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NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DENMARK

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Summary

This report presents the findings of the Eurobarometer-survey completed between September 6 and October 12, 2006.

The report sheds light on the attitudes the Danes have towards their own life in Denmark and in Europe, as well as their attitudes and expectations towards the European Union.

The Danes' contentment and expectations

- ***The Danes are among the most satisfied in Europe***

Danes remain very optimistic. Consumer confidence is high and unemployment is declining. This may explain why Danes also take a positive view on a more personal level. They have, however, been overtaken by the Swedes, who are now Europe's most satisfied population by a small margin.

- ***The economic situation is positive in Denmark***

Danes also take a positive view regarding more specific areas. The employment situation and general economic situation are areas that are judged to be especially good by Danes. The welfare situation and the environmental situation are also assessed in a positive manner by a majority of Danes.

- ***Great expectations for the upcoming year***

Generally, Danes expect the situation in Denmark to improve or remain the same in the upcoming year. Only a small part of the population expects the economic and employment situation to worsen.

- ***Danes' trust in institutions***

In spite of the positive trends in Denmark, levels of trust in the political parties have fallen since the spring of 2006. Danes appear to be divided as to whether or not they trust their national political institutions. Trust is highest amongst the well-educated, while the people with the least education are the least trusting.

Nevertheless, compared with the EU25 average, the Danes are more trusting.

- ***Fighting terrorism: the highest priority for the Danes***

According to the Danes, terrorism is the most important problem currently facing the country. Immigration, crime and the health care system are also high on the list of priorities for the Danes.

Unlike the EU25 average, the Danes do not prioritize unemployment as one of the most important problems facing their country.

The effects of Danish membership of the EU

- ***Membership of the EU is a good thing***

In general, the Danes evaluate their country's membership of the EU as a good thing. Levels of support in general have declined a bit since the spring of 2006. However, the Danes are generally more positive than the average EU25 citizen.

Students and those with a longer education, in particular, assess Denmark's EU membership to be a positive thing.

- ***Denmark benefits from EU-membership***

The fact that the Danes judge EU membership to be a good thing can be related to the fact that most believe that Denmark has benefited from its membership. Compared with the EU25 average citizen, the Danes believe, to a larger extent, that their country has benefited from membership.

- ***EU has a positive role in relation to economy and employment***

According to the Danes, EU membership has had a positive effect on both the economy and the employment situation in their country. This is the view of the Danes despite the fact that the country is now a net contributor to the EU.

- ***EU plays a positive role in relation to bringing peace in the world, fighting terrorism and protecting the environment***

The EU plays a positive role in fighting terrorism and crime, according to the Danes. The Danes also have a positive view of the EU's role in relation to environmental protection and bringing about peace in the world.

The Danes are more divided in relation to their view of the EU's role regarding fighting poverty. In this case, less than half view the EU's role as being positive.

- ***The EU's internal market and competitiveness***

The Danes are among the most positive in the EU25 when evaluating the effect of the EU's internal market on the competitiveness of Danish businesses.

- ***Danish businesses have benefited from globalisation***

A majority of the Danes who were interviewed view globalisation as being good for the competitiveness of Danish businesses. Compared with average EU25 citizens, Danes are considerably more positive.

This positive attitude cuts across all educational and age groups. However, the young and the well-educated are more positive in their views.

- ***Education and research will ensure the economic performance of the EU's***

The Danes and other Europeans agree that research and education are the most important areas on which to focus if the economic development of the EU is to be secured. Many also feel that

another important area is the more effective use of energy. It should be noted that energy is one of the main priority areas in EU at the moment.

The European political union

- *The political union*

As previously mentioned, the Danes generally view their country's EU membership as something positive and they are generally more positively inclined than the EU average. Nevertheless, the Danes are more divided when speaking of a common political union and they are considerably more sceptical than the EU average.

In particular, the older and less educated are more sceptical while the young and better educated are more positive.

- *Decision-making authority*

Problem areas such as the fight against terrorism, research and protecting the environment, which are characterized as being collective, should be solved in the EU framework, according to the Danes. On local political areas, such as the health care system, the education system, tax and pension area the decisions should be made on a national level according to the Danes.

- *European integration*

The Danes have a positive view of further European integration in areas such as defence policy, security policy and foreign policy. However, they are sceptical with regard to the further geographical expansion of the EU and also with regard to a European constitution.

- *The Danes' wish list for the EU*

At the top of the Danes' wish list as to how the EU should prioritize its tasks are: protecting the environment, peace and security, as well as fighting terrorism and poverty.

- *The Danes and the constitutional treaty*

Approximately half of Danish respondents answered that they are in favour of a constitutional treaty. However, the picture becomes blurred when the focus shifts to evaluating the possible effects of a constitutional treaty.

The majority evaluates that the EU will be stronger globally and be more economically competitive. Approximately half of the respondents believe that the EU will be more democratic and effective if a constitutional treaty is adopted. However, fewer believe that the EU will be either more socially inclined or more transparent as a result.

- *The constitutional treaty and the European institutions*

The majority of Danes believe that a European constitutional treaty is necessary for ensuring that the European institutions work well.

The rights of EU citizens

In general, Danes as well as other EU citizens are sceptical as to whether or not the EU has been beneficial for the rights of EU citizens. Only a fifth of Danes believe that the EU has had a

beneficial effect on this aspect while a little over a third of EU25 citizens as a whole feel the same way.

Danes and enlargement

- *Enlargement and the doubting Danes*

Enlargement has been a very central theme in the EU in recent times. Danish politicians have been advocates of the EU's enlargement towards the East and South. Danish respondents are quite divided with almost as many against it as are for it.

- *Who should be invited into the Community*

While the Danes are divided on the question of whether or not the EU should be enlarged further in the future, the attitude is clearer when they are asked who would be welcome to join the Community. The Danes are positively inclined towards expanding into Northern Europe. However, if asked whether the Eastern European countries should be included, there is less agreement and only a quarter of Danes believe that Turkey should be allowed to become a member of the EU.

- *Turkey as an EU-member*

If Turkey is to become a member of the EU in the future, the Danes have a number of demands that the country has to fulfil. The most striking are the demands for abiding by human rights and improving the economic situation.

The Danes' values

- *Closeness to the EU*

Approximately half the Danes believe that their vote counts in the EU and that they know how the EU works. However, only a quarter feel that they are committed to European matters.

- *The Danes' attitudes*

In this survey, the Danes are asked a number of questions regarding their attitude towards different political issues.

Nine out of ten Danes believe that the environment has to be protected even if it is at the expense of economic growth. Likewise, a large number also agree that violent criminals should be penalized much harder than at the present time. Also, more than half of Danes believe that their government is too involved in our lives.

- *Peace, democracy and human rights*

The Danes prioritize peace, democracy and human rights as the most important values. However, religion, solidarity and respect for other cultures are ranked the lowest on the list of priorities by the Danes.

- *The EU and Danish values*

The top 3 values that the Danes believe represent the EU best correspond quite well with the values that the Danes prioritize the highest in general: human rights, democracy and peace.

Danes are divided in their assessment as to whether or not their attitudes and values are in line with the attitudes and values of other EU countries. However, only a small segment of the poll believes that they are either very far from each other or very close to each other.