

# EUROBAROMETER 67

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2007

NATIONAL REPORT  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
GERMANY

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## Executive Summary

### Awareness of the Presidency

- 74% of Germans know about the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union
- Asked whether they think the Presidency is important – independently of whether they had heard of it or not -, 30% of Germans consider it to be very important. 46% said it is important while 14% thought it to be not very important.

### EU-Treaty – Agreements at the Brussels summit

#### *Constitution*

- 66% (+3 points) of Europeans and 78% (+5 points) of Germans are in favour of a constitution for the European Union. In France (68%, +2 points) and the Netherlands (55%, -4 points), stable majorities favour a constitution for the European Union.

#### *Reform of the decision-making rules and participation rights of national parliaments*

- 41% (+6 points) of Germans and 35% (+1 points) of Europeans think that their voice “counts“ in the EU.
- 86% (-4 points) of Germans and 66% (-2 points) of Europeans believe that the voice of their country counts in the EU. In Poland, 68% (+1 points) of respondents believe that the voice of their country counts in the EU.
- 54% (+17 points) of Germans and 52% (+10 points) of Europeans believe that their country will become more influential.
- 54% (+16 points) of Germans and 45% (+7 points) of Europeans think that their interests are well taken care of in the EU.
- 75% (+3 points) of Europeans and 66% (+2 points) of Germans have the impression that the biggest member states have the most influence in the EU.

#### *Exit rules for specific policy areas*

- 47% (+10 points) of Europeans and 59% (+16 points) of Germans think that countries that wish to integrate faster should be allowed to do so in specific policy areas.

#### *Foreign and Security Policy*

- A majority of Europeans (72%, +4 points) and Germans (84%, +7 points) want the EU to develop a common external and security policy.
- 69% (+4 points) of Europeans and 75% (+5 points) of Germans favour a foreign minister for the EU.

### Charter of basic rights

- Every fourth European (25%) and German (28%) regards guaranteed basic rights as important.

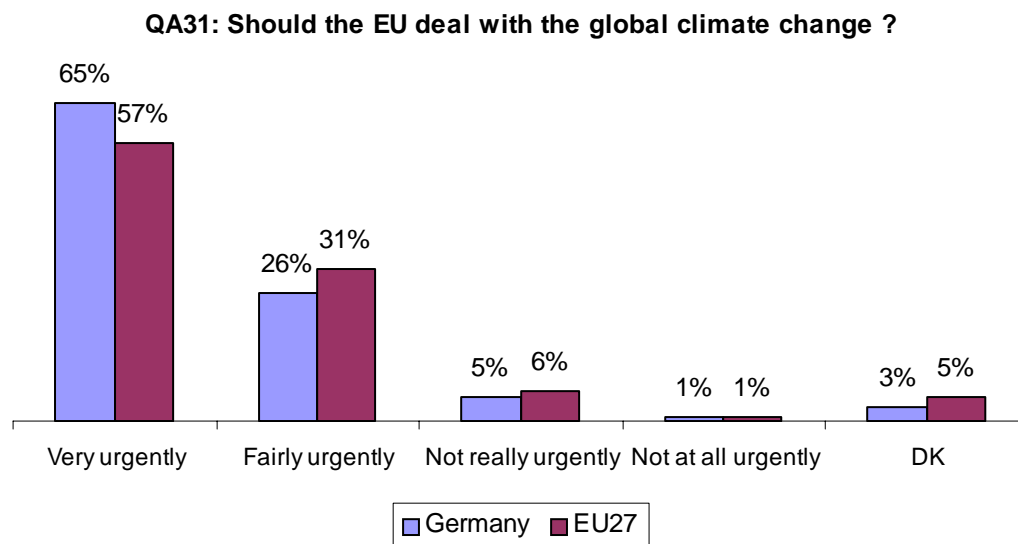
### Flag

- 95% (+3 points) of Europeans in general and 99% (+1 points) of Germans recognise the flag of the EU. 91% (+6 points) of Germans and 85% of Europeans (+5 points) think that the flag is a good symbol for the EU.

