

European Citizens' Consultations 2009



UK views on the
economic and social
future of Europe

Grange City Hotel,
London

21-22 March 2009

Event Report

involve



European Citizens'
Consultations 2009
Making your voice heard



**European Citizens'
Consultations**

www.european-citizens-consultation.org.uk

The project is run by:



Involve exists to put people at the heart of decision-making. We believe public participation can help solve some of our most pressing challenges and lead to the genuine empowerment of people. We believe that we need more than constitutional change; we have to overturn the economic, social, cultural and psychological barriers that currently obstruct our democracy. What makes Involve different is that we focus on the principles and practicalities of making this happen, providing fresh thinking about what to do and showcasing effective methods of public participation.

The project is funded by:



The King Baudouin Foundation is an independent and pluralistic foundation. We provide financial support to around 2,000 organizations and individuals annually. The Foundation also acts as a forum for debate and reflection and fosters philanthropy. With an annual budget of 48 million Euros, the Foundation looks for sustainable ways of contributing to justice, democracy and respect for diversity.



The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust is an independent, progressive organisation committed to funding radical change towards a better world. The JRCT makes grants to individuals and to projects seeking the creation of a peaceful world, political equality and social justice. It chiefly supports work undertaken in the UK, Ireland and South Africa



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The Barrow Cadbury Trust is an independent, charitable foundation committed to funding and encouraging the promotion of social justice. Established in 1920, The Barrow Cadbury Trust aims to close the gaps in current policy and practice by supporting work in local communities and acting as a bridge to national and international policymakers.



CALOUSTE
GULBENKIAN
FOUNDATION

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which is supporting the European Citizens' Consultations, was established in Lisbon in 1956 with a UK Branch in London. The Foundation's purpose in the UK and Ireland is to help enrich and connect the experiences of individuals and secure lasting and beneficial change. It has for more than 50 years initiated and supported pioneering social, cultural and educational developments. International and involving in its outlook, the Foundation is committed to innovative practice and the exchange of ideas.



Esmée Fairbairn Foundation is one of the largest independent grant-making foundations in the UK. We make grants to organisations which aim to improve the quality of life for people and communities in the UK, both now and in the future. We commit approximately £25 million annually towards a wide range of work. Our primary interests are in the UK's cultural life, education, the natural environment and enabling people who are disadvantaged to participate more fully in society.



The Pears Foundation is a UK based Foundation seeking to put the values of social justice and responsibility into practice at home and abroad. For more information, see www.pearsfoundation.org.uk



About the ECC 2009

The European Citizens' Consultations 2009 (ECC 2009) bring together citizens from all 27 EU Member States to in the run-up to the 2009 European elections the question:

“What can the EU do to shape our economic and social future in a globalised world?”

An Online Debate

A pan-European online debate marked the first stage in the European Citizens' Consultations 2009 process. Between the 3rd of December 2008 and March 2009, everyone was invited to take part and to make proposals for our economic and social future. These proposals then fed directly into the European Citizens' Consultation in the United Kingdom as material for discussion.

27 Identical Conferences

The 27 European Citizens' Consultations were attended by a total of 1,500 citizens selected at random by professional opinion research institutes reflecting their country's demographic composition. These identical conferences, held simultaneously in nine countries at a time over three weekends in March 2009, are the heart of the ECC process. They enable citizens to develop recommendations on Europe's economic and social future, and to discuss these with key national and European policy-makers. The European Citizens' Consultations do not work according to a one-size-fits-all approach. While all consultations follow the same basic format, the size of these events varies between a minimum format of 30 participants and up to 150 participants. On the second day citizens are given a unique opportunity to debate their recommendations in the run-up to the European elections – with national MEPs.

A European Citizens' Summit

A European Citizens' Summit, attended by 150 participants from the 27 Consultations, will be held in Brussels on the 10th – 11th May 2009. Here, citizens will finalise a set of European recommendations and debate these with European policy-makers.

