

EU and European Elections: Views and attitudes from a female 'angle'

Extracts of Eurobarometer
Cumulative waves 68,69,70

March 2009



Methodology



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What and how?

- Standard Eurobarometer
- Quantitative research
- F2F interviews in respondent's homes and language(s); about 1 hour duration
- One respondent per household

Who and where?

- General population 15+ years of age; resident in the country and EU citizens
 - Probability sampling
 - Representative sample; weighted to population
- Total 31 countries
 - EU27 plus 4 candidate countries

How many and when?

- Each wave \pm n=27.000 interviews
- Cumulative results of waves 68,69,70
- Cumulative field period: Autumn 2007 – Autumn 2008

The flow of the key findings



Flow of the key findings

- **Some context**
 1. **What issues impact more on women?- life situation, future outlook**
 2. **What is top of mind?- not politics, but daily life issues**
 3. **Women, the EU and politics - a less close relationship?**
 4. **Women and voting in European elections - a closer relationship?**
- **Closing comments**

Some context



Some context

- This analysis does not escape the **pervading gloom**. An **economic feel-bad factor** is perceptible since Spring 2007 which influences the answers of citizens, notably **more so for female citizens**.
- The **European elections are clearly not yet at the forefront of citizens' thoughts** (irrespective of gender) even if certain campaign themes emerge (in particular **those relating to the economic situation**):
 - Unemployment
 - Economic growth
 - Purchasing power
- Consequently, it is not surprising to see **national dimensions mingled** in the voting aspects for the 2009 elections.
- Also, **women tend to give more 'don't know' answers**. However, this does **not reflect a disinterest in voting intentions**.

1. What issues impact (more) on women?



1.1. Concerns more felt by women

In a difficult economic context, women show greater pessimism than men, particularly on issues impacting the household

	♀	%	♂
Situation at national level: 'bad':			
Country's economy	72		66
Country's employment	72		67
Rising prices/inflation :			
As key concern for one's country	39		35
Affecting one personally	52		47
Financial situation of household: 'bad'/'worsening':			
Now	37		31
Past 5 yrs	53		48
Next 12 mths	29		25
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>			
Difficulty paying bills:			
Now	48		44

2. What is top of mind?



2.1. Women and politics

Politics are **not a top of mind topic**; this is further seen in **lower levels of women feeling/being informed** on EU aspects and EP's activities

		♀	%	♂
Discussing politics with friends/family:	Never	34		23
Feeling informed about how EU works:	Agree	36		49

Factual knowledge on EU workings (4 items)	Average correctly answered	47		59
Read/heard/seen sth. about EP in media:	Yes	39		50

Being informed about EP's activities:	Badly	77		69

2.2. Being listened to and decision topics

Women show **slightly lower levels of 'being listened to'**, and **women's preference** on decision-making is on natl. govt ('closer to home')

		♀	%	♂
My voice counts in my country:	Agree	46		49
	Disagree	47		46
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My voice counts in the EU:	Agree	29		32
	Disagree	60		59
Decision to be taken by natl. govt:	Consumer protection	48		45
	Transport	50		47
	Support for regions facing economic difficulties	35		32

3. Women, the EU and politics – a less close relationship?



3.1. Women's opinions are more neutral or critical

Opinions on the EU are firm, but **more neutral** among women, which underpins lower positive scores; on actual benefits of EU membership, women are **more neutral**; **support for the euro sees more criticism**

		♀	%	♂
Image of the EU:	Positive	43		51
	Neutral	38		32
	Negative	14		14
	DK	3		2
Benefits of EU membership:	Good thing	50		59
	Neither	30		25
	Bad thing	14		14
	DK	6		3
Support for the Euro/single currency:	For	57		65
	Against	35		30

3.2. Lack of trust is a shared issue

Levels of **distrust** in institutions are similar;
levels of 'don't know' are lower for women on
institutions that have a more direct impact on their household

	♀	%	♂
Trust in the EU:			
Tend to trust	46		51
Tend not to trust	37		38
DK	17		11
Trust in the natl. govt:			
Tend to trust	32		35
Tend not to trust	61		60
DK	7		6
Trust in the regional/local public authorities:			
Tend to trust	50		50
Tend not to trust	44		45
DK	6		5

4. Women and voting in European elections – a closer relationship?



4.1. Some similarities, yet some differences 'closer to home'

Shared concerns; yet themes '**closer to home**'
rise to the fore for women, now and with view to policies and elections

	♀	%	♂
Top 3 issues one is facing at the moment:			
Rising prices/inflation	52		47
Economic situation	22		24
Healthcare system	18		13
Top 3 EP policies:			
Improve consumer & public health protection	39		33
Combating terrorism	38		35
Combating effective climate change	36		35
Top 3 EP election themes:			
Unemployment	49		47
Economic growth	45		51
Inflation/purchasing power	44		45

4.2. And genders align again re: intention to vote

In the end, the lower levels of being informed on EU/EP aspects or politics not being top of mind do **not translate into much lower levels of intention to vote across the genders**

		♀	%	♂
Knowledge of European elections date :	DK	78		69
Interest in elections:	Yes	40		48
Intention to vote:	Yes	28		31
	DK	7		5

Closing comments



Closing comments

Women experience **more (economic) hardship...**

...in turn, **this drives the issues that are top of mind for women (NOT politics)**

...and their focus on **'closer to home' themes & decision-making**

...**women are more neutral** on the EU's image and perceived benefits, distrust levels in institutions are similar to those of men

...and though lower levels of knowledge on election dates and interest are noted, the **genders get closer again on claimed intention to vote** – a notion that is confirmed through numerous research studies world-wide

**HAPPY WOMEN'S DAY AND
HAPPY VOTING!**

thank you!



Vielen Dank!

bedankt!

merci!

tack!

muchas gracias!

grazie mille!

kiitos!