



**Nuclear Weapons in Europe:  
Survey Results in Six European Countries**

**Study Coordinated by Strategic Communications for  
Greenpeace International**

**May 25, 2006**

## Nuclear Weapons in Europe: Results of Public Opinion Research

### Introduction

Strategic Communications Inc. organized surveys of public opinion in six European countries — Belgium, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands and Turkey — during April and May, 2006. The survey questions were written by Greenpeace International with advice from Strategic Communications, and fielded via respected social research agencies (see Methods section for agencies and notes on methods).

In each country we tested public awareness about the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons on European soil. As a follow-up, we asked respondents whether they are concerned about the presence of such weapons in their country, and whether they would prefer a Europe that is free of nuclear weapons, or not.

The results are presented below.

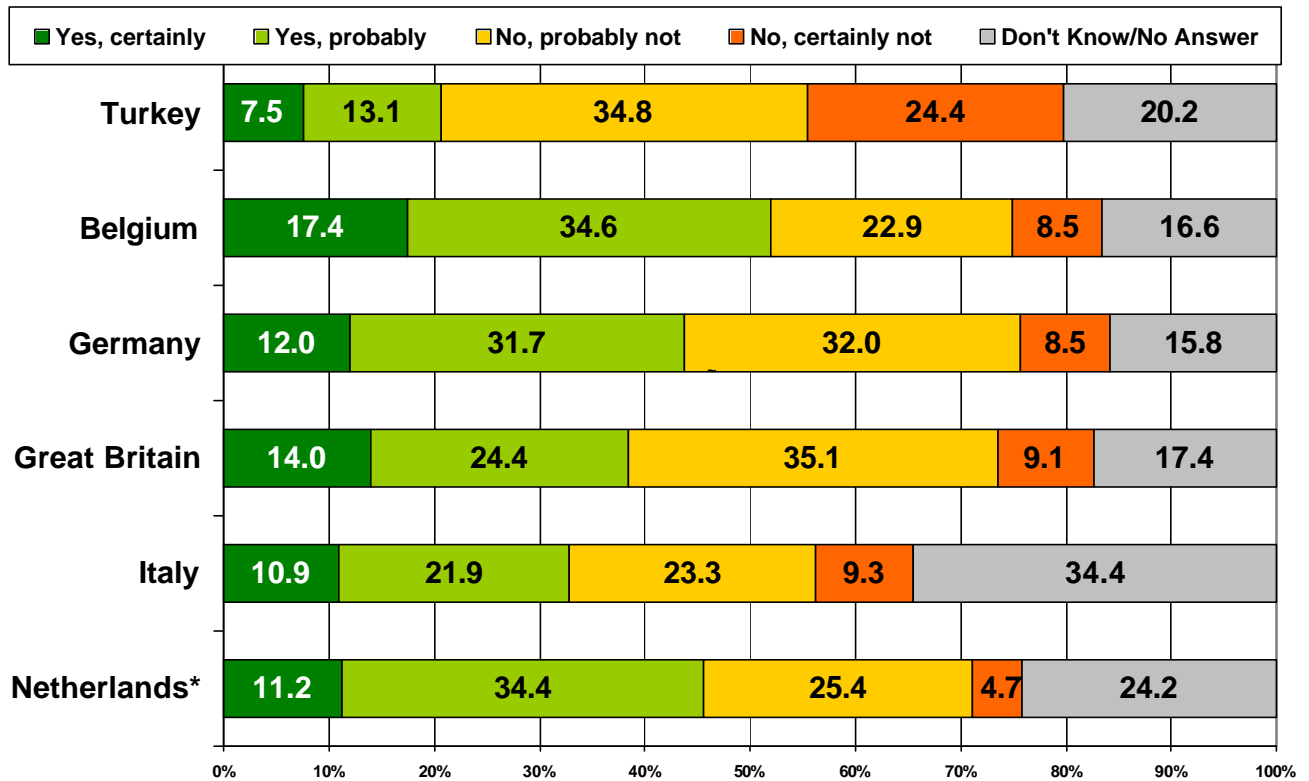
### Major Findings: Awareness of U.S. Nuclear Weapons in European Countries

We first asked respondents “**As far as you know, are there any American nuclear weapons stationed here in [country]?**” We found the highest affirmative response in Belgium where 52% of respondents said that there are certainly (17.4%) or probably (34.6%) U.S. nuclear weapons in that country. By contrast, less than a third (31.4%) expressed the view that there are certainly not (8.5%) or probably not (22.9%) U.S. nuclear weapons in Belgium.

