

EUROBAROMETER 66

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTUMN 2006

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.
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Knowledge of the German Presidency

- 59% of Germans know nothing about Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union during the first half of 2007.
- Asked whether they think the presidency is important – independently of whether they had heard of it or not - a majority of 70% said it was very important.

The development towards a political union

- In Germany (59%, -2 points) and Europe (54%, -1 point) the majority of respondents still supports the development of the EU towards a political union.

Image

- 42% (-1 point) of Germans and 46% (-4 points) of Europeans have a good image of the EU. In Germany, students (57%), managers (52%), the self-employed and white-collar occupational groups (both 47%) have the best image of the EU. The image of Europe is comparatively worse among blue collar workers (35%) and the unemployed (27%).

Evaluation of individual and general effects of EU membership

- 59% (+1 point) of Germans and 53% (-2 points) of Europeans think that their country's membership of the EU is a good thing. A relative majority (49%, +3 points) of Germans believes that Germany has profited from membership. In Europe overall, 54% of respondents agree.

Common Foreign and Security Policy

- From the German perspective, one priority of the EU should be European and international security. 84% (-2 points) of the Germans want a common European defence and security policy and 77% (-4 points) want a common EU foreign policy.

Fight against unemployment, poverty and social exclusion

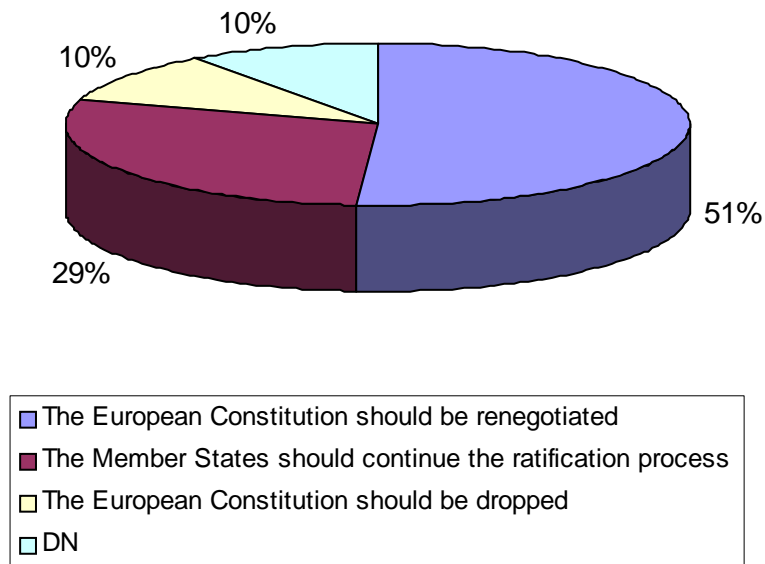
- 53% (-3 points) of Germans and 40% (-3 points) of Europeans expect the EU to do more about unemployment, and 41% (-3 points) of Germans and 43% of Europeans want the EU to fight against poverty and social exclusion.

European Constitution

- 40% (+8 points) of Germans expect a European Constitution to be helpful for further European integration.
- 73% (+2 points) of Germans are in favour of a European Constitution. Against it are 17% (-2 points). Undecided are 10% (+1 point).
- 63% (+2 Pp) of Europeans are in favour of an European Constitution.
- 48% (+1 points) of Europeans and 51% (+1 points) of Germans favour new negotiations about the constitution. Only 10% (-2 points) of Germans and 13% of Europeans think that the constitution should be abolished altogether.
- In the two countries that caused the 'constitution crisis' with their 'No' to the proposed text, a majority now is in favour of the European Constitution. In

France, 16% (+2 points) of all respondents want to drop the constitution completely while 66% (-3 points) think that the text should be renegotiated. In the Netherlands, there are also 16% (-2 points) who want to drop the constitution while 65% (+5 points) of respondents think that the text should be renegotiated

QA37: The future of the European Constitution /Germany



Sustainability of the European economic and social model

- Europeans still see the USA ahead in the technical and scientific realm and in economic organisation and capability. Concerning social matters, the protection of the environment and the health care system, both Europeans and Germans see the EU as better organised and more capable than the USA.

