

**18 October 2016**

The Eurobarometer survey of the European Parliament '[Europeans in 2016: Perceptions and expectations, fight against terrorism and radicalisation](#)' aimed to identify, across a range of different policy fields, the level of awareness of citizens of EU action in that field, and to assess how content they were with EU involvement in each field. This Topical Digest brings together a set of short briefings by EPRS following up the survey. Taking each of those policy fields in turn, they look at what the Union is already doing, identify gaps between citizens' expectations and current EU activity, and explore possible areas for additional EU action. The full survey can be accessed on the European Parliament website, including a series of infographics presenting the differences in public opinion by policy area in each Member State.

[Public expectations and EU policies - Identifying the gaps](#)

Briefing by Alina Dobрева and Eva-Maria Alexandrova Poptcheva, July 2016

Citizens' expectations of the European Union vary widely across policy areas. A Eurobarometer survey – Europeans in 2016: Perceptions and expectations, fight against terrorism and radicalisation – seeks to identify those areas in which EU citizens want to see the Union doing more. Having identified areas in which there is a gap between the EU's current action and citizens' expectations of the Union, the next step is to look at the potential – within the constraints of the EU legal foundations – for the EU to do more to meet citizens' expectations.

[Public expectations and EU policies - Fight against terrorism](#)

Briefing by Piotr Bakowski, Alina Dobрева and Gianluca Sgueo, July 2016

EU citizens show strong expectations for increased involvement of the EU in the fight against terrorism. The current EU legal framework is limited by the primary role of the Member States in this area. Nevertheless, there is still the scope and potential for increased EU involvement within the current legal framework. This briefing considers this and also covers current and potential relevant financing at EU level. Financial instruments that tackle counter-terrorism directly, indirectly or partially are spread across the EU budget and are increasing.

[Public expectations and EU policies - The fight against unemployment](#)

Briefing by Alina Dobрева, Monika Kiss and Martin Svasek, July 2016

Fighting unemployment is an important part of the Europe 2020 Strategy. The European Commission set a target of 75% of 20 to 64 year-olds being employed by 2020. Policies and programmes aimed at fighting unemployment follow various paths: reducing taxes on labour, supporting start-ups, encouraging labour mobility, tackling poverty and social exclusion, improving working conditions and investing in education, vocational training and lifelong learning. More recent initiatives seek to make better use of available skills and enable rapid recognition of qualifications, but also to assess individual needs. Despite all the initiatives, EU citizens still expect more EU intervention in the fight against unemployment or expect to see results from the initiatives that have already started.

[Public expectations and EU policies - Fight against tax fraud](#)

Briefing by Alina Dobрева, Cécile Rémeur and Gianluca Sgueo, July 2016

Tax matters remain closely linked to Member States, and the EU's competences in tax are limited. Different forms of escaping tax obligations result in tax fraud, evasion or avoidance, dealing with which is a cross-border issue. The fight against fraud and evasion is a mix of national and EU actions. However, EU citizens express strong support for EU involvement in the fight against fraud and this creates a gap between citizens' expectations and the actual EU involvement in this policy area.

Public expectations and EU policies - The issue of migration

Briefing by Alessandro D'Alfonso, Alina Dobрева and Anita Orav, July 2016

Migration and asylum are policy areas with one of the highest levels of public support for more EU involvement, but at the same time citizens do not see it as a priority for the EU budget. Post-Lisbon Treaty, the area is governed by fair sharing of responsibilities and financial implications between Member States. Faced with unprecedented migratory flows, the current migration management system has revealed serious shortcomings that arguably cannot be addressed without more EU support.

Public expectations and EU policies - Protection of external borders

Briefing by Alessandro D'Alfonso, Alina Dobрева and Alexandra Gatto, July 2016

An overwhelming majority of EU citizens expect the EU to intervene more in the protection of external borders than at present. An area without internal frontiers, in which the free movement of persons is ensured with appropriate measures with respect to external border controls is envisaged in the Lisbon Treaty. EU powers regarding border control are shared with the Member States, and based on solidarity between Member States, including financial implications. Steps towards further EU action in this area include: the recent revision of the Schengen Borders Code; the revised proposal for an entry-exit system; a draft regulation setting up a European Border and Coast Guard System with a 'right to intervene' in situations at the border requiring urgent action following a Council decision.

Public expectations and EU policies - Promotion of democracy and peace in the world

Briefing by Alina Dobрева, Gianluca Sgueo and Ionel Zamfir, July 2016

According to a new Eurobarometer survey, two thirds of European Union citizens would like to see even stronger EU involvement in the promotion of democracy and peace in the world. Democracy and peace are the fundamental values on which the EU is based and the guiding principles for its external action. The EU has at its disposal a vast array of tools to promote democracy and peace in the world, including its own diplomatic body, development aid and trade conditionality that it can leverage to this purpose. The EU finances a variety of actions that directly or indirectly promote democracy, such as support for governance, elections, civil society and free media, while a specific instrument is dedicated to peace and stability.

