

BRITAIN IN EUROPE RENEGOTIATION SCORECARD

The European Council primer

SUMMARY

- Rather than seeking further opt-outs for Britain, David Cameron has sought a more comprehensive reform of the European Union
- Looking at how the 27 member states stood on the four main baskets of issues, we classified their position as 'convinced' (green), 'partly convinced' (amber), and 'unconvinced' (red), giving us 108 data points.
- In the course of the renegotiation the number of these data points that are green ('convinced') has risen from 37 to 79. The number that are red ('unconvinced') has fallen from 35 to just 6.
- Basket four on social issues and freedom of movement remains the most problematic but has, nonetheless, seen a dramatic shift in opinion between 2015 and today. Last summer, 24 out of 27 member states were unconvinced by reforms on migration. Today, only five remain unconvinced heading into the European Council.
- The opinion of some member states have changed dramatically, including that of key players like France and Germany.

When David Cameron decided to renegotiate the terms of British membership he had a strategic dilemma. Should he demand special treatment for London or should he try to reform the whole European Union?

Rather than seeking further opt-outs for Britain, he sought to bend the whole EU to London's will. And the amazing story of the last few months is how far he has succeeded in this quest. As the EU prepares for its summit on 18/19 February, there remain three sets of issues are still standing in the way of a deal: the debate around benefits for EU migrants, the question on how to manage the relationship between Euro-members and non-members and the question on ever closer union.

But underlying each of these debates is Cameron's original question: is it better for Europe to offer London special treatment or to change the EU as a whole? Although the British Prime Minister made a clear choice, there is still some ambivalence in other member states.

Those worried about British exceptionalism are concerned about creating a populist precedent where any member state can call for special treatment at any time by holding a referendum. In fact, Marine Le Pen's announcement that she would follow the British precedent if elected, has scared many EU members. The EU has already shown how uncomfortable it is with this sort of 'blackmail by referendum' in Greece: both when George Papandreou asked to have a referendum on the first package in 2011 and more recently when Alexis Tsipras called for a referendum in order to strengthen his hand.

But other states are worried about agreeing to a Europe that is too British. They fear that whereas the Irish and the Danish protocols – which are seen as a precedent for the UK - were about carving out specific national exemptions for these countries, the British deal will apply to everyone. Integrationist-minded countries like Belgium and Spain are particularly nervous about the proposals to empower national parliaments or change the language on ‘ever closer union’, a clause which has been invoked by the European Court of Justice to invoke deeper integration. Even though the Tusk letter made it clear that some countries are still committed to the ‘ever closer union’, it appears likely that the clause would lose its legal force if it was not applied universally.

Some of the more Eurosceptic member states have similar fears on the universality of the proposed changes on migration. The Visegrad group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) are particularly keen to keep the UK in as they see Cameron as like-minded leader and want to protect the rights of their many compatriots who are resident in the UK. However, they are now engaged in a last ditch effort to prevent the restriction on benefits applying to other EU member states. If, however, they were to succeed with this, it could make the whole package less attractive for other member states that are supporting it now.

The renegotiation process is becoming a perfect metaphor for the cognitive dissonance between the way the British media writes about EU integration and the way it looks to other governments across Europe. From the British press coverage one could easily conclude that the renegotiation of Britain’s EU membership has been a disaster.

But many other capitals are staggered at how far things have gone Cameron’s way. ECFR started measuring the position of the other member states on Britain’s proposals last summer. Looking at how the 27 member states stood on the four main baskets of issues, we classified their position as ‘convinced’ (green), ‘partly convinced’ (amber), and ‘unconvinced’ (red), giving us 108 data points. In summer 2015, the picture didn’t look particularly rosy for the UK reform proposals. Over the last six months, this changed dramatically, with the data from February 2016 painting a decisively different picture (see figure 1)

Several countries went through impressive contortions; the Czech Republic for instance only supported one of four reform proposals in 2015, while opposing another and being unsure about the two remaining ones. Within half a year it changed its stance to being convinced by all, as did Austria. France and Greece both went from opposing three out of the four reforms to supporting all (Greece) or three out of four (France). Every single EU member state, with the exception of Estonia and Hungary (which already supported three out of four reform proposals in 2015) changed its stance in favour of the UK’s reform proposals. There are now nine countries which are likely to support every part of the British efforts: Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland,

Greece, Ireland, and Luxembourg. In September 2015, not a single EU country was completely convinced. That’s an amazing change. One reason why several countries have changed their mind is that they have realised what is in it for them. It is particularly striking that countries like Austria, France and Germany are interested in how the measures on benefits might apply to them.

Many member states are slowly waking up to the fact that Britain’s reform proposals may result in a much bigger change to the EU than anybody had thought at the beginning of the process. It looks like there is going to be a deal which, in many policy areas, is likely to make the EU into a recognisably British style project. The only ones who do not seem to realise this are the British media. The hope in other EU countries is that the British public will take yes for an answer, understand how influential their country is and how much the others want to keep it in the EU.

Mark Leonard
Director, ECFR

The Britain in Europe Renegotiation Scorecard is a continuous project to monitor the changes in the British negotiation over EU membership ahead of an in-out referendum. The traffic light system represents estimates of government positions, based on background research and interviews with policy makers and experts by our network of associate researchers.

Fig 1: Changes in support for British renegotiation process between 2015 and 2016 (Green = convinced, Yellow = partly convinced, Red = unconvinced)

