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# **The view from the continent: What people in other member states think about the UK's EU referendum**

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## What people in other member states think about the UK's EU referendum

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### 1. Introduction

On June 23, 2016 voters in the United Kingdom will get to decide whether they want Britain<sup>2</sup> to remain in the European Union (EU) or want it to leave. While voters in other member states will have no say in this referendum on the UK's future in the EU, their opinions nevertheless are likely to have an impact. Considering public opinion in their own countries governments of EU member states have been under pressure to respond to the UK's proposed policy changes and will have to react to the consequences of the UK's referendum, which will have significant impact on the EU whatever the result.

In order to shed light on public opinion in other EU member states on the UK's referendum and its potential consequences for the EU at large, we surveyed a representative sample of voters in Germany, France, Poland, Spain, Ireland, and Sweden in late January and early February 2016. A total of 8002 respondents across the six countries answered questions on their views on the UK's position in, and membership of, the EU, the negotiations preceding the UK's EU referendum, and the desirability of having similar processes of public decision-making in their own country.<sup>3</sup>

In this report we present key findings on views from the continent on: the UK's position in, and membership of, the EU; opinions on renegotiations and policy options for Britain; attitudes about some proposed EU-level policy changes that might occur as a result of the UK's negotiation; and views on whether a similar process to that being pursued by the UK is desirable in other EU member states. The findings are particularly insightful for policy makers in the six countries surveyed, informing them about the attitudes of their publics, but the results will also have great relevance for those involved in campaigns for and against the UK's membership in the EU.

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<sup>2</sup> In our survey we predominantly use the term 'Britain' to make the language simpler and to facilitate an easier and more effective translation (see methods note for details of translation processes). Respondents were clearly advised of this at the beginning of the survey and told that 'Britain' was used as a shorthand for "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland" throughout the survey to avoid any confusion. In this report we therefore use both terms interchangeably, meaning the full version of the country name throughout.

<sup>3</sup> Please refer to the project methods note for details on the survey design and implementation.

## 2. Views on the UK's position in, and membership of, the EU

The central question of the research is whether voters in other EU member states think the UK should remain a member of the EU, or whether it should leave. We asked the question in two ways. First, early in the survey we asked respondents whether they thought Britain should *continue* to be a member of the EU or *withdraw* from the EU. We closed the survey with a similar question, this time employing the same terminology that will be used in the Brexit campaign we asked whether respondents thought Britain should *remain* a member of the EU or *leave* the EU.

Table 1: Views on UK membership in the EU by country (%)

		<i>1<sup>st</sup> question: "Do you think Britain should continue to be a member of the European Union or should it withdraw?"</i>			
<i>2<sup>nd</sup> question (final question of survey): "Should Britain remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?"</i>		Continue	Withdraw	Don't know	Total
Germany N=1500	Remain	98	18	68	<b>73</b>
	Leave	2	82	32	<b>27</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>
France N=1500	Remain	91	10	59	<b>56</b>
	Leave	9	90	41	<b>44</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>
Poland N=1500	Remain	96	13	69	<b>80</b>
	Leave	4	87	31	<b>20</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>
Spain N=1500	Remain	97	20	74	<b>81</b>
	Leave	3	80	26	<b>19</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>
Ireland N=1000	Remain	96	8	62	<b>79</b>
	Leave	4	92	38	<b>21</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>
Sweden N=1002	Remain	96	14	66	<b>67</b>
	Leave	4	86	34	<b>33</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100</b>

The first time we asked the question respondents were allowed to respond 'Don't know' (DK). Including DK responses, absolute majorities in 5 of the 6 countries want Britain to continue to be a member of the EU. Only in France was opinion more evenly divided with a plurality of 42 per cent favouring Britain's continued membership and 33 per cent favouring Britain's withdrawal (25 per cent DK).

The second time we asked the question respondents were forced to choose (i.e. DK was not an option). When forced to choose, between two-thirds and fourth-fifths of respondents in each country want Britain to remain in the EU, with the exception of

France where public opinion is tighter, with 56 per cent wanting Britain to remain, but 44 per cent saying they want Britain to leave (see **Table 1**).

When those who responded DK to the first question are forced to choose, the majority opts for Britain to remain in the EU. Except for those respondents who answered DK in the first question and were forced to choose either 'Remain' or 'Leave' in the final question, few respondents shifted their view from the beginning of the survey to the end, meaning there is only a small effect of taking the survey on attitudes towards Britain's membership of the EU.

Who are the voters that want Britain to remain in the EU and who wants Britain to leave? Focusing on those respondents who want Britain to remain within the EU there are no strong patterns in terms of their sociodemographic characteristics (**Table 2**). Whereas within Britain it is the case that older groups of voters are more likely to want Britain to leave the EU, there is a mixed pattern across the six countries in our survey. For example, in Poland 91 per cent of those over 55 want Britain to remain in the EU compared to 69 per cent of those aged 18 to 34. This is to be contrasted with France where just over half of the over 55 year olds (51 per cent) want Britain to remain in the EU compared with more than two-thirds of the 18-34 year olds (68 per cent) who want Britain to remain. With the exception of Germany and France – where women are somewhat more likely to want the UK to remain than men – sex does not seem to offer any particular insight into public attitudes in the six countries investigated. Similarly, there are only small differences in attitudes according to educational attainment with those having higher levels of attainment slightly more likely to want the UK to remain than those with lower levels of educational attainment.

Table 2: Views on UK membership in the EU (forced choice) by socio-demographic characteristics (% saying remain rather than leave) in each country

	<b>Age (% remain)</b>		
	18-34	35-54	55+
Germany	77	72	72
France	69	53	51
Poland	69	80	91
Spain	85	78	83
Ireland	75	79	85
Sweden	71	65	67
	<b>Sex (% remain)</b>		
	Male	Female	
Germany	69	77	
France	50	62	
Poland	79	82	
Spain	80	82	
Ireland	79	79	
Sweden	68	67	

	<b>Highest Educational Attainment</b> (% remain)		
	Lower secondary or below	Upper or Post (non-tertiary) secondary	Tertiary
Germany	66	75	75
France	49	54	66
Poland	76	81	82
Spain	80	81	85
Ireland	79	77	84
Sweden	66	65	73

What else then determines whether voters in other member states want Britain to remain within the EU? We asked respondents what they thought the impact of Brexit would be both on Britain's economy and its voice in the world more broadly (**Table 3**). There is some variation, with Germany and Ireland standing out in that, in both countries, majorities felt that Brexit would leave the UK economy either a little or a lot worse off. A majority of German respondents also felt that Britain's voice in the world would also be a little or a lot worse off in the event of Brexit.

In both France and Sweden it is remarkable that more people think the UK economy would do better outside of the EU than there are people who think it would do worse if the UK remains a member of the EU. The most common response in both countries is that Brexit would make no difference, however. Poland is divided on the question of whether the UK's voice in the world would be better after Brexit, or worse (each response has 30 per cent, with 40 per cent believing it would make no difference). Similarly, 30 per cent of respondents in France feel that Brexit would enhance the UK's voice in the world.

Table 3: Expectations about Britain's economy and voice in the world should it leave the European Union by country (%)

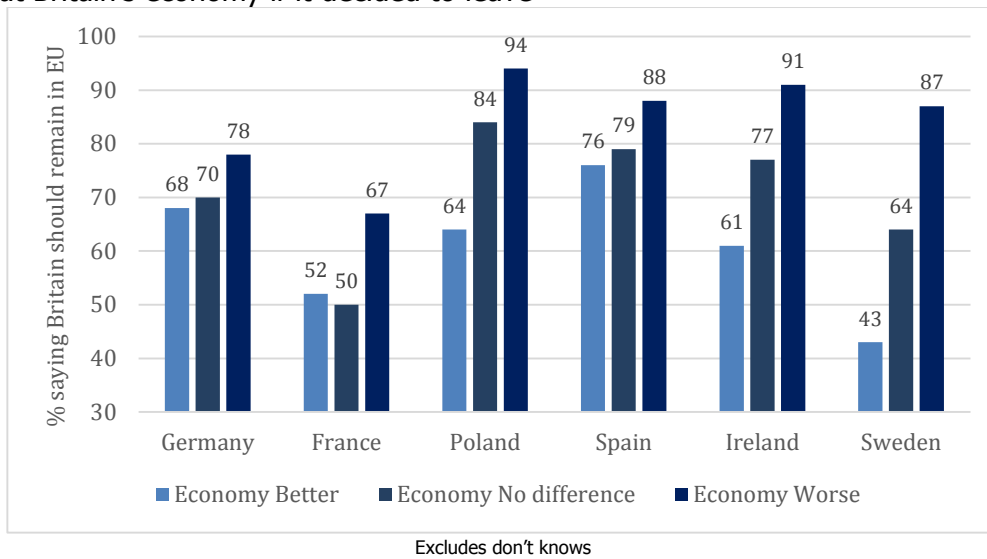
	<b>Britain's Economy</b>			<b>Britain's Voice in the World</b>		
	A lot/a little better	No difference	A lot/a little worse	A lot/a little better	No difference	A lot/a little worse
Germany N= 1330/1349	22	22	56	17	33	50
France N= 1277/1307	30	43	27	30	42	28
Poland N= 1280/1259	28	40	32	30	40	30
Spain N= 1365/1378	20	47	33	21	43	36
Ireland N= 891/920	23	25	52	23	34	43
Sweden N= 833/862	34	37	29	20	42	38

