



CLOSER TO THE CITIZENS, CLOSER TO THE BALLOT

SPRING EUROBAROMETER 2019
Eurobarometer Survey 91.1 of the European Parliament
A Public Opinion Monitoring Study

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Parliament's Spring 2019 Eurobarometer, conducted three months ahead of the European elections, shows continued strong support for the European Union. Despite the challenges of the past years - and in cases such as the ongoing debate surrounding Brexit possibly even because of it, the European sense of togetherness does not seem to have weakened. 68% of respondents across the EU27 believe that their countries have benefited from being part of the EU. On the other hand, more Europeans (27%) are uncertain and see the EU as 'neither a good thing nor a bad thing' - an increase in 19 countries.

Support for European membership remains at a historically high level

Also for the second fundamental indicator to measure citizens' support for the European Union, with 61% of respondents in the EU27 saying their country's EU membership is a good thing, this approval rate is back at its peak level as last recorded between the fall of the Berlin Wall 1989 and the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty 1992.

In spite of major challenges over the past years (terrorism, migration, Brexit) the European sense of togetherness therefore does not seem to have weakened but seems rather to be shared by a majority of respondents in 25 Member States.

Yet the feeling of uncertainty however has evolved, as seen in the 27% of Europeans thinking that the EU is 'neither a good thing nor a bad thing', with an increase registering in 19 countries. As in previous studies, support for EU membership is stronger among younger and better educated respondents.

EU membership continues to be seen as beneficial

The approval of EU membership goes with a strong belief that EU countries overall have benefited from being part of the EU. With 68% in the EU27, results remain at their highest level since 1983. In addition, this view is shared by a majority of people in all Member States except for Italy.

Europeans would predominantly vote to remain in the EU

One month ahead of the date originally scheduled for the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU as laid down in Article 50, close to seven Europeans in ten said they would vote to remain in the EU if a referendum was held in their country. An absolute majority of respondents in 25 Member States hold

this view, a relative majority shares this view in Italy, Czechia and the UK. While this broad majority for remaining in the European Union solidified and even increased, there are also more undecided respondents. Italian respondents are most uncertain, with 32% saying they would not know how to vote in the case of a referendum on their country's EU membership. In 13 EU countries overall, including also the UK, the number of respondents who are undecided has increased. This rise of uncertainty can be seen as a sign of the politically challenging times for the European Union in the run-up to the European elections in May 2019 - and as a confirmation of the challenge of these elections being indeed crucial for the future of the European Union.

Things are not seen as going in the right direction

Despite the overall positive attitude towards the EU but in line with the uncertainty expressed by a growing number of Europeans, the feeling that things are not going in the right direction in both the EU and in their own countries, has increased to now 50% on EU average over the past six months since the last Parlemeter 2018.

Protest parties not the solution

Nevertheless, most respondents feel that protest parties are not the right answer, with 61% of respondents seeing the rise of political protest parties rather as a matter of additional concern.

Role of the European Parliament

Focussing on the past and future role of the European Parliament, the largest group of respondents (41%) believe that the European Parliament's role has stayed the same over the years. Only one in five (21%) had the impression that the institution has strengthened its role, while 24% say Parliament's role has weakened during the past legislature. This pattern is similar across all Member States.

However, a majority of respondents would like to see parliament's role strengthened in the future (54%). These expectations for a more powerful European Parliament are highest since 2012, but can be interpreted as call for change in favour of more powerful European democratic institutions. It is interesting to note that not only those who believe that Parliament's role had already been strengthened over the past years call for an even more powerful institution in the future, but also a majority of those who did not see such a change in the past.

Europeans feel that their voice counts more in their country than in the EU

In the run-up to the European elections, half of the respondents (51%) say that their voice counts in the EU, with big differences between national results. Such differences also occur in the answer to the parallel question on 'my voice counts in my country'. Although there is a widespread perception in nearly all countries that people's voices count more in their own country than in the European Union, this sentiment varies significantly from country to country and depends strongly on national contexts, civic and socio-political cultures as well as traditions.

Awareness of election date not yet at peak level, likelihood to vote on the rise

Late February 2019, a third of Europeans knew that the ballot will take place in May and 5% could cite the exact dates (23-24-25-26 May). However, there were significant disparities between different countries.

More than 50% of respondents affirmed they would certainly vote in four countries: Denmark (65%), the Netherlands (62%), Sweden (61%) and Belgium (58%). Compared to September-October 2018, the share of people who were already certain that they would vote increased by four points on EU average, with Belgium (+17 point increase), France (+10), Greece (+9), Luxembourg (+9) and Spain (+7) topping the list of countries with the most important changes.

The age of the respondents - and thus of potential voters - is crucial for a proper analysis of the likelihood of voting in the European elections, since younger voters traditionally participate less in elections and are the least likely to vote. This is explained in detail in the report.

Economy is growing, migration is on the move

Asked about which issues they find most relevant for the election campaign, respondents have put economy and growth as well as the fight against unemployment at the front and centre of their expectations. Migration and the fight against terrorism are losing ground in the citizens' ranking of priorities, while at the same time the issue of climate change and the protection of the environment is continuing to rise through the ranks, becoming especially important for respondents who are 'very likely' to participate in the next European elections. Undecided voters, on the other hand, are more concerned about economy and growth, combating youth unemployment and immigration issues.

In view of these changes, a special focus on attitudes towards climate change and to immigration as campaign topics can be found in the third chapter of this report.

Main reason to vote? Civic duty!

The main reason cited to vote in the European elections for 44% of Europeans is because 'it is their duty' as a citizen. Apart from this reason, there are five others cited by more than 20% of respondents which all have to do with participation in democratic life: respondents would vote because they usually vote in political elections and because they feel they are citizens of the European Union. Equally important voting drivers are that respondents feel they can change things by voting in the European Parliament elections and because they want to support the European Union or a political party. Both 'very likely' and 'undecided' voters mentioned these reasons the most. Among those who declare 'not likely to vote', civic duty also tops the list of reasons for participating in the elections, followed by the possibility to express dissatisfaction with their national government, discontent with their life and dissatisfaction with the EU.

Potential abstainers do not believe their vote would change anything

One third of citizens of voting age are considering not to participate in the European elections. Their main reason for abstaining is given as the belief that their vote would not change anything. Other reasons are a distrust of politics, lack of interest in politics or in elections in general, belief that the European Parliament does not deal sufficiently with problems that concern people like them, lack of knowledge about the role of the European Parliament or a feeling of not being informed enough to vote.

Methodology and data presentation

Parliament's Spring 2019 Eurobarometer was conducted for the European Parliament by Kantar Public. Fieldwork took place from 19 February to 4 March 2019 in all 28 EU Member States. 27.973 respondents, drawn as a representative sample from the general population aged 15 or more, were interviewed face-to-face. Following the political context at the time of writing, EU average figures were calculated for 27 Member States, with results for the UK being shown in addition.

The full report, including national factsheets, data annexes and results volumes can be found online on <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/>

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.

Economy

From an economic point of view, ten years after the start of the economic and financial crisis in 2008, the European Union has globally turned the page. According to Eurostat, the EU27 unemployment rate was at 6.9% in February 2019. This represents the lowest rate recorded for the EU27 since the start of Eurostat's monthly unemployment series in January 2000.

Among Member States, the lowest unemployment rates in February 2019 were recorded in Czechia (1.9%) and Germany (3.1%). The highest unemployment rates were observed in Greece (18% in December 2018), Spain (13.9%) and Italy (10.7%).

Lead candidate process

In May 2019, European citizens will be asked to vote for their representatives in the European Parliament for the next legislative term (2019-2024). Yet Europeans will not only vote for their representatives in the European Parliament, but will also help decide who should lead the European Commission for the next five years. While the Spitzenkandidaten process was still in its infancy in 2014, the 2019 elections will likely be its litmus test. The European Parliament remains firmly committed to repeating the process in 2019 and, with European elections now only weeks' away, attention has shifted to the European political parties.

A large number of European parties have chosen their lead candidates for the elections: Manfred Weber (EPP), Frans Timmermans (PES), Jan Zahradil (ECR), Nicola Beer, Emma Bonino, Violeta Bulc, Katalin Cseh, Luis Garicano, Guy Verhofstadt, Margrethe Vestager (ALDE), Ska Keller and Bas Eickhout (Greens), Violeta Tomič and Nico Cué (EL). In recent weeks, most of them have launched their campaign and started to set out their vision for the future of Europe.

Brexit

On 29 March 2017, the United Kingdom notified the European Council of its intention to leave the European Union, in accordance with Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union. This triggered the start of a two-year negotiation, also known as the Article 50 process.

In the past few weeks, UK Prime Minister Theresa May suffered several political defeats in the House of Commons over her approach to Brexit. These major setbacks have caused fresh doubt within European institutions that May has the power to win parliament's support for a European Union withdrawal agreement. At the time of writing, the deadline for a withdrawal of the UK from the EU has been postponed until 31 October 2019.

Climate change

For weeks and months now, young people all over Europe are skipping school on Fridays to march through the streets. This has contributed to creating a global student protest movement aiming at driving world leaders into action on climate change. For several months, the action has been part of a global movement, known as Schools 4 Climate Action.

These protests really kicked off when 15-year-old Swede Greta Thunberg started skipping class to sit outside government buildings in September 2018, accusing her country of not following the Paris Climate Agreement. Since then, tens of thousands of school children across Belgium, Germany, Sweden, England, France and numerous other countries have been inspired to hold their own demonstrations.

Migration

According to Frontex, the number of illegal border-crossings at Europe's external borders fell in 2018 by a quarter compared to 2017, down to an estimated 150.000, the lowest level in five years. The total number for 2018 was also 92% below the peak of the migratory crisis in 2015. The drop was due to the dramatic fall in the number of migrants taking the Central Mediterranean route to Italy. The number of irregular crossings detected on this route plunged by 80% compared to 2017 to slightly more than 23.000. The Central Mediterranean route thus saw the smallest influx of irregular entries since 2012.

The number of departures from Libya dropped by 87% compared to a year ago, and those from Algeria fell by nearly half, while departures from Tunisia stayed roughly unchanged. Meanwhile, the number of arrivals in Spain via the Western Mediterranean route doubled in 2018 for the second year in a row to 57 000, making it the most active migratory route into Europe for the first time since Frontex began collecting data¹.

¹ <https://frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news-release/number-of-irregular-crossings-at-europe-s-borders-at-lowest-level-in-5-years-ZfkoRu>

Elections and other political developments

During the past months, several elections and major political events of note took place:

January

- In Greece, on 16 January Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras won a parliamentary vote of confidence (151-148) called following a dispute over changing the name of Macedonia.
- Partido Popular's (EPP) Juan Moreno became the new President of the Junta de Andalucía following a parliamentary vote by a margin of 59 votes to 50. He governs as president of the Junta in coalition with Ciudadanos (ALDE), while Vox members provide backing in parliamentary votes.
- In January, Sweden's national parliament elected Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to a second four-year term ending more than four months of political deadlock.
- Approximately three months after the Hesse state election in Germany, the newly elected State Parliament came together to its first meeting and elected Volker Bouffier (CDU, EPP) as Prime Minister.

February

- In Italy, following the regional elections held in Abruzzo in February, Marco Marsilio, Senator of the right-wing party Brothers of Italy (Fdi, ECR), has been elected regional president. A couple of weeks later, the centre right's Christian Solinas won regional elections to become governor of the Sardinia region.
- Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez (PSOE, S&D) called on 15 February for snap elections to be held on 28 April, only nine months after he took office, after failing to secure Parliament's support for his 2019 budget.

March

- On 3 March, Estonia's opposition liberal-right Reform party (ALDE) won the country's general election over the governing liberal-left Centre party (ALDE). Negotiations to form a governing coalition are ongoing at the time of writing.
- Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's centre-right government (ALDE) resigned on 8 March after it failed to push through a flagship social and health care reform package, just five weeks ahead of a legislative election.

International stage

In early 2019 protesters took to the streets in Venezuela to remove Nicolás Maduro from the presidency. Demonstrations began following Maduro's controversial second inauguration, developing into a presidential crisis between Maduro and National Assembly president Juan Guaidó.

In a resolution adopted with 439 votes to 104 and 88 abstentions, the European Parliament reiterated its full support to the National Assembly, Venezuela's only legitimate democratic body whose powers need to be restored and respected, including the rights and safety of its members².

In February, Macedonia officially renamed itself Republic of North Macedonia, honoring an agreement to end a decades-old dispute with neighboring Greece and secure its entry into NATO.

The first ever European Union - League of Arab States Summit took place on 24-25 February in Sharm El-Sheikh (Egypt), bringing together 49 countries, the League of Arab States and the European Union. In their discussions, the European Union and the League of Arab States reaffirmed that stronger regional cooperation is the key to find common solutions to common challenges.

At the end of February, a North Korea–United States summit was held in Hanoi (Vietnam). It was the second summit between United States President Donald Trump and the North Korean Chairman Kim Jong-un. The Summit did not end with some sort of compromise.

² <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20190125IPR24303/venezuela-parliament-recognises-guaido-urges-eu-to-follow-suit>

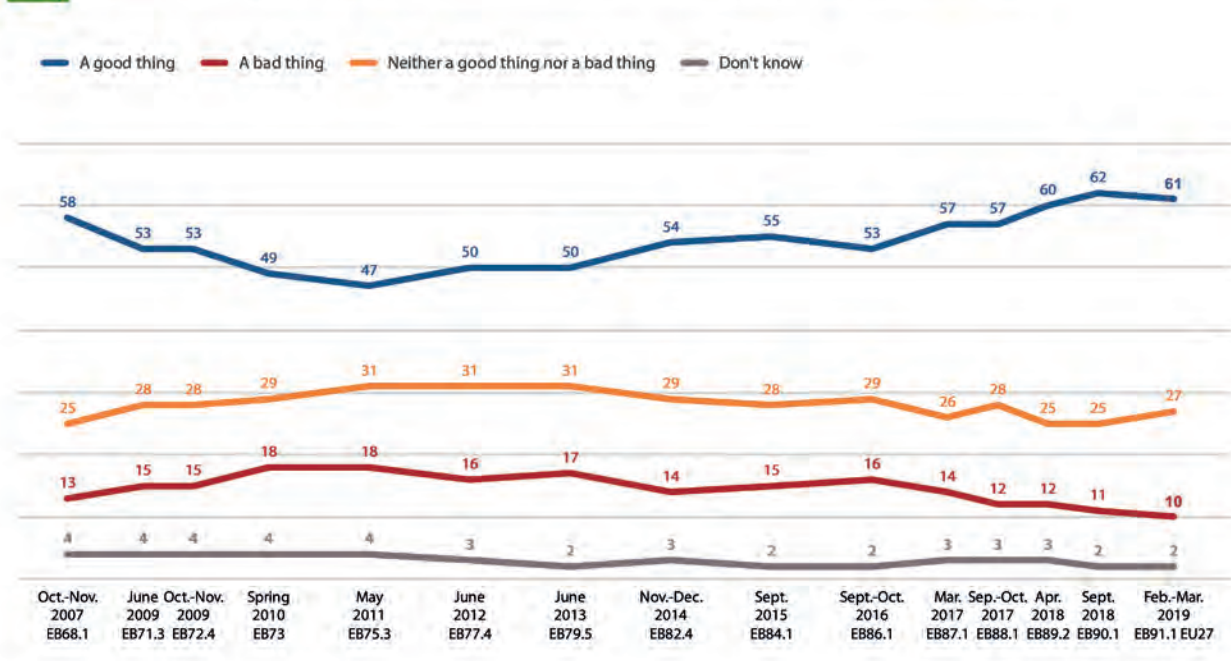
CLOSER TO THE CITIZENS

The unbroken strong believe that being part of the European Union is an asset and that this membership has brought benefits for the countries in the EU are among the most encouraging results of this European Parliament’s spring 2019 Eurobarometer survey. In addition, a majority of respondents in 27 Member States, but also those including in the United Kingdom, would vote in favour of remaining in the EU should a referendum on their country’s membership be organised, with an increase shown in 18 countries overall.

Wide support for European membership holds steady

Support for EU membership settles on its historical high level as already measured six months ago. At EU27 level, just above six interviewed Europeans in ten (61%) find their country’s EU membership a good thing. With this result, one of the Eurobarometer’s fundamental indicators for measuring citizens’ support for the Union remains at its highest level since more than 25 years.

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



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA11

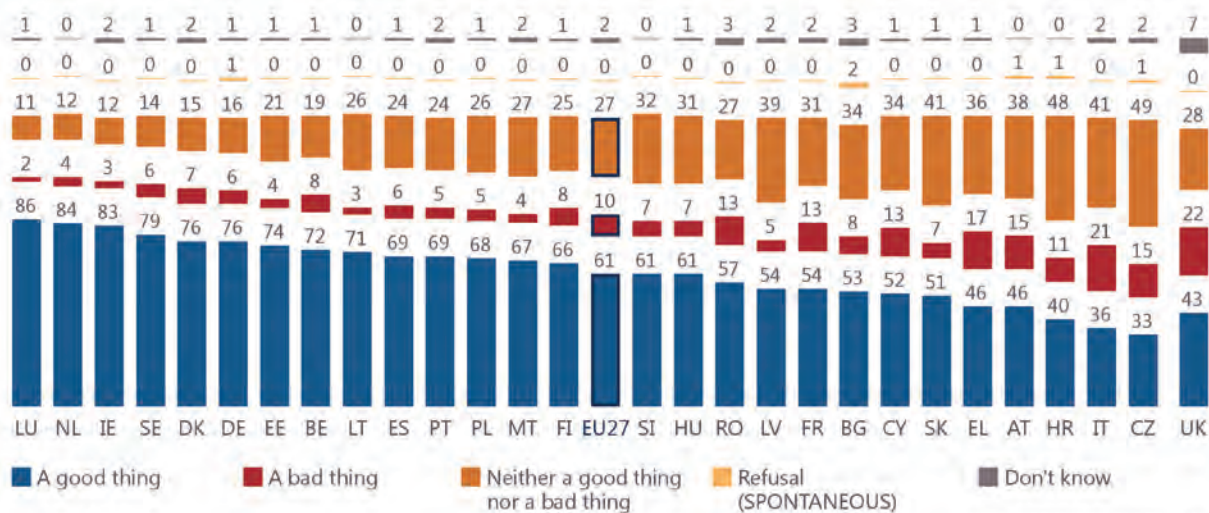
The major challenges of the past years, be they terrorism, migration or Brexit, seem to have not weakened Europeans’ sense of togetherness. On the contrary, this feeling is widely shared by a majority of respondents in 25 Member States who consider being part of the EU a good thing. In five countries, over three-quarters

of respondents registered their positive support for the EU, reaching 86% in Luxembourg (-1pp compared to September 2018), 84% in the Netherlands (+6pp), 83% in Ireland (-2pp), 79% in Sweden (+2pp) and 76% in Denmark and Germany (respectively +1pp and -5pp). Positive developments also register in Romania, currently holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the EU, with an 8-point increase to 57%, as well as in Lithuania (71%, +6pp) and in Slovenia (61%, +5pp).

In parallel, the number of respondents considering EU membership 'a bad thing' has decreased over the past six months in 20 countries. On EU27 average, only 10% of respondents share this view, one point less than in September 2018 in spite of the increases in countries making up the largest share of the EU average, namely Germany (6%, +1pp), France (13%, +4pp) and Italy (21%, +3pp).

The growing uncertainty created by recent challenges impacting on the European Union is possibly also reflected by the development of the 'third' answer option on this indicator: With an increase of 2 points since September 2018, 27% of Europeans think that the EU is 'neither a good thing nor a bad thing'. In 19 countries in total this answer registered a rise, with significant increases in Czechia (49%, +7pp) and Croatia (48%, +7pp) leading to the 'neutral view' becoming the plurality attitude. In Italy most respondents continue to consider that being part of the EU is neither a good nor a bad thing (41%, +4).

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



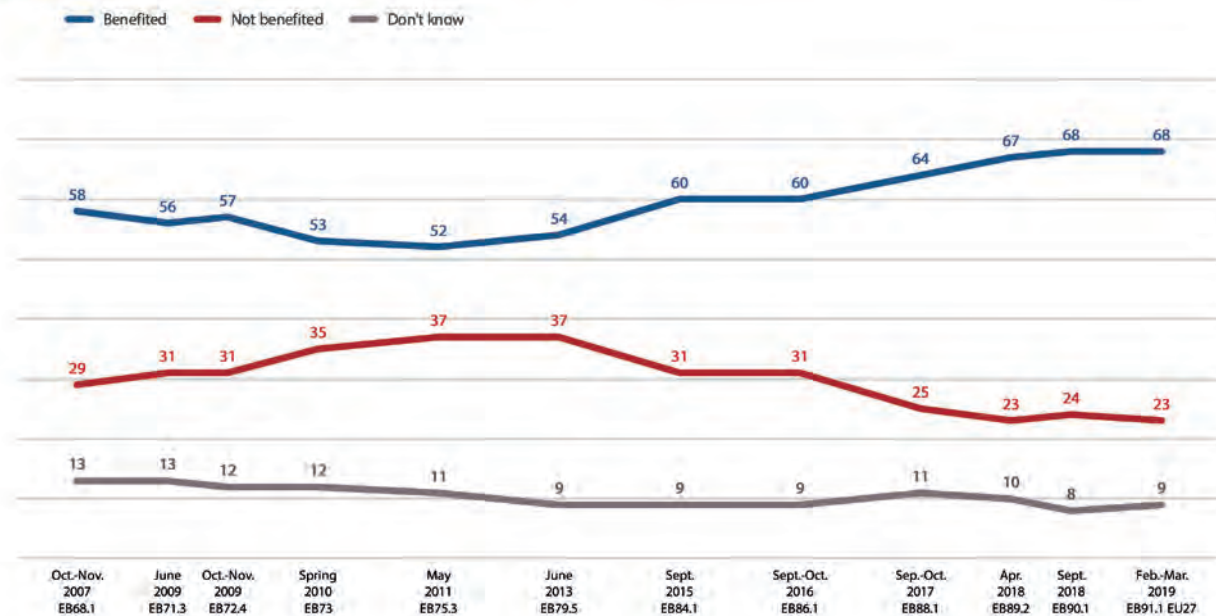
Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA11

Looking from an age perspective, the youngest age group (15-24) has again the highest scores in supporting EU membership. 68% of young citizens at EU level express a positive view, compared to only 60% of European respondents aged 55 or more. Even more striking are the differences when looking at education levels, with a 21-points gap between those who stopped school at the age of 15 or before (51% of support) and the ones who stopped studying at 20 or after (72%). Differences of a similar degree also apply when considering respondents' occupation levels.

EU membership continuously seen as beneficial

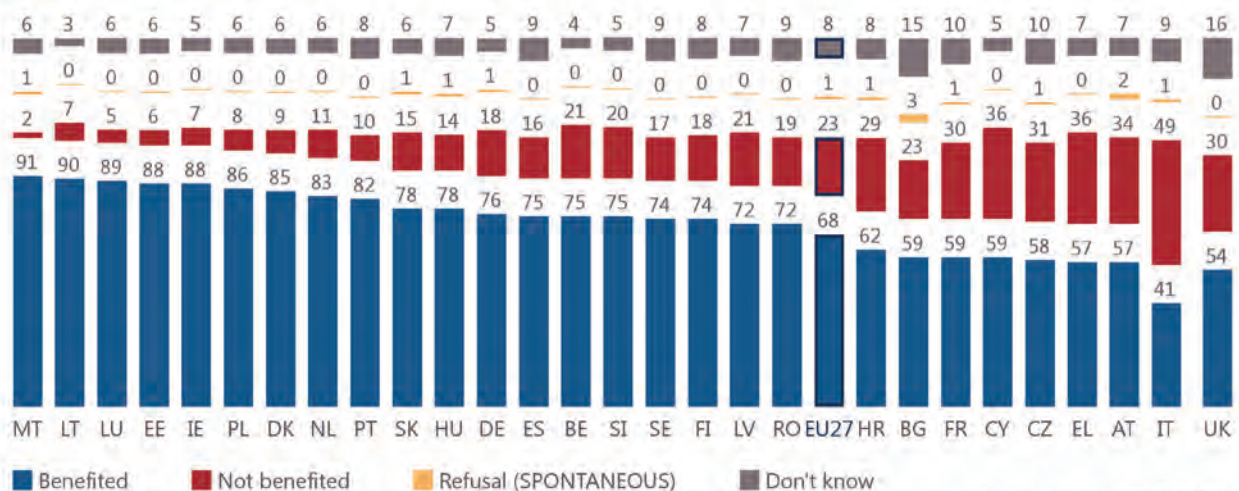
Parliament’s Eurobarometer surveys measure citizens’ support for the EU with two key indicators. Next to the indicator discussed above, focussing more on the ‘feeling’ towards membership, the next indicator calls for a more reflective answer. And indeed, as in the last survey from autumn 2018, citizens’ positive attitude towards EU membership is reinforced by the strong belief that Member States have on balance benefited from being part of the EU. With 68% on EU27 average, results remain at their highest level since 1983. In addition, it remains the majority answer in all Member States but Italy.

