

# EUROBAROMETER 60.1

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTUMN 2003

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SPAIN

The survey was requested and coordinated by the Directorate General Press and Communication.

This report was produced for the European Commission's Representation in Spain.

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The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

**PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY EUROBAROMETER 60.1**  
**OVERVIEW OF REPORT STRUCTURE - SPAIN**

*Autumn 2003*

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## **INTRODUCTION TO EUROBAROMETER EB 60.1 FOR SPAIN**

Between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003 and 7<sup>th</sup> November 2003, the European Opinion Research Group, carried out wave 60.1 of the Standard Eurobarometer, on the request of the European Commission's Directorate-General Press and Communication, Public Opinion Analysis Unit. The study includes a Standard National Report and an Executive Summary both of which focus on the main conclusions about public opinion in Spain and which will be used as recommendations to the EC's Representation in Spain. This executive summary will summarise the most important conclusions of the Spanish report that are presented below.

The Spanish EB60.1 report is structured around various themes of analysis, namely:

**ANALYSIS ISSUE I:** Spanish opinions about satisfaction with their lives

**ANALYSIS ISSUE II:** Spanish levels of trust of the EU Institutions

**ANALYSIS ISSUE III:** Attitudes towards the EU

**ANALYSIS ISSUE IV:** Spanish feelings about main aspects of EU integration

**ANALYSIS ISSUE V:** Spanish thoughts on the reforms of the EU institutions

**ANALYSIS ISSUE VI:** Spanish opinion about information on the EU

For each of the topics, a series of themes is covered, such as public opinion and information on European issues and respondents' personal satisfaction with EU actions and policies. A socio-demographic analysis of the data is provided in order to highlight some of the findings of the Spanish case. For selected questions, the main trends in data collected from past Eurobarometer surveys are also described.

Novelties of EB 60.1 in respect to earlier waves of the Eurobarometer include an improved knowledge of EU institutions and their policies and activities, as well as an increased satisfaction with the way the EU works. The Spanish public also appears to be feeling more and more European, and wants the EU to have a greater say on issues like immigration, the fight against terrorism and education on EU matters. In addition, TV is still one of the favourite sources for getting information on the EU, its policies and actions, although it has dropped some points in the last two editions of the survey. Overall, Spanish public opinion in respect to European matters has become considerably more positive in the last two years. However, more is needed in order for the public to know more about the way the EU works and to receive more information about the ways in which they can participate.

## **Analysis Issue I:** **Spanish opinions about satisfaction with their lives**

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In the present edition of Eurobarometer 60.1, Spanish optimism with respect to the year 2004 has increased little in comparison with the last edition (EB59.1). Although Spanish optimism is higher than that of other Europeans, there is still a low level of optimism as regards their hopes for the coming year. The Spanish public also seems to be more satisfied with their country's economic situation, but rather pessimistic about their personal, household and job situation, where they believe things in 2004 will be the same or worse than in the year 2003. In general, the Spanish public tends to trust the EU institutions and the UN more than the Spanish government or their political parties for which the level of trust was also seen to be low in this edition. Other institutions enjoying the Spanish public's trust are the radio, the press, the police and the armed forces. More specifically:

- 64% of the poll feels fairly satisfied with the kind of life they lead (+4 points than the EU15 average).
- 51% of the Spanish believe that terrorism is the most important problems that Spain faces nowadays, while unemployment (28%) and immigration (22%) are in second and third place. This is a trend that has been maintained from the previous editions.
- The Canaries (40%), Galicia (33%) and Norte (38%) are the regions that are most concerned about unemployment.
- There is still a low level of trust in the Spanish government, although, since the last edition, there has been an increase of seven (+7) points in those saying that they tend to trust the government, (50% of respondents said that they tended not to trust the Spanish government).
- The daily press and the radio are the two Spanish institutions that enjoy the highest percentages of trust; 58% of the poll said they tend to trust the press and 65% said the same for the radio.
- The Spanish public feels fairly satisfied with how democracy works in Spain but also in the EU. 49% of citizens say they feel fairly satisfied with how democracy works in Spain while another 32% do not feel very satisfied with democracy.
- In relation to the EU, the Spanish public feels fairly satisfied with how democracy works in the EU with 48% of them holding that view, in contrast with 20% who did not feel very satisfied with democracy in the EU.

