

PLENARY INSIGHTS

Public opinion at a glance



January 2023



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

- Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 15 December 2022: European citizens remain resilient in their support to Ukraine. 74% approve of the EU's support to Ukraine as well as the specific measures including sanctions against Russia, according to the [EP's latest Eurobarometer survey](#) published in full last week. Almost six in ten citizens (58%) say they are satisfied with the cooperation between EU Member States in addressing the consequences of the war in Ukraine, while almost four in ten (37%) are not satisfied.

- Programme of the Swedish Presidency: In every EU Member State, more than seven in ten respondents are worried about the rising cost of living, with peak results in Greece (100%), Cyprus (99%), Italy and Portugal (both 98%), according to the [EP's latest Eurobarometer survey](#). The rising prices, including for energy and food, are felt across all sociodemographic categories such as gender or age as well as all educational and socio-professional backgrounds. The second most mentioned worry is the threat of poverty and social exclusion, followed by climate change and the spread of the war in Ukraine to other countries equal in third place.

- 30th anniversary of the single market: More than seven in ten EU citizens think that, on balance, their country has benefited from being part of the EU. Main reasons for why citizens think their country has benefited from membership are that the EU contributes to maintaining peace and strengthening security (36%, +6 percentage points since November-December 2021), that the EU improves cooperation between their country and other countries of the EU (35%, +3 pp) and that the EU contributes to their country's economic growth (30%, no change). ([EP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer](#))

- Convention on Cybercrime: 28% of European SMEs have experienced at least one type of cybercrime in 2021. SMEs are most concerned about the risk of hacking online bank accounts (32%) and phishing, account takeover or impersonation attacks (31%), and viruses and spyware or malware (29%). ([Eurobarometersurvey on SMEs and Cybercrime](#))

- Implementation of the common security and defence policy: European citizens support massively a common security and defence policy (81%). War in the EU's neighbourhood is seen as the main challenge to the internal security of the EU as 93% of Europeans consider this issue as important. ([Eurobarometer survey on "Key challenges of our times - the EU in 2022"](#))

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:

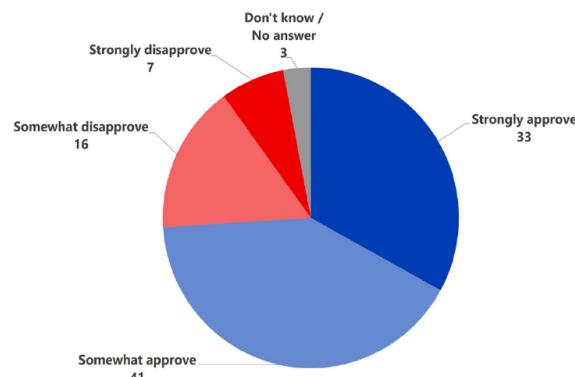
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Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 15 December 2022

On Wednesday 18 January, MEPs will debate the [results of the 15 December EU summit](#) with European Council President Charles Michel and Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Three in four EU citizens (74%) say they approve of the EU's support for Ukraine following Russia's invasion, and this includes 33% who 'strongly approve' and 41% that 'somewhat approve', according to the [EP's latest Eurobarometer survey](#). **In all countries more people approve than disapprove of the EU's support for Ukraine.** The proportion that approve of the EU's support is highest in Sweden (97%), Finland (95%), the Netherlands (93%), Denmark and Portugal (both 92%). Levels of disapproval are highest in south-eastern areas of Europe, such as in Greece (48%), Slovakia (46%), Bulgaria (44%) and Cyprus (42%).

QA13 Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the European Union's support for Ukraine following Russia's invasion of Ukraine? (% - EU27)

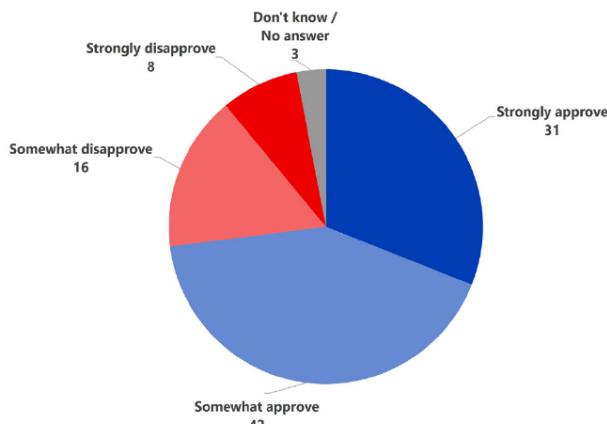


(Oct/Nov 2022)

For more detailed information: [EP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer survey](#) (January 2023)

Around three in four EU citizens (73%) say they approve of the EU's action to support Ukraine, such as sanctions against Russian government or financial, military or humanitarian support.

