

# PLENARY INSIGHTS

Public opinion at a glance

December 2022



Each plenary session, DG COMM's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit (POMU) provides Members with relevant public opinion data on key topics on the agenda:

- **Outcome of the COP27:** A large majority of Europeans declares that climate change is something that frightens them and more than eight in ten think it is important to make our continent the world's first climate neutral one by 2050, finds the [EB Key Challenges of our Times – The EU in 2022](#) survey.

- **Renewable energy, energy efficiency:** According to the same survey, four in ten citizens (40%) believe their home needs an energy-efficient renovation, but the majority states that making their home more energy efficient is too expensive, and they cannot afford it, according to the survey [Fairness perceptions of the green transition](#).

- **Defending Democracy from foreign interference: 70% Europeans are in favour of a common foreign policy** of the Member States of the EU, **and 80% agree that “the EU’s voice counts in the world”**. Most EU Member States have seen an increase in the proportion that agree that “the EU’s voice counts in the world”, according to [EB Key Challenges of our Times – The EU in 2022](#).

- **Digital divide - the social differences created by digitalisation:** there are clearly **differences in the media usage between socio-demographic groups** - younger respondents are much more likely to use social media platform and blogs than the older respondents (46% of 15-24 year-olds vs 15% of 55+ year-olds), according to the [“Media & News Survey 2022”](#); In the survey [“Key Challenges of our Times-The EU in 2022”](#), **younger respondents aged 15-24 are more likely to think the EU should prioritise working on the digital transformation** of the economy and of society in the EU.

For more information on the topics covered in this edition, the methodology of our surveys or on additional services offered to Members by DG COMM's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit, please contact:

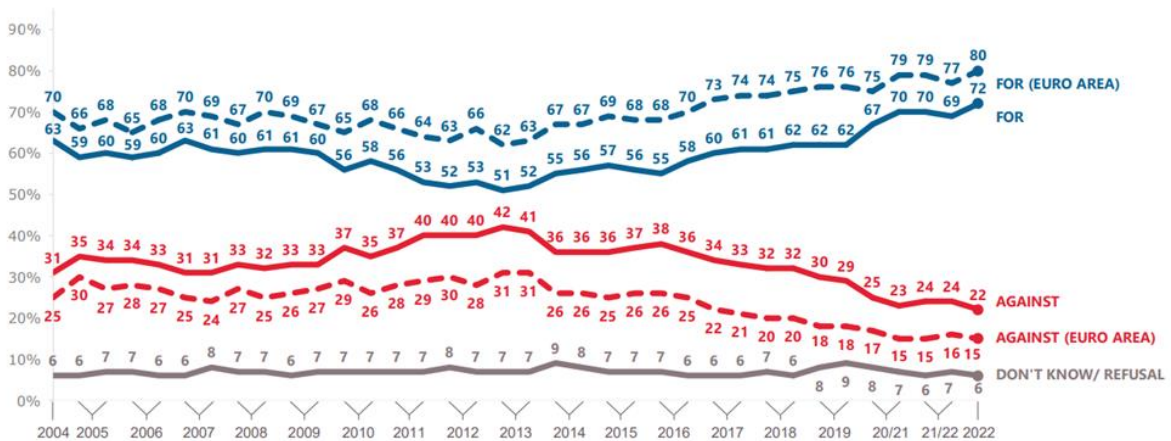
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## This is Europe: debate with PM of Slovenia

During the plenary session in Strasbourg on 13 December, the Slovenian Prime Minister Robert Golob will debate over the state and evolution of the Union. Golob became Prime Minister of Slovenia in May 2022, and he is leading the government coalition the Social Democrats and the Left. Golob identified tackling problems in healthcare and containing rising energy and food prices as the priorities of his government.

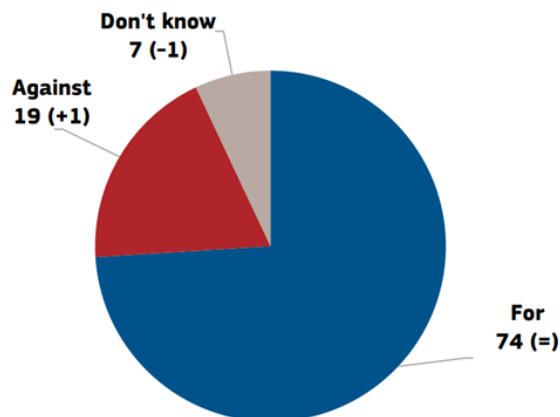
[In the last EB Standard](#) (conducted between 17 June and 17 July 2022), **the support for a European economic and monetary union with one single currency** has increased three percentage points and is now at its highest ever level (72%). In addition, opposition to the euro has declined to its lowest ever level (22%, -2 percentage points):

**QB5.1** What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.  
**A European economic and monetary union with one single currency, the euro (% - EU)**



74% of respondents are for the EU's common trade policy, while 19% are against it (+1 percentage point). Fewer than one in ten (7%) say they don't know or are unable to answer.

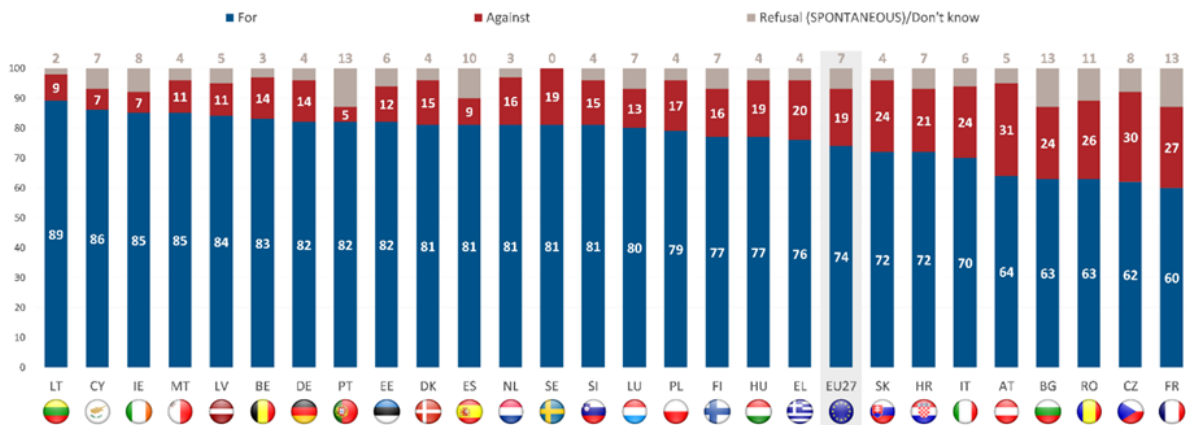
**QB3.3** What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.  
**The EU's common trade policy (% - EU27)**



(Jun. / Jul. 2022 - Jan. / Feb. 2022)

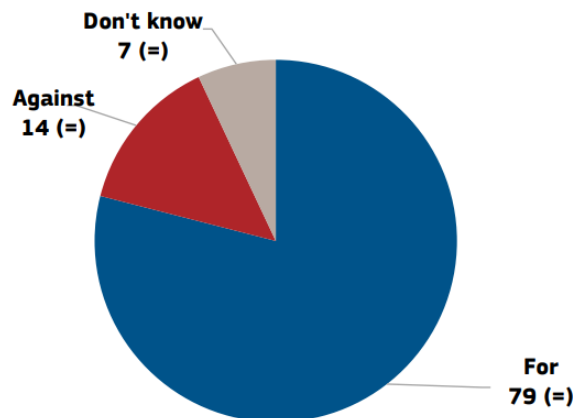
Since winter 2021-2022 **support for the EU's common trade policy** has increased in 12 MS and declined in ten countries incl. Estonia (82%, -8 pp), Croatia (72%, -7 pp) and Czechia (62%, -5 pp).

