

# EUROBAROMETER 70

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

## AUTUMN 2008

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GERMANY

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

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

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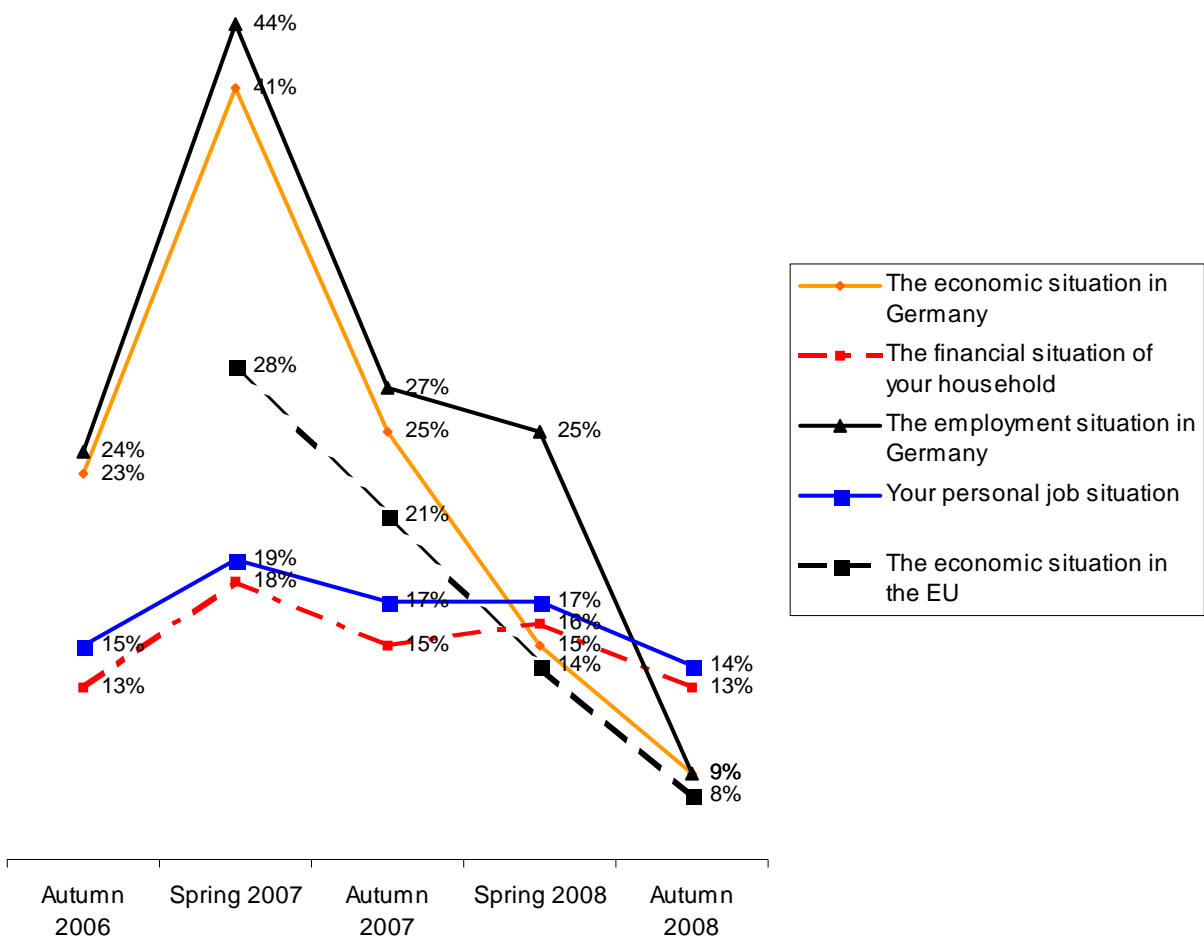
## Satisfaction with life

- 85% (+3 points) of Germans and 76% (-1 point) of Europeans are satisfied with their own life.

## Expectations for the next 12 months

- *Personal situation:* A majority of Germans (59%, +2 points) and 51% (+2 points) of Europeans expect their personal situation to stay the same;

QA6: Expectations for the next 12 months / Germany ("Better")



- *Economic situation of the country:* A majority of Germans (57%, +17 points) and Europeans (51%, +5 points) expect the economic situation of their country to get worse;
- *The financial situation of the personal household:* 57% (+6 points) of Germans and 52% (+2 points) of Europeans do not expect changes to the financial situation of their household;
- *Employment situation:* 56% (+23 points) of Germans and 53% (+14 points) of Europeans believe that the unemployment rate in their country will increase;

- *Personal job situation:* 61% (+1 point) of Germans and 58% (-3 points) of Europeans are convinced that their personal job situation will stay the same in the course of the next year;
- *Economic situation in the EU:* 47% (+21 points) of Germans and 41% (+15 points) of Europeans expect the EU-economy to get worse over the next year.

