

EUROBAROMETER 63.4

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2005

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CYPRUS

Turkish Cypriot Community

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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.

SUMMARY

Standard Eurobarometer 63.4- Turkish Cypriot Community- Spring 2005

This is the second Standard Eurobarometer survey carried out in the Turkish Cypriot Community. The first (Eurobarometer 62) was carried out between 15-28 October 2004, while this one took place between 13 -31 May 2005 and was carried out by KADEM under the auspices of TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium created between Taylor Nelson Sofres and EOS Gallup Europe.

1. Life in the Turkish Cypriot Community

Most of the Turkish Cypriots say they are satisfied with the life they live.

Two-thirds of Turkish Cypriots say they are happy with their lives while the percentage of those who are not happy with their lives is limited to 32%. Compared to the Eurobarometer 62 results, there has been a 17-point decrease in the number of the Turkish Cypriots who said they are very happy with their lives and an increase of 18 points in the number of those who said they are happy.

Life is better compared to the past.

A good portion (62%) of Turkish Cypriots think life is better now compared with 5 years ago.

Turkish Cypriots are optimistic about the future - mostly in terms of their life in general and the economy.

Two-thirds of Turkish Cypriots expect that life will be better in the next 5 years. They also expect that life in general and the economy will be better within the next 12 months.

This optimistic perspective has strengthened over time.

Compared to the Eurobarometer 62 results, there has been a 5-point increase in the levels of optimism of Turkish Cypriots.

Unemployment is the biggest problem. The economic situation is one of the most important societal problems.

Although Turkish Cypriots are optimistic about the economy, they listed the economic situation as the third most important problem. There has been a 25-point decrease in the number of Turkish Cypriots who consider the economic situation to be a problem, compared with the Eurobarometer 62 results. Crime is increasingly becoming a problem.

There is an increasing level of satisfaction among Turkish Cypriots with the way democracy works in the Turkish Cypriot Community.

Turkish Cypriots are generally (55%) satisfied with the way democracy works in the Turkish Cypriot Community. This shows an increase of 22 points since Eurobarometer 62.

Turkish Cypriots are more satisfied with the way democracy works than the average EU 25 citizen.

The level of satisfaction among Turkish Cypriots with the way democracy works locally (55%) is higher than the average satisfaction level in the EU 25 (52%). This is in contradiction with the feeling of distrust expressed by Turkish Cypriots towards political parties. While trust for political parties among Turkish Cypriots remained at 40%, 52% expressed distrust. Despite the fact that Turkish Cypriots tend not to trust political parties, they are happier with the way democracy works.

2. Trust in Institutions

There is increasing trust among Turkish Cypriots in the EU.

The recorded level of trust among Turkish Cypriots in the EU is higher than that of EU 25 average. Compared with the Eurobarometer 62 results, there is an increase of 2 percentage points in the level of trust expressed by Turkish Cypriots in the EU. It is interesting to note that although the levels of trust expressed by Turkish Cypriots in individual EU institutions, such as the European Commission and the European Parliament, decreased during this period, their level of trust in the EU increased. Additionally, 66% of Turkish Cypriots said they are happy with the way democracy works in the EU. It should be noted that this number is higher than the percentage of Turkish Cypriots (55%) who said they are satisfied with the way democracy works in the Turkish Cypriot Community.

Almost half of Turkish Cypriots said they do not trust the United Nations.

The level of trust in the UN among Turkish Cypriots is lower than the EU 25 average.

3. Opinion on Membership and Image of the EU

Turkish Cypriots have a positive view of EU membership and this percentage has increased since Eurobarometer 62.

Those who think EU membership is a good thing make up a large portion (71%) of Turkish Cypriots. There has been an increase of 4 points (compared with Eurobarometer 62 results) in the percentage of the Turkish Cypriots who think EU membership has advantages. 68 % (well above the EU 25 average of 47%) of Turkish Cypriots think EU membership is a good thing.

There are great expectations among Turkish Cypriots with regard to the role of EU in their lives in the future.

72% of Turkish Cypriots expect the EU to play a bigger role in their lives in the future.

The EU has more of an economic and political meaning for Turkish Cypriots.

Turkish Cypriots listed economic prosperity (48%), peace (47%), democracy (36%) and social protection (36%) as answers to what the EU means for them personally.

When asked about regional attachments, Turkish Cypriots have a lower level of attachment towards Europe.

