

THE PRESS AND THE REFENDUM CAMPAIGN

Key Findings



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#EURefMedia

20th September 2016

1. Methods & Context

2. Research Questions

- a) How did the British press cover the EU referendum story?
- b) What were the main stories and issues deployed on each side of the argument?

3. Findings

4. Some Implications



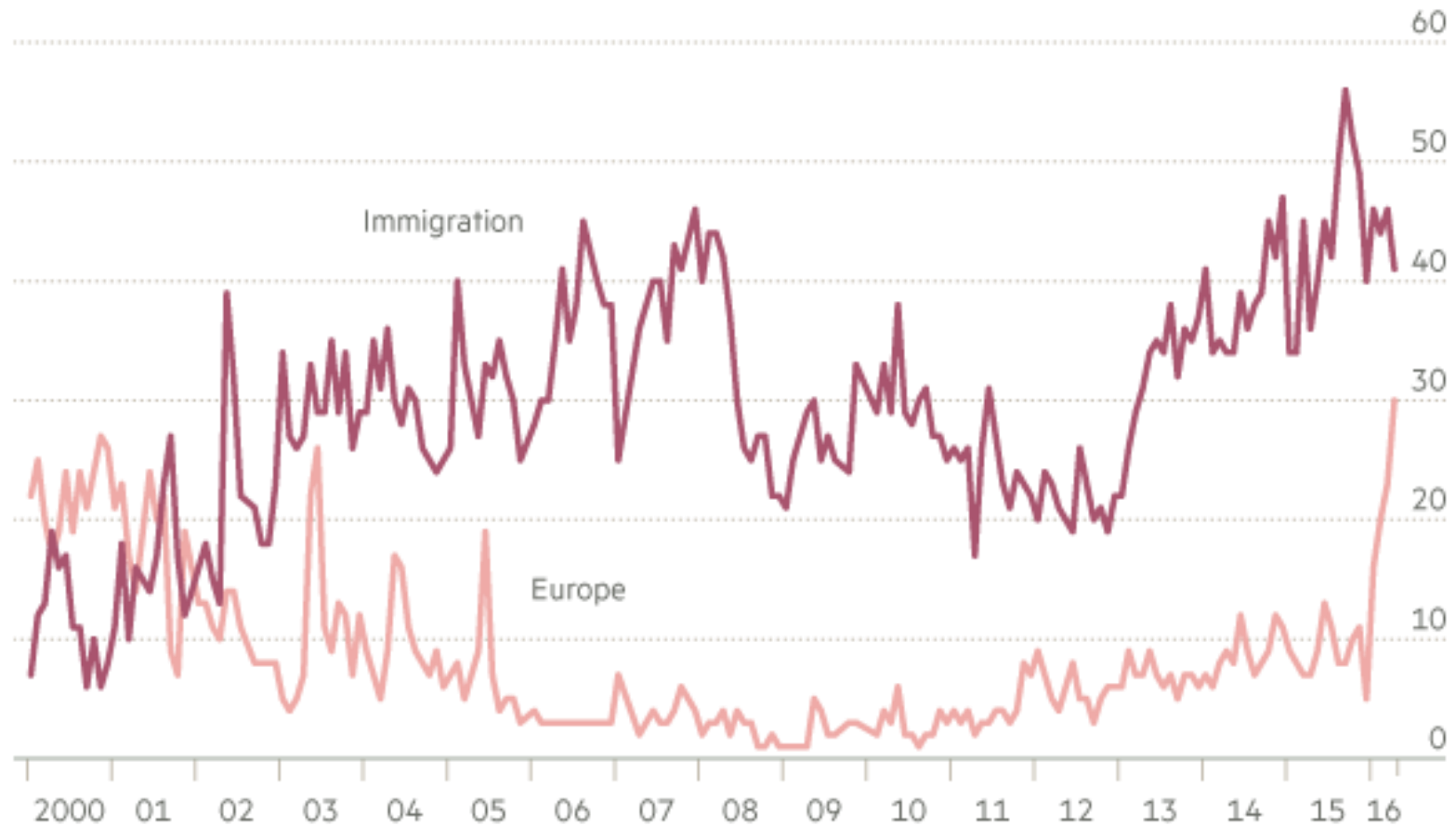
METHODS AND CONTEXT

Period analysed	February 20, 2016 – June 21, 2016		
Analysed days	Tuesdays and Saturdays		
Media sample	9 national daily newspapers = 3,403 total articles, of which 2,378 were focused on the referendum		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daily Express 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daily Mail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daily Mirror
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daily Star 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daily Telegraph 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial Times
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Guardian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Sun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Times



Concern about immigration and the EU

What do you see as the most/other important issue facing Britain today? (sample=1,000 British adults)

