



EUROBAROMETER 62

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTUMN 2004

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SLOVAKIA (SLOVAK REPUBLIC)

The survey was requested and coordinated by the Directorate General Press and Communication.

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

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.

Life in Slovakia

Public opinion polls and sociological research undertaken in Slovakia since 1989 reveal the prevailing dissatisfaction of citizens with the economic, social and political situation in their country, as well as their pessimism in terms of expectations of change. From this perspective, the results of the Eurobarometer No. 62 survey do not significantly differ from those trends. However, more markedly than is the case for the average citizen in the twenty-five European Union countries overall, Slovaks associate their expectations concerning the improvement of economic and social situation with their country's membership of the European Union.

While in the EU25 an average of 81% of respondents declared that they are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the life they lead, in Slovakia only 59% of respondents held this view. The other side of the coin was that only 19% of respondents in the EU25 are not very satisfied or not at all satisfied, whereas in Slovakia the corresponding figure reached 40%. These differences in satisfaction with the quality of life are understandable in view of the differences in GDP per capita in Slovakia and in the EU25 countries on average. The dissatisfaction of Slovak citizens also stems from the economic and social reforms that have been implemented since the breakdown of communism in 1989 and which have not brought a significant improvement in the economic situation of the majority of the population.

Expectations of Slovaks concerning the possible improvement or worsening of the quality of their life in the next 12 months also differs significantly from the EU25 average. While 35% of citizens in the EU25 expect an improvement in their quality of life in general, in Slovakia this figure only reaches 27%. On the other hand, only 13% of EU25 respondents expect their life to worsen, while the corresponding figure in Slovakia is 21%. Interestingly, where the expectations of improvement of the economic situation of the country in which respondents live are concerned, opinions of Slovak citizens and EU25 citizens as a whole did not differ significantly. Improvement was expected by 18% of Slovaks and 20% of EU25 citizens and a worsening was expected by 45% Slovaks and 43% of EU25 citizens overall.

Looking at citizens' assessment of the change in their personal situation over the last five years, there are more people in Slovakia who think that their situation has worsened (39%) than people who think their situation has improved (27%). In the EU25, the situation is the contrary: 39% believe their situation has improved and 28% the contrary. Comparing these results with the results of the survey carried out in spring 2004, the percentages of those who think their personal situation has improved has risen (from 20% to 27%) and the number who think their situation has stayed the same has also increased - from 25% to 34%). There has been a corresponding decrease in the number of people who think their situation has worsened (from 53% to 39%). It is also possible to observe a modest change in Slovaks' views regarding their personal situation in the next five years, where the number of those expecting things to worsen has fallen from 28% to 21%.

Slovakia's urgent problems

The Eurobarometer survey undertaken in the autumn of 2004 confirms the results of the spring 2004 survey concerning the most urgent problems faced by Slovakia insofar as the list of the six most cited problems remained constant. In both surveys, Slovak citizens identified the two most urgent problems as unemployment and the economic situation. These two problems were also identified as the most challenging problems throughout the EU25 - although the overall EU25 figure is lower than that in Slovakia. Compared to the previous survey, a decrease can be noted in the number of people in Slovakia who identify the economic situation as the most urgent problem. This may be related to the influx of capital

that the country is experiencing in recent months. On the other hand, compared with the previous survey, the number of Slovaks who identify a growth in crime as one of the most urgent problems has risen and has reached almost the same level as it is in the EU25. In the list of the most urgent problems, crime is in fourth place together with rising prices/inflation. The third most urgent problem from the viewpoint of Slovak citizens is the healthcare system, while in the EU25 this problem is ranked in fifth place.

The most marked differences in the views of Slovaks compared with those of the EU25 average are found in the cases of terrorism and immigration. 16% of EU25 citizens consider terrorism to be one of the most urgent problems, while in Slovakia the figure is only 4%. A figure of 13% was reached in the EU25 for those who see immigration as one of the most urgent problems, while in Slovakia it is only 2%. In the case of immigration, the reason for such a great difference is the fact that Slovakia is not currently a destination for immigrants and, in addition, in recent years, the Slovak authorities have approved only a minimal number of asylum applications. In the case of terrorism, the reason for the low number of Slovaks seeing this as an urgent problem is that they feel their country is perceived by international terrorist groups as being too small and uninteresting as a potential target for an attack. Since the last survey, a modest increase can be noted in the number of citizens who consider these problems as urgent.

