

# EUROBAROMETER 69

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

## SPRING 2008

### NATIONAL REPORT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### GERMANY

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## Executive Summary

### To Germans, Europe means...

- ... freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU (Germany: 55%, -1 point / EU: 49%, -3 points), the Euro (Germany: 46%, -7 points / EU: 35%, -4 points), peace (Germany: 41%, -7 points / EU: 26%, -7 points), cultural diversity (Germany: 27%, -9 points / EU: 22%, -5 points), a stronger say in the world (Germany: 21%, -11 points / EU: 22%, -4 points), democracy (Germany: 24%, -3 points / EU: 21%, -1 points), social protection (Germany: 7%, -1 point / EU: 9%, -1 point), unemployment (Germany: 19%, -5 points / EU: 11%, -3 points), bureaucracy (Germany: 36%, -3 points / EU: 18%, -3 points), waste of money (Germany: 37%, +/-0 points / EU: 19%, -1 point), more crime (Germany: 32%, +/-0 point / EU: 15%, -2 points), loss of cultural identity (Germany: 8%, -1 point / EU: 11%, -1 point).

### Image

- 44% (-5 points) of Germans and 48% (-1 point) of Europeans conjure up a good or very good image of the EU.

### Membership of the European Union

- Support for membership of the European Union is declining among Germans (60%, -7 points) and Europeans (52%, -6 points).

#### **Young Germans support membership**

*Respondents under the age of 25 show much stronger support for EU membership (66%) than Germans over 55 (56%).*

### Benefits from being a member of the European Union

- 55% (-3 points) of Germans and 54% (-4 points) of Europeans believe that their country has benefited from being a member of the European Union.
- Respondents between the age of 15 and 24 believe that their country has benefited from being a member of the EU (Germany: 66% / EU: 64%) to a much greater extent than those aged 55 and over (Germany: 50% / EU: 47%).

### Main reasons for and against thinking that Germany has benefited from being a member of the EU

- 45% of Germans and 32% of Europeans regard peace as a result of EU-membership.
- 44% of Germans and 37% of Europeans believe that membership of the European Union improves the co-operation between Germany and other countries.
- 29% of Germans and 22% of Europeans believe the European Union gives their people a stronger say in the world.

- 26% of Germans and 30% of Europeans believe that the European Union contributes to economic growth.
- 25% of Germans and 12% of Europeans think that their people have an important influence in decisions made at European Union level.
- 39% of Germans and 28% of Europeans believe that the European Union puts peoples' jobs in danger. Germans in the east of the country particularly distrust the EU.

### Future of the European Union

- 63% (-3 points) of Europeans and 64% (-5 points) of Germans are optimistic about the future of the European Union. Among Germans, the most optimistic are the self-employed (81%), managers (78%) and students (79%).

#### ***Optimistic about Europe's future***

*76% of the respondents under the age of 25 are optimistic about the future of the European Union.*

### Democracy in Europe

- Only one in three Germans thinks that their own voice counts in the European Union (34%, - 2 points).
- Even fewer Europeans believe that their own voice counts in the European Union (31%, +1 point).
- Germans (61%) and Europeans (63%) do not think that their voices are listened to by their respective governments on European issues. This feeling applies also to the European Parliament (Germany: 63% / EU: 61%) and the European Commission (Germany: 62% / EU: 61%).
- 78% (-1 point) of Germans and 61% (+/- 0 points) of Europeans believe that their country's voice counts in the EU.
- 48% of Germans and 60% of Europeans believe that the European Union imposes its view on their country.

### Trust in institutions

- 36% (-4 points) of Germans and 32% (-2 points) of Europeans trust their national governments.
- 41% (+/-0 points) of Germans trust the Bundestag. Europewide, 34% (-1 point) trust their national parliaments.
- 43% (+4 points) of Germans and 50% (+2 points) of Europeans trust the European Union in general.

### Do citizens trust or distrust European institutions?

### *European Parliament (EP)*

- Germans trust the European Parliament more than the Bundestag (50%, -2 Pp).
- 36% of Germans and Europeans trust the EP because decisions taken by the European Parliament are taken in a democratic way.
- 29% of Germans and 23% of Europeans think that members of the European Parliament are the best placed to decide on issues for the European Union as a whole.
- 45% of Germans and 41% of Europeans think that the European Parliament is too far away from ordinary citizens.
- 21% of the respondents in Germany and 25% of Europeans distrust the European Parliament because it is not transparent enough and there is not enough information about the institution.

