



PUBLIC OPINION MONITORING *at a glance*

The European Parliament and the expectations of European citizens

Plenary - March 2019



DG Communication is continuously monitoring public opinion by conducting regular Eurobarometer surveys in all 28 EU Member States. **This newsletter aims at providing general public with the most recent Eurobarometer data on key topics of this week's plenary agenda.**

Although this service cannot be fully exhaustive, as not all items on the plenary agenda have been the subject of a recent Eurobarometer survey, we can offer fresh survey data on the following items of the plenary session:

-) **Preparation of the European Council meeting of 21 and 22 March 2019**
-) **'Future of Europe': Debate with the Prime Minister of Slovakia, Peter Pellegrini**
-) **Council and Commission statements- Climate change**
-) **European Semester for economic policy and coordination**
-) **European Union Cybersecurity Act**
-) **Protection of personal data in the context of elections to the European Parliament**
-) **European Solidarity Corps programme**

Parliament's Eurobarometer surveys cover a wide range of issues. They focus primarily on the European citizens' knowledge of the European Parliament and their perceptions of the EU and its main policy challenges. Expectations in view of the European elections, of the European Parliament and the European integration in general also form part of the face-to-face interviews conducted with more than 27.000 respondents. Together with the Eurobarometer surveys conducted by the European Commission, **the data available allows for a detailed and up-to-date insight into citizens' opinions, expectations and perceptions.**

For more information on the topics covered in this edition, please contact:

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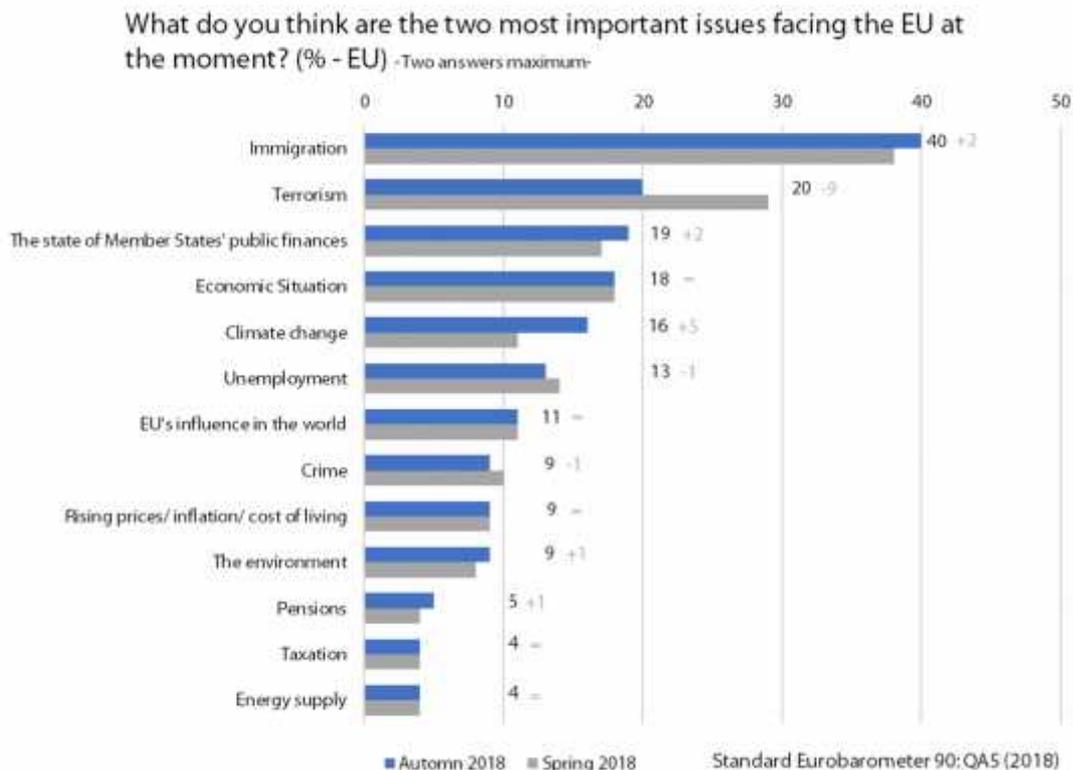
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Members will discuss [their priorities for the 21-22 March European Council](#) on Wednesday morning. Climate change, jobs, growth and competitiveness as well as external relations are expected to feature on the summit's agenda. Besides, one day after the planned vote on the negotiated withdrawal agreement in the British Parliament on 12 March, Members will debate the outcome of this vote and its consequences for the European Union agenda.

According to the European Commission's [Standard Eurobarometer, published end of December 2018](#), for the third consecutive time immigration remains the citizens' main concern, with 40% of mentions on EU average (+2 percentage points since spring 2018). Terrorism remains in second position with 20% of mentions after a third consecutive decrease (-9 since spring 2018, -18 since autumn 2017 and -24 since spring 2017).

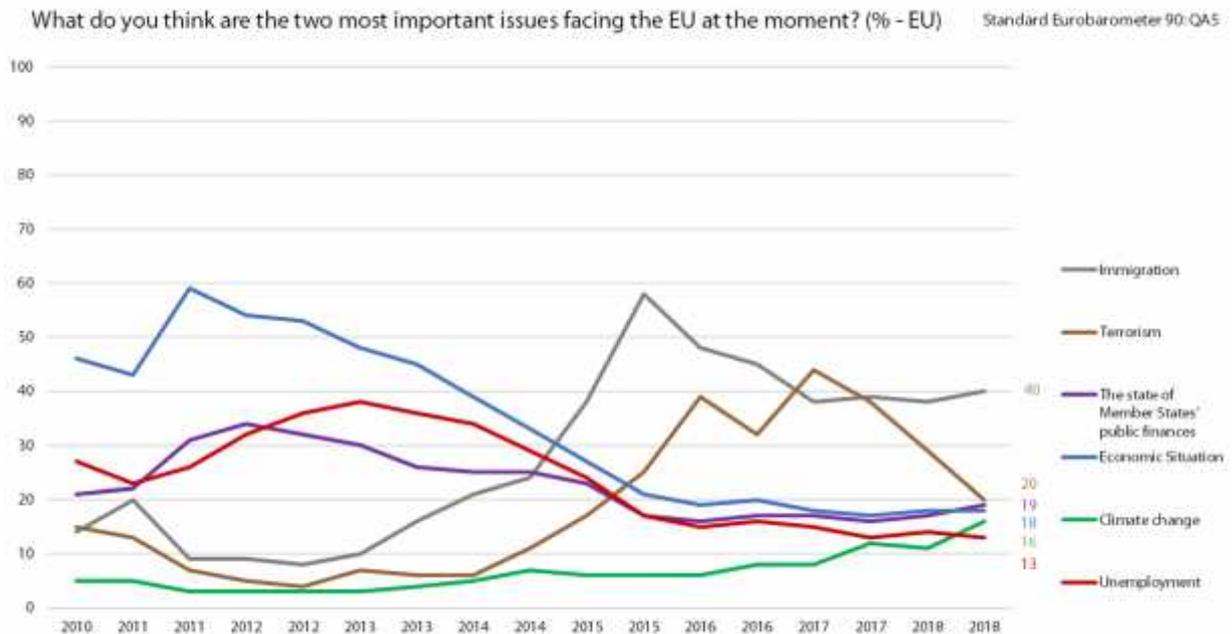
The state of Member States' public finances is in third position (19%, +2), reappearing in the top three concerns for the first time since autumn 2014 (EB82). The economic situation is in fourth place (18%, unchanged), falling out of the top three for the first time since autumn 2010.

In fifth position, at 16%, climate change registers the largest increase (+5 percentage points), reaching a new high. Unemployment is in sixth position, at 13% (-1), the lowest level for this indicator since 2010. The EU's influence in the world follows with 11% of mentions (unchanged). Other items are cited by less than 10% of respondents, and are relatively stable.



