

euro-barometre

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY



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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES
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SUMMARY

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

AUTUMN 1986

- The mood of Europeans: what they expect from **1987**; fears of a new world war; satisfaction with life and feeling of happiness; satisfaction with the working of democracy.
- A people's Europe: the public's centres of interest; the feeling of being a European citizen; the European flag; relations between western European countries since the fifties; right of residence and the right to vote (in local elections) for European citizens; the 'Tour de l'Avenir' European Community cycle race.
- Attitudes towards Europe and the Community.
- The progress of the Community and European unification.
- The European Parliament: its image, the importance of its current role, hopes for its future role, contacts between citizens and their European and national representatives.

PRELIMINARY NOTE

EUROBAROMETER PUBLIC OPINION SURVEYS HAVE BEEN CONDUCTED ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES EACH SPRING AND AUTUMN SINCE SEPTEMBER 1973. THEY HAVE INCLUDED GREECE SINCE AUTUMN 1980 AND HAVE NOW BEEN EXTENDED TO SPAIN AND PORTUGAL.

AN IDENTICAL SET OF QUESTIONS IS PUT TO REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLES - DIFFERENT EACH TIME - OF THE POPULATION AGED FIFTEEN AND OVER IN EACH COUNTRY. THIS SURVEY WAS CARRIED OUT BY PROFESSIONAL INTERVIEWERS BETWEEN 30 SEPTEMBER AND 14 NOVEMBER 1986 IN THE HOMES OF THE 11 837 SELECTED RESPONDENTS.

SPECIALIST NATIONAL INSTITUTES, ALL MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN OMNIBUS SURVEY, WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR CONDUCTING THE SURVEY. ALL THESE INSTITUTES, WHICH WERE SELECTED BY TENDER, BELONG TO THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR OPINION AND MARKETING RESEARCH AND COMPLY WITH ITS STANDARDS.

THE NAMES OF THE INSTITUTES AND FIELD-WORK SPECIALISTS IN EACH COUNTRY ARE LISTED IN THE APPENDIX TOGETHER WITH THE RELEVANT TECHNICAL DETAILS.

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IN ACCORDANCE WITH NORMAL PRACTICE FOR THIS TYPE OF SURVEY THE COMMISSION DISCLAIMS ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR QUESTIONS, RESULTS AND COMMENTARIES.

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¹ With special questions asked in Germany and the United Kingdom.

PREFACE

The phenomenon which has been dubbed "Euro-pessimism" is on the wane: that is the main conclusion to be drawn from the latest Eurobarometer survey conducted in spring 1986. There has been a significant improvement in most countries as regards both the mood of Europeans - measured in the usual way through satisfaction with life and with the working of democracy - and attitudes towards Europe and the Community.

What are the reasons for this development? It is easier to observe than to explain, but there are probably a number of factors working simultaneously in the same direction: a slight improvement in the economic situation, as measured by the indices and highlighted by the media; and a series of events involving the Community which have generally attracted favourable comment from press, radio and television - these include the accession of Spain and Portugal on 1 January, the agreement of governments in February to what has been given the unfortunately restrictive title of "the Single European Act", and the Danish referendum on 27 February.

All these events or, to be more precise, the significance attributed to them by the public, have helped improve both the mood of Europeans and their attitude to the Community between autumn 1985 and spring 1986. Will this last? It is impossible to say. But what is clear is that, throughout the Community, the public is ready to respond to European "messages" which measure up to its expectations and aspirations.

Carlo Ripa di Meana

Member of the Commission
of the European Communities

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

At the end of 1986 "wait and see" is the watchword of a Community where public opinion has turned its back on Euro-pessimism without, however, wholeheartedly committing itself to Euro-optimism.

The survey whose conclusions are set out here was carried out in the field in the twelve countries of the Community during October and November, against a socio-political background whose main features for Europeans were the AmAcen-Soviet summit in Reykjavik and the lead-up to it, during which the security of western Europe was discussed without Europe itself being consulted, a fact seized upon by the press, and the discussions on the ratification of what the experts and diplomats refer to as the "Single European Act", a reform of the functioning of the Community, which has awakened modest expectation in some and great fear in others, without either group being perhaps entirely sure what is involved.

At a time such as this the public, particularly that section of it which is best informed, is waiting and wondering, hovering between scepticism and hope.

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This twenty-sixth edition of Eurobarometer is divided into four chapters:

1. The mood of Europeans. This, as we shall see, has clearly improved since the end of 1985.

2. A people's Europe. This chapter embraces various topics whose common feature is that they affect more or less directly the day-to-day lives of Europeans: their interests, their image of the Community, European identity, etc. A constant source of surprise is the extent, if not the intensity, in almost all the Member States, of the rather vague sense of goodwill which the European Community inspires, or would inspire by addressing its citizens directly, speaking their language, and explaining clearly its aims, the progress being made and the problems involved, as well as highlighting the price of western Europe's political and institutional "underdevelopment".

3. Attitudes towards Europe and the European Community. This chapter uses data collected systematically since 1973 (and even earlier in certain countries) to chart the trend of attitudes towards the unification of Europe (the ideological and emotional aspect) and Community membership (the institutional aspect). This edition also includes a number of specific questions asked in the United Kingdom and in Germany and two extremely illuminating questions, asked in all twelve countries, on how Europeans

assess the current state of progress of the unification of Europe and the Community, and what sort of progress they wish to be made.

4. The final chapter concerns the European Parliament. The replies demonstrate clearly the ambivalence of attitudes towards the Community and its institutions: the European Parliament, particularly around the midpoint of the legislative period, has a low profile; its current role & not been a "very important"; however, most of those questioned would like to see this institution - elected by the people of Europe - play a more important role in the future.

THE MOOD OF EUROPEANS

The coming year. As is customary at the end of the year, a number of questions were asked on the outlook for the coming year. The general trend towards a resurgence of optimism, first recorded at the end of 1984, is continuing and gathering momentum. Throughout the Community, 36% of those interviewed believe that 1987 will be "better" than 1986, and only 19% feel that it will be "worse". Last year the figures were 32% and 24% respectively, compared with 29% and 30% at the end of 1984.

What is being measured is a general trend, different in each country, and an overall mood, & a number of fears persist concerning the possibility of industrial and international disputes.

