

EUROBAROMETER 63.4

PUBLIC OPINION IN EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2005

NATIONAL REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ROMANIA

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This report was produced for the European Commission's Delegation in Romania.

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.

Abbreviations

EB Eurobarometer

EB62 Eurobarometer, data collected in 30 countries between October 2 and November 8, 2004, and for Romania between October 14 and October 27, 2004

EB63.4 Standard Eurobarometer, data collected in 30 countries between May 9 and June 14, 2005, and for Romania between May 23 and June 3, 2005

EU25 The European Union, data collected in all Member States

EU15 Europe of 15 or “the old Member States”

NMS Europe of the 10 new Member States, which acceded in 2004

Figures

Figure 1. The percentage of people who have confidence in the EU, by EB63 countries (answers to question QA7.5, the variant “tend to trust”)

Figure 2. The percentage of people who have confidence in justice, by EB63 countries (answers to question QA7.1, the variant “tend to trust”)

Figure3. The percentage of people who are satisfied with their personal life, by EB63 countries (answers to question QA3, the variants “very satisfied” and “fairly satisfied”)

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Data and assumptions

1. About 30,000 people in 29 European states answered the questions of the 63rd EUROBAROMETER (EB) ⁱ survey between May 9 and June 14, 2005. The data for Romania were collected by TNS CSOP between May 23 and June 3 through direct interviews with 1,004 persons.
2. The first Eurobarometer national report for Romania was the one using the data collected in the autumn of 2004. This report, the second in the national series, shows continuity with the first report.
3. The principles used in drawing up this report were the following:
 - multiple comparisons – in time (with EB62 systematically and with EB61 occasionally), in space (with EU 25, EU 15, NMSs and candidate countries). As well as comparisons with the average European citizen in the old EU Member States (EU 15) and with European citizens in the ten new Member States (NMS), we frequently used comparisons with Bulgaria. This comparison is justified not only by proximity but also by the “roadmap” for accession that the two countries have in common. A comparison between the “average Romanian” and the “average Bulgarian”, in addition to one based on travel or impressions gained from reading, that comes from the interpretation of the survey data could be serve as a useful source of information. Information about our neighbours and also information about ourselves based on comparisons with our neighbours;
 - the use of global comparisons between countries as well as comparisons between the opinions of similar segments of the population in different countries;
 - the use of an appropriate editing style to facilitate easy communication: journalistic but balanced with a technical annex analysing the data. With a simple editing style, we used only percentage points as a quantitative data analysis method. We frequently used the first person plural (“we, Romanians...”, “we are”) or singular (“I think”, “I have selected...”, etc.). Of course, all style specifications stand for intentions. To what extent these intentions have become an act of editing is another matter;
 - the text of the questionnaire included in the annex is the one which was actually used for data collection. Its translation expresses the point of view of the institution which collected the data. In this way, the reader will find it easier to judge the answers in relation to the way the questions were worded.
4. We systematically observed the profile of the persons who answered the questions, irrespective of the country they come from, from the point of view of:

- | | |
|--|--|
| • who they are biologically... | males, females |
| • what they know - human capital estimated through.... | young, old, middle-aged people
school education, elementary, secondary,
higher education
which media they use
knowledge of foreign languages |
| • what material resources they have... | in particular modern, electronic gadgets |
| • what they believe in... | religious faith |
| • what connects them through the language they speak.... | residents of a Latin or non-Latin country |
| • what connects them in terms of residence.... | urban, rural |

What does the European Union mean to respondents?

“What does the EU mean to you personally...”

