

EUROBAROMETER 67

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2007

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GERMANY

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

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

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.

Executive Summary

Awareness of the Presidency

- 74% of Germans know about the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union
- Asked whether they think the Presidency is important – independently of whether they had heard of it or not -, 30% of Germans consider it to be very important. 46% said it is important while 14% thought it to be not very important.

EU-Treaty – Agreements at the Brussels summit

Constitution

- 66% (+3 points) of Europeans and 78% (+5 points) of Germans are in favour of a constitution for the European Union. In France (68%, +2 points) and the Netherlands (55%, -4 points), stable majorities favour a constitution for the European Union.

Reform of the decision-making rules and participation rights of national parliaments

- 41% (+6 points) of Germans and 35% (+1 points) of Europeans think that their voice “counts” in the EU.
- 86% (-4 points) of Germans and 66% (-2 points) of Europeans believe that the voice of their country counts in the EU. In Poland, 68% (+1 points) of respondents believe that the voice of their country counts in the EU.
- 54% (+17 points) of Germans and 52% (+10 points) of Europeans believe that their country will become more influential.
- 54% (+16 points) of Germans and 45% (+7 points) of Europeans think that their interests are well taken care of in the EU.
- 75% (+3 points) of Europeans and 66% (+2 points) of Germans have the impression that the biggest member states have the most influence in the EU.

Exit rules for specific policy areas

- 47% (+10 points) of Europeans and 59% (+16 points) of Germans think that countries that wish to integrate faster should be allowed to do so in specific policy areas.

Foreign and Security Policy

- A majority of Europeans (72%, +4 points) and Germans (84%, +7 points) want the EU to develop a common external and security policy.
- 69% (+4 points) of Europeans and 75% (+5 points) of Germans favour a foreign minister for the EU.

Charter of basic rights

- Every fourth European (25%) and German (28%) regards guaranteed basic rights as important.

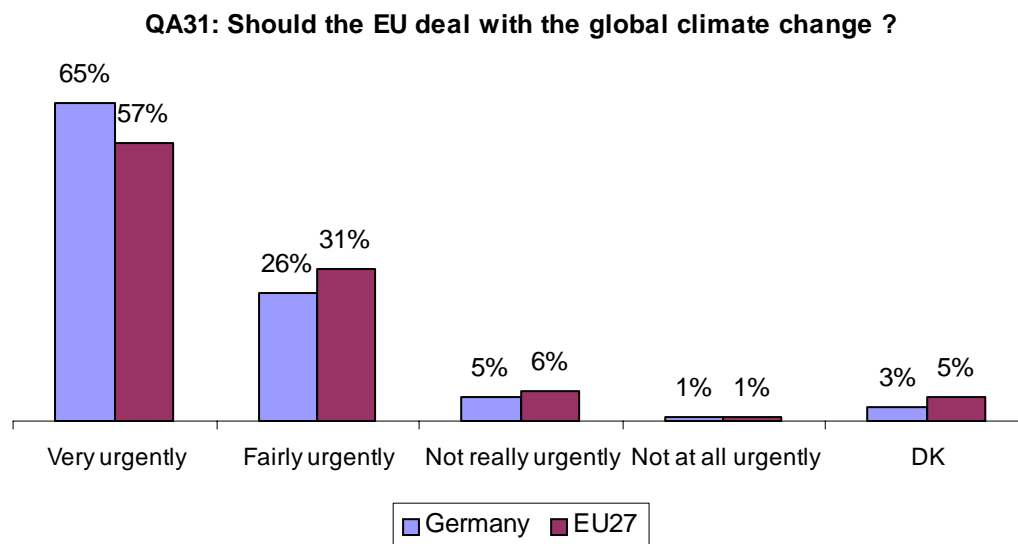
Flag

- 95% (+3 points) of Europeans in general and 99% (+1 points) of Germans recognise the flag of the EU. 91% (+6 points) of Germans and 85% of Europeans (+5 points) think that the flag is a good symbol for the EU.