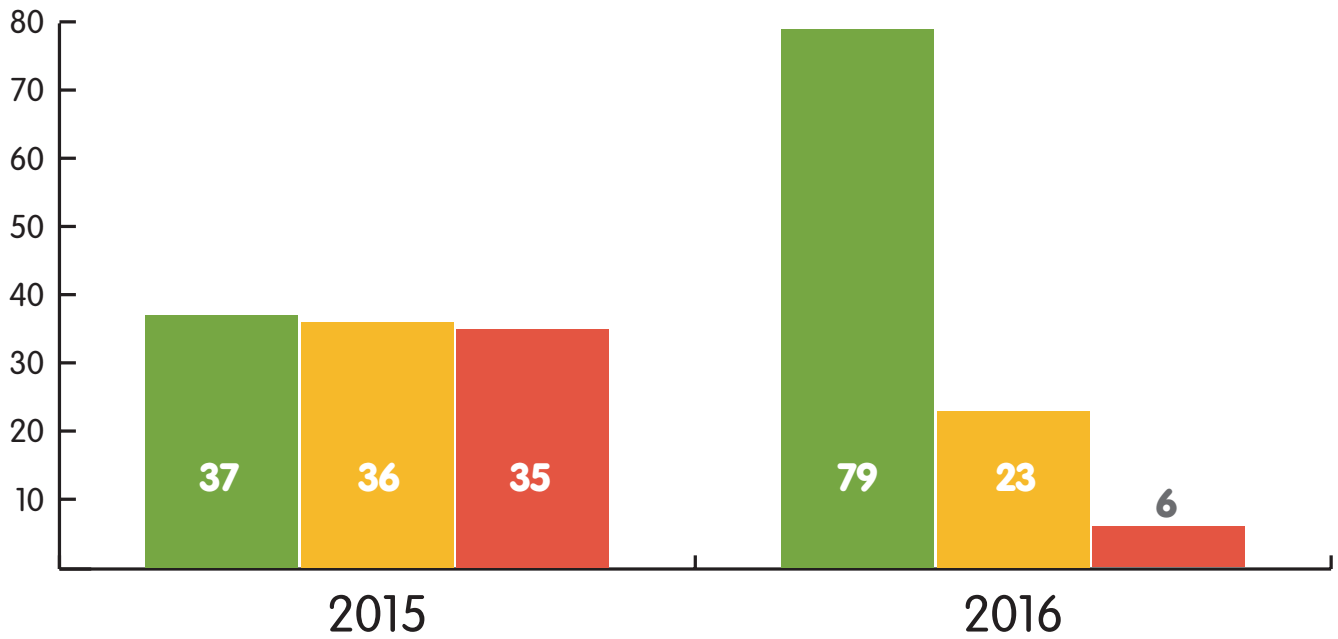
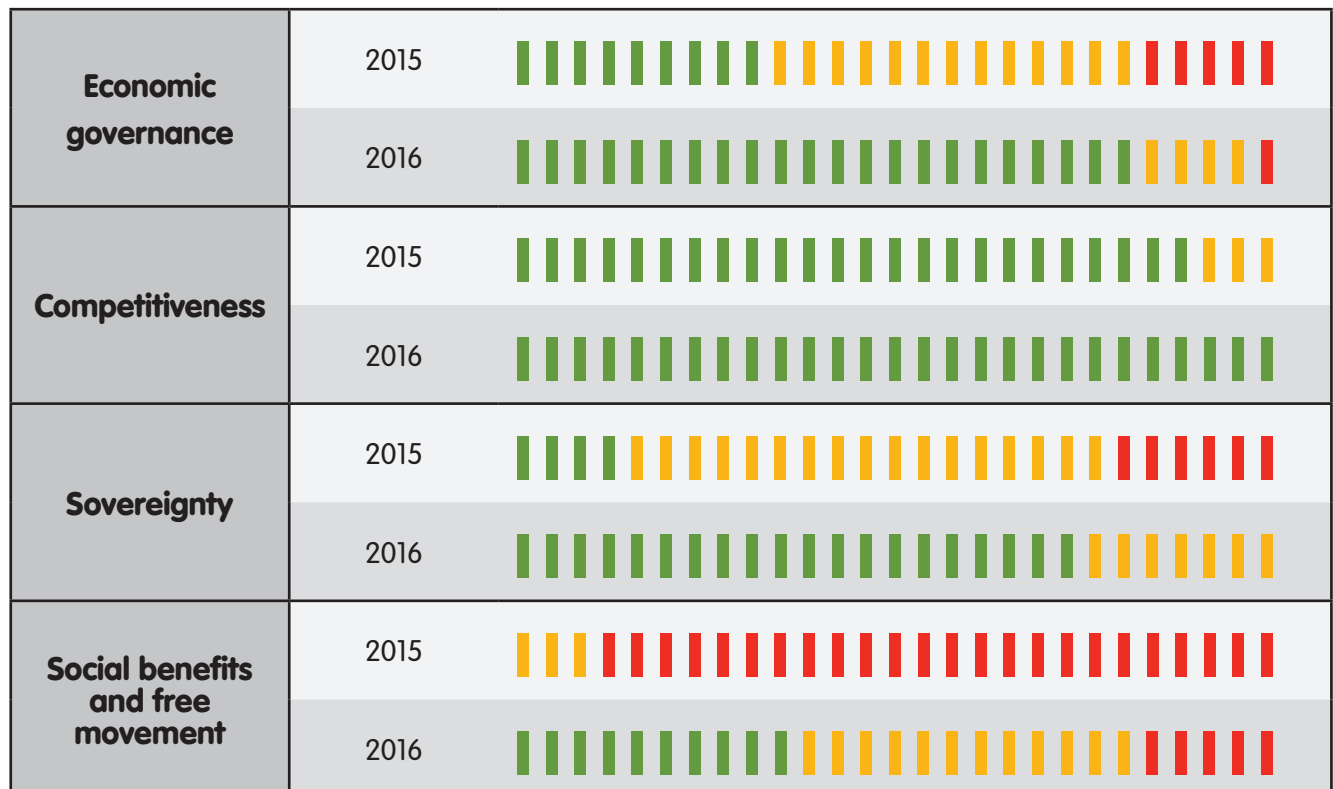



Fig 2: Changes in support amongst 27 EU members for British renegotiation process between 2015 and 2016 by basket

(Green = convinced, Yellow = partly convinced, Red = unconvinced)



 AUSTRIA		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Austria's stance going into the EU Council meeting

Austria favours the UK remaining in the EU and in general, the Austrians support whatever improves the quality of the European integration process without changing the core. It has also made clear that there should not be any exceptions made for the UK only. The Austrian government strongly supports basket four on social welfare and free movement. Foreign minister Kurz has repeatedly called for a restriction in social payments to curb benefit tourism, and has stated he would not shy away from treaty change. With regard to economic governance, Austria supports the notion set out in Tusk's letter that "member states not participating in the further deepening of the economic and monetary union will not create obstacles to but facilitate such further deepening while this process will, conversely, respect the rights and competences of the non-participating member states." Regarding competitiveness any improvement of the single market is welcomed if it is in line with the general principles of EU integration.

Which member states matter most to Austria in the discussion?

Austria sees its closest alliances in the discussions with Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and France, and favours using the Brexit debate as an opportunity for reforms to create a more efficient EU and counter growing popularity and support for populist and Eurosceptic opposition parties.


Where is the Austrian debate on this?

Due to the dominance of the migration and refugee crisis in Austria, the Brexit question is secondary. There is media coverage on the negotiations between Tusk and Cameron, however, a real debate has not yet taken place. The issue attracting the most attention is the social benefit issue as it has been raised several times by the Austrian foreign

minister. Eurosceptic and anti-European parties use the negotiations to support their argument that the European integration process needs to be re-adjusted and that more power should be given back to the member states. At an expert level, the focus is mainly on the economic and political consequences of a possible Brexit while leaving security questions and implications aside.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Austria

There are approximately 11,013 UK citizens living in Austria. If the UK left the EU and the EEA, conditions for Britons would depend on new bilateral arrangements. If treated as straightforward third country nationals, Britons in Austria would also be subject to a strict quota stipulating that the total number of employed and unemployed third country nationals must not exceed 8 percent of the Austrian labour market.

 BELGIUM			
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016	
Economic governance	●	●	
Competitiveness	●	●	
Sovereignty	●	●	
Social benefits and free movement	●	●	

Belgium's stance going into the EU Council meeting

On the one hand, Belgian political elites consider that the withdrawal of a member state from the Union must be avoided, but they also feel like a stronger Union rather than “à la carte” Europe is necessary. Partly because of its consensus tradition and of its will to keep the UK in, the federal government has so far opted for dialogue. However, they could take a stand at the Council meeting, because the only point in the Tusk package that clearly meets Belgian expectations is the one about competitiveness. In particular, they have strong concerns about the proposed compromise protocol text on the UK opt out of ever closer union making an exception for the UK that others might then choose to follow.

A problem appeared when Donald Tusk's letter was discussed with the Belgian federal entities. The French-speakers (both from Wallonia and Brussels) objected on two issues. Firstly, they strongly opposed treaty change in the framework of this agreement. Secondly, and much more fundamentally, they strongly opposed basket four: social welfare and free movement. This opposition can partly be explained by the composition of the different governments. While the French-speaking part of Belgium is led by a center-left coalition, the federal government is mainly composed of parties from the right, including an openly Flemish separatist party. This issue is just one of the many hot topics on which the federal and the French-speaking politicians have conflicting interests.

Which member states matter most to Belgium in the discussion?

The Belgian government is likely to follow the position of France and Germany in the discussions. This is not surprising given Belgium's weight at the EU level: one of its only options to influence the decision-making process is to try to form an alliance with the two countries that are seen as the motor of integration.

Where is the Belgian debate on this?

In Belgium, there is no significant public debate around the renegotiation process, even though it raises some concerns among the political elites. Belgian public opinion is mainly concerned with the terrorist issue and the refugee crisis. In addition Belgium's political DNA of support for increasing European integration runs counter to the idea that a member state may leave the Union. Political leaders are quite reluctant to tackle the issue publicly, to avoid a national debate about the relevance of the European project. An important section of the population remains attached to the Union and its values, but some are so exasperated with the UK's demands that a Brexit could be a good way to boost support for the European project in Belgium.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Belgium

There are around 27,335 UK citizens living in Belgium who would become third country nationals in the event of a Brexit and access to services and benefits would depend on the bilateral deal reached between the UK and Belgium.



BULGARIA

Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Bulgaria's stance going into the EU Council meeting.

Bulgaria has always supported the competitiveness agenda, and, as a euro-out (with a commitment to join when it meets the conditions) has always viewed the UK proposals on a new deal for non-Eurozone members positively as long as they do not preclude further integration of the Eurozone. On sovereignty it is likely to accept the proposals in the Tusk letter on national parliaments and the UK's non-commitment to ever closer union. On social welfare and free movement, it leans more to being convinced by the current proposal than it was on the initial proposals under this basket, but it wants further clarifications on two issues: child benefits and in-work benefits - that the Bulgarian government believes can be resolved.

