



# Voting Intention Opinion Poll

Feb 2009

Prepared for

**THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST**

RESEARCH EVALUATION DIRECTION **CLARITY**

## **Must be Included**

**RED C interviewed a random sample of 1002 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 23<sup>rd</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> February 2009. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults.**



## **SUNDAY BUSINESS POST – 29<sup>th</sup> February 2009 Opinion Poll**

### **Labour surge in support , as Fianna Fail collapse**

Labour support surges in today's Sunday Business Post/ RED C poll, increasing their share of the first preference vote by an extraordinary 8% in just one month. This gain in support is of course on the back of a similar result seen two weeks ago, which in itself has provided the party with significant media coverage over the past two weeks. However even if this increased media spotlight has possibly exaggerated the support for Labour at this moment in time, there is no doubt that the Irish electorate are looking for an alternative political option.

A key finding in today's survey, that can be indentified from the regular tracking of vote behaviour that we conduct, is that while Fianna Fail are the party that suffers most in terms of its share of first preference vote, Fine Gaels trend in support over the last three polls is also downward, with both parties losing out to gains for Labour. It is this apparent desire for a new political option, apart from the two larger parties, that appears to have boosted the gains for Labour quite so much.

In today's poll Labour secure 22% of the first preference vote, up 8% since last month, and perhaps more importantly this continues an upward trend since September which has seen support for the party rise by 13% in six months. When the gains in support over this period are analysed in more detail it becomes apparent that there are some key groups where Labour has made their gains. Support among women for the Labour party has increased at more than twice the rate of men, with an astonishing 20% increase in support among this key demographic, leaving the party with 26% of the first preference vote among women, compared to 19% among men. A similar gain is also seen among the 25-44 year old age groups, which has a close correlation to those with dependent children. In regional terms the really large gains have come from those living in the suburbs in the Rest of Leinster +18% and also those in Munster +16%, bringing support in these areas up close to the levels the party achieves in Dublin, its traditional stronghold, where it secures 27% of the first preference vote.



Fine Gael remain the party with the largest level of support in today's poll, but this fact is somewhat overshadowed by the large gains for Labour. The figure on its own it also disguises the fact that support for Fine Gael has in fact been in decline for the past two polls. The party secures 30% of the first preference vote, and as such is the largest party by some margin, but this does mean that their share of support has fallen for the second month in a row. A drop of 3% in support since last month and a 5% drop overall since November must be a concern for the party, given that their traditional foes are in such disarray.

The gains for Labour provide a new threat for Fine Gael that perhaps they were not really prepared for, with Labour on the upward trend and Fine Gael support in decline, the party will want to ensure that their downward trend in support does not go any further, by regaining a positive momentum. Questions must surely be asked about why Fine Gael is not capitalising as Fianna Fail implodes.

Fianna Fail suffers most as a result of the gains for Labour. The party secures just 23% of the first preference vote in today's poll, a fall of 5% in the past month, but more importantly this continues a trend that has seen the party lose 17% of the first preference vote in just 8 months, with a series of declines in the past five or six polls.

Of course much has changed in the country since September, and the fall in support for Fianna Fail appears to match the decline in the economy and the impact this has had on consumer confidence in the same time period – so closely linked are the fortunes of the party to economic competence. The share of just 23% is the lowest the party has ever secured, and takes them below the often mentioned core support of 25%. The biggest declines in support for the party in that time period have been among 25-44 year old voters, women voters who appear to have deserted the party to Labour, and also those in more upmarket social groups.