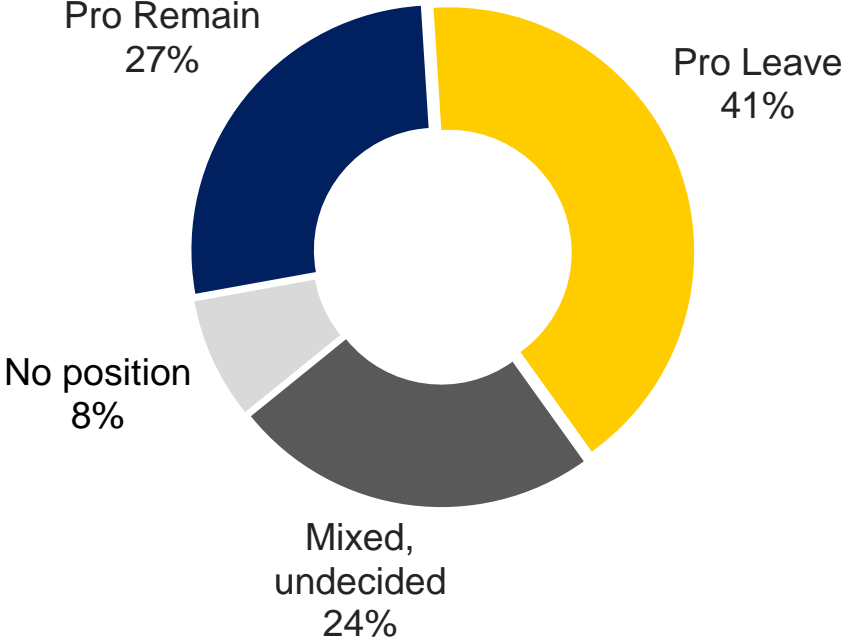


Source: Ipsos Mori

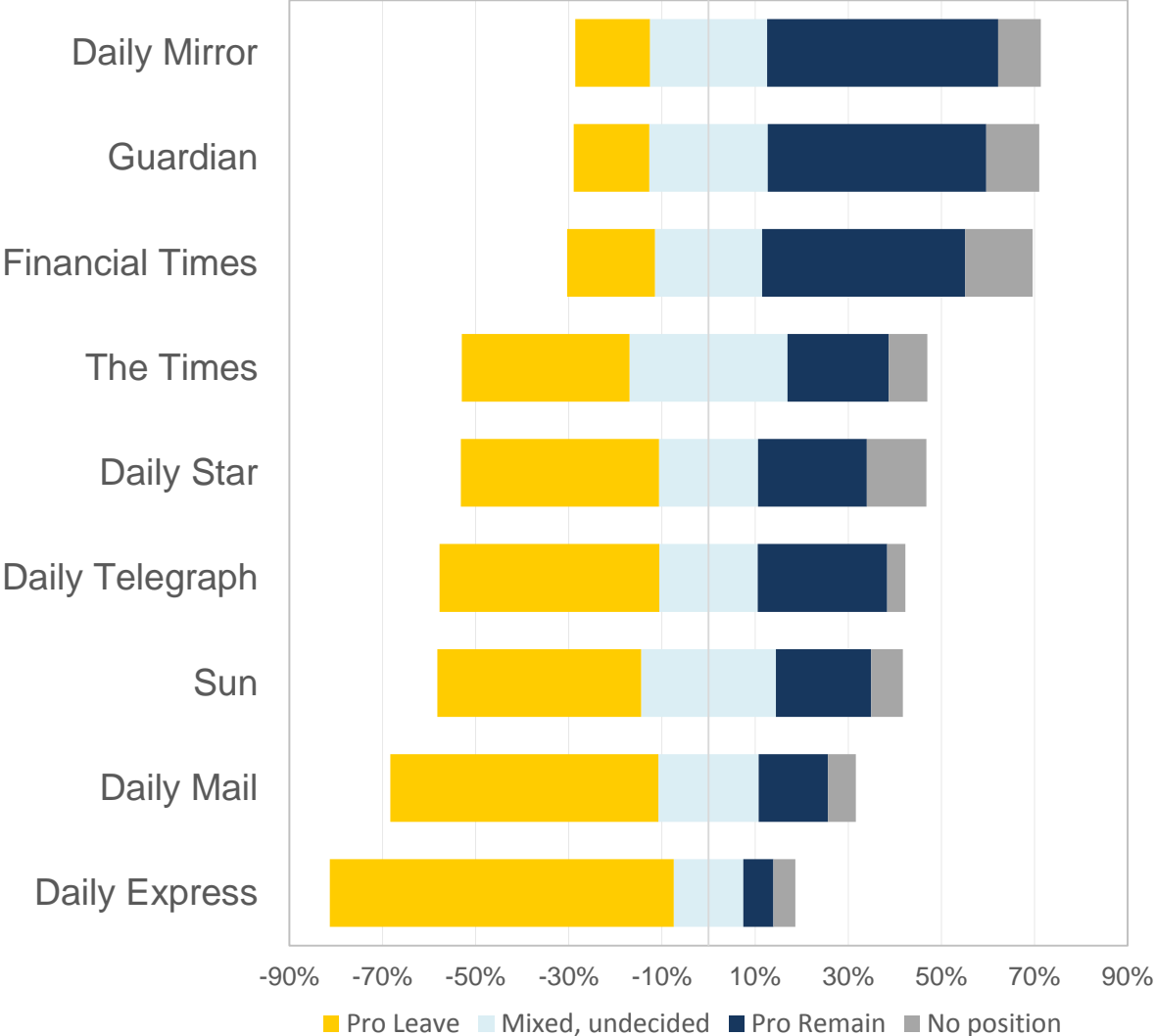
— Immigration

FT

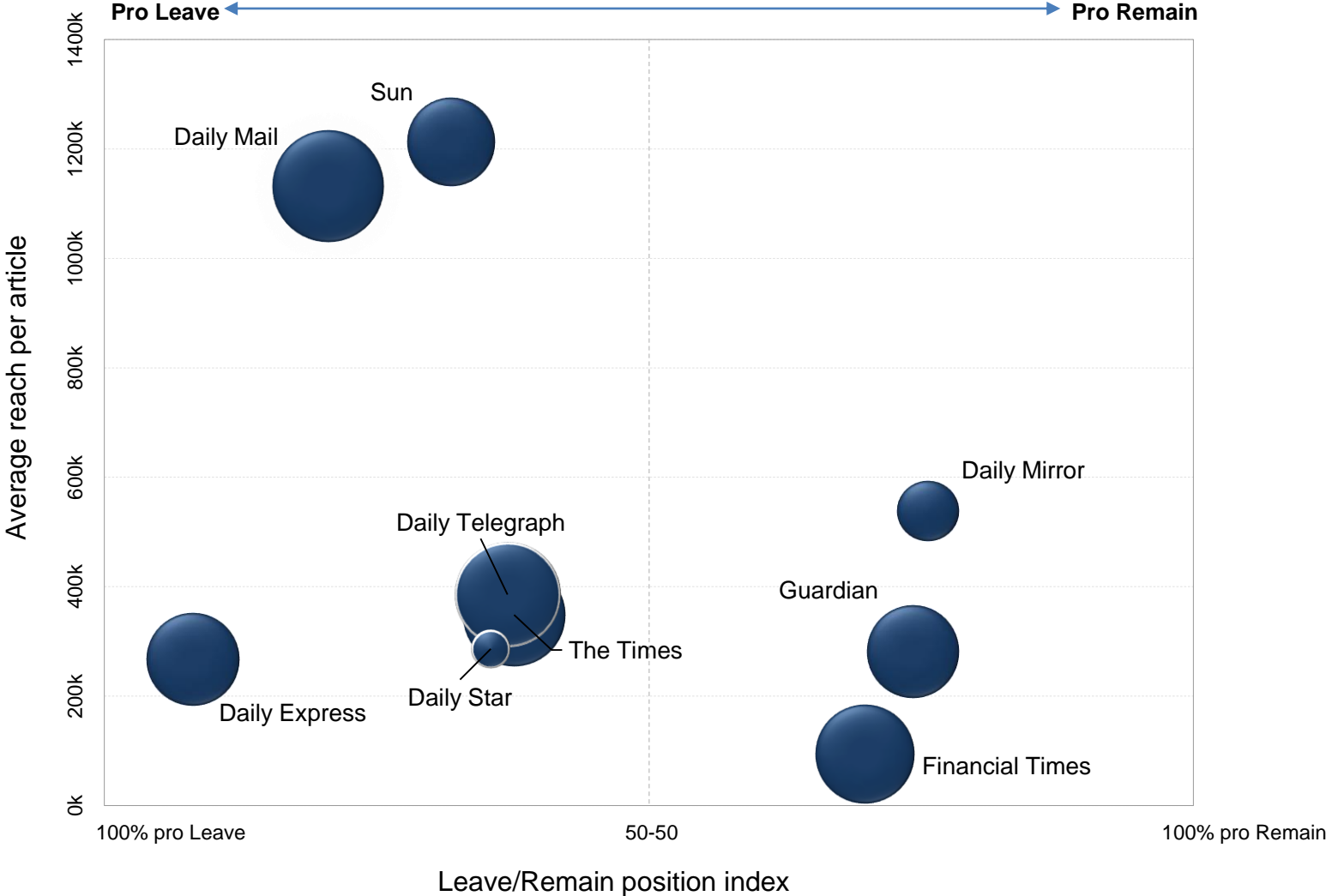
