

## EU Referendum Survey – AGCC data

### February 2016

This EU Referendum survey was carried out between January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2016, before Donald Tusk's letter of response to David Cameron's negotiations was published.

The previous survey, conducted in September 2015, serves as a benchmark for tracking any shift in attitudes towards the EU Referendum among our members.

#### COMPOSITION OF RESPONDENTS

There were 115 responses from the AGCC area, 458 responses in Scotland (including AGCC responses) and 2,133 responses UK-wide.

- AGCC responses were distributed among company sizes as follows: Micro (25%), Small (38%), Medium (24%) and Large (11%).

In comparison, the UK-wide responses strongly featured micro businesses (52%) and a lower proportion of large businesses (9%).

- A majority of AGCC respondents exported (56%) and imported (55%) goods, products and/or services to EU countries. Almost two thirds of businesses (65%) exported to countries outside of the EU.

A higher proportion of AGCC business import and export to Europe and the rest of the world compared when compared to businesses across Scotland.

Some AGCC businesses reported they do not carry out any export (30%) or import (39%) activities.

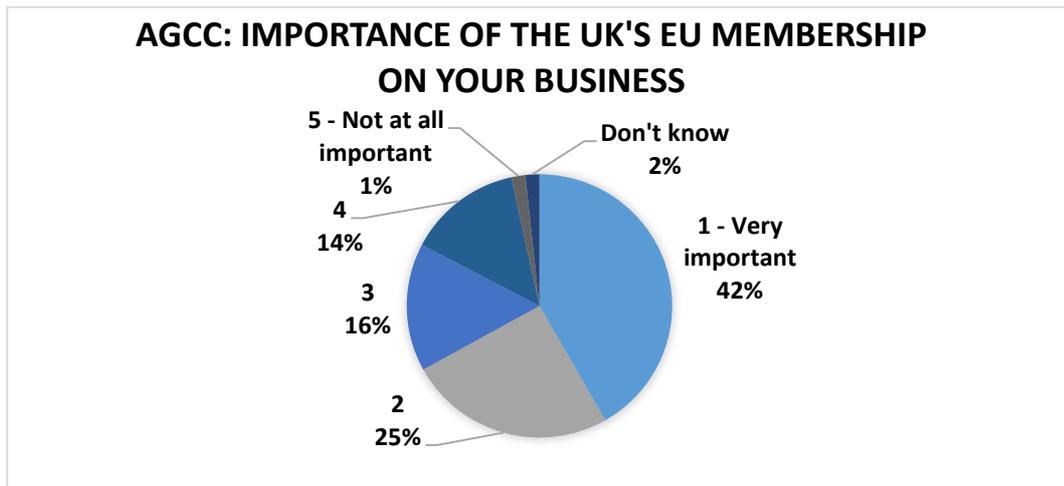
AGCC RESPONDENTS			
	Countries inside the EU	Rest of the world	None
Exports	56.3%	65.2%	30.4%
Imports	55.3%	39.8%	38.8%

SCOTLAND RESPONDENTS			
	Countries inside the EU	Rest of the world	None
Exports	39.6%	38.1%	54.1%
Imports	40.4%	29.4%	53.8%

