

# PLENARY INSIGHTS

Public opinion at a glance

October II 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:

- **Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought:** 'Democracy' tops the list of values citizens want the EP to defend as a matter of priority (38%). 'Protection of human rights in the EU and worldwide' as well as 'Freedom of speech and thought' follow on 27%. ([EP Spring 2022 Eurobarometer](#))

- **Social and economic consequences of the war in Ukraine including the introduction of a windfall tax:** More than nine in ten (93%) respondents in the EU think the level of energy prices for people in their country is a serious problem. Eight in ten (80%) see the current cost of fuel for their transport needs as problem. ([Eurobarometer survey on fairness perceptions of the green transition](#)) Despite the difficulties, Russia's war against Ukraine has strengthened public support for the EU, finds the [EP's Spring 2022 Eurobarometer](#). Almost two thirds (65%) of Europeans see EU membership as a good thing. This is the highest result since 2007, when it was at 58%. Most citizens perceive the war in Ukraine as fundamental change: 61% of Europeans are not confident that their life will continue unchanged. However, 59% of Europeans see the defence of common European values such as freedom and democracy as a priority - even if that were to affect prices and the cost of living. The increasing economic worries are also reflected in the political priorities citizens want the European Parliament to focus on: The fight against poverty and social exclusion is mentioned first (38%). The latest [EC Standard Eurobarometer](#) finds a large majority (88%) thinks the war in Ukraine has had serious economic consequences for their country.

- **UN climate change conference (COP27):** 93% of European citizens consider climate change to be a serious problem. More than six in ten Europeans believe that, within the EU, national governments are responsible for tackling climate change. However, three quarters of Europeans think that their national government is not doing enough ([Eurobarometer survey on Climate change](#)) Almost nine in ten respondents agree that no one should be left behind in the green transition, but a minority (46%) is confident that by 2050 sustainable energy, services and products will be affordable for everyone, according to a new [Eurobarometer survey on fairness perceptions of the green transition](#).

- **Mental health:** Respondents to a [Flash Eurobarometer targeting young people](#) (15-30 years) said the European Year of Youth should focus on improving mental and physical health and wellbeing, which was the most mentioned item on EU average together with protecting the environment and fighting climate change. Unmet healthcare needs have increased across the EU, affecting almost one in five respondents (18%). The backlog in care for younger people (18-29 years) is highest for mental health care, [polling by European Union agency Eurofound](#) shows.

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:

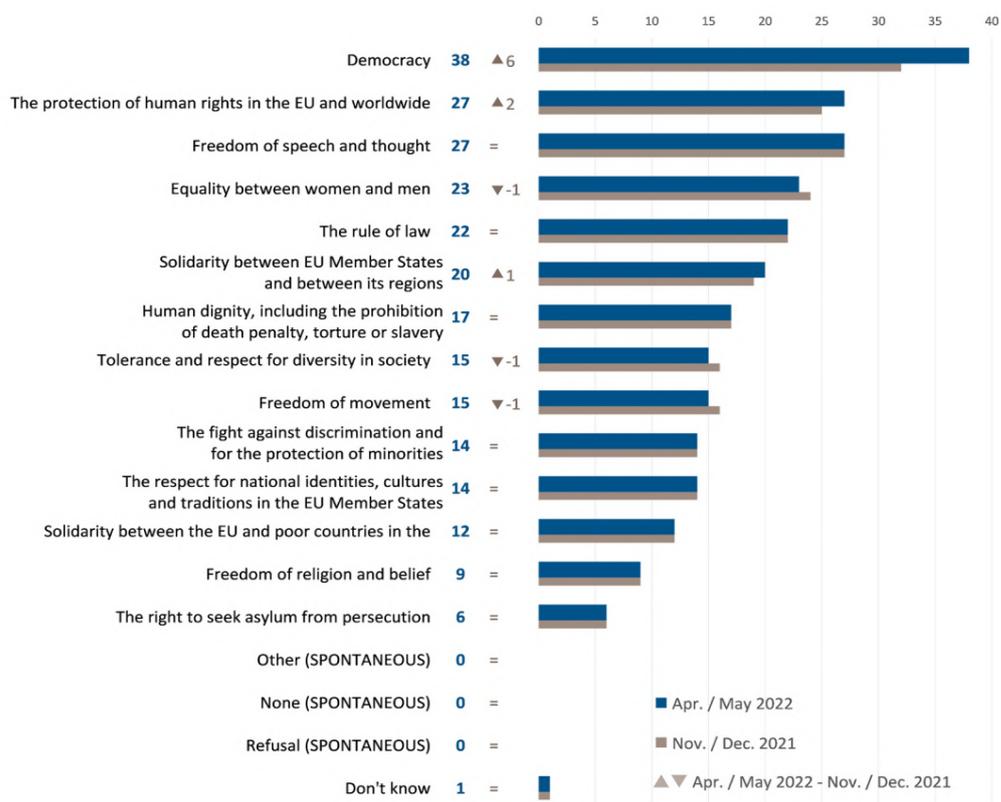
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## Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought

On Wednesday 12 October, Parliament's Conference of Presidents will decide on the laureate for the 2022 [Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought](#). Shortlisted this year are: (I) Julian Assange; (II) The brave people of Ukraine, represented by their president, elected leaders, and civil society; and (III) The Truth Commission in Colombia.

