

# EUROBAROMETER 68

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTUMN 2007

## NATIONAL REPORT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### **CYPRUS**

(AREAS UNDER THE CONTROL OF  
THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF CYPRUS)

This survey was requested and coordinated by Directorate-General Communication of the European Commission.

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

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## **EUROBAROMETER 68.1 – CYPRUS**

(Areas under the control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus)

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

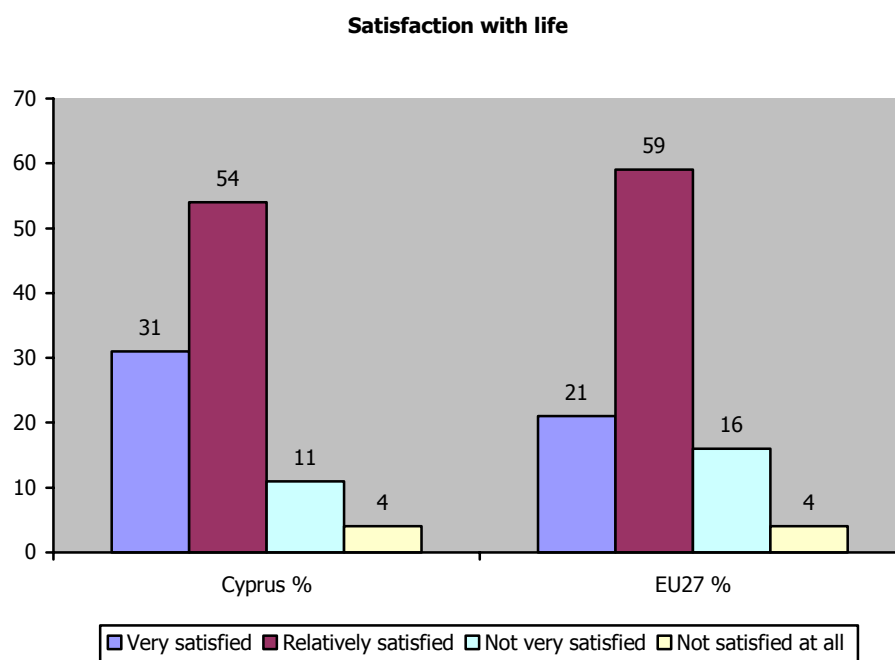
Eurobarometer 68.1 is the seventh survey of the Eurobarometer series conducted in Cyprus after its accession to the European Union. Cyprus joined the European Union with the Cyprus problem remaining unsolved and the *acquis communautaire* being implemented only in the areas under the control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus.

*The survey was conducted between 24 September and 22 October, a period during which the campaign for the presidential elections in February 2008 had commenced. The main events which dominated the media during this period concerned the Swedish government's initiative on the Cyprus issue, the property aspect of the Cyprus problem, statements by the Turkish president on the existence of two peoples on the island, the process for supplying Cyprus with natural gas, the initiation of a ferry connection between Syria and the non-government controlled areas, the increase in the price of fuel and basic consumer products and the start of the information campaign ahead of the adoption of the Euro by Cyprus on 1 January 2008. The media was also focused on the Greek and Turkish parliamentary elections and the process for the presidential election in Turkey, the protests of illegal immigrants held at the central prison complex in Nicosia and immigration issues in general, the tension on the border between Iraq and Turkey, the decision by the European Court of First Instance on the culling of all animals with no resistance to scrappies and the adoption of the Reform [Lisbon] Treaty by the EU. To a lesser extent the media was concerned with the traffic congestion in the capital, the educational reform and the evolution of private colleges to universities, and the reforestation process following the summer's forest fires.*

## A. Life in Cyprus

### Citizens appear satisfied with their life:

- The overwhelming majority of citizens (85%) are satisfied with the life they lead.
- The level of satisfaction has been marginally reduced, by 2%, from the levels recorded in the spring of 2007.
- A small decline is observed in the population which is "very satisfied" (4%).