KEY FINDINGS

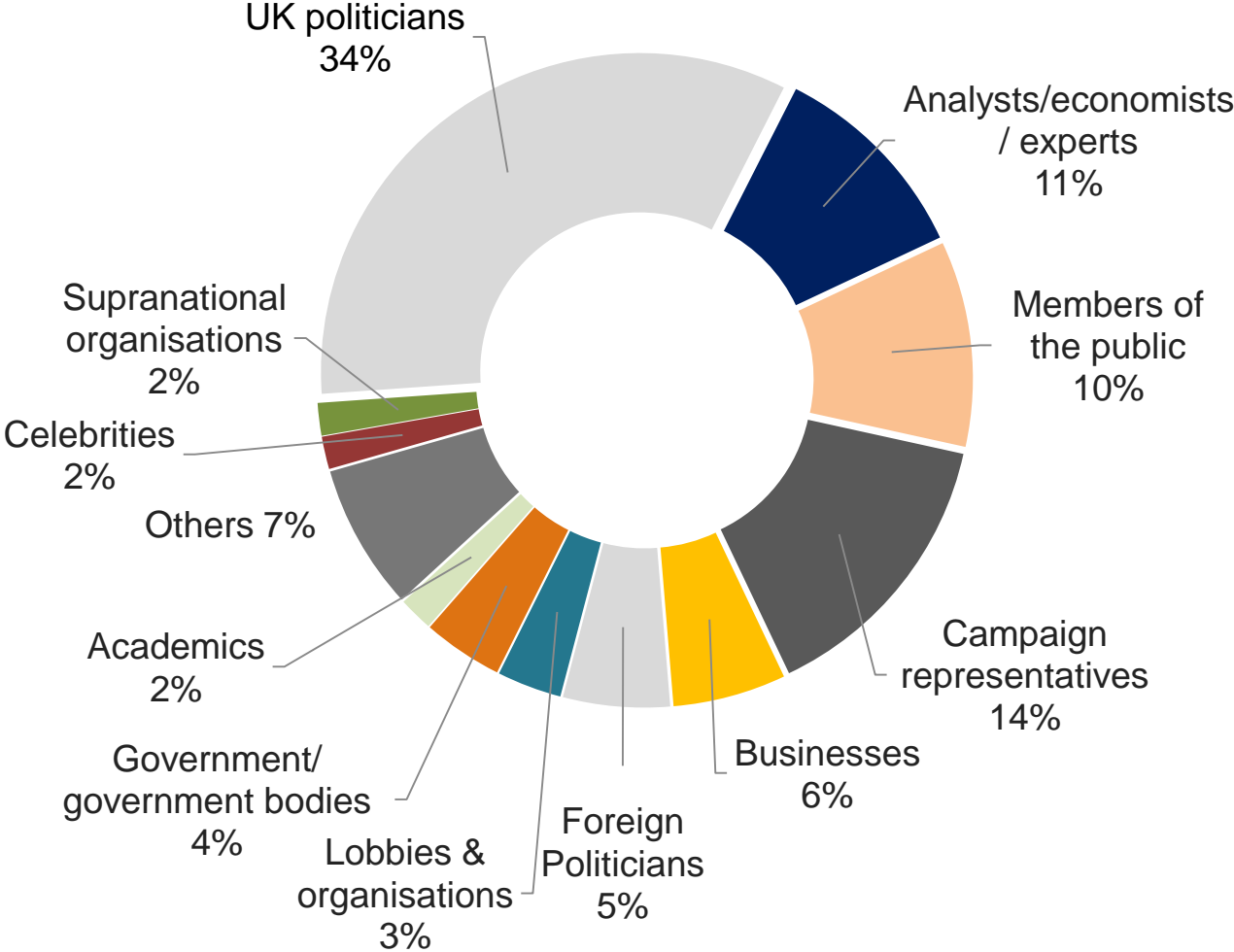


Base: 2,378 articles

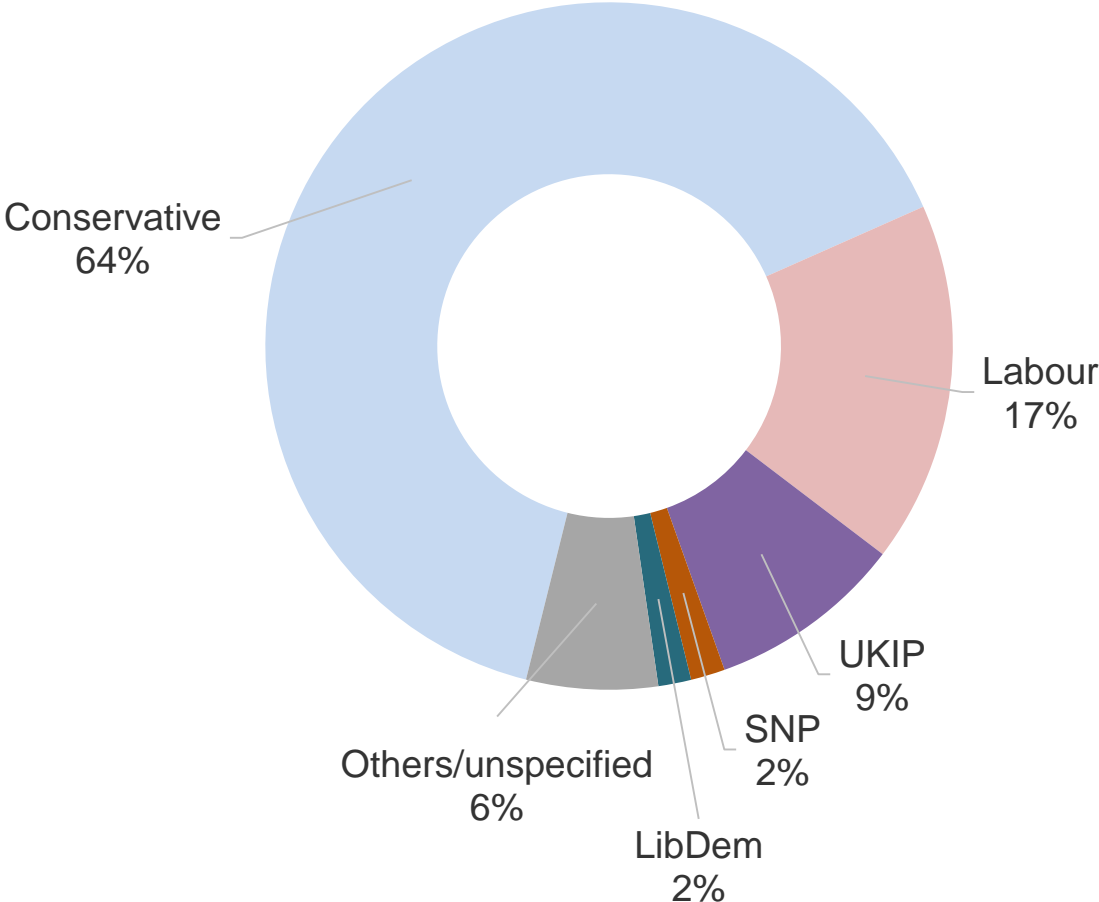


EU Referendum | Newspapers' position by reach and volume

