

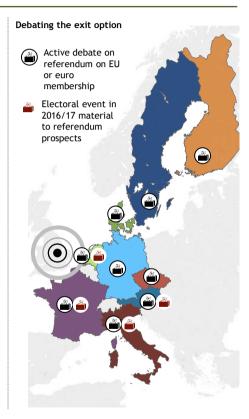
The exit option

How contagious could Brexit be?

The exit option



- The UK referendum vote on leaving the EU is reverberating across EU politics in a range of ways. Economic and market volatility has brought to the boil a simmering banking crisis in Italy. The huge implications of British exit for the Republic of Ireland have triggered a febrile debate on Ireland's ability to insulate itself from the implied economic disruption. In the UK itself, the political settlement of the British union has been called into question by the apparent divergence of Scots and English on the question of continued EU membership. These are all clearly material and important examples of 'contagion' from the vote. In the Italian case, they have potential wider implications for the stability and political and policy consensus of the EU.
- Many things can destabilise the EU, but only political choices can dismantle it. For now, the Brexit vote has established a new point of reference in European politics: that the EU has an exit door, membership is contingent and integration reversible. It is hard to overstate the importance of this new political fact. It will reframe the aims of many European eurosceptics and create a unique test case for life after the EU. The focus of this overview is on political actors in the EU who will take inspiration from this choice, and who may be in a position to act on it in the months and years ahead. Focusing on the scope for referendums on the UK model, it assesses the prospect of others following the UK towards the exit door.
- Other European governments are acutely aware of the way that the British experiment will be watched by their own domestic eurosceptics. This will shape their domestic politics and their demands of Brussels, especially in areas such as migration and demands for policy flexibility. It will shape the way they manage the UK's transition out of the EU and the terms of its future relationship with the EU.



Referendum watch: summary assessment



Country		The route to a referendum	Support referendum	Support EU exit
France	The Front National is pledged to a referendum and radical change to the EU	A FN presidency could trigger a referendum. Alternatively, a referendum can be triggered by a petition containing the signatures of 20% of deputies and 10% of the electorate.	45%1	33%1
Italy	The M5S opposition has pledged a consultative referendum on membership of the euro	If the Renzi government is derailed by the autumn referendum he could lose to a M5S challenge in a snap election. M5S have pledged to hold a consultative referendum on euro membership.	No post- referendum poll	25% ²
Austria	The FPÖ has yet to pledge to hold a referendum, but the idea is popular with activists	A referendum would require an FPÖ majority win in the 2018 parliamentary election and a parliamentary majority for a non-binding plebiscite.	40%³	23%³
Netherlands	The PVV support a referendum on leaving the EU	Holding a non-binding referendum would require majority support for a change to Dutch referendum law after the 2017 Parliamentary election, which is possible but unlikely.	47%4	40%4
Denmark	The Danish People's Party advocates a referendum on EU membership and favours withdrawal	An advisory referendum could be a condition of DPP support for a government after the next election. It requires a majority parliamentary vote.	32%5	31%5
Sweden	The Sweden Democrats advocate a referendum on EU membership and favour withdrawal	An advisory referendum can be held with simple parliamentary approval. However, the cordon sanitaire around the SD mean this would probably require a SD-led government, which is highly unlikely.	30%6	31%6
Germany	The AfD wants changes to Germany's constitution to allow a referendum on euro membership	Germany's constitution forbids national plebiscites; a change would require an implausible supermajority in the Bundestag.	No post- referendum poll	No post- referendum poll
Czech Republic	President Zeman advocates a referendum on membership but supports remaining in the EU	A referendum would require a special law to be passed to allow a referendum on EU membership, which is outside the current scope of permitted issues for public plebiscites.	No post- referendum poll	15% ⁷
Finland	The Finns are divided on an EU referendum	An advisory referendum can be held with simple parliamentary approval, but there is no support beyond the Finns for such a referendum.	41%8	32%8

Sources: 1) TNS-Sofres 29 June, 2) IPSOS 4 July, 3) Austrian Society for European Politics 9 July, 4) Peil 27 June, 5) Voxmeter 4 July, 6) Sifo 27 June, 11 April, 7) CVVM 30 June, 8) Iltalehti 30 June