QA14 Let's now think in more detail about the different actions taken by the European Union to support Ukraine since the start of the war, such as sanctions against the Russian government or financial, military or humanitarian support: do you approve or disapprove of these actions? (% - EU27)



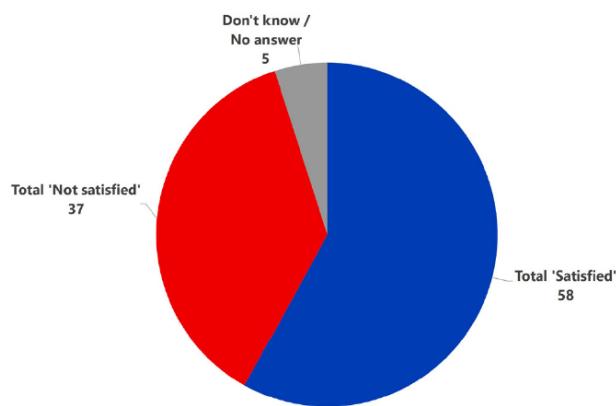
(Oct/Nov 2022)

For more detailed information: [EP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer survey](#) (January 2023)

There is variation in the levels of approval for the EU's actions to support Ukraine. In 24 countries, a majority of respondents approve of the EU's actions, with more than nine in ten approving in Sweden, Finland (both 96%), the Netherlands (93%), Denmark (92%) and Ireland (91%). **However, the majority disapprove of the EU's actions in Greece (51%) and Slovakia (49%), while in Cyprus there are equal proportions that approve and disapprove (both 48%).** Levels of disapproval are also relatively high in Bulgaria (45%), Hungary (41%) and Austria (40%). Once again, the lowest levels of approval for the EU's actions to support Ukraine are concentrated in south eastern areas of Europe.

As well as approving of the EU's support for Ukraine, **the majority of Europeans are positive towards the way Member States have cooperated**. Almost six in ten citizens (58%) say they are satisfied with the cooperation between EU Member States in addressing the consequences of the war in Ukraine, while almost four in ten (37%) are not satisfied.

QA15 How satisfied or not are you with the cooperation between EU Member States in addressing the consequences of the war in Ukraine? (% - EU27)



(Oct/Nov 2022)

For more detailed information: [EP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer survey](#) (January 2023)

In 23 Member States, a majority of respondents are satisfied with the cooperation between EU Member States in addressing the consequences of the war in Ukraine. Satisfaction is highest among respondents in Ireland (84%), Denmark, Portugal (both 83%), Sweden (81%) and Finland (80%). In four Member States, the majority are not satisfied: Greece (61%), Cyprus (56%), Slovakia (54%) and Bulgaria (50%).

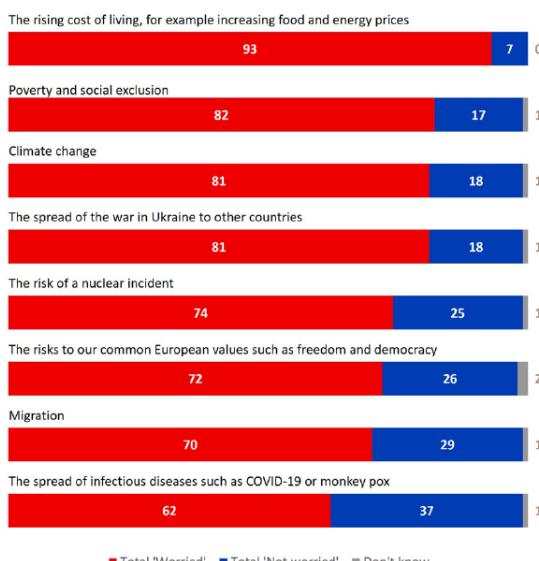
Programme of the Swedish Presidency

On Tuesday 17 January, MEPs will discuss the [programme of Sweden's six-month Presidency of the Council](#), which started on 1 January, with Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson.

Looking at what preoccupies **EU citizens** most, respondents to the [EP's latest Eurobarometer survey](#) are **most worried about the rising cost of living**, for example increasing food and energy prices (93%). There are three other issues which at least eight in ten citizens say they are concerned about: **poverty and social exclusion (82%), climate change (81%) and the spread of the war in Ukraine to other countries (81%)**. Furthermore, at least seven in ten are worried about the risk of a nuclear incident (74%), the risks to common European values such as freedom and democracy (72%) and migration (70%).

QA18

To what extent are you currently worried or not about each of the following issues for your life and those of your close ones? (%) - EU27)



For more detailed information: [FP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer survey](#) (January 2023)

In every country, more than seven in ten respondents say they are worried about the **rising cost of living**, and nearly all respondents are worried in Greece (100%), Cyprus (99%), Italy and Portugal (both 98%). More than eight in ten are 'very worried' in Greece (86%), Cyprus (85%) and Portugal (84%). Respondents are least likely to be concerned about the rising cost of living in Sweden (74%), Denmark (77%), the Netherlands (81%) and Romania (82%).

The **socio-demographic analysis** shows that the rising prices, including for energy and food, are felt across all sociodemographic categories such as gender or age as well as all educational and socio-professional backgrounds.

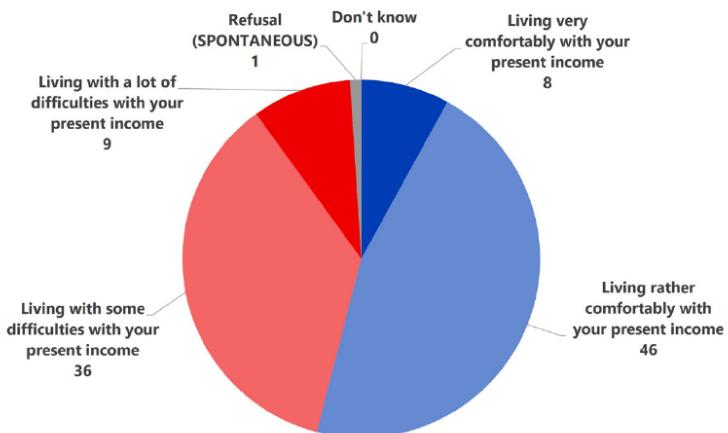
There is widespread concern about **poverty and social exclusion** across Member States. In five countries, more than nine in ten respondents are worried about this: Greece (97%), Portugal (95%), Cyprus (94%), Spain (93%) and Italy (92%).