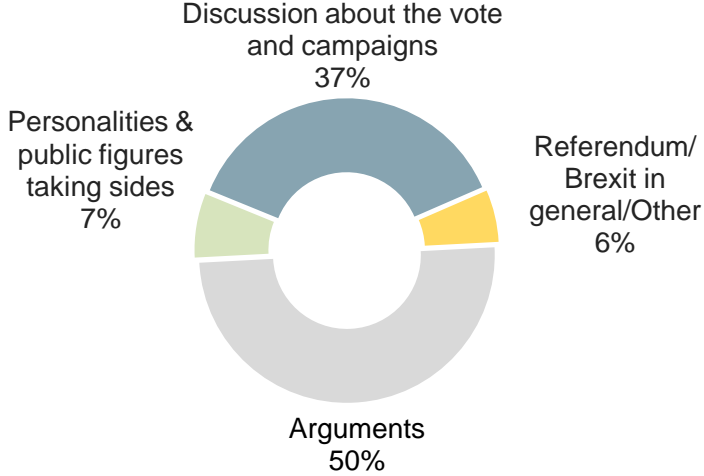




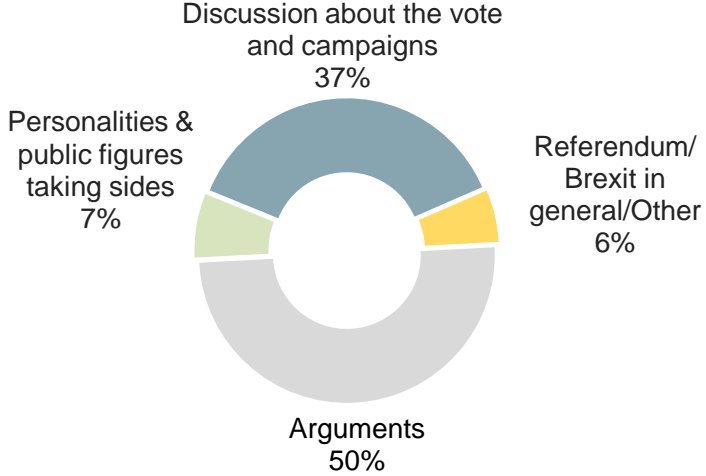
55% of the coverage used spokespeople's quotes