Confidence in institutions

The results of this survey confirm the long-term trends in the trust, or rather non-trust, of Slovak citizens in certain institutions. Compared with the average EU25 citizen, Slovaks trust their government, parliament, justice system and police less. In contrast, Slovaks exhibit greater trust in the media.

52% of Slovaks trust the press, while in the EU25 the average is only 42%. Both in Slovakia and in the EU25, the majority of the population trust television, although in Slovakia the percentage is higher – 65% compared with 50% in the EU25 overall. The highest levels of trust in both Slovakia and the EU25 are in radio. In Slovakia, 72% of respondents trust radio, while, in the EU25, the corresponding average was 63%. These figures show that the impact of the media and their ability to influence public opinion is higher in Slovakia than in the EU25 as a whole.

However, the situation is quite different in regard to political institutions. Although in both Slovakia and the EU25 distrust prevails over trust, in Slovakia, distrust in political institutions is significantly higher. Only 9% of Slovaks trust political parties while in the EU25 the average is 17%. There is slightly higher trust in the national government: the Slovak Government has the trust of 22% of its citizens, while the national governments in the EU25 countries overall had the trust of 35% of citizens. Highest trust levels among the political institutions were in the national parliaments, although levels of distrust are greater than those for trust. Trust in the National Council of the Slovak Republic was claimed by 25% of respondents while, in the EU25 overall, 38% stated they trusted their national parliament.

In Slovakia, the army is among the institutions that traditionally have the highest levels of the public's trust. In the case of the justice system there is a significant difference between the Slovak Republic and the EU25 average. Only 27% of Slovak citizens trust their justice system, while the EU25 average is 45%. Even more significant is the difference between Slovakia and the EU25 in the case of trust in the police. Only 34% of Slovaks trust their police while in the EU25 the police are trusted by an average of 64% of citizens. It should,

therefore, be pointed out that while, on average, in the EU25, the police are ranked the third most trusted national/domestic institution (the first being the army, followed by charities and voluntary organisations), in Slovakia, the police are ranked only eighth in the list of the most trusted national/domestic institutions.

From this point of view, the assessment of the European Union is positive with higher levels of trust being recorded by Slovaks than in the EU25 on average. The EU has the confidence of 60% of Slovak respondents (50% in EU25), whereas only 24% of Slovaks say they do not trust the EU compared with 36% in the EU25. However, the survey does not give a clear answer as to what is the reason for the higher levels of trust in the European Union (and its institutions, as will be seen in the chapter dealing specially with this issue). Is it satisfaction with the performance of these institutions, or could it be the lack of experience, including negative ones, with the performance of the European institutions (compared to experiences with the performance of Slovak institutions). It should be noted that 16% of Slovak respondents could not or were not willing to answer the question as to whether or not they trusted the European Union. This is the second highest proportion of undecided or uninformed Slovak citizens in relation to the institutions that was recorded in the results from the responses to this question dealing with trust.

In the overall ranking of trust in Slovak institutions, the top four are the radio, followed by television, and then the European Union and the Slovak Army sharing (equal) third place. At the bottom of the ranking are political parties, the Slovak Government and the Slovak Parliament. In comparison with the results of the survey undertaken in spring 2004, the greatest rise in trust levels can be observed in the case of the European Union (from 47% to 60%) which caused the EU to move from sixth place into equal third. Another positive trend was seen in the growth in the level of trust in the Slovak justice system (from 16% to 27%).

Information about the European Union

When speaking about the level of knowledge, a distinction needs to be made between the subjective and the actual level of knowledge, i.e. what people think they know versus what they actually know about the European Union. When asked to choose a response to the statement “I know how the European Union works”, only 36% of Slovaks stated that they agreed with this statement (compared with 47% in the EU). On the other hand, 50% of Slovak respondents stated that they did not agree (44% in the EU25).