For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer \(November 2018\)](#)

Long-term trends

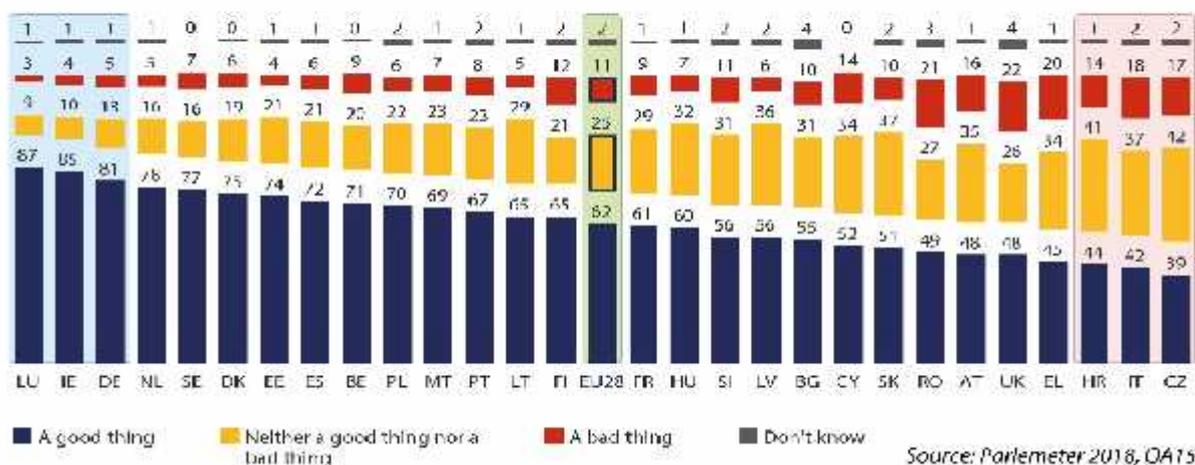


For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer \(November 2018\)](#)

Moreover, according to the [latest European Parliament Eurobarometer survey: 'Taking up the challenge'](#), published in October 2018, the share of respondents believing that their country's membership in the EU is a good thing reaches its highest value since 1992 (62%, +2 since April 2018).

On a national basis, EU membership is increasingly perceived as positive in 18 EU countries, reaching or exceeding the 75% threshold in Luxembourg (87%), Ireland (85%) Germany (81%), Netherlands (78%), Sweden (77%) and Denmark (75%). Support for EU membership decreases in seven countries, mainly in Romania by 10 points to 49%, with a negative view increasing by 7 points to 21%.

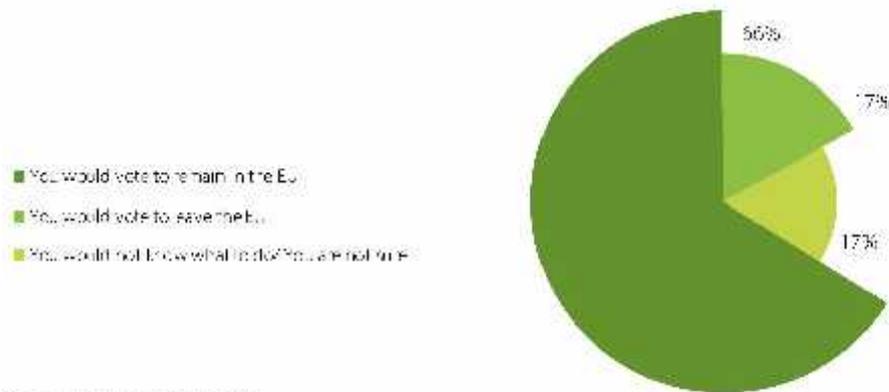
Q Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY)'s membership of the EU is...? (%)



For more detailed information: [Parlemeter 2018: Taking up the challenge \(September 2018\)](#)

In addition, over two years after the UK referendum and a few months ahead of the Art. 50 deadline which would require the UK to leave the EU on 29 March 2019, the Parlemeter 2018 put citizens' views on Brexit in perspective by asking their opinion should a similar referendum to leave the EU be held in their own country. The positive attitude towards the European Union is clearly reflected there: With a convincingly broad majority of 66%, Europeans would vote for their country to remain a member of the EU. Only 17% would vote to leave, with 17 % showing as undecided.

Q If a referendum was held tomorrow regarding (OUR COUNTRY)'s membership of the EU, how would you vote?
(% - EU)



Source: Parlemeter 2018, OAS

For more detailed information: [Parlemeter 2018 : Taking up the challenge \(September 2018\)](#)

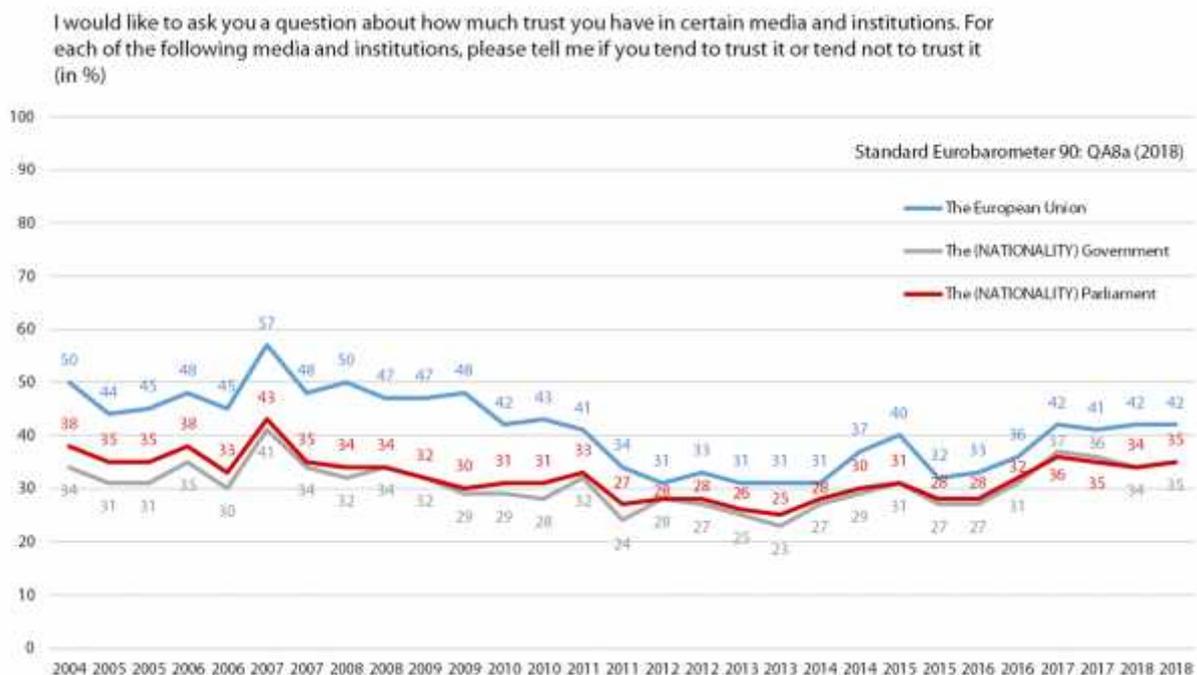
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Debate with the Prime Minister of Slovakia, Peter Pellegrini, on the Future of Europe

Parliament’s series of [debate on the future of Europe continues. The Prime Minister of Slovakia, Peter Pellegrini](#) will be the eighteenth European Union leader to debate the Future of Europe with MEPs on Tuesday morning.

According to the last [Standard Eurobarometer, published in December 2018](#), more than four in ten Europeans trust the European Union (42%, unchanged since spring 2018, the highest level since autumn 2010); in comparison, more than a third trust their national government (35%, +1 percentage point) and their national parliament (35%, +1).

Distrust in the national parliament (58% “tend not to trust”, -2 percentage points since spring 2018) and in the national government (59%, -2) has decreased. Though still the majority, less than half of Europeans “tend not to trust” the European Union (48%, unchanged since spring 2018), and one in ten respondents answer that they “don’t know” (10%).