Politics and public opinion: summary assessment

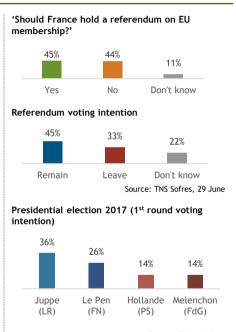


Markets to watch	Electoral events conducted in the full glare of current European tensions make the Italian referendum in October/November 2016 and the French elections in Spring 2017 key moments of potential volatility. Both could intensify the prospects of destabilising debates on EU participation. Euroscepticism in the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Finland is sufficiently embedded to exert a material influence on both politics and policy over the next eighteen months, not least on exit terms for the UK.
Public opinion	Support for the EU has risen in many markets, but a reflexive defence of the status quo in the face of the UK's rejection is a misleading indicator of the real impact of the UK decision on EU public opinion. The true impact of the British experiment will come a year or more from now, when a sense of its economic impact has begun to clarify. Especially for non-Eurozone countries, this will be the point at which political pressure to reassess European commitments potentially becomes more acute, not least if the intervening years in European politics have been messy ones. Denmark and Sweden merit particular attention here.
Impact on policy and legislation As EU governments try to contain domestic versions of the British reassessment of EU, they will economic reform agenda will become more susceptible to delays or blocks where domestic production interests are strong. Flagship programmes on digital sectors, capital markets and energy will be legalistic and aspire more explicitly to extra-territorial application. Pressure for special treatme aid cases, deficit procedures and competition inquiries will increase. But the bigger questions of Brexit demands more political integration - and whether rights of non-EEA migrants should be curbave both proponents and opponents among vulnerable member states. Crucially for any firm de EU-UK trade, these imperatives will shape the terms offered to the UK on its way out.	
The deeper problem	Brexit is a specific choice, but also a symptom. The political drivers of the Brexit choice are widely recognisable across the EU. A sense of economic insecurity, anti-establishment sentiment and a desire to reassert control over the composition and change of societies are all features of politics that link the Brexit debate to continental politics, even if voters in the EU do not ultimately conclude that the EU itself is part of the problem - or at least that dismantling or leaving it is part of the solution.

France



- France's presidential election in Spring 2017 makes it the single most important channel for Brexit contagion by far. Not unexpectedly, Front National leader Marine Le Pen stood out as continental Europe's most vocal endorser of the British choice calling for a French referendum and 'Frexit'. Across the rest of the French political spectrum, the result was generally interpreted as an indictment of a European integration model overly focused on economic liberalisation. The result was also treated with a notable finality there is little sign that the French political class would welcome or encourage a change of heart across the channel.
- A French referendum on membership of the EU is in the gift of the presidency. Alternatively, France's new referendum law compels the administration to hold a referendum supported by a petition containing the signatures of 20% of MPs and 10% of the electorate. Although the Front National do not explicitly advocate leaving the EU, and imply an interest in a continued treaty-based arrangement between EU states, their policy agenda is incompatible with a European Union or single currency zone that in any way resembles the status quo. Some polling suggests that support for a referendum on the British model in France is somewhat short of half of voters, with a third of voters supporting the idea of exit.
- The French political establishment will now be focused on undercutting the FN in presidential and legislative elections in Spring 2017. This is not simply a question of quarantining Le Pen with a grand coalition of left and right votes: the right in particular has continued to follow the Front National into antimmigration territory a "Schengen 2" limiting free movement inside the EU to EU/EEA citizens and partial dilutions to the freedom of movement in the EU have both been floated.