Possible improvements of the European economy

- It is most reasonable in the view of Europeans (65%, +3 points) and Germans (75%, +5 points) to invest in education.
- Of equal importance is increasing investment in research and development. 47% (+/-0 points) of Europeans and 65% (+/- 0 points) of Germans take this view.
- 43% (+/-0 points) of Europeans and 51% (+1 points) of Germans think that deregulation and simpler rules for start-ups are appropriate measures to foster the European economy.
- Energy efficiency is also of growing importance in times of rising energy prices for Europeans (36%, +4 points) and Germans (35% +4 points).
- Ongoing investment in infrastructure is considered fundamental by 27% (+4 points) of Europeans and 17% (+2 points) of Germans.
- A rise in legal working hours is only supported by a small minority of Germans (8%, +/-0 points) and Europeans (10%, +/-0 points).

Globalization

- Compared with the previous survey, more Germans see the process of globalization as an opportunity for enterprises to open up new markets (41%, +7 points). In Europe, 40% (+3 points) share this perspective.
- Only 47% (-12 points) of Germans and 41% (-6 points) of Europeans believe that globalization poses a danger to enterprises and jobs.
- Only 36% of Germans and 41% of Europeans understand the EU to offer protection against the negative consequences of globalization.
- 46% of the Germans and 48% of the Europeans believe that the EU enables them to profit from the positive effects of globalization.

Enlargement – what countries should join the EU?

- 78% (+1 point) of all Europeans and 87% (+3 points) of all Germans could imagine Switzerland as a member of the EU immediately. The same was true for Norway (Europe: 78%, +1 point, Germany 86%, +3 points) or Iceland (Europe 69%, +1 point, Germany 74%, +3 points).
- There are more provisos against poorer or bigger countries: Turkey, a country with official candidate status, is considered as a feasible potential member of the EU by 28% (-3 points) of Europeans and 16% (-5 points) of Germans. Only 39% of Europeans and 39% (-2 points) of Germans are in favour of the accession of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The opinion is somewhat less clear in the case of Croatia. 44% of Germans could imagine its accession, while 48% oppose such a possibility and 8% are undecided. In Europe, 50% (-1 point) want Croatia to join the EU. A relative majority of Europeans supports the joining of Bulgaria next year. 56% (+2 points) of Germans are still against the accession. 46% (+4 points) of Europeans and 64% (+2 points) of Germans are against the accession of Romania.

Defence and foreign affairs

- Two-thirds of Europeans and Germans (64%, +1 point / 69% +1 point) believe that cooperation between the EU and the national member countries would be the best way towards a coherent and effective foreign policy in a globalized world. In general, 77% (-4 points) of Germans and 68% (+1 point) of Europeans think that a common foreign policy would make sense while 84% (-2 points) of Germans and 75% of Europeans are in favour of a common defence and security policy.

Fight against terrorism

- International terrorism can only be fought internationally, says a majority of Germans (88%, +6 points) and Europeans (79%, +1 point).

Energy policy and the protection of the environment

- A majority of Europeans (60%, +1 points) and Germans (66%, + 10 points) is convinced that a successful, sustainable and geopolitical sound energy policy is only feasible if the EU and the member countries cooperate.

- Concerning environmental protection, a majority of Europeans (64%, -2 points) and Germans (76%, +8 points) believes that international problems should be dealt with internationally and that therefore the member states should cooperate with the EU.

Satisfaction with their own life

- 70 % of all East Germans (-3 points) and 85% (+2 points) of West Germans are satisfied with the life they lead. In East Germany, young people aged between 15 and 24 years (76%, -3 points) and those between 25 and 39 years (75%, +8 points), in particular, are satisfied with the life they lead while older respondents have grown more dissatisfied. Of those aged between 40 and 54, only 63%, (-2 points) are satisfied with their personal life, although the figure reaches 71% for those aged 55 or older.
- In West Germany, all four age groups record figures of over 80% satisfaction concerning their personal life.

Germans are sceptical about the general and economic development

- Neither East nor West Germans believe that fundamental changes or improvements will occur during the next twelve months.
- 53% (-5 points) of East Germans and 61% (-2 points) of West Germans believe that their own lives will not change.
- A majority of East (54%, +8 points) and West Germans (44%, +3 points) expect that Germany's economic situation will further deteriorate.
- In the course of the next twelve months, 41% (+11 points) of East Germans and 30% (+2 points) of West Germans expect that their financial situation will worsen.
- Germans do not view the development of the unemployment situation quite as dramatically as half a year ago. 19% (+2 points) of West Germans and 13% (+2 points) of East Germans believe that the situation will get better in the course of the next twelve months. However, 55% (-3 points) of East Germans and 43% (-7 points) of West Germans still expect a further deterioration of the situation.

