

# EUROBAROMETER 69

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

## SPRING 2008

### NATIONAL REPORT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### SWEDEN

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

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

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

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Satisfaction with life and future prospects**

The Swedish part of the survey paints a very positive picture of the future. An overwhelming majority, nineteen out of twenty, are satisfied with their lives, a very high number compared to the European average.

According to the Swedes, prospects for the future are bright. A majority expect their own situation to improve. The signs of a downturn in the economy do not seem to have left any marks on people's views of their own personal prospects. On the other hand, 40 % of Swedes have become more pessimistic about the general situation of the labour market, and 32 % believe the country's economic situation will decline.

### **In favour of EU membership**

The Swedes are strong advocates of EU membership. In this respect, they do not differ from the average European. At the same time, there are huge discrepancies between citizens in different countries and how they perceive membership. Looking at EU membership from a business perspective, a majority of Swedes believe Sweden has profited from membership, while a minority believe that this is not the case. The difference, however, is slight. In other European countries, the perception of EU membership is more positive.

At European level, some interesting trends can be found. 83% of those who trust the EU are satisfied with their lives, whereas the corresponding figure among those who do not trust the EU is 70%. 84% of those in favour of EU membership are satisfied with their lives, whereas only 68% of those who are not in favour of EU membership are satisfied. The same trend can be seen in other areas – those who have a positive view of various aspects of the EU are also more satisfied with their own lives.

### **Trust in the national institutions, in the EU and its institutions**

On the whole, Swedes have confidence in radio and television, as well as in their parliament. However, a small majority (50% compared to 45%) state that they do not trust the government. Furthermore, 57% state that they do not trust the press, whereas 39 % do. Confidence in political parties is low in Sweden – only 28% of respondents trust them. In the EU27, the figure is even lower (18%).

Swedes put great trust in Sweden's ability to assert itself in the European Union. A large majority think that Sweden's vote counts, and that Swedish interests are taken into account. Other Europeans are more sceptical towards their own country's ability in this respect.

### **Who should make the decisions?**

Health and social security are two areas where Swedes prefer their own government to make the decisions. In Sweden, the welfare state has come to symbolise what Swedes believe they are very good at. This might explain why so few are of the opinion that these issues should be decided at EU level. On the other hand, a substantial majority agree that fighting terrorism

(91%) and protecting the environment (81%) should be the responsibility of the European Union, and the same goes for energy (63%) and transport (73%).

According to this Eurobarometer survey, support for monetary union has increased compared to the results of the 2003 referendum. Support for the Euro among Swedes has also increased since the last Eurobarometer, from 45% to 48%.

### Attitudes to enlargement

According to the general survey results, enlargement of the European Union is a sensitive topic. Swedes are all in favour of admitting new members, but other Europeans are more sceptic. This is notably the case in countries such as Germany and France. The only country for which there is general agreement among citizens that it should be admitted into the Union is Croatia, whereas Turkey is the country meeting the most resistance among the EU27 countries. In Sweden, however, seven out of ten are in favour of Turkey joining the EU once the country fulfils the criteria for EU membership.

*Once Turkey complies with all conditions set by the European Union, would you be strongly in favour, fairly in favour, fairly opposed or strongly opposed to the accession of Turkey to the European Union?*

