

PARLEMETER 2018



TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE

FROM (SILENT) SUPPORT TO ACTUAL VOTE

Eurobarometer Survey 90 of the European Parliament
A Public Opinion Monitoring Study



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Eurobarometer survey commissioned by the European Parliament

Directorate-General for Communication

Public Opinion Monitoring Unit

October 2018 – PE 628.262

IMPRESSUM

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Manuscript completed in October 2018

Brussels, © European Union, 2018

Cover photo: Shutterstock

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LINGUISTIC VERSION

Original: EN

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With seven months to go, the Parlemeter 2018 shows a growing appreciation of the EU by Europeans and an improved awareness on the forthcoming EP elections. This well-founded optimism expressed by a silent majority can be the core of a positive European narrative that connects its citizens. One that a broad majority of its citizens could back in a broad majority of Member States, delivering a contrasting narrative to a populist clamour. The Parlemeter 2018 presents the results of the survey as an opportunity to take up the challenge: From (silent) support to actual vote.

More than ever, European citizens see their country's membership to the EU as a good thing. Not since the peak recorded between the fall of the Berlin Wall 1989 and the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty 1992 has this indicator reached as high a level as in the present survey: 62% of respondents on EU average believe that their country's membership to the EU is a good thing. A majority of respondents in all 28 Member States also considers that their country has benefited from its EU membership. This opinion grew since the last survey in April 2018 by one percentage point and now registers at 68%, the highest result ever measured since 1983. Asked for the reasons why their country had benefited, on EU average economic factors top the list, together with the belief that the EU helps to maintain secure relationships with other countries.

Brexit, not the best choice

Nearly all general indicators measuring support for the European Union showed a significant firming up in the aftermath of the UK referendum to leave the EU and the still ongoing negotiations between the EU and the UK on both the withdrawal agreement and the framework of the future relation. The Parlemeter 2018 takes stock of citizens' opinions should a similar referendum to leave the EU be held in their own country. The positive attitude towards the European Union is clearly reflected there: With a convincingly broad majority of 66% Europeans would vote for their country to remain a member of the EU. Only 17% would vote to leave, with 17 % showing as undecided.

A more ambivalent picture

Trends over time also show a reinforcement of the Europeans' level of satisfaction with the way democracy works in the EU (49%, +3 since April) - but also in their own country (58%, +3). This result comes together with a strengthened view by respondents that their voice counts in the EU. For the second time after April

2018, on EU average 48% of respondents agree with the statement that their voice counts in the EU. However, this stability at EU average is hiding a decreasing trend affecting more than half of EU Member States. In this vein and in contrast to the positive results from the above-mentioned indicators, other results from the Parlemeter 2018 also paint a more ambivalent picture. In spite of their significant support for their membership to the European Union in general, half of respondents find that things in the EU are going in the wrong direction. In a reversal of the trend after its upturn in spring 2018, the share of respondents believing that things in the EU are going in the wrong direction is increasing to 50% (+8pp), while 52% (+4pp) believe that their own country is taking the wrong direction. 33% of respondents believe that things are going in the right direction in their country, 28% believe the same for the EU.

Just over half a year ahead of the 2019 European elections, the image of the European Parliament remains stable. While 32% of respondents hold a positive view of the European Parliament, a relative majority of citizens remain neutral with 43%. A negative view towards the EP is held only by 21% of respondents. Equally stable are results on the question whether citizens would like to see a stronger role for the EP in the future. After rather significant moves between 2015 and 2017 calling for a stronger role of the EP, opinions are stabilising on EU average: Today, 48% of respondents would like a more important role for the EP in the future while 27% would prefer a less important role and 15% see no need for a change.

Against this backdrop, the Parlemeter 2018 returns the highest support for the Euro as common currency recorded since 2004. On the eve of its 20th anniversary, Europeans confirmed their broad and constant support for the Euro: 61% on average across all EU countries are in favour of the Euro. This level increases to even 77% in the euro area itself, a plus of three percentage points since March 2018. The lowest level of support is recorded in seven countries all outside the euro area.

Bigger awareness about the European elections

The 2018 Parlemeter also takes a closer look at citizens' views on the upcoming European Parliament elections, showing an overall increased awareness about the next ballot while painting a multi-coloured picture of opinions and attitudes about the elections. In September 2018, 41% of Europeans could call the correct date for the European elections in 2019, an unprecedented 9 point-increase over the last six months on EU average, boosted by two-digit improvements in ten Member States. It must be noted - and seen as wake-up call, that at the same time on average 44% (-6 pp) of Europeans could still not say when the next European elections would take place. In addition, the expressed likelihood to vote in the next European elections remains extremely stable since April 2018. In September 2018, 31% say they would certainly vote (scoring 10 on a scale from 1 to 10) and another 18% would be likely to do so (scoring 8 or 9). Conversely, 33% say that they will most likely not participate in the ballot (scoring between 1 to 5).

In September 2018, 51% of the citizens declare to be interested in the forthcoming European elections,

overall stable in a majority of Member States yet within a very wide range of expressed levels of interest. Citizens' campaign priorities, on the other hand, have evolved over the past six-month period. Today, immigration (50%), economy and growth (47%) as well as combatting youth unemployment (47%) top the list of Europeans' most salient campaign topics. Terrorism moves down the list from first to fourth at 44% (-5 points). Here again, it is indispensable to look behind the European average figures at the national results, as the order of topics not only changes subject according to international context but even more so in the context of the various national settings.

Asked about policy topics citizens would want the European Parliament to give priority to, economic and social issues come out top, together with the fight against terrorism. With a stable 41% of citations, combating poverty and social exclusion is the first most cited item, followed by youth unemployment (33%, +2). The results are thus quite in line with the campaign priority topics as expressed by respondents. When it comes to the values to be defended by Parliament as matter of priority, 46% of Europeans choose protection of human rights worldwide, followed by equality between men and women (40%), freedom of speech (38%) and solidarity between Member States (30%).

CONTEXT

As with every survey of this kind, understanding context at a national, European and international level is key to a proper placement and thus understanding of the results.

On Wednesday 12 September 2018, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, delivered his last State of the Union Address at the European Parliament¹. This speech came ahead of the 2019 European elections and in the midst of the ongoing debate about the future of the European Union at 27.

Economic recovery

President Juncker started his address in Strasbourg underlining that *“ten years after Lehman Brothers, Europe has largely turned the page on an economic and financial crisis which came from outside but which cut deep at home. Europe’s economy has now grown for 21 consecutive quarters. Jobs have returned, with almost 12 million new jobs created since 2014.”*² Indeed, according to Eurostat³, the EU28 unemployment rate was 6,8% in August 2018, stable compared with July 2018 and down from 7,5% in August 2017. This remains the lowest rate recorded in the EU28 since April 2008.

Among Member States, the lowest unemployment rates in August 2018 were recorded in the Czech Republic (2,5%), Germany and Poland (both 3,4%). The highest unemployment rates were observed in Greece (19,1% in June 2018) and Spain (15,2%). Compared to a year ago, unemployment rate fell in all EU Member States. The largest decreases were registered in Cyprus (from 10,5% to 7,5%), Croatia (from 10,9% to 8,5%), Greece (from 21,3% to 19,1% between June 2017 and June 2018) and Portugal (from 8,8% to 6,8%).

Furthermore, this summer, Greece has turned a new page by bringing the stability programme to a successful close. The solidarity shown by the European partners and the efforts of the Greek people have laid the basis for this sustainable upturn.

¹ State of the Union 2018: The hour of European sovereignty, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/state-union-speeches/state-union-2018_en

² State of the Union 2018: The hour of European sovereignty, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/state-union-speeches/state-union-2018_en

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/9279546/3-01102018-AP-EN.pdf/0db3ae5d-eda8-4d8a-8a2c-2bff-b905a7e8>

Spitzenkandidaten process

Nine months ahead of the European Elections 2019, and just over a year before a new European Commission takes over from Juncker's team, the race to become the next European Commission president formally began in September. Several candidates have officially announced that they would seek the nomination of their European party to become its official *Spitzenkandidat*. First established in 2014 during the selection process that saw Juncker emerge as President of the European Commission, this renewed *Spitzenkandidat* process aims again at ensuring that, based on the results of the European elections, a lead candidate will be elected President of the Commission by the European Parliament, after being formally proposed by heads of state or government, who will take account of the outcome of the European elections.

In February, the European Parliament confirmed its position to only elect a Spitzenkandidat as Commission President⁴. At the time, Members warned that Parliament will be ready to reject any candidate who was not appointed as a 'Spitzenkandidat' in the run-up to the European elections.

Brexit

As for the United Kingdom and the ongoing Brexit negotiations, despite some progress on post-Brexit security and defence arrangements between Britain and the European Union, the issue of the Irish border and trade ties remained unresolved. At the informal meeting of the European Council in Salzburg (18-19 September), while the United Kingdom and the European Union both maintain that a deal is the most likely outcome, EU 27 leaders reconfirmed their full unity in contrast with UK's political class.

After the Salzburg summit, the decisive moment for Brexit negotiations will be probably the October meeting of the European Council. Another, extraordinary summit meeting in November is likely, leaving just enough time for a ratification process by EU Member States and the European Parliament. Until then, the UK and the EU hope to have solved all remaining open issues in order to find agreement on the Withdrawal Agreement and a political declaration on the framework for the future relationship, thus avoiding the risk of a no-deal Brexit.

On 14 March 2018, the European Parliament adopted, with 544 votes in favour and 110 against, a resolution⁵ setting out its position on Brexit. The text makes clear that the United Kingdom cannot receive the same benefits from the European Union when it is no longer a member.

4 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2018-0030+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN#BKMD-5>

5 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2018-0069+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Migration

Along with Brexit, migration has dominated the European news of the last months. The Austrian government has made this issue a top priority of its European Union Council presidency. Three years after Europe's biggest influx of migrants and refugees since the Second World War, and although the number of migrants arriving in the European Union has sharply declined from their 2015-16 peak, divergences of opinion between EU Member States over how to handle irregular immigration from outside the EU welled up again this summer.

Especially southern EU countries (including Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain) increasingly highlighted that the burden of coping with migration flows from outside the EU (including people risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea by boat) falls disproportionately upon them as direct border countries. At the Salzburg informal summit (18-19 September), EU leaders discussed the latest developments in this complex area. Taking note that the number of irregular arrivals of migrants had been reduced, the heads of state or government agreed to deepen their migration cooperation with Egypt and other African countries, fight illegal migration and strengthen the external borders.

The European Parliament, for its part, had several times called for an overhaul to ensure a robust, fair system for the future and urged EU governments to reach a common position on the revamp of the Dublin system⁶.

Terrorism

The number of terrorist attacks resulting in fatalities in the European Union has considerably decreased over the last months. While the reinforced cooperation between EU countries on information sharing might have helped to prevent further attacks, stop them or limit their impact, continuous vigilance remains required.

Data protection

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), adopted in April 2016 at EU level, applies fully in all EU Member States as of 25 May 2018. The rules aim to protect all EU citizens from privacy and data breaches in an increasingly data-driven world, while creating a clearer and more consistent framework for businesses. These stronger rules will allow EU citizens to have more control over their personal data while protecting them from abuse.

⁶ Parliament adopted its position in November 2017: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bREPORT%2bA8-2017-0345%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN>

Natural disasters

The summer of 2018 saw unpredictable weather events moving from one extreme to the other, causing both heatwaves and flooding in various European countries. An intense heat wave swept over Europe, triggering deadly fires in several Member States. In Greece, a state of emergency was declared. Roaring temperatures and weeks of drought contributed to major wildfires in Sweden, Latvia, the United Kingdom, Spain and Portugal. Germany, Netherlands, France, Belgium, Luxembourg and the UK were affected by heavy rain, with hail, snow and strong winds in some areas between 29 April and 30 April. Later this summer, several countries in central Europe were hit by severe flooding. Extreme rainfall caused rivers across the region, particularly Danube and Elbe, to break their banks. People living in affected regions in Austria, Bulgaria Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary and Slovakia were evacuated from their homes. A summer of temperature extremes with record heat waves and extreme rainfall and flooding keeps the debate about climate change and its consequences also in Europe fully alive. Climate change is gradually becoming understood as something that might impact on many aspects of Europeans' lives.

Elections and other political developments

During the past months, several elections and major political changes took place across the EU. On 21 May, Italy's anti-establishment Five Star Movement and the far-right League proposed Giuseppe Conte, a civil lawyer and academic, as the country's new Prime Minister to lead their government. A few days later, on 1 June, Giuseppe Conte was sworn in as Prime Minister of Italy after a last-ditch coalition deal had ended months of political deadlock and narrowly avoided snap elections. The government won confidence votes in the Senate (171-117) on June 5 and the Chamber of Deputies (350-236) on June 6.

A motion of no confidence in the Spanish government of Mariano Rajoy (PP) was held between 31 May and 1 June 2018. Mariano Rajoy, who refused to resign before the vote, became the first Spanish Prime Minister to be ousted by a no-confidence motion, while Pedro Sanchez (PSOE) became the first Spanish Prime Minister to be appointed without previously having won an election. The motion passed with 180 deputies voting in favour and 169 against (one abstained).

Furthermore, on 14 May, a new president of Catalonia, Joaquim Torra, was voted in, by the slimmest of margins, with 66 votes to 65, with four abstentions, ending months of political stalemate and legal wrangles over the formation of the region's government. In his investiture speech, Torra called Carlos Puigdemont, who fled the country shortly after the unilateral declaration of independence in October last year, the true President of Catalonia.

General elections were held in Sweden on Sunday 9 September 2018 to elect the members of the Riksdag. With all ballots counted, the governing centre-left coalition came out marginally ahead of the centre-right

Alliance, with around 40% each. The Sweden Democrats (SD) have won about 18% of the vote, up from 12,9% in the previous election. On 25 September, Prime Minister Stefan Löfven (Social Democratic Party) lost a vote of confidence in the Riksdag. Having been Prime Minister for four years, he will continue in a caretaker role until a new government can be formed that has a majority support in the Riksdag.

The Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS), and his leader Janez Janša, emerged in first position from parliamentary elections held in Slovenia on 3 June 2018. Almost three months later, on 17 August, Slovenia's parliament approved former comedian Marjan Sarec as new Prime Minister, after five parties had joined forces to keep SDS out of power. The elections had originally expected to be held on 10 June 2018, but after the resignation of Prime Minister Miro Cerar on 14 March 2018 all parties had called for snap elections.

In Czech Republic, President Miloš Zeman formally appointed Andrej Babiš as Prime Minister on June 6, ending eight months of political deadlock. Babiš, whose ANO party was the runaway winner of an election in October 2017 but lacked a majority, had been ruling in a caretaker capacity since January when his one-party minority cabinet lost a confidence vote in the lower house.

During the month of August, tens of thousands of Romanians who live and work across Europe gathered in the centre of Bucharest to protest against alleged government corruption. While similar demonstrations took place in every major city in Romania, only in the capital police resorted to force. Romania has been seeing frequent protests over the past eighteen months.

During the fieldwork of this present survey, the European Parliament voted on 12 September in favour of triggering an Art.7 procedure against Hungary. After a lively debate with Prime Minister Viktor Orban in plenary, Parliament voted for the first time to trigger this procedure against a EU Member State. On 8 May, Viktor Orban had been re-elected as Prime Minister by the Hungarian parliament, starting his third consecutive and fourth overall term as leader of Hungary.

On 25 May, Irish voters overwhelmingly, with two-thirds in favour, backed repealing Ireland's abortion ban, paving the way for lawmakers to pass new legislation on one of the most divisive issues in the history of the country.

Last, but not least, FYROM and Greece have reached a deal to resolve their 27-year old dispute over the former Yugoslav republic's name. On 12 June, Greece's Alexis Tsipras and Macedonia's Zoran Zaev agreed that the former Yugoslav republic's new name for both domestic and international purposes would be "Republic of Northern Macedonia".

International stage

At June's Turkish presidential elections, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was re-elected president and thus granted more sweeping powers than ever before. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has won a new five-year term

after securing outright victory in the first round, receiving nearly 53% of the votes, while his closest rival, Muharrem Ince, only received 31% of the votes.

On 1 July, Mexican voters overwhelmingly backed Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador in the presidential elections, with at least 54 percent of voters casting their ballot for the candidate of the National Regeneration Movement (MORENA).

On 7 May, Vladimir Putin was sworn in for his fourth term as President of Russia in a ceremony at the Grand Kremlin Palace. He has been in power for 18 years, both as President as well as Prime Minister.

On 6 August, Donald Trump reimposed economic sanctions on Iran which the Obama administration had lifted when it signed the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in Vienna on 14 July 2015, the anticipated next step following Trump's announcement to leave the deal on 8 May. The Iranian Nuclear agreement had been signed by the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States) plus Germany and the European Union.

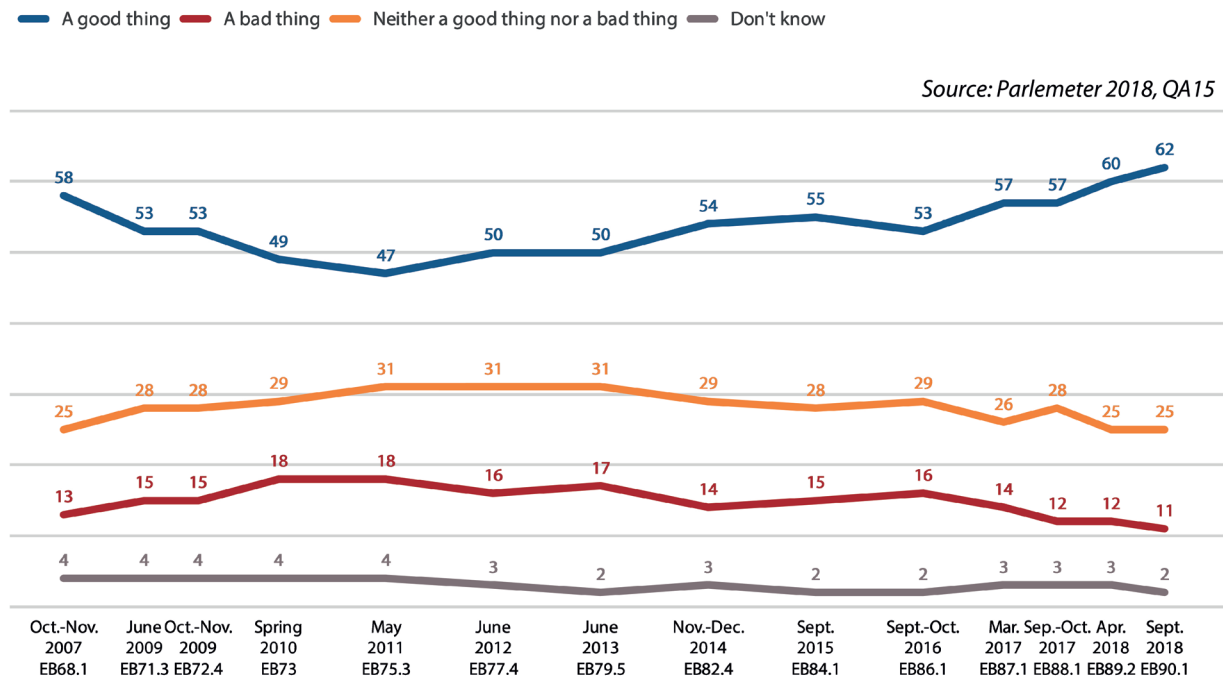
On 12 June, Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un have become the first sitting US president and North Korean leader to meet, an unprecedented development after a year of exchanging threats. After the Singapore summit, the leaders signed a comprehensive document, promising a new relationship between the nations.

EVER GREATER SUPPORT TO EU MEMBERSHIP

One of the traditional key indicators to measure European citizens' attitude towards the European Union is the question whether country's membership of the EU is a 'good thing' or a 'bad thing'. In the Parlemeter 2018, the share of respondents believing that their country's membership in the EU is a good thing reaches its highest value since 1992: Today 62%, more than six respondents in ten, find that being a member of the EU is a good thing for their country (+2 percentage points since April 2018).

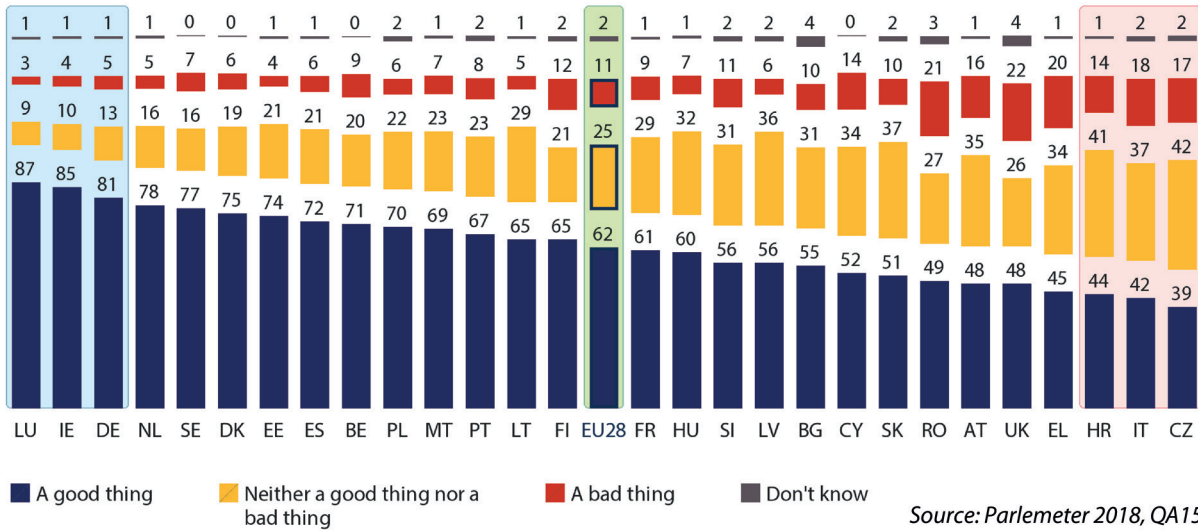
A look at a closer timeframe shows that this indicator has had a positive trend since 2011, and in particular since autumn 2014, after the last European elections. The EP's eighth legislature has thus witnessed an almost continuous improvement of this result.

