

EUROBAROMETER 62

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTUMN 2004

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DENMARK

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

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Executive Summary

This Executive Summary presents the overall results from the EU Eurobarometer 62 poll. All the responses to this survey were gathered in Denmark during autumn 2005.

The main conclusions of the survey are as follows:

Chapter 1: Danes and their general attitudes towards the EU

Chapter 1 covers Danes' general attitudes towards the EU, including the associations they have with symbols and institutions of the EU. The results show the attitudes of Danes according to socio-demographic variables, such as gender and political orientation.

The Danes do not identify with the European flag

94 % of the Danes recognize the European Flag, and almost two out of three associate the flag with positive values. However, only 34 % of them have accepted the flag to such a degree that they identify with it.

Right-wing respondents are more likely to identify with the flag. This is the case for 45% of right-wing respondents, while the same is true for only 30% of the left-wing respondents. However, the difference is not visible, when the respondents are asked if the European flag should be seen on all public buildings in Denmark next to the Danish Flag, the Dannebrog. Both right-wing and left-wing respondents are opposed to this. 79% of Danes are against this.

Remarkably positive attitude towards Danish membership of the EU

Only a small minority of the Danish population is totally against Danish membership of the EU in that only 13% of the population considers that it can be described as a bad thing. 61% have a positive view of Danish membership, while 23% see it as neither positive nor negative. Scepticism regarding Danish membership is highest among left-wing respondents. 18% of this group think that membership can be described as a bad thing.

The gender of the respondents also plays a significant role in determining attitude towards membership: 16% of women see membership as a negative thing, while only 11% of men share this view.

The EU has a poor image among right-wing respondents

In general, the EU has a positive or neutral image among Danes. Only 20% of the population have a negative image of the EU. Right-wing respondents share a more positive attitude towards Danish EU membership. However, this positive attitude is not visible in their image of the EU: 24 % of right-wing respondents have a negative image of the EU, while this is the case for only 12% of left-wing respondents. In general, men have a more positive image of the EU than women.

Danes believe that Denmark's voice counts in the EU

A large majority of Danes (80%) believes that Denmark's voice counts in the EU. This is despite the fact that an even larger majority (84%) thinks the biggest countries have the most power in the EU. Not many believe this situation will change in the future. Only 34% think Denmark will gain more influence within the EU in the future. 57% of respondents do not believe this will happen.

Chapter 2: Danes and the European Constitution

Chapter 2 examines Danes' views regarding the development of the EU and the treaty, which establishes a Constitution for Europe. It also examines their views with respect to several important projects such as the Monetary Union and the common foreign and security policy.

Danes support common projects, but are still sceptical about the EU

While Danes continue to be divided on the question as to whether they are for or against the development of the European Union, they have accepted several aspects of the EU. For instance, 60% support a common European foreign policy. The common security and defence policy also has wide support with 66% of Danes supporting European cooperation in this area. 50% of Danes would support Denmark joining the Euro, while 45% are against it, which makes this question a very even match. It is Danish men, in particular, who back cooperation in specific areas, while Danish women generally are more sceptical or do not express an opinion.

Only a few Danes want the role of the EU in their everyday life to be diminished

A small minority of Danes, only 7%, thinks that the role of the EU in their everyday life will diminish in the next five years. The majority thinks that the role of the EU will be the same as it is today (46%) or will play a more important role (43%). Only 18% want the role that the EU plays in their everyday life to diminish five years from now, while 47% wants to maintain the status quo. 31% of Danes want the EU to play a bigger role in their life than it does today. The desire for the EU's role to diminish is found particularly among left-wing respondents with 24% of them sharing this view.

A small majority in favour of the Constitution for Europe

44% of Danes support a Constitution for Europe, while 36% are against it. However, a large group of voters are still undecided, which could change the majority either way. Support for the Constitutional Treaty is found especially among men with 48% of male respondents supporting the Constitution. Right-wing respondents tend to be in favour of the Constitution with 49% of this group supporting the Constitution. Greatest resistance is found among left-wing respondents with 44% of them against the Constitution.

Chapter 3: Priorities and policies

Chapter 3 examines which areas of cooperation within the European Union that Danes think are the most important at the moment. The chapter also examines in which areas of cooperation Danes think the EU plays a positive or a negative role. Lastly, it examines which areas Danes think are best handled in Denmark and which are best dealt with at European level.

Danes are worried about their job and crime

Danes find unemployment and crime to be the topics of most concern. The political standpoint of the respondents differentiates what worries them. Left-wing respondents are most worried about unemployment, education and the environment, whereas right-wing respondents are most worried about crime and immigration.

The EU is best at fighting crime and terror

According to Danes, tasks that are best dealt with at EU level are initiatives against crime and terror. Issues that are considered best handled at national level in Denmark include cultural matters, education and health care.

Chapter 4: Institutions and foreign relations

This chapter examines Danes' views regarding security, foreign policy and economic development. It also examines their views with respect to the USA.

Remarkable support behind military decisions in the EU

Regardless of their political orientation, Danes support the idea that the EU should have a military force, which can be sent to areas of crisis at short notice. 62% are in favour of this. Least support for this is found among the left-wing voters. Only 53% in this group support the military force.

When Danes are asked who should be responsible for decisions concerning European defence policy, the result is remarkable. Considering the historical reluctance of Danes to letting the EU play a military role, the EU receives the largest degree of support from Danes on this question: 37% think the EU should make decisions about European defence policy, while only 24% think it should be NATO and 27% the national government. Among right-wing respondents the support for EU decision-making in this area is as high as 42%.

Left-wing respondents think the USA play a negative role in fighting terrorism

52% of left-wing respondents think the USA plays a negative role in fighting terrorism, but amongst right-wing respondents, only 15% share this view. 33% of the overall Danish poll holds this negative view, while 48% think the USA play a positive role.

Support for the EU's role in fighting terrorism

59% of Danes think the EU plays a positive role in fighting terrorism. Only 9% of all Danes think the EU's role is negative in this area.

Right-wing respondents think the USA has a positive influence on growth in the world economy

60% of right-wing respondents and 42% of the left-wing respondents think the USA plays a positive role in creating growth in the world economy.

The EU is seen as a partner in creating economic growth in the world

57% of Danes think the EU tends to play a positive role in creating growth in the world economy. 7% hold the opposite view, and think the EU's role in this area is negative.