Regional Follow-up Debates

The citizens' recommendations will be discussed with newly elected Members of the European Parliament and more opinion-leaders at regional conferences in autumn 2009.

Partners

The European Citizens' Consultations are organised by a group of independent not-for-profit organisations including foundations, NGOs, universities and think-tanks from all EU Member States led by the King Baudouin Foundation (Belgium). The ECC 2009 is co-financed by the European Commission under its “Debate Europe” programme, the King Baudouin Foundation, Compagnia di San Paolo, Robert Bosch Stiftung, ING and further foundations supporting activities at national level.



The European Citizens' Consultation in the United Kingdom

The first European Citizens Consultation was held in 2007. At an event in York in March 2007 (organised by the POWER Inquiry) 100 participants from across the UK discussed and debated their vision for the future of Europe. This event was seen as very successful by the European Union, the organisers and the participants themselves. The results from across Europe were so useful that the European Commission decided to run the process again. This time the focus would be on developing clear policy proposals; what the European Union should and shouldn't do to improve the economic and social future of Europe. An interactive website was also added where anyone could discuss the issues and suggest policies that the European Citizens Consultation 2009 should consider. In 2009 there are elections to the European Parliament and so the European Citizens Consultation process takes place at an important time.

The European Citizens Consultation United Kingdom gathered 100 citizens in London between the 21 and 22 of March 2009 to develop UK perspectives on the economic and social future of Europe. The citizens participating in the consultation were randomly invited according to criteria of representativity: different age groups, different educational levels, gender, geographical distribution, and other Member States-specific criteria were considered to ensure that the citizens attending the European Citizens' Consultation in the United Kingdom represented the demographic composition of the country as a whole.

The event was organised by Involve.



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The event was held at the Tower Grange Hotel and opened by UK Citizen Helen Duffett, attendee of the European Citizens' Consultation 2007 and now an approved parliamentary candidate.

This report is a short record of the outcomes of the European Citizens' Consultation in the United Kingdom and was distributed to citizens and other participants at the end of the event. Please contact the organisers or visit www.involve.org.uk to obtain a copy and find out more about the project.



About the Participants

Demographic Information on the Participants

Participants: 100

Men: 51

Women: 49

Age 18-35: 28

Age 36-55: 26

Age 56-80: 25

In education: 6

Employed: 35

Self-employed: 14

At home: 6

Unemployed: 7

Pensioner: 17



"A really good stepping stone to improving the democratic process...long way to go...it's a good start."

-Clare Crompton, Participant



"A lot of us have felt that we could contribute more than we thought. The last session felt like what the EU must be like. This is why decisions take so long to make."

-Susan Dawson, Participant



National Concerns

European competitiveness

Competition for business from BRIC countries

Decline in Europe's global competitiveness

EU labour costs reduce comparative competitiveness

maintaining the EU's place in the world



"This is part of a mammoth exercise about what the EU should... and shouldn't do."

-Caroline Flint, UK Minister for Europe

Environmental management

Effective strategy for recycling and waste disposal

Environment and re-cycling. How to bring everyone/all the EU countries onto to the same level of environment awareness/re-cycling policies

Lack of learning from other member states' effective environmental policies

need to cut down on packaging by big supermarket chains

No European commitment around global warming?

No standardised recycling system across Europe

unsustainable export of waste

Will their economic + social future have a true green agenda

Crime

criminals have more rights than victims

Free movement of organised crime

Loss of respect for elders amongst the youth and youth crime

Social housing

Lack of joint-up thinking in the allocation of social housing

lack of social housing

system of social housing is not responsive to needs

Health and social care

EU Social Policy – One size does not fit all

EU too involved in social issues

need for consideration of euthanasia

NHS is top heavy with bureaucracy



should access to healthcare be standardised across Europe
The need for an international health + social benefits system.
welfare system standardised across Europe

