

# EUROBAROMETER 68

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

## AUTUMN 2007

### NATIONAL REPORT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### GERMANY

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

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

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The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

## **Executive Summary**

### **Image**

- For a relative majority of Germans (49%, -3 points) and Europeans (49%, -3 points) the European Union still conjures up a positive image.

### **Membership of the European Union**

- Support for membership of the European Union is strong and still growing among Germans (67%, +2 points).

### **Benefits of membership of the European Union**

- 58% (+1 point) of Germans and 58% (-1 point) of Europeans believe that their country has benefited from being a member of the European Union.

### **Future of the European Union**

- 66% (-3 points) of Europeans and 69% (-6 points) of Germans are optimistic about the future of the European Union.

### **Democracy in Germany and Europe**

- At the moment, Europeans (58%, +2 points) and Germans (66%, +11 points) are satisfied with the way democracy works in their own country.
- Germans (52%, +9 points) and Europeans (52%, +2 points) are also satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union.

### **The voice of the people in the European Union**

- Only every third German thinks that their own voice counts in the European Union (36%, - 5 points).
- Even fewer Europeans believe that their own voice counts in the European Union (30%, -5 points).

### **Germany's voice in the EU**

- 79% (-7 points) of Germans believe that their country's voice counts in the EU.
- 61% (-5 points) of Europeans think that their country's voice counts in the European Union.

### **Personal involvement in European affairs**

- Only 28% (-1 point) of Germans and 20% (-4 points) of Europeans feel very much involved in European affairs.

## **Interests of Germany in the EU**

- Europe-wide, a relative majority (45%, -7 points) believes that the interests of their respective country are not well taken into account in the EU. On the other hand, in Germany a relative majority (49%, -5 points) thinks that the interests of Germany are well taken into account in the EU.

## **Influence of the biggest countries in the EU**

- Three out of four Europeans (74%, -1 points) and 66% (+/- 0 points) of Germans are convinced that the biggest countries have the most power in the EU.

## **Understanding how the European Union works**

- Compared to the previous Eurobarometer survey, fewer Europeans (40%, - 3 points) and Germans (47%, -3 points) think that they understand how the EU works.

## **Future influence of Germany in the EU**

- Europe-wide, only 43% (-9 points) believe that their country will become more influential in the EU. In Germany, 47% (-7 points) think that their country will become more influential in the EU in the future.

## **Support for different political projects of the EU**

- *A European Monetary Union:* 61% (-2 points) of Europeans and 69% (-3 points) of Germans support a European Monetary Union.
- *A common foreign policy of the member states of the EU:* 85% (+1 point) of Germans and 70% (-2 points) of Europeans support a common foreign policy.
- *A common foreign policy of the member states of the EU that is independent of United States foreign policy:* A great majority of Europeans (78%, -2 points) and even more Germans (91%, +1 point) think that the EU's foreign policy should be independent of United States foreign policy.
- *A common defence and security policy among EU Member States:* Europe-wide 76% (-1 point) of the respondents support such a policy. In Germany, 88% (+1 point) support a common defence and security policy among EU Member States.
- *Further enlargement of the EU:* The willingness of Europeans (46%, -3 points) and Germans (28%, -6 points) to support further enlargement has diminished further since the last survey.
- *Different speeds of integration:* 44% (-13 points) believe that the speed of building Europe should be faster in one group of countries than in other countries. Europe-wide (39%, -9 points), there are fewer respondents who would like to see a group of countries integrate faster than other countries.

- *Common immigration policy of the EU:* 74% (-1 point) of Europeans and 82% (-1 point) of Germans think that a common immigration policy towards people from outside the EU is necessary.

### **Most important policy issues for the coming years**

- According to respondents in Germany, the following aspects should be emphasized by the European institutions in the coming years, to strengthen the European Union in the future: The fight against crime (40%, +3 points), environmental issues (39%, -6 points), energy issues (38%, +2 points), immigration issues (30%, +/- 0 points), social issues (28%, +/-0 points) and a common foreign policy (24%, +2 points).
- Europe-wide, the priorities are the following: fight against crime (36%, +3 points), immigration issues (33%, +4 points), environmental issues (33%, -1 point), energy issues (27%, +2 points), social issues (26%, +1 point).

### **Satisfaction with life**

- 83% (-3 points) of Germans and 80% (+/-0 points) of Europeans are satisfied with their personal life.