Which member states matter most to Bulgaria in the discussions?

In the case of the UK renegotiation agenda, Bulgaria is very close with the other newer member states. There has been some coordination of positions among this group ahead of Council meetings, especially in regard to free movement and social policies. In general, the Bulgarian governments is pro-EU, focussing on closer integration, and pursuing membership of Schengen and the Eurozone. It therefore follows Germany's policies closely, but on certain issues including the single market, the UK influence is important too.

Where is the Bulgarian debate on this?

There is relatively high popular interest and therefore some media coverage for two reasons. First, there is a general Bulgarian perception of instability and confusion on the future of the EU and the UK's renegotiation has played a part in this. Second, there is interest in the practical impact of the deal on Bulgarians living, studying and working in the UK.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Bulgaria

The UN International Migrant stock dataset shows 5,329 UK citizens permanently residing in Bulgaria. Approximately 18,000 UK citizens are estimated to own property in Bulgaria, a right that they would lose if no longer EU citizens. As non-EU nationals they might instead be required to register as a Bulgarian company in order to be able to own property legally.

Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Croatia's stance going into the EU Council meeting.

Since the new HDZ-MOST Croatian government was inaugurated only two weeks ago, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not yet publicly formulated and expressed its position on the UK renegotiation deal. Furthermore, the first two weeks after the inauguration were marked by a series of ministerial scandals.

Previously, Croatia has supported the competitiveness and sovereignty (especially in terms of respect for subsidiarity) agendas. Additionally, the new government is convinced on the proposition of economic governance and views the social welfare and free movement proposition positively.

Which member states matter most to Croatia in the discussions?

Croatia is most likely to be influenced by Germany's position.


Where is the Croatian debate on this?

There is very little debate, if any, going on in Croatia related to the UK renegotiation deal. The public and political focus was placed on the new HDZ-MOST Croatian government. The new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Miro Kovač accentuated that his first priority would be to work on improving neighborhood relations, which are currently at an all-time low due to tensions related to the migration crisis.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Croatia

UN figures show that 670 UK citizens live in Croatia. Citizens of an EU member state are entitled to acquire real estate on the Croatian territory. During their stay in Croatia, EU citizens obtain healthcare in compliance with the provisions of the EU Regulation on the coordination of social security systems and in compliance with the provisions of the

Directive 2011/24/EU. As far as education is concerned, EU citizens and their children have the right to attend school in any member state under the same conditions as nationals of that country. Access to these services is more restrictive for third country nationals.

 CYPRUS		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Cyprus' stance going into the EU Council meeting

Given the deep political, economic, commercial and historical ties between the UK and Cyprus, the Cypriot government will not seek in any way to jeopardise British EU membership through its stance in the renegotiation process. Nevertheless, the government of Cyprus is very sensitive when it comes to the fourth basket of the Tusk proposals. Agreeing to any sort of restriction to the free movement of people within the EU could create precedents with a possible negative effect for the ongoing peace talks on Cyprus. The Cypriot government is likely to acknowledge the problems caused by abusers of the current social welfare systems in European countries, but are unlikely to accept any derogation of the basic freedoms applicable within the EU.

EU in 2004, an expat had to provide evidence that a Cypriot was not able to perform the task an expat has applied for. There is a possibility that this practice could be applied once again for UK citizens after they leave the EU.

Which member states matter most to Cyprus in the discussions?

The UK is the member state with most influence over Cyprus in the discussions.

Where is the Cypriot debate on this?

There is a moderate public debate on renegotiation, led mainly by British expats living in Cyprus. They are very much concerned about losing their certain rights that enable them live, work, and get public benefits in Cyprus. This is also concern for those Cypriot citizens living and working in the UK. However, there is little political debate.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Cyprus

According to UN data, there are 40,547 UK citizens living in the Government controlled areas of Cyprus. The law regarding buying property in Cyprus allows European Union citizens that seek to permanently reside in Cyprus to buy unlimited properties for primary residence on the island. As for employment rights, before Cyprus entered the



CZECH REPUBLIC

Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Czech Republic's stance going into the EU Council meeting

The Czech Republic supports the draft decision set out in Tusk's letter, and would probably accept the British demands even if none of its objections were tackled. On economic governance, the country underlines that the Czech Republic as a pre-in is interested in the European Monetary Union deepening and non-euro countries should not have the right to impede this process. The government is calling for clarification of the second part of the principle two about measures safeguarding financial stability.

The other baskets are also supported with some legal queries, as the Czech Republic prefers that changes to EU treaties be done through protocols. The basket on social benefits is the most sensitive issue. Regarding the safeguard mechanism for benefits, the Czech Republic will promote a shorter period for its application (with the option to prolong it), as it fears that the mechanism could eventually become permanent. The Czech government underlines that the mechanism should be applied only to new workers and that limitations shall be gradually reduced during the time of worker's integration.

Which member states matter most to the Czech Republic in the discussions?

The Czech Republic debates and aligns its position in the UK renegotiations primarily with the other members of the Visegrad group (Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) and most notably Poland. The Czech Republic will support the efforts of other countries to soften limitations in the area of in-work benefits and child benefits.

Where is the Czech debate on this?

The UK demands have provoked very little public interest and no internal political debate. Positions were created within the office of the government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and were not questioned by politicians. This is because of a current focus on the migration agenda, general

support for the British demands, and a relatively low amount of Czech workers in the UK who would be affected.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in the Czech Republic

UN data shows there are 4,796 Britons living in the Czech Republic. In the event of a Brexit, the right to be a state employee could be lost to UK citizens – only EU/EEA nationals can become a state employee. EU nationals are also immediately entitled to economic rights and benefits, while non-EU citizens need to stay in the country for at least a year to gain access to benefits. Non-EU nationals also need work residence permits, which are quite difficult to obtain, although improvements are under way.



DENMARK

Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Denmark's stance going into the EU Council meeting.

The current government is very positive regarding Cameron's deal for two reasons. Firstly, Denmark shares many interests with the UK. Competitiveness and a liberalised internal market have been the driving priority for Danish EU membership since Denmark joined the EU in 1973. Similarly, as a non-eurozone country, Denmark is extremely keen on keeping important economic governance discussions outside of the euro group. Moreover, as a country with a eurosceptic public, the suggestion to give national parliaments a greater say in EU politics is welcomed by the Danish government. The Danish government is also on board on the controversial point on social benefits, which it sees as an opportunity to establish a similar deal for Denmark after heated debate in the country on benefits for EU citizens.

The second reason for the uncritical support of Cameron's quest is that it remains decisive for Denmark that the UK stays in the EU. The weight of the UK in the EU system promoting these interests is crucial for Denmark.

Which member states matter most to Denmark in the discussions?

Cameron does not need to waste any time on lobbying Denmark, the government is already on his side. However, Germany might be able to influence Denmark on the social benefits question.

Where is the Danish debate on this?

Since Denmark sees the UK as a like-minded ally, a potential Brexit is a subject to great public and political debate. While the general sentiment is that Denmark remains supportive of Cameron's deal, there are some critical voices, most notably from the opposition parties, arguing that Denmark should be very careful not to mirror Cameron's current path away from EU integration, and that it might risk losing other – and more important - allies, such as Germany.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Denmark

UN data shows 18,556 Britons are living in Denmark. As EU citizens, they can purchase most property in Denmark without any prior permission. Their benefits include unemployment benefits, permanent and temporary incapacity benefits, child support, and rent subsidy. Regarding all workplace and employment rights, EU citizens are given the same rights as Danish citizens. With an EU residence permit, Britons can join the national health insurance scheme in Denmark which gives them access to free medical treatment at hospitals and doctors. Higher education in Denmark is free to citizens of the EU/EEA, and they have the possibility of receiving state sponsored scholarships. In the event of a Brexit, these benefits would no longer be automatically available to UK citizens.

ESTONIA		Summer 2015	February 2016
Basket of issues			
Economic governance	●	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●	●

Estonia's stance going into the EU Council meeting

In Estonia, the desire to keep the UK in the UK is strong since the UK is seen as a like-minded liberal, free market country whose common sense approach can serve to balance continental impulses towards excessive regulation. In general terms, Estonia's bottom line is its security. The UK is a key player in European security and defence, and Estonia would probably be willing to be quite flexible in order to keep the UK in the EU.

