

CUP-O-NOMICS

IT'S MORE THAN JUST A GAME

Football exposes some fascinating economic lessons. It reveals strengths and weaknesses in decision making... about money.



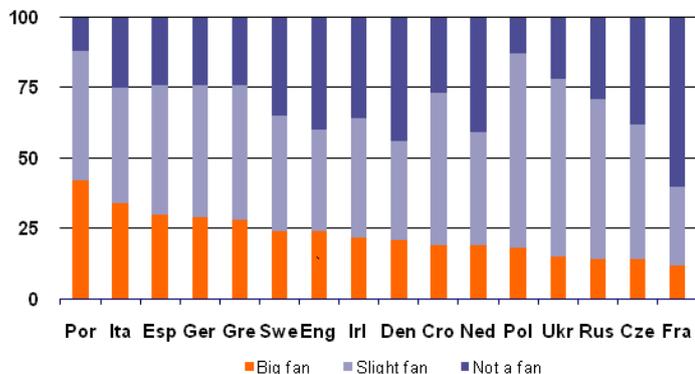
Fanning the football flames

Where in Europe does football fever run highest? What do fans think the EURO 2012 title is worth? What sacrifices are they prepared to make for their favourite team? With the European Championship about to kick off, ING surveyed attitudes to soccer in the 16 countries in the finals of EURO 2012. We compared the inhabitants of all the participating countries to find which is the most passionate about winning the competition. Poland comes top – but most Europeans are dreaming of a final between Spain and Germany.

Europe: football centre of the world

Europe might be losing economic status in the world – the eurozone is shrinking this year while the economies of countries such as the US, China, Japan, Australia, Brazil and Argentina grow – but when it comes to football, this continent is still the centre of the world. Seven of the 10 countries that are highest on the FIFA World Ranking are from the old continent and they have all qualified for EURO 2012. The 16 countries taking part in EURO 2012 are home to large numbers of football fans. Seven in 10 (69%) like football to some extent; a quarter (23%) call themselves big fans; 46% are a little less passionate. A minority of people (31%) are not football fans.

Football fans of all countries
Football fans as a percentage of the population

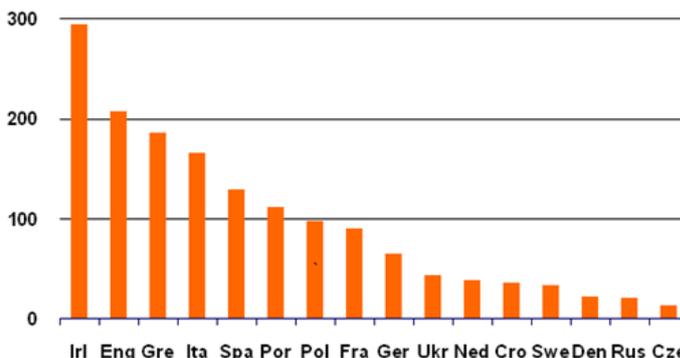


Southern Europeans the biggest fans

The biggest fans of the beautiful game can be found in

southern Europe. Four in 10 Portuguese people (42%) say they are big football fans. That's followed by Italians (34%) and Spaniards (30%). Germans (29%) and Greeks (28%) also score above average. Although from an economic perspective Germany doesn't belong in this group, when it comes to football mania, Germans are true members of the 'Club Méditerranée'. Going down the league tables of big fans, we find England (24%), Sweden (24%), Ireland (22%), Denmark (21%), Croatia (19%), the Netherlands (19%) and Poland (18%). As we move east, the ardour cools: in Ukraine and Russia, one in seven people (14%) say they are big supporters. The laggard is France. Although many countries might envy the French record – world champion once, European champion twice – football leaves most of the French cold. France is the only country where a majority (60%) say they don't like football. Just one in eight people (12%) claims to be a big fan.

The value of the EURO title
in euros

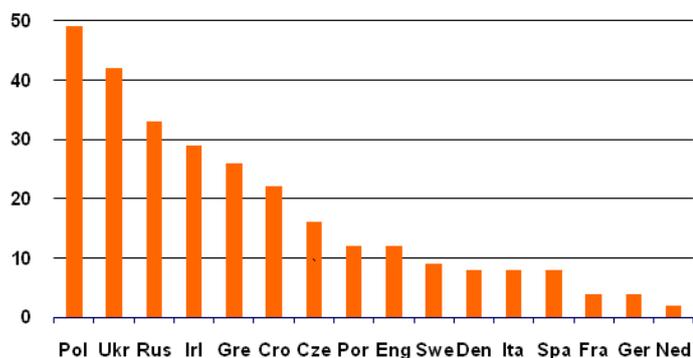


What's winning worth?