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

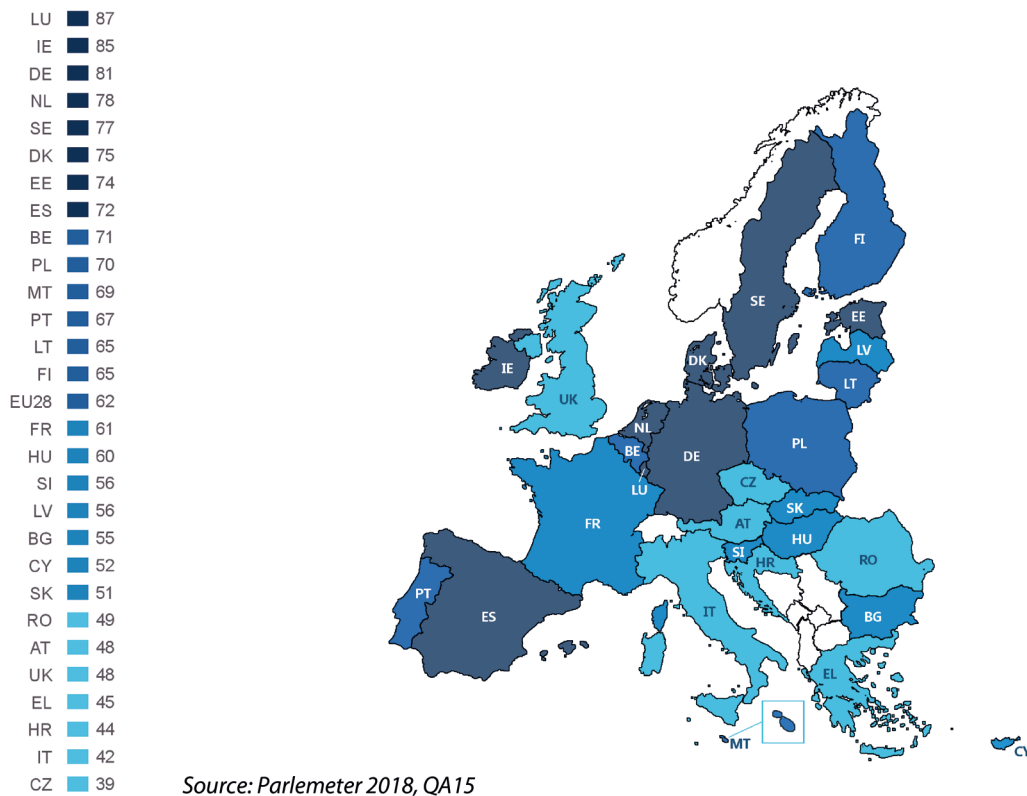


Compared to the most recent measurement in April 2018, some significant moves are visible at a national level. EU membership is increasingly perceived as positive in 18 EU countries, reaching or exceeding the 75% threshold in Luxembourg (87%), Ireland (85%) Germany (81%), Netherlands (78%), Sweden (77%) and Denmark (75%). A significant evolution can be measured in Sweden, where the EU is seen as a good thing by an additional 9 percentage points. This is not only the most important evolution of this indicator over

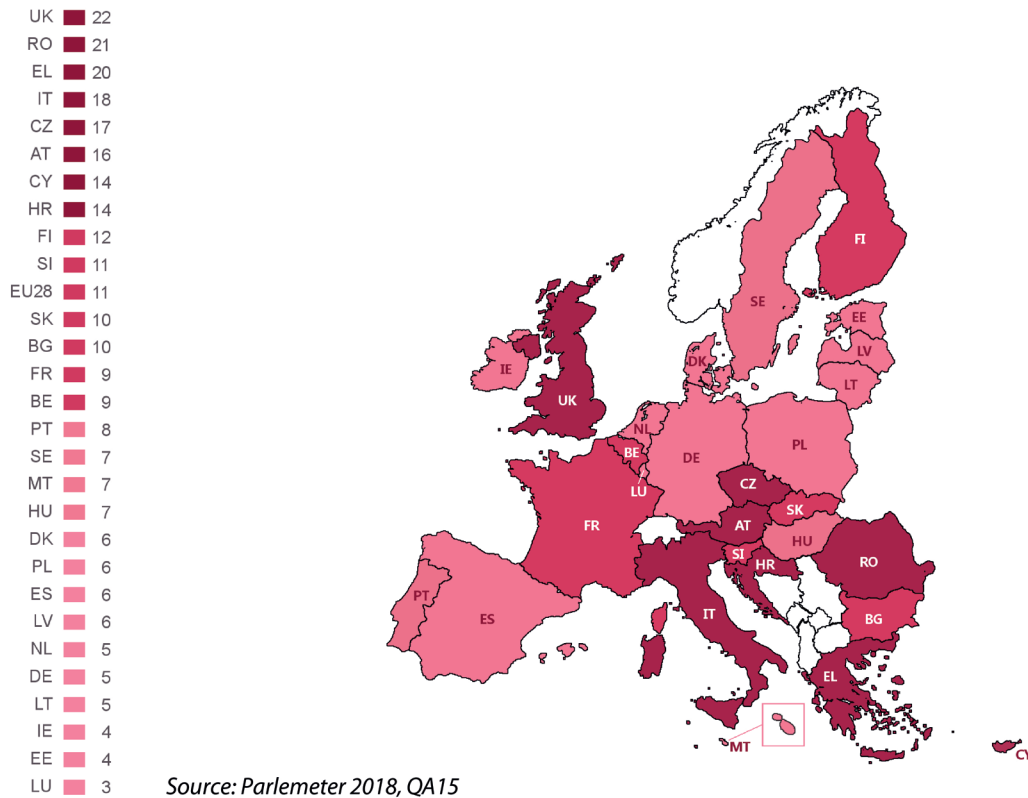
Q Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY)'s membership of the EU is...? (%)



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



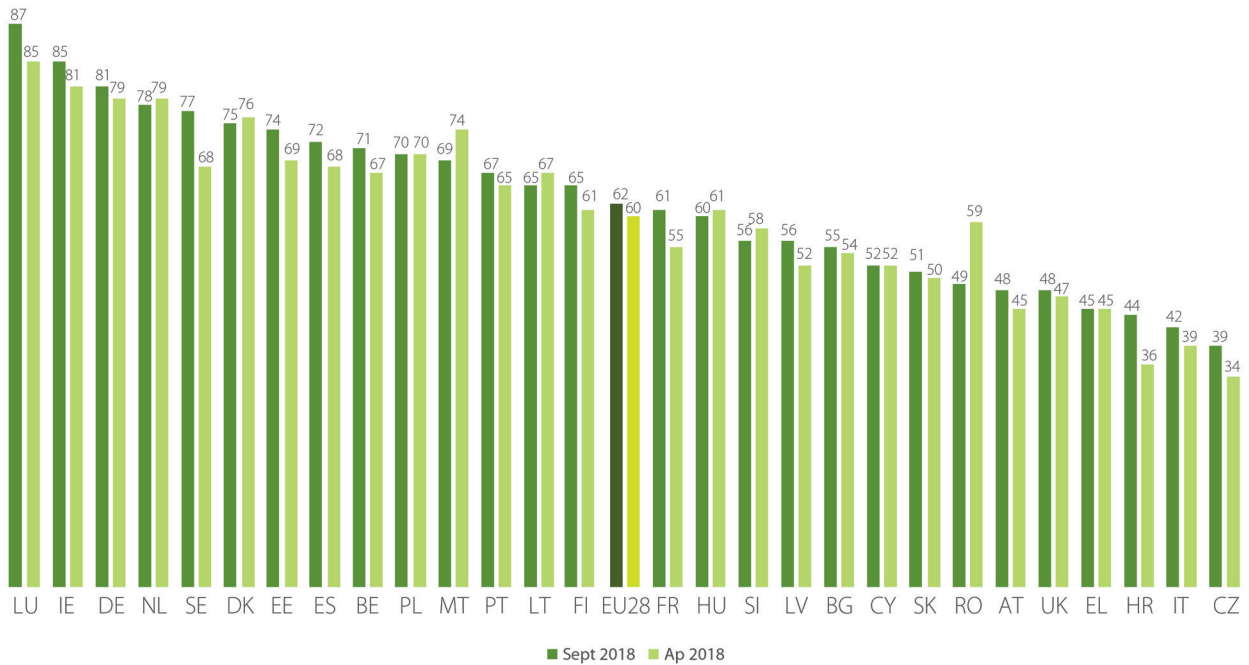
Q Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY)'s membership of the EU is...?
(% - A bad thing)



the past six months, it also marks Sweden’s highest ever recorded level since 2007. Positive developments can also be noted in 9 of the 14 Member States that currently rank below the EU average. In Croatia the EU as a good thing is now seen again by a majority of 44% of respondents (+8 pp vs. ‘neutral’ at 41%, -8pp), +6 pp in France (61%) and +5 in Czech Republic (39%) although not inverting opinions in this case, as 42% of Czech respondents have a neutral perception of EU membership (-4). On average in the EU, just above one respondent in ten sees their country’s membership in the EU as a “bad thing” (11%, -1 pp) while a stable 25% continue to hold a neutral view, believing it is “neither a good nor a bad thing”.

Support for EU membership as measured by this indicator deteriorates in seven countries, mainly in Romania where it loses 10 points (49%) with the negative view increasing by 7 points to 21%. This drop in support in Romania is particularly unprecedented over the last decade, coming from a level of 71% recorded in the country in 2007 while since then fluctuating through the years. Support for membership remains stable in Greece, Cyprus and Poland. The relatively largest proportion of negative views on EU Membership are returned in the United Kingdom (22%, -1), Romania (21%, +7), Greece (20%, 1) and in Italy (18%, +1). A neutral view, i.e. “neither a good nor a bad thing” reaches its highest levels in Czech Republic (42%, -4), Croatia (41%, -8) and Italy (37%, -1) and Slovakia (37%, -1).

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



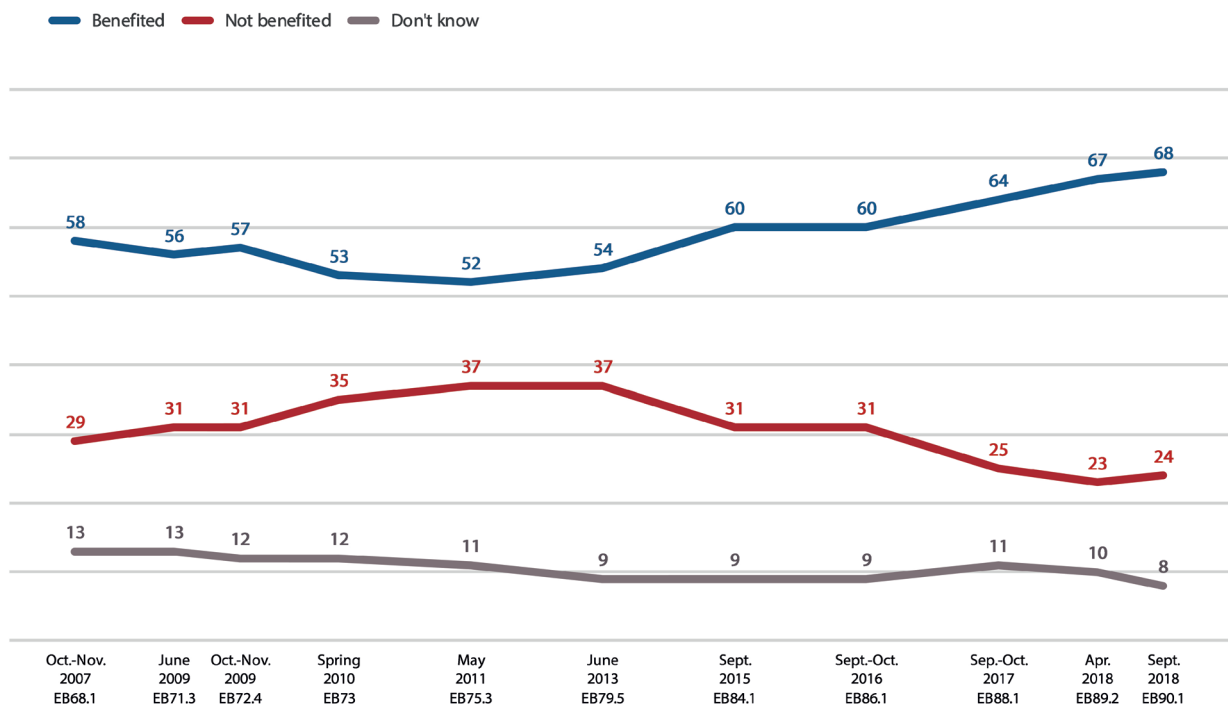
Source: Parlemeter2018, QA15

Being a member of the EU is a benefit for my country, say citizens ...

While the above discussed indicator measures support for EU membership rather on an emotional level, the following indicator adds a more reflective line to the picture. Being asked whether respondents believe that their country has benefited from EU Membership, results show, in line with the record support for 'EU membership being a good thing', that an increasing share of Europeans also consider that their country has benefited from being a member of the EU. Indeed this indicator again returns, after April 2018, its best results since the question was first asked in 1983.

A majority of European citizens in 27 Member States believe that their country has benefited from being a member of the EU, reaching 68% on average (+1 pp since April 2018). One European respondent in four considers that their country has not benefited from being an EU member (24%, +1). Only in Italy this view holds a relative majority with 45% (+4) vs 43% "benefited" (-1).

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

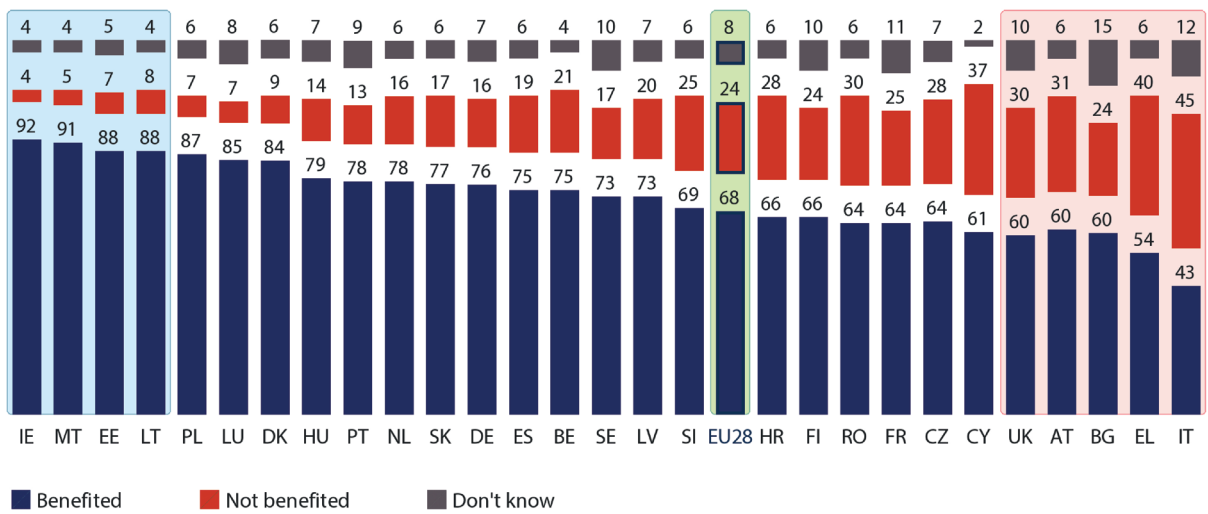


Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA16

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

In 18 EU countries this view remained stable or improved; to its largest extent of both +7 points in Sweden (73%) and the United Kingdom (60%). While this increase in the UK it worth noting on its own, it is equally interesting to see that the British share of “don’t know” answers has been decreasing significantly on this question, possibly indicating that more and more people express an opinion on whether or not their country has benefited from its EU membership. Potentially asked for the last time on this topic in a Eurobarometer survey, the share for “don’t know” dropped by 9 points in the UK to 10%. 30% (+2) of British respondents consider that their country has not benefited from the EU. This is amongst the highest scores for the negative view among all EU Member States, together with Romania (30%, +7 for ‘not benefited’) and following Austria (31%, -7), Cyprus (37%, -3) and Italy (45%, +4).

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

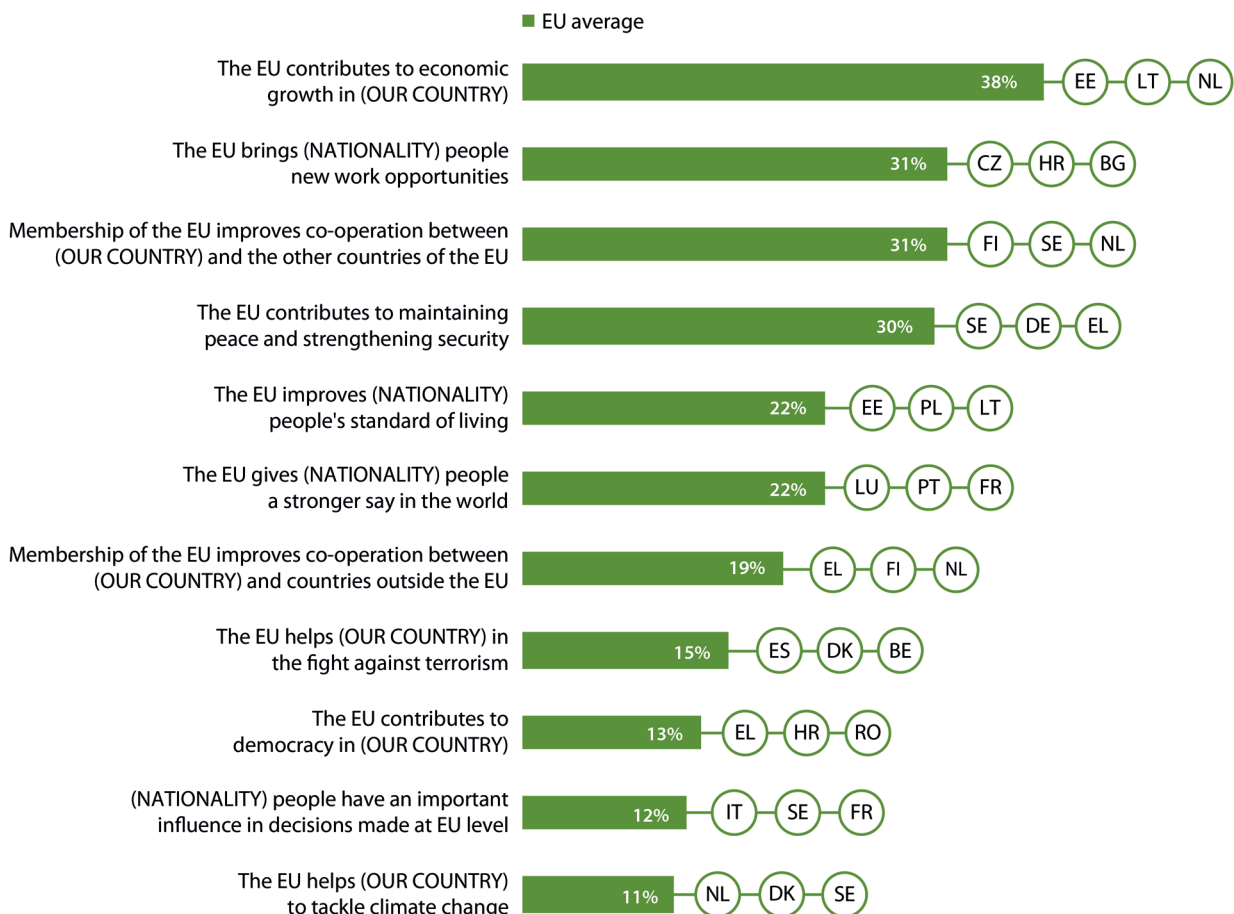


Source: Eurobarometer 2018 QA16

... and they also say why

As the question whether or not respondents believe that their country has benefited from being a member of the EU necessitates a certain amount of reflection, it is only logical to also ask, as a follow-up, for the concrete reasons citizens might have to believe their country has indeed benefited. While results differ from country to country, on EU average economic factors top the list, together with the belief that the EU helps to maintain secure relationships with other countries.

Q Which of the following are the main reasons for thinking that (OUR COUNTRY) has benefited from being a member of the EU? (Max. 3 answers)



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA17

Among those who believe that EU membership has been beneficial (68% on EU average), the most often expressed reason is that ‘the EU contributes to economic growth in their country’ with a support of 38% (+2 pp compared to September 2017). At least one respondent in two in the Netherlands (57%, +1),

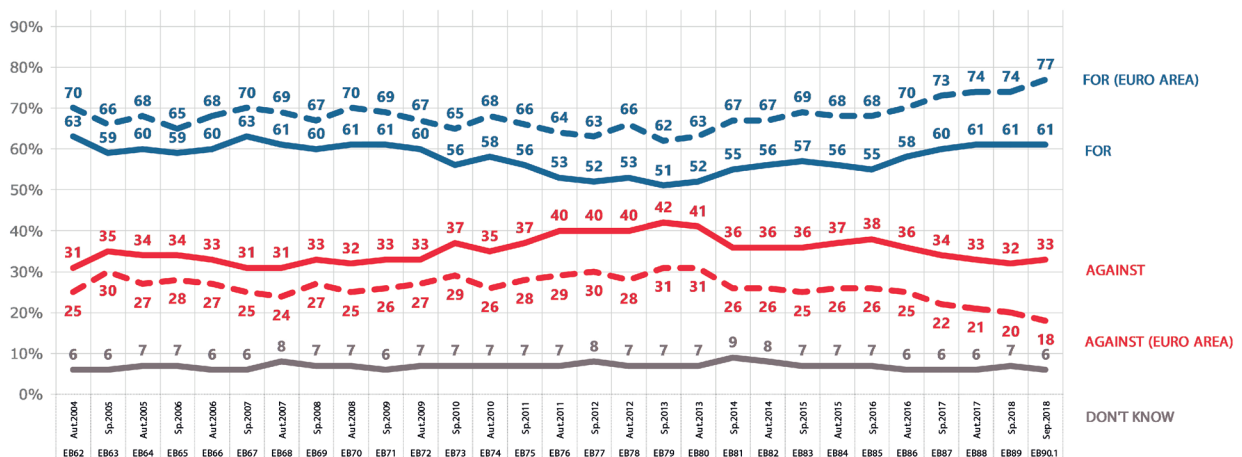
Estonia and Lithuania (both at 51%, respectively +2 and +9 percentage points since 2017) named this argument first. Significant increases for this answer over the past year can be noted with a +10 pp for Portugal (38%), +9 pp for Poland (46%), Croatia and Sweden (both 37%) and +8 pp for Luxembourg (45%). The two following arguments equally record 31% on average, namely ‘membership of the EU improves co-operation between our country and the other countries of the EU’ and ‘the EU brings (NATIONALITY) people new work opportunities’, followed with 30% of replies on average by ‘the EU contributes to maintaining peace and strengthening security’.

The good cooperation between EU Member States matters most for Dutch respondents, with 61% of citations (-1), while being least cited in Romania (16%, -2). ‘The EU brings (NATIONALITY) people new work opportunities’ is the most cited reason in Bulgaria and Croatia (both 59%, respectively +7 and +13 since 2017). This answer also reaches 57% in Czech Republic (+6), but is the least cited in the Netherlands with only 15%. The contribution to maintaining peace and strengthening security is most mentioned in Greece (51%, +2) and in Germany (45%, +2). The next cited reasons are as well related to stability and economy: Europeans citizens mention at 22% on average that ‘the EU gives our people a stronger say in the world’ and ‘the EU improves our people’s standard of living’. The former answer is most mentioned in France, at 34% (=) and the least in Latvia (9%, -3). The latter is most cited in Ireland at 42% (+1) and the least in Sweden, at 5% (+1).

Strongest support for the Euro since 2004

Shortly before its twentieth anniversary, the euro is enjoying wide and stable support among European citizens. The single currency has become the world’s second reserve currency. Moreover, the euro has become a tangible part of European identity and one of the greatest achievements of European integration.

Q What is your opinion on the following statement? Please tell me whether you are for it or against it:
 ‘A European economic and monetary union with one single currency, the euro’

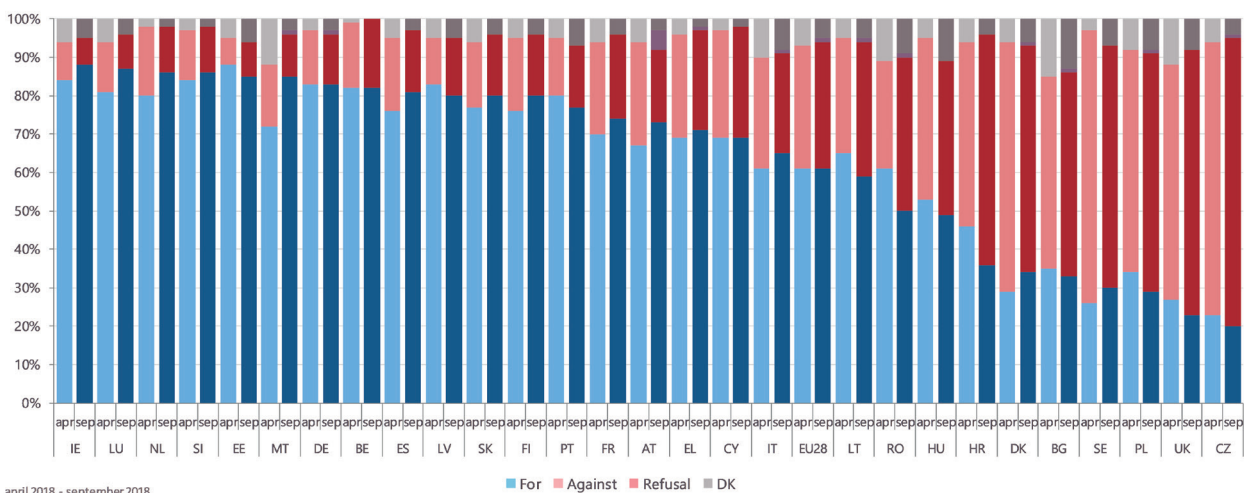


Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA12

Since 2004, the Eurobarometer monitors European citizens' support for their currency. The long-term trend shows that despite highs and lows European citizens have never lost confidence in the euro. Results from the Parlemeter 2018 survey now return the highest support within the Eurozone area since 2004 with 77% of citizens being in favour of "a European economic and monetary union with one single currency, the euro", a plus of three percentage points since March 2018. Only 18% of respondents within the euro area declared themselves against this statement. Looking at the average responses from all EU Member States, support for the Euro remains stable at a high, near-record level of 61%, while 33% of respondents on EU average voice their opposition to the euro, almost stable (+1 since spring 2018), on a relatively low level compared to the long-term trend. From these data it seems clear that the single currency indeed offers protection and opportunities to Europeans, and that a strong and stable euro area is essential for a majority of Eurozone citizens as well as for the EU citizens as a whole.

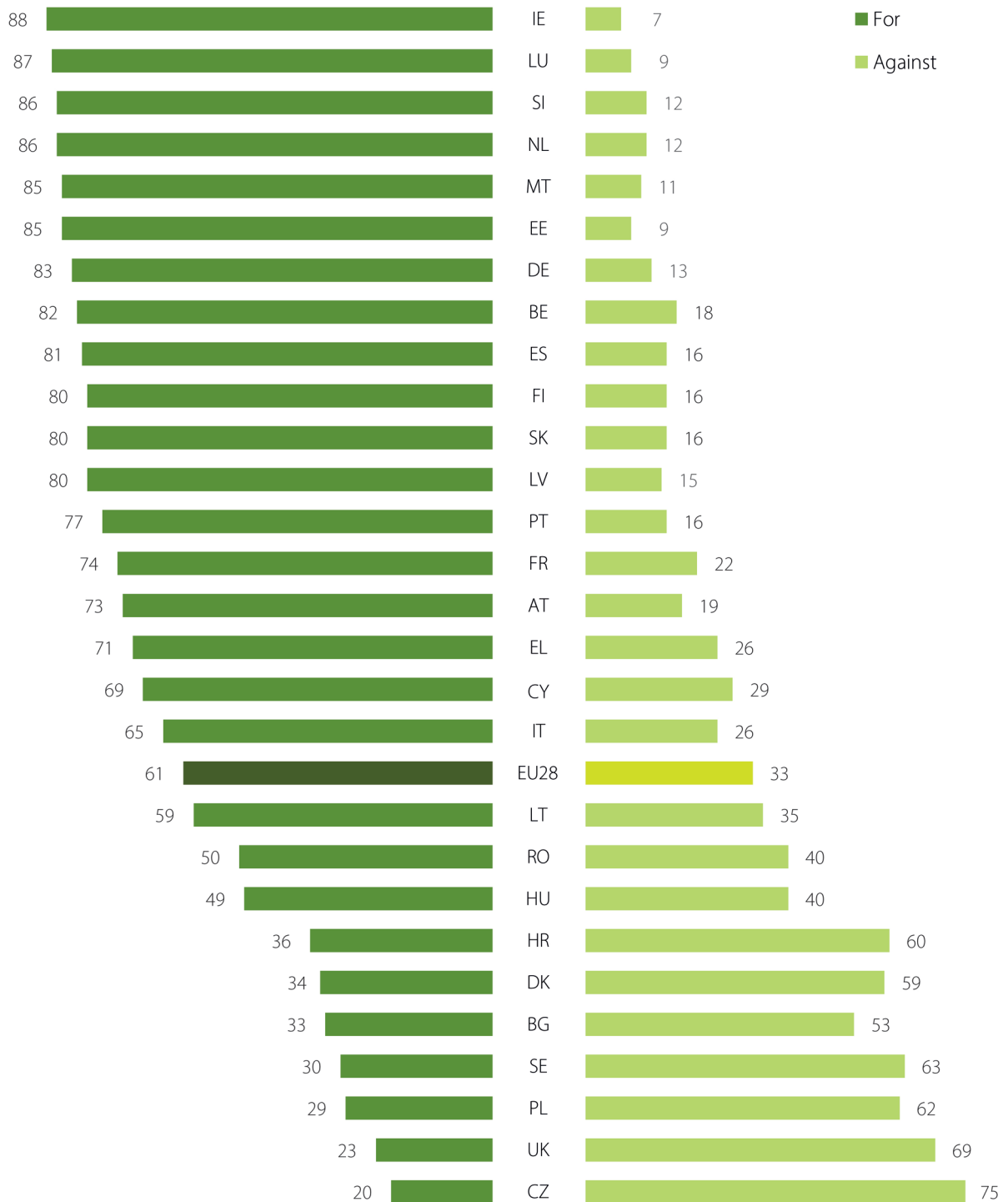
Individual country level support for a European economic and monetary union with one single currency vary considerably between countries of the EU as a whole and the Eurozone member states. A majority of respondents support the euro in 21 EU Member States, led by Ireland (88%), Luxembourg (87%), Slovenia and the Netherlands (both 86%). Majorities of respondents against "a European economic and monetary union with one single currency, the euro" can be found in seven EU Member States, all outside the euro area: Czech Republic (75%), the United Kingdom (69%), Sweden (63%), Poland (62%), Croatia (60%), Denmark (59%) and Bulgaria (53%). Since spring 2018, support for the single currency has gained ground in 14 EU Member States, namely by 13 points in Malta, 6 points in Austria, Netherlands and Luxembourg, 5 points in Denmark and Spain, 4 points in Finland, France, Ireland, Italy and Sweden, 3 points in Slovakia and 2 points in Greece and Slovenia. Conversely, support for the Euro lost ground in 11 EU Member States, namely by 11 points in Romania, 10 points in Croatia, 6 points in Lithuania, 5 points in Poland, 4 points in Hungary and the United Kingdom, 3 points in Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia and Portugal, and 2 points in Bulgaria.