**Cypriots in general are positive as to the condition of the Cypriot and European economies** (53% and 54% respectively), the state of the environment (60%) and the social welfare system in Cyprus (47% are positive, 43% negative). As to the employment situation in Cyprus 50% consider it 'bad' or 'very bad' while only 45% consider it 'good' or 'very good'.

- Despite the overall satisfaction with the state of the Cyprus economy, a large drop (-24 percentage points) is observed from the levels recorded in the spring of 2007 (77%).

### A large number of citizens do not expect changes with regard to their personal situation in the coming 12 months:

- 50% expect that life in general will remain the same, 23% expect an improvement and 19% a worsening. A significant increase is observed in the number expecting a worsening of their personal situation in relation to the spring of 2007 (13 percentage points).
- 47% do not expect changes in the financial situation of their household, 12% expect an improvement and 36% a worsening.
- On their personal employment situation six out of ten (60%) citizens predict stability. 12% expect an improvement and 8% a worsening.
- Over time, short term expectations regarding personal issues appear marginally

differentiated.

**Expectations as to the evolution of the national economy and employment conditions are dominated by pessimism:**

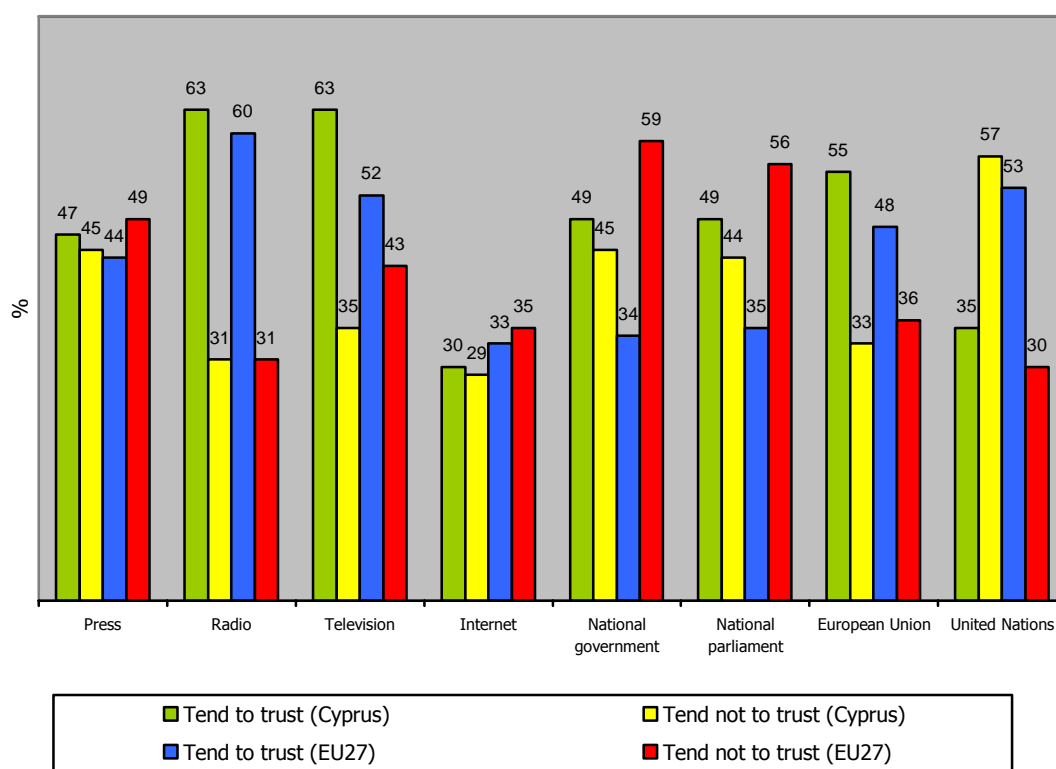
- Over half the population expect that both the national economy (55%) and the employment conditions (43%, spring 2007 50%) will deteriorate within the next 12 months. Only 11% believe that the national economy will improve and 24% believe it will remain unchanged (There is an increase in pessimism compared to spring of 2007).