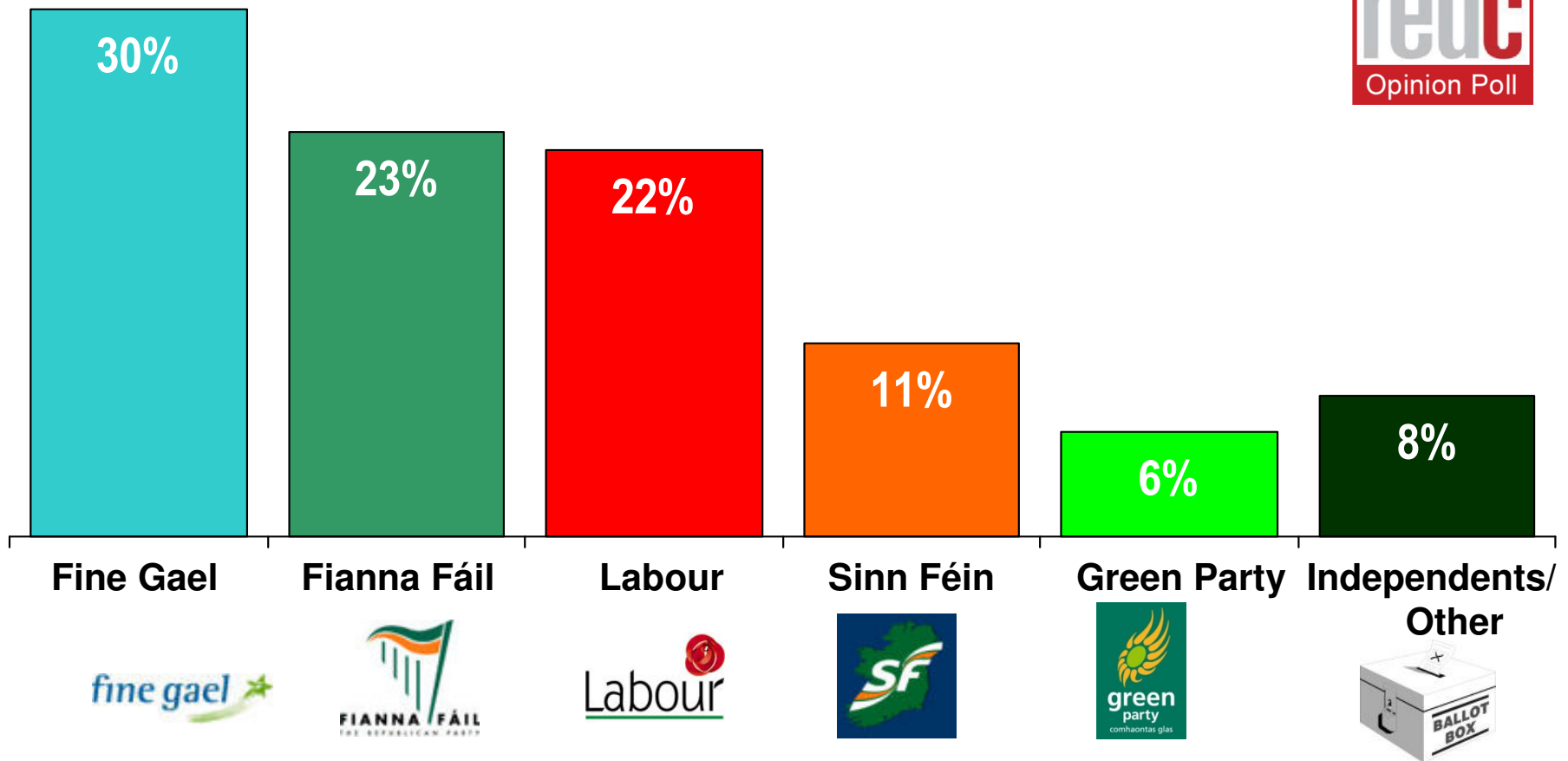
Sinn Fein is the only other party, apart from Labour, to see gains in its support in today's poll. Their share of the first preference vote rises to 11%, the highest level seen for the party in our regular polling since March 2006. Support is very strong for the party among younger 18-34 year old age groups, and while on a small base is particularly high among the unemployed. Their strong support for workers in recent days appears to have struck cord with the public.



Much of the Green Party gains seen in last month's poll are reversed today, with the party support falling by 2% since last month. This still means that they secure 6% of the first preference vote in the poll, ahead of that they achieved at the last election. It appears from this that their support is somewhat more secure than Fianna Fail's at the moment, and perhaps they are still manage to avoid some of the blame for the current crisis. Independents see their support remain at 8% of the first preference vote, apparently unaffected by the turmoil that has shifted the political landscape in Ireland over the last six months.