Optimism about Europe's future

- Europeans as a whole (69%) and Germans (75%) are optimistic about Europe's future.
- 54% of Germans and 51% of Europeans overall believe that the European Union will have a directly elected president within 50 years from now.
- 61% of Europeans and 67% of Germans expect the Euro to be stronger than the dollar in 50 years' time.
- A majority of Germans (60%) and Europeans (56%) expect that there will be a common European army in 50 years' time.

EU climate policy



- 91% of Germans and 88% of Europeans overall think that climate change is a matter that should be dealt with urgently by the European Union.
- 92% of Germans and 89% of Europeans think that the European Union should urgently put new policies in place to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% by 2020.

Perception of Europe

- Germans and Europeans in general perceive the EU as 'modern' (D: 65%, +5 points / EU27: 70%, +3 points), 'democratic' (D: 72%, +2 points / EU27: 70%, +3 points), 'protective' (D: 59%, +10 points / EU27: 57%, +4 points), 'inefficient' (D: 45%, -8 points / EU27: 37%, -6 points) and 'technocratic' (D: 58%, +/-0 points / EU27: 48%, -1 point).

Membership of the EU

- For Germans (65%, +7 points) and Europeans (57%, +4 points), their country's membership of the EU is a good thing.

Image of the EU and its institutions

- The image of the EU improved significantly in Germany (52%, +10 points) and Europe (52%, +6 points) since the last survey.
- 79% of Germans (+5 points) and Europeans (77%, +1 points) think that the European Parliament plays an important role. The European Commission is also perceived as more important than in the last survey by Germans (70%, +4 points) and Europeans (72%, +2 points).

Personal meaning of the EU

- For Germans, the EU means the freedom to travel, work and study anywhere in the Union (D: 56%, -1 point / EU27: 52%, +2 points). The Euro is also an important symbol of Europe (D: 53%, +3 points / EU27: 39%, +/-0 points), as well as the maintenance of peace (D: 48%, -6 points / EU27: 33%, +/- 0 points).

Democracy in Europe

- Only 35% (+1 point) of Europeans believe that their voice counts in the European Union (D: 41%, +5 points).

Knowledge of EU-institutions

- 93% of Germans (+1 point) and 89% of Europeans (-1 point) have heard of the European Parliament; the European Commission is known by 82% (+3 points) of Germans and 82% (+/-0 points) of Europeans. 72% (+9 points) of Germans and 68% (+4 points) of Europeans have heard of the European Council. The institution of the Euro, the European Central Bank, is widely known by Germans (87%, +2 points) and Europeans alike (75%, +3 points).

The most important achievement of European integration

- For Germans (56%, +1 point) and Europeans (39%, -4 points), the most important achievement of European integration is peace between the member states, followed by the free movement of persons and goods (Germany: 41%, +1 point, Europe: 32%, +2 points)

What produces a feeling of community?

- 27% of Europeans and 33% of Germans think that a feeling that the EU develops mainly as a result of economic integration, followed by culture (Germans 27%), Sport (24%) and solidarity with poorer regions (21%). In Europe, the feeling is of a community supported by economic integration and culture (27%), followed by European history (21%).

