



EUROBAROMETER 62

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTUMN 2004

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GERMANY

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

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Executive Summary

Personal optimism in defiance of pessimism concerning the general situation

- Despite a pessimistic view regarding the general (economic) development, personal development is seen more optimistically;
- Optimism again prevails with regard to respondents' personal living situation (+3 points since the last Eurobarometer survey in spring 2004), as well as with regards to the financial situation of their household (+2 points) and personal job situation (+2 points);
- 70% of Germans expect a tightening of the employment market.

The image of the EU in Germany has improved significantly

- The European Union's image has improved again among Germans. 46% (+9 points) have a good or excellent image of the EU, while only 17% (-2 points) have a bad or very bad image;
- The youngest age group (between 15 and 24 years old), in particular, have a good or very good image of the EU (56%).
- The EU enjoys even more trust than in spring 2004;
- Membership of the EU is a positive thing for more than 60% of Germans;
- A majority of respondents favour Political Union;
- A relative majority of 49% consider that Germany benefits from its EU membership;
- A majority associates freedom and peace with the EU;
- More than two out of five Germans believe that the European Union will play an important role in their lives five years from now and even more Germans (44%) favour that role explicitly;
- The growth in this desire in Eastern Germany is interesting. Almost half of respondents would like the EU to play a more important role in their lives five years from now (49% / + 10 points).

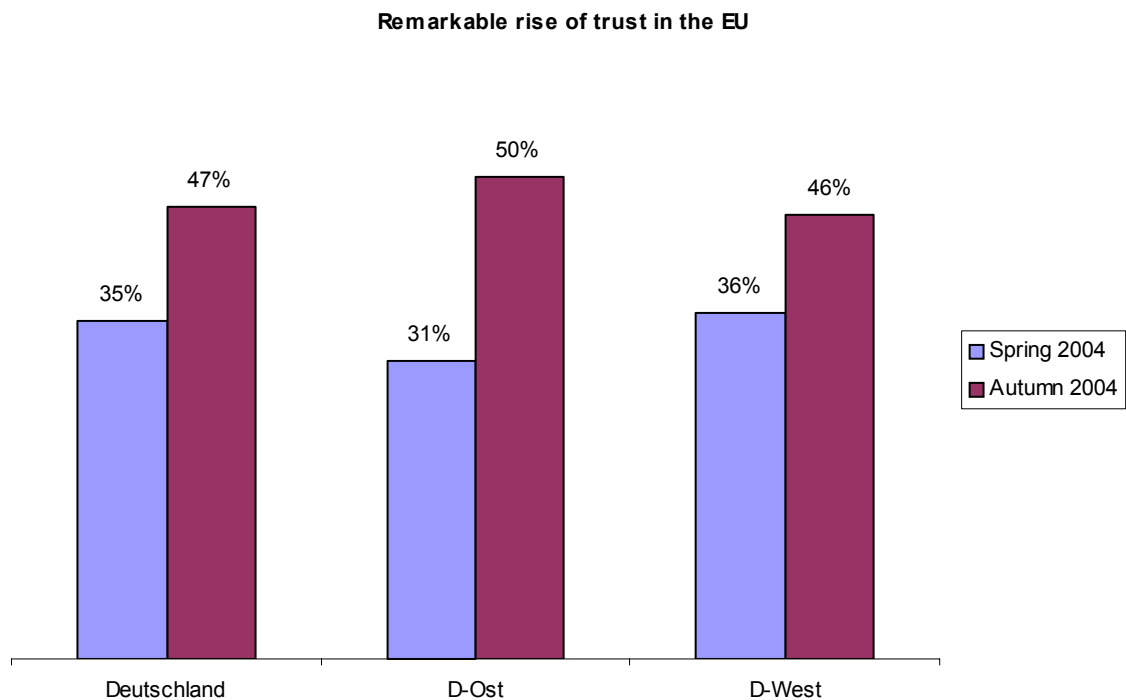
Identification with Europe but also with Germany is on the rise among Germans

- Identification with the European Union is on the rise in general. A majority of 69% (+7 points) feel attached to Europe;
- Dual identification as both German and European has increased. 38% (+2 points) see themselves both as German and European, while 36% (-2 points) see themselves purely as German and a small but stable segment of 5% see themselves as purely European;
- Germans seem to be more attached to their own country than before. Their identification with their country rose by 5 points to 71% since the last survey. However, this is a very low figure compared with the European average. Germans are mostly (61% / + 10 points) satisfied with how democracy works in their country.
- Satisfaction with how democracy works in Europe is also on the rise, although 43% of respondents are still not satisfied with it.

- 57% of Germans are proud to be Europeans – relatively low compared with the EU average.

Remarkable rise of trust in the European Union

- Trust in the European Union has risen strongly (47% / +12 points). The increasing rate of trust was strongest in Eastern Germany (19 points) and was 10 points in Western Germany;
- Organisations, particularly political parties (13%) and big companies (21%) inspired low levels of trust.



