EUROBAROMETER 57.0
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Discrimination in Europe

For Diversity
Against Discrimination

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Eurobaromètre 57.0 - May 2003

DISCRIMINATION IN EUROPE

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for

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE GENERAL

EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Commissioner's foreword

The right of all individuals to equality before the law and to protection from discrimination is a fundamental principle of all democratic societies. The European Union has long been active in the fight against discrimination and in promoting equal opportunities, and with the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997 came new, far-reaching powers to take action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Shortly after these new powers came into force, the Community adopted legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment and occupation on the grounds of religion and belief, disability, age and sexual orientation.
A second piece of legislation prohibits racial discrimination, not only in employment but also education, social security, healthcare and access to goods and services, including housing.

Establishing an effective set of laws against discrimination is an essential part of stamping out unfair treatment, but we know that laws themselves are not enough.
If discrimination is to be eliminated, attitudes and behaviour must also change. This is why, to accompany the new rules, an EU-wide action programme against discrimination was launched. Its purpose is to support activities which combat discrimination and its underlying causes and which raise awareness of the problem and the measures being taken across the Union to tackle it.

As part of this Action Programme, this Eurobarometer survey on discrimination was commissioned to find out more about people's attitudes towards discrimination. Women and men in all fifteen member countries were asked about discrimination they may have experienced or seen at work,

in education, in seeking housing or as a customer of retail or other services. They were also asked about their attitudes towards discrimination.

I am convinced that this survey will be an important tool in helping us to gain a better understanding of the complex nature of discrimination and a better understanding of how it can best be tackled at all levels - from European to local. Helping to bring us closer to our ultimate goal of stamping out discrimination and unfair treatment and making the basic principle of respect for fundamental human rights in Europe a reality for all.

Anna Diamantopoulou

COMMISSIONER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

The Survey

The questionnaire included questions on people's perceptions of discrimination on the five grounds covered by the Community Action Programme against Discrimination:

- **racial** or **ethnic origin,**
- **religion** or beliefs,
- **disability** (physical disability, learning difficulties or mental illness)
- **age** and
- **sexual orientation.**

For the sake of comparability and common understanding, the meaning of discrimination was explained to all respondents as: **treating differently, negatively and adversely people on grounds of their racial or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age and sexual orientation.**

Each of these five designated grounds of discrimination was explored in the questionnaire in four key areas of social and economic life:

- At **work**, including:
  - opportunities for **promotion**, and
  - in **seeking work**
- In **education**, asked separately for experiences in
  - **primary** school
  - **secondary** school and
  - **university** or high school
- In seeking **housing**
- In accessing various **services**, such as in restaurants, shops or from insurance companies.

The questionnaire explored people's experiences of discrimination and their views about it in four ways:

- whether, during the past two years, they felt they **had been discriminated against** and, if they had, on what ground
- whether during the past two years, they had **witnessed** someone else being discriminated against
- whether they felt such discrimination could be **right or wrong**
- whether they would expect **other people** to feel such discrimination could be right or wrong

For the sake of comparability and common understanding, the meaning of discrimination was explained to all respondents as: treating differently, negatively and adversely people on grounds of their racial or ethnic origin, religion or beliefs, disability, age and sexual orientation.

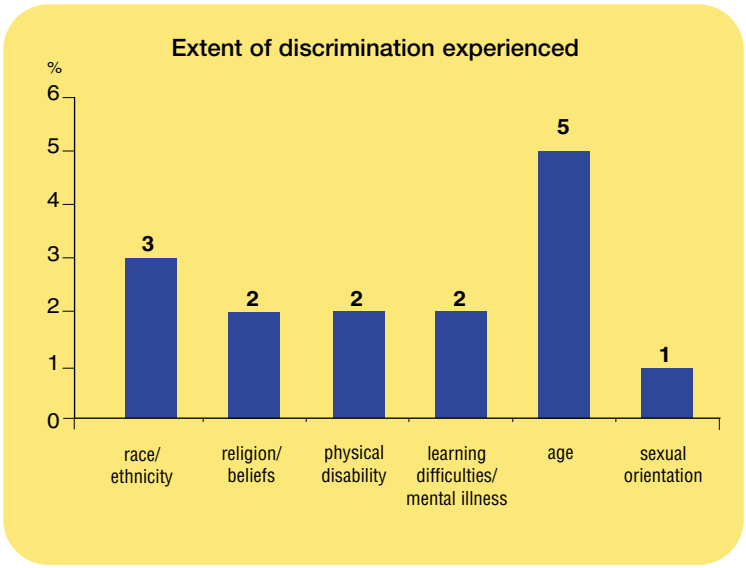
The extent of discrimination experienced

The widest differences concerned racial origin and ethnicity. For example, the Dutch were the most likely to report discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin (7%).

