

EUROBAROMETER

Standard Eurobarometer



European  
Commission

# EUROBAROMETER 62

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

## FIRST RESULTS

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## INTRODUCTION

For Europe, 2004 has been an exceptional year in several ways. Four major events stand out in particular: the enlargement of the European Union to ten new Member States; the European elections which have given a new look to the European Parliament which now has 732 MEPs; the perspective signature of the new Constitutional Treaty and, finally, the appointment of a new European Commission. This is the first time that such wide-ranging institutional and political changes have occurred in such a short period of time.

This Standard Eurobarometer, carried out between 2 October and 8 November 2004, was organised in a particularly eventful European context. Moreover, the results of this survey reflect these changes. Indeed, significant changes have been noted with regard to certain indicators which have been monitored over recent decades. It would appear, therefore, essential to bear in mind the atypical nature of this European year when analysing changes with regard to certain questions.

Finally, the Standard Eurobarometer covers 30 territories: the 25 Member States, the four candidate countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia and Turkey) as well as Northern Cyprus. It is also worthwhile emphasising that while the Eurobarometer survey of spring 2004 was conducted by EORG, the Standard Eurobarometer was carried out in autumn this year, for the first time, by TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium formed by TNS and EOS Gallup Europe<sup>1</sup>.

We have decided to address in this report the initial results of the questions directly related to this particularly eventful European environment. We have therefore focused our analysis in particular on:

- ◆ The climate of opinion: current satisfaction, the expectations and concerns of European citizens;
- ◆ The trust expressed in the Commission and the European Parliament;
- ◆ How European citizens view membership of the European Union;
- ◆ Support for a European Constitution;
- ◆ Support for future enlargement;
- ◆ An evaluation of a common foreign and security policy;
- ◆ An evaluation of the speed of European construction.

In this report we have opted to compare, between them, the averages obtained at the level of the European Union. That means that we will compare here the averages obtained before the latest enlargement with those obtained in the latest survey, which encompass the results recorded in 25 Member States. Any significant differences observed between the average obtained for the 15 "old Member States" (EU 15), that of the "new Member States" (NMS) and that of the 25 countries composing the current European Union (EU 25) are indicated directly on the corresponding graph. Finally, the average results for the previous years represent the average obtained for all Member States of the European Union at that date.

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<sup>1</sup> All tables are included in the Annex. New rounding methods were introduced at the time of this Eurobarometer survey 62 which may explain, if applicable, a difference in the presentation of previous results, which may be as high as one percentage point on certain questions.

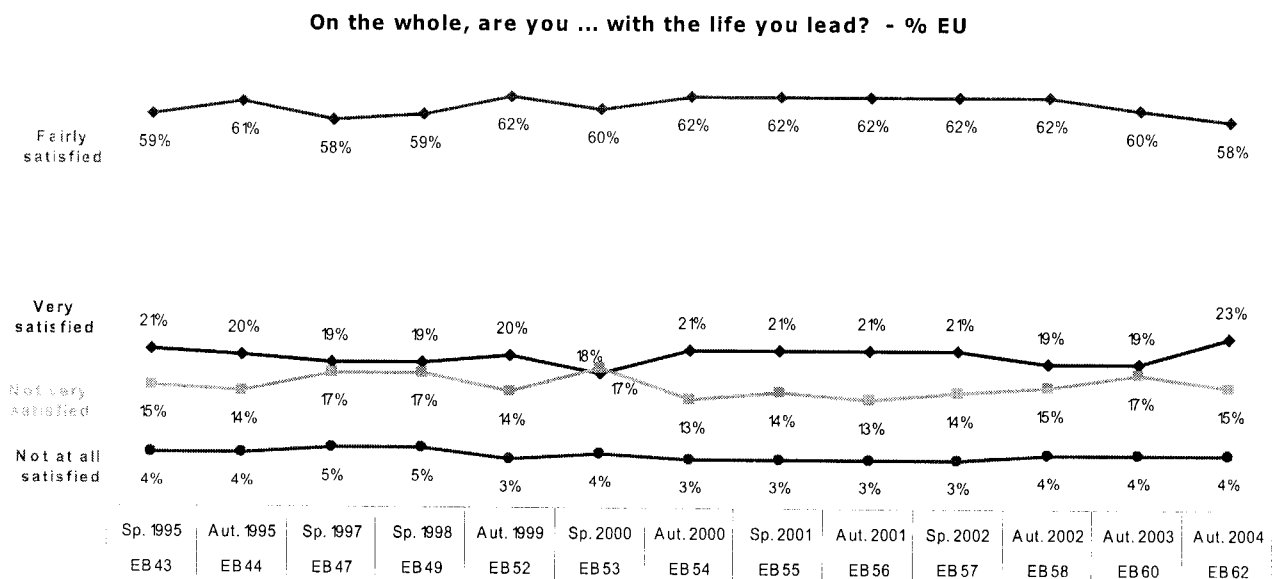
## 1. The climate of opinion

Like any barometer used to forecast tomorrow's weather, the Eurobarometer helps to measure the climate of opinion at key moments in European construction and in a specific economic context. What is the state of mind of European Union citizens at the end of 2004? What are their expectations and concerns for the coming year? Those are the themes that we will address in this first part.

### 1.1. Personal satisfaction

- **More than eight respondents out of ten are satisfied with their life at the present time -**

European citizens are in a positive state of mind. The vast majority of European Union citizens indicate that they are satisfied with their life in general (81%)<sup>2</sup>. This score has increased by two points from that obtained last spring, even if the number of people who are fairly satisfied has fallen slightly (-2 points) and despite a slight increase in the people who are very satisfied (+4 points).



<sup>2</sup> Q4. On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the life you lead?

## 1.2. Expectations

Although the vast majority of European Union citizens are satisfied with their life in general, their expectations for the future are different.

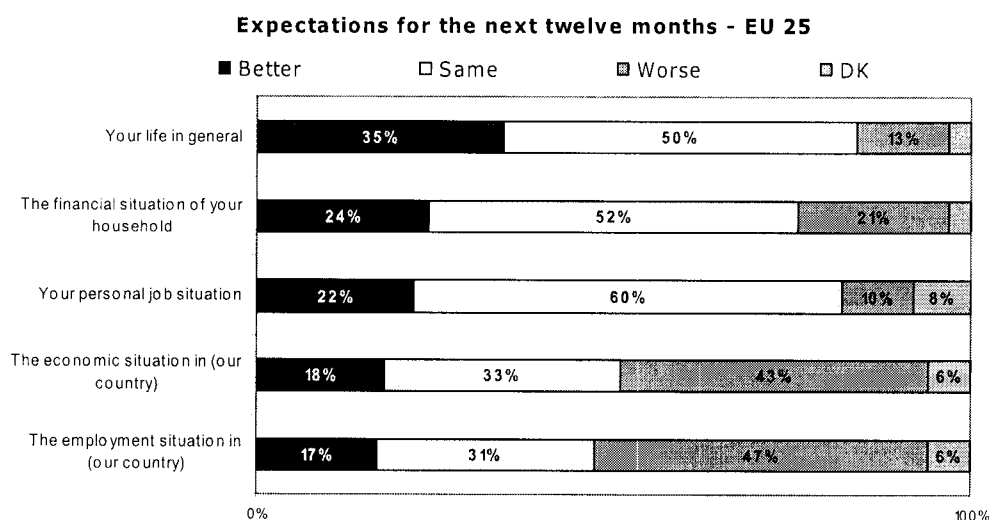
### **- Citizens are more optimistic about their personal situation than that of their country -**

The most positive expectations concern **life in general**, since 35% of respondents believe that it will be better over the next 12 months, while 50% do not expect any changes and 13% believe that it will not be as good<sup>3</sup>.

Next, a quarter of European citizens expect either an improvement in the **financial situation of their household** (24%) or that it will deteriorate (21%). Although 22% of European citizens interviewed believe that **their professional situation** will evolve positively, on the other hand a very large number of them expect it to remain stable in 2005 (60%).

**Respondents are fairly confident regarding their own future but their expectations regarding changes on national job markets** are negative: 47% of interviewees believe that the employment situation will deteriorate next year. Opinions regarding the **national economic situation** reflect the same trend (43%).

We can also note here that new European Union citizens are, in general, less optimistic when it comes to their life, the financial situation of their household or their professional situation. On the contrary, they are more optimistic than their neighbours with regard to the situation of the national economy or employment.



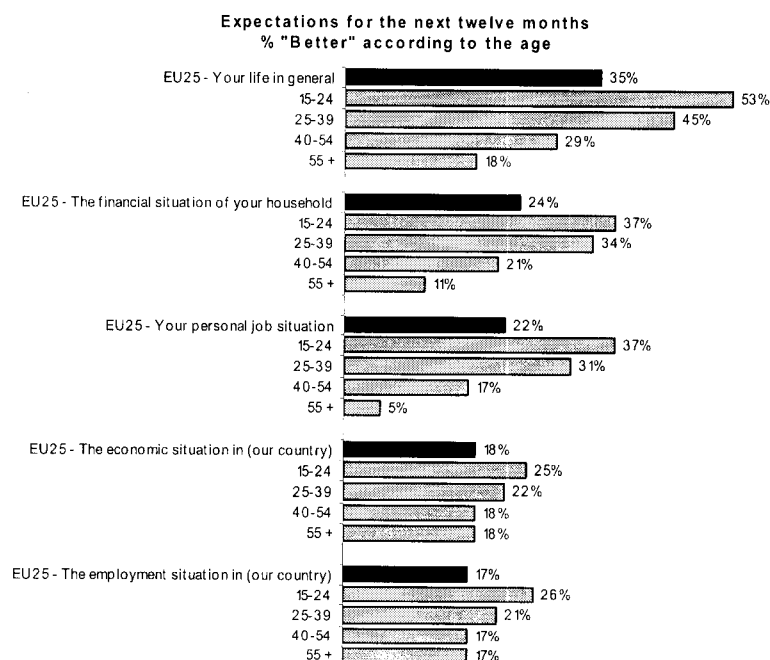
<sup>3</sup> Q5. What are your expectations for the next twelve months: will the next twelve months be better, worse or the same, when it comes to...? 1. your life in general 2. the economic situation in (OUR COUNTRY) 3. the financial situation of your household 4. the employment situation in (OUR COUNTRY) 5. your personal job situation

In terms of changes in expectations, **there is a slight inclination to optimism at the end of 2004** since the number of European citizens expecting a better 2005 has improved or is stable for all the dimensions covered.

Thus, slightly more European Union citizens are optimistic for the next twelve months than at the beginning of this year, as regards their own life in general (+3 points), the financial situation of their household (+2 points) and the national job situation (+2 points). They expect a less clear-cut improvement in their professional situation or in their country's economic situation.

