

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

- **Debate with Italian PM Mario Draghi:** The most important issues facing the EU at the moment of the fieldwork of the <u>EC's Standard Eurobarometer survey</u> (i.e. January/February 2022 ahead of Russia's invasion of Ukraine) were the environment and climate change (26%), rising prices, inflation, cost of living (24%) as well as immigration (22%). Worries about rising prices and inflation have increased considerably, moving up from 6th position in spring 2021 to 2nd in early 2022 (24%, +12).
- Election of the Members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage: Voting in European elections is the most effective way of ensuring voices are heard by decision-makers at EU level, say 55% of Europeans. (Special Europarometer survey on the Future of Europe January 2022) An earlier survey of the Future of Europe series, published in March 2021, found more than two thirds (69%) of Europeans supporting the concept of lead candidates in the European elections for electing the President of the European Commission. There is also some support for the inclusion of transnational lists in European Parliament elections. A majority of EU citizens (58%) say that they would be likely to vote if European elections were held next week. (EP Eurobarometer survey Defending Democracy | Empowering Citizens)
- The follow up of the Conference on the Future of Europe: There is very strong support for a stronger say of EU citizens in decisions relating to the future of Europe. A vast majority of Europeans believe that there is still work to do to strengthen and protect democracy in the EU. (Special Europeans Special Europea
- Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age: 9 in 10 EU citizens (86%) think that the overall influence of science and technology is positive, according the findings of a Eurobarometer survey on European citizens' knowledge and attitudes towards science and technology. 61% of respondents think artificial intelligence will have a positive effect on our way of life in the future. However, when asked about the extent to which they agree or disagree that "Artificial intelligence and automation will create more jobs than they will eliminate" only a minority of respondents (29%) agree that artificial intelligence will create more jobs than it will eliminate. Close to nine in ten (87%) respondents to the Eurobarometer survey on Digital rights and principle indicate the principle that Europeans should be protected against the risky or unethical application of digital technologies including Artificial Intelligence as important, with more than half (54%) of respondents considering this principle very important for inclusion in a list of principles.

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:

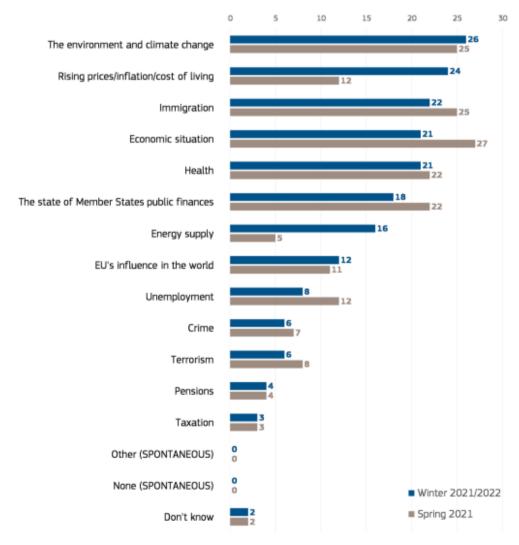
Philipp M. Schulmeister - Head of Public Opinion Monitoring Unit philipp.schulmeister@ep.europa.eu or dqcomm-pom@europarl.europa.eu @EP_Trend

Debate with Italian PM Mario Draghi

On Tuesday 3 May at 11.30, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi will address MEPs and present his views on the state of the EU and his vision for its future. His speech will be followed by a round of contributions from political group speakers.

According to findings of the <u>EC's latest Standard Eurobarometer survey</u> environment and climate change are the most important issues facing the EU at the moment (26%, +1). The significance of rising prices, the increasing inflation and the cost of living has moved up from 6th position in spring 2021 to becoming the second most important issue with 24% of mentions, increasing by 12 percentage points. Immigration remains in third position (22%, -3). Worries about the economic situation have declined – just before the start of the Russian war in Ukraine – from first position in spring 2021 to fourth position (21%) by six points., while worries about the state of Member States' public finances have dropped from fourth to sixth position (18%, -4). Mentions of energy supply have increased notably since spring 2021 and this concern has moved from eleventh to seventh position (16%, +11) – the second largest increase recorded. The EU's influence on the world is in eighth position (12%, +1) and unemployment has dropped from sixth position in spring 2021 and now sits in ninth place (8%, -4).