Excludes don't knows

**Figures 1** and **2** show the share of respondents who want the UK to remain a member of the EU broken down by their expectations of what the effect of Brexit would be on the UK's economy and voice in the world. Unsurprisingly, the worse people think the UK will do outside of the EU, the more likely they are to want it to remain. In other

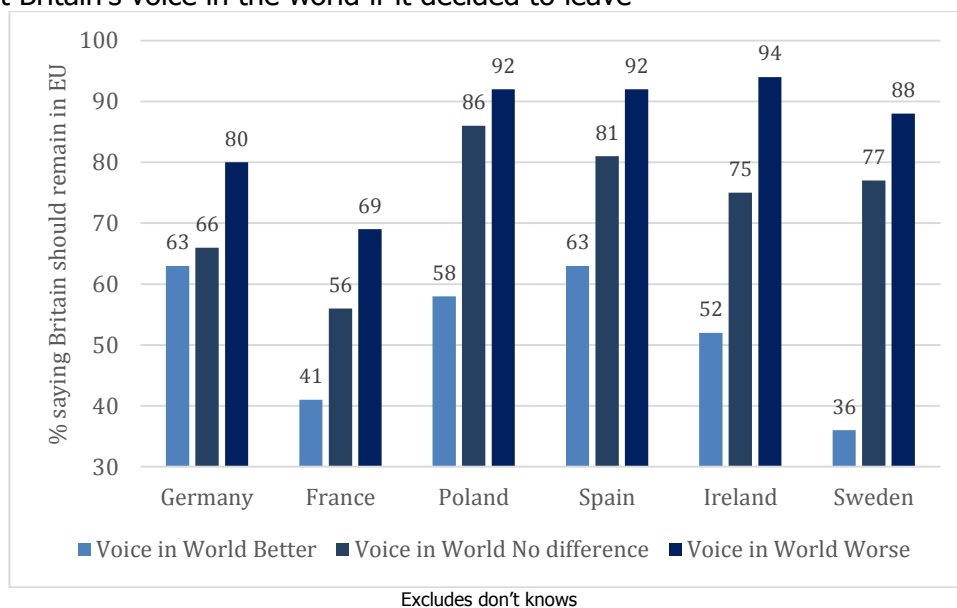
words, there may be a degree of empathy in people’s evaluations, but the extent of it varies across the countries.

Figure 1: Views on Britain’s membership in the EU (forced choice) by expectations about Britain’s economy if it decided to leave



For example, in France only 67 per cent of people who think that the UK economy would suffer from Brexit think the UK should remain a member. That may sound high but that also means that a third (33 per cent) of respondents who held that view nevertheless feel that the UK should leave and suffer the economic consequences (see Figure 1). Similarly, in France, 31 per cent of people who think that the UK’s voice in the world would be weaker in the event of Brexit still think the UK should leave (see figure 2, third column of France). Contrast that with Poland and the difference becomes apparent: in Poland, of those who think the UK economy would suffer in the event of Brexit only 6 per cent say that they would nevertheless like the UK to leave.

Figure 2: Views on Britain’s membership in the EU (forced choice) by expectations about Britain’s voice in the world if it decided to leave



It is interesting that Germany and Spain report the largest percentage of those who think that the UK would do better outside of the EU who nevertheless think that the UK should remain. In other words, in those two countries those who see a bright future for the UK after Brexit are more likely to think that the UK should stay anyway. This suggests, perhaps, a prioritisation of EU cohesiveness.

It is in Sweden where people seem to have the most rationally correlated views on the impact of Brexit on the UK and whether they think the UK should remain or leave. That is to say that in Sweden majorities of those who think that Britain would do well in the event of Brexit also take the position that the UK should leave. That is true of none of the other five countries.

In all six countries the balance of opinion is that the UK's membership is positive for both the UK and for the EU but there are noteworthy variations (**Table 4**). When asked to evaluate the merits of EU membership for the UK itself in all six countries more people think membership is good for the UK than think it is bad for the UK. But there is significant variation between, for example, Ireland – where 62 per cent of respondents think that EU membership is a good thing for the UK – and France and Sweden, where just 45 per cent hold that view.

When asked to evaluate the impact of the UK's membership on the EU overwhelming majorities in each of the six countries think the UK's impact is good or neutral. In France and Germany roughly a fifth of respondents think the UK's membership is bad for the EU, the highest proportion across all countries. It is also interesting that in both France and Germany less than 50 per cent of respondents feel that the UK's membership is good for the EU, perhaps a latent feeling that the Franco-German alliance that was once seen as powering the EU has had to contend with another large member state, in the shape of the UK, since 1973, and a large member state that has come to be perceived as 'awkward'.

Table 4: Evaluation of Britain's membership in the EU for Britain itself and the EU respectively by country (%)

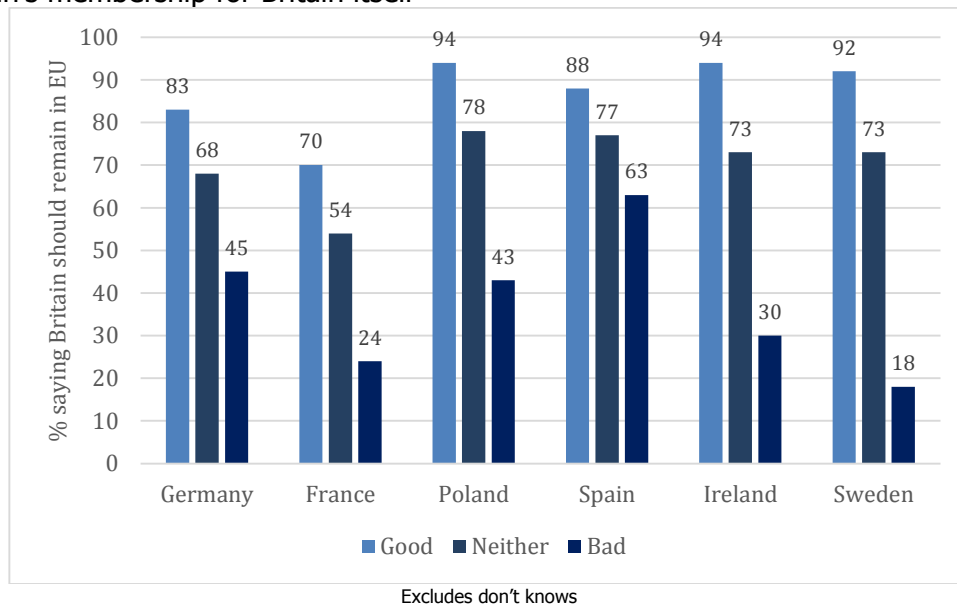
	Effect of British membership					
	For Britain			For EU		
	Very/ rather good	Neither	Very/ rather bad	Very/ rather good	Neither	Very/ rather bad
Germany N= 1362/1374	59	27	14	48	34	18
France N= 1300/1333	45	37	18	40	40	20
Poland N= 1269/1306	52	33	15	66	29	5
Spain N= 1357/1367	51	37	12	51	37	12
Ireland N= 917/928	62	26	12	68	28	4
Sweden N= 819/852	45	29	26	65	28	7

Excludes don't knows

In line with this, in both France and Germany more people think that UK membership is good for the UK itself than think it is good for the EU as a whole. In Poland, Ireland, and Sweden the opposite is true.

Returning to the question of the relationship between how people view the impact of EU membership on the UK and whether they think the UK should remain in the EU, **figure 3** shows that overwhelming majorities of those who think membership is good for the UK also think the UK should remain. Conversely, majorities of those who think membership is bad for the UK think the UK should leave. In Germany, Poland, and Spain over 40 per cent of people who think EU membership is bad for the UK nevertheless think the UK should remain a member, perhaps suggesting a greater emphasis in those countries on a commitment to European solidarity whatever the consequences for the members. This can be contrasted with Sweden, for example, where just 18 per cent of people who think EU membership is bad for Britain also nevertheless think Britain should remain. These evaluations are complex and just because a person thinks that membership of the EU is bad for Britain does not mean that they do not see benefits for themselves, or their country, of Britain’s membership. This would be the opposite of European solidarity and would instead mean people willing to see fellow Europeans worse-off if they thought they themselves would benefit.

Figure 3: Views on Britain’s membership in the EU (forced choice) by evaluation of Britain’s membership for Britain itself

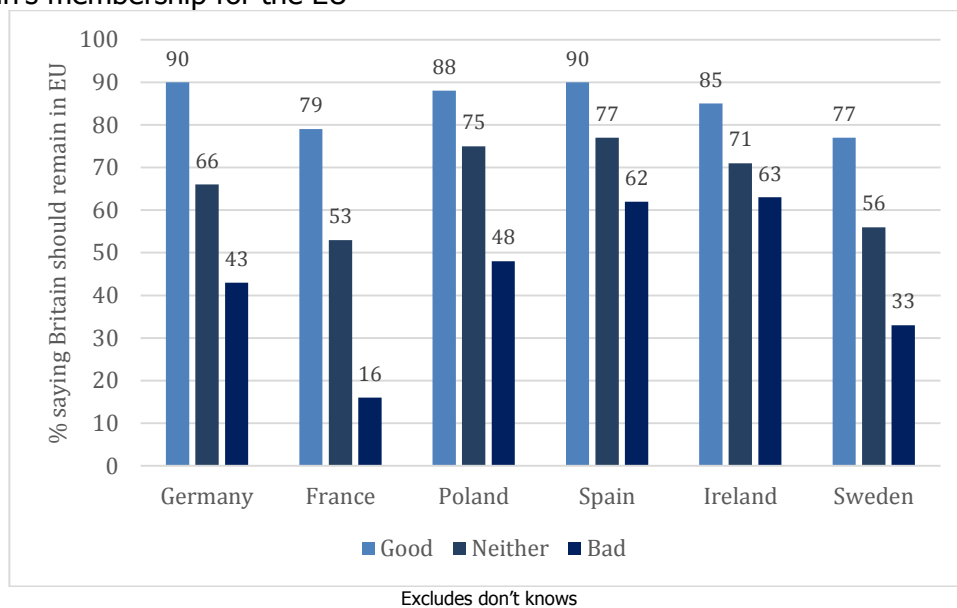


With that in mind, **figure 4** shows the relationship between how people view the impact of the UK’s EU membership on the EU and whether they think the UK should remain in the EU. Once again, as we would expect, large majorities of those who think the UK’s membership benefits the EU think it should remain a member (although in both France and Sweden more than 1-in-5 people who think the UK benefits the EU also think it should leave nevertheless).