Q What is your opinion on the following statement? Please tell me whether you are for it or against it: 'A European economic and monetary union with one single currency, the euro'



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA12; EB 89.2

Q What is your opinion on the following statement?
 'A European economic and monetary union with one single currency, the euro.' (%)



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA12

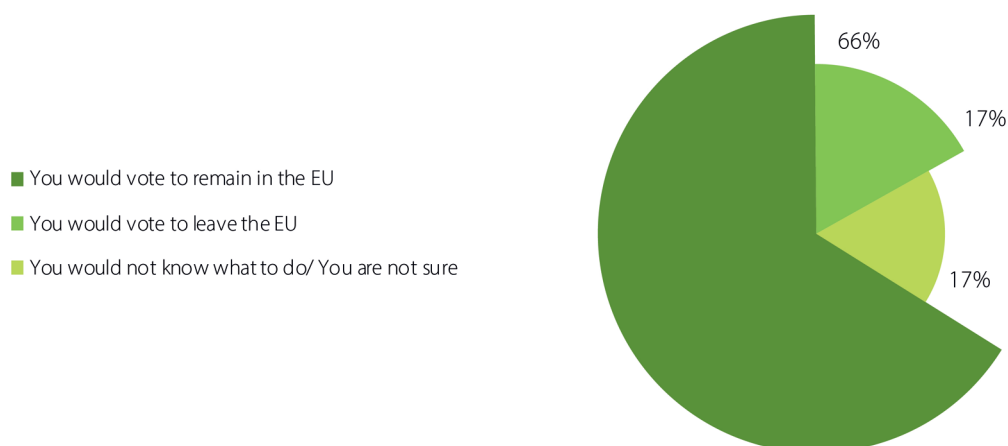
A view on Brexit and its consequences

Nearly all general indicators measuring support for the European Union showed a significant firming up in the aftermath of the UK referendum to leave the EU and the still ongoing negotiations between the EU and the UK on both the withdrawal agreement and the framework of the future relation. Since autumn 2016 trends for both the support for EU Membership and the view on whether membership has been beneficial for the own country have started to improve significantly. Both the outcome of the Brexit referendum and the ongoing negotiations have impacted on the way citizens see the EU, both in terms of concrete benefits they enjoy from it or which they would like to reinforce and in terms of tangible risks in case of their loss.

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

Looking at one socio-demographic factor, the support for remain is very high with 71% among young people in the EU, yet still also strong among the 55 years and older respondents (61%).

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

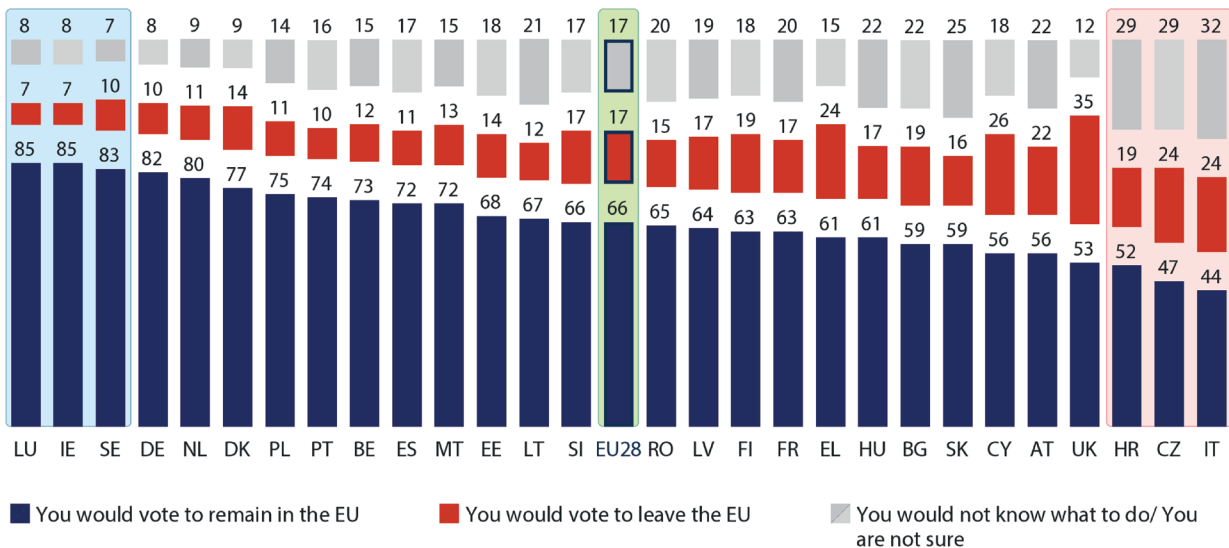


Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA3

Starting from 85% support for remain in Ireland and Luxembourg, three quarters of respondents answered 'remain' in Sweden (83%), Germany (82%), the Netherlands (80%), Denmark (77%) as well as in Poland (75%). An absolute majority would vote in favour of remain in 26 Member States. Noticeable here is again the result for the UK, where 53% of respondents (aged 15 and above) would vote in favour of remain, 35% would vote in favour of leave and 12% said that at the point of the interview they were not sure what to do. This share for the undecided respondents in the UK - the seventh-smallest compared with the other EU countries - might well be a sign of a settling of views after the preceding months of negotiations.

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

Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA3s

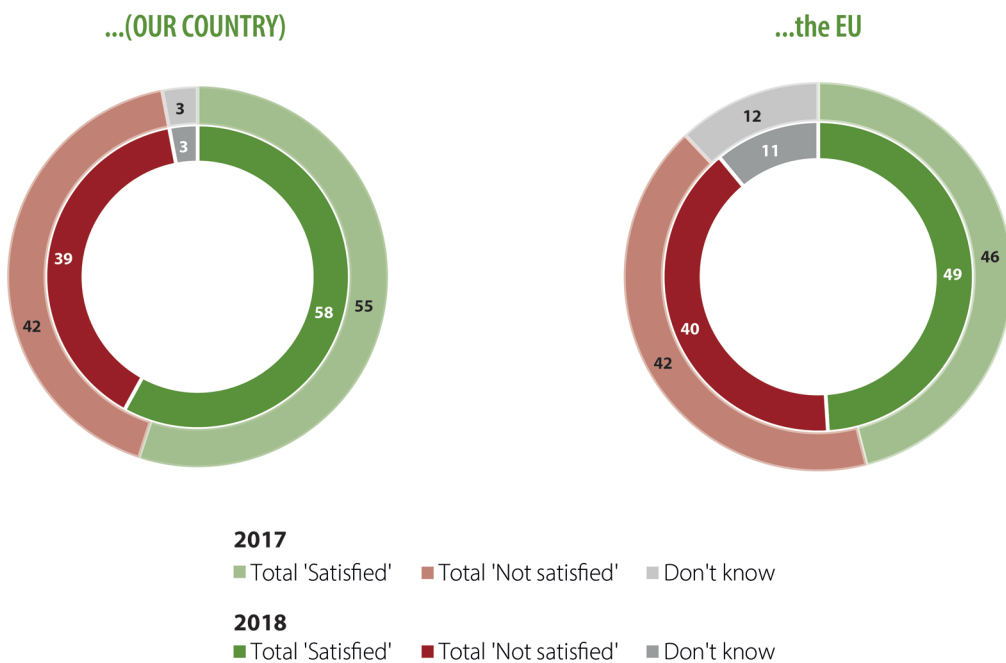


Democracy works, both in the EU and back home

Europeans share an improved feeling of satisfaction with the way democracy works both in the EU and in their country. This feeling of satisfaction with democracy - in both instances - improved the most in the United Kingdom since April 2018.

Close to every second respondent across the EU believes that the European democracy works well (49%, +3 since April 2018), further supporting the overall increasing favourability towards the EU. While results for satisfaction with the way national democracy works are traditionally higher, with 58% (+3) in this survey, it is worth noting that an equal share of respondents are not satisfied with democracy in the EU or in their country, respectively at 40% (-2) and 39% (-3). At the same time a larger difference can be observed in the share of 'don't know' answers, reaching only 3% for the national level and 11% for the European level. Two countries stand out when analysing results: Sweden returns an 8 pp improvement of the level of satisfaction with European democracy to 61%, the UK an even more marked improvement of 9 pp to 47%, close to the EU average of 49%. Similar improvements can be observed in the Netherlands (58%, +7), Luxembourg (68%, +6) and Portugal (61%, +6). Results for Sweden and the UK also return the largest developments across the EU for the level of satisfaction with the way democracy works in their country, improving by 7 points in Sweden (to 87%) and by 12 points in the UK (to 71%). There is also a 7-point increase in Estonia (62%).

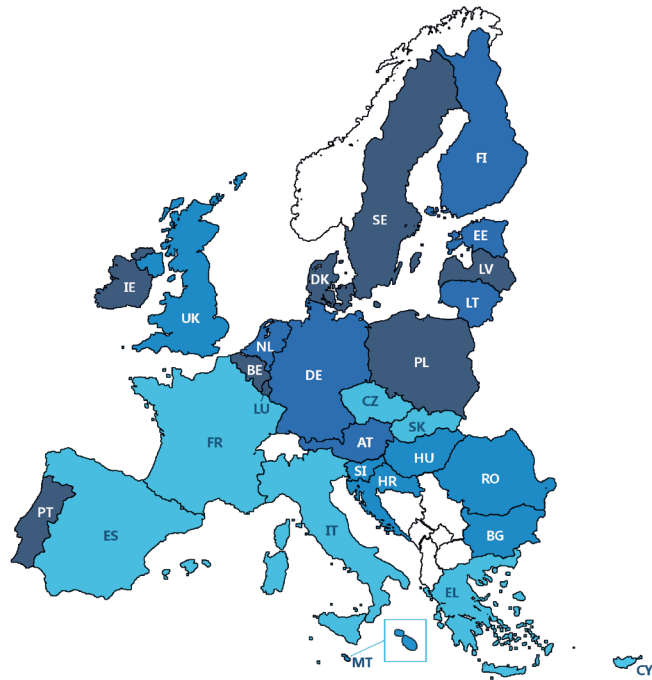
Q On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in... (%)



Source: Parlemeter2018, D80a and D80b

Q And how about the way democracy works in the EU? (% - total 'satisfied')

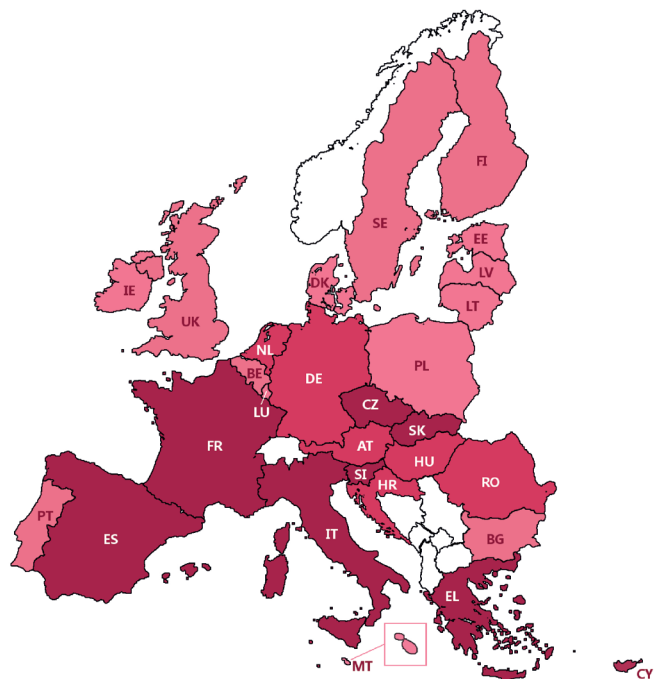
IE	75
DK	72
LU	68
BE	63
PL	62
LV	62
PT	61
SE	61
LT	59
NL	58
FI	55
EE	53
AT	52
DE	52
MT	51
HU	51
HR	51
RO	51
EU28	49
BG	48
UK	47
SI	45
CZ	44
SK	44
FR	44
CY	42
IT	39
ES	36
EL	30



Source: Parlemeter 2018, D80b

Q And how about the way democracy works in the EU? (% - total 'not satisfied')

EL	64
ES	54
IT	52
CY	49
FR	47
SI	46
SK	46
CZ	46
HU	43
AT	43
DE	41
EU28	40
HR	40
NL	38
RO	37
FI	35
BE	35
UK	34
PT	29
BG	29
SE	28
LU	26
MT	26
EE	25
LV	25
PL	22
LT	22
DK	21
IE	15



Source: Parlemeter 2018, D80b

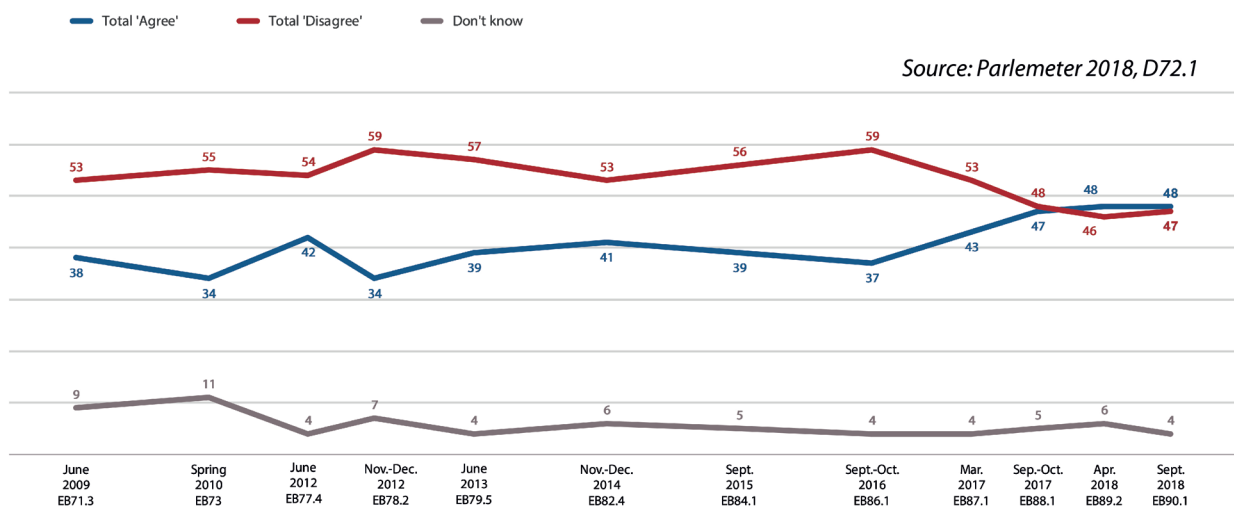
Citizens see their voice counts in the EU

As in April 2018, and for the first time in over more than fifteen years, a majority of Europeans consider that their voice counts in the EU. This average figure, however, is hiding a decreasing trend that affects more than half of EU Member States.

Although by a slim margin only, the Parlemeter 2018 confirms the inversion of curves as already shown in April 2018 with regard to citizens' opinion on whether or not their voice counts in the EU. The September 2018 results stabilize at 48% on EU average, whereas 47% believe that this is not the case (+1).

This year's scenario is a first, as far as the question was asked in the Eurobarometer: Back in 2002, only 21% of respondents considered that their voice counted in the EU. Over the last sixteen years of measurement, the EU democracy therefore witnessed a slow but steady increase of citizens feeling that their own voice indeed counts in the EU. A trend analysis reveals that also the response rate⁷ increased over time, benefiting mainly the positive opinion on this specific question. As this study will show in the next section when discussing citizens' opinion on the direction things are going in the EU, an increased response rate does not always reinforce positive views.

Q Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: 'My voice counts in the EU' (% EU)

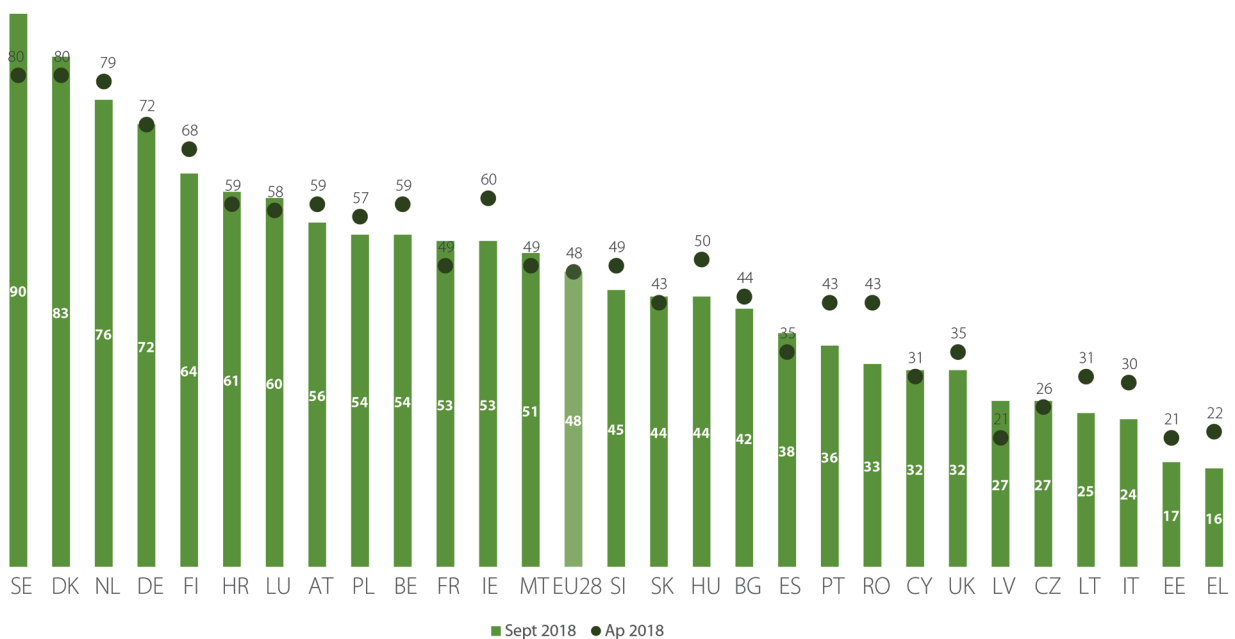


Source: Parlemeter 2018, D72.1

⁷ Respondents giving a different answer than "don't know"

Nevertheless, the true picture as always only emerges when looking in detail at national results. The stable result of 48% for the EU average is actually backed up by increases in a handful of countries only. At the same time, positive returns for 'my voice counts in the EU' have begun to decline in many more countries - currently 16 out of 28 EU Member States.

**Q Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:
My voice counts in the EU. Difference: September 2018 - April 2018**



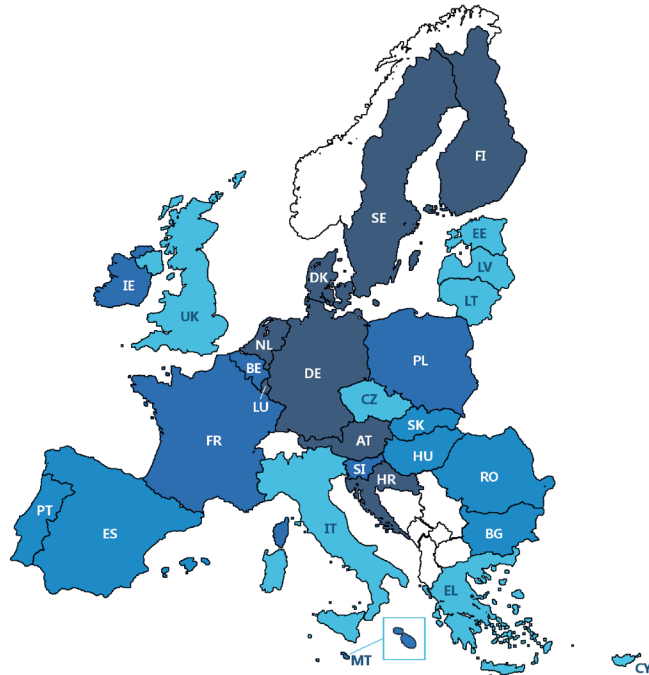
Source: Parlemeter 2018, D72.1 - Eurobarometer 89.2 (April 2018)

And it is again Sweden that stands out with the strongest improvement of positive results: with an increase of +10 percentage points the share of respondents believing that their voice counts in the EU now registers at 90%. 83% of Danish respondents (+3) and 76% of Dutch respondents (-3) share this view on the top of the list. More than fifty percent of respondent are registering in a total of 13 countries sharing this positive view, including France and Malta, where this position has become an absolute majority (respectively 53%, +4 and 51%, +2).

However, the positive trend does not seem to reach as many countries as in April 2018. Indeed, six months later the proportion of respondents who consider that their voice **does not** count in the EU is increasing in 18 Member States overall. While changes are within the margin of error in eight of these countries, in some others the negative trend is stronger pronounced: For instance, in Italy 72% of respondents (+11) believe that their voice does not count in the EU. Similar results are recorded for Portugal at 60% (+9), Romania (58%, +8) and Greece (83%, +7). A socio-demographic analysis indicates that the level of education has the biggest impact on the feeling whether one's voice counts in the EU. Respondents with such a positive view would predominantly also have a very open attitude towards the EU, be satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU, and tend to trust political parties more than the average.

Q Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:
My voice counts in the EU (% - total 'agree')

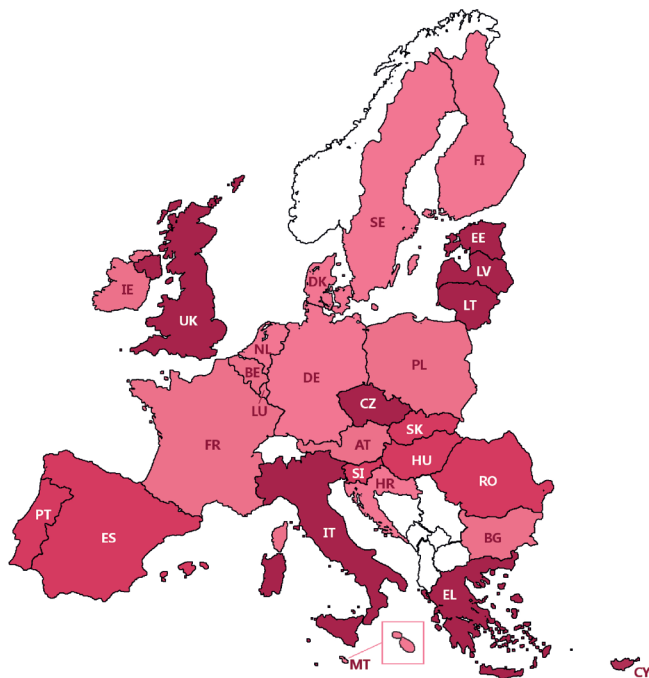
SE	90
DK	83
NL	76
DE	72
FI	64
HR	61
LU	60
AT	56
PL	54
BE	54
FR	53
IE	53
MT	51
EU28	48
SI	45
SK	44
HU	44
BG	42
ES	38
PT	36
RO	33
UK	32
CY	32
LV	27
CZ	27
LT	25
IT	24
EE	17
EL	16



Source: Parlemeter 2018, D72.1

Q Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:
My voice counts in the EU (% - total 'disagree')

EL	83
EE	76
IT	72
CZ	67
LV	66
CY	64
UK	63
LT	61
PT	60
RO	58
ES	58
SI	50
HU	50
SK	49
EU28	47
BE	44
FR	44
BG	44
AT	40
MT	40
IE	39
PL	36
LU	35
HR	34
FI	33
DE	24
NL	20
DK	14
SE	9



Source: Parlemeter 2018, D72.1

Trend reversal for things going in the right direction?

