

EUROBAROMETER 65

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2006

NATIONAL REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SPAIN

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**Eurobarometer 65.2 – Spring 2006
National Report Spain**

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION TO EUROBAROMETER EB65.2

Chapter 1: The general climate and level of satisfaction of the Spanish public

- 1.1 Level of satisfaction with the type of life they lead amongst the Spanish poll
- 1.2 Spanish opinion about the future and life expectations
- 1.3 Main worries among the Spanish poll

Chapter 2: Spanish trust in the European Institutions

- 2.1 Spanish trust in the European Commission
- 2.2 Spanish trust in the European Parliament
- 2.3 General knowledge of the Spanish poll about the EU
- 2.4 Scale of knowledge about the EU and its activities

Chapter 3: Spanish public opinion about the membership of the EU

- 3.1 Spanish support towards the EU membership
- 3.2 General views on the benefits of being a member of the EU
- 3.3 The image of the EU in the media

Chapter 4: Political Union and the European Constitution

- 4.1 Spanish support for the future development of the EU
- 4.2 Feelings of the Spanish public regarding the European Constitution
- 4.3 Spanish opinion about the role of the EU: Present and Future

CONCLUSIONS EB65

Appendix:

Technical Specifications

Questionnaire EB65 (Spanish version)

INTRODUCTION

Between 27 March and 1 May 2006, TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium created between Taylor Nelson Sofres and EOS Gallup Europe carried out wave EB65.2 of the Standard Eurobarometer in the 25 EU Member States on the request of DG Press and Communication. The current Spanish edition includes a Standard National Report (in Spanish) and an Executive Summary focusing on the main conclusions about overall public opinion in Spain in spring 2006. The EB edition is also used as a framework for recommendations to the EC Representation in Spain. The executive summary presented in this document will summarise the most important conclusions of the Spanish National Report.

The Spanish EB65 National Report was structured around 4 (four) themes of analysis, as seen in the table of contents. For each of the themes, a list of topics is covered, such as public opinion and information on European issues or, personal satisfaction with EU actions and policies. Socio-demographic analysis of the data is made in order to emphasise some of the findings of the Spanish case. Additionally, there are a series of data offered in the form of a follow-up from consecutive Eurobarometer surveys, carried out in recent years. For these data, the main trends are described for selected questions.

The main novelties of EB 65 in respect of earlier editions of EB include the stability in the levels of trust of the Spanish public in the EU institutions, an analysis of the opinion of Spanish public in respect to their feelings about becoming European, the support shown for the European Constitution and the fears of the public regarding the future enlargement of Europe. Also, emphasis is, again, placed upon issues such as the policies and activities of the EU, as well as an increased satisfaction with the way the EU works.

Chapter 1: The general climate and level of satisfaction of the Spanish public

“ There is a decrease in the level of satisfaction among the Spanish public as to the type of life the lead”

Overall, and in comparison with the earlier edition of EB in autumn 2005, the Spanish group answered fairly positively about the level of satisfaction with the type of life they lead. With a decrease of -2 points, the Spanish poll said they felt “very satisfied” with the type of life they lead (21% in comparison with 23% in the earlier edition). However, another 66% said they felt “fairly satisfied” with their lives, in comparison with 60% of the average EU results (Table 1).

Table 1: Overall, would you say you are very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied, with the type of life you lead?

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Not very satisfied	Not at all satisfied
EU25 (EB65)	21%	60%	15%	4%
ES (EB65)	22%	66%	10%	1%
ES (EB64)	23%	61%	13%	2%
ES (EB63)	17%	63%	11%	2%

“The Spanish group maintains its positive evaluation about the next year”

The Spanish public seems to be becoming increasingly more positive about the future (Table 2).

Table 2: Expectations for the year to come

	Better	Worse	Same	DK
Your life in general	40	8	50	2
The economic situation in Spain	25	26	41	8
The economic situation in your household	30	13	55	2
The employment situation in Spain	25	26	39	9
Your personal employment situation	28	6	65	2

Also, around 47% of the Spanish interviewees (39% is the average of the 25 EU member states) think that their life in the next five years will be better, while only 7% of the sample thinks it will be “worse”.

Chapter 2: Spanish trust in the European Institutions

“The overall Spanish public opinion regarding the EU institutions has remained the same since the last edition of the autumn of 2005”

Levels of trust have been decreasing although, as is the general trend in most of the EU Member States, the public still feels there are a lot of things that can be improved in terms of their knowledge and participation in EU affairs:

- 47% of the group said they “tend to trust” the European Parliament and another 25% said they “tend not to trust” it.
- Although the Spanish public seems to trust the EU and its role in the world, less than half of the group (45%) said they trust the European Commission
- Among the various occupational groups interviewed, there is a broadly positive attitude towards the EU institutions. However, there are important differences among these groups. For example, while 64% of managers said they “tend to trust” the EU Commission, only 54% of the self-employed and 48% of manual workers said they trusted this institution.
- Among those who said they “tend to trust” the EU Commission, there is a small difference between those living in urban areas and those living in rural ones: 52% of those in urban areas said they trust the EU Commission compared with 43% of those living in rural ones.
- Overall, trust in the EU institutions among Spanish respondents has increased in this edition. Compared with earlier editions, the “level of trust” in the European Parliament has slightly increased. The European Parliament is the only European institution to have maintained the higher levels of trust in this edition.