While the rising cost of living has been a concern for some time, the main change seen when comparing these findings with earlier ones is that **future expectations have become much more pessimistic**. If Europeans have not already seen a reduction in their standard of living, they mostly expect to see one in the next year. There has also been a large increase in the proportion that expect their own living conditions, and the situation of their national economy, to be worse in a year's time.

When considering their financial income, there is a broad split among European citizens between those who are living comfortably and those who are living with difficulties. Just over half (54%) say they are living comfortably, including 8% who are living 'very comfortably' and 46% 'rather comfortably'. By contrast, 45% say they are living with difficulties, including 36% who are living with 'some difficulties' and 9% with 'a lot of difficulties'.

QA16

Thinking about your household's income, how would you describe your current situation?
(% - EU27)



(Oct/Nov 2022)

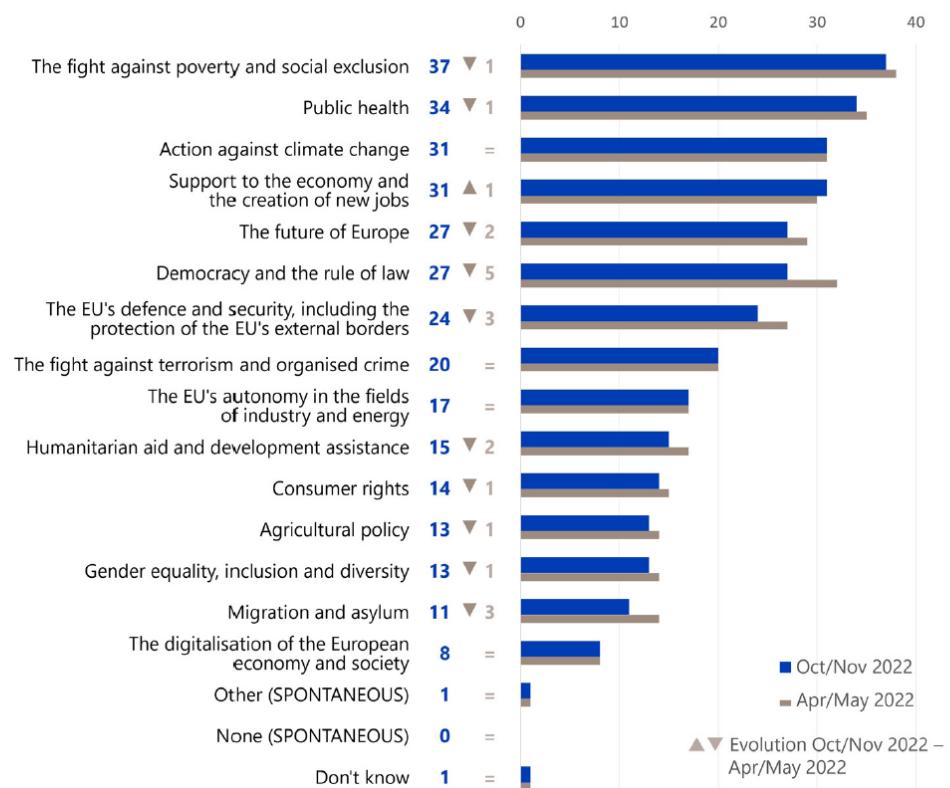
For more detailed information: [EP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer survey](#) (January 2023)

There are large differences between countries. In 16 Member States, the majority of respondents say they are living comfortably. The proportion is highest in Sweden (87%), Denmark (86%), Finland (84%), the Netherlands (82%) and Luxembourg (80%). By contrast, in 11 countries the majority say they are living with difficulties. Respondents are most likely to say this in Greece (79%) and Bulgaria (75%), followed by Romania (64%), Slovakia (63%) and Hungary (62%).

Policy priorities for the EP: Citizens think the **fight against poverty and social exclusion** (37%, -1 percentage point since April-May 2022) **should be the main priority for the European Parliament** to address, followed by **public health** (34%, -1 pp), **action against climate change** (31%, no change) and **support to the economy and the creation of new jobs** (31%, +1 pp). At least one in five think a priority should be democracy and the rule of law (27%, -5 pp), the future of Europe (27%, -2 pp), the EU's defence and security, including the protection of EU's external borders (24%, -3 pp) and the fight against terrorism and organised crime (20%, no change).