Source: BVA, 16 June

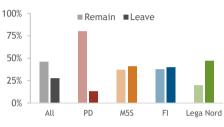
Key dates		
April/May 2017	Presidential elections	
May/June 2017	Parliamentary elections	

Italy



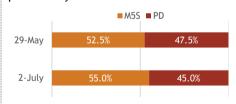
- With the headwind of the Italian banking crisis, the constitutional reform referendum due in the autumn is now the main risk to Italian political stability and a potential step closer to a EU/euro referendum. The referendum will seek voter approval for Renzi's proposals to strip the Italian Senate of some of its current powers. Although most voters agree with the proposals, polls also suggest that many Italians will use this opportunity to punish the Renzi government. Renzi has staked his administration on the referendum and the bank recapitalisation issue will have concrete impact Renzi is looking for enough flexibility from Brussels to avoid a politically unpopular bail-in of retail bondholders. A defeat could lead to his departure and possibly early elections, with a material possibility of a Five Star Movement majority.
- While not opposing EU membership per se, the Five Star Movement has called for a consultative referendum on euro membership. Despite referendums on Italy's membership of international bodies being banned by the Italian Constitution, a significant plurality (42%) of Italians would favour holding one on membership of the EU itself, and perhaps a quarter of Italians (including pluralities of Northern League, Forza Italia, and Five Star Movement voters) would vote to leave the EU. The right wing Lega Nord has long supported a UK-style referendum on EU membership.
- The Five Star Movement's popularity has remained buoyant since the UK vote. Post-UK referendum polls suggest it has sufficient potential support to defeat Matteo Renzi's Democratic Party in the second round of a parliamentary election under the new Italian system. If Renzi loses in the autumn and an election is triggered, this could bring the prospect of an Italian referendum on Europe a step closer.

Voting intention in hypothetical referendum on EU membership



Source: IPSOS, 4 July

Voting intention in second round of parliamentary elections



Source: EMG, 5 July

Key dates

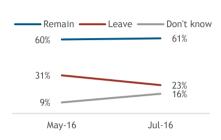
	•			
October 2016		Constitutional referendum		
	Before end 2018	General election		

Austria



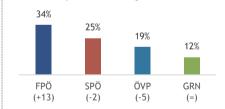
- Austrian political parties' contradictory responses to the UK result were a symptom of a wider fracturing of a longstanding domestic consensus on EU affairs. Far-right FPÖ leader Heinz-Christian Strache congratulated Britain "for regaining [its] sovereignty... paving the way for democracy and against the political status quo, but also against the continuing migration madness". The FPÖ has not committed to a referendum on membership, but political and public support for a referendum on EU membership is growing at 40% of voters. Support for continued membership remains relatively high and support for exit has slumped since the UK vote.
- The re-run of the presidential election ordered by judges for October is set to be dominated by EU issues and migration, with the traditional mainstream parties absent. The razor-thin victory of Green Party presidential candidate Alexander Van der Ballen over FPÖ candidate Rainer Hofer followed an unprecedented rejection of the governing centrist parties. That race was dominated by debate over Europe's response to the refugee crisis, and Hofer has already indicated that the Brexit issues of sovereignty, budget contributions and migration will play a major role in his renewed campaign. If he wins, he can be expected to use the platform assertively and it cannot be ruled out that the FPÖ could campaign in 2018 on a referendum pledge.
- A referendum in Austria would require an FPÖ win in the general election of 2018, and a parliamentary majority for a vote. The EU-UK negotiations will be watched closely by eurosceptics. Perceived favourable exit terms, renewed UK control of migration policy and likely increases in Austria's net contribution to the EU budget are all likely to be points of reference for domestic politicians.