According to the [FP's Spring 2022 Eurobarometer](#), the **European Parliament should defend democracy as a matter of priority**, and respondents are now more likely to say this than they were in November-December 2021 (38%, +6 percentage points), although in both years democracy has been the number one value for citizens. At least one in five think the European Parliament should prioritise defending the **protection of human rights in the EU and worldwide (27%, +2 pp)**, **freedom of speech and thought (27%, =)**, equality between women and men (23%, -1 pp), the rule of law (22%, =) and solidarity between EU Member States and between its regions (20%, +1 pp).

**QA3** In your opinion, which of the following values should the European Parliament defend as a matter of priority? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (% - EU)



For more detailed information: [FP Spring 2022 Survey: Rallying around the European flag - Democracy as anchor point in times of crisis](#) (July 2022)

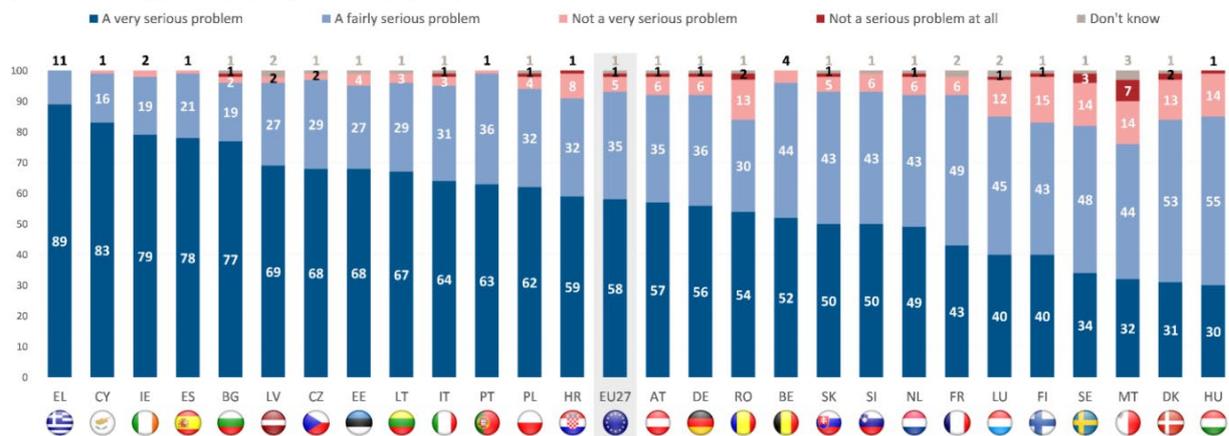
**In 13 countries respondents think the European Parliament should defend democracy as a matter of priority.** In Greece, the first place is shared between democracy and solidarity between EU Member States and between regions. **The protection of human rights is considered the priority in six countries**, and also ranks joint top with freedom of speech and thought in Croatia. **Freedom of speech and thought is the most mentioned value in Estonia (33%).**

## Social and economic consequences of the war in Ukraine

On Tuesday 11 October, MEPs will address the [social and economic consequences of the war in Ukraine](#), including the introduction of a windfall tax.

More than nine in ten (**93%**) respondents in the EU think the level of energy prices for people in their country is a serious problem. At a national level, more than three-quarters of respondents in each Member State say that the level of energy prices in their country is a serious problem for people in general. All respondents in Greece (100%) think this way, as do 99% in Spain, Cyprus and Portugal and 98% in Ireland, compared to 76% in Malta, 82% in Sweden and 83% in Finland. In 19 countries, at least half of all respondents think energy prices in their country are a “very serious problem”, with the highest proportions seen in Greece (89%), Cyprus (83%) and Ireland (79%).

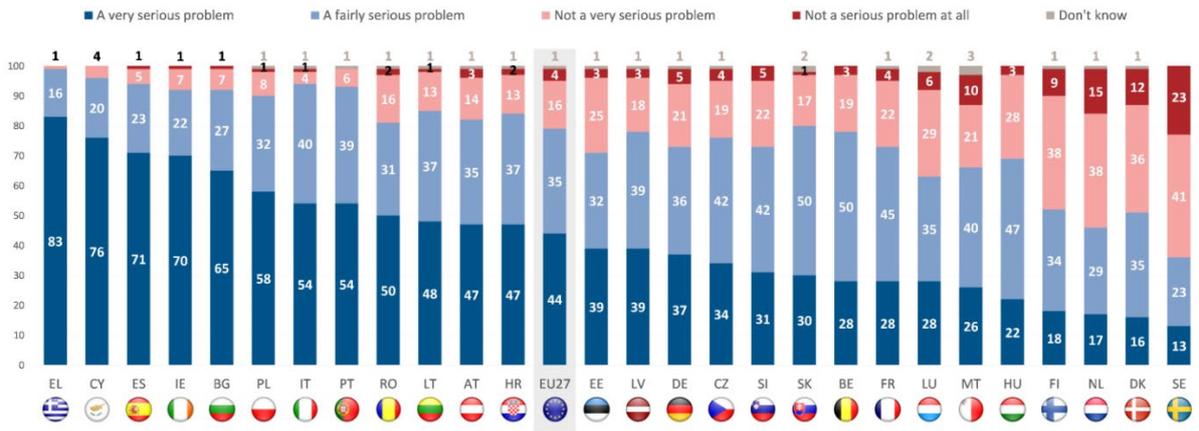
QA17.1 In your opinion, how serious a problem is each of the following aspects?  
(% - The level of energy prices for people in (OUR COUNTRY) in general)



