

EUROBAROMETER 64

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTUMN 2005

NATIONAL REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Standard Eurobarometer 64 / Autumn 2005 – TNS Opinion & Social

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1. CLIMATE OF OPINION

It has been a regular feature in public opinion polls in Slovakia that, over recent years, respondents have tended to assess their personal economic situation and that of their country both critically and negatively. This view is also prevalent with respect to their outlook regarding the future. However, Eurobarometer No. 63 survey, carried out in spring 2005, and also Eurobarometer No. 62 carried out in the autumn 2004 showed a modest growth in the Slovaks' satisfaction and, above all, a significant growth in optimism regarding the future. It is therefore interesting to see whether Eurobarometer No.64 will confirm these trends.

LIFE SATISFACTION

While in the EU25 on average 80% of respondents declared partial or full satisfaction with their life in general, only 64% respondents in Slovakia did so. There was almost no change in the opinion of Slovak respondents in comparison with the previous survey. What is more significant is the difference compared with the 2003 figures, because over this period, an increase of 10 percentage points in their levels of satisfaction has been observed. The differences between Slovak citizens' and average EU25 citizens' satisfaction with their quality of life are understandable in view of the differences in GDP per capita between Slovakia and the EU25 countries on average. However, the answers to the questions asked within the survey, do not allow us to determine the reason for the growing levels of satisfaction and decreasing levels of dissatisfaction of Slovak citizens in the period between 2003 and the first half of 2005. Nor do the results of the survey provide a clear answer to the question as to why this trend comes to a standstill in the second half of 2005. One of the reasons could be the positive impact of Slovakia's membership of the European Union on the Slovak economy. Perhaps the positive impacts were mainly felt within the first year following membership and, subsequently, the potential for a growth in satisfaction has exhausted itself. The decrease in the level of dissatisfaction of Slovak citizens could also be related to the fact that the economic and social reforms that have been implemented since 1989 are beginning to bring a modest, but visible, improvement in the economic situation of a significant part of the population.

1.2 EXPECTATIONS FOR NEXT 12 MONTHS

Expectations of Slovaks concerning a possible improvement or worsening in the quality of their life in the next 12 months also differ from the EU25 average. While only 13% of citizens in the EU25 expect a deterioration in their quality of life in general, in Slovakia this figure reaches 24%. Differences between the opinions of Slovak respondents and those of the EU25 on average can also be observed in relation to the expectations of a change in their country's economic situation. 48% of Slovak respondents – a figure 9 percentage points above the EU25 average – expect a worsening in their country's economic situation. The greater pessimism of Slovak citizens is visible also in the answers to the question concerning an improvement or worsening of their personal financial situation. Improvement was expected by 21% of Slovaks and by 25% of EU25 citizens and a worsening was expected by 35% Slovaks and by 19% of EU25 citizens overall. The pessimism of Slovaks has been manifested also in their expectations concerning unemployment in Slovakia and the personal employment situation of respondents. While 40% of respondents from the EU25 expect a worsening in their country's situation, only 9% expect that this worsening will affect them personally. 39% of Slovaks expect a worsening of their country's situation in the area of employment, while only 14% expect a worsening in their personal situation. Comparing these results with the previous two surveys, there is a fall in the number of people who expect further improvement on the labour market and a growth of the number of those who do not expect any change in the next 12 months.

TRUST IN NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

As in the previous survey, Eurobarometer No. 64 also confirms long-term trends of the extraordinarily low level of Slovaks' trust in certain institutions. Distrust prevails over trust in national institutions not only in Slovakia but also in the EU25 on average. However, levels of distrust are considerably higher among Slovaks. Only 7% of citizens trust political parties in Slovakia, while, in the EU25 overall, the figure is 17%. Distrust in political parties was expressed by 88% of Slovak respondents and 76% of respondents in the EU25 overall. Slovakia is the country with the lowest level of trust and the highest level of distrust in political parties in the whole European Union. Trust in the government is a little higher – in Slovakia, 18% of citizens trust and 78% of citizens do not trust their national government. In the EU25, 31% of citizens trust and 62% of citizens do not trust their national governments. Within the EU, Slovakia is the country with the second lowest level of trust and the highest level of distrust in the national government. Trust in the national parliament was expressed by 20% of Slovak respondents, while the equivalent EU25 figure is 35%. The highest trust levels in Slovaks' national institutions are observed in relation to the justice and legal system. In Slovakia, 31% of respondents trust the justice and legal system while the European Union average is 47%. On the other hand, distrust in the justice and legal system was expressed by 61% of Slovak respondents but by only 47% of respondents within the EU25. Looking at long-term trends over the period from spring 2004 to autumn 2005, a fluctuation in trust in political parties, government and parliament can be seen. The only exception is the growing trust and decreasing distrust in the justice and legal system in that period – trust in the Slovak justice and legal system has increased by 15 points and distrust has fallen by 14 points.

THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING SLOVAKIA

Like EU25 citizens, Slovak citizens consider unemployment and the economic situation to be the two most important issues facing their country. Unemployment is considered to be one of the two most important problems by 49% of Slovak respondents - 5 points more than in the EU25. The economic situation is considered to be one of the two most important issues by 36% of Slovak respondents – 10 points above the EU25 average. Issues in third and fourth place are the same in Slovakia and in the EU25 - although in different order. 31% of Slovaks think that rising prices / inflation is one of the two most important issues and crime was cited by 23% of Slovak respondents.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES FOR NEXT 10-15 YEARS

The differences between the opinion of Slovak citizens and those of the EU25 as a whole are marked in relation to the priority objectives for the next 10-15 years. 43% of Slovak respondents - that is 14 points above the EU25 average - think that the top priority should be the fight against rising prices. 26% of Slovak respondents think that the first objective should be to give people more say in important government decisions. In the EU25, this opinion is shared by the same percentage of people. 25% of respondents in Slovakia think that the most important priority is to maintain order in the country. In the EU25, 32% consider this as top priority. The second greatest number of respondents considers fighting rising prices to be the primary objective in the long run and the third greatest number of respondents thinks that the priority should be to give people more say in important government decisions. The opinion of citizens concerning the top three priorities is more balanced in the EU25. In Slovakia, the fight against rising prices is a dominant priority. This is understandable bearing in mind that, in the period when the survey was undertaken, information about the increase of state-regulated prices (gas, electricity, water, heating) was made public. At the same time, the government announced its intention to increase taxes on alcohol and tobacco. Also when answering the question as to what should be the second greatest priority for the next

10-15 years, the greatest proportion of the poll – 33% of Slovak respondents – chose fighting rising prices. Overall, 76% of Slovak respondents chose the fight against rising prices as one of the two top priorities for the next 10-15 years.

