



# BUILDERS OF PROGRESS EUROPE'S NEXTGEN

EUROPE'S MOST EXTENSIVE YOUTH-FOCUSED RESEARCH SURVEY

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# **BUILDERS OF PROGRESS: EUROPE'S NEXTGEN**

Millennial & Gen Z Views for  
a Youth-Owned Recovery



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# **BUILDERS OF PROGRESS**

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# BUILDERS OF PROGRESS

Builders of Progress is a research project exploring the main concerns and hopes of young Europeans aged 16 to 38. It examines their opinions regarding a wide range of societal issues – including climate change, political participation and the European Union. The research findings intend to stimulate debate and provide informed advice on how to shape a progressive future with and for young people.

The project is conducted by the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS)

with the support of Anny Klawa-Morf Stiftung (Switzerland), Društvo Progressiva (Slovenia), Felipe González Foundation (Spain), Fondation Jean Jaurès (France) and the Party of European Socialists (PES), and in co-operation with ThinkYoung – the research organisation that has co-ordinated the surveys and examination of the findings.

More information on the project can be found here: <https://feps-europe.eu/theme/youth-participation/>.





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# FOREWORD

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Dr. László Andor,  
FEPS Secretary General



The year 2022 was designated to be the European Year of Youth. Ideally such a year is not only a time for discussion but also policy innovation, however one thing is certain: sound analysis can help both. As the leading progressive think tank of the European Union, FEPS has a long-standing tradition of examining young people's attitudes and opinions, and for obvious reasons we looked upon the European Year as the perfect moment to discuss what young people think about European politics broadly.

In the past, the focus of our youth related research was on the Millennial generation. The current survey, in which approximately 19 thousand respondents were involved, picks up the questions of the Millennials, but extends our interest to Generation Z. The resulting new report is thus based on one of the largest surveys on European youth with a focus on political attitudes, and extensive focus group as well as background research. The two large-scale surveys that gathered the inputs were conducted in November and December 2021, and late March and early April 2022.

It should not require lengthy explanations as to why the survey first and foremost focuses on how the pandemic affected young people, shaped their main fears and hopes, and how European youth coped with these extraordinary conditions. In addition, the report covers a variety of important topics, with the main emphasis on young people's expectations towards EU policy. Since the report tends to highlight the role of the young generations in co-shaping how our future will look: we can without exaggeration present them as the Builders of Progress.

The overwhelming concerns in connection with the pandemic in recent years did not mean that other major topics faded away. Climate and sustainability have been driving youth interests and movements and they rightly find their place in this survey as well. But readers will see that this is not disconnected from socio-economic issues, and inequality is a massive problem in the eyes of our youth. Political participation and the rule of law also appear among major topics of the survey, which covers youth views on the European Union more generally. When it comes to the EU, the participants were asked about the policy priorities for the future, but also about specific tools such as the recovery funds.

Without attempting to provide a summary of the report in a foreword, it is probably right to highlight that the young people of Europe seem to be ready to support a European Union which is deepening and enlarging at the same time. Most young people favour further EU integration, enlargement, and an EU that speaks with a single voice on the global stage. At the same time, they also strongly support an EU-wide minimum wage, and an EU role to deliver universal basic income and decent unemployment benefits. Overall, there is a strong sentiment that young people want to be more involved in EU affairs, which should be seen as key to strengthening European democracy.





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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## *Europe, the NextGen are speaking Europe, are you listening?*

This report aims to bridge the gap between policymakers and younger generations of Europeans. It showcases the views of Millennials and Gen Z in response to the shocks posed by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. *Builders of Progress: Europe's NextGen* is one of the most comprehensive research initiatives targeted towards young European people. Nearly 18,500 young Europeans were surveyed throughout the entire project. The research was conducted by the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS), in collaboration with ThinkYoung and with the support of the Anny Klawa-Morf Foundation, Društvo Progressiva, Felipe González Foundation, Fondation Jean-Jaurès and the Party of European Socialists.

The project has had two main research phases. The first phase focused on social and political views in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This initial stage involved desk research followed by online focus-group interviews involving 64 participants, which took place in February and March 2021. Respondents were from Italy, France, Denmark and Hungary. This first phase also included a survey conducted between 9 November and 14 December 2021, which involved over 11,000 respondents.

The second stage of the project was launched following Russia's invasion of Ukraine to understand the impact of the war on the views of young Europeans. This second phase consisted of a follow-up survey of over 7,000 respondents between 25 March 2022 and 7 April 2022, which primarily focused on defence, foreign policy and migration issues. This second survey repeated

some central questions from the first survey to measure the impact of the war on perspectives on relevant issues.

## **Building Blocks for a Youth Centred Europe: Key Findings and Policy Implications**

The report is divided into seven sections. The first six sections represent a collection of fears, hopes and policy preferences on certain issues among young Europeans. Together, they form the blocks to help build a shared future with and for young people by encouraging reflection on what young people think, and what kind of policy response they would like to see in the future. The conclusion addresses the policy implications of the findings.

### **1. The 'New Normal': The COVID-19 Experience and its Transformational Impact**

The pandemic has had a negative impact on young Europeans, ranging from effects on education and employment insecurity to mental health and well-being deteriorations and social isolation.

- Jobs and future employment are the biggest societal concern among young people, followed by poverty and inequality.
- Over half of young Europeans are concerned about their education and training.
- Over 60 per cent of young Europeans are concerned about the negative impact of lockdowns on their mental health.
- Speaking to mental health professionals has a low prevalence amongst young people in



all countries surveyed. Well-off respondents are almost twice as likely to use professional help as people in a humble financial situation.

- Six out of ten young people see working and studying from home in a positive light.
- Young women, those in a humble financial situation and with a lower education, as well as those aged 16-27 are more likely to have concerns that learning from home and teleworking negatively impacts their mental well-being.

### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

**It is critical to remove the barriers that prevent low-income groups from accessing mental health services.**

**For a long-term transition to home-based work and study to be effective, a balance needs to be struck between face-to-face and distance work and learning. Teachers must be well trained to offer online learning. Online classes must be planned to address structural issues that exacerbate the unequal burden on lower-income people, such as lack of equipment and general support for a climate conducive to education.**

**A better balance between family life and homework needs to be ensured. Changes to parental leave entitlements, paid sick leave, flexible working arrangements and access to affordable and reliable childcare are areas that could help in this regard.**

## **2. Political Participation, Democracy & the Rule of Law**

Among young people, voting remains the main form of political participation, while a large majority are in favour of the EU strengthening the rule of law and giving young people more say in European affairs.

- Voting (56 per cent), donating to a cause (36 per cent) and petitioning (27.5 per cent) are the most common ways young people have participated in political life. Less than 10 per cent have never been politically active.
- Involvement in politics via social media is not one of the most frequently used ways for young people to engage. Having said that, younger respondents (and especially those under 18) engage most often in this way.
- Despite their active political participation, young people would like to be even more involved in European public affairs, an opinion shared by two-thirds of respondents.
- To do this, more than 70 per cent of young people want politicians to better communicate to citizens what the EU is doing and how it impacts their daily life.
- Nearly two-thirds of respondents want the EU to stop funding member states that disregard the rule of law. This percentage is also high in Hungary (65 per cent), which is currently under infringement proceedings for disregarding many core democratic principles.



## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Elections remain by far the most important means by which young people make their voices heard. The low number of those who do not politically engage suggests that many younger people can be politically activated by political parties if the right programmes, the appropriate language, and the proper formats are found.

While young people value the EU and want to get involved, there is undoubtedly a need to help them understand how the EU affects their daily lives. This is a challenge that needs to be tackled jointly by the different EU institutions and their representatives.

Policymakers can count on young people's support when they stand firm on enforcing the rule of law in member states, even in states where the rule of law is under threat.

### 3. Equality

The pandemic has brought socio-economic issues to the fore. Young people are concerned about their jobs, and tackling inequality and poverty is at the top of their minds.

- Improving the quality of jobs and salaries is the top EU policy priority for young people for the coming five years. Combating poverty and inequality is number two on this list.
- Of the response measures put in place during the pandemic, young Europeans most want to see assistance to those most in need to continue after the pandemic has ended.
- Support for EU-led socio-economic policies is high:
  - EU-wide minimum wage (69 per cent for, 22 per cent against).
  - Universal basic income (66 per cent for, 23 per cent against).
  - Decent unemployment benefits (58 per cent for the EU to lead, 31 per cent for member states to lead).
  - EU to ensure decent housing for all (69 per cent for, 21 per cent against).
  - Support from well-off youth is significantly lower on these issues than among those with an average and humble financial situation.
- Overcoming the gender pay gap is seen as the most effective way to promote gender equality overall. Men place tackling gender-based violence as their top priority by a small margin.
- Women in our sample were consistently more concerned than men about socio-economic issues, and these concerns were also reflected in their policy priorities.



### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

According to young people the EU should ensure decent jobs and that minimum socio-economic requirements are always met, for example, by helping those most in need and implementing an EU-wide minimum income, unemployment benefits and EU-wide decent housing.

In general, young people strongly support more egalitarian policies and are worried about the disadvantaged and those left behind. However, policymakers need to find ways to get young people with high incomes – who have the most to share – fully on board, as their support for these measures is lower.

nearly two-thirds of young EU residents are in favour of the EU reducing fossil fuel use, reducing energy dependence and transitioning to renewables.

- Almost two-thirds of young EU residents think that the European Union is not doing enough to tackle climate change and protect the environment. Focus group participants also stressed that a 30-year timeframe for achieving change is far too long.

### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Climate change remains a major concern for young people. They believe the EU needs to do more, and to do it faster, while ensuring the transition to a zero-carbon future is just and fair.

## 4. Sustainability and Climate

Climate change was a hot topic among the younger generations well before the onset of the pandemic. The current crisis has not changed this focus, with young people wanting a green and sustainable Europe.

- Young people feel that combating climate change is the second most important priority for spending from the COVID-19 recovery package and that it should be a significant concern for the future of the EU.
- Young people see the fight against climate change as a fight for equality and want sustainability efforts to be just for all, choosing the latter as the most important future climate-based policy alongside reducing air pollution.
- Asked in late March 2022, against the backdrop of Russia's invasion of Ukraine,

## 5. Views on the European Union

Young people support EU integration, and the pandemic has increased their desire for more cooperation between member states. While most are in favour, their support for a strong EU on the global stage is somewhat weaker.

- Most countries show moderate levels of support for further EU integration. When asked whether EU integration has gone too far or whether it should go further, young Europeans on average selected 5.7 (integration should go further) on a negative-positive scale from 0 to 10.
- Over 68 per cent of respondents said the COVID-19 crisis showed that more cooperation at the EU level was needed, and only 21 per cent said the pandemic proved that EU integration had gone too far.



- Just over half of young EU residents want the European Union to speak with one voice internationally. One-third prefer national countries to represent themselves.
- Half of young EU residents are in favour of further enlargement of the European Union. Almost a third are against new countries joining the EU. This suggests increased support compared to previous studies on this topic.
- Young people in the EU are more in support of a European Union army than against it (47 per cent versus 35 per cent). The support has not changed significantly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- Our survey from early April 2022 showed that there is strong support for helping Ukrainian refugees (74 per cent), sending military aid to Ukraine (68 per cent) and the maintenance of sanctions against Russia (76 per cent).

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There is readiness for further EU integration among young people, especially when it comes to preparing for future crises. Most young people want further EU enlargement, but reservations against it remain significant, illustrating that further engagement on the topic is needed.

While most young people want the EU to speak with one voice internationally, a large proportion sees responsibility for representation resting with member states. This suggests that policymakers may face some challenges in getting young people's support for the EU's long-term common foreign policy responses to issues that depend on coordinated European responses on the global stage.

Support for the EU's response to Russia's invasion was seen as very positive in spring 2022. It remains an issue to be constantly monitored against the backdrop of increasing economic uncertainty.



## 6. 'Building Back Better'

The EU's €800 billion emergency recovery package represents an exceptional opportunity to reinvent and transform Europe, and to build back better for all. Young people want to make the most of this and to make sure it leaves no one behind.

### POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Young Europeans want to avoid a return to the 'old normal'. Their top priority for recovery funds is better healthcare and social services, including a focus on mental health & well-being, improving social work and hospitals.

Tackling climate change comes second, while smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth, and reducing social and economic equality are joint third (both at 25 per cent).

Young people do not want to maintain the strict border controls introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Returning EU powers to member states is the least preferred way for the EU to change after the pandemic.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>BUILDING BLOCK 1: THE COVID-19 EXPERIENCE AND THE 'NEW NORMAL'</b>	<b>28</b>
2.1 COVID-19 & Youth: Setting the Scene	29
2.2 Discussion of Research Findings	29
2.2.1 Education & Employment Worries	29
2.2.2 Education & Employment: Working & Studying from Home	38
2.2.3 Mental Health: A Key Concern	50
2.2.4 Strategies to Cope with the Pandemic	56
<b>BUILDING BLOCK 2: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, DEMOCRACY &amp; THE RULE OF LAW</b>	<b>62</b>
3.1 Political Participation and the Rule of Law in Europe	63
3.2 Discussion of Research Findings	63
3.2.1 Democratic Participation & Inclusion	63
3.2.2 Views Regarding the Need for More Racial and Ethnic Diversity Among EU Politicians	80
3.2.3 Challenges to the Rule of Law	83
3.2.4 Views on Communication Regarding EU Matters	88
3.2.4 Sitting on the Fence on EU Topics. How Predominant is it Across (Non) Member States?	91
<b>BUILDING BLOCK 3: EQUALITY</b>	<b>94</b>
4.1 Fostering Improved Equality Outcomes for All	95
4.2 Discussion of Research Findings	95
4.2.1 Millennials and Gen Z Demand a More Social EU	95
4.2.2 Time for the EU to Step Up its Involvement in Social Policy? Gen Z and Millennial Views	99
4.2.3 Gender Equality	119
4.2.4 The Rights of the LGBTQI+ Community	122



<b>BUILDING BLOCK 4: SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>125</b>
5.1 The Slow Path Towards Decarbonising Europe	126
5.2 Discussion of Research Findings	127
5.2.1 Persistent Youth Worries about Climate Change	127
5.2.2 Climate Justice & Equitable Sustainability	135
5.2.3 Sustainable Farming	137
5.2.4 Views on Energy Related to the War in Ukraine	139
<b>BUILDING BLOCK 5: EUROPE IN THE WORLD</b>	<b>140</b>
6.2 Discussion of Research Findings	141
6.2.1 Views on the EU's Foreign Policy and Enlargement	141
6.2.2 Views on Migration	144
6.2.3 Views on a Single EU Army	145
6.2.4 Views on Trade Policy	148
<b>BUILDING BLOCK 6: 'BUILDING BACK BETTER'</b>	<b>151</b>
7.1 Build Back Better: Build Back Fairer	152
7.2 Discussion of Research Findings	152
7.2.1 A More United Europe for the Future	152
7.2.2 Recovery Priorities	159
7.2.3 Leaving No One Behind	164
<b>CONCLUSION &amp; POLICY IMPLICATIONS</b>	<b>173</b>
8.1 Mental Health and Working from Home	173
8.2 Economic Concerns, Economic Equality, and Policy Priorities	174
8.3 Climate & Sustainability	175
8.4 Views on the European Union	176
8.5 Participation in Politics and Youth Empowerment in EU Matters	177
8.6 Generation Z versus Generation Y	177
8.7 Building for Progress	179



<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>180</b>
<b>ANNEXE TO BUILDING BLOCK 1 .....</b>	<b>191</b>
<b>ANNEXE TO BUILDING BLOCK 2.....</b>	<b>197</b>
<b>ANNEXE TO BUILDING BLOCK 3.....</b>	<b>202</b>
<b>ABOUT THE AUTHORS .....</b>	<b>207</b>
<b>ABOUT THE FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN PROGRESSIVE STUDIES (FEPS) AND CONTRIBUTING ORGANISATIONS .....</b>	<b>209</b>



# INTRODUCTION

In 2022, Europe celebrates its Year of Youth. It celebrates its young people's diversity, their ingenuity and their important role in building a better future; no matter how difficult times may be. This report is a contribution to that cause by reflecting and analysing how young people see the world. While policy should always start from core values, this report provides important input for decision-makers who want to shape a youth-friendly future.

Young people form a core segment of the current electorate and of the electorates to come in the future. They will have to live with the consequences of the decisions taken today for decades to come. Neglecting the younger generations will have clear political consequences. Young people who are neglected by society are more likely to become abstainers. They begin to live outside their boundaries and ignore the community that has neglected them.<sup>1</sup> For all these reasons, young people must continue to empower themselves and continue to become the builders of progress who will shape a better future. In doing so, they also need the support of policymakers, young and old, who must pay close attention to their hopes, dreams and concerns. Those in power need to work for young people and with young people to give them the opportunity to feed their perspectives into the development of appropriate initiatives and services.<sup>2</sup>

This Builders of Progress report aims to contribute to these goals by providing a better understanding of the opinions of young Europeans aged 16 to 38, capturing the so-called Generations Z and Y (also known as Millennials). With over 18,000 respondents in two waves of surveys (carried out in November 2021 and March 2022), it presents one of the largest youth surveys in Europe. It focuses on some of the key issues that concern young people, such as social policy, climate change and mental health. Additionally, it takes a greater European focus by asking young people for their opinion on the work of the European Union on these topics. Building on the insights and analysis derived from the Millennial Dialogue research carried out previously by FEPS and ThinkYoung from 2018 onwards, this text represents the newest and most up-to-date analysis of young people's opinions and perceptions in the series.

Unlike previous editions, this report has to take into account the impact of two key crises that have affected the lives of young Europeans and are, therefore, likely to have had a strong influence on their opinions. Firstly, the current pandemic is the exact type of 'shock' that shapes a generation and has brought about so many challenges across a whole host of areas. The significant impact the pandemic has had on numerous social, political, and economic

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<sup>1</sup> Paolini, G. (2013). Youth social exclusion and lessons from youth work. European Commission and EACEA. European Youth Forum (1998). Youth Forum European Youth Policy Adopted by the Executive Committee 3-5 April 1998, Vilnius, Lithuania.

<sup>2</sup> A salient example of this need is the crucial role that young people play in achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/youth/>



matters, while perhaps not fully understood, is certainly well documented and discussed.<sup>3</sup>

However, what is less well documented are the experiences from different generations and the hopes and dreams of young people looking to the future. This report examines the impact of the pandemic on the two generations and tries to find answers to questions such as: What challenges have young generations encountered during the pandemic? What kind of Europe do young people want after COVID-19? Have priorities and preferences shifted? And how can the EU not only rise to the challenge but build back better from the pandemic in the eyes of young people?

While we had already put these questions to more than 11,000 young people in 11 European countries in November 2021, the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 has had profound implications for the European security order and could be a key moment for European integration and cooperation. The conflict, which has become the largest armed conflict on European soil since World War II, is triggering massive migration flows and is having significant inflationary effects on the European economy. The war has also led to a turnaround in European defence policy, as European countries are much more willing to cooperate militarily in response to the Russian invasion.

With this in mind, the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS), in collaboration with ThinkYoung, set out to assess what young Europeans thought about this defining event. From 25 March to 7 April 2022, FEPS and ThinkYoung interviewed more than 7,160 young people between the ages of 16 and 38 across

France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain, and the UK to better understand their thoughts about the conflict. The findings were presented in the resulting report, *Builders of Progress: Europe's Next Gen. The War In Ukraine through the Eyes of Youth*. We used the key findings of this separate publication to complement this report, providing critical perspectives on young people's opinions on energy security, migration and a more autonomous Europe.

This report is divided into Building Blocks. They represent the issues on which we have consulted young people. At the same time, they also symbolise the ingredients needed to build a progressive future for and with young people. In our first Building Block, we describe young Europeans' attitudes towards working and studying during the lockdown, also focusing on mental health as a crucial challenge. In our second Building Block, we look at the political participation and opinions of European young people. We also examine views on the EU project, and its democracy and respect for the rule of law. In our third Block, we examine the perspectives of Millennials and Generation Z on social and gender equality policies. After looking at different perspectives for a sustainable green transformation, we look at opinions on sustainable agriculture and energy independence. Next, after analysing opinions on migration, we turn to views on EU defence, trade policy and diplomacy. The penultimate chapter examines perspectives on how "to build back better", focusing on young people's views on how best to use the funds from the pandemic recovery packages. It also analyses the impact the pandemic has had on perceptions of the EU's objectives and scope for action. The last chapter closes with a conclusion.

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<sup>3</sup> Kaczmarczyk, P. (2020). Coronavirus crisis: There is no way back to business as usual in the EU; Parmar, I and Bhardwaj, A. (2020). We can build a better world after COVID-19 by dragging the state back into public services; European Parliament. (2021d). Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on EU industries. March 2021; ILO. (2021). COVID-19 and the world of work. Eighth edition. ILO Monitor, Eighth edition. 27 October 2021.



## Key Concepts: Youth, Gen Y and Gen Z

Youth is a socially constructed concept that cannot be tied to a single age bracket, nor can it be associated solely with particular behaviours such as taking up a full-time job or having children.<sup>4</sup> The identification of a distinct youth period in the course of a lifetime has become ever more difficult due to recent societal changes.<sup>5</sup> Young adults spend more time in school, begin full-time jobs later, and might be dependent on their parents for extended periods (in some European countries, in fact, the average age at which young people leave their parental household is close to 30).<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, many young people encounter non-linear sequences of experiences in which events take place in non-traditional order: they may have children before finishing their education, for example, or they may return to school after working for several years.<sup>7</sup> For the purpose of this report, we will adopt a rather broad definition of the term youth and include individuals aged 16 to 38 in late 2021. We chose this age range because it allows us to obtain data on the opinions of most Millennials and young Gen Z.<sup>8</sup>

**Generations** typically refer to groups of people born over a 15–20-year span. This means the likelihood of profound political, economic, societal and technological change between generations is very high. They can be seen as a lens through which to understand societal shifts and

the key events that cause them.<sup>9</sup> We can divide generations into various categories: Silent, Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials & Gen Z. With youth as the key stakeholders of this report, we focus on Gen Y, also known as Millennials (young people born between 1982 and 1994) and Gen Z (young people born in and after 1995).

### Millennials

Defining generations is not an exact science; the demarcations between generations and the details that define their experiences are not always consensual and evolve over time. Nevertheless, it can be said that the first generation to come of age in the new millennium share some unique life experiences:<sup>10</sup>

- The attacks of 11 September 2001 and subsequent terrorist attacks and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are, for many, a vivid memory during their formative years.
- The economic crisis of 2008, in the wake of which most Millennials entered the workforce, influenced their life choices and, for many, slowed their entry into independent adulthood.
- Unlike earlier generations, which were shaped by the advent of the TV or the PC, and later generations, who took constant connectivity for granted, they have come of age with the explosion of the internet and social media.

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<sup>4</sup> Furlong, A. (2013). Youth Studies: An Introduction.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid; European Commission. (2021a). Age of young people leaving their parental household. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?oldid=494351#Geographical\\_differences](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?oldid=494351#Geographical_differences)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Obtaining data for individuals under 16 is complex in several jurisdictions.

<sup>9</sup> Duffy, B. et.al. (2018). BEYOND BINARY: The lives and choices of Generation Z. Ipsos Thinks. Ipsos Mori; Dimock, M. (2019). Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins. Pew Research Center. January 17, 2019; Pew Research Center. (2015). The Whys and Hows of Generations Research. September 3, 2015

<sup>10</sup> Dimock, Michael. (2019). Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins; Carrer, S et. al. (2018) Millennial Dialogue on Europe. Shaping the new EU Agenda.



- For most European Millennials, globalisation has been an integral part of their lives (distinguishing them from earlier generations).

## Generation Z

Generation Z is even more difficult to narrow down than Millennials, as their formative years are not yet behind them, and much of what will define this generation is still to come. With this note of caution, we can present some of the defining characteristics of this generation:

- They are the first generation who have grown up with the internet and portable digital technologies from a very early age, impacting how they interact with the world.<sup>11</sup>
- The COVID-19 pandemic falls in its formative years. While the long-term impact remains to be seen, it has already had a particularly negative impact on educational opportunities<sup>12</sup> and mental health.<sup>13</sup>
- Russia's invasion of Ukraine is likely to go down in history as the first major global fallout of this generation, the impact of which on global trade and the economy is yet to be seen.

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<sup>11</sup> Dimock, Michael. (2019). Defining generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z begins; Katz, Roberta. (2021). Gen Z, Explained: The Art of Living in a Digital Age.

<sup>12</sup> Onyema, Edeh M et al. (2020). Impact of Coronavirus Pandemic on Education.

<sup>13</sup> See section 2.2.3 in this paper for a dedicated analysis.



## METHODOLOGY

This report is the result of one of the most comprehensive research projects ever completed on European Millennials and Gen Z. It involved over 18,000 survey participants in 9 EU Member States, Switzerland and the UK. 64 young people also engaged in focus groups across 4 countries. All participants were between the ages of 16 and 38.

We have selected 11 countries that represent a balance between the 27 EU member states. We paid particular attention to the geographical distribution between Western, Eastern, Southern and Northern Europe. It was also important to us that some of the most populous countries were represented. In addition to the EU member states, we also included the United Kingdom and Switzerland in our survey.

### Phase 1: Desk Research

As an initial stage of the research, we conducted a literature review examining the major social implications of the pandemic and the responses implemented by the EU institutions. This was supplemented by a wider review of the EU's work and the priority issues it is seeking to address.

### Phase 2: Data Collection

#### Focus groups

A total of 8 focus groups with young people in Italy, France, Denmark and Hungary were held.

Skilled facilitators conducted the sessions online due to COVID-19 restrictions. The sessions were split by age and main use of time (such as working or studying), with a younger group aged 18 to 27, an older group aged 28 to 37 and two groups split between those who were working and those who were unemployed and studying. Two focus groups were conducted per country: one in a large city or the capital and the other in a rural area or small town.

Facilitators led the groups in their native language. Sessions took place online in February and March 2021 and lasted from 90 to 120 minutes. All sessions were voice recorded with participant consent. The content of the discussions was transcribed in the original language and fully translated into English. All participants were remunerated.

### Primary Survey – Design and Dissemination

The survey questionnaire includes 25 questions originally written in English and translated into each local language. The survey was designed to be representative of all individuals aged 16 to 38 who live in the target countries and was disseminated by Efficiencie3 between 9 November and 14 December 2021. The survey questionnaire aimed to be easily understandable by respondents.



The survey used quota sampling through proprietary online panels. Quotas were based on age, gender and region (NUTS 1).<sup>14</sup> Weights were applied based on educational level and occupation/use of time of the target age group in each country. Weights were adjusted to take into account the population of each country within the target age group. The survey reached over 1,000 respondents in each country with a total sample size of 11,058.

## Follow-up Survey on Ukraine – Design and Dissemination

The follow-up survey on Ukraine was conducted by Pollfish. The survey was launched on 25 March 2022, and the data collection exercise was finalised on 7 April 2022. Local panels were used to target young people between the ages of 16 and 38 years old, with an overall sample size of 7,367. The countries surveyed were France (n=1,019), Germany (n=1,001), Italy (n=1,131), Poland (n=1,002), Romania (n=602), Spain (n=1,002) and the United Kingdom (n=1,610). Quotas were applied for age, gender and education level and weights were applied to ensure the results are nationally representative of basic demographics. Where relevant, EU totals and European totals were applied to take into account the inclusion of the United Kingdom.

## Phase 3: Data analysis

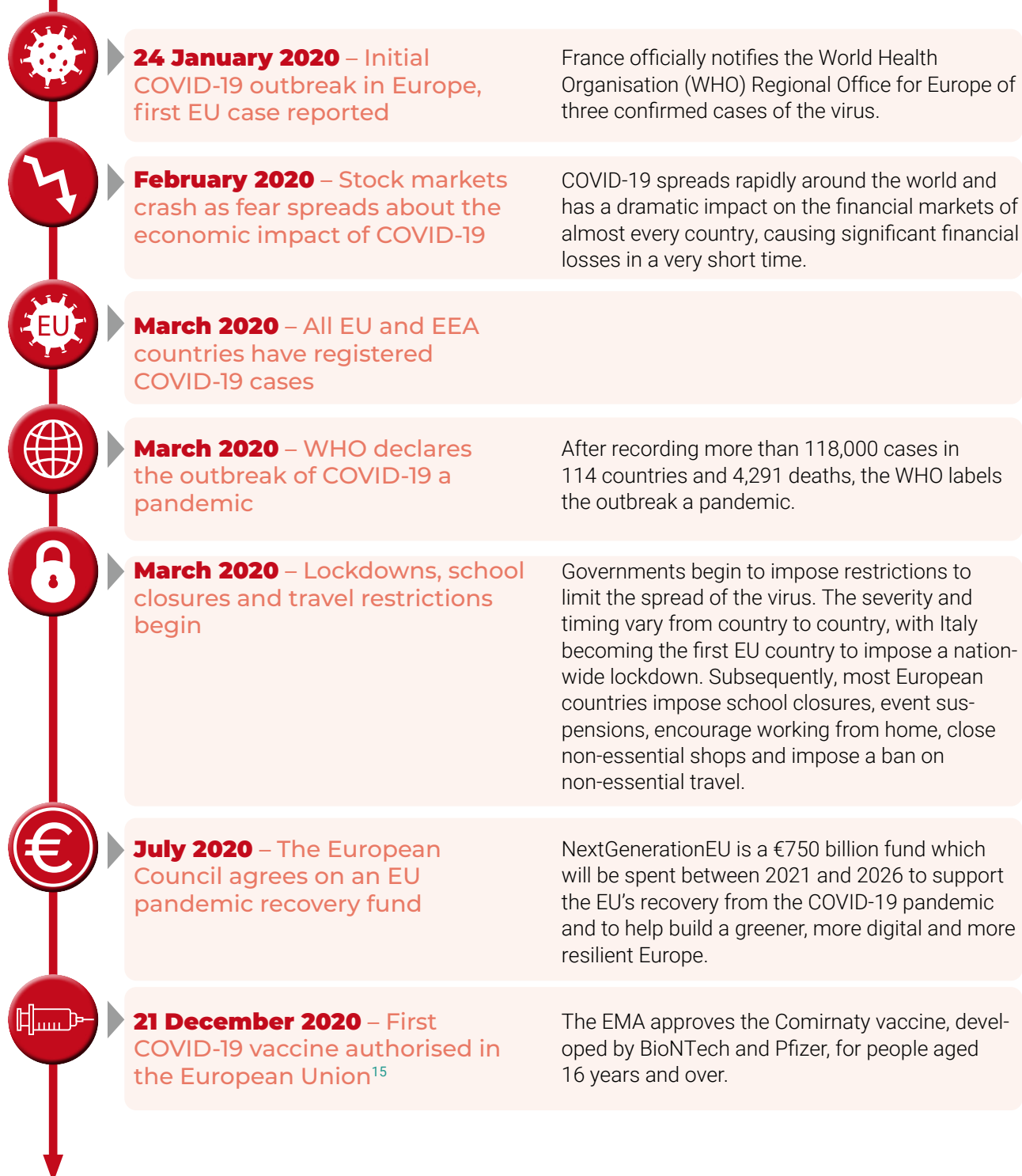
Descriptive data analysis was used in place of specific models. In some instances, multivariate analysis was used to better sort the data. The EU and Europe results are a weighted average for the countries under study. We have avoided drawing conclusions about possible causal relationships as this is beyond the scope of this study. Readers are reminded that the survey results are estimates whose precision – all other things being equal – is determined by the sample size and the statistics observed.

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<sup>14</sup> Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics.

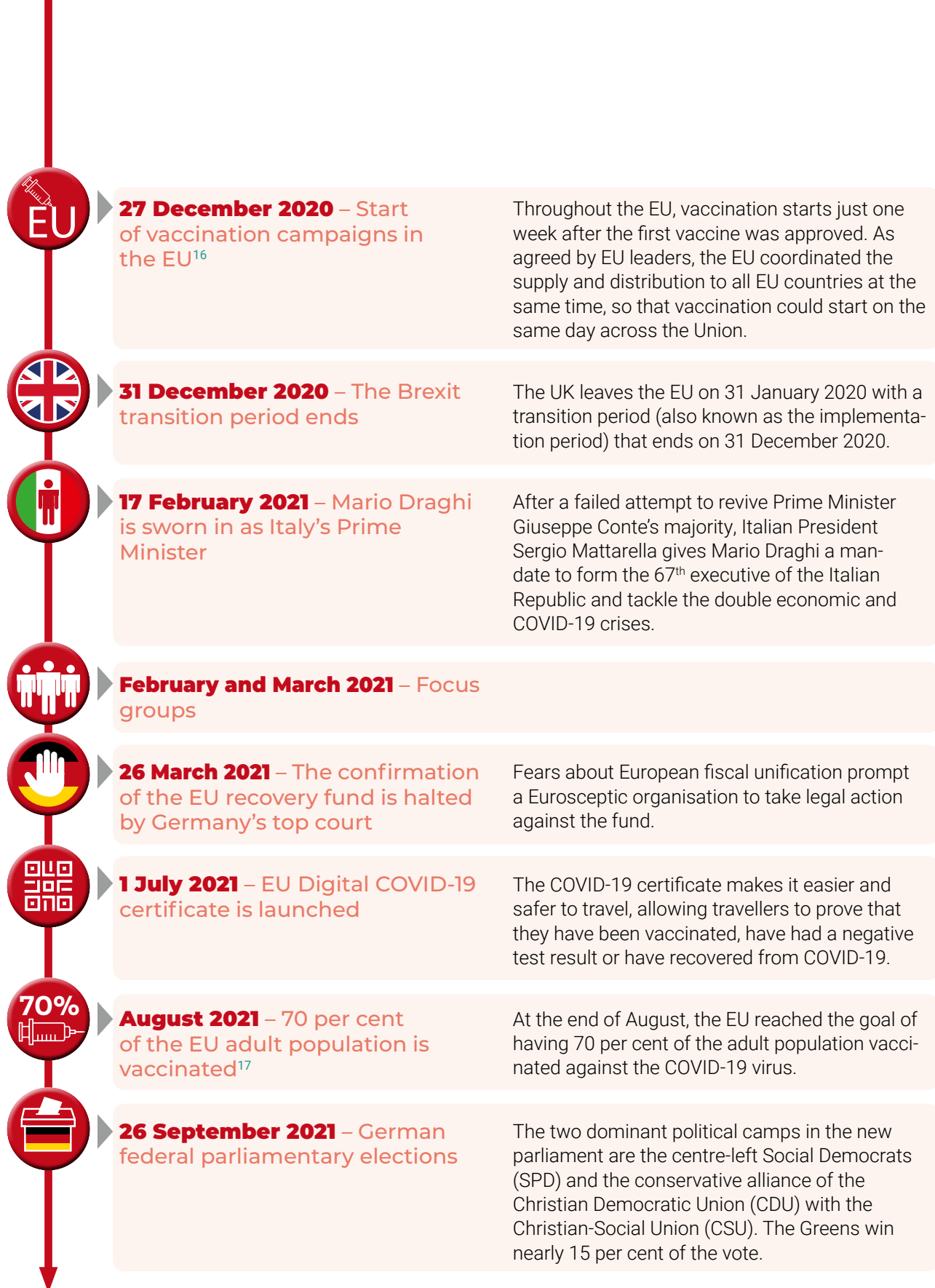


## Timeline of Key Events



<sup>15</sup> OCDC. (2020a). First COVID-19 vaccine authorised for use in the European Union. European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, News. 21 Dec 2020.





<sup>16</sup> European Council. (2022). Stronger together | The incredible journey of COVID-19 vaccines.

<sup>17</sup> European Commission. (2022). The EU in 2021: general report on the activities of the European Union. Directorate-General for Communication.





**November and December 2021** – Dissemination of the first survey



**8 December 2021** – Olaf Scholz (SPD) sworn in as new Chancellor of Germany



**February 2022** – Russian invasion of Ukraine

On 24 February 2022, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation invade Ukrainian territory.



**March 2022** – EU member states begin to significantly ease COVID-19 restrictions

Travel restrictions in Europe are increasingly lifted, and EU countries allow non-essential travel once more. Some countries, such as France, Belgium and Spain, also lift the requirement to wear face masks in public places.



**15 March 2022** – The EU imposes sweeping sanctions against Russia

Sanctions imposed include economic and financial sanctions applied to certain sectors and categories of goods, such as limiting imports of iron and steel from Russia.



**15 March 2022 to 7 April 2022** – Dissemination of the second survey



**24 April 2022** – Emmanuel Macron wins the French presidential election, beginning a second 5-year term



**18 May 2022** – Sweden and Finland apply to join NATO



**7 June 2022** – European Parliament and the Council of the EU secure a preliminary agreement on new EU legislation for fair minimum wages



## KEY STATISTICAL CONCEPTS EMPLOYED IN THIS REPORT

**Cross-tabulation:** (sometimes called a contingency table or crosstab) is a table that shows the frequency distribution of one variable based on the values of another. It offers a simple description of how two variables interact and may be used to discover associations between them.

**Null hypothesis:** a default scientific assertion, usually expressing the absence of an interesting result or finding.

**Pearson's Chi-squared test of association:** statistical test employed to assess the statistical significance of the patterns observed in a cross-tabulation of data. More specifically, it is used to assess if the differences between the predicted and observed frequencies in one or more cells in a crosstabulation are statistically significant.

**Statistical significance:** a metric for assessing if data patterns are meaningful from a statistical standpoint. More technically, an observed effect is considered statistically significant when such an extreme outcome would be improbable to occur if the null hypothesis and all other modelling assumptions were correct. When the p-value for the null hypothesis is less than a certain threshold, the observed effect is considered statistically significant. In this report, the threshold for statistical significance is 0.05 unless explicitly stated otherwise. Likewise, all the associations described in the report are statistically significant unless stated otherwise.



# BUILDING BLOCK 1: THE COVID-19 EXPERIENCE AND THE 'NEW NORMAL'

## COVID-19 Has Heightened Concerns on Education, Training & Employment

- On a concern scale of 0 to 10, jobs and future employment are the biggest societal worry among young people (6.54). This is followed by poverty and inequality (6.49).
- Over half of young people are concerned about their education and training, and 49 per cent indicate a concern level equal to or greater than 7. Young women who are studying are more likely to be worried. Gen Z are also more likely to be worried than Millennials.

## Home Education & Work Has its Benefits

- 6 out of 10 young people see working and studying from home positively, with half seeing it as highly positive (above 7 on a 0 to 10 positivity scale).
- Income and education play a role. Well-educated young people and those in a more comfortable financial situation show a higher positive outlook towards remote working and learning.
- The most favourable opinions on working from home are in the UK & Switzerland and the least positive in Hungary & Slovenia.
- A smaller carbon footprint and reduced environmental impact, while being able to spend more time with family, are the things that young people value most about homework and study.

## Mental Health is a Significant Personal Concern: More Needs to Be Done

- Young people are concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on their mental health, with over 60 per cent concerned about the negative effect of lockdowns and confinement.
- However, the number of young people who spoke to mental health professionals seems low (10 per cent), even in countries with more accessible services. This is even though visits to professionals have increased significantly during the pandemic.
- Those from a high-income background are almost twice as likely as those in a less financially stable situation to get professional help.
- Streaming services, exercise, and social media are key coping mechanisms for those surveyed, with social media a key outlet for women and Gen Z.
- Coping strategies newly adopted during the pandemic include new hobbies such as cooking, baking and dancing; meditation, yoga, breathing exercises and other calming activities; as well as the use of online offerings for art, culture and music.



## 2.1 COVID-19 & Youth: Setting the Scene

The damage caused by the pandemic is well known, with many aspects of daily life grinding to a halt. School closures and enforced lockdowns and the resulting social isolation and confinement have had a detrimental impact on people's mental health and well-being. When looking more closely, the pandemic impacted different age groups in different ways.<sup>18</sup> This Building Block highlights some of the most crucial effects of the pandemic on the lives of young people, paying particular attention to differences between generations, between women and men, and between those well-off and those in a humble financial situation.<sup>19</sup>

## 2.2 Discussion of Research Findings

### 2.2.1 Education & Employment Worries

Even before the first wave of COVID-19 hit Europe, the social and economic integration of young people was a challenge across the continent.<sup>20</sup> 3.4 million young people under the age of 25 were unemployed in 2018—an unemployment

rate of 22.5 per cent.<sup>21</sup> While down from its peak in 2013,<sup>22</sup> young people under 25 were at higher risk of poverty and social exclusion due to more precarious working conditions prone to job losses, pay cuts, and furloughs.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, securing stable jobs and gainful employment during the early stages of the pandemic was also affected by the disruption of education among the 15 to 24 age group.<sup>24</sup> Despite some exceptions, Southern and Eastern Europe, in general, bore the brunt of the pandemic's economic impact through increased poverty and inequality when compared to Northern Europe.<sup>25</sup> The highest job losses among young people were in Mediterranean countries, with an additional 10 per cent of young people becoming unemployed, and in Eastern Europe, where the rate was 6 per cent.<sup>26</sup>

Dubbed the 'lockdown generation', young people are likely to face a volatile future, much like the precarious position the 'austerity generation' found themselves in after the 2008 financial crash. These young people have lived through over a decade of income cuts and significant challenges in finding jobs.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> OECD. (2020b). Youth and COVID-19: Response, Recovery and Resilience. Tackling Coronavirus (COVID-19) Contributing to a Global Effort. 15 June; FEPS and the Felipe González Foundation (2020). Generational impact of the coronavirus pandemic. GENERA project. December 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Respondents were asked to select an option according to how they self-identify: female, male or not stated.

<sup>20</sup> ILO. (2020). Youth & COVID-19: Impacts on Jobs, education, rights and mental well-being. Global report

<sup>21</sup> Eurostat. (2022b). Youth unemployment rate by sex, age and country of birth.

<sup>22</sup> European Parliament. (2020a). COVID-19: how the EU fights youth unemployment. News, 12-10-2020.

<sup>23</sup> Institute for Fiscal Studies. (2020). Sector shut-downs during the coronavirus crisis affect the youngest and lowest-paid workers the most. Press Release, 06 April 2020; Social Justice Ireland (2020). A Rising Tide Failing to Lift All Boats: Review of the Social Situation in Europe and Considerations for a More Sustainable and Inclusive Future. European Research Series.

<sup>24</sup> OECD. (2020b). Youth and COVID-19: Response, Recovery and Resilience.

<sup>25</sup> Palomino, J. C., Rodríguez, J. G., & Sebastian, R. (2020). Wage inequality and poverty effects of lockdown and social distancing in Europe. European Economic Review. Vol.129.

<sup>26</sup> Greece, Italy, Spain as stated in: Eurofound (2021).

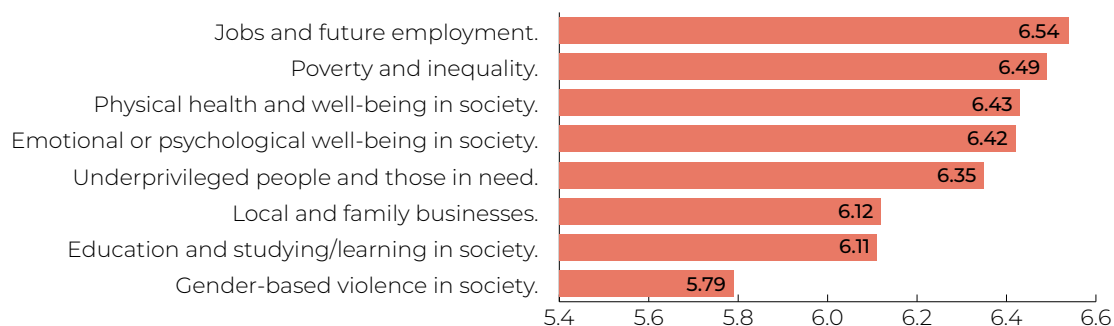
<sup>27</sup> Fernández-Trujillo Moares, F & Gastado Halperín, P. (2022). Generation Austerity: when governments cut budgets young people suffer. Don't do it again. European Youth Forum.



Our data suggest that for young people, jobs and future employment, together with poverty and inequality, were the first two areas of concern during the pandemic (Graph 1.1). This finding is in line with other studies conducted around the

same time. For instance, according to an Ipsos study from October 2021, the virus itself was no longer the biggest concern for adults aged 18-74: It was surpassed by economic concerns.<sup>28</sup>

**Graph (1.1)** Concerns about societal issues



*Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their level of concern on the societal issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The graph shows the mean level of concern of all respondents.*

When asked about their level of concern regarding jobs and employment, 70 per cent of respondents answered 6 or higher on a scale of 0 to 10 (Table 12 – Annexe to Block 1), with women (6.85) and Millennials (6.65) being the most concerned about this issue. However, our data indicate that there was wide variance across countries, as illustrated in Table 1.1. Concern about jobs and employment was particularly high in Italy (7.17) and the United Kingdom (7.00), somewhat lower

in Eastern and Central European countries and relatively low in Denmark (5.86). These differences could be due to pre-existing high levels of youth unemployment before the pandemic in some countries, the duration and severity of the lockdown measures in other countries or the fact that COVID-19 particularly affected sectors of the economy that some countries were overly reliant on.

<sup>28</sup> Ipsos. (2021a). Coronavirus no longer the world's top worry as it is overtaken by economic concerns. What Worries the World. 26 October 2021



**Table (1.1)** *Concerns about societal issues: jobs and future employment*

Country of residence	Mean	Country of residence	Mean
Italy	7.17	Germany	6.28
United Kingdom	7.01	Spain	6.24
Slovenia	6.50	Netherlands	6.12
Romania	6.45	Switzerland	6.09
France	6.33	Denmark	5.86
Hungary	6.32		

*This table shows the mean level of concern for jobs and future employment as a societal issue by country of residence of respondents.*

Besides asking about the level of concern for social issues, a follow-up question asked respondents to look at their personal lives and rate their level of concern for a list of issues. A few results stand out. Firstly, in general, the level of concern is lower for personal issues when compared with wider societal issues. Secondly, health and economic issues come to the fore. It is worth noting that, as shown in Graph 1.2, on a personal level young Europeans are most concerned about their emotional or psychological well-being (5.94).

Income was another significant personal concern for respondents, with an average of 5.85. Unsurprisingly, there are notable variations between countries. Young people residing in Italy

(6.41), the United Kingdom (6.30) and France (6.30) were the most concerned about their income while those residing in Germany (5.32), Switzerland (5.29) and Spain (5.22) were the least concerned (Table 1.2). The Spanish result is surprising given that the median equivalised household annual disposable income in Spain is about \$22,000, which is considerably lower than the Danish median at roughly \$27,000 or the Dutch median at roughly \$29,000.<sup>29</sup> However, it is worth noting that concern levels on all of the societal issues presented to young people in Spain are relatively low from a comparative perspective. Further research and analysis would be needed comparing income levels to the cost of living to better understand these figures.

<sup>29</sup> Annual median equivalised disposable income, in 2016, US dollars at PPP rates. OECD. (2019). Household income, in Society at a Glance 2019: OECD Social Indicators, OECD Publishing, Paris.



### Graph (1.2) Concerns about personal issues

What number on the scale best describes your level of concern on the personal issues below?  
(Scale 0 to 10)



Scale from 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The graph shows the average level of concern of respondents.

### Table (1.2) Views on concerns about personal income by country of residence of respondents

Looking at your own personal life during the COVID-19 pandemic, what number on the scale best describes your level of concern on the issues below? (Scale 0 to 10)

Country of residence	Mean	Country of residence	Mean
Italy	6.41	Romania	5.65
United-Kingdom	6.30	Netherlands	5.40
France	6.30	Denmark	5.34
Hungary	5.88	Germany	5.32
Slovenia	5.75	Switzerland	5.30
		Spain	5.22

Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The table shows the average level of concern about the personal income of respondents by country of residence of respondents.



**Table (1.3)** Views on the personal level of concern on income by gender of respondents  
Looking at your own personal life during the COVID-19 pandemic, what number on the scale best describes your level of concern on the issues below? (Scale 0 to 10)

	Gender	Mean
Your income	Women	6.03
	Men	5.69

Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The table shows the average level of concern for the option “your income” by gender of respondents.

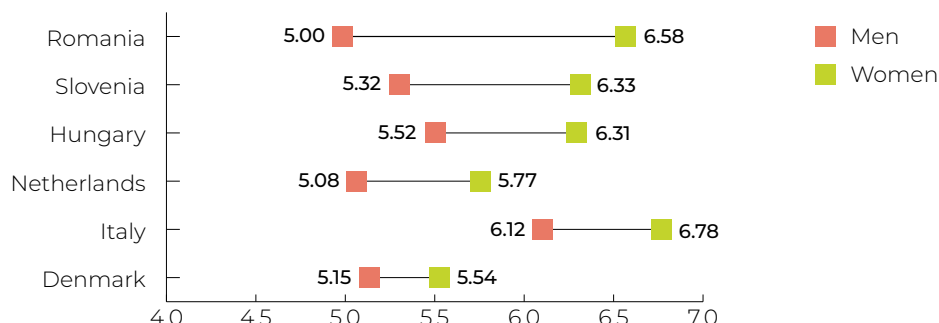
As Table 1.3 shows, young women were significantly more concerned about income than young men. These results mirror the findings from the Flash Eurobarometer 2022: Women in times of COVID-19 report, which found that many women reported that the pandemic had negatively impacted their working lives and “about one in five women note[d] the pandemic has made them either much more (7 per cent) or somewhat more (12 per cent) financially dependent on their partner, other relatives or friends”. As the McKinsey Global Institute noted,<sup>30</sup> women’s greater vulnerability to COVID-19–related economic impacts were the result of existing gender inequalities, namely the fact that women were “disproportionately represented in sectors negatively affected by the COVID-19 crisis” or the fact that women, on average, do “75 per cent of the world’s total unpaid-care work, including childcare, caring for the elderly, cooking, and cleaning.”

Some countries displayed major gaps between women and men when it comes to their level of concern regarding income. Graph 1.3 displays data for the countries with statistically significant differences between the two genders. The gap is particularly large in Romania, where women’s level of concern (6.6) far exceeds that of men (5.0). Women in Italy are even more concerned than their Romanian counterparts (6.8), with an average level of concern that is also significantly higher than that of men (6.1), albeit less prominent than in other countries in our sample. To try and further analyse the level of concern towards personal income, they were cross-referenced with varying socio-demographic characteristics and the likelihood for young people to have a policy preference for tackling the gender gap (an issue detailed in Building Block 3). However, no significant correlations were uncovered.

<sup>30</sup> Madgavkar, A., White, O., Krishnan, M., Mahajan, D. and Azcue, X. (2020). COVID-19 and gender equality: Countering the regressive effects. 15 July 2020. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/future-of-work/COVID-19-and-gender-equality-countering-the-regressive-effects>



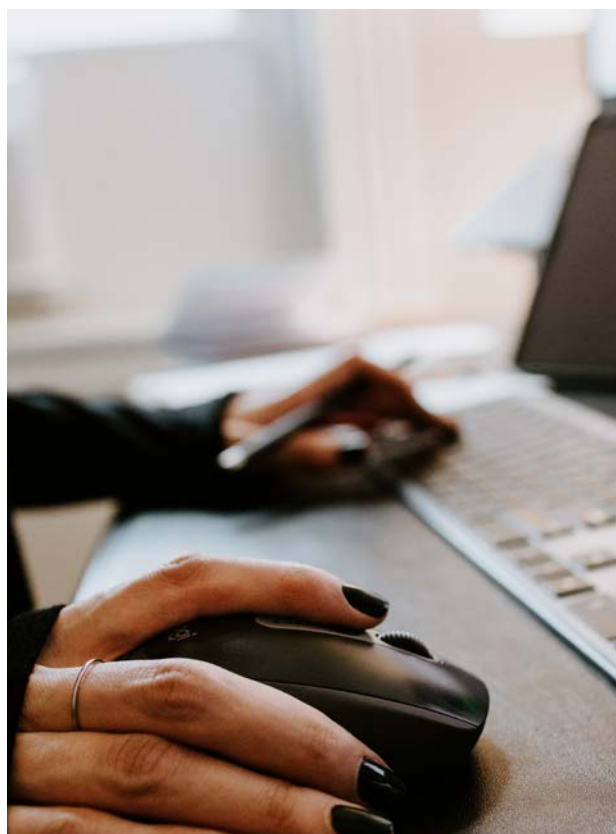
**Graph (1.3)** *Concerns about personal income by gender of respondents – some countries display significant gender gaps*



Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The graph shows the average level of concern for the option “your income” by gender and country of respondents. The lines show the gap between males and females.

As part of this project, we also asked young people to tell us to what extent they were concerned about their education and training. Study respondents had to answer the survey question on a scale from 0 to 10. More than half of respondents in our sample (54 per cent) answered with 6 or more indicating a higher level of concern about their education (Graph 1.4).

After restricting the sample to students<sup>31</sup> only, the percentage of young people replying with 6 or more increased to 63 per cent (Graph 1.5). Among young students, on average, women (6.36) were more concerned than men (5.75). This concern is best encapsulated by a 20-year-old woman from Copenhagen interviewed in a focus group who said: “I’m a little worried that I’ll become a worse chemist than the generation before because of the poorer teaching. Which is a shame.”

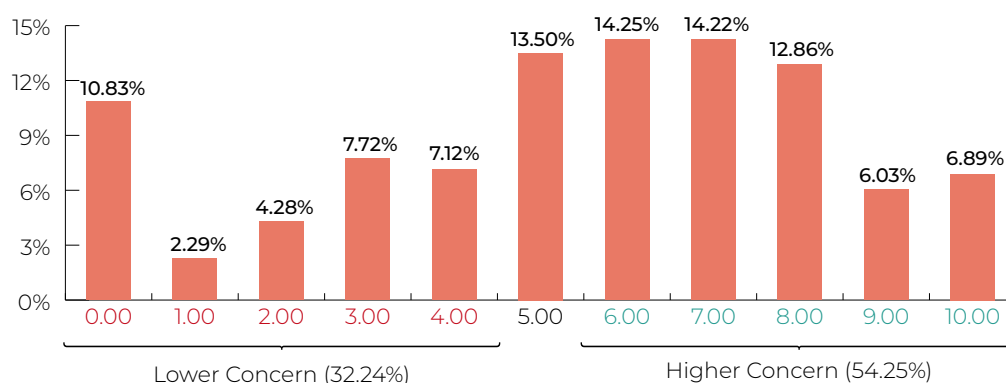


Copyright: Unsplash

<sup>31</sup> Students here refers to those in secondary education or at university.