Turkish Cypriot levels of attachment to their country (96%) are above the EU 25 average (91%). Most Turkish Cypriots do not feel attached to Europe.

4. Attitudes towards the future development of the EU

Turkish Cypriots support the further development and expansion of the EU.

When asked about the future development of the EU, Turkish Cypriots said they support the following: A Common Foreign Policy, Common Foreign and Security Policy, Political Union and Economic and Monetary Union respectively. Additionally, 64% of Turkish Cypriots said they support the further enlargement of the EU.

Turkish Cypriots are also in favour of an EU Minister of Foreign Affairs.

5. Knowledge and Information on the EU

Turkish Cypriots claim they know more about the EU than the EU 25 average.

When asked to evaluate their knowledge on the EU, Turkish Cypriots claimed they have an average level of knowledge (5.1/10). This number puts the Turkish Cypriots as the second in line after the Dutch (5.3/10) in terms of their self-perceived knowledge about the EU.

Nevertheless, when asked about the workings of the EU, the real level of knowledge of Turkish Cypriots remains below the EU 25 average.

Turkish Cypriots who claim to be the second most informed group on the EU in fact have an actual level of knowledge that is below the EU 25 average.

Turkish Cypriots do not know much about the EU Constitution.

Additionally, we can say that Turkish Cypriots are not well informed on how the EU budget is spent.

Turkish Cypriots think most of the EU budget is spent on Scientific Research.

Turkish Cypriots prefer to get their information on the EU from television.

When asked about where they get their information on the EU, 3 out of 4 Turkish Cypriots said they get this information from television.

Turkish Cypriots think the local media give too much and too positive information on the EU.

Turkish Cypriots think that television (54%), newspapers (50%) and radio (42%) give too much coverage to the EU.

6. EU Constitution

Turkish Cypriots do not know much about the EU Constitution.

When asked whether they personally know about the EU Constitution, a high number of Turkish Cypriots (44%) said they have heard about the Constitution but did not know about its contents, while 39% said they have not heard anything about the Constitution.

Nevertheless, they support the Constitution.

Although they have limited information on it, Turkish Cypriots have a positive attitude towards the EU Constitution.

Turkish Cypriots think the Constitution will make the EU more democratic, transparent and powerful.

Additionally, there is a belief among Turkish Cypriots that with the Constitution, the EU will be more powerful, competitive and have a more social content.

7. The EU's Position in the World

Turkish Cypriots have a positive attitude towards the role of the EU.

The majority of Turkish Cypriots (58%) think the EU plays a positive role in the endeavour for world peace. 48% think the EU plays a positive role in the fight against terrorism. 62% think the EU's role in the world economy is positive and half of Turkish Cypriots think EU plays a positive role in the fight against poverty. Lastly, 52% of Turkish Cypriots think the EU has a positive role to play in environmental protection.

Turkish Cypriots have optimistic hopes with regard to the European Economy.

When asked about the economy of the EU, 84% of Turkish Cypriots said the European economy is in a good position. While 75% of Turkish Cypriots believe that in the next 5 years the European economy will be in a better position, this percentage only reaches 56% among EU 25 respondents.

Turkish Cypriots are also positive about globalization.

When asked about what globalization means, Turkish Cypriots said the associated it with new opportunities and increased foreign investment respectively.

8. Opinion and knowledge of young people regarding the EU

Turkish Cypriot youth is not as enthusiastic as those aged 55 and above in supporting the EU on some issues, while the 40-54 group is the most Eurosceptic.

When we look at the EU 25 in general, we see that the 15-24 age group has the most positive attitude towards the EU. In contrast to this, the segment aged 55 and above seems to be very Eurosceptic and has a negative attitude. This does not hold for Turkish Cypriots. Generally, we can see that the 40-54 age group is the most Eurosceptic, while those aged 55 and above tend to have more positive attitudes towards the EU than the 15-24 age group.

Nevertheless, the EU has a more positive image among the 15-24 age group.

The segment that shows greatest support for a European political union is the 15-24 age group.

The 25-39 age group is the most informed on the EU, while the least informed are aged 15-24.

The EU has the following meanings respectively for the Turkish Cypriot 15-24 age group: Economic prosperity, social protection, peace, democracy, freedom of travel throughout the EU, etc.

Turkish Cypriot youth (15-24) accesses information on the EU via television, daily newspapers, discussions with family etc, and the Internet. The use of the Internet to get information on the EU is lower than the EU 25 average.