Few respondents reported personally experiencing discrimination on any of the six grounds explored –ethnicity, religion, physical and mental disability, age and sexual orientation - across the four main potential sites of discrimination – work, education, housing and personal services.

The most often cited ground for discrimination was age (five per cent), followed by racial or ethnic origin (three per cent), religion or beliefs, physical disability, learning difficulties or mental illness (two per cent each) and sexual orientation (one per cent). Young people, people with higher education and those on the left of the political spectrum were more likely to report having experienced discrimination (*figure 1*).

Figure 1

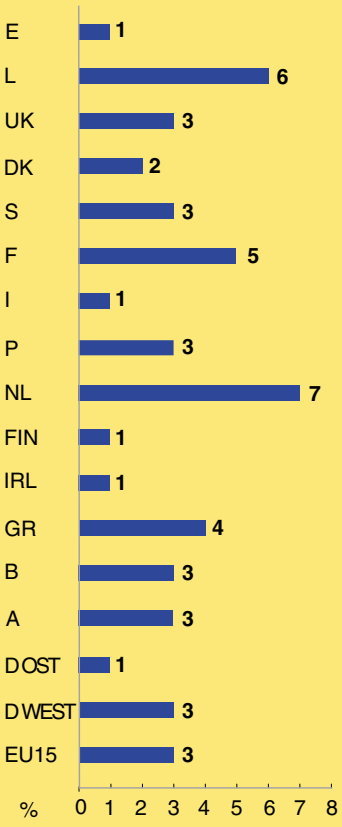


Base : All samples, weighted data. Bars represent proportion of European citizens who experienced discrimination.

There were some differences between European countries. The widest differences concerned racial origin and ethnicity. For example, the Dutch were the most likely to report discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin (seven per cent), followed by Luxembourg (six per cent) and France (five per cent) all compared with just one per cent in Spain, Italy, Finland, Ireland and Germany (*figure 2*).

Figure 2

Discrimination experienced on grounds of race or ethnicity by country



Base :
All sample. Bars represent proportion of respondents who experienced discrimination

These figures must be interpreted cautiously.

• First, such country differences would anyway depend on the size of the minority populations in each country, which vary a lot in the case of ethnic and religious groups, for example. And the questionnaire did not identify respondents' racial or ethnic origin, religion, disability status or sexual preferences, so the rate of discrimination within such groups cannot be measured directly. If for example the British sample had contained a typical proportion of non-white ethnic minority members (about 6 per cent) then about 35 per cent of them would have reported experiencing discrimination in one situation or another. This is probably at least a realistic figure. But the actual number of respondents reporting discrimination on any ground is too small to allow statistical confidence in these differences. In the British example given, it would have been '35 per cent' of about 60 respondents.

• Second, the survey design excluded non-EU citizens and this too would have affected reports of discrimination on grounds of racial or ethnic origin and religion, and other estimates too, such as attitudes towards discrimination examined below.

• Third, people do not always know they have been actively discriminated against, or may be unwilling to admit it in some circumstances. National differences in the legal, social and cultural factors that could impact on such awareness would have encouraged or discouraged reporting. The survey provided data on people's subjective experience of discrimination, which cannot be taken as an objective measure of the incidence of discrimination. Difference between national samples in this subjective measure may reflect no more than greater public awareness of discrimination in one country compared to another, for example, whereas the 'real' level of discrimination may be the same.

Extent of discrimination witnessed

The kinds of respondent most likely to have reported the experience of discrimination - young people and respondents with leftist political views - were significantly more likely to report having witnessed discrimination.