EU % "Better"	EB44	EB46	EB48	EB50	EB52	EB54	EB56	EB58	EB60	EB61	EB62	Diff.
	Aut. 1995	Aut. 1996	Aut. 1997	Aut. 1998	Aut. 1999	Aut. 2000	Aut. 2001	Aut. 2002	Aut. 2003	Sp. 2004	Aut. 2004	Aut. 2004 / Pr. 2004
your life in general	33%	31%	34%	33%	33%	34%	33%	34%	33%	32%	35%	+3
the financial situation of your household	22%	21%	25%	26%	27%	27%	25%	24%	23%	22%	24%	+2
your personal job situation	20%	20%	22%	22%	24%	25%	23%	23%	21%	21%	22%	+1
the economic situation in (OUR COUNTRY)	19%	17%	23%	22%	24%	23%	16%	16%	16%	18%	18%	0
the employment situation in (OUR COUNTRY)	18%	16%	24%	23%	26%	30%	16%	16%	16%	15%	17%	+2

In addition, it is noteworthy that expectations for the coming year vary considerably according to the age of the interviewees. **The younger the interviewees the more optimistic they are as regards the future, particularly regarding their personal situation.**



### 1.3. The main concerns of European citizens

Even if European Union citizens are on balance satisfied with their life at the present time and are more positive about the future than six months ago, they nevertheless have fairly strong concerns.

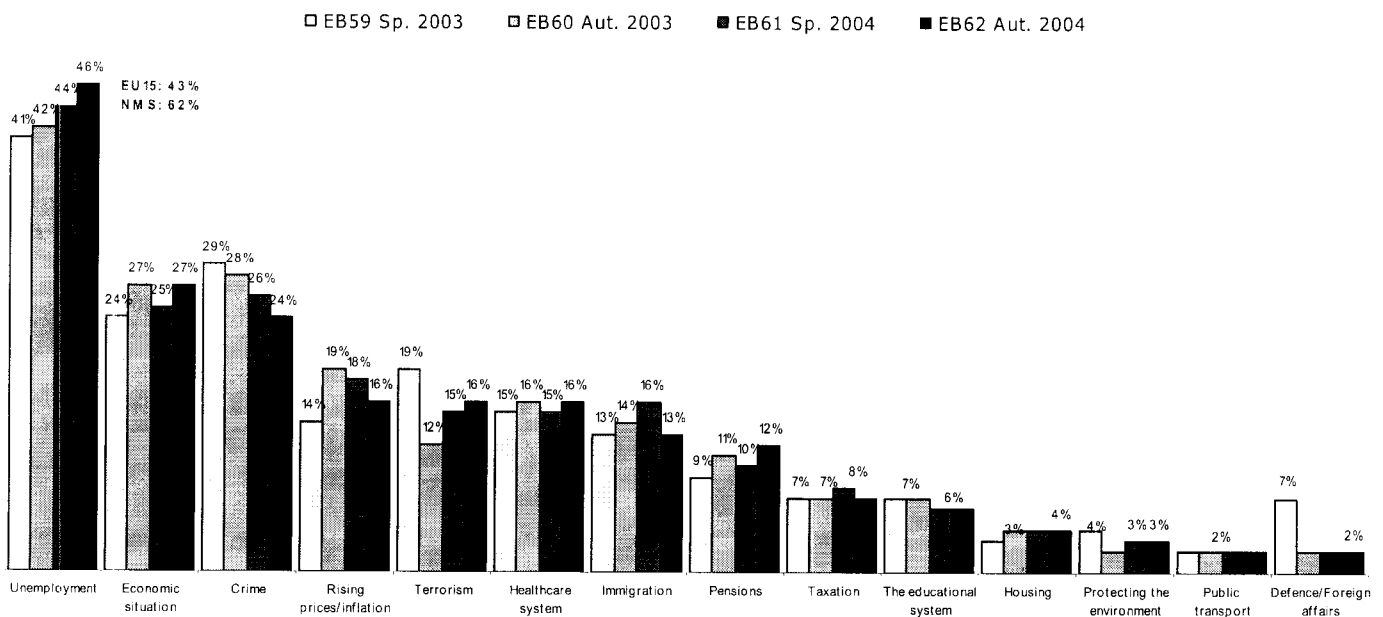
#### - Unemployment: citizens' main concern -

Unemployment continues to be the major concern of citizens. This recurring problem was evoked by 46% of interviewees and continues to grow constantly (+5 points since the beginning of 2003)<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, unemployment seems to be of particular concern in the new Member States, where a very high rate of citations was observed (62%).

The economic situation also generates a certain, relatively stable, level of concern (27%). Moreover, it is the aspect where the evolution is perceived to be most negative by citizens.

Insecurity is less of a cause for concern at the end of 2004 than at the beginning of 2003 (-5 points). However, it still a cause for concern for a quarter of the people interviewed. European citizens seem to be less fearful at the current time about the problems created by inflation, which are seen on the same level as concerns such as terrorism or the situation of national health systems (16%).

The two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment - % EU



<sup>4</sup> Q33. What do you think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment?

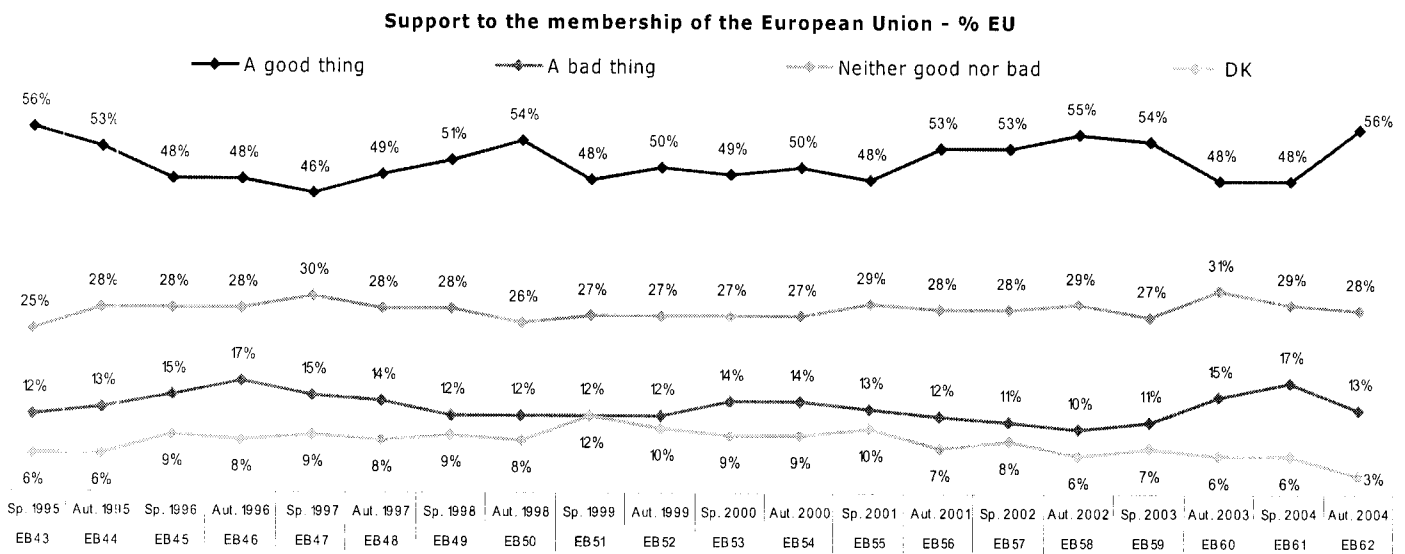


## 2. Being a Member of the European Union today

### 2.1. European Union membership: a good thing?

**- The majority of European citizens are pleased that their country is a member of the European Union -**

After the accession of 10 new Member States to the European Union, the views of citizens concerning membership of the European Union have evolved positively<sup>5</sup>. More than half of the people interviewed consider today that European Union membership is a good thing for their country (56%), which represents a significant increase of 8 points since the last survey six months ago. Such results have not been seen since 1995.

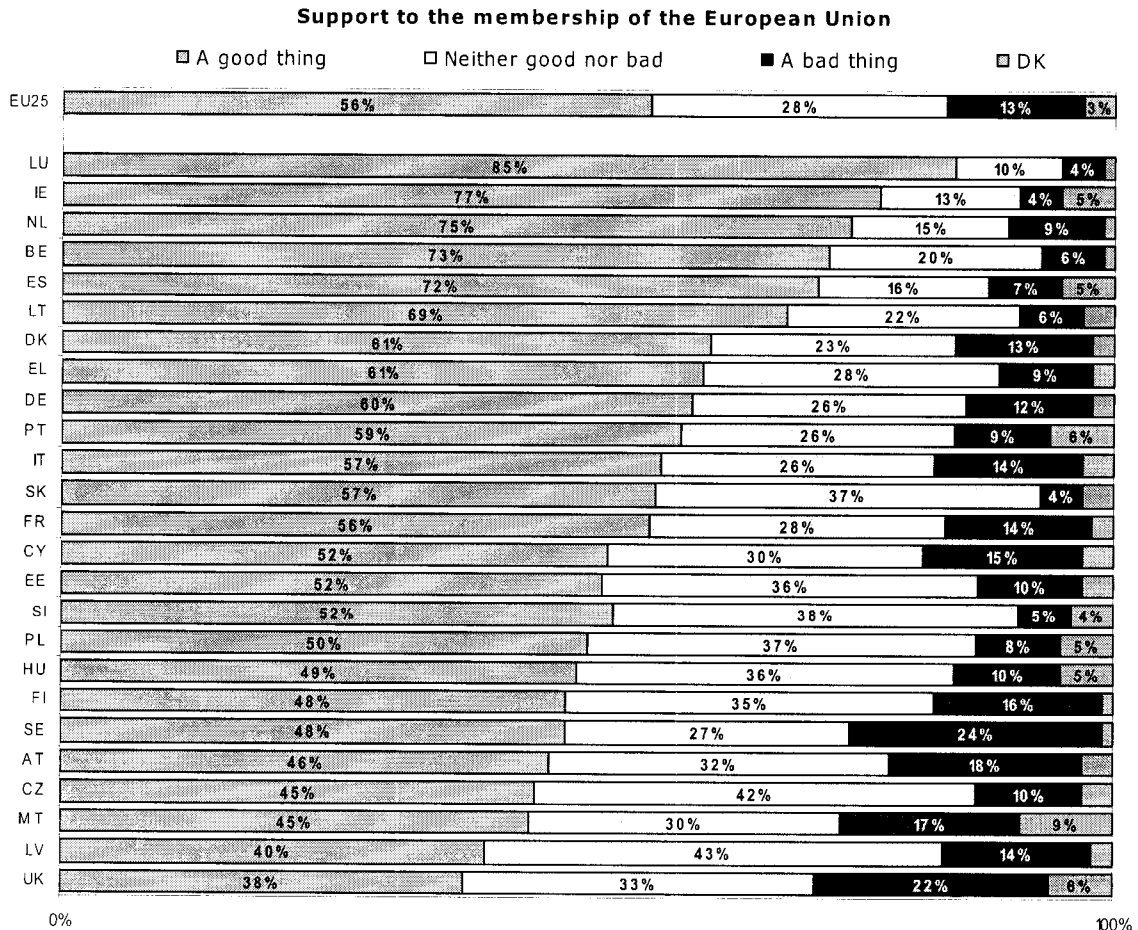


<sup>5</sup> Q11. Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY)'s membership of the European Union is...? - a good thing - a bad thing - neither good nor bad

However, a detailed analysis of the results, reveals a less clear-cut situation:

- ◆ First, the view that European Union membership is a good thing for their country is mainly to be found among citizens of the old Member States, being expressed notably by 85% of respondents in Luxembourg and more than 70% of respondents in Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain.
- ◆ At the same time, it seems to be too early for citizens of the new Member States to judge the impact of being a member of the European Union. Indeed the number of "neutral" answers is particularly high in those countries. That is in particular the case of more than 40% of respondents in Latvia and the Czech Republic, but also in Slovenia, Slovakia and Poland.