QB3.3 What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.  
(% - The EU's common trade policy)



79% are in favour of new measures at the EU level to improve gender equality in the workplace:

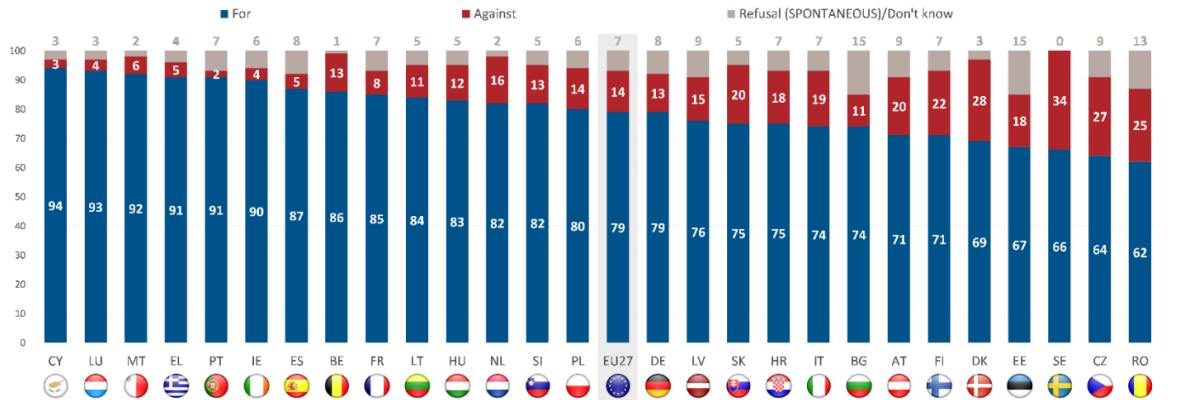
QB5.4 What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.  
Implementation of new measures at the EU level to improve gender equality in the workplace (e.g. pay-transparency measures or quotas to improve gender balance in management and leading positions)  
(% - EU27)



(Jun. / Jul. 2022 - Jan. / Feb. 2022)

At a national level, the support ranges from 94% in Cyprus, 93% in Luxembourg and 92% in Malta to 62% in Romania, 64% in Czechia and 66% in Sweden. Sweden is the only Member State where at least three in ten are against this idea (34%):

QB5.4 What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.  
 (% - Implementation of new measures at the EU level to improve gender equality in the workplace  
 (e.g. pay-transparency measures or quotas to improve gender balance in management and leading positions))



For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer 97](#) (September 2022)

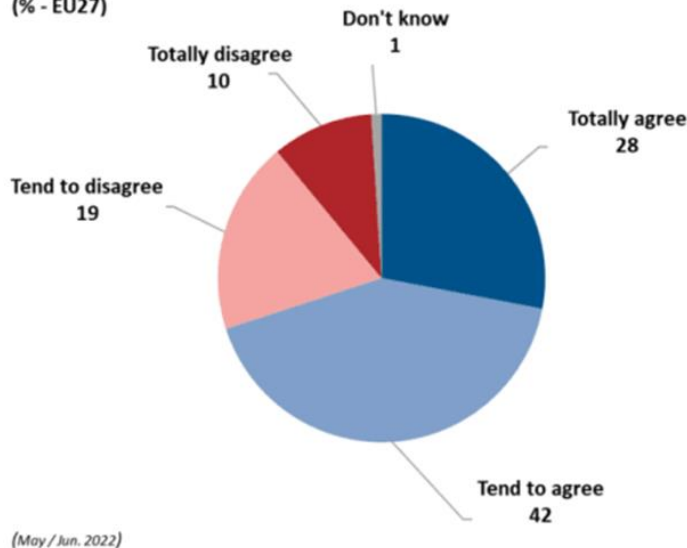
## Outcome of the COP27

The UN Climate Change Conference (COP27) concluded on 20 November in Sharmel-Sheikh, Egypt: leaders decided to establish a fund to compensate vulnerable nations for ‘loss and damage’ from climate-induced disasters.

The conclusions of this Conference will be the focus of a debate on Monday 12 December. As clearly stated in the resolution adopted last October, MEPs consider the climate and biodiversity crises among the most important challenges facing humanity.

**Citizens are frightened about climate change:** according to the survey [“Key challenges of our times - the EU in 2022”](#) conducted last May, seven in ten respondents agree that climate change is something that frightens them, with 28% saying they “totally agree” with this statement. Almost three in ten (29%) disagree, with 10% saying they “totally disagree”.

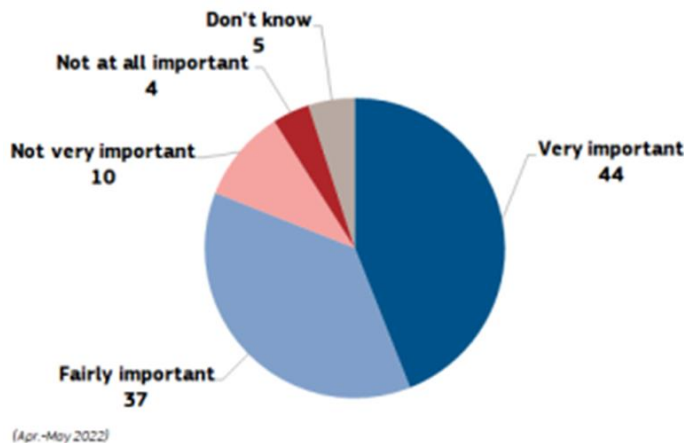
QA1.3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
 Climate change is something that frightens you  
 (% - EU27)



For more detailed information: [Key Challenges of our Times: The EU in 2022](#) (April-May 2022)

Proportions vary from 89% in Portugal, 88% in Malta and 83% in Cyprus to 53% in Czechia. **Southern European countries tend to show high levels of agreement:** following Portugal and Malta; Cyprus (83%), Italy (82%) and Greece (80%) have the highest levels of agreement. In contrast, only 40% in Estonia and 49% in Finland also agree, while in the Netherlands, the opinion is divided (50% agree and 50% disagree).

QC9.3 Please tell how important or not important each of the following is:  
Making Europe the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050  
(% - EU)

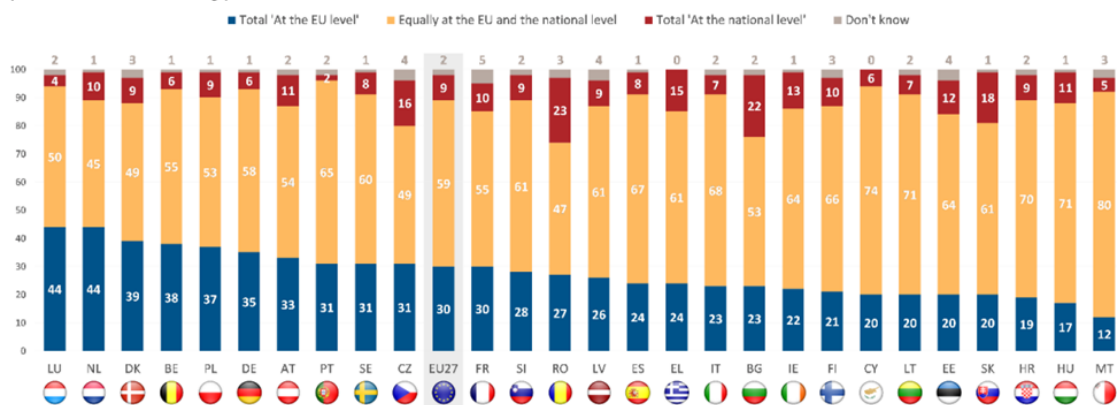


For more detailed information: [Key Challenges of our Times: The EU in 2022](#) (April-May 2022)

Europeans would like the EU to speed up the process to tackle climate change issues: **eight in ten respondents (81%, +1 since September-October 2021) think it is important to make our continent the world's first climate neutral one by 2050.**

