

EUROBAROMETER 66

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

AUTUMN 2006

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SPAIN

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

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

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION TO EUROBAROMETER EB66

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

- 1.1 Level of satisfaction in the Spanish poll with the type of life they lead
- 1.2 Spanish opinion about the future and life expectations
- 1.3 Trust in various institutions
- 1.4 Spanish support for EU membership
- 1.5 Opinion on the benefit of being a member of the EU
- 1.6 Main worries among the Spanish poll

Chapter 2: Spanish opinion on the employment and economy situation

- 2.1 The benefits of membership on the Spanish economy and employment
- 2.2 The common market and international competition
- 2.3 Spanish opinion for improving the EU economy
- 2.4 Opinion about the situation of the Spanish economy and employment

Chapter 3: Political Union and the European Constitution

- 3.1 Spanish support for the future development of the EU
- 3.2 Opinion about the future enlargement of the EU
- 3.3 Feelings of the Spanish public towards the European Constitution
- 3.4 Priorities for the EU

Chapter 4: Spanish opinion about the values of the EU

- 4.1 The feelings of participation among Spanish and European citizens
- 4.2 Spanish opinion on the new values of European society
- 4.3 The values that represent the Spanish public
- 4.4 Shared values between Spanish and EU citizens

CONCLUSIONS EB66

INTRODUCTION

Between the 6th of September and the 10th of October 2006, TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium created between Taylor Nelson Sofres and EOS Gallup Europe carried out wave EB66 of the Standard Eurobarometer in the 25 Member States on request of the European Commission's DG Press and Communication. The current Spanish edition includes a Standard National Report (in Spanish) and an Executive Summary focusing on the main conclusions regarding public opinion in Spain in autumn 2006. The EB edition is also used as a basis for recommendations to the EC Representation in Spain. The executive summary presented here in this document will summarise the most important conclusions of the Spanish National Report.

The Spanish EB66 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 trend is described for selected questions.

Novelties of EB 66, in respect to earlier editions, include public opinion in respect of the employment and economic situation of Spain and the EU, an analysis of the opinion of the Spanish public in respect to their values, as well as the support shown for the European Constitution and the public's fears regarding the future enlargement of the European Union. Also some emphasis is again placed upon issues such as the policies and activities of the EU, as well as the 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 they lead”

Overall, and in comparison with the earlier edition of 2006, the Spanish poll answered fairly positively about the level of satisfaction with the type of life they lead. With an increase of +4 points the Spanish group said they felt “very satisfied” with the type of life they lead (25% in comparison with 21% in the earlier edition). However, another 65% 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
UE25 (EB66)	22%	60%	14%	4%
ES (EB66)	25%	65%	9%	1%
ES (EB65)	22%	66%	10%	1%
ES (EB64)	23%	61%	13%	2%

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

The Spanish public seems to be fairly positive about the future (Table 2).

Table 2: Expectations for the year to come

	Better	Worse	Same
Your life in general	39	5	54
The economic situation in Spain	24	22	48
The economic situation in your household	27	9	63
The employment situation in Spain	23	22	48
Your personal employment situation	29	5	63

Also, around 39% of the Spanish interviewees thought that their life in the next year will be better, while only 5% of the group thinks it will be “worse”.

“Overall levels of Spanish trust in various national institutions is low”

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

- ⇒ Spanish public trusts the radio, the press and TV most. 67% of the group said they trust the radio, followed by 57% who said they trust the press and 50% the TV.
- ⇒ 40% of the group said they trust the Spanish government, and another 48% said they did not trust the Spanish national government.

“More than two-thirds of Spanish respondents think that Spain’s membership of the EU is “something good”

This positive attitude of the Spanish interviewees is maintained since the earlier edition. For EB66, two-thirds of the group thinks like that. Another 27% in the present edition thinks that Spain’s membership is “neither good not bad”.

- ⇒ 64% of the Spanish group thought that Spain has “benefited” from its EU membership.
- ⇒ Immigration is thought by the Spanish public to be the most important problem Spain faces, followed by that of terrorism.

