

Poland Votes to Join EU

The results of the referendum held on 7 and 8 June were strongly positive for joining the European Union. There were two requirements of this referendum in order for it to affirm Poland joining the EU in 2004:

- That it be valid, more than 50% of the roughly 28 million registered voters had to turn out and vote for the referendum to be legally valid; and
- That the vote support EU accession. A simple majority of the votes was needed to affirm EU accession.

Both of those criteria were met. About 59% of the eligible voters turned out, and 77% voted in the affirmative for EU accession.

The voters gave the government a bit of a scare, however. The government, strongly urging Poles to accept EU accession, had set the voting to take place on two days: Saturday and Sunday. This was highly unusual in Poland, perhaps without precedent.

On Saturday, the voter turnout was very light. It appeared on Saturday evening as if not enough voters would turn out for the referendum to be valid.

But, on Sunday the crowds turning out were huge. Why? We have been told it can be ascribed to habit. Poles have always voted on Sundays, so why change?

In any case, Poland (the largest by far of the 10 candidate countries to be joining the EU in this round of expansion) has voted decisively to join the EU. Actual accession will take place in about a year.