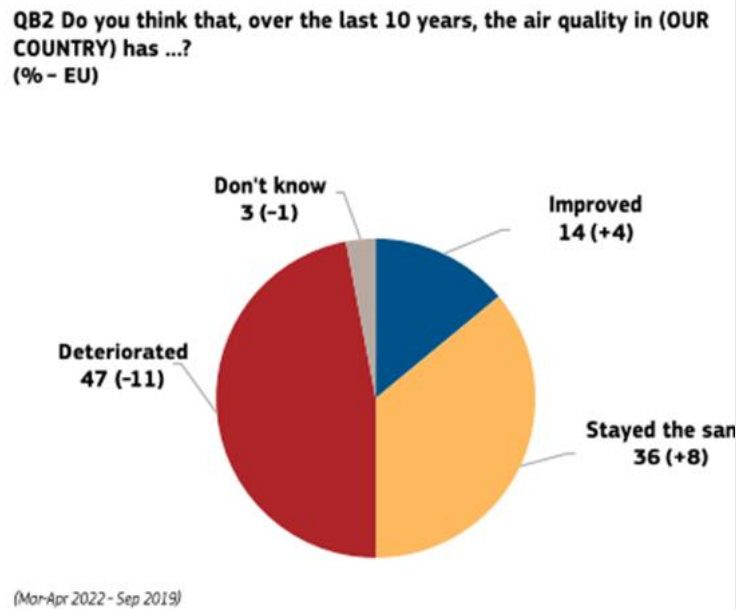
In 16 Member States, more than eight in ten respondents say it is important to make Europe the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050. Respondents are most likely to see this as important in Cyprus (94%), Portugal (92%), as well as Ireland and Malta (both 90%). In four Member States, less than two thirds of respondents think this objective is important: Estonia (48%), Czechia (53%), Latvia (61%) and Finland (65%)

QC11.5 In your opinion, at what level can we deal with each of the following areas most efficiently?  
(% - Environment and climate change)



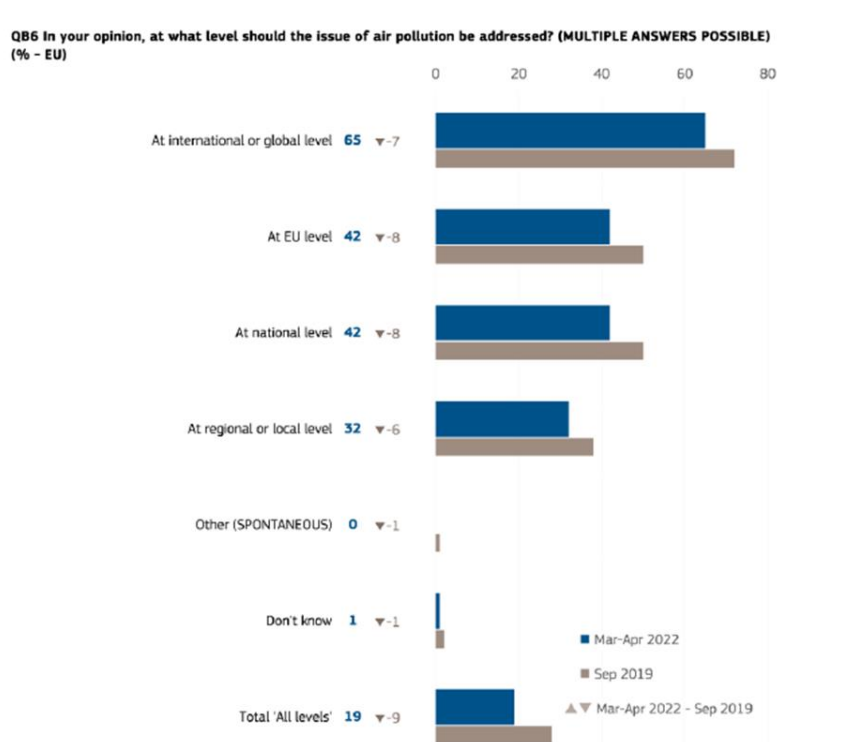
For more detailed information: [Key Challenges of our Times: The EU in 2022](#) (April-May 2022)

In every country, respondents think the environment and climate change should be handled mainly/only at the EU level rather than mainly/only at the national level. The strongest preference for action at the EU level is seen in Luxembourg, the Netherlands (both 44%), Denmark (39%) and Belgium (38%). The proportion that favours mainly/only the national level ranges from 2% in Portugal to 23% in Romania. In all Member States, the most common answer is that the environment and climate change should be dealt with at the EU and national levels equally, with the highest proportions seen in Malta (80%), Cyprus (74%), Hungary and Lithuania (both 71%)



For more detailed information: [Attitudes of Europeans towards Air quality](#) (March-April 2022)

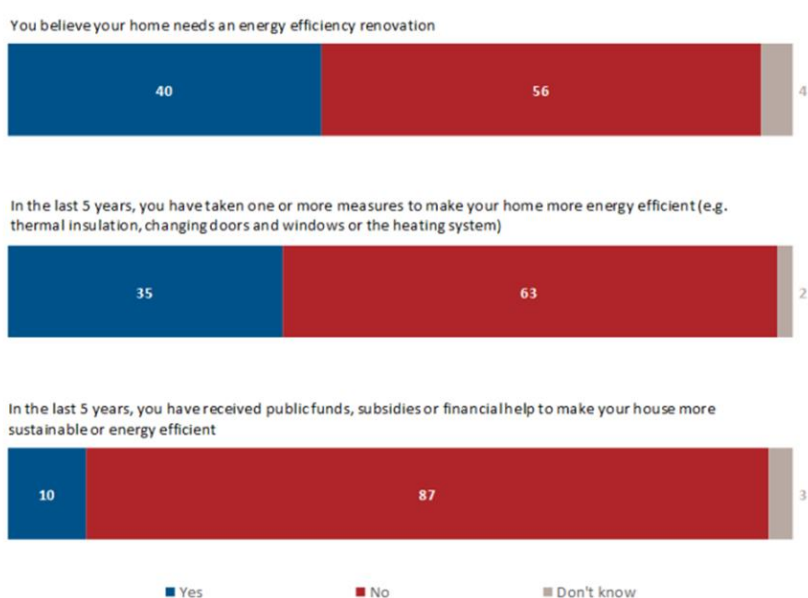
As shown in the survey [“Attitudes of Europeans towards Air Quality”](#) **air quality is also a key concern of Europeans**: nearly half of them think that air quality has worsened over the last years and a large majority think that this issue should be addressed at international level.



## Renewable energy, energy efficiency

On Tuesday 5 October, **Parliament will debate about amendments to EU legislation in the energy field** that would accelerate the take-up of renewable energy sources and promote further increased energy efficiency and savings. **A recent [EC Eurobarometer survey](#) shows that four in ten EU citizens (40%) believe their home needs an energy-efficient renovation.** In the last five years, 35% of respondents have taken one or more measures to make their home more energy efficient (e.g., thermal insulation, changing doors and windows or the heating system), but most (63%) have not. Over the same period, 10% of respondents have received public subsidies or financial help to make their house more energy efficient. The large majority (87%), however, has not.

Q48. For each of the following statements, please tell if it applies to you.  
(% - EU)



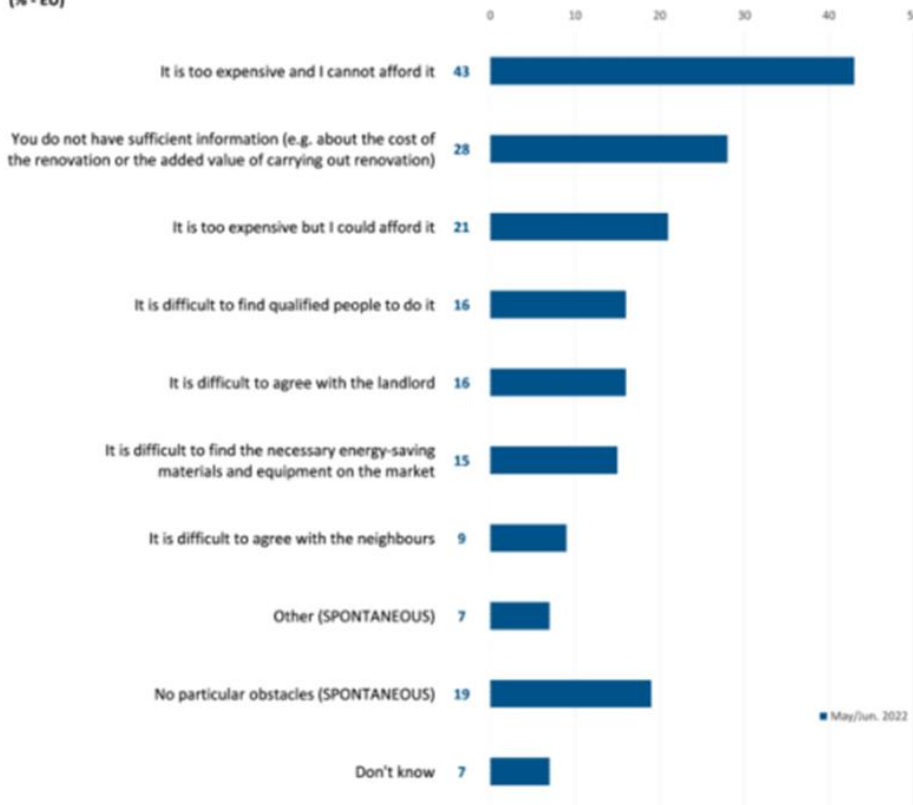
For more detailed information: [Fairness perceptions of the green transition](#) (May-June 2022)

