



Briefing
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Open Europe

EU reform heat-map: Where do EU countries stand on the UK's EU reform demands?



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Open Europe is a non-partisan and independent policy think tank, committed to crafting and putting into action solutions to the European Union's most pressing challenges. We are committed to European Union reform. Our vision for a slimmed-down, outward looking and dynamic EU rests on four principles:

- **Boost jobs and growth.** Enable and encourage free trade – internally and globally. Regulate business less, but better.
- **Embrace democracy.** Be transparent and accountable to citizens, recognising the crucial role of national parliaments. Cut the cost of Brussels.
- **Focus on the big questions.** Do not interfere in areas that could be equally well handled at the national or local level.
- **Be flexible.** Allow powers to flow back to the member states, and let some countries integrate more than others.

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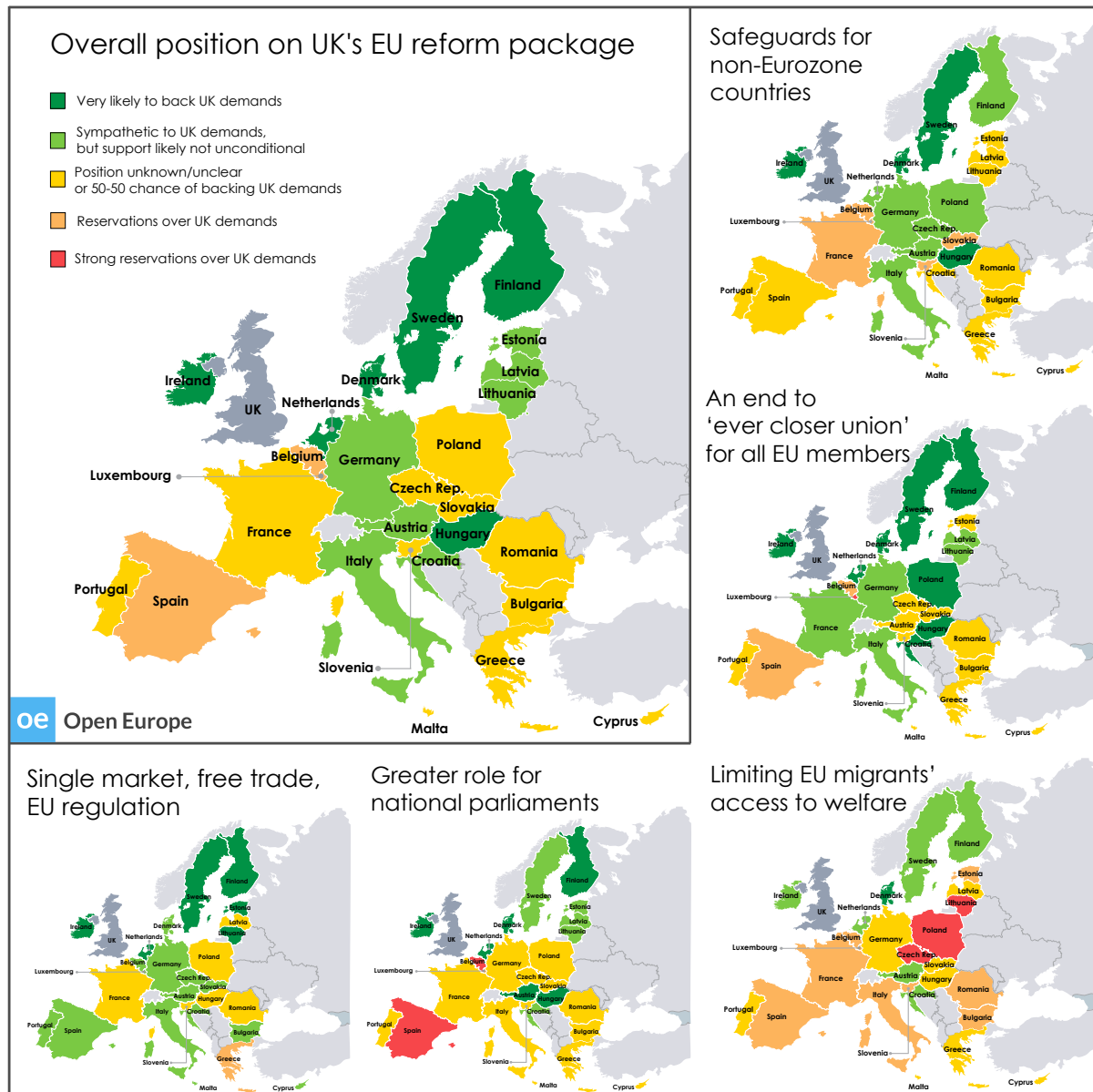
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KEY POINTS

- Changing the rules on EU migrants' access to benefits is likely to be the single most difficult item on David Cameron's agenda. While the UK is far from isolated, several countries are wary that the Prime Minister is looking to undermine the fundamental principle of free movement and discriminate against their citizens living in the UK. Discussions on this issue stalled somewhat due to the Polish elections, but will now resume in earnest and remain top of the agenda.
- Securing stronger safeguards for euro 'outs' is second in order of difficulty. The largest Eurozone countries – Germany, France and Italy – all agree with the principle, but the devil will be in the details. Any mechanism that comes across as standing in the way of closer Eurozone integration, or granting special protection to the UK's financial services sector, will be less likely to fly.
- Greater powers for national parliaments could be slightly easier to negotiate. The 'yellow card' warning system already exists in the EU Treaties – it would essentially be a matter of giving it more teeth. Nonetheless, some member states could put up resistance due to fears this could hamper further EU integration.
- Ensuring that 'ever closer union' no longer applies to all EU member states should be relatively less controversial, as EU leaders have already acknowledged in the June 2014 European Council conclusions that this principle allows for "different paths of integration for different countries."
- On paper, the easiest part of the UK's renegotiation agenda relates to further single market liberalisation, less red tape and more free trade. The question here seems to be more about what Cameron can achieve on top of what is already happening. Furthermore, some EU countries have reservations over specific issues. Germany remains reluctant to open up its professional services, for instance, while France's support for TTIP – the EU-US free trade deal – is not unconditional. While EU leaders may talk a good game in this area, the reality may be different.
- Our scorecard suggests that, along with Denmark, Ireland will be the most helpful country throughout the renegotiation, as it would be the most negatively affected by a Brexit. Open Europe research showed that, if the UK were to leave the EU, Ireland could see a permanent loss to GDP of between 1.1% and 3.1% in 2030 – under a best-case and a worst-case scenario respectively.
- The Netherlands is also broadly supportive of Cameron's EU reform agenda. However, the Dutch government remains suspicious of further integration at the Eurozone-only level and could therefore take a more cautious approach on safeguards for euro 'outs' – as it would prefer a more devolved EU but at the level of EU-28.
- At the opposite end, Belgium, Luxembourg and Spain could be among the hardest to deal with. These countries continue to have a particularly strong emotional attachment to European integration, and tend to view with scepticism any proposal that is perceived as going in the opposite direction to 'ever closer union'.
- Some objections will matter more than others. Some issues on the UK's renegotiation agenda will be subject to majority voting – meaning that the views of the big states will carry more weight. For some others, unanimity could be needed – meaning that each EU member state would have a veto, giving smaller countries an important role. Much will also depend on the specific technical approaches used – some states are unwilling to consider treaty change while there may also be varying interpretations over what is possible under the current treaties. We have not considered this in detail as it will only become clear once the UK has tabled more detailed demands.

