

# EUROBAROMETER 68

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

## AUTUMN 2007

### NATIONAL REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY GREECE

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

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

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<sup>1</sup>

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The EUROBAROMETER 68.1 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 EUROBAROMETER 68.1 was also conducted in the three candidate countries (Croatia, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) 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 drawn 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 allows to safely consider that the research results and assumptions are to a great degree representative of Greek national 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.

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<sup>1</sup> This National Report was prepared by Mrs. Olga Stavropoulou-Salamouri for the EU Commission Representation in Greece.

In this report, all countries are referred to by their official abbreviations. Any abbreviations used correspond as follows:

ABBREVIATIONS	
EU	European Union
EU27	European Union – 27 Member States
EU15	European Union - 15 Member States before the enlargement of 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2004
NMS	New Member States – 12 Member States which joined the EU during the last two enlargements
DK/NA	Don't know / No answer
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
CY	Republic of Cyprus <sup>2</sup>
CY (tcc)	Area in Cyprus not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus
LT	Lithuania
LV	Latvia
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	The Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	The United Kingdom
HR	Croatia
TR	Turkey
FM	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia <sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Cyprus as a whole is one of the 27 European Union Member States. However, the "acquis communautaire" is suspended in the part of the country that is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews conducted in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are recorded in the category "CY" and included in the EU27 average. The interviews conducted in the part of the country not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are recorded in the category "CY(tcc)" (tcc: Turkish Cypriot Community).

<sup>3</sup> FM: Provisional code which does not prejudice in any way the definitive nomenclature for this country (which will be agreed following the conclusion of negotiations currently taking place on this subject at the United Nations).

## Negative assessment for economy, employment, environment and social welfare situations in Greece

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Greek citizens express their strong dissatisfaction regarding the current situation in the economy, employment, environment, as well as social welfare in Greece. It is remarkable that in all the above issues, the Greek dissatisfaction rates are among the highest of the entire survey, differing considerably from the EU27 average.

- 🇬🇷 **The Greek economy is in a bad state; the European economy is in a good one.** 76% of Greek citizens express dissatisfaction about the state of the Greek economy, characterizing it as "bad" (EL: 76% - EU27: 49%). The proportion of Greeks representing this view is one of the highest recorded in the current survey. On the contrary, the majority of the Greek public opinion seems to be satisfied with the European economy, obviously finding that it performs better than the Greek economy (EL: 64% - EU27: 58%).
- 🇬🇷 **Nine out of ten Greek respondents express their dissatisfaction about the current employment situation in their country.** The Greek rate (88%) is among the highest recorded in the survey (EU27: 61%).
- 🇬🇷 **Seven out of ten Greek citizens find the situation of the environment to be rather bad.** The Greek rate (EL: 72% - EU27: 51%) is the second highest recorded in the survey, following that of Hungary (73%). Accordingly, the satisfaction rate (good situation of the environment) is among the lowest of the entire survey (EL: 28% - EU27: 46%).
- 🇬🇷 **Eight out of ten Greek citizens judge negatively the current situation of social welfare in Greece (79%), while the EU27 average is 49%.** The Greek negative rate (bad) is among the highest recorded in the survey, and accordingly the Greek satisfaction rate (good) is among the lowest of the survey (EL: 21% - EU27: 46%).

## Expectations regarding economic and employment situations in Greece

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**Although 42% of the Greek poll foresees that both economic and employment situations in Greece will deteriorate over the next twelve months (42% each), when compared with the previous Eurobarometer survey (EB67.2) carried out between April 10<sup>th</sup> and May 15<sup>th</sup> 2007, a reduction of ten percentage units for both negative percentages is observed (EB67.2: 52% - EB68.1: 42%).** It should be mentioned that there has been a continuous drop of both negative percentages over the four previous EB surveys (EB67.2, EB66.1, EB65.2, EB64.2 & EB63.4).