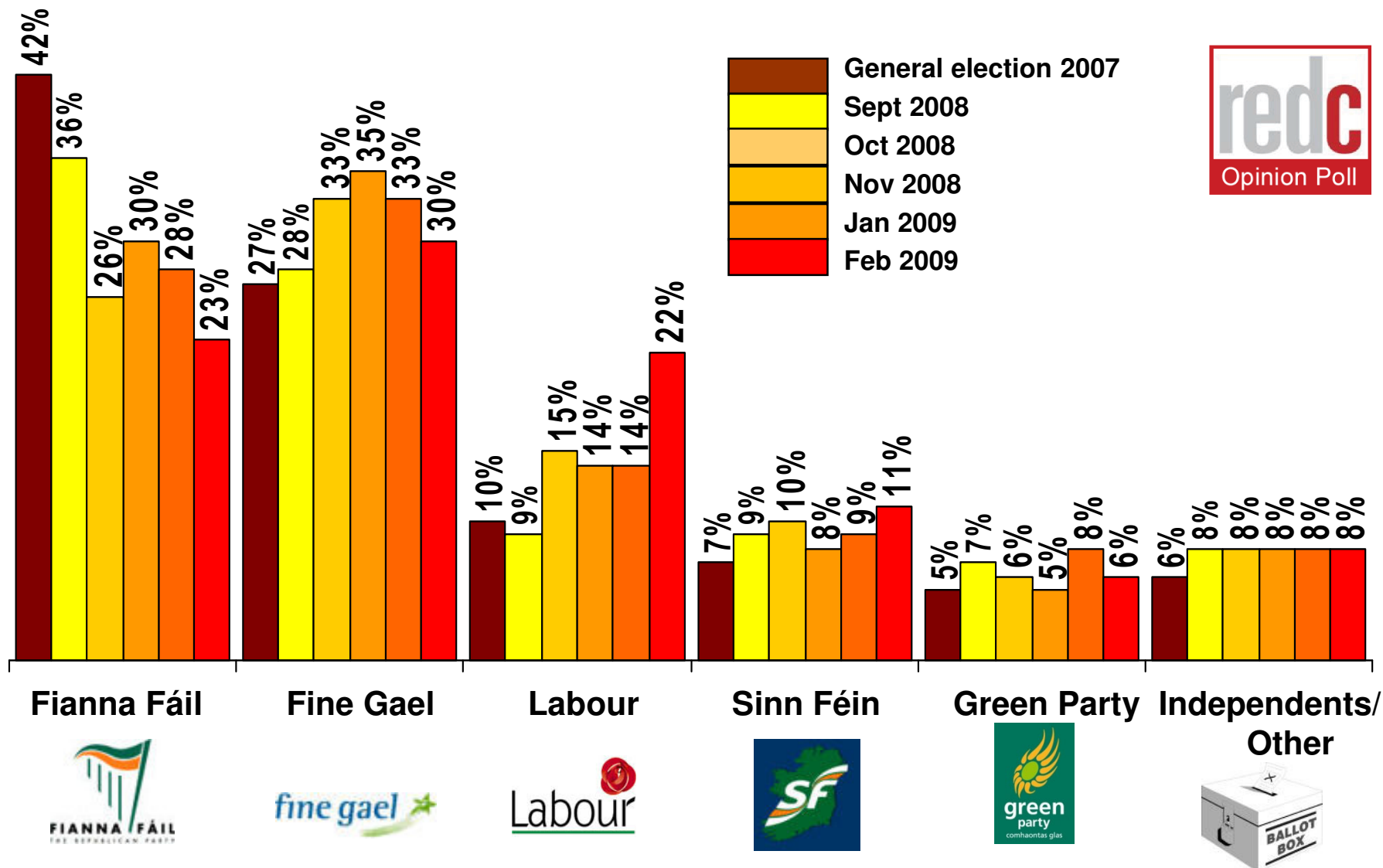
# If there were a *General Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)