When a general trend emerges, as in this case, it is particularly important to look at the exceptions. In comparison with the previous survey (October-November 1985), most countries show an upward trend. The only exceptions are Belgium, where the trend towards pessimism continues, Ireland and the Netherlands, where the improvement recorded in 1985 has fallen off, and finally Denmark, where there has been a sharp decline in optimism.

(See Tables 1 and 2, pp. 5-6, and Tables 3 and 4, pp. 10-11).

This general tendency to take a more optimistic view of the coming year is reflected in people's assessment of the general economic situation in the country over the last twelve months and the financial situation of their household.

For the first time since these questions were included in Eurobarometer (autumn 1982), those who believe that the country's general economic situation has improved in recent times outnumber those who hold the opposite view, the exceptions being once again Belgium, Ireland and Denmark.

The replies concerning the financial situation of the household also show a positive trend, although the movement is less marked; those who think the trend has got worse are still, on average, in the majority. The positive replies outnumber the negative in four countries only: Luxembourg, Germany, Portugal and Italy.

(See Tables 5 and 6, pp. 73-74 and pp. 76-77),

Satisfaction with life and feeling of happiness. Here there has been no radical change from previous surveys, and satisfaction with life and feelings of happiness are still high in all countries, although appreciable variations exist between them.

(See Tables 9 and 11, pp. 21-22 and p. 24).

Satisfaction with the way democracy works. The "public mood" is less positive in all countries - sometimes appreciably so - than the "private mood". In three countries (Belgium, Ireland and especially Italy), the feeling of dissatisfaction even prevails.

There have been only slight changes since the previous survey.

(See Table 13, pp. 26-27).

A PEOPLE'S EUROPE

The public's interests. - A person's interests, the things which concern him or her, tend to be relatively stable and to be organized in terms of priorities.

This study concerns ten spheres of interest - science and technology, sport, how people live in other parts of Europe, etc. The extent to which, generally speaking, the replies correlate between one country and another is striking. Top of the list come "important social problems" (human rights, poverty, sexual equality, etc.), followed by "the environment, nature protection and ecology", "sport", and "the arts and entertainments". However, some fairly substantial differences emerge between the sexes and between the different age groups. Women, whatever age bracket they belong to, tend to be more interested than men in "important social problems" and less interested in national or international politics.

The replies to this question, once they have been analysed in depth on a country-by-country basis, will provide valuable guidelines for policy on informing the various sections of the European public.

(See Table 17 and 18 and Graph 4, pp. 38-47).

Feeling of belonging. The question has already been asked several times and the replies are very stable. Over half of Europeans, on average, say that they "often" or "sometimes" think of themselves as citizens of Europe. This is not something 46% of the French, 58% of the Irish and 67% of the British do yet.

(See Table 19, p. 43).

The European flag. The idea of a Community flag, with all its associations in the public mind, is generally well received: 54% of Europeans are in favour and only 11% against.

The idea finds most support in Italy, Portugal, France and Ireland, and least in the United Kingdom and Denmark.

(See Table 27, p. 46).

Do Europeans know their flag? Each person interviewed was shown four flags including the Community flag (twelve gold stars on a blue background), which was adopted by the Council of Europe as far back as 1955. Surprisingly, whereas seven to eight people out of ten recognized the European flag in France, Luxembourg and Belgium, and more than six out of ten in several other countries (including Spain and Portugal), fewer than one Briton in three gave the right answer, although their country has been a member of the Council of Europe since the outset.

(See Tables 22 and 23, pp. 50 and 51).

Relations between the countries of western Europe over the last thirty years. On the eve of the thirtieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, it seemed appropriate to ask Europeans their views on relations between their countries since the fifties. Almost everywhere, the replies are largely positive: 74% as against 13% and 13% don't know.

This feeling is noticeably less pronounced among the British and noticeably more so among the Germans, the Greeks and the Spaniards.

(See Table 25, p. 55).

Unlimited right of residence for European citizens in any member country of the Community. Recognition of the right of nationals of one Member State to reside for an unlimited time without restrictions in another Member State is an important step towards a sense of European citizenship. The problem has been under discussion for over ten years and has encountered numerous difficulties, ostensibly technical, but undoubtedly mainly political in nature. A large majority of Europeans are in favour: 74% as against 20% who are opposed to the idea. The positive replies range from 56% in Denmark and 63% in the United Kingdom to 90% in Ireland.

(See Table 27, p. 57).

The right of European citizens to vote at local elections in their country of residence. This is another problem which has been debated for several years. The legal problems and the degree of political resistance are still greater in this area than in relation to right of residence. As might be expected, there is less support than there was for the previous proposal, but there is a large majority in favour in all countries, with the exception of Denmark and Luxembourg. Analysis reveals that these replies broadly reflect the legal, demographic, political and psychological situation in each country; home countries have already granted the right to vote at local elections (Ireland, Denmark and the Netherlands) or have awarded it to certain categories of resident (United Kingdom, Portugal); other countries have only a low percentage of foreign residents and themselves have a tradition of emigration (Italy, Greece,

Spain). Luxembourg is a special case, because of the size of the country and the high proportion of foreign residents. Be that as it may, and allowing for certain difficulties in adapting, it has been established that the right of nationals of another Member State of the Community to vote at local elections already has, or should easily be able to secure, the agreement of the citizens of Europe.

(See Table 28, p. 60).

ATTITUDES TOWARDS EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

Interest in Community problems and their importance. Two questions which have already been asked on several occasions measure the degree of involvement of Europeans in the problems of the Community: are they interested in them and, whether they are or not, do they consider them to be important?

The level of interest is fairly low and remains very stable in most countries. On average, a quarter of the people interviewed claim to be "very interested" in these problems, half are "a little interested" and the remainder "not at all interested" (or don't know).

While the degree of interest in these problems is fairly low, they are broadly acknowledged as being important.

Combining the replies to the two questions produces an "index of involvement", which shows the Italians at the top of the table. In 8 countries, opinion leaders - i.e. those who keep in touch, discuss issues and influence those around them - are obviously far more "involved" than others.

(See Tables 34, 36, 37 and 38, pp. 72, 74, 76 and 78).