A quiz in the survey tests respondents’ knowledge about the European Union and the results are not convincing:

- 30% of Slovaks incorrectly think that the EU currently consists of 12 member states (the corresponding figure was 27% in EU25),
- 22% of Slovaks say that it is false that Members of the European Parliament are elected directly by citizens (24% in the EU25),
- 17% of Slovak citizens wrongly think that the President of the European Commission is directly elected by the citizens of the EU (19% in the EU25),
- 24% of respondents do not think that the EU has its own anthem (34% in EU25).

Only 43% of Slovaks know, that every year a European Day is celebrated in all member states (41% in EU25), and only 44% of Slovak citizens correctly answered that the last elections to the European Parliament were not in June 2002 (they were in June 2004).

These answers clearly show that there are still considerable gaps in the level of knowledge of Slovak citizens about the European Union, especially in view of the fact that the questions

concerned only the most basic facts about the EU and the survey did not deal with issues such as competencies of individual EU institutions, their agenda, mutual relations and issues that the EU and their institutions are currently dealing with. On the other hand, it has to be said that the level of knowledge of the Slovak respondents does not differ significantly from the European average. It was even slightly better. Also, in the comparison with the results of the previous survey, there has been a modest improvement in the levels of knowledge of Slovak citizens.

The results of the survey also confirm that Slovak citizens have no clear picture concerning the EU budget. 29% of Slovaks think that the greatest part of the EU budget is spent on administrative and personnel costs, 19% on foreign policy and aid to countries outside the European Union and 17% did not answer the question. Only 7% of Slovaks correctly answered that the greatest part of the European Union's budget is spent on agriculture. In comparison with the previous survey, it can be seen that there has been an increase in the number of Slovaks who think that the greatest part of the EU budget is spent for administrative and personnel costs and for foreign policy and aid to countries outside the European Union. No significant change is discernible in the number of those who correctly know where the most of the EU money really goes. Thus, there is a significant information deficit regarding the EU budget and how it is spent.

Sources of information about the European Union

The results of the survey clearly show that Slovaks have an interest in information about the European Union. Only 7% of respondents answered that they have no interest in such information. This figure is the same as the EU25 average and had decreased by 5 points since the last survey undertaken in spring 2004.

The most frequent source of information remains the television, which is currently used as a source of information by 80% of respondents. In second place is, as in the previous survey, radio - the source used by 47% of Slovaks. However, this shows a marked decrease, as in spring 2004, 68% of respondents cited radio as one of the most frequently used sources of information about the EU. In third place are daily newspapers - used by 44% of Slovaks - also showing a significant decrease of 18 points in comparison with the spring 2004 survey. Slovaks are also using magazines and discussions with family and friends less. At the same time, use of the Internet (20%) by Slovaks to find information about the EU has risen by four points since spring 2004 - figure close to the EU25 average (21%). The survey indicates that because of fall in the number of people who are using other sources of information, the importance and influence of television in providing information on the European Union is rising.

Slightly different results come from the answers to the question, what sources of information on the EU respondents would prefer to use. In this case, the preference for using television as the main source of information falls from 80% to 57%, the preference for using the radio falls from 47% to 33% and for daily newspapers falls from 44% to 32%. Respondents, on the other hand, claimed to have a preference for brochures with more detailed information (32%), leaflets giving an overview (23%) and books giving a complete description (13%). This contrasts with the finding that currently books, brochures and booklets are used as a source of information by only by 16% of respondents. These data appear to indicate that a significant number of Slovaks use television, radio and daily newspapers as their main source of information first and foremost because of the lack of other sources that would provide a basic overview of the European Union in plain language, as well as more detailed and complete information.

The European Union in Slovak media

In view of the high level of trust the media enjoy among the Slovak population, as well as the data from the previous chapter (i.e. that the media are the main source of information about the European Union), it is interesting to analyze respondents' views concerning the way the media present the EU.

The majority of Slovaks think that the volume of the information about the EU that is provided by the media is adequate (59%). Only 12% think that the media talk too much about the EU, while a further 26% think that media do not provide enough information on the EU. Compared with the EU25 average, it could be said that Slovaks are slightly more satisfied with the quantity of information in their national media. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Slovaks use the media as their source of information about the European Union more frequently than average EU25 citizens.

