

EUROBAROMETER 70

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTUMN 2008

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MALTA

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

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

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission.
The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

National Editor: Robert Micallef

Fieldwork/Local Consultancy: MISCO International Ltd.

Project Co-ordination: The TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium created between Taylor Nelson Sofres and EOS Gallup Europe

84 per cent of the Maltese population says that they are satisfied with the life they lead. The percentage for Malta is 8 points higher than the EU average.

When asked about their expectations for the next twelve months about life in general, 23 per cent of Maltese respondents said that they expect things to improve, 11 points less when compared to a year ago. 24 per cent expect their life to get worse in the coming year, an increase of 12 points over a year ago, suggesting increased pessimism in terms of their level of life expectations.

When asked about their expectations for the next twelve months in relation to the economic situation in Malta, 45 per cent expect the Maltese economy to get worse, a substantial increase of 25 percentage points when compared to a year ago.

When compared to a year ago, the percentage of those who said that the financial situation of their household would get better decreased by 10 points from 23 per cent to 13 per cent.

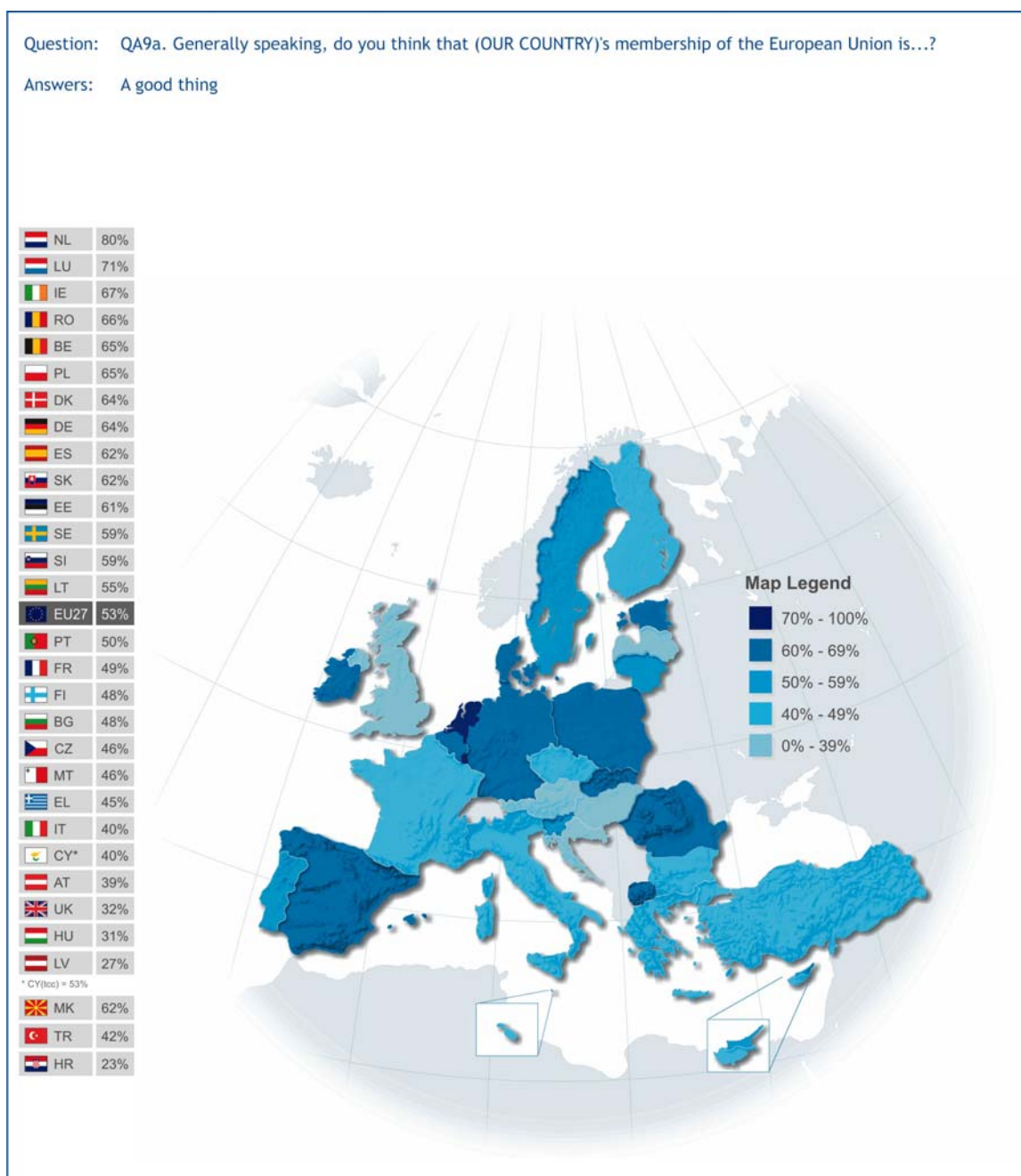
When asked about their expectations on the employment situation in Malta, 23 per cent of respondents stated that it will improve, 32 per cent expect it to get worse while 27 per cent said it will not change.

