Europeans and Americans Agree: Purchasing Power Is Sharply Lower

Contributed by Harris Interactive
Monday, 27 October 2008
Last Updated Sunday, 04 January 2009

September 8th 2008 â€“ Rochester N.Y

All across Europe and the United States, people are concerned about their countryâ€™s purchasing power and many feel that certain countries fare worse than others. Sadly, the concern about purchasing power is not limited to a macro level. When focusing on the purchasing power of the individual, the feelings of Europeans and Americans are strikingly similar â€“ simply put, things are bad.

A new Harris Interactive/France 24/International Herald Tribune survey conducted online by Harris InteractiveÂ® 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:

More than three-quarters of adults in Italy (90%), France (88%), Germany (79%), Spain (77%) and the U.S. (77%) as well as a majority of Britons (58%) all say the purchasing power of their country has decreased over the past three years;

Over three-quarters of Italians (81%) and French adults (77%) all say their countryâ€™s purchasing power has decreased a lot over the past three years while a majority of Germans (55%), Spaniards (52%) and Americans (51%) also say their countryâ€™s purchasing power has decreased a lot;

Over three-quarters of adults in France and Italy (78% each) as well as majorities of Spaniards (61%), Germans (61%), Americans (55%), and Britons (52%) all say their personal purchasing power has decreased over the past three years;
Three in five Italians (62%) and a majority of French adults (54%) say their purchasing power has decreased a lot over the past three years;

Two-thirds or more adults in Germany (74%), France (69%), Italy (66%), the United States (66%) and Great Britain (65%) as well as a majority of Spaniards (56%) are all dissatisfied with what the governments have done to improve purchasing power; and,
In each country, ten percent or less of adults say that they are satisfied with what the governments have done to improve purchasing power.

So What?

In each of these six countries, people are hurting. Costs of necessities are increasing and as a result, people are most likely delaying the purchase of things that they want, but arenâ€™t essential. This problem is not limited to just the US or some particular country. In all six countries, there is little to no satisfaction with what the governments have done to help improve peopleâ€™s purchasing power. People want to blame someone for these problems and the high level of dissatisfaction with the various governments shows whom they will hold responsible.

Governments need to respond â€“ if they do not, the ramifications will become clear in the nextelection. When economic uncertainty is in the forefront of votersâ€™ minds, they are more apt to vote for whatever party is NOT in power at that time. Maybe in the US there isnâ€™t much time for the current administration to do something to change votersâ€™ perceptions befo the next election, but certainly there is in the European countries.