



## General Election Opinion Poll

27<sup>th</sup> May 2012

Prepared for:

**THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST**  
IRELAND'S FINANCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC NEWSPAPER

Job No: 48911

# Methodology and Weighting



- RED C interviewed a random sample of 1003 adults aged 18+ by telephone between the 21<sup>st</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2012.
- A random digit dial (RDD) method is used to ensure a random selection process of households to be included – this also ensures that ex-directory households are covered.
- Half of the sample are interviewed using an RDD landline sample, with the other half conducted using an RDD mobile phone sample, this ensures 98% coverage of the population reaching landline only households, mobile only households and those with both a landline and a mobile.
- Interviews were conducted across the country and the results weighted to the profile of all adults. A further past vote weighting is included that takes the current recall for how people voted at the last election, compares this to the actual results, and weights the data to halfway between the two.
- Vote intention results are based on those who will actually go and vote, using a 10 point scale, where 1 is not at all likely and 10 is very likely, those rating 4 to 10 are included as being those who will actually go and vote.
- Finally, some people tell RED C that they intend to vote, and have a good past voting record, but say they don't know who they would vote for or refuse to answer the question. Whenever such people say which party they voted for in the last election, RED C ascribe 50% to the party they voted for previously. We have seen from analysis of past elections that this is the most likely outcome and this reallocation tries to overcome the effect of the “spiral of silence” where voters are do not want to admit who they will vote for.
- In all respects the poll was completed to the opinion polling guidelines set out by both ESOMAR and AIMRO.

## Can we predict late shifts in Referenda?

There is nothing worse for a pollster than an Irish referendum! How many times have we tracked opinion over the weeks running up the referendum, only to see the Irish electorate only really make up or change their mind in the last week? The shift in this poll back to the No camp, leaving the current standing at 58% Yes and 42% No, is potentially another example of this.

Historically in referenda we have seen the Yes camp gradually decline, with a significant shift toward the No camp in the final two weeks. But hang on; this referendum is different isn't it? In most referenda, voters who either don't understand the issues or are undecided, tend to end up voting No. This is because in most referenda the option is to vote Yes for change, or No for the status quo (keeping things as they are). That is why historically, we often see the No vote grow as we come closer to polling day, because people are either poorly informed or don't understand what they are voting for, and as a result they eventually vote No, to keep things as they are, rather than risk change. In this referendum there is a significant difference, because voting No is not the status quo.

We have no real idea what the impact will be of voting Yes or No, but both need to argue their case, as there is going to be potentially an impact of voting either way. In fact, if anything the arguments being put out by both camps suggest that voting Yes is more likely to keep the status quo for Ireland, whereas we have no true idea of what the impact might be of voting No. Surely then as the undecided get closer to the election they should be more likely to vote Yes? Except they are not doing that!

So what is happening? The undercurrent here appears to be the anger with austerity among many less well off voters that is bolstering the No vote. The shift towards the No camp in the past week, has clearly been among lower social class groups in society. The majority of posters in less well off areas are for the No vote, and there is a real feeling among people in these areas that they are fed up, and just want to vote No "to make everyone sit up and take notice of their problems". To counter this, the Yes camp really needs to spell out what voting No might potentially mean to the average person, rather than high level discussion about the state, that often doesn't mean anything to individuals.

## Can we predict late shifts in Referenda?



This is coupled with the fact that, rather than the undecided moving to the Yes camp as the vote gets closer as we might expect, based on keeping the status quo, they appear instead to be simply deciding not to vote. The proportion of people definitely voting has fallen in the last week from 59% to 55%. At the same time the proportion saying they definitely won't vote has increased from 14% to 17%. This is actually pretty important for the government and the Yes camp. This is because on further inspection, these unlikely voters are actually more likely to vote No. When we run vote intentions without excluding those unlikely to vote the share fall to 56% Yes and 44% No.

