

EUROBAROMETER 72

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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NATIONAL REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
LUXEMBOURG

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Eurobarometer survey - Luxembourg

Slight revival of optimism regarding the economic situation

Unemployment remains by far the most important national issue

Unemployment is considered the main national issue by Luxembourg respondents (52%), representing stabilisation since the Eurobarometer survey in spring 2009. On the other hand, the economic situation has fallen back by 4 points (29%) but remains the second most important national issue. It is followed by price increases (24%), increasing by 6 points in comparison with spring 2009, housing falling 4 points (21%), followed by the educational system (14%), insecurity (12%), retirement and pensions (8%).

The European Commission carried out the Eurobarometer 72.4 survey in autumn 2009 throughout 31 countries or territories: 27 Member States, three applicant countries (Croatia, Turkey and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and the territory of the Turkish Cypriot Community. It provides a picture of the lives of citizens and their perceptions in regard to a range of issues. The image of the European Union and trust in the European and national political institutions are also analysed.

The sample of the Eurobarometer surveys comprises approximately a 1.000 people per Member State. Luxemburg is an exception with a sample made up of 502 people for the EB 72.4 representative of its population (62% of natives of Luxemburg and 38% of nationals of the other EU Member States). In its commentary, the special report, prepared on behalf of the Representation of the European Commission in Luxemburg, refers to the inhabitants of Luxemburg, an entity that not only covers citizens of Luxemburgish nationality.

Satisfaction with life and expectations regarding the next year

96% of the inhabitants of Luxemburg interviewed are satisfied with the life they lead (without variation in comparison with spring 2009). 77% of those polled judged the current Luxemburgish economic situation as good (7 points more than in spring 2009). The same is true in regard to households' financial situation which is considered as good by 91% (10 points higher than in spring 2009 and 2 points more than in autumn 2009). The majority (59%) does not expect their personal situation in general to change in the coming twelve months, and 29% expect an improvement in their personal situation. Concerning expectations regarding the economic situation in the European Union, optimism has gained more ground than in spring 2009 : more than 39% (52% in spring 2009, 60% in autumn 2008) are still pessimistic in respect of the future of the economic situation in the European Union. The situation is similar concerning employment: 46% are pessimistic (51% in spring 2009 and 57% in autumn 2008) and 9% (a drop of 1 point in comparison to spring 2009), believe their household's financial situation will be worse. In addition, 4% believe their own professional situation will be worse in the coming twelve months (a decrease here, again, of 3 points in comparison with spring 2009, when the figure was 7%). Lastly, while, in spring 2009, 32% believed things in the EU were going in the right direction, this figure has risen to 46% in autumn 2009.

Perception of the European Union

A drop of 5 points in comparison to spring 2009 is observed among those polled who believe that their country's membership to the European Union is a good thing, as 74% of them now agree with this opinion (79% in spring 2009). On the other hand, 72% continue to believe their country has benefited from being part of the EU; in addition, 80% are in favour of the euro (a drop of 6 points since spring 2009). The European Union's image is still a bit more prominent in Luxembourg compared with the EU countries as a whole: 66% think that the image is good (56% in spring 2009), that is 18 points more than the EU27 average in autumn 2009 (48%). Up to 90% of respondents in Luxembourg are satisfied with democracy's functioning in their own country, and 75% are with democracy's functioning in the EU.

European Union development and its prospects

Although 74% of respondents in Luxembourg think that the EU has grown too quickly, 81% think that what brings citizens of different countries closer is more important than what separates them. Nevertheless, while 85% of respondents think that the EU is essential to deal with world challenges, 45% of them agree with the idea that, nowadays, the EU lacks ideas and projects. Lastly, 54% of those interviewed are against the idea of further expansion to other countries in the years to come and 43% of them agree that integration should proceed more rapidly within one group of countries than in other countries.

Trust in institutions and the European Union

In regard to the trust respondents in Luxembourg place in their national institutions, a general drop in the figures is observed: the trust rate is about 68% in the Government (77% in spring 2009, during the period of legislative elections) and about 59% for the national Parliament (67% in spring 2009). With respect to the EU, trust is gaining ground: the rate was about 47% in autumn 2008, 55% in spring 2009 and 62% in autumn of the same year. The European institutions have a high reputation, which is superior in Luxembourg than at EU27 level. Trust in the European Parliament records a rise of 5 points between spring 2009 and autumn 2009 (61% to 66%), rates for the European Central Bank remain stable at 60%, the European Commission passes from a rate of 53% of trust in spring 2009, to 59% in autumn 2009. The European Council has the trust of 56% of those interviewed - 15 points higher than the EU27 average (41%).

The EU in financial and economic crisis

For 61% of Luxembourg's inhabitants, the impact of the crisis on employment has not yet reached its peak and worse is to come. In addition to the EU, which 34% of those interviewed believe can offer an effective solution, the G20 and the national Government are each felt by 20% of the poll to offer a solution. Measures to deal with the crisis include support for small and medium enterprises (40%) and investment in education, training and research (37%). To face the main world challenges, according to 52% of those polled, the EU should place more emphasis on social equality and solidarity as well as on environmental protection (47%). Within the framework of the reform of the EU's financial system, 27% think that responsibility must be given to managers in the financial sector, in particular on the bonus issue.

Values in the EU

The three more representative values of the EU for those interviewed in Luxembourg are: peace (48%), followed by democracy and human rights (43% each). Although 50% of respondents think that economic growth should be a priority for their country, even if it affects the environment, 72% think

that environmental protection should be a priority for their country, even if it affects economic growth. In the context of the financial and economic crisis, economic recovery should be a priority for the EU (63%), followed by the fight against climate change (50%). Lastly, with respect to the EU's relationship with the rest of the world, 44% of the poll think that the EU should focus its attention on poverty, 37% on keeping peace and 33% on climate change.