

EUROBAROMETER 63.4

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2005

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GERMANY

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Explaining Europe better!

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Highlights

Unemployment is the central concern of Germans

- More Germans (+ 6 points) say that they are more worried about their personal job situation than in autumn 2004.
- 15% (+ 5 points) believe that the job situation will get better. However, a majority of 54% of Germans still expect a tightening of the job situation.

Germans, as well as Europeans in general, are in favour of a European constitution. However, they heavily criticize the information policy.

- Although most Europeans admit to being poorly informed about the draft version of the European Constitution, a majority (48%) is in favour of the Constitution, while 28% are outspoken critics.
- In Germany, 59% were in favour of and 21% against the Constitution.

Germans are very sceptical about further enlargement

- 40% of Germans think that no new countries should join the EU. Only 11% want the EU to remain open for all countries that want to join, while 44% would let a few, selected countries into the European Union.
- Only France and Austria have a lower level of openness to enlargement at 10%.

There is disaffection with the state of democracy in Germany and Europe

- 53% of all Europeans think that their vote does not count in the European Union.
- In Germany, 55% think the same, the higher figure stemming from the perception of East Germans (66%) who believe that their voice does not count in Europe.

2. Executive Summary

Personal satisfaction remains high. The development of the job market is seen critically.

- Satisfaction of Germans with their personal life remains at a high level. 83% (-1 point) are very satisfied or satisfied with the life they lead and 65% (+4 points) believe that this will stay the same.
- Compared with the rest of Europe, Germans occupy a middle position. The most satisfied are still the Danes, of whom 67% are very satisfied (+3 points) and 31% are satisfied with the life they lead.
- The lowest in the satisfaction scale is still Bulgaria. 70% of all Bulgarians are unhappy with the life they lead.

Unemployment is the central concern of Germans

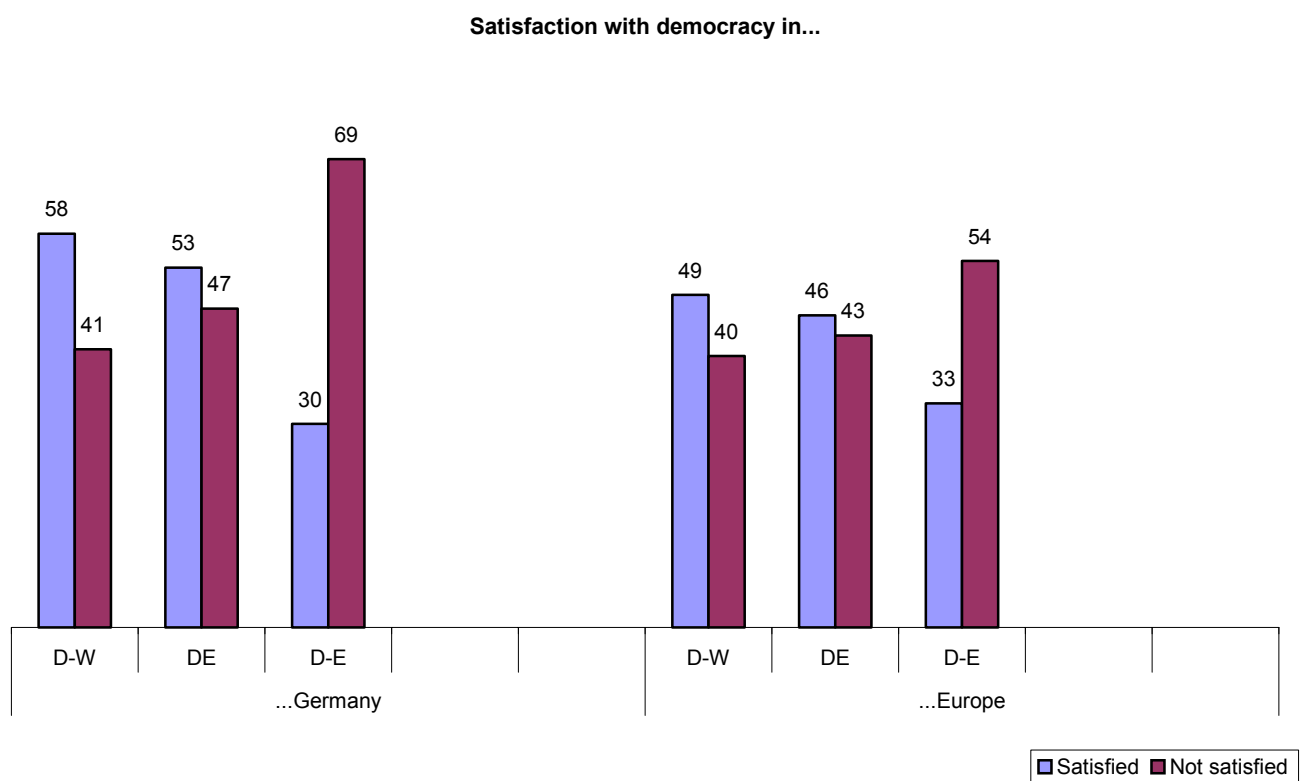
- More Germans (+6 points) say that they are worried about their personal job situation than in autumn 2004.
- 15% (+5 points) believe that the job situation will get better. However, a majority (54%) of Germans still expect a tightening of the job situation.