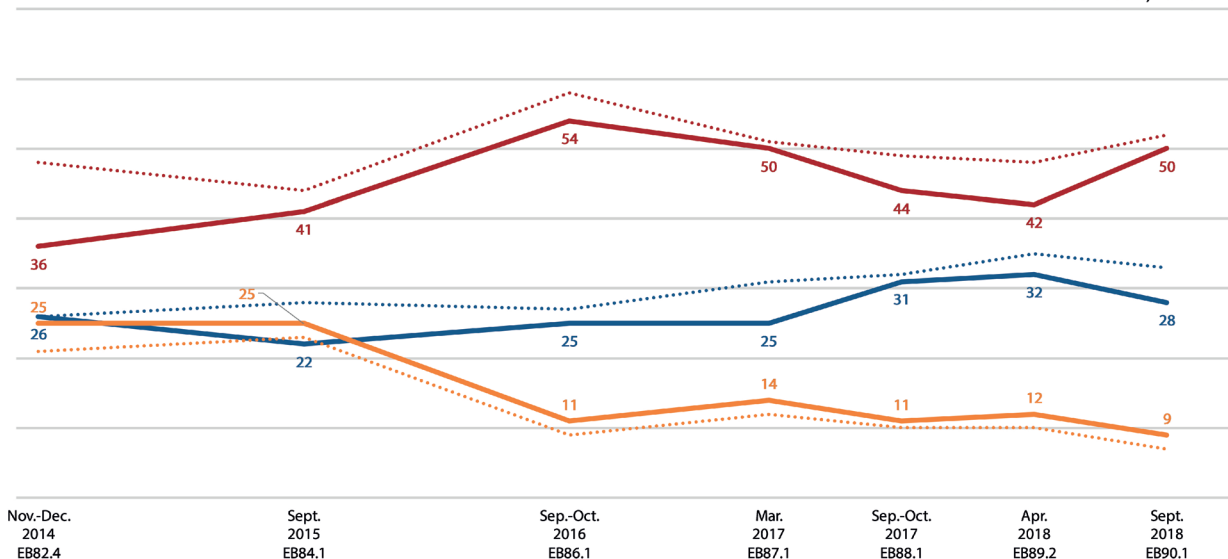
The warning signs regarding citizens' views on whether their voice counts in the EU are complemented by the results on citizens' assessment whether things are going in the right or wrong direction. Contrasting the positive trends on EU membership and citizens' satisfaction with the way democracy works, half of the respondents seem to find that things in the EU are going in the wrong direction. This trend reversal, after a slight positive development in Spring 2018, is mirrored also in the results for the situation on national level.

The indicator measures how respondents assess the way things are going in both their own country and in the EU. Answer options include 'in the right direction', 'in the wrong direction' or 'neither one nor another'. Since 2015, the share of respondents choosing the third option, i.e. not positioning themselves, decreased, resulting in an increase of optimistic answers constituting a solid share of views expressing that things in the EU were indeed going in the right direction. This positive trend was noticeable until April 2018 and could have been attributed to a renewed sense of optimism about the economy and the future. Yet the latest results for this indicator show a sudden reversal of trends: The share of respondents, on EU average,

Q At the present time, would you say that, in general, things are going in the right direction or in the wrong direction, in (OUR COUNTRY) / the EU (% - EU)

- Things are going in the right direction - the EU
- Things are going in the right direction - our country
- Things are going in the wrong direction - the EU
- Things are going in the wrong direction - our country
- Neither the one nor the other - the EU
- Neither the one nor the other - our country

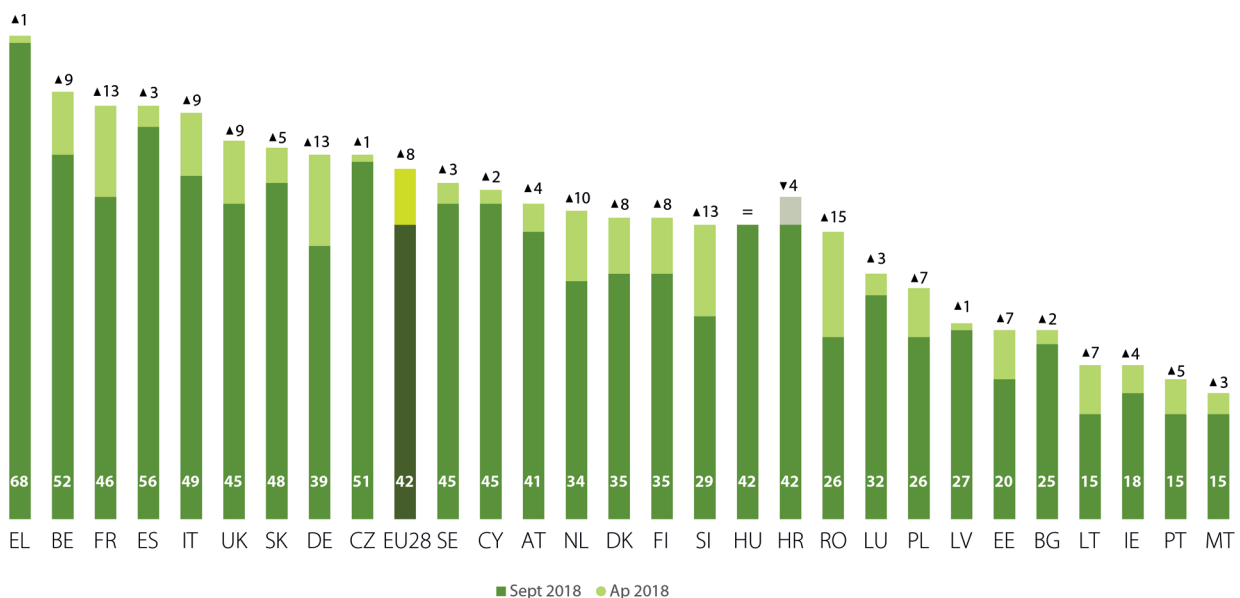
Source: Parlemeter 2018, D73



believing that things in the EU are rather going in the wrong direction is increasing up to an absolute majority. This holds true for both variants of the questions, i.e. when being asked to consider the EU and their own country. The view that the EU is taking the wrong direction now constitutes a majority in 18 Member States. Increases for this opinion are recorded in 26 EU Member States, with the exception of Hungary (42%, stable) and Croatia (minus 4 points for 'wrong direction' to 42%).

Largest increases for the opinion according to which the EU is going in the wrong direction are measured in Romania (41%, +15 pp), France (59%, +13 pp), Germany (52%, +13 pp) and Slovenia (42%, +13 pp). This view increased by ten percentage points in the Netherlands (44%) and by nine percentage points in Belgium (61%), Italy (58%) and the UK (54%). A similar development can be observed in Austria (45%, +4), currently holding the rotating Presidency of the EU Council, and in Sweden (48%, +3) where all other EU indicators have been skyrocketing over the last 6 months. Looking at the perception citizens have about the direction things are taking in their own country, views take an equally negative trend across the board, although to a somewhat lesser extent than regarding the EU.

Q Things are going in the 'wrong direction' in the European Union (%) Differences April 2018 – September 2018

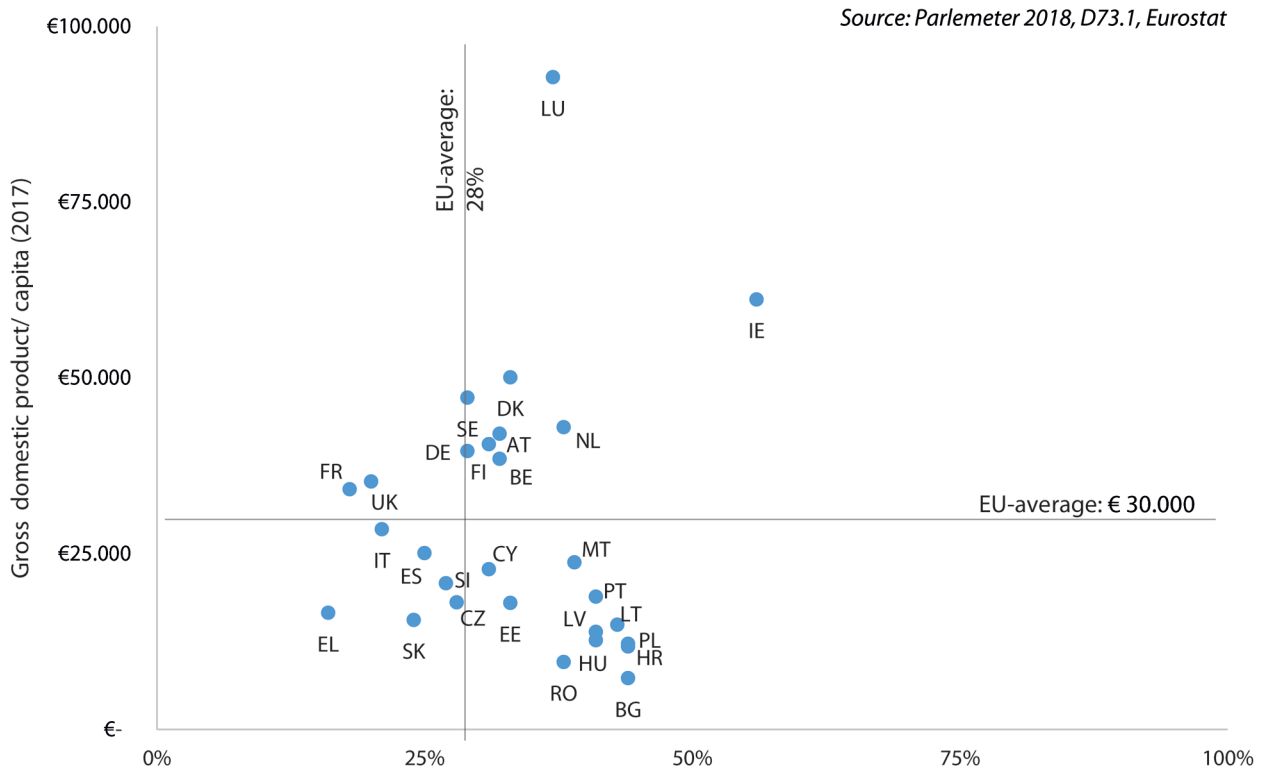


Source: Parlemeter 2018, D73.2 - Eurobarometer 89.2 (April 2018)

A deeper analysis indicates that economic factors would not seem to impact the way people evaluate the direction in which the EU is going. No statistical correlation can be found between positive views about the direction of things in the EU and the GDP per capita in the EU Member States.

There is also no clear correlation between 'going in the right direction' and the perceptions citizens have on social inequalities in their country. As economic indicators would not seem helpful to understand the

Q Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and things are going in the right direction in the EU.

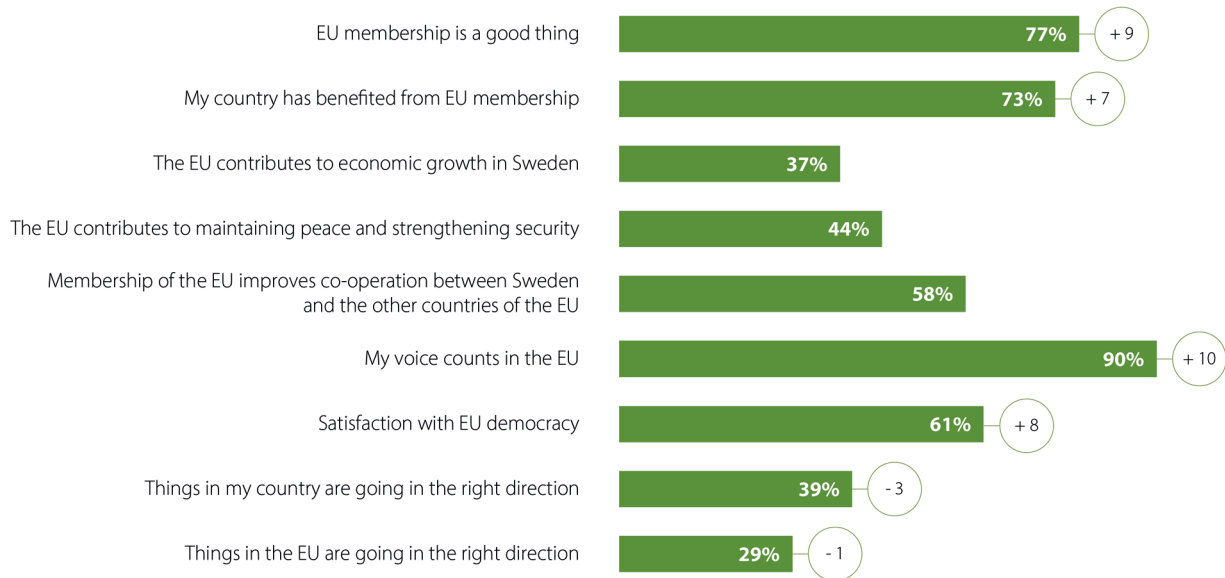


overall picture, political factors might possibly corroborate the decreasing trend. Indeed a cross-analysis reveals that both the image of the EU and the satisfaction about the way democracy works in the EU play a role when it comes to evaluating the way things are going in the EU. Conversely, the interest respondents have for politics does not enter into account.

The next two bar charts illustrate the diversity of attitudes among EU Member States and the impact of national context on citizens' perceptions. Sweden stands out throughout this report with a significantly improved favourability towards the EU: since April 2018, key markers such as 'my voice counts in the EU', 'EU membership is a good thing' or 'satisfaction with EU democracy' increase drastically. The legislative elections that took place on September 9, at the very beginning of the fieldwork, might have played a role in these marked improvements in answers.

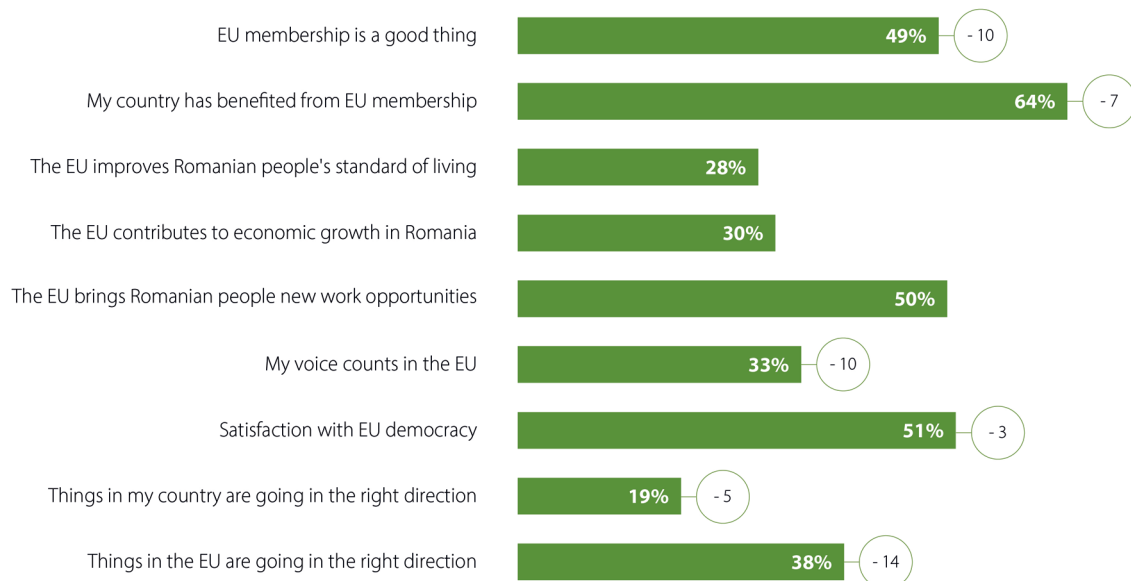
In Romania, which will be the next rotating Council presidency, the turbulent national context that the country knows since August seems to be affecting also its traditionally higher EU support indicators. Romania is shaken by various protests against the government to denounce corruption and the judiciary overhaul. The national discontent seems to reflect on the perception Romanian respondents expressed about the EU in this survey, illustrated in the decreasing indicators showed below.

Sweden



Source: Parlemeter 2018: Q A15, A16, A17, D72.1, D80b, D73.1, D73.2

Romania



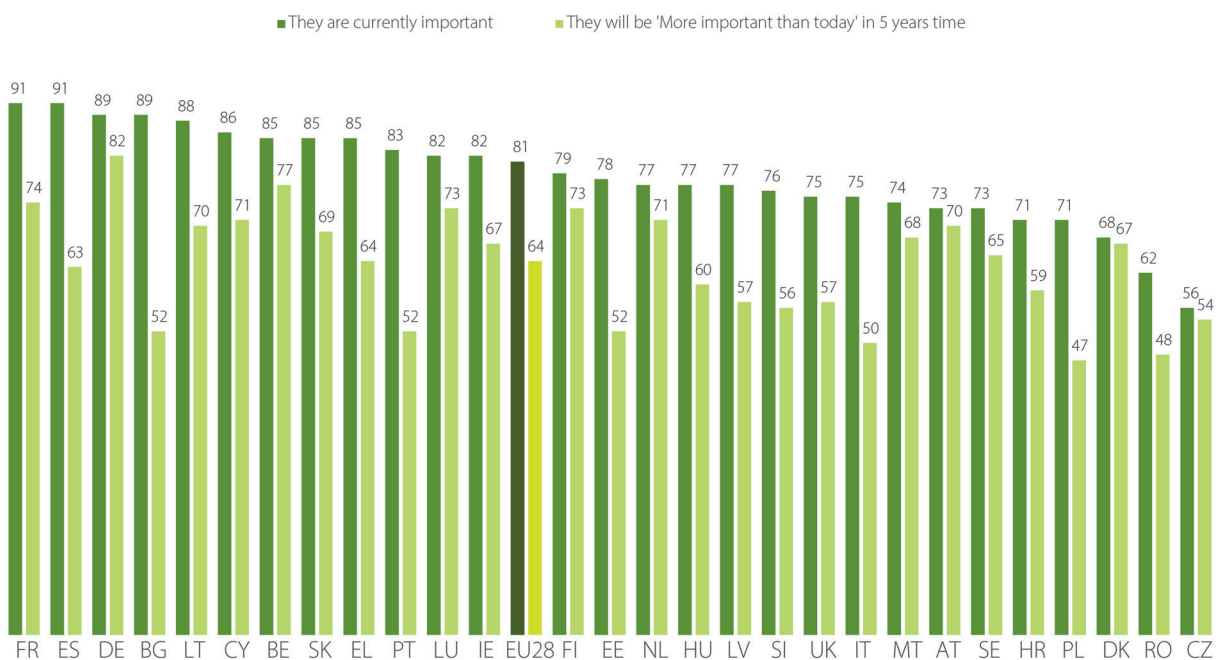
Source: Parlemeter 2018: Q A15, A16, A17, D72.1, D80b, D73.1, D73.2

Perceived social inequalities, today and tomorrow

Despite economic indicators turning green again, Europeans still perceive social inequality as a pressing issue. They also have the feeling that this will not improve in the near future. At EU level, 81% of citizens believe that currently social inequalities are still important. 64% feel that these social inequalities will be even more important in 5 years' time. At national level, a majority of citizens in all Member States considers that inequalities are deep-rooted in the society although at a different degree: scores range from 91% in Spain and France to 56% in Czech Republic.

The outlook towards future inequalities is uncertain and differs from country to country. Interestingly, Member States where perceptions are very strong today are not always among the ones having the most pessimistic view of the future. In this context, it is worth comparing these results with Eurostat data on current income distribution. This indicator puts in perspective the proportion of the 20% richest segment of the population with the 20% of the population with the lowest income. This comparative analysis shows that the perceptions of inequalities do not match with real economic disparities. While public perception and realities may often diverge, in this specific case the concept of social inequality most probably opens up to impressions which encompass different social factors not always easy to gauge.

Q Inequalities between the different social classes in (OUR COUNTRY) (%)

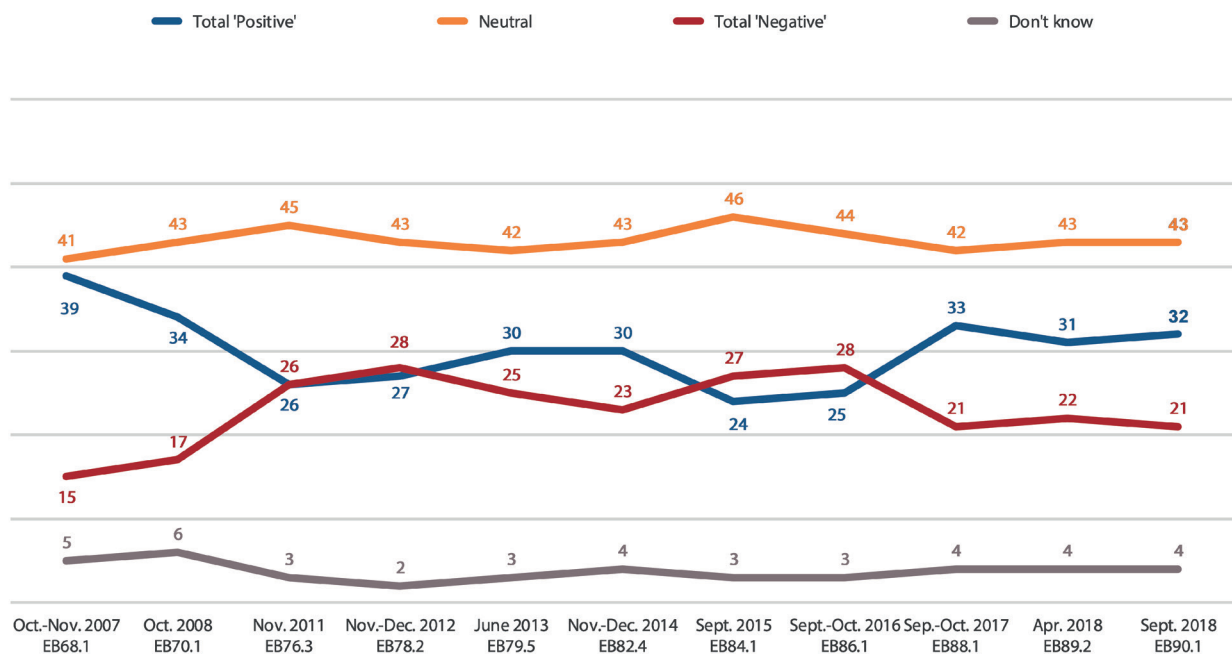


Stable trends for image and role of the European Parliament

The perception Europeans have about the European Parliament stabilizes after significant positive increases between 2015 and 2017.

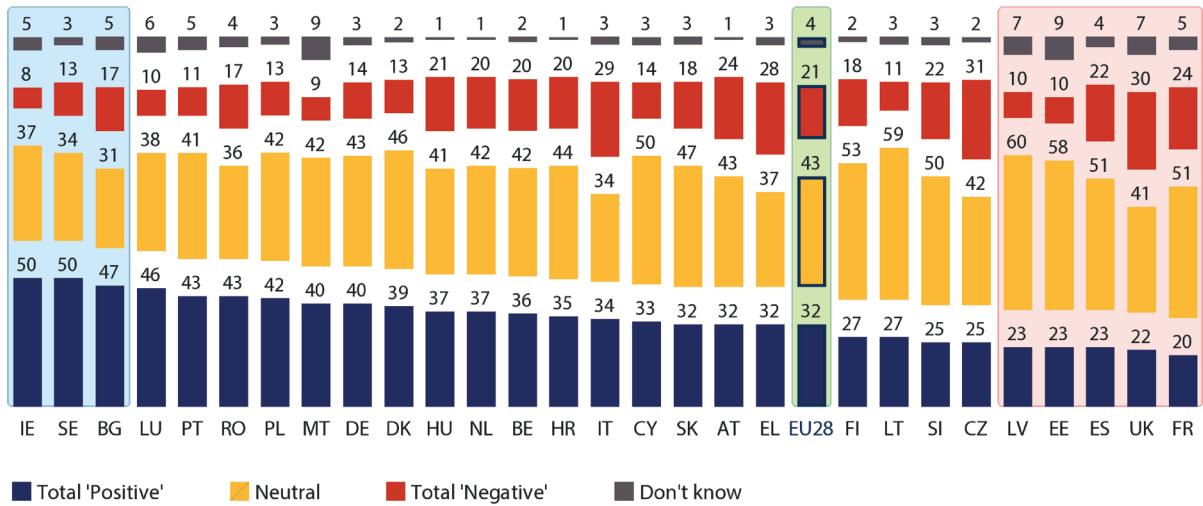
Parlemeter surveys traditionally measure citizens' views on the European Parliament itself with the help of two indicators. The first one deals with the image of the European Parliament in the eyes of European citizens, the second one asks whether Parliament should play a stronger or lesser role in the future. Both perception markers seem to stabilize, on European average, after a significant increase for the positive image of the EP and its desired role between 2015 and 2017. In the year before the next European elections, 32% of respondents have a positive image of the European Parliament, while 43% of respondents continue to hold a neutral view. As in 2017, only one in five respondents has a negative image of the EP (21%).

Q In general, do you have a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image of the European Parliament? (% - EU)



However, these European average figures again hide major evolutions at a national level, where in 25 EU Member States the positive image of the EP in the eyes of their citizens outweighs the negative image, with the exception of France, the UK and Czech Republic. A massive 18 point-increase is recorded in Sweden, where an absolute majority now has a positive image of Parliament (50%), on a par with Ireland (50%, -2).