The lowest affirmative response came from citizens of Turkey, where 20.6% answered affirmatively, and (59.2%) answered negatively.

Data for all six countries is shown in the chart below.

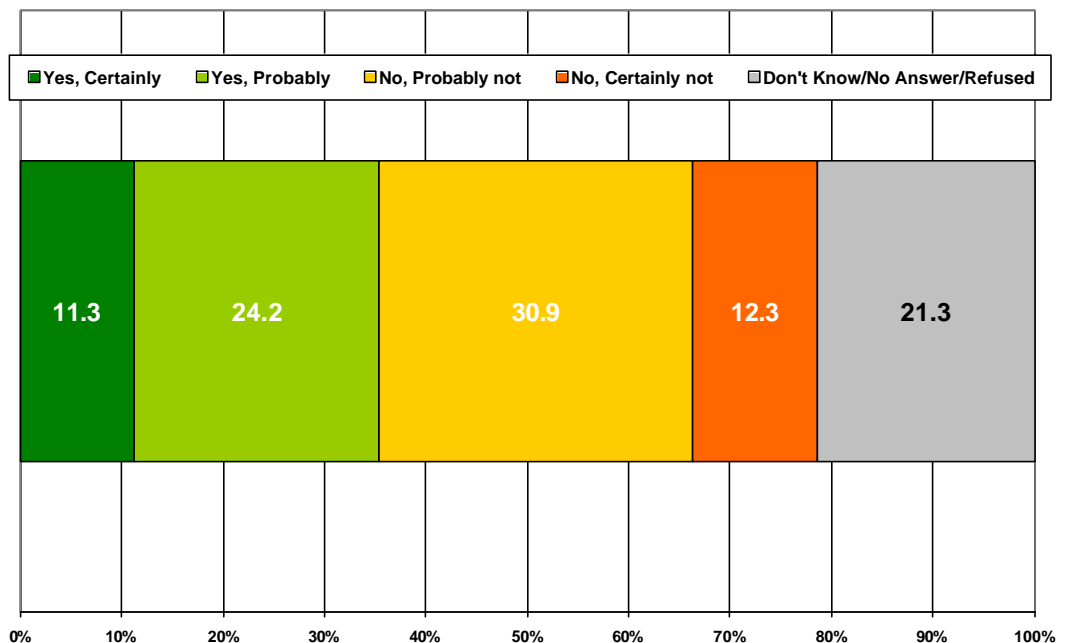
### As far as you know, are there any US nuclear weapons stationed here in [country]?



\*Question worded differently. See narrative for details.

Looking at this data across all six countries together, we find that overall awareness of the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons is relatively low – only 35.5% of respondents affirm their presence, while 43.2% deny their presence. More than one-in-five (21.3%) said they do not know.

