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The Future starts now!

10 cornerstones for a Dialogue Between the Progressive Family and the Millennials Generation

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The Future starts now!

10 cornerstones for a Dialogue

Between the Progressive Family and the Millennials Generation

The Paper builds on the results of the Millennial Dialogue surveys

Conducted by FEPS and Audience Net with the support of Members and Partners

In 11 EU Member States¹

Amy McDonald, one of the iconic singers of the Millennial Generation, sang that *you don't know a thing about the youth of today, stating your opinion, making it ring in my head all day...* Would that indeed be the case?

For over a decade now, after each and every election an old and somewhat worn-out story is being repeated. It features disenchanted, depressed and disengaged young people, who have turned their back to the political system. They *ignore* political appeals, they *distance* themselves from the campaigns and they *fail* to appear at the ballot boxes. Their absence within the framework of institutionalised political conversation makes them a target of political prejudice. Paradoxically, the more they abstain and the less they express, the more vigorously they are beleaguered with speeches, which are build on claim to describing who they are. From “*Generation X*” to “*Generation Z*” – all the labels contain perhaps a grain, but only a grain of the truth. What is missing among serious journalistic diagnoses, robust sociological research papers and political speeches is the voice of the youth itself. And this is what FEPS together with partners wanted to change – by launching in 2014 an initiative called “*Millennials Generation Dialogue*”.

The project was designed to serve a 3P rule – being positive, participatory and progressive.

- **It is to be “positive” because it is to change the terms on the current debate.** There has been enough of complaining, blaming and shaming of young people for the fact that they do not attend the polling stations or for the fact that they do not subscribe to the political organisations. The ambition of the “*Millennials Dialogue*” is not about resonating claims, but about asking what prompts resentment of the younger generation. The aim therefore is to listen, to learn and to change.
- **It is to be “participatory” because it is to give the floor to the representatives of the youth.** There has been enough of building stereotypes, alongside which the younger generation look homogenous in terms of appearance and individualistic, if not egoistic in terms of their attitudes. This is a grave mistake to think that one can see them, their dreams and their challenges as one uniformed cluster. The ambition of “*Millennials Dialogue*” is not about providing a “one model fits all manual”, but about presenting the detailed self-portrait of this age group in the richness of their diversity. The aim therefore is to ask the youth to express themselves, to extract what inspires them and to include their demands.
- **It is to be “progressive” because it is to support the social democratic family in acquiring a new connection with the younger generation.** There has been enough of complaining that the youth does not make a link between the progressive initiatives, such as the Youth Guarantee and the political parties within the progressive family. It has been noted that to

¹ The paper limits itself to the scope of the EU Member States, building on the results available as on 14th June 2016.

the contrary, the appeal of the centre left programme is not strong enough to compete with the one of the radical and protest parties that attract the younger voters these days. The ambition of the “Millennials Dialogue” is not about regretting the shift, but about enabling the younger generation to state what they expect social democracy’s mission to be about. The aim therefore is to frame the agenda jointly, to make a feasible plea and set the new criteria of the delivery by the centre left.

In that spirit until June 2016, there were: over **20 thousands young respondents** involved in the survey, which resulted in receiving of **almost half a million survey responses**. Following that, almost **10 thousands posts** were placed within the herewith newly created virtual community and already **11 EU countries-specific reports** were launched providing the summary of what has been learnt so far. The Millennials’ Dialogue has featured a number of events on both the sides of the Atlantic, in both Americas, and also in Africa – and is awaiting to journey further to reach the shores of Australia and India. The project has been enthusiastically welcome and recognised as an innovative one, attracting even more partners within the EU and beyond – which allowed it to cover the majority of the European States and *go global*.

This rich material serves as an inspiration for this paper, which is drafted in order to sum up the initial findings alongside with identifying the queries that will guide the further debate. It is structured along **10 initial reflections** that emerge from the research, which are matched with subsequently formulated **10 core questions** for the progressives to answer. Together they are the cornerstones that are to serve as a blueprint for the country-specific summaries, helping to organise and focus the debate.

Millennials' Dialogue - 10 initial reflections

- 1. Millennials are not interested in politics in its current format, however politically aware and would be ready to vote.**

Millennials generation should not be painted as *politically disengaged*. This group acquires and poses information regarding contemporary politics, its main actors and is expressing readiness to vote. Where they are different is in their approach is that generation they do not think that established politics is a vehicle to change the reality – they rather point at economy or digital evolution as the factors causing either progress or regress.

- 2. Millennials do not find inspiration in contemporary mainstream politics, however they are optimistic and happy with many things in their lives, and they are confident to seek changes.**

Millennials Generation should not be portrayed as *angry and disappointed*. This group finds itself overall content with their lives and perspectives, seeks and believes in a possibility of improvement– but most obviously does not think that the mainstream, traditional political formula that had served their parents accommodates their aspirations and hopes for a change.

- 3. Millennials do not see traditional partisan life as particularly appealing, however they are interested in different group activities.**

Millennials Generation should not be described as *apathetic*. They are in fact active in terms of defining their interests and consequently choosing their leisure activities. While they find culture and sports exciting, the politics they don't – as it also seem to fail to offer a really exciting and stimulating experience.

- 4. Millennials don't value politics as a profession, while they have clear conditions on what they would need to do to restore trust and gain their electoral support**

Millennials Generation does not appreciate politics as a professional occupation and doesn't find itself in the traditional forms of partisan life, but is ready to invest in it based on personal experience. They admit that they have a difficulty to trust the respective candidates and to believe that their vote will matter, translating into the policies that they would like to see executed. But at the same time, they are ready to open up and reconsider – if they are directly approached and this individual experience would convince them to the people asking for their support.

5. Millennials don't think that the traditional political parties represent them, but know what would need to be done to repair this broken link.

Millennials Generation do not see politicians as those, who are preoccupied with their generational aspirations and would strive for a better future for them. To the contrary they identify unresolved tensions, alongside with the limitations that the contemporary politics is incorporating and imposing. But at the same time, they hint that the most relevant for them to reconsider would be to know that the politicians take them seriously and that they are ready to provide them with life opportunities among which they could choose more freely.

6. Millennials don't think politics is focused on their direct expectations, but have clearly defined priorities they would like to see taken care of.

Millennials Generation does not see their priorities included in the political agenda, but has a clear view of what should make a part of it and what should common resources be directed to. In that sense they are very consistent in seeing health and happiness as a priority, for achieving which they expect the public spending to be directed to the health policy agenda, jobs creation, education, fighting poverty and establishing green economy.

7. Millennials don't think politics currently delivers, but they have their own set of delivery criteria

Millennials Generation do not think that contemporary politicians deliver in overall terms; however they are ready to set new specific criteria of delivery alongside their view what the programmatic priorities of the politicians should be. These fall into 3 categories: matters-related ones (here are i.e. the questions of healthcare or education), the intention related ones (here are i.e. readiness to listen and work for the younger generation's agenda) and legitimacy related ones (here are i.e. understanding of the democratic mandate they have been given and here through their sense of mission). What is important in the light of the survey findings is that in none of that retrenchment in terms of political horizons or specific policies resonated well.

8. Millennials generally don't trust politicians, but nevertheless they are ready to fairly evaluate their qualities and competences.

Millennials see trust as one of the key motivators to make them go vote – they do not see that as a virtue of any of the parties within the current political system. This does not prevent them from evaluating the parties however, which allows to see clear distinction how they perceive the parties from respectively different political segments. While the traditional parties are not denied their qualities in terms of professional experience, they are generally seen as self-centred. And that is the vulnerability from which radical, protest and populist parties benefit from.

9. Millennials do not feel a connection with the contemporary partisan system, but they are ready to imagine themselves as initiators or as a part of a campaign

Millennials feel that their priorities are ‘lost in translation’, but nevertheless still they do exhibit readiness to mobilise and join or launch a political action. They are very clear what ways they find efficient to communicate the message and rally support. As a generation living a digital era, they do consider internet an important medium – but that does not make them disregard neither traditional broadcasters (tv or radio) or the power of one-to-one meetings. That should be of a relief to the parties, which should herewith feel that the assumed tensions between i.e. canvassing and Internet door knocking is simply not real.

10. Millennials may not be keen on voting in the European elections, but they are a generation that wants to live an interrelated Europe and a peaceful world.

Millennials Generation may not appear euro-enthusiastic in electorally behavioural sense, but remains convinced about the necessity of both international and European cooperation. In that sense they are very appreciative to the work that is being done by the state’s representatives on the global and the Union’s level, while expecting more however in terms of their inner policies that would foster their country’s military capacity. That seems striking and would point towards an obvious feeling of the Millennials’ insecurity regarding the feasibility of a promise of a global peaceful coexistence.

Millennials' Dialogue – 10 core questions

- 1. How to prove that progressives understand the approach of the Millennials, while responding to them with a feasible programme that will subordinate economy to a political rule and will make politics remain at service of the society?**
- 2. How to create an innovative political project that would appeal to the young people idealistic belief that another world is possible, while making it encompass the answers to both the challenges that they face and the aspirations that they have?** Millennials can and should be seen as part of the solution to the paralysis that the traditional politics finds itself in.
- 3. How to re-establish the link between politics, political culture and culture?** Millennials would engage in the partisan life that is attractive, while organisationally enabling creativity, diverse forms of self-expression and political socialisation.
- 4. How to renew the movement so that it presents itself as a real, serious alternative and not a part of a cartel system of the mainstream political consensus?** Even more than a programme, the Millennials would like to be able to rely on the politicians – and hence see a leader that they could entrust their hopes with.
- 5. How to construct an agenda that would show that social democrats know how to solve the inter-generational conflicts, while remaining a movement courageously seeking new opportunities to progress for all?** Millennials expect a narrative that would also incorporate a new progressive understanding of freedom, reclaiming it from: neo-liberals, from protest and radical parties, and from the political system's fringes and outskirts.
- 6. How to create and execute a programme, which would show that the austerity is not unavoidable and the highly valued public policies remain at the core of the social democratic struggle?** Millennials have a clear set of priorities and put healthcare in a broad sense as number one, demanding at the same time life opportunities and choices alongside with the possibility to reconcile all of them (including jobs) with the family and social life.
- 7. How to become (young) people's party again?** Millennials want the parties to take the criterion of legitimacy and representation seriously, striking a new balance between idealism (as referring to aspirations) and realism. The progressive parties and their governance should try to become as a source of reassurance, reason for optimism and hopefulness – which at this point Millennials are finding elsewhere.
- 8. How to re-establish the social competence of the progressive parties?** Millennials see the professionalism of the parties, but require them to accomplish a certain 'return to the roots of activism', proving that they still listen and care. Parties need to explore the methods that will transform them towards more open organisations, enabled to enter into a direct exchange with diverse voters groups (here especially young ones).

9. **How to convert the campaigns into set of actions, that can mobilise equally effectively in the real (canvassing, meetings) as in the virtual (tv, radio, internet) worlds?** Millennials keep both in high regard, being a generation that value personal experience and modern technology at the same time. Successful strategy would require making political rallies closer to cultural, exciting and emotionally loaded experiences. As also it would require consistency in using all the media in a manner, which would make all broadcasts mutually reinforcing and multiplication-inducing.

10. **How to modernise its global and European agendas, so that they can present a tangible promise of a peaceful future of sustainably developing world?** Millennials are certain that the international and European cooperation are important, however a change of a narrative is essential to convince them that the efforts must continue to deepen it and advance, providing new guarantees and reaching new horizons.

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Millennials' Dialogue – Summary of the findings²

1. Millennials are not interested in politics in its current format, however politically aware and would be ready to vote.

The Millennial Generation is referred to as a demographic group that is *politically disengaged*. Indeed, the collected data would suggest so at first glance, since the number of young people interested in politics does not cross over the threshold of one fifth. The lowest level is observed in Hungary - only 6% declared “very interested” in politics, and in Poland – where 50% responded that they are “Not interested at all”. These two stand out, and it is difficult to resist the association between these numbers and the overall concerns that are expressed regarding the state of democracy in those two countries³.

The statistics get even worse when the youngest strata is extracted – in the brackets 15 – 17 years of age only 7% of Polish declared interest in politics versus 0% in Italy. Similar results are shown in Germany, as also in Bulgaria. This prompts a conclusion that the situation is *bad* and is likely to deteriorate even further.

The anxiety caused by this data is what instinctively prompts politicians to describe younger generation in a negative manner, perceiving them as withdrawn, introvert and uninterested. And here is where the main misconception lies.

First of all, “withdrawn” does not translate into Millennials’ unwillingness to vote. While the declared interest in politics is low, the avowed readiness to take part in elections (should they take place tomorrow) is incomparably high. The highest numbers noted here are among young Spanish (85% would proceed to ballot boxes, while for remainder only 16% declared themselves “very interested in politics”) and young Germans (80% would vote, whilst only 20% of them claimed to be “very interested” and 43% described themselves as “not interested at all in politics”). **In Hence in general Millennials may have *pulled out* of the traditional politics and its frames, but it does not mean that they are not ready to speak up or that they would resign from their civic rights.** This is what the Charter 1 below clearly illustrates.

² Based on the data available on 14th June from: Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain and United Kingdom.

³ Even if the survey in Poland was completed before the Presidential and General elections of 2015, which brought a shift in power, enabling the newly elected authorities to vote in the laws assessed by Venice Commission as undemocratic and unconstitutional.

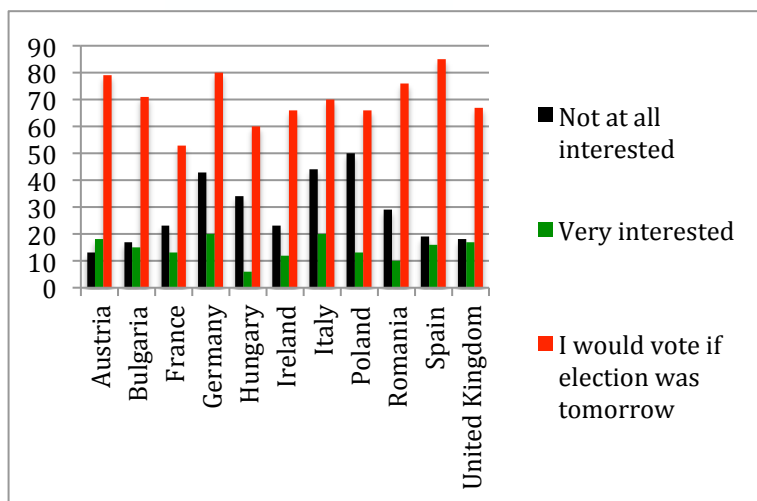


Chart 1: Millennials declaring themselves “uninterested in politics” vis-à-vis the Millennials declaring themselves “very interested in politics” and subsequently those avowing “ready to vote” (*should election take place tomorrow*)

Secondly, the declared disinterest should not be confused with the Millennials being “introvert”.

To the contrary, they are very attentive to the reality they live in, having clear opinions in terms of where politics places itself in the ranking of factors influencing their lives. **Majority points that it is the economic situation that will be the shaping force of their future** – with some exceptions here, noted for example among the assessments shared by young Austrians, who were convinced that the state of the environment will rather have a prevailing role here. **But while these many think that global (and national) economy will be at the core of what is to define their lives, always lesser number of them were convinced about the power of politics** (respectively on the global, national and local level). While this is clearly illustrated by the Charters 2a and 2b below, the conclusion that must be drawn that with such a discrepancy in perceived powers of both economy and politics, the appeals that a new deal of any kind can be installed to replace the one broken by the crisis – are of course treated at best with a great degree of suspicion if not a disbelief. Here is where the lessons lie especially for the European Progressive family.

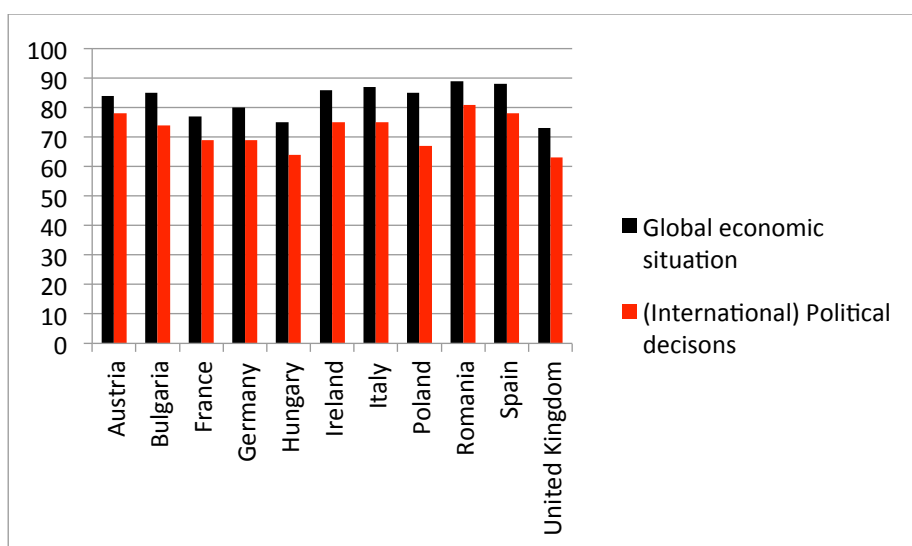


Chart 2: Comparison on how the Millennials perceive the influence of global economy and global political decision making on their lives

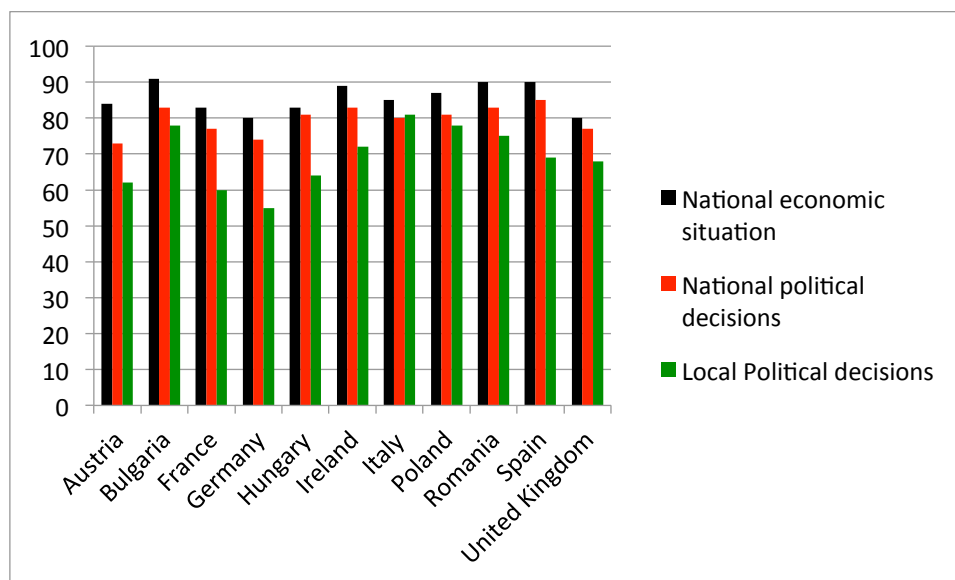


Chart 3: Comparison on how the Millennials perceive the influence of national economy and national and local political decision making on their lives

Thirdly, and finally “uninterested” does not translate into unawareness of what is happening in politics. The younger generation knows the top politicians and leading parties. The parliamentary ones score at the level of recognition of 90% and above, with the seated prime minister usually being known by almost all. The earlier surveys (which tendency was echoed in the later ones as well) showed the level of recognition: 91% in Hungary, 93% in Italy and Bulgaria respectively, 96% in Germany, 97% in Poland. And these numbers are always higher than the ones showing the degree of familiarity with any of the political parties. To that end, whilst the seated Prime Minister remains the most recognised person in most of the EU Member States – there have been two exceptions noted. In France the higher numbers are noted for the President, which can be explained to a certain extent by the specificity of the institutional system – that is a presidential one and hence dissimilar to the parliamentary-governmental set up of the other Member States. In Romania, the Millennials indicated slightly bigger awareness of the former Prime Minister (Traian Basescu) than the one in the office at that point (Victor Ponta), which may be surprising – taking into account that the later one was a politician of a younger generation.