What is particularly noteworthy is that, amongst those who think that UK membership is bad for the EU there is large variation across the six countries in whether they think the UK should leave the EU or remain a member. For example, in Ireland and Spain over 60 per cent of those who think UK membership is bad for the EU nevertheless want the UK to remain a member. Even in Poland and Germany close to half of respondents who think UK membership is bad for the EU would still rather the UK remained a member. Only in France and, to a lesser extent Sweden, do we see the intuitive relationship.



Figure 4: Views on Britain’s membership in the EU (forced choice) by evaluation of Britain’s membership for the EU



Overall, what these relationships suggest is that, for many, evaluating whether a country other than your own should remain in the EU is not something approached exclusively through hard-headed pragmatism. In the case of those who think the UK should remain in the EU despite it being bad *for the UK*, this could just represent some form of anti-UK sentiment. However, for those who think that the UK should remain in the EU despite it being bad *for the EU*, this shows how complicated the relationship is.

Table 5: Correlation coefficients (Cramer’s V) for the relationship between views on whether Britain should remain in the EU and evaluations of Britain’s membership for Britain and the EU respectively, by country

	View on whether Britain should remain or leave by	
	Evaluation of membership for Britain	Evaluation of membership for EU
Germany N= 1362/1374	.304	.407
France N= 1300/1333	.331	.464
Poland N= 1269/1306	.445	.250
Spain N= 1357/1367	.217	.241
Ireland N= 917/928	.534	.174
Sweden N= 819/852	.644	.285

Excludes don't knows

When correlating the relationship between views on whether the UK should remain in the EU with evaluations of whether UK membership is good for the UK and the EU we find that, generally, people who think that the effect of membership is positive for either party are more likely to say that the UK should remain (**Table 5**). But which evaluation matters more – impact on the UK or impact on the EU – differs across the

countries. In Poland, Ireland and Sweden the impact of membership on the UK is much more strongly correlated with views about Brexit than is the impact of membership on the EU. The opposite relationship is seen in the two core countries of the EU, Germany and France, although the relationship is weaker. In Spain there is hardly any difference between the two.

In addition to general evaluations, we also asked respondents to think specifically about their own life and the likely impact that Brexit would have. In this assessment it is clear that Ireland takes a particular role. Given the high level of interdependency between the UK and Ireland it is not surprising that nearly half (46 per cent) of respondents in Ireland think that Brexit would make at least some difference to their own lives. Contrast that with Germany, France, and Poland where similar percentages of respondents think that Brexit would have no impact on them at all. It is fair to say that, with the exception of Ireland, for most people Brexit is not a major issue in people's lives directly. It is worth noting, however, that in all six countries there are substantial numbers of people who think Brexit would make at least a little difference to their lives.

Table 6: "If Britain left the EU, how much difference, if any, do you think it would make to your own life?" by country

	A great deal	Quite a lot	Some	Not very much	None at all	Don't know
Germany N= 1500	3	7	14	18	48	10
France N= 1500	4	7	13	21	43	12
Poland N= 1500	3	6	16	15	45	15
Spain N= 1500	3	9	16	22	38	12
Ireland N= 1000	6	17	23	26	17	11
Sweden N= 1002	2	5	17	28	34	14

**Table 7** considers the relationship between what people think their own country's long-term strategy toward the EU should be and whether they want the UK to remain or leave. It reveals that people who want their country to leave the EU are also more likely to be in favour of Brexit. However, there is variance in this result. For example, whereas in Ireland 86 per cent of those who want Ireland to leave the EU also think the UK should leave, in Spain only 65 per cent of those who want Spain to leave also think the UK to leave. With Ireland the high degree of alignment in exit attitudes may be best explained by the inter-relationships between Ireland and the UK.

Interestingly, in France, Ireland and Sweden those who want a single EU government (i.e. those who are most pro-EU) are less likely than those who want merely to increase the powers of the EU to want the UK to remain. This may be a case of people who favour a single EU government seeing the UK as an obstacle to their preferred outcome, an obstacle that it might be better to simply get rid off. What is clear, across all preferences for their own country's longer-term strategy towards the EU with the exception of 'Leave', the French are least keen to see the UK remain as a member.

Table 7: Views on UK membership in EU (forced choice) by attitudes towards own country's long-run strategy towards the EU, by country

	<b>Own country's long-run strategy towards EU<sup>4</sup></b> (% saying UK should remain within each category)					
	Leave	Reduce powers	Status quo	Increase Powers	Single EU gov.	Don't know
Germany N= 1500	27	78	83	89	83	72
France N= 1500	23	61	75	74	60	68
Poland N= 1500	24	79	93	95	90	74
Spain N= 1500	35	87	88	91	87	80
Ireland N= 1000	14	87	97	92	77	76
Sweden N= 1002	19	88	91	97	78	72

### 3. Opinions on renegotiations and policy options for Britain

Considerable attention has been paid over recent months to the efforts by David Cameron to secure a renegotiation of the terms of the UK's membership of the EU. As a general principle it is clear, from **Table 8**, people in the six countries surveyed generally think that any changes negotiated by the UK should apply to all EU member states. In other words, there is little support for the notion that the UK should be able to carve out a set of unique arrangements.

Table 8: Exceptionality for Britain<sup>5</sup> by country (%)

	Britain should be allowed to negotiate specific changes for itself	Any changes would have to apply to all member states	Don't know
Germany N= 1500	25	62	13
France N= 1500	24	55	20
Poland N= 1500	30	55	14
Spain N= 1500	30	55	15
Ireland N= 1000	26	62	12
Sweden N= 1002	25	53	22

When asked about the influence of their own head of government on the negotiations between the UK and the EU, Germany sticks out as the one country where a majority

<sup>4</sup> "Do you think [Country]'s long-term policy should be to leave the European Union, to stay in the EU and try to reduce the EU's powers, to leave things as they are, to stay in the EU and try to increase the EU's powers, or to work for the formation of a single European government?"

<sup>5</sup> Preamble to section: "The British Government, led by Prime Minister David Cameron, has begun a series of talks with European Union officials and politicians in other member states to renegotiate the terms of Britain's membership in the EU.

Question wording: "Some people have suggested that Britain should be allowed to negotiate specific changes to the current EU rules for itself, while others have suggested that any changes to the current situation would have to apply to all EU member states. Which position comes closest to your own view?"

of people (56 per cent) feel that their political leader had some or a lot of influence (**Table 9**). This is no doubt a reflection of Germany’s dominant position within the EU.

Table 9: Influence of own head of government<sup>6</sup> on renegotiations by country (%)

	A lot of influence	Some influence	Rather little influence	No influence at all	Don't know
Germany N= 1500	18	38	25	9	10
France N= 1500	3	20	34	30	13
Poland N= 1500	6	16	29	34	15
Spain N= 1500	6	18	34	35	7
Ireland N= 1000	2	15	38	34	11
Sweden N= 1002	1	10	41	35	13

In all other countries, irrespective of whether it is one of the largest EU member states (France), or one of the smallest (Ireland), two thirds of respondents felt that their head of government had rather little or no influence at all. In the case of Ireland, evidence suggests that Irish officials were important in the negotiation process, although very much behind the scenes and thus most people would be unaware of those channels of influence.

Table 10: Acceptability of specific policy exceptions for Britain by country

	% saying the exception should be granted rather than not granted <sup>7</sup>				
	Delay welfare payments <sup>8</sup>	No child benefits abroad <sup>9</sup>	Charge for NHS access <sup>10</sup>	Do not pay JSA to EU migrants <sup>11</sup>	Restrict extent of EU migrants <sup>12</sup>
Germany N= 1292-1315	35	39	32	35	41
France N= 1180-1222	39	47	50	43	58
Poland N= 1204-1242	26	36	24	34	43
Spain N= 1313-1336	19	22	23	21	32
Ireland N= 851-887	43	58	42	43	50
Sweden N= 743-805	35	47	33	42	45

<sup>6</sup> “Still thinking about these renegotiations, how much influence, if any, do you think [Head of Government] has in this process?”

<sup>7</sup> “Some people have suggested that, in order for Britain to remain member of the EU, it should be granted exemptions from existing arrangements in the EU. Others have suggested that there should not be exceptions to the existing rules for Britain.”

<sup>8</sup> “Britain will be allowed to delay giving welfare payments to people from other EU countries who work in low-income jobs until they have lived in Britain for four years.”

<sup>9</sup> “Britain will be allowed to deny people from other EU countries working in Britain child benefits they could send to their families at home.”

<sup>10</sup> “Britain will be allowed to charge people from other EU countries for medical treatments received from Britain’s National Health Service.”

<sup>11</sup> “Britain will be allowed to not pay jobseekers allowance to people from other EU countries.”

