

## Pollwatch™: European Briefing

- **United Kingdom** – Cameron's Conservatives lead by 15%
- **Bulgaria** – Pro-European GERB party narrowly ahead
- **Czech Republic** – Socialists lead but government support rises
- **Denmark** – Liberals and Socialists tied, attitudes towards Euro divided
- **Estonia** – Reform and Centre parties tied
- **Finland** – Centre-right National Rally lead by 3%
- **France** – Citizens express lack of confidence in Sarkozy and Fillon
- **Germany** – Merkel's preferred coalition at 52%
- **Greece** – Socialist PASOK party lead government by 4%
- **Hungary** – Opposition Fidesz hold near unassailable lead
- **Ireland** – 58% back Lisbon Treaty ratification,
- **Poland** – Tusk's Civic Democrats ahead by 26%
- **Portugal** – Socialist government in the lead by 15%
- **Slovakia** – Prime Minister Fico's SMER at 49%
- **Slovenia** – Nearly half opposed to Croatian accession
- **Sweden** – Centre-right government trails leftist opposition

### INTRODUCTION

We received a good deal of very positive reaction to our first European Briefing last month and hope that readers will continue to find it valuable.

Please feel free to pass the bulletin on to colleagues, and do let us know how we can make it even more useful.

Finally, please be in touch directly if we can be of assistance with European, national or local research or polling.

With best wishes,

Andrew Hawkins  
Chief Executive, ComRes



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## United Kingdom

### National Political Opinion Poll

Conservative Party	41%
Labour Party	25%
Liberal Democrats	22%
Other	12%

David Cameron's centre-right Conservative Party which has been out of power since Tony Blair's landslide election victory in 1997 holds a commanding 15% lead over Prime Minister Gordon Brown's Labour Party.

The three-point gap between the governing Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats, the UK's third-party, is at its narrowest since 2003.

**"There should be a legal limit on pay in banks that have been bailed out with public money"**

Agree	84%
Disagree	13%

**"The top people in banks that were bailed out should be required by law to give back their bonuses"**

Agree	82%
Disagree	16%

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

Agree	35%
Disagree	45%

Importantly for the Conservatives, 45% of those who don't know or refuse to say how they would vote disagree with this statement, and a further 37% don't know, suggesting that they have yet to convince the many undecided voters that they would do a better job on the biggest political issue of the day.

*ComRes telephoned 1002 GB adults on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> February 2009. Data were weighted by past vote recall. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Full tables at [www.comres.co.uk](http://www.comres.co.uk).*



## Bulgaria

### National Political Opinion Poll

Only launched in December 2006, Sofia Mayor Boyko Borissov's Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB) party holds a 4% lead over Prime Minister Sergei Dmitrievich Stanishev's Socialists.

GERB, a strongly pro-European party, secured first place in Bulgaria's inaugural European Parliament elections in 2007 and appears to be in a strong position to repeat its success in June. Support for the nationalist Ataka Party, which received 14% of the vote and elected three MEPs in 2007, has declined to 6% meaning that the party will struggle to retain its seats in Brussels.

Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB)	24%
Bulgarian Socialist Party	20%
Turkish Movement for Rights and Freedoms	8%
Ataka	6%
United Democratic Forces	3%
Democrats for Strong Bulgaria	2%
National Movement for Stability and Progress	1%

*BBSS Gallup International*

### "Do you approve of Bulgaria's accession to European Union membership?"

Approve	77%
Do not approve	23%

*National Center for Study of Public Opinion*



## Czech Republic

### National Political Opinion Poll

The Czech EU Presidency has marked somewhat of a renaissance for embattled Prime Minister Mirek Topolanek's coalition government, cutting Social Democrat former Prime Minister Jiří Paroubek's lead from 6% in January to 4%.

From the position of analyzing the likely outcome of the European elections, however, the usefulness of this poll is highly debatable.