So what can we expect from the final week of the campaign? Well it is not an easy time for a pollster, with our last poll taken a week before the election! Certainly, the trends seen in today's poll suggest that the No camp could grow over the final week. There has after all been a 5% shift from Yes to No in the past week. If that is replicated in the final week, we would be looking at 53% Yes vs. 47% No, and that is in margin of error territory to the Yes result itself being under threat.

There is certainly plenty of evidence that people could change their mind. When we ask how definite people are to vote as they declared in the poll, only 51% of the Yes camp and 55% of the No camp state they will definitely vote as they have told us. With all the others leaving the door open to changing their mind!

The final week then will be a nerve biting one for the government parties, and this may spur them to help secure the Yes vote. I think this is still the most likely outcome, albeit with maybe a smaller margin than previous polls had suggested, despite the trend toward the No camp in today's poll. But it will require a concerted effort in the final week to get them across the line.

# European Treaty

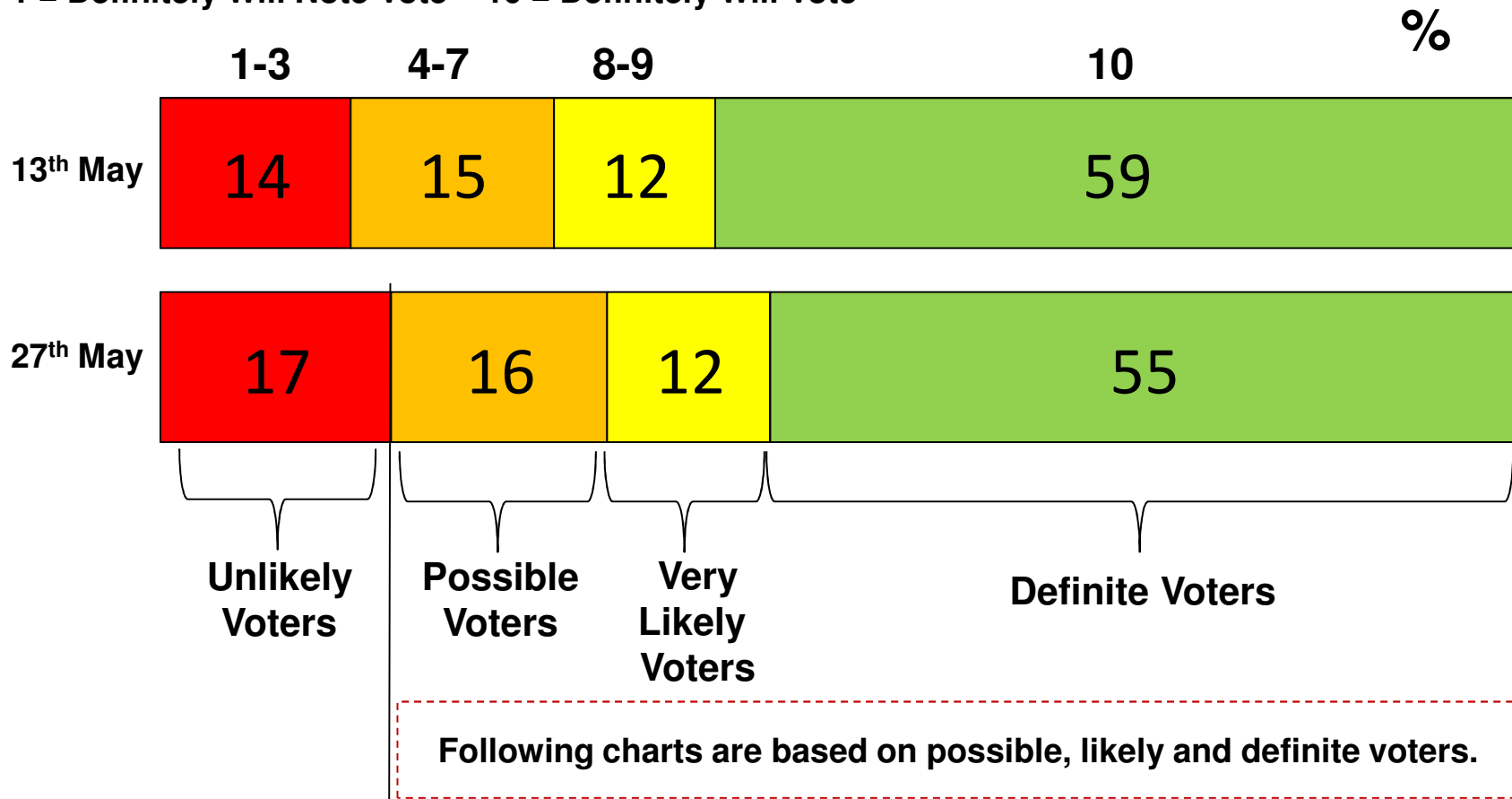
# Likelihood to Vote in Fiscal Stability Treaty Referendum