Being a football fan is one thing. How much you're prepared to spend on your team is quite another. From an economic perspective, there are various ways to measure that 'love'. How much money or how many free days would people give up, for example, if they could see their team win the championship in return? On average, participating Europeans would pay EUR 98 per person to see their country lift the European

Championship trophy this summer (33% would pay money – on average EUR 297 per person). Inhabitants of the British Isles are the most fanatical. The average Irish citizen thinks the EURO 2012 title is worth EUR 295 – the average Englishman EUR 207. Southern Europeans also have an above-average fondness for the title: Greeks most of all (EUR 187), followed by Italians (EUR 167), Spaniards (EUR 130) and Portuguese (EUR 112). Poles are exactly on average at EUR 98. Co-host country Ukraine (EUR 43) scores higher than the other Central and Eastern European countries: Croatia (EUR 37), Russia (EUR 22) and, at the bottom of the league, Czech Republic (EUR 14). Although France has the lowest percentage of football fans, France's EUR 91 is near the European average. Northern European countries, by contrast, are below average: Germany (EUR 65), the Netherlands (EUR 39), Sweden (EUR 34) and Denmark (EUR 23).

1% of annual income sacrificed for the title
percentage of the population



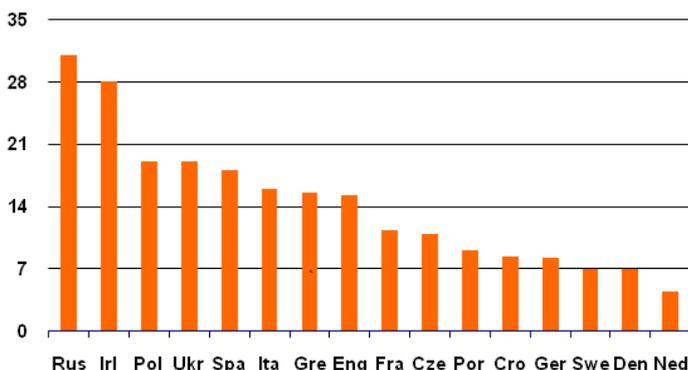
Giving up 1% of purchasing power

Money's not worth the same everywhere. The same euro buys a quarter more in Portugal than it does in Ireland. And with one euro in Poland you can buy 2.5 times more than in Denmark. So a sum in euros does not represent the same sacrifice everywhere. That's why we also asked people if they would be prepared to surrender 1% of their income for a year, in exchange for the title. That way, you can compare the relative sacrifice, regardless of wage or price levels. Half (49%) of Poles would trade this income for the glory, as would four in 10 (42%) Ukrainians and one in three (33%) Russians. Bringing up the rear are Germans, French (both 4%) and the Dutch (2%). Even the Greeks (26%) and Irish (29%), so hard hit in economic terms, are prepared to give up 1% of extra purchasing power for a whole year, for the honour of calling themselves champions.

Days off in a good cause

People are even more willing to make sacrifices for EURO glory if it's free days they're trading rather than money. Almost half (45%) of Europeans are prepared to do this, and they would trade seven days on average. Eastern Europeans top this league. Some 84% of Ukrainian employees would be willing to give up 12 free days on average. Three-quarters (75%) of Poles would give up an average of nine days, and three-quarters (74%) of Russians would even sacrifice 11 days. The Netherlands and France bring up the rear here: one in five French workers (19%) is prepared to give up four days, and one in seven Dutch employees (14%) three days on average.

Money spent on fan paraphernalia
in euros per person



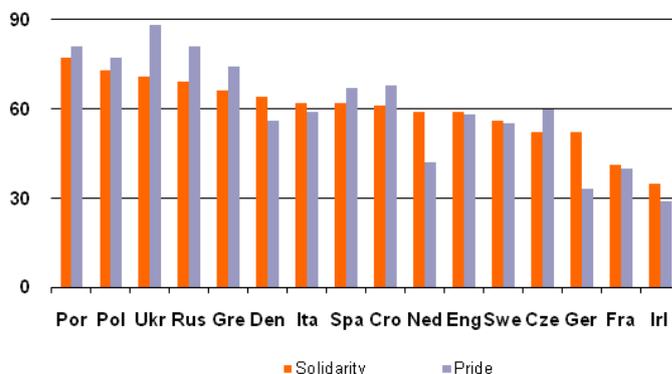
Investing EUR 14 in your outfit

How much do supporters shell out so they can cheer on their team in their national colours? The average European invests EUR 14 in caps, scarves or shirts. Russians (EUR 30) and Irish (EUR 28) spend double that. Then come the host countries (both EUR 19) and defending champion Spain (EUR 18). Italy (EUR 16), Greece (EUR 16) and England (EUR 15) score just above the average. Northern Europeans in particular spend less: Germany (EUR 8), Sweden (EUR 7), Denmark (EUR 7) and, lowest of all, the Netherlands (EUR 4).

