



Germany: Facts & Figures January 2008

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

Politics

If Bundestag elections would have been held on February 3, the CDU/CSU would have received 35% of the vote, the SPD 25%, the Green Party 10%, the FDP 11%, the Left Party 14%, and all other parties combined 5%. (Forsa. 02/02/08)

State Elections (Hesse/Lower Saxony)

In Hesse, the CDU received 36.8% of the vote (down 12% from 2003), slightly ahead of the SPD, which achieved 36.7% (up 7.6%). The FDP received 9.4% (up 1.5%) and the Green Party 7.5% (down 2.6%). The Left Party gained 5.1% of the votes. Currently it is unclear who is to govern with whom in Hesse. (Major papers, 01/28/08)

In Lower Saxony, the CDU received 42.5% (down 5.8% from 2003), while the SPD achieved 30.3% (down 3.1%). The FDP got 8.2% (up 0.3%), the Green Party 8.0% (up 0.4%), and the Left Party 7.1%. The CDU will continue to govern in a coalition with the FDP. (Major papers, 01/28/08)

Economy

In January, the unemployment rate rose to 8.7% (December: 8.1%). (Federal Employment Agency. 01/31/08)

In view of the global economic weakness, the government has reduced its forecast for economic growth in 2008 to 1.7%, down from the predicted 2% last October. (Sueddeutsche. 01/18/08)

The German economy grew by 2.5% last year (down from 2.9% in 2006). The government balanced its budget last year, thus eliminating a budget deficit that ran at 1.6% in 2006 and breached the EU limit of three percent of the GDP in the previous years. German exports grew by 8.3% last year and accounted for more than half of the growth in GDP. Private consumption declined by 0.3% last year. (Federal Statistical Office. Major papers, 01/16/08)

71% of Germans support the idea of a minimum wage. (stern magazine. 01/03/08)

More people had jobs in Germany in 2007 than at any time since the nation's reunification. An average of 39.7 million people held jobs in 2007, some 650,000 more than in the previous year. (Federal Statistics Office. Major papers, 01/03/08)

Society

The amount of beer sold in Germany fell to the lowest sales figure since 1993 — dropping by 2.7% in 2007 to 103.9 million hectoliter beer. The drop in sales came as the demand for beer mixed with fruit juices, soft drinks and other nonalcoholic beverages rose 18.1% from 2006 to 2007. (Federal Statistics Office, 01/29/08)

For the fifth year in a row, the number of Germans dropped and has now reached 82.21 million (down 100,000 compared to 2006). The decline is the result of a birth deficit and a reduced immigration rate. Since 2001, the annual number of immigrants dropped from 273,000 to 23,000. 690,000 babies were born in 2007, but 820,000 people died. (Federal Statistical Office. Tagesspiegel, 01/16/08)

The percentage of Europeans who have confidence in the work of the European Commission, dropped from 52% to 50%. In Germany, 46% have no confidence in the Commission and 25% distrust the Commission. (Eurobarometer. FAZ, 01/15/08)

As preventive measures of youth crime, 92% of Germans favor better language training for immigrant children in kindergartens and 82% said they think it should be mandatory for immigrant families to send their children to all-day schools. In the fight against youth crime, 54% are opposed to the CDU suggestion to increase the maximum sentence of young criminals from 10 to 15 years, while 62% back the proposal for a "warning-shot-arrest" and 59% back tougher sentences for existing laws. (dimap/InfraTest. Die Welt, 01/11/08)

19% of all employed are thinking about emigrating to countries with lower living expenses after retirement. The main reason given is the expected low old-age pension. This figure is up from 15% in 2006. (Allensbach. Postbank. Spiegel Online, 01/14/08)

16% of Germans (24% in June 2007) support government efforts to privatize public services while 28% (19% in June 2007) demand that privatized services be returned to the public sector. (Forsa.Handelsblatt, 01/09/08)

The number of female soldiers in the Bundeswehr has increased to 7.3% in 2007. They now number 13,884. The government conceded that the envisioned quota of 15% female soldiers has not yet been reached. (Major papers, 01/09/08)

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