

# EUROBAROMETER 67

PUBLIC OPINION IN EUROPEAN UNION

## SPRING 2007

NATIONAL REPORT  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**ROMANIA**

**Abbreviations**

EB	Eurobarometer
EB67	Standard Eurobarometer 67, data collected in 30 countries between April 10 and May 15 , 2007, and for Romania between April 10 and May 8, 2007
2007/1	EB67
2006/2	EB66
EU27	The European Union, data collected in all Member States
EU15	Europe of 15 or “the old Member States”
NMS10	Europe of the 10 new Member States, which acceded in 2004

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## ***Executive summary***

Data for Eurobarometer (EB67) were collected in Romania by TNS-CSOP, over the period April 10<sup>th</sup> – May 8<sup>th</sup> 2007. The sample used involved 1,019 persons, aged 15 years old and over, and was representative at national level (for technical details see annex 2 of the main report). The main element that defined the socio-political context during the data collection period was the public debate on the referendum for the suspension of President Traian Băsescu (April 19<sup>th</sup> to May 19<sup>th</sup> 2007). The values recorded for some of the replies to the questions on institutional trust were influenced by this debate.

Romanians' state of mind, since 2004, continues to follow the same trend of a high degree of trust in the EU (65%) and increased discontent with their own government and parliament.

This executive summary represents not only a summing up of the main conclusions of the report, but also a further analysis of the ideas considered important throughout the study.

## **Benefits of accession**

EB 67 data show that the perception of the benefits of accession mainly explains the variation in the ways in which the citizens relate to the EU. Almost 60% of EU citizens<sup>i</sup> consider their country has benefited or benefits from advantages resulting from EU membership status. The percentage of those trusting the Union is very close, at around 57%. In both the cases of satisfaction with benefits and trust, Romanians are ranked above the EU average: 69% of Romanian citizens believe their country has benefited and will benefit from accession.

Satisfaction with accession benefits, no matter their type, varies as a function of multiple factors (Table A3 in Report Annex) depending either on the personal characteristics of the respondent, or the particular context of his/her country of origin. The most important country conditioning is given by the EU accession wave (Table 1).

**Table 1. EU perception function of accession wave (%)**

Respondents from countries in EU accession wave	Percentage of people perceiving EU to be					
	beneficial for own country	“trustworthy”	modern	democratic	security provider for citizens	economic stability provider for the country
1981 Greece, Spain, Portugal	74	65	78	78	60	61
2004 NMS10	69	66	77	76	60	57
2007 Bulgaria and Romania	64	62	80	81	59	51
1957 EU6 (France, Italy, Germany and Benelux)	55	57	67	70	50	49
1973 United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark	48	39	61	56	42	46
1995 Austria, Sweden, Finland	46	53	62	55	42	44
Total EU27	59	57	70	70	52	51

Example of data reading: of citizens total number belonging to countries in accession wave 1981, 74% consider own country “had benefited from EU membership status”.

The most satisfied with the benefits of membership are citizens from Greece, Spain and Portugal (74%), followed by those coming from countries belonging to 2004 accession wave, with a degree of satisfaction of 69%.

Those who are not satisfied with accession benefits are citizens from countries belonging to the 1995 (Austria, Finland and Sweden) and 1973 (United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark) waves. Differences between satisfaction levels with accession benefits are ranked the same way as regards other EU-related aspects. The idea that the EU brings economic stability for the country is widely shared amongst the citizens belonging to the 1981 and 2004 accession waves but is not very widespread amongst those belonging to the 1973 and 1995 waves.

Concrete experience of membership advantages as a function of accession wave has contributed, without a doubt, to the definition of several groups of countries depending on the population's specific state of mind. When the integration process is still in its incipient stages, in the case of Bulgaria and Romania, there are important differences due not to their own experiences, but to other factors, perhaps of a cultural nature. Only 50% of Bulgarians are satisfied with the advantages of accession - 20 percent points less than Romanians. In the same vein, Bulgarians' trust in the EU is 10% lower than that of Romanians', while, from economic point of view, the two countries' situations are quite close, with Romania having a GDP per capita ranked at 35% of the EU25 average, while Bulgaria registers 32%<sup>ii</sup>.

