

1.1 Project Overview

On Monday 8 September 2008, Newswatch UK began a fourteen-week investigation into Today's coverage of European Union news and current affairs. Each edition of Today was recorded, logged and archived in its entirety, and every item of relevance to the European Union or its relationship to the United Kingdom was transcribed in full.

The monitoring interval culminated with the EU's biannual European Council meeting on 11 and 12 December. Other significant issues to arise during the survey interval included the EU's response to the worldwide financial crisis, meetings of environment ministers to discuss climate change, as part of a six month debate instigated by the French presidency, and the EU's foreign policy role in the conflicts taking place in Georgia and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Using a range of analytical techniques and statistical measures, Newswatch investigated whether the BBC's obligations of impartiality and fairness were met in Today's treatment of EU affairs during the period in question, and sought to examine in particular whether recommendations contained in the Wilson Report on the corporation's EU coverage have been implemented by editors, presenters, and journalists. This Independent Panel Inquiry report, published in January 2005, identified five key areas of concern: an institutional mindset at the BBC; an over-simplified polarisation of issues and stereotyping; EU politics being viewed consistently through the 'Westminster Prism'; ignorance on the part of journalists; and bias by omission.

Newswatch holds data on BBC programmes spanning almost ten years, and has monitored and assessed a wide range of BBC news and current affairs programmes, documentary strands and live discussions, as well as online content and podcasts. Using its bespoke database, Newswatch is able to chart coverage patterns and interview appearances and to calculate in detail whether the BBC has kept the public promises it made in the wake of the Wilson Report.

1.2 The Newswatch Monitoring Schedule

Monitoring is an intensive process. Each individual hour of programme airtime results in many more hours of transcription, analysis and textual critique. Scrutiny of the BBC's entire 120-hour daily news output is practically impossible.

In its previous surveys, Newswatch has compared, in detail, its own investigations to a number of other prominent media monitoring exercises. The table provides details of how much national BBC news was surveyed in each project, together with data showing the extent of Newswatch's work since extended monitoring began in September 2002.

Organisation	Project	Date	Total Duration	Relevant Sample
Glasgow Media Group	Bad News From Israel	2000	50 hours	<i>unknown</i>
Morrison Media Consultants	EU Coverage for Wilson Panel	2004	90 hours	41 items
Loughborough University	General Election Survey	2005	45 hours	<i>unknown</i>
Loughborough University	Israel-Palestine Study for Thompson Panel	2005-2006	858 hours	556 items
Cardiff University	Four Nations Impartiality Review	2007	722 hours	491 items
Newswatch	BBC News Coverage of the EU	2002-2008	3345 hours	3420 items

The second most expansive survey in this table is Loughborough University's research into Israel-Palestine news coverage. Newswatch has monitored almost four more BBC airtime than this study, and has transcribed and analysed more than six times the number of relevant reports.

Newswatch's approach is based solidly on analytical media theory, and its methodology is structured to chart long-term trends and to reveal imbalances which could not possibly be identified without the implementation of a stringent and methodical framework. Newswatch's monitoring has been more extensive than any known investigation, and the sample is certainly extensive enough to provide a representative picture of the BBC's EU coverage.

2.1 The Today Programme

Today is BBC Radio 4's flagship news and current affairs programme. It broadcasts for three hours each weekday morning, and for two hours each Saturday. The programme is also made available 'on demand' for those visiting Today's dedicated website, and selections from the programme are included in the BBC's podcast service, which enables listeners to download content directly to their computer or personal music player. The Today website also carries an audio archive, which contains material dating back to June 2003, although more recently this has carried only material broadcast in the second two hours of the weekday programme.

2.2 Today's EU Airtime

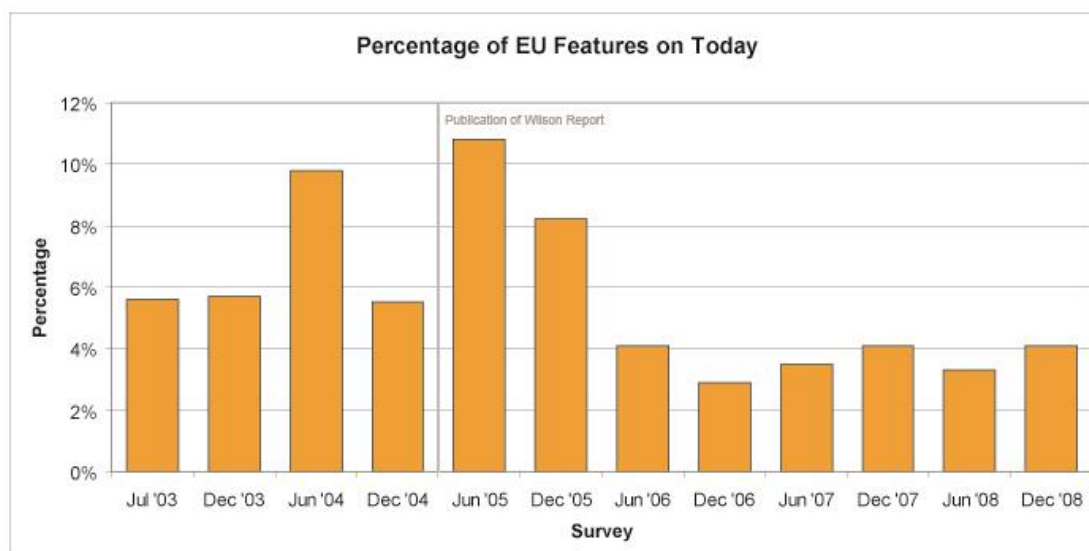
Feature reports account for approximately two-thirds of the Today programme. These include two-way discussions between presenters and correspondents, packages by journalists, and interviews with invited guests. Data from the ten previous Newswatch surveys undertaken since 2002 – a total of 199 weeks – shows that, on average, 5.7% of Today's feature airtime has been devoted to the discussion of matters relating to the European Union. In the most recent investigation, 4.1% of feature airtime was given over to the reporting of EU issues. The table provides details of the twelve Today surveys undertaken by Newswatch since 2002:

Survey Date	Monitored Weeks	Proportion of EU coverage
September 2002 – July 2003	47	5.6%
September – December 2003	12	5.7%
March – June 2004	13	9.8%
<i>June 2004, Mark Thompson appointed BBC Director General</i>		
October – December 2004	10	5.5%
<i>January 2005, Publication of the Wilson Report into the BBC's EU Coverage</i>		
March – June 2005	15	10.8%
October – December 2005	9	8.2%
February – June 2006	16	4.1%
September – December 2006	14	2.9%
March – June 2007	14	3.5%
September – December 2007	14	4.1%
March – June 2008	12	3.3%
September – December 2008	14	4.1%

Newswatch's airtime calculations focus specifically on the programme's features, to prevent totals being skewed by repeated content (bulletins and newspaper reviews), 'non-news' items (sport, weather, trailers), and a section which is outside the programme's direct editorial control (*Thought for the Day*).

In the current survey, for example, there were many items which might have been categorised differently. These items contained EU components, but were linked heavily to other news themes. These included: EU emissions targets discussed in the context of the building of a third runway at Heathrow Airport; UK Councils facing fines for failing to meet EU landfill targets; a report on the death of Austrian far-right politician Joerg Haider which included discussion of EU sanctions against his party; consideration of migrant workers from other EU countries in a report concerned with domestic unemployment rates; a row over former EU trade commissioner Peter Mandelson's meetings with Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska, and Lord Mandelson's subsequent return to the Labour cabinet; and an interview with the Duchess of York on state orphanages in Turkey.