<sup>12</sup> “Britain will be allowed to restrict the number of people from other EU countries who are allowed to come and seek work in Britain.”

Mean <sup>13</sup>	33	42	34	36	45
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Excludes don't knows

When asked about some specific policy exemptions that the UK might have sought in the negotiations people in all six countries were mostly against these exceptions rather than in favour (**Table 10**). The only exemptions that garnered majority support in at least one country were not sending child benefits abroad (which was supported by 58 per cent of respondents in Ireland), charging for NHS access (which was supported by 50 per cent of respondents in France), and restricting intra-EU migration (which was supported by 50 per cent of respondents in Ireland and 58 per cent of respondents in France). Across the six countries the proposal to stop the export of child benefits and the proposal to generally restrict intra-EU migration were more acceptable although, on average across all six countries, majorities still opposed granting these exemptions.

In general, Ireland is the most 'permissive' country to UK exceptions, followed by France. Spain is the least 'permissive', followed by Poland (**Table 11**). But does the degree of permissibility afforded to the UK on the terms of its membership have any relationship to personal experiences of the UK, e.g. whether a person has lived or worked in the UK, or has family that has done so?

Table 11: Mean number of acceptable policy exceptions for Britain (0 to 5)<sup>14</sup> by country

	Mean number	Standard error	95% Confidence Interval
Germany N= 1500	1.57	.042	1.49 – 1.61
France N= 1500	1.88	.048	1.79 – 1.903
Poland N= 1500	1.35	.039	1.27 – 1.39
Spain N= 1500	1.02	.036	0.95 – 1.06
Ireland N= 1000	2.06	.056	1.95 – 2.12
Sweden N= 1002	1.56	.056	1.45 – 1.62

The first step in answering that question is to consider the variance in personal experiences in, or with, the UK. **Table 12** shows that there is variation in the extent of contact that nationals of the six countries have had with the UK. Unsurprisingly, given its geographical proximity and historical ties, Ireland has the highest reported contact levels with 72 per cent of people having a family member who has lived in the UK. A relatively high proportion of Polish respondents (45 per cent) said that they had family who had lived in the UK. These figures were much lower for France, Germany, Sweden, and Spain. Despite fewer people having family members who had lived in the UK people from Germany, France, and Sweden were far more likely than people from Poland to have visited the UK. With the exception of Ireland, very small percentages (less than 10 per cent) of people had personally worked or studied in the UK or reported themselves or a family member as having received UK benefits.

<sup>13</sup> Mean of country values

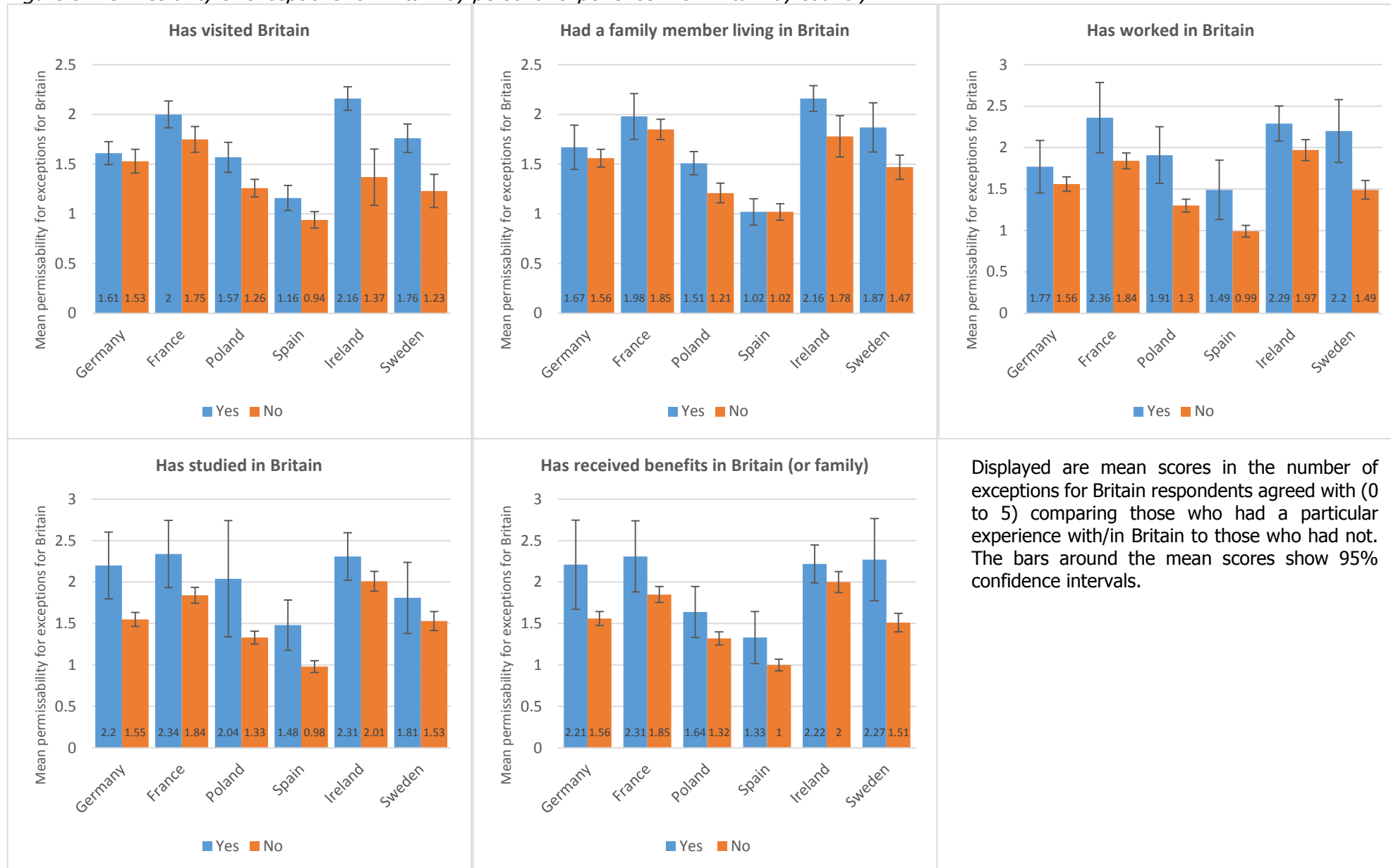
<sup>14</sup> Computed by adding up the number of policy exceptions a person agreed to.

Table 12: Prevalence of particular experiences in/with Britain by country

	% saying that this applies to them				
	Has visited Britain as tourist or guest	Had a family member who lived in Britain	Has worked in Britain	Has studied in Britain	Has received British benefits (or a family member)
Germany N= 1500	52	13	7	4	3
France N= 1500	47	16	5	6	5
Poland N= 1500	27	45	6	2	7
Spain N= 1500	34	27	6	8	6
Ireland N= 1000	86	72	25	16	22
Sweden N= 1002	61	21	8	7	5

**Figure 5** presents a series of graphs showing the relationship between those personal experiences with the UK, detailed in Table 12, and the level of acceptance of exceptions for the UK within the EU. The graphs show that nearly any interaction with the UK at all – even just visiting – results in greater acceptance of special provisions or exceptions for the UK within the EU, yet to varying degree. Especially Polish, Irish and Swedish respondents who have visited or worked in Britain, or who have family members living in Britain, are more permissive to exemptions than their fellow nationals who have had no interaction with Britain of that kind. It is noteworthy that, on average, even those respondents who reported having received state benefits in Britain, or have family members who received state benefits in Britain, are more permissive to exemption than those who had not, although one might have assumed that they would be comparatively less supportive of changing rules that they have benefited from in the past.

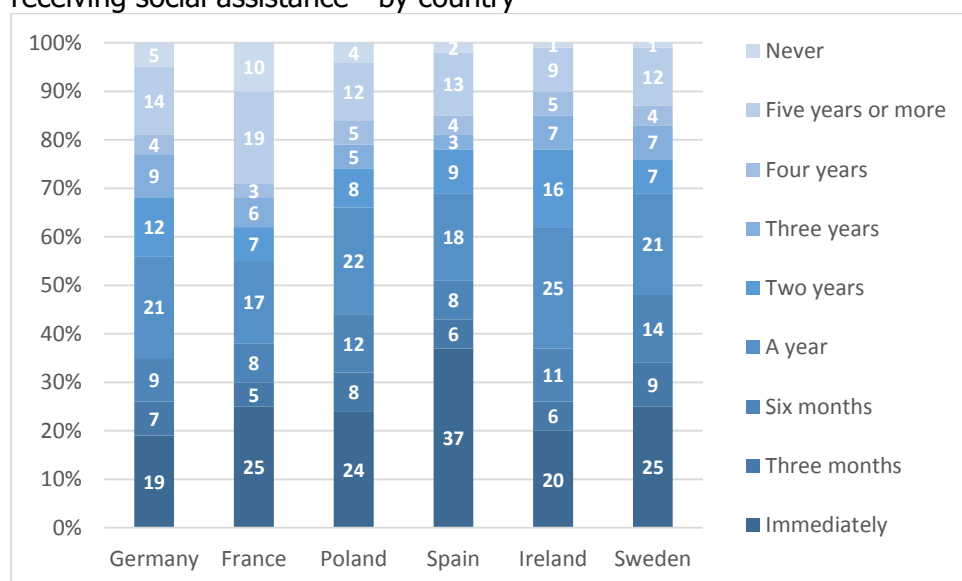
Figure 5: Permissibility of exceptions for Britain by personal experience with Britain by country



Displayed are mean scores in the number of exceptions for Britain respondents agreed with (0 to 5) comparing those who had a particular experience with/in Britain to those who had not. The bars around the mean scores show 95% confidence intervals.