Austria EU referendum voting intention



Source: Austrian Society for European Politics, 9 July

Parliamentary election voting intention



Source: Gallup, 6 July

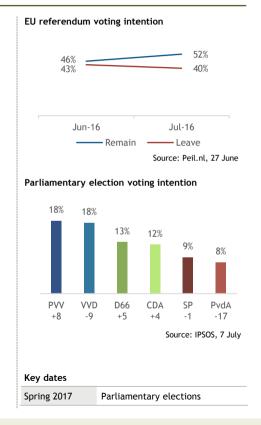
Key dates

October 2016	Re-run of presidential election
Due 2018	Parliamentary election

The Netherlands



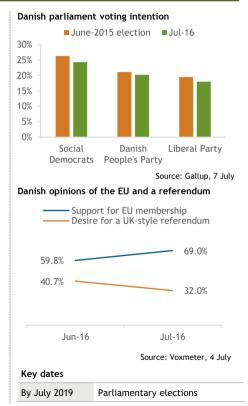
- The 2017 Dutch election will see a pro-EU referendum PVV provide a serious challenge to an enfeebled governing coalition. The PVV has maintained a narrow lead in opinion polls as the largest party, with projected gains in the spring 2017 election. The combined support for the two government parties has fallen to just 26% down from 52% at the 2012 general election.
- PVV leader Geert Wilders has followed Marine Le Pen in demanding that the Netherlands hold its own referendum on EU membership. The PVV backs withdrawal from both the single currency and the EU and much tighter limits on migration and cooperation with other EU states. Post-Brexit vote polling suggests that the Dutch appetite for a referendum has fallen, although around four in ten Dutch voters would still support leaving the European Union.
- A referendum on EU membership would require a majority win for the PVV or a minority government sufficiently dependent on PVV support to concede a change to referendum laws both are unlikely. The fragmented Dutch party system means that Wilders and the PVV are likely to be quarantined by one of a number of possible coalitions between the right and left. All other mainstream political leaders have rejected the idea of a referendum. However, the latent support for a looser relationship with the EU emphasises how carefully the Rutte government are going to have to handle perceptions of a favourable UK exit from the EU. Especially if the UK appears to be retaining market access rights while tightening migration policy a touchstone issue for both hardline and moderate Dutch eurosceptics.



Denmark



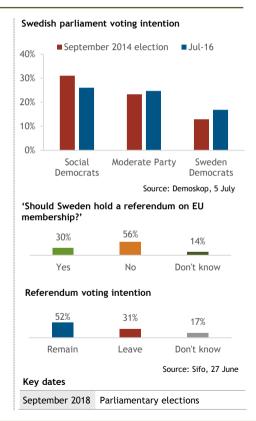
- Calls for an EU referendum in Denmark have been temporarily checked by a post-UK vote boost in pro-European sentiment. The result has had a totemic quality in Denmark because it joined the European Economic Community in the same year as the UK and has had a similar, arm's length and sometimes ambivalent attitude towards European integration. The Danish People's Party (DPP) have called for a referendum and provides critical support for the minority centre-right Danish government, offering them considerable potential leverage. A non-binding referendum in Denmark requires a majority vote in parliament.
- While a 10% boost in pro-EU support since June has probably checked the immediate momentum for a referendum, there is no guarantee that this sentiment will be sustained. DPP leader Kristian Thulesen Dahl has deliberately played a longer game, suggesting that Denmark should support a constructive exit from the EU for the UK and then put the idea of a similar package to Danes. In principle, a strong DPP showing in the next election, which could take place well before 2019 due to ongoing government instability, could put them in a position to force a new government to concede a referendum.
- For this reason, combined with its position outside the Eurozone, Denmark is particularly exposed to proof of concept from the UK experience. Denmark had its own referendum in December 2015 on participation in a number of EU justice and home affairs frameworks. Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen is now bound by this to negotiate a Danish exit from formal participation in Europol, the EU's policing cooperation body. Like David Cameron before him, Rasmussen's basic problem will be securing outcomes that neutralise domestic eurosceptics rather than reinforcing their appetite, especially with the UK example across the North Sea.



Sweden



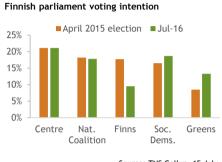
- The Sweden Democrats (SD) have advocated a renegotiation of Sweden's terms of membership of the EU in advance of an in/out referendum. Jimmie Åkesson, leader of the Swedish Democrats, welcomed the UK result, though he stopped short of demanding an immediate referendum. Perhaps conscious of public support for EU membership, he instead called for Sweden to follow the UK's approach by first demanding a renegotiation of the terms of membership with a view to a looser, free trade agreement approach outside of the single market.
- The SD have forced major changes to Sweden's immigration framework and could, in principle, exert similar pressure on policy on a referendum. An advisory referendum in Sweden can be held if approved by a simple majority in the Riksdag. However, unlike Denmark and Finland, the SD have been isolated by a cordon sanitaire of both the centre-right block, led by the Moderates, and the centre-left block, led by the governing Social Democrats. Therefore, the chances of a parliamentary majority in favour of a referendum are slim in the short-term, though the SD success over immigration policy demonstrates their campaigning strength and relative ruthlessness in capitalising on a crisis.
- Core Swedish support for membership of the EU remains comparatively strong, with over half of Swedes favouring membership and against a referendum. However, latent euroscepticism is also relatively strong, with a large pool of floating voters, large majorities believing that the EU is moving in the wrong direction and as few as one in ten voters strongly supportive of the idea of closer integration. This, coupled with non-Euro status makes Sweden fertile ground for a stronger shift in public opinion if the Brexit choice appears to be working for the UK.