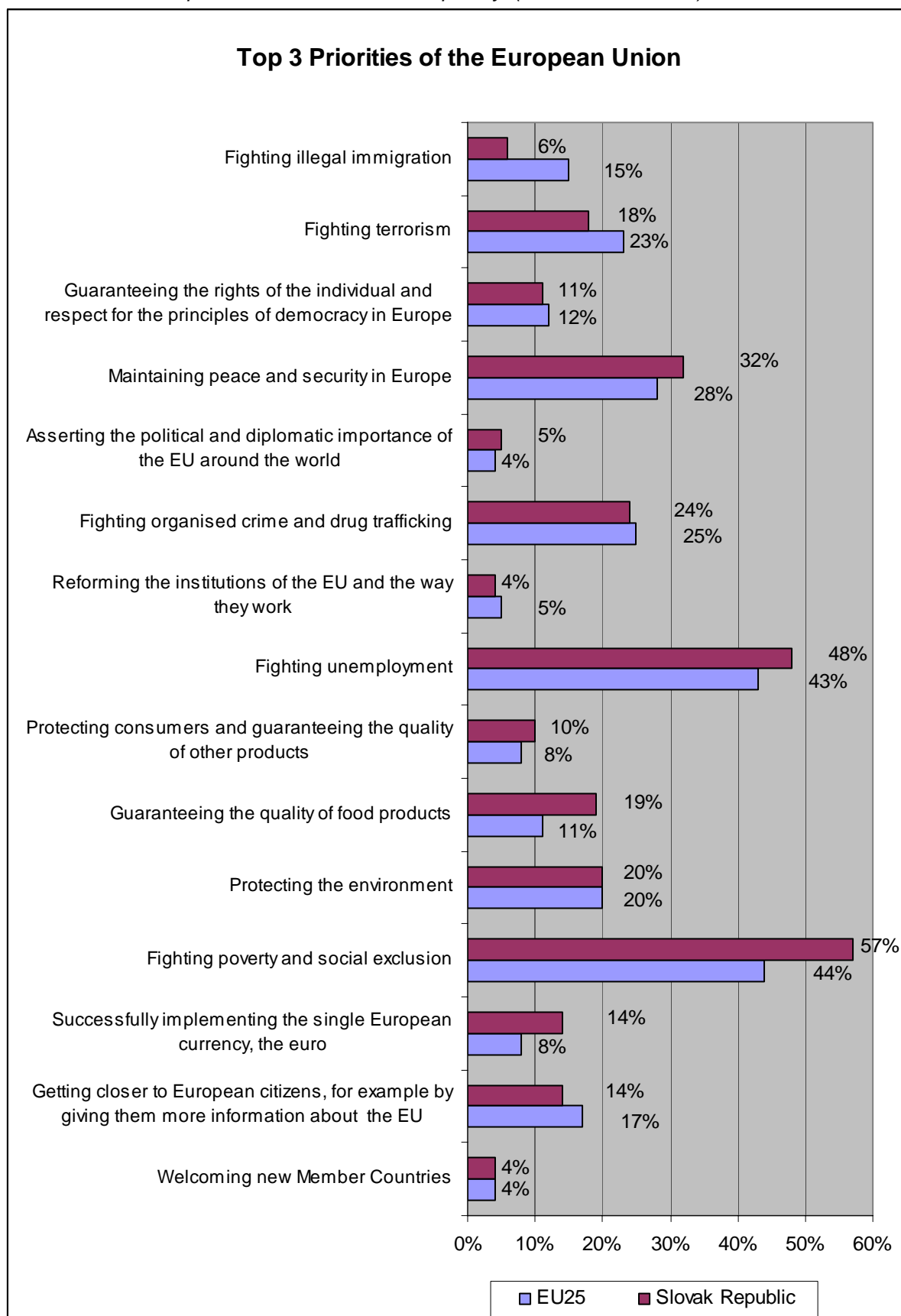
LEVEL OF DECISION

The Eurobarometer survey also investigated respondents' opinion concerning the areas in which decision making should be exclusively within the competence of national governments and those in which national governments should make their decisions jointly within the European Union. Slovak citizens consider that the areas of exclusive competence for national governments should be taxation (79%, 9 points higher than in EU25 as a whole), pensions (74%, same as in the EU25), health and social welfare (70%, 3 points more than in the EU25) and education system (63%, 4 points less than in the EU25). In the EU25, citizens tend to choose the same areas but the order is slightly different. On the other hand, Slovaks prefer joint decision making within the European Union in the area of the fight against terrorism (91%, 13 points more than in the EU25), defence and foreign affairs (83%, 20 points more than in the EU25), scientific and technological research (83%, 14 points more than in the EU25), fight against crime (72%, 13 points more than in the EU25), support for regions facing economic difficulties (68%, 11 points more than in the EU25) and immigration (64%, 7 points more than in the EU25). It is interesting that, in Slovakia, joint decision making within the EU in the area of defence and foreign affairs and the fight against terrorism has the highest support of the citizens of all the 25 member states. In the EU25, on average, citizens prefer joint decision making at EU level in the area of fight against terrorism (78%), scientific and technological research (69%), protection of environment (66%) and defence and foreign affairs (63%).

EUROPEAN UNION'S TOP 3 PRIORITIES

Fighting poverty and social exclusion were selected by both Slovak and EU25 respondents as the main priority on which EU should focus. In Slovakia, 57% of respondents chose this priority as one of the three possible choices and 44% did so in the EU25. The second highest priority should be the fight against unemployment (48% in Slovakia / 43% in the EU25), and the third priority should be maintaining peace and security in Europe (32% / 28%). Other priorities should be, according to Slovak (and EU25) citizens, the fight against organised crime and drug trafficking (24% / 25%), protection of the environment (20% / 20%) and the fight against terrorism (18% / 23%). A few conclusions can be drawn from these results. First of all, there is no significant difference between the responses of Slovak and EU25 respondents in the order of the top priorities. However, there is a significant difference in that the Slovaks set a greater value on economic and social topics (unemployment, poverty) while citizens in the EU25 as a whole set a greater value to the fight against terrorism and illegal immigration. The greatest difference between the views of the Slovak and EU25 citizens on the top priorities of the EU is in the area of the fight against poverty and social exclusion. There is also a considerable difference in the view on illegal immigration and guaranteeing of the quality of food products. The fact that 48% of Slovak respondents think that one of the areas which should be the priority for the European Union is the fight against unemployment is not surprising because this is in line with the finding in other part of this public opinion poll where 49% of Slovaks consider unemployment to be one of the greatest problems Slovakia is currently facing. However, it is interesting, that both in Slovakia and in the EU25 overall only 4% of respondents selected the welcoming the new member states as one of three top priorities of the European Union. This is surprising especially in the case of Slovak respondents because Slovakia belongs to the group of countries in which support for the further enlargement of the Union is highest.

Question: From the following list of actions, could you tell me what should be, for you, the three actions that the European Union should follow in priority. (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)

