



European Opinion
Research Group

E.O.R.G.

EUROBAROMETER 54.0

EUROPEANS AND THE EURO

Report written by

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For

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Health and Consumer Protection**

Direction B – Consumer affairs
Unit B5 – Financial services

Managed and organised by

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Managing the Standard Eurobarometer surveys for the European Commission in co-operation with INRA (EUROPE) and GfK

This opinion poll, managed and organised by Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 'Centre for the Citizen – Public opinion Analysis' Unit, was carried out at the request of Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection, Direction B – Consumer affairs, Unit B5 – Financial services of the European Commission.

It was carried out in all European Union member countries, between 7th October and 13th November 2000, under the overall co-ordination of INRA (EUROPE) – E.C.O., on behalf of the European Opinion Research Group, located in Brussels.

The questionnaire, the names of the institutes involved in this survey, and the technical specifications are in appendix.

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Introduction

The opinion poll analysed in this report was carried out in the fifteen European Union member states, between 7th October and 13th November 2001, within the framework of Eurobarometer¹ 54.0, at the request of Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection, Direction B – Consumer affairs, Unit B5 – Financial services of the European Commission. This opinion poll is managed and organised by Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 'Centre for the citizen - Public Opinion Analysis' unit.

This report deals with the experience and perception Europeans have of various issues relating to the euro. It is subdivided in several chapters covering:

- Europeans' information and interest levels with regard to the euro
- Europeans' knowledge of issues relating to the euro
- Europeans' experience of paying in euro
- Europeans awareness of dual pricing and their point of view
- Their awareness of the euro logo
- Their points of view regarding the introduction of coins and notes in euro

This opinion poll is based on twelve 'TREND' questions, i.e. questions which have been asked in the past using the same phrasing, and more specifically in Eurobarometer 52.0, on eight 'TREND MODIFIED' questions, i.e. questions asked in a similar, but not perfectly identical way in a previous Eurobarometer wave (again, Eurobarometer 52.0) and two new questions. Whilst purely 'TREND' questions make it possible to compare results from one wave to another, one should be cautious in trying to make comparisons with 'TREND MODIFIED' questions as changes can be substantial, in the phrasing of questions, and in the items proposed.

¹ Eurobarometer opinion polls, or more exactly « Standard Eurobarometer opinion polls », are carried out since 1973 (EB N° 0), for the former Directorate-General X of the European Commission, now Directorate-General for Education and Culture. They include Greece since Autumn 1980, Portugal and Spain since Autumn 1985, East Germany since Autumn 1990 and Austria, Finland and Sweden since Spring 1995.

Obviously, these changes are made in order to improve the questions and it is always possible to highlight trends, as long as the analysis and interpretation framework is clearly defined.

It is worth noting that some questions have only been asked to people belonging to the euro zone, from which the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark and Greece were excluded (when the survey took place). Other questions were asked to people belonging to the euro zone AND ALSO to Greek citizens who joined the euro zone on 1st January 2001, i.e. AFTER completion of the survey. Finally, some specific items apply to some countries but not to others, which means that the general average is not always that of the EU15. To avoid confusions or mistakes, it is always specified to which citizens questions were placed when this group is more limited than the EU.

In each member state, questions were asked to a representative sample of the national population aged 15+. In total, 16.172 people were interviewed, i.e. 1,000 people in average per member state, except in Germany (2,000 : 1,000 in the new Länder and 1,000 in the old Länder), in the United Kingdom (1,300 : 1,000 in Great Britain and 300 in Northern Ireland) and in Luxembourg (600). Let us specify that figures relating to the European union as a whole presented in this report are a weighted average of national figures. For each member state, the weighting used is the share of the national population aged 15+ in the community population aged 15+s².

Technical specifications shown in appendix give the detail of methodological questions such as fieldwork dates, sample selection, population covered, weighting, confidence limits, etc. Let us explain some expressions used in the technical specifications: marginal weighting is based on one variable, such as age **or** gender, whilst crossed weighting is based on two variables, such as, for instance, age **and** gender. NUTS regions are 'a ranking of regions of the European Union based on a three-level hierarchical structure. The Eurobarometer is weighted on the basis of NUTS 2 regions.

² See technical specifications in appendix.

It is also worth noting that the sum of percentages presented in graphs illustrating this report and in tables presented in appendix may exceed 100% when respondents have the choice to give several answers to one question.

When respondents can only give one answer, this sum may also slightly diverge from 100%, (e.g. 99% or 101%), due to the rounding of figures.

Due to the variety of educational systems in the European Union, it was decided to set subjective thresholds of education. The first is the 'low' level, which groups people who left full time education at the age of 15 or younger, the second is the 'intermediate' level, which groups people who left this system between the age of 16 and 19 and the third is the 'high' level of education, which groups those who left the system after the age of 19.

The following abbreviations are used to designate member states:

B	Belgium
DK	Denmark
WD	Old Länder
D	Germany
OD	New Länder
GR	Greece
E	Spain
%F	France
IRL	Ireland
I	Italy
L	Luxembourg
NL	Pays-Bas
A	Austria
P	Portugal
FIN	Finland
S	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom

A necessary comment regarding the split between the old and the new Länder which found its justification when East Germany was introduced in the list of states covered by the Eurobarometer in the Autumn 1990. This distinction was kept even after the reunification of Germany as it often brings to light clear cut differences in opinion between these two territories.

The abbreviation used to designate the European Union as a whole is 'EU15'. The abbreviation 'DK' means 'Don't know'.

The numbering of questions reflects the fact that they are extracted from a wider set of questions, included in a standard Eurobarometer wave.

The questionnaire, the name of the institutes involved in this survey and technical specifications are annexed to this report.

The European Commission is not liable for the contents of this report. This report was originally written in French.

Chapter I: Information and interest

1. Do European feel well informed about the euro?

To the question "How well informed do you feel about the single European currency, that is the euro?", European Union citizens state they are not very well informed. On a four-point scale (4 = very well informed, 3 = well informed, 2 = not very well informed, 1 = not at all informed, central point at 2.5), the European average is 2.27 points, between "not very well informed" and "well informed".

There are some noteworthy differences between states. We can underline the Dutch (2.76), Danish (2.65), Luxembourg (2.64) and Finnish (2.60) averages which are somewhat higher. Two countries do not reach the average point of 2 ("not very well informed"): the United Kingdom (1.93) and Greece (1.99), just behind Portugal (2.00). The euro-11 average is 2.35 compared to 2.00 for the "pre-in" countries.

Let us note that one of the less well informed countries, that is Portugal, paradoxically belongs to the euro zone (that is to say the 11 countries directly taking part in the single currency system), unlike the United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark and Greece (not in when the survey took place).

One year ago, the European average was already situated around 2.35 points, between "not very well informed" and "well informed", but it was somewhat higher than today's. Averages were the largest in Luxembourg (2.83), the Netherlands (2.80) and Finland (2.71). Three countries did not reach the average of 2.00 ("not very well informed"): Portugal (1.90), United Kingdom (1.94) and Greece (1.95).