As with every Newswatch survey undertaken to date, all reports with an EU component, however minor, were counted towards the total airtime for the survey, even though they often dealt with European Union issues tangentially, and revealed very little about the structure, politics or future direction of the EU project. The graph shows EU airtime proportions in the twelve most recent Newswatch surveys.¹



The Independent Editorial Adviser's report to the BBC Trust considered Newswatch's previous work and suggested that expressing airtime totals simply as percentages may be 'misleading',² and suggested that it might be more accurate to present a figure expressed as airtime per programme edition. To avoid the charge that the airtime statistics are presented deceptively, the totals for the twelve most recent Newswatch surveys are listed again, this time expressing the totals as the average EU airtime per programme edition:

Survey Date	Editions	Airtime per Edition
September 2002 – July 2003	281	5 min 58 sec
September – December 2003	72	6 min 19 sec
March – June 2004	74	11 min 46 sec
October – December 2004	60	6 min 5 sec
March – June 2005	90	12 min 1 sec
October – December 2005	54	9 min 0 sec
February – June 2006	96	4 min 33 sec
September – December 2006	84	3 min 16 sec
March – June 2007	84	3 min 52 sec
September – December 2007	84	4 min 36 sec
March – June 2008	72	3 min 40 sec
September – December 2008	84	4 min 34 sec

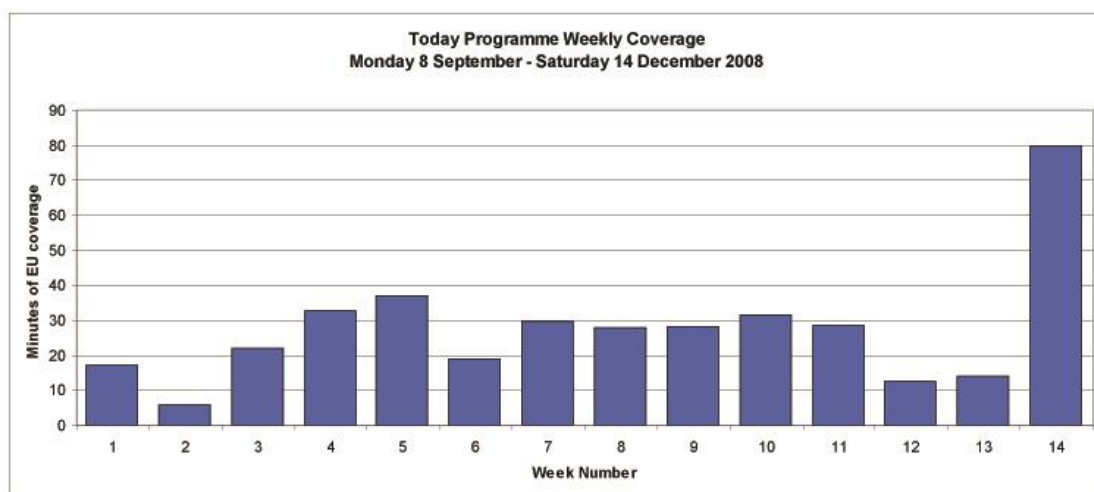
¹ The graph lists each survey by end date.

² Independent Editorial Adviser's Considerations Regarding the Appeal to the Editorial (sic) Standards Committee, p.19.

Of course, because these totals are based on the same figures as those presented earlier, the differentials between the individual surveys listed in this table are identical - whether the totals are displayed as a percentage, or as an 'average airtime per edition'.

2.3 Weekly Coverage

The level of Today's EU coverage fluctuated from week to week. EU related reporting reached its highest point in the final week of the survey, with 80 minutes of EU-related features. Coverage was at its lowest in the second week of monitoring, with just under six minutes of EU-based features across the six editions of the programme.

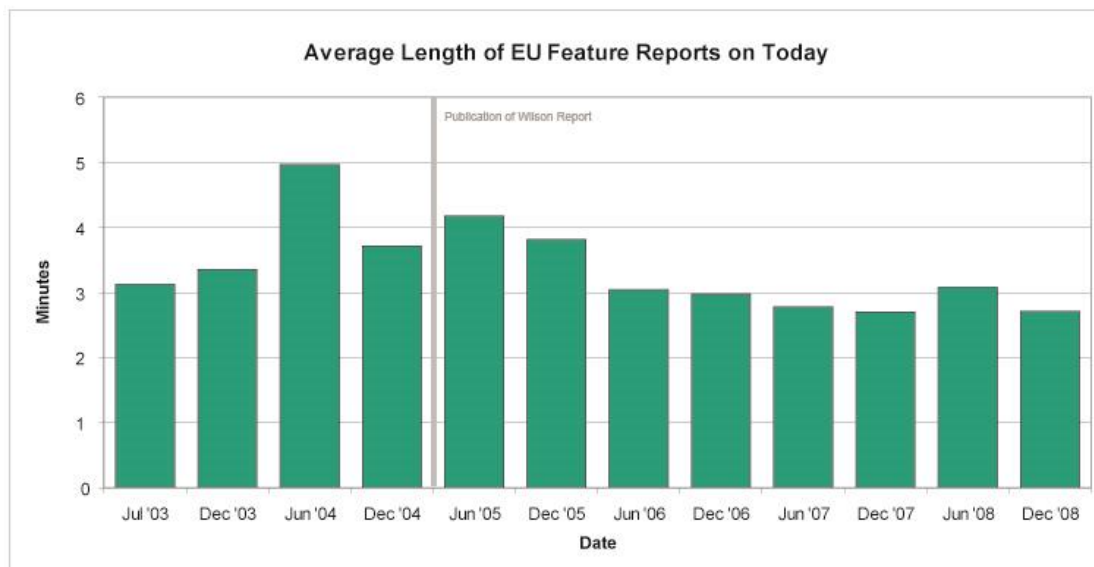


The final week of the survey coincided with the EU heads of government summit meeting in Brussels on 11-12 December. During this week, 80 minutes of Today's feature airtime was devoted to EU news, which represents 13% of the total available space. This consisted predominantly of commentary on EU negotiations to secure a deal on emissions targets, and discussions of the EU's response to the 'credit crunch'.

When viewed historically, 13% of feature airtime is not a particularly noteworthy figure. 31% of features had been given over to EU matters in the week of the French and Dutch Constitution referendums in June 2005, 27% during Tony Blair's proposal to hold a British referendum on the EU Constitution in April 2004; and 22% when Gordon Brown announced his decision on the five economic tests in May 2003. To put the 80 minutes of EU coverage into perspective, Today devoted 86 minutes to coverage of the introduction of euro notes and coins in just a *single edition* of the programme on January 1, 2002.

2.4 Today's EU coverage

Today transmitted 220 EU-related items during the 12 week interval. There were 57 bulletins items, 22 mentions of EU matters in the programme's newspaper review section, and 141 'features', with a total duration of 6 hours and 23 minutes. In addition, there were 64 passing mentions of the EU, including a brief mention in the religious affairs slot, Thought for the Day. Data on the average length of an EU feature item was collected and compared to the ten previous Newswatch surveys:



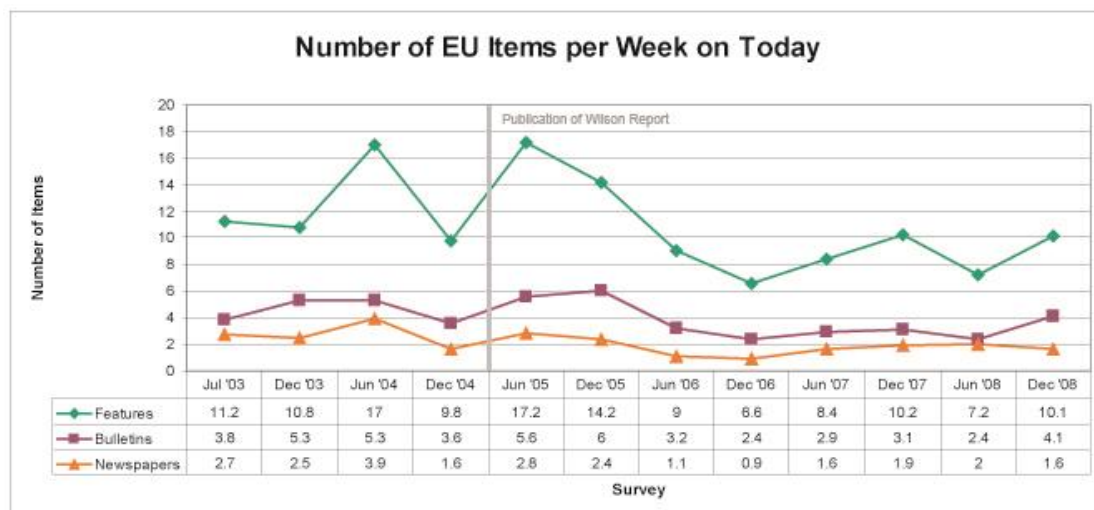
The graph shows a steady decline in the average length of EU feature reports since the survey undertaken immediately subsequent to the publication of the Wilson Report in January 2005. Newswatch's last investigation, culminating in June 2008, indicated a reversal of this downward trend, with the average length of an EU feature rising to 3 minutes and 4 seconds. However, during the current survey, the length of EU features to an average of 2 minutes and 43 seconds, the second lowest of all twelve previous investigations.

Newswatch surveys have noted two significant factors in the decline that has been recorded since the Wilson Report was published. First, the number of 'extended' EU features lasting seven minutes or over fell significantly. Second, EU issues were increasingly incorporated into reports concerned primarily with other matters, rather than the EU being discussed in 'stand-alone' reports. This might include a guest being asked a single question on the EU during an interview covering a number of distinct themes, or a correspondent bringing an 'EU perspective' to bear on global issues such as the environment or the financial crisis.

