

## How Euro Are You?

*Are you an enthusiast, a reformer, a renegotiator or a refusenik? How Euro Are You may well help you decide.*

The BBC2 programme 'How Euro Are You?' sought to explore the issue of Britain's relationship with the European Union in a light-entertainment format - a mixture of quiz show, panel discussion and comedy. The show was presented by former BBC political editor Andrew Marr and Irish stand-up comedian Dora O'Briain and was aired live on 3 October 2005.

At the programme's hub was an interactive quiz, devised by the production company responsible for the popular 'Test the Nation' format, in conjunction with the polling organisation ICM. There were thirty-seven questions in total, delivered in sections and interspersed with comment from the panel of invited celebrity guests, discussion with members of the studio audience and short pre-recorded sequences from commentators, journalists and politicians. Viewers were able to participate by phone, text, message, or by answering questions on the programme website. Unlike 'Test the Nation', however, the audience were unable to participate using the digital interactive facility accessed through their television remote controls.

At the outset Andrew Marr proudly announced the programme to be 'a politician free zone', because 'you hear politicians banging on about this all the time'. Rather absurdly, this pronouncement was followed directly by a video clip of French politician Elizabeth Gigou, urging the British public to 'make your decision and make it in favour of Europe' – Marr's 'zone' clearly only extending as far as the English Channel

Approximately 1.2m viewers tuned in (the lowest audience share of the five terrestrial channels that evening) and, according to the presenters, over 100,000 people took part in the interactive test.

### **The Categorisations**

The intention of the programme was to eventually divide participants into one of following four categories (the definitions here are those provided by programme itself)

Mr and Mrs Chiantishire. This group are euro enthusiasts. They like all things European from going on holiday to sun-dried tomatoes and good red wine. They want to move forward with the European project, further integration, adopt the euro and stand by the EU rather than NATO.

Mr and Ms Dover Straits This group feel European but want things to stay as they are. They do not want any more countries to join. As far as they are concerned the European ideal has gone far enough, but no further. They enjoy being part of the EU, but think that Britain doesn't need the euro or more directives from Brussels.

Mr and Ms Costa Del Sol. This group are the eurosceptics. They want Europe for trading purposes and holidays but that's it. They don't like or approve of the European institutions, or the regulations they think have been imposed on this country by the EU. No European Army, no euro, Britain should stand alone or with NATO.

Mr and Mrs Little Islanders. This group are the europhobes. They want Britain to pull out of Europe. They think that it is a waste of money and that we are better off on our own. They feel that Europe is wasteful and corrupt, and that everything British is best. They say keep the pound and save our jobs from other Europeans.

The categorisations used in the 'How Euro Are You?' programme mirrored the terms used in market research, opinion polling, and focus groups – phrases used to represent a certain political perspective or social outlook. This has been a key component of election campaigns over the past decade, with epithets such as 'Essex Man', 'Mondeo Man' and 'Worcester Woman' being some of the more recognisable examples.

But in these instances, data from polling and focus groups identified new social clusters - in particular, swing-voters who were perceived to hold the balance of power. In the case of the BBC/ICM groupings used in the programme, it would seem to be entirely the reverse: the categories were based on old prejudices and pre-existing stereotypes.

This was the European argument painted in the broadest strokes. Although a good proportion of the test concentrated on cultural and societal considerations, there were actually only two references to culture in the four category descriptions. The 'Mr and Mrs Chiantishire' grouping referred to their 'love of all things European' from 'going on holiday' (presumably to Europe, but the description wasn't specific) 'to sun-dried tomatoes and good red-wine'. The Costa del Sol category also wanted Europe for 'holidays'. There was no indication of how cultural considerations might figure in the 'Dover Straits' and 'Little Islanders' categories – unless one supposes that, the phrase 'everything British is best' referred to the 'Little Islanders' choosing to reject European art, music, food, and film, and enjoying holidays in one of the three remaining Butlin's camps.

Of course, the notion that a person's political viewpoint on the European Union may be the biggest single influence the foods they enjoy, or the holidays they choose, is patently absurd. It could also be contested that very few people would be so firm in their ideologically opposition to the European political project as to refuse to purchase, absorb or experience any cultural product from continental Europe.

But before the categories were announced, and before a single question was asked, presenter Andrew Marr appeared certain about where British taste now lay:

Surrounding me in the heart of London are some of the finest wines that Europe produces, and we drink that stuff by the gallon, we love it. We love their food. We buy houses in their countries. Last year, an astonishing fifty million visits were made by Britons to the continent of Europe. 350,000 of us work there all the time.

It could be argued that, from the outset, the viewing audience were being fed information which would – perhaps even subliminally – push them towards the ‘Chiantishire’ category.

As the presenters pointed out on a number of occasions, the test was wholly unscientific. But even with a self-selecting sample, a range of interesting statistical information might have been gleaned had those devising the test been more open-minded about the possible outcomes. Although the categorisations may have been derived from earlier focus group research undertaken by ICM, they could hardly be considered new, fresh or exciting; they were simply variations on long-established and rather hackneyed ideas of the types of people who might be for or against the EU.