Foreshadowing against western European unification. In spite of the debates on the ratification of the "Single European Act", attitudes towards European unification - broadly positive in all countries - have barely changed since the last survey. On average, eight people out of ten are "for" (80%) and fewer than one in ten is "against" (9%). In Denmark, the only country which shows a less favourable distribution (45% as against 39%), the progress recorded following the referendum in February 1976 appears to have been consolidated, but without any further improvement.

(See Table 40, pp. 87-82).

Attitudes towards the Community. One of the questions concerned relations between the Member States over the past twelve months. In 1977 and 1978 positive attitudes outnumbered negative ones in most countries; the opposite was true in 1981, 1982 and 1983. The upswing which first appeared in the spring of 1985 is confirmed, and the signs of a resurgence of "Euro-optimism" are evident. However, the United Kingdom continues to be an exception to this general trend, in spite of the fact that its government held the Presidency of the Council of the Communities during the second half of 1986. Only 22% of British people claim to have heard or read anything about the presidency.

(See Table 43, pp. 56-87).

"Euro-optimism" is also evident in the replies to another question, on whether the country has benefited or not from membership of the Community. The response was predominantly positive in all countries with the exception of the United Kingdom (this correlates with the replies mentioned previously), and Spain (which has just entered the Community and is currently experiencing problems in adapting its economy). Portugal, on the other hand, is already recording - or anticipating - favourable results.

(See Table 44; pp. 89-90).

The overall judgment of Community membership is broadly positive in all countries, including the United Kingdom. In other words it is held, all things considered, to be "a good thing".

(See Table 45, pp. 97-22).

In short, it can be seen that, in most countries, attitudes to membership of the Community are fairly positive. In some countries, however, support is still fragile and needs to be backed up constantly by tangible results. With the odd exception, there is no real opposition, but there is a constant danger of indifference. For example, 42% of Britons interviewed feel that membership of the Community is "a good thing" (this shows a marked improvement since the crisis years), but of these four out of ten said that they would be "indifferent" if they were to be told that the Community had been scrapped, while most of them felt that it would be realistic for Britain to withdraw from the Community.

(See Tables 49 and 50, pp. 99-101).

To close this chapter on attitudes towards European unification and the European Community, two questions were asked for the first time in Eurobarometer. Each person interviewed was shown a card on which were drawn seven small figures, the first of which was not moving, while the seventh was running at full speed. The person being interviewed was first asked to choose which of the seven figures best corresponded to his opinion of the European Community and European unification, and then which figure best corresponded to what he felt to be desirable.

The "Euro-dynamometer" test is positive. Almost one European in two, in average, believes that Europe is progressing slowly (figures 1 to 3) while seven out of ten would like to see it advance more rapidly (figures 5 to 7). It is true that opinions vary from one country to another, but in all countries without exception the message is clearly that things are moving slowly and that they should be moving faster.

(See the "Euro-dynamometer" below, p. VIII, and Tables 53 and 54, pp. 106 and 107 of the report).

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The next elections, to be held in June 1989, are approaching. The degree of awareness of the institution, measured by whether or not the interviewee has recently read or heard anything about it, has continued to drop in all countries since the June 1954 election. Among those who have read or heard about it, opinion is divided: 36% have a "generally favourable impression", 20% have a "generally unfavourable impression", 31% have a "neither favourable nor unfavourable" view and 7% don't know.

How does one explain the fact that Europeans, who, according to the surveys, are favourably disposed towards unification and towards the Community, do not show more interest in the institution which represents them and whose members they have elected?

The replies to the other questions asked reveal that the majority of citizens - tomorrow's voters - are torn between the feeling that the current role of the European Parliament is not "very important", and their wish - except in the case of Denmark - to see it play a more important role in the future.

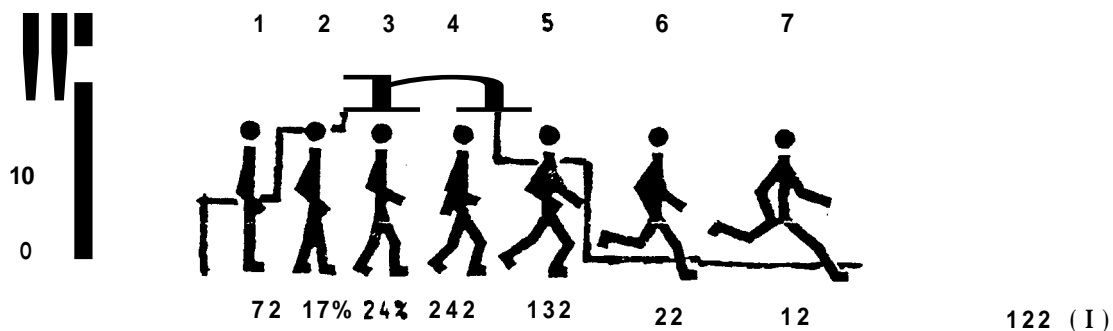
The data highlight all the problems surrounding public opinion and the formation of a united Europe. Europeans aspire to become what they could become if only they were shown the way more clearly: citizens of Europe. Some believe that this has already been accomplished: they are wrong, and will be disappointed. Others are beginning to doubt that it is possible: they are liable to grow tired of waiting.

THE "EURO-DYNAMOMETER"

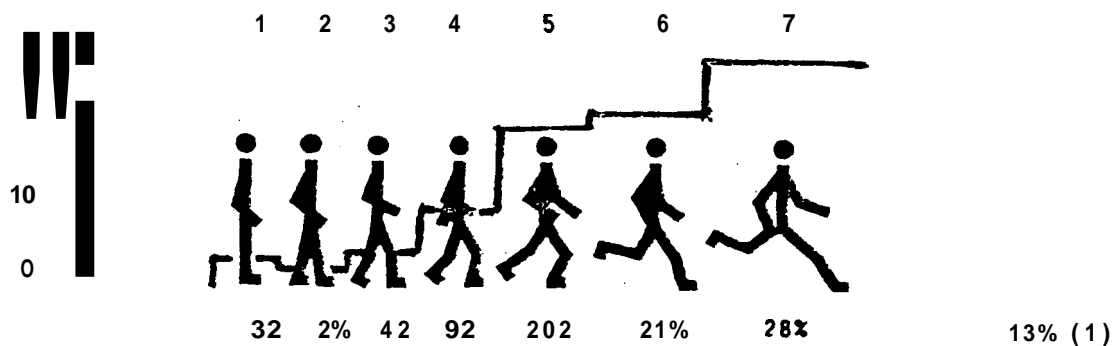
"In your opinion, how is the European Community, the European unification advancing nowadays? Please Look at these people. Number 1 is standing still, Nb 7 is running as fast as possible. Choose the one which best corresponds with your opinion of the European Community and European unification".

