

EUROBAROMETER 59

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2003

NATIONAL REPORTS

**COMPILATION OF THE 15 NATIONAL
EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES**

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AUSTRIA

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. Compared to the previous year, 2002, Austrian attitudes towards the EU have deteriorated: 34% consider Austria's EU membership "a good thing." (19% think it is a "bad thing", 41% cannot decide on either view); 41% identify, all in all, advantages for Austria, (43% do not). In general, the Austrian population perceives the EU's image more often positively than negatively: (27% report that the EU has a "very" or "fairly" positive image, 25% have negative impressions, 44% are "neutral". An additional note seems appropriate. The rather distant attitude towards the EU has been the prevailing Austrian position over the past years. In this sense, the very positive opinions measured in Autumn 2002 were an exception rather than the rule.
- 1.2. 8% are "very satisfied" and 35% "fairly satisfied" with the way democracy works in the European Union, while 31% are not very satisfied and 13% not satisfied at all. The level of satisfaction is higher regarding the ways national democracy works: (13% are "very" and 52% "fairly satisfied", 24% are "not very" and 6% "not at all satisfied"). In both the Austrian and the EU15 cases, however, satisfaction has decreased and discontent has increased.
- 1.3. Of the European institutions Austrians tend to trust above all the Court of Justice (59% "tend to trust", 35% "tend not to trust"), the European Central Bank (52% "tend to trust", 30% "tend not to trust") and the European Parliament (52% "tend to trust", 32% "tend not to trust"). About half are also inclined to trust the European Court of Auditors (49% trust, 29% distrust) and the Commission (46% trust, 36% distrust). 41% indicate trust for the Council of Ministers, 37% hold the opposite opinion. A majority, however, tends to distrust the Convention. For all institutions, the level of trust has decreased considerably over the past year. Austrians are prone to express trust and especially distrust in comparatively explicit ways. The level of trust towards the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors is slightly above EU average and considerably below average when it comes to the Parliament, the Commission, the Council and the Convention.
- 1.4. In looking at the actions that the EU should take, Austrians prioritise above all fighting unemployment and terrorism, protecting the environment, maintaining peace and security in Europe, fighting poverty and social exclusion, guaranteeing the quality of food products

as well as fighting organised crime, drug trafficking and illegal immigration. Guaranteeing the rights of the individual and respect for the principles of democracy in Europe as much as protecting consumers and guaranteeing the quality of other products are also important to the Austrian population.

- 1.5. 41% think that the EU should be in charge of decisions about European Security and Defence policies; 35% prefer jurisdiction of national governments and only 11% would yield that power to NATO. Austrians tend, in general, to emphasise their preferences for national decision powers and do so even more regarding European Security and Defence policies. This trend has also increased since the autumn of last year.
- 1.6. Austrians attribute most influence on decision-making within the EU to the European Parliament (25%), the European Commission (22%) but rarely to the citizens (4%). They would, however, prefer that citizens (37%) along with national governments (18%) exert the most influence.
- 1.7. A majority of Austrians advocates closer co-operation between Member States in economic as well as in social matters. A majority also criticises the fact that big countries have the most power in the EU (80%) and that the way the EU works is too complex (68%). Only a minority believes that decisions taken by the EU are generally sound (38%) or that the EU listens to “people like me” (17%).
- 1.8. Knowledge about the European Convention is, for the most part, rather limited. Regarding various reform proposals, 67% show their preference for at least one commissioner from each Member State while 65% value the national veto rights in order to preserve essential national interests.
- 1.9. Austrians feel considerably more knowledgeable about enlargement than the respondents from almost all other Member States (5% feel that they are “very well” and 43% that they are “well” informed). 20% advocate the admission of all accession countries; 46% would prefer that only some countries should be included; 24% oppose enlargement altogether.
- 1.10. Opinions on the impact of enlargement continue to be varied. A majority expects the increasing importance of the EU in the world, that Europe will be culturally richer with more

member countries and that more peace and security will be guaranteed in Europe. On the other hand, Austrians also anticipate that it will be much more difficult to make decisions on a European scale, that the costs of membership for Austria will increase and that Austria will receive less financial aid from the EU. 58% stress the necessity of reforms before the accession states join. Compared to Autumn 2002, the awareness of costs has increased.

- 1.11. Intentions to vote in elections for the European Parliament are definitely limited - only 42% are determined to vote (compared with 58% who intend to go to the ballots for the elections to the national assembly). Among EU critics, the intention to participate is particularly low. Higher rates of voter participation might be achieved if European elections were to take place at the same time as national elections.
- 1.12. The next EP election campaign should focus above all on employment, issues specific to Austria, fighting crime, the environment, rights of EU citizens and immigration. Parallel to their media usage related to information on the EU in general, Austrians report the mass media also as their main sources of information about the activities of the Members of the European Parliament.
- 1.13. The limited interest of Austrians in European elections relates last, but not least, to ambivalent perceptions of the European Parliament: On the one hand, six out of ten respondents believe that the European Parliament has more power than the Austrian National Assembly and just as many consider the EP elections really important. On the other hand, the respondents attribute less impact on the Parliament's activities by "people like me" – just as in the EU in general – than on national political institutions (federal government, regional governments, national assembly). 48% think that the Members of the EP are good at protecting citizens' interests, but 35% hold the opposite view. EU critics, who are often synonymous with likely non-voters, judge the effect of the activities and decisions of the European Parliament as well as of the representation of interests through the Members of the European Parliament as particularly negligible and mostly negative.
- 1.14. Austrians display particularly critical attitudes towards the USA, especially with regard to their role in protecting the environment and fighting against poverty and for peace in the world: more than half have negative opinions on the US. Austrians are also rather sceptical about the US contribution to the growth of the world economy and the fight

against terrorism. Their sources of information about current international events are mainly the news on Austrian television (76%) and Austrian newspapers and magazines (75%); Austrian radio stations (53%) and news on TV from other countries (38%) play a less important role. The importance of foreign TV news, radio stations and newspapers is still relatively high in Austria, which, for the most part, can be explained with the strong presence of German media (cable, satellite, print media etc.) also in Eastern Austrian metropolitan areas.

BELGIUM

Introduction

This executive summary brings together the main data of Eurobarometer 59.1, which was commissioned in Belgium and the fourteen other Member States of the European Union in Spring of 2003. The two main aspects focused on were: Belgians' overall attitudes towards the European Union and their stance in regard to enlargement. These two aspects make up the two main parts of the report. Some data intended to give a general impression of the Belgians was also gathered. This information is analysed in the first part of this report, which we call « Insight into the people of Belgium ». More than 16.400 people were surveyed in the fifteen Member States, of which 1.112 were Belgians. In each national group, the researchers ensured that all of the socio-cultural and social and occupational trends were represented. In this way, we were able to develop several results based on:

- Place of origin
- Sex
- Age
- Level of studies
- Profession

In addition to these different variables, we were also able to compare several results with the results of previous Eurobarometers, in particular Eurobarometer 56 (December 2001), Eurobarometer 58 (May 2002) and Eurobarometer 58 (Autumn 2002).

1. Insight into the belgian people

In this, the first part of the report, we examine some of the elements which explain the stances that Belgians took during the survey in regard to the European Union and its enlargement.

- **The Belgians**, along with the Spaniards and the Portuguese, **are amongst the Europeans who talk least about politics with their friends**. In fact, 40% of the Belgians say that they never discuss this type of subject with their friends. It is also worth noting that this trend of not speaking about politics with friends has increased since last year.
- **The Belgians tend to be more trusting of the media, i.e. the radio, television and the written press than in institutions**, such as political parties (71% say that they do not trust them), the Belgian legal system (59 % do not trust it), the religious institutions as well as the large companies. **49% of the people surveyed said that they trusted the European Union**.
- In the eyes of Belgians, **unemployment (41%) and insecurity (34%) represent the two main problems that Belgium is currently facing**. Other problems that worry Belgians include the economic situation, taxes and immigration. However, problems such as public transport, defence, the education system and protection of the environment do not represent major preoccupations for the Belgians (less than 5%).
- The Belgians, like other Europeans do have some worries. As in the last report, their **two main sources of concern are international terrorism** (feared by 73% of Belgians) **and organised crime** (feared by 71%).

2. The Belgians and the European Union

2.1 WHAT BELGIANS THINK OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

2.1.1. The Union's image

The Belgians believe it to be a good thing that their **country is part of the European Union**. In thinking this, they are **above the EU average**. This is an observation which has appeared in the last seven Eurobarometer reports. It is mainly the inhabitants of Brussels who are the most positive in this regard. They are followed by the Flemish and the Walloons whose votes are, nevertheless, above the Union average. From a social and occupational point of view, managers, the self-employed, employees and students are the most positive. The least satisfied are pensioners and those who stay at home.

57% of the people questioned believe that their country has benefited from its membership of the Union. This figure is constantly increasing. In December 1999, it stood at only 46 % (Eurobarometer 52).

Overall, we can say that **Belgians are more satisfied than the average European who was questioned**. It is thus clear that the Union's image in Belgium is mainly favourable. **Only 12% say that they have a negative opinion.**

2.1.2. What the Union Represents

According to the Belgians, the EU represents:

1. The Euro (52%)
2. Freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the European Union (38%)
3. Peace (27%)
4. Economic prosperity (22%)

These positive points confirm that the **Union has a fairly good reputation in the country**. However, Belgians also have some **complaints about the Union**. Approximately one in five thinks that the **Union is synonymous with money wastage, lack of border controls and rising crime rates**. 17% of the people questioned also believe that the Union is linked to unemployment.

2.1.3. The Union's priorities

The grievances outlined above are echoed in the actions that the people surveyed would like to see adopted as priorities by the Union. According to Belgians, **the five main actions to undertake are linked to the issues of security and social balance**. Above anything, it is about:

1. Preserving peace and security in Europe (93%)
2. Fighting against terrorism (92%)
3. Fighting against unemployment (92%)

4. Fighting against organised crime and drug trafficking (90%)
5. Fighting against poverty and social exclusion (87%)

Over the last few years, these 5 actions recur as the main priorities in Eurobarometer surveys.

The fight against unemployment and the fight against poverty and social exclusion, in particular, are cited remarkably regularly by 9 out of 10 Belgians.

In contrast, **the two actions that get the least votes are those to reform the European Institutions (44%) and enlargement (27%).** We should, however, remember that the people surveyed had to choose from a short list of priorities and that this does not necessarily mean that they are against these actions. We see in the last part of the report, in fact, that the Belgians were not particularly against enlargement.

2.1.4. The Institutions

Knowledge, importance and confidence

The European Parliament and the European Commission remain the best-known institutions amongst Belgians. Awareness of these institutions has steadily increased over the years. In November 2002, 80% of the people questioned said that they knew of the Commission as opposed to 92% today, which represents an increase of 12%. As for the Parliament, there has been an increase of 5% (from 92% in November 2002 to 97% today). According to the people surveyed, **these two institutions have the most important roles** (Parliament: 82%; Commission: 80%) and **it is these two that they feel are the most trustworthy** (Parliament: 63%; Commission: 59%).

Awareness of the Convention has grown well. Even if this body remains little known, awareness of it has grown from 28% in November 2002 to 39% today. 42% of Belgians agree that its role is of importance.

Besides, it should be noted that there is a **recurring lack of knowledge of the existence of and the work of the Ombudsman, the Social and Economic Committee and the Committee of the Regions.**

The Convention on the future of the European Union

A series of questions on the Convention showed that, while it is better known than in the past, there is still a **much mis-information** in relation to it. It can be seen, for example, that one in two Belgians does not know whether the Government and the Parliament of their country are represented in it. It also seems that people are not aware that the Convention is involved in the writing of the European constitution. In fact, as we see later in this text, seven out of ten Belgians are in favour of such a constitution. Logically, then, they should give a greater importance to the Convention. People claim that they do not hear very much about it and approximately 67% think that the politicians and the media should make an effort in this area.

The European Commission

In regard to how the European Commission works, the question of how many Commissioners there will be after enlargement raises its head. **For approximately seven out of ten Belgians,**

the principle of having one Commissioner per Member State seems important. 70% of the people questioned thought that, after enlargement, each Member State should have the right to appoint a Commissioner and that there should be one Commissioner per country. **65% think that it is necessary in order to preserve Belgian interests.** Furthermore, very few (10%) think that the Union would be less effective with one Commissioner per country.

Turning to the **election of the President of the Commission,**

- **42% of people questioned were of the opinion that he/she should be elected by the citizens**
- 19% think that he/she should be elected by a majority of the European Parliament.
- 18% believe that he/she should be chosen jointly by the Parliament and the Heads of State and Government.
- Only 6% think that he/she should be appointed by the Heads of State and Government.

The European Council

Belgians were asked to comment on the **6-month duration of the Presidency of the European Council.**

- **One in two Belgians thinks that the period should be extended because six months is too short to achieve significant results.**
- On the other hand, only three Belgians out of ten think that this is a good system.

The European Parliament

Earlier, we have seen that 97% of people are aware of the European Parliament and that 82% think that its role is important for the Union. However, **Belgians do not agree that this institution properly defends their interests.** They believe that its role is not really any more important than the role of the Belgian Parliament and few of them consider the European elections to be important. Moreover, 45% of them say that they are not interested in learning more about Members of the European Parliament.

Another series of questions was put to the people surveyed in order to better understand their behaviour in the case of European elections. Looking at the results obtained, we can assume that approximately six out of ten Belgians would go to the ballot boxes if they had the choice. We also noted that the Belgians would be less inclined to vote than the average Union citizen. According to the people questioned, the one thing that would entice them to vote would be if local, regional or federal elections were organised on the same day as the European elections.

2.1.5. Decision making level

When we asked the Belgian population whether decisions on various matters should be made at a national or European level, the replies tended to vary depending on the issue in question. As we have already noted in Eurobarometer 58, the closer the area in question is to the individual (education, health, social security, police, justice, etc.), the more Belgians are of the opinion that decisions should be made by the Belgian government. On the other hand, the more the issue seems to be distanced from the life of the individual (defence, humanitarian aid, aid for regions experiencing economic hardship, the fight against international terrorism and against drugs, etc.), the more Belgians will think that it is the European Union who should make the decisions on these matters.

The area for which the decisions should be made mainly all together by the Union include:

- The fight against all types of violence (terrorism: 88%; the trafficking and exploitation of human beings: 85%; organised crime: 80%)
- Currency (85% in favour of EU-level decision)
- Foreign policy in regard to countries outside of the European Union (80% in favour of EU-level decision)
- Humanitarian aid (79% in favour of EU level decision)
- Information on the European Union, its policies and institutions (77% in favour of EU level decision)
- Scientific research and technology (74% in favour of EU level decision).

In contrast to this, **the areas that should be the responsibility of the Belgian government are:**

- The police (69% in favour of a Belgian level decision)
- Education (68% in favour of a Belgian level decision)
- Health and social security (64% in favour of a Belgian level decision)
- Justice (64% in favour of a Belgian level decision).

2.1.6. CFSP and the European Security and defence policy

Belgians are clearly in favour of more substantial integration in these areas.

- **85% think that when an international crisis occurs, the Member States of the European Union should agree a common position.**
- 80% believe that the European Union should guarantee human rights in each member state, even if this goes against the wishes of some Member States.
- 77% think that Member States of the European Union should have a common immigration policy towards people from outside the Union.

They also would like more autonomy for European defence policy. In this area, 51% are of the opinion that decisions should be made by the EU, 19% by NATO and 13% by the national governments.

2.1.7. Constitution, right to veto and taxation

7 out of 10 Belgians think that the Union should benefit from a European Constitution. This is 10% more than in November 2002. Only 11% say that they are against it.

42% of the people surveyed would like the right of veto to be maintained in order to protect national interests. 21% would like it to be dropped in order to make the Union more efficient. 20% would like it to be limited to rare, vital areas.

Lastly, in regard to taxation, **only one in four Belgians would be prepared to make a direct contribution to the European Union.**

2.1.7. Miscellaneous questions

Some actions and policies were presented to the people surveyed by asking them if they were for or against them. The three suggestions that got the most favourable replies were:

- **To teach children about the way in which the European Union works while they are at school (85% were in favour)**
- To have a monetary union with a single currency - the Euro (81% in favour)
- To have a security and common defence policy for the Union's Member States (79% in favour).

Another series of questions exposed the fact that Belgians believe:

- **That there should be closer cooperation between the Member States in the social domain (80%)**
- That large countries have more power within the European Union (79%)
- That the way in which the European Union works is too complicated (73%)

In contrast, very few people think that the European Union listens to people (16%).

2.2. KNOWLEDGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND INFORMATION

2.2.1. Knowledge of the European Union

Belgians' knowledge of the European Union is not very strong. In contrast to Eurobarometer 58, their knowledge is at a slightly lower level than the other Europeans surveyed.

The inhabitants of Brussels have the best grasp of the European Union. The Walloons follow and the Flemish come next.

Those with the best level of knowledge of the European Union are:

- Managers
- Students

Those who seem to have an above-average knowledge are:

- Those who studied beyond the age of 20.
- The self employed and employees

In contrast, **those who had the lowest levels of knowledge are:**

- House persons
- Those who finished their education before the age of 15.

2.2.2. Sources of information used

The 5 main sources that Belgians use to search for information concerning the European Union are:

- Television (used by 59% of the people surveyed)
- Daily paper (used by 27% of the people surveyed)
- Radio (used by 21% of the people surveyed)
- Detailed brochures (used by 20% of the people surveyed)

- Internet (used by 14% of the people surveyed)

It can be seen that television, newspapers and the radio are used less this year than in the past to gather information on the European Union. We can see, for example a decrease of 10% in the number of people who use the television, as well as a decrease of 9% in those who read daily newspapers to inform themselves on the European Union.

Despite that, **television, the daily press and radio are the three media which remain the favourites amongst Belgians, all the categories combined.**

In contrast, **the sources least used by Belgians surveyed are**

- Posters (3%)
- A computer terminal allowing for databases to be consulted (4%)
- CD-ROMs and video tapes (5%)
- Books giving a complete description (7%)

Students and those between the ages of 15-24 are the people who make the greatest use of Internet in order to look for information on the European Union.