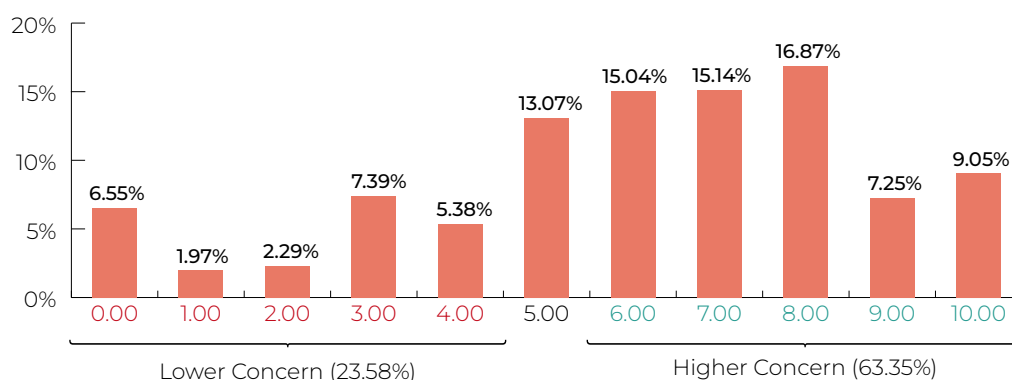


**Graph (1.4)** Concerns about respondent's education and training



Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The graph shows the results for the option “education and training”.

**Graph (1.5)** Concerns about respondent's education and training (sample restricted to students)



Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The graph shows the percentage of respondents choosing each level of concern for the option “education and training”, with the sample restricted to students.

Across the whole sample, respondents aged between 18 and 29 years, people who were more likely in education or at the beginning of their careers, were significantly more concerned than respondents belonging to the last two age groups and who were likely to be more established in their careers already (Graph 1.6). Indeed, on average, young people in an unpaid internship

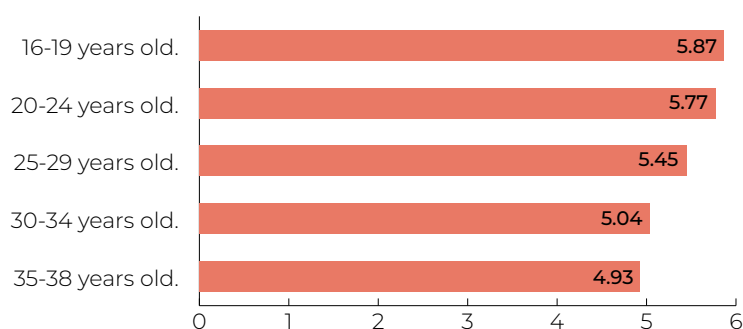
(6.24) and those in education (6.03) were those most concerned about their education and training, as seen in Table 1.4. Reflecting the unstable situation for those in unpaid internships, an issue which has appeared back on the political agenda, in October 2020, the European Parliament condemned the practice of unpaid internships, traineeships and apprenticeships, which exploit



young people's labour and violate their rights. It called on the European Commission to present a legal framework for an effective and enforceable ban on these practices.<sup>32</sup> However, no legal framework has yet been activated, leaving young people worried about their future in the job market. This drives a divide amongst young people,

with those from better-off backgrounds having more opportunities due to family networks and also likely more able to afford to work for free.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, low and middle-income young people often cannot afford unpaid internships.

**Graph (1.6)** Concerns about education and training by age group



*Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The graph shows the results for the option “education and training” by age.*

Our findings on young people's concern for education and training are in line with existing evidence suggesting that the effect of COVID-19 restrictions on education has been devastating.<sup>34</sup> According to the World Bank, “most of the impact will be on children and youth who happened to be between 4 and 25 years old in

2020 and 2021, generating a huge intergenerational inequality. [...] In all countries—rich, middle-income and poor—children from the poorest families are bearing the largest losses as their opportunities to maintain any educational engagement through remote learning are limited.”<sup>35</sup> Similar feelings also emerged from our

<sup>32</sup> European Parliament. (2020b). Parliament calls on member states to fully exploit the European Youth Guarantee. Press Release, 8 October 2020.

<sup>33</sup> Hora, M. T. and Thompson, M. (2021). COVID-19 shows why it's time to finally end unpaid college internships. The Conversation, 9 February 2021.

<sup>34</sup> Engzell, P., Frey, A., & Verhagen, M. D. (2021). Learning loss due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 118(17); Psacharopoulos, G., Collis, V., Patrinos, H. A., & Vegas, E. (2020). Lost wages: The COVID-19 cost of school closures. Available at SSRN 3682160. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3682160>

<sup>35</sup> Gill I. and Saavedra J. (2022). We are losing a generation: The devastating impacts of COVID-19. The World Bank. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/we-are-losing-generation-devastating-impacts-COVID-19>



focus groups.<sup>36</sup> Along similar lines, surveys in the UK have shown that 57 per cent of children and young people experienced a decline in their school learning and progress, with 27 per cent noting a significant decline.<sup>37</sup> Researchers have

also characterised the impact of school closures and lockdowns in the same vein as those arising from natural disasters. This is most apparent for people from disadvantaged backgrounds.<sup>38</sup>

**Table (1.4)** *Concerns about education and training by occupation*

Occupation	Mean
In an unpaid internship	6.24
In education (not paid for by employer), even if on vacation	6.03
Unemployed and actively looking for a job	5.75
Made redundant due to COVID-19	5.74
Retired <sup>39</sup>	5.73
Unemployed, wanting a job but not actively looking for a job	5.68
Other	5.32
I don't know/I'm not sure	5.25
Doing housework, looking after children or other people	5.11
In a paid job or paid internship (even if away temporarily)	5.05
In community or military service	4.93
Permanently sick or disabled	4.59

*Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The table shows the results for the option “education and training” by occupation.*

<sup>36</sup> Quotes available in section 2.2.2.2 – The Negative Impact on Personal Life.

<sup>37</sup> Davies, M. Chandler, L. Woolford, R. Adams, J. Farauanu, D. Carmicheal, T. Bezer, O. Carter, K. Smith, A. Martins, G. Clarke, P. (2020). Mental Health and COVID-19: In Our Own Words. Banardo's.

<sup>38</sup> Soland, J. Kuhfeld, M. Tarasawa, B. Johnson, A. Ruzek, E and Liu, J. (2020). The impact of COVID-19 on student achievement and what it may mean for educators. Brookings, Brown Center Chalkboard.

<sup>39</sup> Less than 0.3 per cent of respondents selected this option. This is to be expected, given the age of the target population.



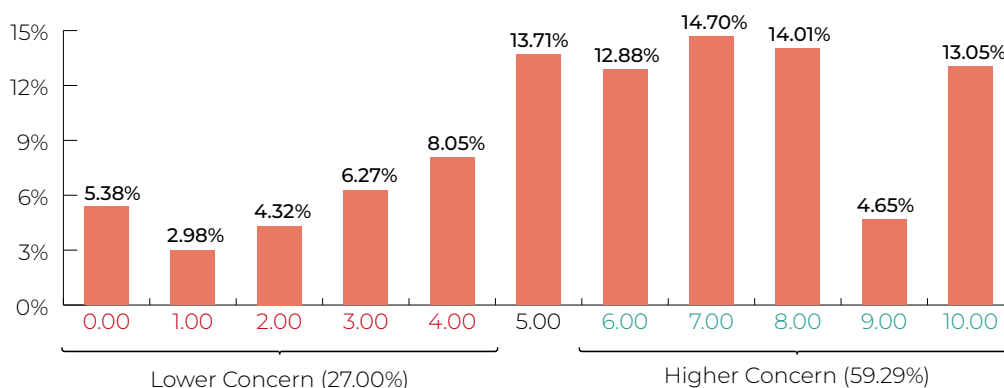
### 2.2.2 Education & Employment: Working & Studying from Home

As illustrated in the previous section, more than half of the respondents stated that they were in some way concerned about their education and training. The pandemic and the experience of working and studying from home had a different

impact on different groups. For instance, young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds were less likely to have a quiet place to work or study or to have access to the necessary technology.<sup>40</sup> As well as connectivity, studying from home required independent learning, skills that not all young people were able to acquire.<sup>41</sup>

#### Graph (1.7) Views on working and studying from home

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many have had to study or work from home. Some people consider that working or studying from home has been a positive experience for themselves. Others consider that it has been rather negative. What number on the scale best describes your experience?



Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their experience of working or studying from home on a scale of 0-10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). This graph shows the overall results.

When asked about their experience of studying or working from home, the overall feeling is positive, suggesting that the benefits of telework and home education outweigh the negatives across the spectrum of young people surveyed. On a scale from 0 (very negative) to 10 (very positive), young people in our sample are more inclined to find working or studying from home as having

been positive – with 59 per cent choosing 6 or more.

Our focus groups provided more insight into the positive and negative aspects of studying or working from home. Among the positive aspects, students appreciated the fact that some online lessons were recorded. They stated that this

<sup>40</sup> OECD. (2020a). Combatting COVID-19s effect on children. Tackling Coronavirus (COVID-19): Contributing to a Global Effort. OECD. 11 August 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Van der Graaf, L et.al. (2021). Research for CULT Committee: Education and Youth in Post-COVID-19 Europe – Crisis Effects and Policy Recommendations. European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels.



allowed for greater flexibility and opportunities to enhance the learning experience. Among participants, some of those working also commented that teleworking allowed them to achieve a better work-life balance.

*“It really worked well for me that the class was recorded, and I could look at it at any time.” (Woman residing in Budapest, Hungary, 21 years old)*

*“You can take notes when you attend the classes, but it can be hard sometimes to catch it the first time. However, if lectures are pre-recorded, you can fast forward and rewind. In conclusion, I think that if we can both meet physically and see lectures again at home, the understanding of the class will be greater.” (Woman residing in Copenhagen, Denmark, 26 years old)*

*“On the one hand, we had to deal with the lack of human relationships and interaction with colleagues, but on the other hand, we have developed resilience... We have learnt how to pivot from one way of doing business to another, which is completely different.” (Woman residing in Milan, Italy, 37 years old)*

The results are almost identical based on gender – suggesting no gendered impact of working or studying from home.<sup>42</sup> However, statistically significant differences do exist based on age and generation, with Millennials showing a higher average positive rating of 6.3 when compared to Gen Z on 5.6 (Table 1 – Annexe to Block 1).

Moreover, our analysis suggests that income and educational factors also played a role in determining whether working from home was positive or negative. According to our data, young people who considered themselves in either well-off or comfortable financial situations assign a more positive value to the experience of teleworking or studying from home than those with low or no income (Graph 1.8 and Table 3 in Annexe to Block 1). It is worth noting that this is open to interpretation based on age, with the potential for some younger Gen Z respondents to be more financially comfortable based on their family situation or household income. Being in the family household while working or studying may also impact how positive outlooks are.

Similarly, for respondents with no secondary level education, working or studying from home was a significantly worse experience (5.4) than for university-educated young people (6.5). The lack of equipment or the lack of readiness for some jobs to be done online negatively affected the transition to online work and study, especially for the less affluent or less educated.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> On average women gave a slightly higher assessment (7.81 out of 10) than men (7.57 out of 10) on their experience regarding working from home.

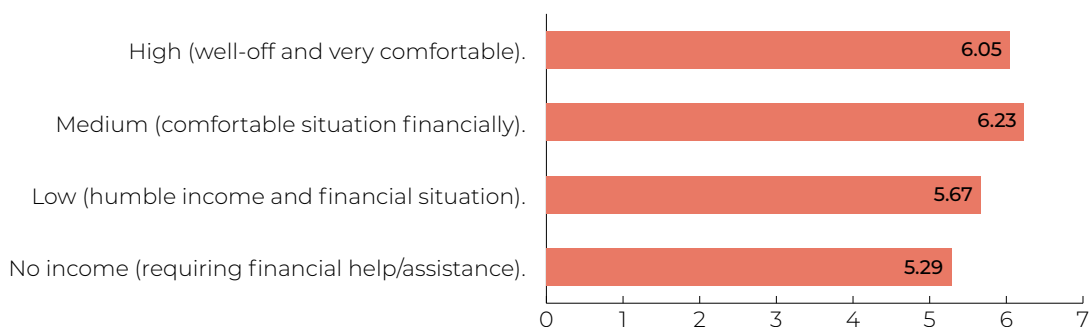
<sup>43</sup> Darvas, H. (2020). COVID-19 has widened the income gap in Europe. Bruegel, 03 December 2020; United Nations. (2020). Education during COVID-19 and beyond. Policy Brief, August 2020.



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**Graph (1.8)** Views on working and studying from home by the financial situation of respondents

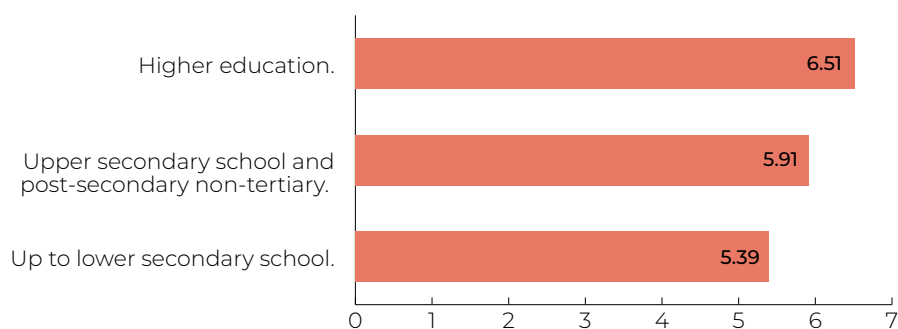
What number on the scale best describes your experience?



Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their experience of working or studying from home on a scale of 0-10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). This graph shows the overall results by the financial situation of respondents

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**Graph (1.9)** Views on working and studying from home by educational attainment of respondent



This graph shows the overall results by the educational attainment level of respondents to the same question as above.

The living situation was also related to a young person's experience of working or studying from home. Those who lived with either their partner or spouse were more likely to have a positive

outlook. Living in a student residence or other kinds of collective housing appears to be the least favourable situation. Our findings are reflective of research recently published in Nature that



living in a denser household and living alone are associated with a low quality of life.<sup>44</sup> The focus groups highlighted how some students who had to move back in with their parents expressed a certain level of frustration about getting used to living with their parents again.

*“Before we were on our own, we would decide when we wanted to do things.*

*But now, with the parents, it is the return to normal life where we lost the reflexes of living alone.” (Woman residing in a town in Pays de la Loire, France, 22 years old)*

*“I had gotten used to my routine alone, and now I had to adjust to my parents’ schedules. I had to adapt to them because they work. It’s normal.*

*But sometimes it was indeed a bit complicated.” (Woman residing in a village in Nouvelle-Aquitaine, France, 18 years old)*

We also sought to understand whether there were differences in the way working or studying from home was experienced in the different regions of Europe due to the different states of readiness for teleworking in different EU member states.<sup>45</sup> For example, in 2019, the percentage of employed people already teleworking regularly was over 30 per cent in Northern European countries, including Sweden, Finland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands—while it was below 10 per cent in half of the other EU Member States.<sup>46</sup> Teleworking was more prevalent in Northern Europe due to higher ICT-intensive employment. However, even within sectors, gaps exist. In Sweden and the Netherlands, more than 60 per cent of people in knowledge-intensive business services were already working remotely, compared to less than 30 per cent in Italy.

Our data show that people in Central and Eastern Europe exhibit the least positive view on home study and work, whereas higher positivity was seen in other parts of Europe. Those residing in countries which already had relatively high levels of teleworking before 2019 tended to have a most positive view. For the UK (6.4) and Switzerland (6.4), young people had the most positive experience of the shift to home working, while in Hungary (5.4) and Slovenia (5.4), respondents had a more neutral experience.

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<sup>44</sup> Groot, J et.al. (2022). Impact of housing conditions on changes in youth’s mental health following the initial national COVID-19 lockdown: a cohort study. Scientific Reports (2022) 12:1939. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-04909-5>

<sup>45</sup> European Commission. (2020f). Telework in the EU before and after the COVID-19: where we were, where we head to. Science for policy brief.

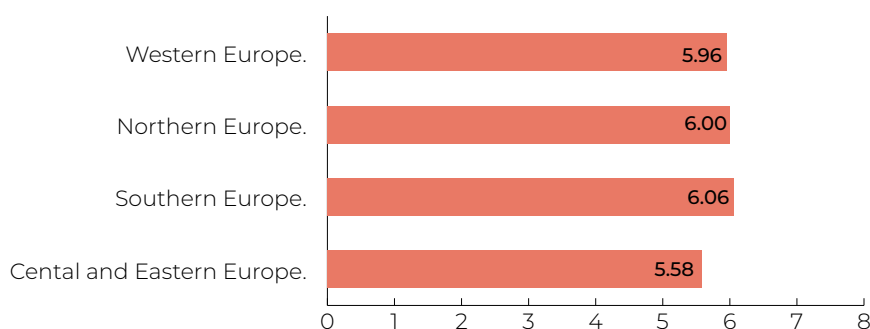
<sup>46</sup> Ibid.



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**Graph (1.10)** *Views on working and studying from home by region of Europe*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many have had to study or work from home. Some people consider that working or studying from home has been a positive experience for themselves. Others consider that it has been rather negative. What number on the scale best describes your experience?



*This graph shows the overall results by region of Europe.*

We also asked respondents whether, among the many measures taken by the government since the beginning of the pandemic, they would like to keep any of them when the pandemic is completely behind us. As shown in Graph 1.11, maintaining the possibility of working and studying from home was the second most favoured measure. Perspectives on this are likely influenced by both the severity of lockdowns and the diverse list of measures introduced across Europe. Analysing the stringency of measures based on a variety of indicators, including school closures and travel bans, the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker highlights the severity experienced.<sup>47</sup> Italy (as discussed later on in this Building Block regarding mental health concerns) experienced some of the most stringent collective measures for a

prolonged time following the outbreak of the pandemic. In Germany, the UK and France, measures became less severe following the first wave, while Hungary and Switzerland comparatively experienced less stringent measures.

Focus groups revealed some further reasons for young people's support levels for maintaining working and studying from home.

*"I believe that online university lectures can be useful for students who are working too. In a COVID-free future, these students can still watch recorded lectures." (Woman residing in a small town in Emilia-Romagna, Italy, 20 years old)*

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<sup>47</sup> These indicators are grouped into 4 main sections: Containment and closure policies; Economic policies; Health system policies; and Vaccine policies. Full information see: <https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/research-projects/covid-19-government-response-tracker>

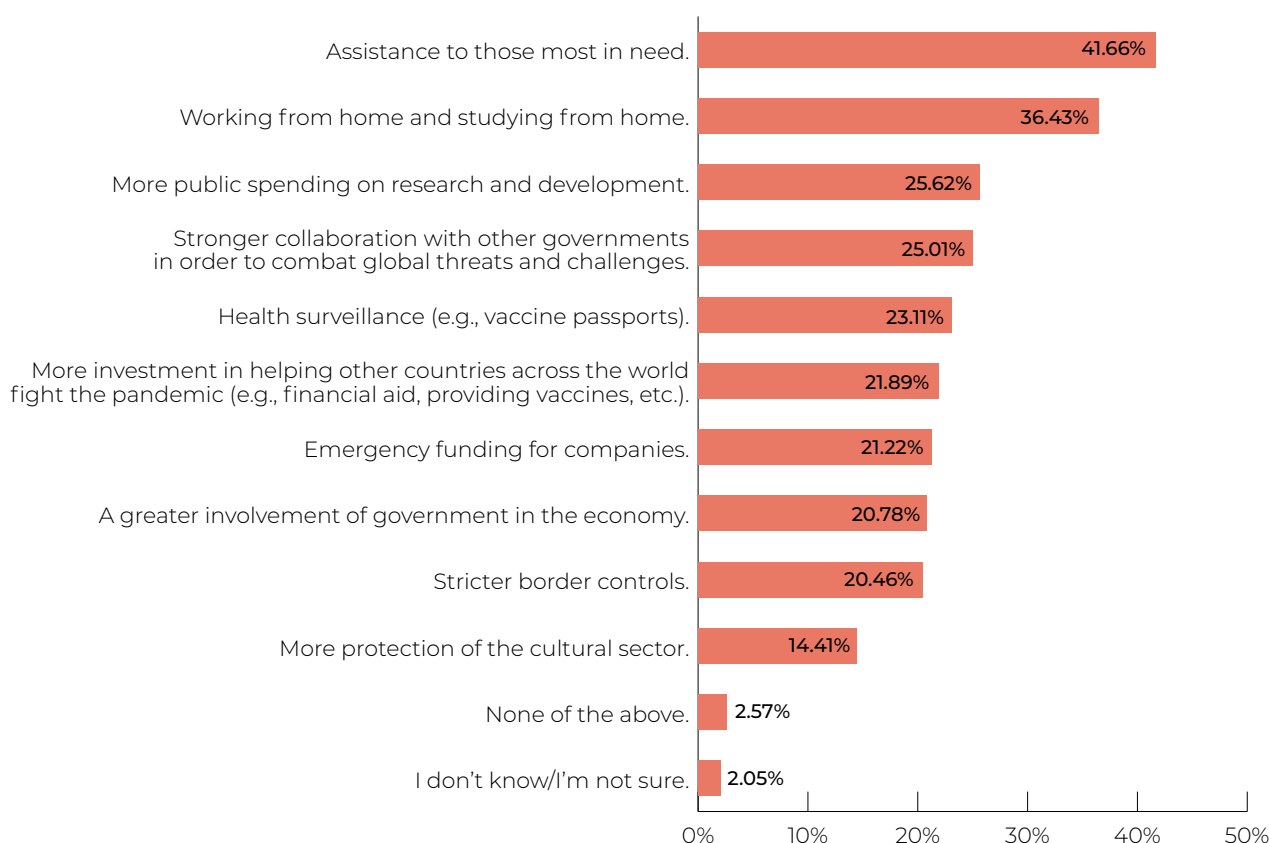


*“We need to find a solution for those students who can’t attend lectures physically. Until last year, physical attendance was mandatory. We can avoid that with online delivery.”*  
(Woman residing in Milan, Italy, 27 years old)

*“Remote working will still be here. One of the few things that the pandemic gave us is a good balance between work from the office and work from home.”* (Man residing in Milan, Italy, 31 years old)

### Graph (1.11) Measures to keep after the pandemic

Governments have taken many measures and actions since the beginning of the pandemic. Some people would stop these policies when the pandemic is fully behind us. Others would keep most of them. Which of the following would you keep?



Respondents were asked to choose up to three options among the proposed measures and actions taken by governments since the beginning of the pandemic, to keep them also when the pandemic is fully behind us. This graph shows the overall results for the entire sample.



### 2.2.2.1 Impact on Personal life: Some Unexpected Positives<sup>48</sup>

As shown below in Graph 1.12, young people have managed to make the most of a bad situation due to the pandemic across different aspects of their personal lives. When asked how working and studying from home has impacted their lives, over half chose between 7 and 10 on the positivity scale, while over 65 per cent stated a positive impact in general (between 6 and 10).

Among the different consequences spending quality time with family (6.75) is seen as the number one unexpected positive of lockdown measures. Reducing their carbon footprint (6.7) and adapting to new situations (6.5) are other key unexpected positives. This view on adaptability stems from young people having had to adapt to changing situations, new response measures and the reintroduction of lockdown measures.

#### Graph (1.12) Impact of working or studying from home

*During the pandemic, many people have worked or studied from home. Do you think the impact has been negative or positive in the following areas of your personal life? (Scale 0 to 10)*



*Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described the impact of COVID-19 on different aspects of their personal lives on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). The graph shows the average impact of each aspect for the entire sample.*

<sup>48</sup> Young people were asked about the positive or negative impact of lockdowns and working and studying from home on varying aspects of daily life. This ranged from adapting to new situations, to access to technology, learning new skills and work-life balance.



In some ways, the pandemic created a scenario where young people had to strengthen their adaptability and their ability to find solutions to deal with complex situations. Among the capacities that seem to have been strengthened most are: adopting strategies to cope with stress, increased self-awareness, higher levels of social awareness and the development of new skills.<sup>49</sup> This social awareness aspect is further reiterated by examples of increased solidarity being shown by young people in the form of volunteering. In the UK, for example, roughly 750,000 people signed up for the National Health Service volunteer scheme, while over 250,000 joined local volunteer centres to help people during the pandemic.<sup>50</sup>

There was also a massive surge in volunteer numbers for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies across Europe. Over 63,000 people were mobilised in Spain through the 'Cruz Roja RESPONDE' plan, 48,000 people signed up to the 'Ready2Help' citizen aid network in the Netherlands, and numbers increased in both Denmark and Sweden.<sup>51</sup> These examples highlight the solidarity and community spirit expressed during the pandemic, a trend which could lead to continued social awareness for the future, something which would need to be further monitored and researched.

### **2.2.2.2 The Negative Impact on Personal Life**

Given that individual, social, and economic factors play a large role in a young person's experience, shifting so many parts of daily life indoors has come with a price. The previous section outlined how young people saw their ability to adapt to changing scenarios and uncertainty as one of the unintended positives of the pandemic. However, this needs to be viewed within the negative context being experienced. Lockdown measures and confinement have also resulted in increasing levels of anxiety. As a result, there remains a concern about the long-term impact on young people, particularly regarding their psychological and emotional well-being.

As a result of multiple lockdowns in spring 2021, nearly two-thirds of young people in the EU between the ages of 18 and 29 were at risk of depression. This is compared to 22 per cent in 2016. This risk was particularly high among unemployed youth, with those out of work displaying even lower levels of mental well-being.<sup>52</sup>

The impact of working and studying from home on young people's mental health, as shown below, has been more on the positive side. However, it is worth observing that on each of the extremes, young people are split. Almost identical numbers of young people have reported it being extremely negative or extremely positive (6 per cent choosing 0 and 6 per cent choosing 10).

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<sup>49</sup> Pontz, E. (2021). 5 Ways Teens Learned and Adapted During the Pandemic. Centre for Parent and Teen Communication. June 16, 2021.

<sup>50</sup> Butler, P. (2020). A million volunteer to help NHS and others during COVID-19 outbreak. The Guardian, 2020; OECD. (2020b). Youth and COVID-19: Response, Recovery and Resilience.

<sup>51</sup> Red Cross EU Office. (2020). Massive surge in volunteer numbers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. 04 December 2020. <https://redcross.eu/latest-news/massive-surge-in-volunteer-numbers-in-response-to-the-covid-19-pandemic>

<sup>52</sup> Eurofound. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 on young people in the EU. Publications Office of the European Union.



### Graph (1.13) Impact on psychological or emotional well-being

Do you think the impact has been positive or negative in the following areas of your personal life? (Scale 0 to 10)



Respondents were asked to choose the number that best describes the impact of COVID-19 on different aspects of their personal lives on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). The graph shows the results for the option “psychological or emotional well-being while working or studying”.

There again were differences amongst different socio-demographic groups. Compared to men (5.6), women (5.2) reported a more negative impact of working or studying from home on their mental well-being. Moreover, members of Gen Z (5.0) were more negatively impacted than Millennials (5.8) and the same difference held for poorer respondents (4.8) compared to wealthier ones (6.2).

Some students who participated in the focus groups also emphasised the various psychological and cognitive challenges of distance education. This again reiterates the diverse experiences of people, given that others, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, highlighted the benefits of recorded lectures and distance learning. Of those with a less positive experience, students living in both urban and rural areas expressed feelings of falling behind, often caused by the lack of motivation to follow lessons, as many spent long hours alone in their bedrooms.

*“I think online learning is not really for me. I know there are many who like it. But I think I fall far behind with the lectures because I keep procrastinating. After all, it is hard to watch it online and to be in the same room all the time.” (Student residing in Copenhagen, Denmark, 22-year-old man)*

*“I used to be excited to go to university as I could stay with my friends, drink some coffee, study in groups in the library... Now, most of my time, it's just me, the desk, and the wall. I'm so frustrated.” (Student residing in a large town in Campania, Italy, 21-year-old woman)*



Lack of teacher preparation in using the available digital tools was also noted.

*"I have some accounting courses on Zoom, and I don't understand anything. I gave up after the second or third lecture. As soon as it involves numbers or requires too much concentration, we can't do it. I don't know how we can make the experience more human and playful."*  
(Woman residing in a village in Pays de la Loire, France, 22 years old)

*"Concerning Zoom, I have had some bad experiences with the lectures, due to the lack of knowledge about these systems from the teachers. They simply do not have enough guidelines."* (Man residing in Copenhagen, Denmark, 23 years old)

A teacher interviewed in one of the focus groups echoed the students' concerns.

*We have not necessarily been trained in the new digital tools. Trying to make learning more fun is not easy. It's even rather tedious. It's troubling."*  
(Teacher residing in Paris, France, 38-year-old man).



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The fact that individuals in the younger age groups of 16-19 years and 20-24 years reported a significantly worse impact on psychological or emotional well-being could be due to several factors. They include the importance of socialisation in these formative years. This reiterates findings on the negative impact of lockdowns characterised as a 'mental health time bomb' in numerous studies.<sup>53</sup> Among the possible reasons for such a severe crisis, "social isolation, changes to the delivery of therapeutic services and almost complete loss of all structured occupations (school, work and training) were highlighted within this population group".<sup>54</sup>

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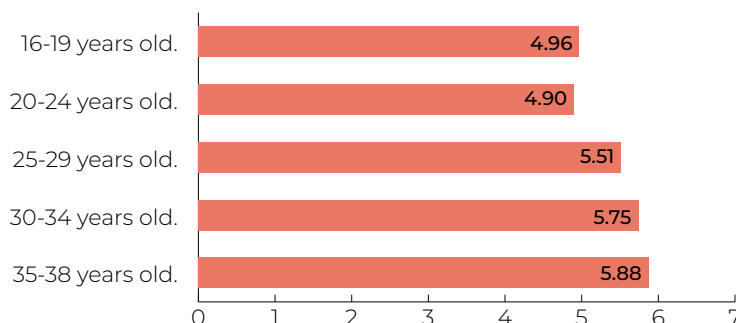
<sup>53</sup> Owens, M et.al. (2022). Mental health and Wellbeing in Young People in the UK during lockdown (COVID-19). Int. J. Environ. Res., Public Health 2022,19(3), 1132; <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19031132>

<sup>54</sup> Power, E. Hughes, S. Cotter, D. Cannon, M. (2020). Youth mental health in the time of COVID-19. Ir J Psychol. 37(4):301-305. doi: 10.1017/ipm.2020.84



**Graph (1.14)** *Impact of working and studying from home on psychological or emotional well-being by age group*

*During the pandemic, many people have worked or studied from home. Do you think the impact has been positive or negative in the following areas of your personal life? (Scale 0 to 10)*



*Respondents were asked to choose the number that best describes the impact of COVID-19 on different aspects of their personal lives on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). The graph shows the results for the option “psychological or emotional well-being while working or studying” by age group.*

Both Gen Z and Millennials indicated that friendships and romantic relationships were negatively impacted by the isolation caused by working and studying from home, as illustrated by Graphs 1.15 and 1.16. However, the negative impact on these two areas was perceived as worse by Gen Z respondents. This could be explained by the important role played by school and extra-curricular activities in forming these relationships<sup>55</sup>—or perhaps by the transitional life stage some are in, either by leaving school or starting university, for example.

In our focus group discussions, Gen Z participants lamented missing out on the benefits

of in-person interactions in the coming-of-age period of their lives. Several felt they were missing out on experiences associated with young adulthood, such as exploring their interests and meeting new people. One of the study participants described it as “*living in a cage*” and the sense of missing out on some of the best years in life: “*I always hear the best years are the years at university, and you get to know so many people, and I feel as if I completely missed that.*” This is important when taking into account how adolescence impacts development and is reflected in those going through adolescence and young adulthood (14-24) being more likely to see the development of mental health difficulties.<sup>56</sup>

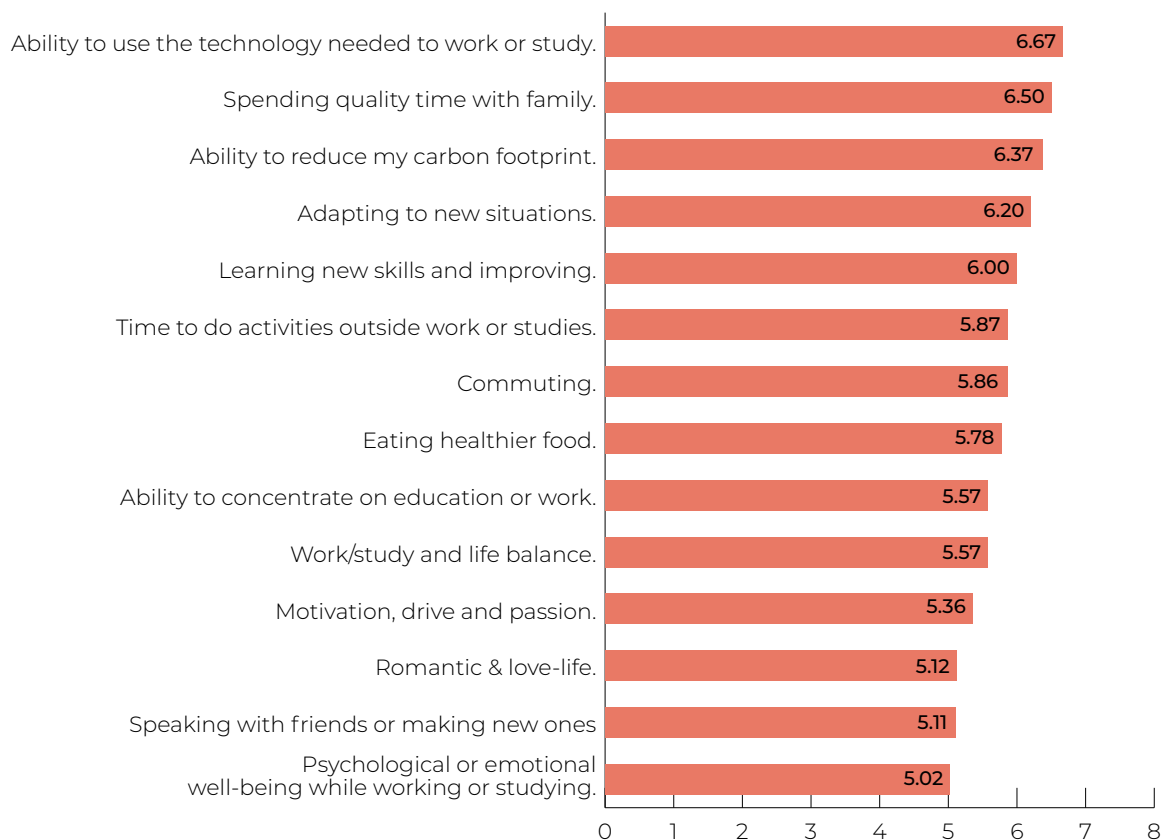
<sup>55</sup> Volkin, S. (2020). The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on adolescents. <https://hub.jhu.edu/2020/05/11/covid-19-and-adolescents/>

<sup>56</sup> Owens, M et.al. (2022). Mental health and Wellbeing in Young People in the UK during lockdown (COVID-19).



**Graph (1.15)** *Impact of working or studying from home for Gen Z*

*During the pandemic, many people have worked or studied from home. Do you think the impact has been negative or positive in the following areas of your personal life? (Scale 0 to 10)*

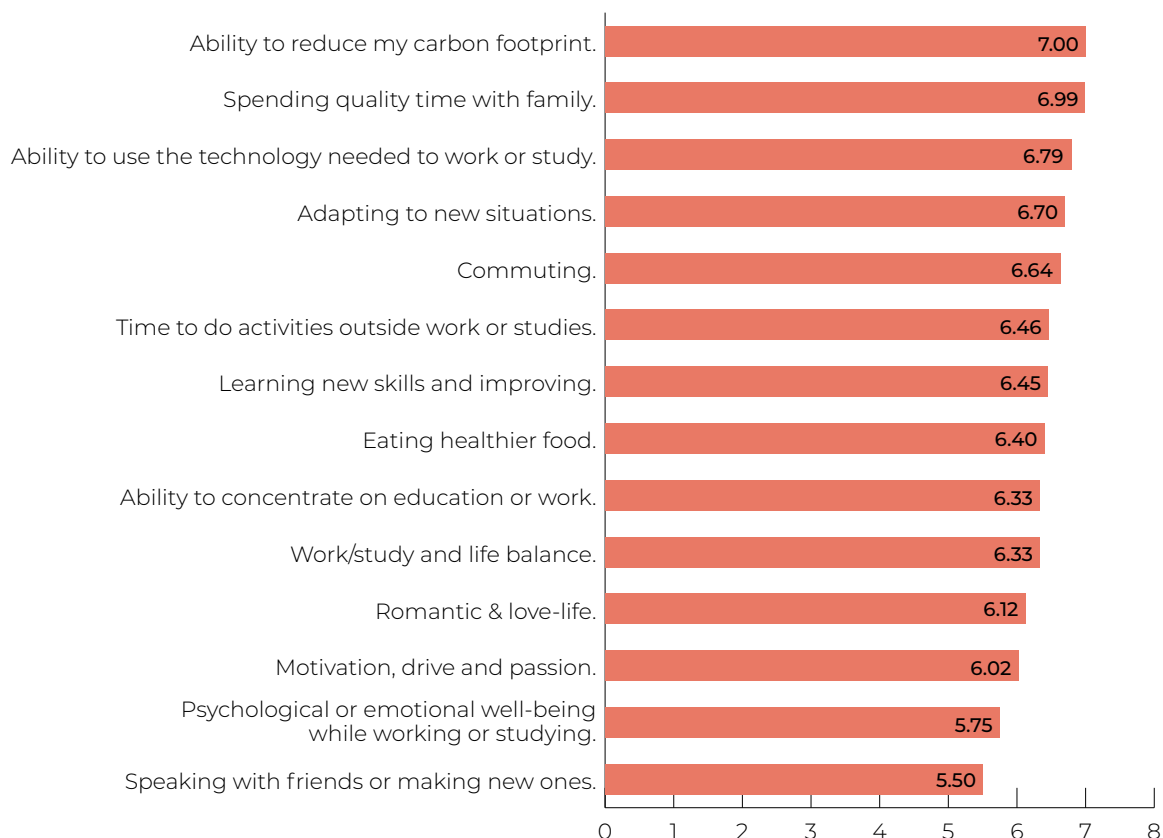


*Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described the impact of COVID-19 on different aspects of their personal lives on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). The graph shows the average impact of each aspect on Gen Z respondents.*



### Graph (1.16) Impact of working or studying from home for Millennials

During the pandemic, many people have worked or studied from home. Do you think the impact has been positive or negative in the following areas of your personal life? (Scale 0 to 10)



Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described the impact of COVID-19 on different aspects of their personal lives on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). The graph shows the average impact of each aspect on Millennial respondents.

### 2.2.3 Mental Health: A Key Concern

As indicated in the previous section, the pandemic has had a severely negative impact on mental health across Europe. During the data collection period of the survey – between November and December 2021 – the Omicron variant of

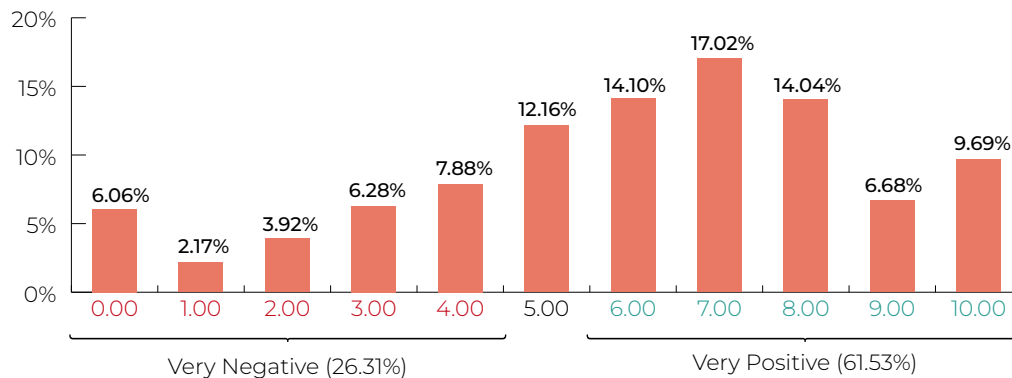
COVID-19 was starting to spread, resulting in movement restrictions once more. Witnessing the reintroduction of various response measures across Europe, more than 61 per cent of young people reported being worried about their emotional or psychological well-being, as seen in Graph 1.17.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Meaning that they answered 6 or more on a scale from 0 to 10.



### Graph (1.17) Concerns about emotional or psychological well-being

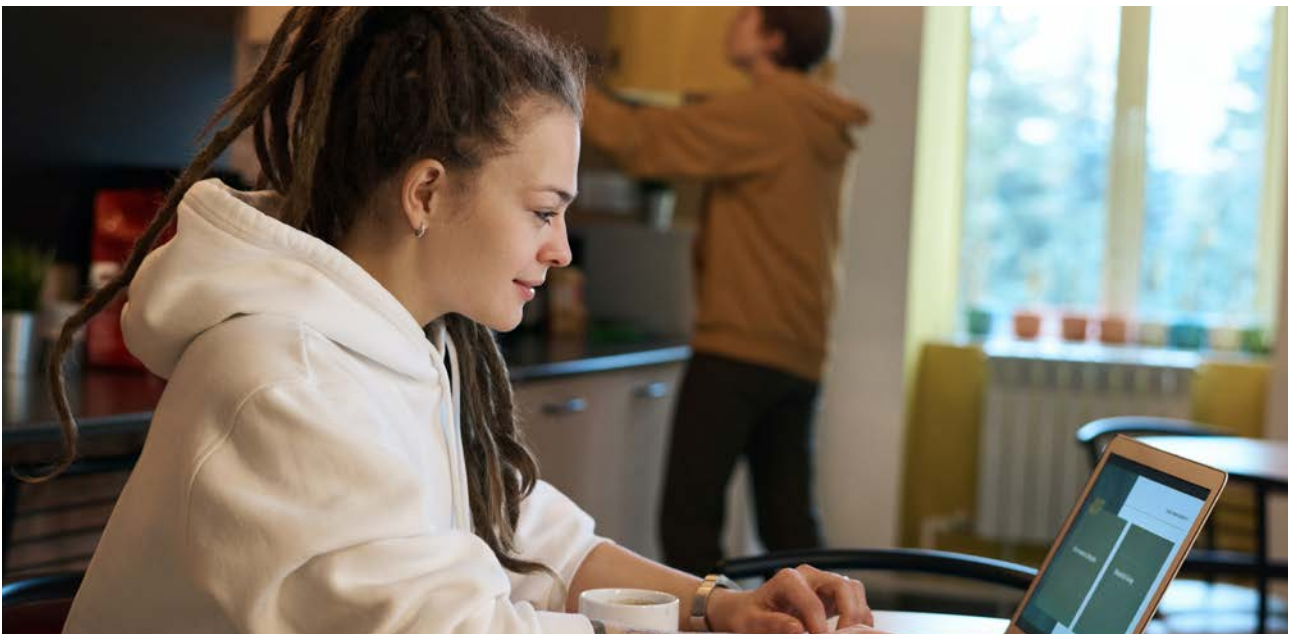
Looking at your own personal life during the COVID-19 pandemic, what number on the scale best describes your level of concern on the issues below?



Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The graph shows the results for the option “your emotional and psychological well-being.”

When asked about the issues that concern them the most because of the pandemic, the number one personal worry was young people’s emotional and psychological well-being (Table 1.5a). However, a look at the data by

age group (Table 1.5b), generation (Table 1.5c), gender (Table 1.6) and country of residence (Table 1.7) illustrates variance amongst different populations.



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**Table (1.5a)** *Concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on personal life*

*Looking at your own personal life during the COVID-19 pandemic, what number on the scale best describes your level of concern on the issues below? (Scale 0 to 10)*

	Mean
Your emotional or psychological well-being	5.94
Your physical health and well-being	5.92
Your income	5.85
Your employment opportunities	5.71
Your access to healthcare and health services	5.65
Your education and training	5.41
Your personal and romantic relationships	5.29
Gender-based violence	4.82
Burden sharing regarding household chores/caring for family or dependents	4.72

*Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The table shows the mean level of concern of respondents for each issue.*

According to our data and as set out in Table 1.5b, respondents in the 20-24 and 30-34 age groups identified mental health and well-being as their primary concern. On the other hand, the other three age groups ranked this concern in third place—still an above-average concern.

Interestingly, when looking at the average concern by age group as set out in Table 1.5c, the difference between Gen Z and Millennials is not statistically significant, though mental health and well-being ranked relatively higher as a concern for Gen Z respondents.

These findings are consistent with existing evidence. According to a report published by the OECD in 2021,<sup>58</sup> young people's mental health has deteriorated dramatically throughout the pandemic due to "disruptions to access to mental health services, the wide-ranging impacts of school closures and a labour market crisis that is disproportionately affecting young people." The report shows that people between the ages of 15 and 24 were 30 to 80 per cent more likely to have symptoms of depression or anxiety than adults in March 2021 in Belgium, France, and the United States. Similar evidence has been provided by the European Youth Forum, which has said that "nearly two-thirds of young people in

<sup>58</sup> OECD. (2021b). Supporting young people's mental health through the COVID-19 crisis. OECD. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=1094\\_1094452-vvnq8dqm9u&title=Supporting-young-people-s-mental-health-through-the-COVID-19-crisis](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/view/?ref=1094_1094452-vvnq8dqm9u&title=Supporting-young-people-s-mental-health-through-the-COVID-19-crisis)



Europe may now be affected by depression or anxiety”.<sup>59</sup>

**Table (1.5b)** *Concerns on the impact of COVID-19 on personal life by age.*

*Looking at your own personal life during the COVID-19 pandemic, what number on the scale best describes your level of concern on the issues below? (Scale 0 to 10)*

	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-38
Your emotional or psychological well-being	5.77	6.04	6.04	6.00	5.83
Your physical health and well-being	5.84	5.88	6.05	5.93	5.88
Your income	5.16	6.01	6.18	5.93	5.86
Your employment opportunities	5.39	5.96	5.93	5.59	5.64
Your access to healthcare and health services	5.30	5.57	5.73	5.81	5.83
Your education and training	5.87	5.77	5.45	5.05	4.93
Your personal and romantic relationships	5.29	5.36	5.49	5.23	5.07
Gender-based violence	4.82	5.19	4.97	4.55	4.59
Burden sharing regarding household chores/caring for family or dependents	4.74	4.68	4.80	4.71	4.66

*Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). This table shows the mean level of concern of respondents for each issue by age group.*

<sup>59</sup> Moxon, D. Bacalsco, C and Serban, A. (2021). Beyond the pandemic: The impact of COVID-19 on young people in Europe. Brussels. European Youth Forum. <https://tools.youthforum.org/policy-library/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/European-Youth-Forum-Report-v1.2.pdf>



**Table (1.5c)** Concerns on the impact of COVID-19 on personal life by generation

Looking at your own personal life during the COVID-19 pandemic, what number on the scale best describes your level of concern on the issues below? (Scale 0 to 10)

	Gen Z	Millennials
Your emotional or psychological well-being	5.94	5.94
Your physical health and well-being	5.90	5.94
Your income	5.70	5.98
Your employment opportunities	5.73	5.69
Your access to healthcare and health services	5.45	5.84
Your education and training	5.77	5.08
Your personal and romantic relationships.	5.39	5.20
Gender-based violence	5.01	4.66
Burden sharing regarding household chores/caring for family or dependents	4.74	4.71

Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). This table shows the average level of concern of respondents for each issue by generation (Gen Z & Millennial).

**Table (1.6)** Concerns on the impact of COVID-19 on personal emotional and psychological well-being by gender

Looking at your personal life during the COVID-19 pandemic, what number on the scale best describes your level of concern on the issues below? (Scale 0 to 10)

	Gender	Mean
Your emotional or psychological well-being	Women	6.3
	Men	5.6

Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). This table shows the average level of concern of respondents by gender.



In addition to Gen Zs, women were also a more vulnerable group during the pandemic compared to men. Several publications show that women have been particularly affected by the restrictions, having to carry the double burden of balancing work and family.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, frontline health workers have been particularly vulnerable to distress in the last two years, and up to 70 per cent of all healthcare workers are women.<sup>61</sup> In addition to this, there has also been an increase in cases of domestic violence during

the various lockdown periods. Interestingly, the issue of gender-based violence is one of the lowest personal concerns among our youth sample. This would need further research down the line, especially as Building Block 3 shows that tackling gender-based violence is viewed as a key strategy to improve gender equality.

All of this impacts personal emotional and psychological well-being.

**Table (1.7)** *Concerns on the impact of COVID-19 on personal emotional and psychological well-being by country of residence of respondents*

*Looking at your personal life during the COVID-19 pandemic, what number on the scale best describes your level of concern on the issues below? (Scale 0 to 10)*

Country of residence	Mean	Country of residence	Mean
France	6.5	Denmark	5.4
Italy	6.3	Hungary	5.3
United-Kingdom	6.1	Switzerland	5.3
Romania	5.8	Slovenia	5.1
Netherlands	5.7	Europe	5.9
Spain	5.6	EU	5.9
Germany	5.5		

*Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their personal level of concern on the issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). This table shows the average level of concern of respondents for personal and emotional well-being by country of residence of respondents.*

<sup>60</sup> Mascherini, M. and Bisello, M. (2020). COVID-19 fallout takes a higher toll on women, economically and domestically. Eurofound, 03 July 2020. <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/fr/publications/blog/COVID-19-fallout-takes-a-higher-toll-on-women-economically-and-domestically>

<sup>61</sup> Boniol, M., Mclsaac, M., Xu, L., Wuliji, T., Diallo, K., & Campbell, J. (2019). Gender equity in the health workforce: analysis of 104 countries. World Health Organization.



Looking at the differences between countries in Table 1.7, the highest average level of concern was recorded in France (6.5), followed by Italy (6.3) and the United Kingdom (6.1). Overall, the European average was 5.9. This difference can be partly explained by the fact that different countries were affected by the pandemic with varying degrees of intensity.

For instance, Italy experienced one of the longest and most rigid lockdowns in Europe. Indeed, it was the first EU Member State to quarantine the entire population and one of the last to ease restrictions.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, when the survey was disseminated, Italian cities were partially or completely in lockdown.

Other multi-country analyses looking at the impact of lockdowns argue that more stringent confinements are positively associated with poor mental health. The results reiterated that symptoms of depression were higher in countries with more severe restriction levels, mirroring the findings of this study.<sup>63</sup> It is further illustrated when looking at countries like Denmark (5.4), Hungary (5.3), Switzerland (5.3) and Slovenia (5.1), which were much more flexible than in Italy, France and the UK. Indeed, the latter had significantly stricter measures according to the Oxford Composite Stringency Index<sup>64</sup>, which tracks the stringency of nine lockdown measures, including school and

shop closures, stay-at-home requirements and travel bans, as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

The long-term psychological impact of the pandemic is not yet clear, but as the results discussed in this section show, young Europeans are concerned about their own well-being. Despite this, the fallout will likely be protracted for 'a sizable minority'.<sup>65</sup> Some of the most likely long-term disorders include general anxiety and obsessive-compulsive disorders. In addition, unemployment or loss of income will continue to negatively impact long-term well-being. Therefore, an integrated approach to mental health policy that considers the key interrelated dimensions of education, employment and mental health and well-being is more urgent than ever.<sup>66</sup>

#### 2.2.4 Strategies to Cope with the Pandemic

Because mental health was such a high concern for younger generations during the pandemic, we tried to understand what strategies young people used to cope. The results are laid out in Graph 1.18. One widely used coping mechanism was the use of streaming services, such as Netflix, YouTube Premium, etc. Indeed, 59 per cent of our sample found it to be a useful coping strategy. This is followed by sports and exercise (44 per cent), social media use (43 per cent) and speaking more frequently with family and friends (41 per cent).

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<sup>62</sup> Benke, C. Autenrieth, L.K. Asselmann, E. Pané-Farré, C.A. Lockdown. (2020). Quarantine Measures, and Social Distancing: Associations with Depression, Anxiety and Distress at the Beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic among Adults from Germany. *Psychiatry Res.* 2020, 293, 113462; Pancani, L. Marinucci, M. Aureli, N. Riva, P. (2021). Forced Social Isolation and Mental Health: A Study on 1,006 Italians Under COVID-19 Lockdown. *Front. Psychol.* 2021, 12, 663799.

<sup>63</sup> Pouso, S. Borja, Á. Fleming, L.E. Gómez-Baggethun, E. White, M.P. Uyarra, M.C. (2021). Contact with Blue-Green Spaces during the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown Beneficial for Mental Health. *Sci. Total Environ.* 2021, 756, 143984.

<sup>64</sup> Hale, T. Petherick, A. Phillips, T. and Webster, S. (2020). Variation in government responses to COVID-19. Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford. April 2020.

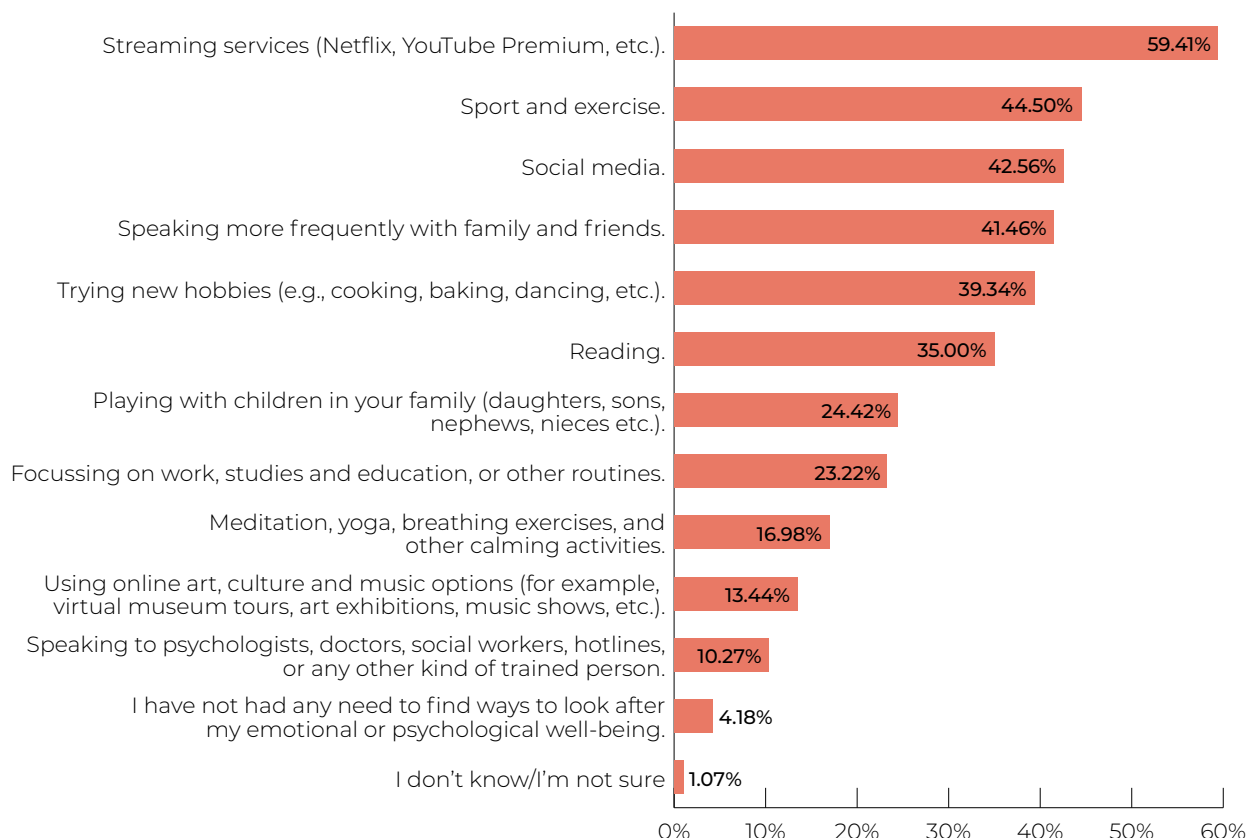
<sup>65</sup> Nicole Scholz. (2021). Mental health and the pandemic. European Parliamentary Research Service, July 2021.