Concerning the objectivity of the Slovak media's coverage of the EU, the majority of the poll think that the media are objective (46%), although 41% think that they are too positive. Only 2% think that it is presented too negatively. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in the EU25 countries overall. In the EU25, only 28% think that information on the EU is too positive and 14% think it is too negative. As far as trends are concerned, since the spring 2004 survey, we can observe an increase in the number of respondents who think that the media provide objective information (a rise of 8 points).

Trust in European Union institutions

A fundamental assumption underlying the expression of trust in individual EU institutions is an awareness of these institutions. The results of the survey show that basic awareness of European institutions is high among Slovak citizens and comparable with the EU25 average. 96% of Slovaks have heard of the European Parliament, 84% of the European Commission, 69% of the European Council of Ministers, 81% of the European Court of Justice and 68% of the European Central Bank. In comparison with the EU25 average, considerably more Slovaks know about the existence of the European Ombudsman – 62% of Slovaks while the average figure in the EU25 was only 37%. 46% of Slovaks have heard of the Committee of the Regions whereas the corresponding EU25 average was only 28%. 50% of Slovaks have heard of the Economic and Social Committee whereas the EU25 average is only 37%. On the other hand, only 32% of Slovaks have heard of European Court of Auditors, in contrast to the overall EU25 figure of 47%.

While Slovak citizens' trust in domestic/national institutions is lower than the corresponding EU25 average, Slovaks have higher than average trust in EU institutions. This is most marked in the case of the European Parliament, which has a trust level of 70% among Slovaks whereas, in the EU25, it has an average trust level of 57% of citizens. A similar situation also arises in the case of the European Commission (trusted by 61% of Slovaks), the Council of Ministers (trusted by 49% of Slovaks) and the European Court of Justice (trusted by 62% of Slovaks). A specific case is the European Ombudsman, which has confidence of 45% of Slovak citizens and only 35% of citizens within the EU25. However, this difference is mainly due to the fact that a much higher proportion of EU25 citizens admitted that they were not aware of the existence of this institution (60% in the EU25 compared with 34% in Slovakia).

Compared with the results of the previous survey, a significant increase can be seen in the level of trust in EU institutions since Slovakia's accession to European Union membership. The survey, however, does not provide the answer as to what is the reason for Slovak citizens' higher levels of trust in the abovementioned European institutions. Given the results of the survey in the area of knowledge about the EU, it cannot be assumed that this trust stems from a rational assessment of their performance based on an adequate volume of information on their competencies and their agenda. Also, in view of the fact that Slovakia has been an EU member for only a few months, it cannot be assumed that trust is based on the positive experiences of Slovak citizens with the work of these institutions. It is more likely, therefore, that this trust is based on ungrounded feelings. From this viewpoint, the high levels of trust in the European Parliament appear paradoxical, when it is borne in mind that fewer than 17% of eligible voters took part in the elections of the Slovak Members of the European Parliament - the lowest turnout in elections in Slovakia since 1990.

The only exception in the pattern of trust levels in European institutions in Slovakia compared with the EU25 is the European Court of Auditors. This institution has the trust of 39% of EU25 citizens but only 25% of the Slovak citizens. However, in this case, the difference in the degree of the confidence may be explained by the fact that 61% of Slovak respondents claim they have not heard of this institution, while in the EU25 it was *only* 50%.

When comparing trust levels in EU institutions of Slovak citizens and of citizens of other EU member states, it can be seen that trust in the European Parliament is highest in Slovakia among the ten new member states, with a trust level of 70%. Slovakia, Belgium and Ireland share equal second place in the ranking just behind Luxembourg where the EP has the trust of 71% of citizens. In the case of the European Commission, Slovakia ranks third among the ten new member states at 61%, just behind Hungary and Slovenia with 64%, and Lithuania with 62% of people trusting it.

Of the European institutions, Slovak citizens accord greatest importance to the European Parliament, with the European Commission in second place, the European Court of Justice in third place, the European Central Bank in fourth place and the Council of Ministers only in fifth place. In comparison with the results of the previous survey, a growth in importance that Slovaks assign to the individual institutions of the EU can be observed. Based on these results, we can also assume that a determinant in respondents' assessment of the importance of institutions is the space that they are given in the media. In 2004, there were elections to the European Parliament, the European Commission was reshaped after the accession of the 10 new states and a new Commission was inaugurated in the second part of the year. Thus the media paid most of its attention to these two institutions. Based on the wide coverage given, citizens started to attribute greater importance to these institutions. On the other hand, the Council of Ministers of the European Union has received minimal coverage in the Slovak media and it is therefore ranked in fifth place.