Respondents said they witnessed considerably more discrimination than they experienced. The ground most often cited for 'witnessed discrimination' was racial or ethnic origin (22 per cent), followed by learning difficulties or mental illness (12 per cent), physical disability (11 per cent), religion or beliefs (9 per cent), age and sexual orientation (each 6 per cent) (*figure 3*).

The kinds of respondent most likely to have reported the experience of discrimination - young people and respondents with leftist political views - were significantly more likely to report having witnessed discrimination. Among countries, the Finnish, Swedish, Dutch and French respondents were significantly more likely to report having witnessed discrimination on grounds of ethnic and minority group membership; Irish, Italian and German respondents the least likely (*figure 4*).

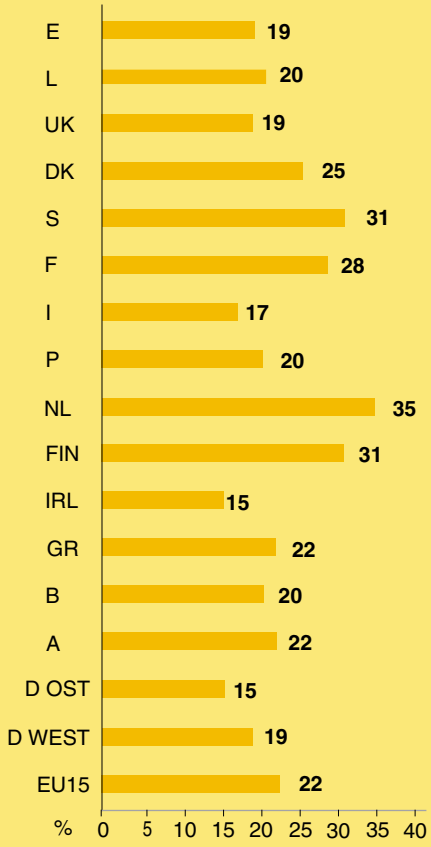
Reports of 'witnessed discrimination' should not be taken as evidence of the likely extent of discrimination. A single incident of discrimination might have been witnessed by many people and could have potentially been reported by more than one respondent. Such reports are in themselves as much evidence of sensitivity and social awareness on the part of the witness as they are of the frequency of their occurrence.

Figure 3

Attitudes towards discrimination

Figure 4

Discrimination witnessed on grounds of race or ethnicity by country



Perceptions of equal opportunities in employment

Respondents were first asked whether they thought the following people would have the same chance of 'getting a job, training or promotion':

A person from another ethnic origin
A person with minority beliefs
A physically disabled person
A person with learning difficulties
A person under 25
A person over 50
A homosexual.

- Applicants with learning difficulties or those with a mental illness were thought to be the most disadvantaged group in the labour market; 87 per cent of respondents thought that they would have less chance than anyone else. Responses varied between 75 per cent in Greece and 94 per cent in Sweden.
- The next most disadvantaged group was thought to be those with a physical disability: 77 per cent of respondents saying they would have less chance, varying between 66 per cent in Italy and 89 per cent in Finland who shared this view.
- The third most disadvantaged group was thought to be the older applicants: 71 per cent thought those over 50 would have less chance and responses varied between 17 per cent in Greece and 83 per cent in Finland.
- The fourth most disadvantaged group was thought to be ethnic minorities with 62 per cent thinking that they would have less chance. Responses varied between 43 per cent in the UK and 89 per cent in Denmark.

Thus, there was throughout Europe a widespread appreciation that these four groups did suffer labour market disadvantages, though fewer thought young people or homosexuals were at a special disadvantage. In some cases, particularly in the case of disability, respondents may be saying only that disabled people would have failed 'fair' selection processes. But this would be less true in the case of age and not at all true in the case of ethnic minorities.

Opposition to discrimination

Majority of European citizens opposed discrimination on all six grounds

Respondents were asked to say to what extent they thought it 'right' or 'wrong' to discriminate against each of the groups dealt with in this enquiry. They were asked to say whether they themselves thought it 'always right', 'usually right', 'sometimes right and sometimes wrong', 'usually wrong' or 'always wrong'. Using the same categories they were then asked to say what view they thought 'other people' would take. These two questions were repeated for four 'domains' of discrimination: seeking work or training, promotion at work, seeking accommodation or housing, and public services such as restaurants, banks and so on.

