



Germany: Facts & Figures September 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 October 5, the CDU/CSU would receive 37% of the vote, the SPD 26%, the Green Party 8%, the FDP 11%, the Left Party 13%, and all other parties combined 5%. (Forsa. 10/01/08)

Ex-SPD chairman Franz Müntefering's return to the political stage in Berlin is supported by 66% of Germans, while 62% are satisfied with his work. Only Foreign Minister Steinmeier (67%) and Chancellor Merkel (63%) have a more positive rating. Forty-one percent believe Steinmeier would have greater chances as SPD chancellor candidate than Kurt Beck. (Deutschlandtrend. Major papers, 09/05/08)

State Politics (Bavaria)

The CSU won the state parliament elections in Bavaria, but lost its absolute majority for the first time in 46 years. According to press reporting, the CSU got 43,4% (down 17,3% compared to the elections four years ago), the SPD got 18,6% (down 1%), the Greens 9,4% (up 1,7%), the Freie Wähler 10,2% (up 6,2%), the FDP 8,0% (up 5,4%) and the Left Party won 4,3% (not represented in Bavarian parliament). (Major papers, 09/29/08)

Economy

In September, the unemployment rate dropped to 7.4% from 7.6% in August. (Federal Statistics Office. 09/30/08)

The inflation rate in Germany dropped to 3.1% in August, a decline of 0.3% compared to July figures. Lower energy prices helped reduce the inflation rate in the euro zone from 4.0% to 3.8% in August. (Sueddeutsche. 09/17/08)

According to an EU-wide study, Germans work 41.7 hours per week. The EU average is 40 hours. (Major papers, 09/15/08)

New industrial orders in Germany fell 1.7% in July compared to June. It was a drop that marked the eighth successive decrease, the most ever recorded. Year on year, June and July orders are 3.4 percent below the same months in 2007. (Major papers, 09/05/08)

The OECD has lowered the prospect for economic growth in Germany in 2008 from 1.9 to 1.5%. The German government confirmed its forecast of 1.7%. (Major papers. 09/03/08)

Society

Germans are increasingly skeptical about Russia. Seventeen percent consider Russia a country Germany could rely on, down from 27% in 2003. The number of people who believe that Germany and Russia can permanently have good relations dropped from 66% of Germans in recent years to 45%. In 2004 only 38% considered Russia a world power; the number is now at 62%. (Allensbach. FAZ, 09/17/08)

Europeans continue to be more critical of President Bush than of the United States. Thirty-six percent of Europeans polled consider U.S. leadership as desirable, but only 19% approved of Bush's handling of foreign policy. Europeans also favor Barack Obama over John McCain with 69% expressing favorable ratings for the Democrat compared with 26% for the Republican candidate. (German Marshall Fund. Major papers, 09/11/08)

Roughly 8.3 million Germans or 10.1% of the population received benefits from the state in 2006. Every fifth resident of Berlin receives state support, while the share in Bavaria is 5.3% and 5.7% in Baden-Württemberg. (Federal Statistical Office. Major papers, 09/05/08)

Seventy-six percent of Germans are worried that the increase in food and energy prices will continue and that they will have to spend more on their everyday essentials. A year ago, standard of living costs were a critical issue for 66% of Germans. Fifty-eight percent also fear a deterioration of the economic situation, up 10% compared to 2007. Concern about rising prices is overshadowing threats such as terrorism and war. Only 41% of Germans are afraid of terrorism and only 31% are worried about German participation in a war. (R+V Insurance. Major papers, 09/05/08)

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