### *European Commission*

- 41% (-5 points) trust the European Commission.
- 28% of Germans and 23% of Europeans think that the European Commission is best placed to make useful proposals for the European Union as a whole.
- 22% of Germans and 26% of Europeans are convinced that the European Commission defends well the interests of all European citizens .
- 24% of Germans and 28% of Europeans believe that the decisions taken by the European Commission are taken in a democratic way.
- 36% of Germans and 34% of Europeans think the European Commission is too far away from ordinary citizens.
- 23% of Germans and 26% of Europeans distrust the European Commission because it is not transparent enough and they do not have enough information.

### *Council of the European Union*

- 39% (-4 points) of Germans and 43% (-1 point) of Europeans trust the Council of the European Union.
- 24% of Germans and 24% of Europeans think that the Council of the European Union defends well the interests of all European citizens.
- 21% of Germans and 27% of Europeans are convinced that the decisions taken by the Council of the European Union are taken in a democratic way.

- 34% of Germans and 32% of Europeans think the Council of the European Union is too far away from ordinary citizens.
- 21% of Germans and 26% of Europeans distrust the Council of the European Union because it is not transparent enough and they do not have enough information.

#### *European Central Bank*

- 60% (-1 point) of Germans and 50% (+3 points) of Europeans trust the European Central Bank.
- 41% of Germans and 31% of Europeans trust the European Central Bank to defend the Euro.
- 26% of Germans and 24% of Europeans are convinced that the European Central Bank protects Europe well against financial turmoil.
- 29% of Germans and 19% of Europeans generally do not trust banks and bankers.
- Those who do not trust the ECB find that the European Central Bank is not efficient enough in its fight against inflation (Germany: 26%, EU: 20%).

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

- *A European Monetary Union:* 60% (-1 point) of Europeans and 69% (+/-0 points) of Germans support a European Monetary Union.
- *A common foreign policy of the Member States of the EU:* 82% (-3 points) of Germans and 68% (-2 points) of Europeans support a common foreign policy.
- *A common defence and security policy among EU Member States:* Europe-wide, 76% (+/-0 points) of the respondents support such a policy. In Germany, 88% (+/-0 points) support a common defence and security policy among EU Member States.

#### ***Young Germans support enlargement***

*49% support further enlargement of the European Union.*

- *Further enlargement of the EU:* Support for enlargement among Europeans (47%, +1 point) and Germans (33%, +5 points) is on the rise again.

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

- Energy (Germany: 47%, +9 points / EU: 30%, +3 points), fight against crime (Germany: 39%, -1 points / EU: 33%, -3 points), protecting the environment (Germany: 42%, +3 points / EU: 33%, +/-0 points), immigration (Germany: 35%, +5 points / EU: 32%, -1 points), social protection (Germany: 24%, -4 points / EU: 24%, -2 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: crime (Germany: 76%, -3 points / EU: 58%, -3 points), terrorism (Germany: 90%, -2 points / EU: 79%, -2 points), defence and foreign affairs (Germany: 74%, -7 points / EU: 64%, -3 points), immigration (Germany: 64%, +2 points / EU: 58%, -5 points), protecting the environment (Germany: 85%, -3 points / EU: 71%, -2 points), agriculture and fishery (Germany: 96%, +4 points / EU: 51%, -2 points), consumer protection (Germany: 62%, +/-0 points / EU: 50%, -3 points), scientific and technological research (Germany: 72%, -2 points / EU: 70%, -2 points), support for regions facing economic difficulties (Germany: 72%, +2 points / EU: 62%, -2 points), energy (Germany: 74%, -6 points / EU: 61%, -7 points), competition (Germany: 66%, +/-0 points / EU: 55%, -2 points), transport (Germany: 64%, +6 points / EU: 48%, +2 points), economy (Germany: 55%, -1 points / EU: 49%, +2 points), fighting inflation (Germany: 69%, +7 points / EU: 51%, +2 points).

### **Young Germans support decisions being made jointly within the European Union**

44% of the respondents supported decisions at EU level regarding healthcare (German average: 32%) and 41% supported European decision-making concerning social protection (German average: 34%).