QA6ab

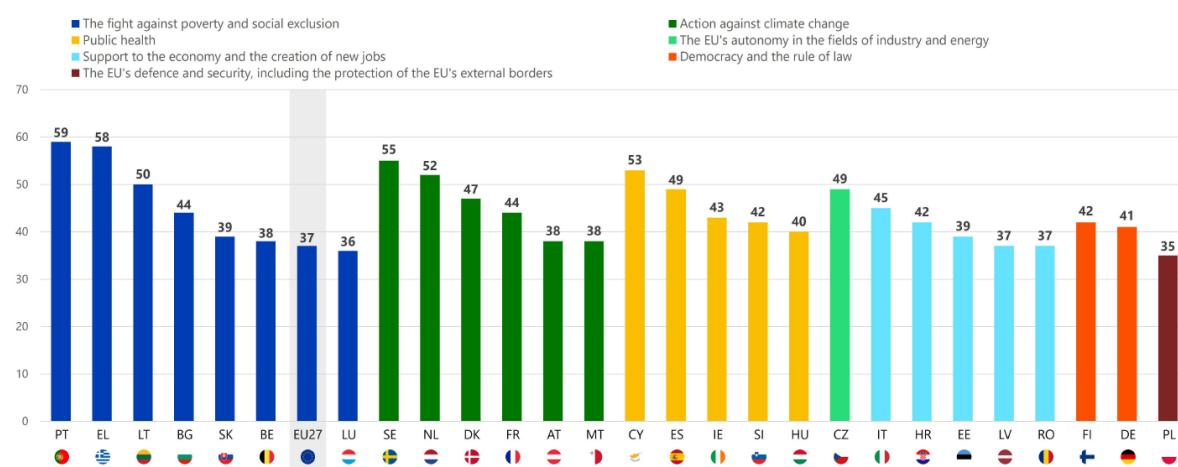
Which of the following topics would you like to see addressed in priority by the European Parliament? Firstly? And then? (Max. 4 answers) (%) - EU27)



For more detailed information: [FP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer survey](#) (January 2023)

Citizens' choice of priority topics vary considerably across the EU. In seven countries, respondents most want to see the fight against poverty and social exclusion prioritised. In five countries respondents most want to see public health prioritised. Action against climate change is the top priority in six countries, while in five Member States, the priority is support to the economy and the creation of new jobs (higher than in April-May 2022 where it was the top priority only in Greece). In Germany and Finland the top priority is democracy and the rule of law, while in Poland the EU's defence and security is the top priority. The highest priority in Czechia is the EU's autonomy in the fields of industry and energy.

Q6ab. Which of the following topics would you like to see addressed in priority by the European Parliament? Firstly? And then? (MAX 3 ANSWERS)
(% - The most mentioned answer by country)



For more detailed information: [FP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer survey](#) (January 2023)

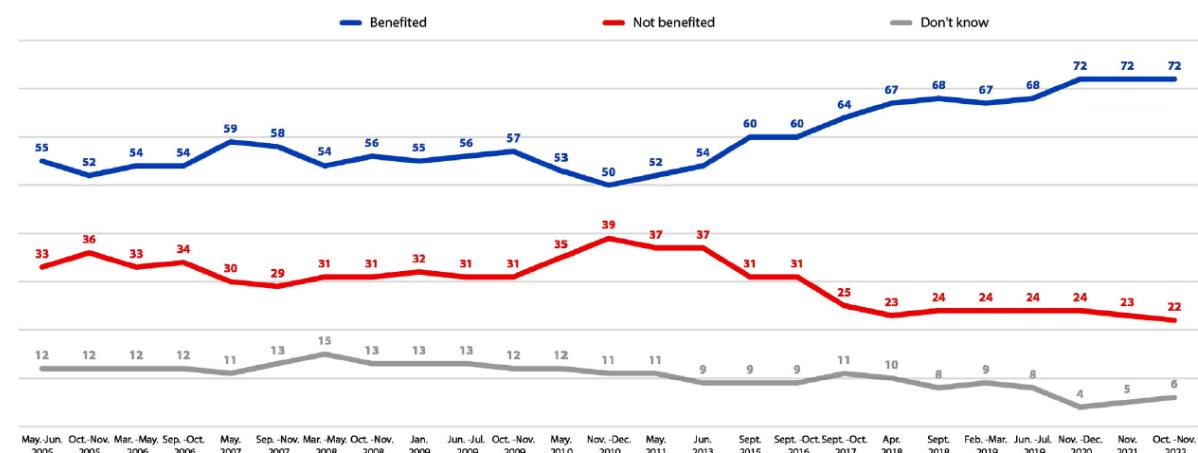
30th anniversary of the single market

On Monday 16 January, a short [ceremony will be held to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the EU single market](#). The following day, MEPs will adopt a resolution on it. Since its creation in 1993, the single market has helped to make everyday life easier for people and businesses, fuelling jobs and growth across the EU.

Reflecting on whether or not membership of the EU is a good thing, more than seven in ten EU citizens (72%, no change since November-December 2021) think that, on balance, their country has benefited from being part of the EU. Just over one in five (22%, -1 pp) say their country has not benefited from its membership. ([EP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer](#))

