

EUROBAROMETER 64

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTUMN 2005

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CYPRUS

Turkish Cypriot Community

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Standard Eurobarometer 64 for the Turkish Cypriot Community

This is the third Standard Eurobarometer carried out within the Turkish Cypriot Community. The first Standard Eurobarometer (EB 62) was carried out between 15 and 28 October 2004, while the second (EB 63) took place between 13 and 31 May 2005. Eurobarometer 64 was carried out between 14 and 29 October 2005 by KADEM under the auspices of TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium created between Taylor Nelson Sofres and EOS Gallup Europe.

1. The general conditions and environment affecting Turkish Cypriot public opinion

A large majority of Turkish Cypriots say they are satisfied with the life they live

79% of the Turkish Cypriot Community said they are satisfied with their lives. There has been an increase of 12% in the level of satisfaction of the Turkish Cypriot Community since Eurobarometer 63 was carried out in May 2005.

The 15-24 age group is most satisfied

When the level of satisfaction of different age groups are compared, we can see that the 15-24 age group (83%) and the 55 + age groups (82%) respectively are the ones that are most satisfied with their lives. Those respondents who are least satisfied are aged between 40 and 54 (73%).

Life is better compared to the past

When asked about how their lives have changed over the last 5 years, 64% of Turkish Cypriots said their lives have improved while 9% said they are now worse off.

Internet use is limited

While the percentage of those in the EU 25 countries who said they do not use the internet is 44%, this percentage is 61% in the Turkish Cypriot Community. Generally, Turkish Cypriots who use the internet use it for the following reasons: information search (27%), chat (8%), reading newspapers (6%) and accessing leisure sites (6%).

The 15-24 age group uses internet more than the other age groups. When we look at the behavior of this group in terms of the internet, we can see that they mostly get connected to search for information (60%), to chat (23%), and to log on to leisure sites (17%). Only 20% of this age group stated that they do not use the internet. The equivalent percentage is a lot higher among the 55 + age group: 93%.

Cell phones are widely used.

The percentage of cell phone use in the Turkish Cypriot Community is very similar to the EU 25 average, which is 77%. 76% of the Turkish Cypriots who participated in the study said they use cell phones. When we look at the rate of cell phone usage in different age groups, we can see that within the Turkish Cypriot Community, the age group that uses cell phones most is the 15-24 age group (91%).

Turkish Cypriots are optimistic about life in general and the economy in the future.

The optimism portrayed by the Turkish Cypriots in EB 63 continues in EB 64. There is a higher percentage of Turkish Cypriots who expect their lives and the economy to be better in the future, than the EU 25 average (life in general, EU 25: 35%, TCC: 49%, economic situation: EU 25: 25%, TCC: 41%). Compared to the May 2005 expectations of Turkish Cypriots, there has been an increase of 2 percentage points in the number of Turkish Cypriots who think the economic situation will improve, while there has been a 5 point decrease in the number of Turkish Cypriots who think the economy will get worse.

Unemployment is the biggest problem.

50% of the Turkish Cypriots who participated in the study listed unemployment as the biggest problem facing the Turkish Cypriot Community. Similarly, Turkish Cypriots listed the economic situation as the second largest problem facing the community today. Compared to the Eurobarometer 63 results, there has been a big drop (21 percentage points) in the number of Turkish Cypriots who listed crime as a problem: in the latest survey, only 23% of Turkish Cypriots have listed crime as a problem.

The highest priority of the Turkish Cypriot Community is to maintain order in the community.

Turkish Cypriots think the biggest priority for their community for the next 10-15 years will be to maintain order while the second priority will be participation of the public in the decision making process and fighting rising prices. Freedom of expression was listed as the last priority.

The fight against unemployment and poverty should be the priority of the EU

Turkish Cypriots believe the European Union should primarily work on the following issues:

- fight against unemployment (37%)
- fight against poverty (36%)
- welcoming new member states (24%)
- bringing the EU institutions closer to citizens (23%)

Trust in political parties is low while trust in the media is higher.

While Turkish Cypriots showed a low level of trust for political parties (30%) and listed freedom of expression as the last priority for the community, they have a very high level of trust in the media, especially television (59%).

2. Individuals and the European Union

The EU leads to a feeling of hope and trust among Turkish Cypriots

The EU evokes a higher level of hope and trust within the Turkish Cypriot Community (59% and 34% respectively) than it does in the EU 25 as a whole (42% and 22%).

The EU has more of an economic and political meaning.

When asked what the EU means to them personally, Turkish Cypriots gave the following answers: economic welfare (53%), peace (40%), social protection (40%) and democracy (29%). Compared to Eurobarometer 63 results, Turkish Cypriots place less emphasis on the meaning of democracy and peace that the EU may have and more on the economic aspects.

One-third of Turkish Cypriots believe their views are taken into account in the EU.

Only 33% of Turkish Cypriots believe their views are taken into account in the EU. This percentage is very similar to the EU 25 average of 34%. The percentage of Turkish Cypriots who said their views are not taken into account in the EU is lower than that for the average EU 25 citizen.