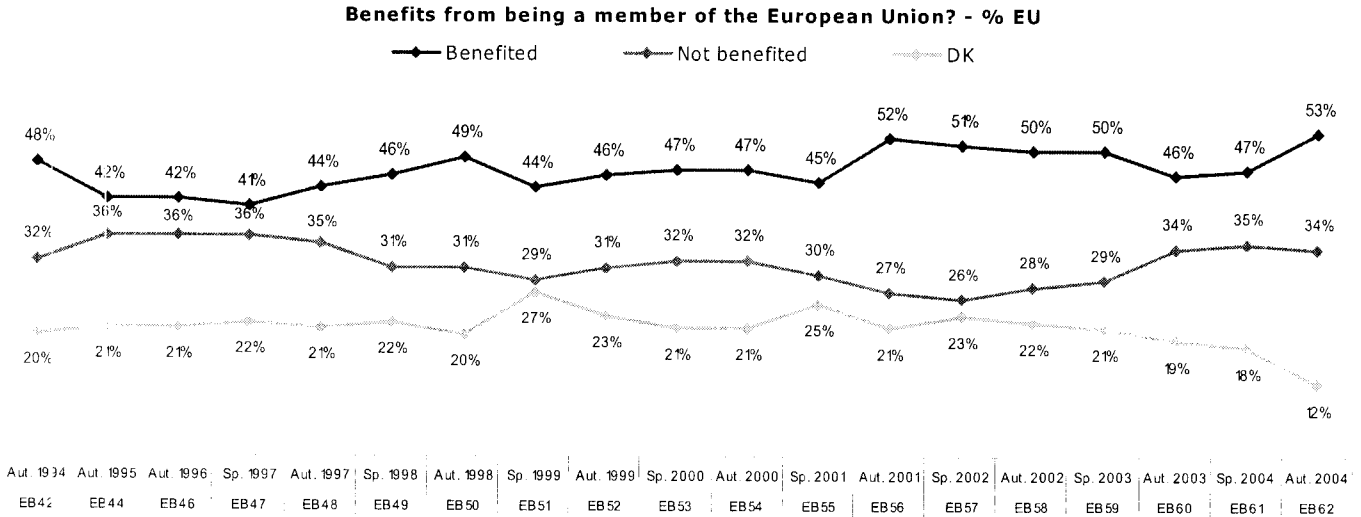
It is to be noted that, in terms of support, the United Kingdom is in 25<sup>th</sup> place.



2.2. The benefits of belonging to the European Union

- A strong increase in the perceived benefits -

If European citizens view positively the fact that their country is part of the European Union, it is because they can perceive the benefits of membership<sup>6</sup>. At the end of 2004, 53% of European citizens interviewed consider that on balance their country has benefited from belonging to the European Union, compared with 34% who are of the opposite view. This positive view has increased by 6 points over six months and has now reached a level not previously seen over the last ten years. Nevertheless, the increase seems to reflect more a fall in the number of people previously undecided (-6 points) than a real change of mind among people who are negative on this point and for which the percentage has remained stable.

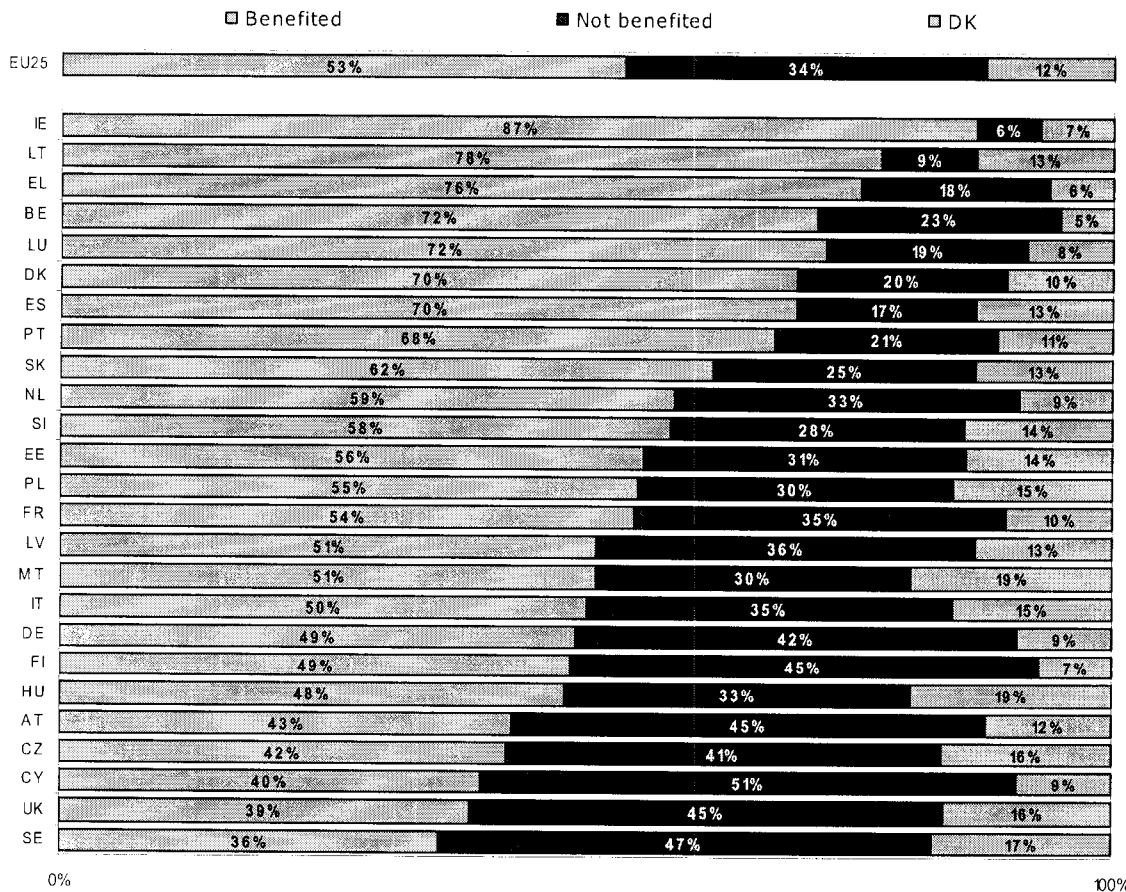


<sup>6</sup> Q.12. Taking everything into consideration, would you say that (OUR COUNTRY) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union?

Irish respondents have the highest score among European citizens who perceive the benefits of European Union membership (87%). Citizens in Lithuania (78%), Greece (76%), Belgium and Luxembourg (72%) very much share this positive view.

If it is too soon for the citizens of the new Member States to express an opinion on this aspect, it is notable, on the other hand, that citizens in certain old Member States have a somewhat negative view of the benefits of membership. That is the case in Sweden, Austria and Finland (the three countries which, until last May, were the most recent European Union members), where approximately 45% of interviewees consider that their country has not benefited from belonging to the European Union. That is also the case in the United Kingdom.

**Benefits from being a member of the European Union**

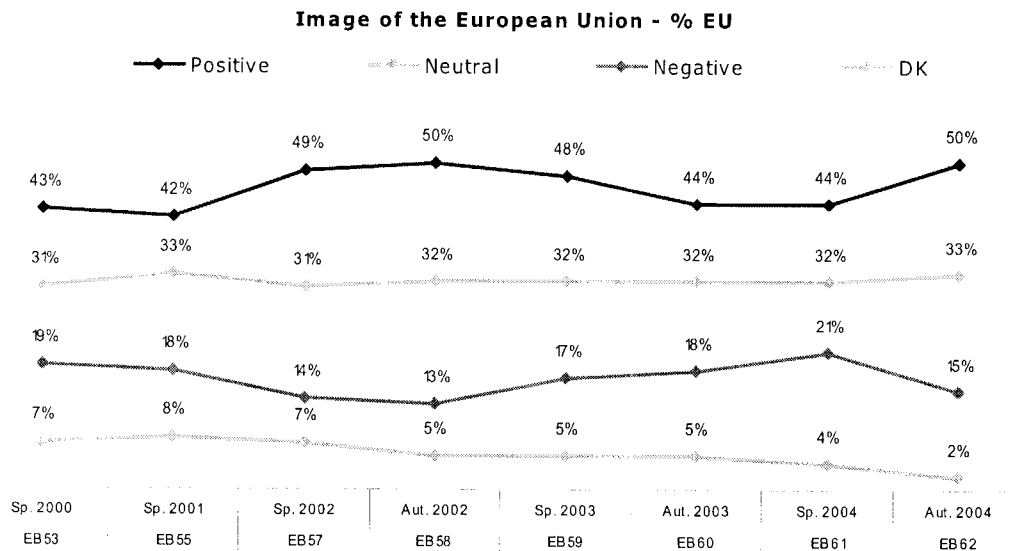


### 2.3. The European Union's image

#### - A more positive image -

The European Union's image is now reflected through more than 450 million citizens. In the new enlarged European Union, one citizen in two has a positive image of the European Union at the end of 2004 (50%)<sup>7</sup>, i.e. an increase of 6 points compared with spring 2004. One citizen in three is neutral about the European Union's image (33%) and less than one citizen in six has a negative perception of its image (15%). The evolution in the balance of positive and negative opinions is considerable: in six months it went from 23 to 35 points.

Following a decline in the positive perception of the European Union's image in recent years, the latest survey shows a return to levels close to those obtained at the end of 2002.





























It is interesting to analyse the national results obtained on this aspect, not only as regards the perception of the 25 European Union Member States, but also in the 5 other countries or territories which are also included in this Eurobarometer, namely Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Northern Cyprus and Turkey.