**Those who tend to trust the EU are less pessimistic:**

*Those who tend to trust the EU believe that the employment situation will get better (12%) or stay the same (38%) in the next 12 months. Those who tend not to trust the EU expect the employment situation to get worse (66%).*

### **Purchasing power**

- 65% of Germans say that their purchasing power got worse during the last 5 years;
- Every third respondent (32%, -3 points) in Germany has difficulties paying all bills at the end of the month.

### **Future of today's children**

- Life of those who are children today will be more difficult according to 73% (-4 points) of Germans and 62% (+1 point) of Europeans.

### **Are things going in the right direction in Germany and Europe?**

- 38% (+4 points) of Germans think that things are going in the right direction at present in Germany. Only 28% (-4 points) of Europeans agree that things are going in the right direction in their country;
- 41% (+4 points) of Germans and 35% (-7 points) of Europeans think that things are going in the right direction in the EU.

### **Economic situation of Germany**

- 49% (+17 points) of Germans think that the economy of Germany is in bad shape.

### **Economic situation of the EU**

- 48% (+21 points) of Germans and 58% (+31 points) of Europeans think that the economy of the EU is in decline.

### **Germans are convinced that the employment situation is good**

- 41% (+10 points) of Germans but only 28% (-8 points) of Europeans think that the employment situation in their country is good.

## Situation in Germany compared with the EU

- 63% (-1 point) of Germans think that the situation of their national economy is better than the average of the European countries;
- 48% (+3 points) of Germans and 59% (+2 points) of Europeans think that the employment situation in their country is worse than the average of the European countries;
- 51% (-18 points) of Germans and 67% (-5 points) of Europeans believe that the cost of living in their own country is higher than the average of the European countries.

## The two most important issues facing Germany at the moment

- Inflation is the most important problem for Germans and Europeans alike (Germany: 42%, -2 points / EU: 37%, +/-0 points), followed by the economic situation (Germany: 34%, +20 points / EU: 37%, +17 points). For the first time in years, unemployment is not one of the two most important issues anymore (Germany: 34%, -11 points / EU: 26%, +2 points).

## Relevance of globalisation for companies

- 46% (+5 points) of Germans think that globalisation represents a good opportunity for national companies.

## EU protects from negative effects of globalisation

- 47% (+6 points) of Germans and 43% (-1 point) of Europeans believe that the European Union helps to protect them from the negative effects of globalisation.

*Those who tend not to trust the EU, believe that globalisation represents a threat to employment and companies in Germany (53%). Only 29% of those who trust the EU share this opinion.*

## EU enables citizens to benefit from globalisation

- 50% (+8 points) of Germans and 48% (+/-0 points) of Europeans are convinced that the European Union enables European citizens to better benefit from the positive effects of globalisation.

## What does Europe mean to you personally?

*Positive:*

- Freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU (Germany: 50%, -5 points / EU: 44%, -5 points), peace (Germany: 45%, +4 points / EU: 27%, +1 point), the Euro (Germany: 45%, -1 point / EU: 34%, -1 points), democracy (Germany: 28%, +4 points / EU: 21%, +/-0 points), cultural diversity (Germany: 25%, -2 points / EU: 23%, -1 point), a stronger say in the world (Germany: 24%, +3 points / EU: 23%, +1 point).

Negative:

Waste of money (Germany: 36%, -1 point / EU: 19%, +/-0 points), bureaucracy (Germany: 32%, -4 points / EU: 17%, -1 point), unemployment (Germany 19%, -5 points / EU: 11%, -3 points), more crime (Germany: 26%, -6 points / EU: 14%, -1 point), not enough control at external frontiers (Germany: 22%, -8 points / EU: 16%, -2 points), unemployment (Germany: 15%, -4 points / EU: 11%, +/-0 points).

**Control at external frontiers:** Today, only 22% (-8 points) of Germans think that there is not enough control at external borders.

**Image:** 60% of the respondents who are under 25 years old conjure up a positive image of the EU.

### Image

- 48% (+4 points) of Germans and 45% (-3 points) of Europeans conjure up a good or very good image of the EU.

### Membership of the European Union

- Support for membership of the European Union is rising again among Germans (64%, +4 points) and Europeans (53%, +1 point).
- 58% (+3 points) of Germans and 56% (+2 points) of Europeans believe that their country has benefited from being a member of the European Union.

