

# CIVITAS: Pre-election briefing on

## THE EUROPEAN UNION<sup>1</sup>

### 27 EU Member States:

**1957**-France, Luxembourg, Belgium, West Germany, the Netherlands, Italy

**1973**-Britain, Ireland, Denmark

**1981**-Greece

**1986**- Spain, Portugal

**1995**-Austria, Sweden, Finland

**2004**-Poland, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Malta, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary

**2007**-Romania, Bulgaria

### **3 Candidates countries:**

- Turkey, Croatia and FYR Macedonia

### Britons' opinion of the EU [\*]:

- 51% feel the UK has *little* or *very little* influence on the way EU laws are made.
- 83% UK citizens say they know little or nothing about the EU (2009).
- 37% feel the economic benefits of EU membership outweighed the costs.
- 41% believe decisions in the EU Parliament (EP) are primarily taken on the basis of EU states' national interests.

- **2010 EU Budget<sup>1</sup> = €141.5bn<sup>2</sup>** (1.2% of member states' gross national income [GNI]<sup>3</sup>)
  - 2009 = €136.8bn<sup>4</sup>, 1970 = €4bn<sup>5</sup>,
  - 2007-13 = €864.3bn<sup>6</sup>
- **2010-11 UK payments to the EU = €7.2bn** (€6.4bn<sup>7</sup>) almost 60% higher than 2009-10<sup>8</sup>
  - £257 for every UK household, or 3p on standard rate of income tax<sup>9</sup>
  - **UK rebate** 2010-11 = £3.3bn<sup>10</sup> [1999-05 rebate ranged between €4.4bn - €5.7bn<sup>11</sup>]
    - 2007-13 UK gave up €10.5bn (€9.3bn) rebate to push for EU budget reform<sup>12</sup>
- **2010 EU spending:<sup>13</sup>**
  - **Management of natural resources = €59.5bn<sup>14</sup>**
    - **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) = €43.8bn<sup>15</sup>** (31% EU budget +6.4% from 09)
    - **Rural development = €14.4bn<sup>16</sup>** (2.6% higher than 2009)
    - **Milk producers emergency aid = €300m<sup>17</sup>**
    - **Common Fisheries Policy (CFP)=€921m<sup>18</sup>** (+2.6% from 2009<sup>19</sup>, 2007-13 total = €3.85bn)
  - **Sustainable growth = €64.3bn<sup>20</sup>**
    - **Competitiveness** (research) **€14.9bn<sup>21</sup>**
    - **Cohesion** (regional aid) **€49.4<sup>22</sup>** (2% higher 2009)
  - **Economic recovery = €2.4bn<sup>23</sup>** (2009-2010 total = €5bn<sup>24</sup>)
  - **Combating climate change = €307m<sup>25</sup>** (3.2% less than 2009)
  - **Energy and transport = €2bn** (10.2% higher than 2009)
  - **European Social Fund =€10.8bn**
  - **Justice and security = €1bn** (16.2% higher than 2009 [biggest increase])
    - **Common Foreign and Security Policy =€281m<sup>26</sup>** (+15.9% than 2009<sup>27</sup>)
    - **External Borders Fund = €208m<sup>28</sup>**
    - **Integration of Third Country Nationals = €111m<sup>29</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> For more info and a glossary on the EU, see the simple guide in the 'notes to editors' section

- **European Police Office (Europol) = €80m<sup>30</sup>**
- **External Aid = €8.1bn<sup>31</sup>**
  - **Developing countries = €2.5bn<sup>32</sup>** (3.9 % higher than 2009)
  - **Pre-accession assistance (IPA) = €1.6bn<sup>33</sup>** (4.5% higher than 2009)<sup>34</sup>
  - **Humanitarian Aid = €800m<sup>35</sup>** (+3% than 2009)
- **Administration = €7.9bn<sup>36</sup>** (+3.87% from 2009) - **EU Commission admin = €3.6bn<sup>37</sup>**

## UK Labour Party

The UK Labour Party is broadly 'Pro-EU' and wants the UK to have more influence in the EU rather than "opting out". However Labour has a mixed record on engaging with the EU and negotiating advantages for the UK: having proclaimed a commitment to join the Euro (the EU's single currency), Labour has dragged its feet; Tony Blair gave up 20% of the UK rebate in exchange for "fundamental reform of the CAP" in 2005, but reform was limited.