<sup>66</sup> OECD. (2021c). What are the implications and lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic for integrated mental health, skills and work policy? In: *Fitter Minds, Fitter Jobs | From Awareness to Change in Integrated Mental Health, Skills and Work Policies*, 4 November 2021.



### Graph (1.18) Views on strategies to cope with the pandemic

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have found ways to help their emotional or psychological well-being. Have any of the following been useful for you?



Respondents were asked to choose all the activities, among those proposed, that helped their emotional or psychological well-being during the pandemic. This graph shows the proportion of respondents selecting each option.

The use of social media during the pandemic increased with young people using it for various purposes, including accessing COVID-related information, education and teleworking. For instance, Marciano et al. found that adolescents alleviated negative experiences of social distancing by spending more time online and replacing face-to-face interactions with text messages and video chats.<sup>67</sup> On the other hand, according

to Salzano et al., young Italians spend more than 6 hours a day on screens for educational purposes and 4 to 6 hours a day for recreational activities.<sup>68</sup> The increase in time spent in front of screens by the generations under study is also reflected in our results. As shown in Graph 1.18, we asked young Europeans which activities had contributed to their emotional or psychological well-being during the pandemic and 43 per cent

<sup>67</sup> Marciano, L., Ostroumova, M., Schulz, P. J. and Camerini, A. L. (2022). Digital Media Use and Adolescents' Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Frontiers in Public Health*.

<sup>68</sup> Salzano, G. et al. (2021). Quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of adolescents: the crucial role of technology. *Italian journal of paediatrics*, 47(1), 1-5.



of respondents selected 'social media'. We then asked them to indicate which of the selected activities were new. We observed that social media use increased, with as many as 22 per cent of those who said they used social media to improve their emotional well-being starting this activity specifically during the pandemic.

However, despite being deployed as a coping mechanism, recent studies claim that constant connectivity plays the exact opposite role. Persistent online activity has become such a normal practice that many young people do not distinguish between their 'digital life' and their 'offline life'.<sup>69</sup>

**Table (1.8)** *New strategies to cope with the pandemic*

*During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have found ways to help their emotional or psychological well-being. Have any of the following been useful for you?*

*Please indicate which of the hobbies that you have picked in the previous question are new hobbies that you have taken up during the pandemic.*

	Proportion of respondents selecting each option as a new strategy to cope with the pandemic
Other new hobbies (e.g., cooking, baking, dancing, etc.)	69%
Meditation, yoga, breathing exercises, and other calming activities	68%
Using online art, culture and music options (for example, virtual museum tours, art exhibitions, music shows, etc.)	60%
Speaking to psychologists, doctors, social workers, hotlines, or any other kind of trained person.	53%
Sport and exercise	45%
Focussing on work, studies and education, or other routines	41%
Reading	34%
Speaking more frequently with family and friends	33%
Playing with children in your family (daughters, sons, nephews, nieces etc.)	30%
Streaming services (Netflix, YouTube Premium, etc.)	25%
Social media	22%

Respondents were asked to pick all the hobbies, among those proposed, that were new and had been taken up during the pandemic. This table shows the proportion of respondents selecting each option as a new hobby or strategy.

<sup>69</sup> European Youth Forum (2018). The future of work and youth.



When looking at gender differences, young women (46 per cent) were more likely to use social media to cope with the pandemic than young men (39 per cent). Our findings are in line with a paper by Prowse et al., from 2021, which showed that girls and women who are studying used technology and online applications “a lot” or in “extreme amounts” to cope with COVID-19.<sup>70</sup>

Social media use also varied between generations. Our findings show that compared to Millennials (38 per cent), Gen Z (48 per cent) respondents were more likely to use social media. Among other things, this might be because new platforms such as Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok appeal more to younger generations.

Despite this, participants from our focus groups emphasised the psychological need for face-to-face interactions.

*“Before, we did not realise how important it is to meet people face-to-face.” (Woman residing in a village in Brittany, France, 23 years old)*

*“As I’m from Avellino, I have my friends and relatives all there. I have lived in Rome for several years, so I went down to see them every weekend, but it is no longer possible. We adapted with video calls, but it was not the same thing. Indeed, it was a very difficult period.” (Man residing in Rome, Italy, 31 years old)*

The pandemic encouraged people to pursue new hobbies and activities. Of those who used meditation, yoga, breathing exercises and other calming activities, 68 per cent reported engaging in these activities for the first time during the pandemic. Along similar lines, using online art, culture, and music as a new hobby was selected by 60 per cent of respondents. This validates many of the efforts put in place to put art and culture content online, for example, through virtual tours, digitalised collections, online concerts via streaming services, and online cultural content.<sup>71</sup> The link between culture and personal well-being has been made, with art having helped people cope with the pandemic, according to 64 per cent of respondents in a survey on art consumption.<sup>72</sup>

Surprisingly, talking to psychologists, doctors, social workers or other professionals ranked last among the various ways to deal with the pandemic. Only 10 per cent of respondents said they had sought professional help. Of these people, however, 53 per cent had begun seeking specialised support since the pandemic began. The low overall figure is nevertheless surprising since, as mentioned earlier, emotional or psychological well-being was a major source of concern for respondents during the pandemic. Despite this, young Europeans appear to not be getting the psychological help that matches their needs.

Previous research suggests three main causal factors that explain this mismatch: the stigma surrounding needing or seeking psychological help in society, the access and availability and the waiting times and associated costs.<sup>73</sup> Indeed a study by Gulliver and other co-authors found

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<sup>70</sup> Prowse, R. et al. (2021). Coping With the COVID-19 Pandemic: Examining Gender Differences in Stress and Mental Health Among University Students. *Frontiers Psychiatry* 12, 650759 (2021).

<sup>71</sup> Cruwé, C. (2020). European Festivals Association, Tools to Help Spread Arts and Culture. 17 March 2020

<sup>72</sup> Network of European Museum Organisations. (2020). Survey on the impact of the COVID-19 situation on museums in Europe, Final Report, May 2020.

<sup>73</sup> Bernardo A., Álvarez Del Vayo, M. et al. (2021). Pay up or put it off: how Europe treats depression and anxiety. *Civico: Medicamentalia*.





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that the main hurdles perceived by young people to getting treatment are stigma and humiliation, issues recognising symptoms (low mental health literacy) and a propensity for self-reliance.<sup>74</sup> Service-level barriers include lengthy waiting

times and “help being too expensive.”<sup>75</sup> The economic barrier is visible in our results as set out in Table 1.9, with well-off respondents almost twice as likely to get professional help (20 per cent) as those from lower-income backgrounds.

**Table (1.9)** *Speaking to psychologists or any other trained person to cope with the pandemic by the financial situation of respondents*

*During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have found ways to help their emotional or psychological well-being, have any of the following been useful for you?*

	High (well-off and very comfortable)	Medium (comfortable situation financially)	Low (humble income and financial situation)	No income (requiring financial help/ assistance)
Speaking to psychologists, doctors, social workers, hotlines, or any other kind of trained person	20%	10%	9%	13%

*Respondents were asked to choose all the activities, among those proposed, that helped their emotional or psychological well-being during the pandemic. This table shows the proportion of respondents selecting the option “speaking to psychologists, doctors, social workers, hotlines, or any other kind of trained person” by the financial situation of respondents.*

<sup>74</sup> Gulliver, A., Griffiths, K.M. & Christensen, H. (2010). Perceived barriers and facilitators to mental health help-seeking in young people: a systematic review. BMC Psychiatry 10, 113 (2010). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-10-113>

<sup>75</sup> Iskra, W., Deane, F.P., Wahlin, T. and Davis, E.L. (2018). Barriers to services for young people. Early Intervention in Psychiatry, 12: 125-134. <https://doi.org/10.1111/eip.12281>



**Table (1.10)** *Speaking to psychologists or any other trained person to cope with the pandemic by country of residence of respondents*

*During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people have found ways to help their emotional or psychological well-being, have any of the following been useful for you?*

Country of residence	Speaking to psychologists, doctors, social workers, hotlines, or any other kind of trained person
Denmark	18%
Netherlands	14%
United Kingdom	14%
Spain	11%
Switzerland	11%
France	9%
Germany	9%
Italy	9%
Romania	9%
Slovenia	7%
Hungary	6%

*Respondents were asked to choose all the activities, among those proposed, that helped their emotional or psychological well-being during the pandemic. This table shows the proportion of respondents selecting the option “speaking to psychologists, doctors, social workers, hotlines, or any other kind of trained person” by country of residence of respondents.*

However, looking at data on how easy it is to access mental health services in different European countries, we find that Spain has five psychologists per 100,000 population nationwide, while Denmark has 54 psychologists per 100,000.<sup>76</sup> This has an impact on waiting times. While in Denmark, 94 per cent of patients are treated by psychological services in less than

30 days,<sup>77</sup> in some regions of Spain, such as Galicia or Aragon, patients have to wait 60 days to receive psychological help.<sup>78</sup> Future research could examine whether there exists a relationship between access to mental health services and residence in high-income countries or countries with well-developed welfare states—as Table 11 in Annexe to Block 1 seems to suggest.

<sup>76</sup> Bernardo A., Álvarez Del Vayo, M. et al. (2021). Pay up or put it off: how Europe treats depression and anxiety. Civio: Medicamentalia. <https://civio.es/medicamentalia/2021/03/09/access-to-mental-health-in-europe/>

<sup>77</sup> Waiting times for health services: next in line (2020) OECD

<sup>78</sup> Bernardo A., Álvarez Del Vayo, M. et al. (2021). Pay up or put it off: how Europe treats depression and anxiety. Civio: Medicamentalia. <https://civio.es/medicamentalia/2021/03/09/access-to-mental-health-in-europe/>



# BUILDING BLOCK 2: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, DEMOCRACY & THE RULE OF LAW

## Traditional Political Participation Still Key

- Among those eligible, voting, donating to a cause and petitioning are the most common ways young Europeans participate in political life. Differences between Gen Z and Millennial respondents were minor.
- Those who have voted are also more likely to have participated in politics through other means than non-voters.

## Citizen Empowerment a Key Priority for Young Europeans

- Two-thirds of young EU residents believe the EU should involve and empower more young people in European public affairs.
- This approval is also reflected in the desire for more say in EU economic policy, which two-thirds also support.

## Need for More Racial and Ethnic Diversity Among EU Politicians

- Just over half of young EU residents would like greater diversity among EU politicians in terms of race and ethnicity—a proposal rejected by less than a third of respondents.

## The EU Needs to Enforce Democracy & the Rule of Law

- Just under two-thirds of young people want the EU to stop funding member states breaking rules concerning the Rule of Law, the so-called “conditionality mechanism.”
- There is some variation in opinion across countries: 69 per cent of German youth want EU action on this matter. The figure is 65 per cent in Hungary, the state currently subjected to EU infringement procedures. With 58 per cent, the lowest support is in Denmark.

## The EU and Young People: Better Information Needed

- More than 71 per cent of young people want politicians to better communicate to citizens what the EU is doing and how it impacts their daily life.
- 6 per cent of respondents from EU member states had no opinion on over half of the EU-related questions that were asked as part of the survey.



### 3.1 Political Participation and the Rule of Law in Europe

Since the end of the cold war, liberal democracy has been the basis of the system of government in most European countries. Its core pillars include political participation through the organised election of representatives and the separation of powers, in which the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of governance function independently of each other. The principle of the rule of law is a necessary condition for the equality of all citizens before the law and is the basis for a non-arbitrary form of government.<sup>79</sup> Thereby, it is a precondition for ensuring that human rights, civil rights, civil liberties, and political freedoms are guaranteed for all.<sup>80</sup> European history shows that democracy contributes to keeping dictators out of government and promotes peace as well as economic and human development. Apart from being enshrined in the constitutions of all EU Member States, democracy constitutes a fundamental value of the EU as established in Article Two of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU). The following section will explore young people's opinions on some of the key pillars of democracy from democratic participation and inclusion (3.2.1), views regarding the need for more racial and ethnic diversity among EU politicians (3.2.2), challenges to the rule of law (3.2.3), and the challenge of not forming an opinion on political issues.

### 3.2 Discussion of Research Findings

#### 3.2.1 Democratic Participation & Inclusion

To shape their future, young people must be heard and have a voice in today's decisions. With the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing conflict in Europe combining to create an environment where young people are concerned about their employment, income and education, this is truer now than ever. Against this background, we wanted to know how young Europeans engage and participate in politics. Throughout the history of liberal democracies, trends in political participation have evolved under the influence of broader societal changes, technological development and economic realities. Examining the development of these trends among young people is crucial, especially given the apparent rise in popularity of certain forms of participation such as buyouts and boycotts,<sup>81</sup> the rise of newer forms of democratic participation such as participatory budgets, and the influence of the internet and social media on participation. The discussion of the findings in this section attempts to capture these ever-evolving forms of youth political participation while also highlighting important differences according to age, gender, level of education and country of residence.

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<sup>79</sup> Choi, N. (2022) Rule of law. Britannica. 26 August 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/rule-of-law>

<sup>80</sup> European Commission. (2022n). Upholding the rule of law. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law_en)

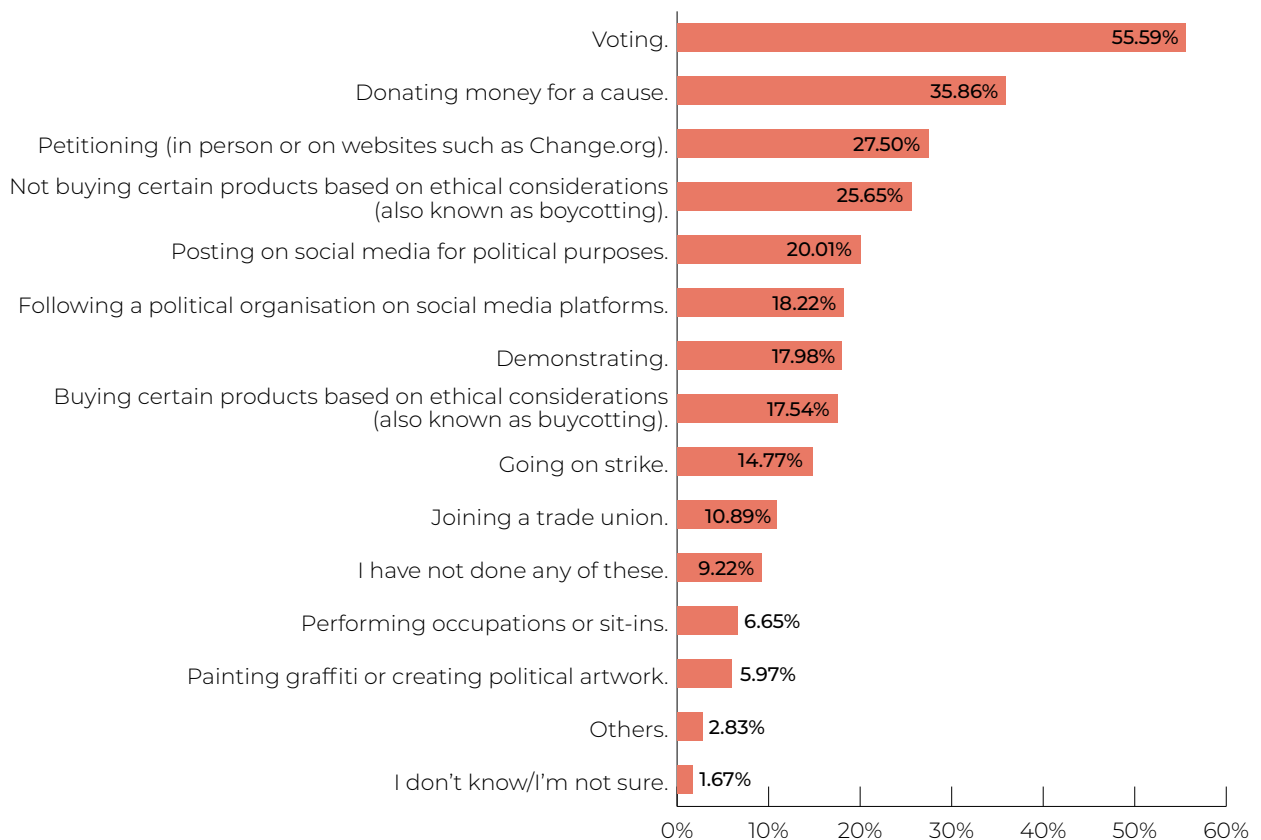
<sup>81</sup> Kyroglou, G and Henn, M. (2022). On Measuring Political Consumerism: An Exploratory Study Among Young People in the UK and in Greece.



### 3.2.1.1 Participation and General Political Views

#### Graph (2.1) Types of participation – entire sample

People participate in politics in many different ways. During your lifetime, which of the following have you carried out? Select all that apply



Respondents were asked to indicate all the ways in which they participated in politics from among those proposed. This table shows the percentage of respondents who selected each option.

Voting is by far the most common way young Europeans participate in politics, with 56 per cent declaring that they have gone to the polls at least once in their lifetime. This is also confirmed by other recent research. In a recent European Parliament Youth Survey (2021), covering the views of young Europeans aged 16 to 30, voting was placed first among the different political

and civic activities, with 46 per cent of respondents having voted in the last local, national or European elections.<sup>82</sup>

Although our results show that other critical forms of political participation are noticeably less common, still about one in three have donated money to a cause, and about 1 in 4

<sup>82</sup> European Parliament. (2021c). Flash Eurobarometer | European Parliament Youth Survey. September 2021.



have petitioned or participated in a boycott. Interestingly, using social media to participate in politics is not especially common among young Europeans. In fact, only around 1 in 5 declare that they have followed a political organisation on social networks or have posted on social media for political purposes.

As described in Building Block 1, the pandemic had a particularly strong impact on the labour market for younger people, and (decent) jobs belong to their greatest concerns. This is why we want to briefly discuss trade union membership and strikes here—the participation forms most directly related to working conditions. The average figures for the entire sample show that participation was relatively low compared to other methods: 11 per cent are or have been members of a trade union, and 15 per cent have already taken part in a strike. Whether this is an increase over the pre-pandemic period is beyond the scope of this report but needs to be explored further in light of data showing a likely increase in global union membership during the pandemic.<sup>83</sup>

There are apparent differences between countries: for example, it is noticeable that in Spain 29 per cent of young people have already participated in a strike, which is far above the average of our sample (16.5 per cent), while in Switzerland only about 8 per cent have done so. This cannot be directly deduced from the level of trade union membership, as this is only a difference of about three percentage points between both countries (Switzerland 8 per cent, Spain 11 per cent). Other factors such as education, age and generation

have had far less influence on union membership and strike activity in our sample.

When comparing non-voters and voters in our sample, some interesting trends emerge. The data suggest that people who have voted are more likely to have participated in politics through other means than non-voters. For instance, 34 per cent of voters have also petitioned, compared to 19 per cent of non-voters. Likewise, 42 per cent of voters declared that they had donated money for a cause, while only 28 per cent of non-voters had done so.

Previous research suggests some of the key reasons for political disengagement. The European Parliament Youth Survey asked the non-voting respondents what had prevented them from doing so and found that apart from not being eligible to vote, two main reasons were lack of interest (15 per cent) and lack of understanding of the issues at stake (11 per cent).<sup>84</sup> Importantly, the same survey also showed that the belief that decision-makers ‘do not listen to people like me’ (13 per cent) also featured strongly as a reason for disengagement. It is striking that 16- to 19-year-olds are far less likely (6 per cent) than people in their twenties to think that they are not listened to.<sup>85</sup>

However, according to our results, there are two clear exceptions to the general trend for voters and non-voters when it comes to other forms of political participation. As Table 2.1a illustrates, performing occupations or sit-ins is more common among non-voters than voters.

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<sup>83</sup> Otieno, O et. al. (2021). Trade union membership dynamics amidst COVID-19: Does social dialogue matter?

<sup>84</sup> European Parliament. (2021c). Flash Eurobarometer | European Parliament Youth Survey. September 2021.

<sup>85</sup> European Parliament. (2021c).



Similarly, painting graffiti or creating political artwork<sup>86</sup> is also more frequent among non-voters (8.6 per cent) than those who have expressed their preferences through the polls (3.9 per cent). The same trends also hold among young people who are likely to have had the chance to vote at least once, given their age, ruling out voting

age as a possible confounder, as can be seen in table 2.1b. This suggests that non-voters are more inclined than voters to choose less formalised forms of civic resistance. This trend does not apply to more conventional or institutionalised forms of protest, such as strikes or demonstrations.

**Table (2.1a)** *Types of political participation by voting status – entire sample*

*People participate in politics in many different ways. During your lifetime, which of the following have you carried out? Select all that apply*

	Voters	Non-voters (Abstainers and people under voting age confounded)
Donating money for a cause	42.0%	28.2%
Petitioning (in person or on websites such as Change.org)	34.1%	19.2%
Not buying certain products based on ethical considerations (also known as boycotting)	28.8%	21.7%
Posting on social media for political purposes	21.9%	17.6%
Following a political organisation on social media platforms	21.2%	14.5%
Demonstrating	20.2%	15.2%
Buying certain products based on ethical considerations (also known as boycotting)	18.6%	16.2%
Going on strike	16.1%	13.2%
Performing occupations or sit-ins	5.0%	8.7%
Painting graffiti or creating political artwork	3.9%	8.6%

*Respondents were asked to indicate all the ways in which they participated in politics, from among those proposed. This table shows the percentage of voters and non-voters who selected each option. Only statistically significant differences between voters and non-voters are displayed (<0.01).*

<sup>86</sup> As a form of civil disobedience, street art can be conceptualised as an example of micropolitics with individual actors hoping to influence the political positions of national and international actors. It is often employed by marginalised individuals who have limited access to institutionalised forms of political participation or who do not believe that politics can bring about the desired change because their views are not sufficiently heard by institutional actors. For details see Waldner, L. K., and Dobratz, B. A. (2013). Graffiti as a form of contentious political participation. *Sociology Compass*, Vol.7 n.5, pp. 377-389.



**Table (2.1b)** *Types of political participation by voting status - sample restricted to respondents aged 23 and older*

*People participate in politics in many different ways. During your lifetime, which of the following have you carried out? Select all that apply*

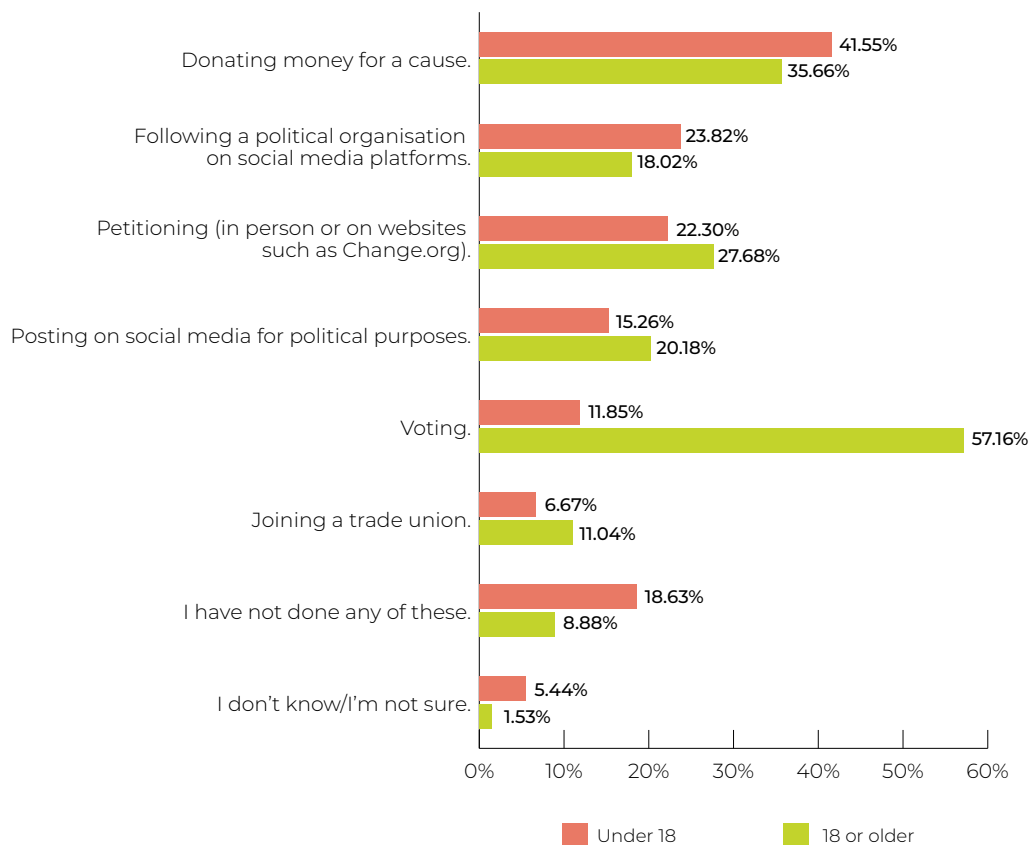
	Voters	Non-voters (Abstainers)
Donating money for a cause	42.9%	26.9%
Petitioning (in person or on websites such as Change.org)	34.0%	18.8%
Not buying certain products based on ethical considerations (also known as boycotting)	28.7%	21.8%
Posting on social media for political purposes	19.8%	16.4%
Following a political organisation on social media platforms	19.5%	13.4%
Demonstrating	20.1%	14.9%
Buying certain products based on ethical considerations (also known as boycotting)	18.4%	16.2%
Going on strike	15.4%	12.4%
Performing occupations or sit-ins	4.6%	7.9%
Painting graffiti or creating political artwork	3.5%	6.5%

*Respondents were asked to indicate all the ways in which they participated in politics, from among those proposed. This table shows the percentage of voters and non-voters who selected each option, with the sample restricted to respondents aged 23 or older. Only statistically significant differences between voters and non-voters are displayed (<0.05).*



### Graph (2.2) Types of political participation by voting status

People participate in politics in many different ways. During your lifetime, which of the following have you carried out? Select all that apply



Respondents were asked to indicate all the ways in which they participated in politics, from among those proposed. This graph shows the most common types of participation for respondents under 18 compared to those 18 or older. Only statistically significant differences are displayed ( $<0.01$ ).

Graph 2.2 shows the most common types of political participation among those under the voting age.<sup>87</sup> Interestingly those under 18 seem particularly inclined to follow organisations on social media. In fact, this mode of participation

is much more common in this group than among those who are 18 or older. Indeed, almost 1 in 4 under the voting age have followed political organisations on social networks.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> In our sample this refers to respondents aged 16 and 17, a total of 335 respondents.

<sup>88</sup> As shown by the accompanying Chi-square results the differences are statistically significant.



**Table (2.2)** *Types of political participation by voting status*

People participate in politics in many different ways. During your lifetime, which of the following have you carried out?

		Under voting age	18 or older	Total
Following a political organisation on social media platforms	No	76.20%	82.00%	81.80%
	Yes	23.80%	18.00%	18.20%
Total		100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Respondents were asked to indicate all the ways in which they participated in politics from among those proposed. This table shows the results for the option “Following a political organisation on social media platforms” by comparing respondents under 18 and those 18 or older.

Examining the relationship between education levels and political participation, Graph 2.3 shows a generally positive association between education level and participation.<sup>89</sup> While just 39 per cent of respondents with only secondary education have voted, the proportion rises to

57 per cent among those with up to a post-secondary education level. The level rises further to 69 per cent among those who hold a university degree. Conversely, those with lower education levels were more likely to have not engaged in any type of political participation.



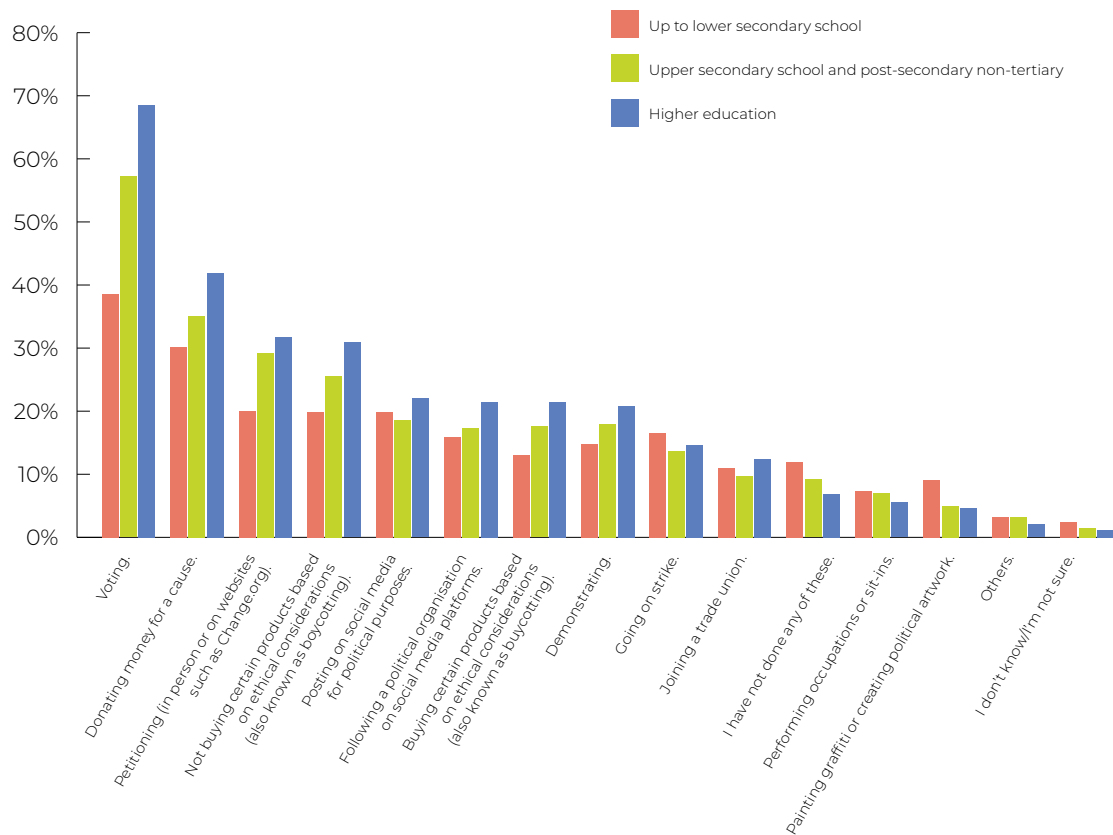
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<sup>89</sup> It is worth noting that this general positive association between education level and participation tends to hold even after controlling for age for most types of participation.



### Graph (2.3) Types of political participation by education level

People participate in politics in many different ways. During your lifetime, which of the following have you carried out?

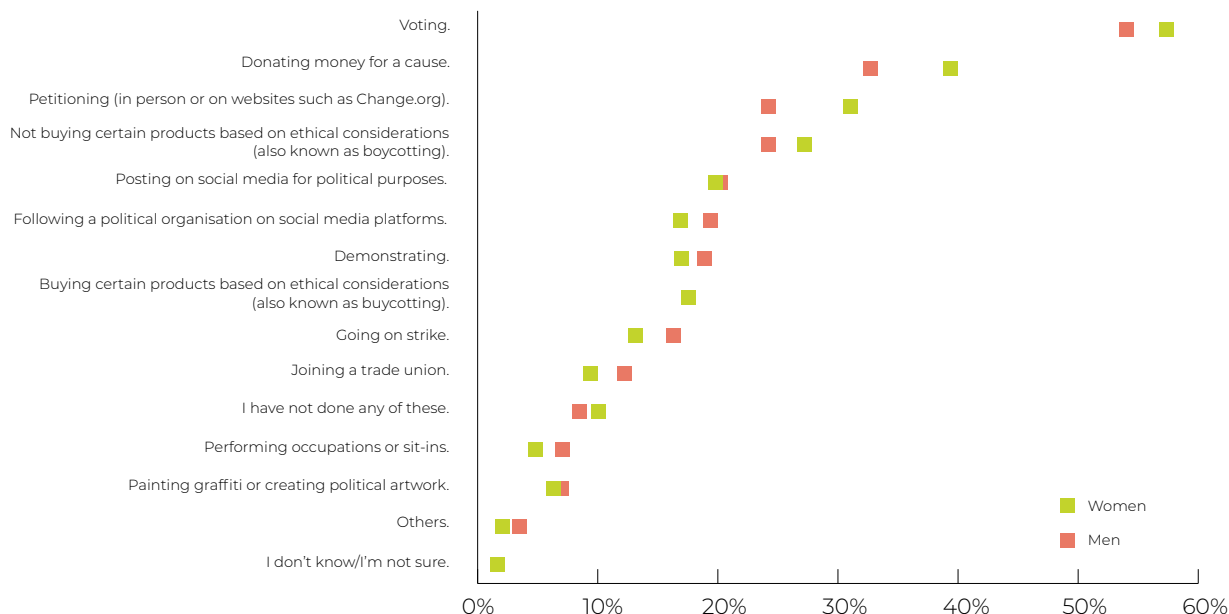


Respondents were asked to indicate all the ways in which they participated in politics from among those proposed. This graph shows the percentage of respondents who selected each option by education level. All differences displayed between education levels are statistically significant ( $<0.01$ ).



### Graph (2.4) Types of political participation by gender – entire sample

People participate in politics in many different ways. During your lifetime, which of the following have you carried out?



Respondents were asked to indicate all the ways in which they participated in politics from among those proposed. This graph shows the percentage of respondents who selected each option by gender. Only the following differences are statistically significant at the <0.01 level: those for voting, petitioning, boycotting, donating money for a cause, following a political organisation on social media platforms, demonstrating, going on strike, joining a trade union and painting graffiti or creating political artwork.

Analysing disparities based on gender, Graph 2.4 shows that women have a slight tendency to engage more in political participation. The two notable exceptions, however, are donating money for a cause and petitioning, where women are substantially more inclined than men to engage. Our findings are consistent with a recent paper on gender inequalities in youth political participation and engagement in Europe, which found that gender differences tend to be minor.<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, reflecting the findings of this

research, the paper also finds that young women are more active in petitioning and boycotting.<sup>91</sup>

For men, Graph 2.4 shows they are more likely to follow a political organisation on social media platforms and to join trade unions. This reflects the findings of the Grasso and Smith research, which found that young men are more active than young women in more institutional forms of participation, linked to organisations and parties

<sup>90</sup> Grasso, M. and Smith, K. (2021) Gender inequalities in political participation and political engagement among young people in Europe: Are young women less politically engaged than young men? Politics, Special Issue: youth Doing Politics in Times of Increasing Inequalities. Vol. 42, Issue 1, p. 39-57.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.



and are more likely to consume political news through various channels.<sup>92</sup>

Two interlinked key aspects are stressed in the literature and seen as potential root causes of gender differences in participation. These are

socialisation more broadly and, in particular, the fact that young girls and boys might be raised differently, which affects their political engagement<sup>93</sup> and resources or the differences in those attributes, which can be seen to support participation.<sup>94</sup>

**Graph (2.5)** *Types of political participation by age group*  
*People participate in politics in many different ways. During your lifetime, which of the following have you carried out?*



Respondents were asked to indicate all the ways in which they participated in politics from among those proposed. This table shows the percentage of respondents who selected each option by age group. Only the following differences are statistically significant at the <0.01 level: those for voting, donating money for a cause, following a political organisation on social media platforms, posting on social media for political purposes, going on strike, joining a trade union and painting graffiti or creating political artwork.

<sup>92</sup> Grasso, M. and Smith, K. (2021).

<sup>93</sup> Verba, S., Burns, N. and Schlozman, K.L. (1997). Knowing and caring about politics: Gender and political engagement. *The journal of politics* Vol. 59, issue 4, pp. 1051-1072; Baxter, S. and Lansing, M. (1983). *Women and Politics the Visible Majority*. The University of Michigan Press; Schlozman, K.L., Burns, N.E. and Verba, S. (1994). Gender and the pathways to participation: The role of resources. *Journal of Politics* Vol 56, Issue 4, pp. 963-990.

<sup>94</sup> Flora, C.B. and Lynn, N.B. (1974). Women and political socialization: Considerations of the impact of motherhood. In: Jaquette, J.S. (1974). *Women in Politics*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, pp.37-43; Hooghe, M. and Stolle, D. (2004). Good girls go to the polling booth, Bad boys go everywhere: Gender differences in anticipated participation among American fourteen-year-olds. *Women and Politics*, Vol. 26, Issue 3, pp. 1-23.



As shown in Graph 2.5, other than the fact that, because of voting age limitations, Gen Z are, of course, less likely to have voted, there are no major differences in the way Millennials and Gen Z participate in politics.

It is worth noting that Gen Z respondents are slightly more inclined to engage in politics via social media than Millennials. While 17 per cent of Millennials follow political organisations on social media platforms, 20 per cent of Gen Z do so. Similarly, 18 per cent of Millennials have posted on social media for political purposes, compared to 22 per cent of Gen Z.<sup>95</sup>

### **3.2.1.2 Views Regarding Youth Empowerment in EU Decision-making**

The EU has limited powers in youth policies. In fact, according to its treaties, the Union can only assist, coordinate, and supplement the efforts of the member states in this policy area.<sup>96</sup> Of course, this does not mean that the EU cannot exert influence. The European Youth Guarantee, under which all young people under the age of 30 are entitled to receiving a high-quality offer of employment, further education, training or work experience,<sup>97</sup> or the Erasmus exchange programme, are just two of the best-known youth

policy initiatives implemented at the European level.

Young individuals and youth organisations can have their say through the EU Youth Dialogue, a mechanism that allows for recurrent interactions between youth organisations and policymakers. With the aim of informing the coordination and supplementing of youth policies, it functions as a venue for ongoing, collaborative discussions on the objectives, strategies and outcomes.<sup>98</sup> The European Youth Forum is a crucial actor in this respect, representing over 100 youth organisations. It helps to strengthen their capacities and represents their interests vis-à-vis EU institutions.<sup>99</sup> Apart from the specific dialogue mechanism, the European Commission, through the 2018 European Youth Strategy, aimed to increase youth engagement in democratic life, providing access to quality information on politics as well as encouraging turnout in European and other elections.<sup>100</sup>

To better understand young people's views on the EU's efforts to engage youth in EU policy-making, we asked Millennials and Gen Z residing in the EU their opinion on this issue. As Graph 2.6 shows, two-thirds of young EU residents believe the EU should involve and empower more young people in European public affairs, while only 22 per cent believe that it is not the Union's role.

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<sup>95</sup> The survey did not distinguish between different platforms through which respondents engaged. Generally speaking Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok are more popular the younger people are, while Facebook is far more popular with Millennials. See for example Cox, T. (2019). How different generations use social media. The Manifest. <https://themanifest.com/social-media/how-different-generations-use-social-media>

<sup>96</sup> Article 165 and 166 of the TFEU.

<sup>97</sup> European Commission. (2022d). Employment, Social Affairs & inclusion. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>

<sup>98</sup> Council of the European Union. (2019). Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council establishing guidelines on the governance of the EU Youth Dialogue – European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027.

<sup>99</sup> European Youth Forum. (2022). About the European Youth Forum. <https://www.youthforum.org/about>

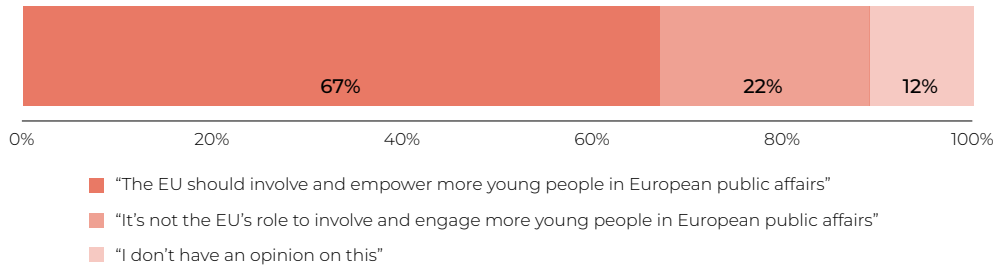
<sup>100</sup> European Commission. (2018a). Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: a new EU Youth Strategy. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions.



This suggests the EU should step up its work in this area.

**Graph (2.6)** Empowering more young people in European affairs

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on youth involvement in European public affairs, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

While breaking down responses by education level, there is a meaningful association between education level and beliefs on youth empowerment in European affairs. While 6 out of 10 of those with a basic education support more youth empowerment, this number rises to more than 7 in 10 among those who have completed university.

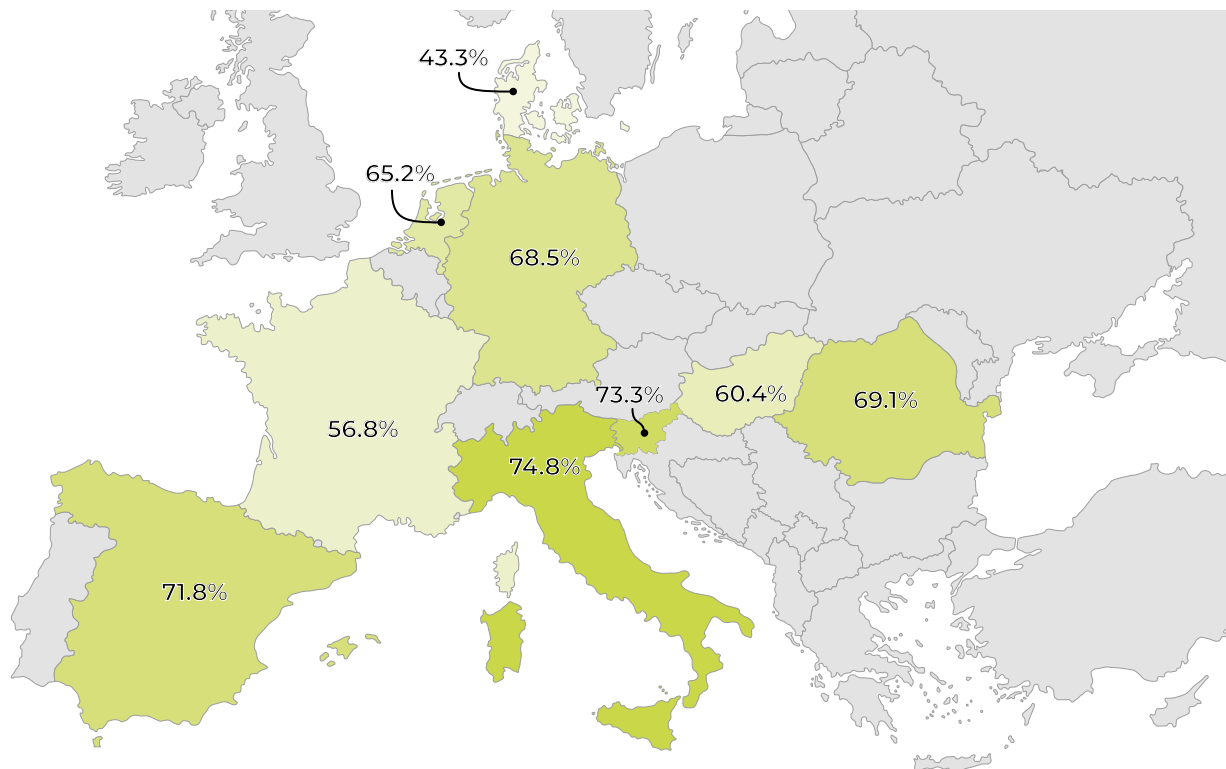


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**Graph (2.7)** Empowering more young people in European affairs by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement "The EU should involve and empower more young people in European public affairs" by country of residence, with the sample restricted to EU residents.



**Table (2.3a)** *Empowering more young people in European affairs by country of residence of respondents*

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.

	<b>"The EU should involve and empower more young people in European public affairs"</b>	<b>"It's not the EU's role to involve and engage more young people in European public affairs"</b>	<b>"I don't have an opinion on this"</b>
Italy	74.80%	15.90%	9.20%
Slovenia	73.20%	14.00%	12.70%
Spain	71.80%	17.30%	10.80%
Romania	69.10%	22.50%	8.20%
Germany	68.50%	21.30%	10.10%
Netherlands	65.20%	22.40%	12.30%
Hungary	60.50%	19.50%	20.10%
France	56.80%	28.70%	14.50%
Denmark	43.30%	33.40%	23.20%

Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on youth involvement in European public affairs by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

Noticeable differences exist based on country of residence. This is shown in Table 2.3a. (also see table 17 – Annexe to Block 2). While roughly 3 out of 4 of those residing in Italy and Spain believe the EU should involve and empower more young people in European public affairs, less than half of respondents share that opinion in Denmark. In fact, a third of respondents in Denmark believe that it is not the EU's role to involve and engage more young people in European public affairs. It

is a similar picture in France, where 29 per cent of respondents share this opinion. It is also worth noting that both Hungarian and Danish residents are the most likely to state a lack of views on the matter. This trend is repeated for many of the questions in our survey amongst Danish respondents. What is behind the high proportion of "no opinion" responses in Hungary would need further investigation.



**Table (2.3b)** *Empowering more young people in European affairs by country of residence of respondents. Highlights*

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.

	<b>"The EU should involve and empower more young people in European public affairs"</b>	<b>"It's not the EU's role to involve and engage more young people in European public affairs"</b>	<b>"I don't have an opinion on this"</b>
Italy	74.80%	15.90%	9.20%
Slovenia	73.20%	14.00%	12.70%
Spain	71.80%	17.30%	10.80%
Romania	69.10%	22.50%	8.20%
Germany	68.50%	21.30%	10.10%
Netherlands	65.20%	22.40%	12.30%
Hungary	60.50%	19.50%	20.10%
France	56.80%	28.70%	14.50%
Denmark	43.30%	33.40%	23.20%

Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This table shows the views on youth involvement in European public affairs by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

Interestingly, there does not seem to be a clear link between the wish for more European integration, a topic we address in Building Block 6, and young people's desire to have more of a say in EU affairs. On the one hand, in line with our assumption, support for further EU integration is relatively high in Spain, Italy and Romania, as is the demand for more youth participation. On the other hand, Denmark, for example, is in the middle of our country sample in terms of support for EU integration. Yet, young people show little overall support for EU-related issues in the survey or youth empowerment at the EU level. Similarly, young Slovenians' support for further EU integration is low compared to the other countries in our sample. However, their support for more participation of young people in EU decision-making is higher than in the other Member States. In

summary, the level of desire for a more or less united EU is not a reliable predictor of whether young people want to be more involved in the EU.

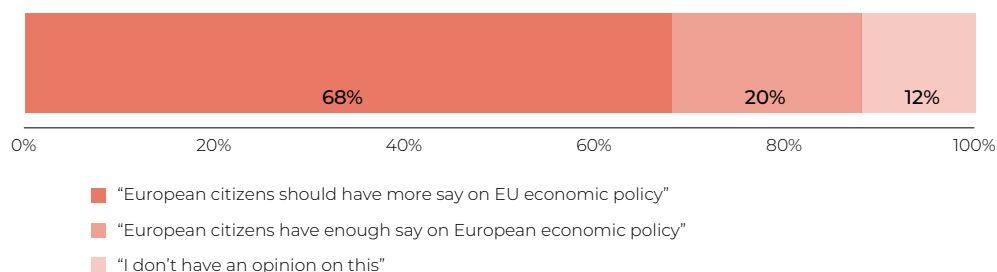
### **3.2.1.3 Views Regarding Citizens Having a Say on EU Economic Policymaking**

Shifting the focus now to views towards citizen involvement in EU economic policymaking, we see a strong consensus around the idea that European citizens should have more say on EU economic policy, with over two-thirds of respondents supporting this position. However, as Graph 2.8 reveals, 20 per cent hold the opinion that European citizens have enough say in European economic policy.



### Graph (2.8) Views on citizen involvement in EU economic policy

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on citizens' involvement in EU economic policymaking, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

Country analysis reveals a strong consensus in most member states around the idea of more citizen involvement in EU economic policymaking, as illustrated in Graph 2.9. The percentage is exceptionally high in Spain and Romania, surpassing 70 per cent. Yet, support is also widespread in most other countries in which we

surveyed young people. Denmark stands out again for the seemingly low level of support among respondents, with only one in two supporting the idea. This is due both to the high proportion of respondents without a clear opinion on the matter and a higher degree of opposition (see Table 2.4).

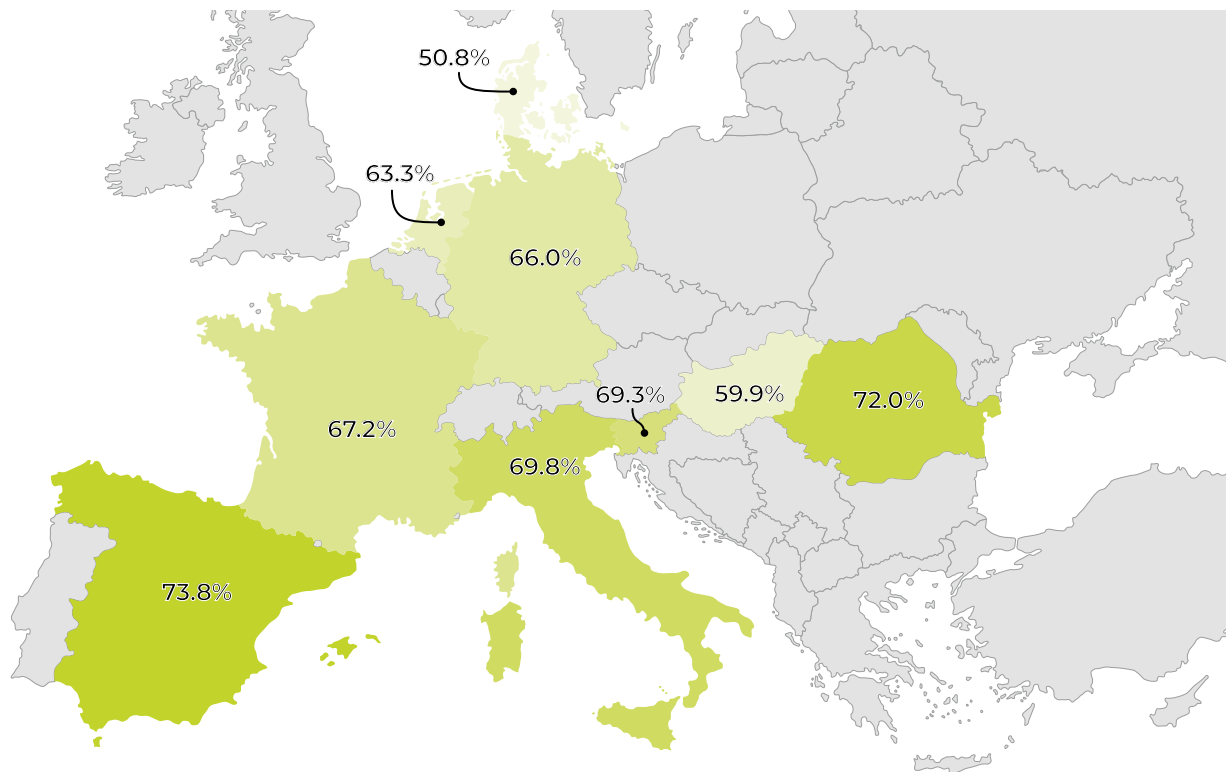


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**Graph (2.9)** Views on citizen involvement in economic policy by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement "European citizens should have more say on EU economic policy" by country of residence, with the sample restricted to EU residents.



**Table (2.4)** *Views on citizen involvement in economic policy by country of residence of respondents*

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.

	"European citizens should have more say on EU economic policy"	"European citizens have enough say on European economic policy"	"I don't have an opinion on this"
Spain	73.80%	16.70%	9.40%
Romania	72.00%	17.70%	10.20%
Italy	69.80%	19.60%	10.60%
Slovenia	69.30%	15.70%	14.90%
France	67.20%	22.70%	10.20%
Germany	66.00%	20.00%	14.00%
Netherlands	63.30%	23.50%	13.00%
Hungary	59.90%	22.60%	17.50%
Denmark	50.80%	26.90%	22.30%

Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This table shows the views on citizen involvement in EU economic policymaking by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

### 3.2.2 Views Regarding the Need for More Racial and Ethnic Diversity Among EU Politicians

A core principle of liberal democracy is pluralism—the possibility to represent a diverse spectrum of ideas and opinions. Yet, it is equally crucial that distinct societal groups are represented as equally as possible to ensure sufficient representation of varied backgrounds. This is important for citizens to feel adequately represented by their politicians. This protection of diverse backgrounds concerns the questions of gender,

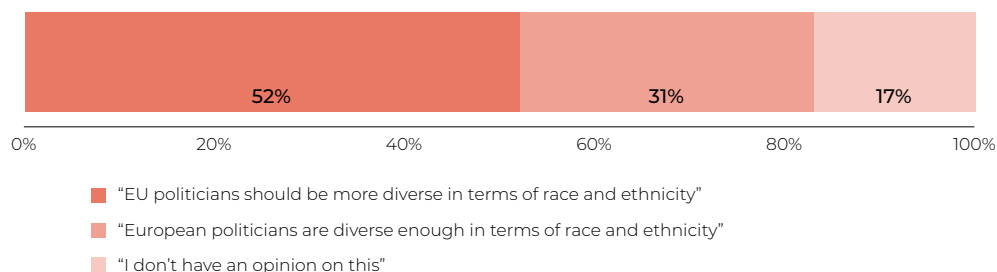
age, sexual orientation and social class, as well as ethnic diversity among those represented.

We asked Millennials and Gen Z about their views on the need for more racial and ethnic diversity among EU politicians. About half of EU respondents consider that EU politicians should be more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity. On the other hand, about a third believe that politicians are diverse enough, while about 1 in 5 expresses no opinion on the matter.



