

Europeans Tend to See Germany as "Leader" of Europe

Contributed by Harris Interactive
Friday, 11 July 2008

Europeans Tend to See Germany as "Leader" of Europe

Germany's Angela Merkel Perceived to be Most Influential Leader in Europe Today.

ROCHESTER, N.Y. – April 9, 2008 – The question of who leads Europe, if anyone, is one that has been discussed at length, and according to a new Harris Interactive/France 24/International Herald Tribune survey, it appears that the answer is Germany.

Majorities of the public in France (68%), Spain (57%) and Germany (57%), as well as 39 percent of Italians and 35 percent of British adults consider Germany to be the "leader" of Europe. Of these European countries, Germany is considered the leader by all five. In the United States, almost two-thirds (63%) of Americans lean more towards the country they believe to be their closest partner, Great Britain, as the leader of Europe today.

Looking forward, Germany is considered the country that will have the most influence over the rest of Europe in the next ten years. Majorities in Germany (53%) and France (52%) believe this as do a plurality of Spaniards (44%) and one-third of British adults (35%) and Italians (33%). Half of Americans (50%), however, believe that Great Britain will have the most influence in Europe over the next ten years.

These are just some of the results of a Harris Interactive/France 24/International Herald Tribune survey conducted online by Harris Interactive® among a total of 6,478 adults aged 16 to 64 within France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, and the United States, and adults aged 18 to 64 in Italy, between February 27 and March 6, 2008.

Person to Lead Europe

The honor again goes to Germany when looking to see who is considered the most influential leader in Europe today. At the top for each of the five European countries is German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Only the United States differs, as the person they think is most influential is British Prime Minister Gordon Brown. One thing to consider is that at least one-third across the countries, including over half of British adults (56%), is not sure who they would consider the most influential leader in Europe today.

The question of a possible European President has also been discussed, and there are a couple of people that rise to the top for each country. In Great Britain and the US, adults are more likely to believe Tony Blair should be the European president. Italians and Germans tend to believe Angela Merkel should be the European president. French adults are more likely to believe Jacques Delors, the former President of the European Committee, should be the European president while more Spaniards think it should be Felipe Gonzalez, the former president of Spain. However, many people, including 46 percent in Britain and 32 percent in Germany and the United States, are opposed to the idea of having a "President of Europe".

So What?

At the moment, there is already a president of the European Committee, and a potential "President of Europe" would be in addition to this, leading to two presidents. The opposition to a President of Europe may be stemming from the worry that this would cause needless confusion and no one would be quite sure how the duties of the two would be different.