

Political opinion polls in Belgium from 1 January 1998 to 13 June 1999

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Notwithstanding its inherent limitations, the opinion poll is an important way to register public opinion. In Belgium particularly, where little attention is paid to other forms of registration of public opinion and where little effort has been made to develop political statistics, it is important that the various polls that are conducted throughout the political year by different organisations be registered and classified. This survey tries to fill this need by taking up an old tradition in the Political Yearbook.² From 1974 to 1992, an annual review of the political opinion polls in Belgium was published in *Res Publica*. The University of Ghent compiled the information about opinion polls in this period in a book.³ In recent years, however, no classification or overview of political opinion polls has been available. The present inventory lists the political opinion polls for 1998 and for 1999 up to the elections of 13 June. Given the importance of these elections for the Chamber of Representatives, the Senate, the European Parliament, and the Flemish Parliament as well as for the Walloon Parliament, the Brussels Council, and German-speaking Council, it is appropriate to cover the entire period from 1 January 1998 to these elections and not to stop, as in previous surveys, at 31 December 1998.

This review of political opinion polls in Belgium is divided in function of the major policy sectors: foreign policy, social policy, economic policy, financial policy, domestic policy, and cultural policy. This is the same classification scheme as was used previously. Although the opinion polls may concern several policy sectors, each was classified only under the one judged to be the most appropriate. Thus, if one does not find what one is looking for, one should consult other related policy sectors.

We wish to stress that this survey only lists the opinion polls. They were not tested for their scientific value, so we are unable to indicate their scientific or other value.

This research instrument covers the political opinion polls that were published in 1998 or 1999 (before 13 June) with a subject relevant for that period. For example, we did not include the important ISPO poll on voting behaviour

1 The author would like to thank the following for the information they provided: Jan Drijvers (Dimarso), Prof. Frank Thevissen (VUB), Jean-Pol Thiebaut (Inra-Marketing Unit), Pierre Baudewyns (PIOP), Astrid Depickere (ISPO), Sandra Van Heyste (Dimarso), Leo Vereycken (Market Development), Jean-Pierre Stroobants (*Le Soir*) and Roger Creyf (VRT).

2 See: E. DAS, Political opinion polls in Belgium, 1974-1989. Index of keywords and references. *Res Publica*, 1991, nr. 3-4, pp. 641-659.

3 Steunpunt Sociopolitiek Systeem, *De politieke opiniepeilingen in België 1974-1991*, Gent, 1992.

even though some publications based on it appeared in 1998 because it concerned the 1995 elections, which were outside of our reference period.

In this inventory, the title of the poll is given along with the content, the institute that conducted the poll, the time of polling, the size of the sample, the sponsor, and the bibliographical data of its publication. A dash indicates that the item of information is confidential or unknown. To facilitate matters, we have added the period of polling to the title of the poll.

A) Foreign Policy

1 UNO and other world organisations

War in Serbia and Kosovo (April 1999)

Content: attitude toward NATO bombings, possible intervention of ground troops, refugees from Kosovo in Belgium

INRA BELGIUM - MARKETING UNIT, 9-12 April 1999, sample of 502 Belgians 18 years old and older

Sponsor: *Le Soir*

Publication: *Le Soir*, 14 April 1999

NATO-bombings in Serbia (April 1999)

Content: agreement with NATO bombings and with a possible intervention of ground troops, refugees from Kosovo in Belgium

DIMARSO, 16-22 April 1999, sample of 1,002 Belgians 15 years old and older

Sponsor: VRT-Journaal

Publication: on TV: *VRT Journaal*, 23 April 1999

De Standaard, 27 April 1999

2 European policy

Expectations from the European Union (February 1998)

Content: expectations towards more European integration, what will be better/worse?