### What are the obstacles faced by citizens?

When Europeans are asked about the obstacles to making their home more energy efficient **cost seems to be the main barrier**, with 43% saying making their home more energy efficient is too expensive, and they cannot afford it. At least one in five respondents also mention that they do not have sufficient information (28%) or that it is too expensive, but they could afford it (21%).

More than one in ten say it is difficult to find qualified people to make these changes or that it is difficult to agree with the landlord (both 16%), while 15% say it is difficult to find the necessary energy-saving materials and equipment on the market. Almost one in ten (9%) say it is difficult to agree with the neighbours. Almost one in five (19%) say there are no particular obstacles to making their home more energy efficient, while more than one in twenty (7%) say they don't know.

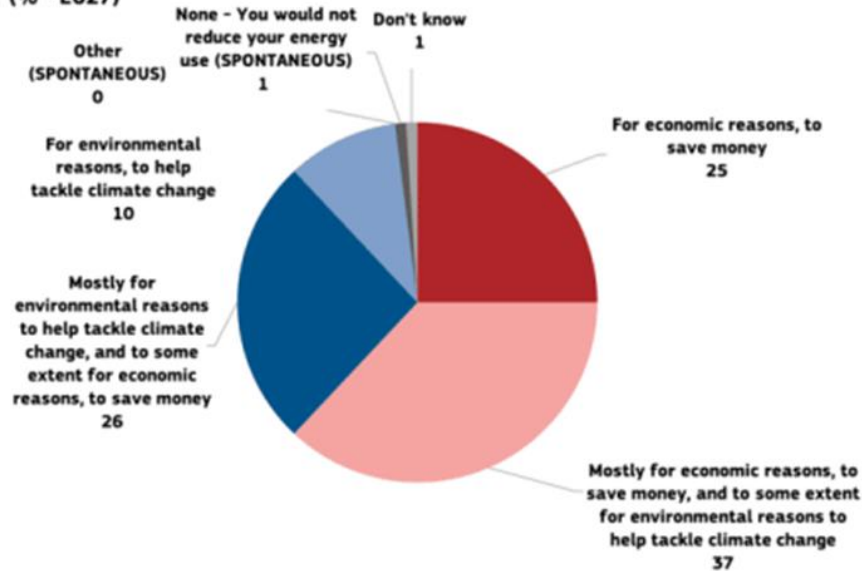
QA9T Regardless of whether or not you have taken any measures, what are the main obstacles to making your home more energy efficient? Firstly? And secondly? (MAX 3 ANSWERS)  
(% - EU)



For more detailed information: [Fairness perceptions of the green transition](#) (May-June 2022)

**Saving money is the main motivator for reducing energy use: 62% say they would reduce their energy use mainly or only for economic reasons, while 36% would do so mainly or only for environmental reasons.**

QA4 Thinking about the main reason why you would reduce your energy use, which one corresponds best to your own situation? You would reduce your energy use:  
(% - EU27)



(May / Jun. 2022)

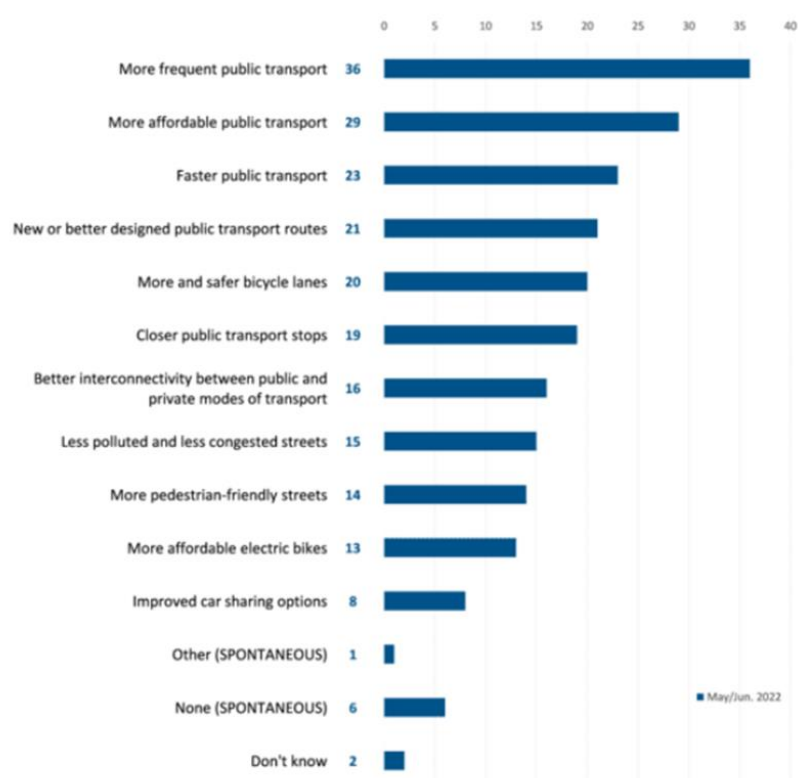
For more detailed information: [Fairness perceptions of the green transition](#) (May-June 2022)



Respondents were asked **what would be most helpful to adopt a more sustainable mode of transport**. More frequent public transport (36%) was most mentioned, followed by more affordable public transport (29%). At least one in five mentions faster public transport (23%), new or better designed public transport routes (21%) or more and safer bicycle lanes (20%). Almost as many respondents mention closer public transport stops (19%).

In 21 countries, respondents are most likely to say more frequent public transport would most help them adopt a more sustainable mode of transport, with the largest proportions seen in Greece (54%), Portugal (49%) and Spain (44%) and the lowest in Denmark and Latvia (both 30%). In five countries, including Sweden (51%) and the Netherlands (45%), more affordable public transport is the most mentioned answer, while in Estonia, (33%) of respondents most often say new or better-designed public transport routes would help them adopt more sustainable transport.

QA13 From the following list, which aspects would help you the most to adopt a more sustainable transport mode? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)  
(% - EU)

