

# EUROBAROMETER 71

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

SPRING 2009

NATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GERMANY

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

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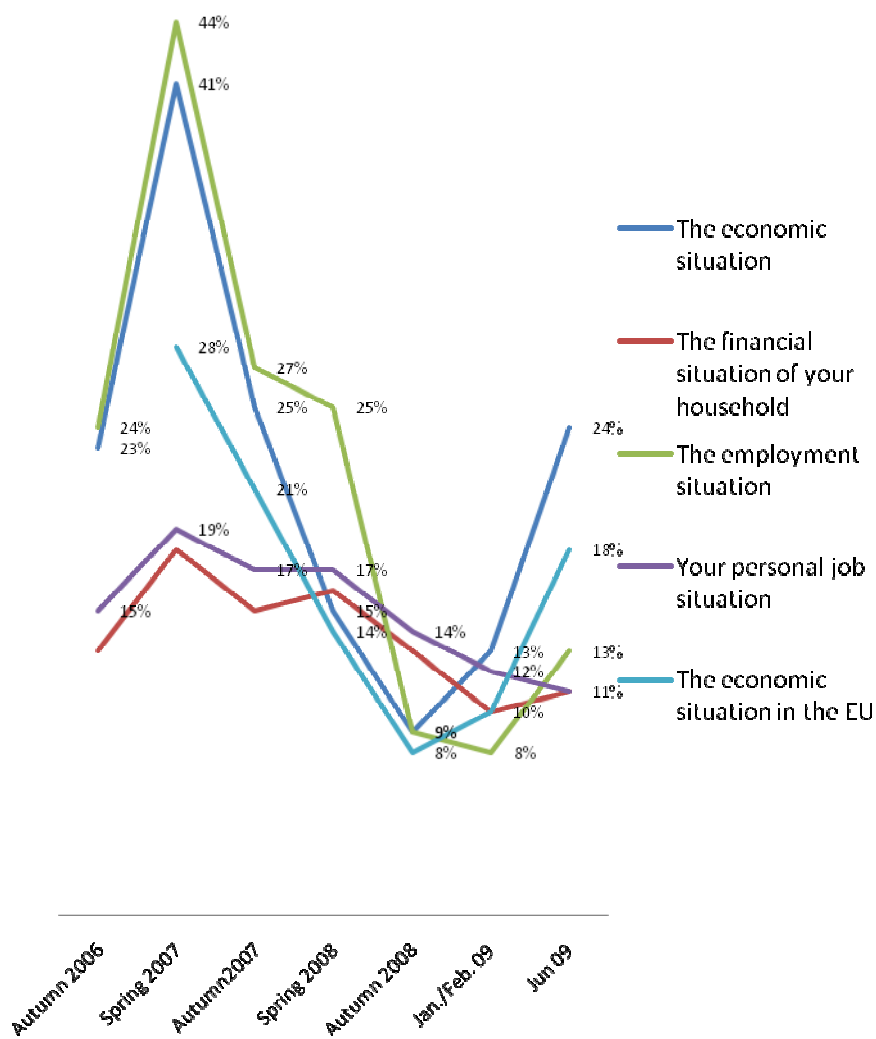
## Satisfaction with life

- 84% (-3 points) of Germans are very satisfied with their own lives.

## Expectations for the next 12 months

- 67% (+8 points) of Germans and 56% (+2 points) of Europeans expect their personal situation to stay the same.
- 24% (+11 points) of Germans and 25% (+10 points) of Europeans expect the economic situation of their country to get better again.
- Only 17% (-5 points) of Germans and 18% (-8 points) of Europeans expect that the financial situation of their household will get worse.

**QA3: Expectations for the next twelve months  
('Better') / Germany**



- 51% (-12 points) of Germans and 44% (-17 points) of Europeans believe that the unemployment rate in their country will increase.
- 70% (+5 points) of Germans and 59% (+1 point) of Europeans are convinced that their personal job situation will stay the same in the course of the next year.
- 43% (+9 points) of Germans and 38% (+9 points) of Europeans expect the situation of the EU-economy to stay the same over the next year.

### **Inflation and the situation of the economy are the two most important issues for Germans and Europeans alike**

- Inflation is the most important problem for Germans and Europeans alike (Germany: 36%, -13 points / EU: 38%, -7 points), followed by the economic situation (Germany: 22%, +2 points / EU: 26%, -1 point).