Generally speaking, for the EU27, the degree of satisfaction with current or future benefits resulting from membership is significantly higher (Table A3):

- at personal level
  - for young men,
  - with mid or higher education studies,
  - with access to internet,
  - satisfied with personal life and their financial situation,
  - and residing in urban areas,
- as a function of countries of residence that
  - are relatively poor, with lower life expectancy levels,
  - have a religious profile that is predominantly orthodox or catholic (not protestant or multi-faith)
  - belong to the 1981 and 2004 accession waves.

In Romania, those perceiving accession as beneficial for the country have a similar profile to the EU average:

- mostly young men,
- with higher education studies,
- with a good financial situation and
- residing in urban areas.

In other words, they represent people with significantly higher material means and educational qualifications than the country average.

Combinations of level of resources, level of information and living environment result in high differences in perceptions as to accession benefits amongst the Romanian population. Managers and self-employed people are the most convinced (87%) that accession benefits the country. Manual workers are sceptical, with only 47% of them considering Romania will benefit from EU accession.

Retired persons, students and managers from urban areas are more optimistic than those in rural areas as regards the benefits that accession brings to the country:

	manager, self-employed	student	retired person	qualified worker	non-qualified worker	
rural	81%	70%	57%	62%	48%	61%
urban	88%	82%	69%	55%	45%	75%
	87%	79%	63%	58%	47%	69%

### Trust in institutions

The way Romanians relate to institutions involves both continuing and changing aspects. The continuing aspects refer to high-level expectations from the EU, with a trust level of 65%, close to that registered in autumn 2006. As for changing aspects, trust in their own government and parliament is still on a downward trend (Figure 5, Figure 7 in Report). A positive trend is registered as regards their levels of trust in mass-media:

	Trust in EU	Trust in parliament	Trust in government	Trust in TVs	Trust in written press
2006/2	67%	24%	27%	74%	60%
2007/1	65%	19%	19%	88%	68%

In practical terms, the level of trust in the EU remains the same, while Romania's position in the European context is changing. The modification is due to substantial change, over the last half year, of the EU member states' situation.

In the old member states, the level of trust in EU has significantly increased, from 42% last autumn to 55% in spring 2007. A more than 10% increase over such a short period is unusual. It is hard to say what brought about the change. The reasons for this evolution may be:

- an increase of the satisfaction level as to membership benefits, from 52% to 57% between autumn 2006 and spring 2007, in the EU15;
- the increase in the dialogue between politicians and citizens in the EU15 following the rejection of the European Constitution by France and The Netherlands;
- the fact that events, such as the accession of Romania and Bulgaria on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2007, were accompanied by media coverage that allowed for a re-assessment of enlargement benefits;
- an acknowledgement of the fact that economic migration from new member states towards the old ones had more positive than negative effects, etc.

The fall in Romanians' level of trust in their own government and parliament, between autumn 2006 and spring 2007, is most likely due to domestic political debates, including those in April-May 2007 concerning the referendum on the suspension of the President. EB67 data were gathered between April 10<sup>th</sup> and May 8<sup>th</sup>, the period during which the debate on the referendum was also taking place. Respondents in the period closest to the voting exercise have a lower probability (Figure 6) of declaring their trust in parliament compared with those giving replies in the first period of data collection (April 10-19). The conclusion is that, most likely, the whole debate on the suspension of the President has contributed to a fall in the level of trust in government and parliament<sup>iii</sup>.

## Values

Data from EB67 have permitted the identification of cultural particularities as regards respondents' relationships with their place of residence, their country and to the content of mass-media news.

Over half of Romanians (57%) claim they are attached to the place where they live. Is this a lot, or too few? Are Romanians more attached to their surroundings than the average citizen from the NMS or EU15? And, no matter if it is a lot or too few, what are the reasons for the attachment to their own locality? Does it derive from poor economic development, isolation, reduced level of internet access, religion, history or other factors? Of course, EB data do not allow for a thorough explanation. There are, nevertheless, some elements among the data that can offer some explanations. And the topic should be further analysed as it is supposed, sometimes, that an excessively strong attachment to one's own village or town can be an obstacle to the modernisation process and can reduce the inclination for global communication, European integration or tolerance.

