



# **Euroscepticism in the United Kingdom: the influence of the written press**

**Mireille van der Hoeven**

**Student number: 09065415**

**ES4**

**Supervisor: Mr. Nixon**

**Academy of European Studies & Communication Management**

**The Hague University of Applied Sciences**

**The Hague, the Netherlands**

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## Executive summary

Euroscepticism is present in almost all European countries, from Austria to France in several different forms that vary from scepticism regarding particular EU policies to opposition towards the delegation of powers to a supranational institution like the EU. However, the combination of the sensationalist British press and traditional sceptic opinions in British politics on European cooperation have made the UK the “home of euroscepticism”. Euro sceptics can be classified as people that are in general supportive of the European Union and European integration. Nevertheless, they are sceptic towards the European Union as an institution which reflects the ideas of European integration, or the direction that the European Union is heading towards in embodying the ideas of European integration.

The term euroscepticism is fairly recent. During the first few decades of European integration, this term has not made an appearance. The first appearance of the actual term “euroscepticism” was in the United Kingdom. In the mid 1980’s there was a lot of public debate regarding the European Commission. At the time the EC was busy completing the Common Market, which was a touchy subject in the UK. Within the Labour party, there was a large group of members of cabinet that opposed joining the European Economic Community (EEC) and later continued to campaign for the UK to withdraw from participation in the EEC. These were called the “anti-marketeters”. On September 11, 1985 the term “euroscepticism” was first used in the British newspaper, The Times, to refer to the feelings of opposition towards the Common Market.

The decline in newspaper readership has intensified the need for thrilling journalism, which has led to a climate of news reporting that is based more on sensationalism rather than providing information. Right wing papers such as The Daily Mail, The Sun and The Daily Telegraph are the source of most of the eurosceptic discourse in the British written press. The written press does influence the eurosceptic attitudes in the UK, but is not solely to blame for the British reluctance towards European integration. The lack of education on the European Union and its institutions as well as historically and culturally rooted motives also play a great part in the sceptic opinions of both the general public and British politics towards the European Union.

## Table of Contents

Executive summary .....	2
Preface .....	5
List of abbreviations .....	6
Introduction .....	7
Chapter 1 – What is euroscepticism? .....	11
1.1 The definition of euroscepticism .....	11
1.2 The origin of euroscepticism .....	13
1.3 Varieties of euroscepticism .....	15
Chapter 2 – Euroscepticism in the United Kingdom .....	24
2.1 Political parties and euroscepticism .....	24
2.1.1 Conservative Party .....	24
2.1.2 Cameron and the referendum .....	25
2.1.3 Labour .....	27
2.1.4 UKIP (UK Independence Party) .....	28
2.1.5 Smaller political parties .....	30
2.2 Origin of euroscepticism in the UK .....	31
2.2.1 Immigration .....	32
2.2.2 Economy .....	33
2.2.3 Geography .....	34
2.3 Trend of growing eurosceptic attitudes of the general public .....	35
Chapter 3 - British media and euroscepticism .....	39
3.1 British media .....	39

3.2 British newspapers and Europe.....	42
3.3 The amount of foreign news in British newspapers.....	44
3.4 The coverage of major European news stories in the British newspapers .....	46
3.5 European Union related news in the British newspapers .....	47
3.5.1 Level of euroscepticism visible in the British written press .....	50
3.6 Does the written press offer an adequate representation of European issues to the public?.....	52
Chapter 4 - Influence of the media .....	54
4.1 Selective exposure theory and euroscepticism .....	54
4.2 The influence of the British media on the general public.....	57
Chapter 5 - Conclusion .....	63
References .....	65
List of appendices .....	77

## Preface

During my studies I have learned a lot about the functioning of the European Union and the benefits membership offers to the member states and to Europe in general. Especially for a small country such as the Netherlands, EU membership offers a lot of benefits and opportunities. For me as a student, being part of the EU means unlimited possibilities. Being able to study and work abroad, as well as living in a multicultural society offers opportunities on both cultural and professional levels. In a world where globalisation becomes more and more important every day, it is necessary to look past the borders of your own country. I have always been quite intrigued with the position of the United Kingdom in Europe. From the start of European cooperation the UK has always had one foot out of the door. Why are the British so reluctant towards the European Union? It's a question that cannot be easily answered.

During my internship at the Netherlands British Chamber of Commerce, I had the opportunity to learn more about the British perspective on Europe. Through the various people I got to talk to, I learned more about the perspective of people and of businesses in the UK towards further European integration and the current EU policies

Euroscepticism will always remain a very complex subject and will always be apparent in modern day society. The EU will continue to make decisions that are beneficial to some, but less beneficial to others. This dissertation will hopefully help to clarify the phenomenon of euroscepticism and its roots in the United Kingdom.

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Mireille van der Hoeven

## List of abbreviations

<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Cooperation
<b>DM</b>	The Daily Mail
<b>DT</b>	The Daily Telegraph
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EEC</b>	European Economic Community
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EMU</b>	Economic Monetary Union
<b>GP</b>	General Public
<b>MEP</b>	Member of European Parliament
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NATO</b>	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
<b>NHS</b>	National Health Service
<b>PM</b>	Prime Minister
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UKIP</b>	United Kingdom Independence Party
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USSR</b>	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

## Introduction

“People feel that the EU is heading in a direction that they never signed up to. They resent the interference in our national life by what they see as unnecessary rules and regulation. And they wonder what the point of it all is. Put simply, many ask 'why can't we just have what we voted to join - a common market?'” (David Cameron, Speech on the European Union, January 2013)

After World War II ended, Europe was left devastated. Most of the European countries shared the opinion that European cooperation would be the best way to move forward. In 1952, the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, which had as goal to eliminate the possibility of future wars and hostility between European countries, was seen as the first step towards European integration. The founding members of the Community were Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and West Germany. 40 years later, in 1992, the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht created the European Union in its current form. With 28 member states, the European Union and its institutions promote European cooperation on a large scale. However, in recent times, some of the European Union member states wonder just how far this European cooperation should go. The functioning of the European Union, as well the Eastern enlargements in 2004 and 2007, have received a lot of strong criticism from countries such as Denmark, France and the United Kingdom. The United Kingdom has always been quite sceptical towards Europe; they were not part of the “founding members” of the EU. The UK joined in 1973, 19 years after the creation of the European Coal and Steel community, after the United States encouraged them to counterbalance the French influence in Europe. They did not adopt the Euro currency and also do not take part in the Schengen agreement.

The support for membership of the European Union in the United Kingdom among the general public has been at an ultimate low in 2013. Financial crises, budget cuts, bailouts and sentiments of a loss of national sovereignty seem to have contributed to the rise of *euroscepticism* in Europe, and in particular in the United Kingdom. Many political scientists point the finger towards Britain's infamous media, who have been sceptical towards the EU from the very beginning. The British press is where euroscepticism originated; the tabloid press is what made it become famous. However, is the media the

only one to blame? Does the press reflect public opinion, or does it shape it? This leads to my central question: ***What is the influence of the written press on euroscepticism in the United Kingdom?***

The research methods selected for this dissertation are desk and field research. The desk research consists of a literature research and media monitoring. In this literature research, theories on euroscepticism as well as media theories will be provided to offer a clear overview of the concept. Additionally, during a two week period a selection of British newspapers will be monitored to provide evidence of euroscepticism. Furthermore, the desk research will be conducted through the use of books, reports, news articles and videos. The field research consists of interviews that will be conducted with a Dutch news correspondent who works in the United Kingdom and with a communications lecturer of The Hague University. The interviews will have an added value to this dissertation because the interviewees have a relevant opinion concerning the topic and have experience with both eurosceptic attitudes in the UK as well as the British media.

This is an overview of the most valuable desk research that has been used for this dissertation:

➤ Books

- *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration*

Authors: R. Harmsen, M. Spiering. Rodopi Publishing 2005.

This book analyses the various aspects of euroscepticism. M. Spiering dedicated a chapter of this book to euroscepticism in the United Kingdom, which proved to be very useful to clarify the underlying motives of euroscepticism in the UK.

- *Understanding Euroscepticism.*

Author: C. Leconte. Palgrave Macmillan 2010.

This book is written by Cécile Leconte, who is the Associate Professor of Political Science and Head of European Studies Department at the Institut d'etudes Politiques in Lille (France). It provides a well-structured and insightful assessment of the dynamics, character and consequences of euroscepticism.



➤ Reports

- *Shrinking World: The decline of international reporting in the British press.*

Media Standards Trusts 2010.

This report covers the research done by Media Standards Trust concerning the decline of international news in the British written press. It is a very detailed report that elaborates on research carried out over a longer period. The report was published in 2010, but features research from the year 2009.

- *Eurobarometer 71 – National Report United Kingdom.*

European Commission 2009.

This report covers research carried out by the European Commission over a period of 2 months (June- July 2009) concerning the public opinion regarding the European Union in the United Kingdom. It elaborates on the correlation between education levels and the image of the general public in regard to the European Union.

➤ Newspapers

To carry out the necessary research of how the EU is portrayed in the British media, extensive newspaper monitoring will be carried out. Three newspapers have been selected who each belong to a different category and hold on to a different political orientation. The newspapers selected are:

- The Guardian (quality newspaper, left wing/liberal)
- The Daily Mail (tabloid newspaper, right wing/populist)
- The Daily Telegraph (quality newspaper, right wing/conservative)

To provide the reader with a better understanding of euroscepticism in general including more specifically in the United Kingdom and to answer the central question, a combination of field and desk research will help to examine and comprehend the phenomenon of euroscepticism in the UK. The first chapter will cover the theoretical basis of euroscepticism in general. This chapter will elaborate on the different types of euroscepticism that are noticeable in society, as well as their historical grounds. The

second chapter will cover euroscepticism in the UK. It will clarify the origins of the phenomenon as well as the appearance of euroscepticism in British politics and among the general public. The third chapter will analyze euroscepticism in the British media. It will give examples of how the European Union is portrayed in the written press and how this is perceived by the general public. The fourth chapter will further examine the influence of the British media and the extent to which this is feeding sceptical attitudes in the UK. Finally, the fifth chapter will answer the central question as well as provide an overall conclusion.

## Chapter 1 – What is euroscepticism?

The ratification of the Treaty of Maastricht and the founding of the European Union has led to a more intense and extended form of European cooperation. There have been individuals, parties and even governments that are very much pro-Europe, but not everyone has such a positive attitude towards the ever growing importance of the European Union. This chapter will discuss the theoretical grounds of euroscepticism and the different forms of this phenomenon.

### 1.1 The definition of euroscepticism

There are many different definitions of the term euroscepticism. The Oxford Dictionary defines euroscepticism as: *“a person who is opposed to increasing the powers of the European Union.”* (Oxford University Press, 2013), while the Macmillan Dictionary chooses to define it as *“someone, especially a politician, who thinks that their country should not be part of the European Union”* (Macmillan, 2013). In theory, both of these definitions are incorrect. To define the term “euroscepticism” it is relevant to first discuss the term “scepticism” in general. The origin of scepticism lays in ancient Greece (4<sup>th</sup> century BC). Greek philosopher Pyrrho is said to be the first sceptic philosopher who outlined the ideas for the school of Pyrrhonism, this was the first school of scepticism (Thorsrud, 2004). Cécile Leconte uses a clear definition of sceptics in her book “Understand Euroscepticism”, namely: *“sceptics do not accept the validity of any belief or opinion a priori, without submitting it to a free and critical examination”* (Leconte, 2010). This means a sceptic refrains from judgement and even encourages distancing oneself from his or her own opinions, beliefs and ideology. A sceptic has a questioning attitude and will doubt the factual accuracy of knowledge, facts, or opinions/beliefs that other people might take for granted. Philosophical scepticism is the most famous form of scepticism; this school of thought uses an approach that requires all information to be supported by evidence and to be well examined (“Philosophical scepticism”, n.d.)

In this context, a eurosceptic can be seen as someone who holds a questionable attitude towards the European Union and European integration and who requires the decisions of the European Union concerning European integration to be supported by evidence. In fact addressing the issues and ideas of European integration from a sceptical point of view.

According to Taggart and Szczerbiak there are two different classifications that apply to euroscepticism, namely:

- **Hard euroscepticism:**

Hard euroscepticism means that an individual or a group has “principled” opposition to the European Union as an institution and to the general idea of European integration (Leconte, 2010). Hard eurosceptics oppose to the membership of the EU or even the existence of the EU. Examples of political parties and groups that can be classified as hard eurosceptic are: The Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group and the United Kingdom Independence Party (Szczurbiak, 2002).

- **Soft euroscepticism**

Soft euroscepticism means that an individual or a group has a “qualified” opposition to the EU. It reflects more on dissatisfaction with EU politics or dissatisfaction with the direction the EU is heading towards, whether in the past, current or future times which they perceive to be contrary to the national interest. It supports the existence of an institution as the European Union, however soft eurosceptic groups or individuals oppose specific policies of the EU (Szczurbiak, 2002). Examples of parties and groups that can be classified as soft eurosceptic are: The European Conservatives and Reformists group, British Conservative Party, the European United Left–Nordic Green Left (Wikipedia, n.d.).

The definition of the term “*eurosceptic*” needs to be explained in perspective to other types of attitudes towards the European Union. The book “*Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration*” by Harmsen & Spiering uses the figure below which shows how parties (but also groups or individuals) can be classified in different terms that reflect on their position towards European integration.

Figure 1: Typology of party positions on Europe

SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION		
S U P P O R T  F O R  E U		
	SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION	
	Europhile	Europhobe
EU-optimist	Euro-enthusiasts	Euro-pragmatists
EU-pessimist	Eurosceptics	Eurorejects

Source: Kopecký and Mudde 2002

Figure 1.1 – Typology of party position on support for European Union

As this figure shows, eurosceptics can be classified as people that are in general supportive of the European Union and European integration. Nevertheless, they are **sceptic** towards the European Union as an institution that reflects the ideas of European integration, or the direction that the European Union is heading towards in embodying the ideas of European integration. A very clear distinction has to be made between eurosceptics and eurorejects. Eurorejects can be classified as people that do not support the European Union as an institution, but also do not support the ideas that are underlying European integration. A clear difference with eurosceptics is that they refrain from any support towards European cooperation (Harmsen, 2005).

## 1.2 The origin of euroscepticism

Euroscepticism is a fairly recent term. During the first few decades of European integration, this term has not made an appearance. Many strong terms were used for individuals and groups that opposed or doubted European cooperation such as; nationalists or communists. In effect, the first time a term to identify a certain view of a group or individual towards European integration was in the mid 1960's in France. During the "De Gaulle era" the term "Eurocrat" was listed in French dictionaries (Leconte, 2010). The definition of a Eurocrat is "*an administrative official at the headquarters of the European Union*" (The Free Dictionary, n.d.). De Gaulle, who was immensely patriotic and very reluctant towards European cooperation, saw these eurocrats as "*'Stateless functionaries without faces*" (Whitney, 1997). This suggests that the term eurocrat was

used to strengthen the feeling of a gap between the “European elites” and the average citizens. However, the first appearance of the actual term “euroscepticism” was in the United Kingdom. In the mid 1980’s there was a lot of public debate regarding the European Commission. At the time the EC was busy completing the Common Market, which was a touchy subject in the UK. Inside the Labour party, a large group of members of cabinet that opposed the UK joining the European Economic Community (EEC) and later continued to campaign for the UK to withdraw from participation in the EEC. These were called the “anti-marketeers”. On September 11, 1985 the term “euroscepticism” was first used in the British newspaper, The Times, to refer to the feelings of opposition towards the Common Market. (Spiering, 2005).

In 1988, the term euroscepticism became more familiar and was popularized by Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher spoke about euroscepticism in her famous “Bruges speech” which was held at the College of Europe. In this speech Thatcher strongly opposed to hand over the United Kingdom’s sovereignty towards the European Union. A famous quote from this speech: *“We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain, only to see them re-imposed at a European level, with a European super state exercising a new dominance from Brussels”* (Palmer, 1988). Thatcher referred to a lot of points that were already made by President De Gaulle regarding the reluctance to hand over the complete sovereignty of a state. Thatcher’s speech is seen as one of the most important events in the opposition of the United Kingdom towards European integration (Leconte, 2010). Furthermore, the term euroscepticism became increasingly popular around the time the Maastricht treaty appeared on the agenda. During the time the Maastricht treaty negotiations took place, which started in December 1990 up until December 1991, euroscepticism became a term more and more people became familiar with, especially in the United Kingdom. A term that cannot be seen apart from euroscepticism is the French term “souverainiste”. This term is defined by Harmsen and Spiering as *“those holding views which are (strongly) critical of the current course of European integration and who seek to preserve the sovereignty of the French state against what are deemed to be the excessive incursions of the European institutions* (Harmsen & Spiering, 2005). While the French dictionary also mentions the word “eurosceptique”, it has not been used as often as souverainiste. This shows varieties of the term euroscepticism exist in different countries, which can all be categorized in the same category, or have a similar definition, which is a critical and sceptic view towards the European Union and European

integration. While becoming more popular during the Maastricht treaty era, it is now a popular word in politics on a national and international level and it is mainly used as a collective term to identify any sort of reluctance or opposition towards the EU as an institution, European cooperation and integration or European party politics. The term is often misused, or used in the wrong context to put emphasis on a certain statement or idea.

