

EUROBAROMETER 65

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2006

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GERMANY

This survey was requested and coordinated by Directorate-General Communication.

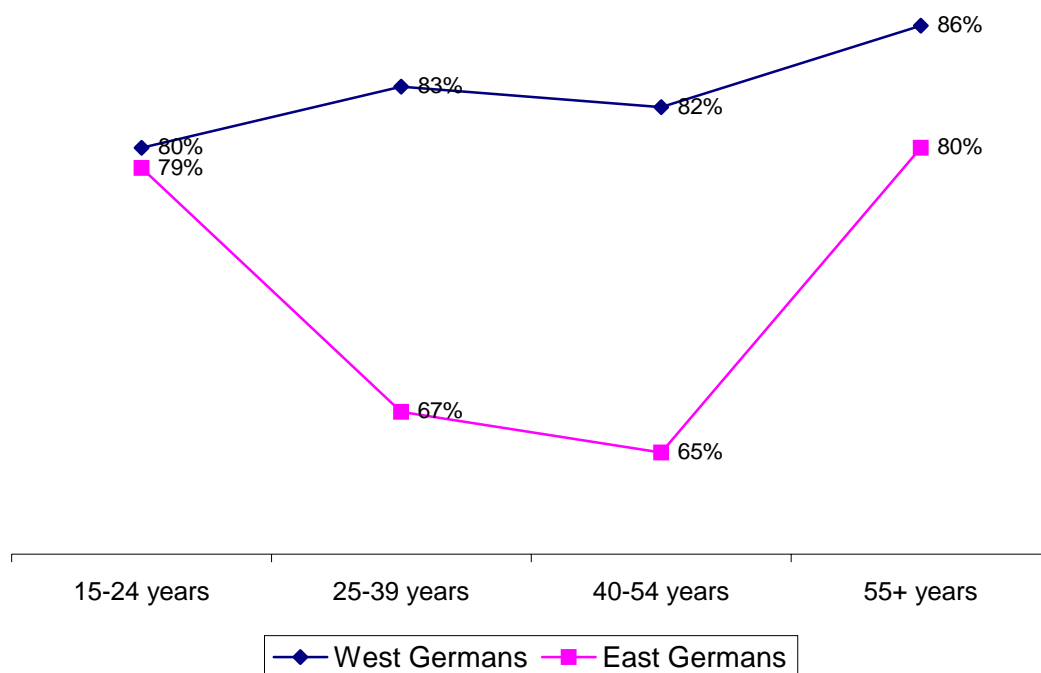
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East and West Germans are satisfied with their life

- Almost three out of four East Germans (73%, - 1 point) and 83% (+ 3 points) of West Germans are satisfied with the life they lead.
- In East Germany, it is mainly the younger respondents (79%) and the older ones (80%) who are satisfied with their life, whereas the age groups in between (25-39 years: 67% satisfaction, 40-54 years 65% satisfaction) are significantly less satisfied.

QA3: I am satisfied with the life I lead / age groups



- In Western Germany, all age groups are satisfied with the life they lead (> 80%).

Many are sceptical when it comes to general and economic development

- 58% of respondents in East Germany and 63% of those in West Germany do not believe that their own lives will change significantly. Nevertheless, almost every second East German (46%, -4 points) and 41% of the West Germans (-4 points) expect a worsening of the situation.
- A majority of East (58%) and West Germans (50%) expect a further deterioration in the employment situation in Germany. They do not, however, expect a change in their personal job situation (East Germans 65%, +2 points, West Germans 62%, -4 points).

Germans are the most pessimistic Europeans

- 39% of East Germans and 25% of West Germans expect their own life to get worse. East Germans, and in particular those aged between 40 and 54 years, are pessimistic. On the other hand, young East Germans aged between 15 and 24 years are even more optimistic than their western counterparts (East 72% vs. West 59%) when it comes to the expectations regarding their own lives.

- The most optimistic views are among students in the East (87%) and West (62%), of Germany followed by unemployed respondents (East 39%, West 42%).
- Of all respondents throughout Europe, the Germans are most pessimistic about the coming five years. With only 25% optimism they are at the bottom of the ranking in Europe.

East Germans mistrust both German and European democracy

- Germans are more dissatisfied with the state of European democracy than the EU25 average. Especially low – and lower than in any other European country – is the figure in East Germany. Only every fourth East German thinks that his voice counts in the European Union (East 24%, -7 points and West 37%, -2 points).
- 60% of West Germans but only 34% of the East Germans are satisfied with democracy in Germany.