To that end, **the Millennials are aware of and familiar with the progressive parties, which are known to them on more or less similar level as their traditional opponents (Conservatives) are.** This level would be in between 80 and 90%, which is also illustrated by the Chart 4 below. In terms of knowledge of the extreme, populist or smaller parties, as also of the newly established ones – Millennials show their recognition of those on the level of 70 – 80% on average (with the tendency of higher degree of recognition for those in the traditionally bi-partisan systems). The standing out exceptions here are the great degree to which the Millennials are aware of National Front in France, Jobbik in Hungary, Law and Justice in Poland, as also Freedom Party in Austria. Nevertheless, **comparing the overall scores in terms of familiarity of Millennials with the traditional and mainstream parties with the electoral turnouts, it is but evident that it is not lack of interest or insufficient information that drives the younger generation away from the polling stations.**

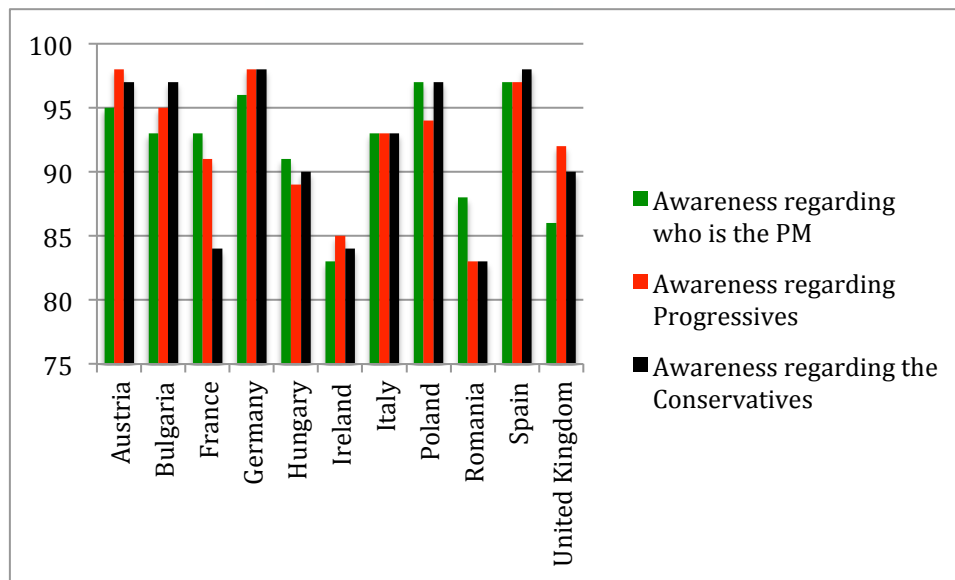


Chart 4: Awareness of the Millennials regarding the Prime Minister, Progressive and Conservative Parties

The conclusion arriving from these is that Millennials generation should not be painted as *politically disengaged*. This group acquires and poses information regarding contemporary politics, its main actors and is expressing readiness to vote. Where they are different is in their approach is that generation they do not think that established politics is a vehicle to change the reality – they rather point at economy as the main factor causing either progress or regress.

The question that remains for the debate among the progressive is how to prove that they understand the approach of the Millennials, while responding to that with programme and action plan that will subordinate economy to a political rule, which will remain at the service of theirs and the society overall.

- 2. Millennials do not find inspiration in contemporary mainstream politics, however they are optimistic and happy with many things in their lives, and they are confident to seek changes.**

The Millennial Generation has been spoken broadly as the age group with a gloomy perspective for life. The subsequent editions of the *Eurobarometer* and survey by other institutes have coined the understanding that the current 30+ age group expects their and their children's future to be featuring worse standards of live than the ones their parents enjoyed.

This led to two conclusions on the side of the mainstream politicians. First of all, it was assumed that the youth is a group composed of people in despair and the approach vis-à-vis them should be almost *therapeutically* comforting⁴. Hence the mainstream parties use the well-known slogans: “we will not let the current generation live on the costs of the future ones”. On the right they referred to what the conservatives and liberals consider to be the “over spending of the robust welfare states”, while on the left it has been used mostly in the context of debates focused on sustainability (of i.e. environment). Secondly, it was anticipated that the new generation should be addressed via reference to the problems many of them experience (such as unemployment, limited access to

⁴ The concept is not having a singular term to describe it with on the ground of political sciences, however it would refer to something closely related to the French notion of *pedagogy of the reforms*.

education and training) and not through a positive message that would frame an emotional bond based on understanding of their respective, diverse, generational ambitions. The two approaches have not proven successful. Not only the major challenges that the youth faces sadly remain unsolved, but also the trend of the shift of young voters towards more radical or even protest parties continues.

The “Millennials Dialogue” surveys point in that sense towards a different, quite unorthodox direction. From within the data, it seems that the younger generation consider themselves as generally *happy*⁵. So claim 92% of Austrians, 89% of young Germans, 88% of young Bulgarians to give an example. The exception here is the low level of 61% of the young Hungarians (but here the statistics shows a dissimilar to other tendency, where more Millennials find themselves optimistic about the future). It is true that the data does not allow to identify the socio-economic profile of respondents, who crossed the “generally happy” answer, what they understand under this term or for that matter if more or less feels that under the progressive government, however already in its fabric it suggests that the overall opinion may have been misguided in their understanding of what the young people feel and think. To that end, for example 85% of Romanians, 84% of Polish, 77% of Brits and 76% Bulgarians are optimistic about the future. These data are illustrated in the Chart 5 below.

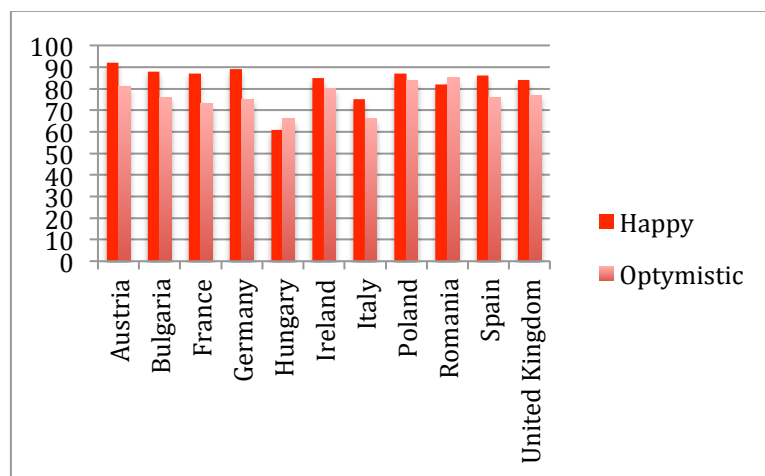


Chart 5: Millennials declaring themselves happy and being optimistic about the future

The results of the surveys put a question mark in how far it can be proven that the decision of so many young voters to seek political agents outside of the traditional political spectre is the question of their anger, as frequently suggested. It does not match with how many Millennials consider themselves happy. The clue may lay in a gap between declared happiness and optimism about the future, which with exception of Hungary, show lower scores for the later by about 10 points in every case. Following the results quoted, the hypothesis that seems plausible at that stage would be that Millennials believe that a change for better is still possible, but not in the way the things unfold today and hence not with the current mainstream parties. The degree of the optimism declared by the Millennials would also suggest that they reject the gloomy TINA⁶ philosophy, so frequently repeated in aftermath of the crisis.

⁵ The collected data does not allow to make a distinction between the young people of the different socio-economic profiles.

⁶ Infamous: *There Is No Alternative* – which was used initially by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to explain political choices of the conservative government and recently has been adopted by the mainstream parties in Europe to justify the unpopular austerity policies.

This premise can find supporting evidence also elsewhere. In none of the countries it turned out that young people would see ideologies, political parties or specific politicians as those actors, who would have the biggest influences on their lives. The main points of reference for them are their parents, siblings and friends – with a leading role of the first ones.

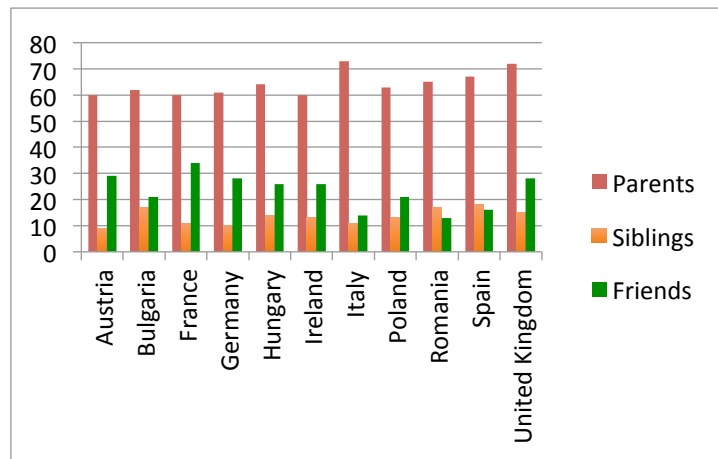


Chart 6: Millennials indicating, who plays the most important roles in their lives.

While it is the parents – who inspire, influence and help making choices – the Millennial generation admits to think that themselves they are less connected with politics than their parents (and/or grandparents). So thinks vast majority of young people in 9 out of the 10 countries, where the survey was completed (with exception of Spain and the United Kingdom).

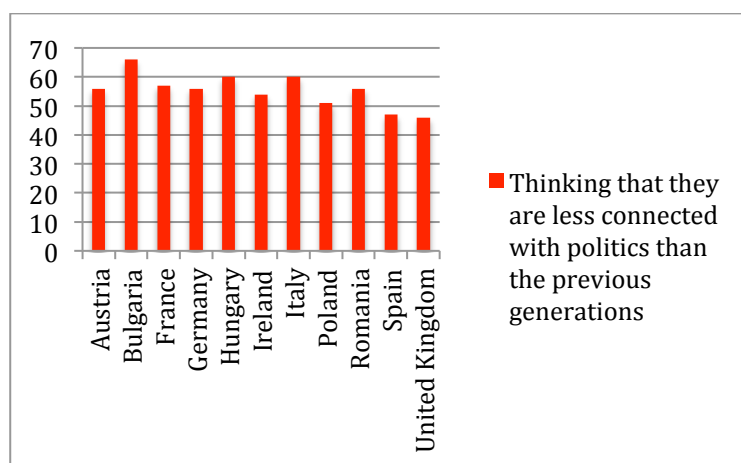


Chart 7: Millennials thinking that they are less connected with politics than previous generations

Taking those two outcomes together (as displayed in Charts 6 and 7 respectively) – strong interrelation with parents on one hand, and distancing themselves from their political culture on the other – indicate a double-folded tendency. First of all, **this means that the idea of *politicised families, where generations keep on voting the same parties* is no longer matching the reality at hand. This is an obvious warning signal for the so-called “traditional parties”, with the progressives among them.**⁷ Secondly, taking into account also the Chart 4 from the earlier Chapter - it is not lack of political and civic education that makes young withdraw from politics. **The unwillingness to follow**

⁷ Here for further evidence see also Chart 12.

the ancestors' path in terms of political involvement, whilst being fully aware of the political and economic reality at hand means that the Millennials simply do not find at the moment political projects that they would find personally attracting, inspiring and worth investing in.

The conclusion arriving from these is that Millennials Generation should not be painted as *angry and disappointed*. This group finds itself overall content with their lives and perspectives, seeks and believes in a possibility of improvement– but most obviously does not think that the mainstream, traditional political formula that had served their parents accommodates their aspirations and hopes for a change.

The question that remains for the debate among the progressive is how to create an innovative political project that would appeal to the young people idealistic belief *that another world is possible*, while making it encompass the answers to both the challenges that they face and the aspirations that they have. Millennials can and should be seen as part of the solution to the paralysis that the traditional politics finds itself in.

3. Millennials do not see traditional partisan life as particularly appealing, however they are interested in different group activities.

The Millennial Generation is often considered as *apathetic*. It is the quality assigned to them in the context of the *democratic malaise* that describes the contemporary societal behavioural patterns, which concern both the political aspects (such as voting attitudes, where the lowering turnout is perhaps the most commonly mentioned feature) and the socialisation (especially in its participatory dimension in terms of the engagement in the different communities: from interest groups to civil society organisations). In that sense young people are perceived as *de-motivated, individualistic and introvert*.

This picture is neither fair, nor true. The data collected show in fact to the contrary. First and foremost, the younger generation is very keen on enjoying broadly understood culture⁸. All the respondents have given the top scores to film and music - with 94% of Italian and Polish, 92% of Romanians and 91% of British marking movies as their main interest. Against prejudices that would perhaps place them in front of television at home, still above three quarters declares fondness of cinema (with 89% Italians, 87% of Polish, 82% of Bulgarians, 81% of Germans and 72% of Hungarians). Further on the list are: theatre and festivals. Quite high on the lists are also sports – both in terms of taking part and in terms of watching. These data contrast with the low popularity of politics among the interests. In its low markings it is joined by religion. There a surprising finding is that it is Polish and Romanians who constitute an exception to the rule, while not joined by the Millennials of the other states traditionally considered as the ones with the strong role assigned to the Church and religion (such as Spain, Austria and Hungary).

These tendencies are illustrated by the Charts 8a and 8b below.

⁸ The data available do not distinguish in between the different educational or socio-economic profiles of the respective respondents.

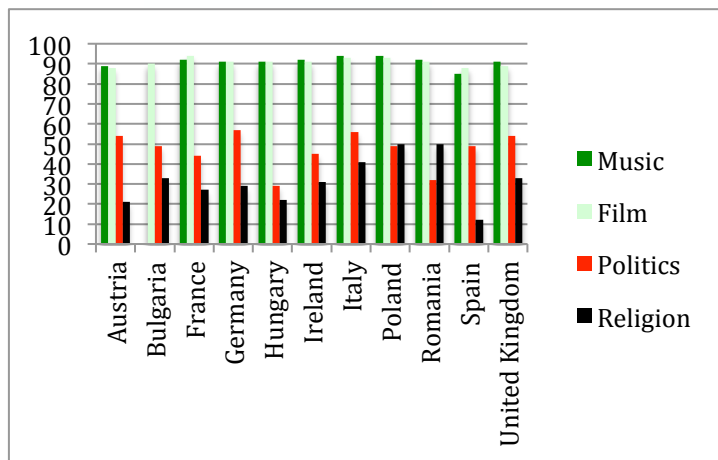


Chart 8a: Millennials' interests – between the top (culture) and bottom (politics and religion)

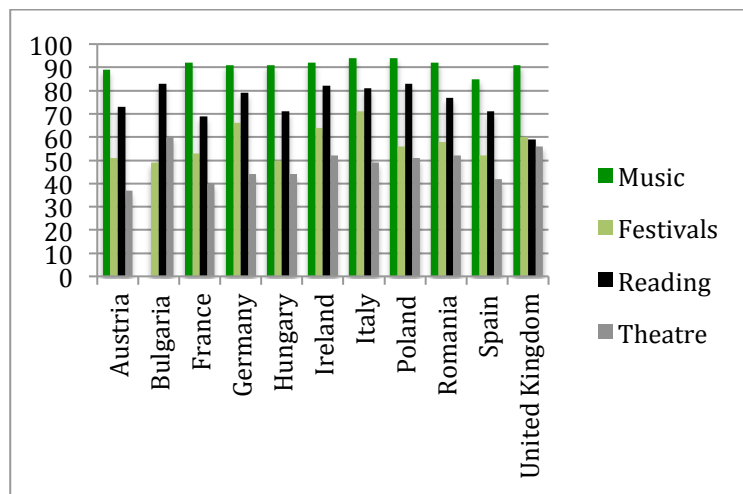


Chart 8b: Millennials' interests – between the interest and the group experience connected with the interest

At the first glance, these findings would stipulate that in fact *culture* and *political culture* have drifted apart in the perception of the younger generation. This does not touch only narrowly upon the ideological ethos and the way of proceeding, but rather points out that the evolution of the world of politics made it disconnected from separately developing world of arts. **One could say that with that the drums that would mark the beat of the different movements hearts got lost, depriving the contemporaries from a possibility to see the political organisations as also cultural communities. This presents itself as a great challenge especially for the progressives, whose political family grew upon workers' mobilisation and frequently also revolutionary arts, literature and music.**

But while drawing this conclusion, one should pay attention to another, more hidden aspect that the Chart 8b is indicating. Namely that the Millennial generation is fond of culture, but enjoying it is rather a part of individual than of a collective experience. In other words, interest and participation in a related-to-interest activity are two different things. This is what comes out of comparing the interest in film vis-à-vis interest in cinema, the interest in music vis-à-vis interest in festivals, and finally the interest in reading (which is surprisingly high against the stereotype that nowadays "people don't read") vis-à-vis interest in theatre. **One could therefore remark that though culture in all its forms is very important to the Millennials, this is not a new kind of *Woodstock generation* – and should the progressive parties attempt a strategy of bringing culture back to the movement, they would need to strike a right balance to cater more needs for individualised experiences.**

But, even though the collective cultural experiences are scoring lower than the interest in diverse forms of culture that one can enjoy individually, still altogether they are by far more popular than politics. It scores in the bottom 3 of the 15 enumerated categories, that the respective Millennial Dialogue surveys asked them to rank. The question therefore would be why. **The hypothesis is that while the culture, but also sports offer a stimulating experience, politics of today perhaps doesn't. It may neither be a tool enabling to learn more (also about the world), nor a source of pleasure and well being⁹ nor an adventure thanks to which ones fulfils a sense of belonging, being among like-minded.** The evidence gathered through the same question could support this hypothesis, when one compares the already analysed interests, including the one in politics, with the ones in for example cooking, sporting or watching sports. These data are gathered in the Chart 8c below.

