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EUROPÄISCHES PARLAMENT    EUROOPA PARLAMENT    ΕΥΡΩΠΑΪΚΟ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΙΟ    EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
PARLEMENT EUROPÉEN    PARLAIMINT NA HEORPA    PARLAMENTO EUROPEO    EIROPAS PARLAMENTS  
EUROPOS PARLAMENTAS    EURÓPAI PARLAMENT    IL-PARLAMENT EWROPEW    EUROPEES PARLEMENT  
PARLAMENT EUROPEJSKI    PARLAMENTO EUROPEU    PARLAMENTUL EUROPEAN  
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PUBLIC OPINION MONITORING UNIT

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### **EB71.3 - EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2009**

**Post-electoral survey  
Country profile: European average and results for UK**

**Population: EU 18+ (in Austria 16+)  
Coverage: EU 27 (26.830 European citizens)<sup>1</sup>  
UK sample size: 1316<sup>2</sup>  
UK voters sample size: 458<sup>3</sup>  
Dates of the fieldwork: 12th June - 6th July 2009**

The present note keeps the format and the structure of the general first results document (where the European Union wide results and Member States variations are presented) in order to facilitate a comparison throughout.

**In this document the results for UK are singled out for each question and compared with the EU average.**

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<sup>1</sup> The results of this post-electoral study have been weighted socio-demographically and politically to ensure their representativeness

<sup>2</sup> Respondents who are eligible to vote.

<sup>3</sup> Respondents who declared they had voted in the European elections 2009.

## I. PARTICIPATION AND POLITICAL PROXIMITY

### A. Participation in European elections 2009

*Q1. Participation in the European Parliament elections 2009*

	EU27	UK
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>34,8%</b>
<b>ABSTENTION</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>65,2%</b>

#### Profile of the voters<sup>4</sup>

<b>GENDER</b>		
Men	44%	36%
Women	42%	34%
<b>AGE</b>		
18-24 years	29%	20%
25-39 years	36%	17%
40-54 years	44%	38%
55 years or older	50%	52%
<b>EDUCATION (end of)</b>		
at 15 years or younger	43%	36%
16-19 years	40%	34%
20 years or older	52%	43%
<i>Still studying</i>	<i>34%</i>	<i>17%</i>
<b>FEEL ATTACHED TO EUROPE</b>		
yes	49%	39%
no	34%	34%
<b>EXPOSURE TO THE EE CAMPAIGN</b>		
yes	47%	43%
no	36%	26%

\*Attachment to Europe: average of "yes" answers for voters and non-voters together for the EU is 64% and UK 34%.

\*\*Exposure to campaign: average of "yes" answers for voters and non-voters together for the EU is 67% and UK 54%.

NB All respondents were asked this question; profile of the voters shown

The participation in the European elections 2009 in the UK was lower than in the EU as whole.

- Men and women voted in similar shares (36% and 34%).
- The participation was lowest in the group of respondents aged 25-39 years (17% compared to 36% EU). It was also low amongst the youngest, 18-24 years old respondents (20%) and students in the UK (17%).
- The education level group that came to the polls in the largest share are respondents who ended schooling at the age of 20 or older (43%).

<sup>4</sup> Results for variables in italics must be interpreted with caution due to low number of respondents in the category.

- Attachment to Europe was a very important indicator of the participation. 39% of those respondents from the UK who do feel attached to Europe voted (49% in the EU as a whole) while the share of those who do not feel such attachment and still voted equals the EU average (34%).
- Even more importance is given to exposure to the EE2009 campaign as 43% of those who recall it went to the polls (47% EU) but only 26% of those who do not remember the campaign voted (36% EU).

## B. Participation in national elections

*Q9 Participation in the last national elections*

	EU27	UK
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>60,8%</b>
<b>ABSTENTION</b> <sup>NB1</sup>	<b>28%</b>	<b>39,2%</b>

### Profile of the voters<sup>5</sup>

<b>GENDER</b>		
Men	72%	59%
Women	72%	62%
<b>AGE</b>		
18-24 years	38%	26%
25-39 years	64%	44%
40-54 years	77%	69%
55 years or older	82%	81%
<b>EDUCATION (end of)</b>		
at 15 years or younger	76%	68%
16-19 years	70%	60%
20 years or older	80%	63%
<i>Still studying</i>	<i>40%</i>	<i>34%</i>
<b>*FEEL ATTACHED TO OWN COUNTRY</b>		
yes	75%	64%
no	51%	42%

\*Attachment to own country: average of "yes" answers for voter and non-voters together for the EU is 91% and the UK 86%.