However, as it stands, the governments has some reservations on the Tusk proposal. On economic governance, Estonia agrees that better consultation mechanisms could be created, but not that non-euro member states should be given the right to block decisions made by the eurogroup. Estonia is also in principle against any exceptions to the free movement of capital. On sovereignty issues, Estonia could support some of the changes, but not through treaty change, and it suggests a "green card" system rather than the "yellow card" system. The biggest issue is with the social welfare and free movement section, as Estonia strongly supports free movement of persons as a fundamental right. The principle of non-discrimination is essential. Estonia is willing to compromise on changes to social insurance rules regarding those people who have not (yet) contributed, but not regarding those who are employed. Estonia also does not accept the idea of ending the export of child benefits.

Which member states matter most to Estonia in the discussions?


In general, Estonia has always tried not to veer too far from German positions. Estonia also closely consults with the Nordic countries, especially Finland. In terms of positions (but not influence), the other Baltic states, Latvia and Lithuania, will likely be singing from the same hymnsheet. If Poland can compromise on free movement, then Estonia may follow.

Where is the Estonian debate on this?

There is popular interest but little political debate. Officials and politicians do discuss and worry about it, but there is little debate since there is consensus among them on Estonia's interests in the Brexit issue.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in the Estonia

UN data shows there are 487 British nationals living in Estonia at the moment. Right now, they have access to property ownership, social security, employment rights and public services through their EU membership. For non-EU nationals, these are available after obtaining a residency permit and a work permit. The biggest obstacle for a long term residence permit is that the foreign nationals have to demonstrate a knowledge of the Estonian language of at least B1 level.

 FINLAND		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Finland's stance going into the EU Council meeting.

The Finnish government has not publicly taken a position on the demands presented by the United Kingdom. However, there are good reasons to believe that the government is generally supportive of the preliminary deal presented by Tusk – and ready to go to some lengths in order to satisfy the British demands. Generally speaking, Finland considers the United Kingdom as an important ally within the EU, as the countries share many objectives. From the Finnish point of view, the UK is an essential member state also because it adds weight to the EU’s foreign, security and defence policies.

Finland has traditionally opposed the emergence of dividing lines within the EU, and is worried about special status for some member states because of the complications in decision-making. However, the compromises suggested in the Tusk letter will likely suit Finland. As a result of the debate on the refugee crisis, the issue of benefits and cost of migration are becoming more pertinent. As long as the proposed measures in the fourth basket do not endanger the freedom of movement within the EU on a larger scale, Finland is likely to support them.

However, so far Finland has not had a significant role in the renegotiation process and this is unlikely to radically change in the final stages of the process.

Which member states matter most to Finland in the discussions?

Finland will naturally pay particularly close attention to the British concerns and views. Like in most EU matters in recent years, Finland is also likely to attach significance to the position of Germany. However, Finland is unlikely to change its views in any radical way.

Where is the Finnish debate on this?

Especially during the last weeks and months, the Finnish media has reported quite extensively on the negotiations between the EU and the UK. However, there is little political debate about the issues on the table or the about the relationship between the EU and the UK. The UK question has been largely overshadowed in Finland by the refugee crisis, the tensions between the EU and Russia, and the eurozone crisis. Also, as explained above, the demands of the UK have not proven very controversial in Finland. To some extent, the whole renegotiation process has been seen as something that Finland can have little or no influence on.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Finland

UN data shows 6,898 UK citizens currently live in Finland. In the case of Brexit, the status of the UK citizens within the EU would depend largely on the kind of relationship that the EU and the UK would agree on. If the UK nationals were to be considered simply as non-EU citizens, they would have similar access to rights, social security and public services, but only if they could get a residence permit. They could only apply for this after already having secured a job or place in university. Due to a recent government decision, non-EU/EEA citizens also have to pay tuition fees in order to study in the English-speaking study programmes of Finnish universities.



FRANCE

Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

France's stance going into the EU Council meeting

France's major outstanding concern is the economic governance basket: the deal for euro outs. François Hollande has repeatedly declared that he would reject any veto for the UK – or any non-eurozone country – in the decision-making of the eurozone. The ambiguity of Donald Tusk's letter about the mechanism that would reassure the concerns of the UK without giving London a veto does not satisfy the French government at this point.

On both the sovereignty basket and the social benefits and free movement basket, France has moved all the way from red (unconvinced) to green (convinced) during the negotiations, even though the new red card offered to national parliaments goes further than France would have liked. In any case, France appreciates that Donald Tusk's letter give David Cameron symbolic signs of reassurance and does not involve treaty modification.

Which member states matter most to France in the discussions?

Throughout the renegotiation, Paris and Berlin have remained very closely aligned. The French government knows that it needs the support of Berlin in order to influence the negotiations. The respect of existing treaties is an absolute red line for both countries, but France puts special emphasis on preventing any veto by non-eurozone member states on Eurozone policies. France is also working on joint proposals to deepen integration of the eurozone with Berlin.

Where is the French debate on this?


Despite some political figures being opposed to Donald Tusk's proposed concessions, or even in favour of a Brexit, mainstream parties share the same perspective: the UK should stay in the EU, and the compromise should not impose treaty modification. On the other hand, the Front National sees the renegotiations as an opportunity to attack

the EU. Marine Le Pen has said that David Cameron's use of the referendum to force the EU to renegotiate could be a model for her European policy if she is elected President in 2017.

The popular debate has also been limited. All media outlets have discussed Donald Tusk's letter and the possible implications of a Brexit, although in a descriptive fashion. They have been discussing as much eurozone governance as reform of social benefits and free movement: pro-European movements and media outlets have regretted the leniency of Donald Tusk and European partners vis-à-vis David Cameron on this issue, while others have sometime alluded to the possibility that France could benefit from the similar reforms. Still, the discussion in France is rather about the regime opened by the Directive on posted workers than about welfare abuses.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in France

185,344 UK citizens live in France, and 200,000 more own a holiday home. As citizens of the EEA, they can work in any sector in France, and can stay to look for work up to 6 months. More Britons receive unemployment welfare in France than French citizens in the UK. All EU citizens have the same healthcare rights as French citizens, and education is mandatory and free for all from age 6 to 16.

 GERMANY		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Germany's stance going into the EU Council meeting

The keystone of Germany's position is that Germany wants the UK in, but only in a strong Union. This means Berlin cannot give in to claims that it believes will undermine the Union, but is willing to support measures that will strengthen it. It follows from this that Berlin has an interest in helping London to sell whatever is agreed as an ambitious package.

Germany's remaining concerns are around the implications of the sovereignty deal and the social welfare/free movement package. On the sovereignty deal, the high 55 percent threshold for the national parliaments red card veto system in Tusk's letter could be deemed sufficient to make it a high hurdle, but Berlin is concerned about conceding a reduction in the European Parliament's authority to the anti-EU lobby. On the fourth basket, Berlin has always been concerned about attacks on the principle of free movement. The current proposals around the emergency brake system could be acceptable since they give the EU institutions a role in it being enacted.

Which member states matter most to Germany in the discussions?

Berlin's key allies in this discussion are those EU members that care about questions of fundamental nature for the future of the Union – centred around, but not exclusively among the six founding members (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands). On the social welfare/ freedom of movement basket, the central and eastern European states are crucial. Berlin's relationship with Warsaw is currently strained, and Germany will be wary of agreeing on a package that might put it at odds with Poland. On the eurozone question, the conversations within the eurozone are vital, but Berlin also has a strong interest in any outsider willing to support constructive coexistence of both eurozone and non-eurozone to make a future deal work. Conversations with Sweden and Denmark, are perhaps easier at this stage than with Poland.

Where is the German debate on this?