### **Expectations for the next 12 months**

- *Personal situation:* A majority of Germans (62%, +/-0 points) and 54% (+5 points) of Europeans expect their personal situation to stay the same.
- *Economic situation of the country:* A majority of Germans (52%, +14 points) and Europeans (44%, +6 points) expects the economic situation of their country to stay the same.
- *The financial situation of the personal household:* 57% (-2 points) of Germans and 53% (-1 point) of Europeans do not expect changes to the financial situation of their household.
- *Employment situation:* 44% (+12 points) of Germans and 43% (+8 points) of Europeans are convinced that the employment situation of their country will not change over the next 12 months.
- *Economic situation in the EU:* 45% (+7 points) of Europeans expect no growth of the European economy. In Germany only 21% (-7 points) still believe in further growth of the economy of the European Union in the next 12 months.

### **Judgment of the current situation in Germany and Europe**

- 67% (-7 points) of Germans still judge the current economic situation in Germany as good or very good.
- 65% (+12 points) of Germans think that that the economic situation in the European Union is good.

- 31% (+25 points) of Germans are satisfied with the employment situation; however, 68% (-25 points) still judge the employment situation as bad. 36% (+9 points) of Europeans are satisfied with the employment situation in their own country.
- 39% (+15 points) of Germans and 51% (+10 points) of Europeans think that the state of the environment is bad.
- 59% (+1 point) of Germans are satisfied with the social welfare system in Germany.

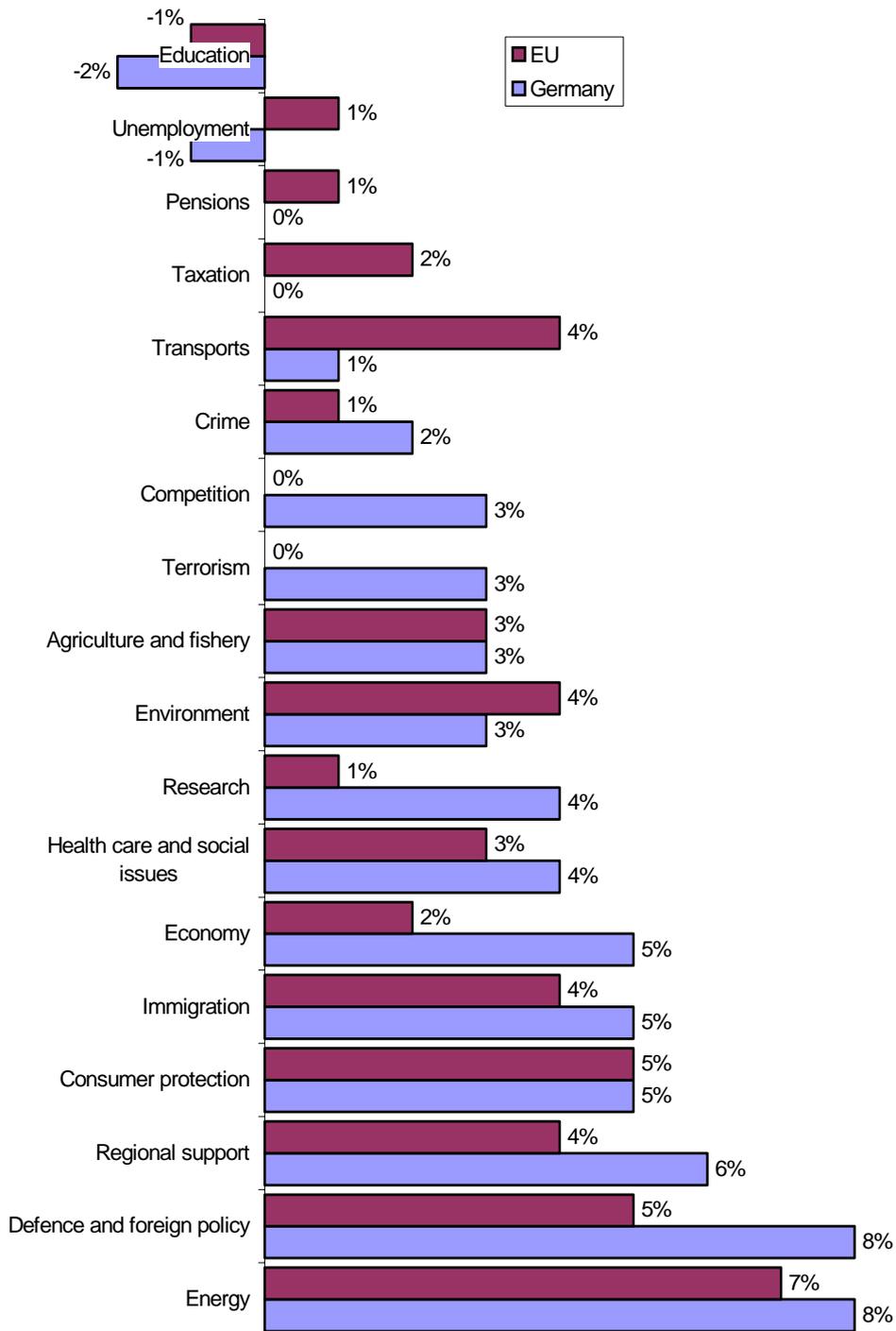
### **The two most important issues facing Germany at the moment**