The media and euro scepticism

Media portrayal of EU / national government policy / actions
Our opinions of the EU are heavily influenced by the media
Press coverage in the UK too Euro-sceptic

Subsidies

Adverse influence of EU subsidy mechanisms
Cost of food subsidies
Too many subsidies spent on livestock instead of on crops

"We are here to learn more about the EU and pass
it on to as many people as possible."
-Beverly Beckett, Participant

"Far more interesting than I expected."
-Mark Nielsen, Participant



Management of the economy and currency

Currency instability
Current economic situation
Current financial crisis
Euro: in the recession - is it a disadvantage, or advantage
financial waste and mismanagement of budget and assets
How can protectionism be avoided.
How EU would deal with the economic concerns in a coherent way
how we stand in relation to the rest of Europe re the financial crisis
independence of UK national banks
Ineffective regulation of the financial sector
Instability of the pound in the future
No provisions for rapid change to reflect change in circumstances eg. stock
market crash or rapid change in prosperity of individual countries re. their



eligibility for EU funding

Not enough regulation of financial institutions

protectionist measures as a result of the economic downturn

PROTECTIONSIM

What's going to happen to the £?

Will the Euro make it through the financial crisis?

Language barriers

Is language a perceived barrier to harmony?

Lack of language skills in UK means British don't take advantage of EU job opportunities

The contribution of language barriers to disunity

Mobility issues

Brain drain to richer countries

Concerns over free movement of trade and jobs between EU countries in the light of recession

Free + easy travel across Europe is a failing concept.

how can migrant employment work equally throughout Europe

Integration of foreign workers with native communities

lack of transferability of qualifications between different sectors and countries

National laws getting in the way of the ideal of free movement of services, goods, people and capital

Stricter regulations for migration of workers in terms of criminal records

The impact of labour mobility and different wages and conditions on the conditions of work in richer countries

Need more information about Europe

Lack of knowledge about what the EU is doing about provision of energy for the future

misinformation / lack of information from Brussels

negative image of EU needs to be improved

We don't know what the EU do

Ageing population

Aging: more older people creating a burden on rest of European population, economy and healthcare

Increase in older population in the UK might increase retirement age and cause resentment

Energy supply, sustainability and security

Diminishing fuel reserves



Energy rates - British are paying more than rest of Europe

lack of carbon-efficiency

Lack of investment in renewable sources of energy

lack of security of energy supply

Post-oil economy

Reliance on energy from outside of Europe - for social environmental, security and economic reasons

security of resources /renewable resources

unsustainable use of land for bio fuel production

Immigration issues - too much immigration

Disproportionate concern about migrant workers in relation to the banking crisis

Income for migrant workers-undercutting UK workers income

lack of effective regulation of illegal immigrants

Lack of management of immigration

Lack of management of migration

Migration

Migration- concern about the amount of housing available in London

The number of refugees coming into the UK



"Today has highlighted the huge need for education [about the EU] at all levels, from schools to other areas"

-Kat Mortimer, Participant

"Politics is about making it personal."

-Helen Duffet, Participant in 2007 and now an approved Parliamentary Candidate

Identity and diversity

countries becoming more protectionist in the recession leading to increased xenophobia

countries losing their individuality, i.e. due to the open market

Current economic climate has the potential to fuel insular views-makes people defensive

Difficulty of stereotypes +mistrust.

How to achieve unity without diluting national identity



How to overcome perceived national + cultural differences.

Loss of cultural diversity

Loss of national cultures and traditions

loss of national identity through membership of EU

Need for unity within UK before Europe.

Perception of UK not joining Euro zone - will we be stigmatised?

Uk's physical isolation from continental Europe

EU Foreign relations

How the UK relationship with the US might threaten its relationship within EU

Should be EU have protected borders?

Social responsibility on the global stage.