### Optimism about Europe's future

- Europeans as a whole (69%) and Germans (75%) are optimistic about Europe's future.
- 54% of Germans and 51% of Europeans overall believe that the European Union will have a directly elected president within 50 years from now.
- 61% of Europeans and 67% of Germans expect the Euro to be stronger than the dollar in 50 years' time.
- A majority of Germans (60%) and Europeans (56%) expect that there will be a common European army in 50 years' time.

### EU climate policy



- 91% of Germans and 88% of Europeans overall think that climate change is a matter that should be dealt with urgently by the European Union.
- 92% of Germans and 89% of Europeans think that the European Union should urgently put new policies in place to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% by 2020.

## Perception of Europe

- Germans and Europeans in general perceive the EU as 'modern' (D: 65%, +5 points / EU27: 70%, +3 points), 'democratic' (D: 72%, +2 points / EU27: 70%, +3 points), 'protective' (D: 59%, +10 points / EU27: 57%, +4 points), 'inefficient' (D: 45%, -8 points / EU27: 37%, -6 points) and 'technocratic' (D: 58%, +/-0 points / EU27: 48%, -1 point).

## Membership of the EU

- For Germans (65%, +7 points) and Europeans (57%, +4 points), their country's membership of the EU is a good thing.

## Image of the EU and its institutions

- The image of the EU improved significantly in Germany (52%, +10 points) and Europe (52%, +6 points) since the last survey.
- 79% of Germans (+5 points) and Europeans (77%, +1 points) think that the European Parliament plays an important role. The European Commission is also perceived as more important than in the last survey by Germans (70%, +4 points) and Europeans (72%, +2 points).

## Personal meaning of the EU

- For Germans, the EU means the freedom to travel, work and study anywhere in the Union (D: 56%, -1 point / EU27: 52%, +2 points). The Euro is also an important symbol of Europe (D: 53%, +3 points / EU27: 39%, +/-0 points), as well as the maintenance of peace (D: 48%, -6 points / EU27: 33%, +/- 0 points).

## Democracy in Europe

- Only 35% (+1 point) of Europeans believe that their voice counts in the European Union (D: 41%, +5 points).

## Knowledge of EU-institutions

- 93% of Germans (+1 point) and 89% of Europeans (-1 point) have heard of the European Parliament; the European Commission is known by 82% (+3 points) of Germans and 82% (+/-0 points) of Europeans. 72% (+9 points) of Germans and 68% (+4 points) of Europeans have heard of the European Council. The institution of the Euro, the European Central Bank, is widely known by Germans (87%, +2 points) and Europeans alike (75%, +3 points).

## The most important achievement of European integration

- For Germans (56%, +1 point) and Europeans (39%, -4 points), the most important achievement of European integration is peace between the member states, followed by the free movement of persons and goods (Germany: 41%, +1 point, Europe: 32%, +2 points)

## What produces a feeling of community?

- 27% of Europeans and 33% of Germans think that a feeling that the EU develops mainly as a result of economic integration, followed by culture (Germans 27%), Sport (24%) and solidarity with poorer regions (21%). In Europe, the feeling is of a community supported by economic integration and culture (27%), followed by European history (21%).