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: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA12

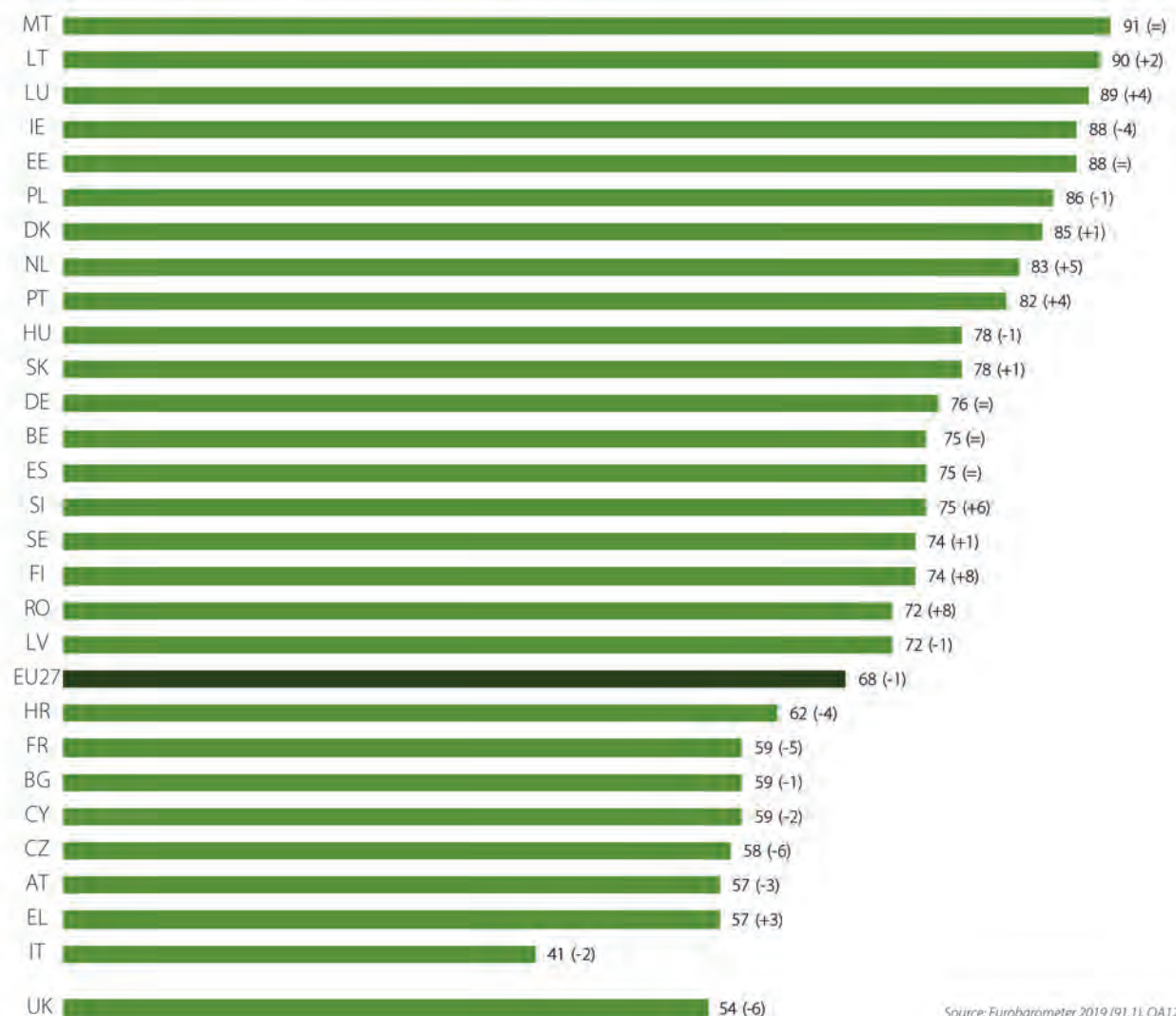
Q Taking everything into account, would you say that (OUR COUNTRY) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the EU? (% - EU)



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA12

With 91% in Malta (= to September 2018) and 90% in Lithuania (+2pp), this appreciation is near unanimous in these two countries. It is shared by more than eight respondents in ten in Luxembourg (89%, +4pp), Estonia and Ireland (both 88%, respectively = and - 4pp), Poland (86%, -1pp) Denmark (85%, +1pp), the Netherlands (83%, +5pp) and Portugal (82%, +4pp).

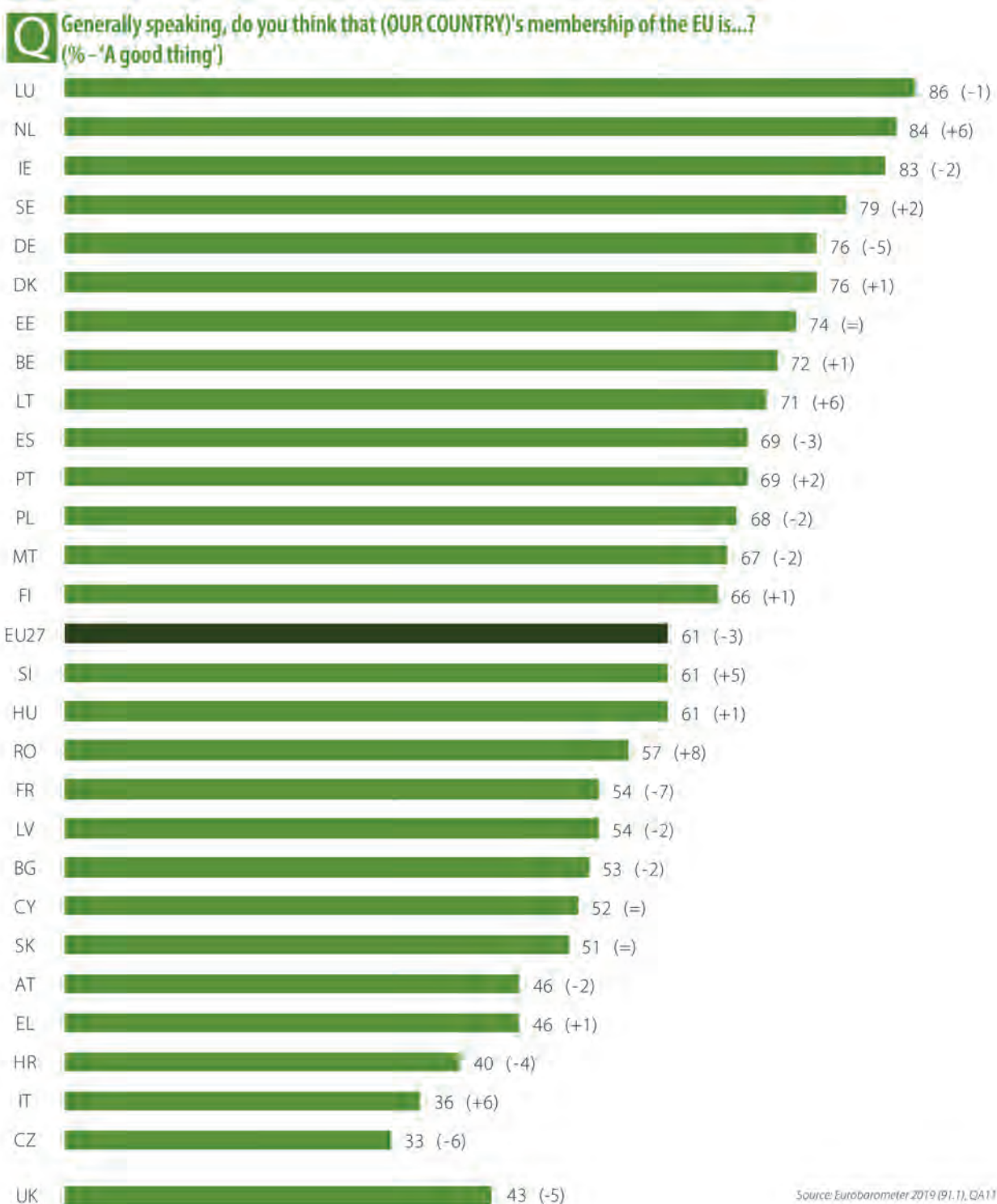
Q Taking everything into account, would you say that (OUR COUNTRY) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the EU? (% - 'Benefited')



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA12

Increases of eight points are noted in Finland (74%) and in Romania (72%) since September 2018, while the benefits of EU membership are similarly perceived as increasingly positive in Slovenia (75%, +6pp) and Greece (57%, +3pp). On the other hand, some countries see a decrease in their citizens' positive attitude towards the benefits of EU Membership, mostly in parallel with a decline in support for EU membership. In Czechia, results for 'benefited' go down by 6 points to 58%, equally split between increases for 'has not benefited' and 'don't know'. In France on the other hand only 59% see their country as having benefited

from EU Membership, a minus of 5 points leading to the same increase for 'has not benefited'. In Croatia and Ireland, the results for 'benefitted' decrease by 4 points to respectively 62% and 88%, while Austria loses 3 points to 57%.

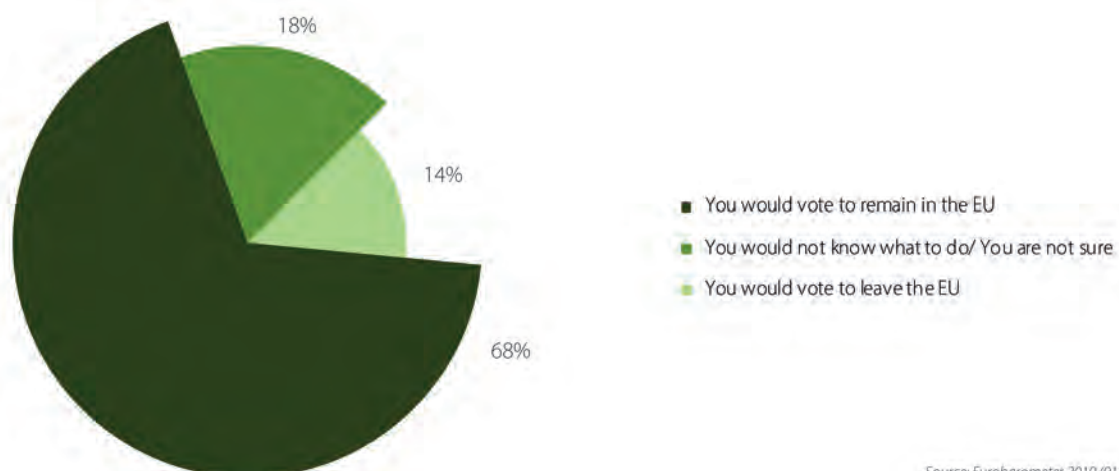


On these two indicators it is interesting to take a look specifically at the United Kingdom. Survey results show a growing uncertainty in the UK with 16% of respondents, an increase of 6 points over the past six months, not knowing whether their country has benefited or not from EU membership. At the same time, the answer 'has benefited' is declining by 6 points to 54%, while the number of respondents believing that the UK had not benefitted remained stable at 30%. As in other countries, the support for European membership is also declining in parallel. With a decrease of 5 points, only 43% of UK respondents see EU membership as a good thing. However, this does not mean that the numbers for membership is a 'bad thing' are rising. In fact, the 'neutral options' have increased, respectively 'neither a good nor a bad thing' by 2 points to 28% and 'don't know' to 7% (+3pp).

In all Member States, a majority would vote to remain in the EU

At the end of February 2019, and therefore one month ahead of the initial scheduled date for the UK's withdrawal from the European Union as defined by Article 50, close to seven Europeans in ten would vote to remain in the EU should a referendum be held regarding their country's membership to the EU. Europeans' sense of unity seems to become ever greater over the months, the closer Brexit is getting. 68% of respondents in the EU27, a plus of two points since September 2018, declare that they would vote to remain. Conversely, a drop of three points see only 14% on EU average ready to vote to leave. Less than one in five respondents (18%) would be unsure about their decision.

Q If a referendum was held tomorrow regarding (OUR COUNTRY)'s membership of the EU, how would you vote?
(% - EU27)

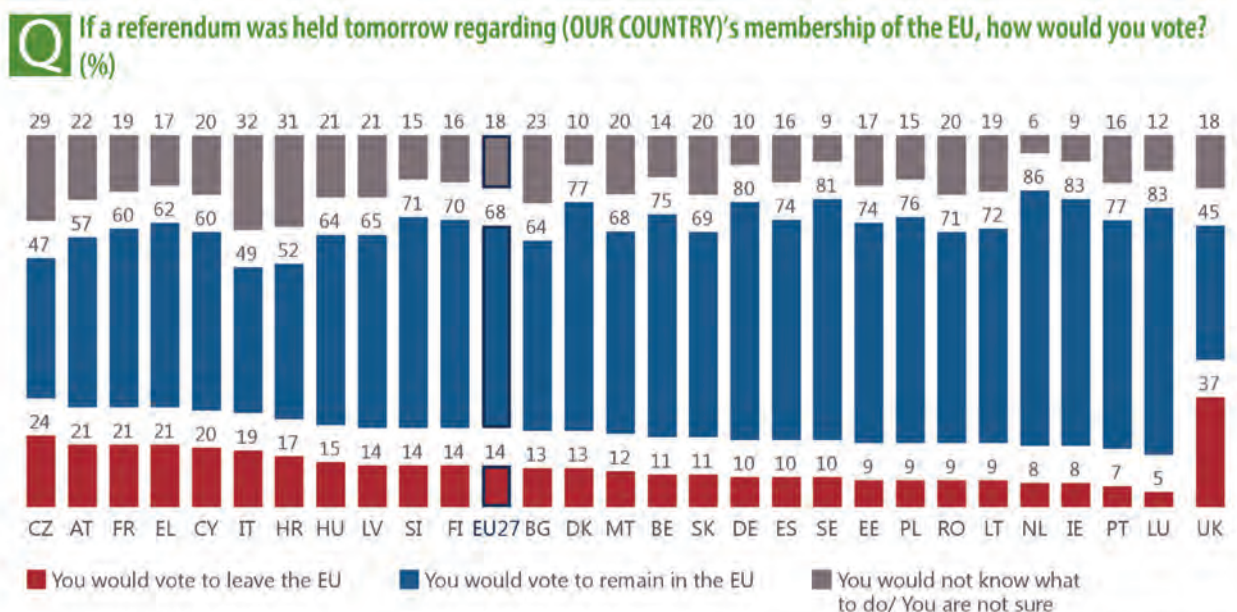


Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA3s

A vote to remain reflects the opinion of a majority of respondents throughout the European Union. In 25 Member States an absolute majority of respondents hold this view, led by citizens from the Netherlands (86%), Ireland and Luxembourg (both 83%), Sweden (81%) and Germany (80%), where four out of five or more would vote in favour of remaining in the EU.

A relative majority in favour of remaining can be found in Italy (49%), Czechia (47%) and among UK respondents (45%, -8 points). Yet while in the UK 37% (+2) of respondents would vote to leave, this number drops in Czechia to not even one in four respondents (24%). The results are encouraging for Italy, as both the numbers for 'vote to remain' increased by five points over the past six months and the results for 'vote to leave' dropped by a corresponding five points during the same time to 19%. While not even one Italian in five would thus support their country leaving the EU, the impact of the current political debate might also be reflected in the third answer category: Compared to all other EU countries, Italian respondents are the most unsure, with 32% saying they would not know what to do in case of a referendum.

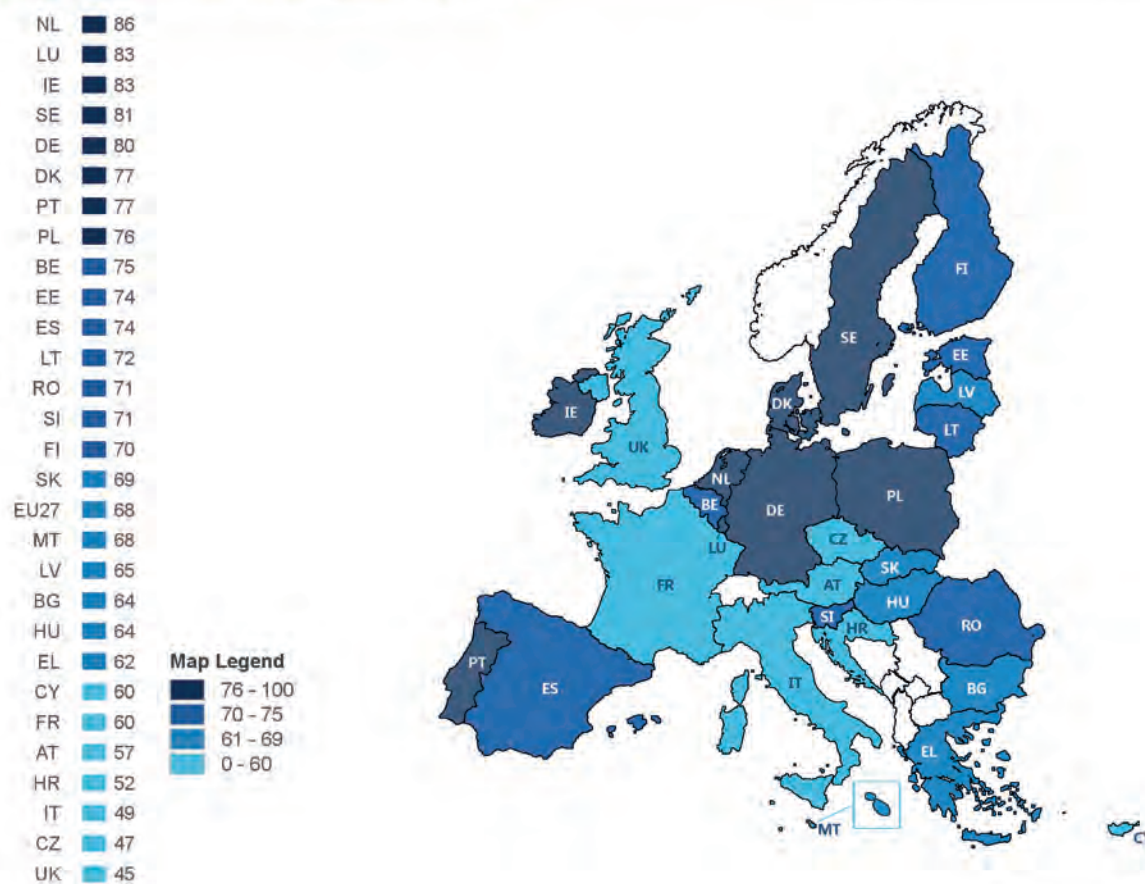
It can be seen as sign of the politically challenging times for the European Union in the run-up to the European elections in May 2019 - and as a confirmation of the challenge of these elections being indeed crucial for the future of the European Union - that the number of respondents being unsure about their decision on their country's future membership in the EU is increasing in 13 countries, including in the UK. Six months ago, only 12% of UK respondents felt unsure about whether they would vote to remain or leave - this result was interpreted as sign for a settling of preferences as the end of the withdrawal negotiations drew nearer. In March 2019, the number of unsure respondents has increased by six points to 18%, reflecting again growing public insecurity in the face of political uncertainty in the United Kingdom.



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA3s

In twelve other EU countries a rise in the 'unsure' category has been registered, with increases coming sometimes from declines measured for both the 'remain' and the 'leave' camp (e.g. in Malta and Luxembourg). On the other hand, the 'unsure' answer decreases in ten countries almost exclusively to the benefit of 'remain'. Overall, a vote to remain would increase in 19 Member States, with significant increases coming from Slovakia (69%, +10pp), +7pp in Finland to 70%, +6pp in the Netherlands, Estonia and Romania (86%, 74%, 71%) and +5pp each in Lithuania (72%), Slovenia (71%), Bulgaria (64%) and Italy (49%).

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



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA35

Again, it is interesting to look for similar patterns between countries' replies on the issue of remaining in the European Union and their citizens' attitudes about being part of the EU. For the purpose of this exercise, data is compared for France, Greece, Czechia and Italy, where about one respondent in five would vote to leave the EU: 24% in Czechia, 21% in France and Greece as well as 19% in Italy.

While in France (60%) and Greece (62%) the vote to remain is close to 60%, it remains below 50% in Czechia (47%) and Italy (49%). In these two countries, a majority of respondents also consider that EU membership is neither a good nor a bad thing (49% and 41%), while a relative majority considers it a good

thing in France (54%) and Greece (46%). When asked whether their country has benefited from being a member of the EU, a majority in all these countries but Italy believe that they have benefited.

'Would vote to remain'



'EU membership is neither a good nor a bad thing'



'(MY COUNTRY) has not benefited from being member of the EU'

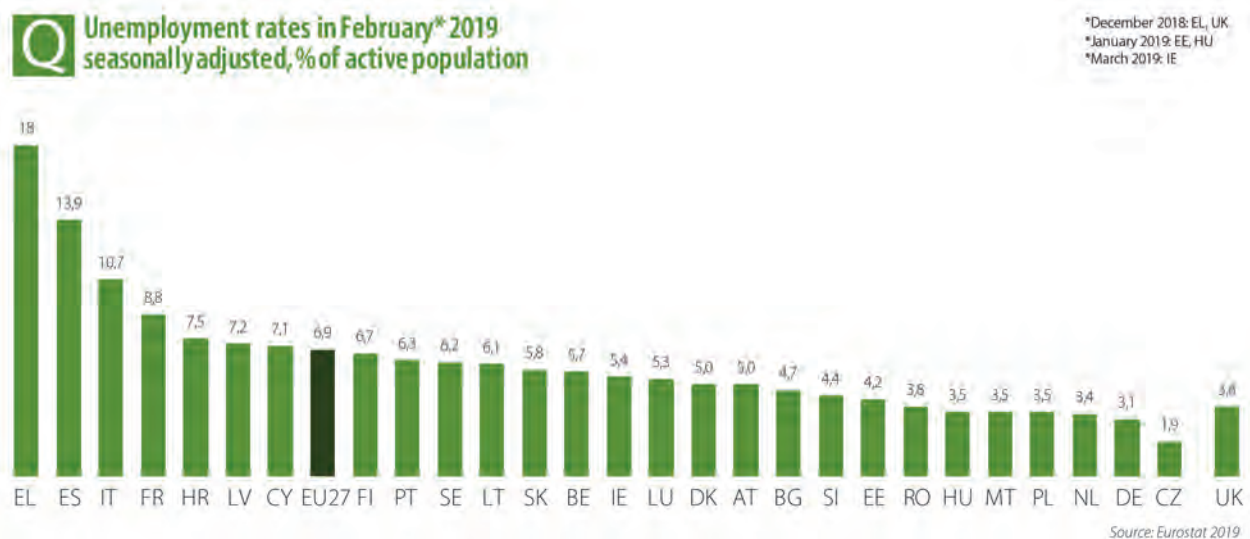


Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA3s, AQ11, AQ12

Things are not necessarily going in the right direction

In contrast, but not necessarily in contradiction to the continuously positive indicators concerning citizens' fundamental support for the European Union, most Europeans believe that things have not been going in the right direction over the past 6 months, neither in the EU nor in their own country. The slight improvement for these indicators measured between autumn 2017 and spring 2018 is not repeated since then.

This negative mood among respondents concerning the current path of the European Union and their own countries also in contrast to other indicators showing robust signs of economic recovery, e.g. the unemployment rate in the EU27 dropping to 6,9% in February 2019, which is its lowest rate since January 2000³.