It can be stated that euroscepticism mostly originated in media discourse. It became popular through newspapers and television, and is unmistakably connected with the media strategy of party politics. Euroscepticism itself cannot be seen as an ideology. It is used by either extreme left politicians as much as with extreme right politicians and is therefore seen as compatible with any kind of ideology. Euroscepticism does not express one particular view on the world, or one single idea. It reflects on the fact that an individual or group has critical remarks on the functioning of the European Union as a whole, or simply on just one of the policies or decisions. Because some politicians feel that euroscepticism has a negative tone to it, they prefer to refer to themselves as “euro critics” or “euro realist”.

### **1.3 Varieties of euroscepticism**

Euroscepticism is not solely a term of British origin. In the British context, euroscepticism has a specific and different type of definition than in most other countries. In the UK, euroscepticism is seen as more of a cultural and historical opposition towards European integration which is broader and more complex than in most other European countries. This will be further discussed in chapter 2. The fact that euroscepticism has been subject to different definitions over the course of the history of European integration has already been briefly discussed earlier in this chapter. Two major events have steered the evolution of euroscepticism in Europe.

- 1. The creation of the European Economic Community (EEC)** by the Treaty of Rome in 1957 which further encouraged European integration, especially in the economic area. It included the creation of a Common Market. The founding members of the EEC were: Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany (“EEC”, n.d.).

From 1957 on there was a lot of opposition towards this idea of economic integration and the Common Market. This has increased the popularity of the term euroscepticism.

**2. The signing of the Maastricht Treaty** on 7 February 1992 in Maastricht, Netherlands. This created the European Union and led to the adoption of the euro, the single European currency and was signed by Belgium, Italy, France, Netherlands, West Germany, Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom, Greece, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain ("Maastricht Treaty", n.d.).

Euroscepticism is a multifaceted phenomenon and is constantly changing and developing. Rather than identifying euroscepticism by one single definition, several forms can be distinguished. These forms interact with each other, although in some cases very distinctly. Cécile Leconte identifies four different forms of euroscepticism in her book "*Understanding Euroscepticism*".

### **1. Utilitarian euroscepticism**

Utilitarian euroscepticism expresses scepticism towards the benefits that are gained from EU membership at the level of individuals or the country as a whole. It is defined in the following way: "*Utilitarian scepticism refers to scepticism about the gains derived from integration, or its distributional impacts, be it at an individual or collective level*" (Leconte, 2010).

This form of euroscepticism did not appear in the period between the 1960s and the late 1980s, because during this period European integration was accompanied with a period of economic growth. However, from 1990s on, there has been an increase in the appearance of utilitarian euroscepticism in public and political debate. Both the public and governments became more critical and often started to wonder whether adopting a certain EU policy would bring benefits to the country, or if it would only bring costs. Growing confusion and insecurity in national governments about the fact if a country would gain enough in comparison to the costs of implementing certain EU policies has increased attitudes of utilitarian euroscepticism (Rose, 2010).



Two main factors can be identified that have influenced this particular type of scepticism, namely:

- > The Economic Monetary Union (EMU)
- > EU enlargement being open to less developed countries.

In early 1990s, governments were dealing with an economic recession and later on, with the aftermath of signing of the Maastricht Treaty. The EMU was part of the Maastricht Treaty and in between 1992 and 1999; a lot of discussion took place regarding the implementation of the EMU. Both the general public and the national governments had their doubts about whether the EMU would prove to become a benefit for their country. Due to these doubts, the EU has become known as an organization that is costing the national governments money instead of the national government benefiting from membership. In recent years, many people in EU member states believe that the prices have gone up since the signing of the Maastricht Treaty and thus the introduction of the European Union (Leconte, 2010). Regarding EU enlargement, EU member states have been worrying about the re-nationalization of the EU's distributive policies. The richest countries such as Germany, France and the Netherlands became increasingly sceptic regarding the costs of integrating new member states in the EU. ("Not Your Grandfather's Eastern Bloc", 2009)

## **2. Political euroscepticism**

When we talk or read about euroscepticism, often this is "political euroscepticism". Political euroscepticism refers to concerns over the influence and impact of European integration and cooperation on national sovereignty and the national identity of a country.

Political euroscepticism is defined as: "principled opposition or defiance towards the setting up of a supranational institutional system, the delegation of powers to a supranational institution beyond a limited core of policies (internal market, competition policy) and to the principle of the pooling of sovereignties" (Leconte, 2010). This form of euroscepticism first appeared in the early stages of European integration around the 1950's. However, from the mid-1960s until the end of the 80s, the perception and views on European integration became more positive and therefore political euroscepticism was mostly limited to minority groups or individuals (Leconte, 2010).

Two clear examples that have influenced political euroscepticism can be identified:

- > EU citizenship
- > European identity

Citizenship of the European Union was part of the Maastricht Treaty and in short means that *“Every citizen who is a national of a Member State is also a citizen of the Union”* (“Treaty of Maastricht on European Union”, n.d.). This offers a citizen the right to free movement, voting in European elections, settlement and employment in the EU etc. This form of citizenship received a lot of opposition during the ratification period of the Maastricht Treaty, especially in Denmark, France and the UK. Most of this opposition was based on the fact that these countries were in fear of the phenomenon of “double allegiance”. This could happen if the EU citizenship were to compete with the national citizenship of an individuals’ country, and if he or she would then give priority or a preference to the EU citizenship in situations or cases in which there could be a conflict between the two citizenships (Leconte, 2010). Thatcher openly spoke about the fear of this EU citizenship in June 1993 during the ratification debate. She said *“If there is a citizenship, you would all owe a duty of allegiance to the new Union.”* emphasizing that this new EU citizenship would come with certain conditions (Koslowski, 2010). The Lisbon treaty later stated that EU citizenship is additional to the national citizenship (Stanners, 2010).

Together with reluctance towards EU citizenship, was scepticism that targeted European identity as a whole. Many politicians were hesitant towards further European integration because they felt it would lead to an obligation to create a certain “European culture”. One of the most famous examples is Thatcher’s Bruges speech in 1988 during which she spoke the now famous words: *“Europe will be stronger precisely because it has France as France, Spain as Spain, Britain as Britain, each with its own customs, traditions and identity.”* (Wikiquote, n.d.). This speech is symbolic for many politicians that feared that a new European culture would mean a loss of the national identity of a member state (Leconte, 2010).

### **3. Value-based Euroscepticism**

Value-based euroscepticism is a bit more of an unfamiliar form. It denounces the interference of the European Union in “normative issues”. This means issues that ought to be solved in a specific way or issues that involve cultural norms that are part of a social construction. Value based euroscepticism can be defined in the following way: *“It refers to the perception that EU institutions unduly interfere in matters where not only strongly held collective and societal preferences, but, more fundamentally, value systems, are at stake”* (Leconte, 2010)

Value based euroscepticism refers to the impact and influence EU decision can have on certain issues such as abortion, divorce and minority rights. It mostly occurs when polarizing issues that receive a lot of media attention are being dealt with in a certain country. These eurosceptics believe that the EU's influence is reaching further than it should regarding issues that are culturally or socially meant to be solved in a national government or national context.

#### **4. Cultural anti-Europeanism**

Cultural anti-Europeanism is a different form of scepticism towards Europe, but it can be classified as part of the school of euroscepticism. It does not solely involve hostility towards the European Union and its institutions, but more broadly it can be described as being hostile towards the continent of “Europe” and a lack of trust towards the societal models and institutions of European countries (Leconte, 2010). Cultural anti-Europeanism can be defined as: “scepticism towards Europe as a civilization, as a historical and cultural entity. Here euroscepticism is rooted in a deeper, cultural scepticism towards Europe in a broader sense, which can be defined as anti-Europeanism” (Leconte, 2010).

There are two different examples that can be identified:

- > The thought that “Europe” does not exist
- > Continental Europe is incompatible with national preferences and traditions.

The first example of this kind of euroscepticism implies that “Europe” as a whole does not exist, both seen from a historic and a cultural point of view. Furthermore, classifying people in the different member states as one is not possible because they do not share a

common history or political culture. The diversity in Europe is often used by many eurosceptic politicians or individuals that want to emphasize the fact that Europe is a continent with many different influences and cultures. The main arguments of this form of scepticism include: geographical wise Europe has seen a lot of changes and therefore people can doubt validity of geographical Europe, the influences from Arabic and Asian countries are very strong in some countries and counteracts the idea of a common past and finally, the lack of shared history and shared ethnic identity. The second example implies that the goal of continental Europe to be an entity with equal values and norms would in reality never work because it would be in conflict with the national culture of the member states that each has its own preferences, values and traditions. Eurosceptics say that further forms of “Europeanization” will be abandoned once people see that it might influence the national norms and values.

This example can be seen in many eurosceptic discourses in for example the Netherlands. In 1996, Dutch politician Frits Bolkenstein claimed that “The Netherlands’ individualistic and open democratized culture shares greater similarities with Canada than with Italy”. He stated that many European countries actually share more identity similarities with countries outside of Europe, than with the member states of the European Union (Harmsen, 2005).

Euroscepticism does not only vary from year to year, it also varies from country to country. Each country has their own view towards policies from the EU and what it means for the situation of this specific country. Here are a few examples of euroscepticism in three countries that have been involved in a lot of eurosceptic political discourse:

## **1. Austria**

In 2009, only 41 % of the citizens in Austria held a positive view towards EU membership and the future of the economy of the EU (European Commission, 2009). One of the most eurosceptic parties in Austrian politics is the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ), they currently hold 34 of the 183 seats in the National Council of the Austrian government. It does not propose withdrawal from the EU as a whole, but it does hold a very critical position towards the European Union (Sanders, 2012). The specific fields and policies

that Austria is opposing to or sceptic towards are the EU enlargement of Eastern European countries and Turkey's EU accession.

Regarding Turkey's EU accession, most of the Austrian political players hold a very negative view towards this issue. The far right Freedom Party, who hold a very strict view towards minorities, the centre-left parties who worry about globalization and overstretch of the EU, and the centre right party that focuses on the costs of Turkey's EU accession (Ringler, 2006). Austria has also had a history of xenophobia, which explains why EU issues regarding minorities are still an outspoken issue and thus for some Austrians a reason for scepticism towards European integration. Furthermore, Austria has been in the middle of the EU enlargement in the Eastern European countries, with countries such as Czech Republic and Slovenia becoming EU member states. Negative perceptions towards these expansions have caused Austrians to have become more eurosceptic (Mulvey, 2005).

## **2. Sweden**

In Sweden, national and international politics deals with somewhat different topics than in most European countries. In 2012, there were three main topics of concern regarding the current political situation in Sweden; these were unemployment, health and social security and the education system. In Sweden, the general public remains very sceptic towards the euro, with only 10% of the people seeing this as a positive result of the European Union. Also, the general economic power of the EU does not receive a lot of support in Sweden (European Commission, 2012). In Swedish politics, the Left Party which is a socialist and feminist political party and the Swedish Democrats are strongly against membership of the European Union and still aim for withdrawal of Sweden. Both of these parties account for 38 of the 349 seats in Swedish Parliament. Moreover, there are various other parties who are moderately sceptic towards EU integration ("Left Party", n.d.).

The specific fields and policies that Sweden is opposing or sceptic towards are further political integration in the field of foreign policy and the euro.

Regarding the field of foreign policy, Sweden has always remained a country that preferred to stay neutral. In the Swedish newspapers, the national politics get a lot more attention than the foreign relations of this country. Sweden is also not a part of the NATO. Sweden does not completely refrain from any political integration in the field of foreign policy, but chooses their topics more specifically. While Sweden remains positive towards the accession of Turkey as a candidate-member of the European Union, they are, for example, sceptic towards the EU's climate change policies (Stavrou, 2009). Moreover, Sweden is not a full member of the European Monetary Union (EMU) and has not adopted the single European currency (euro). In 2011, 9 out of 10 Swedes wanted to stay outside the Euro zone and hold on to their currency, the krona (AFP, 2011). These arguments are strengthened by the fact that Sweden has a strong economy, the 33<sup>rd</sup> ranked country based on their gross domestic product (GDP) ("List of countries by GDP", n.d.).

### **3. France**

In France, the general public has very little interest for European matters in general. During the 2009 European Parliament elections only 40% of the French citizens went to vote, which was below the EU average ("La synthèse des résultats en France", 2009). In 2012, unemployment and the economic situation were the main concerns of the general public in France. While the French are positive about the euro as a result of European integration, they are not so positive about the economic power of the EU (European Commission, 2012).

As already stated before, during the De Gaulle era, French politics was known to be very reluctant towards European cooperation. Nowadays, this has not changed. Many political parties in France have a eurosceptic view. The more radical ones oppose to European integration in general, examples are the Gaullist *Debout la République* party and *Libertas*. These moderate right parties account for 5% of the national vote and the main argument they have against European integration and membership of the EU is that France has lost its economic sovereignty to a supra-national entity (the EU). However, the biggest eurosceptic party in France is the far right party, *Front National (FN)*. This party has hard eurosceptic views, in 2002 their leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, campaigned on pulling France out of the EU and re-introducing the franc as the national currency ("Front

National", n.d.). One of the main policies that France has been sceptic towards is the Treaty of Lisbon. In 2005, a referendum was held in France to decide whether France should ratify the "European Constitution" that was proposed by the European Union. The result of this referendum was that 55% of the French citizens voted against the ratification ("Euroscepticism – France", n.d.). With this result, France was the first country to reject the constitution and therefore reject further European integration. The Treaty of Lisbon was then in the end approved for ratification by the French parliament in 2007. The "No vote" was seen as a lack of trust in the European institutions and reluctance towards European integration, both from citizens and the political environment of France. A lot of parties had encouraged the citizens to vote against the ratification. Because a second referendum regarding the matter has never taken place, there is still a lot of scepticism towards the functioning of the Treaty of Lisbon and the actual benefits for France as a country ("French say firm No to EU treaty", 2005).

As this shows, there are quite some EU members that have become more and more reluctant towards European integration over the past few years.

## Chapter 2 – Euroscepticism in the United Kingdom

This dissertation will focus on euroscepticism in the United Kingdom. The UK has a long history of euroscepticism, both in politics and in media discourse. At the moment, the European Union is a very newsworthy topic and is heavily discussed in political debates. This chapter will further clarify euroscepticism in British politics, the origin of euroscepticism in Britain and the growing trend of sceptical attitudes regarding the EU among the general public. .

### 2.1 Political parties and euroscepticism

#### 2.1.1 Conservative Party



**Leader:** David Cameron

**Founded:** 1834

**Membership (2012):** 130,000

**Representation in Parliament:** 303/650 (House of Commons)

The Conservative Party is a centre-right political party. After the last elections in 2010, it became the largest political party in the United Kingdom and the largest single party in the House of Commons, the Conservative Party has a representation of 303 out of 650 members of parliament. In the local government, they have 9,391 active councillors. The conservatives also hold the largest representation in the European Parliament with 25 MEPs ("Conservative Party", n.d.). The Conservative Party can be divided into three different movements. One of these movements is: The Thatcherites (sometimes also called "Conservative Way Forward"). This name comes from the fact that they are followers of the "Thatcherism" ideology. This ideology is in support of low inflation, the small state, free markets, tight control of the money supply and privatization. The Thatcherites also follow Thatcher in her opinion on the European Union and European integration.

The Conservative Party can be classified as eurosceptic. In the 1990s, the signing of the Maastricht Treaty caused a lot of commotion within the Conservative Party between the moderate eurosceptic members and the hard eurosceptics that opposed the signing of the treaty as a whole. John Major who served as UK Prime Minister from 1990 to 1997 had to



deal with the signing of the Maastricht Treaty during his run as Prime Minister and managed to provide the UK with opt-outs, including not participating in the single currency. During his attempts to ratify the treaty, he had to deal with the strong eurosceptic opposition from inside the party. These eurosceptic MPs formed the “Maastricht Rebels”. The Maastricht Rebels refused to accept Majors’ attempts to implement the Maastricht Treaty. Thatcher supported this rebellion stating that she would never have signed the treaty. The Maastricht rebellion was only slightly successful. After this, the Conservative Party had to endure several internal fall outs regarding the division in the party, on one hand the eurosceptic MPs who expressed their critical point of view regarding EU policies, and on the other hand the more pro-Europe MPs that appealed for further European integration. Discontent among the members of the party has led to the loss of votes in recent times (“The History of the Conservative Party”, n.d.).

Nowadays, the Tories classify themselves as a “eurosceptic bunch”, as they are not in favour of complete withdrawal from the EU, they rather see renegotiations with Brussels to defend the British interests (“Should Eurosceptic Tories join UKIP?”, 2011). David Cameron has been the leader of the Tories since the elections in 2010. Though he is known for his famous quote “I am certainly a big Thatcher fan, but I don’t know whether that makes me a Thatcherite”. His political views and expressions of leadership can be qualified as being close to the Thatcherites (“To what extent is Cameron a Thatcherite”, 2010).

### **2.1.2 Cameron and the referendum**

On Wednesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2013, Cameron announced that he promises an “in-out referendum” on membership of the EU by the end of 2017. That is, if the Conservatives are still in power after the next elections for Parliament in 2015. In his speech, he announced that he will first try to renegotiate the British memberships terms. If these negotiations are successful, Cameron stated that he “plans” on organizing a referendum for the British citizens to choose whether they want to stay in or withdraw from the EU on the new negotiated terms. Cameron explained: *“It is time for the British people to have their say. It is time to settle this European question in British politics”* (Watt, 2013). The question is whether offering the public a referendum will be sufficient to settle the European question in British politics. The opinion of the general public can shift

back and forth in the upcoming years; the end of the Euro zone crisis could potentially influence the opinions of people who belong to the “soft eurosceptics”.