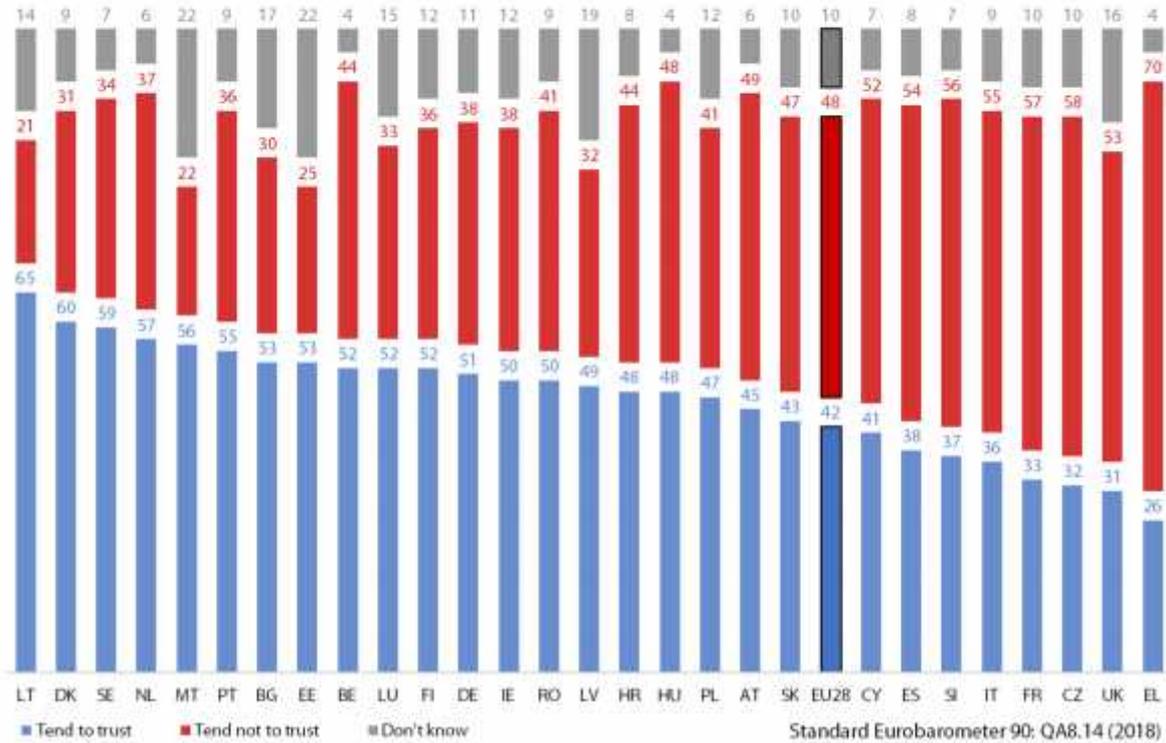


For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer \(November 2018\)](#)

Trust in the EU is predominant in 17 EU Member States (up from 15 in spring 2018), with the highest proportions in Lithuania (65%), Denmark (60%) and Sweden (59%). More than half of respondents also say they “tend to trust” the EU in the Netherlands (57%), Malta (56%), Portugal (55%), Estonia and Bulgaria (both 53%), Luxembourg, Finland and Belgium (all 52%) and Germany (51%).

At the other end of the scale, lowest proportions are seen in Greece (26%), the United Kingdom (31%) and Czechia (32%). Overall, a majority tend “not to trust” the EU in ten countries. Finally, respondents in Hungary are evenly divided (48% “tend to trust” vs. 48%).

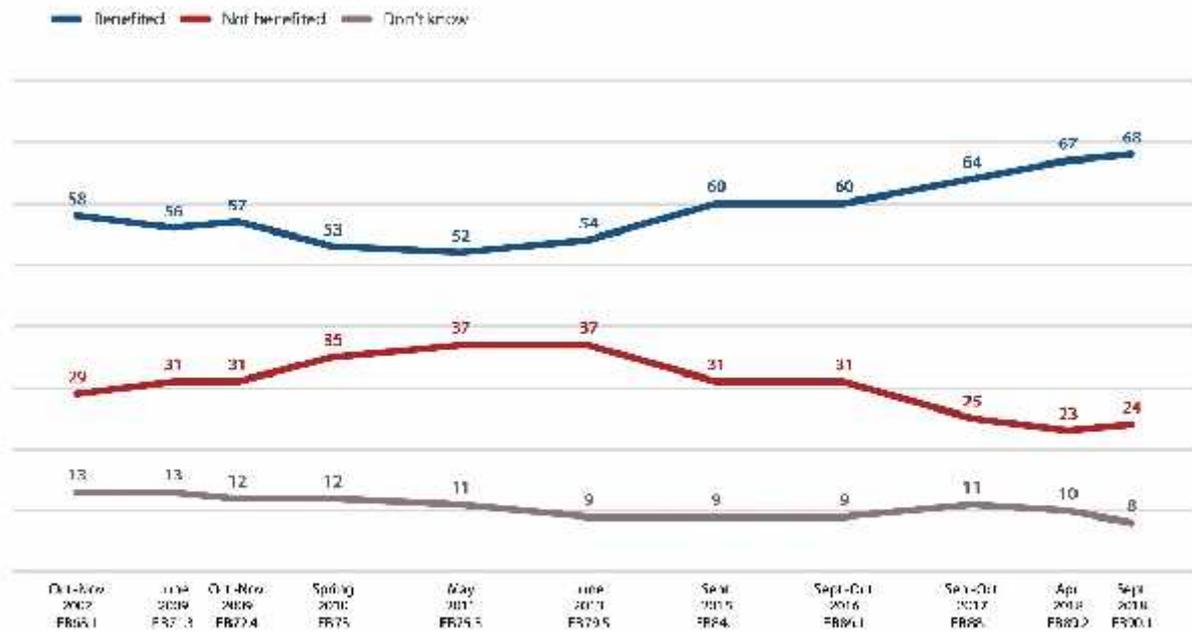
I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain media and institutions. For each of the following media and institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.
 - The European Union (in %)



For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer \(November 2018\)](#)

Moreover, according to the [European Parliament Eurobarometer survey: 'Taking up the challenge'](#), published in October 2018, 68% (+1pp since April 2018) of EU respondents believe that their country has on balance benefited from being a member of the EU, bringing this indicator to its highest level overall level since 1983.

Q Taking everything into account, would you say that (OUR COUNTRY) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the EU? (% - EU)

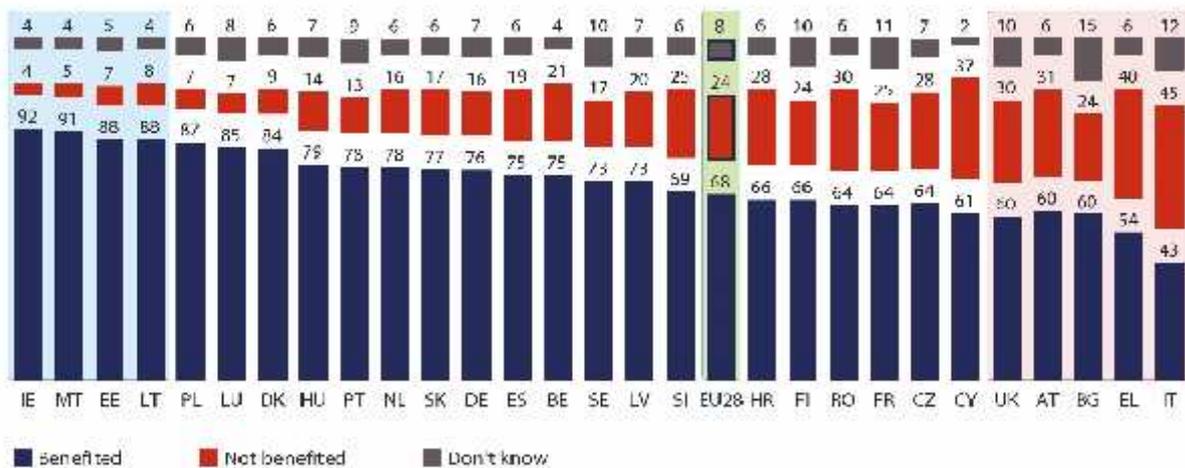


Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA16

For more detailed information: [Parlemeter 2018 : Taking up the challenge \(September 2018\)](#)

In all 27 other EU countries, a majority considers that their country has benefited from its EU membership, ranking from a maximum of 92% in Ireland to 54% in Greece - still well above an absolute majority.