**The two main problems worrying citizens remain inflation (45%) and crime (33%).**

**A considerable decrease in the level of trust shown by citizens towards the government and parliament is observed:**

- Compared to the Eurobarometer of spring 2007 the level of trust by the citizens towards the government decreased from 64% to 49% and towards the national parliament there was a decrease from 67% to 49%.

**Trust in Institutions**



**Public opinion is split over its tendency to trust the press. 47% exhibit trust and 45% do not** (for the EU27 the corresponding responses are 44% and 49%). 63% of Cypriot citizens trust television, higher than the 52% recorded for the EU27. 30% trust the internet (33% in the EU27), 29% do not and a significant 41% (increased from the 33% recorded in the spring Eurobarometer) did not answer.

**Cypriot citizens continue to exhibit a high level of trust towards the European Union:**

- The majority of citizens (55%) trust the EU (lower than the 61% recorded in the spring). It is significant that the degree of trust towards the European Union is higher than the EU27 average (48%).

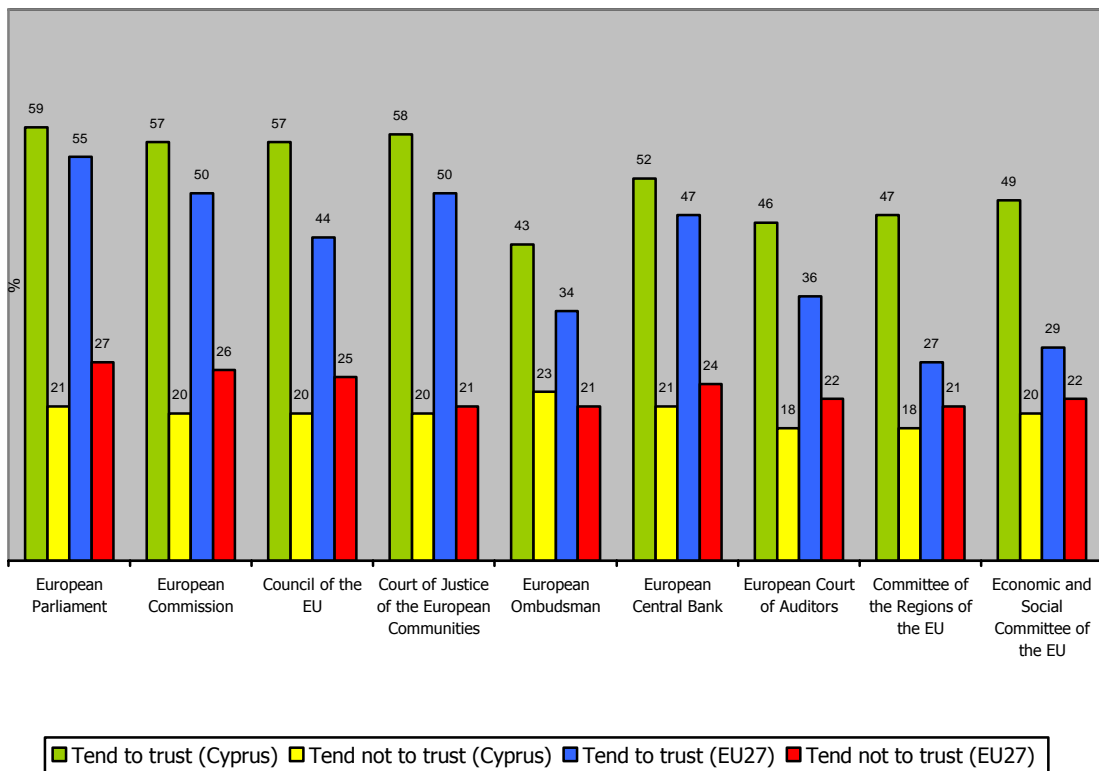
**The majority of Cypriots (61%) are satisfied with the way democracy works in Cyprus (EU27, 58%).** 13% are very satisfied and 48% fairly satisfied. Higher satisfaction is recorded amongst students (76%) and 15-24 year olds (74%) while 62% of those unemployed are not satisfied.