M.A.S., -, sample of 2,000 Belgians

Sponsor: *Het Nieuwsblad*

Publication: *Het Nieuwsblad*, 13 February 1998

The public opinion in the European Union (April-May 1998)

Content: knowledge of the European Union, knowledge of and support for the euro and enlargement of the EU, perceived and desired importance of the European Parliament, participation in the European elections of 13 June 1999, expectations for the future, issues of concern, trends in public opinion

INRA BELGIUM - MARKETING UNIT, 10 April - 4 May 1998, sample of 1,007 Belgians 18 years old and older as part of a sample of 16,165 people in the 15 Member States of the European Union

Sponsor: European Commission

Publication: *Eurobarometer, Report number 49*, September 1998

The single currency (euro) (April 1998)

Content: knowledge of the process of introducing the euro, knowledge of its value and attitude toward the single currency

SOBEMAP, 18-23 April 1998, sample of - Belgians

Sponsor: -

Publication: *Le Soir*, 2 May 1998

3 Policy toward the developing countries

Situation in South-Sudan (September 1998)

Content: attitude toward military intervention and the increase of aid for Sudan, attitude toward solutions for the conflict

SURVEY & ACTION, 9-13 September 1998, sample of 1,004 Belgians 17 years old and older

Sponsor: Le Soir

Publication: *Le Soir*, 19 September 1998

4 East-West-relations

5 Defence policy

6 International relations

7 Foreign policy of other countries

8 Domestic policy of other countries

B) Social Policy

1 Labour system

2 Employment policy

Temporary workers (April 1998)

Content: profile and career of temporary workers

SOBEMAP, -, sample of 1,000 Belgians who were temporary workers in 1996

Sponsor: UPEDI (Organisation of temporary employment agencies)

Publication: *Le Soir*, 24 April 1998 en *De Financieel-Economische Tijd*, 24 April 1998

3 Professional organisations

4 Social security

5 Family policy and demographic policy

6 Public health

The dioxin and chicken scandal (June 1999)

Content: attitude toward biological products, consumption behaviour, effect of the crisis on voting behaviour, confidence in the government

INRA BELGIUM - MARKETING UNIT, 4-5 June 1999, sample of 500 Belgian people, 18 years old and older

Sponsor: Le Soir

Publication: *Le Soir*, 8 June 1999

The dioxin and chicken scandal and changing voting behaviour (June 1999)

Content: influence of the chicken crisis on one's voting behaviour, evaluation of the policy of the ministers who resigned

MARKET RESPONSE, 7 June 1999, sample of 402 Flemish people, 18 years old and older

Sponsor: Regionale Uitgeversgroep

Publication: *Het Belang van Limburg*, 9 June 1999
De Gazet van Antwerpen, 9 June 1999

- 7 **Housing**
- 8 **Social planning**
- 9 **Consumption**
- 10 **Environmental protection (including urban planning)**
- 11 **Welfare**

C) **Economic Policy**

1 **Property**

Debt of individual families (December 1997)

Content: debt of individual families, use of loans, money spending
MARKETING UNIT, December 1997, sample of 3,919 Belgian families
Sponsor: Koning Boudewijn Stichting, Belgische Vereniging van Banken,
Groep Gerling, Observatoire du Cr dit en de l'Endettement / Overleg Schuldenoverlast
Publication: *Gazet van Antwerpen*, 25 March 1998

- 2 **Organisation of the economy**
- 3 **Prices policy**
- 4 **Subsidization policy**
- 5 **Policy regarding economic cycles**
- 6 **Energy policy**
- 7 **Infrastructure - transport and communications**

Local airport in Antwerp (February-April 1999)

Content: attitude towards the expansion of the airport of Antwerp
DIMARSO, 23 February- 4 March 1998, sample of 4,600 inhabitants of
Antwerp 17 years old and older and 31 March-2 April 1998, sample of 200
people who live near the airport 17 years old and older
Sponsor: RUG - Gazet Van Antwerpen
Publication: *Gazet van Antwerpen*, 12 May 1998

Use of mobile phones in cars (December 1997)