<sup>7</sup> Q.13. In general, does the European Union conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?

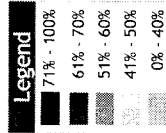
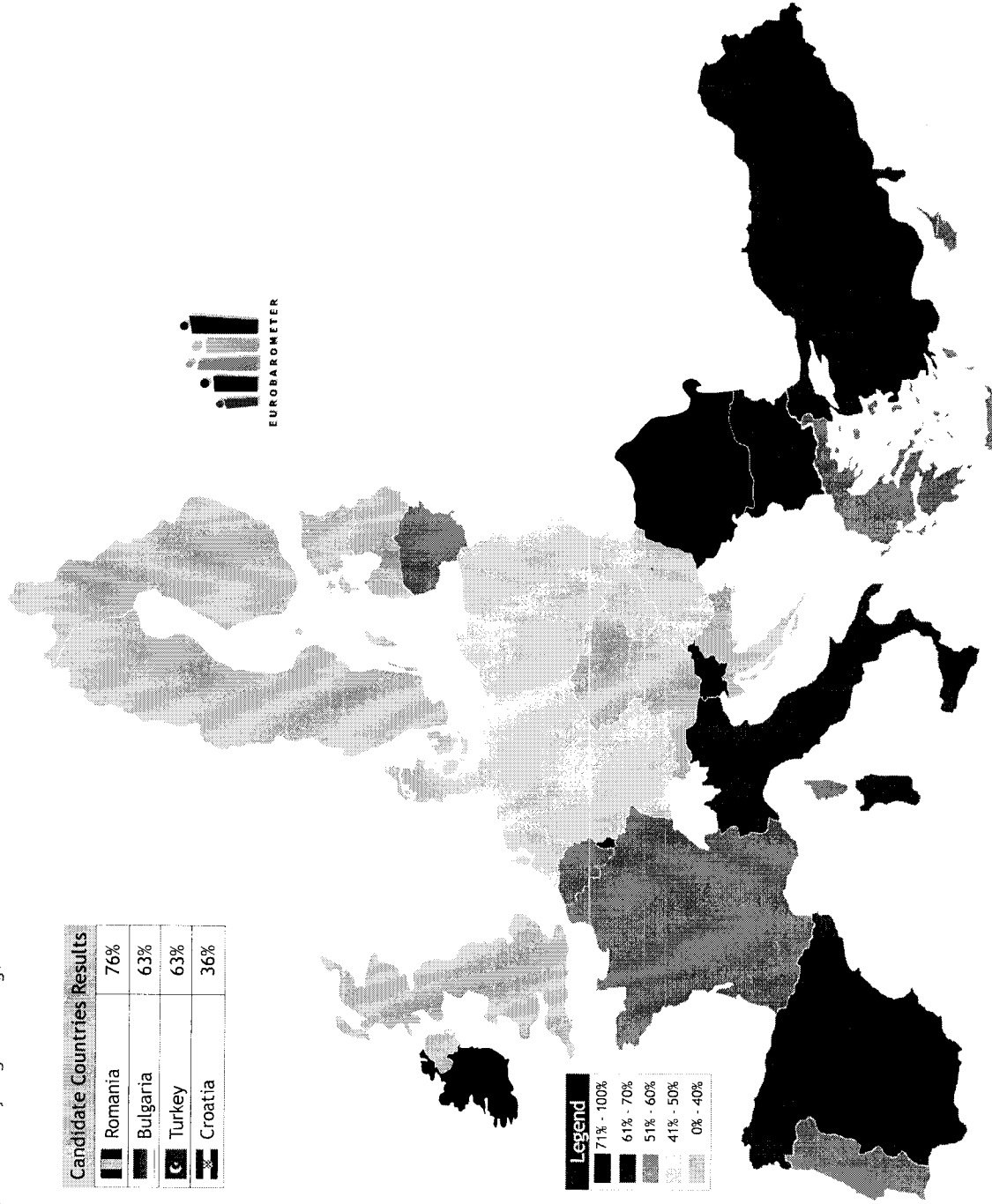
Q13 In general, does the European Union conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?

Answers: Total Positive

Country Results	
 Ireland	75%
 Italy	64%
 Spain	62%
 Slovenia	62%
 Luxembourg	61%
 Portugal	60%
 Lithuania	60%
 Belgium	59%
 Greece	58%
 France	53%
 Cyprus	51%
 EU25	50%
 Slovakia	48%
 Germany	47%
 Poland	46%
 Hungary	46%
 The Netherlands	45%
 Malta	45%
 Czech Republic	40%
 Latvia	40%
 Denmark	38%
 Sweden	38%
 Estonia	38%
 Finland	35%
 Austria	34%
 United Kingdom	32%

\*Cyprus North (57%)

Candidate Countries Results	
 Romania	76%
 Bulgaria	63%
 Turkey	63%
 Croatia	36%



The country with the highest score in terms of a positive perception of the European Union's image is a country which is not yet a member of the European Union. That country is Romania, a candidate country, where more than three out of four citizens have a positive perception of the European Union's image (76%). A similar level is also to be found in Ireland (75%).

Moreover, more than 60% of interviewees share this positive perception in Italy, Spain, Slovenia and Luxembourg. As regards non-members, Bulgaria and Turkey obtain very similar scores (63%).

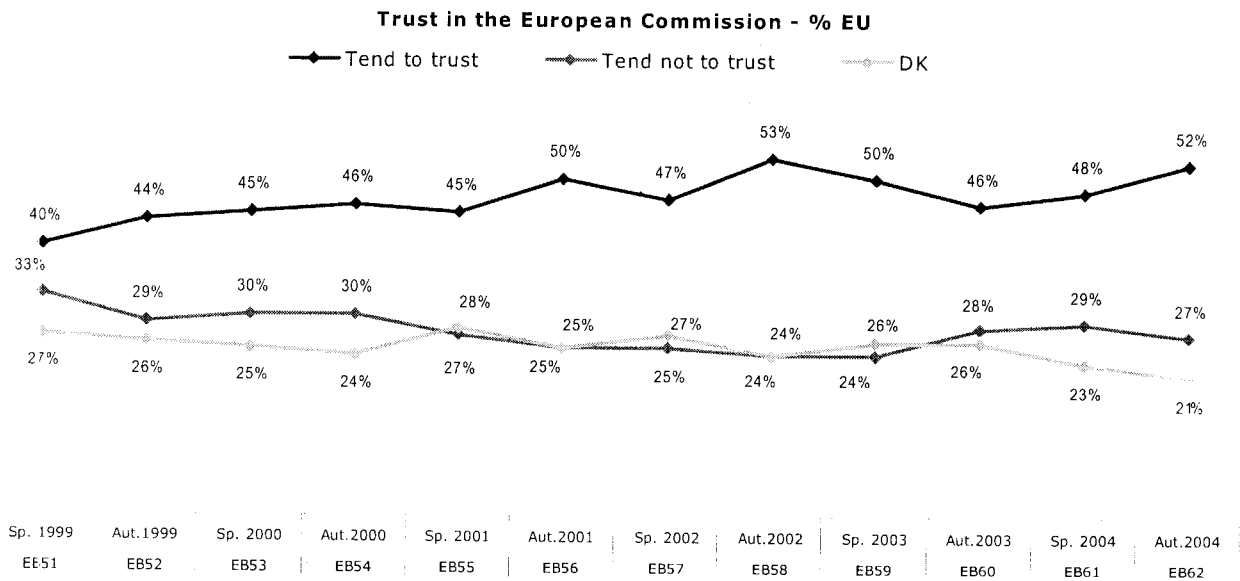
It would appear however, that Estonians have no clear-cut perception of the European Union's image (48% have a "neutral" perception of it). It is in Sweden and the United Kingdom that citizens are the most negative as regards their perception of the European Union, with 31% of citizens in those two countries having a negative perception of the European Union's image.

### 3. Trust in the European Institutions

#### 3.1. The European Commission

##### *- greater trust in the European Commission -*

In autumn 2004, in a rapidly changing institutional context, 52% of respondents in the 25 European Union countries, have confidence in the European Commission<sup>8</sup>. This level of confidence has increased by 4 points since the start of the year and has now reached a level similar to that recorded two years ago. There are now 25 points between those who have confidence in the European Commission and those who have a certain mistrust. Six months ago the differential was 19 points.



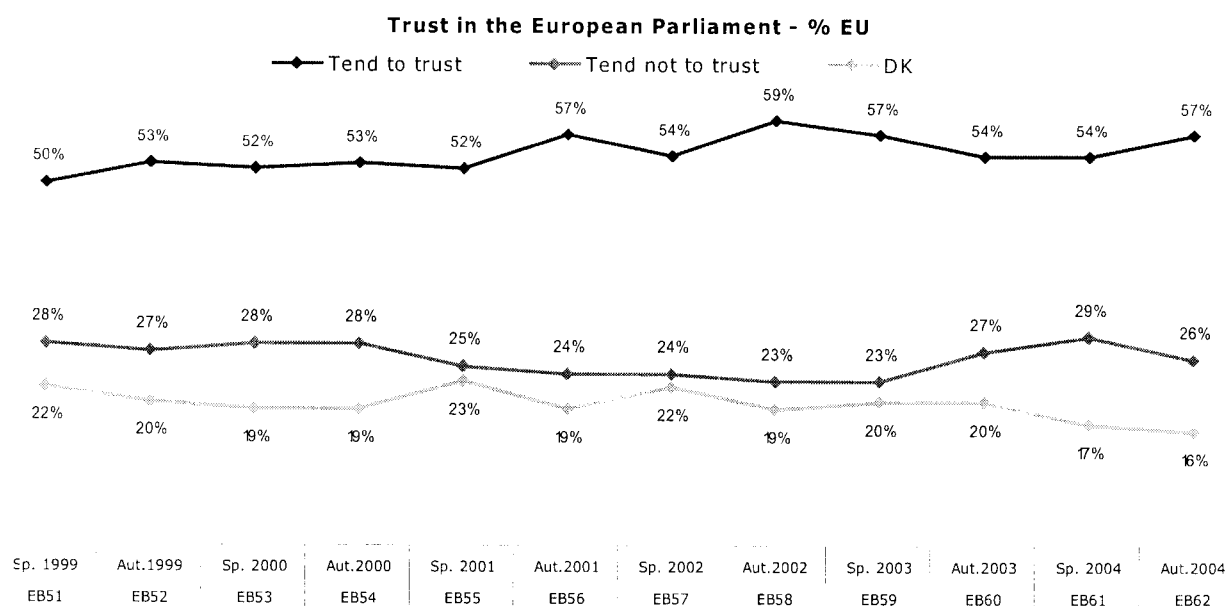
<sup>8</sup> Q29. And, for each of them, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?  
The European Commission



### 3.2. The European Parliament

#### - 57% of interviewees trust the European Parliament -

The latest survey, carried out just after the European elections which for the first time concerned 25 Member States, shows that confidence in the European Parliament has increased; 57% of interviewees in the 25 Member States have confidence in the European Parliament<sup>9</sup>, i.e. an increase of 3 points compared with last spring. A comparison of results shows that the public at large has always tended to have more confidence in the European Parliament than in the Commission. It is also interesting to note that in terms of changes in the views of respondents, the confidence curves of the two institutions move generally in the same direction.