5. To almost 60% of Romanians, the EU means first and foremost the free movement of persons. The next three main meanings – in answer to the question “What does the European Union mean to you personally?” – are prosperity, peace and democracy which are associated with the EU. The belief that membership of the Union brings democracy is considerably stronger among Romanians than among citizens of other nations, with a score of 49% (seven percentage points lower than in the autumn of 2004). The public agenda in Romania with respect to the EU – what Romanians want, what they expect from membership of the Union – is stable, with the order of preferences in 2005 identical with those of 2004. Although general elections were held in Romania in the autumn of 2004, which were accompanied by an intense media campaign, the social issues of interest to the population remained, for the most part, unchanged.
6. In the series of concerns associated with EU integration, Romanians’ top concern is related to the difficulties which membership is expected to bring about for agriculture (55%), followed by concerns related to the higher payments into the EU budget that the country might have to pay (50%) and growing drug addiction (47%). The new concerns that Romanians have in relation to the EU, i.e. concerns with much higher scores in EB63 than in EB62, are related to agriculture (55% as against 41%), economic crisis (36% as against 30%) and the loss of social benefits (25% as against 18%).
7. Romanians’ expectations from the EU continue to be focused on combating poverty (67% in EB62, up to 68% in EB63), the maintenance of security in Europe (declining from 39% to 29%) and fighting unemployment (declining from 34% to 29%).

Democracy

8. Many Romanians, nearly 40%, cite the EU as being a democratic area *par excellence*, where democracy is stronger than in their own country. Nearly one-third of interviewees, believe that democracy does not work either in their own country or in the Union. A quarter of Romanians consider that democracy works in both their own country and in the Union. The predominant group, who considers that democracy works only in the Union, grew by about 6 percentage points between autumn 2004 and spring 2005. Romania is the country with the largest number of people who believe that democracy works better in the EU than in their own country.
9. Opinion about Romanian democracy and European democracy strongly depends on people's information and resources:
 - the variant "democracy works only in the EU" is shared in particular by well-off people, with a higher education level and a high or medium level of information about the EU institutions;
 - the variant "democracy does not work either here or there" is mainly shared by elderly people, with lower resources in terms of education, wealth, and information about EU;
 - the variant "democracy works both here and there" is mainly shared by young people having a medium level of education, fairly solid information about EU and a good financial situation.

Knowledge of

...the institutions

10. Between the two Eurobarometer surveys, Romania had the highest rate of improvement of knowledge about the EU institutions. The proportion of those who can be considered to have a "good deal of knowledge" about elementary institutional procedures within EU increased from 28% in the autumn of 2004 to 42% in the spring of 2005. Of course, this increase resulted from a simple test, based on only four questions (about the number of EU Member States, the election procedure for Members of the European Parliament, the date of the last European Parliament elections and the EU anthem – see question QA24 in the questionnaire annexed to the Report). Romania is still among the five countries with the lowest levels of knowledge about EU institutions (along with Bulgaria, Croatia, Turkey and the United Kingdomⁱⁱ).
11. The Romanians' poor knowledge of European institutions is characterised by polarity: on the one hand, there is a large segment of the population that tends to overrate their knowledge about the Union (around 50-60% of "naïve persons") and a group of "realists", who estimate their level of knowledge (30-40%) quite correctly. The Bulgarians, Croats, British and Swedes fall within the same category.
12. In Romania, those who are best informed about European institutions are young people living in towns and having a high level of school education, wide exposure to the media and good knowledge of foreign languages.