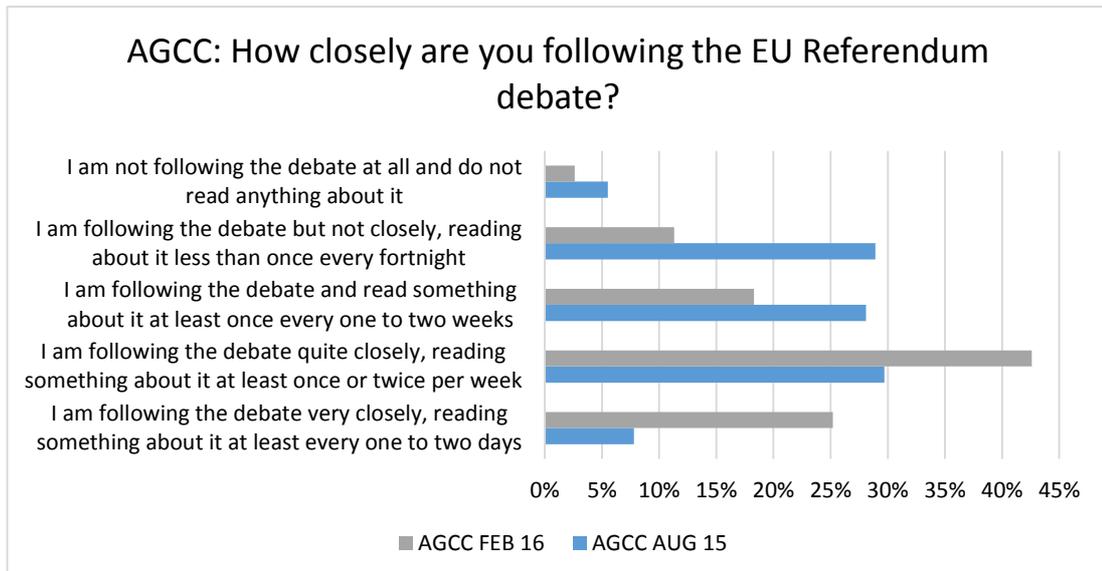
**BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE AND OPINIONS ON THE REFERENDUM**

- Only 1.7% of AGCC business leaders said the EU referendum was “not at all important” to their business, compared to 7% of Scottish and 7.9% of UK businesses.

The referendum is “very important” for 42% of AGCC businesses, similarly to businesses across Scotland and the UK (42% and 43%).



- More than two thirds of AGCC respondents (68%) are now following the EU referendum debate “closely”, i.e. at least weekly. This marks a strong increase, from 37% in September 2015.



Scottish and UK businesses are similarly well exposed to the debate, with 62% and 66% following the debate closely in the respective areas.

Slightly more UK businesses read about the debate fortnightly (22%) than AGCC respondents (18.3%).

- The majority of business leaders completing the survey in the AGCC area say they are familiar with every objective in the Prime Minister’s renegotiation package: safeguards for non-Euro countries (62%); UK exemption from ever-closer union (62%); and restricting EU migrants’ access to tax credits (72%).

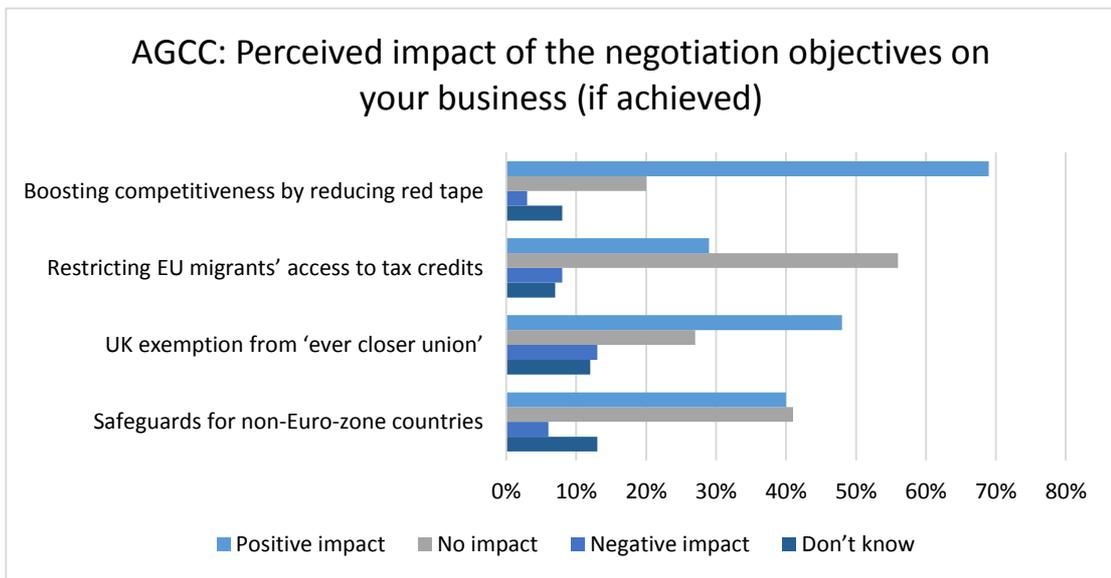
A smaller majority reports being familiar with the objective of boosting competitiveness by reducing the burden of red tape (57%).

