

EUROBAROMETER 61

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2004

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SPAIN

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This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission.
The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

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INTRODUCTION TO EUROBAROMETER EB 61 FOR SPAIN

Between 20th February and 28th March 2004, the European Opinion Research Group, carried out wave EB61 of the Standard Eurobarometer, on the request of the European Commission, Directorate-General 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 used as recommendations to the EC Representation in Spain. This executive summary provides a resumé of the most important conclusions of the Spanish report.

The Spanish EB61 report was structured around various themes of analysis, as seen in the table of contents. For each of the topics, a list of themes is covered, such as public opinion and information on European issues or the personal satisfaction of respondents with EU actions and policies. Socio-demographic analysis of the data is undertaken in order to highlight some of the findings of the Spanish case. Additionally, trends in data from Eurobarometer surveys carried out in recent years are examined for selected questions.

Novelties of EB 61 in respect to earlier editions include an analysis of opinion in the New Member States (NMS), in respect to their feelings of becoming European. Also of interest are aspects such as improved knowledge about the EU institutions, policies and activities, as well as increased satisfaction with the way the EU works. The Spanish public seems to be feeling more and more European and wants the EU to have a stronger voice 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 its popularity has dropped a few points in the last two surveys. Overall, Spanish public opinion in respect to European matters has become considerably more positive over the last two years. However, more needs to be done so that the public can learn more about the way the EU works and can get more information as to how they can better participate.

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Issue Analysis I: Spanish Opinions on General life context

In Eurobarometer 61, it can be seen that Spanish optimism has increased little in comparison with the previous survey, EB60.1. Although Spanish optimism is higher than that of the rest of the Europeans, there is still a medium level of optimism as regards expectations for the coming year. Furthermore, the Spanish public seems to be more satisfied with the economic situation of their country, but rather pessimistic about their personal household and job situation where they believe things in 2005 will be the same as in the year 2004.

In greater detail:

- 38% of the Spanish poll feels that their lives have improved during the last five years.
- 61% feel that their personal job situation will be the same in the year to come.
- Madrid ¹ seems to be the most optimistic region with 39% of its population expecting the economic situation in Spain will improve in 2005.
- 58% of the Spanish surveyed believe that terrorism is one of the most important problems in Spain. Unemployment (33%) and immigration (20%) are the second and third most important issues faced by Spain today.
- The regions of Norte, Centro and Sur are those that show greatest concern about unemployment with 57%, 40% and 39% of their inhabitants respectively citing these issues.
- Most worried about terrorism were the inhabitants of the Rioja-Aragón (75%) and Este (74%) regions.
- 14% of Spanish men think that Spain also faces a problem in terms of the economic situation and a further 15% think the same about price increases/inflation.

¹A list of Spanish regions is provided in the Appendix at the end of this report.

Issue Analysis II: Spanish opinion about information on the EU

In EB61, it can be seen that the Spanish public feels that their level of knowledge about the EU is not very good. 21% feel that their level of knowledge is at level 3, on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 is "I know nothing" and 10 "I know a lot". Another 17% place their knowledge at level 7, while only 3% said they know a lot about the EU, its actions and policies.

With respect to information about the enlargement countries, Spaniards feel they know very little. Thus, 27% say they are well informed, while another 24% say they feel completely uninformed about the New Member States. The majority of the sample (50%) does not feel very well informed and only 2% feel very well informed. Among the Spanish poll, there is a feeling of being poorly informed about these countries. 49% of Spanish men and half of women share this view.

- When looking at the trends in the levels of knowledge of the Spanish public, we see that there is a slow but gradual increase in those thinking that their knowledge is at levels 6 and 7.
- The Spanish public feels that the EU has a good image in the media.
- 50% feel that the media talk enough about the EU.
- 13% feel that the media talk too much about the EU, while 28% feel that the media talk very little about it.
- Among those who feel that the media talk too little about the EU, 28% are men, 29% are women, 33% are managers, 17% students and 31% manual workers.
- 34% consider that the media give a very positive image of the EU, while a further 39% feel that the EU is presented objectively in the media. 6% of the Spanish poll felt that the image of the EU presented in the media is negative.
- As to the sources used by the Spanish sample to receive information about the EU, 60% said they use the television, 30% the radio and another 10% the Internet.

