



AP Poll: Majority of Germans Say Immigrants Have A Negative Influence On Country

Washington, D.C. (AP) — More than half of Germans say immigrants have a negative influence on their country, even though they tend to take jobs Germans don't want, an Associated Press poll found.

The Associated Press Poll is conducted by Ipsos-Public Affairs. Between May 7-17, 2004, the AP/Ipsos poll interviewed a representative sample of about 1,000 residents of Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Spain and the United States. The margin of error is +/- 3 for all adults. Please reference the topline results for the complete list of number of interviews and margin of error for each country.

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Associated Press

Washington, D.C. (AP) — More than half of Germans say immigrants have a negative influence on their country, even though they tend to take jobs Germans don't want, an Associated Press poll found.

In a survey of 1,000 Germans, 57 percent said they consider immigrants a bad influence on their country.

Seven in 10 said foreign workers accept jobs Germans don't want, while 23 percent said they believe they take jobs away from Germans.

Germans have mixed feelings on the value of diversity in customs and religion, the AP-Ipsos poll found.

Germans were evenly split over whether it is better for everyone in their country to have the same customs and traditions with 48 percent on each side of that issue. Fifty-five percent said a population with varied religious practices is good.

The German government has been stalled in a push for a new immigration law that would make it easier for people to have German residency if they fill labor shortages in certain fields, such as computer programmers. Talks are deadlocked with the conservative opposition, which wants tougher rules to allow deportation of terror suspects. That issue has been in the public eye in the last few months.

That debate, along with the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, are factors in why Germans were so disapproving of immigrants, said Christian Holst, head of public affairs for Ipsos-Germany.

"Until lately, governments have refused to accept that there is immigration ... going on, and thus shied away from introducing laws that could regulate this," Holst said. "This attitude is, of course, still prevalent in the public."

Also persistent, Holst said, is "the 'old' argument that immigrants take jobs away, an important issue with an unemployment rate of over 9 percent."

Germany has 7.3 million foreign residents, who make up about 9 percent of the population. Turks are the largest group, about 2 million, followed by Italians, Greeks, Poles and people from former Yugoslavia.

Official statistics show xenophobic hate crimes declined slightly last year, though attacks motivated by anti-Semitism increased. Like elsewhere in Europe, Muslim groups have expressed concern that the rest of the population not lump all of them into the extremist camp, but it's not a big public issue.

The AP/Ipsos poll in Germany was conducted May 7-15 and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points. Other European nations polled by Ipsos were France, Italy, Spain and Britain.

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