

# **GALLUP EUROPE PRESS RELEASE**

## **Americans' attitudes about European Union divide along ideological lines**

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### **AWARENESS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Americans are surprisingly uninformed about the European Union. Only about two in ten or 22% say they know either a "great deal" or a "fair amount" about the European Union or the EU, with only 3% claiming to know a great deal about it.

Almost eight in ten (77%) say they know very little or nothing at all about the EU, roughly divided between those who claim very little knowledge (37%) and those who claim none at all (40%).

### **KNOWLEDGE OF EU**

A question used to test Americans' basic knowledge about the European Union, namely, whether the EU had a larger population, smaller, or about the same population as the USA, reveals how uninformed Americans are about even the most rudimentary facts about the European Union.

For example, only two in ten correctly say that the EU is larger than the USA, whereas about three in ten, incorrectly in both instances, say that the EU is smaller than the US (29%) or that the US is about the same size (29%).

### **ATTITUDES ABOUT THE EU**

To elicit Americans' general attitudes about the European Union, they were first asked how likely or unlikely they thought it was that the EU would ever become a superpower such as the USA.

In response to this question, about four in ten (44%) of the American public, think this is very or somewhat likely to occur, with the same percentages saying it is not very or not at all likely.

The public was next asked whether they felt the EU played a positive or a negative role regarding five key global policy objectives. These were peace in the world, the war against terrorism, the growth of the world economy, the fight against poverty in the world, and protection of the environment. To provide perspective, the US public was also asked whether they felt the United States played a positive or negative role regarding these same five policy objectives.

In every instance, larger percentages of the American public nationally say the USA plays a positive role than claims the EU plays a positive role.

The US is rated highest positively vis-à-vis the EU for its role in the war against terrorism, 69% to 41%, and for the fight against poverty in the world, 57% to 33%. The US is rated lowest compared to the EU for keeping world peace (59% to 45%) and for protecting the environment. In the latter case, the US receives a 46% positive whereas the EU scores a 40% positive.

### **Evidence of an ideological divide: perceptions of the European Union differ by political affiliation**

Analysis of these findings by various groups in the US population reveals that although there are relatively few differences based on the public's socio-economic or demographic background, there are major differences in terms of political ideology. In fact, the differences revealed in the current findings are among the most striking seen in recent Gallup surveys.

Pointing out these differences are the contrast in the findings for four groups self-identified as politically conservative and four groups identified as politically liberal. The former group consists of conservatives, Republicans, those who approve of Bush's job performance, and those who think the war in Iraq is worth the effort. In the latter group are liberal/moderates, Democrats, those who disapprove of Bush's job performance, and those who think the Iraq war is not worth it.

To clarify the analysis, the findings for Republicans and Democrats have been selected as representative of these ideological groups on the left and on the right.

In response to the question regarding whether the EU will ever become a superpower such as the USA, forty percent of Republicans think this is either very or somewhat likely, while 40% think it is not very likely or not at all likely. Democrats, on the other hand, are slightly more optimistic saying they believe this is likely to occur by a margin of 49% to 42%.

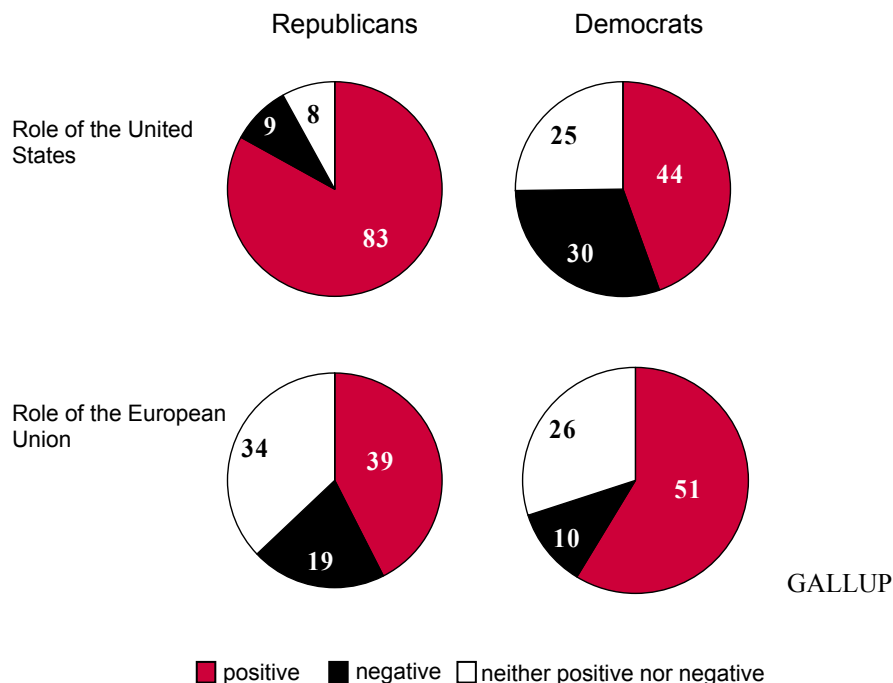
The differences between the conservative groups and their liberal counterparts are much more pronounced in terms of their perceptions of the roles played by the EU and the US regarding the five global policy issues.

