

DELIVERING ON EUROPE

ONE YEAR TO GO - EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2019

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the economic and financial crisis, European citizens have increasingly become aware that decisions taken by the European institutions can and would affect them immediately and touch their daily lives. Developments on both the international and European stage, e.g. the rise in power and influence of both China and Russia or the ongoing Brexit negotiations, lead citizens to clearly support rather joint European action instead of individual national responses.

In a series of questions asked throughout several survey waves since 2016, the European Parliament's Eurobarometer also traces the rising awareness of citizens that the European Union is indeed delivering for them in the areas that matter most to them. In parallel to this rising awareness of 'delivery', survey results also show the unbroken call of Europeans for more EU action in many of these policy fields.

EUROPE DELIVERS, CITIZENS FIND

Since 2016 European citizens have been asked about their perception of current EU action in an array of fifteen policy areas. At the same time, the surveys measured their expectations for future EU intervention in the same areas. The combined analysis of 'delivery assessment' and future expectations shows that whereas an increasing share of respondents already today finds that EU action is adequate, a clear majority of citizens keep on calling for more Europe in the future in nearly all policy areas tested.

Terrorism, unemployment and the protection of the environment are the three policy areas where, on EU average, more than three-quarters of respondents call for more EU intervention in the future (respectively 77%, 76% and 75%). With no significant change in expectations since 2016, these three areas were and remain the citizens' top priorities for European intervention. Together with the fight against tax fraud (74%), promotion of democracy and peace in the world (73%) and migration (72%) these six top-cited policy areas also match the topics citizens have chosen as priorities for the European elections campaign.

The really noteworthy change happened with the respondents' evaluation of current EU action in these areas: 32% of respondents, a significant increase of 9 percentage points compared to 2016, see the EU's fight against terrorism as adequate. 29% of respondents say the same about the fight against unemployment, an equally significant increase of 6 percentage points. At the same time, the number of respondents assessing the EU's fight against terrorism as insufficient went down to 57% by 12 percentage points. For the fight against unemployment, a decrease of 10 percentage points from 69% to 59% in 2018 registers.

Next to these policy areas similar changes in other fields measured over the past two years clearly illustrate that European citizens in almost all member States are increasingly aware that the EU is delivering on their behalf. In 2018, for six out of the fifteen policy areas more respondents found current EU action rather adequate than insufficient. These areas concerns 'equal treatment of men and women' (46% adequate vs 40% insufficient), 'energy supply and energy security' (45% vs 37%), 'industrial policy' (42% vs 31%), 'foreign policy' (41% vs 36%), 'economic policy' (40% vs 38%) and 'agriculture' (38% vs 37%). In 2016, only for two areas, namely 'equal treatment of men and women' and 'energy supply and energy security', a relative majority of respondents found then current EU action adequate.

PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR JOINT EUROPEAN ACTION

The survey also sheds light on how citizens want new European initiatives and policies to be developed: Results show that on EU average citizens are equally balanced between those who would prefer some Member States to move forward without waiting for the others to be ready (44%) and those who want to wait for all to be ready and to launch new policy developments together (43%).

A different picture emerges when it comes to the way the EU should react to significant international events impacting on the European Union. **A clear majority of European citizens want the EU to speak with one voice and act together.** This is the case for dealing with the rising power and influence of Russia (71%) or China (71%), this holds true also for dealing with the US-Presidency of Donald Trump (71%). Last, but not least, an absolute majority in 27 Member States also thinks that their countries' interests would be better taken into account by acting jointly with the other EU Member States with regard to the ongoing Brexit negotiations (68%).

This survey is not a policy evaluation tool as such. It means to deliver a reliable picture of public opinion in all EU Member States when it comes to assessing whether and where citizens actually feel that the EU has delivered for them. Observing the national context is key for a correct reading of the results, as European averaged results would hide the manifold nuances in national situations. For this reason, the structure of this study puts a high emphasis on describing the national evolutions from 2016 to 2018, breaking down the results country by country, to be found in the second part of the report.

All results are coming from the larger survey "Democracy on the move, European elections: one year to go"¹ that was carried out by Kantar Public on 11-22 April 2018 for the European Parliament and was published on 23 May 2018. The second part of the survey as described in this briefing will be published with results and individual country factsheets on 17 September 2018.