"And which corresponds best to what you would Uke?"

Europe's current progress



Europe's desired proaress



(1) Community as a whole

CHAPTER I

THE MOOD OF EUROPEANS



THE MOOD OF EUROPEANS

In autumn 1986, as at the end of previous years, Europeans were asked a number of questions about their expectations for the year ahead, their thoughts on developments in recent months and their fears of another world war. To flesh out this picture of the public mood, they were also asked the usual questions about personal satisfaction with life, feelings of happiness and satisfaction with the way democracy works in their country.

■ 1. EXPECTATIONS FOR 1987¹

"So far as you are concerned, do you think that 1987 will be better or worse than 1986?"

"Looking ahead to next year, 1987, do you think ...

... strikes and industrial disputes in this country will increase, decrease, or remain the same?

... it will be a peaceful year more or less free of international disputes, a troubled year with much international discord, or remain the same?"

The general upsurge of optimism which we identified as far back as the end of 1984 is continuing and gathering momentum. We must, however, make it clear that this is a general trend, which varies from country to country, and an overall mood which is tempered more or less everywhere by persistent fears about the likelihood of industrial and international disputes in 1987.

I.1.1. 1987 taken overall

At the end of 1985, for the first time in the five years in which the question had been asked, the number of Europeans who thought that the year ahead would be "better" outnumbered those who thought it would be "worse": by 32% to 24%. In autumn 1986 these figures had become 36% and 19%

¹ These questions were asked on behalf of the Gallup International Association. Findings were kindly made available to us by the General Secretary, Mr Norman Webb.

respectively. The general shift towards what may be called "Euro-optimism" is continuing and even growing.

(See Figure 1 and Table 1)

Country-by-country analysis reveals two distinct groups of countries: those where the mood is predominantly optimistic, i.e. where the "betters" outnumber the "worses"; and those where the negative replies are in the majority. Comparing the replies in autumn 1986 and those from previous years shows whether the trend towards greater optimism in a particular country is persisting or declining.

Countries which were optimistic at the end of 1986. Italy leads this group, followed, some way behind, by Portugal, Spain, Luxembourg and Germany. Optimism also still predominates, although to a lesser degree, in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, France and Denmark. In other words, nine of the twelve Community countries expect 1987 to be "better" than 1986.

Countries which were pessimistic at the end of 1986. The three countries recording more negative replies than positive are Belgium, Ireland and Greece, although in the case of Greece the difference is so slight that it would be more accurate to describe the two views as balanced.

Trend. Since the previous survey (autumn 1985) optimism has gained ~~go —e—~~ or less everywhere except in Belgium, where the trend towards pessimism continues, Ireland and the Netherlands, where the improvement recorded in 1985 has fallen off, and finally Denmark, where there has been a sharp decline in optimism. The countries where optimism has gained most ground over the year are Portugal, Italy, Greece and Spain.

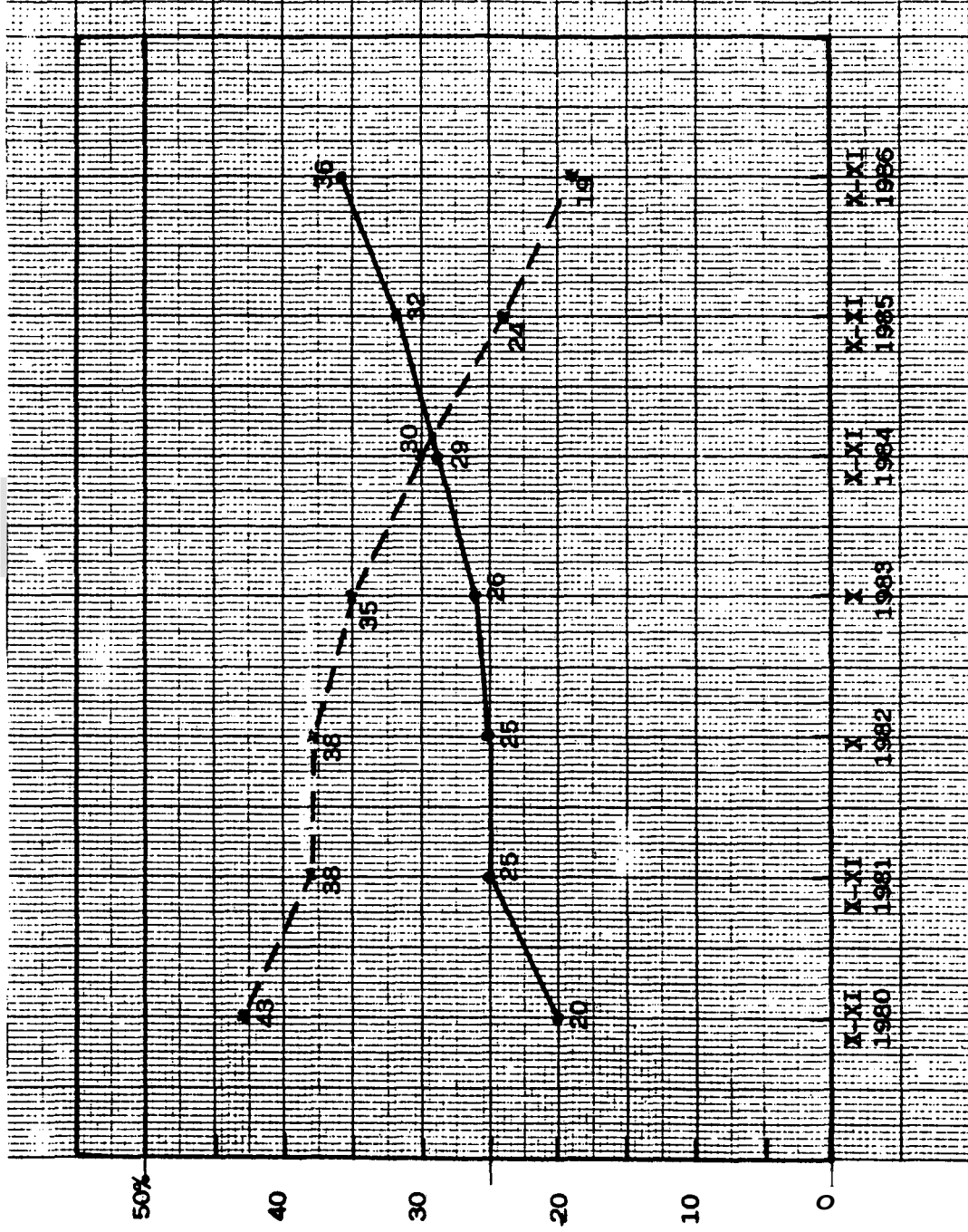
Table 2 shows the trend by country from 1985 to 1986 while Figure 2 charts the trend from 1980, revealing the fairly widespread swing from "Euro-pessimism" to "Euro-optimism".²