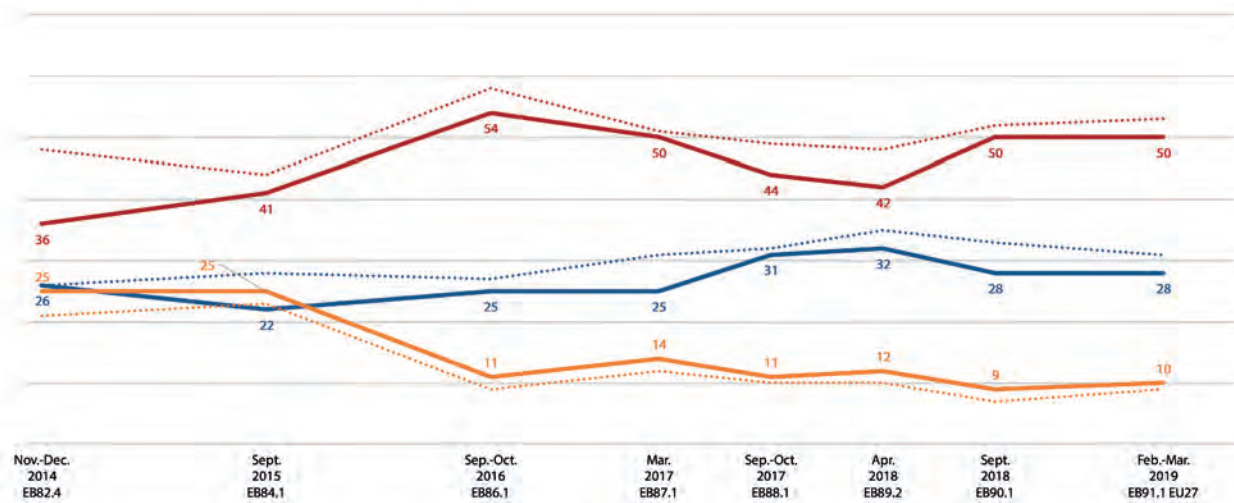
Still, for one in two European citizens, things are going in the wrong direction in the EU (50%). This is mostly the case for French and Greek respondents, where 66% share this pessimistic view, a plus of seven points for France and a decrease of 3 points in Greece. In countries where more than half of the respondents feel that things are going in the wrong direction in the EU, increasing numbers of citizens believing that things are not going the right way in the EU can also be found in the UK (57%, +3pp), Czechia (56%, +4pp) and Finland (51%, +8pp), while others seem to become less pessimistic, namely in Spain (56%, -3pp) and in Belgium (53%, -8pp).

In Luxembourg and Denmark the 'right direction' is losing 11 percentage points (respectively 26% and 22%) while the 'wrong direction' increases by 6 points in Luxembourg (41%) and 4 points in Denmark (47%). In Poland, the view that things in the EU are going in the wrong direction becomes the plurality view (39%, +6pp), with a decrease of 8 points to 36% of citizens believing that things are going in the right direction.

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/9628005/3-01032019-BP-EN.pdf/fdee8c71-7b1a-411a-86fa-da4af63710e1>

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) / in the EU? (%)

— Things are going in the right direction - the EU
— Things are going in the wrong direction - the EU
- - - - Things are going in the right direction - our country
- - - - 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: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), D73.1, D73.2

In Ireland as well, the ‘wrong direction’ gains 9 points to 31%, coming from multiple drops in ‘right direction’, ‘neither one nor the other’ and ‘don’t know’. While the impact of the ongoing Brexit debate might play a role in this attitude change, Ireland remains nevertheless the most optimistic country in the EU with 54% of its citizens believing that things in the EU are going in the right direction. Romania and Lithuania follow suit in their optimism (both 45% and respectively +7pp and +2pp), followed by Croatia and Bulgaria at 40% (both -4pp).

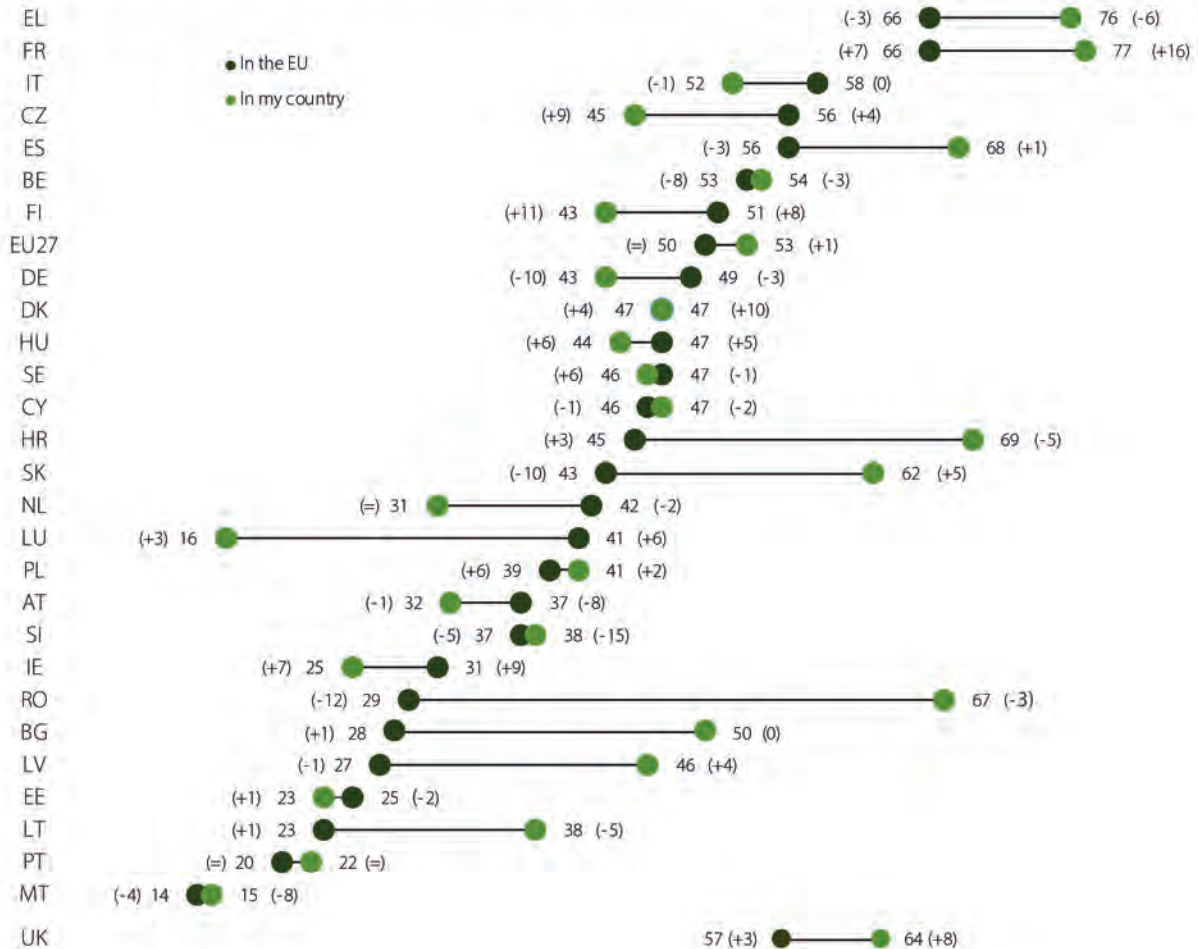
Irish respondents also remain the most optimistic with regard to the direction of things within their own country, with 66% (-2pp) considering that things are going in the right direction. Following in satisfaction with the direction of things in their own country are respondents in Luxembourg (60%, =), Malta (51%, -6pp) and the Netherlands (50%, -5pp).

Nine Member States show a negative development for both indicators by finding increasingly that the situation is not going in the right way both in the EU and in their own country.

While in France 66% (+7pp) believe that things are not going in the right direction in the EU, this attitude increases to 77% (+16pp) for the course of things at a national level. Only 12% of respondents (-11pp) believe that things are going in the right direction in their country.

In Greece, such as in France, the course of things in the EU is perceived negatively. Likewise, only 12% consider that things are going in the right direction in Greece itself, while 76% see things rather

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) / in the EU? (% - Total 'wrong direction')



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), D73.1, D73.2

moving in the 'wrong direction'. This being said, the increase of three points for the 'right direction' and the corresponding decrease of 6 points for those of hold the view of 'wrong direction' might give ground to cautious optimism.

Last, but not least, in the United Kingdom, the change in views concerning the 'right' (18%, -2pp) and the 'wrong' direction of things in the EU (57%, +3pp) remain relatively stable, while eight points less than six months ago (18%) find that things are going in the right direction in their country, with a corresponding increase of 8 points to 64% of respondents finding that things are going in the wrong direction in the UK.

Ireland, optimism champion in the EU

Q Case study: IRELAND

'I would vote to remain' - 83%



EU membership is a good thing - 83%



(MY COUNTRY) has benefited from being a member of the EU - 88%



This are going in the right direction in (MY COUNTRY) - 66%



This are going in the right direction in the EU - 54%

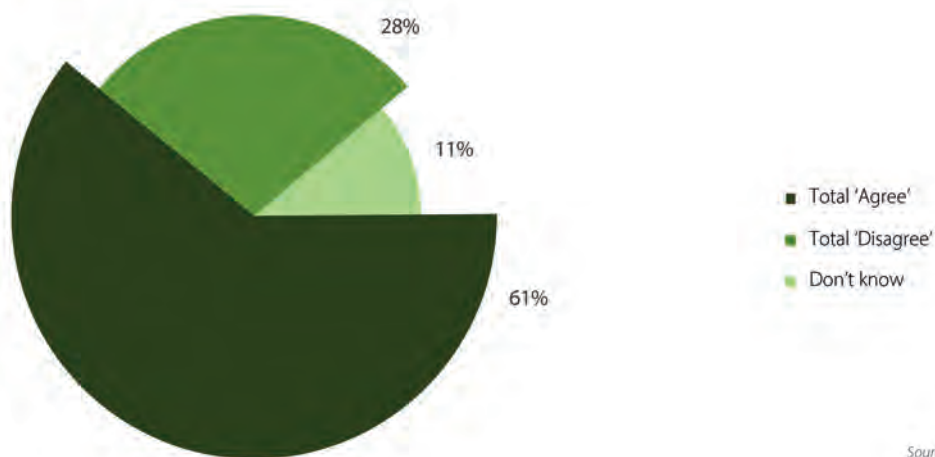


Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA3s, QA11, QA12, D73.1, D73.2

The rise of political parties protesting against the traditional political elite

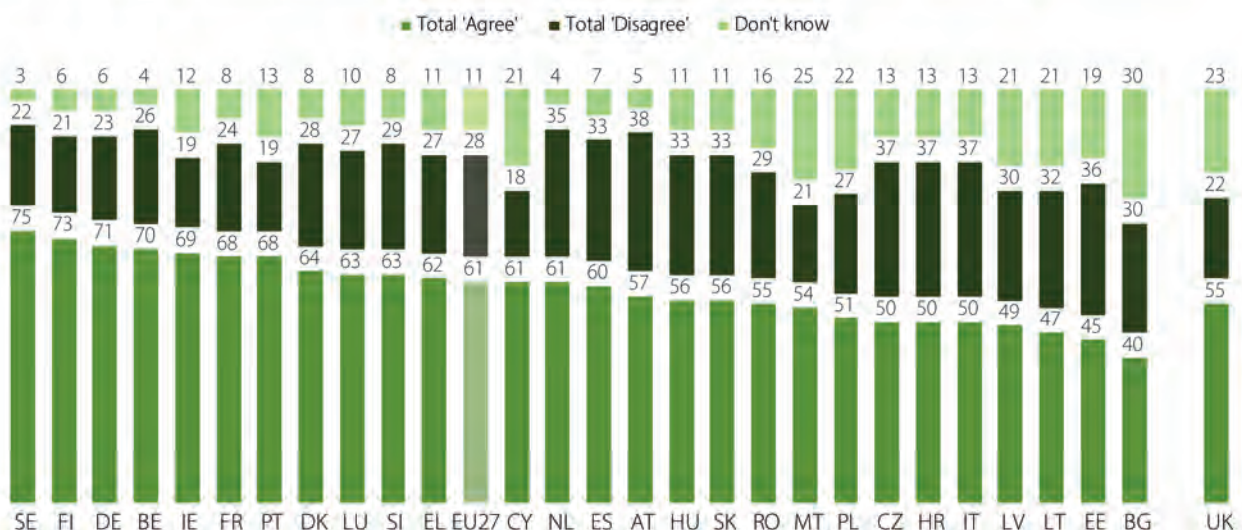
While many Europeans therefore feel that things are not going in the right direction in neither the EU nor their own country, the rise of protest parties would not seem to be seen as a right antidote. On the contrary, a clear plurality of Europeans appear to believe that the rise of political protest parties is rather a matter of additional concern.

Q To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statement: The rise of political parties protesting against the traditional political elites in various European countries is a matter of concern (%)



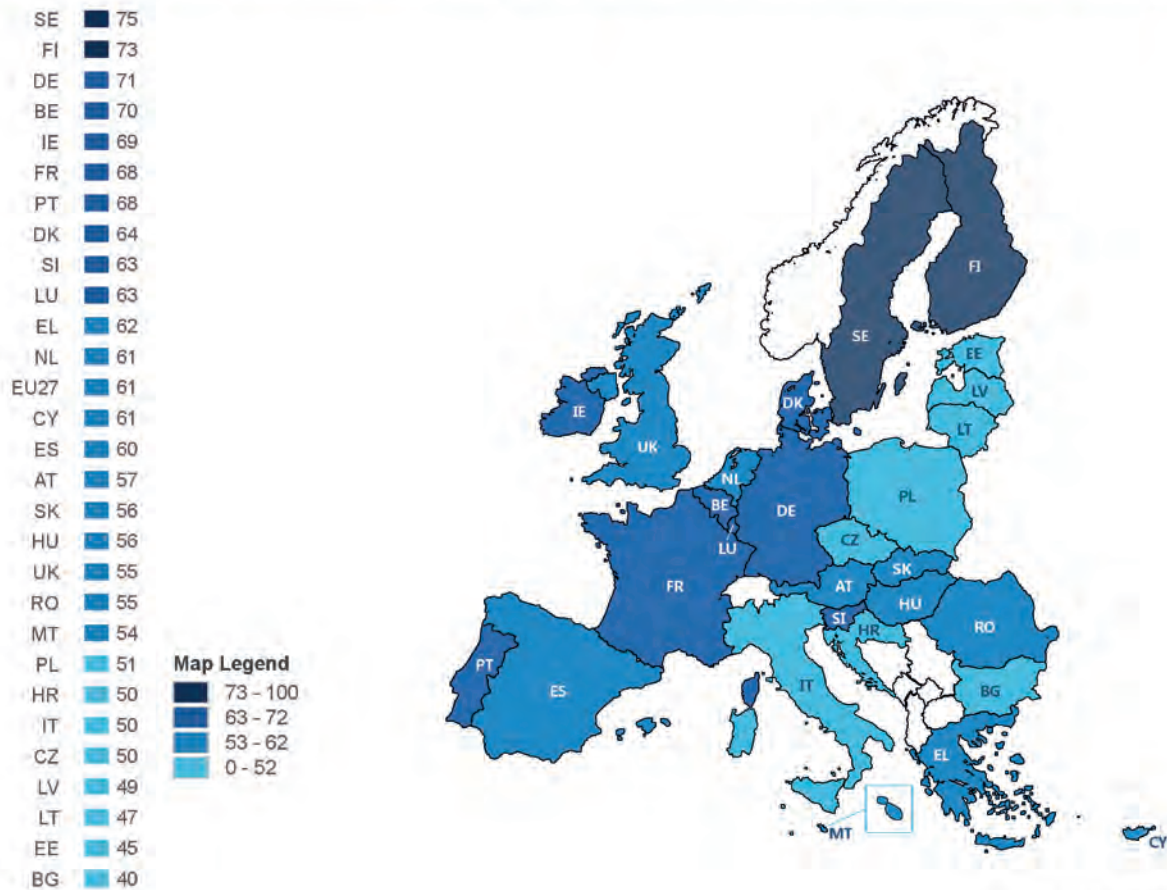
Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA13

Q To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statement: The rise of political parties protesting against the traditional political elites in various European countries is a matter of concern (%)



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA13

Q To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The rise of political parties protesting against the traditional political elites in various European countries is a matter of concern (% - Total 'Agree')



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA16

In the light of recent political developments in different EU Member States and in view of the upcoming European elections, 61% of European citizens would agree that the rise of protest parties is a matter of concern. Only 28% disagree with this statement and 11% say they do not know. Respondents in Sweden (75%), Finland (73%), Germany (71%) Belgium (70%), Ireland (69%), Portugal and France (both 68%) are the most likely to agree.

On the other hand, only 40% of respondents in Bulgaria (vs. 30% 'disagree'), 45% in Estonia (vs. 36%), 47% in Lithuania (vs. 32%), 49% in Latvia (vs. 30%), 50% in Czechia, Italy and Croatia (vs. 37% in all three countries) agree. The highest proportions of respondents who do not know are found in Bulgaria (30%), Malta (25%), the UK (23%), Poland (22%), Cyprus, Latvia and Lithuania (all 21%).

Looking at the results from socio-demographic angle, respondents who see the rise of protest parties as a matter of concern are predominantly women (62%), 55+ year-olds (63%) and managers (70%). By contrast, men (32%), 25-39 year-olds (32%) and unemployed (35%) tend to disagree with this statement.

CLOSER TO THE BALLOT

In the framework of a stable and settled backing of the European project, contrasted with a continuing feeling of things going in the wrong direction, the European elections clearly become a crucial opportunity for citizens across the EU to decide on the European Union they want to live in. At the same time, the ballot faces the challenge of a more than ever scattered public opinion and a still quite elevated level of undecidedness among potential voters.

While framing the public views towards European membership and its benefits, the survey also sheds light on citizens' attitudes towards the European Parliament and on their expectations for the future role of this institution in the years to come. Throughout a series of election related questions, the survey not only shows that Europeans have started pencilling the date of the ballot in their calendar, they also are feeling more strongly that their voice can indeed have an impact on the future of the EU.

Against this setting, the active participation in the next European elections is nevertheless not a won battle yet. A third of the population is swinging between uncertainty and moderately likelihood to vote in a moving context of priorities. Today, the economic situation and employment prospects are again at the forefront of Europeans' mind while migration issues are not as pressing as six months ago - and climate change and environmental protection are steadily rising through the ranks of priority issues for these elections.

The Role of the European Parliament

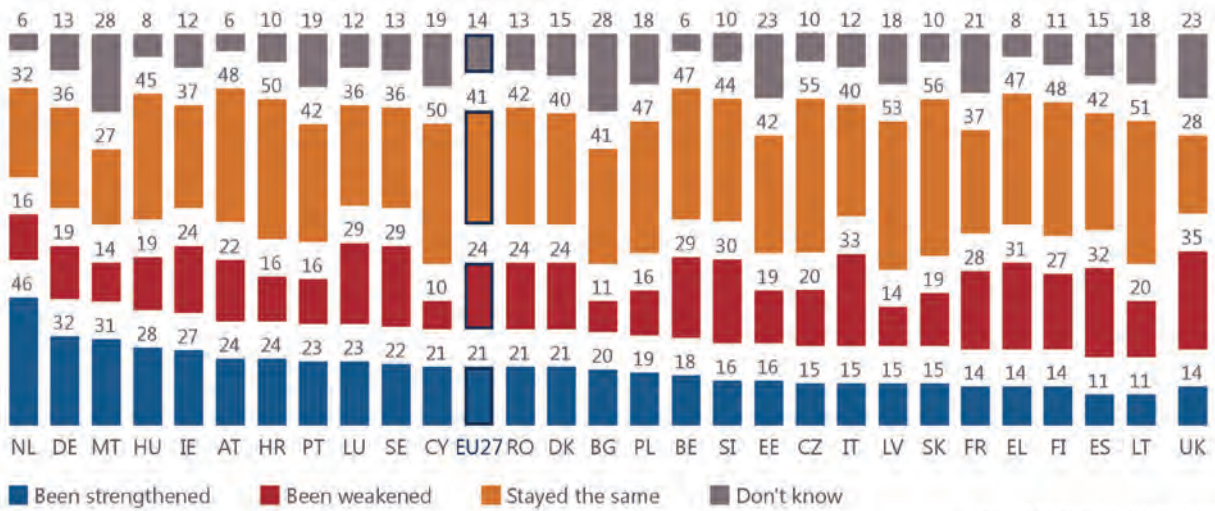
Less than three months to the European elections, this survey asked how European citizens see the European Parliament and its functioning. Firstly, it focuses on the role of the institution in the past years, then on which role Parliament should play in the future.

Looking back at the role played over the past years, a majority of Europeans believe that this role stayed the same (41%). Only 21% of respondents have the impression that the institution has strengthened its role, with 24% believe it has weakened during the past legislature.

This pattern appears relatively homogenous across almost all Member States with a relative majority of citizens considering the role of the European institution as stable. Only in Malta and the Netherlands most respondents assert that Parliament's position had been strengthened in the past years.

Results for the United Kingdom stand out with an opposite trend: 35% consider that the power of the institution has been weakened, while only 14% say that it has been reinforced. At the same time, a significant proportion of respondents in the United Kingdom do not know what to reply (23%).

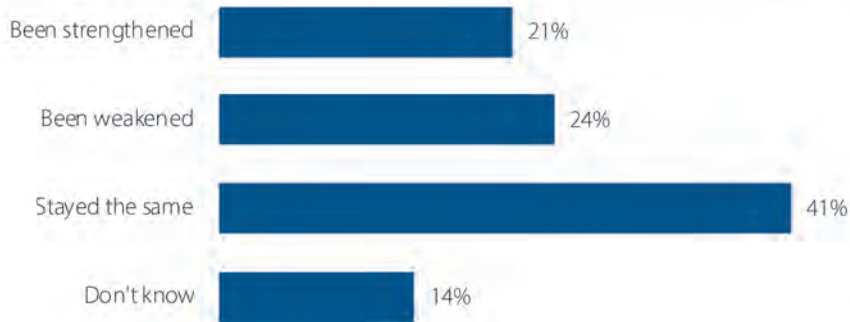
Q Would you say that over the past years the European Parliament's role within the European Union has...? (%)



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QAI

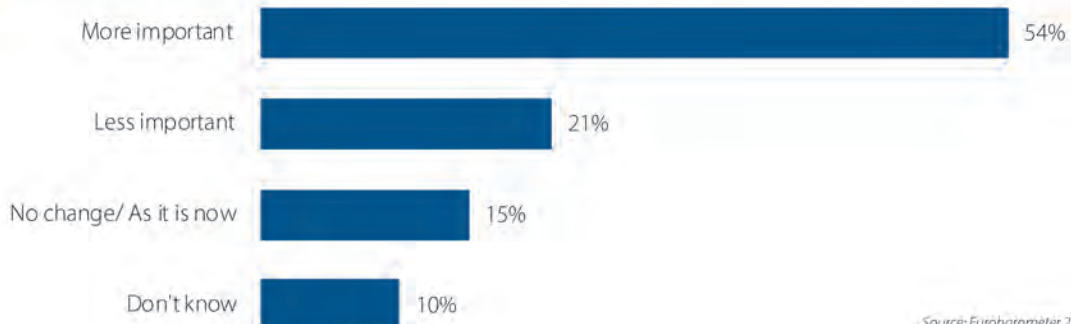
The level of 'undecidedness' on this question is significant not only in the United Kingdom. Very high percentages of 'don't know' are also observed in Bulgaria and Malta (both 28%), Estonia (23%), and France (21%) as well as in Portugal, Cyprus (both with 19%), Poland, Lithuania and Latvia (18% each).