## B. Europeans and the European Union

### The majority of citizens trust the main institutions of the European Union:

- Trust in the European Parliament is expressed by 59% of the respondents, in the European Commission by 57%, in the Council of the European Union by 57% and in the European Central Bank by 52%. Small decreases are recorded in all percentages compared to the spring 2007 results, but they remain above the EU27 average.

Trust in EU Institutions



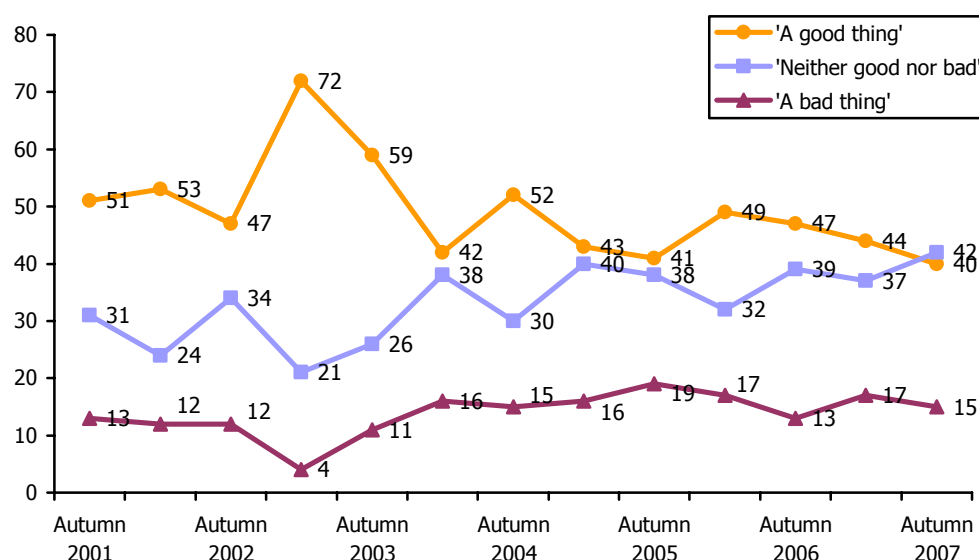
**Almost half (49%) of the citizens residing in the areas under the control of the government of the Republic of Cyprus are satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union.**

- Cyprus ranks 18<sup>th</sup> in the EU27 in terms of levels of satisfaction, with the EU27 average at 52%. Poland ranks first with 67% of its citizens satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU.

**Almost half (42%) of Cypriot citizens consider Cyprus's EU membership neither a good nor a bad thing. 40% consider membership a good thing and 15% a bad thing.**

- A decrease is recorded in the percentages of those that believe that membership is a good thing and in the percentages of those that believe it is not.
- Cyprus ranks fourth lowest amongst EU member states in the level of positive opinion with regards to membership in the European Union.

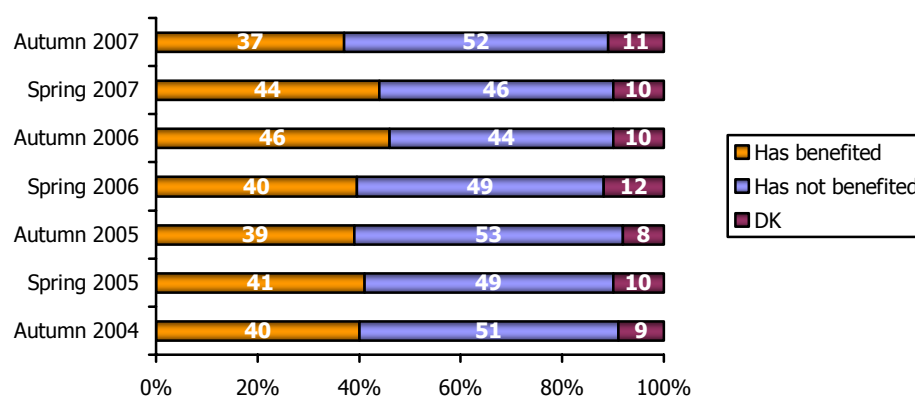
**Opinion on Cyprus' membership to the EU**



