

# EUROBAROMETER 66

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

## AUTUMN 2006

### NATIONAL REPORT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### GREECE

This survey was requested and coordinated by Directorate-General Communication.

This report was produced for the European Commission's Representation in Greece.

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission.  
The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

## INTRODUCTION

Between 6 September and 10 October 2006, TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium created between Taylor Nelson Sofres and EOS Gallup Europe, carried out wave 66.1 of the EUROBAROMETER, on request of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General Press and Communication, Opinion Polls.

The EUROBAROMETER "Standard" is part of wave 66. 1 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 "Standard" has also been conducted in the two acceding countries (Bulgaria and Romania), 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.

The Greek sample consists of 1000 Greek residents, which allows, to a great and secure degree, to consider that the research results and assumptions are representative of the very same Greek national public opinion.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face in people's homes and in the appropriate national language.

All survey percentages have been rounded; from 0.1 to 0.4 down and from 0.5 to 0.9 up to the nearest unit of the decimal system.

## Personal situation and expectations

---

### **Although fairly satisfied with their daily life, still less than the average European citizen.**

Greek respondents (55%) claim to be *fairly satisfied* with the life they lead (EU25: 60%). The rate of Greeks displaying satisfaction (70% - total: "very satisfied, 15% + fairly satisfied, 55%") is one of the lowest recorded in the survey sample, while the EU25 average (82% - total: "very satisfied, 22% + fairly satisfied, 60%") is significantly higher.

### **Uncertainty and pessimism regarding expectations for the upcoming year.**

Expectations remain low for the next twelve months, as pessimism is seen in the position of Greek citizens regarding their country's economic and employment situation. More specifically, the majority of the Greek sample predicts worse economic developments (EL: 53% - EU25: 35% / EB65.2: 57% - EB64.2: 63% - EB63.4: 59%) as well as a deterioration in the employment situation (EL: 55% - EU25: 34% / EB65.2: 59% - EB64.2: 64% - EB63.4: 63%) in Greece for the forthcoming year. It is noted that although both rates are negative, they have still dropped when compared to those recorded in the three previous EB surveys (EB65.2, EB64.2 & EB63.4). Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the Greek sample (30% & 31% respectively) does not foresee any change (either positive or negative) in the upcoming year concerning the economic and employment situations in Greece (EU25: 40% & EU25: 38% respectively).

## Important issues that Greece is faced with

---

### 📍 Unemployment remains the issue of major concern.

As in the previous Eurobarometer surveys, the most important issue that Greece faces is unemployment (EL: 56% - EU25: 40%).

It is noted that the rate has dropped considerably when compared to the figures recorded in previous EB surveys ((EB60.1: 75%, EB61.0: 69%, EB62.1: 64%, EB63.4: 60%, EB64.2: 68% and EB65.2: 56%).

A significant proportion of Greek public opinion expresses concern about their country's economic situation (EL: 41% - EU25: 23%) and rising prices / inflation (EL: 31% - EU25: 16%).

## Trust in institutions

---

📍 **A majority of Greek citizens tend to trust the European Union.** The Greek percentage (65%) is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest of the entire survey, following those of Slovenia (70%) and Romania (67%), while the EU25 average for those displaying trust towards the European Union is significantly lower (EU25: 45%).

📍 **54% of Greek citizens seem to trust the Greek Parliament** (EU25: 33%). The Greek percentage is among the highest of the entire survey. Distrust in this institution is expressed by 46% of Greek respondents, as well as by the majority of European citizens (EU25: 58%).

📍 **58% of Greek and 62% of European citizens tend to not trust their national Government.** However, the proportion of Greek citizens (42%) that express trust in the Greek Government (EU25: 30%) is significant.

📍 **55% of Greek respondents tend to not trust the trades unions (EU25: 46%).** Trust is expressed by 44% of Greek and 38% of European citizens.

📍 **A tendency towards strong distrust of the Internet is recorded**, as it is expressed by six out of ten Greek citizens (EL: 61% - EU25: 35%). It is worth noting that the Greek rate displaying a tendency towards distrust in the Internet is the highest of the entire survey sample. The percentage of Greeks that expresses trust in the Internet is limited to just 33% (EU25: 34%).

📍 A high percentage of distrust is recorded by the majority of both Greek and European citizens (77% & 76% respectively), who take a **negative standpoint vis-à-vis political parties**.

## Greece's membership in the European Union

---

### 📍 Greece has benefited from being a member of the European Union.

The majority of Greeks (57%) believe that Greece's membership of the European Union has had a positive impact (EU25: 53%). The opposite view is held by 12% of Greek citizens (EU25: 16%), while 31% of Greeks take a neutral position ("neither positive nor negative") - (EU25: 27%). This is why the majority of Greek citizens (74%) believe that Greece has benefited from its membership of the European Union. The percentage of Greeks holding this view is one of the highest in the current survey, while the EU25 average is significantly lower, reaching 54%.

## The international role of the European Union

---

**A positive attitude is recorded regarding the international role of the European Union** in matters such as peace, the fight against terrorism, world economic development, the fight against poverty and the protection of the environment.