Public expectations and EU policies - Environmental protection

Briefing by Didier Bourguignon, Alina Dobрева and Magdalena Sapala, July 2016

Two thirds of EU citizens express support for increased EU action on environmental protection. EU policy aims to move towards a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy, to safeguard biodiversity and to protect human health through legislation on air, chemicals, climate, nature, waste and water. While the EU budget represents an important and growing source of investment, Member States are responsible for financing and implementing environmental protection measures, and some implementation gaps remain.

Public expectations and EU policies - Security and defence policy

Briefing by Alina Dobрева, Kristina Grosek and Patryk Pawlak, July 2016

Decisions on security and defence policy are, most of the time, taken by the EU-28's national governments and usually without public scrutiny. Yet, almost two thirds of EU citizens would like the EU to intervene in this policy area more than it does at present. Since the introduction of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the Treaty of Maastricht, the EU has made substantial progress in assuming its role as a regional security provider. Although significantly strengthened by the Treaty of Lisbon, this policy area continues to be hampered by the Member States' lack of will to make better use of the existing legal framework, and by inadequate funding mechanisms.

Public expectations and EU policies - Health and social security

Briefing by Alina Dobрева, David Eatock, Nora Milotay, Matthew Parry and Nicole Scholz, July 2016

Almost two thirds of EU citizens would like to see more EU engagement in the areas of health and social security. The EU's main role in these policies is to support and complement the activities of Member States, and it can encourage cooperation and best practice. EU health policy aims to foster good health, protect citizens from health threats and support dynamic health systems. Social policy promotes social cohesion equality as well as solidarity through adequate, accessible and financially sustainable social protection systems and social inclusion policies. The EU encourages national pension reforms to ensure they are both adequate and sustainable. In the EU budget, the Health Programme 2014-2020 is the only programme specifically

created for this policy area, but other programmes contribute in part to health objectives. EU spending on social security is tied to labour market measures.

Public expectations and EU policies - Economic policy

Briefing by Alina Dobрева, Magdalena Sapala and Christian Scheinert, July 2016

The EU's economic policy is mainly geared towards coordinating national economic policies, with much attention given to macroeconomic imbalances, as well as managing the fiscal safeguards provided by the Stability and Growth Pact. However, compliance by Member States with the existing framework is weak. At the same time monetary policy is an exclusive EU competence for the euro area.

Public expectations and EU policies - Equal treatment of men and women

Briefing by Alina Dobрева, Gianluca Sgueo and Rosamund Shreeves, July 2016

Public opinion surveys suggest that the majority of Europeans are aware of EU action, and consider that equal treatment of women and men should be an EU priority, with majority support for existing or higher levels of EU involvement. In areas where the public feel that EU intervention is most effective – notably ensuring equal pay, facilitating work-life balance and combating violence against women – there is scope for further action at national and EU level, ranging from 'soft' measures such as awareness-raising campaigns to better implementation and enforcement of existing equal treatment legislation, and the potential introduction of new legislative proposals. A number of initiatives are already on the table, but stakeholders have also expressed concerns about diminishing commitment to gender equality policy at EU level.

Public expectations and EU policies - Energy supply and energy security

Briefing by Alina Dobрева, Gregor Erbach and Martin Svasek, July 2016

More than half of EU citizens would like to see the EU play a bigger role in energy supply and energy security. The EU was given competences in energy policy by the Lisbon Treaty in 2009. The main objectives of EU energy policy are sustainability, affordability and security of supply. The Energy Union strategy, adopted in 2015, provides a holistic framework for further integration of European energy markets. According to analysis carried out by the European Parliament, a more integrated single market for energy could result in annual efficiency gains worth €250 billion. Energy-related expenditure is spread across different parts of the EU budget. Energy is among the priorities of the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI).

Public expectations and EU policies – Agriculture

Briefing by Alina Dobрева, James McElDowney and Matthew Parry, July 2016

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is one of the EU's oldest policies, although it has been the subject of various reforms over the years. For more than five decades it has provided Europe with a secure food supply and a living countryside. There is thus a high level of public awareness of the support the EU provides to farmers, though a much lower proportion of the population know the details. Half of EU citizens would like to see stronger EU intervention in agriculture, although levels of support differ among Member States. Following the most recent CAP reforms in 2013, to which the European Parliament made a strong contribution, important changes were made to the CAP. These included a new system of direct payments whose basic component is support for farmers' income, as well as greater flexibility given to Member States. The budgetary resources devoted to the CAP have been reduced. The mid-term review planned for 2017 will offer an opportunity to review a range of policy implementation issues. The role of the European Parliament as co-legislator is significant in this process and in any future decisions on a post 2020 CAP.