If the answers had been assessed in a more sophisticated way, the ‘How Euro Are You?’ test may have challenged existing archetypes and established new ones in their place, to rival even ‘Essex Man’ and ‘Worcester Woman’. The terminology mimicked that of focus groups and market research, but the actual methodology was exactly the reverse: the test attempted to squeeze participants into clichéd categories, rather than use the data to identify and examine new trends.

### **‘How Euro Are You?’ Test – Part One, General Knowledge**

*‘We want to see how many hard facts about the EU have soaked in over the last thirty years.’*

In the first section of the test, participants were asked twelve general knowledge questions concerning the European Union, and invited to select the correct answer from one of three options. These questions covered a range of subjects: EU geography and the member states, enlargement, the Commission, the EU’s flag, anthem and motto, the single currency, and the Constitution. But Andrew Marr’s introduction was misleading. The general knowledge questions were not part of the interactive test, and viewers were instructed simply to keep track of their scores using a pen and paper. In reality, therefore, the presenters and producers were unable to gauge ‘how many hard facts’ its audience had absorbed.

Of course, an individual’s knowledge of the European Union, its geography and institutions is no indicator of their political beliefs. It was therefore appropriate to separate the factual

questions from those designed to categorise the audience based on their views and opinions. But the preclusion of the first twelve questions from the interactive test meant there was no way of establishing a base-line level of audience awareness. This was a missed opportunity: the scores achieved by those taking part could have provided a valuable insight into levels of awareness of the key EU policy areas included in the test.

In addition, the results of the general knowledge quiz could have been used to investigate the entrenched assumption that scepticism towards the EU stems from an ignorance or misunderstanding of the project's aims and purposes. This is an argument recurrently made by Europhiles. Editor of the Independent, Simon Kelner speaking on BBC Radio 4's Today programme in June 2004 said,

People haven't been persuaded of the virtues of Europe, because they haven't been told about them. And one of the most interesting things about the YouGov poll at the weekend that the ignorance of people who were polled.

Of course, this hypothesis ignores the point that individuals may become more sceptical of the EU, as they become more conversant with its processes and objectives. But the association is nonetheless commonplace: that anti-EU feeling and ignorance are linked. This was underscored by presenter Dara O'Briain at the end of the general knowledge section. He noted that one member of the studio audience had managed to score zero on the test, and declared,

You'd have to wilfully hate Europe and everything that's going on to actually get it wrong.

This was a light-hearted comment, but served to reinforce the notion that those opposed to the EU are either ignorant of, or completely uninterested in, EU issues. Of course, the 'zero' score may just have easily come from a pro-EU audience member, and the results among the invited panel confirmed this, with pro-withdrawal journalist Peter Hitchens and pro-EU former Downing Street advisor Sir Stephen Wall both scoring very highly.

### **'How Euro Are You?' Test – Part Two, Categorisation**

The second part of the test involved a series of questions designed to place the audience into one of the four categories outlined previously. Participants were asked to decide which of the four responses best matched their own viewpoint. Questions were split into four sections: seven on 'Euro People', nine on 'Euro Politics', four on 'Euro Leisure' and five on 'Euro Work'

Question 1: Which of the following do you feel are Britain's best friends in Europe?

- a) The Italians
- b) The Poles
- c) The Greeks

d) The Danes

The opening question was bizarre and arbitrary. In order for the test to have any validity, it must be presumed that each of the four possible responses related to one of the four categories set out in the programme's introduction: Chiantishire, Dover Straits, Costa Del Sol and Little Islanders. But however intensely this question is studied, it is almost impossible to see how a correlation could be made. Is it more pro-European to believe that the Danes are our best friends in Europe? Or are you in favour of British withdrawal if you believe the Italians are our closest allies?

Question 2: How do you sum up your attitude to Germany?

- a) Best beer in the world
- b) Vorsprung Durch Technik
- c) Beach towels on the sun beds
- d) Two World Wars and one World Cup

The second set of possible responses employed a set of national stereotypes bordering on xenophobia. Presumably option d) would score a point for the 'Little Islander' category, and option c) would match most closely the views of the 'Costa Del Sol' grouping. But the other choices were oblique. Would admiring Germany for its beer exports score a point for the 'Chiantishire' group, or for 'Dover Straits'? And did each participant have the prerequisite brand awareness or language skills to understand that advertising slogan 'Vorsprung durch Technik' is the German phrase for 'progress through technology'?

Question 3: Do you perceive Europe to be . . .

- a) multi-faith
- b) mainly Christian
- c) mainly Muslim
- d) mainly atheistic

The third question was baffling, with the first response overlapping the other three. Certainly, Europe could be a 'multi-faith' society, but simultaneously 'mainly Christian', 'mainly Muslim', or 'mainly atheistic'. For example, in the 2001 UK Census, there were 42 million Christians, 13 million who stated no religion, and 1.6 million Muslims, (together with significant numbers of Buddhists, Hindus, Jews and Sikhs). As such, one might say that Britain is a multi-faith society, but also that it is mainly Christian. In a test such as this, questions must be mutually exclusive.