2.2.3. Sources used to understand the international situation

The same question was then asked again but, this time, in regard to seeking information relating to the international situation.

We noticed that the majority of Belgians surveyed used the Belgian newscasts, Belgian newspapers and magazines, as well as national radio.

Thus, the same three sources were used as for the European Union.

The sources which are unsuccessful in regard to international news are:

- Other countries' radio
- Continuous news stations
- Internet
- Other countries' newspapers and magazines.
-

From an occupational point of view, the unemployed, employees and house persons represent the greatest number who watch television in order to inform themselves about international news.

Managers make up the biggest group reading Belgian newspapers and magazines. Radio is mainly listened to by employees.

It is noticeable that media from other countries are one of the sources least used by Belgians when they want to keep abreast of the international situation.

One last remark can be made about the use of internet. Even if this tool is not amongst the most used resources, there are still many students who use it in their search for information, not only for international news, but also on the European Union.

3. Belgians and enlargement.

3.1. THE CONSEQUENCES OF ENLARGEMENT

3.1.1. Should enlargement take place?

As noted in previous reports, **the Belgians are not all in agreement on the topic of enlargement.** 19% of them think that the European Union should allow for the inclusion of every country that expresses a desire to join. 40% think that the European Union should be enlarged to include only some of the countries wishing to join. That equates to almost 60% of the people surveyed (similar figures to those of the previous Eurobarometer) who are not resolutely against this process.

However, **there is an increase of 4% amongst people who are against enlargement.** While in November 2002, 26% of Belgians were opposed to the enlargement of the European Union, by March 2003, this figure had risen to 30%.

We know, thanks to the different variables gathered during the survey, that **those who in general give the most favourable responses to enlargement**, are:

- The inhabitants of Brussels
- Managers, employees and the unemployed
- Those between 40-54 years
- Those who studied after the age of 20.

In contrast, **those who gave the most negative responses** in this regard are:

- Young people who finished their studies by the age of 15.
- The Walloons (the Flemish expressed opinions that fell between the inhabitants of Brussels and the Walloons)
- Those who are still studying, house persons and the self-employed.

3.1.2. The consequences of enlargement

The three main consequences of enlargement (i.e. those indicated by more than 65% of people surveyed) as seen by the Belgians were as follows:

- With more Member States, it will be more difficult to make decisions on an European scale (a negative consequence quoted by 77% of people)
- The more members that the European Union has, the more important it will be in the world (positive consequence quoted by 73% of people)
- With more member countries, the Union will be richer on a cultural level (positive consequence quoted by 66% of people polled)

It should also be pointed out that many Belgians believe that enlargement will prove to be expensive for the countries who are already members and that they do not agree that candidate countries be given financial aid before they become members.

Finally, it should be underlined that one out of two Belgians believe that the EU should reform the way in which the institutions work before integrating the new members.

3.2. KNOWLEDGE OF THE CANDIDATE COUNTRIES

The five countries best known to the Belgians are:

- Turkey (97% of those surveyed had heard of it)
- Poland (93% of those surveyed had heard of it)
- Hungary (92% of those surveyed had heard of it)
- Romania (91% of those surveyed had heard of it)
- Cyprus (90% of those surveyed had heard of it).

In contrast, **the countries that the Belgians had heard the least about were the three Baltic States:**

- Lithuania (83% had heard of it)
- Latvia (84% had heard of it)
- Estonia (84% had heard of it).

Continuing with the Belgians' knowledge of candidate countries, **67% of them have either never visited these countries and/or have no link with them.**

The countries where the Belgians have been to the least and/or with whom they have no link of some kind are identical to those of which they have heard the least about.

This covers the three Baltic States. Only one or two out of a hundred Belgians have been there and/or have some kind of link with one of these three countries.

Turkey, the Czech Republic and Poland meanwhile, are the three countries most visited and/or with whom Belgians had the most links.

3.3. INFORMATION ON ENLARGEMENT.

No matter what region Belgians hail from, they are not very well informed about enlargement.

There are, nevertheless, some variations in the results. We can note, for example, that the **Walloons and the Flemish think that they are slightly better informed than in the previous report, while the inhabitants of Brussels believe that they are less well informed.**

On the whole, Belgians are slightly better informed than the rest of the EU and we notice that, in comparison with the last two years, the people surveyed believe that they are slightly better informed about enlargement.

Overall, if we rely on all the variables that were encountered, we can confirm that **the groups who believe themselves to be the best informed on enlargement, whatever area they come from, are:**

- Men
- Those over 55 years of age
- Those who have continued their studies after the age of 20
- The self-employed, pensioners and managers

Those who believe that they are the least well informed are:

- Young people who finished their studies at the age of 15.
- House persons, the unemployed and manual workers
- Women

DENMARK

Executive Summary

This Executive Summary presents the overall results from the EU Eurobarometer Poll no. 59.1. The responses to the survey were gathered in Denmark between March 18, 2003 and April 30, 2003.

The main conclusions of the survey are as follows:

The decision structure and influence of the EU

Strong wish for a Danish Commissioner

81% of the Danish population think that Danish interests will be neglected if Denmark does not have its own Commissioner.

The President of the European Commission should either be directly elected by the citizens of the EU or chosen by the European Parliament, as well as Heads of State or Heads of Government jointly

28% of the Danish population think that the President of the European Commission should be directly elected by the citizens of the EU. The same number, 28%, feels that the President should be chosen by the European Parliament as well as the Heads of State or Heads of Government jointly.

Danish disagreement over the length of the Council Presidency

47% would like the current 6-month period of the Council Presidency to be extended. 44% want to retain the length of the presidency as it is because it gives each Member State a chance to hold the presidency of the EU on a regular basis.

The right of veto should be retained in its present form

There is a significant majority of 57% who wish to retain the present right of veto in order to preserve vital national interests. 27% would like the right of veto to be limited to a very few vital areas.

The Danes object to paying part of their personal taxes directly to the EU

The survey shows that 76% of the Danish population does not wish to pay part of their taxes directly to the EU.

European Parliament elections are of greatest interest in Denmark

Denmark holds first place among the EU-countries when it comes to how likely it is that the population will vote in a European Parliament election. The UK has the lowest interest in European Parliament elections.

Television is the most relevant medium for Members of the European Parliament

65% of the Danish population have seen or heard Members of the European Parliament on television since the last election. The figure is 45% when it comes to newspapers or

magazines. 54% prefer television when it comes to information about Members of the European Parliament.

18% of Danes feel that the EU has an important impact on them

18% of Danes estimate that decisions taken by the EU have a great effect on them, whilst 63% feel that they only have some impact. 12% express the opinion that decisions taken by the EU have no effect whatsoever on them.

European Parliament elections are important

73% of Danes totally agree or tend to agree that the European Parliament elections are really important.

Danes would like the next European Parliament election campaign to focus on the environment

Danes in all age groups would very much like the next European Parliament election campaign to focus on the environment.

Higher participation rates if European Parliament election were organized on the same day as local, regional or national elections

35% of the Danish population expresses the opinion that it would be more likely to vote in the European Parliament election if it were organized on the same day as local, regional or national elections.

The Convention and the institutions of the EU

The Danes prefer the EU to be called the EU

53% of the Danish population would prefer that the EU remains called the EU in future.

The European Parliament is the best-known institution

Almost all Danes (98%) have heard of the European Parliament. It stands out as the EU's best-known institution, closely followed by the Court of Justice, the European Commission and the Council of Ministers.

The European Parliament is the most important organ of the EU

Almost 8 out of 10 Danes consider that the European Parliament plays an important role in the EU. In second place comes the Court of Justice with 78%, whilst 74% and 73% respectively feel that the European Commission and the Council of Ministers play important roles.

Danes have the greatest confidence in the Court of Justice of the European Union

70% of Danes express confidence in the Court of Justice. Generally speaking, the Danes have greatest confidence in those EU-institutions they know best.

Danes are satisfied with the way democracy works

90% of Danes are satisfied with the way democracy works in Denmark. 33% are even very satisfied.

The Danish population is the most satisfied with the way democracy works in their country

Of all the EU nationalities, the Danish population is the one that is most satisfied with the way democracy works in its country. On a scale of satisfaction ranging from 1-4, Denmark gets 3,24 points compared to an EU-average of 2,48.

The Danes are also more satisfied with democracy in the EU than average. The EU gets 2,68 points from the Danes compared to an average of 2,59 in Europe overall.

The European Parliament has the greatest influence - it ought to be the citizens

28% of Danes believe that the European Parliament is the institution with the most influence, whilst 35% feel that it ought to be the citizens. No one thinks that lobbyists should have the greatest influence, but 11% nonetheless feel that they do.

Danes are divided when it comes to the question of an EU constitution

43% of the Danish population feel that the EU ought to have a constitution whilst 37% are against. More than one in every five Dane has not made up his or her mind yet.

Ignorance when it comes to the work done by the European Convention

Danes are ignorant when it comes to the work done by the European Convention. Most women admit this ignorance whereas a lot of men seem to pretend to be knowledgeable, but incorrect answers give them away.

Danes lack knowledge about the Convention

8 out of 10 Danes think that both politicians and the media need to be better at informing them about the work of the Convention.

Decisions concerning European defence policy should be taken by NATO

32% of Danes express the opinion that decisions concerning European defence policy should be taken by NATO.

A majority of Danes think that the United States plays a positive role in the fight against terrorism

More than half of the Danish population, 55%, thinks that the United States plays a positive role in the fight against terrorism.

The tasks of the EU

Environmental protection and peace should be top EU priorities

9 out of 10 Danes express the opinion that the EU has to give priority to protecting the environment, maintaining peace and security in Europe, fighting organized crime and drug trafficking, fighting terrorism, guaranteeing the rights of the individual and the respect for the principles of democracy in Europe, guaranteeing the quality of food products and fighting social exclusion and poverty. The greatest disagreement occurs when it comes to whether or not the EU should give priority to implementing the euro.

Humanitarian aid, regional aid, research and protection of the environment jointly within the EU

Humanitarian aid, regional aid, research and protection of the environment are some of the issues on which Danes feel that decisions should be made jointly within the EU. In return, the Danes would like to keep their sovereignty when it comes to health and social welfare, as well as policies concerning culture, media and education.

Some aspects of judicial co-operation should be within the EU

A clear majority of the Danes feel that the fight against international terrorism, against the trade in and exploitation of human beings and against organized crime and drugs must take place jointly within the EU.

A majority in favour of a common currency, a common foreign policy and a common defense and security policy

It seems that the Danes are ready to let go of at least two of the opt-outs concerning the co-operation with the EU. 57% are in favour of a common defense and security policy, while only 31% are against it. 55% are in favour of a common foreign policy and 53% are in favour of the common currency, the euro.

A majority in favour of more substantial common security, defense and foreign policies

More than 75% of the Danes are in favour of closer co-operation in the area of the protection of human rights, as well as of EU-countries finding a common position independent of US foreign policy in cases of international crisis. A smaller majority of 54% is in favour of a common military force.

FINLAND

This Executive Summary presents the overall results from the EU Eurobarometer Poll 59. The report is based on the analysis of results obtained from the Eurobarometer survey that was carried out in Finland and the other Member States of the European Union in March and April 2003. It focuses on:

- (a) knowledge of the European Union and attitudes towards Finnish membership
- (b) general awareness of European Union institutions and bodies, as well as trust in them
- (c) level (national or European) at which various policy issues should be decided
- (d) future of the European Union e.g. enlargement, Common Security and Defence Policy and the possible changes proposed by the Convention in order to make European Union more efficient in the future.

Knowledge of the European Union and attitudes towards Finnish membership

Even though Finns estimate their average level of knowledge about the EU to be slightly worse than last autumn, this knowledge is still above the European average. Demographic analysis shows that people in the age groups 25-54 years feel they know more than average about the European Union, as do managers, the self-employed and, also, surprisingly, house persons.

For Finnish people on a personal basis, the European Union represents freedom to travel, study and work everywhere in Europe, as well as the common currency, the Euro. 42 % of the Finnish population sees membership of the European Union as a good thing. This is six percent up from June 2001 when the number of Finns seeing membership as a good thing was the lowest ever.

Almost half the population, 46 %, thinks that, taking everything into consideration, Finland has, on balance, benefited from membership of the European Union. This figure has also risen by a couple of percentages in each Eurobarometer poll since 2001. Managers, more highly educated people, students, those living in cities and supporters of the political right wing, in particular, think that Finland has benefited.

It is only since Autumn 2002 that the number of those thinking that Finland has benefited from its membership has been higher than the number of those thinking the opposite. Before then, the number believing that Finland had not benefited from its membership was higher in each Eurobarometer survey.

56 % of Finns see themselves solely as Finnish and 38 % see themselves as Finnish and European.

When asked about the image that the European Union gives of itself, we see that the image perceived by Finns is generally more neutral or negative than the European average.

General awareness of the European Union institutions and bodies, as well as trust in them

98 % of Finns have heard about the European Parliament, which ranks it as the best-known EU institution among the Finnish population. 94% have heard about the European Commission and 92 % of the European Central Bank. The European Parliament, the European Central Bank, the European Ombudsman, the Court of Justice of the European Communities, and the European Commission are the most important institutions in the life in the EU (all of them gained 75 % or more of the Finnish votes in terms of their importance). The European Ombudsman is the most trustworthy of all institutions as 66% of the Finns express confidence in this institution; 65 % trust the Court of Justice of the European Communities; the European Parliament and the European Central Bank are also seen as trustworthy by more than 60 % of the Finnish population, as is the European Commission with 59%.

Even though 62% of Finns trust the European Parliament, only 37% of them think that the Members of the European Parliament are effective in protecting citizens' interests. There is a need for a response from European institutions when faced with the fact that 86% of Finns do not believe that the European Union listens to citizens like them.

The level (national or European) at which various policy issues should be decided and what policy issues should be prioritised by the European Union

The vast majority (82% or more) of Finns want decisions about defence, health and social services, police and justice matters, immigration policy and rules for political asylum to be made by the Finnish government. On the other hand, they think that issues concerning international terrorism, the fight against the trade in, and exploitation of, human beings and organised crime, as well as foreign policy towards countries outside the European Union, should be dealt with by the European Union.

Almost all Finns believe that the largest member countries have most power in the European Union and they have doubt in small countries' abilities to protect their own interests effectively. Only 19 % of Finnish believe that Finland's role in the European Union is important. Two-thirds oppose the idea of transferring even more responsibilities to the EU and four out of five people think that the way European Union works is too complex.

When asked what issues should be prioritised by the EU, 88 % consider that maintaining peace and security in Europe should be the first on the list. Other important issues are the fight against poverty, social exclusion, unemployment, organised crime and drug trafficking.

Enlargement

Only 29 % of Finns think that successful enlargement of the European Union to include new member countries should be prioritised as a policy issue. Half the Finnish population is in favour of enlargement while 40 % are opposed to it. The number of those opposing enlargement has risen by nine percentage points in six months. Almost half of the Finns would prefer the

European Union to be enlarged to include only some of the countries wishing to join. The scenario of the European Union being enlarged to include all the countries wishing to join is mostly supported by managers and retired persons, by those who finished their education by the age of 16 and those over 55 years of age.

On a European scale, the Finns feel very well informed about the enlargement of the European Union. 83 % of Finns fear, with more countries, that it will be much more difficult to make decisions on a European scale. Almost the same number of them believes that the degree of bureaucracy will increase after the new countries have joined. Only 25 % of Finns believe that the European Union will work effectively after enlargement and over half of them fear that Finland will become less important. Almost three-quarters think that once the new countries have joined, Finland will receive less financial aid from the EU and that enlargement will cost more for existing member countries.

Only 20 % of Finns believe that the countries that will join the European Union in 2004 should already have a say in European Union foreign policy.

Common Security and Defence Policy

Even though 91 % of Finns believe that the national defence should be in the hands of the Finnish government, almost half of them (47 %) think that decisions regarding European defence policy should be made jointly within the European Union while 43 % oppose this proposition. The number of citizens favouring jointly made decisions has gone up by 12 % since the last Eurobarometer poll in Autumn 2002. 51 % of the population is for the Common Defence and Security Policy. When it comes to the Common Defence and Security Policy, the support for the national government is by far the highest among Finns when compared with other Member States. Only 3 % believe that decisions concerning European defence policy should be taken by NATO.

88 % think that European Union foreign policy should be independent of United States foreign policy. The general image of the United States and the perception of the role it plays when it comes to peace in the world and the fight against terrorism has grown more negative during the past six months.

The European Union's Rapid Reaction Force that can be sent quickly to trouble-spots when an international crisis occurs is supported by half of Finns. 71 % think that Member States that have opted for neutrality should have a say in European Union foreign policy.

Two-thirds want the right of veto to be retained in order to preserve essential national interests and only 8 % are ready to give it up for all decisions in order to make the European Union more efficient.

The work of the Convention

When it comes to the knowledge about the work of the Convention, Finns rank themselves quite highly when compared with the rest of the Member States. In Spring 2003, however, the vast majority of those surveyed thought that they were not being informed well enough by either the newspapers or politicians about the work of the Convention.

The Constitution

The number of Finns in favour of the Constitution has dropped by 10 % since last year. The self-employed, those who finished school under the age of 16, those living in the countryside and supporters of the political centre, in particular, think that the European Union should have a constitution. White-collar workers, those who consider their knowledge about the EU to be good or very good, managers and supporters of the political left wing are the biggest groups opposing the Constitution. Only in Denmark is support for the Constitution lower.

Number of Commissioners

87 % of Finns consider that every Member State should have its own Commissioner - even after enlargement - and almost as many think that every Member State should have the right to appoint a Commissioner. Nine out of ten Finns are afraid that Finland's interests would suffer if there were no Finnish Commissioner. Two-thirds believe that small Member States should have the right to appoint the same number of Commissioners as large Member States.

The Presidency of the European Council and The European Union Foreign Minister

While 47 % of Finns believe that the period of the Presidency of the Council should be extended because six months is too short to achieve significant results, 44 % think that the six-month period should be retained. The numbers are almost the same when it comes to the proposed Foreign Minister for the European Union: 47 % are for it and 42 % against.

The President of the European Commission

One-third of those surveyed think that the President should be chosen both by the European Parliament and the Heads of State or Heads of Government. Of all the Member States, support for direct election is lowest in Finland where only 19 % support this option.

