

EUROBAROMETER 63.4

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2005

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

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.

Eurobarometer 63.4 - Public Opinion Survey

REPORT STRUCTURE – (See National Report Spain)

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INTRODUCTION

Between the 9th of May and 14th of June of 2005, the European Commission's DG Press and Communication carried out wave EB63.4 of the Standard Eurobarometer. The study includes a Standard National Report and an Executive Summary focusing on the main conclusions about public opinion in Spain. It is also used as a framework for recommendations to the EC Representation in Spain. This executive summary will summarise the most important conclusions of the Spanish report presented below in this document.

The Spanish Report of EB63.4 was structured around 5 themes of analysis, as seen in the table of contents. For each of the themes a list of topics is covered, such as public opinion and information on European issues or the personal satisfaction with EU actions and policies. Socio-demographic analysis of the data is done in order to highlight some of the findings of the Spanish case. Additionally, there are a series of data offered in the form of a follow-up to consecutive Eurobarometer surveys, carried out in recent years. For these data, the main trend is described for selected questions.

Novelties of EB 63.4 in respect to earlier editions include an analysis of the opinion of the Spanish public in respect to their feelings of being European, the European Constitution and the fears of the public relating to the future enlargement of Europe. Some attention is again focused upon issues such as the trust in the EU institutions, policies and activities, as well as an increased satisfaction with the way the EU works.

The website of the Eurobarometer can be consulted at:
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index_en.htm

Issue Analysis I: Spanish Opinion on Satisfaction with Life

Spanish optimism has remained stable in comparison with the last edition of EB62 last autumn.

Although Spanish optimism is higher than that of the rest of the Europeans, there is still a medium level of optimism as regards hopes for the coming year.

The Spanish public seems to be 'fairly satisfied' with the economic situation of their country, but rather pessimistic about "their personal household and job situation", where they mostly believe that things in 2006 will be the "same", as they were in the year 2005. Also in the present edition, "unemployment" and "housing" are important fears of the Spanish group as shown in the data.

More details include:

- 63% of the group feels "fairly satisfied" with the life they lead.
- Overall, Spanish interviewees think that their lives will improve in the next five years, with those living in Madrid being the most positive.
- 57% feels that their lives will improve in the next five years and another 32% feels that it will stay the "same".
- 46% of the poll feels that their life has improved during the last five years.
- Most of the group believes that the economic situation in their households will be the same, and almost a third feels that the employment situation in Spain will "improve" (29%).
- Once again, the Spanish thought that terrorism is the most important issue that Spain faces today, with 46% of the poll citing this.
- 30% of the group considers that the second most important issue that Spain faces is "immigration", and 28% feel the same about "unemployment"
- "Housing" and "crime" are the fourth and fifth most important issues for Spanish citizens with 20% and 16% respectively of the group sharing this view.
- "Unemployment" seems to be an important issue for 31% of the citizens interviewed in the regions of the north-west of Spain, 43% in the north-east and 19% in Madrid.

Issue Analysis II: Spanish Level of Confidence in the EU Institutions

Spanish public opinion seems to be divided as to their trust in the EU

- While 46% of the group said they “tend to trust” the EU another 40% said they “tend not to trust” the EU.
- Although the Spanish public seems to trust the EU and its role in the world, less than half of the group (43%) said they trusted the European Commission
- Two out of three Spaniards polled think that the role of the EU institutions (such as the EU Commission, the EU Parliament, the Court of Justice or the European Central Bank) is ‘very important for the EU’.
- Among the various occupational groups interviewed, there is an overall positive attitude towards the EU institutions. For example, 52% of the self-employed, 53% of managers and white-collar workers, 40% of manual workers and 32% of house persons, said they “tend to trust” the EU Commission.
- 57% of the citizens of Madrid said they “tend to trust” the European Commission, another 60% trusts the EU Parliament and one in two said they trust the European Court of Justice, with this region showing itself to be the one with the strongest feelings of trust in the EU institutions.
- As to the trust in the EU Commission there is a 10 percentage point difference between those living in rural areas and those living in bigger cities (38% compared with 48% respectively)
- Overall, trust in the EU institutions among the Spanish interviewees has fallen in this edition. Compared to earlier surveys, the “level of trust” in the EU has been lower, with the EU Parliament being the only institution that has maintained high levels of trust.

Issue Analysis III: Attitudes towards the EU

- 68% of the Spanish poll said they are "in favour" of the development of a European Union
- As in the rest of Europe, Spanish citizens value above all those characteristics of the European Union that are closely related with their daily lives.
- 41% of the group said the European Union means for them the 'Euro' and another 40% the 'freedom to travel, study and work in any part of the EU'.
- 26% of the group value the 'cultural diversity' in the European Union and almost a third the fact that 'their voice is stronger' in the EU.

Personal feelings about the meaning of the EU relate mostly to 'hope' and 'trust, according to 35% and 29% respectively of the Spanish surveyed.

- Almost one in two Spanish interviewees thinks that the image of the European Union is "fairly positive" and another 29% that this is "neutral".
- 66% said that being part of the EU is "something good" while another 19% thought that Spanish membership is "neither good nor bad".
- In a similar vein, 69% of the Spanish group (compared with the EU average of 55%) thought that Spain has "benefited" from its membership of the European Union, while only 15% said that Spain has "not benefited".