Q Would you say that over the past years the European Parliament's role within the European Union has...? (%)

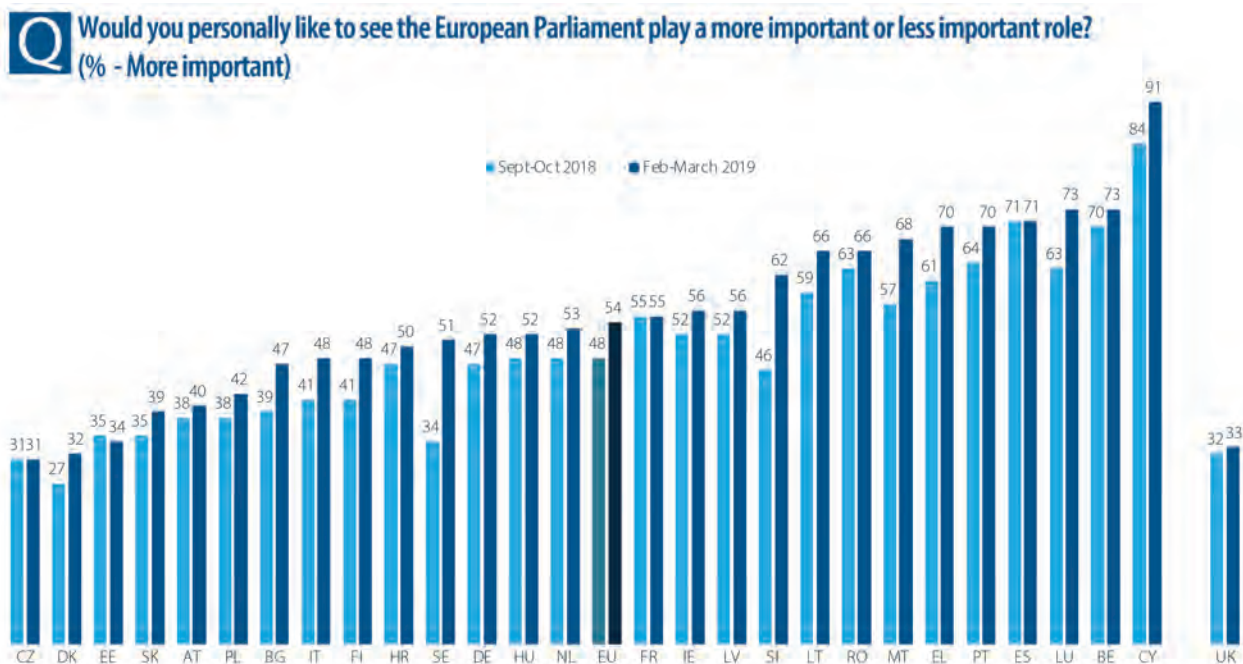


Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QAI

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



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QAI



Regardless of their assessment on the past role of the institution, Europeans feel less uncertain when they look at it projected in the future. Interestingly, while most of them ponder that the role of the European Parliament did not change in the past years (41%), the majority among them would like to see it strengthened in the future (54%). These expectations for a more powerful European Parliament not only reach their highest score since 2012, but can also be interpreted as call for change in favour of more powerful European democratic institutions. Not only most of the people who believe that Parliament’s role had already been strengthened over the past years still do call for an even more powerful institution in the future - also a majority of those who did not see such a change in the past would like the European Parliament to play a more important role.

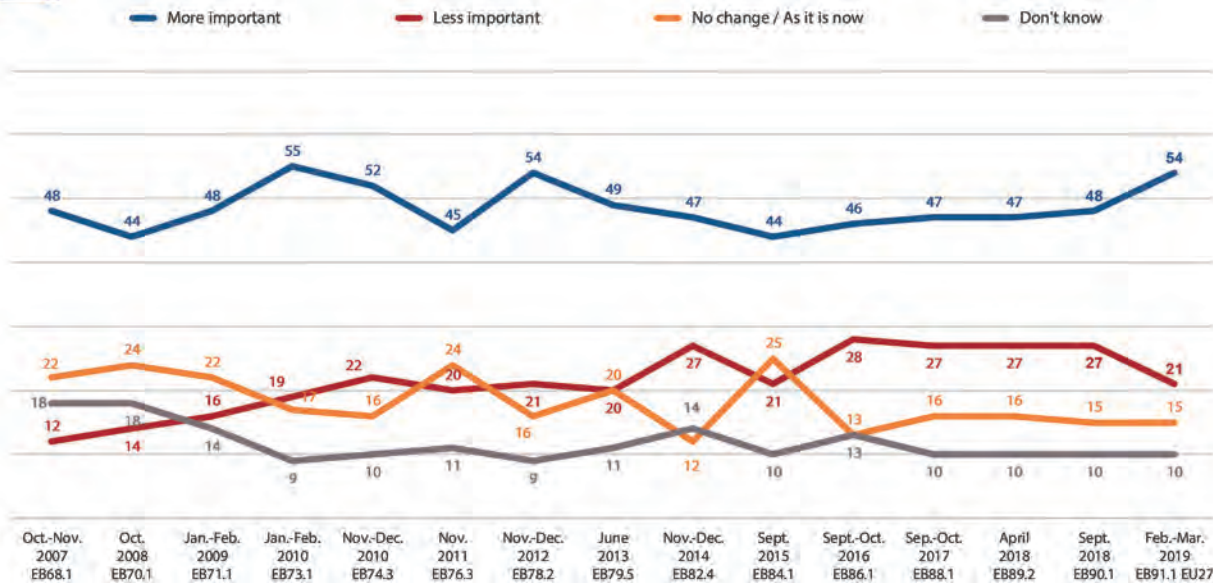
This view is supported by the results concerning the level of trust citizens attach to the European Parliament. According to the last Standard Eurobarometer survey⁴ published by the European Commission in December 2018, citizens are shown to trust the European Parliament most among all EU institutions and also, across 20 EU Member States, more than their respective national Parliaments or government. This is particularly striking for Romania (60% tend to trust the EP vs. 24% their national Parliament and 23% their national Government), Lithuania (57% vs. 16% and 28%), Bulgaria (51% vs. 13% and 22%) and Croatia (50% vs. 18% and 19%).

At national level, an absolute majority in 18 Member States want a more important role for the European Parliament in the future. In 25 Member States a plurality supports this view.

⁴ <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2215>. According to this survey, a relative majority of Europeans of the EU27 tend to trust the European Parliament.

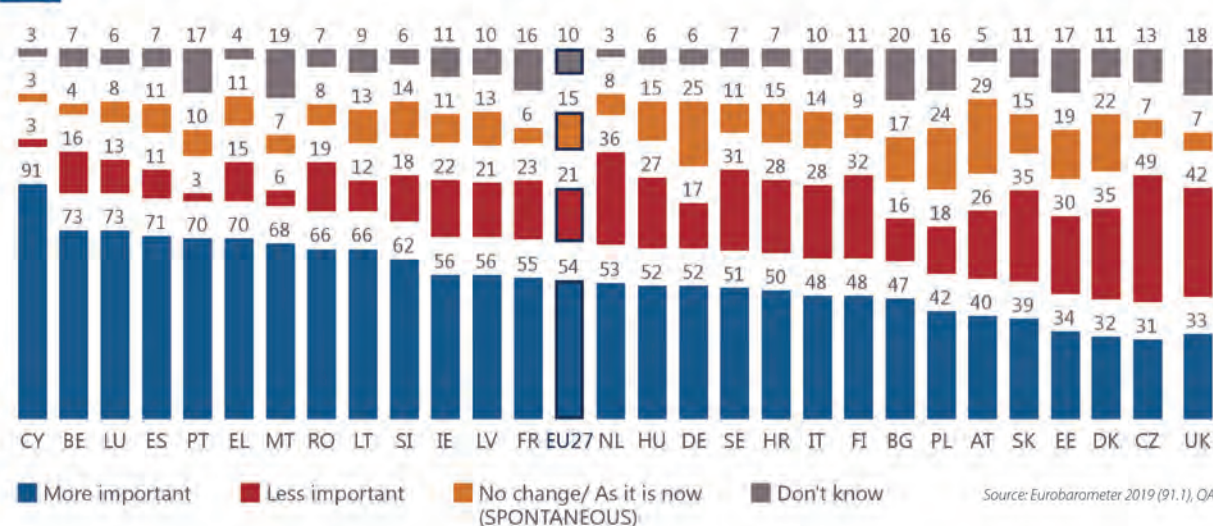
In Czechia and Denmark a majority of the population asks for a less important role for this European institution (49% and 35% respectively); also in the United Kingdom public opinion mostly backs a European Parliament with less power (42%).

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



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), Q42

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



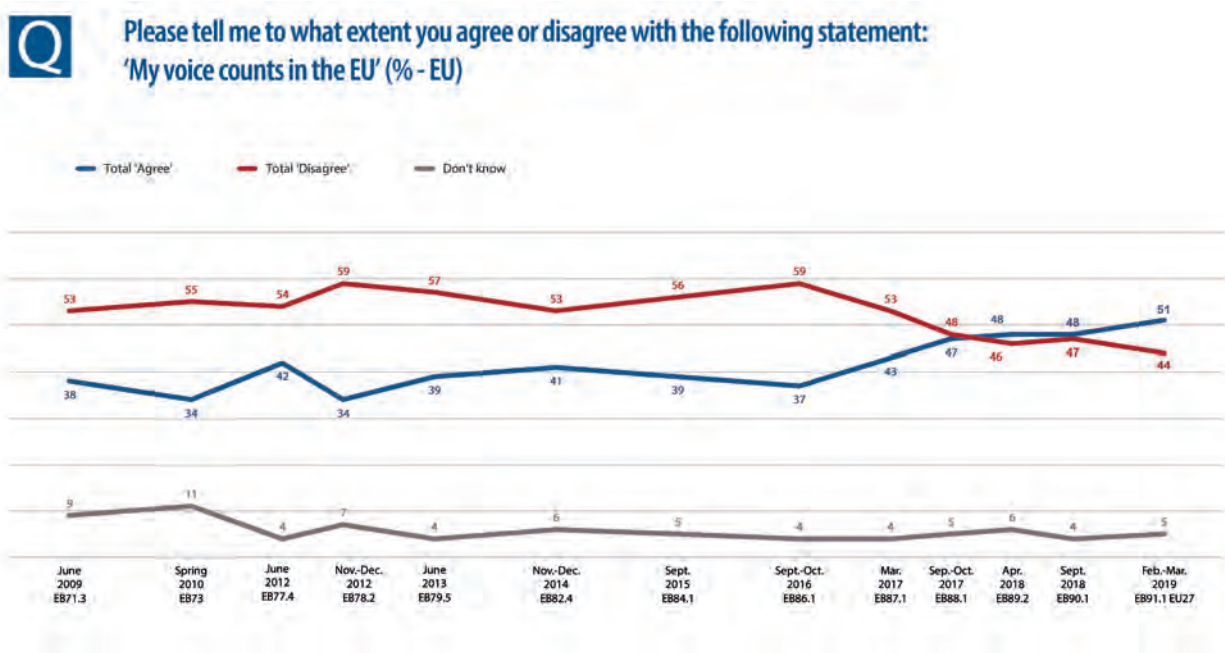
Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), Q42

In terms of evolutions, the proportion of citizens calling for a more important role of the European Parliament has increased in most countries with the exception of Czechia, France, Spain and Estonia. Sweden (+17pp), Slovenia (+16pp), Malta (+11pp), Luxembourg (+10pp) see the most positive trends over the past

six months. Undoubtedly, these evolutions are also impacted by the continuous public debate about the future of the European Union and with it of the European Parliament. On the other hand, the increase in support for a stronger role for the EP should not be exclusively attributed to the approaching elections: While in the run-up to the 2009 European elections a similar peak was measured, no such ‘pre-electoral boost’ was registered in 2013/14.

My voice counts

Agreement to the statement ‘My voice counts in the EU’ does seem to be strongly influenced by an approaching election date. As shown by historical trends, this indicator has often peaked in the months ahead of a European election⁵. Also the spring 2019 Eurobarometer registers a small but steady increase of citizens’ feelings that their voice counts in the EU (51%, +3pp) compared with September 2018). If in Lithuania, Slovakia and Portugal the positive evolutions are quite significant (+ 7 points each compared to six months before), rather negative trends are visible in Cyprus (-8pp), Croatia (-6pp) and Czechia (-5pp). Yet, the ups and downs of this trend line are only one of the interesting aspects of this question which patently reveals how variegated the European public perception in this domain can be.



The next map illustrates national results ranging from 88% of Swedish or 80% of Danish citizens who feel that their voice counts in the EU to only 22% in Greece, Estonia and Czechia. A wide spectrum of national differences is also reflected in the parallel question whether ‘my voice counts in my country’. Replies for this indicator are more positive compared to the one discussed above.

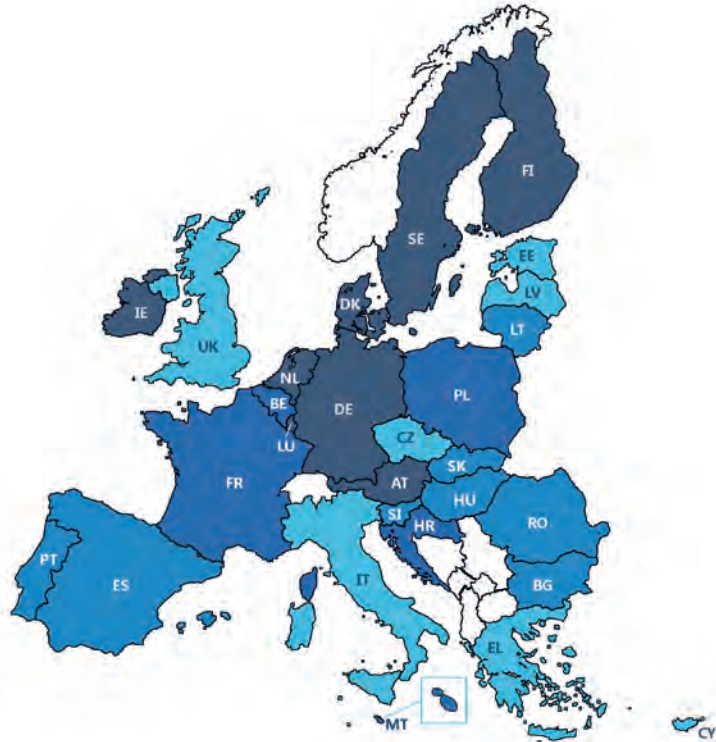
⁵ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/major-changes-in-european-public-opinion-with-regard-to-the-eu-2016>. This study displays major historical evolutions of the European public opinion.

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

SE	88
DK	80
NL	79
DE	70
FI	68
LU	62
AT	60
IE	59
PL	57
BE	57
MT	55
HR	55
FR	53
SK	51
SI	51
EU27	51
HU	46
BG	46
PT	43
ES	42
RO	39
LT	32
UK	31
LV	27
IT	26
CY	24
CZ	22
EE	22
EL	22

Map Legend

58 - 100
52 - 57
32 - 51
0 - 31



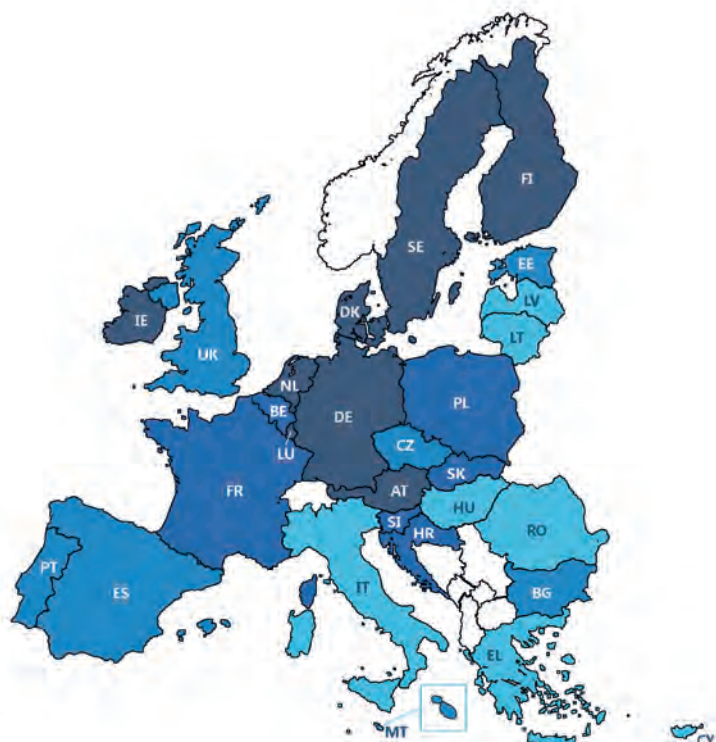
Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), D.72.1

Q Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements:
 'My voice counts in (OUR COUNTRY)' (% - Total 'Agree')

SE	95
NL	91
DK	91
FI	87
DE	78
AT	78
LU	70
IE	70
SK	69
HR	67
FR	67
PL	66
BE	65
EU27	62
SI	61
PT	56
MT	56
CZ	52
EE	51
BG	51
ES	50
UK	47
HU	45
LV	40
IT	40
RO	39
LT	34
EL	30
CY	29

Map Legend

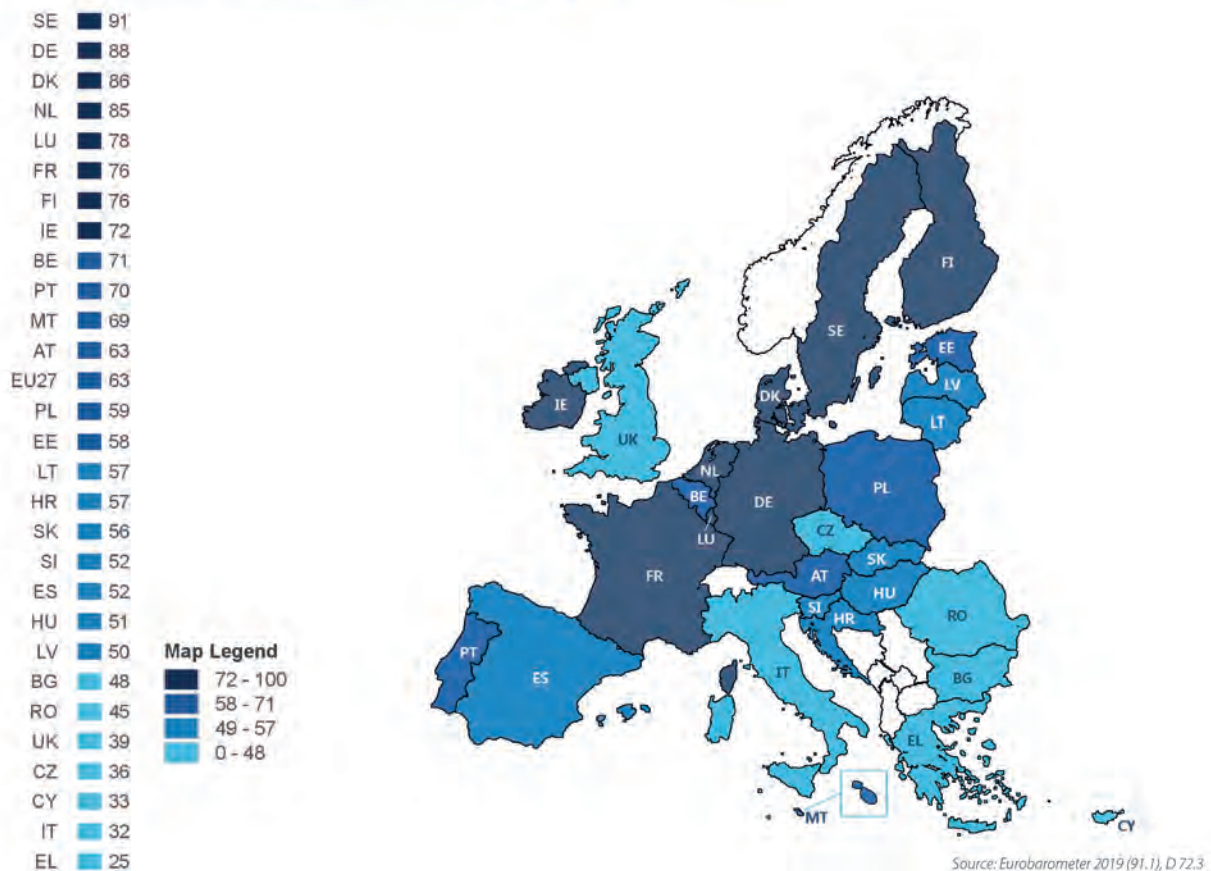
70 - 100
57 - 69
46 - 56
0 - 45



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), D.72.2

For many years now there is a widespread perception within the European population⁶ that their voice counts more in their country than it does in the European Union. Nevertheless, with a not too dissimilar pattern compared to the above question, the strength of this feeling varies significantly from country to country, strongly depending on national contexts, civic and socio-political cultures as well as traditions.

Q Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:
 '(OUR COUNTRY)'s voice counts in the EU' (% - Total 'Agree')



A third question completes this set and explores citizens' views regarding the voice of their country in the EU. While countries which in the recent past did not suffer from an economic crisis top the scale of the national results (Sweden 91%, Germany 88%, Denmark 86%) countries which have been more affected by financial and economic turbulences register the lowest scores (Greece 25%, Italy 32%, Cyprus 33%). Still, the economic prospect is most probably one of the factors driving respondents' reactions. Looking at the changes in comparison with the previous survey, one might deduce that the public discourse and the international role played by the country also have a strong impact on the replies. The case of Romania is emblematic. An increase of 12 points in the share of people who feel that the voice of their country counts in the EU is not surprising in the light of the current Romanian Presidency of the European Council.

⁶ At the exception of Hungary (46% think their voice counts in the EU, 45% in their country) and Romania (39%, 39%)

Date of the ballot

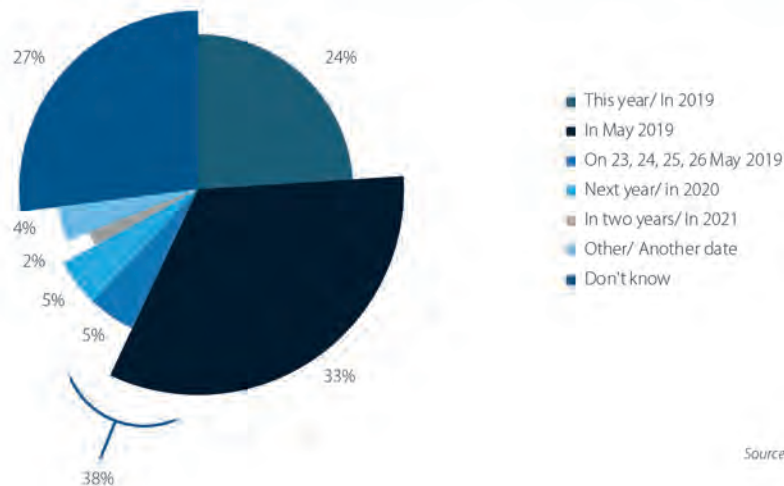
With three months to go to the European elections at the time of the survey's fieldwork, the study narrows down to precise questions touching upon citizens' awareness of and attitude towards the European vote.

First, the knowledge around the date of the upcoming ballot is an important indicator of the population's responsiveness to the event and the campaigns surrounding it.

In February-March 2019, 33% of European respondents could already affirm that the European elections will take place in May. 5% can even cite the exact date (23-24-25-26 May), while 24% are aware that the ballot will be held this year. 38% of respondents gave different, yet always incorrect answers or say they don't know.

While a similar question was asked in a previous survey, a direct comparison cannot be drawn as the list of answers had to change. Nevertheless, with the aim to better frame the increase of awareness around this election it is worth noting that in September 2018 only 23% could say that the next European ballot would take place in May 2019 (this being the most specific reply option then, without the exact days being named in addition).

