

Brussels - Aurélien Mähl

Are your clients interested in the Referendum and, if so, are they pro or anti Brexit?

None of our clients brought the issue to us directly, although it has arisen in discussions on some specific topics. Most people assume that the UK will not cut ties anyway, but there will be long-term uncertainties on the relationship with the EU for sure. It is clear that no one we work with sees Brexit as a positive development, as it brings complexity and more regulatory costs to enterprises.

What do the Belgian public think and has the Referendum featured prominently in the news?

The referendum is in the news but it looks like people don't realise the possible consequences for them. It probably reflects the fact that short-term consequences of a Brexit would be much more stringent in the UK itself than elsewhere in Europe. Also, as Britain has already opted out from EU policies whose impact is the most visible for the other Europeans (Schengen, the Euro), most consequences will be rather felt at corporate level.

In Belgium, there are no calls from politicians to organise such a referendum, which does not question its EU membership.



Brussels (2)

What do you think about Brexit?

As consultants representing the interests of companies and organisations to the EU institutions, we understand how burdensome the decision-making process can be in the EU. But we also see what the private sector gets from the Single Market: access to 500 million consumers, regulatory convergence, less red tape, more opportunities. Our feeling is that companies need simplicity and coherence, not fragmentation and barriers.

We as an office are a mini-Europe in ourselves, with people coming from all over the Continent, and we work very well together! EU rules make it much easier for PI to recruit the people we need, and for non-Belgians to live, work, access public services in Belgium in the same conditions while also contributing.

We don't really see what Britain would gain from leaving, and believe it's mostly a political move.



Madrid – Javier Fernández

Are your clients interested in the Referendum and, if so, are they pro or anti Brexit?

Most of our clients are multinational companies that have interests in different EU countries, including the UK. While they have carefully assessed the impact that the Referendum might have on their businesses, and are following closely all developments on this matter, this is not an issue that they channel through their Public Affairs teams in Madrid.

What do the Spanish public think and has the Referendum featured prominently in the news?

The Referendum has featured rather discretely in the news since other internal developments in Spain, such as the upcoming General Elections or the situation of Catalonia, have taken the spotlight. On the other hand, the economic and specialized press have followed the issue more closely. According to polls, 74% of Spanish citizens are aware of the Referendum, and predominantly believe that Brexit would be bad for the EU Economy (76%), the Spanish Economy (69%) and the British Economy (53%).



Madrid (2)

What do you think about Brexit?

The economic and political impact of Brexit for Spanish companies would be considerable, but nothing compared to the personal impact on the more than 700,000 British citizens that currently live in Spain and the 150,000 Spanish citizens that live in the UK. At Political Intelligence Madrid we pride ourselves of our British origin and although perfectly possible, it is hard for us to imagine a UK-less European Union.



Paris – Maelle Lelardic

“No, we don’t want to lose our best frenemy”

Paris – London, London – Paris, sister cities and best enemies. Would this referendum be an opportunity to get rid of an eternal rival? The frogs and the ‘rosbifs’ are like a couple, and all couple have their ups and downs. So, please don’t go! We, the French, will always have a love/hate relationship with the British and 62% want you to stay. Because, unity matters to all of us, and even more in these difficult times. Great Britain does have a strong voice in Europe and is a major economic partner for France. And a Brexit may have a cooling effect on French investment in the UK. But unity is not only about economic and financial figures, it also about a social project. Many British enjoy a peaceful retirement in the south of France and London is said to be France’s sixth biggest city. Europe has so much to offer to all its people. It is when we work together that we can make a difference by shaping the European project the way we want and need it. Be part of it, BRemain!

Germany – Miller & Meier – Patrick Spengler

“Please don’t go! – Bitte geht nicht!” The bilingual title of the current issue of Germany’s news magazine Der Spiegel echoes a widespread sentiment among the German population. According to a recent survey, 79% of Germans want Great Britain to remain in the EU. There are a number of reasons. First and foremost, Germany would lose a close ally who shares their penchant for budgetary discipline. Germany would have to assume an unwanted role of a European hegemon and, thus, exacerbate existing divisions in the union. Furthermore, the economic ties between Berlin and London are on the line. A prime example is the envisaged merger between the London Stock Exchange and Deutsche Börse. For a long time it seemed that this project would put both countries at eye with the big players of the financial industry. However, Brexit might well turn these dreams into dust.



Ireland – DHR– Sebastian Enke

As polls continue to suggest that the result is on a knife-edge, nerves about Brexit are beginning to jangle in Irish official circles.

Ireland's relationship with the UK is closer than that with any other member of the European Union – not just economically but also geographically, Ireland being the only European country to share a land border as well as a common travel area with the UK. The worst-case scenario is that Ireland might end up having a 'hard' border on the island again, with travel across it restricted.

In economic terms, an estimated €1 billion in trade each week could be curtailed. The UK is also the first port of call for most Irish exporters and a home for some of Ireland's biggest publicly quoted companies. Brexit would be very bad news for Ireland.

Interestingly, while the polls are too close to call, the bookies' odds are for Britain to remain... we'll have to wait and see who'll be the winners and losers come the early hours of Friday morning.