### Graph (2.10) Views on the ethnic diversity of EU politicians

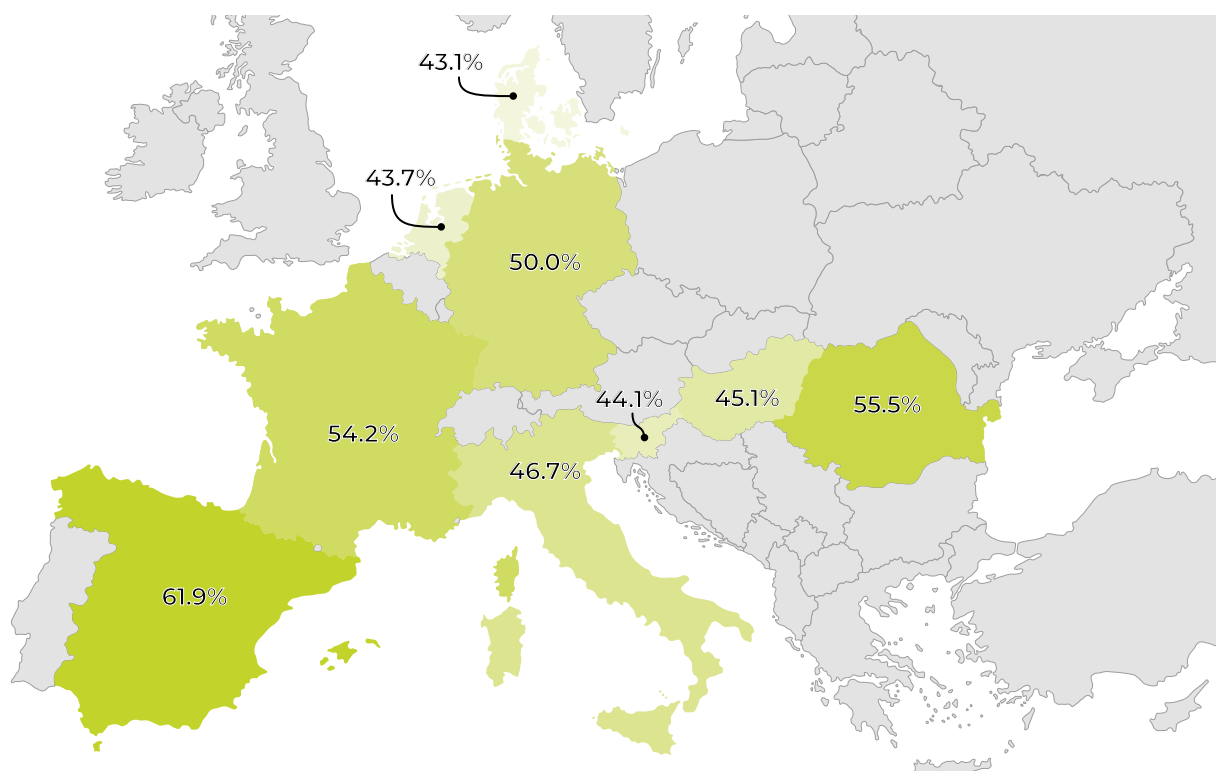
People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the need for more ethnic diversity among politicians, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

### Graph (2.11) Views on the diversity of EU politicians by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement "EU politicians should be more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity", by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.



As shown in Table 2.5, there are clear differences based on country of residence regarding this issue. Just under 62 per cent of respondents in Spain see a need for more diversity. Support is also strong in France and Romania, with 54 per cent and 56 per cent of respondents, respectively, seeing a need for more ethnic and racial variety. In all other countries, support is at 50 per cent or lower. Even if the level of support for more diversity in EU politics does not seem exceptionally high at first glance, it can be seen that in all countries, more people are in favour of greater diversity in EU politics than against it. The gap between the groups is still the smallest in the Netherlands, where the difference is

about ten percentage points between those in favour and those against. The gap is widest in Spain (37 percentage points more in favour than against). Moreover, the relatively low level of support in most countries can also be explained by high levels of the proportion of people without an opinion on the issue, which account for more than a quarter in 5 of the 9 countries surveyed, and even a quarter in Slovenia and Denmark. In other words, it can be assumed that a significant proportion of respondents simply do not know enough about the topic.

**Table (2.5)** *Views on the ethnic diversity of EU politicians by country of residence of respondents*

*People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.*

	<b>"EU politicians should be more diverse in terms of race and ethnicity"</b>	<b>"European politicians are diverse enough in terms of race and ethnicity"</b>	<b>"I don't have an opinion on this"</b>
Spain	61.90%	25.20%	12.80%
Romania	55.50%	29.10%	15.20%
France	54.20%	28.20%	17.60%
Germany	50.00%	35.20%	14.70%
Italy	46.70%	31.30%	21.90%
Hungary	45.10%	34.80%	20.20%
Slovenia	44.10%	29.00%	26.80%
Netherlands	43.70%	34.50%	21.60%
Denmark	43.10%	31.20%	25.70%

*Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This table shows the views on the need for more ethnic diversity among politicians, by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.*



### 3.2.3 Challenges to the Rule of Law

Having discussed political participation in general and young people's participation in EU affairs in particular, we now turn to another important aspect of European democracies: their willingness to follow the rule of law. The rule of law is one of the fundamental values of the EU.<sup>101</sup> It entails that all members of society, including politicians, are equal before the law and subject to the control of independent and impartial courts. More generally, it prevents the arbitrary use of power by governments and in society more generally. It is also a prerequisite for the protection of all other fundamental values of the Union, including citizens' fundamental rights and democracy.<sup>102</sup>

In recent years, the EU has faced several systematic threats to the rule of law in some of its member states. Most prominently, in Hungary, the European Commission's latest report on the rule of law criticises long-standing problems with the independence of the judiciary, Hungary's insufficient track record in fighting corruption, and major concerns about the independence of the public media.<sup>103</sup> In Poland, the independence of the judiciary has been under threat for several years.<sup>104</sup> The issue of violations of the rule of law in these two countries was a hot topic in EU circles in the months leading up to and during

our November 2021 survey, on which the following results are based. In particular, the debate on withholding EU funds for Poland's post-pandemic reconstruction in the face of outstanding rule-of-law reforms fuelled national<sup>105</sup> and international media discussion.<sup>106</sup> In addition, the fact that the Polish Constitutional Court gave precedence to the country's constitution over some EU laws led to coverage of the issue.<sup>107</sup> Finally, the Commission took the first informal steps to implement its conditionality mechanisms during this time,<sup>108</sup> which gives the EU the ability to withhold funds to member states if they violate the rule of law.

#### 3.2.3.1 Views on the Rule of Law

Against this context, we asked Millennials and Gen Z about their views. Graph 2.12 displays the distribution of respondents based on their views on the interaction between EU institutions and the bloc's member states regarding respect for EU legislation. Our findings show that 63 per cent of young EU residents believe that the EU should have stronger powers to challenge and prevent member states from breaking EU rules, such as the key principles enshrined in the treaties. On the other hand, our findings indicate that 23 per cent of young EU residents believe that the EU has enough power for this, while 14 per cent have no opinion.

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<sup>101</sup> Article 2 TEU.

<sup>102</sup> European Commission. (2022n). Upholding the rule of law. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law_en); Choi, N. (2022) Rule of law. Britannica. 26 August 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/rule-of-law>

<sup>103</sup> European Commission. (2022i). 2022 Rule of Law Report: Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Hungary.

<sup>104</sup> European Commission. (2022j). 2022 Rule of Law Report: Country Chapter on the rule of law situation in Poland.

<sup>105</sup> Some examples: Kitekinto.(2021). Napi 1 millió eurós bírsággal ösztönzi az EU Lengyelországot a jogállamisági vitában; Deutschlandfunk (2021). Nach der Millionen-Strafe des EuGH Polens Verhältnis zur EU; Iwaniuk, J (2021). Etat de droit: la Pologne frappée au portefeuille par la Cour de justice de l'Union européenne.

<sup>106</sup> Wanat, Z. (2021b). Poland hit with record € 1M daily fine in EU rule-of-law dispute.

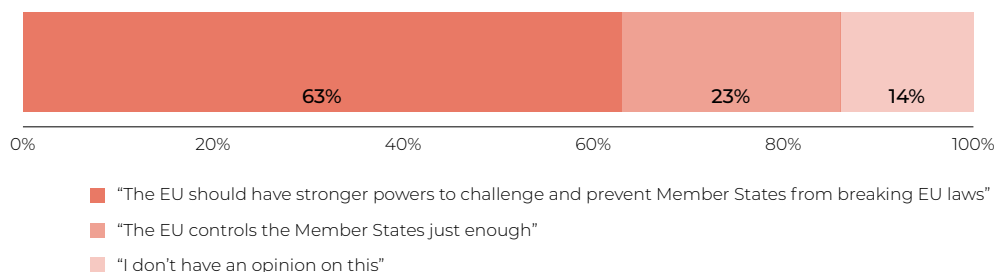
<sup>107</sup> Wanat, Z. (2021a). Court ruling puts Poland on a collision course with the EU's legal order.

<sup>108</sup> Wanat, Z and Lili Bayer. (2021). Brussels takes step toward rule-of-law penalty process with Poland, Hungary.



### Graph (2.12) Views on EU powers & the rule of law

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



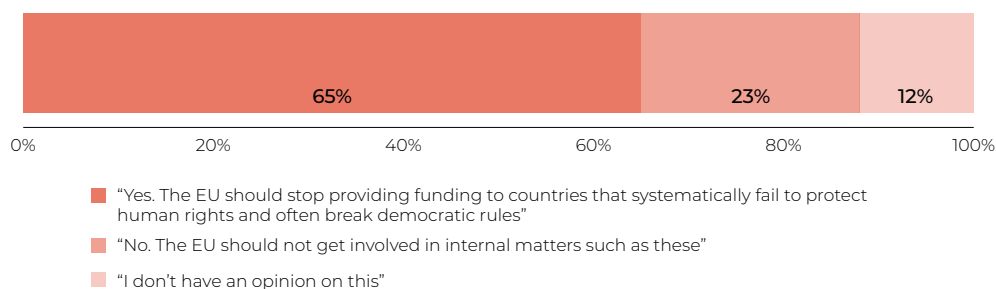
Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the rule of law, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

When it comes to taking action against offending countries, 65 per cent of young EU residents believe that the EU should stop providing funding to European countries when it deems that they have failed to protect human rights and follow

democratic rules. The data for both questions show that a clear majority of respondents favour an EU that penalises member states that do not adhere to basic democratic principles.

### Graph (2.13) Views on EU funding for countries breaching the rule of law

In your opinion, should the EU stop providing funding to European countries when it deems that they have failed to protect human rights and follow democratic rules (for example, by acting against the independence of the judicial system, the freedom of the press, or the rights of minorities)?



Respondents were asked to choose the statement they agreed with most regarding the conditionality of EU funding to respect the rule of law. This graph shows the results with the sample restricted to EU residents.

A look at the individual countries shows that in all of them, a clear majority is in favour of stopping the funding of member states that repeatedly violate democratic principles. Support is

strongest in Germany, where more than two-thirds of respondents support conditionality for funding and weakest in Denmark, where 58 per cent of young people support this stance.



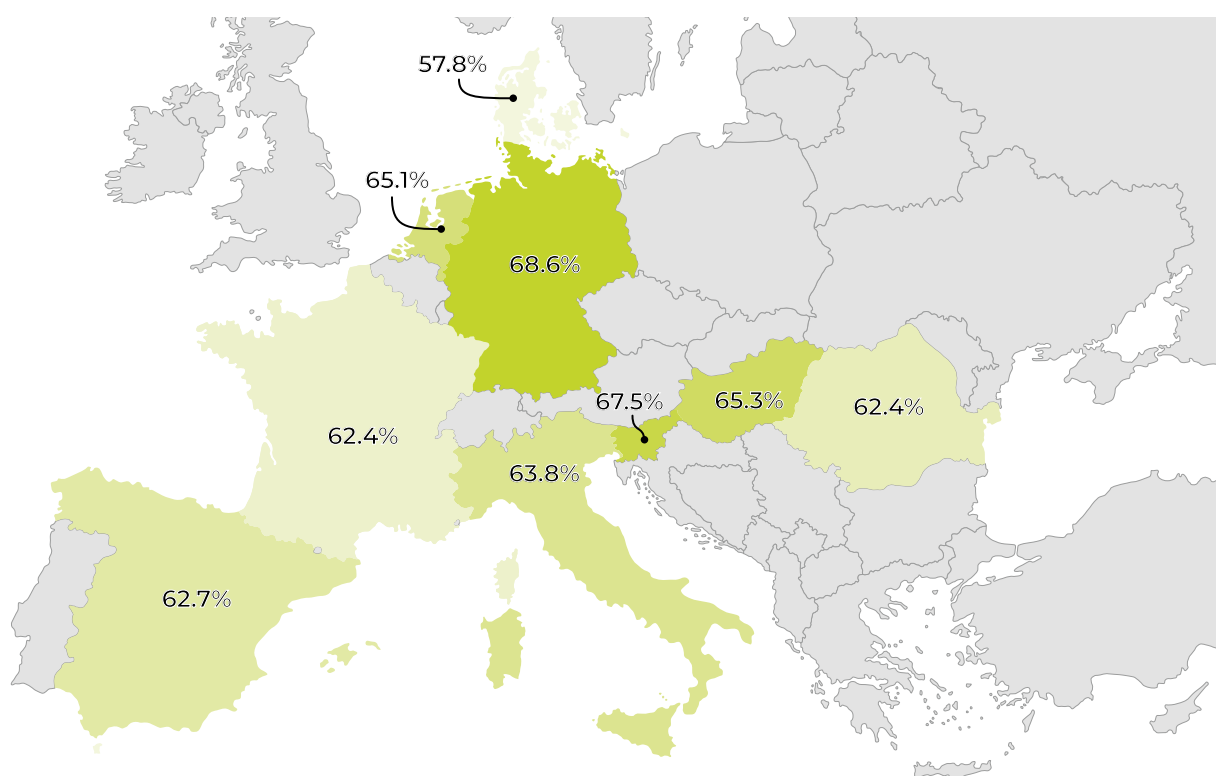
In Denmark, the trend remains that relatively low support can be explained mainly by a very high number of people with no opinion (20 per cent).

Interestingly, Hungary, one of the countries most criticised for dismantling democratic institutions and undermining the rule of law, has one of the highest percentages of respondents in favour of the EU imposing sanctions. It also has the second lowest percentage of respondents (19 per cent) who do not want the EU to get involved. The situation is similar in Slovenia,

whose rule of law deficits have also been the subject of repeated debates, for example, in the European Parliament.<sup>109</sup> Here, too, there is robust support for imposing sanctions on member states that do not play by the rules (67.5 per cent). The country also has the lowest number of respondents who oppose such measures (17 per cent). This gives additional argumentative material to those who say that the (young) populations in these countries are more pro-European than their governments.

**Graph (2.14)** *Views on EU funding for countries which break the rule of law. Data are broken down by country of residence of respondents*

*In your opinion, should the EU stop providing funding to European countries when it deems that they have failed to protect human rights and follow democratic rules (for example, by acting against the independence of the judicial system, the freedom of the press, or the rights of minorities)?*



<sup>109</sup> European Parliament. (2021g). Resolution of 16 December 2021 on fundamental rights and the rule of law in Slovenia, in particular the delayed nomination of EPPO prosecutors (2021/2978(RSP)).



Respondents were asked to choose the statement they agreed with most regarding the conditionality of EU funding to respect the rule of law. This graph shows the results for the statement “Yes, The EU should stop providing funding to countries that systematically fail to protect human rights and often break democratic rules”, by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

**Table (2.6a)** Views on EU funding for rule breaching countries by country

In your opinion, should the EU stop providing funding to European countries when it deems that they have failed to protect human rights and follow democratic rules (for example, by acting against the independence of the judicial system, the freedom of the press, or the rights of minorities)?

	<b>“Yes. The EU should stop providing funding to countries that systematically fail to protect human rights and often break democratic rules”</b>	<b>“No. The EU should not get involved in internal matters such as these”</b>	<b>“I don’t have an opinion on this”</b>
Germany	68.60%	20.80%	10.50%
Slovenia	67.50%	16.70%	15.70%
Hungary	65.30%	19.20%	15.50%
Netherlands	65.10%	20.10%	14.60%
Italy	63.80%	23.10%	13.00%
Spain	62.70%	22.20%	14.90%
Romania	62.40%	26.00%	11.50%
France	62.40%	24.40%	13.30%
Denmark	57.80%	22.60%	19.60%

Respondents were asked to choose the statement they agreed with the most, regarding the conditionality of EU funding to respect the rule of law. This table shows the results by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.



**Table (2.6b)** Views on EU funding for countries which break the rule of law: Data broken down by country of residence of respondents. Highlights.

*In your opinion, should the EU stop providing funding to European countries when it deems that they have failed to protect human rights and follow Democratic rules (for example, by acting against the independence of the judicial system, the freedom of the press, or the rights of minorities)?*

	<b>"Yes. The EU should stop providing funding to countries that systematically fail to protect human rights and often break democratic rules"</b>	<b>"No. The EU should not get involved in internal matters such as these"</b>	<b>"I don't have an opinion on this"</b>
Germany	68.60%	20.80%	10.50%
Slovenia	67.50%	16.70%	15.70%
Hungary	65.30%	19.20%	15.50%
Netherlands	65.10%	20.10%	14.60%
Italy	63.80%	23.10%	13.00%
Spain	62.70%	22.20%	14.90%
Romania	62.40%	26.00%	11.50%
France	62.40%	24.40%	13.30%
Denmark	57.80%	22.60%	19.60%

*Respondents were asked to choose the statement they agreed with most regarding the conditionality of EU funding to respect the rule of law. This graph shows the results by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.*

There is a positive association between educational level and degree of support for conditionality. As Graph 2.15 shows, the association is considerable, and this difference is statistically significant (see also Table 22 – Annexe to Block 2). While 71 per cent of those with a university degree are in favour of the measure, 61 per cent of those with basic education are.

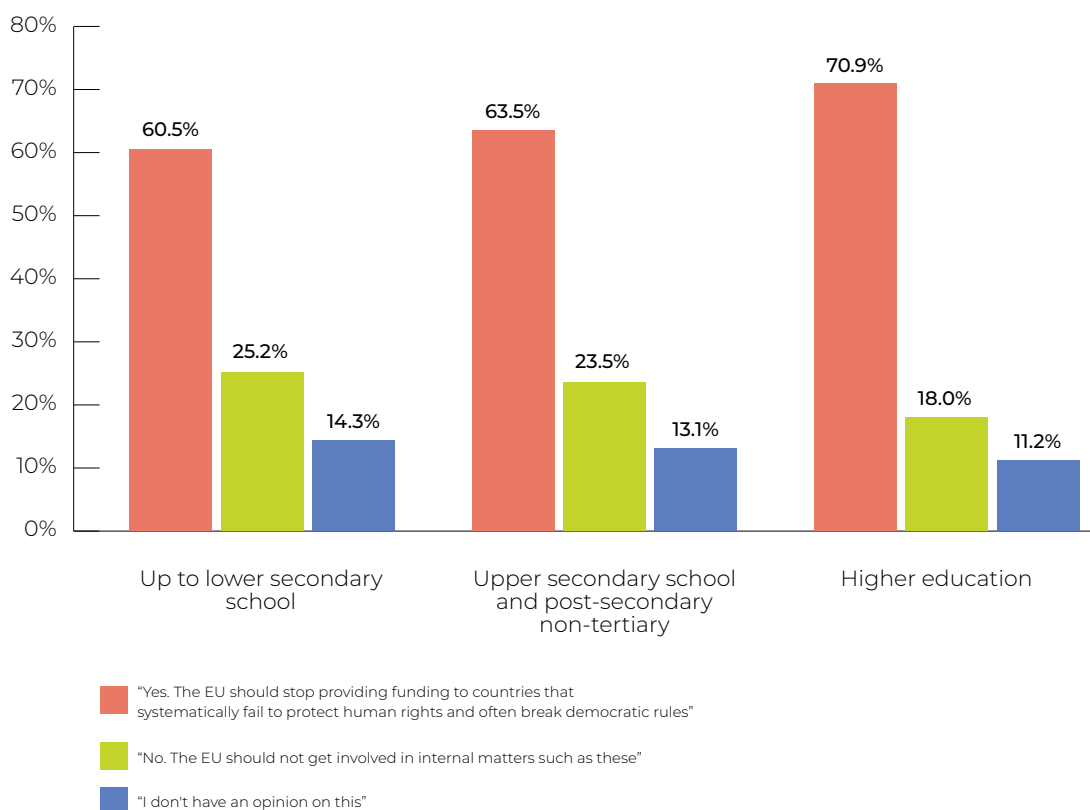
Interestingly, the different levels of support for conditionality do not appear to be due to

knowledge levels among lower-educated young people, as the proportion of respondents indicating a lack of opinion on the topic is rather similar across levels of education. While such a difference could stem from the relatively lower propensity to support further EU integration among young people with lower education levels, further research may be needed to identify why this specific pattern emerges.



**Graph (2.15)** Views on EU funding for countries which break the rule of law by educational attainment of respondents

*In your opinion, should the EU stop providing funding to European countries when it deems that they have failed to protect human rights and follow democratic rules (for example, by acting against the independence of the judicial system, the freedom of the press, or the rights of minorities)?*



*Respondents were asked to choose the statement they agreed with most regarding the conditionality of EU funding to respect the rule of law. This graph shows the results by education level, with the sample restricted to EU residents.*

### 3.2.4 Views on Communication Regarding EU Matters

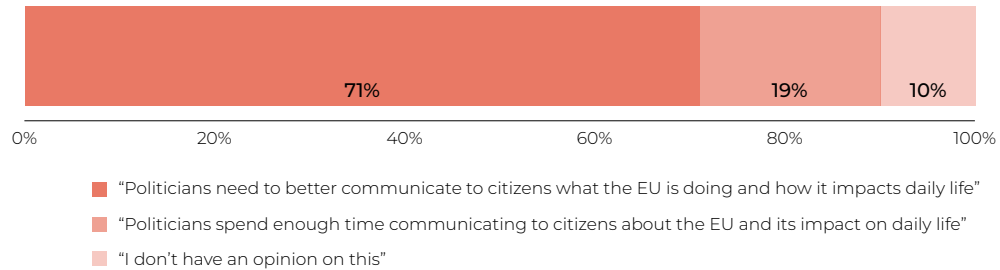
We have discussed numerous aspects relating to EU integration, democracy and the rule of law. One important part of being able to participate in democratic debates around these topics is the ability to be informed and to be able to develop an opinion. Linked to this is the issue of where young people receive their information and who helps them to form their opinion. In this section, we examine the extent to which young Europeans

consider the success or otherwise of politicians to convey how the EU matters in their daily lives.

Regarding communication on EU matters, we see strong support around the idea that politicians need to better convey to citizens what the EU is doing and how it impacts daily life, with 71 per cent expressing support for this view. Nevertheless, about 1 in 5 respondents believe that politicians spend enough time communicating to citizens about the EU.



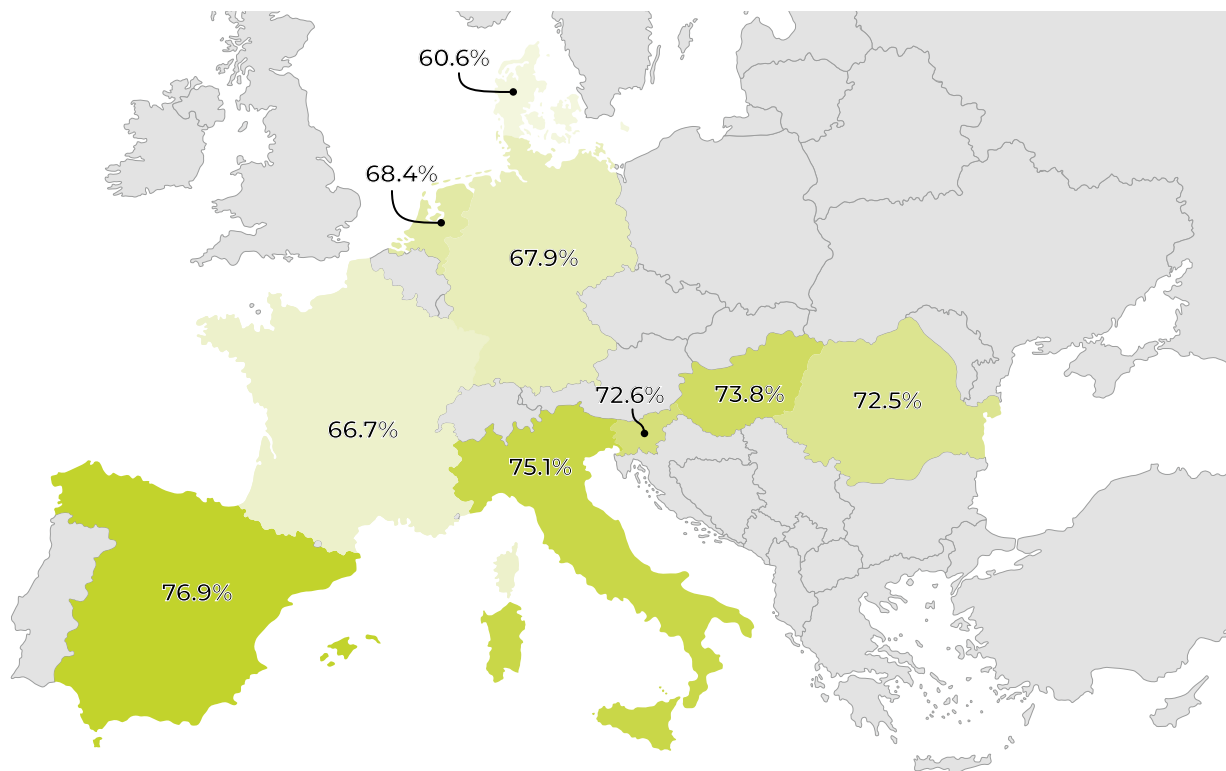
**Graph (2.16)** Views on EU communication regarding EU matters



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on politicians' communication with citizens, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

**Graph (2.17)** Views on communication regarding EU matters by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement "Politicians need to better communicate to citizens what the EU is doing and how it impacts daily life", by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.



**Table (2.7)** Views on EU communication regarding EU matters by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.

	"Politicians need to better communicate to citizens what the EU is doing and how it impacts daily life"	"Politicians spend enough time communicatin to citizens about the EU and its impact on daily life"	"I don't have an opinion on this"
Spain	76.90%	15.10%	7.80%
Italy	75.10%	15.30%	9.50%
Hungary	73.80%	14.50%	11.80%
Slovenia	72.60%	15.10%	12.20%
Romania	72.50%	19.80%	7.50%
Netherlands	68.40%	19.70%	11.70%
Germany	67.90%	21.60%	10.40%
France	66.70%	21.10%	12.20%
Denmark	60.60%	23.90%	15.50%

Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on politicians' communication with citizens by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

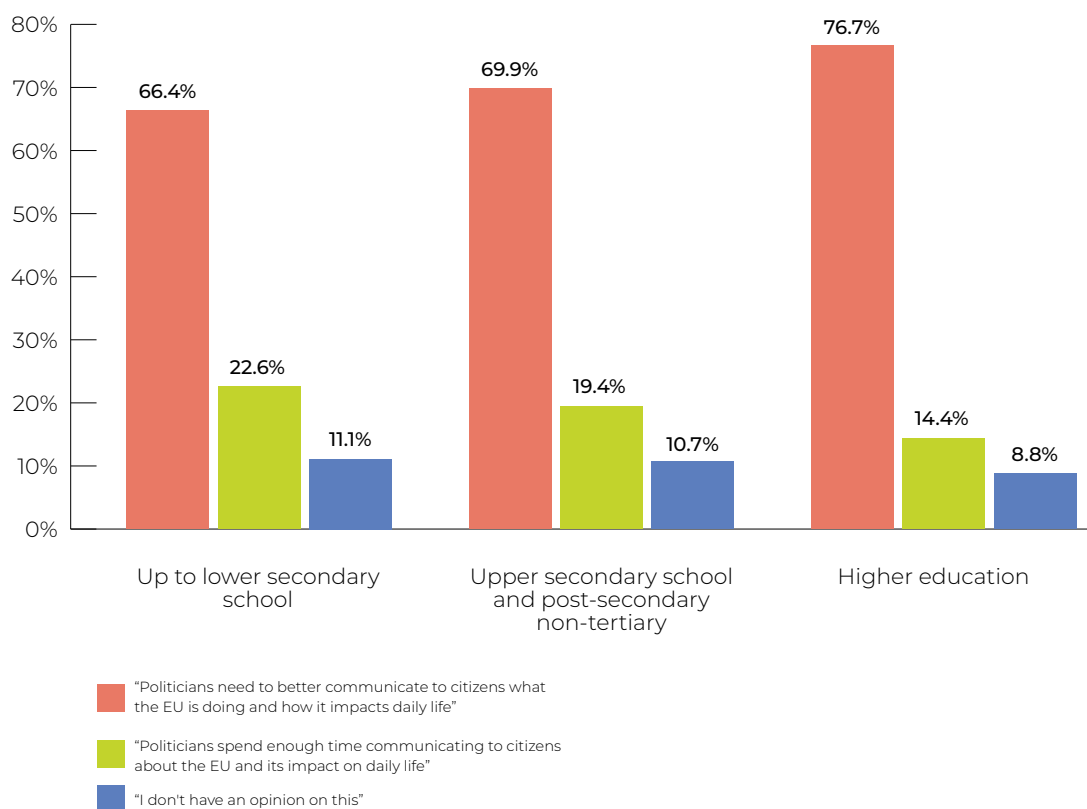
As can be seen in Graph 2.17, there are significant differences between respondents in each of the EU countries included in our study – with the need for more communication being expressed more frequently in the southern and eastern European member states, each of which received 72.5 per cent or more support in our sample. Support is also strong in the

more western countries but somewhat weaker (around 67 per cent in Germany, the Netherlands and France), while much weaker in Denmark (61 per cent). The latter again confirms a trend showing that Danish respondents often have the largest group of no opinion and negative opinions on EU-related issues.



### Graph (2.18) Views on EU communication by educational attainment

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on politicians' communication with citizens by education level, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

As Graph 2.18 shows, there is an association between respondents' education level and the extent to which they believe more communication by politicians is necessary. Interestingly, the higher the education level, the higher the perceived need is. While only 2 in 3 respondents with a primary education level feel there is a need for more communication about the EU, this proportion rises to 3 out of 4 among those with a university education.

### 3.2.4 Sitting on the Fence on EU Topics. How Predominant is it Across (Non) Member States?

As mentioned in the previous section, it is important to form an opinion on political issues as this enables informed political participation. In this section, we explore the extent to which young Europeans have developed opinions on EU issues based on their country of residence.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>110</sup> To do this, we analysed the response of a total of 23 EU-specific questions of our survey and counted the number of respondents who explicitly stated that they had no opinion on at least half of these questions.



As a measure of lack of opinion on EU matters, we counted the number of respondents expressing no opinion on over half of EU-specific questions. Our findings show that 6 per cent of respondents residing in the EU expressed no opinion on at least half of the EU-focused questions.<sup>111</sup> Graph 2.19 shows that, unsurprisingly, in non-EU countries, the level of ambivalence on EU matters is significantly higher. In Switzerland, 13 per cent of respondents expressed no opinion on at least half of the EU-focused questions. In the UK, this figure was 12 per cent, likely due to the lower visibility of EU issues due to their non-membership of the EU. However, it is worth noting that Denmark has a similar level at 11 per cent.

This could be due to citizens in Nordic countries having a tendency towards more Euroscepticism,

which tends to be centred around the welfare state.<sup>112</sup> Nordic Eurosceptics tend to perceive the Nordic model as preferable to less generous social models found elsewhere in Europe.<sup>113</sup> From this perspective, European integration is seen as a threat to the efficient delivery of public services, social and gender equality and collective wage agreements.

Throughout this report, there are numerous examples of Danish respondents exhibiting relatively high levels of ambivalent responsiveness towards EU matters or full opposition to further European integration. Northern Euroscepticism may be a common factor that could explain the weaker support for further EU integration.<sup>114</sup> However, more research will be required to gain further insights into the possible reasons behind this.

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<sup>111</sup> The overall European average is 8 per cent.

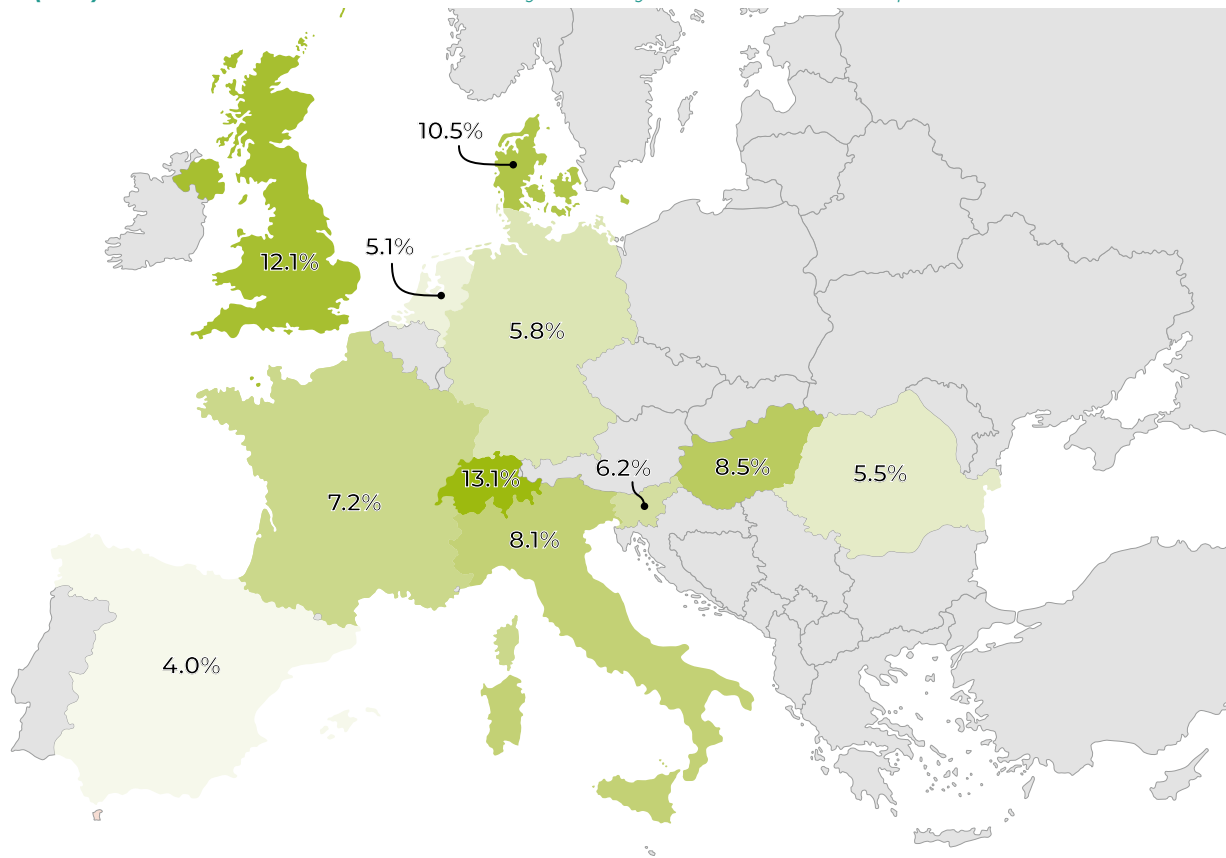
<sup>112</sup> Raunio, T. (2007). Softening but persistent: Euroscepticism in the Nordic EU countries. *Acta Politica*, 42(2), 191-210.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> This lack of explicit support included both: outspoken opposition and expressing more doubt on whether further integration is desirable.



**Graph (2.19)** Ambivalence on EU matters by country of residence of respondents



This graph shows the proportion of respondents not expressing an opinion in over half of EU-specific questions. This refers to respondents selecting answer options such as “I don’t know/I’m not sure” or “I don’t have an opinion on this”.



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# BUILDING BLOCK 3: EQUALITY

## Not Just Jobs but Good Jobs & Jobs for the Vulnerable

- Creating more jobs is what young people think should be the top general priority for the EU. This is an issue of specific concern for Millennials. Tackling poverty and social and economic inequality, and education are the second and third priorities.
- Young people want a stronger focus on social policy. This includes improving the quality of jobs and salaries as the top social policy priority, a focus on the welfare state (healthcare, social care & childcare), and access to housing.
- A significant majority of young EU residents (69 per cent) want the Union to ensure the provision of decent and affordable housing. This is seen as key in southern European countries in our sample and among young women.
- 69 per cent also want the EU to guarantee fair minimum wages. This is supported in particular by young people in less financially stable situations.

## Equal Pay & Reducing the Care Burden of Women – But no to Quotas

- Young Europeans see addressing the gender pay gap as the most important strategy to promote gender equality. The second and third most favoured strategies are combating gender-based violence and providing parents with childcare and adequate care support.
- Quotas for women in leadership positions is a less crucial strategy according to European youth, with fewer young women seeing this as impactful when compared to other key strategies.
- European young people want more to be done to protect the rights of the LGBTQI+ community.



## 4.1 Fostering Improved Equality Outcomes for All

The negative impact of the pandemic has hit young people the hardest on the basis of increased vulnerability across a whole host of factors. A key consideration is the gendered aspect of the pandemic, with confinement and lockdown resulting in widening socio-economic gender gaps and sharp increases in gender-based violence and forms of child abuse.<sup>115</sup> Building on our initial analysis of the main concerns of young Europeans in Building Block 1, which reveal a high level of anxiety about socio-economic issues, this chapter explores these concerns in more detail from the perspective of (in)equality.

The first section addresses the general future priorities of young people and how they relate to their socio-economic concerns. Next, we examine the specific socio-economic policy priorities to tackle these concerns. Following this, the penultimate section focuses specifically on young people's concerns about gender inequality, and the policies they see as most impactful to address this. The final section investigates young people's views on the rights of the LGBTQI+ community.

## 4.2 Discussion of Research Findings

### 4.2.1 Millennials and Gen Z Demand a More Social EU

Echoing the findings from Building Block 1 that socio-economic issues are at the top of young people's personal and social concerns, this section shows that they are also at the heart of young people's political priorities. With the availability of jobs and future employment being seen as the most pressing societal concern, European young people view the provision of jobs as the number one priority for the EU in the next five years (40 per cent), as shown in Graph 3.1 below. Along similar lines, young people show a high level of concern for poverty and inequality: it is their second policy priority for the EU in the next five years (34 per cent).

Education is the third most popular policy priority, with 32 per cent of young people choosing this as a key action area. It is worth noting that despite its prominence in the public eye, strengthening independent media and combating fake news ranks last on the list of priorities. Finding an explanation for this is not straightforward. However, one can perhaps assume that respondents prioritised issues that affect their living conditions more directly based on the list presented to them through the survey.

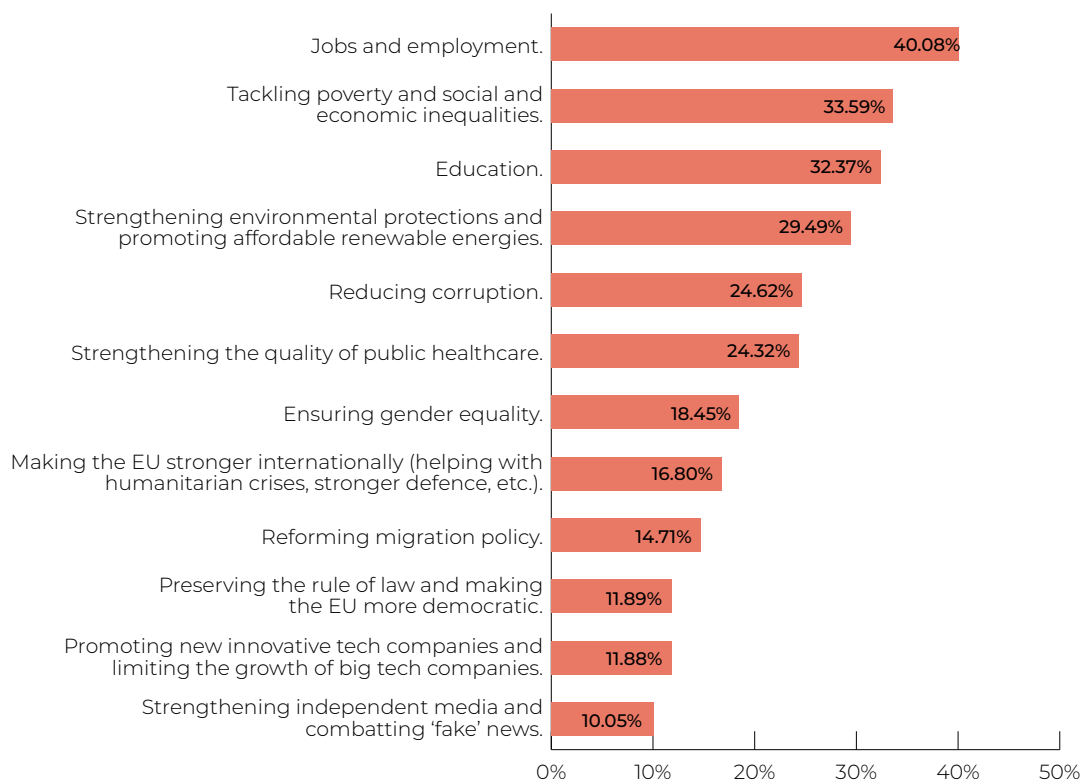
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<sup>115</sup> OECD. (2021a). Gender Gaps in Eurasia: The daunting effects of COVID-19. <https://www.oecd.org/eurasia/Gender%20gaps%20in%20Eurasia%20The%20Daunting%20effects%20of%20COVID%2019.pdf>



### Graph (3.1) EU priorities

Choose three priorities in the list below for the EU in the next 5 years.



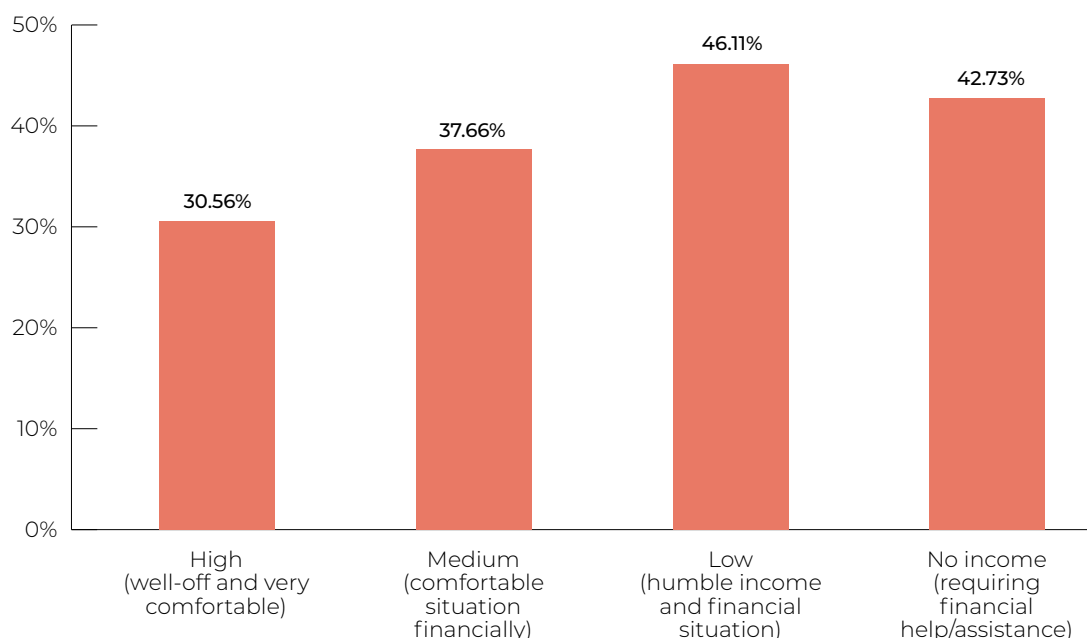
Respondents were asked to choose three priorities for the EU over the next five years from the proposed options. This graph shows the overall results for the sample restricted to EU residents for both the first survey and the second survey.

Access to jobs and employment is particularly pressing for those aged between 27 and 38. Almost half (45 per cent) of Millennials chose this compared to 36 per cent of Gen Z. This is in line with the findings uncovered in Building Block 1, with Millennials showing higher personal concern levels for both their income and employment opportunities when compared to their younger counterparts. Gen Z, on the other hand, place slightly more emphasis on education as an EU priority (34 per cent compared to 30 per cent). This is again reflected in young people's personal concerns, with a direct correlation between age and worries about education and training.

Income also plays a role in young people's views on what the EU should prioritise looking to the future. Respondents with a more modest financial situation are much more likely to see the need for EU action on jobs and employment than those from higher-income backgrounds (47 per cent compared to 30 per cent). This is again mirrored with the societal and personal concerns uncovered in our sample, whereby young people with low or no income backgrounds showcase higher concern levels for jobs and future employment in general, as well as for their own individual employment opportunities.



**Graph (3.2)** *Jobs and employment by the financial situation of respondents*  
Choose three priorities in the list below for the EU in the next 5 years.



*Respondents were asked to choose three priorities for the EU in the next 5 years from the proposed options. This graph shows the results for the option 'Jobs and Employment' by the financial situation of respondents.*

A rather large gender difference regarding the views on the future priorities of the EU can be seen when looking at Graph 3.3 below. Women are significantly more likely to choose tackling poverty and social and economic inequalities than men (40 per cent compared to 29 per cent).

Women also see education (36 per cent) and ensuring gender equality (21 per cent) as more important than young men (29 per cent and 15 per cent, respectively). This bears similarities to the findings in Building Block 1, which highlighted the gendered impact of the pandemic.



### Graph (3.3) EU priorities by gender

Choose three priorities in the list below for the EU in the next 5 years.



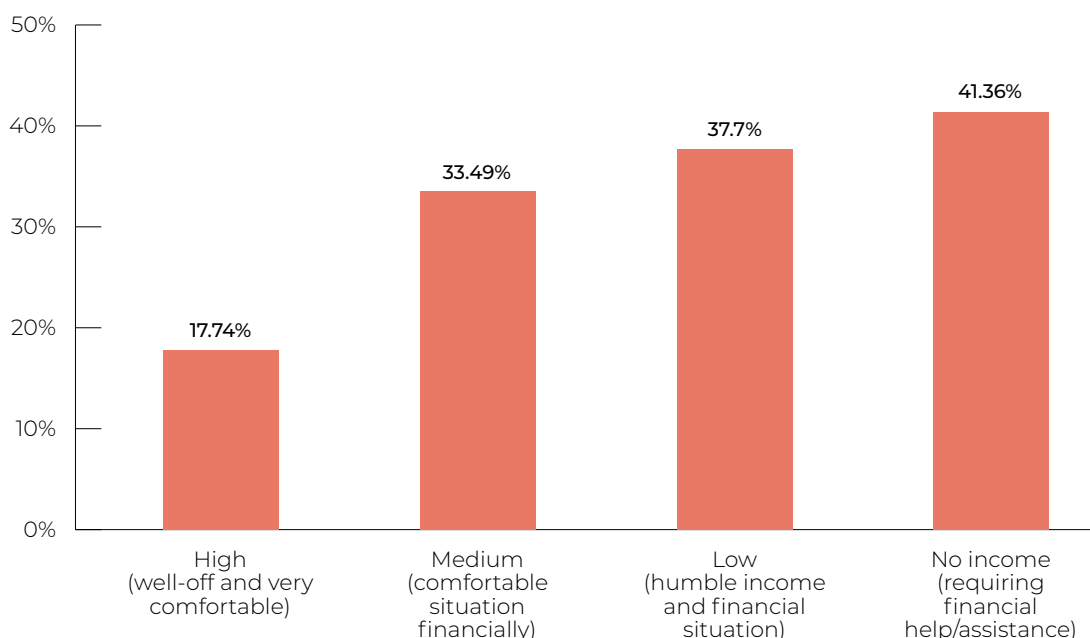
Respondents were asked to choose three priorities for the EU in the next 5 years from the proposed options. This graph shows the overall results by gender.

As mentioned previously, tackling poverty and economic inequality is a key concern for young people. Much like for jobs and employment, income background levels act as a differentiator. Those in a modest financial situation (38 per cent), in need of financial help (41 per cent) and in an average financial situation (33 per cent) see the fight against economic inequality as more urgent

than respondents in a very comfortable financial situation (18 per cent). This is illustrative of the challenge of maintaining solidarity across European society, posing the question of how to build a society in which wealth is re-distributed from those with the most to share to those in a more humble financial situation.



**Graph (3.4)** *Tackling poverty and inequality as a top EU priority*  
Choose three priorities in the list below for the EU in the next 5 years



Respondents were asked to choose three priorities for the EU in the next 5 years from the proposed options. This graph shows the results for the option “Tackling poverty and social and economic inequalities” by the financial situation of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

#### 4.2.2 Time for the EU to Step Up its Involvement in Social Policy? Gen Z and Millennial Views

In 2017, the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission set out 20 key principles essential for a strong social Europe. Labelled the European Pillar of Social Rights, these range from education, training and life-long learning to fair working conditions, gender equality and social protection (e.g., childcare support, minimum income, and disability mainstreaming).<sup>116</sup>

With this in mind, we wanted to know which social policies are most important to young people. This question complements the data from the previous section, where social priorities rivalled issues in other areas. In line with both the concerns of young people and their general priorities for the future of the EU, the top social policy priority (41 per cent) is improving the quality of jobs and salaries. This is especially key for Millennials (44 per cent) but less of a key concern for wealthier respondents (23 per cent).

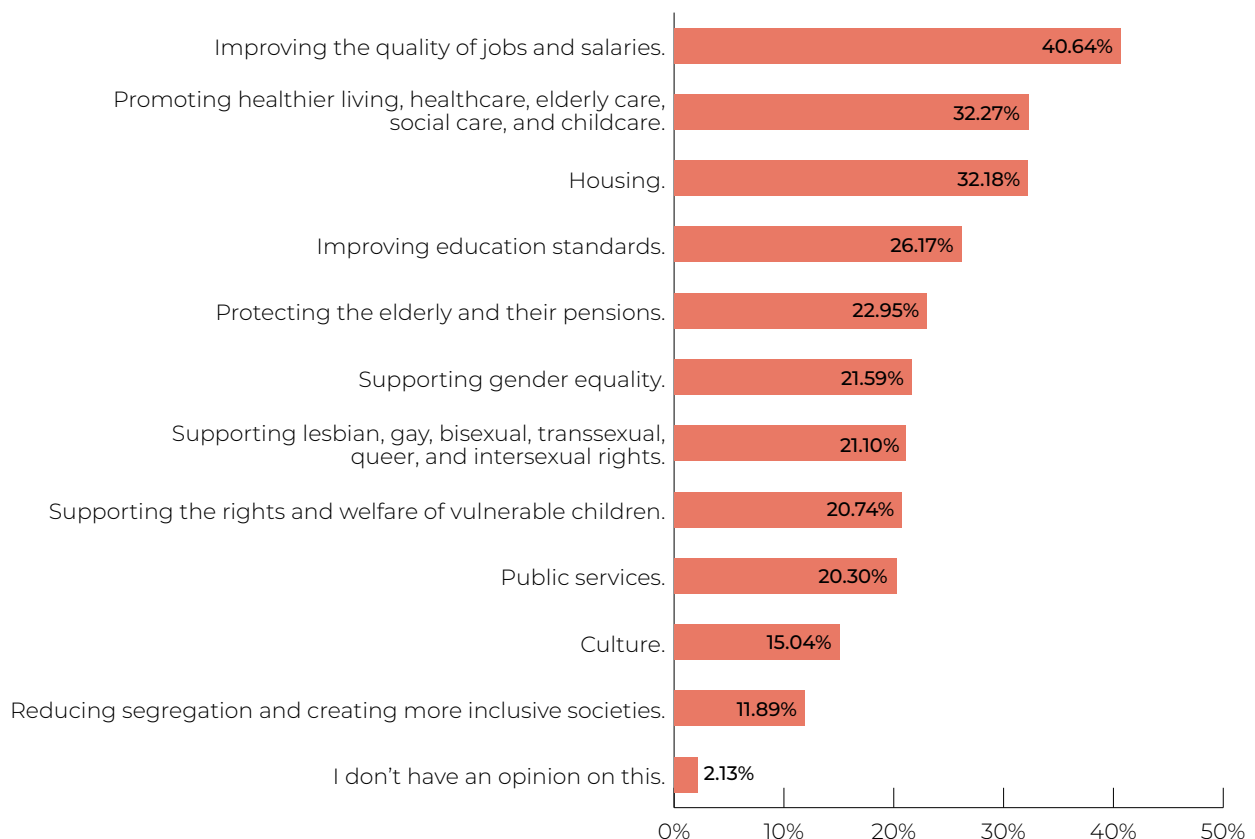
<sup>116</sup> European Commission. (2022f). European Pillar of Social Rights. Building a fairer and more inclusive European Union.



The joint second most important issues cited by respondents are 'Promoting healthier living, health care, care for the elderly, social care and childcare' and housing (32 per cent respectively). Unsurprisingly, promoting healthier living

is particularly important for those whose profession centres on housework, childcare or caring for other people, with 42 per cent of these respondents picking it as one of their top three priorities.

**Graph (3.5)** *Views on what should be the EU's top social policy priorities*  
Choose three priorities in social policy from the list below for the EU in the next 5 years.



Respondents were asked to choose three priorities in social policy for the EU in the next 5 years from the proposed options concerning social policy. This graph shows the overall results restricted to EU residents.

#### 4.2.3.1 Fair Minimum Wages

Conceived as part of an action plan to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights, the European

Commission President in 2019 declared the aim of proposing fair minimum wages for all workers in the EU.<sup>117</sup> The need for everyone to have access to minimum wages regained traction

<sup>117</sup> Von der Leyen, U. (2019a). A Union that strives for more, my agenda for Europe. Political Guidelines for the Next European Commission 2019-2024.



within the context of the social and economic crisis caused by the pandemic.<sup>118</sup>

As of 1 January 2022, 21 of the 27 EU member states have statutory minimum wages (wage levels regulated by statutes or formal laws).<sup>119</sup> However, wage levels in Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Italy and Sweden are determined through collective agreements between trade unions and employers.<sup>120</sup> In countries where the minimum-wage setting is based on collective bargaining, workers do not always get a fair minimum wage. For example, in Italy, at least 11 per cent of workers who should be protected by a collective agreement do not receive the minimum wage set by the agreement.<sup>121</sup>

On 7 June 2022, the European Council Presidency and the European Parliament reached a provisional agreement on legislation to support member states in establishing a framework for minimum wages.<sup>122</sup> The agreement will not set a European minimum wage but instead will establish minimum requirements for gradual

implementation to ensure minimum wages are set at a sufficient level for every worker to receive a decent income.