Table 3: Opinion on the benefits of the Spanish membership to the EU

	Benefited	Not Benefited
Men	68	21
Women	59	19
15-24	65	22
25-39	71	19
40-54	72	16
55+	50	23
Professionals	89	9
Self-employed	74	14
Manual workers	78	13
Unemployed	62	26
Students	64	22

Chapter 2: Spanish opinion on the employment and the economic situation

"The Spanish public feels that the EU had a positive impact on their country's economy"

- ⇒ In the Spanish poll, a majority (62%) believe that EU membership has had a positive effect on their country's economy. Another 22% said that the effects of membership were negative.
- ⇒ On the other hand, less than half think that the effects of membership were positive for the employment situation of the country (40% of the sample).

Table 4: Do you think that the membership of your country had a "good" effect on...?

	The Spanish economy	The employment in Spain
Men	56	42
Women	46	38
independent workers	68	49
manual workers	57	46
unemployed	43	35

- ⇒ The majority (45%) of the Spanish thinks that the Single European Market had "fairly positive" effects for Spain. Another 11 % thought that the effects of the single European market were "very positive".
- ⇒ In terms of "international competition in the last 10 years", more than half of the group (54%), thinks that it is better today.
- ⇒ Improving education and professional training, facilitating the creation of enterprises and investing more in research and development are the three ways that the Spanish public proposed as means to improve the European economy.
- ⇒ Almost half of the group (47%) said they thought that the situation of the Spanish economy was "fairly positive".

Chapter 3: Political Union and the European Constitution

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

=> A great majority of the Spanish said that they are in favour of the existence of an EU Constitution. 62% of the group said they are "in favour" of the existence of an EU Constitution, while another 40% said they agree that the EU will work more "efficiently" with a Constitution, and another 37% that it will be more "transparent".

⇒ Two out of three interviewees said that Spain's membership is "something good" (62%).

⇒ At EU level, Spain is above the EU average with 54% saying they are "in favour" of the future development of the EU. Another 30% said they are "against" the future development of the EU.

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

⇒ Half of the Spanish group said they are “in favour” of future enlargement of the EU, with more countries joining as member states.

⇒ 51% of the group said they are “in favour” of a future enlargement, a difference of +6 points with the EU average (EU-25:46 %)

⇒ Another 21% said they are “against” the future enlargement of the European Union, while 42% said the same in the EU-25 Member States on average. There is also a big difference in terms of the opposition to the EU enlargement.

Among the Spanish group there is the belief and hope that the EU will play an important role in the future.

Chapter 4: Spanish opinion about the values of the EU

"Peace and human rights are the most important values, according to Spanish public opinion"

⇒ According to the Spanish public, "peace", and "human rights" are the two most important values at the personal level. 55% thought that "peace" was the first most important value for them, while 41% thought the same about "human rights".

⇒ At European level, the same themes are repeated: 52% thought peace to be the most important value followed by "respect for human life" (43%) and "human rights" (41%).

As to the participation of the public in European affairs, we see that the majority of the group does not agree that their voice counts in Europe.

While almost a third of the Spanish poll (27%) tends to agree that "my voice counts in Europe", another 57% tends not to agree with the statement.

⇒ 59% of the Spanish poll said they did not agree that they know how Europe works, while another 31% said they agree.

⇒ At the EU-25 level, 43% of the European sample agreed that they "know how Europe works", while another 31% said they did not agree.

⇒ Among the Spanish poll, 40% said that more importance should be given to free time rather to working time, as did 36% of the EU-25 poll.

Conclusions EB66

In the current edition of Eurobarometer 66, the overall feeling about the state of Spanish public opinion is that Spanish citizens are more interested in the latest developments of the EU but they 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.

Spanish public opinion was once more very satisfactory in regard to its interest in the development of the EU. Most of them think they have, so far, “benefited” from Spanish EU membership, and that being a member has been something “good” for them. They are shown to have great support for the future enlargement of the EU and they fully support the idea of having a Constitution for Europe.

Also, other criticisms deal with the social and economic situation in Spain but also in Europe, while security, immigration and unemployment are two major concerns that the Spanish group has about the future. In the current edition, 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 said they are ‘in favour’ of a future enlargement. Once more, Spanish concerns are mostly around issues of economic and social stability since they consider that “unemployment and crime may rise”.

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