
Adults in Five Largest European Countries and the U.S. Say Recession Will Last at Least One More Year

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – July 15, 2009 – A new **Financial Times/Harris Poll** finds that very few adults in the five largest European countries and the U.S. believe the recession in their countries will end in the next six months (between 6% in the U.S. and Germany and 2% in Great Britain). A plurality of Britons (45%), Americans (43%), Spaniards (40%) and French adults (40%) as well as 39% of Italians and 32% of Germans believe the recession will end between 1 to 2 years from now. Additionally, between 14% of Germans and 25% of both Britons and Americans believe it will not end until more than 2 years from now. Germans are the most pessimistic as 21% say they do not expect the recession to end in the foreseeable future, but this is down from December, when 30% of Germans felt this way.

These are some of the findings of a **Financial Times/Harris Poll** conducted online by Harris Interactive among a total of 6,362 adults aged 16-64 within France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, and the United States and adults aged 18-64 in Italy between June 24 and 29, 2009.

Feelings on Standard of Living Slightly More Optimistic

In November, strong majorities of French adults (76%), majorities in Spain (59%), Italy (58%), and Great Britain (55%) as well as 45% of Germans and 44% of Americans believed their standard of living would be worse in the next year. These numbers have come down slightly in France (68%), Germany (43%) and the U.S. (36%) and even more in Spain (47%), Great Britain (41%), and Italy (30%). Now, 62% of Italians and almost half of Britons (48%) believe their standard of living will be neither better nor worse. Germans are more pessimistic – in November 21% believed their standard of living would be better in the next year and now that number has dropped to 14%.

Personal Job Loss Concerns

When it comes to concerns over job losses, Italians and Spaniards have become slightly less concerned, but people in other countries have about the same level of concern as they did in December. In December, 21% of Italians were extremely concerned they might lose their job in the next year as were 27% of Spaniards. Now, 13% of Italians are extremely concerned as are 21% of Spaniards. Almost half of French adults (47%), 45% of Germans, 42% of Americans and 40% of Britons are not at all concerned they will lose their jobs within the next year because of the recession.

Savings

While there has been a lot of talk about people saving more and not spending, that may not be the case. Half of French adults (52%) and Italians (50%) as well as 47% of Spaniards say the share of their monthly income that they save has decreased compared to six months ago. Six in ten Germans (60%), half of Britons (52%) and 47% of Americans all say the share of their monthly income that they save has saved the

same. Small numbers, between 15% of Spaniards and 5% of Italians, say their savings have increased over the past six months.

The Government’s Handling of the Financial Crisis

In November, majorities of adults in the United States (68%), Spain (62%), Italy (57%) and Great Britain (53%) thought the performance of their country’s government in handling the global financial market crisis was poor while almost one-quarter of French (23%) and German (23%) adults said their government’s handling was good. Now, just 8% of French and 13% of Germans say their government’s handling is good. Almost three-quarters of Spaniards (72%), three in five Britons (62%) and French (61%), a majority of Italians (56%) and 47% of Americans say their government’s handling is poor while 46% of Germans say it is fair.

On the issue of inflation, three in five Italians (63%), over half of Americans (56%) and Spaniards (54%), half of Britons (50%) and a plurality of Germans (47%) and French adults (42%) all believe the recent actions of central banks and governments in cutting interest rates and increasing spending will cause inflation to occur in the near future. There is also a lot of uncertainty on this issue as between 18% of Spaniards and 34% of British adults say they are not sure if this will cause inflation in the near future.

So What?

While there may be some glimmers of hope in these numbers that attitudes on the economy may becoming slightly less negative, they are far from becoming positive. In Europe, one of the larger issues is how each country’s government has been handling the crisis. In these five countries, attitudes on this issue have all gone down in the past six months. While almost half of Americans are still negative, this is better than November and can be attributed to a new administration taking over in January. But, if things don’t turn around, the U.S. bounce may not last.

**TABLE 1 – DECEMBER 08
WHEN RECESSION WILL END**

“Moving on to a few questions on current affairs, many economists say that [the UK/Germany/Italy/Spain/ the US] is now in recession. When do you expect the recession to end?”

