

Pollwatch™: European Polling Briefing

- **United Kingdom** – Conservatives with 13% lead over governing Labour
- **Croatia** – Two thirds support EU membership application
- **Czech Republic** – Narrow lead for Social Democrats, TOP-09 surges
- **Denmark** – Liberal Venstre and Social Democrats tied
- **Finland** – Top three parties tied for first place
- **Germany** – Merkel coalition coasting
- **Hungary** – Dominant Jobbik at 65%, 47% ahead of Socialists
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- **Lithuania** – President Grybauskaite approval rating at 87%
- **Macedonia** – Macedonian Unity Party ahead, many undecided
- **Netherlands** – Wilders' Freedom Party ahead, D66 gaining momentum
- **Poland** – Prime Minister Tusk's Civic Platform at 47%
- **Romania** – Basescu and Geoana too close to call in Presidential race
- **Russian Federation** – United Russia is the only show in town
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- **Sweden** – Leftist coalition ahead of centre-right government
- **Ukraine** – Yanukovich leads all challengers

INTRODUCTION

With this summer's European Elections just a distant memory and the Lisbon Treaty nearly ratified, our attention turns to domestic politics.

While some European leaders continue to enjoy poll ratings of a level that colleagues elsewhere can only dream of (see the stratospheric support for Fidesz in Hungary), others leaders such as the UK's Gordon Brown and Ukraine's Viktor Yushchenko look set for defeat in the next few months.

However, one of the most interesting battles to watch in 2010 will be in the Netherlands where support for Geert Wilders' Freedom Party has crept up to the point where he is a serious contender to be the next Prime Minister. Such a result would send shock waves throughout the entire continent.

Andrew Hawkins

Chief Executive, ComRes



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- Four times a year ComRes sends postal and online questionnaires to MEPs who have pre-agreed to take part in our surveys
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- These MEPs are representative of all political groups and European regions in the Parliament
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- We offer a full service package; this means that the price of a question on the ComRes MEPs panel includes help with designing the question, and a full analytical report which explains the results in context. All results are available 5 weeks after fieldwork begins
- We show how MEPs' views differ according to which European region or party group they represent, and according to their gender or age

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United Kingdom

National Political Opinion Poll

Opposition leader David Cameron's centre-right Conservatives lead Prime Minister Gordon Brown's Labour Party by thirteen percentage points. The next UK general election will likely take place in on 6 May 2010.

Conservative Party	40% (-)
Labour Party	27% (-1)
Liberal Democrats	18% (-1)
Other	15% (+2)

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Economic Downturn

- Opposition leader David Cameron and Shadow Chancellor (Finance Minister) George Osborne have the edge over Labour and the Lib Dems in terms of public confidence on the economy. Nearly one third of people (31%) think that George Osborne and David Cameron have the best ideas for tackling the banking crisis and the recession that followed. This compares to 27% of people who think the same for Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Chancellor Alistair Darling. People are more likely to say "none" of the political parties have shown they have the best ideas for tackling these issues (17% do so) than say Liberal Democrat Shadow Chancellor Vince Cable and Leader Nick Clegg have shown they have (12% of people nominate the Lib Dem team).
- However, Cameron and Osborne haven't made any ground since April 2009, when exactly the same percentage of people (31%) thought that they could be most trusted on the economy. Over the same period, there has been 4% drop in the percentage of people who think that Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling can be trusted the most on the economy (April 31%, October 27%).
- George Osborne and David Cameron lead Gordon Brown and Alistair Darling on this measure across all social groups apart from skilled manual workers (C1s) among whom it is nearly neck-and-neck on 27% for the Tories and 28% for the Labour team.

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Croatia

Do you support Croatia's application for European Union membership?

Championed by popular President "Stripe" Mesic, almost two thirds of Croatians are supportive of their country's bid for membership of the European Union. Fewer than a third oppose the bid.

Yes	65%
No	27%
Unsure	7%

Delo



Czech Republic

National Political Opinion Poll

Former Prime Minister Jiří Paroubek's Social Democratic Party (PES) continues to hold a narrow three point lead over Mirek Topolánek's Civic Democrats.

While support for the ODS has declined markedly since the last elections to the Chamber of Deputies in 2006, the Social Democrats have failed to capitalize effectively on this – remaining static at the 32% the party received in 2006. The single largest beneficiaries of Topolánek's party's decline appear to be Karel Schwarzenberg's newly-formed Tradition Responsibility Prosperity – 09 (TOP-09) list, a right-wing pro-European party formed out of parts of the Christian and Democratic Union. Curiously, base support for the Christian and Democratic Union has been unaffected by TOP-09's creation having declined in the polls by only 1% since 2006.

In achieving just over 6% of the vote at the 2006 legislative elections, the Green Party secured a place as a partner in Topolánek's coalition government - although with the support of only 3% of voters their electoral future now appears decidedly uncertain.