For this dissertation, an interview took place with NOS correspondent Arjen van der Horst. He explains Cameron’s political motives behind the announcement of a possible referendum: *“The announcement of a referendum means a big turning point in Cameron’s thinking. When Cameron became party leader, he warned his Conservative Party to “stop banging on about Europe”. As a young party activist he saw at close hand how the Conservatives tore themselves apart over Europe, which led to deep party split. This split is one of the main reasons why the Conservatives failed to win elections for a long time. It was an important lesson for Cameron and he vowed to “detoxify” his party.”*

However, Cameron’s decision did not come out of the blue. One of the influences was the expenses scandal in 2009, during which The Daily Telegraph published a list with names of various members of Parliament that were abusing their right to claim expenses from the State, that led to a lot of Conservative MP’s leaving the parliament before elections in 2010. Mr. van der Horst explains: *“almost a third of the elected members in 2010 were first time MP’s. The new Conservative fraction in the House of Commons was almost homogeneously Eurosceptic. Until then, there always had been a fairly large minority of pro-European in the Conservative Party, but after 2010 that almost disappeared”*. Another influence was the fact that the Conservative Party was forced to govern in a coalition. The Liberal Democrats are very much pro-Europe and this has led to discontent among the Tories. This discontent resulted in strong voices from within Cameron’s own party to adopt a more eurosceptic approach, eventually leading to a strong demand for an in-out referendum. According to Mr. van der Horst, two main events eventually pushed Cameron into the position that he could no longer deny the British public a referendum, *“For a long time Cameron resisted the calls. Until last year he refused flat out to hold a referendum. Two events forced him to change his mind. First of all, the crisis in the Euro zone became deeper and deeper, which led to increasing resentment in the UK over Europe. Secondly, opinion polls showed that the anti-European, anti-immigration UK Independence Party started to eat in the traditional Conservative support.”*

The question is whether this referendum will actually happen in 2017. Mr. van der Horst pointed out several “ifs” that could prove to be obstacles towards a referendum:

- **Cameron will only hold a referendum after he has negotiated a new relationship with Europe.** This new relationship has to be agreed by all European nations, and so far it's unlikely they will give in much

- **A majority in parliament is needed to make a referendum possible.** At the moment the Liberal Democrats and Labour are against, so there is no majority.

- **The Conservative party needs to win the elections in 2015 by an outright majority.** A lot of negative media concerning the Conservative party is hurting their chances to obtain enough votes to have an outright majority in 2015.

### 2.1.3 Labour

**Leader:** Ed Miliband

**Founded:** 1900

**Membership:** 193,961 (2012)

**Representation in Parliament:** 257 / 650 (House of Commons)



Labour is a centre-left political party and is one of the two big parties in UK politics (together with the Conservatives). The Labour Party was last in power from 1997 until 2010, under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. Currently, they hold 257 seats in the House of Commons and form the Official Opposition. In the local government, they hold 8,151 out of the 21,871 seats and they currently hold 13 out of the 73 seats in the European Parliament ("Labour Party", n.d.). Labour started as a more left wing party, but over the years they have moved more towards the centre. Originally their ideology was in favour of democratic socialism, but nowadays the word socialism is not used often in relation to the Labour party. Regarding opposition towards EU membership, Labour MP's were the first to initiate this. The Labour politicians feared that becoming a member of an organization such as the EU, would hinder their socialist ideas and policies. Many scholars including Spiering, say that the first eurosceptic politician was actually a Labour man, namely: Hugh Gaitskell. Gaitskell was Labour's leader from 1955 until 1963. In October 1962, Gaitskell held a famous speech, in which he opposed British membership of the Common Market, during which he stated: *"We must be clear about this; it does mean, if this is the idea, the*

*end of Britain as an independent European state. I make no apology for repeating it. It means the end of a thousand years of history. You may say: Let it end. But, my goodness, it is a decision that needs a little care and thought."* (Jeffreys, 1999)

The current Labour leader is Ed Miliband. Miliband served in the Cabinet from 2007 until 2010, under Prime Minister Brown, and got elected as Leader of the Party in 2010. Miliband has stated that he does not support a referendum on British EU membership; instead he sees an EU reform as the solution to Britain's problems with EU policies. Miliband states that under the current Cameron government, the UK is on its way to an EU exit and has numerous times criticized Cameron for not being able to handle the pressure of the eurosceptic MPs in his own party. The Labour party statement says that it is absolutely vital for the UK to stay in the EU to be able to have a voice in Europe, and to make sure that this voice is heard. However, with the discussion regarding the EU heating up, Miliband has had to deal with numerous people within his party who have taken a more eurosceptic stance (Hennessy, 2012).

#### 2.1.4 UKIP (UK Independence Party)

**Leader:** Nigel Farage

**Founded:** 1993

**Membership (2013) :** 27.000

**Representation in Parliament:** Not represented in House of Commons or House of Lords. 11/73 seats in the European Parliament.



UKIP is the most notable eurosceptic party. UKIP is a right-wing party and currently only represented in the European Parliament and on local level. In the local government they hold 202 out of the 21,259 seats in the UK. UKIP originated out of the Anti-Federalist League, a small organization that aimed to bring people who opposed the Maastricht Treaty together. ("UKIP", n.d.). Their first success was during the 2004 European elections when they managed to get 12 MEP's elected (third place in the elections overall), but they have failed to obtain a seat at Westminster up until today. In May 2013, UKIP booked an enormous success in the local county elections, where UKIP received 23% of the votes and thus had 147 councillors elected. A result like this for a party that is

not part of the big three (Conservatives, Labour and Lib Dems) has not happened since World War II (“UKIP- About Us”, 2013).

UKIP originated as a single issue party, which is: withdrawal from the European Union. However, in 2010 their leader Nigel Farage announced that the party was focusing on more than just the European issue and Farage said that UKIP would stand for “traditional conservative and libertarian values”. Currently, UKIP advocates different policies such as: simplification of the tax system, new immigration laws that would put restrictions on immigration and work permits and the issue of same sex marriage. However, the EU still remains their most important point. UKIP advocates withdrawal from the European Union to restore self-government and democracy. This would result in pulling out of EU treaties and stopping all payments to the EU (“UKIP”, 2013). UKIP can be qualified as a “hard” eurosceptic party, as they pursue withdrawal from the European Union as a whole. The popularity of UKIP is something that is widely apparent in the British media. After their success in the regional elections they are seen as a real threat to the current political establishment, and more importantly a threat to the Conservative Party. There are various opinions on how they have managed to obtain such popularity in a short period of time. As British politics are quite conservative and complex, it is unusual for a small party to make such an impact. For this dissertation, an interview was conducted with Mrs. Amanda Coady, a British lecturer at The Hague University, who has worked in the communications world in Britain for a long time. She gave her view on UKIP’s popularity and tried to clarify how she thinks that they have managed to become popular in Britain: *“I think that the rise of UKIP is a sign of how bad of state the Conservative party and the rest of the British politics is in. I think the party itself, if you actually look at them and you look at their policies, they haven’t got anything to offer. They are just a kind of protest. They have a one trick pony. They have one idea and they realize that there are a significant number of people that feel quite strongly about this issue and they are just pushing everything on that and lots of their policies are kind of bland, poorly thought through ideas that do not mean anything.* She does not think that the popularity of UKIP is solely about Europe. *“I do not really know if it is about Europe per se, I think it is linked to Europe, I think it is a lot about the financial crisis. And the people are very, very scared, especially in areas that are suffering a lot. Areas in the North and the Midlands and they are scared of immigration, losing more jobs, and so they vote out of protest for that.”* What

is clear is that UKIP appeals to a certain group of voters that feel like other parties are not listening to their demands.

### 2.1.5 Smaller political parties

Apart from the 3 biggest (eurosceptic) parties in the UK (UKIP, Conservatives and Labour), there are a number of smaller parties that have strong sentiments of euroscepticism. The **British National Party (BNP)**, is a far right party led by Nick Griffin. The party has strong opinions towards immigration and the Islamification of the UK. They are a hard eurosceptic party, which is in favor of complete withdrawal from the EU to restore the British sovereignty. They state that membership of the EU is “destroying national identity”. The party has failed to make a big impact in UK politics, they are solely represented in the European Parliament (1 seat) and have 2 seats in the local government (“BNP”, n.d.). The **Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)** is another right wing eurosceptic party. The DUP is a Northern Ireland party, and is the largest party in the Northern Ireland Assembly. They hold 8 out of the 18 Northern Irish seats in the House of Commons. The party has a strong bond with the Protestant church and is generally considered to be a homophobic party. They are soft eurosceptic as they are critical towards Europe, but do not favor complete withdrawal. (“DUP”, n.d.) The **Libertarian Party (LP)** is a liberal political party that wants less government control and strong civil liberties. They favor withdrawal from the EU and a reformed membership of the United Nations. They have failed to obtain any representation on both national and local level (“LP”, 2013). A left wing party that is eurosceptic is the **Socialist Labour Party (SLP)**. This party was created as a breakaway party from the Labour party and is in favor of replacing capitalism in the UK with socialism. They are in favor of EU withdrawal as they see it as the only way for “Britain to begin to regain control of its economy, sovereignty and its political powers”, calling the European Union a “capitalist club that makes it easy for multi-national companies to exploit workers throughout its member states” (“SLP”, n.d.). The party has not yet managed to make an impact in the elections. It can be concluded that there are more right wing political parties that are hard eurosceptic, than left-wing parties.

## 2.2 Origin of euroscepticism in the UK

As stated in Chapter 1, euroscepticism is a phenomenon that became known in the United Kingdom in the 80s, and later became popular under Thatcher. The Maastricht Treaty fed the Europe discussion and currently there is a heated debate concerning a referendum about withdrawal from the EU. It is interesting however to look at the origin of euroscepticism in the UK and which factors stimulate the sceptic mind-set of the British public

For this dissertation, an interview was conducted with NOS correspondent Arjen van der Horst who works as a Dutch journalist in the United Kingdom. To clarify the origins of euroscepticism, he went all the way back to the Second World War, Mr. van der Horst stated: *“Being Eurosceptic is almost the norm in the United Kingdom, so yes, I do encounter this lot. Most of my British friends would be fairly anti-European and a lot of them will say it would be better if the UK leaves the European Union. Funny or not, a lot of this has to do with the Second World War. Many British, including friends of the younger generation, look at Europe through the prism of WW-II. This is very stark black and white: the British are the good guys, the Germans want to dominate Europe and all the other European countries are weak and we had to liberate them. This is a cliché, but you will be surprised how prevalent this attitude is.”* This might be a bit superseded, as the younger generation has quite a different mind-set regarding historical events than the older generation in Britain, but in essence, small things do still reinforce this attitude. If we look at the UK's role in World War II, Britain had a lot to be proud of and played an instrumental role. During the Battle of Britain in 1940, the Britons were able to fight off Germany's air force and unlike France, the Netherlands and Belgium; Great Britain remained strong and prevented Germany from invading the country. This victory was one of the turning points during the war and the position of Great Britain as a superpower became stronger, especially in the eyes of the United States. The UK became one of the “Big Three” together with the US and the USSR; one can state that Britain's importance in European history is one of the reasons that they are very sceptical about their own position in comparison to the other EU countries (“The Battle of Britain”, n.d.). The successes in the Second World War influence the British feelings of national identity and they do certainly want to hold on to these emotions. The fear of losing power of their own country by delegating part of their country's identity to the EU is clashing with the fact that

they feel almost superior over the countries that did get conquered and taken over by Nazi Germany during the War (Grant, C, 2010). Governments of most European countries saw an urgent reason to collaborate to ensure their safety, this was not so urgent for the UK. The UK had the possibility to pursue their ambitions of cooperating with the USA and the Commonwealth countries, in addition to European cooperation (Spiering, 2008).

### **2.2.1 Immigration**

A more recent factor to explain eurosceptic attitudes is immigration. Political parties in the UK use, and abuse, the correlation between immigration and euroscepticism regularly in their discourse. UKIP, as earlier discussed, currently has the strongest voice regarding the causality between EU policy and immigration in the UK. Free movement of citizens of member states of the EU and the right to work in every EU member state were founded in the Treaty of Rome. In 2004, a lot of Central and East European countries joined the EU, including countries such as Slovakia, Slovenia and Poland. The government (then led by Tony Blair) issued a law that stated that “unrestricted migration” was accepted from these particular countries. This has led to a big stream of labour immigration, with both positive and negative consequences. With the current financial crisis, the negative consequences have become more apparent and both media and politics do not hesitate to point this out. Many eurosceptics in the UK feel that this particular EU policy is harming British interest and see this as a reason to withdraw from the EU, because to them it is essentially harming the cultural identity of the UK and more importantly, threatening the British job market (Ford, 2012). This graph from 2007 shows the international migration estimates in relation to the enlargement of the European Union. It shows there is a relatively low number of net migration to the UK from the "EU15" member states; these are the original EU members. An increase is noticeable when you look at the net migration in the UK of the EUA8 countries, the eight Eastern European nations who joined in 2004. From all 27 members states together (Croatia is not included because it was not yet a member in 2007) a significantly higher number of immigration than emigration from the EU member states to the UK is noticeable. Note that this graph does not exclude exchange students or expats who might be only temporary immigrants. Nonetheless, this graph also shows that immigration does not solely come from other EU member states. The “New Commonwealth”, which consists mainly of former British colonies such as British Guiana



and Honduras, also accounts for a large group of immigrants in the UK (UK migration: What the figures mean", 2008).

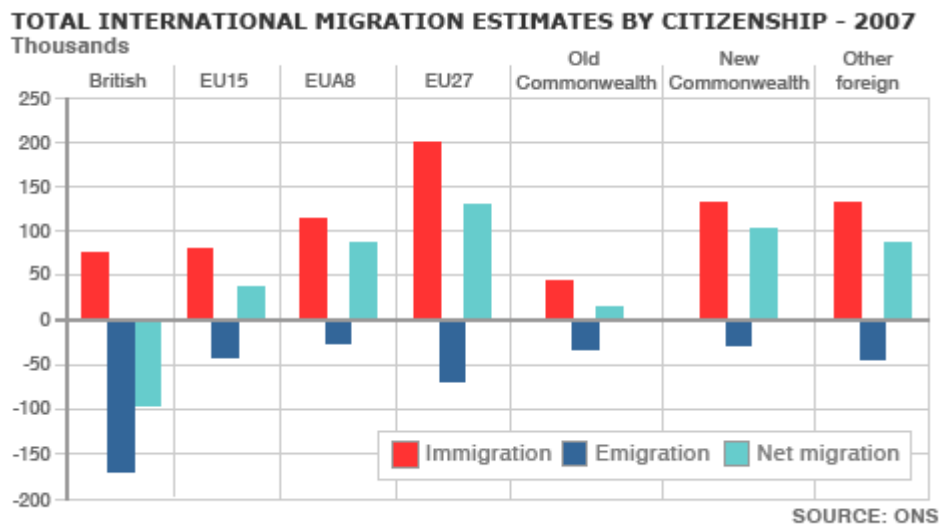


Figure 2.1 International Migration Estimates by Citizenship (Office for National Statistics via BBC News, 2008)

### 2.2.2 Economy

Euroscepticism related to the economy is one of the oldest forms of euroscepticism in Britain. When in the 70s the debate about joining the Common Market was ruling British politics, the general attitude among the so called “anti-marketeers” was: *if we become a part of the Common Market, how do we get out?* The hostility towards membership of the Common Market can be explained in coherence with the previously stated historical motives. Britain saw itself as not just a European power, but also a worldwide power, and therefore did not feel like it desperately needed to become a part of a Europe based economic agreement. Moreover, the UK was not involved in negotiations concerning the EEC and thus believed the conditions were not particularly in favour of the UK. This shows that the UK has always had one foot out of the door regarding EU membership. The British economy has been one of the leading economies up until the current financial crisis. The reforms Thatcher applied during her time as Prime Minister resulted in the fact that Britain had a stable economy that showed relatively high growth. Studies have showed that around the start of the new millennium in 2000 the unemployment rate in France and Germany was twice as high as that of the UK (Grant, 2008). Additionally, the

economy in Britain continued to flourish, even without the adoption of the single currency. The City of London remained Europe's biggest financial city and notably the third most important city in finance in the world (along with New York City and Tokyo). The foreign exchange market in London is the world's biggest, more Euros are traded on yearly basis in London alone than in the whole Euro zone together. The British felt that the rest of Europe could learn from their economic success, and therefore did not see any benefits in adopting the Euro currency (Gilligan, 2012). Currently, the British economy is suffering from a recession. However, in 2011 a YouGov poll showed that even in a recession, 85% of the British public is against adopting the euro currency (*"YouGov poll reports no appetite for any more bailouts in Eurozone"*, 2011). With countries such as Cyprus, Portugal and Greece struggling, it has become less and less attractive for Britain to adopt the euro currency. It is quite difficult to qualify the economic motive as a real reason for euroscepticism, because many politicians and economists who are not particularly eurosceptic to begin with have opposed the euro currency for years. It is thus important to understand that these are two separate discussions.