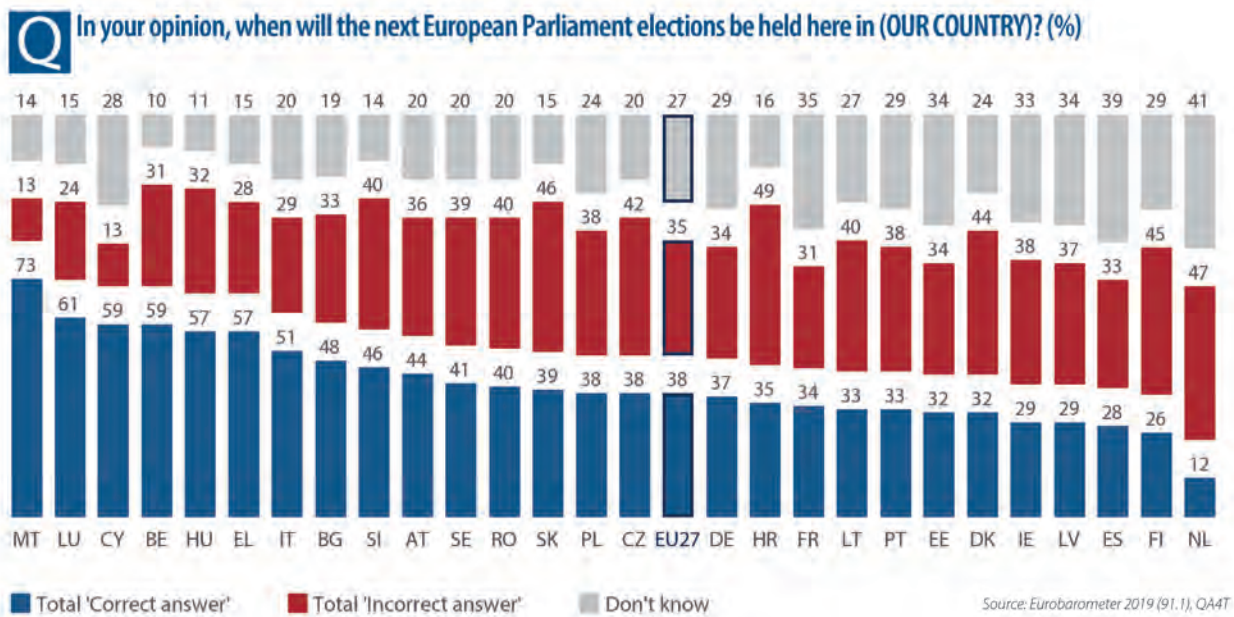
Q In your opinion, when will the next European Parliament elections be held here in (OUR COUNTRY)? (% EU27)



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA4T

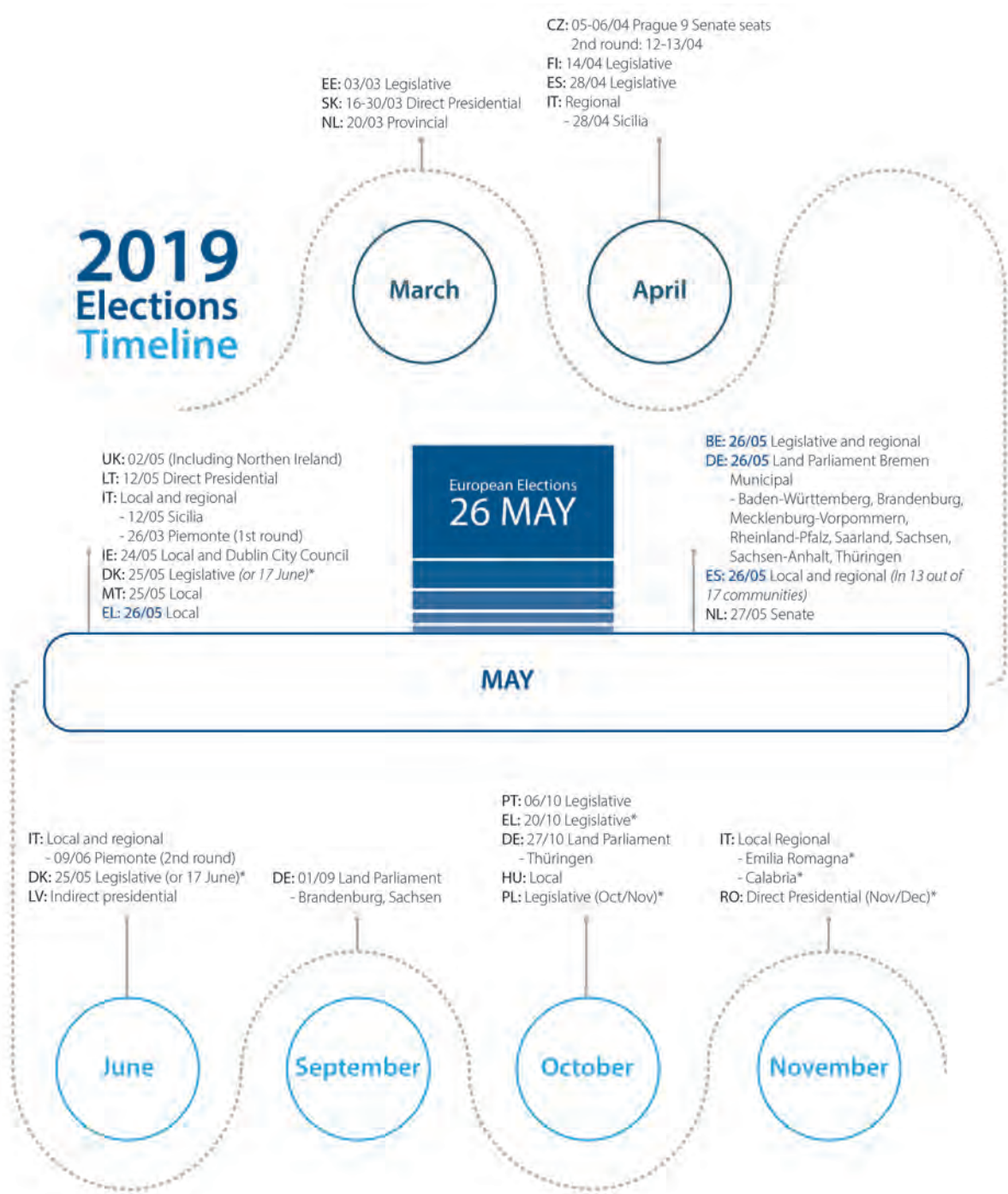
Yet the national spectrum shows great disparities in the knowledge of the European election date. This confirms the crucial importance of national context and running campaigns which might impact on media priorities.

The Netherlands might serve as good proof for this: Provincial elections were set for March 20. During the fieldwork of the survey (19 February - 4 March) the public national discourse was highly concentrated



on these elections while communication on the European ballot was certainly more marginal. This may explain the very little share of people who could reply with the correct answer (May 2019, or exact date) to this question. In the same line, Estonian national elections were held on 3 March, right during the field-work of the survey. Also in this case attention for the European elections was certainly limited and public interest rather redirected towards national affairs. Similarly, Spain and Finland have currently legislative elections dominating the key political debates, resulting in the level of knowledge around the European ballot remaining among the lowest compared to other EU countries.

In terms of socio-demographic patterns, men are overall more likely to give a correct answer on the date of the next European elections (42% correct replies for only 35% among the women). This is also the case for the most educated people (45%) and the ones who live in large cities (42% for 36% of citizens living in rural villages). Unsurprisingly, those who have a strong interest in politics (54%) and have the feeling that their voice counts in the EU (43%) also have a higher awareness about the date of the ballot. What's more, nearly one in two respondents with a high index of positive attitude towards the EU (47%) correctly give the correct answer.



*Dates to be confirmed
It should be noted that the information shown here is the one that was publicly available until April 09.

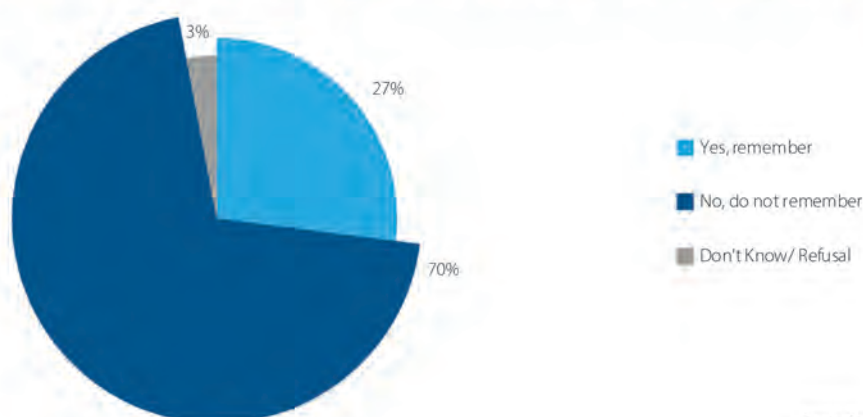
Messages from the campaign trail

Nevertheless, findings show that the knowledge of the date was not yet at its peak level in February and March 2019. One of the reasons for this may be attributed to the still limited number of messages linked to the ballot and the fact that political campaigns in the Member States have not yet fully kicked off.

Like with most other elections, be they national regional or local, also the last weeks of any campaign for European elections are of crucial importance both to increase awareness and to support proactive behaviours towards actual voting. Data from the European Parliament's 2014 post electoral survey on when Europeans decided to abstain or to vote in the last European ballot well corroborate this thesis. In this context, among the key figures of that survey are the 34% of abstainers who declared having decided not to vote in the European elections at the very last moment, i.e. during the last days or even on the day of the ballot.⁷

Keeping this context in mind it is then interesting to look at how far citizens can already recall messages encouraging their participation in the upcoming European elections: In February 2019, already 27% of European citizens could remember having seen on TV, on the Internet, online social networks, read in newspaper or heard on the radio messages encouraging people to vote in the European Parliament elections. The picture varies from country to country and also when looking at different socio-demographic scenarios, underlining again the necessity to analyse each national result in the light of the local public discourse, political arena and different media coverage which inevitably impact on public awareness and opinion on the matter.

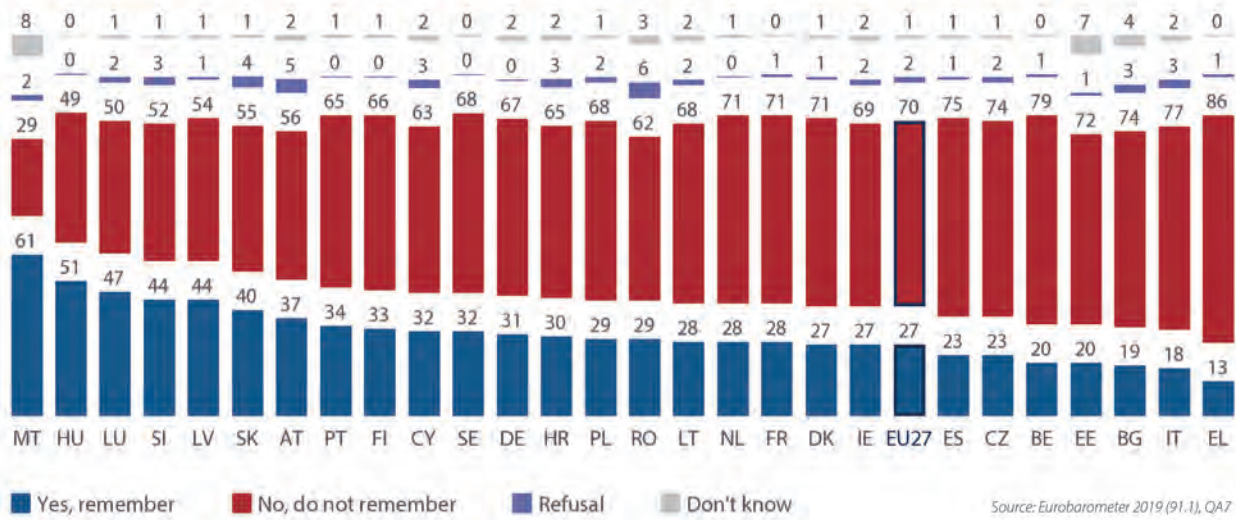
Q Personally, do you remember having seen on TV, on the Internet, online social networks or posters, read in newspapers or heard on the radio messages encouraging people to vote in the European Parliament elections? (% - EU)



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA7

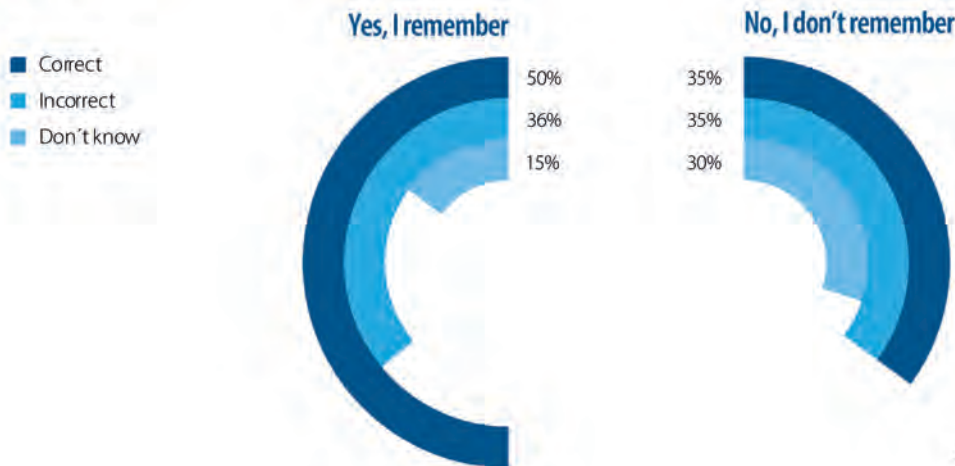
⁷ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/post-electoral-survey>

Q Personally, do you remember having seen on TV, on the Internet, online social networks or posters, read in newspapers or heard on the radio messages encouraging people to vote in the European Parliament elections? (%)



As shown in the graph below there is also a positive, although moderate, relation between the knowledge of the date of the next European elections and the recall of having heard messages linked to the ballot.

Q Knowledge of the date of the EE2019: share of citizens who recalled messages encouraging to vote



Looking at socio-demographic factors, the recall feeling is overall higher among the most educated people, but also for citizens with a more open attitude towards the EU the responsiveness to campaign messages seems to be stronger.

Against this setting, can we measure to what extent the future propensity to vote is influenced and moved by the various campaign messages which are spreading across the EU? The approaching of the ballot and a reinforced recall feeling would certainly allow for more accurate answers. At the moment this reflexion

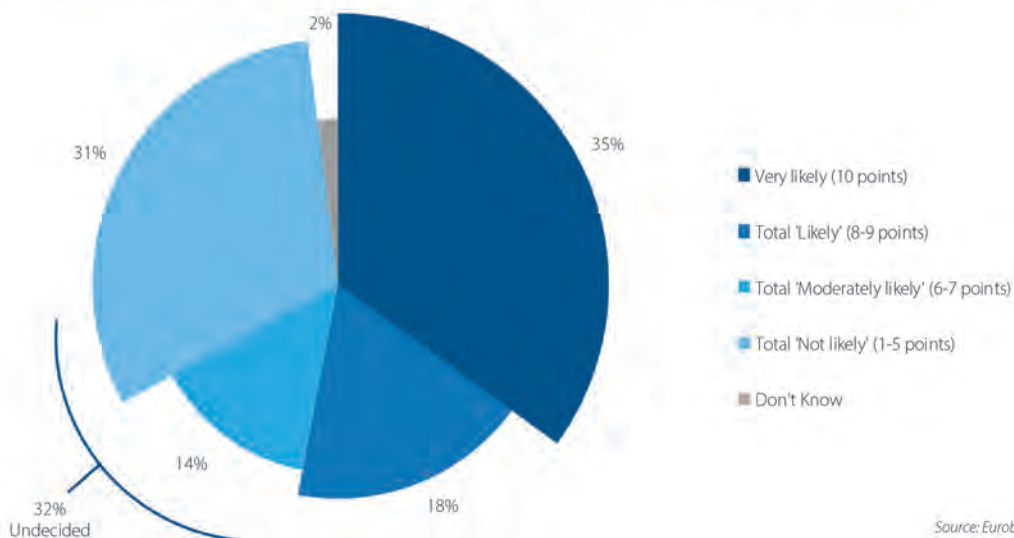
needs to remain restricted to the following chart which shows that the proportion of people who recall messages encouraging to vote in the next European elections seem also to be higher among the citizens with highest likelihood to participate.

Q Percentage of respondents who remembered messages in the media encouraging people to vote in the European Parliament elections (by likelihood to vote, in %)



In this line, the results on the question regarding people’s likelihood to vote as asked in this survey shall be looked at with accurate lenses. Many factors are driving the attitude to vote and certainly not all of them can be explained or supported by survey data. Yet, without losing sight of this complexity around personal propensities to vote, it is crucial to frame the results in a correct context. First of all, it is important to recall the exact period in which the survey was conducted (19 February - 4 March 2019), three months ahead of the ballot.

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'.



No less important is the formulation of the question which requires special attention. Respondents were asked to position themselves on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 means it is 'not at all likely (that I will vote)' and 10 it is 'very likely'. In February-March 2019 more than one third of Europeans of voting age (35%) already declared that they are certain to vote, i.e. responding 10 on this scale. Less than one third (31%) are not likely to vote (1 to 5 on the scale) while another 32% are still undecided and declared themselves 'moderately likely' (14%) or 'likely' (18%) to go to vote (6-7 and 8-9 on the scale).

National discrepancies are remarkable. On one hand, they underline how citizens may react differently to a question which offers a wide range of options (given by a 1-10 scale) and captures national and personal sensitiveness to the meaning of doubt and certainty. On the other hand it also offers a first reflection on the scattered European voting behaviour and on the multi-level importance attached to this ballot in the various countries.

As shown in the table on the next page, more than 50% of citizens are already certain to vote in four countries: Denmark (65%), the Netherlands (62%), Sweden (61%), In Belgium, 58% declared themselves certain to vote, although voting is compulsory in this country. Five countries bring up the other end with less than 20% being certain to vote: Czechia (10%), Italy (16%), Portugal (17%), Croatia (17%) and Austria (18%).

At the same time, a relative majority of people is not committed yet in seven Member States (Italy 50% (for answers 'moderately likely' or 'likely' to vote), Austria 42%, Greece 40%, Bulgaria 40%, Hungary 39%, Finland 38% and Romania 34%).

Compared to September 2018, the share of people of voting age who are already sure that they will vote has increased by four points on EU average, with Belgium (+17 point increase), France (+10pp), Greece (+9pp), Luxembourg (+9pp) and Spain (+7pp) topping the list of countries with the most important changes.

The number of eligible voters not likely to vote has slightly decreased at EU level to 31% (-2pp), with significant drops observed in Belgium (-10pp), Slovakia (-8pp) and France (-6pp). Major swings among undecided voters are recorded in Spain and Poland (-9pp), Romania (-8pp) as well as Ireland and Belgium (-7pp).

Q Percentage of respondents who remembered messages in the media encouraging people to vote in the European Parliament elections (by likelihood to vote, in %)

	Very likely		Total 'Likely'		Total 'Moderately likely'		Total 'Not likely'		Don't know
	February/ March 2019	Diff. February/ March 2019 - September 2018	February/ March 2019	Diff. February/ March 2019 - September 2018	February/ March 2019	Diff. February/ March 2019 - September 2018	February/ March 2019	Diff. February/ March 2019 - September 2018	
EU27	35%	+4	18%	=	14%	2	31%	2	2%
BE	58%	+17	14%	2	10%	5	18%	10	0%
BG	24%	+2	21%	+1	19%	+2	30%	5	6%
CZ	10%	6	13%	+2	13%	2	61%	+5	3%
DK	65%	1	12%	+1	6%	2	17%	+3	0%
DE	48%	=	17%	=	9%	=	25%	=	1%
EE	34%	+3	13%	3	12%	=	38%	=	3%
IE	37%	+3	20%	3	12%	4	29%	+4	2%
EL	28%	+9	26%	=	14%	3	31%	5	1%
ES	31%	+7	17%	2	12%	7	39%	+2	1%
FR	44%	+10	11%	2	10%	2	34%	6	1%
HR	17%	+2	16%	=	17%	1	50%	=	0%
IT	16%	=	24%	1	26%	+1	29%	1	5%
CY	26%	+2	14%	=	10%	3	49%	+1	1%
LV	29%	+1	12%	1	13%	1	45%	+2	1%
LT	35%	=	18%	=	14%	+4	32%	4	1%
LU	49%	+9	10%	5	12%	+2	29%	4	0%
HU	28%	=	22%	2	17%	+2	32%	=	1%
MT	36%	1	26%	+3	9%	4	28%	+3	1%
NL	62%	+3	16%	=	10%	1	12%	2	0%
AT	18%	4	22%	+1	20%	+1	39%	+2	1%
PL	25%	+4	17%	3	16%	6	37%	+4	5%
PT	17%	+4	19%	+3	15%	3	47%	5	2%
RO	30%	+5	15%	3	19%	5	33%	+2	3%
SI	33%	+5	14%	+2	9%	3	42%	4	2%
SK	20%	+5	19%	+3	16%	+1	42%	8	3%
FI	30%	3	21%	3	17%	+6	31%	=	1%
SE	61%	+2	13%	3	10%	1	16%	+2	0%

Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), Q46

In socio-demographic terms the generational gap on this specific question is the most striking one, again continuing the historical trend which would see youngest voters traditionally less active in elections and the least likely to vote. Although no direct comparison between the declared likelihood to vote and the actual turnout can be drawn, turnout results of the 2014 European elections by age groups are instrumental to frame this trend.

Q Turnout in the 2014 European elections. Breakdown by age.

Country	Total	18-24 years ^{NB}	25-39 years ^{NB}	40-54 years ^{NB}	55 years + ^{NB}
	Turnout				
BE*	89,64%	90,10%	92,60%	89,10%	87,80%
LU*	85,55%	86,70%	77,70%	85,70%	92,00%
SE	51,07%	65,50%	50,30%	49,10%	48,50%
MT	74,80%	61,90%	66,10%	80,10%	82,00%
EL*	59,97%	44,70%	55,10%	68,00%	63,70%
IT	57,22%	44,70%	58,70%	65,50%	53,30%
LT	47,35%	43,60%	33,20%	46,60%	60,60%
DK	56,32%	38,20%	49,10%	58,90%	64,40%
DE	48,10%	29,40%	37,50%	48,70%	59,40%
AT**	45,39%	29,30%	39,70%	50,60%	50,00%
CY*	43,97%	28,60%	32,10%	42,40%	63,60%
EU28	42,61%	27,80%	35,20%	44,60%	51,30%
BG	35,84%	27,20%	30,40%	34,70%	42,90%
ES	43,81%	26,60%	37,20%	46,20%	51,70%
FR	42,43%	24,70%	30,20%	40,40%	56,50%
IE	52,44%	21,40%	37,30%	59,50%	75,90%
RO	32,44%	20,20%	25,30%	35,20%	42,40%
HU	28,97%	20,00%	20,00%	31,60%	37,10%
UK	35,60%	19,40%	21,00%	32,20%	53,10%
PT	33,67%	18,60%	26,80%	38,40%	41,40%
NL	37,32%	18,00%	33,80%	34,50%	48,30%
LV	30,24%	17,40%	26,50%	28,00%	44,80%
CZ	18,20%	16,40%	17,00%	18,30%	19,60%
EE	36,52%	15,80%	28,40%	39,50%	49,40%
PL	23,83%	14,10%	18,80%	28,30%	28,40%
SI	24,55%	13,70%	17,60%	18,70%	37,40%
HR	25,24%	13,10%	19,50%	27,20%	31,50%
FI	39,10%	10,40%	44,50%	47,20%	43,20%
SK	13,05%	5,60%	11,90%	13,00%	17,70%

NB: Data based on the European Parliament 2014 Post-electoral survey

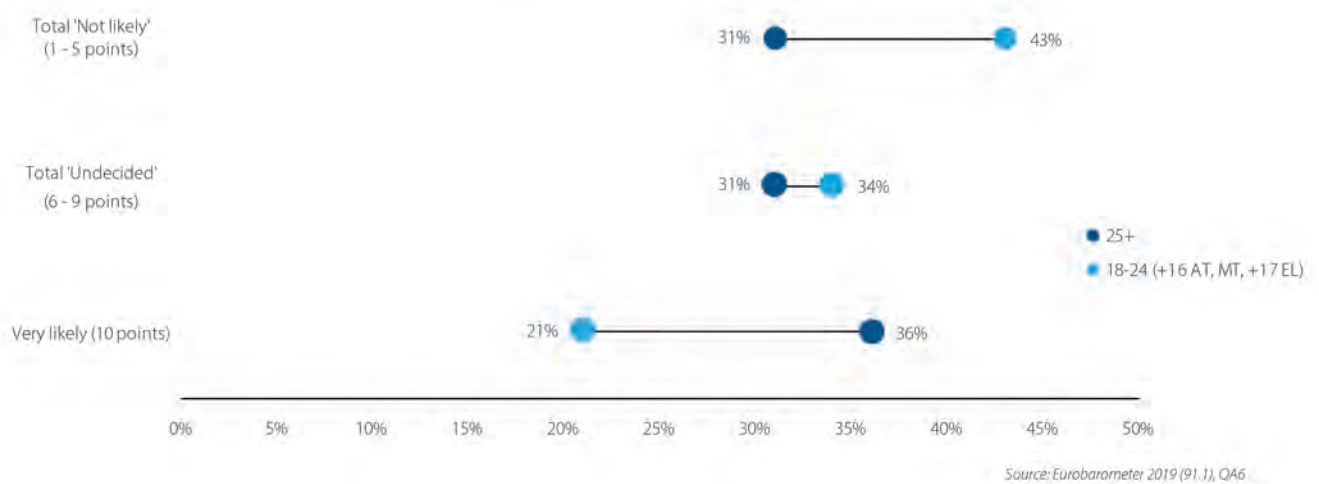
* Member States with compulsory vote

** In Austria, the youngest age group is 16-24 years

Source: EP Public Opinion Monitoring

Comparing the youngest voter group⁸ and citizens older than 24 years, clear differences appear: in March 2019, an average of 21% of the young citizens who are entitled to vote declared that they are very likely to vote in the upcoming European elections (value 10 on the 1-10 scale). This in sharp contrast to the number of those aged 25 years and older, of whom more than every third (36%) are very likely to go to the ballot.