EU reform heat-map: where do EU states stand on the UK's EU reform demands?



To see a high-resolution version of the overall map above, click [here](#).

To see the individual maps, click on the following links:

- [Non-Eurozone safeguards](#)
- [Ever closer union](#)
- [EU migrants' access to welfare](#)
- [National parliaments](#)
- [Single market](#)

THE UK'S MAIN EU REFORM DEMANDS

The UK's main reform demands can be broken down into five broad categories:

Safeguarding the rights of non-Eurozone countries

Under new EU voting rules, the 19 Eurozone countries have an in-built majority in the Council of Ministers, where national governments vote on new EU laws. The UK is pushing for stronger safeguards to ensure that non-Eurozone countries cannot be systematically outvoted by the Eurozone acting as a 'caucus' – and essentially writing the rules for all 28 EU member states. As part of this basket, the UK also wants the EU to be officially recognised as a 'multi-currency union'.

End 'ever closer union' for all EU members

The UK is seeking formal recognition of the principle that the commitment to achieving an 'ever closer union' set out in the EU Treaties does not apply to all EU member states. This is not simply a symbolically important issue. It is linked to the broader, long-standing UK demand that the EU should become more flexible and allow for different levels of integration.

Limiting EU migrants' access to welfare

The UK's flagship proposal is to restrict EU migrants' access to in-work benefits for the first four years. Other demands include: stopping EU migrants claiming child benefits if their children are living abroad; longer re-entry bans for people who abuse EU free movement; and tighter and longer restrictions on migration from countries that may join the EU in future.

A 'red card' for national parliaments

The UK is proposing giving groups of national parliaments the power to veto unwanted EU proposals by showing the European Commission a 'red card'. At the moment, national parliaments can show the Commission a 'yellow card' – but the Commission can essentially ignore the warning and push ahead with the proposal, and has already done so in the past.

Deepening the single market, boosting free trade and cutting red tape

The UK wants to speed up further liberalisation of the single market, particularly on services. It is also keen on the EU becoming quicker at concluding free trade deals with third countries – notably the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with the US. Finally, the UK would like to see a stronger de-regulation drive at the EU level and swifter progress towards an Energy Union and a Capital Markets Union.

Open Europe is not specifically endorsing or dismissing these points. This assessment is simply based on what we believe are likely to be the key points of the letter Prime Minister David Cameron will send to European Council President Donald Tusk.

OPEN EUROPE'S COUNTRY-BY-COUNTRY ASSESSMENT

Austria

Austria is sympathetic to UK plans to restrict EU migrants' access to welfare, and will likely back further single market liberalisation. Furthermore, as a country that attaches great importance to the principle of 'subsidiarity' – legislate as locally as possible – Austria could be an ally of the UK in pursuing greater powers for national parliaments, including a 'red card' to block unwanted EU proposals. It is worth bearing in mind, however, that Austria is currently run by a 'grand coalition' government. The centre-right Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) of Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz will likely be more open-minded on David Cameron's EU reform demands than the Social-Democratic Party (SPÖ) of Chancellor Werner Faymann. In addition, the lawsuit against the UK that Austria filed during the summer at the European Court of Justice (ECJ) – concerning EU-approved state subsidies for the new Hinkley Point C nuclear power plant in Somerset – has caused tensions between the two countries.

Belgium

Belgium may well be among the least helpful countries for David Cameron's renegotiation. Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel has voiced support for the 'soft' items on the UK's EU reform agenda – deepening the single market, less EU red tape, and more free trade deals with third countries. However, he has also been categorical in rejecting the idea of a 'red card' for national parliaments and has said that EU free movement is "inviolable". Years have gone by, but Belgium – a founding member of the EU – remains genuinely convinced that 'ever closer union' is essential and should be the ultimate goal of European integration. Therefore, it instinctively receives with scepticism any proposal that it sees as going in the opposite direction. That said, the silver lining for David Cameron is the presence in the Belgian coalition government of the moderate nationalist New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) party of Finance Minister Johan Van Overtveldt – which is a fellow member of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) Group at the European Parliament and is more sympathetic to the UK's EU reform demands.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria has so far said little about David Cameron's EU reform proposals. As a fellow non-Eurozone country, we would expect Bulgaria to back stronger safeguards to protect the rights of euro 'outs'. That said, the country still intends to join the single currency in the coming years and could therefore be wary of a categorical split between countries inside and outside the Eurozone. In addition, similar to other Central and Eastern EU member states, Bulgaria will probably be rather cautious on UK proposals to restrict EU migrants' access to benefits.

Croatia

Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanović has been adamant in voicing his opposition to 'ever closer union'. He also seems to be fairly open-minded with regard to David Cameron's plans to change the rules on EU migrants' access to benefits. One important caveat: the Croatian general election will take place on 8 November, and it is unclear whether the Croatian Prime Minister's centre-left coalition will be able to retain power.