### 2.2.3 Geography

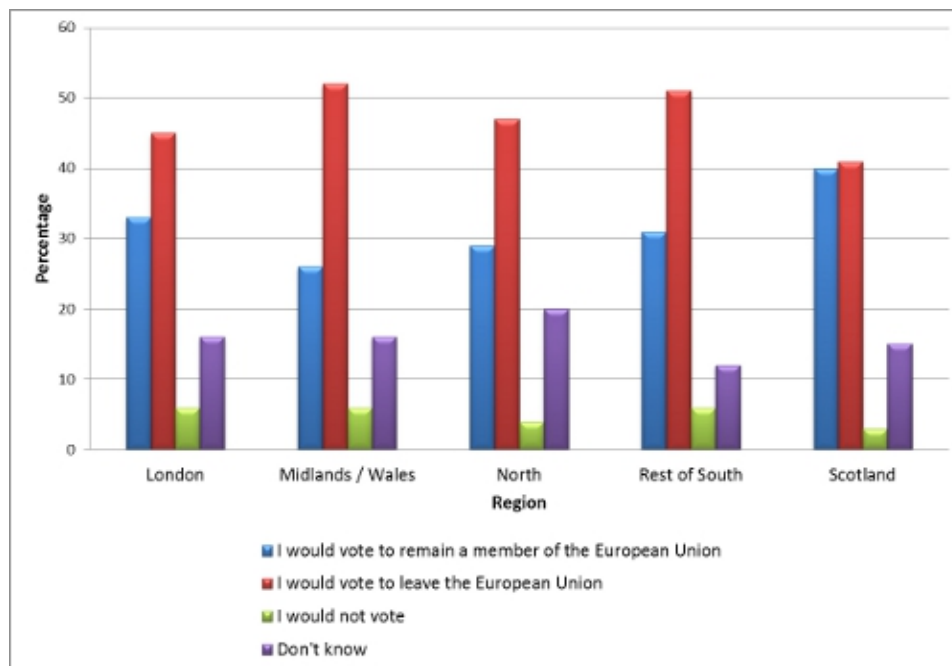
Geography is also a factor in the origin of euroscepticism in the UK. As can be seen in many old TV shows and movies that originated in the UK, Europe is often referred to as "The Continent". The UK consists of Great Britain, which is the third most populous island and Northern Ireland, which is the only part of the UK that shares a border with another country, namely: Ireland. Apart from this, the UK does not have any neighbouring countries or shared borders. This means Europe seems far away for the British citizens, very different from countries such as Belgium which is bordered by France, Germany, The Netherlands and Luxembourg. UK has a so called "Island Culture". The ocean has played a big part in the British history, the colonies were reached by conquering the oceans and it has affected trade. Historically, the UK has focused on North and South America, Africa and Asia more than on Europe. Additionally, the UK also has a big metropolitan city, London. While other European countries look up to cities such as Paris, Berlin or Madrid, the UK has its own multicultural capital. Overall, a sentiment of being proud of British heritage is also a factor in the eurosceptic discussion. As Mrs. Coady stated in her interview: *"I have never heard anyone ever in the UK say that they are European. Even when we have been in Indonesia or America or Africa, I have never heard anyone from*

*the UK say that they are European, they are always British or even more likely they are English, Welsh, Scottish etc.”.*

### **2.3 Trend of growing eurosceptic attitudes of the general public**

Not just politics in the United Kingdom have become increasingly more eurosceptic in the last century, also the opinion of the general public has changed into a more negative and reluctant view towards European integration. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2013, The Times published the results of a poll commissioned by YouGov that showed that 46% of the general public in the UK would opt for the choice to leave the EU, if a referendum was held now, 35% would choose to stay a member of the EU and 20% does not know whether they want in or out. This shows the British public is very divided about the topic of Europe, albeit it does show the majority of the general public currently has a negative view of the EU (Watson, 2013). This was not at all surprising, because a few days earlier during the local county elections, UKIP booked a tremendous success. The UK Independence party averaged with about 26% of the votes in the county council polls (“Local Council Elections: UKIP Make Big Gains”, 2013). UKIP is the UK’s most eurosceptic political party and their success shows once again that the general public in the UK is concerned about EU membership.

In 2012, Chatham House held a survey to poll the support for a referendum on EU membership and whether the UK should stay in or get out. The results of this survey were published in an official publication, and one of their employees; Thomas Raines wrote a blog about this on the official blog of the London School of Economics and Political Science. The results showed that Midlands & Wales had the highest number of people that would vote to leave the EU, closely followed by the South region. Remarkable is also that in every region of the UK that was polled, there was a higher number of people that would vote to leave the EU, than the number of people that would vote to remain a member. The following graph from Raines’s blog shows the results of this survey:



(Source: Raines, 2012: Chatham House survey results from the London School of Economics and Political Science official blog)

For this dissertation, interviews were conducted with British citizens from different ages and different geographical locations to get a view on how they see euroscepticism in their country and what their experiences are regarding this topic.

Among the respondents, there was a division visible between the people who see the EU as a positive institute and those who see it as more negative. One of the respondents, a 30 year old male who works as a photographer and lives in Royal Leamington Spa, a small city near Birmingham states that he sees EU membership mainly as a positive thing for trade purposes. He says it *“takes down barriers of entry for trading with EU and non EU members”*. However he feels that *“Politically I believe it does not make a difference if the UK are members or not”*. His opinion has changed in the last five years, while he says that five years ago he was very positive towards further EU integration, he is now more hesitant. One of the respondents from London, a 42 year old male adds: *“The original concept of a European common market was a positive move both politically and economically. However, now European Union is completely different animal. I am worried about the gradual move to a truly federal union; it’s yet another step towards removing ‘real’ power away from the people. When people feel politically, economically and socially*

*emasculated there is a danger that people will revolt*". Most of the respondents felt that there is no real urgency for Britain to become more involved in EU policies such as the Schengen agreement or adopting the euro currency. A 24 year old dispensing optician from Manchester thinks that *"the financial problems of other EU countries have created a negative stigma"*. Regarding the involvement in more EU policies he says: *"I think a good relationship with the EU is a positive I don't necessarily see further integration as a good thing. We're not in a 'stick or twist' situation in my opinion and a move towards such things as the Euro would only create more tension and animosity within the UK towards outside influences"*. There were various examples among the respondents of comments that have been featured in many of the British newspapers over the last few years. An example of this comes from one of the respondents in London who shared his opinion regarding the immigration discussion in the UK *"at a time of high unemployment the last thing British town and cities need is immigrants"*. On the other hand not all the respondents are negative about EU membership. One of the respondents, a 28 year old electronics technician from Leicester states: *"Personally I feel it's a positive, countries working together is surely better then isolation. Having free trade between 27 countries is a good thing"*. One of the respondents even pointed out that she felt proud to be a member of the European Union, because it represents unity and a communal feeling. The 26 year old graphic designer from Cardiff states: *"I feel the UK's involvement in the EU as an overall positive, as it is beneficial overall to the Economy, particularly trading with free movement of goods between EU states. I think that the UK needs to opt in on the Schengen Treaty to make this work better, as freedom of movement is necessary to run a free trade system. I am particularly proud of the fact that as a member of the EU I can work, study and travel freely within Europe"*

Almost all of the respondents agreed that they noticed that the people around them have become more negative towards the European Union. One of the respondents says: *"People are scared of things they cannot see so the thought of being governed by Brussels makes them very wary"*. Another respondent says this has more to do with what is currently happening in the crisis countries: *"I think this is more to do with the crisis of the Euro currency and its effects on countries like Greece Portugal and Spain. Also concerns of too much movement of people from one country of EU to another in one go. Putting stresses on the country taking in the influx of new people"*. Furthermore, one of the younger respondents points out that she thinks it is a combination of politics and

media that has created this. She describes that *“a heavy push from certain Political parties and also due to the Media trying to reinforce all the supposed negative aspects of the involvement, such as loss of business, money and immigration”* are the main reasons for euroscepticism to grow in modern day society in the UK. Most of the respondents that hold a mostly positive opinion regarding the EU have strong opinions on the popularity of UKIP. One of the respondents states: *“I feel very strongly about these parties and am absolutely against them. I may be patriotic but their views are far too extreme and even racist”* and one even states that he won't, by any means, be backing *“such Europhobic and delusional parties like the UKIP”*. However, some of the respondents can definitely understand why UKIP has become so popular. They think UKIP appeals to a certain group of citizens that have previously been unheard. One of the respondents comments: *“I feel it appeals to the indigenous people of the UK, who worried that the country cannot take on board a new wave of immigration, which may cause tensions in society, culturally, economically(driving down wages). They feel UKIP listens to their concerns, which the major parties e.g. Tories/Labour do not”*.

Ultimately, most of the respondents believe that the UK will remain a member of the EU. However, some are worried there are real possibilities for the UK to leave the EU in the upcoming years. One of the reasons that was pointed out by a few of the respondents was the fact that UKIP is gaining a lot of votes and popularity which could lead to destabilization of the big coalition parties and could be potentially threatening towards the policies of for example the Conservatives and Labour. A 21 year old language student from Brighton says: *“If UKIP become more powerful, withdrawal could be a likely option but I think there would be huge outrage if things were looking that way”*. Furthermore, a 42 year old respondent from London concludes: *“I do not see a bright future for the UK's EU membership, if they continue to follow the same path in the foreseeable future. He states:” I can see the UK withdrawing from the EU within ten years”*

## Chapter 3 - British media and euroscepticism

Euroscepticism is intertwined with the media. As shown in Chapter 2, euroscepticism originated in media discourse and the media is an outlet for eurosceptic thinking. The British media is an exceptional force, unlike any other. This chapter will further clarify the relationship between euroscepticism and the media, in particular the written press.

### 3.1 British media

Media is a very broad term; it includes the regular media channels such as radio, newspapers, TV and books, but also the newer more digitally focused media such as the internet, blogs and social media (Twitter, Facebook, and Pinterest). The most prominent name in the British media world is BBC, the British Broadcasting Cooperation. This state owned public service company was founded in 1922 and is said to be the world's largest broadcaster (Sehgal, 2009). Their main competitor is ITV, which operates as a public limited company and focuses mainly on TV and production activities. The third player on the media market is the British Sky Broadcasting Group (Sky).

The British media has a very negative image. This is not surprising, as the British media has been involved in many scandals over the last few years. One of the biggest scandals was the "News of the World scandal", during which journalists were guilty of hacking cell phones of politicians and celebrities and even were accused of bribing police officers. This scandal evoked a discussion in the UK, whether newspapers and its journalists were enjoying too much power and control over the British news coverage. Because of these scandals, many politicians have spoken out about the possible creation of a "media watchdog", a regulatory body that can, for example, fine newspapers who publish wrongful information ("Leveson calls for new British media watchdog", 2012). This is a discussion that can be viewed in many different ways. On one hand it will benefit towards the image of the British media as a whole, but on the other hand, the independent and outspoken media is what the UK is famous for. Many journalists feel that the powerful UK media is part of society and controlling that would be a violation of freedom of speech. Additionally, the audience remains the most important factor for success, their demands will define what the media will publish or broadcast. Over the years, the British media has grown to be more polarized, this might be because the audience demands this, or because society has just simply become harsher..

“Don't tell me about the press. I know exactly who reads the papers: The Daily Mirror is read by people who think they run the country, the Guardian is read by people who think they ought to run the country, the Times is read by people who actually do run the country, the Daily Mail is read by the wives of the people who run the country, the Financial Times is read by people who own the country, the Morning Star is read by people who think the country ought to be run by another country and the Daily Telegraph is read by people who think it is” (Quote from the British TV show; Yes Minister)

In this dissertation, the focus on the relationship between media and euroscepticism will be on the written press. Many of the most significant news organizations such as Reuters, the Financial Times and The Economist are British. The popularity of the written press and in particular that of newspapers has declined in the last ten to twenty years. The digital age has created many opportunities to stay informed with the latest news, sometimes for free, otherwise for a significantly lower subscription fee than the paper version. In 2012, the National Readership Survey showed that 35 million people in the UK read a national newspaper (both online and in print) at least once a week; this means a bit more than 50% of the population of the United Kingdom frequently reads a newspaper (Ponsford, 2012). This shows that many people are exposed to what is written in the press and newspapers and other forms of written media can be a powerful medium for politicians and organizations.

There is a wide variety of newspapers in the United Kingdom. One can say that there is a division between two significant categories, the “*broadsheet press*”, which are the newspapers focused on more serious issues and that distinguish themselves by offering quality writing and the “*tabloid press*”. The tabloid press focuses on celebrity news and various stories regarding human interest. They rarely report on serious political issues or foreign news. The most read newspaper in the UK is The Sun, one of the most famous tabloid newspapers. The Sun is a daily tabloid newspaper and in 2012, this newspaper had an average daily readership of 7.3 million (Bartlett, 2012). It has been known for publishing many controversial articles. In the 1980's the newspaper heavily supported Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative Party, during these years they were known to publish malicious articles about the Labour Party in order to destabilize them. Furthermore, The Sun can be seen as a more right wing and populist newspaper, with a strong voice about Europe.



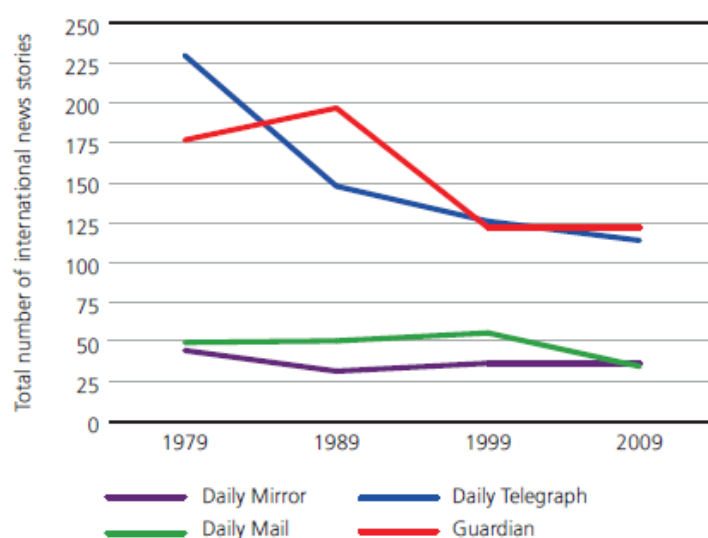
The second most read newspaper in the UK is the Daily Mail, another tabloid newspaper. The Daily Mail was first published in 1896 and was the first newspaper that aimed at the middle class target group. It had an average daily readership of 4.3 million in 2011 ("Daily Mail: readership figures", 2013). The Daily Mail is a traditional paper that has a very right wing approach to news coverage and has published many articles that openly criticize more left wing media as the BBC. In recent years, the newspaper openly speaks out to endorse the Conservative Party. If we look at the quality newspapers, the readership numbers are significantly lower. Historically, The Times has always been the UK's most read quality newspaper. However, the famous newspaper is losing its readers. The Times was first published in 1785, and was the first newspaper to use "Times" in their title, later followed by The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times and many others. The Times has an average daily readership of 1.3 million in the UK (Bartlett, 2012). It is a newspaper with a long history, and is less of a sensationalist paper compared to the tabloid newspapers. This newspaper attracts Labour, Conservative and Lib Dem readers. The Guardian is another UK quality newspaper, with a daily readership of 1.7 million in the UK in 2012 (Bartlett, 2012). The Guardian is known for their serious news coverage and a more left wing and liberal approach than most of the British newspapers. However, The Daily Telegraph is currently the most read UK broadsheet newspaper, with a daily readership of 1.8 million in 2012. This is still significantly less than the readership of the tabloid newspapers (Reynolds, 2012). The Daily Telegraph is known to be a very conservative and traditional newspaper. Their news coverage is mostly presented from a right-wing perspective. Their loyalty to the Conservative party has gained them the nickname "*Torygraph*" (Curtis, n.d.)

The competition between the newspapers is very strong; while the readership of all British newspapers is declining, the quality newspapers feel that for them the losses are the hardest and that they lose a lot of their readers to the tabloid newspapers. This encourages newspapers to appeal to a large group of the public and therefore be more outrageous and extreme in their language and manner of covering news stories. The free newspapers such as Metro and Evening Standard are also a big competition for the established newspapers. The free newspapers can be found at metro/train/bus stations or are handed out on the streets. The Metro has an average daily readership of 3.4 million ("Metro Classified", 2013), which is twice as much as The Times and The Guardian.

### 3.2 British newspapers and Europe

Charles Grant, director of the Centre for European Reform, once stated that “of the roughly 30 million people who read a daily newspaper in Britain, three-quarters read papers that are determined to make people dislike the EU”, but is this actually true?

The amount of European news in the British newspapers in general has declined in the last decade. Research carried out by Media Standards Trust, who monitored the amount of foreign news over the period between 1979 and 2009, showed that there was a decline of almost 10% in the coverage of foreign news in 2009 compared to 1979. The research stated that in 2009, 20% of the news in the British newspapers is dedicated to foreign news, which means 80% is solely British news (Media Standards Trust, 2009). Similar research was carried out in the Netherlands, which showed that on average the Dutch newspapers dedicate 30% of their content to foreign news. A clear difference compared to the UK. It is important to point out that there is a clear difference noticeable between the quality newspapers and the tabloids regarding foreign news. According to this report, papers as *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph* reserve around 15% of their content for non-British news, while the tabloids, such as *The Daily Mail* and *The Daily Mirror*, their content consists of only 5% of foreign correspondence. This graph from the Media Standards Trust report shows the decline in international news stories in the period between 1979 and 2009.