Q Taking everything into account, would you say that (OUR COUNTRY) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the EU? (%)



Source: Eurobarometer 2018 QA16

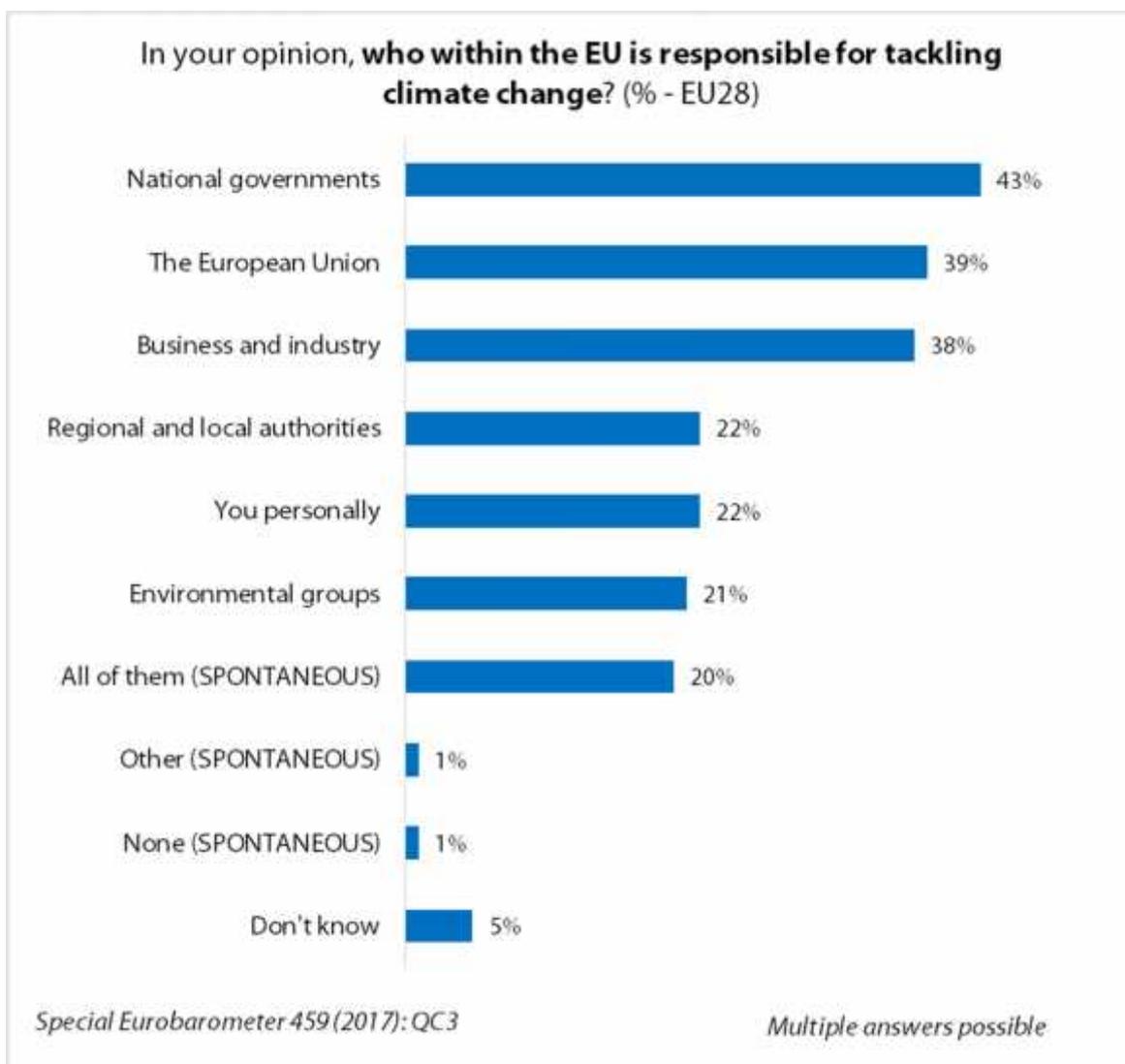
For more detailed information: [Parlemeter 2018 : Taking up the challenge \(September 2018\)](#)

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Council and Commission statements - Climate change

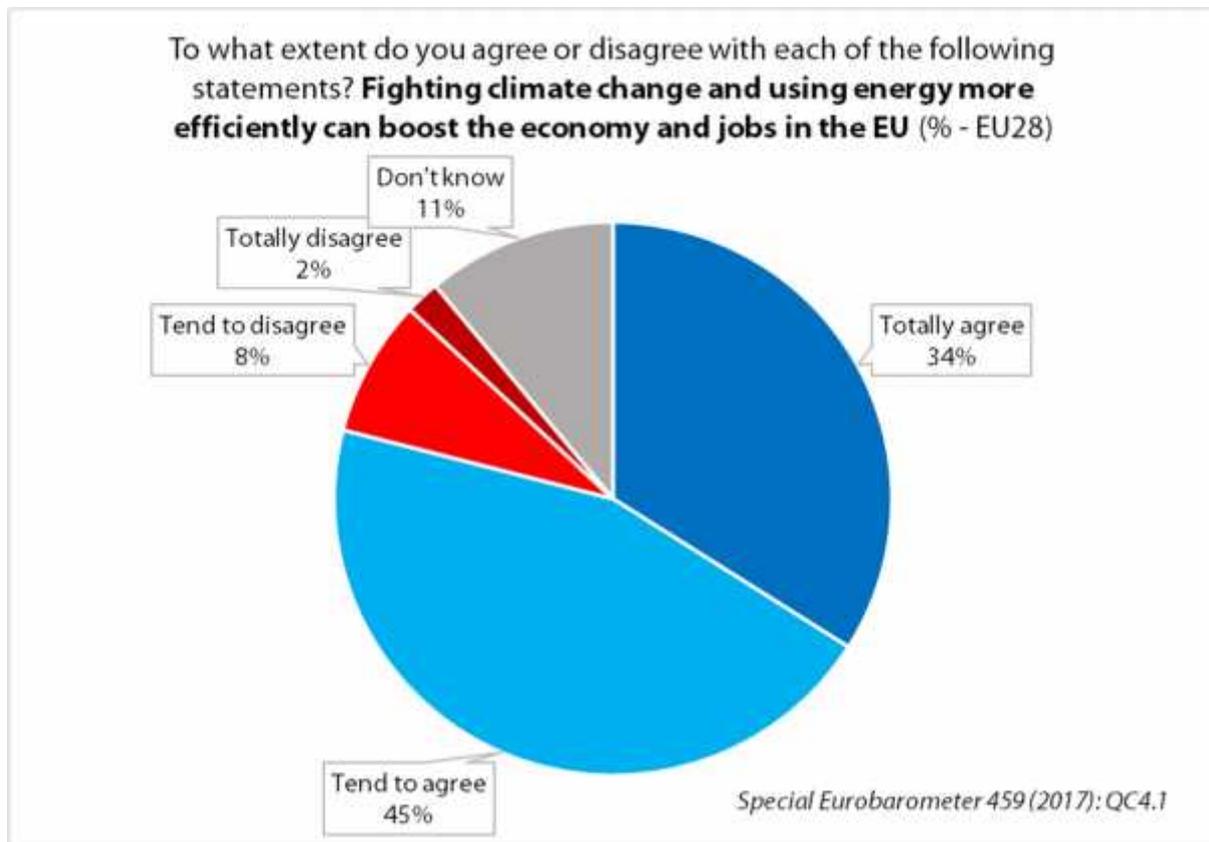
Members will discuss measures [to tackle Climate change](#) with the Commission and the Council on Wednesday morning. The European Parliament has been at the forefront of the global response to climate change, passing new legislation that will help curb greenhouse gas emissions and steer the EU towards a low-carbon economy less dependent on costly fossil fuel imports. (Vote on Thursday)

According to a [Special Eurobarometer on Climate change from March 2017](#), over four in ten respondents (43%) think national governments are responsible for tackling climate change, while just under four in ten see the EU (39%) and business and industry (38%) as bearing the main responsibility.