Issue Analysis III: Spanish knowledge of the EU

A novelty in the present edition has been the evaluation of the knowledge that Spanish (and Europeans in general) have about the EU. To assess their knowledge, some statements were presented which the interviewees had to classify as true or false. From the results obtained, it may be seen that Spanish respondents' level of knowledge appears to be in line with the rest of Europeans - although this is at a quite low level. The issues where the Spanish public seems to have a good level of knowledge are those involving general symbols and procedures of the EU, such as its flag, its anthem or the way MEPs are elected.

- In general, levels of knowledge in Spain with respect to facts about the EU are similar to those in other EU countries: very low.
- Very few Spaniards know the correct number of Member States in the European Union or the date of the next European elections.
- The Spanish public was right in knowing that EU citizens directly elect Members of the European Parliament. 47% said this statement was true, while 20% said this was false.
- Spaniards show a better level of knowledge when asked about various historical aspects of the EU, and they seem to know that the EU has its own flag and anthem.
- Only 14% of the Spanish public knows that the headquarters of the European Commission are not in Strasbourg.
- A very low percentage of those interviewed knew the correct date for the forthcoming European elections. Only 17% of the group said that the date of June 2006 was false.
- Spaniards were relatively unaware about Europe Day in all EU Member States. 26% correctly said that it existed, while 23% said that the day does not exist.
- The majority of the poll (34%) correctly said the statement that 'the President of the European Commission is directly elected by the EU citizens' is false, but 26% said this was true.

Issue Analysis IV: The meaning and the role of the EU for Europeans

In this Eurobarometer survey, it appears, once again, that Spanish respondents like to be close to Europe and, with time, increasingly feel that they are both Spanish and European. However, the numbers of those feeling only Spanish are also growing as was seen in recent editions of Eurobarometer. There is a strong feeling of being attached to Europe, although the Spanish feel that European integration should be progressing more rapidly. They feel that EU membership has benefited their country, and that the EU's image is generally positive. Similarly, within the NMS-10, there is a strong feeling of support for the EU, with people in these countries believing that their countries would benefit from EU membership.

- 59 % of the poll feels primarily Spanish and then European. A further 37% said they only feel Spanish.
- Within the Spanish sample, it can be seen that: 60% of men and 54% of women said they feel both Spanish and European, while more women than men (41% compared with 31%) said they only feel Spanish.
- 65% of the self-employed said they feel both Spanish and European and 68% of managers and 61% of students thought the same.
- 46% of Spaniards think that the EU's image is 'more or less positive'. A further 34% think the image is 'neutral' and 13% that it is 'very positive'.
- In the same vein, 64% of the poll feels that being an EU Member State is 'a good thing'. 22% think that being part of the EU is 'neither good nor bad'. Of those polled in Spain, 67% of men and 62% of women think that EU membership is 'a good thing', as do 78% of the self-employed, 72% of students and 68% of manual workers.
- Feelings about being European and towards the European Union show a clear improvement with 48% of the poll saying they feel 'very attached' to the EU.
- Although 69% feel that Spain has benefited from EU membership, 16% feel that it has not.
- For the majority of the Spanish poll (51%), the EU means above all freedom to travel, study and work throughout the EU.
- The euro, economic growth, cultural diversity and having a stronger voice in the world are the aspects of the EU that are most important to Spaniards, with 50%, 32% and 28% respectively sharing these feelings

Issue Analysis V: Spanish feelings of trust in the EU

Overall, the Spanish exhibit strong trust in the European as well as in certain international institutions. In this edition of the Eurobarometer survey, trust in the Spanish government and in political parties is still seen to be very low, while other national institutions, such as the army or the police, seem to enjoy greater public trust.

- There is still a low level of trust in the Spanish government with an increase of +2 points since the last edition in those saying that they tend not to trust the government, (52% of the poll said that they tended not to trust the Spanish government compared with 50% in EB60.1).
- 65% of the sample said they did not trust political parties.
- Daily newspapers and the radio are the two Spanish institutions that enjoy highest levels of trust: 61% said they trust the press and 67% the radio.
- 48% do not trust the Spanish justice system.
- There is an increase in Spaniards' levels of trust in the European Union and the United Nations: 58% of the sample trusts the EU, while another 56% said the same about the UN.
- Men and women show the same levels of trust in the EU, with 58% saying they trusted it.