(Base: All adults 18+/ all adults 18+ likely to vote)



In any one referendum, turnout might be at only around 60% of all eligible to vote. It is important therefore that we control our voting intention questions by how likely people are to vote. RED C ask respondents to say how likely it is that they will go and vote using a ten point scale where 10 means they would be absolutely certain to vote and 1 means they would be certain not to vote. We then exclude anyone who gives a score of 1-3 from our voting intention calculations, as these people will not vote in an election anyway.

1 = Definitely Will Not Vote – 10 = Definitely Will Vote

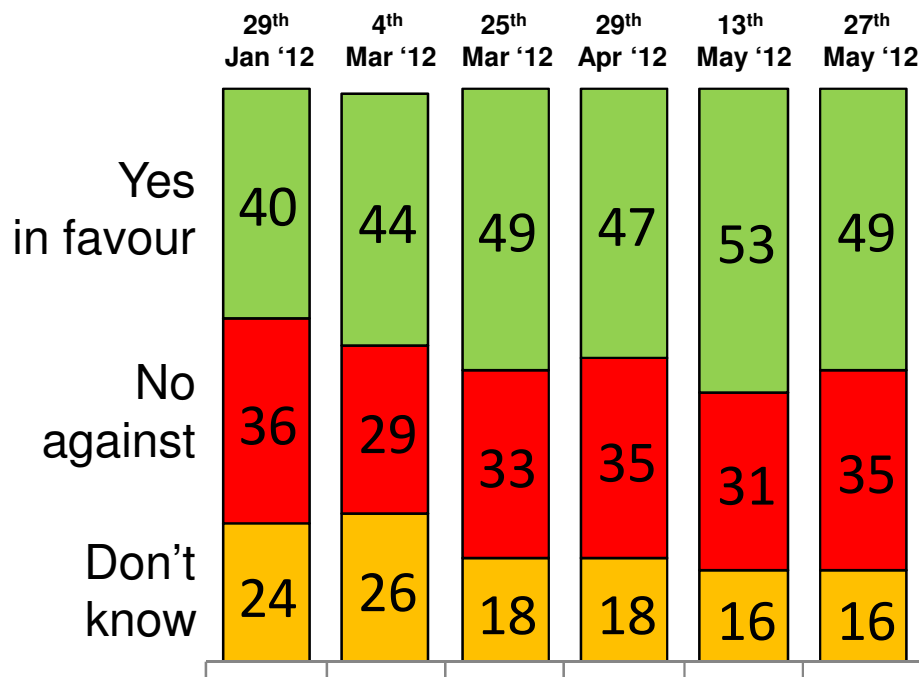


# Likely vote behaviour towards the European Treaty

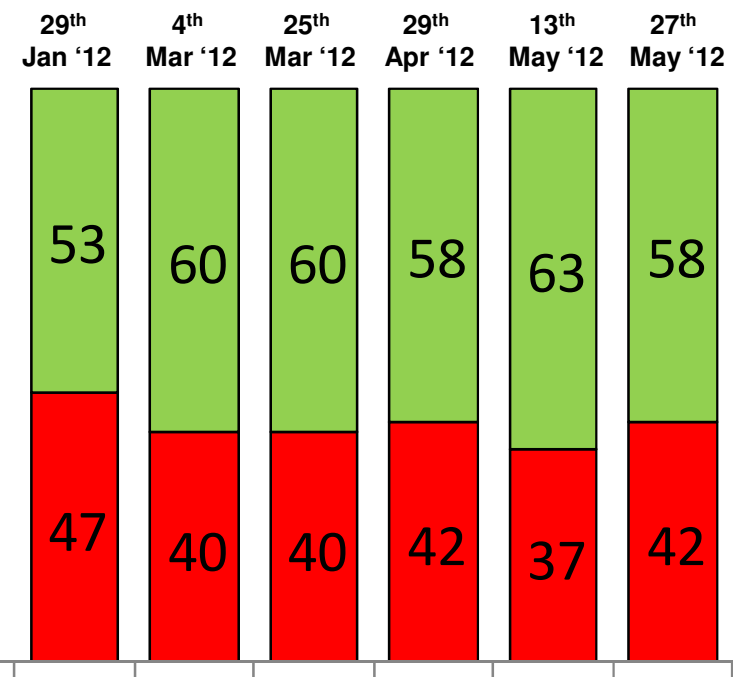