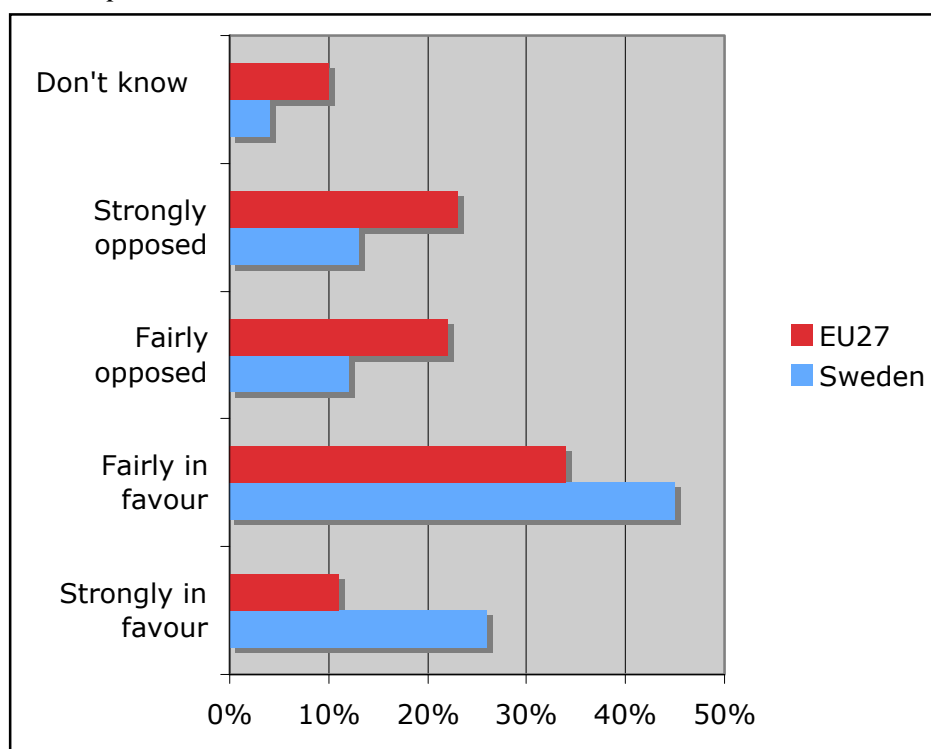


Fig 1. Swedes are for Turkey joining the EU, once criteria for membership are met.

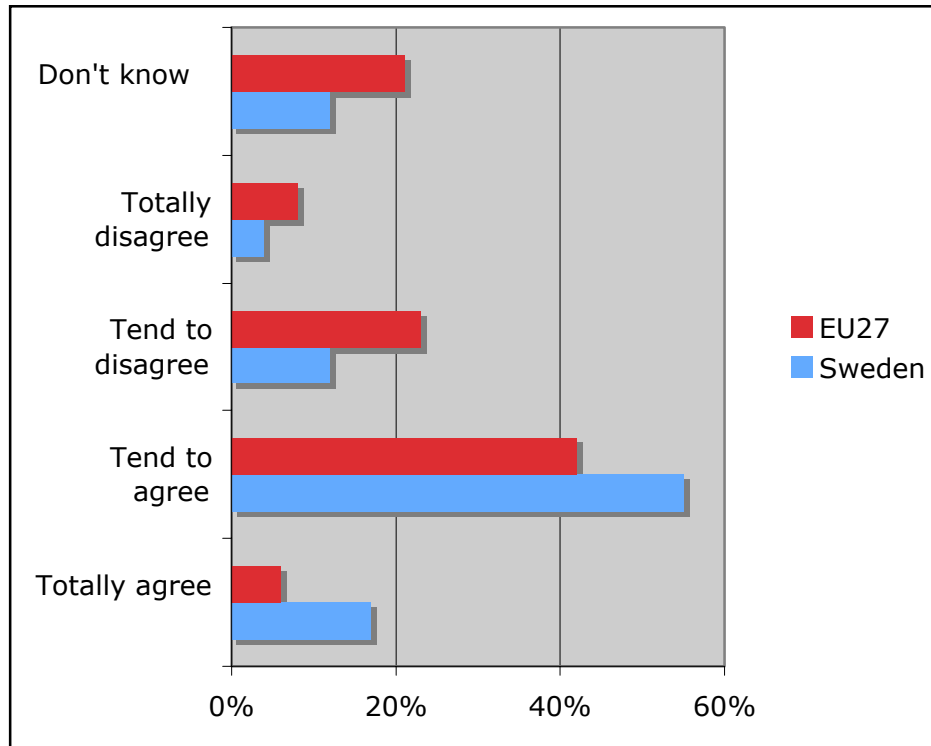
### Globalisation

Globalisation is a complex concept which is used in different ways, often for various political purposes. It brings with it possibilities as well as threats. On the whole, Swedes see little cause for concern. 64% of Swedes believe globalisation opens up new markets for companies. After Denmark (78%), Sweden is the country with the highest number of respondents who believe globalisation brings with it increased business opportunities. The difference compared to countries such as Germany (41%), Italy (34%) and France (25%) is considerable.

A majority of Swedes (53%) also see the EU as a protection against the negative effects of globalisation. This opinion is shared by a majority of EU27 respondents (44%).

Swedes in general believe that the EU helps them benefit from globalisation; this view is shared by 7 out of 10 respondents. In the EU27, this belief is less strong.

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The European Union enables European citizens to better benefit from the positive effects of globalisation.*



*Fig 2. A majority of Swedes believe the EU helps them benefit from globalisation.*