The media have reported on the British question with more dedication over the past few weeks, but the Tusk proposals, largely because of their complexity and their nature as a moving target, are far from making the headlines. These continue to be dominated by the refugee crisis, which is of much more immediate concern to the German public than Britain's EU future. This is one reason why the government itself is holding back from making more detailed statements on the negotiations and offers it is willing to put on the table. A great deal of attention is being paid though in the policy community – from the Chancellor, across a number of ministries, to the business community, experts in think tanks as well as by the German parliament to the details of any future deal. The European Affairs Committee of the Bundestag discussed the British proposals in an expert hearing in late January 2016. There is a concern that a UK deal with fundamental impact on the functioning of the EU is signed without participation of parliaments.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Germany

Just over 103,352 UK citizens live in Germany, and as EU citizens have full rights to freedom of movement. In the event of a Brexit, depending on the bilateral deal reached between the UK and Germany, UK citizens could be asked to apply for work and residency permits.

Another immediate challenge for the UK government in the event of a decision to leave the EU would be to negotiate an agreement on pension entitlements. British citizens, who have contributed to the German pension scheme are – within a European-wide agreement - currently entitled to receive a pension dependent on their respective contribution period. In the event of a Brexit, these contribution periods would lapse. UK citizens then would have to wait 24 months before being able to claim back their contributions.

 GREECE		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Greece's stance going into the EU Council meeting

The fundamental position of Greece is that Britain should stay in the European Union. This position is grounded in Athens' fear that in the case of a Brexit, the structure of Europe will completely change and a domino effect could be created. Athens wants a compromise to be found, at all costs.

As a matter of principle Greece is not particularly satisfied with Tusk's proposals on economic governance and social benefits/free movement. In July 2015, for instance, Britain contributed to Greece's bridge loan, and this would not be possible in the future. Additionally, restrictions in social benefits/free movement standards could pave the way for a new European debate that could turn against Greece in a period during which more voices are being heard about its expulsion from the Schengen area. Nevertheless, what matters more for the Greek government is that a compromise between Brussels and London is reached safeguarding Britain staying in the Union. Therefore, Athens is likely to refrain from taking part in the discussion on issues of its interest and remain neutral regarding Tusk's proposals on competitiveness and sovereignty.

Which member states matter most to Greece in the discussions?

Greece plays no active role on the matter and only expects a compromise following mediation by bigger EU players.


Where is the Greek debate on this?

As often happens with European affairs in Greece, the debate about Brexit and Tusk's proposals receives little attention. There is no political discussion on the matter.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Greece

According to UN data 17,679 UK citizens live in Greece. As far as healthcare is concerned, there is free access

for all emergencies irrespective of nationality. But for non-emergency health treatment, the European Health Insurance Card is required for adults to show EU citizenship and eligibility (children constitute an exception).

 HUNGARY		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Hungary's stance going into the EU Council meeting

Hungary has been supportive of the demands the UK has made in the first three baskets. The real question for Hungary is the fourth basket on social benefits and free movement. There are over 56,000 Hungarians in the UK. As it has been often communicated by the Hungarian government, according to their calculations these people pay more taxes than the amount of benefits they receive. The government finds it unacceptable that those who just use their right to free movement could be discriminated against. It has been repeatedly noted that Hungary supports preventing abuse of benefits. However, the emergency break mechanism, especially without concrete and precise details, is not seen as acceptable in the form as it is presented in the Tusk letter by the Hungarian government. The Polish and Hungarian prime ministers have announced that they will not support the EU adopting such a position binding all member states to be subjected to the emergency break. Hungary seeks very strong evidence-based justification to be introduced as part of the emergency break mechanism should it be accepted, and any modifications under this package can only concern newcomers. On the question of indexing childcare benefits, Hungary will likely be more flexible, but here again Hungary insists that it can only be applied to newcomers.

Which member states matter most to Hungary in the discussions?


Hungary is in favor of building a coalition and formulating one final common position with the other Visegrad countries (Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia) ahead of the Council meeting. Nevertheless, since the Szydło government came into power in Poland, the Orbán government has been strengthening ties with Poland specifically and has been coordinating with Warsaw on the highest levels.

Where is the Hungarian debate on this?

The political debate is very narrow and shallow: the government dominates communication about the UK renegotiation demands, and only concentrates on the fourth basket of demands. Public debate on the demands and on the Tusk letter is limited to a few brief analyses and opinion pieces.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Hungary

According to the UN's International Migrant Stock dataset, in mid-2015, 6,980 UK citizens lived in Hungary. With the European Health Insurance Card, EU and EEA citizens are entitled to public healthcare either free of charge or in certain cases their treatment is reimbursed. Anyone, including foreigners, staying in Hungary for longer than three months needs to register with the National Health Insurance Fund (OEP) in order to be eligible for Hungarian public health insurance.

 IRELAND		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Ireland's stance going into the EU Council meeting

The primary Irish concern going into the Brexit negotiations was how best to marry the Irish pro-European integration stance, with the country's need to maintain the strong, prosperous British-Irish relationship. There is a sense that the draft decision strikes a fair balance between the European position and the UK's concerns, and that the difference between the UK's negotiating position and that of its counterparts in the European Council is not so great as initially feared.

Ireland supports the proposals on economic governance and sees the competitiveness basket as little more than an amalgamation of the existing EU initiatives. The Irish see no major issues with the articles on sovereignty. Regarding social benefits and free movement, it was key for the Irish that the principle of non-discrimination be respected, but there is a sense that the current proposal satisfies this, since it firstly does not provide for a UK-specific exception, and secondly leaves a say over the emergency break with Europe.

Which member states matter most to Ireland in the discussions?

Normally influenced by the UK and the Franco-German axis, this is a rare occasion in which the Irish national interests have taken precedence. Ireland has a vested interest in facilitating a solution to the UK's reform agenda, and since it sees the current proposal as an acceptable solution, it is unlikely to be swayed from this position.

Where is the Irish debate on this?

Though there is public awareness of the issue, the Brexit conversation in Ireland is very much top-down, led primarily by government, think-tanks, political parties and industry representative organisations. Ireland is somewhat unusual in the European context, in that there exists little in the way of domestic Euroscepticism. As such, the debate,

has focused largely on the potential negative implications for Irish interests. The only party that could be seen to have moderate eurosceptic leanings, Sinn Fein, has also made clear that they do not wish to see a Brexit.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Ireland

According to UN data, the number of UK nationals in Ireland is 254,761. As members of the Common Travel Area, UK citizens enjoy special status in Ireland, which allows them to live and work in Ireland in much the same way as Irish citizens. Depending on the terms of a British departure from the EU, and assuming that the current arrangements between the two countries would continue to exist post-Brexit, it is theoretically possible that the rights of UK citizens, as provided for under the current domestic and bilateral arrangements, would not be unduly affected. However, there exists significant uncertainty as to whether these arrangements could be maintained in the post-Brexit scenario.



Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Italy's stance going into the EU Council meeting

During the renegotiations, the dossier on which the Italian has shifted the most significantly is economic governance. Last summer, the Italian position was very wary on the UK request for a voice on eurozone decision making, but Renzi's government is now likely to take the view that if the UK's interests are in better reshaping the balance between eurozone ins and outs, without obstructing a further integration in domains such as fiscal and banking union, Italy will be able to support Tusk's proposal on this matter. Concerns remain around basket four on social welfare/freedom of movement, both in terms of overall principle, and in terms of impact on Italian workers in the UK. Italy is likely to be looking for a deal that is sufficiently time limited in nature and tailored to exceptional circumstances.

Which member states matter most to Italy in the discussions?

Traditionally, Germany and Italy have been quite close in various rounds of treaty reforms, partly because of similar bureaucratic traditions regarding EU constitutional law. However, more recently, the Italian ambition to pull their weight again within the EU has started to play out in relations with Germany. Nevertheless, this ambition for retaking a central role in EU decision making may well drive Italy to flank Germany in the discussions, precisely because Merkel's brokering role is likely to be critical.


While Italy's philosophical stance on Europe is in total opposition to the British one, a partnership of sorts has emerged between the UK and Italy during the renegotiation process. The two countries share the same view on streamlining bureaucracy and on introducing greater flexibility. Italy may commit to uphold the great majority of the reforms Cameron is asking for in the name of the shared end of a simplified EU, as set out in the common memorandum issued by foreign ministers Gentiloni and Hammond in early December.

Where is the Italian debate on this?