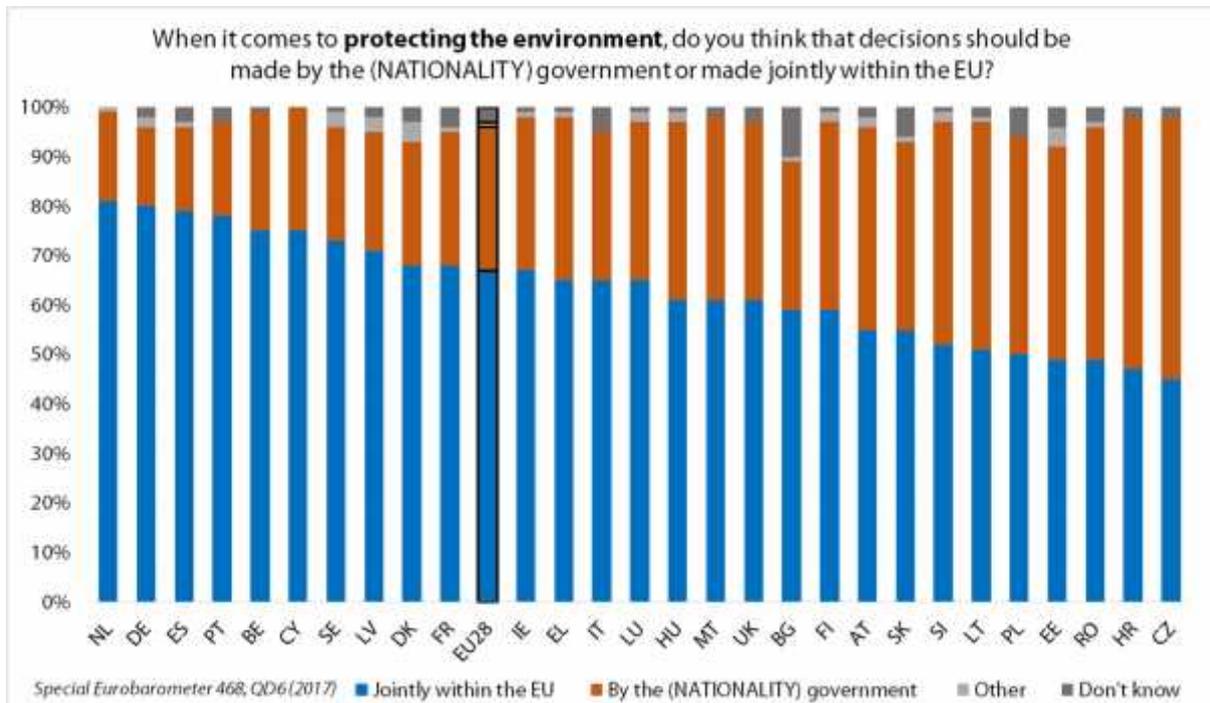
For more detailed information: [Special Eurobarometer on Climate change \(March 2017\)](#)

Around eight in ten EU respondents think fighting climate change and using energy more efficiently can boost the economy and jobs in the EU.



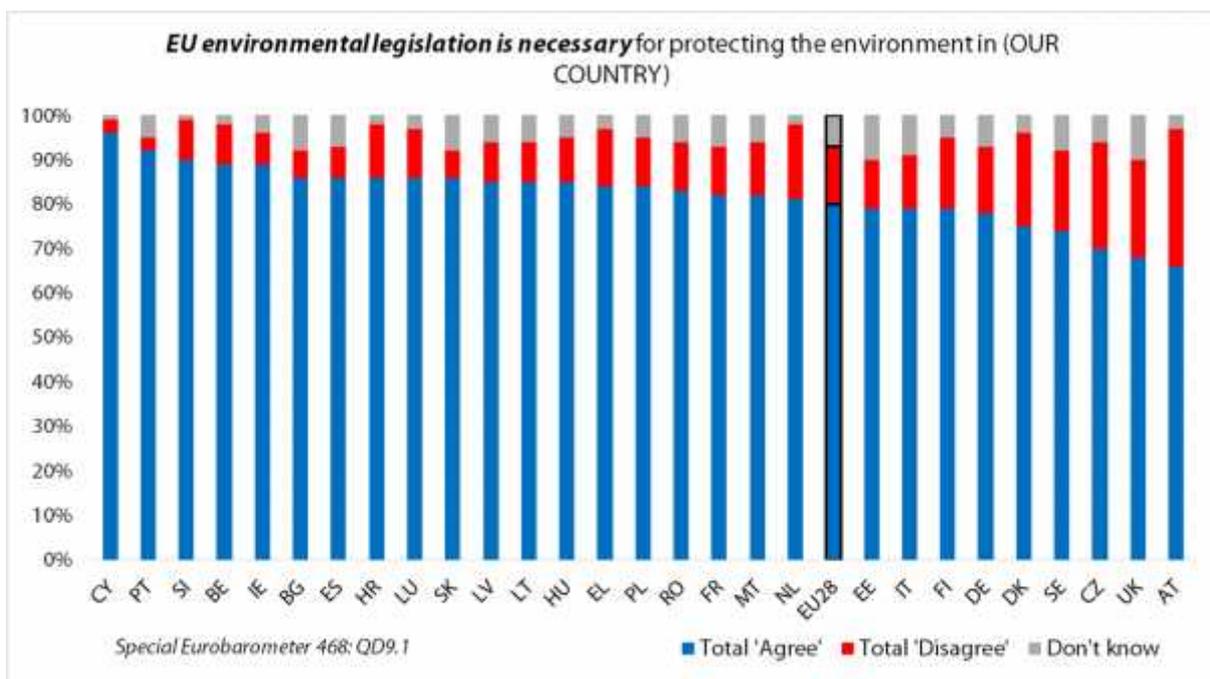
For more detailed information: [Special Eurobarometer on Climate change \(March 2017\)](#)

According to a special [Eurobarometer on Attitudes of European citizens towards the Environment from October 2017](#), 67% of Europeans think that environmental decisions should be taken jointly within the EU, 29% believe that national governments should take such decisions individually.



For more detailed information: [Special Eurobarometer on Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment \(Oct. 2017\)](#)

Moreover, a large majority of Europeans agree that European Union environmental legislation is necessary for protecting the environment in their country.



For more detailed information: [Special Eurobarometer on Attitudes of European citizens towards the environment \(Oct. 2017\)](#)

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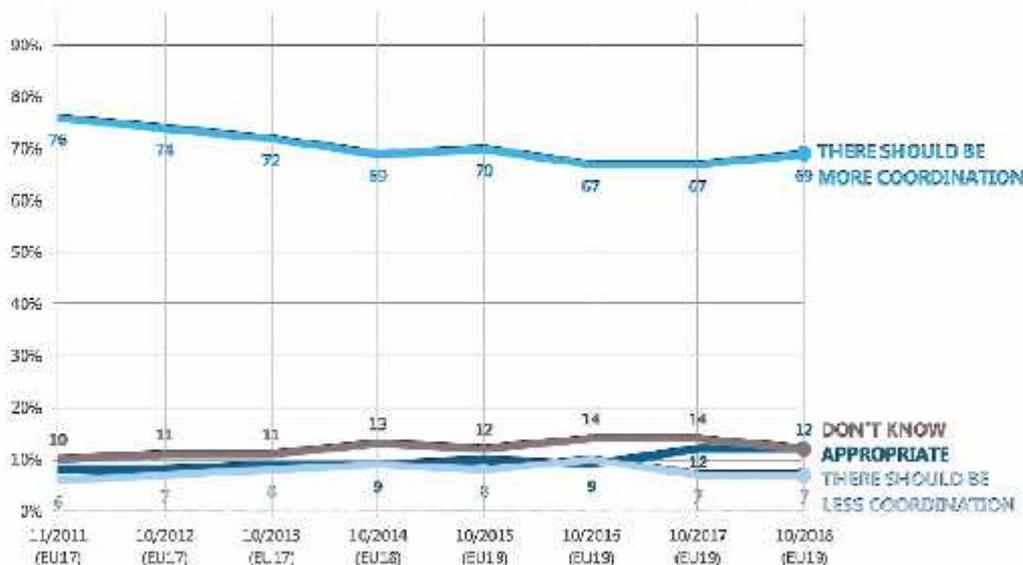
European semester for economic policy and coordination

The European Union’s economic, social and single market priorities for 2019 will be the focus of a debate with the European Commission on the [“European Semester” for economic policy coordination](#) on Wednesday afternoon. They are to vote two separate resolutions on these issues on Thursday.

