

Information Guide



Euroscepticism

A guide to information sources on Euroscepticism, with hyperlinks to further sources of information within European Sources Online and on external websites

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Introduction

The euro area crisis has been a tough test of the construction of the euro. A lot has been done to respond to the revealed failure of the European institutional framework.

[...] Having said that, we need to acknowledge and to react to the fact that presently Europe is not doing what is needed to exit the crisis once and for all. Losing that opportunity is certainly not acceptable to citizens who already question a construction that many feel impinges negatively, and no longer positively, on their lives.

It is no surprise against this background that we have seen the rise of Eurosceptic parties on both the Right and the Left calling for the break-up of the euro area and, in some cases, withdrawal from the EU [...].

From: '[Third Independent Annual Growth Survey – iAGS 2015](#)' OfCE, Economic Council of the Labour Movement, Macroeconomic Policy Institute, December 2014.

Brief Historical Overview

The term 'Euroscepticism' first appeared on 11 November 1985, in the British newspaper, The Times, to describe a sceptic opposition towards the European Union and its policies that would be more flexible than 'euro-phobia' or 'anti-Europeanism'.

However, it wasn't until British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's famous "[Bruges Speech](#)" on 20 September 1988 that the word gained popularity. In the discourse given to the College of Europe in Brussels, the then Prime Minister was very vocal in her opposition to the European Union sovereignty to supersede that of Great Britain:

We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them reimposed at a European level, with a European superstate exercising a new dominance from Brussels.

Since then, Euroscepticism has continued to grow across Europe and according to political analysts Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul A. Taggart, there are three major factors that account for this growth ([Szczerbiak, Taggart](#): p3):

First, there is a sense of decline of the permissive consensus that appeared with the difficulties of ratifying the Maastricht Treaty.

Second, there is a stimulation of interest in European matters created by the increasing tendency in the European integration project to resort to referendums to ratify treaties.

And third, the enlargement of the European Union that widened the scope of the integration project.

This latter factor, especially accompanied by the diversification of expectations within the European community, is considered to have been key into inclining citizens towards Euroscepticism as integration is frequently presented by radical populist parties as the first step to head to a situation in which 'what one population wants from the integration may be what another fears will happen' ([Sørensen](#): p15).

French historian Christophe Le Dréau points out in '[Introduction à l'identité européenne des eurosceptiques: l'énigme Philippe Chalamont](#)' that 'euroscepticism is therefore a term issued by the media and not a lexicon of political science' and that it shouldn't be

understood as a direct opposition to the euro-optimism sentiment but as a movement of opposition to European Construction. This opinion is shared by political analysts and journalists, as can be perceived on EurActiv, an independent specialised European Union affairs portal for EU policy professionals where [Eurosceptics](#) are defined as 'citizens or politicians who present themselves as 'sceptical' – critical – of the union which they say takes powers away from their national government and poses a threat to their national sovereignty'.

Hans-Jørg Trenz and Pieter de Wilde support this idea and state that Euroscepticism 'does not oppose particular policies but the polity, i.e. the competencies and constitutional settlement of the EU' ([Trenz, de Wilde](#): p4). Additionally, they argue, that it 'is not linked to the expression of particular preferences of polity design for the EU' ([Trenz, de Wilde](#): p5).

However, there are qualitative differences of Euroscepticism which can be subsumed in [two categories or forms](#):

- 'Hard' or 'withdrawalist' euroscepticism is the opposition to membership or the existence of the EU.

This 'can be seen in parties who think their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies toward the EU are tantamount to being opposed the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived' ([Szczzerbiak, Taggart](#): p7).

[The European Parliament's Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group](#), which includes the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), is hard eurosceptic.

- 'Soft' or 'reformist' euroscepticism supports the existence of the EU and membership to the Union, but opposes further integrationist EU policies and the idea of a federal Europe.

It can therefore be observed 'where concerns on one (or a number) of the policy areas leads to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory' ([Szczzerbiak, Taggart](#): p8).

[The European Conservatives and Reformists group](#), including the British Conservative Party and the European United Left-Nordic Green Left alliance, can be described as soft eurosceptics.

Szczzerbiak and Taggart also comment on a passive position towards the EU, maintaining that a support for the current status quo of the European integration process without any wish for further progress is effectively Eurosceptic ([Szczzerbiak, Taggart](#): p8).

Euro Crisis 2008

Since the euro crisis began in 2008, trust in the European Union has fallen dramatically; especially in countries that had always been perceived as pro-European. In France trust in the common project has gone from +10 to -22%; in Germany from +20 to -29% and in Italy from +30 to -22%. But perhaps the most discouraging and worrying data is the one coming from Spain where they have gone from +42% to -52%.

This data was made public on 25 April 2013, when The European Council on Foreign Relations published '[The remarkable rise of continental Euroscepticism](#)' and shed light on the reasons behind this global disappointment. The paper revealed that 'everyone in the EU has been losing faith in the project: both creditors and debtors, and eurozone countries, would-be members, and op-outs':

[...]The old explanation for Euroscepticism was the alleged existence of a democratic deficit within the EU. Decisions, critics said, were taken by unaccountable institutions rather than elected national governments. But the current crisis is born not of a clash between Brussels and the member states but a clash between the democratic wills of citizens in northern and southern Europe - the so-called centre and periphery. And both sides are now using EU institutions to advance their interests.

[...]Since the crisis began, citizens in creditor countries have become resistant to taking responsibility for the debts of others without having mechanisms for controlling their spending. With the fiscal compact and demands by the European Central Bank (ECB) for comprehensive domestic reforms, Eurocrats have crossed many of the red lines of national sovereignty, extending their reach way beyond food safety standards to exert control over pensions, taxes, salaries, the labour market, and public jobs. These areas go to the heart of welfare states and national identities.

To an increasing number of citizens in southern European countries, the EU looks like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) did in Latin America: a golden straitjacket that is squeezing the space for national politics and emptying their national democracies of content. In this new situation, governments come or go but policies remain basically the same and cannot be challenged.

Meanwhile, in northern European countries, the EU is increasingly seen to have failed to control the policies of the southern rim. The creditors have a sense of victimhood that mirrors that of the debtors.