Trust in European institutions

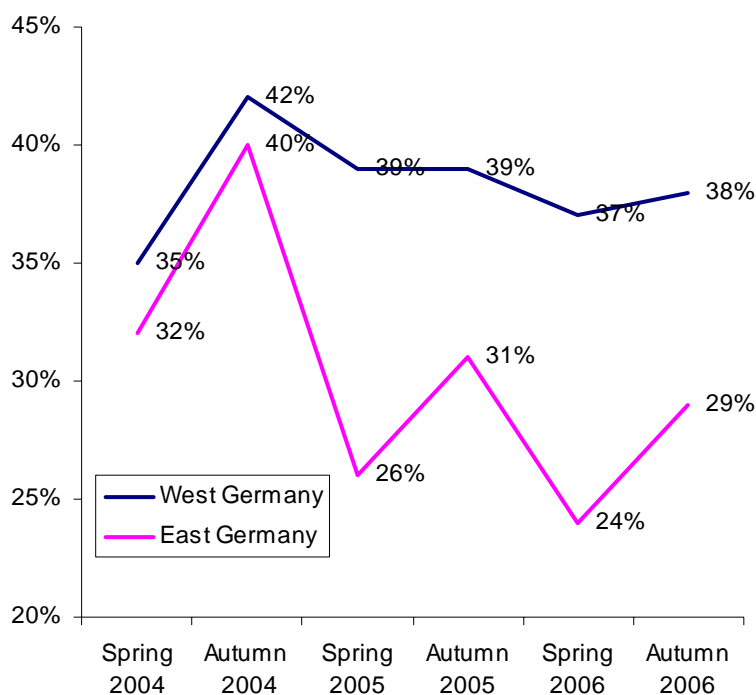
- Europeans and Germans alike trust the European Union slightly less (Europe 45%, -3 points, Germany 38%, -3 points).
- The level of trust in the European institutions corresponds with the knowledge Europeans have of these institutions and with the experiences citizens have had with them. 90% (+1 point) of Europeans know the European Parliament and 52% trust this institution. 92% (-1 point) of all Germans know the Parliament and 52% (+3 points) trust it. 82% (+1 point) of Europeans know the European Commission and 48% (-1 point) trust it. The corresponding figures for Germany are 79% and 42%.
- Trust in the European institutions diminishes the less these institutions are known. Only 40% (+3 points) of all Europeans and 22% of all Germans know the European Ombudsman and only every third European (35%, +3 points)

and 27% of Germans trust this institution specifically responsible for defending the interests of European citizens.

Involvement in European affairs

- 38% of West Germans and 29% of East Germans believe that their voice counts in the European Union. Over an extended period of time, it appears that in East Germany the feeling of involvement in European affairs is not only less than in the West but also more volatile.

QA12: My voice counts in the European Union (positive answers)



Values of the Europeans

- The dominant value in Europe is still peace (Europe 52%, -8 points, Germany 65%, -1 point), followed by respect for human life in general (Europe 43%, -3 points, Germany 37%, -1 point) and human rights (Europe 41%, +4 points, Germany 46%, +10 points). Democracy is for 24% (-1 point) of Europeans and 30% (+5 points) of Germans a very important value. Individual values are less important than three years ago. In Europe, only 11% (-5 points) think that self-fulfilment is important. In Germany, the drop is even more striking (10%, -6 points). Individual freedom dropped also significantly in importance. Only 22% (-8 points) of Europeans and 20% of Germans (-24 points) consider this value to be important.

Values attributed to the European Union

- For European respondents, the European Union stands mainly for the protection of human rights (38%, +2 points), democracy (38%, +8 points) and peace (36%, -2 points). In Germany, the European Union stands foremost for democracy (46%, +12 points), peace (46%) and human rights (41%, +2 points). These value attributes contrast significantly with what Europeans want the EU to stand for: social issues, energy security and environmental protection.

Identification with Europe

- 57% of Germans feel sometimes or often European.

Knowledge about the EU

- Only 36% (-10 points) of Germans know that the EU currently has more than fifteen member states. 44% (+4 points) of respondents thought this to be correct. In the EU on average, the number of those not knowing the exact number of member states is much lower (35%).
- Only a few Europeans have ever heard of the right to request access to non-published documents of European Union institutions (Europe 16%, Germany 12%).
- Only 42% (-11 points) of respondents in West Germany know that the Members of the European Parliament are directly elected by citizens. In East Germany, the picture is almost reversed. 52% (+6 points) of the respondents give the correct answer to this question. In Europe, 49% (-3 points) give the right answer.
- Most Europeans (27%, -4 points) and Germans (39%, -4 point) suspect that the main part of the European budget is spent on administration and personnel costs. In fact, the EU only spends a minor part of its budget on these items.