(Base: All adults 18+/ all adults 18+ likely to vote)



## How do you think you would currently vote in such a referendum? %



## Treaty Vote Intention (excl Don't Knows) %



Q. European Union country leaders have agreed on a new European Fiscal Stability Treaty in 2012, that would entail greater oversight by the EU over member states budgets. In the upcoming referendum, you will have the option to vote YES in favour of Ireland ratifying the treaty, or NO against Ireland ratifying the treat. How do you think you would currently vote in such a referendum?

**\*March 25<sup>th</sup> Onwards Includes Question about likelihood to vote**

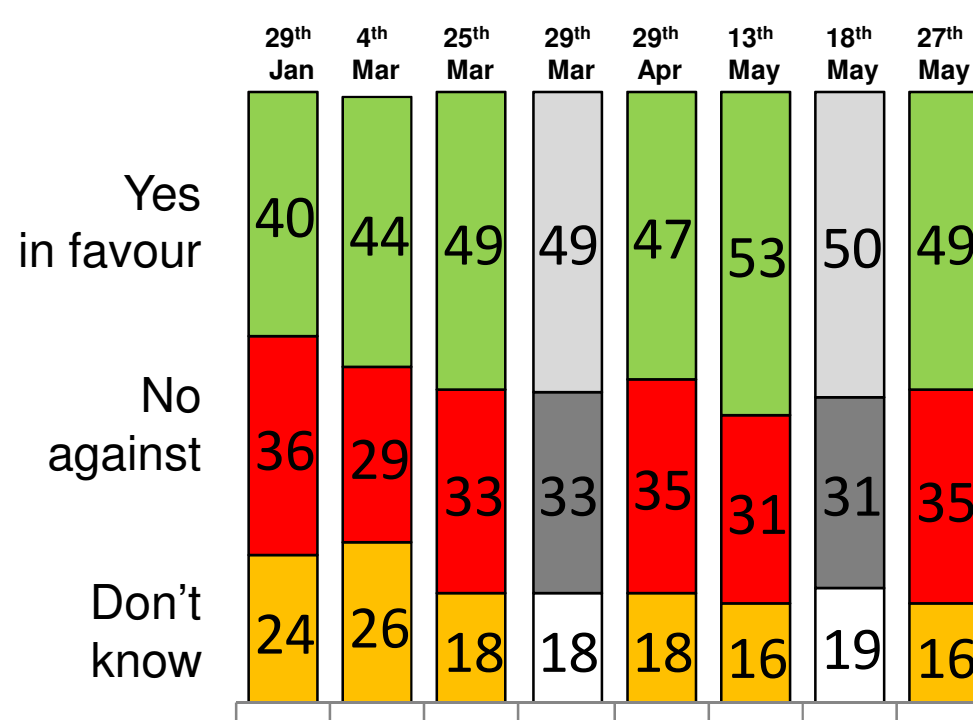
# SBP Referendum Polls In Context of all RED C Referendum polls