### Question 1 (combined): As far as you know, are there any US nuclear weapons stationed here in [country]?

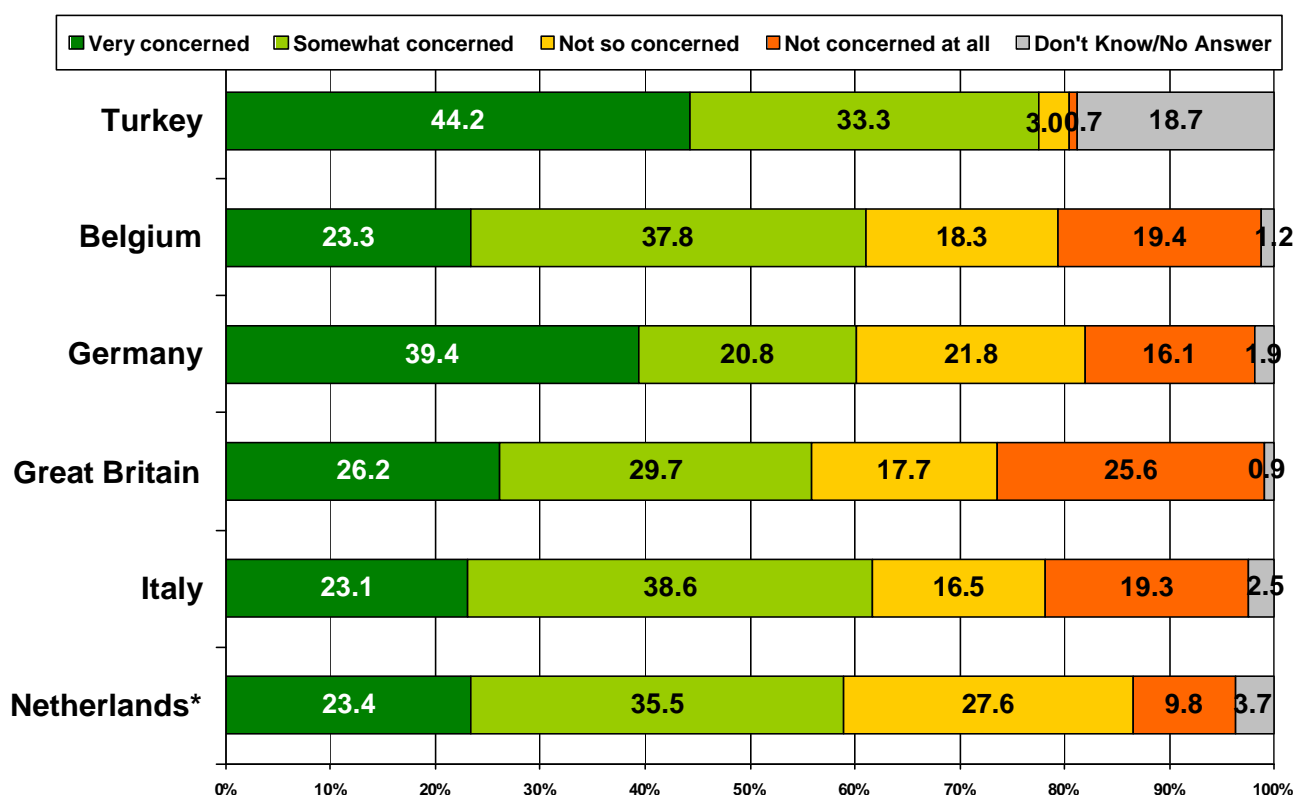


\*Question wording varied in Netherlands. See narrative report for details.

## Major Findings: Concern

Secondly, we told respondents that independent experts confirm that there are a certain number of U.S.-controlled nuclear weapons in their country, and asked “**given this, are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not so concerned, or not concerned at all?**”<sup>1</sup> The results for all six countries are shown in the chart below.