Conclusions

Overall, it can be said that even though Finns seem to be among the most negative in their opinions about the European Union, it can be seen that this opinion has turned slightly more positive during the past few years. Change is noteworthy especially when it comes to the Common Defence and Security Policy and whether decisions concerning it should be made nationally or jointly within the EU.

The same goes for the results relating to whether Finnish citizens consider EU membership as a good or a bad thing – the number of the people considering Finnish membership to be a good thing was only ever higher in December 1999 and the number of Finns considering it a bad thing is the lowest ever at the moment. The same may be said for the number of the people thinking that Finland has not benefited from its membership in the European Union: currently, the number of Finns considering that, on the whole, Finland has benefited from its membership is the highest ever.

FRANCE

INTRODUCTION

The public opinion poll Eurobarometer 59.1 was carried out for the European Commission in each of the fifteen Member States of the European Union. In France, 1075 people were interviewed in Spring 2003, between March and April 2003.

This report sums up the results concerning France. It is divided into five chapters.

Chapter 1 gives an overall overview of the French opinion.

Chapter 2 deals with the image of the European Union, general knowledge about the European institutions and the way the French obtain information about the EU.

Chapter 3 describes French attitudes towards the enlargement of the EU.

Chapter 4 deals with the Convention as it is perceived by French opinion. It also focuses on the debate on the future of Europe, and particularly on the priorities for the EU, the principle of a European constitution and the reform of the European institutions.

Chapter 5 covers public attitudes to the 2004 European Parliamentary elections.

1. OVERALL REVIEW OF FRENCH OPINION

- The institutions that the French trust the most are radio, non-governmental organisations, the army and the police. Further, 45% of them tend to trust the European Union (although 40% do not), 44% trust the French Parliament and 43% trust the French government. The institutions that are least trusted in France are trade unions (35%), big companies (33%) and political parties (15%).
- The fear of international terrorism (85%) and of international crime (65%) have decreased slightly since the last Eurobarometer in Autumn 2002. The fear of epidemics (71%), which has increased by 15 points since the last Eurobarometer, is the only threat to have registered an increase.

- Respondents feel that the main problems faced by France at the moment are unemployment (48%), crime (39%), the economic situation (21%) and inflation (14%).
- For their future information needs about the EU (multiple answers possible), respondents continue to prefer television (56%), followed by newspapers (31%), radio (24%), brochures and leaflets (22%), magazines (16%), books (14%) and the Internet (13%). Other information sources such as videotapes, CD-ROM'S, information offices and computer databases are widely disregarded.
- Three out of four French respondents feel "not very well informed" (53%) or "not informed at all" (26%) about enlargement. It is noteworthy that one in four never looks for information on this topic.

2. FRENCH ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

- The main indicators have remained fairly constant since the last Eurobarometer. Support for the EU institutions remains strong, although slightly reduced.
- One French respondent in two (49%, -4) has a fairly good (42%) or very good (7%) image of the EU. Fewer than one in five (17%, 0) have a fairly bad (12%) or a very bad (5%) image of it.
- One respondent in two (50%, -2) of the respondents consider France's membership of the EU to be a good thing; 12% (=) think it is a bad thing and 33% (+1) think it neither good nor bad. Further, 50% (-1) also consider that their country has benefited from being a member of the European Union, although 26% (-2) disagree and 24% (+3) do not know. These figures are close to the EU average.
- Some European institutions are much better known than others. The majority of French respondents have heard of the Parliament (93%), the Commission (83%), the European Central Bank (69%), the Council of Ministers (67%) and the Court of Justice of the European Communities (67%). However, the other institutions are little known: the Convention on the future of Europe, in particular, was known to only 29% (+2).
- 75% (+4) of French respondents are now in favour of the Euro, while the proportion of opponents has decreased to 20% (-6). France has become one of the Eurozone countries where support for the single European currency is highest.

3. THE FRENCH AND THE ENLARGEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- The results of recent surveys about French attitudes towards enlargement have been mixed. In a previous Eurobarometer (EB59.0) carried out in February 2003, the sample was randomly divided into two groups. One group was asked whether it was "totally in favour", "rather in favour", "rather against" or "totally against" enlargement: respondents tended to be "rather in favour". The other group was asked whether it was "for" or "against" enlargement: this group produced a large majority "against" enlargement, showing the influence of question formulation on the response.
- The current poll shows that there has been a shift in public opinion since February. Support for enlargement has decreased all over Europe, so that France is no longer the only country where a majority opposes enlargement.

Within France itself, support for enlargement has decreased to a remarkable degree. Only 31% (-10) are now in favour, while 54% (+5) are opposed to enlargement. Further, 34% believe that no new members should join, while 40% think that only some of the Candidate countries should accede.

- Opposition to the enlargement of the Union is particularly strong in East France, in Nord/Pas-de-Calais and in the Mediterranean area. Forty percent of those who usually vote for left-wing parties and 29% of right-wing voters are in favour of enlargement. Support increases with the level of information on the European Union possessed by the respondent and decreases with age.
- The best known of the Candidate countries are Poland (known by 89%), Turkey (88%) and Romania (85%). On the other hand, only 66% of French respondents have heard of Estonia and Latvia. Almost three in four (72%) have never visited any Candidate country nor do they have any kind of link or relation with them.

4. THE CONVENTION AT THE END OF ITS WORK

- Only 29% of the French have heard of the Convention, but three out of four would like the mass media and politicians to talk more about it.
- In many areas, French public opinion is very similar to that in other Member States. When asked what the EU's priorities should be, the French ask for more European integration in areas such as the fight against poverty and unemployment or the protection of the environment. On the other hand, they prefer not to transfer responsibility for justice, education and health policy to the EU level.
- Following the war in Iraq, support for a common defence and security policy in Europe has increased remarkably: 77% (+10) across the EU are now in favour of it, as are 69% of the French.
- Anti-Americanism is growing in France. A large majority of French citizens believe the USA plays a negative role regarding protection of the environment (74%), peace in the world (73%), the fight against poverty (70%) and even the fight against terrorism (49%). As a result, 58% (+9) of the French think decisions concerning defence should be taken by the European Union, 18% by the national government and only 8% (-8) by NATO.
- The French strongly support the idea of a European constitution: 61% of them are in favour and only 7% against. However, support for a constitution has fallen by 7 points since a previous survey carried out in October 2002.
- 47% of the French think the name of the European Union should not be changed. Only 16% and 14% respectively say that they prefer the names "United Europe" and "European Community". The names "United Nations of Europe" and "United States of Europe" are even less successful.
- When asked how the President of the Commission should be selected, 38% are in favour of a direct election, 23% think the President should be appointed by both the Parliament and the Heads of States and Governments. Only 12% support election by the majority of the European Parliament while 11% prefer appointment by only the Heads of States and Governments. As usual, support for direct election in France is higher than the EU average (33%).
- Regarding the reform of the Commission, 71% think that each Member State should have the right to appoint its own Commissioner and 51% are in favour of keeping the right of veto to defend national interests.

5. THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

- One year before the elections of the European Parliament, 11% of the French are certain that they will not vote, although about 25% are not so sure that they will not. There is a significant difference in the level of information in France about national assemblies and about the European Parliament: one respondent in two has not heard of the latter since the last elections in 1999.
- The expected electoral issues (multiple answers were possible) are unemployment (69%), crime (55%), the environment (44%) and immigration (43%). Interest in specific European issues like enlargement (11%), the reform of the European institutions (13%) and the activities of the European Parliament (13%) seems to be very low.
- None of the proposals to encourage participation in the upcoming elections – such as voting on the same day throughout the European Union, voting at work via the Internet or at work - seem to produce significant results.

CONCLUSION

As in previous Eurobarometer surveys, attachment to the European institutions remains strong and is even increasing. Two examples are support for the Euro (75%) and for a EU constitution (67%), where France is ahead of most of the Member States. Similarly, support for a common foreign policy has increased by several points, probably as a direct consequence of the war in Iraq. The desire for more European integration is undoubtedly very strong, although respondents do not seem able to translate this desire into the institutional level. It is significant that, while 70% think the right of veto should be maintained, the same proportion is in favour of a common foreign policy !

Significant differences within French opinion appear only in one area: the attitude towards the enlargement of the Union. The gap between supporters and opponents of enlargement is widening: it has now reached 23 points. Three in four respondents still do not feel informed about the process. Furthermore, the French seem to have a looser relationship with the applicant countries than do other European countries.

In recent weeks, there has been a surge in media coverage of these countries, although the future members are presented more as a source of problems than as “a chance for Europe”. The French government has also launched a big information campaign (several millions of brochures have been sent and posters have been displayed in railway stations). It is still too early to evaluate the results of this campaign, but specific actions in this field are now more necessary than ever. Three proposals have been already put forward in our latest report:

- A partnership with schools and universities: experience has shown that a strong bottom-up information effect exists, so that informing students amounts to informing their families. However, teachers themselves are not informed enough

about the issues of enlargement. Together with the national authorities, the European institutions could launch action to “instruct the instructors” at the beginning of the new academic year.

- Information campaigns specifically aimed at opponents to enlargement (older people, farmers, women, low income groups): it is particularly difficult to reach this audience because it does not actively look for information on European topics. Therefore, information on enlargement should be supplied by organisations and media close to these groups.

- A co-operation strategy with the major media: the written press might find it useful to publish basic facts about the European Union in the form of permanent inserts. These could include the names of the applicant countries, the accession schedule and information about how the process will take place. An educational campaign on the institutional reforms introduced by the Convention should be launched as soon as the project has been adopted by the IGC.

Furthermore, it would be very useful to explain the main issues of the Constitution in a simple way in order not to repeat the mistakes of the Maastricht campaign, when the Treaty was often rejected for being “too complicated”. When the referendum campaign on the constitution is launched after the European elections, teams of writers, designers and communication experts should therefore already be operational.

GERMANY

Germany in Europe 2003: In the area of differences over institutional reform and enlargement the European Union faces a major task

René Sgraja
Dr. Christian Holst
INRA/IPSOS Deutschland

Main Results

Unemployment is the most important issue for Germans, but fear of a world war and epidemics is increasing rapidly

- Unemployment is still considered by far the most important issue facing Germany (66 percent); in second place, by a wide margin, follows the general economic situation (37 percent).
- Within the context of the war in Iraq and the SARS outbreak, it is not surprising that fears of a world war and epidemics have increased among Germans. Since October 2002, fear of a world war is greatest among 15-24 year olds.

Majority of citizens prefer direct election of the President of the European Commission, and the population wants more information on the European Convention

- More than 60 percent of Germans and EU citizens are still in favour of a constitution for the European Union.
- In spite of the upcoming EU enlargement, about 50% of Germans, as well as EU citizens, remain in favour of maintaining the right of veto in order to preserve vital national interests.
- Approximately one-third of German and European citizens support the direct election of the President of the European Commission. While support for this option has remained stable, noticeably fewer citizens than last year favour the appointment of the Commission President by the European Parliament.
- As in October 2002, 7 out of 10 Germans and EU citizens feel that the President of the European Commission and the College of Commissioners should resign if they no longer have the support of the European Parliament.
- Three-quarters of all respondents would like to find out more about what the Convention is doing; likewise, citizens' knowledge of the Convention is sketchy.

Support for current enlargement increases, but further inclusions are regarded with greater doubt

- Citizens in Germany, as well as in Europe overall, favour the inclusion of all countries wishing to join the EU. However, the share of Germans supporting this view is below the EU average. Fewer Germans now than before support the inclusion of only a few of the countries wishing to join.
- Since October 2002, the support for the accession of new countries has declined in Germany by 4 percentage points from 46 to 42 percent. In the EU as a whole, the support sank by 6 percentage points from 52 to 46 percent in the same period.
- Germans feel better informed about enlargement than the average EU citizen.
- Overall negative and positive expectations concerning enlargement have remained stable between October 2002 and April 2003.

The democratic process in the European Union is regarded very differently within Eastern and Western Germany; satisfaction with the way democracy works has declined noticeably in Germany as a whole

- The share of Germans who consider their country's EU-membership as a good thing remains stable at 59 percent and lies above the EU-average of 54 percent.
- 45 percent of Germans and 50 percent of EU-citizens continue to feel that their respective countries benefit from EU-membership.
- In Western Germany, the share of the population that is satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union is higher than the EU-average. In Eastern Germany, however, this share is the lowest in all of the EU.
- Satisfaction with democracy in their own country – Germany – has fallen markedly from 66 to 60 percent.
- Between October 2002 and April 2003, there has been a slight but visible decline in trust in the EU institutions, as well as in the assessment of the institutions' importance – both in Germany and in the EU as a whole.
- Among Germans, those institutions that have an independent supervisory function, such as the European Court of Justice, the European Central Bank, and the Court of Auditors, enjoy a higher degree of trust and importance than in the EU as a whole. However, the degree of trust and perception of importance of the European Commission and the Council of Ministers remains lower in Germany than in the EU overall.

Increasing importance of a common foreign and security policy

- In both Germany and Europe as a whole, more citizens now consider that the European Union should decide on matters of defence policy. NATO, on the other hand, is now seen by considerably fewer citizens as an important actor in European defence policy.
- Among those measures that should be made a priority by the European Union, the fight against unemployment continues to hold the number one spot in the eyes of German

citizens. According to respondents, other measures to which the European Union should give priority are: maintaining peace and security in Europe, the fight against terrorism and organised crime, the fight against poverty and social exclusion, environmental protection and consumer protection.

- According to those polled in Germany, decisions in the area of foreign policy vis-à-vis non-EU countries, defence policy, the fight against terrorism, environmental protection and the fight against poverty and social exclusion should be decided on jointly within the European Union and not by the national governments alone. At the same time, Germans think - unlike the average European citizen - that decisions in the fight against unemployment should be taken by their national government, despite the fact that they think that this issue should be the European Union's number one priority.

Election of the European Parliament is important

- Two-thirds of Germans agree that the elections for the European Parliament are 'really important'.
- Almost half of respondents have not had any contact with a representative of the European Parliament through any media since the last election. When asked in what ways they would like to see or hear more about Members of the European Parliament, one-third of EU citizens state that they would not be interested in seeing or hearing more about them at all.

Self-assessment of knowledge on the EU is higher among Germans than for the EU-average

- Germans rate their knowledge on the EU, its policies and institutions higher than the average European citizen.
- Their main sources of information about the European Union are national television news, newspapers and radio stations.
- The EU institutions known by the largest share of the population in Germany are the European Parliament, the European Central Bank, and the Court of Auditors. In Europe as a whole, the institutions known by most citizens are the Parliament, the European Commission, and the European Central Bank.

GREECE

INTRODUCTION

Between March 18th and April 30th 2003, the European Opinion Research Group, a consortium of market and public research agencies, carried out wave 59.1 of the standard Eurobarometer poll, on the request of the European Commission Directorate-General Press and Communication, Public Opinion Analysis Unit.

The research covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Member States, aged 15 years and over, resident in each of the Member States. The basic sample design applied in all Member States is a multi-stage, random (probability) one. In each EU country, a number of sampling points were selected with probability proportional to population size (for a total coverage of the country) and to population density.

The Greek sample, covering 1003 Greek residents, shows complete homogeneity with regard to nationality. This fact allows us, to a great and secure degree, to consider that the research results and assumptions are representative of Greek national public opinion.

All interviews took place in person, at the interviewees' homes and in their national language.

PREVIEW OF GREEK PUBLIC OPINION

- Some interest in political discussions. A majority of Greek citizens (51%) appears to discuss political matters on an occasional basis with friends, while 3 out of 10 seem to have lost interest because they state that they never get involved in discussions of political nature.
- Institutional trust. The vast majority of the Greek sample (80%) tends to trust the army. One out of 3 Greek citizens declare their trust in their national legal system, as well as in their national police. 1 in 2 Greek citizens tends to trust the European Union. There is lack of trust observed with respect to political parties (80%), the Greek government (53%) and the Greek press (50%). In addition, 7 out of 10 Greeks tend not to trust large companies.
- According to Greek citizens' answers, the two most important issues facing Greece at the moment are unemployment (62%) and the country's economic situation (34%).
- Greeks express their fears more than other European citizens (EU15 average), especially when it comes to organised crime (GR: 86% - EU15: 71%), epidemics (GR: 85% - EU15:

63%), and (to a lesser extent) international terrorism (GR: 83% - EU15: 80%). Moreover, substantial differences in percentages can be seen between Greek and European citizens when also asked if they are afraid of the possibility of an accident in a nuclear power station (GR: 83% - EU: 65%); the spread of nuclear, bacteriological or chemical weapons of mass destruction (GR: 81% - EU15: 71%); a world war (GR: 77% - EU15: 59%); an accidental launch of a nuclear missile (GR: 74% - EU15: 57%); ethnic conflicts taking place in Europe (GR: 67% - EU15: 54%); a conventional war in Europe (GR: 66% - EU15: 48%); and a nuclear conflict in Europe (GR: 64% - EU15: 50%).

- 9 out of 10 Greeks declare that the source they use the most in order to inform themselves about the current international situation is the news programme on Greek television, while 30% of the Greek sample use the Greek daily newspapers and magazines. Only 6 out 100 Greeks use the Internet as their main source of information on current international issues.
- Greeks, more than all other EU citizens, express their strong negative opinion - towards the international role that the United States tends to play regarding peace in the world (GR: 91% - EU15: 58%); the fight against poverty in the world (GR: 86% - EU15: 52%); the protection of the environment (GR: 84% - EU15: 59%); the fight against terrorism (GR: 80% - EU15: 35%); and, the growth of the world economy (GR: 79% - EU15: 37%).
- Greek citizens, when asked what does the European Union mean to them personally, replied the following:
 - ✓ 49%: Freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the European Union.
 - ✓ 40%: Euro
 - ✓ 33%: Peace
 - ✓ 30%: Stronger say in the world
 - ✓ 27%: Economic prosperity

One out of 5 Greeks relates the European Union to unemployment, and 1 out of 10 perceives it as a waste of money. It is worth mentioning that only 7% of Greek respondents relate the European Union to '*bureaucracy*', while the EU15 average is 18%.