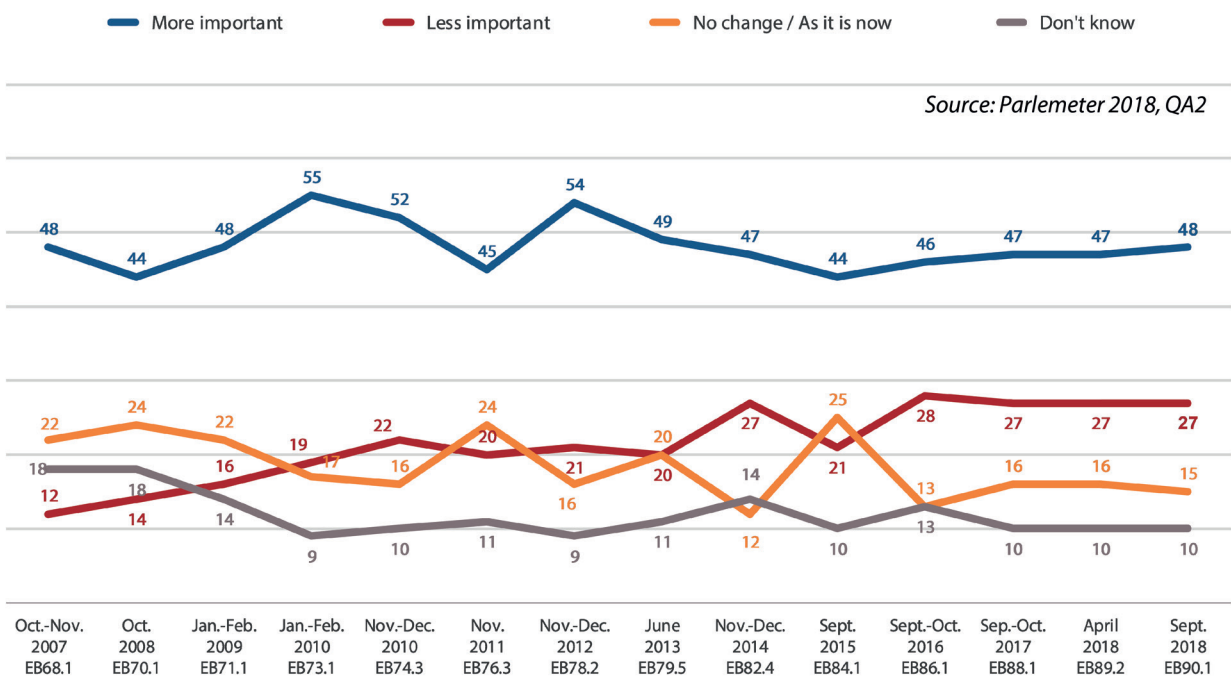
Q In general, do you have a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image of the European Parliament? (%)



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA1

48% of respondents want the European Parliament to play a more important role in the future, a nearly stable result compared to 2017 (+1 pp). 15% of respondents spontaneously declared that they want it to remain as it is now (-1 pp), 27% would like the Parliament to play a less important role in the future (=).

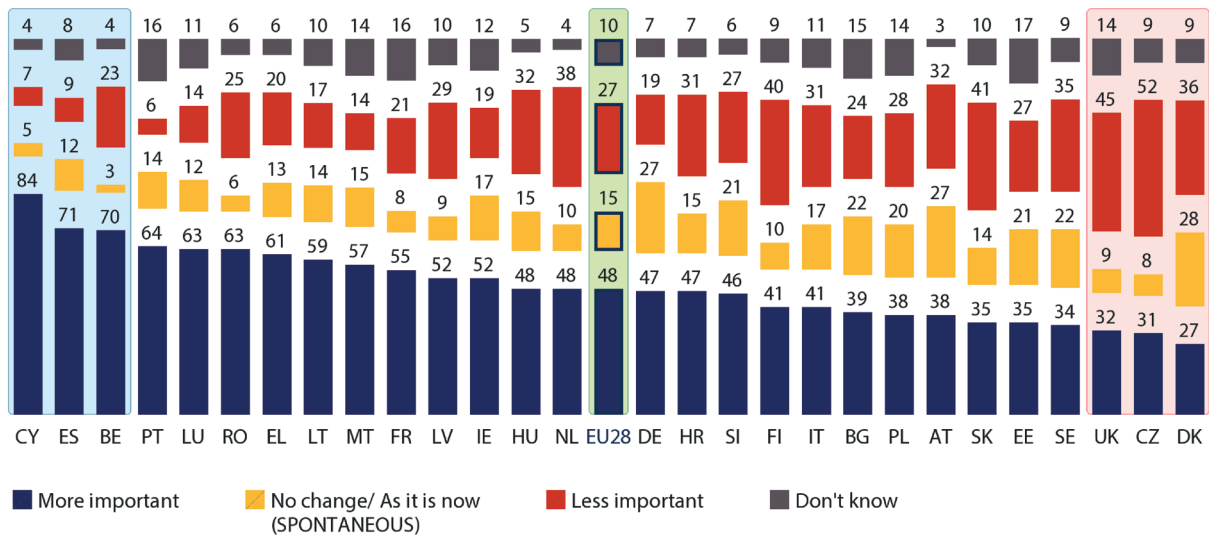
Q Would you like to see the European Parliament play a more important role or less important role? (% - EU)



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA2

The call for a more important role is the majority position in 23 Member States. National variations are again very present compared to April 2018. They reach +7 points in both Belgium (70% in favour of a more important role) and in Czech Republic (31%). Conversely, they drop by 11 points in Slovenia (46%). Last, but not least, only less than a third of respondents want a more important role for the European Parliament in the UK, Czech Republic and Denmark.

Q Would you personally like to see the European Parliament play a more important or less important role? (%)



Source: Eurobarometer 2018 QA2

As the next map shows, a more important role for the EP saw an increase in public support in 12 countries since April 2018. This call for more European democracy could be driven by different explanations as well as by the national political context. In about a third of Member States, a high wish for a more important role for the EP is pretty correlates with a low level of satisfaction with the way democracy works in the EU.

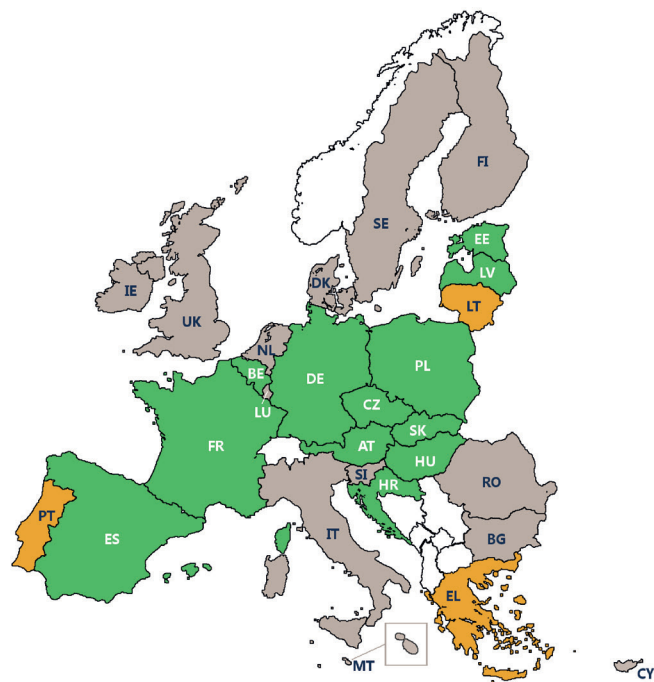
This is mostly the case in Cyprus, in Spain and in Greece where twice as many respondents call for a more important role for the EP than are satisfied with democracy in the EU. A similar scenario applies to a lesser extent in seven other Member States, including Romania, France and Italy. Yet there is also the opposite relationship in 17 countries, when the result for a more important role for the EP is inferior to the level of satisfaction with the way the EU democracy works.

Q Would you personally like to see the European Parliament play a more important or less important role?
September 2018-April 2018

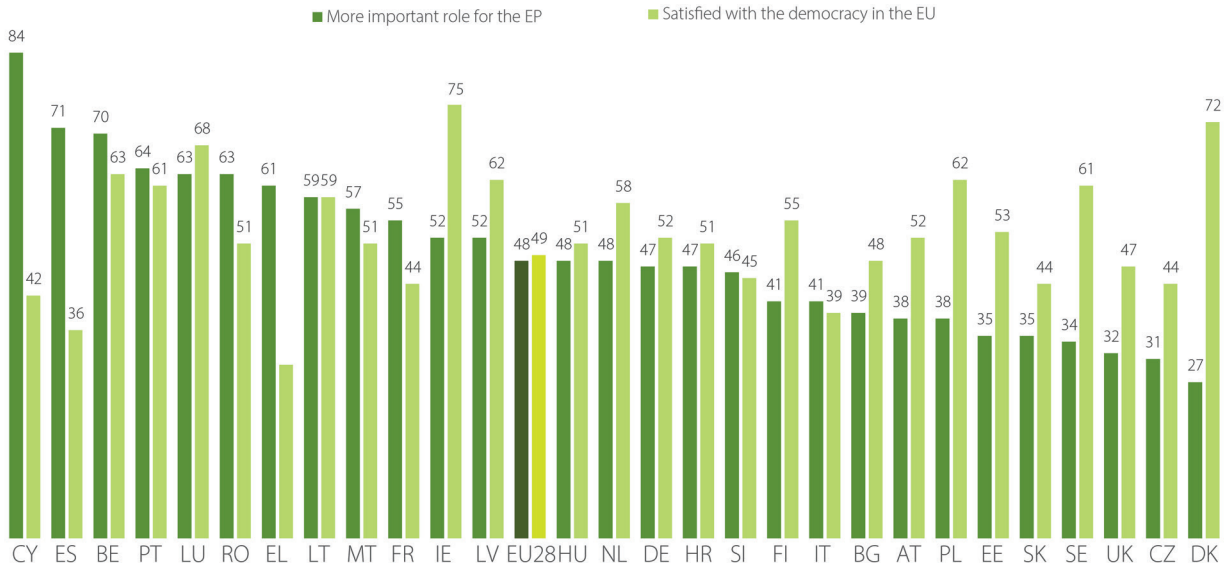
Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA2 and Eurobarometer 89.2, April 2018

BE	70	▲ 7
CZ	31	▲ 7
SK	35	▲ 5
HR	47	▲ 5
AT	38	▲ 4
FR	55	▲ 3
LV	52	▲ 3
HU	48	▲ 2
ES	71	▲ 2
EE	35	▲ 2
DE	47	▲ 2
PL	38	▲ 2
EU28	48	▲ 1
EL	61	=
PT	64	=
LT	59	=
NL	48	▼ 1
IE	52	▼ 1
DK	27	▼ 1
RO	63	▼ 1
IT	41	▼ 1
SE	34	▼ 2
CY	84	▼ 2
FI	41	▼ 2
UK	32	▼ 3
LU	63	▼ 6
BG	39	▼ 6
MT	57	▼ 8
SI	46	▼ 11

Map Legend
■ Positive
■ Stable
■ Negative

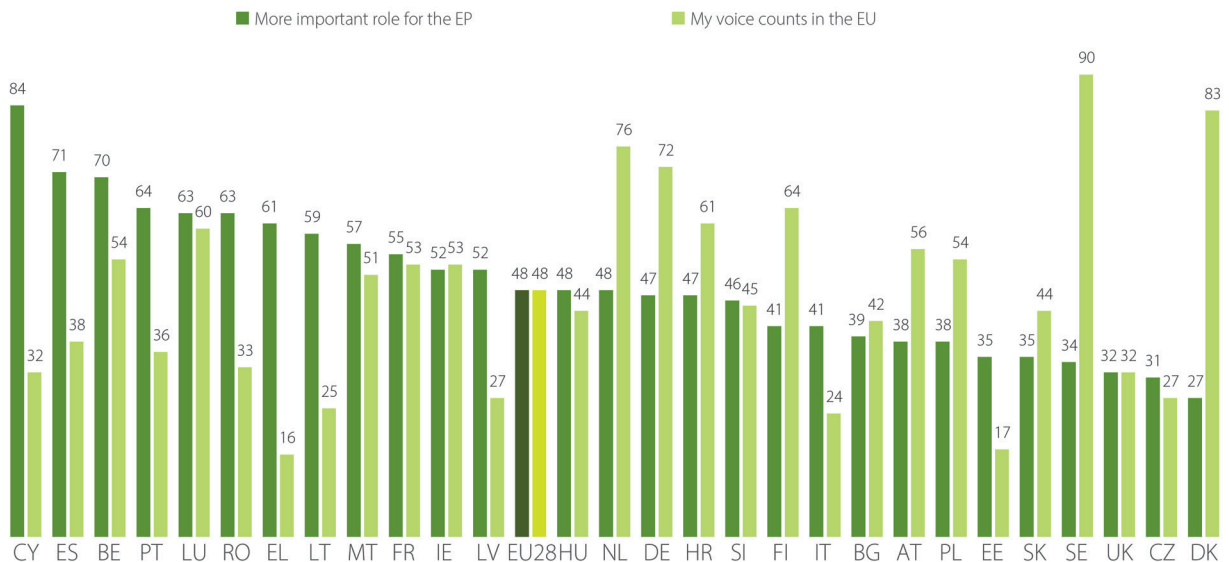


Q Would you personally like to see the European Parliament play a more important role? And how about the way democracy works in the EU?



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA2, D80b

Q Would you personally like to see the European Parliament play a more important role? Please tell me to what extent you agree with the following statement: My voice counts in the EU.



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA2, D72.1

When comparing with results for “my voice counts in the EU”, the same two patterns appear, both similarly telling: On one side, 61% of respondents in Greece call for a more important role for the EP while only 16% of them feel that their voice currently counts in the EU. On the other end, only 34% of Swedish respondents want a more important role for the institution, believing to the level of 90% that their voice counts in the EU.

TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE: FROM (SILENT) SUPPORT TO ACTUAL VOTE

While the support for EU membership keeps on rising and perceived favourability towards the EU project is back on track, feelings of uncertainty about the future remain high, coupled by distrust in institutions and political parties. In this context, the upcoming European elections in 2019 are both a challenge and an opportunity.

Looking at the challenge, developments in both political landscapes and public opinion show that a populist clamour, distrust in politics and expressions of discontent seem to dominate the public discourse. At the same time, recent Eurobarometer data demonstrates that citizens are also clearly aware that everyday matters relating to their personal life and circumstances indeed relate to wider contexts surpassing mere local and national spheres. Confirming this framework, the last European Parliament Eurobarometer publication 'Delivering on Europe' clearly showed that citizens increasingly keep on calling for more EU action in a broad range of policies, notably those that matter most to them. At the same time, they expect the European Union to be a united and strong actor when responding to international challenges⁸. The upcoming European elections are therefore also an opportunity for the European Union to take even closer heed of citizens' expectations and turn their wishes of a rather silent majority into loud voices in the ballot.

In the light of these reflections, this chapter sheds light on the knowledge that citizens have about the upcoming European elections and their attitudes towards them. While exploring the level of interest in the ballot, the analysis focuses on the topics Europeans would like to see debated during the now starting electoral campaign and points out the multi-coloured picture of opinions across the different countries.

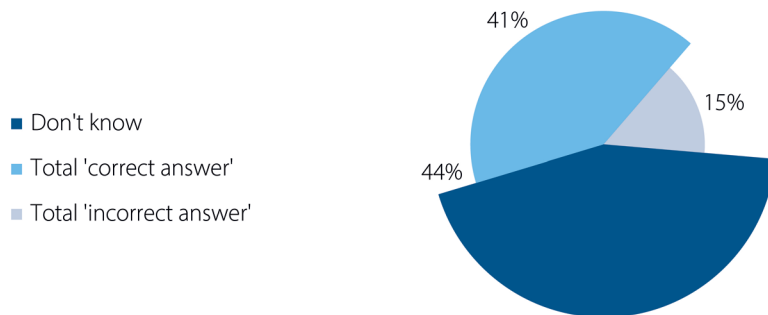
EE19 date: Public awareness is on the rise

An increasing share of European citizens seem to be aware of the upcoming elections and can cite its correct date: 41% of respondents know that the next elections to the European Parliament will take place in 2019. This amounts to an increase of 9 points since April 2018. Sociodemographic insights reveal that older generations as well as population segments with a higher level of education overall have a better knowledge of this date. This holds true as well for people having a stronger political interest and a more positive image of the European Parliament. Yet when looking at the individual national results a more differentiated picture emerges. The rise of awareness about the election date is widespread across all Member States, with the unique exception of Spain, where the share of correct replies has not increased over the last six months.

Evolutions are nevertheless very different from country to country, as is the percentage of citizens knowing the year of the next elections in each Member State: Hungary and Greece top the list of countries with regard

⁸ Delivering on Europe: Citizens' Views on Current and Future EU Action, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/delivering-on-europe-citizens-views-on-current-and-future-eu-action>

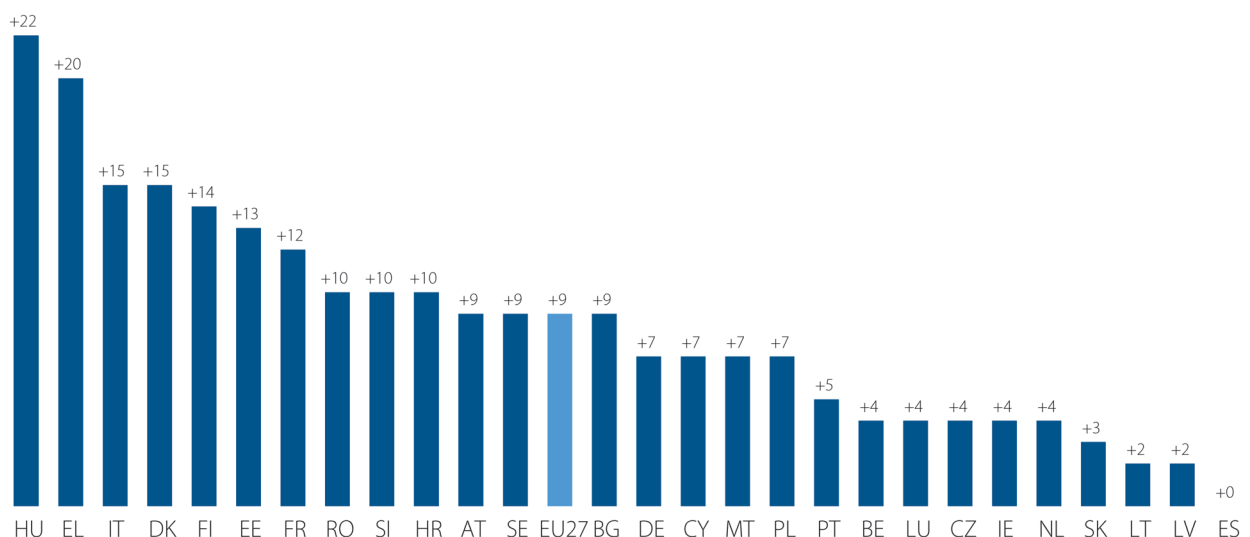
Q In your opinion, when will the next European Parliament elections be held here in (OUR COUNTRY)? (% - EU27)



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA6

to improved knowledge of the date (+22 and +20 percentage points respectively). Double-figure increases are also recorded in Italy (+15), Denmark (+15), Finland (+14), Estonia (+13), France (+12), Romania (+10), Slovenia (+10) and Croatia (+10). Contrasting these results with the state of play at a similar point in time ahead of the last European elections in 2014, data indicates that the current knowledge of the date of the next European ballot is already relatively high at EU level, as only 34% of citizens could respond in a correct way in June 2013.

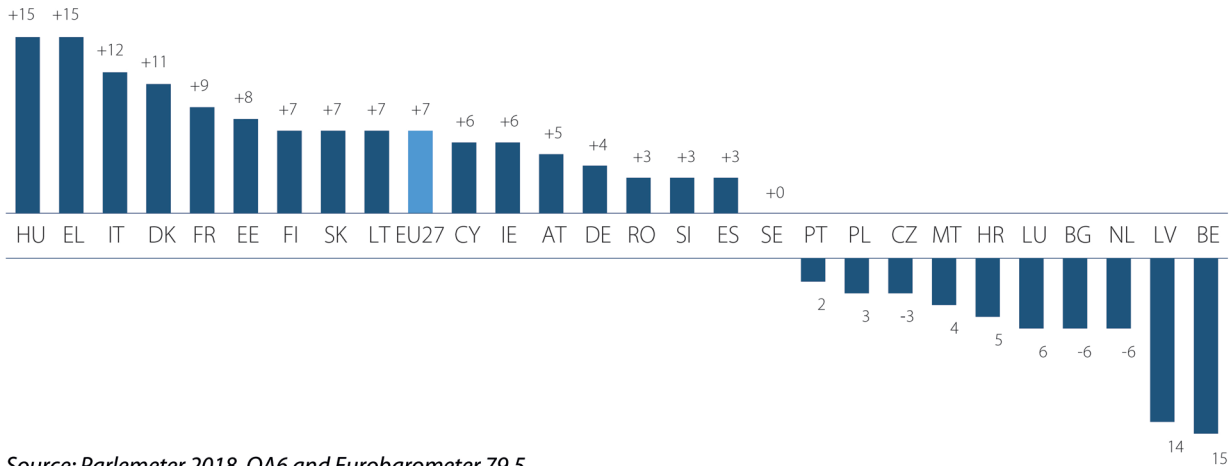
Q In your opinion, when will the next European Parliament elections be held here in (OUR COUNTRY)? Increased awareness of the date, difference April 2018 - September 2018 (percentage points)



Source: Parlemeter 2018, OA6 and Eurobarometer 89.2

As shown in the next chart, in only a minority of countries, led by Belgium and Latvia, a larger proportion of people seemed to have been better aware in 2013 about the date of the European elections than they are today. In sixteen countries, on the other hand, respondents show a better level of knowledge today of the upcoming ballot in 2019.

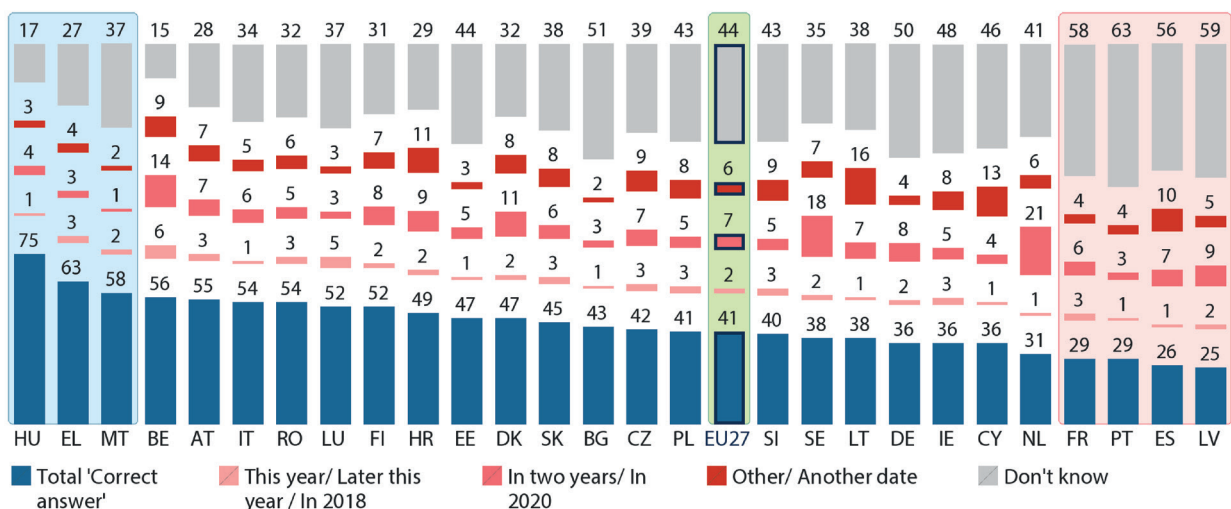
Q In your opinion, when will the next European Parliament elections be held here in (OUR COUNTRY)?
Increased awareness of the date, difference June 2013 – September 2018 (percentage points)



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA6 and Eurobarometer 79.5

Diversity among Member States is notable not only in the evolution of these trends but also in the share of respondents mentioning the correct answer. In September 2018, the proportion of citizens who already know the date of the next European ballot ranges widely from 75% in Hungary to 25% in Latvia. No less important is the fact that on average 44% (-6 percentage points since April 2018) of Europeans simply do not know when the next European elections will take place. This is the case for at least one in two respondents in Portugal (63%), Latvia (59%), France (58%), Spain (56%), Bulgaria (52%) and Germany (50%).

Q In your opinion, when will the next European Parliament elections be held here in (OUR COUNTRY)? (%)



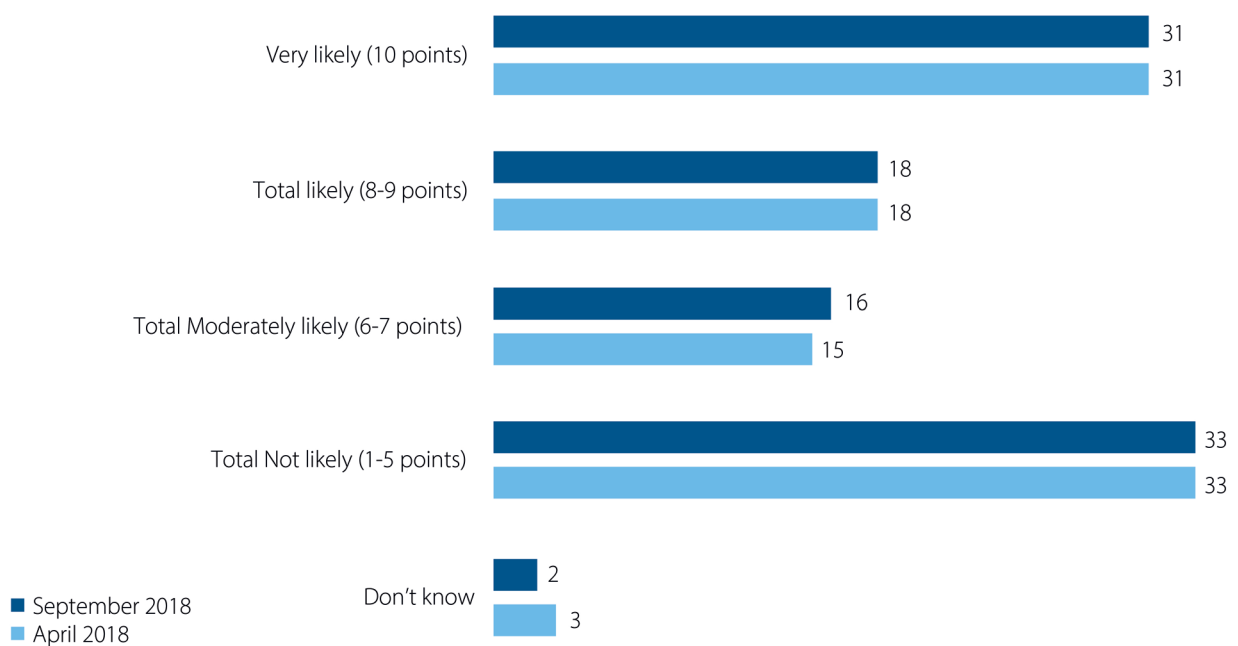
Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA6

Voting likeliness and feeling of importance still weak

Next, this report will analyse how the level of knowledge might affect the declared propensity to vote in the next ballot. Despite an increased awareness of the date, the share of respondents who declare themselves likely to vote in the next European elections has not changed in the course of the last six months.

