

## Pollwatch™: European Briefing

- **United Kingdom** – Cameron's Conservatives lead by 17%
- **Czech Republic** – Tight race between Social Democrats and ODS
- **France** – 53% of French call Sarkozy a good President
- **Germany** – Merkel on brink of re-election
- **Greece** – Socialists and New Democracy tied
- **Hungary** – Centre-right Fidesz trounce opponents by 48% margin
- **Italy** – Berlusconi drops but maintains 12% lead
- **Lithuania** – 85% approve of President Grybauskaite
- **Macedonia** – National Unity Party ahead, yet many undecided
- **Moldova** – Communist Party most popular choice
- **Netherlands** – Christian Democrats and Freedom Party deadlocked
- **Norway** – Close race expected in 14<sup>th</sup> September poll
- **Romania** – President Basescu leads narrowly in race for re-election
- **Russian Federation** – Putin's United Russia crushes all opposition
- **Slovakia** – Prime Minister Fico's SMER dominates
- **Slovenia** – SDS and SD deadlocked with most voters undecided
- **Spain** – Political stalemate continues
- **Sweden** – Leftist coalition has upper hand over Reinfeldt's conservatives
- **Turkey** – Three fifths satisfied with Erdogan's performance
- **Ukraine** – Yanukovich the most popular choice for President

## INTRODUCTION

Following the European Parliament election in June, and over the summer shutdown months, fewer polls have published. Nonetheless there are some notable political hotspots emerging this Autumn – in particular the Irish Referendum on 2 October and the German Federal Election on 27 September.

We hope you find this interesting. Please note that we compile from published sources so, if you don't find polling for a particular country, it is probably because none has been published since our last bulletin.

**Andrew Hawkins**

Chief Executive, ComRes

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## United Kingdom

### National Political Opinion Poll

Conservative Party	41%
Labour Party	24%
Liberal Democrats	18%
Other	16%

At a general election this would translate into a CONSERVATIVE MAJORITY OF 124.

- The Tories are comfortably ahead among every age group and even among lower social groups C2 and DE.
- At 16%, 'others' remain high but only 1% are 'other others'.
- Only 50% of people who voted Labour in 2005 are 'absolutely certain' to vote now compared with 75% of 2005 Tory voters
- Only 66% of 2005 Labour voters intend to vote for that party now, and only 70% of 2005 Lib Dem voters intend to vote for that party
- By contrast 90% of 2005 Conservative voters intend to vote for that party now

### "All British forces should be withdrawn from Afghanistan as quickly as possible"

Agree	60% (64% in July)
Disagree	33% (33% in July)

As in July, more women than men agree. Also as in July, there is a direct correlation between social group and support with lower social groups most strongly agreeing.

### "A High Pay Commission should be set up to curb excessive pay and bonuses"

Agree	65%
Disagree	31%

Surprisingly there is little variance among different social groups. Even 63% of Tories agree compared with 66% of Labour voters and 75% of Lib Dems

### "The Conservatives have the right ideas about how to get Britain out of recession"

Agree	37% (Feb 35%, April 38%)
Disagree	48% (Feb 45%, April 49%)

The Tories have failed to boost their economic credibility so far during 2009 – leading to the question what happens if we now see proper economic recovery? Again there is remarkable little variance between different social groups. Less surprising is that 73% of Tory voters agree but only 13% of Labour and 19% of Lib Dems agree. Among people who refuse to say or don't know, 27% agree and 41% disagree – suggesting the Tory messages are not persuading people who are electorally promiscuous.

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## Czech Republic

### National Political Opinion Poll

Former Prime Minister Jiří Paroubek's Social Democrats continue to hold a narrow 4% lead over Mirek Topolánek's Civic Democrats.

The newly-formed Tradition Responsibility Prosperity 09 (TOP-09) list, a pro-European conservative party led by former Foreign Minister Karel Schwarzenberg, records the support of 7% of voters - enough to guarantee it representation in the Chamber of Deputies.

With both the Social Democrats and Civic Democrats holding the support of around a third of voters, either party will need to form a coalition in order to govern. Support for a 'leftist' coalition comprised of the Social Democrats, Communists and Greens stands at 49% while support for a centre-right coalition of the Civic Democrats, People's Party and TOP-09 stands at 46%.

A general election will be held in October 2009 to replace the Jan Fischer's interim government.

Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD)	35%
Civic Democratic Party (ODS)	31%
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM)	12%
Christian and Democratic Union - Czech People's Party	8%
TOP-09	7%
Green Party	2%

*Median*

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**France**

## “How would you describe Nicolas Sarkozy?”

Having struggled for months with poor approval ratings, a majority of French voters (53%) now believe him to be “a good President”. Sarkozy’s strong performance in this poll follows an impressive performance for his Union for a Popular Movement party at the 2009 European elections in which they increased their vote share by 11%.

A good President	53%
A bad President	38%
Not sure	9%

*VSD*



**Germany**

## National Political Opinion Poll

With little less than a month until voters go to the polls, Angela Merkel’s CDU/CSU party leads their centre-left SPD coalition partner by thirteen percentage points. Crucially for the CDU/CSU coalition, their preferred coalition partners the Free Democratic Party are polling at 15% - enough to guarantee Merkel the seats required to secure another four years in office without the need for an uncomfortable ‘grand coalition’.

It is noticeable, however, that recorded support for Merkel’s party stands little more than 1% higher than that it received at the 2005 Bundestag elections while support for the Social Democrats has declined by 11%. The chief beneficiaries of the decline in SPD support appear to be the Free Democrats and Green parties whose support has risen from 10% to 15% and 8% to 15% respectively. At 9%, support for former SDP leader Oskar Lafontaine’s far-left Linke party remains unchanged since 2005.

Christian Democrats/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU)	36%
Social Democrats (SPD)	23%
Free Democratic Party (FTP)	15%
Bundis 90/Die Grunen	13%
Linke	9%

*Infratest-Dimap*



## Greece

### National Political Opinion Poll

George Papandreou's Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) leads Prime Minister Kostas Karamanlis' New Democracy by 4%. Karamanlis, who won a narrow victory in the September 2007, will not have to call a general election until 2011.

Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	34%
New Democracy (ND)	30%
Communist Party of Greece (KKE)	8%
Coalition of the Radical Left (SYR)	7%
Ecologist Greens (OP)	4%
People's Orthodox Alarm (LAOS)	4%

*Metron*



## Hungary

### National Political Opinion Poll

Former Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz) holds a near-unassailable 48% lead over Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány's Socialist Party. A general election must take place by the spring of next year.

Orbán's party's continued strength comes in the wake of exceptionally strong European election results for his party – their 56% vote share being the highest recorded for any national political party since the first European elections were conducted in 1979.

At 9%, stated support for the controversial far-right Jobbik Party remains high yet is unlikely to illustrate the true depth of the party's support given their 15% vote share at the 2009 European elections.

Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz)	65%
Socialist Party	17%
Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary	9%
Hungarian Democratic Forum	3%
Alliance of Free Democrats	1%

*Tarki*



Italy

## National Political Opinion Poll

Despite being plagued by months of political scandals and high-profile revelations following the break-up of his marriage, Silvio Berlusconi's centre-right coalition continues to hold a convincing 12% lead over his fractured left-wing opposition.

Berlusconi's continued resilience follows strong European election results for his coalition, whose combined support far outpaced that of the Democratic Party and Antonio Di Pietro's Italy of Values list. With a comfortable working majority, it is unlikely that Berlusconi will call a general election until he is legally mandated to do so in 2013.

Berlusconi coalition - Italian People of Freedom Party (PdL) / Northern League (LN) / Movement for Autonomy (MPA)	49%
Democratic Party (PD) / Italy of Values (Lista di Pietro)	37%
Union of the Centre	7%
Left Rainbow	3%
Left and Freedom	2%

*Crespi Ricerche*



Lithuania

## How do you evaluate Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaite?

Following her landslide victory in the May Presidential election in which she received the support of 68% of voters, former European Commissioner Dalia Grybauskaite holds a favourability rating of 85%. Grybauskaite is arguably the most popular European – or probably global - head of state at present. The next Lithuanian Presidential election will be held in May 2014.

Favourable	85%
Unfavourable	3%

## How do you evaluate Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius?

In contrast, sworn into office in December 2008, Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius is viewed favourably by only 24% of Lithuanians with a majority (55%) describing their view of him as unfavourable. Kubilius' low favourability ratings is arguably greatly influenced by the ongoing economic crisis affecting Lithuania, recently culminating in the country's application for a crisis loan from the European Investment Bank.

