

EUROBAROMETER 64

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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NATIONAL REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
GERMANY

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

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.

Highlights

Unemployment is still the main concern of Germans

- For 74% (-7 points) unemployment is still the most urgent problem, followed by the economic situation (43%)
- 51% of all German respondents believe that the situation on the job market is getting worse

There is still support for the European Constitution

- Every second German (50%) and also every second European (49%) thinks that the European Constitution should be renegotiated. 65% of respondents in France and 64% in the Netherlands have the same attitude
- 28% of Germans (and 22% of Europeans overall) want the ratification process to continue and only 13% of the Germans (and the same percentage of Europeans) want to drop the Constitution completely
- 69% of German respondents and 60% of the European poll as a whole think that the Constitution would help the European institutions function better

Germans like Europeans in general want more information and greater involvement in European affairs

- 71% of Germans do not feel sufficiently involved in European affairs. East Germans, in particular, feel that Europe is something that is happening without their participation (79%)
- Every second German (53%) and 47% of Europeans overall want to be more involved in European issues, but do not know how to go about this
- 80% of Europeans in general, and 78% of Germans, expect the European institutions to make greater efforts to involve them in European affairs

Further enlargement of the European Union heavily criticized

- 59% of the Germans are against the accession of further countries in the coming years, although 49% of the European poll would favour further accessions.
- The Germans have no objection to the accession of countries such as Switzerland, Norway or Iceland.
- Interestingly enough, every third German could imagine the accession of the Ukraine into the European Union (30%, +/-0 points) and, Europe-wide, 42% (-3 points) would accept the accession of the Ukraine.
- Only every fifth German (21%, +/-0 points) and every third European (31%, -4 points) favours the EU-membership of Turkey.

Executive Summary

A majority of Germans, as well as of Europeans, are satisfied with the life they lead

- The general mood in Germany has fallen slightly by 4 points to 79% of the poll who are satisfied with the life they lead. This deterioration is mainly as a result of the West Germans' responses where there was a fall of 6 points
- Only every fifth German expects an improvement in his life in general (21%, +1 point). In Europe, in general, only 35% of respondents share this view (+1 points)
- Only 18% (+1 point) of Germans believe that the economy will finally grow again. Interestingly, the change in opinion is supported mainly by respondents in Eastern Germany, where almost every fifth respondent believes in a recovery of the economy (19%, +5 points)
- The Germans expect only slight changes concerning the economic situation even over a longer period of time. 49% (-1 point) of Germans expect that the situation will stay more or less the same over the next five years, 25% (+/- 0 points) believe that the situation will improve, while 21% expect the situation to worsen.

Unemployment is still the main concern of Germans

- For 74% (-7 points) unemployment is still the most urgent problem, followed by the economic situation (43%).
- 51% of all German respondents believe that the situation on the job market is getting worse.
- Most Germans are convinced that the fight against unemployment is a national problem (67%, +5 points) foremost. Only 31% (-4 points) believe that the problem could be dealt better jointly within the European Union.

A positive picture of the European Union

- 40% (-2 points) of Germans have a positive image of the European Union.
- 56% (-2 points) of Germans associate the freedom to work and to travel with the European Union.
- A majority of Germans associates a life in peace within the European Union.
- Only every fifth (19%, +4 points) respondent associates the EU with economic success – once again underlining the problems of the Lisbon Process.
- For 47% (+3 points), the EU stands for cultural diversity.

A majority of Germans as well as Europeans overall think that EU membership is a good thing

- 53% (-5 points) of Germans and 50% (-4 points) of Europeans as a whole think that EU membership is a good thing

Trust of the Germans in European institutions has risen significantly

- 43% (+6 points) trust the European Commission.

- 40% (+5 points) of Germans trust the European Council, 62% (+6 points) trust the Court of Justice of the European Communities, 56% (+4 points) of Germans believe, that the European Central Bank is capable of guaranteeing a stable Euro and 46% (+/-0 points) trust the European Court of Auditors.

Still low levels of trust in German and European Democracy

- The number of Germans who believe that their voice does not count in Europe has risen again by 1 point to 56%.