Q Likelihood to vote for the youngest voter group (18-24 years) compared to citizens 25 years old and older (% - EU27)

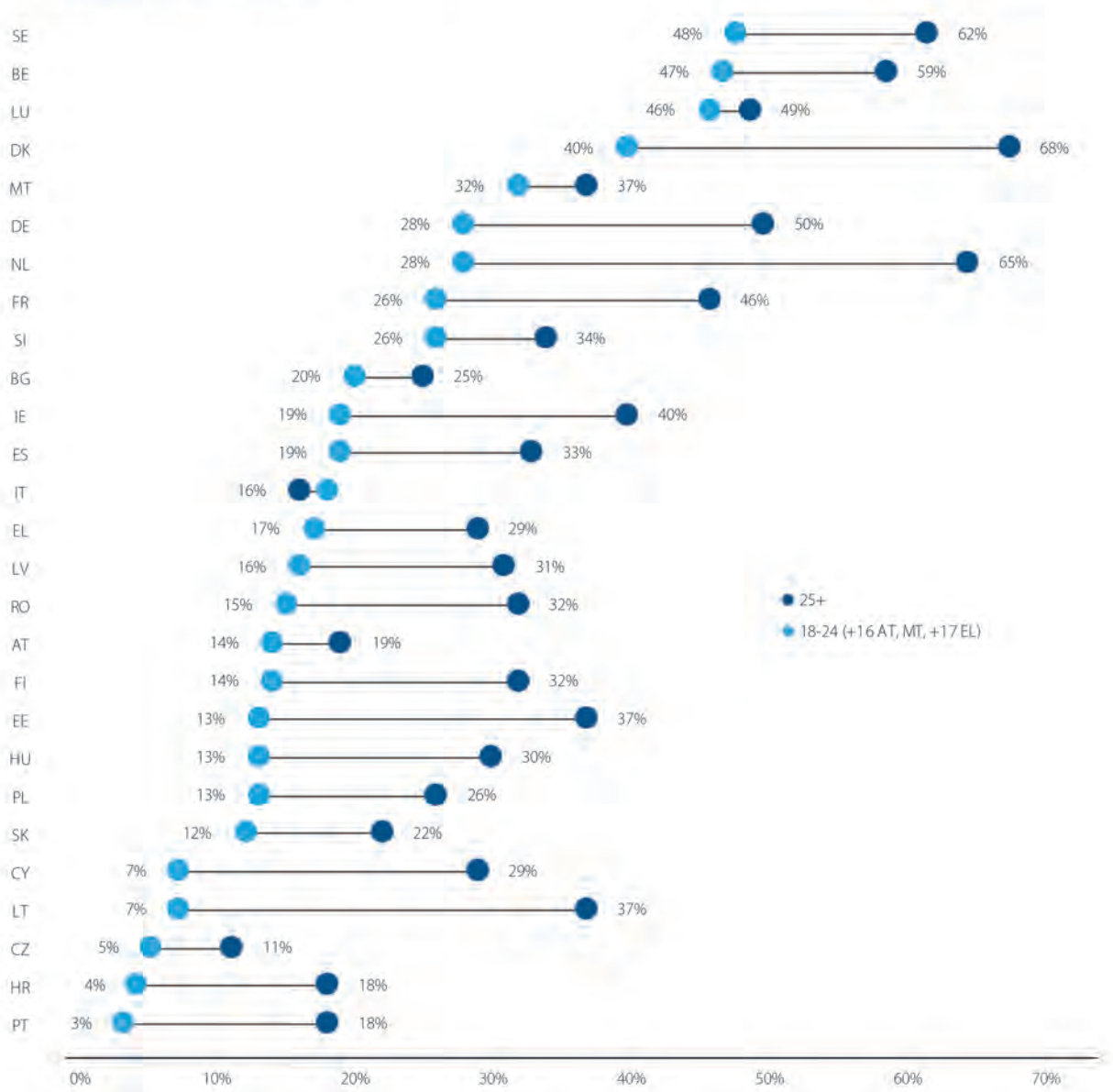


Looking at the generational gaps across Member States for the share of those who responded to be 'very likely' to vote, the lowest percentage for young people can be observed in Portugal (3%), followed by Croatia (4%) and Czechia (5%), while the highest score is recorded in Sweden (48%). Results for this survey indicator correspond well with the turnout level of young people in the last European elections in 2014. Indeed, it was comparatively low in Portugal (18,6%), Croatia (13,1%) and Czechia (16,4%) and among the highest in Sweden (65,5%).

The difference between the two age groups is the largest in the Netherlands, with 37 points difference and lowest in Luxembourg with 3 points. The only country where young people have more often indicated to be very likely to go vote than those older than 24 is Italy, although on a rather lower level and by a small margin: 18% of young voters compared to 16% of older age groups.

8 18-24 years, with exceptions for Austria and Malta 16 years old and Greece 17 years old

Q Share of the youngest voter group (18-24 years) responding 'very likely' to vote compared to citizens 25 years and older, grouped per Member State.



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), Q46

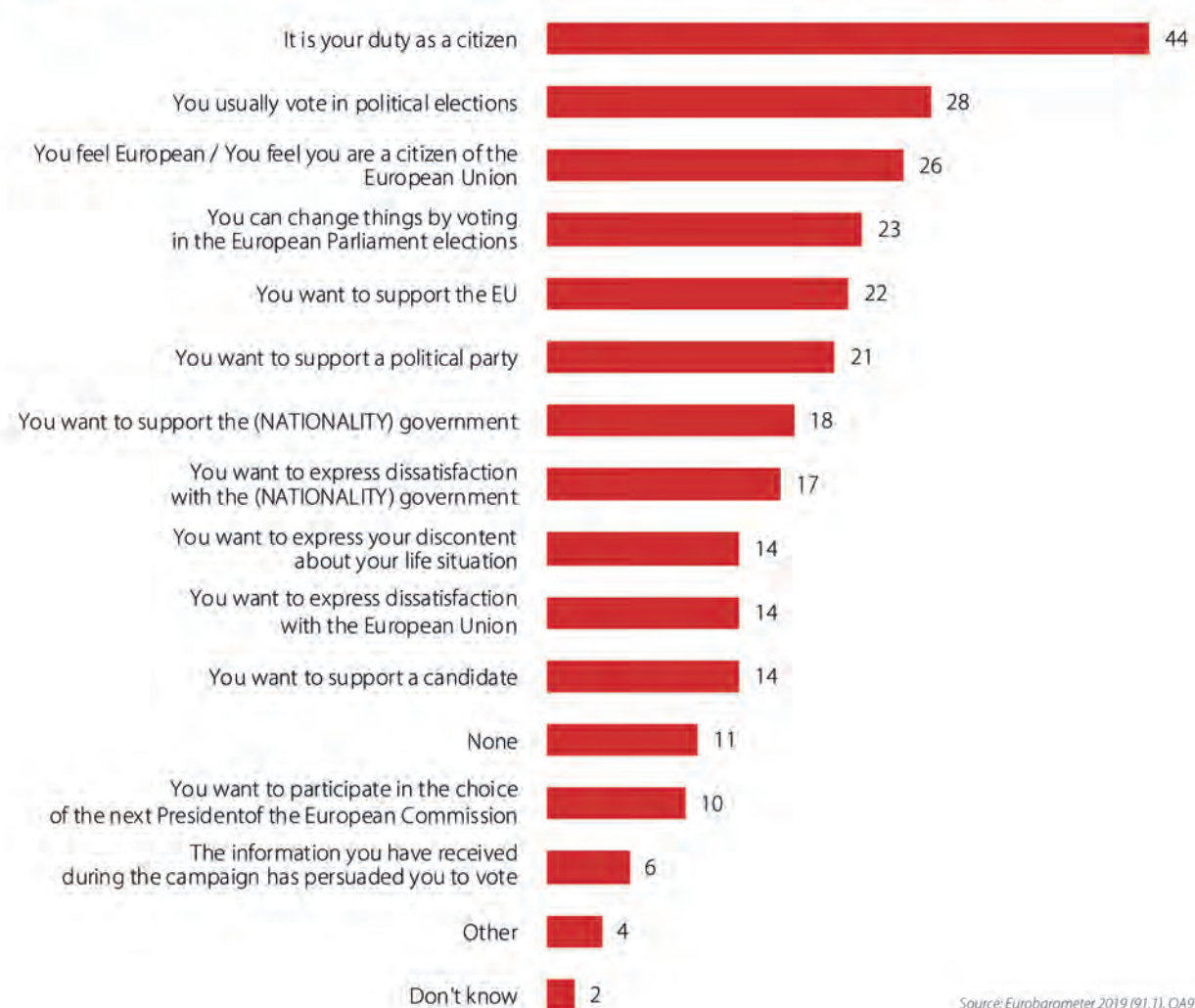
REASONS TO VOTE & CAMPAIGN TOPICS

In the light of the data presented above on the Europeans' propensity to vote and level of undecidedness, it is important to explore the potential reasons to vote or to abstain as well as to identify the most salient topics in the electoral campaign. This chapter analyses respondents' answers also with a view to the various level of likelihood to vote and expression of commitment in the upcoming elections.

Reasons to vote in the European elections

When asked about their main reasons to vote in the European elections, the largest share of respondents say because 'it is their duty' as a citizen (44%). This top mention is followed by a block of five reasons, with more

Q Regardless of whether you are going to vote or not in the next European Parliament elections, what are the reasons, if any, why you would vote in these European Parliament elections? Firstly? And then? (Max. 4 answers) (% - EU)



than 20% of responses: 28% say they usually vote in political elections, 26% would vote because they feel they are a citizen of the European Union. While 23% think they can change things by voting in the European Parliament elections, while 22% want to support the European Union and 21% want to support a political party.

The reasons mentioned the most by those who are 'very likely to vote' remain by and large the same, yet are expressed with a higher salience:

- It is their duty as a citizen (57%)
- They usually vote in political elections (42%)
- They feel they are a citizen of the European Union (36%)
- They want to support the EU (32%)
- They can change things by voting in the European elections (30%)
- They want to support a political party (26%)

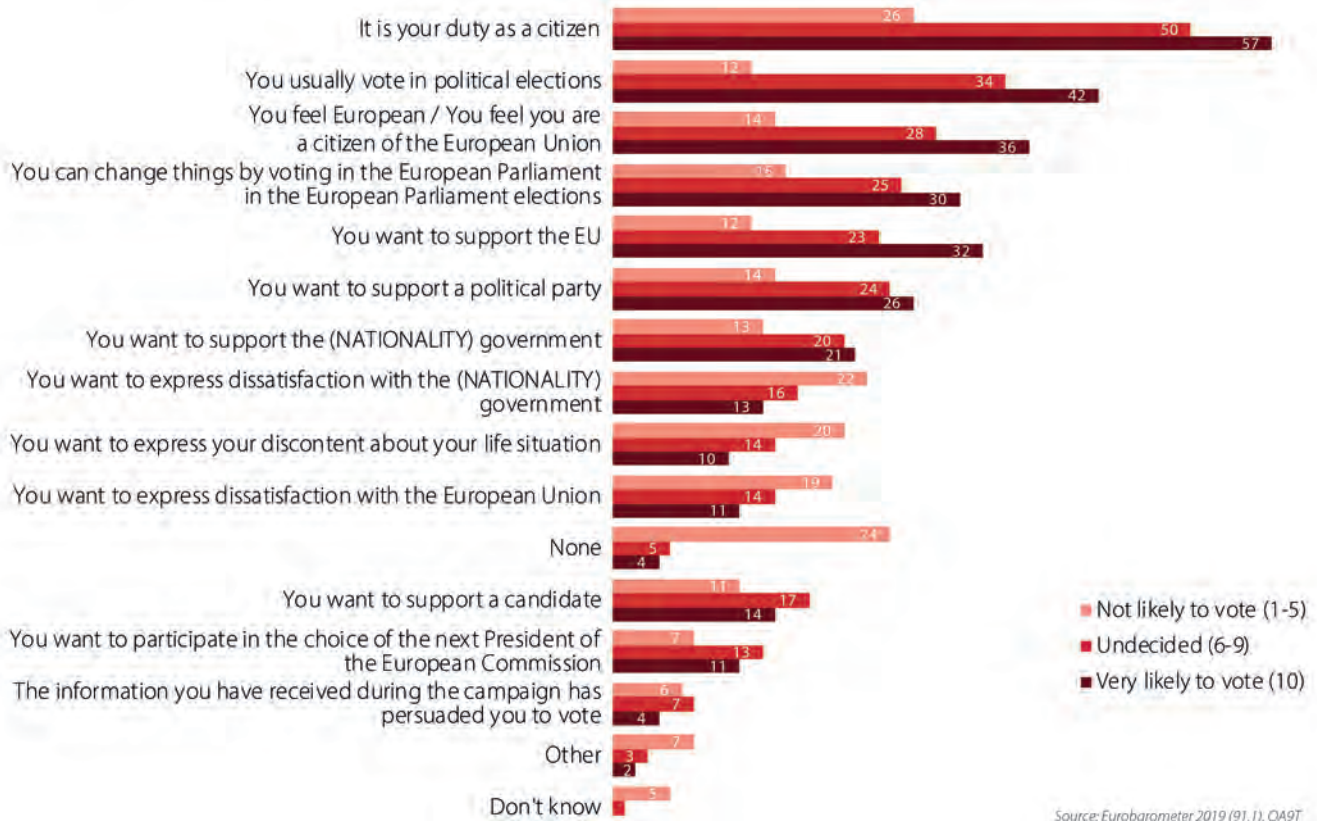
A similar increased salience, while lower than for the committed voters, can be observed also for the 'undecided voters', i.e. respondents between 6 and 9 on the scale for the propensity to vote:

- It is their duty as a citizen (50%)
- They usually vote in political elections (34%)
- They feel they are a citizen of the European Union (28%)
- They can change things by voting in the European elections (25%)
- They want to support a political party (24%)
- They want to support the EU (23%)

Last, but not least it is interesting to identify which reasons for voting respondents would give who declared themselves as not likely to vote: While voting as duty for citizens still tops the list with 26%, following motivators differ:

- They want to express dissatisfaction with their national government (22%)
- They want to express discontent with their life situation (20%)
- They want to express dissatisfaction with the EU (19%)

Q Regardless of whether you are going to vote or not in the next European Parliament elections, what are the reasons, if any, why you would vote in these European Parliament elections? Firstly? And then? (Max. 4 answers) (% - EU27)



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA9T

The detailed differences per Member State are displayed in the table on the following page. While looking at the data, it is important to keep in mind that voting is compulsory in five countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Cyprus, and Greece.

Q Regardless of whether you are going to vote or not in the next European Parliament elections, what are the reasons, if any, why you would vote in these European Parliament elections? (Max. 4 answers)

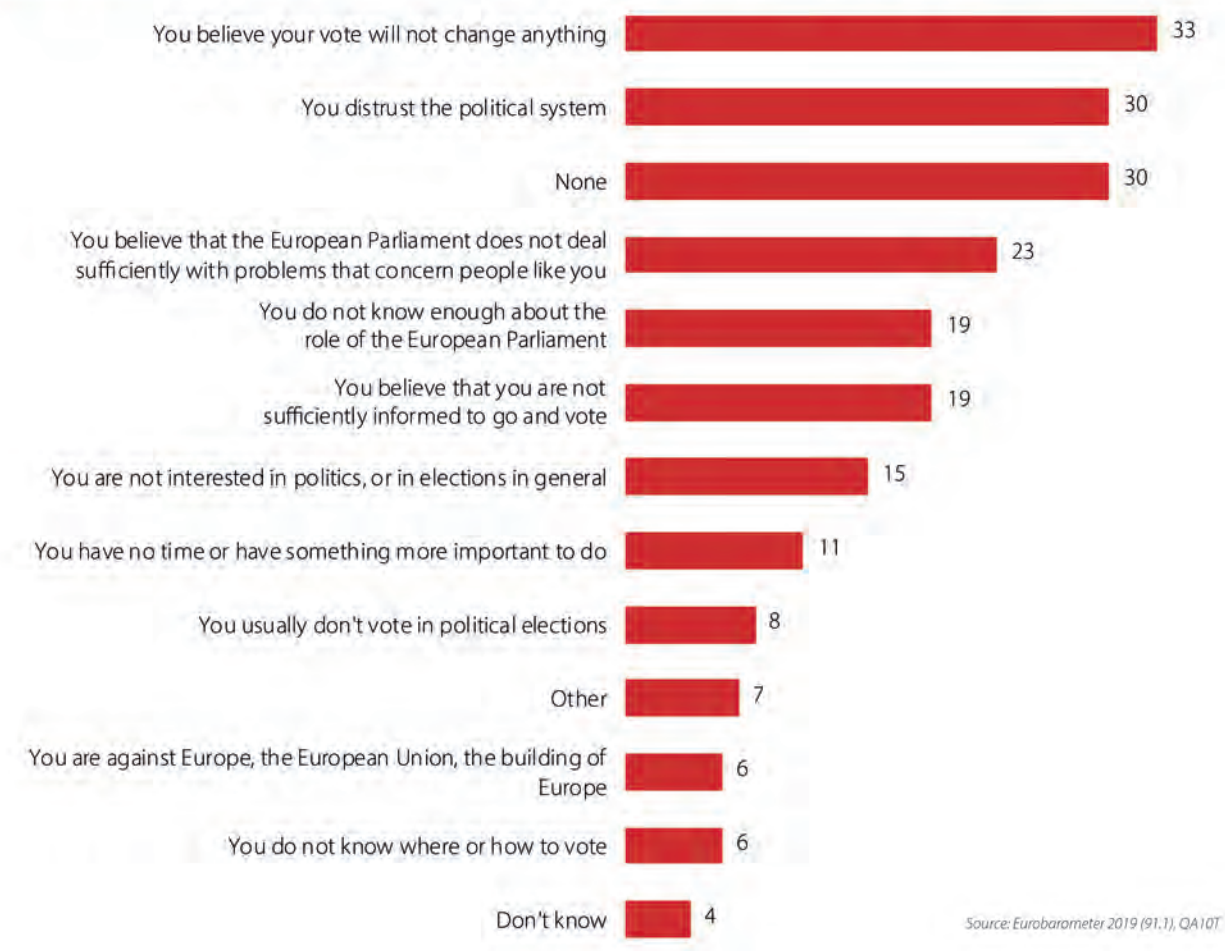
	It is your duty as a citizen	You feel European / You feel you are a citizen of the European Union	You want to support the EU	You can change things by voting in the European Parliament elections	You usually vote in political elections	You want to support a political party	You want to express dissatisfaction with the (NATIONALITY) government	You want to support the (NATIONALITY) government	You want to express your discontent about your life situation	You want to participate in the choice of the next President of the European Commission	You want to support a candidate	You want to express dissatisfaction with the European Union	The information you have received during the campaign has persuaded you to vote	None (SPONTANEOUS)	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't Know
EU27	44	26	22	23	29	21	17	18	15	10	14	14	6	11	4	2
BE	59	28	23	24	24	22	15	10	17	10	12	14	4	7	7	0
BG	41	20	23	17	30	27	14	12	19	9	16	6	6	9	3	5
CZ	22	16	9	12	23	29	15	23	16	6	20	24	7	7	8	4
DK	64	36	35	26	39	19	3	24	2	8	12	10	6	7	6	1
DE	36	33	35	24	30	27	16	22	13	9	12	15	6	12	3	1
EE	51	28	22	13	21	16	7	24	8	2	22	5	5	16	5	5
IE	52	23	26	19	33	18	13	21	12	12	24	9	10	9	4	2
EL	53	21	10	28	35	32	27	13	30	13	19	20	6	9	3	0
ES	46	22	14	24	28	21	13	15	10	9	14	12	3	15	6	3
FR	51	25	23	22	30	10	24	12	22	9	8	18	3	11	3	2
HR	42	18	15	17	28	22	35	14	31	8	18	17	5	6	3	1
IT	45	22	16	19	25	21	15	21	12	14	12	21	7	11	5	1
CY	49	20	10	15	29	25	11	22	13	7	30	8	4	22	3	1
LV	50	20	18	22	29	10	21	18	14	3	19	8	3	18	3	2
LT	67	27	24	15	30	15	7	17	10	4	20	5	5	10	6	1
LU	51	39	40	24	27	15	5	21	7	14	8	11	3	6	11	2
HU	36	26	16	23	27	20	22	24	19	12	10	16	14	10	2	2
MT	53	23	16	27	24	22	11	26	8	3	21	3	4	10	3	8
NL	52	46	34	48	50	26	7	16	4	13	7	12	5	3	3	0
AT	34	27	26	25	25	29	18	22	16	18	17	20	14	11	5	1
PL	39	20	17	18	25	23	15	24	10	7	20	6	5	10	3	7
PT	56	22	9	14	30	18	9	17	12	15	15	6	3	20	5	2
RO	45	22	21	20	23	18	27	14	29	11	16	10	10	9	2	3
SI	48	27	19	14	21	19	12	17	11	9	25	9	5	17	7	1
SK	34	20	19	23	17	20	18	14	20	8	27	10	10	9	7	3
FI	47	38	25	35	39	21	10	20	4	6	23	11	6	11	3	1
SE	59	34	36	61	46	29	5	14	1	11	7	9	3	6	2	1

Reasons to abstain in the European elections

In addition to giving their reasons to vote, respondents were also asked to name the main reasons for which, if any, they would not vote in the European ballot.

- On EU average, one third (34%) of citizens of voting age, were they to abstain, would do so believing that their vote will not change anything.
- 31% of respondents, were they to abstain, would not vote because they distrust the political system.
- 15% of citizens would not vote because they are not interested in politics or in elections in general.
- 23% of respondents gave as reasons for abstaining the belief that the European Parliament does not deal sufficiently with problems that concern people like them.
- 19% of citizens would abstain as they do not know enough about the role of the European Parliament - the same number as those who would abstain as they believe not to be sufficiently informed.
- 15% of citizens are not interested in politics, or in elections in general
- 30% of respondents could give no specific reason why they would choose to abstain.