Furthermore, the question, although framed in terms of audience 'perception', was actually a question with a correct answer, based on a statistical certainty (even though more than one of the multiple choice answers may have been correct). Were those, for example, who believed the EU to be 'mainly Muslim' placed into the 'Little Islanders' on account of their ignorance?

With the BBC providing no clear methodology, there is no way of ascertaining how each option related to the overall scores.

Question 4: When watching news stories about the EU, would you say you are . . .

- a) very interested
- b) quite interested
- c) not really interested
- d) tend to switch off when the EU is mentioned

The fourth question attempted to discern how engaged participants were with media coverage of EU politics. This was, in itself an interesting question: one of the four main findings of the Wilson Report into the BBC's EU coverage was that, 'BBC reporting has failed to increase public understanding of EU issues and institutions and their impact on British life, thereby contributing to public apathy.' While the fourth question was certainly a valuable line of inquiry, problems emerged when audience engagement with EU news stories becomes a factor in the categorisation of their viewpoints on the EU.

The inference would appear to be that participants strongly in favour of the European Union would respond that they are 'very interested' in EU news stories, while those with most antipathy would 'tend to switch off when the EU is mentioned'. But, if this question was part of the formula used place the audience into the four 'Eurometer' categories, it rested on a precarious assumption. As Peter Hitchens demonstrated in the general knowledge section, it does not necessarily follow that those with the most antipathy to the EU would also find it least interesting.

Question 5: Thinking about former Communist countries like Poland and the Czech Republic, are they now . . .

- a) part of Europe
- b) linked to Europe but not part of it
- c) not really part of Europe
- d) separate to Europe

This question was more suited to the general knowledge round. It certainly had an unequivocal answer: both Poland and the Czech Republic joined the EU during the last round of enlargement in May 2004. Of course, in a test concentrating on feelings and perceptions, the question may have been attempting to address something deeper – whether these new member states could be considered 'European' in terms of culture, national identity and outlook. But the question failed to make this explicit, and as such participants could only consider it a factual inquiry. The third possible response - that the two countries were 'not really part of Europe' – was an incongruent option, offering a needless bridge between the

second and fourth choices, and probably included only to ensure that each question had four possible responses.

Because the question was based on a factual certainty, it is unclear how it correlated to the four groupings. Neither the BBC nor ICM have offered details of the precise methodology employed, but question five presents a grave concern: that any eurosceptic who provided the correct answer may have been deemed to have given a pro-EU response. If this was the case, the validity of the whole test is brought into question.

Question 6: Which of the following best describes your position. Finish this sentence. We are all Europeans . . .

- a) there are no differences between us
- b) but some differences remain between us
- c) but there are significant differences between us
- d) but we have little, if anything in common with each other.

A vague question on cultural difference and national identity, with the options presumably arranged the same order as the four category groupings, the most pro-European response being 'there are no differences between us' and the most Eurosceptic being, 'we have little, if anything in common with each other'. This presents the debate in crude and simplistic terms – reinforcing a link between anti-EU sentiment and a mistrust of other cultures. While some strands of anti-EU philosophy do stem from such a viewpoint, it does not necessarily follow – as the question implies – that the more differences one perceives between the various European cultures, the more sceptical a person will be towards the EU political project.

Question 7: Which of these European do you think dislike the British most?

- a) French
- b) Portuguese
- c) Spanish
- d) Irish

This was a reversal of the opening question, with participants instructed to choose the European nation with the most antipathy towards the British, as opposed to selecting 'our best friends'. Once again, it is difficult to see precisely how the possible responses correlated to the four groupings. It is likely that most would have chosen the French, with ongoing political frictions between the two nations over issues including farm subsidies, the British budget rebate, the war Iraq, and Jacques Chirac's criticism of British cuisine at the G8 summit in June 2005. Conversely, it is difficult to name any significant disagreement between Britain and the Portuguese, and one wonders how many chose this rather peculiar option.

Question 8: What can the countries of Europe teach us in Britain about democracy?

- a) A lot
- b) Quite a lot
- c) Not very much
- d) Nothing at all

This was the first question in the 'Euro Politics' round. Once again, the possible answers appeared to be arranged from the most pro-European to the most sceptical response. The question was so vague as to be meaningless – the EU comprises twenty-four member states each with their own distinct democratic frameworks. To answer this question accurately, participants would be required a working knowledge of all twenty-four systems of government, and indeed British, and with the clock ticking, it was virtually impossible for participants to give this question any sort of accurate consideration. Were all respondents even aware of all the countries making up the European Union post accession?

A much more pertinent line of inquiry would have been to assess the audience's viewpoint on the EU itself, and ask them to consider how democratic its institutions are. This was an area discussed by the panel later in the programme, but it would have been useful to also gauge the opinions of those being surveyed. As it stood, question eight could elicit no more than an unconsidered gut response.

Question 9: The intentions of people in mainland Europe towards Britain . . .