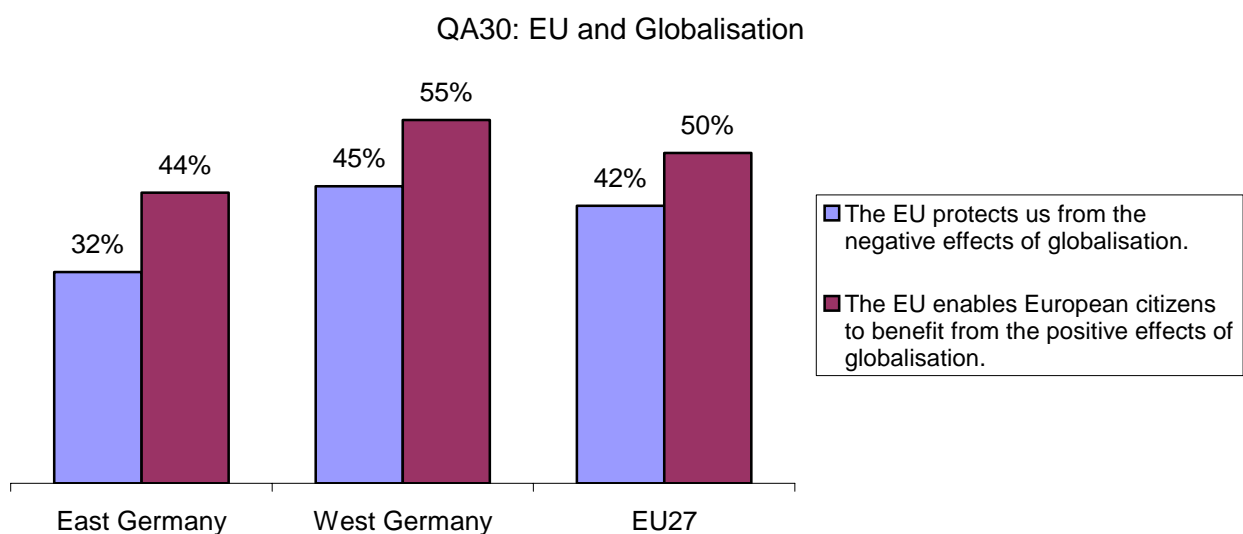
Germany's and Europe's most important problems

- The most important problem Germany still faces is the high number of unemployed citizens (58%, -12 points). Europeans also think that the fight against unemployment is the most important challenge Europe is facing (34%, -6 points). For Germans, the reform of the health care system is the second most important issue (20%, +/-0 points) followed by educational reforms (18%, +6 points). Europeans think that the fight against crime is the second most important issue (24%, +1 point) followed by the economic situation (20%, -3 points).

Forming globalisation

- A majority of Germans associate something positive with the concept of globalisation (51%, +14 points). In Europe as a whole, 46% (+5 points) associate something positive with the term globalisation. However, only a tiny part of the German respondents think of direct investments in Germany when they hear the term globalisation (7%, -1 point). 30% (+12 points) of Germans perceive globalisation as an opportunity for German firms abroad. Most of the German respondents, however, fear the relocation of work to countries with lower labour costs (46%, -5 points / EU27: 35%, -2 points).

The European Union and the consequences of globalisation



- 50% (+2 points) of Europeans and 53% (+7 points) of Germans think that the European Union helps their citizen to profit from the process of globalization.

Areas in which integration should be intensified

- Europeans want more engagement in environmental issues (34%), followed by the fight against crime (33%) and immigration (29%), energy and social issues (both 25%)
- From a German perspective, environmental issues should be dealt with urgently (45%), followed by the fight against crime (37%), energy (36%), immigration (30%) and social issues (28%).

Influence of the country

- 54% (+17 points) of the respondents believe that Germany will become more influential in the future. In Europe 52% (+10 points), people believe in the growing importance of their respective countries.

National or European decision-making

- Taxation (D: 69%, -2 points / EU27: 68%, -1 point), unemployment (D: 60%, -2 points / EU27: 58%, -1 point), education (D: 57%, -12 points / EU27: 64%, -4 points), pensions (D: 83%, +/-0 points / EU27: 72%, -2 points), health and social issues (D: 71%, -3 points / EU27: 66%, -2 points) should be dealt with at national level.
- Crime (D: 77%, +5 points / EU27: 60%, +1 points), terrorism (D: 89%, +1 point / EU27: 81%, +2 points), defence and foreign affairs (D: 73%, -1 point / EU27: 62%), immigration (D: 61%, +5 points / EU27: 59%, +2 points), environmental issues (D: 85%, +9 points / EU27: 69%, +4 points) and energy: (D: 72%, +6 points / EU27: 61%, +1 point) should be dealt with jointly at European level.

