

# Introduction of the euro in the new Member States

## Summary

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This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

Flash EB Series #307

# Introduction of the euro in the new Member States

## Round 11

Survey conducted by The Gallup Organization,  
Hungary, upon the request of the  
European Commission,  
Directorate-General for Economic and  
Financial Affairs



Coordinated by Directorate-General  
Communication

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**THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION**

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## Introduction

All EU Member States shall adopt the common currency, the euro, once they have fulfilled the criteria defined in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (with the exception of Denmark and the UK which have a specific opt-out from these Treaty provisions). There is no common strategy or fixed timetable with regard to the introduction of the euro in each of the Member States that joined in 2004 or later, but the Treaty does require them to join the euro area at an undefined date in the future.

Of the countries that joined the EU in 2004 or later, Slovenia, Cyprus and Malta joined the euro area in 2007 and 2008 and Slovakia followed in January 2009. Before adopting the euro, a country must comply with the Maastricht criteria and have been a member of the Exchange Rate Mechanism II (ERM II) for a minimum of two years. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are members of the ERMII, whereas Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania have not yet joined the Mechanism. Based on the latest Convergence Report on euro readiness, the Commission formally proposed to the Council that Estonia adopt the euro on 1 January 2011. On 13 July 2010, EU finance ministers took the final decisions on the euro adoption in Estonia and confirmed that Estonia is ready and will adopt the euro on 1 January 2011.

Concerning the introduction of the euro in the Member States that joined the EU in 2004 or later, the European Commission keeps track of general opinions, levels of knowledge and familiarity with the single currency among citizens of the respective countries. This survey is the eleventh of its kind, following earlier Flash Eurobarometer surveys in the period 2004–2009.

The objectives of this survey are identical to those of the previous rounds, to identify and track citizens' perceptions in non-euro area new Member States (hereafter described as the NMS8), regarding the future introduction of the common currency.

The main themes of this report are an examination of:

- levels of knowledge and experience of the euro among citizens in the NMS8;
- feelings as to whether these citizens are informed – and their most favoured information channels;
- NMS8 citizens' perceptions and support for the single currency;
- their expectations concerning the adoption of the euro and the envisaged potential inconveniences related to it.

This report sums up the main attitudes towards the euro in the NMS8 and describes the climate of opinion in each of the countries due to adopt the common currency in the future. It should be noted that “average” perceptions might change because of the different composition of samples in comparison to previous rounds: Slovakia was dropped from the surveys in 2009, Malta and Cyprus in 2008 and Slovenia in 2007. In addition, Bulgaria and Romania joined the surveys as of autumn 2007. In the current round, the NMS8 average includes Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania.

The present questionnaire is fully comparable to those of 2006-2009. The survey's fieldwork was carried out between 20 and 24 September 2010. Over 8,000 randomly selected residents aged 15 and above were interviewed in the NMS8. Statistical results were weighted to correct for known demographic discrepancies. More details on the survey methodology can be found in the annex of this report.

## Main findings

### *Awareness of – and experience with – the euro*

- When asked about the exact number of Member States already in the euro area, almost one third (32%) of respondents knew the correct answer: 16 countries. A majority of respondents, nonetheless, gave an incorrect answer: 30% thought that 13 countries had introduced the common currency, 12% believed that the right answer was six countries and 3% thought that all EU Member States had already started using the euro.
- One fifth of interviewees (20%) anticipated accession to the euro area to happen in 2016 at the earliest. The majority of respondents (59%) expected their country to join the euro area by 2015 at the latest: 41% thought this would be the case in the period 2013-2015, 15% said this would happen in 2012 and 3% thought their country would join the euro area in 2011. Roughly 9 in 10 (89%) respondents in Estonia thought that their country would join the euro area in 2011 – i.e. the date for joining the euro area as formally decided by the Council on 13 July 2010.
- Three-fifths (60%; a decrease of 3 percentage points compared to May 2010) of the surveyed countries' citizens believed that their nation had a choice as to whether it could adopt the euro, even though the Accession Treaty obliges all new Member States to join the euro area. About one-third of respondents (32%) correctly answered that their country had no choice in this regard.
- As in other rounds of the survey, in most NMS8 countries, citizens were more familiar with euro banknotes than euro coins:
  - 83% of respondents had seen euro banknotes and 77% had seen euro coins; 60% had already used the banknotes and 54% had used such coins
  - while 51% of interviewees knew that euro banknotes had the same design in all euro area countries, only 36% correctly stated that euro coins had partly different designs from country to country.
- As in previous rounds, payments in euros in foreign countries were said to be more widespread than those made in the respondents' home countries. Over half (53%) of respondents had only used euro banknotes abroad, 18% had only used euro banknotes in their home country and 28% had used them both at home and abroad.

### *Informing citizens about the euro*

- A majority of citizens did not feel well informed about the euro: 40% said they were not very well informed and 17% did not feel well informed at all. Focusing on respondents who felt well informed about the euro, 34% answered that they were rather well informed and 7% felt very well informed. These results were almost the same as those recorded in the previous round
- Like in previous surveys, a majority of citizens who feel that they lack proper information about the euro would like to be informed about the introduction of the euro well in advance of the changeover: 27% of respondents would like to be informed as soon as possible and 29% would like to receive information at least a few years before the introduction of the euro.
- Previous measurements showed that national central banks and European institutions were the most trustworthy sources of information regarding the euro and issues related to the changeover. This trend was continued with more than three quarters (77%) of respondents saying they would trust information provided by their national central bank and 69% saying the same about information from the European institutions. Half of the respondents would trust information about the euro changeover from governments, national or regional authorities, or the tax and fiscal administrations (both 50%). Compared to the previous survey round, in May 2010, the trustworthiness of euro-related information provided by these institutions has decreased slightly by three percentage points for both types of sources.
- The ranking of preferred channels of information about the euro remained the same between the last two rounds of the survey: television remained the most preferred source of information (90%), while information provided in supermarkets and shops was once again selected by the lowest proportion of

respondents (50%). Other popular channels for information about the introduction of the euro were banks (80%), newspapers and magazines (78%), the radio (77%) and the Internet (74).

- As for citizens' views about the content of the euro information campaign, most respondents felt that all of the suggested topics were important: the proportion of "essential" items ranged from 77% for information on the appearance of euro banknotes and coins to 90% for information about the way the euro would be introduced and 92% for the value of the national currency in euros.
- Survey participants in NMS8 countries were asked which campaign activities and tools were essential if they were to be well prepared for the introduction of the euro. A majority of respondents considered that all of the activities – those that had actually been used in other countries prior to the changeover – were indispensable. Nonetheless, as in previous years, there were significant differences in the priorities given to various methods. The dual display of prices was seen to be the most important information tool; dual price displays in shops were most frequently mentioned (88%, -1 point), followed by dual price displays on utility bills (82%, -2 points) and on pay slips (76%, -3 points).

### ***The euro: perceptions and support for its introduction***

- Overall, a relative majority of 47% of the respondents in the NMS8 thought that the euro would have positive consequences for their country; fewer respondents expected negative consequences at a national level (43%). On the other hand, a relative majority of 45% of respondents thought there would be negative outcomes at a personal level; slightly fewer interviewees held the opposite view (43% believed in positive consequences; a decrease of 5 percentage points compared to May 2010 and September 2009).
- In order to describe general attitudes towards the euro, respondents were asked to evaluate public opinion, based on the views of people they knew, about the introduction of the euro. Survey participants saw a rather negative climate in this regard: while two-fifths (40%) of interviewees believed that their fellow citizens were very much or rather in favour of the introduction of the euro, slightly more respondents reported that people they knew were against (very much or rather) this idea (43%).
- A relative majority of NMS8 citizens would like to see the euro introduced as late as possible (38%); this ratio increased by six percentage points compared to May 2010. Roughly one third (35%; -4 percentage points lower than in May 2010) of interviewees wanted the changeover to happen after a certain time, while approximately one fifth (21%; -3 percentage points) opted for as soon as possible.
- In the current round, almost three quarters of respondents (74%) agreed that the euro had the status of an international currency, similar to the US dollar or the Japanese yen; roughly one in five (19%) disagreed with this proposition.

### ***Consequences of adopting the euro***

- A relative majority of 47% of citizens in the NMS8 thought that the introduction of the euro had had positive consequences in the countries that were already members of the euro area (12% "very positive" and 35% "rather positive"), while about a third felt that the consequences had been negative (10% "very negative" and 25% "rather negative").
- Almost 7 in 10 (69%) of NMS8 citizens expected that the euro's introduction would increase prices in their country, while almost one in five (19%) thought that it would contribute to price stability.
- Citizens in the NMS8 most frequently agreed that Europe's place in the world would be reinforced when the currency was adopted in their country: 58% expected this outcome (-3 percentage points compared to May 2010) and 26% disagreed with this proposition (unchanged). The second most anticipated positive consequence of the changeover was sounder public finances: 43% of NMS8 citizens agreed (-3 points), and 34% disagreed (+2 points) that adopting the euro would ensure sounder public finances.

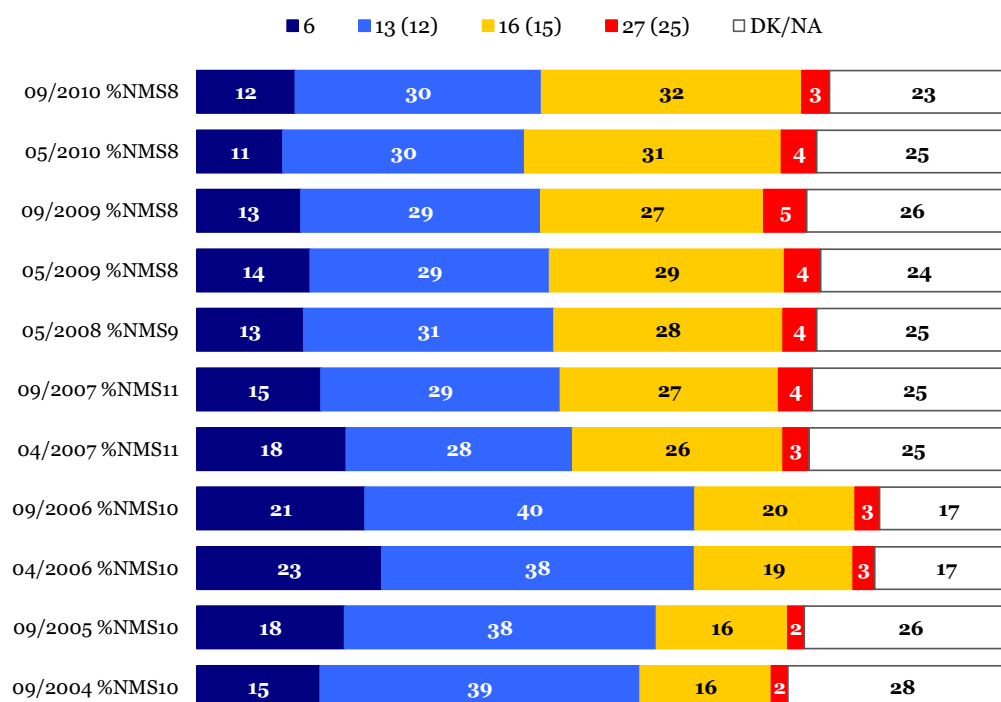
- Half (51%) of respondents in the NMS8 countries thought that using the euro would make people feel more European. Since September 2009, this proportion has dropped by four percentage points; however, a very small increase of 1 percentage point was noted compared to May 2010. Slightly more than 4 in 10 (42%) disagreed with this statement and less than 1 in 10 respondents (7%) did not answer this question.
- As was seen in previous rounds, an overwhelming majority of NMS8 citizens agreed with statements suggesting that travelling and shopping in countries that use the euro would become easier:
  - 90% agreed that joining the common currency would be more convenient for those who travel in other countries that use the euro (unchanged compared to May 2010)
  - 85% agreed that the euro would make it easier to shop in other countries using the common currency (-1 point)
  - 82% confirmed that joining the euro area would allow them to easily compare prices with those in other countries that use the euro (unchanged)
  - 76% thought that the euro's introduction would eliminate any charges relating to currency exchange when, for example, visiting other countries that use the euro (unchanged).
- A decreasing minority of respondents agreed that the euro will protect a country against the effects of international crises (37%, -5 percentage points), while an increasing proportion of respondents disagreed (42%, +3 points).
- Respondents were also asked to evaluate some potentially negative impacts due to the euro's introduction. In accordance with the aforementioned overall positive attitudes towards the euro, the majority of respondents did not worry about the various potential negative consequences of the changeover to euro. However, the proportion of those not worrying has slightly decreased since the previous measurement, signalling an increased level of pessimism:
  - no personal inconveniences that could be caused by the changeover: 52% (-2 points),
  - no loss of their country's control over economic policy: 51% (5 points)
  - no negative effect on their country's identity: 52% (-5 points).
- As in previous rounds, the only concern that a majority of respondents in the NMS8 countries shared among the statements presented were possible abuses and cases of cheating on prices during the changeover (74%, unchanged).