### Question 2: There are [x] nuclear weapons stationed here in [country]. Given this, are you...?

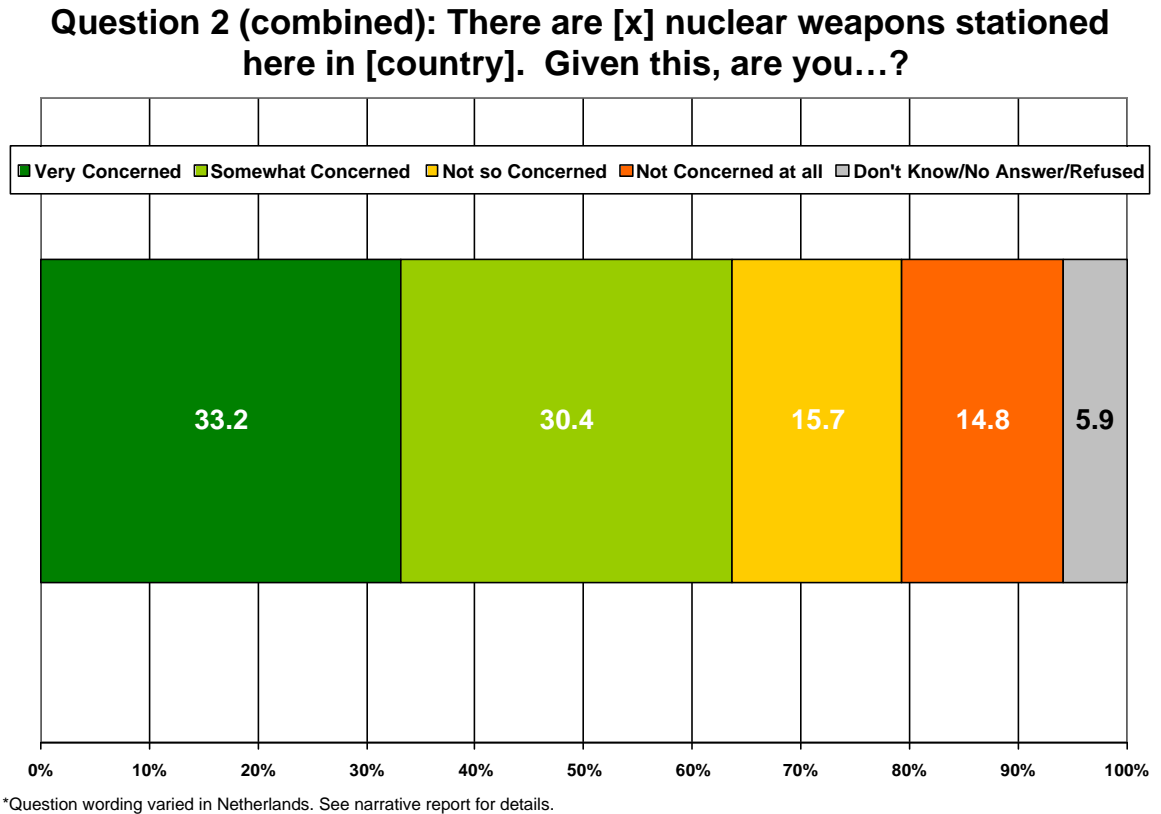


\*Question worded differently. See narrative for details.

The data show that while overall levels of concern are relatively high across all six countries - between 55.9% in Great Britain and 77.5% in Turkey - the intensity of concern is significantly higher in Turkey. There, 44.2% are very concerned, 69% more than Great Britain where 26.2% say they are very concerned. Great Britain is also where the greatest percentage of respondents say they are not at all concerned about the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons (25.6%).

<sup>1</sup> The full text of the question was: “According to independent experts, there are [no.] U.S.-owned nuclear weapons stationed here in [country]. Given this, are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not so concerned, or not concerned at all?” However, in the Netherlands, the question was worded as follows: “There are independent experts who claim there are twenty [20] U.S.-owned nuclear weapons stationed here in The Netherlands. What if this is true? Would you be very concerned, somewhat concerned, not so concerned, or not concerned at all?”

When the results on this question are taken together (see chart below), the results show that a solid majority of respondents in this study (63.6%) are ‘somewhat’ or ‘very’ concerned when told that their country hosts U.S. nuclear weapons, and one-in-three citizens of these countries is ‘very concerned’.