Content: use of mobile phones while driving a car
MARKETING UNIT, December 1997, sample of - Belgian people
Sponsor: Belgisch Instituut voor Verkeersveiligheid (BIVV)
Publication: *Gazet van Antwerpen*, 10 September 1998
Het Belang van Limburg, 10 September 1998

- 8 **Regional development**
- 9 **Industrial policy**
- 10 **Trade policy**
- 11 **Agricultural policy**
- 12 **Policy vis-à-vis the middle classes and the self-employed**

List of priorities for the next government (April 1999)

Content: satisfaction about the policy toward small and medium-sized enterprises, favourite prime minister, list of priorities for the next govern-

ment

MARKETING DEVELOPMENT, - 1999, sample of - self-employed and representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises

Sponsor: NCMV

Publication: *Z(elfstandig) O(ndernemen) Magazine*, 16 April 1999

D) Financial Policy

- 1 **Investments and savings**
- 2 **Budget policy**
- 3 **Fiscal policy**
- 4 **Monetary and credit policy**

E) Domestic Policy

- 1 **Organisation of the state**
- 2 **National institutions**

Expectations and priorities for the future (December 1997)

Content: trends and evolutions in the next century, priorities for the future, attitude toward European judge Wathélet and the right to vote for immigrants

DIMARSO, 1-13 December 1997, sample of 522 Flemish people 18 years old and older and a sample of 197 MP's from Flanders (either Senate, Chamber or Flemish Parliament)

Sponsor: De Financieel-Economische Tijd

Publication: *De Financieel-Economische Tijd*, 31 December 1997 -
2 January 1998

Trust in institutions, expectations for the future (Oktober-November 1998)

Content: trust in institutions and groups of people (women, citizens, teachers,...), trends and evolutions in the next century, importance of the year 2000

SURVEY & ACTION, 24 Oktober-5 November 1998, sample of 1,210 Belgian people

Sponsor: Le Soir and De Standaard

Publication: *Le Soir*, 6 January 1999

De Standaard, 6 January 1999

Seasonal barometer of public opinion (March 1998)

Content: voting intentions, popularity of politicians, satisfaction with the government

INRA BELGIUM-MARKETING UNIT, 6-16 March 1998, sample of 750 people from Wallonia, 750 people from Flanders and 500 from Brussels

Sponsor: La Libre Belgique

Publication: *La Libre Belgique*, 30 March 1998

Seasonal barometer of public opinion (September 1998)

Content: voting intentions, popularity of politicians, satisfaction with the government

INRA BELGIUM-MARKETING UNIT, 1-12 September 1998, sample of 750

people from Wallonia, 750 people from Flanders and 500 from Brussels
Sponsor: La Libre Belgique
Publication: *La Libre Belgique*, 28 September 1999

Seasonal barometer of public opinion (December 1998)

Content: voting intentions, popularity of politicians, satisfaction with the government
INRA BELGIUM-MARKETING UNIT, 30 November-10 December 1998, sample of 750 people from Wallonia, 750 people from Flanders and 500 from Brussels
Sponsor: La Libre Belgique
Publication: *La Libre Belgique*, 21 December 1998

Seasonal barometer of public opinion (March 1999)

Content: voting intentions, popularity of politicians, satisfaction with the government
INRA BELGIUM-MARKETING UNIT, 2-14 March 1999, sample of 750 people from Wallonia, 750 people from Flanders and 500 from Brussels
Sponsor: La Libre Belgique
Publication: *La Libre Belgique*, 29 March 1999

Seasonal barometer of public opinion (May 1999)

Content: voting intentions, popularity of politicians, satisfaction with the government
INRA BELGIUM-MARKETING UNIT, 3-21 May 1999, sample of 750 people from Wallonia, 750 people from Flanders and 500 from Brussels
Sponsor: La Libre Belgique
Publication: *La Libre Belgique*, 31 May 1999

The resignation of the ministers of Justice and Home Affairs (April 1998)