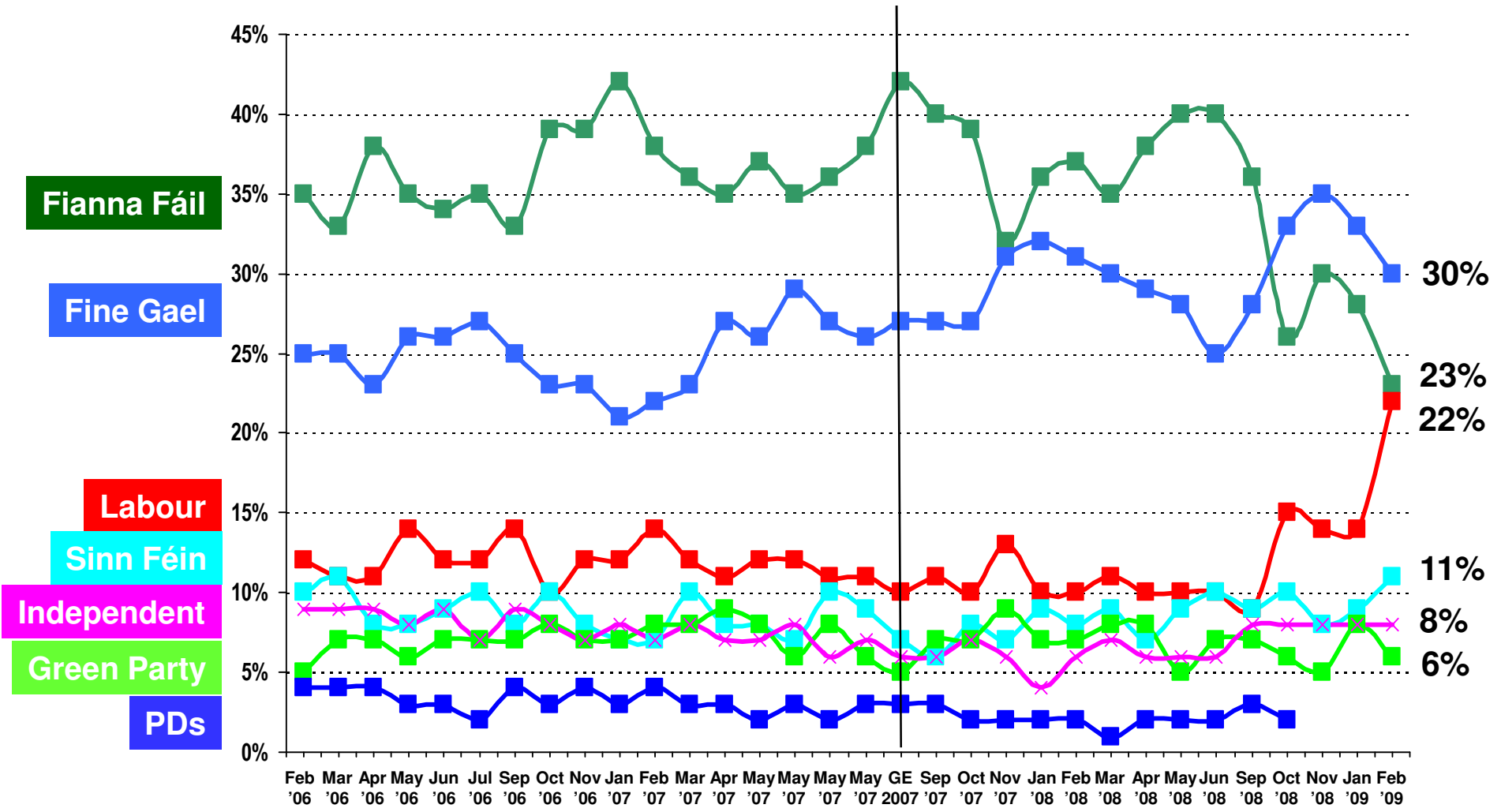
# If there were a *General Election* tomorrow which party or independent candidate do you think you would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults WHO WILL VOTE 18+)



# If there were a *general election* tomorrow, to which party or independent candidate would give your first preference vote?

(Base: All adults 18+)



<b>CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT</b>			
	<b>Core figures Feb 08</b>	<b>Excluding undecided</b>	<b>2007 Election Results</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Fianna Fáil</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Fine Gael</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Labour</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Sinn Féin</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Green Party</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Independents/Ot hers</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>18</b>		

**CURRENT FIRST PREFERENCE SUPPORT BY THOSE MOST LIKELY TO VOTE**  
 (those who give a score of 7 or more out of 10, on a scale where 1 = Definitely will not vote and 10 = Definitely will vote)

	Feb 2009	Jan 2009	Nov 2008	Oct 2008	Sept 2008	June 2008	May 2008	April 2008	March 2008	Feb 2008	Nov 2007	Oct 2007	2007 Election Result
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Fianna Fáil</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Fine Gael</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Labour</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Sinn Féin</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Green Party</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Independents/ Others</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>

# How you will vote in the Lisbon Treaty referendum to be held again this year?



(Base: All IRISH CITIZENS 18+ likely to vote)