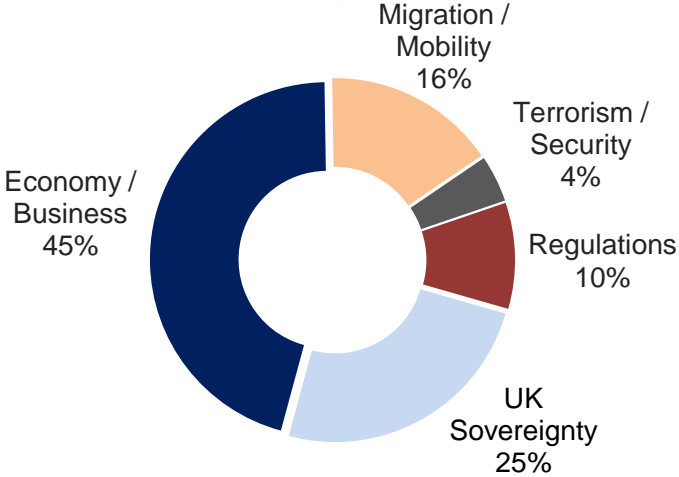




Base: 19,158 messages

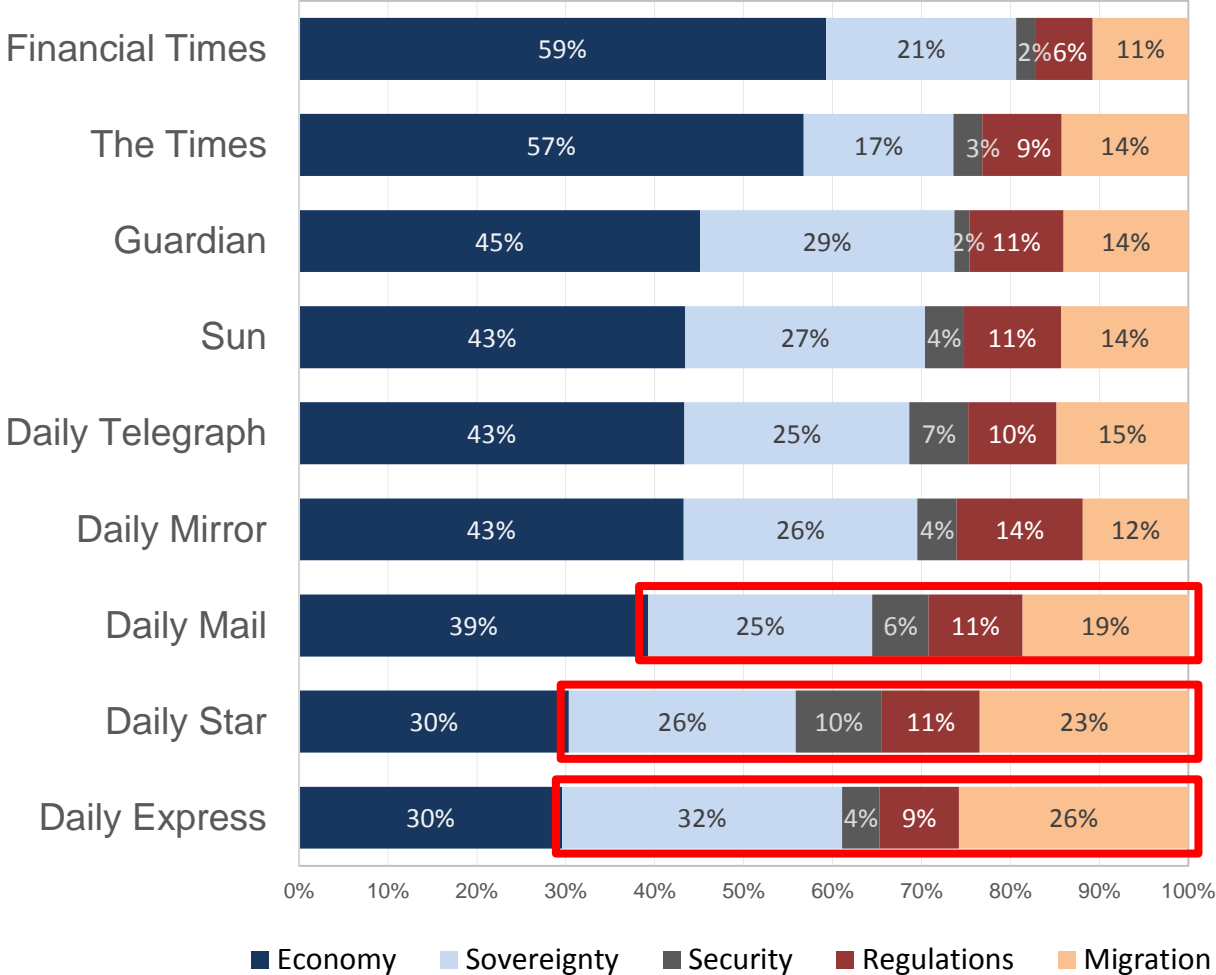


Base: 19,158 messages

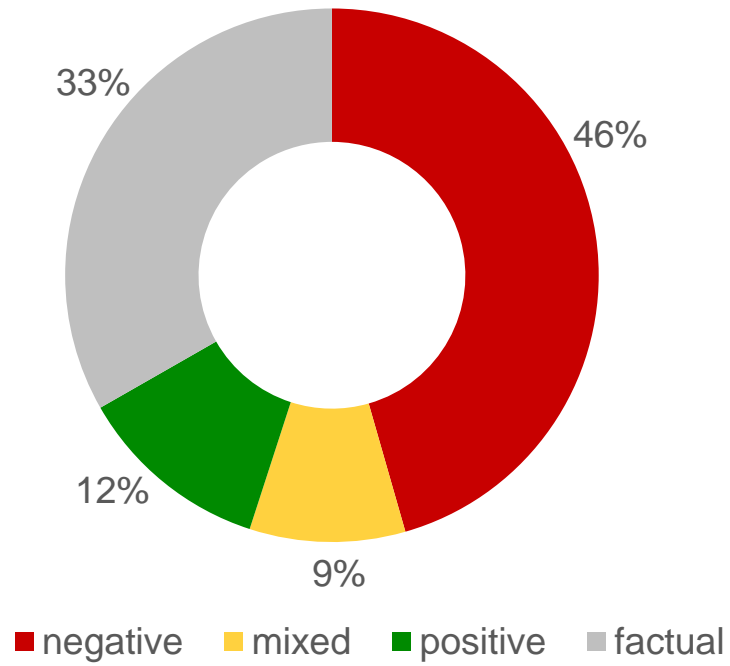