Favourable	24%
Unfavourable	55%

*Vilmorus / Lietuvos Ritas*

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## Macedonia

### National Political Opinion Poll

Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski's Macedonian Revolutionary Organization & Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity leads their closest rivals, the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia, by 17%. First elected in August 2006, Gruevski's party was returned to office in June 2008 with 49% of the vote. It is noticeable that only 45% of those polled recorded an expressed preference for any one political party.

Macedonian Revolutionary Organization & Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity	26%
Social Democratic Union of Macedonia	9%
Democratic Union for Integration	7%
New Democracy	3%

*Institute for Democracy*



## Moldova

### National Political Opinion Poll

Despite widespread street protests following their her party's victory in the July legislative elections, President Vladimir Voronin's Communist Party continue to lead in Moldovan opinion polls, outpacing Vlad Filat's Liberal Party by 18%.

Since the July poll, support for the ruling Communists has dropped from 45% to 31% while the Liberal Democratic Party have similarly fallen from 17% to 7% of the recorded votes.

Communist Party of Moldova (PCRM)	31%
Liberal Party (PL)	13%
Democratic Party of Moldova (PDM)	10%
Liberal Democratic Party (PLD)	7%
Our Moldova (MN)	3%
Social-Democratic Party of Moldova (PSDM)	1%
Christian-Democratic People's Party (PPCD)	1%
Centrist Union of Moldova (CUM)	1%

*Institute of Public Policy*





## Netherlands

### National Political Opinion Poll

Following his party's narrow victory in the June European elections, Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende's Christian Democrat Appeal party has a projected one seat lead over Geert Wilders' far-right Party for Freedom in the Tweede Kamer.

The next election to the Tweede Kamer will be held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

Christian Democrat Appeal	31 seats
Party for Freedom / List Wilders	30 seats
Democrats 66	21 seats
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	17 seats
Labour Party	16 seats
Green Left	12 seats
Socialist Party	12 seats
Christian Union	6 seats
Party for the Animals	2 seats
Reformed Political Party	2 seats
Proud of the Netherlands	1 seat

*Maurice de Hond*



## Norway

### National Political Opinion Poll

With polling day fast approaching, Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg's governing Labour Party holds a 9% lead over the centre-right Progress Party. Support for Stoltenberg's coalition partners; the Socialist Left and Agrarian Parties totals 12%, placing the incumbent Prime Minister's coalition at 45%.

Support for a rumoured 'centre right' coalition between opposition leader Siv Jensen's Progress Party, the Conservatives and Christian People's Party stands at a combined 49% of the vote. It has, however, been widely reported that the proposed coalition has struggled to agree on a common political programme, thus increasing the likelihood of Stoltenberg's re-election as Prime Minister.

The general election will be held on 14<sup>th</sup> September.

Labour Party	33%
Progress Party	25%
Conservatives	17%
Socialist Left	7%
Christian People	7%
Liberal Left	5%
Agrarians	5%

*Norsk Respons / Aftenposten*

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## Should Norway join the European Union?

Half (49%) of Norwegian voters continue to oppose membership of the European Union. Failed referenda on the issue were held in the country in 1979 and 1994.

Yes	39%
No	49%
Undecided	13%

*Norstat*



## Romania

### Presidential Opinion Poll

Incumbent Traian Basescu (whose youngest daughter Elena was elected an independent candidate at the European elections in June) and Social Democrat Mircea Geoana have clearly established themselves as the strongest contenders for the November Presidential poll. National Liberal candidate Crin Antonescu trains in third place with less than half the support recorded for Basescu or Geoana.

*First*

*Round:*

Traian Basescu (PD-L)	33%
Mircea Geoana (PSD)	27%
Crin Antonescu (PNL)	13%
Sorin Oprescu	8%
Corneliu Vadim Tudor (PRM)	8%
Kelemen Hunor (UDMR)	3%
Prince Radu Duda	2%

*Run-Off:*

President Traian Basescu leads each of his competitors when voters are asked to express their preferences in a second round run-off. Mircea Geoana, the Social Democrat candidate, trails Basescu by only 2% while the incumbent would beat National Liberal candidate Crin Antonescu by 10%. Geoana would lead Antonescu by a powerful 17% margin.