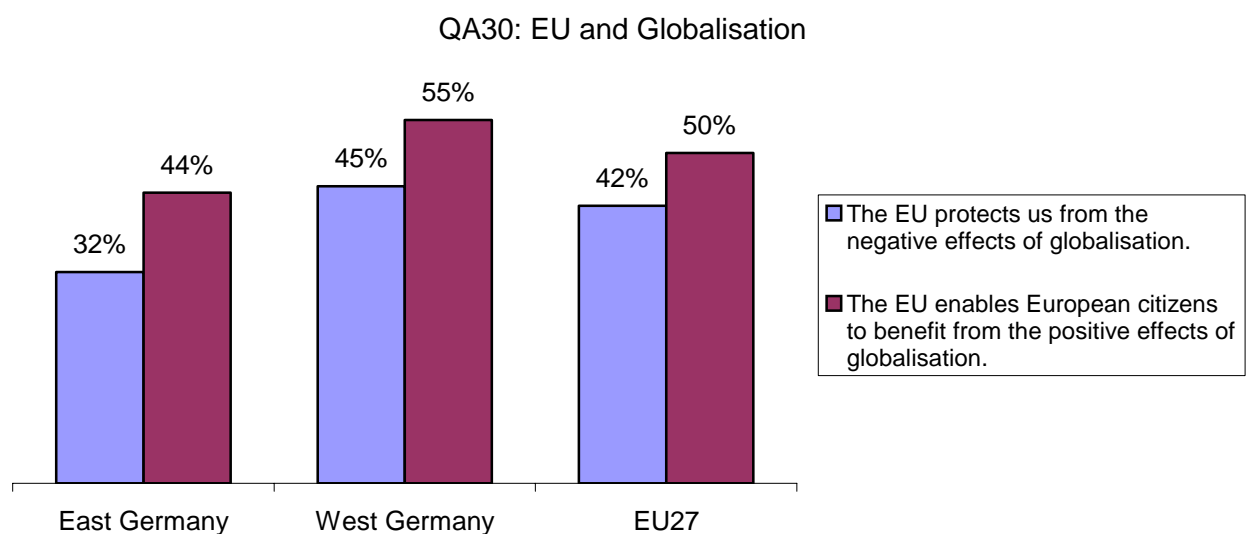
## Germany's and Europe's most important problems

- The most important problem Germany still faces is the high number of unemployed citizens (58%, -12 points). Europeans also think that the fight against unemployment is the most important challenge Europe is facing (34%, -6 points) For Germans, the reform of the health care system is the second most important issue (20%, +/-0 points) followed by educational reforms (18%, +6 points). Europeans think that the fight against crime is the second most important issue (24%, +1 point) followed by the economic situation (20%, -3 points).

## Forming globalisation

- A majority of Germans associate something positive with the concept of globalisation (51%, +14 points). In Europe as a whole, 46% (+5 points) associate something positive with the term globalisation. However, only a tiny part of the German respondents think of direct investments in Germany when they hear the term globalisation (7%, -1 point). 30% (+12 points) of Germans perceive globalisation as an opportunity for German firms abroad. Most of the German respondents, however, fear the relocation of work to countries with lower labour costs (46%, -5 points / EU27: 35%, -2 points).

## The European Union and the consequences of globalisation



- 50% (+2 points) of Europeans and 53% (+7 points) of Germans think that the European Union helps their citizen to profit from the process of globalization.

## Areas in which integration should be intensified

- Europeans want more engagement in environmental issues (34%), followed by the fight against crime (33%) and immigration (29%), energy and social issues (both 25%)
- From a German perspective, environmental issues should be dealt with urgently (45%), followed by the fight against crime (37%), energy (36%), immigration (30%) and social issues (28%).

## Influence of the country

- 54% (+17 points) of the respondents believe that Germany will become more influential in the future. In Europe 52% (+10 points), people believe in the growing importance of their respective countries.

## National or European decision-making

- Taxation (D: 69%, -2 points / EU27: 68%, -1 point), unemployment (D: 60%, -2 points / EU27 58%, -1 point), education (D: 57%, -12 points / EU27: 64%, -4 points), pensions (D: 83%, +/-0 points / EU27: 72%, -2 points), health and social issues (D: 71% , -3 points / EU27: 66%, -2 points) should be dealt with at national level.
- Crime (D: 77%, +5 points / EU27: 60%, +1 points), terrorism (D: 89%, +1 point / EU27: 81%, +2 points), defence and foreign affairs (D: 73%, -1 point / EU27: 62%), immigration (D: 61%, +5 points / EU27: 59%, +2 points), environmental issues (D: 85%, +9 points / EU27: 69%, +4 points) and energy: (D: 72%, +6 points / EU27: 61%, +1 point) should be dealt with jointly at European level.

