



## **TNS POLLING & SOCIAL FACTS AND FIGURES – EUROBAROMETER**

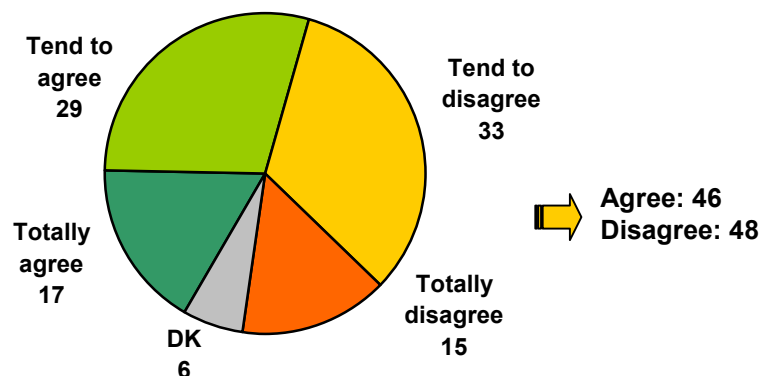
### **EUROPEANS DIVIDED ABOUT THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN SOCIETY**

London (UK), January 18th, 2007 – Europeans are divided regarding the place of religion in society. On average, 46 percent of respondents agree with the proposal that religion is too important while 48 percent disagree and 6 percent does not answer, according to the findings of the latest wave of the Eurobarometer survey conducted by TNS Opinion & Social for the European Commission.

#### **The place of religion in society – European Union percentage**

*For each of the following propositions, tell me if you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree, or totally disagree?*

*The place of religion in our society is too important*



**Source:** TNS Opinion & Social for the European Commission – Eurobarometer 66

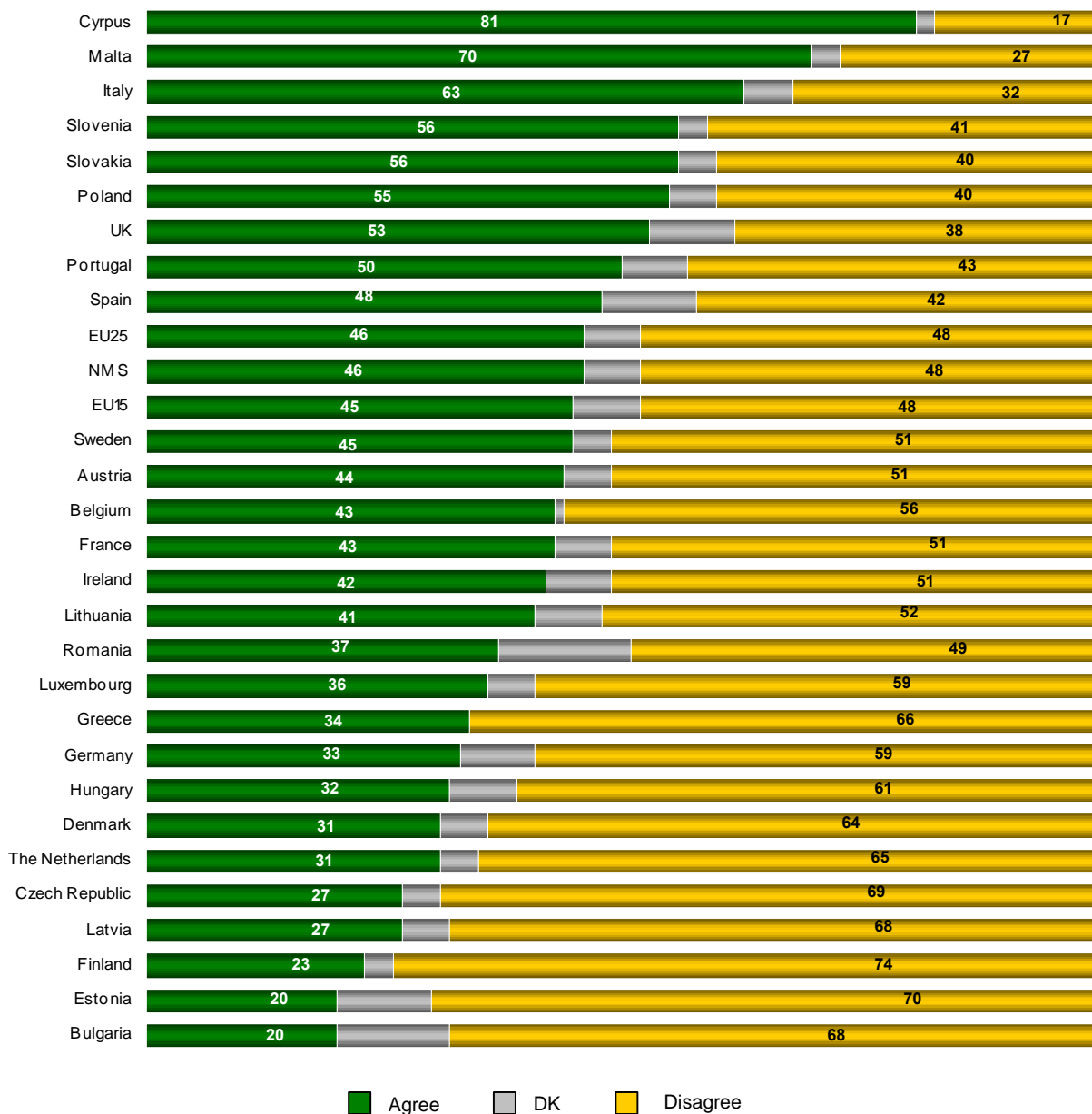
The survey, which interviews nearly 30,000 people across the 25 Member States, the two acceding countries, the two candidate countries and the Turkish Cypriot Community, also shows that Cyprus (81 percent agree), Malta (70 percent) and Italy (63 percent) are the countries where respondents consider the most that the place of religion in society is overstated. Conversely, Bulgarians (20 percent agree), Estonians (20 percent) and Finns (23 percent) are the most satisfied with the importance of religion in their society.