Base: UK, German, Italian, Spanish and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%
In less than 6 months	3	3	3	7	5
Between 6 months and 1 year	15	14	18	18	20
Between 1 and 2 years	43	36	47	32	38
In more than 2 years	25	24	19	14	25
I do not expect the recession to end in the foreseeable future	13	22	13	30	13

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 1 – JULY 09
WHEN RECESSION WILL END**

“Moving on to a few questions on current affairs, many economists say that [the UK/France/Germany/Italy/Spain/ the US] is now in recession. When do you expect the recession to end?”

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
In less than 6 months	2	3	3	5	6	6
Between 6 months and 1 year	21	20	24	17	26	18
Between 1 and 2 years	45	40	39	40	32	43
In more than 2 years	18	20	18	24	15	21
I do not expect the recession to end in the foreseeable future	14	17	15	14	21	12

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 2
STANDARD OF LIVING**

“In the next year, do you expect your standard of living to become...?”

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
November 2008						
BETTER (NET)	11	4	12	7	21	21
Much better	1	*	1	1	3	3
Somewhat better	10	4	11	6	18	18
Neither better nor worse	33	20	30	34	34	35
WORSE (NET)	55	76	58	59	45	44
Somewhat worse	40	59	40	44	30	35
Much worse	15	17	19	15	15	9
July 2009						
BETTER (NET)	11	6	8	15	14	23
Much better	1	1	1	3	3	4
Somewhat better	10	5	7	12	12	19
Neither better nor worse	48	27	62	38	43	41
WORSE (NET)	41	68	30	47	43	36
Somewhat worse	32	46	26	37	31	28
Much worse	9	22	5	10	11	8

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 3 – DECEMBER 08
CONCERN OVER PERSONAL JOB LOSS**

“How concerned are you that you will lose your job within the next year as a result of this recession?”

Base: UK, German, Italian, Spanish and U.S. adults who are employed full or part time

	Great Britain	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%
Extremely concerned	9	21	27	6	12
Fairly concerned	16	23	22	13	11
Somewhat concerned	38	30	29	35	32
Not at all concerned	38	27	22	47	45

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

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Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults who are employed full or part time

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Extremely concerned	8	9	13	21	8	12
Fairly concerned	11	16	16	22	10	9
Somewhat concerned	41	29	46	32	37	36
Not at all concerned	40	47	25	25	45	42

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 4
MONTHLY SAVINGS**

“Thinking of the share of your monthly income that you save, would you say that compared to 6 months ago this has now...?”

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Increased	8	8	5	15	6	12
Remained about the same	52	40	45	39	60	47
Decreased	40	52	50	47	34	41

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; * indicates less than 0.5%

TABLE 5
INDIVIDUAL GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF FINANCIAL CRISIS

"How would you rate the performance of your country's government in handling the global financial market crisis?"

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
November 2008						
GOOD (NET)	15	23	16	10	23	4
Excellent	2	1	3	2	2	1
Good	13	22	12	7	21	3
Fair	32	39	28	28	43	27
POOR (NET)	53	38	57	62	34	68
Poor	33	23	32	34	22	41
Terrible	19	15	24	28	12	27
July 2009						
GOOD (NET)	9	8	16	7	13	16
Excellent	1	1	4	2	1	4
Good	7	7	12	6	11	12
Fair	29	31	28	21	46	37
POOR (NET)	62	61	56	72	41	47
Poor	32	37	32	34	26	26
Terrible	30	23	25	38	15	21

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

TABLE 6
CENTRAL BANKS/GOVERNMENTS REGULATION OF ECONOMY AND INFLATION

"Do you believe the recent actions of central banks and governments in cutting interest rates and increasing spending will cause inflation to occur in the near future?"

Base: All EU adults in five countries and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States
	%	%	%	%	%	%
WILL (NET)	50	42	63	54	47	56
Definitely will	11	8	13	10	7	18
Probably will	39	34	49	44	40	38
WILL NOT (NET)	16	33	18	28	31	19
Probably will not	14	29	16	21	28	17
Definitely will not	2	4	2	7	3	1
Not sure	34	26	20	18	22	25

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Methodology

This **FT/Harris Poll** was conducted online by Harris Interactive among a total of 6,362 adults aged 16-64 within France (1,089), Germany (1,033), Great Britain (1,109), Spain (1,033) and the United States (1,052), and adults aged 18-64 in Italy (1,046) between June 24 and 29, 2009. Figures for age, sex, education, region and Internet usage were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult populations of the respective countries. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls and of the British Polling Council.

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