Several EU candidate states have held a referendum on joining the EU. EU Treaty amendments, EU enlargement, economic and monetary union, new treaties or new constitutional arrangements have also attracted referendums in some Member States. These may be binding, advisory or consultative.

This Note charts the referendums on EU matters held in candidate and Member States since 1972, with brief details on turnout and results. It also outlines the positions of France and Austria with regard to holding a referendum on EU enlargement.

This Note updates Part B of Standard Note 2709, European Union: treaty ratification and the use of referendums, 20 October 2003
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1 Referendums on joining the EEC/EC/EU, candidacy for EU membership and continued membership

1.1 Joining the EEC/EC/EU

Ireland – 10 May 1972

Turnout 71%
YES 83%
NO 17.0%

Denmark – 3 October 1972

Turnout 90.1%
YES  63.3%
NO   36.7%

Norway

i. 26 September 1972

Turnout  79.2%
YES   46.5%
NO    53.5%

ii. 27-28 November 1994

Turnout  88.8%
YES   47.6%
NO    52.4%

Austria - 12 June 1994

Turnout  81%
YES   66.4%
NO    33.6%

Finland - 16 October 1994

Turnout  74%
YES   57.0%
NO    43.0%

Aaland Islands¹ – 20 November 1993

Turnout  49%
YES   74%
NO    26%

Sweden - 13 November 1994

Turnout  82.4%
YES   52.2%
NO    46.9%

Malta – 8 March 2003

Turnout  91%
YES   53.6%
NO    46.4%

Slovenia – 23 March 2003

Turnout  60.3%
YES   89.6%
NO    10.4%

¹ The Aaland Islands are an Autonomous Province of Finland
Hungary – 12 April 2003

Turnout 45.6%
YES 83.8%
NO 16.2%

Lithuania – 10–11 May 2003

Turnout 63.4%
YES 91.7%
NO 8.9%

Slovakia – 16-17 May 2003

Turnout 52.1%
YES 92.5%
NO 6.2%

Poland – 7-8 June 2003

Turnout 58.9%
YES 77.5%
NO 22.6%

Czech Republic – 15-16 June 2003

Turnout 55.2%
YES 77.3%
NO 22.7%

Estonia – 14 September 2003

Turnout 63.0%
YES 66.9%
NO 33.1%

Latvia – 20 September 2003

Turnout 72.5%
YES 67.0%
NO 32.3%

Croatia – 22 January 2012

Turnout 43.5%
YES 66.3%
NO 33.1%

1.2 Candidacy for EU membership

Switzerland

2 The two Swiss referendums were on candidacy for membership, rather than membership itself. Accession negotiations have never been opened with Switzerland.
i. 8 June 1997

Turnout  35%
YES    25.9%
NO     74%

ii. 4 March 2001

Turnout  55.1%
YES    23.2%
NO     76.7%

1.3 Staying in or withdrawing from the EC

United Kingdom – 5 June 1975

Turnout  64%
YES    67.2%
NO     32.8%

Greenland – 23 February 1982

Turnout  75%
YES    48%
NO     52%

2 Referendums on enlargement, Treaty amendments, European Economic Area, the Euro and bi-lateral agreements

2.1 Enlargement to admit UK, Denmark and Ireland

France – 23 April 1972

Turnout  60%
YES    67.7%
NO     32.3%

2.2 Single European Act

Denmark – 27 February 1986

Turnout  75%
YES    56.2%
NO     43.8%

Ireland – 26 May 1987

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3 The UK held a referendum on whether to remain in the EEC, based on renegotiated terms of entry. The majority voted in favour of staying in.

4 Greenland voted on whether to stay in the EEC. The majority voted to withdraw from the Community.
Turnout  44%
YES    70%
NO     30%

2.3  EU Constitution[^5]

Italy – 18 June 1989

Turnout  81%
YES    89%
NO     11%

2.4  Treaty on European Union (Maastricht)

Denmark

i. 2 June 1992

Turnout  82.3%
YES    49.3%
NO     50.7%

ii 18 May 1993

Turnout  86.2%
YES    56.7%
NO     43.3%

Ireland - 18 June 1992

Turnout  57.3%
YES    68.7%
NO     30.8%

France - 20 September 1992

Turnout  69.7%
YES    51%
NO     49%

2.5  European Economic Area (EEA)

Switzerland – 6 December 1992

Turnout  78%
YES    49.7%
NO     50.3%

Liechtenstein

i. 12 December 1992

[^5]: This was a consultative referendum on whether to transform the European Communities into a federal Union, allowing the European Parliament to draft a European Constitution to be ratified by Member States.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turnout</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
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</table>

ii. 9 April 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turnout</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.6 Treaty of Amsterdam

Denmark – 28 May 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turnout</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>76%</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Ireland – 22 May 1998

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turnout</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56%</td>
<td>61.7%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7 Treaty of Nice

