

EUROBAROMETER 64

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LUXEMBOURG

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Luxembourg Eurobarometer Survey

The European Constitution: a necessity for the institutions to function well

One person in two favours the renegotiation of the current draft constitution text, while one in four wants the ratification process to continue

The major event in Luxembourg in the period preceding this Eurobarometer survey was the referendum on the Treaty establishing the European Constitution, held on 10 July, of which the positive outcome was, at some moments uncertain, due to the French and Dutch rejections. European issues dominated political events in Luxembourg throughout the first six months of the year due to Luxembourg's Presidency of the European Union's Council of Ministers.

Eurobarometer survey 64.2, undertaken on behalf of the European Commission during autumn 2005 throughout the EU, examines the views on life and perceptions on various issues of the citizens of the Member States. The image of the European Union and trust in European and national political institutions were also analysed, as were the future of the political European Union and the follow-up of the ratification process of the European Constitution.

The European Union still benefits from a high level of trust from Luxembourg residents. The majority of those who participated in the Eurobarometer survey in Luxembourg clearly stated they were not in favour of the future expansion of the EU.

The Eurobarometer survey sample requires that +/- 1.000 persons are interviewed in each EU country. Luxembourg's quota for EB 64.2 was 510, due to the fact that three-quarters of the population are Luxembourg nationals and one-quarter of the population are nationals of other European countries. In its commentary, the special report, which was drawn up for the European Commission's Representation in Luxembourg, makes reference to Luxembourg's population overall, rather than uniquely to residents of Luxembourgish nationality.

Reference to contentedness with the way of life and pessimism regarding employment market developments

A high proportion (92%) of the poll in Luxembourg is satisfied with their way of life. Most residents do not expect their own situation to change within the next year, but expect a deterioration of their country's economic situation. However, despite the fact that in the employment market most people expect there to be a setback within the next 12 months, not many people expect their own professional situation to change for the worse. The fight against unemployment obviously remains one of the primary goals of the European Union, although social issues (health, pensions, employment) are viewed as falling within the remit of the national as opposed to Community-level decision-making. A majority of the Luxembourg poll also considers that tax matters and education should be decided upon by national governments.

High levels of trust in national and European institutions

Residents of Luxembourg, in general, place great trust in their institutions – above all, in their government (70%), ahead of the House of Representatives and the police (both at 67%) - scores that remain at high levels. In Luxembourg, the headquarters of several European institutions, trust in the European institutions is far greater than is the case in other European countries.

Sense of belonging to the European Union and pride in being European

Luxembourg is in favour of being a member of the EU, with 82% of the poll registering a positive opinion. This is the highest score reached in any European country. This result is due to the fact that 75% of Luxembourg residents believe that being a member of the EU is of great benefit to their country. These figures have slightly increased since the last Eurobarometer. Economic aspects, other those relating to employment, are what lead the majority of Luxembourg's respondents to assess their country's EU membership positively. Luxembourg residents are ahead of respondents in all other European countries in their response to the question as to whether they feel that they are not only residents of their own country but also European. In fact, pride in being European reaches its highest levels in Luxembourg and Italy. Despite the fact that 54% of respondents in Luxembourg are convinced that their opinion counts within the European Union - a considerably higher figure than the EU average of 34% - Luxembourg's residents feel that both the European institutions and their national government should make a greater effort to involve them more in European affairs.

An average knowledge about the European Union, but insufficient awareness about the structure of the EU's budget

56% of Luxembourg's residents claim they understand the functioning of the EU, but, like respondents in most of the other countries polled, are hesitant when self-evaluating their knowledge about the EU, its politics and institutions. One in three persons interviewed believes that the most important budget item is that relating to administration, personnel and building expenditure, and only 22% (EU: 17%) of the people interviewed in Luxembourg are aware that agricultural expenditure is the most important item – showing no major change since autumn 2004.

The European Constitution

The potential effect of the European Constitution on the functioning of the institutions and the role of the EU in the international arena are positively rated in Luxembourg and in the EU overall. Although adopting a constitution is of great necessity for 70% of the people interviewed in Luxembourg and 60% in the EU as a whole, one in two people wants to see the current draft renegotiated, and only one in four people interviewed consider the ratification process should continue.

Rejection of the future expansion of the EU in Luxembourg and in most of the other countries in the EU

Together with Germany, Austria and France, Luxembourg is against the future expansion of the EU. However, three countries (Norway, Switzerland and Iceland) that have not currently got EU membership applications pending would, in their eyes, be welcome to join the EU. When Luxembourg residents were asked their opinion about the future membership of a list of countries, Turkey and Albania came at the bottom of the list.