Trust in European institutions

- 58% (+5 points) of Germans and 56% (+4 points) of Europeans trust the European Parliament.
- Trust in the European Commission has risen slightly among Europeans (52%, +4 points) and Germans (49%, +7 points).
- 47% (+4 points) of Europeans and 46% (+7 points) of Germans trust the Council of the European Union.
- 65% of Germans (+5 points) and 53% (+6 points) of Europeans trust the European Central Bank.

Trust in national institutions

- A relative majority of Europeans do not trust the press in their country (48%, -1 point). In Germany, 51% (-1 point) are critical of the national press.

- Unlike the printed press, radio is trusted more by Europeans (66%, +3 points) and Germans (69%, +4 points).
- More respondents trust television than the printed press (Germany: 62%, +5 points / Europe 58% (+5 points).
- 39% (+4 points) of the respondents in Europe and 33% (+4 points) in Germany trust the internet.
- National governments have experienced a huge increase in trust (Europe: 41%, +11 points / Germany: 49%, +22 points).
- National parliaments are trusted also more than before (Europe: 44%, +11 points / Germany 51%, +20 points).

Experience with enlargement

- Every fifth German (18%) says that enlargement have had a positive effect on his life.

Enlargement of the EU

- In general, Europeans (49%, +3 points) and Germans (34%, +4 points) tend to see the issue of enlargement more positively again. A majority of Germans, however, are still against further enlargement.

Satisfaction with their own life

- Germans (86%, +4 points) and Europeans (80%, -2 points) are satisfied with their lives.

Expectations for the next 12 months

- 62% (+/-0 points) of Germans expect no change in their personal situation during the next 12 months. In general, Europeans are optimistic: 37% (+2 points) of respondents expect that their lives will improve during the coming year.
- 41% (+18 points) of Germans expect the economy to grow over the next year. Europeans are not as optimistic as Germans (28%, +8 points).
- That the financial situation of their own household will improve is expected by 18% (+5 points) of Germans and (27%, +2 points) of Europeans.
- 44% (+20 points) of Germans and 31% (+9 points) of Europeans believe that the unemployment rate will decrease.
- 30% (+4 points) of Germans and 43% (+2 points) of Europeans are convinced that their personal situation will improve in the course of the next year.

Germany compared with the other EU member states

- 64% (+17 points) think that the German economy is stronger than those of other member states. In Europe, 38% (-3 points) of respondents assess their own economy as being more competitive than those of other member states.
- 40% (+23 points) of Germans think that their job situation is better compared with those of the other member states. Among Europeans, 32% (+2 points) are convinced that their job situation is better compared with that of the other member states.
- 61% (+1 point) of Germans think that, despite all the reforms and cuts in social services, Germany still possesses the best social welfare system in the EU.
- A majority (57%, +1 point) of Germans think that the German educational system is not as good as that of other EU-countries. 39% (-1 point) of Europeans are convinced of the quality of their educational system.
- Germans are convinced that there are few places in the EU where life is better than in Germany (67%, +6 points).

Knowledge of the functioning of the European Union

- Every second German thinks they understand how the EU functions. In Europe, 43% share this view.

German knowledge levels regarding EU-issues

- 72% of Germans are not convinced that their fellow citizens are well-informed regarding EU issues.

Knowledge of measures in other countries

- 73% of Germans do not think that their fellow countrymen are well informed of measures taken in specific policy areas in other parts of the European Union.

Sources of information

- Germans, as well as Europeans, inform themselves about the European Union mostly by television (D: 79%, -3 points / EU27: 63%, -70 points), the daily press (D: 62%, +/- 0 points, EU27: 41%, +/-0 points), radio (D: 34%, -13 points / Europe: 26%, -5 points), internet (D: 30%, +5 points, EU27: 28%, +5 points) and in discussions with relatives and friends (D: 23%, -8 points, Europa: 21%, -1 point).