Germans, as well as Europeans as a whole, want more information and more involvement in European affairs

- 71% of the Germans do not feel sufficiently involved in European affairs. East Germans, in particular, feel that Europe is something happening without their participation (79%).
- Every second German (53%) and 47% of Europeans in general want to be more involved in European issues, but do not know how to go about it.
- 80% of Europeans, as well as 78% of Germans, expect the European institutions to make greater efforts to involve them in European affairs.
- However, 81% of both Germans and Europeans in general expect their national government to involve them more in European affairs.
- 73% of Germans and 76% of Europeans overall believe that local Government should make more effort to involve its citizens more in European affairs.

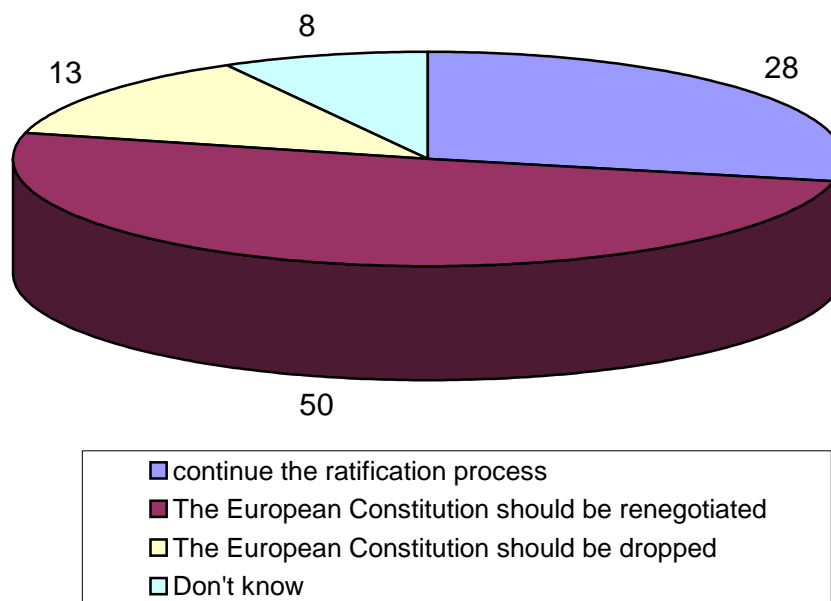
The development towards a European political union is supported by a clear majority but is also a source of fear

- 61% of Germans support the development of the EU towards a European political Union (-3 points).
- However, in Western Germany, support has fallen by 4 points to 60%, while Eastern Germans support political union a little bit more in autumn 2005 than half a year before (+4 points, 67%).
- Europe-wide, 55% (-3 points) of respondents favour a European political union
- Germans believe that controls at EU borders are not strict enough (41%, +8 points) causing rising crime rates (36%, +2 points).
- The fear of organised international crime is one of the main concerns of Germans (75%, +2 points).
- Declining importance of their language is a problem for 42% (+3 points) of Germans.
- Rising payments to the European Union represent a problem for 74% (+6 points) of the German poll.
- The deterioration of social standards and social transfers is increasingly seen as a severe problem by 64% of Germans (+4 points). The European Union is not seen as part of the solution but as part of the problem.
- As in earlier surveys, the transfer of jobs to other member countries with lower production costs is of central concern to a large majority of Germans (84%, +/-0 points).

Still support for the European Constitution

- Every second German (50%) and also every second European (49%) thinks that the European Constitution should be renegotiated. 65% of the respondents in France and 64% in the Netherlands have the same attitude
- 28% of Germans (and 22% of Europeans on average) want the ratification process to continue and only 13% of Germans (and the same percentage of Europeans across the board) want to drop the constitution completely

QA49 13 countries have ratified the European Constitution, but France and the Netherlands voted "no". Which of the following best describes your view? Basis: 1534 German citizen 15 years and older



- 69% of Germans and 60% of Europeans think that a constitution would help the European institutions to function better.
- 22% of Germans and 25% of Europeans don't believe that a constitution is necessary to make the European institutions function better.
- 67% of Germans and 64% of Europeans are convinced that a constitution would make the European Union more democratic.
- 58% of Germans and 61% of Europeans believe that a constitution would make the European Union more efficient.
- 55% of Germans and 56% of Europeans expect the constitution to make the European Union more transparent.
- 75% of Germans and 69% of Europeans expect the constitution to make the European Union play a stronger role internationally.
- 65% of Germans and 64% of Europeans believe that the constitution would make the EU more competitive.