(Base: All adults 18+/ all adults 18+ likely to vote)



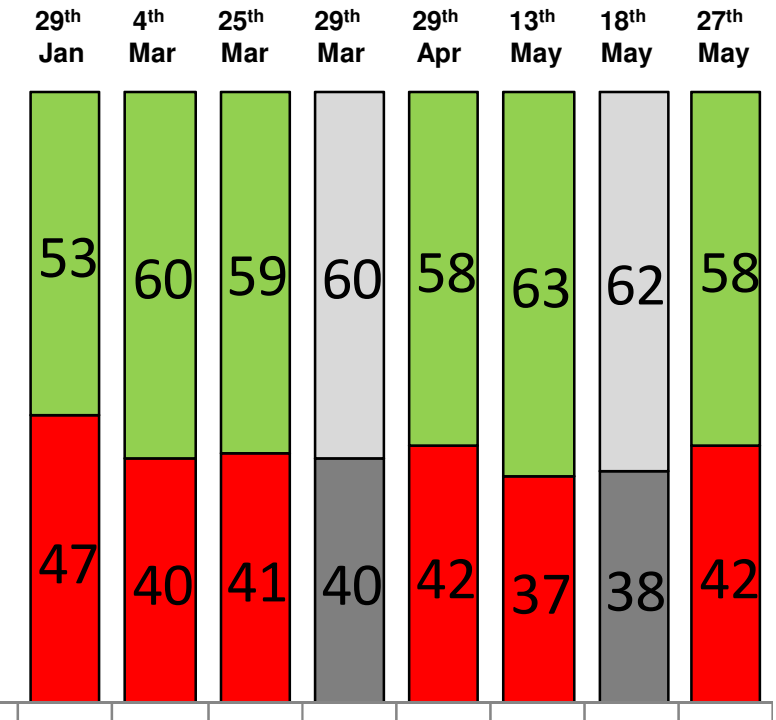
## How do you think you would currently vote in such a referendum?

%



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# How do you think you would currently vote in the EU Treaty referendum – excluding those not likely to vote?

(Base: All adults 18+ excluding those not likely to vote)



How do you think you would currently vote in such a referendum?	Total %	Gender		Age			Class		Region			
		Male %	Female %	18-34 %	35-54 %	55+ %	ABC1 %	C2DE %	Dublin %	ROL %	Munster %	Conn/ Ulster %
Yes	49%	50%	48%	45%	42%	61%	57%	38%	50%	49%	49%	45%
No	35%	36%	33%	35%	39%	28%	28%	42%	36%	35%	34%	34%
Don't Know	16%	14%	19%	20%	19%	11%	15%	20%	14%	16%	17%	21%