QA9

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

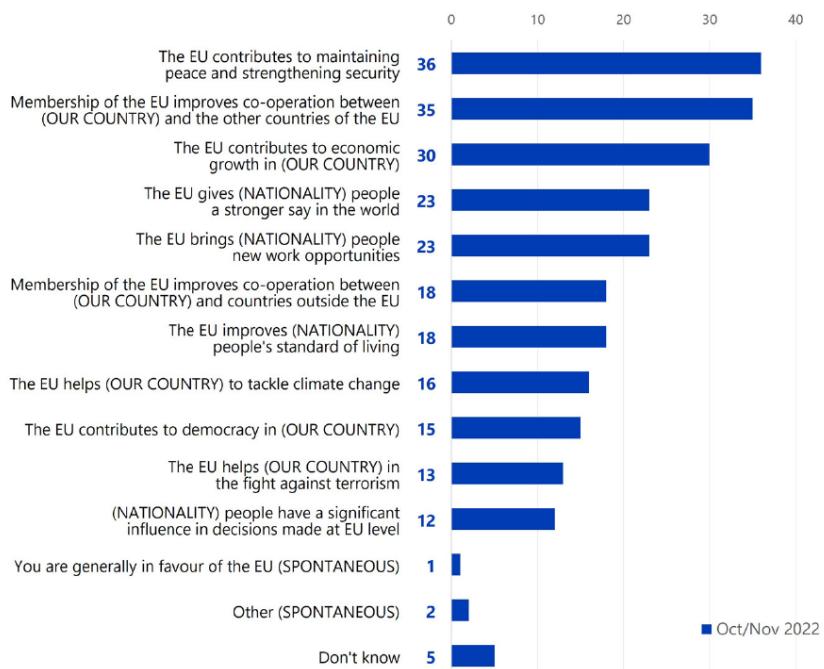


For more detailed information: [EP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer survey](#) (January 2023)

In every EU Member State, more than half of respondents say that their country has benefited from being a member of the EU, and this applies to more than nine in ten respondents in Malta (95%), Ireland (92%), Luxembourg and Lithuania (both 91%). This proportion is lowest in Austria (55%), followed by Bulgaria (60%), Italy (61%) and France (63%). Austria has the highest proportion of those who think their country has not benefited from EU membership (38%).

There are three **main reasons that citizens consider as to why their country has benefited from membership of the EU:** the fact that the EU contributes to **maintaining peace and strengthening security** (36%, +6 percentage points since November-December 2021), that the **EU improves cooperation between their country and other countries of the EU** (35%, +3 pp) and that the **EU contributes to their country's economic growth** (30%, no change). The next most important benefits of EU membership are that the **EU brings people new work opportunities** (23%, -1 pp) and that the **EU gives people in their country a stronger say in the world** (23%, +3 pp).

QA10ab Regardless of whether you think (OUR COUNTRY) has benefited or not from being a member of the EU, which of the following are the main reasons why people think (OUR COUNTRY) has benefited from being a member of the EU? Firstly? And then? (Max. 3 answers) (%) - EU27



For more detailed information: [FP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer survey](#) (January 2023)

Moving to the detailed country analysis, we find that respondents in the Netherlands (48%), Sweden and Germany (both 47%) are most likely to mention the EU's contribution to **maintaining peace and strengthening security**, while this benefit is least likely to be mentioned in Ireland (19%) and Malta (21%).

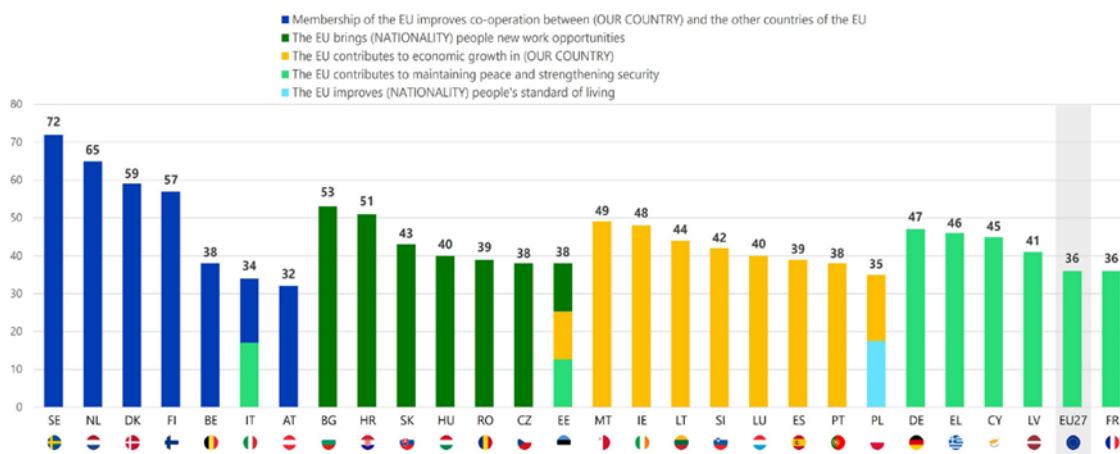
The **EU's contribution to cooperation between Member States** is highlighted by more than half of respondents in Sweden (72%), the Netherlands (65%), Denmark (59%) and Finland (57%). This is least likely to be seen as a benefit of membership by respondents in Ireland (20%), Romania and Poland (both 22%).

The **EU's contribution to economic growth** is seen as an important benefit of EU membership in Malta (49%), Ireland (48%) and Lithuania (44%). This is least likely to be seen as a benefit of membership by respondents in Italy (21%) and France (23%).

The analysis also shows some large figures for other benefits. The **EU's contribution to new work opportunities** is mentioned by 53% in Bulgaria, 51% in Hungary and 43% in Slovakia.

A large proportion in Greece (39%) say that the **EU gives people in their country a stronger say in the world**. In Ireland, 40% say a benefit of EU membership is that it **improves people's standard of living**.