Policy issues that should be dealt with by the Member States exclusively are: taxation (Germany: 67%, -1 point / EU: 68%, +3 points), fighting unemployment (Germany: 57%, -4 points / EU: 57%, +/-0 points), the educational system (Germany: 60%, +2 points / EU: 66%, +2 points), pensions (Germany: 81%, -2 points / EU: 73%, +3 points), health (Germany: 67%, +3 points / EU: 64%, +5 points), social welfare (Germany: 64%, +3 points / EU: 67%, +3 points).

## Countries that should become part of the EU

Switzerland (Germany: 83%, -4 points / EU: 77%, -1 points), Norway (Germany: 88%, +2 points / EU: 78%, +/-0 points), Iceland (Germany: 72%, -2 points / EU: 71%, +2 points), Croatia (Germany: 46%, +2 points / EU: 52%, +2 points),

## Countries that should *not* become part of the EU

Bosnia and Herzegovina (Germany: 58%, -2 points / EU: 44%, -2 points), Serbia (Germany: 63%, -1 point / EU: 47%, -1 Pp), Montenegro (Germany: 54%, -2 points / EU: 41%, -2 points), Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Germany: 55%, -4 points / EU: 43%, -1 points), Albania (Germany: 68%, -6 points / EU: 51%, -2 points), Turkey (Germany: 77%, -1 points / EU: 55%, -4 points), Ukraine (Germany: 61%, +/-0 points / EU: pro Ukraine: 43%, +2 points).

## Membership of Turkey

- 45% (+6 points) of Europeans are in favour of Turkish membership, once Turkey complies with all the conditions set by the European Union.
- Germans are still against Turkish membership (63%, -6 points), even if Turkey were to comply with all the conditions set by the European Union.

## **EU membership of the countries and territories of the Western Balkans would help to stabilise that part of Europe.**

- 48% of Europeans and 40% of Germans tend to agree with the above statement.

## **General effects of globalisation**

- 56% of Europeans and 62% of Germans think that globalisation is an opportunity for economic growth.

### ***Young Germans believe in positive effects of globalisation***

68% think that globalisation is an opportunity for economic growth. 30% do not believe that globalisation is profitable only for large companies (German average: 24%).

- At the same time 65% of Germans and 56% of Europeans think that globalisation increases social inequalities.
- 54% of Germans and 44% of Europeans think that globalisation helps peace in the world.

- Globalisation does not represent a threat to their national culture, according to 64% of Germans and 45% of Europeans.
- 24% of Germans and 22% of Europeans do not believe that globalisation is profitable only for large companies, but believe that it also benefits citizens.
- 83% of Germans and 64% of Europeans think that globalisation makes common rules at global level necessary ("worldwide governance").

## **Relevance for companies**

- 41% of Germans and 39% of Europeans think that globalisation represents a good opportunity for national companies.
- 50% of Germans and 43% of Europeans think that globalisation is a threat for national companies and jobs.

## **EU and globalisation**

- 41% (-2 points) of Germans believe that the European Union helps to protect us from the negative effects of globalisation.
- 42% (-11 points) of Germans are convinced that the European Union enables European citizens to better benefit from the positive effects of globalisation.

## **Performance of the European economy**

- 43% (+19 points) of Germans and 36% (+15 points) of Europeans believe that the European economy is performing better than the American economy.

- 32% (+10 points) of Germans and 22% (+4 points) of Europeans believe that the European economy is performing better than the Japanese economy.
- 36% (+3 points) of Germans and 30% (+1 point) of Europeans believe that the European economy is performing better than the Chinese economy.
- 49% (+5 points) of Germans and 45% (-15 point) of Europeans believe that the European economy is performing better than the Indian economy.

### **Situation in Germany compared with the EU**

- 64% (+/-0 points) of Germans and 35% (-3 points) of Europeans think that the situation of their national economy is better than the average of the European countries.
- 49% (+9 points) of Germans and 34% (+2 points) of Europeans think that the employment situation in their country is better than the average of the European countries.
- 69% (+12 points) of Germans and 72% (+7 points) of Europeans believe that the cost of living in their own country is higher than the average of the European countries.
- 86% (+11 points) of Germans and 73% (+10 points) of Europeans think that energy prices in their own country are higher than the average of the European countries.
- 59% (-8 points) of Germans and 46% (-2 points) of Europeans believe that the quality of life in their own country is better than the average of the European countries.

