



EUROBAROMETER 70

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

FIRST RESULTS

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http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index_en.htm

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12. THE EUROPEAN UNION BUDGET

The Eurobarometer regularly measures public knowledge of how the European Union budget is spent. These analyses have highlighted the tendency of Europeans to over-estimate the costs of the EU's administrative overheads⁴².

This wave of the Eurobarometer examines knowledge of how the EU budget is spent. However this time, the question has been changed by asking respondents not only what they think most of the EU budget is spent on but by subsequently asking them how they would like most of the budget to be spent. The new question also allows respondents to choose from a much wider range of expenditure areas than the old question did⁴³.

- EU budget remains a mystery to many Europeans and administrative overheads over-estimated -

Europeans continue to over-estimate the administrative overheads (26%)⁴⁴ which is the most frequently mentioned expense. Following on from this, slightly under a quarter of Europeans estimate that most of the European Union's budget is spent on 'economic growth' and 'agriculture and rural development' (24% for both).

Overall, it appears that the EU budget is still a topic about which few Europeans are well-informed. This is reflected in the high 'don't know' rate (25%).

Yet Europeans have a somewhat more outspoken opinion on how the EU budget should be spent. In light of the current economic crisis, and taking account of the widespread concern voiced by Europeans in this respect, it is not surprising to find that the **most popular areas on which Europeans would like the EU budget to be spent are economic growth (38%) and employment and social affairs (36%)⁴⁵**.

⁴² The last result (Autumn 2006, EB66) was that 27% of Europeans considered administrative overheads to account for the largest slice of the European Union's budget.

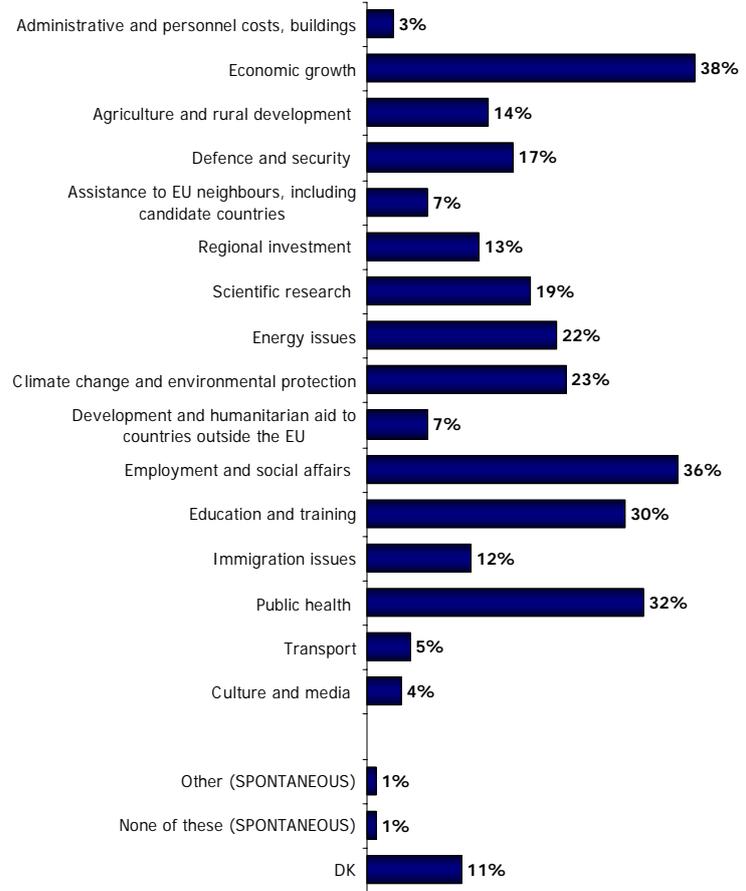
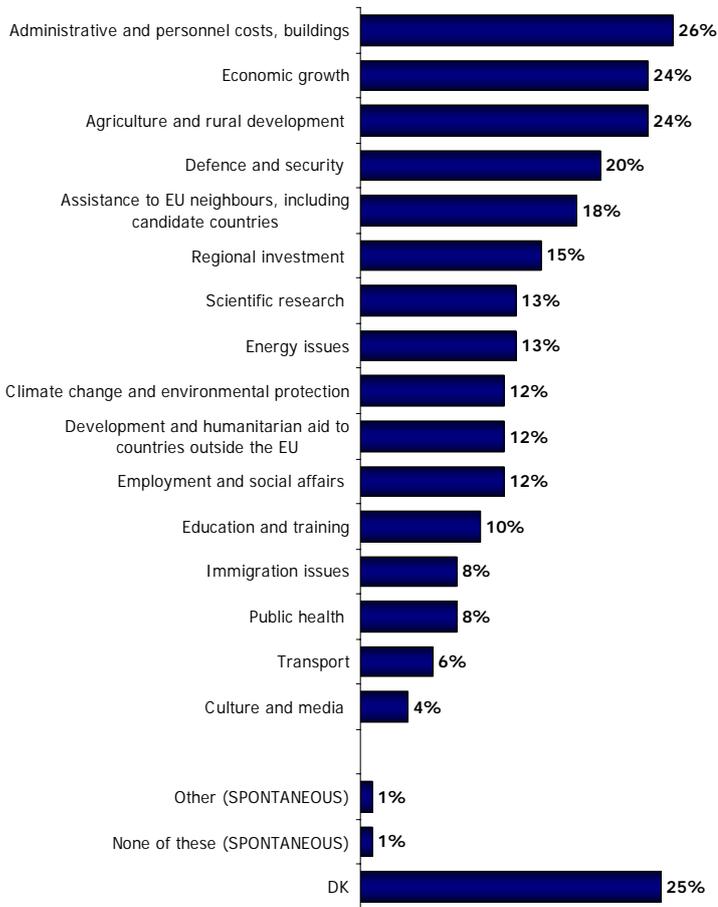
⁴³ The question now has 16 areas of expenditure from which respondents can select the one on which they think most of the EU budget is spent, compared to only 6 the last time the question was asked in Autumn 2006 (EB66).

