



## Germany: Facts & Figures November 2009

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

### Politics

If Bundestag elections were to be held on December 6, the CDU/CSU would receive 37% of the vote, the SPD 20%, the Green Party 13%, the FDP 12%, the Left Party 11%, and all other parties combined 7%. (Forsa. 12/02/09)

### Economy

The unemployment rate declined 0.1% from October to 7.6%. A total of 3.22 million people were out of work in November down from 3.23 million in October. Economic experts had expected the November level to increase. However, compared to November of last year, the level of unemployed rose by 227,000 for the month. (The Federal Labor Office. Major papers, 12/02/09)

According to chief economists of German banks and research institutes, the German economy could double its economic growth next year. Two-thirds of the economic experts interviewed said they expected economic growth above the 1.2% the government is expecting. Every third expert expected economic growth of up to between two and 2.5%. (Major papers, 11/25/09)

According to economic experts, the German economy is expected to grow by 1.6% next year. (Major papers, 11/13/09)

Three-quarters of Germans desire markets to be more regulated. Particularly East Germans are skeptical about the market economy. One-fifth of Germans in the former east believe that there is a better economic system and 45% did not want to make a final judgment. (Sueddeutsche Ztg. Berliner Ztg. Allensbach. 11/10/09)

The east German economy has reached 70% of the west German average 20 years after the Fall of the Wall. This level was previously expected to be reached by 2028. (Economic Institute IW. Major papers, 11/05/09)

On average, Germans plan to spend € 226 on Christmas presents, an increase of € 5 compared to last year. However, western Germans plan to spend € 229, eastern Germans only € 213. (Ernst & Young. Stern.de, 11/04/09)

### Society

Approximately 8.1 million people in Germany received transfer payments of minimum social security systems at the end of 2007. This means that almost every tenth person (9.8%) living in Germany had to rely on financial support from the government to secure his or her livelihood. In total, Euro 41.6 billion were spent to finance such social benefits in 2007. (Federal Statistical Office, 11/30/09)

About 423,400 first semester students started studies at institutions of higher education in Germany in academic year 2009 (summer semester 2009 and winter semester 2009/2010), including 210,800 women (50%). Compared with 2008, the total number of first semester students was up by just under 7%. The number of first semester students enrolling at universities increased by 5%, those at universities of applied sciences by 9%. A total of 734 350 children started school in Germany at the beginning of the current school year 2009/10. This was a decline of 0.1% from the previous year.. (Federal Statistical Office, 11/25 & 24/09)

Eighty-six percent of Germans have a positive view on German unity, saying that the reunification of the country almost 20 years ago was the right decision. In East Germany, 91% of people welcome German unity, while in West Germany, 85% believe it was a good thing. Eleven percent think the decision was wrong. Fifty-eight percent say German reunification has had more benefits than disadvantages. Twenty-eight percent believe the disadvantages were greater. (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen. Major papers, 11/06/09)

The population in reunited Germany declined to 81.9 million in the first quarter of 2009, down from 82.1 million at the end of March 2008. (Federal Statistical Office, 11/04/09)

About 60% of the persons in employment used a car to cover their daily distance to work in 2008. This percentage has been unchanged for the past 12 years, despite relevant appeals and increasing fuel prices. Public short-distance passenger transport has even become less attractive for those commuting to work, declining to 10.8% in 2008 (1996: 11.5). (Federal Statistical Office. 11/03/09)

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