**The percentage of citizens who believe that Cyprus has benefited from accession to the EU records a significant drop of 7 percentage points:**

- 37% of citizens believe that Cyprus has benefited from its accession to the European Union. This percentage remains below the EU27 average (58%) and shows a decline of 7 percentage points from spring 2007. The percentage which believes that Cyprus has not benefited is at 52%, an increase of 6 percentage points from the spring survey.

**Benefit for Cyprus from EU membership**

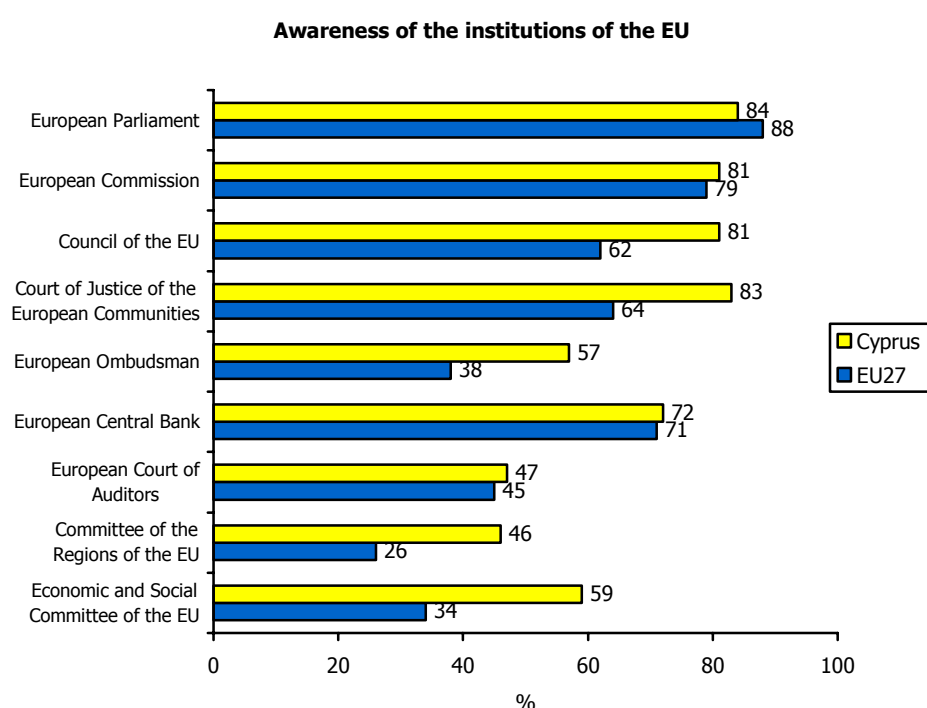


### More than half the citizens (53%) state that they have a positive image of the European Union:

- The percentage of citizens with a positive image exceeds the percentage of citizens who believe that Cyprus' participation is a good thing (40%) and that Cyprus has benefited from its membership in general (37%). Similar results were observed during previous Eurobarometer waves.

### The majority of citizens are aware of the institutions of the European Union:

- A strong majority of citizens have heard of the European Parliament (84%), The European Commission (81%) and the Council of the European Union (81%). A significant percentage is also aware of the Court of Justice of the European Communities (83%) and the European Central Bank (72%).



### More than half the citizens state that they understand the way the European Union works:

- 55% of citizens (a 4% increase since the spring of 2007) state that they understand how the EU works. Cyprus ranks amongst the four countries with the highest stated understanding of how the EU works.