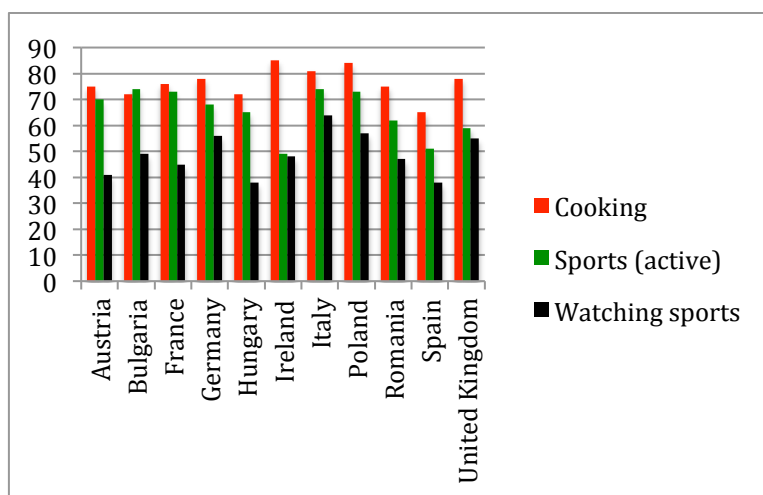


Chart 8c: Millennials' interests – regarding cooking, sporting and watching sports

This Chart shows two tendencies. The first one is that the Millennials are very into health and healthy life style, which preoccupation is also confirmed by the fact that they see “being in a good health” as one of the core life objectives (see Chapter 6 of this paper). This influences their views in terms of what politics should focus on and what the public investments should be allocated to.

The second one is that there is not only a missing connection between politics and culture, but also there is a missing one between the world of politics and the world of sports. While in the disciplines that are popular to watch, such as football, a number of positive campaigns have been observed. A prominent example of it is the FIFA anti-racism campaign, which engaged top players and has been broadcasted worldwide. It however does not find any liaison with political discourse, which on the other hand continues to accommodate more and more prejudice, phobias and hate.

Finally, while culture, sports and well-being are among the interests of the Millennials, so is the technological evolution and hence social media. They however surprisingly comes on average slightly after the interest in music and reading.

In order to investigate on why, it is necessary to contrast data from three parts of the survey – namely the one looking at the interest, the one analysing the degree to which the Millennials think

⁹ The Millennials declare that happiness and well-being are the most important objectives in their lives. For details please see the Chart 15.

that the technological evolution matters (will affect their future) and the percentage that would use the virtual space as the place for political action (to relate also to the earlier question in how far politics could re-establish the links with the other sphere of ones' lives). The data compared herewith are featured in the Chart 9 below.

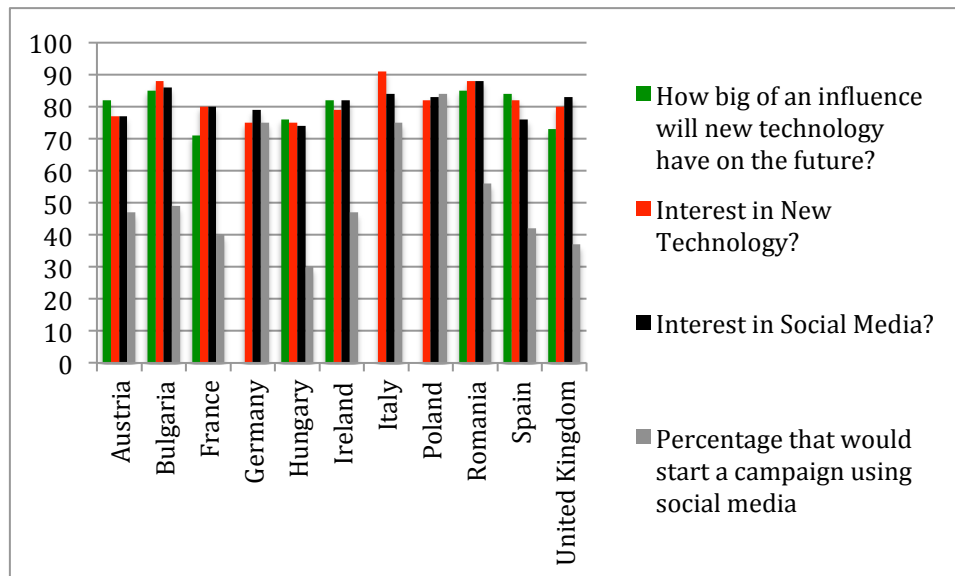


Chart 9: The comparison on how important Millennials think the technological change is vis-à-vis their own interest in new technologies and social media, compared with if they would themselves start a (political) campaign using these

To that end, it is important to mention that the young generation is quite taken also by the technological evolution and the developments that it brings along. However, although they declare that it will determine their futures – it never comes ahead of economy, environment or education. This is a relevant point, especially in the times when much consideration is being given within the progressive family if not to re-orientate the agenda and make it spin around the opportunities that the IT and new economy could create.

The interest in new technology¹⁰ is lower than the relevance they give to an overall influence technology has, and for that matter lower than the interest they have in culture. The same is the case for social media, whereby they show a relatively high interest in them. But what is important, **Millennials consider virtual space as relatively private realm - and not essentially a place to start a campaign (and per extension act politically), even if it is one of the places to launch an action in the end. This of course constitutes a challenge for political parties, which on one hand could be pleased that altogether Millennials give priorities to the interests and activities within the “real” and not the ‘virtual’ world, but on the other are not that inclined to enthusiastically welcome politicising of social media sphere.**

The conclusion arriving from these is that Millennials generation should not be painted as *apathetic*. They are in fact active in terms of defining their interests and consequently choosing their leisure activities. While they find culture and sports exciting, the politics they don't – as it also seem to fail to offer a really exciting and stimulating experience.

The question that remains for the debate among the progressive is how to re-establish the link

¹⁰ The data available are collected without prejudice regarding the actual accessibility of internet that the young people surveyed have at their disposal.

between politics, political culture and culture. It should not be backward looking, trying to restore the cultural legacy of the previous generations in the movement – but it should focus on how to organise the partisan life so that it is attractive, while enabling creativity, diverse forms of self expression and political socialisation. The supplementary issue is how to ensure that it is done so both in real and virtual social spheres.

4. Millennials don't value politics as a profession, while they have clear conditions on what they would need to do to restore trust and gain their electoral support

The evolution of politics brought along a number of phenomena, among them *mediatisation* and *professionalization*. Indeed, nowadays being a politician is often seen as a *having* a profession, especially that as an occupation it takes more than a full-time and offers financial gratification. The contemporary political careers also require that in order to become a “front-bencher” one needs to devote him or herself to that path fully and from the earliest years. In terms of skills it would be rather *school of political life* that they graduate from, having often no other professional experience than *being* and serving in a party.

As it turns out it is not seen as a *dream job* by the Millennials. Becoming a business owner (founder) is the most exciting prospect for all the respondents and one should state, by far more attractive than becoming a “politician”. The disparity in popularity of selected top (business owner) and bottom (politician) professions is more clearly illustrated by the Chart 10 below.

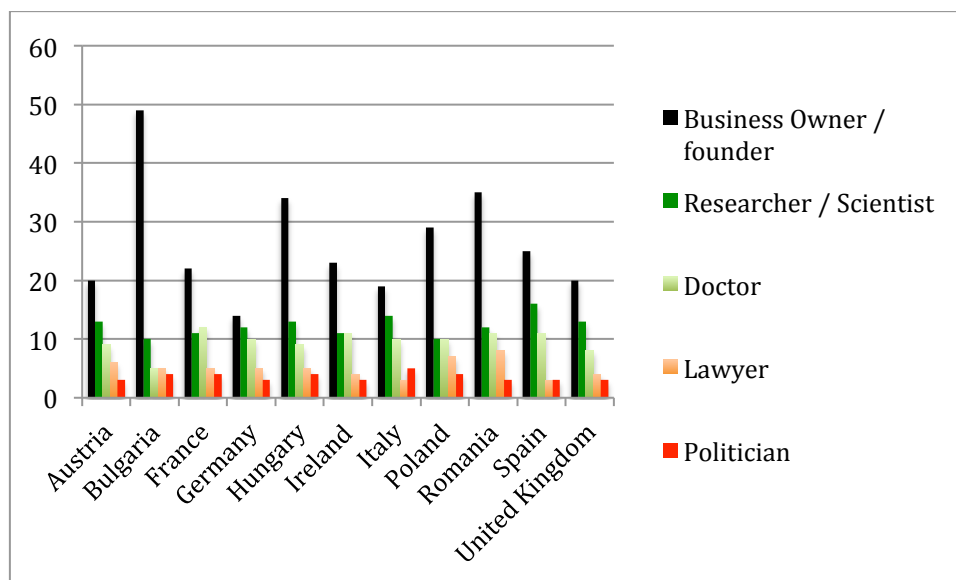


Chart 10: Millennials and the professions they would choose

Analysing this Chart further is allowing making three additional conclusions. First of all, the Millennials, which as Chart 2a shows do believe in primacy of economy and as Chart 5 supplemented are quite optimistic about their future, want to take their faith in their own hands and ensure their own prosperity by themselves directly. Herewith they let show some entrepreneurial inclinations, also matching with clear readiness to take certain risks. Secondly, although they admit that technological evolution will influence their future (as Chart 9 illustrated), nevertheless not that many of them wish to shape the course of it. Evidently, being a researcher or scientist in the age of knowledge is not the most desired occupation. This puts a question mark in what the Millennials would effectively consider to be a professional mission they would like to fulfil. And thirdly, there is

an obvious low attractiveness associated with the professions that are part of the public sector (such as doctors or academics). They score particularly low in countries such as Bulgaria and Hungary, where the welfare state remains under lot of pressure momentarily. This means that in order to change the trend, it would be essential to think about how to make a job more than an occupation and also how to make a state a better, more desirable employer.

Finally, as Millennials do not find professional politics either too attractive or too desirable to exercise, they also tend not to value professional political experience too highly. This is showed by the results of the survey, where the respondents were asked about the qualities that they value in an elected politician, for example – and of which further exploration is included in Chapter 8 of this paper. **Consequently, while politics has become professionalised and requires full time from people engaging in it with an ambition to advance also personally, the low appreciation for a profession of a politician can also serve as a partial explanation as to why the young people do not get involved.**

The reluctance in taking part in the traditional partisan life, which would include climbing the steps of the organisational ladder starting from local meetings, popularly features meetings, is further indicated by numbers. They are included in the Chart 11 below.

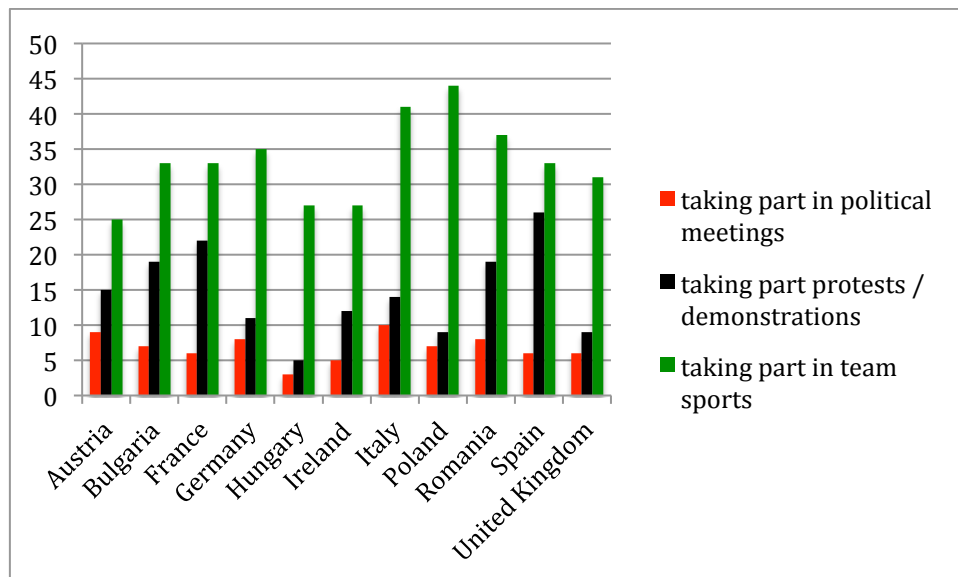


Chart 11: Millennials and their engagement in politics

Although this compilation of data can surprise at first, in fact thanks to contrasting diverse categories the Chart 11 shows a very interesting fact. As observed before, Millennials are not fond of the traditional partisan meetings. Not too many of them take part in those. But against of what is being said about their potential radicalisation, also not that many (even if numbers double in comparison) take part in protests or peaceful demonstration (and even less in disruptive demonstrations as such). **It is also not the protest politics *sensu largo* that attracts this generation the most. What that shows is that there is a need to be more creative in terms of offering organisational possibilities for the young people to involve.** And to that end, the lack of readiness to join seem to lie strictly with inadequate contemporary offer and not with the fact that the Millennials are not team players. The Chart 10 allows busting that myth, but showing also how many of them are ready to get active in the scope of team sports.

But while the engagement in the format that has been known as partisan activity may no longer

(even ever) appeal to the Millennials, still, as indicated in Chart 1, this does not mean that they withdraw totally. To the contrary, as said before, they consider themselves as ready to vote, should election was taking place tomorrow. And they have clear conditions that they describe as essentials for the politicians to fulfil in order to actually gain their support.

The first and the most important issue is trust. All the Millennials say that they would definitely not only be ready to vote but actually would go voting, should they have a chance to trust politicians more and should they were convinced that their votes would matter. **Respectively they admit that they abstain usually because they do not have confidence neither in candidates nor in political parties. Some (like young Italians) think that this is because they do not see any of the parties particularly representing their views, while the others (here for example Polish and Germans) claim that this is because they think “all parties are the same”. The herewith-presumed political mainstream created by the formerly left or right political parties around the centre is the factor that they describe as repulsive.** Interestingly so, while they are critical about lack of bold ideological differences, they do not justify their voting abstention by *disliking of available political choices*. It is noteworthy, as it indicates that against the prejudice – currently inactive young voters are not the future supporters of anti-systemic movements by default.

For all the young people taking part in election appears to be an extremely personal issue. What motivates them to vote is first of all what they think about the leaders, of which the Chart 12 is the testimony.

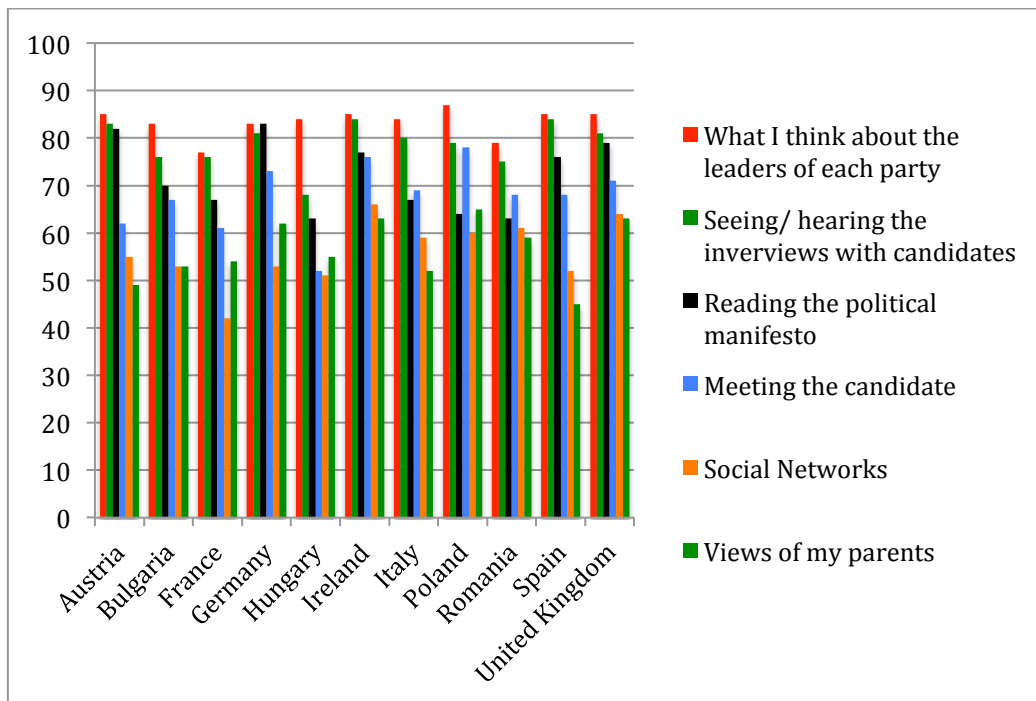


Chart 12: Factors contributing to the voting decisions by Millennials

Further to the fact that what influences the Millennials’ vote is what they think of respective leaders (which is especially the case in the UK, Ireland, Poland and Hungary), it may surprise that second in relevance is seeing and hearing the interviews with candidates. Hence seeing them ‘in action’. It comes way before meeting actual candidate in person, which however is still particularly important

in Poland, UK, Ireland and Germany¹¹). What is more and can be of a surprise, Millennials may say that they abstain because ‘all the parties are the same’ – but also consequently, they claim that reading the political manifesto matters to them greatly. So claim 83% of Germans, 82% of Austrians and 79% of British. Although one should admit that the interest in programmatic offer is higher in the Western Europe, altogether the data contradicts the observation propagated in recent years that the programmes do not play that of an important role. This is refuted even more by another data that the Chart 10 brings – namely the proportion to which they see social media’s influence. Following the complementing data, this come even after reading blogs online or newspapers interviews (see Chart 24). As already showed before in Chapter 2, views of the parents play even lesser role.