Majority of European citizens opposed discrimination on all six grounds they were prompted to consider in each of the four areas – work, education, housing and services – they were asked to consider them in. They said, typically, that discrimination was 'usually wrong' or 'always wrong'. People tended to give the same answer in each of these four areas, so a single 'score' can be calculated for each 'victim group' by adding together the four area-scores. These are then expressed as a percentage of the maximum 'anti-discrimination' score. Figure five shows the average for all 15 countries (weighted by size of country). Typically European citizens (*figure 5*) indicated they thought discrimination against each group is, at the least, 'usually wrong'. These scores were a little lower in the case of mental disability (though, interestingly, not in the case of physical disability). Issues of discrimination and mental disability are more vulnerable than other examples to confusion in respondents' minds between selection, which is fair, and discrimination, which is unfair.

Figure 5

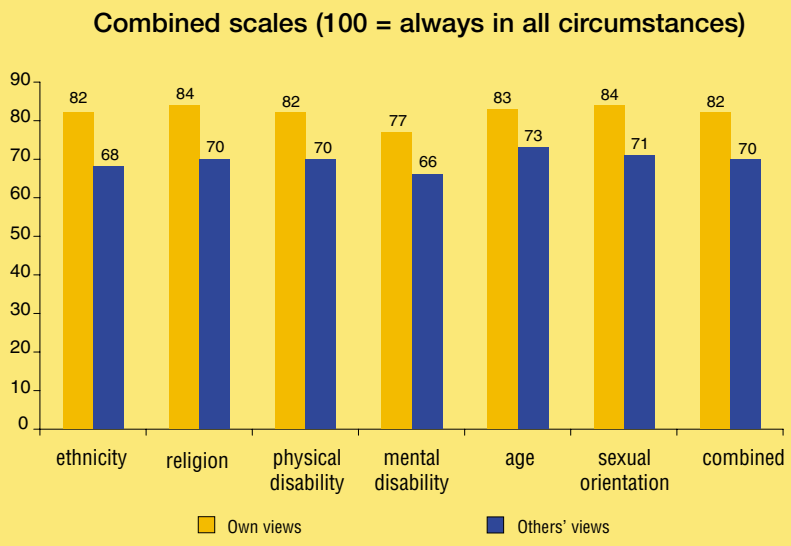
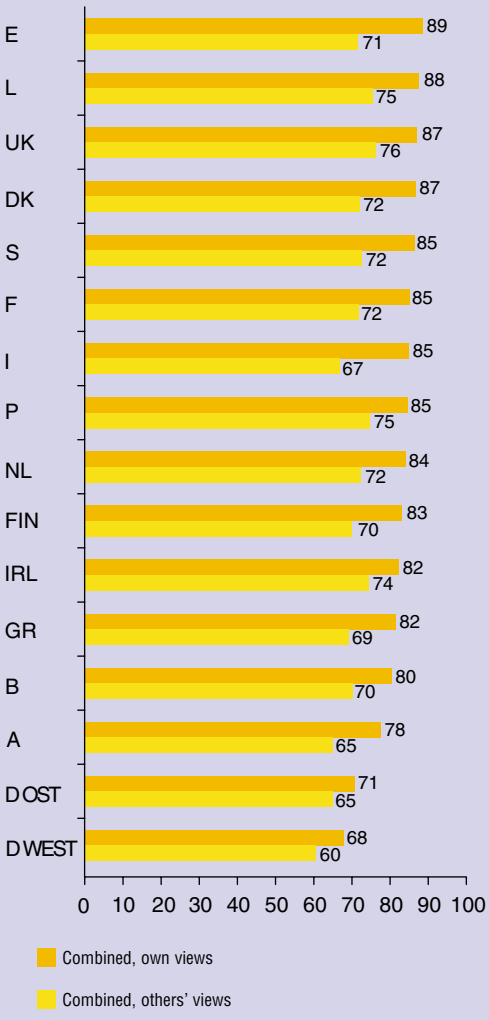


Figure 6

Combined Single Scale
of Opposition to Discrimination
(100 = wrong in all circumstances
and on all grounds)



Respondents were pessimistic about the views of their fellow European citizens, whom they felt would be more likely than they were to approve of discrimination. This was particularly true of views on discrimination against ethnic minorities. A gap in scores such as these of 82 compared to 68 is a large one. Italy and Spain showed the largest discrepancies of this kind, typically a gap of more than 20 percentage points and Germany the smallest, typically less than 10 points.