## **ANALYSIS ISSUE II:**

### **Spanish levels of trust in the EU Institutions**

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In this edition of the Eurobarometer, Spanish trust towards the European Institutions has increased. Once more, Spanish trust is higher than the EU15 average, which has seen trust levels falling. For example, while the EU Commission has lost points overall in the EU15, in Spain, more people say that they tend to trust the Commission than before. Also, the Spanish public trusts most of the EU institutions with the European Ombudsman and the Council of Ministers being among the public's favourites. In addition, Spanish citizens appear to give strong support to an EU Constitution. More Spaniards (after Italians and Greeks) than other Europeans would like Europe to have a Constitution. Examples of results include:

- The European Parliament attracts the majority of trust of all institutions, according to 62% of respondents, (54% of EU15 citizens overall tend to trust the Parliament), and less people say they trust the Commission (around 55%, compared with the EU15 average of 46%).
- The European Central Bank appears to be the institution in which the Spanish group has less trust. Only 43% said that they tend to trust this institution (very similar to the EU15 average which is 44%) in contrast with the 25% of the poll who said they did not trust it (compared to 26% of the EU15 poll).
- Men and women trust the EU institutions in a similar way, although it is usually men who show a greater tendency of trusting the EU institutions. For example, 65% of men and 60% of women say they tend to trust the Parliament, while the respective figures for the Commission were 58% of men and 53% of women.
- One of the most popular institutions among the Spanish public is, once more, the European Ombudsman, with 47% of men and 45% of women in the Spanish poll saying they trust this institution.
- Inhabitants from Galicia and Aragón-Rioja are the ones that trust the EU institutions least. For example, 37% of the Galician poll and 33% of the Aragonese poll said they did not trust the Council of Ministers.
- The Canaries seem to be the region that trusts the EU Institutions most. For example, 75% of the Canaries poll said they trust the Parliament, 73% the Commission and 72% the Council of Ministers.
- 65% of Spanish citizens believe that the European Union should have a Constitution, compared to 62% of the EU15 poll overall.

### **ANALYSIS ISSUE III:**

#### **Attitudes towards the EU**

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In general, Spanish citizens have a very positive image of Europe. This feeling has been maintained for at least three Eurobarometer surveys. Each time, Spanish public opinion attaches increasing importance to being European, in addition to being Spanish, and they believe that Spanish EU membership has been good for the country. Similarly, most of the public believes that Spain has benefited from its membership in the EU. Furthermore, the Spanish poll believes that Europe, above all, means to them the freedom to travel, study and work in different countries of the EU. Also, they feel that the EU means economic prosperity, the use of a single currency, as well as cultural diversity and having a stronger voice in the world. However, they show a negative opinion about the role of the USA in the world. More specifically:

- 48% of the group say they feel fairly attached to the European Union.
- 59% of the group feels first Spanish and then European. Feeling Spanish solely has dropped from 34% in EB59.1 to 29% in this edition 60.1.
- Around 62% of the group believes that being a member state of the EU is a good thing for Spain. This is higher than the EU15 average of 48%.
- Students (75%), self-employed people (70%) and managers and white-collar workers (79%) are among the economically active groups who feel that being a member of the EU is a good thing.
- 66% of Spaniards think that their country has benefited from being an EU member state compared with the 46% average in the overall EU15 poll.
- 68% of the inhabitants of the Canaries think that Spain has benefited from being an EU member, followed by 64% from the East, 62% from Cataluña and 62% from the Sur (South) region.
- 47% of the group feels that the EU, above all, means to them the freedom to travel, study and work in the European Union (in contrast to the EU15 average of 49%).
- Another 32% of the Spanish group feels that the EU means economic prosperity, compared to the 18% of people in the EU15 overall. Cultural diversity and a stronger say in the world were valued by 27% and 26% of the poll respectively.
- For the Spanish public, hope and trust represent the two positive feelings towards the EU, with 42% and 33% thinking this way (EU15 average: 38% and 20% respectively).

- 51% of Spanish citizens think that the US plays a negative role in fighting against terrorism and 62% think this in regard to the fight against poverty in the world.

#### **ANALYSIS ISSUE IV:**

##### **Spanish feelings about the main aspects of EU integration**

The Spanish public has a very positive image of the European Union. In general, they feel happy with the role of the EU in different policies, although they feel the role of the EU has not been very important in terms of fighting unemployment in Spain or other social matters. They are also in favour of a common defence and foreign policy and they are more open to the enlargement process than other Europeans, believing that the EU should be enlarged to include all of the countries wishing to join. Overall, they believe that more decisions should be taken at EU level and that EU integration should be faster than its actual speed. More specifically:

- The Spanish public thinks that the role of the EU has been positive in fighting crime (51%), fighting terrorism (59%), defence (50%) and foreign affairs (51%).
- They think that the role of the EU has been negative in terms of dealing with rising prices (48%), taxes (36%) and immigration (35%), while they believe that the role of the EU has been neither positive nor negative in respect to the health system (40%), fighting unemployment (35%) or public transport (46%).
- The Spanish poll believes that decisions concerning international terrorism, the fight against poverty and social exclusion and humanitarian aid should be taken by the European Union with figures of 87%, 66% and 77% respectively recorded.
- On the contrary, they believe that decisions about education (56%), the health system (59%) and rules about broadcasting and the press (59%) should be taken by the Spanish government.
- Concerning immigration, 68% of Spanish citizens (in contrast to an EU15 average of 51%) believe that decisions should be taken at EU level.
- A common defence policy for all Europeans is one of the most important issues for the Spanish public with 74% of them in favour of this policy.
- There is more support for a common immigration policy among managers, students and the self-employed than other occupational groups, with scores of 76%, 67% and 70% respectively in favour of this policy.

- 75% of the poll tends to agree in that the EU should have a rapid military reaction force and 76% agree that, when an international crisis occurs, EU members should agree on a common position.
- 62% of the Spanish poll considers that the EU should be enlarged to include all the countries wishing to join in contrast to an EU15 average of only 47%.

## **ANALYSIS ISSUE V:**

### **Spanish thoughts on reform of the EU institutions**

The Spanish public believes that the EU should have a Constitution and, in the most recent surveys, this positive attitude has been maintained. They also believe that they should participate in the election of the President of the European Commission, in the same way as the rest of EU15 citizens. Spanish opinion about the length of the Council presidency is that this should be more than 6 months. Likewise, they believe that the right of veto should be maintained to preserve national interests.

Noteworthy results include:

- Among the Spanish public, a strong wish for the existence of a European Constitution emerges, with 65% giving the idea their support.
- The Canaries seem to be the region most in favour of a Constitution - with a figure of 79% in favour.
- Between men and women, there is a bigger difference: while 70% of men believe that the EU should have a Constitution, only 59% of women do.
- 36% of the poll (fewer people than in the rest of the EU) thinks that the Council presidency should be extended because six months is too short a period to achieve significant results. Another 26% think that the presidency term should be maintained at six months. The EU15 average is 49% for those wanting the period of the presidency to be extended and 27% for those wishing to keep the current six-month term.
- There are important differences among the regions as to the extent to which the presidency of the Council should be extended: for example, 30% in the Sur Region and 29% in the Canaries believe that the presidency should be maintained at six months, while 52% from Aragon-Rioja and 48% from Cataluña believe that it should be extended.
- A lot of support (30%) was given to the option that EU citizens should elect the Commission President, while another 15% think that the Heads of State or Government should nominate him/her. The EU15 averages for this response were 34% and 11% respectively. A further 15% were of the opinion that the European Parliament should elect the Commission President.



- 29% of the Spanish public want the right of veto to be maintained in order to preserve national interests. This is well below the EU15 average of 41%.

## **ANALYSIS ISSUE VI:**

### **Spanish opinion about information on the EU**

The Spanish public assesses its knowledge about the EU, its policies and actions at a level between 4 and 5, on a scale where 1 is "I don't know anything" and 10 is "I know a lot". In this survey, the average knowledge of the public has improved, since most of the poll believes that the information about the EU given to them is reliable and objective. In addition, the TV seems have recovered some points as the most used source for procuring this information, although it has lost points in terms of being the most preferred source. The Internet has, again, increased in this wave - both in terms of being a commonly used and a preferred source - while radio and press keep their second and third places respectively. It should also be noted that:

- 20% of the poll say their level of knowledge is situated at level 4, 19% say it is at level 5 and a further 15% at level 3. The EU15 averages in terms of these levels of knowledge are 17%, 19% and 18% respectively.
- Managers, students and white-collar occupations tend to say their level of knowledge is at level 5, while manual workers and house persons say it is at level 3.
- Men and women show little difference in their levels of knowledge: 21% of men and 19% of women assess their knowledge to be at level 5.
- 40% of Spanish citizens believe that the media talk too positively about the EU, while only 23% of the EU15 poll shares this view.
- In contrast, 42% of the EU15 poll thinks that media talk objectively about the EU, compared to 38% of Spaniards holding this opinion.
- 50% of the Spanish poll feels that the media talk about the right amount about the European Union, in contrast to 44% in the EU15 overall. Another 37% think that the Spanish media talk too little about the EU.
- Television is, again, the preferred source of information about the EU, according to 63% of the poll, (+3 points above the EU15 average at 60%)
- The daily press (32%), radio (29%) and Internet (10%) are the second, third and fourth most preferred sources, according to the Spanish poll.
- The Canaries (20%), the North (18%) and Galicia (14%) are the regions whose inhabitants say they use the Internet the most.
- The Internet was, again, used more by men (11%) than women (8%), and students (24%) are the group using the Internet the most.