### **Every third European lives from day to day**

- 56% of Germans but only 31% of Europeans are able to plan one or two years ahead financially (West Germany: 61% / East Germany: 40%).
- 29% of East Germans and 21% of West Germans are only able to plan six months ahead. 29% of East Germans and 16% of West Germans live from day to day – like 35% of Europeans.

### **Unemployment and the situation of the economy are the most important issues facing Germany at the moment**

- The two most important issues facing Germany at the moment are unemployment (53%, +11 points) and the economic situation (49%, +/-0 points). Europeans assess the situation similarly: Unemployment (49%, +4 points) and the economic situation (42%, -5 points) are the two most important problems facing their respective countries.

### **Membership of the EU**

- 61% (+1 point) of Germans and 53% (+1 point) of Europeans feel that their country's membership of the EU is a good thing.
- 57% (+1 point) of Germans and 56% (+1 point) of Europeans think that their country has profited from being a member of the EU.

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

- 37% (-2 points) of Germans and 50% (-5 points) of Europeans do not think that things are going in the right direction in their country at the moment.
- 37% (+1 point) of Germans and 34% (+5 points) of Europeans think that things are going in the right direction in the European Union.

- For 46% (+2 points) of Germans and 45% (+2 points) of Europeans, the European Union conjures up a positive image.

### **What does the European Union mean to you personally?**

Positive:

- Freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU (DE: 47%, -3 points / EU: 42%, -2 points), Euro (DE: 45%, +/-0 points / EU: 33%, -1 point), peace (DE: 43%, -2 points / EU: 25%, -2 points), democracy (DE: 29%, +1 point / EU: 22%, +1 point), stronger say in the world (DE: 26%, +2 points / EU: 23%, +/-0 points), cultural diversity (DE: 25%, +/-0 points / EU: 19%, -1 point), economic prosperity (DE: 14%, +1 point / EU: 16%, -1 point), and social protection (DE: 7%, +/-0 points / EU: 10%, +1 point).

Negative:

- Bureaucracy (DE: 35%, +3 points / EU: 19%, +2 points), waste of money (DE: 34%, -2 points / EU: 20%, -1 point), more crime (DE: 20%, -6 points / EU: 11%, -3 points), and not enough control at external borders (DE: 12%, -10 points / EU: 12%, -4 points).

### **Democracy in Germany and the EU**

- A relative majority of Germans (46%, +11 points) believes that their own voice counts in the European Union. 53% (-8 points) of Europeans think that their own voice does not count in the European Union.
- 64% (+5 points) of Germans and 51% (+5 points) of Europeans believe that their voice counts in their own country.
- 55% (+1 point) of Germans and 44% (+1 point) of Europeans think, that the interests of their respective country are well taken into account in the EU.