Traian Basescu (PD-L)	46%
Mircea Geoana (PSD)	44%

Traian Basescu (PD-L)	49%
Crin Antonescu (PNL)	39%

Mircea Geoana (PSD)	52%
Crin Antonescu (PNL)	35%

*CURS*

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## Russian Federation

### National Political Opinion Poll

Former President and incumbent Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's United Russia party continues to dominate Russian politics, holding the support of almost three in five voters (57%). Indeed, Putin's party records almost eight times the support than that of Gennady Zyuganov's Communist Party which holds the stated support of 7% of voters.

United Russia	57%
Communist Party	7%
Liberal Democratic Party	4%
For a Just Russia	4%

*All-Russian Public Opinion Research Centre*



## Slovakia

### National Political Opinion Poll

Popular Prime Minister Robert Fico's centre-left Direction-Social Democracy Party (Smer) holds a 21% over its nearest political rival, the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union.

Smer's continued dominance in the opinion polls follows an impressive performance at the June European elections in which the party secured more than twice the support of its closest rival, the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union.

The next Slovakian general election will be held in middle of 2010.

Direction-Social Democracy (Smer)	48%
Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU)	15%
Slovak National Party (SNS)	12%
Christian Democratic Movement (KDH)	9%
Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK)	7%
People's Party - Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (LS-HZDS)	6%

*Median*



## Slovenia

### National Political Opinion Poll

Former Prime Minister Janez Janša's Slovenian Democratic Party is statistically tied with incumbent premier Borut Pahor's Social Democratic Party – the two parties being separated by two percentage points. It is noticeable, however, that combined support for Slovenian political parties stands at significantly below 50%.

Slovenia has long had a fractured party system, as witnessed in the June European elections where the two largest parties – the SDS and SD – received the support of less than 45% of voters.

The next Slovenian general election must be held by September 2012.

Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS)	21%
Social Democratic Party (SD)	19%
Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS)	6%
Slovenian National Party (SNS)	6%
For Real (Zares)	5%
Democratic Party of Retired People of Slovenia (DeSUS)	2%
Slovenian People's Party (SLS)	2%

*Delo*



## Spain

### National Political Opinion Poll

As has been commonplace throughout the past almost five years, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's Socialist Workers Party and Mariano Rajoy's opposition Partido Popular are statistically tied in national opinion polls. The closeness of the two political parties mirrors the results of the 2009 European elections in which the Partido Popular scored a narrow 4% victory following their 4% loss at the 2008 general election.

The next elections for the Cortes Generale must be held by March 2012.

Popular Party (PP)	40%
Socialist Workers Party (PSOE)	39%
United Left (IU) / Initiative for Catalonia-Greens (IC-V)	5%
Union, Progress and Democracy (UPyD)	3%
Convergence and Union (CiU)	3%
Republican Left of Catalonia (ERC)	1%
Basque Nationalist Party (PNV)	1%

*CIS*

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Sweden

## National Political Opinion Poll

Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt's centre-right coalition government which has held office since 2006 is trailing Social Democrat opposition leader Mona Sahlin's centre-left coalition by five percentage points (47% to 42%).

One of the most significant results of the European election campaign was the election of a Pirate Party MEP from Sweden. With the party continuing to record the support of 3% of voters, it appears possible that the party may repeat its success at the 2009 poll and achieve the threshold of 4% of the national vote required for parliamentary representation. The next elections to the Riksdag, which occur every four years, will be held on September 19<sup>th</sup> 2010.

Workers' Party/Social Democrats	30%
Moderate Rally	26%
Environmental Party/Greens	10%
People's Party Liberals	8%
Left Party	7%
Swedish Democrats	6%
Centre Party	5%
Christian Democrats	4%
Pirate Party	3%

*Demoskop / Expressen*



Turkey

## "Do you approve or disapprove of Recep Tayyip Erdogan's performance as Prime Minister?"

First elected in 2003, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan continues to receive the widespread support of the Turkish people with three in five voters (58%) approving of his performance. Prime Minister Erdogan's Justice and Development Party was re-elected at the 2007 general election. The next election will be held in 2011.

Approve	58%
Disapprove	38%



## Presidential Opinion Poll

Former Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, who lost a controversial second round run-off election in 2004 following widespread allegations of vote rigging, holds a clear fifteen percentage point lead over Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko in the Presidential election due to be held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

Incumbent President Viktor Yushchenko holds the stated support of only 6% of voters; less than half the total secured by former Foreign Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

Viktor Yanukovich	30%
Yulia Tymoshenko	15%
Arseniy Yatsenyuk	13%
Viktor Yushchenko	6%
Volodymyr Lytvyn	2%

*USS*

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