

EUROBAROMETER 68

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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NATIONAL REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY DENMARK

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Executive summary

This report presents the findings of the Eurobarometer-survey completed between 30 September and 3 November 2007.

The report sheds light on the attitude Danes have towards the situation in Denmark, as well as their attitude towards the European Union.

On 24 October, the Danish Prime Minister called a national election to be held on 13 November 2007. Thus, this survey took place in the period prior to the election. 10 days after the survey was completed, the VK government, consisting of Venstre – Denmark's Liberal Party - and the Conservative Party, was re-elected for its third consecutive term.

The election is commented on in the report where it is considered relevant.

The current situation

- **Good judgement of the current situation in Denmark**

Unemployment in Denmark continues to be historically low and the economy is strong. This fact is portrayed in the Danes' judgement of the current situation. Almost all Danes consider the employment situation and the situation of the Danish economy to be good. Also, a majority consider the social welfare situation, as well as the environmental situation, in Denmark to be good.

- **Healthcare: The number one priority for Danes**

According to Danes, healthcare continues to be the most important issue currently facing Denmark. Crime, immigration and environmental protection are also highly prioritized problems.

Contrary to the average EU citizen, Danes do not consider unemployment, inflation and the economic situation to be the most important problems facing their country. This opinion reflects the favourable labour market and the strong Danish economy.

- **Positive view on developments in Denmark**

A majority of Danes say things are going in the right direction in Denmark. Compared to the other EU countries, Denmark is the country in the EU with the largest share of citizens believing this development is positive.

It is primarily Danes who politically belong on the right wing who believe this development is going in the right direction. In contrast, large shares of left wing voters believe development is going in the wrong direction.

- **Trust in the Danish government and the parliament**

A majority of Danes tend to trust the Danish government. However, compared to the previous survey, fewer Danes have trust in the government. Nevertheless, the Danish government was re-elected on 13 November this year; yet with fewer votes than in the general election in 2005.

Danes' view on the EU

- **Denmark's voice counts in the EU**

A majority of Danes believes that Denmark's voice, as well as their own voice, counts in the EU. Yet nine out of ten Danes also believe that the biggest countries have the most power in the EU.

- **Danish trust in the European institutions**

Danes tend to trust a number of European institutions, especially the Court of Justice of the European Communities. Generally speaking, larger shares of Danes than EU citizens on average tend to trust the European institutions.

Both Danes and EU citizens on average answer 'don't know' in relation to a number of institutions. Most Danes answer 'don't know' in relation to the European Court of Auditors. This probably reflects the fact that many citizens do not know the European Court of Auditors.

- **Large majority in favour of a common defence and security policy**

A majority of Danes believe that a common defence and security policy among EU Member States should exist. They also believe a common foreign policy among the Member States of the EU, towards other countries, should exist.

- **Small majority in favour of a European Monetary Union**

A small majority of Danes are in favour of a European Monetary Union with one single currency.

- **Danes want an EU foreign policy that is independent of that of the United States**

Eight out of ten Danes agree, like EU citizens on average, that the EU's foreign policy should be independent of the United States' foreign policy. More Danes on the political left wing than the right wing believe that the EU's foreign policy should be independent of that of the United States.

- **Positive outlook regarding the EU's future**

Most Danes are optimistic concerning the future of the EU. Denmark and Poland are the two most optimistic countries in the EU.

- **4 out of 10 Danes have a positive image of the EU**

Four out of ten Danes have a positive image of the EU. Only one out of ten have a negative image of the EU.

Half of all Danes have a neutral image of the EU. This share has risen since spring 2007. Danes are less likely than EU citizens on average to have a positive image of the EU

- **Danes fairly well informed about European political affairs**

Four out of ten Danes believe that the Danish population is well informed about European political affairs. Despite of this relatively low share, Denmark belongs among the three countries in the EU where most believe the population is well informed.

- **Decision-making authority**

According to Danes, issues with a local feel, such as pensions and taxation, should be decided on by the national government. On the other hand, more collective issues, such as fighting terrorism and protecting the environment, should be solved in the EU framework.

In relation to a number of issues, more Danes than EU citizens on average tend to believe that decisions should be made by the national government. This belief reflects the general scepticism Danes have towards the EU.

- **EU influence**

Danes believe that the EU plays a positive role in regards to environmental protection. More Danes believe this now than they did previously, although many Danes also believed this to be true in the former surveys.

The EU in the Danish media

- **Adequate media coverage of the EU**

Half of all Danes believe that Danish media coverage of the EU is adequate. Only a few Danes believe that the Danish media talk too little about the EU.

Furthermore, it appears that Danes use TV, radio and press more than websites to get news. This is especially the case for the elderly, which corresponds with their general use of media.

- **Objective media coverage of the EU**

The Danish media presents the EU objectively. Only a few Danes believe the EU is presented too negatively.

A larger share of Danes than EU citizens on average believes that the EU is presented objectively.

- **Trust in the Danish media**

A majority of Danes have trust in television, radio and the press, while only half of Danes have trust in the internet. It is primarily the elderly, as well as Danes with least educational qualifications, who tend to least trust the internet.