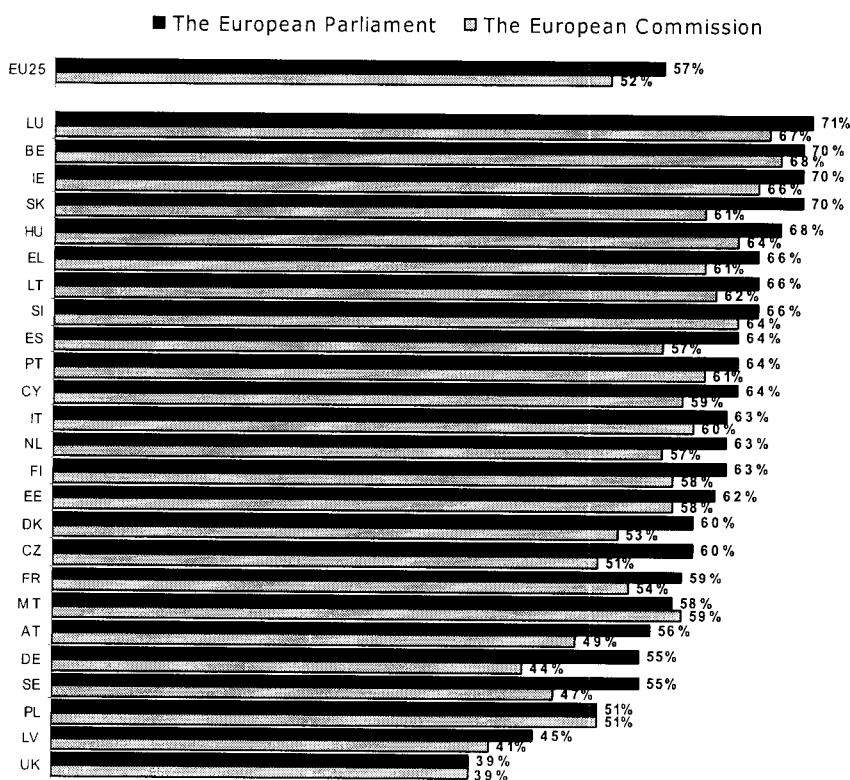
<sup>9</sup> Q29. And, for each of them, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?  
The European Parliament

At the level of the Member States, the degree of confidence differs to a fairly considerable extent. The countries which have the most confidence in the European Commission and Parliament are Luxembourg, Belgium and Ireland. Conversely, British citizens seem to have mixed feelings on this subject, since fewer than four respondents out of ten have confidence in these two European institutions. In the United Kingdom, a relative majority tend to mistrust the European Parliament (41%).

Among the new Member States, respondents in Slovakia, in particular, seem to have more confidence than their neighbours in these two institutions compared to their neighbours.

It is also noteworthy that Germans seem to have more confidence in the European Parliament than in the Commission: in terms of levels of confidence there is a difference of 11 points between the two institutions.

### Trust in the European institutions % "Tend to trust"



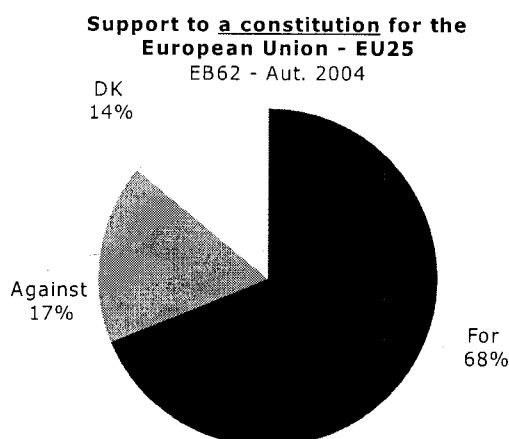
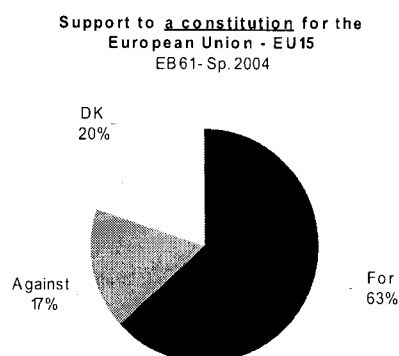
#### 4. Support for a European Constitution

##### *- More than two thirds of respondents support the idea of a European Constitution -*

It is worth recalling that the vast majority of interviews were conducted in the weeks preceding the adoption of the Constitutional Treaty by the Council on 29 October 2004 in Rome.

European Union citizens are in favour of the idea of a European Constitution since 68% of respondents are in favour of such a legal instrument<sup>10</sup>. This percentage has increased by 5 points since the beginning of the year. It is interesting to note that this increase concerns part of the people who felt unable to express an opinion last spring. In other words, that part of the population which was undecided six months ago now seems to have switched to the pro-Constitution camp.

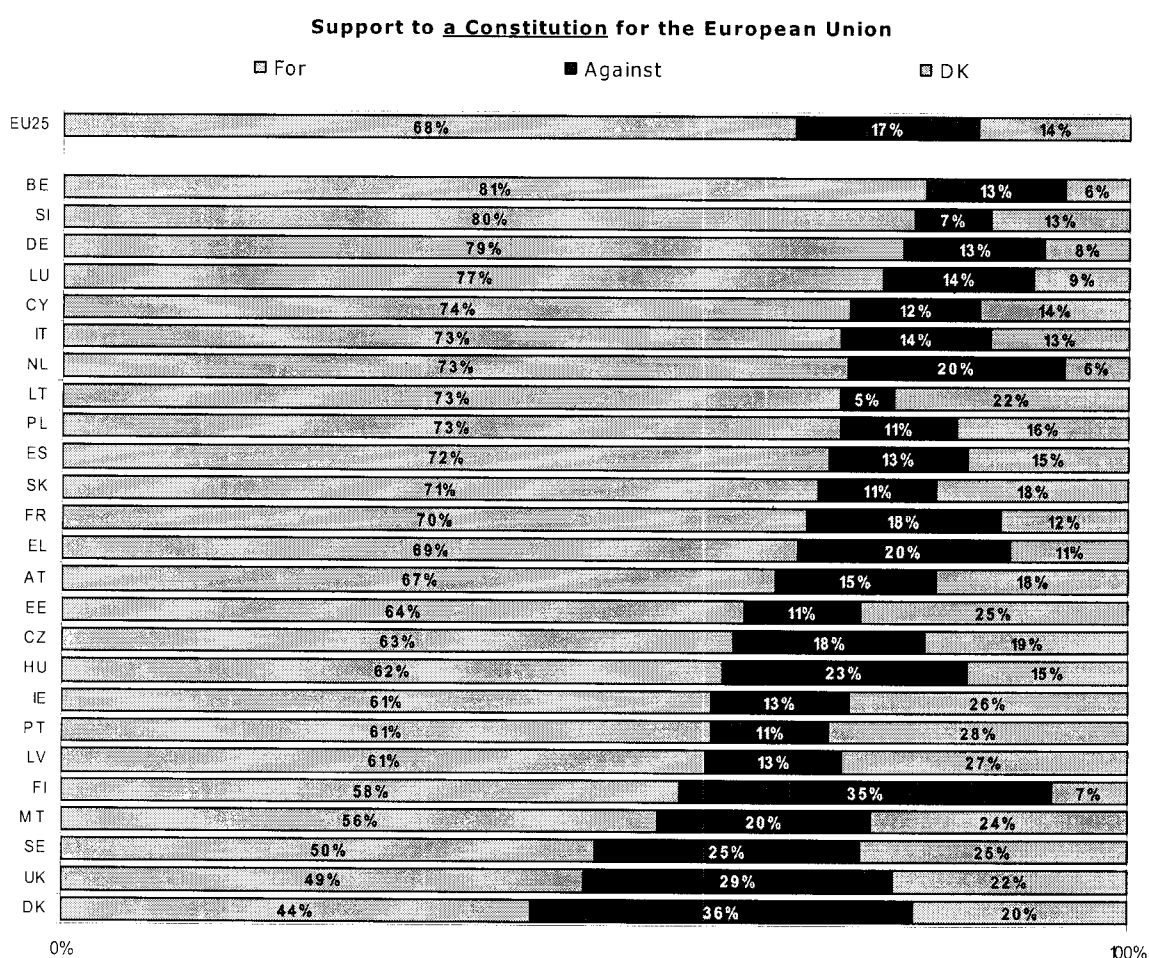
Nevertheless, this result must not be seen as an indication of the voting intentions of the countries which are considering holding a referendum or have already announced that they will be organising a referendum on the Constitutional Treaty. It translates solely the extent to which people support the concept of a Constitution for the European Union and not an assessment of the content of the text proposed for ratification in the Member States, and even less an indication of voting intentions in a possible referendum.



<sup>10</sup> Q.36. What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell me for each statement, whether you are for it or against it. A constitution for the European Union

In Belgium, Slovenia, Germany and Luxembourg, approximately eight people out of ten support the concept of a Constitution for the European Union. In terms of intensity, citizens of the United Kingdom and above all Denmark remain the least favourable to the idea of a European Union Constitution.

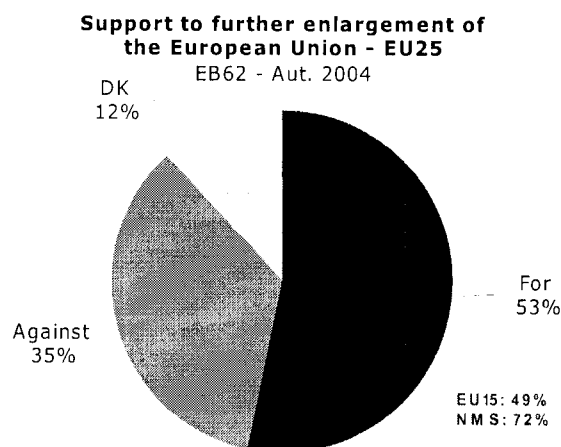
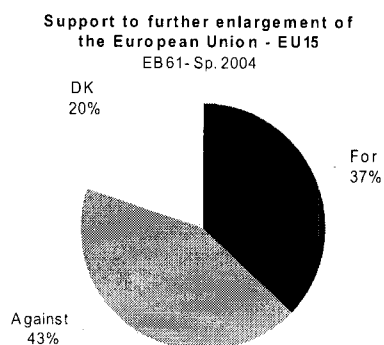
Also noteworthy is the large number of interviewees who do not feel able to take a view on the issue. That is the case in particular in Portugal, notwithstanding the fact that Portugal will be one of the first countries to organise a referendum in 2005. The same indecision on this issue is to be found in Latvia, Ireland, Estonia and Sweden.