Originally scheduled to take place in October 2009, a ruling by the Czech Republic's Constitutional Court means that election to replace interim Prime Minister Jan Fischer will now take place in June 2010.

Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD)	32%
Civic Democratic Party (ODS)	29%
Tradition Responsibility Prosperity – 09 (TOP-09)	13%
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM)	12%
Christian and Democratic Union - Czech People's Party	6%
Green Party (SZ)	3%
Public Affairs	3%
Sovereignty	2%

CVVM



Denmark

National Political Opinion Poll

Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen's liberal Venstre Party leads Helle Thorning-Schmidt's Social Democratic party by a narrow 2%. Support for Denmark's two major parties remains largely unchanged since the 2007 general election in which Venstre received 26% of the vote to the Social Democrats' 25.5%. Since the last general election the largest increased in support is recorded for the Socialist People's Party whose support has increased from 13% to 19%.

Left Liberal Party of Denmark (Venstre)	26%
Social Democracy in Denmark	24%
Socialist People's Party	19%
Danish People's Party	14%
Conservative People's Party	10%
Radical Left-Social Liberal Party	5%
Unity List-The Red Greens	3%
New Alliance	1%
Christian Democrats	*

Catinét Research / Ritzau



Finland

National Political Opinion Poll

As has become common in Finnish politics over the past few years, the National Rally, Centre and Social Democratic Parties are effectively tied for first place – each polling around a fifth of the total vote. Centre Party leader and Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen has until March 2011 to call a general election.

National Rally	22%
Finnish Centre Party	20%
Social Democratic Party	20%
Green League	11%
Left Wing League	8%
True Finns	8%
Christian Democrats	4%
People's Party	4%

Suomen Gallup



Germany

National Political Opinion Poll

Following their comfortable election victory, Angela Merkel's coalition between her Christian Democrat/Christian Social Union and Guido Westerwelle's Free Democrats hold a convincing lead over their disparate leftist opponents.

Alarming for the Social Democrats, who secured a dramatic general election victory in 1998 with 40.9% of the vote, support for the party has halved in the period to the present day to just 21%. In the same period, support for the Green Party has increased from 6.7% to 11% while a comparison with the Linke's predecessor party, the Party of Democrat Socialism, shows the ultra-left party having increased its standing from 5.5% to 12% today.

Christian Democrats/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU)	38%
Socialist Party (SPD)	21%
Free Democratic Party (FTP)	14%
Linke	12%
Bundis 90/Die Grunen	11%

FG Wahlen



Hungary

National Political Opinion Poll

Fresh from securing the largest percentage of votes for any national political party in a member state since the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979 (56%), former Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz) (EPP) party appears headed for a landslide election victory over Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai's governing Socialist Party (PES).

Hungary appears likely to make a decided lurch to the right in its upcoming general election, handing the centre-right Fidesz and nationalist Jobbik (NI) parties a combined vote share of 77% in current polls. Stated support for Jobbik in particular has increased dramatically since the party's 15% vote at the 2009 European elections, prior to which no poll had ever estimated their support at over 8%. Jobbik and their controversial leader Gábor Vona can be expected to enter the *Országház* at the next Hungarian election.

Support for the Hungarian Democratic Forum (ECR) stands at 3%, some 2% lower than at the 2006 legislative elections. At 1%, support for the liberal Alliance of Free Democrats (ALDE) – who have traditionally polled strongly among Budapest's educated and wealthy middle classes – is negligible.

Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz)	65%
Socialist Party	18%
Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary	12%
Hungarian Democratic Forum	3%
Alliance of Free Democrats	1%

Tárki



Ireland

National Political Opinion Poll

The government of Prime Minister Brian Cowen, who took office eighteen months ago following the resignation of Bertie Ahern, is in serious difficulties, trailing opposition leader Enda Kenny's Fine Gael (EPP-ED) by ten percentage points.

Fianna Fáil's current opinion poll rating is the worst recorded for the party since opinion poll tracking began – and some seventeen points less than the 42% they secured at the 2007 general election. The governing party's decline has boosted both main opposition parties. Fine Gael is presently polling 8% higher than at the last general election and the third-place Labour Party has doubled its support from 10% in 2007 to 19% today.

Fine Gael (FG)	35%
Fianna Fáil (FF)	25%
Labour Party (Lab.)	19%
Sinn Fein (SF)	9%
Green Party (GP)	3%

Red C



Lithuania

Do you approve or disapprove with Dalia Grybauskaite's performance as President?

President Dalia Grybauskaite, elected to succeed Valdas Adamkus in July 2009, is establishing herself as Europe's most popular political leader with almost nine in ten Lithuanians approving of her job performance.

Approve	87%
Disapprove	3%

Do you approve or disapprove with Andrius Kubilius's performance as Prime Minister?

While President Grybauskaite enjoys almost universal approval from the Lithuanian public, the same cannot be said for Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius of the Homeland Union/Lithuanian Christian Democratic Party. Kubilius' approval rating stands at 23% with more than half of Lithuanians disapproving.