Our data show that young Europeans overwhelmingly support the idea of the EU guaranteeing minimum wages. Just under 70 per cent want this to be introduced, as shown in Graph 3.6 below. This is compared to only 22 per cent who prefer the EU to stay out of the issue.

The fact that the vast majority favours the adoption of statutory minimum wages places a spotlight on whether to introduce wage differentials according to age group. For example, in the UK in 2022, workers over the age of 23 receive an hourly wage at least equal to the National Living Wage (£9.50), while minimum wages are lower for 21 to 22-year-olds (£9.18), 18 to 20-year-olds (£6.83) and under-18s (£4.81).<sup>123</sup> On the one hand, the idea behind the youth minimum wage system is that it stimulates youth employment.<sup>124</sup> On the other, it is argued that the youth minimum wage is discriminatory and unfair.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> European Commission. (2020e). State of the Union Address by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary. Speech, 16 September 2020. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH\\_20\\_1655](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_20_1655)

<sup>119</sup> Lecerf, M. and Sabbati, G. (2020). Minimum wage in the EU. European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). Briefing, PE 659.294, October 2020.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Euronews. (2022). How do EU member states compare on minimum wage? 9 June 2022.

<sup>122</sup> European Parliament. (2021a). Deal reached on new rules for adequate minimum wages in the EU. Press release, 7 June 2022.

<sup>123</sup> UK Government. (2022). National Minimum Wage and National living Wage rates. Wages as April 2022.

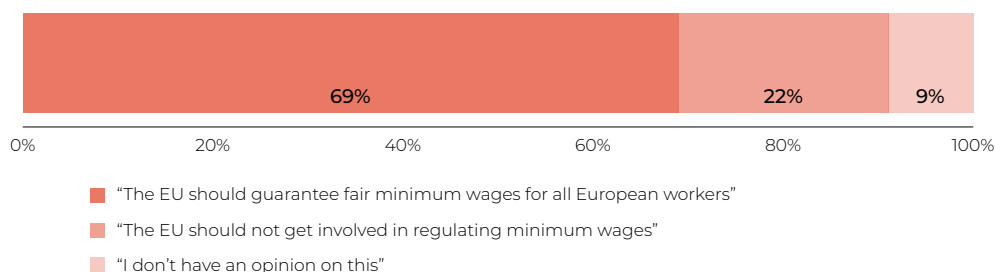
<sup>124</sup> Bakhtina, K. (2021). The Dutch system for youth minimum wages: expressing concern about age discrimination and the rights of young people. Italian Labour Law e-Journal, Issue 2, Vol 14.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.; ETUC. Young people and the youth pay gap. <https://www.etuc.org/en/young-people-and-youth-pay-gap>



### Graph (3.6) Views on EU involvement in guaranteeing fair minimum wages

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the guarantee of a minimum wage by the EU, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

As shown in Graph 3.7, the country analysis reveals major differences across the continent when it comes to views on the EU guaranteeing minimum wages, with the relationship being statistically significant (see Table 23 – Annexe to Building Block 3). While a clear consensus exists in most member states, Denmark stands out again as a special case. The Nordic country again has the highest proportion of undecided respondents while also exhibiting the largest share of young people who do not support the measure (28 per cent).

This could be explained by a general tendency among Nordic countries to be less in favour of both EU and state intervention on certain policy

issues, including the idea of minimum wages. Moreover, while the minimum wage directive has been a cause for celebration among European Social Democrats – this has been met with strong opposition from left parties and trade unions in Denmark and Sweden. Contrastingly, they hold the view it challenges the Nordic model focussed on collective bargaining.<sup>126</sup> This is likely based on the Scandinavian model's success in the past, with Nordic countries enjoying comparatively high average salaries under their collective bargaining models.<sup>127</sup> In contrast, Italy shows strong support among its young generation for the introduction of a minimum wage, with 3 in 4 expressing support.

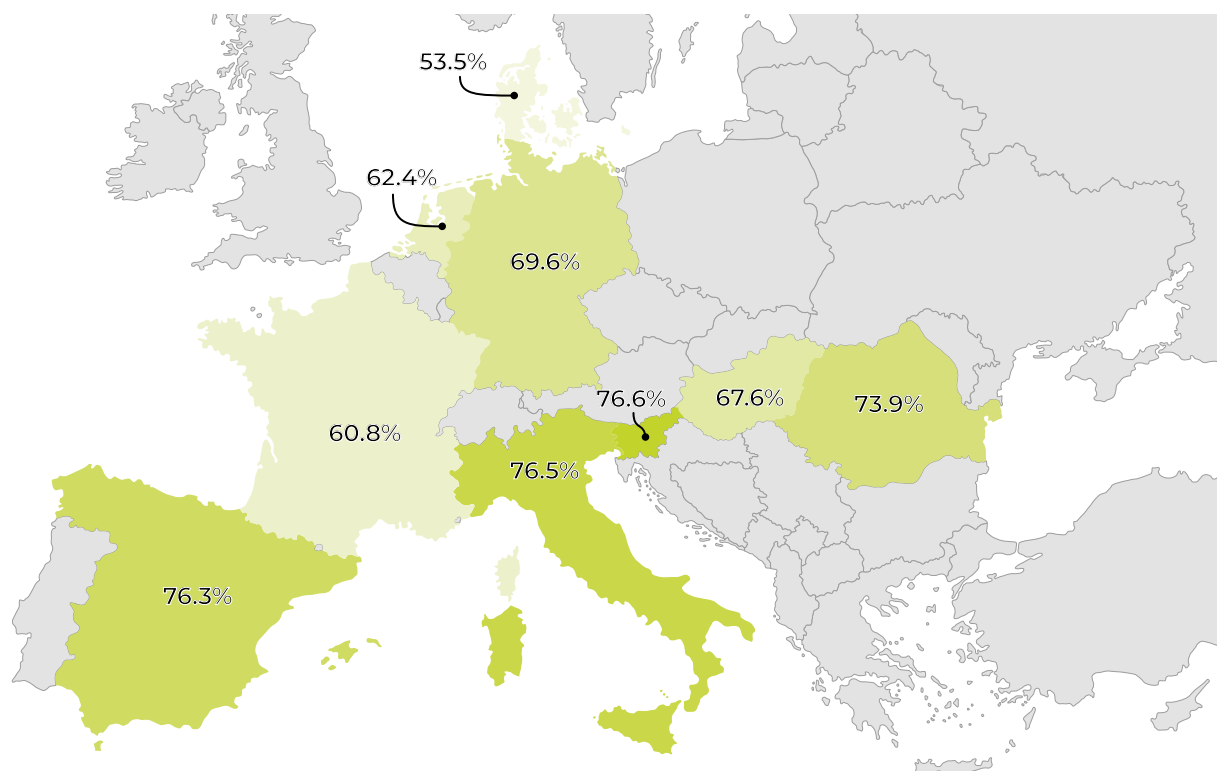
<sup>126</sup> Allenbach-Amman. J. (2021). Danish and Swedish socialists fight against minimum wage directive. Euractiv, 19 November, 2021.

<sup>127</sup> Boffey, D. (2020). Nordic countries at odds with EU over minimum wage. The Guardian. European Union. 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/12/nordic-countries-at-odds-with-eu-over-minimum-wage>



**Graph (3.7)** Views on EU involvement in guaranteeing fair minimum wages by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement “The EU should guarantee fair minimum wages for all European workers” by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

**Table (3.1)** Views on EU involvement in guaranteeing fair minimum wages by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.

	“The EU should guarantee fair minimum wages for all European workers”	“The EU should not get involved in regulating minimum wages”	“I don’t have an opinion on this”
Slovenia	76.60%	16.00%	7.20%
Italy	76.50%	16.30%	7.10%



	“The EU should guarantee fair minimum wages for all European workers”	“The EU should not get involved in regulating minimum wages”	“I don’t have an opinion on this”
Spain	76.30%	17.50%	6.10%
Romania	73.90%	18.40%	7.50%
Germany	69.60%	22.60%	7.80%
Hungary	67.60%	19.50%	13.00%
Netherlands	62.40%	25.80%	11.70%
France	60.80%	27.00%	12.20%
Denmark	53.50%	28.30%	18.20%

*Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the guarantee of a minimum wage from the EU by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.*

When looking at the impact of socio-demographic variables, the most significant differences are seen with young people’s financial situation. While 60 per cent of those who are well-off support the EU’s role in guaranteeing a minimum wage, this jumps up to 70 per cent for those in an average financial situation and 71 per cent for those in a humble financial situation. Apart from the clear differences based on the country of residence of respondents and their financial situation, there are no major differences in terms of age, gender, and education, although they all lead to statistically significant results. The difference in support for minimum wages between young people with up to a lower secondary education (66 per cent) and young

people with tertiary education (71 per cent) was the largest in absolute terms out of this group.

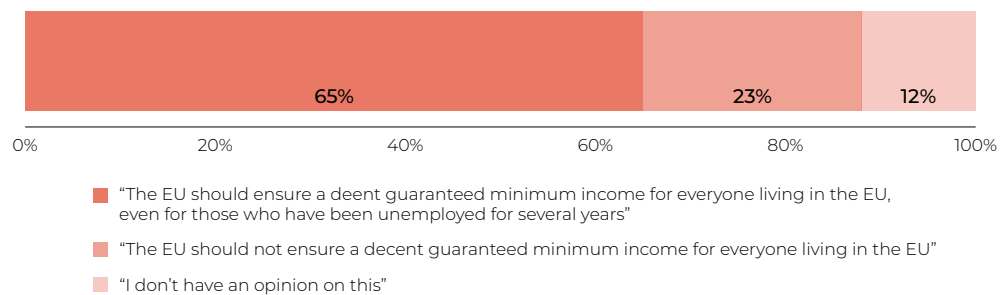
#### **4.2.3.2 Universal Basic Income**

There is a similar level of consensus around the idea of the EU guaranteeing a universal basic income. As displayed in Graph 3.8, 66 per cent of respondents believe that the EU should ensure a decent guaranteed minimum income for everyone living in the Union, even for those who have been unemployed for several years. This contrasts with 23 per cent who believe that the EU should not get involved in this kind of policy, while 12 per cent express no opinion.



### Graph (3.8) Views on EU involvement in ensuring a universal basic income

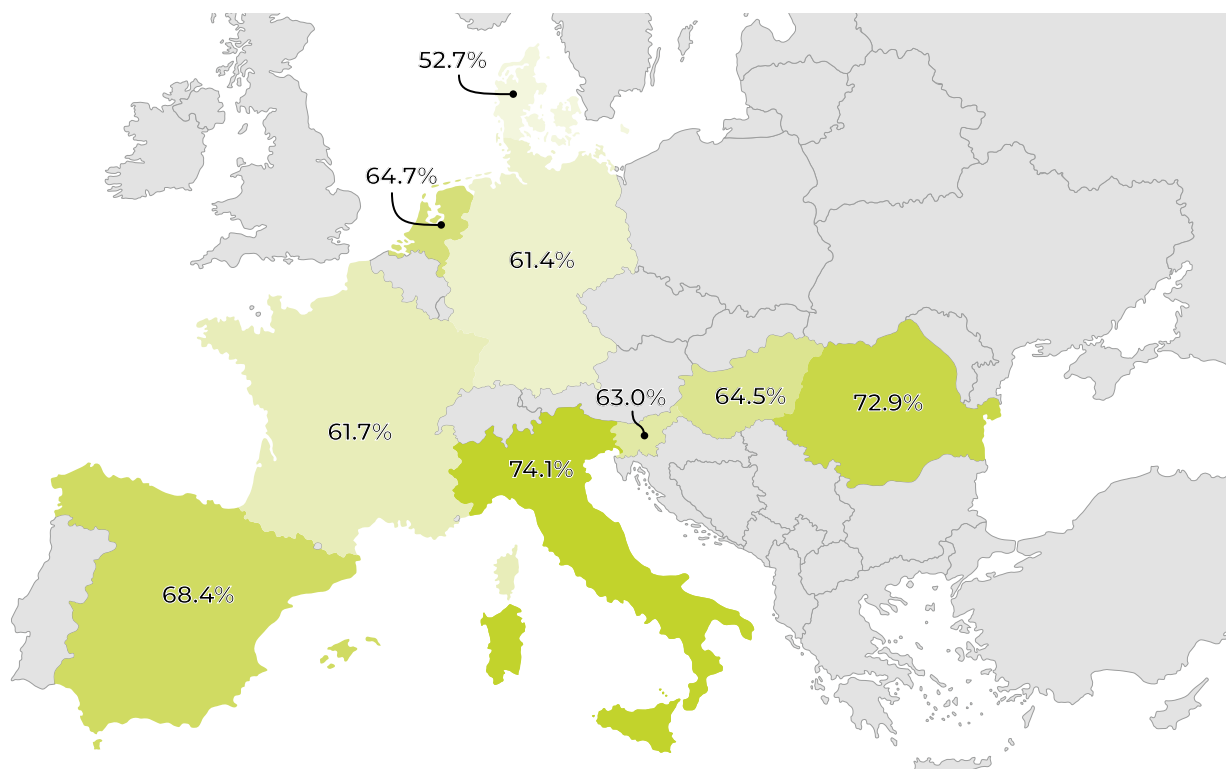
People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the guarantee of universal minimum income by the EU, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

### Graph (3.9) Views on EU involvement in ensuring a universal basic income by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.





Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement “The EU should ensure a decent guaranteed minimum income for everyone living in the EU, even for those who have been unemployed for several years” by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

**Table (3.2)** Views on EU involvement in ensuring a universal basic income by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.

	“The EU should ensure a decent guaranteed minimum income for everyone living in the EU, even for those who have been unemployed for several years”	“The EU should not ensure a decent guaranteed minimum income for everyone living in the EU”	“I don’t have an opinion on this”
Italy	74.10%	16.40%	9.40%
Romania	72.90%	20.80%	6.20%
Spain	68.40%	20.60%	10.90%
Netherlands	64.70%	21.60%	13.60%
Hungary	64.50%	23.30%	12.20%
Slovenia	63.00%	23.20%	13.70%
France	61.70%	24.90%	13.40%
Germany	61.40%	26.50%	12.00%
Denmark	52.70%	28.50%	18.70%

Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the guarantee of universal minimum income from the EU by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

Additionally, there is a substantial and statistically significant variation throughout the continent. As shown in Graph 3.9, a strong consensus exists in most member states, with support topping at almost three-quarters in both Italy and Romania. Denmark stands out yet again as

a special case, where respondents are the most likely to be undecided or to oppose the measure.

#### 4.2.3.4 Unemployment Benefits

Unemployment benefits, whose purpose is to protect and insure workers against the risks that come from losing their jobs, provide an essential



safety net for individual workers and their families, thus helping to protect them from poverty.<sup>128</sup> As with most areas of social policy, there is a wide variation between European countries, making direct comparisons more difficult. For example, unemployment benefits can last from a minimum of 90 days in Hungary to an indefinite period in Belgium.<sup>129</sup> Moreover, benefits may also vary in terms of amount and progression over time. Denmark offers 90 per cent of previous earnings.<sup>130</sup> Both the Netherlands and France have a higher initial allowance of 60 to 75 per cent of earnings, but only for an initial period, after which it falls.<sup>131</sup> A lower unemployment benefit is offered in the UK, where a flat rate of €77 to €121.05 per week for up to 26 weeks is given.<sup>132</sup>

The need for the EU to get involved in some form of unemployment benefit has been debated widely over the past decade, with it also now

being a political commitment by the European Commission President. Whereas the EU has had the prevention of unemployment in mind when supporting temporary short-time work schemes, the lack of an EU ability to provide some form of unemployment assistance during this crisis has harmed the economic performance and social cohesion of the entire eurozone. Introducing the measure could offer a greater level of social protection during future crises.<sup>133</sup>

Regarding the views on EU involvement in unemployment benefits, as Graph 3.10 shows, almost 6 out of 10 young Europeans believe the EU should ensure decent unemployment benefits for all citizens (58 per cent). On the other hand, 31 per cent believe national governments, and not the EU, should oversee benefits for unemployed people, while 1 in 10 has no opinion on the subject.

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<sup>128</sup> European Commission. (2018b). Unemployment Benefits. European semester thematic factsheet.

<sup>129</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, De Wispelaere, F., Pacolet, J., De Smedt, L., Export of unemployment benefits: report on U2 portable documents.

<sup>130</sup> Denmark.dk. (2022). Unemployment benefits: Receiving unemployment benefits – amount. <https://lifeindenmark.borger.dk/working/work-rights/unemployment-benefits>

<sup>131</sup> European Commission. (2022 g). Netherlands – Unemployment. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1122&langId=en&intPagId=4996>; European Commission (2022). France – Unemployment. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1110&intPagId=4543&langId=en>

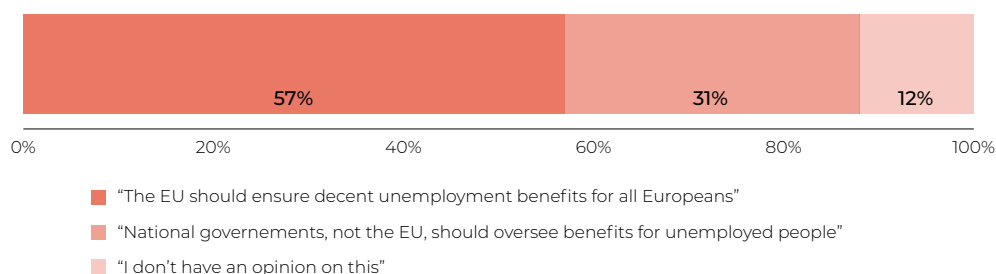
<sup>132</sup> Age.uk. (2022). Benefit rates 2022-23, Changes to Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice/money-legal/benefits-entitlements/benefit-rates-2022-23/>

<sup>133</sup> Andor. L. (2022). European unemployment insurance. From undercurrent to paradigm shift. European Trade Union Institute (ETUI). Main Article. SAGE.



### Graph (3.10) Views on the EU being involved in providing unemployment benefits

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU's involvement in unemployment, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

The strongest support for further EU action can be found in Italy and Spain, where over two-thirds of respondents support the initiative. According to a European Youth Forum study, it was specifically these two countries that suffered significantly from the 2010 financial crisis and are still experiencing some consequences today. In particular, young people in Italy and Spain were overwhelmed by a wave of instability, while the lack of social protection led to a deteriorating quality of life.<sup>134</sup>

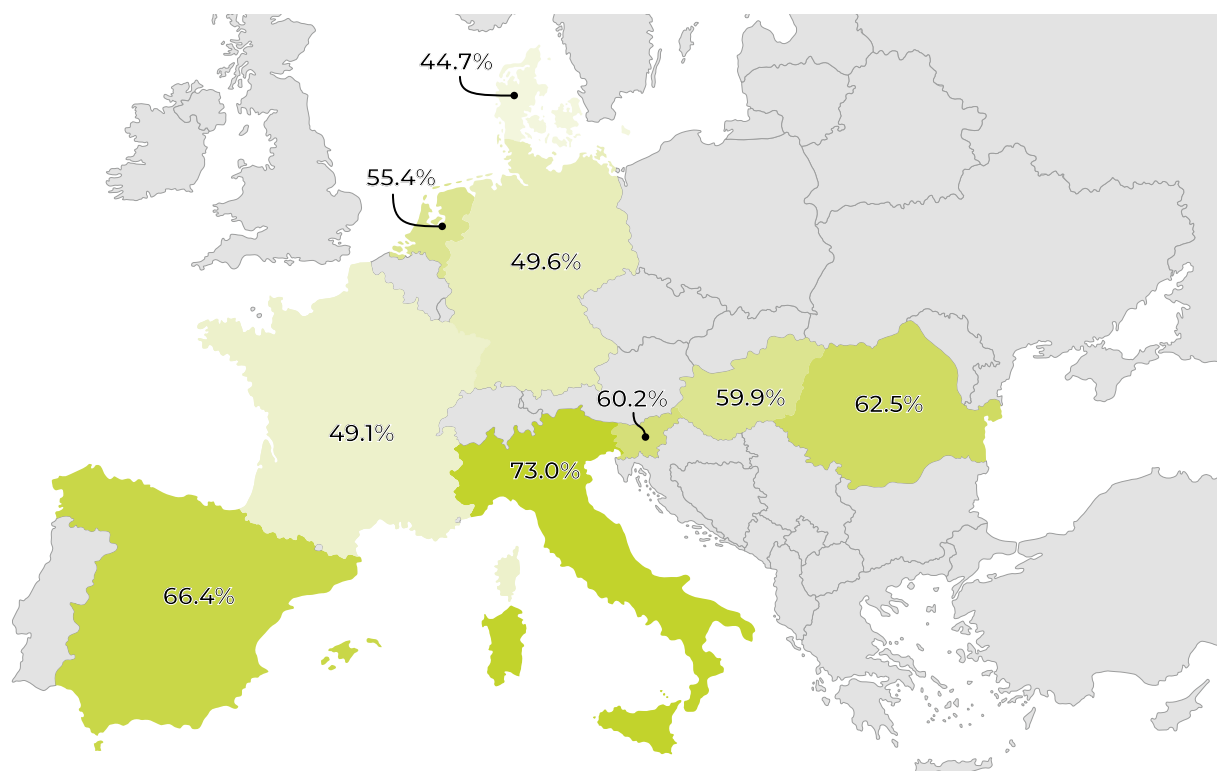
The experience of the 2010 crisis could potentially explain the greater support in Spain and Italy in having an unemployed benefit ensured by the EU. Alternatively, the strong support for EU integration in these countries may have influenced young respondents' opinion that the EU should take over the distribution of unemployment benefits (see Building Block 6). Yet again, Denmark stands out for its high proportion of individuals expressing no opinion and a relatively high proportion of respondents opposing further EU involvement (Table 3.3).

<sup>134</sup> Fernández-Trujillo, F. and Gastaldi, P. (2022). Generation Austerity: When governments cut budgets, young people suffer, don't do it again. Brussels: European Youth Forum.



**Graph (3.11)** Views on the EU being involved in providing unemployment benefits by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement “The EU should ensure decent unemployment benefits for all Europeans” by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

**Table (3.3)** EU unemployment benefits by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.

	“The EU should ensure decent unemployment benefits for all Europeans”	“National governments, not the EU, should oversee benefits for unemployed people”	“I don’t have an opinion on this”
Italy	73.00%	14.50%	12.40%
Spain	66.40%	25.40%	8.00%
Romania	62.50%	30.00%	7.40%



	“The EU should ensure decent unemployment benefits for all Europeans”	“National governments, not the EU, should oversee benefits for unemployed people”	“I don’t have an opinion on this”
Slovenia	60.20%	30.00%	9.70%
Hungary	59.90%	27.70%	12.50%
Netherlands	55.40%	33.90%	10.60%
Germany	49.60%	37.70%	12.70%
France	49.10%	38.30%	12.60%
Denmark	44.70%	36.80%	18.50%

*Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to select the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU involvement in providing unemployment benefits by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.*

Despite the notable differences by country of residence, no major differences were found based on other demographic variables. This could be because this question does not refer to the generosity of unemployment programmes. Instead, it alludes to whether the EU should or

not be involved in such matters. Indeed, our data do show a significant positive association at the individual level between the general level of support for further EU integration and endorsing further EU involvement in unemployment schemes.



Copyright: Unsplash



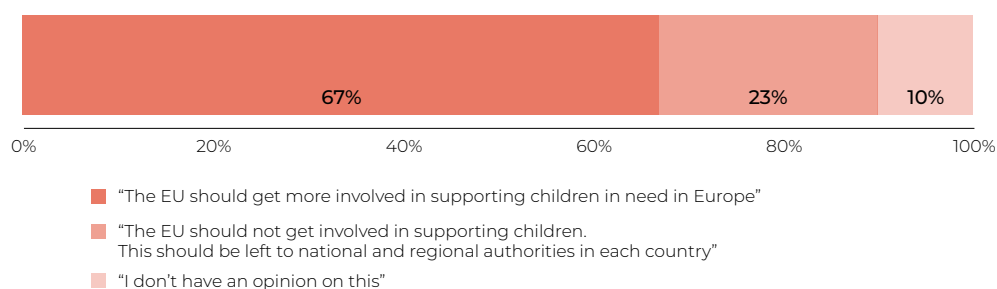
### 4.2.3.3 Supporting Children in Need

Young EU residents agree that the Union should get more involved in supporting children in need in Europe. As Graph 3.12 shows, 67 per cent of EU-based respondents would support further

involvement of the Union's institutions on this matter. On the other hand, 23 per cent believe that supporting children should be left to national and regional authorities in each country, while 10 per cent do not have an opinion on the matter.

#### Graph (3.12) Views on EU involvement in supporting children in need

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU's role in supporting children, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

Analysis by country of residence reveals a continuation of the trends we have observed so far when it comes to the involvement of the EU in key social issues. There is a statistically significant association between country of residence and the level of support for more EU involvement in supporting children in need. As shown in Table 3.4, the strongest level of support can be seen amongst those residing in Slovenia, Spain, Romania and Italy, where more than seven out of ten would support such increased involvement. This correlates with the statistics on child poverty seen in some of these countries, with, for

example, Romania registering the highest rate of children at risk of poverty (42 per cent) and Spain (32 per cent) scoring higher than the EU average (24 per cent).<sup>135</sup>

Danish residents are the most likely to either oppose EU involvement (29 per cent) or not have an opinion on the matter. However, when looking at these results, it is worth bearing in mind child poverty is not a significant concern in Denmark, which ranks among the bottom three EU member states in terms of children at risk of poverty or social exclusion (14 per cent).<sup>136</sup>

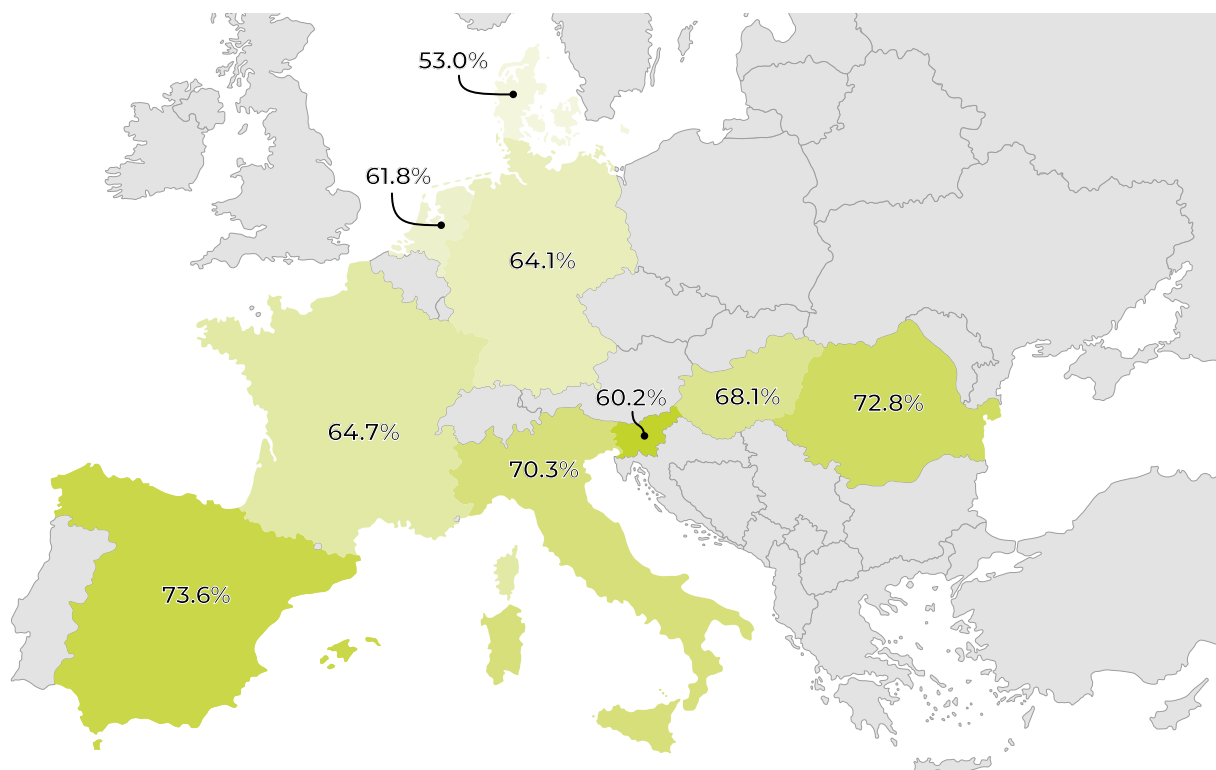
<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Eurostat. (2021). 1 in 4 children in the EU at risk of poverty or social exclusion. 28 October 2021.



**Graph (3.13)** Views on EU involvement in supporting children in need by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement "The EU should get more involved in supporting children in need in Europe" by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

**Table (3.4)** Views on EU involvement in supporting children in need by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.

	"The EU should get more involved in supporting children in need in Europe"	"The EU should not get involved in supporting children. This should be left to national and regional authorities in each country"	"I don't have an opinion on this"
Slovenia	75.80%	13.60%	10.50%
Spain	73.60%	16.60%	9.60%



	“The EU should get more involved in supporting children in need in Europe”	“The EU should not get involved in supporting children. This should be left to national and regional authorities in each country”	“I don’t have an opinion on this”
Romania	72.80%	18.10%	8.90%
Italy	70.30%	20.40%	9.20%
Hungary	68.10%	21.40%	10.50%
France	64.70%	24.30%	11.00%
Germany	64.10%	25.70%	10.20%
Netherlands	61.80%	27.50%	10.50%
Denmark	53.00%	28.90%	18.10%

*Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU's role in supporting children, by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.*

Noticeable differences come to light when examining the relationship between gender and the level of support for further EU involvement in providing help to children. As seen in Graph 3.14 while 71 per cent of women support the initiative, only about 64 per cent of men do so, the

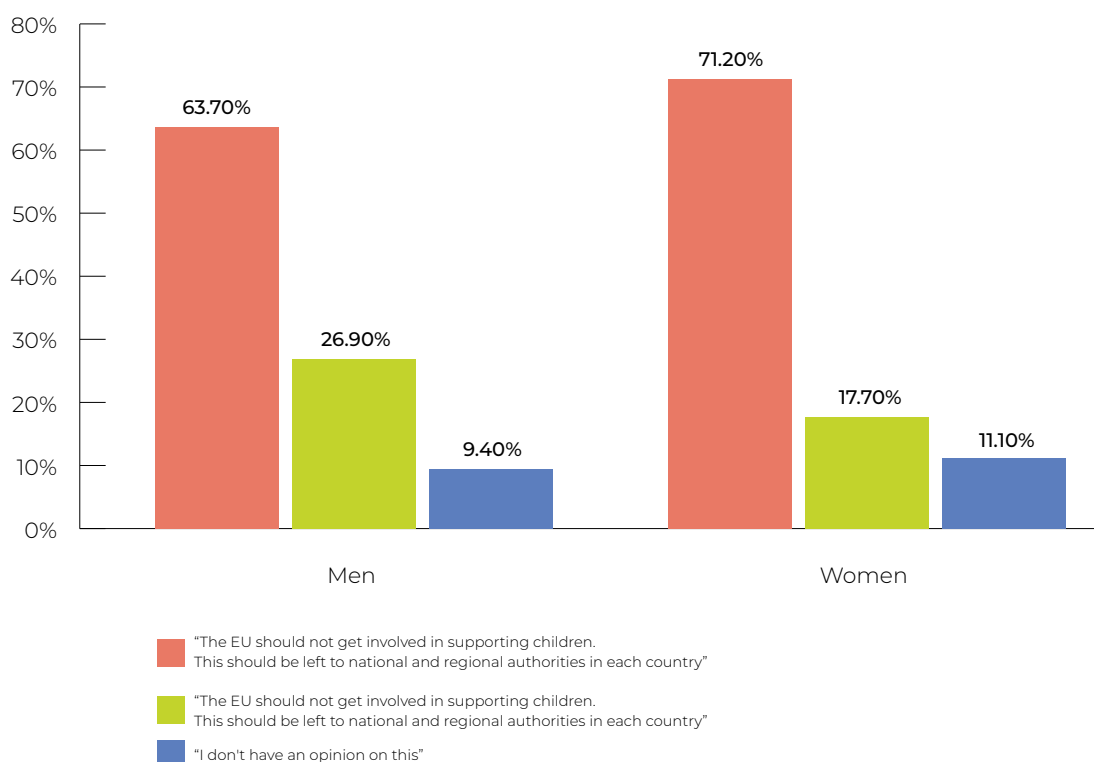
difference also being statistically significant (Table 30 – Annexe to Building Block 3). While 27 per cent of men would oppose increased EU involvement in providing support to children, only 18 per cent of women do.



Copyright: Unsplash



**Graph (3.14)** *Views on EU involvement in supporting children in need by gender of respondents*  
 People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU's role in supporting children by gender of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

The degree of support for additional EU involvement in aiding children is also related to the respondents' education level. As Graph 3.15 shows, the higher the education level the more likely it is for an individual to support further involvement from the EU in helping children.

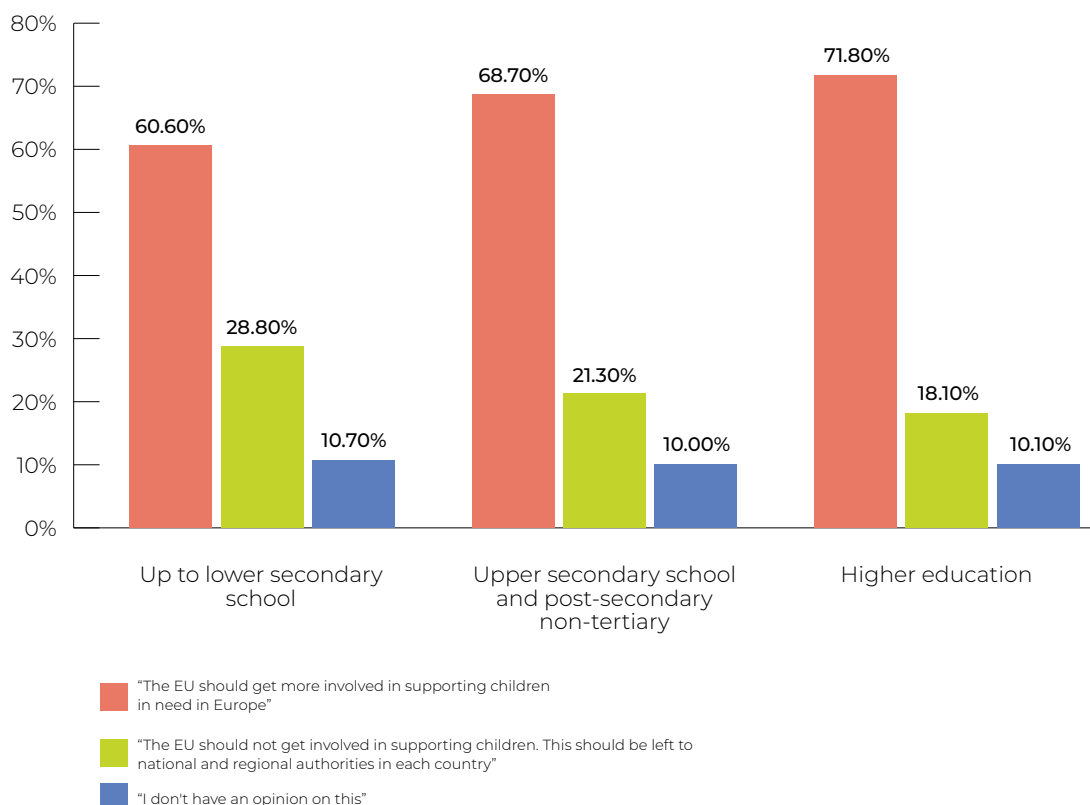
Indeed, while only 61 per cent of those with a basic education support the initiative, 72 per cent of those with a higher education degree do so. This relationship is statistically significant (see Table 31 – Annexe to Building Block 3)<sup>137</sup>

<sup>137</sup> The relationship remains statistically significant even when controlling by the age of respondents.



**Graph (3.15)** Views on EU involvement in supporting children in need by educational attainment of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU's role in supporting children by the educational attainment level of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

A generational difference also exists regarding the views on EU involvement in child support. While 65 per cent of Gen Z back the initiative, 70 per cent of Millennials do so.

#### 4.2.3.5 Providing Financial Benefits to Students

When it comes to providing financial benefits to students, around two-thirds of young EU residents believe that the Union should provide this kind of support, as shown in Graph 3.16. Conversely, 22 per cent believe that the EU should not be involved in providing this type of financial

help, while one in ten expresses no opinion on the matter.

Major differences exist across EU member states on this specific policy issue. As displayed in Graph 3.17, there is a suggestion of a North/South divide where support for financial assistance to students is widespread among Spanish (74 per cent) and Italian (73 per cent) residents, but also among those residing in Slovenia (75 per cent) and Romania (72 per cent). On the other hand, our findings show that support for the initiative is particularly high among students that live at home with family members,



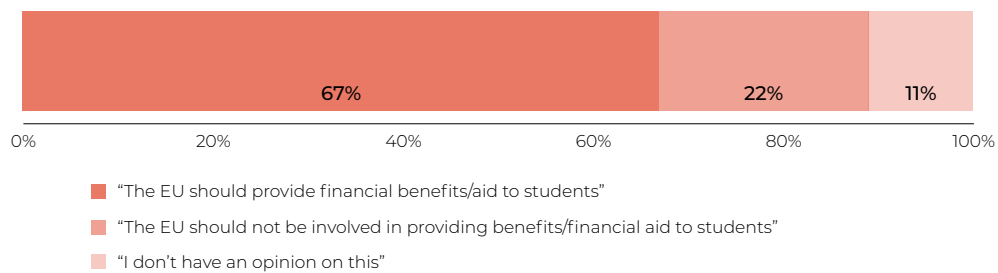
with 77 per cent in favour of such an initiative. In parallel, a significant association exists between support for European integration and endorsement for EU involvement in providing financial

support to students. Wider socio-demographic characteristics, including financial situation, age, and gender, did not have any significant impact on the support levels.

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**Graph (3.16)** *Views on EU involvement in providing financial aid to students*

*People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.*

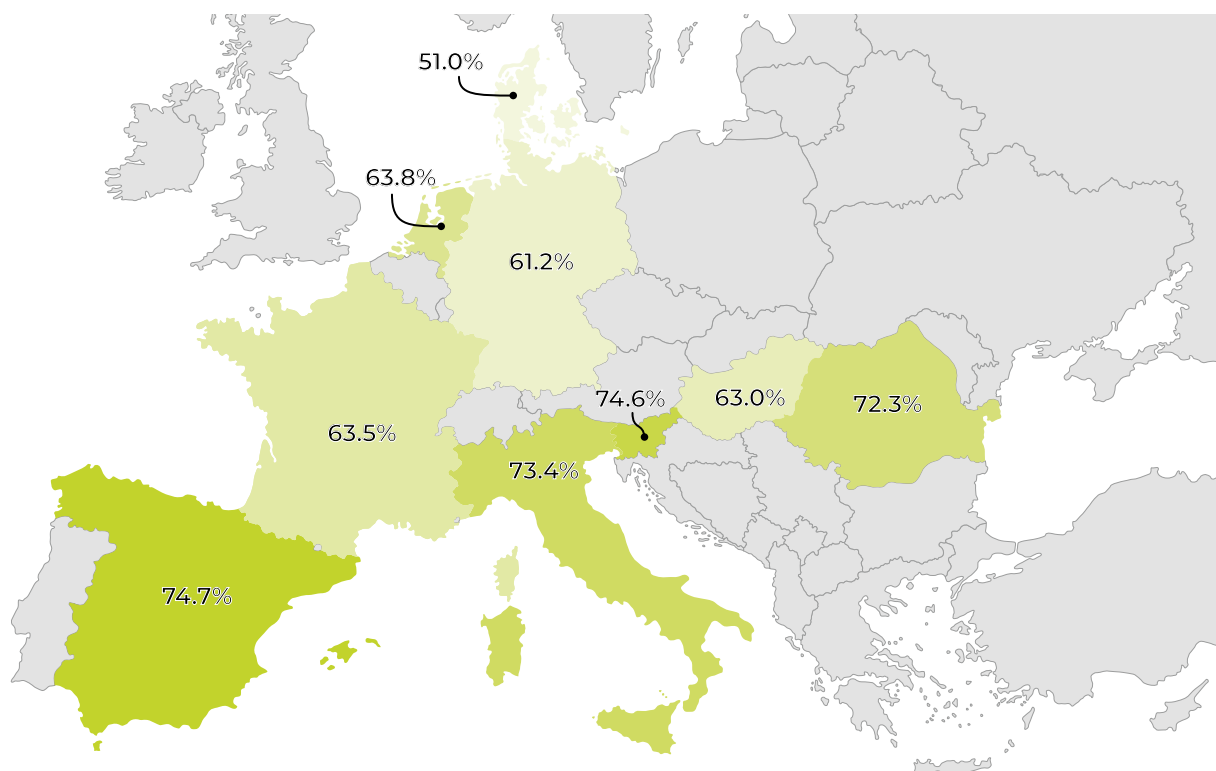


*Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU providing benefits to students, with the sample restricted to EU residents.*



**Graph (3.17)** Views on EU involvement in providing financial aid to students by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement “The EU should provide financial benefits/aid to students” by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

**Table (3.5)** Financial benefits to students by country of residence of respondents

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.

	“The EU should provide financial benefits/aid to students”	“The EU should not be involved in providing benefits/financial aid to students”	“I don’t have an opinion on this”
Spain	74.70%	18.60%	6.50%
Slovenia	74.60%	14.20%	11.10%
Italy	73.40%	16.30%	10.10%



	"The EU should provide financial benefits/aid to students"	"The EU should not be involved in providing benefits/financial aid to students"	"I don't have an opinion on this"
Romania	72.30%	17.90%	9.70%
Netherlands	63.80%	21.30%	14.70%
France	63.50%	24.30%	12.30%
Hungary	63.00%	18.80%	18.20%
Germany	61.20%	26.00%	12.80%
Denmark	51.00%	29.70%	19.30%

*Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU providing benefits to students, by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.*

#### 4.2.3.6 Housing Policy

Between 2010 and 2020, home prices rose by 26 per cent in the EU and rent also increased by 14 per cent.<sup>138</sup> Many of our respondents have grown up in the aftermath of the 2007 financial crisis, which led to housing affordability being redefined as an urban problem not only for the less affluent but also for middle-income and younger generations.<sup>139</sup> To emphasise the point, the current Spanish housing market is still suffering from the consequences of the crisis of the past decade, which resulted in 525,000 families leaving their homes due to rent and mortgage arrears between 2010 and 2017.<sup>140</sup>

According to our results, housing is the joint second most important societal issue for European youth, as outlined earlier in this section (32 per cent). This is a priority across the board for young people, with gender, education level, and

financial situation having no significant impact. Generation does play a role in whether housing is a priority, with Millennials (37 per cent) seven percentage points more likely to see the housing situation as in need of urgent action when compared to Gen Z (30 per cent). This may well be due to respondents finding themselves in a situation of requiring more space due to residing with their family and, therefore, more aware of the housing market.

In addition, more than half of the respondents living in the EU (69 per cent) agree that the EU should ensure that all citizens have access to decent and affordable housing, as shown in Graph 3.18 below. The situation seems to be particularly critical in Southern Europe, where young people in Spain (75 per cent) and Italy (75 per cent) see EU intervention in ensuring affordable housing as necessary. This is compared to just under half in Denmark (49 per cent).

<sup>138</sup> Eurostat. (2020). Evolution of house prices and rents.

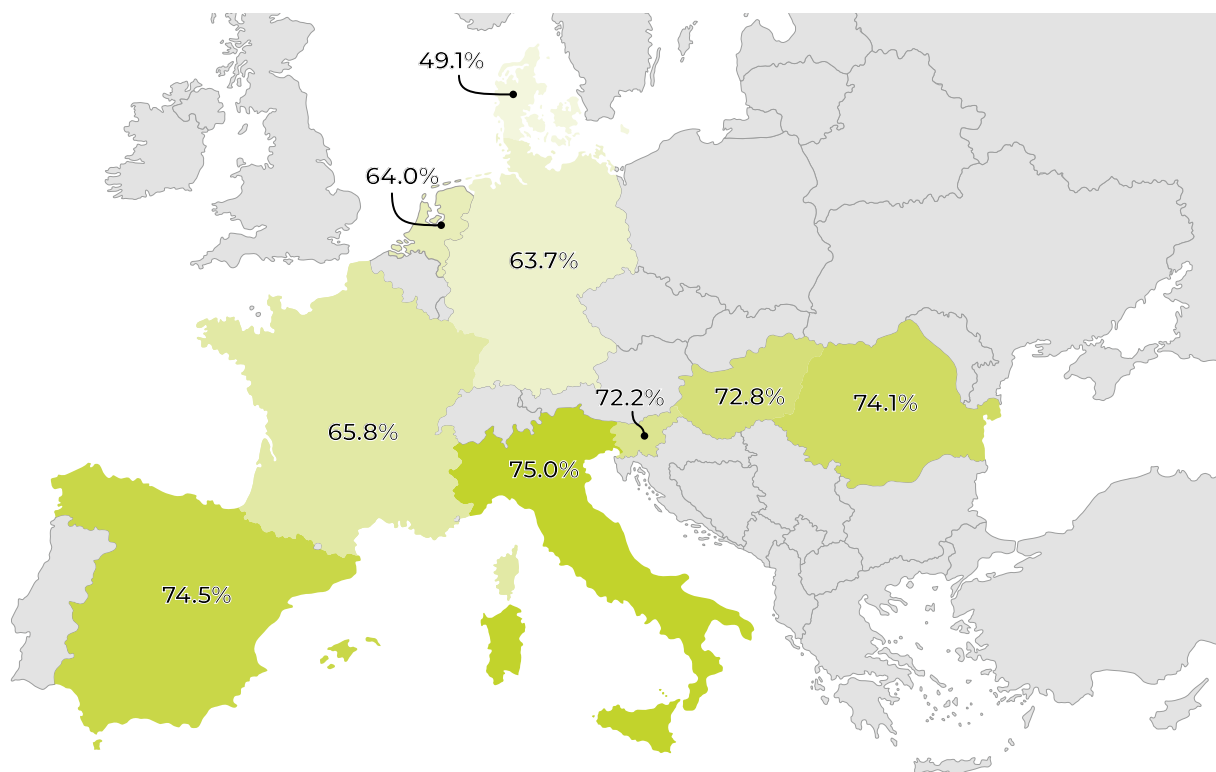
<sup>139</sup> Nasarre-Aznar, S., Ftáčni, M. Lambea-Ilop, N. and Rasnača, L. (2021). Concrete Actions for Social and Affordable Housing in the EU. FEPS.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.



**Graph (3.18)** Views on EU involvement in ensuring access to decent and affordable housing by country of residence of respondents.

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement “The EU should ensure access to decent and affordable housing to all citizens” by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

Analysing further some of the demographic factors that influence young people’s preference for the EU to ensure decent and affordable housing, both gender and financial situation have an impact. Women (72 per cent) are more inclined to favour this when compared to their male counterparts (66 per cent). Moreover, young people’s financial situation plays an important role. Only 56 per cent of those who are well-off want EU intervention, compared to those from low and humble-income backgrounds (71 per cent). This difference of 15 percentage points is worth emphasising, with young people in a less financially stable position strongly in favour of EU intervention to ensure affordable housing.

#### 4.2.3 Gender Equality

Twenty-two per cent of young people selected supporting gender equality as one of their top three social priorities for the EU in the next five years from a list of 11 key social policy issues, as shown in Graph 3.5. This puts it in the middle of the field compared to other social issues. This rises to 24 per cent for women, with 18 per cent of men sampled choosing this as a social priority. Digging into the wider perspectives of youth on gender equality, we asked Millennials and Gen Z about their views on what policies would have the biggest impact on gender equality. We proposed ten options and the respondents had to choose three. We show in Graph 3.19 the results for the entire sample.



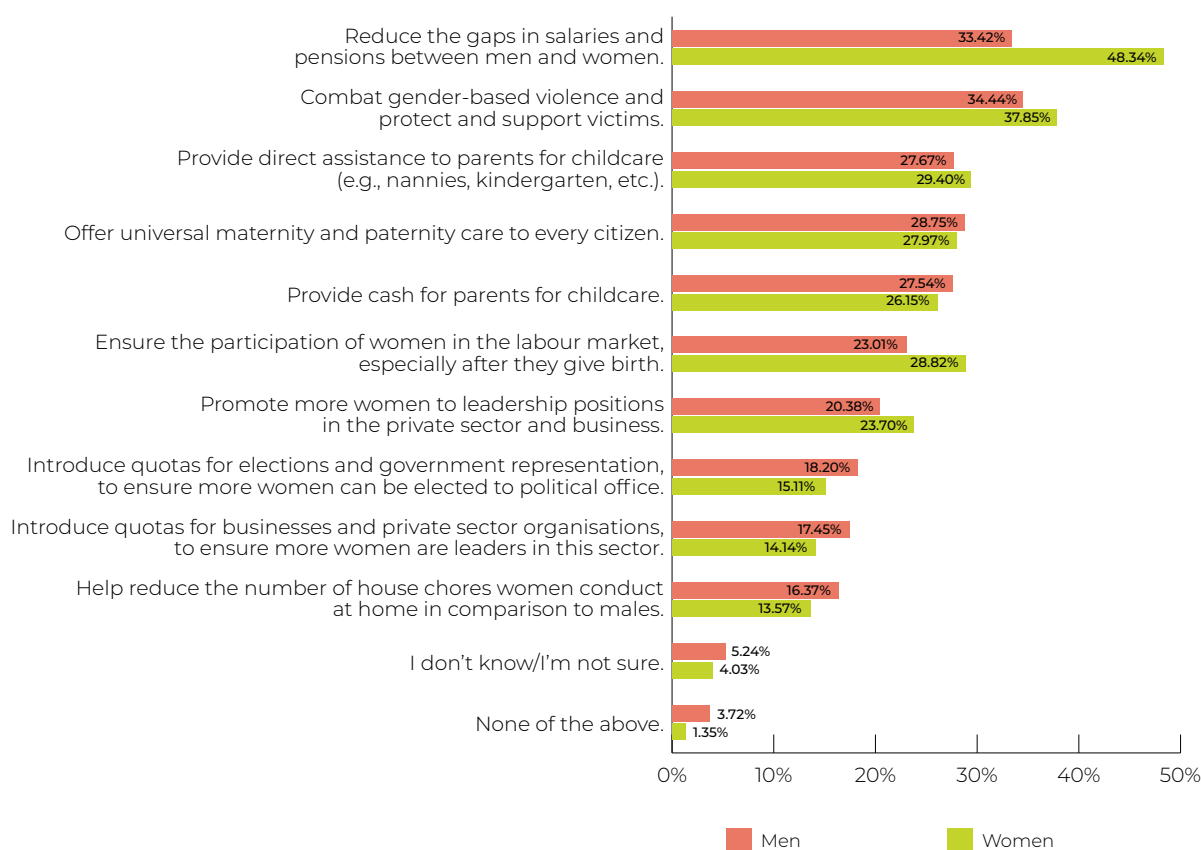
According to the findings, reducing the pay and pension gap (40 per cent) was considered the most impactful strategy to promote gender equality, with 48 per cent of women and 33 per cent of men selecting the option as a priority. It's worth noting that the gender pay gap measures a wider concept than just wage discrimination. It also includes: sectoral segregation, that is, the over-representation of women in

relatively low-paid sectors, the unequal share of paid and unpaid work (the care burden) and the hierarchical position of women.<sup>141</sup>

In 2022 however, the gap is far from closed. According to the latest data available, the average gender pay gap in the EU is 13 per cent.<sup>142</sup>

### Graph (3.19) Preferred strategies to improve gender equality by gender of respondents

Achieving greater gender equality is a priority for the EU/UK/Switzerland. What do you think from the below options would have the biggest positive impact on gender equality across the EU/UK/Switzerland



Respondents were asked to choose three options among the proposed ones. This graph shows the results for the entire sample by gender.

<sup>141</sup> European Commission. (2020a). EU action for equal pay.

<sup>142</sup> Eurostat. (2022a). Gender pay gap in unadjusted form. Last updated 25 February 2022. [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg\\_05\\_20/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/sdg_05_20/default/table?lang=en)



After the reduction of the gender pay gap, combating gender-based violence was the second most preferred option among respondents, with 38 per cent of women and 34 per cent of men considering it the most effective way to tackle gender disparities. It is worth noting this was seen as having the most impact according to men, as shown above in Graph 3.19. This result is somewhat counterintuitive given the findings in Building Block 1, which showed that gender-based violence scored relatively low among personal concerns on the impact of the pandemic.<sup>143</sup>

The flash Eurobarometer on women in times of COVID shows that roughly three-quarters of women across the EU see the pandemic as having increased physical and emotional violence in their country – alongside a significant number becoming more financially dependent on their spouse or partner.<sup>144</sup> Younger girls and women also highlighted an increase in knowledge of women within their social group or community who experienced different forms of violence – ranging from online harassment and cyber violence to street harassment.<sup>145</sup> Along similar lines, across the European region, 1 in 3 children have noted some form of violence by parents, caregivers, peers or other family members.<sup>146</sup>

The third most preferred option was providing direct assistance to parents for childcare. A similar percentage of both genders (28 per cent of men and 29 per cent of women) think that providing direct assistance for childcare (kindergarten, nannies) would help achieve greater gender equality. The pandemic has challenged the balance between work and family life for many parents. Data collected by Eurofound in the “Living, Working and COVID-19” survey suggest that parents reported greater difficulties in maintaining a good work-life balance compared to childless adults.<sup>147</sup> This is based on the heightened stress levels and mental health implications for parents who have difficulties balancing the demands of work with the needs of their children.<sup>148</sup> This is further amplified in single-parent households or for parents in complex situations with children who have special educational needs – raising the likelihood of income insecurity, stress, and exacerbated inequality.<sup>149</sup>

During the discussion held in the focus group interviews, we noted that the respondent’s country of residence seemed to play a role in young people’s experiences of gender inequality.