For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on fairness perceptions of the green transition](#) (October 2022)

**79% of respondents say the current cost of their household’s energy needs is a problem, with 44% describing it as a “very serious problem”.** The proportion of respondents who say the current cost of their household’s energy needs is a serious problem varies considerably, **ranging from 99% of respondents in Greece, 96% in Cyprus and 94% in Spain and Italy to 36% in Sweden, 46% in the Netherlands and 51% in Denmark.** At least seven in ten in Greece (83%), Cyprus (76%), Spain (71%) and Ireland (70%) say the cost of their household’s energy needs is a “very serious problem”. Respondents in Southern European countries and some Eastern European countries are more likely to say that the current cost of their household energy needs is a problem when compared to Northern and Western European countries. A similar pattern applies to the current cost of fuel for transport needs.

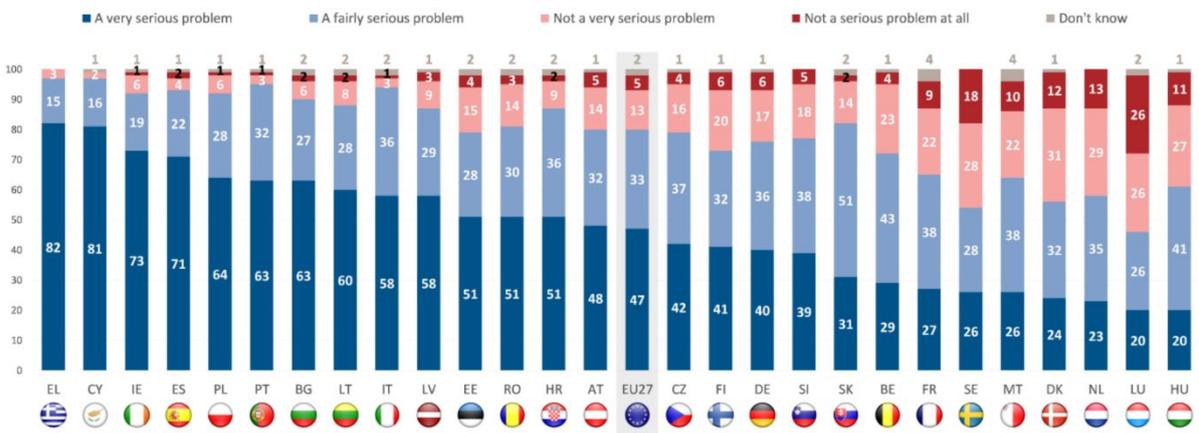
QA17.2 In your opinion, how serious a problem is each of the following aspects?  
 (% - The current cost of your household's energy needs (lighting, cooking, heating, cooling, running appliances, etc.))



For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on fairness perceptions of the green transition](#) (October 2022)

**Eight in ten (80%) say the current cost of fuel for their transport needs is a problem, and for 47%, it is a serious one.** In all but one country, the majority of respondents say the cost of fuel for their transport needs is a serious problem, and this view is most widespread in Greece, Cyprus (both 97%) and Portugal (95%). At the other end of the scale, 46% in Luxembourg, 54% in Sweden and 56% in Denmark think the same way. More than eight in ten in Greece (82%) and Cyprus (81%) say the cost of fuel for their transport needs is a “very serious problem”.

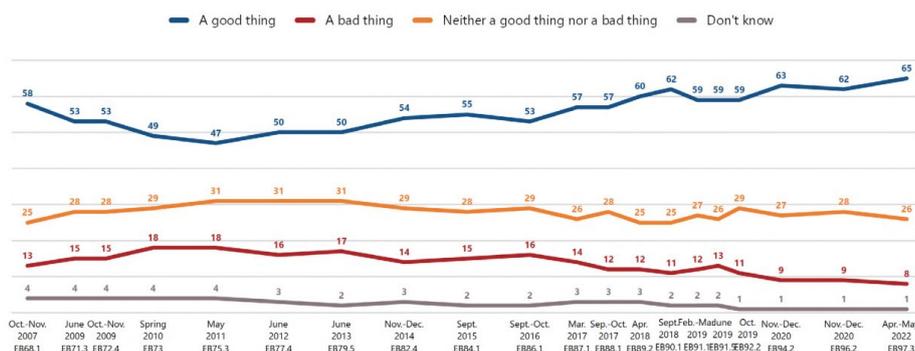
QA17.3 In your opinion, how serious a problem is each of the following aspects?  
 (% - The current cost of fuel for your transport needs (public transport, ticket price increase, private cars, your daily or less frequent mobility needs etc.))