More specifically, in the current survey, 42% of the Greek sample predicts worse economic developments (EL: 42% - EU27: 26%) as well as a deterioration in the employment situation (EL: 42% - EU27: 25%) in Greece for the forthcoming year.

Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the Greek sample (32% & 37% respectively) does not foresee any change (either positive or negative) in the upcoming year concerning the economic and employment situations in Greece (EU27: 44% & EU27: 43% respectively).

Better developments for the Greek economy and employment situation are predicted by fewer Greek respondents, 25% and 21% respectively.

**No concern is expressed about the performance of the European economy** as Greek respondents do not predict any change, either positive or negative (EL: 44% - EU27: 45%).

## Concern about unemployment in Greece

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**Greeks are mostly concerned about unemployment.** As in the previous Eurobarometer surveys, the most important issue that Greece faces is unemployment (EL: 42% - EU27: 27%). However, it should be noted that this rate has dropped considerably when compared to the data recorded in the previous EB surveys (EB60.1: 65%, EB61.0: 75%, EB62.0: 69%, EB63.4: 64%, EB64.2: 60%, EB65.2: 68%, EB66.1: 56%, EB67.2: 51%).

A significant proportion of the Greek public opinion expresses concern about the economic situation of the country (EL: 33% - EU27: 17%) and rising prices / inflation (EL: 34% - EU27: 26%).

In general, **Greek and European respondents, 44% and 41% respectively, express their concern that developments in their countries are moving in the wrong direction.** Nevertheless, a significant proportion of both Greek (35%) and European (34%) public opinion finds that things, at the time the survey was conducted, are progressing in the right direction. **Both Greek and European citizens appear to be more satisfied with the way things are developing in the European Union** (EL: 47% - EU27: 40%).

## Trust in institutions

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- 🇪🇺 **A majority of Greek citizens tend to trust the European Union** (EL: 65% - EU27: 48%), **as well as the European institutions**, such as the European Parliament (EL: 77% - EU27: 55%), the European Commission (EL: 69% - EU27: 50%), the Council of the European Union (EL: 68% - EU27: 44%) and the European Central Bank (EL: 53% - EU27: 47%). The Greek trust the European Union is the third highest of the entire survey, following that of Romania (68%) and Estonia (67%).
- 🇪🇺 **52% of Greek citizens trust their national parliament** (EU27: 35%). However, distrust in this institution is expressed by 48% of Greek respondents, as well as by the majority of European citizens (EU27: 56%).
- 🇪🇺 **54% of Greek and 59% of European citizens tend to not trust their national government.** However, the proportion of Greek citizens (46%) that express trust in their national government is significant (EU27: 34%).
- 🇪🇺 **56% of Greek respondents tend to not trust the trades unions (EU27: 45%).** The Greek negative rate is the second highest in the entire survey following that of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (65%). Trust is expressed by 43% of Greek and 39% of European citizens.
- 🇪🇺 A high percentage of distrust is recorded by the majority of both Greek and European citizens (79% & 75% respectively), who take a **negative standpoint vis-à-vis political parties.**
- 🇪🇺 **A tendency of distrust towards the United Nations is recorded**, as it is expressed by six out of ten Greek citizens (EL: 61% - EU27: 30%). However, European citizens hold the opposite view, expressing their trust in the international organization (EU27: 53%). The percentage of Greeks that express trust in the United Nations is 38%. It is worth noting that the Greek rate displaying a tendency of distrust in the United Nations is the highest of the entire survey sample.

## Greece has benefited from being a member of the European Union

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- 🇪🇺 The majority of Greeks (62%) views positively Greece's membership of the European Union (EU27: 58%). This is why eight out of ten Greek citizens also believe that **Greece has benefited from its membership of the European Union (80%)**. The EU27 average is lower, at 58%.
- 🇪🇺 Even though Greek citizens express satisfaction regarding their country's membership of the European Union, they believe that **the interests of their country (Greece) are not well-taken into account in the European Union (EL: 61%)**. The Greek negative rate is the 4<sup>th</sup> highest recorded in the entire survey, following those of Finland (76%), Cyprus (67%) and the Czech Republic (64%), while the EU27 average is 46%.
- 🇪🇺 Nevertheless, six out of ten Greek citizens appear to be optimistic, as they predict that **their country, in the future, will become more influential in the European Union** (EL: 62% - EU27: 43%). 36% of the Greek and 39% of the European public opinion does not express the same opinion.