QA5 What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment? (MAX. 2 ANSWERS) (% - EU)



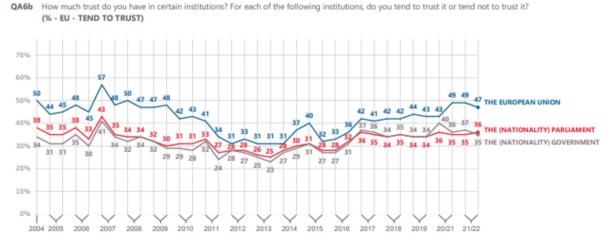
For more detailed information: FC Standard Furobarometer 96 (April 2022)

The environment and climate change is viewed as the most important issue by 26% of respondents in the EU as a whole. It is the most mentioned issue in nine countries, with the highest levels seen in Denmark (53%), Sweden (52%) and the Netherlands (50%). It ranks second in Ireland (29%) and Portugal (25%), and joint second with immigration in Luxembourg (28% each). The environment and climate change ranks third in Hungary and Slovenia (both 22%) and joint third with immigration in Czechia (25% each) and Estonia (26% each).

Rising prices/ inflation/ cost of living is the second most mentioned issue at the EU level with 24% of respondents. While in spring 2021 no MS had this issue in first position, it now became the most mentioned issue in six Member States, with overall largest shares in Czechia (35%), Croatia (33%), Ireland and Latvia (both 32%). Rising prices/ inflation/ cost of living is the second most mentioned issue in six countries including Czechia, Estonia (30%) and Germany (29%). It ranks third in Malta (26%), Italy (25%), and Romania and Belgium (both 21%). It ranks joint third with immigration and the economic situation in Portugal (all 20%). Immigration ranks third at an overall EU level with 22% in the EU saying it is the one of the most important issues facing the EU, and it is also the most mentioned issue in Cyprus (61%), Lithuania (34%) and Hungary (33%). It is the second most mentioned issue in seven countries, with the highest levels in the Netherlands (33%), Denmark, Luxembourg, and Malta (all 28%).

Immigration is the third most mentioned issue in nine countries including Latvia (28%), France (25%) and Greece (24%). It shares third place in Bulgaria with the economic situation (25% each), in Estonia and Czechia with the environment and climate change, and in Portugal with rising prices/inflation/cost of living and the economic situation (all 20%).

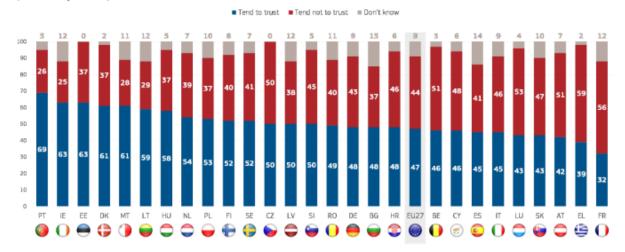
Almost half of all Europeans trust the European Union (47%), a slight decline of two points since the spring 2021 and still on the highest level since autumn 2009. Trust in national governments has also declined slightly (35%, -2 percentage point since spring 2021) while trust in national parliaments has remained stable (36%, +1). The gap between the (higher) trust in the EU and in national governments remains significant at 12 points.



For more detailed information: EC Standard Furobarometer 96 (April 2022)

The highest levels of trust in the EU can be observed in Portugal (69%), Ireland, Estonia (both 63%), Malta and Denmark (both 61%), while the lowest are in France (32%), Greece (39%) and Austria (42%).

QA6b.10 How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?



For more detailed information: EC Standard Europarometer 96 (April 2022)

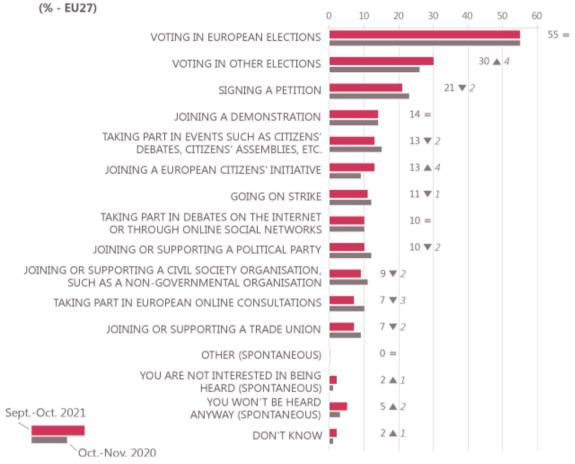
Election of the MEPs by direct universal suffrage

On Monday 2 May, MEPs are set to discuss the legislative <u>proposal for a new European Electoral Act</u>, aiming to turn the 27 national elections into a real, single European election with common minimum standards, a Union-wide constituency, and gender balance (debate Monday, vote Tuesday).

Voting in European elections is seen as the best way of ensuring voices are heard by decision makers at EU level, according to findings of the Special Europarometer survey on the Future of Europe (January 2022). Respondents were presented with a range of ways in which EU citizens could potentially make sure their voices are heard by decision-makers at EU level, and were able to select up to three responses to describe which they felt were the best methods. Voting in European elections is clearly regarded as the most effective way of ensuring voices are heard by decision-makers at EU level, with 55% of Europeans choosing this response as one of the best methods.