Base: 9,189 messages

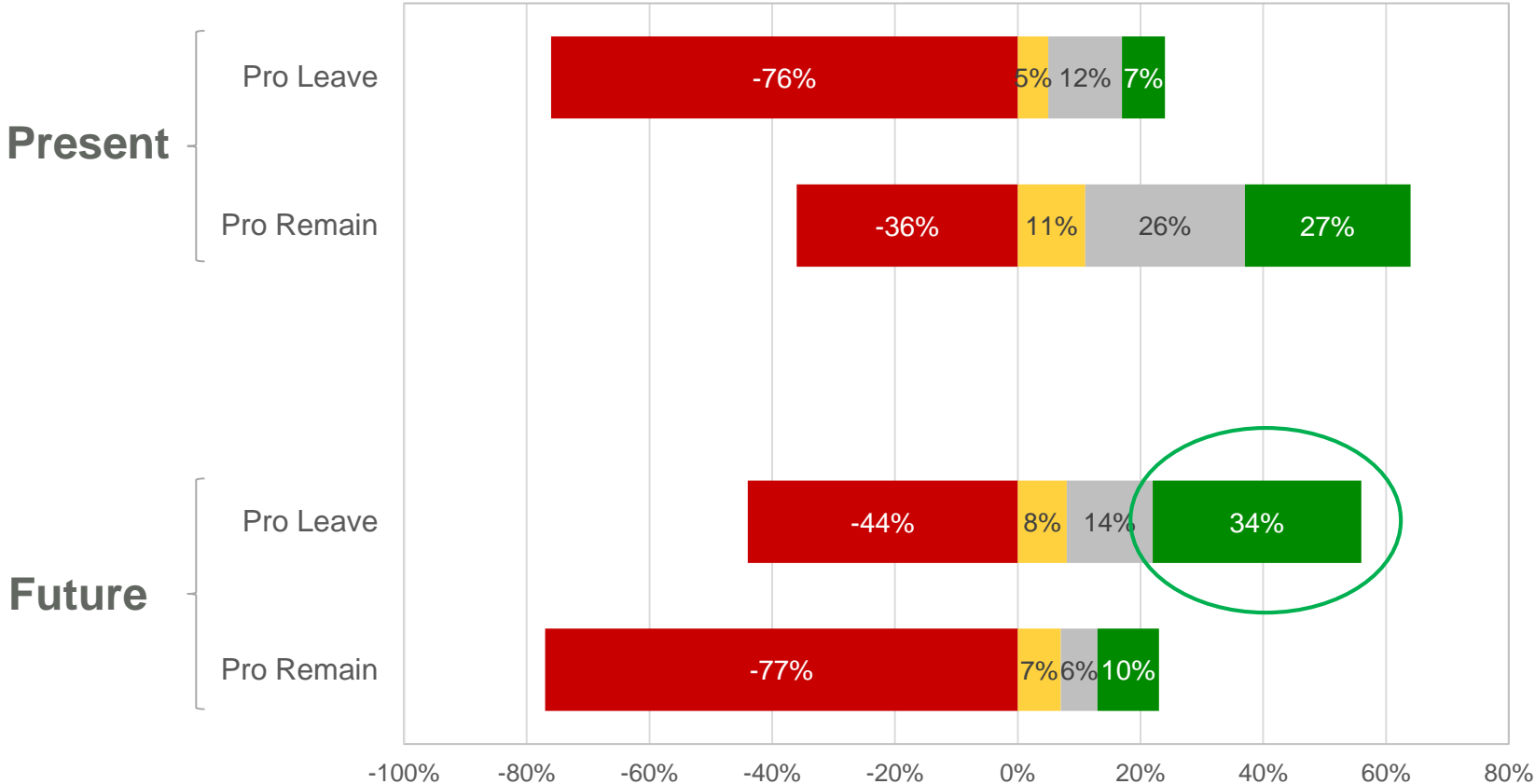
EU Referendum | Topics by newspaper



Tone of overall messages

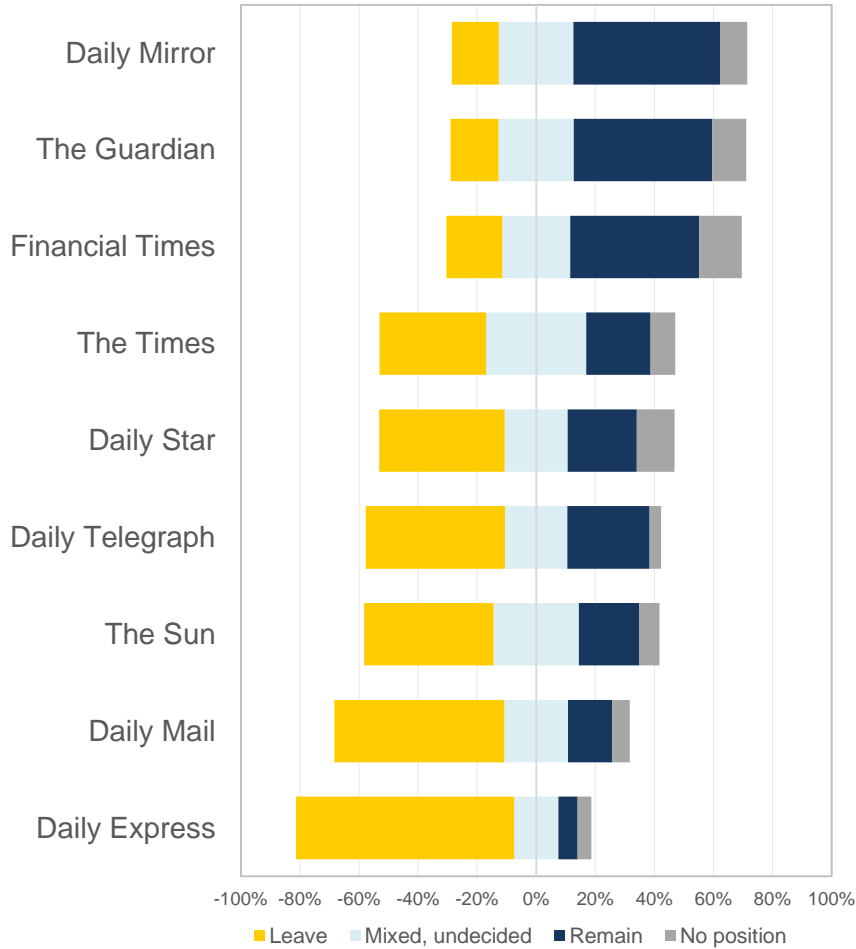