### **Are things going in the right direction in Germany and Europe?**

- 40% (+8 points) of Germans think that things are going in the wrong direction at present in Germany. 45% (+4 points) of Europeans agree that things are currently going in the wrong direction.
- 37% (+/-0 points) of Germans and 42% (+2 points) of Europeans think that things are going in the right direction in the EU.

*42% of Germans under the age of 25 think that things are going in the right direction in their country.*

### **Transparency of national public administration today**

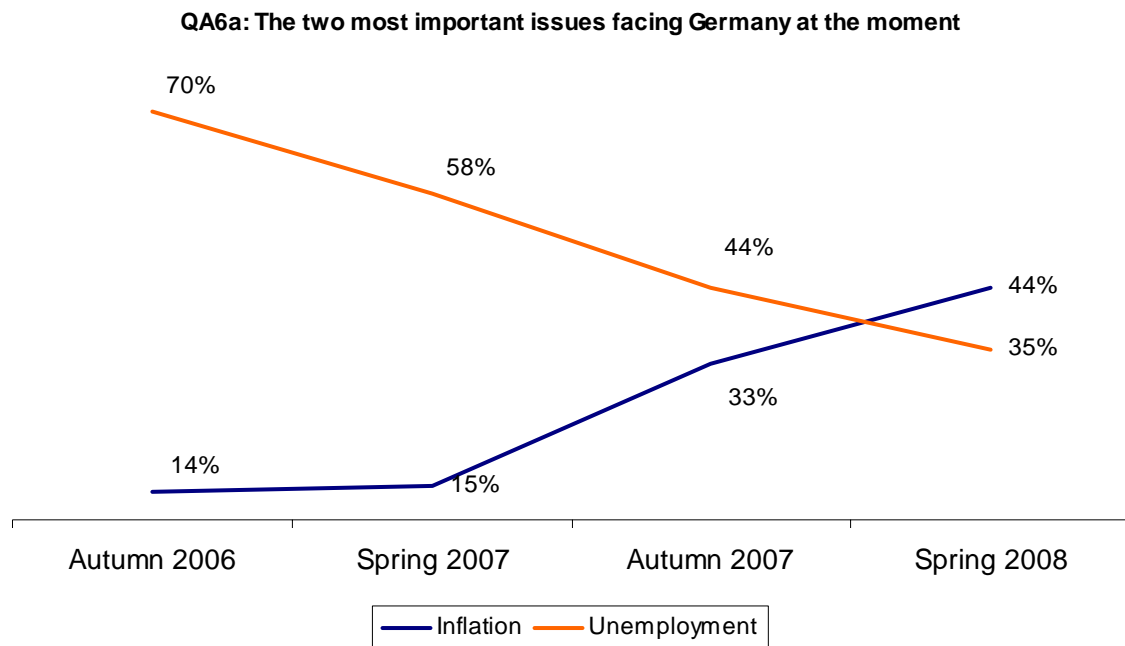
- 74% of Germans do not think that the German national public administration is transparent enough. Europewide, 68% think the same about their own national public administration. 88% of Germans and 87% of Europeans believe that a transparent national public administration is important.



- 74% of Germans and 54% of Europeans say that the European institutions are not transparent. Again, transparency is important for 85% of Germans and 84% of Europeans.

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

Inflation is the most important problem for Germans and Europeans alike (Germany: 44%, +11 points / EU: 37%, +11 points), followed by unemployment (Germany: 35%, -9 points / EU: 24%, -3 points).



### Satisfaction with life

82% (-1 point) of Germans and 77% (-3 points) of Europeans are satisfied with their personal life.

### Expectations for the next 12 months

- *Personal situation:* A majority of Germans (57%, -5 points) and 49% (-5 points) of Europeans expect their personal situation to stay the same.
- *Economic situation of the country:* 40% (+19 points) of Germans and 46% (+20 points) of Europeans expect the national economy to decline during the next 12 months.
- *The financial situation of the personal household:* 51% (-6 points) of Germans and 50% (-3 points) of

#### **Young Germans are optimistic about the next 12 months**

41% expect their personal situation to get better (German average: 22%).

23% expect the situation of the German economy to get better (Germany: 15%)

26% expect that the financial situation of their household will get better (Germany: 16%).