⁴⁴ QG2a On which of the following do you think most of the European Union budget is spent? Firstly? Any others? (Total 'first answer' and 'other answers')

⁴⁵ QG3a And on which of the following would you like European Union budget to be spent? Firstly? Any others? (Total 'first answer' and 'other answers')

QG2a + QG2b On which of the following do you think most of the European Union budget is spent? (MAX. 4 ANSWERS) - % EU

QG3a + QG3b And on which of the following would you like European Union budget to be spent? (MAX. 4 ANSWERS) - % EU

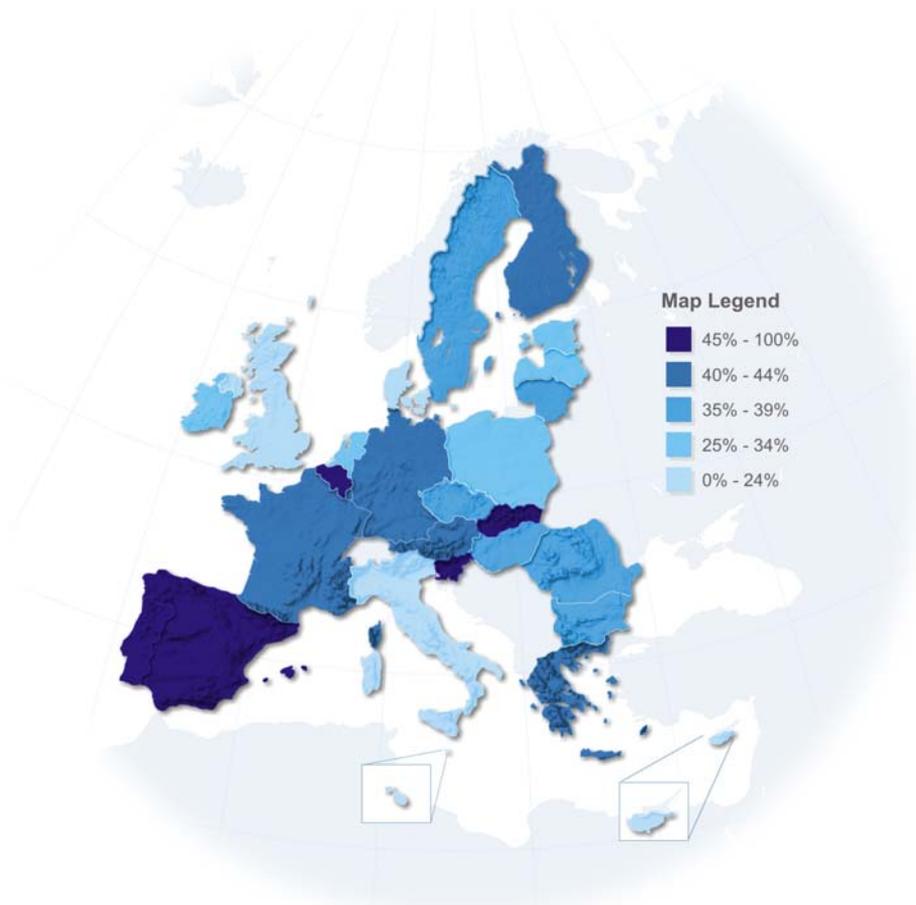


A country-by country analysis indicates that, apart from few exceptions, countries where the largest share of citizens would like the EU budget to be spent on economic growth or on employment and social affairs tend to be those where the concerns about the economic situation are most pronounced. Hence, we find that Greece (65%) tops the list when it comes to wanting EU money to be spent on economic growth, followed by Lithuania (57%), Bulgaria and Hungary (both 55%).

 SI	56%
 ES	51%
 SK	50%
 PT	47%
 BE	45%
 DE	44%
 AT	44%
 FI	44%
 FR	43%
 LU	43%
 EL	42%
 SE	39%
 HU	39%
 CZ	38%
 BG	37%
 RO	37%
 EU27	36%
 LT	35%
 NL	34%
 LV	34%
 IE	31%
 EE	30%
 PL	28%
 DK	24%
 IT	22%
 CY	19%
 MT	19%
 UK	16%

Question: QG3T. Desired use of the European Union's budget

Answers: Employment and social affairs



When it comes to wanting EU money spent on employment and social affairs, Spain sits near the top of the table, just behind Slovenia (51%). It should be recalled that Spain currently has the highest unemployment rate in the EU⁴⁶.

Not surprisingly, this issue is mentioned by 46% of unemployed respondents, whereas it seems less of a major issue for the retired (32%) and the self employed (31%).

⁴⁶ September 2008 Eurostat unemployment figures. See <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/euroindicators>