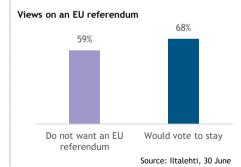
Finland



- As in other European countries, the Brexit vote has had a chilling effect on Finnish euroscepticism. Support for an EU referendum markedly decreased following the UK vote, falling to below a third. Meanwhile, over two thirds of Finns would vote to stay in the EU, a much stronger endorsement than the 57% that voted to join the EU in 1994 and an increase of 10 points since a similar poll conducted in spring 2016. As in other Nordic countries, an advisory referendum like the one Finland held in 1994 before joining the EU only requires a majority vote in parliament. However the two other coalition parties are strongly pro-European. The prospects for a referendum therefore remain limited.
- Advocacy for a UK-style referendum in Finland is limited to the Finns Party, though the party has softened its demand for a referendum since entering government in 2015. Having a referendum was not one of the party's key demands for joining a coalition, and government has had a significant moderating effect on the party's European platform. It has also taken a significant toll on the party, whose support has halved since last year. The party remains divided on the issue the youth wing of the Finns launched a petition supporting a vote in the wake of the UK result and leader Timo Soini supports one, but the senior leadership remain divided on the issue.
- Euro membership has also exerted a moderating pull on Finnish euroscepticism. As the only Nordic country in the Eurozone, with no opt-outs, Finland is more integrated into the EU than its neighbours. Kaj Tarunen, the Finns MP who chairs the parliamentary commerce committee, has said that "a [Finnish] currency doesn't have any chance".



Source: TNS Gallup, 15 July



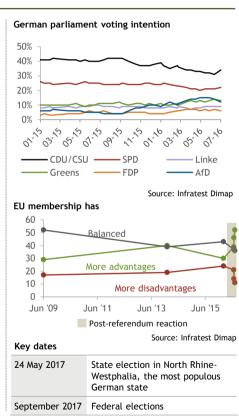
Kev dates

September 2018 Parliamentary elections

Germany



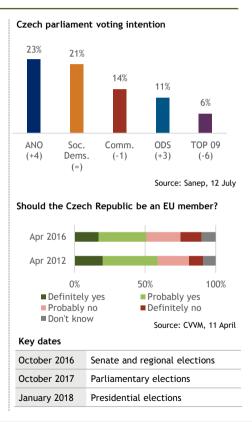
- The initial public response to the referendum vote in Germany has been a sharp spike in general support for the EU. A series of polls in the wake of the vote have all shown a sharp reversal of sliding satisfaction with Germany's place in the EU. We can expect this picture to potentially become more nuanced however over the next year as an initial sense of protectiveness of the EU erodes. Small gains for the CDU/CSU have provided some respite from the battering of the refugee crisis but this may not last. Negotiations between the EU27 and the UK may play to Merkel's pragmatism and her ability to frame defence of German interests as European.
- The eurosceptic Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) is divided over its own response to the issue and took no immediate dividend from the UK vote. The AfD supports changes to Germany's constitutional prohibition on referendums to allow for votes on 'existential' questions, and supports a referendum on membership of the single currency. While the AfD leadership is relatively moderate on more fundamental changes to the EU, activist views span a very wide spectrum, including German exit of the EU altogether. A change to the German constitution to allow a referendum requires a two thirds supermajority in both houses of parliament.
- The relative marginalisation of the AfD is likely to facilitate a pragmatic German approach to the consequences of UK exit. However, it has divided the Grand Coalition on the question of the EU's own internal political response. The SPD have called for further EU integration and a revision of the EU's tough fiscal framework. Merkel and the CDU with the AfD in mind have been more cautious and as on Greece, the SPD's focus on European solidarity and closer collective action is likely to be moving faster than German public opinion will ultimately warrant.



