

EUROBAROMETER 69

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2008

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SLOVENIA

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I. LIFE IN SLOVENIA

Slovenians are satisfied with the life they lead; they are the second most satisfied citizens among the new member states. Optimism about the future is falling.

89% of the surveyed Slovenians are satisfied with their life, which is 2 percentage points higher than 6 months ago. Slovenia's figure is above the European average (77%), which has decreased by 3 percentage points since the last survey. Cyprus has taken first place over Slovenia among the new member states regarding satisfaction with their lives.

The majority of Slovenians (60%) are not expecting any changes in their lives for the next 12 months, which is 8 percentage points more than in the previous Eurobarometer survey. 24% of people surveyed expect their life to get better while 13% expect it to get worse. The share of those who are expecting their life to improve has decreased by 2 percentage points and the share of those who expect their life to be worse in general has decreased by 7 percentage points.

Slovenians expect the decline of economic situation; two priority tasks are fight against inflation and fight against unemployment.

The assessment of the economic situation in Slovenia has worsened in the last six months. The share of those who expect an improvement in the economic situation has decreased by 6 percentage points and stands at 17%. On the other hand, the share of Slovenians expecting the economic situation to worsen has increased and is now 42%. 35% of respondents are not expecting any change.

Less optimistic views are also evident regarding the assessments of the economic situation in Europe. 22% of people surveyed (4 percentage points less than six months ago) think it will improve and the share of those expecting it to decline has increased and is now 26% (an increase of 9 percentage points).

The majority of respondents in Slovenia believe that the cost of living, the economy, the employment situation and energy prices in their country are worse compared to the EU average. All mentioned areas have obtained less positive answers about Slovene situation since the last survey.

71% of Slovenians consider inflation as the most important issue facing Slovenia at the moment. This result represents an increase of 8 percentage points compared to the survey 6 months ago. Already, at that point, Slovenians listed inflation as a high priority with a figure above the European average. The other issues of importance for Slovenians are unemployment and the economic situation.

More than half of respondents in Slovenia have noticed a decrease of their purchasing power compared to five years ago and only 15% have noticed an

increase. More than half of Slovenians have trouble paying their bills at the end of the month.

II. SLOVENIA AND THE EU

Slovenian membership of the EU is a good thing; Slovenia has benefited from its membership.

More than half of surveyed Slovenians (52%) believe that the Slovenia's EU membership is a good thing. However, this represents a decline of 4 percentage points since the last measurement. At the same time, the opinion that Slovenian membership is a bad thing has increased by 4 percentage points. The opinion that membership is a good thing has declined also at the EU level by 6 percentage points to 52%.

The opinion that Slovenia has benefited from the membership of the EU has not changed since the last measurement. 71% of Slovenians continue to believe that EU membership benefits the country. In the EU as a whole, 54% of respondents share this view, which is a 4 percentage points lower result than when previously measured.

For Slovenians, the main reasons proving that Slovenia has benefited from membership are: that membership of the EU improves cooperation between Slovenia and other countries, that the EU provides new work opportunities and that the European Union contributes to maintaining peace and reinforcing security. The main reasons offered to argue that Slovenia has not benefited from its EU membership are that the European Union decreases Slovene living standards, that Slovenians have very little influence in decisions made at EU level and that the European Union puts jobs in danger.

The Euro guarantees economic stability, the voice of Slovenia in the European Union counts. Slovenia's presidency of the Council of the European Union is important.

62% of Slovenians feel safer because Slovenia is a member of the European Union, which is 13 percentage points more than the EU27 average. The same share of Slovenians think that being in the eurozone assures higher economic stability; 61% believe that their voice counts; 28% of Slovenians think that the Members of the European Parliament listen to them regarding European matters; and the same share believes that the European Commission acknowledges the voice of the individual. 73% of respondents believe that the voice of Slovenia counts in the EU; 56 % of the respondents in Slovenia consider that the interests of Slovenia are taken into account.

92% of Slovenians are aware of reporting about Slovenia's presidency of the EU Council during its term of office. Almost four-fifths of the respondents believe that the presidency of Slovenia is important.