If sovereignty is understood as the capacity of the people to decide what they want for their country, few in either the north or the south today feel that they are sovereign. A substantial part of democracy has vanished at the national level but it has not been recreated at the European level.

While it is true that the financial crisis has enhanced Euroscepticism, it is unwisely to think that once economic growth starts to pick up in the Eurozone, this movement will recede. As The European Council on Foreign Relations remarks 'the collapse of trust in the EU runs deeper than that' and enthusiasm for the European project 'will not return unless the EU profoundly changes the way it deals with its member states and citizens'.

This is a sentiment shared by many pro-European experts in Europe who are warning about the critical point that the EU has reached and the necessity of a discussion on its objectives. This observation is important in so far as critique and opposition to the present stage of development exists, which sees the shortcomings of the EU not as a result of excessive integration but rather as a consequence of an insufficiently far-reaching and unfinished process. Usually, these voices belong to the pro-European side of the public debate.

Dr Florian Hartleb – a researcher associate for the Centre for European Studies and lecturer at the University of Bonn and the University of Politics in Munich – goes as far as warning about a new Euroscepticism that is arising in response to the recent developments. He wrote extensively about this matter in September 2012, in an article called '[A thorn in the side of European elites: the new euroscepticism](#)'.

European Elections 2014

On 22 April 2013, President of the European Commission, José Manuel Durão Barroso, spoke to the Brussels Think Tank Dialogue and expressed his concern about

Euroscepticism in the next European elections but also welcomed the debate between eurosceptic formations and pro-European ones ([SPEECH/13/346](#)):

[...]European integration has at times been driven forward by engaged citizens, by committed trade unions, by business communities who knew where their interests lay and by citizens who spoke their minds. Today, facing the economic and social crisis, we need them more than ever. We need to fully engage them in the European process.

Of course I know that this is not without risk. Most likely, in the next European elections, the eurosceptic and europhobic forces will have their share of the vote, also exploiting the current difficult context Europe is facing. But the times of implicit consent are over, and it's better to have a real European democratic debate where mainstream pro-European forces leave their comfort zone than to try to manage European challenges only in bureaucratic or even diplomatic terms trying to avoid the hard questions [...]

This concern was shared by Members of the European Parliament (MEP) such as Marc Tarabella of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D) as seen on the [parliamentary question](#) made on 16 May 2013:

The latest edition of the annual survey carried out in Europe by the independent institute Pew paints a grim picture of the European sentiment within the Eu. Support for the European ideal, which has been in decline for several years, has fallen dramatically from 2012 to 2013.

On 17 May 2013, MEP Salvador Sedó I Alabart of the European Popular Party (PPE) also questioned the Commission regarding the '[decline in public trust in the European project and the challenges faced by the EU](#)':

One year ahead of the European Parliament elections, a recent poll conducted by the Peer Research Centre, a US think tank based in Washington, has shown a marked decline in public trust in the European project and disagreement between countries such as Germany, France and the United Kingdom as to the path the EU should take, creating, in the opinion of the report's authors, a dangerous mix that could result in the fragmentation of European unity.

[...] We have one year to restore trust in the European institutions and in European integration. The European Parliament elections in 2014 will be particularly crucial for Europe's future and that of its people. We must not forget that the people form the cornerstone of European integration.

On 10 July 2013, Transparency group VoteWatch Europe published '[10 votes that shaped the 7th European Parliament: positions of the European political groups and national party delegations](#)'. The report breaks MEP voting habits and reveals the trends that have shaped the current Parliament and threaten to fracture the next.

Speaking to EurActiv about [these predictions](#), VoteWatch chairman, Simon Hix, warned about the effect that having more anti-European than pro-European forces in the Parliament could have on the EU and its legislation; especially that regarding border issues and the environment:

One issue may be the EU rules permitting the free movement of persons. Hix, a European politics professor at the London School of Economics, thinks that future eurosceptic MEPs may find scope to return EU rules on the free movement of persons to the movement of labour.

With EU unemployment at a record high, eurosceptic politicians have sought political gains by pledging to tighten up border controls.

"We could see on the agenda the issue of the free movement of labour, which became persons, as the treaties say," Hix stressed.

Euroscepticism may also leave its mark on the environment, one of the most divisive issues in the current Parliament, Hix said. According to the report, MEPs have made more amendments to environmental proposals than to any other pieces of legislation.

"This may well be seen in environmental issues, with groups opposed to 'European interference' on these issues," Hix said.

In October 2013, there was a growing concern in the EU about the use of 'protest votes' by participants to express their frustration about the austerity measures imposed from Brussels since the beginning of the European recession. There were many reasons why a rise in eurosceptic votes was feasible as French Journalist Alain Salles pointed out on his article '[Fears of a growing protest vote](#)':

In addition to the traditional anti-immigration and anti-Brussels votes, which have fed Euroscepticism in previous elections, [anti-Merkel](#) and anti-troika groups, which have thrived amid the euro crisis and repeated austerity programmes, stand to make a strong showing. Different political strands are often intertwined on these "protest" fronts. The eurosceptics are worried about growing immigration, while austerity has encouraged rejection of a Europe ruled by liberal economics.

In a context where ruling parties are more concerned by national votes than by low-turnout European ballots, the protest parties are counting on the [elections](#) on May 22 and 25, 2014, to establish their influence. What is more, the surge in their support will come at a time when the European Parliament [has won greater powers](#), notably with regard to its choice of the president of the future Commission.