Czech Republic



- Among the CEE states, the Czech Republic looks most politically vulnerable to demands for a fundamental reversal of integration with the EU. These demands could intensify in the next 18 months from two large opposition parties: centre-right eurosceptics from the Civic Democratic Union (ODS) and the Communists. Neither party backs a referendum, although the ODS opposes euro membership and is generally committed to a more decentralised EU.
- Czech President Miloš Zeman has spoken in favour of a referendum. Zeman has publicly supported the idea of a referendum on the Czech Republic's EU and NATO membership but like David Cameron said he would campaign against leaving the EU. The leaders of the biggest parties in the coalition government Social-Democrat Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka and Finance Minister Andrej Babiš from ANO have both rejected the idea of a referendum, calling instead for EU reform aimed at more efficient tackling of common external threats, like migration, terrorism and excessive influence from Russia.
- The new referendum bill, if enacted, will allow the president to call plebiscites on various issues, but not on EU membership. The parliament is currently debating a government-backed proposal to enable the president of the Republic to call a nationwide referendum after receiving a public petition signed by at least 250,000 registered Czech voters. A majority would subsequently need to vote in favour of a proposal for it to pass, with a minimum turnout of 25%. However a number of key issues budgets, taxes, fundamental rights or international relations (including EU membership) would not be subject to such plebiscites. The Czech Republic has held a nationwide referendum only once in its history in 2003, when a special law had to be enacted for a one-off plebiscite on EU entry.





The eurosceptics and revisionists



		Core n	nanifesto on EU membership	Current polling
	Geert Wilders and the PVV have significant public support for positions on both a referendum and EU withdrawal, but the Dutch multi-party system creates multiple options for keeping them from government if they cannot win an outright majority. Wilders called the UK vote a revolt against the Europhile elite.		ding referendum on EU membership thdrawal from Eurozone thdrawal from the EU strictions on migration and minimal operation with EU	21% (GfK, 25 July)
OF) Dansk Folkeparti	Kristian Thulesen Dahl and the DPP are betting that a successful UK exit will place them in a strong position at the next election to demand a similar referendum in Denmark as a condition of support for government - or to offer one as a majority government.	ond With	ferendum on Danish EU membership ce the British terms of exit are clear thdrawal from the EU ong hostility to free movement of ople and immigration	20% (Gallup, 7 July)
Sprigolemokraterns	Jimmie Åkesson and the SD support a Swedish renegotiation and a referendum, and are calculating that just as they have pulled Sweden into tougher migration restrictions, they can capitalise on Brexit to secure a similar vote on membership.	Ref	position to euro membership ferendum on EU membership EU based purely on inter-government operation negotiation of Swedish membership of EEU	,
	EU withdrawal		Radical EU reform	General decentralisati

The eurosceptics and revisionists



		Core n	nanifesto on EU membership		Current polling
FRONT	Marine Le Pen and the French Front National propose a revised approach to EU integration so fundamental that it would leave the EU unrecognisable. Her 2017 presidency bid is the single most important potential trigger for further political destabilisation of the EU.	RerFreincResWit	erendum on EU membership negotiation of the EU Treaties to nch sovereignty in a range of are luding agriculture and migration stored primacy of French law thdrawal from the euro nch contribution to EU budget ne	eas	28% (BVA, 10 July)
FPO	The FPÖ have never explicitly backed the idea of Austrian departure from the EU, but the migration crisis and the prospect of a bigger financial contribution post-Brexit is hardening views. The party's platform is explicitly decentralising and anti-migration.	■ An wit	Ferendum on EU membership economic rather than a political h greater decentralisation hits on immigration to Austria	union	34% (Gallup, 6 July)
Perus	The Finns remain divided on the question of a referendum on membership, with leader Timo Soini and parts of the youth activist base in particular in favour, but many in the party - which is currently in government - against.	ref sof gov	tical of the EU and advocates a erendum on EU membership but l tened its advocacy for it since en rernment stility towards free movement		10% (TNS Gallup, 15 July)
	EU withdrawal		Radical EU reform		General decentralisati