## Information deficiency on European political affairs

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Disappointing results occurred in the effort to evaluate how well-informed Greek citizens are about European political affairs, as an overwhelming majority of the Greek sample shows an information deficiency (total: "not well informed"). The Greek negative rate is the highest recorded in the current survey (EL: 91% - EU27: 78%).

*More specifically, when breaking down the total percentage (91%):*

It is rather revealing that **only nine out of one thousand Greek citizens (1%) consider themselves to be very well informed about European political affairs**. Moreover, the Greek percentage **(8%) of those declaring themselves to be fairly well informed** is significantly low.





It is also remarkable that one out of two Greek citizens (50%) expresses doubts on his/her information knowledge stating to be "not very well informed". Lastly, a great proportion of Greek respondents express an absolute information deficiency on European Union political matters, stating they feel "not at all informed" (41%).

## Decision-making

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The survey makes reference to some areas in which Greek respondents are called upon to express their opinion as to whether decisions should be taken independently by the national government or jointly within the European Union.

Greek citizens express their preference for **joint decision-making in the protection of the environment, 79% (EU27: 73%), the fighting of inflation, 56% (EU27: 49%) and the national economy, 54% (EU27: 48%), while they remain firm that issues regarding pensions (EL: 59% - EU27: 70%) should fall under the competence of the Greek government**.

-  Protection of the environment, 79% (EU27: 73%): In comparison with the previous Eurobarometer survey (EB67.2), an increase in the Greek percentage stating a **preference for joint-decision in issues concerning the protection of the environment** is recorded (EB67.2 - EL: 66% - EU27: 69%). It is worth mentioning that the current EB survey was carried out soon after the disastrous fires that took place in Greece (summer 2007).
-  **The majority of the Greek poll prefers decisions relating to the fight against inflation to be taken at the European level**, meaning joint decisions (EL: 56% - EU27: 49%), rather than at the national level, i.e. solely by the Greek government. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the Greek sample expresses the opposite opinion believing that it is better for those decisions to be taken by the Greek government only (EL: 44% - EU27: 45%).
-  Although **the majority of the Greek sample feels more comfortable with joint decision-making procedures concerning the country's economy** (EL: 54% - EU27: 48%), there are still many Greek respondents who do not share this view and believe that decision-making about the national economy should be made independently by their national government (EL: 46% - EU27: 47%).
-  **Regarding the issue of pensions, the majority of the Greek poll expresses a preference for independent decision-making by the Greek government** (EL: 59% - EU27: 70%). Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the Greek sample prefers related decisions to be made jointly within the European Union (EL: 41%). It is worth noting that the Greek percentage choosing joint decision-making is among the highest in the entire survey while the EU27 average is 26%.

### **The role of the European Union**

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The Greek poll finds the role of the European Union to be negative when it comes to **the rising prices / inflation**, an issue of major importance to Greek citizens (EL: 55% - EU27: 36%).

On the other hand, Greek citizens believe that the European Union plays a positive role in the fight against terrorism (EL: 55% - EU27: 57%), the protection of the environment (EL: 51% - EU27: 52%) and in defence and foreign affairs (EL: 46% - EU27: 48%).

Regarding the issue of **pensions**, which is of intense concern to Greek respondents and has caused political turbulence over the last few years, it is interesting that 48% of Greek citizens take a neutral stand stating that the European Union's role is neither positive nor negative (EU27: 50%). In any case, the Greek percentage finding the EU role to be negative, with regard to pensions, is the highest recorded in the entire survey (EL: 38% - EU27: 21%).