While it is clear that the Social Democrats will improve dramatically upon their woefully poor performance in the 2004 European elections, where they secured only two of the country's twenty-four seats and were outpolled by the Communist Party, the poll does not take into the account the possible impact of several Eurosceptic parties which will contest the June poll.

The most significant challenge is likely to come from the sharply-Eurosceptic President Vaclav Klaus who parted company with the ODS earlier this year. Klaus' endorsement of the Free Citizen's Party is likely to be enough to secure the European parliamentary representation. Lesser Eurosceptic challenges are expected from businessman Vladimír Železný MEP (Ind/Dem) who intends to stand under the Libertas banner and controversial former television presenter Jana Bobošíková MEP (NI).

Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD)	35%
Civic Democratic Party (ODS)	31%
Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM)	14%
Christian and Democratic Union - Czech People's Party	7%
Green Party (SZ)	6%

*Median*



## Denmark

### National Political Opinion Poll

Socialist parties continue to dominate Danish politics, with Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen's Venstre and the Social Democrat Party in a statistical tie.

Venstre's support has increased from 6% from 2004 while Social Democrats support has declined from 32% to 24%. Support for the Danish People's Party, who have drawn criticism for their tough positions on immigration, is 9% higher than at the 2004 elections. The party may secure a second seat in June.

As with previous national opinion polls, figures do not take into account support for the Eurosceptic June Movement which has held a seat in the European Parliament since 1979 but does not contest domestic elections. The June Movement received 9% of the vote in 2004 and their MEP Hanne Dahl, Co-President of the Ind/Dem group, will be seeking re-election.

Left Liberal Left Party of Denmark (Venstre)	25%
Social Democracy in Denmark	24%
Socialist People's Party	18%
Danish People's Party	15%
Conservative People's Party	10%
Radical Left-Social Liberal Party	4%
Unity List-The Red Greens	2%
New Alliance	*
Christian Democrats	*

*Catinét Research / Ritzau*

### "Do you support introducing the euro and replacing the Krone?"

Support	41%
Oppose	40%
Don't know	19%

*Capacent Epinion / Danske Bank*



## Estonia

### National Political Opinion Poll

After months of economic instability in which the government narrowly survived a vote of no confidence, the market-liberal Reform Party (ELDR) led by Prime Minister Andrus Ansip holds a narrow 2% lead over the Edgar Savisaar's Centre Party (ELDR).

Estonia, one of the smallest European Union member states, elects only six members to the European Parliament. At the 2004 elections, the Social Democrats (PES) topped the poll, securing three of these six seats and 37% of the national vote.

It is unlikely, given the Social Democrats' current 13% opinion poll rating that the party will win more than one seat and as such it is likely that both the Reform and Centre Parties will gain an MEP, giving ELDR parties two thirds of Estonia's seats in Brussels.

Reform Party	30%
Centre Party	28%
Social Democrats	13%
Union of Fatherland/Res Publica	12%
Greens	9%
People's Union	8%

*TNS Emor*

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## Finland

### National Political Opinion Poll

Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen's Centre Party (ALDE) trails in third place (20%) behind both his junior coalition partners the National Rally (EPP) (25%) and the Social Democrats (PES) (22%).

The results of the most recent poll closely mirror the outcome of the 2004 elections where the National, Social Democrat and Centre parties were divided by only 2.5% of the vote.

Given that the Swedish People's Party were able to elect an MEP with only 5.7% of the vote in 2004, it is possible that both the Eurosceptic True Finns party and Left Wing League may secure representation in Brussels.

National Rally (Kansallinen Kokoomus)	25%
Social Democrats	22%
Centre Party	20%
Green League	10%
Left Wing League	8%
True Finns	7%
Christian Democrats	4%
Swedish People's Party	4%

*Suomen Gallup / Helsingin Sanomat*

 France

Less than one hundred days from a European election campaign which he has micro-managed, 55% of the French public profess to have "no confidence" in President Nicholas Sarkozy.