A comparative analysis of data for EU-27 points to the identification of some factors that may provide explanations for understanding the strong attachment of respondents to their own community (Table A5):

- farmers tend to be more attached to their own locality than city people,
- attachment to local community tends to be stronger in poorer countries compared with wealthier ones. The percentage of those attached to their own locality is 60% in countries with a GDP lower than 60% of the EU average, and only 47% in wealthier countries, with a GDP over 120% of the EU average.
- chances of a strong attachment to their local community decreases for internet users at home compared with non-users of this communication tool. Internet access at home is a factor of multiple significance, indicative not only for a culture of online communication, but also of access to increased resources associated generally with a higher level of education, residence in urban areas and youth.
- residence in mainly orthodox countries seems to be a factor that favours a culture of local attachment that is more important than the level of economic development. It is not clear, though, which elements of the orthodox-religious culture favour such an orientation.

The percentage of Romanians declaring a strong attachment to their country is 52%, significantly lower than the average for the NMS10 (65%) and relatively similar to the EU15 (53%).

Throughout the whole of the EU, attachment to own country is less influenced by economic aspects than attachment to respondents' own locality. GDP per capita differences are not mirrored in the attachment levels to country (Table A6). On the other hand, cultural influences are significant, as in the case of attachment to locality. Respondents who manifest a stronger attachment to their country tend to be, in EU27,

- older than younger,
- with a lower level of education,
- more from rural than urban areas,
- persons satisfied with own life,
- citizens from countries with a majority of Christian-Orthodox or protestants.

Identification with locality, country and EU are not mutually exclusive. The typical European trusts the EU and has a strong attachment to both their country and place of residence. It could be described as a local or patriot Euro-optimism, as it manifests both in trust in the EU and local and national patriotism. A quarter of EU citizens belong to this category. In the NMS, including Romania, the weight of the respective category is larger, representing over 30% (Table 2).

The “pure” European who trusts the EU, but has a low attachment to their own country or locality (“the cosmopolitan Euro-optimist”) has already an important weight in the Union, of around 20%. In Romania’s case, the weight of the respective category is over the EU average, with a percentage of 26%.

Local Euro-sceptics are those that claim not to trust the EU, but have a strong attachment to own locality or country; they represent the third major type of spatial identity in current Europe. Their weight at EU level is almost 17% (similar in Romania).

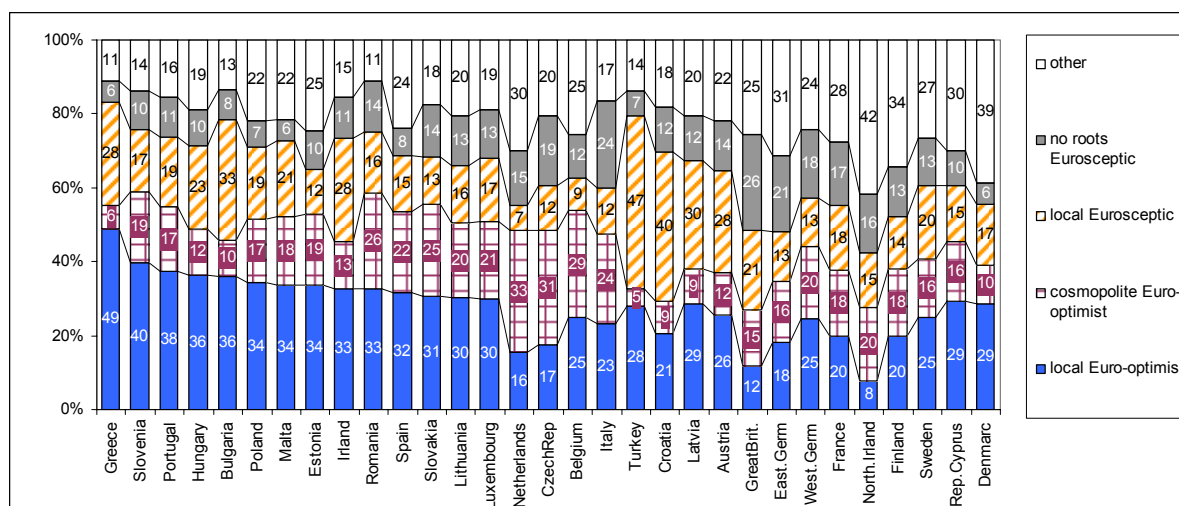
Lastly, the “no roots” European could be defined as having distrust in the EU and a low attachment to his/her country and place of residence. Currently, at the level of the Union, this category has a similar weight to that of the local Euro-sceptics.