The conclusion arriving from these is that Millennials generation does not appreciate politics as a professional occupation and doesn’t find itself in the traditional forms of partisan life, but is ready to invest in it based on personal experience. They admit that they have a difficulty to trust the respective candidates and to believe that their vote will matter, translating into the policies that they would like to see executed. But at the same time, they are ready to open up and reconsider – if they are directly approached and this individual experience would convince them to the people asking for their support.

The question that remains for the debate among the progressive is how to renew the movement so that it presents itself as a real, serious alternative and not a part of a cartel system of the mainstream political consensus. Even more than a programme, the Millennials would like to be able to rely on the politicians – and hence see a leader that they could entrust their hopes with. This should make the parties seriously consider the ways they elect their presidents and select their candidates.

5. Millennials don’t think that the traditional political parties represent them, but know what would need to be done to repair this broken link.

The contemporary democratic political systems are based on the principles of representation and legitimacy. That defines the relation between citizen – voter and the political parties – the elected politicians. The later ones are expected to aggregate, consolidate and advocate for the ideas of the electorate, following the programmatic platform for which that they have received the support in the elections. In that sense, the political parties are agents of change bound to a mandate offered them through the casted votes.

There is handful of studies showing that the classical understanding of the nature of these connections between the traditional parties and the citizens is no longer applicable. Diverse societal processes (here especially fragmentation, polarisation and individualisation) alongside with the evolution of the political systems themselves (the emergence of the catch-all parties, the blending of the opposing ideologies into a grand coalition operating as a cartel system etc.) mean that it is impossible to talk, for instance, about “class votes” or “core electorates” in the way these terms used to apply. To the contrary, it would seem that every election is a plebiscite during which competition among the parties is much more open than before. This is shown by the volatility of the electoral support, which is explained by the fact that nowadays people tend to vote generally identifying

¹¹ An important observation here is that for young Germans, and effectively almost only for them, the context plays an important role and they do see “what is going on in the news” as the second most relevant factor shaping their electoral decision.

themselves rather with a specific issue than with an ideology.

This trend resonates also among the Millennials. While as shown before they see personal experience with politics as the most influential factor in terms of *if* to vote, they decide *whom* to vote following their passion for one or another issue. It is worth noting that their choice is formulated individually and is not subjected to persuasion of family members or peers (even if, as previous sections indicated, it is parents, whom they identify as having the largest influence on their lives¹²).

The picture is too complex to offer a singular answer explaining all the electoral choices of the Millennials. The survey however enables to identify the core issues that they consider repulsive and consequently discouraging from making them offer their electoral support. The first among them is the fact that **the younger generation believes that their views are being largely ignored. The number is highest for Bulgaria and Romania (84%), followed by Italy (with 81%), Spain (with 78%) and France (74%).** This is the Chart 13 below illustrates. These numbers prove that the majority of the younger generation do not *included*, taken seriously or not even considered. The percentage of them, who would contradict it never reaches a critical level of one quarter of the generation representatives.

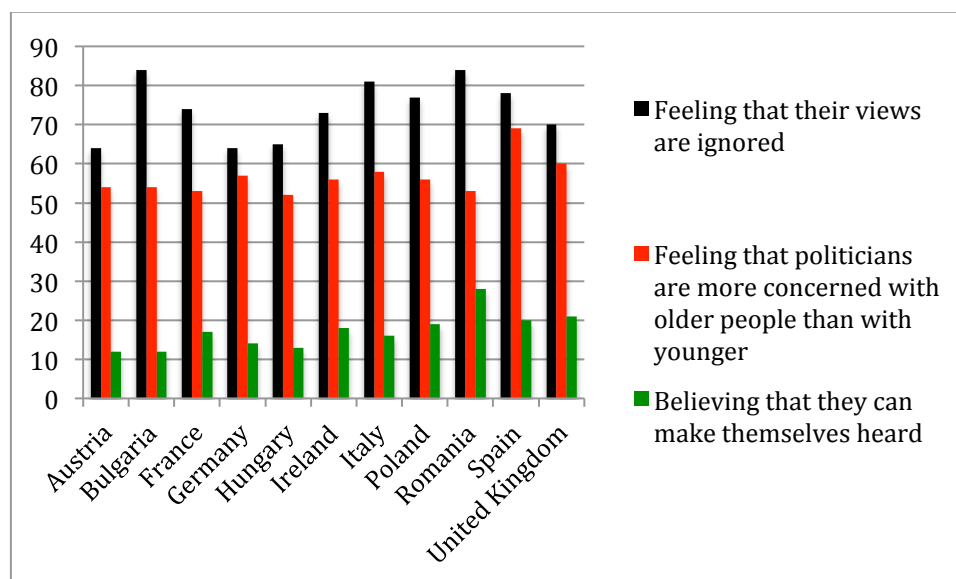


Chart 13: Millennials feeling that their views are ignored, that there is primacy given to older people's agenda vis-à-vis their belief in how far they can make themselves heard

Secondly, there seems to be a tension between the Millennials conviction that they should be listened to and here through also represented in comparison on how they feel the older people's agenda is taken care of¹³. **69% of Spanish, 60% of British, 57% of young Germans 58% of young Italians, think that politicians are "more concerned" with the older people than with them. This assessment would, at least partially explain, why the traditional parties are ageing** – but beyond that it points to another interesting observation. It would seem that in overall terms the politics of today is neither truly forward-looking, nor does not provide a tangible answer on what *solidarity between generations* effectively means. That reaffirms the situation, when worried about sustainability of the system; different groups potentially turn against one another – simply naturally competing for attention and resources. This hypothesis may be loaded with more threat than expected – especially that it could mean that the older people voting the traditional parties versus

¹² See section 2 of this paper

¹³ The data does not allow defining what is being considered as "younger" or "older" people's concerns.

the younger people seeking alternatives elsewhere (even if those are only seasonal groupings) can be in fact a struggle between the old and the new partisan order.

Thirdly, the younger generation feels that the politics of today is rather about limiting them than about offering them better prospects for the future, which is shown by the data accumulated in Chart 14.

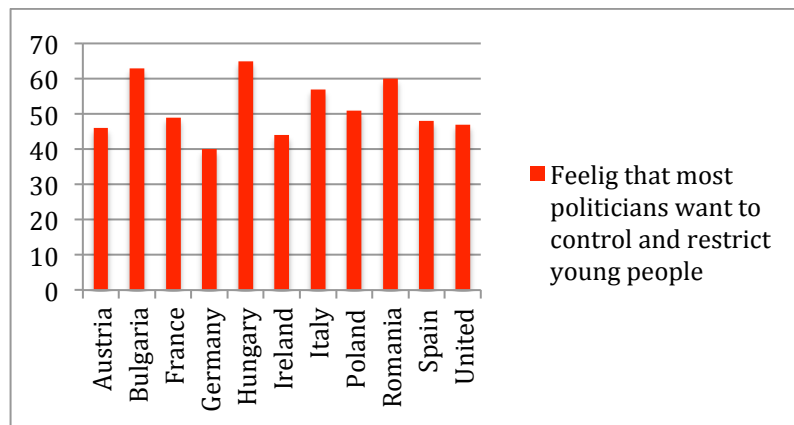


Chart 14: Millennials feeling that politicians want to control and restrict young people

What makes this statistics even worse is that on the top of the fact that Millennials see the politicians as the ones aiming to control and restrict them, not too many believe that they are doing that in the name of another, greater mission. In fact, very few of Millennials believe in good intentions among the politicians (the highest numbers here noted for Germany, UK and France), as far as their future is concerned – which is exhibited by the Chart 14a below.

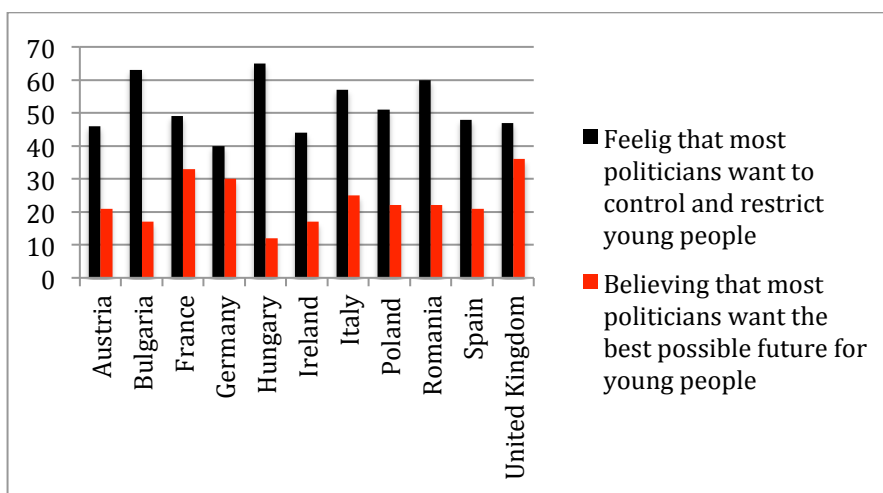


Chart 14a: Millennials feeling that most politicians want to control them – vis-à-vis Millennials believing that politicians want to ensure best possible future for them

This is providing yet another lesson. If social sciences are correct in their mainstream diagnosis, the Millennials are the generation that abides by the post-post modernist values – where freedom (liberty) scores among the highest appreciated principles. It is paired with equality (understood as gender equality and of sexual orientation specifically) that is considered as important by 70% – 80% of the population. **The fact that Millennials believe that politics is narrowing and not broadening their options, that it is focused on preservation and not on the future, and that the politicians do not want the best possible for the young people, is therefore a very serious issue. That explains**

why Millennials do not see the interest of theirs (best future) and the ambitions of the politicians (whom they associated with restrictions) converge.

The conclusion arriving from these is that Millennials generation do not see politicians as those, who are preoccupied with their generational aspirations and would strive for a better future for them. To the contrary they identify unresolved tensions, alongside with the limitations that the contemporary politics is incorporating and imposing. But at the same time, they hint that the most relevant for them to reconsider would be to know that the politicians take them seriously and that they are ready to provide them with life opportunities among which they could choose more freely.

The question that remains for the debate among the progressive is how to construct an agenda that would show that social democrats know how to solve the inter-generational conflicts, while remaining a movement courageously seeking new opportunities to progress for all. The overall narrative should also incorporate a new understanding of freedom – of choice, of options, of access – so that it is being reclaimed from: neo-liberals, from protest and radical parties, and from the political system’s fringes and outskirts.

6. Millennials don’t think politics is focused on their direct expectations, but have clearly defined priorities they would like to see taken care of.

Every generation grows up with its’ very own dream and seeks to fulfil it, while imposing an essential transformation. This is also why it is being claimed that every time needs its own answers, this is how the diverse historical periods distinguish from one another, and this is how a continues development and here through also progress is being assured. The changes can come in an evolutionary manner; however they can induce more abrupt changes – being a catalyst of the new movements and new political doctrines to emerge. For the social democratic movement such moments were of course the very beginning of industrial revolution, when they came out as the movement that demanded that social dimension of it is regulated, or for that matter the 1960s, when it embraced the social demands for freedom and peace as impulses to renew its own agenda.

Since the centre-left movement succeed that in the past, the troublesome query remain how come it only partially managed to do so in the 1990s (when the phenomena of globalisation emerged and the movement divided around the modernisation ways¹⁴) and did not succeed in the midst of the financial crisis of 2008. The popular belief, even if not truly based on any historical evidence, was that social democracy would benefit from the crash politically – as the predicament would show the deficiency of the neo-liberal model and would make the voters turn back the electoral pendulum towards the centre left. As the numerous analyses show that did not happen, which makes many wonder why in the aftermath – with some exceptions – the centre-left is in the best case scenario polling around one quarter or one third of the available votes only. That underpinned a number of ‘grand coalitions’ within which social democrats frequently gave into the policies designed to “get control over robust spending”. The problem was that it led to infamous “austerity”, which translated in many countries into the cuts of the welfare state. Vastly unpopular at first, they gradually turned

¹⁴ Reference here is to the so called ‘Third Way’

to be seen as the “bitter medicine to swallow”. The subsequent elections seem to prove that that become a new understanding, which then is rather favourable for the centre-right to glow upon¹⁵.

While these are the political facts, they should further be seen in the context of still declining active engagement of the Millennials generation in this very same political system (see Chapters 1 and 2 of this paper). This would mean that **the ‘current post-crisis consensus’ – if one can take a risk of calling it so – does not respond to the Millennials aspirations. That is especially in terms of the lives choices that they would like to lead.**

The data collected through the survey support this hypothesis. While asked to rank the issues accordingly to their importance, Millennials provide a list of clear priorities, which are listed in Chart 15 below. *Being in a good health* and *being happy*¹⁶ remain the most relevant (with exception of the UK, where second most important is to *have leisure time*). On the further places are consequently *having leisure time*, *spending time with family* and *being successful*. The next group entails generally either personal objectives – such as *being successful* or *making money* (ranked that high by Hungarians) – or collective rights such as *freedom of speech* and *having voice heard*.

What is important *taking interest in politics* takes the last, 17th place in all the rankings across the 11 surveys – with an exception of Germany, where it gets place 16 (ahead of *being involved in local community*).

Austria	Being in good health	Being happy	Having my voice heard	Having leisure time	Being free to do and say what I want
Bulgaria	Being in good health	Being happy	Having leisure time	Being free to do and say what I want	Being successful
France	Being happy	Being in good health	Being free to do and say what I want	Having leisure time	Being successful
Germany	Being in good health	Being happy	Having leisure time	Having my voice heard	Spending time with friends
Hungary	Being happy	Being in good health	Having leisure time	Making money	Being free to do and say what I want
Ireland	Being in good health	Being happy	Being free to do and say what I want	Having leisure time	Helping others
Italy	Being in good health	Being happy	Having leisure time	Spending time with family	Being free to do and say what I want
Poland	Being in good health	Being happy	Having leisure time	Making money	Being successful
Romania	Being happy	Having leisure time	Being free to do and say what I want	Being in good health	Spending time with family
Spain	Being happy	Being in good health	Being free to do and say what I want	Having leisure time	Having my voice heard
United Kingdom	Being happy	Having leisure time	Being in good health	Being free to do and say what I want	Spending time with family

Chart 15: Millennials’ lives’ priorities¹⁷

These findings allow two observations. As noted before already (see i.e.: Chart 8c), the Millennials are a generation that is concerned with their well-being. This is indicated through and through, and here explicitly with the high importance given to the notions of happiness, success and good health. **Such a set of priorities, regardless of the country in which the survey was conducted, means that Millennials would seek much to have ways and choices in order to conduct a healthy life style. It can of course politically translate into numerous dimensions – from the health environment and food, through access to sports (which they indicate they are interested in – see Chapter 1), to the**

¹⁵ See the diverse analyses 2015 elections in: the UK or Portugal.

¹⁶ The data collected do not allow exploring what “being happy” means in particular.

¹⁷ The list to rank consists of: *good health; happiness; leisure time; having voice heard; spending time with friends; spending time with family; freedom of speech; making money; equality in society; helping others; being successful; taking an interest in music; the well being of society; contributing to society; being connected to friends via social media; politics; being involved in a local community.*

public policies preventing illnesses and supporting in case of sickness.

The second observation is that the Millennials value the living conditions more than other aspects of their lives. This means that what they would expect most likely is a possibility to reconcile all the other issues (including here work) with the time and ways they wish to pursue to devote themselves to the relations with family and friends. As such it contradicts the earlier already busted myths about their predominantly individualistic attitudes. Here however a distinction needs to be made – **while Millennials want to spend more time among those closest to them, any societal or communitarian aspects of life come only after in the list of priorities. That is of a great consideration, especially for the progressives, who (due to own origins and traditions) think about mobilisation and organising alongside the traditional line of the (workers', local) community.**

With the clear set of priorities, it does not astonish therefore that the Millennials have a clear view on what should be the main areas of public spending. The first one is *healthcare*, which polls at the levels of: 96% of young Bulgarians, 95% of young Romanians, 92% of young Polish, 94% of young Spanish 91% among young Hungarians (equally high as job creation) and 90% of young Polish. It is seconded by *education* and *job creation* (this one scoring exceedingly low among young Germans on the level of 77% of support). The further places up to number five are filled in with: *fighting poverty* and attending *environmental, food and rural affairs, fighting poverty* and *investing in business, innovation and skills, attending to environmental, food and rural affairs* and to *energy policies*; and finally *fighting poverty* and *attending energy issues*¹⁸. The respective scores can be traced in the Charts 16a and 16b below.