Cyprus

Due to the historical links between the two countries, we expect Cyprus to be constructive throughout the renegotiation and do its best to keep the UK in the EU. However, Cypriot politicians have hardly made any public statements about the substance of David Cameron's reform demands – meaning that the island's stance remains mostly unclear.

Czech Republic

Unlike its predecessor, the centre-left Czech cabinet led by Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka appears to be far more committed to further EU integration – although public opinion remains sceptical. While Sobotka himself has said that he would like his country to join the euro "around 2020", we would still expect the Czech Republic to back UK demands for stronger safeguards for non-Eurozone countries. However, the Czech government will likely be a tough interlocutor on EU migrants' access to welfare – and may well be wary of a 'red card' for national parliaments.

EU reform heat-map: where do EU states stand on the UK's EU reform demands?

Denmark

Overall, we expect Denmark to be very supportive of David Cameron's EU reform agenda. Along with the UK, Denmark is the only EU member state with a permanent opt-out from joining the euro. As such, it is very likely to back British demands for stronger safeguards for non-Eurozone countries and should not have a major problem with the UK achieving an opt-out from 'ever closer union'. London and Copenhagen also see eye-to-eye on EU migrants' access to benefits – as the issue has been the subject of political debate in Denmark too.

Estonia

The government of Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas will wholeheartedly back David Cameron's proposals for further single market liberalisation and swifter free trade deals with third countries. However, Estonia will likely be more cautious as regards plans to restrict EU migrants' access to benefits. The Estonian position on the other key renegotiation items remains unclear at this stage.

Finland

The Finnish government, mostly via Finance Minister Alexander Stubb, has expressed favourable views over the UK's main EU reform proposals. Free movement could be a potential flashpoint between Helsinki and London, although Stubb himself has described British demands on EU migrants' access to welfare as "very legitimate". While the Finnish government is indeed a coalition comprised of three parties, all of them to different degrees – the (True) Finns party of Foreign Minister Timo Soini more than the Centre Party of Prime Minister Juha Sipilä – have displayed an open-minded attitude vis-à-vis David Cameron's EU reform drive. At the time of writing, the Finnish coalition appears to be close to collapsing due to disagreements over Prime Minister Sipilä's proposed health and social care reforms. A government crisis could make Finland's position more unpredictable in the short term. Sipilä would likely try to put together a new cabinet before calling snap elections, but his chances of success are unclear at this stage.

France

French President François Hollande and Economy Minister Emmanuel Macron have repeatedly evoked the need for "differentiated integration" within the EU – with the Eurozone pushing ahead with closer integration, while safeguarding the rights of countries outside the single currency. However, France remains wary that David Cameron is ultimately looking for some sort of 'veto via the back door', or a special carve-out for the UK's financial services sector – meaning that everything will depend on the details of the mechanism that will be put on the table. While the French government has voiced support for cutting EU red tape, it is far from obvious that it would back UK demands to go beyond what is already being done – especially when it comes to further services liberalisation. The backlash triggered by Macron's plans to open up a number of regulated professions (notaries, lawyers, bailiffs, etc.) gives a good idea of the domestic resistance to this kind of reforms. Similarly, France's support for TTIP – the EU-US free trade deal – is not unconditional. In addition, Paris is unlikely to be a cheerleader for the 'red card' for national parliaments and may also be reluctant to agree to UK proposals to restrict EU migrants' access to benefits – especially if it sees the plans as undermining the principle of free movement.

Germany

Germany is clearly prepared to make concessions to keep the UK in the EU and avoid being left alone facing a Mediterranean bloc that tends to have more protectionist views when it comes to EU external trade. Chancellor Angela Merkel and Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble have been talking a good game on the importance of finding a good compromise to keep the UK in the EU – which is helpful for David Cameron's renegotiation. In principle, Berlin would back the UK's push for reform of the rules on EU migrants' access to welfare – as similar issues have arisen in Germany over the past few years. However, Merkel will also be careful not to antagonise her junior coalition partner, the SPD, as well as Central and Eastern member states – especially Poland, which she considers as a valuable ally. In addition, Germany is not fully on board when it comes to the 'red card' for national parliaments – due to fears that it could hamper further EU integration. Similarly, Germany remains reluctant to open up its professional services market – which could clash with UK proposals to speed up services liberalisation within the EU.

EU reform heat-map: where do EU states stand on the UK's EU reform demands?

Greece

Two general elections in less than one year and a third bailout package to negotiate with its Eurozone partners and the IMF. Greece had more than enough on its plate and has therefore said very little – if anything at all – about the UK's EU reform plans. We are inclined to think that the SYRIZA-led government is not instinctively sympathetic to David Cameron's liberalising agenda – as well as UK plans to cut in-work benefits for EU migrants. However, Greece's official position remains broadly unclear at this stage.

Hungary

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán is clearly sceptical of 'ever closer union' and is likely to back British demands for stronger safeguards to protect the rights of non-Eurozone countries – as Hungary is itself outside the single currency and unlikely to join any time soon. Hungary may well be attracted to David Cameron's proposal for a 'red card' system that would significantly boost the influence of national parliaments in the EU decision-making process. It is unclear, however, to what extent Orbán would be supportive of UK plans to tighten up the rules on EU migrants' access to welfare.

Ireland

Ireland is arguably the country that would be most negatively affected by a Brexit. Open Europe research showed that, if the UK were to leave the EU, Ireland could see a permanent loss to GDP of between 1.1% and 3.1% in 2030 – under a best-case and a worst-case scenario respectively. Furthermore, the Irish government believes that the UK's EU membership has so far facilitated the Irish peace process. As a result, Ireland will likely spare no effort to make sure that David Cameron's renegotiation is successful. As long as the principle of free movement is not put into question, Ireland could back changes to the rules on EU migrants' access to benefits.