**Table 2. Social identity types in the EU (%)**

Identity types	Trust in EU	Local attachment*	Identification with the country*	Romania	Bulgaria	NMS10	EU15	EU27
Local Euro-optimist	yes	yes	yes	33	36	32	23	25
Cosmopolitan Euro-optimist	yes	no	no	26	10	19	19	20
Local Euro-sceptic	no/NR	yes	yes	16	33	18	16	17
No roots Euro-sceptic	no/NR	no	no	14	8	10	18	16
Other combinations between the spatial identity types				11	13	21	24	23
Total				100	100	100	100	100

\*Local attachment and identification with the country have been defined by strong attachment to own locality and country respectively. Example of data reading: 33% of Romanians claim to trust in the EU and have a strong attachment to their own locality and country.

Euro-optimists with strong links to their local-national space are to be found in countries from the 1981, 2004 or 2007 accession waves (Figure 1). Romania belongs to this group. In addition, it has an important percentage of cosmopolitan Euro-optimists, at similar levels as those recorded in Spain, Slovakia and Lithuania.



**Figure 1. Share of social identity types, per country**

Cosmopolitan Euro-optimists are mostly found in The Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and the Czech Republic. Euro-sceptics with strong local-national attachment are mostly the citizens from candidate countries, Croatia and Turkey, but also from member states, Latvia and Austria. Certain population segments in the UK and Germany show generalised scepticism towards the EU, their country and locality.

### Social inequalities associated with internet

Having internet access from home is a sign of multiple resources associated with youth, higher level of education and residence in urban areas. At EU level, the percentage of persons with internet access at home is almost 50%. In Romania, the respective percentage is 20%, 2.7 times lower than in the old member states (EU15).

What does the EU population look like from the point of view of internet access? Where are the main differences between those with internet access and those without it? Replies to these questions can lead to:

- an understanding of one of the most important aspects of social inequality in the globalisation era,
- the identification of social variations between population segments with similar resources from different regions of the EU,
- the identification of social variations between Romania and other regions of the EU function of availability or not of internet access.

A first comparison that might be relevant is that between young people aged 15-24 and adults in the 40-54 year category. In Romania, internet users represent 36% in the first category and 19% in the second, a difference of over 15 percentage points (a 1.9 ratio in favour of young people). The difference is similar in the NMS that joined the Union in 2004. In the old member states, though, the gap is of only 4 percentage points (**Table 3**). Proportions are similar for other recorded indicators:

- in Romania, access to internet by urban residents is 6 times higher than amongst rural inhabitants; in the NMS10, the ratio is 1.6, while in the EU15 access levels are almost equal.



- in Romania, internet access by people with higher education studies is 4 times higher than in the case of people with mid-level education. In the NMS, the ratio is of only 1.8, while in the EU15 it stands at 1.3.

Table 3. Share of persons that have internet access from home

	Bulgaria	Romania	NMS10	EU15	EU27
15-24 years	33	36	57	69	64
25-39 years	33	26	48	64	59
40-54 years	24	19	39	65	58
55+ years	3	5	13	32	28
elementary education	2	1	7	24	21
mid-level education	17	10	31	57	49
higher education	35	41	56	76	71
rural resident	3	5	27	53	44
urban resident	27	31	43	55	52
	20	20	37	54	49

Example of data reading: 33% of persons aged 15-24 in Bulgaria have internet access at home.

It is observed that Romania not only has a relatively reduced level of internet access, but also a very strong internal differentiation function of access to this communication resource:

- Romania has the largest gap in terms of internet access between age categories. Only Lithuania, Latvia and Hungary have similar gaps between the 15-24 and 40-54 age groups, although more limited.
- The widest gap in the EU between internet access by people with higher studies and those with mid-level education is also found in Romania (four to one, as compared to three to one in Greece, the country ranked next in the list of similar gaps).
- The number of users in Romanian cities is, as mentioned already, 6 times higher than in rural areas. Only Bulgaria has a higher difference between these two categories, at 10.3.