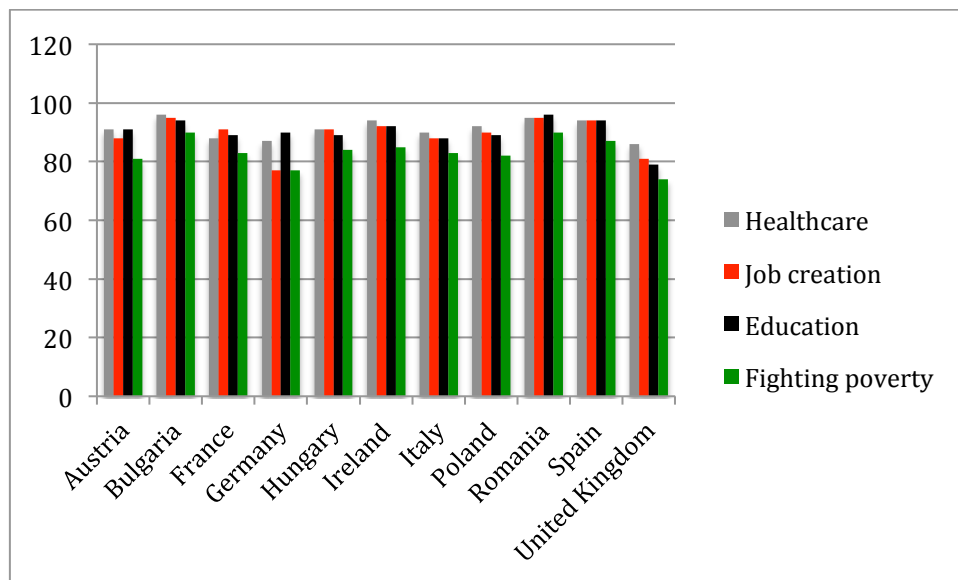


Chart 16a: Millennials' priorities in terms of public spending (part 1)

¹⁸ The noteworthy exceptions from general trends are here: Germany putting education as number 1 priority and placing job creation only on the place 5; as also Poland putting energy-related issues as priority number 4.

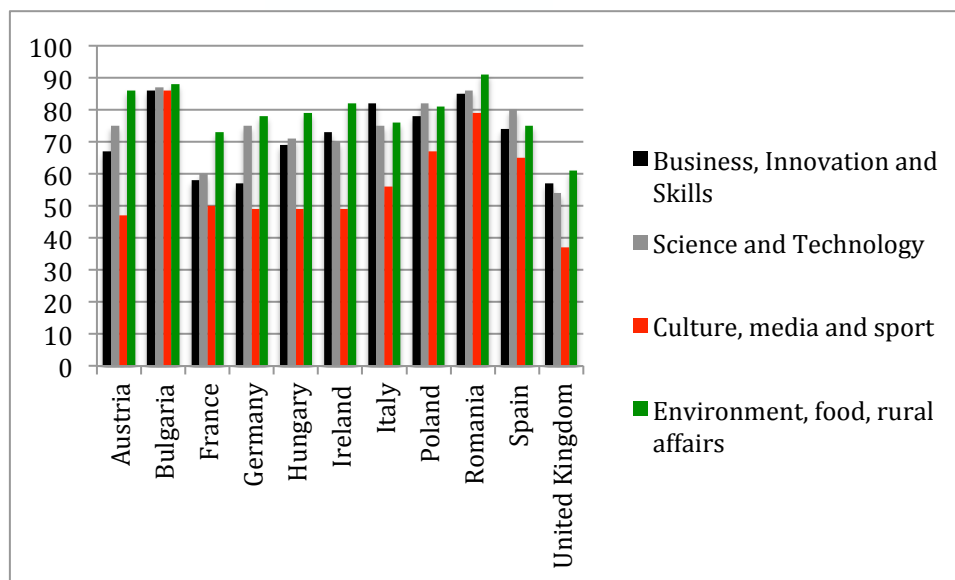


Chart 16b: Millennials' priorities in terms of public spending (part 2)

There are three eminent observations to be made, following the analyses of the two Charts above. First of all, the **Millennials are believers of welfare state policies – however they do give a priority to the ones characteristic to the specific, active welfare state.** This is why also in their rankings fighting poverty comes after education, job creation and healthcare. Secondly, following what was shown in the Chart 9, though Millennials think that new technologies will have a considerable impact on their lives – they do not see their boosting as the absolute priority spending. Hence **should the politicians wish to consider replacing knowledge based economy vision with the IT-centred one, they would need to think how they can make a link enabling between that and the other priorities enlisted by Millennials.** That is a challenge for all speaking on innovation as a key to the future. And thirdly, the Millennials are able to put a clear distinction between what their personal interests are and what requires most of funding. That is once again giving them credit and busting a myth about their presumed self-centrism.

The conclusion arriving from these is that Millennials generation does not see their priorities included in the political agenda, but has a clear view of what should make a part of it and what should common resources be directed to. In that sense they are very consistent in seeing health and happiness as a priority, for achieving which they expect the public spending to be directed to the health policy agenda, jobs creation, education, fighting poverty and establishing green economy.

The question that remains for the debate among the progressive is how to create and execute a programme, which would show that the austerity is not unavoidable and the highly valued public policies remain at the core of the social democratic struggle. At the same time, it is clear that with the review of priorities and putting healthcare in a broad sense (from life choices to prevention of sicknesses and healthcare system), it is also essential to attend the demand of the Millennials to offer life opportunities and choices alongside with the possibility to reconcile all of them (including jobs) with the family and social life that they find exceedingly relevant.

7. Millennials don't think politics currently delivers, but they have their own set of delivery criteria

With already mentioned *professionalization* and *mediatisation* of politics (see Chapter 4), the criteria of evaluation of political actions have altered. Since it became a “*job*”, it started being assessed alongside the question in how far “*it is being well done*” and hence in how far persons exercising it have effectively *delivered*. In that sense, a vote became a *good* that a voter can ‘trade’ offering support, while in exchange expecting that the politicians will keep up to their initial promise and execute the programmatic plea, which they had made during the campaign.

The problem with these evaluation criteria is that it is hard to measure in how far parties and their representatives *can deliver* indeed. Especially because of the votes’ split and very infrequent landslide victories, the parties ‘have to’ repeatedly enter coalitions (from so called ‘grand’ to multi-partisan). That means that any step forward is an effect of a multi-pier consensus and additional political trading. To that end, the infamous TINA (see footnote 6) seems to be additionally disempowering them by narrowing the scope of what they would consider tangible actions. It tempers their boldness alongside with their political imagination. Consequently, general perception is that politicians nowadays ‘*can’t do much*’, which feeling sadly they themselves sustain while talking about *unavoidability* of processes such as globalisation. While they lower the expectations against the socially conceptualised delivery criteria, the herewith-growing gap creates a space for resentment. This unsurprisingly is shared among the Millennials.

The previous Chapter showed that the younger generation is very clear in terms of spelling out their own ambitions and priorities. But beyond that, the survey also allows stating that **young people are very decisive in terms of what they would like the politicians to do. Having a clear view on that, they also seem to think that in majority of cases the politicians fail to deliver.** As the example, it is enough to look at the data regarding what they think in terms of desirable and delivered policies in the field of their own priority – namely health and healthcare. This is examined in the Chart 17 below.

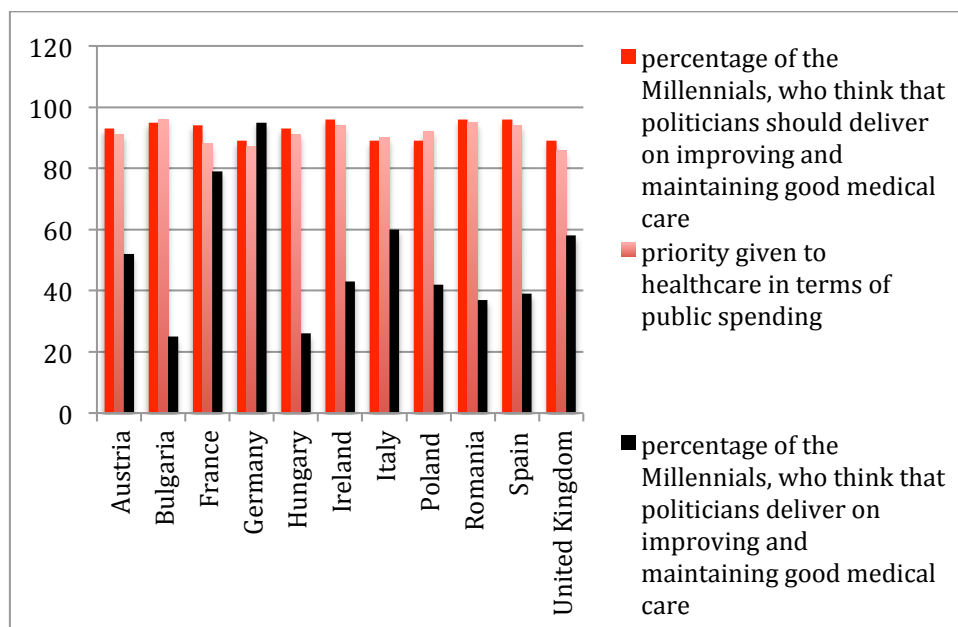


Chart 17: Millennials, who think that politicians should deliver on improving and maintaining good medical care – vis-à-vis percentage that sees that as a priority in public spending and the percentage that believes that politicians do work towards it.

Contrasting the data shows a clear disparity in between the percentage of the Millennials, who think that the politicians should deliver on *improving and maintain good medical care* and who see it as a priority for the public spending, and the number of them, who agree that the politicians actually do so. The only exceptions here are Germany (where the Millennials see politicians slightly even exceeding the expectations), as also France (where disparity is not that great either). To that end, it is important that there is no correlation between the results in the context of progressives are in the government of the respectively surveyed country or in terms of what governmental partisan set up (grand coalition, multi-partisan etc.) is in place.

Similarly discrepancy between the expectations and the assessed level of the delivery can be also seen in other dimensions, example of which Chart 18, which showcases the data regarding education. While Germany and France stand out as exceptions here again, in general the incongruity is even greater than in case of healthcare.

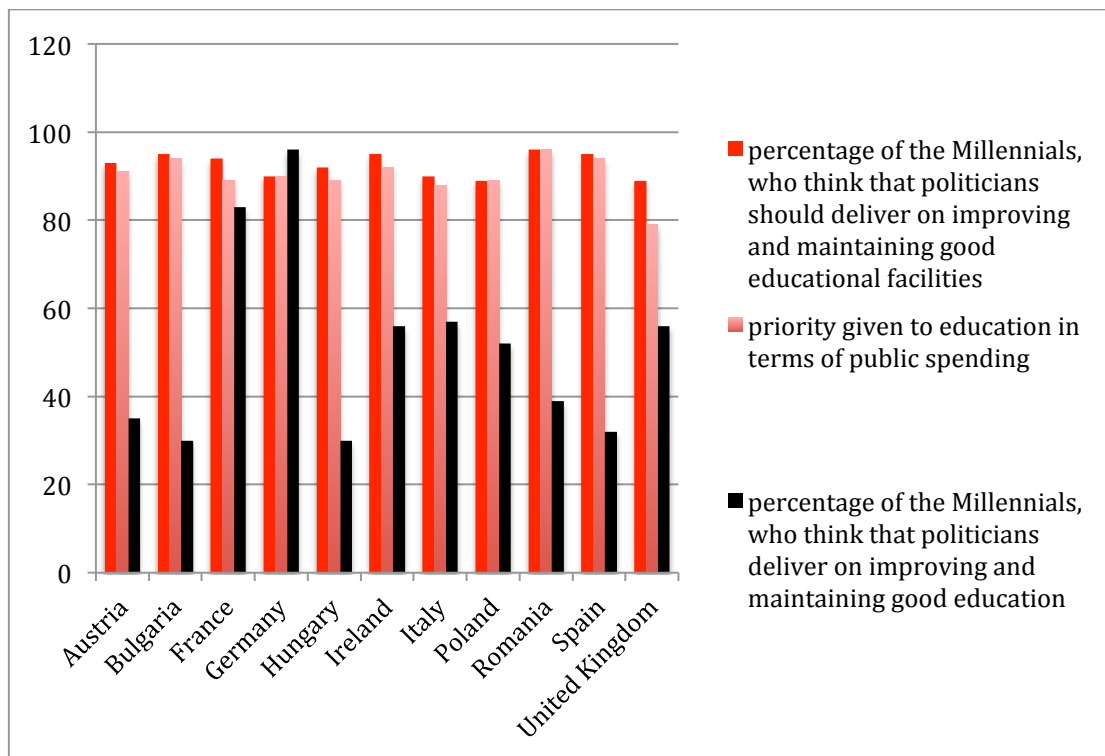


Chart 18: Millennials, who think that politicians should deliver on improving and maintaining good educational facilities – vis-à-vis percentage that sees that as a priority in public spending and the percentage that believes that politicians do work towards it

While the Charts 17 and 18 showcase the disappointment in terms of delivery in the specific policy areas, also on the more general matters that are relevant to the Millennials they seem to be seen as failing. This is shown in the Chart 19 below.

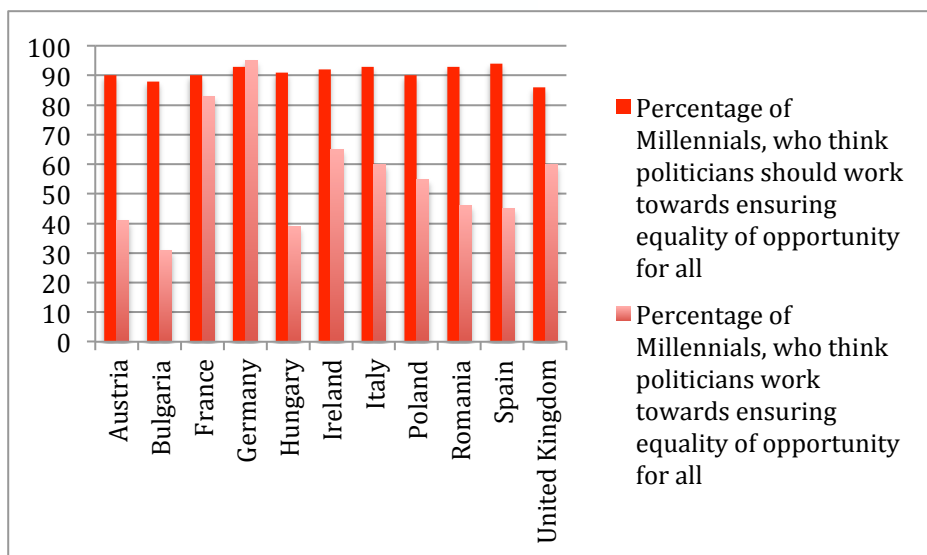


Chart 19: Millennials, who think that politicians should work towards ensuring equality of opportunities for all – and those who think, that politicians do.

The context of the Chart is the connection between the earlier data and the observation of the Chapter 6, whereby it was concluded that young people in Europe are vastly in favour of active welfare state. This derives from the set of the values they uphold, which are predominantly: freedom (see Chart 15) and equality (which manifests itself also in their strong belief in relevance of equality of genders and sexual orientations). Interestingly so, equality within the society ranks high in overall terms as an important issue, but still is placed by the Millennials after the more focused, tangible matters that they personally could eventually benefit from or need support in. The exception here is Ireland, which can perhaps be attributed to the recent campaign ahead of the referendum (even if that was specifically focused on the equality of rights of people of diverse sexual orientation). This is showed by the Chart 19a, which shows on which place equality is in the overall rankings. The conclusion that one should draw is that **equality is not a notion that would carry the Millennials by default (as it did in 2008) and hence to champion that debate, more efforts should be invested in making the connection between equality (and equal opportunities agenda) and the priorities that this generations spells out as the top important for them.**

	Where is Equality among what is important?
Austria	Place 10
Bulgaria	Place 12
France	Place 10
Germany	Place 9
Hungary	Place 11
Ireland	Place 6
Italy	Place 8
Poland	Place 11
Romania	Place 11
Spain	Place 8
United Kingdom	Place 9

Chart 19a: Place that equality in society is given in the ranking of the “most important” issues for the Millennials.

In general terms, Chart 19 shows that also in terms of expectations regarding politicians abiding by the priority of ensuring equal opportunities for all and the delivery on the matter, there is an overall disappointment among the Millennials. That is with an exception of Germany, which stands out with its reverse numbers of 93% to 95%. A possible explanation here is the strong appearance of German state and its wealthy socio-economic situation at this moment, which prevents the retrenchment and austerity measures in the majority of egalitarian policies.

The overall diagnosed disappointment is naturally an argument for the Millennials regarding why they do not want to get involved in the contemporary politics and consequently they are hesitant at best in offering their support to the politicians. But while the issues above may be more complex and delivery may be determined by multiple factors (such as state of global and national economies), also on the straightforward questions there is a big gap between the expectations and the assessed level of delivery. That shows most clearly, when Millennials are asked about in how far they believe that politicians act on their and other citizens' behalf. That is illustrated by Chart 20.

