

# EUROBAROMETER 70

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

## AUTUMN 2008

### NATIONAL REPORT

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### GERMANY

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

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

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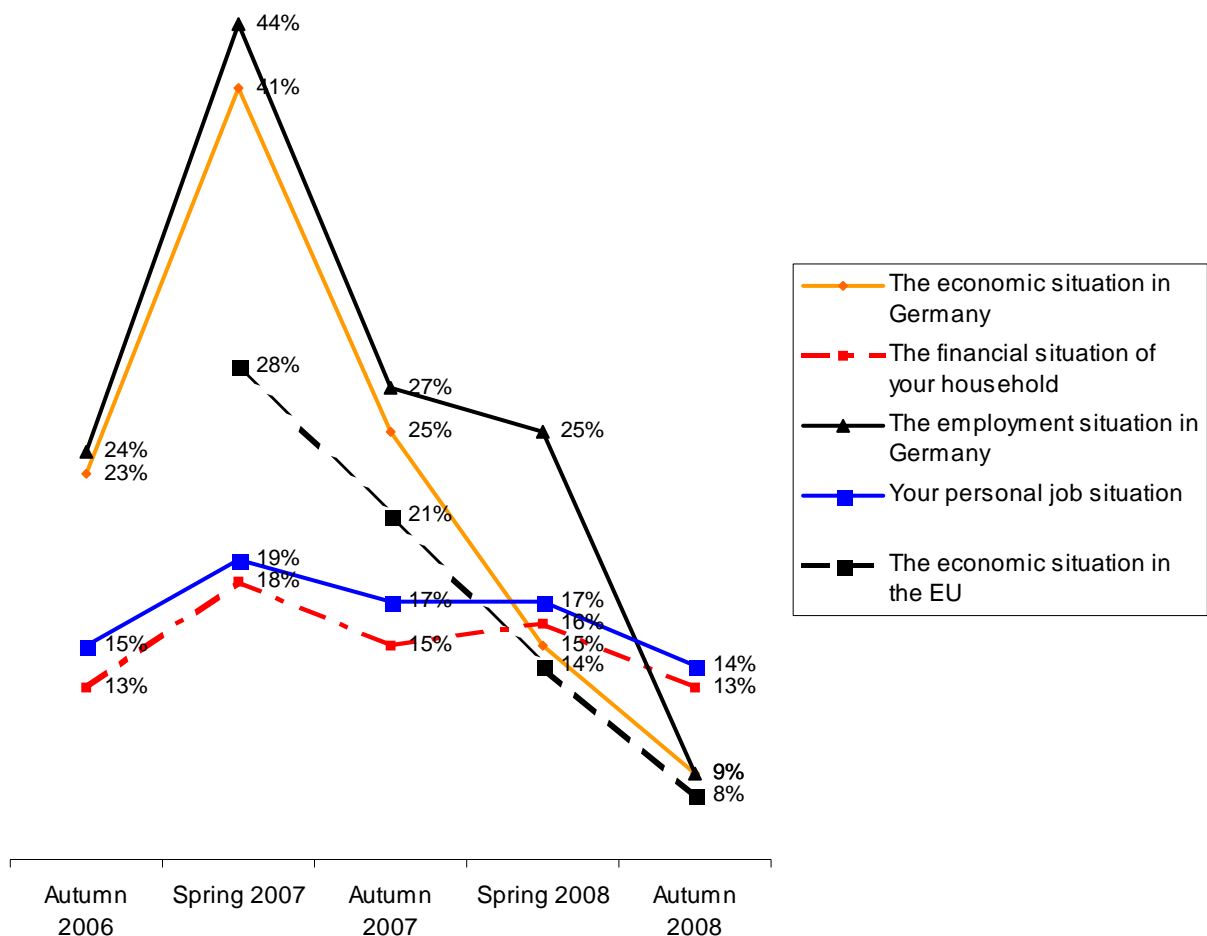
## Satisfaction with life

- 85% (+3 points) of Germans and 76% (-1 point) of Europeans are satisfied with their own life.

## Expectations for the next 12 months

- Personal situation:* A majority of Germans (59%, +2 points) and 51% (+2 points) of Europeans expect their personal situation to stay the same;

QA6: Expectations for the next 12 months / Germany ("Better")



- Economic situation of the country:* A majority of Germans (57%, +17 points) and Europeans (51%, +5 points) expect the economic situation of their country to get worse;
- The financial situation of the personal household:* 57% (+6 points) of Germans and 52% (+2 points) of Europeans do not expect changes to the financial situation of their household;
- Employment situation:* 56% (+23 points) of Germans and 53% (+14 points) of Europeans believe that the unemployment rate in their country will increase;

- *Personal job situation:* 61% (+1 point) of Germans and 58% (-3 points) of Europeans are convinced that their personal job situation will stay the same in the course of the next year;
- *Economic situation in the EU:* 47% (+21 points) of Germans and 41% (+15 points) of Europeans expect the EU-economy to get worse over the next year.

