Brits Feel Not So "European" With 50% Saying They Would Leave EU Tomorrow

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- 50% of electorate would vote for the UK to leave the European Union tomorrow.
- British respondents are significantly more negative about membership of the European Union than German, French and Polish.
- 40% of UK citizens see their countries as European, in contrast to 84% of Germans.
- Labour voters are currently in favour of remaining members (48% vs. 36%) but Conservatives would vote to leave by a significant margin (58% to 33%).
- UK business remains positive about the benefits of EU membership, with more stating that withdrawal would be bad for British business (37%) than good (32%).
- A fifth of German (17%) and French (19%) citizens believe a UK exit would have a positive impact on their country.
- Lansons and Cambre Associates commission report in response to debate on the future of the UK in the EU.

UK consumers are sceptical of EU membership and half would vote to leave the EU tomorrow, according to new research from consultancies Lansons and Cambre Associates. The in-depth report, created by Opinium Research, analyses consumer and business sentiment surrounding the EU and compares it to research from Germany, France and Poland and is the first study of its kind.

The report reveals that British respondents are significantly more negative about European Union membership, in comparison to their European neighbours. 50% of UK voters would vote to leave in a referendum held tomorrow, with 36% voting to remain. UK voters are also more likely to say the economy would be better (41%), rather than worse (22%), after an exit from the EU, with 29% of people stating that an exit would have a positive impact on their personal standard of living vs. 15% who think it would have a negative one.

A fifth of UK residents believe that leaving the EU will make little or no difference. 20% think that the economy would do about as well in the EU as out of it, while 41% predict either a neutral impact or none at all on their standard of living. 36% believed that there would be no difference in terms of their living costs, and 44% expect no change in their job security and employment prospects.

UK residents are evenly split over whether leaving the EU would make the UK more or less attractive to international companies (26% saying more and 26% saying less) but, again, 32% said "about the same".

UK consumers consider that an EU exit would have very little impact on the UK's foreign relations and international standing. 37% say leaving would have a positive impact on relations with the United States, 12% predict a negative one and 37% predict either a neutral impact or none at all. 29% think that the UK would go up in global standing as a result of an exit, with 22% expecting a negative impact and 34% a neutral impact or none at all. Understandably, respondents expected an EU exit would damage relations with EU countries (45% negative, 11% positive) but even here, a substantial proportion believe that EU exit would have a neutral impact or none at all (30%).

The findings are also split by political affiliation, with Labour voters in favour of remaining members (48% vs. 36%) and Conservatives voting to leave by a significant margin (58% to 33%).

Today's findings are despite the fact that British citizens see individual aspects of EU membership, such as tourism, travel and ease of doing business as positives. The one individual aspect of EU membership that is seen to have a significantly negative effect is immigration to the UK, with 64% of UK residents stating that this has a negative effect. The research indicates that although people like the benefits that more open borders bring (such as easing travel and tourism and lowering restrictions for businesses) they dislike the logical extension of this in the form of immigration.

Interestingly, when asked for the biggest drawbacks to EU membership, the most popular category of answers was not immigration (24%) but "laws" (33% of respondents), this includes regulations and EU directives. The third largest EU membership drawback is seen to be "waste / cost" (20%), covering the direct financial contribution that the government makes to EU institutions, general complaints about too much money being wasted and complaints about money being spent on subsidies going outside the UK.

Comparison With Other European States

People in the UK are less likely than those in Germany, France and Poland to be positive about EU membership. A quarter of UK residents (26%) view EU membership as a good thing, vs. 62% of Polish, 55% of German and 36% of French. They are also the most likely to say that EU membership brings more drawbacks than benefits. Almost half (48%) of UK residents see more drawbacks than benefits, against 45% of French, 25% of German and 14% of Polish respondents.

UK respondents are also the least likely to define their country as European. 40% of UK residents state that the UK is European, vs. 84% of Germans, 59% of French and 70% of Polish. People in Britain are also the least likely to select other EU countries as the country they felt closest to. The UK feels closest to other English-speaking countries such as the United States (33%), Australia (31%), Canada (23%), New Zealand (23%) or Ireland (23%). The most popular non-English speaking countries are Germany (14%) and France (11%).

Additionally, the UK should not assume that other European states unanimously consider it a positive force within the EU. A fifth of German (17%) and French (19%) citizens believe a UK exit would have a positive impact on their country. Significantly more consider that a 'Brexit' would have no effect on their country, with 38% of Germans, 35% of French and 28% of Polish people considering the impact to be neutral.

Positive Business Sentiment

Businesses in the UK are considerably less Eurosceptic than consumers. 47% of businesses see EU membership as a good thing (vs. 26% of consumers). Larger businesses of different sizes with respondents from large companies (250+ employees) are also generally more positive than those from smaller companies, particularly micro businesses (0-9 employees).

Micro business respondents were almost evenly divided on whether EU membership is good (38%) or bad (40%) compared to far more positive larger businesses (57% good, 16% bad). Similarly, on whether membership currently has more benefits or drawbacks, micro businesses were negative (30% more benefits, 48% more drawbacks) than large ones (46% more benefits, 22% more drawbacks).

Most businesses view the impact of EU membership as positive or neutral, with just 18% saying it has a negative impact on their business. Again, positive feeling is most likely among those with 250 or more employees (43% positive, 17% negative) but this is true even among micro businesses (28% positive, 19% negative).

UK business respondents are also more positive about individual aspects of EU membership than the general public. Business respondents were more emphatically positive about the single market areas of the EU, with 68% viewing the lack of customs, duties or tariffs between member states a benefit and 42% see a common set of rules for business across the EU as a benefit. 38% of business respondents view the idea of free movement of workers and citizens across the EU as a benefit.