## Awareness of – and experience with – the euro

### Awareness of the current euro area countries

When asked about the exact number of Member States already in the euro area, almost one third (32%) of respondents knew the correct answer: 16 countries. A majority of respondents, nonetheless, gave an incorrect answer: 30% thought that 13 countries had introduced the common currency, 12% believed that the right answer was six countries and 3% thought that all EU Member States had already started using the euro.

#### Number of current euro area countries



Q5. According to you, how many EU countries have already introduced the euro?  
(figures in parentheses were asked in previous surveys)

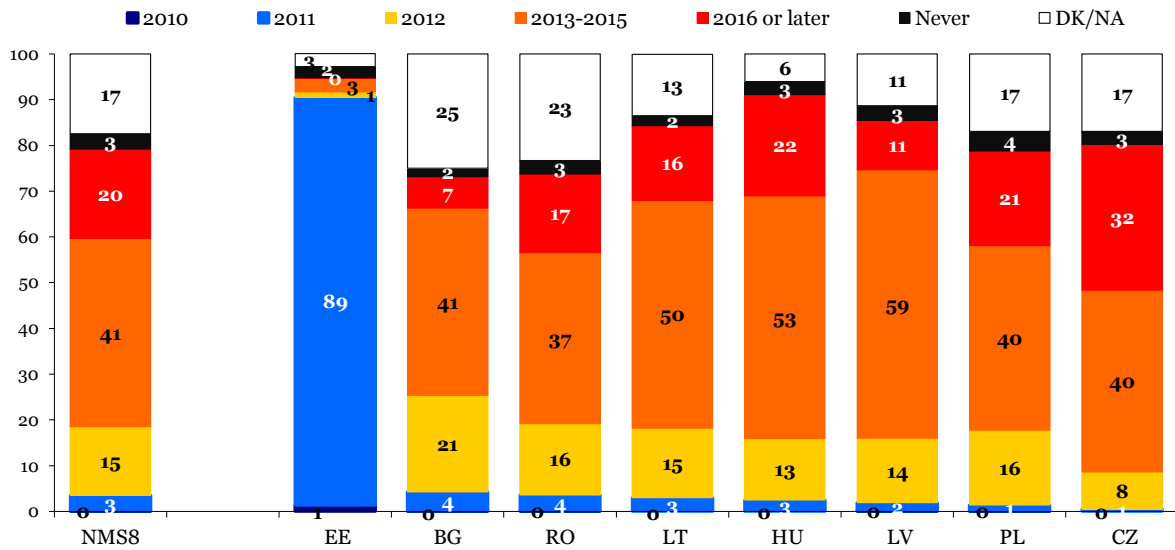
While the Hungarian and Czech respondents were the most likely to know the correct number of EU Member States that use the euro as their currency (both 38%), Romanian and Bulgarian citizens were the least likely to answer the question correctly (both 28%).

### Expected date of the euro's adoption

One fifth of interviewees (20%) anticipated accession to the euro area to happen in 2016 at the earliest. The majority of respondents (59%) expected their country to join the euro area by 2015 at the latest: 41% thought this would be the case in the period 2013-2015, 15% said this would happen in 2012 and 3% thought their country would join the euro area in 2011. A small proportion (3%) of survey participants believed that the accession to the euro area would never happen. Finally, 17% of respondents said they did not know when the euro would be introduced or gave no answer.

Roughly 9 in 10 (89%) respondents in Estonia thought that their country would join the euro area in 2011 – i.e. the date for joining the euro area as formally decided by the Council on 13 July 2010. Among the other NMS8 countries, the proportion of respondents who thought that their country would join the euro area in the coming five years (by 2015 at the latest) ranged from 49% in the Czech Republic to 75% in Latvia.

**Expected date of the euro’s adoption**

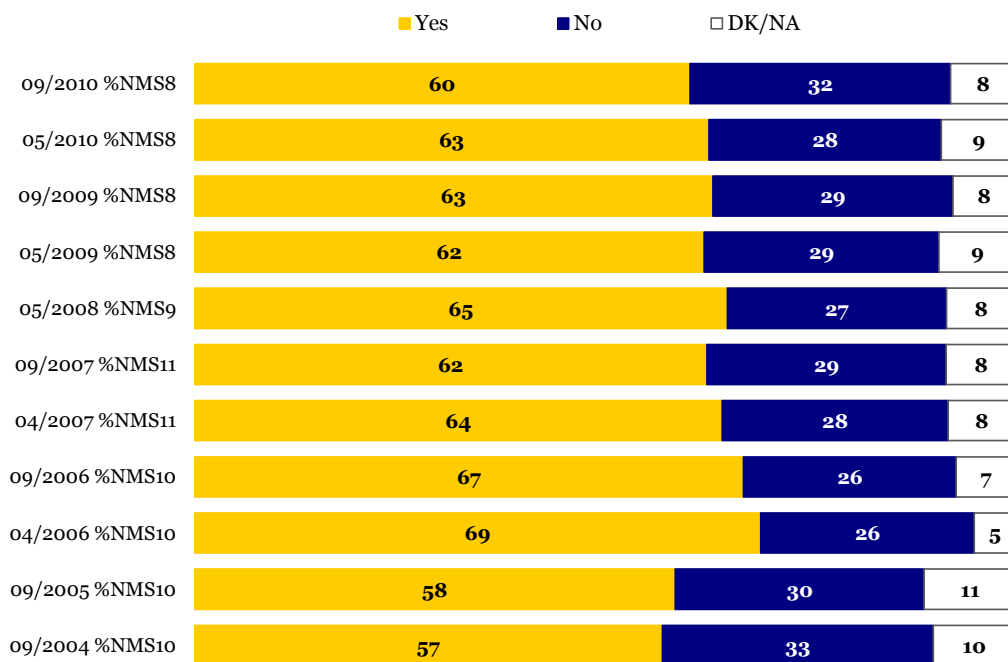


Q5ter. When, in which year do you think the euro will be introduced in [ COUNTRY]?  
% by country

**Can new Member States choose whether or not to adopt the euro?**

Three fifths (60%; a decrease of 3 percentage points compared to May 2010) of the surveyed countries’ citizens believed that their nation had a choice as to whether it could adopt the euro or not, even though the Accession Treaty obliges all new Member States to join the euro area. About one third of respondents (32%) correctly answered that their country had no choice in this regard. Compared to May 2010, this result shows an increase of 4 percentage points in the ratio of those who knew that choosing to adopt or not the common currency it is not an option, but a legal obligation for the Member States. Finally, 8% of interviewees did not know how to answer the question.

**Can Member States choose whether or not to adopt the euro?**



Q5bis. Can [ COUNTRY] choose whether or not to introduce the euro?

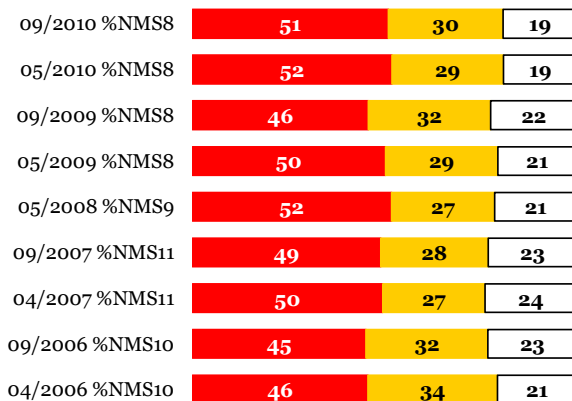
**An awareness of their country's legal obligation to join the euro area was the highest in Estonia,** where a majority of respondents gave the correct answer (55%; a significant increase of 20 percentage points since May 2010). In Poland, on the other hand, only roughly one quarter (24%) of respondents were aware of this legal obligation.

Analysing the ranking of the non-euro area new Member States according to their knowledge of this topic, we found a relatively stable situation compared to May 2010: Czechs and Latvians were among the most aware of their country's legal obligation to adopt the euro, while Poles and Romanians were among the least likely to be aware of this obligation. However, it is worth mentioning that the Czech Republic has seen a decrease of seven percentage points in the number of informed citizens compared to May 2010 (from 52% to 45% in September 2010), and that Hungary (from 30% to 36% in September 2010) and Romania (from 27% to 33% in September 2010) have seen an increase of six percentage points in this proportion.

### **Familiarity with the design of euro cash**

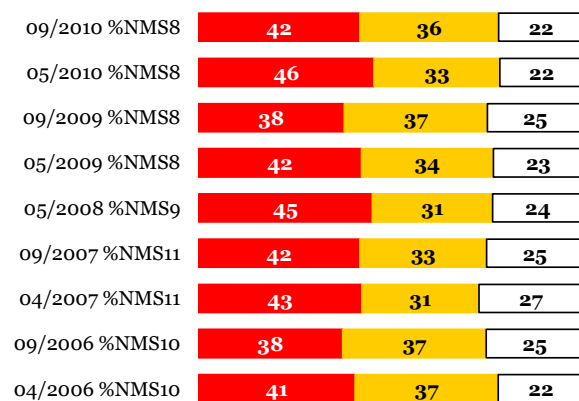
As in previous rounds of this survey, **respondents were more familiar with the design of euro banknotes than with the design of euro coins:** while 51% of interviewees knew that euro banknotes had the same design in all euro area countries, only 42% correctly stated that euro coins had partly different designs from country to country.