III. THE EU IN THE EYES OF A SLOVENIAN CITIZEN

Things are heading in the right direction in the EU. The EU has a great reputation for Slovenians.

Slovenians believe, to a greater extent than half a year ago, that currently things are heading in the right direction in the EU (59%, half a year ago 54%). This result is above the EU27 average (42%). Slovenians are also above the average regarding the level of trust they have towards the European Union. 66% of Slovenians respondents trust it, which represents an increase of one percentage point since the last survey. At the EU level, half of respondents in EU 27 trust the Union.

For the majority of Slovenians (60%), the European Union has a positive reputation which is higher than the European average (48% in EU27). This result represents a decrease of one percentage point in Slovenia.

The European Union means, primarily, for 52 % of Slovenians, the freedom of travel, study and employment anywhere in the EU. In second place, is the euro (43%), followed by cultural diversity (26%). For the same share of respondents (26%), the EU means also more crime.

Slovenians still have a good level of knowledge about the European institutions; despite the small decrease in the level of trust in the institutions, it remains above the EU27 average.

The level of knowledge of the institutions has decreased slightly since the last Eurobarometer. Despite this, Slovenians remain above the European average in regard to their knowledge of European institutions. Most Slovenians have heard about the European Parliament (93%), followed by the European Central Bank (90%) (the EU institution that received an increase of 2 percentage points in comparison with the last survey); 87% have heard about the European Commission, and 86% of the Council of European Union (over which Slovenia was presiding in the reporting period). Knowledge of all institutions is considerably above the EU27 average.

Slovenians' trust in European institutions is higher than in the EU27 as a whole. Slovenians trust the European Central Bank the most (63%), followed by the European Parliament (60%), the European Commission (58%) and the Council of European Union (57%).

Respondents' knowledge about the EU was tested by means of their responses to some statements. Slovenians continue to be at the top among the EU citizens in that respect.

IV. EU POLITICS AND FUTURE

Support for EU policies has increased; Slovenians are optimistic regarding the EU's future.

A great majority of Slovenians support individual EU policies. In general, support for policies has even slightly increased since the last survey. 90% of Slovenians support

the European Monetary Union (86% six months ago), which is the highest among all the EU states. The common foreign policy of EU Member States towards other countries is supported by 82% of respondents in Slovenia (six months ago, 81%). Joint defence and security policy is supported by 87% of respondents (six months ago, 86%). The highest increase in support is seen regarding enlargement, which is supported by 74% of Slovenians (six months ago, 66%).

74% of Slovenians are optimistic regarding the future of the European Union which is above the EU27 average (64%).

In the opinion of Slovenians, the European institutions should focus mostly on social affairs, environmental affairs and the fight against crime to strengthen the European Union.

Slovenians are above-average defenders of EU enlargement; accession of countries of the Western Balkans will contribute to stabilisation of this part of Europe.

Slovenians are above-average advocates of the enlargement of the Union: Slovenia's support for every country cited is higher than the EU27 average. Most Slovenians would support the inclusion of Switzerland, Norway and Iceland and the lowest support was given to the candidate states for joining the EU.

If fulfilling the accession criteria, 57% of Slovenians would be in favour of Turkey's accession (EU27, 45%). The same share of Slovenians believe that the accession of the countries of the Western Balkans would contribute to the stabilisation of this part of Europe (EU27, 48%).

V. GLOBALISATION

Globalisation increases social inequality and brings more foreign investment to Slovenia, in the opinion of Slovenians. Slovenians are divided regarding the level of protection from globalisation assured by the EU.

Slovenians, in comparison with the EU27 average, are more likely to see globalisation as an opportunity for economic growth (67%, EU27 56%). More than three-quarters of Slovenians believe that globalisation increases social inequality, 56% believe that globalisation does not protect them from price increases.

A little less than a half of Slovenians (47%) do not agree with the statement that the European Union helps to protect from negative effects of globalisation, 43% agree with the statement (in EU27, 44% agree).

In the opinion of Slovenians, the European economy is in better shape compared to national economies within the EU.