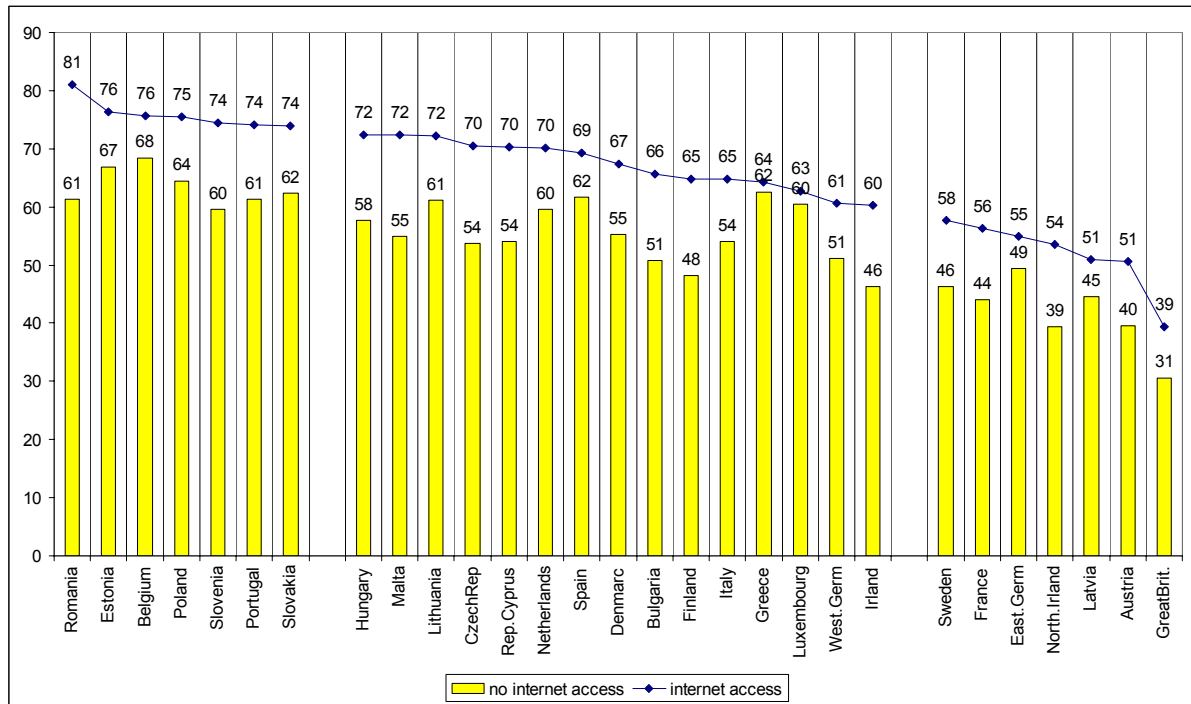
In terms of opinions, internet users in Romania are the most active in affirming their trust in the EU. Over 80% of Romanians who use internet from home claim to trust the EU, compared with only 61% of those not using internet, meaning a gap of approximately 20 percentage points as regards trust in the EU. Nowhere in the EU can a similar gap be found between the opinions expressed by those with or without internet access. The simple proof is the data in Figure 2. Only in Finland is a similar gap recorded (17 %) between those with or without access to internet in terms of trust in EU.

Of course, this gap does not directly result from the culture of using this communication tool, but from the totality of resources associated with its use.

At the level of the Union, internet per se stops being a differentiating factor in relation to trust in the EU when considering population groups with similar education levels, age and residential status (Table A3).

The situation is not the same, though, when taking into account opinions on the benefits of membership. In this case, the use-of-internet culture ("internet") remains a significant factor in the differentiation of opinions even when "eliminating" (by statistical means) the influence of education, age and residential status (Table A3). All other conditions remaining equal, the experience acquired through internet use increases significantly the chances of having

positive opinions on the benefits of membership amongst internet users, compared with non-users.



**Figure 2. Trust in the EU function of internet access, per country**

Trust in the national parliament is, in Romania, 2 percentage points lower amongst people with internet access (18%) than those without (20%). In the NMS10, internet users have a trust level in their national parliament with which is 2 percentage points more than non-users (22% vs 20%). These differences are not significant from a statistical point of view either for Romania or for the NMS10. The situation is different in the EU15 where the difference between respondents' trust levels in their national parliaments is of 8 percentage points between internet users and non-users (53% vs 45%), resulting in a significant variation in the trust level

<sup>i</sup> In order to avoid repetitions, the term "Union" is used for the "European Union".

<sup>ii</sup> Indexes for 2005, according to *Europe in figures. Eurostat yearbook 2006-2007*, EUROSTAT, European Communities, 2007, p.152.

<sup>iii</sup> This expression is justified through the analysis of adjusted standardised residues in the table that combines trust in government and the period when data were collected in Romania. A more elaborated analysis (Table A2) does not reject the null hypothesis implied by the reasoning. It is probable that a decision to test the hypothesis would have been easier to take if the data collection period for EB 67 were to have overlapped more with the period in question.