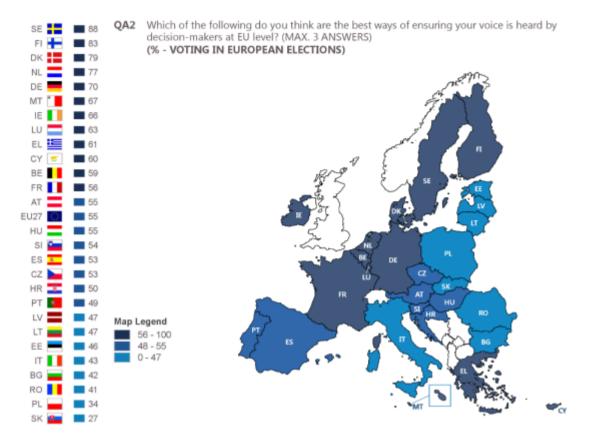
Other popular choices are voting in other elections (30%, +4 percentage points) and signing a petition (21%, -2), mentioned by at least one in five respondents. Other types of political participation mentioned by more than 10% of Europeans are: joining a demonstration (14%, =), taking part in events such as citizens' debates or citizens' assemblies (13%, -2), joining a European Citizens' Initiative (13%, +4) and going on strike (11%, -1). One in ten think their voice would be best heard through joining or supporting a political party (10%, -2), taking part in debates on the internet or through online social networks (10%, =), or joining or supporting a civil society organisation, such as a nongovernmental organisation (9%, -2). Less than one in ten favour taking part in European online consultations (7%, -3), or joining or supporting a trade union (7%, -2). Overall, 7% of Europeans feel that they either wouldn't be heard anyway or that they have no interest in being heard (+3).

QA2 Which of the following do you think are the best ways of ensuring your voice is heard by decision-makers at EU level? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)



For more detailed information: Special Europarometer survey on the Euture of Europe (January 2022)

Respondents are most likely to say that voting in European elections is the best way of ensuring their voice is heard by decision-makers at the EU level in the north of Europe; specifically in Sweden (88%), Finland (83%), Denmark (79%) and the Netherlands (77%). The lowest proportions are seen in Slovakia (27%), Poland (34%), Romania (41%), Bulgaria (42%) and Italy (43%)



For more detailed information: Special Europarometer survey on the Euture, of Europe (January 2022)

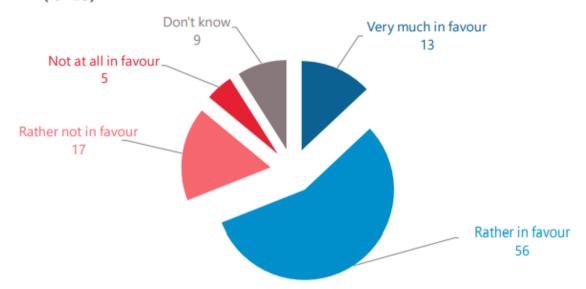
Older respondents are more likely to mention voting in European elections (58% of those aged 55 or over vs. 46% of those aged 15-24) and voting in other elections (33% vs. 23%). Younger respondents are more likely to favour other options, such as joining a demonstration (24% of those aged 15-24 vs. 10% of those aged 55 or over). There are no clear differences by gender.

There are, however, differences by level of education: Respondents who stayed in education until the age of 20 or above are more likely to mention several of the options, such as voting in European elections (64% vs. 50% of those who left education by the age of 15) and signing a petition (23% vs. 15%). Voting in European elections is mentioned most frequently by managers (64%) and least frequently by unemployed respondents (43%). Respondents who have difficulties paying bills most of the time are less likely to mention voting in European elections (40% vs. 61%) or other elections (23% vs. 32%). Respondents who hold a generally positive image of the EU are more likely to say that voting in European elections is one of the best ways of getting one's voice heard (63% vs. 38% those who hold a negative image of the EU), and they are also more likely to mention voting in other elections (33% vs. 23%).

Respondents were further asked about the process for electing the President of the European Commission through the choice of lead candidates. Around seven in ten Europeans (69%) say they are in favour of this process, including 13% who say they are 'very much in favour'. Just over one in five (22%) say they are not in favour of this process.

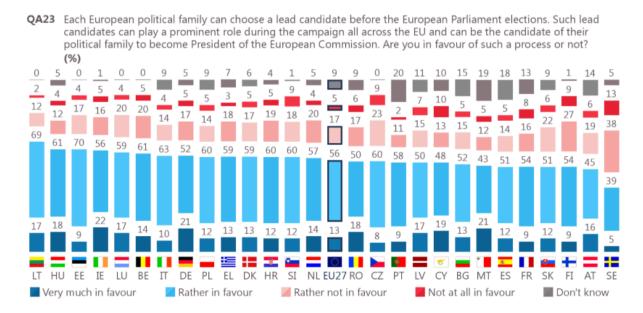
QA23 Each European political family can choose a lead candidate before the European Parliament elections. Such lead candidates can play a prominent role during the campaign all across the EU and can be the candidate of their political family to become President of the European Commission. Are you in favour of such a process or not?

(% - EU)



For more detailed information: Special Eurobarometer survey on the Future of Europe (March 2021)

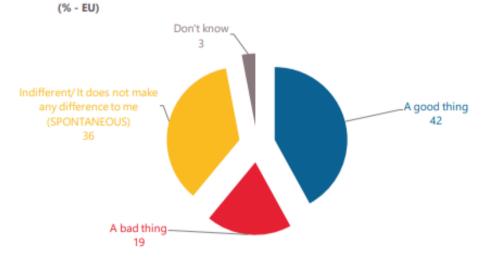
In every country except for Sweden, the majority of respondents say they are in favour of the process for electing the President of the European Commission through the choice of lead candidates. Respondents in Lithuania are most likely to be in favour of this process (86%), followed by those in Hungary and Estonia (79%), Ireland (78%), Luxembourg (76%) and Belgium (75%). In Sweden, 44% of respondents are in favour of this process but 51% are not in favour. The proportion that are not in favour is also relatively high in Finland (36%) and Czechia (32%)



For more detailed information: Special Furobarometer survey on the Future of Europe (March 2021)

Respondents were asked for their views on a possible change to the type of lists citizens can vote for in European Parliament elections. As well as voting for lists in an exclusively national frame, the possibility was raised of also **voting for transnational lists**, i.e. lists gathering candidates from different EU countries in a list all EU citizens across the EU could then vote for. **Europeans are twice** as likely to think that this would be a good thing (42%) as think it would be a bad thing (19%), while more than third (36%) say they are indifferent or that it doesn't make any difference to them.

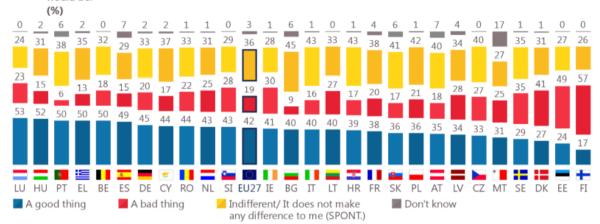
QA24 In the last European Parliament elections, EU citizens could vote for lists in a national frame. For example, an EU citizen living in (OUR COUNTRY) could vote for a list in (OUR COUNTRY). It is currently debated that in the future EU citizens could have the possibility to vote in addition also for transnational lists. Such lists would gather candidates from different EU countries and all EU citizens could then vote for the same transnational lists. Do you think that this would be:



For more detailed information: Special Europarometer survey on the Future of Europe (March 2021)

In all but four Member States, respondents are more likely to think that the use of transnational lists in European Parliament elections would be a good thing rather than a bad thing. At least half of respondents say that this would be a good thing in Luxembourg (53%), Hungary (52%), Portugal, Greece and Belgium (all 50%). Respondents are more likely to say this would be a bad thing than a good thing in Finland (57% vs. 17%), Estonia (49% vs. 24%), Denmark (41% vs. 27%) and Sweden (35% vs. 29%). In seven countries, the majority view is indifference, with respondents in Bulgaria (45%), Italy and Croatia (both 43%) the most likely to say that this change would not make any difference to them

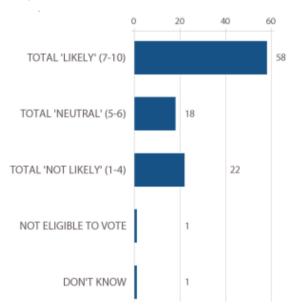
QA24 In the last European Parliament elections, EU citizens could vote for lists in a national frame. For example, an EU citizen living in (OUR COUNTRY) could vote for a list in (OUR COUNTRY). It is currently debated that in the future EU citizens could have the possibility to vote in addition also for transnational lists. Such lists would gather candidates from different EU countries and all EU citizens could then vote for the same transnational lists. Do you think that this would be:



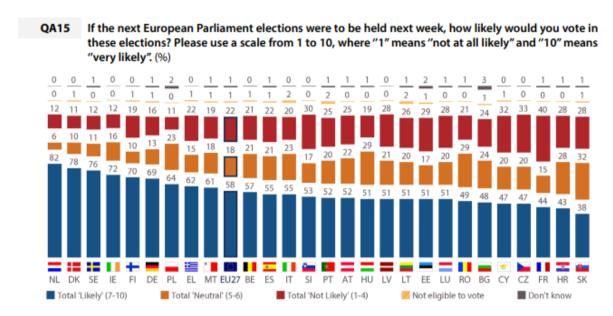
For more detailed information: Special Furobarometer survey on the Future of Furope (March 2021)

Respondents to the most recent <u>EP Eurobarometer survey 'Defending Democracy | Empowering Citizens'</u> were asked **how likely it was they would vote if European elections were to be held next week.** Responses were given on a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" means "not at all likely" and "10" means "very likely". **A majority of EU citizens (58%) say that they would be likely to vote** (grouping scores 7 to 10), while around one in five (22%) say they would not be likely to vote (grouping scores 1-4), and 18% are "moderately likely" (grouping scores 5 and 6) to vote.

QA15 If the next European Parliament elections were to be held next week, how likely would you vote in these elections? Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where "1" means "not at all likely" and "10" means "very likely". (% - EU27)



As expected, there **is significant variation between Member States** in the proportion who say they would be likely to vote in European elections. At least seven in ten respondents declare themselves likely to vote in the Netherlands (82%), Denmark (78%), Sweden (76%), Ireland (72%) and Finland (70%). By contrast, less than half of respondents say they would be likely to vote in Slovakia (38%), Croatia (43%), France (44%), Czechia, Cyprus (both 47%), Bulgaria (48%) and Romania (49%). Respondents in France are most likely to say that they would not be likely to vote (40%), if European elections were held next week.



For more detailed information: EP Europarometer, survey Defending Democracy | Empowering Citizens (February 2022)

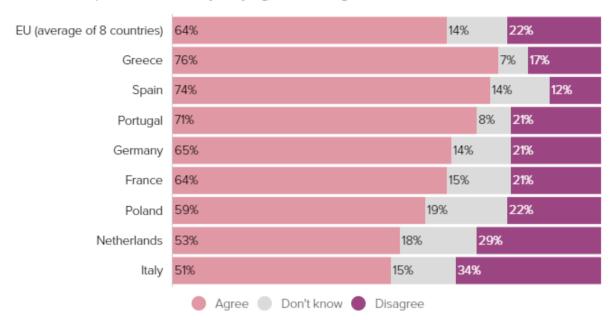
For reference, the actual turnout at the last European Parliament elections in 2019 was 51%. When comparing the share of "very likely voters" (scoring 10 on the scale) and "likely voters" (scoring between 7 and 10 on the scale) to the actual 2019 European Election turnout, striking differences can be observed in various Member States. In Luxembourg (-33 pp), Belgium (-31 pp) and Malta (-12 pp), the share of "likely voters" (7-10 points) is significantly lower than the previous turnout. A possible explanation for those differences could be existing compulsory voting laws in these Member States, which might be a particular incentive to make citizens go to vote even though they respond with a rather low propensity to vote when being asked in surveys. In contrast, the share of respondents which declare themselves as "likely voters" is much higher than the 2019 turnout in the Netherlands (+40 pp), Finland (+29pp) and Slovenia (+24pp).

EXTERNAL INSIGHT: According to a <u>Euroskopia poll</u>, almost two-thirds **(64%) of respondents across eight EU Member States backed the idea that EU citizens should directly elect the President of the European Commission.** The poll was conducted in January and February 2022 and surveyed adults in Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands and France.

A DIRECT VOTE FOR THE COMMISSION PRESIDENT?

Should the president of the European Commission be directly elected by EU citizens?

Share of respondents who say they agree or disagree.



The poll was conducted by Sigma Dos in Spain, SWG in Italy, Opinionway in France, Insa in Germany, IBRIS in Poland, Pitagórica in Portugal, Prorata in Greece and I&O Research in the Netherlands.

Sample size: 1,000 in each country; field work: January 31 - February 13, 2022.

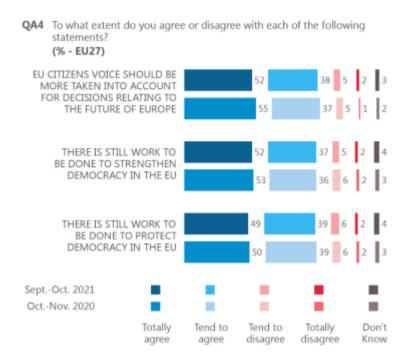
SOURCE: EUROSKOPIA By Aniket Narawad

Source: Furoskopia poll (April 2022)

The follow up of the Conference on the Future of Europe

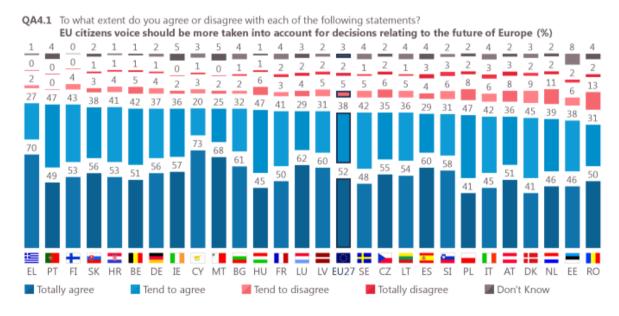
As the Conference on the Future of Europe approaches its conclusion, MEPs will assess its Plenary's recommendations and the overall process in a debate on Tuesday afternoon.

The special Eurobarometer survey on the Future of Europe published in January 2022 finds a very large majority of Europeans (90%, -2 percentage points since (Special Eurobarometer 500 on the Future of Europe 2020) agree that EU citizens' voices should be taken more into account for decisions relating to the future of Europe. Overall, around half (52%, -3) "totally agree" with this statement, while 38% (+1) "tend to agree" and only 7% (+1) disagree. Around nine in ten respondents (89%, =) agree that there is still work to be done to strengthen democracy in the EU, while 7% (-1) disagree. A similar proportion (88%, -1) agree that there is still work to be done to protect democracy in the EU, while 8% (=) disagree.



For more detailed information: Special Europarometer survey on the Future of Europe (January 2022)

There is widespread support across EU Member States for citizens' voice to be taken more into account for decisions relating to the future of Europe. In every country, more than eight in ten respondents agree with the statement. This viewpoint is most strongly held in Greece (97%), Portugal, Finland (both 96%), Slovakia and Croatia (both 94%). The lowest levels of agreement to this statement are found in Romania (81%), Estonia (84%) and the Netherlands (85%). The proportion that "totally agree" with the statement is highest in Cyprus (73%), Greece (70%) and Malta (68%), while this is lowest in Poland and Denmark (both 41%).



For more detailed information: Special Europarometer survey on the Future of Europe (January 2022)

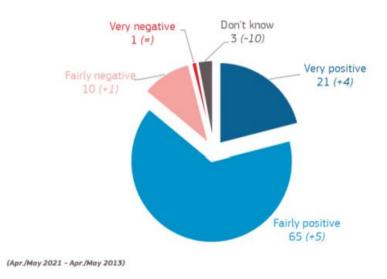
Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age

On Tuesday 3 May, MEPs will debate and vote on Tuesday on the final report by the Special Committee on <u>Artificial Intelligence in a Digital Age</u>. The text says the EU must set global Al standards and unlock its enormous potential to address challenges in the fields of health, the environment and climate change.

Almost 9 in 10 EU citizens (86%) think that the overall influence of science and technology is **positive**, according to the findings of a <u>Eurobarometer survey on European citizens' knowledge and</u> attitudes towards science and technology.

Across the EU almost nine in ten (86%) respondents think the overall influence of science and technology in society is positive, with 21% saying it is 'very positive'. Just over one in ten (11%) think science and technology has a negative influence, with 1% saying it is 'very negative'. **Opinion** is more positive than it was in 2013, with a nine point increase in the proportion who think science and technology has a positive influence on society. This has been driven by a decline in the proportion that say they don't know (-10 pp), as the proportion that think the influence is negative has remained stable (+1 pp).

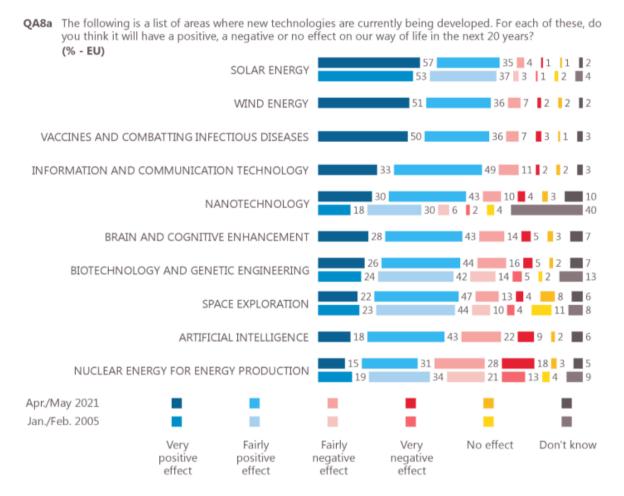
QA6 Do you think that the overall influence of science and technology on society is...? (% - EU27)



For more detailed information: <u>Furobarometer survey on Furopean citizens' knowledge and attitudes towards science and technology (September 2021)</u>

Respondents were asked about the effect of different technologies being developed in the next 20 years on our way of life. Almost all respondents think solar energy (92%) will have a positive effect, while 87% say this about wind energy. More than eight in ten think vaccines and combatting infectious diseases23 (86%) or information and communication technology24 (82%) will have a positive impact. Almost three-quarters (73%) of respondents think nanotechnology will have a positive impact on life in the next 20 years, while 71% say this about brain and cognitive enhancements, 70% say this about biotechnology and genetic engineering, and 69% say this about space exploration. Respondents are least likely to think new technologies in artificial intelligence (61%) or nuclear energy for energy production (46%) will have a positive

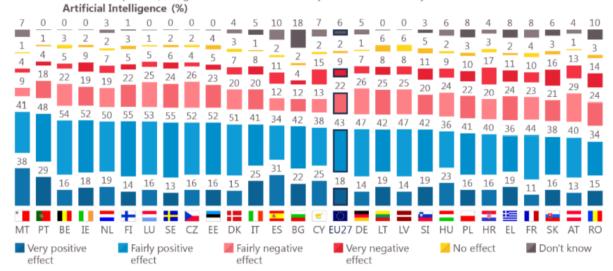
impact. Nuclear energy is the only area where the positive view does not have a majority (46% positive, 46% negative).



For more detailed information: <u>Europarometer survey on European citizens' knowledge and attitudes towards science and technology (September 2021)</u>

The majority of respondents in every Member State think artificial intelligence will have a positive effect on our way of life in the next 20 years. At least seven in ten respondents in Malta (79%), Portugal (77%), Belgium and Ireland (both 70%) think this way (highest proportions), as do 49% in Romania, 53% in Austria and 54% in Slovakia (lowest proportions). The largest proportions of respondents who think there will be a 'very positive' effect are seen in Malta (38%), Portugal (29%) and Italy and Cyprus (both 25%).

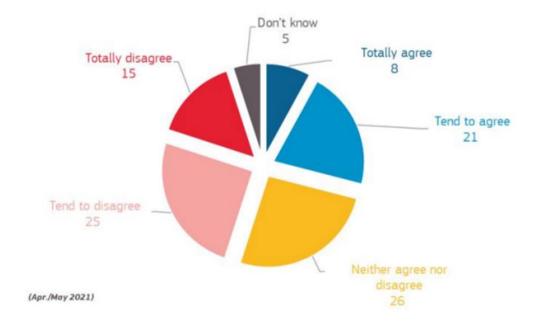
QA8a.10 The following is a list of areas where new technologies are currently being developed. For each of these, do you think it will have a positive, a negative or no effect on our way of life in the next 20 years?



For more detailed information: <u>Furobarometer survey on Furopean citizens' knowledge and attitudes towards science and technology (September 2021)</u>

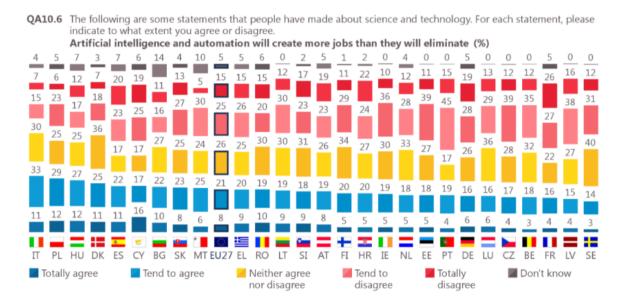
Respondents were further asked the extent to which they agree or disagree that "Artificial intelligence and automation will create more jobs than they will eliminate". Only a minority of respondents (29%) agree, with fewer than one in ten (8%) 'totally agreeing'. The majority (40%) disagree, and 15% do so strongly. Just over one-quarter (26%) are neutral (neither agree nor disagree) and 5% say they don't know.

QA10.6 The following are some statements that people have made about science and technology. For each statement, please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree. Artificial intelligence and automation will create more jobs than they will eliminate (% - EU27)



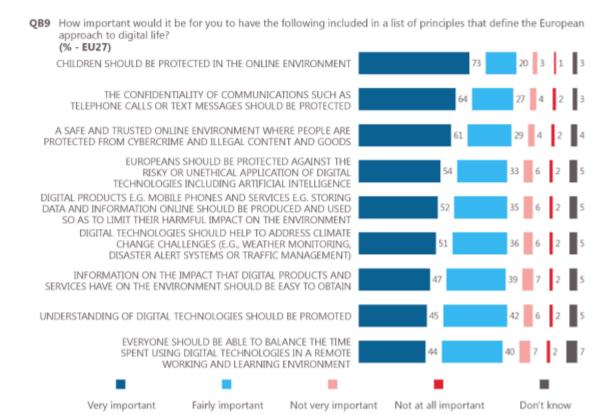
For more detailed information: <u>Furobarometer survey on Furopean citizens' knowledge and attitudes towards science and technology (September 2021)</u>

Although fewer than half of the respondents in any country agree that artificial intelligence and automation will create more jobs than they will eliminate, this is the most common opinion in five countries: Italy (44%), Poland (41%), Hungary (39%), Denmark (36%) and Bulgaria (32%), while in Denmark respondents are equally likely to agree or be neutral (both 36%). At the other end of the scale respondents in Sweden (17%), Latvia (19%) and France (20%) are the least likely to agree. Overall, there are 22 countries where respondents are most likely to disagree.