## 5. Support for future enlargement

### - Important increase in support for future enlargement -

More than half of the people interviewed in the current 25 Member States are in favour of a proposed further enlargement in the coming years (53%)<sup>11</sup>. This score shows an increase of no less than 16 points since the beginning of the year and reflects not only a fall in the number of "don't knows" (-8 points), but also the conversion of a far from negligible number of citizens who were previously against further enlargement (-8 points). Indirectly, it is a sign that respondents have the impression that the last enlargement was a success and that there were no major problems in integrating 10 new Member States in May last.



<sup>11</sup> Q.36. What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell me for each statement, whether you are for it or against it. Further enlargement of the European Union to include other countries in future years

Q36.4 What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell me for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.

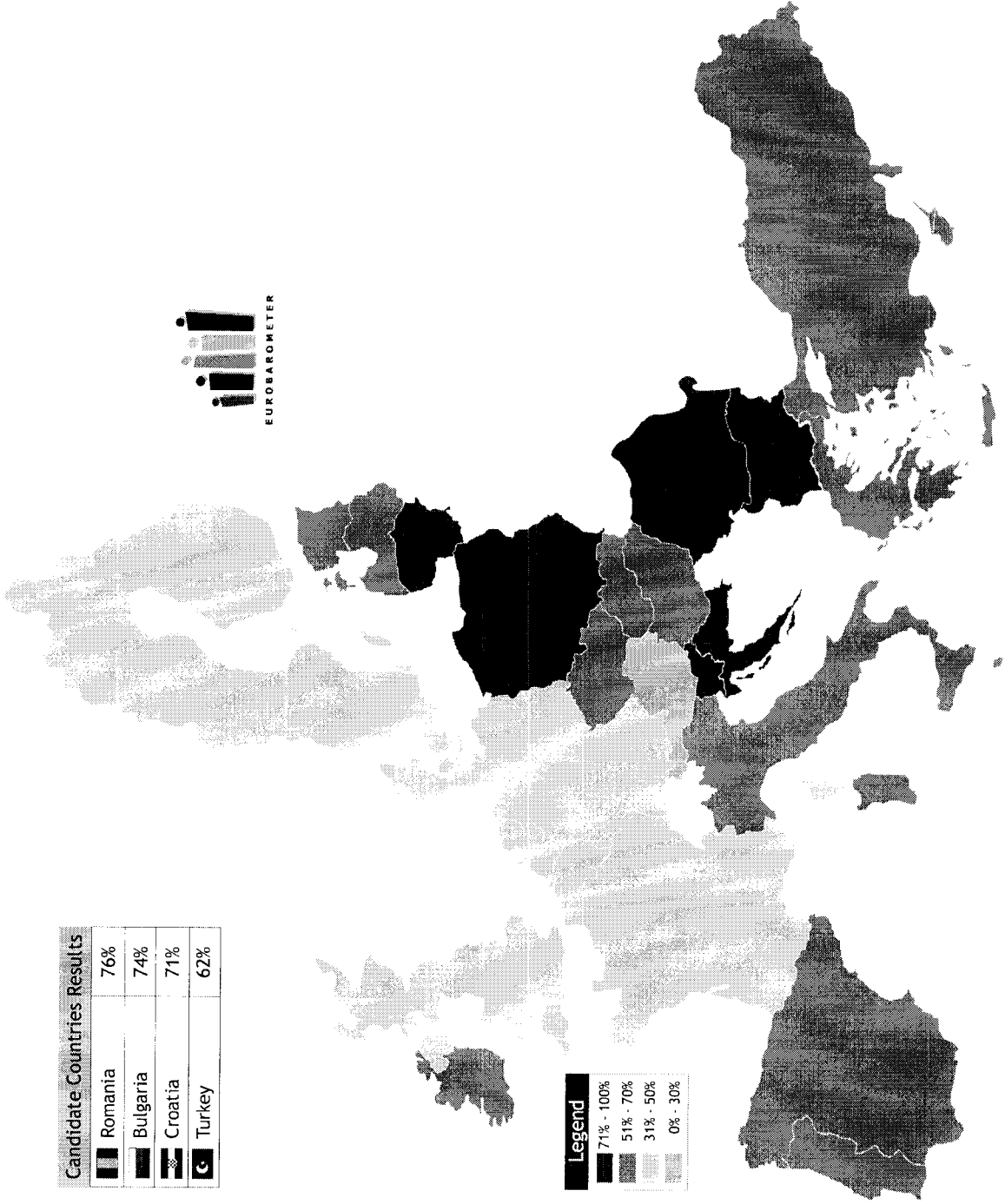
Option: Further enlargement of the European Union to include other countries in future years

Answers: For

Country Results	
	78%
	76%
	75%
	69%
	67%
	66%
	65%
	63%
	63%
	62%
	61%
	61%
	61%
	54%
	53%
	51%
	50%
	50%
	50%
	45%
	44%
	43%
	39%
	38%
	36%
	28%

<sup>1</sup>Cyprus North (63%)

Candidate Countries Results	
	76%
	74%
	71%
	62%



The citizens of the new Member States are the strongest supporters of a future enlargement of the European Union. In those countries, the percentage of citizens in favour of a further enlargement is higher than the European average, with in particular very high scores of support in Poland, Lithuania and Slovenia.

It is to be noted that 62% of citizens in Austria, which has common borders with 4 new Member States, are against a further enlargement of the European Union. That is also the case for 57% of respondents in Germany, 54% in Luxembourg, 52% in Finland and 51% in France.

The candidate countries for accession in the future are also very much in favour of further enlargement of the European Union which, implicitly, would concern them. That is certainly the case in Romania and Bulgaria, which lead the field with three interviewees out of four supporting further enlargement, followed by Croatia. In Turkey and Northern Cyprus, just over 6 respondents out of ten are in favour of a future enlargement of the European Union.

## 6. Common foreign and security policy

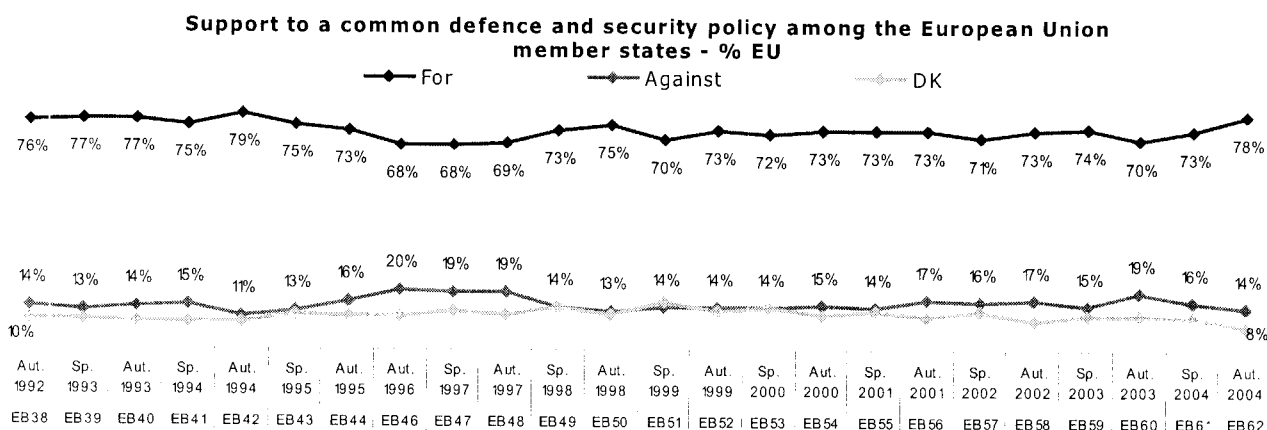
### 6.1. Support for a common foreign and security policy

*- Support is as strong as 10 years ago -*

It would appear that European public opinion is more than ever receptive to Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) questions.

Within the enlarged European Union, support for a common security and defence policy is now 78%, i.e. a significant increase of 5 points since spring 2004<sup>12</sup>. It has not enjoyed such a strong level of support since 10 years ago.

This increased support can be explained above all by an important drop in the number of "don't knows" in earlier surveys and by the integration of the favourable opinions expressed essentially in the new Member State in the average of the 25 Member States. In other words, respondents are more inclined to express an opinion on this question because they are more sensitive to the issue.



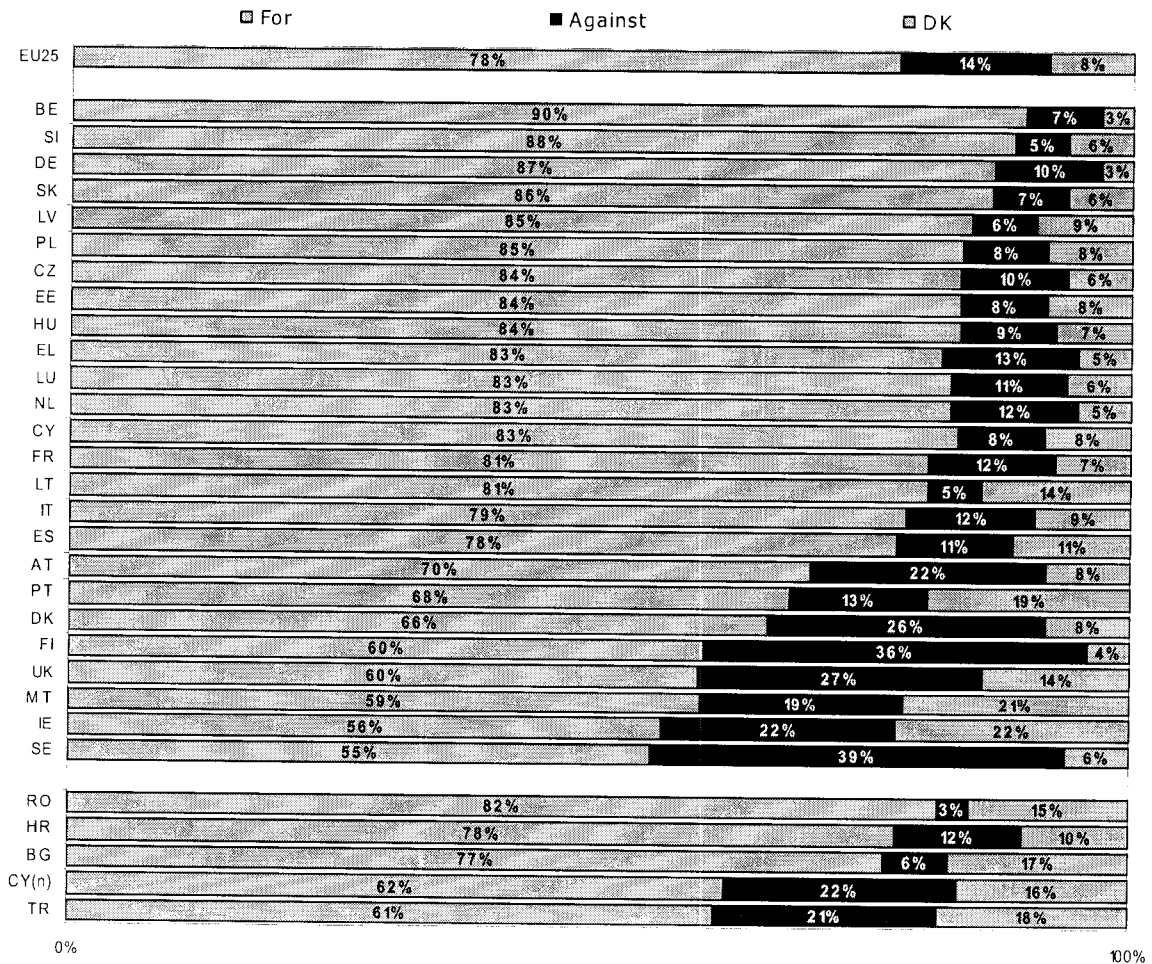
<sup>12</sup> Q.36. What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell me for each statement, whether you are for it or against it. A common defence and security policy among European Union member states



