



Germany: Facts & Figures May 2009

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

Politics

If Bundestag elections had been held on May 31, the CDU/CSU would have received 35% of the vote, the SPD 24%, the Green Party 11%, the FDP 15%, the Left Party 10%, and all other parties combined 5%. (Forsa. 05/27/09)

Horst Köhler was re-elected as German president with 613 votes, exactly the number of votes necessary. SPD presidential candidate Gesine Schwan received 503 votes of the available 1,224 votes. However, she did not receive ten votes from the SPD and the Green Party. Peter Sodann, the candidate of the Left Party received 91 votes, two more than the Left Party had delegates in the National Assembly. Frank Rennike of the right-wing extremists received four votes. Köhler, who is 66 years old, begins his second term on July 1, 2009. (Major papers, 05/26/09)

Thirty-six percent of Germans are still undecided four months prior to the national elections. Twenty-seven percent of SPD supporters and 25% of CDU supporters are not yet convinced that they would cast their vote for their party. Ninety percent of Left Party voters have, however, said they have already made up their minds. Forty-four percent believe that a coalition between the CDU/CSU and the FDP would be the best for the country. (Infratest Dimpa. Die Welt, 05/09/09)

Economy

The jobless rate dropped in May to 8.2% after remaining steady in (April at 8.6%. However, the economy shows no signs of a lasting recovery from the recession in the job market. The decline is due to a regular spring boost to employment. The number of jobless dropped 127,000 in May to 3.458 million. (Federal Labor Agency, 05/28/09)

The annual inflation rate has dropped to zero for the first time in 22 years. (Federal Statistical Office. Major papers, 05/28/09)

Germany's economy shrank 3.8% in the first quarter of 2009. The steep drop in the first quarter over the previous three months is the largest since record-keeping began in 1970. The decline was led by a 9.7% slump in exports over the previous quarter. The government has forecast that the economy will shrink by 6% this year, followed by a feeble 0.5% increase in 2010. (Federal Statistical Office. Major papers, 05/27/09)

A "Poverty Atlas" drawn up by a German charity organization reveals that the poorest Germans live in Mecklenburg Western-Pomerania where 24.3% of the people are poor, while only 10.0% of the people in Bavaria are considered poor. According to the EU definition, the poverty line is drawn so that those receiving less than 60% of the national average income are considered poor. In Germany, a single person earning less than 764 euros per month, and a childless couple earning less than 1.376 euros per month would qualify as poor. According to the atlas, every fifth eastern German is threatened with poverty, while that number is 12.9% in western Germany. (Major papers, 05/19/09)

The economic crisis is hitting flights between Germany and the U.S., with the number of flight passengers from Germany dropping by 9.3% in the first quarter of this year. These were 1.9 million fewer passengers than in the first quarter of 2008. Overall, flight traffic between the U.S. and Germany dropped by 17.9%, while traffic to Asia dropped by 9%. (Die Welt, 05/19/09)

Society

The majority of Germans still see more differences than commonality among eastern and western Germans. Forty-two percent of western Germans and 63% of eastern Germans are of the opinion that the differences between the West and the East predominate. Only 20% in the West and 11% in the East said that common views predominate. (Allensbach. Die Welt, 05/22/09)

Some 4 million households (9% of all households) in Germany were equipped with mobile phones at the beginning of 2008 and did not have an additional fixed line network. In 2003 the share was 4%. Mobile phones managed to replace fixed line networks mainly with younger people. Thirty-five percent of the households of persons below the age of 25 had only mobile phones and no fixed network at the beginning of 2008. The share of households exclusively using mobile phones fell with increasing age of the main income earner. With those aged 25 to 34 years the figure was 19% of households, with the 55 to 64-year-olds 6% and with those over 70 years it was 2%. (Federal Statistical Office, 05/14/09)

Only 39% of the people in Germany believe that Muslims living in the country are loyal to Germany, although 71% of Muslims said they believe they are loyal. (Gallup. Süddeutsche, 05/09/09)

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