Q Regardless of whether you are going to vote or not in the next European Parliament elections, what are the reasons, if any, why you would not vote in the European Parliament elections? Firstly? And then? (Max. 4 answers) (% - EU27)



Looking firstly at 'undecided voters', their main reasons for not voting were they to decide to abstain are:

- 35% of 'undecided' citizens of voting age believe their vote will not change anything
- 30% of these respondents distrust the political system
- 25% believe that the EP does not deal sufficiently with problems that concern people like them
- 22% believe that they are not sufficiently informed to go and vote
- 21% would abstain because they do not know enough about the role of the European Parliament
- 13% would abstain because they have no time or have something more important to do, while
- 12% are not interested in politics or in elections in general

Reasons most mentioned among citizens who are 'not likely to vote' are:

- their vote will not change anything (45%)
- they distrust the political system (42%)
- they believe that the EP does not deal sufficiently with problems that concern people like them (27%)
- they are not interested in politics, or in elections in general (26%)
- they believe that they are not sufficiently informed to go and vote (22%)
- they do not know enough about the role of the European Parliament (22%)
- because they usually do not vote (15%)
- because they have no time or have something more important to do (12%)

Q Regardless of whether you are going to vote or not in the next European Parliament elections, what are the reasons, if any, why you would not vote in these European Parliament elections? Firstly? And then? (Max. 4 answers) (% - EU27)



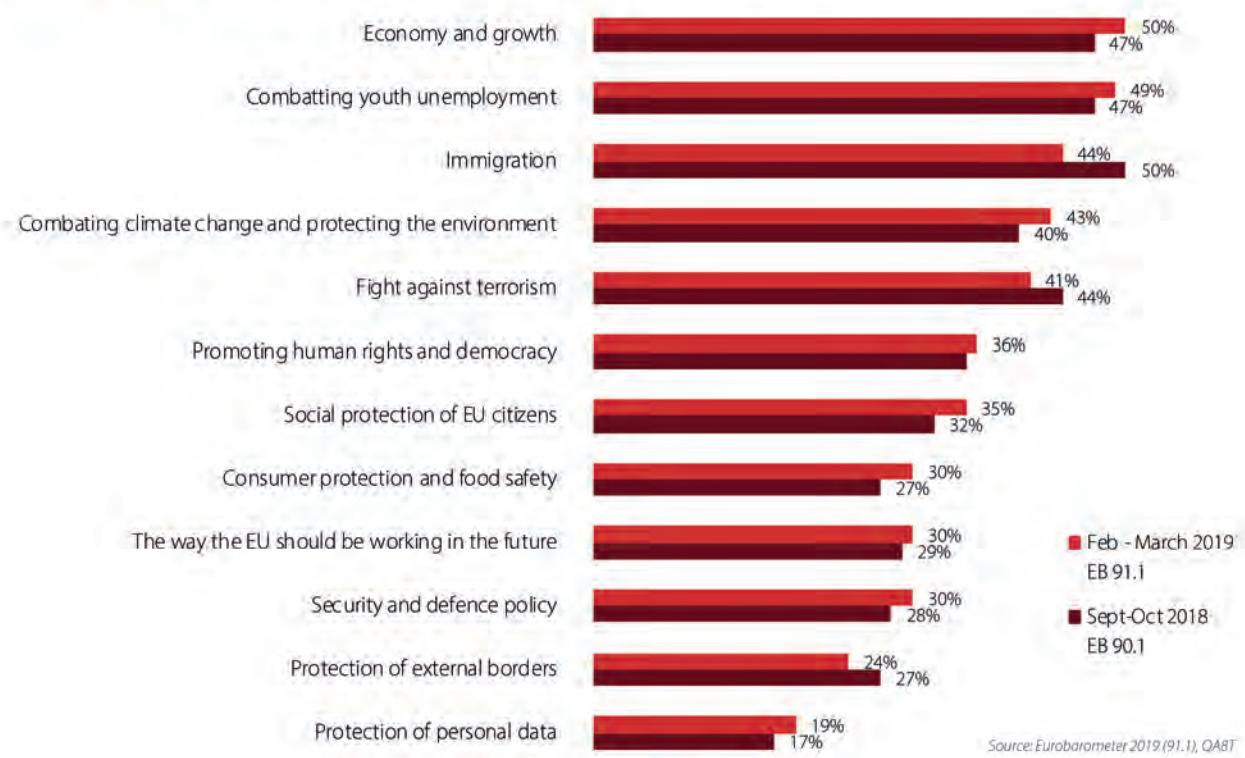
Q Regardless of whether you are going to vote or not in the next European Parliament elections, what are the reasons, if any, why you would not vote in the European Parliament elections? (Max. 4 answers)

	You believe your vote will not change anything	You distrust the political system	You believe that the European Parliament does not deal sufficiently with problems that concern people like you	You are not interested in politics, or in elections in general	You do not know enough about the role of the European Parliament	You believe that you are not sufficiently informed to go and vote	You usually don't vote in political elections	You have no time or have something more important to do	You are against Europe, the European Union, the building of Europe	You do not know where or how to vote	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	None (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't Know
EU27	34	31	23	15	19	19	8	11	6	6	7	30	4
BE	44	35	29	19	24	22	5	12	5	7	14	14	1
BG	39	28	25	16	14	16	9	12	5	3	5	26	9
CZ	38	28	37	18	27	22	11	20	9	7	8	10	5
DK	23	16	13	12	27	27	4	12	5	4	16	35	3
DE	30	22	25	12	13	15	8	7	5	3	2	46	3
EE	37	18	19	19	18	10	8	12	4	3	6	37	6
IE	29	26	21	19	23	23	10	16	6	8	12	26	4
EL	52	50	41	18	20	19	7	16	12	7	5	22	0
ES	29	40	15	12	21	19	9	5	3	4	11	30	4
FR	34	33	23	12	18	22	6	8	6	6	5	35	3
HR	51	44	33	29	23	13	11	23	7	5	6	9	2
IT	39	37	27	14	21	18	6	10	11	8	6	23	2
CY	51	48	33	22	24	19	12	8	6	3	2	25	0
LV	39	30	26	14	16	15	6	10	3	5	5	35	3
LT	48	35	27	23	20	17	10	15	2	4	9	20	2
LU	30	24	23	12	14	19	8	7	3	6	20	24	5
HU	35	29	24	21	18	16	13	19	8	6	8	26	3
MT	30	27	20	24	13	13	9	4	5	4	3	29	14
NL	26	15	18	9	23	27	1	18	2	6	17	33	3
AT	39	32	29	21	24	25	14	27	13	9	6	23	2
PL	29	26	17	21	12	12	13	11	6	6	8	22	12
PT	33	31	19	18	28	21	7	8	3	3	8	31	3
RO	34	41	21	21	21	23	10	20	7	9	6	22	4
SI	36	29	25	17	13	16	12	16	3	6	11	30	2
SK	32	29	27	17	19	17	7	15	5	8	14	20	6
FI	40	21	20	19	31	35	9	12	6	7	6	27	1
SE	26	14	20	4	28	37	2	14	5	9	8	42	2

Campaign issues: Economy is growing, migration is on the move

For the third time, after spring 2018⁹ and autumn 2018¹⁰, citizens were asked which topics they would like to see debated as a matter of priority during the electoral campaign. Three months ahead of the European ballot the order of priorities of Europeans has changed. Economy and growth (50%, +3pp) as well as the fight against unemployment (49%, +2pp) have risen again to the forefront of citizens' mind, while migration (44%, -6pp) is losing importance. Continuing the trend already observed in the past survey, combating climate change and protecting the environment gathered an increased share of replies (43%, +3pp), ranging now just one percentage point after immigration and ahead of fight against terrorism (41%, -3pp).

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? (Max. 4 answers) (% - EU)

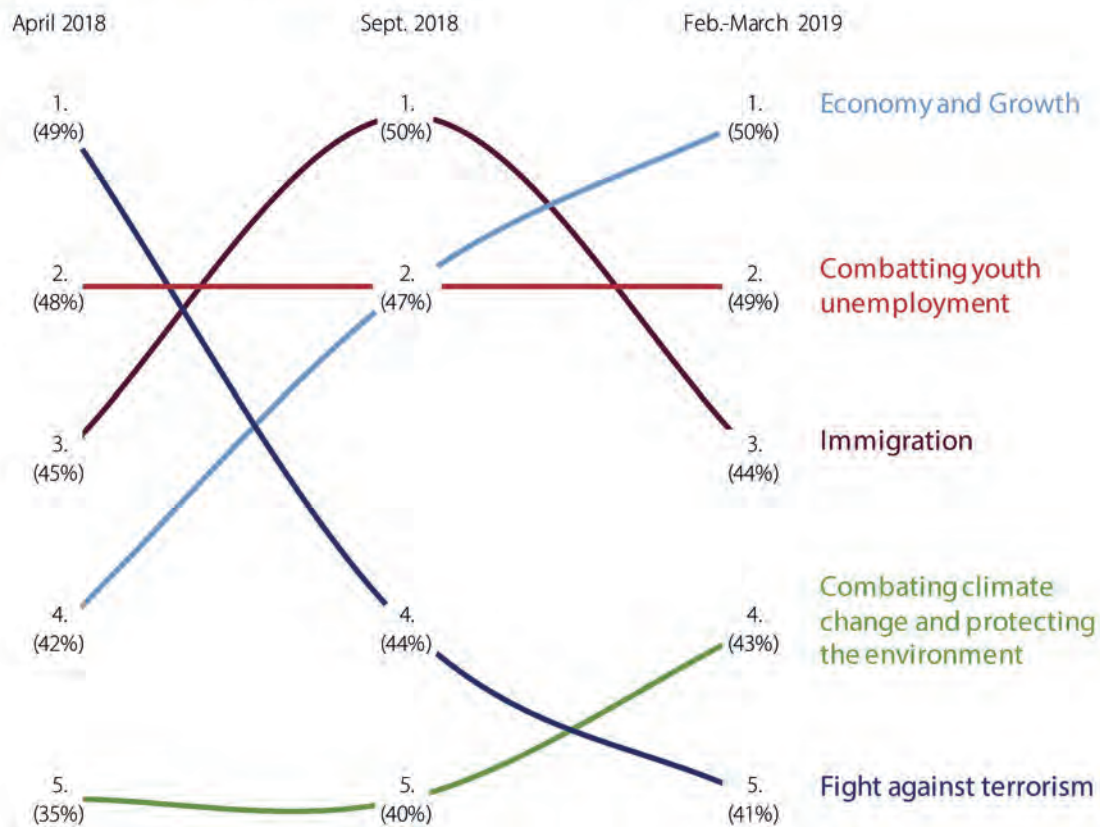


The next chart below shows how the ranking of topics has evolved over time since the first poll in which this question was asked (April 2018).

⁹ European elections: one year to go – Special Eurobarometer April 2018 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/be-heard/eurobarometer/eurobarometer-2018-democracy-on-the-move>

¹⁰ Taking up the challenge – Special Eurobarometer September 2018 <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2018/parlemeter-2018/report/en-parlemeter-2018.pdf>

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? (Max. 6 answers)
Ranking of the top 5 campaign topics over time

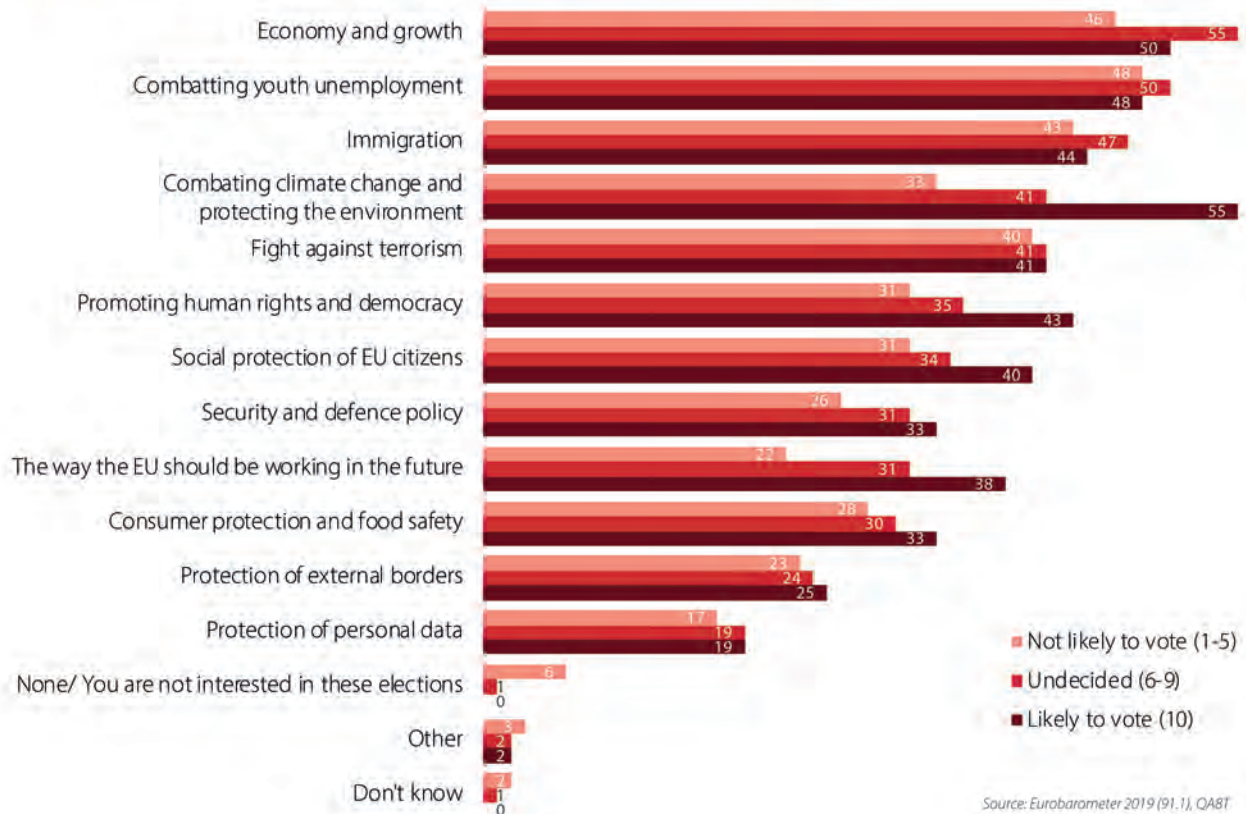


Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA8T

Economic and social issues keep mounting the scale of citizen's priorities and surpass the security aspects. From its fourth position in spring last year, economy and growth is now the first priority for Europeans, followed by combating youth unemployment which has maintained a stable second position over the past year. Immigration loses ground from its first rank in autumn 2018 to now third position, mirrored by a positive uptrend of combating climate change and protecting the environment. The fight against terrorism is on a descending curve from its first position in spring 2018 and leaves room to matters which strongly relate to social rights, consumer protection and food safety.

Looking at the topics of concern for Europeans according to their propensity to vote, findings show that citizens who are 'very likely' to participate in the next European elections are most interested in combating climate change (55%). On the other hand, undecided voters are more concerned about economy and growth, combating youth unemployment and immigration issues.

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? (Max. 6 answers) (% - EU)



In view of the next European ballot, the topics to be debated are of key interest not only if broken down by categories of likely voters but mostly when assessed against the different national contexts. Also from this angle data shows that the order of priorities has also evolved across Member States.

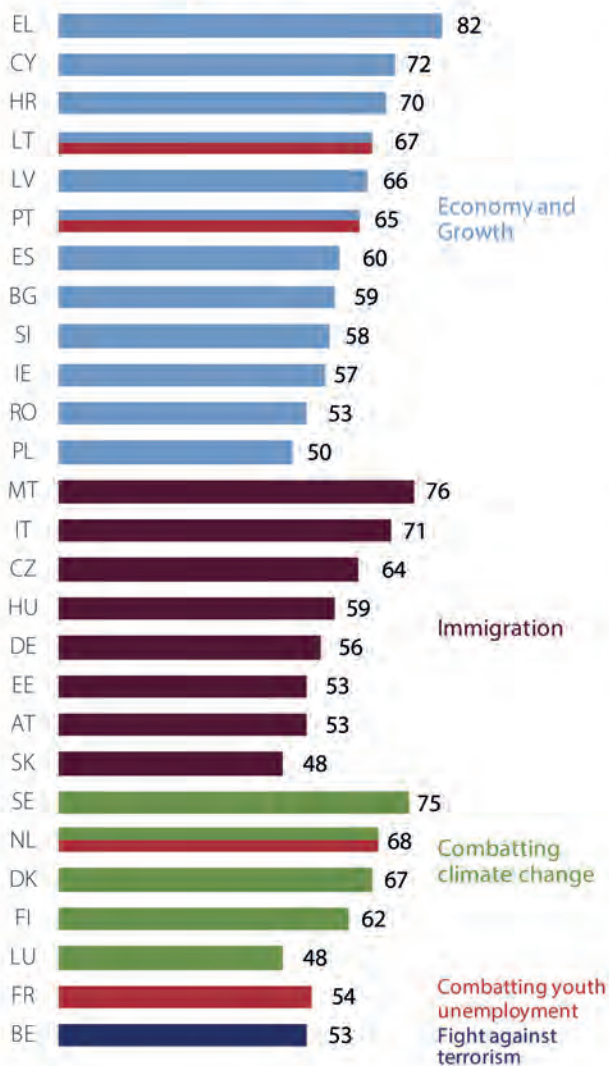
In September 2018, immigration was cited as the first key issue for debate in nine countries, whereas in February-March 2019 the same theme is considered the most important one in only four countries (Malta, Hungary, Czechia and Italy¹¹). Combating climate change and environmental protection has become the main topic in seven countries (Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany) while this was the case for only five Member States six months before.

At the same time, in comparison with the previous survey, there are now three additional countries putting the fight against youth unemployment as top priority.

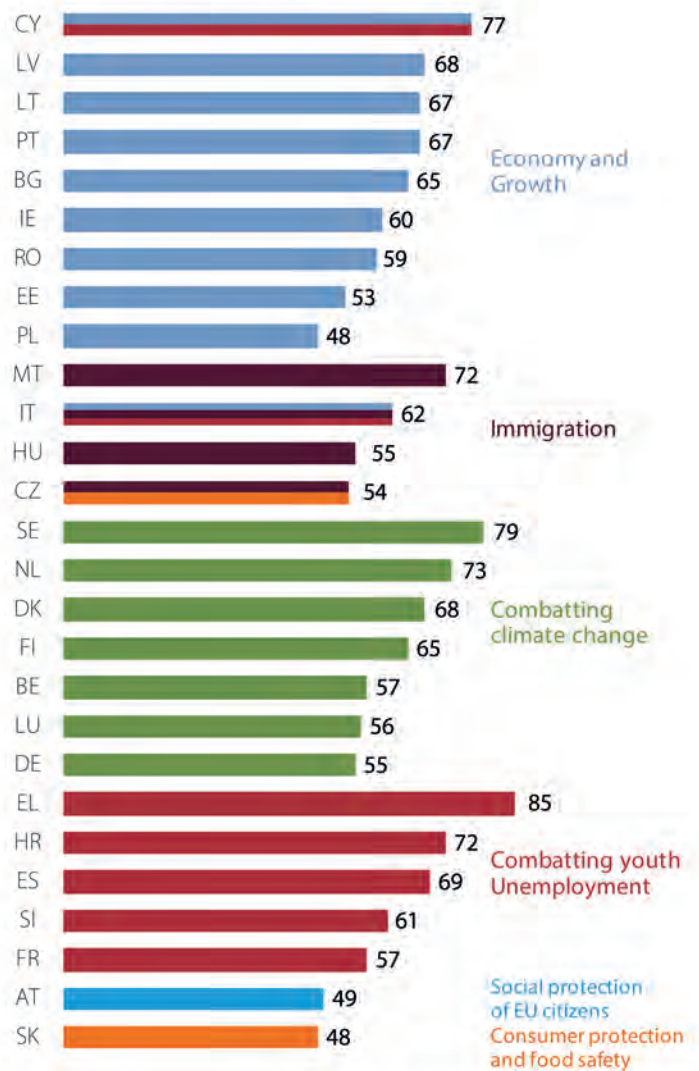
¹¹ In Italy there is an equal share of respondents which mention migration, economy and growth and combating youth unemployment

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? (Max. 6 answers) (%)

September 2018



Feb. - March 2019



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA10T and Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA8T



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? (%)

	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		Don't know
	February / March 2019	Diff. / March 2018	February / March 2019	Diff. / March 2018	February / March 2019	Diff. / March 2018	February / March 2019	Diff. / March 2018	February / March 2019	Diff. / March 2018	February / March 2019	Diff. / March 2018	February / March 2019	Diff. / March 2018	February / March 2019	Diff. / March 2018	February / March 2019	Diff. / March 2018	February / March 2019	Diff. / March 2018	February / March 2019	Diff. / March 2018	February / March 2019	Diff. / March 2018	
EU27	44%	-6	50%	+3	35%	+3	30%	+3	43%	+3	36%	+1	41%	-3	30%	+1	49%	+2	30%	+2	24%	-3	19%	+2	1%
BE	44%	-3	44%	-2	42%	+9	26%	-3	57%	+10	34%	+6	43%	-10	27%	+2	38%	-8	21%	=	22%	-1	23%	+2	-
BG	39%	-4	65%	+6	53%	+11	43%	+3	23%	+5	23%	+4	38%	-1	33%	+3	42%	+5	27%	=	30%	+4	23%	+3	2%
CZ	54%	-10	32%	-4	25%	-3	41%	+5	27%	=	21%	-6	54%	+4	32%	-4	17%	-3	35%	-2	47%	-6	16%	-2	2%
DK	41%	-14	39%	-2	30%	+2	30%	+1	68%	+1	42%	+2	46%	-2	30%	+1	25%	=	34%	+6	28%	+1	25%	+2	1%
DE	48%	-8	34%	+2	42%	+2	32%	+5	55%	+3	37%	+2	38%	-7	32%	-1	38%	-2	29%	+5	29%	-4	24%	+5	1%
EE	51%	-2	53%	+6	30%	-1	17%	-2	28%	+1	31%	+4	39%	+1	30%	+4	29%	-4	48%	+8	30%	-3	22%	+1	3%
IE	37%	=	60%	+3	33%	+2	25%	+2	34%	=	39%	+3	30%	-10	33%	+6	35%	-3	21%	=	20%	-4	26%	-1	3%
EL	59%	-5	81%	-1	48%	+8	33%	=	32%	+1	36%	+5	34%	+5	34%	+2	85%	+9	39%	+1	38%	-1	16%	+2	-
ES	47%	-5	64%	+4	29%	+2	18%	-3	35%	=	42%	=	41%	-2	18%	-4	69%	+9	21%	+1	12%	-6	8%	-1	2%
FR	32%	-7	43%	+10	34%	+3	36%	+6	52%	-1	34%	+5	50%	-3	29%	+2	57%	+3	25%	-2	19%	-2	19%	+2	1%
HR	33%	-2	68%	-2	48%	=	48%	+5	30%	+4	32%	=	36%	-3	20%	+1	72%	+3	21%	+1	21%	+1	17%	+1	1%
IT	62%	-9	62%	=	22%	+2	25%	+2	30%	+5	25%	-2	41%	-2	27%	+5	62%	+3	28%	-1	18%	-1	16%	=	1%
CY	35%	-6	77%	+5	34%	+6	23%	-2	35%	+5	40%	-2	36%	+1	19%	+4	77%	+5	47%	+4	24%	+1	11%	-7	-
LV	33%	-5	68%	+2	42%	-1	32%	+7	26%	+5	28%	+1	25%	-7	22%	+2	46%	-2	31%	=	24%	-2	20%	+2	1%
LT	39%	+2	67%	=	55%	+6	28%	+1	27%	+8	32%	+1	26%	-3	29%	=	56%	=	33%	-2	17%	-5	22%	+1	1%
LU	39%	-7	32%	+6	36%	+3	25%	-2	56%	+8	30%	-4	42%	+3	38%	+10	51%	+3	23%	+5	14%	-6	21%	+8	2%
HU	55%	-4	51%	+2	31%	+3	27%	+2	33%	+5	36%	-5	38%	+2	30%	+1	39%	=	38%	+1	39%	-4	17%	+1	1%
MT	72%	-4	24%	-7	24%	+2	25%	+7	50%	+11	40%	+2	34%	-15	23%	-2	17%	-10	13%	-7	17%	=	14%	+3	5%
NL	41%	-5	43%	+2	33%	+3	28%	-1	73%	+5	53%	+2	49%	+4	56%	+3	22%	-5	43%	+3	22%	-2	33%	+9	-
AT	48%	-5	39%	-3	49%	-2	42%	+3	48%	+3	35%	+4	33%	-1	46%	+4	42%	-3	29%	+1	44%	-4	31%	=	-
PL	28%	-10	48%	-2	31%	+4	28%	+4	25%	+4	33%	+2	38%	-7	25%	+2	34%	+1	36%	=	25%	-5	14%	-1	5%
PT	35%	=	67%	+2	62%	+13	31%	+6	46%	+21	52%	+16	43%	-5	33%	+8	60%	-4	41%	+14	20%	+2	15%	-1	1%
RO	27%	+5	59%	+6	38%	+3	44%	+8	28%	+2	45%	+7	30%	=	25%	+2	51%	+7	35%	+10	22%	=	20%	+1	2%
SI	32%	-6	59%	-3	41%	+2	38%	+13	41%	+13	33%	+3	27%	-1	25%	+3	61%	+8	13%	-4	24%	-3	16%	+1	1%
SK	47%	-1	47%	+5	41%	+9	48%	+17	36%	+11	36%	+9	31%	+3	36%	+8	46%	+6	30%	+2	38%	+7	14%	-2	1%
FI	45%	=	40%	+2	24%	+3	22%	=	65%	+3	52%	+3	43%	-5	34%	-2	42%	-3	53%	+5	29%	-4	20%	+1	1%
SE	42%	-4	40%	-7	31%	+5	23%	+3	79%	+4	69%	=	49%	+7	58%	+4	20%	-4	38%	+4	16%	-1	13%	+1	1%

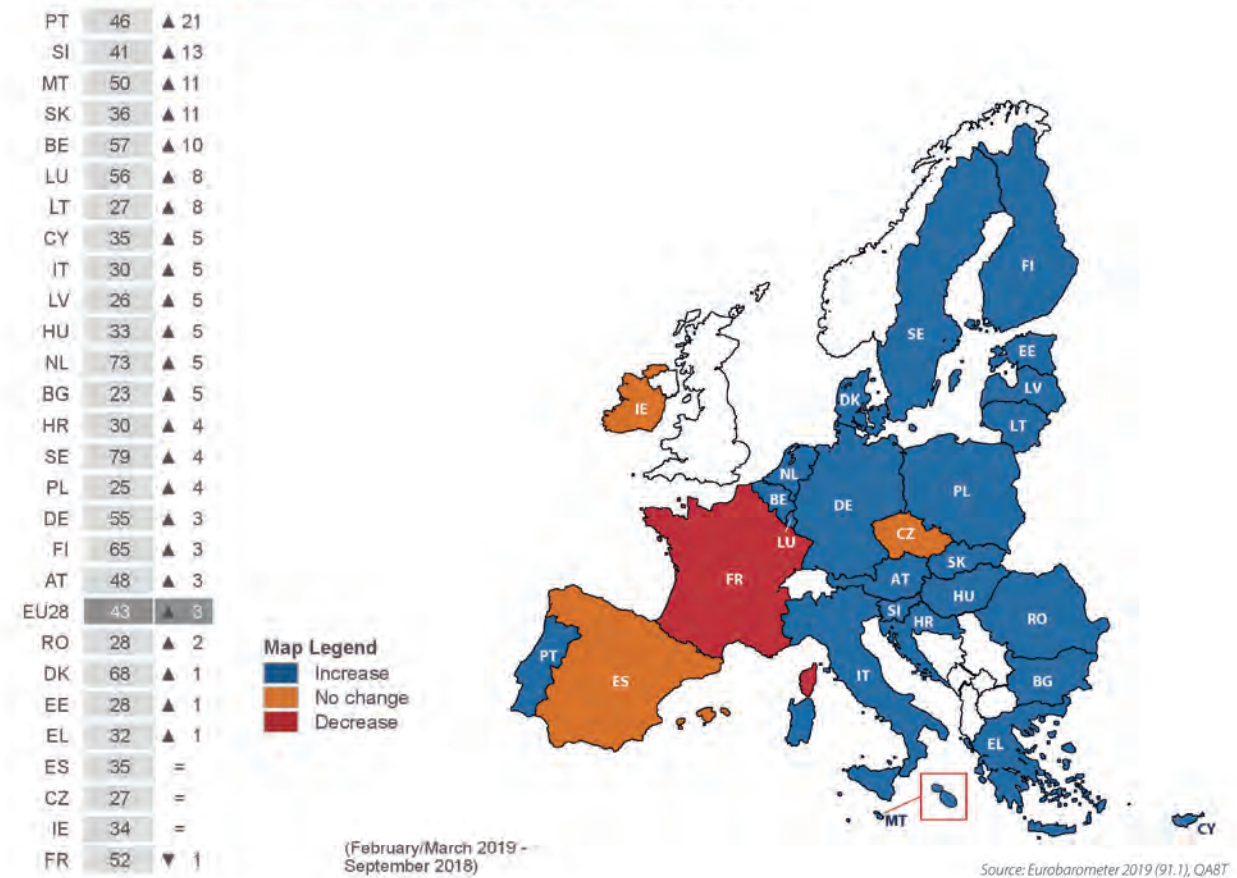
Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), Q410T

Focus on combating climate change and protecting the environment

Given the increasing importance of the theme and the vivid debate surrounding it, it is worth having a closer look at citizens' concern for climate change and environmental protection. As presented above, combating climate change and protecting the environment is the first key topic in seven EU Member States, as well as the absolute priority for citizens who are certain to vote in the next European Elections.