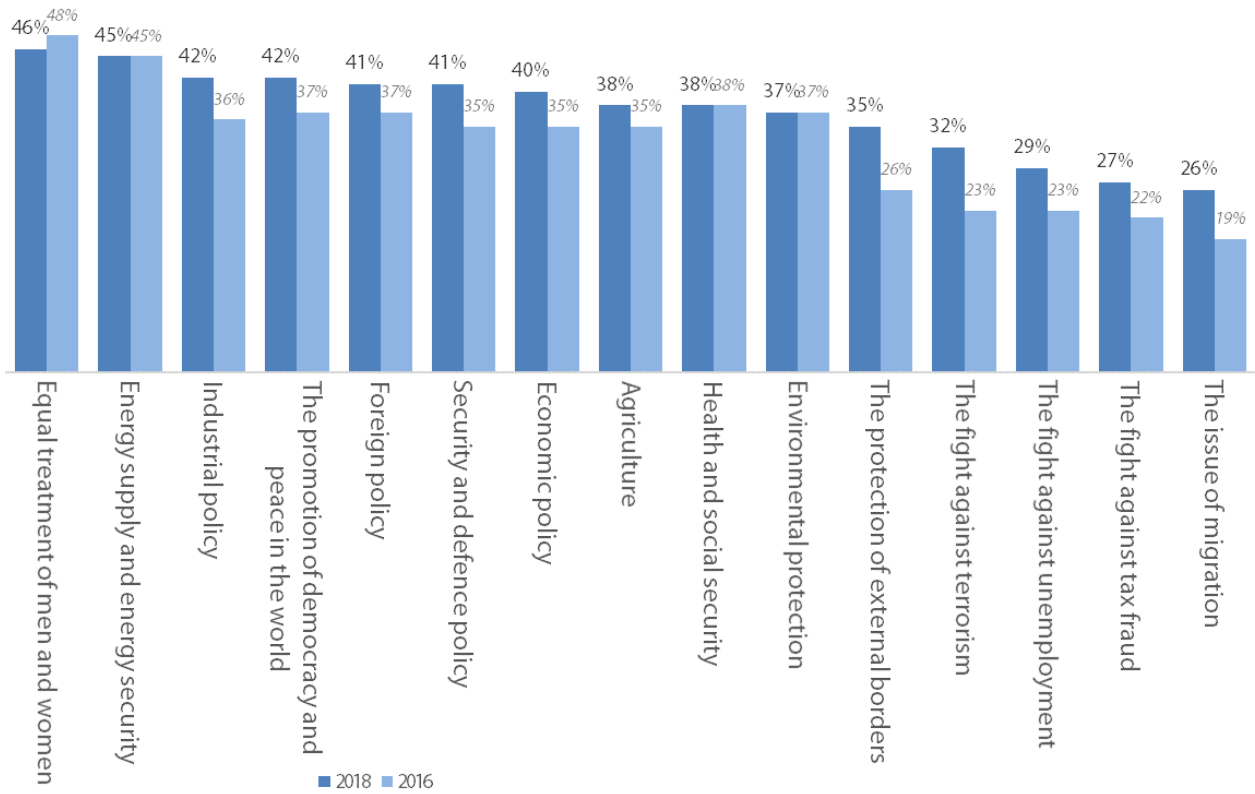
*For more information, please contact the Public Opinion Monitoring Unit in DG COMM:
Philipp Schulmeister, Head of Unit (philipp.schulmeister@ep.europa.eu) or
Luisa Maggio (luisa.maggio@ep.europa.eu)*

¹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/eurobarometer-2018-democracy-on-the-move>

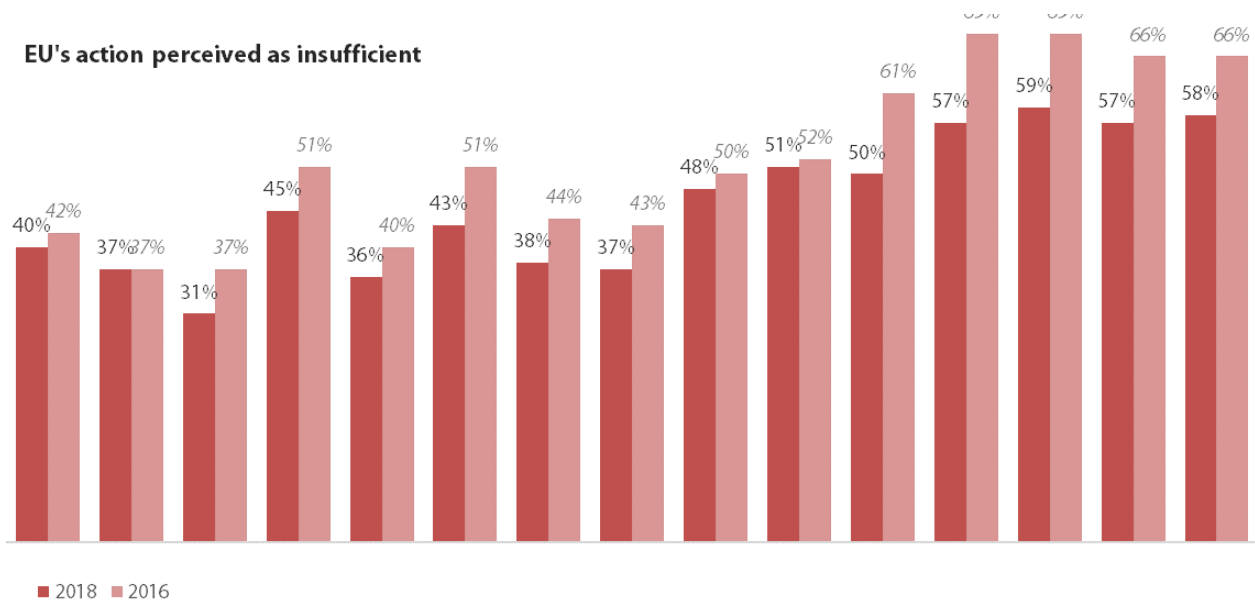
PERCEPTIONS

Question: Would you say that current European Union action in the following policy areas is adequate/about right or insufficient?