#### **The graphic design of the euro banknotes**



- The euro banknotes/ coins look exactly the same in all countries
- The euro banknotes/ coins have partly different designs from country to country
- DK/NA

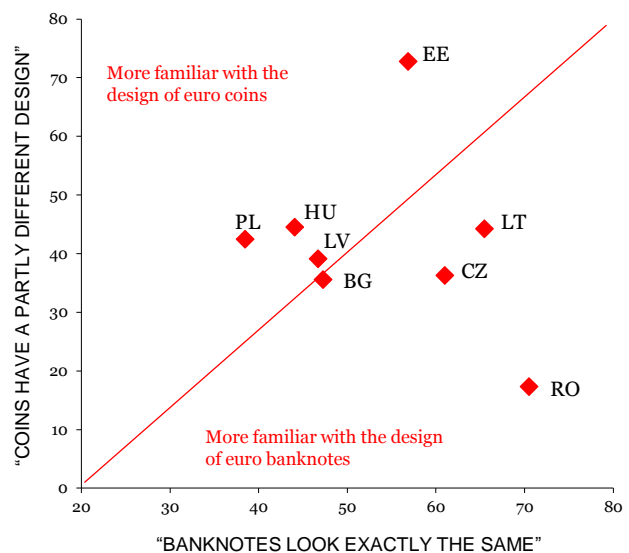
#### **... and coins**



Q3-Q4. What do you think, which of the following statements is correct?  
%, all respondents

As in previous rounds of this survey, Estonia was the only country where a majority of respondents gave the correct answer concerning the design of both euro banknotes (57%) and coins (73%). In most other non-euro area new Member States, respondents were more informed about the design of euro banknotes than the design of euro coins. A striking difference was seen in Romania, where respondents were among the most familiar with the design of euro banknotes (71%), while they were by far the least familiar with the actual design of euro coins (17%). High differences between the knowledge of euro banknote design and the

### **The design of the euro money**

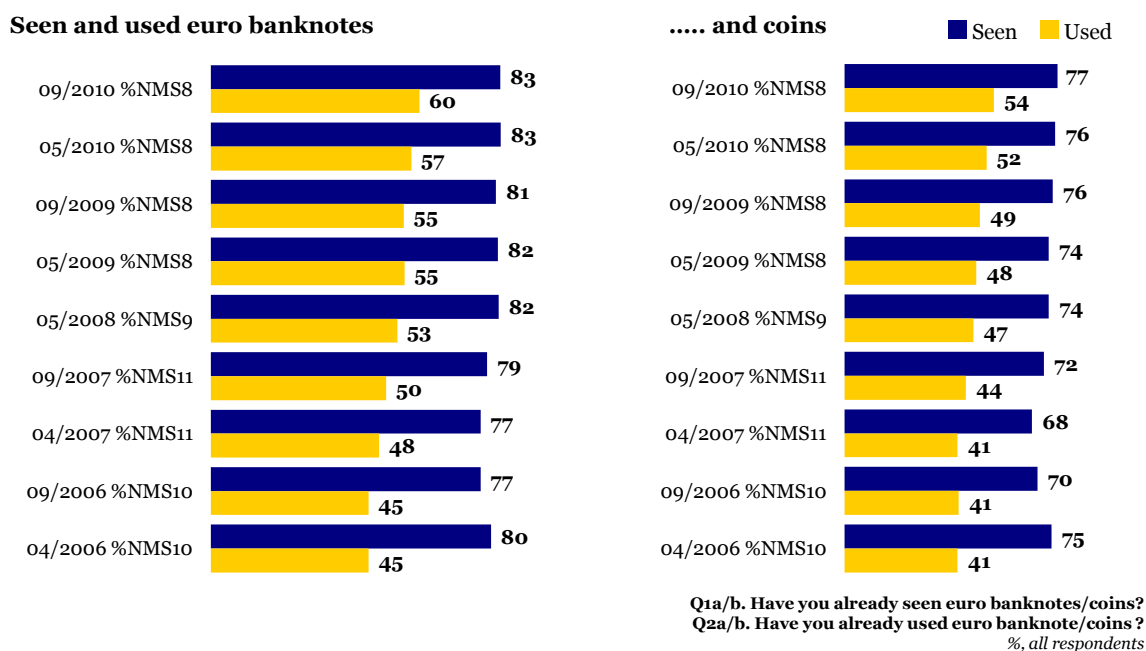


Q3-Q4. What do you think, which of the following statements is correct?  
% by country

knowledge of euro coin design were also found in the Czech Republic (euro banknotes: 61% vs. euro coins: 36%; 25 percentage points difference) and Lithuania (euro banknotes: 66% vs. euro coins: 44%; 22 percentage points difference).

### Experience with euro cash

The current round again showed that, generally speaking, **euro coins have been less seen and less widely used than euro banknotes** in the NMS8 countries. About three quarters of respondents have seen euro coins (77%) and a slim majority said they have used those coins (54%). The corresponding proportions for euro banknotes were 83% and 60%, respectively.



The share of respondents who had already seen euro banknotes ranged from 74% in Hungary to 88% in Romania. Larger differences between NMS8 countries were seen when looking at **the proportion of citizens who had already used these banknotes: this proportion ranged from 45% in Hungary and Lithuania to 69% in Romania** (a difference of 24 percentage points).

**Czech respondents were the most familiar with euro coins:** 84% said they had seen the coins and 63% stated that they had used them. Following the Czechs, the Estonians, Poles and Romanians were also very aware of euro coins – in all these countries, 79% of respondents stated that they had seen euro coins; however, the ratio of those who used euro coins was lower and varied between 56% in Poland and 60% in Romania. Lithuanians were the least familiar with the euro: while 64% reported having seen euro coins, only 35% said they had actually used them.

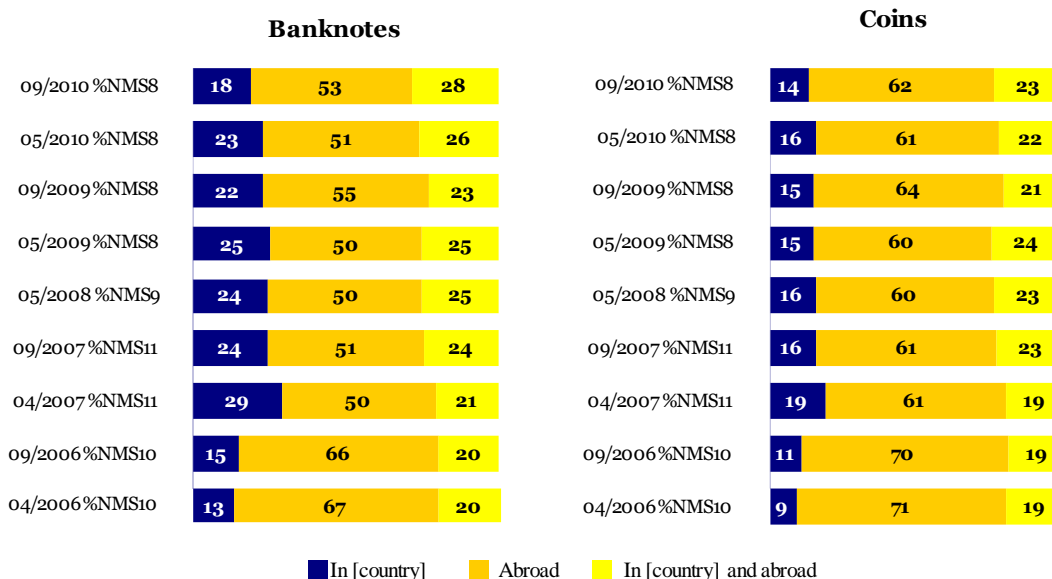
Romania has seen the largest increase in familiarity with euro coins compared to the previous round of this survey (+6 percentage points; from 73% in May 2010 to 79%); in addition, more citizens in Romania used euro coins since May 2010 (60% in September 2010 vs. 56% in May 2010). As with the usage of euro banknotes, the biggest change with regard to the usage of euro coins was seen in Poland: while 48% of Polish said that they had used euro coins in May 2010, 56% stated this in September 2010 (+8 percentage points).

## Where do people use the euro?

As in previous rounds, **payments in euros in foreign countries were said to be more widespread than those made in the respondents' home countries**. Over half (53%) of respondents<sup>1</sup> had *only* used euro banknotes *abroad*, 18% had *only* used euro banknotes *in their home country* and 28% had used them *both at home and abroad*. The corresponding proportions for euro coins were 62% for “only abroad”, 14% for “only in their home country” and 23% for “both at home and abroad”.

**The proportion of respondents who had used euro banknotes in their own country and abroad has gradually increased the previous year** (+5 points compared to September 2009; +2 points since May 2010), while the share of those who had only used euro banknotes in foreign countries has decreased since the previous round (-5 points). No significant change was seen in the usage of euro coins, compared to the findings of previous rounds.

### Where do people use the euro ...?



Q2bis./ Q2ter. You said you already used euro banknotes/coins. Was it...?  
Base: those who have already used euro banknotes /coins

In Estonia, the Czech Republic and Hungary, over all of the survey rounds, there was a wide gap between a large majority who had *only* used euros *abroad* compared to a minority who had *also* used them *at home*. For example, 90% of Estonians had only used euro banknotes in a foreign country, while 10% had used them both abroad and at home (a gap of 80 percentage points, +10 points since the previous round); the corresponding proportions for euro coins showed an even wider gap: 93% vs. 7% (a gap of 86 points, +10 points).

Romania's results were also characterised by a wide and relatively constant gap, but in the opposite direction. As in previous rounds, Romanians were more likely to have used both euro banknotes and coins *in their home country as well* rather than having *only* used them *abroad*. In the current round, 18% of Romanians had *only* used euro banknotes *abroad* and 28% had only used euro coins outside of Romania; while, 82% of Romanians said they had *also* used euro banknotes *in their home country* and 71% said they had done the same in regard to euro coins (a gap of 64 points for euro banknotes and a gap of 43 points for euro coins).