A socio demographic analysis reveals slight differences on the basis of age, education and political views. The main cleavage is, however, at country level, as the survey highlights a strong degree of heterogeneity among the Member States in this regard. Support for the proposal that the place of religion in our society is too important ranges from 20 percent in Estonia to 81 percent in Cyprus.

### The place of religion in society – European Union percentage

For each of the following propositions, tell me if you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree, or totally disagree?

*The place of religion in our society is too important*



Source: TNS Opinion & Social for the European Commission – Eurobarometer 66

Marita Carballo, Global Head of TNS Polling & Social, comments: "The results of the Standard Eurobarometer provide an interesting overview of the relationship between Europeans and Religion. Whilst decreasing attendance to church in contemporary societies has led many observers to announce the secularization of Western civilization, social research in the last decades revealed that people's religious convictions and considerations are more based on private beliefs and increasingly less based on those provided by collective authorities. In this context, half of Europeans disagree with the idea that religion's place in society is overstated. Furthermore, there seems to be no particular link between economic development and satisfaction with the place of religion, with majorities of Finns, Dutch and Germans saying that it is not too important, and Britons holding the opposite view. Finally, two of the three countries with the highest percentages of dissatisfaction with religion's social importance are Cyprus, where the conflict between Greeks and Turkish Cypriots has divided the country for decades, and Italy, a country strongly connected with the Catholic Church".

## Ends

### Note to Editors

#### About TNS Polling & Social Facts and Figures:

**The Eurobarometer report was posted at the following website on December 2006:**  
[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/standard\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/standard_en.htm)

The European Commission has made data from this report available to relevant media since it was first published. To the best of our knowledge, the findings in the attached press release have not been released.

These findings are based on TNS Opinion & Social research conducted between March and May 2006. All data discussed in the above announcement is based on the opinions of those surveyed. TNS will only support data which is published, in the context we have presented it and our own interpretation of these findings. We cannot be held responsible for any other interpretation.

As a leading information provider, TNS wants to cast new light on currently debated topics presenting data collected on a European or International basis. TNS Polling & Social Facts & Figures will be published twice a month.

#### **Methodological background:**

**Fieldwork:** 6<sup>th</sup> of September to the 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2006

**Number of interviews conducted:** 29,152 persons interviewed face-to-face in the 25 Member States of the EU, the two acceding countries (Bulgaria and Romania), the two candidate countries (Croatia and Turkey) and the non-government controlled area of Cyprus.

#### **About TNS**

TNS is a market information group:

- The world's largest provider of custom research and analysis
- A leader in political and social polling
- A major supplier of consumer panel, media intelligence and TV and radio audience measurement services.

TNS operates across a global network in over 70 countries, allowing us to provide internationally consistent, up-to-the-minute and high quality information and analysis.

The group's employees deliver innovative thinking and excellent service to local and multi-national clients worldwide. In the custom business, they combine in-depth sector knowledge with expertise in the areas of new product development, positioning and segmentation research, brand and advertising research and stakeholder management.

**TNS' strategic goal is to be recognised as the global leader in delivering value added information and insights that help our clients to make more effective decisions.**

TNS is the sixth sense of business.

[www.tns-global.com](http://www.tns-global.com)

**For more information and detailed results on a country-by-country basis, please contact:**

Marita Carballo, Global Head of TNS Polling & Social  
Tel: +44 (0) 7739 856 902 or email: [marita.carballo@tns-global.com](mailto:marita.carballo@tns-global.com)

Leendert de Voogd, Managing Director, TNS Opinion & Social  
Tel: +32 (0) 2 66 118 66 or email: [leendert.devoogd@tns-opinion.com](mailto:leendert.devoogd@tns-opinion.com)

Katie Zurita, International PR Manager, TNS  
Tel: +44 (0) 208 967 4787 or email: [katie.zurita@tns-global.com](mailto:katie.zurita@tns-global.com)

Liz Kearney / Emily Luscombe, Camargue  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7636 7366 or email: [ekearney@camarguepr.com](mailto:ekearney@camarguepr.com)