Participants from some countries, particularly Italy and Hungary, highlighted the historical and cultural context regarding structural gender disparities. Some noted that ‘the problem is

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<sup>143</sup> In Table 1.5a (Building Block 1), gender-based violence scored 4.82. The question asked to indicate the level of personal concern on a scale from 0 to 10, and the low score can be explained by the fact that the other options proposed in the question included psychological well-being (5.94), physical health (5.92), income and job opportunities (5.71), all issues highly impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>144</sup> European Parliament. (2022). Flash Eurobarometer 2022 | Women in times of COVID-19.

<sup>145</sup> European Parliament. (2022). Flash Eurobarometer 2022 | Women in times of COVID-19.

<sup>146</sup> WHO. (2020b). The rise and rise of interpersonal violence – an unintended impact of the COVID-19 response on families. World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe.

<sup>147</sup> Eurofound. (2020). Living, Working and COVID-19, COVID-19 Series. Publications Office of the European Union.

<sup>148</sup> Millar, R. Quinn, N. Cameron, J. Colson, A. (2020). Considering the evidence of the impacts of lockdown on the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people within the context of the individual, the family, and education. Glasgow: Mental Health Foundation.

<sup>149</sup> OECD. (2020a). Combatting COVID-19s effect on children.



structural. This nation [Italy] is particularly close to the patriarchal figure' and where the 'mother manages the household chores'. It was further highlighted that this trend is not exclusive to older generations as 'many people have this opinion...people close to me, people my age' and based on this, it is up to use to foster change: 'We are the ones who can bring a long-term change for the future'.<sup>150</sup> In relation to the care burden and household chores, it was noted:

*"My father doesn't work hard at home, but, personally, I try to do anything to help my mother. I also try to make my brother work... I do it also for his future. I do not want him to have a wife who will do it all by herself." (Woman residing in a small town in Emilia-Romagna, Italy, 20 years old)*

The same theme was noted during focus group sessions with a participant in Hungary, where it was said that gender inequality 'is really a problem in Hungary' and that:

*"...regardless of politics, it should be fixed on a social level, especially if we think of the countryside or smaller cities. Male and female roles – who has to do what – are put on us like a stamp" (Man residing in Budapest, Hungary, 21 years old).*

Large differences between countries are also underlined by wider research. According to the latest Global Gender Gap Report of the World

Economic Forum, countries such as Finland, Sweden and Lithuania perform better in terms of labour force employment, access to health and education and political empowerment.<sup>151</sup> Other countries, however, such as Hungary, Greece or Romania, perform poorly.

Gender quotas are a tool used to increase the representation of women in sectors where they are largely underrepresented, such as the political field.<sup>152</sup> In June 2022, the European Parliament introduced a transparent procedure to ensure that at least 40 per cent of women are on the non-executive boards of EU companies by the end of June 2026.<sup>153</sup>

Going back to our survey results, gender-based quotas are seen as less crucial when compared to other strategies. Among the sample surveyed, those most inclined to consider quotas positively are those well-off (30 per cent). This does not necessarily mean the strategy is not important at all, but when competing with other key socio-economic priorities is viewed as less crucial.

#### 4.2.4 The Rights of the LGBTQI+ Community

The need to support the rights of the LGBTQI+ community is seen as a top three social policy priority by a fifth of young Europeans, ranking it seven out of 11 options presented to respondents. Taking into account generational differences 26 per cent of Gen Z see this as a priority, an increase of 9 per cent when compared to Millennials (17 per cent).

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<sup>150</sup> Quotes taken from the Italian focus group session (Man residing in a small town in Sicily, Italy, 21 years old).

<sup>151</sup> World Economic Forum. (2021). Global Gender Gap Report 2021. Insight Report, March 2021.

<sup>152</sup> Mensi-Klarbach, H. and Seierstad, C. (2020). Gender Quotas on Corporate Boards: Similarities and Differences in Quota Scenarios. European Management Review, Vol. 17, pp. 615–631.

<sup>153</sup> S&D Group. (2022). Women on Boards Directive: landmark agreement to guarantee diversity and equality at the top. Press. 07/06/2022.

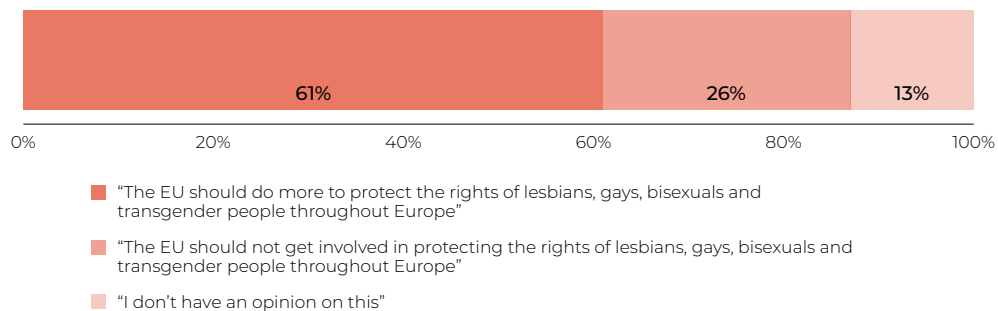


A majority of young EU residents (61 per cent) agree that the EU should do more to protect the

rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people across Europe

**Graph (3.20)** *Views on EU involvement in protecting LGBTQI+ rights*

*People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.*



*Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU and LGBTQI+ rights, with the sample restricted to EU residents.*

In 2019, the Eurobarometer on the social acceptance of LGBTQI+ people in the EU asked a similar question. The results showed that 76 per cent of Europeans agree that members of the LGBTQI+ community should have the same rights as heterosexual people.<sup>154</sup> These results show the growing need to build an inclusive community. This has been a focal point for the EU, with the European Commissioner for Equality, Helena Dalli, emphasising the need to guarantee the rights of the LGBTQI+ community and the Commission launching the first ever LGBTQI+ equality strategy for the period of 2020-2025.<sup>155</sup>

However, support is not uniform across the countries in our sample as shown in Graph 3.21. The highest support is recorded in Italy (69 per cent) followed by Spain (66 per cent) and

then France (61 per cent). The lowest support was found in Hungary, where only 45 per cent agreed with the statement. Looking at the ILGA-Europe rating of 49 European countries, Hungary is facing a precarious situation when it comes to the protection of LGBTQI+ rights.<sup>156</sup> Hungary occupies a low position overall in the ranking and dropped three positions since 2021 due to the Parliament adopting discriminatory legislative amendments, including a ban on the 'representation and promotion of gender identity other than sex at birth, sex change and homosexuality' for children under the age of 18."<sup>157</sup>

Denmark appears to have a low level of support for EU action on LGBTQI+ rights in our survey. However, as the ILGA report notes, the country enjoys a very high degree of protection for

<sup>154</sup> European Commission. (2020d). Spotlight on THE EU AND LGBTI EQUALITY.

<sup>155</sup> European Commission. (2020c) LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025. 12 November 2020.

<sup>156</sup> ILGA-Europe. (2022a). Rainbow Map Europe, reflecting the legal and policy human rights situation of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex (LGBTI) people in Europe.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

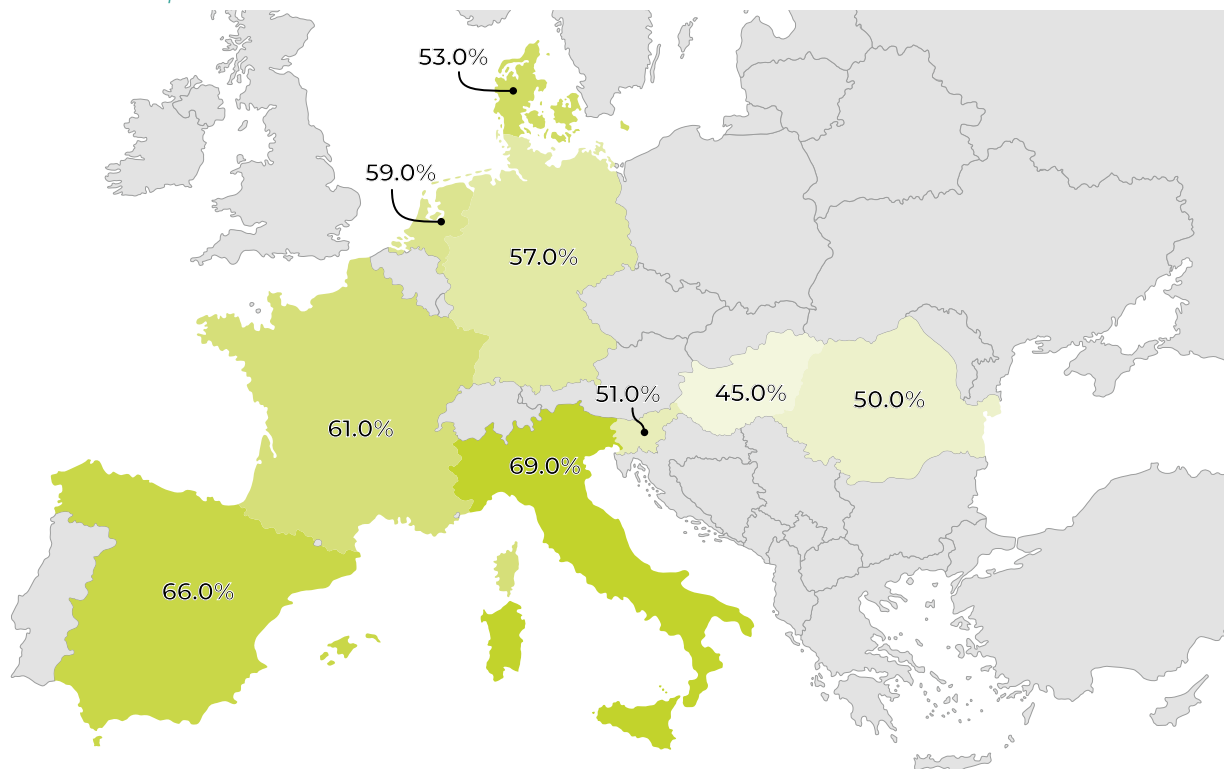


LGBTQI+ persons and it may be felt that further action at the EU level is not necessary. Indeed, Denmark was placed second in the 2022 ranking, thanks to a seven-place jump for its efforts to close anti-discrimination loopholes in existing legislation through an Equal Treatment Act, covering health, education, employment and services, as well as changes to the criminal code.<sup>158</sup>

Looking outside of the countries involved in our sample (apart from Slovenia), it's worth noting

that there were positive legislative actions in other Eastern and Central European countries in 2022 (Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia) that counter the narrative that there is a simple East-West divide on LGBTQI+ rights in Europe. However, on the whole, there are still improvements in the fundamental protection against discrimination and violence to be made. Overall, 28 out of 49 countries surveyed by ILGA still have no protection against violence based on gender identity.<sup>159</sup>

**Graph (3.21)** Views on EU involvement in protecting LGBTQI+ rights by country of residence of respondents



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement “The EU should do more to protect the rights of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people throughout Europe” by country, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

<sup>158</sup> ILGA-Europe. (2022b). Rainbow index 2022. 12 May 2022.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.



# BUILDING BLOCK 4: SUSTAINABILITY

## Climate Change Still a Major Concern

- Combating climate change is the second priority for the EU's COVID-19 recovery package, with a third of young Europeans seeing it as a top 3 recovery spending priority. It is also a top three concern regarding the future of the EU, according to respondents.
- Close to two-thirds of young EU residents think the Union is not doing enough to fight climate change and protect the environment.<sup>160</sup> Focus group respondents also stressed that a timeline of 30 years to achieve change is too long. In France, Italy and Spain, young people are particularly emphatic that more needs to be done, even if it entails job losses.
- More than two-thirds of respondents want the EU to be stricter against companies that pollute the most to combat climate change.

## Equitable Sustainability & Climate Action

- Young people see ensuring the fight against climate change is fair and equitable and reducing pollution as the two most important focal points in combating climate change.

- Ensuring a clean, affordable, and secure energy supply comes just behind by a few percentage points.
- Agriculture is key to recovery, and young people want fair wages and income support for farmers above all other priorities. Helping local farmers and protecting the environment by modernising agriculture are also top policy choices, which shows that young people are making a connection between the environment and agriculture.

## Speed up the Transition to Renewables

- Young Europeans strongly support (65 per cent) the EU reducing fossil fuel use, reducing energy dependence on outside sources and transitioning to renewables – a view probably reinforced by the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> This is in response to a statement-based question where respondents were asked to choose whether they think the EU is doing enough or not to fight climate change and protect the environment in late March and early April 2022.

<sup>161</sup> Finding taken from the second phase of the Builders of Progress initiative investigating young people's views on the war in Ukraine. This is in response to a statement-based question asking whether the EU is doing enough or needs to speed up its fossil fuel use and speed up transition to renewable, so it relies less on energy from the EU.



## 5.1 The Slow Path Towards Decarbonising Europe

Among the many negative impacts of the pandemic, the temporary positive effects on the environment were probably one of the most important benefits of the pandemic response. Stay-at-home orders across the globe saw decreases in air pollution, heavily polluted waters like those in Venice became clear and wildlife re-emerged in unexpected places.<sup>162</sup> Climate change remains a key item on the agenda for people, with research noting a large majority of adults across the globe viewing the climate crisis as important as the pandemic resulting in the need to prioritise climate change in recovery packages.<sup>163</sup>

In light of our November-December 2021 survey, it is important to note that 2021 was quite the year for European climate policy. While it is common knowledge that news about EU policy does not always make national media headlines, there is reason to believe that this year was somewhat different and that this may have influenced young people's responses to our survey at least to some degree.<sup>164</sup>

As part of the European Green Deal, the European Council approved a binding EU climate target in December 2021.<sup>165</sup> The new goal consists of a net domestic reduction of at least 55 per cent in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.<sup>166</sup> On the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 2021, the EU published the European Climate Law enshrining the objective of becoming climate neutral by 2050.<sup>167</sup> Seen also as a lifeline out of the pandemic, the European Commission pledges to transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy.<sup>168</sup> Steps have been taken, ranging from proposals to remove, recycle and sustainably store carbon, to new transport initiatives and proposals to decarbonise the EU gas market by facilitating the uptake of renewable and low carbon gases.<sup>169</sup>

In addition to these landmark decisions from 2021, the war in Ukraine has brought energy independence to the fore, with the European Commission through REPowerEU aiming to become fully independent from Russian fossil fuels by 2030.<sup>170</sup> With this in mind, our second survey, launched in late March 2022, asked young people if they think enough is being done to tackle climate change and ensure a just

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<sup>162</sup> Colón. C. (2020). The forgotten crisis. Why responding to COVID-19 should not side-track us from climate action. UNICEF. 05 May 2020.

<sup>163</sup> Ipsos. (2020). Most in the US and around the world agree climate change is as serious a crisis as COVID-19. Citizens want economic recovery actions to prioritise climate change. 22 April 2020.

<sup>164</sup> Hadji-Lazaro, P. Quorning, S. Fröhlich, T. Theine, H. and Forster, T. (2022). Taking the Temperature of the European Green Deal. FEPS and Karl-Renner-Institut.

<sup>165</sup> European Council. (2020). 'European Council Conclusions, 10-11 December 2020', 11 December 2020

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/1119 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 2021 establishing the framework for achieving climate neutrality and amending Regulations (EC) No 401/2009 and (EU) 2018/1999 ('European Climate Law').

<sup>168</sup> European Commission. (2022b). A European Green Deal. Striving to be the first climate-neutral continent.

<sup>169</sup> European Commission. (2021b). Commission proposes new EU framework to decarbonise gas markets, promote hydrogen and reduce methane emissions. Press release, 15 December 2021, Brussels; European Commission (2022h) REPowerEU: Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy. Strasbourg, 8 March COM (2022) 108 final

<sup>170</sup> Borrell, J. (2022) The war in Ukraine and its implications for the EU. European Union External Action. 14 March.



transition to climate neutrality, along with their views on energy independence in the context of the conflict in Ukraine.

## 5.2 Discussion of Research Findings

### 5.2.1 Persistent Youth Worries about Climate Change

When asked about their biggest worries for the future, climate change and the environment was selected by almost half of the respondents (46 per cent). This came just behind jobs and employment, which was the number one worry reiterating the socio-economic concerns among young European people expressed in Building Blocks 1 and 3. Moreover, the vast majority believe that the EU institutions are not doing enough to combat climate change (65 per cent).

The opposite view – that institutions are already doing enough – is held by only 24 per cent of respondents and is more common among men (27 per cent), well-off (35 per cent) and lower-educated respondents (29 per cent). These specific demographic findings are somewhat of a puzzle to untangle. Further research could be conducted to see why young people in a more financially comfortable situation or with a lower level of education are more inclined to believe enough is being done to combat climate change. In contrast, women (21 per cent), low-income (20 per cent) and highly-educated respondents (18 per cent) are significantly likely to think that enough is being done. This reflects similar findings uncovered in other surveys, which show that young women have a higher level of concern and are more worried about climate change when compared to young men (50 per cent compared to 42 per cent).<sup>171</sup>



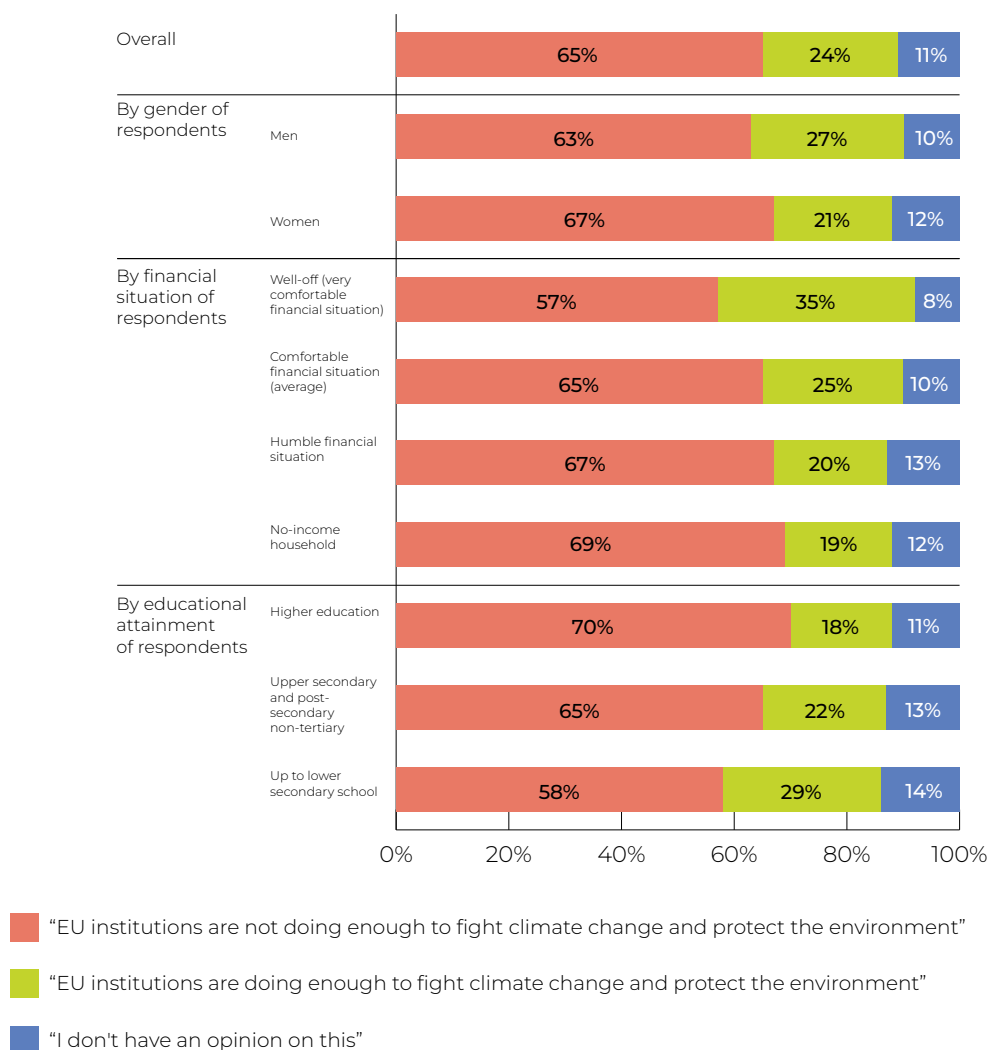
Copyright: Unsplash

<sup>171</sup> Ipsos. (2021b). Pan-European Survey. Main multi-country report #climate of change. End Climate Change, Start Climate of Change. Ipsos



#### Graph (4.1) Views on the need for more EU climate action

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU's Environmental and Climate policy, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

Looking at the geographical spread of those who think the EU is not doing enough to protect the environment and want to see more done, Spain (70 per cent), Italy (69 per cent) and France (68.5 per cent) have an almost similar share of people with this opinion. In contrast, Denmark

(53 per cent), the Netherlands (55 per cent) and Hungary (56 per cent) have the lowest percentage of people agreeing with this view, as can be seen in Graph 4.1, though it should be noted that these numbers still represent a majority.



This again reinforces previous survey findings where young people in Spain and Portugal, at 71 per cent and 63 per cent respectively, stated that they were very or extremely worried about climate change. From a regional perspective, they also uncovered that southern European young people are markedly more worried about climate change than their peers elsewhere in Europe – a trend replicated in our results. This could be because of the predicted heightened impact of climate change on Southern Europe, with the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC) predicting a clear north-south divide in the climate change burden. This is based on the projected effects of extreme heat, water scarcity, drought, forest fires and agriculture losses.<sup>172</sup>

The focus groups revealed that participants generally welcomed the EU's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2050. However, some also complained that a 30-year time horizon might encourage the transition to be too slow. Instead, many felt that climate change should be treated as a crisis treated with a more urgent approach is needed.

*“We have been talking about sustainability for a long time, decades. In reality, only (a) little has been done. We always tend to give 2020, 2050 as deadlines, but these deadlines are never met. What is missing are checks. The institutions do not check. They make exceptions. Something more rigid is needed.”* (Man residing in Rome, Italy, 31 years old)

It was also argued that long-term goals are too far away and result in a lack of action and motivation:

*“The problem with these long-term plans is that they are not going to be completed. We should do it slowly step-by-step”* (Man residing in a village in Győr-Moson-Sopron County, Hungary, 30 years old).

This sentiment was echoed by other participants who showed a positive response to the European Green Deal but worried about the timeline:

*“I think this initiative is basically very good, but the next 29 years will cause a lot of damage in terms of carbon emissions.”* (Man residing in Budapest, Hungary, 21 years old)

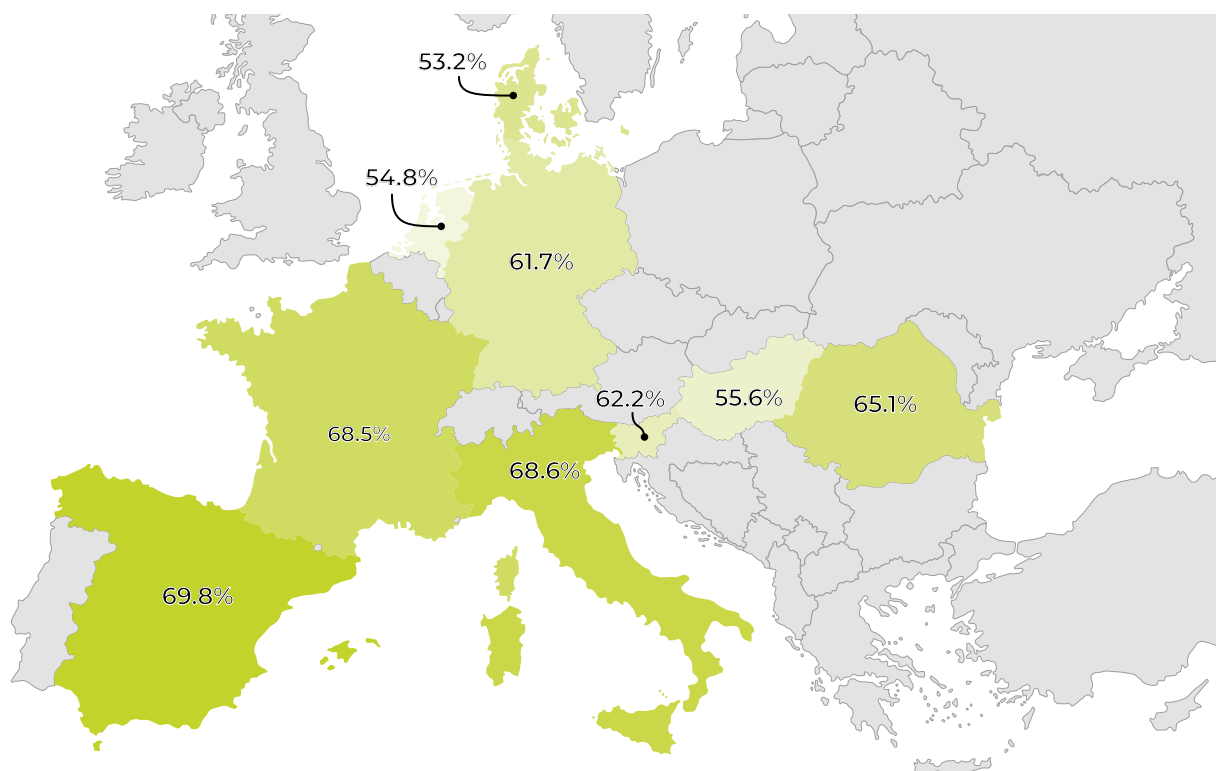
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<sup>172</sup> Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC). (2020). Climate change impacts and adaptation in Europe. JRC PESETA IV final report. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020.



**Graph (4.2)** *Views on the EU's performance in combating climate change by country of residence of respondents*

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement “EU institutions are not doing enough to fight climate change and protect the environment” by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

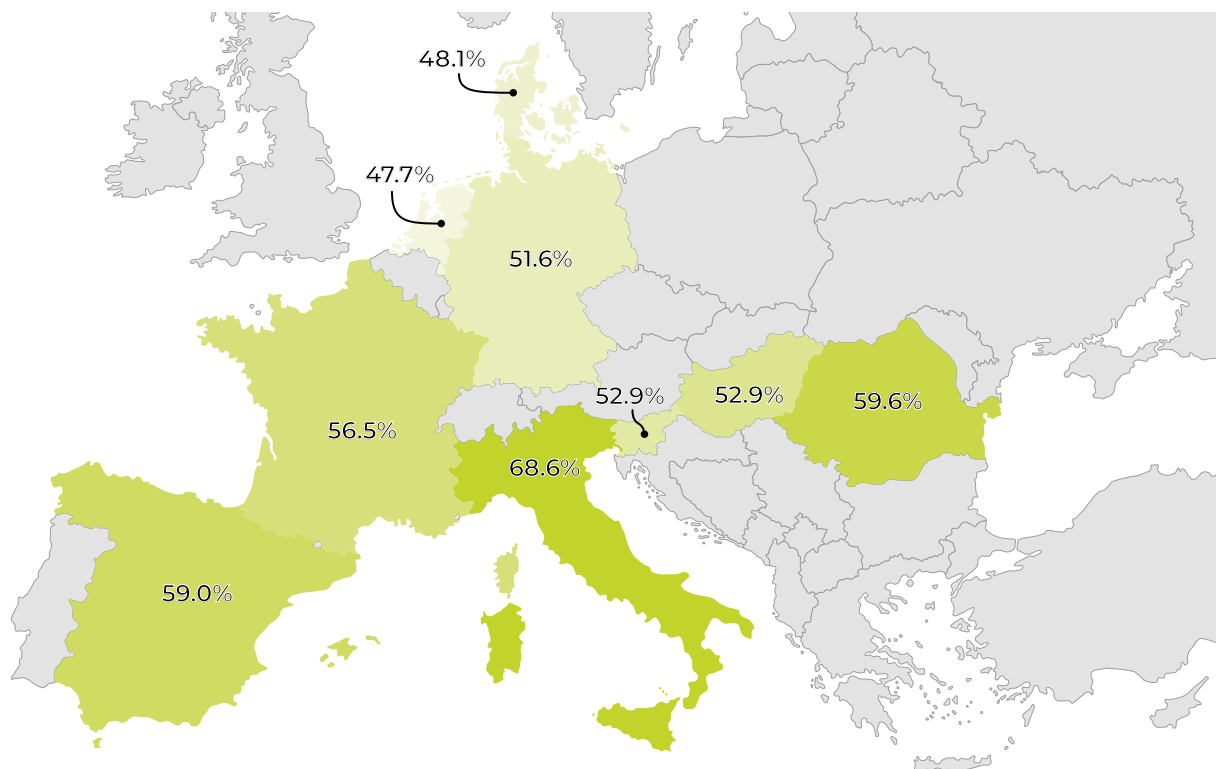
A high percentage of people in these same countries also support the idea that the EU should prioritise the environment over the economy, even if this means losing some jobs – Italy (64 per cent), Romania (60 per cent), Spain (59 per cent) and France (57 per cent). On the other end, respondents residing in the Netherlands and Denmark are less likely to favour prioritising the environment over the economy. This may be because both Denmark and the Netherlands have the strongest levels of environmental protection already

among the countries surveyed—as a result, the need for further environmental protection may be less widely felt.<sup>173</sup> Alternatively, respondents in Denmark and the Netherlands may see the green economy as sufficient to avoid job losses or hold the view that climate and the economy are not mutually exclusive regardless of the phrasing of the question. Respondents in Denmark may also be more broadly less in favour of EU intervention on certain policy issues as indicated by previous sections of this report.

<sup>173</sup> Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy. Environmental Performance Index. 2021 EPI Results. <https://epi.yale.edu/epi-results/2022/component/epi>



**Graph (4.3)** *Views on climate action and the economy by country of residence of respondents*  
 People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement “The EU should prioritise the environment over the economy even if that means that some jobs are lost by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

Moving onto individual socio-demographic factors and views on prioritising the environment over the economy those who are particularly opposed to the idea of prioritising the environment tend to have a better financial situation (36 per cent) compared to those in a humble financial situation (27 per cent).<sup>174</sup> It is also worth noting that young people in a humble financial situation or in need of financial assistance are

more likely to state they do not have an opinion on the matter (23 per cent), as can be seen in Table 4.1. The proportion of those who have no opinion decreases significantly as the financial situation improves, culminating in well-off respondents being reluctant to express their opinion in only 6 per cent of cases.

<sup>174</sup> The breakdown of income is based on the demographic question ‘In your view, which of the following best describes your current financial situation?’. Respondents were given a list of 6 answers ranging from ‘High (well-off and very comfortable)’ to ‘No income (requiring financial help/assistance)’. While the question was intended to uncover income, some respondents may have answered based on wealth.



**Table (4.1)** *Views on climate and the economy by the financial situation of respondents*  
 People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.

	High (well-off and very comfortable)	Medium (comfortable situation financially)	Low (humble income and financial situation)	No income (requiring financial help/ assistance)
"The EU should prioritise the environment over the economy, even if that means that some jobs are lost"	57.60%	58.10%	51.90%	48.50%
"The EU's priority should now be to favour economic growth and jobs, even if that means more pollution"	36.40%	27.90%	26.50%	28.20%
"I don't have an opinion on this"	6.00%	14.00%	21.70%	23.30%

Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU's environmental and climate policy by the financial situation of respondents level, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

Income level also turns out to be a statistically significant variable when examining whether the EU should be tougher on polluting companies. Indeed, only 54 per cent of well-off Europeans agreed that the EU should be stricter against companies that pollute the most to further combat climate change—while 67 per cent of the overall sample agrees with it. This sentiment was reinforced through the focus group sessions, with participants noting the slow uptake of environmentally sustainable practices and the need for stronger enforcement and the need for fines:

*"I used to make 'Environment' posters at the elementary school, now 30 years have passed. Are there any changes?! Small ones! It is a problem that is always put to the side-line. We must issue fines. We have to penalise those who do not respect the rules. We don't have to make many exceptions. Otherwise, in the end, everybody will do what he or she pleases." (Man residing in Rome, Italy, 31 years old)*



**Table (4.2)** *Views on companies that pollute by the financial situation of respondents*  
 People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.

	High (well-off and very comfortable)	Medium (comfortable situation financially)	Low (humble income and financial situation)	No income (requiring financial help/ assistance)
"The EU should be stricter against companies that pollute the most in order to further combat climate change"	54.00%	68.70%	69.00%	67.80%
"The EU should prioritise the protection of all jobs and promote economic growth at this time. The EU is already doing enough"	41.40%	22.50%	18.90%	20.00%
"I don't have an opinion on this"	4.50%	8.80%	12.10%	12.30%

*Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This table shows the views on the EU's role towards polluting companies by the financial situation of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents*

Our results show that climate change and the environment are important concerns for young people. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that fighting climate change emerges as the second most important way for young people to spend money from the COVID-19 recovery package (33 per cent). This comes just after healthcare and social services (including social work and

mental health and well-being) as the top spending priority. In particular, well-educated young people are likely to see climate change as a recovery spending priority when compared to their less well-educated counterparts, although the difference is not large (36 per cent compared to 31 per cent).



**Table (4.3)** *Support for dedicating recovery package money to climate change by age group and gender of respondents*

*The EU has agreed to spend very large sums of money to recover from the negative economic and social impact of the pandemic. What should be the priority areas for COVID-19 recovery money?*

Gender	Age group				
	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-38
Women	43.90%	34.90%	33.00%	29.70%	32.60%
Men	29.90%	29.50%	29.10%	34.20%	34.70%

*Respondents were asked to choose up to three priority spending areas for COVID-19 funds. This graph shows the results for the option “Combating climate change (e.g., investing in clean energy and transport, sustainable farming, etc.)” for groups based on gender and age.*

As shown in Table 4.3, it is mainly women aged 16 to 19 who consider funds for climate recovery money as important. This is by a clear margin over all women in older age groups. The opposite seems to be the case for men: The cohorts over 30 have the most favourable attitude towards recovery climate funds. However, when only looking at generational differences, regardless of gender, there are no substantial disparities between Gen Z and Millennials even though the media tend to portray climate strike movements as emanating primarily from Gen Z.<sup>175</sup>

This result should also be seen against the background of an earlier generation survey in the UK. The survey presents near identical levels of agreement across generations when asked whether they were willing to make changes to their lifestyle to reduce the impact of climate change, with large majorities of Gen Z (70 per cent), Baby Boomers (68 per cent) and Millennials (65 per cent) willing to change their lifestyle for environmental reasons.<sup>176</sup> Although the question was, of course, a different, less

policy-oriented one, it opens up starting points for further research on generational attitudes and climate change.

As well as being high on the list of priorities for recovery spending, strengthening environmental protections and promoting affordable renewable energy is listed in fourth place by 30 per cent of young people as a priority for the EU over the next five years. Based on the importance of climate change to European youth as already outlined in our findings, wider surveys have looked into young people’s views on the key actors involved. The ‘Y-FED: Europe is what we make of it’ survey on the future of Europe from the Assembly of European Regions and the Young European Federalists (JEF) asked its respondents whom they trust to find solutions to the climate problem. The highest trust levels were given to the EU (48 per cent), followed by the 33 per cent for international organisations such as the UN. However, a small but not negligible percentage of respondents (16 per cent) trust neither the EU,

<sup>175</sup> Lorenzini, J., Monsch, A.G and Rosset, J. (2021). Challenging Climate Strikers’ Youthfulness: The Evolution of the Generational Gap in Environmental Attitudes Since 1999. *Front. Poli. Sci.*, 07 May 2021

<sup>176</sup> KCL. (2021). Who cares about climate change? Attitudes across the generations. The Policy Institute, King’s College London. New Scientist.



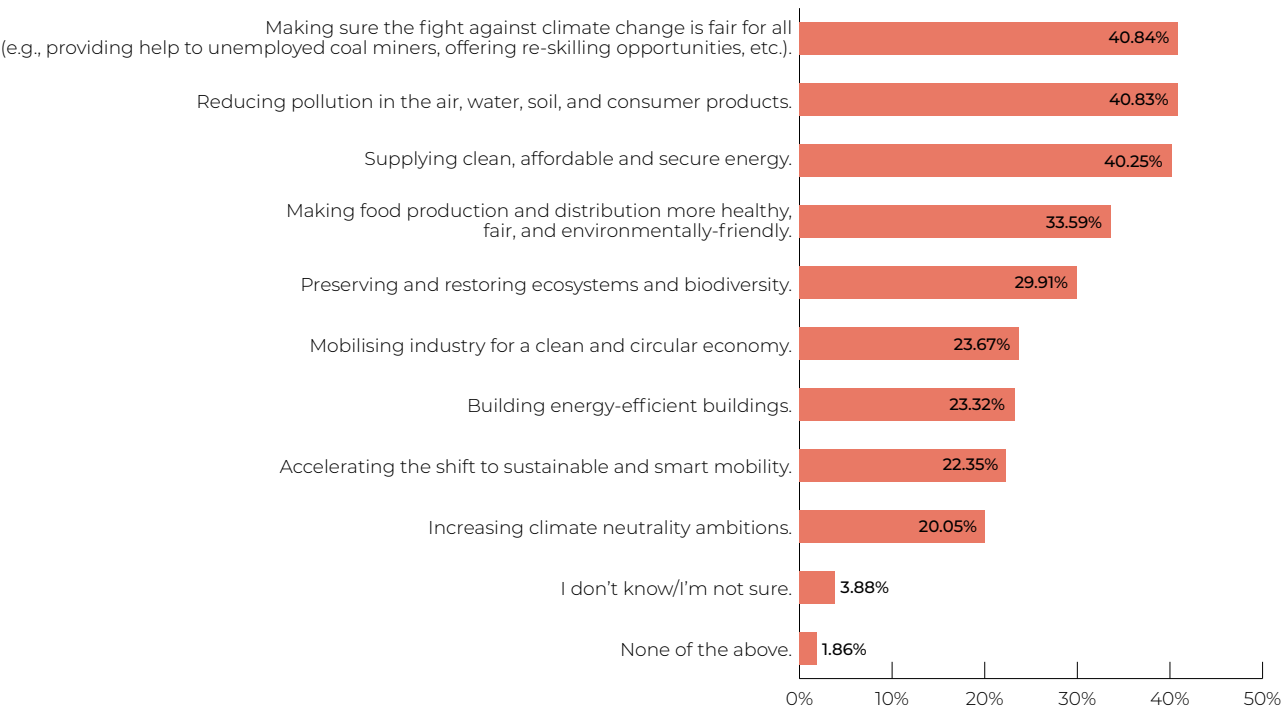
international organisations nor national governments to adequately address the issue.<sup>177</sup>

### 5.2.2 Climate Justice & Equitable Sustainability

As seen in the previous section, the current environmental situation is a source of concern

across our youth sample. However, people have different opinions on what the priorities should be in the fight against climate change in the EU. Based on this, we wanted to find out what strategies young people see as the best means to tackle it.

**Graph (4.4)** *Views on climate change priorities*  
People have different opinions on what should be the priorities when combating climate change. Please select the priorities you agree with most (choose the top 3).



Respondents were asked to choose their top three priorities for the EU in combating climate change. This graph shows the overall results for the entire sample.

As detailed in Graph 4.4 above, young people see both reducing pollution and ensuring the fight against climate change is fair for all (e.g., the provision of help and training for unemployed coal miners, and tackling fuel poverty) as joint top priorities when asked to select their top three

(41 per cent). This highlights the importance of climate justice for young people across Europe, – a trend that repeats itself throughout. Making food production and distribution healthier, fairer and more environmentally friendly is also considered important by young people, with one-third

<sup>177</sup> Y-FED. (2021). Y-FED Survey on the Future of Europe. Final Results for the Y-FED Final Conference.



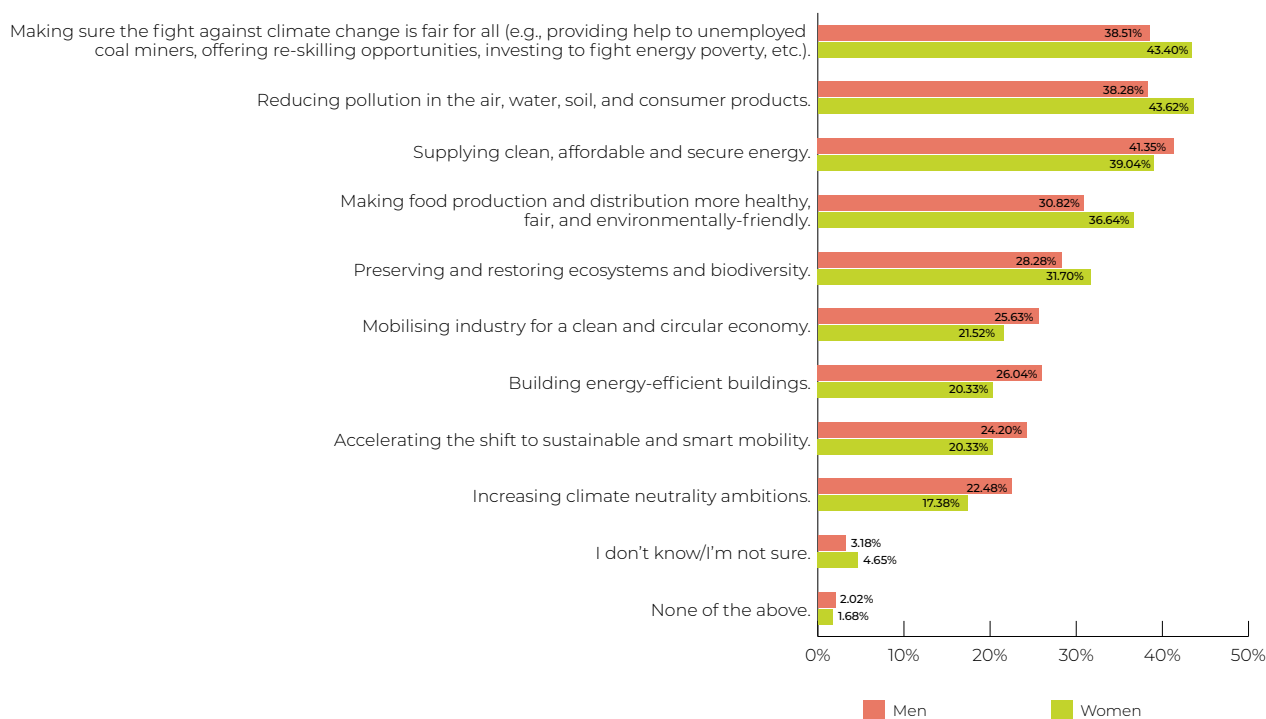
selecting this option as one of the top three priorities to combat climate change.

Some key gender differences can be seen in response to the same question, as detailed in Graph 4.5 below. Women are more inclined to view making the fight against climate change fair for all as a priority when compared to their male counterparts (43 per cent and 38.5 per cent, respectively). Similarly, women view making food

production and distribution more healthy, fair and environmentally friendly as key (37 per cent compared to 31 per cent). This can perhaps be linked to the growing understanding of the gendered impact of climate change, with research showing women and girls in vulnerable situations are bearing the brunt of climate change, nature loss, and pollution because of their age, ethnicity, and socio-economic situation.<sup>178</sup>

#### Graph (4.5) Views on climate change priorities by gender

People have different opinions on what should be the priorities when combating climate change in the EU/UK/CH. Please select the priorities you agree with most (choose the top 3)



Respondents were asked to choose their top three priorities for the EU in combating climate change. This graph shows the overall results for the entire sample by gender.

The preceding results have reiterated that young Europeans want the EU to act and to do so quickly. However, they are also taking action

at an individual level. Several focus group participants discussed how they had altered their consumption habits to be more environmentally

<sup>178</sup> UN. (2022). Standing with all women and girls at the heart of climate justice. 02 March 2022.



conscious. Some considered meat eating as excessive in society due to its environmental effect and recounted how they had sought to decrease their intake.

*"I know that my habits have changed a lot...I consume products differently, I only buy certain meats, and I don't eat as much as I used to. I try to adapt my behaviour to environmental requirements. Even if I drive a car, I generally travel by public transport. When I travel within Paris, I never take the car. It's only for journeys where I have no choice."* (Man residing in Paris, France, 25 years old)

Reiterating the role of agriculture, and food production and distribution, it was also noted that cost plays a key role, and more needs to be done to make sustainable choices more cost-friendly:

*"I have been trying to reduce meat as much as possible... But I also agree that... meat and dairy products are much cheaper than they really should be, among other things"* (Man residing in the city of Aarhus, Denmark, 28 years old)

The same participant argued that disincentives could play a role, stating:

*"...it might also be an extra incentive for me to choose differently if the meat became more expensive. So, it is all of a sudden easier to take the alternative that is both better for the environment and better for my wallet."*

### 5.2.3 Sustainable Farming

This concept of fairness and help for the most vulnerable presents itself again when looking at the role of farming and agriculture. Although primary production continued largely unaffected during the pandemic, trade in many products was affected due to mobility restrictions, work-force shortages, and strong demand volatility.<sup>179</sup> Moreover, in some of the countries in our sample, production was heavily impacted by a lack of supply of seasonal workers.<sup>180</sup>

We asked young Europeans about their views on the role of farming and agriculture to help recover from the pandemic. 36 per cent of respondents indicated they want fair wages and income support for farmers to be a priority. This is by far the most prioritised measure, regardless of gender, age, education and financial situation. However, it is particularly important among young people with a humble financial situation (38 per cent).

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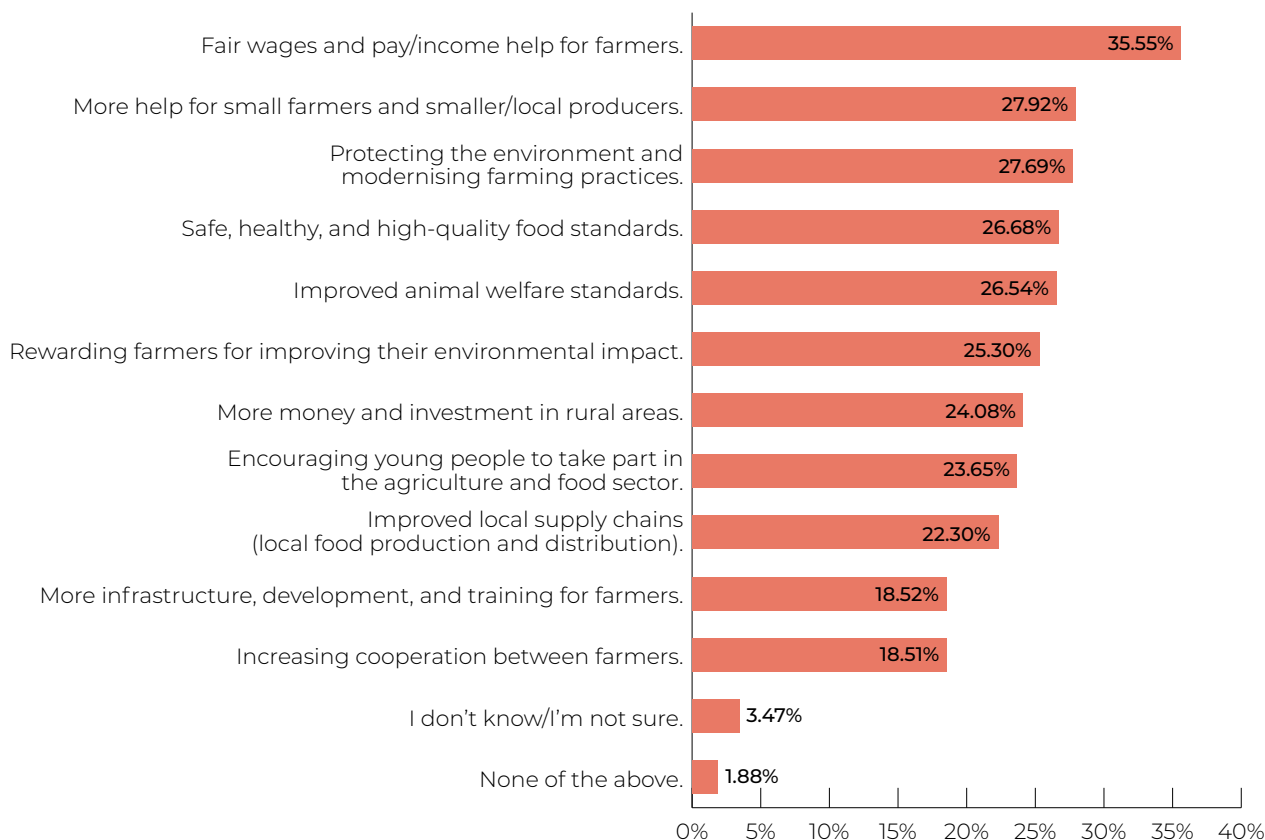
<sup>179</sup> European Commission. (2020b). EU agricultural outlook for markets, income and environment, 2020-2030. European Commission, DG Agriculture and Rural Development.

<sup>180</sup> European Parliament. (2021e). Migrant seasonal workers in the European agricultural sector. BRIEFING. European Parliament Research Service (EPRS).



#### Graph (4.6) Views on farming and COVID-19 recovery

Thinking more about the role of farming and agriculture to help recover from COVID-19, which of the below do you think are most important for the long-term future? (Choose top 3)



Respondents were asked to choose their top three long-term priorities to help the agriculture and farming sectors recover from COVID-19. This graph shows the overall results for the entire sample.

According to the 2020 Eurobarometer on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the number of EU residents that believe the income given to farmers is too low has increased by 13 percentage points since 2017.<sup>181</sup> Moreover, young people want to see more help given to local producers (about 27 per cent). This could indicate that young people see this group as struggling the most economically. It could also mean that young people see the need for a change towards less mass production in food production, which is often criticised as one of the main causes

of species extinction. These are questions for future research.

In line with this, according to respondents in our survey 'Protecting the environment and modernising farming practices' and 'Rewarding farmers for improving their environmental impact' are also high on the list of priorities in our survey results (28 per cent and 25 per cent respectively). This suggests that encouraging sustainability in the food sector is also crucial for young people.

<sup>181</sup> European Commission. (2021d). Public opinion on the common agricultural policy. The Eurobarometer Survey



#### 5.2.4 Views on Energy Related to the War in Ukraine

The EU's heavy reliance on Russian energy has been a contentious subject for years, but its significance has come to the fore due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. As a response, EU leaders decided that eliminating reliance on Russian gas, oil and coal imports would be a priority.<sup>182</sup> The EU decided on a three-pronged strategy that involves diversifying energy suppliers, increasing energy efficiency and accelerating renewables. The programme, named REPowerEU, intends to make Europe independent of Russian fossil resources by 2030.<sup>183</sup> To achieve this it proposes a five-year budget of €195 billion and increased targets for renewable energy installations and consumption reduction.

In this context, the recent FEPS and ThinkYoung report on young people's views of the war in Ukraine looked at what young Europeans

think about the energy question and the shift to renewables. The findings emphasised that young Europeans are strongly in favour of the EU reducing fossil fuel use, reducing external energy dependence and transitioning to renewables (65 per cent).<sup>184</sup> According to the findings, over 80 per cent of young people in Romania support the move to green energy.<sup>185</sup> In comparison, those in France and Germany are more cautious about the transition (52.5 per cent and 55.5 per cent, respectively).<sup>186</sup>

According to the Climate Change Performance Index, France and Germany fare better in climate protection than the rest of the countries in this second phase survey (excluding the United Kingdom).<sup>187</sup> This could explain the lower perceived need for action in these two countries. The relatively low support in Germany may also be explained by the country's heavy dependency on Russian gas.

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<sup>182</sup> Borrell, J. (2022). The war in Ukraine and its implications for the EU. European Union External Action. 14 March.

<sup>183</sup> European Commission. (2022h). REPowerEU: Joint European Action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy. Strasbourg, 8 March COM(2022) 108 final.

<sup>184</sup> Dressler, M. and Howard, C. (2022). Builders of Progress: Europe's Next Gen. The War In Ukraine Through the Eyes of Youth. FEPS and ThinkYoung.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Burck, J et.al. (2021). RESULTS. Monitoring Climate Mitigation Efforts of 60 Countries plus the EU – covering 92% of the Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), referenced in Dressler, M. and Howard, C. (2022). Builders of Progress: Europe's Next Gen The War In Ukraine through the Eyes of Youth. FEPS and ThinkYoung.



# BUILDING BLOCK 5: EUROPE IN THE WORLD

## A Stronger Europe in the World?

- More than half of young EU residents (52 per cent) want the EU to act with a single voice internationally.
- About half of young people want the EU to enlarge further (49 per cent) compared to those that want to stop enlargement (33 per cent).
- A large majority (74 per cent) of young European people believe that accepting Ukrainian refugees into their country is a crucial humanitarian measure. Young Europeans also want to see considerably more EU money spent on assisting Ukrainian refugees (70 per cent).
- More young people support the creation of an EU army (47 per cent) than those who oppose it (36 per cent). The support has not increased significantly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- Young people showcase somewhat polarised views on international trade. While 46 per cent want the EU to make it easier to access and buy products outside of Europe, 40 per cent want to see stronger efforts to protect European goods and products from outside competition.



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The outbreak of the pandemic was a challenge for global cooperation. Supply chains came to a standstill, and pandemic response measures largely restricted international travel. On the other hand, international cooperation was needed more than ever in developing vaccines. At the end of 2021, in the second year of the pandemic, Russia began to build up military pressure on its western borders. This eventually led to the invasion of Ukraine at the end of February 2022. Against this backdrop, the following chapter displays young people's opinions on the EU's global role. We include the results of the surveys from late 2021 and spring 2022 in our analysis, hoping to get a more comprehensive picture of how young people see the global role of the European Union and view the war in Ukraine.

## 6.2 Discussion of Research Findings

### 6.2.1 Views on the EU's Foreign Policy and Enlargement

In the annual report on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy 2021, it was noted foreign policy decisions should no longer be made by unanimity as this gives a member state the authority to veto a decision

made by all the other countries.<sup>188</sup> Instead, it was argued that decisions should be made by qualified-majority voting. The text of the report was adopted in a European Parliament resolution on 17 February 2022.