British business respondents had a more rounded view of the Single Market and were positive about every aspect of EU membership except subsidies (such as the Common Agricultural Policy) and EU rules on workers' rights / restrictions.

Andrew Silverman, Head of Public Affairs, Lansons Communications commented:

"Britain last held a referendum on its membership of the European Union in 1975 and on that occasion 67% of the electorate voted in favour of staying in. Approaching forty years later controversy still rages over Britain's EU status and the effect of it on the nation's economy and social fabric. The difference between then and now lies in the vastly increased scope of the EU, both in terms of its competences and membership. This and the Eurozone economic crisis have brought Britain's membership into sharper focus, along with questions over the rationale for the EU Commission, Parliament and attendant institutions.

"By commissioning this report, Lansons and Cambre Associates hope to enable leading thinkers on EU policy from across the political spectrum to put their arguments to the test and learn more about what their fellow citizens think, in time contributing to the debate on Britain's future in Europe."

James Endersby, Managing Director of Opinium Research, who conducted the research and compiled the report, commented:

"Our findings give a clear indication of how the British public would vote should a referendum be called tomorrow. As a nation, our research indicates that we are overwhelmingly the most negative about the

EU compared to France, Germany and Poland.

"This public view does differ from that of the business community. From a sample of nearly 300 businesses, from SMEs to blue-chips, we found a more positive sentiment towards the EU, particularly among larger businesses. Most respondents believe being in the EU is a net positive for their businesses and were more emphatically positive about the single market areas of the EU."

The full report can be downloaded from http://www.lansons.com/pdfs/inoroutbrochure.pdf

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Notes to Editors

1. The report launch event will take the form of a panel discussion about Britain's future role in the EU on Tuesday 3rd December. The event, organised in association with City of London Corporation, will take place at the prestigious Guildhall in London. The results of in-depth research into opinions and attitudes of stakeholders and citizens in the UK and a selection of key EU Member States will be presented ahead of the debate.

Panellists:

- Professor Tim Congdon CBE, Economics Spokesperson, UK Independence Party.
- Timothy Kirkhope MEP, Deputy Chairman, European Conservatives and Reformists.
- Katja Hall, Chief Policy Director, Confederation of British Industry.
- Dr. Richard Corbett, Labour MEP candidate, Adviser at the Cabinet of the European Council President.

2. Methodology

Opinium research conducted online surveys among samples of general consumers in each of the UK, France, Germany and Poland as well as a sample of senior decision makers from UK businesses.

Respondents in each country were shown the same questions (translated into the required languages by native speakers). Some of the identification questions required country-specific answer sets but otherwise every effort has been made to ensure that respondents were answering the same questions.

In France, Germany and Poland, the consumer sample has been weighted to nationally representative criteria including age group, gender, region and how they voted in the last national election. For the UK, the sample has been weighted to nationally representative criteria including age group, gender, region, social grade and working status with the "current voting intention" question weighted to match Opinium's most recently published political polls.

Sample sizes for the consumer surveys in each country were 2,069 in the UK, 1,017 in France, 1,001 in Germany and 1,030 in Poland.

For the business sample, interviews were conducted online among senior decision makers in businesses of a range of sizes. The criteria for respondents was to be a senior manager or above in a private sector business based in the UK but which bought or sold goods or services to or from parties abroad. The sample was split into segments of micro businesses (1-9 employees), small businesses (10-49 employees), medium sized businesses (50-249 employees) and large businesses (250+ employees) with the aim of approximately even sized segments rather than making the sample strictly representative of UK businesses generally.

Among businesses, there were 274 respondents with 81 coming from micro businesses (1-9 employees), 59 from small businesses (10-49 employees), 42 from medium sized businesses (50-249 employees) and 92 from large businesses (250+ employees).

Headline referendum voting intention figures (50% to leave, 36% to stay) come from Opinium's political polling. Opinium surveyed 1,946 GB adults from 12th to 14th November 2013 with results weighted to nationally representative criteria.

3. About Cambre Associates

Cambre Associates is a Brussels-based public affairs and public relations consultancy, with a track record of successful pan-European and international campaigns. Our hallmark is practical action, based on analysis, strategic advice and flexibility. We offer a diverse, multilingual team, trained in a variety of disciplines, such as law, journalism, PR and public affairs. Cambre has won a number of awards,

including the European Public Affairs Award for "Consultancy of the Year" in 2010 and 2011.
For more information, please contact www.cambre-associates.com

4. About Lansons

Lansons Communications is the UK's fourth largest independent PR consultancy, employing around 100 staff and has been voted agency of the year seven times since it was established in 1989 by its Chairman, Clare Parsons and Chief Executive, Tony Langham. Lansons is a member of the PROI international network of 56 independent PR agencies, in over 50 cities and on 5 continents around the world. Lansons is currently ranked 20th in the UK's top 30 Best Medium Workplaces 2013 (Great Place to Work® Institute) and has been in the top 50 for nine years running.

Lansons Communications offers corporate and consumer communications, social media, regulatory and public affairs expertise, financial calendar work, employee engagement and change services, media training and broadcast PR supported by a fully serviced studio capability. For more information about Lansons Communications visit www.lansons.com

5. About Opinium Research LLP

Opinium Research is a full service market research agency offering quantitative and qualitative marketing research and consultancy across a range of sectors. These include consumer markets, financial services and insurance, technology, business to business, advertising and media, automotive, business and leisure travel, politics and healthcare. Opinium's offering spans consultancy, syndicated, Omnibus and field and data services. Opinium runs a daily low-cost online Omnibus survey interviewing 2000 UK adults per wave.

Opinium - What People Think, Feel and Do. www.opinium.co.uk

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