

EUROBAROMETER 67

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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NATIONAL REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
GREECE

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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 the 10th of April and the 15th of May 2007, TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium created between Taylor Nelson Sofres and EOS Gallup Europe, carried out wave 67.2 of the EUROBAROMETER, on request of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate General Communication, "Public Opinion and Media Monitoring".

The STANDARD EUROBAROMETER 67.2 is part of wave 67.2 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 STANDARD EUROBAROMETER 67.2 has also been conducted 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 and the population of citizens of all the European Union Member States that are residents in these countries and have a sufficient command of the national languages 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 defined 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 enables us, to a great and secure degree, to consider that the research results and assumptions are representative of Greek 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

Ⓜ **Satisfied with their daily life, but still less than the average European citizen.**

Greek respondents (57%) claim to be *fairly satisfied* with the life they lead (EU27: 59%). The total rate of Greeks displaying satisfaction ("very satisfied 10% + fairly satisfied, 57%") is 67%, while the EU27 average ("very satisfied, 21% + fairly satisfied, 59%" - total: 80%) is significantly higher.

Ⓜ **Low expectations -for the upcoming year- regarding economic and employment situations in Greece.**

The majority of the Greek sample predicts worse economic developments (EL: 52% - EU27: 27%) as well as a deterioration in the employment situation (EL: 52% - EU27: 27%) in Greece for the forthcoming year. It is noted that, although both rates are negative, they have nevertheless dropped when compared to those recorded in the three previous EB surveys (EB66.1, EB65.2, EB64.2 & EB63.4). However, a significant proportion of the Greek sample (32% & 35% respectively) does not foresee any change (either positive or negative) in the coming year concerning the economic and employment situation in Greece (EU27: 38% & EU27: 35% respectively). Improvements in the Greek economy and employment are predicted by fewer Greek respondents, 16% and 13% respectively.

No concern is expressed about the performance of the EU economy, as Greek respondents do not predict any change, either positive or negative (EL: 51% - EU27: 38%).

📍 **Comparing the present situation with five years ago and predictions for the next five years.**

When comparing rates recorded in the current survey with those of the previous one (autumn 2007 / EB65.2), it is observed that Greek citizens appear to be more satisfied with their present personal situation. More specifically, the negative rate recorded, of citizens stating that their personal situation has deteriorated over the last five years, has dropped significantly -fifteen points- from 52% in the previous survey to 37% in the current one. Furthermore, 27% of the Greek sample recognizes improvement (EB65.2: 20%) while 36% believe that their personal situation has neither improved nor worsened (EB65.2: 29%).

Measured optimism is seen as 38% of the Greek sample estimates that its personal situation will improve within the next five years. The rate recorded has increased by seven points when compared to the rate recorded in the previous survey (EB65.2: 31%).

Nevertheless, no alteration is foreseen by 34% of Greeks and 38% of Europeans in general concerning their personal situation over the next five years. On the other hand, pessimism is expressed by 26% and 14% of respondents respectively as they fear that their personal situation will get worse.

📍 **Situation in Greece is worse than the average of the European Union countries.**

Greek citizens believe that their country is at the backseat of the European Union, as they find the situation -in a series of domains presented- to be not as good as that in other EU Member States. More specifically, the rates recorded for each domain presented in the current survey are:

Provision of pensions (EL: 94% - EU27: 56%), Employment situation (EL: 89% - EU27: 54%), Situation of Greek economy (EL: 88% - EU27: 49%), Social welfare (EL: 88% - EU27: 44%), Cost of living (EL: 88% - EU27: 65%), Healthcare system (EL: 88% - EU27: 48%), Energy prices (EL: 83% - EU27: 63%), Educational system (EL: 83% - EU27: 44%), Public transport (EL: 70% - EU27: 44%), Quality of life (EL: 60% - EU27: 40%), Situation of the environment (EL: 57% - EU27: 39%), Knowledge of foreign languages (EL: 52% - EU27: 52%).

It is noted that, in most cases, the negative rating recorded in Greece is among the highest recorded in the entire survey, while the EU27 average comprises a significantly lower level of negative responses.

Important issues facing Greece

📍 **Greeks are mostly concerned about unemployment.**

As in previous Eurobarometer surveys, the most important issue that Greece faces is unemployment (EL: 51% - EU27: 34%).

It is noted that the rate has dropped considerably when compared to those recorded in previous EB surveys (EB60.1: 65%, EB61.0: 75%, EB62.0: 69%, EB63.4: 64%, EB64.2: 60%, EB65.2: 68% and EB66.1: 56%).

A significant proportion of Greeks express concern about their country's economic situation (EL: 39% - EU27: 20%) and rising prices / inflation (EL: 28% - EU27: 18%).