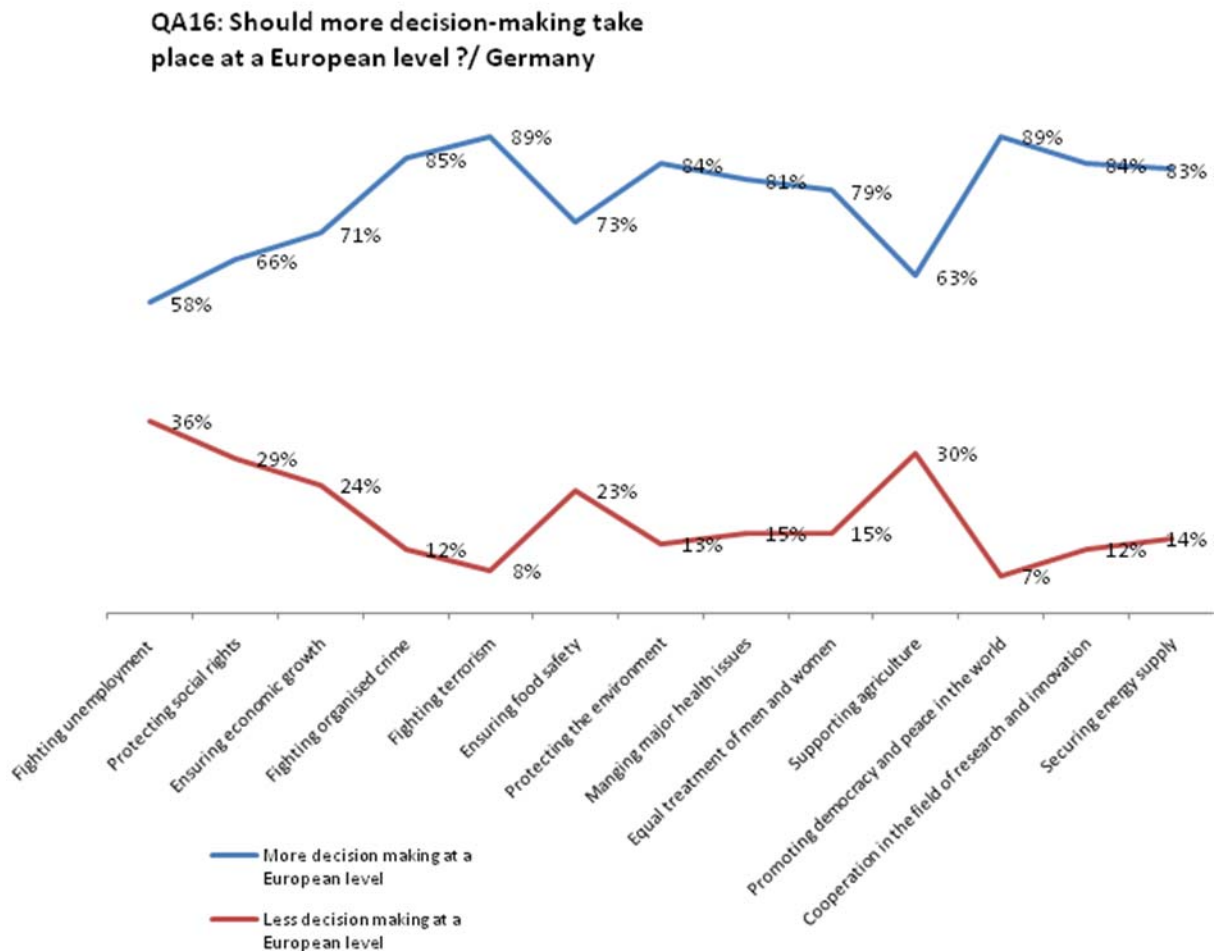
### **Opinion about various areas of European integration**

- Majorities in Germany (69%, -2 points) and in Europe as a whole (61%, +/-0 points) support a European Monetary Union.
- Germans (66%, +1 point) and Europeans (46%, +3 points) are against further enlargement of the EU.
- 43% (+4 points) of Germans are against, 43% (-4 points) are in favour of the speed of building Europe being faster in one group of countries than in the other countries. A relative majority (42%, +/-0 points) of Europeans is against different speeds of integration.

## Should decision-making take place at a European or national level?

More decisions at a European level:

- Fighting unemployment (DE: 58%, +2 points / EU: 60%, +9 points), protecting social rights (DE: 66%, +7 points / EU: 64%, +9 points), ensuring economic growth (DE: 71%, +11 points / EU: 70%, +10 points), fighting organised crime (DE: 85%, +1 point / EU: 78%, +3 points) fighting terrorism (DE: 89%, +4 points / EU: 81%, +1 point), ensuring food safety (DE: 73%, +8 points / EU: 70%, +4 points), protecting the environment (DE: 84%, +11 points / EU: 77%, +5 points), managing major health issues (DE: 81%, +10 points / EU: 72%, +2 points), equal treatment of men and women (DE: 79%, +16 points / EU: 72%, +7 points), supporting agriculture (DE: 63%, +7 points / EU: 64%, +7 points), promoting democracy and peace in the world (DE: 89%, +9 points / EU: 81%, +4 points), cooperation in the field of research and innovation (DE: 84%, +8 points / EU: 78%, +4 points), and securing energy supply (DE: 83%, +13 points / EU: 76%, +7 points).



## **Which aspects should be emphasized by the European institutions in the coming years?**

- Economic affairs (DE: 36%, +/-0 points / EU: 33%, -7 points), the fight against climate change (DE: 27%, +/-0 points / EU: 16%, -1 point), the fight against crime (DE: 25%, -3 points / EU: 23%, -1 point), social and health issues (DE: 24%, -5 points / EU: 26%, -1 points), energy issues (DE: 24%, -6 points / EU: 19%, -4 points), European education policy (DE: 23%, +4 points / EU: 13%, +2 points), environment issues (DE: 22%, +4 points / EU: 21%, +4 points), and immigration issues (DE: 22%, +1 point; EU: 25%, +2 points).