...the institutional vocabulary

13. Almost three-quarters of Romanians said they had positive feelings or a positive perception in connection with “social security”, “free trade” and “competitiveness”. In other words, an overwhelming majority considers that it is a good thing for people to receive pensions, health insurance benefits, unemployment benefits, etc., while the economy should be governed by the rules of free market, competition and competitiveness. Among the words cited most frequently as having negative connotations are “monopoly” and “globalisation”. A large number of persons claim to associate these terms with negative aspects.
14. Romanians’ opinion on globalisation is rather unstructured: 40% have a positive feeling towards this word, 25% give it a negative meaning and 35% give no answer to this question. Romania is among the top five countries as regards the number of “no answers” given to the question about globalisation (along with the Maltese, Bulgarians, Lithuanians and Latvians). The number of anti-globalisation persons is low in Romania compared with the scores recorded for Greece, France and East Germany where many respondents have a negative perception of the term.
15. On the whole, each of the Romanians interviewed expressed no opinion on 2.4 of the 10 questions of relating to institutional vocabulary (company, monopoly, competitiveness, social security, free trade, protectionism, globalisation, public service, trade union, reforms). A similar situation of minimal understanding of the meaning of the abovementioned words was seen in Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, Portugal and Northern Ireland.
16. The immediate living environment, urban or rural, and the degree of media consumption influence to a great extent the level of knowledge of the institutional vocabulary and of the meanings of the respective terms. The percentage of Romanians who attach a positive meaning to the term ‘competitiveness’, for instance, increases from 59% in the case of villagers with a low degree of media consumption to over 80% in the case of the people living in towns and having medium or high media consumption.

Confidence

...in the European Union

17. The Romanians' position compared with other nations with respect to the knowledge and perception of the EU could be described as a paradox. Although their knowledge about the Union is relatively poor, they tend to have a much better opinion about what they know about European institutions compared with other nations. Romania continues to be the nation with the highest degree of confidence in the EU (Figure 1), although the confidence score has slightly decreased from 74% to 68% between autumn 2004 and spring 2005..
18. The Romanians' positive attitude towards the EU is reflected not only in the confidence score, but also in the fairly high percentage of those who have a positive perception of the Union or who say that they are in favour of the European Constitutionⁱⁱⁱ (70% compared with 61% in EU 25).
19. The rate at which changes occur in the perception of the EU, from the angle of the question about confidence, varies across the Romanian social spectrum. Those with a higher level of education have the same level of confidence in the EU in 2005 as in 2004, the percentage being quite high: 78%. Conversely, there has been a dramatic drop in confidence on the part of those with reduced resources, and with a low stock of human capital. For instance, in the case of people with elementary education, the level of confidence in EU fell from 66% in the autumn of 2004 to 55% in May 2005.
20. This different dynamic of confidence, based on education levels, confirms once again that resources and human capital play an essential part in the Romanians' perception of the EU. Eurosceptics in Romania emerge to an increasing extent from amongst those with reduced resources or those with low resources of human capital.
21. In Romania, confidence in the EU tends to be stronger among young people with a higher education level, greater media consumption, a comfortable lifestyle and access to the Internet.
22. Confidence in the EU among the urban population is only 2 points stronger than among villagers (69% in urban areas as against 67% in rural areas). The difference is practically insignificant. On the whole, villagers and townspeople in Romania show a similar degree of confidence in EU. However, the people with a medium education level in rural areas tend to be more confident in the Union (with a confidence score of 71%) than those with a similar education level in urban areas (with a confidence score of 61%)^{iv}.
23. For the EU 15 population, confidence in the Union is stronger among young males, having greater material and human capital, who are Catholics or Protestants and are citizens of non-Latin countries. The factors that bolster confidence in the EU among the population of NMS are more or less the same as those that favour confidence in the EU among the EU 15 population. The difference lies in the fact that education and religion have a lower influence on the level of confidence in EU across the NMS area.
24. The profile of confidence^v in institutions shows that Romania is closer to the NMS than to the EU 15. In this profile, confidence in international institutions

(EU and UNO) is stronger than confidence in national institutions. In the case of the EU 15 population, confidence in justice in their own countries tends to exceed levels of confidence in the EU/UNO.

25. There is a strong similarity between Romania and Bulgaria as regards the confidence profile. In both countries:
- confidence is greater in international institutions than in national ones;
 - confidence in justice comes close to the level of confidence in political institutions (Government and Parliament).