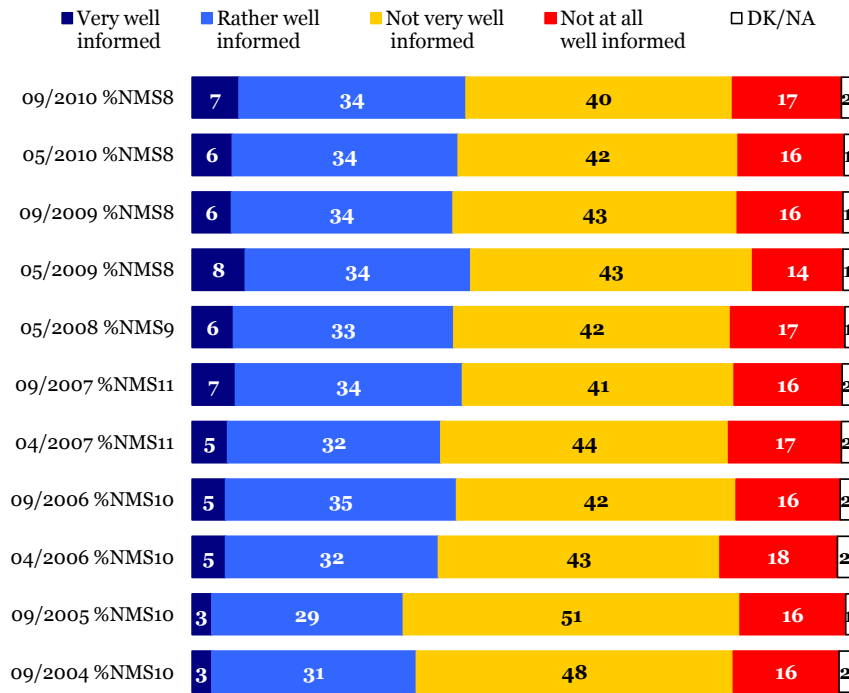
<sup>1</sup> Base : those respondents who have already used euro banknotes or coins

## Informing citizens about the euro

### Self-perceived level of information

Looking at the NMS8 countries, a **majority of citizens did not feel well informed about the euro**: 40% said they were *not very well informed* and 17% *did not feel well informed at all*. Focusing on respondents who felt well informed about the euro, 34% answered that they were *rather well informed* and 7% felt *very well informed*. **These results were almost the same as those recorded in the previous round.**

Evolution of self-perceived information level regarding the euro, %



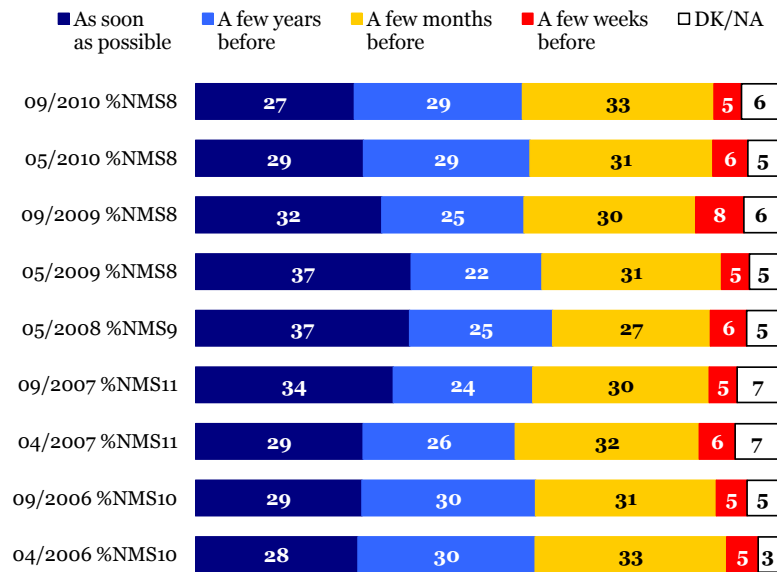
Q6. To what extent do you feel informed about the euro? Do you feel...:

In most NMS8 countries, respondents who felt *not very well* or *not well informed at all* about the euro outnumbered those who felt *very well* or *rather well informed*. The two exceptions were **Estonia and Romania**. The proportion of Estonians who felt *very well* or *rather well informed* about the euro has more than doubled since 2004; the gradual increase from 30% in 2004 to 50% in May 2010 was followed by a sharp increase of +16 points in only four months, from 50% to 65%. In Romania, equal shares of respondents felt either well informed or not well informed about the euro (49% each), close to the levels recorded about one and half year ago.

### Timing for the receipt of information about the euro

A majority of citizens lacking proper information would like to be informed about the introduction of the euro well in advance of the changeover: 27% of respondents would like to be informed *as soon as possible* and 29% would like to receive information at least *a few years before* the introduction of the euro. One third of respondents said that they would like to receive information about the euro *a few months before* the introduction of the currency (33%), and a small number of interviewees preferred to be informed *a few weeks before* the changeover (5%).

### Desired timeframe for being informed about the euro



Q7. When would you like to be informed about the introduction of euro in [COUNTRY]?

Base: who are not informed

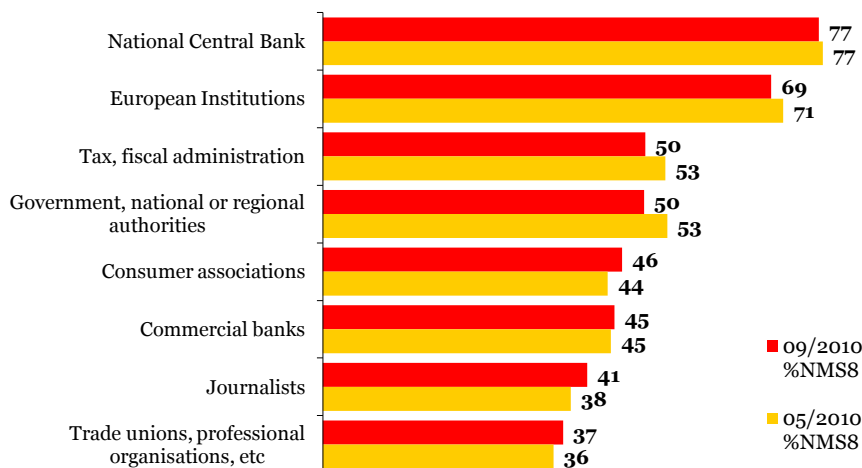
The share of those who wanted to be informed *as soon as possible* ranged from 17% in Hungary and 20% in Lithuania and Latvia to 40% in Estonia and 42% in the Czech Republic.

### Trusted distributors of information on the euro

Previous measurements showed that **national central banks and European institutions were considered the most trustworthy sources of information regarding the euro and issues related to the changeover**. This trend was continued with more than three quarters (77%) of respondents saying they would trust information provided by their national central bank and 69% saying the same about information from the European institutions.

Half of respondents would trust information about the euro changeover from governments, national or regional authorities, or the tax and fiscal administrations (both 50%). Compared to the previous survey round, in May 2010, the trustworthiness of euro-related information provided by these institutions has decreased slightly by three percentage points for both types of sources.

### Trusted distributors of information campaigns (% "trust")



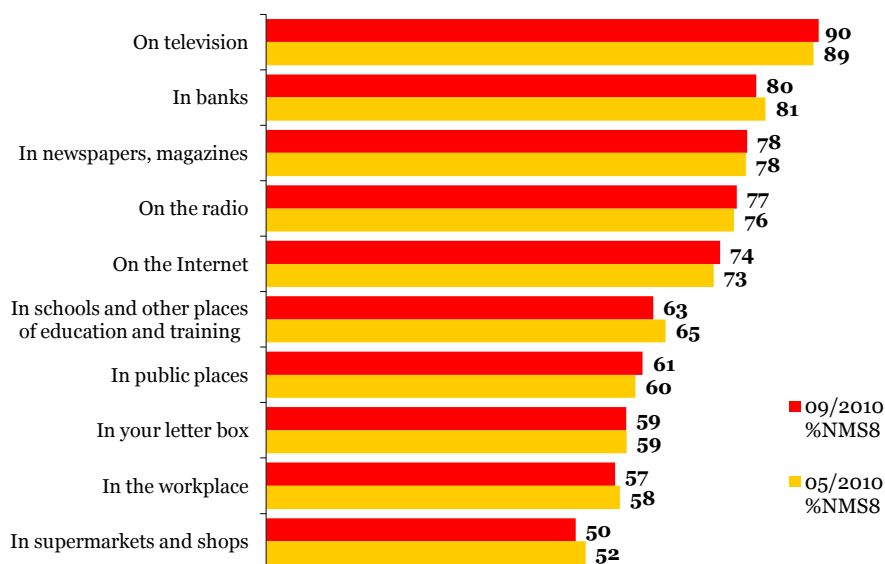
Q8. For each of the following institutions or groups, please tell me if you would trust information they provide on the changeover to the euro, or not?

In all but one of the NMS8 countries, the national central bank was the institution that respondents had most confidence in when it came to receiving information about the euro and its introduction. Czech respondents were the most likely to answer that they would trust information provided by their national central bank (90%), while respondents in Lithuania were the least likely to do so (63%). Lithuanians placed the most trust in European institutions (66%), with the central bank ranking second. In a further five NMS8 countries, the second most trusted source of information about the euro and the changeover was the European Institutions; also in Estonia they were the third most trusted (between 58% of citizens in Latvia and 80% in the Czech Republic considered the European Institutions trustful sources of information).

### ***Preferred channels of information***

The ranking of preferred channels remained the same between the last two rounds of the survey: television remained the most preferred source of information (90%), while information provided in supermarkets and shops was once again selected by the lowest proportion of respondents (50%). Other popular channels for information about the introduction of the euro were banks (80%), newspapers and magazines (78%), the radio (77%) and the internet (74).

**Preferred channels for information campaigns, %**



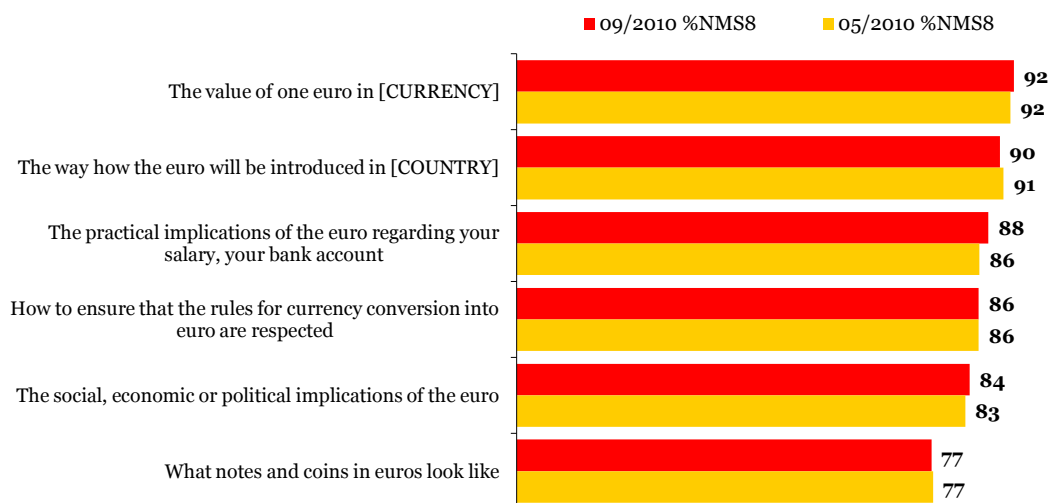
**Q9. Where would you like to receive useful information on the euro and the changeover?**  
multiple answer

Television was the most preferred channel of information in six of the NMS8 countries, ranging from 82% in Hungary to 95% in Poland. In Estonia and the Czech Republic the use of banks was the most preferred channel for information about the euro and its introduction: 84% in Estonia and 88% in the Czech Republic.

### ***Most favoured topics of information campaigns***

As for citizens' views about the content of the euro information campaign, most respondents felt that all of the suggested topics were important: the proportion of "essential" items ranged from 77% for information on the appearance of euro banknotes and coins to 90% for information about the way the euro would be introduced and 92% for the value of the national currency in euros.

### Preferred topics for information campaigns (% "essential")



Q10. In your view, which of the following issues about the euro are essential to be covered in priority by the information campaign?