Although Belgians, Slovenians and Germans are most in favour of a common safety and defence policy (close to 90% are in favour), it is to be noted that support in Sweden and Finland is more mixed, where more than one citizen in three is against the CSDP (39% and 36% respectively), as well as in the United Kingdom (60% in favour with 27% against).

Finally, it is interesting to note that support for a common security and defence policy is particularly strong in the countries which recently joined NATO (Poland and the Czech Republic especially).

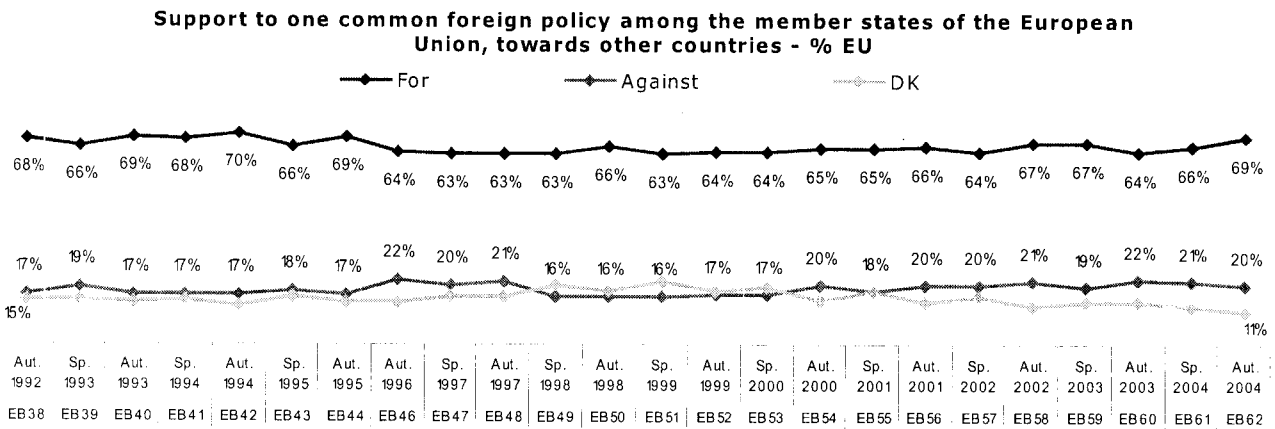
**Support to a common defence and security policy among European Union member states**



**6.2. Support for a common foreign policy**

**- Increased expectations in terms of a common foreign policy -**

As a corollary of the above, there is also increased support for a common foreign policy, but to a lesser extent<sup>13</sup>. Some 69% of European citizens support this concept, i.e. 3 points higher than in last April, but still 9 points below the level of support obtained for a common defence and security policy. Here again, such a level of support was last recorded 9 years ago. The international environment is certainly a factor in this development.



The United Kingdom was the only country participating in the survey to record a level of support below 50% (47% exactly). As regards the others, on the whole, the respective scores are in line with those recorded for a common security and defence policy. The Finns and above all the Swedes are more readily against the idea of a common foreign policy than the other Member States, unlike the Belgians, Slovenians and Germans.

<sup>13</sup> Q.36. What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell me for each statement, whether you are for it or against it. One common foreign policy among the member states of the European Union, towards other countries

Q36.2 What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell me for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.

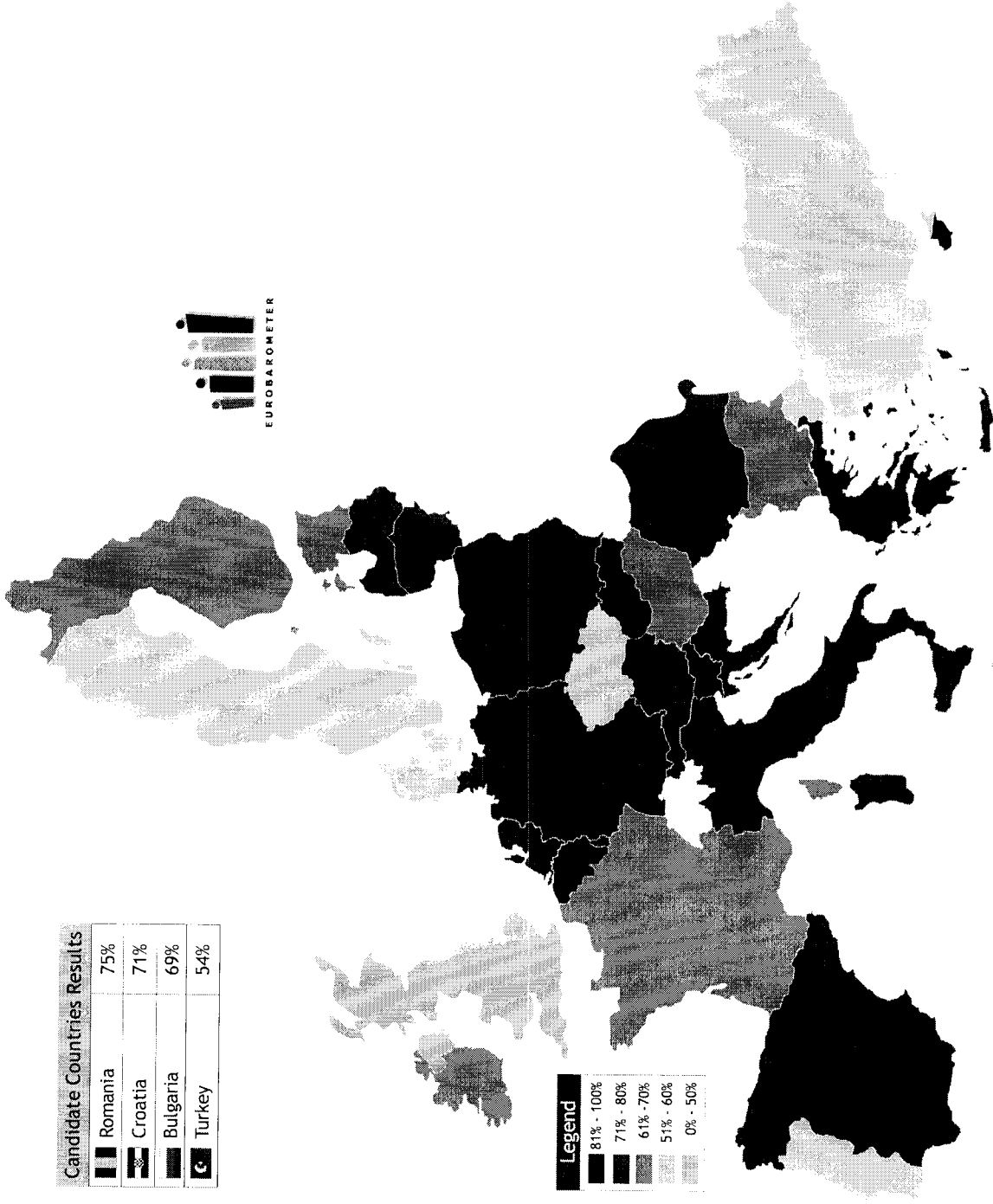
Option: One common foreign policy among the member states of the European Union, towards other countries

Answers: For

Country Results	Percentage
Belgium	82%
Slovenia	81%
Germany	80%
Greece	80%
Cyprus	78%
Poland	78%
Slovakia	75%
Luxembourg	74%
Spain	73%
Italy	72%
The Netherlands	72%
Austria	72%
Latvia	71%
Lithuania	71%
Estonia	70%
<b>EU25</b>	<b>69%</b>
France	69%
Hungary	69%
Ireland	62%
Finland	61%
Denmark	60%
Czech Republic	59%
Portugal	58%
Sweden	52%
Malta	50%
United Kingdom	47%

\*Cyprus North (65%)

Candidate Countries Results	Percentage
Romania	75%
Croatia	71%
Bulgaria	69%
Turkey	54%



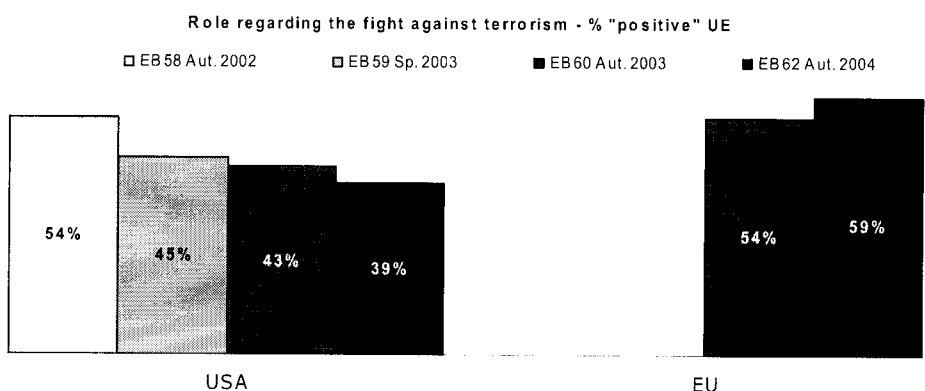
### 6.3. The roles of the European Union and the United States in the world

Certain local crises have had important repercussions internationally. The Iraqi crisis, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to mention but two examples, have created in particular this year tensions between certain Member States and the United States.