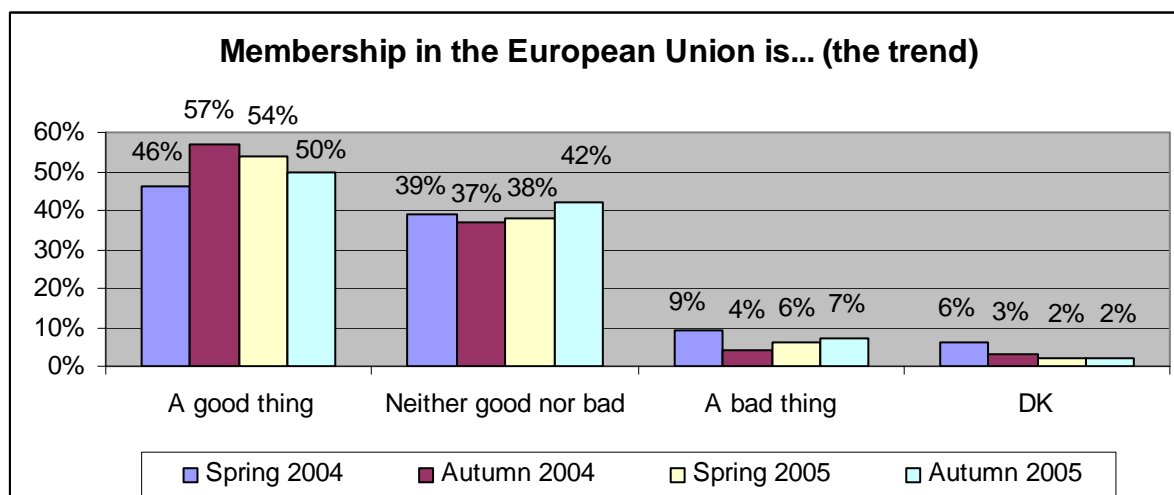


2. THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Slovak citizens in public opinion polls traditionally identify themselves as Europeans more frequently than is the EU average but, at the same time, they do not dispense with their national identity. Also, in the near future, Slovak citizens see themselves foremost as both Slovaks and Europeans (58%), but they put their Slovak identity in first place. Still, there is a significant group of citizens who in the future see themselves only as Slovaks with no European identity (38%). The percentage of Slovak citizens who see themselves in the near future only as Europeans is slim (2%). The European Union gives to Slovak citizens primarily a feeling of hope. This opinion was expressed by 53% of Slovak respondents - 11 points above the EU25 average. In second place is the feeling of trust (26%), followed by mistrust (17%), indifference (19%) and anxiety (10%). Thus, it can be said, that positive feelings prevail over negative feelings. From the viewpoint of the trends, it is interesting that, in comparison to the previous two surveys, the percentage of those who have a feeling of hope in relation to the EU has significantly decreased. Only a minority of Slovak citizens (26%) – 8 points less than in the EU25 as a whole – think that their voice counts in the European Union. And only a very small percentage of citizens in Slovakia, but also in the EU25, have a feeling that they are very much involved in European affairs. In Slovakia, 11% of respondents expressed this view, while in the EU25 as a whole, 26% of respondents did so. Slovaks found themselves at the bottom of the involvement in EU affairs 'chart'.

3. BEING A MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TODAY

According the survey, 50% of Slovak citizens consider their country's EU membership to be a good thing. That is at the same level as the EU25 average and, at the same time, it is the third highest assessment among the ten new member states. The greatest proportion of people in the new member states who consider their country's EU membership to be a good thing is in Lithuania (57%), with Poland in second place (54%). Overall, the most positive evaluation of their country's EU membership is found in Luxemburg, where 82% of citizens share this view. On the other hand, the least positive valuation is observed in Austria, where only 32% of citizens hold this view. In comparison to the EU25 average, there are fewer people in Slovakia who think that the membership in the EU is a bad thing – the figure is only 7% while in the EU25 it is 16%. On the other hand, in Slovakia there are more people who think that EU membership is neither a good nor a bad thing. 42% of respondents expressed this view in comparison to 30% in the EU25. Looking at the trends, after the significant rise in the positive evaluation of Slovak membership of the European Union that was seen in the period between spring and autumn 2004 (the period shortly before and after Slovakia become the member of the EU), a fall of 7 points in the positive evaluation has been observed over the last year.



Support for membership of the European Union is related to expectations of what can be gained from membership. Although Slovakia has only been a member of the EU since 1 May 2004, 62% of citizens think that their country has benefited from EU membership. In the EU25 overall, 52% of citizens hold this view. Only 28% of Slovaks think that their country did not profit from membership (as opposed to 36% in the EU25). Slovakia is thus in third place among the new member states – just behind Lithuania (70%) and Poland (63%) – in giving a positive evaluation to their country's EU membership.

Although the views of Slovak citizens on the influence of their country's EU membership on domestic industry and services do not differ from the EU25 average, in other areas the differences are marked. The most significant is the perceived influence of membership on employment. While 54% of Slovaks think that Slovakia's EU membership has a good effect on the employment in their country, in the EU25 as a whole the same percentage of people considers that EU membership has a bad effect on domestic employment. On the other hand, 62% of Slovaks think that EU membership has a bad effect on domestic agriculture while in the EU25 only 48% of citizens hold this view. Slovak citizens more positively assess the influence of EU membership on their country's security (75% in Slovakia / 67% in the EU25), while, in the EU25 overall, citizens assess more positively the effect of EU membership on their country's exports (64% in the EU25 / 57% in Slovakia).

4. TRUST IN EU INSTITUTIONS

The confidence of Slovaks in the European Union and its institutions stayed at approximately the same level as in the previous survey. After the previous surveys in which we observed, firstly, a growth in trust (in the period shortly before and shortly after Slovakia joined the EU) and, subsequently, a fall in the levels of trust in the EU and its institutions, we now see the stabilisation of Slovak opinion. The only exception is in relation to the European Court of Justice (ECJ), where, for a second consecutive time, a decrease in trust and an increase in distrust have been recorded. Trust in the ECJ has decreased since the last survey by 5 points and by 9 points since the survey undertaken last year. Trust levels in the ECJ are thus currently even lower than in spring 2004, i.e. before the boom in the growth of the confidence of Slovak citizens in EU institutions. There are no apparent reasons for such a slump, because the ECJ in the given period did not pass any judgment that was counter to Slovakia's interests or that caused large-scale public controversy.