According to a [flash Eurobarometer survey on the Euro area from October 2018](#), more than two-thirds of respondents (69%) answer that there should be more coordination on economic policy among euro area governments.

Looking at the longer-term picture, the proportion of respondents who believe that there should be more coordination on economic policy among euro area governments has gradually decreased between 2011 and 2017, down from 76% to 67%. However, this downward trend seems to stop with this 2-percentage point increase compared to 2017, the biggest increase in the 2011-2018 series (and only the second one after the 1-percentage point increase between 2014 and 2015).

Q Do you think that the degree to which economic policy, including budgetary policies, is coordinated in the euro area is appropriate? Should there be more or less coordination among euro-area governments? (% EURO AREA)

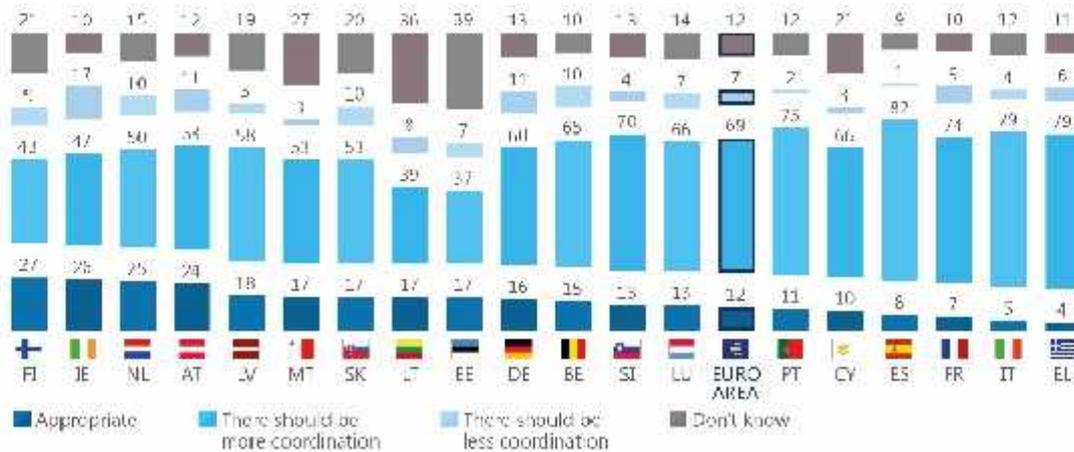


Source: Flash Eurobarometer 423 (Q)

For more detailed information: [Flash Eurobarometer on the Euro area \(October 2018\)](#)

At country level, the perception that there should be more economic policy coordination among euro area governments is the majority view in all euro area countries, with the highest scores in Spain (82%), Greece and Italy (both 79%), Portugal (75%) and France (74%). This view is least widespread in Estonia (37%), where the ‘don’t know’ rate is slightly higher (39%), Lithuania (39%), Finland (43%) and Ireland (47%). On the other hand, the proportion of respondents who believe that there should be less coordination vary between 17% in Ireland and just 1% in Spain.

Q Do you think that the degree to which economic policy, including budgetary policies, is coordinated in the euro area is appropriate? Should there be more or less coordination among euro-area governments? (%)



Source: Flash Eurobarometer 473, Q8

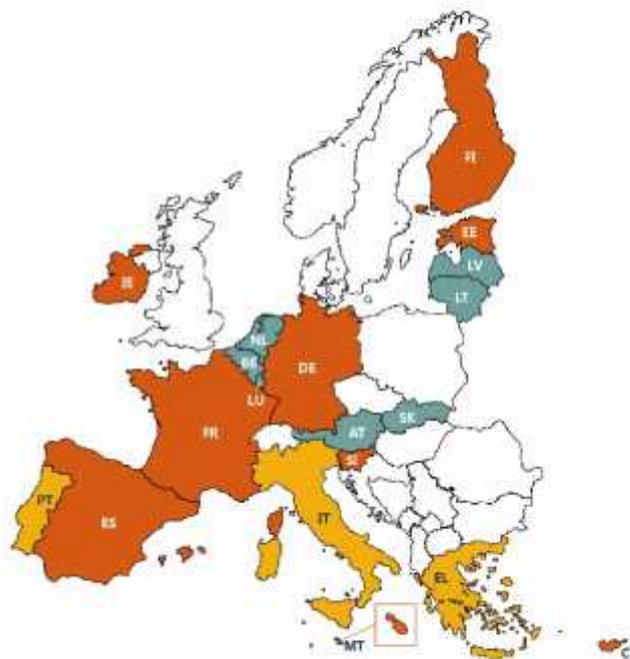
For more detailed information: [Flash Eurobarometer on the Euro area \(October 2018\)](#)

Since 2017, the proportion of respondents who think that the degree to which economic policy is coordinated in the euro area is appropriate has decreased in nine euro area countries, most notably in Malta (-7 percentage points). On the contrary, it has increased in seven other countries, in particular in Latvia (+7 pp), followed by Lithuania (+5). In the three remaining countries, the proportion who think that way remains unchanged: Portugal, Italy and Greece.

Q Do you think that the degree to which economic policy, including budgetary policies, is coordinated in the euro area is appropriate? Should there be more or less coordination among euro-area governments? (% APPROPRIATE)

LV	18	▲ 7
LT	17	▲ 5
BE	15	▲ 3
AT	24	▲ 3
SK	17	▲ 3
LU	13	▲ 3
NL	25	▲ 2
EURO AREA	12	=
IT	5	=
PT	11	=
EL	4	=
FI	27	▼ 1
FR	7	▼ 1
CY	10	▼ 1
IE	26	▼ 2
DE	16	▼ 2
SI	13	▼ 2
EE	17	▼ 2
ES	8	▼ 3
MT	17	▼ 7

Map Legend
 Positive
 Stable
 Negative



(October 2018 - October 2017)

Source: Flash Eurobarometer 473, Q8

For more detailed information: [Flash Eurobarometer on the Euro area \(October 2018\)](#)