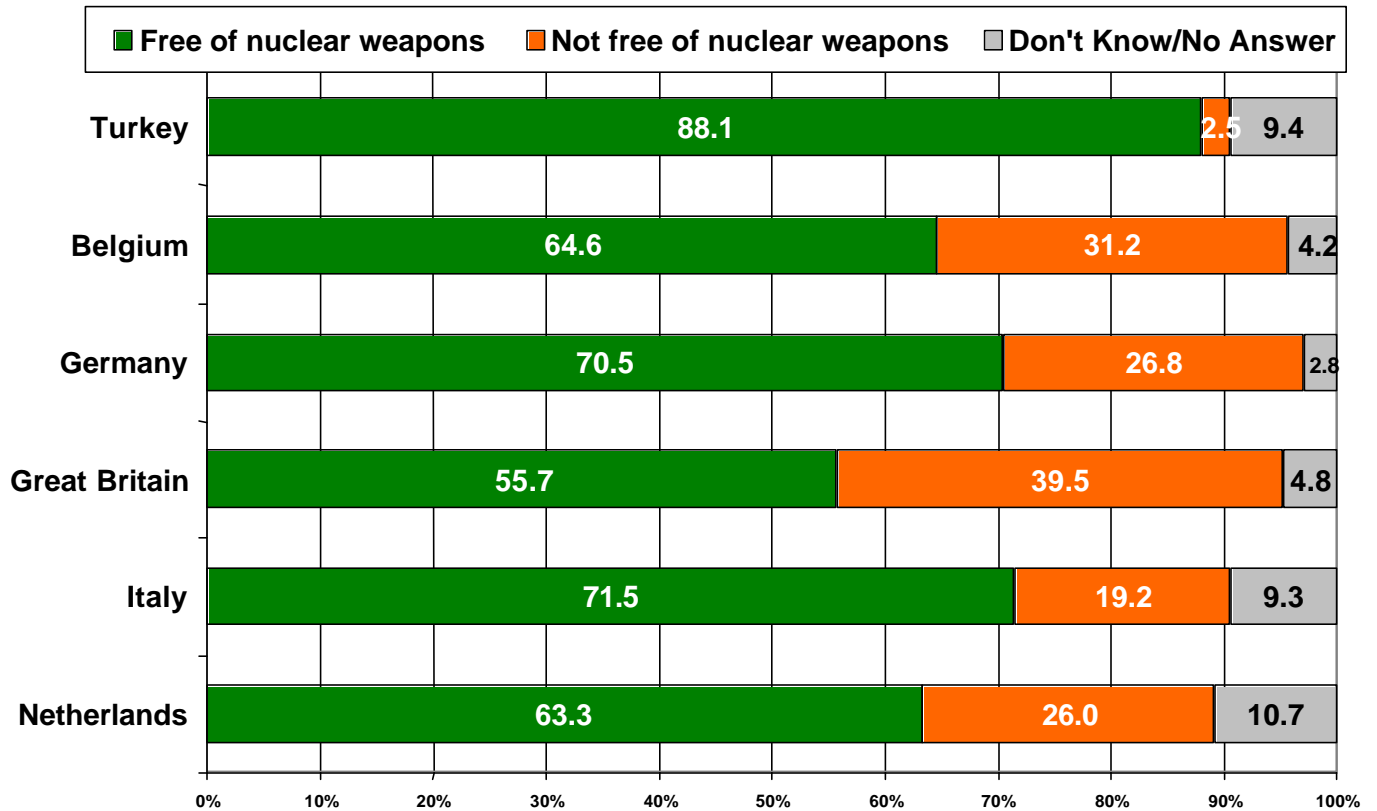
**Major Findings: Should Europe be free of nuclear weapons?**

Finally, we asked respondents to consider what should be done in the future. The question read as follows: **“As you may know, there have been nuclear weapons stationed in Europe since the 1950’s. In recent years, European leaders have reduced the number of nuclear weapons in Europe. Now some people say that some nuclear weapons should remain, while others argue that the time had come to remove all nuclear weapons from Europe. What about you? Do you want Europe to be free of nuclear weapons or not?”**

What we found is that support for a nuclear-free Europe is strong right across all six countries. The highest level of support is in Turkey, where an overwhelming majority (88.1%) say they want Europe to be free of all nuclear weapons, versus only 2.5% who do not want to see Europe free of all nuclear weapons.

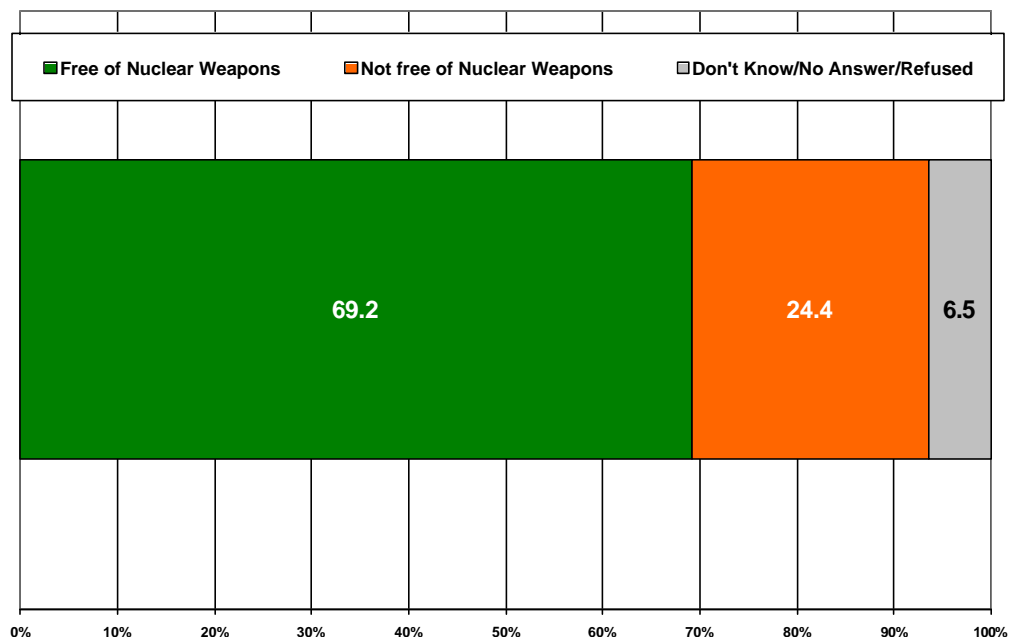
Italy has the next-highest support for the nuclear-free option (71.5%), with Great Britain showing the lowest level of support (55.7%). The data for all six countries is shown in the chart below.