Issues in which the EU plays a	positive role	negative role
Economic situation in Spain	45	21
Increasing prices/inflation	21	48
Fight against unemployment	32	22
Fight against terrorism	61	12
Immigration	30	32

- Spanish citizens value the positive role played by the EU in terms of fighting terrorism and its impact on the economic situation in the country. In contrast, they think that the EU plays a less positive role when it comes to issues such as price increases/inflation.
- 55% of the group feels Spain is more stable economically because of its membership of the EU.

Issue Analysis IV: Spanish Feelings about EU integration issues

When Spanish citizens are asked about European integration they “tend to agree” that ‘bigger countries have more power in the EU’. 75% of the group shared this opinion while 11% said that they “tend to disagree” with this statement.

- 37% of the group agreed that ‘their voice counts in the EU’, a very similar percentage to the 38% European (EU-25) average.
- In the present edition, the Spanish public shows in general terms its support for the further development of the EU, its policies and institutions, although in the first few months 2005 some criticism of the actions of the EU was felt.

The majority of the Spanish poll thinks that the EU should have a European Constitution. 63% say they are “in favour” of the existence of an EU Constitution (the EU-25 average was 61%). However, 72% said that although they knew about its existence they thought that they knew too little about its contents.

- Spanish public opinion is “in favour” of a common Foreign Policy for all EU member states. 68% say they are “in favour”, while 13% say they are “against” this. In a similar vein, 70% of the Spanish poll say they are “in favour” of a common Security and Defence policy in the EU while 13% say they are “against” it.
- There is a certain division of opinion as to the future enlargement of the EU. While a third say they are “in favour” that the EU enlarges to include all the countries wishing to join, another third of the group say that the EU should be enlarged only to include some of the countries wishing to join.
- Turkey is the country for which there is greatest opposition for its future accession to the EU. Respecting human rights and large immigration flows towards the EU are the biggest concerns for the Spanish citizens relating to Turkey joining the EU.

	In Favour	Against
Switzerland	67	12
Iceland	60	13
Bulgaria	51	21
Croatia	49	23
Romania	48	26
Albania	47	25
Bosnia-Herzegovina	47	25
Serbia -Montenegro	46	24
Turkey	42	33

Issue Analysis V: Spanish opinion about Information on the EU

Spanish interviewees said they mostly use television as a source of information about the EU, its policies and actions. Daily newspapers were also very important while the numbers using the Internet reached 10% in this edition of the survey.

Television	66
Daily Press	35
Radio	24
Internet	10

Most of the poll said that their level of knowledge about the EU is situated between levels 4 and 5, on a scale where 1 means "I know nothing" and 10 means "I know a lot".

- Within the different occupational groups surveyed, the self-employed were among those who say they know most about the EU. 21% of this group situated their level of knowledge at level 7 of the scale from 1 to 10.
- In general, the Spanish public feels that the image of the EU in the media is 'good' and 42% think that its coverage as seen on television is "objective" while another 37% thought that its coverage on TV was "too positive".
- In terms of the amount of information that the Spanish public feels there is available in the media, the majority (46%) thinks that in the media they speak about the right amount about the EU.
- While a larger number of men interviewed (43%) in the Spanish group said they use daily newspapers for getting information about the EU, only 28% of women did so. In contrast, women rely on the TV mostly.
- When asked about whom they trust to get the information about the EU, they said they had most trust in journalists.
- Among the various issues that are priority for the EU, Spanish citizens think that fighting terrorism (41%) and fighting poverty and social exclusion (28%) should be the first two priorities.
- Fighting unemployment and maintaining peace were the third and fourth most important priorities for the EU according to the Spanish public interviewed for this edition.

Conclusions EB63.4

In this edition of Eurobarometer 63.4, information about Spanish public opinion was gathered around the latest developments in the EU. These included the support that European citizens show for the European Constitution, their knowledge and interest about EU activities, the image of the EU that they receive through the media, as well as the support they show towards future enlargement of the EU.

In general, Spanish public opinion was once more very positive in relation to the further development of the EU. They claim to have an average knowledge about the EU, its policies and actions situating their level of knowledge between level 4 and 5 on a scale from 1 to 10. They also say they favour the teaching of how the EU works in schools.

Most of them think they have so far benefited from their country's EU membership, and that their country's membership has been something good for them. They show great support for the future enlargement of the EU and they fully support the idea of having a common Foreign Policy as well as a common Defence and Security Policy for all member states.

The less positive aspects in the present edition were those concerning the levels of trust in some of the EU institutions, which have fallen since the autumn 2004 edition. Thus, while the public has maintained quite high levels of trust in the European Parliament, the European Commission is the one institution in which the Spanish public feels they have less trust. Also, other criticisms deal with the social and economic situation in Spain but also in Europe, while security, fighting terrorism and unemployment are the two main concerns they have about the future.

In this survey, housing and immigration have also been ranked high in the consideration of important issues that Spain faces in the present.

As to the future enlargement of the EU, the Spanish public seems to be divided since a third believes that it should include any country

wishing to join, while another third of the group interviewed thought that it should include only some of the countries wishing to join.

Once more, Spanish concerns mostly revolve around issues of economic and social stability since they expect that unemployment and crime will rise.

Overall, the image of the EU as portrayed by the Spanish media seems to be very positive, and the Spanish public considers journalists a trustworthy source of information.

They feel that Spanish media speak about the right amount about the EU, and that the information they get is usually objective or too positive.

Television is the preferred source of the Spanish public, with the daily press and the radio coming second and third in their list of preferred sources. Internet has also maintained its fourth place with a stable 10% saying to use this source for getting information about the EU.