

Swedes paid the best, Bulgarians the least

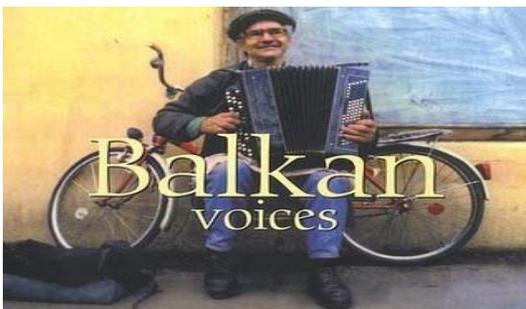


An average EU citizen has a real estate in which he/she lives, the internet access from home, and a price of electricity in the last three years they pay more expensive by about 13.5%, has been published by the Office for statistics of the EU, Euro-stat in statistical annual publication for 2008. The most house owners have Lithuania and Estonia, both per 88%, and the least Germany, 44%. Mentioned one is also the only member of the Union in which less than a half of citizens has their own homes. An average citizen of the Union, for one hour of work earns 20.35 Euros, by spending 4.7 nights on vacation. The

biggest price of an hour of work - 32 Euros and 16 cents gets a worker in Sweden, and the least money a Bulgarian worker – 1 Euro and 65 cents on average. Internet in household is the most available in Netherlands, and services of so called electronic government in Austria. According to data of Euro-stat, population of the Union has been increased by 3.4% from 1997 to 2007, mostly thanks to the fifth wave of enlargement. The biggest natural increase of citizens, of even 18% in last ten years has been recorded by Ireland, and the biggest lost Bulgaria, which has in the same period lost 7.9% of citizens. Women live the longest in Spain and France, to the age of 84.4 on average, and the shortest in Romania, where they live up to the age of 76.2. The longest expected life span of man is on Cyprus (age of 78.8), and the shortest in Lithuania (65.3). In the Union, according to data from publication, rate of unemployment is 7.1%. The biggest is in Slovakia (11.1 %), and the smallest in Denmark, where 3.8% of work able citizens are unemployed.

Pessimism over Balkans

Citizens of BiH, Serbia and Macedonia are not satisfied with life, and many of



them do not hope that it will be better

after the EU accession. Research of Galup in cooperation with the European fund for Balkans has shown that the citizens of Montenegro and Kosovo are the only ones, who optimistically look at the future. Pessimism dominates in BiH and Croatia, which broadly negotiates the membership in the EU, but its citizens, however, think that it will not bring them a better tomorrow, nor it will endanger the standard and living conditions. In analysis "Between hope and disappointment" it has been emphasized that the Kosovo's Albanians, even 83% of them, and citizens of Albania express the biggest excitement

over getting closer to the Union and belief that the EU citizens want them in their rows. This has been interpreted as a weak understanding of what serious

political and economic reforms must be implemented in order for the Union door to get opened for someone.

Who's still afraid of a doctor?

The European Commission claims that the doctors in the EU often make mistakes by doing their job. Each tenth medical check is incorrect. Because of that, the patients should in future sue the doctors more easily. The European Commission requires more safety for patients – with a good reason: "In the EU, medical mistakes happen in 10% cases. These mistakes are a real challenge for the European health care system", has been cited by German "Die Welt", Androullau Vassiliou, from the Commission. She demands from Member States to improve the security and rights of patients. "We expect that the Member States will adopt a list of proposal measures in order to improve the safety of patients. This means that in case of wrong medical treatments patients can sue the doctor for inadequate check and claim compensation", Vassiliou has said. The Commission states that in 15 million cases per year medical mistakes happen in the EU. The chairman of the consumer association in Germany, Gerd Billen, asks the federal governments to adopt the law which would correctly regulate the rights and obligations between the patients and doctors. "It is important for the victims that mistakes

can be simply and quickly corrected. Unfortunately, that is a rare case, because the proving procedure relates to a patient. This must be changed", he has explained. If a medical mistake happens, then the doctor would have to prove the opposite, Billen has said. In Germany, damaged patients sue the doctors by about 10.000 complaints per year because of the wrong treatments. It is known that around 40.000 patients per year complain about the wrong medical treatments. But, the experts think that a number of patients in reality is much bigger. Patients mostly complain about the surgeons, orthopedics, and internists and gynecologists as well.



(Source: DW, November 2008)

Hand in hand – positive or negative



At the each center at which the decisions are being adopted, there are lobbyists who lobby in the interest of someone who is paying them. How it is in Germany, and how does Germany represent the interests, for example, in Brussels? The term lobby is of a Latin origin, it is source form of "lobia" and it used to mean a porch of the Rome Senate. It has already been related to people who are the representatives of powerful Rome families or interest groups, who have been waiting before the entrance in the main hall for their senators, who have been expressing their wishes to them, opinions and proposals of those on behalf whom they have been talking, with a hope to get some good results. It has remained the same till today. In democratic societies, lobbying is a legitimate labor, often even preferable. In Berlin, around 2.000 of different associations, going from the representatives of automobile or chemical industry, over representatives of breeders of swine or sheep, to the protectors of environment or human rights, have been registered. Number of

employed lobbyists in those has been estimated to around ten thousands. In positive cases, they can be of a huge assistance by forming political standpoints or writing documents, since they dispose by very detailed and competent information on some problems from their sphere of labors, has been pointed out by Gerhard Timm, chairman of the Association for environment protection - BUND. "It never gets the way we wanted, but the ministry has been directed to us. Good lobbyist does not speak of what he/she would like to achieve, but they inform by pointing out to the facts. Coworkers in ministries have a lot of work and are thankful for the information which suggests some certain decision." From the other side, danger of misuse, manipulation or corruption should not be neglected. Delegates may not be corrupted, has been pointed out by deputy chairman of the demo-Christian club in Bundestag, Wolfgang Bosbach. "Delegates should in any case refuse a direct receiving of services for their functions. It should not, for example, happen that they become awarded because they have voted that way or the other way", he has said. Even more lobbyists than in Berlin live and work in Brussels. On around 25.000 officials of the EU, there are 15 to 20 thousands of different lobbyists: mostly representatives of different industrial association from all Member States. There are also many representations working with them. Germany has a federal representation, but individual provinces have their own. The most active is the one from Bavaria.

Peace the most important for Europeans



Peace, respecting human life and human rights are the highest values of the EU citizens, are the results of research of the Euro-barometer. Results of public survey of the EU citizens show that a positive standpoint on membership at the level of the Union is 53%. With the most optimism the EU is being viewed in Ireland – 78%, and Netherlands is at the top with 72%, even though that country has rejected to ratify the

European Constitution. Even though a positive image of the Union has dropped down by 4% (46%), 33% of citizens think that the EU develops itself in a right direction. Level of trust in the European institutions is the same, as well as a gulf between supporters and antagonists of a further enlargement. Among the main conclusions of research there is a data that a majority of Europeans does not approve the legalization of homosexual marriages, or homosexual couples to adopt the children. More than 2/3 of citizens are against the legalization of consuming cannabis, and majority of questioned would want even more strict sanctions for the violators of this law. The research of Euro-barometer has been conducted in September and November in Member States.