- **CAP and CFP** - reform to enable sustainable, environmentally-friendly farming and fishing
- **Economy** - *work for a level-playing-field in Europe:*
  - Support a coordinated EU response to the economic downturn
  - create a democratic European Central Bank (ECB)
- **Energy** - *Negotiate EU-wide energy policy*
  - reduce imports dependency - use efficient/renewable energy e.g. biofuels
- **Environment** - *Strengthen minimum EU standards<sup>38</sup>*
  - meet the EU target to reduce CO2 emissions by 20% by 2020
  - promote recycling and sustainability and create new "green jobs"
- **EU Enlargement** - In favour of Turkey and Croatia joining the EU.
  - *Health:* support EU-wide food labelling, common standards in health and safety
- **Euro membership**- *Repeatedly delayed decision on the UK joining the euro:*
  - Gordon Brown's "5 Economics tests" (1997) concluded joining the euro "is not in the UK's economic interest".<sup>39</sup> A review in 2003 drew the same conclusion.<sup>40</sup>
- **External relations** -*'soft' power (economic sanctions, trade agreements, diplomacy)<sup>41</sup>*
  - Create trade agreements with ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific)
- **Lisbon Treaty** -2005 Labour Party manifesto promised a referendum on EU Constitution, but Labour claimed its replacement (Lisbon Treaty) was "fundamentally different" and refused to hold a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.
- **Social Policy** - *support the development of an EU-wide social policy:*
  - *Social Chapter* - signed by Tony Blair in 1998<sup>42</sup>,
  - *Workers' rights:* working time laws; equal rights for part time workers;

## UK Conservative Party

The UK Conservative Party is broadly 'EU-sceptic' and opposes EU Federalism, but does not advocate withdrawal from the EU. The Tories propose a *UK Sovereignty Bill* to confirm the authority of UK Parliament and courts. They campaign to end the EU's 'waste, excessive bureaucracy and lack of transparency'. In 2009, Conservative MEPs left the *European People's Party* (biggest EP grouping) to 'create real opposition', but critics say their new group (*European Conservatives and Reformists*) has limited power and includes extreme European parties.

- **CAP and CFP:** need radical reform

- **Economy:** Boost Global competitiveness by enabling free and fair trade and competition with minimal regulation throughout the Single Market
- **Energy:** Sustainable, clean energy supply with an emphasis on energy security
- **Environment:** Tackle Global warming
  - o Create incentives for investment in green technology
  - o international agreement on reducing CO2 emissions and consumption of unsustainable resources
- **Immigration:** Effectively control immigration and end abuse of asylum procedures
- **JHA:** Oppose EU encroachment into UK's Criminal Justice System
  - o Will negotiate a full UK opt-out from the *Charter of Fundamental Rights* (CFR)
- **Lisbon Treaty** – promise to 'not let matters rest'. Offered "cast iron guarantee" of a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty but, now that it has been implemented, they instead propose amending the 1972 European Communities Act to 'prohibit the transfer of power to the EU without referenda'.
- **Social Policy** - Restore national control over social and employment legislation
  - o Working Time Directive – protect the UK opt-out

### Notes to Editors:

#### How does the EU work?

(See [www.civitas.org.uk/eufacts](http://www.civitas.org.uk/eufacts) for a detailed guide!)

In a mixed **supranational** and **intergovernmental** model, nation states pass the right to decide on certain issues to the EU but retain the power for independent action in others. Laws proposed by the Commission are passed to the EU Parliament and Council of Ministers to approve.

**EU Commission:** the most powerful EU Institution – the only one able to propose EU laws.

- 27 Commissioners (1 from each EU state) manage an EU policy area for a 5 year term.
- UK's Catherine Ashton = EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.
- President: José Manuel Barroso (Portugal).
- 2,000 permanent civil servants based in Brussels.

**European Council:** directs EU Policy.

- All EU Heads of State or Govt (e.g. UK Prime Minister), EU Commission President and Council President
- Hold 4 summits per year (plus emergency summits on specific issues).
- President: Herman Van Rompuy:
  - o Serves 2½ year term (renewable only once).
  - o Before 2010, EU states took turns to hold the Presidency for 6 months (e.g. Tony Blair was President July-Dec 2005), but the Lisbon Treaty created the permanent Presidency.

**Council of the European Union (Council of Ministers)** – approves EU law.

- Government ministers from all 27 EU states (national ministers in charge of policy area being discussed will attend specific councils).
- Member states take turns to chair ministerial meetings for 6 months (excluding Foreign Affairs meetings, which are led by the EU High Representative).

**European Parliament (EP)** – approves EU law.

- 736 MEPs directly elected every 5 years.
- President: Jerzy Buzek (Poland).
- The number of MEPs per EU state reflects its population (Britain has 72 MEPs).
- The EP can't propose legislation, only discuss and vote on laws proposed by the Commission.
- EP can accept/reject individual Commissioners, and sack the whole Commission.