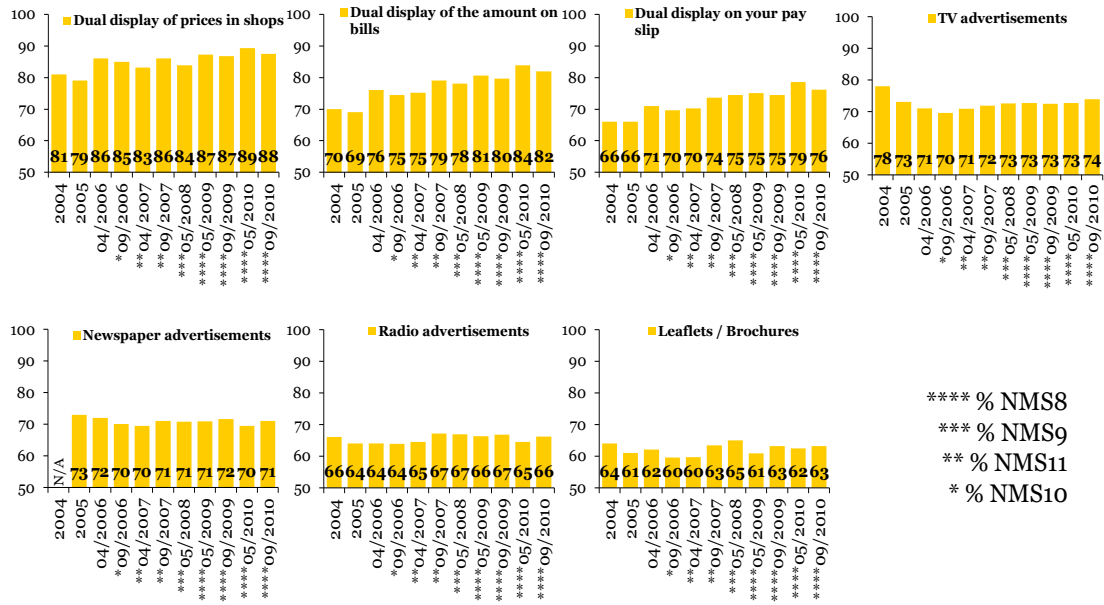
In almost all countries, *the value of the euro in the local currency* was listed as an essential topic for an information campaign by more than 9 in 10 respondents (ranging from 87% in Romania to 96% in Hungary). Similarly, the changeover scenario, i.e. *the way the euro would be introduced* – was selected by at least 9 in 10 interviewees in five countries (ranging from 90% in Bulgaria to 93% in Poland, the Czech Republic and Lithuania). The most notable exception was Romania, where the above-mentioned topics and all of the others suggested for inclusion in the euro information campaign received less support (for example, 87% for *the value of the euro in the local currency* and 82% for *the changeover scenario*).

### Main activities and events essential to an information campaign

Survey participants in NMS8 countries were also asked which campaign activities and tools were essential if they were to be well prepared for the introduction of the euro. Across those countries, a majority of respondents considered that all of the activities – those that had actually been used in other countries prior to the changeover – were indispensable.

Nonetheless, as in previous years, there were significant differences in the priorities given to various methods. **The dual display of prices was seen as the most important information tool**; dual price displays *in shops* were most frequently mentioned (88%, -1 point), followed by dual price displays on *utility bills* (82%, -2 points) and on *pay slips* (76%, -3 points). *TV ads* were the next most popular tool for the provision of vital information about the euro and its introduction (74%, +1 point), followed by *newspaper ads* (71%, +1 point). About two thirds of respondents considered *radio ads* to be essential (66%, -1 point) and about 6 in 10 felt this way about *leaflets and brochures* (63%, +1 point).

**Preferred tools of the information campaigns**



Q11. Here is a list of various information campaign actions. Could you tell me for each of them whether you would find it essential or not essential to prepare yourself for the euro?  
 % of "essential"

Across all NMS8 countries, the *dual display of prices* was seen as an essential tool that would provide vital information about the introduction of the euro. For example, in seven of eight countries, the dual display of prices *in shops* appeared in first place with proportions ranging from 83% in the Czech Republic and Lithuania to 95% in Hungary. Furthermore, the dual display of prices on utility bills appeared in second place in six countries (ranging from 76% in the Czech Republic to 90% in Hungary) and in the first place in Estonia (80%).

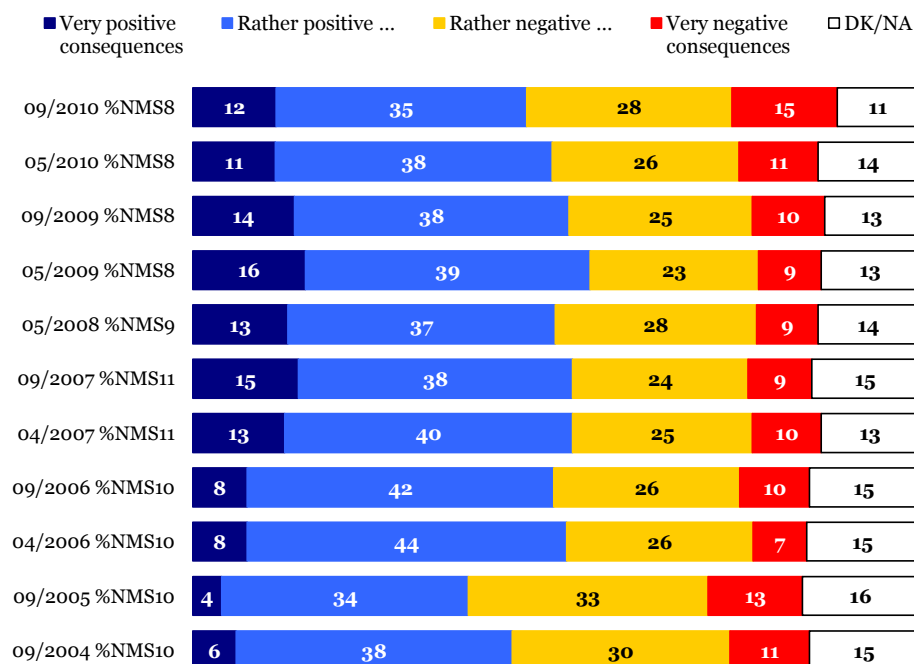
**The euro: perceptions and support for its introduction**

***Consequences of the euro's introduction – at a national and personal level***

Overall, a relative majority of 47% of the respondents in the NMS8 thought that the euro would have positive consequences for their country; fewer respondents expected negative consequences at a national level (43%). However, these figures reflect a constant decrease - since May 2009 - in the proportion of citizens who believed that the euro's introduction would have a positive impact at a national level.

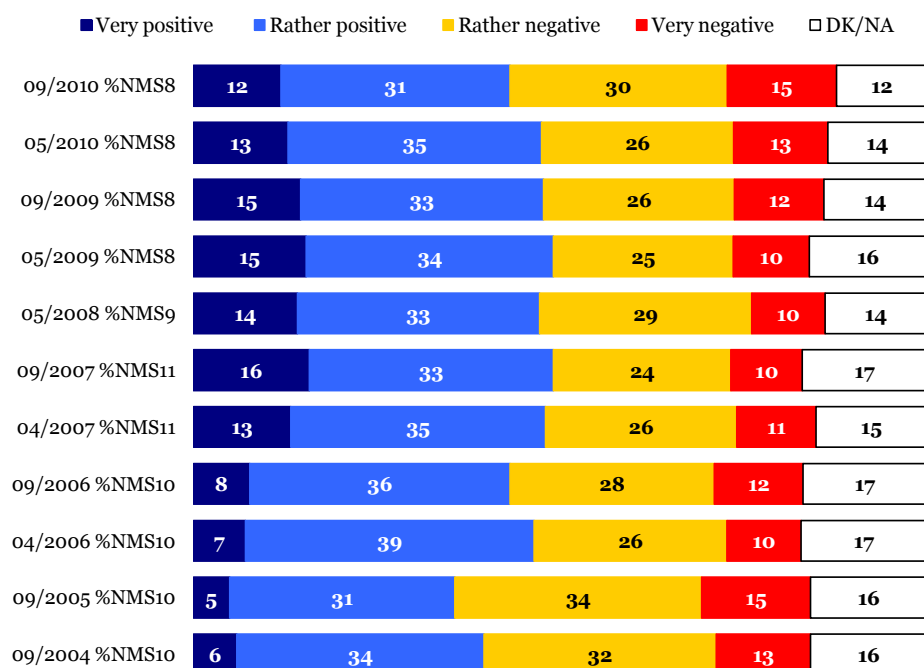
A relative majority of 45% of respondents thought there would be negative outcomes at a personal level; slightly fewer interviewees held the opposite view (43% believed in positive consequences; a decrease of 5 percentage points compared to May 2010 and September 2009).

### Consequences of the euro's introduction at a national level



Q13.(2007-2010)/Q12(2006). Do you think the introduction of the euro would have positive or negative consequences for [COUNTRY]...?

### Consequences of the euro's introduction at a personal level



Q14.(2007-2010)/Q13.(2006) And for you personally, do you think that it would be positive or negative if the euro would be introduced?

**In four NMS8 countries** (Estonia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania), respondents who expected positive consequences for their country outnumbered those who expected a negative outcome. **The opposite pattern** – i.e. respondents expecting a negative outcome outnumbering those expecting a positive impact – was observed in the **Czech Republic** (57% vs. 38%), **Lithuania** (49% vs. 41%), **Latvia** (52% vs. 34%) and **Poland** (45% vs. 43%). Compared to May 2010, in almost all NMS8 countries we found an increase in the ratio of those who expected negative outcomes for their country. The most pronounced such variations were found in Romania, Hungary and Poland.

**Only one country – Romania - had an absolute majority of respondents who expected positive personal consequences from the changeover (58%; -3 percentage points lower than in May 2010);** only about a third (32%) of Romanians envisaged negative outcomes for themselves. In addition to Romania, in Hungary (42% vs. 37%) and Bulgaria (46% vs. 42%) we found as well more respondents who expected positive personal consequences than negative ones. However, in both countries we found significant decreases in the proportion of those who predicted positive consequences at personal level since the previous round (Hungary: - 10 points; Bulgaria: - 5 points). **In the other five NMS8 countries, there were more respondents who expected negative personal consequences than positive ones.** This was most noticeable in the Czech Republic where a majority (59%) of respondents thought they would personally suffer disadvantages after the euro's introduction, compared to 36% of Czechs who expected positive personal consequences.

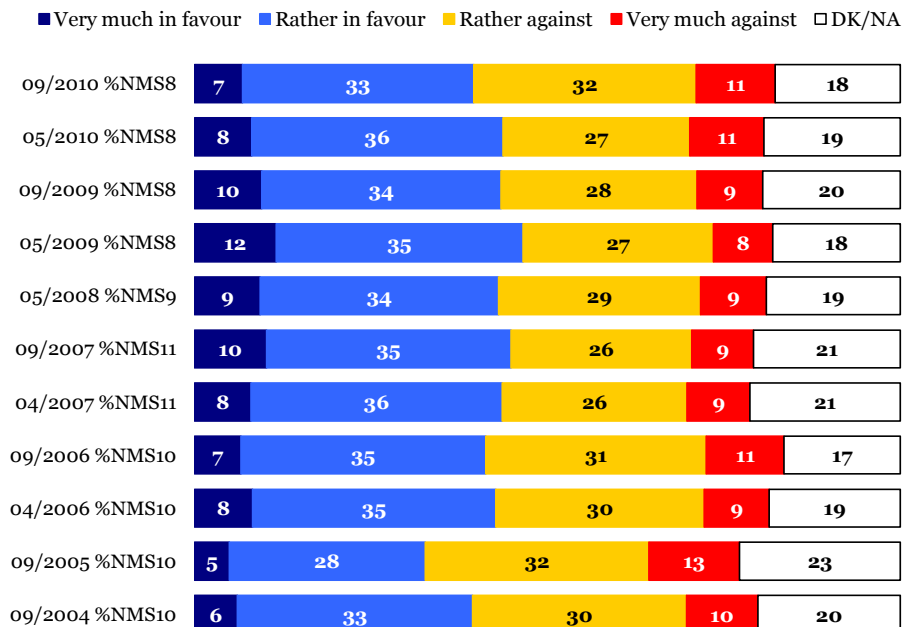
Romania was characterised by the largest increase in the proportion of respondents who expected a negative personal impact from the changeover compared to May 2010 (+9 percentage points).