The levels of familiarity are somewhat lower than among UK respondents: safeguards for non-Euro countries (68%); boosting competitiveness (64%); UK exemption from ever-closer union (70%); and restricting EU migrants’ access to tax credits (81%).

**BUSINESS IMPACTS**

- More than nine in ten AGCC business leaders report that the referendum has had no material impacts on orders/sales, recruitment, investment or costs in their business to date.
- AGCC respondents believed the following impacts would result if the PM’s negotiation process is successful:

AGCC RESPONDENTS				
	Safeguards for non-Euro-zone countries	UK exemption from ‘ever closer union’	Restricting EU migrants’ access to tax credits	Boosting competitiveness by reducing red tape
Positive impact	40%	48%	29%	69%
No impact	41%	27%	56%	20%
Negative impact	6%	13%	8%	3%
Don’t know	13%	12%	7%	8%



- If the UK were to leave the EU, a majority of AGCC respondents said it would have no impact on their recruitment strategy (60%), investment strategy (56%) or treasury/cash management (52%).

For their export and international sales strategy, 45% saw no impacts and 41% saw negative impacts. For their businesses’ import/supply chain strategy, 43% saw no impacts and 42% saw negative impacts.

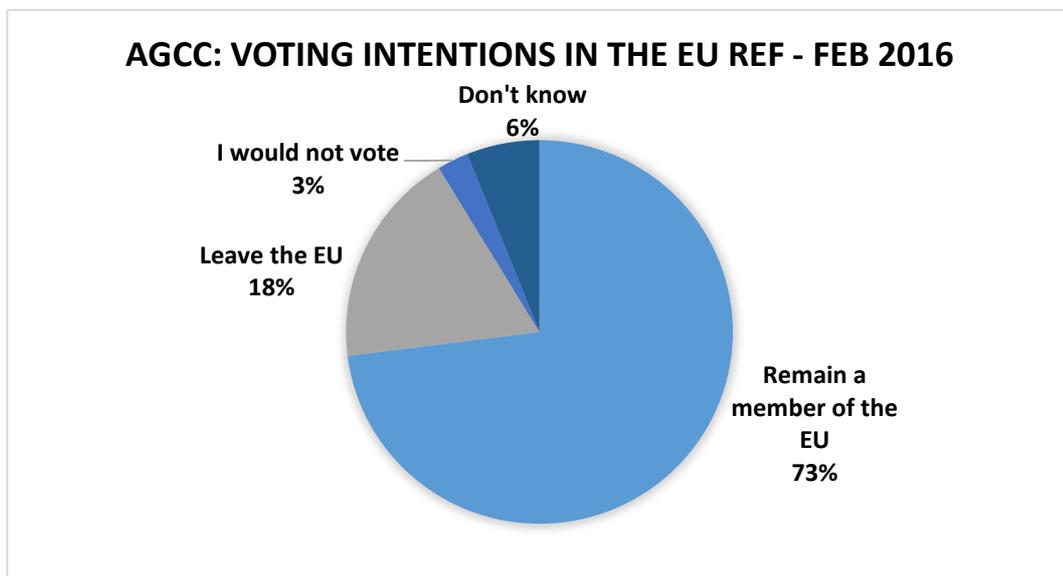
**For their overall growth strategy,** 10% saw positive impacts, 45% saw no impacts and 33% saw negative impacts. 11% did not know what the impacts would be.