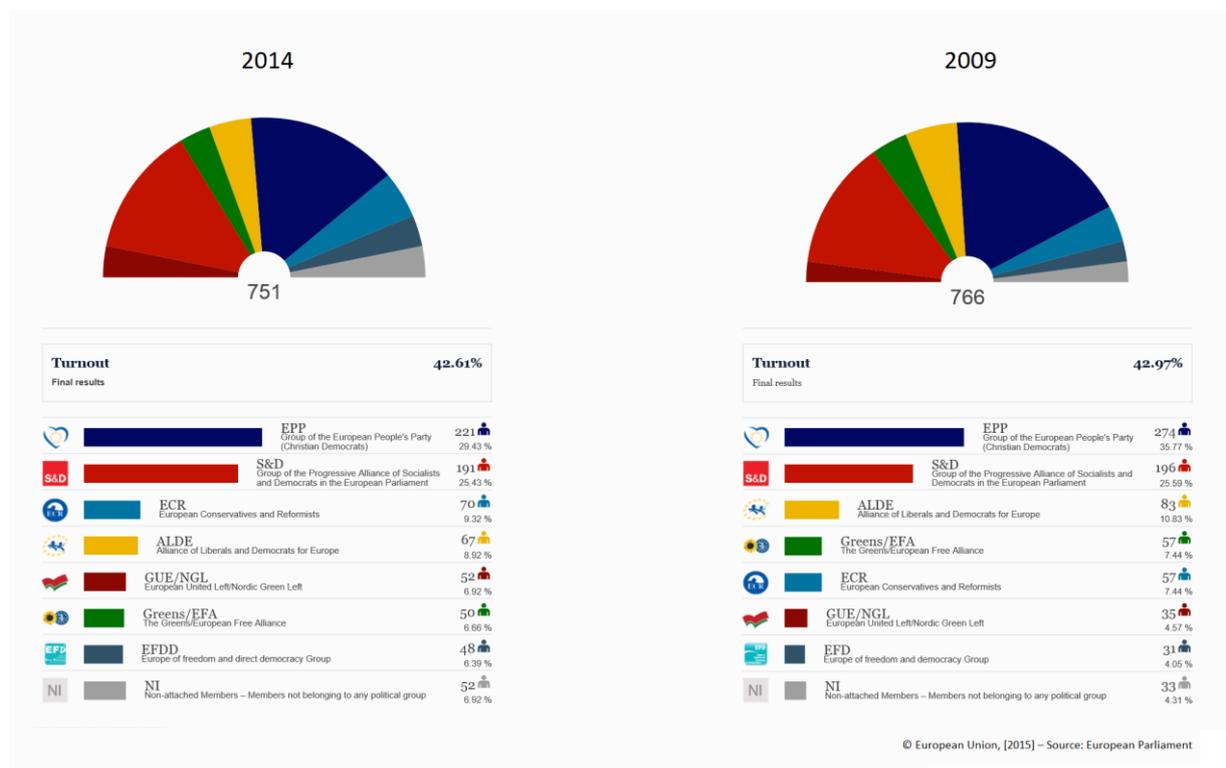
On 16 October 2013, The Telegraph published [an article](#) about French politician Marine Le Pen's intention to create a pan-European eurosceptic movement when she travelled in November to the Netherlands to meet with her Dutch counterpart, far-right leader Geert Wilders. Both became part of the coalition European Alliance of Freedom (EAF) and recruited other political parties such as the Northern League in Italy, the Austrian Freedom Party, Vlaams Belang in Belgium and the Eurosceptic Democratic Party in Sweden. Opinion polls in all the native countries of the above mentioned parties showed that the above mentioned eurosceptic parties were gaining support at the time.

On 28 October 2013, the online platform Debating Europe – launched by Friends of Europe and Europe's World, in partnership with the European Parliament, Microsoft Europe, Gallup and Skype – revealed [the results](#), so far, of the online poll [Vote 2014](#) that gathered the vote intention of its audience. While few readers intended to support a Eurosceptic party, the platform pointed out that some analysts predicted 'that as much as 30% of the vote in May 2014 could go to Eurosceptics.' A result like this was deemed to pose problems for the other major EU institutions, in particular the European Commission and the Council, as they could find it very hard to respond to such a wave of euroscepticism. (For more detailed information about the provisional results please see '[European Parliament Elections 2014: Results](#).')

On 27 March 2014, The London School of Economics ventured on [an article](#) that despite Eurosceptic parties reaching some success in the 2014 European elections, their overall impact in the European Parliament would 'be limited.'

This was corroborated on 16 April 2014, on another [article](#) by The Telegraph that revealed that 'the [Pollwatch2014](#) prediction, based on opinion polls across the European Union, puts the French Front National and Dutch Freedom Party leaders on course to form a far-Right parliamentary bloc of 38 MEPs from at least seven countries.'

Between 22-25 May 2014, elections were held in all the Member States of the EU to configure the 8th European Parliament. And as predicted by the media and the opinion polls, eurosceptic parties saw a rise in their number of seats, in the detriment of the two main parties, the Group of the European People's Party (EPP) and the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D). This meant that up to 25% of the seats available in the parliament would be allocated to anti-EU MEPs.



Furthermore, many Eurosceptic parties won their national elections. These include UKIP in the UK, the National Front in France, The Peoples Party in Denmark and SYRIZA in Greece. (For more detailed information about the results see [Election Results 2009](#) and [Election Results 2014](#)). However, others like the Dutch Freedom Party did very poorly, something which was blamed on his association with Marine Le Pen (see [The Telegraph's EU elections 2014: 'toxic' Marine Le Pen blamed for Geert Wilders defeat](#)).

A day after the elections The Economist published an [article](#) regarding the consequences that the success of the Eurosceptics could potentially have in what they call an Eurosceptic Union:

[...]the blunt reality is that Europe's political fault-line is shifting: from left versus right, to pro-Europeans against anti-Europeans.

[...]For pro-Europeans, the relief is that Eurosceptics are split between left and right. Even on the right, they are divided among themselves, ranging from the euro-critical European Conservatives and Reformists, led by Britain's Tories; to the anti-EU Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD), led by UKIP; and a more radical far-right alliance led by Ms Le Pen.

[...] Nevertheless the Eurosceptics now have political momentum. Governments in Britain and France face an acute dilemma over how to respond, and the likelihood is that they will harden their stance on a host of issues, particularly immigration and EU enlargement.

They further revisited the impact on the EU and abroad in an [article](#) published on May 29 2014:

[...]But the impact of the radicals will be felt in several ways. First, they will form a noisy opposition to initiatives by the European Commission. Second, and perhaps more importantly, they will affect domestic politics in their home countries, which will in turn constrain governments' willingness to embark on risky European projects. As Mr Farage put it, European integration once seemed inevitable; now that sense of inevitability has gone.