## **Conclusions EB60.1**

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In this edition of EB60.1, it can be seen that Spanish public opinion continues to show a positive attitude towards the EU. In general terms, the Spanish public has an average knowledge about the EU similar to that in other EU Member States. However, they trust the EU institutions more than other Europeans and would prefer the EU to be more active in decision-making, particularly in respect to social issues. One of the novelties of this wave has been the increasing level of trust towards the EU and the support that the Spanish public seems to show towards policies undertaken jointly by the 15 Member States. In this respect, the Spanish public seems to be in favour of joint policies aiming to control immigration, defence and foreign matters, as well as the fight against unemployment and social exclusion. More specifically:

- 51% of the Spanish poll believes that terrorism is the most important problem facing Spain today, followed by unemployment (28%) and immigration (22%) in second and third place.
- There is still a low level of trust in the Spanish government, although there has been an increase of seven (+7) points since the last survey of those saying that they tend to trust the government. 50% of Spanish respondents say that they tend not to trust their national government.
- The European Parliament (62%) attracts the most trust of all the institutions in contrast to the EU15 average of 54%. Fewer people (55%) say they trust the Commission, but this is still higher than the EU15 average of 46%.
- 48% of the group say they feel fairly attached to the European Union.
- 59% of the group feels firstly Spanish and then European. The percentage of those feeling Spanish solely has dropped from 34% in EB59.1 to 29% in this poll.
- Around 62% of the Spanish poll believes that being a member state of the EU is a good thing for their country. This is higher than the EU15 average which is only 48%.
- The Spanish public thinks that the role of the EU has been positive in fighting crime (51%), fighting terrorism (59%), defence (50%) and foreign affairs (51%).
- They think that the role of the EU has been negative in dealing with rises in prices (48%), taxes (36%) and immigration (35%), while they believe that the role of the EU has been neither positive nor negative in respect to the

health system (40%), fighting unemployment (35%) or public transport (46%).

- 51% of the poll thinks that the US plays a negative role in fighting against terrorism; 62% have a similar negative view regarding the US's role in the fight against poverty in the world.
- In regard to immigration, 68% of the Spanish poll believes that decisions on this should be taken jointly by the EU in contrast to the EU15 average of 51%.
- A common defence policy for all Europeans is one of the most important issues for the Spanish public with 74% supporting it.
- 62% of the Spanish poll considers that the EU should be enlarged to include all the countries wishing to join, while only 47% of the EU15 poll overall shares this view.
- Among the Spanish poll, there is strong support (65%) for a European Constitution.
- 36% of Spanish citizens (fewer than in the rest of the EU) think that the EU Council Presidency should be extended because six months is too short a period to achieve significant results. The EU15 average sharing this view is 49%.
- 30% of Spaniards support the proposition that citizens of the EU should elect the European Commission President.
- 29% of Spanish citizens want the right of veto to be maintained in order to preserve national interests, (much less than the EU15 average of 41%).
- On a scale of 1 to 10, 20% of the poll assesses their level of knowledge at level 4, 19% at level 5 and a further 15% at level 3. The EU15 averages for these levels of knowledge are 17%, 19% and 18% respectively.
- 50% of the poll feel that the media talk about the right amount about the European Union, compared with 44% in the EU15 overall. Another 37% believe that the Spanish media talk too little about the EU.
- While 40% of the Spaniards believe that the media talk too positively about the EU, the equivalent EU15 average is only 23%. In contrast, 41% of EU15 citizens overall think that the media talk objectively.
- Television is again the preferred source from which to get information about the EU, according to 63% of the Spanish poll, (+3 points than the EU15 average of 60%).
- The daily press (32%), radio (29%) and the Internet (10%) are the second, third and fourth most preferred sources.

## **APPENDIX EB60.1**

### **Codes of regions**

1. **GALICIA** = GALICIA (11)
  2. **NORTE** = ASTURIAS (3) + CANTABRIA (6)
  3. **NORESTE** = PAÍS VASCO (17) + NAVARRA (14)
  4. **ARAGÓN – RIOJA** = ARAGÓN (2) + RIOJA (15)
  5. **MADRID** = MADRID (12)
  6. **CENTRO** = CASTILLA-LEÓN (7) + CASTILLA-LA MANCHA (8) + EXTREMADURA (10)
  7. **CATALUÑA** = CATALUÑA (9)
  8. **ESTE** = COMUNIDAD VALENCIANA (16) + BALEARES (4)
  9. **SUR** = ANDALUCÍA (1) + MURCIA (13)
  10. **CANARIAS** = CANARIAS (5)
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