In this survey we have focused on the perception of the roles played by the European Union and the United States in two areas directly related to foreign policy and security, namely their roles in promoting world peace and combating terrorism<sup>14</sup>. Those two areas were also at the centre of the American presidential campaign.

#### **- The perception of the international role of the United States has become increasingly negative -**

Generally speaking, the perception of the role played by the United States internationally has changed in relation to the previous survey (autumn 2003) and confirms the increasingly negative perception noted over the past few years.



<sup>14</sup> Q.41. In your opinion, would you say that the United States tend to play a positive role, a negative role or neither a positive nor a negative role regarding...? 1. peace in the world 2. the fight against terrorism  
Q.42. And in your opinion, does the European Union tend to play a positive role, a negative role or neither positive nor negative role regarding...? 1. peace in the world 2. the fight against terrorism

At the current time, a majority of European citizens believes that the United States plays a negative role as regards world peace (58%, +5 points) and in the fight against terrorism (42%, +5 points).

Conversely, a majority of the people interviewed recognise the positive role played by the European Union to promote world peace (61%, +1 point) and combat terrorism (59%, +5 points).

	USA		EU	
	2004	Diff. 2003/2004	2004	Diff. 2003/2004
<b>Peace in the world</b>				
Positive	22%	-5	61%	+1
Negative	58%	+5	11%	+2
Neither	15%	-1	22%	-1
<b>The fight against terrorism</b>				
Positive	39%	-4	59%	+5
Negative	42%	+5	11%	0
Neither	14%	-1	23%	-2

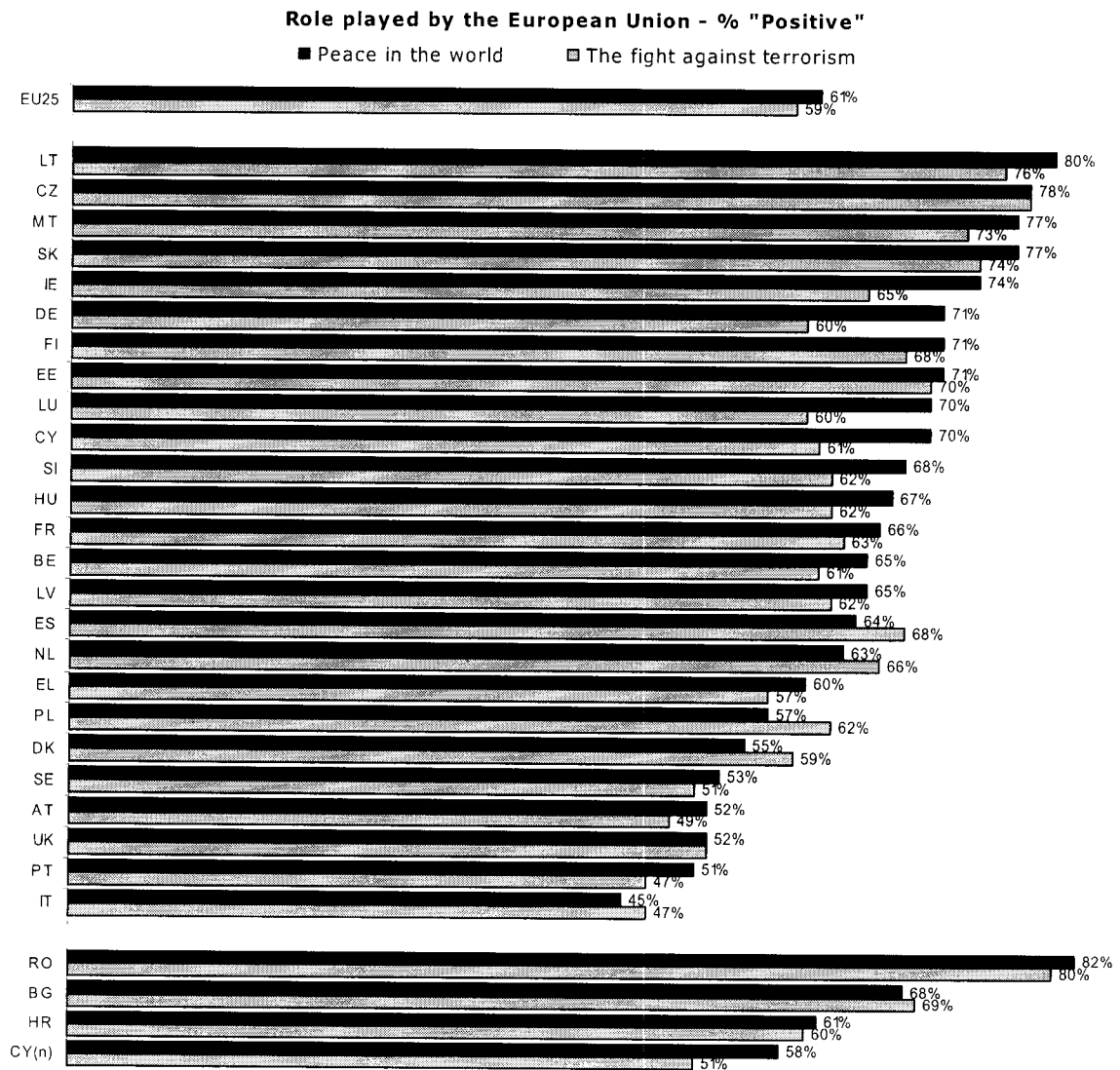
Only three of the thirty countries/territories which participated in the survey have a positive perception of the role played by the United States to promote **world peace**: the Czech Republic, Lithuania and Romania. The countries which are most critical of the United States in this area include in particular Greece, Cyprus, France, Belgium and Turkey.

Opinions are, however, more divided as regards the assessment of **the fight against terrorism**. There is a fairly sharp division between the majority of the new Member States and the historical supporters of the United States (United Kingdom, the Netherlands,...) on the one hand, and the old European Union Member States, on the other hand.

The same type of divergence also exists among the group of accession candidate countries: the opinion of the majority of Romanians is diametrically opposed to that of the vast majority of Turks.

There is a broad consensus in all the Member States and the other countries which participated in the survey that the European Union has played a positive role in promoting world peace and combating terrorism.

Opinions are the most positive in Romania, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Malta and Slovakia. On the other hand, opinions are slightly more critical in Austria, the United Kingdom, Portugal, but above all in Italy where less than one respondent in two has a positive view of the role played by the European Union in these two areas.



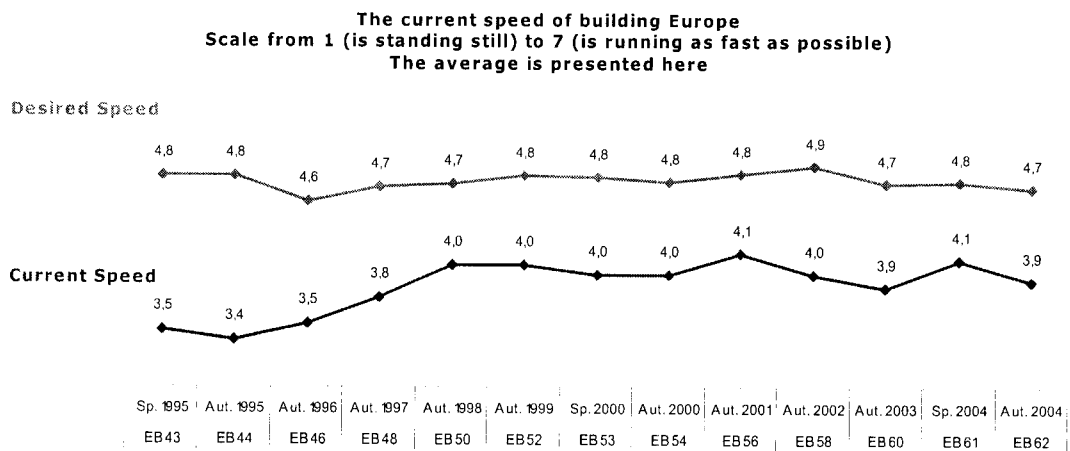
## 7. The speed of European construction

### - Citizens want European construction to be speeded up -

In order to measure the perception of the speed of European construction, the Eurobarometer uses a visual graph showing an individual on the move and linked to values. An average is calculated on that basis<sup>15</sup>. This question distinguishes between the perception of the actual speed of construction and the desired speed.

As regards the average of the 25 European Union Member States, it is to be noted that the desired speed of European construction is above the perceived speed of construction. **This constant trend reflects once again the gap which exists between the wishes of citizens for more Europe and their perception of the current situation.**

Moreover, even if the perception of the current speed of European construction has weakened slightly compared with the scores recorded on the eve of enlargement, the desired speed is at a level comparable to that observed last spring.



<sup>15</sup> **Q.19.** a) In your opinion, what is the current speed of building Europe? Please look at these figures. N°1 is standing still, N°7 is running as fast as possible. Choose the one which best corresponds with your opinion of the current speed of building Europe. b) And which corresponds best to the speed you would like?

## CONCLUSION

The Eurobarometer autumn 2004 survey was carried out in a context of rapid change at institutional and political levels. The main conclusions that can be drawn are as follows:

- ◆ European public opinion is sensitive to all changes related to European construction and has developed significantly with regard to several indicators.
- ◆ First of all, European citizens are more optimistic as regards the future and are more satisfied with their personal situation than six months earlier.
- ◆ Following enlargement, more than one respondent in two (56%, +8 points) now supports membership of the European Union; the perception of the benefits linked to membership is also stronger (53%, +6 points).
- ◆ The European Union has a more positive image on the basis of 25 Member States compared to 15 Member States: one interviewee in two now perceives the European Union positively (51%, +6 points).
- ◆ Trust in the European Commission and Parliament has increased and is now at respective proportions of 52% (+4 points) and 57% (+3 points) of citizens.
- ◆ The idea of the European Union adopting a Constitution continues to gain ground: more than two thirds of interviewees are in favour of the idea (68%, +5 points).
- ◆ It would seem that European Union citizens consider that the enlargement, integrating ten new Member States was accomplished successfully. They are even in favour of a further enlargement of the European Union in the coming years (53%, +16 points).
- ◆ In a particularly turbulent international context, a vast majority of the people interviewed support a common security and defence policy (78%, +5 points) as well as a common foreign policy (69%, +3 points).
- ◆ The perception of the role played by the United States internationally has deteriorated in recent years, while there has been slight progression in the perception of the European Union's international role: 61% of interviewees believe that the European Union plays a positive role in promoting world peace (+1 point), compared with only 22% for the United States (-5 points).
- ◆ The above elements confirm the wish to see European construction speeded up.