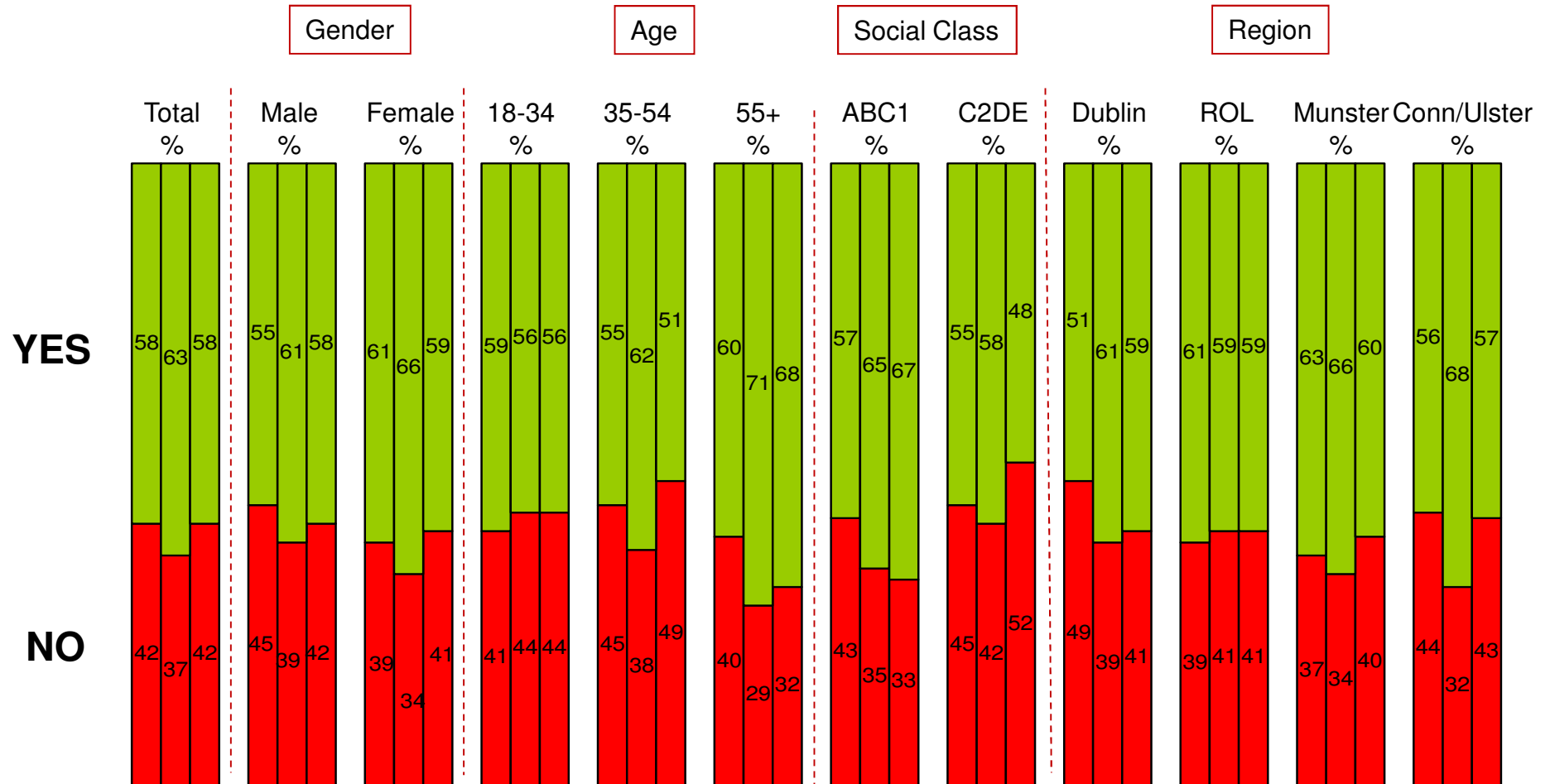
How do you think you would currently vote in such a referendum?	Total %	PARTY SUPPORT					
		Fianna Fail	Fine Gael	Labour	Sinn Fein	Ind.	Undecided
Yes	49%	59%	74%	63%	18%	27%	41%
No	35%	29%	13%	25%	78%	54%	27%
Don't Know	16%	12%	13%	12%	4%	19%	32%

# How do you think you would currently vote in the EU Treaty referendum – excluding Don't Knows and those not likely to vote?