[...]The global repercussions may be more worrying. The new European Parliament will probably be more sceptical of free markets and less favourable to free trade, particularly the ambitious Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with America. One of Ms Le Pen's demands is the immediate suspension of these negotiations. Moreover, anti-EU parties are often markedly pro-Russian. Internationally, the loser of these elections could be America—and the winner, Russia.

The reinforcement of Putin in Europe was something that EUobserver had already warned about in an [article](#) published on April 23 2014 as an outcome of the European Parliament elections.

This contrasts greatly with other opinions within the EU which state that the influence of the 140 eurosceptic MEPs will be 'marginal' as 'most plenary session voting in Strasbourg is taken by absolute majority' and this requires 376 seats (see [EurActiv EU Elections 2014](#).)

However most politicians agreed after the elections that the results were worrying and that work had to be done to regain the trust of EU citizens. An [article](#) on EUObserver reveals that British Prime Minister David Cameron stated in a press statement that 'the turnout and results in the EP elections have underlined the need for reform to ensure that the EU is doing more to deliver what voters care about: jobs, growth and a better future' while German Chancellor Angela Merkel said during a press conference that the vote was 'an important signal to Europe.'

Euroscepticism in Europe

The Eurobarometer survey published in November 2012 (see [Public Opinion in the European Union](#)) revealed that since 2009 the negative perception of the EU among its citizens had continued to grow. The trend was also observed by the European Council of Foreign Relations (see [The remarkable rise of continental Euroscepticism](#)) who also pointed out that Euroscepticism was on the rise in Poland, Italy, France, Germany, the UK and Spain and that Eurosceptic and populist parties were gaining momentum as the European elections drew closer.

This information was later confirmed by the European Commission itself on 25 April 2013, when the article '[Analysis: Public Trust in the EU drops to record low](#)' was published as part of the ongoing 'Debate on the future of Europe':

Euroscepticism is soaring as public confidence in the EU drops to an all-time low, according to a study of Eurobarometer polls. [...]financial crises, budget cuts, bailouts and the loss of national sovereignty have contributed to the rise of euroscepticism across the EU.

Eurobarometer, the EU's polling arm, surveyed the EU's six biggest countries – France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom – accounting for over two-thirds of the EU population.

The [...] data compares trust and mistrust in the EU at the end of 2012 with data from 2007. [...] the figures show that historically pro-European countries, such as Spain, Germany and Italy, have lost faith in the EU and are leaning more toward the traditionally British distrust of its institutions.

In contrast, on 17 September 2013, France 24 published an article that revealed that most people questioned in an opinion poll carried out by the [Ifop Institute](#), and published by the French daily La Croix, 'still considered membership of the 28-member European Union to be a good thing [...] five years after the start of the lingering debt crisis.'

On 8 May 2014, eurosceptics were criticized by the then President of the European Commission, José Manuel Durão Barroso, during a speech on the present and future of the European Union given at the Humboldt University in Berlin ([SPEECH/14/355](#)):

[...]Ultimately, the problem is this: all countries would like to see Europe as a big screen projection of their own aspirations, and are ready to say that 'Europe' has a problem when the others don't follow their initiatives. Many Member States hope or pretend Europe will eventually be a bigger version of themselves - but that will never be the case.

[...]Nothing has done our Union more harm than the tendency of those who fail to convince to blame their lack of success on deficiencies of Europe rather than on their inability to win a majority for their ideas. And this, in turn, leads us into the stark dilemma that is at the heart of the discussion on the future: when the people do not like a national decision, they usually vote against the decision-maker. If they do not like a European decision, they tend to turn against Europe itself.

[...]This explains why, while the lack of support to national institutions or political parties does in general not become a threat to national unity, the lack of support to Union institutions may become a threat to European integration itself. In fact, any political project needs a minimum of sustained support, be it explicit or implicit. Beyond the general doubt or 'Angst' of common citizens regarding their perceptions of most institutions and elites in the age of globalisation, the specific challenge that the European Union has been facing recently is this: confronted with the growing voices of euroscepticism and even europhobia, some mainstream political forces have internalized populist arguments rather than countering them.

On 23 January 2015 President Juncker answered a [parliamentary question](#) made in November 2014 about the growth of euroscepticism in Europe that revealed that despite the presence of a larger number of Eurosceptic parties in the parliament, public trust in the EU was starting to rise again ([ANSWERS/E-009980/2014](#)):

[...]The latest Eurobarometer results show the image of the EU is becoming more positive and trust in its institutions is rising. Moreover 40% of Europeans say their voice counts in the EU, confirming the significant rise in engagement measured immediately after the EP elections.

The Commission will encourage this upward trend by focusing its communication on the 10 policy areas in the political guidelines, with the Commissioners being politically active in the Member States including in National Parliaments and in dialogues with citizens, thus directly communicating the impact EU policies have on citizens' daily lives.

Eurosceptic organisations

- **TEAM – The European alliance of EU-critical movements**

TEAM is an umbrella organisation of Eurosceptic or EU-critical associations from 18 European countries. It includes 49 organisations, parties and non-partisan groups of the whole political spectrum. They have united under the belief that the building of a European super-state, with its centralisation and federalisation of decision-making and monetary policies, weakens the nation-state and is happening without the consent of the EU member states' citizens.

- **The Freedom Association**

Founded in the United Kingdom in 1975, TFA is a libertarian pressure group campaigning for individual freedom, personal and family responsibility, the rule of law, limited government, free market economy, national parliamentary democracy and strong national defences. It runs the campaign 'Better off out' supporting a British withdrawal from the EU.

- **The National Platform EU Research and Information Centre**

The National Platform is a research and information group based in Dublin. It was founded after the Irish referendum on the Single European Act in 1987 and is currently chaired by Anthony Coughlan. The group around Coughlan appealed to the Irish Supreme Courts in 1986 for clarification on the competencies to ratify Treaties. The Court ruled in 1987 that EU Treaties have to be ratified by popular referendum.

Eurosceptic thinktanks

- **Open Europe**

Open Europe is a Eurosceptic thinktank founded by British business people with offices in London and Brussels. It does not advocate a UK withdrawal from the European Union but it campaigns for 'radical reform based on economic liberalisation, a looser and more flexible structure, and greater transparency and accountability'.

