

**For immediate release**

## **EU citizens think things across the union heading in the wrong direction - but committed to membership**

An Ipsos survey of citizens in nine European countries finds a majority of respondents (73%) think things across the EU are headed in the wrong direction, and fewer than half agree that EU membership has improved their own standard of living. Attitudes are most negative among French respondents, with only 15% saying the union is on the right track, and of all countries surveyed only Spain responded more positively to this question than in 2014.

EU citizens report feeling that the EU unfairly benefits its more developed economies (59%, up 2 percentage points), and this is higher amongst Spanish and Italian respondents. Further, a majority (63%) think that pressure from the EU to cut public spending has had a negative effect on their national economy.

However, despite these misgivings, few (17%) want to leave the EU and overall; the most commonly chosen option (29%) for the future of their country and the EU is to stay in the union but seek to reduce its powers. There's some support for more powers being given to the EU (21%), and even for the formation of a single European government (19%).

The study of more than 7,000 people in nine countries, shows:

- Large and increasing majorities in most countries saying things across the EU are going in the wrong direction.
- Less than half feel that their personal standard of living has been enhanced by EU membership.
- No increase in support for leaving the EU since 2014 – and in Britain the proportion who want to leave has fallen.

Head of Political Research, Ipsos MORI Social Research Institute, **Gideon Skinner**, said:

“This study highlights the tension at the heart of European integration for many. There are high levels of dissatisfaction with Europe’s direction across all countries, especially economically, and some support for reducing the EU’s powers, but few want to leave outright.”

Detailed findings include:

**A majority of EU citizens in all nine countries agree that things across the EU are heading off on the wrong track;** overall 73% say things are on the wrong track, with 27% saying things are headed in the right direction. France is the most negative, with 85% of its citizens saying things are on the wrong track. The proportion thinking things are headed in the wrong direction has increased in eight of nine countries since 2014 – rising most notably in Belgium, from 66% to 75%. Only in Spain has the proportion fallen, from 76% in 2014 to 68% now.

**Six in ten disagree that their personal standard of living is higher now than if their country had not joined the EU.** Just over one third of Italian (36%) and French (37%) citizens, and four in ten Spaniards (41%) agree that living standards are higher as a result of joining the club. More positively for the EU, these figures represent a strong rise in Spain and Italy – in 2014 just 32% of Spaniards and 29% of Italians agreed with this statement.

**Two thirds say that their country's economy has been damaged by EU pressure on their governments to cut spending.** Eight in ten (81%) Italians agree that EU demands for austerity have damaged their country's economy – a rise of eleven percentage points since 2014. Three quarters of Spanish (77%) and French (78%) citizens also agree – and so do half of German citizens (53%).

-ENDS-

**Notes to Editor:**

- For all media queries please contact [Claire Wotherspoon](#) on: 020 7347 3452
- For the full data please visit our website.

**Technical notes:**

- Ipsos is an independent market research company controlled and managed by research professionals. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos has grown into a worldwide research group with a strong presence in all key markets. Ipsos ranks third in the global research industry.
- With offices in 86 countries, Ipsos delivers insightful expertise across six research specializations: advertising, customer loyalty, marketing, media, public affairs research, and survey management.
- Respondents aged 16-64 were interviewed via the Ipsos Global @dvisor Online Panel in Belgium, France, Great Britain, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Spain and Sweden between July 24 - August 7, 2015. 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+.