- Unemployment is still the biggest problem for 44% (-14 points) of the respondents.
- Rising prices for food, transport and energy have established inflation as the second largest problem (33%, +18 points).
- Europeans also still regard unemployment as the biggest issue (27%, -7 points), followed by inflation (26%, +8 points).

### **Should the following decisions be made by national governments, or made jointly within the European Union?**

- Policy issues that should be dealt with cooperatively between the member states and the European Union are: Fighting terrorism (Germans 92%, +3 points / EU: 81%, +/-0 points), protecting the environment (Germans 88%, +3 points / EU 73%, +4 points), defence and foreign affairs (Germans 81%, +8 points / EU 67%, +5 points), energy (Germans 80%, +8 points / EU 68%, +7 points), fighting crime (Germans 79%, +2 points / EU 61%, +1 point), research (Germans 74%, +4 points / EU 72%, +1 point), support for regions facing economic difficulties (Germans 70%, +6 points / EU 64%, +4 points), competition (Germans 66%, +3 points / EU 57% (+/-0 points), immigration (Germans 66%, +5 points / EU 63%, +4 points), consumer protection (Germans 62%, +5 points / EU 53%, +5 points), transport (Germans 58%, +1 point / EU 49%, +4 points), and the economy (Germans 56%, +5 points / EU 48%, +2 points).
- Policy issues that should be dealt with by the member states exclusively are: taxation (Germans 68%, -1 point / EU 65%, -3 points), health care and social issues (Germans 67%, -4 points / EU 62%, -4 points), unemployment (Germans 61%, +1 point / EU 57%, -1 point), and education (Germans 58%, +1 point / EU 64%, +/-0 points).

### QA20: Preferred decision level / Growth in %



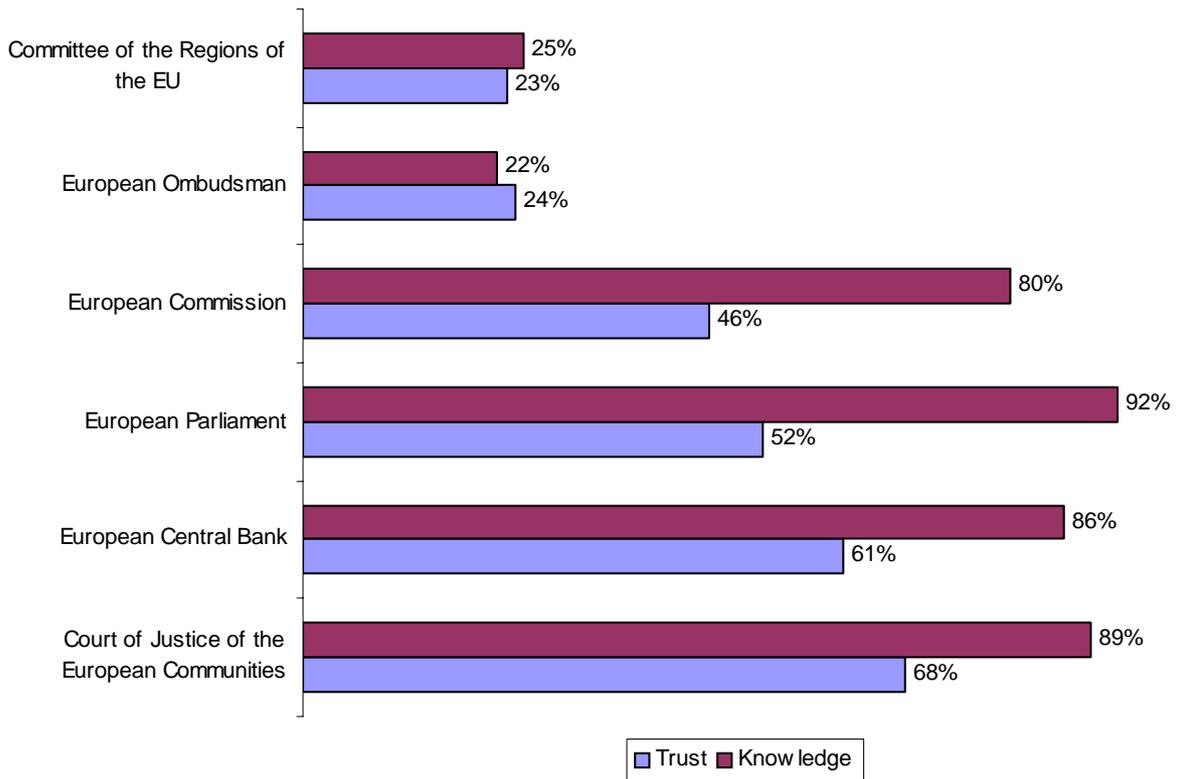
### Trust in European and national institutions