In favour of free trade and social security –against globalisation and public administration

- Germans still have a positive attitude towards the term *company* (East 63%, -4 points, West 67%).
- Also the term *competition* is supported by respondents. However, East Germans cherish the term less than one year previously (65%, -6 points). In West Germany, three out of four respondents oppose this term.
- *Social security* is highly valued in West (68%) and East Germany (77%).
- In West Germany, *free trade* (79%) is widely seen as positive. East Germans are slightly less enthusiastic about the term (71%, -5 points).
- *Protectionism* arouses negative reactions in Germany (52% negative vs. 24% positive), even though in East Germany the number of those who reject the claim sank significantly by 10 points (49%).
- Reactions to the term *globalisation* tend to be more on the negative side in Germany (57%, +4 points) than on the positive (37%, +1 points).
- In regard to the term *trade unions*, Germans are ambivalent (54% pro, 41% contra).
- While West Germans are pro *reforms* (54%), just as many East Germans are in favour of and against reforms (48%).
- There is no clear position taken in regard to the term *public administration* throughout Europe. East Germans are the most severe adversaries to public administration (against 63% vs. for 34%).

East Germans don't see advantages in EU membership

- The attitude to EU membership is getting more positive. In particular, in West Germany, there is a significant rise (58%, +6 points).
- However, a significant proportion of East Germans, in particular, do not see any advantage in EU membership (50%). In West Germany, the attitude is slightly more enthusiastic (advantageous 47% vs. not advantageous 44%).

The EU means mobility and peace but also bureaucracy and a waste of money

- Germans associate mobility (57%), peace and the euro with Europe (> 50 %).
- However, Europe also arouses negative associations such as waste of money (44%), bureaucracy (37%), unemployment (34%), rising crime (34%) or insufficient controls at EU borders (33%).

Germans don't expect too much of the EU when it comes to political or economic issues

- Germans do not believe in economic stabilisation through EU membership (West 57%, East 63%).
- Similarly Europeans are very ambivalent about political stabilisation through EU membership. 50% of East Germans and 45% of West Germans do not believe in it.

Europe's future role

- 42% (-6 points) of West Germans and 37% (-8 points) in the East believe that the EU will become even more important in five years from now.
- 46% (-5 points) of East Germans and 43% (-3 points) of West Germans want the EU to play a more important role in five years from now.

EU-Integration: Germans fear a transfer of jobs

- The central problem of European integration for many Germans is still the possible transfer of jobs to countries with lower production costs (85%, +1 point).
- Together with a fear in regard to their own job, many respondents are beginning to worry about the loss of social benefits. 74% of East Germans (+1 point) and 66% of respondents in West Germany (+4 points) fear European integration will result in cutbacks in social security.
- In almost all countries of the EU, a majority fears that their own country will have to pay more and more to the EU. In Germany, this fear is especially significant.

Need for action: Unemployment still is the central issue in Germany

- In Germany, unemployment is by far the most important issue cited by respondents (78%). East Germans see the problem as being even more important (82%).
- In second and third place are the economic situation (26%) and the healthcare system (24%).

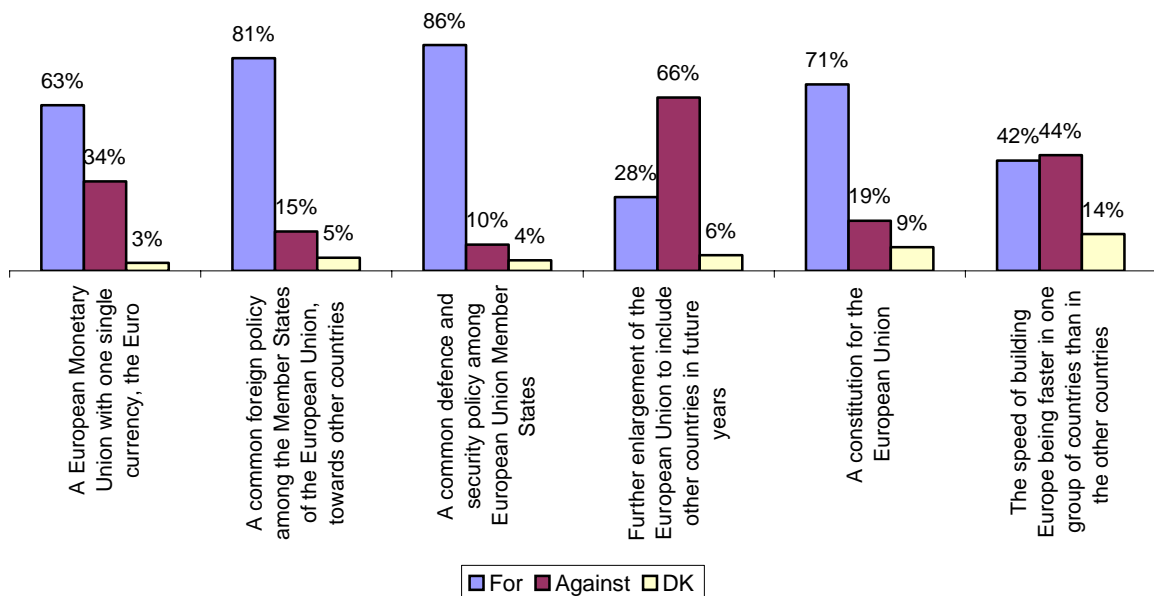
Negative evaluation for the EU for the coping with key problems