GREEK POSITIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE EU

- Greeks' sense of their knowledge in regard to the European Union may be characterised as satisfactory as it is at a medium level (5) of a decimal scale from 1 (know nothing at all) to 10 (know a great deal). This self-assessment of '*Euro-Knowledge*' by Greek respondents shows a relative lack of self-confidence, while it is obvious that Greeks do not feel they get adequate information on the European Union, its policies and its institutions.
- In line with the results of previous Eurobarometer surveys, Greek public opinion continues (GR: 74% - EU15: 58%) to point to television as the most preferred source of getting information about the European Union.

Greek feelings on the European Union

- 44% of the Greek public has a '*fairly positive*' image of the European Union and 12% a '*very positive*' one. The European Union conjures up a '*neutral*' image for 33% of the Greek sample, a '*fairly negative*' one for 7% and a '*very negative*' one for only 3%.
- 1 out of 2 Greeks appears not to understand how the European Union functions.
- 7 out of 10 Greeks find that the way the European Union works is too complex.
- 4 out of 10 Greeks tend to disagree with the statement that decisions taken by the European Union are generally sound.
- 8 out of 10 Greeks believe that the decisions taken by the European Union have an impact on their daily lives.

being a member of the european union

- The majority of the Greek population (61%) views positively the country's membership of the European Union characterising it as a 'good thing', while 74% of the respondents declare that Greece has benefited from being an EU member. As in the previous Eurobarometer survey (58.1), the Irish (77%) and Greeks appear to be the most satisfied EU citizens in regard to their countries' membership of the EU.
- In accordance with the previous Eurobarometer survey (58.1), Greek respondents fully identify with their nationality viewing themselves primarily as being solely Greek (52%). On the other hand, 41% of them express a sense of dual identity, meaning that there are a significant number of Greek citizens who view themselves in the near future as – primarily - Greek and – secondarily - European.

EU enlargement

- 7 out of 10 Greeks (71%) are in favour of enlargement of the European Union to include new countries.
- However, Greeks are more critical of the way the enlargement is achieved, as 57% (EU15: 40%) believes that the European Union should be enlarged to include only some of the countries wishing to join.
- 8 out of 10 Greeks believe that enlargement of the European Union will guarantee peace and security in Europe and will enhance the role of the European Union in the international arena.
- However, 1 out of 2 Greek respondents is afraid that the EU's enlargement will lead to an increase in unemployment in Greece.

- The majority of the Greek sample (40%) believes that enlargement will have a cost for existing Member States like Greece. In addition, they estimate that, as a result of the enlargement, Greece will receive less financial aid from the European Union (57%). Nevertheless, 54% of the Greek sample believes that the European Union should provide financial aid to the future member countries, even prior to their accession to the EU.
- The probability of Greece having less political power after the enlargement does not seem to constitute a serious fear for a considerable percentage of the Greek public opinion (47%).
- Greeks would like to be better informed about the enlargement of the European Union. Greek public opinion seems to be somewhere between moderation and doubt. One out of 5 Greeks appears to be *'not at all well informed'* about EU's enlargement. **However, it is worth noted that compared to the previous Eurobarometer survey (58.1) the percentage of the Greeks feeling 'well' and 'very well informed' has risen from 20% to 31%.**

COMMON EU POLICIES ON CRITICAL SECTORS

- The majority of the Greek public opinion remains supportive of the European Monetary Union (as in previous Eurobarometer survey 58.1), as 7 out of 10 take a positive stand and declare their strong support for EMU with a single currency (Euro).
- 9 out of 10 Greek respondents appear to encourage the development of a common foreign policy among the EU Member States towards other countries (88%). Similarly, Greeks support (84%) the principle of a common European defence and security policy among the EU Member States.
- More than any other European citizens, Greeks (77%, highest percentage) agree that the European Union should have a rapid military reaction force that can be sent immediately to trouble spots when an international crisis occurs. Furthermore, Greeks believe (86%) that when an international crisis occurs, European Union Member States should agree on a common stance.
- Although the majority (53%) appears to agree with the fact that Member States which have opted for neutrality should have a say in European Union foreign policy, a significant percentage (32%) of the Greek sample still tends to disagree with that, while 15% did not take a position on this question.
- Greeks (88%) share the opinion that the European Union should have its own Foreign Minister, who can be the spokesperson for a common European Union position.

DEMOCRACY, DECISION MAKING, EU PRIORITIES

- Greek public opinion appears to be *'fairly satisfied'* with the way democracy functions at both national (40%) and European (42%) levels. Nevertheless, a great number of the Greek sample expressed dissatisfaction with the way democracy works in Greece (38%, *'not very satisfied'*) and in the European Union (29%).

- The survey makes reference to a number of areas in which Greeks are called upon to express their opinion on whether decision-making should be made independently by **the** national government or jointly with the European Union. A large majority of Greek citizens appear to take a positive stand in regard to the formulation of EU common policies and joint decision making in all but 3 (cultural policy, defence and basic rules for broadcasting and press) out of the 15 sectors currently examined (e.g. foreign policy, information on EU and its policies, scientific and technological research, education, environmental protection, agriculture and fishing policy, unemployment, health and social welfare, etc). More specifically, Greeks believe that decisions on cultural policy (53%, while 45% believes that decisions should be taken jointly with the EU), defence (51%, it is noted that the percentage has dropped from 58% as it was in the previous Eurobarometer survey 58.1), and on basic rules for broadcasting and press (50%, while 44% believes that decisions should be taken jointly with the EU) should be taken at national level.
- 7 out of 10 Greeks believe that the European Union (67%), rather than the national government (24%) should take decisions concerning European defence policy. Only 1 out of 100 Greeks believes that NATO should take decisions concerning the European defence policy.
- *Maintaining peace and security in Europe, the fight against poverty and social exclusion, the protection of consumers and guarantee of product quality, the fight against unemployment, against organised crime and drug trafficking, and against terrorism, are some of the basic actions that Greek respondents in their vast majority encourage the **European Union to set as top priorities.***

INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

- According to the Greek sample, the European institutions - in general - do play important role in the life of the European Union, with the European Parliament (79%) and the European Commission (75%) reaching the highest percentages. Moreover, a majority of Greeks express their trust on the European Union and its institutions, with the European Parliament (62%) being the most trustworthy, followed by the Court of Justice of the EU (60%) and the European Commission (57%).

- Although Greeks state that the European Parliament is the institution that has the most influence on decision-making within the European Union, they still believe that it should be the European citizens themselves (41%) who should have the most influence, followed by the European Parliament (20%).
- However, 7 out of 10 Greeks state that the European Union does not listen to the opinions of its people.
- In the event that national or European Parliament elections were held, Greeks firmly express their willingness to participate by stating in their majority '*Yes, I would definitely vote*'.
- The majority of Greeks believes that the European Parliament has more power than the national parliament (39% totally agree and 36% tend to agree). It is noted that the percentage of those in total agreement with this statement (39%) is much greater than the EU average (12%). Furthermore, 45% of Greek respondents view the European Parliament elections as being really important.
- According to Greek public opinion, the next European Parliament election campaign should mainly focus - among other issues - on unemployment (74%), crime (53%), education (48%), and agriculture (39%).
- 8 out of 10 Greeks state that they have read in the newspapers or heard on the radio or television something about the Greek EU Presidency. The fact that Greece held the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the European Union at the time of this survey is perceived to be important (very important) by 8 out of 10 Greek respondents.
- There is a lack of knowledge on issues that concern the objectives, goals and procedures of the European Convention. 8 out of 10 Greeks believe that the media, as well as politicians, should provide more information on the European Convention and its work.
- Greeks take a firm stand (87%) in calling for the maintenance of at least one Commissioner from each Member State in the European Commission in an enlarged European Union, and that every Member State should have the right to appoint a Commissioner. Greek citizens believe (86%) that Greece's interests would suffer if there were no Greek Commissioner as part of the European Commission. Greeks, more than all other European citizens, think that small Member States should have the right to appoint the same number of Commissioners as large Member States (GR: 74% - EU15: 51%). Furthermore, 78% of Greek respondents do not believe that if there were to be a Commissioner from each Member State, that the European Union would become inefficient.
- Concerning the presidency period of the European Council, 47% of the Greek public opinion thinks that the six-month period should be retained because it gives each Member State a chance to hold the Presidency of the Council on a regular basis. Nevertheless, 44% of Greek respondents take an opposing stance by wanting the period of the presidency to be extended in order to allow the presiding country to achieve more significant results.
- Greek citizens (75%) believe that the European Union should have a Constitution. The percentage of the Greek sample is the highest among all Europeans (EU15: 63%).
- 30% of Greek citizens consider that the European Parliament alone should elect the President of the European Commission, while 35% of them believe that the citizens of the European Union should directly elect the President of the European Commission.

- A large majority of Greek public opinion (78%) clearly believes that the right of veto on important/sensitive decisions must be retained, in order to preserve vital national interests.

IRELAND

Introduction

1. The present report deals with Eurobarometer 59 (spring 2003). Its first task is to update the picture of basic trends in Irish people's attitudes to European integration and the European Union. The report then deals with the response of public opinion to four major events and developments in the European Union and in international politics as of the spring of 2003. These developments are, in order of their treatment in this report: the enlargement of the European Union, the Convention on the future of the European Union, the forthcoming elections to the European Parliament and, finally, the war in Iraq and the implications of that war and of events leading up to it for public support for a European common foreign and security policy.
2. Fieldwork for the EB59 survey in Ireland was carried out between 22nd March and 18th April. In the European Union as a whole, fieldwork was completed between 18th March 2003 and 30th April 2003.
3. In order to avoid repetition, this executive summary begins with a reminder of the main findings of the Irish reports on EB57 and EB58 and of two reports on the two Nice referendums that were carried out on behalf of the European Commission Representation in Dublin. Readers who are familiar with the previous reports may wish to fast forward to point 7 in this summary

Background - Previous Eurobarometers and the Nice referendums

4. The EB 57 report showed that, as of spring 2002, Irish attitudes to the European Union and to Ireland's membership of the Union were characterised by widespread approval of Irish membership, widespread perception of the benefits of membership, including personal benefits, and a widespread positive image of the EU. However, these positive attitudes were accompanied by low levels of engagement with and knowledge of European affairs.
5. The study of the second Irish referendum on the Nice Treaty showed a marked improvement in communication and a substantial increase in people's sense that they could understand the issues at stake. The improvements in communication were concentrated in the mass media (television, radio and newspapers) and in interpersonal discussion of the issues. On the other hand, the evidence also showed that the communication process had its limits and that there was very little spillover from an understanding of the issues raised by the Treaty of Nice to a more general understanding of the institutions of the Union and how they work.
6. When account is taken of evidence on both the perceived speed of building Europe and on the preferred speed of building Europe, Ireland is seen to move from the front rank of supporters of integration to the other end of the scale where it is fourth lowest in terms the proportion regarding the pace of integration as too slow. This suggests that, when it comes to the pace of European integration, Irish people tend to prefer the *status quo* or the *status quo ante*. On the other hand, there is a significant minority (about one-quarter) that is prepared to forge full-speed ahead.

Trends in attitudes to European integration and the European Union

7. Eurobarometer 59 shows the third successive fall in Irish support for European integration as measured by the standard EB membership indicator. Approval of Ireland's membership of the European Union has fallen from 83 per cent in autumn 2001 to 67 per cent in spring 2003. The benefits indicator (believe that Ireland has benefited from membership of the EU) has fallen from 90 per cent to 77 per cent over the same period.

Cumulatively, these are substantial changes and suggest a significant alteration in the overall orientation of Irish people to European integration.

8. The extent of the alteration in Irish attitudes can be seen by comparing the gap that existed between Irish and average European support for membership of the European Union in autumn 2001 with the gap that now exists. In autumn 2001 the gap was 27 percentage points; in spring 2003 it was 13 percentage points. The change in the basic indicators between autumn 2002 and spring 2003 is confirmed by a variety of other indicators of attitudes to European Union, including people's image of the European Union (which went from 69 per cent positive in autumn 2002 to 50 per cent positive in spring 2003) and people's trust in a wide range of European institutions.
9. Previous reports in this series have emphasised the importance of the public's knowledge of the European Union. Eurobarometer 59 indicates that the subjective sense of knowing little or nothing about the European Union has increased significantly in all but three member states between autumn 2002 and spring 2003. In the Irish case the increase is of the order of five percentage points; this change places Ireland among the four countries with the most widespread sense of lack of knowledge of the European Union and its policies.

Attitudes to enlargement

10. Irish attitudes to enlargement have been extensively dealt with in previous reports in this series and, accordingly, need not receive detailed treatment in this report. However, it should be noted that EB 59 indicates some slippage in support for enlargement between autumn 2002 and spring 2003 (a decline from 67 per cent in favour to 60 per cent in favour). Opposition to enlargement has grown by four percentage points over the same period and there was a marginal increase in the percentage giving a don't know response. The changes just noted still leave Irish support for enlargement of the European Union significantly ahead of support in the European Union as a whole.

Perceptions of and attitudes to the Convention on the future of the EU

11. As of spring 2003 less than one-third of European citizens had heard of the Convention on the future of the European Union. And only half that number again (one sixth of the citizens) assented to the view that "we are hearing a lot about Convention at the moment". Irish citizens score a bit above average in terms of basic awareness of the Convention (39 per cent having heard of it). Given the publicity surrounding the finalisation of the Convention's report and its presentation to the EU summit in June 2003, one would expect that people's awareness of the Convention will have substantially improved between spring 2003 and early summer or 2003. Assuming that this is so, the challenge will be to ensure that the improved level of awareness is maintained and that it is accompanied by a full understanding of the convention's proposals as they make their way through the process of treaty revision and ratification.
12. Again, as of March-April 2003, only two in every five European and Irish citizens were aware that national governments were represented in the Convention. Slightly under 40 per cent (both in European Union as a whole and in Ireland) knew that the Convention was working on proposals to reform the EU. On other aspects of the Convention, the Irish level of knowledge tended to be somewhat better than the levels of knowledge among European citizens as a whole. But, while it may have been better, it was not particularly good - only one quarter or thereabouts of Irish citizens say that it is true that citizens will have an opportunity to accept or reject the Convention's proposals, or that it is true that the EU member states will be allowed to modify the convention's final proposals or that the governments of the accession states are represented in the Convention.

13. EB59 evidence suggests that, again as of spring 2003, the Convention or, more precisely, the member states that back the Convention's proposals had a long way to go to persuade the publics of the existing member states of the merits of some of the Convention's key proposals.

- ***Number of Commissioners***

Obviously, since fieldwork for this survey was done in March-April and since the Convention's proposal in relation to the make-up of the Commission only became clear at a much later stage, the question asked in Eurobarometer 59 did not and could not have addressed the precise details of the proposal in the Convention's final report. Nonetheless, it is quite clear from the data in Eurobarometer 59 that there is majority support for the principle of one Commissioner per member state and one can only assume that this support is for a one full Commissioner per member state, i.e. one Commissioner with full voting rights. There is a significant large state versus small state polarisation underlying views on this issue. Thus, support for the proposition that the country's interests would suffer if there were no Commissioner from that country is in excess of 80 per cent in Denmark, Greece, Sweden and Ireland and close to 80 per cent in Finland and Luxembourg. By contrast, support for this proposition falls to a range of 66 to 71 per cent in Italy, the UK and Germany and to 58 and 54 per cent in Spain and France respectively.

- ***The President of the Commission***

Public opinion is also somewhat out of sympathy with the design produced by the Convention in regard to the selection of the President of the Commission. One-third of EU citizens believe that the President of the European Commission should be directly elected by the citizens of Europe while a further 18 per cent say that the President of the European Commission should be "solely elected" by the European Parliament. Thus 51 per cent support the notion the President of the Commission having a broad direct or indirect democratic mandate. Support for one or other of these two democratic alternatives is most widespread in Luxembourg, Greece, Belgium and the Netherlands and least common in Finland, the UK, Portugal and Ireland. Irish public opinion falls into the less integrationist camp not in virtue of its support for some other alternative but rather in virtue of the large proportion of don't knows on the issue, in this case amounting to almost one in four.

- ***Preservation of the right of veto***

A plurality, amounting almost to a majority, of European citizens is in favour of the retention of the status quo in regard to national vetoes. Fifty per cent of Irish respondents feel that a right of veto should be retained in order to preserve essential national interests and 47 per cent of respondents throughout the EU 15 feel likewise. The attachment of the public to some form of national veto is even more apparent if we add in the proportion of respondents who feel that the right of veto should be maintained but should only apply to "a very few essential areas".

- ***Rotation of the Council Presidency***

The Convention's proposals regarding change in the six-monthly rotation of the presidency of the European Council may well encounter greater public support. In the EU as a whole less than one-third of respondents support retention of the present system whereas 50 per cent support the idea of extending the period. Ireland is among the country's that are least supportive of the retention of the present system though, once again, this position is in part a function of the large

proportion of don't know responses in Ireland (in this case amounting to 29 per cent).