Despite the majority of respondents across countries being opposed to granting policy exemptions to Britain in the EU in general, asking people to think about their own country reveals that only between 19 per cent (in Germany) and 37 per cent (in Spain) think people from other countries should be eligible to receive social assistance immediately (**Figure 6**). In other words, firm majorities in all six countries agree, in principle, with some sort of 'waiting period', during which contributions ought to be made by foreign workers before they are able to receive social assistance. But more than 50 per cent of respondents in every country think that this waiting period should be at most a year, or non-existent.

Figure 6: How long should workers have lived and paid taxes in a country before receiving social assistance<sup>15</sup> by country



David Cameron was able to secure a provision whereby EU migrant workers will be excluded from the full entitlement of in-work benefits for up to four years. Four years is towards the top end of the answer options we offered respondents and only between 15 per cent of people (in Ireland) and 32 per cent of people (in France) are supportive of at least that length of wait ('four years', 'five years or more', or 'never').

Overall, it is fair to say that people in other member states are generally not in favour of granting exceptions to the UK, although some policy exceptions (e.g. stopping the exporting of child benefit and generally curbing intra-EU migration) are seen as more permissible than others (e.g. NHS charges, delayed welfare payments, or the withdrawal of jobseekers allowance). There is variation both between countries in the aggregate, and between individuals with personal experiences with the UK making people somewhat more permissive of exceptions.

Another important policy debate revolves around Britain's future in the EU's single market in case of Brexit. The main pro-Brexit campaign groups seem to have disowned the idea of the UK leaving the EU but seeking to remain part of the single market (as

<sup>15</sup> "Thinking about migrants from other countries in the European Union who are living, and paying taxes in [COUNTRY OF RESPONDENT]. For how long should they have worked and paid taxes in [COUNTRY OF RESPONDENT] before they receive the same level of social assistance as [COUNTRY OF RESPONDENT]'s nationals?"



the three members of the European Economic Area do). Asking people what they think, implicitly, of the UK leaving the EU and re-establishing a relationship with the EU akin to Norway's or Iceland's it is clear that there are divided opinions. **Table 13** shows that Germans, Poles, and the Irish are much more likely to be in favour of such a relationship. However only 25 per cent of French respondents and 30 per cent of Spanish respondents agreed that, in the event of Brexit, the UK should be a member of the single market. Swedes seem the most divided on the issue, with roughly a third of respondents in each camp. Given the complexity of the question it is worth noting that about a third of respondents in each country responded 'Don't Know'.

Table 13: Views on Britain's access to single market if leaving the EU<sup>16</sup> by country (%)

	Britain should be a member of the EU's single market	Britain should not be a member of the EU's single market	Don't know
Germany N= 1500	46	22	31
France N= 1500	25	39	36
Poland N= 1500	50	19	31
Spain N= 1500	30	42	28
Ireland N= 1000	41	26	33
Sweden N= 1002	32	30	38

#### 4. Opinions on proposed policy changes at the EU level

In addition to specific questions about the UK's referendum and policy renegotiations, we also asked our survey respondents to give their views on a series of potential EU policy changes at a general level, such as ending the automatic right to free movement to live and work elsewhere in EU, access to free healthcare and welfare benefits for EU migrants as well as the EU's regulatory power over businesses and people's working hours. While there was not much support for British exceptionalism, there is a greater degree of agreement with propositions for policy changes across all EU member states.

Responses, by country and by issue, are presented in **Table 14**. Overall, France, followed by Germany and Ireland, are most amenable to the five changes that would all, broadly speaking, cut against the existing structures and powers of the EU (also see table 15). Poland and Spain are, on the whole, least amenable, perhaps reflecting a greater tendency to see the EU as providing overarching frameworks that offer security and protection for citizens. Sweden sits somewhere in between.

In terms of the five specific proposals, however, there is considerable variation. The proposal to reduce free movement rights within the EU is the least popular, with more people in all six countries opposed than in favour. However, France is notably less hostile to the proposal, with just 35 per cent of respondents opposed compared to 50 per cent or more in the other five countries.

<sup>16</sup> "Some countries are members of the EU's single market although they are not members of the EU. If Britain leaves the EU, do you think..."

Table 14: Views on EU policy options proposals by country (%)

	Strongly/ Somewhat in favour	Neither in favour nor opposed	Somewhat/ Strongly opposed	Can't choose
End automatic free movement to live and work elsewhere in EU <sup>17</sup>				
Germany N= 1500	16	18	62	4
France N= 1500	25	33	35	7
Poland N= 1500	12	27	57	4
Spain N= 1500	17	23	58	2
Ireland N= 1000	23	22	52	3
Sweden N= 1002	21	20	50	9
Stop access to free healthcare for EU migrants <sup>18</sup>				
Germany N= 1500	33	23	39	5
France N= 1500	33	27	34	6
Poland N= 1500	25	22	49	4
Spain N= 1500	21	22	54	3
Ireland N= 1000	29	21	47	3
Sweden N= 1002	21	19	53	7
Reduce access to welfare benefits for EU migrants <sup>19</sup>				
Germany N= 1500	46	24	24	6
France N= 1500	53	23	18	6
Poland N= 1500	37	27	31	5
Spain N= 1500	29	28	41	2
Ireland N= 1000	51	17	29	3
Sweden N= 1002	32	25	33	10
End EU's control over people's work hours <sup>20</sup>				
Germany N= 1500	38	26	31	5
France N= 1500	43	28	20	9
Poland N= 1500	32	32	31	5
Spain N= 1500	31	34	32	3
Ireland N= 1000	35	28	34	3

<sup>17</sup> "End the automatic right of people from EU countries to go to another EU member state to live and work."

<sup>18</sup> "Stop people from other EU countries getting health treatment for free in other EU countries that they have moved to."

<sup>19</sup> "Reduce the ability of migrants from EU countries to claim welfare benefits in other EU countries they have moved to."

<sup>20</sup> "End the ability of the EU to decide the maximum number of hours people can be expected to work."

Sweden N= 1002	36	24	29	11
	Reduce EU business regulations <sup>21</sup>			
Germany N= 1500	45	26	22	7
France N= 1500	40	33	18	9
Poland N= 1500	34	38	22	6
Spain N= 1500	33	38	25	4
Ireland N= 1000	39	29	28	4
Sweden N= 1002	44	25	18	13

There is a distinction between France and Germany, on the one hand, and Ireland, Poland, Spain and Sweden on the other hand, on the issue of access to healthcare for EU migrants. While the most common response in all six countries is to oppose stopping access, in France and Germany respondents are far more evenly divided.

One of the most salient issues in the UK connected to EU reforms is the access of EU migrant workers to a country's welfare system. On that issue it appears that France, Ireland and Germany are, on the whole, more supportive of such restrictions than the other three countries. In Cameron's recent negotiations it has been said that he received some support from these countries on these issues, with many of the eastern European member states, often led by Poland, opposed. It is thus particularly interesting that respondents in Poland appear quite divided on this issue, with no clear majority opposing such restrictions, rather similar to Sweden. Spain is most firmly opposed to such restrictions.

The Working Time Directive, something that was once a major issue in UK debates about EU reform, divides opinion pretty evenly in all of the countries surveyed except France where there is stronger support for ending the EU's role in determining working hours. Finally, on the issue of business regulations, which has been a part of Cameron's negotiation, there is broad sympathy with the view that says EU red tape needs to be reduced. In each of the six countries more people are in favour of reducing EU regulations on business than are opposed. But in Spain, Poland, and Ireland opinion is more closely divided on the issue of EU business regulations than it is in France, Germany, and Sweden.

Taking the proposals to reduce EU powers in the aggregate it becomes clear that France is by far the most likely to favour policies that reduce the EU's existing powers and reverse some of its existing rules (**Table 15**). After France, Germany is most amenable in general, followed by Ireland and Sweden (although there is no statistically significant difference between those two countries). Poland and Spain are least amenable.

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<sup>21</sup> "Reduce how much the EU regulates companies and businesses."

Table 15: Desirability of reducing EU powers by country

	Mean agreement score <sup>22</sup> to policy proposals for a reduction in EU powers		
	Mean	Standard error	95% Confidence interval
Germany N= 1334	-0.06	0.11	-0.28 – 0.16
France N= 1293	1.27	0.12	1.03 – 1.51
Poland N= 1347	-0.80	0.11	-1.01 – 0.59
Spain N= 1398	-1.24	0.10	-1.43 – -1.04
Ireland N= 932	-0.44	0.15	-0.73 – -0.14
Sweden N= 820	-0.47	0.15	-0.77 – -0.17

Excludes those saying "can't choose"

We can also correlate the attitudes of people to reducing the EU's powers with both their political positions (left versus right) and their levels of trust in their national parliament and in the EU parliament (**Table 16**). People who self-classify as politically on the right are more likely to agree with reducing the EU's powers, although this is less pronounced in Ireland and Spain than it is elsewhere. Those who think migrants are good for the economy are less likely to want to reduce the EU's powers. This correlation is strongest in Ireland, Sweden, and France, and weakest in Spain.