For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on fairness perceptions of the green transition](#) (October 2022)

Despite the difficulties, **Russia’s war against Ukraine has strengthened public support for the EU. Almost two thirds of Europeans (65%, +3 percentage points) think their country’s membership of the EU is a good thing.** Over the longer-term, support has generally been increasing since 2011 and **is now at its highest ever level.** Fewer than one in ten (8%, -1 pp) think EU membership is a bad thing for their country. ([EP’s Spring 2022 Eurobarometer](#))

**QA7** Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY)'s membership of the EU is...? (% - EU)

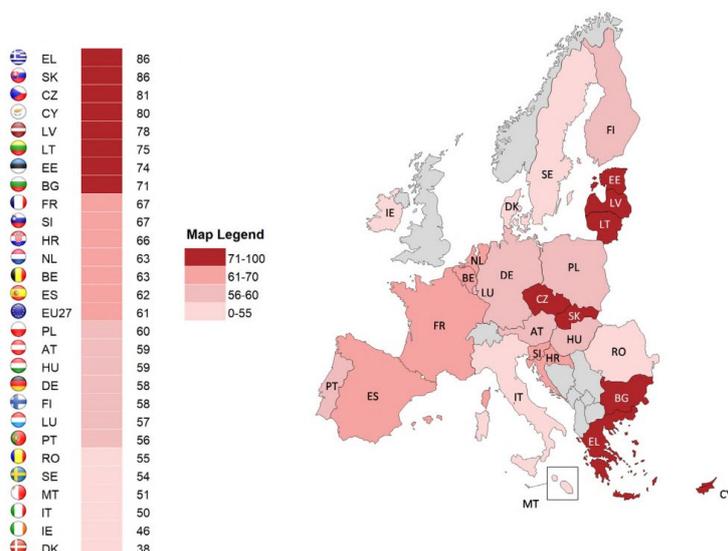


For more detailed information: [FP Spring 2022 Survey: Rallying around the European flag - Democracy as anchor point in times of crisis](#) (July 2022)

Although it is the majority view in 25 Member States, there is **considerable variation in the view that the country's membership of the EU is a good thing**. At least eight in ten in Luxembourg (90%), Ireland (86%), Lithuania (82%) and Portugal (80%) think EU membership is a good thing for their country, compared to 41% in Greece and Slovakia and 46% in Austria. In Slovakia and Greece respondents most often say membership is neither good nor bad for their country (50% and 43% respectively). Romania (23%) is the only country where more than one in five think EU membership is a bad thing for their country, in Austria (17%), Greece (16%) and Bulgaria (15%) more than one in ten think the same way.

**Only a minority of citizens (37%) are confident that their life will continue unchanged as a result of the war in Ukraine** and its potential consequences, with just 4% being 'very confident' that this will be the case. The majority (61%) say that they are not confident that this will be the case, with 18% being 'not at all confident'. Denmark (61%) and Ireland (52%) are the only two EU Member States where the majority of respondents are confident their life will continue unchanged as a result of the war in Ukraine and its potential consequences, although 49% in Italy and 47% in Malta also think this way. At the other end of the spectrum, only 12% in Slovakia, 14% in Greece and 17% in Czechia think their life will continue unchanged.

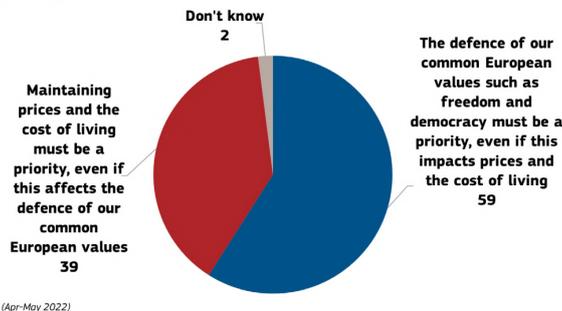
**QA11** Thinking about the war in Ukraine and its potential consequences on your life, how confident do you feel that your life will continue unchanged? (% - Total 'Not confident')



For more detailed information: [FP Spring 2022 Survey: Rallying around the European flag - Democracy as anchor point in times of crisis](#) (July 2022)

Respondents were also given two statements and asked where they would position themselves on a scale between them. **Almost six in ten (59%) position themselves closest to the statement 'The defence of our common European values such as freedom and democracy must be a priority, even if this impacts prices and the cost of living', while 39% position themselves closest to the statement 'Maintaining prices and the cost of living must be a priority, even if this affects the defence of our common European values'.**

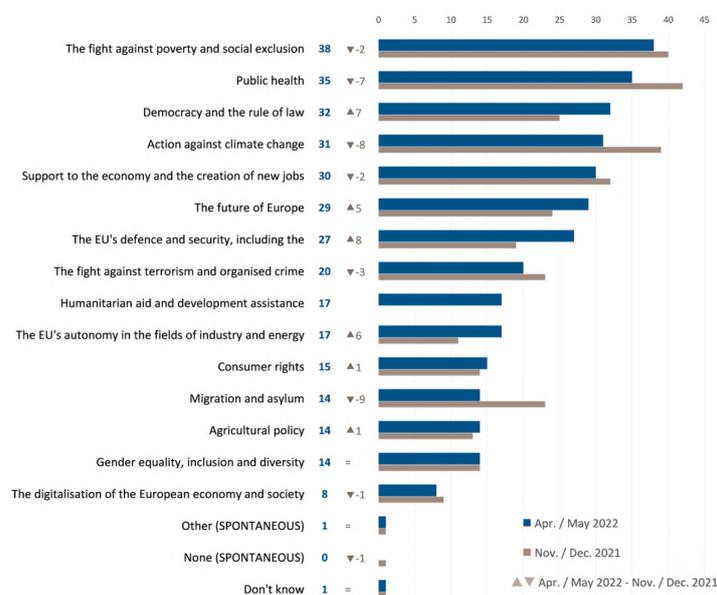
**QA15** Thinking about the war in Ukraine and its consequences, where do you position yourself between these two statements? Please use this scale from 1 to 6, where "1" means that "the defence of our common European values such as freedom and democracy must be a priority, even if this impacts prices and the cost of living"; and "6" means that "maintaining prices and the cost of living must be a priority, even if this affects the defence of our common European values". The remaining numbers indicate something in between these two positions. (% - EU)



