

How Do You Feel about the Olympics Taking Place in China This Summer?

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European and U.S. Adults Tend to Disagree on Whether it's Good or Bad

A new Harris Interactive/France 24/International Herald Tribune survey conducted online by Harris Interactive® among a total of 6,620 adults aged 16 to 64 within France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, the United States, and adults aged 18 to 64 in Italy, between July 2 and 14, 2008 finds that:

Only a majority of Spaniards (55%) and half of Italians (49%) feel it is a good thing that the Olympics are taking place in China this summer. Half of French adults (49%) and 47 percent of Germans believe it is a bad thing. Two in five Americans (41%) believe it is a good thing while almost three in ten (28%) believe it is a bad thing and 31 percent are not sure. For Britons, the largest number are not sure (37%) followed by those who believe it is a bad thing (35%) and then a good thing (28%);

Majorities in all six countries (from 51% in Great Britain to 73% in France, Italy and the U.S.) believe that their country should not boycott the Olympics;

A relative majority of French adults (44%) believes their officials should boycott the opening ceremonies while a majority of adults in the U.S. (56%), Spain (55%) and Italy (53%) do not. Germans and British adults are more torn – three in ten Britons believe the ceremonies should be boycotted (30%) while just over that (31%) believe they should not be boycotted. In Germany, two in five believe they should not be boycotted (40%) while just under that (38%) believe they should be;

Majorities in the U.S (66%), Italy (66%), Germany (63%) and France (58%) as well as just under half of Spaniards (47%) and two in five (39%) Britons believe that politicians from their country should not be allowed to make statements against the Olympics at the games;

Half or more of adults in France (65%), Italy (62%), Germany (60%), Great Britain (50%) and Spain (50%) as well as 46 percent of Americans believe that athletes should be allowed to publicly express their position if they want, enforcing the idea that this is about the athletes; and,

Majorities in France (62%), Italy (52%) and Germany (51%) as well as a plurality of Spaniards (45%) and two in five Britons (39%) and Americans (38%) all say that their country should not attend the Olympics without any protests or boycotts.

So What?

This week athletes from around the world will convene in China for the start of the 2008 Summer Olympics. Looking at the current situation in China, including their involvement in Tibet, there are various things countries could do at the Olympics. Adults in the five largest European countries and the United States may disagree on exactly what should be done, but strong numbers in all six countries do believe that their country should not attend without some kind of protest or boycott.

The main consensus seems to be that if something is done, it should be done by the athletes – the Olympics seem to be perceived as "games" not a political event, so this would be the most appropriate type of response. For two weeks the eyes of the world will be focused on China – from the pageantry of the Opening Ceremonies through the individual sporting events, until the torch is passed to the next host country at the Closing Ceremonies - and how other countries, their politicians and their athletes react will be watched closely.

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