Partial exceptions to this pattern of very strong opposition to discrimination were Belgium and Austria in the case of ethnic discrimination and Greece and Austria in the case of discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, though in these cases majorities remained opposed to discrimination. One exception to this pattern was Germany, equally so in the former West Germany and the former East Germany where scores were lower on every measure.

It was found that respondents' scores for each of the six 'victim groups' were strongly correlated with one another. People who thought discrimination against ethnic minorities was wrong tended reliably to feel that other kinds of discrimination against other groups were wrong too, and vice versa. This is of itself an important finding. It means that people's views about discrimination are guided by an underlying dimension of attitudes for or against the practice of discrimination.

This close association between respondents' views about discrimination in principle allowed the combination of attitude-scores towards all six 'victim groups' into a scale of 'anti-discrimination'. On this scale, all except three countries occupy the range between 80 and 90 per cent of the maximum score of 100. The European average is 82, ranging from 89 in Spain to 80 per cent in Belgium, dropping a little to 78 in Austria but then down sharply to 71 in the former East Germany and to 68 in the former West Germany (*figure 6*).

Consistently across Europe, the young, people with higher education, non-manually-employed and women were more likely to oppose discrimination, older male manual workers with little education less so. But there was no clear evidence that the tendency to believe discrimination right or wrong, or to attribute such views to others, is socially determined to any great degree.

Those on the left had higher anti-discrimination scores compared to those on the right. But this difference was not large enough to indicate that views about discrimination in Europe as a whole are mainly determined by traditional left-right ideological differences by the party political choices that they tend to represent.

On the other hand, the 'left-right' scale produced another interesting result. Those who said 'Don't Know' to the left-right scale gave scores close to the average on the anti-discrimination scale. Those who refused to provide a left-right self-placement gave anti-discrimination scores lower than average. They were in fact closely in line with those who placed themselves on the far right. They were also more likely than others to say they 'don't know' whether the various acts of discrimination were right or wrong. This does not amount to hard evidence that there may be a grounds-well of hidden opinion that is less opposed to discrimination than the more explicit questionnaire responses among the majority suggest, but it is suggestive of this and may provide the basis for further research.

Awareness of anti-discrimination legislation

About 80 per cent of those who stated that they would complain said, they would complain verbally, 37 per cent said they would complain in writing and 22 per cent said they would take it to court.

More than one third of EU citizens said that, should they be discriminated against or harassed in accessing commercial services, they knew their rights and about half said they did not. Belgians, Austrians, East Germans and the Danish were the least likely to know their rights, while the Finns were the most likely.

Those who experienced discrimination were not any-more likely than those who did not experience dicrimination to know their rights, but those who witnessed discrimination were more likely than those who did not witness discrimi-nation. The people with higher education respondents and those in professional and man-agerial occupations were more likely to say that they knew their rights.

On average, seven out of ten respondents said they would complain if they were discriminated against, with the rates varying between 60 per cent in Austria and 81 per cent in Sweden. The same pattern of variation associated with higher education and occupational status persists, though the differences were smaller. Those who did not witness discrimination were more likely to say that they would complain than those who did witness discrimination. Those who said they knew their rights were more than twice as likely to say that they would complain.

About 80 per cent of those who stated that they would complain said, they would complain verbally, 37 per cent said they would complain in writing and 22 per cent said they would take it to court. In Luxembourg, Netherlands and Greece, about one in five said they would complain in writing, while more than half in Britain did. In Finland and Netherlands, less than seven per cent said they would go to court, in France half said they would take their complaint to court.

STANDARD EUROBAROMETER 57.0
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Between February 23 and April 4 2002, the European Opinion Research Group, a consortium of Market and Public Opinion Research agencies, made out of INRA (EUROPE) and GfK Worldwide, carried out wave 57.0 of the standard Eurobarometer, on request of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General Press and Communication, Opinion Polls.

The Standard EUROBAROMETER 57.0 covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, aged 15 years and over, resident in each of the Member States. The basic sample design applied in all Member States is a multi-stage, random (probability) one. In each EU country, a number of sampling points was drawn with probability proportional to population size (for a total coverage of the country) and to population density.