NB<sup>1</sup> Including respondents who answered "don't know": 3% in the EU and 3,5% in the UK.

NB<sup>2</sup> All respondents were asked this question; profile of the voters shown

Participation in the last national elections in the UK was lower than the EU average (60,8% vs. 72%).

- Women voted in a larger share than men, the difference being 3 points.
- The only age group that voted in a comparable share to the EU as whole are respondents aged 55 years or more (81% vs. 82%) . The

<sup>5</sup> Results for variables in italics must be interpreted with caution due to low number of respondents in the category.

other age groups voted much less (their participation decreasing with age), especially the respondents aged 18-24 years of whom only 26% came to the polls (38% EU).

- The age at the end of education was not an important discriminator for participation but those respondents who still study voted much less often than the other groups and less than the EU average (34% vs. 40% for the EU).

## C. Political proximity

Q10. Do you feel close to any one of the political parties?

	EU27	UK
Yes, very close	13%	6%
Yes, somewhat close	30%	16%
No, not really close	28%	41%
No, not close at all	26%	35%
DK	3%	2%

Overall reported closeness to a particular political party in the UK is much less strong than amongst respondents in the EU on average (when answers "yes, very" and "yes, somewhat" are added, the UK average is 22% compared to 43% for the EU).

- The largest part of respondents say they do not feel really close to any party (41% in the UK, 28% EU) or not close at all (35% vs. 26%).
- Only 6% of respondents in the UK declare feeling very close to one of the political parties (13% EU).

Q10 Do you feel close to any one of the political parties?

	EU27	UK
<b>EU27</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>GENDER</b>		
Men	45%	23%
Women	41%	20%
<b>AGE</b>		
18-24 years	30%	8%
25-39 years	36%	14%
40-54 years	42%	18%
55 years or older	52%	34%
<b>EDUCATION (end of)</b>		
at 15 years or younger	45%	29%
16-19 years	40%	16%
20 years or older	50%	29%
<i>Still studying</i>	<i>36%</i>	<i>15%</i>

\*Sum of "yes, very close" and "yes, somehow close" answers

\*\*Results for variables in italics must be interpreted with caution due to low number of respondents in the category.

Taking into consideration the difference in overall average, the trends in socio-demographic analysis are similar to the EU trends (men more than women, increasing with the age).

- The only difference appears when looking at the age at the end of education. The two groups who report feeling close to one of the parties are those who ended education aged 15 or less (29%) or aged 20 years or more (also 29%):

## II. EXPOSURE TO THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN

Q8. Personally, do you remember having seen on TV, in the Internet or on posters, read in newspapers or heard on the radio a campaign encouraging people to go to vote on the European elections?

	EU27	UK
<b>EU27</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>GENDER</b>		
Men	69%	58%
Women	64%	50%
<b>AGE</b>		
18-24 years	66%	57%
25-39 years	64%	46%
40-54 years	69%	60%
55 years or older	67%	55%
<b>EDUCATION (end of)</b>		
at 15 years or younger	60%	50%
16-19 years	67%	55%
20 years or older	73%	58%
<i>Still studying</i>	68%	58%

\*Sum of "yes" answers

\*\*Results for variables in italics must be interpreted with caution due to low number of respondents in the category.

In the UK the exposure to the European elections campaign was lower than the EU on average (54% compared to 67%).

- The groups which recalls the campaign in the smallest numbers are the respondents aged 25-39 years (46% vs. 64% EU) and most those, aged 40-54 years (60% vs. 69%).

### III. THE VOTERS - PROFILE AND REASONING

NB. The following questions (Q3a, Q4d and Q5) were only posed to the respondents who declare to have voted in European elections 2009 (43% in EU and 34,8% in the UK).

#### A. Timing of the decision of who to vote for

*Q3a. When did you decide to vote for the political party or candidate you voted for in the recent European Parliament elections?*

	EU27	UK
You have always voted like this	50%	41%
You decided a few months ago	21%	21%
You decided a few weeks ago	13%	15%
You decided a few days before the elections	9%	11%
You decided on the day of the election	6%	11%

Respondents who declared they had voted in the European elections were asked this question

The decision of who to vote for was taken later by the voters in the UK than all EU on average.

- 41% of respondents voted the same as they always vote (50% EU).
- The share of those who decided a few months ago is the same as the EU average (21%).
- But there are more respondents than the average who decided who to vote a few weeks ahead of elections (15% vs. 13%) or a few days before the elections (11% vs. 9%).
- Moreover, last minute decision (on the day of the elections) were made much more often in the UK than the EU as whole (11% vs. 6%).

## B. Reasons for voting

*Q4d. What are the main reasons why you decided to go to vote in the recent EP elections?*

	EU27	UK
This is your duty as citizen	47%	<b>41%</b>
You always vote	40%	<b>51%</b>
To support the political party you feel close to	24%	21%
You can make things change in voting on the European elections	19%	12%
You are in favour of the EU	16%	7%
You feel European/ citizen of the EU	13%	4%
To express your disagreement	11%	<b>22%</b>
To support your Government	9%	8%
The EU plays an important role in your everyday life	6%	4%
To impose sanctions to your Government	5%	5%
You are very interested in European affairs	5%	3%
The information you received during the campaign convinced you to go to vote	5%	4%
To impose sanctions to the EU	2%	4%
(ONLY IN THE COUNTRIES WHERE VOTING IS COMPULSORY) Because voting is compulsory	2%	-
Other (SPONTANEOUS)	1%	4%
DK	1%	3%

\*In **BOLD** top three reasons for the country

\*\*Respondents who declared they had voted in the European elections were asked this question

\*\*\* Sum of answers, maximum three choices available.

- Over half of the UK voters in the European elections 2009 came to the polls because they always vote (51% for the UK, 40% for the EU).
- Voting due to civic duty is the second most often motive given by the UK respondents (41% vs. 47% EU).
- The third reason behind the vote is expressing disagreement which was much more present in the UK than the EU as whole (22% vs. 11%).
- The pro-European motives for voting were given by a below average share of voters in the UK. For example, voting due to the feeling of being European was chosen in 4% cases (13% EU), due to being in favour of the EU represents 7% of choices (16% EU).

## C. Issues that motivated the vote

QK5. What are the issues which make you vote to the European elections?

	EU27	UK
Economic growth	41%	<b>23%</b>
Unemployment	37%	<b>25%</b>
The future of pensions	22%	9%
The role of the EU in the international scene	22%	11%
The power and competences of the European institutions	19%	15%
Crime	18%	15%
Inflation and purchasing power	18%	7%
Immigration	16%	<b>21%</b>
The fight against climate change	16%	12%
European values and identity	16%	9%
The energy	13%	9%
The single currency, the Euro	12%	7%
Terrorism	11%	10%
Agriculture	11%	6%
The food security	9%	4%
Other (SPONTANEOUS)	4%	10%
None (SPONTANEOUS)	12%	34%
DK	3%	7%

\*In **BOLD** top three reasons for the country

\*\*Respondents who declared they had voted in the European elections were asked this question

\*\*\* Sum of answers, maximum three choices available.

- The main issue in the European elections 2009 for the UK voters was unemployment that was chosen in the 25% of citations (37% in the EU on average).
- The second place is occupied by economic growth (23%) but has much less importance than in the EU as a whole (41%).
- Immigration comes third in the number of citations (21%), being more important issue for the UK voters in EE2009 than in the EU on average (16%).
- The biggest share of respondents who voted in the EE2009 and were asked about the main issues behind it did not identify any of the offered issues as the ones that made them vote (34% in the UK compared to 12% in the EU on average).

#### **IV. NON-VOTERS - PROFILE AND REASONING**

NB. The following questions, Q3b and Q4b, were only posed to the respondents who declared NOT to have voted in European elections 2009 (57% in the EU and 65,2% in the UK).

##### **A. Timing of the decision not to vote**

*Q3b. When did you decide NOT to vote in the recent European Parliament elections?*

	<b>EU27</b>	<b>UK</b>
You never vote	22%	39%
You decided a few months ago	18%	9%
You decided a few weeks ago	15%	11%
You decided a few days before the elections	16%	9%
You decided on the day of the election	16%	15%
DK	13%	17%

\*Respondents who declared they had not voted in the European elections were asked this question

Compared to the EU averages, the UK respondents who did not participate in the European elections 2009 have the following characteristics:

- A relative majority of them never votes (39% UK vs. 22% EU) - let us remind the reader at this point that 51% of those who came to the polls did so because they always vote.
- Of those who do vote sometimes only a small part decided not to vote in the EE2009 a few months before the elections (9% vs. 18% EU), the same share as those who took the decision a few days before the elections (9% vs. 16% EU).
- More than average share of them cannot say when they decided not to vote (17% vs. 13% EU).

## B. Reasons for not voting

Q4b. What are the main reasons why you did NOT vote in the recent EP elections?

	EU27	UK
Lack of trust in/ dissatisfaction with politics generally	28%	<b>20%</b>
Not interested in politics as such	17%	<b>14%</b>
Vote has no consequences/ vote does not change anything	17%	9%
On holiday/ away from home	10%	8%
Too busy/ no time/ work	10%	<b>15%</b>
Do not know much about the European Union/ European Parliament or the European Parliament elections	10%	11%
Rarely or never vote	10%	<b>14%</b>
Not interested in European Union matters	9%	9%
Dissatisfied with the European Parliament as an institution	8%	9%
Sick/ health problem at the time	7%	4%
Lack of public debate/ lack of electoral campaign	6%	3%
Involved in a family/ leisure activity	5%	3%
Opposed to the European Union	4%	3%
Registration or voting card problems	3%	6%
Did not know there were elections	2%	3%
Other (SPONTANEOUS)	6%	7%
DK	3%	3%

\*In **BOLD** top three reasons for the country

\*\*Respondents who declared they had not voted in the European elections were asked this question

\*\*\* Sum of answers, maximum three choices available.

- The main reason for abstention is the same as the EU on average, namely lack of trust in/ dissatisfaction with politics generally but it is less present in the UK (20%) than the EU on average (28%).
- The second most often given reason for abstention is being busy, not having time to go to the polls (15% vs. 10%).
- The first two reasons are followed by two more with the equal share of quotations (14%). The first one is "I rarely or never vote" (14% vs. 10%) which is a reflection of the question Q3b where it was shown that a large part of abstentionists in the EE32009 never vote. The second one is disinterest in politics as such (14% vs. 17% EU).
- Worth pointing out is also a lower than average share of answers "my vote has no consequences/ does not change anything" which represents 9% of the answers in the UK but 17% in the EU as whole.

## V. OPINION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

### A. The European Parliament

*Q7. For each of the following propositions, please tell me if it rather corresponds or rather does not correspond to your attitude or your opinion.*

	EU27	UK
You had all the necessary information in order to choose for whom you were going to vote in the recent European elections	53%	42%
The European Parliament takes into consideration the concerns of European citizens	46%	40%

\* All respondents were asked this question; sum of answers "yes, somewhat"

- In the UK fewer respondents than the EU average believe they had enough information to be able to choose their candidate in EE2009 (42% vs. 53%).
- A smaller share of respondents than the EU average believe that the EP takes into consideration the citizens' concerns (40% vs. 46%).

### B. The European Union

*Q7 For each of the following propositions, please tell me if it rather corresponds or rather does not correspond to your attitude or your opinion.*

	EU27	UK
You trust the institutions of the EU	50%	29%
The membership of (OUR COUNTRY) in the EU is a good thing	69%	43%
You feel you are a citizen of the EU	64%	37%
You feel attached to (OUR COUNTRY)	91%	86%
You feel attached to Europe	64%	34%
You are very interested in politics	39%	38%

\* All respondents were asked this question; sum of answers "yes, somewhat"

- The trust in the institution of the EU amongst the UK respondents is lower than the EU average (29% vs. 50%). There are also less respondents who agree that the membership of the UK in the EU is a good thing (43% vs. 69%).
- The UK respondents less often report feeling citizens of the EU (37% vs. 64%) and even less of them say they are attached to Europe (34% vs. 64%).
- Attachment to own country is also lower than for the EU as whole (86% vs. 91%).

## ***VI. IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS***

*Q7. For each of the following propositions, please tell me if it rather corresponds or rather does not correspond to your attitude or your opinion.*

	<b>EU27</b>	<b>UK</b>
It is very important for you which particular candidates who win seats and become MEPs in the European Parliament elections	49%	38%
It is very important for you which particular political party gained the most seats in the European Parliament elections	50%	34%

\* All respondents were asked this question; sum of answers "yes, somewhat"

Compared to the EU on average, it is less important for the UK respondents to know both the candidates who won seats (38% vs. 49%). It is even less important to know the parties who gained most seats in the European Parliament elections (34% vs. 50%).

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