Trust in institutions

- 🇪🇺 **A majority of Greek citizens tend to trust the European Union** (EL: 63% - EU27: 57%), **as well as the European bodies:** European Parliament (EL: 65% - EU27: 56%), European Commission (EL: 62% - EU27: 52%), Council of the European Union (EL: 62% - EU27: 47%), European Central Bank (EL: 56% - EU27: 53%).
- 🇪🇺 **53% of Greek citizens trust their national parliament** (EU27: 43%). However, distrust in this institution is expressed by 47% of Greek respondents, as well as by the majority of European citizens (EU27: 50%).
- 🇪🇺 **59% of Greek and 53% of European citizens tend not to trust their national Government.** However, the proportion of both Greek and European citizens [41%] that express trust in their national Government is significant.
- 🇪🇺 **A tendency of strong distrust in the Internet is recorded**, with 66% of Greek respondents (EU27: 35%) taking this stance. It is worth noting that the Greek rate displaying a tendency of distrust towards the Internet is the highest of the entire survey sample. The percentage of Greeks that expresses trust in the Internet is limited to 31% (EU27: 39%).
- 🇪🇺 Likewise, a high percentage of distrust is recorded by Greek respondents (highest negative rate of the entire survey sample) who take a **negative standpoint vis-à-vis television** (EL: 61% - EU27: 37%). 39% of Greek respondents tend to trust it, as well as a majority of the European Union poll (EU27: 58%).
- 🇪🇺 **Distrust is expressed towards the press by 53% of Greek and 48% of European respondents.** Nevertheless, significant proportions of both the Greek and European poll tend to trust it (EL & EU27: 47%).
- 🇪🇺 However, a **high percentage of trust in radio is recorded by the majority of both Greek and European citizens (60% & 66% respectively).** However, many Greek respondents (40%, among the highest negative rates recorded in the survey) express distrust towards radio, while the EU27 average is limited to 28%.

Globalisation

Greek and European citizens share positive views regarding: reforms (EL: 76% - EU27: 64%), competitiveness (EL: 73% - EU27: 73%), free trade (EL: 66% - EU27: 76%) and liberalisation (EL: 54% - EU27: 58%). However, Greek respondents take a strongly negative standpoint (71%, highest rate recorded in the entire survey) stating that **globalisation brings to mind something negative**, while the EU27 average is only 39%.

1 out of 2 Greek citizens seems to believe that **globalisation causes the relocation of some companies to countries where labour is cheaper** (EL: 50% - EU27: 35%); therefore, it is perceived as a threat to their country's employment situation. The rate recorded in Greece is the second highest -negative- of the entire survey, following that of France (57%).

However, there are some who consider that globalisation favours foreign investments in Greece (EL: 17% - EU27: 14%) and creates new opportunities for Greek companies in terms of new outlets (EL: 15% - EU27: 22%).

Decision Making

Greek and European citizens agree that for every European decision that is subject to negotiation, the opinions of the national Government of all Member States should be taken into account (EL: 67% - EU27: 63%).

Moreover, 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 18 areas, while they remain firm that issues regarding **the educational system** (EL: 64% - EU27: 64%), **transport** (EL: 64% - EU27: 51%), **agriculture and fisheries** (EL: 60% - EU27: 45%), **taxation** (EL: 63% - EU27: 68%), **pensions** (EL: 59% - EU27: 72%), **as well as health and social welfare** (EL: 58% - EU27: 66%) **should fall within the competence of the Greek government.**

Preference for joint decision-making is expressed for the following areas: Scientific and technological research, 85% (EU27: 71%) – fighting against terrorism, 78% (EU27: 81%) – Energy, 75% (EU27: 61%) - support for regions facing economic difficulties, 73% (EU27: 60%) - protection of the environment, 66% (EU27: 69%) - competition, 61% (EU27: 57%) - defence and foreign affairs, 58% (EU27: 62%) – immigration, 54% (EU27: 59%) – fighting unemployment, 53% (EU27: 39%) – fighting crime, 57% (EU27: 60%) – consumer protection, 51% (EU27: 48%) and economy, 51% (EU27: 46%).

Nevertheless, in regard to the Greek economy, a significant proportion of the Greek poll would prefer decisions to be taken by the national government (EL: 49% - EU27: 50%).