- **Bruges Group**

The Bruges Group is a Eurosceptic all-party thinktank based in the United Kingdom, founded in 1989. It strongly opposes further European integration and campaigns for a complete restructuring of Britain's relationship with other European countries.

- **European Foundation**

This British Eurosceptical thinktank was founded by John Goldsmith, the former leader of the British Referendum Party, and is chaired by Bill Cash, a Conservative MP. It does not advocate a withdrawal from the EU but campaigns for a 'thoroughgoing reform'.

- **Centrum für Europäische Politik (CEP)**

The Centrum für Europäische Politik (Centre for European Politics) is a subsidiary of the [Stiftung Ordnungspolitik](#) (Foundation for Ordo-liberal Politics) based in Freiburg, Germany. While it encourages an open European domestic market it opposes the centralisation of European decision making. It aims to limit bureaucracy and regulation to a necessary degree and strengthen the political control of national parliaments.

Transnational Eurosceptic parties and political groups

- **EUDemocrats**

[Europeans United for Democracy – Alliance for a Europe of Democracies](#) – is a Eurosceptic alliance of parties, movements and individuals from 15 European countries. It covers the political spectrum from centre-left to centre-right and campaigns for more transparency, subsidiarity, democracy, diversity and budget control within the European apparatus. It was involved in the [European Referendum Campaign](#) aiming for a Europe-wide referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. After the 2009 elections, they had 6 affiliated MEPs in the European Parliament; 4 were sitting as members of the now defunct [Independence and Democracy Group](#) and 2 as independents. However that number quickly plummeted down to just only 1 MEP. In the 2014 elections, the group had 2 members elected.

- **Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD or EFD²)**

[Europe of Freedom and Democracy](#) (EFD) was a right-wing, Eurosceptic political group in the European Parliament, formed after the 2009 EU Parliament elections. It consisted mostly of former members of the now defunct European parliamentary groups [Independence/Democracy](#) and [Union for a Europe of Nations](#). During the 2009-2014 period, its 32 MEPs came from Conservative, right-wing, Eurosceptic, and regionalist national parties such as [Lega Nord](#), [Mouvement Pour la France](#) and [United Kingdom Independence Party](#). After the 2014 elections, several MEPs shifted their alliance to the European Conservatives and Reformists group and the party was forced to find new affiliates and reform. As a consequence, on 12 June, Italy's [Five Star Movement](#) (M5S) was accepted. They were followed by [Sweden Democrats](#), and the Czech Republic's [Party of Free Citizens](#). On 24 June 2014, the new political formation was renamed as the [Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group](#) (EFDD or EFD².) It currently occupies 47 seats in the parliament. The group rejects European bureaucracy and further European integration. Convinced that there is no such thing as a single European people, it regards the nation state and its parliament as the only legitimate level of democratic power.

- **European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)**

The [European Conservatives and Reformists](#) (ECR) – also known as European Conservatives and Reformists Group – is a centre-right to right-wing, Conservative, Eurosceptic and anti-federalist political group in the European Parliament, founded after the 2009 EU Parliament elections. Its origins can be traced via the [Movement for European Reform](#), formed as an interim group outside the EU Parliament for the [European Democrats](#) group within the [European People's Party](#). After the 2009 European Parliament elections, the ECR had 55 MEPs from nine countries, mainly from the British [Conservative Party](#), the Polish [Law and Justice Party](#) and the Czech [Civic Democratic Party](#). After the 2014 elections, the Eurosceptic [Danish People's Party](#) and [Finns Party](#) left the EFD group to join ECR. Other parties such as [Alternative for Germany](#) (AfD), [Independent Greeks](#) or the Dutch [Reformed Political Party](#) soon followed increasing the number of MEPs to 72. The group's policies include support for a sovereign nation state, free trade and competition, small government and the family as the bedrock of

society. It opposes EU federalism and bureaucracy as well as further European integration.

- **European Alliance for Freedom (EAF)**
[European Alliance for Freedom](#) (EAF) is a right-wing, Eurosceptic pan-European political party, founded in late 2010. After the 2014 elections, the main member parties were the French [National Front](#) (FN), the Dutch [Party for Freedom](#) (PVV), the Italian [Northern League](#) (LN), the Austrian [Freedom Party](#) (FPÖ) and the Belgian [Flemish Interest](#) (VB). The group was unable to meet the parliament's requirement of 7 member states to be represented in each group – they only had 5 – and the National Front, the Northern League and the Freedom Party of Austria left the coalition. Its current MEPs sit as Non-attached Members in the Parliament.
- **Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom (MENF)**
The [Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom](#) (MENF) is a European alliance of Eurosceptic, right-wing political parties, founded in 2014 after the EAF unsuccessful attempt to form a political group during the aftermath of the 8th European Parliament elections. Current member parties are the French [National Front](#), the Italian [Northern League](#) and the Austrian [Freedom Party](#).
- **Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy (MELD)**
The [Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy](#) is a right-wing, Eurosceptic political alliance, founded in 2011. Its members are 'opposed to further European integration' and 'the centralist political structure of the EU' and advocate for 'freedom and cooperation among sovereign States.' Member parties include [Movement for France](#), Greece's [Popular Orthodox Rally](#), [United Poland](#) and [Slovak National Party](#).

For a more specific list of parties and the individual situation in each country please check '[Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration](#)'; '[Euroscepticism in Europe](#)'; '[The continent-wide rise of Euroscepticism](#)' and the 'Further Information Sources on the Internet' section below.

Eurocritical media

- **EUObserver**
An independent online newspaper founded in 2000, EUObserver reports on the debate on and the development of European affairs. The publication focuses on human rights, transparency, anti-corruption, environmentalism and the democratisation of the EU. Thereby it distinguishes itself from pro-European coverage such as EurActiv. Lisbeth Kirk, founder and publisher of EUObserver, is the wife of Jens-Peter Bonde, a former Danish MEP who co-chaired the 'Independence and Democracy' group of Eurocritical MEPs in the European Parliament.
- **The Brussels Journal**
The Brussels based conservative blog reports on the politics of Belgium and the European Union. It was founded in 2005 by the Flemish journalist Paul Belien and is published by the Swiss non-profit organisation Society for the Advancement of Freedom in Europe (SAFE). It claims to present matters differently from what it calls the 'consensus-media' of Europe and regards the European Parliament as unaccountable and undemocratic.