(See Table 2 and Figure 2. For more details, see Table 1 in the Appendix, pp. A5-A8, which also gives pre-1985 results for Spain and Portugal supplied direct by Gallup International)

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- ¹ The Tables and comments below show that, in both 1985 and 1986, 36% of interviewees thought that the coming year would be "the same". It is clearly impossible to interpret the attitude expressed in this "unprompted" response one way or the other. This is why the comments mainly concern the optimistic ("better") and the pessimistic ("worse") replies.
 - ² Statistical analysis of the trends since 1980 in each of the ten countries covered shows that the pace of change has been more or less uniform in five of them (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands), slightly more rapid in Luxembourg (although the small size of the sample means that the results must be interpreted with caution) and slightly slower in the United Kingdom, Ireland and France. The only country out on a limb is Greece, where there was an extraordinary wave of optimism just after the general election in October 1981.

FIGURE 1

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR
COMPARED TO THE CURRENT YEAR
(Community as a whole)



— Better
- - - Worse

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR¹

(Community as a whole)²

	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Feel that the coming year will be:							
▪ better	20%	25%	25%	26%	29%	32%	36%
▪ the same	30	30	31	32	35	36	36
▪ worse	43	38	38	35	30	24	19
Strikes and industrial disputes (in your country):							
▪ will increase	14%	14%	18%	13%	15%	17%	15%
▪ will remain the same	36	34	31	36	36	39	43
▪ will decrease	43	44	49	45	42	36	34
The year on the international front will be:							
▪ fairly peaceful	10%	10%	9%	7%	13%	13%	14%
▪ remain the same	28	32	39	37	48	41	44
▪ troubled	53	50	44	49	32	38	33

Table 1

¹ "Don't knows" excluded from the Table but included in the calculation of percentages.

² Average of answers given in the Member States (including Spain and Portugal) from 1985, weighed by proportion of population in each country aged 15 and over.

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE COMING YEAR: 1985 AND 1986¹

	B	DK	D	F	IRL	I	L	NL	UK	GR	E	P	EC (2)
<u>October-November 1985</u>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
						41	35	33	37	26	33	25	32
						25	45	46	25	19	28	22	36
						31	16	16	30	45	25	29	24
						3	4	5	8	10	14	24	8
						100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
	-10	21	16	5	-2	10	19	17	7	-19	8	-4	8
...													
... better	16	25	29	26	32	57	33	31	39	36	38	44	36
... the same						21	50	43	26	17	28	25	36
... worse						19	13	20	25	37	15	17	19
Don't know	6	7	9	8	5	3	4	6	10	10	19	14	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Difference between "better" and "worse"	1-13	4	19	7	-5	38	20	11	14	-1	23	27	17

Table

¹ The figures in bold indicate the countries where the trend towards optimism, measured here as the difference between the percentages expecting the year ahead to be "better" and the percentage expecting it to be "worse", increased most between the end of 1985 and the end of 1986. The answer "the same" was unprompted (see p. 2)

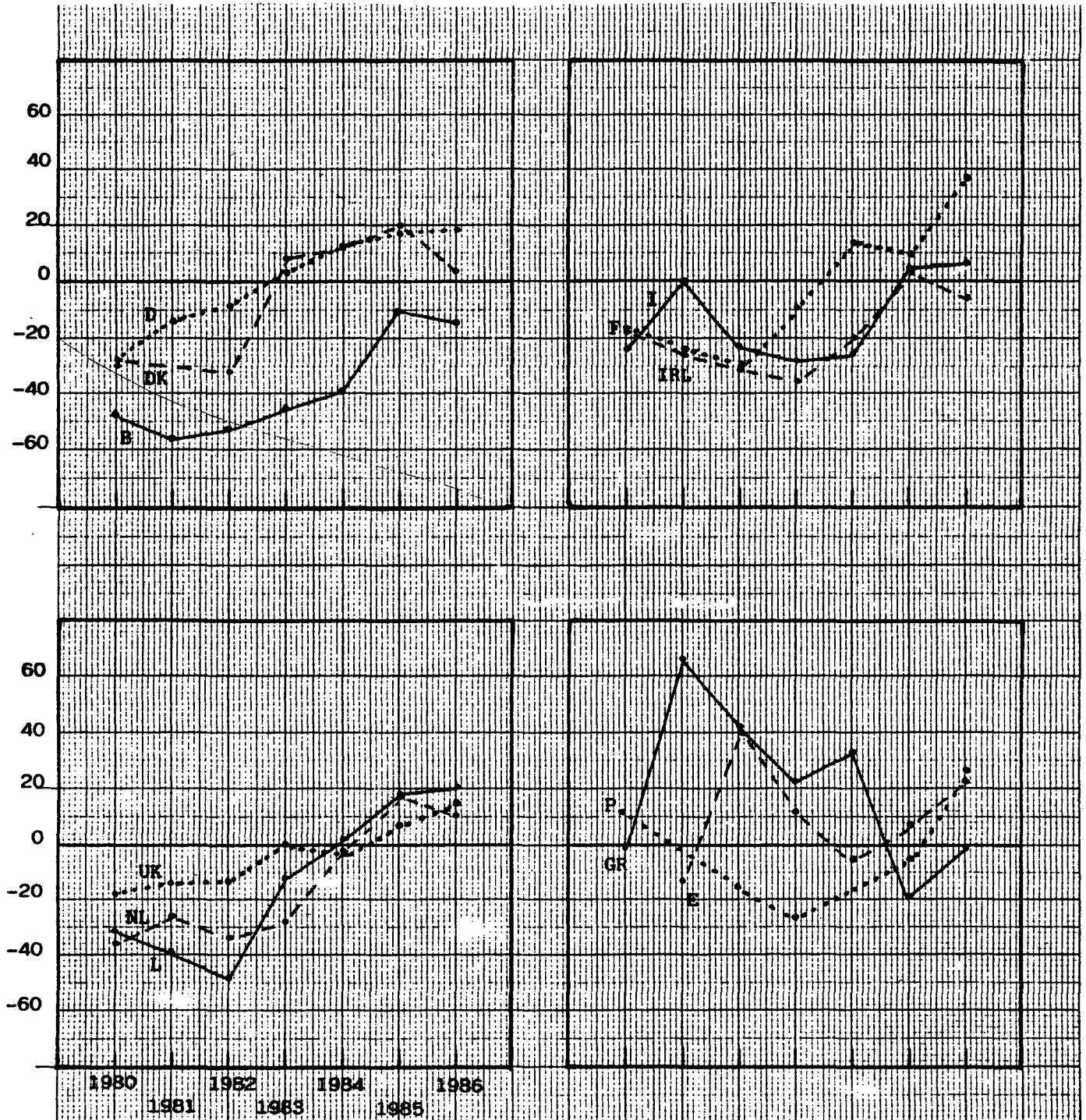
² Weighted average.

