

EUROBAROMETER 71

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2009

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LUXEMBURG

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

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

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.

Eurobarometer survey in Luxembourg

The economic situation judged to be less pessimistic in Luxembourg

Unemployment becomes the main national problem

Unemployment is considered the main national problem by respondents (52%) in Luxembourg, representing a rise of 32 points since the Eurobarometer survey in autumn 2008. The proportion of those seeing the economic situation as being the main problem facing the country has risen by 3 points. It remains the second most important national problem (33%) and is followed by housing (25%), price increases (18%, a fall of 31 points in comparison with autumn 2008), followed by the educational system (15%), safety (11%), retirement and pensions (9%).

The European Commission carried out the Eurobarometer 71.3 survey in spring 2009 in 31 countries or territories: 27 Member States, three applicant countries (Croatia, Turkey and former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and the territory of the Turkish Cypriot Community. It provides a picture of the lives of citizens and their perceptions in regard to a range of issues. The image of the European Union and trust in the European and national political institutions are also analyzed.

The sample of the Eurobarometer surveys comprises approximately 1.000 people per Member State. Luxembourg is an exception with a sample made up of 530 people and is representative of its population (65% of people with Luxembourgish nationality and 35% of nationals of the other EU Member States). In its commentary, the special report, prepared on behalf of the Representation of the European Commission in Luxembourg, refers to the inhabitants of Luxembourg, an entity that not only covers citizens of Luxembourgish nationality but also other nationals.

Satisfaction with the lives they lead and expectations regarding the next year

96% of Luxembourg's poll are satisfied with the life they lead (a rise of 6 points since the Eurobarometer survey in autumn 2008). 70% of the poll judged the current Luxembourgish economic situation as good (60% in spring 2008). The same is true for the household's financial situation with the figure for those judging it to be good increasing by 10 points between autumn 2008 (79%) and spring 2009 (89%). The majority of residents (58%) do not expect their personal situation to change in the coming twelve months, in general, but 28% expect an improvement in their personal situation. Concerning their expectations towards the economic situation in the European Union, there is a decrease in respondents' pessimism in comparison with autumn 2008: 52% of those surveyed (60% in autumn 2008) are pessimistic regarding the future of the economic situation in the European Union. 51% are pessimistic regarding employment (57% in autumn 2008), but only 10% think that their household's financial situation will be worse (21% in autumn 2008) and 7% think that their own professional situation will be less good in the coming twelve months (a decrease of 4 points in comparison with autumn 2008, when the figure was 11%).

The perception of the European Union

The European Union's image continues to be better in Luxembourg than on average in the European Union member states. 56% of respondents consider it good, which means an increase of 11 points in comparison with the European average and 10 points more than in autumn 2008 (46%). With 8 points more than in autumn 2008, 79% of Luxembourg's poll judge Luxembourg's membership of the European Union to be a good thing and 72%, 4 points more than in autumn 2008, consider that it is beneficial. The European Union continues to represent, for a majority of those interviewed, the freedom to travel, study and work everywhere within the European Union (56%).

Future actions of the European Union

For the inhabitants of Luxembourg, the future actions of the European Union should be focused in the following fields: environmental questions (58%, EU: 41%), social and health questions (55%, EU: 52%), fight against climate change (51%, EU: 34%), immigration (48%, EU: 49%), solidarity with the poorest regions (47%, EU: 40%), and the European education policy (44%, EU: 29%).

In addition, as a means to help people overcome the effects of the economic and financial crisis, 50% of Luxembourg inhabitants think that the European Union should give priority to supporting SMEs (EU: 37%) and 31% in investment in education, training and research (EU: 26%). Our society should focus more on equality and solidarity (52%) and on environmental protection (52%) in order to meet the main challenges facing the world.

Trust in institutions and the European Union

Luxembourg respondents' trust in national institutions remains very high. The level of trust is 77% for the national Government (60% in autumn 2008) and 67% for the national Parliament (56% in autumn 2008). At the same time, there has been an increase of 8 points in the level of trust in the European Union in spring 2009 (55%) in comparison to autumn 2008 (47%). The European institutions have a high reputation, which is superior in Luxembourg than at Community level. The European Parliament and the European Central Bank benefit from the trust of the majority of those surveyed (61% and 60% respectively), followed by the European Commission (53%).

National and European identity

For 50% of Luxembourg's respondents, democratic values are the most important element of European identity and, for 36%, a high level of social protection. The most important characteristics of being Luxemburgish are, for 58%, the sense of belonging and, for 51%, the ability to speak one of the official languages of the country. 89% of Luxembourg's residents feel themselves to be European, 81% Luxemburgish, 87%, inhabitants of a region and 63% citizens of the world.

The European Union and human rights

According to those polled in Luxembourg, the main priority of European foreign policy concerning human rights should concern children rights (49%). For 48%, it should be the fight

against human being trafficking and, for 37%, the fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

Concerning the promotion and defence of human rights in the world, 34% of those polled judge that the European Union does enough, while a majority of 57% consider that it does not do enough.

The Luxemburgish health system

The overall assessment of the Luxemburgish health system is good: 82% of residents consider that it provides a sufficient protection level and 77% believe that it could serve as a model for other countries. Looking towards the future, life in the year 2030 is expected to be more difficult: 47% think that the health system will provide a sufficient protection level while 51% feel that it will cost too much for the society.

Lastly, half of those interviewed are confident about the future of their retirement.