### Democracy in Europe

- 56% (+1 point) of Germans and 61% (+4 points) of Europeans tend not to think that their voice counts in the EU;
- 79% (+1 point) of Germans and 60% (-1 point) of Europeans believe that their country's voice counts in the EU;
- 49% (+1 point) of Germans and 60% (+/-0 points) of Europeans believe that the European Union imposes its view on their country;
- A majority of Germans (59%, +/-0 points) thinks that their voice counts in their own country. In Europe 48% (+3 points) don't think that their voice counts in their own country.

### Knowledge of institutions

- 90% (+/-0 points) of Germans and 87% (+/-0 points) of Europeans do know the European Parliament;

- 77% (+/-0 points) of Germans and 77% (-1 point) of Europeans have heard of the European Commission;
- 64% (+2 points) of Germans and 64% (+2 points) of Europeans have heard of the Council of the European Union;
- 90% (+2 points) of Germans and 77% (+4 points) of Europeans have heard of the European Central Bank.

### **Budget of the EU**

- 33% of Germans and 33% of Europeans don't know that the EU got it's own budget;
- 51% of Germans and 51% of Europeans have heard of it.

### **Importance of different institutions**

- 70% (-3 points) of Germans and 74% (-1 point) of Europeans think that the European Parliament plays an important role in the life of the European Union;
- 62% (-2 points) of Germans and 68% (+/-0 points) of Europeans think that the European Commission is important;
- 54% (-3 points) of Germans and 61% (+1 point) of Europeans believe that the Europeans Council of the European plays an important role in the life of the European Union;
- 83% (+1 point) of Germans and 73% (+2 points) of Europeans are convinced that the European Central Bank is important for the European Union.

### **Trust in national and international institutions**

- 59% (+1 point) of Germans and 48% (+2 points) of Europeans tend to trust the national legal system;
- 73% (-4 points) of Germans and 75% (-1 point) of Europeans tend not to trust political parties;
- 42%, (+6 points) of Germans tend to trust the German Government. Only 34% (+2 points) of Europeans tend to trust their national government;
- 52%, (-1 point) of Germans tend not to trust the German Parliament, Bundestag. 58% (+/-0 points) of Europeans tend not to trust their national parliaments;
- 43% (+/-0 points) of Germans trust the European Union;
- A relative majority of Germans 45% (-2 points) and 50%, (-4 points) of Europeans tend to trust the United Nations;

## Trust in European institutions

- A relative majority of Germans (47%, -3 points) and 51% (-1 point) of Europeans trust the European Parliament;
- 43%, (+2 points) of Germans and 47% (+/-0 points) of Europeans trust the European Commission;
- An even smaller relative majority of Germans (38%, -1 Pp) and Europeans (42%, -1 Pp) tend to trust the Council of the European Union;
- 56% (-4 points) of Germans trust the European Central Bank.

## Support for different political projects of the EU

- *A European Monetary Union: 61% (+1 point) of Europeans and 71% (+2 points) of Germans support a European Monetary Union;*
- *A common foreign policy of the member states of the EU: 79% (-3 points) of Germans and 68% (+/-0 points) of Europeans support a common foreign policy;*
- *A common defence and security policy among EU Member States: Europe-wide, 75% (-1 point) of the respondents support such a policy. In Germany, 82% (-6 points) support a common defence and security policy among EU Member States;*

**Less support for enlargement:** *Even among the young Germans (15-24 years old), at present only 42% (-7 points) support further enlargement of the EU while 45% are against it.*

- *Further enlargement of the EU: Support for enlargement among Europeans (44%, -3 points) and Germans (26%, -7 points) is declining.*

## Most important policy issues for the coming years

- 30% (+6 points) of Germans and 27% (+3 points) of Europeans think that social issues should be emphasised by the European institutions;
- 42% (-5 points) of Germans and 30% (+/-0 points) of Europeans think that the EU should focus on energy issues;
- 35% (-7 points) of Germans and 27% (-5 points) of Europeans want the EU to focus on environmental issues;
- 20% (+2 points) of Germans and 16% (+1 point) of Europeans want the EU to concentrate on a European foreign policy;
- The same applies to a European defence policy (Germans: 15%, +1 point / EU: 14%, +1 point).

- 32% (-7 points) of Germans and 29% (-4 points) of Europeans think that the fight against crime should be emphasised by the European institutions;
- 30% (-5 points) of Germans and 29% (-3 points) of Europeans think that the EU should focus on immigration issues;