Asked to express their propensity to vote in the next European elections on a scale from one to ten, around one-third (31%) of Europeans say with 'certainty' that they will vote (score 10). Another 18% declare to be moderately likely to vote (scores 8 and 9). Results from the Eurobarometer survey carried out in April 2018⁹ showed the same returns.

Q The next European Parliament elections will be held in May 2019. How likely are you to vote in these elections?

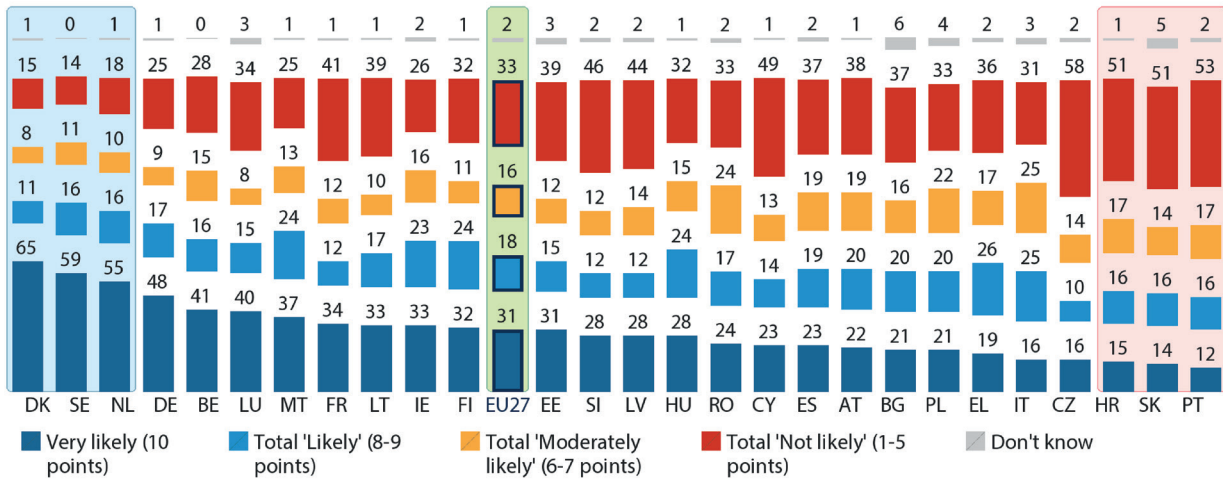


Source: *Parlemeter2018, QA8*

Nine months ahead of the elections, 33% of the respondents tend to say that they will not participate in the ballot (scores from 1 to 5). In five Member States the share of citizens who are thus not likely to vote reach nearly 50% or more: Cyprus (49%), Slovakia (50%), Croatia (51%), Portugal (53%) and the Czech Republic (58%).

⁹ Democracy on the move – European Elections: One year to go, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/beheard/eurobarometer/eurobarometer-2018-democracy-on-the-move>

Q The next European Parliament elections will be held in May 2019. How likely are you to vote in these elections?
Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where '1' means 'not at all likely' and '10' means 'very likely' (%)



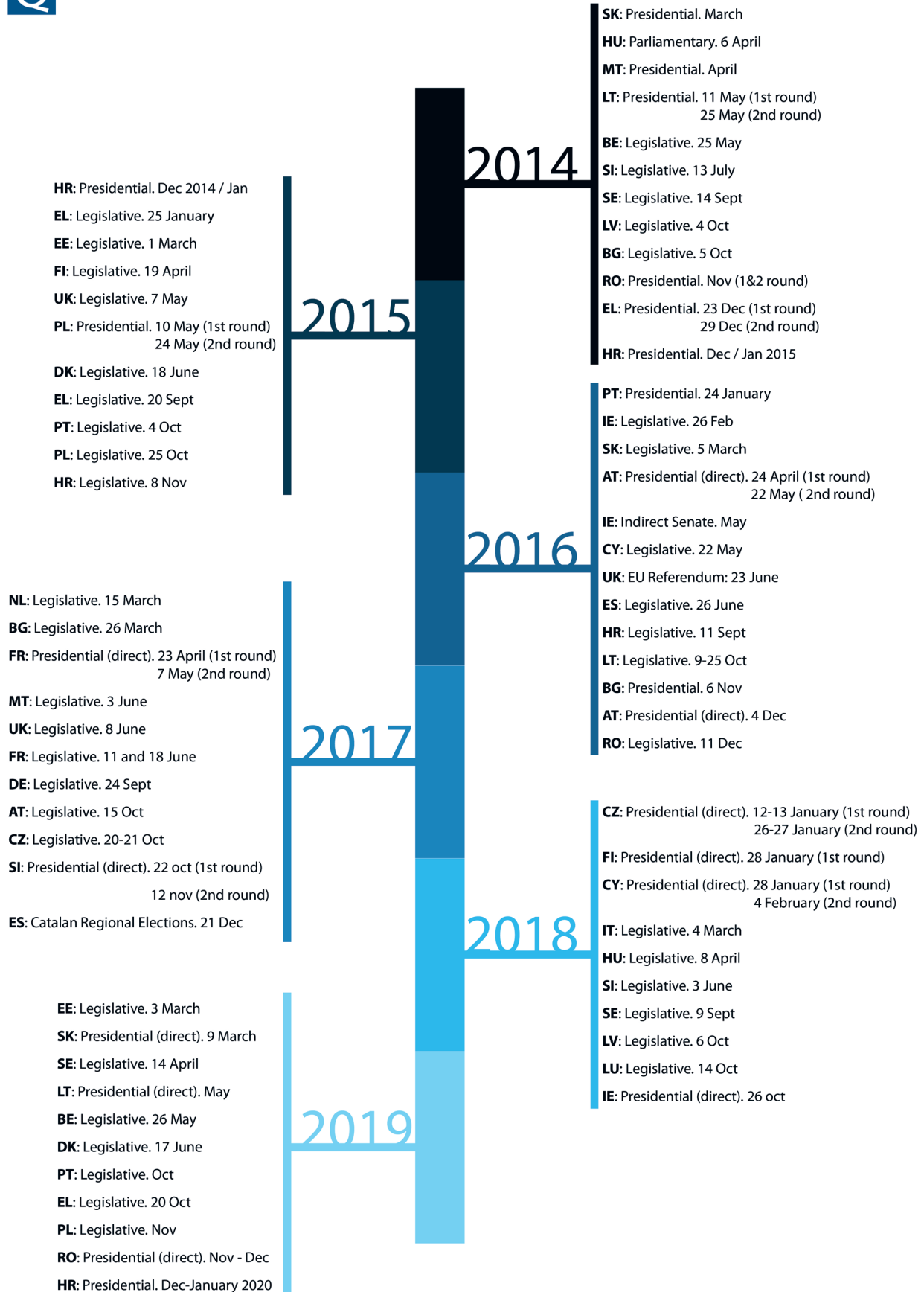
Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA8

Comparing these results with April 2018, significant negative evolutions are observed mainly in Cyprus (-10 percentage points for those saying with 'certainty' that they will vote, with a score 10 on the 1 to 10 scale), Romania (-10), Malta (-9) and Bulgaria (-8). At the same time, an equally significant positive change occurred in Sweden with an increase of 11 percentage points of respondents saying they will "very likely vote". On this result, it is worth noting that legislative elections took place in Sweden on the weekend immediately preceding the fieldwork in this country. This specific political setting may well have affected citizens' response to this question.

Electoral cycle and calendar as influencing factors

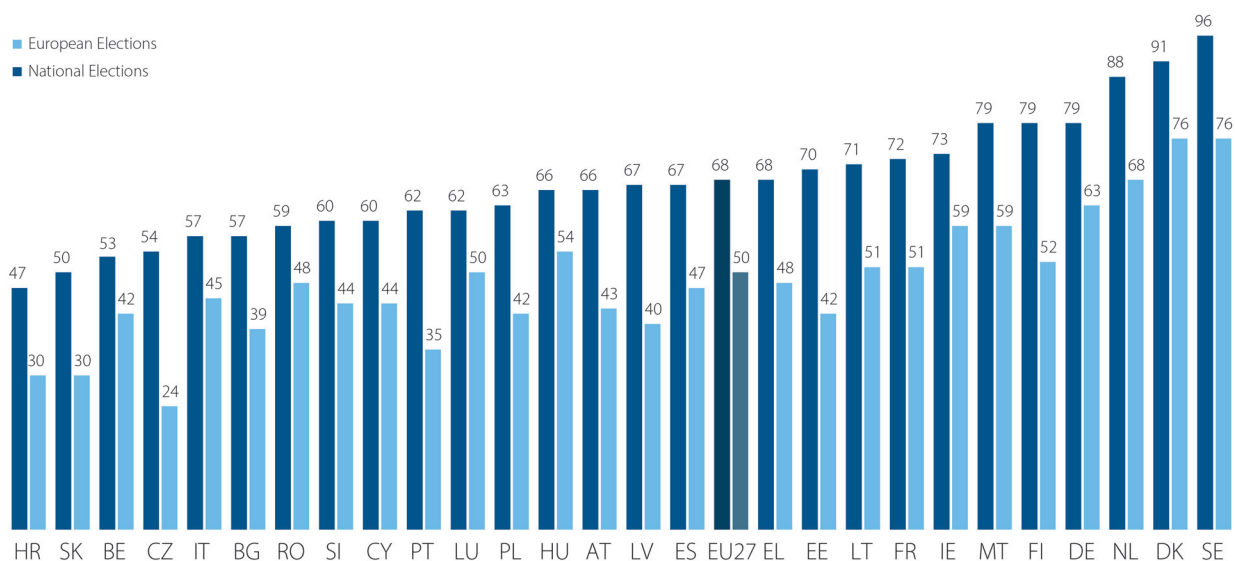
As widely discussed also at academic and scientific level, national elections and legislative cycles may strongly influence participation rates and results in other elections, be they local, regional or European ballots. For this reason, when thinking of the 2019 European elections, it is important to keep in mind the calendar of the main electoral events that will take place in 2019. They may have an impact both on turnout level and on the topical landscape influencing the European vote. This aspect becomes even more pertinent considering that in 2019 eleven elections, either legislative or presidential, will be held next to or simultaneously with the European elections. Moreover, the point in time when the European elections will take place during the election cycle in any given EU Member State is also essential to project the next European ballot: It makes a difference to electoral momentum and the issues debated, as proven in all relevant research, whether the European elections take place at the end, the beginning or in the middle of a national legislative cycle.

Q Timeline legislative and presidential elections 2014 - 2019



Eurobarometer results also confirm the longstanding view of a majority of citizens in all Member States that voting in European elections is less important than voting in national elections. When asked about the importance they attach to both elections, 68% of respondents consider the national elections highly important, while only 50% share this view with regard to European elections.

Q How important or not it is for you personally to vote in the European and national elections? (% - 'high importance')



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA11aT and A11bT

In April 2018¹⁰, 49% of respondents attached a high importance to the European elections, 68% held this view about the national elections. Looking at this development from specific national results, Sweden again stands out with a significant upturn: 76% of people (+13 percentage points) give today more importance to the European elections than they did in April of this year. Similar remarkable evolutions can be found in Greece (+7 percentage points), France, Latvia (both +6), Hungary and Estonia (both +4). In parallel, negative developments are present in Romania, Malta, Austria, Portugal (all with -7 points), Slovenia (-6), Ireland, Cyprus and Croatia (-5).

The elements affecting citizens' understanding on the relative salience of an election are certainly various and not always predictable: they relate both to contextual socio-economic factors as well as to personal attitudes and judgements. Nevertheless, the analysis of these questions in the light of recent turnout rates show a certain coherence between the significance accorded to different ballots and the actual participatory behaviour in ballots.

Although the percentages on perceived importance cannot be compared to the real levels of turnout, citizens' alleged order of priority of elections is unquestionably in line with past voting behaviours. The next

¹⁰ Democracy on the move, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/eurobarometer-2018-democracy-on-the-move>

table puts in perspective participation results from the last two European elections and national elections. In all countries without mandatory voting, the difference in turnout is patent and shows that Europeans in all Member States are still much more likely to participate in national elections rather than in European ones.

TURNOUT IN TWO LAST EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS				
Country	EE2009	EE2014	Two last National Elections	
BE	90,39%	89,64%	89,28%	89,68%
BG	38,99%	35,84%	51,15%	54,07%
CZ	28,22%	18,20%	59,48%	60,84%
DK	59,54%	56,32%	87,70%	85,89%
DE	43,27%	48,10%	71,50%	76,20%
EE	43,90%	36,52%	63,53%	64,20%
IE	58,64%	52,44%	69,19%	65,10%
EL	52,61%	59,97%	63,62%	56,16%
ES	44,87%	43,81%	69,67%	69,84%
FR ¹	40,63%	42,43%	57,22% / 55,40%	48,70% / 42,64%
HR ²	20,84%	25,24%	60,82%	54,35%
IT	65,05%	57,22%	75,19%	72,94%
CY	59,40%	43,97%	78,70%	66,74%
LV	53,70%	30,24%	59,49%	58,85%
LT ¹	20,98%	47,35%	52,92% / 35,91%	50,64% / 38,10%
LU	90,76%	85,55%	89,15%	91,40%
HU	36,31%	28,97%	66,42%	70,22%
MT	78,79%	74,80%	92,90%	92,10%
NL	36,75%	37,32%	74,57%	81,90%
AT	45,97%	45,39%	74,90%	80,00%
PL	24,53%	23,83%	48,92%	50,92%
PT	36,77%	33,67%	58,03%	55,84%
RO	27,67%	32,44%	41,76%	39,78%
SI	28,37%	24,55%	51,73%	52,64%
SK	19,64%	13,05%	59,11%	59,82%
FI	38,60%	39,10%	70,50%	70,10%
SE	45,53%	51,07%	85,81%	87,18%
UK	34,70%	35,60%	66,10%	68,70%
EU Total	42,97%	42,61%	-	-

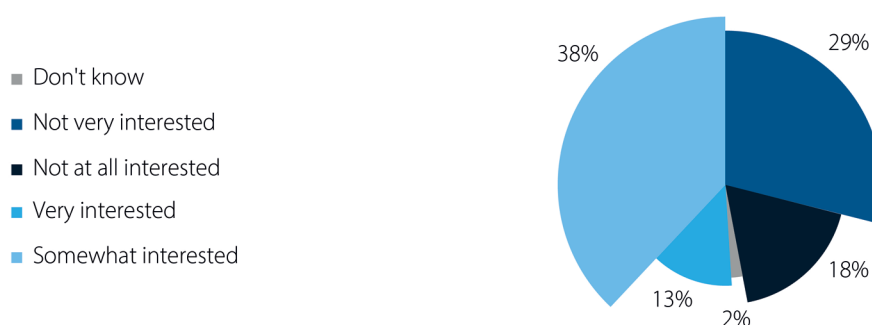
¹ In France and Lithuania, turnout figures for the legislative elections are referring to 1st and 2nd round.

² For Croatia, the first European election were in 2013.

Interest in the European elections: higher than before, yet not at full potential

Against this setting, interest in the European elections seems to be higher than in the past. In September 2018, 51% of citizens said to be interested in the European elections. Compared to the last election period, a similar level of interest at EU level was only reached in April 2014, i.e. one month ahead of the actual election date.

Q The next European elections will be held in May-June 2019. How interested or not are you in these elections?



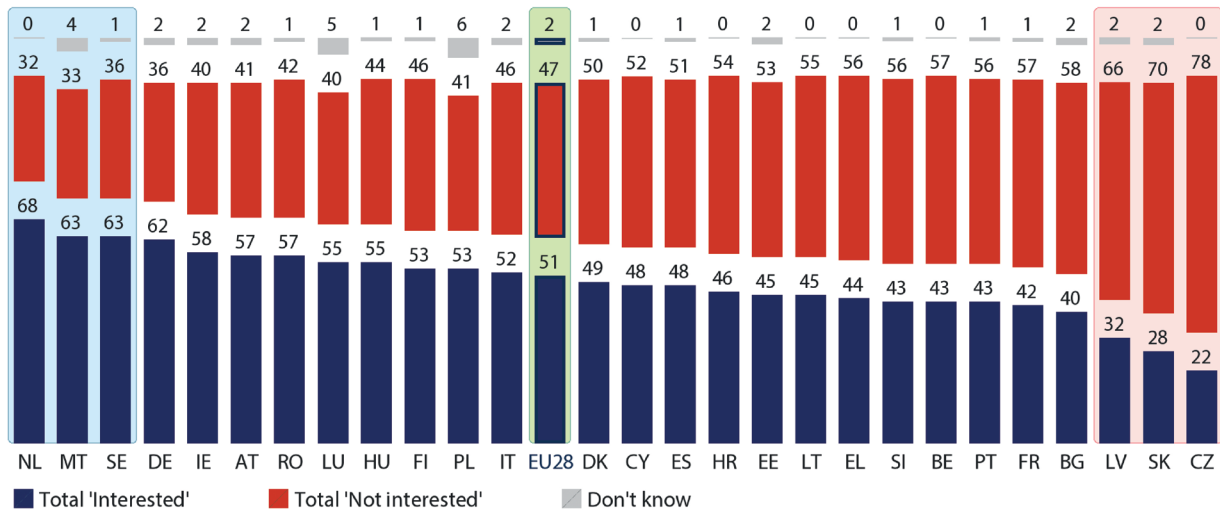
Source: *Parlemeter 2018, QA7*

Compared to the previous Eurobarometer survey six months ago, when citizens had expressed a similar level of interest (50%), trends remain stable in the majority of Member States within a wide spectrum across the EU. Scores range from 68% in the Netherlands to 22% in the Czech Republic. Moreover, while in twelve Member States more than half of the respondents feel already interested in the European elections, in fifteen Member States a majority does not express an interest in the ballot.

Sweden sees again a positive evolution, with the number of people showing interest in the ballot rising by 8 percentage points compared to April. A similar tendency is observed in Greece and Italy (both +5 points). In parallel, a drop in the level of interest is registered in Denmark (-8), Lithuania (-7) and Croatia (-6).

Taking all national differences into account, the average share of Europeans who are interested in the next ballot appear stable, solid and higher than the one expressed in the past European elections.

Q The next European Parliament elections will be held in May - June 2019. How interested or not are you in these elections? (%)

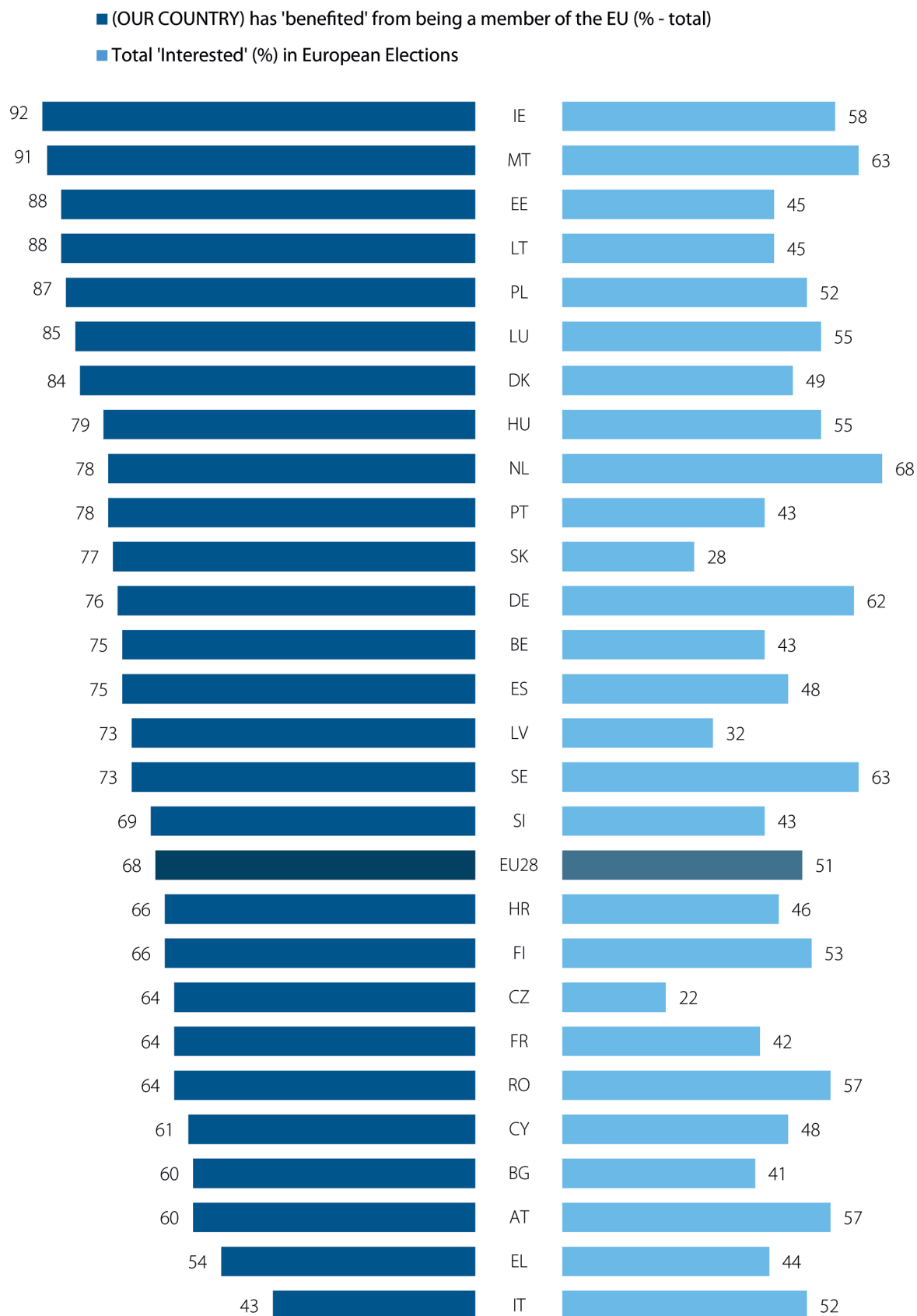


Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA7

At the end of this section the interest in the elections is contrasted to the two general support indicators for the European Union, namely the marker for the positive image of the European Union and the question whether respondents believe that EU membership has benefited their own country. While respondents having a positive image of the European Union indeed seem generally more interested in the European elections, an increased perception of EU benefits does not directly translate in a higher professed interest in the elections.

Not only is, on EU average, the share of interested citizens (51%) lower than the share of respondents believing that their country has benefited from being a Member of the EU (68%). The same analysis applies for all Member States except for Italy, where the proportion of respondents who feel interested in the next European elections is higher than the share of Italian respondents believing that their country has benefited from being a member of the EU.

Q Would you say that (OUR COUNTRY) has benefited from being a member of the EU?
How interested are you in next European Parliament elections?



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA16 and QA7.

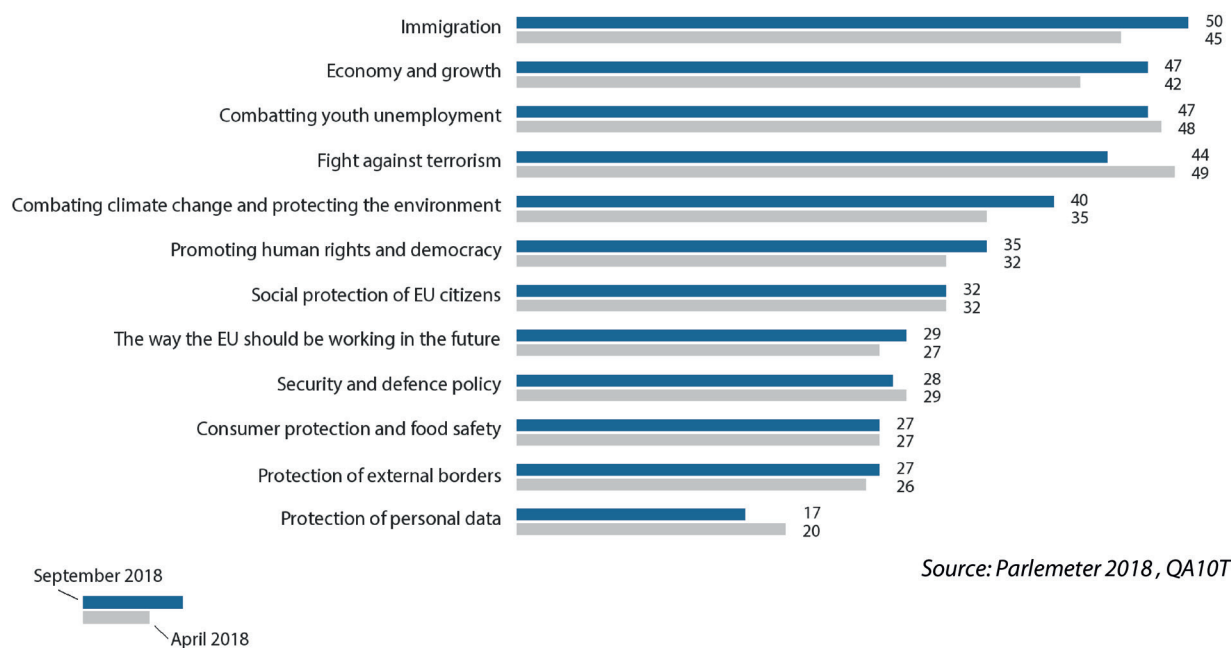
Campaign topics: ways to raise the interest?