Republicans give the US wide leads over the EU in terms of positive grades for all five policy areas with the largest margins in the case of the war against terrorism (89% to 39%), and fighting world poverty (74% to 29%). The smallest leads for the USA among Republicans occur in the case of protecting the environment (67% to 37%).

Slightly larger percentages of Democrats, on the other hand, award more positive marks to the EU in the case of promoting peace in the world 51% to 44% and for protecting the environment, and slightly lower grades compared to the US for the war against terrorism, growth of the world economy, and the fight against poverty in the world.

The findings reported below show that the wide positive margins Democrats give the EU compared to the US are due not so much to awarding very high marks to the EU as to giving relatively low marks to their own country - at least at this point in history.

### Preserving Peace in the World



Democrats are *somewhat* more positive about the role of the EU in four of the five areas. For example, whereas Republicans rate the EU's role for keeping world peace as 39% to 19% positive, Democrats rate it as 51% positive to 10% negative.

For protection of the environment by the EU, Republicans vote 37% to 12% positive to negative while Democrats are 44% to 14%.

For the war against terrorism, the vote is 39% positive to 24% negative among Republicans and 45% to 11% positive to negative among Democrats.

In the fight against poverty in the world, Republicans score the EU role as 29% positive to 14% negative and Democrats 37% to 19%.

For the growth of the world economy, Republicans say the EU role is 48% to 16% positive to negative, while Democrats vote roughly the same, 49% positive to 12% negative.

In the case of the role of the *United States*, however, much larger differences are noted in the way Democrats view the US's role in all five measurement areas compared to their Republican counterparts.

For keeping world peace, for example, while Republicans rate the USA's role as 83% positive to only 9% negative, Democrats rate their nation's role as only 44% positive to 30% negative.

For protecting the environment, Republicans rate the US as 67% to 14% positive-negative, while Democrats grade it as only 31% positive- 48% negative.

For the war against terrorism, the US score is 89% positive and 6% negative for Republicans and 51% positive to 27% negative for Democrats.

For growing the economy, the US receives 85% to 4% positive-negative by Republicans and 53% to 27% positive to negative by Democrats.

The current findings point out the importance of political ideology in determining how favorable or unfavorably Americans view the European Union. In the polarized atmosphere of the presidential election year, even Europe has become a partisan issue for the American public.

*Note: For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum error attributable to sampling and other random effects is  $\pm 3$  percentage points. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls. The questions on the global role played in different domains were asked from a random half of the sample. The corresponding errors there are  $\pm 4.5$  percentage points.*

## Perceptions as to whether the European Union/ The United States plays positive or negative Roles in Key Global Policy Areas

Q: In your opinion, would you say that the European Union/ United States tends to play a positive role, a negative role, or neither a positive or negative role regarding...

	National	Rep.	Dem.	Cons.	Mod./Lib.	Bush-Appr.	Bush-Disappr.	Iraq War Worth it	Iraq War Not Worth
<b><u>Peace in the World</u></b>									
EU									
Positive	45	39	51	40	47	38	52	40	50
Negative	15	19	10	21	11	21	9	21	11
Neither positive nor negative	29	34	26	28	31	31	28	32	27
USA									
Positive	59	83	44	78	43	85	37	83	38
Negative	22	9	30	8	32	4	38	7	36
Neither positive nor negative	18	8	25	13	21	10	24	9	25
<b><u>Protection of the Environment</u></b>									
EU									
Positive	40	37	44	40	42	35	46	37	45
Negative	14	12	14	13	14	16	11	10	14
Neither positive nor negative	30	38	25	31	30	36	24	36	24
USA									
Positive	46	67	31	62	34	69	25	64	31
Negative	31	14	48	15	46	12	51	15	45
Neither positive nor negative	21	19	21	22	18	17	23	19	23
<b><u>The War Against Terrorism</u></b>									
EU									
Positive	41	39	45	35	45	37	47	40	44
Negative	18	24	11	23	14	24	11	24	13
Neither positive nor negative	30	29	32	22	31	30	31	28	33
USA									
Positive	69	89	51	87	52	94	44	98	42
Negative	17	6	27	8	26	2	33	*	33
Neither positive nor negative	12	4	20	4	18	3	19	1	21
<b><u>Growth of the World Economy</u></b>									
EU									
Positive	48	48	49	48	49	48	49	49	48
Negative	15	16	12	19	12	17	13	16	13
Neither positive nor negative	24	24	25	18	29	24	24	25	23
USA									
Positive	66	85	53	76	60	79	53	80	54
Negative	17	4	27	10	23	6	28	7	26
Neither positive nor negative	14	9	18	12	15	13	16	11	18
<b><u>The Fight Against Poverty in the World</u></b>									
EU									
Positive	33	29	37	31	35	30	36	32	36
Negative	18	14	19	18	19	17	20	16	20
Neither positive nor negative	33	42	28	32	33	37	30	38	30
USA									
Positive	57	74	44	66	47	74	41	72	45
Negative	22	10	30	12	29	12	33	13	30
Neither positive nor negative	20	15	24	19	20	13	25	14	24