

EUROBAROMETER 65

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTUMN 2006

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LUXEMBOURG

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

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Decline in the positive assessment of EU membership

Unemployment remains the main preoccupation

The second half of 2006 was marked in Luxembourg by a rising unemployment rate. Even though it is one of the lowest in the EU, it is the problem that is uppermost in the public's mind in spite of an economic growth rate of more than 5%. Along with labour market problems comes the discussion about a uniform status for both workers and employees in order to avoid social differences between the two groups.

The Eurobarometer 66.1 survey was carried out by the European Commission in autumn 2006 in a total of 30 countries and territories: in the 25 EU countries, the 2 accession countries (Bulgaria and Romania), the two candidate countries (Croatia and Turkey), and the territory of the Turkish Cypriot Community, provides a snapshot of the life of citizens and the perception and image that they have of the EU, as well as their levels of trust in European and national political institutions.

The Eurobarometer Survey sample requires that +/- 1.000 persons be interviewed in each EU country. Luxembourg's quota for EB 66.1 was 503 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 prepared for the European Commission's Representation in Luxembourg, refers to Luxembourg's population overall, rather than uniquely to residents of Luxembourgish nationality.

Between satisfaction with their way of life and pessimism regarding employment

93% of Luxembourg's citizens are satisfied with their way of life. Most of the citizens do not expect that their personal situation will change in the year ahead. Even if they expect a deterioration in the employment market, few people expect negative developments in their own professional situation, as was the case in 2005.

Trust in national and European institutions and the sense of being part of the Union

Trust in national and European institutions and the sense of being part of the Union continues in Luxembourg as before, with three-quarters of its population still in favour of being part of the European Union. However, more than a quarter now believes that Luxembourg has not benefited from its membership.

The economic situation and the employment

Even if the economic situation has been rated positively, as has EU membership, as being favourable for the economy, the employment situation has been rated negatively in Luxembourg, partly because of EU membership and globalisation. Although, the single market is appreciated as a means of encouraging competition, it is, at the same time, blamed for the loss in competitiveness of national companies.

Political union and the European Constitution

With regard to positive opinion concerning progress towards a European political union, Luxembourg's figures are below the EU average, which places it only in twentieth position amongst the 25 Member States, a drop of 6 places in the ranking over the last year. Even though respondents claim that they understand the functioning of the EU and consider their voice important, they do not feel involved in European affairs. They are largely in favour of the Euro, a common foreign policy, a common security and defence policy, and even the constitution, each time exceeding the EU average. The EU constitution would be an advantage, according to public opinion in Luxembourg, favouring the political functioning of the EU in a democratic, efficient and transparent way, and so giving strength to Europe's place in the world and global economic development.

The enlargement of the European Union

Luxembourg, together with Germany and Austria, are the three countries most opposed to the future enlargement of the EU. Luxembourg citizens consider that three countries (Switzerland, Norway and Iceland) which are not candidates for membership would be welcome to join the EU. However, Turkey and Albania are rejected. The vast majority of Luxembourg respondents are opposed to the future enlargement of the EU - with only one-third in favour of the process.

European citizens' values

Opinions about values amongst the EU Member States are split and very controversial. Luxembourg mainly thinks that there are greater differences in values than commonalities. Peace and human rights are essential values amongst the citizens of Luxembourg.

A broad convergence is noted on what the European Union represents on this level. Within the European Union, opinions as to the proximity of values amongst the Member States are controversial. It was noted that five people out of ten rate close values as being more important and four people out of ten the contrary. Luxembourg clearly stands out and is in third position amongst those Member States of the EU believing that, in terms of values, there is more of a distance than a closeness between the Member States.

To conclude this report, a series of supplementary graphics provides the image of the EU of certain individual liberties which have been evaluated by public opinion in each of the Member States.