For the first time, the percentage of those feeling more satisfied with how democracy works in Spain is higher than that relating to democracy in the EU:

- The Spanish public feels fairly satisfied with how democracy works in Spain as well as in the EU. 52% (48%, EB60.1) of the poll says they feel fairly satisfied with how democracy works in Spain, although another 24% do not feel very satisfied with it.
- 48% of Spanish respondents feel fairly satisfied with how democracy works in the EU. 20% of the poll does not feel very satisfied with democracy in the EU.

Issue Analysis VI: Spanish thoughts on the reforms of the EU institutions

The Spanish public does not seem to have very strong opinion about certain changes within the European Institutions. Their opinion seems to be divided - with no clear majority thinking in a given way. Spanish respondents appear to have less strong views in comparison with other Europeans regarding aspects such as the right of veto:

- 42% think that there should be one vote for each Member State irrespective of its population size, while 28% say that voting should be in proportion to the size of a Member State's population.
- The equivalent EU15 averages were 43% and 34% respectively. In addition, a large amount of people said they did not know about this issue: 16% in the EU-15 but 23% in Spain.
- The Spanish public also feels divided about the duration of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers: although 39% think that the term should be longer than six months, 37% think that it should remain a six-month term as it currently is.
- In the rest of Europe, the majority (50%) is in favour of having longer Presidencies in contrast to 32% who would prefer it to be six months.
- In contrast with many EU Member States, the Spanish public also seems to be divided in respect of the use of the right of veto: for example, 39% (45% in the EU-15 overall) say that they would prefer the right of veto to be maintained for important national interests, while another 18% (24% in the EU-15) say this should be limited to a very few essential areas.
- Around 12% of all Europeans feel that the right of veto should disappear completely.
- 17% of the Spanish public thinks that the vast majority of the EU's budget is spent on administration, personnel and related costs in contrast to an EU-15 average of 24%.
- The Spanish sample also thought the EU budget was spent mainly on three other areas: employment and social affairs (12%), regional aid (12%), and foreign policy and aid to countries outside the EU (13%).
- According to Spanish respondents, around 6% of the EU budget is spent on research and agriculture.

Issue Analysis VII: Spanish opinion and the European Parliament elections

In this survey, Spanish citizens seem willing to participate in the European elections in June 2004. As will be seen from the results outlined below, there was an increase since spring 2003 of around +7 points for those saying that they will definitely vote. Whatever Spanish respondents' political orientation, intentions to vote increased across the board. The greatest increases were seen with respect to those on the left and the smallest were with respect to those belonging to the centre.

More specifically:

- 46% of Spaniards feel that the European elections are really important.
- 32% of the group said that they would definitely vote, placing their intentions at level 10 on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 is 'I will definitely not vote' and 10 is 'I will definitely vote').
- Around 10% of the poll said that they would definitely not vote in the June 2004 elections.
- 40% said they would vote on the basis of their own opinion on national issues and topics.
- Another 24% think that the policies proposed by the candidate are also an important reason for deciding for whom to vote.
- 36% of those supporting the Left said they would definitely vote - virtually identical to the 35% of those supporting the Right.
- There is a seven-percentage point increase in the intention to participate (those saying they would definitely vote) among those claiming to support the Left from 29% in spring 2003 to 36% in spring 2004.
- More men (33%) than women (28%) say they would vote in the elections.
- Madrid seems to be the region where there is least motivation to participate, with only 15% of respondents saying they would definitely vote, compared to Galicia where 44% said they would definitely vote in the elections.
- 46% of the Spanish public claims they have heard and/or seen election candidates on the television. A further 5% said they had done so by using the Internet.
- 34% of the group said they were interested in such information (on European Parliament candidates and elections).

Issue Analysis VIII: Spanish Public opinion on Globalisation

In the current survey, some questions were asked relating to globalisation, in order to get an insight as to the way Spaniards (and Europeans in general) feel about this issue. It can be seen that the majority of the Spanish poll is not against globalisation, although they feel concerned about its effects and how these might be controlled.