Chapter 3: Spanish public opinion about the membership of the EU

“More than two-thirds of Spanish respondents think that being a member of the EU is “something good”

This positive attitude of the Spanish poll is maintained since the previous edition of EB. In EB65, 72% of the poll share this view. Another 15% thinks that Spain’s membership is “neither good not bad”.

- Of those thinking that the Spanish membership is something “good”, 78% are men and 66% are women
- Similarly, 91% are white-collar professionals, 74% are self-employed, 76% are manual workers and 88% are students.
- 68% of those living in rural areas or villages think that Spanish membership is “good”, while 75% of those living in large towns share this view.

“More than two-thirds of respondents think that Spain has benefited from its EU membership”

71 % of the Spanish poll thought that Spain has “benefited” from its EU membership, while 13% said that Spain has “not benefited”. A further 14% said they “don’t know”.

	benefited	not benefited
Men	76	13
Women	66	13
15-24	79	9
25-39	75	13
40-54	75	15
55+	59	13
Professionals	95	0
Self-employed	68	17
Manual workers	78	13
Unemployed	72	13
Students	88	7

51% of the Spanish poll thinks that the image of the EU in the media is “more or less positive”, while another 10% thinks it is “very positive”. The same percentage of the group thought that on TV they speak “enough” about the EU.

Chapter 4: Political Union and the European Constitution

“The Spanish poll said they are “in favour” of the development of a European Union”

- For example, 60% of the group they were “in favour” of the EURO
- Among those who said they were “in favour” of the EURO, 69% are men, 51% are women, while 81% are managers, 81% are students and 74% are manual workers.
- Support for the development of the European Union is greater among those living in middle sized towns, with 70% “in favour” and 10% “against” it. Against the development of the EU are 15% of those living in large towns and 13% of those living in rural areas.
- In the same way, 64% said they were “in favour” of a common European foreign policy, while only 12% said they were “against” this.

Also, 36% of the poll said they feel “more or less attached to Spain”, while 41% said the same for Europe. Although the Spanish public seems to be more attached to Spain than to Europe, there is a growing difference in those groups of people who feel “more or less attached “ to either Spain or Europe.

“ There was also a very positive attitude towards the existence of a Constitution”

A great majority of the Spanish poll said that they are in favour of the existence of an EU Constitution. 63% of the group said they “ tend to agree” about the existence of an EU Constitution, while another 13% said they are “ against” it.

“ The majority of the Spanish group said they are ‘in favour’ of the future enlargement of the EU”

More than half of the Spanish poll said they are ‘in favour’ of the future enlargement of the EU, with more countries to joining as member states.

- 55% of the group said they are ‘in favour’ of a future enlargement, a difference of +10 points with the EU average (EU-25: 45%)
- Another 15% said they are “against” the future enlargement of the European Union, in contrast to the EU25 average of 42%. There is also a big difference between Spain and the EU25 average in terms of opposition to EU enlargement.

Among the Spanish poll, there is the belief and hope that the EU will play just as an important role in the future as it does today.

“37% of the group said that they would like the EU to play an important role in the next 5 years”

In the Spanish poll, there is the belief that the EU plays an important role in the fight against crime, with 42% of the sample agreeing with this statement.

Even more importantly, however, is the fact that 52% of the Spanish public consider the EU plays an important role in the fight against terrorism.

Unlike other Member States, the Spanish poll feels less positive regarding the role played by the EU in terms of fighting unemployment. Only 29% said they felt that the EU played an important role in this respect.

Conclusions EB65.2

In the Eurobarometer 65.2 edition, the overall feeling about the state of Spanish public opinion is that citizens are more interested in the latest developments of the EU but are still more critical about the way the EU works and their level of participation. These opinions include the support that European citizens still show towards the EU Constitution.

Spaniards were, once again, very satisfied in regard to the development of the EU. They said they had an average knowledge about the EU, its policies and actions, situating their level of knowledge between level 4 and 5 in a scale from 1 to 10. They also said they are “in favour” of teaching in schools how the EU works.

Most of them think they have, so far, “benefited” from Spain’s EU membership, and that being a member has been something “good” for them. They show great support for the future enlargement of the EU and they fully support the idea of having a common Foreign Policy as well as a common Defence and Security Policy for all Member States.

The less positive aspects in the present edition were those concerning the levels of trust towards some of the EU institutions, which decreased somewhat since the last edition of autumn 2005, and are very low. Thus, while the European Parliament has maintained quite a high level of the trust among the public, the European Commission is the one institution in which the Spanish public feels they trust less. Also, other criticisms deal with the social and economic situation in Spain but also in Europe, and security, immigration and unemployment are three major concerns that the Spanish poll has about the future. In this edition of EB, housing and immigration have also scored high in the ranking of important issues that Spain faces at present.

As to the future enlargement of the EU, the Spanish public seems to have a quite divided opinion, although the majority of the group said they are 'in favour' of a future enlargement. Once again, Spanish concerns are mostly around issues of economic and social stability since they consider that "unemployment and crime levels may rise".

Overall, the image of the EU portrayed through the Spanish media seems to be very positive, with journalists once again being cited as a trustworthy source of information for the Spanish public. Respondents feel that the Spanish media speak "about the right amount" about the EU, and that the information they get is usually either "objective" or "too positive".

The Eurobarometer website may be consulted at:
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index_en.htm