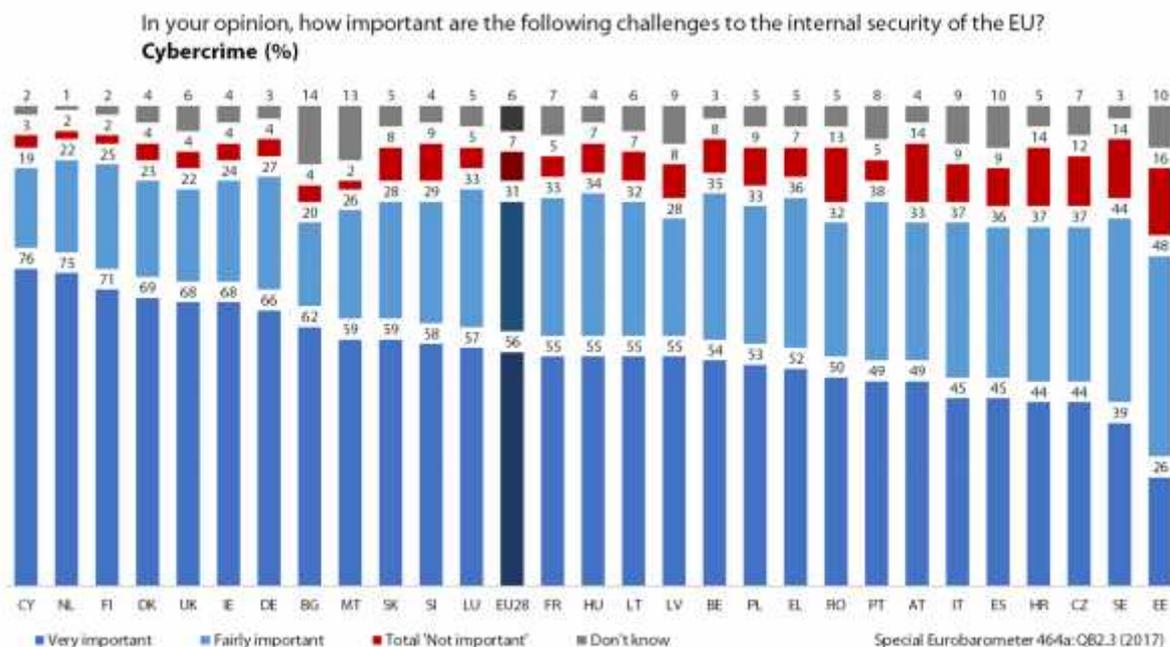
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European Union cybersecurity Act

Next Tuesday, Parliament is set to adopt the [European Union Cybersecurity Act](#), which will strengthen Europe’s cybersecurity, by setting up a European Cybersecurity certificates scheme for products, processes and services and by extending the mandate of the EU Cybersecurity Agency (debate on Monday).

According to a [special Eurobarometer on Europeans’ attitudes towards cybersecurity from June 2017](#), nearly nine in ten (87%) of those surveyed see cybercrime as an important challenge to the EU security: over half (56%) see it as a very important problem while just under a third (31%) view it as a fairly important problem.

There are significant country-level differences in the proportions of respondents who think that cybercrime is a very important security issue. In 20 28 Member States, 50% or more of those polled see this issue as very important, ranging from just 50% in Romania to three quarters of respondents in the Netherlands (75%) and Cyprus (76%).

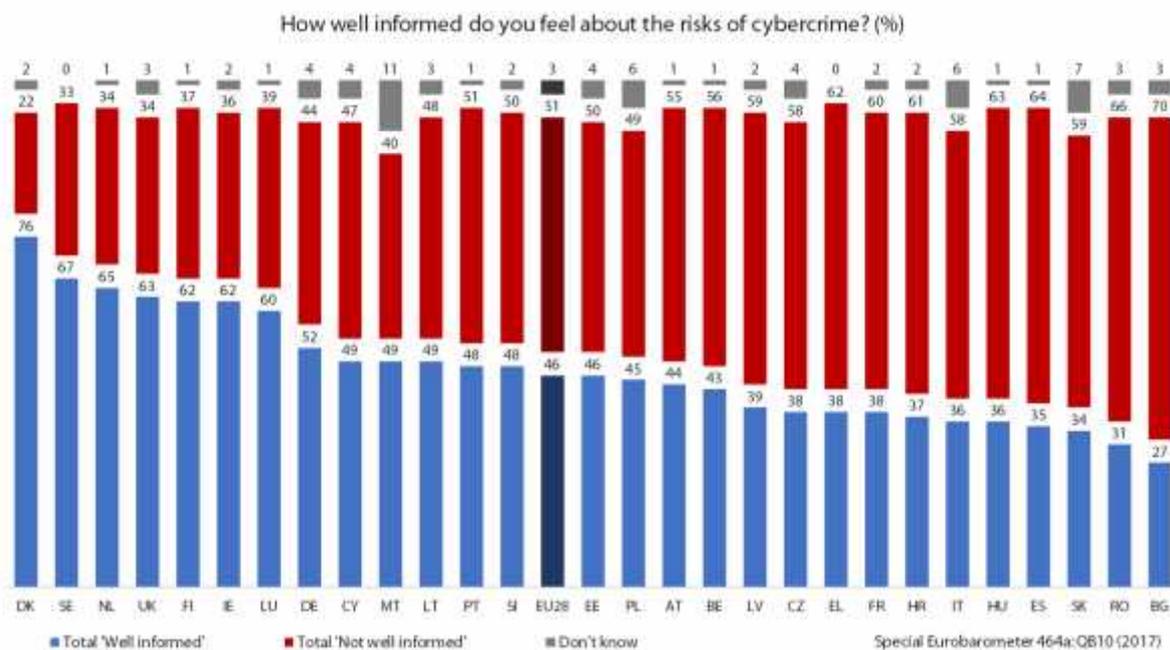


For more detailed information: [Special Eurobarometer on Europeans' attitudes towards Cybersecurity \(June 2017\)](#)

Just over half (51%) of respondents say they feel 'not well informed' about cybercrime, with nearly a fifth (19%) considering themselves completely uninformed and almost a third (32%) saying that they are 'not very well informed'. Only a very small proportion of respondents (3%) do not know whether they are well informed or not.

Results vary significantly across Member States. In 11 Member States, a relative majority of respondents consider themselves to be 'well informed' about cybercrime, ranging from over three quarters (76%) of respondents in Denmark to just under half (49%) of those polled in Lithuania. Denmark also has the highest proportion of respondents who feel 'very well informed' (24%).

In the remaining countries, the proportion of respondents who feel 'not well informed' outweighs the proportion of those who feel 'well informed'. In Bulgaria, seven in ten (70%) of respondents give this response, with nearly four in ten (37%) saying that they feel 'not at all informed' about this issue. In many cases, the proportion of respondents who are 'not at all informed' is significantly higher than the proportion who consider themselves 'very well informed', and in nine countries at least a quarter (25%) of respondents say they have no knowledge of cybercrime issues.



For more detailed information: [Special Eurobarometer on Europeans' attitudes towards Cybersecurity \(June 2017\)](#)

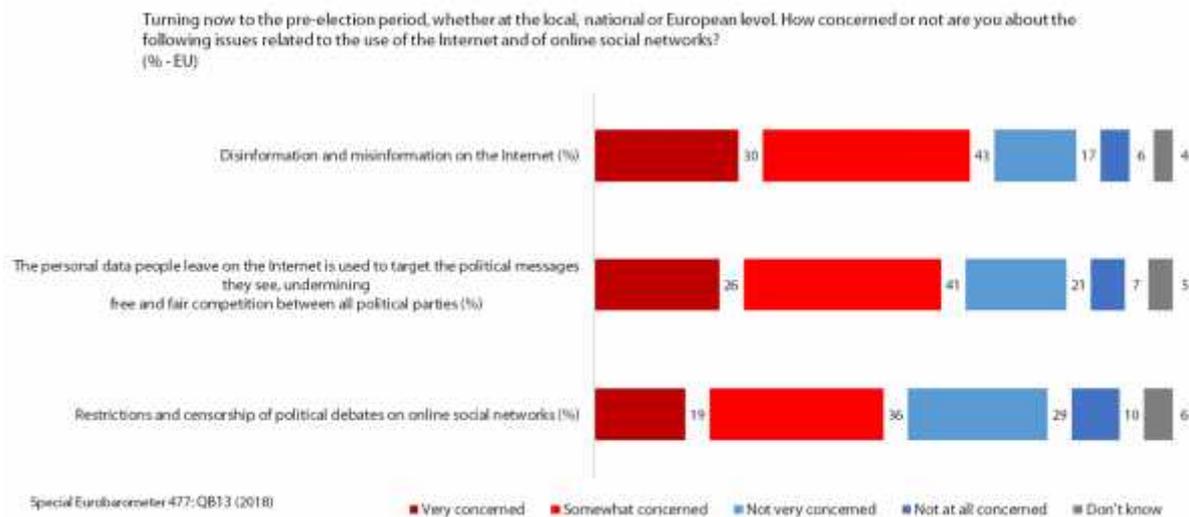
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Protection of personal data in the context of elections to the European Parliament

Democracy is a fundamental principle of the European Union. The importance of representation and participation, through free and fair elections and an open, informed and plural political debate represent the cornerstones of a functioning democracy. Thus, in the run up of the next European Elections in May, Members will vote next Tuesday a report [on the protection of personal data in the context of elections to the European Parliament](#).