**Those who tend to trust the EU are less pessimistic:**

*Those who tend to trust the EU believe that the employment situation will get better (12%) or stay the same (38%) in the next 12 months. Those who tend not to trust the EU expect the employment situation to get worse (66%).*

### **Purchasing power**

- 65% of Germans say that their purchasing power got worse during the last 5 years;
- Every third respondent (32%, -3 points) in Germany has difficulties paying all bills at the end of the month.

### **Future of today's children**

- Life of those who are children today will be more difficult according to 73% (-4 points) of Germans and 62% (+1 point) of Europeans.

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

- 38% (+4 points) of Germans think that things are going in the right direction at present in Germany. Only 28% (-4 points) of Europeans agree that things are going in the right direction in their country;
- 41% (+4 points) of Germans and 35% (-7 points) of Europeans think that things are going in the right direction in the EU.

### **Economic situation of Germany**

- 49% (+17 points) of Germans think that the economy of Germany is in bad shape.

### **Economic situation of the EU**

- 48% (+21 points) of Germans and 58% (+31 points) of Europeans think that the economy of the EU is in decline.

### **Germans are convinced that the employment situation is good**

- 41% (+10 points) of Germans but only 28% (-8 points) of Europeans think that the employment situation in their country is good.

## Situation in Germany compared with the EU

- 63% (-1 point) of Germans think that the situation of their national economy is better than the average of the European countries;
- 48% (+3 points) of Germans and 59% (+2 points) of Europeans think that the employment situation in their country is worse than the average of the European countries;
- 51% (-18 points) of Germans and 67% (-5 points) of Europeans believe that the cost of living in their own country is higher than the average of the European countries.

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

- Inflation is the most important problem for Germans and Europeans alike (Germany: 42%, -2 points / EU: 37%, +/-0 points), followed by the economic situation (Germany: 34%, +20 points / EU: 37%, +17 points). For the first time in years, unemployment is not one of the two most important issues anymore (Germany: 34%, -11 points / EU: 26%, +2 points).

## Relevance of globalisation for companies

- 46% (+5 points) of Germans think that globalisation represents a good opportunity for national companies.

## EU protects from negative effects of globalisation

- 47% (+6 points) of Germans and 43% (-1 point) of Europeans believe that the European Union helps to protect them from the negative effects of globalisation.

*Those who tend not to trust the EU, believe that globalisation represents a threat to employment and companies in Germany (53%). Only 29% of those who trust the EU share this opinion.*

## EU enables citizens to benefit from globalisation

- 50% (+8 points) of Germans and 48% (+/-0 points) of Europeans are convinced that the European Union enables European citizens to better benefit from the positive effects of globalisation.

## What does Europe mean to you personally?

*Positive:*

- Freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU (Germany: 50%, -5 points / EU: 44%, -5 points), peace (Germany: 45%, +4 points / EU: 27%, +1 point), the Euro (Germany: 45%, -1 point / EU: 34%, -1 points), democracy (Germany: 28%, +4 points / EU: 21%, +/-0 points), cultural diversity (Germany: 25%, -2 points / EU: 23%, -1 point), a stronger say in the world (Germany: 24%, +3 points / EU: 23%, +1 point).

*Negative:*

Waste of money (Germany: 36%, -1 point / EU: 19%, +/-0 points), bureaucracy (Germany: 32%, -4 points / EU: 17%, -1 point), unemployment (Germany 19%, -5 points / EU: 11%, -3 points), more crime (Germany: 26%, -6 points / EU: 14%, -1 point), not enough control at external frontiers (Germany: 22%, -8 points / EU: 16%, -2 points), unemployment (Germany: 15%, -4 points / EU: 11%, +/-0 points).

**Control at external frontiers:** *Today, only 22% (-8 points) of Germans think that there is not enough control at external borders.*

**Image:** *60% of the respondents who are under 25 years old conjure up a positive image of the EU.*

#### **Image**

- 48% (+4 points) of Germans and 45% (-3 points) 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 rising again among Germans (64%, +4 points) and Europeans (53%, +1 point).
- 58% (+3 points) of Germans and 56% (+2 points) of Europeans believe that their country has benefited from being a member of the European Union.

#### **Democracy in Europe**

- 56% (+1 point) of Germans and 61% (+4 points) of Europeans tend not to think that their voice counts in the EU;
- 79% (+1 point) of Germans and 60% (- 1 point) of Europeans believe that their country's voice counts in the EU;
- 49% (+1 point) of Germans and 60% (+/-0 points) of Europeans believe that the European Union imposes its view on their country;
- A majority of Germans (59%, +/-0 points) thinks that their voice counts in their own country. In Europe 48% (+3 points) don't think that their voice counts in their own country.