Content: resignation of ministers De Clerck and Vande Lanotte, resignation of the whole government, resignation of the chef of the gendarmerie
TELEPERFORMANCE, 24 April 1998, sample of 1,266 Belgians 18 years old and older
Sponsor: La Dernière Heure
Publication: *La Dernière Heure*, 25 April 1998

The resignation of the ministers of Justice and Home Affairs (April 1998)

Content: resignation of ministers De Clerck and Vande Lanotte, resignation of the whole government, new elections, party faithful voting behaviour
INRA BELGIUM - MARKETING UNIT, 24-27 April 1998, sample of 500 Belgians 18 years old and older
Sponsor: Le Soir
Publication: *Le Soir*, 28 April 1998

National government (March 1999)

Content: evaluation of the current government, changes to the government after the elections, reasons to vote for a party, attitude toward democracy
SURVEY & ACTION, 15-26 March 1999, sample of 1,404 Walloon people

Sponsor: Le Soir
Publication: *Le Soir*, 20 April 1999

3 Regional institutions

Socioscopic of the Walloon people (July 1998)

Content: how the Walloons see themselves, their way of life and their attitude toward the monarchy

INRA BELGIUM - MARKETING UNIT, 10-25 July 1998, sample of 1,500 Walloons

Sponsor: PRL-FDF
Publication: *Le Soir*, 29 August 1998

A purple coalition? (April 1999)

Content: preferred coalition partner in the Walloon government of one's favourite party

SURVEY & ACTION, 15-26 March 1999, sample of 1,404 Walloon people

Sponsor: Le Soir
Publication: *Le Soir*, 13 April 1999

The Walloon Region (December 1998 - January 1999)

Content: attitudes of Walloon people towards the Walloon region
PIOP, December 1998-January 1999, sample of 573 Walloon people

Sponsor: Institut Jules Destrée
Publication: -

4 Provincial and local institutions

Voting intentions for the local elections in Antwerp (May 1998)

Content: voting intentions, preferred mayor, disliked mayor
DIMARSO, 23 February- 4 March 1998, sample of 4,600 inhabitants of Antwerp 17 years old and older

Sponsor: RUG - Gazet Van Antwerpen
Publication: *Gazet van Antwerpen*, 26 May-30 May 1998

5 Political parties

White movement and the white party (January 1998)

Content: attitude toward the white movement that struggles for a better functioning of the judiciary system, attitude toward a white political party and toward Paul Marchal, voting intentions

FIELD RESEARCH, 6-11 January 1998, sample of 1,000 Belgians

Sponsor: Het Laatste Nieuws and La Dernière Heure

Publication: *Het Laatste Nieuws*, 14 January 1998
La Dernière Heure, 14 January 1998

Gérard Deprez and his MCC-movement that split off the PSC (January 1998)

Content: knowledge of, attitude towards and evaluation of the MCC
INRA BELGIUM - MARKETING UNIT, 20-31 January 1998, sample of 400 people from Brussels and 700 people from Wallonia, 18 years old and older

Sponsor: PRL-FDF
Publication: *Le Soir*, 13 February 1998

6 Elections

Voting intentions (April 1998)

Content: voting intentions

INRA BELGIUM - MARKETING UNIT, 2-11 April 1998, sample of 1,100 French-speaking Belgians, aged 18 years and older

Sponsor: PRL-FDF

Publication: *Le Soir*, 20 April 1998

Voting intentions (May 1998)

Content: voting intentions in Flanders and in the province of Limburg, compulsory voting, preferred prime minister

DIMARSO, 14-26 May 1998, sample of 1,074 Flemish people 17 years old and older and of 416 inhabitants of the province Limburg

Sponsor: RUG-Concentra

Publication: *Het Belang van Limburg*, 12 and 13 June 1998 and *De Gazet van Antwerpen*, 12 and 13 June 1998

Voting intentions (August 1998)

Content: voting intentions

INRA BELGIUM - MARKETING UNIT, 14-26 August 1998, sample of 400 people from Brussels and 700 people from Wallonia 18 years old and older