Further enlargement of the European Union heavily criticized

- Only 3% see further enlargement as a priority

- 59% of Germans are against the accession of further countries in the coming years, although 49% of the European poll as a whole would favour further accessions.
- However, Germans have few objections to the accession of countries such as Switzerland, Norway or Iceland.
- Interestingly enough, every third German could imagine the accession of the Ukraine into the European Union (30%, +/-0 points) and Europe-wide 42% (-3 points) would accept the accession of the Ukraine.
- Only every fifth German (21%, +/-0 points) and every third European (31%, -4 points) could imagine Turkey becoming a member of the EU.

The international role of the USA is heavily criticised

- A majority of Germans (64%, -2 points) and Europeans (53%, -2 points) rate the impact of the USA on world peace negatively. 77% (+3 points) of Germans and 63% of Europeans (+/-0 points) are convinced of the positive role the EU is playing in the field of international politics.
- The judgement concerning the role of the USA in the fight against terrorism is less clear. Although 43% believe that the policy of the USA is not suited to curb the dangers of international terrorism, a rising number of Germans are not so sure anymore. 63% (+3 points) of Germans rate the role of the European Union as positive. However, 25% (-4 points) don't make a judgement on this matter.
- A small relative majority (38%; -3 points) thinks that the USA has a positive influence on the world economy, but 23% (+4 points) don't have an opinion.
- Almost every second European (49%, -1 point) and almost every second German (48%, +3 points) also believes in the positive influence of the European Union on the world economy.
- Both Germans (59%, -3 points) and Europeans (51%, -1 point) are convinced that the role played by the USA in the fight against poverty is insufficient. Both Germans and Europeans evaluate the role of the EU in this policy field more highly: (54%, +/-0 points) and (49%, +/-0 points)
- Equally clear is the evaluation of the role of the United States concerning international environmental policy. Only 9% (+/-0 points) of Germans and 17% (-1 points) of Europeans see the USA playing a positive role in this field.

Economic performance of the USA and Japan is rated higher than that of the EU but the quality of life is better in Europe

- A relative majority of Germans (36%, -3 points) and Europeans (37%, -2 points) believes that the US economy performs better than the European economy.
- Even clearer is the rating concerning the performance of the Japanese economy: both Germans (44%, +/-0 points) and Europeans in general (45%, +/-0 points) believe that the European economy is performing worse than the Japanese economy.
- Both Europeans and Germans like to live in the European Union and rate the quality of life there as higher than that in the USA (Germans 58%, +7 points, Europeans 51%, +5 points), Japan (Germans 52%, +8 points, Europeans 46%, +2 points), China (Germans 71%, +4 points, Europeans 74%, +4 points) and India (Germans 71%, +/-0 points, Europeans 79%, +3 points).

Germans think that their knowledge of the EU has improved since the last survey

- 46% (-1 point) of Germans think they understand how the EU works and how its institutions function
- While the self-evaluated level of knowledge about the EU declined slightly among Western Germans, more easterners think they comprehend the functioning of the EU

The Germans want to know more about the EU – television is still the main source of information

- Every fourth German (24%) admits that he should know more about the EU. 39% would like to know more about the EU, while 36% are satisfied with their knowledge
- Germans want more information especially in regard to their rights as European citizens (55%), on the EU's employment policy (45%), on education and youth policy (43%), as well as on the functioning of European institutions.
- Germans get information on the EU mainly through television (81%, +/-0 point), daily newspapers (62%, +2 points), the radio (42%, -4 points), in discussions with friends and relatives (32%, +3 points), from magazines (26%, +3 points) and on the internet, an information source for every fourth German (25%, +2 points). Only 3% (-3 points) visit conferences and events and only 1% use telephone services like EuropeDirect.

German citizens don't know on what the European Union budget is spent

- Most Germans think that the bulk of the European Union budget is spent on administrative and personnel costs and buildings (43%), followed by agriculture (16%) and regional aid (8%).

QA37 On which of the following do you think most of the European Union budget is spent? Basis: 1534 German citizen 15 years and older