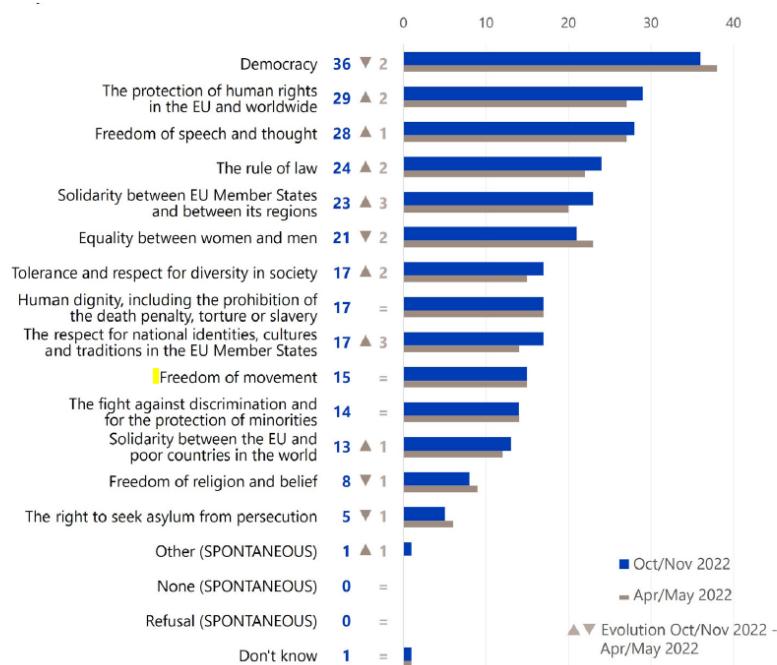
QA10ab Regardless of whether you think (OUR COUNTRY) has benefited or not from being a member of the EU, which of the following are the main reasons why people think (OUR COUNTRY) has benefited from being a member of the EU? Firstly? And then? (Max. 3 answers) (% - The most mentioned answer by country)



For more detailed information: [FP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer survey](#) (January 2023)

The single market gives people the chance to travel and work around the EU and allows goods, services and money to move around almost as freely as within a single country. **15% of respondents to the survey say that the EP should defend “freedom of movement” as a matter of priority.** Freedom of movement is the joint highest answer in Bulgaria, together with the defence of human rights in the EU and worldwide. Overall, **the defence of freedom of movement is higher in newer MS than in older ones**, with highest mentions in Bulgaria (37%), Slovakia and Ireland (28%), Estonia and Romania (26%), Croatia and Poland (25%), where it is among the three most frequently mentioned items.

QA5ab In your opinion, which of the following values should the European Parliament defend as a matter of priority? Firstly? And then? (Max. 3 answers) (% - EU27)



For more detailed information: [FP Autumn 2022 Eurobarometer survey](#) (January 2023)

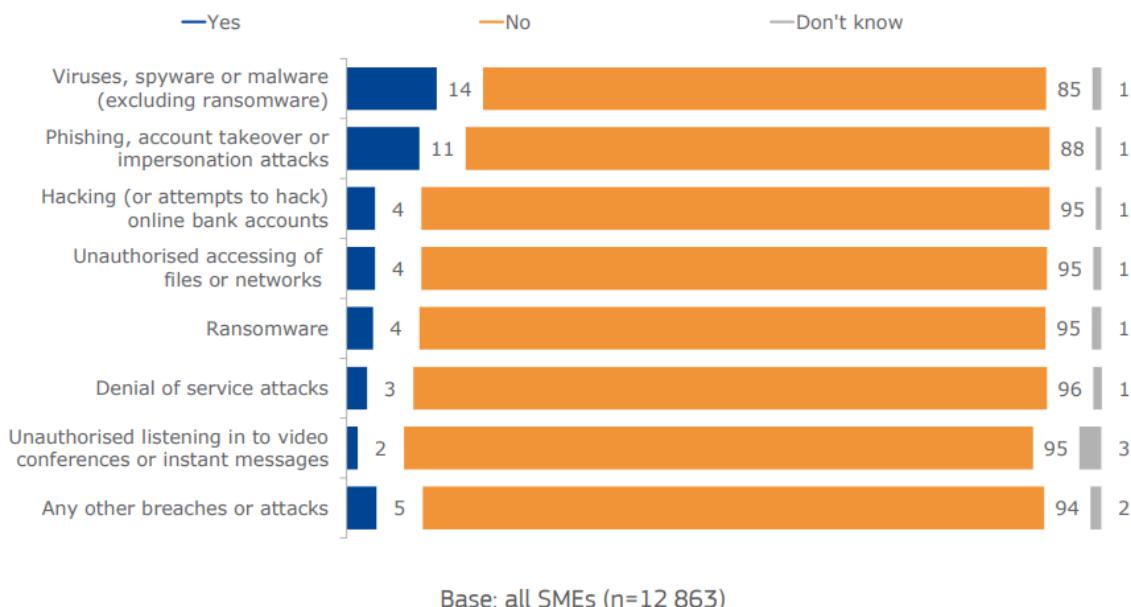
Convention on Cybercrime

On Tuesday 17 January, MEPs will discuss the [Convention on Cybercrime on enhanced co-operation and disclosure of electronic evidence](#).

The COVID-19 crisis led to an increased digital transformation for small and medium sized enterprises and at the same time to a higher exposure to cybercriminal activities. For the [Eurobarometer survey on SMEs and cybercrime](#) a representative sample of SMEs in the manufacturing, retail services and industry sectors was interviewed. The SMEs in the survey were asked which of the listed types of cybercrime they have experienced in the last 12 months. The **most prevalent type of cybercrime experienced during this timeframe is viruses, spyware or malware (experienced by 14% of SMEs in the last 12 months), followed by phishing, account takeover or impersonation attacks (11%).**

The other types of cybercrime have incidence rates (for the past 12 months) of less than 5%, including hacking (or attempts to hack) online bank accounts, unauthorised accessing of files or networks and ransomware (all three experienced by 4% of SMEs in the last 12 months), denial of service (DoS) attacks (3%) and unauthorised listening in to video conferences or instant messages (2%). Lastly, 5% of SMEs surveyed have experienced ‘another breach or attack’ over the last 12 months.