For more detailed information: [EP Spring 2022 Survey: Rallying around the European flag - Democracy as anchor point in times of crisis \(July 2022\)](#)

The increasing economic worries are also reflected in the political priorities citizens want the European Parliament to focus on. **Citizens think the fight against poverty and social exclusion (38%, -2 percentage points since November-December 2021) should be the main priority for the European Parliament to address**, followed by public health (35%, -7 pp), democracy and the rule of law (32%, +7 pp), action against climate change (31%, -8 pp) and support to the economy and the creation of new jobs (30%, -2 pp).

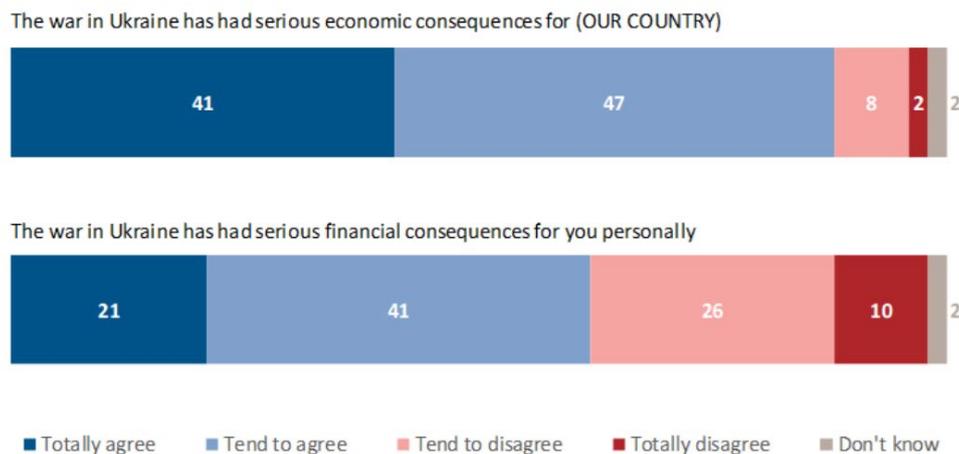
**QA4ab** Which of the following topics would you like to see addressed in priority by the European Parliament? Firstly? And then? (MAX. 4 ANSWERS) (% - EU)



For more detailed information: [EP Spring 2022 Survey: Rallying around the European flag - Democracy as anchor point in times of crisis \(July 2022\)](#)

A large majority thinks **the war in Ukraine has had serious economic consequences for their country, while a smaller majority say it has had serious personal financial consequences.** Almost nine in ten respondents agree the war in Ukraine has had serious economic consequences for their country (88%), with just over four in ten (41%) totally agreeing. One in ten (10%) disagree and 2% say they don't know. In comparison, a smaller majority (62%) agree the war has had serious financial consequences for them personally, although one in five (20%) "totally agree". More than one third (36%) disagree and 2% say they don't know.

**QES. Thinking about the consequences of the war in Ukraine, please tell to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements?**  
(% - EU27)



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

In addition to Eurobarometer data, DG COMM's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit is assembling on a weekly basis **recent surveys and polls from across the EU giving insight into how citizens see Russia's war against Ukraine** as well as its ripple effects. All editions can also be found [here](#).

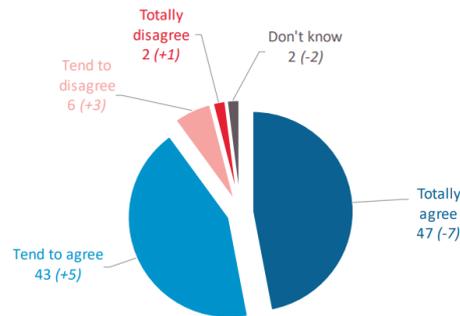
## UN climate change conference (COP27)

On Tuesday 11 October, MEPs are set to call on all countries to step up their 2030 climate targets before the [COP27](#) in Egypt from 6-18 November, to limit global warming in line with the Paris agreement. They are also expected to demand the USD 100 billion climate finance goal be met and that donors start disbursing money already in 2022 (debate Tuesday, vote Thursday).

**Nearly eight in ten respondents (78%) agree that climate change is a very serious problem,** while 15% consider it to be a fairly serious problem and 7% not a serious problem according to a [Eurobarometer survey on climate change](#).

**A climate-neutral Europe by 2050: A large majority of respondents (90%, -2 percentage points since 2019) agree that 'we should reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a minimum while offsetting the remaining emissions, for instance by increasing forested areas, to make the EU economy climate neutral by 2050',** with nearly half (47%, -7) answering they 'totally agree'. On the other hand, less than one in ten respondents (8%, +4) disagree with this statement, while just 2% (-2) say they do not know.

QB10 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: We should reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a minimum while offsetting the remaining emissions, for instance by increasing forested areas, to make the EU economy climate-neutral by 2050.

