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Global – The latest Ipsos European Pulse, tracking sentiment of over 8,000 online citizens in ten European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain and Sweden), suggests that on average **two in three (68%) think things across the European Union are moving in the wrong direction**. Pessimism is highest in Spain, Italy and France, where around three in four (76%, 77% and 77% respectively) think Europe is on the wrong track, and lowest in Poland, Hungary, and Germany, where 61% feel the same.

However, in **six of the countries (Poland, Hungary, Belgium, Spain, Italy and France) people are even more concerned about the direction their own country is moving in**. Only in Germany, Britain, and Sweden are people more optimistic about their domestic situation.

The influence of the EU across nine policy and personal areas looms large – and is generally believed to be negative

Most people across the ten countries believes the European Union plays a very important role in crucial policy areas, especially the economy, agriculture, and laws and regulations where around eight in ten feel it has influence over their country. Again, there are differences by country – for example the Spanish are the most likely to feel that the EU has influence over the economy, jobs, and the finances of their government, while the British, Germans and Poles are particularly likely to stress the influence the EU has over immigration.

On balance, people feel that the EU's impact has been more negative than positive across all of these policy areas. They are **particularly negative about its**



influence on their government – its finances and its ability to make decisions in the best interests of the country – but less so about its impact on people’s daily lives.

The geographical pattern seen earlier repeats itself, with people in Poland, Hungary and Germany generally more positive about the EU’s impact, and Spain, Italy and France more critical.

But desire to leave the EU outright is low

Relatively few people want to leave the European Union outright (18% on average), but **the single most popular option is to stay in the EU but reduce its powers** (34%). Just over a third want to see either the EU’s powers strengthened further (18%), or even a long-term policy of working towards a single European government (also 18%).

However, there are significant differences by country. The Swedes, British and Dutch are most in favour of leaving or reducing the EU’s powers (69%, 68% and 68% respectively), and they are **also the most likely to think that anti-European movements will win the next European elections in their country** (60%, 56% and 57% respectively).

On the other hand, around half of people in Hungary (54%) and Germany (48%) want to see an increase in the EU’s powers, or the formation of a single European government. These proportions are similarly high in Italy (49%) and Spain (48%), even though these countries are among the most critical of the EU on other aspects.

People are worried about the EU’s impact on their country’s economy – especially the demands of austerity – and are sceptical about the benefits of membership

The policy area where, on average, the EU is seen to have most influence is on the economy, but the majority (59%) across the ten countries think this influence has been negative – as they do on the EU’s impact on jobs in their country (61%). This is likely to be linked to perceptions of the austerity programme; 64% believe that **their country’s economy has been damaged by EU pressure on Eurozone member governments to cut their spending.**



This all leads to doubts about the benefits membership of the EU has brought. Only a third (35%) believe that their standard of living is higher than it would have been if their country had not joined the EU.

Again, there are clear differences in opinion by country, which often appear related to the economic climate people have experienced since the crisis. Citizens in France, Italy and Spain are all particularly negative about the EU's impact on the economy (74%, 74%, and 68% respectively are critical), and many feel that their economy has been damaged by the demands of austerity (75%, 70%, and 75% respectively). Over half, though, of people in Poland (59%), Hungary (53%) and Germany (52%) think that the EU has benefited their economy.

There are also faultlines in perceptions of whether all EU member states have benefited equally. Large majorities in Spain (73%), Italy (71%) and Poland (64%) believe that the **EU gives an unfair advantage to richer countries over poorer ones**, but this falls to two in five (39%) of Germans.

Between February 4th and February 18th, 2014, Ipsos surveyed 7,028 respondents in nine European countries for their attitudes towards the European Union. The data was collected via Ipsos online panels and then weighted to represent the general population in the country surveyed. Respondents aged 16-64 were interviewed via the Ipsos Online Panel in Belgium, France, Great Britain, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain and Sweden. Approximately 1000+ individuals participated on a country by country basis with the exception of Belgium, Hungary, Poland and Sweden where each have a sample of approximately 500. A further 1,017 were interviewed online in the Netherlands between 18-20 February 2014. This sample is representative for the Dutch population which may vote (all Dutch aged 18+), and data are weighted by age, sex, education, working status, region and previous national election behaviour.



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