Brexit has triggered a more intense debate among political forces than among the Italian public. As the national debate is still rather weak, the public orientation will depend largely on the UK's approach at the negotiations in the EU Council meeting on 18 February. If the UK takes a cooperative and positive stance, this might lead the Italian public and media to judge the renegotiations positively. On the contrary, a confrontational approach, with no willingness to reach any compromise, would negatively influence the public perception on the Brexit's renegotiations.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Italy

According to UN data 64,986 UK citizens live in Italy and have the same rights as Italian nationals to work, welfare and social security and services via EU citizenship. In the event of a Brexit, arrangements for these citizens would depend on the bilateral deal negotiated.

 LATVIA		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Latvia's stance going into the EU Council meeting

Latvia fully agrees with the proposed reforms on competitiveness, but is critical of the other baskets of reforms. On economic governance, the government insists that any changes in the current cooperation should be done in accordance with the EU legislation and based on mutual interests. Latvia considers a “two-speed Europe” as problematic, but as it considers the UK to be one of its most important security guarantors, it is likely to put these concerns aside. Most problematic are the proposed changes on social benefits and free movement: the Latvian government disagrees with any discrimination and fully supports the free movement of people. However, the government seeks a deal with the UK to maintain the existing cooperation.

Which member states matter most to Latvia in the discussions?

Latvia is almost definitely going to follow Germany’s lead on this matter. Latvia also tends to listen to the opinions of France and regional partners Sweden and Finland, but Germany’s advice would prevail. Poland, is one of Latvia’s strongest and more outspoken partners, but doesn’t carry the same weight in Latvia since its change in government.

Where is the Latvian debate on this?

There is some popular interest but little political debate. Although the media has reflected upon the matter to some extent, the main attention has been paid to the matters of migration and benefit seekers. Most of the public debate was more concerned with how the proposed reforms are perceived in British society. The political debate is very limited even on the highest level. The process of confirming a new Latvian government and the ongoing discussion on the acceptance of refugees could be explanations for this lack of interest.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Latvia

1,148 British nationals currently live in Latvia. As EU citizens, they enjoy the same rights regarding property, social security (if legally employed), health care and education as Latvian citizens. If Britain leaves the EU and the EEA and does not join the EFTA, these rights would be at risk.



LITHUANIA

Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Lithuania's stance going into the EU Council meeting

The Lithuanian position is that Tusk's proposal creates the preconditions for a positive outcome, but the proposed reforms on social benefits and free movement are problematic. There are about 100,000 Lithuanian living and working in UK, so changes that affect their rights are politically sensitive. In internal political discourse, it is argued that the EU was created to promote cooperation and free movement. Other issues are almost absent from public discussions, perhaps with an exception of very general statements that creating a “two-speed” Europe is a threat to European unity and Lithuania’s interests. Lithuania is very supportive of the idea of increased competitiveness.

Which member states matter most to Lithuania in the discussions?

Most attention is given to what is said in Germany, and to a lesser extent Poland, but this does not necessary translate into a strong influence on Lithuanian position.

Where is the Lithuanian debate on this?

The issue is almost absent from public discussions. There are some bureaucratic consultations within specific ministries but they do not attract public or even media’s attention. There were only very few commentaries in the media on the issue, usually by Lithuanian representatives in the European Parliament. If there is any discussion, it relates the Brexit question to the issue of European unity, and what this means for the EU’s position towards Russia.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Lithuania

3,301 UK citizens currently live in Lithuania. As EU citizens, they have a right to acquire property, access to social security, right to be employed, and access to public services. If Britain leaves the EU and the EEA and does not join the EFTA, these rights would be at risk.



LUXEMBOURG

Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Luxembourg's stance going into the EU Council meeting

The government is very much opposed to the UK leaving the EU. But it has so far played its cards quite close to its chest regarding the the proposed UK-EU deal. Luxembourg's concern throughout this process has been to prevent this renegotiation process damaging any of the founding principles of the EU, and insofar as Tusk's deal appears to prevent work arounds in each case on this, it is likely to support coming to agreement.

Which member states matter most to Luxembourg in the discussions?


France and Germany are Luxembourg's natural allies in most EU negotiations, and since Germany is likely to be pushing to find a workable deal in the discussions on the UK deal, it seems likely that Luxembourg will work with this effort.

Where is the debate in Luxembourg on this?

The public debate in Luxembourg on this issue is very subdued, if not nonexistent. Luxembourg has one of the most instinctively pro-European populations in the EU. European issues are rarely debated in Luxembourg, and do not easily become politicised. The renegotiation process has so far proved no exception to this rule.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Luxembourg

In 2015, 6,559 UK citizens were living in Luxembourg. Currently they benefit from an EU preference rule, which would no longer apply to UK citizens in the event of a Brexit, and employers would have first to demonstrate that no EU citizen could be found to do a job, and then have to wait for three weeks before asking for an official certificate to be allowed to employ a third country national. This could be a significant disadvantage for UK citizens, as their competition from French, Belgian and German commuters could be stiff.

 MALTA		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Malta's stance going into the EU Council meeting

Malta is extremely nervous about the prospect of the UK leaving the EU. When compared with other EU nations, Malta is particularly vulnerable to the potential economic effects of a Brexit. Exports to the UK made up 7.8 percent of Maltese GDP in 2013, FDI Stock in the UK made up 11.8 percent of GDP in 2013, and UK Bank Links as a percent of GDP (this is the sum of UK bank liabilities and bank claims) were 67 percent in 2014. As a result, Prime Minister Joseph Muscat has announced that Malta is “ready to discuss flexible conditions for Britain.”

Nevertheless, negotiations over social benefits and free movement will be stickiest from the Maltese perspective. The interests of a large number of Maltese nationals residing and working in the UK, along with the value of remittances from those nationals, are of great economic and political importance. Thus, the premise that the UK can discriminate against EU nationals, even if only for a limited period of time, is a hard one for the Maltese political establishment as well as the Maltese man-in-the-street to swallow. On the other side of this equation however are the twenty thousand foreign nationals (mostly EU nationals) residing in Malta and the incentive to scale back the benefits that they are currently entitled to. Much will depend on the exact nature of the “emergency brake” on benefits and under what conditions exactly that brake will be pulled.

Which member states matter most to Malta in the discussions?

As Malta’s most important allies within the EU, the UK and Italy’s positions are the most likely to influence that of Malta in the discussion at the Council meeting.


Where is the Maltese debate on this?

In short, there is little public debate on Brexit in the Maltese parliament, in the media, or on the streets. While discussions on EU policy (i.e. irregular migration policy)

and tensions between subsidiary rights and a federalised Europe abound, there is little discussion of the implications of a Brexit or renegotiated British membership.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Malta

According to UN data, 12,046 British nationals are resident in Malta. As members of the EU, British nationals are granted access to a number of entitlements in Malta, including property ownership, contributory social security, healthcare and education, that they may stand to lose in the case of a Brexit. However Maltese membership of the Commonwealth and a series of bilateral arrangements (i.e. the Convention on Social Security between the Government of the Republic of Malta and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; the Reciprocal Health Agreement; and the Malta-UK Double Tax Convention) on entitlements between Malta and the UK would certainly soften the blow of a Brexit to the interests of British nationals in Malta.

 THE NETHERLANDS		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

The Dutch stance going into the EU Council meeting

The Netherlands has a strong political and economic interest in keeping the UK within the EU. It is therefore keen to listen to British concerns, but without compromising on basic principles of European integration.

The Netherlands and the UK share the same position on the sovereignty issue. While the Dutch government supports the proposals regarding economic governance in principle, it emphasises that much depends on the details, especially regarding the mechanism for involvement of non-Euro countries in Eurozone decision making. The current proposal is considered as a realistic compromise between the interests of Eurozone and non-Eurozone countries, if there can be an assurance that the deal will not inhibit the functioning of the Eurozone. Regarding competitiveness, the Netherlands support the UK attempts to further liberalise the internal market, to deregulate and to conclude trade agreements. This fits neatly in the priorities of the current Dutch presidency of the EU. Regarding social benefits and free movement, the Netherlands is committed to respecting the current arrangements. At the same time it welcomes the proposed measures to prevent misuse and the indexation of child benefits. The Netherlands also supports the creation of a mechanism which enables a response in case of exceptional situations of inflow of workers from within the EU, if non-discriminatory and under specific conditions.

