

EUROBAROMETER 69

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2008

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SPAIN

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Eurobarometer EB69- Spain

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Introduction for EB69- Spain

This edition was based on data collected through a survey undertaken between 25 March and 4 May by TNS- Demoscopia. Using the responses of the Spanish public, the data showed that, in comparison to earlier editions, they feel less positive regarding their life in general as well as the economic situation in Spain and the EU for the next 12 months. However, the Spanish public feels more or less satisfied with the type of life they lead and expressed, on average, higher levels of trust towards the EU-27 and the EU institutions than other EU citizens.

This edition¹ has also shown that the Spanish public feels that EU membership is a good thing for Spain and that Spain has benefited from this membership. Although most of the responses indicate that Spanish public opinion is in favour of the future development of the EU, the general feeling is that the EU will help Spain to do better economically. This is because most interviewees answered that EU membership has contributed to making Spain stronger economically and that, for them, the EU means, above all, the Euro.

Finally, this edition confirms that, once again, the main worries of the Spanish public are, in descending order, "Terrorism", "Unemployment" and "Housing". However, it is clear from this and earlier editions that Spanish public opinion is very positive in terms of the levels of trust towards the main national institutions such as, the Parliament, political parties and the Spanish government.

¹ This report was drawn up for the EC Representation in Spain by M. Bozini Andiónach (mara.bozini@gmail.com). The web site of the Eurobarometer can be consulted at : http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index_en.htm

Issue 1: General feelings and level of satisfaction of the Spanish public

The first issue of EB69 is that the Spanish public has shown a less positive attitude, compared to earlier editions, regarding the level of satisfaction with the type of life they lead, as well as towards the Spanish economy and employment situation:

- The EU27 average of those saying that they are “more or less satisfied” with the type of life they lead is 58%, a little lower than the Spanish average of 66%.
- While in the earlier edition, 37% of the Spanish group said that their life will be “better” in the next 12 months, only 27% said so in this edition.
- Only 19% thought that in the next 12 months the Spanish economy will be “better” (30% thought so in EB68).
- Terrorism is again the main worry of the Spanish public, followed by unemployment and housing.
- The Spanish public showed high levels of trust towards the main national institutions: 54% said that they “tend to trust” the National Parliament, 40% said that they “tend to trust” the political parties and the figure is 74% for the Spanish Army. The Spanish Army therefore enjoys the highest level of trust among all institutions.
- 60% of the interviewees said that they “tend to trust” the national Press, in contrast with the EU27 average of 44%.
- TV registered the lowest level of trust among the Spanish public in terms of media: 37% of the Spanish group said that they “tend not to trust” this form of media, compared to an EU27 average of 43%.

Issue 2: Feelings of the Spanish public towards the EU

The second issue of EB69 brings us closer to the Spanish opinion in a comparative way, in order to evaluate the economic and employment situation in Spain and the EU. Overall, Spanish public opinion tends to be very critical, arguing that things are somewhat better in the EU than in Spain, although they think that the “quality of life” is “somewhat better in Spain”. For example:

- 51% said that the economy is “somewhat worse” in Spain, while 19% said that it is “somewhat better”.
- In terms of the employment situation in Spain, most said that this is “somewhat worse” (54%).
- Quality of life was considered to be “somewhat better” in Spain compared to the rest of the EU, according to 39% of the group. 31% said that it is “somewhat worse”.
- As to the economic situation in the EU, 19% of the group said that it will be “better” in the next 12 months, while 21% thought that it will be “worse”.
- When asked to evaluate the image of the EU, the majority of the group said that this is “more or less” positive,.
- Two thirds of the Spanish interviewees (66%) said that they “tend to trust” the EU.

Issue 3: Public opinion on Spain's membership of the EU

Spain's membership of the EU has been positively evaluated by the Spanish group: two thirds (68%) of the interviewees said that being a Member State of the EU has been "good" for Spain.

- Only 8% of the group said that being a member of the EU was "bad", a much lower percentage than the EU27 average of 14%.
- Additionally, 66% of the group said that Spain has "benefited" from being a member of the EU.
- 29% of the group said that Spain has benefited from its membership for economic reasons.
- 23% of the group thought that Spain's membership of the EU "would improve the co-operation between our community and other countries".
- The third most popular answer was that "the EU would give Spain a stronger say in the world", according to 21% of the group.
- 20% chose the answer: "the EU would contribute to maintaining peace and reinforcing security".
- For the Spanish public, the EU means, above all, the Euro, according to 43% of the group.
- In second place, 37% of the Spanish public believe that the EU means "the freedom to travel, study and work in any place in Europe".
- Finally, "having a stronger say in the world" was chosen as a third option by 27% of the group.

Issue 4: The Spanish public and the European institutions

Spanish public opinion indicates high levels of trust towards the main EU institutions: 62% of the Spanish group said that they “tend to trust” the European Parliament, and 58% the European Commission.

- One of the main reasons for trusting the European Parliament was that “the European Parliament defends the interests of all EU citizens”, according to 25% of the group.
- More than two thirds of the interviewees said that the EU institutions play a very important role in their lives.
- Half of the Spanish group said they “tend to agree” that their “voice counts in Spain” and 35% said that they “tend not to agree” with this statement.
- 45% of the group said that they “tend to agree” that their “voice counts in the EU” compared to 40% who “tend not to agree” with this statement.
- To the question: “At the present time, would you say that, in general, things are going in the right direction or in the wrong direction, in Spain?”, the majority of the group (42%) said that “things were going in the right direction”.
- 48% of the Spanish group said that things were going in the right direction also for the EU.