...in justice

26. The Romanians' confidence in justice stands at 35% (Figure 2), that is nine points more in spring 2005 compared to autumn 2004. Although this level of confidence has seen a substantial increase, Romania is still far behind the predominant trend in EU 15 where there is an almost 50% score of confidence in justice. Compared with the average scores in the NMS, Romania is five points ahead of them.
27. Social differentiation as regards distrust in justice is rather insignificant among Romania's population. It is easier to say who **does not** believe rather than who **does** believe in justice in this case. The Romanian model of perception of justice is closer to the one in the NMS, being dominated by deep distrust shown by the older population with medium and higher levels of education, living in urban areas.
28. Among the population in the EU 15, confidence in the legal system of their own countries tends to be stronger among young people with higher education, greater media consumption, good knowledge of foreign languages, comfortable living standards, living in rural areas, in non-Latin countries. Catholics and Protestants in these countries tend to have greater confidence in justice.

Socio-political context and membership of the European Union

Dissatisfaction and hope

29. Concerning domestic life, Romanians continue to be among the European citizens who are most dissatisfied with their "life in general" (Figure 3). With 55% of dissatisfied people, Romania is in second position in the EB63, with a score that is slightly lower than the Bulgarians' 70% score. It is positioned far away from the NMS average of 32%. In the EU 15, the percentage of those dissatisfied with their "life in general" stands at only 16%.
30. Dissatisfaction as a frame of mind seems to be justified by the low level of resources, if we only take as a criterion the poverty of Romanians who never spend their holidays outside their place of residence. With a 47% score in this respect, Romania is in the group of the poorest in terms of holiday spending, along with the populations of the Baltic States, Malta and Hungary.
31. "We are very dissatisfied with the life we lead but amongst the most optimistic", the majority of Romanians apparently think. Concerning social optimism, based

on the percentage of Romanians who say that they hope they will live better in five years' time, we are in the group of the top four European nations along with the Irish, the Spanish and the British (with over 55% claiming to be optimists).

Interest in politics

32. One quarter of the Romanians have stated that they usually do not discuss political issues. Nearly 60% say that they occasionally discuss political issues and only 14% are keen on discussing such issues. This is much in line with the European average: 55 + 15 + 30. 55% discusses political issues occasionally, 15% frequently and 30% never or very rarely. Except for small variations, the situation is similar in the EU 15, NMS and Romania.
33. The Romanians who discuss political issues more frequently are mainly grown-up males and older males with greater human capital resources (higher education, greater media consumption, good knowledge of foreign languages).
34. All the abovementioned factors play a similar role also in most EU Member States. In the EU 15, there are additional factors which boost interest in politics: the good financial situation of the household, belonging to Orthodox faith and having one's residence in an urban area. As Orthodox faith is mainly concentrated in Greece, the abovementioned situation may not be a result of the Orthodox religion alone, but also other factors associated with specific national variables.

Romanian membership of the Union

35. 45% of the EU25 poll is in favour of Romania's membership of the Union. The greatest support comes from the NMS, but also from some countries from "the old Union", such as Sweden, Greece and Denmark. On the whole, it is males with a higher education level, who are well off and live in towns who are most in favour of Romania joining the Union.

