.000	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	9.012.443
DK	Denmark	TNS Gallup A/S	1.004	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	4.561.264
DE	Germany	TNS Infratest	1000	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	64.409.146
EE	Estonia	TNS Emor	1.000	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	945.733
EL	Greece	TNS ICAP	1.000	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	8.693.566
ES	Spain	TNS Demoscopia S.A	1.003	1/10/2012	4/10/2012	39.035.867
FR	France	TNS Sofres	1.002	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	47.756.439
IE	Ireland	IMS Millward Brown	1.000	1/10/2012	4/10/2012	3.522.000
IT	Italy	TNS Infratest	1.000	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	51.862.391
CY	Rep. of Cyprus	CYMAR	501	2/10/2012	3/10/2012	660.400
LV	Latvia	TNS Latvia	1.001	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	1.447.866
LT	Lithuania	TNS LT	1.000	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	2.829.740
LU	Luxembourg	TNS Dimarso	506	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	404.907
HU	Hungary	TNS Hoffmann Kft	1.003	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	8.320.614
MT	Malta	MISCO International Ltd	500	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	335.476
NL	Netherlands	TNS NIPO	1.003	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	13.371.980
AT	Austria	TNS Austria	1.002	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	7.009.827
PL	Poland	TNS OBOP	1.000	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	32.413.735
PT	Portugal	TNS EUROTESTE	1.000	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	8.080.915
RO	Romania	TNS CSOP	1.005	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	18.246.731
SI	Slovenia	RM PLUS	1.001	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	1.759.701
SK	Slovakia	TNS AISA Slovakia	1.000	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	4.549.955
FI	Finland	TNS Gallup Oy	1.011	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	4.440.004
SE	Sweden	TNS SIFO	1.000	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	7.791.240
UK	United Kingdom	TNS UK	1.002	1/10/2012	3/10/2012	51.848.010
TOTAL EU27			25.557	1/10/2012	4/10/2012	408.787.006