Slovak citizens are characterised by a higher level of trust in the EU and its institutions compared with the EU25 average. Trust in the European Union was expressed by 56% of Slovak respondents, i.e. 11 points higher than the EU25 average. Trust in the Council of the European Union was expressed by 55% of Slovak respondents, (i.e. 15 points above the EU25 average); trust in the European Parliament was expressed by 65% of respondents (14 points more than in the EU25) and trust in the European Commission was expressed by 57% of Slovaks (i.e. 11 points above the EU25 average). The most trustworthy institution of the European Union for Slovak citizens is still the European Parliament in spite of the fact that in the EP elections in Slovakia less than 17% of those registered to vote took part. Only in two other EU member states is trust in the European Parliament higher than in Slovakia. In Portugal, 67% of citizens trust the EP and, in Luxembourg, 68% of citizens trust the European Parliament. It is not possible, using this survey as the only basis, to determine the reasons for Slovaks' higher levels of trust in EU institutions, compared with their low level of trust in national institutions. However, taking into consideration the results of the survey in relation to their knowledge about the EU, it cannot be assumed that this trust is based on the amount of knowledge and information Slovak citizens have about the work of these institutions.

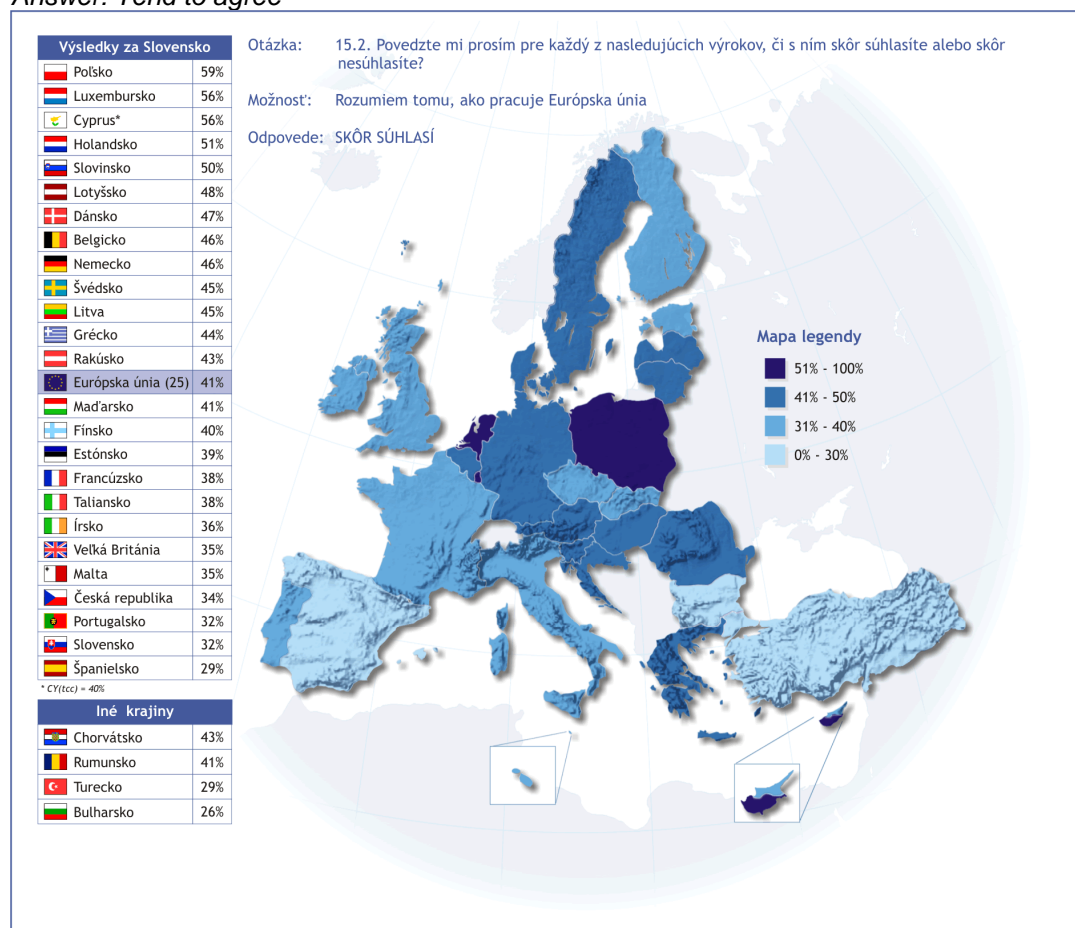
KNOWLEDGE ON THE EUROPEAN UNION

In spite of the fact Slovaks have a high level of trust in EU institutions, only 32% of the poll stated that they did understand how the European Union works (in the EU25, the equivalent figure was 41%). On the other hand, 60% of Slovaks stated that they do not understand how the EU works (in the EU25, the figure was 52%). Slovakia is therefore, together with Portugal, is close to the bottom of the list of EU 25 member states in terms of the self-assessment of its citizens regarding their knowledge on how the EU works. Only in Spain is there a lower number of respondents claiming that they understand how the EU works. When compared with the results of the last four Eurobarometer surveys, the growing trend in the growth in the number of those who declared that they do not understand how the EU works has come to a standstill. While in the period between spring 2004 and spring 2005 the number of respondents who chose this answer increased by 15 points, no change was recorded between spring and autumn 2005.