Q7 Has your company experienced any of the following types of cybercrime in the last 12 months? (% EU27)

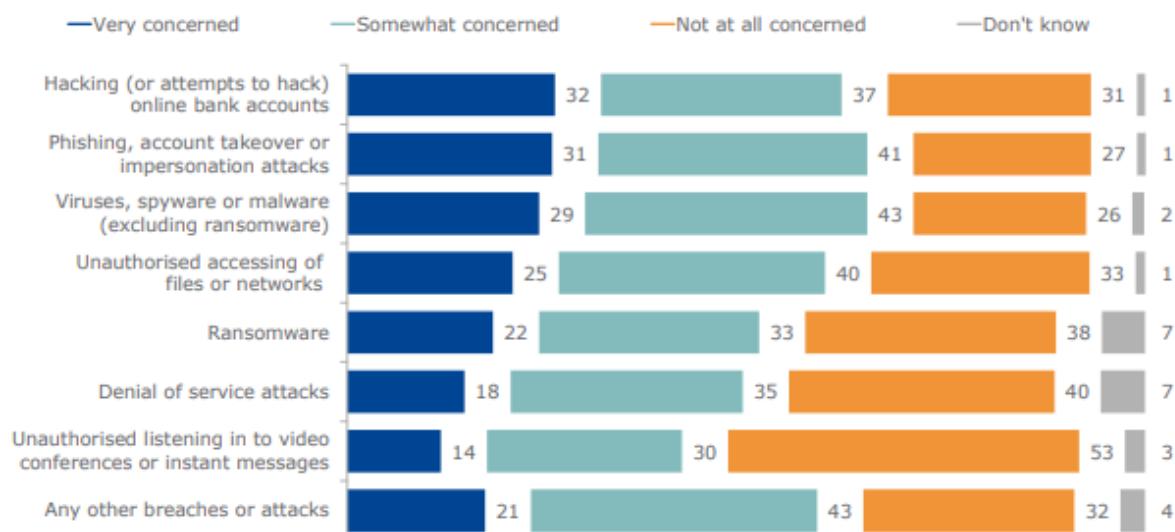


For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on SMEs and cybercrime](#) (May 2022)

Concern about cybercrime: to measure SMEs' level of concern about cybercrime, **SMEs surveyed were asked how concerned they are about a number of key cybercrime-related risks.** The results show that **SMEs are the most likely to be concerned about hacking (or attempts to hack) online bank accounts (32% are ‘very concerned’) and phishing, account takeover or impersonation attacks (31%), and viruses and spyware or malware (excluding ransomware) (29%). Between 37% and 43% of SMEs are somewhat concerned about these risks, and between 26% and 31% report not being concerned at all.** A quarter of SMEs are very concerned about unauthorised accessing of files or networks and 40% say they are somewhat concerned about this threat. One in three SMEs is not concerned at all about unauthorised accessing. Around one in five (22%) SMEs are very concerned about ransomware and a somewhat lower proportion (18%) are

very concerned about denial-of-service attacks. For these threats, about twice as many respondents say they are not concerned at all (38% and 40%, respectively). The proportion being 'not concerned at all' is the highest for unauthorised listening in to video conferences or instant messages (53% vs 14% who are 'very concerned'). 'Any other breaches or attacks' are a reason to be very concerned for 21% of SMEs.

Q6 When using the internet for business-related activities, such as selling goods or online banking, are you concerned about any of the following risks? (% EU27)

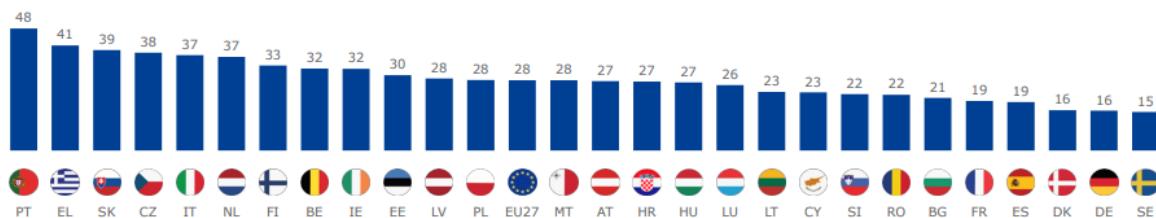


Base: all SMEs (n=12 863)

For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on SMEs and cybercrime](#) (May 2022)

Aggregating all types of cybercrime, it is calculated that 28% of SMEs in the EU have experienced at least one of the listed types of cybercrime in the last 12 months. At country level, the proportion of SMEs that have experienced at least one of these types of cybercrime in the last 12 months ranges from 15% in Sweden and 16% in both Denmark and Germany, to 48% in Portugal. Apart from Portugal, in five other countries, more than one in three surveyed SMEs experienced at least one type of cybercrime in the last 12 month: Greece (41%), Slovakia (39%), Czechia (38%), Italy and the Netherlands (both 37%).