Public expectations and EU policies - Foreign policy

Briefing by Alina Dobрева, Raquel Juncal and Eric Pichon, July 2016

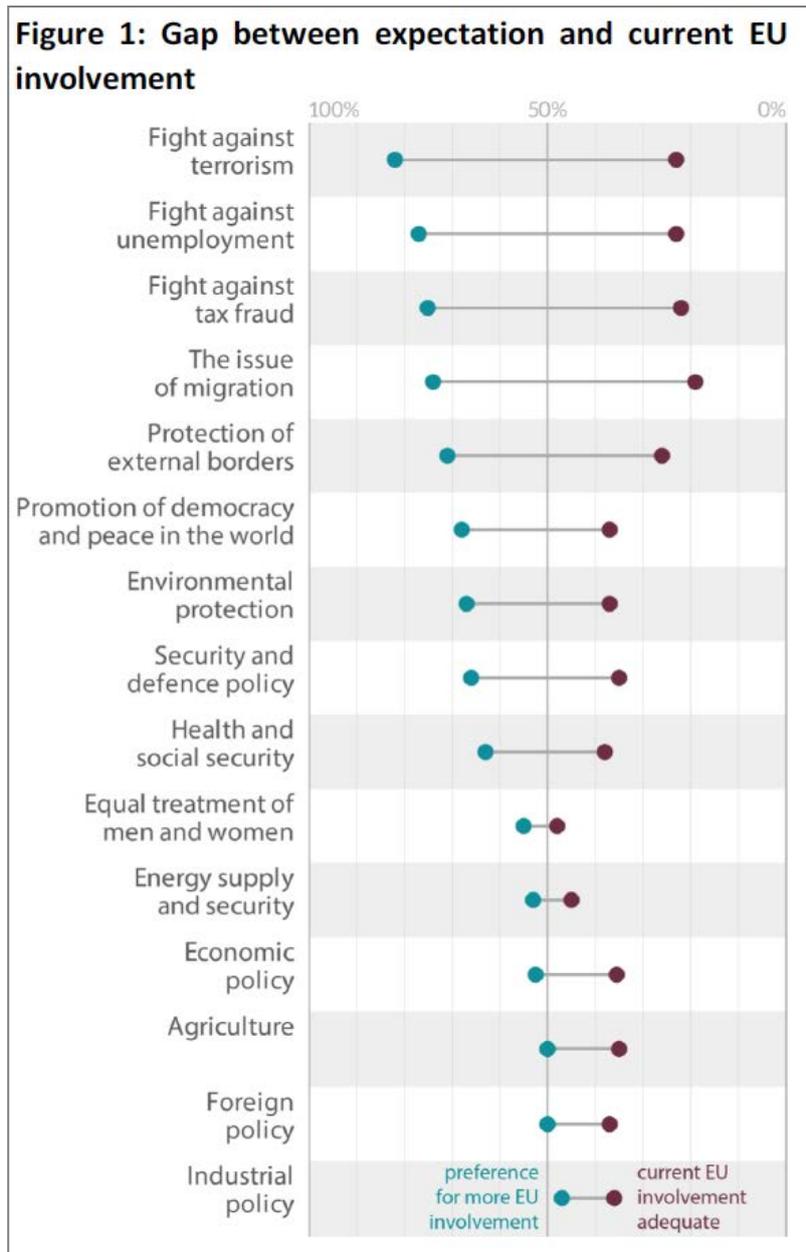
Citizens who think EU engagement in foreign policy is sufficient are almost as numerous as those wishing the EU does more in this area – and nearly one fifth confess they are not able to evaluate EU action. This can be explained as the remit of EU foreign policy is not easy to identify, since it brings together missions for which the EU has full responsibility and competences shared with EU Member States, or even the UN or WTO. However, since its inception, EU foreign policy has adapted to an ever-changing global context: most international issues have multiple impacts – on climate, migration flows or security – and need to be comprehensively addressed. Building on the Treaties' provisions, the EU and its Member States are moving from 'silo' policies (trade, development, humanitarian aid) towards more integrated strategies.

Public expectations and EU policies - Industrial policy

Briefing by Angelos Delivorias, Alina Dobrova and Marcin Szczepanski, July 2016

Industrial policy has recently attracted the attention of EU policy-makers seeking sources of economic growth. It is a key element of the Europe 2020 strategy, and the Commission has set itself the target of increasing industry's share of GDP to 20% by 2020. The policies and programmes contributing to the EU's industrial policy are significant (amounting to almost €200 billion), and the policy coverage is wide in scope. On the other hand, it seems that European citizens still perceive industrial policy as predominantly national in character. The Commission is addressing the challenge of reindustrialisation of Europe with a number of horizontal tools such as the Investment Plan, the Digital Single Market Strategy and the Single Market Strategy.

More in the [Graphics Warehouse](#)



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