Time off for EURO 2012

European Championships don't pass unnoticed in Europe's workplaces. One in 10 European workers will take at least a few hours off for the tournament – an average of 28 hours for this group. Ukraine tops the league: a quarter of employees in that country plan to take 39 hours off, on average. Besides the enthusiasm about hosting EURO 2012, the time difference might play a role: many matches don't start before 21:45 local time, which means it could be a late night and they might need a lie-in. For Russians it's at least an hour later – so there will be late nights for football fans from Ekaterinenburg to Vladivostok. The 18% of workers who plan to take time off reckon they'll be absent for 43 hours. That's a sharp contrast with countries such as Denmark (3% taking 21 hours off) and France (4% taking 16 hours off).

Football generating happiness
% of respondents who feel more solidarity and pride



Football inspires pride and solidarity

Football doesn't only mean sacrificing money and time in Europe. The beautiful game also creates masses of positive feelings – if things go well. Six in 10 (61%) Europeans feel proud if their national team wins. And 60% see solidarity increase in their country. Pride is most stirred by favourable

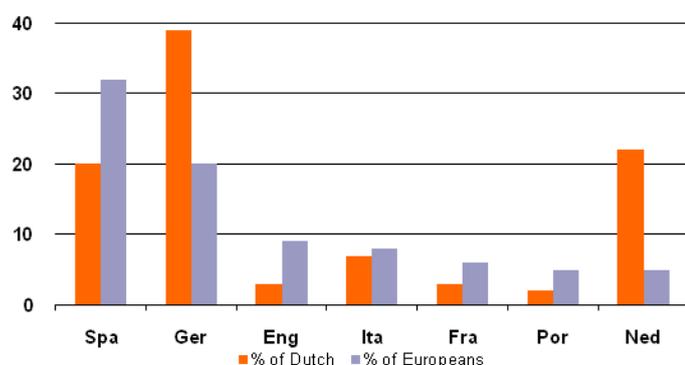
soccer results in Ukraine (88%), Russia (81%), Portugal (81%), Poland (77%) and Greece (74%). The Irish (29%), Germans (33%), French (40%) and Dutch (42%) are less quick to feel proud. It's a similar picture for solidarity. Success on the pitch brings the Portuguese (77%), Poles (73%), Ukrainians (71%) and Russians (69%) closer together and, to a far lesser extent, the Irish (35%) and French (41%). In almost all countries, there is a strong link between pride and solidarity. But there are a some striking exceptions. In Ukraine and Russia, pride is stoked more strongly than solidarity. And in Germany and the Netherlands, good football results don't make most people proud – but they do bring them closer.

Football or the Olympics?

There's another huge sporting event on the horizon this summer: the Olympic Games. That means we can measure the relative interest in football among the inhabitants of the various participating countries. One in five (20%) Europeans thinks EURO 2012 is more important than the Olympics. But that percentage is substantially higher in Poland (29%), Germany (27%) and Ireland (25%). Only a few Greeks (9%) rate the young sport of soccer higher than the Olympics, whose origins date back to antiquity.

In England, which invented football but will also host this summer's Olympics, opinions don't differ quite so starkly. One in five (20%) of the English is fonder of the European Championships, which is exactly the European average.

Who will be champion? % of respondents



Desired champions

Most Europeans hope their own country will claim the EURO 2012 title. But on average, by far the most (15%) are rooting for reigning European and world champion Spain. Then come Germany (10%), England (9%), Italy (8%) and the Netherlands (7%). It's striking that in some countries, a minority wants the national team to win: Croatia (44%), Czech Republic (45%), Greece (38%) and Poland (43%). In these countries, Spain is consistently the second choice. Germany also has a remarkably high number of supporters in Greece (8%), Czech Republic (11%), Croatia (12%) and Poland (13%).

Spain the favourite

Most Europeans think Spain has the best chance of winning. One-third (32%) expects Spain to keep the title. One in five (20%) thinks Germany will thwart Spanish ambitions. But the Spanish have the highest self-confidence: 90% of them expect their country to take the trophy home. In Germany, 60% are expecting a national triumph. Confidence is weakest in Poland (8%).

Want to bet Spain doesn't win?