Question: Please tell me for each statement, whether you tend to agree or tend to disagree.

Option: I understand how the EU works

Answer: Tend to agree



Using a quiz, Eurobarometer 64 seeks to assess respondents' real level of knowledge about the EU. While half of Slovak and EU25 citizens know that Members of the European Parliament are elected directly, only 28% of respondents in Slovakia and 24% in the EU25 correctly answered that the last elections to the EP did not take place in 2002 (they actually took place in 2004). Even more striking is the fact that only 46% of Slovak respondents and 44% of EU25 respondents correctly answered that the European Union does not consist of 15 member states (it consists of 25 states). Slovak citizens only demonstrated significantly better knowledge than citizens of the EU25 in one case – when 49% of respondents correctly

answered that the European Union has its own anthem - while in the EU25 there were only 33% of correct answers.

The answers of Slovak respondents therefore do not portray a high level of knowledge of the Slovaks about the European Union. Furthermore, the trends do not indicate any improvement of the situation. Moreover, it should be noted that the questions asked in the survey involved only the most basic information on the EU. One has to wonder about the level of knowledge of Slovak citizens (and also that of citizens of other member states) regarding EU institutions, their competencies, how legislation is drafted, EU decision making processes and the familiarity of the public with EU policies. The part of the survey discussed in the next paragraph foreshadows something in this regard.

In 2004, 44% and, in 2003, 45% of the EU budget was spent on agriculture. When respondents were asked the question as to how most of the EU's budget was spent, Eurobarometer 64 confirmed that Slovak citizens have little idea as to how most of the EU money is spent. 34% of Slovaks think that most of the EU budget is spent on administrative and personnel costs, 17% think that most of money is spent on foreign policy and aid to countries outside the EU, 12% think that it goes on employment and social affairs, 10% thinks that it is on regional aid and 13% could not answer or did not want to answer the question. Only 5% of Slovak respondents answered correctly that most of the EU budget is spent on agriculture. Within the EU25, 17% of respondents correctly answered that agriculture is the recipient of the largest part of the EU budget. This figure is three times more than it is in Slovakia but still is alarmingly low. Slovaks' knowledge about the EU budget is therefore remarkably low.

5. POLITICAL UNION AND EUROPEAN CONSTITUTION

As was seen above, Slovak citizens are more positive about their country's EU membership than the EU25 average and trust more in EU institutions than the EU25 average. Similarly, they are above the EU25 average in favour of further enlargement of the Union and of further European integration.

72% of Slovak citizens are in favour of the development towards European Political Union and only 17% are against. Slovakia is thus the country with the highest support for the establishment of the European Political Union among all the 25 EU member states, followed by Slovenia (71%), Spain and Cyprus (69%) and Greece (68%). In the EU25, on average, only 55% of citizens support the development toward the European Political Union and 31% are against it. The lowest level of support for the establishment of the European Political Union is traditionally in the United Kingdom with only 30% of the poll. Looking at trends, over the last year, there has been a moderate rise in the number of Slovaks who are against development towards European Political Union. The number of citizens in favour of European Political Union did not, in fact, change over the period. As the number of those who had not answered this question in previous surveys fell in this latest survey, it is clear that the rise in the number of those opposing European Political Union is not caused by a change of mind of the "pro-European" Slovaks but rather by those, who formerly did not have opinion, finally expressing one in this survey.

The citizens of the Slovak Republic are strong supporters of the adoption of the European Constitution. 67% of Slovak respondents think that the European Constitution is necessary to ensure that the European institutions work well. This figure is 7 points above the EU25 average. A majority of Slovaks (52%) also think that the European Constitution should be renegotiated and only 27% think that the EU Member States should continue the ratification process in spite of the unsuccessful referenda results in France and the Netherlands. Only 10% of Slovak citizens consider that the European Constitution should be dropped. In the EU25 on average, the answers did not differ significantly from those of Slovak citizens. However, in the EU25 there were fewer who supported the continuation of the ratification process and the renegotiation of the Constitution and more who were in favour of dropping the European Constitution. Slovak citizens believe that the adoption of the European Constitution would make the European Union more democratic, more transparent and more efficient. Slovaks also think that the adoption of the European Constitution would make the European Union more competitive, stronger in the world and more socially-minded.

