

EUROBAROMETER 64

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTUMN 2005

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SPAIN

Standard Eurobarometer 64 / Autumn 2005 – TNS Opinion & Social

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REPORT STRUCTURE - SPAIN

Eurobarometer 64 - Public Opinion Survey

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INTRODUCTION

Between the 11th of October and the 15th of November 2005, TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium created between Taylor Nelson Sofres and EOS Gallup Europe carried out wave EB64.2 of the Standard Eurobarometer in the 25 member states on request of DG Press and Communication. The current Spanish edition included a Standard National Report (in Spanish) and an Executive Summary focusing on the main conclusions about the overall public opinion in Spain during the autumn of 2005. The EB edition it is also used as a framework for recommendations to the EC Representation in Spain. The executive summary presented here will summarise the most important conclusions of the Spanish National Report.

The Spanish EB64 National Report was structured around 5 (five) 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 personal satisfaction with EU actions and policies. Socio-demographic analysis of the data is undertaken in order to emphasise some of the findings of the Spanish case. Additionally, there is a series of data provided in the form of a follow-up from previous Eurobarometer surveys, carried out in recent years. For these data, the main trend is described for selected questions.

The main novelties of EB 64, in respect to earlier editions, include an improvement in the levels of trust of the Spanish public towards the EU institutions, an analysis of the opinion of the Spanish public in respect to their feelings of becoming European, the support shown for the European Constitution and the public's fears regarding the future enlargement of Europe. Also, some focus is again placed upon issues such as the policies and activities of the EU, as well as an increased satisfaction with the way the EU works.

Chapter 1: general climate of opinion in Spain

“There is an increase in the level of satisfaction among the Spanish public as to the type of life they lead”

Overall, and in comparison with the spring edition of 2005, the Spanish group answered fairly positively about the level of satisfaction with the type of life they lead. With an increase of +6 points, the Spanish poll said they felt “very satisfied” with the type of life they lead (23%, in comparison with 17% in the previous edition). A further 61% said they felt “fairly satisfied” with their lives in comparison with 59% of EU citizens on average (Table 1).

Table 1: Overall, would you say you are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied, with the type of life you lead?

| | Very satisfied | Fairly satisfied | Not very satisfied | Not at all satisfied | DK |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| EU25 (EB64) | 21% | 59% | 16% | 4% | 0% |
| ES (EB64) | 23% | 61% | 13% | 2% | 1% |
| ES (EB63) | 17% | 63% | 11% | 2% | 1% |

“The Spanish group maintains its positive outlook regarding the year to come”

The Spanish public seems to be more positive about the future in all the cases cited (Table 2).

Table 2: Expectations for the year to come

| | Better | Worse | Same | DK |
|--|--------|-------|------|----|
| Your life in general | 40 | 10 | 48 | 3 |
| The economic situation in Spain | 22 | 29 | 39 | 10 |
| The economic situation in your household | 32 | 12 | 53 | 3 |
| The employment situation in Spain | 23 | 30 | 38 | 9 |
| Your personal employment situation | 28 | 9 | 59 | 4 |

Around 51% of Spanish respondents (compared with an average of 41% in the EU25 as a whole) think that their life in the next five years will be better, while 33% think it will remain the same.

Chapter 2: Spanish levels of trust in and knowledge about the EU Institutions

“Overall, Spanish public opinion towards the EU institutions has improved since the spring 2005 edition”

Levels of trust have been increasing although, like in many EU member states, the public still feels there are many things that can be improved in terms of their knowledge and participation in EU affairs:

