

**Adults Worldwide Say "Tax the Rich!"**  
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*Global Poll Finds that Gap between Rich and Poor Expected to Increase in Next Five Years*

A new **Financial Times / Harris Poll** finds that when it comes to taxes on the wealthy people in eight countries, majorities in all of them believe that the government should tax the wealthy more. The study, conducted online by Harris Interactive® among a total of 8,748 adults (aged 16-64) within France, Germany, Great Britain, Spain, and the United States, adults (aged 18-64) in Italy and Japan, and adults (aged 18-60) in China between 30 April and 14 May 2008 indicated:

- A range from a low of just over half in France (51%) to a high of over three-quarters (77%) of adults in Japan believe the wealthy should be taxed more;
- When it comes to those with lower incomes, the feelings are stronger. At least three in five adults in all eight countries (ranging from 61% in the US to 90% in China) believe that the government should tax those on a lower income less;
- Adults in the five largest European countries, the U.S., China and Japan all believe that the gap between the rich and the poor in their country is too wide. Almost nine in ten Germans (87%) and over three-quarters of French adults (85%), Italians (82%), Chinese (80%), Britons (79%), Americans (78%), and Spaniards (76%) all believe the gap is too wide;
- "Only" two-thirds of Japanese (64%) believe the gap is too wide while one in five Japanese (20%) believe the gap between rich and poor in Japan is about right;
- Strong majorities (between 74% in the US and 89% in Germany) in the five European countries, the U.S. and Japan believe that the gap will increase in the next five years;
- In China, while three in five adults (60%) believe the gap will increase, almost one-quarter (22%) believe that it will decrease.

Thoughts on the prices of homes in the various countries differ:

- Half of adults in Great Britain (55%) and just under half of Spaniards (48%) and Americans (47%) all expect the prices of houses to come down in the next year;
- A plurality of adults in France (43%) and just over one-third (34%) of Japanese expect that house prices will remain the same;
- Just under half of Chinese adults (46%) as well as two in five Germans (40%) and 38 percent of Italians all expect housing prices to go up in the next year.

There is also disagreement as to whether the government should have any responsibility to ensure housing prices do not decline substantially in countries around the world:

- Spain and Italy are the two countries where the largest numbers of adults believe the government should have a lot of responsibility (37% and 32% respectively), but larger numbers in Italy believe the government should only have some responsibility (38%) and larger numbers in Spain believe the government should have no responsibility (39%);
- Majorities of adults in Japan (60%), China (58%), and Great Britain (53%) as well as just under half of Americans (49%) and a plurality of Germans (42%) believe their governments should only have some responsibility to ensure housing prices do not decline substantially;
- French adults are split with 43 percent believing their government should have some responsibility and the same number saying the government should have no responsibility.

**TABLE 1**

**GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR**

"Is the gap between the rich and poor in [the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, China, Japan, the US] too narrow, too wide or about right?"

Base: All EU adults in five countries, Japanese, Chinese, and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States	China	Japan
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base	1088	1288	1087	1120	1106	1046	1011	1002
Too wide	79	85	82	76	87	78	80	64
About right	8	10	8	13	8	12	15	20
Too narrow	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	8
Not sure	11	4	9	9	5	8	3	8

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 2**

**DIFFERENCE IN GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR**

"Do you expect the gap between rich and poor to increase, decrease or stay the same in the next 5 years?"

Base: All EU adults in five countries, Japanese, Chinese, and U.S. adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States	China	Japan
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base	1088	1288	1087	1120	1106	1046	1011	1002
Increase	78	85	76	75	89	74	60	81
Stay the same	10	9	10	14	4	15	9	14
Decrease	3	2	5	5	4	5	22	1
Not sure	9	4	9	6	3	7	9	4

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 3**

**TAXING THE WEALTHY**

"What should the government do with regard to taxes on wealthy people in [the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, the U.S., China, Japan]? Do you think the government should tax the wealthy more, less or do you think they should keep taxes on the wealthy at their current level?"

Base: All EU adults in five countries, Japanese, Chinese, and US adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States	China	Japan
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base	1088	1288	1087	1120	1106	1046	1011	1002
The government should tax the wealthy more	56	51	59	65	64	62	60	77
The government should keep taxes on the wealthy at their current levels	27	30	22	20	25	22	32	14
The government should tax the wealthy less	6	11	11	5	5	6	2	4
Not sure	10	8	9	10	6	9	6	5

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 4**

**TAXING THOSE WITH LOWER INCOMES**

"What should the government do with regard to taxes for those on a low income in [the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, the U.S., China, Japan]? Do you think the government should tax those on a lower income more, less or do you think they should keep taxes for those on a low income at their current levels?"

Base: All EU adults in five countries, Japanese, Chinese, and US adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States	China	Japan
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base	1088	1288	1087	1120	1106	1046	1011	1002
The government should tax those on a low income less	74	69	86	82	83	61	90	76
The government should keep taxes for those on a low income at their current levels	16	22	7	9	11	27	8	19
The government should tax those on a low income more	2	3	2	2	1	4	*	1
Not sure	8	6	5	8	5	8	2	4

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding; \* indicates less than 0.5%

**TABLE 5**

**DIRECTION OF HOUSING PRICES**

"Thinking to the next 12 months, do you expect house prices in [the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, the U.S., China, Japan] to go up, come down or remain the same as they are today?"

Base: All EU adults in five countries, Japanese, Chinese, and US adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States	China	Japan
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base	1088	1288	1087	1120	1106	1046	1011	1002
Expect house prices to come down	55	23	25	48	18	47	27	23
Expect house prices to remain the same	21	43	27	32	28	23	22	34
Expect house prices to go up	15	27	38	15	40	21	46	32
Not at all sure	10	7	9	6	13	8	12	5

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

**TABLE 6**

**RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING PRICE STABILITY**

"How much responsibility should the government of [the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, the U.S., China, Japan] take to ensure that the values of homes in {the UK, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, the U.S., China, Japan} do not decline substantially?"

Base: All EU adults in five countries, Japanese, Chinese, and US adults

	Great Britain	France	Italy	Spain	Germany	United States	China	Japan
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Unweighted base	1088	1288	1087	1120	1106	1046	1011	1002
It should have a lot of responsibility	25	14	32	37	24	15	35	25
It should have some responsibility	53	43	38	25	42	49	58	60
It should have no responsibility whatsoever	23	43	30	39	35	36	7	15

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

#### Methodology

This **FT/Harris Poll** was conducted online by Harris Interactive among a total of 8,748 adults (aged 16-64) within France (1,288), Germany (1,106), Great Britain (1,088), Spain (1,120), and the United States (1,046), adults (aged 18-64) in Italy (1,087) and Japan (1,002) and adults (aged 18-60) in China (1,011) between 30 April and 14 May 2008. Figures for age, sex, education, region and Internet usage were weighted where necessary to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was used to adjust for respondents' propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Interactive avoids the words "margin of error" as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100% response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Interactive surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of the adult populations of the respective countries. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Interactive panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.

***These statements conform to the principles of disclosure of the National Council on Public Polls and of the British Polling Council.***

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