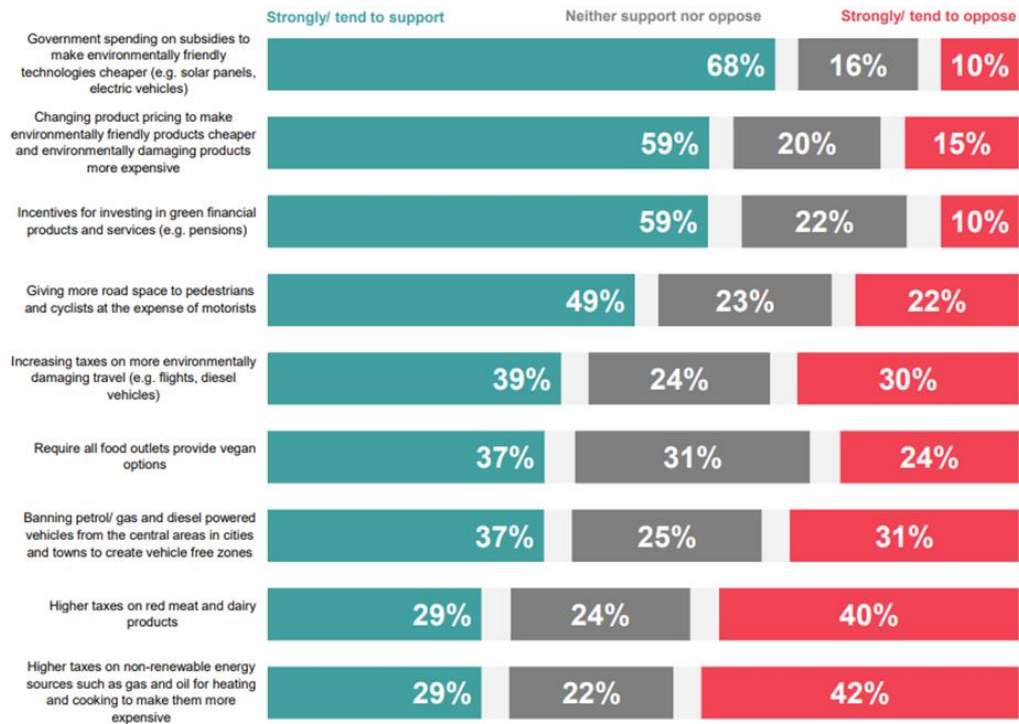


For more detailed information: [Fairness perceptions of the green transition](#) (May-June 2022)

**Almost nine in ten respondents (88%) agree that the green transition should not leave anyone behind. Yet, confidence that by 2050 sustainable energy, products and services will be affordable for everyone, including poorer people, is less widespread, with 46% saying they agree, including 14% who totally agree.**

**EXTERNAL SOURCE:** According to a [recent survey conducted by IPSOS](#) on the topic, the public opinion is in favour of a range of climate change policies, such as government subsidies for environmental technology, changing product pricing and incentives for green products.

Q. Below are a number of policies that have been suggested to reduce climate change, sometimes by increasing costs or inconvenience to individuals like you to try to change behaviours. To what extent, if at all, do you or would you support or oppose the following policies in your country?



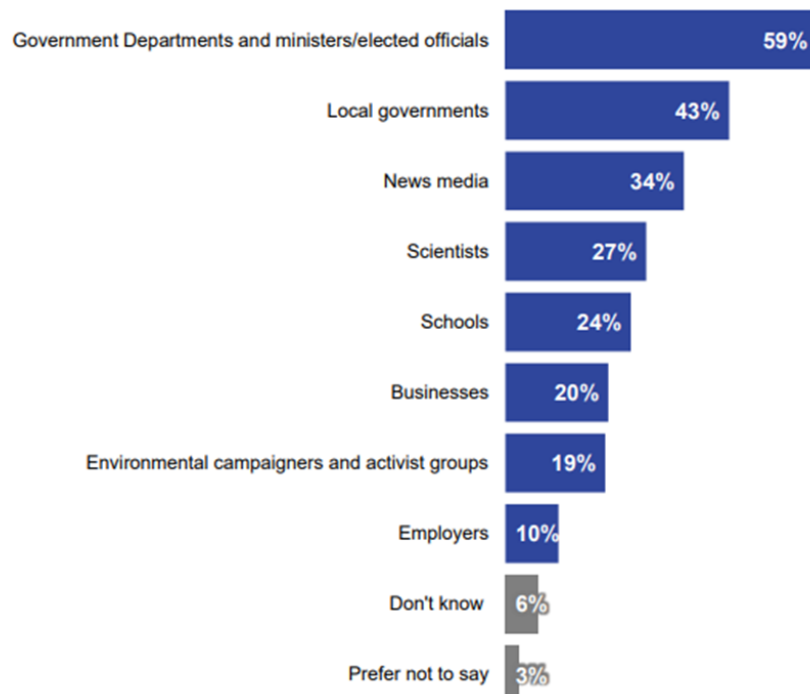
Base: 22,528 online adults across 34 countries, 26<sup>th</sup> August - 9<sup>th</sup> September 2022. NB surveyed adults aged 18-74 in the United States, Canada, Republic of Ireland, Israel, Malaysia, South Africa and Turkey, 20-74 in Thailand, 21-74 in Indonesia and Singapore, and 16-74 in 24 other markets



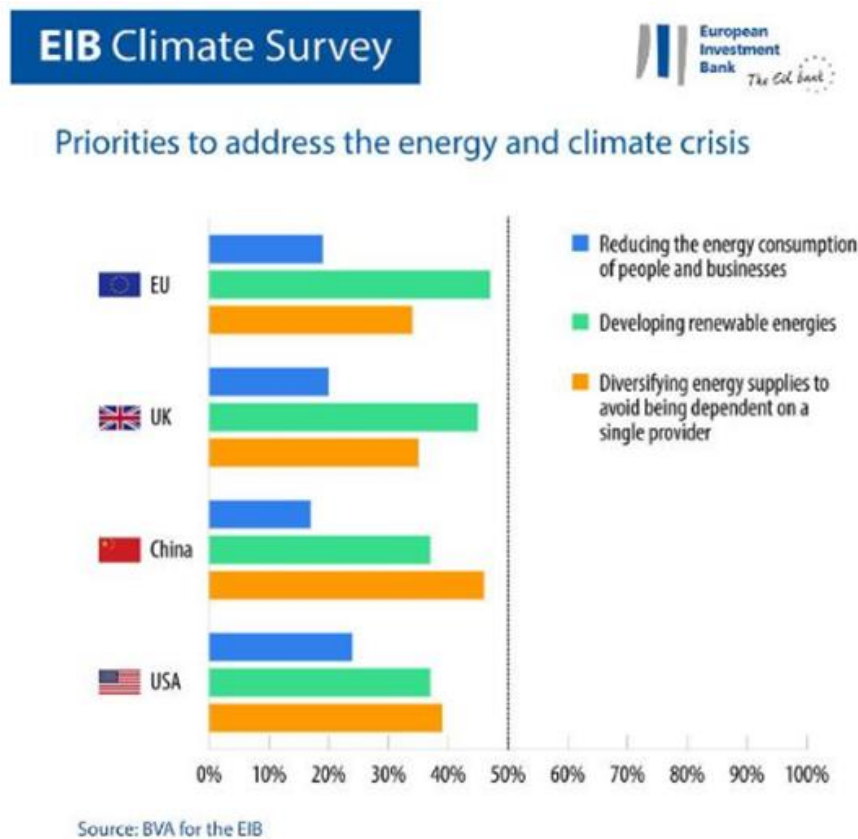
For more detailed information: <https://www.ipsos.com/en/global-advisor-sustainability-2022>

Moreover, a majority of them believes it is mostly the responsibility of the Government Departments and ministers to educate the public on climate change.

Q. In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to inform and educate the public about the actions that need to be taken in [COUNTRY] to combat climate change? Please select the three that you consider to be most responsible.



**EXTERNAL SOURCE:** As shown in the new [2022-2023 EIB Climate Survey](#) exploring priorities on energy, nearly half of people surveyed in the European Union (47%) and in the United Kingdom (45%) want their government to prioritise the development of renewable energies (vs. 37% in both the United States and China).



