

Eurobarometer : latest survey shows growing support for key EU policies in acceding countries

Public support for a number of key European Union policy priorities is continuing to grow in the ten acceding and three candidate countries, according to the most recent Eurobarometer opinion survey, published today. The survey is the latest in a series carried out in the ten countries due to join the EU next May as well as Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. It asks a number of questions about citizens' attitudes on a range of issues relating to the EU and its policies as well as their own lifestyles and outlook. This survey questioned 12,126 people in the 13 countries between 16 June and 18 July. The results show a continued growth in support for accession to the EU, membership of the euro and joint EU decision-making in foreign and defence policy.

The main results include:

- Citizens believe the main priorities of the EU should be fighting unemployment, poverty, terrorism, and organised crime and maintaining peace and security in Europe.
- Support for enlargement is continuing to grow, with support at an average of 79% among the countries joining next year, up 4 percentage points since the spring. Among the 13, average support has risen to 78% from 72%.
- Support for joining the euro has risen to an average of 72% in the acceding states, up 3 points from the spring.
- On average, 74% of those polled in the acceding countries support a Common Foreign and Security Policy. Support for a European foreign minister averages 70% in the acceding countries, up 9 points since spring.
- Support for common defence policy averages 84% in the countries joining next year, up by 4 points from the spring. 80% of those polled in the acceding states backed the idea of an EU rapid military reaction force. More people believe the EU should take decisions on European defence than individual governments or NATO.
- The poll also revealed growing support for ideas such as a common EU asylum policy, an EU seat on the United Nations Security Council, and the need for EU foreign policy to be independent of the US.
- People in the acceding and candidate countries increasingly believe the EU will come to play a more important role in their lives in 5 years time. Two thirds say they would like the EU to play a greater role in their lives.
- Attitudes towards the US are warmer than at the time of the Iraq war. The US is viewed as playing a positive role in the fight against terrorism and the growth of the world economy. People are less clear-cut concerning the US role in bringing world peace, fighting poverty and protecting the environment.
- The European Union is much more widely seen as playing a positive role on these five issues compared to the US and this positive view has increased consistently throughout the year.

- A majority of those polled support joint EU decision-making in areas like research, regional aid, and the fight against terrorism and organised crime. However, there is less enthusiasm for joint decision-making on issues of culture, justice, immigration and police matters.

The full report is available in English on paper and on the website of the Public Opinion Sector of the Commission at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion and via the Commission's enlargement website at:

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/opinion>

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