Democratic governance requires that public policy reflects the wishes of the public. In the European Union (EU), however, there are only weak and indirect institutional mechanisms linking public preferences and policy change. This paper investigates empirically whether any relationship exists between public support for European integration and EU policy output in the period 1973-2008. Using a new indicator of policy output - the volume of important legislation produced in each semester - we discover a surprising relationship between public support and legislative production in the EU. Employing a VAR approach we demonstrate that the levels of public support Granger-cause levels of legislative output but not vice versa, and that the relationship is strong up to the middle of the 1990s but non-existent afterwards. The effect is robust to the inclusion of indicators of the state of economy and government preferences. In addition, we discover that the average level of EU support in the Council of Ministers tracks with a 4-years delay unemployment levels. The findings provide one of the first attempts to understand the emerging EU polity at the system level and have implications for the EU democratic legitimacy debate.

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