- a) can never be trusted
- b) can be trusted sometimes but not often
- c) can be trusted most of the time
- d) can always or almost always be trusted

It is difficult to see how the intentions all those living in mainland Europe could accurately be determined. Presumably the first option, that their intentions 'can never be trusted' correlated to the 'Little Islanders' category and the fourth option corresponded to the 'Chiantishire' grouping. But there was a significant difference: the first choice was an absolute (*never*) whereas the fourth option was more flexible (*always or almost always*). Even the most hardened eurosceptic may have found it difficult to concur that the intentions of *every single person* in mainland Europe could *never be trusted*. If the question had concerned the intentions of EU politicians and policymakers it might have been less vague – after all most judgements relating to specific countries are based on the actions of their governments than the populace itself.

Question 10: Going forward, the EU is heading in:

- a) exactly the right direction
- b) generally the right direction



- c) generally the wrong direction
- d) completely the wrong direction

This was one of the few straightforward questions in the whole test. The four possible options correlated to the 'Chiantishire', 'Dover Straits', 'Costa Del Sol' and 'Little Islander' categories, and the premise was simple and clear – a question on the EU's political direction which was not clouded by non-political considerations.

Question 11: Thinking about possible wars in Europe – do you think that the existence of the EU and its political institutions make war in Europe . . .

- a) a lot less likely
- b) a little less likely
- c) a little more likely
- d) a lot more likely

Underlying this question was the familiar pro-EU contention that membership has delivered peace and security across the continent since the Second World War. Of course, there are other considerations to take into account: primarily membership of NATO, but also social and cultural changes, which have contributed to making a war between EU member states unlikely. As such, the question was weighted towards the first two responses, few would argue that the existence of the European Union makes it more likely that member states would take up arms against each other. It may have been appropriate to have given a possibility such as 'it makes no difference' or 'other factors have contributed to peace in Europe' As it stood, the responses did not match the four possible categorisation on the 'Eurometer' in an equal and balanced way.

Question 12: At present, the EU is . . .

- a) almost completely run to the tune of the French and Germans
- b) mainly run to the tune of the French and Germans
- c) a more equal partnership between member states
- d) the French and Germans have less say in the way the EU is run than other countries

The twelfth question was fairly straightforward, and the responses offered correlated broadly to the four groupings. However, it would, of course, be possible to see the European Union as 'a more equal partnership between member states', but still support British withdrawal, or feel that the EU is 'run to the tune of the French and Germans', but be content with this and support further integration. The question highlighted the limitations of attempting to distil the myriad of viewpoints and opinions concerning the European Union into four catch-all groupings.

Question 13: How long do you think it will be before there is one European defence force?

- a) Within 5 years
- b) Within 10 years
- c) Longer than 10 years but there will be one
- d) Never

This was a question asking participants simply to predict the pace of the change, and therefore the responses could provide no accurate measure of a person's overall attitude towards the EU. As Peter Hitchens pointed out later on in the programme, 'It's already happening. There are already units which carry the EU stars on their shoulder flashes.' For those participants aware of this development, the question would have been bewildering. In order to assess opinion, the question ought to have been something such as, 'Do you support the idea of a European Defence force', although, of course, trying to devise four possible responses to what would essentially be a closed 'yes/no' question may have proved difficult.

Question 14: Looking ahead, we should . . .

- a) integrate fully with other EU countries
- b) not integrate further but stay as we are
- c) have a trade agreement with other EU countries but that's it
- d) leave the EU

This question was perhaps the most straightforward of all, as it corresponded most directly to the four categories into which participants would ultimately be placed. This raises an interesting issue: how far did the results for question fourteen correlate to the overall numbers placed into the four groupings? If the proportions of 'Chiantishire', 'Dover Straits', 'Costa del Sol' and 'Little Islanders) were close to the percentages returned for question fourteen, then the groupings would be an accurate reflection of the participants' views. But, conversely, if there were significant discrepancies, this would demonstrate how far the respondent's views to this fundamental question had been shifted by the other questions, many of which were confusing and oblique. Unfortunately this information has not been provided by either the BBC or ICM.

Question 15: If there to be another conflict and the EU and NATO disagree about how to deal with it, do you think Britain should . . .

- a) stand with the EU
- b) stand with NATO
- c) stand alone
- d) stay out of it

The intention here was presumably to test whether test participants felt more allegiance to The United States or to the European Union. But the question was potentially confusing, as many EU countries also belong to NATO. The campaign against Iraq in 2003 was conducted by a coalition, including some NATO member countries and others from outside NATO.

France and Germany were perhaps the most vocal opponents, but a number of other EU member states including Britain, Spain, Italy, Denmark and the Netherlands were part of the US-led coalition. As such, there was no neat divide between the EU and NATO during this conflict, and this question could have been worded more clearly.

Once again, the possible responses did not correlate neatly to the four categories into which participants were ultimately placed. Pacifists or opponents of the Iraq war may have chosen the fourth option - but this would be no indicator of their general attitude towards the European Union. Furthermore, the possible responses were not necessarily mutually exclusive: presumably if NATO and the EU were at odds, one of them would be supporting a conflict and one of them would be in opposition to it, thus making the fourth response 'to stay out of it' tautological.

Question 16: In your mind, Britain is . . .

