



Germany: Facts & Figures July 2008

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

Politics

If Bundestag elections would be held on August 3, the CDU/CSU would receive 35% of the vote, the SPD 26%, the Green Party 10%, the FDP 12%, the Left Party 13%, and all other parties combined 4%. (Emnid. 07/30/08)

67% of Germans (60% in the East, and 69% in the West) approve of President Köhler's job performance. This is twice as much as in June 2004 when only 32% of Germans had a good opinion of Köhler. (Allensbach. Die Welt, 07/25/08)

Economy

In July, the unemployment rate increased to 7.7% (June: 7.5%). (Federal Statistics Office. 07/31/08)

Federal, regional and local governments can expect rising tax revenues despite reduced consumer spending due to rising prices for gas and oil. In June, tax revenues increased 4.9% compared to the same month last year. For the first six months this year, tax revenue increased 5.9%. (Handelsblatt. 07/22/08)

The mood among finance market experts in Germany has dropped sharply. The ZEW index on economic expectations dropped 11.5 points from the previous month to minus 63.9, the lowest level in 17 years. Reasons for the decline were the high oil price, the euro to U.S. dollar exchange rate, and the most recent economic data. (Major papers, 07/16/08)

12% of German companies consider the work of German trade attaches at German mission abroad to be "bad," or "very bad." More than one third is of the opinion that the German embassies represent German interests in a "satisfying way," and only 17% said their work is "good." (Handelsblatt. 07/09/08)

Inflation in the Eurozone in June increased by 4.0% compared to the same month a year ago. This is the highest increase since the beginning of the statistical data in 1997, and is caused by rising fuel prices. (Eurostat. 07/01/08)

Society

In 2007, 32% of the gainfully employed in western Germany and 48% in eastern Germany considered their wage to be inappropriately low. (DIW. Süddeutsche, 07/29/08)

Between January and June 2008, only 3.34% of the 34 million gainfully employed were on sick leave. This is a historically low percentage. (Major papers, 07/29/08)

One third of Germans feel that the reforms of the past few years have gone too far. However, at the same time, 50% of Germans assume that international trade and competition has resulted in a loss of jobs in Germany. 75% think the government should protect important German companies from takeovers by international companies. 52% think well of the social market economy, down from 70% eight years ago. 58% of the interviewed expect a lowering of the standard of living in Germany in the coming years, and 25% said Germany needs more market forces, while 41% were of this opinion in 2000. (Major papers, 07/25/08)

According to the most recent survey by the Federal Statistical Office, Germany has 80.9 million inhabitants, 1.3 million less than the 82.2 previously thought. Registration offices had registered people several times. Exact figures will be available only after an EU-wide census in 2011. (Federal Statistical Office. Major papers, 07/23/08)

69% of Germans are bothered "often" or "sometimes" by loud conversations from people using cell phone. 31% are never bothered. Loud ring tones annoy 63% sometimes or often. 64% of respondents say cell phones have made a positive contribution to their lives, 34% say they have as many advantages as disadvantages. 2% dislike cell phones. (Bitkom. Focus online, 07/22/08)

In 2007, 246,400 foreign students studied in Germany. The majority comes from China, with 25,700 Chinese students being enrolled at German universities. They are followed by Bulgarian, Polish, and Russian students with 10,000 to 12,000 students each. The most popular majors are economics, German language and literature studies, computer science and mechanical engineering. (Sueddeutsche Zeitung, 07/16/08)

The number of asylum seekers coming to Germany increased in the first half of this year to 11,000, an increase of 30% compared to the figures from the same period of last year. Almost one third of the asylum seekers came from Iraq, followed by Turkey, Serbia, and Vietnam. (Tagesspiegel, 07/15/08)

Germany: Facts & Figures, published monthly by the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Consulate General, uses respected German and international media sources for its contents. The U.S. Government does not assume responsibility for the ultimate accuracy of the public opinion polls reported in the Digest. Use of these sources does not reflect official endorsement. Reproduction for private use or gain is subject to original copyrights. To receive this product electronically, please contact: ircfrankfurt@state.gov