Which member states matter most to the Netherlands in the discussions?

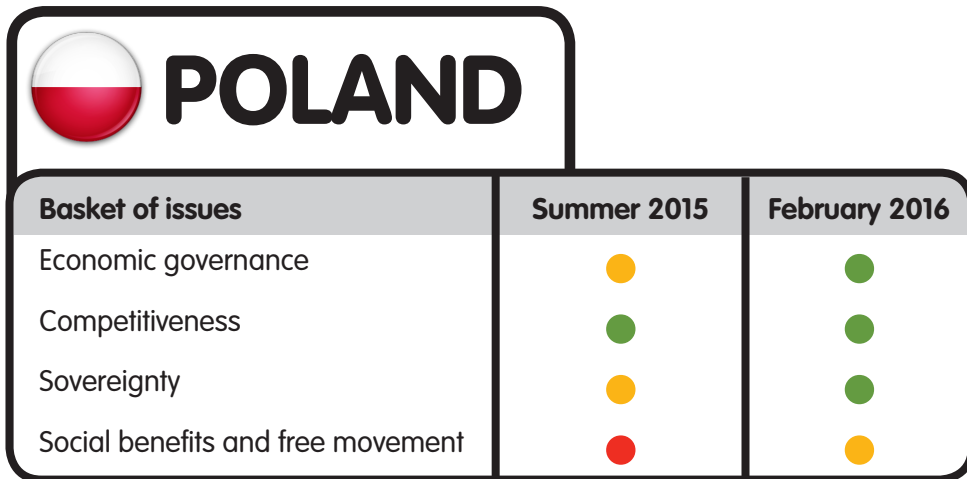
The fact that the Netherlands holds the EU presidency means that the Dutch position will be relatively moderate in order to enable the Dutch government to act as a deal broker. It is likely that in relation to the issue of economic governance the Netherlands will be in line with the positions of other Eurozone countries, particularly Germany and France. Regarding social welfare and free movement, there will be understanding for the positions of south and east European countries which are relatively large exporters of labour.

Where is the Dutch debate on this?

There is very little public and political debate on the issue. There is neither much interest in the contents of the negotiations, nor in the desirability of the renegotiations.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in the Netherlands

According to UN data 49,549 UK citizens live in the Netherlands. As EU citizens, they have the right to property ownership, and access to social security. They also have employment rights and access to public services including education and healthcare. If Britain leaves the EU and the EEA and does not join the EFTA, these rights would be at risk.



Poland's stance going into the EU Council meeting

The Law and Justice government of Poland firmly supports the UK's membership in the EU, its scepticism over integration, and its concern to keep national sovereignty as a firm principle within the EU. This explains in large part the evolution in the Polish position since the change of government last autumn, from an amber-red view of the four baskets to the current green-amber take. The sticking point for Poland remains the fourth basket on social welfare and free movement and it is unclear whether the proposal in Tusk's letter goes far enough in assuaging the concerns of the Polish government on the impact on the current stock of Polish workers currently in the UK. The Polish government has repeatedly stated (including after David Cameron's visit to Warsaw in the first week of February) that it will never accept a limitation of the rights of Poles working in the UK but it is ready for negotiations and certain concessions. It is likely to use the Council discussions to try to ensure that the provision regarding in-work benefits is restricted just to the British case and should not form a general regulation that could also be implemented by other EU member states.

Which member states matter most to Poland in the discussions?

At the end of January 2016, the Polish national-conservative government declared the UK to be Poland's main strategic ally, replacing Germany's longstanding position in this role. In addition, the Visegrad group – Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland – will have a strong bearing on Poland in the discussions, since they are an important reference point for the Law and Justice government. Within this quartet, the Czech Republic and Hungary are viewed as particular allies.

Where is the Polish debate on this?

There is quite a heated political debate about the shift in strategic alliances away from Germany and towards the UK - with Brexit viewed in this context - with trade

and security arguments being used on both side of the argument for which alliance should constitute a priority. For ordinary Poles, the Brexit issue limits itself mostly to the issue of Polish workers in the UK. Poles generally are against Brexit, however the great majority of them will not approve substantial constraints on the rights of their co-nationals living in the UK.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Poland

According to UN data, 34,545 Britons are currently registered as living in Poland, with access to services, social security, property ownership, and crucially, the right to reside and work as EU citizens.



PORTUGAL

Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Portugal's stance going into the EU Council meeting

Viewing the UK as a longstanding ally, who they are very keen to see remain in the EU, Portuguese diplomats have been very guarded in relation to the renegotiation process. However, fundamentally, Portugal finds itself in a very different place the UK on the reform agenda. While Portugal is a member of the eurozone and of the Schengen area, Britain is not. While Portugal sees its participation in the EU as central to its own democratic regime, Britain does not. While Portugal closely associates the country's economic modernisation and prosperity to the single market, Britain believes there are alternatives. While for Portugal the European integration process never fundamentally questioned national identity, for Britain it does and still does. As such, Portugal's wish to support the UK can only go so far and it has particular concerns about the social welfare and free movement proposal and their relationship to fundamental EU principles.

Which member states matter most to Portugal in the discussions?


Portugal will work with different countries on different parts of the renegotiation agenda. On matters related to economic governance and competitiveness – Portugal will be close to Germany and Italy. It agrees with them that the economic and monetary union requires deeper integration, but also accepts that this should be voluntary for states outside the euro, and favours a reduction on Brussels' red-tape and hyper-regulatory inclination. It sees its position on sovereignty as aligned with the same partners, but also with France. On social benefits and free movement matters – Portugal will be clearly working with member states like Poland, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania and Lithuania, all very wary that the UK is trying to undermine the fundamental principle of free movement and discriminating against their national citizens living in the UK.

Where is the Portuguese debate on this?

In Portugal, so far, the UK's initiative to renegotiate its relationship with the EU has not been the focus of much public debate. Portuguese media has covered the topic intermittently (mostly by quoting news agencies) and in the main, Portuguese newspaper columnists have written little about it. Up to now no major public event has been organised to discuss the issue and Portuguese politicians have tended to downplay the topic when speaking about it (occasionally) in public. Portugal has been preoccupied with pressing domestic matters, including complex elections in 2015, and at a European level the fallout from the eurozone and refugee crisis and the future of Schengen. Yet, while public and political debate on the issue has been limited, there is an acute awareness among Portuguese public opinion and politicians of the serious implications that the British renegotiation could have, particularly if it leads to Brexit.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Portugal

According to UN data, 17,798 British citizens live in Portugal. As EU citizens, they are entitled to employment, social security, healthcare and a range of other benefits including unemployment benefits, sickness cash benefits, child care benefits, maternity or paternity benefits, invalidity benefits, survivors' benefits.

 ROMANIA		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Romania's stance going into the EU Council meeting

Throughout the negotiations, Romania has been convinced by the UK's competitiveness agenda, and in general has had some sympathy with the UK scepticism about closer integration, because of its own fears about increasing pressure for tax harmonisation. However, it is more wary about the fourth basket, as it is very protective of both the principle of free movement and the potential impact of measures on Romanians working in the UK.

Which member states matter most to Romania in the discussions?


Germany's voice is the most crucial one for Romania in the Council not only because of Germany's influence within the EU but also because of strong cultural ties. The current Romanian president is an ethnic German. The US also has very strong resonance in Romania, so its views on the undesirability of Brexit carry significant weight.

Where is the Romanian debate on this?

There is very little debate in Romania on this issue, apart from in some elite foreign policy circles. In general Romanians find it hard to believe that the UK might actually consider leaving the EU but this has not led to significant coverage in the media or elsewhere.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Romania

UN data states that 3,124 UK citizens are resident in Romania and as EU citizens have an automatic right to work, study, and through employment to access the contributory health and social security schemes in the country. The right to property ownership in Romania exists for both domiciled and non-domiciled EU citizens but is much more complex for non EU citizens, with conditions for foreign nationals of other countries set out in bilateral treaties.