- a) separate from Europe
- b) somewhat detached from Europe
- c) attached to Europe but not firmly
- d) part of the European Union

The sixteenth question was confusing and vague. It attempted to address perception using the phrase 'in your mind' – but it also contained a correct answer, that Britain is 'part of the European Union'. It was only upon reading the fourth option that participants might have realised this was a question about politics rather than geography or culture. If sections of the audience approached this as a purely factual inquiry, many sceptics may have chosen the fourth option – presumably the most Europhile response.

Question 17: On holiday in Europe, which would you prefer?

- a) I would be most happy on holiday with other Brits
- b) I like to mix but mainly prefer to be around other Brits
- c) I would like a mix but would prefer to be with other Europeans and not Brits
- d) I would prefer to avoid other Brits

This question was the first in the 'Euro Leisure' round, and it attempted to discern how comfortable participants felt with citizens from other member states when holidaying abroad. But there were too many variables involved to allow the four responses to correlate neatly to the four eventual groupings, other than relying upon the heaviest of stereotypes. The inference here was that the pro-European 'Chiantishire' group would 'avoid other Brits' and the 'Little Islanders' would be most happy surrounded by their countrymen. But this is crude and unsophisticated, and much would depend on a host of external factors, including an individual's foreign language skills, the type of holiday they enjoy, and their familiarity with and interest in other cultures.

Question 18: When watching a foreign film . . .

- a) I prefer it in its original form – no subtitles
- b) I prefer it with subtitles
- c) I prefer it dubbed into English
- d) I would never watch a foreign film

This was a wholly cultural question with no bearing at all on a participant's attitude towards the EU as a political enterprise. The first of the four responses relied upon the respondent having reached a high level fluency in an additional language (assuming they wished to understand the dialogue and plot) and the remaining three options were simple matters of personal taste.

The question held a number of ambiguities. It did not specify that the 'foreign' film mentioned would be in a European language (some participants may enjoy viewing a martial arts movie in Japanese, or watching a 'Bollywood' blockbuster in Hindi). But even if participants saw the question in context and assumed that the hypothetical foreign film was one in a European language, it is highly questionable that any participant in the 'How Euro Are You?' test would be fully conversant in all twenty official languages of the European Union. As such, the question remained open to interpretation and required a degree of additional supposition by the audience – should they take it to mean that they preferred watching *European* films *in one of the languages I can speak and understand?*

Question 19: The UK's biggest cultural contribution to Europe has been our . . .

- a) Sport
- b) Literature
- c) Music
- d) Art

Question nineteen appeared to have no direct relevance to any of the four groupings, and it is difficult to see why an enquiry as arbitrary as this was included in the test. The question was expansive and to give a considered view, participants would also require an additional level of understanding: namely an appreciation of how each of these British cultural products had influenced continental Europe. Arguably, this is something which could only be acquired through an understanding of the cultures of each member state.

Question 20: The European lifestyle is best summed up as . . .

- a) Opera and art galleries
- b) Sport and music
- c) Fashion and film
- d) Kebabs and the Crazy Frog

Question twenty was perhaps the most confusing of all. The incongruity of the fourth option elicited laughter from the studio audience, but actually made very little sense. The Crazy Frog – a mobile telephone ringtone, and subsequently a chart-topping single – was produced by a Swedish company and taken to number one by a German pop group. But kebabs, of course, are most closely associated with Middle Eastern, Indian or Turkish cuisine. As such, the audience were likely to be confused as to quite how these two symbols could be seen to represent ‘the European lifestyle’.

An alternative reading of this question might recognise these cultural products as symbols of contemporary British society, especially popular among the lower classes. The kebab and Crazy Frog are two potent emblems linked to anti-social behaviour: binge drinking and inconsiderate mobile phone use. If this interpretation is correct, then option four suggests that for a proportion of the public, British culture *is* European culture - in the sense that it takes precedence over the very concept of a ‘European lifestyle.’ This, in itself, is a dangerous assumption, but in the context of the ‘How Euro Are You?’ test it becomes especially damaging. If, as it would appear, option four correlates to the ‘Little Islander’ category, it establishes an explicit between the withdrawal argument and the most boorish, disagreeable elements of contemporary British society. The implication is clear: the ‘Little Islander’ mentality rejects the sophistication and elegance of European art, music, fashion, and film, in favour of cheap, disposable, vulgar, British commodities.

Question 21: If you’re looking for a new job, would you . . .

- a) actively look for a job in Europe
- b) consider a job in Europe positively
- c) think about working in Europe but would not be that keen
- d) definitely rule out working elsewhere in Europe

This was the first question in the ‘Euro Work’ round. The available responses appeared to be arranged so as to match the four category groupings, from pro-European to pro-withdrawal. However, there are too many external factors that might influence the selection in a question such as this. Even the most pro-European audience members might rule out working elsewhere on the continent for any number of reasons – family obligations, the expense of relocation, the lack of work in a specific sector, mortgage commitments, the language barrier, or simply a preference for remaining in Britain. Similarly, a eurosceptic participant, while opposed to the direction of the European project generally, may actively consider working in another European country because no such obstacles apply. As such the question appeared to rest upon the same stereotypes as the groupings themselves: from the cosmopolitan ‘Chiantishires’ to the isolationist ‘Little Islanders’

Question 22: On the euro, do you think we should . . .