Italy

Italy wants to speed up Eurozone integration and clearly accepts the need to safeguard the rights of countries outside the single currency as part of the process. Crucially, the Italian and British governments are said to be holding technical talks on this specific issue – with a joint position paper potentially in the pipeline. Furthermore, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi has repeatedly stressed the need to slim down EU bureaucracy and is a strong supporter of TTIP. While Italy is in favour of greater involvement of national parliaments in the EU decision-making process, it may not be prepared to go that far as to back the 'red card' system proposed by the UK. Generally speaking, Italy strongly wants the UK to stay in the EU – as it is not keen to be 'left in the room' alone with Germany and France running the show. On the other hand, however, the on-going migrant crisis and the UK's unwillingness to take part in the European Commission's refugee quota system may impact Italy's willingness to help.

Latvia

It is hard to figure out where Latvia stands on the various UK reform proposals, not least because of the lack of public statements available. The Latvian government may be relatively open-minded about the issue of 'ever closer union', and less sympathetic to UK demands on EU migrants' access to welfare.

Lithuania

Lithuania will likely be among the hardest to persuade when it comes to UK demands for stricter rules on EU migrants' access to benefits. Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė is clearly in favour of deepening the single market, but she also seems keen on EU integration to progress at 28 as much as possible – meaning that she may not be entirely enthusiastic, for instance, about UK plans to win an opt-out from 'ever closer union'.

Luxembourg

Luxembourg's Prime Minister Xavier Bettel does not particularly like the idea of having an EU with too many different levels of integration. He is also sceptical of granting the UK any special treatment as a result of the renegotiation. Therefore, Luxembourg is unlikely to be enthusiastic about UK demands for an opt-out from 'ever closer union' – as well as stronger safeguards for non-Eurozone countries.

Malta

While still leader of the opposition, Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat was no big fan of David Cameron's EU renegotiation plans. However, his government seems to have adopted a more pragmatic stance. That said, aside from the fact that Malta is against EU Treaty change, we do not know much about the island's views on the various UK reform proposals due to the limited number of public statements available. As in the case of Italy, the UK's attitude vis-à-vis the migrant crisis could play a role in shaping Malta's negotiating position.

Netherlands

The Netherlands is arguably one of the UK's closest allies on EU reform. The Dutch government's motto, 'European where necessary, national where possible' perfectly summarises its scepticism vis-à-vis the idea of an 'ever closer union' in every policy area. Furthermore, the Netherlands has openly backed giving groups of national parliaments the power to block unwanted EU proposals via a new 'red card' mechanism. The Dutch government agrees with the principle that the rights of non-Eurozone countries should be protected. At the same time, however, it may be wary of creating a clear and permanent split between euro 'ins' and 'outs'. The Netherlands appears to be concerned that moving towards closer Eurozone integration would entail a loss of sovereignty without necessarily gaining a greater say/control over the budget policies of the fiscally laxer Eurozone countries. As a result, it would prefer a more devolved EU – where subsidiarity is enforced properly – but at the level of EU-28.

Poland

The victory for the conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party in the 25 October general election means the new Polish government could well back David Cameron in his bid for a more flexible EU in which not every member state is bound to pursuing 'ever closer union'. Poland is also likely to support UK demands for safeguards for non-Eurozone countries. However, the UK and Poland will continue to clash over EU migrants' access to benefits. Strictly speaking, PiS is not an economically liberal party. Therefore, it remains unclear to what extent Warsaw will back the UK's push for further single market liberalisation beyond what is already happening. However, the new Polish government could back the TTIP free trade deal with the US out of strategic considerations.

Portugal

Due to the inconclusive outcome of the 4 October general election, Portugal is in the midst of a complicated government formation process. We based our assessment on the views of the centre-right government of Pedro Passos Coelho – whose continuation in power remains uncertain at this stage. However, a Socialist-led government backed by radical left-wing parties would be less sympathetic to pro-market and pro-free trade reforms – and would likely take a less open-minded stance on EU migrants' access to welfare.

Romania

Romania will carefully scrutinise UK proposals to restrict EU migrants' access to welfare. However, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis has shown pragmatism and willingness to treat the issue of social benefits as separate from the more fundamental principle of free movement. This could potentially make David Cameron's task easier. The Romanian position on the other big renegotiation items remains mostly unclear. The recent resignation of Prime Minister Victor Ponta is likely to add further uncertainty in the short term.

Slovakia

Although Slovakia's stance on some issues (e.g. the 'red card' for national parliaments) remains unclear, Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico has displayed a broadly open-minded attitude towards the UK's renegotiation agenda. This includes some encouraging remarks with regard to David Cameron's proposed changes to rules on EU migrants' access to benefits. On this issue, however, Slovakia may eventually align itself with its close allies in the so-called 'Visegrad Group' (V4) – Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary – and therefore take a less flexible stance.

Slovenia

Slovenia has not been giving much away on its views of David Cameron's EU renegotiation agenda. However, Slovenian Prime Minister Miro Cerar has insisted that any reform should respect the EU's 'four freedoms' – including free movement of workers – and ensure the equal treatment of all EU citizens across the bloc. Therefore, Slovenia will likely be cautious in assessing UK demands for stricter rules on EU migrants' access to welfare.

Spain

Spain would reluctantly agree to stronger safeguards for non-Eurozone countries, if these were deemed necessary to achieve closer Eurozone integration. The centre-right government of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy is also in favour of deepening the single market and is supportive of TTIP. However, Spain believes that a 'red card' for national parliaments would be a step too far. Furthermore, Madrid may put up resistance to reforming the rules on EU migrants' access to welfare if such reforms were seen as discriminating against the increasing number of Spaniards moving to the UK. Looking at the bigger picture, Spain continues to have a strong emotional attachment to European integration because of the link it draws between the latter and its return to democracy. Therefore, proposals that are seen as watering down the principle of 'ever closer union' are unlikely to go down well in Madrid. In addition, the considerable domestic challenges that Spain is facing at the moment – persistently high unemployment, the Catalan independence push, etc. – mean that the country may well not see the UK's EU reform drive as a priority in the coming months. One can also not rule out that other issues could come into play (think Gibraltar) that could negatively influence Spain's negotiating stance. One obvious caveat: Spain faces a general election on 20 December – meaning that the incumbent government is not in a position to make any firm pledge to the UK.

