Fellow nationals make the best lovers

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The findings of a GfK survey on the sexual attitudes of Europeans and Americans

Nuremberg/Frankfurt/Main, 1 July 2005 - The best lovers are fellow nationals, or at least, that's what one in three Americans and Europeans believe. By far the most confident are the Greeks and 77 per cent rated their own country top in matters of sex. The exceptions to this are the Belgians, Germans and Dutch who assume that it is not those in their own countries but rather Italians who make the best lovers. These are the findings of a 20-country survey of sexual attitudes in Europe and the USA carried out by GfK Custom Research Worldwide commissioned by the Wall Street Journal Europe in spring this year.

When it comes to sex, patriotism is the order of the day among men and women. 34 per cent of Europeans and 25 per cent of Americans are convinced that the best lovers can be found in their own country. Bringing up the rear are the Dutch (13 per cent), the Belgians (14 per cent) and the Germans (15 per cent). In these three countries, Italians are considered as the best lovers and this is hardly surprising, because the respondents in another 13 out of the 20 countries surveyed rated the Italians second best. 69 per cent of Italians are convinced that the best sexual partners can be found in their own country. This is topped only by the Greeks, where 77 per cent believe this. It is therefore no wonder that in comparison the Italians and Czechs were open to discussion on the subject. The opposite is true of the Danish subjects, who were by far the most buttoned up when it comes to the subject of sex.

Greeks are the most sexually active

Also on the question of how frequently couples should have sex to be satisfied, the Greeks are right at the top of the league table, with 24 per cent regarding at least five times a week as appropriate. This means that the Greeks are distinctly above the European (10 per cent) and American (16 per cent) average. A large number of Europeans, i.e. 40 per cent, feel that between two and four times a week is enough for a happy sex life. At 39 per cent, almost as many think once a week or less is adequate. By contrast, the Czechs, only half of whom share this view, are over-proportionally undemanding this respect.

Friends and contemporaries are the most influential

In answer to the question as to who influences sexual attitudes and practices the most, it was evident that for around one third of men and women, friends and contemporaries carried the most weight. One quarter talk to parents and as many obtain their information from the media. With four and two per cent respectively, school and church play a subordinate role, the only exception being Bulgaria, where 43 per cent of the survey subjects gave school as their prime source of information. Only in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Romania (each with 37 per cent) and Turkey (25 per cent) do parents play the most important role.

Being unfaithful is not necessarily being disloyal

Adultery in marriage is regarded very differently in the various countries. Whereas in Western Europe and the USA around four out of ten people thought straying from the straight and narrow was unforgivable, in Turkey, a huge nine out of ten thought adultery was intolerable, making Turkey the country where extra-marital affairs are least tolerated. In protestant Sweden and France, with its reputation for free thinking, more or less the majority of men and women were of the opinion that adultery is unforgivable. In every country, women are more unforgiving of extra-marital adventures than men. French women are particularly intolerant, with six out of ten saying they regarded an affair as unforgivable and just four out of ten Frenchmen thought the same. German women are also less tolerant (48 per cent) than their men (25 per cent). The reverse is true in Turkey, where 92 per cent of men are of the opinion that adultery is not forgivable and only 86 per cent of women think so. 12 per cent of Western Europeans, 17 per cent of Eastern Europeans, the same percentage of Americans, and just three per cent of the Turkish subjects believed that an affair could be forgiven. The Dutch proved to be particularly understanding, with one in four saying they would usually forgive their partner for an extra-marital affair.

The Survey

The "Sexlife" survey asked nationals in 20 different countries about their attitudes to sex, being unfaithful and homosexuality. The survey researched into who make the best lovers, how frequent is frequent enough for sexual

satisfaction and whether being unfaithful can be forgiven. The survey, which was commissioned from GfK Custom Research Worldwide by the Wall Street Journal Europe with financial assistance from GfK-NÃ¼rnberg e.V. was carried out between March and May 2005 and surveyed a total of 19,100 subjects in 20 countries.

The GfK Group

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