There has certainly been a considerable fall in the number of extended packages dealing exclusively with the EU. During the fourteen weeks leading up to the European Council

summit in June 2005, for example, Today carried 44 EU-related features lasting seven minutes or over; in the fourteen weeks leading up to the December 2008 European Council summit there were only five.

The graph below presents data from the last twelve Newswatch surveys. The surveys had different durations - ranging from 9 weeks to 47 weeks – and so a calculation has been made to show the average number each type of programme item per week, for each individual survey.

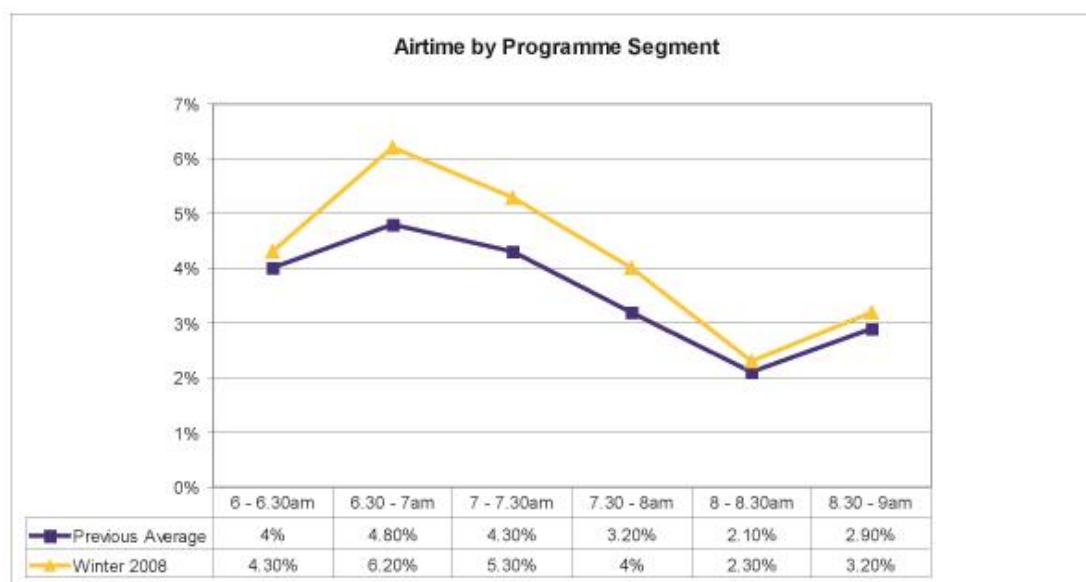


The graph illustrates that during the current survey an average of 10.1 feature items per week contained an EU component. As such, the frequency of EU related feature items was lower than in six previous surveys, and higher than in five. There was more coverage of EU themes in the programme's bulletins than at any time since December 2005, with 4.1 items per week on average, but EU coverage in Today's 'newspaper review' sections was fourth lowest when of the twelve previous surveys.

2.5 The Position of EU News

Assessing the positioning of EU material in the Today running order necessitates a complex calculation, given that each half-hour segment does not carry equal space for feature reports. For example, the first half hour of the programme generally has space for 17 minutes of features, while the last half hour has between 26 and 29 minutes. In addition, the Saturday programme begins at 7am, and has a slightly different running order to the weekday editions.

With these variables taken into account, the chart gives weighted totals for EU news coverage, as a percentage of the total airtime available in each half-hour segment, over the full survey interval. If EU coverage had been spread evenly across each segment for the full 12 weeks, the chart would simply show a horizontal line³. The average of the data collected during the four previous Newswatch surveys (representing 54 weeks in total) is presented alongside data for the current survey.



The chart shows a higher proportion of EU coverage in every slot, as the airtime devoted to EU news was slightly higher in this survey period (4.1%) than the average of the previous four surveys (3.5%). The segment with the most EU news, in keeping with the previous average, was the 6.30am to 7am slot. This segment also saw the greatest divergence from the previous average, with 6.2% of feature items in this slot containing an EU component.

The most striking feature of the chart is that the same broad pattern identified previously recurs. In all five Newswatch surveys undertaken since this method of analysis was first employed, the same inversely proportional pattern has emerged: as listeners increase with each successive post 7am segment, the proportion of EU coverage has decreased, followed by a marginal recovery in the programme's final half hour, when listening figures start to decline.

Once again, the segment with the lowest proportion of EU coverage was the 8am – 8.30am slot. Over the fourteen weeks of the survey, only 2.3% of the available airtime (33 minutes in total) was devoted to EU-related discussion. .

³ In the case of the current survey, if EU news was spread equally throughout the programme, the graph would show straight line at 4.1% running through each of the six half hour segments, representing the EU airtime proportion for the survey as a whole.

Senior BBC staff have refuted the suggestion that EU news has been placed recurrently in off-peak slots, or that these programme segments are ‘a dumping ground for unpopular items’⁴ However, the chart illustrates a recurrent pattern which has built up over 68 weeks of Today’s EU coverage, and demonstrates clearly that the day-to-day judgements of Today’s editorial staff, when combined, have served to sideline EU news, particularly in the programme’s prime time segments.

2.6 Guest Speakers

Today’s EU coverage featured 139 guest contributors during the survey, of which 77 were interviews and 62 were pre-recorded soundbites. The table lists speakers according to whether they expressed Europhile or Eurosceptic views. Each guest was categorised according to the *contents* of the contribution, rather than the established views of the person concerned, or their party affiliation.

Early Newswatch pilot studies found that categorising speakers simply as Europhile or Eurosceptic presented difficulties in two circumstances: first, when it is impossible to deduce a speaker’s overall view of the EU from the content of their contribution alone, and a summation could only be made regarding one particular policy aspect; and second, when a politician with known Eurosceptic views speaks in favour of a particular EU policy or a pro-EU politician speaks against it. As a consequence, two categories – ‘in favour of specific EU legislation/action’ and ‘against specific EU legislation/action’ – were introduced to better reflect such incidences. For example, during the current survey, Delcan Ganley of the Irish campaign group Libertas spoke against the Lisbon Treaty, even though the group’s director had described the group as being ‘being ‘passionately pro-European’ in a Today interview earlier in the year.’⁵

But during the current monitoring interval, this method of categorisation also produced anomalies. First, on 18 October, news emerged that the government was planning to inform local authorities not to prosecute traders who refuse to sell products in metric measurements, following clarification from the EU on the issue. Two speakers, Warwick Cairns of the British Weights and Measures Association, and Neil Herron of the Metric Martyrs campaign, were included in reports that morning, and spoke against the original legislation, but welcomed the new advice on that matter. Second, on 11 November, Today interviewed Justin King, chief executive of Sainsbury’s, on the EU’s decision to scrap legislation relating to misshapen fruit and vegetables. Once again he spoke critically of the original legislation, but welcomed the

⁴ Independent Editorial Advisers Considerations Regarding the Appeal To The Editorial (sic) Standards Committee, p.23

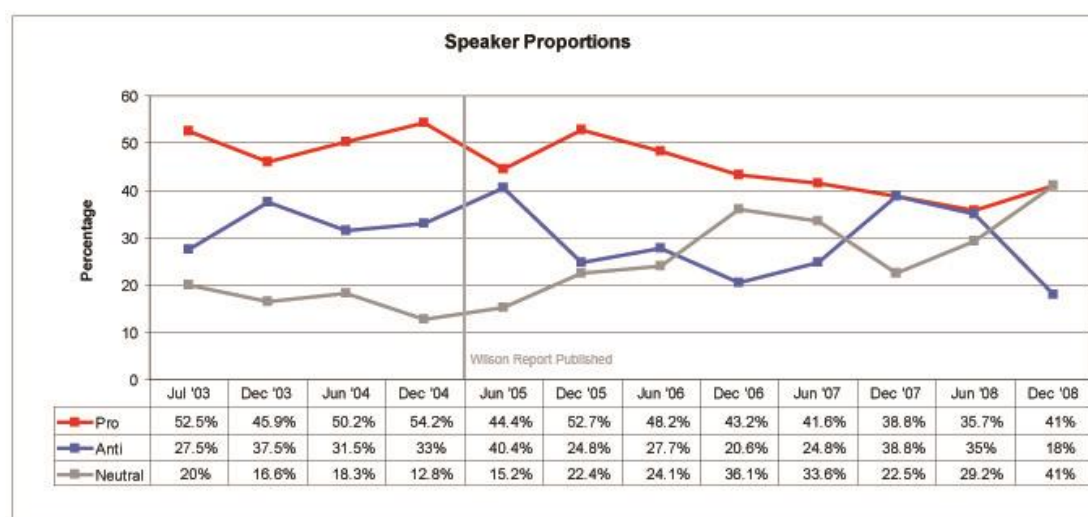
⁵ BBC Radio 4, Today, 10th May 2008, Interview with Naoise Nunn, director of Libertas 7.50am

EU's change of tack. All three speakers were therefore categorised as broadly anti-EU, to maintain consistency with the categorisation of traditional 'sceptical' viewpoints in earlier Newswatch surveys, even though it could be argued that Messrs Cairns, Herron and King were now actually in accord with the EU's actions, since the Commission's change of approach to these issues.