Figure 2

FROM EURO-PESSIMISM TO EURO-OPTIMISM

TREND IN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OPTIMISTIC AND PESSIMISTIC REPLIES

1980 - 1986



I.1.2. Harmony at home and abroad

Expectations for the coming year correlate both with the interviewees' perceptions of recent changes in their personal and social position (variables which are considered on pages 12 to 17) and with their expectations of harmony or conflict in the immediate future.

In other words, those who expect the coming year to generate fewer strikes and industrial disputes and fewer international disputes tend to view it positively and vice versa.¹ However, it should be noted that the overall view of the coming year is more positive than the more limited judgments on disputes at home and abroad would lead one to expect. This doubtless means that the public feels such disputes are not very serious and can be coped with by our societies; up to a certain point optimism is confident though not blind.²

Strikes and industrial disputes at home. On average, just over four interviewees in ten (43%) thought that disputes at home would remain at the present level and 15% thought they would decline. The remainder, 34% or just over a third of those questioned, expected them to increase. This capacity was shared by almost two thirds of Danes (65%), nearly half the French (47%) and almost as many Greeks (44%).

The only two countries where fears of an escalation in strikes and industrial disputes have clearly increased are Denmark and Belgium.

¹ The correlation between the two harmony variables and the overall assessment of the coming year is as follows:

	<u>For individuals</u>	<u>For the twelve countries</u>
. Strikes and industrial disputes	.214	.462
. International disputes	.212	.571

² Obviously a great deal of research, using a large number of indicators corresponding as closely as possible to the explicit or implicit anxieties of the various social groups, remains to be done into both individual and collective attitudes to the near or distant future.

International disputes. On average the answers to this question vary less from country to country than in the case of the previous question, doubtless because what is being measured is perception of the same international environment.

Just over four interviewees in ten (44%), on average, thought that the year ahead would be similar to the year just ending. One third (33%) thought it would be a troubled year and 14% thought it would be peaceful.¹

These results are very similar to those obtained last year; this is hardly surprising since the international scene has changed very little.

(See Tables 3 and 4 and Tables 2 and 3 in the Appendix, pp. A9-A16)

1.2. APPRAISAL OF CHANGES IN THE COUNTRY'S GENERAL ECONOMIC SITUATION AND THE FINANCIAL SITUATION OF HOUSEHOLDS

"How do you think the general economic situation in this country has changed in the last 12 months? Would you say it is now a lot better, a little better, the same, a little worse or a lot worse?"

"How does the financial situation of your household now compare with what it was 12 months ago? Is it a lot better, a little better, the same, a little worse or a lot worse?"

The mood of a people and of its constituent individuals is strongly influenced by feelings and recollection. Experience has shown that both these questions, which deal with recent changes in the general economic situation of the country and in the financial position of the household, are useful indicators not only of views on the socio-economic situation but also of the mood among interviewees.² Analysis reveals that general

¹ The strong similarity in the pattern of replies to this question and the previous one throughout the twelve Member States suggests that there is a correlation between the two harmony variables. This turns out to be $r = .243$ for individuals and $r = .402$ for the twelve countries. People who are anxious about the situation within their country tend also to worry about outside events which could affect it.

² These are among the questions used to produce the index of consumer confidence devised and employed by the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs of the Commission of the European Communities. They are asked every month in a number of the Member States.

HARMONY AT HOME: 1985 AND 1986

	8	DK	D	F	IRL	I	L	NL	UK	GR	E	P	EC (1)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Don't know	5	9	7	8	5	6	6	8	5	15	18	28	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Difference between "decrease" and "increase" ²	-12	-10	-17	-31	-29	-20	-17	-21	-12	-41	-14	-6	-19
October-November 1986													
Don't know	5	7	7	6	6	4	1	8	6	14	24	16	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Difference between "decrease" and "increase" ²	-30	-63	-16	-42	-14	-15	-20	-24	-1	-32	-17	-3	-19

Table 3

¹ Weighted average.

² A negative difference indicates a predominantly pessimistic outlook.

HARMONY ABROAD: 1985 AND 1986

	8	DK	D	F	IRL	I	L	NL	UK	GR	E	P	EC (1)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>October-November 1985</u>													
The year on the international front will be:													
... fairly peaceful	9	6	17	8	16	16	9	8	7	10	17	22	13
... remain the same	50	48	45	49	34	39	34	44	38	35	28	24	41
... troubled	35	36	29	35	44	40	52	43	50	40	38	35	38
Don't know	6	10	9	8	6	5	5	5	5	15	17	19	8
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Difference between "fairly peaceful" and "troubled" ²	-26	-30	-12	-27	-28	-24	-43	-35	-43	-30	-21	-13	-25
<u>October-November 1986</u>													
The year on the international front; will be :													
... fairly peaceful	10	8	18	5	16	21	14	7	8	14	14	32	14
... remain the same	45	46	46	53	41	43	36	41	43	35	36	28	44
... troubled	38	36	27	34	36	32	46	46	43	39	25	29	33
Don't know	7	10	9	8	7	4	4	6	6	12	25	11	9
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Difference between "fairly peaceful" and "troubled" ²	-28	-28	-9	-29	-20	-11	-32	-39	-35	-25	-11	-3	-19

¹ Weighted average.