- a) adopt it in place of the Pound as soon as possible
- b) keep our options open and probably adopt the Euro at some point
- c) keep our options open but probably not adopt the Euro for the foreseeable future
- d) decide to keep the Pound and rule out the Euro completely

This was a straightforward question, and one of the few which corresponded directly to the classification system employed by the test.

Question 23: Newly emerging economies such as India and China make it important that we . . .

- a) make ourselves completely independent of the EU
- b) distance ourselves a little from the EU
- c) look to integrate more with the EU
- d) integrate completely with the EU

This was a precise and direct question, with the responses appearing to match the four categories from 'Little Islander' to 'Chiantishire'. But the issue itself is a complex one, and depends on both an understanding of world trade in an era of globalisation, and an awareness of the possible alternatives to British membership of the EU, such as Britain negotiating its own free trade agreements with other nations, or joining other trade associations such as NAFTA.

Question 24: If you were to visit another country in Europe for an extended stay do you think you would . . .

- a) make sure you could speak the language
- b) learn enough of the new language to get by
- c) give the language a try but probably give up
- d) hope to get by in English

The penultimate question again pandered to stereotypes. Presumably 'making sure you could speak the language' related to the 'Chiantishire' category, while 'hoping to get by in English' would mark a participant as 'Little Islander'. The question itself was imprecise, relying heavily on the participants' interpretation as opposed to clear instruction.

The key variable here is that the response very much depended on which EU state the audience members had in mind. The percentage of people speaking English varies greatly across the EU member states. For example if a participant in the test imagined a visit to Denmark, the Netherlands or Sweden, around three-quarters of the population are able to converse in English, and perhaps language skills would not be so important. But if they envisaged a trip to Bulgaria, Hungary or Slovakia, learning at least some of the language might be more necessary, as only 14% of these nations' population possessing English language skills.

This question oversimplified a complex issue. The avocation of cultural integration through language and cultural exchange is clearly very different to the avocation of cultural integration through politics and economics. But by including this question, those who devised the test essentially politicised an essentially cultural concern. It would appear that those reluctant to learn a language were positioned as eurosceptic in the test -

Question 25: Being part of Europe makes . . .

- a) it easier to work across the EU
- b) me think about working elsewhere
- c) no difference to job opportunities
- d) it easier for Europeans to take our jobs

The main problem with the final question was that the responses were not mutually exclusive. For example, the first and fourth options could be viewed as being the same thing – one might suggest that being part of Europe makes it easier to work across the EU *and* it easier for other Europeans to take jobs in Britain. Furthermore, the second option overlapped significantly with the first – many respondents who felt that being part of Europe ‘makes it easier to work across the EU’ might also consider taking a job abroad.

The table below lists the twenty-five questions from the second part of the test, and provides an assessment of each, based upon the more detailed criticism presented above.

		Straightforward questions relating unambiguously to the four categories	Vague, confusing or responses not mutually exclusive	Did not relate clearly to the four specified categories	Did not relate specifically to the EU, its member states or its institutions
Q1	Which of the following do you feel are Britain's best friends in Europe?			<b>X</b>	
Q2	How do you sum up your attitude to Germany?		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Q3	Do you perceive Europe to be . . .(religion)		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Q4	When watching news stories about the EU, would you say you are . . .			<b>X</b>	
Q5	Thinking about former Communist countries like Poland and the Czech Republic, are they now . . .			<b>X</b>	
Q6	Which of the following best describes your position. Finish this sentence. We are all Europeans . . .		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Q7	Which of these European do you think dislike the British most?			<b>X</b>	
Q8	What can the countries of Europe teach us in Britain about democracy?		<b>X</b>		
Q9	The intentions of people in mainland Europe towards Britain . . .		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Q10	Going forward, the EU is heading in (direction)	<b>X</b>			
Q11	Do you think that the existence of the EU and its political institutions make war in Europe . . .			<b>X</b>	
Q12	At present, the EU is . . .(run by French and Germans)	<b>X</b>			
Q13	How long do you think it will be before there is one European defence force?			<b>X</b>	
Q14	Looking ahead, we should . . . (integration)	<b>X</b>			
Q15	If there to be another conflict and the EU and NATO disagree about how to deal with it, do you think Britain should . . .			<b>X</b>	
Q16	In your mind, Britain is . . .(part of/separate from Europe)		<b>X</b>		
Q17	On holiday in Europe, which would you prefer?			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Q18	When watching a foreign film . . .(subtitles)			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Q19	The UK's biggest cultural contribution to Europe has been our . . . (sport, literature, music, art)		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Q20	The European lifestyle is best summed up as . . .		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Q21	If you're looking for a new job, would you . . .(seek work in Europe)			<b>X</b>	
Q22	On the euro, do you think we should . . .	<b>X</b>			
Q23	Newly emerging economies such as India and China make it important that we .	<b>X</b>			
Q24	If you were to visit another country in Europe for an extended stay do you think you would . . .(learn language)		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Q25	Being part of Europe makes . . . work and employment		<b>X</b>		



The table shows that only five of the twenty-five questions related clearly and unambiguously to the categories into which participants were eventually placed. For the most part, the questions were vague, ambiguous, or did not relate specifically to the European Union or its political institutions.