Contributions by Party	Labour	Conservative	Liberal	UKIP	EU	Other	Total
Pro-EU	18	2	1	0	14	8	43
In favour of specific EU legislation/action	0	2	0	0	0	12	14
Anti-EU or Eurosceptic	0	5	0	3	0	1	9
Against specific EU legislation/action	0	0	1	0	0	15	16
Neutral/Factual viewpoint	4	1	0	0	4	48	57
Total Speakers	22	10	2	3	18	84	139

In the two previous Newswatch surveys⁶, the numbers of broadly 'Pro' and broadly 'Anti' speakers achieved parity for the first time. However, during the current monitoring interval, broadly pro-EU speakers once again outnumbered broadly anti-EU guests by a very significant margin. In total, 57 guests (41%) provided a favourable opinion on the EU or its legislation, 25 guests (18%) provided negative viewpoint, and 57 guests (41%) expressed a neutral or factual point of view.

The chart collates data from the twelve surveys undertaken since September 2002. It represents 2532 individual guest speaker appearances on Today, over a combined period of 189 weeks.

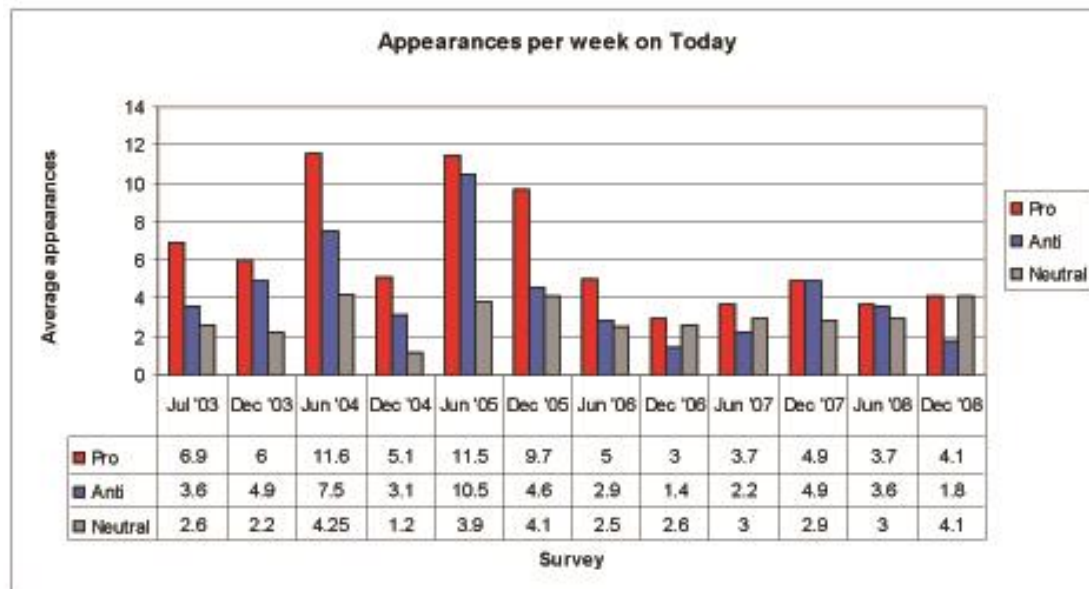


Data collected during the December 2007 and June 2008 suggested that a new mechanism might have been established to ensure a more balanced reflection of the EU debate, both on

⁶ Covering the periods September–December 2007 and March – June 2008

the Today programme and perhaps more widely across BBC News⁷ However, the current investigation showed a significant decline in the proportion of Eurosceptic guests, with just 18% of guests offering a critical perspective on the EU or its legislation. This is the lowest proportion of eurosceptic guests recorded by Newswatch in any survey to date.

The following table provides detail on the number of actual guest appearances, rather than the proportions alone. Surveys over the last six years have differed in length, and the data is adjusted to reflect the average number of speaker appearances per week in each project.



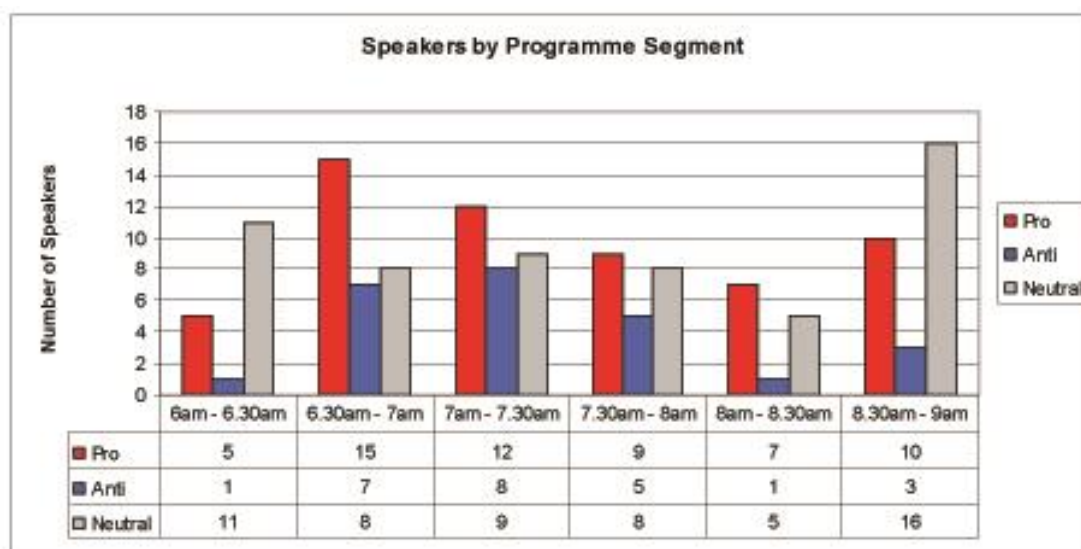
The data illustrates, that overall there has been a strong weighting in favour of the Europhile case on the Today programme. Of the 2532 speakers who have contributed to coverage since September 2002⁸, 1191 speakers (47%) have provided arguments in favour of the EU or its proposals, compared to 782 speakers (31%) who have spoken against it. The remaining 559 speakers (22%) have provided neutral or factual contributions.

2.7 Appearance of Guest Speakers by Segment.

The chart shows the number of speakers appearing in each half hour segment of the programme over the 12 week survey, according to whether the arguments they gave were broadly Pro-EU, broadly Anti-EU, or Neutral.

⁷ When monitoring was extended to include additional BBC News programmes during the week of the Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty in June 2008, the proportions balanced almost exactly across the programmes.

⁸ 175 weeks of Today, amounting to 1050 individual programme editions with a combined duration of 2975 hours have been monitored in full by Newswatch since September 2002.



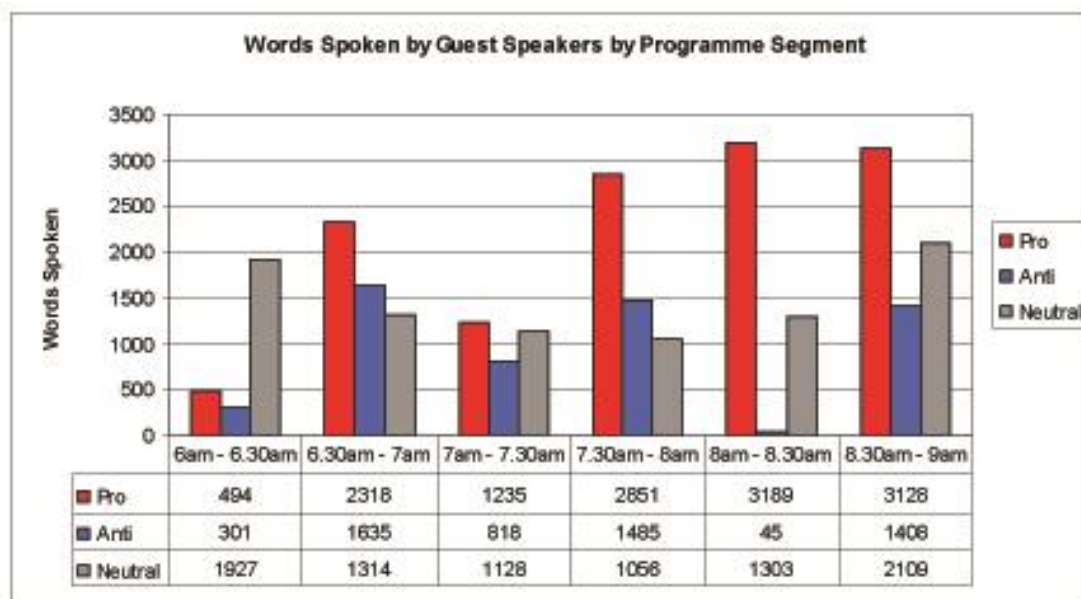
The graph shows that the number of broadly pro-EU speakers outnumbered the number of anti-EU speakers in every programme segment. In Today's peak 7am – 8.30am slot, those speaking in favour of the EU or its legislation outnumbered those speaking against the EU or its legislation by 28 to 14, and outside peak time by 30 to 11.