Total number of international news stories published by newspaper  
(By newspaper, Mon-Fri, first week in March)

Figure 3.1 Foreign  
correspondence in British  
newspapers

Nevertheless, foreign news does not necessarily mean “European news”. It is therefore important to ask the question: **What is the quality and quantity of representation of European issues in the written press?**

It has become a tradition in the British written press to publish “euro-myths”. These euro-myths often concern a silly tradition or any modification towards the traditional way of living. The most infamous euro-myth is that of the “straight banana”. The story originated after the EU has put in place a regulation that pointed out several rules concerning the physical appearance of fruits and vegetables. It stated that bananas must be “*free from malformation or abnormal curvature*”. The British tabloids ridiculed the regulation set up by the European Commission and published headlines such as “Brussels bureaucrats ban bananas” (Nosemonkey, 2008). There was not a single European country, apart from the UK, that paid any attention to this EU regulation, as there was no sign of any ban on vegetables to begin with. Mr. van den Horst said the following about this: “These Euro myths, such as the straight banana, are absolute nonsense of course, which most sensible British people wouldn’t believe anyway, but there are more subtle myths on Europe that a lot British people DO believe”. He also pointed out that often, the British media show that they have hardly any knowledge of the European Union and its institutions. He stated: “You see that a lot of British media have hardly any knowledge of Europe. For instance, the Council of Europe or the European Court of Human Rights are many times portrayed as in situations of the European Union (which is not true). This is a result of misreporting in the media” .This is not very surprising, as most of the British newspapers do not actually have a correspondent in Brussels, unlike many other European newspapers. Currently there are only three daily newspapers that have staff present in Brussels to cover European stories first hand, namely: The Guardian, Financial Times and the Times. This means none of the tabloid newspapers such as the Daily Mail, The Sun or any other have a (full time) correspondent in Brussels who is able to cover the news straight from the source. One can wonder how much credibility their news coverage has, when EU stories are covered from London instead of Brussels itself. In comparison to the Netherlands, where almost all big newspapers have at least one full time EU correspondent in Brussels, it seems that the British media overall is less engaged in EU news coverage.

To be able to get a better view of how European news is covered in British newspapers and to answer the question regarding the quality of the representation of European issues, as well as to find out if there are clear signs of euroscepticism visible in the written press, research was conducted by monitoring three British newspapers on a daily basis over a period of 2 weeks (14 days) in the month of October 2013. The research was carried out by analysing a few key aspects.

These were the following aspects:

- The amount of foreign news and how much of this consists of news related to European countries in particular
- The coverage of major European news stories
- European Union related news and how is the EU represented in the media.

The newspapers that were selected for this research are:

- The Guardian (quality newspaper, centre left wing/liberal)
- The Daily Telegraph (quality newspaper, centre right wing/conservative)
- The Daily Mail (tabloid newspaper, right wing/populist)

### **3.3 The amount of foreign news in British newspapers**

The earlier mentioned research carried out by Media Standards Trusts dates back from 2009, it is interesting to find out if these numbers have changed over a period of 4 years. Do the UK newspapers publish even less foreign news, or has it remained somewhat the same?. When going through the 3 selected newspapers, The Guardian, The Daily Telegraph and The Daily Mail. It becomes clear that their main priority is not to cover foreign news. All three newspapers are dominated by news from or related to the UK. On average the Guardian consists of about 40/50 pages. Their "International news" section covers, on average, 4-5 pages. About 1-2 pages are dedicated to news from the USA,

one full page covers the news stories about the Middle East, which leaves 1/1.5 pages for other foreign (European) news. The Daily Telegraph is a newspaper which consists of about 30-40 pages daily. It has a "World news" section which on average consists of 2/3 pages. One full page covers the news from the United States, mostly in relation to the Middle East. During the two week period, the Daily Telegraph never dedicated one full page to covering European news. The Daily Mail on average consists of about 70 pages daily. Unlike the other two newspapers, it does not have an international news section featured in the paper. International news is part of their general news section. On four out of the 14 days that the newspaper was monitored, it did not feature any international news at all. On the 10 days during which the Daily Mail did feature international news, only in four issues of the paper it was news related to Europe, the other six issues covered news on the US or Middle East.

#### Foreign news in British newspapers

Newspaper	Percentage of foreign news (daily)
The Guardian	10%
The Daily Mail	1,5%
The Daily Telegraph	7%

*This table presents the results of the research carried out over a period of two weeks. The percentage on the right shows the amount of foreign news featured in this particular newspaper on an average day.*

This shows there is a big difference between the amount of international news that the British newspaper readers are exposed to. The Guardian, which is a quality newspaper, offers the most international news to their readers, while The Daily Mail as a tabloid newspaper offers almost no foreign correspondence. If we compare this to other European newspapers, significant differences are noticeable. One of the major Dutch newspapers, NRC Handelsblad, which consist of about 50 pages, dedicates on average 6 pages daily to foreign news. This however can be expected in a small country which has relatively less national news to report on than a bigger country such as Germany or the UK. Le Monde, which is one of France's main newspapers, has a foreign news section of about 4 pages on average, even though the newspaper only consists of 48 pages. This is almost equal to the Guardian.

In comparison to the research carried out by Media Standards Trust, it shows that there is a further decline visible in foreign correspondence. In 2009, the Guardian and the Daily Telegraph dedicated 15% of their news coverage to foreign news stories, but in the research carried out for this dissertation in 2013, this was only 10% for the Guardian and 7% for the Daily Telegraph. A decline is also visible in regard to the Daily Mail, which in 2009 dedicated 5% of their content to foreign news, but in 2013 this has declined to almost none (1,5%).

### **3.4 The coverage of major European news stories in the British newspapers**

During the two week period that this research took place (2 October – 14 October) there were some significant European news stories. One of these was the accident that took place in the Mediterranean Sea, near the Italian island of Lampedusa, during which more than a 100 refugees who were trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea on a boat lost their life. This story dominated the European news for days. Oddly enough, The Guardian was the only one of the three newspapers that featured the story on their October 4 front page. The Daily Telegraph did not even mention the story until page 22 of the newspaper, in a small article that only covered the most important details. The Daily Mail mentioned the story at page 20 in an even smaller article. One could say the British newspapers have very different priorities on which news stories are ranked as important, than many other European newspapers have. Another story that dominated the European news for several weeks was the situation regarding Berlusconi in Italy. This was also covered in very different ways by the various newspapers in the UK. While The Guardian featured the news on their front page, the Daily Telegraph published some small articles in their foreign news section. The Daily Mail chose an entirely different, yet very characteristic way, of covering the story. On October 7, they published an article with the following headline: "Berlusconi faces a year of picking up rubbish", in which they gave a humorous twist to the events that were happening in the Italian government. This shows that all of these newspapers reflect the attitudes of their readers in a different way, the Guardian feels that their readers are eager to read about this story, which is why it is featured on the front page. On the other hand, the Daily Mail reflects the idea that foreign news is of less importance than domestic issues.

In general it seems that the major European news stories do get some kind of mention in the British newspapers, but are in no way more important than the national news stories. Readers of the Daily Mail or the Daily Telegraph, will not read anything about the Lampedusa accident until they have reached page 20 of their newspaper and will miss out on the background of the stories, because only the most important details are discussed.

### **3.5 European Union related news in the British newspapers**

During the two week period, there was a fair share of EU related news to be found in the newspapers. The on-going debate whether or not the UK should remain a member of the EU and if so, to what costs, is extensively covered in the British news. The Daily Telegraph, that has always been a supporter of the Conservative Party, reported on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, that *"PM's plan to take powers back from the EU is 'doomed'"*. This article quoted European Commission President, Barroso, with the use of words such as "Cameron's plan is unreasonable" and "doomed to failure". The article suggested strongly that the EC does not take the UK, and in particular Prime Minister Cameron, seriously. The Daily Telegraph does also not refrain from publishing articles that can be classified in the category of "euro-myths". On Oct 4, they published an article stating *"Blair's latest role, helping Albania join the EU"*. An article that, with a bit of a cynical tone, reports on former Labour Prime Minister Tony Blair's latest political activities. Further research shows that Blair merely acts as an advisor to Albania to help them achieve the requirements for joining the EU. At the end of the article it states *"Albania is one of the poorest countries of Europe"*, which is backed up with some statistics concerning its GDP. This is not a surprising addition to this article, because the last few years various, mostly right wing, MPs have spoken about the migration from poor EU countries to the UK. Furthermore, on October 10, the DT published an article stating that *"MEPs want to ban cigarettes in packs of 10"*. Another clear example of a euro-myth, which was only one of the many suggested measures featured in a report by the European Parliament on the topic of tightening tobacco regulations in Europe.

The differences in news coverage in left-wing newspapers (The Guardian) compared to right-wing newspapers (The Daily Telegraph) are also visible on a day to day basis. On Oct 7, both the DT and the Guardian covered a news story about a Tory MP who

planned on forcing an early EU in/out referendum. The DT's headline said the following *"Tory fury at move to force early EU vote"*, while The Guardian opted for: *"Rebel Tory MP calls for EU referendum before 2015 elections"*. But, not only the headlines show a lot of differences in how the news is presented to the readers, the actual content of the articles varies significantly. The DT puts the emphasis on the struggles within the Tory party regarding certain individuals who speak out on such issues and state that even *"eurosceptic Tory MPs"* are wary towards an early referendum. The Guardian however, presents the article from a more Labour point of view, stating that it is important to be aware that the Labour party has refused to give an opinion with regards to a EU referendum. The article also features numerous quotes to clarify various opinions that are going round in British politics. The article notes that this one of the many clashes within the Tory party, a direct quote from the article *"The Tories are back to obsessing over the EU"*. An important difference is also, that the article in the DT mentions UKIP, whom have been regularly featured in discussions regarding the UK and the EU. The Guardian does not mention anything with regards to UKIP, possibly because they see UKIP's opinions as of no value to their readers.

Another news story that dominated the British media during these two weeks was also related to the European Union, namely the case of EU migrants coming to the UK to claim welfare benefits. As stated before in Chapter 2, the discussion regarding EU migrants is one of the reasons that part of the UK public has become more sceptical towards their membership of the EU. Both the Daily Mail and the Daily Telegraph dedicate their front page to this discussion, after the EC had published a report concerning the "benefits tourism" in the UK as a result of a heated discussion between the British Ministers and the European Commission. The DT opted for *"112,000 EU migrants seeking British jobs"* as their front page headline, while the DM suggests to *"Slash benefits for EU migrants"*. The Daily Mail features a projection of the costs of the EU migrants in the UK;

- 611,779: The number of 'non-active' EU migrants in Britain - up 42 per cent in six years
- £1.5bn: Estimated annual cost to NHS of treating 'non-active' migrants
- 73% increase in the number of 'job seeking' EU migrants in Britain between 2009 and 2011"

Interestingly enough, they mention a poll carried out by Sky News which projects the opinion of the general public regarding this issue: "Sixty-seven per cent said the UK's



population is too high and want 'drastic action' to cut immigration, while 52 per cent said they are more likely to vote for a party promising to reduce immigration 'significantly'" (Daily Mail, 2013). This poll however, was carried out before the report of the EC was published and therefore cannot be used as a clear and unbiased reflection of the opinion of the GP. The DT's article consists of quite similar reporting, however they mention a very important statistic which helps to better understand the GP's opinion on EU migrants, namely: "71% of the people who said they did not know any immigrants well, supported drastic action by the British government, while in the group of people that are familiar with immigrants, only 58% supports drastic action" (The Daily Telegraph, 2013). This shows that the previously reported stats by the Daily Mail, could be heavily influenced by the fact that people are in general not familiar with immigrants, or fear them because immigration as whole is unknown to them. Finally, The Guardian covers the news of this report in a very different way, and shows the point of view of the European Commission regarding the British claims. The Guardian elaborates on the fact that this EC report is not as black and white as it might seem, it features quotes such as *"The UK can't come up with figures regarding the benefits tourism thing, only with anecdotal evidence"*. The article offers evidence in a well-structured way and therefore takes quite a different approach and direction than the Daily Mail and The Daily Telegraph, who chose to focus more on the opinions and consequences for the UK, rather than the actual facts in the report from the EC. A clear example of this is the fact that both newspapers speak of 600.000 EU migrants in Britain without a job, but fail to add that this number also includes elderly, children and students.

Negativity surrounds EU related news. It seems that EU news is reported in a negative way, or it is not. If news regarding the EU is published, it is almost in every case written from a perspective on what the influence is on the UK. Examples of this type of news coverage are headlines such as *"EU may rob Britain of cheap energy"* or *"EU killing prospect of cheap gas"* (The Daily Telegraph, Oct 7 2013). The Daily Mail takes a slightly different approach to please their eurosceptic readers, on Oct 3rd; they published a page wide spread regarding a British representative in Strasbourg. The Daily Mail is famous for its outrageous stories and often publishes articles that are a direct personal attack on the person in question. The headline of this article says it all: *"A career Eurocrat on £150.000 a year"*. The article elaborates on the "apparent" discontent of some MPs with Mr. Mahoney, a British representative at the European Court of Human Rights. Some quotes

from the article: *“Mr. Mahoney was there for hearings that led to the ruling in favour of prisoners”, “Mr Mahoney is an avid Eurocrat” and “Give axe murders the vote says judge”*. The Daily Mail ironically leaves out the fact that the European Court of Human Rights is not a part of the European Union, but part of the Council of Europe, which is not related to the EU itself. A few days later, they continue on the same subject by publishing a similar article, in which they label the European Court of Human Rights a *“Euro gravy train for killers and terrorists”* adding that *“Judges in Strasbourg handed the criminals taxpayer funded pay-outs of £4.4 million”*. The article lacks any clear evidence to back these facts up, but that is also clearly not the intention that went behind publishing this particular article.

To summarize the way international news is covered in the United Kingdom, a few things have a significant impact. First, there is very little international news presented to the readers of the three newspapers in question. Most of the international news concerns the USA and the Middle East. Even news stories that are of high importance in other European countries, are of less importance for UK newspapers than new stories concerning the USA/Middle East. The fact that the distinction between a more centre left newspaper (The Guardian) and centre right newspaper (The Daily Telegraph) is very much visible in the way the articles are presented and the use of certain language shows that these newspapers are certainly very much aware of the demands of their readers and how to please them. After monitoring the media for 2 weeks, it became clear that there actually two different discussions going on regarding Britain and the EU. On one hand, the discussion regarding the fact whether the UK should completely withdraw from EU membership as a whole and on the other hand the discussion whether the UK should pursue a repatriation of EU powers. There is no clear distinction in the media between these two topics of discussion, it is often not clear if “leaving the European Union” is used in the context of complete EU withdrawal or repatriation of EU powers.

### **3.5.1 Level of euroscepticism visible in the British written press**

Not in all EU related articles published in the British newspapers are signs of euroscepticism visible. This table shows the percentage of EU related articles that contain elements of euroscepticism and eurosceptic attitudes published in the three selected newspapers.

The elements that have been used to identify eurosceptic articles are:

- Euro-myths (false stories about EU policies)
- Withholding evidence from the readers
- Providing incorrect facts to the readers
- Use of strong negative sentiments in the writing style
- Expressions of hostility towards the EU or its institutions

Level of euroscepticism in British newspapers	
Newspaper	Percentage of EU news that contains elements of euroscepticism
The Guardian	0%
The Daily Mail	83%
The Daily Telegraph	62%

As this graph shows, The Guardian did not publish articles that contain elements of euroscepticism during the two weeks of newspaper monitoring that was conducted for this dissertation. The European Union news coverage of the Daily Mail contains high levels of euroscepticism, 83% of the articles regarding the EU show evidence of euroscepticism. A bit more than half of the EU related articles that The Daily Telegraph publishes contains elements of euroscepticism (62%)

If these newspapers were to be rated on their level of scepticism towards the Europe, the European Union and European politics, there would be a clear distinction.

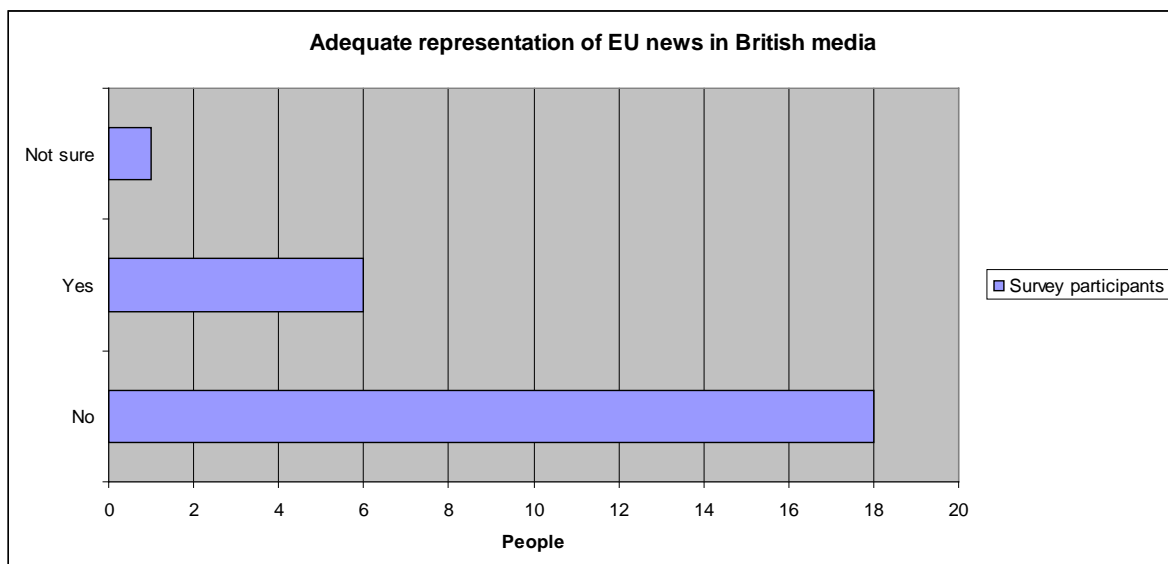
1. Daily Mail (clear evidence of Euroscepticism found in the news coverage)
2. The Daily Telegraph (Eurosceptic in some way, but mostly accurate in the way they inform their readers)
3. The Guardian (neutral news coverage, European news is presented in an accurate and adequate way)

### **3.6 Does the written press offer an adequate representation of European issues to the public?**

To find out more regarding the opinion of the British general public concerning the British newspapers and if they are of the opinion that these newspapers offer too little coverage on European stories, or if it is sufficient to them. A survey was distributed among 25 people from all age categories and from different parts of the United Kingdom.