² A negative difference indicates a predominantly pessimistic outlook.

Table 4

expectations for the coming year correlate more strongly with both these variables¹ than with fears of possible or distant disputes.

In autumn 1986 the general trend both in the economic situation of the country and in the financial position of the household was assessed much more favourably than in previous years.

1.2.1. The country's general economic situation

For the first time since this question was included in Eurobarometer in autumn 1982, those who believe that the country's general economic situation has improved over the past year outnumber, by a few percentage points, those who believe it has deteriorated.

At the end of 1986 on average 36% of Europeans considered that the situation had improved over the previous twelve months while only 30% felt that it had deteriorated. At the end of 1985 these figures were 29% and 40% respectively.

However, the trend varies from one country to another: it is clearly positive in Portugal, Greece, Italy and Germany but negative in Belgium and Ireland and even more so in Denmark.

If we examine the pattern over a longer period - and data are available from 1982 - it can be seen that most countries feel they are emerging from the crisis, a conviction which is strongest in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Germany and Italy; the United Kingdom and Greece are still exceptions to the general rule.

(See Table 5)

1.2.2. The financial situation of individual households

In autumn 1986 only 23% of Europeans on average felt that the financial situation of their household had improved over the previous year while 28% felt it had deteriorated. A year earlier, these figures had been 18% and 33% respectively. In other words, there has been some progress, but the general view is still negative rather than positive.

¹ The coefficients of correlation with general expectations for the coming year are as follows:

	<u>For individuals</u>	<u>For the twelve countries</u>
- Recent changes in the general economic situation of the country	.347	.692
- Recent changes in the financial situation of the household	.339	.593

Table 5

ASSESSMENT OF THE CHANGES IN THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC SITUATION OVER THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS¹

	B	DK	D	F	CM	Q	L	NL	UK	GM	EC 10 (2)	E	P	EC 10 (3)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
October 1982														
A lot better	5	4	3	13	5	3	6	1	3	10	2			
A little better	25	15	30	29	10	10	24	3	28	38	12			
The same	35	43	43	35	30	43	43	50	16	23	21			
A little worse	30	35	19	20	54	35	25	34	26	18	37			
A lot worse									24	5	25			
Index ⁴	1.65	1.63	1.76	1.02	1.46	1.75	1.75	1.67	2.11	2.75	1.88			
March-April 1983														
A lot better	8	11	1	1	1	1	2	7	2	26	2			
A little better	22	45	18	9	3	10	2	11	26	26	16			
The same	38	16	39	29	10	18	19	21	21	21	26			
A little worse	23	17	28	28	23	40	46	45	26	25	31			
A lot worse		3	10	29	62	28	29	21	21	11	21			
Index ⁴	1.80	2.83	2.18	1.72	1.35	1.79	1.65	1.87	2.13	2.42	1.97			
October 1983														
A lot better	1	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2			
A little better	2	42	23	16	7	18	9	19	28	31	20			
The same	42	20	37	26	14	18	22	18	22	23	25			
A little worse	4	11	29	33	32	41	53	46	27	20	33			
A lot worse	1	1	7	21	45	21	11	15	19	10	17			
Index ⁴	1.92	2.79	2.29	1.98	1.57	1.94	1.98	2.08	2.14	2.49	2.10			
March-April 1984⁵														
A lot better			1			1			3			1		
A little better			24	5		17			27			15		
The same			46	27		22			27			28		
A little worse			21	35		36			23			34		
A lot worse			5	28		20			17			16		
Index ⁴			2.42	1.67		2.00			2.24			2.00		

ASSESSMENT OF THE CHANGES IN THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC SITUATION OVER THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS¹

	B	DK	D	F	IRL	I	L	NL	UK	GR	EC 10 (2)	E	P	EC 12 (3)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A lot worse Index ⁴	17 1.96	8 2.59	5 2.47	26 1.79	45 1.57	12 2.29	5 2.42	8 2.54	28 1.93	11 2.45	16 2.15			
A lot worse Index ⁴	8 2.38	5 2.65	3 2.59	14 2.12	27 1.89	13 2.25	5 2.73	3 2.81	20 2.05	30 1.73	12 2.27	12 2.28	14 2.06	12 2.26
A lot worse Index ⁴	10 2.15	9 2.26	2 2.89	8 2.25	37 1.67	4 2.72	2 2.88	3 2.79	20 2.07	18 2.17	9 2.48	7 2.41	3 2.80	8 2.48

Table 5 (contd.)

¹ "Don't knows" excluded from the Table but included in the calculation of percentages.

² Weighted average.

³ Including Spain and Portugal from 1985.

⁴ Index calculated by applying the coefficients 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively to the replies "a lot better", "a little better", "a little worse" and "a lot worse". Replies that the situation remained the same are excluded, as are the "don't knows". The mid-point is 2.50. Below this level, the negative answers predominate and above, the positive ones.

⁵ The April 1984 survey covered only five countries. Findings were kindly made available by Professor Michael S. Lewis-Beck, University of Iowa, USA, who is currently researching these data with support from the National Science Foundation, Washington.

The only countries where positive assessments outnumbered negative ones at the end of 1986 were Luxembourg, Portugal and Italy. At the other end of the scale negative views were most widespread in France and Ireland.

This variable is less sensitive than the previous one, for obvious reasons: the financial situation of the household is something which experienced direct changes only slightly over the short term; the public's image of the economic situation of the country, on the other hand, is built up mainly from information provided by the media. The two variables correlate strongly but are quite separate. Depending on circumstances, there can be a prevailing feeling that recent developments have had more of an influence - for better or worse - on the situation of the country than on that of the household or vice versa. Hence in most countries during the crisis period of autumn 1982, assessments of changes in the household situation were less negative than those of changes in the national situation; this trend has **now been** reversed and the situation of the country tends to be regarded more favourably than that of the household.