(Base: All adults 18+ excluding those not likely to vote)



13<sup>th</sup> May '12  
 Apr '12       27<sup>th</sup> May '12



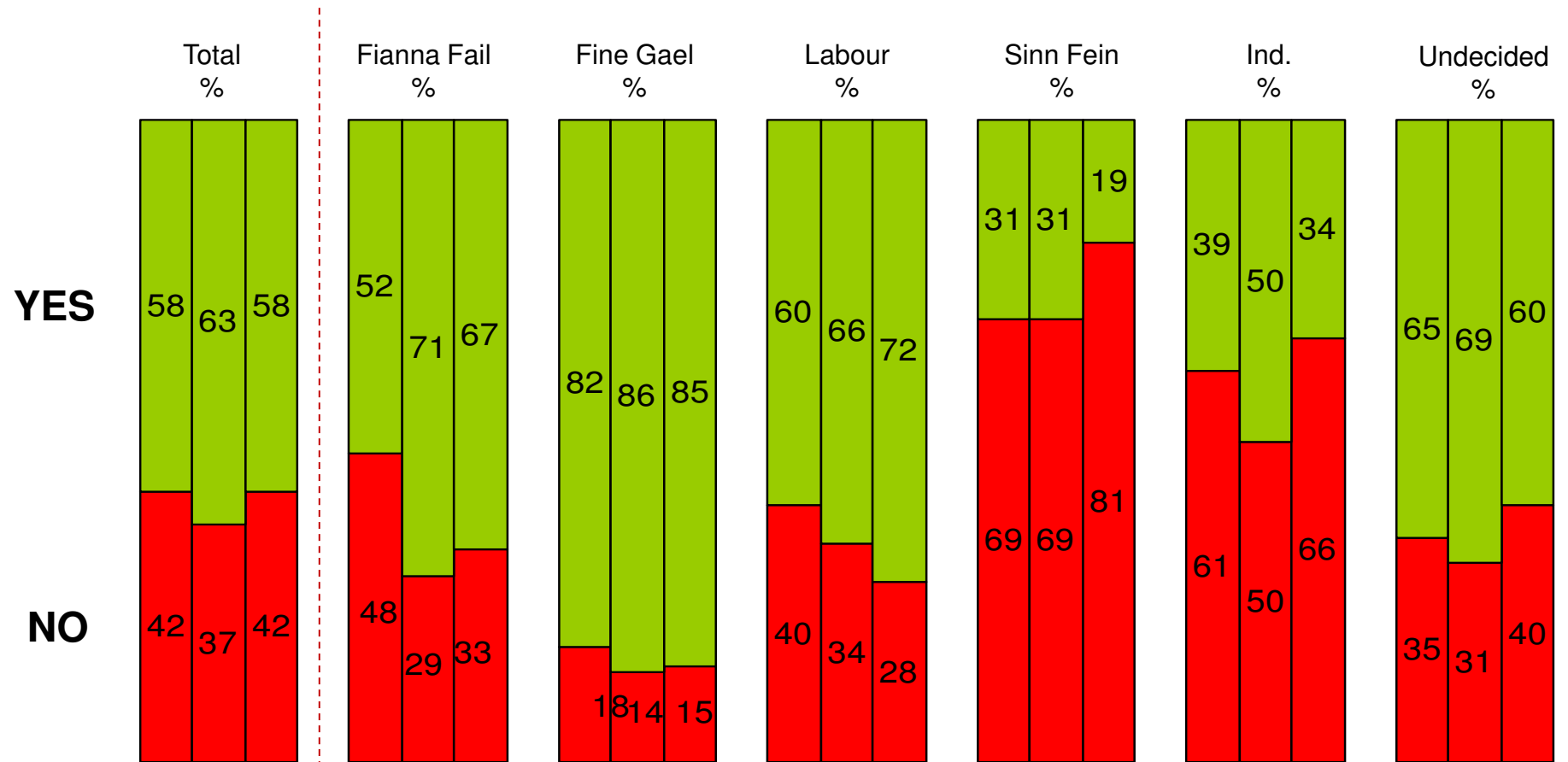
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13<sup>th</sup> May '12  
 Apr '12    27<sup>th</sup> May '12

Current Party Support



# Strength of commitment to likely vote behaviour?

(Base: All adults 18+ excluding those not likely to vote)