Concerns about unemployment

growing unemployment

Income for migrant workers-undercutting UK workers income

Unemployment

Bureaucracy

Bureaucratic distance/selective deafness

cutting down length of time taken for planning permission for utilities

Policies for the sake of it not beneficial on the ground

The size of EU bureaucracy

Too big a delay in executing decisions from the executive to the citizen

Too much bureaucracy in the EU

Too much red tape

Too much trivial regulation in the EU

Education

easier and equal access to higher education

Education-social education-awareness of other peoples cultural and learning disability needs

Lack of consistency and comparability among European education systems

Inequalities (national and regional)

Different levels of compliance with regulation creating an unfair playing field

How to ensure that each member state contributes.

Lack of taxation parity allows advantages within free trade.

regional policy, benefits of wealthier countries supporting less wealthier countries

Smaller countries in the EU-will they have as much of a voice as the bigger countries?



Socio-economic disparity between London/South East and the rest of the UK

The high levels of influence of France and Germany

The high levels of influence of France and Germany

The tensions caused to the euro zone by some country's poor economic condition

UK culture very open – leading to exploitation

Unequal employment opportunities across member states

Human rights and civil liberties

Civil liberties being eroded in the UK

Civil rights-worried about losing civil rights

Erosion of civil liberties

human rights act serving as a get out clause for a lot of people

No uniform interpretation or application of human rights

The individual rights of the individual versus the rights of the society

Democracy and transparency

Governments not doing what they signed up for

Independently audited ratified accounts.

Lack of accessibility to EU policies that affect citizens

Lack of our input into democratic process

lack of transparency about what the UK gets back in return for what we put in referendum on Lisbon Treaty: some allowed / some not - results not always accepted

The EU is becoming increasingly undemocratic and more autocratic

Too many policies are written by unelected civil servants, not elected representatives, therefore are not answerable to public

Undemocratic establishment of EU institutions

Judiciary and police

Brussels: having one size fits all policies

Judicial system - concerns about UK courts making decisions which is then overruled at the highest level in the EU

Police harassment-arresting young people unnecessarily. Suppression of their rights

using European court to overturn decisions don't like at a national level

Trade regulations

trade regulations resulting in food and wine mountains

Agricultural policy

Agricultural policy is costing us money, land - and might change for the EU to



need more food

common agricultural policy and fisheries

Common agricultural policy transformed outwards sustainable production

importing of low quality meat from outside the UK

no common policy on welfare, transportation and slaughtering of animals

Supporting local farmers

Cost of the EU

Cost of EU e.g. MEP salaries and expenses

Cost of the countries joining the EU - is it sustainable?

Disunity is costing us money - e.g. 27 different defense strategies

Is EU expansion eastwards to the cost of Western standards.

The EU wasting money

wasted EU funding on short term job creation projects

Unity within the EU

In the EU each member state is pulling a different way

What degree will European unity extend to?

Labour law/policy

European minimum wage.

Lack of recognition and monetary value for stay-at-home parents

Lack of regulation with regard to minimum wage

Transport and infrastructure

Lack of investment in major infrastructure, e.g. transport

The price of trains in UK

ID cards and DNA database

The British DNA database

The incompatibility between a national system of ID cards and the EU systems

What does progress mean now?



National Recommendations

	Confidence vote
The EU commission to take urgent action to set up a centralised energy research body which would focus on self-sufficiency, sustainability and efficiency of energy production sourced within the EU.	89.53%
For increased public awareness, the EU should be made more transparent, accountable and accessible. Co-ordinate existing agencies to scrutinise and publish legislative and financial activities in the conduct of anyone on the EU payroll, specifically via free publication. The EU should publish independent fully signed-off audited accounts as a pre-requisite to receiving continued national funding.	88.1%
The EU should collectively promote Research and Development into future energy needs through the creation of an R+D agency that will promote and emphasise collaboration between public/private bodies and member states. Future energy needs will be its specific remit. Transparency should be created by having on-going public consultations and on-line publications of R+D findings.	86.08%
The EU should facilitate the acceleration of the flow of secure information required in the prevention and detection of crime across member states by increased funding for, and better utilisation of, new integrated technology and improved training of European awareness for police officers.	82.93%
The EU should develop, coordinate & promote a set of guidelines and research focused on sustainable production of goods and services leading by example in its own procurement practices. The EU should incentivise optimum efficiency in land & natural resource use to accelerate viable sustainable production of goods and services. The EU should make available financial incentives to academia and industry to develop R&D research exchange programmes and undertake comprehensive EU-wide information and education programmes.	82.43%