### **Methodology and the ICM and BBC Websites**

Material on the polling company ICM's website revealed that only eighteen of the twenty-five questions had been used to identify the 'clusters' used in the TV programme, but only identified two questions that were excluded.

An introductory paragraph explained that the 'How Euro are You?' interactive test was based on earlier focus group research conducted nationally in June and July 2005. It was difficult to tell from this passage whether the data related to the focus group survey, the TV and internet tests, or a mixture of the two.

#### **TALENT TV - HOW EURO ARE YOU? OCTOBER 2005**

The questions and answer options used in the test were designed by ICM and Talent TV and are based on focus group research on European attitudes conducted by ICM in June and July 2005. The test questions are those that were used by ICM to conduct 1,002 nationally representative interviews with adults across Britain between 5th and 8th August 2005. Respondents to the internet version of the survey, as well as those in the studio were given 20 seconds to select an answer. As a result, some questions and answer categories were edited in order to fit this time frame. The clusters identified and used in the TV and internet-based versions of the survey were based on 18 of the 25 questions shown.

A list of the twenty-five questions used during the second part of the programme followed, along with percentage breakdowns for each response. Close examination suggested that the results related to the focus group interviews only (notes for two questions mentioned that the multiple-choice options had been changed for the TV version, but the data referred to only the original answer set.)

Despite the introductory piece's assertion that seven of the twenty-five questions had not been used to categorise the participants into the four groupings, only two questions had the proviso 'this question was not used in calculating cluster membership'. The first was question one, which asked participants to name the country which they felt were 'Britain's best friends in Europe', and question seven, a near-reversal, 'Which of these European do you think dislike the British most?' It would appear that five more questions were also excluded from the end calculation, but there were no further details.

The BBC website provided an analysis of results by gender, age and location, but did not give a question by question breakdown of the results for the live TV programme and internet survey, or give details of the responses for each question, or provide an 'answer key' which might have helped unravel the methodology that was employed. Conversely, the ICM website provided data on the focus group's responses to individual question, but did not place the sample into the four categories used by the programme. It is therefore impossible, using the data provided by the BBC and ICM, to deduce whether any of the questions were weighted, or to identify precisely which were included and which were excluded from the totals.

The ICM website stated that seven of the twenty-five questions in the second round were excluded from the test completely. One wonders why these questions were asked at all, if there was never any intention of using the results as part of the overall totals.

It is possible they were included simply to contribute to the peculiar sense of alchemy these pseudo-scientific tests engender. Participants place themselves at the hands of the questioner, in the belief that the test will provide them with a unique insight into their own psychology, a better understanding of their attitudes than they might have achieved by considering a given issue carefully. Of course this is illusory – and the BBC/ICM test certainly demonstrated this. As the previous analysis has demonstrated, only five questions were robust enough to accurately match the four groupings chosen – the rest were superfluous, serving only to confuse and complicate.

For example, Question Fourteen was one of the most straightforward. It asked participants whether they thought Britain should a) integrate fully with other EU countries, b) not integrate further but stay as we are, c) have a trade agreement with other EU countries, or d) leave the EU. These four responses corresponded exactly to the 'Chiantishire', 'Dover Straits', 'Costa del Sol' and 'Little Islander' categories. But herein lies the problem: if a participant answered 'leave the EU' to question 14, but gave what were presumably more 'pro-European' responses to the other questions (for instance: they prefer to avoid other Brits while on holiday, enjoy watching foreign films in their original language, recognised that the Czech Republic and Poland are EU member states, and would happily seek employment in the European Union) it is easy to see how things could very easily become skewed.

## The Results

“It is entirely unscientific, it is all a joke.”

Presumably Andrew Marr meant to convey that the interactive test was just a ‘bit of fun’, designed to entertain and inform the programme’s audience in a humorous and light-hearted way. But, as the programme drew to close, his choice of words was illuminating.

By this point, the results among studio audience members had been exposed as erratic and unreliable. On five separate occasions, those taking part in the studio were asked how their own perceptions matched the categorisation given by the test results – and on every occasion they failed to match. After the first section, audience member Wendy Norman spoke about being ‘proud to be British’ and expressed fears about ‘losing our identity’. Presenter Dara O’Brian asked, ‘So it would surprise you to find out that so far you’re Chiantishire? You’re pro-Europe at this stage, according to your answers.’ Ms Norman replied that she would be surprised to discover that. Next, came Alex Milne and Sian Fleetmill, who disagreed that they belonged to the Costa del Sol category, as the test so far suggested. Audience member Kate Thompson launched a fierce attack against the Eurosceptic press, calling their treatment of the EU ‘shocking’ and accusing them of ‘stirring up hysteria’, but her test result suggested she was eurosceptic. Looking somewhat puzzled Ms Thompson responded, ‘Really? I just thought I had a balanced view’. Tony Sefton who had lived in Sweden for three and a half years predicted, ‘Well, I think I know which one I am, because I am quite pro-Europe. I think I’m Mr Chiantishire.’ Dara O’Brian informed him that ‘so far your answers are Mr Costa del Sol’, and asked Mr Sefton if he was surprised. He replied, ‘Yes, I am a bit’. Finally, Emily Carter, who thought of herself as ‘Costa del Sol’ was actually categorised as a ‘Little Islander’.