### ***Society's support for the single currency***

**While two fifths (40%) of interviewees believed that their fellow citizens were *very much or rather in favour* of the euro's introduction, slightly more respondents reported that people they knew were *against (very much or rather)* this idea (43%).**

Compared to the previous round, the current results indicated **some worsening in the climate of opinion concerning the euro:** since May 2010, the share of interviewees who thought that public opinion was *in favour of* joining the euro area has decreased by four percentage points (from 44% in May 2010 to 40% in September 2010). In comparison, the share of respondents who reported a *negative* climate of opinion has increased by five percentage points in that timeframe (from 38% in May 2010 to 43% in September 2010).

#### **Climate of opinion regarding the euro's introduction**



Q15.(2007-2010)/Q14.(2006) Generally speaking, are most people you personally know more in favour or against the idea of introducing the euro in [COUNTRY]?

The proportion of respondents who thought that the general climate of opinion surrounding the euro's introduction in their country was negative (i.e. they thought their fellow citizens were against the changeover) ranged from one in five (20%) in Romania to a majority (59%) in the Czech Republic.

### ***Personal support for replacing the national currency by the euro***

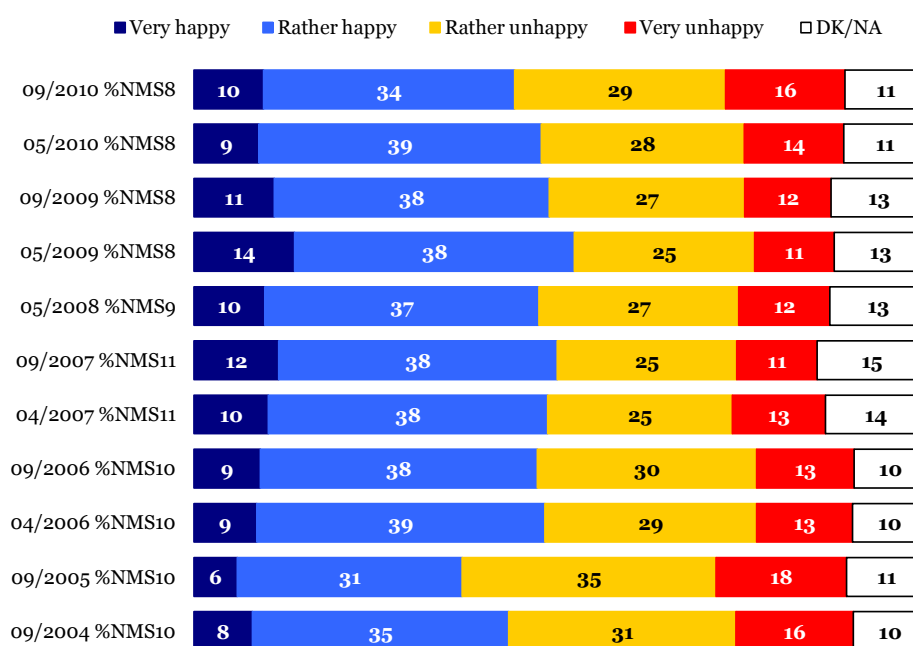
While 45% of respondents said they were *unhappy* that the euro could replace their national currency, about the same proportion (44%) said the opposite. However, looking at those who had strong views we found a higher ratio of interviewees who declared themselves *very unhappy* (16%) with the changeover than respondents who were *very happy* (10%).

Changes in respondents' support for the fact that the euro could replace their national currency were similar to those observed in regard to the general climate of opinion surrounding the euro's introduction, with a negative trend observed in September 2010 compared to May 2010.

Consistent with past surveys, respondents in **the Czech Republic, Latvia and Estonia** were the most liable to say that they were personally *unhappy* that the euro could replace their national currency (54%-61%). Furthermore, respondents in **Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary** were the most likely to say they felt *happy* about this changeover. For example, roughly half (51%) of Romanians said they were *happy* that the euro could replace their national currency, while significantly fewer (34%) said the opposite.

Focusing on changes that occurred since the previous round, we found the biggest variations in Romania and Hungary – more precisely, a significant decrease in the proportion of those *happy* (-4 and -7 percentage points, respectively) with the changeover and an increase in the ratio of those *unhappy* (+6 and +5 percentage points, respectively).

#### **Are people happy that the euro will replace their national currency?**



Q12.(2007-2010)/q15.(2006)Are you personally happy or not that the euro could replace the [CURRENCY]?

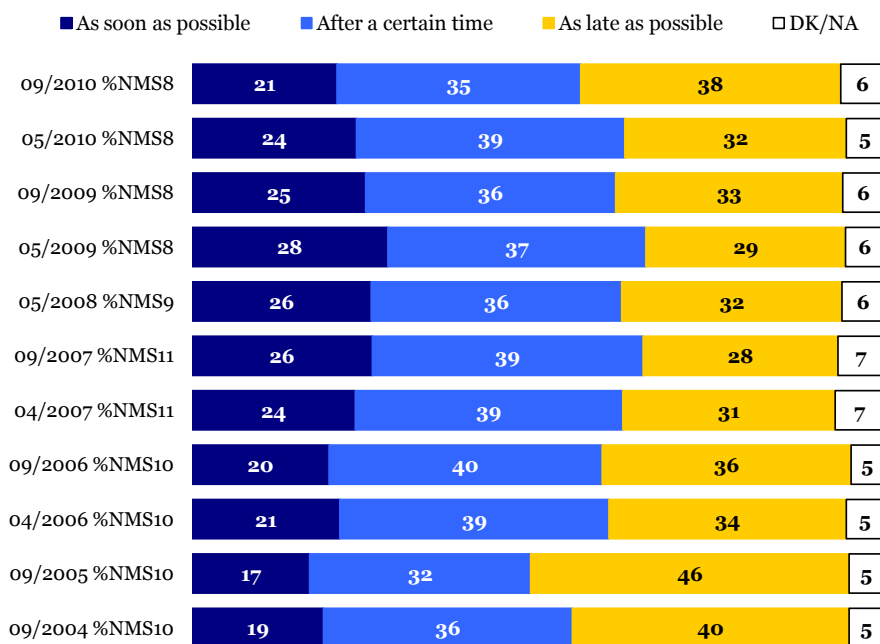
### ***The most desired timeframe for the adoption of the euro***

A relative majority of NMS8 citizens would like to see the euro introduced *as late as possible* (38%); this ratio increased by six percentage points compared to May 2010. Roughly one third (35%; -4 percentage points lower than in May 2010) of interviewees wanted the changeover to happen *after a certain time*, while approximately one fifth (21%; -3 percentage points) opted for *as soon as possible*.

In line with the findings of previous rounds, in most NMS8 countries, respondents were more likely to want the euro to be introduced later rather than sooner. **The proportions of respondents who wanted the euro to be introduced *as late as possible* were the highest in the Czech Republic and Poland (both 47%) and Latvia (46%).** In these three countries, only 12%-13% of interviewees thought that an early accession to the euro area was preferable.

Romania's results were in contrast: 22% wanted the euro to be introduced *as late as possible* and 39% *as soon as possible*. Romania and Hungary were the only countries where those opting for an early accession outnumbered those wanting this to happen as late as possible.

### Desired timeframe for adopting the euro



Q16. When would you like the euro to become your currency?

### Status of the euro as an international currency

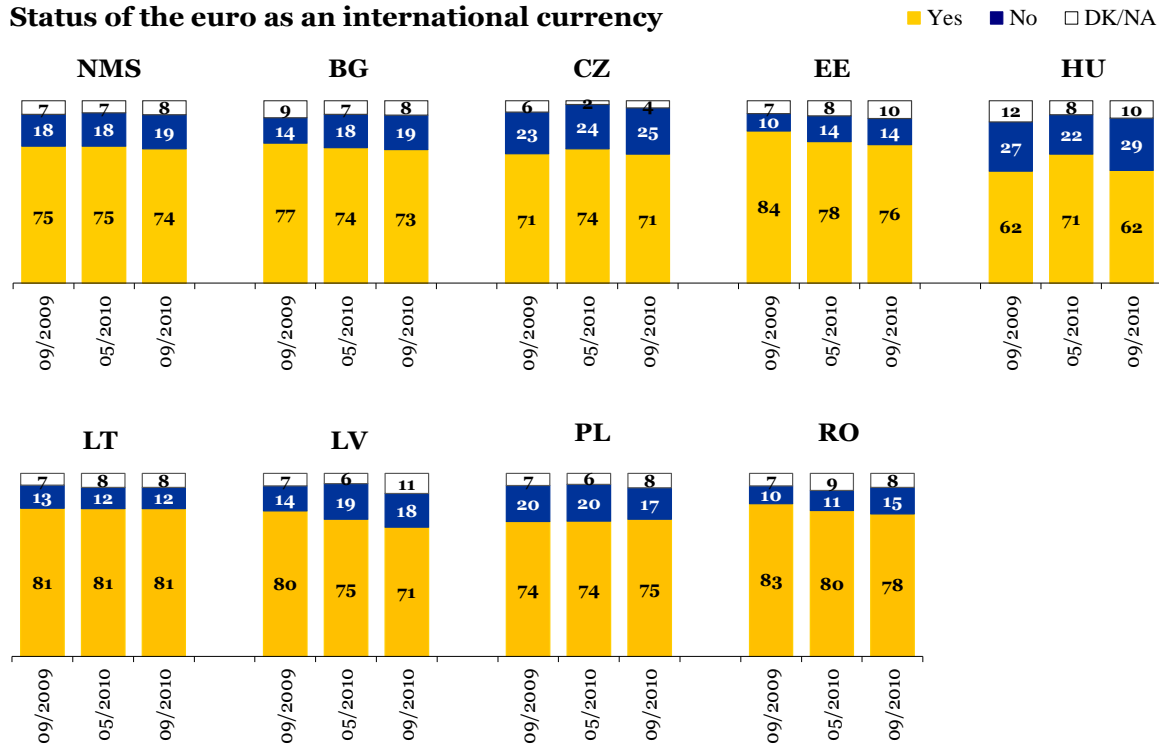
In the current round, almost **three quarters of respondents (74%) agreed that the euro had the status of an international currency**, similar to the US dollar or the Japanese yen; roughly one in five (19%) disagreed with this proposition.

Since the first round of the present survey, there has been a solid and broad consensus among citizens in the surveyed countries that the euro does have the status of a major international currency. Furthermore, between 2004 and May 2009, this belief had gradually increased from 73% to 79%; in September 2009, however, it decreased to 75% and in September 2010 it decreased to 74%.