Ireland

i 7 June 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turnout</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>53.9%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

ii 19 October 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turnout</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49.5%</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>37.1%</td>
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</table>

2.8 Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe

Spain – 20 February 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Turnout</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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6 Referendums were planned but cancelled in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Ireland, Poland, Portugal and the UK following the French and Dutch rejections and the subsequent abandonment of the treaty.
France – 29 May 2005
Turnout 69.7%
YES 45.1%
NO 54.9%

Netherlands – 1 June 2005
Turnout 63.3%
YES 38.5%
NO 61.5%

Luxembourg – 10 July 2005
Turnout 87.8%
YES 56.5%
NO 43.5%

2.9 Economic and Monetary Union

Denmark – 28 September 2000
Turnout 85%
YES 46.9%
NO 53.1%

Sweden – 14 September 2003
Turnout 81.2%
YES 41.8%
NO 56.2%

2.10 Treaty of Lisbon

Ireland
i. 12 June 2008
Turnout 53.1%
YES 46.6%
NO 53.4%

ii. 2 October 2009
Turnout 58.0%
YES 67.1%
NO 32.9%

2.11 Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (Fiscal Compact – inter-governmental)

Ireland – 31 May 2012
Turnout 50.5%
YES 60.4%
NO 39.6%

2.12 Bi-lateral agreements with the EU

Switzerland

i. 21 May 2000 (bilateral agreements)
Turnout 48.3%
YES 67.2%
NO 32.8%

ii. 5 June 2005 (Schengen and Dublin agreements)
Turnout 56%
YES 54.6%
NO 12/23 cantons

iii. 25 September 2005 (free movement of persons – 2004 EU enlargement)
Turnout 53.8%
YES 56%
NO

iv. 26 November 2006 (cohesion funds for CEEC states)
YES 53.4%
NO 47%

v. 8 February 2009 (freedom of movement Bulgaria and Romania)
Turnout 50.9%
YES 59.6%
NO 40.4%

vi. 17 May 2009 (development of Schengen – biometric passports)
Turnout 38%
YES 50.1%
NO 49.9

3 France, Austria and enlargement referendums

3.1 France

France held a referendum on the admission of the UK, Denmark, Ireland and Norway to the EEC in 1972 (see above).

An amendment to Article 88.5 of the French Constitution was introduced in 2005 under former President, Jacques Chirac, which required a referendum to be held on any new EU accession, and was passed just before the French referendum on the EU constitution in 2005. In April 2008 the French Government of Nicolas Sarkozy approved the removal of the 2005 obligatory referendum clause.

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7 Referendum data available on Swiss Government website.
8 These were a mixture of optional and mandatory referendums.
On 20 May 2008 the National Assembly began discussions on a constitutional reform bill, the “Constitutional law on the Modernisation of the Institutions of the Fifth Republic”. The Assembly voted on 29 May 2008 by 48 votes to 21 to approve an amendment tabled by Jean-Luc Warsmann (UMP) making it compulsory for France to hold a referendum on large countries joining the EU (if the acceding country represented more than 5% of the overall EU population of about 500 million people – this was seen as targeting Turkey in particular).

On 23 June 2008, as part of the constitutional reform package, the Senate voted by 297 to 7 to remove the constitutional requirement for a referendum for new accessions, and in July that year approved a revised version of the earlier bill, allowing the President to decide on a nationwide referendum or for Parliament to decide by means of a parliamentary vote.

The final vote by the French Congress was on 21 July 2008 and the bill was narrowly passed.

3.2 Austria
The former Austrian Foreign Minister, Ursula Plassnik, said in August 2008 that “Coalition parties have agreed to go for a referendum if Turkey’s accession talks are concluded in favour of a decision to prepare a membership agreement”. Elections in September 2008 brought in a new Chancellor, Werber Faymann. He said on 3 May 2011 that Austria would hold a referendum on Turkish accession to the EU. During a state visit to Austria in May

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9 See EUObserver, 24 June 2008
10 It was passed as Loi constitutionnelle n° 2008-724 of 23 July 2008. Full dossier is at http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/13/dossiers/reforme_5eme.asp
11 Constitution of France, 4 October 1958 (as amended), Article 88-5. See Adam Sage, Sarkozy snatches reforms victory by a single vote”, The Times, 22 July 2008. The amendment bill is not made subject to a referendum when the President of the Republic decides to submit it to Parliament sitting in Congress. In this case, the revision bill is passed if it has the approval of three-fifths of the votes cast. The office of Congress is that of the National Assembly. There is also a ‘Warning’ which states: “3” The two versions of article 88-5 are not applicable to accessions that result from an Intergovernmental Conference whose meeting was decided by the European Council before July 1, 2004 by virtue of article 47 of the Constitutional Act no. 2008-724 of July 23, 2008”.
12 See EurActiv 25 August 2008
2011, the Turkish President, Abdullah Gül, said Turkey would also hold a referendum on EU accession.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{13} See \textit{EurActiv} 6 May 2011