

EUROBAROMETER 66

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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NATIONAL REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
SLOVENIA

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SUMMARY

Introduction

This EB66 report explores the state of Slovenian public opinion before the introduction of the euro and the enlargement of the EU to include two additional countries. Continuing the trend of previous Eurobarometer surveys, the EB66 report shows that strong overall optimism persists among Slovenians regarding the EU.

I. LIFE IN SLOVENIA

Slovenians satisfied with their life

Slovenians are even more optimistic about their personal situation than in the previous EB. The percentage of Slovenians satisfied with their life has increased in the past six months from 88% to 89%.

Slovenians are also optimistic about their future, although the majority does not expect any major changes in the next 12 months (59%). A total of 27% of Slovenians think that life will improve in the next 12 months while 11% think the opposite – i.e. that it will get worse.

The opinion of Slovenians about the general economic situation in Slovenia has also improved in the last six months – by one percentage point and it is better than the EU25 average.

II. SLOVENIA AND THE EU

Slovenia is benefiting from EU membership

A total of 57% of Slovenians believe that Slovenia's membership of the EU is positive compared with the 54% recorded in the previous EB, while only 6% regard it as negative.

Taking everything into account, 71% of Slovenians are feel that their country has benefited from being a member of the European Union (in the spring of, 2006 the level was lower - at 68%). The EU25 average stands at 54%. EU membership is considered to have a positive effect on the country's economy and security and a less positive effect on agriculture and employment.

Not yet benefiting from the euro

A total of 31% of Slovenians have benefited from the common currency, the Euro, so far, and 66% have not. This level of response is understandable because that question was asked just before the introduction of the Euro in Slovenia and was intended more for respondents in member countries of the Euro zone.

EU should make decisions about fighting terrorism, Slovenia about pensions

Slovenians have cited fighting terrorism (84%), scientific and technological research (75%), and defence and foreign affairs (68%) as the three priority areas for EU action. The priority tasks for the Slovenian government are defined as pensions (72%), health and social care (69%) and taxation (69%).

III. EUROPEAN UNION THROUGH THE EYES OF SLOVENIAN CITIZENS AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE EU

Positive image of the EU

For the majority of Slovenians (62%), the EU has a positive image. Only 7% see it in a negative light. Peace is the value which best represents the EU and fighting poverty and social exclusion is also considered a priority action.

Of the European institutions, Slovenians think that they know the European Parliament the best. This is followed by the European Commission and the Council of the European Union. The European institutions are highly trusted in Slovenia. Slovenians believe they know the EU and the functioning of its institutions rather well. As many as 57% of them believe they understand how the EU works.

Testing their actual knowledge about the EU confirms that Slovenians are indeed well acquainted with EU matters. They also believe it is quite easy to find information about the EU.

Involvement of Slovenians in European affairs is comparatively low but it is increasing

Half of respondents also regard themselves as European, and 46% of them believe their voice counts in the EU. The percentage of Slovenians who feel involved in EU affairs has increased by 3 percentage points in the last year. In comparison with the EB64 survey one year before, the percentage of negative answers decreased from 83% to 78%.

IV. THE DEVELOPMENT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND EUROPEAN POLICIES

High support for EU projects

Slovenians are still strongly in favour of the further development of European political integration - a common defence and security policy among European Union Member States (86%), a European Monetary Union with one single currency, the euro (83%), a common foreign policy of the Member States of the European Union (80%), a constitution for the European Union (79%) and the further enlargement of the European Union to include other countries (74%).

IV.1 Enlargement

Only 46% of respondents from the EU25 support the further enlargement of the European Union, which is slightly higher than in the previous EB (45%). Support for enlargement has increased in most of the EU25, as well as in Slovenia (from 73% to 74%). Nevertheless, Slovenia is no longer the strongest supporter of the enlargement as it has now been overtaken by Poland. Slovenia has also dropped from first place regarding support for Turkish membership. Support for Bulgarian and Romanian membership is considerably higher in Slovenia than the EU25 average.

IV.2 The effects of globalisation

Slovenians are divided in their opinion as to whether globalisation has a positive or a negative impact on the economy. They believe that globalisation has the most positive effect on scientific and technical progress (69%) and on the quality of public services (61%). Its most negative effect is believed to be on employment in Slovenia.

Slovenians believe that the EU is ahead of the USA in regard to the protection of the environment (68%) but it is lagging behind in healthcare research (49%) and medical research (43%).

IV. 3 The state of the European economy is good

A total of 84% Slovenians believe that the European economy is well off. It could be given additional boost through better education and professional training and increased investment in research and innovation.

Four-fifths of Slovenians welcome increased competition as a result of the single market. Most Slovenians (63%) think that the single market has improved the international competitiveness of their country's companies in comparison with 10 years ago.