

In the 5 Largest European Countries, French Health Care System Most Popular at Home and Most Admired Abroad

Very few people in Europe admire the U.S. system

A recent survey by HI Europe, the London-based subsidiary of Harris Interactive, asked people in the five largest European countries – Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain – about their attitudes to six aspects of life in their own and five other countries. We asked them to say which countries’ quality of life, system of government, economy, environment and health care system they felt positively about. Specifically, we asked them to consider these factors in their own countries (Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain) and also in the United States, Canada, China, Japan and Russia.

This issue of the Harris Interactive *Health Care News* focuses on the five countries’ perceptions of their own and of other countries’ health care systems.

This survey was conducted online by HI Europe between June 3 and 8, 2004 among the following nationwide cross sections of people aged 16 and older: 2,339 in Great Britain; 2,018 in France; 2,078 in Germany; 2,120 in Italy and 1,382 in Spain. The data were weighted to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.

Perceptions of own countries’ systems

The survey found huge differences in the proportions of the public in these five countries who feel positively about their own health care systems. Fully 65% of the French feel positively about their system and 42% of Spaniards feel positively about the Spanish system. At the other extreme, only 21% of Italians and 28% of Germans feel positively toward their health care systems, somewhat below the 32% who feel positively in Britain.

TABLE 1
Those Who Feel Positively About Six Factors In Their Own Countries

Base: All Adults

	Great Britain	France	Germany	Italy	Spain
	%	%	%	%	%
Quality of life	38	48	38	29	53
Constitution and system of government	29	33	31	24	44
The economy	34	12	12	8	24
The environment	24	20	42	23	17
The health care system	32	65	28	21	42
The present government	16	20	11	18	34

• EDITOR •

Humphrey Taylor
Chairman of *The Harris Poll*®



Perceptions of other countries' systems

When people in these five countries were asked to say which of the 10 countries' health care systems they felt positively about, relatively few people mentioned any countries. In each of the five countries, more people feel positively about their own systems than about all the other countries' systems.

Overall, France topped the list with 28% of Europeans, on average, rating their system positively but this partly reflects the very high level of satisfaction in France itself. Germany (22%) was the only other country to score moderately among people living in these five countries. It was followed by Britain (15%), Canada (14%) and Spain (12%).

Few people (10%) on average in these countries feel positively toward the U.S. health care system. It was better regarded in Britain (17%) and in Italy (14%) than in France (3%), Germany (5%) or Spain (8%).

Comparisons with other data

It is interesting that when the World Health Organization ranked health care systems in 191 countries in 2000, France was rated as having the best system in the world. In a survey conducted in Europe for the European Commission in 1998, as part of the *Eurobarometer* series of polls, many more people in France (65%) were satisfied with their system than in Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain or Italy (for a detailed comparison of the WHO ranking and EU survey results, see *The Public Versus World Health Organization on Health System Performance* by Robert Blendon et al, Health Affairs, Vol. 20, No.3). However, in the *Eurobarometer* survey five small European countries which were not included in our new survey – Denmark, Finland, Austria, the Netherlands and Luxembourg – all reported even higher levels of satisfaction with their systems.

TABLE 2

Those Who Feel Very Positive About The Health Care System In Different Countries

"For each of the following, please indicate which countries you feel very positive about – the health care system."

Base: All Adults

	Total	Country				
		Great Britain	France	Germany	Italy	Spain
	%	%	%	%	%	%
France	28	26	65	12	17	22
Germany	22	22	18	28	18	23
Great Britain	15	32	4	8	14	13
Canada	14	19	13	14	10	13
Spain	12	12	4	4	6	42
United States	10	17	3	5	14	8
Italy	8	6	3	3	21	4
Japan	6	8	3	6	4	6
China	1	2	1	2	1	1
Russia	1	1	1	1	1	1
None of these	31	30	20	47	33	23

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Methodology

This survey was conducted online by HI Europe between June 3 and 8, 2004 among the following nationwide cross sections of people aged 16 and older: 2,339 in Great Britain; 2,018 in France; 2,078 in Germany; 2,120 in Italy and 1,382 in Spain. Figures for region, age, sex, education and income were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online

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