Dara O’Brian turned his attention to the national results. He identified the cities with the highest proportion for each category, with the awkward focus-group terminology adding an extra layer of impenetrability to the proceedings.

The greatest concentration of Chiantishires, now how do we do this, across the nation, there are certain towns in which there were more than others, the greatest concentration of Chiantishires was to be found in . . . in Derry, stroke Londonderry – depending on which way you want to call it – I have to be very careful of that! (*laughter from audience*), that’s the highest density of Chiantishires there. For Dover Straits – Swansea, we’re getting a spread across the country, alright. Southampton for the eurosceptic Costa del Sol, and for the Little Islanders? Plymouth, interestingly enough. So, the sea-going places have the most fear of Europe. (*laughter from the audience*) That may be traditional.

Mr O’Brian attempted to gather results of the test based on the age of the participants, but presumably owing to a technical difficulty these were not forthcoming. And no overall

percentages for the four groupings were made available either. Resultantly, the lack of detail provided during the live programme was absurd in its inadequacy.

In order to gain a sense of the wider picture, the audience had to access the BBC website in order to access the results. The results here were fairly surprising, and appeared at odds with some of the data gathered by ICM during its research earlier in the year.

The table below shows the results of the BBC interactive quiz, together with the percentage response to Question Fourteen of the ICM survey, which, in the absence of a similar way of categorising responses, most closely reflected the four focus group categories.

<b>BBC Categories/ICM Q14 on further EU integration</b>	<b>BBC</b>	<b>ICM</b>
Chiantishire/ Integrate fully with other EU countries	57%	16%
Dover Straits/ Not integrate further but stay as we are	6%	34%
Costa del Sol/ Have a trade agreement with other EU Countries but no more	27%	33%
Little Islanders/ Leave the EU	10%	15%
Don't know	n/a	3%

There was a very considerable 31% difference in the percentage categorised as Chiantishire (pro-EU) in the BBC's test, and the numbers who supported 'full integration' in the ICM poll. The disparity between the BBC's 'Dover Straits' category and those who wished to 'stay as we are' in the ICM test was also high, at 28%. There were 6% more participants in the ICM poll who wished to have 'a trade agreement with other EU countries only' and those in the BBC test who were classified as 'Costa del Sol'. The BBC poll also saw 5% fewer 'Little Islanders' than ICM respondents who wished to leave the European Union. Even the ICM test results were out of kilter with long-term survey trends which usually indicate that over one third of British citizens are in favour of withdrawal from the European Union.

Of course the BBC test was a self-selecting sample, and it could simply be that many more pro-European viewers took the time to watch the programme and take part in the test than those with an antipathy to the European project. But it would be very interesting to know to what extent the questions chosen contributed to the significant differences between the focus group and interactive results.

## Conclusion

Tests like this exploit our desire to understand our own psychology, to find a place within a wider collective, or to have our existing viewpoints confirmed and reinforced. But in reality, attitudes to the European Union cannot be pigeon-holed so easily: for every stereotypical 'Little Islander' or 'Mr and Mrs Chiantishire' there are those, pro and anti-European who defy such categorisations. It is vital that the BBC make their methodology immediately available, in order that the results of the test can be properly scrutinised. Reaching a firm conclusion has often been difficult, because sufficient information regarding the underlying process has not been provided.

The chief problem was the 'How Euro Are You?' test's inability to differentiate sufficiently between 'Europe' as a continent with its rich cultural traditions, and 'Europe' as shorthand for 'European Union' - a political and economic project. Of course, both are legitimate areas of investigation, but lines between these two distinct themes were blurred throughout.

ICM and the BBC missed a valuable opportunity to present useful and interesting information about both Britain's relationship with the European Union, and the nation's position within the cultural and societal tapestry of the European continent. The test could easily have been divided into three discrete sections: General Knowledge, European Union Politics, and European Culture. This would have allowed cross-tabulation of the results, first giving a clear indication of participants' views on the EU, and then placing this information alongside both their attitude to European culture, and their knowledge of the EU and its institutions. For example, it would have been possible to see how many withdrawal supporters were suspicious of European culture or have a limited knowledge of the EU and its processes – and how many of them actually enjoy European culture, understand the processes of the EU, but still would like Britain to be independent of the political union.

This would have been a much more sophisticated approach to using the available data, and would have perhaps helped challenge or investigate stereotypes rather than simply confirm them. As it stood, the cultural arguments were mixed so heavily into the political debate, that the information gained from the whole exercise was virtually meaningless.