**The proportions of respondents who thought that the euro had the status of a major international currency were the highest in Lithuania (81%) and Romania (78%).**

As in the previous rounds, **Hungarians were the most sceptical about the status of the euro among other international currencies**: 62% felt that the euro was a major international currency and 29% disagreed with this idea. In addition, **Hungary's current results represented a considerable change** compared to those measured in May 2010 (71% then, but now 62%, nine percentage points lower), bringing the country back to the support level measured in September 2009.

## Status of the euro as an international currency

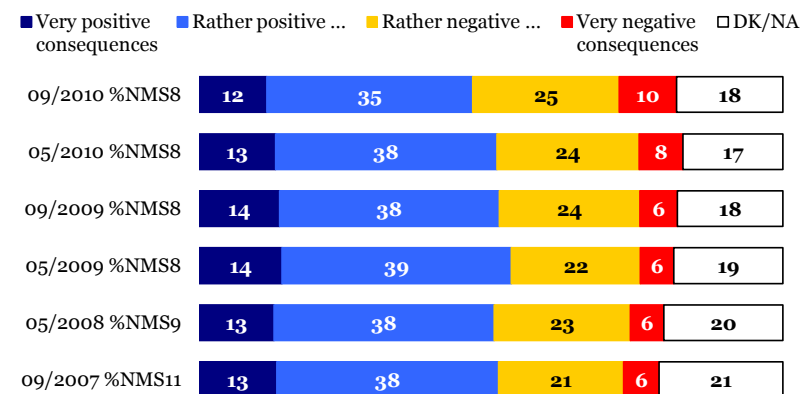


Q19.(2007-2010)/Q18. (2006) Do you think that the euro is an international currency like the US dollar or the Japanese Yen?

## Consequences of adopting the euro

A relative majority of 47% (-4 percentage points than in May 2010) of citizens in the NMS8 thought that the introduction of the euro had had positive consequences in the countries that were already members of the euro area (12% “very positive” and 35% “rather positive”), while about a third felt that the consequences had been negative (10% “very negative” and 25% “rather negative”). One sixth of respondents (18%) could not or would not answer this question.

## Consequences of the introduction of the euro in those countries already using the euro



Q17. Do you think the introduction of the euro has had positive or negative consequences in those countries that are using the euro already?

In six NMS8 countries, respondents who thought the euro’s impact had been positive in the euro area countries outnumbered those who believed that its impact had been negative. **Respondents in Romania were the most confident about the positive effects of the euro in those countries where the changeover had already taken place: approximately 6 in 10 (62%; -4 percentage points**

compared to May 2010) thought that the changeover had had positive consequences, compared to one in five (20%; +5 points) who thought the consequences had been negative.

As in the previous round, **respondents in the Czech Republic were the most pessimistic** about the consequences of the introduction of the euro in the countries that have already introduced it: slightly more than half (51%; +3 points) thought euro area countries had seen negative consequences after the changeover, compared to 37% (-5 points) who held an optimistic view.

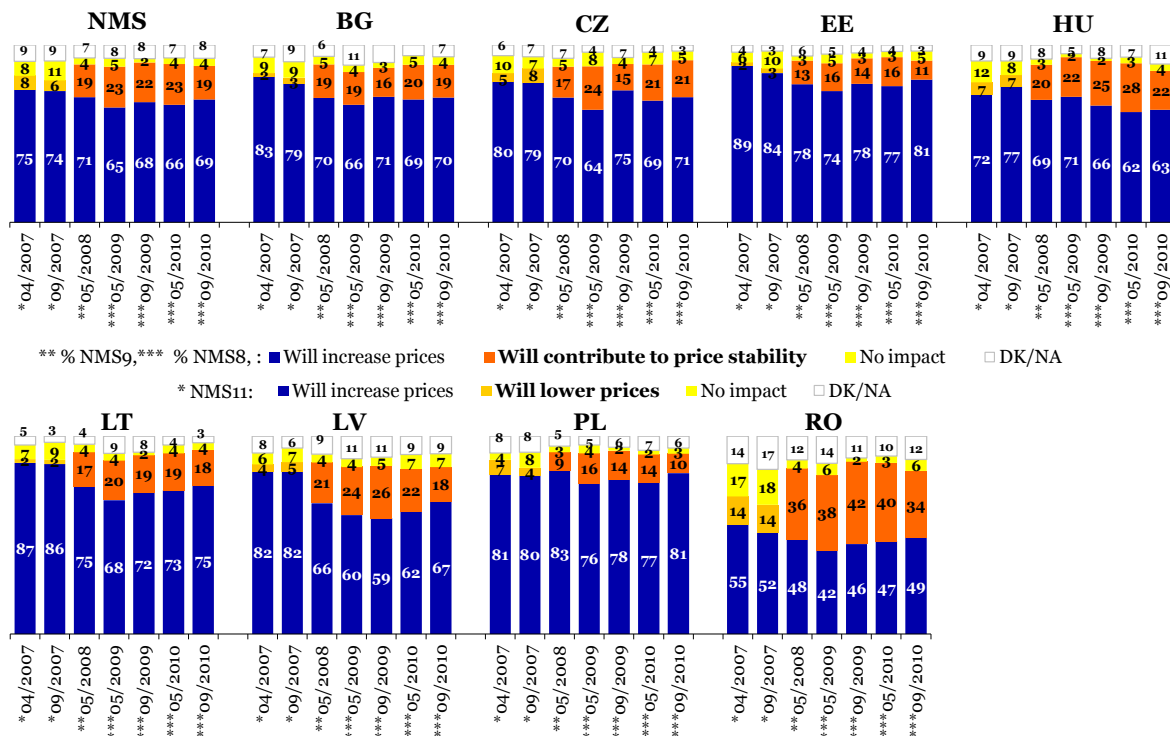
**Political and economic consequences of introducing the euro**

**Almost 7 in 10 (69%) of NMS8 citizens expected that the euro’s introduction would increase prices in their country**, while almost one in five (19%) thought that it would contribute to price stability. Very few respondents (4%) expected no impact and 8% could not or would not estimate the euro’s impact.

**Romanians showed the least concern** about price increases due to the euro’s introduction: less than half (49%) expected prices to increase in their country; furthermore, 34% believed that the euro would contribute to price stability and 6% expected no impact. A clear majority of **Polish and Estonian respondents** expected prices to increase (both 81%), while roughly one in 10 (10%-11%) expected prices to remain stable and a handful (3%-5%) thought there would be no impact.

In Poland and Estonia the proportion of those who expected an increase in prices had risen since the previous round by 4 percentage points.

**Expected consequences of the changeover to the euro on prices**

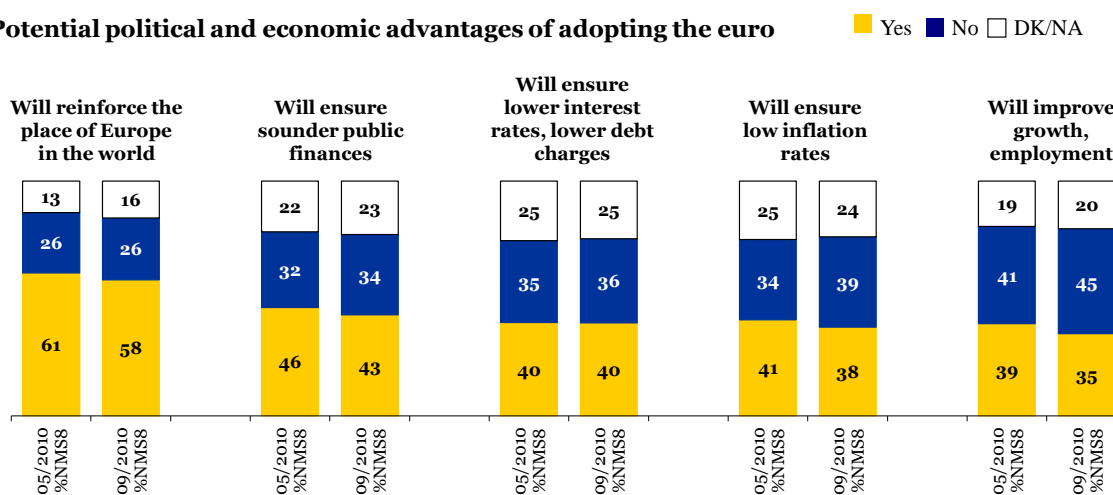


Q18. (2008-2009) Do you think the euro will increase prices in [COUNTRY] when it is first introduced or, on the contrary, it will contribute to price stability?  
 Q18. (2007) Do you think the euro will increase prices in [COUNTRY] when it is first introduced or, on the contrary, it will lower prices?  
 % by country

## Favourable political and economic consequences of the euro

Citizens in the NMS8 most frequently agreed that *Europe's place in the world would be reinforced when the currency was adopted in their country*: 58% expected this outcome (-3 percentage points compared to May 2010) and 26% disagreed with this proposition (unchanged). **The second most anticipated positive consequence of the changeover was *sounder public finances***: 43% of NMS8 citizens agreed (-3 points), and 34% disagreed (+2 points) that adopting the euro would ensure sounder public finances.

### Potential political and economic advantages of adopting the euro



Q21a-e. In your opinion, what are the main advantages of the adoption of the euro for [COUNTRY]?

In seven out of eight NMS8 countries, the highest levels of agreement were found for the statement about Europe having a *stronger global position* following a further enlargement of the euro area. Bulgarians and Hungarians were most confident about this strengthening effect of the euro (both 60%), while respondents in the Czech Republic were the most likely to *disagree* with the statement (41%). However, compared to the previous round, we found a significant decrease in agreement in Hungary (-11 points).

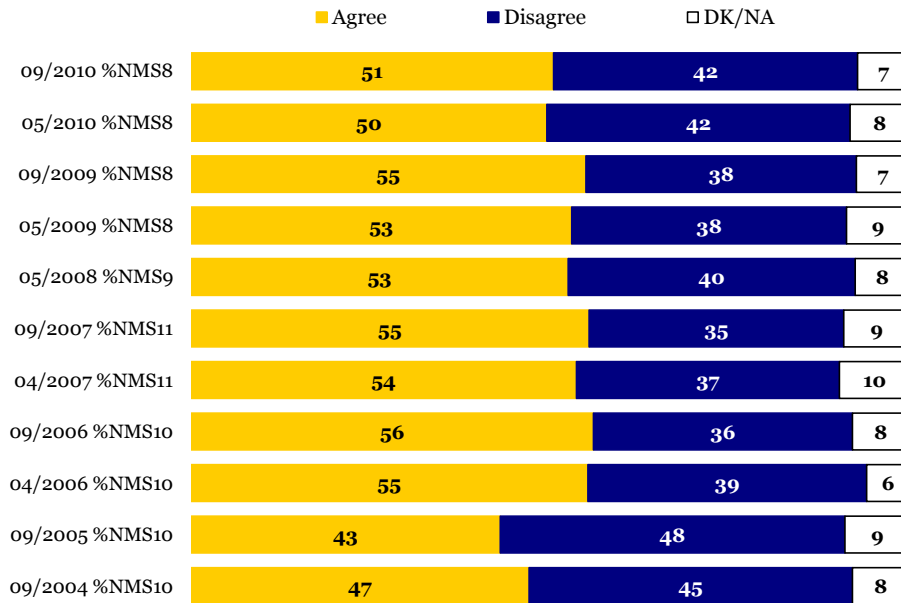
Respondents in Hungary were also the most likely to agree with most of the statements that suggested a positive impact on the national economy, while those in the Czech Republic were the most likely to disagree with each of the statements in this vein:

Furthermore, looking at the results in comparison with the previous round of the survey we found no significant increases in the ratios of those who agreed with the statements in question; in contrast, in many countries in September 2010, fewer respondents were in agreement with the propositions compared to May 2010. In Hungary for example, in May 2010, six in 10 citizens believed that adopting the euro would *improve growth and employment*; in the current round, only 45% held a similar view (a decrease of 15 percentage points).