Tone of messages by position & time perspective

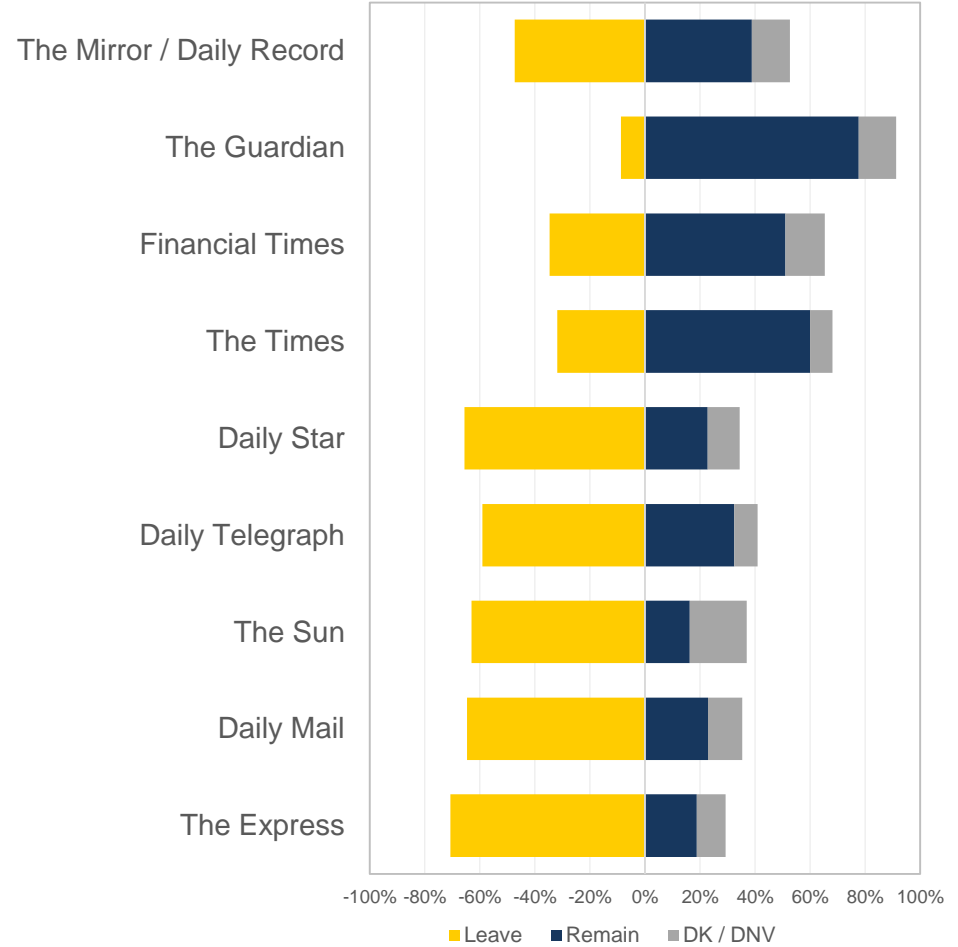


Position of Newspapers Leave/Remain and Vote by Newspaper according to YouGov exit poll