2.8 Guest Speaker Word Counts

A detailed assessment was undertaken to analyse the precise number of words spoken by each guest contributor. There were 27,244 words spoken on the EU by guest contributors during the current survey. 13,215 words (49%) were from broadly pro-EU speakers; 5692 words (21%) were from broadly anti-EU speakers, and 8337 words (31%) came from speakers offering a neutral or factual perspective. This represents an even greater differential between the Europhile and Eurosceptic case than the headcount figures alone reveal.

2.9 Word Counts and Speaker Positioning

The chart presents the number of words spoken by contributors in each of the programme's six half hour segments. It shows that the pro-EU case was put more expansively than the anti-EU case in all six programme segments. Of particular concern is Today's key 8am – 8.30am slot, in which 70% of words spoken on EU matters came from pro-EU guests, and only 1% came from a speaker offering a sceptical perspective – thus the pro-EU case outweighed the sceptical case by a ratio of 70 to 1.



The positioning of guest contributors is a matter of vital importance for a programme such as Today, where relatively few listeners will listen to an edition in its entirety, and for many a particular section of the programme will form part of a daily routine.⁹ With this in mind, it is vital that different shades of opinion are tested with equal vigour in each segment of the programme. The complete dominance of the pro-EU view in the key 8am-8.30am slot during the current survey represents a serious cause for concern.

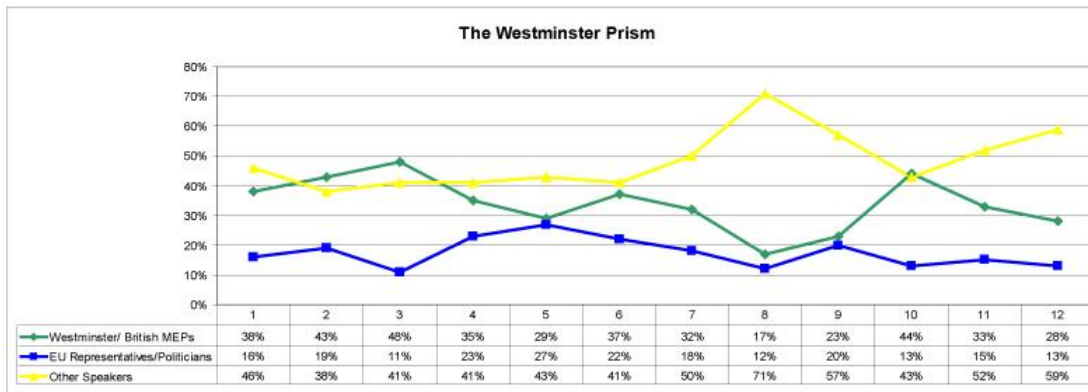
2.10 The Westminster Prism

The Wilson Report found that *'the dominance of Westminster politics, both in the structure of BBC News and in the allocation of air-time, leads to distorted reporting of the EU'*.

The chart presents data collected during the last eleven Newswatch surveys, and gives details of speaker proportions, separated into three categories.¹⁰

⁹ Luckhurst, Tim. *This is Today*, Aurum Press, London, 2001, pp75-76

¹⁰ Newswatch has, since beginning extended monitoring in September 2002, consistently categorised British MEPs according to their domestic political parties. As such, the figures presented here do not equate exactly to the definition of 'Westminster' employed in the 2005 Wilson Report.



The data shows a 7% increase in the number of appearances from non-politically aligned guests since the previous Newswatch survey, as illustrated by the 'Other Speakers' category on the chart. There was a 5% decrease in the number of Westminster politicians/British MEPs, and a 2% decrease in the number of EU representatives and politicians from other member states. The number of non-politically aligned speakers reached the second highest proportion of all previous surveys,

However, despite the increase in the numbers of speakers from outside the 'Westminster Prism', a concern is that political speakers still tend to be given more airtime and greater prominence within the programme than those from outside mainstream party politics, and this is something which the broad headcount methodology does not necessarily reflect. A word count analysis was undertaken to assess the proportion of words spoken by each category of speaker.

	Headcount Proportion	Word Count Proportion
Westminster Politicians/British MEPs	28%	40%
EU Representatives	13%	10%
Other Speakers	59%	50%

The table illustrates that despite the fairly low headcount of Westminster politicians and British MEPs, they received almost as much interview space as those from outside mainstream party politics, with their contributions accounting for 40% of the words spoken during the survey.

2.11 Politicians and Non-Politicians

Political and non-political speakers were categorised according to their broad attitudes towards the EU and its legislation, and whether they contributed to the programme through interviews or shorter pre-recorded soundbites. In this analysis, 'politicians' included domestic MPs, representatives of the EU, and politicians from the member states. The results are presented in the table:

	Political Speakers		Non-Political Speakers	
	Interview	Soundbite	Interview	Soundbite
Pro	18	20	7	12
Anti	6	4	9	6
Neutral	2	7	35	13

In keeping with a pattern which has recurred in previous surveys, the pro-EU case was more likely to be made by mainstream politicians than non-political speakers, and sceptical opinion was more likely to be put by those with no party political alignment. The current survey saw a significant overall imbalance between Europhile and Eurosceptic guests. These figures illustrate a further inequality: Europhile politicians outnumbered sceptical politicians in their appearances on the programme by 38 to 10. However, the differential between speakers from outside mainstream politics was much smaller, with 19 broadly pro-EU guests and 15 broadly anti-EU guests.

The imbalance raises a number of questions relating to audience perception of particular speakers: are non-political speakers able to offer the same degree of insight as politicians when speaking about the EU? Are speakers from outside mainstream politics more likely to offer criticism of a single piece of EU legislation as opposed to speaking for or against the EU in broader, or more firmly ideological terms? Are listeners more likely or less likely to trust the views of a politician, compared to those of a speaker who is not politically aligned? These questions are difficult to answer through statistics alone.

One disparity, however, is easier to investigate through statistical analysis: political speakers tend to be given more airtime than non-political speakers, as was illustrated by the table showing word count proportions in section 2.10. As a consequence, the imbalance between the numbers of political/non-political speakers invited to comment on EU themes may have had a detrimental effect on the amount of space given to the eurosceptic case.

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2.12 The Withdrawal Perspective

The survey data was analysed to assess how many speakers who appeared on Today during the survey interval supported withdrawal from the EU. Contributors had to meet one three criteria in order to qualify as 'withdrawalist': they explicitly expressed, as part of their contribution, a support British withdrawal, their own country's withdrawal, or the dissolution of the European Union; they were said to hold such views in introductory sequences, or in additional journalistic commentary; they belonged to a party explicitly advocating withdrawal or a comparable policy.

Of the 139 contributions to Today's EU coverage during the fourteen week survey, four speakers qualified for inclusion. The table shows the number of withdrawal supporters appearing on Today in the ten surveys since March 2004.¹¹

Start Date	End Date	Programme	Weeks	Total Speakers	Withdrawal Supporters	Percentage
29 Mar 2004	22 Jun 2004	Today	12	279	15	5.4%
14 Oct 2004	18 Dec 2004	Today	10	94	7	7.4%
<i>Publication of the Wilson Report</i>						
7 Mar 2005	2 Jun 2005	Today	12	389	13	3.4%
24 Oct 2005	24 Dec 2005	Today	9	165	3	1.8%
27 Feb 2006	17 Jun 2006	Today	16	166	6	3.6%
11 Sep 2006	16 Dec 2006	Today	14	98	4	4.1%
19 Mar 2007	23 Jun 2007	Today	14	125	4	3.2%
10 Sep 2007	15 Dec 2007	Today	14	178	5	2.8%
31 Mar 2008	23 Jun 2008	Today	12	123	2	1.6%
8 Sep 2008	13 Dec 2008	Today	14	139	4	2.9%

The current survey saw an increase in the proportion of withdrawalist speakers appearing on Today, although these speakers remained in a lower proportion than in the two pre-Wilson Newswatch surveys.