EU Reaction

The discussion of Euroscepticism, like any other political topic, is not confined to the political elite alone. The public takes part in it through the relay of the mass media.

Hence, the mass media becomes another important participant in the discourse as an editor and conveyor of information. Trenz and de Wilde observe that:

'Euroscepticism is performed through the mass media. Its performance is primarily targeted to draw attention. To receive this attention, Eurosceptic narratives must achieve news value and therefore dramatize [...]. These narratives are typically constructed around the distinction between friend and foe, between true friends and false friends, between assumed perpetrators and real perpetrators that dramatize the stories, make them publicly salient and provoke societal resonance' ([Trenz, de Wilde](#): p14).

As a consequence, the media, especially the private media sector, holds considerable power to shape public opinion by choosing and editing the information available to its audience. Incidents, commonly termed Euromyths, of press publications containing hearsay, rumours and half-truth are frequent and some of them have been repeated so often that they have entered public consciousness.

For the European Commission, as well as for national governments, the struggle to rectify these myths and overcome false public prejudices requires constant vigilance, and still might prove impossible to overcome. As a result, the media can have a decisive impact on national politics, especially during election times or prior to public referenda.

In February 2013, The Telegraph revealed in [an article](#) that the European Parliament was 'to spend almost £2 million on press monitoring and trawling Eurosceptic debates on the internet for "trolls" with whom to debate in the run-up and during euro-elections next year'.

It can be argued that the contributions from the pro-European side of the public debate try to enhance the discourse about the EU and its institutions since they rely more on academic research and less on populist opinion. Their reform proposals often suggest further integration and European cooperation to overcome the negative effects of the current situation.

However, there are interesting initiatives aimed at the general public that try to reach beyond politicians. As an example, The European Movement has set 'What has Europe done?' as part of the campaign 'Speak Up Europe' which aims to ignite a debate amongst EU citizens about the Union and its future. In the same manner, the [film competition 'What does Europe mean to you?'](#) was launched in July 2013 by 'Europe at Heart' to encourage filmmakers and Europeans to express their awareness of life in Europe and their attitude towards the European project.

From September 2012 to March 2014, the European Commission also reached out to citizens across Europe through a series of dialogues held in some of the main cities of the EU 'in the style of town-hall debates' where commissioners were given the opportunity to answer questions and talk to a live audiences made of students, entrepreneurs, local authorities and ordinary citizens. The experience was deemed very positive and new [Citizens' Dialogues](#) have been scheduled during 2015.

Information sources in the ESO database

Find updated and further information sources in the ESO database:

[Euroscepticism](#)

Further information sources on the internet

- European Council on Foreign Relations
 - [The remarkable rise of continental Euroscepticism](#)
 - [The continent-wide rise of Euroscepticism](#)
- European Parliament: 2014 elections
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [Results of the 2014 European elections](#)
- European Parliament: EuroparlTV
 - [Euroscepticism related videos](#)
- EurActiv
 - EU Elections 2014: Links Dossier: [Euroscepticism: More than a British phenomenon](#)
 - EU Elections 2014: News: [Eurosceptic MEPs will have "marginal" influence in EU Parliament](#)
 - EU Priorities 2020: Opinion: [Time to shake off the gloom: Europe matters](#)
- EUObserver
 - [Post EU Elections](#)
- UACES: Collaborative Research Network on Euroscepticism
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [Euroscepticism](#)
 - [Journal of Common Market Studies, Vol.51, No.1, January 2013: Special Issue: Confronting Euroscepticism](#)
- The London School of Economics and Political Science
 - EUROPP BLOG: Current themes: [Euroscepticism](#)
- European Union Politics (EUP)
 - Sage Journals:
 - [Political versus Instrumental Euro-scepticism](#)
 - [The Two Sides of Euroscepticism](#)
- Thinking Europe
 - Publications: [A Thorn in the Side of European Elites: The New Euroscepticism](#)
- CAIRN Info
 - [Introduction - L'identité européenne des eurosceptiques: l'énigme Philippe Chalamont](#) by Christophe Le Dréau
- Debating Europe
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [Will Eurosceptics be the big winners in the EU elections?](#)
 - [Vote 2014](#)
- Wikipedia
 - [Euroscepticism](#)
- TEAM – The European Alliance of EU-critical Movements
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [About TEAM](#)
 - [Member organisations](#)

- The Freedom Association
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [About TFA](#)
 - [Campaigns](#)
 - [Better off out](#)
 - [Events](#)
- The National Platform EU Research and Information Centre
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [About TEAM](#)
- Open Europe
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [About Open Europe](#)
 - [Research](#)
 - [Events](#)
 - [Media Centre](#)
 - [Daily press summary](#)
 - [Open Europe: Blog](#)
- Bruges Group
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [About the Bruges Group](#)
 - [Events](#)
 - [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
 - [Media Centre](#)
 - [Analyses of the EU Constitution](#)
 - [Analyses of the Lisbon Treaty](#)
 - [Bruges Group: Blog](#)
- European Foundation
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [European Foundation: Blog](#)
 - [Publications including The European Journal](#)
- Centrum für Europäische Politik (CEP)
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [About CEP](#)
 - [Policy Fields](#)
 - [Publications](#)
- EUDemocrats – Alliance for a Europe of Democracies
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [About EUDemocrats](#)
 - [Statute](#)
 - [Budget](#)
 - [Position Papers](#)
 - [News Archives](#)
 - [Political demands](#)
 - [Political platform](#)
- Europeans United for Democracy (new EUD website)
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [About EUD](#)
 - [Members](#)
 - [Programme](#)
 - [News](#)