- Degree of trust: Court of Justice of the European Communities (Germans 68%, +1 point / EU 50%, -1 point), European Central Bank (Germans 61%, -4 points / EU 47%, -6 points), European Parliament (Germans 52%, -6 points / EU 55%, -1 point), European Commission (Germans 46%, -3 points / EU 50%, -2 points), Council of the European Union (Germans 43%, -3 points / EU 44%, -3 points), German Parliament (Germans 41%, -10 points), German

Government (Germans 40%, -9 points), European Ombudsman (Germans 24%, -3 points / EU 34%, -1 point), and Committee of the Regions of the European Union (Germans 23%, -2 points / EU 27%, -1 point).

- Only 39% (-17 points) of Germans and 48% (-9 points) of Europeans still trust the European Union in general.

#### QA15/QA16: Trust in and knowledge of EU institutions / Germany



#### Knowledge of the institutions of the European Union

- Degree of knowledge: European Parliament (Germans 92%, -1 point / EU 88%, -1 point), Court of Justice of the European Communities (Germans 90%, -1 point / EU 64%, -6 points), European Central Bank (Germans 86%, -1 point / EU 71%, -4 points), European Commission (Germans 80%, -2 points / EU 79%, -3 points), European Court of Auditors (Germans 69%, +/-0 points / EU 45%, -2 points), Council of the European Union (Germans 66%, -6 points / EU 62%, -6 points), The Economic and Social Committee of the European Union (Germans 45%, +3 points / EU 34%, -2 points), Committee of the Regions of the European Union (Germans 25%, +1 point / EU 26%, -2 points), and European Ombudsman (Germans 22%, +/-0 points / EU 38%, -1 point).

#### Quiz

- *Statement 1: The EU currently consists of fifteen Member States (wrong).* 27% (+/-0 points) of Germans agree with this statement.

- *Statement 2: Every six months, a different Member State becomes the President of the Council of the European Union (right).* 66% (+2 points) of Germans and 49% (+/- 0 points) of Europeans agree with this statement.

### **How well informed about European political affairs are Germans and Europeans?**

- 80% (+8 points) of Germans and 78% (+3 points) of Europeans do not think that the citizens of their own country are well informed about European political affairs.

### **Extent of coverage on Europe**

- 48% (+14 points) of Germans and 48% (+13 points) of Europeans think that there is not enough coverage of the EU on national television. 47% (+13 points) of Germans and 46% (+16 points) of Europeans think that the national radio does not talk enough about the EU. 58% (-5 points) of Germans and 45% (-6 points) of Europeans are satisfied with the amount of EU-related coverage in the press.

### **Objectivity of coverage on Europe**

- 62% (+5 points) of Germans and 53% (+/-0 points) of Europeans are satisfied with the objectivity of television. The same applies to radio (Germans 59%, +6 points; EU: 51%, +3 points) and the press (Germans 61%, +3 points; EU 51%, +2 points).

### **Top television channels**

- ARD (58%), ZDF (49%), RTL (43%), Sat1 (27%), Pro7 (24%), VOX (12%).

### **Top radio stations**

- 57% of the respondents listen to radio stations with little information orientation and 35% listen to those with a medium information orientation.

### **Top written press**

- BILD (10%) and Süddeutsche Zeitung (2%).

### **Most popular websites**

- 11% of the respondents use google.de, 4% eBay, 2% Spiegel.de, 2% websites of television magazines. 60% do not use any websites.