It is interesting that in Germany, France, Ireland, and Sweden, greater levels of trust in both the national and/or the EU parliament is associated with people being less likely to want to reduce the EU's powers. In Poland things are slightly different: greater levels of trust in the EU parliament are associated with people being less likely to want to reduce the EU's powers, but greater levels of trust in the Polish parliament are associated with people being more likely to want to reduce the EU's powers. This suggests some sort of tension in Poland between the perceptions of the national and the European parliament. In other words, it seems to be that in Poland if you trust your own parliament you want it to have more power, and correspondingly you want the EU to have less. In Spain things are different again: there is no relationship at all between trust in either parliament and whether or not an individual wants to reduce the EU's powers.

<sup>22</sup> Sum score for the five policy proposals presented above (recoded: -2, strongly opposed to +2, strongly in favour); Range: -10 to +10; excluding those who said "can't choose"

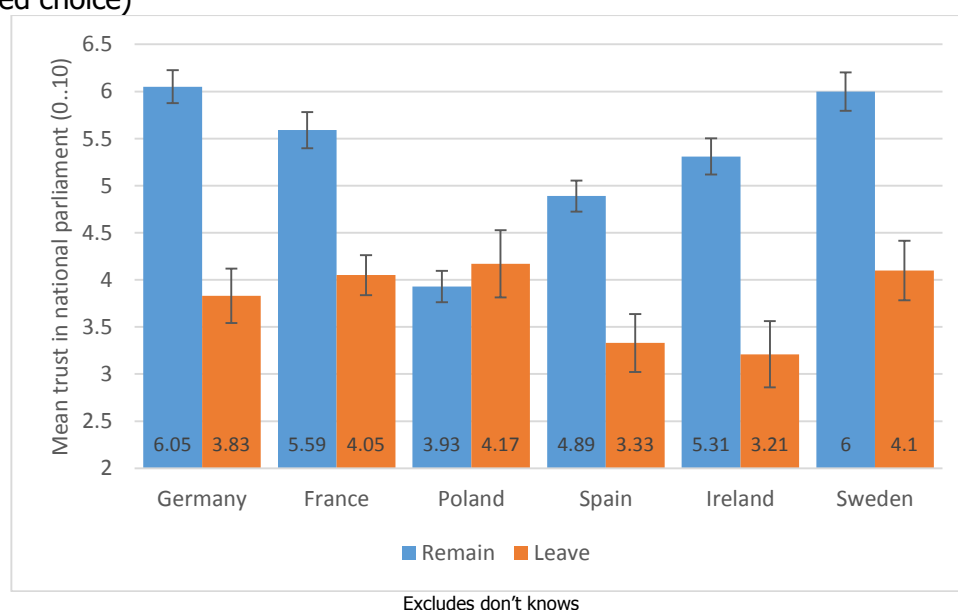
Table 16: Correlation between desirability for a reduction in EU powers and political positions and trust in national parliaments and the EU parliament by country (%)

	Correlation coefficient <sup>23</sup> with mean agreement score on EU reduction			
	Left-right position <sup>24</sup>	Migrants impact on economy <sup>25</sup>	Trust in national parliament <sup>26</sup>	Trust in EU parliament <sup>27</sup>
Germany N= 1245-1315	0.33**	-0.30**	-0.20**	-0.26**
France N= 1156-1261	0.28**	-0.39**	-0.23**	-0.27**
Poland N= 1175-1328	0.26**	-0.27**	0.12**	-0.32**
Spain N= 1321-1389	0.18**	-0.15**	0.04	-0.05
Ireland N= 833-906	0.16**	-0.46**	-0.15**	-0.24**
Sweden N= 776-813	0.24**	-0.42**	-0.26**	-0.30**

Significance values: \*\*p<0.01, \*p<0.05  
Excludes those saying "can't choose" or "don't know"

We also looked at the relationship between trust in national parliaments and a person's view on whether the UK should remain in, or leave, the EU (**Figure 7**). Those who want the UK to remain in the EU are far more trusting of their own national parliaments. It is striking how strong this relationship is in all countries surveyed except Poland.

Figure 7: Mean trust in national parliaments by view on Britain's membership in EU (forced choice)



<sup>23</sup> Pearson's r.

<sup>24</sup> Self-positioning on left-right scale: "In political matters, people often talk of 'the left' and 'the right'. Generally speaking, how would you place your views on a scale where '1' means 'the left' and '10' means 'the right'?"

<sup>25</sup> "On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is extremely bad and 10 is extremely good, would you it is generally bad or good for [Country]'s economy that migrants come to [Country] from other countries?"

<sup>26</sup> "How much trust to you have in [National parliament]?" 0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust)

<sup>27</sup> "How much trust to you have in the European Parliament?" 0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust)

Besides specific EU policy changes, we asked people for their views on the four core areas of David Cameron's renegotiation agenda with the EU (**Table 17**). Mr Cameron sought an explicit opt-out for the UK from the EU's commitment to 'ever closer union'. In the published agreement of 19 February 2016 the European Council state that it will be made clear 'that the references to ever closer union do not apply to the United Kingdom'. Few respondents disagree with this principle: in Spain, as few as 5 per cent of people disagree with the principle, rising to as high as 17 per cent in France. Between 41 per cent (in France) and 65 per cent (in Spain) of respondents agree with the principle. In short, national leaders in these six countries are under no pressure from their citizenry to try and join Mr Cameron in this opt out from 'creating an ever closer union'.

The UK's renegotiation has brought attention to what has been variously been described as multi-speed Europe, i.e. the idea that there is a core of the EU that proceeds to integrate in new areas, whilst those countries not in the core lag behind. It is clear that in the six countries surveyed there is little support for the idea of a core Europe and a strong preference for all EU member states to make decisions and advance together. Poland and Spain are least amenable to the idea of a Core Europe, perhaps stemming from a fear that such Core Europe projects could work to exclude them.

Another of Mr Cameron's stated aims in his renegotiation was to further empower national parliaments in the EU decision-making process. There are relatively small groups of people (ranging from 9 per cent in Spain to 19 per cent in Germany) in all six countries who oppose moves to strengthen national parliaments. Whilst many people neither agree nor disagree with the proposal, in all countries except Germany there are pluralities, or majorities, in favour of this proposal. In other words, the changes secured by Mr Cameron in this area might find broad favourability across the continent, although the issue remains one that a large group of people have no real view on at all (up to 40 per cent of respondents who neither agree nor disagree).

Regarding the attempt, by Mr Cameron, to change the EU's procedures to ensure that non-Eurozone countries are given greater protection, we see that those countries who use the Euro as currency (France, Germany, Ireland, and Spain) are not in favour of such rule changes, whilst those countries who do not use the Euro (Sweden and Poland) are in favour. This suggests that the changes delivered through Mr Cameron's negotiations might find broad support amongst the citizenry of EU members who are outside the Eurozone.

Table 17: Opinions about general EU policy options brought up in renegotiations with Britain (%)

	<b>Commitment to creating an 'ever closer union' in Europe<sup>28</sup></b>			<b>Core Europe: all member states to make decisions together<sup>29</sup></b>	
	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Germany N= 1221/1326	48	43	10	71	29
France N= 1243/1204	41	43	17	69	31
Poland N= 1294/1315	51	39	10	82	18
Spain N= 1374/1336	65	30	5	85	15
Ireland N= 870/888	49	37	14	67	33
Sweden N= 796/803	52	35	13	63	37
	<b>National parliaments should play a stronger role in EU<sup>30</sup></b>			<b>Alter EU decision making process to address non-Euro-members concerns<sup>31</sup></b>	
	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Germany N= 1278/1210	41	40	19	37	63
France N= 1239/1035	49	40	11	42	58
Poland N= 1306/1135	51	36	14	68	32
Spain N= 1371/1195	55	36	9	46	54
Ireland N= 866/750	58	31	11	38	62
Sweden N= 730/677	47	37	16	59	41

Excludes don't knows

<sup>28</sup> "The EU Treaties are committed to 'the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, in which decisions are taken as closely as possible to the citizen'. Do you agree with this proposition, neither agree nor disagree, or disagree?"

<sup>29</sup> "These days some people speak of a 'core Europe' where smaller groups of EU member states make some joint decisions for themselves that do not apply to all 28 members. Others argue that all of the 28 EU member states should always make decisions and develop new policies together. Which position do you agree with?" Agree: "All 28 EU member states should always make decisions together" or Disagree: "Smaller groups of EU member states should make some decisions for themselves"

<sup>30</sup> "Some people argue that the national parliaments of the EU member states should play a stronger role within the EU's decision-making process than they do now. Do you agree with this proposition, neither agree nor disagree, or disagree with this proposition?"

<sup>31</sup> "EU member states who share the Euro as their common currency often coordinate their actions in EU decision making processes. Some people have raised concerns that this disadvantages non-Euro member states and therefore decision-making rules should be changed, while others have suggested that decision-making rules should not be altered because of this. Which comes closest to your own view?" Agree: "EU decision making processes should be altered to address concerns by non-Euro member states" or Disagree: "EU decision making processes should not be altered because of this"

Despite these evaluations, however, it is important to note that these issues of EU policymaking and procedure seem to be elite concerns at large (**Table 18**). On each of the four issues discussed above, the level of 'Don't Know' responses increases the less formal education a person has completed. For example, on the principle of 'ever closer union', whilst 62 per cent of those educated to tertiary level have a view, one way or another, only 47 per cent of those with primary and lower secondary education have a view. The pattern is similar on the question of strengthening national parliaments. Whilst there are generally far fewer 'Don't Know' responses, at all education levels, to the question about new decision-making processes to protect the non-Eurozone members and the question about a Core Europe, the same pattern holds: the less formal education you have completed, the more likely you are to reply 'Don't Know'.

