

PRESS RELEASE

Europeans prefer greater independence from the US

A clear majority of Europeans are willing to take greater responsibility for their own interests in a changing world order. This is the key finding of an eupinions survey conducted by the Bertelsmann Stiftung in the 27 member states of the European Union. The figures show a clear shift in opinion in Europe: at the end of 2017, only a quarter of citizens wanted more European engagement.

Gütersloh, November 20, 2024. The majority of European citizens believe that Europe should go its own way in the current geopolitical landscape. The Bertelsmann Stiftung's eupinions survey in all 27 EU member states and the US shows that Europeans had already internalized the political consequences of global developments for their continent before Donald Trump's re-election. Sixty-three percent believe that it is time for the European Union to go its own way, compared to only 25 percent in 2017.

"This significant shift in public opinion reaffirms that European leaders need to do more for European security. This applies above all to greater engagement in NATO, whose security guarantee is of great importance to Europeans," says Isabell Hoffmann, co-author of the study and Europe expert at the Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Here are the key results of the eupinions survey:

- **EU citizens want the European Union to play a more active role in world affairs.**
 - o 73 percent would like the EU to take on more responsibility internationally. A much smaller majority of Americans (56 percent) want the same for the US.
- **People in both Europe and the US see NATO as a cornerstone of their security.**
 - o 64 percent of Europeans and 59 percent of Americans believe that NATO protects them. This shows a commonality in the attitudes of citizens on both sides of the Atlantic.
- **For Europeans, peace is particularly important, for Americans it is civil rights.**
 - o Europeans choose "securing peace" (20 percent) as the most important task for the EU, while Americans see "protecting civil liberties" (23 percent) as the biggest challenge for the US in the coming years.
 - o In second place on both sides of the Atlantic is the "management of migration" (EU 15 percent and US 16 percent).
- **The commitment to the transatlantic partnership is also a question of age.**
 - o On both sides of the Atlantic, the partnership is considered more important among the older segments of the population. In contrast, younger people (18-35 years old) seem to have little attachment to the transatlantic partnership: only 38

percent of young Europeans and 34 percent of young Americans see the other as their most important ally.

- By comparison, in the group those 55 and older, the figure is 63 percent of Europeans and 59 percent of Americans.

- **The Germans are in line with the European trend.**

- Peacekeeping is particularly important to the Germans. A quarter of those surveyed cite this point as the primary task of the EU. In addition, 73 percent of Germans think that the EU should play a greater role in the world and 63 percent agree that it is time for the EU to go its own way.
- At the same time, however, 68 percent of Germans see NATO as a cornerstone of their security.

"Transatlantic relations will change significantly, and the America of old will not return. That is why Europe must redefine its role, if possible together with the Americans given the new geopolitical realities. People on both sides of the Atlantic are convinced that cooperation is more important than competition in international relations," says Isabell Hoffmann.

Additional information: **eupinions** is a European opinion research tool developed by the Bertelsmann Stiftung in cooperation with Latana. eupinions regularly surveys citizens in all 27 EU member states on European issues. The survey for this analysis was conducted in September 2024 in the EU and the United States with a total of around 29,000 participants. Details of the survey methodology are included in the publication.

For more information, please visit our website: www.eupinions.eu.

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