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## EU-FRIENDLY GEORGIANS

Georgians are more in favor of EU expansion than most every other country in Europe, even though they don't really consider themselves European. When viewing Europe as a whole, it seems that most are either happy with the EU's current member count or would like to see its numbers reduced. Georgia wants the EU to continue growing, presumably until it borders touch Azerbaijan.

Georgian Opinion Research Institute International conducted the European Values survey in Georgia in 2008. Respondents across Europe were asked on a scale of 1 to 5 whether the European Union expansion "should go further" (1) or it "has already gone too far" (5). Europe was generally divided at 2.6. There is some variation, though, between countries like Germany (4.6), Luxembourg (4.2) and Ireland (3.9) were often in more expansionist attitudes like Moldova (2.6) and of course Georgia (2.2). As you might expect from the included data, it's relatively easy to predict a country's overall acceptance of EU expansion by its member status. Non-members are very interested in seeing Europe expand, long term members are unhappy with the extent it's grown already, and new members are generally happy with its current size (2.2 is considered "neutral" on a 1 to 5 scale).

## A WORRIED EU

Respondents were also asked to rank their fears related to EU expansion from 1 (very much afraid) to 5 (not afraid at all). Europeans were generally worried about possible economic problems tied to building a European Union, the worry that "our country just there and move to the European Union" scored an average of 4.5, and people were also generally worried about "the loss of jobs in [our country]" (4.2). Of the countries in this analysis, Latvia was the most worried with a 3.2 and 2.9, respectively.

	EU Expansion	Living better Months	losing jobs	Country	Europe
Georgia	2.2	4.7	3.1	30%	3%
Germany	4.6	2.2	2.2	30%	12%
Ireland	3.9	4.7	2.4	32%	13%
Latvia	2.2	4.2	3.2	39%	11%
Luxembourg	4.2	4.8	2.4	33%	7%
Moldova	2.6	3.2	3.3	74%	11%
Netherlands	4.2	3.9	4.2	30%	15%
Poland	3.4	3.0	3.4	34%	4%
Romania	3.4	3.2	4.2	32%	17%

Respondents were a little less fearful about a possible loss of sovereignty or national identity. When asked about "a loss of power in the world for [our country]" and "the loss of national identity and culture," the European average was 3.4 and 3.2. Contrary to all the member and candidate countries, however, both Moldova and Georgia were virtually unworried about any of these issues. It seems likely that this is because neither

country has a legitimate chance of joining the EU in the foreseeable future. Perhaps if EU eligibility became a reality, the national political discussion that would certainly arise would bring these fears to people's minds.

## NATIONAL IDENTITY

Even if Georgians would love to see the EU expand further and are unworried about the prospects of engaging in close international relations with such a body, there remains some doubt that the Georgian citizens would see themselves as anything other than Georgians. Respondents were

given a "first" and "second" choice as to which group they belong to: town, region, country, Europe, or the world as a whole. Georgians were by far the most likely to choose their country, a full 96% chose Georgia as either their first or second choice. Only 8% chose Europe at all, and only 1% as first choice. For contrast, 64% of Luxembourgers identified themselves by their country, and almost half (48%) chose Europe.

So, while Georgians would like to see the EU expand further (along with other European non-member states), that story may change if membership ever becomes a real possibility and the reality of surrendering some part of their national sovereignty sinks in.

There were 1500 Georgians included in this poll, and around 50,000 other Europeans. Polls of this sort have a margin of error of 3.5% with a 95% confidence interval. Visit our website at gorbi.com

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