Behind this rising support we may find a deep-rooted public alertness towards natural disasters as well as specific national concerns regarding such events over the past year, such as the wild fires that touched some countries (e.g. Portugal or Sweden). Yet, it also reflects the increasing awareness around global environmental issues moved by public debates and events.

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? (Max. 6 answers)
 (% - 'Combating climate change and protecting the environment')



The findings confirm that the theme is generally more important for younger generations as well as for the most educated Europeans. Within socio-professional categories, 58% of the managers see it as one of the key topics to be debated during this campaign and one in two students list it among the most

pressing issues. The topic is also favoured by those who have a more favourable image of the European Union and call for a more important role of the European Parliament.

Looking at the national differences, Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark and Finland continue to be the leader countries on the topic with respect to citizens' interest. Portugal registers the biggest increase in respondents' replies (+21pp since September 2018), followed by Slovenia (+13pp), Slovakia (+11pp), Malta (+11pp) and Belgium (+10pp).

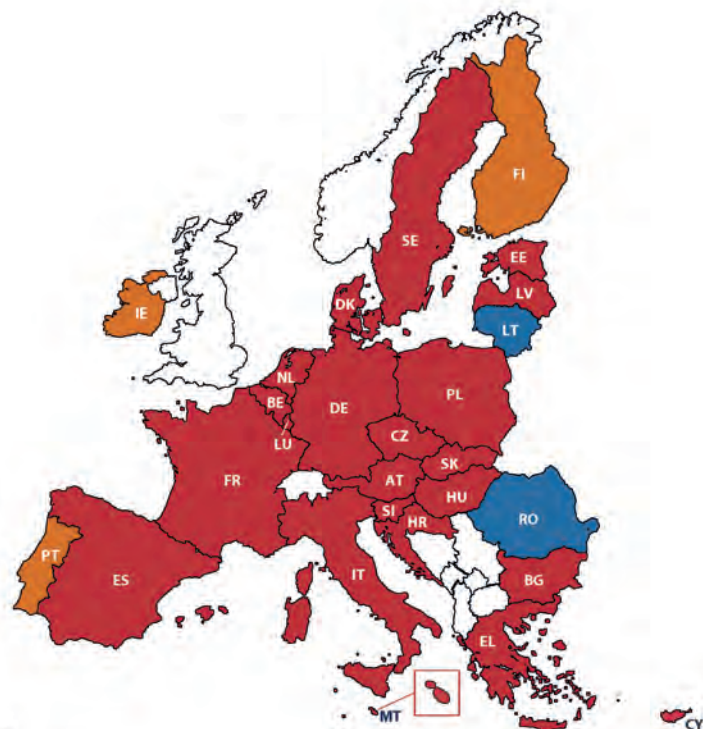
Focus on immigration

In contrast to climate change, the issue of immigration has lost significance as a campaign topic in this final Eurobarometer survey ahead of the European elections. Although the issue is still seen as a major concern by many Europeans, the importance attached to it has considerably dropped in the past six months. This is clearly visible both at EU level (44%, -6 points) and in some of the countries where immigration had been and still is at the core of the political discourse. Indeed, the largest decreases are recorded in Denmark (41%, -14pp), Czechia (54%, -10pp), Italy (62%, -9pp), and Germany (48%, -8pp).

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? (Max. 6 answers) (% - 'Immigration')

RO	27	▲ 5
LT	39	▲ 2
PT	35	=
IE	37	=
FI	45	=
SK	47	▼ 1
HR	33	▼ 2
EE	51	▼ 2
BE	44	▼ 3
MT	72	▼ 4
BG	39	▼ 4
SE	42	▼ 4
HU	55	▼ 4
NL	41	▼ 5
EL	59	▼ 5
ES	47	▼ 5
AT	48	▼ 5
LV	33	▼ 5
EU28	44	▼ 6
CY	35	▼ 6
SI	32	▼ 6
LU	39	▼ 7
FR	32	▼ 7
DE	48	▼ 8
IT	62	▼ 9
PL	28	▼ 10
CZ	54	▼ 10
DK	41	▼ 14

Map Legend
■ Increase
■ No Change
■ Decrease



(February/March 2019 - September 2018)

Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1), QA8T

Without losing sight of the complexity of the issue and of the many variables incorporated in the term 'immigration', the present data shows a developing new trend in public opinion.

One reason for this change may relate to the gradual reduction in number of applications for international protection in the EU as well as to the more limited number of 'arrivals' of asylum seekers during the winter season. The topic does not dominate anymore the main headlines of national newspapers and is becoming, in the eyes of Europeans, a less salient issue.

At the same time, the slowing down of the European and global economy has shifted the attention of citizens more towards economic matters. As in the case of climate change, the topics of economy and growth (+3 points) and youth unemployment (+2 points) have gained significance in the debate on the upcoming European elections.

A closer look at the data reveals that sociodemographic characteristics tend to show little differences to the aggregated European level. Only for length of education a noteworthy variation can be observed: the more educated a respondent is, the less likely he or she is to consider immigration as a matter of priority. Rather, the issue of immigration seems to be touching upon questions of different political views, also with respect to the EU. For example, citizens holding a negative image of the EU or wanting the European Parliament to play a less important role, often attribute a high priority to the issue of immigration.

FOCUS ON UK

A few days after the European leaders' decision to delay the deadline for the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU until 31 October 2019, the present focus compiles the most recent Eurobarometer data illustrating how Brexit, the EU and the European Parliament are perceived by UK citizens. The findings trace the ambivalent opinions which dominated the debate on Brexit since the start. Against the positive perception of the benefits enjoyed as a Member of the European Union, British views are more reluctant vis-a-vis the European institutions.

On the one side, a majority of British citizens still believes to this day that their country has benefited from being a member of the EU (54%). 45% of them would vote to remain in the EU if a referendum was held today.

On the other hand, they believe that their voice does not count enough and they generally have a less positive opinion of the European Parliament than citizens would have in other EU countries. In this light, unsurprisingly, the Parliament should play a less important role in the future for a majority of British respondents.

Strong feelings of uncertainty towards the future emerge from the study

A majority of the British citizens considers that things are not going in the right direction, neither in their country nor in the EU.

Across all trends, the generational gap remains a constant, pointing to a steady and much more favourable opinion of the youngest citizens towards the EU.

In February-March 2019, 66% of the 15-24 years old said that the country has benefited from being a member of the EU, for only 40% among the 55+. The youngest generations are also more likely to believe that their voice counts in the EU and that the European Parliament should play a more important role.

EU membership seen as beneficial in the UK

In autumn 2010, only 27% of UK citizens believed that their country had benefited from being a Member of the EU. Since then, the share of citizens holding this positive view has doubled, with 54% of UK respondents believing today that their country has benefited from being a member of the EU.

In contrast, the United Kingdom shows the highest proportion of citizens, compared to all other EU countries, considering EU membership of their country as 'a bad thing' (22%). However, a relative majority of its citizens (43%) still assesses it positively.

Eurobarometer data also shows the clear age divide among the British population when it comes to assessing the benefits of EU Membership: In March 2019, when asked whether the UK has benefited from being a Member of the EU, the young answer positively by 66% compared with 40% among the oldest generation.

Brexit: remain/leave today

This survey also takes stock of citizens' views on Brexit. The findings are clear: On EU27 average, 68% of Europeans would vote for their country to remain a member of the EU. Only 14% would vote to leave, 18% of respondents said that they were not sure how to decide.

In the United Kingdom, a relative majority of respondents (45%) would also vote to remain in the EU, yet the share of respondents who would vote to leave is the largest across all Member States (37%).

Nearly one in five UK respondents would not know how to vote. This quite elevated level of undecidedness, even after two years of national debate on the UK's withdrawal from the EU has even increased by six points over the past six months. It also mirrors the strong feeling among UK respondents that their voice does not count in the EU and well resonates with their perceptions on how things are going in the country and in the EU.

British voices in the EU

Indeed less than one third of British people have the impression that their voice counts in the EU (31%) with nearly one in two sharing this opinion when it comes to the national sphere (47%). The feeling has gradually weakened over the past years, especially in regards to the voices in the EU. Yet, the trend lines hide again a variety of patterns with much more negative results for the older generations.

Perceptions of the European Parliament

Looking at the expectations citizens have around the European Parliament, the UK ranks second (after Czechia) among the 28 EU countries for negative perceptions: A majority of citizens in the country would like the European Parliament to play a less important role in the future (42%). A different picture emerges though when looking at the youth who is overall much more inclined to have a positive perception of and to call for a more important role for the European Parliament.

Things are not going in the right direction...

Overall, for UK respondents things are going in the wrong direction in the EU (57%). In their view the UK itself is even on a worse track, as 64% believe things in their country are going in the wrong direction.

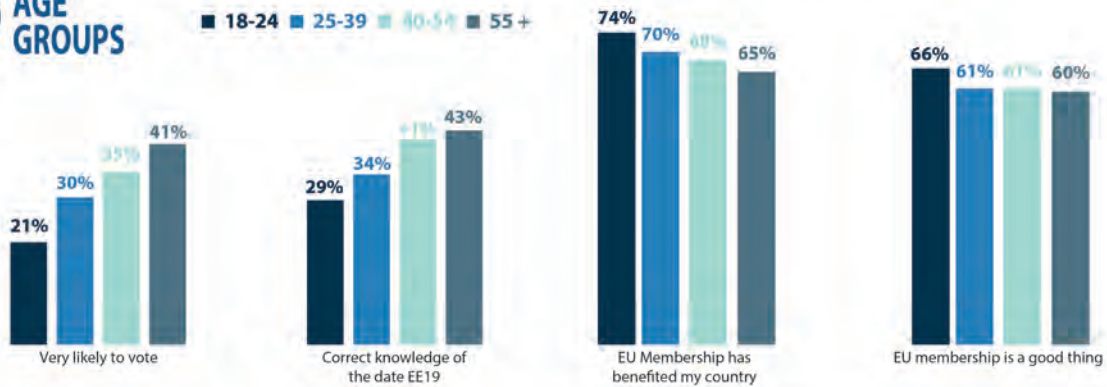
The proportion of respondents who share this opinion has significantly increased in the last six months, showing a plus of 3 percentage points for 'wrong direction' in the EU and a plus of 8 points for the UK itself

		Remain/Leave: I would vote to remain in the EU	I would like the EP to play a more important role	EU membership is a good thing	My country has benefited from being a Member	My voice counts in the EU	My voice counts in my country	Things are going in the wrong direction in the EU	Things are going in the wrong direction in my country
UK		45%	33%	43%	54%	31%	47%	57%	64%
Gender	Man	41%	33%	41%	52%	25%	45%	61%	65%
	Woman	50%	32%	46%	57%	36%	49%	53%	64%
Age Groups	15-24	53%	46%	51%	66%	36%	48%	35%	55%
	25-39	50%	46%	48%	63%	40%	41%	48%	65%
	40-54	53%	32%	54%	60%	34%	51%	65%	76%
	55+	34%	19%	29%	40%	20%	48%	66%	61%
Education ended at	15-	25%	19%	19%	33%	19%	44%	58%	55%
	16-19	41%	27%	40%	50%	29%	44%	57%	62%
	20+	62%	46%	63%	74%	41%	55%	58%	76%
	Still studying	64%	68%	61%	78%	41%	58%	53%	70%

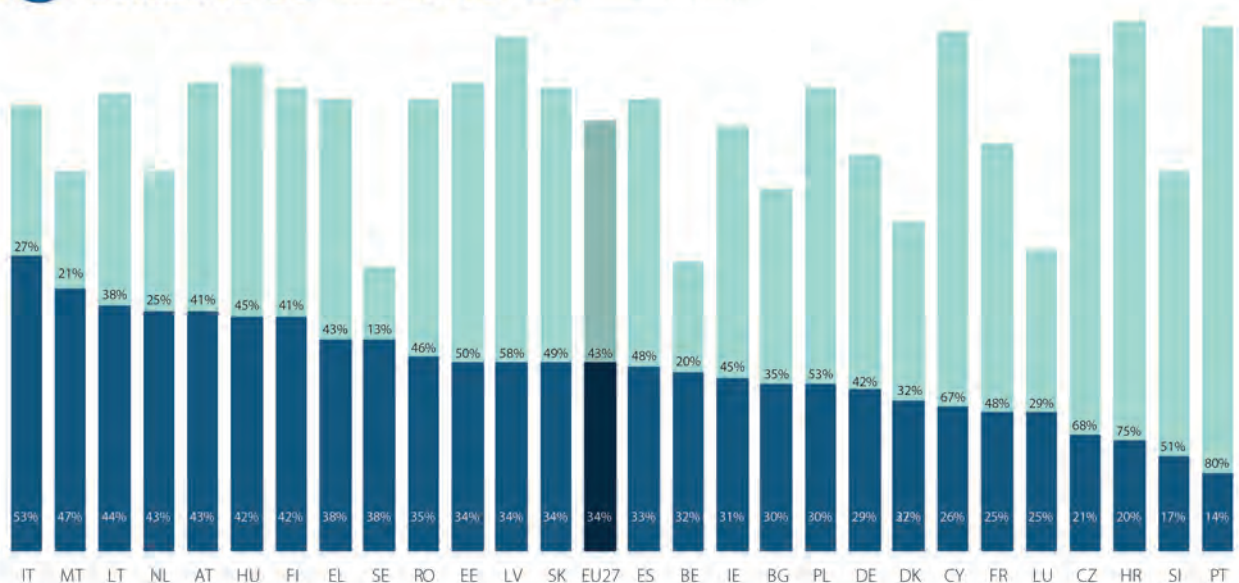
Young people have a significantly more favourable image of the EU membership and the benefits that come with it, when compared to older generations. Nevertheless, their likelihood to vote as well as their knowledge of the date of the 2019 European Elections remains quite low. Looking closer at the situation of this pro-European, yet silent young majority in the Member States, one can observe that the share of undecided voters is still large. Combating youth unemployment and climate change, as well as economy and growth are the key topics the undecided youth is most concerned about. Among the main drivers to vote, next to civic duties, they mention reasons with a strong EU-component.

GENERATION GAPS

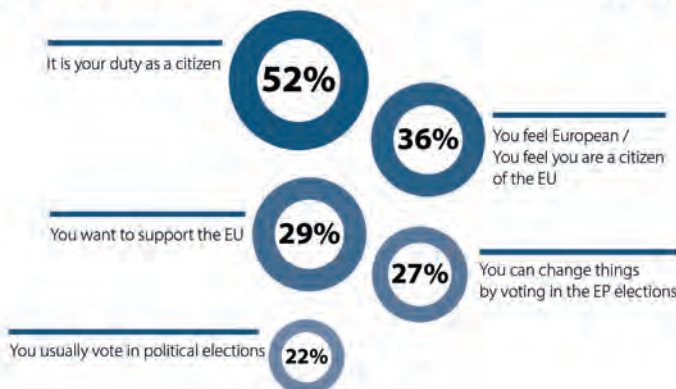
1 AGE GROUPS



2 LIKELIHOOD TO VOTE BY MEMBER STATE 18-24



3 VOTING REASONS



undecided
18-24

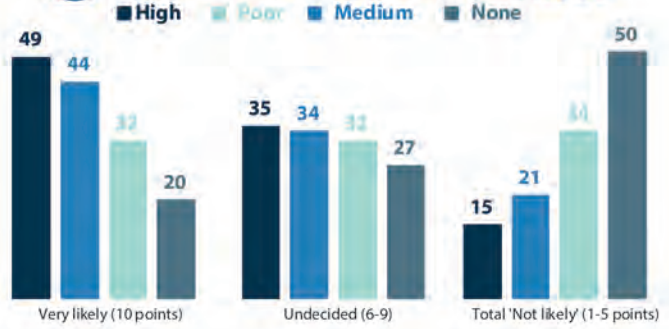
CAMPAIGN TOPICS

- 56% Combatting youth unemployment
- 47% Economy and growth
- 44% Combatting climate change and protecting the environment
- 41% Immigration
- 38% Promoting human rights and democracy
- 38% Fight against terrorism
- 38% Social protection of EU citizens

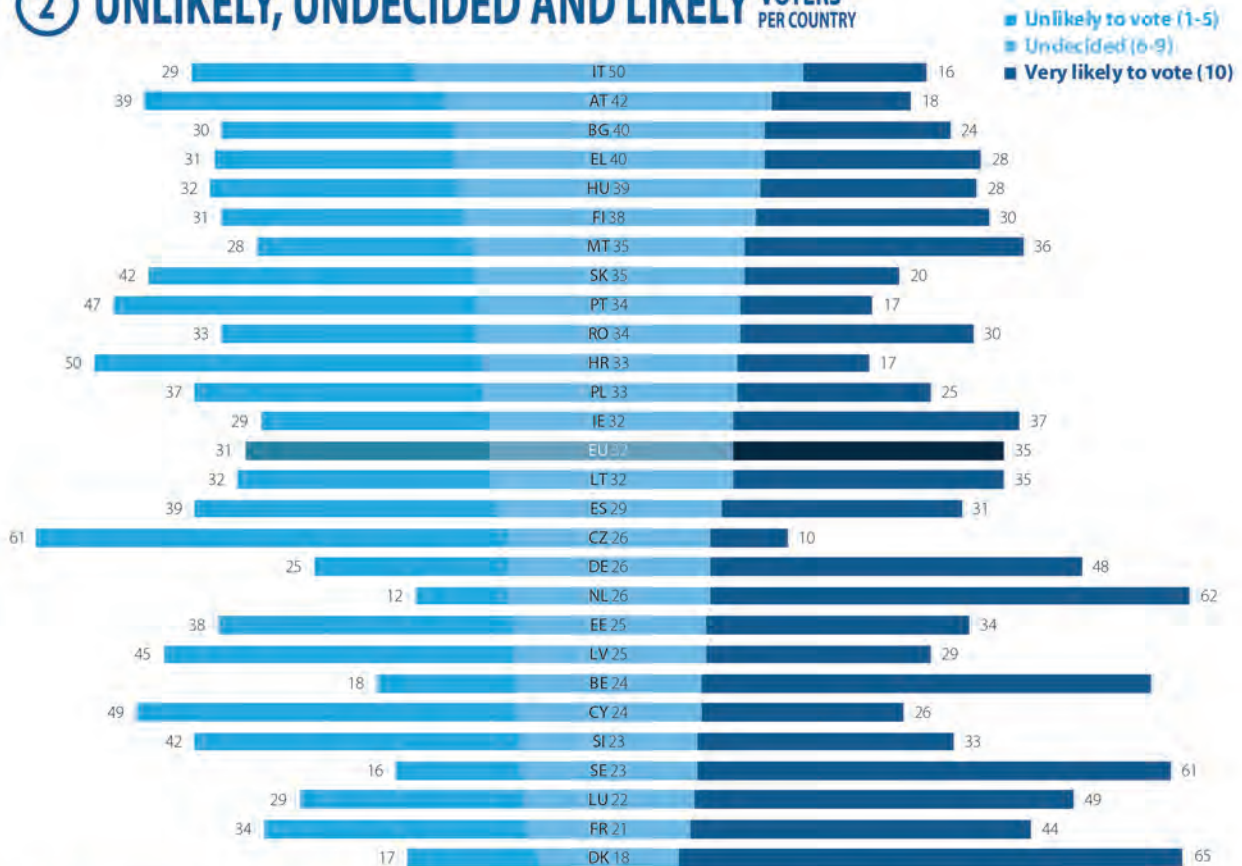
LIKELIHOOD TO VOTE

In March 2019 more than one third of Europeans say to be already very likely to vote but another third is still undecided. Citizens' openness towards the EU clearly affects their answers. Yet information channels can also play an important role: for example, people who never use the internet or have no internet access are generally less likely to go to the ballot. Last but not least, favourable personal economic situations seem to positively move the propensity to vote.

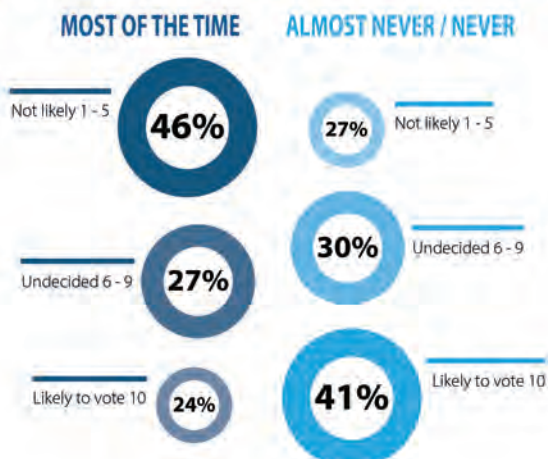
1 POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE EU



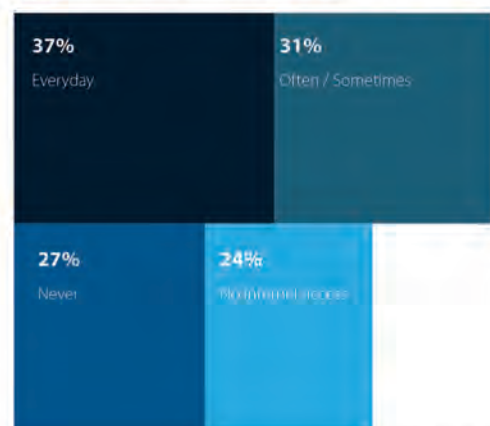
2 UNLIKELY, UNDECIDED AND LIKELY VOTERS PER COUNTRY



3 LIKELIHOOD TO VOTE BY DIFFICULTIES PAYING BILLS



4 VERY LIKELY TO VOTE BY USE OF INTERNET



Source: Eurobarometer 2019 (91.1)

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: 27.973 Europeans

Population: General population aged 15 or more

Methodology: Face-to-face

Fieldwork: 19 February to 4 March 2019, survey conducted by Kantar Public

Note on confidence intervals

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

SPRING EUROBAROMETER 2019: CLOSER TO THE CITIZENS, CLOSER TO THE BALLOT

This Eurobarometer survey of the European Parliament (EP/EB 91.1) was carried out in all 28 Member States of the European Union, from 19 February to 4 March 2019 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.

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