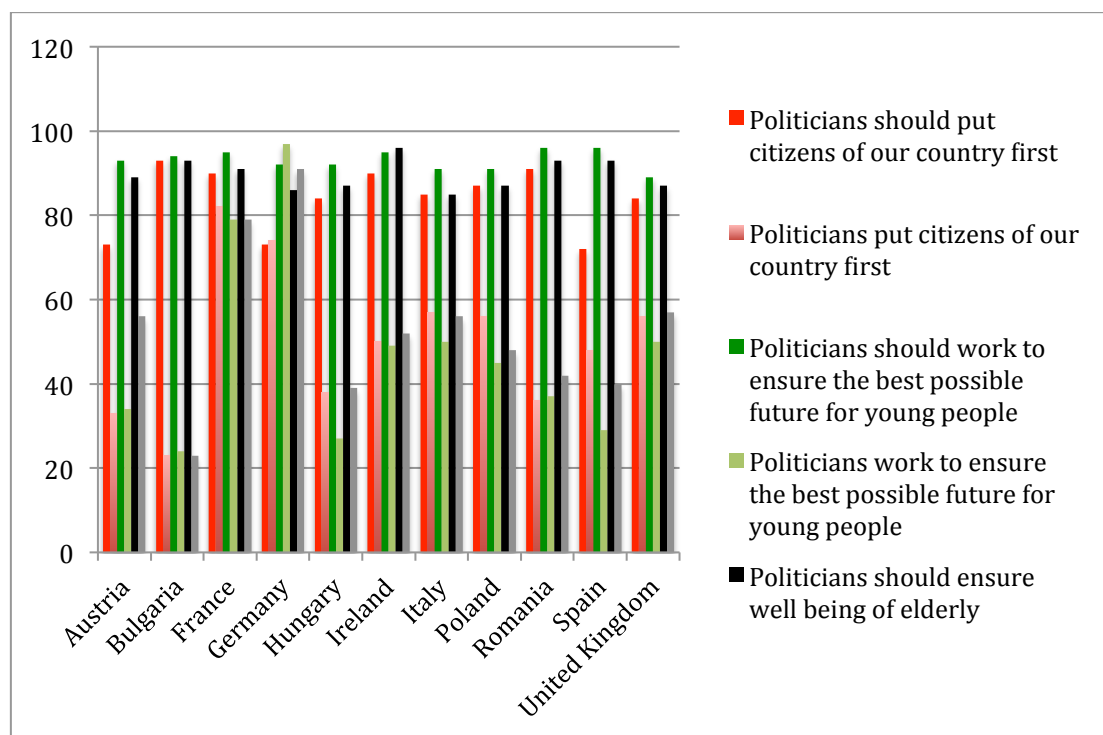


Chart 20: Millennials, who think that: 1) Politicians should put their respective country citizens first (and that they do); 2) they should work to ensure best possible future for young people (and they do); 3) They should ensure well being of elderly (and they do)

There are following observations to be made here. First of all, **the question of putting people of the country first can be put in other words as “in how much they feel bond to the legitimacy principle”¹⁹, while the one on ensuring best possible future for young people would then stand for “how far politicians show the intention to take responsibility for the course of lives of respective others”. As such they are in their core the questions on legitimacy and representation, offering an explanation why Millennials are disappointed by the ways the representative democracy does (not) work for them at the moment.** It reaffirms the conclusions already formulated earlier, in

¹⁹ The question is interpreted alongside the line of the 2009 PES slogan “Putting People First” – which resonated typical for social democrats understanding of “first of all: serve the citizens”. It would be possible to argue that some of the respondents thought of the “national interests” as well, but the transposition into legitimacy principles allows here avoiding mistakes in the interpretation. It places the statement in democratic/state terms without detailed consideration of that notion.

Chapter 5 of this paper.

Secondly, the gap between the expectation towards politicians to *ensure best possible future for them and in how far they do* is vast. This is most striking, as obviously young people are convinced that politicians are not really forward looking and hence doing enough. While this is to be contrasted with what was said about their general optimism and *feeling happy* (see Chapter 2 of this paper), it remains at odds. That is, unless to assume that **the Millennials find the sources of their confidence and hope outside of the traditional politics**. To that end, once again this is Germany that stands out as an exception, with 92% saying that the politicians should carry this specific work versus 97% believing that they do; as also France, where the gap is between expectation and delivery is relatively small. **This is most of all alarm bells for the politicians to dare re-focusing from political management towards political vision.**

Thirdly, the Millennials are very clear that the politicians should work to ensure best possible future for young people and this objective is given a priority in rankings ahead of the task to ensure well being of the elderly. That is with one exception, which is Ireland. Altogether the data echo the findings already included in Chapter 5 in the Chart 13, whereby Millennials were stating that in their views the politicians are far more concerned with the agenda of older than with younger people. These numbers altogether show that **the current mainstream political agenda appears to the Millennials as catering predominantly older than they, rather conservative (in a sense of preserving and safeguarding in its nature) and not having the same kind of offer for younger generation.**

The conclusion arriving from these is that Millennials generation do not think that contemporary politicians deliver in overall terms; however they are ready to set new specific criteria of delivery alongside their view what the programmatic priorities of the politicians should be. These fall into 3 categories: matters-related ones (here are i.e. the questions of healthcare or education), the intention related ones (here are i.e. readiness to listen and work for the younger generation's agenda) and legitimacy related ones (here are i.e. understanding of the democratic mandate they have been given and here through their sense of mission). What is important in the light of the survey findings is that in none of that retrenchment in terms of political horizons or specific policies resonated well.

The question that remains for the debate among the progressive is how to become (young) people's party again. The query is how to frame the list of priorities, so that they correspond with the ambitions of the new generation and also show that while asking for their support, the centre left takes seriously a criterion of legitimacy and representation. In that sense, they need to strike a new balance between idealism (as referring to aspirations) and realism. What is essential for the new narrative is to restore the link on the bases of which the young voters would see the progressive parties and their governance as a source of reassurance, reason for optimism and hopefulness – which at this point they are finding elsewhere.

8. Millennials generally don't trust politicians, but nevertheless they are ready to fairly evaluate their qualities and competences.

The lack of trust in politicians and the doubt that they would deliver on their promises seem to

remain one of the main factors discouraging Millennials from taking part in the institutional forms of political life such as voting (see Chapters 4 and 7). But this does not make them prejudicial in their approach. They are at the same time knowledgeable and aware about particularities, and hence they show readiness to go beyond the statement *all political parties are the same* (see Chapter 4 again). **Millennials distinguish in terms of what qualities and core competences a respective party in question possess in their opinion.** This is a relevant piece of information. Although the social psychology and based on that political science analyses suggest that in politics *once lost competence is the one lost forever* – in case of this Millennial generation it would seem not to be entirely true. And that would be a hint that there is eventually yet another possible opening in terms of constructing a connection.

To that end, the collected data show another relevant thing. **The Millennials are very decisive about pointing out which qualities they consider vital for both the political parties and the political leaders. In their opinion honesty comes always first** – with exceptions of France, where the first is *being good in crisis*; Germany – where Millennials value *trustworthiness* slightly higher; and United Kingdom, where priority is given to *ability to listen* and honesty equally. The approach of the British in overall terms may serve as the part of the explanation of the popularity of Jeremy Corbyn in his campaign for the Labour Party leadership, where his strategy was to stand up to raise issues and profile himself as the politician, who first of all listens. Chart 21 below shows the compilation of the data.

Austria	Honesty (96%)	Intelligence (96%)	Ability to listen to others (95%)	Stance against corruption (94%)	Ability to be firm (93%)
Bulgaria	Honesty (96%)	Intelligence (96%)	Ethics (95%)	Stance against corruption (95%)	Ability to be firm (94%)
France	Good in crisis (97%)	Honesty (96%)	Ability to listen to others (96%)	Intelligence (96%)	Trustworthiness (96%)
Germany	Trustworthiness (92%)	Honesty (91%)	Intelligence (90%)	Stance against corruption (90%)	Good in crisis (90%)
Hungary	Intelligence (92%)	Honesty (91%)	Good in crisis (91%)	Ability to listen to others (90%)	Ability to be firm (90%)
Ireland	Honesty (95%)	Intelligence (94%)	Ability to listen to others (94%)	Good in crisis (94%)	Stance against corruption (93%)
Italy	Honesty (90%)	Intelligence (89%)	Stance against corruption (89%)	Ability to listen to others (89%)	Trustworthiness (89%)
Poland	Honesty (93%)	Intelligence (93%)	Good in crisis (93%)	Trustworthiness (93%)	Ability to listen (93%)
Romania	Honesty (96%)	Intelligence (95%)	Stance against corruption (95%)	Ability to listen to others (95%)	Good in crisis (95%)
Spain	Honesty (96%)	Stance against corruption (96%)	Good in crisis (94%)	Trustworthiness (94%)	Ability to listen to others (93%)
United Kingdom	Ability to listen to others (89%)	Honesty (89%)	Intelligence (88%)	Good in crisis (87%)	Stance against corruption (87%)

Chart 21: Important qualities for an elected politician according to the Millennials

What this ranking shows additionally is following. First of all, there is a core set of qualities that the Millennials expect politicians to embody. These refer first and foremost to their ethics, while the experience (both political and also extra-political) comes at further places in the ranking. This is important and offers additional context as to why the data showed in Charts 19 and 20 (regarding the politicians' intentions and delivery) are so relevant.

Secondly, they want politicians to be intelligent, to be able to listen and to be able to act - hence also in many cases ability to act quickly, be firm and be good in crisis is given a lot of importance. Some of the characteristics are valued more in specific context, such as 'stance against corruption' – which personal integrity issue ranks particularly high in Spain, Romania due to the circumstances at hand.

But while that is the case, the further personal qualities – such as good looks, sense of humour place themselves on the bottom. To that end the ability to keep up with technological developments is also ranked low, which once again puts a question mark on if Millennials really expect politics to move into virtual space – which topic was deliberated upon in-depth in Chapter 4.

Thirdly, the Millennials see personal integrity as more relevant than in how far the politician in question can understand young people. And here comes an important conclusion – **Millennials look to be represented by politicians, who embody high moral standards before they consider in how far the candidate understands them as a generation in particular. Although that may seem in a certain contradiction to the delivery criteria that they set in terms of policies (See Chart 20), it is in fact not illogical at all. It is the intention that seem to count first, which indicates that possibly the evaluation criteria of politics should be changed alongside with the necessary transformation of the current nature of politics.**

As it was stated before, politics is a very personal issue for the Millennials. Therefore, as concluded before, they attribute such a great importance to the question who is the leader, how candidates perform in the battlefield (on Tv and in radio) and what is written in the manifestoes. But the survey shows that they also have quite strong views about the parties, especially the traditional (historical) ones. The opinions here are naturally country-specific, offering however interesting panorama on how the progressive family is perceived by the Millennials within the respective national contexts.

In Austria, **SPÖ** comes first in the ranking of *political experience* (with 57%, 2 points ahead of ÖVP). It is ranked quite high in terms of exhibiting *caring nature* (31%, after the Greens with 46%), *being good in crisis* (with 27%, as 2nd after ÖVP and equal in place with FPÖ), *intelligence* (with 41%, after The Greens 46% and ÖVP 45%) and *stance against corruption* (with 35%, after the Greens with 51% and NEOS with 36%). The rankings are led by far by The Greens in terms of *honesty* and *ability to listen to others*.

In Bulgaria, **BSP** scores higher in rankings of *intelligence* with 30%, after The reformist bloc with 40%, but also after Alternative for Bulgarian Revival with 33%), *ability to be firm* (with 25%, after GERB with 42% and on the same level as The Reformist Bloc, Ataka and Patriotic Front) and *ethics* (with 25%, after GERB with 34%). GERB is the one scoring as first across the rankings of qualities.

In France however, it is **PS** that leads almost all the rankings – being ahead in terms of: *being believable in what they say* (with 47%, ahead on the Republicans with 26%); *being open and honest* (with 40%, being ahead of The Republicans with 29%) and *having the right ideas to improve life in France* (with 44%, ahead of the Republicans with 33%). The only quality that the Republicans lead ahead – however with 1% only – is the one on *understanding young people*.

In Germany, **SPD** scores highest in following: *trustworthiness* (with 39% ahead of the Greens' 38%), *honesty* (ahead of the Green's 42%), *stance against corruption* (with 39% ahead of the Greens' 38%), *ability to think quickly* (with 45% ahead of CDU's 44%), and in *non-political experience* (ahead of CDU's 40%). It scores high also in: *ability to be firm*, *ability to listen to others*, *ethics*, *political experience*, *ability to come across well on tv/radio* and *caring nature*.

In Hungary, **MSZP** is valued for its political experience (with 40%, after Fidesz's 52%), non-political experience (with 29% after Jobbik's 31% and Fidesz's 30%) and *intelligence* (with 28%, after Jobbik's 41%, Fidesz's 32% and Lehet más a politika with 31%). It also ranks relatively high in qualities such as *being good in crisis* (with 18%, after Jobbik's 31% and Fidesz 22%, whereby however all the other parties also poll low) and in *ability to listen* (with 20%, after Jobbik's 39% and Lehet más a politika

with 32%).

In Ireland, the **Labour Party** is behind Sinn Féin, Fina Gael and Fianna Fáil in most of the categories – however there the parties are in general not ranked highly in terms of qualities attributed to them. Hence even if it scores with 9% in terms of *Being Believable in What they Say* and *Having the right ideas to improve in Ireland*, the leading Sinn Féin is attributed 17% and 16% in those respectively.

In Italy, **Partito Democratico** polls as first in terms of having *political experience* (with 48%) and *non-political experience* (with 30%, after 5 Star Movement's 33% and Forza Italia's 31%); It's *intelligence* is valued (35%, after 5 Star Movement's 36%) and it's trustworthiness (25%, after 5 Star Movement's 32%). It scores well in *ability to be firm* (after 5 Star Movement with 33% and Lega Nord with 24%), *ability to keep up with technologies* (with 31% after 47% attributed to 5 Star Movement), however also in sense of humour (with 28, after 32% of 5 Star Movement) and in good looks (with 24%, 1 point after 5 Star Movement and Forza Italia).

In Poland, **SLD** scores relatively on average, coming predominantly 4th or 5th in the rankings – always after Civic Platform, and Law and Justice. It has to be however taken into account here that the survey originates from before the last elections and the electoral merger of SLD and Your Movement into one electoral coalition. It is ranking well in: *political experience* (with 34%, after Civic Platform with 52%, Law and Justice with 44% and Polish People's Party with 35%); in *ability to be firm* (with 21% after 36% attributed to Civic Platform, 35% attributed to Law and Justice and 34% attributed to Congress of the New Right).

In Romania, **PSD** leads in qualities such as: *political experience* (with 36% ahead of National Liberal Party with 26%), *ability to come across well on tv* (with 32%, ahead of the National Liberal Party with 24%), *being good in crisis* (with 27% ahead of the National Liberal Party with 26%), *ability to think quickly* (with 27% ahead of the National Liberal Party with 26%) and *good looks* (with 26% ahead of the National Liberal Party with 25%).

In Spain, **PSOE** is attributed a high level of political experience (with 28%, 1 point after Partido Popular). The fact remains that in the survey in 3 questions (*Being believable in what they say*, *Being open and honest*, as also *having right ideas to improve life in Spain*) around half of the Spanish Millennials replied frequently *don't know / other / None of them*.

In the UK, **the Labour Party** comes first in *ability to keep up with the latest technologies* (with 41% ahead of the Conservatives with 36%). It is ranking second in: *intelligence* (with 50%, after 51% attributed to Conservative Party), *ability to listen to others* (with 41%, after SNP with 51% - which result was however in case of SNP polled for Scotland only), *stance against corruption* (with 42%, after SNP with 49% - which result was however in case of SNP polled for Scotland only), *an understanding of young people* (with 38%, after SNP with 51% - which result was however in case of SNP polled for Scotland only), *non-political experience* (with 39%, after SNP with 45% - which result was however in case of SNP polled for Scotland only) and *sense of humour* (with 35%, after SNP with 46% - which result was however in case of SNP polled for Scotland only).

However, as emphasised in the introduction, the results quoted in this section are country-specific, nevertheless it is possible to try to make at least one general conclusion. That is that **according to the Millennials the progressive parties are usually ranking high, when it comes to the attributes of the historical experience parties. This is reflected in where they are in the data, when the questions concern i.e. political experience**, however some of them (i.e. SPD or Partito Democratico) are valued also for a relative high degree of non-political experience. **The progressive parties are considered by**

Millennials as smart, frequently also therefore described as the ones able to think and act quickly. Where majority notes their shortcomings however is on the abilities belonging to the political parties *social competence*, such as an *ability to listen to others* and exhibiting *caring nature* (with SPÖ, SPD and the UK Labour Party being exceptions here). It s also to be noted, that SPD, PS France and the UK Labour Party score particularly well on all the scales.

The last pending issue is the question in how far the progressive parties find it difficult to show that they are in fact attentive to young people, able to listen and understand them. The summary of the data gathered in the Chart 22 below indicates that this is the case.

Country	1 st place in the ranking	Place attributed to the progressive party
Austria	The Greens with 48%	SPÖ: 4 th place with 28% (after: NEOS with 44%, FPÖ with 42%)
Bulgaria	GERB with 37%	BSP: 5 th place with 17% (after: The Reformist Bloc with 30%, Patriotic Bloc with 22%, Alternative for Bulgarian Revival with 19%)
France	The Republicans with 38%	PS: 2 nd place with 37%
Germany	The Greens with 43%	SPD: 3 rd place with 36% (after: Pirate Party with 42%)
Hungary	Jobbik with 48%	MSZP: 5 th place with 17% (after: Lehet Más a politika with 31%, Párbeszéd Magyarorszáért with 21%, Fidesz with 19%)
Ireland	Sinn Féin with 20%	Labour Party: 3 rd place with 9% (after Fine Gael with 13%, equal with Fianna Fáil and Green Party)
Italy	Forza Italia with 41%	Partito Democratico: 2 nd place with 28%
Poland	Congress of New Right with 32%,	SLD: 5 th place with 17% (after: Your Movement with 26%, Civic Platform with 24%, Law and Justice with 19%)
Romania	National Liberal Party with 26%	PSD: 2 nd place with 23%
Spain	Podemos with 46%	PSOE: 6 th place with 3% (after Don't know/None of them taking in total 31%, Ciudadanos ranked with 8%, and Izquierda Unida with 3%)
United Kingdom	SNP with 51% (however this results ins based on Scotland data only) Otherwise Labour Party with 38%	(The Green Party received 36%, and the Conservatives 26%)

Chart 22: The Millennials ranking of the political parties regarding the quality “ability to understand young people”

Following Chart 22, in none of the countries (with exception of the UK) was the progressive party put as the first one in the ranking regarding the ability to *understand young people*. While the scores vary, two points should be noted. In Germany and Austria, it is the Greens who are considered the most youth-understanding political parties. These are not new parties, however until now coming always behind on the electoral scoreboards and hence not considered directly as the vested part of the predominantly bi-partisan system. **While in Spain the clear winner of the votes in that category**

of who understand young people (the most) is Podemos, in the Central and Eastern countries (especially in Hungary and Poland) it is the right wing extreme and populists, who obviously grasped the momentum to present themselves as alternative to the Millennials.