Attitudes to the European Parliament and to the 2004 elections

14. Inevitably no doubt, the European Parliament (and the European Union) rank quite low on a scale of the perceived impact of institutions of governance. Whereas over 50 per cent of people see national governments as having a great effect, only 21 per cent take the same view regarding the impact of the European Parliament. On aggregate, the perceptions of the impact of the Parliament are somewhat more widespread in Ireland than in the Union as a whole. The extent of perception of the Parliament as having a great effect on people's lives is mirrored in the proportion of people who regard European Parliament elections as really important (Irish and European responses in this regard are almost identical).
15. However, Irish views on the proposition that "the members of the European Parliament are good at protecting your interests" are substantially more favourable in their assessment of MEPs than are responses in the Union as a whole - 50 per cent of Irish respondents agree with the proposition compared to 35 per cent of respondents in the Union as a whole.
16. Ireland is, however, far from the top of the class when it comes to the extent of contact between the citizens and MEPs. Fifty-seven per cent of Irish people report having had some contact with MEPs since the last election. The corresponding figure for European Union as a whole is 53 per cent whereas in Denmark it is 76 per cent, in Luxembourg 72 per cent and in Finland 67 per cent.
17. The proportions of people having multiple contacts with MEPs are particularly low in Portugal, Britain, Italy East Germany and Greece. One of the factors that differentiates Luxembourg Denmark Sweden and Finland from the rest of the EU, including Ireland, is the higher rate of exposure to the activities of MEPS through reports in newspapers and magazines.
18. Bearing in mind the fact that at the time of interviewing the elections were more than a year away, is not surprising that a strong commitment to voting is quite low. However, what is somewhat more puzzling is that strong commitment to participation in European Parliament elections declined between autumn 2002 and spring 2003. This decline becomes more understandable when account is taken of the evidence, also from Eurobarometer 59, that propensity to vote in a hypothetical national election declined during the same period by an almost identical margin. In short, the indications of any increased problems with propensity to vote in the European Parliament election of 2004 would seem to be attributable to domestic rather than specifically European factors.
19. In assessing this evidence it must be borne in mind that the European Parliament election of 2004 in Ireland will coincide with local elections and that the level of turnout in the European Parliament election is likely to be boosted at least to some extent by this concurrence. However, this does not dispense with the importance of encouraging people to vote in European Parliament election as such as, without such interest and such commitment, the value of participation as a factor in developing a relationship between the people and the European institutions would be greatly diminished.
20. Finally, EB 59 provides some evidence of the kinds of factors that will affect the level of participation in European Parliament elections in 2004. This evidence confirms the value of the distinction between circumstantial and voluntary abstention and the related distinction between facilitating turnout and mobilising turnout. It suggests furthermore that circumstantial abstention and hence the need for improved facilitation of voting is a

greater problem in Ireland than in the European Union as a whole. In regard to the mobilisation of political participation, the data confirm the obvious point that the concurrence of other elections helps to mobilise participation as does the feeling of participating simultaneously in Europe-wide elections. The evidence suggests that the potential boost to turnout that might be brought about by the inclusion of citizens from other member states as candidates in the election is likely to be marginal.

The Iraq War and attitudes to the United States and to a European CFSP

21. One would anticipate that developments in the Middle East and, in particular, the onset of war in Iraq would have had an effect on Europeans evaluations of the role of the United States in the international system and that there might have been some carryover into attitudes to the need for a European common foreign and security policy.
22. On the issue of the role of the US in relation to peace in the world, only 2 European countries show a positive net evaluation (United Kingdom at plus 14 percentage points and Denmark at plus seven percentage points). Irish public opinion on this issue is the next most favourable (or next least unfavourable) - at a net evaluation of minus 5 percentage points. Beyond that one can identify three groups of countries defined by three levels of net negative evaluation of the role of the US in relation to peace in the world ranging from minus 14 percentage points in the Netherlands to minus 87 in Greece.
23. The picture regarding a net evaluations of the role of the United States in relation to the fight against terrorism is quite different. Only four countries make a net negative a valuation of the United States in this regard - Austria at minus 14 points, Spain at minus 19, France at minus 18 and Greece at minus 70. In the remainder of the member states, however, the positive net evaluation ranges from 51 per cent in the case of the United Kingdom to 5 per cent in the case of Portugal.
24. Between autumn 2002 and spring 2003, substantial changes in the net evaluation of the role of the United States in relation to peace in the world occurred in a majority of the member states and the vast bulk of the change that occurred was in a negative direction. In the case of the peace in the world item, Irish public opinion moved from a net positive evaluation of plus 4 percentage points in autumn 2002 to a net negative evaluation of minus 5 percentage points in spring 2003. On the question of the fight against terrorism the size of the movement of Irish public opinion was somewhat greater (down 14 percentage points).
25. Eurobarometer 58 and 59 also allow us to track changes in the mood of Irish and European citizens in relation to a range of fears they might have regarding the international or global situation. The list of potential objects of fear ranged from an accident in a nuclear power station to a world war and included such things as organised crime, international terrorism, epidemics and ethnic conflicts. Irish fears about developments in the international system diminished significantly between autumn 2002 and spring 2003 and, with one notable exceptional area (anything having to do with nuclear issues) tend to be significantly lower in frequency than comparable fears among European citizens as a whole.
26. There is some evidence of increased support in the majority of member states for defence decisions being made by the European Union. Several states show marked increases, including France (up eight percentage points), Belgium (up seven percentage points) and Finland (up 11 percentage points). Support for European Union decision-making declined significantly in just one state (Austria). Ireland together with Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain and Luxembourg showed no change.

27. Detailed analysis of a battery of questions dealing with CFSP issues that were introduced for the first time in EB59 points to three dimensions underlying such attitudes. The first dimension is that of support for or opposition to a comprehensive common foreign and security policy that would include a rapid military reaction force, an EU foreign minister, an EU common position in international crises, common asylum and immigration policies and a seat for the EU on the UN Security Council. The second dimension involves attitudes to an independent and ethical foreign policy (guaranteeing or working for human-rights in the context of an EU foreign policy independent of US foreign policy). The third and final factor or dimension measures people's attitudes to participation in the formulation of EU foreign policy, i.e., whether the policy-making process should include the neutral states and accession countries.
28. Member states are divided fairly neatly into 3 groups in terms of their support for a comprehensive common foreign and security policy. The advanced group, i.e. those most in favour of a comprehensive common foreign and security policy include Greece, Italy, France and the Benelux countries. The middle group on this dimension is made up of Germany, Austria, Spain, Portugal, and Britain. Ireland is placed firmly in the middle of this middle group. The group of member-states opposed to a comprehensive European foreign and security policy comprises the Scandinavian states, with Finland Denmark and Sweden clearly opposed to a comprehensive EU foreign and security policy.
29. The distribution of member states on the independent and ethical foreign policy dimension constitutes a continuum rather than discrete groups of countries with clearly different views. However, the ends of the continuum are clearly identifiable - support for an independent and ethical foreign policy is most widespread in the Scandinavian countries, in Greece and in East Germany whereas strongest opposition to this view is found in Britain and, to a lesser extent in Portugal. Ireland is in the middle of this dimension, leaning very slightly towards the opposition pole. On the dimension measuring attitudes to participation in the formulation of foreign policy there is a very clear polarisation between Ireland, followed by Austria and Portugal, which are highly supportive of wide participation, and Denmark and the Netherlands, which are strongly opposed.

ITALY

European Union institutions and policies

The level of knowledge regarding EU institutions and policies is still low and the trend in Italy shows a slight worsening. For the second consecutive time, the Eurobarometer has shown a decrease in the average knowledge level. On a scale of 1 to 10 (where 1 stands for total lack of knowledge and 10 for a maximum level), the average knowledge of the Italian sample (4.35) is slightly above the European average (4.25).

Television remains the main medium that Italians use to get information on Europe-related topics. The use of daily newspapers and magazines shows an increase while the level of usage of the Internet remains constant.

Analysing the level of knowledge of European institutions, the three that Italians are most familiar with are the European Parliament (93%), the European Commission (77%) and the European Central Bank (71%).

With the exception of the European Parliament, there was a decrease in the level of knowledge regarding EU institutions in this survey compared with the data collected in the course of the previous Eurobarometer. This ranges from 4% (European Commission) to 8-10% (Convention and Committee of the Regions).

The three most familiar institutions are also the ones that, according to Italians, play a major role within the EU and which Italians trust the most.

The European Parliament occupies the first place in terms of importance (83%) and for trust (70%), followed by the European Commission (which 74% of the Italian sample consider important and which 61% trust). Next in line is the European Central Bank (66% importance, 49% trust) which, for the first time, overtakes the Council of Ministers (62% importance, 49% trust).

Most Italians tend to trust the European Union more than national political institutions.

The list of political, economic and social institutions in which Italians tend to place their trust is topped by the army and the police (both at 69%), followed by the European Union (59%), while the Judiciary, the Italian Government and Parliament all score less than 50%.

Italians confirm their position as the most “EU-enthusiastic” citizens in the European Union. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 1 stands for a totally negative attitude and 5 for a

totally positive attitude towards the EU), Italy emerges as the nation with the most positive attitude in the EU, with an average of 3.75 against the European average of 3.36.

Overall, Italians are more satisfied with the functioning of democracy in the European Union than in Italy.

On a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 stands for the lowest level and 4 for a maximum level of satisfaction), the average evaluation expressed by the Italian sample is 2.36 when it comes to the functioning of national democracy and at 2.53 when it comes to European democracy. The data show that Italians are the people who are the least satisfied with their national democracy among the 15 Member States.

59% of Italians see themselves as “Italians **and** Europeans”, while only 26% of the Italian sample view themselves as “only Italians”.

Nonetheless, it clearly emerges that the European Union is still considered as an institution which is too complex and distant from its citizens. 51% of Italians and 65% of EU citizens find that the functioning of the EU is too complex and only 13% of Italians think that the EU really pays attention to the voice of common people; in fact 66% of the Italian sample consider it as being too remote from its citizens.

The features that, according to Italians, best reflect the European reality are the freedom to travel, study and work anywhere within the Union (55%), followed by the Euro (45%) and a stronger role on a world-wide level (33%).

Among the negative aspects, the lack of sufficient controls at external borders (14%) and the increase of criminality (7%) are the ones that Italians frequently mentioned.

An absolute majority of Italians (54%) would prefer the name of the EU not to be changed and therefore to remain “European Union”; while among those interviewed who are favourable to a change of name (14%) opt for “United Europe”, and 10% for “United States of Europe”.

The three priorities that, according to Italians, the EU should tackle are the struggle against unemployment, the preservation of peace and security and the fight against terrorism.

The list of priorities definitely reflects the impact of the events of 11 September and the recent war in Iraq. Nonetheless, topics linked to labour and economic conditions (the struggle against unemployment and poverty) still occupy an important position in Italians' minds. International terrorism still represents the greatest fear felt by both Italians and EU citizens, followed by organised crime and proliferation of nuclear, bacteriologic and chemical weapons of mass destruction.

Enlargement of the European Union

A low level of knowledge and information held by Italians on enlargement-related topics clearly emerges from the data surveyed.

On a scale from 1 to 4 (where 1 stands for total lack and 4 for a maximum level of information on the subject of enlargement), the Italian average is surveyed at 1.88, against the EU average of 2.01 (that is the “not well informed” level). Data show that only 14% of the Italians surveyed feel they are well or fairly well informed, whereas 84% of those interviewed say they consider themselves scarcely or not at all informed on the matter.

Most Italians are favourable to the enlargement process, with one of the highest percentages in this survey. The Italians and the Danes are just behind the Greeks in terms of those European citizens who are most in favour of enlargement and showing the greatest openness towards new Member States.

The favourable attitude expressed by the Italians towards enlargement is reflected in their greater readiness to welcome a larger number of countries than the EU average.

The survey confirms that this trend is on the rise and that Italy is the second country after Sweden most willing to accept all the countries that ask to join.

52% of the Italians interviewed are convinced that, before proceeding to enlargement, the EU ought to reform its own institutions. The majority of those interviewed felt uncertainties as to the functioning of the EU after enlargement has taken place, considering that the main risk is represented by an increase in bureaucracy.

74% of Italians have never visited one of the candidate countries. The best-known candidate countries are Turkey, Poland and Romania. The ones that Italians have tended to visit are Slovenia, Turkey, the Czech Republic and Malta.

The assessment of the political consequences of enlargement expressed by the Italian sample is overall more favourable than the average across the EU. A greater wealth in the field of culture, a rise in world-wide importance of the EU and a stronger guarantee of peace and security are

the key positive aspects assessed by the Italians, who do not feel particularly worried about the possible negative economic impacts of the enlargement.

Unlike the EU average, the majority of Italians interviewed do not share the view that the enlargement will have the direct effect of a rise in unemployment. The risk of a loss of financial aid granted by the EU after the enlargement is felt by 31% of the Italian sample (against the EU average of 52%).

As regards the economic aspects, 38% of Italians interviewed believe that enlargement will weigh more heavily on the fifteen countries' finances, while 34% are of the opposite opinion. This is at odds with the EU average (52%) which foresees that enlargement will result in an increase of costs for the current member States.

The hypothesis that after enlargement the EU will face greater difficulties in the decision-making processes is shared by 54% of the Italian sample. This piece of data is even more striking when related to the high percentage of those interviewed who fully agree with the principle that the EU needs to modify its functioning mechanism before proceeding to the enlargement.

61% of Italians are not of the opinion that the enlargement will imply a decrease of importance of Italy on the European scene.

Altogether, the Italian data indicate a substantial stability in the percentage of people who consider themselves very or rather badly informed on the subject of enlargement (84%) compared to the data collected in November 2001. Over the period November 2001-November 2002, Italy had registered a slight increase in the percentage of those who are in favour of enlargement from 64% to 66%.

On the contrary, the European data indicate a decrease from 52% to 50% in the number of people who are in favour and an increase of those who are against it (30% to 33%).

Common foreign and security policy, immigration and asylum

The Eurobarometer survey shows the attraction of Italians towards an EU common foreign policy, which is supported by 74% of Italians, compared with 63% of the total European sample.

In this area, Italians are ranked in third place, behind Luxembourg (78%) and Greece (76%). The direct consequence, that confirms and reinforces such data, is the widespread consent expressed with regard to the possible institution of a European Minister for foreign affairs (81% of the Italian sample compared with 64% of the European sample). The Italian figures are the highest in the EU.

The popularity expressed by the Italians for a common foreign policy is also confirmed by the fact that 88% of those interviewed think that in the case of an international crisis the Member States should take a common stand.

The Italian position is further emphasised by the fact that 80% of those interviewed deem that foreign policy-related decisions towards non-EU member states should be taken within the EU, whereas only 12% of the Italian sample prefer to solely rely on the national government.

75% of the Italian sample think that the EU common foreign policy should be independent from that of the United States. To be noted that the percentage of the Italians in favour is slightly lower than the EU average. The perception Italians have of the role played by the United States on the international scene is somewhat fragmented. The two most positive aspects are linked to the fight against terrorism and to economic growth. Overall, the opinion of the Italian sample tends to be slightly more favourable than the EU average. The negative criticisms concern the role played by the US with regard to protection of the environment, peace in the world and the struggle against poverty.

86% of Italians interviewed are in favour of a common European defence and security policy. This view enjoys high support across the EU, even though with a lower percentage (74%). According to a wide majority of Italians (69%), decisions related to a European common defence policy should be taken within the EU.

73% of the Italian sample also agree with the principle that the EU should have a rapid-action military force, to be quickly sent to conflict areas when an international crisis occurs. The wide support shown towards a common foreign and security policy is stressed by the fact that a large majority of Italians (73%) share the view that the EU ought to have a seat of its own in the UN Security Council.

As regards the topics of immigration and asylum, Italians have no doubts as to the need to entrust a greater key role to the EU with 79% of the Italian sample believing that the member States should endorse a common immigration policy for people coming from non-member States. The Italian average of those who are in favour is higher than the EU average (71%).

A similar percentage of people interviewed is also favourable to the principle that member States should practise a common asylum policy towards applicants. In particular, this opinion is shared by 73% of the Italian sample and by 70% of the EU average.

European Constitution, Convention and institutional reforms

Italians show by far the strongest support in the EU for the introduction of a European Constitution (77% of the Italian sample).

Nonetheless the knowledge of the activities under way in this field do not correspond to high degree of consent manifested towards the European Constitution:

Only 36% of the Italian sample are aware that the Convention has worked on proposals of reform of the European Union. When questioned on the functioning mechanisms and the composition of the Convention, the Italians, the EU average, answered with an absolute majority of "I don't know".

77% of Italians are of the opinion that, after the enlargement has taken place, the European Commission should include at least one Commissioner per each Member State. 79% of Italians do not think that the EU's effectiveness will be jeopardized by the introduction of one Commissioner per Member State; on the contrary, 71% of the interviewed deem that national interests would suffer from the lack of an Italian Commissioner.

53% of the Italian sample share the view that smaller countries should be entitled to appoint a same number of Commissioners as the bigger countries. The relative majority of Italians (33%) is of the opinion that the President of the Commission should be elected directly by the EU citizens.

50% of Italians and EU citizens interviewed think that it would be preferable to prolong the presidential term of office, because 6 months' is too short a time to obtain significant outcomes. 33% of the Italian sample are in fact of the opinion that the 6-month period should be maintained, since it offers all member States the possibility to chair the Union on a regular basis.

41% of Italians and 47% of EU citizens believe that the right of veto should remain in force in order to preserve fundamental national interests; 19% think it should be restricted to a few basic areas, while 15% would abolish the right of veto for all decision-making processes in order to enable the EU to be more efficient.

LUXEMBOURG

Half of Luxembourg's citizens would restrict enlargement to certain candidate countries

A large majority wants more information about the work of the European Convention

When asked to say to what extent the European Union should enlarge, people in Luxembourg have clear views: 51% of them (10 points down compared to September 2002) compared with 40% at Community level, believe that the EU should confine itself to taking in only some of the candidate countries, while only 23% (+7 points), compared with 24% Community-wide, believe that all the countries wishing to join should be allowed to do so.

Since May 2001, the results for Luxembourg have changed appreciably. The percentage of those in support of enlargement to include all of the candidate countries (14% in May 2001) rose, then fell and then rose again in March 2003 to its highest level (23%); nevertheless, Luxembourg's figure still lies below the overall EU15 level.

This was revealed by the Eurobarometer 59.1 survey conducted by the European Commission in Spring 2003. The survey gives a general overview of what Europeans think about enlargement, the information they receive about the EU, their knowledge about the European Convention, and their interest in the European Parliament and in European elections. The survey allowed for Luxembourg's special demographic situation, with a sample comprising 75% Luxembourg nationals and 25% nationals of other EU Member States. In the commentary, the special report produced on behalf of the European Commission's Representation in Luxembourg therefore refers to "people in Luxembourg", a broader concept than Luxembourg nationals proper.

Can this apparent coolness towards enlargement be attributed solely to lack of information? Nearly half (48%, +11 percentage points) of people in Luxembourg feel that they are well or very well informed about enlargement, whereas the European average is only 24% (+3 points).