#### **Knowledge of institutions**

- 90% (+/-0 points) of Germans and 87% (+/-0 points) of Europeans do know the European Parliament;

- 77% (+/-0 points) of Germans and 77% (-1 point) of Europeans have heard of the European Commission;
- 64% (+2 points) of Germans and 64% (+2 points) of Europeans have heard of the Council of the European Union;
- 90% (+2 points) of Germans and 77% (+4 points) of Europeans have heard of the European Central Bank.

### **Budget of the EU**

- 33% of Germans and 33% of Europeans don't know that the EU got it's own budget;
- 51% of Germans and 51% of Europeans have heard of it.

### **Importance of different institutions**

- 70% (-3 points) of Germans and 74% (-1 point) of Europeans think that the European Parliament plays an important role in the life of the European Union;
- 62% (-2 points) of Germans and 68% (+/-0 points) of Europeans think that the European Commission is important;
- 54% (-3 points) of Germans and 61% (+1 point) of Europeans believe that the Europeans Council of the European plays an important role in the life of the European Union;
- 83% (+1 point) of Germans and 73% (+2 points) of Europeans are convinced that the European Central Bank is important for the European Union.

### **Trust in national and international institutions**

- 59% (+1 point) of Germans and 48% (+2 points) of Europeans tend to trust the national legal system;
- 73% (-4 points) of Germans and 75% (-1 point) of Europeans tend not to trust political parties;
- 42%, (+6 points) of Germans tend to trust the German Government. Only 34% (+2 points) of Europeans tend to trust their national government;
- 52%, (-1 point) of Germans tend not to trust the German Parliament, Bundestag. 58% (+/-0 points) of Europeans tend not to trust their national parliaments;
- 43% (+/-0 points) of Germans trust the European Union;
- A relative majority of Germans 45% (-2 points) and 50%, (-4 points) of Europeans tend to trust the United Nations;

## Trust in European institutions

- A relative majority of Germans (47%, -3 points) and 51% (-1 point) of Europeans trust the European Parliament;
- 43%, (+2 points) of Germans and 47% (+/-0 points) of Europeans trust the European Commission;
- An even smaller relative majority of Germans (38%, -1 Pp) and Europeans (42%, -1 Pp) tend to trust the Council of the European Union;
- 56% (-4 points) of Germans trust the European Central Bank.

## Support for different political projects of the EU

- *A European Monetary Union:* 61% (+1 point) of Europeans and 71% (+2 points) of Germans support a European Monetary Union;
- *A common foreign policy of the member states of the EU:* 79% (-3 points) of Germans and 68% (+/-0 points) of Europeans support a common foreign policy;
- *A common defence and security policy among EU Member States:* Europe-wide, 75% (-1 point) of the respondents support such a policy. In Germany, 82% (-6 points) support a common defence and security policy among EU Member States;

**Less support for enlargement:** Even among the young Germans (15-24 years old), at present only 42% (-7 points) support further enlargement of the EU while 45% are against it.

- *Further enlargement of the EU:* Support for enlargement among Europeans (44%, -3 points) and Germans (26%, -7 points) is declining.

## Most important policy issues for the coming years

- 30% (+6 points) of Germans and 27% (+3 points) of Europeans think that social issues should be emphasised by the European institutions;
- 42% (-5 points) of Germans and 30% (+/-0 points) of Europeans think that the EU should focus on energy issues;
- 35% (-7 points) of Germans and 27% (-5 points) of Europeans want the EU to focus on environmental issues;
- 20% (+2 points) of Germans and 16% (+1 point) of Europeans want the EU to concentrate on a European foreign policy;
- The same applies to a European defence policy (Germans: 15%, +1 point / EU: 14%, +1 point).

- 32% (-7 points) of Germans and 29% (-4 points) of Europeans think that the fight against crime should be emphasised by the European institutions;
- 30% (-5 points) of Germans and 29% (-3 points) of Europeans think that the EU should focus on immigration issues;