 SLOVAKIA		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Slovakia's stance going into the EU Council meeting

Slovakia views the Tusk letter as a good starting point for a deal at the Council meeting, but has concerns around basket four. In discussions in London in February, Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico sought assurances from David Cameron that any deal regarding restricting access to benefits for EU citizens living and working in the UK would not be retroactive. Despite a strong desire to keep the UK in, and strong support for other aspects of Cameron's agenda, impact on the current stock of Slovakian citizens working in the UK – around 60,000 – is viewed as a red line for the Slovakian government.

Which member states matter most to Slovakia in the discussions?

Slovakia aligns closely with the other Visegrad states – the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland – on this dossier, as with many other. Within this group, Poland's voice is likely to be the most influential for Slovakia given its weight in discussions.

Where is the Slovakian debate on this?

There is very little public debate in Slovakia on this issue. With forthcoming parliamentary elections in Slovakia in March, it is this, along with the question of migration, where there is quite strong opposition in Slovakia to the relocation quotas agreed in autumn 2015, that are dominating Slovakian debate.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Slovakia

4,890 UK citizens live in Slovakia. As EU citizens they currently have the right to reside and work, and if registered as workers, have access to the social security system.



SLOVENIA

Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Slovenia's stance going into the EU Council meeting

The attention of the Slovenian government is currently firmly on the European migrant and refugee crisis which is affecting Slovenia directly in terms of flows into the EU. In addition, the government is also in a relatively weak position in opinion polls and under heavy fire from the opposition for their handling of the refugee crisis at an EU level. It is not likely that it will pursue an active policy with regard to the renegotiation package. But broadly, the Slovenian government is content with the four areas set out in Tusk's letter although it retains some concerns around the fourth basket, and the risk of compromise on one of the four freedoms.

Which member states matter most to Slovenia in the discussions?

Germany and France are the most critical players for Slovenia on this dossier. The Slovenian economy depends heavily on Germany as one of the most important export markets for Slovene firms and a motor of growth in the central Europe. France is another important political and economic partner of Slovenia. However, the UK also matters to Slovenia: Slovenian exports to the UK is worth €500 million a year. Slovenia will also keep an eye on the positions of Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, known as the 'Visegrad four' but particularly Poland as the biggest of this group. Relations between Slovenia and the Visegrad group have been strengthening of late, and the group could play an important role in defining the position of the new member states on issues such as mobility, social rights and the principle of non-discrimination.


Where is the Slovenian debate on this?

There has been some limited coverage in Slovenian media of this issue, but is not a major subject of interest. Even though Slovenia is currently led by a progressive liberal party the world view of its voters is very different from

the one underlying the UK's reform plan. There is limited understanding for the position of the UK. The Slovenian parliament debated the UK reform package in December as part of a broader discussion on EU reform, but the debate centred around issues of more immediate concern to Slovenia including the future of Schengen.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Slovenia

578 UK citizens live in Slovenia according to UN data. EU citizenship gives these people the right to own properties, access social security benefits, their employment rights and access to public services. Brexit would mean that the above mentioned rights would have to be renegotiated.

 SPAIN		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Spain's stance going into the EU Council meeting

Difficult negotiations to form a government in Spain are still underway after the elections in December 2015. The Socialist party leader, Pedro Sanchez is currently in the driving seat on these discussions. In this context there are legal doubts if the current Popular Party interim administration is competent to adopt decisions at the European Council on 18 February. State legal services believe that the acting government will need the support of the parliament to give approval to an agreement. The foreign minister Margallo has requested advice from the legal services of the European Council and from the international law office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One possibility is that Mariano Rajoy signs the agreement ad referendum (“the signature becomes definitive once it is confirmed by the responsible organ”). The Prime Minister’s Office view the deal in Tusk’s letter as a good basis for agreement but they are still conducting a review of the legal aspects. There is particular concern about the implications of the social welfare/ freedom of movement basket for the between 200,000 and 500,000 Spaniards living in the UK.

Which member states matter most to Spain in the discussions?

Given the political context in Spain, the Spanish government is likely to keep a low profile, and to stay close in the discussions to Germany, France and Italy. Spain is in no mood to block agreement – only a decisive deal being reached by the opposition parties in the coming days could change this position.


Where is the Spanish debate on this?

In the present circumstances of political instability - hung parliament, uncertain government formation and corruption scandals - the current political debate is 100 percent focused on domestic issues. The fragmented composition of the new Parliament means the stalemate could last for months. In this environment, there is little

popular interest in the issue and the political debate is limited to think tanks, embassies and some media. This could change around the Council meeting this week.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Spain

308,821 UK citizens reside in Spain and can access employment, social and tax benefits and services as EU citizens. Most healthcare services are currently reserved for the holders of the EU health insurance card. This is a primary concern of British residents in Spain since Spanish authorities estimate that as many as half of British expats in Spain are over the age of 50.

 SWEDEN		
Basket of issues	Summer 2015	February 2016
Economic governance	●	●
Competitiveness	●	●
Sovereignty	●	●
Social benefits and free movement	●	●

Sweden's stance going into the EU Council meeting

Sweden's strongest concerns in this process have always been around basket four on social welfare and free movement. The intense pressure which it has been under from the refugee crisis over the last eight months of the renegotiation period may have somewhat increased public sympathy for restrictions of some types on immigration in Sweden, but the EU principle of freedom of movement is still seen as very important, and any move that counters this will not be supported. The detail of the deal on basket four will matter to Sweden.

Which member states matter most to Sweden in the discussions?

There is no indication that Sweden intends to stand out in the discussions on renegotiation at the Council meeting. It has a strong political and economic interest in keeping the UK in the EU and is likely to stick closely to Germany in the talks as Merkel tries to find an acceptable deal that achieves this.

Where is the Swedish debate on this?

Sweden's national debate is currently focussed on the refugee crisis which consumes a large proportion of airtime on both domestic and European issues. Partly as a result, the possibility of Brexit has received some coverage but there has not been a major discussion of the renegotiation process.

Key issues to watch for UK citizens in Sweden

There are 24,950 UK citizens resident in Sweden. As an EU citizen you have the right to work, study or live in Sweden without a residence permit. People from outside the EU/EEA who want to work, must have been granted a work permit before entering Sweden. To obtain a work permit, you must have an offer of employment in Sweden. Your employer must have advertised the job in Sweden and the EU/EEA and Switzerland for at least ten days before the offer of employment was made.

ABOUT ECFR

The **European Council on Foreign Relations** (ECFR) is the first pan-European think-tank. Launched in October 2007, its objective is to conduct research and promote informed debate across Europe on the development of coherent, effective and values-based European foreign policy.

ECFR has developed a strategy with three distinctive elements that define its activities:

- **A pan-European Council.** ECFR has brought together a distinguished Council of over two hundred Members – politicians, decision makers, thinkers and business people from the EU's member states and candidate countries – which meets once a year as a full body. Through geographical and thematic task forces, members provide ECFR staff with advice and feedback on policy ideas and help with ECFR's activities within their own countries. The Council is chaired by Carl Bildt, Emma Bonino and Mabel van Oranje.
- **A physical presence in the main EU member states.** ECFR, uniquely among European think-tanks, has offices in Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris, Rome, Sofia and Warsaw. Our offices are platforms for research, debate, advocacy and communications.
- **A distinctive research and policy development process.** ECFR has brought together a team of distinguished researchers and practitioners from all over Europe to advance its objectives through innovative projects with a pan-European focus. ECFR's activities include primary research, publication of policy reports, private meetings and public debates, 'friends of ECFR' gatherings in EU capitals and outreach to strategic media outlets.

ECFR is a registered charity funded by the Open Society Foundations and other generous foundations, individuals and corporate entities. These donors allow us to publish our ideas and advocate for a values-based EU foreign policy. ECFR works in partnership with other think tanks and organisations but does not make grants to individuals or institutions.

www.ecfr.eu

The European Council on Foreign Relations does not take collective positions. This paper, like all publications of the European Council on Foreign Relations, represents only the views of its authors.

Copyright of this publication is held by the European Council on Foreign Relations. You may not copy, reproduce, republish or circulate in any way the content from this publication except for your own personal and non-commercial use. Any other use requires the prior written permission of the European Council on Foreign Relations

© ECFR February 2016

Published by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR),
Floor 7, Kings Building
16 Smith Square, London,
SW1P 3HQ, United Kingdom

london@ecfr.eu