Decision-making will be more difficult

Various questions were asked about the potential impact of enlargement. Throughout the EU and also within Luxembourg, the trend is the same, although the percentage in Luxembourg endorsing the proposed statement is above the EU average in all cases. In Luxembourg, 85% of those questioned (EU: 65%) believe that the decision-making process will become more difficult with more Member States and 79% (EU: 64%) believe that the EU will be richer culturally. For 78% (EU: 67%), the EU will gain in importance in the world and for 57% (EU: 55%) reform of the institutions will be inevitable ahead of enlargement. 56% (EU: 41%) believe that enlargement will increase unemployment and 53% (EU: 52%) expressed the opinion that their country would receive less financial aid.

The numbers of people in favour of EU enlargement, as well as of people against enlargement, have risen since autumn 2002. The opinion that EU should accept only some of the candidate countries still prevails. The percentage of persons against enlargement has risen constantly and has reached its highest level at 21%.

The European Convention: a lack of information

Knowledge about the European Convention is incomplete. Both at EU level and within Luxembourg, a lot of persons, sometimes even a large majority, are not able to answer the questions.

Half of Luxembourg citizens (50%; EU: 41%) confirm that the government is represented at the Convention; 48% (EU: 39%) know that the Convention is working on the institutional reform of the Union; a third of the people (34%, EU: 29%) know that the national Parliament is represented at the Convention and 23% (EU: 22%) say that Member States can change the final conclusions of the Convention.

Although the level of information about the European Convention may be unsatisfactory, citizens in Luxembourg - more than in the EU overall – have expressed the wish for better information. Nearly 85% in Luxembourg (EU: 71%) think that politicians should speak more about the work of the Convention, while 75% (EU: 74%) wish that the media would publish more information about it.

People in Luxembourg want to keep “their” commissioner in Brussels. 84% (EU: 72%) think that every Member State should have the right to nominate a member of the European Commission and 82% (EU: 72%) believe that there should be at least one commissioner per Member State. In Luxembourg, 77% think that the interests of their country will suffer if there is no commissioner in Brussels to represent it (EU: 69%). 66% in Luxembourg (EU: 51%) are in favour of appointing the same number of commissioners for big and small countries.

In comparison to the results of Autumn 2002, the percentage of people in favour of the right of veto has fallen both within Luxembourg and at Community level. It is interesting to see that the percentage of people in favour of abolishing the right of veto is also falling.

People surveyed in Luxembourg continue to see the right of veto as an essential prerogative, with 62% (-5 points) stating that it must be retained in order to preserve national interests, compared with only 47% (-6 points) of all those questioned throughout the Union. In the EU overall, nearly 12% (-12 points) are in favour of dropping it in order to improve the effectiveness of the EU, the figure in Luxembourg being only 8% (-13 points).

Sound knowledge of European matters

The three main sources of information on the EU used by people in Luxembourg are television news from other countries (79%) – because of the specific geographic situation of the country -, daily newspapers and magazines (60%) and the national television news (56%). This trend is different throughout the EU: national television news programmes are the main source of information (82%), ahead of newspapers and magazines (59%) and radio (40%).

The vast majority of those questioned in Luxembourg (85%, +2 percentage points compared with September 2002) are in favour of their country's membership of the EU, a view shared by only 54% (-1 point) of citizens across the EU.

Close to three-quarters (74%, +2 points) of those questioned in Luxembourg believe that their country has benefited from membership of the EU, an opinion shared by only 50% (stable) of citizens EU-wide. More than a quarter of all Europeans surveyed (29%, +1 point) claim that their country has not benefited from EU membership, compared with 18% in Luxembourg (+1 point).

Two-thirds of persons questioned in Luxembourg in favour of the European Constitution

65% of persons surveyed in Luxembourg think that the European Union needs a Constitution (-11 points). This opinion is shared by 63% overall in the EU (-2 points). The percentage of those against a Constitution is the same in Luxembourg as overall in the EU (10%). A quarter of those questioned in Luxembourg (24%; EU: 27%) declined to give an answer to this question.

A broadly positive image for two-thirds of people in Luxembourg

63% (-3 points) of Luxembourg residents have a very positive or rather positive image of the European Union (EU: 47%, -3 points). The negative image has grown in importance in Luxembourg as well as in the EU15 overall. For 22% (+8 points) of European citizens, the EU has a negative, and even a very negative, image (Luxembourg: 10%; +3 points).

People in Luxembourg are very familiar with the Community institutions, no doubt because a number of them have headquarters in the capital or meet there; the scores are, in all cases, above the EU average. 98% (EU: 91%) of those questioned know the European Parliament, 93% (EU: 78%) the European Commission, 91% (EU: 73%) the European Central Bank, 91% (EU: 69%) the Court of Justice and 85% (EU: 62%) the Council of Ministers.

Even if the European Convention is well known in Luxembourg, in the EU15 overall, levels of knowledge are very low.

The European Ombudsman (Luxembourg: 40%, EU: 33%) and the Committee of the Regions (Luxembourg: 37%, EU: 26%) are the least well-known institutions.

The logical consequence of the above answers is that people in Luxembourg have far more confidence in the Community institutions than the Community average. Generally speaking, there has been a significant fall in confidence levels in the European institutions in comparison with Autumn 2002. The Court of Justice (73%, -1 point; EU: 57%, -2 points) leads the field, followed by the European Parliament (73%, -1 point; EU: 57%, -2 points), the European Central Bank (69%, -4 points; EU: 47%, -2 points), the European Commission (68%, -6 points; EU: 50%, 3 points) and the Council of Ministers (63%, -3 points; EU: 40%, -5 points).

Confidence in the European Convention is mentioned by 44% of the Luxembourg residents (EU: 26%).

The European Ombudsman ranks last in the Luxembourg replies, at 35% (-5 points). In last place at EU15 level comes the Committee of the Regions with a score of 24%; even though it brings up the rear in Luxembourg too, it still receives 37% favourable replies in terms of confidence levels.

In favour of teaching children about how the EU works

Various proposals for EU activities were put to those questioned. EU-wide, the proposal which scored the highest level of agreement was that of teaching schoolchildren about how the EU works (83%, -1 point), followed by the common security and defence policy (74%, +1 point). Next came the principle of the President and Members of the Commission resigning in the absence of a majority in the European Parliament (68%; -1 point) and a common foreign policy (67%, +1 point). EU enlargement received the least support, at 46% (-6 points) of the votes.

Luxembourg citizens give first place to the proposal to teach schoolchildren about how the EU works (93%, stable), followed by the common security and defence policy (92%, +4 points) and the monetary union (86%, stable). In the EU as a whole, all proposals get a lower percentage of positive answers than within Luxembourg.

First a national of one's own country, then European

As a rule, most of those questioned consider themselves, for the foreseeable future, firstly as nationals of their own country and, secondly, as Europeans, the rates being 44% (-5 points) for the EU as a whole and 45% (-6 points) in Luxembourg.

The sense of belonging to one's own country is stronger throughout the EU: the percentage of those who believe they have only their own nationality (40%, +2 points) is far higher than in Luxembourg (21%, +4 points).

A sense of being firstly European and then a national of one's own country is felt by 10% (-4 points) of people in Luxembourg but only 8% (+1 point) of Europeans in general.

While 4% (+1 point) of European citizens consider themselves Europeans alone, the figure is 20% (+7 points) in Luxembourg.

A majority of people surveyed in Luxembourg (62%, +5 points) think that decisions regarding the defence of the EU should be taken on EU level, followed by NATO (18%, -8 points) and national government (13%, +3 points).

Results at EU level are similar but the percentages are lower. 49% (+5 points) of those asked are in favour of decisions being taken by the EU, 14% (-7 points) by NATO and 21% (+1 point) by national governments.

In Luxembourg and throughout Europe in general, health, social security and education are seen by the majority of those surveyed as matters for the national government alone.

Support for the direct election of the Commission President

Several possible options were put forward for the appointment of the President of the European Commission: direct election by citizens, election by the European Parliament, appointment by the Heads of State or Government or election by the European Parliament and the Heads of State or Government. Direct election (50%, +3 points) is the method most favoured in Luxembourg, well ahead of election by the European Parliament and the Heads of State or Government (17%).

The matter is less clear-cut for the EU in general, with 33% (-7 points) in favour of direct election and 21% in favour of election by the European Parliament and the Heads of State or Government. Appointment by Heads of State or Government is supported by only 13% (-4 points) of those surveyed in Luxembourg and 12% (-3 points) of EU respondents overall.

Most people satisfied with the functioning of democracy in their country and in the EU

80% (+2 points) of Luxembourg citizens are satisfied with the functioning of democracy in their country, compared with only 58% (-1 point) of EU15 respondents in general.

In Luxembourg, almost two-thirds, i.e. 62% (-3 points) of those questioned are satisfied with the functioning of democracy in the EU, compared with only 46% (-1 point) of Europeans in general.

Luxembourg residents think that the major problems of the country are insecurity (41%), unemployment (40%), education (22%) and the economic situation (14%). At EU15 level overall, unemployment (41%), insecurity (29%), the economic situation (24%) and terrorism (19%) are the most frequently quoted answers.

A name for Europe: 'European Union'

In Luxembourg, 60% opted for 'European Union' as the name for Europe (EU: 49%), followed by 'United Europe' (15%; EU: 14%) and 'United Nations of Europe' (8%; EU: 6%).

A large majority is in favour of a European Constitution (Luxembourg: 65%; EU: 63%), but one out of ten is against a constitution for Europe.

Half of those asked in Luxembourg and elsewhere in the EU are in favour of extending the period of office of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the European Union because six months is too short to achieve significant results. 40% in Luxembourg and 30% in the EU15 overall think that the six-month period should be retained because it gives each Member State a chance to hold the Presidency of the European Union.

European elections: a majority would vote tomorrow

In Luxembourg, 51% of people (EU: 31%) declare that they would definitely vote if there were a European Parliament election being held tomorrow.

In Luxembourg, people consider that the next European Parliament election campaign should mainly focus on employment (59%), security (55%), education (45%), environment (44%) and rights as a European citizen (40%)

For people asked EU-wide, the campaign should focus on employment (53%), security (51%), immigration (44%), environment (39%) and rights as European citizen (33%).

A majority of those asked in Luxembourg had a contact with a member of the European Parliament since the last European Parliament election: 55% (EU: 37%) have seen members of the European Parliament on television, 45% (EU: 25%) have read about them in newspapers or magazines and 36% have heard them speak on the radio. However, 27% in Luxembourg and 46% in the EU15 overall say that they have not seen or heard anything about or had any contact with a member of the European Parliament.

A large majority of those asked in Luxembourg (85%; EU: 65%) think that the European Parliament election is a very important issue, 69% (EU: 43%) that the European Parliament has more power than the national Parliament and 63% (EU: 35%) believe that the Members of the European Parliament represent their interests well.

THE NETHERLANDS

INTRODUCTION

The Eurobarometer 59.1, a public opinion poll, has been carried out at the request of the European Commission. It was conducted in all 15 Member States of the European Union and interviews in the Netherlands were held on 18 March 2003. This report contains the analysis for the Netherlands.

This executive summary will give an overview of the main results for the Netherlands.

The report consists of five chapters.

- Chapter 1 deals with general knowledge about the EU, the importance of EU institutions and the priorities the EU should have. In addition, questions regarding EU competences in certain areas are dealt with.
- Chapter 2 is concerned with the amount of trust Dutch people have in the EU institutions, the way in which the EU affects their lives and their overall image of the EU.
- Chapter 3 deals with international relations. It mainly looks at the EU Common Security and Defence Policy and the role of the United States in the world.
- The fourth chapter describes how Dutch people see the future of the EU and deals with the forthcoming European elections.
- The last chapter deals with Dutch people's knowledge of and views on EU enlargement.

A comparison of the responses of Dutch people and people from other Member States has been made and, where significant differences exist, this is mentioned in the report.

1000 Dutch citizens were interviewed. The people interviewed come from a broad range of sectors, income brackets and age groups and have different political preferences.

Chapter 1

THE EUROPEAN UNION IN GENERAL

- A majority of the Dutch people (64%) consider their knowledge of the European Union as insufficient. The Dutch would be eager to learn more about the EU, preferably by watching television (61%), reading the newspaper (39%) or listening to the radio (23%). The Internet (27%) is also seen as a popular source of information, especially amongst students.
- The EU institutions that are best known to the Dutch are the European Parliament (93%), the European Central Bank (84%) and the European Court of Justice (79%). The Committee of Regions (10%) and the Economic and Social Committee are not very well known (18%) by the Dutch. The more Dutch people state that they have heard of an EU institution, the more they tend to think that the institution in question is important and the more they tend to trust it. If they have not heard of a certain EU institution, the Dutch tend to regard the institution as less important and less trustworthy.
- A large majority of the Dutch (84%) is convinced that larger countries within the EU have the most power and that the EU, in general, does not listen to 'ordinary' people like them (74%).
- A large majority of the Dutch (approximately 80%) thinks that unemployment, environmental and consumer protection should be priorities for the EU. They would, therefore, like to see closer cooperation between EU Member States on social and economic issues. The Dutch regard issues such as the enlargement of the EU (38%) and the reform of the EU institutions (51%) as lesser priorities for the EU.
- Most Dutch consider that there should be a common European approach regarding foreign policy and immigration policy. Defence policy, however, is seen as something the Netherlands should deal with on its own.
- Even though more than 50% of the Dutch people see the fight against organised crime, the fight against drugs, trafficking of human beings, tackling immigration and asylum and dealing with international terrorism as matters that should be dealt with on a European level, they feel that justice and police matters should remain exclusive competences of the Netherlands.
- In general, the Dutch (73%) regard the membership of the EU as a positive thing. A majority of the Dutch people (65%) believe the

Netherlands has profited from its membership of the EU. Those who regard the EU membership as negative tend to think that the Netherlands has not profited from being an EU Member State.

Chapter 2

THE EUROPEAN UNION FROM A SOCIO-POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE

- The majority of the Dutch people (65%) discuss politics occasionally, 56% think that they occasionally even convince others of their point of view.
- The Dutch seem relatively content with the way democracy works in the Netherlands (60%), even though, at the time of the opinion poll, there appeared to be significant degree of distrust in political parties (57%) or the Dutch government (49%). It should be noted that at the time of the opinion poll the Netherlands government had resigned.
- According to the Dutch, crime (49%), the economy (40%) and the health care system (35%) are the most important issues for the Netherlands. The environment (2%), taxes (2%) or housing (3%) are not seen as important issues by people in the Netherlands.
- The Dutch tend to think that local and regional government and politics affect their lives more than government and politics on a European level.
- A majority of the Dutch fear international terrorism (71%), organised crime (62%) and epidemics (59%). They are not very frightened of a world war (34%) or a nuclear or conventional war in Europe (24-25%).
- In the eyes of the Dutch, the EU has a neutral (42%) or slightly positive image (35%); those holding these views tend to be students and people who think the Netherlands has profited from EU membership. 50% of the Dutch do not think the name 'European Union' needs to be changed. 20% would be in favour of the name 'United Europe'.

- To the Dutch personally, the EU mainly means the euro and the right to travel, study and work in the EU. Since the last Eurobarometer opinion poll, the amount of Dutch people that see themselves as solely Dutch has risen. Nevertheless, quite a large share of the Dutch (43%) sample see themselves as being both Dutch and European in the future.

Chapter 3

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- Most Dutch mainly inform themselves about the situation in the world by watching the news on television (89%) or by reading Dutch newspapers (73%). Foreign news on television is watched by 40% of the Dutch, while foreign newspapers are hardly read (7%).
- The Dutch generally have a positive view towards a European common foreign policy. A majority thinks that the EU should have a so-called Rapid Reaction Force (69%), should have a Minister of Foreign Affairs (70%) and should have a seat of its own at the United Nations (76%). The opinions of the Dutch towards a common defence policy are more divided. Furthermore, the Dutch (76%) feel the EU's foreign policy should be independent of the United States. According to 71% of the Dutch, the candidate countries should not be able to have a say in the common foreign policy until they have become full members of the EU.
- The role of the United States in combating international terrorism is more seen as positive (56%) than as negative (25%) by the Dutch. However, as regards protecting the environment (67%) and fighting poverty (55%), the United States' role is seen as negative.

Chapter 4

FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- Most Dutch (71%) think that the EU should have a Constitution. However, the work of the European Convention on the EU Constitution was not very well known by the Dutch at the time of the opinion poll. A large amount of Dutch people (70%) state that they do not know a lot about the work of the European Convention. The Dutch, therefore, feel that they should be kept more informed about the work of the Convention by politicians (74%) and the media (80%).
- Because the Dutch (74%) think that Dutch influence in the EU will diminish if there would no longer be a Dutch Commissioner, they feel that each Member State of the EU should continue having its own Commissioner. This 'national' Commissioner should preferably be appointed by the Member State (75%). 32% of the Dutch feel that the President of the Commission should be chosen by the citizens. This is a decrease compared to the previous Eurobarometer opinion poll, where 42% of the Dutch felt that the President of the Commission should be chosen by European citizens. 25% of the Dutch feel that he or she should be solely appointed by the European Parliament.
- 57% of the Dutch feel that the six-month Presidency of the EU should be extended, whereas 30% of the Dutch feel that the six-month period should be kept to enable each Member State to have the Presidency once in a while. As to the right to veto, 49% of the Dutch think this should remain in order to protect vital national interests, while 17% of the Dutch feel this should be abolished in order to make the EU more efficient.
- The Dutch are more prone to vote in national elections than for European elections. If there were national elections tomorrow, 50% of the Dutch would vote, whereas only 34% of the Dutch would vote if there were to be European elections tomorrow.

- Quite a large amount of Dutch people (50%) state that they have not heard anything from Dutch Members of the European Parliament since the last European elections. If the Dutch have heard about or seen Dutch MEPs since the last European elections, they mainly saw them on television (33%) or read about them in newspapers or magazines (26%). Only very few Dutch (5%) have heard about Dutch MEPs through the Internet.
- 44% of the Dutch state that they would like to hear or see more about Dutch MEPs on television. However, 36% of the Dutch state that they are not interested in more information from or about Dutch MEPs.
- The campaign for the European elections should, according to a majority of the Dutch, deal in particular with matters as crime (58%) and employment (54%). Issues such as enlargement of the EU (18%) or reform of EU institutions (19%) are seen as less important matters for the European elections.
- The fact that public transport would be free (83%), that there would be voting booths in supermarkets (83%) or that voting by internet (66%) would be possible are not reasons to entice the Dutch to go out and vote. The same remark applies if voting were possible at work, if there were elections in the whole of Europe on

the same day or if citizens of other EU Member States were listed on the ballot lists.

