

Press release

Poles are the nation the most satisfied with their level of savings in Europe – according to ING survey

Every other Pole feels comfortable or very comfortable when it comes to his savings. That is a higher proportion than in Germany, France, the UK or the USA – according to 'ING Financial Barometer' survey conducted for ING Group by TNS NIPO in several countries around the world.

'ING Financial Barometer' is the first edition of a quarterly survey by ING Group on attitude and behaviour of consumers with respect to financial issues. The survey was conducted in several countries all around the world like Poland, Germany, the UK, Czech Republic, the USA, Australia, China. Editions will focus on various aspects of consumer finance – the first one was about savings.

We assumed that financial comfort stems from subjective factors rather than objective ones. Instead of asking about the amounts saved we asked what were the feelings about one's level of savings. Is it a source of safety and comfort? Did the financial crisis affected these attitudes?

The results were surprising. From the whole Europe it was in Poland that the fraction of answers pointing to high comfort from one's savings was the highest: 18% for Poles, next came Germany (10%). Taking together answers 'I feel comfortable' and 'I feel very comfortable' Poland, with 50%, moved to third place after the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

It follows from 'ING Financial Barometer' that the comfort on savings side does not go hand in hand with wealth, measured in the study by the amount of money one could raise in a week in case of an urgent expenditure. Owing more than PLN7000 (EUR1500) was declared by 17% of Poles which was the ninth result in Europe. Using GDP per capita as a proxy for wealth also failed to explain the Poles' comfort.

*In our view the solution is the GDP growth, 4.2% in 2011 in Poland, the highest among European countries cover by the ING survey. It lets Polish consumers show some cautious optimism if not ignorance of the Eurozone problems. Poland scored less than the world average in the percentage of respondents saving to have a rainy-day fund (45% vs 58% average). However asked about plans how to use savings this year 42% mentioned holidays (eg compared to 31% in Czech Rep.). It seems Poles keep living on the green island (a reference to a map of Europe with 2009 GDP growth, all in red except a green Polish spot ie positive reading, often referred to in the local media as the green island) – said **Grzegorz Ogonek, ING Bank Śląski economist.***

A selection of survey results:

- 50% of Poles feel comfortable or very comfortable about their level of savings. European average was 38%. The fraction of answers 'very comfortable' (18%) was the highest in Europe.
- Only 36% of Poles feels comfortable about their expenditures vs 42% on average for Europe.
- 49% saves less because of the current economic situation compared to 74% in Romania (the highest result), 64% in both Spain and Italy.
- 38% of Poles declares their financial situation either did not change or improved because of the current economic situation. Almost a half of respondents from Poland (47%) said their finances deteriorated because of faster growth of prices than incomes.
- 42% of Poles plans to use their savings this year for holiday while the European average was 37%.
- Only 12% of Poles plans not to touch their savings this year vs the European average of 22%.
- A separate emergency fund account is owed by 29% of Europeans but only 12% of Poles.
- 8% of Poles named the media as their most trusted source of advice when faced with a major financial decision. It was the highest reading for media in Europe (5% average). The most frequent answer in Poland was family (67%).

The study 'ING Financial Barometer' was conducted in November 2011 and expanded in January 2012 (Asia) on 18348 respondents from 19 countries (Poland, Germany, the UK, France, Austria, Romania, Spain, the Netherlands, Italy, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Luxembourg, Turkey, Australia,

USA, Canada, China, India, Thailand). The survey was commissioned by ING Group and realised by TNS NIPO.