Support for the European Union membership

According to the survey, 57% of the Slovak citizens think that their country's EU membership is a good thing. This figure is close to the EU25 average (56%) and it is the second highest among the ten new member states. When compared with the EU25 average, in Slovakia there is a much lower number of people who think membership in the EU is a bad thing - only 4% compared with 13% in the EU25. Significant growth in support for Slovakia's EU membership compared with the previous survey can be observed. In spring 2004, only 42% thought that their country's EU membership was a good thing. The increased support for membership may relate to the expected advantages that will come from membership.

Although Slovakia has been an EU member only since 1 May 2004, 62% of citizens think that their country benefits from the EU membership (compared with 53% in the EU25).

Support for the European Union's key policies

Support from Slovak citizens for the EU's key policies is also above the EU25 average. European Monetary Union is supported by 69% of Slovaks, Common Foreign Policy towards the third countries is supported by 75% and the highest support of all is for the Common Defence and Security Policy with 86% of Slovaks giving it their backing. Compared with the results of the previous survey, almost no change can be observed. The strong support for the EU's Common Defence and Security Policy is probably related to the lax attitude of Slovaks towards Slovak membership of NATO. In the case of the Common Foreign policy, the high level of support can be explained by the lack of tradition in foreign policy-making, by having no traditional interest in this area (unlike the United Kingdom) and also by the fact that Slovakia does not have tradition of neutrality (as is the case in Sweden). In these two countries, support for the Common Foreign Policy is the lowest.

The meaning of Europe

For the majority of Slovak citizens, as it is the case throughout the EU25, the European Union above all means freedom of travel, study and work wherever in the EU. This answer was chosen by 68% of Slovak respondents. There is a decrease of 4 points compared with the previous survey, but is still higher than the EU25 average (53%). The main difference between Slovak citizens and the EU25 average (and especially the "old" member states) is what they rank in second place – for EU25 citizens the second most frequently cited meaning of the European Union is the Euro (currency) while for Slovaks it is economic prosperity. For 44% of Slovaks, the EU is associated with economic prosperity (a decrease of seven points from spring 2004), while in the EU25, only 22% of citizens connect the EU with economic prosperity. Other associations with the EU frequently cited by Slovaks are the Euro (36%), peace (34%) and democracy (27%).

Image of the European Union

Generally speaking, for the vast majority of Slovaks the European Union presents a rather positive or neutral image and only for 10% of them has it a negative image. In comparison with the EU25 average, Slovaks give a more positive evaluation of the role played by the European Union in various areas. According to Slovak respondents, the most positive role the EU plays is in regard to the peace in the world. Slovaks are also more positive than the EU25 average with respect to the role the union plays in the fight against terrorism, in the growth of the world economy, the fight against poverty in the world and protection of environment. The Slovaks are predominantly proud to be Europeans. 78% of Slovaks are proud to be Europeans, while in the EU25 this feeling is shared by only 68% of citizens. On the other hand, Slovaks are slightly less proud to be the citizens of their country than the EU25 average.

The workings of the European Union and the benefits of membership

The difference in the sense of pride in their nationality and in being European between Slovaks and the EU25 average is rooted in their level of satisfaction with how democracy works in their own country and how it works in the EU. 57% of EU25 citizens are satisfied with how democracy works in their respective countries whereas this is the case for only 25% of Slovak citizens.

On average, more EU25 citizens (48%) than Slovaks (41%) are satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU. However, the differential between these levels of satisfaction is significantly smaller than is the case when they were asked how democracy works in their respective countries (cited above).

It is a paradox, that in spite of all the facts described above, when asked how people would react if they were told that the European Union had been scrapped, only 38% Slovaks and 39% of EU25 citizens responded that they would be very sorry. Similar percentages of people responded that they would be indifferent (44% in Slovakia and 43% in EU25). More significant is the difference in the percentage of those who would be very relieved, if the EU were scrapped. In the EU25, this answer was selected by 13% of citizens whereas in Slovakia the figure was only 6%.