The image of the European Union has fallen slightly

- 42% (-5 points) of Germans have a positive image of the EU, while 21% tend to see the EU negatively. In Europe overall, 47% tend to see the EU positively, while 19% have a negative image of it.
- Membership of the EU is still seen positively by a majority of Germans (58%, -2 points). Looking across Europe, the Germans are somewhat above the average of 54% (-2 points).
- Every second German (50%, +1 point) thinks that EU membership is good for their country, while 43% (+1 point) oppose this view.
- 47% (+3 points) of Germans want the European Union to play a more important role in their lives.
- To Germans, Europe still means living in peace (53%, +1 point). This perception is exceeded only by figures regarding the freedom of movement. The possibility to travel, study and work everywhere in Europe is the most important image that Germans have of the European Union (58%). Furthermore, the Euro as the common currency of a group of EU countries (49%) and the cultural diversity of Europe complete the German image of the EU.
- In comparison with the last survey, Germans are more sceptical with regard to European Institutions. Only 39% (-8 points) trust the European Union. With this result, the trust of the Germans undercut those of Europeans in general (44%, -6 points)

Disaffection with the state of democracy in Germany and Europe

- 53% of all Europeans think that their vote does not count in the European Union.
- In Germany, 55% share this view, the higher figure stemming from the perception of East Germans 66% of whom believe that their voice does not count in Europe.
- Every second German is satisfied with the functioning of German democracy (53%), although this figure was 8 points higher in autumn 2004. The most significant drop happened in East Germany (-17 points). Satisfaction with the functioning of democracy in East Germany is at 30% while it is at 58% (-6 points) in West Germany. 69% of East German respondents do not agree with the way democracy functions in Germany. Across Europe, 53% are satisfied with the functioning of democracy in their own country, while 44% are not.



Basis: 24801 EU-citizen 15 years and older / 1520 German citizen 15 years and older

Germans as well as Europeans in general are in favour of a European Constitution. However, they are heavily critical of the information policy.

- Although most Europeans admit to being poorly informed about the draft version of the European Constitution, a majority (48%) is in favour of the Constitution while 28% are outspoken opponents.
- In Germany, 59% were in favour of and 21% against the Constitution.
- 81% of all Europeans have heard of the European Constitution. However, 68% admit that they know very little or nothing about the constitution.
- In Germany, every fourth respondent does not know that a draft version of an European Constitution exists (24%) and only 11% believe that they are very well informed of its content. 66% believe that they are poorly informed.

- Even in France (46% pro and 44% against) and the Netherlands (49% pro and 43% against), the mood is in favour of the European Constitution. Those figures should not be interpreted as support for the specific draft version but as a sign of support for a European constitution in principle.

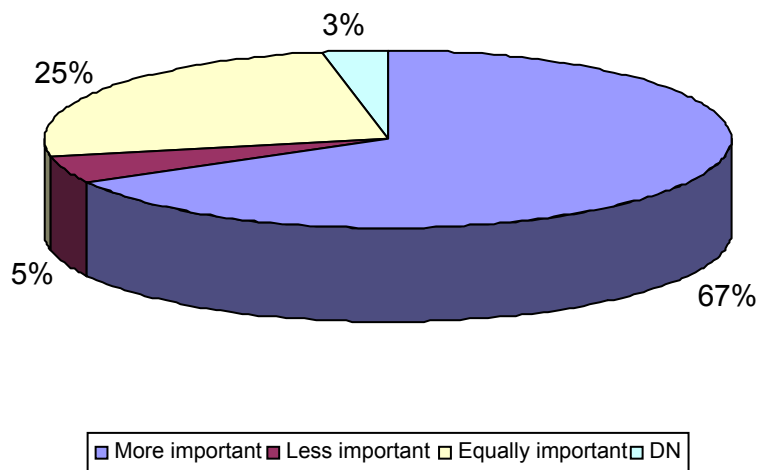
Germans are very sceptical about further enlargement

