

Europe: Which Country has the Most Social Media Savvy Politicians?

More politicians than ever are using social media to raise their profile and make their views heard on a local, national and international level.

Social media provides an opportunity for politicians to talk directly and immediately to constituents and the wider public without needing to go through a media filter. This does, however, create additional challenges for businesses presented with yet another stream of communication to monitor for risk purposes. Politicians are using social media to proactively engage with news in a more immediate and unedited manner than previously seen with traditional media. Following HSBC's announcement of job losses in his constituency, Nick Clegg (270k+ followers, 17+ retweets) took to [Twitter](#) to comment on the "devastating blow for Sheffield".

Social media presents notable challenges, with multiple examples of political issues being generated or escalated on social platforms. The Labour Party is still trying to deal with the fallout of MP Naz Shah's [comments](#) on Facebook, controversially suggesting a relocation of Israel to the US. The social media posts sparked a wider debate about perceived anti-Semitism from within the Party and led to Shah's suspension.

While awareness of online criticism and praise from UK politicians is now seen as an integral aspect of communications, multinational organisations have multiple regions to take into consideration. If your organisation came under fire by a politician in Italy on Twitter, for example, would the first you knew about it be when news outlets began reporting on the event, and negative coverage filtered through to your clippings? Could focusing solely on the discussion of politicians in the UK mean you are facing significant risks elsewhere?

With this in mind, Social360 conducted analysis, using our extensive database of political sources, to ascertain just how socially active politicians across 10 European countries really are. We analysed the social media output and presence* of politicians across ten countries: UK, Ireland, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Social Media Output

Firstly, let's take a look at the social media output of politicians in the various regions, to establish a comparative share of conversation.

Social360 tracked the social media output of politicians across the nominated territories over a week**. During this time, politicians in the monitored countries collectively posted more than 129,000 times across their social media platforms.

UK politicians were the most active, with 34% of the overall conversation, accounting for over 43,000 posts. The impending EU referendum on 23 June and the lead-up to local elections, which took place on 05 May, are potential reasons for the significant output from UK politicians during this time.

In second and third place were Italy (19%) and France (15%). Both countries have upcoming local and national elections. In Italy, voters will take to the polls in June to vote for a new mayor for both Milan and Rome, while in France, the campaigns have begun for the presidential election in 2017, which could be a contributory factor to the higher volume of social output. Comparatively, Norway's politicians use social media much less frequently, with only 787 comments (0.6% share of voice) identified during the monitored period.

Data does, however, need to be considered in relative terms. With the inclusion of all chambers and devolved parliaments, the UK has 1,443 politicians. Compared to The Netherlands' 172 politicians, it's no surprise that overall output is considerably higher.

Social Media Presence

With the highest percentage of socially present politicians, Denmark can be seen to be the most prolific with only one of Denmark's 178 politicians not having an identifiable social media presence. Over

90% of politicians from Ireland (96.4%), Germany (91.8%) and Norway (91.7%) also have social media presences.

Comparatively, Spain has the lowest number, with only 57% of its politicians having an identifiable social media account. Out of the 10 monitored regions, none have less than 50% of politicians on social media.

While the overall social media output of UK politicians is significant, only 57.7% of its politicians have a social presence, ranking 9 out of 10. However, further analysis leads us to conclude that the relative absence of the House of Lords (23.8%) here significantly impacts the overall average, with all other chambers and devolved parliaments having a reasonably significant presence. Only 5 of the UK's 650 MPs have no identifiable social media presence.

Conclusions

Social360's research reaffirms the view that monitoring potentially influential conversations across all key regions is the only way to remain completely informed and be able to formulate a valuable response. With the increasing prevalence of social media, and the willingness of politicians to take to various platforms to express their view, multinational organisations can no longer solely focus monitoring efforts on the UK. A wider discussion is happening, and organisations need to make sure they are listening.

Social360 has developed a database of political sources across more than 40 territories.

Interested in how we can help you make sure you are listening to all conversations relevant to your organisation? Contact us on info@social360group.com.

**Definition of output: Volume of social media posts being issued by a particular presence*

Definition of presence: Social media account of an individual or organisation

***Social360 monitored the output of politicians across social platforms between 27 April – 04 May 2016*

Appendix

Table 1. Social media output of politicians from nominated European countries

Country	No. of mentions issued by politicians	% of share of voice
UK	43,688	34%
Italy	24,271	19%
France	19,975	15%
Germany	13,862	11%
Spain	12,536	10%
Denmark	7,050	5%
Sweden	3,102	2%
Netherlands	2,811	2%
Ireland	1,160	0.8%
Norway	787	0.6%

Total number of social media mentions issued by politicians across the 10 monitored territories during the monitored week period: 129,242

Table 2. Identified social media presences of politicians in nominated European countries

Country	Chamber	No. of politicians (total)	No. of politicians with social presences	% of politicians with social presences
Denmark	Main Chamber	178	177	99.44
Ireland	All Chambers	226	218	96.46
	Dail Eireann MPs	166	160	96.39
	Seanad Members	60	58	96.67
Germany	All Chambers	795	730	91.82
	Bundestag	626	625	99.84
	Bundesrat	169	105	62.13
Norway	Main Chamber	169	155	91.72
France	All Chambers	923	812	87.97
	National Assembly	577	552	95.67
	Senators	346	260	75.14
Italy	All Chambers	950	792	83.37
	Deputies	631	533	84.47
	Senators	319	259	81.19
Netherlands	All Chambers	224	172	76.78
	House of Representatives	149	136	91.28
	Senators	75	36	48.00
Sweden	Riksdag	349	255	73.07
UK	All Chambers	1443	833	57.73
	MPs	650	645	99.23
	House of Lords	788	188	23.86
<i>Scotland</i>	SMPs	128	127	99.22
<i>Wales</i>	MPs	60	59	98.33
<i>Northern Ireland</i>	MPs	107	92	85.98
Spain	All Chambers	589	339	57.56
	Congress of Deputies	330	235	71.21
	Senate	259	104	40.15