Lastly, with regard to the role of the European Union on the economic situation in Greece, 36% of Greek respondents (EU27: 20%) find it to be negative, 32% (EU27: 39%) express the opposite opinion characterising it as positive and 32% (EU27: 29%) take a neutral stand (neither positive nor negative).

## Objective but limited reference to EU-related issues by Greek mass media

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The majority of both **Greek and European public opinion evaluates the information presented by the media on the European Union to be objective** (Television EL: 48% - EU27: 53%, Radio EL: 60% - EU27: 51%, Press EL: 58% - EU27: 51% and Internet EL: 51% - EU27: 33%).

Although the Greek mass media makes limited reference to the European Union, still the press, more than television, radio and websites, somewhat meets the information needs of Greek citizens.

- ☒ While **television** constitutes the main source of information for Greek citizens, it is still inadequate and talks “*too little*” about the European Union, according to 61% of Greek respondents (EU27: 48%); being the third highest (negative) percentage recorded in the entire survey, following those of the Netherlands (66%) and France (65%). Furthermore, when compared to the EB65.2 Eurobarometer findings, the negative rate has increased from 48% in the earlier survey to 61% in the current.
- ☒ When it comes to the **press**, 45% of Greek citizens (the second highest negative rate recorded in the survey, following that of Italy 47%) believe that reference made by Greek press to the European Union is not adequate, while an equally significant proportion of the Greek sample does not share the same opinion, declaring themselves to be satisfied with the information / news received (43%). It is noted that the negative rate, wishing more press coverage, has increased by ten percentage points from that recorded in the previous Eurobarometer survey asking the same question EB65.2: 35%).
- ☒ Concerning **radio**, 57% of Greek respondents are not satisfied [the third highest negative rate recorded in the survey following those of France (62%) and Italy (59%)], saying that the radio talks too little about the European Union (EU27: 46%). The Greek negative rate currently recorded has increased by eleven percentage points from that recorded in the previous EB survey (EB65.2: 46%).
- ☒ Lastly, 38% of Greek respondents find that the **Internet** meet their information needs, providing adequate information on the European Union (EU27: 30%), while 32% (EU27: 19%) appear to want more information to be available on websites.

**Greek citizens express feelings of distrust towards the Greek mass media (Television, Press, Radio as well as Internet). This is depicted in the distrust rates recorded by the Greek respondents, which are among the highest recorded in the entire survey.**

- ☒ A high percentage of distrust is recorded by the Greek respondents (highest negative rate of the entire survey sample) who take a **negative standpoint vis-à-vis television** (EL: 64% - EU27: 43%). Tendency of trust is recorded by 36% of Greek respondents and the majority of the European public opinion (EU27: 52%).
- ☒ **Distrust towards the press is expressed by 62% of Greek and 49% of European respondents.** In comparison with the previous Eurobarometer survey (EB67.2), a nine-point increase of the Greek negative rate is recorded (EB67.2: 53%). In addition, the Greek distrust rate is among the highest of the entire survey following the ones of the United Kingdom (75%), Turkey (68%) and Hungary (66%). On the other hand, trust percentages of both Greek and European public opinion towards the press are 37% and 44% respectively.



- ☞ Likewise, **a high percentage of distrust in radio is recorded by Greek respondents (53%)**, being the second highest of the entire survey sample following that of Turkey 57%, while the EU27 average is limited to 31%. This is a notable “change of mind” when compared to the previous Eurobarometer survey where six out of ten Greek citizens expressed their trust in radio (EB67.2: 60%). Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the Greek public opinion expressed trust in radio as a source of information (47%).
- ☞ **A tendency of strong distrust towards the Internet is recorded**, as it is expressed by 62% of Greek respondents (EU27: 35%). It should be highlighted that the Greek rate displaying distrust towards the Internet is the highest of the entire survey sample. The percentage of Greeks that express trust in the Internet is 34% (EU27: 33%).

Furthermore, only four out of ten Greek citizens (41%) state that they possess a computer and even fewer, three out of ten (27%), that they have an internet connection at home, while both respective European rates are significantly higher (61% and 50%).