### The euro as an ingredient in European identity

Half (51%) of respondents in the NMS8 countries thought that using the euro would make people feel more European. Since September 2009, this proportion has dropped by four percentage points; however, a very small increase of 1 percentage point was noted compared to May 2010. Slightly more than 4 in 10 (42%) disagreed with this statement and less than 1 in 10 respondents (7%) did not answer this question.

### Using the euro will make people feel more European



Q22e.(2007-2010)/Q21e.(2006) Could you tell me for each of the following statements if you agree or disagree...?  
 "The usage of the euro instead of the NATIONAL CURRENCY will make us feel more European than now"

The proportion of respondents who agreed that using the *euro would make people feel more European* ranged from 29% in Hungary to 59% in the Czech Republic.

**Five of the NMS8 countries have seen a decrease in the level of agreement when compared to the previous round;** for example, the proportion of respondents who thought that using the euro would foster a more European identity has decreased by eight percentage points in Latvia and Bulgaria.

On the other hand, in Lithuania, Poland and Romania more respondents expressed their agreement than in May 2010. The largest increase was seen in Romania where over a half (54%) of interviewees agreed that using the *euro would make people feel more European*, compared to 46% who believed the same in May 2010.

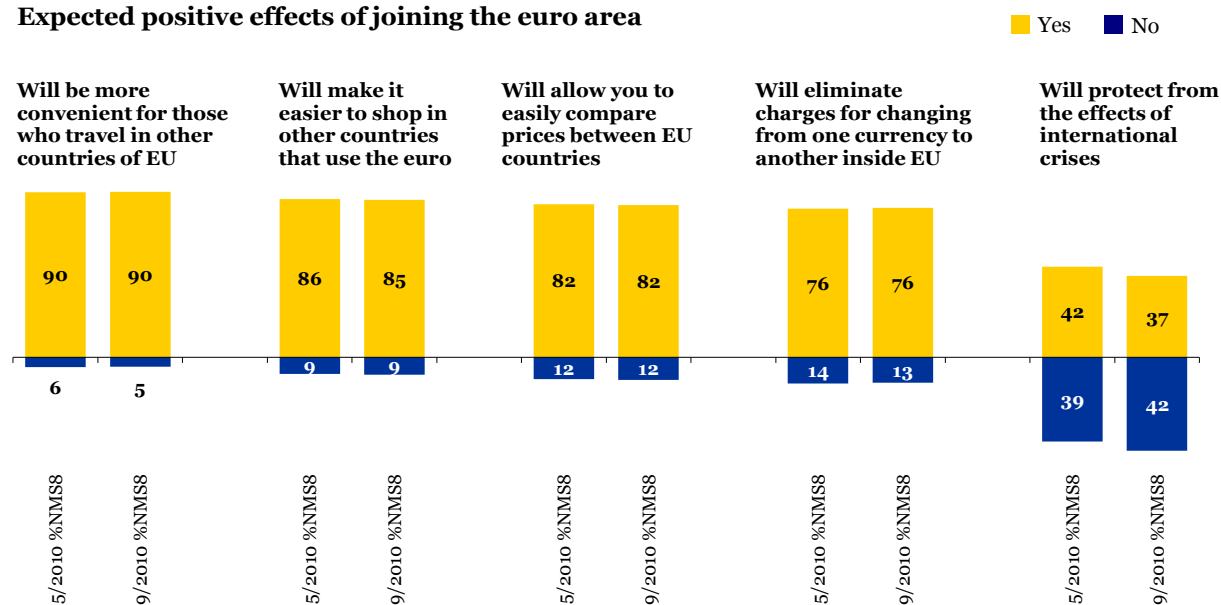
### Practical consequences of the euro changeover

Respondents were asked to evaluate some of the practical consequences of belonging to the euro area. As was seen in previous rounds, **an overwhelming majority of NMS8 citizens agreed with statements suggesting that travelling and shopping in countries that use the euro would become easier:**

- 90% agreed that joining the common currency would be *more convenient for those who travel in other countries that use the euro* (unchanged compared to May 2010)
- 85% agreed that the euro would make it *easier to shop in other countries using the common currency* (-1 point)
- 82% confirmed that joining the euro area would *allow them to easily compare prices with those in other countries that use the euro* (unchanged)
- 76% thought that the euro's introduction would *eliminate any charges relating to currency exchange when, for example, visiting other countries that use the euro* (unchanged).

As observed before, **respondents were rather pessimistic about the power of the euro to protect against the effect of international crises** – only a decreasing minority of respondents agreed with this statement (37%, -5 percentage points than in May 2010), while even more respondents disagreed (42%, +3 points).

### Expected positive effects of joining the euro area



Q20a-e . Do you think that the euro ...?

**Respondents in Hungary** were not only the most likely to agree with the statements that suggested a positive impact on their countries' economies, they were also **among the most likely to agree with each of the statements** about the practical consequences of belonging to the euro area.

In September 2009, the results for the Czech Republic showed the biggest rise in optimism about the euro's potential impact, but in May 2010, the levels of agreement had decreased for most statements. In the current round, however, the levels of agreement have increased again in the Czech Republic, close to the values recorded in September 2009. Even so, **respondents in the Czech Republic were among the most likely to disagree with each of the statements** about the euro's practical consequences.

On the other hand, in most NMS8 countries there was a **decrease in the level of agreement with the statement that the euro would protect countries from the effects of international crises**. The proportion who agreed with this statement has decreased by 10 points in Bulgaria (from 55% to 45% in September 2010, getting close to the level of 44% recorded in September 2009), by 9 points in Poland (from 43% to 34%), by 6 points in Latvia (from 29% to 23%) and by 4 points in Hungary (from 46% to 42%).

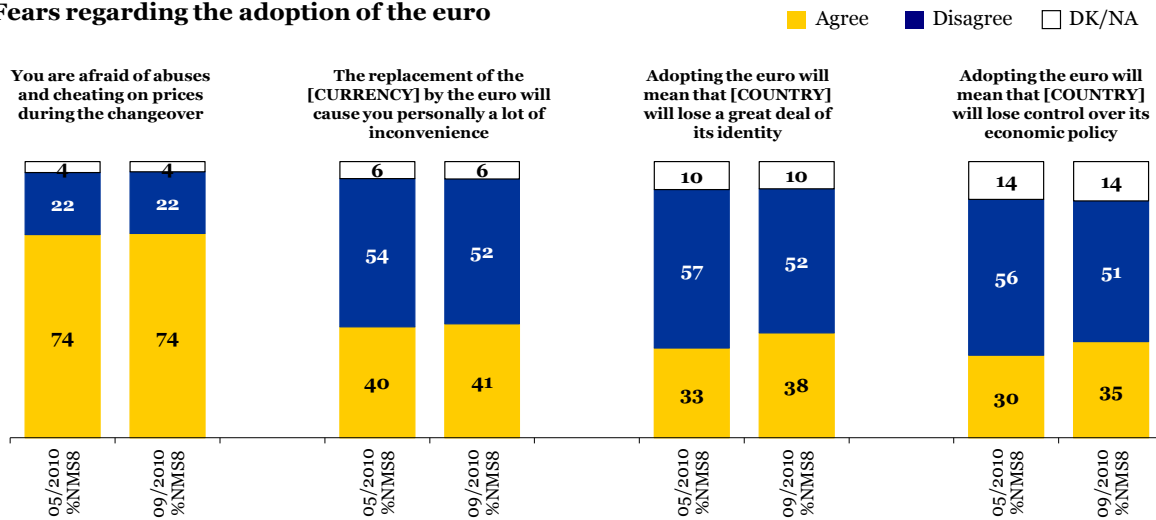
### Potential inconveniences of the introduction of the euro

In accordance with the aforementioned overall positive attitudes towards the euro, most respondents *did not express concerns* about:

- *personal inconveniences that could be caused by the changeover* (52%, -2 points);
- *a loss of their country's control over economic policy* (51%, -5 points); or
- *a negative effect on their country's identity* (52%, -5 points).

As in previous rounds, **the only concern that a majority of respondents in the NMS8 countries shared among the statements presented were possible abuses and cases of cheating on prices during the changeover** (74%, unchanged).

## Fears regarding the adoption of the euro



Q22a-d. Could you tell me for each of the following statements if you agree or disagree...?

Since the question was first asked in 2004, **across all NMS8 countries, respondents who were concerned of abuses and cheating on prices during the changeover to the euro have outnumbered those who did not share this concern.** In the latest survey rounds, the smallest difference in proportions was seen in Romania (61% “agreed” vs. 35% who “disagreed”), while the largest difference was found in Poland (82% vs. 14%). Compared to May 2010, Hungary has seen the largest increase in the proportion of respondents who are worried about possible *abuses and cases of cheating on prices during the changeover to the euro* (+4 percentage points). On the other hand, Bulgaria has seen the largest decrease in this proportion (-5 points).

**In the majority of non-euro area new Member States, the exceptions being the Czech Republic, Hungary and Bulgaria, at least half of interviewees did not expect personal inconveniences due to the introduction of the euro:** this proportion ranged from 50% in Lithuania to 61% in Romania. In the Czech Republic, however, respondents who expected such personal inconveniences outnumbered those who did not (55% and 42%, respectively), while in Hungary and Bulgaria pessimistic respondents were slightly outnumbered by those more optimistic (44% vs. 47% and 45% vs. 48%, respectively).

Contrary to the NMS8 average, **in four countries, more respondents agreed that the introduction of the euro would lead to a weakening of national identity;** this was the case in Latvia (66% vs. 26% who disagreed), the Czech Republic (62% vs. 37%), Lithuania (54% vs. 39%) and Estonia (46% vs. 43%). **A majority of respondents in Hungary (67%), Romania (57%) and Poland (54%) did not believe that using the euro would cause a loss of national identity.** Bulgarians who disagreed with this statement also outnumbered those who agreed (50% vs. 37%). In most NMS8 countries, since May 2010, there was an increase in the number of citizens concerned that adopting the common currency would dilute the national identity. The most significant changes in the proportion of respondents who expected a weakening of national identity were seen in Romania (+10 points), Hungary (+7 points) and Poland (+6 points).

The proportion of respondents who disagreed with the statement that **their country would lose control over its economic policy** following the adoption of the euro ranged from 36% in Latvia to 61% in Hungary. In most countries, those who disagreed outnumbered those who agreed. Since the first round conducted in 2004, **Latvians** have been more likely than their counterparts in other countries to expect that the introduction of the euro would cause a loss of control over their country’s economic policy. In the current round, 55% of Latvians agreed with the statement, compared to 36% who disagreed, with no change since May 2010. Hungary has seen the largest decrease in the proportion of respondents who disagreed that the introduction of the euro would make the country lose control over its national economic policy (-9 percentage points less than in May 2010), however this change came after an equivalent *increase* of 9 points from September 2009 to May 2010.