The results of this survey show that most of the respondents find that the British media overall does not offer an adequate representation of European news to their readers. A small part of the respondents feel that the British media does offer enough European news coverage, these were mostly younger respondents (between the ages of 20-30). This also depends on what the expectations of the general public are, their interests and if they actively search to read more European news in various media outlets. The respondents did seem to have a fairly good view of how the British media works, as one of the younger respondents from Northern Ireland said *“British media news, being British, is mostly concerned with how European issues affect Britain. Regionalism is impossible to escape; however, I think the average person has reasonably good access to news of the majority of the important events happening in Europe”*. As shown by the newspaper monitoring, a lot of the European news is presented in a way that highlights the British perspective and/or consequences of this news. This is also noticed by the general public, as one of the younger respondents from Cardiff points out; *“I think that European news does tend to get glossed over, unless it is something dramatic, usually disasters with lots of deaths get into coverage. When we hear about European Politics on TV News it is generally presented with a “How does this benefit and/or harm Britain” with no real concern for the News in itself and how it affects its own country and people”*. The respondents also stated that they feel that the amount of foreign news and British news should be better balanced, and that they do not feel like it is pleasant to only read about the negative things happening in Europe, but it would be refreshing to read some positive news coverage regarding the EU.

The respondent from Cardiff pointed out that it is necessary to research European news stories to be able to get all the facts right, because the news coverage in many newspapers cannot always be trusted. *“I feel that not enough opportunity is given to the British public to form their own opinions due to the presentation of information in a brisk way. I don’t always feel like I’m given all sides of the story, which is why I particularly make sure to search out the news more thoroughly through online sources.”* It is then to wonder, how many people actually do make an effort to find out all sides of the story regarding European news. The respondents, who stated that they read the Daily Mail or the Sun, also agreed that they feel like European news is not covered in an adequate manner. With one older respondent from Glasgow stating that she *“can’t remember the last time I read something positive about the EU”*. A 34 year old respondent from Edinburgh and a 21 year old respondent from Manchester were the only two respondents that read local newspapers. Interestingly, the young respondent from Manchester said he did not notice any negativity in the British written press, the Scottish respondent, who only reads local Scottish news, stated she did notice quite a lot of negativity in the way EU news is covered in the British written press. Also among the respondents who read both left and right wing newspapers, the negativity in the British written press was still noticed.



*This graph shows the results of the survey that was distributed among 25 people from the UK. Out of the 25 respondents, only 6 found that there was sufficient coverage of European news. 18 respondents answered that they do not believe the UK media offers them an adequate representation of European news, furthermore one person did not have a clear opinion on this topic.*

## Chapter 4 - Influence of the media

### 4.1 Selective exposure theory and euroscepticism

To further explain the influence and relationship between media and eurosceptic views, it is interesting to look at a media theory called “*selective exposure theory*”. This theory might help to explain the reason why euroscepticism has been apparent in the UK for many years, primarily because it has a lot to do with habitual decisions made by the general public. It might also explain why eurosceptic attitudes are hard to break down because of the pattern of reinforcement of existing opinions that is linked to selective exposure. The selective exposure theory is based on the fact that individuals have a tendency to favour information that reinforces their pre-existing views while avoiding information that contradicts these views. In other words, an individual tends to actively seek for information that confirms their beliefs and opinions, and therefore avoids information that challenges these beliefs and opinions. When someone is exposed to information, they will tend to select certain parts of the information based on their own attitudes and perspectives. By doing this, individuals choose to select evidence that favors their opinions, while consciously ignoring more unfavorable evidence.

Selective exposure can affect the decision making process, as individuals can fear new information that might change their views and/or beliefs. This is because people may not be willing to change their attitudes and opinions. An example of selective exposure can be found in political election campaigns. The advertisements used during political elections are subject to selective exposure, because people in general tend to favour a politician that agrees with their own beliefs and reinforces their existing views. This means an individual is likely to “filter out” the messages from politicians that are less comparable with their beliefs. This theory is further explained by Berelson and Steiner, who both state “*people tend to hear and see information favorable to their predispositions, thus they are more likely to hear and see congenial information rather than neutral resources*” (Berelson & Steiner, 1964). Certain topics that are often discussed in the media are more vulnerable to selective exposure than others because these topics depend heavily on the perception and interpretation of information by an individual. An example of one of those particular topics that is vulnerable to selective exposure is politics. The rise of Social Media has made it even easier for individuals to be selective about the information that they prefer to

read. Various search engines on the internet are able to be modified in a way that one can only read about certain topics and articles from certain newspapers. This is however not completely surprising, the increase in media channels has led to people being exposed to enormous amounts of information, and naturally have to make a choice about what they want to read and what they feel comfortable with. Joseph Klapper described the selective exposure theory in relation to media effects. He stated that the media actually has a very limited effect. The media often fails to influence the public because they have limited exposure to information that contradicts beliefs rather than reinforces established views (Klapper, 1960).

Various studies show that the political participation of an individual also plays a big role in the extent to which they apply selective exposure in their lives. So called “strong partisans” expose more selectively than “weak partisans”. This means people that have more interest and stronger political affiliations are more likely to select information that fits their perceptions. However, people with limited political affiliation follow the same pattern but to a lesser extent, primarily because they choose not to select information regarding politics at all, or they do so in a very limited manner. In the UK there are a wide variety of newspapers that are politically outspoken, some moderately so and others very strongly. This makes it even easier for an individual to be selective in the information they want to be exposed to. Whether it is a conscious choice, or if they are unaware of it, someone who is strongly eurosceptic will be drawn more towards a newspaper that feeds these feelings, than a newspaper that has a more pro-Europe view (Jisun, n.d.). Another factor that can influence selective exposure is the community which that individual is a part of. Stroud, in her report on selective exposure theory and politics called “*Media Use and Political Predispositions: Revisiting the Concept of Selective Exposure*” states the following: “*If people live in likeminded communities, they may be more likely to consume likeminded newspapers—not because they wouldn’t like to read newspapers with contradictory views, but because they have limited access to more diverse newspapers*”. Although nowadays in the UK, most newspapers offer the opportunity to read the news online, regionalism can still play a big role in deciding which newspaper people choose to read. Citizens of Scotland might prefer to read mainly Scottish media and therefore read local Scottish newspapers. This might be a choice, but it can also be part of a habit or preference that is not necessarily motivated by any arguments. As a result, this person is only exposed to the news that is featured in the Scottish newspapers.

One should be careful when analyzing the correlation between the media and the public opinion. There is no obvious answer as to whether newspapers are a direct reflection of the opinion of the general public, or if they are influencing the GP in a way that they are shaping the public opinion. In the case of euroscepticism in Britain, there seems to be a factor of reinforcement visible; the GP historically has been quite sceptic of Europe, which is reflected in the news coverage. But, because of the generally negative news coverage regarding the EU the general opinion is not likely to change into a more positive attitude.

The theory of selective exposure has been criticized often over the years. As described in *Media Use and Political Predispositions: Revisiting the Concept of Selective Exposure* by Natalie Jomini Stroud, scholars who are critical about the use of the theory to explain trends in modern day society state that individuals are exposed to a very large amount of media on a day to day basis, which means that it is only natural for a human being to act selectively in regard to the news (Stroud, 2007). This makes sense, as in the UK there are more than 100 national and local newspapers. However, it still does not explain whether or not it is a conscious decision to choose information that reinforces pre-existing views. Of course there are many factors that affect the extent to which someone is able to be influenced by external sources such as the media. Some people tend to follow the “general” opinion, which makes them feel part of a large group. There is nothing really wrong with that, but it can influence the point of view of a large group of people regarding several issues, such as the EU. Other people actively try to make up their own opinions, by trying to obtain information from various perspectives. In 2010, the Eurobarometer report on the UK showed that education also plays a significant part in developing a certain attitude towards the EU. The report states: *“There continues to be a strong correlation between education levels and understanding how the EU works. Two- thirds (65%) of those educated to 15 or less do not understand the EU compared with only 39% of those educated to age 20 or beyond.”* (European Commission, 2010). Regarding this statement it is important to keep in mind that higher educated people are probably more familiar with the benefits of the EU and have obtained more knowledge about the EU in general than people who have been educated at a lower level. The report also states that not understanding how the EU works may also be influential on the image that people in the UK have regarding the EU. *“Only 9% of the people educated to age 15 or less have a positive image of the EU, compared to 35% of the people educated to age 20 or above”.*



As stated in Chapter 3, the British media itself is not always trustworthy of publishing correct information regarding the EU.

The selective exposure theory and the results from the Eurobarometer as presented in this chapter can be used to clarify eurosceptic attitudes among the British general public. A stereotypical eurosceptic would be an individual between the age of 55 and 65, an age group that has proven to be more sceptical towards the EU than younger people (Heaver, 2013), whom has not been educated at a high level and who has no real interest in the EU or European cooperation to begin with. This individual is part of the 4.3 million people who read one of Britain's most popular newspapers, The Daily Mail and this the only newspaper he or she has been reading for years. According to the selective exposure theory and the evidence presented by Eurobarometer, this person is exposed to an entirely different type of news coverage than someone in the same age category who has completed a high level of education and who has an extended interest in the EU. It is of course easy to use this example to simplify the theory, but it is not that clear cut. Although it is relevant to understand that if someone has been reading, for example, the Daily Mail for years, this person is exposed to the news coverage that this particular newspaper provides, when reading negative articles regarding the EU, it is not so far-fetched to think that at least a couple of these negative attitudes are picked up by the reader, whether this happens intentionally or not. Additionally, a Daily Mail reader is exposed to a very limited amount of foreign news which might cause an (unwilling) ignorance to develop regarding European news, as British related news is always presented as more important in this particular newspaper.

To conclude, the selective exposure theory can definitely help to better understand attitudes of the general public regarding the media, but it does not give a satisfying answer as to why the general public in the UK is thoroughly more eurosceptic than in other countries.

#### **4.2 The influence of the British media on the general public**

As the report by Media Standards Trust mentions, it seems that the British public has lost its appetite for foreign news coverage. Nonetheless, if the written press believes that the public is less interested in foreign news, then they will publish less of it, which will make

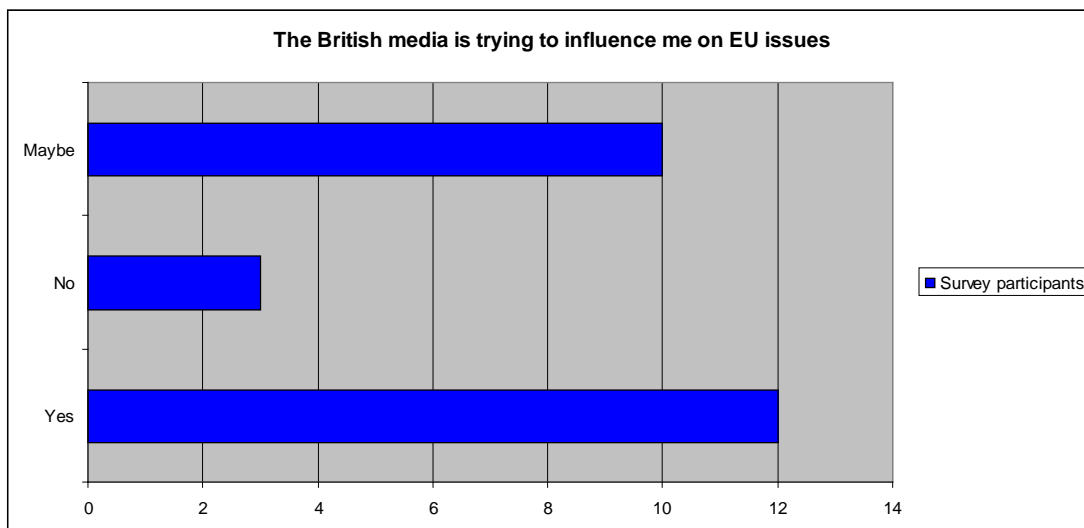
foreign news more unavailable to the public, who will become even less interested over time. This shows there is a co-dependent relationship between the opinions of the general public and how the papers choose to reflect on this (Media Standards Trust, 2009).

It is clear that the readers of the right wing tabloids are in fact more sceptical towards Europe than the readers who read the Guardian or any other more pro-Europe newspaper. But the question remains whether the readers are eurosceptic to begin with, or if this is caused by the fact that they are influenced by this particular newspaper.

According to Mr. van der Horst, the tabloids just pick up on what concerns the general public and reflect this in the paper. He states: *"You do see a shift though in recent years. Tabloids like The Sun and The Daily Mail have become harsher in their views on Europe, but this reflects a shift in British opinion in general. Usually tabloids don't set the mood, but tend to follow an existing mood"*. The other interviewee, Mrs. Pimlott-Coady reflects on the fact that tabloids are also very influential in the political process; she gives the example of how tabloids have created a lot of the popularity of UKIP and have, in some way, influenced the general public's behaviour towards this particular political party. She states: *"I think these tabloids just see it as a story, so they report it and they follow the trend. They think: "Oh the people are so unsatisfied with the Tory government, or coalition government, that they would even vote for this party". So what you have to be careful about is that either, it shocks people that they are so successful and they think that they have to stop voting for them because otherwise they might even get in government, or it will give people more confidence to vote for a party like that because well if everyone else is doing it, why would I not do it?"*

All media is biased in some way, but the way it is projected in their coverage of news varies. The British media is known to be quite influential regarding politics and public issues. Of course it is difficult to measure the extent to which this influence is noticeable in society. Most of the survey respondents agreed on the fact that they felt like the media was trying to influence them in some way, whether successfully or not. The participants who answered "maybe" pointed out that they were made aware of euroscepticism as an issue in the UK, but state that it did not cause their opinion to be influenced in any way. What many of the participants did point out was that the tabloids (Daily Mail, The Sun, The Daily Express) in particular are seen as "guilty" of trying to

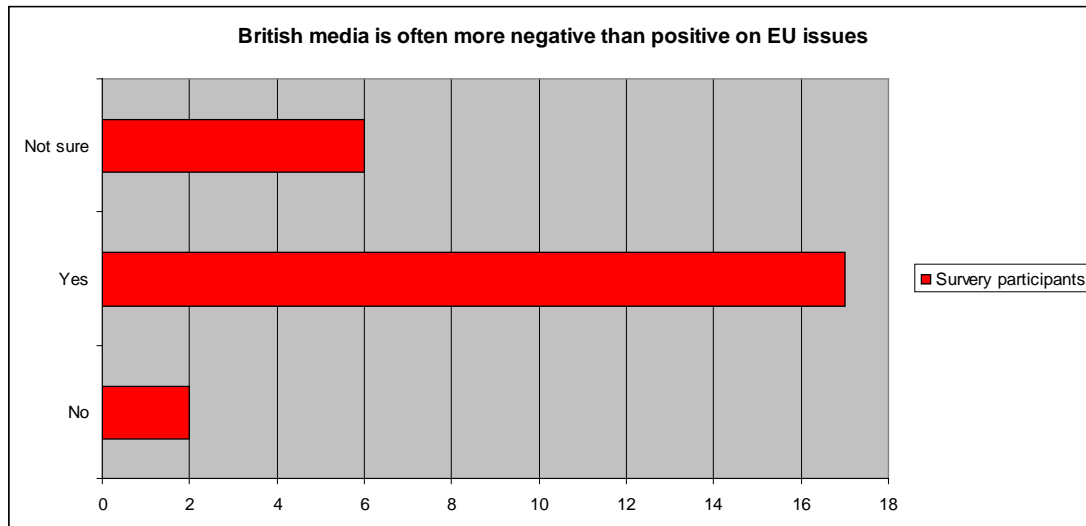
influence people to behave and think in a more negative way regarding the EU. These tabloids seek to reinforce the negative feelings among the general public. As one of the respondents states: *“The EU costs Britain money is the overall voice and opinions seem to be presented as the facts in order to reinforce this”*. In contrast, it is necessary to point out that not all the written media is immediately guilty of trying to influence people or support a certain viewpoint. The participants pointed out that for example the BBC which is one of Britain’s biggest news outlets generally takes a very neutral position regarding European issues and has very thorough and intelligent reporting, in contrast to some of the written media. Taking an overwhelmingly pro Europe stance is not necessarily seen as something positive either. The European Union, as many other institutions, should also be criticized when it needs to be. Overall it seems there is a demand for neutral and fair reporting, with a mix of criticism as well as positive reporting about EU issues. The influence of the media is also subject to the amount of news a person is exposed to and chooses to read. About 25% of the participants said they prefer to read multiple newspapers because they feel it is important to obtain information from different perspectives. However, for the most part the participants answered that they choose a newspaper because of its political direction and/or the way the news is reported. In theory, these people would be more vulnerable to be influenced by this media outlet.