At the present time, generally speaking, 37 per cent of Maltese respondents believe that things are going in the right direction in Malta while 39 per cent said that things are going in the wrong direction.

When asked about the economic situation in Malta, 39 per cent said that the economy is in a good shape while 57 per cent of Maltese respondents gave a negative assessment.

When asked about the cost of living in Malta, a high figure of 84 per cent said that the situation is bad. Only 14 per cent of Maltese respondents answered positively. 78 per cent of Maltese respondents believe that the situation in Malta is worse than the average of the European countries.

55 per cent of Maltese respondents believe that the situation of the environment in Malta is bad while 43 per cent said that it is good. 66 per cent believe that the situation in Malta is worse than the average of the European countries.



Maltese respondents were also asked to comment on the affordability of energy in Malta. Only 12 per cent gave a positive answer. 82 per cent of respondents said the situation is bad. 77 per cent of Maltese respondents say that the situation in Malta is worse than the average of the European countries.

Maltese respondents were also negative in their assessment of the affordability of housing in Malta. 81 per cent gave a negative answer while 13 per cent said that the situation was good.

Concerning the way public administration runs in Malta, 45 per cent of Maltese respondents gave a positive assessment while 32 per cent gave a negative judgement. 23 per cent could not give an answer.

When asked about the situation of the European economy, 52 per cent of Maltese respondents gave a negative answer while 29 per cent answered positively. Respondents were even more negative when asked about the situation of the economy in the world. 74 per cent said it is in bad state while 12 per cent disagreed.

Maltese respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the suggestion that they have difficulties paying all their bills at the end of the month. 65 per cent agreed with the statement while 28 per cent did not. 7 per cent did not answer.

When asked about what they think of the prospects for future generations, 71 per cent of Maltese respondents think that the life of those who are children today will be more difficult in future, 15 per cent said their lives will be easier and 10 per cent said it will be neither easier nor more difficult than the life of those from the present generation.

Respondents were also asked if they tend to agree or to disagree with the statement that the children who live in Malta would have a better life if they immigrated to another country. 36 per cent agreed with the statement while 30 per cent disagreed. 24 answered 'it depends'.

When asked about the most important issues facing Malta, survey respondents ranked immigration as first priority with 48 per cent of Maltese respondents mentioning it as a top concern for Malta. This percentage represents an increase of 8 percentage points over a year ago. The cost of living/inflation issue received a percentage of 41 and follows closely in second place in the ranking of Maltese concerns.

Although unemployment as a concern went down by 3 percentage points over the past year, it is still one of the top five concerns of the Maltese people with a response rate of 14 per cent. Other high concerns for the Maltese public are the economic situation (18 per cent) and energy-related issues (28 per cent).

The most important issues facing Malta	Autumn 2007	Autumn 2008	EU27
Crime	14 %	8 %	17 %
Economic situation	15 %	18 %	37 %
Rising prices\ inflation	41 %	41 %	37 %
Taxation	10 %	8 %	8 %
Unemployment	17 %	14 %	26 %
Terrorism	1 %	1 %	5 %
Defence\ Foreign affairs	1 %	1 %	1 %
Housing	11 %	6 %	8 %
Immigration	40 %	48 %	9 %
Healthcare system	7 %	4 %	16 %
The educational system	4 %	2 %	7 %
Pensions	9 %	3 %	10 %
Protecting the environment	11 %	6 %	4 %
Energy-related issues	5 %	28 %	5 %
Other	6 %	2 %	1 %
DK	1 %	1 %	1 %

Maltese respondents were asked if they felt the Maltese Government was sensitive to issues that concern Maltese citizens. 58 answered positively while 24 per cent disagreed. 18 per cent could not give an answer.

