

Summary of Finnish opinion poll on the Lisbon Treaty

Background information

The opinion poll was commissioned by the GUE/NGL group carried out by TNS Gallup Oy, a Finnish opinion poll agency (which makes the Eurobarometer surveys for the Commission). The method was telephone interviews in early May 2008, the sample was 1000 over 15 years old Finns and the margin of error is +/- 3%.

Three questions were asked.

Question 1: The Constitution as such

“In Your opinion, should the Parliament of Finland ratify the European Constitution, which at the moment is in the parliamentary decision-making process?”

The whole population: 39 % Yes – 29 % No – 32 % Do Not Know

There was a majority in favour of the ratification only in two groups: in those working in management level (60 %) and in those who voting for the National Coalition Party (centre-right, EPP-ED, 63 %). Only 19% of Left Alliance supporters were for the ratification.

Question 2: The Constitution increasing federalisation of the EU.

“In Your opinion, should the Parliament of Finland ratify a European Constitution that renders the European Union more and more similar to a federation?”

The whole population: 22 % Yes – 59 % No – 19 % Do Not Know,

When more information about the contents of the Lisbon Treaty was added, the opinions changed. Now an overwhelming majority was against the Constitution, women more against men.

Young people between 15 and 24 years of age were considerably more (33 %) for a federation than the others.

In all political groups there was a majority of no-votes.

Question 3; The Constitution militarising the EU.

“In Your opinion, should the Parliament of Finland ratify a European Constitution that obliges Finland to increase military armament and to provide combat units consisting of mercenaries?”

The whole population: 11 % Yes – 83 % No – 6 % Do Not Know

Now almost every one questioned had an opinion, and there was only few (6 %) who did not have. The opinions were strongly against such a Constitution by which the union is militarised. The Finns love the militarily non-allied status of the Finnish state, but the right-wing government has given it up in the program of the government. This answer can be interpreted as a protest of the people against the EU defence policy of the government of Finland.

All the differences to be found between groups regarding this question are subtle: in no group is the percentage of those against ratifying lower than 74 %.

The conclusion

The opinion polls made about the acceptance of the Constitution as such are normally positive to the idea. This bias is experienced also in the Eurobarometer surveys where The French and the Dutch are more positive to the idea of the Constitution as such than to the concrete proposal for a Constitution.

When the discussion is started about the contents of a concrete proposal, the opinions turn immediately more negative, and this kind of result was achieved in the Finnish poll. The big majority was against a federal state and the militarisation of the union.