### **Should the following decisions be made by national governments, or made jointly within the European Union?**

Policy issues that should be dealt with jointly by the member states in the European Union are: terrorism: Germany: 87%, -3 points / EU: 79%, +/-0 points, protecting the environment: Germany: 81%, -4 points / EU: 67%, -4 points, fighting crime: Germany: 77%, +1 point / EU: 59%, +1 point, defence and foreign affairs: Germany: 76%, +2 points / EU: 64%, +/-0 points, energy issues: Germany: 75%, +1 point / EU: 63%, +2 points, scientific and technological research: Germany: 73%, +1 point / EU: 72%, +2 points, fighting inflation: Germany: 71%, +2 points, / EU: 54%, +3 points, support for regions facing economic difficulties: Germany: 70%, -2 points / EU: 62%, +/-0 points, competition: Germany: 69%, +3 points / EU: 57%, +2 points, agriculture and fisheries: Germany: 66%, -3 points / EU: 50%, -1 point, immigration: Germany: 64%, +/-0 points / EU: 60%, +2 points, consumer protection: Germany: 61%, -1 point / EU: 48%, transport: Germany: 61%, -3 points / EU: 48%, +/-0 points, economy: Germany: 60%, +5 points / EU: 51%, +4 points.

**European educational policy? :** 45% (+6 points) of Germans believe that educational issues should be dealt with at EU level. In particular, respondents under the age of 25 support a common European educational policy (51%).

Policy issues that should be dealt with by the member states exclusively are: Pensions: Germany: 79%, -2 points / EU: 70%, -3 points, social welfare: Germany: 66%, +1 point / EU: 65%, -2 points, -2 points, taxation: Germany: 65%, -2 points / EU: 66%, -2 points, health: Germany: 65%, -2 points / EU: 64%, +/-0 points, fighting unemployment: Germany: 55%, -2 points / EU: 57%, +/-0 points, the educational system: Germany: 54%, -6 points / EU: 64%, -2 points.

### **Knowledge of the conflict between Russia and Georgia**

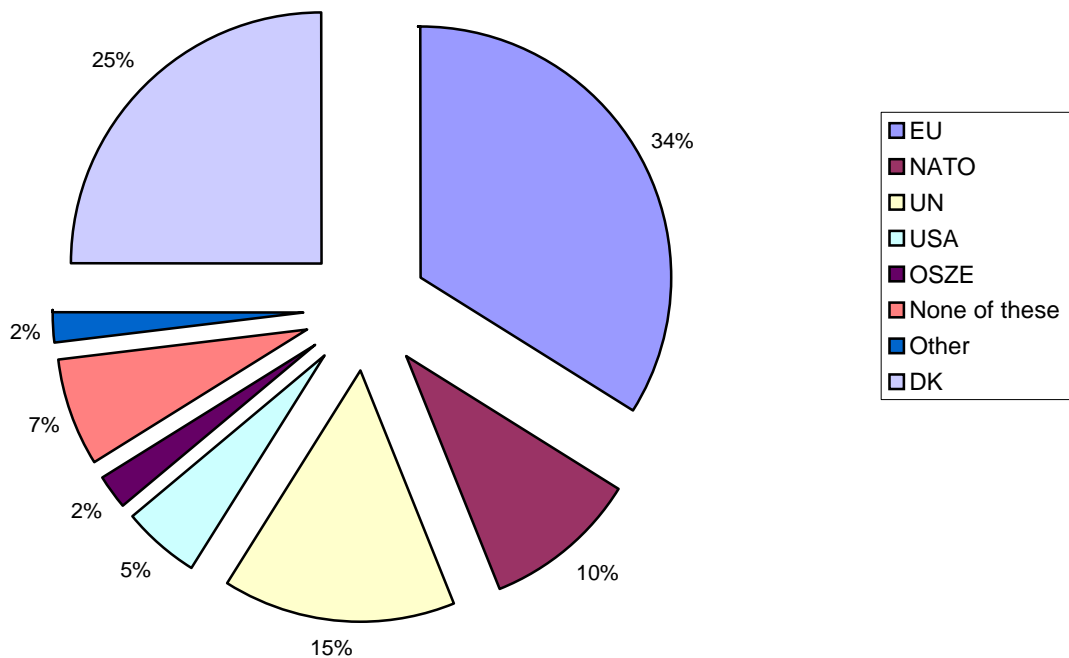
- 48% of Germans and 46% of Europeans said they had heard about the conflict but don't know really what it was about;
- 43% of Germans and 36% of Europeans not only heard about the conflict but also think they know exactly what it was about.



## Which institution played the most important role in bringing the conflict to an end?

- 34% of Germans and 26% of Europeans are convinced that the EU played the most important role in bringing the conflict to an end.

QE2: Which institution played the most important role in bringing the conflict to an end? / Germany



## Does this conflict could have an impact on the security of energy supply in the European Union?

- 12% of Germans and 19% of Europeans believe that the conflict between Russia and Georgia could have a strong impact on the security of energy supply in the European Union;
- 49% of Germans and 41% of Europeans believe that the conflict between Russia and Georgia could have an impact on the security of energy supply in the European Union;
- Only 32% of Germans and 20% of Europeans do not believe that the conflict between Russia and Georgia will have a strong impact.