Table 18: Rate of indecision or Don't Know on general EU policy options (%)

		<b>'Ever closer union'</b>	<b>Stronger national parliaments</b>	<b>Euro countries decision making</b>	<b>Core Europe</b>
		Neither/ nor or Don't Know	Neither/ nor or Don't Know	Don't Know	Don't Know
Total N=8002	Primary and lower secondary education	53	50	34	19
	Upper secondary education	50	48	25	14
	Tertiary education	38	39	18	10
	<b>Total</b>	47	46	25	14

## 5. Beyond Britain: Views on similar processes in other countries

A final issue that we set out to explore was whether people in other EU member states would like a similar process to that currently underway in the UK for their own country. In France a majority of people would like a referendum on EU membership (53 per cent) and in Sweden, Germany, and Spain there are more respondents in favour of holding a similar referendum than opposed (**Table 19**). In Poland and Ireland the opposite is true, with more people not wanting a referendum than wanting one.

This is a complex issue and it should not be assumed that higher percentages wanting a referendum equates to a more eurosceptic public. Eurosceptics who think that a referendum would result in their side losing the argument may seem think holding a referendum poses too high a risk; they could see the issue settled in a way contra their preferences for a generation or more. Conversely, in countries where there is a growing euroscepticism, those who are more pro-EU might want a referendum to deliver a national verdict on the issue, hoping to settle it.



Table 19: Wish for own country to hold similar referendum as Britain<sup>32</sup> by country (%)

	I would like [my country] to hold a referendum on its EU membership	I would not like [my country] to hold a referendum on its EU membership	Don't know
Germany N= 1500	45	40	15
France N= 1500	53	29	18
Poland N= 1500	39	45	16
Spain N= 1500	47	39	13
Ireland N= 1000	38	49	14
Sweden N= 1002	49	33	18

If a referendum were held in the six countries it seems that the outcome would be a firm affirmation of EU membership in Germany, Poland, Spain, and Ireland (**Table 20**). In France and Sweden, however, less than 50 per cent of respondents say that they would vote to remain in the EU. There are noticeably more respondents who are undecided in those two countries than in the other four countries surveyed, but also noticeably more respondents firm to vote for their country to leave the EU.

Table 20: Preference if a referendum on own country's membership in the EU were to be held<sup>33</sup> by country (%)

	Would vote to remain	Would vote to leave	Don't know
Germany N= 1500	60	27	14
France N= 1500	45	33	22
Poland N= 1500	66	20	14
Spain N= 1500	68	18	14
Ireland N= 1000	69	18	13
Sweden N= 1002	42	37	21

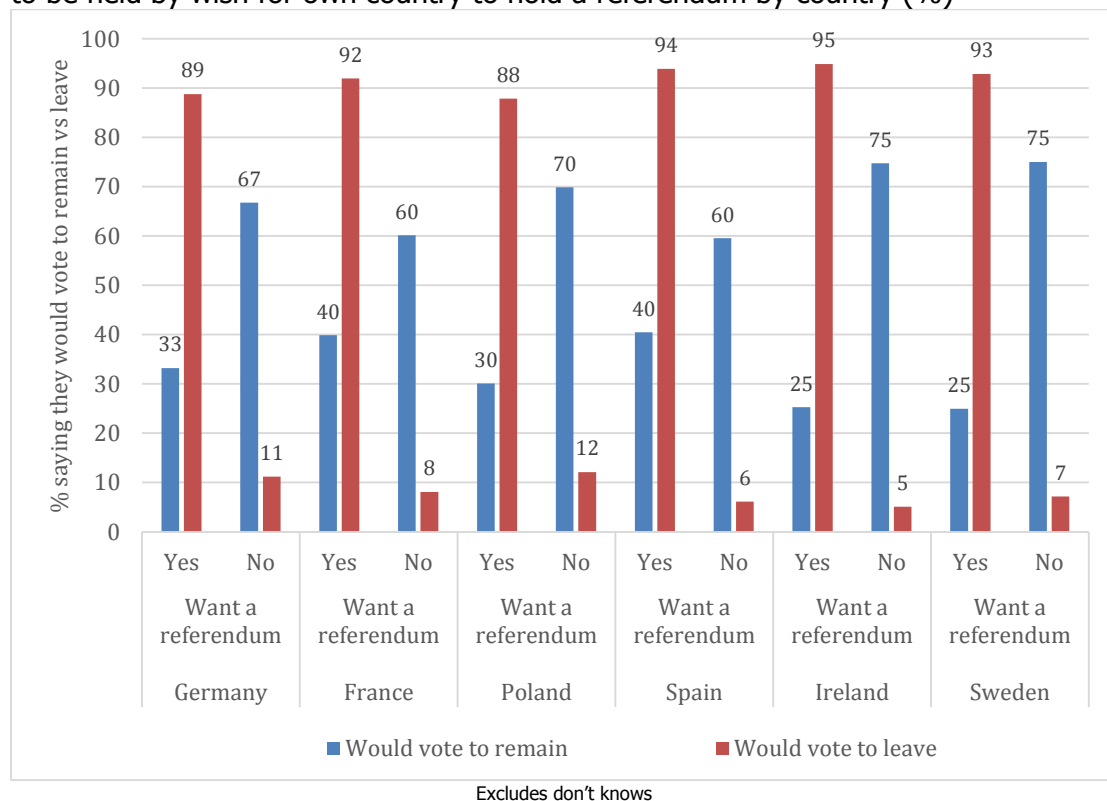
In **Figure 12** we explore the relationship between preference for a referendum and preference about whether to stay in, or leave, the EU. The overwhelming majority of those who want their country to leave the EU would like to have a referendum. Taking into consideration that a majority of respondents said they would vote for their country to remain in the EU (Table 20), for those respondents in Germany, Poland, Spain, and Ireland who want to leave the EU this suggests either a high degree of confidence that they can shift public opinion significantly to secure their desired outcome, or that they are not thinking strategically about the issue.

<sup>32</sup> "Now thinking of [own country], what do you think about holding a similar type of referendum as in Britain in which people would be asked whether they wanted [own country] to remain part of the EU or to leave the EU?"

<sup>33</sup> "If a referendum on [own country]'s membership in the EU were to be held, would you vote for [own country] to remain a member of the EU or to leave the EU?"

Amongst those who want their country to remain in the EU the divide is less stark however clear majorities within this group in all six countries do not want to hold a referendum. In France and Spain the gap is the narrowest, with 40 per cent of those who want their country to remain in the EU also favouring a referendum. This indicates that there may be a variety of rationales to back a referendum, other than holding a referendum to change the status quo of EU membership. In the case of Spain that might be a rational bet, as it seems the country would indeed vote to remain. This is not the case for France, however, where 40 per cent of those who want to remain in the EU would also back a referendum.

Figure 12: Preference if a referendum on own country’s membership in the EU were to be held by wish for own country to hold a referendum by country (%)



Asking people to think in a more nuanced way about their country’s long-term policy towards the EU it is apparent that in France, Sweden, and Ireland majorities hold broadly eurosceptic attitudes, if we define that as including a preference for remaining in the EU but trying to reduce the EU’s powers (**Table 21**). Yet, these levels of euroscepticism are still substantially lower than the levels recorded in the UK (between 65 and 70 per cent). France is the country with the largest set of extreme views – if we measure extreme as wanting to either leave the EU or, conversely, work for the formation of a single European government (38 per cent of French respondents prefer one of those two options). Poland and Ireland are least susceptible to extreme responses at either end of the scale, with Germany, Spain, and Sweden falling in between.

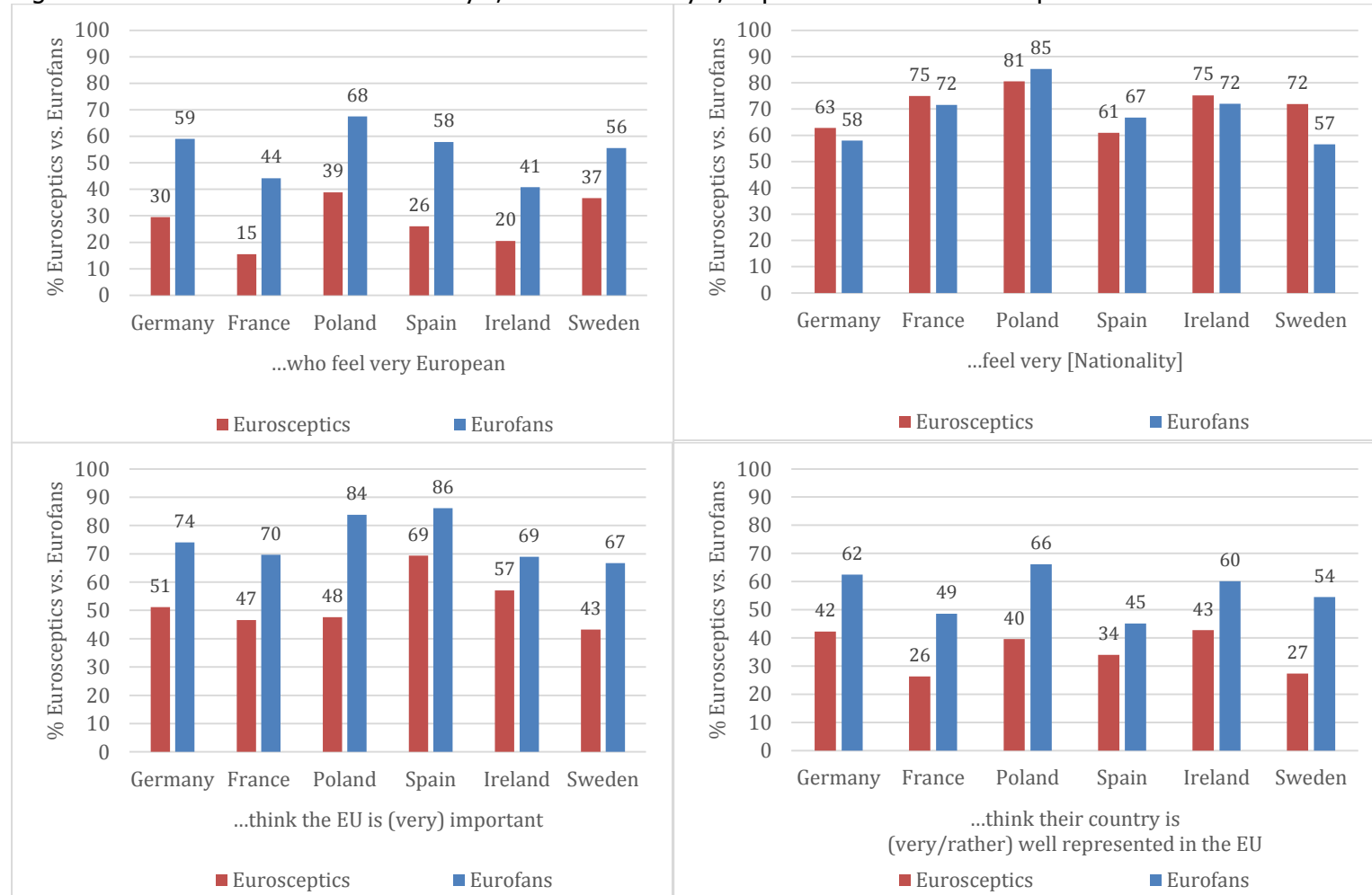
Table 21: Wish for what own country's long-term policy towards the EU should be by country (%)