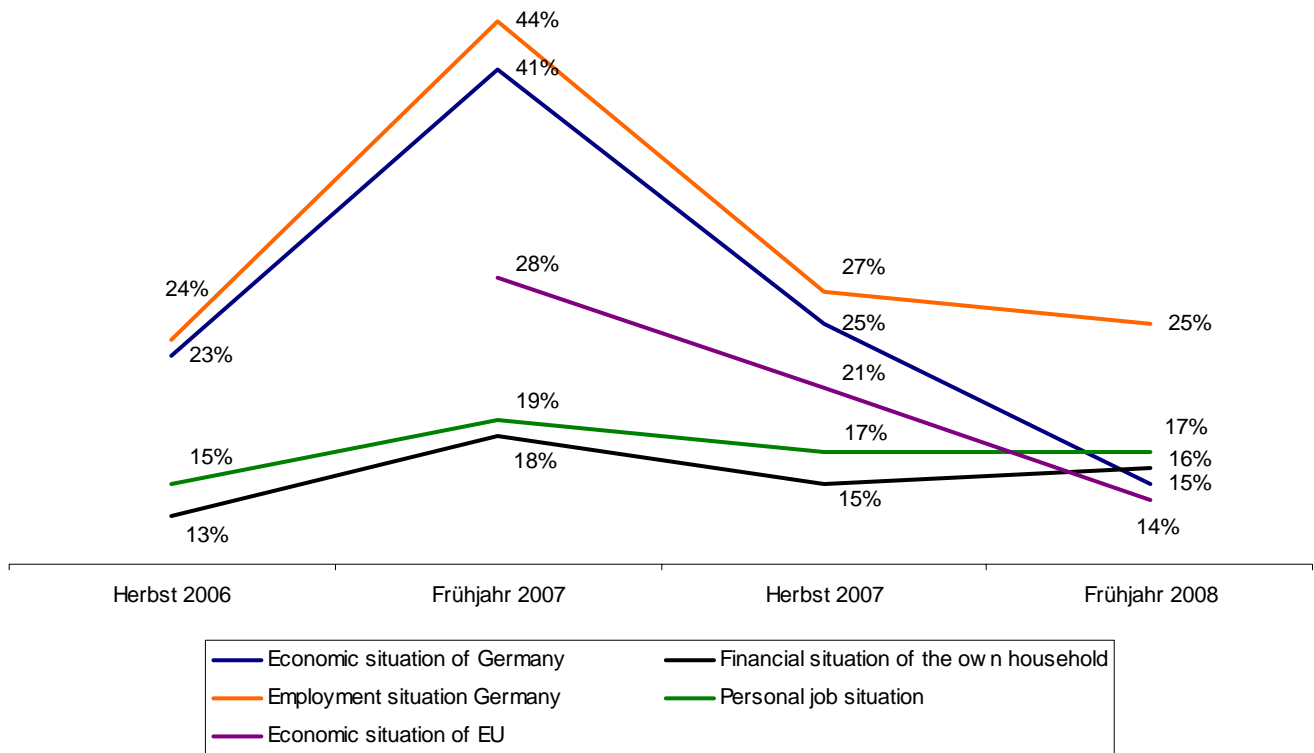
34% expect the German employment situation to get better.

40% (Germany: 17%) expect their personal job situation to get better.

Europeans do not expect changes to the financial situation of their household.

- *Employment situation:* 38% (-6 points) of Germans are convinced that the employment situation of their country will not change over the next 12 months.
- *Economic situation in the EU:* 38% (-7 points) of Europeans expect no growth of the European economy. In Germany 50% (-5 points) of the respondents expect no change.

**QA4: Expectations for the next 12 months**



### Purchasing power

- 70% of Germans and 51% of Europeans say that their purchasing power got worse during the last 5 years.
- Every third respondent in Germany and 47% of Europeans have difficulties paying all their bills at the end of the month.

### Future of today's children

- The life of those who are children today will be more difficult, according to 77% of Germans and 61% of Europeans.

### Quiz

- Statement 1: The EU currently consists of fifteen Member States (wrong). 28% (+1 point) 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). 62% (-4 points) of Germans and 51% (+2 points) of Europeans agree with this statement.
- Statement 3: The Euro zone currently consists of twelve Member States (wrong). 39% (-5 points) of Germans and 38% (-3 points) of Europeans agree with that statement.
- Statement 4: Switzerland is a member of the European Union (wrong). 84% of Germans and 68% of Europeans disagree.