Basis: 2072 EU citizens in Germany in spring 2004 / 1545 EU citizens in autumn 2004, 15 years and older

The most important challenges for Germany and the EU

- 75% (+9 points) of the Germans see the high unemployment rates as the main challenge for their country;
- The improvement of the economic situation is rated accordingly high (42% / +7 points);
- This prioritisation is in line with the overall European trend, even if the priorities are not as clear-cut as in Germany in the EU overall (unemployment 42%; economic situation 27%).

In favour of deeper integration, critical towards further enlargement

- In contrast to the overall European trend, there are still 57% of Germans against further enlargement;

- A large majority is in favour of deeper integration of EU institutional structures, such as the establishment of a constitution or a common foreign & defence policy.

Continuing strong, rising support for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy

- Three out of four respondents favoured a common EU foreign policy in spring 2004. That already high score has been overtaken in the current report: in autumn 2004, 80% support a common and coordinated EU foreign policy;
- In Germany - as well as in the European Union – there is strong support for a European foreign and security policy independent of that of the USA. 90% (+6 points) of German respondents back this position;
- Despite the German candidacy for a seat in the United Nations Security Council, the number of those supporting a European Union seat has risen from 66% to 74%;
- 57% (+13 points) think that the EU should have the last say in security issues and in the time of crisis, 20% (-5 points) think their national government should decide and only 17% (+3 points) see NATO as the right instance to take such decisions.

Severe criticism of the international role of the USA

- A majority of Germans think that USA policies have negative effects on world peace, the war on terror and environmental protection;
- A majority of respondents think that the EU plays a positive role in these fields.

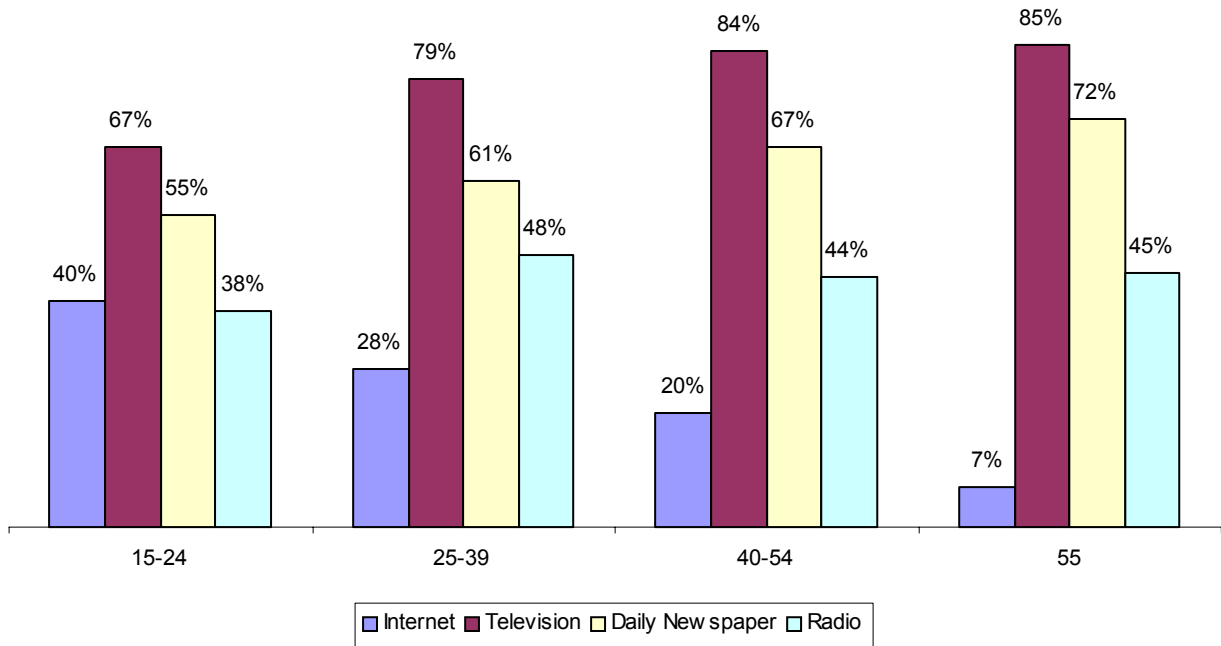
Continuing support for an acceleration of European integration

- After the enlargement in spring 2004, the Germans sense a slowing in the European integration process;
- A majority of Germans still want to see a more rapid European integration process.

Germans feel well informed; the role of the Internet as an important information channel is gaining ground

- The majority (57%) of Germans think they are well informed about EU-related issues;
- Particularly among younger Germans (15-24 years old) and those who are still studying, the Internet has become one of the primary sources of information (40%) leaving radio behind and catching up with the daily press and television (e.g. students: television 55%, Internet 54%);
- As in previous surveys, Germans estimate their level of knowledge about the EU above the European average, while their real knowledge lies somewhere in the middle.

The internet has become a primary source of information about the EU among young Germans



Basis: 1545 EU citizen in Germany autumn 2004, 15 years and older