*This graph shows the outcome of the survey that was conducted for this dissertation. The results show that a small majority feels that they are being influenced by the British media, while 10 out of the 25 people are not sure whether or not the British media is actually influencing them.*

The amount of influence a newspaper has over an individual varies from person to person. Similar to what we see during political elections, there are people who have a relatively clear idea of who they will vote for, but there is always a group of people that does not, the so called “swing voters”. This group of voters is one of the most important for politicians to address, because they are vulnerable and thus more likely to be influenced by external forces. These people are often pursued by political campaigns to vote for a person/party. In the media world, a similar effect is visible. Now more than ever, newspapers need to sell and attract readers to be able to keep up the daily readership. There is nothing to gain by focusing solely on their subscribers and daily readers who have been reading the paper for years. In order to gain readers, they focus on the group of people that is “in between”, people who do not have strong opinions on issues, for example Europe. These people search for an opinion or ideology to identify with. These people are potential new readers for them and are still able to be influenced by the media. Because of this, newspapers tend to publish more and more opinionated and extreme articles to be able to grab the attention of the various other media outlets, in the hope of attracting new readers by reflecting on the general public’s opinion. Among the respondents, this particular question was raised *“Is the British media often more negative than positive on EU issues?”*. Most of the respondents answered that they agree that the British media is in general negative regarding the EU. Interesting to notice was the fact that the respondents who read more left wing newspapers or a selection of both left wing and right wing newspapers pick up on the negativity more often. An example is this quote from one of the respondents who reads a selection of right and left wing newspapers and stated that he feels the closest connection to a liberal political ideology: *“The media in the UK are predominantly coming from a right-wing ideology and promote capitalism and small business, they see the EU as a form of socialist group and feel aggrieved that the UK has had to prop up failing economies in Greece and Cyprus, a lot of the population who don’t take the time to research get all their info from papers such as the Daily Mail which actively promotes an EU exit”*. This shows that the larger part of the respondents of the survey have noticed a strong negativity in the media. Whether this influences them to think more negatively or not, they do experience a sentiment of negativity while reading EU related news in (several) newspapers. About 25% of the respondents are not sure if they feel like the media is often more negative than positive regarding EU issues. Several reasons for this can be brought up, either these people are not exposed to the written press as often as others, or they show no interest towards EU

related news. Another explanation could be that because they are already sceptic towards the EU, they do not particularly notice negativity in the written press, because they agree with what is written. What is clear is that the people who answered “not sure” are more likely to be influenced by the newspapers because they do not seem to pick up on the (very apparent) negativity in the British written press.



This graph shows the outcome of the survey that was conducted for this dissertation. The results show that the majority of the respondents agree that the British media often reports more negatively about EU issues. 6 out of the 25 people do not know whether or not if the British media is more negative than positive. They do not find negativity very noticeable in EU news reporting.

As shown throughout this dissertation, the written press plays an important part in the development and growth of euroscepticism in the UK. However, it is important to point out that this is often part of a much more extended trend in society. As stated in *A Spiral of Euroscepticism: The Media's Fault?* by Claes H. de Vreese, a strong sentiment of euroscepticism in a country often follows a decline in the general public's trust in national politics and the government. The general public feels "alienated" from the politicians in their country and feels overall discontent with politics on both a national and supra-national level. These feelings thus feed eurosceptic attitudes, as many people are not able to separate politics related to domestic issues and politics on a European level. (Vreese, 2007).

In the UK, the Edelman Trust Barometer showed in 2012 that confidence of the general public in the British government was down to just 29% (PR Week, 2012), in the same year the EU's polling organization; Eurobarometer showed that 69% of British citizens do not have confidence in the European Union (Traynor, 2013). This shows that overall, the British general public is quite sceptic of politics in general and that discontent with the UK government can be of influence on the opinion of the general public towards European issues.

The media is not solely to blame for the eurosceptic attitudes of both the general public and British politicians, what can be assured is that the written press does influence the discussion regarding the UK and the European Union. By providing the general public with negative stories about the EU on a daily basis, it is not surprising to notice negative attitudes in outlets such as Eurobarometer.

## Chapter 5 - Conclusion

This dissertation focused on the influence of the media, specifically the written press, on euroscepticism in the United Kingdom. This chapter will present an answer to the research question: *What is the influence of the written press on euroscepticism in the United Kingdom?*

Euroscepticism is present in almost all European countries, from Austria to France, in several different forms that vary from scepticism regarding particular EU policies to opposition towards the delegation of powers to a supranational institution like the EU. However, the combination of the sensationalist British press and traditional sceptic opinions in British politics on European cooperation have made the UK the “*home of euroscepticism*”. The relationship between the UK and the EU has been a controversial topic during Cameron’s time as Prime Minister, whose objectives to repatriate powers from the EU have received a lot of criticism in Brussels. The recent popularity of anti-EU party UKIP, who look to destabilize the current coalition, has increased the eurosceptic rhetoric in British politics ahead of the next general elections in 2015.

The decline in newspaper readership has intensified the need for thrilling journalism, which has led to a climate of news reporting that is based more on sensationalism rather than providing information. Right wing papers such as The Daily Mail, The Sun and The Daily Telegraph are the source of most of the eurosceptic discourse in the British written press. The popularity of these papers among the British public remains unparalleled, the “tabloid press” has enjoyed the highest daily readership of all newspapers during the last decade. The question remains whether the press is generating an anti-EU bias or if the press simply reflects the views of the general public itself. However, it is clear that predominate negative coverage regarding the European Union has permeated deep into the general public’s mind. The inadequate coverage of EU news, as well as foreign news in general, has resulted in a severe lack of knowledge among the British general public concerning European issues.

The media has created a negative stigma that surrounds euroscepticism. The negative persistence of the most popular media outlets has overruled more pro-Europe sentiments and has in essence changed the definition of euroscepticism from being sceptical towards

the EU to opposing against everything the EU does or says. In the end, being eurosceptic does not necessarily have to mean something negative. Similar to national politics, international (in particular European) politics should be reviewed from a sceptical point of view. The European Union as an institution and its policies should not be blindly followed and agreed on by member states, instead there should be a fair amount of criticism as well as praise which encourages all EU members to actively participate in policy discussions. With the British media being overly negative on EU issues, there is no balance in the news coverage of EU issues. The general public is in need of fair and adequate reporting.

To conclude, the written press does influence the eurosceptic attitudes in the UK, but is not solely to blame for the British reluctance towards European integration. As shown throughout this dissertation, the lack of education on the European Union and its institutions as well as historically and culturally rooted motives also play a great part in the sceptic opinions of both the general public and British politics towards the European Union. At this moment it is impossible to predict what will happen to the United Kingdom and their membership of the European Union. Will there be an in/out referendum after the elections in 2015? Will the British public vote to withdraw from EU membership? Today it seems more likely than ever that the European Union will have one less member state in the future, but in politics everything can change in an instant.

What is clear is that euroscepticism is deeply rooted in British society, and this is not likely to change in the foreseeable future. Britain's European hopes lay in the hands of the younger generation, who have already shown to be less eurosceptic than their older counterparts. If the British media decides to report EU related stories with more accuracy and less bias, in addition to improved education that will help solve the problem of a uninformed public, euroscepticism might become a thing of the past.



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### List of appendices

1. Interview with Mr. Arjen van der Horst, UK & Ireland correspondent for Dutch broadcaster NOS, current affairs programme Nieuwsuur and national daily Trouw, 26 April 2013.
2. Interview with Mrs. Amanda Pimlott-Coady, Media & Communication lecturer at The Hague University. 23 May 2013, The Hague.
3. Questionnaire
4. Student Ethics Form

## Interview 1

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Date: 26 April 2012

Duration: - (interview was conducted via e-mail)

Name: Arjen van der Horst.

Function: UK & Ireland correspondent for NOS.

### **1. What is your opinion on the fact that Prime Minister Cameron has announced a potential referendum concerning the EU membership of the UK?**

The announcement of a referendum means a big turning point in Cameron's thinking. When Cameron became party leader, he warned his Conservative Party to "stop banging on about Europe". As a young party activist he saw at close hand how the Conservatives tore themselves apart over Europe, which led to deep party split. This split is one of the main reasons why the Conservatives failed to win elections for a long time. It was an important lesson for Cameron and he vowed to "detoxify" his party. Although being a pragmatic eurosceptic himself, he didn't want Europe to become a divisive issue in his party. A few developments have forced his hand. First of all, after the expenses scandal of 2009 a lot of the Conservative old guard left parliament and almost a third of the elected member in 2010 were first time MP's. The new Conservative faction in the House of Commons was almost homogeneously Eurosceptic. Until then, there always had been a fairly large minority of pro-European in the Conservative Party, but after 2010 that almost disappeared. In other words: there was a significant mood shift in the party towards more euroscepticism. The second important factor is the coalition. For the first time in 70 years the British had a coalition government. Conservatives were forced to govern with the very pro-European Liberal Democrats. This led to a lot of resentment within the Conservative Party and on a few occasions a large group of eurosceptic Conservative MP's rebelled against Cameron's European policies. Demands for a referendum on Europe started to get louder and louder. For a long time Cameron resisted these calls. Until last year he refused flat out to hold a referendum. Two events forced him to change his mind. First of all, the crisis in the Eurozone became deeper and deeper, which led to increasing resentment in the UK over Europe. Secondly, opinion polls showed that the anti-European, anti-immigration UK Independence Party started to eat in the traditional

Conservative support. Opinion polls also showed a majority of British voters wanted to leave the European Union. Cameron made a political calculation and thought it would be best to call a referendum. There are many 'ifs'. Cameron will only hold a referendum *after* he has negotiated a new relationship with Europe. This new relationship has to be agreed by all European nations, and so far it's unlikely they will give in much. Cameron is very unpopular on the Continent, especially after he used his veto in 2011. If there's no deal, there will be no referendum. Also, a majority in parliament is needed to make a referendum possible. At the moment the Liberal Democrats and Labour are against, so there is no majority. That's why Cameron has said he will hold a referendum after the next election in 2015. In other words: he needs to win the election outright to make a referendum possible. You see there are many obstacles towards a referendum and at the moment it seems unlikely. Then again, events can force a change. For instance, further deepening of the Eurozone crisis can lead to a change in Labour's position.

**2. Do you experience signs of the British eurosceptic attitude in your daily life regarding your work or other activities? Could you give me some examples?**

Being Eurosceptic is almost the norm in the United Kingdom, so yes, I do encounter this a lot. Most of my British friends would be fairly anti-European and a lot of them will say it would be better if the UK leaves the European Union. Funny or not, a lot of this has to do with the Second World War. Many British, including friends of the younger generation, look at Europe through the prism of WW-II. This is very stark black and white: the British are the good guys, the Germans want to dominate Europe and all the other European countries are weak and we had to liberate them. This is a cliché, but you will be surprised how prevalent this attitude is. At the same time I encounter a pragmatic attitude, which is also very British. A lot of people I interviewed on this issue are not particularly pro-European, but they do see a lot of benefits in being part of the largest single market in the world. I suspect that's how a lot of British would like to see their relationship with Europe: a looser relationship, less power to Brussels, but still member of the European Union.

**3. Do you notice any differences in the way you are treated as a correspondent from the Netherlands who works in the UK opposed to how national journalists are treated? Could you give me some examples?**

As a journalist from The Netherlands I'm completely insignificant. So for instance, for me it's very hard to get interview with politicians, because I have no use to them. Interviews with the prime minister or important ministers are nearly impossible and even normal Members of Parliaments are hard to get. When I try to get politicians I use what I call the "drag net" tactic: I ask about 10 to 15 politicians for an interview, and if I'm lucky I manage to get one. Another tactic is to look if politicians have written a book (as most British politicians have), so you use their need for publicity to get an interview. When there are elections, most parties impose a simple media policy on their candidates not to speak to foreign media, because they see it as a waste of time. Unless you work for CNN or another big international medium, they won't speak to you. In general it's difficult to get interview with British people. This country has such an aggressive tabloid press that most people are very wary to speak to journalists. It takes sometimes a lot of convincing to get interviews. Another problem are PR agencies, almost every organisation or company uses professional PR people as a go-in-between for journalists. These guys are in general extremely annoying and unhelpful and act as a kind of barrier between journalists and the people you want to speak to. On the other hand, Ireland –which I also cover- is an absolute dream for journalists. Irish are very laidback and welcoming, it's very easy to work there. Britain is a nightmare most of the time.

**4. Do you think euroscepticism in the UK is a result of media discourse or do you think it has more to do with cultural and historical aspects?**

I believe both is true. The majority of the written media are very right-wing and very eurosceptic. In the public debate on Europe there is hardly any balance, it's much more difficult for the pro-European voice to get heard. Especially the tabloids spread a lot of nonsense about Europe. For instance, the Daily express had a front page story two years ago which said to Brussels wanted to merge France and the UK into one country. Absolute nonsense of course, which most sensible British people wouldn't believe anyway, but there are more subtle myths on Europe that a lot British people DO believe. The most famous one is that the European Union wants to make all banana's straight. You see that a lot of British media have hardly any knowledge of Europe. For instance, the Council of Europe or the European Court of Human Rights are many times portrayed as in situations of the European Union (which is not true). This is a result of misreporting in the media. At the same time euroscepticism here has a historic-cultural background.



This is after all an island nation that has lived most of its existence in “splendid isolation”. I already mentioned the Second World War, which has influenced thinking on Europe greatly.

**5. Newspapers are typically categorized as being either Eurosceptic or Europhile. Do you think the political orientation towards Europe is still an important factor in deciding to buy a certain British newspaper, or is this something that has become less important over the years?**

It's not a very important factor, because all newspaper, except The Guardian and The Independent, are eurosceptic in various degrees. One newspaper, The Daily Express, is actively campaigning to get the UK out of the EU, so they might attract a particular eurosceptic reader group. You do see a shift though in recent years. Tabloids like The Sun and The Daily Mail have become harsher in their views on Europe, but this reflects a shift in British opinion in general. Usually tabloids don't set the mood, but tend to follow an existing mood.

**6. Do you notice a lot of differences in the way European news is covered and presented in the British newspapers compared to the Dutch newspapers?**

Like I said, British newspapers are not very knowledgeable in European affairs. They tend to see Europe as far away as the United States (arguably, the USA is closer to British media than Europe). Even the quality newspapers have a knowledge deficit. They tend to have a lot of correspondents all over the world, but compared to some of the Dutch media (NOS, NRC, Volkskrant, Trouw) they have far fewer correspondents in the European capitals. The BBC for instance has one chief correspondent who covers all big European stories, from the crisis in Greece, Portugal and Spain to the political tussle in Brussels. The tabloids have hardly any foreign correspondents, except perhaps one in Brussels. That's why you tend to read of nonsense in those papers. The only exception is the Financial Times that has excellent European reporting. Together with the BBC, they are the only ones who have a correspondent in The Netherlands for example (all the other media cover The Netherlands from Brussels or London).

**7. Do you personally feel that the media in the UK offers an adequate representation of European issues to the public? Or do you feel like they are being too negative regarding European integration?**

See also my answer in 6. British media in general don't give a very balanced view of Europe and there is a lot of misreporting. Especially tabloids tend to write a headline before the actual event has happened. So no matter what the outcome is of a certain event (like negotiations on a new policy in Brussels) tabloids have decided beforehand to take a negative line. The quality newspapers are more balanced in that sense, but the problem with British newspapers in general is that they are so politically coloured and that influences their reporting heavily.

**8. How do you see the position of the UK in the European Union in the foreseeable future? Do you think there will be drastic changes or will the situation remain similar to how it is now?**

This is very hard to predict. My sense is that British are at heart very pragmatic. At the moment we see a negative campaign against Europe, but when push comes to shove and there will be a referendum on Europe, I believe you will get a whole new dynamic in the campaign in the run-up to a referendum. Don't forget that the leaders of the three main political parties want to stay within the EU. Also a large part of the business community is in favour of strong ties with Europe. On many big issues like energy and climate change everybody knows they can only have success in a European context. Those voices and arguments are not heard very much at the moment, but they will be when a referendum is on the way. At the moment a majority of British is in favour of leaving the EU (according to opinion polls), but I think in the end the vote will be much tighter. Again, it's hard to predict. External factors could change the whole debate. Suppose the crisis Spain or Italy will lead to the collapse of the euro, then we will have a whole new different ball game. A referendum would be at earliest date in 2017 or 2018, a lot can happen in the next few years.

## Interview 2

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Date: 23 May 2013

Duration: 1 hour.

Name: Mrs. Amanda Pimlott-Coady

Function: Media & Communication lecturer at The Hague University.

The Hague University, The Hague (Netherlands).

**Mireille: Could you tell me something about yourself? Where are you born?  
Something about your studies/work?**

Amanda: I am born in the UK and I am from Manchester. I have lived there for most of my life. I have studied English literature and French. I have lived in France. I have lived here in the Netherlands for the last 10 years. In terms of work, my working background I worked mainly in communication all my life, in most fields in marketing communication, public relations and internal communication. My main area of involvement has always been environmental management. We would advise our clients on how to improve their performances and solve their problems. I came here ten years ago for my husband's job and then very shortly after I started to work at The Hague University.

**M: Regarding the UK and the European Union, what is your opinion on the fact that Prime Minister Cameron has announced a potential referendum concerning the EU membership of the UK in 2017?**

A: Yeah, I think it is a very odd decision coming from him. I think the UK government is in a very, very difficult phase anyway. The coalition is not credible. They do not agree with one another all the time, they undermine each other's actions, and it is very odd to have a referendum on something that is not going to happen for another year or so.