SUPPORT FOR FUTURE ENLARGEMENT

The Slovak Republic belongs to the countries in which support for further enlargement of the European Union is markedly above the EU average. Enlargement of the EU is supported by 67% of Slovaks, while, in the EU25, it is supported by only 49% of citizens. However, in comparison to the previous survey, support for enlargement has dropped by 6 points in Slovakia, while in the EU25 it has stayed at the same level. Enlargement of the European Union has greatest support in Slovenia and Greece (74%) and in Poland (72%).

When answering the questions concerning the support for EU membership of certain individual countries, Slovak respondents declared in most cases significantly higher support than EU25 citizens overall. The greatest difference was in the case of Croatia, whose EU membership is supported by 79% of Slovaks – a figure that is 28 points above the EU25 average and the highest figure in any of the EU25 member states – ahead of the Czech Republic (76%) and Hungary (75%). Moreover, Croatia is from the viewpoint of Slovak citizens the third top candidate for EU membership with greater support than Iceland, which is the third in the EU25's overall classification. A significant difference is also apparent between the views of Slovaks and EU25 citizens as a whole in the case of Bulgaria whose EU membership is supported by 69% of Slovaks – a figure that is 21 point above the EU25 average. Only in Sweden was support for Bulgaria's EU membership higher at 70%. On the other hand, there is only a minimal difference between the views of Slovaks and EU25 citizens in the case of Turkey and Albania (a difference of 3 and 2 points respectively). It should be noted that these two countries' EU membership has least support in both Slovakia and the EU25 as a whole. Turkish EU membership is supported by only 28% of Slovaks and that of Albania by 31%. In regard to the reluctance towards the EU membership of individual countries, it would appear that the results are the mirror image of the support for membership. In Slovakia, the greatest reluctance is in respect to the membership of Turkey (50% against) and Albania (49% against). The greatest difference in opinion between Slovak and EU25 citizens was in the case of Croatia, whose EU membership is opposed only by 14% of Slovak respondents, while in the EU25 on average it is opposed by a figure of 20 points more. The differences between Slovakia and the EU25 concerning support for enlargement of the European Union and concerning support for the membership of individual countries more or less follow the distinction between new and old member states.

CONCLUSION

The results of the Eurobarometer No. 64 survey undertaken in the autumn 2005 can be summarised as follows:

Slovaks are still less satisfied with their life in general than the EU25 average. After two previous half-year periods in which satisfaction with their life and with their economic situation had risen modestly, during the last half year stagnation can be observed. Similarly, the growth of optimism in their outlook for the future has come to a standstill.

Slovaks are satisfied with their country's EU membership and they are convinced that it is benefiting from it. Slovaks have an image of the EU that is predominantly neutral or rather positive. More than other EU25 citizens, on average, Slovaks declare their European identity. However, national identity is still more important for them than European identity.

According to the Slovak poll, unemployment and the economic situation are the two greatest problems that Slovakia has to face at the moment. Slovaks think that the EU's top priority should be the fight against rising prices.

According to Slovak citizens, decisions should be taken jointly within the European Union above all in the areas of defence and foreign affairs and the fight against terrorism. On the other hand, the fields of taxation, pensions, health and social welfare should stay within the exclusive remit of the national government.

Slovak citizens are more in favour than the EU25 average of the further enlargement of the European Union. More markedly, than EU25 citizens on average, they support the EU membership of countries of the former eastern bloc. Most significant is Slovaks' support in the case of Croatia. At the same time, Slovaks are not in favour of Turkey and Albania's membership of the EU. In this regard, Slovak citizens do not differ from the EU25 average.

Citizens of the Slovak Republic are the greatest supporters within the EU25 of the development towards the creation of a European Political Union. Slovaks concede that they do not have sufficient information and knowledge about the functioning of the European Union and the test of their knowledge confirms this self-assessment. The majority of Slovak citizens acknowledge that they do not understand how the EU works and therefore it is questionable as to what they understand by the term (European Political Union'.

In spite of considerable gaps in their knowledge about the European Union, Slovak citizens trust EU institutions much more than their national institutions. However, figures for trust in the EU institutions have also fallen.

Slovak citizens' knowledge concerning the EU budget is very low. The fact that, over the period of one and half years, the number of those who answered correctly that most of the EU budget is spent on agriculture has slightly decreased is alarming. The European Union and the member states face a difficult task to explain to their citizens what amounts of money are being spent by the EU and for what purposes it is being spent. For the Slovak Government and the Representation of the European Commission in the Slovak Republic, this issue should become a top priority in their information and communication activities.

EUROBAROMETER SPECIAL « STANDARD » TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

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 64.2 of the EUROBAROMETER, on request of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General Press and Communication, Opinion Polls.

The EUROBAROMETER SPECIAL « STANDARD » is part of wave 64.2 and covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, resident in each of the Member States and aged 15 years and over. The EUROBAROMETER 64.2 has also been conducted in the two acceding countries (Bulgaria and Romania) and in the two candidate countries (Croatia and Turkey) and in the Turkish Cypriot Community. In these countries, the survey covers the national population of citizens of the respective nationalities and the population of citizens of all the European Union Member States that are residents in those countries and have a sufficient command of one of the respective national language(s) to answer the questionnaire. The basic sample design applied in all states is a multi-stage, random (probability) one. In each country, a number of sampling points was drawn with probability proportional to population size (for a total coverage of the country) and to population density.