Sweden

As a fellow non-Eurozone country, Sweden is very likely to side with the UK on stronger safeguards for euro 'outs'. It is also supportive of deepening the single market and cutting EU red tape. Furthermore, Sweden traditionally gives great importance to the role of its national parliament in scrutinising the government's EU policy – and therefore it may well go along with the 'red card' system the UK is proposing. The centre-left cabinet of Prime Minister Stefan Löfven may raise some objections to UK plans to restrict EU migrants' access to benefits – mostly due to fears that the changes could undermine the principle of free movement – but the surge of the anti-immigrant Sweden Democrats could put pressure on the Swedish government to take a more pragmatic stance on this issue.

WHAT HAVE THEY SAID?

Austria

“What the EU needs right now is politicians who act responsibly and stand behind common European policies. Up until now I see the opposite tendency in Britain.”

- Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann, 15 May 2015¹

“Freedom of establishment is a central pillar of the EU and must be protected... Taking up work for only one day shall not be enough to receive social benefits.”

“The aim of the EU must be to constantly improve itself and solve new problems that arise. We in Austria also see the need for improvement, for instance when it comes to subsidiarity. Therefore, I can even envisage [EU] Treaty changes.”

- Austrian Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz, 10 June 2015²

Belgium

“There can be no ambiguity. At the end of the [renegotiation] process, the result cannot be that we dismantle Europe. For Belgium, there are some red lines: the principles of free movement and non-discrimination among citizens of the [European] Union are inviolable. Nor there can be a veto that would be granted to national parliaments: that would be the end of the EU!”

- Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel, 11 June 2015³

Bulgaria

“We agreed on the need to develop an EU that is more competitive, democratically accountable and fair to all member states, whether part of the euro or not.”

“We also discussed the need to protect the UK's welfare system from abuse while acknowledging that free movement of people to work is one of the four fundamental freedoms of the EU.”

- Bulgarian Foreign Minister Daniel Mitov and UK Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, 16 June 2015⁴

Croatia

“I am against the EU developing into ever closer union. This is wrong. We are close enough, the EU has enough powers... One now needs to draw the line somewhere and say, ‘Enough is enough’ - perhaps even too much.”

- Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanović, 1 October 2015⁵

“We should continue working on strengthening the single market and all freedoms, but I'm not in favour of further expanding federal powers either of the [European] Union or of the European Commission. They have enough powers as it is and should know how to use them.”

- Croatian Prime Minister Zoran Milanović, 3 June 2015⁶

Czech Republic

"I would like to highlight a topic that especially lies at my heart and about which I mentioned in relation to the internal market, and that is the free movement of persons. That key freedom of the EU is indispensable for me personally, and I am strongly convinced that it is for you as well. It is a fundamental source of European integration and is a crucial symbol. If we are serious about the EU, then we have to make a maximum effort to overcome its limitations. Any sign of negative developments in this area would have serious consequences for the integration process."

"Further integration is essential, because in some areas that are key for Europe's future, and about which I will still speak, we are only half way there, and in some cases only at the beginning."

"A Europe with a strong internal market will be better at facing global challenges. The internal market is also a tool that enables people to feel the practical effects of integration, and that strengthens European identity."

"We must admit that building the internal market is a constant work task with varying aims. New social phenomena and new technologies are emerging, and previous steps are resulting in challenges that could not have been foreseen. Deepening the internal market needs to be understood as a continual and dynamic process. We should realise its purpose and not let up in the effort to deepen it."

- Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka, 4 May 2015⁷

Denmark

"It would be a disaster for all of us if we arrive at a situation where [David] Cameron doesn't get the platform he needs to win a referendum. Some of the points the British are prioritising match my own thinking, namely that we need to strike a new balance between the free movement of labour and what welfare services those rights entitle a person to."

- Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, 24 June 2015⁸

"I'm definitely in favour of the freedom to move, but not freedom just to claim [benefits]. I think the different member states should have some access to protect their own welfare model."

"There's a window of opportunity, because everyone really wants the UK to stay in Europe...I'd like to look at us as helpful in developing such ideas between now and the UK referendum."

"If you ask me, it's not very realistic to get [EU] Treaty changes, but on secondary legislation I think it's doable to find practical solutions and we have developed quite a few ideas in that regard."

- Danish Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen, 22 September 2015⁹

Estonia

"I do agree with David Cameron that even the best unions can be made better. We can be open to discussions and I think David Cameron will be taken very seriously and we'll find a way to make the EU stronger together. I believe that we can listen to David's ideas and use many of them to make the EU a better place."

- Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas, 10 October 2015¹⁰

EU reform heat-map: where do EU states stand on the UK's EU reform demands?

"We are not thinking that we should lose or even have less of the main, basic freedoms of the EU. I think these freedoms are extremely important."

- Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas, 22 May 2015¹¹

"We must ensure that one of the fundamental freedoms in Europe, freedom of movement, is not endangered in any way because that is Europe's great strength, one of the foundation stones of the European Union, which we want to keep."

"As far as I understand, British Prime Minister David Cameron is not against that. He doesn't want to reduce freedom of movement, but his proposal is primarily aimed at ensuring that people who go to live in another country do so in order to work or study there rather than seek welfare benefits."

- Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas, 3 June 2015¹²

Finland

"Britain should absolutely stay [in the EU]. This is my hope... We have very many common issues, like internal market, free trade, creating growth and jobs, and so on."

"I think the issue about [EU migrants' access to] social benefits, this might be a very big issue in the UK. In Finland, this is not a big issue economically. But I fully understand the situation and the worries you have on this issue. When you have a concrete proposal, I think that Finland and other Nordic countries, we are very open to find a solution for that."

- Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä, 30 October 2015¹³

"We will do everything in our power to make sure the UK remains a steadfast, key player in the European Union. I think a lot of the claims you have made about economic reform, about social security, about immigration, about 'ever closer union' are very legitimate."

- Finnish Finance Minister Alexander Stubb, 15 October 2015¹⁴

"I think [the UK] will get what it wants. There are two reasons: one is called David Cameron, and the other one is called George Osborne. On top of that, you guys have probably one of the best civil services around. What the UK has done is the right thing. They have clearly defined four baskets of issues that they want to deal with. So they want economic reform - we all want that. They don't want 'ever closer union' - that's an issue for the UK that I think can be solved. They also want to define the relationship between the 'ins' and 'outs' in the euro - I think they will get what they want. The difficult issue will be free movement and limiting social security [for EU migrants]. That's where we still need to work. But I'm quite sure that, at the end of the day, there's not going to be crisis or mayhem - there'll be a solution."