### Should the following decisions be made by national governments, or made jointly within the European Union?

Policy issues that should be dealt with jointly by the member states in the European Union are: terrorism: Germany: 87%, -3 points / EU: 79%, +/-0 points, protecting the environment: Germany: 81%, -4 points / EU: 67%, -4 points, fighting crime: Germany: 77%, +1 point / EU: 59%, +1 point, defence and foreign affairs: Germany: 76%, +2 points / EU: 64%, +/-0 points, energy issues: Germany: 75%, +1 point / EU: 63%, +2 points, scientific and technological research: Germany: 73%, +1 point / EU: 72%, +2 points, fighting inflation: Germany: 71%, +2 points, / EU: 54%, +3 points, support for regions facing economic difficulties: Germany: 70%, -2 points / EU: 62%, +/-0 points, competition: Germany: 69%, +3 points / EU: 57%, +2 points, agriculture and fisheries: Germany: 66%, -3 points / EU: 50%, -1 point, immigration: Germany: 64%, +/-0 points / EU: 60%, +2 points, consumer protection: Germany: 61%, -1 point / EU: 48%, transport: Germany: 61%, -3 points / EU: 48%, +/-0 points, economy: Germany: 60%, +5 points / EU: 51%, +4 points.

**European educational policy? :** 45% (+6 points) of Germans believe that educational issues should be dealt with at EU level. In particular, respondents under the age of 25 support a common European educational policy (51%).

Policy issues that should be dealt with by the member states exclusively are:

Pensions: Germany: 79%, -2 points / EU: 70%, -3 points, social welfare: Germany: 66%, +1 point / EU: 65%, -2 points, -2 points, taxation: Germany: 65%, -2 points / EU: 66%, -2 points, health: Germany: 65%, -2 points / EU: 64%, +/-0 points, fighting unemployment: Germany: 55%, -2 points / EU: 57%, +/-0 points, the educational system: Germany: 54%, -6 points / EU: 64%, -2 points.

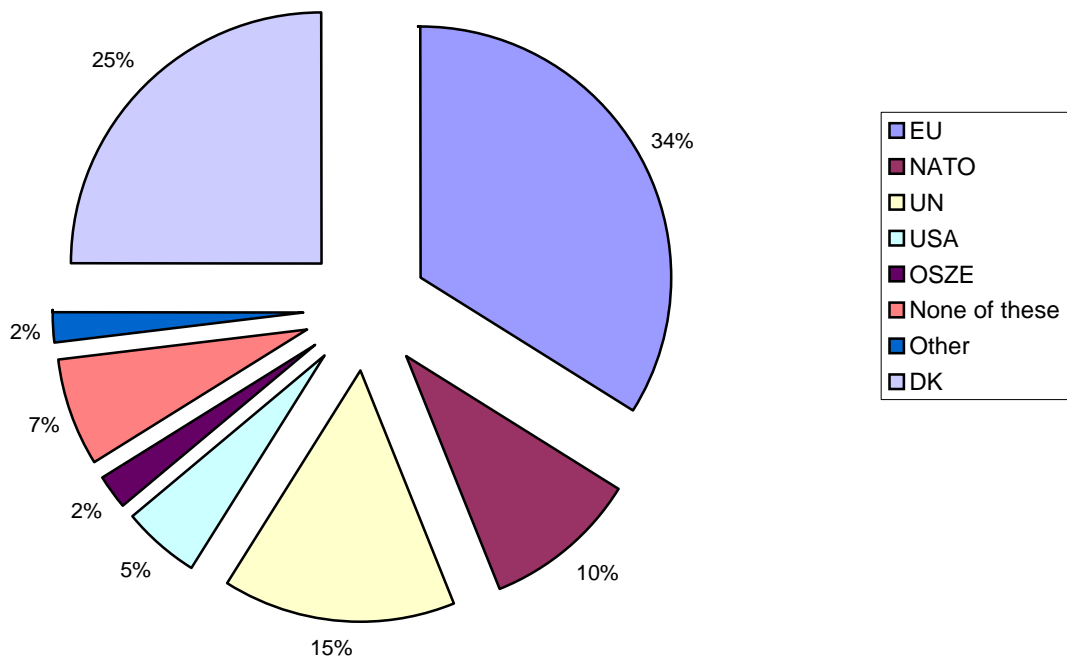
### Knowledge of the conflict between Russia and Georgia

- 48% of Germans and 46% of Europeans said they had heard about the conflict but don't know really what it was about;
- 43% of Germans and 36% of Europeans not only heard about the conflict but also think they know exactly what it was about.

**Which institution played the most important role in bringing the conflict to an end?**

- 34% of Germans and 26% of Europeans are convinced that the EU played the most important role in bringing the conflict to an end.

**QE2: Which institution played the most important role in bringing the conflict to an end? / Germany**



**Does this conflict could have an impact on the security of energy supply in the European Union?**

- 12% of Germans and 19% of Europeans believe that the conflict between Russia and Georgia could have a strong impact on the security of energy supply in the European Union;
- 49% of Germans and 41% of Europeans believe that the conflict between Russia and Georgia could have an impact on the security of energy supply in the European Union;
- Only 32% of Germans and 20% of Europeans do not believe that the conflict between Russia and Georgia will have a strong impact.