48 per cent of Maltese respondents say that the Maltese Government is sensitive to issues that concern European citizens while 21 per cent do not share that view. 31 per cent could not give an answer.

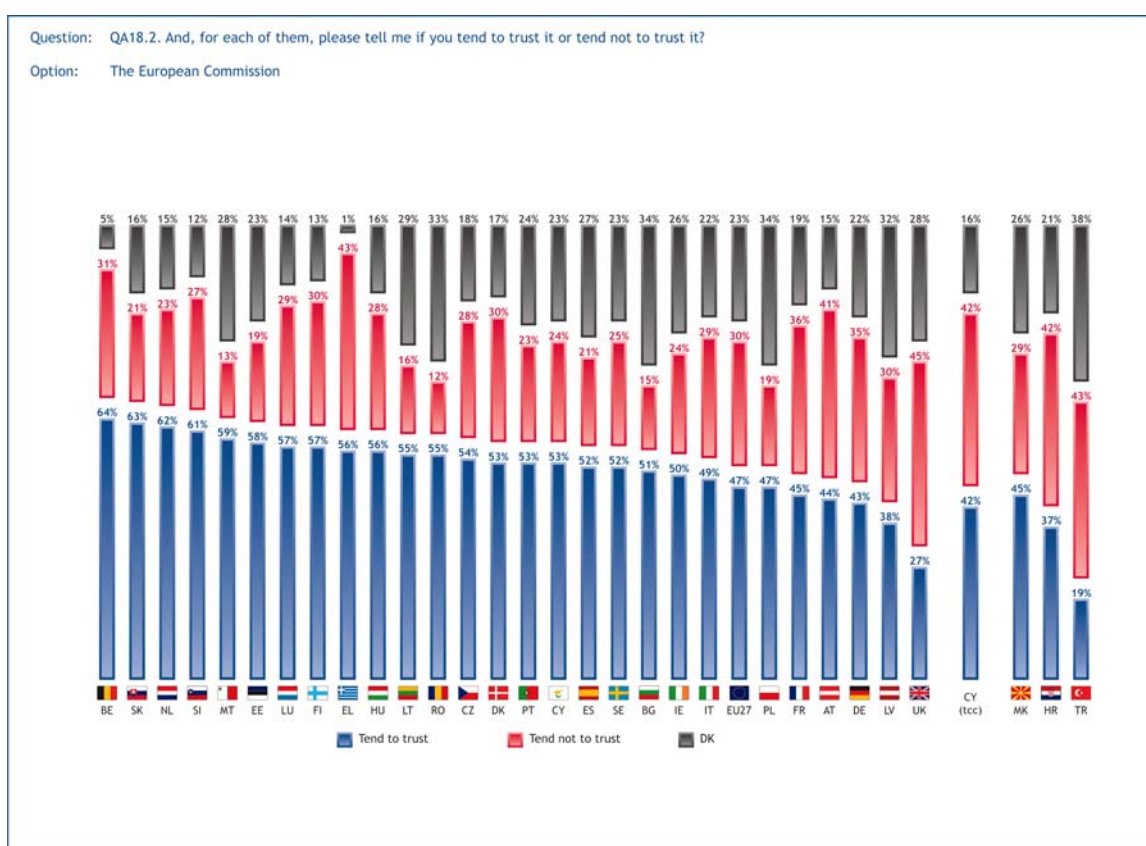
57 per cent of Maltese respondents tend to trust the Maltese parliament, an increase of 15 percentage points over a year ago. 30 per cent (-14 points) tend not to trust the Maltese parliament, while 13 per cent said that they do not know. A lower percentage was recorded for respondents showing trust in the Maltese Government as an institution. In fact, 50 per cent answered positively, an increase of 5 percentage points over a year ago. 37 per cent answered negatively representing a 6 point decrease over the survey of the previous Autumn.

According to this survey, Maltese political parties are trusted by only 34 per cent of the public. A majority of 51 per cent do not trust Maltese political parties while 15 per cent remained neutral. In the European Union Member States, political parties are trusted by 20 per cent of the public and mistrusted by a high percentage of 75 per cent.