- The EU should fund and coordinate projects to increase awareness of its organisations, functions, policies and services. Each member state should launch a comprehensive multimedia campaign to publicise 'Europe Direct' as an easy-access information portal which should be linked to events around 'Europe Day'. **79.27%**
- In order to deal more effectively with illegal immigration, the EU should take overall strategic and financial responsibility for the strengthening of external border controls including the faster processing of cases and standardisation of treatment of people in transit. **77.78%**
- The EU should fund and provide an on-going teachers information pack available to all schools to develop understanding of and cooperation between individual member states and institutions in a European context. It would include learning resources, school linking support and invitations to regional events to widen participation in Model EU. **76.74%**
- The EU should promote financial security through a common framework for improved financial services regulation. The EU should encourage member states to create an 'Independent Regulatory Authority' that implements and oversees regulation. It should have the power to uphold an enforceable code of conduct, which encompasses social and economic responsibility. **76.54%**
- MEPs and EU officials to increase open debate. Methods to include monthly surgeries in public spaces (e.g., supermarkets); online e-petitioning, debate and proposal; public voting on proposals to give MEPs direction (possibly online); public meetings; large scale consultation events such as ECC 09. The EU should foster a bottom-up approach. **74.07%**



How were the Results achieved?

The Online Debate

From the 3rd of December 2008 right until a few days before the national consultations, a pan-European online debate took place inviting people from all over Europe to discuss and put forward their ideas on what the EU can do shape our economic and social future. This debate took place in the national languages of each country, enabling all members of the general public to make their voice heard and to make their proposals. The ten proposals from the online debate in the United Kingdom were one of the inputs given to citizens attending the European Citizens' Consultation in London. In addition, citizens were given the top idea from the online debates in the 8 other countries holding their national consultation at the same time.

The Deliberative Process at the National Consultations

The outcomes of the national consultations are a combination of carefully facilitated table discussions among citizens, the exchange of results across national consultations taking place across Europe. Discussions with experts helped ensure the feasibility of the recommendations drawn up by citizens. At each event, groups or tables of citizens were overseen by a table facilitator who kept the discussion going and made sure that every voice was heard by inputting agreed upon contributions into a central database system. Prior to the event, citizens received background information on the project and the EU's competencies and activities. No prior knowledge was required.

	Activity
Day 1 :Morning	Welcome / Introduction by Helen Duffett and video address by Caroline Flint MP
	Exploration of Citizens' Concerns
Day 1: Afternoon	European Exchange with other events happening simultaneously across Europe.
	Development of Ideas Citizens generate their own ideas on "What needs to be done?"
	Challenging the Ideas Resource people, i.e. experts, join the discussion challenging the citizens' ideas.
	Reflection of Input Citizens reflect on the input from the resource people, weighing up the information and making any changes they wish.
	Selection of 10 Final Ideas by the Citizens (Voting)
Day 2: until early afternoon	Presentation and Sharing of Results
	Input on the Competency and Responsibility for Action Resource people highlight to citizens who is responsible for action and, where applicable, what the EU is already doing in this field.
	Drafting of Recommendations in Groups Citizens work at tables to develop their ideas into recommendations.



Revision of Recommendations after feedback from other Groups
Final Confidence Voting by all Citizens
MEP Debate A unique debate with citizens about their recommendations for the economic and social future of Europe.
Closing Ceremony / End of National Consultation Richard Wilson, Director of Involve

Some examples of local press coverage:

The East Kilbride News:

"An East Kilbride woman is one of 100 people in the UK chosen to take part in a debate to decide how the European Union can deal with the current economic crisis.