Approve	23%
Disapprove	51%

Vilmorus



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 21%. First elected in August 2006, Gruevski's party was returned to office in June 2008 with 49% of the vote.

Revolutionary Organization & Macedonian National Unity	32%
Social Democratic Union	11%
Democratic Integration Union	10%
New Democracy	3%
United Macedonia	1%

International Republican Institute



Netherlands

National Political Opinion Poll

The Freedom Party has a narrow lead over both the Democrats 66 and Prime Minister Jan Balkenende's Christian Democrat Appeal party. If a general election were held today, Wilders would be Prime Minister.

At the last election to the Tweede Kamer, Christian Democrat Appeal secured 41 seats but would fall to 25 if a general election were held today. A similar fall is recorded for the Socialist Party whose seat share would decline from 25 seats to 15 while the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy would drop from 22 seats to 16.

Freedom Party	<i>29 seats</i>
Democrats 66	<i>26 seats</i>
Christian Democrat Appeal	<i>25 seats</i>
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	<i>16 seats</i>
Socialist Party of the Netherlands	<i>15 seats</i>
Labour Party	<i>14 seats</i>
Green Left	<i>13 seats</i>
Christian Union	<i>6 seats</i>
Animals Party	<i>3 seats</i>
Reformed Political Party	<i>2 seats</i>
Proud of the Netherlands	<i>1 seats</i>

Maurice de Hond

NB: Available polling data is only published on the basis of projected seat numbers in the Dutch Parliament, the Tweede Kamer.



Poland

National Political Opinion Poll

Following their seventeen-point victory in the 2009 European elections, Prime Minister Donald Tusk's centre-right Civic Platform (EPP) holds a convincing 20% lead over President Lech Kaczyński's Law and Justice Party (ECR). Support for the two right-wing parties totals over 75% with the leftist Democratic Alliance headed by Grzegorz Napieralski getting support from only one in ten voters.

These figures represent a considerable shift towards Donald Tusk's party since the 2007 *Sejm* election, the ruling party's standing increasing six points from the last general election with support for the Law and Justice Party declining by four points.

The next Polish general election is due to take place in 2011.

Civic Platform	48%
Law and Justice	28%
Democratic Alliance	10%
Peasant Party	6%

PBS DGA



Romania

Presidential Election – First Round

Incumbent President and former Bucharest Mayor Traian Basescu holds a narrow 4% lead over Social Democratic Party leader Mircea Geoana in the first round of the Romanian Presidential election.

When support for other candidates – notably Liberal leader Crin Antonescu and Bucharest Mayor Sorin Oprescu – is redistributed in the second round, Geoana holds a 2% lead.

Traian Basescu (Independent)	33%
Mircea Geoana (Social Democrat)	29%
Crin Antonescu (Liberal)	15%
Sorin Oprescu (Independent)	8%

Corneliu Vadim Tudor (Greater Romania)	6%
Gigi Becali (Independent)	5%
Kelemen Hunor (Hungarians in Romania)	4%

Presidential Election – Second Round Run-Off

Mircea Geoana (Social Democrat)	51%
Traian Basescu (Independent)	49%

INSOMAR



Russian Federation

National Poll

Vladimir Putin's United Russia Party continues to be the only serious force in Russian politics, holding a near fifty point lead over the Communist Party.

United Russia	56%
Communist Alliance	7%
Liberal Democratic Party	6%
A Just Russia	4%

All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center



Slovakia

National Poll

Prime Minister Robert Fico's centre-left Direction-Social Democracy Party (Smer) leads opposition leader Mikuláš Dzurinda's 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)	39%
Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU)	14%
Christian Democrats	9%
Slovak National Party (SNS)	8%
People's Party - Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (LS-HZDS)	6%

MOST-HID	5%
Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK)	5%

Focus



Sweden

National 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 three percentage points (49% to 45%).

The next elections to the Riksdag, which occur every four years, will be held on September 19th 2010.

Social Democrats	34%
Moderate Rally	30%
Green Party	8%
Left Party	7%
People's Party/Liberals	6%
Centre Party	5%
Christian Democrats	5%
Swedish Democrats	4%

Synovate



Ukraine

Which candidate will you vote for in the next Presidential election?

Five years after coming to power in an international blaze of glory following the dramatic 'Orange Revolution' election President Viktor Yushchenko now appears headed for a humiliating defeat in the Ukraine's forthcoming Presidential election. Only 2% of Ukrainians intend to vote for the incumbent President, while 27% state support for Viktor Yanukovych, the man he defeated in a second round run-off in 2004 Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko trails Yanukovych in second place with the support of 16% of voters.

Viktor Yanukovych	27%
Yulia Tymoshenko	16%
Arseniy Yatsenyuk	9%
Petro Symonenko	4%
Viktor Yushchenko	2%
Sergiy Tygypko	2%

Volodymyr Lytvyn	1%
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