The first appearance of a withdrawal advocate in the survey interval came on 21 October, at 6.54am. Baroness Ashton had been proposed as EU trade commissioner to replace Peter Mandelson, and Nigel Farage was invited onto the programme to discuss her appointment. He outlined his reasons for opposing the appointment, based primarily on what he believed to be her lack of experience in trade, industry and business. Presenter John Humphrys suggested that it was 'a bit odd' that the leader of a party 'sworn to getting Britain out of Europe altogether' to call for someone more powerful in the EU trade role. Mr Farage replied that he did not want trade policy decided in Europe, as he did not believe it was in Britain's interests, but given that Britain was part of the EU, it was important to have someone competent with business experience. He also suggested that Baroness Ashton had been given the post as a reward for 'pushing the Lisbon Treaty through the House of Lords without a referendum.' Mr Humphrys countered, 'well obviously you're the man to do the job – that would be a change for you, wouldn't it?', suggesting that this would mean 'the end of UKIP'. Mr Farage replied that such an appointment would mean in the end of the EU's current trade policy. Mr Humphrys then wondered 'whether commissioners get better pay than MEPs', and when Mr Farage replied that they were paid three times as much, Mr Humphrys countered, 'ah, but with all the perks?', and Mr Farage said that for serving one year as commissioner Baroness Ashton would receive £8000 a year pension. Mr Humphrys returned to the issue of whether Mr Farage would prefer this job, 'Right, so this is your job application is it, let's be clear about this?'. Mr Farage laughed and said that he would 'love' to go to the Commission

¹¹ In earlier surveys this table included data from multi-programme monitoring, to allow for the largest possible sample size. However, to allow more direct comparisons, data from Today is presented in isolation.

and talk about why trade policy should be repatriated to member states. Mr Humphrys put it to Mr Farage that he would not be able to stop Baroness Ashton's appointment, and that it had 'been agreed, so that's that'. Mr Farage said that it hadn't quite been agreed, that the European People's party were 'split down the middle' and he believed there would be a substantial number of abstentions, but that he didn't expect it to go further than that. Mr Humphrys then asked why Mr Farage had not objected to the appointment of Peter Mandelson. Mr Farage said that he had objected, but on slightly separate grounds, but that Mr Mandelson was a 'big hitter, with serious ministerial experience', and that Mr Mandelson had the stature to 'stand up to Mr Sarkozy', whereas he felt Baroness Ashton did not.

Mr Farage was able to put across a key points of his party's policy on withdrawal – namely that UKIP did not wish to see trade policy decided on an EU-wide basis – and he also was able to address issue of why a party standing on a strong anti-European Union platform might still wish for a strong EU trade commissioner. However, a number of points put to him by John Humphrys were conspicuously unsophisticated – they rested on the question of whether or not Mr Farage could do the job better himself, and whether indeed he would want to do the job himself, rather than exploring in detail the core issues surrounding Baroness Ashton's experience, and perhaps making a devil's advocate case based on the government's arguments for appointing her to the role. This was coupled with points MEPs expenses, which possibly served to reinforce a long-standing idea that UKIP MEPs happily claim expenses but rarely attend the parliament itself. But this was not put to Mr Farage straightforwardly, and so it was difficult for him to challenge the insinuation directly.

The second withdrawal supporter appeared on Today on 19 November. Nick Griffin of the British National Party was interviewed by presenter James Naughtie concerning the news that a list of its party membership had been leaked online. Two sections of the interview focused on 'Europe'. Mr Naughtie said that he noticed the BNP wished to use the Human Rights Act to defend the privacy of its members, and asked Mr Griffin if he was in favour of the legislation. Mr Griffin replied, 'It's actually quite ironic. No we're not in favour of the Human Rights Act . . . It's a piece of European legislation, we'd withdraw from Europe, so we would get rid of that piece of legislation, but as it's there, we will happily use it if we can'. Mr Naughtie asked whether the Human Rights Act was something which could be used to defend freedom. Mr Griffin said that it was 'certainly something that could be used to defend privacy', but that he didn't think that 'any European law can be used to defend freedom, the two are . . . thoroughly at odds.' Mr Naughtie suggested the party was using the law to defend the freedom of its members, and Mr Griffin replied that they were using the law to defend privacy, and 'that's a different thing to freedom'. The interview then turned to the publication of the list, and this was followed by an observation by Mr Naughtie:

You're complaining about this, I notice – about the leak – and people will probably think you're upset by it, but I notice on your website that you are saying it will probably frighten some of them, that's thousands of UKIPers, members of UKIP whom you

expect to join the BNP at some point, but it's water off a duck's back to the stout hearts of the British National Party, let's enjoy the publicity bonus. So it's really good news after all.

The interview then moved on to discuss the range of BNP members, and so the point about UKIP was not addressed by Mr Griffin.

Although Mr Griffin has been included by Newswatch as a withdrawlist speaker because he stated that his party would 'withdraw from Europe', the Human Rights Act is actually legislation of the Council of Europe, rather than of the European Union. To revoke the Human Rights Act would mean to rescind on a legally binding international treaty, and could not be achieved by leaving the EU. However, nothing was said by the presenter to clarify this, and Mr Griffin said very little of substance on the issue, aside from his view that 'defending freedom' was impossible through European Law. The interview was also significant because it reinforced a link between UKIP and the BNP on politics more widely, something which UKIP themselves were unable to contest. Opinion polls have consistently indicated that support for withdrawal from the EU is not confined only to those with views on the political right, but Newswatch has collected many examples over the years of the withdrawal perspective being positioned as 'extremist', and this was another.

On 4 December, UKIP leader Nigel Farage appeared on Today again to discuss new proposals concerning when the police are able to ask members of the public for identification. Nigel Farage suggested the move was alien to British society, and not something the public had ever been asked to do, except briefly during the Second World War. He suggested that this was 'the ID card coming in through the back door', and began to speak about the policy making Britain 'much more like our European neighbours, where this is a commonplace thing', before he was interrupted by presenter Sarah Montague, who asked him, 'before we get onto that', for his understanding of what exactly was being proposed. Mr Farage then explained the government proposals, and that the argument being used by ministers was that the draft legislation would help deal with illegal immigrants and the fight against terrorism. Ms Montague put it to him that the Home Office had made it 'absolutely clear' that this was not about trying to introduce ID Cards. Mr Farage claimed that the government did not have a good track record on these matters, that telephone taps had been extended to 'help the fight against terrorism', but that local councils were now 'tapping people's phones to find out whether they're dumping rubbish', and the terrorism legislation had been used to freeze the assets of a bank. Ms Montague quoted at length from the Home Office, in a statement which said it was wrong to claim that there were plans to make ID cards compulsory, or to require citizens to have ID Cards or any form of ID on them at all times. She then put it to Mr Farage that when the draft legislation went through Parliament the phrasing of the bill could be changed to make this clear. Mr Farage then turned to the European Union for his final contribution to the discussion:

Well, yes, and I mean, there'll be a debate in the House of Commons on this, and hopefully there'll be some sensible amendments, but this is only part of a very much bigger project, because what the government are not talking about, dare not talk about, is the fact that they recently pushed through the Commons and the Lords, the Lisbon Treaty. Now we were promised a referendum on this, but of course that hasn't happened, and part of that Treaty is Justice and Home Affairs, this whole area becomes a European Union competence, and with that, the plans here in Brussels are very clear, that we're to have an EU-wide ID card scheme and database, and so, you know, the elephant in the room is the whole European dimension to this. We could argue about British legislation, but all the while we're heading to a situation where within five years all of these things will be controlled in Brussels, and we will have an EU identity card.

This final contribution, at 168 words, represented less than a quarter of the words spoken during the discussion. Had Ms Montague not been so keen to guide Mr Farage away the topic of the EU early on, the UKIP leader might have been able to expand further upon these points, but in effect a significant proportion of his interview was used simply to explain the legislation to listeners in more detail, following an unusually terse introduction to the package, which ran as follows:

Well, one of the laws that the government is planning to introduce covers when police can ask for identification. It's being condemned by, among others, The UK Independence Party.

Clearly, if a more thorough introduction had been drafted, Mr Farage would have had more space in which to outline his views and make political points, as opposed to simply outlining the details of the legislation itself.

On the final day of the survey, Today broadcast a report in its Yesterday in Parliament slot covering a House of Lords debate on how European legislation is made. Parliamentary correspondent Mark Darcy began by reporting that peers had debated a report which had – in its words – tried 'to lift the veil on that mysterious process of where European laws really do come from'. The UKIP peer, Lord Willoughby de Broke featured first, he said:

It conjures up the image of a mysterious lady, we do not know what lies behind that veil. When we lift it, will we . . . what will we see? A sloe-eyed young beauty or a poxed and wizened hag? Well, I have to say, sadly, the committee's report reveals the latter.