The abovementioned results are also reflected in the answer to the question as to what feelings the European Union evokes. In both Slovakia and the EU25 the greatest proportion of respondents mentioned hope as the dominant feeling, although a higher proportion of Slovaks chose this answer – 61% compared with 47% in EU25. On the other hand, the EU is associated with the feeling of anxiety by only 7% of Slovak citizens in contrast to an EU25 average of 17%. 55% of Slovaks feels more secure thanks to the membership of Slovakia in the EU.

On the other hand, it should be mentioned, that Slovaks are rather pessimistic in their opinion concerning their influence in the European Union. Only 27% of them believe that their own voice counts in the EU, while, in the EU25 overall, this figure reaches 39%. Similarly, only 37% of Slovaks believe that their country's voice counts in the EU, while in the EU25 the corresponding figure is 68%. The answer to the question as to why Slovak citizens are so pessimistic in their opinion on the possibility to influence the European Union can be found in the fact that Slovakia with the population of 5 million belongs to the group of smaller countries of the EU and 83% of Slovaks believe that the largest countries have the most power in the EU (in the EU25 overall, this opinion is shared by 75% of citizens).

The role of the European Union

According to Slovak citizens, the uppermost priorities of the European Union should be the fight against unemployment, the fight against poverty and social exclusion, maintaining peace and security in Europe, the fight against organized crime and drug trafficking, the fight against terrorism and protection of the environment. These six priorities also top the ranking in the EU25 overall. However, some differences in the opinions of Slovaks and EU25 citizens can be observed. The fight against unemployment is the highest priority for 55% of Slovak citizens while the EU25 average is 44%. The fight against poverty and social exclusion is the highest priority for 48% of Slovaks, whereas the EU25 average is 40%. On the other hand, the fight against terrorism is a priority for an average of 27% of citizens across the EU25 but for only 19% of Slovak citizens.

Among the greatest differences in the priorities of the Slovak and EU25 citizens is that relating to guaranteeing the quality of the food products - a priority for 15% of Slovaks but for only 8% of citizens across the EU25. Conversely, the fight against illegal immigration is a priority for an average of 15% of EU25 citizens but for only 5% of Slovak citizens.

Citizens of the Slovak Republic have expressed support for the further strengthening of the Common Security and Foreign Policy and European Security and Defence Policy. 56% of Slovaks think that decisions in the area of European defence policy should be made jointly at

European Union level. A significant majority of Slovak citizens also agree that the EU should have a rapid military reaction force, which can be sent quickly to troublespots when an international crisis occurs and that, in the case of an international crisis occurring, EU member states should agree on a common position.

The only area in which the opinions of the Slovak citizens and the citizens of the EU25 diverge considerably is on the question of guaranteeing human rights in the world. While 79% of the citizens in the EU25 think that the EU should work to guarantee human rights around the world, even if this is contrary to the wishes of some other countries, in Slovakia only 63% of citizens have such conscientious attitudes.

Fears arising from EU membership

Along with positive expectations, EU membership is also associated with certain fears. Slovak citizens' fear is mostly related to an increase in drug trafficking and international organised crime (74% compared with an EU25 average of 65%). Slovaks are also afraid of more difficulties for their farmers and that their country will have to pay more and more towards the European Union's budget. They also fear the transfer of jobs to other member countries that have lower production costs, as well as the loss of power of smaller member states.

Looking back to spring 2004, a considerable, and, in some cases, dramatic increase in levels of fear can be observed. Fears about an increase in drug trafficking and international organised crime have risen by 11 points over the six-month period. Fear that Slovakia will pay more and more to the European Union has risen by 18 points. The reason for the dramatic growth in fear in the last mentioned area may be due to information published in the media that Slovakia is not sufficiently well prepared to use Structural Funds and, for this reason, these funds may not be used and Slovakia will find itself in the position of a net payer.