In this context it is certainly necessary to assess how public interest in the elections might be raised - which leads directly to the next section of the survey analysing which issues citizens want to see debated during the campaign and which policy areas and values they seem to be most concerned about.

As in the previous survey, citizens were asked to name the topics they want to see debated as a matter of priority during this electoral campaign. Compared to April 2018, the order of priorities has changed.

Immigration (50%), economy and growth (47%) as well as combating youth unemployment (47%) now top the list of Europeans' replies, whereas the fight against terrorism moves from first to fourth position with a decrease of 5 percentage points to 44%.

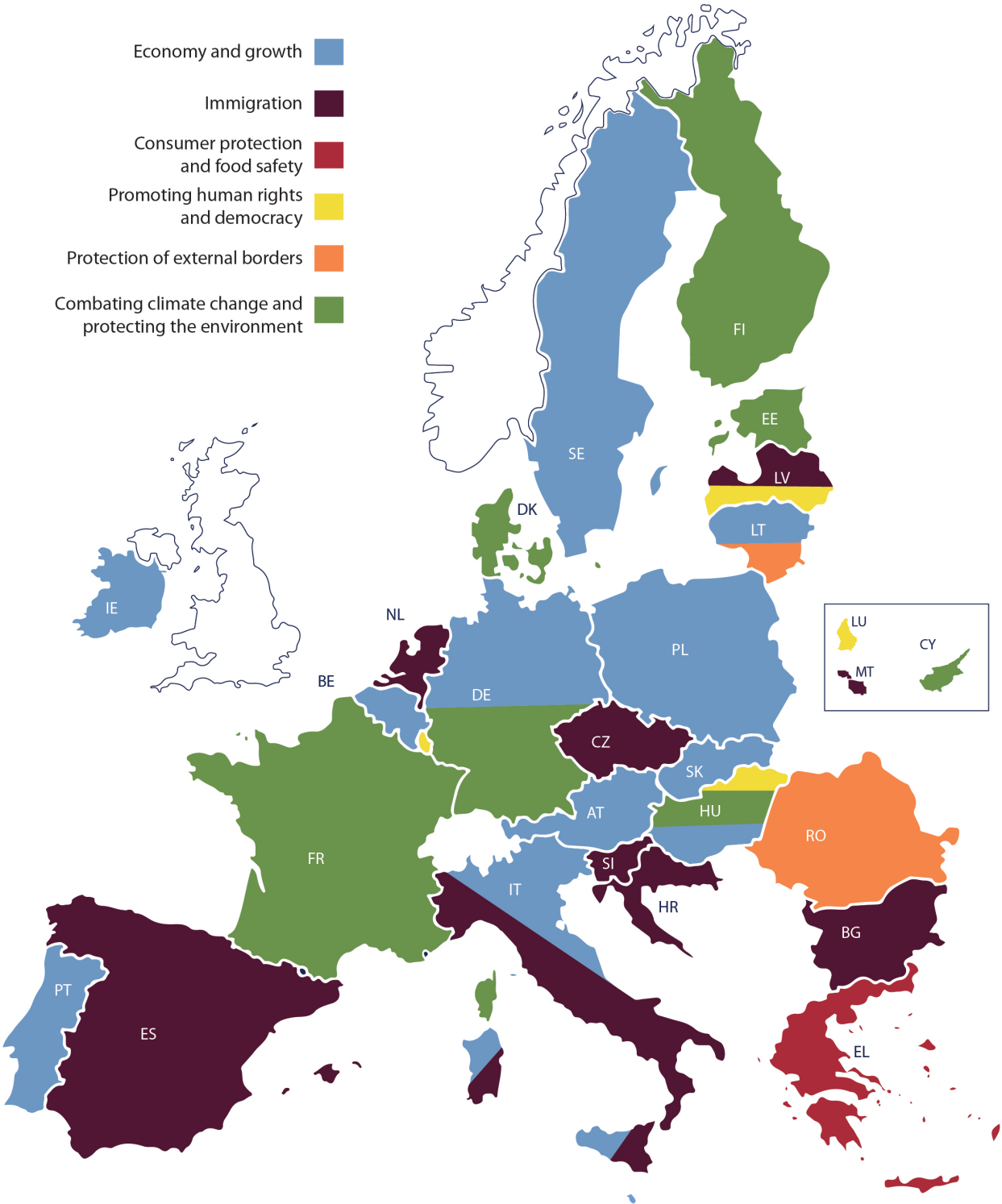
Q Which of the following themes should be discussed as a matter of priority during the electoral campaign for the next European Parliament elections? Firstly? And then? (% EU27)



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA10T

Apart from the order of campaign topics, in the course of the last six months a growing interest can be registered with regard to immigration, economy and growth as well as combating climate change and protecting the environment. For these three topical areas, the proportion of citizens who want to hear about it during the campaign has increased by 5 percentage points at the EU level. The increased appetite for these themes is widespread throughout a majority of all Member State: It is the case in 22 countries for immigration, in 24 countries for economy and growth and in 19 countries for combating climate change and protecting the environment.

Q Campaign topics: the biggest increases



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA10T

Nonetheless, the order of topics has perceptibly changed following international and national developments and the importance given to them strongly resonates with the different national settings.

As shown in the previous map, immigration is the top growing topic in nine countries: Croatia, Spain, Malta, the Czech Republic, Latvia (on a par with promoting human rights and democracy), Bulgaria, Slovenia, Italy (on a par with economy and growth) and the Netherlands.

At the same time, economy and growth gather the biggest increase in support in eleven Member States: Portugal, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, Ireland, Austria, Belgium, Germany (on a par with climate change), Lithuania (with protection of external borders), Hungary (with climate change and promoting human rights and democracy), and Italy.

Climate change recorded its highest increases as priority campaign topic in seven countries: France, Denmark, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Estonia, as well as Hungary. Romania is the only Member State where the greatest evolution touches the protection of external borders. In Greece, this holds true for consumer protection and food safety.

In Latvia, Hungary and Luxembourg also the promotion of human rights and democracy has drawn the biggest pick-up of replies.

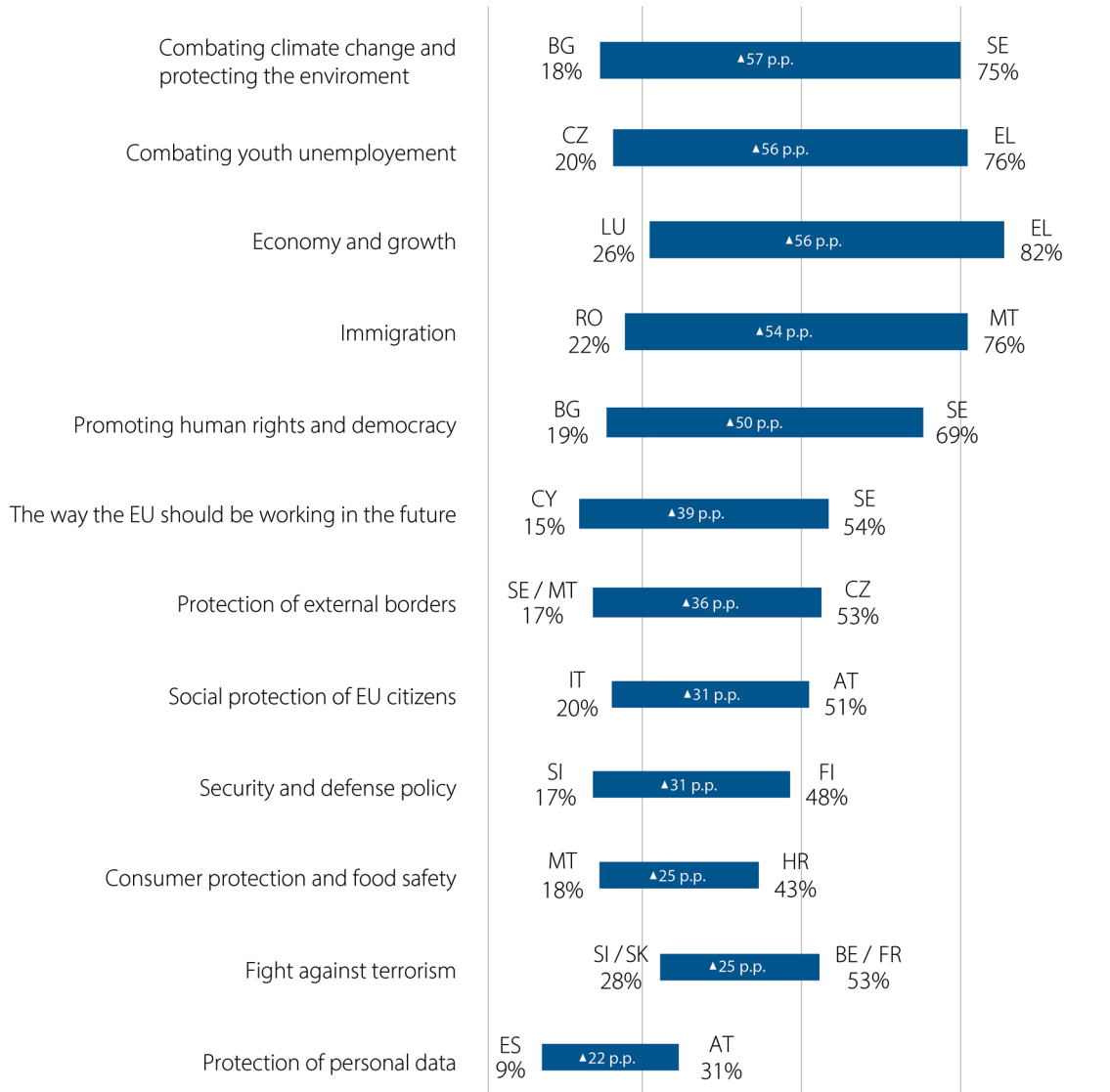
When assessing citizens' preferred campaign topics at national level, it is not only interesting to focus on the change of importance over time, but also on the different support that the same issue receives from country to country.

As the next graph shows, the greatest divergences relate to climate change with 57 percentage points difference from the highest value in Sweden to the lowest one in Bulgaria, economy and growth with a difference of 56 points, youth unemployment (56 points difference), immigration (54 points difference) and promoting human rights and democracy (50 points difference).

The combined analysis of the different levels of interest in campaign topics across the EU and the evolving attention attached to them points out how national angles clearly shape citizens' views and expectations. This would hold true even more for a detailed sociodemographic microanalysis.

As for the next European elections and the different campaign fought over the coming months, this diversity is part of the challenge and opportunity. If the adage that all politics is local holds true also for European elections, public interest in the ballot and consequently turnout might be successfully piqued, at least partially, with campaigns able to match and respect the multi-coloured picture of expectations in the different countries.

Q Which of the following themes should be discussed as a matter of priority during the electoral campaign for the next European Parliament elections? Discrepancies between Member states.



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA10T

	Immigration	Economy and growth	Social protection of EU citizens	Consumer protection and food safety	Combating climate change and protecting the environment	Promoting human rights and democracy	Fight against terrorism	The way the EU should be working in the future	Combating youth unemployment	Security and defence policy	Protection of external borders	Protection of personal data
	Sep-18	Sep-18	Sep-18	Sep-18	Sep-18	Sep-18	Sep-18	Sep-18	Sep-18	Sep-18	Sep-18	Sep-18
	Diff. April-Sept. 2018	Diff. April-Sept. 2018	Diff. April-Sept. 2018	Diff. April-Sept. 2018	Diff. April-Sept. 2018	Diff. April-Sept. 2018	Diff. April-Sept. 2018	Diff. April-Sept. 2018	Diff. April-Sept. 2018	Diff. April-Sept. 2018	Diff. April-Sept. 2018	Diff. April-Sept. 2018
EU27	50%	47%	32%	=	40%	35%	44%	29%	47%	28%	27%	17%
BE	47%	46%	33%	-2	29%	-3	47%	25%	46%	21%	27%	21%
BG	43%	59%	+2	+3	40%	+3	39%	30%	37%	-7	26%	20%
CZ	64%	36%	+4	28%	=	36%	-1	37%	-1	37%	-2	53%
DK	55%	41%	+5	28%	+2	29%	+3	25%	-5	28%	-2	27%
DE	56%	32%	+8	40%	+3	27%	-2	40%	-2	24%	=	33%
EE	53%	47%	+5	31%	+1	19%	+4	27%	=	40%	+4	33%
IE	37%	57%	+11	31%	=	23%	+2	34%	+4	36%	-4	24%
EL	64%	-1	82%	+1	40%	=	33%	31%	+6	31%	-4	39%
ES	52%	+5	60%	=	27%	-1	21%	21%	=	38%	-3	39%
FR	39%	-1	33%	-1	31%	+2	30%	30%	-3	20%	-4	21%
HR	35%	+16	70%	+9	48%	=	43%	+9	+3	32%	+4	29%
IT	71%	+5	62%	+5	20%	-1	23%	-3	25%	-1	27%	19%
CY	41%	+3	72%	+5	28%	-3	25%	-2	25%	+9	42%	27%
LV	38%	+10	66%	+7	43%	+8	25%	+3	25%	+3	32%	20%
LT	37%	+2	67%	+7	49%	+4	27%	+2	19%	=	31%	27%
LU	46%	+4	26%	-6	33%	+2	27%	-2	48%	=	34%	19%
HU	59%	-3	49%	+7	28%	+4	25%	+5	28%	+7	41%	38%
MT	76%	+11	31%	+3	22%	-2	18%	=	39%	-6	38%	30%
NL	46%	+4	41%	+3	30%	-3	29%	+2	68%	+2	51%	31%
AT	53%	+7	42%	+8	27%	+4	39%	+1	45%	+2	31%	30%
PL	38%	+7	50%	+13	27%	-3	24%	+1	21%	-2	31%	30%
PT	35%	+9	65%	+14	49%	-3	25%	=	25%	-5	36%	38%
RO	22%	=	53%	+1	35%	-2	36%	=	26%	=	38%	30%
SI	38%	+8	58%	+4	39%	-5	25%	-9	28%	+2	30%	28%
SK	48%	+9	42%	+11	32%	-5	31%	-3	25%	=	27%	30%
FI	45%	+4	38%	+1	21%	=	22%	+3	31%	+9	49%	49%
SE	46%	-1	47%	+12	26%	=	20%	+2	75%	+9	69%	65%

AN EU THAT PROTECTS

The Parlemeter 2018 continues to explore areas which Europeans would predominantly be considering as threats and where they want the EU to protect them from. Terrorism, poverty and unemployment top this list, right before illegal immigration.

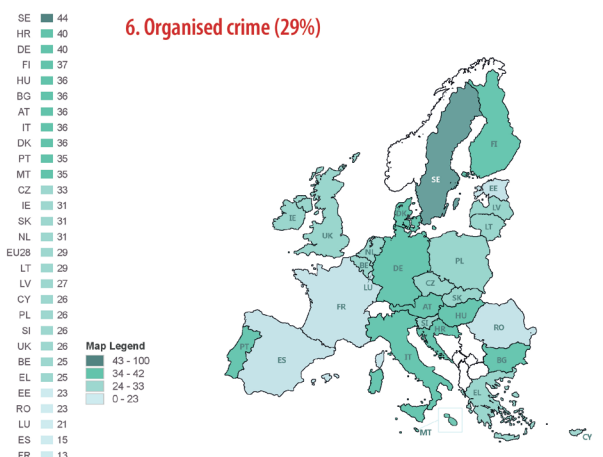
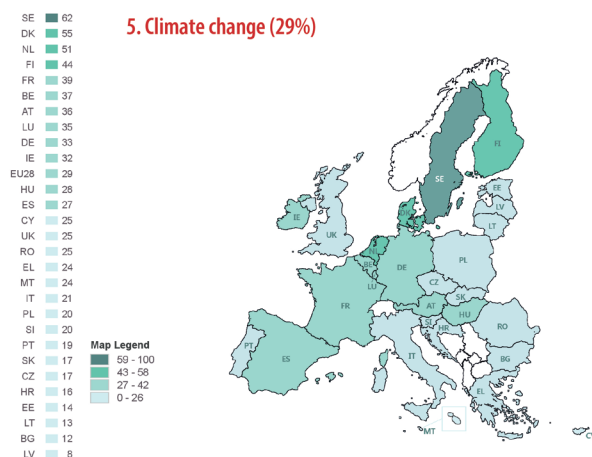
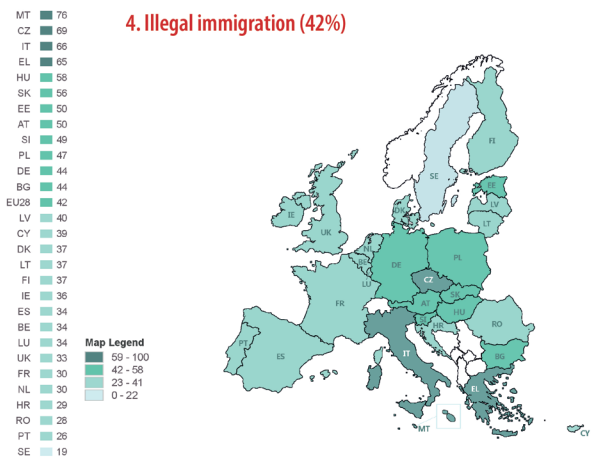
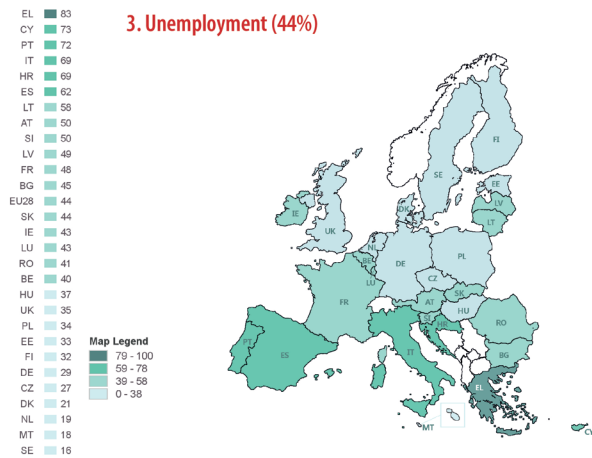
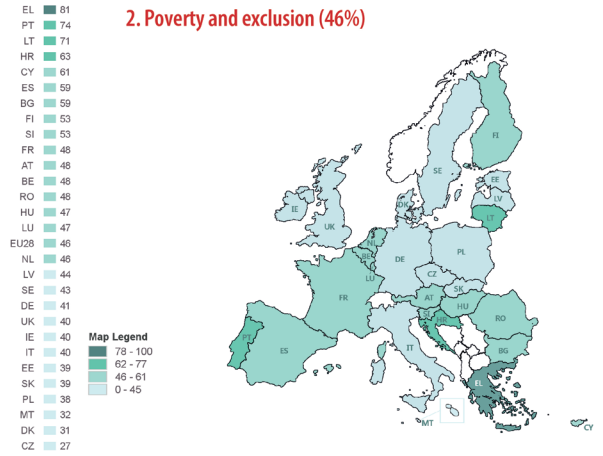
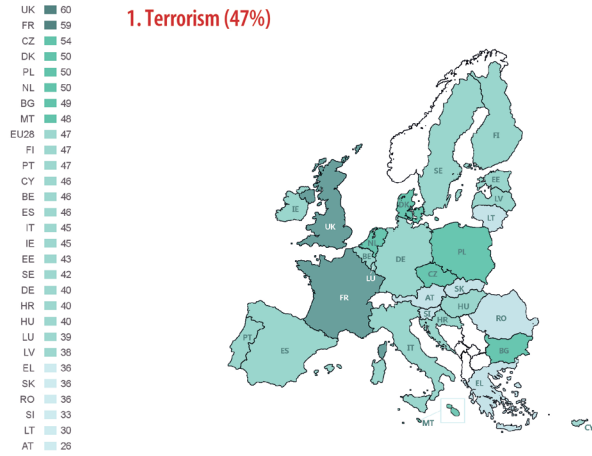
As is the case throughout this report, understanding national levels are of utmost importance to understand the diversity of opinions throughout the European Union, which cannot be conveyed in the same way by European average figures. To best illustrate their respective importance at national level, the following pages displays each of the threat topics tested on a map.

Terrorism is the most cited answer in the United Kingdom (60%) and in France (59%). Poverty and social exclusion is most mentioned - by far - in Greece, with 81%, as is unemployment, which ranks even higher among Greek respondents with 83%. Illegal immigration on the other hand is most cited in Malta (76%), Czech Republic (69%), Italy (66%) and Greece (65%), while also ranking above 50% in Hungary (58%) and Slovakia (56%). Climate change is the highest cited threat in Sweden (62%), Denmark (55%) and the Netherlands (51%).

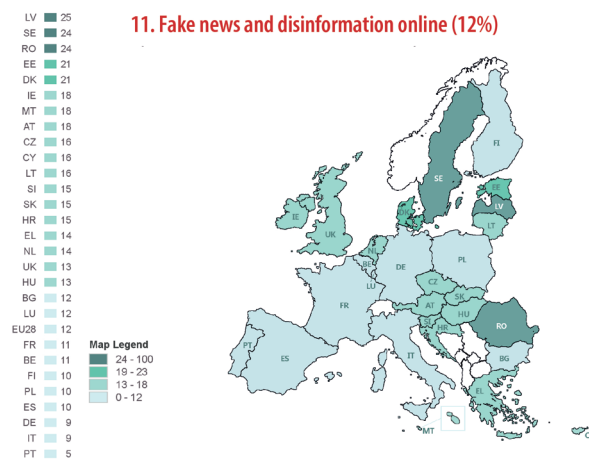
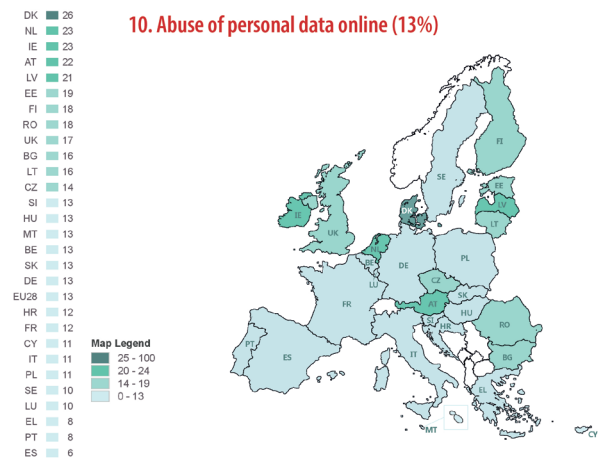
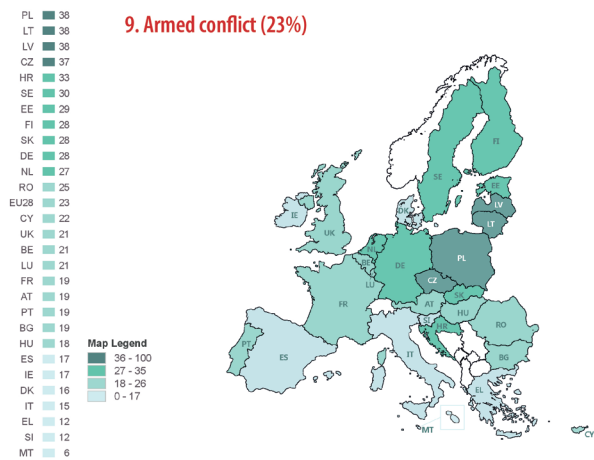
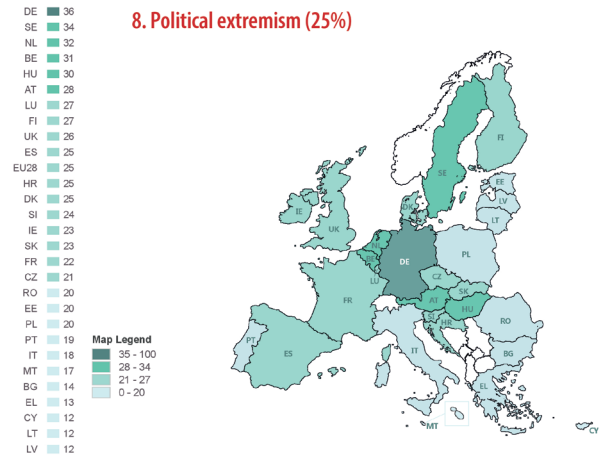
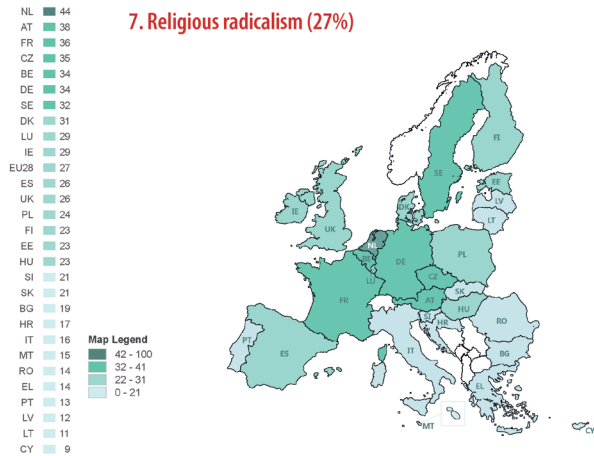
The next items are cited in lesser proportions. Organised crime ranges highest in Sweden (44%), Croatia and Germany (both at 40%). Religious radicalism sees its largest mentions as threat in the Netherlands (44%) and Austria (38%), while political extremism sees highest citations in Germany (36%) and Sweden (34%). Armed conflict scores 38% in Poland, Lithuania and Latvia.