Greek and European citizens agree that the European Union plays a positive role regarding:

- 🇪🇺 Peace in the world, (EL: 61% - EU25: 60%).
- 🇪🇺 Protection of the environment, (EL: 59% - EU25: 60%).
- 🇪🇺 Fight against terrorism, (EL: 53% - EU25: 59%).
- 🇪🇺 Growth in the world economy, (EL: 53% - EU25: 53%).
- 🇪🇺 Fight against poverty in the world, (EL: 49% - EU25: 49%).

## Economy and Employment

---

🇪🇺 **The Greek economy is in a bad state; the European economy is in a good one.**

Eight out of ten Greeks express their dissatisfaction about the state of the Greek economy, characterizing it as "bad" (EL: 78% - EU25: 50%). The proportion of Greeks holding this view is one of the highest recorded in the current survey. However, it is noted that the rate has dropped significantly when compared to that recorded in the previous EB survey when this question was asked (EB63.4: 86%). On the other hand, the majority of Greek public opinion seems to be satisfied with the European economy, finding that it performs better than the Greek economy (EL: 69% - EU25: 58% - EB63.4: 56%).

🇪🇺 **Nine out of ten Greek respondents express their dissatisfaction about the current employment situation in their country.** The Greek rate (88%) is among the highest recorded in the survey (EU25: 70%).

🇪🇺 Greek citizens believe that **their country belonging to the European Union has had a good effect on the Greek economy** (EL: 64% - EU25: 56%). However, they do not seem to believe the same when it comes to Greek employment (Bad effect / EL: 52% - EU25: 51%). In any case, a significant proportion of Greek public opinion finds that it has had a good effect on Greek employment as well (EL: 47% - EU25: 38%).

🇪🇺 Most Greek, as well as European, citizens believe that, in order **to improve the performance of the European economy, priority must be given to improving education and professional training** (EL: 68% - EU25: 65%), as well as to facilitating the creation of new companies (EL: 54% - EU25: 43%). Few respondents think that an increase in the legal number of working hours would have a positive effect on the performance of the European economy (EL: 7% - EU25: 10%).

🇪🇺 Four out of ten Greek respondents state that, due to the single market, especially when compared to ten years ago, **the international competitiveness of Greek companies has improved** (EL: 40% - EU25: 42%).

🇪🇺 Greek citizens perceive **globalization as a threat for their country's employment situation as well as for Greek companies (EL: 64% - EU25: 41%)**. The Greek and French rates are the highest recorded in the current survey.

### 🇪🇺 Level of decision-making

- The survey makes reference to a number of areas in which Greek respondents are called upon to express their opinion on whether decision-making should be made independently by the national government or jointly within the European Union. Greek citizens express their preference for joint decision-making in 12 out of 16 areas, while they remain firm that issues regarding **pensions** (EL: 60% - EU25: 73%), **taxation** (EL: 58% - EU25: 69%), **the educational system** (EL: 58% - EU25: 68%), **as well as health and social welfare** (EL: 51% - EU25: 68%), **should fall within the competence of the Greek government.**

*Preference for joint decision-making is expressed for the following areas: Scientific and technological research, 76% (EU25: 70%) - Fight against terrorism, 74% (EU25: 79%) - Energy, 70% (EU25: 60%) - Support for regions facing economic difficulties, 66% (EU25: 57%) - Protection of the environment, 64% (EU25: 64%) - Competition, 60% (EU25: 54%) - Consumer protection, 59% (EU25: 46%) - Defence and foreign affairs, 58% (EU25: 64%) - Immigration, 54% (EU25: 57%) - Fighting crime, 52% (EU25: 59%) - Fighting unemployment, 52% (EU25: 38%) - Agriculture and fishery, 51% (EU25: 49%).*

- **The EU should take decisions regarding European defence policy.** The majority of Greek public opinion believes that the European Union (EL: 61% - EU25: 49%), rather than the national government (EL: 34% - EU25: 21%), should make decisions concerning European defence policy. Only 2% [the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest survey percentage recorded, following that of Cyprus (1%)] would prefer NATO to make decisions concerning European defence policy (EU25: 17%).

### 🇪🇺 Support for EU common policies

Greek and European citizens are in favour of:

- A common defence and security policy among European Union Member States (EL: 82% - EU25: 75%).
- A common foreign policy among the Member States of the European Union, towards other countries (EL: 80% - EU25: 68%).
- The development towards a European political union (EL: 73% - EU25: 54%).

### 🇪🇺 Could be a 'YES', could be a 'NO' for Euro

One in two Greek citizens (50%) appears to be in favour of a European Monetary Union with a single currency (euro), while an almost equal proportion of the Greek sample (49%) is against. The EU25 average percentages are 60% in favour of the euro and 33% against. It is noted that the percentage of Greek respondents who are against the euro is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest following that of the United Kingdom (62%).

### 🇪🇺 Top priorities for the European Union

The majority of Greek public opinion believes that the top priorities of the European Union should be the fight against poverty and social exclusion (EL: 58% - EU25: 43%), as well as the fight against unemployment (EL: 55% - EU25: 40%).