The eurosceptics and revisionists



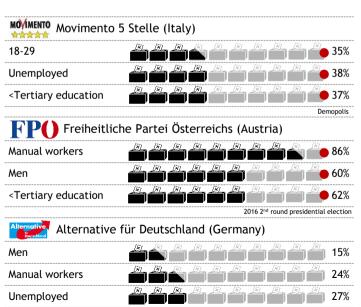
		Core m	anifesto on EU membership	Current polling
MO\/IMENTO	The Italian M5S opposition is eclectic and idiosyncratic, and despite its critical stand on the EU has never openly supported leaving it. It supports a consultative referendum on euro membership - but whether as leverage or with genuine intent is hard to know.	"Eu in" ■ A co	port for continued EU membership - rope can only be changed by staying onsultative referendum on euro nbership	31% (IPSOS, 3 July)
Alternative Deutschland	The AfD explicitly support changing Germany's constitutional ban on referenda in order to allow a vote on euro membership. Their EU policy is decentralising and implies a radical change in the direction of EU policy.	mer sing refe	ded on the issue of a referendum on nbership, though strongly against the le currency and supportive of a erendum on leaving it ocate a looser and less political Unio k to restrict free movement within th	July)
ODS*	The Czech ODS is opposed to euro membership and supports greater decentralisation in the EU, but has not supported a referendum on EU membership. President Zeman supports the idea of a referendum, although he favours continued membership.	euro • Nat	otiation of a permanent opt-out from o adoption ional control over immigration policy tible, multi-speed European Union	July)

Votes and voters

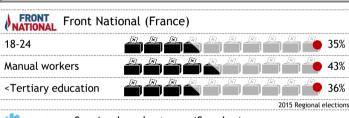


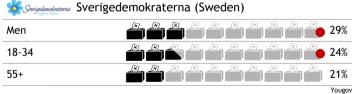
Declared supporters of parties or candidates in selected elections or recent polls, by social or economic categories

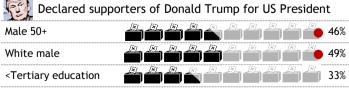
= single largest expressed preference for this voter cohort



♦ Vote Leave UK EU	exit referendum - leave voters
65+	A A A A A A A A A A
DE social grade	<u> </u>
<tertiary education<="" th=""><th>M M M M M M 64%</th></tertiary>	M M M M M M 64%







Gallup

© Global Counsel 2016

Rheinland-Pfalz 2016 regional elections

Authors:

The GC Europe team

Image credits:

Cover image: Blandine le Cain (CC BY 2.0)

Global Counsel
5 Welbeck Street, London, W1G 9YQ

T: +44 [0]203 667 6500

W: www.global-counsel.co.uk

@Global_Counsel

© Global Counsel 2016

Although Global Counsel makes every attempt to obtain information from sources that we believe to be reliable, we do not guarantee its accuracy, completeness or fairness. Unless we have good reason not to do so, Global Counsel has assumed without independent verification, the accuracy of all information available from official public sources. No representation, warranty or undertaking, express or implied, is or will be given by Global Counsel or its members, employees and/or agents as to or in relation to the accuracy, completeness or reliability of the information contained herein (or otherwise provided by Global Counsel) or as to the reasonableness of any assumption contained herein. Forecasts contained herein (or otherwise provided by Global Counsel) are provisional and subject to change. Nothing contained herein (or otherwise provided by Global Counsel) is, or shall be relied upon as, a promise or representation as to the past or future. Any case studies and examples herein (or otherwise provided by Global Counsel) are intended for illustrative purposes only. This information discusses general industry or sector trends, general market activity and other broad economic, market or political conditions. It is not research or investment advice. This document has been prepared solely for informational purposes and is not to be construed as a solicitation, invitation or an offer by Global Counsel or any of its members, employees or agents to buy or sell any securities or related financial instruments. No investment, divestment or other financial decisions or actions should be based on the information contained herein (or otherwise provided by Global Counsel). Global Counsel is not liable for any action undertaken on the basis of the information contained herein. No part of this material may be reproduced without Global Counsel.