The level of trust in the European Commission by Maltese respondents is substantially higher than the European average with 59 per cent saying that they trust it and 13 per cent answering negatively. 28 per cent could not give an answer.

The European Parliament is the most trusted institution amongst Maltese respondents with 64 per cent saying they trust it as opposed to 14 per cent who disagreed. 22 per cent of respondents did not answer.

When asked about their trust in regional or local public authorities, 56 per cent of Maltese respondents answered positively. On the other hand, 29 per cent tend not to trust them, while 15 per cent of respondents could not give an answer.



The Maltese legal system is trusted by 57 per cent of Maltese respondents while 32 per cent answered negatively with 11 per cent remaining neutral. In the 27 EU Member States, the average trust in the national legal system is 9 points lower and stands at 48 per cent.

59 per cent of Maltese respondents trust the European Union as a whole while 23 per cent tend not to trust it. 18 per cent do not know.

When asked about the United Nations, 55 per cent of Maltese respondents said that they tend to trust it while 13 per cent tend not to. A high 34 per cent could not give an answer.

Despite Malta's traditional neutrality status, only 18 per cent of Maltese respondents say that they do not trust the North American Treaty Organisation (NATO) as an institution. 40 per cent trust Nato, while 42 per cent do not know.

The most well known EU institution among the Maltese is the European Parliament with 92 per cent of respondents saying they have heard of it. This percentage is higher than the EU average of 87 per cent. The European Commission (85 per cent) and the European Central Bank (80 per cent) are next in terms of awareness amongst the Maltese public. 77 per cent of Maltese respondents have heard of the Council of the European Union, 9 percentage points more than the level of a year ago (68 per cent).

Maltese respondents were asked if they were for or against a European Monetary Union with one single currency, the euro. 63 per cent gave a positive answer. This is the same result as that which was recorded a year ago. 24 per cent expressed a negative opinion this time, 4 points less than a year ago.

When asked if they thought Malta was economically stable because the country is a member of the euro area, 56 per cent gave a positive answer while 33 per cent disagreed. 11 per cent of Maltese respondents gave a neutral answer. This compares positively with the replies given by respondents in the rest of the euro area where 48 per cent agreed that their country is more economically stable thanks to the euro, while 42 per cent disagreed.

The Maltese have a positive view about the prospects for further enlargement of the European Union to include other countries in future years with 57 per cent saying they are in favour and 20 per cent against. 23 per cent could not give an answer.

54 per cent of Maltese respondents are in favour of a common foreign policy among the Member States of the EU, towards other countries. 19 per cent are against. 63 per cent agree with a common defence and security policy among EU Member States while 12 per cent of Maltese respondents oppose it.

In relation to support for EU membership, Malta is the country with the most significant drop from amongst all the Member States with a drop of 14 points since the last survey of 6 months ago. However, generally speaking, the Maltese appear to

have remained in favour of Malta's membership of the EU with 46 per cent saying it is a good thing.

When asked if the interests of Malta are well taken into account in the EU, 46 per cent tend to agree and 29 per cent tend to disagree. 25 per cent do not know.

Maltese respondents were also asked if the European Union imposes its views on Malta. A high percentage of 65 per cent agreed with the statement while 18 per cent disagreed.

When asked if the EU is sensitive to issues that concern Maltese citizens, 39 per cent agreed and 32 per cent disagreed. 29 per cent could not answer.

When asked whether they think Malta has benefited from being an EU member state taking everything into account, 60 per cent responded positively (-9 points when compared to 6 months ago; -4 points when compared to a year ago), 24 per cent answered negatively (same as last year) while 16 per cent (+4) said that they do not know.

When asked if their voice as citizens counts in the European Union, 49 per cent (+2 points when compared to a year ago) of Maltese respondents said that they tend to agree. When asked if Malta's voice counts in the European Union, 62 per cent (-10) of Maltese respondents said that they tend to agree, 24 per cent (+1) said they tend to disagree, while 14 (+9) did not give an answer.

When asked about European integration and what aspects, in their opinion, should be emphasized by the European institutions in the coming years, to strengthen the European Union in the future, a large majority of Maltese respondents (62 per cent) mentioned the immigration issue. This figure is 33 percentage points more than that for respondents across Europe who mentioned the same issue (29 per cent).