- [Campaigns](#)
- Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [Newsroom](#)
 - [Members](#)
 - [About EFDD](#)
 - Member organisations:
 - [UK Independence Party \(UKIP\)](#) (United Kingdom)
 - [Laitos Orthodoxos Synagermos](#) (Greece)
 - [Mouvement Pour la France \(MPF\)](#) (France)
 - [Partija Tvarka ir teisingumas](#) (Order and Justice- Liberal Democrats) (Lithuania)
 - [Slovenskej národnej strany \(SNS\)](#) (Slovak National Party) (Slovak Republic)
 - [SGP Eurofractie](#) (The Netherlands)
 - [Movimento 5 Stelle](#) (Five Star Movement) (Italy)
 - [Sverigedemokraterna](#) (Sweden Democrats) (Sweden)
 - [Strana svobodných občanů, Svobodní](#) (Party of Free Citizens) (Czech Republic)
- European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [About Us](#)
 - [Policy](#)
 - [Publications](#)
 - Member organisations:
 - [Lijst Dedecker](#) (Belgium)
 - [ODS \(Civic Democratic Party\)](#) (Czech Republic)
 - [Independent](#) (Denmark)
 - [Magyar Demokrata Fórum \(MDF\)](#) (Hungarian Democratic Forum) (Hungary)
 - [ChristenUnie](#) (The Netherlands)
 - [Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK](#) (Conservative Union: For Fatherland and Freedom) (Latvia)
 - [LLRA \(Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania\)](#) (Lithuania)
 - [PiS Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc](#) (Law and Justice) (Poland)
 - [PjN Polska Jest Najważniejsza](#) (Poland)
 - [Conservative Party](#), Ulster Conservatives and Unionists (United Kingdom)
 - [Dansk Folkeparti](#) (Denmark)
 - [Perussuomalainen](#) (True Finns) (Finland)
 - [Alternative für Deutschland](#) (Alternative for Germany) (Germany)
 - [Familienpartei Deutschlands](#) (Family Party of Germany)
 - [Obyčajní Ľudia](#) (Ordinary People and Independent Personalities) (Slovakia)
 - [Nova](#) (New Majority) (Slovakia)
 - [Anexartitoi y Ellines](#) (Independent Greeks) (Greece)
 - [Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie](#) (New Flemish Alliance) (Belgium)
 - [България без цензура](#) (Bulgaria without Censorship) (Bulgaria)
 - [ВМРО – Българско Национално Движение, VMRO – Bulgarsko Natsionalno Dvizhenie](#) (IMRO – Bulgarian National Movement) (Bulgaria)
 - [Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij](#) (Reformed Political Party)
- European Alliance for Freedom (EAF)
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [About EAF](#)
 - [Political Platform](#)
 - [Statutes](#)

- Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom (MENF)
 - [Front National](#) (France)
 - [Lega Nord](#) (Italy)
 - [Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs](#) (Austria)
- Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy (MELD)
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [About MELD](#)
 - [Members](#)
 - [News](#)
- EUObserver
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [Opinion](#)
 - [EUObserver blogs](#)
 - [Agenda](#) (summary of forthcoming issues in the EU Parliament)
- The Brussels Journal
 - [Homepage](#)
 - [Notable and Quotable](#)
 - [About The Brussels Journal](#)

By country:

- Austria
 - The Economist: Austria's election: [The Eurosceptics' victory](#)
 - [Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs](#) (Freedom Party of Austria, a conservative party that opposed Austria joining the EU in 1994 and who would like to leave the union)
 - [Bündnis Zukunft Österreich](#) (Alliance for the Future of Austria, a socially conservative party, in 2011 openly supported leaving the eurozone and in 2012 announced their support to full withdrawal from the EU)
 - [Team Stronach](#) (established in 2012, it campaigns to leave the EU and replace the single currency with the Austrian Schilling)
 - [The Reform Conservatives](#) (founded on 23 December 2013 by Eurosceptic politician Ewald Stadler)
 - [EU Withdrawal Party](#)
 - [Neutral Free Austria Federation](#)
- Belgium
 - [Vlaams Belang](#)
 - [Lijst Dedecker](#)
- Bulgaria
 - [VMRO – BND](#)
 - [NFSB](#)
 - [Attack](#)
 - [Union of Communists in Bulgaria](#)
 - [Bulgaria Without Censorship](#) (in a coalition with VMRO – BND)
- Croatia
 - Euroacademia: [Euroscepticism Amongst Youth in Serbia and Croatia as an Extreme Form of Strategic Coalition](#)
 - [Croatian Party of Rights dr. Ante Starčević](#)
 - [Croatian Party of Rights](#)
 - [Croatian Pure Party of Rights](#)

- [Autochthonous Croatian Party of Rights](#)
- [Croatian Demochristian Party](#)
- [Only Croatia – Movement for Croatia](#)
- Czech Republic
 - [Free Citizens Party](#) (Czech party in favour of withdrawing from the EU)
- Cyprus
 - [New Internationalist Left](#)
 - [Progressive Party of Working People](#)
 - [Committee for a Radical Left Rally](#)
- Denmark
 - [Danish Euroscepticism: Unique or Part of Broader Patterns?](#)
 - [People's Movement against the EU](#) (only takes part in European Parliament elections)
 - [June Movement](#) (pro-EU but Eurosceptic dissolved in 2009)
 - [Unity List](#) (socialist political party that has withdrawal from the EU as a policy) Red-Green Alliance
 - [Danish People's Party](#) (advocates withdrawal but supports EU structures such as the inner market)
- Estonia
 - [Independence Party](#) (wants Estonia to withdraw from the EU)
 - [Centre Party](#) (advocated against Estonia joining the EU)
- Finland
 - [The Finns Party](#)
 - [Independence Party](#)
 - [Communist Party of Finland](#)
 - [Workers Party of Finland](#)
- France
 - Igitur – Utretch Publishing & Archiving Services: Student-Theses: [Euroscepticism en France](#) [in French]
 - [Gaullist](#) (Gaullism, a right leaning Eurosceptic party)
 - [Debout la République](#) (Arise the Republic, a right leaning Eurosceptic party)
 - [Mouvement pour la France](#) (Movement for France, a right leaning Eurosceptic party)
 - [Chasse, Pêche, Nature & Traditions](#) (Hunting, Fishing, Nature & Traditions, a right leaning Eurosceptic party)
 - [Front National](#) (National Front, a main far right political party, the largest Eurosceptic party in France)
 - [Parti de Gauche](#) (Left Party, a left-wing Eurosceptic party)
 - [French Communist Party](#) (left-wing Eurosceptic party)
 - [Front de Gauche](#) (Left Front, formed by the Parti de Gauche and the French Communist Party for the 2009 European Parliament elections)
 - [New Anticapitalist Party](#) (far-left eurosceptic party)
 - [Lutte Ouvrière](#) (Worker's Struggle)
 - The [Citizen and Republican Movement](#) (left-wing eurosceptic and sovereigntist party)
 - [Popular Republican Union](#)
- Germany
 - Presseurop: European Union: [No Euroscepticism please, we're German](#)
 - The Economist: Euroscepticism in Germany: [Silent no more](#)