## VOTING INTENTIONS

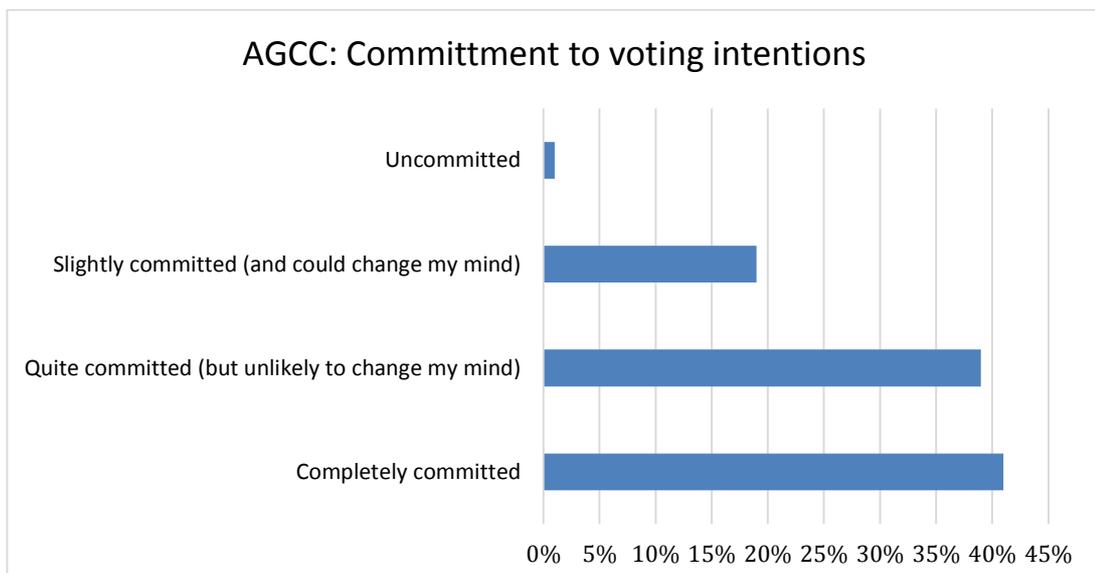
- Should the vote take place tomorrow, almost three quarters (73%) of AGCC business leaders would vote to remain in the EU (74% in September 2015), compared to 69% in Scotland and 60% in the rest of the UK.

18% of AGCC business leaders would vote to leave the EU, up from 11.5% in September 2015. This proportion is still fewer than among UK respondents (30%), but similar to the Scotland-wide result (19%).

6% of North-east business leaders still don't know how they would vote. This uncertainty has decreased since the September 2015 survey (14%).



- North-east business leaders said they were “completely committed” (41%); “quite committed” but unlikely to change their mind (39%); “slightly committed” and could change their mind (19%); or “uncommitted” (1%).



- Commitment is currently higher amongst North-east respondents who intend to vote to Remain in the EU – 45% are completely committed, in contrast with 24% of those who would vote to leave. Conversely, 38% of those who would vote to Leave the EU are slightly committed and “likely to change their minds”, in contrast with 14% of respondents who intend to vote “Remain”.
- AGCC respondents said the outcome of the PM's negotiations are:
  - “very likely” to influence their voting intentions (21%)
  - “somewhat likely” (20%)
  - “unlikely” (55%).

The PM's negotiations have less influence now among AGCC respondents than in September 2015, when only 40% were “unlikely” to be influenced by them.

Among UK businesses, 12% say the PM's renegotiation is ‘very likely’ to influence their vote; 22% ‘somewhat likely’; 63% ‘unlikely’ (up from 45% in September 2015)