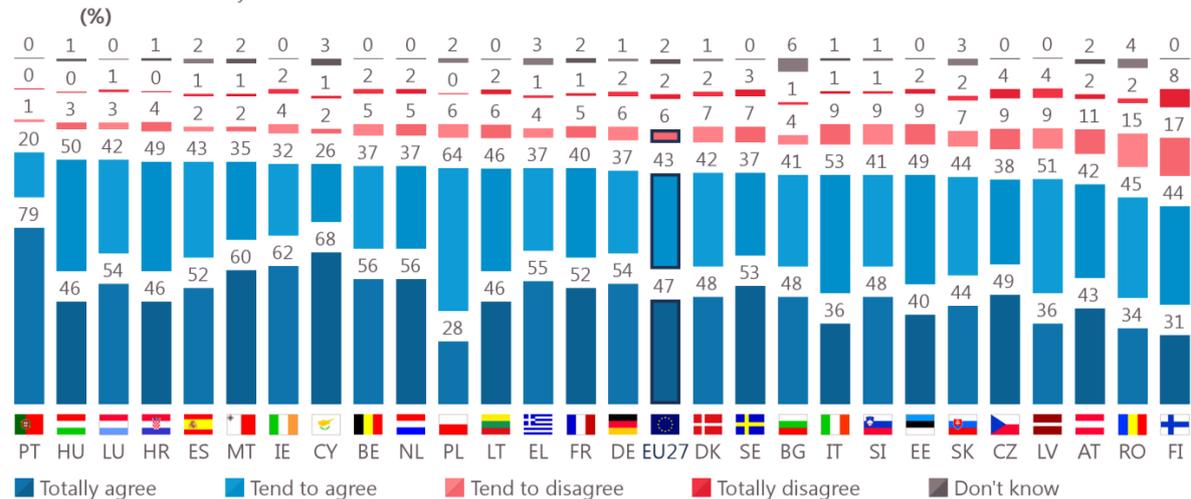


(Mar./Apr. 2021)

For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on climate change](#) (July 2021)

**A national analysis** reveals that, in all 27 EU Member States, at least three quarters of respondents agree that greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced to a minimum, while offsetting the remaining emissions, in order to make the EU economy climate-neutral by 2050. This proportion is highest among respondents in Portugal (99%), Hungary (96%) and Luxembourg (96%), and lowest in Finland (75%), Romania (79%) and Austria (85%).

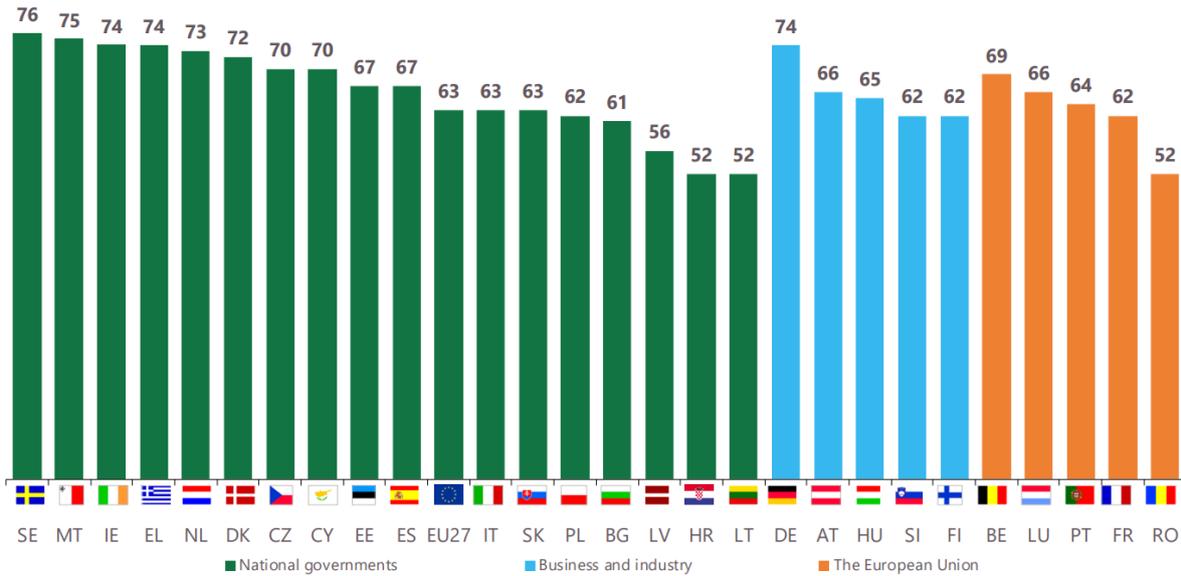
QB10 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: We should reduce greenhouse gas emissions to a minimum while offsetting the remaining emissions, for instance by increasing forested areas, to make the EU economy climate-neutral by 2050.



For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on climate change](#) (July 2021)

**More than six in ten Europeans believe that, within the EU, national governments are responsible for tackling climate change**, ahead of business and industry and the EU. A national analysis highlights that, in 17 EU Member States, respondents place national governments in first position among the actors responsible for tackling climate change, with the highest scores being recorded in Sweden (76%), Malta (75%) and Ireland (74%) and Greece (74%). At the other end of the scale, slightly more than half of respondents share this opinion in Romania (51%), Slovenia (52%), and Lithuania and Croatia (52% in both countries, where this is the most mentioned actor).

