



## Press Release

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### **Illness and terrorism are the prime concerns**

#### **These are the findings of an international GfK survey on personal and societal fears**

**Nuremberg/Frankfurt am Main, December 7, 2007 – The prime personal fears are illness, death and injury. In terms of society, worldwide, the greatest fears are terrorism and war. Many people deal with their anxieties by talking to friends and family. Some of them are even actively engaged in trying to make the world a better place. These are the findings of the survey on “Fears” carried out in 20 European countries, India and the USA by GfK Custom Research for the Wall Street Journal Europe.**

People are often concerned by events which might happen in the future, both in personal and societal terms. Responding to the question of what they were most afraid of, one third of the survey subjects mentioned death, illness and injury within the family circle. At 50%, the number putting these fears at the top of their list is even higher in Sweden and Bulgaria, although only 16% of Americans gave these issues the highest rating. Quite naturally, it is older, rather than younger people, who are more preoccupied with thoughts of death and disease.

#### **More than a fifth have no fears at all**

In addition to health fears, one in ten is worried by thoughts of a personal financial crisis caused by loss of their job or some other financial disaster. In general, 7% don't feel good about their future, with 6% worrying about problems with children or parents. 5% are concerned about falling victim to a crime and a similar number worry about problems in the workplace. 4% are anxious about splitting up with their spouses or partners. Overall, the findings are surprising, that 23% of those surveyed said they had no fears at all. In Western Europe, this was an opinion expressed by one fifth of the respondents, while in India, the figure was 23%, in Central and Eastern Europe, 15%, in the USA, 37% and in UK as high as 43%.

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### International overview: "What is your greatest day-to-day fear?", expressed in %

	Death/illness/injury in the family	I'm not at all worried	Financial crisis caused by job loss or other reason	General fears about the future	Problems with children or parents	Problems at work (with the boss or colleagues, etc.)	Victim of a crime	Divorce/separation	Phobias (spiders, vertigo, etc.)
Belgium	37	23	7	5	10	5	4	3	3
Germany	39	20	12	7	2	2	6	3	2
France	48	14	5	8	6	4	7	4	1
Greece	35	10	24	5	7	12	1	1	1
UK	12	43	9	5	5	7	6	3	5
Italy	39	19	8	6	8	7	5	4	2
Netherlands	46	15	6	6	6	2	7	4	4
Austria	48	19	8	9	3	2	1	3	5
Sweden	51	20	7	6	2	3	2	2	1
Switzerland	41	20	11	4	2	6	6	4	2
Spain	46	8	7	12	5	6	7	3	1
<b>Western Europe</b>	38	20	9	7	6	5	6	3	2
Bulgaria	55	8	7	9	3	1	7	4	0
Poland	36	11	17	11	4	5	4	2	2
Romania	44	19	7	7	5	2	6	6	1
Czech Republic	44	19	10	4	4	2	9	5	1
Hungary	23	21	20	8	11	5	2	2	3
<b>Central/Eastern Europe</b>	39	15	13	9	5	3	5	4	2
India	27	23	6	14	10	5	7	4	1
Russia	41	12	8	8	7	3	7	7	1
Turkey	47	13	9	10	6	2	3	7	1
USA	16	37	10	4	7	7	3	2	3
<b>Total of all countries</b>	33	23	10	7	6	5	5	4	2

Source: GfK "Fears" survey, GfK Custom Research 2007

### Fear of terrorism or war affecting society

In tandem with personal fears, people also said they worried about global society. One third of the survey subjects said they feared terrorism or war, with fear of terrorist attacks dominating concerns in most countries. In Western Europe, the Spanish and French are particularly beset by such fears, with 47% and 38% respectively worried about terrorist attacks or a war. In Central and Eastern Europe, the subject is of particular concern to the Russians (41%) and the Polish population (37%). At least a third of Indians

and Turks are also worried by the threat of terrorism or war. The findings for the UK are similar and fears of terrorist attacks come a clear top of the list. With only 14% worried about terrorism and 11% about war, these issues do not figure as highly on the US agenda.

The subject of global warming and other environmental issues preoccupies 14% of those surveyed in the different countries, although there are marked differences within individual regions. In Western Europe, it is the Swedes and the Greeks, both with 34%, who are most concerned about the environment. Conversely, at 8%, the Germans are virtually unconcerned about environmental damage and only in Russia and the Czech Republic (both with 5%) were similarly low values returned. In the USA, people are comparatively insensitive to environmental subjects, with just 14% expressing concerns about global warming and other environmental issues.

Worries about the moral decline of society were expressed by a total of 13%, and 10% said they feared an economic crisis. Just as many were concerned about natural disasters, such as tsunamis, earthquakes and floods. In Central and Eastern Europe and Romania in particular, as many as one in five of the survey subjects said they feared natural disasters. In last place with 4% was the fear of an epidemic. Interestingly, 12% said they had no fears concerning global society.

### **Turning to family and friends helps**

Just under two fifths of the survey subjects said they dealt with their personal fears by talking to family or friends and in Central and Eastern Europe, the figure is 50%. Some deal with the problem on their own, or seek solace in religious communities. While a total of 11% said that religion helped them to deal with their fears, at 24%, the figure was higher in the USA. Similarly high percentages are found only in India and Romania, in both of which one fifth said they looked to religion for help. Many said they drew hope for the future from their families and children, with just under one fifth also mentioning the Church and scientific progress as a source of hope for the future.

### **Commitment to a better world comes in many guises**

The survey also asked what people did to make the world a better place. Around one third of those surveyed said that they behaved morally and lived good lives. 15% said they donated money or time to charity and others said they were committed to working for the environment (10%), with as many joining a religious community. However, 19% admitted to doing nothing at all for a better world.

In general, the mood was one of pessimism, with only one fifth believing that the world would be a better place in future and even here, opinions differed from country to country. While three quarters of Greeks and Turks



looked to the future with pessimism, more than half the Indians believed the world would improve.

### **The survey**

The survey on "Fears" was carried out by GfK Custom Research for The Wall Street Journal Europe and with the financial assistance of the GfK Nürnberg Association. In September and October 2007, 21,000 people over the age of 15 in 20 countries were surveyed on their personal and societal fears, how they deal with these fears and what they personally do to make the world a better place, how they thought the global society of the future would develop and what was their greatest source of hope for the future.

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### **The GfK Group**

The GfK Group is the No. 5 market research organization worldwide. Its activities cover five business divisions Custom Research, Retail and Technology, Consumer Tracking, Media and HealthCare. The Group has 115 companies covering over 90 countries. Of a total of approximately 8,760 employees (as of September 30, 2007), 80% are based outside Germany. For further information, visit our website: [www.gfk.com](http://www.gfk.com)

### **The Wall Street Journal Europe ([www.wsj.com](http://www.wsj.com))**

The Wall Street Journal Europe was founded in 1983 and is headquartered in Brussels. It belongs to the leading global financial news group, Dow Jones & Company, which also owns the Wall Street Journal, the Wall Street Journal Asia and Wall Street Journal Online, the major global news website available on subscription. Combined, these publications sell 2.7 million copies daily, providing financial leaders the world over with relevant global financial news and information from a regional perspective. Dow Jones publications have won 31 Pulitzer Prizes for the achievement of journalistic excellence.

The Wall Street Journal Europe has a global network of around 1,900 journalists. It constitutes the largest network of financial and economic journalists in the world. Some 350 of these are based in Europe and the Middle East in a total of 42 offices serving 33 major towns and cities in the region.

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