- Finnish Finance Minister Alexander Stubb, 15 October 2015¹⁵

"So far we have muddled through the crises. But it is clear that more fundamental [EU] reform will be needed. This will raise many issues of balance of power... This will also most probably lead to increasing differentiation inside the EU. There will have to be a clearer definition of tasks between 'ins' and 'outs' in the euro, immigration and security policy. I do not, however, believe that we will see a quantum leap forward toward some kind of a federal state."

- Finnish Finance Minister Alexander Stubb, 7 October 2015¹⁶

"Of course I sympathise with [David Cameron's EU reform] agenda, personally. But I'm now one of the cabinet ministers in the Finnish government. If there are sensible approaches and suggestions tabled then of course we can support them, but even though we are the second biggest party in the government, I can only speak on behalf of the whole government up to a certain limit."

"This will be in a few years' time maybe the biggest problem inside the EU, because how can [EU members outside the Eurozone] act the same way if all the others are going in the other direction and going for an ever closer union? I think that it's very important that this problem is recognised, because if not, there's a possibility that Great Britain will leave."

"The [EU reform] process is very important and it must be taken seriously. This process can be useful from everybody's viewpoint, because if you look at the results that the EU is producing, you don't have to be the helot in the cave to say that it hasn't worked out very well."

- Finnish Foreign Minister Timo Soini, 3 July 2015¹⁷

France

"One needs to accept the idea that Europe is made at two speeds, and that there is a union based on solidarity and differentiation. There's a history at 28 and a history at 19 [the Eurozone]. Europe at 28 must be simpler, clearer and more effective, and must continue to move forward on digital and energy. The Eurozone avant-garde must move towards more solidarity and integration: a common budget, a common borrowing capability and tax convergence."

- French Economy Minister Emmanuel Macron, 31 May 2015¹⁸

"Strengthening the euro is not only about the Eurozone. It cannot be isolated from a broader rethinking of the EU, not least because we need to be able to answer the key question: what about the other member states? A stronger Eurozone should be the core of a deepened EU. We need a simpler and more efficient union, with more subsidiarity and streamlined governance. The fundamental instrument of EU integration is the single market; we should therefore make a new step towards a better-integrated internal market, with a targeted approach on key sectors like energy and digital economy."

- French Economy Minister Emmanuel Macron and German Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel, 3 June 2015¹⁹

"We need a fair treatment of the [Eurozone] 'out' countries...It is the right moment to reform a lot of things."

- French Economy Minister Emmanuel Macron, 27 July 2015²⁰

"Institutional choices will be necessary in order for the Eurozone to be governed...These choices will be binding for the member states that so wish. The European Parliament will exert its control and will guarantee the overall coherence of a Europe that will progress under a differentiated integration."

- French President François Hollande, 7 October 2015²¹

"We can do many things within the [EU] Treaties as they stand, as they offer enormous room for manoeuvre."

"We agree with the idea that it wasn't a good thing that, over time, the [European] Commission has wanted to regulate anything and everything, such as olive oil containers and toilet flushes."

"The fight against fraud and abuses [of the welfare system] is compatible with the Treaties."

"There are things that cannot be put into question, such as freedom of movement, which is a fundamental achievement."

- French Europe Minister Harlem Désir, 15 May 2015²²

"One can discuss what Europe must do and not do – that is, how to simplify a certain number of decisions. One can also envisage that there are countries inside the Eurozone and countries outside of it, without being in each other's way. One can ensure that national parliaments play a greater role – we are not at all hostile to that. On the other hand, if the discussion is about the essential principles of the EU – freedom of movement, the ability to decide together – then we don't want any Treaty change."

- French President François Hollande, 7 September 2015²³

Germany

"Where there are justified concerns – whether competitiveness or a better functioning of the EU – British concerns are our concerns."

"The Europe of today is no longer a one-speed Europe."

"We will do what we can so that Britain can stay [in the EU]."

- German Chancellor Angela Merkel, 2 November 2015²⁴

"As the euro area continues to integrate, it is important that countries outside the euro area are not at a systematic disadvantage in the EU. So future EU reform and Treaty change must include reform of the governance framework to put euro area integration on a sound legal basis, and guarantee fairness for those EU countries inside the single market but outside the single currency."

- UK Chancellor George Osborne and German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, 27 March 2014²⁵

"[Chancellor Merkel] has made it very clear that the fight against the possible abuse of free movement is of legitimate interest for us in Germany as well. But the higher principle of freedom of movement in general should not be meddled with."

- Steffen Seibert, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman, 3 November 2014²⁶

"There's considerable interest not just in Germany but in the whole of Europe in discussing all the questions that the UK wants to discuss, with a view to finding a good solution because we have a huge interest in the UK remaining a strong and engaged member of the EU...If we can't achieve [Treaty change] in one step, we won't say 'all or nothing'. We will try to move in this direction, possibly through agreements that would later be incorporated into Treaty changes. There is a big margin of manoeuvre."

- German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, 21 May 2015²⁷

"Not all 28 EU member states will always be able to do everything together at the same time. We need in Europe more courage to accommodate co-operation at different speeds...Not every [member state] must participate in everything."

- German Vice-Chancellor and Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel, 29 May 2015²⁸

Hungary

“As I get older, I tend to be more sceptical. Values are more important than money. National sovereignty is more and more important in my mind. The question, ‘Who is governing us?’ is the key question.”

“We shall need a new [EU] basic treaty eventually.”

- Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, 15 October 2013²⁹

Ireland

“There are a whole range of issues where we have, I think, a lot of agreement in terms of the single market, the digital market, the energy market, services, red tape, [and] administration.”

- Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny, 18 June 2015³⁰

“Freedom of movement is fundamental. That’s not in question. It’s not an issue, as confirmed by the Prime Minister [David Cameron] himself.”

- Irish Prime Minister Enda Kenny, 19 June 2015³¹

“Grexit is of course a concern, but we could recover from it in a matter of weeks. A Brexit would be a profound and fundamental change in the Irish-British relationship that would inevitably raise questions about Ireland’s place in the EU.”

