



France

Efficiency 3

Globalization and Trade

The French (along with the Americans) are among those most skeptical about the benefits of globalization. While a slim majority of French respondents believe that globalization is positive for their country, they tend to be more negative than others about its impact on workers and the environment.

- 51% say that globalization is “mostly good” for France, though 42%—the largest percentage among the 18 countries polled—say it is “mostly bad.”
- Majorities think trade is good for their economy (64%), consumers (61%) and French companies (55%). But large minorities disagree, ranging from 34% to 43%.
- Only half of French respondents (50%) consider trade good for their standard of living while nearly half (44%) say it is not.
- Most French respondents believe international trade is bad for labor. Four out of five (80%) say that trade harms job security in their country and three out of four (73%) think it has a negative impact on domestic job creation—the highest percentages among those polled.
- Two-thirds (66%) believe trade harms the environment, again making France the most negative country on this issue.

Climate Change

The French show the highest level of concern about global warming and the greatest readiness to take costly steps to address it.

- More than three out of four (78%) believe global warming is “a serious and pressing problem” and that “we should begin taking steps now even if this involves serious costs.” That’s the largest majority among 13 publics polled.
- Only 20% think global warming can be addressed gradually and hardly any (2%) say it is not problem

Genocide and Darfur

The French strongly support the idea that the UN Security Council has the right to use force against genocide and a majority thinks it has the responsibility to do so, both in general and in the specific case of Darfur. A majority would contribute troops to a peacekeeping force in western Sudan.

- More than eight in 10 (85%) say the Security Council should have the right to authorize force to “prevent severe human rights violations such as genocide.”
- A majority of 54% says the UN has the responsibility to take action in such a case. Interestingly, 39% say it does not have this right, the highest percentage responding negatively among the 12 countries polled.
- On Darfur: France is the only country among 10 polled where a clear majority (55%) says the United Nations has a responsibility to authorize intervention to stop the killings in western Sudan.
- Large numbers of French respondents (84%) are in favor of contributing French troops to “an international peacekeeping force to stop the killing in Darfur.” This is the widest support among the seven countries polled.

Future of the United Nations

The French show the strongest support among the publics polled for many of the proposals for strengthening the United Nations. France is also one of the few countries where a large majority is ready to accept adverse UN decisions.

- Most believe the United Nations should have the authority to go into countries to investigate human rights violations (92%), to regulate the international arms trade (77%), and to establish a standing UN peacekeeping force (74%).
- The French even show strong support (70%) for allowing the United Nations to fund its activities by imposing a tax on such things as international sales of arms or oil. Majorities in only three other countries (China, South Korea and Israel) support this measure.
- More than four out of five French respondents believe that the Security Council has the right to authorize the use of force to defend a country that has been attacked (84%), to stop a country from supporting terrorist groups (84%) and to prevent severe human right violations such as genocide (85%).
- The French are divided about whether the UN should have the right to use force to stop nuclear proliferation: 50% say it should be able to act militarily to prevent countries from acquiring nuclear weapons (48% say it should not) and 50% say it should be able to do so to stop non-nuclear countries from producing nuclear fuel that could be used to make weapons (48% should not).
- Nearly seven in 10 (68%) believe that France should be more willing to make decisions within the United Nations, even if this means going along with a policy that is not their government’s first choice.
- A slim majority favors allowing the United Nations to authorize military action to restore a democratic government to power (52% should, 45% should not).

US Leadership

The French are among the publics most convinced that the United States should not continue to be the preeminent world leader and that it should reduce its overseas military presence.

- Nearly nine in 10 (89%) agree that the “United States is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be,” the largest majority out of any public polled.

- Three-quarters (75%) of French respondents feel the United States should “do its share in efforts to solve international problems with other countries.” Only 21% believe that “the US should withdraw from most efforts to solve international problems” and very few (3%) say that the United States should continue to be the preeminent world leader.
- The French express little confidence that the United States can be trusted to act responsibly in the world: nearly three-quarters (72%) say they have little (42%) or no trust (30%). Only 28% say they trust the United States “somewhat” or a “great deal.”
- Nearly seven in 10 (69%) say that the United States should have fewer military bases overseas, while about one quarter (27%) believes the number should remain the same. Very few (2%) feel it should be increased.

Rise of China

Most of the French think that China’s economy will grow to the size of the United States’ and few are worried about this prospect. But most French do not trust China to act responsibly in the world.

- 69% of the French public believes that China’s economy will grow to be “as large as the US economy.”
- Only 29% feel that it would be “mainly negative” for China to catch up with the United States. The most common view among French respondents is that it would be “equally positive and negative” (46%) while 20% say it would be “mainly positive.”
- More than three out of four French respondents (76%) say they do not trust China to “act responsibly,” even more than those who feel that way about the United States (72%). However, a majority trusts Japan (59%).