## **Most important elements that go to make up a European identity**

- Democratic values (DE: 52% / EU: 41%), a high level of social protection (DE: 35% / EU: 24%), common history (DE: 24% / EU: 24%), common culture (DE: 20% / EU: 23%), geography (DE: 19% / EU: 25%), entrepreneurship (DE : 8% / EU : 11%), common religious heritage (DE: 8% / EU: 8%).

## **To what extent do you personally feel you are German or European?**

- A majority of respondents feels European (DE: 85%, +2 points / EU: 74%, +3 points). 95% (-1 point) of Germans feel German. In Europe, 94% (+1 point) identify with their own nationality. Only 58% (+10 points) of Germans and 54% (+5 points) of Europeans consider themselves as world citizens.

## **Future of the European Union**

- 68% (+4 points) of Germans and 64% (+1 point) of Europeans feel optimistic about the future of the EU.
- 65% (-2 points) of Germans and 56% (-5 points) of Europeans expect the Euro to be stronger than the Euro in the year 2030.
- 66% (-6 points) of Germans and 56% (-5 points) of Europeans think that the EU will be a leading diplomatic power in the world in the year 2030.

## **Impact of public authorities on the living conditions of EU citizens**

- Only 15% (+8 points) of Germans and 13% (+4 points) of Europeans think that the European Union has the biggest impact on their daily lives. That their living conditions are most influenced by national authorities is believed by 46% (+/-0 points) of Germans and 46% (+3 points) of Europeans. That regional authorities have the biggest impact of all levels is believed by 31% (-5 points) of Germans and 34% (-4 points) of Europeans.
- Two-thirds of the respondents in Germany and Europe as a whole (both 63%, +5 points) do not think that regional or local public authorities are sufficiently taken into account when deciding policies in the European Union.

## **The challenge of globalisation**

- 65% (+3 points) of Germans and 59% (+3 points) of Europeans believe that the process of globalisation is an economic opportunity.
- A majority of Germans (67%, +2 points) and Europeans (62%, +6 points) is convinced that globalisation increases social inequalities. 84% (+1 point) of Germans and 73% (+9 points) of Europeans support the idea that globalisation requires common global rules ("worldwide governance").
- 48% (+2 points) of Germans and 47% (+2 points) of Europeans believe that the European Union helps to protect them from the negative effects of globalisation.
- 53% (-2 points) of Germans and 54% (+3 points) of Europeans are convinced that the European Union enables European citizens to better benefit from the positive effects of globalisation.

## **Ability of different institutions to take effective actions against the effects of the financial and economic crisis**

- 26% of Germans and 20% of Europeans think that the G20 is best able to take effective actions against the effects of the crisis, followed by the EU (DE: 23%, +5 points / EU: 21%, +4 points) and the USA (DE: 13%, +/-0 points / EU: 16%, +1 point).

## **Does the European Union have sufficient power and tools to defend its economic interests in the global economy?**

- A majority of Germans (68%, -16 points) believes that the European Union has sufficient power and tools to defend its economic interests in the global economy.

## **Measures the EU should prioritise in order to help people overcome the effects of the financial and economic crisis**

- Support to small business (DE: 42%, +1 point / EU: 37%, +6 points), investment in education\ training\ research (DE: 39%, -2 points / EU: 26%, -3 points), support for the poorest (DE: 22% / EU: 20%), support for the unemployed (DE: 21%, -1 points / EU: 27%, -8 points), guarantee the provision of healthcare (DE:16%, -4 points / EU: 13%, -10 points), investment in infrastructures (DE: 16%, -4 points / EU: 16%, -4 points), investment in energy and the environment (DE: 16%, -10 points / EU: 16%, -6 points), support for large companies / industry (DE: 8% / EU: 15%), and support for pensioners (DE: 8%, -10 points / EU: 12%, -8 points).

## Main priorities for the European Union's foreign policy regarding human rights

- Freedom of speech (DE: 40% / EU: 30%), economic & social rights (DE: 38% / EU: 33%), fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination (DE: 35% / EU: 28%), children's rights (DE: 33% / EU: 36%), fighting human trafficking (DE: 26% / EU: 33%), abolition of the death penalty (DE: 19% / EU: 14%), fighting torture (DE: 19% / EU: 18%), women's rights (DE: 16% / EU: 20%), freedom of the media (DE: 14% / EU: 9%), rights of those belonging to minority and ethnic groups (DE: 9% / EU: 8%), fight against detention without trial (DE: 8% / EU: 8%), and lack of fair trial (DE: 8% / EU: 10%).