- Irish MP Dominic Hannigan, Chairman of the Irish parliament’s Joint Committee on EU Affairs, 25 March 2015³²

“We want the UK in the EU because our union is stronger on account of Britain’s presence – because Ireland and our society, businesses and citizens benefit from the UK’s [EU] membership. And because it reinforces and enriches the remarkably deep bond between our two countries and peoples.”

“From the outset, joint British-Irish EU membership has facilitated progress with the [Irish] peace process.”

- Irish Foreign Minister Charles Flanagan, 7 September 2015³³

Italy

“I grew up with the idea of a two-speed Europe, while perhaps today the moment has come to build a [European] Union made of two concentric circles.”

- Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni, 9 October 2015³⁴

“Europe without the UK would not just be less rich. It would be less Europe, less itself. We will do everything... to affirm that these values of investing on a different Europe need to be brought together to unity... Different ideas are a positive thing that makes us proud, [they do] not irritate us.”

- Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, 2 July 2014³⁵

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"I think [Brexit] could be a disaster for Europe, obviously, but I believe also for the UK...We need a UK [that is] able to invest in a different idea of Europe - more supportive of the relations with citizens and not with the power of bureaucrats."

- Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, 16 November 2014³⁶

"We must absolutely change Europe...before the referendum of 2017 in the UK. And not only because there is a referendum, but because it's absolutely correct...I believe [it is] important [to] reduce the power of bureaucracy in Europe. I absolutely believe [it is] important [to] reduce the level of technocrats' power in Brussels."

- Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, 3 October 2014³⁷

"For us, it is a priority [that] the UK can continue to work inside the European Union because a European Union without the UK is impossible."

- Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, 17 June 2015³⁸

"London doesn't want to exit Europe, it wants to renegotiate. And this is not a negative thing in itself. In our opinion, there is one thing that cannot be negotiated: the free movement of people across EU member states."

- Italian Europe Minister Sandro Gozi, 9 May 2015³⁹

Lithuania

"The questions that are discussed today in Britain are sensitive for everybody, but freedom of movement is the core value of the European Union."

"Free movement of labour has been the fundamental value of the EU...Efforts to achieve [a] compromise can be made, however, not at the expense of core values."

- Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, 22 May 2015⁴⁰

"The digital market holds a huge economic potential. A fully functioning single market will facilitate the creation of start-ups. It will allow consumers to choose goods and services from all over the Union and pay less for them. This way, we will not only boost growth, but also create conditions for hundreds of thousands of new jobs to emerge throughout the European Union."

- Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė, 26 June 2015⁴¹

Luxembourg

"I cannot imagine an EU without the UK, just like I cannot imagine a UK without the EU."

"I cannot accept to give in to all UK demands. When David Cameron says that he wants better regulation, a more efficient Europe, he wants us to take better care of our money. I fully agree. But that does not mean that the best solution for the UK is always the best solution for the EU."

"My French counterpart François Hollande has proposed a core [EU] with deeper integration between the founding countries. The problem is that, at the moment, we are not able to manage the Schengen area and the Eurozone. Hence, we cannot add this core EU."

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“Ever closer union is one of the aims of the EU. I am not in favour of a Europe à la carte, where you can pick what you want and reject the rest. I recently found myself in the eye of the storm, but I didn't say I wanted to leave because of that.”

- Luxembourgish Prime Minister Xavier Bettel, 31 August 2015⁴²

“While it is clear that keeping the UK in the EU is of strategic importance, upholding the European spirit and values, free movement, is equally important.”

- Luxembourgish Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn, 30 June 2015⁴³

Malta

“Malta shares some common views on a number of proposals, such as a renewed focus on a competitive Europe and a strengthened Single Market, because only growth will take the EU out of austerity. Malta is also in favour of opening further free trade with the US and Asia.”

“Malta and the UK share the goal of creating a European Union which is more modest and effective, making sure that the growth we need is not stifled by unnecessary regulation that antagonises businesses and citizens. This can only be done if everyone embraces the principle that one size does not fit all.”

“The ministers agreed that the member states need a Union that enables them to maintain the necessary latitude and flexibility in the use of various economic and fiscal policy instruments, while respecting the attribution of competencies established in the Treaties and the integrity of the single market.”

- Office of Maltese Deputy Prime Minister Louis Grech, 20 February 2015⁴⁴

The Netherlands

“I want the UK to stay involved. [The discussion should examine] what you can do to strengthen Europe with the 28 [member states] - on markets, simplification, free trade. Keep them in, but then get a better deal with the 28.”

- Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, 25 June 2015⁴⁵

“I think we should have an open discussion about how we can give Britain and other [Eurozone] outs comfort if necessary.”

- Dutch Finance Minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem, 2 November 2015⁴⁶

“The time of an ‘ever closer union’ in every possible policy area is behind us.”

- Government of The Netherlands, 21 June 2013⁴⁷

“We would encourage national parliaments to bring Europe back home where it belongs...If one-third of national parliaments raise subsidiarity objections to a legislative proposal (the yellow card procedure), the [European] Commission should not just reconsider, it should use its discretion to take the disputed proposal off the table, turning the yellow card into a red.”

- Then Dutch Foreign Minister Frans Timmermans, 14 November 2013⁴⁸

Poland

"If you ask the Polish people, I believe that a vast majority of them would say they are pleased with EU membership, but also a majority consider very highly the sovereignty and independence of Poland - they are very attached to Polish tradition. So the issue of sovereignty is a very basic one for us. And, in this aspect, I generally share the position of Prime Minister [David] Cameron."

- Polish President Andrzej Duda, 15 September 2015⁴⁹

"We won't allow Poles' position as EU citizens to be weakened. This is a red line for us."

"In terms of Poland's membership of the Eurozone, this is only something we can realistically discuss when the Polish economy and Polish earnings reach that level...In practice, this means many years."

- Polish President's Foreign Affairs Advisor Krzysztof Szczerski, 15 June 2015⁵⁰

Portugal

"I'm sure that it will be possible to work together to...find the answers that serve us all and that protect both the British welfare state and the rights of the thousands of Portuguese that, in difficult times, found employment in the UK and thus also contribute to the UK's economic growth."