Mark Darcy said Lord Willoughby de Broke had accused to Lords committee which had written the report of failing to ask searching questions about the democratic legitimacy of the European Commission, and that the Lord had also been critical of their two 'star witnesses' - former EU commissioners Neil Kinnock and Leon Brittan. There followed another extract from the Lord's contribution to the House, in which he said that asking if the two former commissioners thought that Commission should retain the sole right of legislation is 'rather like asking a fox if it wants to keep the keys to the hen-coop.' Mr Darcy continued,

Lord Willoughby, a hereditary peer, whose dynasty has traditionally been counted amongst the parliamentary awkward squad, ruffled more feathers with a suggestion that the stream of detailed, worthy reports, which emerges weekly from the Lords' invisible empire of European Scrutiny Sub-Committees were simply binned when they got to Brussels

There followed a contribution from Conservative peer, Lady O'Cathain, who said this was 'absolutely not true', and that the House of Lords reports were 'pored over' in Europe. Mr Darcy reported that there had been 'strong murmurs of agreement around the chamber' but that the UKIP peer was 'unrepentant'. There followed a third soundbite contribution from Lord Willoughby de Broke.

So my Lords, really to follow on the point made, what is the point of these committees? They do a lot of good work everyone has a lot of evidence and it's all very interesting, but what actually is the point of it? The unsavoury truth, really is that the vast majority of our law now is made in Brussels by our real government there, leaving our elected MPs with ever less to do.

Mark Darcy reported that Lord Willoughby de Broke had been speaking after a series of peers had 'hailed the report for dispelling myths about Europe's lack of democratic accountability', and proceeded to include soundbites from a number of these peers. First, Labour MP Lord Tomlinson who spoke about the 'mythological creation in the minds of UKIP', that the bureaucrats of Brussels are 'wagging the dog by the tail'. He said the UKIP claim was 'arrant nonsense, and it's well debunked'. Next, came an audio clip of the Conservative peer Lord Bowness, who said that the report showed plenty of influences in the making of Euro-law, 'not least the European Parliament and national governments', and the British parliament should take a more active role. A contribution from the Liberal Democrat spokesman Lord Wallace of Saltaire came next. He criticised UKIP's contribution to the European Parliament directly:

Lord Willoughby de Broke did not perhaps mention that, if one's looking at the contribution which the European Parliament makes to the scrutiny of European representation, the contribution which the UKIP Members of the European Parliament have made in the last five years has not been amongst the most distinguished.

Mark Darcy concluded his report with the observation, 'by the sedate standards of their Lordships' house, this was all rather catty', and noted a recent trend for 'noble claws to be unsheathed' when 'the subject of Europe' crops up.

Lord Willoughby de Broke was given ample space within the package to criticise the processes of the Lords' European Scrutiny Sub-Committees, with three soundbites and additional explanation from Mark Darcy. However, none of his contributions called for withdrawal, or set out any arguments for the perspective. Furthermore, the package was the impression that Lord Willoughby de Broke was a lone voice, attracting criticism from the rest of the political spectrum, including a Labour peer, a Liberal Democrat peer, and two Conservative peers. Hansard reveals that the debate itself was more balanced, with UKIP's

Lord Pearson of Rannoch, and Conservative peer Lord Astor of Hever both offering contributions which supported Lord Willoughby de Broke's point of view.

The structure chosen for the report further accentuated the impression that Lord Willoughby de Broke's arguments had been pulled down by all sides of the House. The final three soundbite contributions were presented out of their chronological order – the three peers had actually spoken *before* Lord Willoughby de Broke – and although this was made explicit to by Mark Darcy, it was certainly a somewhat peculiar way in which to present the debate, and served only to strengthen the impression that Lord Willoughby de Broke's was an isolated view.

2.13 The Business News

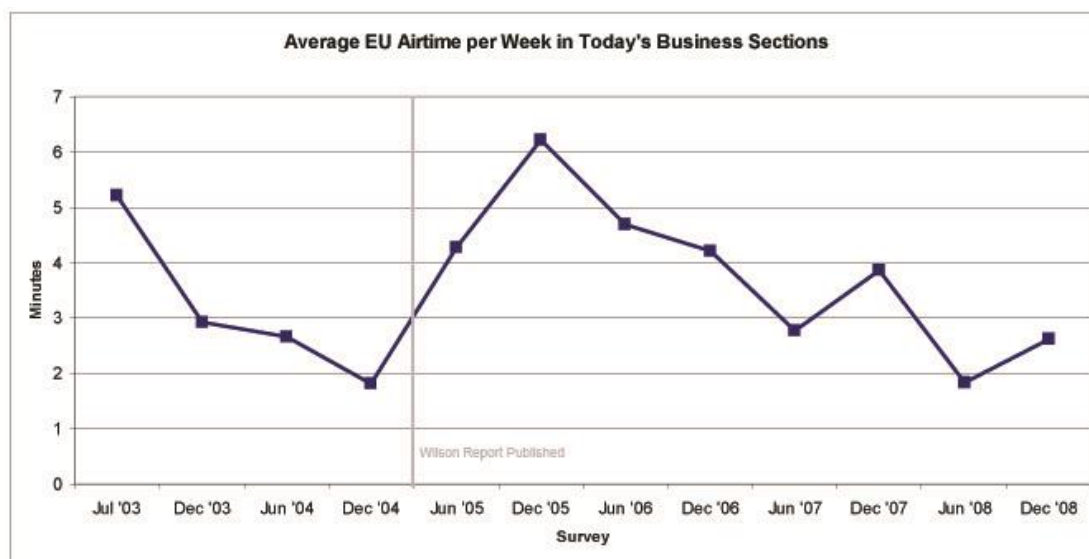
Today broadcasts its main Business News report at 6.15am each weekday morning, along with two shorter updates later in the programme. Combined, these three slots typically account for somewhere between 14 and 20 minutes per programme, which equates to between 12 and 17% of coverage in Today's weekday editions. During the current survey, where the global 'credit crunch' fears over the UK housing market, share prices, job losses and the threat recession were prominent themes, business coverage in the dedicated slots was augmented with a wide range of additional reporting on these themes in the main body of the programme. In total, 35.9% of the Today programme was devoted to these issues during the survey interval.

The table provides details of the EU stories which have appeared in Today's Business News and Business Update slots in the twelve Newswatch surveys undertaken since September 2002.

Business News and Business Update coverage						
Survey	Survey Date	Weeks	Total Items	Duration	Items per week	Airtime per week
1	September 2002 – July 2003	47	138	246 min	2.9	5 min 13 sec
2	September – December 2003	12	24	35 min	2.0	2 min 55 sec
3	March – June 2004	12	15	28 min	1.3	2 min 40 sec
4	October – December 2004	10	11	18 min	1.1	1 min 48 sec
5	March – June 2005	15	27	64 min	1.8	4 min 16 sec
6	October – December 2005	9	21	56 min	2.3	6 min 13 sec
7	February – June 2006	16	32	75 min	2.0	4 min 41 sec
8	September – December 2006	14	26	59 min	1.9	4 min 12 sec
9	March – June 2007	14	20	39 min	1.4	2 min 47 sec
10	September – December 2007	14	23	54 min	1.6	3 min 52 sec
11	March – June 2008	12	19	22 min	1.6	1 min 50 sec
12	September – December 2008	14	27	39 min	1.9	2 min 37 sec

The current survey saw an increase in the amount of airtime given over to the discussion of EU issues in Today's business sections from the previous Newswatch investigation, However,

as the graph shows, average weekly EU business coverage was still the third lowest of the twelve Newswatch surveys undertaken since September 2002



Stories relating to business, finance and economics also accounted for a significant proportion of Today's total EU coverage during the period, with 159 minutes of features devoted to these matters. This represented 41% of the total airtime EU airtime broadcast by Today during the survey interval.

2.10 Lisbon Treaty Coverage

Today carried only four reports on the Lisbon Treaty during the fourteen week survey. One mention appeared in the Newspaper Review section, and the rest were features, with a combined duration of 15 minutes and 30 seconds. This meant that the theme accounted for just 4% of the programme's EU coverage, and 0.17% of the total available airtime. By comparison, during the previous Newswatch investigation, undertaken between March and June 2008, there had been 40 reports on the Treaty in total, including 8 bulletin items, 5 mentions in the Newspaper Review sections, and 27 features with a combined duration of 2 hours and 12 minutes. This meant that 49.8% of Today's EU airtime had been devoted to discussion of the Treaty, and the theme had accounted for 1.6% of Today's total feature output.

In terms of airtime and positioning within the programme, only one of the three features on the Lisbon Treaty (representing 23% of the total airtime on this theme) appeared during the programme's peak 7am-8.30am period. This report was broadcast on October 1, in a feature linked to the Conservative Party conference, and only a proportion of the package focused on the Lisbon issue.