It can be seen that:

- 46% of Spaniards feel that globalisation is a good thing for their country.
- This is 6 percentage points above the EU-15 average of 40%.
- Around 55%, however, think that globalisation concentrates most of the power in large companies at the expense of others.
- 43% (55%: EU15 average) of Spanish respondents believe that globalisation has negative effects on the environment.
- 33% of Spaniards agree that globalisation makes it difficult to control the quality of food products sold in their country, while another 36% disagree that globalisation cuts the prices of products and services through increased competition.
- 32% of the Spanish public agreed that globalisation leads to a duller and more uniform world.
- 26% of the poll thinks that the European Union is the best organisation for controlling the effects of globalisation. A further 16% think that citizens themselves are the best to tackle this task and 19% think the Spanish government is the most appropriate body.
- 27% of Spanish men think that European Union is best in controlling the effects of globalisation, while women seem to have a more divided opinion, with 19% thinking that it is the Spanish government and 21% the EU.
- Only 9% of women trust the United Nations for controlling the effects of globalisation, while 21% of Spanish men said they trust this organisation.

CONCLUSIONS EB 61

Overall, Spanish citizens are seen to have a greater interest in EU-related issues, although they seem to have low levels of knowledge in many instances. As seen from the responses to the 'True and False' questions, the Spanish public does not know much about certain basic subjects. However, their interest in participating in elections and/or hearing and getting to know candidates for the European Parliament elections are important elements to be taken into consideration with respect to the public's motivations. The Spanish public would also appear to be more interested in issues such as terrorism, immigration, employment and external aid. However, they feel that most of the EU budget is spent on administrative and personnel costs.

More specifically:

- 61% of Spanish respondents feel that their personal job situation will be the same in the year to come.
- 58% of the Spanish group believes that terrorism is one of the most important problems facing Spain while unemployment (33%) and immigration (20%) are the second and third most important issues.
- In general, Spanish knowledge in respect to facts about the EU is similar to other EU countries – at a very low level.
- Very few Spanish know the correct number of Member States of the European Union or the date of the next European elections.
- The Spanish public feels that the EU has a good image in the media.
- 27% say they are well informed, while another 24% say they feel completely uninformed about the new Member States. The majority of the poll (50%) feels that they are not very well informed and only 2% feel they are very well informed.
- 46% of Spanish respondents think that the image of the EU is more or less positive, while 34% think its image is neutral and a further 13% that it is very positive.
- Daily newspapers and the radio are the two Spanish institutions that enjoy high percentages of trust: 61% of Spaniards polled said they tended to trust the press and 67% said the same for the radio.
- Feelings about being European and towards the European Union show a clear improvement with 48% of the poll saying that they feel very attached to the EU.
- For the majority of the Spaniards surveyed (51%), the EU means first and foremost freedom to travel, study and work throughout the EU.

- The euro (50%), economic prosperity (32%), cultural diversity (29%) or having a stronger voice in the world (29%) were the aspects that the Spanish public most associate with the European Union.
- The Spanish public feels fairly satisfied with how democracy works in Spain, as well as in the EU. 52% (48%, EB60.1) of Spaniards say they feel fairly satisfied with how democracy works in Spain, while 24% say they do not feel very satisfied with it.
- In relation to the EU, 48% of the Spanish poll feels fairly satisfied with how democracy works in the EU, compared with 20% who are not very satisfied with it.
- There is still a low level of trust of the Spanish government with an increase of +2 percentage points, since autumn 2003, of those saying that they tended not to trust the government, (in EB 61, 52% of the poll said that they tended not to trust the Spanish government compared with 50% in EB60.1).
- 42% of Spanish respondents think that there should be one vote for each Member State in the Council of Ministers, while 28% say that voting should be in accordance with the size of Member States' populations.
- In contrast to many EU Member States, the Spanish public seems divided in respect to the use of the right of veto: for example, 39% (45% in the EU-15 average) say that they would prefer the right to veto to be retained in order to preserve essential national interests, while another 18% (24% in the EU-15) say it should be limited to a very few essential areas.
- 46% of the Spanish public feels that the European elections are really important.
- 32% of the group said they would definitely vote, placing their intentions on level 10 on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 1 is 'I will definitely not vote' and 10 is 'I will definitely vote').
- Around 10% of the Spanish poll said that they would definitely not vote in the European Parliament elections of June 2004.
- 36% of those affiliated to more left wing parties said they would definitely vote – a figure very close to the 35% of those supporting the right wing.

ESPECIFICACIONES TÉCNICAS DEL EUROBARÓMETRO 61
ESPAÑA

Reagrupación de las regiones

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)

LOS NÚMEROS ENTRE PARÉNTESIS INDICAN LA NUMERACIÓN USADA EN EL NUTS 2
(COMUNIDADES AUTÓNOMAS)