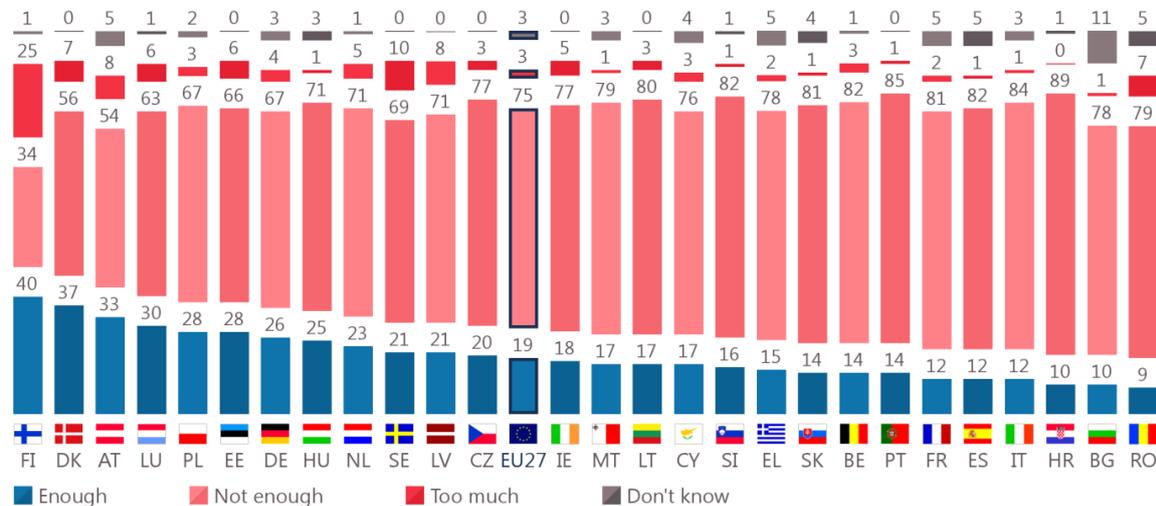
**QB3** In your opinion, who within the EU is responsible for tackling climate change? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)  
 (% - THE MOST MENTIONED ANSWER BY COUNTRY)



For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on climate change](#) (July 2021)

However, **three quarters of Europeans think that their national government is not doing enough to tackle climate change. A national analysis reveals that, in 26 EU Member States, more than half of respondents think that their national government is not doing enough to tackle climate change.** Within these countries, this proportion is highest among respondents in Croatia (89%), Portugal (85%) and Italy (84%), and lowest in Austria (54%), Denmark (56%) and Luxembourg (63%). Finland is the only country where the largest group of respondents think that their national government is doing enough to tackle climate change (40% versus 34% 'not enough' and 25% 'too much').

**QB7** Do you think that the (NATIONALITY) government is doing enough, not enough or too much to tackle climate change? (%)

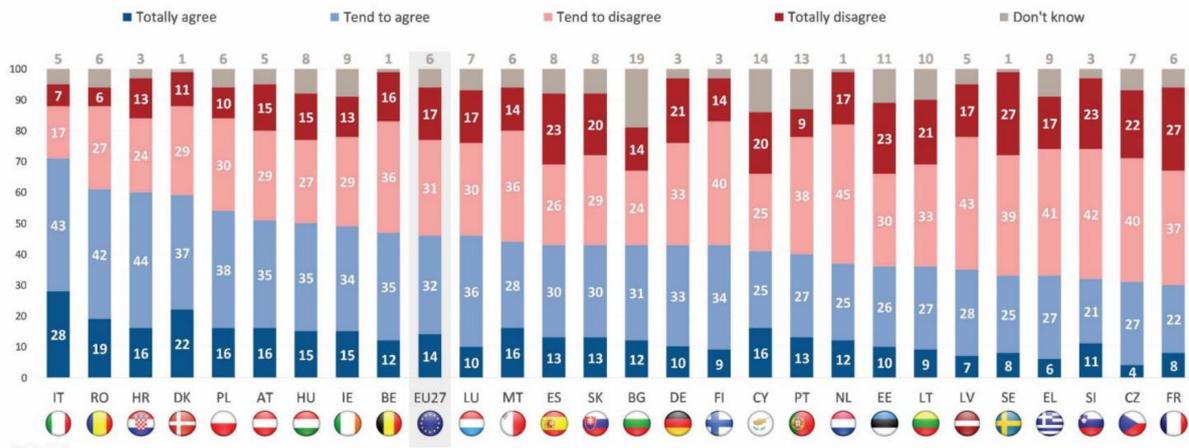


For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on climate change](#) (July 2021)

**Almost nine in ten respondents agree that no one should be left behind in the green transition,** according to a new [Eurobarometer survey on fairness perceptions of the green transition](#) published last week. However, **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.** Almost as many (48%) disagree, with 17% saying they “totally disagree”. Just over one in twenty (6%) say they don’t know. In seven countries, including Italy (71%), Romania (61%) and Croatia (60%), the majority agrees that by 2050 sustainable energy, products and services will be affordable for everyone. In contrast, only 30% in France, 31% in Czechia and 32% in Slovenia agree.

