

A European spring? Latest Standard Eurobarometer shows Optimism is on the rise

Close to a majority of Europeans are now also optimistic about the state of their national economy. Trust in the European Union is growing – it is at its highest level since 2010, and support for the euro is greater than it has been since 2004. Moreover, a majority of respondents, from eleven non-EU countries polled for the first time, say they have a positive view of the EU. These are some of the key results from the latest Standard Eurobarometer survey published today with the Flash Eurobarometer survey “Future of Europe – Views from outside the EU”.

I Optimism about the future of the European Union and the state of national economies

The future of the European Union: most Europeans are optimistic and their trust in the EU institutions is growing

A majority of Europeans (56%) are optimistic about the future of the EU – an increase of six percentage points compared to autumn 2016. The most significant increases can be observed in France (55%, +14 points since last Autumn), Denmark (70%, +13 points) and Portugal (64%, +10 points).

Trust in the EU continues to be on the rise and stands at 42% (up from 36% in autumn 2016 and 32% in autumn 2015). It has increased most strongly in France (41%, +15 points), in Denmark (56%, +11 points) and in Estonia (55%, +11 points). It has also increased by 10 points in Germany, reaching 47%.

As in the two previous surveys of spring and autumn 2016, the levels of trust in national parliaments and governments have also increased to 36% and 37% respectively, but remain below the levels of trust in the EU.

40% of Europeans have a **positive image of the EU** (+5 points since autumn 2016) with the number of respondents with a positive image increasing in 24 Member States, in particular in France (40%, +11 points), Denmark (42%, +10 points) and Luxembourg (57%, +10 points).

Finally, 68% of Europeans **feel they are citizens of the EU**, which is the highest level ever shown by this indicator.

The economy: more positive feelings and strong support for the euro

Close to half of Europeans think that the **current situation of their national economy** is ‘good’ (46%, +5 percentage points since autumn 2016). This proportion has increased significantly in recent years (+20 points since spring 2013; +26 points since spring 2009).

Although large differences remain between Member States, positive assessments

of the situation of national economies are gaining ground in 22 Member States, in particular in Finland (59%, +19 points), Portugal (33%, +18 points), Belgium (60%, +11 points) and Hungary (41%, +11 points).

In the euro area, close to three-quarters of respondents support the euro (73%, +3 points), which is the highest score reached since autumn 2004. 80% of respondents or more support the euro in six countries: Slovakia, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Slovenia and Luxembourg.

II For the first time, terrorism is seen as the major challenge facing the EU

Terrorism is now on top of the issues that citizens cite when it comes to challenges that the EU is currently facing (44%, +12 percentage points since autumn 2016). **Immigration**, which has been a top concern since spring 2015, is now the second most frequently cited challenge (38%, -7 points). It is well ahead of **the economic situation** (18%, -2 points), **the state of Member States' public finances** (17%, unchanged) and **unemployment** (15%, -1 points). Terrorism is the number one concern for the EU in 21 Member States while this was the case in one country only in autumn 2016. Terrorism and immigration are mentioned as the top challenges in all countries except for Portugal and Sweden.

At the national level, the main concerns remain unemployment (29%, -2 points) and immigration (22%, -4 points) although both are declining. Health and social security are now in the third place (20%, +2 points), followed by terrorism for which the increase is noticeable (19%, +5 points). The economic situation, which was the main concern at the national level in autumn 2011, is now in fifth place (16%, -3 points).

III Future of Europe – Views from outside the EU survey

For the first time, the Eurobarometer survey assessed the image of the European Union in eleven non-EU countries^[1]. These countries represent 49% of the world population and 61% of global GDP. In the three most populated of these countries (China, India and the USA), at least three quarters of respondents have a positive view of the EU.

Respondents in most of the countries covered by the survey have a positive view of the EU: 94% in Brazil, 84% in China, 83% in India, 76% in Japan, 79% in Canada, 75% in the USA, 67% in Australia and 54% in Turkey. At the same time respondents in countries closer to the EU (Russia, Norway and Switzerland) tend to have mixed feelings (between 43% and 46% have a positive view of the EU).

The survey also shows that **the EU is globally perceived as “a place of stability in a troubled world”** in the countries polled – with important differences, from 82% in India thinking that way to 49% in Turkey – but this is not the case in Russia where only 33% share this view and 61% the opposite.

Background

The “Spring 2017 – Standard Eurobarometer” (EB 87) was conducted through

face-to-face interviews between 20 and 30 May 2017. A total of 33,180 people were interviewed across the EU Member States and in the candidate countries^[2].

The Flash Eurobarometer 450 “Future of Europe – Views from outside the EU” was conducted through telephone interviews between 20 and 25 February 2017. A total of 11,035 people were interviewed in 11 non-EU countries.

The Standard Eurobarometer ‘First results report’ published today outlines Europeans’ attitudes towards the EU, as well as citizens’ main concerns and perceptions of the economic situation.

For More Information

– [Standard Eurobarometer 87](#)

– The report for the Flash Eurobarometer survey 450 [“Future of Europe – Views from outside the EU”](#)

^[1] Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Norway, Russia, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States of America

^[2] The 28 European Union (EU) Member States, five candidate countries (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania) and the Turkish Cypriot Community in the part of the country that is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus.