



Germany: Facts & Figures January 2009

A monthly overview of current opinion data and statistical information in the Federal Republic of Germany

Politics

If Bundestag elections were held on February 1, the CDU/CSU would receive 35% of the vote, the SPD 22%, the Green Party 10%, the FDP 16%, the Left Party 12%, and all other parties combined 5%. (Forsa. 01/28/09)

Fifty-two percent of Germans prefer a coalition between the CDU/CSU and the FDP. Forty percent favor a SPD-Green Party coalition and 38% would welcome a grand coalition. Eighteen percent would be content with a coalition between the SPD, Green Party and the Left Party. (Deutschlandtrend. Major papers, 01/23/09)

A majority of people said they trust Chancellor Merkel and Foreign Minister Steinmeier to lead the country. With 60 out of 100 points, Steinmeier is trailing right behind Merkel, who got 63 points. With Finance Minister Steinbrück (57) and SPD Chairman Müntefering (53), two SPD politicians come in third and fourth. (Forsa. Stern, 01/02/09)

Hesse Elections: The CDU and FDP are heading for a coalition in Hesse under acting Minister President Koch after both parties secured a solid majority in Sunday's elections. The CDU got 37.2% (up 0.4), the FDP 16.2% (up 6.8), the SPD 23.7% (down 13), the Green Party 13.7%, and the Left Party 5.4%. (Major papers, 01/19/09)

Economy

The German government forecast on Wednesday that the country's economy will shrink by 2.25% this year, which would be its worst performance since WWII. The new forecast was down from the government's previous prediction, made in mid-October, of 0.2% growth. (Major papers, 01/22/09)

The German economy slowed drastically in 2008, growing only 1.3%. The 2008 figures compares with GDP growth of 2.5% in the previous year. (Federal Office for Statistics. Major papers, 01/14/09)

The CDU/CSU Bundestag group predicts a budget deficit of 3.5% in 2009. The reason is weak economic growth and the government's second economic stimulus package amounting to 50 billion euros in 2009 and 2010. The EU Stability Pact would only allow a package amounting to 73 billion euros. The situation could get even worse in 2010, when the debt of the federal government, Länder and regional governments could reach 4.5% measured against gross domestic product. (Handelsblatt. 01/12/09)

The share of ecologically produced electricity in Germany increased from 14.5 to 15.3% in 2008. (Sueddeutsche. 01/08/09)

The unemployment rate rose to 8.3% (December: 7.4%), with 3.489 million people out of work last month. (Federal Labor Agency. 01/20/09)

Society

Wealthy Germans have become wealthier since 2002, while poorer people have become poorer. The wealthiest ten percent of Germans had 61.1% of all private assets. In 2002, the figure was 57.9%. (German Institute for Economic Research. Major papers, 01/22/09)

More than 10 million Germans watched Barack Obama's inauguration. (Tagesspiegel. 01/21/09)

Fifty percent of Germans believe Israel pursues aggressive policies, while 45% say it is a "nice country." Fifty-nine percent said Israel pursues its interest without taking other countries into account. Thirteen percent noted that Israel has no right to exist in the Middle East. Only 30% said the country respects human rights. (Forsa. Stern, 01/15/09)

Germany had 82.05 million inhabitants at the end of 2008, a decline of 0.2% from 2007. The number of people living in Germany has been declining since 2003. Germany's population is expected to drop to 69 million by 2050. (Federal Statistical Office. Süddeutsche, 01/08/09)

Upper income groups carry the main burden for financing Germany's social security system. The 10% of Germans with the highest income pay 42% of their income to the government and the social security system, while the 30% of Germans with the lowest income receive 900 euros on the average more from the state than they pay in taxes and charges to the state. (German Institute of Economy. Major papers, 01/08/09)

Forty-six percent of East Germans said their living conditions have improved since the fall of the wall. In the western part of the country, 40% say things are better than in 1989. (Forsa. Berliner Zeitung, 01/02/09)

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