Despite not being a new contention and the demand longstanding, it is an issue of increasing prevalence based on international affairs in general and the current context of the war in Ukraine. Moreover, practitioners and researchers alike frequently contend that the EU's absence of a unified voice results in a lack of visible presence in the global arena.<sup>189</sup>

We asked Millennials and Gen Z residing in the EU about their views on the EU expressing itself with a single voice worldwide. Based on our findings, 52 per cent of young EU residents believe that the EU should have more powers to represent Europe with a single voice on the world stage, while 34 per cent would prefer each country to represent itself. These views have not changed drastically against the backdrop of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Our March 2022 survey showed 49 per cent of respondents in favour and 36 per cent against.<sup>190</sup>

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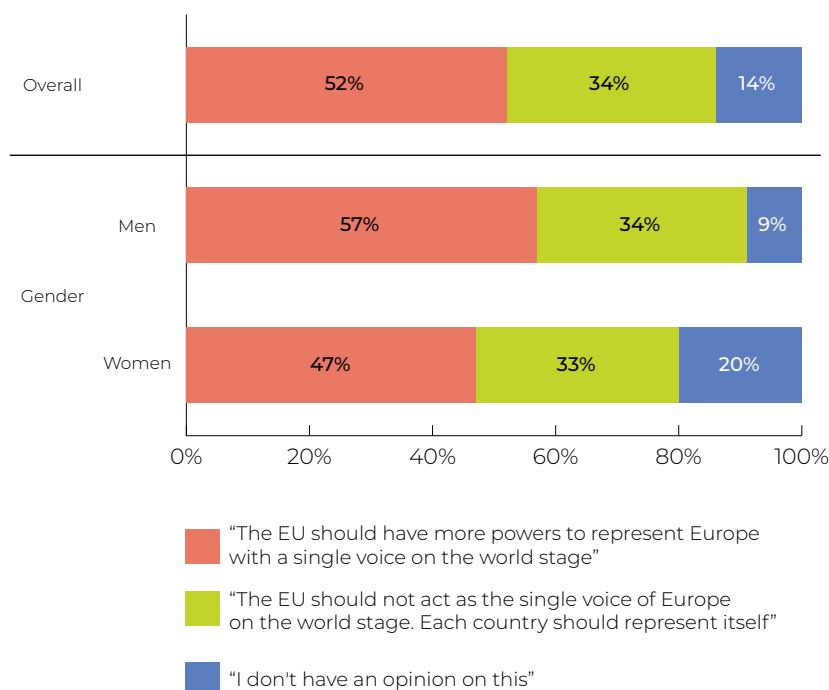
<sup>188</sup> European Parliament. (2021f). REPORT on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy – annual report 2021. 20.12.2021 – (2021/2182(INI)). Committee on Foreign Affairs.

<sup>189</sup> Novak, S. (2014). Single representative, single voice: magical thinking and the representation of the EU on the world stage. *Global policy*, 5, 68-75.

<sup>190</sup> The two numbers are not to be compared directly, as we used a different county sample in the two surveys. Yet, the numbers suggest that opinions have not shifted drastically after Russia's invasion.



**Graph (5.1)** *Views on the EU representing Europe with a single voice on the world stage*  
 People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



*Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU representing Europe with a single voice on the world stage, with the sample restricted to EU residents.*

Our December 2021 results show that in particular, the majority of respondents from Spain want the EU to act with one voice on the world stage (67 per cent). While once again respondents in the Netherlands (36 per cent) and Denmark (36 per cent) show a much lower preference for strengthening the EU on a global level. Once again, differences between genders emerge.

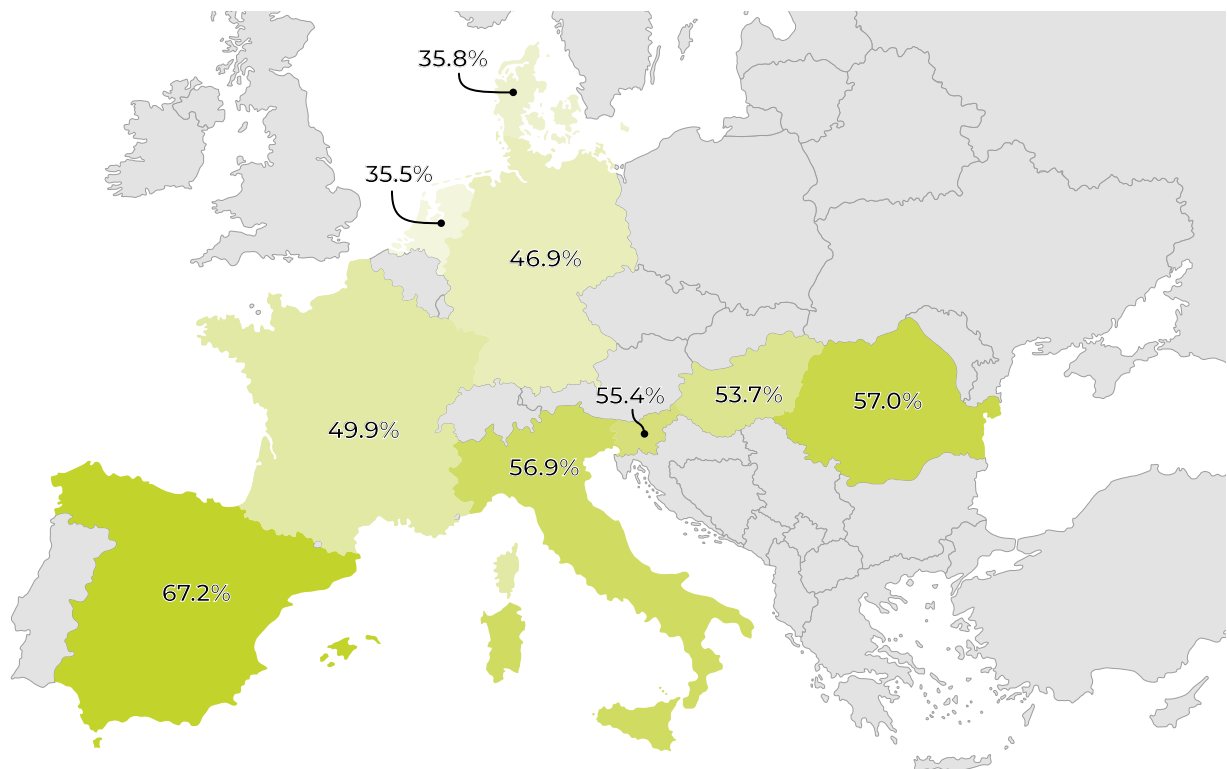
Men are ten percentage points more likely than women to see the benefits of having a single voice on the world stage (57 per cent compared to 47 per cent). However, 20 per cent of young women indicate no opinion on this issue compared to nine per cent of young men, which might partly explain this difference in support.





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**Graph (5.2)** *Views of the EU on the world stage by country of residence of respondents*  
 People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement “The EU should have more powers to represent Europe with a single voice on the world stage” by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

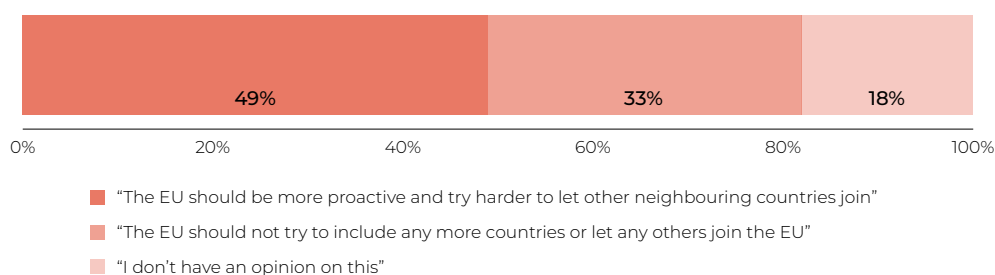


About half of young people want the EU to continue to enlarge (49 per cent) versus those who do not want further expansion of the EU (33 per cent). Interestingly, most well-off respondents are inclined to see the benefits of a greater effort to bring other neighbouring countries into the EU (59 per cent), compared to those with fewer economic resources (45 per cent). These results, when compared to earlier opinion polls, might hint at a swing in favour of EU enlargement. As uncovered in the autumn 2018 Eurobarometer,<sup>191</sup> 45 per cent of EU residents were against enlargement of any kind. Similar

results were also shown in a survey conducted by the European Council on Foreign Relations in 2019.<sup>192</sup> However, it is important to note that these results refer to the entire population. Thus rather than a swing in opinion, the difference may be due to variation between perspectives by age groups. Since we asked these questions before the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it is possible that a similar survey today would lead to greater approval among young people due to the momentum created by the debate on Ukraine's accession status. Future polls should address the issue.

### Graph (5.3) Views on EU enlargement

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on the EU's role towards countries who want to join the EU, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

### 6.2.2 Views on Migration

With the arrival of high numbers of refugees in Europe from 2015 onwards, migration became a highly visible and politicised issue in European politics. Some countries built actual barriers

and blockades between themselves and non-EU neighbouring countries, while others refrained from doing so.<sup>193</sup> In parallel, Schengen's effectiveness was weakened when member states instituted border restrictions at internal EU

<sup>191</sup> European Commission. (2018c). Standard Eurobarometer 90. Autumn 2018. <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2215>

<sup>192</sup> Bertelsmann Stiftung. (2019). EU Citizens Remain Against Further Enlargement. Germans lead the opposition, followed by Austrians. euopinions, REFERENCE 19 Aug, 2019. <https://eupinions.eu/de/blog/eu-citizens-remain-against-further-enlargement>

<sup>193</sup> Moreno-Lax, V. et al. (2021). The EU Approach on Migration in the Mediterranean. Report for the European Parliament.



borders.<sup>194</sup> Arrivals have sharply declined since 2015, partly as a result of deterrent efforts implemented by the EU home affairs agencies and member state governments in conjunction with externalisation agreements with Turkey and Libya.<sup>195</sup> Against this background and according to a pan-European Survey conducted by Ipsos<sup>196</sup>, in 2021 people in Europe did not consider large-scale migration to be among the most salient issues.

With Russia's invasion adding a wave of migration and refugee flows in Europe, asylum gained new traction as a top issue on the EU's agenda. The humanitarian situation has been worsening since the outbreak of war, with many millions of people having become refugees settling in other European countries.<sup>197</sup> In reaction to the humanitarian crisis, the EU has put in place a temporary protection programme for those fleeing Ukraine which includes immediate access to fundamental rights such as housing, education, welfare and basic healthcare.<sup>198</sup> At the same time, the EU has made available funds for member states to support refugees escaping from the conflict.<sup>199</sup>

The recent FEPS and ThinkYoung report on young people's views of the war in Ukraine finds that a large majority of European young people believe that accepting Ukrainian refugees into their country is a crucial humanitarian measure. In late March and early April, when the

related survey was launched, 74 per cent supported the initiative. The report also finds that while young people in France and Germany are the least supportive (with 36 per cent and 37 per cent opposed respectively), young people in Romania are very likely to support the measure (82 per cent in favour overall). Young Europeans also want to see considerably more EU money spent on assisting Ukrainian refugees (70 per cent). This viewpoint is most firmly held in Poland (76 per cent), Romania (75 per cent) and the United Kingdom (75 per cent). This could be explained by the cost and burden of providing aid alone and the need for EU financial support, or by the more general view that the EU needs to do more in the face of the humanitarian crisis from a human rights-based perspective.

### 6.2.3 Views on a Single EU Army

We also explored youth views on the establishment of a single EU army. In autumn 2021 (our first survey) we asked respondents which of the following two statements they agreed with: "All EU countries should merge their armies into a single European army" and "EU countries shouldn't merge their armies". While nearly half support an EU army (45 per cent), over a third of respondents are against it. This would seem to indicate that while there is some support for an EU army amongst young people, it is not necessarily a strongly held opinion. A fifth of respondents expressed no opinion and the Russian invasion

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Carrera, A. and Vosyliūtė, L. (2018). The Effects of Anti-Migrant Smuggling Policies, *International Journal of Border and Migration Studies*, as referenced in Moreno-Lax, V. et al. (2021). The EU Approach on Migration in the Mediterranean. Report for the European Parliament.

<sup>196</sup> Ipsos. (2021b). Pan-European Survey. Main multi-country report #climate of change. End Climate Change, Start Climate of Change. Ipsos.

<sup>197</sup> OCHA. (2022). Ukraine: Situation Report, 29 June 2022. UNHCR (2022) Operational Data Portal. Ukraine Refugee Situation. Last updated 29 June 2022. As of 30 August just over 7 million Ukrainian refugees across Europe have been recorded. It is worth noting these numbers change regularly. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

<sup>198</sup> Pirozzi, N. (2022) Has the war in Ukraine made the EU a geopolitical actor? Social Europe.

<sup>199</sup> Council of Europe. (2022) Ukraine: €17 billion of EU funds to help refugees. Press Release.

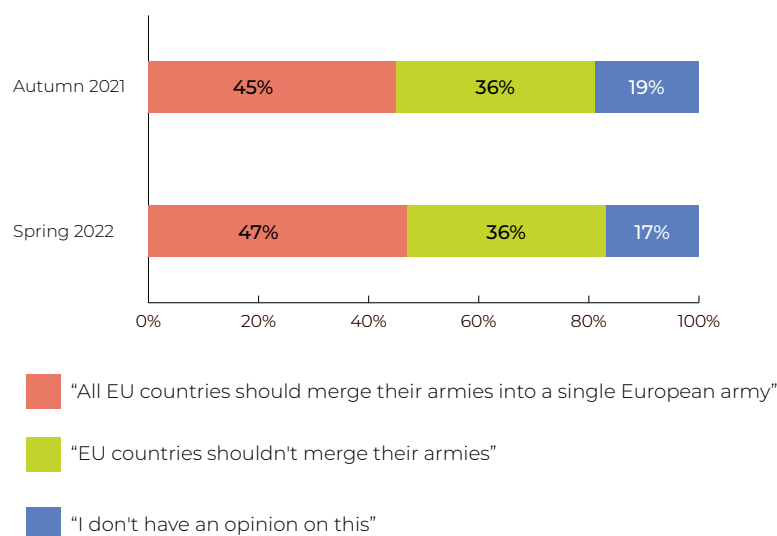


of Ukraine did little to sway opinions.<sup>200</sup> Our subsequent survey, conducted after the invasion began between late March and early April 2022,

found 47 per cent in favour, 36 per cent opposed and 17 per cent without an opinion.<sup>201</sup>

**Graph (5.4)** Views on an EU army before and after the Russian invasion of Ukraine

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on a single EU army, with the sample restricted to EU residents, comparing results from before and after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Our survey from late 2021 showed that several member states had at least half of those surveyed support the creation of an EU army; Romania (53 per cent), Spain (50 per cent) and Slovenia (50 per cent). While those with the lowest number of people in favour were Denmark (38 per cent), France (37 per cent) and the Netherlands (33 per cent).

Our follow-up survey showed that the Russian invasion moved opinion in some countries. For example, before the onset of the 2022 war, 53 per cent of Romanian residents supported the creation of a single EU army, while 61 per cent did so after the Russian invasion. This may not be surprising, as Romania borders Ukraine, has taken in over 80,000 Ukrainian refugees as of

<sup>200</sup> Dressler, M. and Howard, C. (2022). Builders of Progress: Europe's Next Gen The War In Ukraine through the Eyes of Youth, FEPS and ThinkYoung.

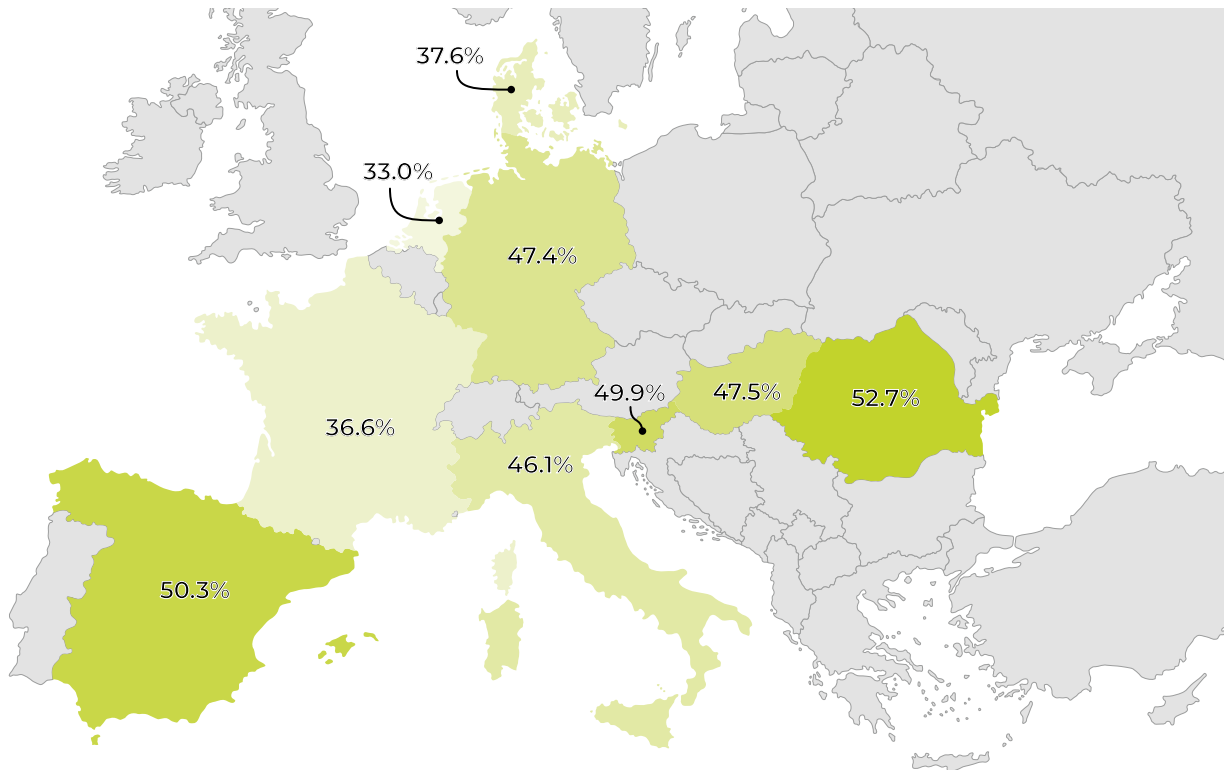
<sup>201</sup> It should be noted that the second survey in March 2022 used a different country sample and the results are therefore not directly comparable with those from the end of 2021. However, the figures give a good indication that opinions on the matter have not changed drastically.



July 2022, and may therefore feel the effects of the war more directly than other member states. Respondents in Romania were also

highly concerned about the possibility of the war spreading to their country.

**Graph (5.5)** Views on an EU army by country of residence of respondents  
 People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the results for the statement “All EU countries should merge their armies into a single European army” by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents. The results displayed are for autumn 2021.

**Table (5.1)** Views on an EU army by country of residence of respondents  
 People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.

	“All EU countries should merge their armies into a single European army”	“EU countries shouldn’t merge their armies”	“I don’t have an opinion on this”
Romania	52.70%	29.50%	17.70%
Spain	50.30%	31.90%	17.60%



	"All EU countries should merge their armies into a single European army"	"EU countries shouldn't merge their armies"	"I don't have an opinion on this"
Slovenia	49.90%	24.60%	25.40%
Hungary	47.50%	30.30%	22.20%
Germany	47.40%	34.70%	17.80%
Italy	46.10%	30.60%	23.20%
Denmark	37.60%	36.50%	26.00%
France	36.60%	44.80%	18.60%
Netherlands	33.00%	45.50%	21.30%

*Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on a single EU army by country of residence of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents. The results displayed are for autumn 2021.*

## 6.2.4 Views on Trade Policy

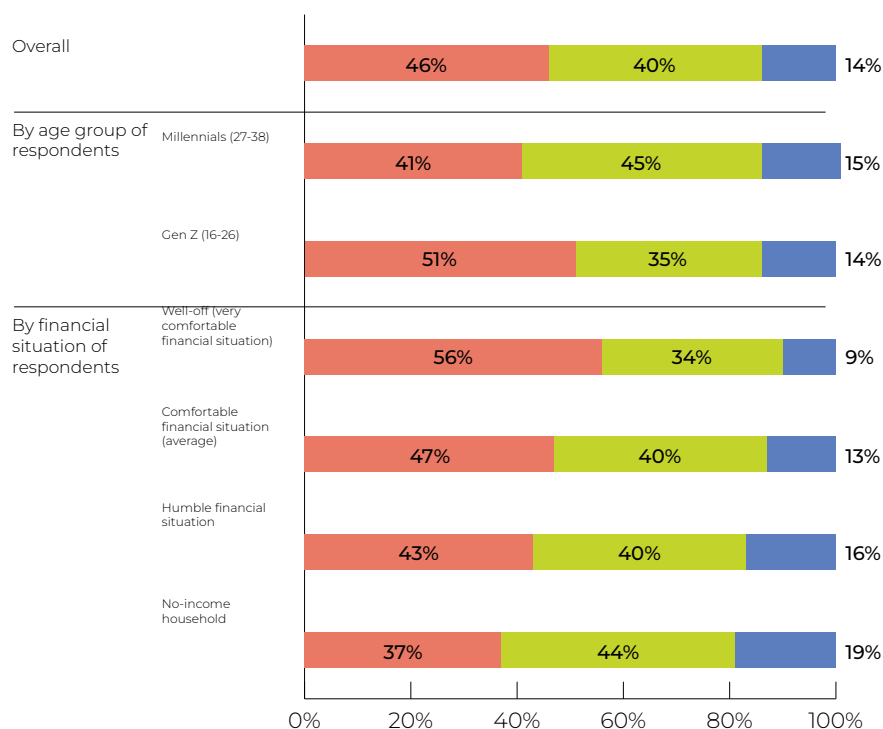
Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economy suffered. Due to problems in global supply chains and – at least initially – competition for scarce commodities such as vaccines and medical devices, voices were raised prophesying the end of globalisation as we know it. In this light, we asked young Europeans their opinion on the role of the EU in international trade. Nearly half (46 per cent) of respondents think that the EU should make it easier for Europeans to buy products made in non-European countries, suggesting a preference for trade liberalisation. On the other hand, 40 per cent would like to see the EU be more active in protecting European producers against competition from foreign companies.

We observed some marked differences according to demographic variables. Over half of Gen Z (51 per cent) want to see trade liberalisation. Millennials are 10 percentage points less in favour of making it easier for Europeans to buy products outside the EU. This generational difference likely stems from the historical mobilisation of the Millennial generation against austerity and free trade in the EU seen after the 2008 economic crash and onwards. We also found a clear trend between the respondent's financial situation and support for trade liberalisation. As Graph 5.6 shows, well-off respondents are nine percentage points more likely to support liberalisation than those with an average financial situation. Respondents from a no-income background were more likely (44 per cent) to support the protection of the EU single market than liberalisation.



### Graph (5.6) Views on trade policy

People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the overall views on EU trade policy, with the sample restricted to EU residents, by age group and by the financial situation of respondents.

These findings were uncovered before the war in Ukraine. With a relatively similar percentage both in favour and against the statement, European youth are polarised on the issue despite a higher number favouring free trade. In the second phase survey following the onset of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, young people showed a preference for increased EU independence on several issues.

For example, over half (52 per cent) believe the EU should increase its sovereignty and move away from its reliance on other global countries on issues including defence, trade and digitalisation, a statement opposed by 36 per cent. Moreover, as mentioned in Building Block 4, there is strong support for reaching energy independence in Europe.



This seeming shift in outlook could link to the current debate on 'the end of globalisation as we know it'. The ramifications of two crises (the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine) are

a watershed moment for the global economy, with it being argued the economic isolation of Russia will result in globalisation never fully recovering.<sup>202</sup>



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<sup>202</sup> De Ville, F. (2022). The End of Globalisation As We Know It. Ghent Institute for International and European Studies. Ghent University. March 2022. [https://www.ugent.be/ps/politiekewetenschappen/gies/en/gies\\_papers/2022-ukraine/the-end-of-globalisation-as-we-know-it](https://www.ugent.be/ps/politiekewetenschappen/gies/en/gies_papers/2022-ukraine/the-end-of-globalisation-as-we-know-it)



# BUILDING BLOCK 6: 'BUILDING BACK BETTER'

## A More United Europe for the Future

- The pandemic has emphasised the need for more EU cooperation, according to European youth. When asked how the pandemic has influenced their view on the EU's long-term future, young people want to see a stronger focus on healthcare systems, a more unified response to global threats, and burden sharing for future crises.
- Young people do not want to maintain the stricter border controls introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Returning EU powers to member states is the least preferred way for the EU to change after the pandemic.

## A Social Services & Equality Based Recovery

- Young Europeans want to avoid a return to the 'old normal'. Their top priority for recovery funds is better healthcare and social services, including a focus on mental health & well-being, improving social work and hospitals.
- Tackling climate change comes second, while smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth, and reducing social and economic inequalities are joint third (both at 25 per cent).

## Leaving No One Behind

- We asked Millennials and Gen Z to pick up to three policy options to ensure an equitable recovery from the pandemic. Educating and employing vulnerable people is the preferred policy option, with 36 per cent of respondents selecting this option as a top three priority. This is closely followed by giving financial assistance to children from underprivileged backgrounds (selected by 31 per cent) and supporting those with care responsibilities (selected by 28 per cent).
- When asked which measures introduced during the pandemic they would like to maintain after it is over, most (42 per cent) chose supporting those most in need as one of their top three priorities.

## Tech & Digital Innovation Takes a Step Back for Most

- Surprisingly, among the issues young Europeans are worried about when looking to the future, AI and technological change are the lowest priority.



## 7.1 Build Back Better: Build Back Fairer

In July 2020, the European Council agreed on a recovery budget package. The package contains a seven-year regular budget of €1.074 trillion and a supplementary coronavirus recovery fund branded as NextGenerationEU, which amounts to €750 billion, to be spent between 2021 and 2026.<sup>203</sup>

The following sections analyse young European views on how the EU should change after the pandemic and the prospects for European integration. It also addresses views on the use of the recovery package and how to ensure that the measures to stimulate the economy do not leave anyone behind. Finally, views on measures to better prepare Europe for future health crises are explored.

## 7.2 Discussion of Research Findings

### 7.2.1 A More United Europe for the Future

The COVID-19 pandemic has underlined how crucial the cooperation between the 27 EU member states is. When asked to look into the future and select two priorities for how Europe and the EU should change after the pandemic, young people's top choice was for there to be more of a focus on healthcare systems. They also prioritise a more unified response to global threats (31 per cent) and the sharing of the cost and financial burden of a pandemic (27 per cent). These findings reinforce what is expressed throughout the report, namely that young people want to focus on social justice and equality as they look to the future, and consider cooperation and solidarity to be important.

There are significant differences between countries in terms of the desire to focus more on health systems. This ranges from the highest support in Romania (46 per cent) and Spain (43 per cent) to the lowest in Denmark (30 per cent) and Switzerland (29.5 per cent). The higher support for these measures in Romania and Spain could be partly attributable to differences in COVID-related mortality. While COVID-related mortality was significantly higher in Romania and Spain than the average across all European countries, the opposite is true for Denmark and Switzerland.<sup>204</sup>

Moreover, young people in Spain (37 per cent), Slovenia and Italy (34 per cent respectively) are most in support of a more unified response to global threats, while the lowest agreement with this is seen in Denmark and France (30 per cent respectively). These national differences are reflective of the difference in opinions expressed throughout the analyses in this report, with, for example, young people in Denmark showcasing a more cautious approach to EU intervention on social and external matters as seen in Building Blocks 3 and 5.

Similarly, when asked what measures introduced during the pandemic they would maintain even when the health crisis has been completely overcome, 25 per cent would keep the stronger collaboration between governments and 22 per cent supported keeping greater investment in helping other countries around the world fight the pandemic, which ranked number two and three among the nine answer options. Among the respondents, a noticeable gap can be seen between the countries surveyed. Romania (28 per cent) and Italy (27 per cent) are the countries most in favour of maintaining aid levels, while Slovenia (11 per cent) and Hungary (12 per cent) are at the other extreme.

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<sup>203</sup> Lorenzo Codogno et.al. (2020). Assessing Next Generation EU. 7 October 2020.

<sup>204</sup> John Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center. (2022). Mortality Analyses.



While these findings showcase differences between countries, the overall results still show strong support for social inclusion, with young people across the board wanting to see increased solidarity across the EU in response to health crises, increased cooperation, and more effective healthcare systems. National differences in the strength placed on these issues by young people could be linked to the severity of the pandemic for national healthcare systems, with, for example, the first wave of the pandemic highlighting the inefficiency of health systems in Italy and Spain.<sup>205</sup>

These policy priorities link well to the response measures put in place by the EU, with the EU4Health programme 2021-2027 adopted to respond to the pandemic and reinforce crisis preparedness. Implemented due to the fragility of national health systems, the programme is a step towards the creation of a European Health Union.<sup>206</sup>

Prioritising the spending of the EUR 750 billion coronavirus recovery fund to improve what is perceived as an underfunded healthcare system is a desire also shared by focus group participants.

*“The health sector is 100 per cent one of the areas where it is important to get investment and get quality. It is one of the main institutions in society that just has to work. And if there are not enough employees, then there has to be some more through education. If it is not good working conditions they work under, then it is something that must change to make sure the frontline staff in the country are still motivated to take the heavy load in the future.”* (Man residing in Copenhagen, Denmark, 22 years old)

*“I would invest in the health system. Italy’s situation is terrible. We are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and there are still people who spend nights in corridors outside the emergency room because there are no rooms left. That should not be the case.”* (Man residing in Rome, Italy, 31 years old)

*“[I would spend the EU pandemic recovery funds] clearly on the healthcare system. I live with a nurse, and she tells me how pressured they are. I would use those funds for improving living standards, social health care and the nurse’s situation.”* (Woman residing in rural Denmark, 28 years old)

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<sup>205</sup> Lupu, D. and Tiganasu, R. (2022). COVID-19 and the efficiency of health systems in Europe. *Health Economics Review* 12, 14 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13561-022-00358-y>

<sup>206</sup> European Commission. (2022e). EU4Health programme 2021-2027 — a vision for a healthier European Union. [https://health.ec.europa.eu/funding/eu4health-programme-2021-2027-vision-healthier-european-union\\_en](https://health.ec.europa.eu/funding/eu4health-programme-2021-2027-vision-healthier-european-union_en)

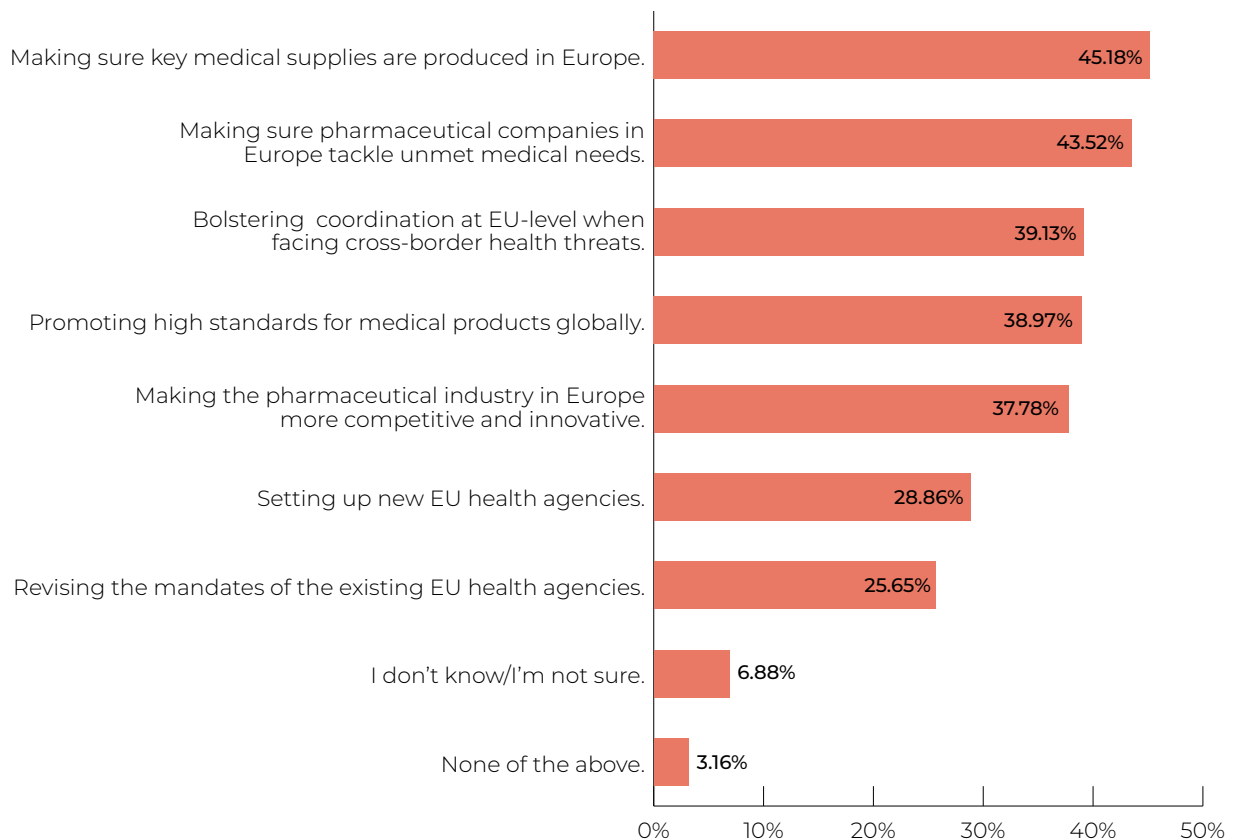


When asked what they think the EU should prepare for future health crises, 45 per cent of respondents said that they want to ensure, above all, that essential medical products are made in Europe. This is most likely a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, where even basic medical products such as masks were in short supply during its early stages. The second most important issue in preparing for future crises is

that pharmaceutical companies in Europe meet unmet medical needs (44 per cent). This could be interpreted in line with the above-mentioned emphasis on burden sharing and sharing key products and medical capacities across countries, especially in moments of crisis. Moreover, 39 per cent would prioritise the promotion of high standards for medical products.

#### Graph (6.1) Views on future health crises

*Thinking about preparing for future pandemics and health crises, which of the below do you think are most important for the long-term future? (choose top 3)*



*Respondents were asked to choose their top three actions to prepare the EU for future pandemics and health crises. This graph shows the overall results for the entire sample.*

This perspective on increased burden sharing and cooperation is also reflected in the responses to the question of whether young people want

more or less EU integration against the background of the COVID-19 pandemic. More than two-thirds would like to see greater cooperation



in the EU, and only one in five young Europeans would like to see the EU's powers returned to the member states. Similar results were seen in a pan-European survey conducted by ECFR, which shows that after the start of the COVID-19 crisis, there was an increase in public support for unified EU actions.<sup>207</sup>

Reiterating young people's views on the need for cooperation within and between countries looking to the future, participants in our focus groups stressed the need to create a sense of solidarity between the EU member states. In particular, some respondents in Denmark stated that less wealthy EU countries should have priority when it comes to receiving EU recovery funds.

*"I am very pro-EU, and to help the weaker countries in the EU community that can also help the relationship between these countries in the long term. The fact that you kind of help the weak, so to speak, I think is one important aspect of the EU community."* (Man residing in Copenhagen, Denmark, 22 years old)

*"I think it is better that we are all roughly at the same level. That creates economic growth around each other. Because it is the trade between the countries that makes us create growth here at home as well."*  
(Woman residing in Copenhagen, Denmark, 26 years old)

Expanding on the preference of young people for a more cooperative Europe, respondents were asked to state their level of support for furthering EU integration on a scale from 0 to 10. As displayed in Graph 6.5, most respondents show a moderately high level of support for furthering EU integration. Within EU countries, the support is particularly high in Italy, Spain, Hungary and Romania and lowest in the Netherlands and Slovenia. Among non-EU countries, it is noteworthy that UK respondents showed a rather high level of support for further integration.

In general, it can be said that crisis management in the context of the pandemic seems to have triggered enthusiasm for more cooperation and unification among EU youth. Asked more soberly about the promotion of EU integration as a whole, the desire for it is still there, but far less pronounced than in the specific crisis context.

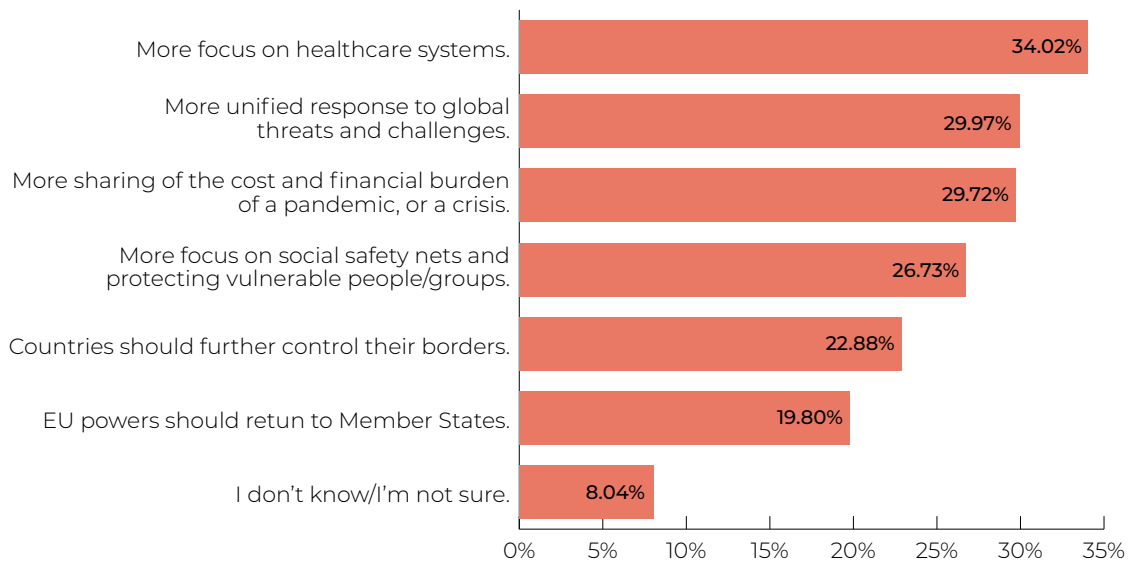
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<sup>207</sup> Dennison, S. and Zerka, P. (2020). Together in trauma: Europeans and the world after COVID-19. Policy brief, European Council of Foreign Relations.



**Graph (6.2)** Views on how Europe and the EU should change after the pandemic

Looking to the long-term future, how should Europe and the EU/UK/Switzerland change after the pandemic?



Respondents were asked to select 2 options among those proposed on how Europe and the EU should change after the pandemic. This graph shows the overall results for the entire sample.

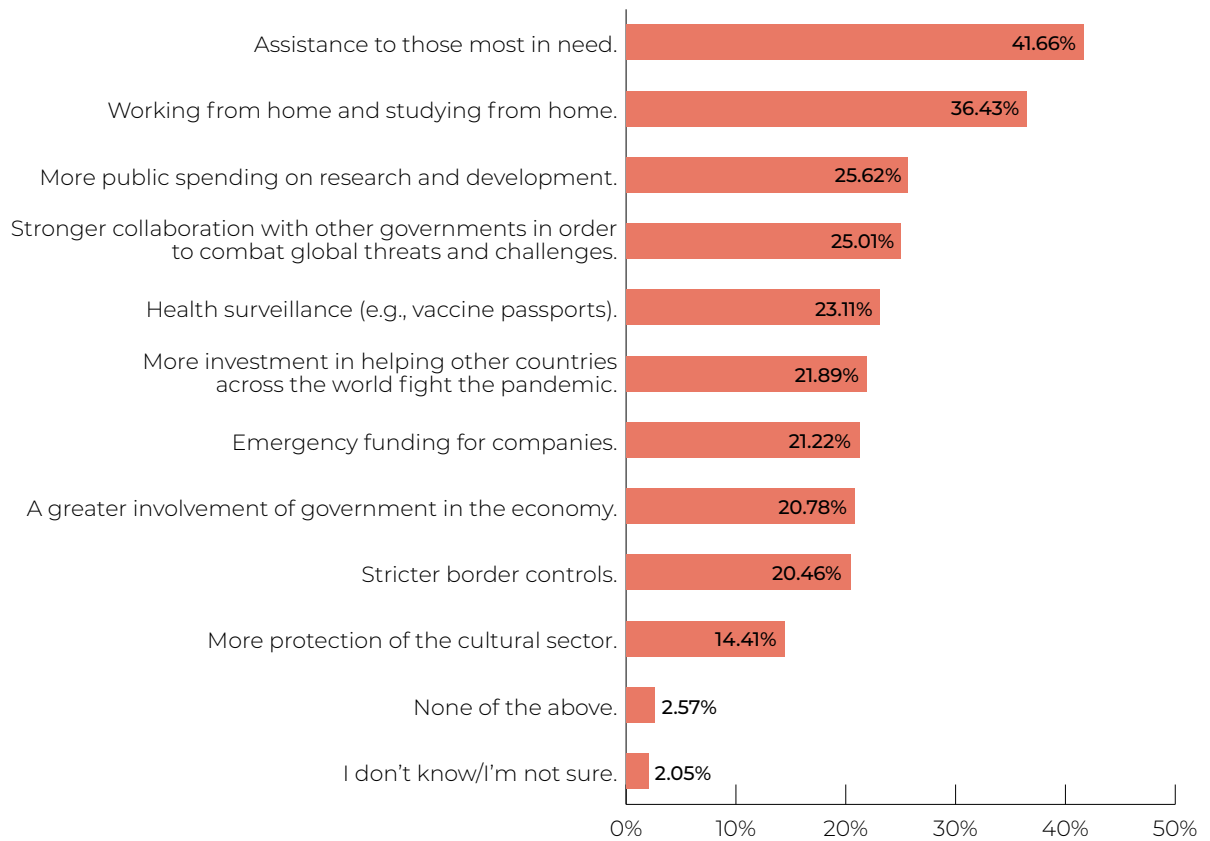


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### Graph (6.3) Views on measures to keep after the pandemic

Governments have taken many measures and actions since the beginning of the pandemic. Some people would stop these policies when the pandemic is fully behind us. Others would keep most of them. Which of the following would you keep?

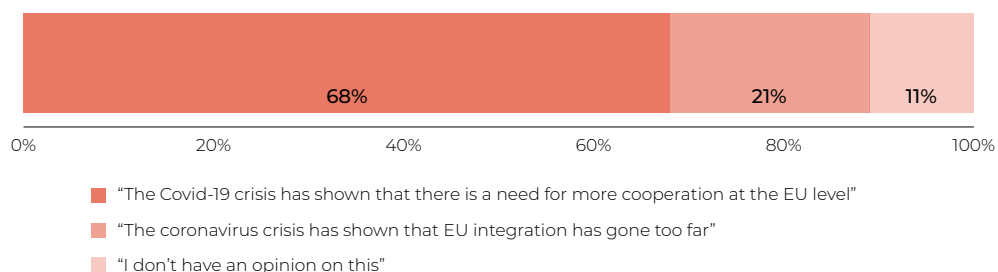


Respondents were asked to select up to 3 options among the proposed measures to keep after the pandemic. This graph shows the results for the entire sample.



#### Graph (6.4) Views on the need to cooperate more

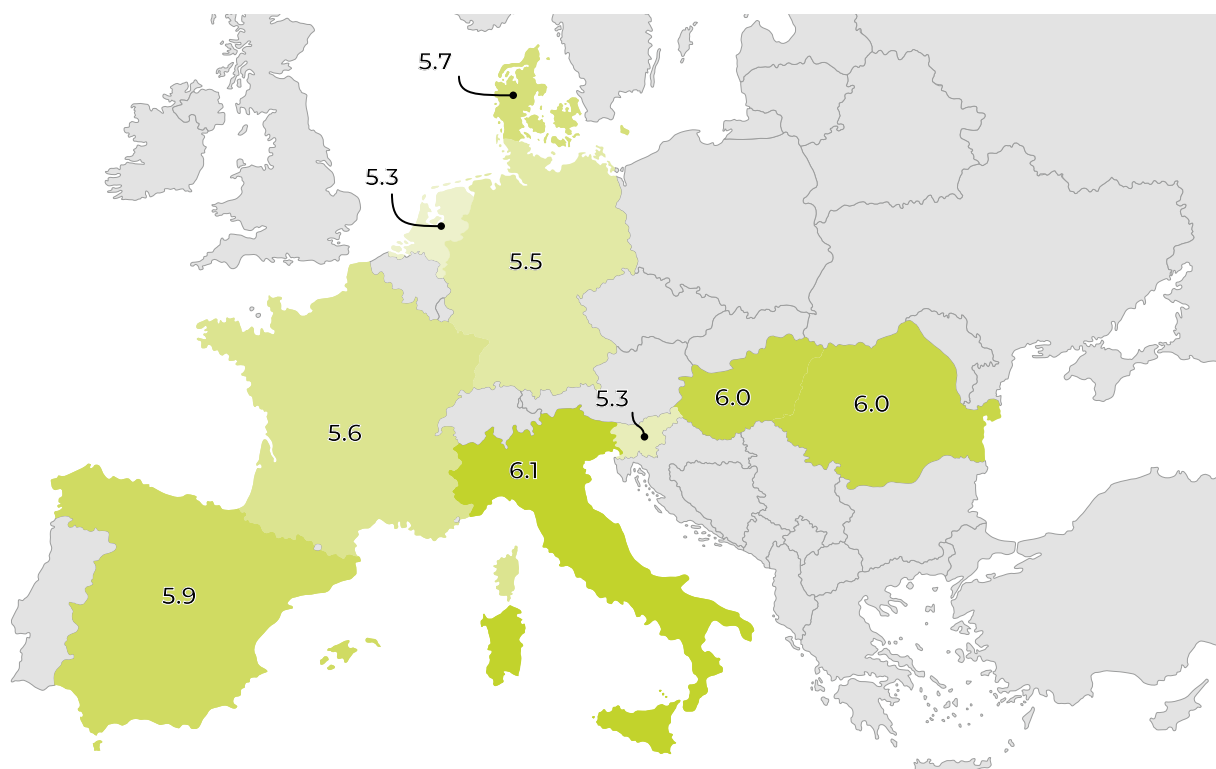
People have very different opinions about Europe and the European Union. Please choose the statement you agree with most.



Pairs of statements were shown to respondents, who were asked to choose the one they agreed with most. This graph shows the views on COVID-19 and EU integration for the entire sample.

#### Graph (6.5) Views on EU integration and unification by country of residence of respondents

Some think European countries should unite further. Others say unification has already gone too far. What number on the scale best describes your position?



Respondents were asked to select the number that best described their position on further European integration on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 indicating complete opposition and 10 maximum support). This graph shows the results by country of residence of respondents.



### 7.2.2 Recovery Priorities

*“Let us take this opportunity to examine our conscience and make the future better, take active steps to make it better and not make the same mistakes” (Man residing in a town in Sicily, Italy, 22 years old)*

The discussion in the previous section has shown that young Europeans are predominantly pro-European and show solidarity in looking towards a post-pandemic world. The opening quote illustrates that this sentiment is also supported by a positive view of the future. However, we also captured voices that think that not much will change in European societies.

*“There are no guarantees...we live amongst uncertainty, an environment that has always been unstable. The human condition is like that, and the current situation makes us aware that this is the way it is.” (Man residing in Paris, France, 34 years old)*

*“In the end, we all had the impression of being closer to certain social groups, of caring more about the environment, of understanding how beautiful Milan is without cars, etc. Then finally, nothing may change because the status quo will return.” (Man residing in Milan, Italy, 39 years old)*

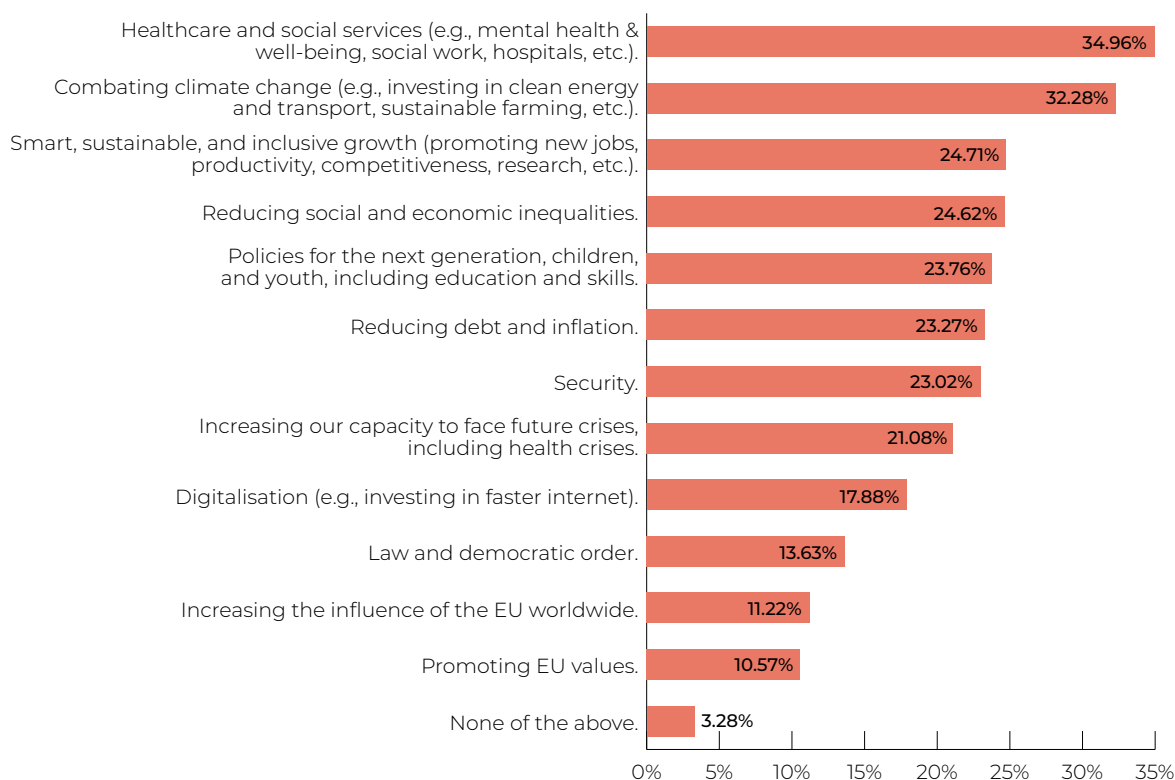
Without being able to anticipate what the future holds, we wanted to know what policies are needed to make a post-pandemic Europe a better place. With this in mind, we asked Millennials and Gen Z how they would like to use EU funds for post-pandemic reconstruction. More specifically, we asked respondents in EU countries to pick what they believed should be the three priority areas the recovery funds should focus on.

As the most chosen priority, 35 per cent of respondents selected strengthening healthcare and social services. As the second and third policy priorities, respectively, 32 per cent of respondents selected fighting climate change while 25 per cent chose fostering smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. The fourth spending priority where young Europeans want the money to go, almost on par with priority three, is reducing social and economic inequalities. These findings are in line with Building Block 2, which showed that the most pressing areas of societal concern during the pandemic have been jobs and employment; poverty and inequality; and physical and mental health. The dominance of health as the preferred policy in the minds of young people was certainly also driven by the launch of the survey in November 2021, when closures and rising COVID cases again became a reality.



### Graph (6.6) Views on COVID-19 recovery package spending

The EU has agreed to spend very large sums of money to recover from the negative economic and social impact of the pandemic. What should be the priority areas for COVID-19 recovery money? (Choose 3)



Respondents were asked to choose up to three priority spending areas for COVID-19 funds. This graph shows the overall results for the sample restricted to EU residents.

Similarly, the Spring 2021 Eurobarometer found that the top three public priorities when it comes to what the European Parliament should focus on are public health (49 per cent), followed by the fight against poverty and social exclusion (39 per cent), the economy and job creation (39 per cent) and action against climate change (34 per cent).<sup>208</sup>

Significant differences exist between genders regarding spending priorities. The gap between male and female preferences is especially pronounced in some policy priorities, as can be observed in Graph 6.7. While 41 per cent of women would prioritise healthcare and social services, only 29 per cent of men would do so. This gap is not surprising given the existing research on male and female approaches to health, which signals women are substantially more proactive towards healthcare than men, illustrated by their

<sup>208</sup> European Parliament. (2021b). Eurobarometer. Resilience and Recovery, Public Opinion One Year into the Pandemic. Eurobarometer 95.1. DG COMM. Public Opinion Monitoring Unit.





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greater tendency to go for medical check-ups compared to men.<sup>209</sup> On the other hand, while 21 per cent of men would prioritise digitalisation, only 15 per cent of women would do so. Another major difference can be found regarding the promotion of EU values. While 14 per cent of men would prioritise such an initiative, only 7 per cent of women would.

These differences are also reflected in the wider political science literature. Several publications have found that women's policy priorities differ significantly from men's.<sup>210</sup> They highlight that women are more likely to emphasise education, health, housing, poverty, family and children.<sup>211</sup> Conversely, men are more inclined to prioritise the economy, foreign policy, and law and order.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>209</sup> Harvard Medical School. (2019). Mars vs. Venus: The gender gap in health. [https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter\\_article/mars-vs-venus-the-gender-gap-in-health](https://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletter_article/mars-vs-venus-the-gender-gap-in-health); Ek, S. (2015). Gender differences in health information behaviour: a Finnish population-based survey. *Health promotion international*, 30(3), 736-745.

<sup>210</sup> Norris, P. (2003). The gender gap: Old challenges, new approaches." *Women and American politics: New questions, new directions* pp. 146-72.

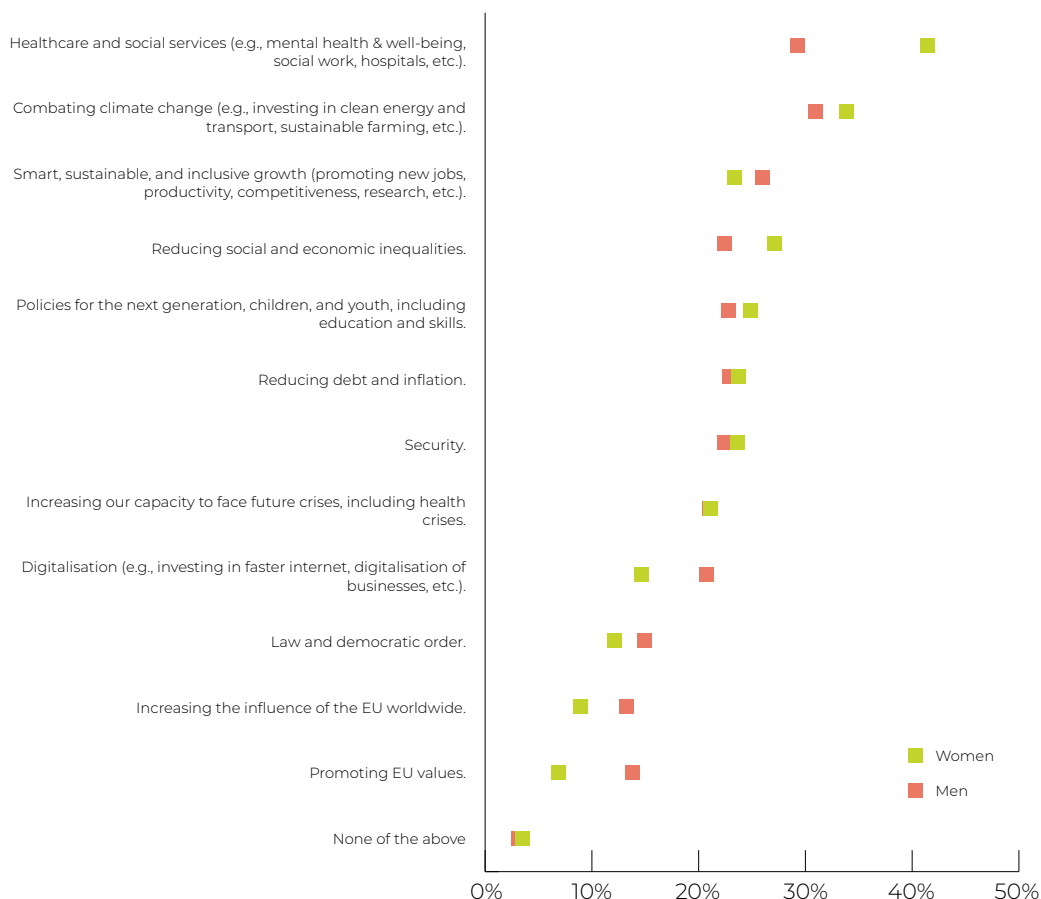
<sup>211</sup> Yildirim, T. M. (2021). Rethinking Women's Interests: An Inductive and Intersectional Approach to Defining Women's Policy Priorities. *British Journal of Political Science*, 1-18.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.