### Question 3: ... do you want Europe to be free of nuclear weapons or not?



And when the data for this question are viewed in aggregate, almost three times as many Europeans say they prefer a nuclear-free Europe as express the view that that continent should continue to have such weapons (69.2% vs 24.4%).

### Question 3 (combined): Do you want Europe to be free of nuclear weapons or not?



## Some Interpretive Comments

A solid majority of Europeans (65.5%) in the six countries are unaware that their nation is host to U.S. nuclear weapons. In part this finding reflects the significant changes in the way security, defence, and disarmament issues are framed in the public discourse since the end of the Cold War and especially since the attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. Simply put, security concerns now focus on terrorism and the controversial role of the United States in world affairs, while nuclear weapons *per se* are discussed almost exclusively under the heading of 'horizontal' proliferation -- that is, the threat of these weapons being developed by North Korea, Iran, and Iraq and the possibility that they could be obtained by networks such as Al-Qaeda.

The issue of 'vertical' proliferation -- the manufacture and deployment of nuclear arms by the recognized nuclear states (US, UK, France, China, Russia) -- has almost entirely disappeared from debate in western countries (though not, it should be noted, in other parts of the world). Lower awareness among citizens of Europe that they still live alongside nuclear weapons is one consequence of these changes.

However, a majority in each of these six countries is concerned when they become aware of the presence of such weapons. And support for making Europe nuclear-free is very strong (69.2%). And while there remains significant support for retaining nuclear weapons in Europe (24.4% overall), there is clearly potential for public concern to intensify if awareness of the presence of nuclear weapons increases, and for demands that all nuclear weapons be removed from Europe to become a prominent and determining feature of public debate.

## Methods

Strategic Communications organized fielding of research questions on behalf of Greenpeace International through the following firms in the six European countries. This table also shows the total number of interviews in each country, the margin of error at the 95% confidence level, and the fielding method.

Country	Supplier	Fielding dates	No. of interviews	Margin of Error	Fielding Method
Belgium	Gates Marketing	May 2 - 14	1000	+/- 3.0%	Random household selection, by telephone
Germany	RiQuesta	April 20 - 22	1003	+/- 3.0%	Random household selection, by telephone
Great Britain	Ipsos MORI	May 5 - 7	1002	+/- 3.0%	Random household selection, by telephone
Italy	Eurisko	May 6 - 8	1000	+/- 3.2%	Random household selection, by telephone
Netherlands	TNS-NIPO	April 26 - May 8	1005	+/- 3.1%	Selection from a pre-screened 'panel' of 200,000 online respondents
Turkey	Ipsos MORI	May 4 - 23	995	+/- 3.0%	Random household selection by face-to-face interview, suburban/urban population

In each country, some post-interview weighting was applied to ensure exact proportionality of the final sample to the census population. Please note that the questions asked were developed by Greenpeace International in consultation with Strategic Communications, Inc., not the suppliers of fielding services.



The three charts in this report that aggregate data to show combined results for all six countries were produced by Strategic Communications, using weighting of individual country data according to latest available national census total population figures for the six study countries.

Strategic Communications received invaluable assistance in conducting this research from Donna Mattfield of Greenpeace International. The principal researcher for this study was John Willis, Director of Campaigns and Research for Stratcom.

### **About Strategic Communications**

Strategic Communications Inc. (Stratcom) provides opinion research, communications, and strategy services exclusively for charities, not-for-profit groups, unions, and other civil society organizations. The firm is based in Canada, and also has clients in the United States and Europe.

Over the past ten years Stratcom has conducted opinion research in a wide array of public policy areas, including health care, education, environmental issues, energy policy, electoral reform, government finance, political choice, and legal services.

Recent clients of the firm have included the **United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)**, **Amnesty International**, the **Canadian Union of Public Employees**, **The Humane Society of the United States**, **OXFAM**, and **The Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation**.