

EUROBAROMETER 62

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SLOVENIA

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Greater satisfaction with life

Three events of significance have occurred since the last Eurobarometer survey (issue 61), conducted in spring 2004. EU accession on 1 May 2004 is one of the key dates in Slovenia's history. Prominent Slovene leaders declared it to be the most important event since the democratisation process began in 1989 and Slovenia declared its independence in 1991.

A first general examination of the survey data shows that Slovenians are more optimistic when talking about their personal situation and talking about the general situation of their country than they were before 1 May.

Slovenia has faced increased unemployment levels, so it is no surprise that unemployment is the issue that is most frequently cited by respondents as needing to be dealt with – the same holds true for other New Member States and the EU-25 as a whole. Unemployment, fighting poverty, and peace and security are the three areas of concern that Slovenia and the rest of the European Union have in common.

Levels of trust in various institutions

The most trusted institutions in Slovenia are radio (66%), television (65%), followed by international organizations like the European Union (60 %, EB61 - 47%), the United Nations (58%) and the army (58%). The least trusted institutions in Slovenia are political parties (17%), the legal system (27%) and trades unions (31%). The national government (35%, EB61-27%) and the parliament (36%, EB61-25%) have improved their ratings since EB61.

Perceived and actual level of information

A majority of Slovenians perceive their own knowledge of the EU, its policies and institutions as average (the average is 5 on a scale of 1-10) - the same as before 1 May. But the actual level of knowledge (respondents had to answer 'true or false' to a series of statements about the EU) about some basic facts relating to the Union is higher in Slovenia than in the EU25 overall. The proportion of correct answers has increased in the last six months ranging from +7% to +40%.

Sources of EU-related information

Traditional news media are considered to be the most important sources of EU-related information. The most frequently mentioned source of information regarding the EU is television (82%), followed by daily newspapers (54%) and radio (52%).

Slovenian citizens think that their media give enough EU-related information (60% said that coverage of the EU is adequate, while 23% think that the EU is not covered enough in their national media). The majority (54%) consider the EU is presented in an objective light, although the share of those who think that it is portrayed in too positive a light is quite high – 30% (but less than it was in EB61 – 39%).

EU institutions, membership and policies

The European institutions that are best known in Slovenia are the European Parliament and the European Commission, known by 95% and 90% of respondents respectively. People also think that the European Parliament and the European Commission play important roles in the European Union and they tend to trust them.

People with higher levels of education have heard of a higher number of EU institutions.

Support for EU membership in Slovenia is 52%, which represents an increase from the 40% figure in favour of membership in spring 2004. This is closer to the 2003 figure, the year of the accession referendum, when 57% of respondents thought it would be good for Slovenia to be a member of the EU.

With regard to benefits from EU membership among citizens of the member states, 58% of Slovenians consider their country has benefited from EU membership.

Slovenians are the strongest supporters of the common foreign policy (81%) in the EU25 and among the strongest in supporting common defence and security policy (88%) and EU enlargement (75%).

Image of the European Union

Slovenians most often associate the European Union with the Euro (61% cited it) and freedom to travel, work and study anywhere in the EU (58%). For the most part, Slovenians associate the EU with positive characteristics, since the first negative characteristic that they cite (more crime) is ranked in eighth position.

More than half of Slovenian citizens agree that their country will be more economically and politically stable because of EU membership; that they feel safer because Slovenia is a member of the European Union and that Slovenia's voice will count in the EU.

The role of the European Union and the USA

The Slovenian poll is in line with the overall EU25 poll with regard to the positive role of the European Union in the following fields: peace, fighting poverty, fight against terrorism, environmental protection and economic prosperity.

They have a more negative view concerning the role of the USA compared to the EU25 citizens overall.

Fears relating to EU membership

The most frequently mentioned fears cited by Slovenians relating to EU membership among are more difficulties for their country's farmers (77%), the transfer of jobs to countries with lower production costs (70%), increase in drug trafficking and international organized crime (68%), and the fear that Slovenia would have to pay more and more to the EU budget (67%). Fears relating to loss of national identity, culture and the Slovenian language being used less are not cited often.

European Union budget

In the perception of Slovenians, most of the EU budget is spent on administrative and personnel costs/buildings (37%), for agriculture (18%) and foreign policy and aid to countries outside the EU (11%).

European identity

In Slovenia, the most frequent attitude cited was the combined (European and national) identity – 57% of Slovenians identify with both, while 40% identify exclusively with their national identity.

Identity is connected to the level of knowledge about the EU – people with a lower level of knowledge about the EU tend to identify themselves more often exclusively with their national identity.

Future of the European Union

The support of Slovenians for the EU Constitution is almost the highest in all the EU25 countries – 80%.

77 % of Slovenians are in favour of development towards a European political union (the highest figure recorded in the EU25) and only 7% are against it (the lowest figure recorded in the EU25).

The current speed of building Europe is neither too fast nor too slow, but Slovenians are in favour of it being speeded up.

There is strong support for common European policies in all the following areas: an EU rapid military reaction force, a common EU position when an international crisis occurs, an EU seat on the UN Security Council, an EU foreign policy independent from that of the USA, the EU to guarantee Human Rights around the world. Levels of support are similar to or higher than the EU25 average.

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