- [Alternative for Germany](#) (a soft Eurosceptic party that considers itself pro-Europe and pro-EU but opposes the euro)
- Greece
 - [Communist Party of Greece](#)
 - [Golden Dawn](#)
 - [Anticapitalist Left Cooperation for the Overthrow](#)
 - [SYRIZA](#)
 - [ANEL](#)
 - [I Don't Pay Movement](#)
 - [LAOS](#) (Popular Orthodox Rally)
- Hungary
 - [Jobbik](#) (hard eurosceptic party)
 - [Fidesz](#) (soft eurosceptic party)
 - [Politics Can Be Different](#) (sometimes considered a soft eurosceptic party)
- Iceland
 - [Independence Party](#)
 - [Progressive Party](#)
- Ireland
 - Roskilde University: M. Jepsen: [The European Irishmen: An analysis of euroscepticism in Ireland](#)
 - [Sinn Féin](#) (opposes the current direction and structure of the EU)
 - [United Left Alliance](#) (an electoral left-wing alliance that shares some views on Europe with Sinn Féin)
- Italy
 - [Five Star Movement](#) (main eurosceptic party, in the 2013 general election became the biggest eurosceptic party in Europe. It advocates withdrawing Italy from the eurozone and replacing the euro with the lira)
 - [Lega Nord](#) (Northern League, the second main eurosceptic party in Italy)
 - [The Right](#) (minor Eurosceptic party)
 - [New Force](#) (minor Eurosceptic party)
 - [Tricolour Flame](#) (minor Eurosceptic party)
 - [No Euro Movement](#) (minor Eurosceptic party)
 - [Brothers of Italy](#) (minor Eurosceptic party)
 - [I Change](#) (minor Eurosceptic party)
- Latvia
 - [National Alliance](#)
 - [For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK](#)
 - [All for Latvia!](#)
 - [Union of Greens and Farmers](#)
- Lithuania
 - [Order and Justice](#)
- Luxembourg
 - [Alternative Democratic Reform Party](#) (soft eurosceptic party)
- Malta
 - [Labour Party](#)
 - [Libertas Malta](#)

- The Netherlands
 - [Party for Freedom](#)
 - [Socialist Party](#) (pro-EU but against current economic and neoliberal measures)
 - [Reformed Political Party](#) (favours cooperation within Europe but against the construction of a superstate dominated by Catholics)
 - [ChristianUnion](#) (favours cooperation within Europe but against the construction of a superstate dominated by Catholics)
 - [Party for the Animals](#) (pro-EU but believes the EU is not doing enough regarding animal rights and environmental policies)
- Norway
 - [Centre Party](#) (against EU-membership)
 - [Christian Democratic Party](#) (against EU-membership)
 - [Socialist Left Party](#) (against EU-membership)
 - [Red Party](#) (against EU-membership and the current membership in the European Economic Community)
 - [Liberal Party](#) (against EU-membership and the current membership in the European Economic Community)
- Poland
 - [Congress of the New Right](#)
 - [Real Politics Union](#)
 - [United Poland](#)
 - [National Movement](#)
 - [Law and Justice](#) (soft euroscepticism)
- Portugal
 - [National Renovator Party](#)
 - [New Democracy Party](#)
 - [MRPP](#)
 - [Portuguese Communist Party](#)
 - [Left Bloc](#)
 - [CDS – People's Party](#) (soft euroscepticism)
- Romania
 - [Greater Romania Party](#)
 - [New Republic](#)
 - [People's Party - Dan Diaconescu](#)
- Slovakia
 - [Slovak National Party](#)
 - [Freedom and Solidarity](#)
 - [Conservative Democrats of Slovakia](#)
- Slovenia
 - [Slovenian National Party](#)
- Spain
 - [Candidatura d'Unitat Popular](#) (advocates for Catalan Countries out of the EU)
 - [Podemos](#) (soft euroscepticism)
- Sweden
 - [Left Party of Sweden](#) (against Sweden joining the EU, it also wants Sweden to leave the EU)
 - [Sweden Democrats](#) (strongly advocates against the Union and wishes to withdraw and rejoin the European Economic Area)
 - [Centre Party](#) (moderately sceptic)

- [Green Party](#) (moderately sceptic)
- [June List](#) (eurosceptic political party)
- Switzerland
 - [Swiss People's Party](#)
 - [Ticino League](#)
 - [Geneva Citizens' Movement](#)
- Turkey
 - [MHP](#) (National Movement Party, a far-right secularist party)
 - [Saadet Partisi](#) (Felicity Party, a far-right Sunni Islamist party)
- United Kingdom
 - [Euroscepticism in the United Kingdom](#)
 - [Proposed referendum on United Kingdom membership of the European Union \(Brexit\)](#)
 - BBC: [UK Politics](#)
 - Marshall Univeristy: Theses, Dissertations and Capstones: Jared Figgins – [Political Party Affiliation, Regional Variation and the Demographic Correlates of Euroscepticism on the Isle of Great Britain](#)
 - [United Kingdom Independence Party](#) (UKIP) (its primary policy is withdrawal from the EU, it has significant support in European elections)
 - [Conservative Party](#) (campaigns against entry to the European Monetary Union and the Social Chapter)
 - [Labour Party](#)
 - [Communist Party of Britain](#)
 - [Socialist Workers Party](#)
 - [Green Party of England and Wales](#) (opposes the euro and is critical of both the current direction and structure of the EU)
 - [British National Party](#) (BNP) (far-right eurosceptic party that strongly campaigns for withdrawal)
 - [We Demand a Referendum Party](#)
 - [Referendum.com](#)

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