**M: Yes in 2017**

A: Yeah, another 3 years.

**M: And even before that, there will be elections**

A: Exactly! It is a really pointless announcement and I am not really sure what the motivation was behind that. But I do not understand a lot of things that the government do actually. I find it a bizarre move; I just think why you would announce something like that while it might not even be his responsibility. He might not even be in power then. I think what you see in the UK is that nobody really has any faith in politicians anymore and you can see that by all the crazy figures that are now arriving in politics even though before they would never ever been given the time.

**M: Do you think it is a good thing that he wants to give the public a referendum, that he wants to give the public a choice to stay in the EU or not, or do you think it should not have been happening at all?**

A: I think it is not relevant, I think that if the people of the UK want to make that decision, they will make it at the elections at the polling stations. They will not wait for a referendum. So, I think it is an empty gesture really. I think he wants to be seen as giving people the option, but if people really want to take that option, they will show that in their votes. I do not think it is an important move, I think it is just a really silly thing. I think the British right from the start, I do not know if you did any content analysis on this, but the British have always been very apprehensive about Europe, even when it was the Common Market and not the European Union yet.

**M: Yes, the so called “anti-marketeers”**

A: Yeah and the first thing that they asked was if we get involved in this, how can we get back out? Even from the very first moment, they have been apprehensive and they have always had one leg out of the door. They have always been ready to run away. I think the UK might have too much of an island culture. Maybe they just feel

**M: Isolated?**

A: Yes, isolated and too scared to relinquish any powers. Now they are already trying to claw them back, they are trying to get back as much power as they can.

**M: I personally never expected him to make such an announcement**

A: I did not either; I do not think that many people did.

M: But right now, the discussion is more about what if there was one tomorrow. But, there is not going to be one tomorrow, it will be in 4 years.

A: It is stupid; I was reading in an article that it is almost as if he hopes that if that if he gives the people a referendum they might hold on and vote for him. Which is, of course, nonsense. If you feel that strongly about it you will choose for a party that will give you what you want.

**M: And that is someone else. That brings me to my next question, how do you feel about the rise of UKIP?**

A: Ehm, I think that the rise of UKIP is a sign of how bad of state the Conservative party and the rest of the British politics is in. I think the party itself, if you actually look at them and you look at their policies, they haven't got anything to offer. They are just a kind of protest

**M: Just a single point that they pursue. A bit like Wilders in the Netherlands, there are also similarities with their views on immigration.**

A: Yeah, they have a one trick pony. They have one idea and they realize that they are a significant number of people that feel quite strongly about this issue and they are just pushing everything on that and lots of their policies are kind of bland, poorly thought through ideas that do not mean anything. So, if they ever get into power that is a disaster.

**M: You cannot deny that they are factor right now. Especially after the regional elections that were held 2 weeks ago. It was really surprising how many votes they got.**

A: No, definitely they are a factor. I am sure the coalition is scared of them. Whether they are a serious contender, I do not know. I think what is more scary in politics is that a weak party will get in the government because they are stealing votes away, not necessarily that they will get in.

**M: Now I do not know a lot about the political system in Britain, but what I keep reading is that it will be really hard for them to actually get into power because of the structure. Which seems weird to me because they are really big right now, so you would think that there would be a chance for them?**

A: The problem is the more seats they gain, so the more little regions they take control of, the more seats they get in the House, so the more seats they get, the more trouble they can cause. But to actually get in power, that is hopefully impossible.

**M: So far any small party it would be really hard to get in power?**

A: Yes, for any small party it is really difficult to get in power yes. For a long time, there have not really been that many options. Mainly all you have is either the Tory or the Labour party. And now since a few years, the Liberal Democrats have become remotely credible, because before even they were not really important. They were just those small guys and then we had a short period where we had the Raving Loony Party, and every now and then you will get this odd group that will flare up and then you have obviously the Nationalist Party, you get some very extreme groups and everybody kind of hopes that they will never get in.

**M: I do not think that that would not be as likely**

A: But really there are only 2 and a half serious contenders.

**M: So UKIP is really popular right now, but it will not mean that much?**

A: It is not even really popular right now. The media is making it appear very popular, if you at the statistics they are doing okay for a small party, they are winning a scary

number of minority votes.

**M: What I have read a lot is that Britain is not even ready for a party such as UKIP, once the elections will be around the corner, they will be too scared to vote for them and they will just vote for the same party as they have always been voting for.**

A: That is often what happens, nobody will take a risk like that I don't think.

**M: How do you think that they became so popular? Do you think a lot has to do with their Europe statements?**

A: I do not really know if it is about Europe per se, I think it is linked to Europe, I think it is a lot about the financial crisis. And the people are very, very scared, especially in areas that are suffering a lot. Areas in the North and the Midlands and they are scared of immigration, losing more jobs, and so they vote out of protest for that.

**M: I have seen a lot about the link between immigration and euroscepticism. There seems to be a feeling that sounds a lot like "All these Europeans are coming to our country and taking away our jobs".**

A: Well they feel like entry into the EU takes away power of the border control, because we have to open our borders to Europe and that scares them. They think that they have to give rights to all these people that are flooding in and then we are only a small island and we'll sink. So I think mainly it is not really the case about Europe itself, but much more about immigration and control that people are worried about.

**M: Well now there is a bit of a movement between the Tory MP's moving away from the Party towards UKIP, so I think they are scared about what is happening right now.**

A: I think that the problems that the Conservative Party and the Labour Party have is the fact that modern Labour is more right-wing than it has ever been, and the Conservatives are more left wing than they ever used to be. So what you get is this kind of bland group, and there is no real distinction between these two parties anymore. There are some minor

points here and there. And I think for the people that have more extreme views, it worries them. So they may defect. But also, there are a few high profile UKIP politicians that have defected over to the Conservative Party. So it is two way traffic really.

**M: I head more about the Tory MP's moving to UKIP than the other way around**

A: Yes, well I believe that is partly what the media making you think.

**M: Maybe to us foreigners it seems like UKIP is really popular right now, but maybe that is also what the media tries to make of it.**

A: I think that is partly what the media is trying to create because when I go home, the people I come across, they talk about UKIP like "Oh what a joke". However, they say the same thing about the Tories and about Labour, so actually about politics generally. So I do not believe that they are popular. Not as popular as the media wants us to believe. Nobody sees them as the answer.

**M: But they do have an influence, otherwise Cameron would not be panicking as much?**

A: I think the public are desperate, and desperate people do weird things. So I think that makes politicians scared.

**M: You have been living in the Netherlands for quite a while now, do you notice a lot of differences in the way people view Europe in the Netherlands compared to the UK? Is it more negative?**

A: I do not know if it has actually changed a lot over the years. If you look at certain newspapers, The Telegraph for example is way more skeptical of Europe as some of the other papers. So they put much more emphasis on the negative. When I was younger, most of the stories about Europe were very negative stories. There were never any stories about the benefits that we would get from being part of the EU, it was always like "Oh Europe wants to take control over the shape of our bananas" . And now recently there have been huge headlines on the fact that Europe wants to ban



small glass bottles that they put olive oil in, because they have to be fully labelled. Now, that has been reported across the board and things like “Oh we have a financial crisis and small businesses are going broke all over the place”.

**M: So definitely more negative in the UK than in the Netherlands?**

A: I have not even seen the olive oil story covered here in the Netherlands. Maybe only a tiny article.

**M: No, I have never read about it in the newspapers**

A: No, and it is everywhere in the UK. It has been in every big newspaper in the UK. So yeah any opportunity that these newspapers have to show like, look at how controlling the EU is trying to be, they are taking away all of our freedom, those stories get in the media.

**M: So it is kind of logical really that people are becoming more negative, because it is the only thing that they read?**

A: Absolutely, but I think also what you notice is that until the financial crisis happened and whole companies started to collapse. There was hardly any news in the British media about European countries. We have more news about the United States. I could have told you more about what was going on in the US and what decisions were being made there, than what was happening in countries such as Greece or Spain. We did get quite regularly some pieces from France, because well that was also always quite negative. But, apart from that, Spain, Italy, Portugal, these countries... nothing. Unless there was some kind of scandal.

**M: So, a lot of disinterest too?**

A: Yes a lot of disinterest. That has become much more prominent now that there is a financial interest in what is going on in these countries. Now there has been a lot more reporting on these countries.

**M: So basically, if it affects the UK than everybody wants to know what is going on, but if it does not there is no interest at all?**

A: Yes. That is why there is always domestic stuff in the newspapers. The British media is harsh and they see Europe as one massive target, if there are stories about the EU in the media, it is always about how controlling they are, how they are taking all this money etc.

**M: Personally how do you see the EU? Do you see it as a positive thing?**

A: For the UK with this state of mind, no. Because they have chosen this line that they are not completely in and they are not completely out, they do not get any of the benefits and I think they need to make a decision. And at the moment, if they decided to pull out of Europe now, I think in the short term, it would be very bad for them, but in the long term it would probably not make that much of a difference. Because, yes maybe in the short term trade will suffer, but you can have relations as closely with the US as with Germany or France.

**M: So they should either just be all in or all out?**

A: Yes, I do not really think that the approach that they are taking now is good for anyone.

**M: Because I personally do not see them ever adopting the euro currency. It seems so far away for them.**

A: They are outside and that is the problem. If they choose to stay on the edge, they can easily choose to stay out

**M: Would it affect the other countries in the EU a lot if the UK withdraws?**

A: I think the UK would notice it in the short term with things like trade and stuff, they would maybe not be able to profit from some privileges, but the other countries I would not know why they would care if the UK was no longer part of the EU. We are not a big producer, not as Germany.

**M: So ultimately, there would be a chance that the UK would leave the EU?**

A: Yeah, I think there would be. If they do it on the basis of a referendum, I do not think the politicians would dare to, but if they did it on the basis of a referendum than there is a lot of people that only read the negative reports and do not read enough about the advantages, they just think that Europe is collapsing anyway.

**M: So for Cameron it would actually be a good move to point out the advantages?**

A: If he wants to stay in the EU, yes.

**M: He said he wants to stay in the EU. But I think he is being pushed towards a more negative approach if he wants to stay in power.**

A: Yes and the fact is that people are not taking these decisions rationally. They make these decisions based on the more emotional stories that they read in the media.

**M: It will be interesting to see what happens**

**M: So, about the media in general. Do you follow it closely the British media?**

A: Not all of it, I watch the BBC and I read The Telegraph and every now and then I read The Guardian. Oh and I watch some of these news debate programs. But yeah, I do not follow everything in the media because well it would drive me crazy haha.

**M: I can imagine. But do you think euroscepticism in the UK is a result of media discourse or does it have more to do with cultural and historical reasons?**

A: I think it is both. I think part of why the media discourse is the way it is, is because of the cultural and historical background. I do not think the media created that, I think the media plays to it.

**M: Right, because the Dutch NOS correspondent that I interviewed, he pointed out to me that in Britain they are still holding on to the feeling that after World War II, they were the glorious country and that Germany is the bad guy and the other European countries were irrelevant and that still in modern day society this is visible.**

A: I do not think they think they are irrelevant; more that they drag them down. I think they feel that countries that are not doing that well are dragging them down. But I also think they are not stupid, they have noticed that there are some far bigger powers out there.

**M: Right, because also after World War II they were very close with the USA obviously. Do you think they are still very close to the USA?**

A: Yes, I think the UK is closer to the USA than to Europe.

**M: The British press is famous for their reputation of being quite harsh and direct, especially when it comes to politics, do you feel like this has grown stronger in the last few years?**

A: I do not know if it has gotten worse, I think politicians have gotten worse and they have given them more ammunition now. No I do not think it has gotten worse, they have always been very harsh and very aggressive.

**M: Newspapers are typically categorized as being either Eurosceptic or Europhile. Do you think the political orientation towards Europe is still an important factor in deciding to buy a certain British newspaper, or is this something that has become less important over the years?**

A: It is definitely, my brother in law would not read The Telegraph, and when he does he hisses. If you have strong feelings one way or another, they you will mostly chose, there is a newspaper called The Observer, which a lot of more left wing people choose to read.

**M: I noticed that the right wing media is definitely very Eurosceptic. The Daily Mail and the Times.**

A: Yeah, the decision which newspaper someone will buy will definitely be influenced by which perspective it is written from. Definitely. Still nowadays

**M: Do you personally feel that the media in the UK offers an adequate representation of European issues to the public? Or do you feel like they are being too negative regarding European integration?**

A: No, not at all. Very negative and very selective.

**M: And do you feel like the written press has a lot of influence on people?**

A: I think it has an influence because it reinforces ideas and makes people feel more strongly about their beliefs than they might do otherwise. I think it fuels them

**M: And you think there are certain newspapers that are worse at this than others?**

A: Yes.

**M: A lot of the British people that I spoke named the Daily Mail as one of the worst**

A: Yes, the tabloid press they tend to be the worst. In the broadsheet press, in those newspapers they tend to be a bit more reasonable, I mean they are still biased, but they tend to be a little bit more, their arguments are just mainly better supported. The tabloids are just completely subjective and judgmental and shameless really in the way they report things.

**M: Yes that is what the British media is famous for. A lot of people do read it though?**

A: Yes, definitely. They have focused on scandal and sort of character assassination and gossip, but these days a lot of that surrounds politicians. So, you get more of the bad reporting and undermining the credibility of the EU officials and politicians and stuff. And they are generally just negative.

**M: And they have always been this way?**

A: Yeah, for as long as I can remember.

**M: Is it worse now with Cameron than it was with Brown?**

A: No, they just pick on different things. They hated Brown as well. For him, they made fun of him for being so boring and having no character, and now with Cameron it is more focused on his politics.

**M: So definitely in election year it will be big? These tabloids seem to be keen on UKIP**

A: I think these tabloids just see it as a story, so they report it and they follow the trend. They think: "Oh the people are so unsatisfied with the Tory government, or coalition government, that they would even vote for this party". So what you have to be careful about is that either, it shocks people that they are so successful and they think that they have to stop voting for them because otherwise they might even get in government, or it will give people more confidence to vote for a party like that because well if everyone else is doing it, why would I not do it?

**M: Among the people that I have interviewed, I have noticed that a lot of the younger people said that they did not notice a lot of euroscepticism among their friends or families, but the older people answered me by saying that they notice that a large group of people around them is Eurosceptic. Do you think it has something to do with age?**

A: Yes, I think it might possibly be a generation thing. I remember when I was in school, we did not even talk about being British, we talked about being English. So I definitely think there has been a shift over the last 10-20 years. Also, I have never heard anyone ever in the UK say that they are European. Even we have been in Indonesia or America or Africa, I have never heard anyone say that they are European, they are always British or even more likely they are English, Welsh, Scottish etc.

**M: So it is definitely still strong, the regional feelings?**

A: Yes. They would definitely not say they are from the UK.

**M: I did not know it was still that strong**

A: Yes, now whether younger people see that differently.. I am not sure. But I can imagine that they see Europe as something more positive, because they have grown up with it. It has always been there. Now the older people, they were right there at the beginning of it, when the debate was still about whether we should join the Common Market or not.

**M: So it would be older people voting for UKIP more or?**

A: No I am not sure about that, I do not think age is the most important factor here; maybe social status is more of a factor in deciding to vote for UKIP.

**M: Yes, I noticed while interviewing people that a lot of the people that studied at university are less Eurosceptic than the ones that are, so to say, working class**

A: Yes, I think that might have a lot more to do with it than age.

(Discussion continues on UK's immigration problems)

**M: Also, from the data I obtained, I noticed a lot of people classified the BBC as a neutral source of information regarding Europe?**

A: The BBC tries to be neutral, but they are also losing credibility at the moment.

(Discussion about a recent BBC scandal)

A: In their reporting the BBC always says that they are doing their best to stay neutral, whether this is the case I do not know. But they are less obviously biased than some of the print media. What you do see on the BBC is that if there is a really important issue, a lot of their programs will organize a debate with a selected audience and relevant members of both sides of the argument. So they do make an attempt to be neutral, but they the question is, who watches them? Those are probably already the people that do not have such extreme views about it. Who are just generally interested.

## Questionnaire

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This questionnaire was distributed among a group of 25 people from England, Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland. These people were selected in various age groups and of low, middle and high educational levels.



Gender:

Age:

Occupation:

Location/City:

### **United Kingdom & European Union**

1. In general, how do you feel about the UK's membership of the European Union?  
Do you see this as something positive or as something rather negative?
2. Do you feel like in the last couple of years the general public in the UK has become more negative towards EU membership?
3. Do you think the UK should become more involved in EU policies (examples: adopting the Euro currency, being part of the Schengen treaty)?
4. Between 1 and 10, how would you grade your confidence in the EU officials in Brussels?
5. What is in your opinion the reason Eurosceptic parties such as UKIP are becoming more popular in the UK?
6. Is a particular party's opinion on EU issues an important factor for you on deciding whom to vote for?
7. In your daily life, do you notice people are sceptic or critical towards the EU and its institutions?
8. What is your prediction for the future of the UK in the EU, do you think they will actually withdraw from EU membership?

### **The British media & the EU**

1. Which newspapers do you read (online or in print)?
2. Is there a particular reason that you read this newspaper?
3. Is the political orientation of a newspaper or magazine an important reason for you to read this particular newspaper?
4. Do you feel like the British media covers European news enough and in a correct way?
5. Do you notice the press is fairly more negative on EU issues than positive?
6. Do you feel like the British media is trying to influence you to create a more sceptic view towards the EU?