- Portuguese Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho, 4 September 2015⁵¹

Romania

"We have suggested today to Prime Minister [David] Cameron and to other leaders on other occasions [that] we should separate freedom of movement from social benefits...If we treat the issue separately, we have a better way to fix it."

- Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, 11 June 2015⁵²

"No member state is allowed to treat people coming from elsewhere differently from its own people. But we are in a position where we have to find practical, non-discriminatory solutions which make it possible to treat this kind of problems."

- Romanian President Klaus Iohannis, 11 June 2015⁵³

Slovakia

"We do have a great understanding and sympathy towards the need of the EU's new winds of reforming some areas. There are no categorical statements Slovakia would be saying that we are against this or that cannot be done."

"The Slovak Republic fully supports Britain's position with regard to the need of increasing the EU's competitiveness. We also share the same opinion with the UK with regard to some people abusing the welfare systems of some wealthy countries."

- Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico, 19 June 2015⁵⁴

Slovenia

“Slovenia is definitely willing to discuss the proposals from London...Solutions must of course be based on equal treatment of all EU citizens and respect the [European] Union's four fundamental freedoms.”

- Slovenian Prime Minister Miro Cerar, 18 June 2015⁵⁵

Spain

“We want the UK to stay in the EU. It would be unthinkable...if the UK were not in the EU.”

“The position the Spanish government will adopt is going to be a constructive and flexible one. We will consider the [EU reform] proposals that we are made. What we have heard so far seems very positive...Spain will do everything in its hands in order for things to go well.”

“We agree on important issues...It is very important to keep deepening the internal market. It is also important that the European Commission acts quickly to favour the work of small, medium and also big businesses. We think regulation is excessive in many cases. We believe it is also important to conclude a free trade agreement with the US.”

“Spain sees the British Prime Minister's [EU reform] efforts with sympathy. We are convinced that things will go well, and I encourage him to continue his work.”

- Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, 4 September 2015⁵⁶

Sweden

“There is a risk that [further Eurozone integration] could lead to a weaker position in the EU and reduced influence over policy formulation for non-euro countries. Ultimately, this may also affect the design of the EU single market which is so important for Sweden.”

- Swedish Finance Minister Magdalena Andersson, 17 July 2015⁵⁷

“The fact that one country believes that one thing is wrong does not mean that we can change, because every country might have its own priorities and that may just ruin the EU.”

“I think it's wrong because that means that every country can find their own solutions on different issues. If you first create a common market with common rules, and then if the individual countries are supposed to change that on their own, then, I mean, soon, we do not have a European common market.”

- Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven, 7 November 2014⁵⁸

European Council

“The European Council noted that the concept of ever closer union allows for different paths of integration for different countries, allowing those that want to deepen integration to move ahead, while respecting the wish of those who do not want to deepen any further.”

- European Council conclusions, 27 June 2014⁵⁹

METHODOLOGY

This is not a scientific but an explanatory exercise. Open Europe carried out a qualitative assessment of how each EU member state might receive David Cameron's main EU reform demands. The assessment is based on public statements made by leading politicians – where available – and on insights gathered from conversations Open Europe had with officials and diplomats from various EU member states. As such, it is a subjective assessment of the situation.

Cameron is expected to flesh out his demands shortly, in a letter he will send to European Council President Donald Tusk in the coming days. Once more details become known, some countries could well spell out their stance on certain issues in a clearer fashion – and we may therefore update our table.

As regards the colour key, we opted for the following:

- **'Green'** when we see a country as very likely to back UK demands on a specific issue;
- **'Light green'** when we believe a country is likely to support UK demands, but not without posing some conditions and/or raising some objections;
- **'Yellow'** when we are either uncertain about where a country stands on a certain topic or we genuinely see a 50-50 chance of that country going along with UK demands;
- **'Orange'** when we believe a member state is likely to express reservations over UK demands and will therefore be harder to persuade compared to other countries;
- **'Red'** when we believe a country has strong reservations over UK demands in a specific area. This does not mean that these countries are 100% impossible to get on board, but that they are more likely to be unhelpful during the renegotiation and may only agree very reluctantly to some of Cameron's requests.

To provide the overall ranking of states, we assigned a number to match the colours we had already assigned – with 'Red' being 1 and 'Green' being 5. This means the overall total of states could range between 5 and 25, with their scores summed up across the five main EU reform areas. We then categorised this range into the existing five-colour scheme (5-8 Red, 9-12 Orange, 13-16 Yellow, 17-20 Light Green, 21-25 Green). This helps provide an insight as to how each state's views on the five reform areas could tally into an overall position. Again, as with the entire exercise, these are based on our subjective assessment of where each EU country stands.

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oe	Safeguards for non Eurozone countries	'Ever closer union' no longer binding for everyone	Limiting EU migrants' access to welfare	Greater role for national parliaments, including 'red card' to block EU proposals	Single market, free trade, EU regulation	Overall position on UK's EU reform package
Austria	4	3	4	5	4	20
Belgium	2	2	2	1	4	11
Bulgaria	3	3	2	3	4	15
Cyprus	3	3	3	3	4	16
Croatia	3	5	4	4	4	20
Czech Republic	4	3	1	3	4	15
Denmark	5	5	5	5	4	24
Estonia	3	3	2	4	5	17
Finland	4	5	4	5	5	23
France	2	4	2	3	3	14
Germany	4	4	3	3	4	18
Greece	3	3	3	3	2	14
Hungary	5	5	3	5	3	21
Ireland	5	5	4	5	5	24
Italy	4	4	2	3	4	17
Latvia	3	4	3	4	3	17
Lithuania	3	4	1	4	5	17
Luxembourg	2	1	2	2	4	11
Malta	3	3	3	3	4	16
Netherlands	4	5	4	5	5	23
Poland	4	5	1	3	3	16
Portugal	3	3	3	3	4	16
Romania	3	3	2	3	3	14
Slovakia	2	3	3	3	4	15
Slovenia	2	3	2	3	3	13
Spain	3	2	2	1	4	12
Sweden	5	5	4	4	5	23

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