- 52% of the poll said they “tend to trust” the European Parliament and another 28% said they “tend not to trust” the European Parliament.
- Although the Spanish public seems to trust the EU and its role in the world, less than half of the group polled (48%) said they trust the European Commission
- Among the various professional groups interviewed, there is an overall positive attitude towards the EU institutions. However, there are important differences among the groups. For example, while 72% of the self-employed said they “tend to trust” the Commission, only 38% of the unemployed and 40% of house persons said they trusted this institution.
- Among those who said they “tend to trust” the European Parliament, there is a small difference between those living in urban areas and those living in rural ones: 51% of those in urban areas said they trust the EU Parliament and 49% of those living in rural ones.
- The regions of north-east and south of Spain are those that show lowest levels of trust - 40% and 37% respectively, with the south being the region with weakest feelings of trust towards the EU institutions.
- Overall, trust in the EU institutions among Spanish interviewees has increased in this edition. Compared to earlier editions, the “level of trust” towards the European Parliament has increased by +2 points, with the European Parliament being the only EU institution which has also maintained high levels of trust in this edition.

Chapter 3: The individual and the European Union

“The Spanish public feels both Spanish and European sometimes”

According to the survey results, 41% of respondents said they feel not only Spanish but also European “sometimes”. Another 15% said they feel European “often”.

| | Often | Sometimes | Never |
|-------------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| EU-25 | 17 | 38 | 42 |
| ES | 15 | 41 | 37 |
| rural areas | 16 | 38 | 38 |
| middle sized town | 16 | 43 | 33 |
| large town | 13 | 42 | 42 |
| 15-24 years | 13 | 48 | 32 |
| 25-39 years | 19 | 43 | 32 |
| 40-54 years | 18 | 42 | 36 |
| 55+ years | 10 | 35 | 45 |

“One in two Spanish respondents feels Spanish and European at the same time”

The feeling of being European has increased in recent editions of the Eurobarometer. The majority of the group, 48%, said they feel “Spanish and European” in contrast to 36% of the group who said they felt “only Spanish”. Another 5% said they feel only “European”.

“The feeling that Spanish respondents attach to Europe is that of ‘trust’ ”

For the Spanish public, the sentiment that they attach to Europe is one of trust. One in three said they associated the feeling of trust with the EU. In earlier editions, it tended to be hope, but with a slight increase in the present percentages, trust seems to be the number one sentiment towards the EU, followed by that of “hope”. Younger people, aged between 20 –24 years, said they mostly associate the EU with a feeling of hope.

Chapter 4: Being a member of the EU today

“Two in three Spanish interviewees think that their country’s EU membership is “something good”

This positive attitude of the Spanish interviewees has remained stable since the previous edition, where 66% of the group shared the same opinion. A further 19% in the current survey think that Spain’s membership is “neither good nor bad”.

- 70% of the men and 63% of the women interviewed thought that the Spanish membership in the EU is something “good”
- Similarly, 84% of managers, 75% of self employed, 68% of manual workers and 78% of students thought it was something ‘good’.
- 18% of those living in rural areas or villages think that Spanish membership is “neither good nor bad”, while 23% of those living in large towns share the same view.

“More than two thirds of Spanish respondents think that their country has benefited from its EU membership”

- 69% of the Spanish poll considered that Spain has “benefited” from its EU membership, while 16% said that Spain has “not benefited” and another 14% said they “don’t know”.

| | benefited | not benefited |
|----------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Men | 69 | 16 |
| Women | 66 | 16 |
| 15-24 | 73 | 16 |
| 25-39 | 75 | 16 |
| 40-54 | 72 | 17 |
| 55+ | 61 | 16 |
| Managers | 87 | 4 |
| Self-employed | 84 | 15 |
| Manual workers | 71 | 17 |
| Unemployed | 63 | 17 |
| Students | 83 | 11 |

Chapter 5: Political Union and European Constitution

“69% of the Spanish poll said they are “in favour” of the development of a European Union”

- Among those who said they were “in favour” of the development of a European Union, 72% are men, 66% are women, while 80% are self-employed, 81% are managers, 74% are manual workers and 81% are students.
- Support for the development of the European Union is greater among those living in middle-sized towns, with 70% “in favour” and 10% “against”. 15% of those living in large towns and 13% of those living in rural areas are “against” the development of the EU.