Turkish Cypriots feel both Turkish Cypriot and European.

Three-quarters of Turkish Cypriots said they are very proud to be Turkish-Cypriot. Additionally, almost one out of every three Turkish Cypriots (32%) said they are very proud to be European.

3. EU membership

Turkish Cypriots mostly feel EU membership is good and advantageous.

72% of Turkish Cypriots think the EU is a good thing. When the feelings of different age groups are examined, it is the 40-54 age group (77%) that has the most positive views about the EU.

When asked whether they think EU membership will have advantages, 76% said yes. The most optimistic age group in this regard is the 15-24 age group 84% of whom gave an affirmative answer.

Turkish Cypriots believe their standard of living will improve with EU membership.

Turkish Cypriots who participated in the research said they expect their standard of living (80%) and the export (79%) and services (74%) sectors to improve with EU membership.

On the other hand, 18% of Turkish Cypriots believe their security will be adversely affected.

There is a decrease in the positive image of the EU among Turkish Cypriots

Compared to the May 2005 results, there is a 3 percentage point decrease in the positive image of the EU among Turkish Cypriots (65%). Nevertheless, the EU's image among Turkish Cypriots is more positive than the EU 25 average (47%).

When the EU's image is examined within different age groups of the Turkish Cypriot Community, it can be seen that it is most positive among the 15-24 age group (72%).

4. Trust in EU institutions, information on the EU and the effect of media

There is an increase in the level of trust for the European Commission.

Although there was a decrease in the level of positive image of the EU among Turkish Cypriots compared to Eurobarometer 63, there is a 7 percentage point increase in the level of trust for the European Commission. With this increase, the level of trust felt by the Turkish Cypriots towards the European Commission increased to 47%; 1 point higher than the EU 25 average of 46%.

Similarly there is an increase in the level of trust for the European Parliament.

Similarly there is a 3 percentage point increase in the Turkish Cypriot level of trust for the European Parliament. However, the level of trust Turkish Cypriots show for the European Parliament (45%) is lower than the EU 25 average (51%).

Turkish Cypriots trust the EU more than they trust the UN.

Turkish Cypriots say they trust the EU (51%) more than they trust the UN (41%).

There is a low level of information on how the EU works.

Only 40% of Turkish Cypriots say they have information on how the EU works. This percentage is close to the EU 25 average.

When asked to rate their level of knowledge on the EU, Turkish Cypriots said they have an average (4.6/10) level of knowledge. This rate is slightly higher than the EU 25 average (4.2/10).

After disclosing their perceived level of knowledge on the EU, Turkish Cypriots answered a short quiz to establish their real level of knowledge. With 43% right and 19% wrong answers, Turkish Cypriots seem to know more than the average EU citizen (38% right and 36% wrong).

Turkish Cypriots believe the local media, other than local radio, give too much and too positive information on the EU.

Close to half of the Turkish Cypriots think television (46%) and press (43%) carry too much information/news on the EU while 40% think these media carry sufficient information. On the other hand, Turkish Cypriots think local radio gives less information on the EU compared to other media channels. Only 35% of Turkish Cypriots think radio carries too much information on the EU while 35% believe this level of information is sufficient.

Similarly, while Turkish Cypriots believe television and the press are too positive with regard to the EU, they think local radio is less positive.

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

Turkish Cypriots listed television as their key source of information on the EU. Similarly, television is the institution Turkish Cypriots say they trust most (75%). After television, Turkish Cypriots listed daily newspapers (55%), discussions with friends and relatives (30%) and radio (26%) as their main sources of information on the EU. As the use of internet is limited in the Turkish Cypriot Community, only 16% of the Turkish Cypriots said they use the internet to find information on the EU.

5. Political Union and the EU Constitution

Turkish Cypriots support the idea of a political union.

A large majority of Turkish Cypriots (72%) support the idea of a political union in Europe. This percentage is high compared to the EU 25 average (55%).

Compared to the EU 25 (53%), Turkish Cypriots show stronger support for the EU Constitution.

The 15-24 age group of Turkish Cypriots (68%) shows the highest support for the EU Constitution (compared to the overall TCC average of 56%).

Similarly, a higher percentage of Turkish Cypriots think the Constitution will make the European Union more democratic (68%), more efficient (67%) and more transparent (62%) compared to the average EU25 citizens (64%, 61%, 56% respectively).

On the other hand, only 56% of Turkish Cypriots think the Constitution is necessary for the better functioning of the European institutions. This percentage is higher in the EU 25 (60%).

While only 41% of the EU citizens support the further enlargement of the EU, this figure is higher among the Turkish Cypriots (61%).

Turkish Cypriots support the EU enlargement process and Turkey's EU membership.

While 61% of Turkish Cypriots support the further enlargement of the EU, a much higher percentage supports Turkey's membership: 86%. 8% of Turkish Cypriots who participated in the survey said they are against Turkey's membership of the EU.

While 49% of the EU citizens stated that they support the further enlargement of the EU there is a lower degree of support among EU citizens for Turkey's membership (31%).