A slightly different situation can be observed in the case of fears about the transfer of jobs to other member countries with lower production costs. In Slovakia, the fear of such an occurrence has increased by 8 points compared with spring 2004, while in the EU25 it has risen by 12 points. This difference can be explained by the fact that during recent months a number of foreign companies have announced investments in the Slovak economy that will lead to the creation of new jobs. Also, there have been reports in the media that various foreign businesses are considering moving production plants from 'old' to 'new' member states, thus generating concerns of job losses among citizens of the 'old' member states. In the case of Slovakia, such concerns are only moderate as few member states have production costs lower than the Slovak Republic.

What is also interesting is the increase by 3 points in the level of fear about more difficulties for Slovak farmers. This may stem from the extensive coverage that the Slovak media have given to the dispute between farmers' representatives and the Slovak authorities concerning the level of compensations paid from the state budget, as well as information in the media about a possible delay in direct payments. It is interesting that, according to information published by EUROSTAT at the end of 2004, Slovak farmers' incomes increased in 2004 because of direct payments.

European identity

Accession to the European Union also means the challenge of a new identity – a European identity besides the national identity. The greatest part of the Slovak population associates itself with both a national and a European identity, however clearly placing the national identity in first place. The second largest segment is composed of those who associate themselves exclusively with a national identity. Only a small minority of Slovaks associate themselves exclusively with the European identity. This means that although Slovaks have much higher trust in European than national institutions, have a positive attitude to the European Union and are satisfied with their country's EU membership, they still see their national identity as playing an important role.

Institutional Reform of the European Union and Further Enlargement

Just as Slovaks have an above-average (the EU25 average) assessment of their country's EU membership, have above-average trust in EU institutions, have above-average expectations that their lives will improve after EU membership, in the same way, they have a positive attitude towards the further enlargement of the European Union and increased European integration

74% of Slovak citizens are in favour of the creation of a European political union, while only 12% oppose such a development. In the EU25 overall, the creation of a European political union is supported by 59% of citizens and opposed by 28%. It should be emphasized that the term 'European political union' is vague, and it is questionable what citizens understand this notion to mean, and how they would respond if a precise definition of it were to be provided. Slovaks also support further enlargement of the European Union, with 69% of citizens in favour, compared with a 53% EU25 average figure.

While there are higher levels of support in Slovakia for the creation of a European political union and further enlargement of the Union than in the EU25 overall, in the case of the adoption of a European Constitution, there is almost no difference between Slovaks' opinions and those of EU25 citizens overall. However, here, there is a paradox: among EU25 citizens there are more who support the adoption of the Constitution of the European Union than support the creation of a European political union, while in Slovakia, the opposite is the case. Given that the adoption of the Constitution is a precondition for the establishment of a European political union, this begs the question as to what extent Slovak citizens understand what the precise meaning of the creation of a European political union to be. It is also unclear as to how well informed Slovak and EU25 citizens are about the contents of the Constitution, as in the survey there was no question asking respondents whether they have read the full text of the Constitution or at least some form of abbreviated version.

The survey also shows that Slovaks are in favour of increasing the speed of building Europe or European integration. Compared with the EU25 average, more Slovak citizens think that the current speed of European integration is rather slow and more respondents than the EU25 average answered that they would like to see an increase in this speed. However, the question is what precisely do citizens understand by the speed of building Europe – it could mean the enlargement of the EU, the removal of barriers between countries, the total harmonization of laws or even the creation of a European federal state.

STANDARD EUROBAROMETER 62 TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Between 2nd October and 8th November 2004, the TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium created between Taylor Nelson Sofres and EOS Gallup Europe, carried out wave 62 of the standard Eurobarometer, on request of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General Press and Communication, Opinion Polls.

The Standard EUROBAROMETER 62 is the first Eurobarometer conducted after the enlargement to 10 new member States which occurred on the 1st of May 2004. The survey covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, resident in each of the Member States and aged 15 years and over. The Standard Eurobarometer 62 has also been conducted in the 3 candidate countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey) as well as in Croatia and Northern part of Cyprus. In these countries, the survey covers the population, aged 15 years and over, of citizens of the respective nationalities and the population of citizens of all the EU Member States that are residents in those countries and have a sufficient command of one of the respective national language(s) to answer the questionnaire. The basic sample design applied in all Member States is a multi-stage, random (probability) one. In each EU country, a number of sampling points was drawn with probability proportional to population size (for a total coverage of the country) and to population density.