For doing so, the points were drawn systematically from each of the "administrative regional units", after stratification by individual unit and type of area. They thus represent the whole territory of the Member States according to the EUROSTAT NUTS 2 (or equivalent) and according to the distribution of the resident population of the respective EU-nationalities in terms of metropolitan, urban and rural areas. In each of the selected sampling points, a starting address was drawn, at random. Further addresses were selected as every Nth address by standard random route procedures, from the initial address. In each household, the respondent was drawn, at random. All interviews were face-to-face in people's home and in the appropriate national language.

COUNTRIES	INSTITUTES	Nº INTERVIEWS	FIELDWORK DATES	POPULATION 15+ (x 000)
Belgium	IINRA BELGIUM	1016	25/02 – 25/03	8,326
Danmark	GfK DANMARK	999	23/02 – 04/04	4,338
Germany (East)	INRA DEUTSCHLAND	1040	24/02 – 16/03	13,028
Germany (West)	INRA DEUTSCHLAND	1014	23/02 – 16/03	55,782
Greece	MARKET ANALYSIS	1001	25/02 – 29/03	8,793
Spain	INRA ESPAÑA	1000	28/02 – 18/03	33,024
France	CSA-TMO	1004	02/03 – 25/03	46,945
Ireland	LANSDOWNE Market Research	1000	03/03 – 25/03	2,980
Italy	INRA Demoskopea	994	27/02 – 20/03	49,017
Luxembourg	ILRes	600	23/02 – 04/04	364
The Netherlands	INTOMART	995	25/02 – 26/03	12,705
Austria	SPECTRA	1025	25/02 – 25/03	6,668
Portugal	METRIS	1000	24/02 – 23/03	8,217
Finland	MDC MARKETING RESEARCH	1039	23/02 – 27/03	4,165
Sweden	GfK SVERIGE	1000	28/02 – 03/04	7,183
Great Britain	MARTIN HAMBLIN LTD	1000	26/02 – 21/03	46,077
Northern Ireland	ULSTER MARKETING SURVEYS	305	02/03 – 23/03	1,273
	Total number of interviews	16032		

For each country a comparison between the sample and the universe was carried out. The Universe description was derived from Eurostat population data or from national statistics. For all EU member-countries a national weighting procedure, using marginal and intercellular weighting, was carried out based on this Universe description. As such in all countries, minimum gender, age, region NUTS 2 were introduced in the iteration procedure. For international weighting (i.e. EU averages), INRA (EUROPE) applies the official population figures as provided by EUROSTAT in the Regional Statistics Yearbook (data for 1997). The total population figures for input in this post-weighting procedure are listed above.

The results of the Eurobarometer studies are reported in the form of tables, datafiles and analyses. Per question a table of results is given with the full question text in English and in French. The results are expressed as a percentage of the total. The results of the Eurobarometer surveys are analysed and made available through the Directorate-General Press and Communication, Opinion Polls of the European Commission, rue de la Loi 200, B-1049 Brussels. The results are published on the Internet server of the European Commission: http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/epo. All Eurobarometer datafiles are stored at the Zentral Archiv (Universität Köln, Bachemer Strasse, 40, D-50869 Köln-Lindenthal), available through the CESSDA Database http://www.nsd.uib.no/cessda/europe.html. They are at the disposal of all institutes members of the European Consortium for Political Research (Essex), of the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (Michigan) and of all those interested in social science research.

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

OBSERVED PERCENTAGES	10 % ou 90 %	20 % ou 80 %	30 % ou 70 %	40 % ou 60 %	50 %
CONFIDENCE LIMITS	± 1.9 %	± 2.5 %	± 2.7 %	± 3.0 %	± 3.1 %

This survey, together with other Eurobarometer surveys, can be found on the web site of the Public Opinion Sector of the Directorate-General Press and Communication of the European Commission at **http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/**

The anti-discrimination web site of the Directorate-General Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission can be reached at **http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/index_en.htm**

A great deal of additional information on the European Union is available on the Internet.
It can be accessed through the *Europa* server **(http://europa.eu.int)**

For more information on European and national information campaigns on combatting discrimination you can consult the web site **www.stop-discrimination.info**

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