Are these concerns shared by European Union citizens? The answer is clearly “yes” according to a [Special Eurobarometer on democracy and elections from September 2018](#) in which respondents who use the Internet were asked to think about the pre-election period during local, national or European elections, and the use of the Internet and social networks during this time.

-) Almost three quarters (73%) answered they are concerned about *disinformation or misinformation online*, with 30% ‘very concerned’ about this.
-) More than two thirds (67%) said to be concerned that *the personal data people leave on the Internet is used to target the political messages they see, undermining free and fair competition between all political parties*: 26% were ‘very concerned’ about this.
-) More than half (55%) answered they are concerned about *restrictions and censorship of political debates on online social networks*, with 19% ‘very concerned’.

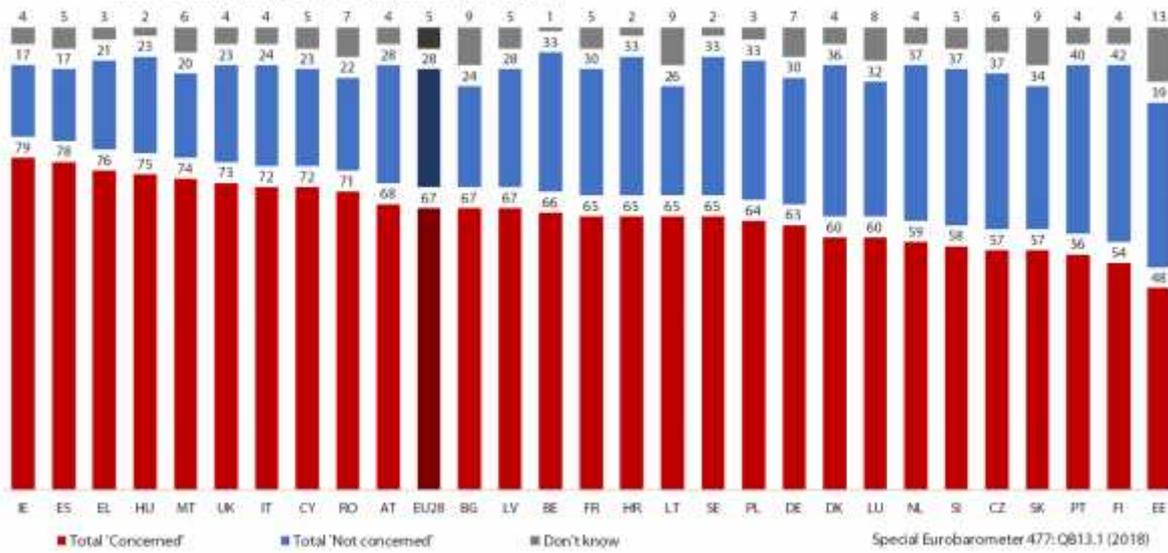


For more detailed information: [Special Eurobarometer on Democracy and elections \(September 2018\)](#)

In addition, amongst respondents who use the Internet, at least three quarters in Ireland (79%), Spain (78%), Greece (76%) and Hungary (75%) were concerned the personal data people leave on the Internet is used to target the political messages they see, undermining free and fair competition between all political parties. Estonia is the only country where fewer than half were concerned (48%), followed by Finland (54%) and Portugal (56%). However, it is worth noting that even in Estonia Internet-using respondents were more likely to be concerned than not concerned (39%).

Turning now to the pre-election period, whether at the local, national or European level. How concerned or not are you about the following issues related to the use of the Internet and of online social networks?

The personal data people leave on the Internet is used to target the political messages they see, undermining free and fair competition between all political parties (%)



For more detailed information: [Special Eurobarometer on Democracy and elections \(September 2018\)](#)

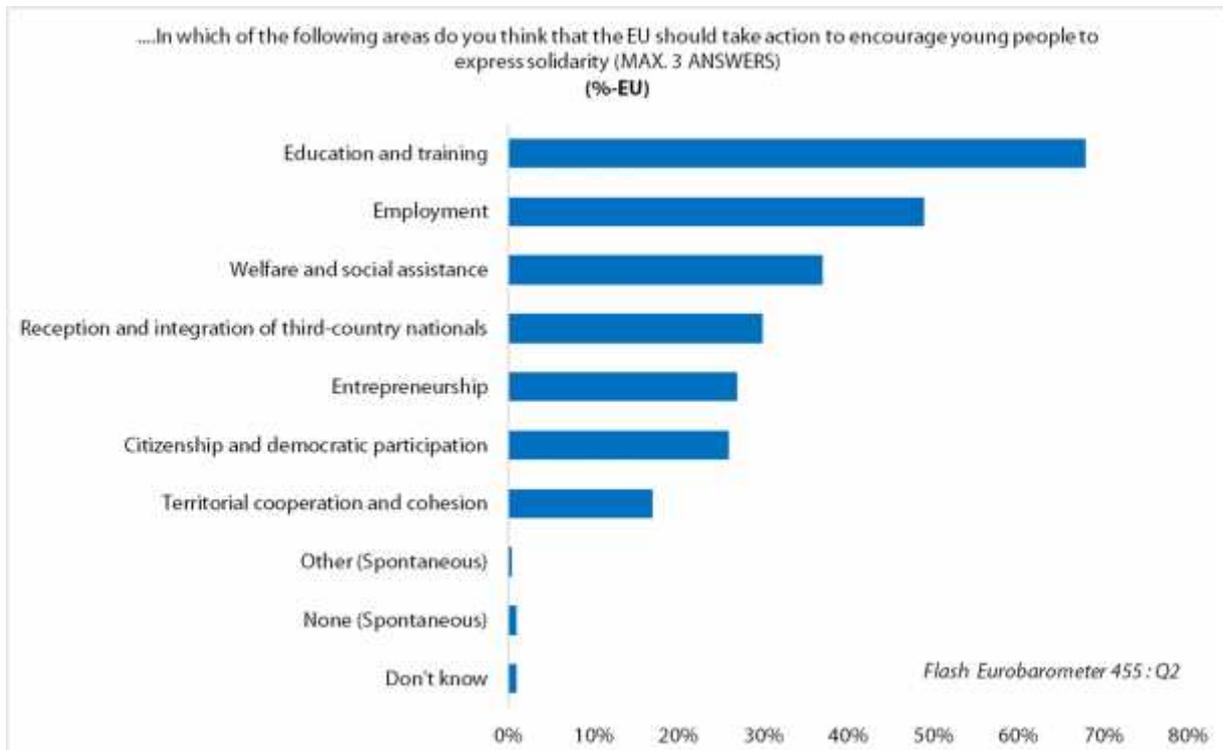
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European Solidarity Corps programme

The European Union is built on solidarity, a shared value which is strongly felt throughout European society and which provides a clear compass to guide the European youth in their aspirations for a better Union. Thus, the Plenary will discuss (on Monday) and vote (on Tuesday) the implementation of the European Solidarity Corps programme putting the spotlight on the value of volunteering and young people's contribution to society.

In the [Flash Eurobarometer on European Youth from September 2017](#), respondents were told about the European Solidarity Corps initiative that creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their own country or abroad that benefit communities and people around Europe. They were then asked about the areas where they thought the EU should take action to encourage young people to express solidarity.

More than two thirds of respondents think the EU should take action in the area of education and training to encourage young people to express solidarity (68%). This is the only area mentioned by at least half of all respondents, although almost half (49%) mention employment.



For more detailed information: [Flash Eurobarometer on European Youth \(September 2017\)](#)