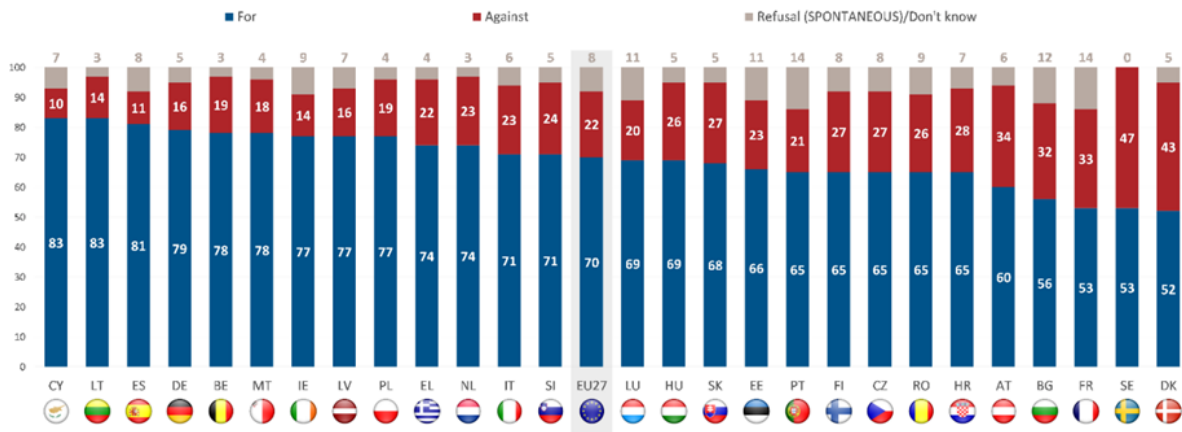
For more detailed information: <https://www.eib.org/en/surveys/climate-survey/5th-climate-survey/eu-usa-china.htm>

## Defending Democracy from foreign interference

On 13 December, the INGE Committee will ask the European Commission about [defending democracy from foreign interference](#) in relation to the President of the Commission 'Defence of Democracy' package aimed at combating foreign interference in our political systems. The resolution will tackle different issues: from the importance of the strengthening democracy, especially bearing in mind the upcoming European elections in 2024; to a package to protect of critical infrastructure, media and online networks, information security and energy security, among other issues.

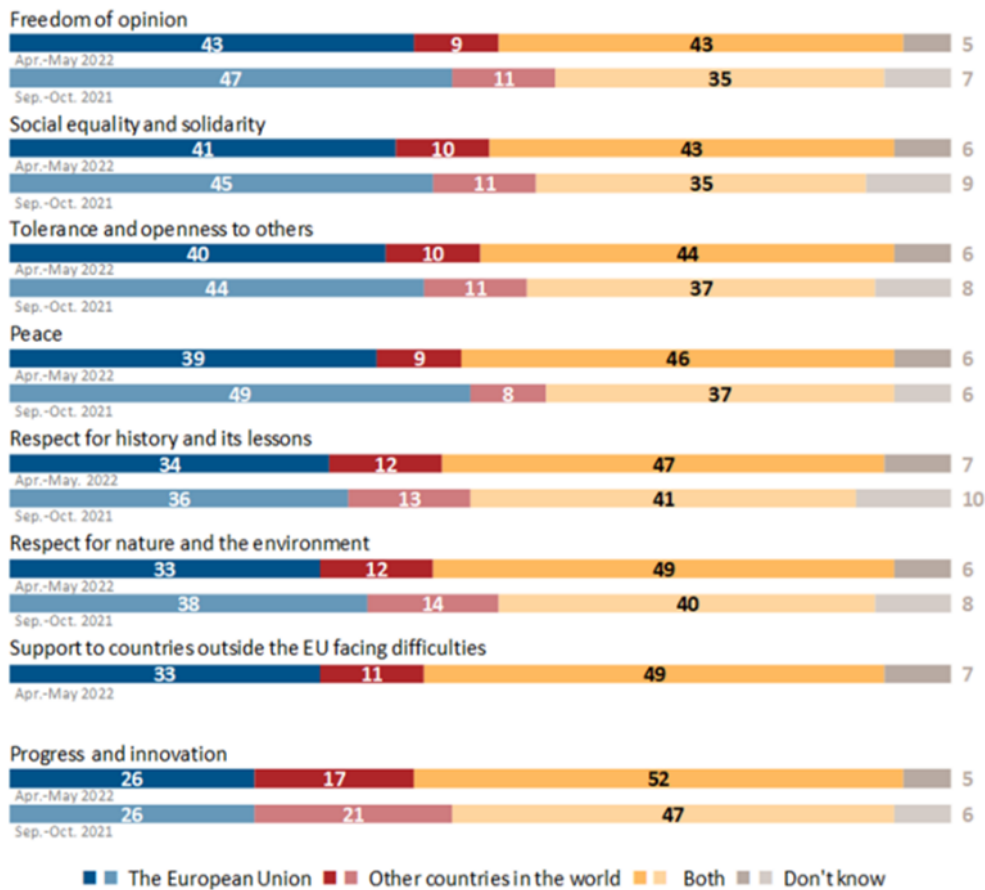
In the [EB Key Challenges of our Times – The EU in 2022](#) (May-June/July 2022), **70% Europeans are in favour of a common foreign policy of the Member States of the EU**. In all 27 Member States, the majority is for a common foreign policy of the Member States of the EU, with the strongest support in Cyprus, Lithuania (both 83%) and Spain (81%). Denmark (52%), Sweden, France (both 53%) and Bulgaria (56%) are the only countries where fewer than six in ten are for this policy.

QB3.1 What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.  
(% - A common foreign policy of the Member States of the EU)



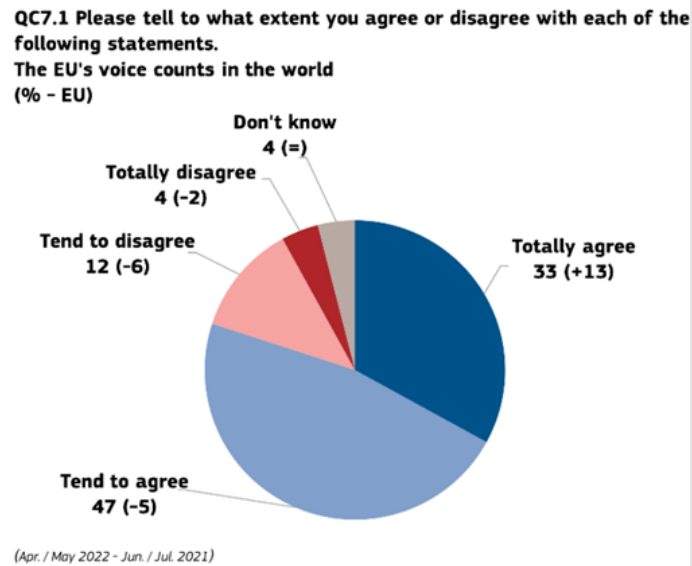
Furthermore, respondents were asked about a list of 8 values to associate with the EU, with other countries or both: **freedom of opinion** (43%), **social equality and solidarity** (41%), **tolerance and openness** to other (40%) and **peace** (39%) are the values associated more with the EU than other countries.

QC10. For each of these values, please tell if you tend to associate them with the EU, other countries in the world or both?  
(% - EU)



**80% of EU citizens (+8 percentage points) agree that “the EU’s voice counts in the world”.** In every Member State, more than two-thirds of respondents agree that “the EU’s voice counts in the world” - in Portugal (95%), Malta (94%), Sweden (93%) and Ireland (92%). Most EU Member States have seen an increase in the proportion that agree that “the EU’s voice counts in the world”. The largest increases can be found in Finland (89%, +17 percentage points since June - July 2021),

Belgium (82%, +14), Luxembourg (75%, +14), the Netherlands (86%, +14), and Spain and Lithuania (both 85%, +12).