Support for EU common policies

- Ⓜ **Disappointed by the Euro.** The use of the European currency has caused disappointment to Greek citizens as they appear to take a **negative standpoint towards the European Monetary Union with one single currency, the Euro** (EL: 52% - EU27: 31%). It is noted that the percentage of Greek respondents who are against the Euro is the 2nd highest following that of the United Kingdom (64%). Nevertheless, a great proportion of Greek public opinion is in favour of a European Monetary Union and is in agreement with the majority of the EU27 public opinion which records the high percentage of 63%.
- Ⓜ **Favouring EU common policies.** Greek and European citizens are in favour of a common defence and security policy among European Union Member States (EL: 84% - EU27: 77%), as well as a common foreign policy among the Member States of the European Union towards other countries (EL: 80% - EU27: 72%).
- Ⓜ **YES to an EU Constitution.** Six out of ten Greek citizens (EL: 61% - EU27: 66%) express the wish for a Constitution of the European Union. However, it is observed that the Greek rate has dropped –by eleven points– when compared to the previous Eurobarometer survey that posed the same question (EB66.1: 72%). The percentage against a Constitution for the European Union recorded has increased from 25% (EB66.1) to 38% in the current survey.

The results, presented in the current survey, solely reflect the sample's opinion as to having a Constitution for the European Union and do not, in any case, refer to its content.

The enlargement of the European Union

🇸🇬 **Greeks continue to support EU enlargement**

Greeks support the prospect of more countries joining the European Union in the forthcoming years (EL: 56% - EU27: 49%), whereas 43% of Greek respondents are opposed to such an event (EU27: 39%). However, it is observed that the Greek rate has dropped – by fifteen points - when compared to the previous Eurobarometer survey that asked the same question (EB66.1: 71%).

- 🇸🇬 **Regarding the enlargement that took place in May 2004**, when ten new Member States joined the European Union, one out of two Greek citizens (50%) takes a neutral standpoint, finding the enlargement to be neither positive nor negative (EU27: 33%). However, enthusiasm is expressed by 31% of the Greeks, while only 17% appear to be disappointed.

The image of the European Union

A majority of Greek citizens see the European Union as democratic (EL: 78% - EU27: 70%), **modern** (EL: 68% - EU27: 70%) and **efficient** (EL: 59% - EU27: 46%).

It should be noted that, more than all other European citizens, Greeks find the European Union to be particularly technocratic (77%). The rate recorded in Greece is the highest in the entire survey, with the EU27 average only 48%.

In general, the **majority of the Greeks continue to view the European Union positively (EL: 51% - EU27: 52%)**.

Specifically, in the question “*what does the European Union mean to you personally?*” Greek respondents replied the following:

- 🇸🇬 **Freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the European Union** (EL: 61% - EU27: 52%).
- 🇸🇬 **Peace** (EL: 55% - EU27: 33%).
- 🇸🇬 **Euro** (EL: 50% - EU27: 39%).
- 🇸🇬 Stronger say in the world (EL: 32% - EU27: 26%).
- 🇸🇬 Democracy (EL: 30% - EU27: 22%).
- 🇸🇬 Unemployment (EL: 27% - EU27: 14%).
- 🇸🇬 Cultural diversity (EL: 24% - EU27: 27%).
- 🇸🇬 Social protection (EL: 19% - EU27: 10%).
- 🇸🇬 Not enough control at external frontiers (EL: 19% - EU27: 18%).
- 🇸🇬 Loss of cultural identity (EL: 17% - EU27: 12%).
- 🇸🇬 More crime (EL: 17% - EU27: 17%).
- 🇸🇬 Economic prosperity (EL: 16% - EU27: 20%).
- 🇸🇬 Waste of money (EL: 16% - EU27: 20%).
- 🇸🇬 Bureaucracy (EL: 7% - EU27: 21%).

European Integration

Six out of ten Greek citizens are not concerned with the idea that one group of countries in Europe could work together at a faster rate on a common policy than other Member States (EL: 59% - EU27: 48%). Nevertheless, there are many who view this development negatively (EL: 40% - EU27: 36%).

With regards to the idea of a **“two speed Europe”**, Greek citizens (EL: 53% - EU27: 47%) consider that those countries that are ready to intensify the development of a common European policy, in certain important areas, should do so without having to wait for the others. The opposite opinion is expressed by 45% (EU27: 37%) of the Greek sample as it prefers a common evolution for all countries, meaning that regardless of whether they are ready, they would still have to wait until all Member States of the European Union are prepared to jointly intensify the development of a common European policy in certain areas.

Greek citizens want the European institutions to focus their efforts mainly on **social** (EL: 36% - EU27: 25%) **and environmental issues** (EL: 35% - EU27: 34%).

Greek citizens find the well-established peace among the Member States of the European Union to be the most positive result of European integration (EL: 72% - EU27: 58%). Rated as the second most positive result, is the free movement of people, goods and services within the European Union (EL: 70% - EU27: 62%).

At the same time, there are few who believe that student exchange programmes such as ERASMUS (EL: 17% - EU27: 19%), the Euro (EL: 12% - EU27: 27%), as well as the Common Agricultural policy (EL: 9% - EU27: 10%) could be presented as the most positive outcomes of European integration.

In an effort to characterise the feelings of the Greek sample regarding this year's celebration of the **50th anniversary of the Rome Treaty**, which marks the origin of the creation of the European Union as it stands today, Greek respondents expressed their feeling of hope (EL: 38% - EU27: 35%).