Bookmakers and internet gamblers also have high expectations of Spain and Germany. According to the odds in early May, Spain had a 26% chance of winning EURO 2012. Germany was close behind, with 23%. The Netherlands was given a 12% chance, with England at 8% and France at 7%. Bookmakers' odds show once again how hard it is to predict the winner. Spain may be the favourite, but according to the most objective yardstick we have – the betting odds – there's still a 74% chance that Spain doesn't win. That chance is three times as high as the chance that they do. After all, the ball can roll any way...

Dream final: Spain vs Germany

A Germany-Spain clash would be the dream final for the biggest number of Europeans (9%). That would be a repeat of the last EURO final. A final between England and one of those two titans would also be popular: 6% would like to see the Three Lions face down Die Mannschaft, with 5% preferring the Three Lions vs La Selección.

Football passion in Europe

Ranking	Football fans % big fans	Value of title (EUR)	Sacrifice in holidays (days)	1% of income sacrificed (%)	Fan paraphernalia (EUR)	Days off	Pride %
1	Por (42%)	Irl (EUR 295)	Ukr (10.2)	Pol (49%)	Rus (EUR 31)	Ukr (9.3)	Ukr (88%)
2	Ita (34%)	Eng (EUR 207)	Rus (7.9)	Ukr (42%)	Irl (EUR 28)	Rus (7.8)	Por (81%)
3	Esp (30%)	Gre (EUR 187)	Pol (6.8)	Rus (33%)	Pol (EUR 19)	Irl (4.4)	Rus (81%)
4	Ger (29%)	Ita (EUR 167)	Gre (4.8)	Irl (29%)	Ukr (EUR 19)	Pol (4.3)	Pol (77%)
5	Gre (28%)	Esp (EUR 130)	Cro (4.6)	Gre (26%)	Esp (EUR 18)	Eng (2.7)	Gre (74%)
6	Swe (24%)	Por (EUR 112)	Irl (4.3)	Cro (22%)	Ita (EUR 16)	Cro (2.5)	Cro (68%)
7	Eng (24%)	Pol (EUR 98)	Cze (3.5)	Cze (16%)	Gre (EUR 16)	Esp (1.9)	Esp (67%)
8	Irl (22%)	Fra (EUR 91)	Por (2.9)	Por (12%)	Eng (EUR 15)	Gre (1.7)	Cze (60%)
9	Den (21%)	Ger (EUR 65)	Ita (1.9)	Eng (12%)	Fra (EUR 11)	Cze (1.6)	Ita (59%)
10	Ned (19%)	Ukr (EUR 43)	Eng (1.9)	Swe (9%)	Cze (EUR 11)	Ger (1.3)	Eng (58%)
11	Cro (19%)	Ned (EUR 39)	Esp (1.9)	Den (8%)	Por (EUR 9)	Swe (1.1)	Den (56%)
12	Pol (18%)	Cro (EUR 37)	Swe (1.9)	Ita (8%)	Cro (EUR 8)	Ita (1.1)	Swe (55%)
13	Ukr (15%)	Swe (EUR 34)	Den (1.3)	Esp (8%)	Ger (EUR 8)	Ned (0.8)	Ned (42%)
14	Cze (14%)	Den (EUR 23)	Ger (1.2)	Fra (4%)	Swe (EUR 7)	Fra (0.6)	Fra (40%)
15	Rus (14%)	Rus (EUR 22)	Fra (0.8)	Ger (4%)	Den (EUR 7)	Den (0.6)	Ger (33%)
16	Fra (12%)	Cze (EUR 14)	Ned (0.5)	Ned (2%)	Ned (EUR 4)	Por (0.5)	Irl (29%)

Rivalry with the neighbours

Among participating European countries, the most popular final would be against one of the football superpowers or a neighbouring country. Clear favourite among the Irish is a confrontation with England (33%). Although the English would most like to meet Germany (30%) or Spain (14%), one in 11 (9%) would still most like a final against the Boys in Green. Swedes (23%) would most enjoy a final against Denmark. The Danes most fancy playing their southern neighbours (16%), but an inter-Scandinavian showdown comes a close second (15%). If they reach the finals, Ukrainians would most like to face down Russia (7%). But that's not mutual. Russians would most like to meet Spain, England or Germany (each 10%). Apparently there's little football rivalry between the host nations. Just a few Poles (3%) and Ukrainians (2%) dream of thrashing the neighbours in Kiev.

Disclaimer

This survey of consumer attitudes and behaviour in relation to football in the countries participating in EURO 2012 was commissioned by ING and conducted by TNS Nipo. In the Netherlands, there was an online survey among 1,043 respondents who were representative of the population based on age, gender and income. In all the other countries, at least 1,000 respondents representative of the internet population in terms of age and gender were surveyed online.

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