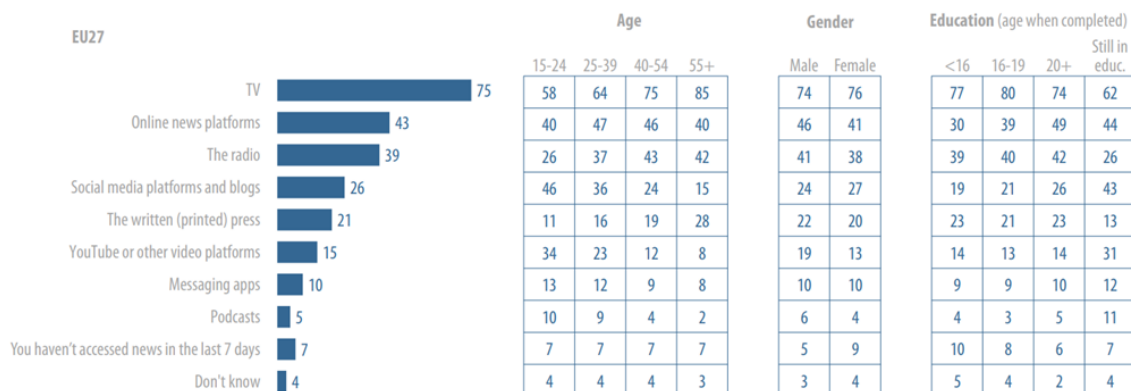


For more detailed information: [Special Eurobarometer 526 Key Challenges of our Times – The EU in 2022 \(June 2022\)](#)

## Digital divide: the social differences created by digitalisation

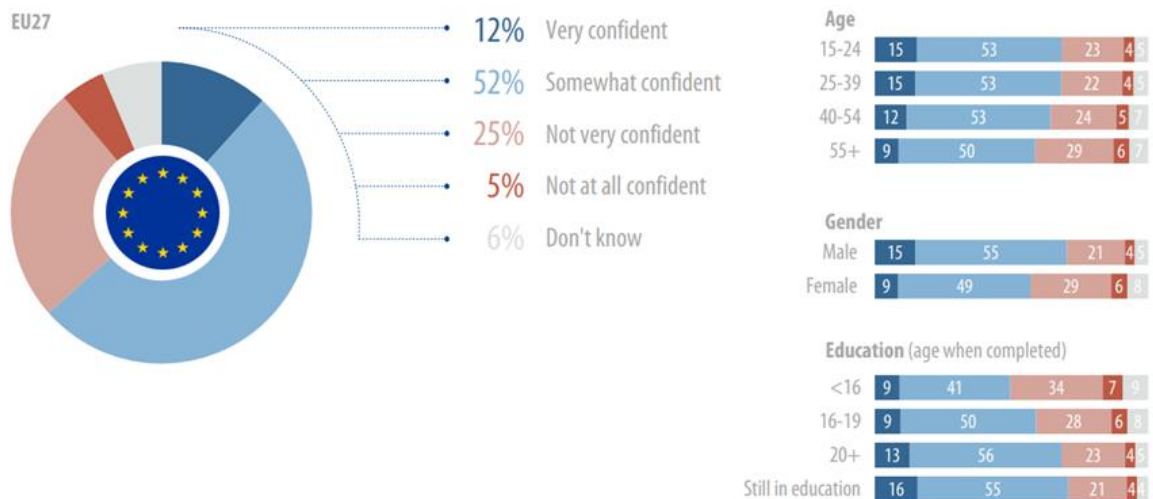
During the plenary session in Strasbourg on Tuesday 13 December, there will be a motion from the PETI committee for a resolution on [social differences created by digitalisation](#) addressing the fact that although digitalisation have created numerous benefits and opportunities, a number of challenges have emerged which point out the urgency of tackling with new forms of inequalities and discrimination. In the [“Media & News Survey 2022”](#) emerges that there are clearly **differences in the media usage between socio-demographic groups**: younger respondents are much more likely to use social media platform and blogs than the older respondents (46% of 15-24 year-olds vs 15% of 55+ year-olds); the largest difference in terms of education is seen for the use of online news platforms (selected by 49% of the higher educated vs 30% of the lower educated respondents).

**Q3ab** | Among the following, what media have you used the most to access news in the past 7 days? Firstly? And then?  
 [multiple answers possible]



Asking about the **confidence in distinguishing between real news and fake news**, we notice that this feeling decreases with age and increases with level of education. Among respondents still in education, 16% reply feeling 'very confident' and 55% 'somewhat confident' in recognising disinformation and fake news:

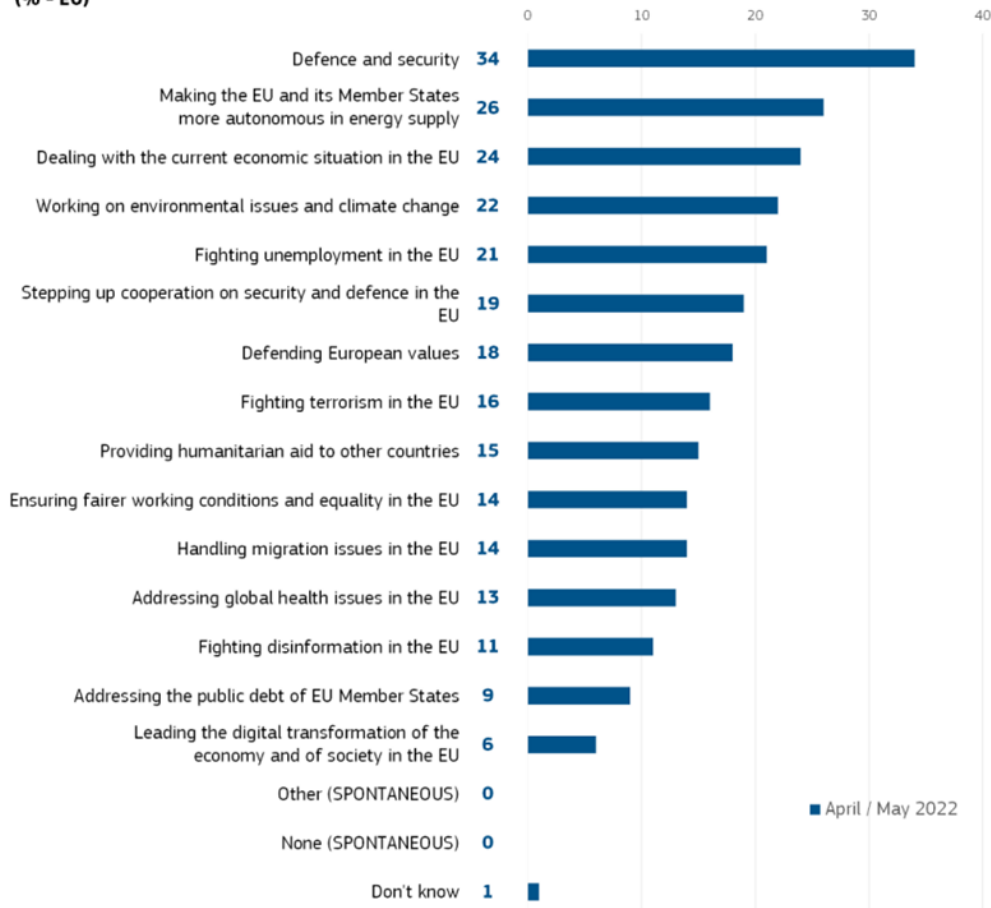
**Q13** | Do you feel confident that you can recognise disinformation when you encounter it?



For more detailed information: [Media & News Survey 2022 \(July 2022\)](#)

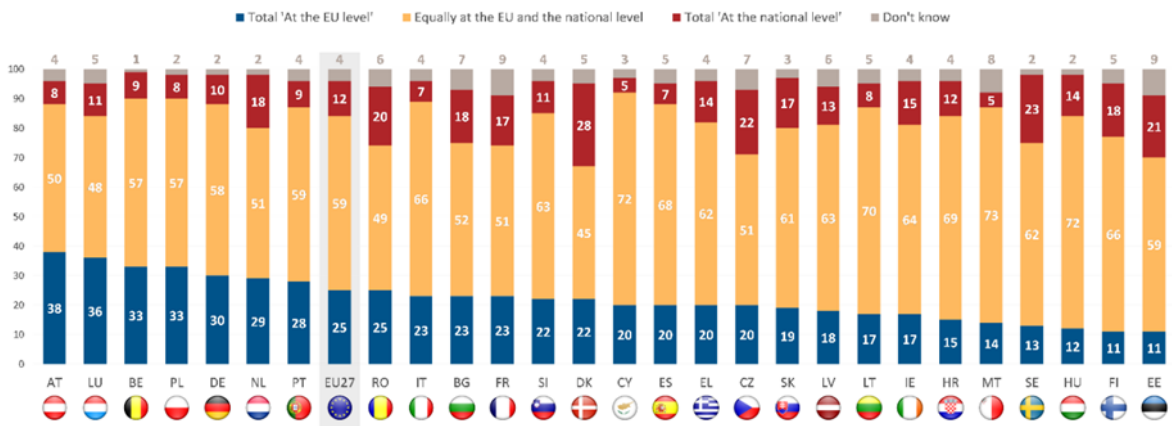
In the survey "[Key Challenges of our Times-The EU in 2022](#)", respondents were asked on a range of policy areas that should be addressed at EU level. We notice **that younger respondents aged 15-24 are more likely to think the EU should prioritise working on the digital transformation** of the economy and of society in the EU (9% vs. 4% of those aged 55 or over).