- 40% of Germans think that no new countries should join the EU. Only 11% want the EU to remain open for membership to all countries that want to join, while 44% would let some selected countries into the European Union.
- Only France and Austria have a lower level of openness to enlargement: 10%.
- Especially significant is the dismissive position in regard to the two future member states Bulgaria (59% rejection) and Romania (66% rejection) and Turkey, whose membership a huge majority of Germans (74%) reject. For 29% of Germans, the prospect of Turkish membership would have been a reason not to vote for the EU Constitution if there had been a referendum in Germany.

Europe's role in the world

- More than two-thirds (67%) of all Germans think that the European Union has become more important internationally.

**Has the EU become more important internationally /
German perspective?**



Basis: 1520 Germans 15 years and older

- German support for a common European Foreign and Security Policy has fallen slightly from 80% to 78% and it is stagnating at this high level. Throughout the EU, especially in the new member states, people are convinced supporters of common policies: 75% in the NMS are in favour while the level of agreement in the older member states is at 66%.
- A budget reversal in regard to the common foreign and security policy is favoured by a clear majority of 66% of Germans and 50% of all Europeans. In

the new member states, 39% would allocate more resources for a common policy.

- When asked whether the EU could become the strongest global economic power in the course of the next five years, Germans are very sceptical. 71% (+2 points) do not believe in such a possibility. The corresponding Europe-wide opinion is somewhat more optimistic, however only every third European (35%, -3 points) believes in the Lisbon goals, according to which Europe shall be the strongest economy in the world.
- This sceptical attitude becomes clear when comparisons are made with the perceived economic power of Europe's competitors. 39% of Germans and Europeans believe that the USA is economically more powerful. Even clearer is the result if the EU is compared with Japan. 44% of the Germans and 45% of the Europeans think that the EU performs worse than that competitor.
- Economic performance has an indirect effect on the quality of life. In this field, Europeans and Germans rate the quality of life in their own realm more highly than in competitors' economies. Quality of life in the EU is considered by 46% of Europeans in general and 51% of Germans as being better than in the USA. Compared with Japan, both Europeans and Germans think that life is better in the EU. Compared with China, 70% of Europeans and 67% of Germans share this view. India is seen as the economy with the lowest quality of life with 76% of Europeans overall and 71% of Germans believing that the EU performs better.

Purpose of spending and the priorities of the EU

- In spring 2005, a majority of Germans (44%, -4 points), as well as a majority of Europeans (31%, +1 point), believed the largest proportion of the EU budget was spent on administrative tasks, personnel and facilities. Only 16% (-2 points) of Germans and 17% of European respondents (+1 point) correctly identified agricultural expenditure as comprising the largest single heading of the EU's budget.
- 60% of Germans (+7 points) expect the EU to do everything possible to fight unemployment.
- Combating poverty and the prevention of social exclusion are considered central aims for the European Union by Germans (41%, +6 points) as well as by Europeans (44%, +4 points).
- The maintenance of peace and security – a founding motive of the EU – remains a very important goal for Germans (38%, -1 point) and Europeans (31%, -3 points).
- That there should be a closer relationship between the EU and the demands of its citizens is favoured by 27% (+5 points) of German respondents and 19% (+3 points) of Europeans. After the demand for fighting poverty and social exclusion, this point has seen the biggest rise in Germany.

Knowledge of citizens about the EU

- In Germany, the share of those who admit that they know little about the EU has fallen slightly (62%, -5 points). However, the share of those who claim they know nothing at all about the EU is one point higher (12%) than in the last survey in autumn 2004.

- Germans (81%, +/-0 points) as well as Europeans in general (70%, -1 point) get information about the EU mainly from television. Other sources include the daily press (Germany 60%, -7 points; Europe 43%, -6 points), radio (Germany 46%, +2 points; Europe 32%, -2 points) as well as the Internet (Germany 23%, +1 points; Europe 22%, +1 points) and magazines (Germany 23%, -4 Pp; Europe 17%, -5 points).