“Within the Spanish poll, there is a belief that a European Constitution would make the EU more democratic and more transparent”

The majority of Spanish respondents think that the EU should have a European Constitution. 34% of the Spanish poll said that they “tend to agree” that a European Constitution would make the EU more “transparent”, while another 43% thought that the EU would work more “democratically”.

Overall, the majority of the Spanish poll agrees that the European Constitution would make the EU work more “democratically”, “transparently” but also “more efficiently”.

“There was also a very positive attitude towards the economic and social development of Europe as a result of the existence of a Constitution”

A great majority of the Spanish poll believes that the existence of a Constitution would make the EU “stronger in the world” in terms of its economic and social development. 43% said they “tend to agree” with this statement, while another 28% said they “totally agree” with it.

“The majority of the Spanish poll said they are ‘in favour’ of the future enlargement of the EU, although there are differences in their preferences regarding which countries should join”

More than half of the Spanish poll said they were 'in favour' of a future enlargement of the EU, with more countries joining as member states.

- 55% of the group said they were 'in favour' of a future enlargement, a difference of +6 points higher than the EU average (EU-25: 49%)
- 59% of men and 52% of women were 'in favour' of a future enlargement, while 21% and 18% respectively said they were 'against'
- Self-employed and manual workers tend to be against the future enlargement, with respective figures of 18% and 14%
- 51% of those living in rural areas and villages, and 63% of those living in large towns said they were 'in favour' of a future enlargement.

When asked about the different countries that might be joining the EU in the future, the Spanish poll shows clear preferences. The majority of the group preferred countries like Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Bulgaria to join the EU, while other possibilities like Albania or Turkey were less attractive.

| | ES-EB64 | |
|---------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| | In favour | Against |
| Switzerland | 66 | 10 |
| Iceland | 57 | 15 |
| Bulgaria | 50 | 22 |
| Croatia | 48 | 23 |
| Romania | 47 | 26 |
| Albania | 45 | 25 |
| Bosnia Herzegovina | 46 | 24 |
| Serbia Montenegro | 44 | 25 |
| Turkey | 40 | 33 |

- Turkey is the country for which there is still great opposition to its future entry to the EU. Respecting human rights and large immigration flows towards the EU are the biggest concerns for Spanish citizens in relation to an eventual Turkish accession.

Conclusions EB64.2

In the present edition of Eurobarometer 64.2, the overall feeling about the state of Spanish public opinion is that Spanish citizens are more interested in the latest developments of the EU but also more critical about the way the EU works and their level of participation. These opinions relate to the support that European citizens show towards the EU Constitution: they feel that there should be a new process (and text) as the present one should only be continued if changes are made.

Spanish public opinion was once more very satisfactory in regard to their interest about the development of the EU. Respondents said they had 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 said they were “in favour” of teaching how the EU works in schools.

Most of them think they have, so far, “benefited” from their country’s membership of the EU, and that being a member has been something “good” for them. They show great support for the future enlargement of the EU and 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 of the current edition were those concerning the levels of trust towards some of the EU institutions, which, although they had increased since the last edition of Eurobarometer in spring 2005, are still very low. Thus, while the European Parliament has maintained quite a high level of the public’s trust, the European Commission is the one institution in which the Spanish public feels it trusts less. Other criticisms deal with the social and economic situation in Spain but also in Europe, while security, immigration and unemployment are the three major concerns that the Spanish group has about the future. In the current edition, housing and immigration have been also high in the hierarchy of important issues that Spain faces in the present.

As to the future enlargement of the EU, the Spanish public seems to have quite a divided opinion since, although the majority of the group said they are 'in favour' of future enlargement, there are clear differences as to the preferences for the countries that should join. Once more, Spanish concerns are mostly around issues of economic and social stability since they consider that “unemployment and crime may rise”.

Overall, the image of the EU as portrayed by the Spanish media seems to be very positive, with “the journalists”, once more, being cited as a trustworthy source by the Spanish public. They feel that the Spanish media speak “about the right amount” about the EU, and that the information they get is usually either “objective” or “too positive”.

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