Sponsor: PRL-FDF

Publication: *Le Soir*, 29 August 1998

Political Autumn poll (August - September 1998)

Content: voting intentions, preferred prime minister, preferred coalition, importance of policy issues, evaluation of the current government, attitude towards a come-back of politicians who resigned, attitude on certain policy issues

DIMARSO, 31 August-12 September 1998, sample of 1,000 Flemish people 15 years old and older

Sponsor: Knack

Publication: *Knack*, 30 September 1998 and 7 Oktober 1998

Voting intentions (February - March 1999)

Content: voting intentions

SURVEY & ACTION, 23 February-3 March 1999, sample of 1,928 Belgian people 17 years old and older

Sponsor: Le Soir

Publication: *Le Soir*, 25 March 1999

Voting intentions (March - April 1999)

Content: voting intentions, preferred prime minister, preferred coalition, importance of policy issues, who has real power in Belgium?

M.A.S., 15 March-9 April 1999, sample of 2,400 people from Flanders and the region Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde 18 years old and older

Sponsor: Knack and VTM

Publication: *Knack*, 28 April 1999

Voting intentions (March - April 1999)

Content: voting intentions in Flanders and in the provinces Antwerp and Limburg, kind of elections held on 13 June, relation between issues and parties

DIMARSO, 29 March - 20 April 1999, sample of 1,000 Flemish people 18 years old and older, sample of 250 inhabitants of the province Limburg and 125 inhabitants of the province Antwerp

Sponsor: Regionale uitgevergroep
Publication: *Het Belang van Limburg*, 13 May 1999 and
De Gazet van Antwerpen, 13 May 1999

Voting behaviour of young people (May 1999)

Content: voting intentions of young people, relation of voting behaviour to employment and voting behaviour of parents
FIELD RESEARCH, 8 - 14 May 1999, sample of 1,000 Flemish people between 18 and 24 years old
Sponsor: Het Laatste Nieuws
Publication: *Het Laatste Nieuws*, 19 May 1999

Media figures as candidates in the elections of 13 June (March 1999)

Content: popularity, political credibility and chances of succes for media figures who are candidate for the elections of 13 June
CENTER FOR APPLIED MARKETING/COMMUNICATION RESEARCH (FREE UNIVERSITY BRUSSELS), 1 - 14 March 1999, sample of 797 Flemish people aged 18 years and older
Sponsor: -
Publication: *De Standaard*, 3 June 1999

The extent to which voters remain faithful to the party they voted for the last elections (May 1999)

Content: party faithful voting behaviour
FIELD RESEARCH, 1-7 May 1999, sample of 1,000 Flemish people 18 years old and older
Sponsor: Het Laatste Nieuws
Publication: *Het Laatste Nieuws*, 11 May 1999

The extent to which voters remain faithful to the party they voted for the last elections (part two) (June 1999)

Content: party faithful voting behaviour
FIELD RESEARCH, 5-9 June 1999, sample of 1,000 Flemish people 18 years old and older
Sponsor: Het Laatste Nieuws
Publication: *Het Laatste Nieuws*, 11 June 1999

Exit-poll (June 1999)

Content: voting behaviour
DIMARSO, 13 June 1999, sample of 5,000 Flemish people 18 years old and older
Sponsor: VRT/De Financieel-Economische Tijd
Publication: *De Financieel Economische Tijd*, 14-18 June 1999

7 Rights and liberties

8 Administration of justice

9 Linguistic problems and minorities

Perception of the circular letter of minister Peeters (March 1998)

Content: attitude of Flemish people toward facilities for French speaking people in the Flemish region around Brussels
INRA BELGIUM-MARKETING UNIT, 6-10 March 1998, sample of 568 Flemish people 18 years old and older

Sponsor: Le Soir
Publication: *Le Soir*, 16 March 1998

Flemish-Walloon-relations (March 1998)