The conclusion arriving from these is that while the Millennials see trust as one of the key motivators to make them go vote – they do not see that as a virtue of any of the parties within the current political system. This does not prevent them from evaluating the parties however, which allows to see clear distinction how they perceive the parties from respectively different political segments. While the traditional parties are not denied their qualities in terms of professional experience, they are generally seen as self-centred. And that is the vulnerability from which radical, protest and populist parties benefit from.

The question that remains for the debate among the progressive is how to re-establish their *social competence*. While their professionalism is not denied, perhaps a certain ‘return to the roots of activism’ would be desirable. This would require exploring methods through which parties (and their representatives) would become more open, more interested in direct exchange with diverse voters groups (here especially young ones) and would proof that they both *listen* and *care*.

9. Millennials do not feel a connection with the contemporary partisan system, but they are ready to imagine themselves as initiators or as a part of a campaign

While the mediatisation of politics (see Chapter 4) has been progressing, the political performance started being measured alongside the line of communication strategy. The evaluation criteria that emerged herewith were, amongst others, *visibility* and *effectiveness in embedding a core, coherent message in perception of a broad audience*. That was therefore soon matched with the assumed expectations towards respective candidates – in terms of their ability to *come across well on tv and radio* and herewith also appearance (so called *good look*) and rhetoric skills (including sense of humour). These rules were well comprehended by the traditional parties, who found it as challenging as also doable to cope with the technological evolution that brought popularisation of tv. That is especially that in parallel with the development of the broadcast and multiplication of the stations, the legal framework was being put in place to ensure that they abide by the principles of pluralism, freedom of speech and democracy.

The further progress meant also that it became much easier to print and colportage materials, which was yet another impulse for development of the methods used within political marketing. Production of leaflets, posters and banners – which has been one of the oldest communication channels – became easier in terms of realisation, cheaper in terms of execution and could even be outsourced to external companies regarding distribution.

Where the story became more complicated, was the moment in which the digitalisation got into speed. Internet became available to all, becoming a source of popularisation of knowledge (including about political matters) and of information spread. Social media, which followed, enabled each and everyone to communicate on the scale so far unimaginable – forging in some ways a parallel universe of virtual reality. While the ‘rules of the game’ have not been invented or framed in legal ways yet, the political campaigning found itself in a peril. There have been suddenly many more opportunities,

while there have been also certain uncertainty, lack of patterns and perhaps even skills in how to approach it. Additionally, within organisational debates a tension arrived between which methods to focus on: personal canvassing or internet mobilising?

In the previous Chapters, it was eluded to what Millennials believe to be the most relevant qualities of the politicians. As discovered in Chapter 8, they valued the characteristics such as *honesty* and *ability to listen to the others* the most. However, the data in Chapter 4 and Chart 12 point out that what prompts them to vote on the other hand is first of all what they think of a leader (of a party in question) and secondly seeing or hearing the interviews with the candidates on the radio/tv. The potential disparity in between the qualities they would like to see the candidate embodying and what motivates their action inspired confronting the data further. Chart 23 therefore presents the scores that the Millennials gave for the 4 key abilities: *to listen to others*; *to understand young people*; *to come across well on tv and radio*; and finally *to keep up with the latest technology*.

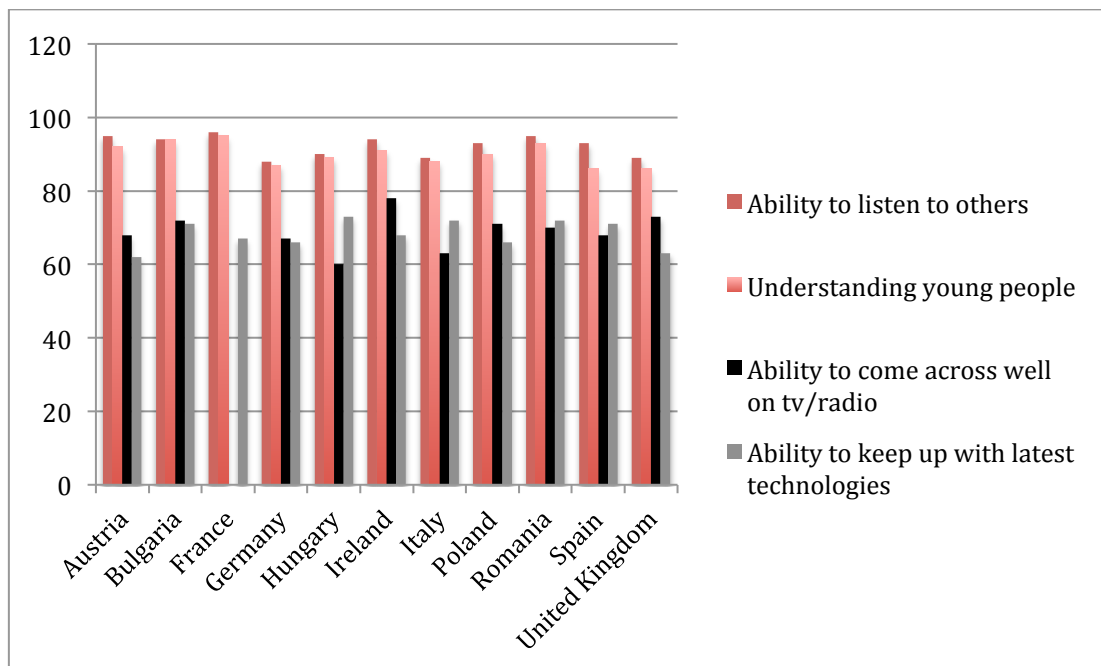


Chart 23: Important qualities for an elected politicians (part 2) - ranking in terms of abilities: *to listen to others*; *to understand young people*; *to come across well on tv and radio*; and finally *to keep up with the latest technology*.

The Chart 23 allows drawing a following conclusion. It shows that the *ability to listen* and *showing that one understands young people* comes top. But while that is the case, on the other hand **for the Millennials there is no direct correlation between the *understanding of young people* and the *ability to keep up with the new technologies***. Though the later ones ranks high in the relative terms, with exception of Hungary and the United Kingdom, it is rated comparatively on the same level as *ability to come across well on tv*.

The difficult part that the data reveals (see also earlier Chapter 8) is that although the Millennials may not see being-up-to date with IT evolution as the most important – it still comes across as relatively relevant. That is of a challenge especially for the progressive family, since **the data show that except Partito Democratico and the UK Labour Party, in general the progressive parties are not considered as champions of new technologies**.

To grasp how crucial that is, it is key to look at what the Millennials see the most effective way to

campaign. That underpinned the question: *which means they would use to start a political campaign*, of which answers are gathered in Chart 24 below.

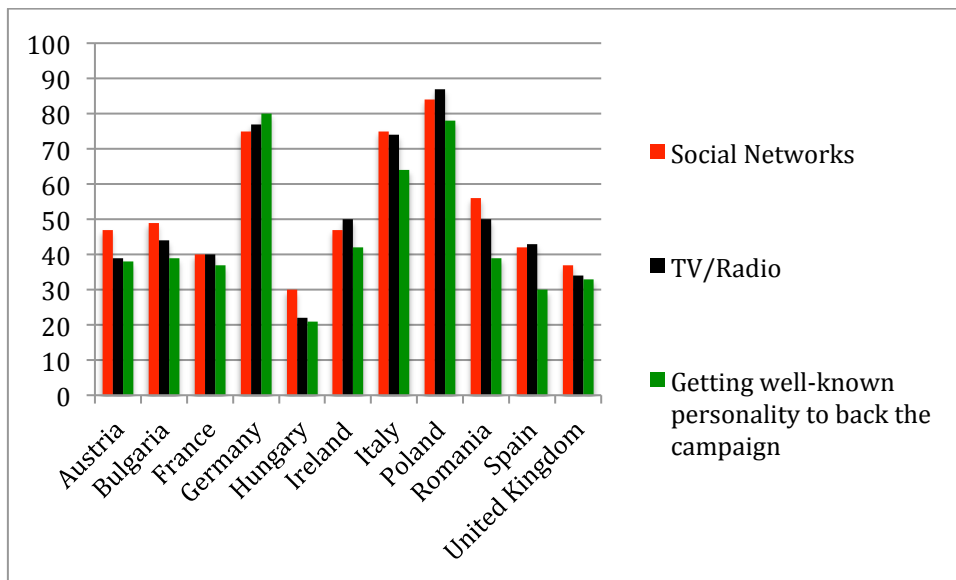


Chart 24: Percentage of the Millennials, who would start a campaign with respectively: social networks, TV/radio appearance and/or by getting well-known personality to back the campaign

The results show that half of the Millennials would focus their efforts on social media, almost equally many declared that a good campaign begins with appearing on tv or radio, as also can start with getting a well known personality to back the cause. Hence the actual dominance of the preference expressed for social media is not that much of a lead ahead of the other choices. And to offer an example, Irish and Spanish Millennials would rather opt for tv than they would for social media in order to campaign. Part of the explanation is the conclusion drawn earlier in Chapter 4, when it was remarked that many young people consider the social media as a private space.

Once again, it is the data collected from Germany that constitutes the most outspoken exception. The German Millennials would start a campaign from getting a well-known personality to back a campaign, most likely for that person to lent next to his/her support also his/her own credibility for the cause. While that may be striking in a sense that that would prove that Millennials are free of prejudice or revolt against established authorities *per se*, the question is in how far they would mean by that asking someone from the world of politics. And that inspired contrasting the data included in subsequent Chart 25.

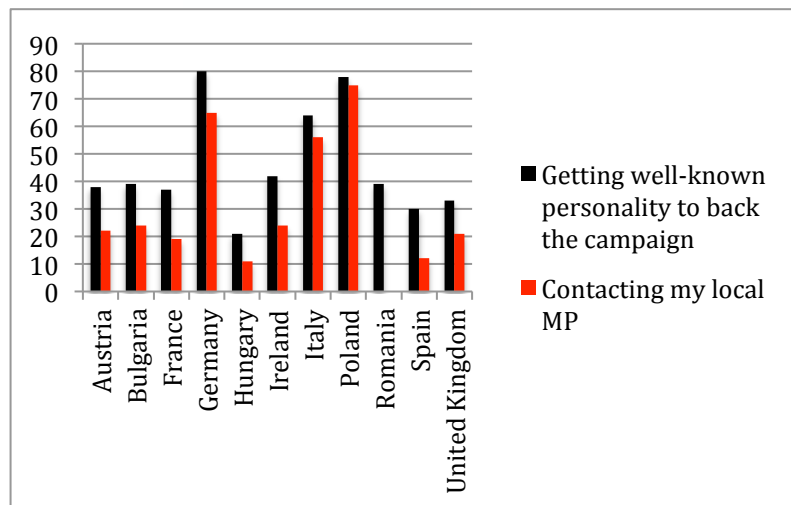


Chart 25: The percentage of Millennials, who would start a campaign asking a 'well-known personality to back it up' – vis-à-vis those, who would ask their local MP

Chart 25 shows an interesting trend. **While in between 30% - 40% of the Millennials would address a well-known personality to back their campaigns, only about half of those numbers would do so requesting support from their local members of parliament.** There are multiple possible explanations to be offered here, the three most evident are as follows. Either they do not consider their MPs as approachable. Or they do not know them. Or they simply feel that a well-known personality carries more “weight” in terms of credentials. In either ways there is an obvious missing link, which needs to be further pondered.

While the principle on how the Millennials would start a campaign has been analysed by now, an interesting question that remains is what sort of means they would use to manifest themselves and the presence of their initiative. Their preferences are shown in the data put together in the Chart 26 below.

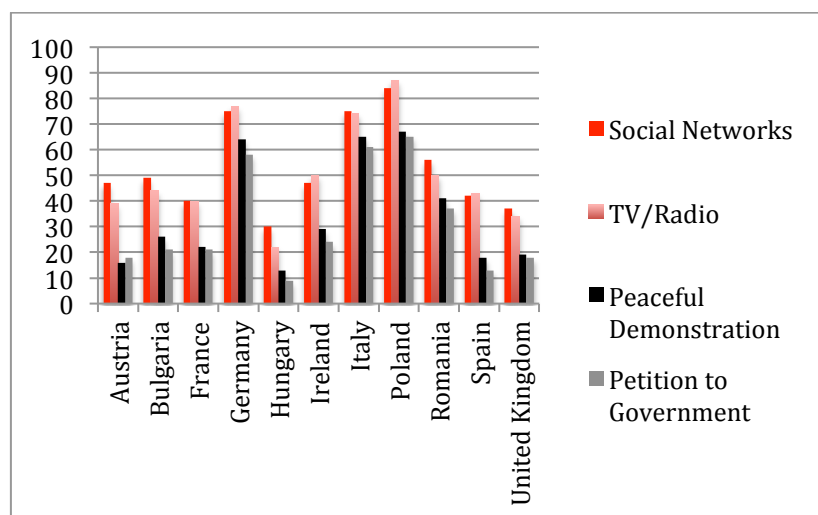


Chart 26: Millennials would rather start a campaign from social networks or/and tv/radio. The forms such as peaceful demonstration or petition come later.

Chart 26 shows herewith one very relevant tendency. **The Millennials believe that a campaign (understood as taking an initiative in the name of an issue) is first and foremost about reaching out. Taking into account the means that they would use, the target would be always a broader audience – name the society. In the first instance they would not address politicians or institutions**

(such as the government) to ensure a change. That is further proven by the low score that the means such as *petition to the government* note. That is very telling in explaining why in the recent years those, who demanded alternative would rather choose to explore an option of creating social movement around the issue than directly addressing any of the existing political parties.

Last but not least, though the social media scored very high among the Millennials as a platform to start and run a campaign, still they remain quite fond of the traditional mobilisation methods. What may surprise is that majority of them would see an actual real-time activity an essential inauguration of any political actions. Majority considered an event that would be including a cultural part (concert, festival) in conjunction with a talk as quite appealing. Less would hold a *peaceful* demonstration and definitely less than that would opt for a disruptive one. As already partially shown, the ideas such as handing a petition to the government, designing stickers or posters or a graffiti scored in the lower half of preferable methods.

That brings about the last question, namely the one on means that the Millennials would consider as the most relevant in communicating on their initiative and hence the ones that they themselves would be attracted by. The comparison of popularity of diverse options is shown in the Chart 27 below.

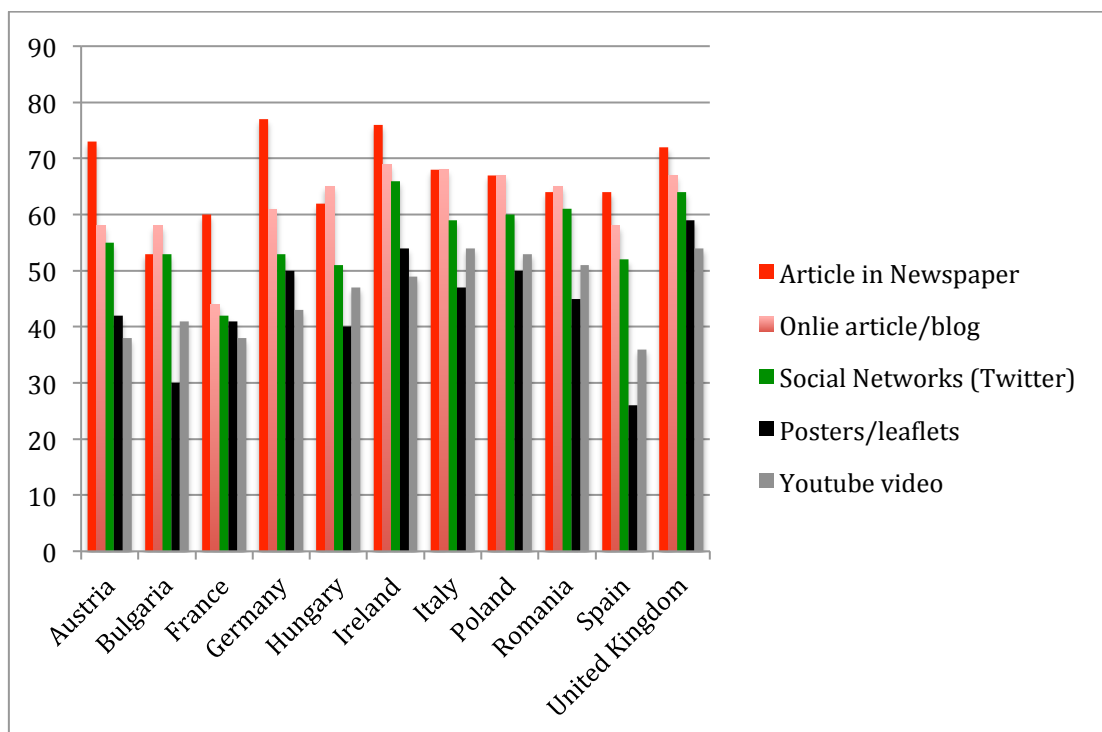


Chart 27: Millennials indicating which means of communication influence their respective votes

While the traditional campaign communication methods (such as posters and leaflets) are not considered as particularly mobilising by the Millennials, neither are the youtube videos. The exception to the later one are the data from the United Kingdom. This reiterates the earlier conclusion that success of an action is not necessarily defined by in how far the usage of the *new media* is embedded in the overall strategy. Additionally, the **Millennials still find the written words as the most effective mean of communication with them, which is why they rank high articles in newspapers and the online blogs (articles). This reconfirms the observations made before that the Millennials indeed put a lot of attention to the content of the message (programme) (see Chapter 4 and Chart 12), which corresponds with the fact that their admit that reading respective**

manifestoes heavily determines their votes.