- Every second German (51%, +1 point) is convinced that the Euro has fuelled inflation. 47% (+10 points) of East Germans and 43% (+4 points) of West Germans think that the EU is responsible for higher taxes.
- For the success of Europe, there is virtually no issue that is more important than the fight against unemployment. In East, as well as in West Germany, respondents are convinced that the EU has made a poor job of fighting unemployment (51%, +2 points).
- The most positive evaluations for the EU can be seen in the field of fighting crime (54%, +5 points), the fight against terrorism (63%, +5 points), foreign and defence policy (63%, +5 points) and in the protection of the environment (51%).

Germans are in favour of deeper integration and against further enlargement

- East and West Germans are in favour of the Euro and the European Monetary Union.
- Germans are the most ardent supporters of a common foreign policy throughout Europe (81%) and East Germans are even more enthusiastic (85%). Two out of three Europeans are in favour of such a deep coordination of foreign policies.
- Even more supportive are the respondents in Germany with respect to a common defence and security policy (pro 86%). Three out of four Europeans are in favour of a European common security policy.
- Willingness to integrate new countries into the EU has decreased further. Only 32% (-8 points) of East and 27% (-8 points) of the West Germans are in favour of further enlargement.
- All member or candidate countries have a majority in favour of an EU constitution. (EU pro 3:1 contra). In Germany, 71% are for a constitution. Also, in France and the Netherlands, there are clear majorities in favour of a constitution.

QA30: What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell me for each statement, whether you are for it or against it



Germans are focused on the region but feel also attached to Europe

- East and West Germans both display a strong sense of belonging to their town (90% East, 87% West).
- Similarly, they feel attached to the region in which they are living (90% East, 88% West).
- They are strongly attached to Germany (East 82%, -2 points, West 90%, +3 points).

- Germans are to a lower degree also attached to Europe (East 62%, -4 points, West 69%, +3 points).

Germans know and value the symbols of the European Union

- Almost every German (98%) has seen the European flag and knows what it symbolises (92%).
- The great majority of East Germans (82%, -2 points) and West Germans (87%, +3 points) think that the flag is a good symbol for Europe.
- 61% of West Germans (+5 points) and 53% of East Germans (-5 points) are able to identify with the European flag.

European constitution: Support for more democracy but ignorance of the content

- Two out of three Germans (67%) had heard of the constitution but know little about its contents.
- Most Germans expect the constitution to make the EU more democratic (East Germany 64%, - 6 points; West Germany 63%, -1 point).
- Like Europeans in general, a majority of Germans want a renegotiation of the constitution.

Insufficient knowledge of European affairs in West and East Germany

- 40% of the Germans (-4 points) believe that the EU consists of 15 member states. Concerning this issue the German standard of knowledge is well below the European average.
- Even when asked whether the members of the European Parliament are elected directly by citizens of the European Union, 40% of East Germans are not sure.
- 48% in East- and West Germany suspect that the major part of the budget of the European Union is spent on administrative and personnel costs. In the European Union overall, 41% think the same.

Television is still the most important medium of information while the internet is gaining ground especially among the young

- Germans still get their information from television (82%), followed by the daily press (62%), radio (47%) and the internet (25%).
- Among Germans, discussions with friends, family and colleagues (31%) beats the internet as a medium of information.
- In the age group between 15-24 years, the internet is the second most important source of information (43%) behind television (76%). Among students, the role of the internet is even more important (52%).

Satisfaction with degree and objectivity of EU related reporting in national media

- Germans are satisfied with the degree of EU-related reporting. 63% (+15 points) in the East and 53% (+3 points) in the West think that television reports about the right amount about EU affairs (Press: East 65%, +7 points, West 63%, +5 points; Radio: East 52%, +5 points, West 49%, +4 points).

- The objectivity of reporting is rated by the Germans as rather good: The majority is satisfied with the reporting done by the press (58%, +2 points), television (57% +2 points) and radio (53%, -2 points).