(See Table 6)

1.3. FEAR OF A THIRD WORLD WAR IN THE NEXT-TEN YEARS

"Here is a sort of scale (SHOW CARD). Would you, with the help of this card, tell me how you assess the changes of a world war breaking out in the next ten years?"¹

In 1986, as in 1985, the vast majority of Europeans felt that the risk of a third world war was slight or even non-existent.

Again too, anxiety in Portugal and Ireland was slightly more marked than elsewhere in the Community.

(See Table 7)

In general, young people (15-24 years old) are slightly more worried than their elders. Fear of war also seems to correlate with a pessimistic view of changes in the country's general economic situation and with dissatisfaction with the way democracy works.²

¹ Graduated scale in multiples of 10. 100 = "war certain" and 0 = "no danger of war".

² These variables and the way in which they interact need further study.

**ASSESSMENT OF THE CHANGES IN THE FINANCIAL SITUATION
OF INDIVIDUAL HOUSEHOLDS OVER THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS¹**

	e	OK	O	F	IRL	I	L	NL	UK	GR	EC 10 (2)	E	P	EC 12 (3)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A lot worse Index ⁴	14 1.86	6 2.29	3 2.32	14 1.96	26 1.73	8 2.21	9 2.08	10 2.00	17 2.12	6 2.74	11 2.14			
A lot worse Index ⁴	14 1.86	5 2.38	5 2.24	21 1.84	37 1.55	6 2.27	9 1 1 1 2.03 2.01	12 2.25	11 2.29	11 2.12				
A lot worse Index ⁴	12 1.94	5 2.46	2 2.43	21 1.85	27 1.70	7 2.24	8 2.05	12 1.98	15 2.19	10 2.44	11 2.15			
A lot worse Index ⁴	: :	: 2.34	3 1.88	16 1.88	: 2.21	6 2.21	: :	: :	14 2.28	: :	13 1.98			1

Table 6

**ASSESSMENT OF THE CHANGES IN THE FINANCIAL SITUATION
OF INDIVIDUAL HOUSEHOLDS OVER THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS¹**

	B	OK	D	F	IRL	I	L	NL	UK	GR	EC 10 (2)	E	P	EC 12 (3)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A lot worse Index ⁴	10 2.02	5 2.46	2 2.57	24 1.78	26 1.75	7 2.31	8 2.19	10 2.12	15 2.16	8 2.55	11 2.18			
A lot worse Index ⁴	10 2.05	4 2.55	2 2.61	18 1.89	17 1.93	6 2.36	6 2.34	9 2.23	14 2.26	18 1.94	10 2.22	8 2.25	13 2.05	10 2.21
A lot worse Index ⁴	6 1.91	5 2.54	4 2.80	13 2.49	20 2.29	4 2.34	3 2.35	6 2.22	15 2.63	14 2.35	9 2.22	5 2.63	4 2.35	8 2.35

Table 6 (contd.)

1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 see notes to Table 5.

FEAR OF A THIRD WORLD WAR IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS¹

(Per 100 actually replying)

	8	OK	O	F	IRL	I	L	NL	UK	GR	EC 10 (2)	E	P	EC 12 (3)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
October-November 1985														
War certain (100)	2	1	3	1	3	1	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	1
(90-60)	10	6	9	10	14	10	6	8	8	5	9	11	18	9
(50)	8	12	10	15	13	9	11	10	10	8	11	11	14	11
No danger (40-10)	40	40	46	43	29	43	32	57	36	31	42	34	40	41
(0)	40	41	32	31	41	37	50	23	44	54	36	41	25	37
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Average score	2.10	1.95	2.48	2.49	2.68	2.20	1.79	2.43	1.98	1.58	2.26	2.42	3.27	2.31
(Did not reply)	(7%)	(13%)	(10%)	(.)	(13%)	(1%)	(2%)	(5%)	(5%)	(10%)	(5%)	(8%)	(14%)	(6%)
October-November 1986														
War certain (100)	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	.	2	2	2	2	2	2
(90-60)	15	4	10	10	14	9	5	6	8	8	9	12	12	9
(50)	8	10	9	13	12	12	12	8	10	9	11	12	14	11
(40-10)	47	42	39	50	38	45	39	60	38	38	44	39	50	44
No danger (0)	29	43	40	26	34	32	42	26	42	43	34	35	22	34
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Average score	2.63	1.78	2.20	2.61	2.14	2.42	1.98	2.03	2.12	2.06	2.32	2.51	3.00	2.38
(Did not reply)	(2%)	(10%)	(14%)	(1%)	(9%)	(.)	(4%)	(3%)	(5%)	(7%)	(5%)	(12%)	(11%)	(6%)

Table 2

¹ Graduated scale of probability from 100 to 0; a score above 50 thus corresponds to more than one-in-two chance. The average scores are equal to the values obtained divided by ten.

² Weighted average.

Including Spain and Portugal.

The data collected over the last twenty-five years, and particularly **over** the last decade (the period covered by Eurobarometer), show that the **only** time that the alarm bells started ringing was in 1980-81, shortly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

(See Table 8 and Table 4 in the Appendix, pp. A17-A24)

1.4. SATISFACTION WITH LIFE AND FEELING OF HAPPINESS

1.4.1. Satisfaction with life

"On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the life you lead?"

As in all recent surveys, satisfaction with life remains high everywhere, although the level varies from country to country: top of the league are Denmark, Luxembourg and the Netherlands; bottom of the league are France, Greece, Italy and Portugal.

Portugal, however, is the only country where satisfaction with life has increased since the last survey.

(See Table 9 and Table 5 in the Appendix, pp. A25-A36)

If we look back as far as 1973, we see that the level of satisfaction in Belgium and Ireland is now a little below previous minima: autumn 1984 and autumn 1983 respectively.

(See Table 10)

1.4.2. Feeling of happiness

"Taking all things together, how would you say things are these days - would you say you're very happy, fairly happy, or not too happy these days?"

The index of happiness, like that of satisfaction with life, *is* still high in most countries with more people saying that they are "very happy" than "not too happy". The happiness rating is highest in the Netherlands, where 41% claim to be "very happy" and lowest in Greece, where 38% are "not too happy".

There has been no increase since the previous survey, the decline has been particularly steep in Ireland and Denmark.

(See Table 11 and Table 6 in the Appendix, pp. A37-A44)