



Special Eurobarometer



European
Commission

COMMUNICATION OF EUROPEAN UNION EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICIES

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HIGHLIGHTS

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COMMUNICATION OF EUROPEAN UNION EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL POLICIES

Highlights

This study, made within the framework of Eurobarometer 60.2 between 2nd November and 12th December 2003, presents the perceptions of the European Union citizens of the key messages communicated by the European Union in employment and social affairs. It also covers the usage of different communication channels to get information about what the European Union does in this field. All the people that participated in this study are European Union nationals, aged 15 years and over, and reside in a European Union member country.

1. Policy awareness

A large majority of European Union citizens are aware of European Union employment and social policies

- More than 60% have already seen, read or heard something about each of the six areas of European Union employment and social policies¹.
- Moreover, 85% have seen, read or heard something about at least one of these areas. This figure increases to over 90% in Sweden, Italy, Finland, Greece and Luxembourg.
- Job creation and the fight against unemployment is the area that enjoys the highest awareness.

More than 75% of the EU population knows at least one of the specific actions taken by the European Union in the field of employment and social affairs

High visibility of EU legislation in the area of employment and social affairs

- The three concrete EU actions that enjoy the highest level of awareness concern legislation in the area of anti-discrimination (57%), labour law and health and safety at work (53%) and equality between men and women (50%).

¹ The question covered the following areas: job creation and the fight against unemployment; working conditions; the fight against social exclusion, poverty and discrimination; the reform of the national systems of social protection (pension, healthcare, etc.); equality between women and men; the employment and social policy issues related to the enlargement of the EU to include new Member States.

- It is in Greece and Luxembourg that the highest levels of awareness of most of the nine specific EU actions presented to the respondents can be found. Conversely, the lowest levels are frequently found in Germany and France.

2. General perception of the communication of European Union policies in the field of employment and social affairs

As a general rule, information about what the European Union does in the area of employment and social affairs is considered by EU citizens to be positive.

- 51% said it is positive i.e. 45% “fairly positive” and 6% “very positive”.
- Greek and Irish people have the most positive perception (73% and 70% respectively), followed by Italians (63%), Finns (62%), Spaniards and Luxembourgers (61% each).

Moreover, awareness leads to a general positive perception

- 59% of those who have seen, read or heard something about the six areas of EU employment and social affairs have a general positive perception of what the European Union does in this field.

3. Importance of information on European Union employment and social policies

Overall, a vast majority of citizens underlines the importance of having access to information about EU employment and social policies

- The three areas with the highest scores are: the EU's role in relation to the reform of the national systems of social protection (82%), job creation and the fight against unemployment, and the fight against social exclusion, poverty and discrimination (81% each).
- Furthermore, people who are aware of what the European Union does in the area of employment and social affairs are more likely to say it is important to have access to information about these issues.

Enlargement reinforces the need for information

- Almost 50% of European Union citizens said that after the enlargement of the EU in May 2004, they would like to receive more information than they do today.

4. How to reach the European Union citizens?

For 84% of EU citizens, television is the main source of information regarding what the EU does in the area of employment and social policies, followed by daily national newspapers (41%) and radio (40%). Regional and local newspapers are not to be neglected, as their share is high in some countries.

- Regional and local newspapers are a main source of information on these EU policies for 31% of EU citizens, with highest figures in Germany (57%), Sweden (55%) and Finland (52%).

The European Union web site could be a useful source of information in the future

- Internet is already used as much as publications when it comes to having access to information about EU employment and social policies. 10% said they surf the net (4% surf on EUROPA, the European Union web site, and 6% surf on other web sites) and 9% rely on books, brochures and leaflets.
- Nevertheless, the importance of EUROPA will increase in the future as 42% of people said it could be useful to get information about the European Union employment and social policies.