Sarkozy's Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (EPP-ED) is fielding strong candidates in Michel Barnier and Rachida Dati in the populous Ile-de-France region, yet have been rocked by Sarkozy's decision to demote senior MEP Alain Lamassoure in favour of former Toulouse Mayor Dominique Baudis in the South West region.

**"Are you confident in President Sarkozy's ability to face the country's problems?"**

Confidence	39%
No confidence	55%

**"Are you confident in Prime Minister Fillon's to face the country's problems?"**

Confidence	40%
No confidence	52%

*CSA / Le Parisien*



## Germany

### National Political Opinion Poll

With less than eight months until voters go to the polls, Angela Merkel's CDU/CSU party leads their centre-left SPD coalition partner by eleven percentage points. Crucially for the CDU/CSU coalition, their preferred coalition partners the Free Democratic Party are polling at record high of 18% - enough to guarantee Merkel the seats required to secure another four years in office without the need for an uncomfortable 'grand coalition'.

From the perspective of the European Parliament elections, however, the numbers do not necessarily make such good reading for the Christian Democrats (EPP-ED). In 2004, the CDU/CSU attracted 37% of the national vote and 40 seats in the Parliament while their vote today now stands at 34%. Polls suggest that the Free Democrats (ALDE), who secured 6% of the vote and seven seats in 2004, have increased their support three-fold.

Given the likely increase in support for the Free Democrats, it is likely that they will replace the British Liberal Democrats the largest national political party inside the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe grouping. Bundis 90/Die Grunen, who have been destabilized by the effective deselection by party activists of several senior and long-standing members of their delegation, are unlikely to repeat their success in 2004 where they secured thirteen seats.

Christian Democrats/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU)	34%
Socialist Party (SPD)	23%
Free Democratic Party (FTP)	18%
Linke	11%
Bundis 90/Die Grunen	10%

*Forsa / Stern / RTL*



## Greece

### National Political Opinion Poll

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

Given the high number of undecided voters recorded in this survey, it is impossible to assess the likely impact of the figures upon the country's European election results in June.

Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	33%
New Democracy (ND)	29%
Coalition of the Radical Left (SYR)	8%
Communist Party of Greece (KKE)	7%
People's Orthodox Alarm (LAOS)	5%
Ecologist Greens (OP)	4%

*MRB / Eleftheros Typos*



## Hungary

### National Political Opinion Poll

Former Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz) hold a near-unassailable 31% lead over Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány's Socialist Party. A general election must take place by the spring of 2010.

At the 2004 elections, Fidesz (EPP-ED) secured 47% of the vote to the Socialist Party's (PES) 34%. Given present trends, it is likely that the already-strong Fidesz delegation will be strengthened. In an effort to maintain their representation in the European Parliament, the Alliance of Free Democrats (ALDE) have cleverly nominated long-standing Budapest Mayor and former MEP Gábor Demszky as the third ranked candidate in order to help boost the party over the country's 5% electoral threshold.

Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz)	61%
Socialist Party	30%
Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary	2%
Alliance of Free Democrats	2%

*Tarki*



## Ireland

### “How would you vote if a new referendum on the Lisbon Treaty takes place?”

After rejecting the first referendum on the Lisbon Treaty by a 54% to 46% margin, support for the Treaty among Irish voters now stands at 58%. A second referendum is rumoured to be scheduled for this summer.

Yes	58%
No	28%
Unsure	14%

*Red C*



## Poland

### National Political Opinion Poll

With Prime Minister Donald Tusk's centre-right Civic Platform (EPP-ED) holding a 26% in the latest opinion polls, it appears that there will be no easy path back to power for hard-line former President Lech Kaczyński's Law and Justice Party (UEN).