In any event, a majority of Greek and European citizens expressed their **optimism about the future of the European Union (EL: 67% - EU27: 69%)**. On the other hand, pessimism is reflected in 32% of Greek and 24% of EU27 samples.

In a **projection of 50 years from now, Greek and European respondents** consider the following developments as being probable for the European Union:

- 🇪🇺 Greek citizens, recording the highest percentage of the countries surveyed, think that the European Union will have its own president, directly elected by the European citizens (EL: 71% - EU27: 51%).
- 🇪🇺 The citizens of Cyprus (73%) and Greece (66%) –recording the highest rates in the entire survey- believe that the European Union will have its own army (EU27: 56%).
- 🇪🇺 Greeks, and European respondents overall, predict that with the Euro they will have a more powerful currency than the dollar (EL: 67% - EU27: 61%).
- 🇪🇺 Respondents also predict that the European Union will be a leading diplomatic power in the world (EL: 71% - EU27: 61%). The Greek rate is among the highest observed in the entire survey.

Lastly, the only prediction which divides the Greek sample into opposing groups, is with regard to the European Union being only a secondary economic power (EL: 48 - EU27: 31%), while 49% of both the Greek and European samples foresee that it will have a much stronger economic position after fifty years.

Education on Europe

With regard to teaching pupils and students about the European Union, after evaluating a series of measures (presented in the current survey), **a majority of Greek and European citizens considers the following measures to be efficient:**

- ⓐ A common European history book that will be given to all the pupils and students in the European Union (EL: 61% - EU27: 68%).
- ⓑ A common European curriculum on European education for all teachers (EL: 62% - EU27: 68%).
- ⓒ The creation of European schools and universities in all Member States that will be focused on European issues (EL: 75% - EU27: 70%).
- ⓓ The development of new and the enhancement of existing exchange programmes between European schools and universities (EL: 82% - EU27: 84%).

Lastly, Greek and European citizens believe that school children should be taught about the way in which the European Union institutions work (EL: 85% - EU27: 86%).

Greece's membership of the European Union

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

The majority of Greeks (55%) believe that Greece's participation in the European Union has had a positive impact (EU27: 57%). This is why they also believe that Greece has benefited from its participation in the European Union (75%). The EU27 average is lower, at 59%.

The fact that Greece is a member of the European Union makes Greek citizens feel safer. This sense of security is expressed mostly by the citizens of Cyprus (72%), Estonia 70% and Greece (70%), who record the highest figures in the entire survey (EU27: 52%).

Greek and European citizens state that they feel there is **more economic** (EL: 57% - EU27: 51%), **as well as political** (EL: 62% - EU27: 45%) **stability due to the fact that their countries are Members States of the European Union.**

Participation in European Affairs

Greek, as well as most European citizens, do not believe that their voice counts in the European Union (EL: 70% - EU27: 55%). However, European respondents share the belief that their countries' voice is heard in the frame of the European Union (EL: 42% - EU27: 66%), while Greek citizens do not feel the same about their country's say in European Union issues (EL: 57% - EU27: 26%).

Nevertheless, many Greek respondents consider **Greece to be more influential in the European Union now than it was ten years ago** (EL: 68% - EU27: 54%).

Six out of ten Greek citizens appear to be even more optimistic as they predict that **their country, in the future, will become more influential in the European Union** (EL: 60% - EU27: 52%). 38% of the Greek and 33% of the overall European Union polls do not express the same opinion.

In any case, a majority of Greek citizens (EL: 87% - EU27: 75%) consider that the **biggest countries have the most power in the European Union**. The Greek rate recorded is among the highest of the entire survey, following those in Finland (94%), the Czech Republic (88%), Cyprus (88%) and Latvia (87%).

Even though Greek citizens express satisfaction with their country's membership of the European Union, they still believe that **the interests of their country (Greece) are not well taken into account in the European Union (EL: 61%)**. The negative figure recorded in Greece is the 3rd highest recorded in the entire survey, following those in Finland (67%) and Latvia 64%, while the EU27 average is only 39%.

78% of the Greek and 69% of European citizens overall do not feel very much involved in European affairs. Only one in five Greek citizens thinks of him/herself to be well involved in European matters (EL: 21% - EU27: 24%).

While in the previous survey Greek respondents -in contrast with most European citizens- appeared to understand the operating mechanisms of the European Union, (EB66.1: 55%), in the current survey, **they express difficulty in comprehending the way the European Union works** (EL: 52% - EU27: 50%). Nevertheless, a great proportion of the Greek sample insists that they have relative knowledge (EL: 48% - EU27: 43%).

This National Report for the EU Representation in Greece was written by Ms. Olga Stavropoulou.