	Leave the European Union	Stay in the EU and try to reduce the EU's powers	Leave things as they are	Stay in the EU and try to increase the EU's powers	Work for formation of a single European government	Don't Know
Germany N= 1500	16	20	9	27	17	10
France N= 1500	24	23	8	16	14	16
Poland N= 1500	9	26	22	22	6	14
Spain N= 1500	11	22	14	24	18	11
Ireland N= 1000	11	34	19	15	9	11
Sweden N= 1002	27	25	14	12	5	18

Across all countries, Eurofans (wishing for their country's long-term strategy to be to stay in the EU and increase powers or work towards a single EU government) are more likely to feel very European, more often think that the EU is (very) important, and more often think that their country is well represented in the EU in contrast to Eurosceptics (wishing for their country's long-term strategy to be to leave the EU or significantly reduce its powers, **Figure 13**). Especially in France and Sweden, Eurosceptics often think their country is (rather) badly represented in the EU.

It is noteworthy in this context, though, that there are no big differences in terms of national identity between Eurofans and Eurosceptics across countries. Only in Sweden are there considerably more Eurosceptics than Eurofans who report feeling very national, in that case very Swedish (72 per cent vs. 57 per cent). In Poland and Spain, there are even larger shares of Eurofans than Eurosceptics who report to feel very strong about their nationality.

Figure 13: Attitudes towards EU identity<sup>34</sup>, national identity<sup>35</sup>, importance of EU<sup>36</sup> and representation within EU<sup>37</sup> for Eurosceptics vs. Eurofans<sup>38</sup>



Excludes don't knows

<sup>34</sup> "Below is a scale from 1 to 7 to describe to what extent you think of yourself as European. The more European you feel, the further to the right you would put yourself. The less European you feel, the further to the left you would put yourself. Where would you put yourself on this scale?" 1 (Not at all European) to 7 (Very strongly European)

<sup>35</sup> "And here is a similar scale I would like you to use to describe to what extent you think of yourself as [Nationality]. Where would you put yourself on this scale?" 1 (Not at all [Nationality]) to 7 (Very strongly [Nationality])

<sup>36</sup> "In general, how important or unimportant is the European Union to you personally?" 1 (very important) to 5 (very unimportant)

<sup>37</sup> "How well or badly do you think [COUNTRY OF RESPONDENT]'s interests are represented in the European Union?" 1 (very well represented) to 4 (very badly represented)

<sup>38</sup> Where Eurosceptics are those who wish for their country's long-term strategy to be to leave the EU or significantly reduce its powers and Eurofans are those who wish for their country's long-term strategy to be to stay in the EU and increase powers or work towards a single EU government

## 6. Concluding remarks

Views on the UK's EU referendum are complex and diverse for the six countries we surveyed. Our findings suggest that there is not one simple narrative that explains what people across different member states think of the UK, and what they think of the implications of this process for the EU more generally, and their countries in particular. There is no majority support in any of the countries for Britain to leave the EU. However, the degree to which people want the UK to remain part of the union varies significantly, with France being the least favourable. Also, there was variation in the evaluation of who benefits most from Britain's membership of the EU. While more people in France and Germany thought Britain benefited more than the EU does from its membership, the opposite was the case in Ireland, Poland and Sweden.

If Britain left the EU, there is no agreement in the publics of the six countries whether it should be allowed to be a member of the single market or not. While there is support for the proposition in Poland, Germany and Ireland, more respondents in France and Spain reject the idea than are in support of it. Across these countries people also tend to be against exceptional treatments for Britain to encourage a British vote to remain a member. Yet, different proposals have varying levels of support and those who have any personal experiences with Britain are shown to be more likely to support exceptions for Britain.

This rejection of exceptional treatment for Britain, however, should not be read as opposition to reforms of the EU more generally that could follow from some of the proposals made by the UK government in the renegotiations. There is general agreement in all six countries with the proposition that workers should have to work for some time in a new country first before being allowed to receive benefits (however, few people support as long a time frame as four years). Also, there is support in all countries to reduce the EU's ability to regulate businesses. Other proposals gather agreement in some, but not all countries. Reducing access to welfare benefits for EU migrants is seen as positive in most countries, including Germany, France and Ireland, and to a lesser extent in Poland, but people in Spain tend to disagree. Ending the EU's control over people's work hours is shown to have strong support in France and to some extent in Germany and Sweden. Other proposals are consistently rejected (or at least not supported), in particular the end to free movement to live and work and access to free healthcare.

Overall, people who position themselves to the right of the economic spectrum are more likely to want to see a reduction in EU powers. Those who think that migrants overall benefit the economy are less likely to want to see a reduction in powers. Similarly, those who trust their national parliament or the EU parliament more are less likely to want to see a reduction in powers, so institutional trust matters. However, the findings about trust do not hold in Spain where there was no such relationship.

When it comes to changes on EU principles, procedures and structures several of the established norms are still favoured by majorities in all countries surveyed. There is consistent agreement with the principle of creating 'an ever closer union' as prescribed in the treaties and opposition to the idea of a 'core Europe', with a continued desire for decisions to be taken jointly. However there is support for the idea that national parliaments could play a stronger role in EU decision-making in all countries. Views are split on protecting countries outside the Eurozone from decisions taken within in a predictable manner: those who use the Euro (Germany, France, Spain and Ireland)

oppose special provisions for those who do not use it, while Poland and Sweden – outside of the Eurozone – favour such provisions. It is important to note however that these debates clearly take place at a more elite level. They are not policy debates that many people find intuitive to engage with. This is reflected in a relatively high number of 'don't know' or undecided responses for many of these questions.

In some of the countries surveyed people would like to follow the British example and hold a referendum on their country's membership of the EU. The strongest majority for a referendum is found in France, but also in Sweden, and to a lesser extent Spain and Germany, there are more people in favour of holding a referendum than are opposed. However, there is no universal support: more people in Ireland and Poland reject the idea than support it.

If such referenda were held, generally there would be more people in favour of remaining in the EU than would vote to leave. However, the difference between those on favour of remaining and those ready to vote to leave is rather small in Sweden, followed by France. Although in both countries 'Remain'-supporters have a clear advantage, that advantage is considerably smaller than in the other four countries. In all countries, those who want a referendum are more likely to support their country leaving the EU, while those who oppose a referendum are more likely to want their country to remain. The extent of the difference varies between countries.

Across all countries those who wish for an increase in powers at the European level feel more European affectively, evaluate the EU as important, and also think that their own country is well represented in the EU. When differentiating between supporters and opponents of more European integration the pragmatic evaluation of one's own country's representation is most important in France and Sweden (though the relationship is substantial in all countries). On the contrary, those "Eurosceptics" and "Eurofans" do not differ very much in terms of their country's national identity (with the exception of Sweden where those who are in favour of leaving the EU or who want to reduce the power of the EU are substantially more likely to feel more Swedish).

The UK's EU referendum gives us an opportunity to review the relationship between the UK and the rest of the EU, not only from an elite perspective, but also in terms of public views. This report has shown that there are significant differences of opinion across EU member states on the role of the UK. Beyond Britain's role we have been able to show that the desire for joint decision making remains substantial amongst the people in the countries surveyed and that exceptions for individual countries are not favoured. However, at the same time there is a willingness to engage with changes to certain EU policies, balanced by a reluctance to give up principles that represent the substantive framework of the EU.

This suggests that in the context of the UK's EU referendum and the future of the EU more broadly public views require some careful attention and cannot be assumed to be universal across the continent. There is a danger of having some reform discussions at a highly abstract level that does not allow for the engagement of the public. When people feel that they are not represented well their views about their own country's EU membership sours. The UK's EU referendum should not just be seen as an opportunity to revise EU-level policies, but also a chance to reappraise how such changes may be perceived by publics across the EU.