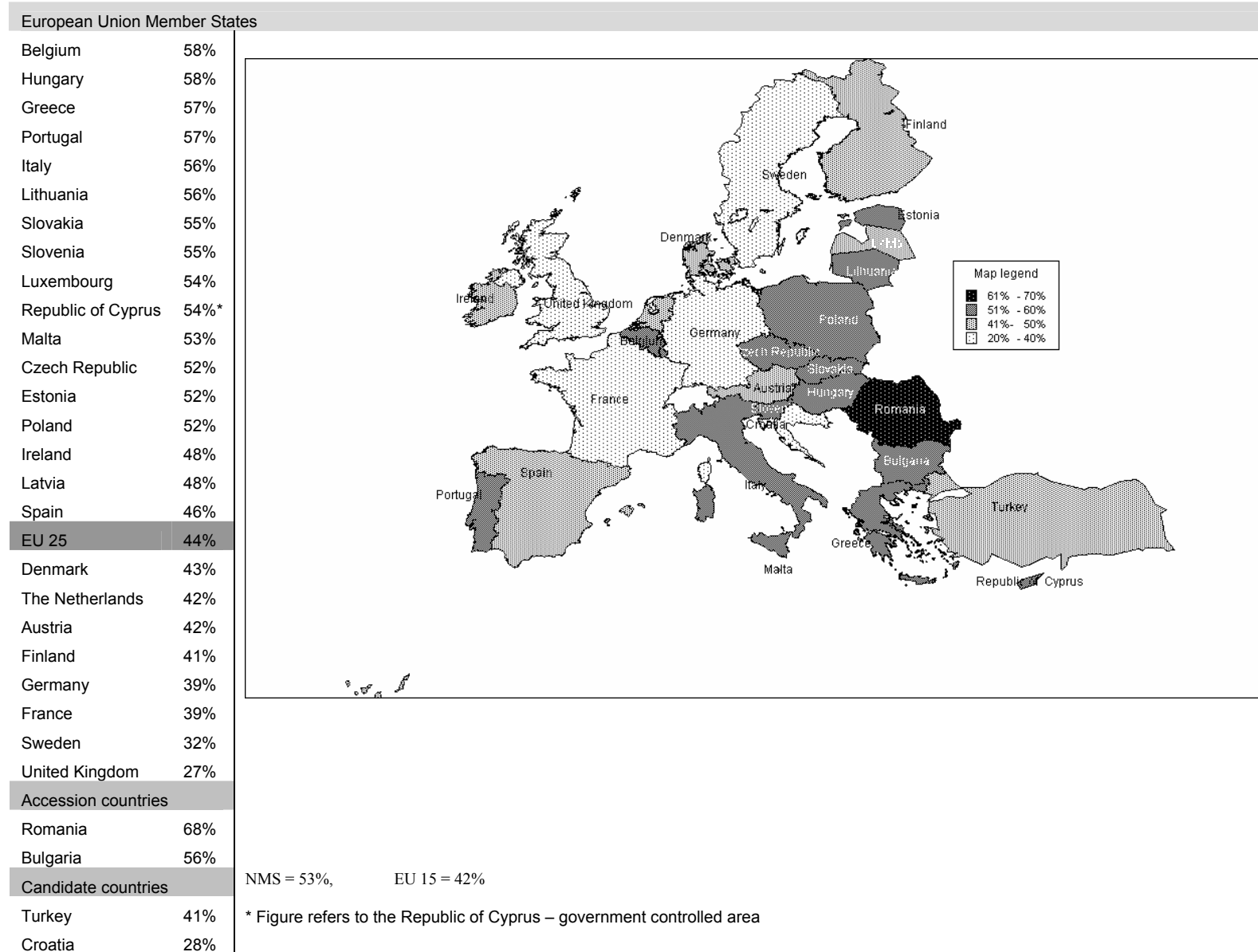


Figure 1.The percentage of people who have confidence in EU, by EB63 countries (answers to the question QA7.5, the variant “tend to trust”)



Figure 2. The percentage of people who have confidence in justice, by EB63 countries (answers to the question QA7.1, the variant “tend to trust”)