QA1.4 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?  
 (% - You are confident that by 2050 sustainable energy, products and services will be affordable for everyone, including poorer people)



For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on fairness perceptions of the green transition](#) (October 2022)

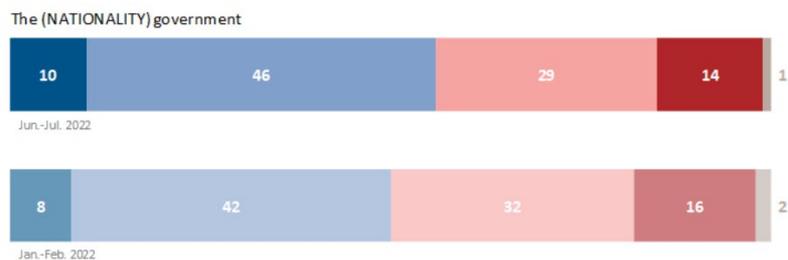
## Mental Health

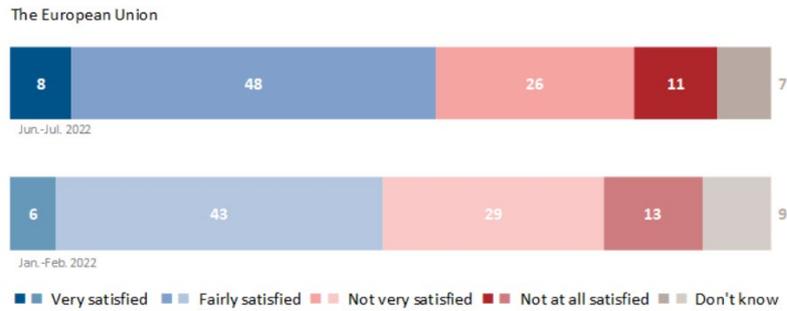
On Tuesday 11 October, one day after World [Mental Health](#) Day, MEPs will discuss the issue.

**Satisfaction with the measures taken by the European Union to fight the coronavirus pandemic has increased since winter 2021-2022 with 56% (+7 pp) now satisfied ([Standard Eurobarometer 97](#)).** Over the same period dissatisfaction also declined (37%, -5 pp), while 7% of citizens say they don’t know (-2 pp).

**Satisfaction with measures taken by national governments to fight the coronavirus pandemic has also increased (56%, +6 percentage points since winter 2021-2022).** Dissatisfaction decreased slightly (43%, -5 pp), while 1% (-1 pp) of respondents say they don’t know.

QC2. In general, how satisfied are you with the measures taken to fight the coronavirus pandemic by....?  
 (% - EU27)





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

In a [Flash Eurobarometer targeting young people](#) (15-30 years) respondents were asked about key themes the European Year of youth should focus on.

According to the respondents, **the European Year of Youth should focus on improving mental and physical health and wellbeing, protecting the environment and fighting climate change (both 34%), improving education and training, including the free movement of students, apprentices, pupils, etc. (33%), and fighting poverty and economic and social inequalities (32%).** Improving young people’s mental and physical health and wellbeing is considered the (shared) most important priority theme for the European Year of Youth in 16 of the 27 Member States. Proportionally, improving mental and physical health and wellbeing is considered a priority for the European Year of Youth by between 26% of respondents in Germany and 56% in Estonia.

**Q12** The European Commission has decided to make 2022 the ‘European Year of Youth’ to support the generation that has sacrificed the most during the COVID-19 pandemic. What are the key themes you think the European Year of Youth should focus on? You can select up to three answers. [MULTIPLE ANSWERS] (% - EU27)



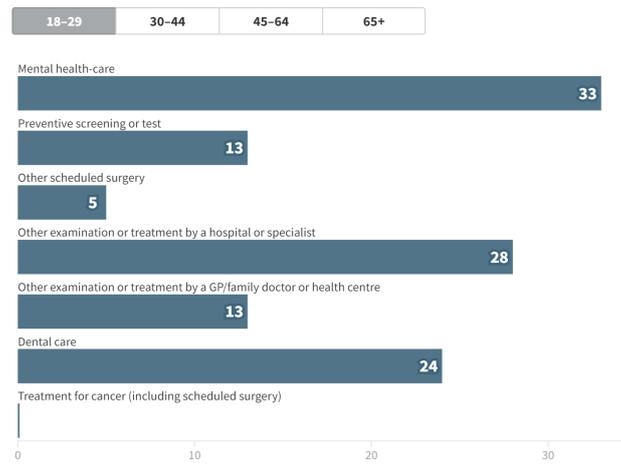
Base: All respondents (n=26 178)

For more detailed information: [Flash Eurobarometer Youth and Democracy in the European Year of Youth](#) (May 2022)

**External Insight:** The number of Europeans reporting "bad" or "very bad" health soared during the COVID-19 pandemic, even beyond the end of lockdowns, new [polling by European Union agency Eurofound](#) shows. The number of people reporting "bad" or "very bad" mental health doubled from 6.4% in March 2020 at the onset of the crisis to 12.7% two years later even as restrictions were eased. The pandemic and its related restriction measures have been associated with a decline in mental well-being, particularly for young people. **Unmet healthcare needs have**

increased across the EU, affecting almost one in five respondents (18%). The backlog in care for younger people (18-29 years) is highest for mental health care.

Unmet health-care needs by age group (%)



For more detailed information: [Eurofound: Fifth round of the Living, working and COVID-19 e-survey: Living in a new era of uncertainty \(July 2022\)](#)