**European Court of Justice (ECJ)** – highest EU court, interprets EU treaties and laws

- 27 judges (1 from each EU state).
- Rulings are binding for nations and citizens

## Glossary:

- **Accession** – joining the EU (EU enlargement takes place when new states join).
- **2004 EU Accession states (A8)** – joined the EU in 2004: Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Hungary, Cyprus and Malta.
- **Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)** - subsidies to protect agriculture throughout the EU.
- **Common Fisheries Policy (CAP)** – making EU fishing grounds a common resource.
- **Co-decision**: procedure for decisions taken jointly by the EP and Council of Ministers.
- **EU27** – all 27 members of the European Union
- **European Arrest Warrant (EAW)** - Citizens can be charged in another EU country for action that is not a crime in their home country without recourse to the UK courts.
- **Eurojust** - body enabling EU-wide co-operation between prosecutors and courts
- **Europol** - body enabling cooperation in international police investigations, has power to request criminal investigations within member states
- **Eurozone**: used to describe the 16 member states that use the Euro.
- **Intergovernmental** - governments work together to achieve shared goals.
- **Supranational** - decisions made by international institutions, not individual states.
- **Rebate**: refund of part of budget contributions, UK rebate secured by Thatcher in 1984.
- **Stability and Growth Pact (SGP)** – controls eurozone members’ spending and borrowing.
- **Subsidiarity** – decision-making should be kept as close to the people it affects as possible.
- **Supremacy**: EU law is superior to national laws when the ECJ has jurisdiction.
- **Sovereignty**: having the ultimate power to make decisions about your country.
- **Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS)**: cap CO2 emissions allowing firms to buy allowances.
- **Subsidy**: government money used to keep down prices.
- **Opt-out**: Member States can be permanently exempt from part of an EU treaty.

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## Notes to Editors

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i. [www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/EB68/EB6](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/EB68/EB6)

ii. [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl\\_274\\_sum\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_274_sum_en.pdf) & [8 synthese analytique en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_274_synthese_analytique_en.pdf)

<sup>1</sup> Total EU “Commitments Appropriations”

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/budget\\_detail/current\\_year\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/budget_detail/current_year_en.htm)

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/budget\\_detail/last\\_year\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/budget_detail/last_year_en.htm)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.civitas.org.uk/eufacts/download/SF.1.Budget.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/european\\_community\\_finances\\_2009.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/european_community_finances_2009.pdf) P6

<sup>7</sup> [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/european\\_community\\_finances\\_2009.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/european_community_finances_2009.pdf), Table 3.2, p25

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/6073804/UKs-payments-to-EU-jump-by-60-per-cent.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/6073804/UKs-payments-to-EU-jump-by-60-per-cent.html)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/european\\_community\\_finances\\_2009.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/european_community_finances_2009.pdf) P25

<sup>11</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/low/world/europe/4721307.stm>

<sup>12</sup> [www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/6516753/Tony-Blairs-decision-to-cut-the-EU-rebate-cost-9.3billion-report-shows.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newstopics/politics/6516753/Tony-Blairs-decision-to-cut-the-EU-rebate-cost-9.3billion-report-shows.html)

<sup>13</sup>

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1958&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

<sup>14</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/budget\\_detail/current\\_year\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/budget_detail/current_year_en.htm)

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<sup>15</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/publications/budget\\_in\\_fig/dep\\_eu\\_budg\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/publications/budget_in_fig/dep_eu_budg_2010_en.pdf), p1

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/034-66442-348-12-51-905-20091215IPR66441-14-12-2009-2009-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/034-66442-348-12-51-905-20091215IPR66441-14-12-2009-2009-false/default_en.htm)

<sup>18</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/publications/budget\\_in\\_fig/dep\\_eu\\_budg\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/publications/budget_in_fig/dep_eu_budg_2010_en.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

<sup>20</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/budget\\_detail/current\\_year\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/budget_detail/current_year_en.htm)

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Ibid

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress\\_page/008-64533-320-11-47-901-20091116IPR64531-16-11-2009-2009-false/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/008-64533-320-11-47-901-20091116IPR64531-16-11-2009-2009-false/default_en.htm)

<sup>24</sup> <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/142>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/budget\\_detail/current\\_year\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/budget_detail/current_year_en.htm)

<sup>32</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/publications/budget\\_in\\_fig/dep\\_eu\\_budg\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/publications/budget_in_fig/dep_eu_budg_2010_en.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/budget/data/LBL2010\\_VOL1/EN/Vol1.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/budget/data/LBL2010_VOL1/EN/Vol1.pdf), p2

<sup>37</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/publications/budget\\_in\\_fig/dep\\_eu\\_budg\\_2010\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/library/publications/budget_in_fig/dep_eu_budg_2010_en.pdf)

<sup>38</sup> [http://www.eurolabour.org.uk/Environment\\_and\\_transport](http://www.eurolabour.org.uk/Environment_and_transport)

<sup>39</sup> [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/speech\\_chex\\_271097.htm](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/speech_chex_271097.htm)

<sup>40</sup> [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/EMU03\\_exec\\_126.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/EMU03_exec_126.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.eurolabour.org.uk/Europe\\_in\\_the\\_World](http://www.eurolabour.org.uk/Europe_in_the_World)

<sup>42</sup> [www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/CountryFactsheets/UK\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/CountryFactsheets/UK_en.pdf)