In order to do so, the sampling points were drawn systematically from each of the "administrative regional units", after stratification by individual unit and type of area. They thus represent the whole territory of the countries surveyed according to the EUROSTAT NUTS II (or equivalent) and according to the distribution of the resident population of the respective nationalities in terms of metropolitan, urban and rural areas. In each of the selected sampling points, a starting address was drawn, at random. Further addresses (every Nth address) were selected by standard "random route" procedures, from the initial address. In each household, the respondent was drawn, at random (following the "closest birthday rule"). All interviews were conducted face-to-face in people's homes and in the appropriate national language. As far as the data capture is concerned, CAPI (*Computer Assisted Personal Interview*) was used in those countries where this technique was available.

ABREVIATIONS	COUNTRIES	INSTITUTES	N° INTERVIEWS	FIELDWORK DATES	POPULATION 15+
BE	Belgium	TNS Dimarso	1.024	13/10/2005 - 06/11/2005	8.598.982
CZ	Czech Rep.	TNS Aisa	1.161	14/10/2005 - 05/11/2005	8.571.710
DK	Denmark	TNS Gallup DK	1.032	16/10/2005 - 13/11/2005	4.380.063
DE	Germany	TNS Infratest	1.534	14/10/2005 - 08/11/2005	64.174.295
EE	Estonia	Emor	1.000	14/10/2005 - 06/11/2005	887.094
EL	Greece	TNS ICAP	1.000	17/10/2005 - 05/11/2005	8.674.230
ES	Spain	TNS Demoscopia	1.015	15/10/2005 - 05/11/2005	35.882.820
FR	France	TNS Sofres	1.009	11/10/2005 - 07/11/2005	44.010.619
IE	Ireland	TNS MRBI	1.009	13/10/2005 - 13/11/2005	3.089.775
IT	Italy	TNS Abacus	1.000	19/10/2005 - 10/11/2005	49.208.000
CY	Rep. of Cyprus	Synovate	502	17/10/2005 - 06/11/2005	552.213
LV	Latvia	TNS Latvia	1.033	14/10/2005 - 07/11/2005	1.394.351
LT	Lithuania	TNS Gallup Lithuania	1.020	15/10/2005 - 04/11/2005	2.803.661
LU	Luxemburg	TNS Okres	510	12/10/2005 - 05/11/2005	367.199
HU	Hungary	TNS Hungary	1.000	18/10/2005 - 06/11/2005	8.503.379
MT	Malta	MISCO	500	14/10/2005 - 05/11/2005	322.917
NL	Netherlands	TNS NIPO	1.041	21/10/2005 - 13/11/2005	13.242.328
AT	Austria	Österreichisches Gallup-Institute	1.020	14/10/2005 - 03/11/2005	6.679.444
PL	Poland	TNS OBOP	1.000	17/10/2005 - 07/11/2005	31.610.437
PT	Portugal	TNS EUROTESTE	1.003	17/10/2005 - 08/11/2005	8.080.915
SI	Slovenia	RM PLUS	1.034	11/10/2005 - 07/11/2005	1.663.869
SK	Slovakia	TNS AISA SK	1.096	17/10/2005 - 02/11/2005	4.316.438
FI	Finland	TNS Gallup Oy	1.028	13/10/2005 - 09/11/2005	4.279.286
SE	Sweden	TNS GALLUP	1.033	14/10/2005 - 06/11/2005	7.376.680
UK	United Kingdom	TNS UK	1.320	12/10/2005 - 15/11/2005	47.685.578
BG	Bulgaria	TNS BBSS	1.001	19/10/2005 - 31/10/2005	6.695.512
HR	Croatia	Puls	1.000	13/10/2005 - 06/11/2005	3.682.826
RO	Romania	TNS CSOP	1.000	13/10/2005 - 31/10/2005	18.145.036
TR	Turkey	TNS PIAR	1.005	14/10/2005 - 07/11/2005	47.583.830
NC	North part of Cyprus	KADEM	500	14/10/2005 - 29/10/2005	157.101
TOTAL			29.430	11/10/2005 - 15/11/2005	442.620.588

For each country a comparison between the sample and the universe was carried out. The Universe description was derived from Eurostat population data or from national statistics offices. For all countries surveyed, a national weighting procedure, using marginal and intercellular weighting, was carried out based on this Universe description. In all countries, gender, age, region and size of locality were introduced in the iteration procedure. For international weighting (i.e. EU averages), TNS Opinion & Social applies the official population figures as provided by EUROSTAT or national statistic offices. The total population figures for input in this post-weighting procedure are listed above.

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

Observed percentages	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
Confidence limits	± 1.9 points	± 2.5 points	± 2.7 points	± 3.0 points	± 3.1 points