Position of Newspapers Leave/Remain

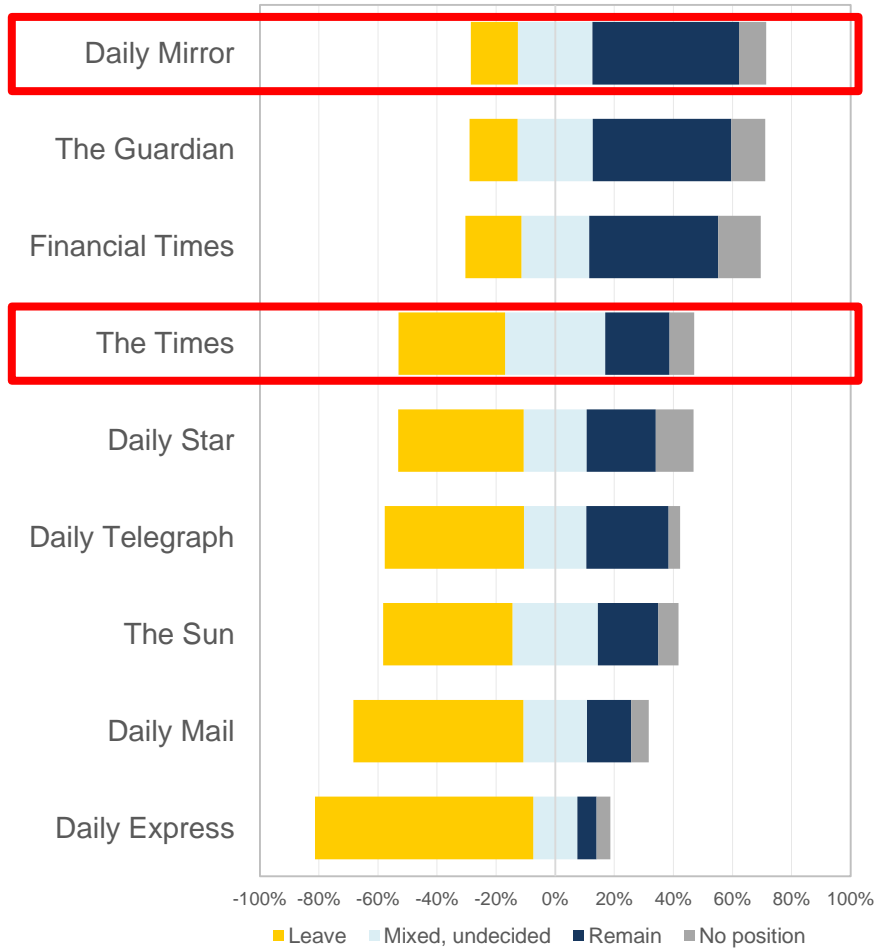


YouGov exit polls

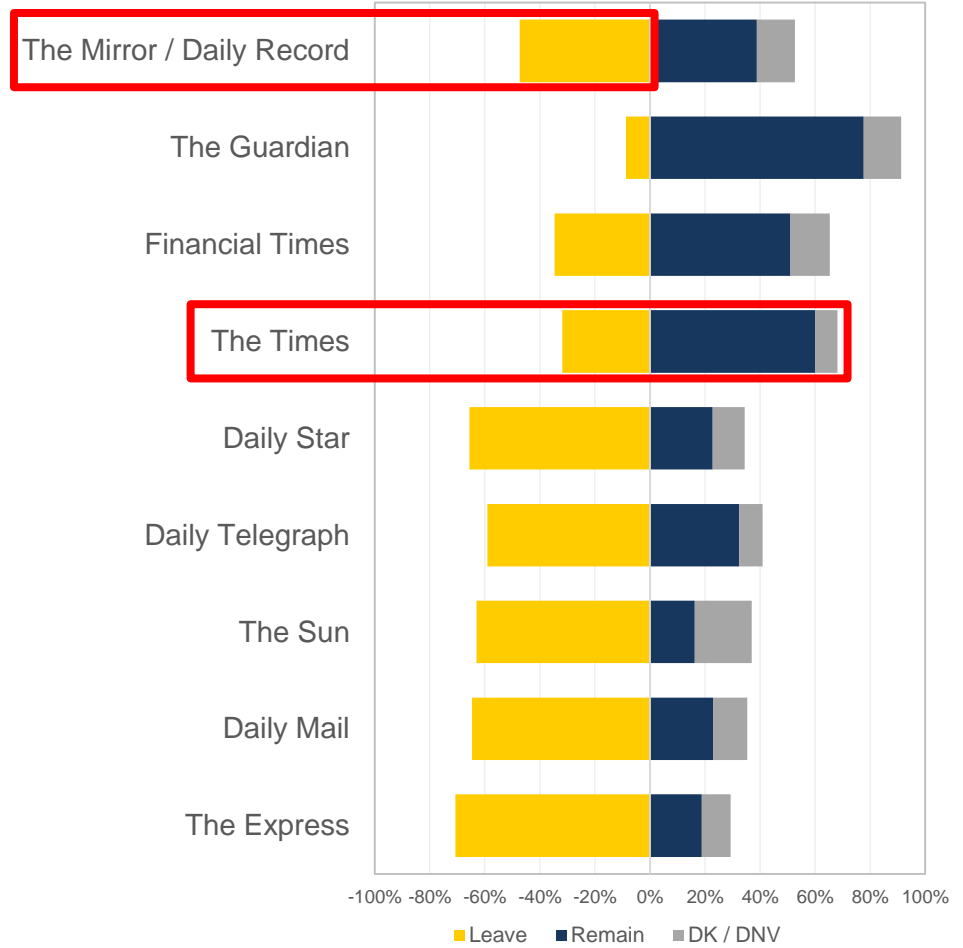


Position of Newspapers Leave/Remain and Vote by Newspaper according to YouGov exit poll

Position of Newspapers Leave/Remain



YouGov exit polls



RECAP

- Coverage varies by title but overall Pro-Leave
- Largely a Blue on Blue campaign
- Leave campaigners cited far more than Remain
- Personalities/contest prevail over any issue
- Issue coverage polarised Leave/Remain
- Tone generally negative but more so for Remain
- Papers' positions broadly in line with readers' votes with 2 exceptions

IMPLICATIONS

- Who cares about papers anyway?
 - Declining readership but boost during referendum
- Why might press coverage matter?
 - agenda setting
 - wider media agenda
- Referendum coverage and the voters?
 - Better at reinforcing views of decided voters
 - Than informing the undecided

THE PRESS AND THE REFENDUM CAMPAIGN

Panel Discussion



Matthew Elliott (Vote Leave)

Lucy Thomas (Britain Stronger In Europe)

Jonathan Isaby (BrexitCentral)

Richard Corbett (Labour MEP)

Moderated by **Dr Sara Hagemann** (European Institute)

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