**QC8 In light of the current situation, which of the following areas should the EU prioritise for 2022? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)**  
 (% - EU)



Besides, the majority of respondents in every country think the **digital transformation of the economy and of society can most efficiently be dealt with equally at the EU and national level**, with the largest shares seen in Malta (73%), Cyprus, Hungary (both 72%) and Lithuania (70%).

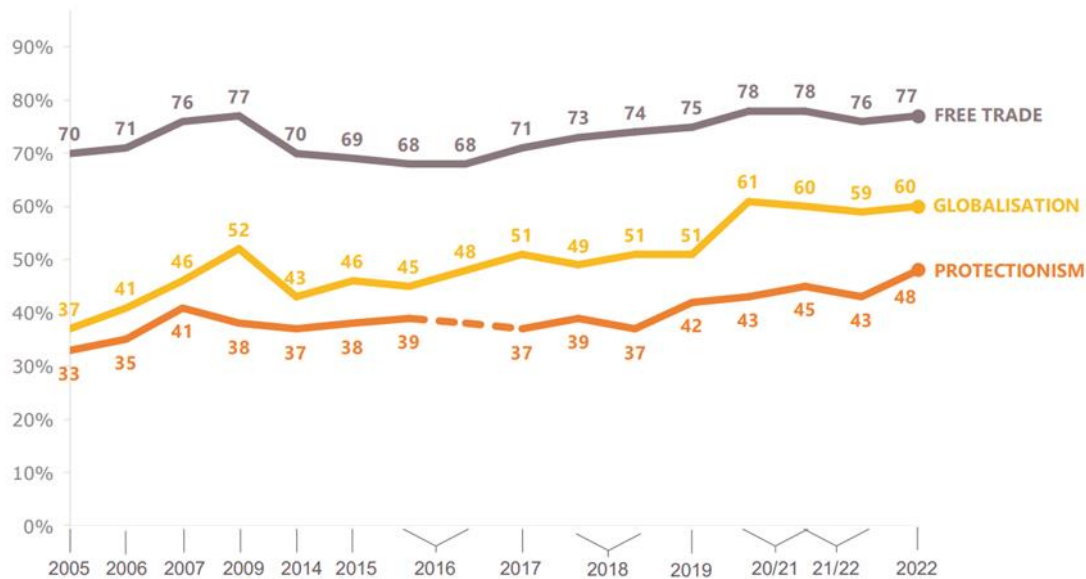
QC11.12 In your opinion, at what level can we deal with each of the following areas most efficiently?  
 (% - The digital transformation of the economy and the society)



For more detailed information: [Key challenges of our times - the EU in 2022 \(June 2022\)](#)

Completing the above results: **67% (+3 pp)** say the digital transformation of the economy and society brings to mind something positive in the last [EB Standard](#):

**QB2** Could you please tell for each of the following, whether the term brings to mind something very positive, fairly positive, fairly negative or very negative?  
(% - EU - TOTAL 'POSITIVE')



For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer 97](#) (September 2022)

#### EXTERNAL SOURCES:

[An international IPSOS survey](#) of a 20-country “Trust in the Internet” reveals that **the trust in the Internet has dropped significantly since 2019** of 11 p.p. The most notable include Poland -26 p.p. (50%).

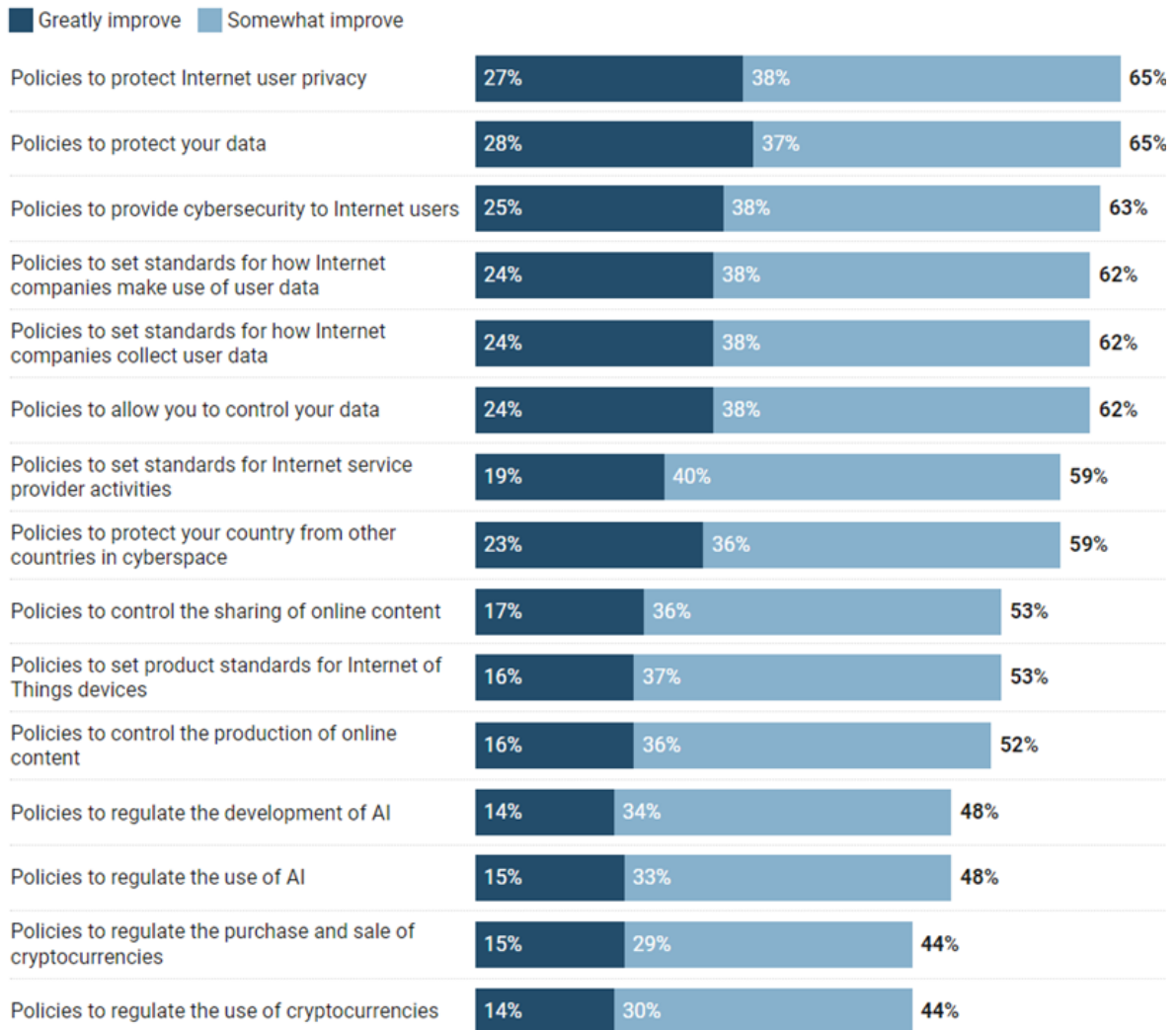
Besides, **privacy is a major concern for those surveyed**: 79% were worried about their online privacy; whereas, only 50% felt online security is adequate. 57% believe the Internet is effectively governed. But fewer than half in France (41%) and in Germany, trust in the Internet fell to 61%, down 9 points since 2019.

Besides, protection of user privacy (65%); protection of users’ personal data (65%); the establishment of standards detailing how Internet companies collect and make use of user data (62%); and the establishment of policies allowing users control their own data (62%) are cited as the most effective policies to improve trust in the Internet should include:



## Support for government policies to improve trust in the Internet

To what extent would new government policies in the following areas improve or worsen your trust in the Internet?



For more detailed information: [Trust in the Internet](#) (November 2022)