Chapter 5

ENLARGEMENT OF THE EU

- Not very many Dutch people (49%) think that they are well aware about EU enlargement. 17% even think that they are not aware of enlargement at all.
- A majority (52%) of the Dutch think that the EU should only enlarge to include some of the candidate countries, although 19% feel all candidate countries should become EU members. The amount of Dutch people that think that the EU should not enlarge at all has risen since the last Eurobarometer opinion poll in November 2002, from 14% to 21%.
- Even though a majority of the Dutch thinks that the importance of the EU will grow with more Member States (73%), that peace and security (56%) and that the cultural diversity of Europe will increase (63%) once the EU has more Member States, 67% of the Dutch also think that enlargement will cost current Member States, such as the Netherlands, more money and therefore 62% of the Dutch feel that the candidate countries should not be financially supported. Furthermore, 72% of the Dutch believe that it will more difficult to take decisions in the EU once the EU has more members.
- Even though hardly any Dutch people have actually visited any of the candidate countries, the candidate countries are very well known to the Dutch (a range of between 94% and 99%).

PORTUGAL

1. Attitudes towards the EU, the Euro, Enlargement and Internal Security Issues

Together with the United Kingdom, Spain and Ireland, Portugal remains one of the countries where citizens feel less informed about European issues. This feeling is especially prevalent among women and segments of the population with less education. Data reveal strong continuities in cross-national differences, suggesting that the causes of these feelings are structural in nature.

However, this does not prevent the Portuguese from exhibiting strong support for European integration. 68 percent of the Portuguese believe that Portugal has benefited from membership, 61 percent that membership is a “good thing” and 63 percent have a “positive” or “very positive” image of the Union. Support is especially strong among those with higher levels of education and those who are more satisfied with the way democracy works in Europe. These percentages are above the EU average, as well as close to those found in countries sharing geo-cultural affinities with Portugal, such as Greece and Spain.

The only significant change that seems to be taking place in this respect is a narrowing gap between Portugal and the EU average in the perceived benefits of integration. In 1999, that gap amounted to 29 percent. Today, it has been cut to 18 percent. It is too early, however, to ascertain whether this amounts to a consistent trend towards convergence in this respect. Furthermore, support for the common currency — seen as the most important manifestation of European integration in Portugal — remains very strong: 75 percent of respondents are in favour of Economic and Monetary Union. Comparatively speaking, this is a high level of support when compared with all EU nations and remains on a par with the Eurozone countries.

Attitudes towards enlargement have changed little in recent times. Support for enlargement is expressed by 60 percent of the Portuguese, who also remain among the less discriminatory of Europeans with regard to which countries should be allowed to join the EU. This relative stability helps place Portugal at a higher level of support when compared with other EU countries, where support for enlargement has diminished. Thus, as of spring 2003, Portugal ranks third among European countries supporting enlargement.

Especially relevant is the fact that this support is strong regardless of an evaluation of enlargement’s economic and political consequences that is far from overwhelmingly positive. In fact, a majority of the Portuguese believe that enlargement will result in a loss of financial support for the country, in increased unemployment, in a reduction of the country’s importance and in increased difficulties in European decision-making. In all these areas, percentages were higher than the EU average. However, the Portuguese are also among the most optimistic Europeans concerning enlargement’s contribution to cultural diversity, the importance of Europe in the world and increased peace and security. In the end, these positive opinions seem to be the ones that contribute most to forming Portuguese attitudes vis-à-vis enlargement.

Internal security remains a major concern of the Portuguese, who rank among the Europeans who are most worried about the rise of organized crime. Fighting it — as well as drug trafficking — has remained, since 1997, one of the major priorities assigned to the EU by at least 90 percent of Portuguese respondents. Support for sharing sovereignty with the EU in such areas is

in the majority, and although the same does not occur in every single area related to security (justice and police, for example), such support remains consistently above the EU average.

2. National support for Common Foreign and Security Policy

A clear majority of the Portuguese (68 percent) believes that decisions about foreign policy should be shared with the European Union. Conversely, 24 percent prefer that decisions are made exclusively by the national government. Furthermore, when specifically questioned whether they agree or disagree with a common foreign policy, the Portuguese continue to present positive attitudes towards European integration: 62 percent agree, a percentage similar to that found in the last survey (64 percent). Nevertheless, comparatively speaking, these percentages remain somewhat below the EU average. Other consistent deviations of Portuguese public opinion vis-à-vis the EU average are stronger support for the participation of countries that are not yet member countries of the Union and reduced support for increased autonomy vis-à-vis the USA.

Majority support for a common foreign policy is not replicated for what concerns defence policy, a domain in which the population is evenly split: while 45 percent of the Portuguese consider that defence policy should belong exclusively to the national government, 48 accept to share sovereignty with the EU in this domain. However, attitudes shift to a more pro-integration mode when the question is placed in a more abstract way, i.e. when the issue of “national sovereignty” is not mentioned. When asked whether they generally agree or disagree with a common defence and security policy, 75 percent of respondents answer positively (a percentage similar both to the EU average and to results from the previous survey). Support for a common defence policy in Portugal is stronger among the wealthiest and more educated sectors of the population.

Lastly, the Portuguese tend to make a negative assessment of the role played by the United States in the World. That assessment is particularly negative (and more so than the European average) where it relates to the contribution of the USA to world peace and to most defence and security issues. However, comparatively speaking, the Portuguese have a less negative view of the USA’s role in social, economic and environmental issues than the average European. Predictably, attitudes towards the USA are more based on ideological grounds (the left being more critical) than on socio-demographics.

3. Attitudes towards Democracy in the EU

Portuguese satisfaction both with their own and Europe’s democracy is, today, clearly below the European average and has been so since the late 1990s. In fact, both feelings seem to be strongly correlated, suggesting that Portuguese respondents treat the “political system” as a more or less diffuse object and that attitudes towards national and supranational institutions are not entirely independent, both being affected by factors such as the economic climate.

Nevertheless, one Portuguese peculiarity, from a comparative point of view, is the fact that respondents seem to be less satisfied with Portuguese than European democracy, a pattern that is only shared by Italy. An analysis of trust in national and European institutions confirms this peculiarity. The Portuguese express far greater levels of trust in European institutions (such as the European Council, the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European

Court of Justice) than in national institutions (such as the government, the parliament or the national judicial system). However, unlike their views regarding satisfaction with democracy, trust in European institutions is strongly above the EU average.

Curiously, when the impact of knowledge of such institutions on the trust placed in them is taken into account, the Portuguese place proportionally greater confidence in institutions where a clear electoral accountability nexus is absent than in those where it is present (such as the European Parliament or the Council of Ministers). This is an interesting finding about Portuguese political culture that deserves greater investigation in the future.

4. Views on EU reform

70 percent of the Portuguese believe that the institutional reform of the European Union is a priority, the same percentage noted in the last Eurobarometer survey. Comparatively speaking, the percentage of Portuguese who place institutional reform at the top of the EU agenda is considerably above the European average. Another link with the recent past is a majority support for the approval of a European Constitution: 60 percent of respondents agree, a percentage close to the EU average. In general, the Portuguese with higher income and education levels tend to be more supportive of both institutional reform and the European Constitution.

However, it is questionable as to whether this general support is — for the meantime — built upon solid cognitive bases. The question regarding support for a European Constitution prompts among the Portuguese one of the highest rates of “Don’t Know/No answer” responses among Europeans and most Portuguese are unable to answer most objective questions about the functioning of the European Convention. Answers about specific proposals for reform are also generally plagued by this syndrome, with very high levels of non-responses.

Nevertheless, some trends are detectable. First, a majority of the Portuguese (55 percent) is in favour of keeping the rule that allows one Commissioner per member state, while most respondents also reject the notion that the Commission would become inefficient under those circumstances following enlargement. Second, one out of every three respondents prefers the direct election of the President of the European Commission by the citizens of the European Union to the other alternatives offered (i.e., nomination by Heads of State and Government, election by European Parliament, or choice by both). Third, 43 percent of respondents agree and 36 percent disagree with the notion that “the Presidency (of the European Council) should be extended because six months is too short to achieve significant results”. Lastly, 45 percent of the Portuguese agree with the preservation of the right to veto “in order to preserve national interests”. In all these issues, Portuguese public opinion does not significantly deviate from that of the EU average.

In other words, among four likely paths of reform, the Portuguese only give significant support to one of them (the end of six-month European Council presidencies). It is important to restate, however, that non-opinions about these issues in Portugal reach significantly high figures (never below 20 percent), and rapid shifts in one way or the other in the near future cannot be excluded.

SPAIN

INTRODUCTION TO SPANISH EUROBAROMETER 59.1

Between 18th March 2003 and 30th April 2003, the European Opinion Research Group, carried out wave 59.1 of the Standard Eurobarometer poll, at the request of the European Commission, General-Directorate Press and Communication, Public Opinion Analysis Unit.

The study includes a Standard National Report and an Executive Summary both focusing on the main conclusions about public opinion in Spain and providing the EC Representation with information strategy recommendations.

The Spanish report examines public opinion in this country in relation to the four following major topics:

- Public attitudes towards the EU, enlargement and internal security issues.
- Spanish support for the common defence and security policy.
- Attitudes towards democracy in the EU.
- Spanish views on EU reforms.

Public attitudes towards the EU, enlargement and internal security issues.

- o In general Spanish citizens have a very positive image of Europe. Around two- thirds of those surveyed believe that being a Member State of the EU is 'a good thing' for Spain.
- o Similarly, most of the public believes that Spain has benefited from its membership of the EU.
- o 54% of the Spanish survey believes that terrorism is one of the most important problems in Spain, while unemployment (35%) and immigration (17%) are the second and third most important issues that face Spain today.
- o The Spanish public firstly feels Spanish and then European. The majority of the public has expressed that they mostly 'feel Spanish' and, in comparison with other EU countries, show less feelings of being European.
- o Although they feel they have little information about enlargement, the Spanish public considers that this process signifies peace, security and economic development for Europe.

- Spaniards believe that enlargement will make Europe more important in the world; furthermore, they consider the fact that Europe will have greater cultural diversity after these countries join the EU to be a very positive result.
- The most popular sources for getting information about European issues are TV, radio and the daily press. The Internet, with 11% of the responses, was next on the list of the most cited sources for the first time in this survey.
- In relation to the different policies in Europe, the Spanish public thinks that 'education for children in schools on how the EU works', is of great importance with a 79% 'in favour' of this policy.
- The greatest percentage of those saying that they trust 'political parties' were registered in the region of Norte, with 52% of the inhabitants of this region saying that they 'trust' political parties. In other Spanish regions, the level of trust in the EU institutions was very low, ranging between 13% and 31% of the responses.

Spanish support for the Common Foreign and Security Policy

- More of the Spanish than other Europeans are afraid of world wars and other international conflicts, including a conventional war within Europe.
- In this edition of the survey, international terrorism is the greatest fear not just in Spain but also among the rest of EU Member States.
- The majority of those surveyed seem 'in favour' of the policies proposed for external security. Spanish respondents focus more on issues such as common immigration policies (68% of them are in favour of this policy) and policies enhancing the EU's role in world politics.
- The Spanish polled are in favour of one common foreign policy among the Member States of the European Union towards other countries, with 74% of them agreeing with this. However, there are regional differences in this respect: 11% of the inhabitants of Madrid and 16% of Catalans are against such a policy.
- The Spanish public feels that the role of the US in the world is negative. Overall, they believe that the US has a negative role in regard to environmental protection, peace in the world and economic development in the world.

- With respect to decision making in Europe, the poll shows that EU citizens should have a greater voice, giving the national governments and the European Parliament more power in decision-making.
- News on the national TV and daily press are the sources most used to obtain information on the international situation. Very low in comparison with the rest of European countries is the Spanish preference for TV debates between politicians and experts - probably because there are few programmes of this nature on Spanish TV.

Attitudes towards democracy in the EU.

- The Spanish public feels fairly satisfied with how democracy works both in Spain and in the EU. 49% of those polled stated they were 'fairly satisfied' with how democracy works in Spain, while another 30% felt 'not very satisfied' with democracy.
- The regions of Norte (67%), Galicia (53%) and Catalonia (53%) are those where the majority of inhabitants feel 'fairly satisfied' with how democracy works. On the other hand, the regions of Noreste (59%), Canaries (42%) and Este (34%) had a majority of 'not very satisfied' responses.
- Within the Spanish poll, there is a low will to participate in future national or European elections. Only one-third of those surveyed answered that they would definitely vote in national elections if there were elections tomorrow. The likelihood of their voting in European elections would seem to be even lower.
- There is great homogeneity between men and women in the Spanish survey in terms of their will to vote (on a scale between 1 to 10 where 1 is 'definitely not voting' and 10 'definitely voting'). Around 15% of men and women say they are in level 8. Another 32% of men and 34% of women situate themselves in level 10.
- The likelihood of voting in general elections between the different groups in relation to their political affiliation also looks similar: 37% of those from the 'left', 34% of those from the 'centre' and 40% of those from the 'right' would 'definitely vote'.
- 51% of the Spanish polled and 47% of the EU15 overall say that they would definitely vote if national, regional and local elections took place on the same day as the European elections.
- A further 37% of Spaniards and 39% of the EU15 say that they would definitely vote 'if elections were the same day in all Europe'.

- Crime, unemployment and immigration are the preferred topics of the Spanish public for European Parliament electoral campaigns.

Spanish views on the EU reforms.

- Among the Spanish polled, there is low knowledge of the European institutions. The European Parliament and the Commission are the best known institutions (91% and 74% of the public say they know these institutions), while the Economic and Social Committee or the Committee of the Regions are those that are the least known to the public.
- The European Parliament is the most trusted of all institutions, with fewer people saying they trust the Commission.
- This greater trust in the Parliament is sustained whatever people's political affiliations or the regions from which they come.
- The Spanish public has little knowledge of the European Convention and says it does not hear enough about it from politicians and the media.
- 64% of Spanish believe that the European Union should have a Constitution.
- One-third of Spaniards say they do not trust the European Convention. This opinion is also reflected on an EU 15 basis.
- 24% of the EU 15 say they do not trust the European Commission.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS TO SPANISH REPORT EB 59.1/ RECOMENDATIONS TO THE SPANISH REPRESENTATION

- In general, the Spanish public feels it knows little about EU policies and actions. They are in favour of policies that are common to all EU Member States and they believe that the EU is something good and that Spain has benefited from its membership.
- However, they seem to feel very insecure and are more afraid than other Europeans about wars in Europe or elsewhere, especially conflicts involving international terrorism. In this respect, they have shown a very negative attitude towards the role of the US which they consider responsible for international insecurity.

- In the same way, the Spanish public feels less open to the process of enlargement, since it believes that the EU should only be enlarged to include some of the countries that wish to become members.
- Spaniards also believe that Spain will be less important after the enlargement. In this respect, they feel that the accession countries should not have a voice regarding European common defence and security policies before May 2004.
- The Spanish public has a strong need to know about the different positions held in Europe by political parties and institutions. Both TV and the Internet have been cited as important sources of information. The introduction of specific programmes and information packages could therefore prove to be beneficial for the Spanish, more so than in other countries, in terms of educating the public.
- One of the most important gaps to be filled in Spaniards' knowledge is the content and work of the European Convention, as well as the process of building a European Constitution. Spanish public opinion is of very low quality concerning these issues and does not show any evidence of citizens' participation in the debates about the future of Europe. Previous editions of this survey have also highlighted the low levels of Spanish knowledge in this respect.

Greater attention is required with respect to the amount and type of information aimed at informing the Spanish public. Information services provided by the EC Representation in Spain need to work on a more routine basis in order to encourage the interaction of the Spanish public with European actions and policies that are currently being developed through the work of the Convention, but also in relation to the process of enlargement.

In this edition of the Eurobarometer survey, it has been seen in the Spanish case that most people have a favourable opinion towards the European Union. However, they would like to know more about the different actions, policies and processes. In that respect, we need to establish a clear link between information and a sense of feeling of belonging to the EU, in the sense that knowledge about different EU actions should also result in a sense of feeling more European, a difficult issue in the present state of the construction of Europe.

SWEDEN

Executive Summary

The following summary provides an overview of the Swedish results of an opinion poll carried out in all the EU Member States, the Eurobarometer 59.1. The Eurobarometer serves as a means for the European Commission to obtain an insight into the opinions of citizens on EU-related issues, as well as to measure differences and similarities between them. The following pages provide a resumé of the results in three different areas of special interest to Sweden: (i) general attitudes in Sweden towards, and knowledge of, the EU; (ii) public opinion on the future of Europe and the role of Sweden in the EU; and lastly, (iii) attitudes and perceptions towards enlargement and the Euro. Where appropriate, the results of the Swedish poll will be contrasted with those of the EU Member States as a whole, and socio-demographic differences within Sweden explored.

Attitudes towards, and knowledge of, the EU

Knowledge

When asked to estimate their knowledge on a scale of one to ten, those polled feel they know more than the average European about the EU. Indeed, when asked what European Union institutions they had heard of, 97% of the Swedes claimed to have heard of the European Parliament, as opposed to 91% of the citizens in the EU as a whole. In general, it is safe to say that Europeans know what the European Parliament is, but when it comes to the other European Institutions, the numbers are much lower. The institution most Swedes claim to have heard of is the Council of Ministers (90%).

Attitudes

When asked whether or not they are satisfied with how democracy works in Sweden and in the EU, 62% of Swedes claim to be fairly satisfied, as compared with 50% of the general EU population. The results are the inverse when it comes to EU-level. Only 39% of the population in Sweden is satisfied with how democracy works in the European Union, whereas for the EU as a whole the figure is 42%. Only very few people in the EU and Sweden seem to be very satisfied with how democracy works nationally and in the European Union. 53% of Swedes think that the national government has a great effect on them, and the views are the same for the whole of the EU. However, only 15% of the Swedes believe that the EU institutions as a whole have any impact on them. The EU average here is 23%. An interesting regional difference is that the southern regions of Sweden seem more convinced that they may be affected by the EU institutions (Gothenburg 26% and Malmö 20%).