Elizabeth Raeburn, 48, was randomly selected to take part in European Citizens Consultation 2009 in London.

This is the first time members of the public have been asked for their ideas by officials in Brussels. Over a weekend these 100 citizens are being asked to help officials come up with 10 ideas for policies which they believe will help Europe deal with the looming recession.

These ideas will then be handed over to the decision-makers of Europe who will listen to and act on what the people of Europe think should be done." - Mar 21 2009 by Lynda Nicol, [East Kilbride News](#).

Bedford Today:

"Local woman chosen for European Citizens' Consultations - Lisa will voice her opinion and put forward policy ideas.

A Luton woman has been randomly selected to voice her opinion at the European Citizens' Consultation 2009.

Lisa Crowe, aged 40, of May Street, is one of 100 people chosen at random to discuss what Europe can do to cope with the looming recession.

The event, being held on March 21 and 22 will involve Members of the European Parliament and experts on Europe who will work with Lisa and the other citizens to come up with 10 policy ideas which they think will help secure the future of Europe in the face of the economic downturn.

These ideas will then be handed over to decision-makers of Europe who will listen to and act on what the citizens think should be done.

To follow the online debate visit www.european-citizens-consultation.org.uk" - 17 March 2009



What Happens with these Results?

Before the event in London Involve has worked hard to raise the profile of the process; working with national and local media, as well as with the European Commission, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the National Council for Voluntary Organisations.

The European Citizens' Consultation in the United Kingdom is one of 27 Consultations taking place in all EU Member States in March 2009. Each National Consultation produces national perspectives on the economic and social future of Europe. This report is the UK perspective. These events are only the first step in a longer process.

All national outcomes serve as the basis for a **European overview of national recommendations**, drawn up shortly after the last round of National Consultations are held on the 28th/29th of March 2009. This overview of all recommendations from all 27 Member States will be vetted by citizens, debated on by the general public and the final 15 European Recommendations will be selected by those citizens who attended the National Consultations.

These 15 European recommendations form the basis of the **European Citizens' Summit** which will be held in Brussels on the 10th and 11th of May 2009. Here 150 citizens who attended their National Consultation will discuss the European recommendations, as well as the feasibility and policy relevance of their demands and suggestions. The heads of the European Institutions as well as Heads of European political parties have agreed to continue the debate with the citizens themselves.

The European Citizens' Summit also kicks off a **comprehensive follow-up process of regional outreach debates**, which actively communicate the outcomes to policy-makers on national and European level and disseminates the results via the participating citizens to the broader public and civil society. Following the European elections this is an important step in cementing the importance of citizen participation in policy making and in furthering the reach of the European Citizens' Consultations 2009.

To keep up to date with the latest outreach activities and results of the continued debates please see www.european-citizens-consultations.eu or www.involve.org.uk.



Contact

For more information about Europe and EU issues:
Europe Direct: 0080067891011
Europa.eu/abc

For more information on the EU in the UK:
Ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom
www.europe.org.uk
euonym.wordpress.com

To contact the event experts:
Dr David Sears – searsdj@tiscali.co.uk
Antonia Mochan – Antonia.mochan@ec.europa.eu

For further information about the UK part of the European Citizens' Consultation, including information for the media, how you can stay involved in the process, travel re-imbursement and further feedback.
Contact:

Laurie Waller
Involve
212 High Holborn
London WC1V 7BF
United Kingdom
Email: Laurie@involve.org.uk

For further information about the European Citizens' Consultations in general, please contact the project coordinator:

Dr. Stefan Schäfers
European Programme Advisor
King Baudouin Foundation
Rue Brederodestraat 21
B-1000 Brussels
Belgium

Email: schaefers.s@kbs-frb.be