Content: attitude toward facilities for French speaking people in the Flemish region of Brussels, attitude toward the enlargement of the region of Brussels, attitude toward institutional reforms and evaluation of the relations between Flemings and Walloons

INRA BELGIUM-MARKETING UNIT, 6-16 March 1998, sample of 750 people from Wallonia, 750 people from Flanders and 500 from Brussels

Sponsor: La Libre Belgique
Publication: *La Libre Belgique*, 14 April 1998

Belgium, Flanders and Wallonia (November 1998)

Content: attitude toward the persistence of Belgium, pride about Belgium, knowledge of the country's languages, relation with Flanders, what can be improved in Belgium?

INSTITUT D'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPÉRIEUR (NAMUR), November 1998, sample of 3,000 inhabitants of Namur

Sponsor: -
Publication: *De Standaard*, 9 January 1999

10 Maintenance of public order

11 War recovery

12 Problems concerning foreigners

Regulation concerning immigrants and refugees (September 1998)

Content: attitude toward refugees and their stay in Belgium

INRA BELGIUM-MARKETING UNIT, 28-30 September 1998, sample of 531 Belgian people 18 years old and older

Sponsor: Le Soir
Publication: *Le Soir*, 2 Oktober 1998

13 Moral conceptions

14 Church-state relations

F) Cultural Policy

1 Education

Knowledge of languages (May 1999)

Content: knowledge of languages, which languages were taught at school
INRA BELGIUM-MARKETING UNIT, - 1999, sample of 700 Belgian people 18 years old and older

Sponsor: Tweektaligheid in Beweging-Bilinguisme en Mouvement (Tibem)
Publication: *De Standaard*, 20 May 1999
Het Belang van Limburg, 20 May 1999

2 Scientific research

3 Adult education

4 Leisure

5 Emancipation of women

6 Youth

7 Art

8 Mass communication

The use of internet (June 1998)

Content: use of internet: how much time spent on it, for which purposes used, the advantages of internet

SOBEMAP, 9-24 June 1998, sample of 1,863 Belgians 15 years old and older

Sponsor: Onderzoeks- en Informatiecentrum van de Verbruikers-organisaties (OIVO)

Publication: *De Financieel-Economische Tijd*, 4 September 1998

Kanaal Z (February 1999)

Content: knowledge of the business TV-channel Kanaal Z, ever watched the channel?

SOBEMAP, 15-20 February 1999, sample of 616 inhabitants of Flanders and Brussels

Sponsor: Kanaal Z

Publication: *De Financieel-Economische Tijd*, 25 February 1999

Kanaal Z (February - May 1999)

Content: knowledge of the business TV-channel Kanaal Z, ever watched the channel?

SOBEMAP, 15 February-3 May 1999, sample of 5,652 Flemish people 18 years old and older

Sponsor: Kanaal Z

Publication: *De Financieel-Economische Tijd*, May 1999

9 Cultural autonomy

10 Tourism

11 Sports

EURO 2000 (April 1999)

Content: knowledge of, attitude toward and interest in the European Championship football (EURO 2000)

INRA BELGIUM, 27-29 April 1999, sample of 500 inhabitants of Belgium 18 years old and older

Sponsor: Le Soir

Publication: *Le Soir*, 3 May 1999

Addresses of opinion-polling institutions:

PIOP, Place Montesquieu 1/7-8, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve

ISPO, E. Van Evenstraat 2B, 3000 Leuven

Field Research, Treft 68A, 1853 Strombeek-Bever

Survey & Action, Chaussée de La Hulpe 178/3, 1170 Brussel-Bruxelles

M.A.S., Tervuursevest 120, 3000 Leuven

Dimarso-Gallup, Rogierlaan-Avenue Rogier 240, 1030 Brussel-Bruxelles

Inra Belgium - Marketing Unit, Louizalaan-Avenue Louise 430, 1050 Brussel-Bruxelles

Sobemap, Louizalaan-Avenue Louise 250, 1000 Brussel-Bruxelles