The conclusion arriving from these is that even if the Millennials feel that their priorities are ‘lost in translation’, still they do exhibit readiness to mobilise and join or launch a political action. They are very clear what ways they find efficient to communicate the message and rally support. As a generation living a digital era, they do consider internet an important medium – but that does not make them disregard neither traditional broadcasters (tv or radio) or the power of one-to-one meetings. That should be of a relief to the parties, which should herewith feel that the assumed tensions between i.e. canvassing and Internet door knocking is simply not real.

The question that remains for the debate among the progressives is how to transform their campaigns into set of actions, that can mobilise equally effectively in the real (canvassing, meetings) as in the virtual (tv, radio, internet) worlds. The first one would require making political rallies closer to cultural, exciting and emotionally loaded experiences. The second would require consistent strategy that would make sure to use all the media in a manner, which would make all broadcasts mutually reinforcing and multiplication inducing.

10. Millennials may not be keen on voting in the European elections, but they are a generation that wants to live an interrelated Europe and a peaceful world.

The political discourse of the last two decades has been focused on underlining how interconnected the world has become. This phenomenon, broadly known as globalisation, has been painted as a side effect of transposition of capital onto the world stage. That meant that the multinational companies began to move freely across the globe following their instincts in terms of where they sensed the conditions to be most favourable and where consequently their business would flourish the most. This brought along a different set of challenges, including among them a profoundly new understanding of competitiveness. While there has been an agreement that there is a limit to those freedoms and certain standards must be obeyed (following the ILO – International Labour Organisation and especially WTO – World Trade Organisation charters), still much has been left in a grey zone. That was one of the profound reasons for which the debate started about the inadequacy of the post-war system (the Bretton Woods agreement) and a need for a new deal. It would have to limit the competition that could often be named ‘race to the bottom in terms of the labour standards’ and focus on sustainability.

At the same time, Europe and EU member states felt compelled to remain a powerful global player in this changing, multi-polar world. Economically that meant embarking on a new strategy (known as Lisbon Strategy), which was aiming at making them “the most competitive knowledge-based economy” of the world. Politically it meant forging further integration, which required on one hand stronger political backing, on the other it had to include speaking with one, joint voice on the global level. Though certain progress has been made – both the socio-economic and the political plans did not result in the desired outcomes. To the contrary, EU seems to have been bouncing from one to another predicament, being vulnerable at the point when the crash of 2008 arrived to its gates.

With both those factors – a deficiency of the existing global order and the EU that is described as an organisation almost permanently in crisis – there is a valid question to ask, how Millennials feel about those developments. To that end, it is of crucial importance to know what their take on the future of the both is; especially that at least in terms of the EU the worrying factor is their declining participation in the subsequent elections. The first question therefor is the one about the relevance

that the international and European politics is given by the Millennials. Consequently, Chart 28 below shows the initial data that may help formulating an answer.

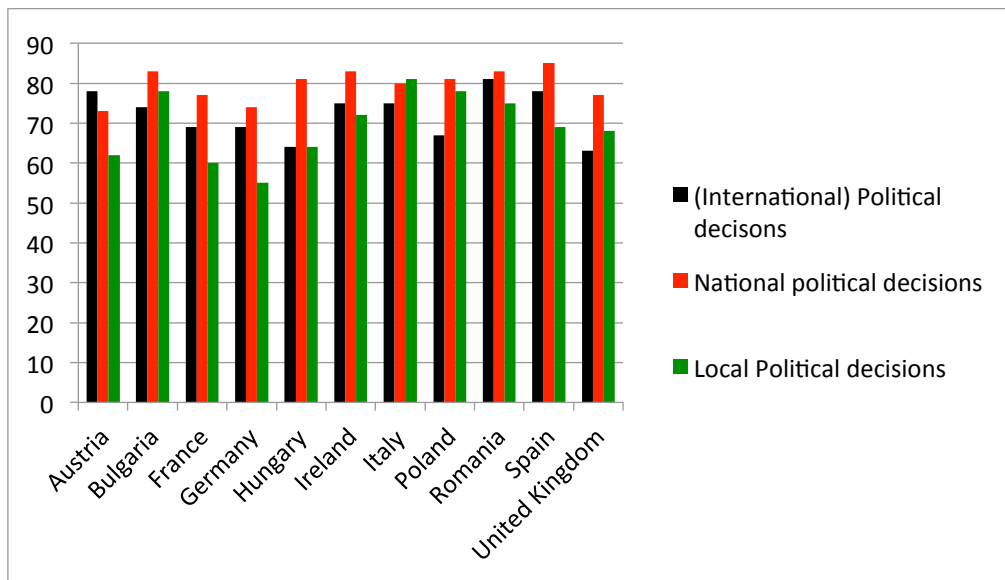


Chart 28: The percentage of Millennials that say that respectively international / national / local political decisions will influence their future

Although it was established in the Chapter 1 (see Charts 2 and 3) that in the opinion of the Millennials the economy takes primacy ahead of politics in determining the future of their lives, still they do consider politics as such relevant. The Chart 28 shows that on average they also consider the three different levels of governance²⁰ similarly important. Here Austria is a certain exception, as the Millennials there believe the international political decisions to be the most defining. That is quite different to the opinions collected in the United Kingdom, where in terms of relevance the lead of the national level above the international one is the greatest from among all the countries. To that end, in Bulgaria, Poland and UK the local level plays a more important role than the national one.

With this being the case, the consequent question is the one about the expectations that the Millennials have in terms of their countries involvement in the international and European institutions, and hence also regarding their views in how far they deliver in accomplishing their missions on the field of the relevant foreign policies. This frames the analyses showcased in Chart 29 below.

²⁰ Available data do not allow examining the importance that the European political decisions have following the Millennials' opinions.

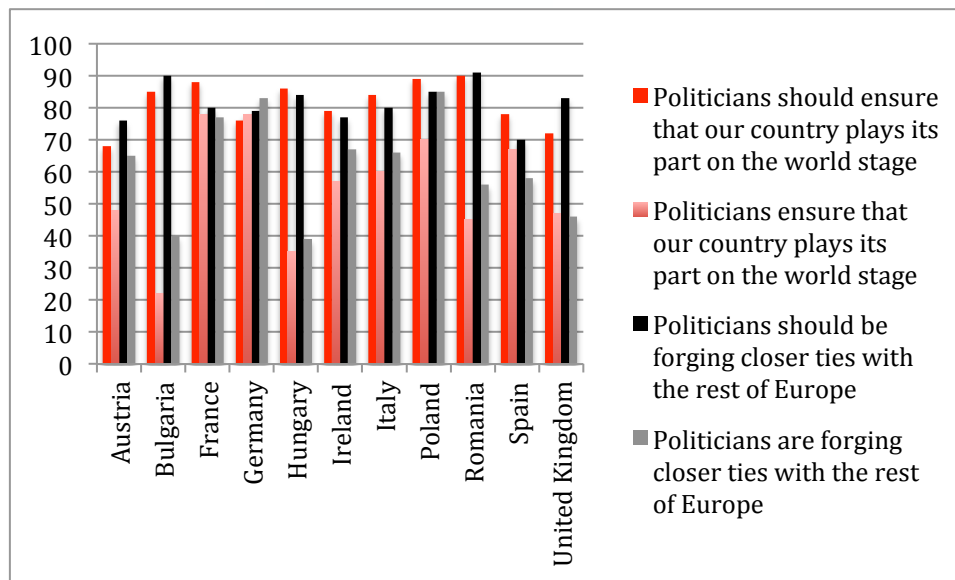


Chart 29: Millennials opinion regarding a need to give priority to international and European affairs, together with evaluation in how far in their opinion it is being done

In majority of cases the Millennials share a view that politicians should be working to ensure that their country plays a role on the international stage. In all the cases, except Germany (where as before the assessment of delivering on the task is higher than the importance given to the task) there is a demand for greater efforts to ensure that the respective countries play their parts on the world stage. **As the Chart 29 shows, also when it comes to Europe, Millennials prove to be predominantly pro-European.** That is even in the countries that are claimed to be euro-sceptic (such as the UK) and opposing the EU rule (as in case of a dispute on the principle of democracy, which causes an on-going conflict between Brussels and Budapest). **Perhaps that is also one of the signs that there is a change of attitudes with the Millennials emerging in terms of showcasing a more of internationalist and more pro-European approach.**

There would need to be a further research completed in order to fully understand why that is the case – that is especially because the Millennials are a the second if not third generation born after the end of the World War II and are the ones, who in many of the surveyed countries cannot remember personally any other reality than the one of being the citizens of the EU. But to a certain degree a part of the answer can be retrieved, while looking one more time at the factors that the Millennials consider as crucial in defining their future. The economic circumstances take primacy, as Charts 2 and 3 showed. But the threat (or reality) of war alongside dangers connected with rise of terrorism are also named by many as potentially heavily influencing their lives now and tomorrow. And that is an unprecedented result, as shown in the Chart 30 below. Especially when one recalls again that it is noted for the generation born into peaceful, stabilised context.

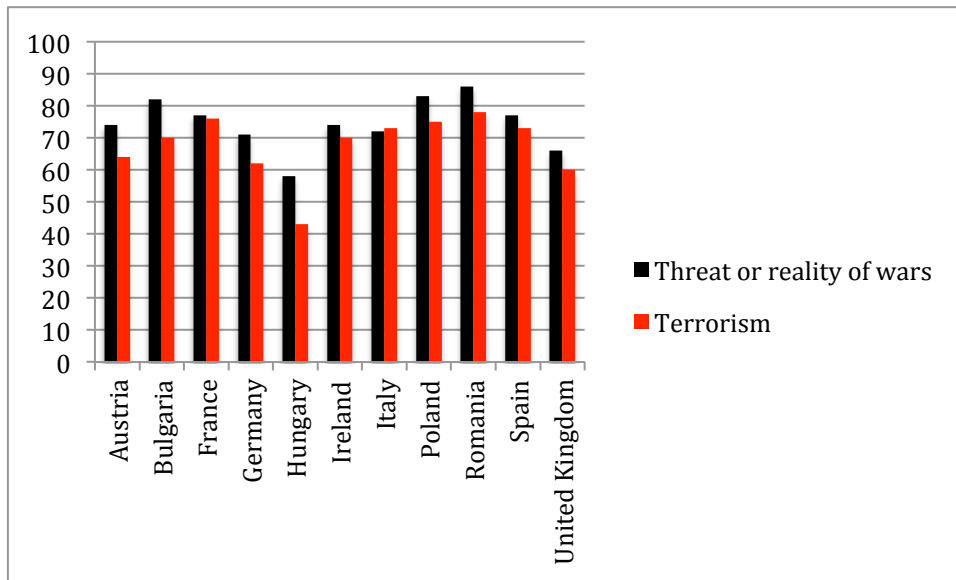


Chart 30: Millennials opinion in how far war and terrorism will affect the quality of their lives in the future

The numbers quoted in Chart 30 would to a certain extent back the hypothesis that the Millennials' re-focus on the international and European cooperation may be driven by the same motivation that was felt by the UN and EEC (EU) founders. That would be a search for ways in which cooperation could ensure safeguard and promote peace. This would further find its evidence in the fact that for example in case of France, if one sees the previous Chart 29, the international and European cooperation scores truly high – while of course the recent horrifying attacks clearly also enhanced the fear of war and terrorism of the French Millennials.

If that was the case, that the attitudes of the Millennials show 'a return to the roots' (of the global and the European orders), then it would mean that it was most likely also the international and European cooperation that they would expect to be a way to solve other of their concern in terms of the factors that may influence (negatively) the quality of their lives in the future. For recalling, these would be international crisis, immigration and state of environment – as displays in Chart 31.

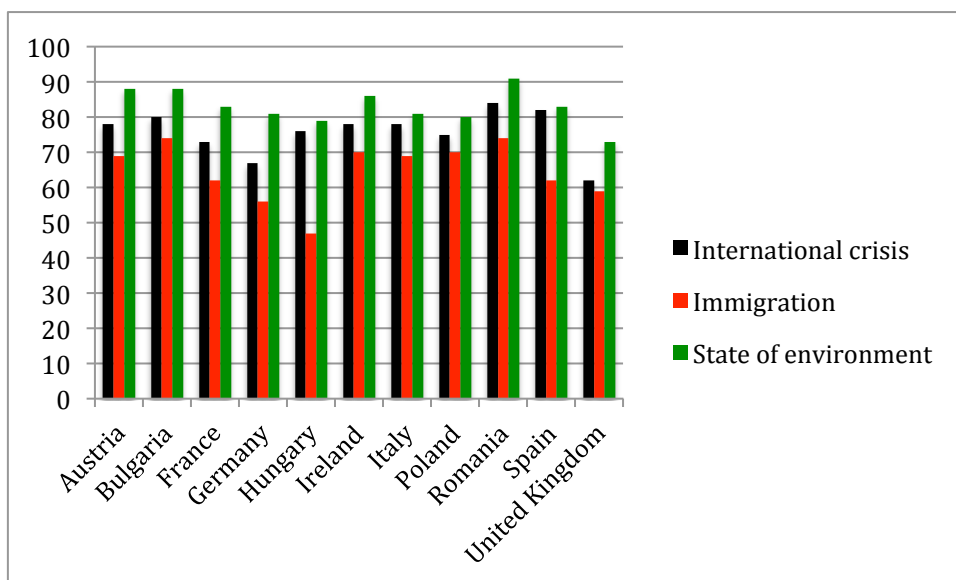


Chart 31: Millennials' opinion in how far international crisis, immigration and environmental changes will affect the quality of their lives in the future

Last but not least, it is worth noting while the Millennials feel threatened by a tangible prospect of war and terrorist attacks, the attention they give to importance of the global and European cooperation is paired with their opinion regarding the efforts that should be put in place as far as *building and maintaining strong military force* is concerned. It is illustrated by the data gathered in Chart 32 below.

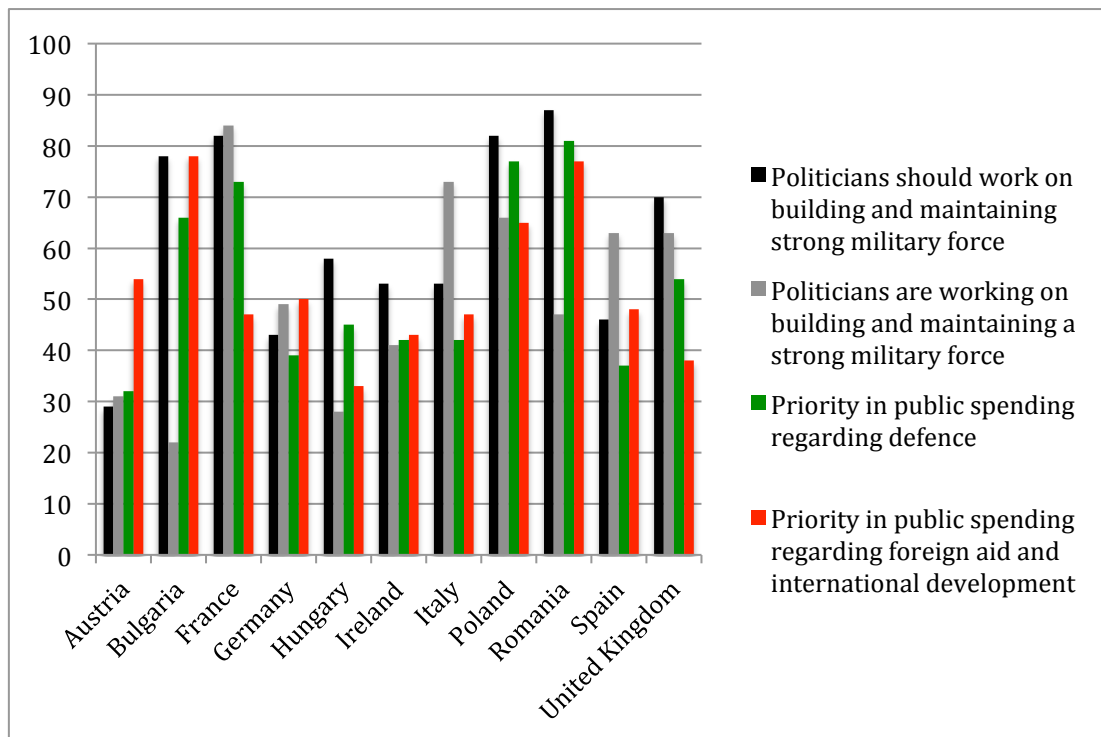


Chart 32: Millennials opinion regarding if politicians should work / work on strong military force – and if priorities in public spending should fall onto defence and/or foreign aid.

Once again, also these numbers may come as striking. Chart 32 shows that the Millennials, to a large degree, believe that the politicians should buttress their efforts in terms of working towards stronger military capacity. For many it is a relatively important priority in terms of public spending. What is also telling, especially while re-looking at the Charts 30 and 31 again, is that **with exception of Austria, Germany and Spain – among Millennials reinforcing military force polls higher than the matters of foreign aid and international development.** To that end in some of the states proud of their interventional involvement in aid and development policy areas, the numbers show record support for defence capacity instead. That is the case for both UK and France.

The conclusion arriving from these is that Millennials generation may not appear euro-enthusiastic in electorally behavioural sense, but remains convinced about the necessity of both international and European cooperation. In that sense they are very appreciative to the work that is being done by the state's representatives on the global and the Union's level, while expecting more however in terms of their inner policies that would foster their country's military capacity. That seems striking and would point towards an obvious feeling of the Millennials' insecurity regarding the feasibility of a promise of a global peaceful coexistence.

The question that remains for the debate among the progressive is how to modernise its global and European agendas, so that they can present a tangible promise of a peaceful future of

sustainably developing world. What underpins that is a challenge to change the narrative. It is not necessary to convince the Millennials that the international and European cooperation important, as they are aware of that. What is essential is to prove that it needs to advance, providing new guarantees and reaching new horizons.