**Cypriots are split over their support for Monetary Union with one single currency, the euro.** 46% support Monetary Union and 48% are against it. Cyprus has the third lowest support rate in the EU27 (61%). A drop is recorded in support for Monetary Union compared to the results of the spring of 2007. The equivalent averages in the EU 27 are 61% for and 31% against. The highest support is recorded in Ireland with 87% for and the lowest in the United Kingdom with 24%.



**57% of Cypriots support further enlargement of the European Union while 24% do not.** The issue of enlargement is supported by 46% of the respondents in the EU27, while 40% oppose it.

**90% of citizens, the highest percentage recorded in the EU27, support a common defence and security policy among the member states (EU27 76%) and 81%, the third highest percentage recorded in the EU27 (70%), support a common foreign policy among EU member states.** These percentages are marginally varied from the results recorded in the spring of 2007.

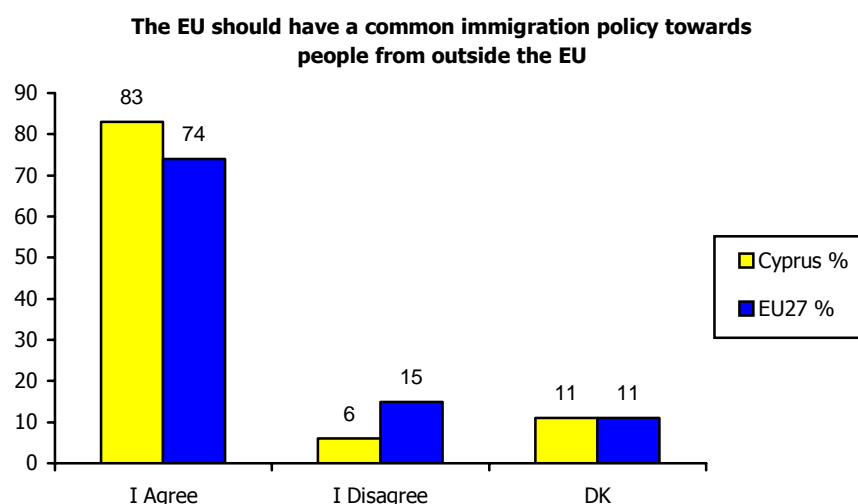
**Asked about their opinion on the speed of building Europe being faster in one group of countries than in the other countries, 44% answered positively (decrease of 13% from the spring of 2007), 23% negatively, while 33% did not answer.** Cyprus ranks eighth in relation to other EU member states. The corresponding averages for the EU27 are 39% for and 40% against.

**89% of Cypriots believe that EU foreign policy should be independent of United States foreign policy (decrease of 3% from the spring of 2007).**

- Cyprus ranks third in the EU27, with Greece being first with 94% and Romania last with 64% in support of an independent foreign policy for the European Union.

**83% of citizens in the area controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus agree that the European Union should have a common immigration policy (decrease of 3% from the spring of 2007).**

- Cyprus, along with the Netherlands and Greece, records the highest level of citizens that agree with a common immigration policy.



**Cypriots believe that emphasis should be given by the European institutions to solidarity with poorer regions (40%), environmental issues (38%) and the fight against crime (34%).** Respectively, the main priorities set by European citizens are the fight against crime (36%), environmental issues (33%) and immigration issues (33%).

**68% of the sample is optimistic about the future of the European Union, compared to 66% for the EU27.** 9% answered that they are very optimistic and 59%

fairly optimistic. 23% of the sample appears pessimistic (EU27 26%) while only 6% said they are very pessimistic.

**Cypriots believe that the media in Cyprus refer 'too little' to the EU, while the majority believes that they present the EU objectively.**

- 46% and 47% respectively believe that television and radio do not make adequate references to the EU ['too little'] while, for the press, 36% believe that it refers adequately ['the right amount'], in contrast to 30% who believe that it refers 'too little' to the EU. 15% believe that websites refer adequately to the EU while the vast majority (58%) did not answer.
- 47% believe that television, 42% the press and 39% the radio refer objectively to the European Union. 23% believes that websites refer objectively to the EU, while, again, the majority (62%) did not answer.