The Civic Platform, who defeated Law and Justice by a ten point margin at the last general election, is poised to build on the fifteen seats it secured at the 2004 European poll. The League of Polish Families, who received 16% of the vote and secured 10 MEPs in 2004 do not even register in current voting intention polls and appear to be facing electoral annihilation in June. It is possible that the collapse of the League of Polish Families may partially benefit the opposition Law and Justice Party who secured only 13% of the vote in 2004 and are now polling at 23%.

It is rumoured, following an informal arrangement between the European People's Party and Party of the European Socialists, that former Prime Minister and current Civic Platform MEP Jerzy Buzek will be elected as the first President of the European Parliament from a 2004 accession state after the June elections.

Civic Platform	49%
Law and Justice	23%
Democratic Alliance	12%
Peasant Party	7%

*PBS DGA / Gazeta Wyborcza*



## Portugal

### National Political Opinion Poll

Prime Minister José Sócrates's Socialist Party (PS) holds a fifteen point national lead over Manuela Ferreira Leite's opposition Social Democratic Party (PSD). Despite this, however, the Socialist Party's 40% opinion poll rating remain 5% lower than that which they polled at the 2004 European elections.

Much of the comparative fall in support for the Socialist Party can be proscribed to the growth in support for the left-wing Unitarian Democratic Coalition (CDU) and Leftist Bloc (BE), whose combined support now exceeds 22% as opposed to 14% in 2004.

In 2004, the Social Democrat and Popular Party (both of whom sit inside the PSD-PP group) cooperated inside in broad 'Força Portugal' electoral list which secured a combined 34% of the vote – one point less than the 35% combined strength of the parties at present.

Socialist Party (PS)	40%
Social Democratic Party (PSD)	25%
Unitarian Democratic Coalition (CDU)	12%
Leftist Bloc (BE)	10%
Popular Party (CDS/PP)	10%

*Marktest / Diario de Noticias / TSF*



## Slovakia

### National Political Opinion Poll

Popular Prime Minister Robert Fico's centre-left Direction-Social Democracy Party (Smer) holds a vast 36% over its nearest political rival, the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union.

Smer appears guaranteed to improve upon its performance at the 2004 European elections where the party received 16.9% of the vote and elected only three of the country's fourteen MEPs. The party should conservatively expect to at least double its representation in Brussels.

Direction-Social Democracy (Smer)	49%
Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU)	13%
Slovak National Party (SNS)	12%
People's Party - Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (LS-HZDS)	9%
Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK)	7%
Christian Democratic Movement (KDH)	6%
Slovak Communist Party (KSS)	1%
Free Forum (SF)	1%
Movement for Democracy (HZD)	1%
New Civic Alliance (ANO)	*

*UVVM*



## Slovenia

### "Are you supportive of Croatian accession to EU membership?"

Following a high-profile border dispute between the Slovenian and Croatian governments, almost half (49%) of Slovenians are opposed to admitting Croatia to membership of the European Union.

Support	33%
Oppose	49%
Don't know	18%

*Delo*



## Sweden

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 seven percentage points (52% to 45%).

As with polls from neighbouring Denmark, it is difficult to translate recent national opinion polls into predictions as to the likely outcome of the European elections due to the presence of a Eurosceptic list which stands solely in European elections. In 2004, the JuniBevægelsen list headed by economist Nils Lundgren secured a surprise 14% of the vote and three of the country's nineteen seats.

If JuniBevægelsen, who drew votes away from mainstream centre-right and centre-left parties, fails to emulate its performance in 2004, one could expect both the Moderate Rally and Workers' Party to improve upon their respective 25% and 18% showings five years ago.

### National Political Opinion Poll

Workers' Party/Social Democrats	40%
Moderate Rally	29%
Environmental Party/Greens	7%
Left Party	5%
People's Party Liberals	6%
Centre Party	5%
Christian Democrats	4%
Swedish Democrats	2%

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ComRes  
Ront Point Schuman 6  
Box 5  
1040 Brussels

T +32 (0)2 234 63 82  
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