## Trust in European institutions

- 58% (+5 points) of Germans and 56% (+4 points) of Europeans trust the European Parliament.
- Trust in the European Commission has risen slightly among Europeans (52%, +4 points) and Germans (49%, +7 points).
- 47% (+4 points) of Europeans and 46% (+7 points) of Germans trust the Council of the European Union.
- 65% of Germans (+5 points) and 53% (+6 points) of Europeans trust the European Central Bank.

## Trust in national institutions

- A relative majority of Europeans do not trust the press in their country (48%, -1 point). In Germany, 51% (-1 point) are critical of the national press.

- Unlike the printed press, radio is trusted more by Europeans (66%, +3 points) and Germans (69%, +4 points).
- More respondents trust television than the printed press (Germany: 62%, +5 points / Europe 58% (+5 points).
- 39% (+4 points) of the respondents in Europe and 33% (+4 points) in Germany trust the internet.
- National governments have experienced a huge increase in trust (Europe: 41%, +11 points / Germany: 49%, +22 points).
- National parliaments are trusted also more than before (Europe: 44%, +11 points / Germany 51%, +20 points).

### **Experience with enlargement**

- Every fifth German (18%) says that enlargement have had a positive effect on his life.

### **Enlargement of the EU**

- In general, Europeans (49%, +3 points) and Germans (34%, +4 points) tend to see the issue of enlargement more positively again. A majority of Germans, however, are still against further enlargement.

### **Satisfaction with their own life**

- Germans (86%, +4 points) and Europeans (80%, -2 points) are satisfied with their lives.

### **Expectations for the next 12 months**

- 62% (+/-0 points) of Germans expect no change in their personal situation during the next 12 months. In general, Europeans are optimistic: 37% (+2 points) of respondents expect that their lives will improve during the coming year.
- 41% (+18 points) of Germans expect the economy to grow over the next year. Europeans are not as optimistic as Germans (28%, +8 points).
- That the financial situation of their own household will improve is expected by 18% (+5 points) of Germans and (27%, +2 points) of Europeans.
- 44% (+20 points) of Germans and 31% (+9 points) of Europeans believe that the unemployment rate will decrease.
- 30% (+4 points) of Germans and 43% (+2 points) of Europeans are convinced that their personal situation will improve in the course of the next year.

## **Germany compared with the other EU member states**

- 64% (+17 points) think that the German economy is stronger than those of other member states. In Europe, 38% (-3 points) of respondents assess their own economy as being more competitive than those of other member states.
- 40% (+23 points) of Germans think that their job situation is better compared with those of the other member states. Among Europeans, 32% (+2 points) are convinced that their job situation is better compared with that of the other member states.
- 61% (+1 point) of Germans think that, despite all the reforms and cuts in social services, Germany still possesses the best social welfare system in the EU.
- A majority (57%, +1 point) of Germans think that the German educational system is not as good as that of other EU-countries. 39% (-1 point) of Europeans are convinced of the quality of their educational system.
- Germans are convinced that there are few places in the EU where life is better than in Germany (67%, +6 points).

## **Knowledge of the functioning of the European Union**

- Every second German thinks they understand how the EU functions. In Europe, 43% share this view.

## **German knowledge levels regarding EU-issues**

- 72% of Germans are not convinced that their fellow citizens are well-informed regarding EU issues.

## **Knowledge of measures in other countries**

- 73% of Germans do not think that their fellow countrymen are well informed of measures taken in specific policy areas in other parts of the European Union.

## **Sources of information**

- Germans, as well as Europeans, inform themselves about the European Union mostly by television (D: 79%, -3 points / EU27: 63%, -70 points), the daily press (D: 62%, +/- 0 points, EU27: 41%, +/-0 points), radio (D: 34%, -13 points / Europe: 26%, -5 points), internet (D: 30%, +5 points, EU27: 28%, +5 points) and in discussions with relatives and friends (D: 23%, -8 points, Europa: 21%, -1 point).