Q7 Has your company experienced any of the following types of cybercrime in the last 12 months? (% experienced at least one type of cybercrime, by country)



Base: all SMEs (n=12 863)

For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on SMEs and cybercrime](#) (May 2022)

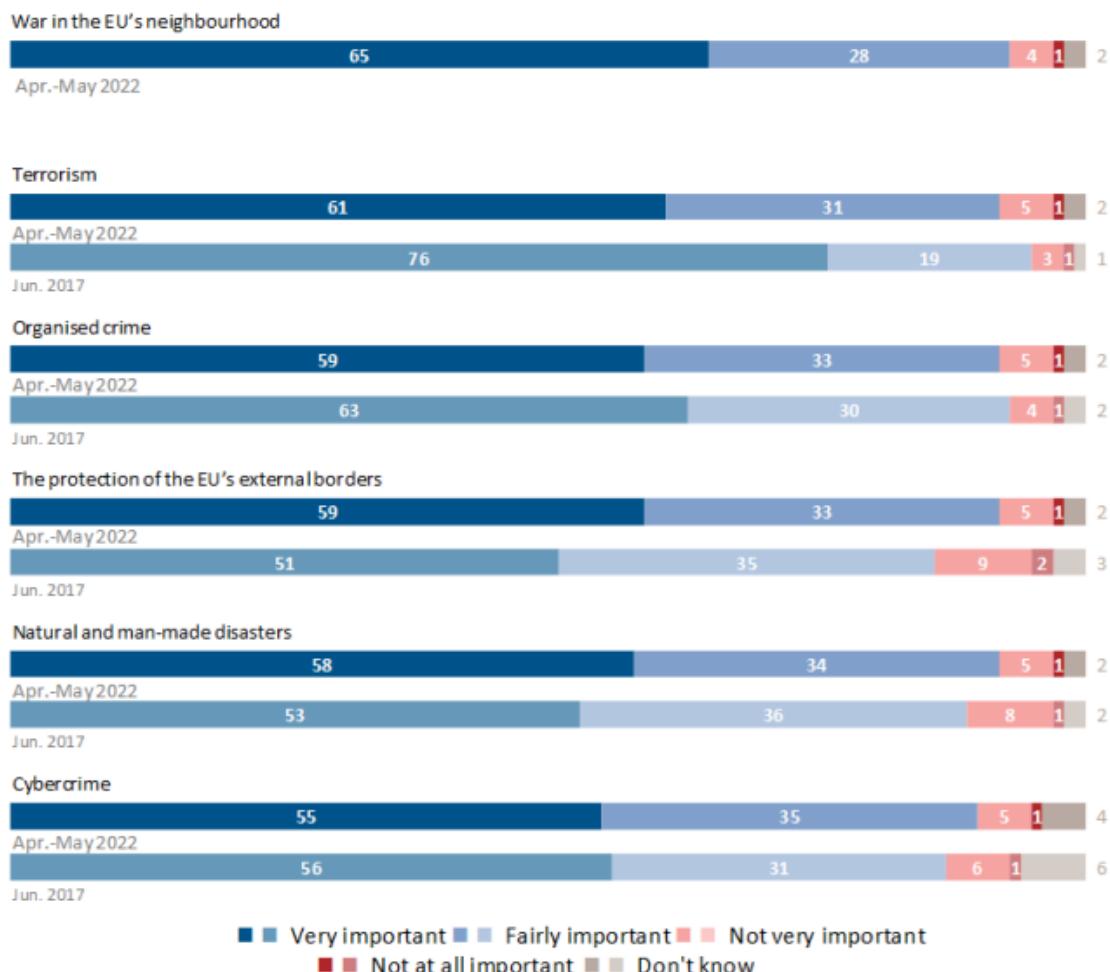
Implementation of the common security and defence policy

On Tuesday 17 January, MEPs will discuss the [annual report of the implementation of the common security and defence policy](#)

War in the EU's neighbourhood is seen as the main challenge to the internal security of the EU: 93% of Europeans consider this issue as important, including 65% who answer 'very important' and 28% who say that this issue is a 'fairly important' challenge to the EU's internal security. ([Eurobarometer survey on "Key challenges of our times - the EU in 2022"](#))

Four challenges closely follow in joint second position: **terrorism** (92%, including 61% 'very important' and 31% 'fairly important'), **organised crime** (92%, including 59% and 33%), the **protection of the EU's external borders** (92%, including 59% and 33%) and **natural and man-made disasters** (92%, including 58% and 34%). Cybercrime ranks last but is still mentioned by at least nine in ten respondents (90%, including 55% and 35%). Compared with June 2017 mentions for terrorism decline by three percentage points and by one percentage point for organised crime. Conversely, three items are mentioned by a higher proportion of respondents than in the previous survey: the protection of the EU's external border rise by six percentage points while increases are slightly less pronounced for natural and man-made disasters (+3) and cybercrime (+3). War in the EU's neighbourhood is a new item with no historical data available.

QC1. In your opinion, how important are the following challenges to the internal security of the EU?
(% - EU)



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

Respondents were also presented with two statements regarding the EU's defence and security and foreign policy. **Eight in ten (81%) are in favour of a common defence and security policy among EU Member States**, while 13% are against it and 6% say that they do not know. **Additionally, three quarters of Europeans (75%) show support for a common foreign policy of the Member States of the EU**, while 17% oppose this idea and 8% answer 'don't know'.

QC14. What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.

(% - EU)

A common defence and security policy among EU Member States



A common foreign policy of the Member States of the EU



■ For ■ Against ■ Don't know

Eurobarometer survey on "Key challenges of our times - the EU in 2022" (June 2022)