In order to do so, the sampling points were drawn systematically from each of the "administrative regional units", after stratification by individual unit and type of area. They thus represent the whole territory of the countries surveyed according to the EUROSTAT NUTS 2 (or equivalent) and according to the distribution of the resident population of the respective EU-nationalities in terms of metropolitan, urban and rural areas. In each of the selected sampling points, a starting address was drawn, at random. Further addresses were selected as every Nth address by standard random route procedures, from the initial address. In each household, the respondent was drawn, at random (following the *closest birthday rule*). All interviews have been conducted face-to-face in people's home and in the appropriate national language. As far as the data capture is concerned, CAPI (*Computer Assisted Personal Interview*) was used in those countries where this technique was available.

<u>COUNTRIES</u>	<u>INSTITUTES</u>	<u>N°</u> <u>INTERVIEWS</u>	<u>FIELDWORK DATES</u>	<u>POPULATION 15+</u>
Austria	Österreichisches Gallup-Institute	1007	11-10/07-11/2004	6,679,444
Belgium	TNS Dimarso	974	08-10/08-11/2004	8,598,982
Denmark	TNS Gallup DK	1028	06-10/08-11/2004	4,380,062
France	TNS Sofres	1020	14-10/30-10/2004	44,010,619
Finland	TNS Gallup OY	1005	10-10/04-11/2004	4,279,286
Germany (East)	TNS Infratest	508	11-10/27-10/2004	12,802,222
Germany (West)	TNS Infratest	1037	08-10/27-10/2004	51,372,073
Greece	TNS ICAP	1000	11-10/31-10/2004	8,674,230
Great Britain	TNS UK	1310	05-10/08-11/2004	46,371,359
Ireland	TNS MRBI	1000	08-10/08-11/2004	3,089,775
Italy	TNS Abacus	1020	11-10/01-11/2004	49,208,000
Luxembourg	TNS ILReS	502	05-10/26-10/2004	367,199
The Netherlands	TNS NIPO	1009	07-10/04-11/2004	13,242,328
Portugal	TNS EUROTESTE	1000	02-10/01-11/2004	8,080,915
Spain	TNS Demoscopia	1023	06-10/27-10/2004	35,882,820
Sweden	TNS GALLUP	1000	02-10/01-11/2004	7,376,680
Cyprus (South)	Synovate	500	10-10/31-10/2004	552,213
Czech Republic	TNS Aisa	1075	15-10/30-10/2004	8,571,710
Estonia	Emor	1000	08-10/28-10/2004	887,094
Hungary	TNS Hungary	1014	10-10/28-10/2004	8503379
Latvia	TNS Baltic Data House	1005	12-10/03-11/2004	1,394,351
Lithuania	TNS Gallup Lithuania	1002	10-10/30-10/2004	2,803,661
Malte	MISCO	500	03-10/22-10/2004	322,917
Poland	TNS OBOP	1000	16-10/03-11/2004	31,610,437
Slovakia	TNS AISA SK	1252	02-10/30-10/2004	4,316,438
Slovenia	RM PLUS	1000	19-10/05-11/2004	1,663,869
Bulgaria	TNS BBSS	1004	12-10/24-10/2004	6,695,512
Romania	TNS CSOP	1012	14-10/27-10/2004	18,145,036
Turkey	TNS PIAR	1027	09-10/26-10/2004	47,583,830
Croatia	PULS	1000	14-10/03-11/2004	3,682,826
Cyprus (North)	KADEM	500	15-10/28-10/2004	157,101

For each country a comparison between the sample and the universe was carried out. The Universe description was derived from Eurostat population data or from national statistics. For all EU member-countries a national weighting procedure, using marginal and intercellular weighting, was carried out based on this Universe description. As such in all countries, gender, age, region and size of locality were introduced in the iteration procedure. For international weighting (i.e. EU averages), TNS Opinion & Social applies the official population figures as provided by EUROSTAT or national statistic offices. The total population figures for input in this post-weighting procedure are listed above.

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

Observed percentages	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
Confidence limits	± 1.9 points	± 2.5 points	± 2.7 points	± 3.0 points	± 3.1 points