EU's action perceived as adequate



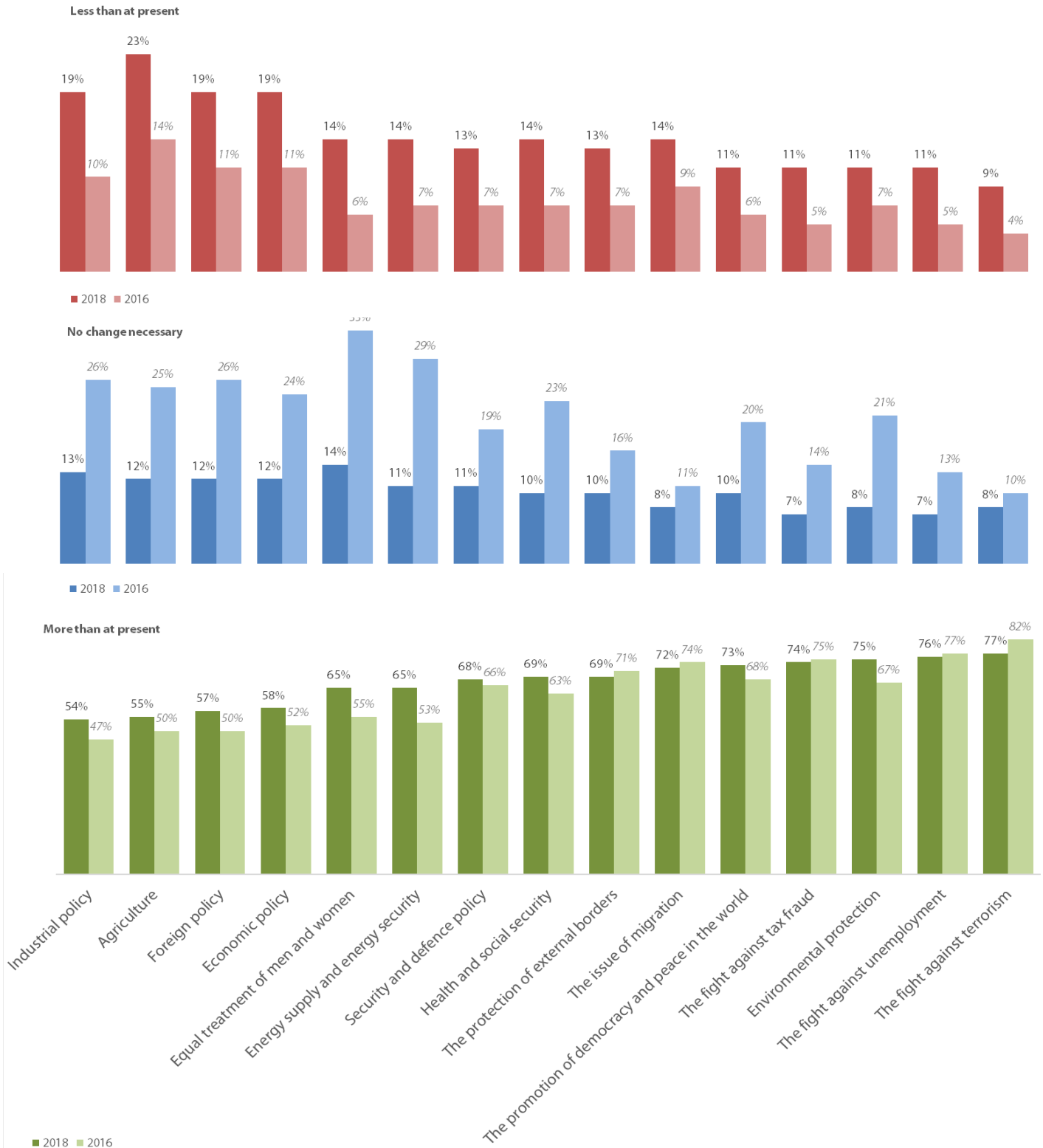
EU's action perceived as insufficient



Source: European Parliament Eurobarometer EB89.2

EXPECTATIONS

Question: For each of the following policy areas, would you like the European Union to intervene less than at present or more than at present?



Source: European Parliament Eurobarometer EB89.2