### 🇪🇺 'Yes' to an EU Constitution

Seven out of ten Greek citizens (72%), as well as six out ten European citizens (63%), express the necessity for a Constitution of the European Union. Moreover, Greek and European citizens believe that the adoption of a Constitution for Europe is necessary in order to ensure that European institutions work well (EL: 71% - EU25: 61%).

## The enlargement of the European Union


### 🇬🇷 Greeks remain ardent supporters of EU enlargement

Greeks support EU enlargement, as they explicitly support the prospect of more countries joining the European Union in the forthcoming years (EL: 71% - EU25: 46%), whereas 28% of Greek respondents are opposed to such an event (EU25: 42%).

### 🇬🇷 Greek and European citizens do not want Albania and Turkey to become part of the EU

Greek citizens seem to recognize the readiness of most countries presented in the context of the survey, except for Turkey (EL: 75% - EU25: 59%) and Albania (EL: 62% - EU25: 53%).

The following table presents the rates recorded by Greek and European citizens who are in favour of the countries under consideration to become, in the future, part of the European Union.

			
87	78		Switzerland
86	78		Norway
77	69		Iceland
72	37		Serbia
66	50		Croatia
65	39		Bosnia & Herzegovina
65	40		Montenegro
64	41		Romania
63	41		Ukraine
62	46		Bulgaria
52	40		FYROM
38	32		Albania
24	28		Turkey

### 🇬🇷 Greek and European citizens do not detect any positive outcome resulting from Turkey joining the European Union.

- Greek and European citizens agree that **Turkey will have to systematically respect human rights** in order to join the European Union in about ten years' time. Turkish public opinion also agrees with this view (73%). Another significant condition regarding Turkey's accession seems to be the economy of the country, as Greeks (EL: 94% - EU25: 77%) consider that in order to join the European Union in about ten years' time, **Turkey will have to significantly improve the state of its economy**. Turkish citizens express the same view (72%).
- Although Turkish citizens (64%) believe that their country's accession to the European Union would strengthen the security in this region, Greek and European respondents have an opposite opinion, as they disagree with this statement (EL: 59% - EU25: 51%). Nevertheless, a significant proportion of Greek public opinion seems to agree with Turkish citizens (EL: 41% - EU25: 33%).

- Greek and European citizens (EL: 79% - EU25: 61%) believe that the cultural differences between Turkey and European Union Member States are too significant to allow for this accession. It is worth noting that Turkish citizens (55%), as well as respondents within the Turkish Cypriot community (52%), share the same view.
- Greek and European citizens (EL: 82% - EU25: 66%) believe that Turkey's joining could risk favouring immigration to more developed countries in the European Union. It is noted that 63% of Turkish citizens express the same view.
- Greek and European citizens (EL: 66% - EU25: 50%) do not think that Turkey's accession to the European Union would favour the rejuvenation of an ageing European population.
- **Greek citizens do not consider that Turkey partly belongs to Europe either in terms of its geography** (EL: 59% - EU25: 32%), **or its history** (EL: 83% - EU25: 44%). The Greek results in regard to these views are the highest recorded in the current survey, along with those of Cyprus (57% and 84% respectively).

### Values of European citizens

---

**Greek citizens believe, that in terms of shared values, European Union Member States are close to each other (EL: 63% - EU25: 48%).** The Greek figure is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest recorded in the survey following those of Slovakia (71%), the Czech Republic (68%) and Turkey (66%).

Moreover, Greek and European citizens agree that:

- ☞ The State intervenes too much in their lives (EL: 67% - EU25: 62%).
- ☞ More equality and justice are needed, even if that means less freedom for the individual (EL: 62% - EU25: 64%).
- ☞ Criminals should be punished more severely, as nowadays there is too much tolerance (EL: 85% - EU25: 85%).
- ☞ Citizens should participate more actively in their country's politics (EL: 93% - EU25: 81%). The Greek rate is the highest recorded in the current survey.
- ☞ Immigrants do not contribute a lot to their countries (EL: 57% - EU25: 52%). It is noted that a significant proportion of Greek, as well as European, public opinion disagrees with this assumption (EL: 43% - EU25: 40%).
- ☞ Free competition is the best guarantee for economic prosperity (EL: 57% - EU25: 64%).
- ☞ More importance should be given to spare time than to work (EL: 66% - EU25: 48%). The Greek percentage is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest of the current survey, following those of Cyprus (69%) and Estonia (67%).
- ☞ The personal consumption of cannabis should not be legalized throughout Europe (EL: 81% - EU25: 68%). The Greek rate is the 7<sup>th</sup> highest of the current survey.
- ☞ Homosexual marriages should not be authorised throughout Europe (EL: 84% - EU25: 49%). The Greek and Latvian rates are the highest of the current survey.
- ☞ Child adoption by homosexual couples should not be authorised throughout Europe (EL: 89% - EU25: 61%). The Greek, Latvian and Polish rates are the highest recorded in the current survey.