### Graph (6.7) Views on COVID-19 recovery package spending by gender

The EU has agreed to spend very large sums of money to recover from the negative economic and social impact of the pandemic. What should be the priority areas for COVID-19 recovery money?



Respondents were asked to choose up to three priority spending areas for COVID-19 funds. This graph shows the overall results by gender of respondents for the sample restricted to EU residents.

Differences in each respondent's financial situation are also associated with different views

on how the amount allocated for post-pandemic recovery should be spent.



**Table (6.1)** Views on COVID-19 recovery package spending by the financial situation of respondents

The EU has agreed to spend very large sums of money to recover from the negative economic and social impact of the pandemic. What should be the priority areas for COVID-19 recovery money?

	High (well-off and very comfortable)	Medium (comfortable financial situation)	Low (humble financial situation)	No income (in need of financial assistance)	Prefer not to say	Not sure/ don't know
Healthcare and social services (e.g., mental health & well-being, social work, hospitals, etc.).	30%	36%	42%	38%	44%	40%
Combating climate change (e.g., investing in clean energy and transport, sustainable farming, etc.).	31.50%	33.50%	33%	28%	30%	32%
Smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth (promoting new jobs, productivity, competitiveness, research, etc.).	29%	26%	21%	33%	15%	34%
Reducing debt and inflation.	16%	23.50%	26%	24%	26%	23%
Policies for the next generation, children, and youth, including education and skills.	20%	24%	24%	23%	14%	29%
Reducing social and economic inequalities.	19.50%	24%	27%	26%	17%	22.50%
Security.	20%	22%	21%	17%	19%	16%
Increasing our capacity to face future crises, including health crises.	20%	20%	22%	22%	19%	18%
Digitalisation (e.g., investing in faster internet, digitalisation of businesses, new technologies, etc.).	22%	17%	15%	17%	17%	16%
Law and democratic order.	18%	13%	11%	10%	16%	14%



	High (well-off and very comfortable)	Medium (comfortable financial situation)	Low (humble financial situation)	No income (in need of financial assistance)	Prefer not to say	Not sure/don't know
Increasing the influence of the EU/UK/CH worldwide.	17.50%	11.30%	10.40%	10.30%	11.10%	8.40%
Promoting EU/UK/Swiss values.	14.00%	11.90%	8.10%	9.50%	13.50%	8.90%
None of the above.	3.60%	3.00%	4.20%	3.70%	4.20%	5.60%

Respondents were asked to choose up to three priority spending areas for COVID-19 funds. This table shows the overall results by income for the entire sample.

People in the no-income (38 per cent), low-income (42 per cent) and middle-income (36 per cent) groups see health and social services as the highest priority area. In contrast, wealthy respondents see combating climate change as the most important (32 per cent) and health services as the second most important (30 per cent). That is not to say that lower-income groups do not prioritise using the funding to tackle climate change. This came in second for these income groups. Furthermore, reducing social and economic inequalities (27 per cent) and reducing debt and inflation (26 per cent) are seen as more important by low-income respondents than by high-income respondents (20 per cent and 16 per cent). These two last figures confirm the findings of earlier sections of the report that the highest income group is least concerned about social inequality and poverty. This poses a challenge to policymakers, as it is these respondents who are likely to have the most to contribute financially to addressing inequalities.

### 7.2.3 Leaving No One Behind

*“We need to focus on the shops that are closed down and have no earnings. But of course, also focus on the vulnerable people who lost jobs in the restaurant industry, for example. Focusing money on where people actually suffer, I think, is the primary thing.” (Man residing in Copenhagen, Denmark, 22 years old)*

The pandemic and subsequent restrictions affected everyone, but not everyone equally. As described in Building Block 1, young people were negatively affected by job losses, school closures and mental health considerations. This was particularly detrimental for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, in precarious employment or with caring responsibilities. That is why we wanted to know how the COVID-19 recovery funds can be used so that no one is left behind.

Educating and employing vulnerable people is seen as the best way to ensure an equitable recovery from the pandemic (35 per cent). This is



in line with other findings across the report that show that employment and wages are a key priority for young people. While the second and third most crucial issues the EU needs to consider, according to young people to 'build back better'

are financial help and assistance for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (30 per cent) and help for those with caring responsibilities, including single mothers and people caring for people with disabilities (28 per cent).

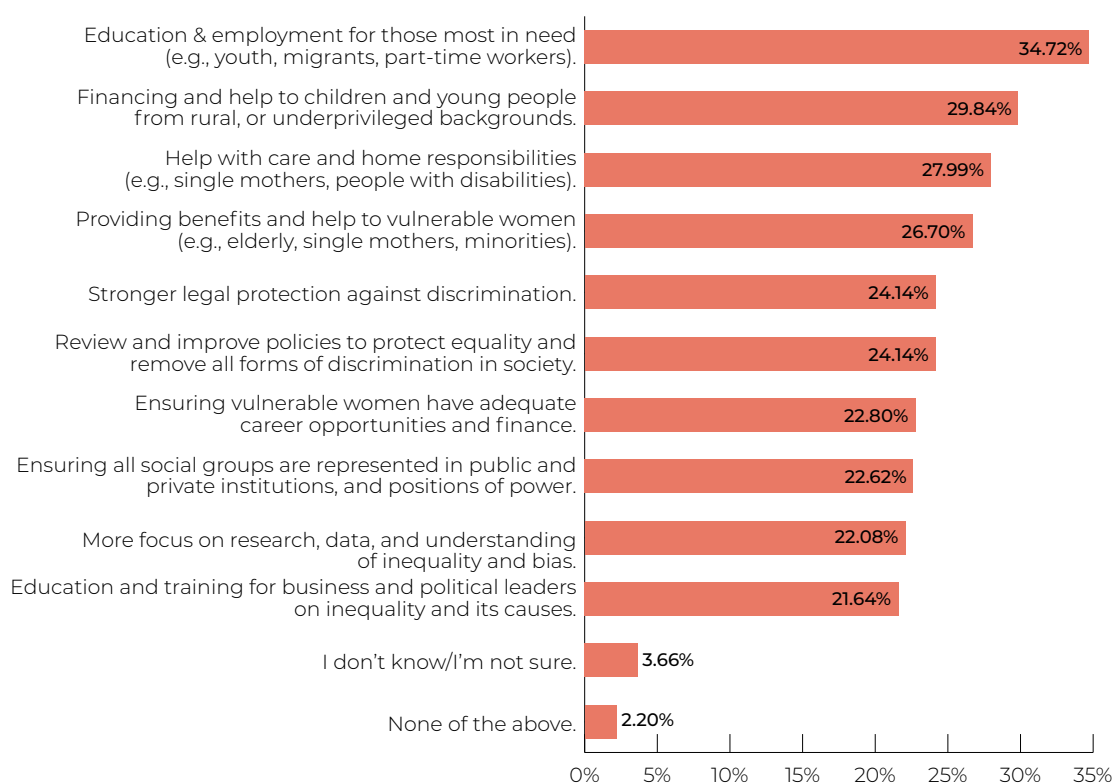


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### Graph (6.8) Views on equality and COVID-19 recovery

Making sure the EU's COVID-19 recovery does not leave certain people behind is important for many. Which of the options below do you think are most crucial to make sure we 'build back better' for everyone long term?



Respondents were asked to choose up to three options they thought most crucial to make sure the EU's COVID-19 recovery does not leave certain people behind. This graph shows the overall results, with the sample restricted to EU residents..

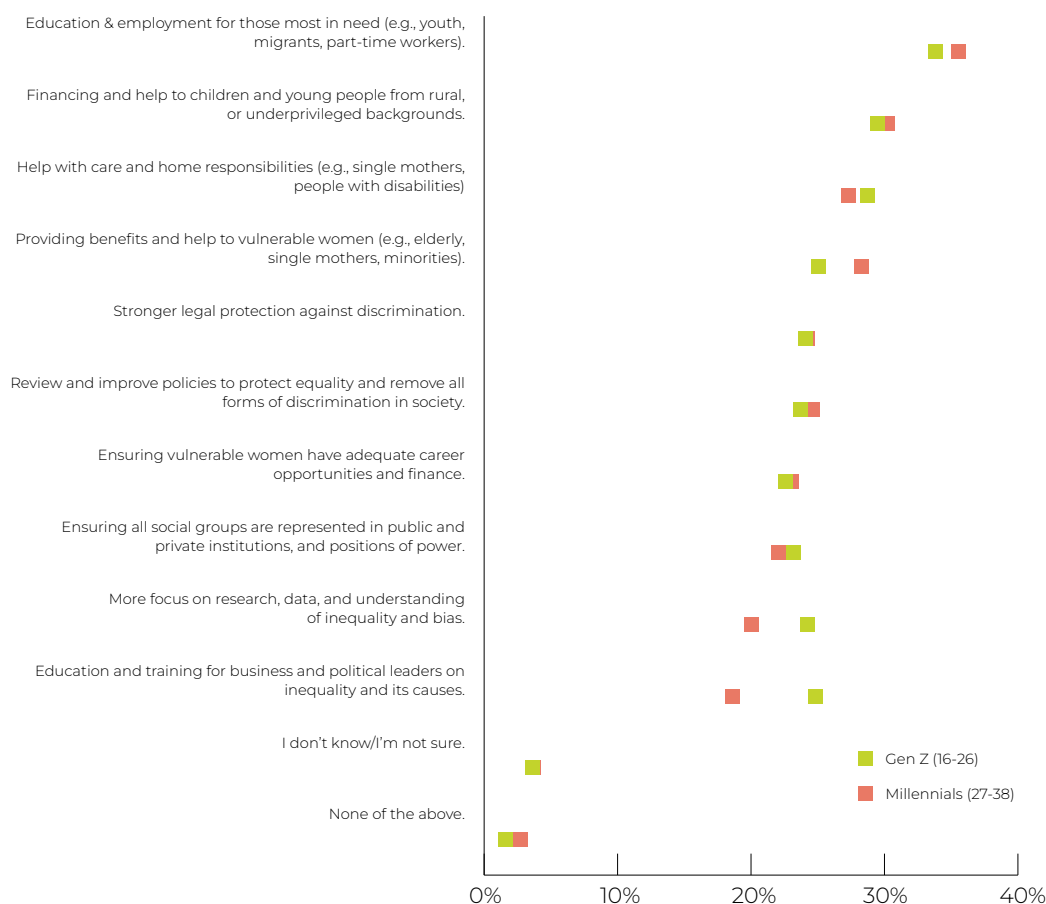
Income levels are again somewhat of an indicator as to where respondents' opinions lie. Among the answers where the greatest differences can be seen is the need to educate and employ the most vulnerable. The importance of this is particularly felt by those with no income

(41 per cent), while it is less of a priority for the financially well off (28 per cent). On the other hand, the wealthier group is more likely to see the importance of educating and training economic and political leaders on inequality and its causes (29 per cent).



### Graph (6.9) Views on equality and COVID-19 recovery by age group of respondents

Making sure the EU's COVID-19 recovery does not leave certain people behind is important for many. Which of the options below do you think are most crucial to make sure we 'build back better' for everyone long term?



Respondents were asked to choose the option they thought most crucial to make sure the EU's COVID-19 recovery does not leave certain people behind. This graph shows the overall results by age group of respondents, with the sample restricted to EU residents.

We have seen throughout the paper that issues of social inclusion, education, employment, and assistance to the most vulnerable in society are important issues for European youth. These most vulnerable people within society are also most negatively impacted because of the pandemic. Therefore, the question arises as to what the EU has done to help young people, especially

the most disadvantaged among them, to cope with the impact of the pandemic.

To support youth in more vulnerable situations, several initiatives have been developed at both the European and national levels in recent years. The European Commission announced the reinforced Youth Guarantee in October 2020.<sup>213</sup> This

<sup>213</sup> The new recommendation replaces the Council Recommendation of April 2013 on the establishment of a Youth Guarantee. It now increases the age limit for young recipients from 25 to 29 and provides for a better inclusion of people from vulnerable groups, such as NEETs, young women and people with disabilities.



is a commitment by all member states to ensure that all young people under the age of 30 receive a good quality offer of employment, further education, apprenticeship or traineeship within four months after becoming unemployed or leaving education.<sup>214</sup> This was complimented by the new ALMA mobility programme, aimed at youth who have difficulty finding a job, are unemployed, have experienced migration or have disabilities.<sup>215</sup>

Support at the national level has also been observed. Support to facilitate the transition to online learning was provided in most of the

countries surveyed with, for example, a national programme in Romania bringing 250,000 electronic devices with internet connections to primary, secondary and higher education students, and Germany allocating €100 million to provide help for students in financial difficulties.<sup>216</sup>

All these initiatives and incentives have certainly helped. According to respondents of our survey, some of these measures and actions, taken by governments since the start of the pandemic, should be maintained.



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<sup>214</sup> European Commission. (2022 m). The reinforced Youth Guarantee.

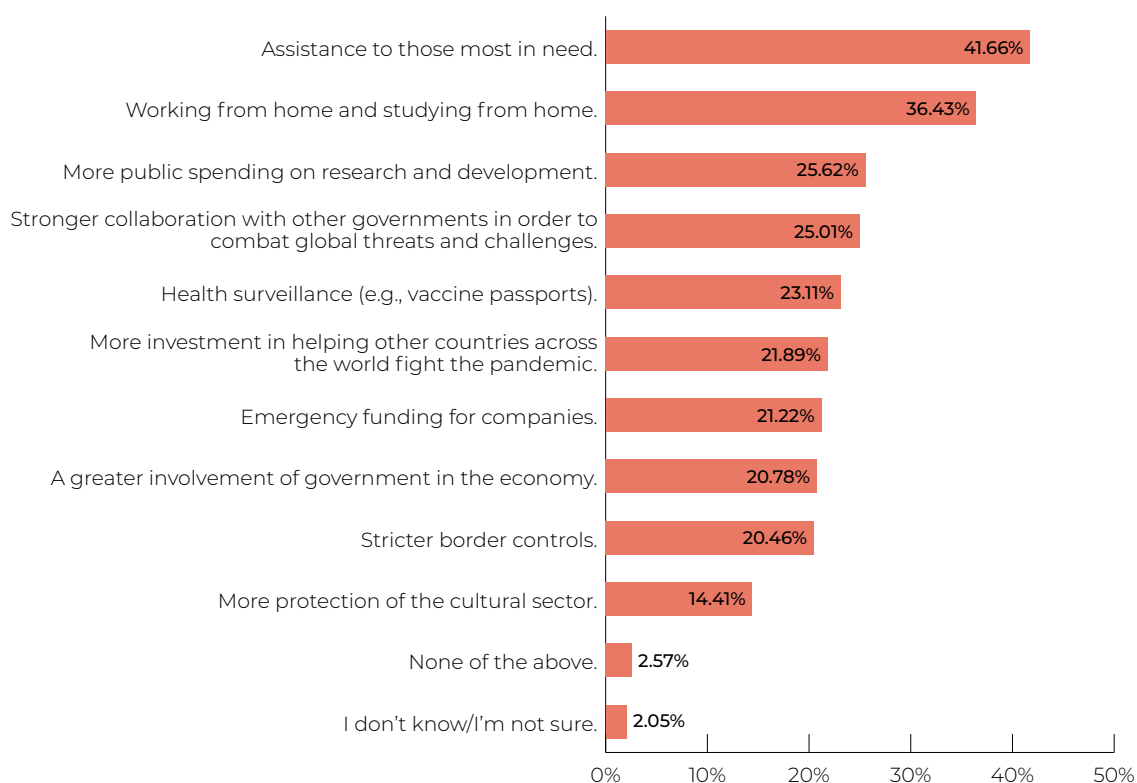
<sup>215</sup> EACEA. (2020). National Student Fee and Support Systems in European Higher Education – 2020/21. Eurydice – Facts and Figures. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.



### Graph (6.10) Views on pandemic response policies

Governments have taken many measures and actions since the beginning of the pandemic. Some people would stop these policies when the pandemic is fully behind us. Others would keep most of them. Which of the following would you keep?



Respondents were asked to choose up to three options among the proposed measures and actions taken by governments since the beginning of the pandemic, to keep them also when the pandemic is fully behind us. This graph shows the overall results for the entire sample.

As a first priority, among the response measures, 42 per cent of young Europeans want the help given to those most in need to be kept for the long-term. This view is shared by 48 per cent of women compared to 36 per cent of men. This is in line with our early explanations about women often emphasising social policies more than men. Respectively, 44 per cent of Millennials compared to 39 per cent of Gen Z approve of this priority. This could well link to welfare state-based findings mentioned previously, with Millennials more inclined to see healthcare, social care, or childcare as an important social policy priority.

Millennials also place more emphasis on tackling poverty and social and economic inequality as a top-three general priority for the future (36 per cent compared to 32 per cent among Gen Z).

Differences between countries can be observed. Indeed, wanting to support those most in need is a key measure to keep, according to the Slovenian residents (63 per cent), but it is not as important for those residing in Denmark (33 per cent) or the Netherlands (34 per cent). This focus among young people in Slovenia could link to the higher



concern levels during the pandemic towards poverty and inequality as a societal issue. Along similar lines, youth in Denmark showed the lowest concern levels on this, perhaps explained by the strong social system in place or less severe lockdown measures put in place.

Additionally, it is noteworthy that maintaining the protections for the cultural sector appears not to be a priority for the generations under study, with only 14 per cent prioritising the continuation of this kind of measure. This is surprising considering that, in 2018, the share of 15–39-year-olds in cultural employment was 44 per cent,<sup>217</sup> and that many young people picked up on online cultural activities to cope with the negative impacts of the pandemic (Building Block 2).

### ***Tech & Digital Innovation Takes a Step Back for Most***

The Commission is determined to make this decade Europe's 'digital decade' and has set four main objectives to be achieved by 2030. Of these, the first two focus on digital capabilities in infrastructure, education and skills and the other two focus on the digital transformation of businesses and public services.<sup>218</sup> Transformative technologies like AI are a further focal point of the EU's vision for the digital future. A White Paper sets out a strategy to link innovative technology with EU rules to ensure the safeguarding of fundamental and consumer rights.<sup>219</sup>

However, according to our results, among the issues young people are concerned about when thinking about the future of the EU, AI and technological change comes last (with only 18 per cent of respondents choosing it) – with the most concerned being well-off respondents (27 per cent) and men (22 per cent).

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<sup>217</sup> Pasikowska-Schnass, M. (2019). Employment in the cultural and creative sectors. EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service, PE 642. 264, October 2019.

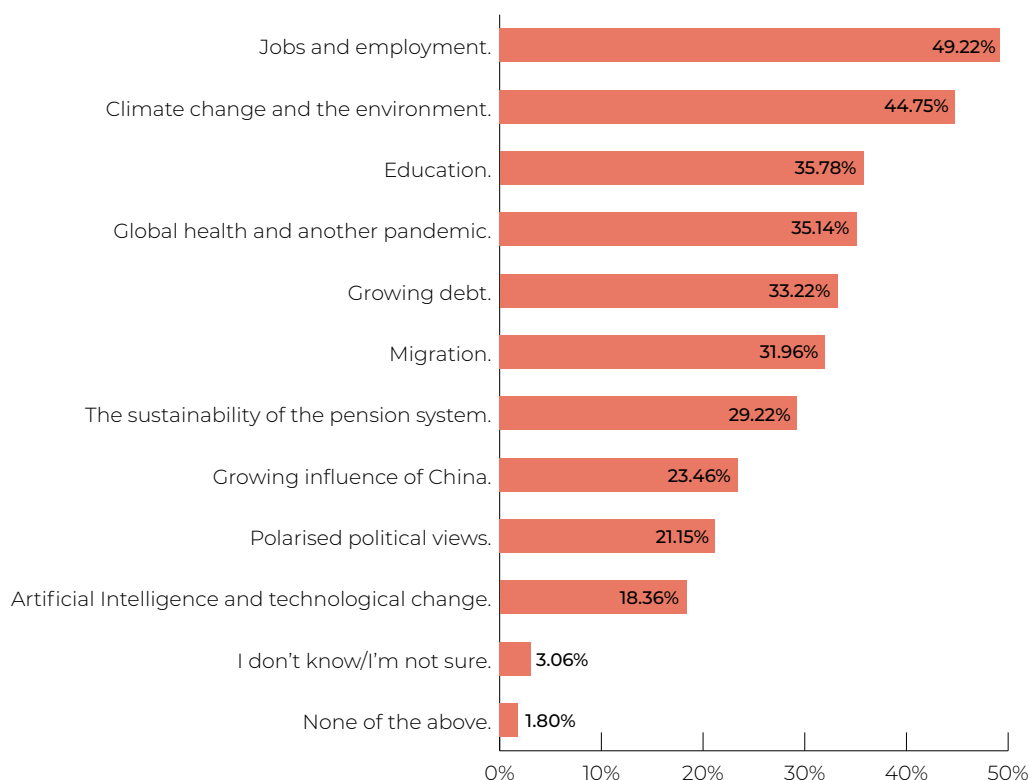
<sup>218</sup> European Commission. (2021c). 2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade. Brussels, 9.3.2021 COM (2021) 118 final.

<sup>219</sup> European Commission. (2020 g). White Paper on Artificial Intelligence – A European Approach to Excellence and Trust.



### Graph (6.11) Concerns about the future of the EU

Some people are worried about the future of the EU, while others are not. Thinking about the future of the EU, are you worried about any of the issues below?



Respondents were asked to choose all the issues among those proposed that worried them about the future of the EU. This graph shows the overall results for the entire sample restricted to EU residents.

Furthermore, digitalisation ranks low on the agenda of young people when it comes to what they would like the money from the recovery fund to be spent on. Indeed, we find the spending of funds on faster internet digitalisation of businesses and new technologies is, on average, in the eighth position out of twelve across the countries surveyed. This low level of interest could indicate a gap in the EU's strategy for digitalisation, with 'digital transformation' as a general term less supportable when detached from

the key issues people care about linked to digitalisation (e.g., clear objectives for digital health, or digitalisation linked to education, as an example).

It's worth noting that digitalisation occupies the highest position in Germany, coming in fifth place with 25 per cent, among recovery fund spending priorities. This may be explained by the large rural-urban divide when it comes to broadband connectivity.<sup>220</sup> A different scenario arises for Romania, which ranks last among all EU

<sup>220</sup> European Commission. (2022k). The Digital and Society Index – Countries' performance in digitisation.



Member States in 2021 and scores below average on most indicators. But young Romanians

still put digitisation in second to last place in their spending priorities (9 out of 10).<sup>221</sup>

**Table (6.2)** *Recovery package spending for digitalisation as a priority by country of residence of respondents*

*The EU has agreed to spend very large sums of money to recover from the negative economic and social impact of the pandemic. What should be the priority areas for COVID-19 recovery money?*

Digitalisation (e.g., investing in faster internet, digitalisation of businesses, new technologies, etc.).			
Country	Position	Value	
Germany	5	25%	
Denmark	7	19%	
United-Kingdom	7	20%	
Slovenia	8	19%	
Switzerland	8	18%	
Italy	9	18%	
Netherlands	9	16%	
Romania	9	15%	
Spain	9	13%	
France	10	14%	
Hungary	10	16%	

*Respondents were asked to choose up to three priority spending areas for COVID-19 funds. This graph shows the results for the option “Digitalisation (e.g., investing in faster internet, digitalisation of businesses, new technologies, etc.)” by country of residence of respondents.*

<sup>221</sup> Ibid (2022).



# CONCLUSION & POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To identify the concerns, hopes and policy priorities of young Europeans in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, this report surveyed their attitudes on a wide range of issues, focusing on how EU policies can help to address these same concerns. This section summarises the main findings and provides some guidance for policymakers.

## 8.1 Mental Health and Working from Home

The social isolation caused by the pandemic has had a negative impact on the mental health of many young people. More than 60 per cent of young Europeans were concerned about the negative impact of the lockdowns on their mental health. Despite this, the proportion of those who have sought professional mental health care remains low. Our findings suggest that young people who are concerned about their mental health are more likely to see a psychologist if they live in high-income countries, such as Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK. This is consistent with our survey's general finding that people with higher income backgrounds are almost twice as likely to seek professional help as people with lower income backgrounds. It is, therefore, crucial to remove the barriers that make it difficult for lower-income groups to access mental health services. This is also a desire that is reflected in young people's top priority for the use of COVID-19 recovery funds, where the focus is to use the funds for health and social services, including a focus on mental health and well-being.

Working and learning from home during the pandemic undoubtedly also triggered mental health concerns, as our findings show. Nevertheless,

most young Europeans value working and learning from home because it offers them opportunities such as reducing their carbon footprint, spending more time with family, and learning about new technologies. The continuing expansion of remote working and learning may thus serve Gen Z and Millennials well into the future, but only under certain conditions. Our research found that young women and Gen Z respondents (16-27 years old) are more concerned about the negative impact of working or learning from home on their mental well-being. We also found that young people who were in affluent or comfortable financial situations (6.1) and those with a higher education level (6.5) were more positive about the experience of teleworking or studying from home than those with little or no income (5.3) and a lower education (5.4). This is when asked to choose how positive it has been on a scale from 0 to 10.

For a long-term transition to home-based work and study to be successful, we have found that a balance needs to be struck between the benefits of face-to-face and distance work and learning, as young people continue to value face-to-face interaction. Teachers must be well trained to offer online learning. Online classes must be planned to address structural issues that exacerbate the unequal burden on lower-income people, such as lack of equipment and general support for a climate conducive to education. In addition, structural reasons, such as balancing family life and homework, need to be addressed, particularly since they have a pronounced impact on women. Changes to parental leave entitlements, paid sick leave, flexible working arrangements and access to affordable and reliable childcare are areas that could help in this regard.



## 8.2 Economic Concerns, Economic Equality, and Policy Priorities

The pandemic has brought jobs and the future of employment into focus. This was the top social concern of our survey respondents during the pandemic and was also reflected in what young people want the European Union to focus on over the next five years: Jobs and fighting poverty and social and economic inequality.

More specifically, we looked at support for specific socio-economic policies. Policies that receive broad support include the introduction of an EU-wide fair minimum wage (69 per cent for, 22 per cent against) and a universal basic income (66 per cent for, 23 per cent against). The EU's role in ensuring adequate unemployment benefits is also seen as an important tool in tackling employment insecurity. Fifty-eight per cent support the EU taking the lead on this issue, while 31 per cent prefer national governments being in charge. Finally, young people strongly support the EU ensuring access to decent and affordable housing (69 per cent for, 21 against). This suggests that policymakers can count on the support of young people in pushing these issues at the European level.

However, there are some important differences in this support stemming from the country of residence and income of respondents. For example, young people in Italy, Spain and Romania are most likely to support the EU's commitment to these socio-economic policies. Support for these measures is also strong in Slovenia. In France and especially in Denmark, young people are often relatively less inclined to support the EU's commitment to these measures. Denmark's lack of support and the fact that Danish respondents are the largest group of respondents who have no opinion on EU-driven policies is something we see consistently in our results. This suggests that also among the younger generation there is a specific type of Euroscepticism based on the assumption that the Nordic

welfare model is preferable to a European one, which often has lower standards. Furthermore, our research shows that 60 per cent of well-off respondents support the EU's role in ensuring a minimum wage, compared to 70 per cent of middle-income respondents and 71 per cent of low-income respondents. Similarly, 71 per cent of young people with a humble financial situation are in favour of supporting decent housing, a number that drops to 56 per cent among those with the highest income. Generation also plays a role, with a higher number of Millennials choosing housing as a top social policy priority for the next 5 years (37 per cent vs 30 per cent of Gen Z).

In general, young people want to see more egalitarian policies and are worried about the disadvantaged and those left behind. Young Europeans want to maintain the assistance provided to those most in need throughout the pandemic as the top long-term COVID-19 response measure. Their solidarity goes even further: in their eyes, training and employing vulnerable people is the first choice to ensure equitable recovery after the pandemic. European Parliament resolutions to support the most vulnerable young people, reinforce the Youth Guarantee, and focus on youth entrepreneurship and youth social investment are positive signs towards addressing this. But more can always be done, especially in the face of a looming economic crisis due to the impact of the Russian attack on Ukraine, the economic consequences of the pandemic and rising inflation.

While, overall, there is strong support for equality and solidarity, it is also clear that some groups show more solidarity than others. One of the most worrying observations is the seemingly lower levels of solidarity amongst well-off young people. When asked about what the EU's priorities should be for the next five years, the support amongst respondents with a modest financial situation (38 per cent), in need of financial help (41 per cent) and a medium-income (34 per cent) for prioritising the fight against economic



inequality was at a level twice that than respondents with a very comfortable financial situation (18 per cent). High-income respondents were also far less inclined to support policies ensuring decent housing or an EU-wide minimum wage when compared to respondents with more modest means. Linking values of solidarity and equality to the most pressing contemporary challenges (like the need for swift and socially equitable decarbonisation as noted by the Club of Rome), policymakers will need to find ways to get well-off young people fully on board.<sup>222</sup>

Like income, gender had a strong influence on socio-economic concerns and political priorities for greater equality. Women in our sample were consistently more concerned than men about socio-economic variables, and these concerns were also reflected in their policy priorities. Two of the most striking examples are that women were about 10 percentage points more likely than men to name tackling poverty and social and economic inequality as one of the top three priorities for the EU over the next five years (39 per cent versus 29 per cent).

When asked which of the policies introduced in response to the pandemic should be maintained in the future, 48 per cent of women chose providing support for those most in need compared to 35 per cent of men. We also looked at how young Europeans view gender equality. A higher number of women selected supporting gender equality as one of their top three social policy priorities from a list of 11 options (24 per cent of women vs 18 per cent of men). Reducing the pay and pension gap was seen as the most effective strategy to promote equality (40.5 per cent named it as a top three priority). 48 per cent of women (highest priority overall) and 33 per cent of men (second highest priority overall) chose

this option. This was the strategy where women's and men's preferences differed the most. Dealing with gender-based violence and providing direct childcare support to parents rounded out the top three choices for both men and women, although the numerical differences between the sexes were much smaller here. Interestingly, fighting gender-based violence was the top priority for men. Gender quotas in both politics and business were relatively low on young people's list of priorities. One possible explanation for this could be that, due to our research design, this issue had to compete with important socio-economic priorities for respondents' attention.

Based on our findings, young women are passionate about tackling social inequality and poverty and represent a key group to be further empowered to help those in need. Moreover, our findings are a wake-up call to reduce the gender pay gap. In terms of gender equality, it is promising to see tackling gender-based violence (GBV) as the top priority amongst young men. An issue that needs to be addressed across society, specific efforts need to be made to protect the most vulnerable and those most at risk – especially as women and girls are the main victims.<sup>223</sup>

### 8.3 Climate & Sustainability

Young Europeans are deeply in tune with the environmental challenges we face today. Climate change and the environment is the second concern for the future of the EU, according to young people. Combating climate change is also the second priority for the EU's COVID-19 recovery package, with a third of young respondents seeing it as a top three recovery spending priority.

When it comes to climate policy priorities, what matters most to young people is that climate

<sup>222</sup> Tagesschau. (2022). Kehrtwende zur Rettung des Planeten nötig.

<sup>223</sup> European Commission. (2022o). What is gender-based violence? Gender-based violence can take different forms and mostly affects women and girls. [https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/what-gender-based-violence_en)



change is fair and equitable for all (it shares first place with tackling air pollution). This underpins the analysis above, which shows that most young people have strong egalitarian values. When asked if they would be willing to prioritise tackling climate change over the economy even if it cost jobs, 56 per cent were in favour, while 29 per cent were against it. Interestingly, respondents in a humble financial situation are far less likely than well-off respondents to prioritise the economy over climate change (27 per cent vs 36 per cent). Our poll from late March 2022, conducted against the backdrop of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, found that two-thirds of respondents want an accelerated energy transition away from fossil fuels. Only 22 per cent are against it. Likewise, perhaps precisely because tackling climate change is so important to them, almost two-thirds of young Europeans think that the EU is not doing enough to tackle climate change and protect the environment. Focus group participants also stressed that a 30-year timeframe for achieving change is far too long.

Overall, these results suggest that climate change remains a major concern for young people and that they believe the EU needs to do more, and to do it faster, while also ensuring that the transition to a zero-carbon future is just and fair.

## 8.4 Views on the European Union

As part of this report, we also wanted to know how young people view the European Union in general. Most countries show moderate levels of support for further EU integration on a negative-positive scale of 0 to 10, although differences between countries are not extreme, with the highest support in Italy (6.1) and the lowest in Slovenia and the Netherlands (5.3). Among non-EU countries, it is noteworthy that respondents from the UK (5.8) showed quite high support for further EU integration, while respondents from Switzerland showed the lowest support (5.0) of all countries. It is interesting to note that

the impact of the pandemic seems to have made young people inclined to support further cooperation within the Union: 68 per cent of respondents said the COVID-19 crisis showed that more cooperation at the EU level was needed, while only 21 per cent said EU integration had gone too far.

This cooperation and EU integration are based on values such as democracy and the rule of law, which are enshrined in the EU treaties. When asked whether the EU should defend these values by sanctioning member states that repeatedly disregard them, two-thirds of respondents agreed—with the support levels in countries ranging from 69 per cent in Germany to 58 per cent in Denmark. Interestingly, the level of agreement in Hungary, which is repeatedly described as the member state with the greatest democratic deficit, is also relatively high at 65 per cent, placing it third in our sample of eight member states.

When asked how respondents see the EU's role in the world, support for a strong global EU is lower compared to support for internal integration: 52 per cent of young EU residents want the Union to have more power to represent Europe with a single voice on the world stage, and 34 per cent think countries should represent themselves instead. The differences between countries are large. In our November 2021 survey, a large proportion of respondents from Spain want the EU to have one voice on the world stage (67 per cent). By contrast, respondents in the Netherlands and Denmark (36 per cent each) are much less in favour of strengthening the EU role at the global level. In fact, the EU average on this issue has not changed significantly since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began, according to a poll we conducted at the end of March 2022. This is not to say that there is not also strong solidarity among young EU residents following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. A large majority of young Europeans believe that hosting Ukrainian refugees in their country is an important humanitarian measure. 74 per cent support this idea.



Similar strong support can also be observed for sanctions against Russia (76 per cent) and military support for Ukraine by the European Union (68 per cent).

All this suggests that the EU is seen as an important player on the world stage and that EU policy towards Ukraine currently enjoys broad support amongst young people. However, it also shows that national sentiments are stronger among the young generation when it comes to EU foreign policy than when it comes to issues of EU integration and cooperation between EU member states. This may pose a challenge to the EU's long-term common foreign policy responses to the pressing questions of how to continue sanctioning external adversaries such as Russia against the backdrop of an energy shortage, how to achieve energy independence and how to combat climate change, all issues that depend on coordinated European responses on the global stage.

## **8.5 Participation in Politics and Youth Empowerment in EU Matters**

As a basis for this report, we have asked young people across Europe many questions about social and individual concerns as well as future political priorities. The question now is how young people can get involved to ensure that the above goals are achieved.

Voting remains by far the most important means of political participation for young people in Europe: 56 per cent of respondents have voted at some point in their lives. Donations (36 per cent) and petitions (27.5 per cent) are the second and third most important means. Less than one-tenth of all respondents have never

been politically active. Interestingly, only about one in five say they follow a political organisation on social networks or have posted on social media for political purposes. Given the preference for social media amongst Millennials and Gen Z, these values seem low. For political parties, this means that while the lack of engagement of young people in traditional politics has long been discussed, elections remain by far the most important means by which young people make their voices heard. The low number of those who are not engaged at all also suggests that many younger people can be politically activated if the right programmes, the right language and the right formats are found for them.

Despite their active political participation, young people would like to be even more involved in European public affairs, an opinion shared by two-thirds of respondents. While in five countries agreement was roughly 70 per cent or above (Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Romania, Germany), in Hungary and France the enthusiasm to get involved was 60.5 per cent and 57 per cent, respectively, suggesting a noticeably lower appetite for more involvement compared to other countries. Finally, two-thirds of respondents in all countries except Denmark think that politicians need to do a better job of communicating to citizens what the EU does and how it affects young people's daily lives. This opinion is particularly strong in Southern and Eastern European countries, with agreement levels of 72.5 per cent or more.

This suggests that while young people value the EU and want to get involved, there is a need to help them understand how the EU affects their daily lives. This is a project that needs to be tackled jointly by the different EU institutions and their representatives.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Strategies on how to do so have also been discussed in a recent European Parliament Survey on youth. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2021/youth-survey-2021/report.pdf>



## 8.6 Generation Z versus Generation Y

One of the goals of this report was to identify the similarities and differences in attitudes between Millennials and Generation Z. According to the data in this report, there are some differences in attitudes between the generations, but they are relatively small compared to the differences between different socio-economic groups and men and women.

There are some variations across generations on important societal concerns, but none are higher than 0.5 on a negative positivity scale of 0 to 10, reflecting similar levels of concern. Overall, Generation Z is slightly less worried about all the issues we mentioned, suggesting that the younger generation is slightly more positive about the future. Jobs and employment top the list for both generations (number one for Gen Z, number two for Millennials). It is noteworthy that Millennials rate social concerns such as poverty and equality as well as the situation of the underprivileged and people in need slightly higher than Gen Z, while Gen Z rates physical health and emotional well-being relatively higher. This trend is also evident in other responses: for example, 44 per cent of Millennials compared to 39 per cent of Gen Z agree that aid for those most in need of assistance should be maintained in the long term, even after the pandemic.<sup>225</sup>

In another question, we asked about how recovery money should be spent. Interestingly, while climate change spending is a key issue for both generations, there are no major differences between Generation Z and Millennials on this point, despite the media's tendency to portray the climate strike movements as coming mainly from Generation Z. Rather, differences are more

granular: it is particularly important for young women between 16 and 19 who stand out in their support for this matter (support among men is strong among those aged 30 to 38). One of the rare generational differences that is not primarily due to professional status is the level of support for the need to further promote the rights of the LGBTQI+ community. While still a top three social policy priority across the board, support levels increase by 9 percentage points between Millennials and Gen Z (17 per cent vs 26 per cent).

The main differences that do exist may be more attributable to occupational status, such as being employed or unemployed (which is more likely for Millennials) or being in education (which is more likely for members of Generation Z). For example, concerns about education and training were greater among respondents aged 18-29, who were naturally more likely to be in education or at the start of their career than respondents who were older (5.69 vs 4.99).<sup>226</sup> Those in education and unpaid internships were the most concerned, which comes as no surprise (6.03 and 6.24). Similarly, Millennials expressed greater concern about jobs and employment, reflected in the ten percentage point increase in the proportion of those who identified this as a top priority for the EU over the next five years (45 per cent compared to 36 per cent of Gen Z).

We also saw significant differences in how respondents from the two generations felt about working or studying from home and the impact it had on their well-being. Members of Gen Z were more negatively impacted than Millennials, with those between 16 to 19 and 20 to 24 showing the most concern. This indicates the need for increased efforts to boost access to mental health services, as discussed in the paragraphs above.

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<sup>225</sup> The numbers refer to the percentage of respondents who have chosen this as a top three priority among a list of issues.

<sup>226</sup> Values are on a zero (low concern) to ten scale (high concern) respectively.



Another interesting question is whether Generation Z, who grew up with social media from a young age, uses it differently than Millennials, for whom it only entered their lives in their teens. We found some differences. Generation Z used social media notably more to cope with the pandemic (48 per cent) than Millennial respondents (38 per cent). The difference was less pronounced in other areas. Generation Z is slightly more inclined to engage with politics via social media than Millennials: While 17 per cent of Millennials follow political organisations on social media platforms, 20 per cent of Gen Z do. Similarly, 18 per cent of Millennials have posted on social media for political purposes, compared to 22 per cent of Gen Z. What is interesting here is that those under 18 are the ones most active on social media for political purposes, according to our data.

For decision-makers, this means that the differences between the generations are not drastic and result mainly from typical developmental steps (from education to work and family). Concerns and policy priorities are, therefore, naturally influenced by occupational status. Young people who are still in education will therefore be most interested in the issue. In addition, health is a relatively more important issue for Generation Z, while social issues are more important for Millennials. However, the differences are not great. Generation Z is also more active on social media regarding political issues than Millennials, but here it is mainly the under-18s

who are most active online and can be engaged in political issues there.

## 8.7 Building for Progress

As the European Year of Youth progresses, this report has shown that young people are ready to engage for a progressive future for Europe. They stress their demand to get more involved in EU public affairs, while also highlighting the need to learn more about how the EU impacts their daily life. Their main concerns are jobs, health and climate. In addressing these issues, they want solutions that are fair and just for all. Many of them believe that this can be achieved in a more integrated European Union, where the burden is shared between countries rather than countries retreating inwards. In all of this, there are also important differences between them: in particular, in some countries, such as Denmark, EU engagement is met with less enthusiasm, while in other countries, especially Spain and Italy, enthusiasm for EU engagement is high. As Millennials and Gen Z strive to build a European future, they can count on many similarities between them. As we conclude this report, there is just one thing to say: a lot of listening has been done, opinions have been sought, and future goals have been highlighted. Now is the time to go to work and ensure that young people and policymakers – including those from Gen Z and Millennials – work together to build a better future, one that is based on progress.



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# ANNEXE TO BUILDING BLOCK 1

The tables below show the Chi-Squared and ANOVA test results accompanying the tables and charts in this Building Block.

*During the COVID-19 pandemic, many have had to study or work from home. Some people consider that working or studying from home has been a positive experience for themselves. Others consider that it has been rather negative. What number on the scale best describes your experience?*

**Table 1.** *Views on working or studying from home by age group of respondents*

Age group	Mean
Gen Z (16-26)	5.5857
Millennials (27-38)	6.3351

*Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their experience of working or studying from home on a scale of 0-10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). This table shows the views on working or studying from home by age group of respondents.*

**Table 2.** *Views on working or studying from home by education*

Education	Mean
Up to lower secondary school	5.3919
Upper secondary school and post-secondary non-tertiary	5.9056
Higher education	6.5127

*Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their experience of working or studying from home on a scale of 0-10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). This table shows the views on working or studying from home by education level.*

**Table 3.** *Views on working or studying from home by income of respondents*

Income	Mean
High (well-off and very comfortable)	6.0535
Medium (comfortable situation financially)	6.2265
Low (humble income and financial situation)	5.6712
No income (requiring financial help/assistance)	5.2879

*Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their experience of working or studying from home on a scale of 0-10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). This table shows the views on working or studying from home by income of respondents.*



**Table 4.** Views on working or studying from home by housing situation

Housing situation	Mean
I live alone with my spouse or partner	6.4515
Other	6.0361
I live with housemates (including friends or siblings)	5.9006
I live at the home of older family members (parents, grandparents, etc.)	5.7627
I live alone (in an apartment, a studio, or a house)	5.6269
I live at a residence/dorm for students and/or young professionals (or any other type of large collective housing)	5.1925
I don't know/I'm not sure	5.123

Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their experience of working or studying from home on a scale of 0-10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). This table shows the views on working or studying from home by housing situation.

**Table 5.** Views on working or studying from home by region of Europe

Region of Europe	Mean
Southern Europe	6.0583
Northern Europe	6.0014
Western Europe	5.9623
Central and Eastern Europe	5.5825

Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their experience

of working or studying from home on a scale of 0-10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). This table shows the views on working or studying from home by region of Europe.

**Table 6.** Views on working or studying from home by country of residence of respondents

Country of residence	Mean
United-Kingdom	6.363
Switzerland	6.3502
Spain	6.1098
Italy	6.0149
Denmark	6.0014
Netherlands	5.8983
Germany	5.7737
France	5.7405
Romania	5.7204
Slovenia	5.4336
Hungary	5.3522

Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their experience of working or studying from home on a scale of 0-10 (with 0 meaning very negative and 10 very positive). This table shows the views on working or studying from home by country of residence of respondents.



**Table 7.** Views on concerns due to the pandemic at the societal level

During the COVID-19 pandemic, some people have been very concerned with some societal problems. Others have not been at all concerned. What number on the scale best describes your level of concern on the societal issues below?	Mean
Jobs and future employment	6.5356
Poverty and inequality	6.485
Physical health and well-being in society	6.4286
Emotional or psychological well-being in society	6.4194
Underprivileged people and those in need	6.3502
Local and family businesses	6.1217
Education and studying/learning in society	6.1072
Gender-based violence in society	5.787

Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their level of concern on the societal issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The table shows the average level of concern of respondents for each issue.

**Table 8.** Views on concerns about emotional or psychological well-being in society by country of residence of respondents

Country of residence	Mean
Italy	6.9751
United-Kingdom	6.8642
Netherlands	6.3411
Slovenia	6.3161
France	6.2368
Spain	6.2206
Switzerland	6.1469
Germany	6.133
Romania	6.1053
Hungary	6.0324
Denmark	5.9706

Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their level of concern on the societal issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The table shows the average level of concern for “emotional or psychological well-being” by country of residence of respondents.



**Table 9.** *Views on concerns about your mental health or psychological well-being by gender*

Gender	N	Mean
Women	5208	6.261
Men	5725	5.6525

Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their level of concern on the societal issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The table shows the average level of concern for “emotional or psychological well-being” by gender.

**Table 10.** *Views on speaking to psychologists or any other trained person to deal with the pandemic by age group (entire sample)*

Age Group					Total
16-19 years old	20-24 years old	25-29 years old	30-34 years old	35-38 years old	
88.1%	89.1%	88.4%	91.0%	92.0%	89.7%
11.9%	10.9%	11.6%	9.0%	8.0%	10.3%
100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Respondents were asked to choose all the activities, among those proposed, that helped their emotional or psychological well-being during the pandemic. This table shows the proportion of respondents selecting the option “speaking to psychologists, doctors, social workers, hotlines, or any other kind of trained person” by age group.



**Table 11.** *Views on speaking to psychologists or any other trained person to deal with the pandemic by age group (restricted sample)*

		Country of residence						
		Denmark	France	Germany	Hungary	Italy	Netherlands	Romania
Speaking to psychologists, doctors, social workers, hotlines, or any other kind of trained person.	No	72.7%	87.6%	85.3%	92.5%	90.0%	82.7%	89.6%
	Yes	27.3%	12.4%	14.7%	7.5%	10.0%	17.3%	10.4%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Respondents were asked to choose all the activities, among those proposed, that helped their emotional or psychological well-being during the pandemic. This table shows the proportion of respondents selecting the option “speaking to psychologists, doctors, social workers, hotlines, or any other kind of trained person” by country of residence of respondents.

		Country of residence				Total
		Slovenia	Spain	Switzerland	United-Kingdom	
Speaking to psychologists, doctors, social workers, hotlines, or any other kind of trained person.	No	90.7%	90.7%	88.0%	82.8%	86.7%
	Yes	9.3%	9.3%	12.0%	17.2%	13.3%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



**Table 12.** Views on concerns about jobs and future employment

		Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Per cent
Valid	0.00	500	4.5	4.6	4.6
	1.00	147	1.3	1.3	5.9
	2.00	290	2.6	2.7	8.6
	3.00	515	4.7	4.7	13.3
	4.00	589	5.4	5.4	18.7
	5.00	1177	10.7	10.8	29.5
	6.00	1414	12.9	13.0	42.5
	7.00	1879	17.1	17.2	59.8
	8.00	1861	16.9	17.1	76.8
	9.00	1061	9.6	9.7	86.6
	10.00	1463	13.3	13.4	100.0
	Total	10895	99.0	100.0	
Missing		105	1.0		
Total		11000	100.0		

Respondents were asked to choose the number that best described their level of concern on the societal issues proposed on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 meaning not at all concerned and 10 very concerned). The table shows the average level of concern for “jobs and future employment”.



# ANNEXE TO BUILDING BLOCK 2

The tables below show the Chi-Squared and ANOVA test results accompanying the tables and charts in this Building Block.

**Table 13.** *Following a political organisation on social media platforms. \* Above or below voting age (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.341	1	0.004		
Continuity Correction	7.956	1	0.005		
Likelihood Ratio	7.789	1	0.005		
Fisher's Exact Test				0.005	0.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.34	1	0.004		
N of valid Cases	11000				

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between being older than the voting age and following a political organisation on social media platforms.*

**Table 14.** *Views on Youth Involvement in European Public Affairs by Education Level – Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	64.605	4	0
Likelihood Ratio	64.987	4	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	40.64	1	0
N of valid Cases	8999		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between education level and youth involvement in European public affairs.*



**Table 15.** *Support for European Integration by Country of Residence*

Q10. Some think European countries should unite further. Others say unification has already gone too far. What number on the scale best describes your position? \*Education

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups (combined)	345.151	2	172.576	21.754	0
Within Groups	67006.716	8446	7.933		
Total	67351.867	8448			

Respondents were asked to select the number that best described their position on further European integration on a scale of 0 to 10 (with 0 indicating complete opposition and 10 maximum support). This graph shows the results by country of residence.

**Table 16.** *Views on Citizen involvement in EU Economic Policymaking by Country of Residence – Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	217.635	16	0
Likelihood Ratio	213.395	16	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	86.495	1	0
N of valid Cases	9001		

The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between country of residence and views on citizen involvement in EU economic policymaking.



**Table 17.** *Views on Youth Involvement in European Public Affairs by Country of Residence – Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	416.421	16	0
Likelihood Ratio	409.065	16	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	178.827	1	0
N of valid Cases	9001		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between country of residence and views on youth involvement in European public affairs.*

**Table 18.** *Views on Politicians' Communication on the EU by Country of Residence- Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	127.686	16	0
Likelihood Ratio	128.391	16	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	56.225	1	0
N of valid Cases	9000		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between country of residence and views on politicians' communication on the EU.*



**Table 19.** *Views on Politicians' Communication on the EU by Education Level of Residence-Sample Restricted to EU Residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	71.696	4	0
Likelihood Ratio	73.104	4	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	44.547	1	0
N of valid Cases	8999		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between education level and views on politicians' communication on the EU.*

**Table 20.** *Views on the Need for More Ethnic Diversity among Politicians by Country of Residence – Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	197.674	16	0
Likelihood Ratio	196.898	16	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	16.28	1	0
N of valid Cases	9002		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between country of residence and views on the need for more ethnic diversity among politicians.*



**Table 21.** *Conditionality of EU Funding to the Respect for the Rule of Law by Country of Residence – Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	82.048	16	0
Likelihood Ratio	81.994	16	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.416	1	0.065
N of valid Cases	9001		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between education level and views on EU funding conditionality based on respect for the rule of law.*

**Table 22.** *Conditionality of EU Funding to the Respect for the Rule of Law by Education Level of Residence- Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	63.903	4	0
Likelihood Ratio	65.023	4	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	44.391	1	0
N of valid Cases	8999		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between education level and views on conditionality of EU funding to the respect for the rule of law.*



# ANNEXE TO BUILDING BLOCK 3

The tables below show the Chi-Squared and ANOVA test results accompanying the tables and graphs in this Building Block.

**Table 23.** *Views on the EU Guaranteeing Minimum Wages by Country of Residence – Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	289.968	16	0
Likelihood Ratio	282.879	16	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	162.817	1	0
N of valid Cases	8999		

The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between country of residence and views on the EU guaranteeing minimum wages.

**Table 24.** *Views on the EU Guaranteeing Minimum Wages by Gender – Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	101.296	2	0
Likelihood Ratio	102.241	2	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.36	1	0.548
N of valid Cases	8999		

The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between gender and views on the EU guaranteeing minimum wages.



**Table 25.** *Views on the EU Guaranteeing Minimum Wages by Education Level – Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.744	4	0
Likelihood Ratio	23.496	4	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	15.671	1	0
N of valid Cases	9001		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between education level and views on the EU guaranteeing minimum wages.*

**Table 26.** *Views on the EU Guaranteeing Minimum Wages by generation of respondents – Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.045	2	0.001
Likelihood Ratio	14.101	2	0.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.882	1	0.009
N of valid Cases	9001		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between gender and views on the EU guaranteeing minimum wages.*



**Table 27.** *Views on the EU Guaranteeing Universal Basic Income by Country of Residence – Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	172.444	16	0
Likelihood Ratio	176.122	16	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	57.497	1	0
N of valid Cases	9000		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between country of residence and views on the EU guaranteeing universal minimum income.*

**Table 28.** *Views on EU Support for Children by Country – Sample Restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	214.967	16	0
Likelihood Ratio	212.113	16	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	99.008	1	0
N of valid Cases	9000		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between country of residence and views on the EU's support for children.*



**Table 29.** *Views on EU Support for Children by Age Group – Sample restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.447	2	0
Likelihood Ratio	23.455	2	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	18.953	1	0
N of valid Cases	8999		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between generation and views on the EU's support for children.*

**Table 30.** *Views on EU Support for Children by Gender – Sample Restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	108.02	2	0
Likelihood Ratio	109.255	2	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.024	1	0
N of valid Cases	9002		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between gender and views on the EU's support for children.*



**Table 31.** *Views on EU Support for Children by Education Level – Sample Restricted to EU residents (Chi-Square Tests)*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	95.014	4	0
Likelihood Ratio	93.524	4	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	39.745	1	0
N of valid Cases	9001		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between education level and views on the EU's support for children.*

**Table 32.** *Views on the EU Providing Benefits to Students by Country of Residence- Sample restricted to EU residents*

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	335.22	16	0
Likelihood Ratio	349.731	16	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	145.599	1	0
N of valid Cases	9000		

*The Pearson Chi-square test indicates a statistically significant association at the  $p < 0.01$  level between country of residence and views on the EU Providing Benefits to Students.*



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