

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2012 12:43 PM
To: H
Subject: FW: Attitudes in Europe

Worth a read.

From: Hormats, Robert D
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2012 8:34 AM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject: Attitudes in Europe

Hi Jake,

Thought S should see this before her trip. Very useful background. Ai am speaking to our EUR ambassadors on a regular basis about the financial crisis on a regular basis and will keep you up to date. The dangers are growing and the harmony of views is not increasing – perhaps even going the other way. And, as the survey shows, there is also a growing crisis of confidence,,
 Bob

This survey by Andrew Kohut of more than 8,000 people in Britain, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland and Spain was conducted between March 17 and April 16. It also finds:

- **Economic Integration:** Across the eight EU countries surveyed, a median of only 34% think that European economic integration has strengthened their country's economy. Only in Germany (59%) do most people say that their country has been well served by European integration. Among the five euro-area nations surveyed, a median of only 37% believes having the euro as their currency has been a good thing. The three non-euro zone countries surveyed are quite happy they have kept their own currencies. Since 2009, belief that European economic integration has weakened their national economy has grown by 22 percentage points in the Czech Republic, 20 points in Italy, and 18 points in Spain.
- **European Unity:** The symbols of a united Europe retain public support. Despite the fall off in EU favorability, most Europeans surveyed still see the EU positively, including 69% of the Poles, 68% of the Germans and 60% of the French and Spanish. And more than half in all five euro area countries surveyed – including 71% of the Greeks, 69% of the French and 66% of the Germans – would like to keep the euro as their currency and not return to a national currency.
- **Support for the Free Market:** Solid majorities in only three of the eight countries surveyed – Germany 69%, Britain 61%, and France 58% – still believe that people are better off in a free market system. Since 2007, before the global financial crisis began, belief in capitalism is down 23 percentage points in Italy, 20 points in Spain, 15 points in Poland, 11 points in Britain, and nine points in the Czech Republic. Support for the free market has remained relatively unchanged in the United States during that same time.
- **Overall Mood:** Europeans have been consistently downbeat about the state of their nations for the entire 11 years the Pew Global Attitudes Project has been surveying in Europe. But this year the mood is particularly grim. Miniscule numbers of Greeks (2%), Spanish (10%) and Italians (11%) say their country is on the right course. Satisfaction is down 41 percentage points in Spain since 2007. Dissatisfaction with their country's direction tracks with Europeans' bleak assessment of their national economies. A median of just 16% of Europeans

surveyed think their economy is performing well. Across the board, Europeans expect the adverse effects of the euro crisis to continue for the immediate future.

- **Blame:** Among those who say their economy is bad, the Greeks (87%), Italians (84%), Poles (90%) and Czechs (91%) complain that their own governments are responsible for current economic distress. The Spanish (78%) and French (74%) fault the banks and other major financial institutions. The British and Germans blame both. Such sentiments have not changed much in the last year.
- **Economic Threats:** Europeans see economic threats on all sides: a median 88% of those surveyed say unemployment poses a major threat to their economic well-being; 81% think their country's national debt is a threat; and 74% believe rising prices could undermine their well-being.
- **Leaders and Policies:** Europeans have little faith in the ability of most of their leaders to deal with current economic challenges. The lone exception is German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Nor do Europeans put much stock in austerity or budgetary oversight from Brussels.
- **Divided Europe:** The EU is, in some ways, fractured into multiple, often discordant, elements. But these divisions do not always cut along presumed lines. Contrary to their popular portrayal, the Germans do not differ markedly from other Europeans on policy issues. On many counts, it is the Greeks who are the most isolated in Europe. Meanwhile, a north-south split within Europe is far from clear cut.