Today's coverage of the Lisbon Treaty during the interval included four interviews, and no soundbite contributions. The contributors were as follows: William Hague, Conservative Europe minister, gave a 253 word interview in which he spoke critically of the Lisbon Treaty, Patrick Smith, an Irish journalist who gave a 422 word neutral appraisal of events surrounding the possibility of a second referendum in Ireland, and a two-way interview featuring Irish Foreign Minister Dick Roche, who spoke 366 words in favour of the Treaty, and Declan Ganley from Libertas who spoke 474 words against. With two anti-Lisbon speakers to only one pro-Lisbon guest over the course of the survey, Today's coverage of the Lisbon Treaty reversed the overall trend observed in the survey, with 46% of the words spoken coming from the sceptical guests, compared to 23% for the pro-EU case, and 30% from the neutral contributor. However, it must be noted that this was a very small sample, the previous survey, for example, which was two weeks shorter in duration, included 55 guests speaking about the Lisbon Treaty.

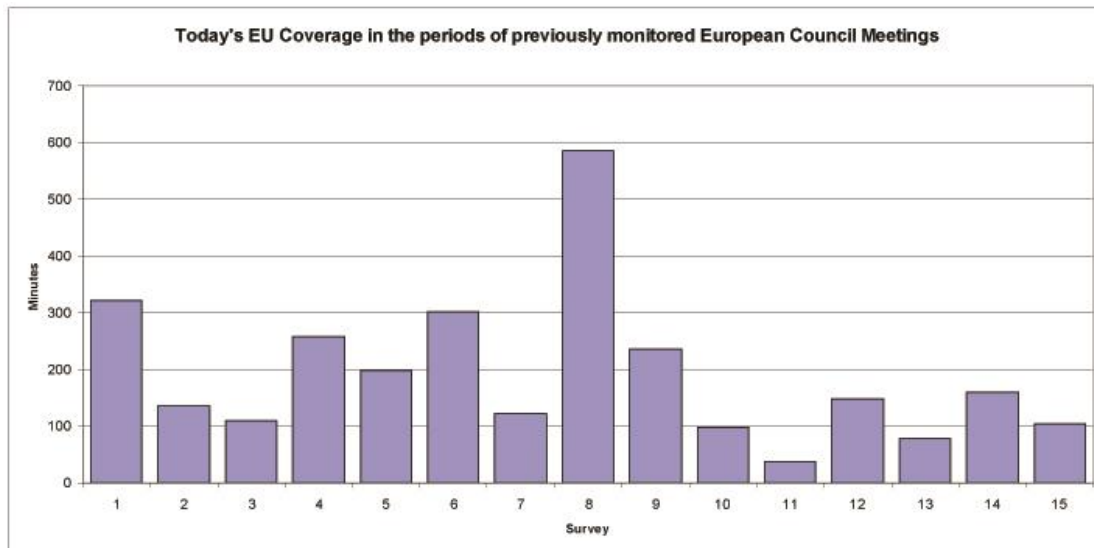
3.1 The European Council Meeting

The EU's biannual European Council took place in Brussels on 12 and 13 December 2008, chaired by the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy. Issues discussed at the Council included the Lisbon Treaty, economic and financial affairs, energy and climate change, the common agricultural policy and the EU's security and external relations.

Newswatch has monitored the Today programme in the period surrounding the EU's European Council meeting on fourteen previous occasions. The earliest surveys were event-based, with Today being monitored for three-week intervals. To allow close comparisons with these initial investigations, data from later, more extensive, projects is isolated to produce figures for an equivalent 21-day period: nineteen days leading up to and including each summit, and for two days subsequently.

		Total Items	Feature Reports	Airtime (features)	Speakers
1	Feira, June 2000	104	66	322 minutes	69
2	Seville, June 2002	69	43	137 minutes	51
3	Copenhagen, December 2002	54	34	110 minutes	50
4	Thessaloniki, June 2003	111	73	258 minutes	99
5	Brussels, December 2003	78	46	198 minutes	67
6	Brussels June 2004	110	61	303 minutes	90
7	Brussels, December 2004	48	33	122 minutes	40
8	Brussels June 2005	179	117	586 minutes	199
9	Brussels, December 2005	97	58	236 minutes	88
10	Brussels, June 2006	41	29	98 minutes	28
11	Brussels, December 2006	23	15	38 minutes	13
12	Brussels, June 2007	54	38	148 minutes	45
13	Brussels, December 2007	41	28	79 minutes	36
14	Brussels, June 2008	72	40	160 minutes	68
15	Brussels, December 2008	56	30	104 minutes	34

The data represents the *total* EU coverage in each three-week period, and not just 'summit specific' coverage – which is often difficult to define in practice. The information collected in previous surveys provides a useful benchmark against which to measure Today's treatment of EU themes in June 2008, and also provides an indication of just how much of the programme's airtime may be taken up with EU-related news, when the theme is considered by editors to be high on the news agenda. The graph shows airtime data from the Today programme during the 15 European Council Meetings monitored by Newswatch



The period of the December 2008 European Council saw the third least amount of EU news of the fifteen Council Meetings monitored previously by Newswatch.

3.2 The Summit Week in Detail

Newswatch investigated the wider news agenda during the week of the European Council, by logging and timing every report broadcast by Today over the course of its six editions. All stories which formed the basis of three or more individual feature reports are presented in the table:

Main Stories: Monday 8 – Saturday 13 December 2008			
Story	Total Airtime	Features	Average feature length
Credit Crunch/economics/finance	139 minutes	35	3 min 58 sec
Knife and Gang Crime	45 minutes	8	5 min 38 sec
EU, business, economics and finance	37 minutes	7	5 min 17 sec
EU and the Environment	24 minutes	6	4 min
Zimbabwe	22 minutes	5	4 min 24 sec
Damian Green Arrest	19 minutes	4	4 min 45 sec
Assisted Suicide	17 minutes	3	5 min 40 sec
Cigarette Sale Restrictions	17 minutes	3	5 min 40 sec
Welfare Reform	17 minutes	3	5 min 40 sec
Mumbai Terrorist Attacks	14 minutes	5	2 min 48 sec
Primary Education	14 minutes	3	4 min 40 sec
Stansted Airport Protests	13 minutes	4	3 min 15 sec
Afghanistan	11 minutes	3	3 min 40 sec
Walking Speed of Postmen	11 minutes	4	2 min 45 sec
Death of Oliver Postgate	8 minutes	3	2 min 40 sec

There were some difficulties in categorising the week's main stories, owing to an overlap in some of the main news themes. The 'credit crunch' was by far the most prominent story, with 139 minutes of coverage and 35 feature reports devoted to this issue. This represented 21%

of Today's available airtime. For the purposes of this investigation, EU-based business and financial stories were categorised separately, but in practice there was an overlap. As such, if the EU-based financial coverage were included alongside the wider 'credit crunch' stories, a total of 176 minutes and 42 features were devoted to items on this theme.

However, the figures could also be taken another way. Both the 'credit crunch' and the environment were issues being discussed at the European Council Meeting. As such, if these two EU themes were categorised together, and the single report on the Lisbon Treaty which appeared during the week was included too, they would amount to 14 feature reports with a combined duration of 69 minutes, and coverage that was broadly European Council-related would be the second most prominent theme of this week.

Aside from the fifteen stories listed in the table, Today had space for 4 hours 17 minutes of additional features, or 39% of its overall space within the programme. These were often in the form of single, standalone reports, and a proportion might not be considered 'newsworthy' in the strictest sense. These included: news of a musical based on the life of the cricketer Shane Warne, an exhibition of pre-revolutionary Russian garments at the V&A Museum and a study looking at the emotions expressed by dogs.

The following table collates data from equivalent 'summit weeks' in the six most recent Newswatch surveys:

Date	Main Stories	Airtime of 'Main Stories'	% of Airtime	Most Prominent Story	Airtime - Most Prominent Story
Dec 05	10	380 minutes	57%	Today's Christmas Poll	99 minutes
Jun 06	13	343 minutes	52%	Criminal Sentencing	68 minutes
Dec 06	15	377 minutes	57%	Prostitute Murders	71 minutes
Jun 07	13	409 minutes	62%	EU Summit	89 minutes
Dec 07	10	252 minutes	38%	Bali Climate Talks	62 minutes
Jun 08	11	310 minutes	47%	Credit Crunch	89 minutes
Dec 08	14	408 minutes	61%	Credit Crunch	139 minutes

The data shows that, by comparison, the week of the December 2008 summit was a comparatively heavy news week and the most prominent story – the credit crunch - dominated an unusually high proportion of the programme.