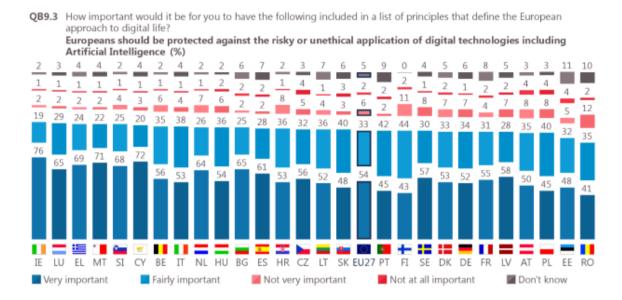
For more detailed information: <u>Furobarometer survey on Furopean citizens' knowledge and attitudes towards science and technology (September 2021)</u>

A <u>Eurobarometer survey on Digital rights and principles</u> finds that close to nine in ten (87%) respondents indicate the principle that **Europeans should be protected against the risky or unethical application of digital technologies including Artificial Intelligence as important,** with more than half (54%) of respondents considering this principle very important for inclusion in a list of principles.



For more detailed information: <u>Furobarometer survey on Diaital rights and principles</u> (December 2021)

A national analysis shows that in 11 EU Member States, at least nine in ten respondents consider it important to include the principle that Europeans should be protected against the risky or unethical application of digital technologies. Respondents are most likely to think this way in Ireland (95%), Luxembourg (94%), and Malta, Greece, and Slovenia (93% all). The least likely to mention this are respondents in Romania (76%), Estonia (80%), and Austria and Poland (both 85%). In 21 EU Member States, half (or more) consider this principle very important to be included in a list of digital principles. This is for example the case in Ireland (76%), Cyprus (72%), and Malta (71%). The least likely to think this way are respondents in Romania (41%), Finland (43%), and Portugal and Poland (both 45%). Around one in ten respondents in Estonia (11%) and Romania (10%) indicate that they don't know



For more detailed information: Eurobarometer survey on Digital rights and principles (December 2021)

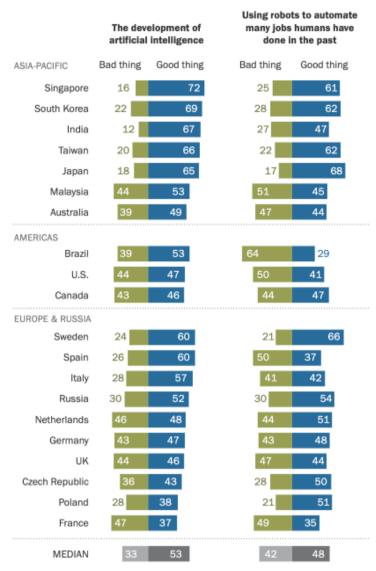
An analysis of the **socio-demographic data** shows respondents who go online every day are more likely (92%) to consider as important for inclusion in a list of digital principles that Europeans should be protected against the risky or unethical application of digital technologies including Artificial Intelligence than those who sometimes use the internet (86%), and those who never go online (65%).

Overall, managers, students, the self-employed, manual workers, and the unemployed are more likely to support including the proposed example principles in list of digital principles, than house persons and those who are retired. For example, the self-employed and the unemployed are the most likely (both 92%) to consider as important for inclusion in a list of digital principles that Europeans should be protected against the risky or unethical application of digital technologies including Artificial Intelligence, followed by students and managers (both 91%), other white collar workers (89%), manual workers (88%), house persons (83%), and those who are retired (81%).

EXTERNAL INSIGHT: As artificial intelligence (AI) plays a growing role in the everyday lives of people around the world, views on AI's impact on society are mixed across 20 global publics, according to a recent Pew Research Center survey. People globally offer mixed views of the impact of artificial intelligence, job automation on society. Men, younger adults, those with more education are often more likely to see artificial intelligence as a positive thing for society.

Majorities in most Asian publics surveyed see Al as a good thing for society

% who say each of the following has mostly been a ____ for society



Note: Respondents who gave other responses or did not give an answer are not shown. Source: International Science Survey 2019-2020. Q11a-b.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

For more detailed information: Pew Research Center survey (December 2020)

[&]quot;Science and Scientists Held in High Esteem Across Global Publics"