On European average, the abuse of personal data online as well as fake news and disinformation online return as lowest-ranked threats. On national level, the abuse of personal data online scores the highest in Denmark with 26% and 23% in both the Netherlands and Ireland for. In Latvia (25%), Sweden and Romania (both 24%) the threat of fake news and disinformation online find its highest relative support.

Q A European Union that protects against..



Q A European Union that protects against..



WHAT PRIORITIES FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT?

The Parlemeter each year measures which concrete policies European citizens would expect the European Parliament to tackle as a matter of priority. Not to be confounded with the previously discussed campaign topics, the policy priorities nevertheless largely align by putting economic and social issues on top of the list together with the fight against terrorism.

Q The EP makes decisions on European legislation which directly impacts every citizen's life. In your opinion which of the following should be given priority by the European Parliament? Firstly? And then? (% EU28)



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA13T

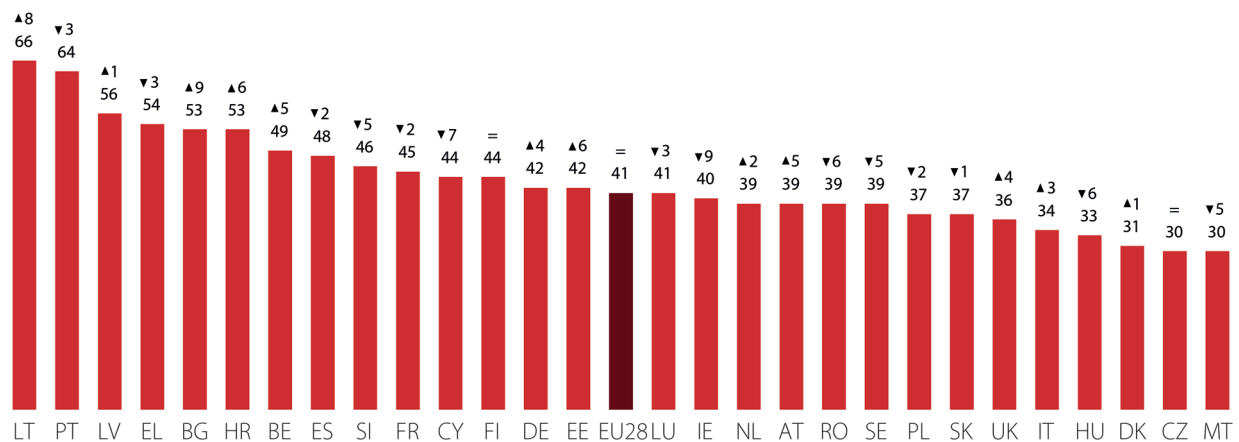
In spite of significant achievements, many challenges persist for the European Union. Insecurity and anxiety regarding their future as expressed by citizens are traceable in Eurobarometer indicators measuring their attitude on the direction the EU is taking or with regard to their assessment on the development of social inequalities in the future. In addition, the ranking of policy priorities gives a clear indication of the deep marks left in people's lives by the economic crisis and the uncertainty about one's future. With 41% of citations, respondents put combating poverty and social exclusion on top of their priority list for the European Parliament, followed by youth unemployment, listed by 33% (+2) as their top issue.

EU citizens clearly put their trust and expectation in Europe's and the European Parliament's ability to shape the future and to support the development of a fair and prosperous society.

Combating poverty and social exclusion

Q The EP makes decisions on European legislation which directly impacts every citizen's life. In your opinion which of the following should be given priority by the European Parliament? Firstly? And then?

Tackling poverty and social exclusion



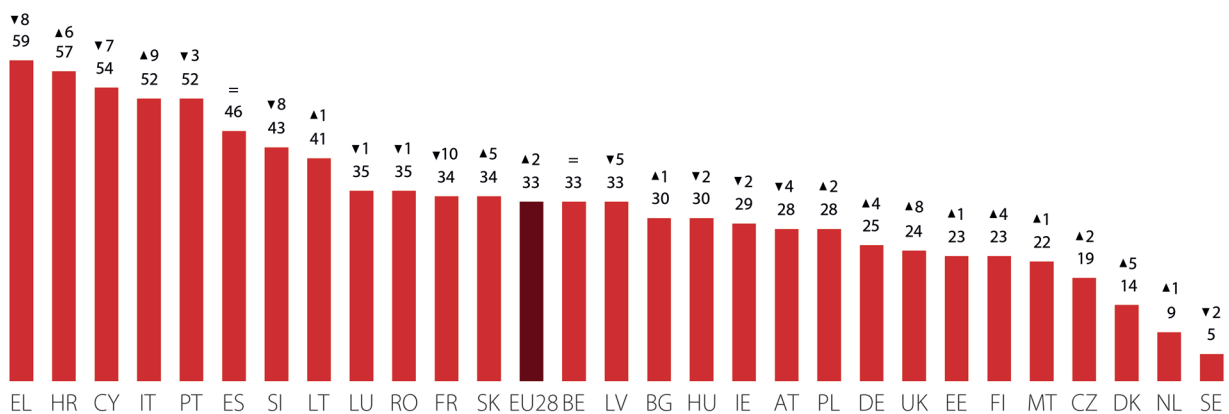
Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA13T and Parlemeter 2017, QA8T.

Compared to results from September 2017 the EU average remains stable with 41%. Noticeable are some significant moves at national level, where combating poverty and social exclusion is increasingly perceived as priority policy in 12 EU countries, led by Bulgaria with +9 percentage points (53%), Lithuania +8 (66%) and Croatia +6 (53%) and Estonia 42% (+6).

Combating youth unemployment

Q The EP makes decisions on European legislation which directly impacts every citizen’s life. In your opinion which of the following should be given priority by the European Parliament? Firstly? And then?

Combating youth unemployment



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA13T and Parlemeter 2017, QA8T.

Combating youth unemployment increases in its priority ranking on EU average by 2 percentage points and scores 33% at European level. The largest increases are measured in Italy with +9 points to 52%, the United Kingdom with +8 to 24% and in Croatia with a plus of six points to 57%.

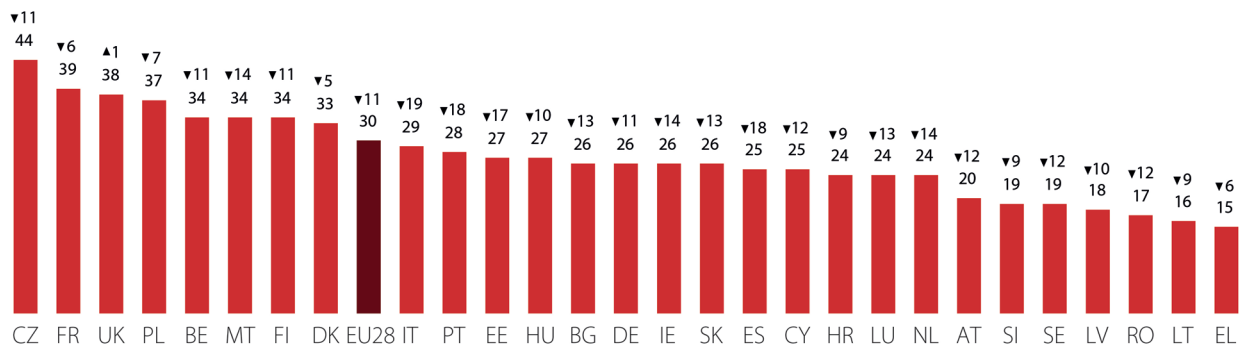
Combating terrorism

Security has arguably been a greater issue for Europeans in the past three years than in many years before, contributing to anchoring security and in particular, terrorism issues at the top of Europeans’ concerns. Nevertheless, at EU level a significant decrease by 11 points to 30% can be noted regarding the share of citizens wanting the European Parliament to legislate on ways to fight against terrorism as a matter of priority.

This decrease might well be linked to the fact that the number of terrorist attacks resulting in fatalities in the European Union has considerably reduced in the last months. Seen from a national angle, the survey notes a statistically insignificant increase of respondents naming the fight against terrorism as one of Parliament’s priorities only in the United Kingdom +1 (38%). In all other Member States, results show a general and significant decline of the number of respondents asking for this policy to be a top priority, led by Italy -19 (29%), Portugal -18 (28%) and Spain -18 (25%).

Q The EP makes decisions on European legislation which directly impacts every citizen's life. In your opinion which of the following should be given priority by the European Parliament? Firstly? And then?

Combating terrorism



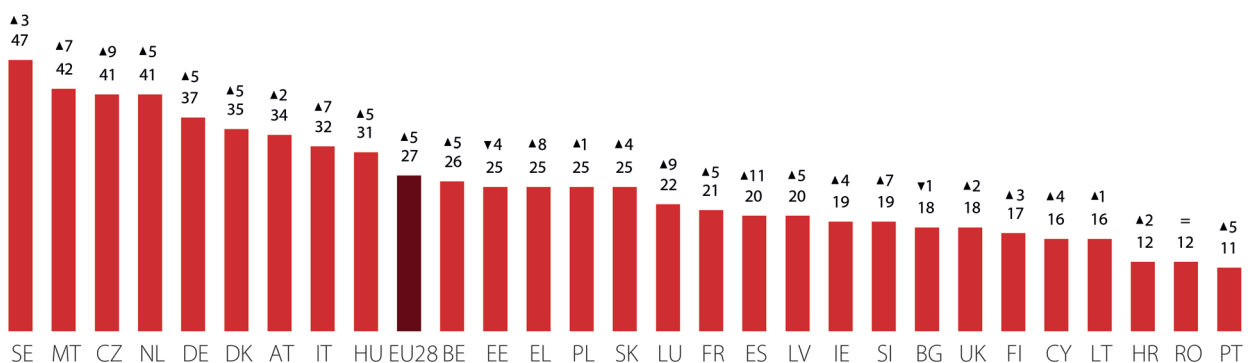
Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA13T and Parlemeter 2017, QA8T.

Finding a common European response to the issue of migration

Three years after Europe's biggest influx of migrants and refugees since the Second World War, and although the number of migrants arriving in the European Union has sharply declined from their 2015-16 peak, divergences of opinion between EU Member States over how to handle irregular immigration from

Q The EP makes decisions on European legislation which directly impacts every citizen's life. In your opinion which of the following should be given priority by the European Parliament? Firstly? And then?

Finding a common European response to the issue of migration



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA13T and Parlemeter 2017, QA8T.

outside the EU welled up again this summer. Differing perceptions about the reality on the ground between frontline countries and others often reinforce the evident differences in national position to finding a common European response to the issue of migration.

Compared to the year before, only Estonia with a minus of 4 percentage points to 25% and Bulgaria (-1 to 18%) return a decrease in priority for this issue. In all other EU Member States, except Romania (12% unchanged), citizens increasingly want the European Parliament to give priority to finding a EU common response on migration issues. This development is the strongest in Spain (+11 to 20%), Czech Republic (+9 to 41%), Luxembourg (+9 to 22%), Greece (+8 to 25%) and Italy (+7 to 32%), Malta (+7 to 42%) and Slovenia (+7 to 19%).

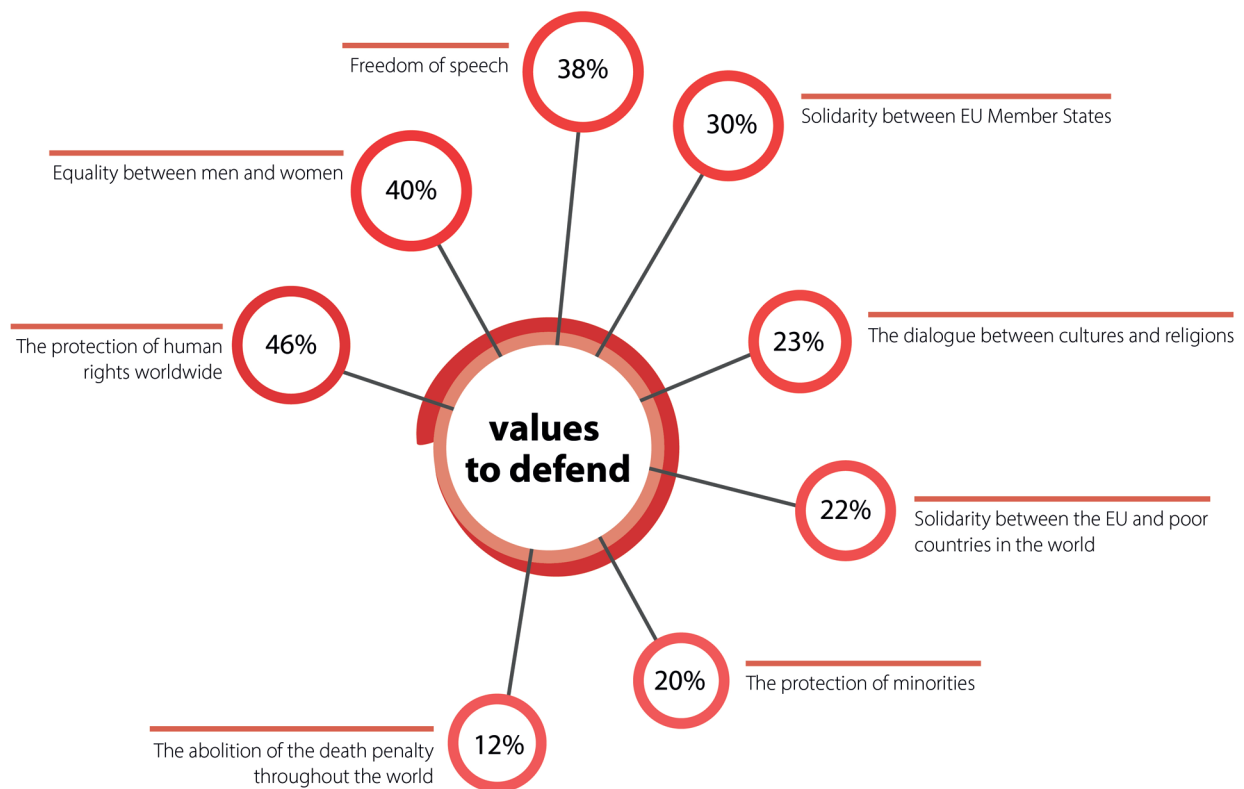
VALUES TO SHARE

The European Parliament has a well-recognized reputation as a dedicated defender of people’s basic rights and democracy, both within the European Union and worldwide. Moreover, it supports human rights through its annual Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, established in 1988.

The European Parliament does not believe that people’s basic rights end at the EU’s borders. In its last resolution of 13 December 2017 on the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World 2016¹¹ and the European Union’s policy on the matter, Plenary “expresses profound concern about the pushback against democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which continue to be under threat worldwide; recalls that the EU has committed to promoting the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms and values, as well as to advancing democratic principles, which must be enhanced worldwide.”

¹¹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P8-TA-2017-0494+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN>

Q In your opinion, which of the following values should the European Parliament defend as a matter of priority?



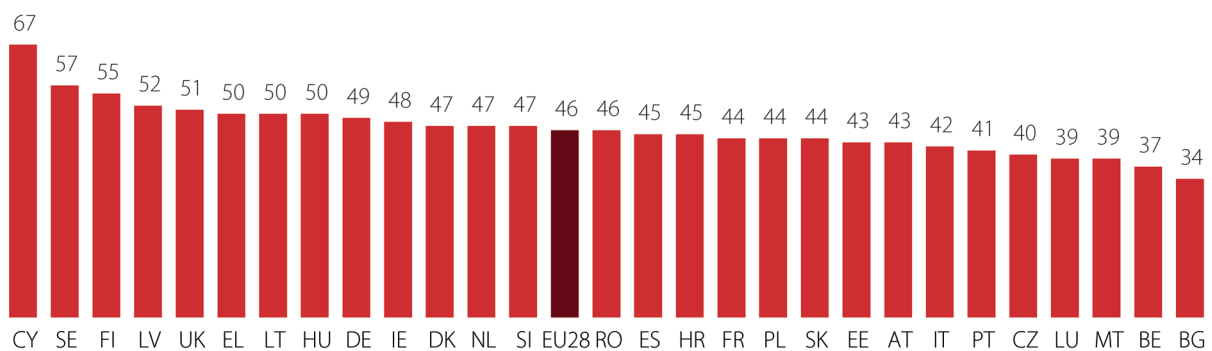
The protection of human rights worldwide

The results from the Parlemeter 2018 see public opinion squarely backing up Parliament on this issue: The protection of human rights worldwide is seen as the top value to be defended as matter of priority for almost one in two Europeans (46%). At least half of respondents in eight Members States, led by Cyprus (67%), Sweden (57%) and Finland (55%), consider this value essential.

Moreover, respondents who support this EU value as a priority are predominantly women (48%), 15-24 year-olds (50%), students (53%), managers (48%) and manual workers (47%).

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

The protection of human rights worldwide



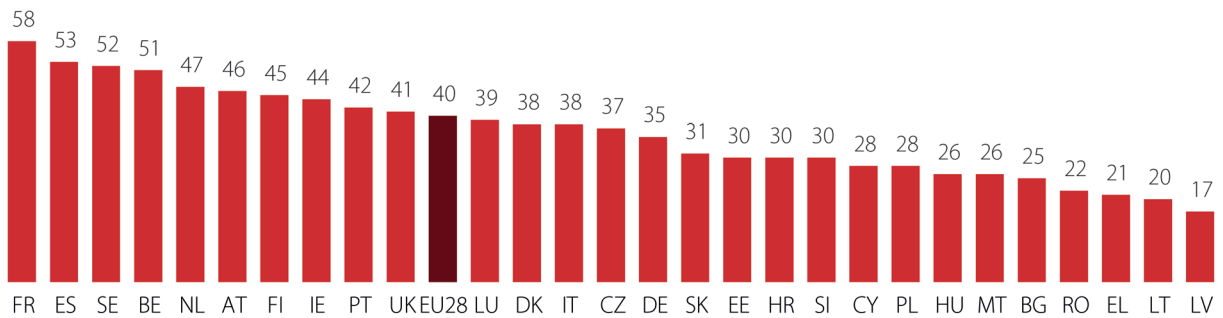
Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA14

Equality between men and women

Equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the European Union and one of its objectives. Moreover, the European Parliament has always been a fervent defender of the principle of equality between men and women. According to this survey, 40% of respondents on EU average share this view. From a socio-demographic point of view supporters are mostly women (46%), young people (15-24 year olds, 45%) or students (46%) as well as house persons (45%). On a national basis, respondents in France (58%), Spain (53%) and Sweden (52%) are the most likely to mention this issue, while in Latvia (17%), Lithuania (20%) and Greece (21%) the lowest shares of citations are measured.

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

Equality between men and women



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA14

Freedom of speech

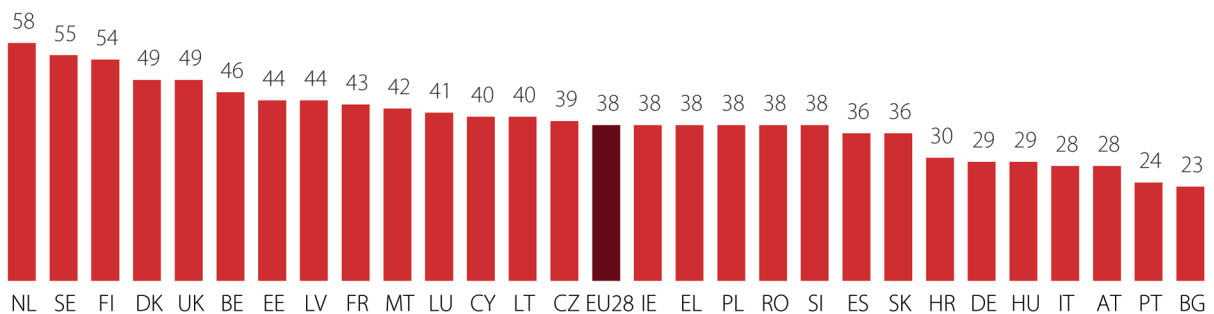
Freedom of opinion, freedom of expression and the right to information are basic human rights and the European Union sees them as cornerstones of democracy. 38% of respondents share the same view and want this value to be defended as a matter of priority by the European Parliament.

More than half of respondents prioritising the defence of freedom of speech can be found in three Members States, namely the Netherlands (58%), Sweden (55%) and Finland (54%).

Looking at the socio-demographic angle, respondents who consider the defence of freedom of speech as a priority can be found predominantly with men (40%), young people (15-24 years, 45%) and students (42%) as well as managers (39%), other white collar workers (39%) and manual workers (39%).

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

Freedom of speech



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA14

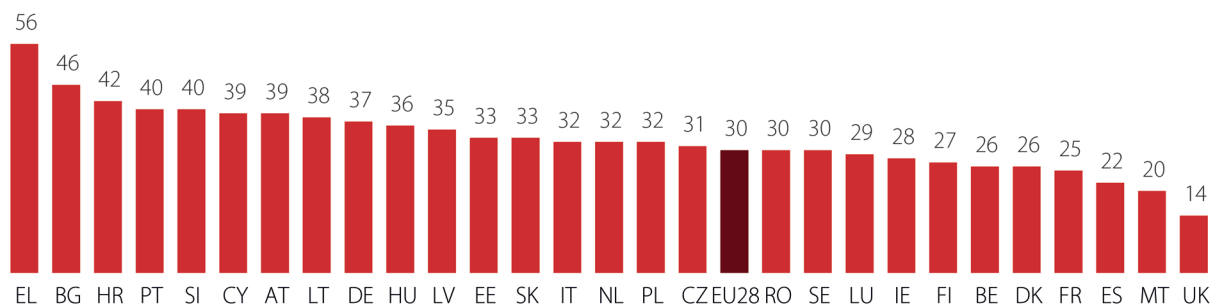
Solidarity between Member States

The notion of solidarity is at the centre of the European project and its integration process. However, solidarity can sometimes mean different things to different Member States according to their interests or their national policy agenda. There are thus significant differences to be observed between those countries that are the most in favour of the European Parliament defending the value of solidarity at EU level, and those who return the least support. This spread reaches, in the latest Parlemeter results, 42 points, with an EU average of 30%.

Solidarity between Member States as a value to be defended receives top priority in Greece by 56% of respondents, Bulgaria (46%) and Croatia (42%). Countries with the least amount of support are the United Kingdom (14%), Malta (20%) and Spain (22%). Respondents more likely to support solidarity between Member States are mainly men (33%), the 65-74 year olds (35%), and managers (36%). This is also the case for respondents with a positive image of the EU (37%) and who think that things in the EU are going in the right direction (35%).

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

Solidarity between EU Member States



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA14

TECHNICAL NOTE ON THE IMPACT OF THE GDPR

In May 2018 the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force. The GDPR imposes strict obligations on Kantar and its supply chain. GDPR implementation also impacts the implementation of Eurobarometer studies in several ways.

Higher standard for consent

Consent to participate in a survey and to process personal data must be unambiguous and by a statement or clear affirmative action – and capable of withdrawal at any time: inactivity, silence and pre-ticked boxes cannot constitute consent (art. 7). For this reason, for all Eurobarometer surveys, explicit consent is now sought from the respondents on the basis of a privacy policy (in the language of the respondent) and reassuring them that “the collected responses will be thoroughly anonymised, and all identifiable information will be removed”.

Age of respondents and parental consent

The universe for Eurobarometer studies covers people aged 15 years old and over. The upcoming GDPR regulations state that for all respondents aged under 16 there is a need for consent from their parents or legal guardian to proceed with the contact, though member states can lower this age requirement to 13 if they choose to do so (art. 8).

Consent for processing ‘sensitive’ personal data

Under the new GDPR, “processing of personal data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership”, as well as “the processing of genetic data, biometric data, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation” are prohibited, unless the data subject has given explicit consent to do so (art. 9). For all Eurobarometer questionnaires, Kantar Public identifies in advance so-called ‘sensitive questions’ that are related to political opinions, religious beliefs, racial or ethnic origin, health, sex life or sexual orientation. During the screener phase, the interviewer informs the respondents that the questionnaire includes some questions that might be considered ‘sensitive’ and asks them whether or not they would agree to be asked these questions. In case the respondents refuse, then these questions will be skipped for them. The consent is asked in a way that allows respondents to selectively agree or refuse to be asked questions about a certain category of ‘sensitive’ data (e.g. they can give consent to be asked questions about their political views, but refuse to be asked questions related to their health). This means that the response rate for the questions that are considered ‘sensitive’ might be lower than for the rest of the questions. The refusal to answer sensitive questions is recorded into a special category, so that we can measure the impact of the new GDPR on our questionnaires and to take it into account for future studies.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Coverage:	EU28
Interviews:	27.474 Europeans
Population:	General population aged 15 or more
Methodology:	Face-to-face
Fieldwork:	8 to 26 September 2018, survey conducted by Kantar Public

Note

The results of a survey are estimates and their accuracy depends on the sample size and the observed percentage. For around 1000 interviews (sample size generally used at the level of a Member State), the real percentage fluctuates between the following confidence intervals:

Observed percentages	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
Margins of error	+/- 1,9 points	+/- 2,5 points	+/- 2,7 points	+/- 3,0 points	+/- 3,1 points

TAKING UP THE CHALLENGE: FROM (SILENT) SUPPORT TO ACTUAL VOTE

This Eurobarometer survey of the European Parliament (EP/EB 90) was carried out in all 28 Member States of the European Union, from 8 to 26 September 2018 by

KANTAR PUBLIC[®]

The EP Eurobarometer monitors European citizens' opinions on the EU membership and its benefits, on their attitudes towards the European Parliament, its priorities, actions and mission. It also sheds light on the role of the EU in tackling major threats and protecting the main achievements cherished by its citizens.

**A publication of the
Public Opinion Monitoring Unit
Directorate-General for Communication
European Parliament**

PE 628.262

ISBN: 978-92-846-4057-7

DOI: 10.2861/886943

Catalogue Number: QA-04-18-868-EN-N