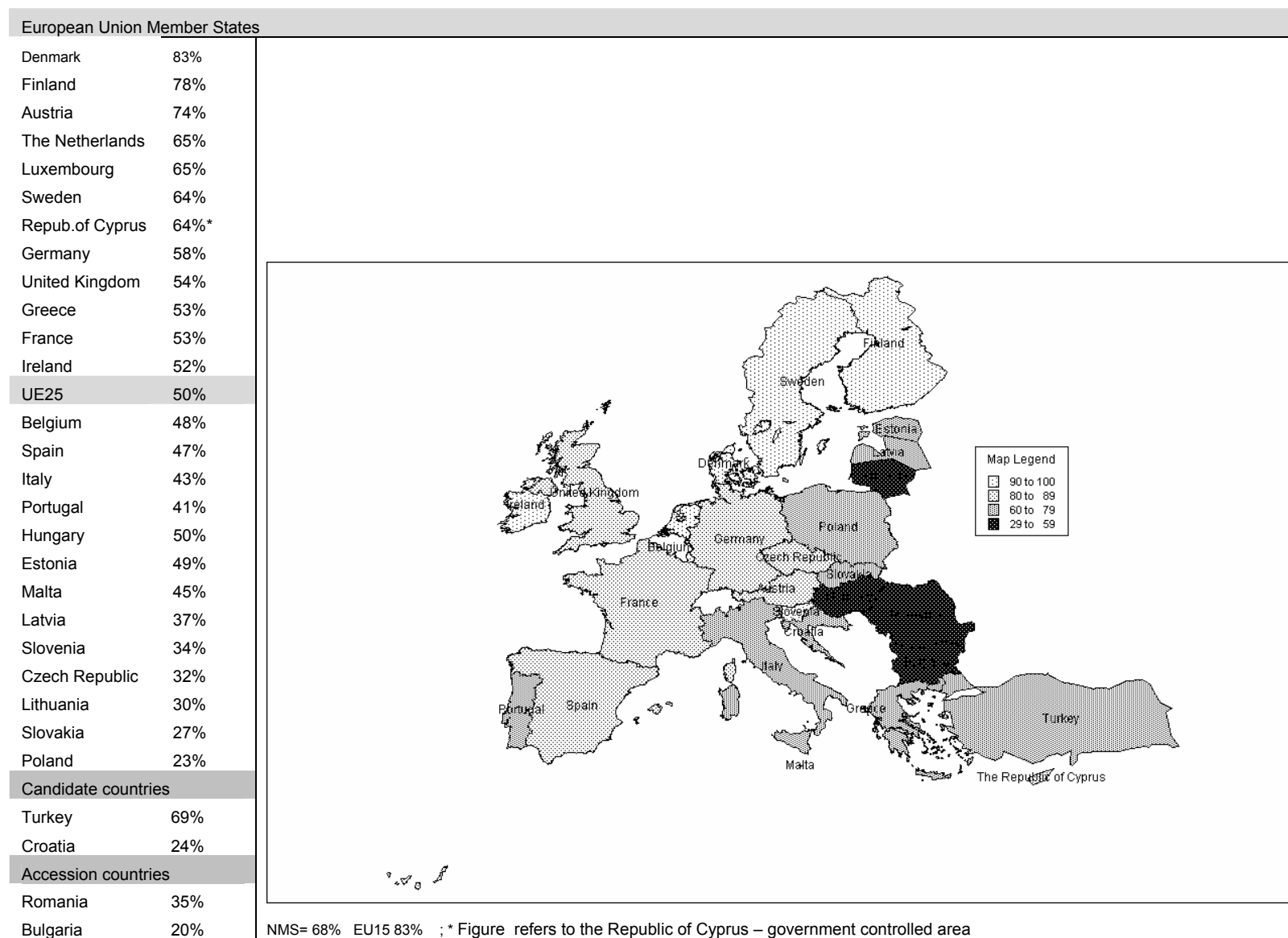


Figure 3. The percentage of people satisfied with their personal life, by EB63 countries (answers to the question QA3, the variants “very satisfied” and “fairly satisfied”)

Notes

ⁱ For technical details on data collection see Annex 1. Data processing for the National Report also included some sub-country specifications (e.g. Northern Ireland, West and East Germany, the Turkish Cypriot Community, etc.).

ⁱⁱ Of course, the explanation for the United Kingdom is different from that for the candidate countries.

ⁱⁱⁱ Answers to the question QA28.5.

^{iv} This ratio is recorded despite the fact that the level of information about the EU is higher in urban areas compared with rural areas, particularly for the education category under discussion. It probably has to do with a culture specific to this educational-residential segment.