

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release 26 April 2016

The UK environmental profession backs continued EU membership – because it works

The environmental profession strongly backs Britain remaining part of the European Union because the EU delivers higher environmental standards, the widest and most detailed opinion survey carried out in the sector has shown.

Of 893 environmental professionals who responded to an online poll run from February to March, the margin for Remain versus Leave is 85% to 15% (excluding don't know and will not vote). This is a higher margin than any virtually any other significant group in society.

The survey shows environmental professionals' pro-Remain majority to be pragmatic rather than ideological.

The profession strongly believes that the EU delivers higher environmental standards (81% net positive), including on cross-border issues that cannot easily be tackled only at national level (77% net positive). There is also strong belief that the EU provides a stable environmental policy foundation (69% net positive).

In contrast, the environmental profession has relatively low trust in UK government institutions to protect the environment and sustainability, in particular the current Conservative UK government (63% net negative) (though the Welsh (18% net positive) and Scottish (15% net positive) administrations are seen as performing better).

But environmental professionals are not starry eyed about Europe and readily see flaws in the way the EU works. Overall agreement with negative adjectives such as wasteful and arrogant was 32%, whereas agreement with positive attitudes such as efficient and accountable was 23%.

Moreover, environmental professionals see the EU as failing on certain environmental matters. There is overall agreement that the Common Agriculture Policy (net 32%) and Common Fisheries Policy (net 13%) cause environmental harm. A significant majority is concerned that the EU's free trade agenda will undermine environmental protection.

If the UK public votes to remain in the EU environmental professionals see the highest priority as being an increase in national regulatory resources (82% strong or very strong agreement) and full enforcement of environmental rules (67% strong or very strong agreement).

If on 24 June Britain is on a path to exiting environmental professionals want all possible steps taken to ensure continuity in the environmental policy framework (84% strong or very strong agreement). This includes a strong desire for Britain to remain in the European single market (70% strong or very strong agreement).

Research by ENDS shows that the difference between staying in or leaving the single market is enormous in environmental policy terms. Of 40 of the most important pieces of EU environmental legislation about three-quarters apply across the European Economic Area, which governs the single market and would continue to apply in Britain unless it exited altogether.

The survey was managed and its results analysed by the environmental publisher ENDS, in association with Society for the Environment, the umbrella organisation for environmental professional institutions and overseer of the Chartered Environmentalist qualification.

The survey was open online between 4 February and 20 March 2016 and publicised by ENDS and Society for the Environment. A total of 893 complete responses met quality criteria and were retained for analysis.

A report on the survey findings – “An environmental union?” will appear in the May edition of the ENDS Report and is published on 26 April online, available free at www.endsreport.com/reports/EUref (registration required). The full survey results can be downloaded at www.ends.co.uk/downloads/EURefSurRslts.pdf. Commenting on the survey, ENDS Publisher Nick Rowcliffe said: “Our findings are based on a good cross section of the environmental profession. Environmental professionals have given a strong endorsement of the EU, not because they see it as perfect, but because they believe it is necessary.”

“This is a pragmatic profession, united in a desire for further steps towards sustainability, calling for Britain to continue with what works, and for UK government institutions to do better.”

Society for the Environment CEO Dr Emma Wilcox said: "Professional competence is critical to good decision-making so I was pleased to offer SocEnv's support to ENDS for this review. As the professionals at the coalface, our registrants make decisions that impact our environment and deal with European laws on a daily basis. Their views are credible and deserve to be heard. However, whether we remain in the EU or vote to leave in June our Chartered Environmentalists will continue working towards a sustainable future."

#EUEnviroPoll

[ENDS](#) is a leading publisher of information for environmental professionals, including the benchmark [ENDS Report](#) magazine and website, the EU environmental policy news service [ENDS Europe](#) and the environmental legal database and ISO 14001 support tool [ENDS Compliance Manager](#). ENDS is part of Haymarket Media Group.

[Society for the Environment](#) (SocEnv) has a Royal Charter to regulate and monitor the standards for Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) registration in the UK. The CEnv qualification is available to individual members of the Society's 24 professional partners by way of a licence from SocEnv. These partners represent hundreds of thousands of practitioners, working across a broad range of disciplines and sectors who share a common vision of delivering sustainability through environmental professionalism.

For further information, contact Nick Rowcliffe, ENDS Publisher, nick.rowcliffe@haymarket.com, tel 020 8267 8112, mob 07806 297918.

For further information on the work of the Society for the Environment, see the website www.socenv.org.uk or contact Deputy Chief Executive Kerry.Geldart@socenv.org.uk tel: 0247 679 6451.