Generally speaking, 41% of Swedes believe that being a member of the EU is a good thing. A large number, 30%, think it is neither a good nor bad thing. In the southern regions and the Stockholm area, around half of the population is very positive towards membership in the EU while in the northern regions, support is weaker. When asked if Sweden has benefited from being a member of the EU, 50% of the population says they believe Sweden has not benefited. This is a negative trend, since when asked the same questions in November 2002 only 46% responded negatively. It is interesting to note that, in general, the male population of Sweden has a more positive response to this question.

As for issues of trust, 45% of the Swedes tend to trust their national government to a larger extent than the average EU citizen, at 37%. Trust in the European institutions is very low in Sweden with 61% saying they tend not to trust them. The average EU level of trust is higher, at only 38%. Among the European institutions, the Swedes tend to trust the Court of Justice the most (63%) and show more trust in the European Parliament than in the Council of Ministers (57% and 49% respectively). When asked which institution they believed has the most influence in the EU, 44% answered the European Parliament, as compared to the EU average, where only 27% thought this was the case. 21% of Swedes judged the European Commission as being the most powerful institution in the EU whilst only 13% believed the national government has the most influence. When asked who should have the most influence, 50% of Swedes thought this should belong to the citizens, with 20% believing this should be the domain of national government.

National identity and the meaning of the EU

National identity in Sweden still seems strong and is, moreover, increasing: Swedes see themselves as predominantly Swedish (55%) and, to a lesser extent, Swedish as well as European (39%). This is a decrease of more than 5% since November 2002, when 45% of Swedes claimed to regard themselves as being Swedish as well as European in the near future. In the EU as a whole, 44% would like to look upon themselves as being both their own nationality as well as European. Very few Member State citizens claim to feel they are firstly Europeans, ahead of their own nationality.

Swedes have a mixed view of what the European Union signifies to them personally. Freedom to study, travel and work are important factors (62%). Other important factors are peace (35%) and a stronger say in the world (31%). However, 40% of Swedes think the EU signifies a waste of money and 43% connect it with bureaucracy. An interesting comparison is that only 11% of Swedes feel the European Union signifies economic prosperity, as opposed to the average number of 20% in the EU.

The future of the European institutions and Sweden as part of the EU

There are a number of areas the Swedish population believes the European Union should take action, some areas more than others. Of particular priority are areas such as fighting poverty and social exclusion (96%), protecting the environment (97%), fighting organised crime and drug trafficking (96%) and maintaining peace and security in Europe. Guaranteeing the rights of the individual and respect for the principles of democracy in Europe (92%), as well as giving citizens more information on the European Union and its policies (86%) and institutions is also considered important for the Swedish population, as for the rest of the Member States, even though the percentages for the average EU citizen are slightly lower. However, most Swedes believe that a majority of issues should be dealt with primarily on a national level, especially for issues such as health and social welfare, where 90% of Swedish citizens want to keep matters within national control. Issues they could contemplate being dealt with jointly by their own government and the European Union are those such as fighting poverty and social exclusion within the Union, unemployment, support to regions experiencing economic difficulties, foreign policy issues, combating drugs and organised crime and matters of scientific technological research.

The European Convention

The European Convention has been something which a majority of EU citizens feel they have heard far too little about. 93% of Swedes think the media should focus more on what the Convention is doing, and 88% thinks politicians should do the same.

The European Commission and the 6-month Council Presidency

35% of Swedes think the President of the European Commission should be chosen by the European Parliament as well as Heads of State and Government. 33% of Swedes, and the average EU-citizen, think this decision should be made by the citizens of the EU. As for Commissioners, 90% of Swedes think that following enlargement, every Member State should be allowed to appoint at least one Commissioner, and 67% think small countries should have the same number of Commissioners as the larger Member States. In the EU as a whole, fewer citizens, 72%, think there necessarily has to be at least one Commissioner from each Member State as opposed to 90% in Sweden where the citizens also think that Sweden's interests would suffer if there was no Swedish Commissioner. The Swedish also think that the rotating 6-month Council of Ministers Presidency should be retained as it gives each Member State a chance to hold the presidency on a regular basis. However, 50% think the period of office should be extended as 6 months is too short to achieve any significant results. Furthermore, 52% think the right of veto in certain areas should be retained in order to protect vital national interests.

European Parliament elections

When it comes to the European Parliament and elections, 40% of the Swedish population says they would definitely vote. However, they would be more inclined to vote if polling stations were to be set up outside supermarkets, or if it were possible to vote from work. Also, and to a greater extent than the average EU citizen, Swedes are interested in voting via the Internet.

44% say they would be very interested in voting were the elections organised on the same day throughout the European Union. As for the Members of the European Parliament, the Swedes seem to be more in touch with their MEPs than the rest of EU citizens. 41% claim to have read about an MEP since the last elections, as opposed to 25% for the average EU citizen; 54% claim to have seen an MEP on television compared to the EU average of 37%. However, a rather large number of Swedes are interested in reading more about or seeing more of Members of the European Parliament. For the next European Parliament elections, both the Swedes and the average EU citizen would prefer the focus to be on issues such as the rights of the European Union citizen, rather than on reforms of the EU institutions or the activities of the European Parliament.

European taxes

At present, each Member State passes on to the European Union a part of its tax revenue. When asked if they would prefer paying this tax revenue directly to the European Union, 67% of the Swedish population would prefer not to do so. In the EU in general, 54% has the same view.

Common security and foreign policy

In terms of these issues, Sweden concurs with the general views of the EU citizen. 67% of Swedes and 69% of EU citizens believe there should be a military force within the EU, capable of responding rapidly to an international crisis. 83% think the Member States should hold a common political position when an international crisis occurs, but only 47% of Swedes (cf. 64% of EU citizens) think there should be a EU Foreign Minister. A little more than half of the population (55%) think the EU should have its own seat in the United Nations. 71% of them believe that Member States which have opted for neutrality should still have a say in EU foreign policy, as opposed to 51% of the general EU population. No more than 30% of Swedes, or 33% of the EU Member States, think that the countries that will join the European Union next year should have any say in foreign policy at this stage. A majority of both Swedes and EU citizens feel strongly about EU foreign policy being independent from US foreign policy. As for a common immigration policy and a common asylum policy, around 68% of the population in Sweden thinks this is a good idea, which is marginally less than the rest of the EU population.

Enlargement and the Euro

Enlargement

Only 2% of the population in Sweden feel they are well informed on issues surrounding enlargement; 56% of the population feel they are not very well informed.

Nevertheless, 21% of the population in the EU is of the opinion that the EU should not be enlarged at all. On the other hand, 36% of Swedes and 24% of the other Member States as a whole think all countries willing to join should be able to do so. 60% of the Swedish are for the enlargement in general. Also, 64% of them believe that more countries entering the EU will mean peace and security and around the same number of citizens, 65%, think it will culturally enrich the EU. 80%, as opposed to 66% in the EU overall, believe that enlarging the EU will make the EU more important in the world. However, 70% consider it will make it harder to make decisions on a European scale.

When it comes to the new members of the EU, only a small part of the population, around 25%, considers it a good idea to give financial aid to these countries before their entry and full membership of the Union and 64% disagree with the view that it would not bring any additional costs for Sweden.

The Euro

40% of Swedes are against European Monetary Union, which is a growing number. 30% were against joining the Euro in autumn 2002. However, the number of undecided is also growing, with about 10% of the Swedish population now claiming to be unsure on this issue. All in all, 53% of the population in the three "pre-in" countries say they are against the Euro.

UNITED KINGDOM

Executive Summary

Eurobarometer 59.1 was conducted for the European Commission in the 15 Member states during March and April 2003.

In the UK interviews were held with 1315 people between 18Th March and 30th April.

The main findings are as follows:

The UK is becoming more politically interested

The UK is becoming a country where political matters are now being discussed more frequently and more in line with EU averages. Previous Eurobarometer results showed a very low level of political discussion in the U.K. but in this spring 2003 survey a substantial increase is noted. 16% of those polled in the UK said they discussed politics frequently. This is now slightly ahead of the EU average of 15% and a substantial increase on the UK's 9% in the previous Eurobarometer 58.1 of the autumn of 2002.

The Press is trusted by less than a third of those who trust radio

Only 20% of those polled in the UK trusted the press. This compares with an EU15 average of 47%. Radio, however, is trusted by 62% of those polled in the UK (EU 15 = 65%)

British Army has high levels of trust

The British Army is trusted by 79% of those polled and is the British Institution given the highest ranking. The EU average is 66%

Political Institutions have low levels of trust

Trust levels for political organisations are lower than in most other EU countries with the British parliament being trusted by 37%. This compares with an EU average of 42% and 69% in Denmark.

The European Union earns an even lower UK trust rating at 24% - the lowest within the EU and nearly a third of the 66% trust factor accorded by the Portuguese.

Business is not trusted

Big companies achieved lower levels of trust in the UK and Germany at 21% than any other EU country. The EU average was 29%, although high scores were noted in Portugal (43%) and Denmark (50%).

The two major concerns in the UK are crime and immigration

The UK's two most important issues were seen as being crime (39%) and immigration (32%). These compare with EU 15 figures of 29% and 13% respectively.

Only 8% of the UK are concerned about unemployment

The UK level of concern over unemployment was the only single digit result in this area of concern. The average for the EU 15 was 41% with figures as high as 66% in Germany.

22% of the UK feel they know nothing about the European union

The UK figure in this area is twice as high as the EU 15 average and six times as high as Sweden where less than 4% put themselves in this category.

Television is the UK's preferred way of getting information on the European Union

Of those polled in the UK in this multiple choice question, 49% said television was their favourite way of getting information on the EU. This was also the most popular way across the EU with an average figure of 59%.

14% of the UK don't know if membership of the EU is a good or bad thing.

The UK has the highest percentage of people who don't know if membership is a good or bad thing compared with an EU average of 7%. Of those expressing an opinion, more than half of the total EU poll (58%) believed membership of the EU was a good thing as opposed to only 35% of the UK who held this opinion.

Only 32% of the UK think that the country has benefited from EU membership

While 77% of Irish people and 50% of EU members in general think their country has benefited from membership, only Sweden (31%) has a more negative view than the UK.

The EU means a loss of cultural identity to 25% of the UK

While only 6% of Italians and 12% on average of all EU citizens saw the EU creating a loss of cultural identity, one in four Britons saw this as a result of the EU.

Many don't know in the UK results

A further 12% of the UK poll in the cultural identity question said they ***did not know*** what the EU meant to them—this compares with an EU average of 4% and emphasises the 'don't know' element of a large number of those polled in the UK.

UK is happy with the name European Union

When given the option to choose an alternate name for the European Union, the UK poll was heavily in favour of retaining the existing name. With 45% of those polled holding this view it was close to the EU average of 49%

Once again the UK 'don't knows' made up virtually a sixth of those polled (16%).

UK shows improving knowledge of EU institutions and bucks EU trend

Although starting from a relatively low level of awareness about EU institutions, the UK figures buck the general trend in this part of EB 59.1

In the ten institutions reviewed, the average EU figures show a decline in awareness in nine and an increase in only one. The UK figures show a decline in only four, non-movement in two and an increase in four.

The UK tends not to trust the major EU institutions

The largest groups in this part of the UK poll were those tending **not** to trust the European Parliament (37%), the European Commission (36%) and the Council of Ministers (34%). In addition, the UK 'don't know' factors in these three cases were 28%, 35% and 49% respectively.

The EU average figures showed the highest numbers tending to trust and achieved levels of 57%, 50% and 40% respectively.

The UK and the rest of the EU do not see Enlargement as a priority

The UK poll has 57% believing enlargement is not a priority. This belief is also held by 55% of the whole EU

The UK and the rest of the EU both see the need for more information on the EU

59% of the UK poll saw this as a priority as did 74% of the whole EU poll.

The UK does not see the implementation of the Euro as a priority.

While 88% of Luxemburgers see this as a priority (as do 59% of all EU15 citizens), only a quarter of the UK poll (24%) give it the same importance. 54% of Danes see this as a priority as opposed to only 24% of Swedes.

85% of the UK believe protecting the environment is an EU priority.

The UK figure is very close to the EU average of 87% in this area. Six EU countries rated this at more than 90%.

There is lukewarm interest in reforming the EU institutions and the way they work.

A relatively small 50% of those polled in the UK and across the EU felt that reforming the European Institutions and the way they worked was a priority. However the 'don't know' syndrome is present again with 20% of the UK and 19% of the EU in this camp.

Maintaining peace and security in Europe is a major priority.

The UK poll produced 87% support for this concept slightly behind the 91% across the EU.

The UK believes defence should be handled by National Governments.

63% of the UK poll believe individual governments should take defence decisions. The general opinion across the EU is closely divided with 46% adhering to the UK view while a slightly larger 50% believe defence should be handled jointly across the EU

58% of the UK believe environment protection issues should be a joint EU decision

The majority of UK people polled as well as 64% of the EU are prepared to cede sovereignty on issues relating to the protection of the environment.

The UK protects its currency from outside decisions

While on average across the EU only 28% of those polled believe currency decisions should be made by the national government, figures from Denmark (42%) Sweden (52%) and the UK (71%) show the other side of the Euro argument.

Foreign policy decisions should be made jointly within the EU

In another example of individual countries ceding sovereignty, both the UK (60%) and the EU average (73%) indicate a willingness to deal en bloc in the field of foreign policy.

66% of the UK believe immigration policy should be the responsibility of the National Government

While two thirds of the UK see immigration policy as being a domestic affair, the majority of the EU (52%) see it as an issue that should be handled jointly within the EU. The same broad division occurs in the field of establishing the rules for political asylum.

Only 24% of the UK support a common European currency.

Only a quarter of the UK support the Euro compared with two thirds (66%) of the whole of the EU. The next lowest figures are 41% from Sweden and a majority (53%) of the Danish poll.

The UK does not favour a joint EU foreign policy

While on average across the EU 67% of those polled are in favour of a common EU policy towards other nations this figure drops to only 37% in the UK. The UK 'don't know' quotient is also the highest of the 15 member states at 24%.

The UK is equally divided on the question of enlargement

Ignoring the 28% of people who said they did not know, those people in the UK who expressed an opinion were equally divided at 50% each on the question as to whether the EU should be enlarged to include new countries. France was firmly against enlargement with 54% of those polled being against it. This compares with Greece where 71% of those polled supported enlargement and only 19% were against it.

On average across the EU 46% were for enlargement, 35% against it and 19% did not know.

72% of the UK support teaching school children about how the EU institutions work

While this represents nearly three-quarters of those polled, it is below the 83% EU average and high figures of more than 90% from Luxembourg, Finland and Sweden.

The UK had a more positive view of the USA than the EU average

When looking at the role of the USA in several areas, the UK had a substantially more favourable view than the rest of the EU. In the area concerning the United States' role regarding peace in the world, 45% of the UK respondents saw this as positive compared with 23% in the EU overall. Turning this issue through 180°, a majority of the EU (58%) regarded the USA as having a negative role compared with 31% from the UK.

Similar figures emerged when looking at the role played by the United States in the fight against terrorism. Two-thirds of the UK (68%) saw this in a positive light compared with only 45% across the EU.

When looking at the role of the USA regarding the fight against world poverty a similar picture emerges. Countries such as Greece (86%) and France (70%) combined with the rest of the EU to provide a figure of 52% who believed the UK played a negative role in this area. This compares with only 34% in the UK sample.

Turning to the role of the United States regarding the protection of the environment, the UK figure for a negative view was 54% of those expressing an opinion. This compares with two-thirds of the total EU sample.

Neither the UK nor the EU in general understands how the European Union works.

A fundamental problem emerges for all EU citizens in the crucial area of understanding how the European Union works.

Leaving aside the 11% of the UK and 14% of the whole EU who were in the 'don't know' camp, only 31% of the UK and 45% of the EU overall felt that they understood the broad principles.

Both the UK and EU countries in general feel that the way that the European Union works is too complex.

Again, leaving aside the 21% of 'don't knows' in the UK and the 18% in the EU overall, 84% of the UK and 79% of the EU15 sample tended to agree that the way that the European Union works is too complex.

UK citizens do not know if the European Union should have a constitution.

While a substantial 27% of all EU citizens do not know whether the EU should have a constitution, this figure is dwarfed by the 39% of 'don't knows' in the UK poll. However, when this large proportion of undecided people is removed from the calculation, of those people expressing an opinion, the sentiment is similar between the UK (85%) and the EU15 (86%) who feel that the EU should have a constitution.

The UK and the EU15 support the concept of at least one commissioner from each Member State.

Once again removing the 28% of 'don't knows' from the UK data and the 21% from the EU15 figures, a vast majority of those polled agree with this statement. The figures reach 95% in the UK and 91% in the EU15.

The UK supports direct election of the President of the European Commission by the citizens of the EU.

An identical 33% of those polled in the UK and across the EU support this method of appointing the President of the European Commission. Once again, the UK 'don't knows' were one in four (25%).

The UK and EU15 support a longer term for the Presidency of the European Council.

Of those expressing an opinion, 69% of the UK poll were in favour of a longer period than the current six-month term accorded to European Council Presidency.

European citizens would prefer to contribute to the EU via their own national exchequers.

Removing, yet again, the 25% of both the UK and EU15 poll who did not express an opinion, 80% of the UK sample and 72% of the EU15 overall preferred to continue with the current system of paying their taxes related to the European Union via their national exchequers.

The UK citizen is twice as likely not to vote in a European election.

While 10% of the UK poll said they would definitely not vote in a national election, this figure rises to 19% when the election in question is a European Parliament election. Comparable figures for the EU15 are 7% and 10%.

The UK believes the next European Parliament election should focus on immigration and crime

In this multiple choice question, 60% of those polled in the UK saw immigration as a main European Parliament election issue compared with 44% across the EU. Very similar figures were seen when looking at the issue of crime with this being seen as an important subject by 50% of the UK and 51% of the EU15 sample.

The UK and the EU15 do not feel well-informed about the new countries joining the European Union.

In the joint categories of people feeling they were 'not very well-informed' and 'not at all well-informed' were to be found 73% of the EU15 and 79% of the UK poll.
