



EUROBAROMETER 74 **PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION**

ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Fieldwork: November 2010

Publication: 12 January 2011 (European Semester Conference)

Standard Eurobarometer 74

Autumn 2010

Public opinion in the European Union

**Conducted by TNS Opinion & Social at the
request of the European Commission -
Directorate General for Communication**

**Survey co-ordinated by the Directorate
General for Communication**

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Introduction

This report presents the first results of the Standard Eurobarometer wave 74 which was carried out from mid-November to early December 2010¹; it was fielded in 32 countries or territories: the 27 European Union Member States, four candidate countries² (Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Iceland), and the Turkish Cypriot Community in the part of the country that is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus.

The report presents, under the title "Economic governance in the European Union", firstly, a selection of questions relating to the present financial and economic crisis, governance measures to exit the crisis, measures to improve governance of the financial markets and the perceived role of the various global actors. Then, in a second part, the report focuses on the Europe 2020 strategy, with a view to take up with economic growth on a mid-term perspective. The report is published at the occasion of a major conference organised by the European Commission³ on economic governance in the European Union.

The survey reveals that there is a significant increase in the number of people who feel that the impact of the economic crisis on the job market has already reached its peak. This view is shared by a majority in 13 countries out of 27. This evolution is consistent with the latest official statistics.

In November 2010, when this survey was carried out, the first signs of economic recovery were visible: EU27 growth was slightly higher than that recorded in the previous quarter (+0.4 points) and was up as much as +2.1 points⁴ on a year-on-year basis. At the same time, although unemployment has increased slightly in the European Union⁵ (+0.2 points since October 2009), it has fallen significantly in some countries, in particular in Germany, Finland, Sweden and Malta, by -0.5 points or more since October 2009.

However, at a time when some countries are starting to emerge from the economic crisis, others have experienced difficulties, in particular Ireland which faced a serious financial crisis at the time of the survey fieldwork. On 21 November, the Irish government asked the International Monetary Fund and the European Union, through the European Financial Stability Facility, for support.

The various Member States thus find themselves in contrasting economic situations; in some countries there are already signs of an economic recovery while in other Member States it seems the worst is yet to come.

¹ For precise details of the fieldwork dates in each country, please refer to the technical specifications.

² Montenegro is also a candidate country since December 2010

³ Conference "Towards integrated economic governance in the EU: The European Semester", Brussels 12 January 2011, organised by the Bureau of European Policy Advisers (BEPA) and DG ECFIN.

⁴ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/2-12112010-BP/EN/2-12112010-BP-EN.PDF

⁵ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-30112010-BP/EN/3-30112010-BP-EN.PDF

Despite these differences, most countries agree that the European Union should play a major role in resolving the crisis and reforming the global financial system.

This report focuses on results from the EU27 Member States and is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the crisis and how it is perceived by European public opinion. The second part analyses public support for the Europe 2020 strategy: their evaluation of the achievability of its objectives, and their priorities within the different flagship initiatives set out in the strategy.

* * *

The methodology used is that of the Standard Eurobarometer surveys of the Directorate-General for Communication ("Research and Speechwriting" Unit). A technical note concerning the interviews, carried out by the institutes within the TNS Opinion & Social network, is annexed to this report. This note describes the interview method used, as well as the confidence intervals⁶.

The Eurobarometer web site can be consulted at the following address:

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

*We would like to take the opportunity to thank all the respondents across Europe
who have given their time to take part in this survey.*

Without their active participation, this study would not have been possible.

⁶ The results tables are included in the annex. It should be noted that the total of the percentages in the tables of this report may exceed 100% when the respondent can give several answers to the same question.

In this report, the countries are represented by their official abbreviations. The abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

ABBREVIATIONS	
EU27	European Union – 27 Member States
DK/NA	Don't Know / No answer
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
CY	Republic of Cyprus*
CY (tcc)	Area not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus
LT	Lithuania
LV	Latvia
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	The Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	The United Kingdom
HR	Croatia
TR	Turkey
MK	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia**
IS	Iceland

* Cyprus as a whole is one of the 27 European Union Member States. However, the "*acquis communautaire*" is suspended in the part of the country that is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews conducted in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are recorded in the category "CY" and included in the EU27 average. The interviews conducted in the part of the country not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are recorded in the category "CY(tcc)" [tcc: *Turkish Cypriot Community*].

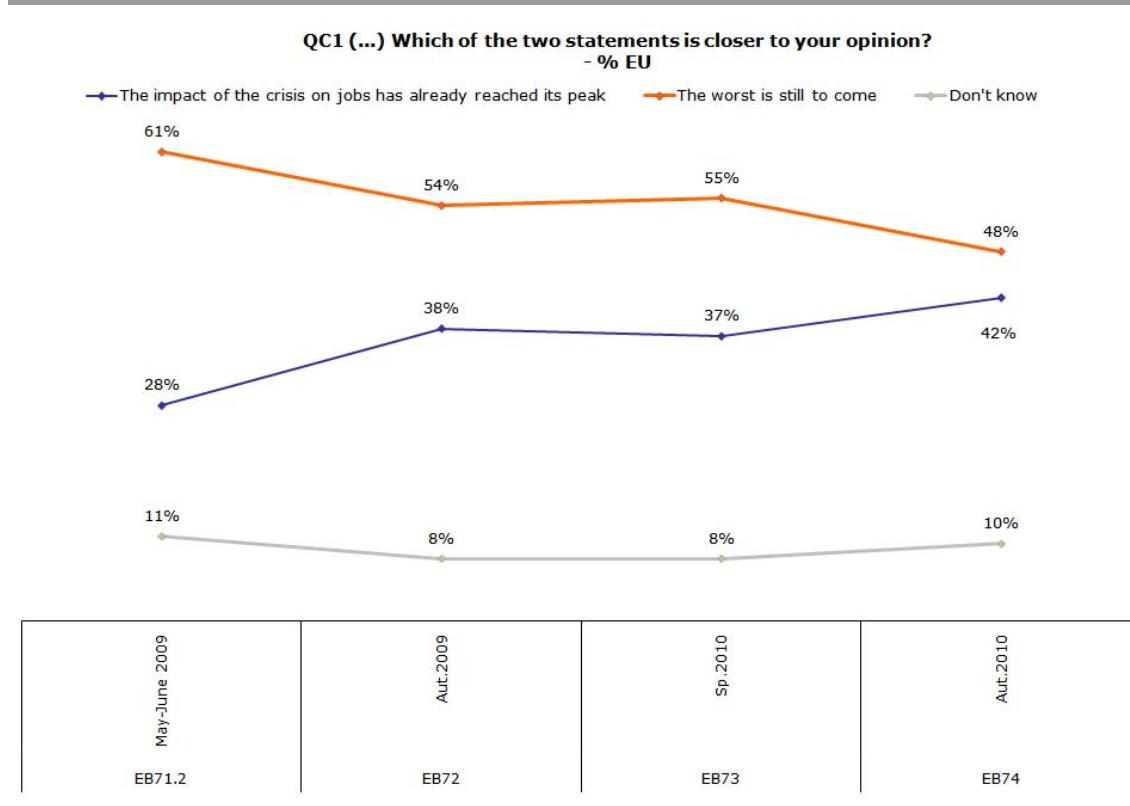
** Provisional code which does not prejudge in any way the definitive nomenclature for this country, which will be agreed following the conclusion of negotiations currently taking place at the United Nations.

1. THE EUROPEANS AND THE CRISIS

1.1 The economic crisis: has it already "reached its peak", or is "the worst still to come"?

- The feeling that the crisis has already reached its peak is increasing; though it is still the minority view -

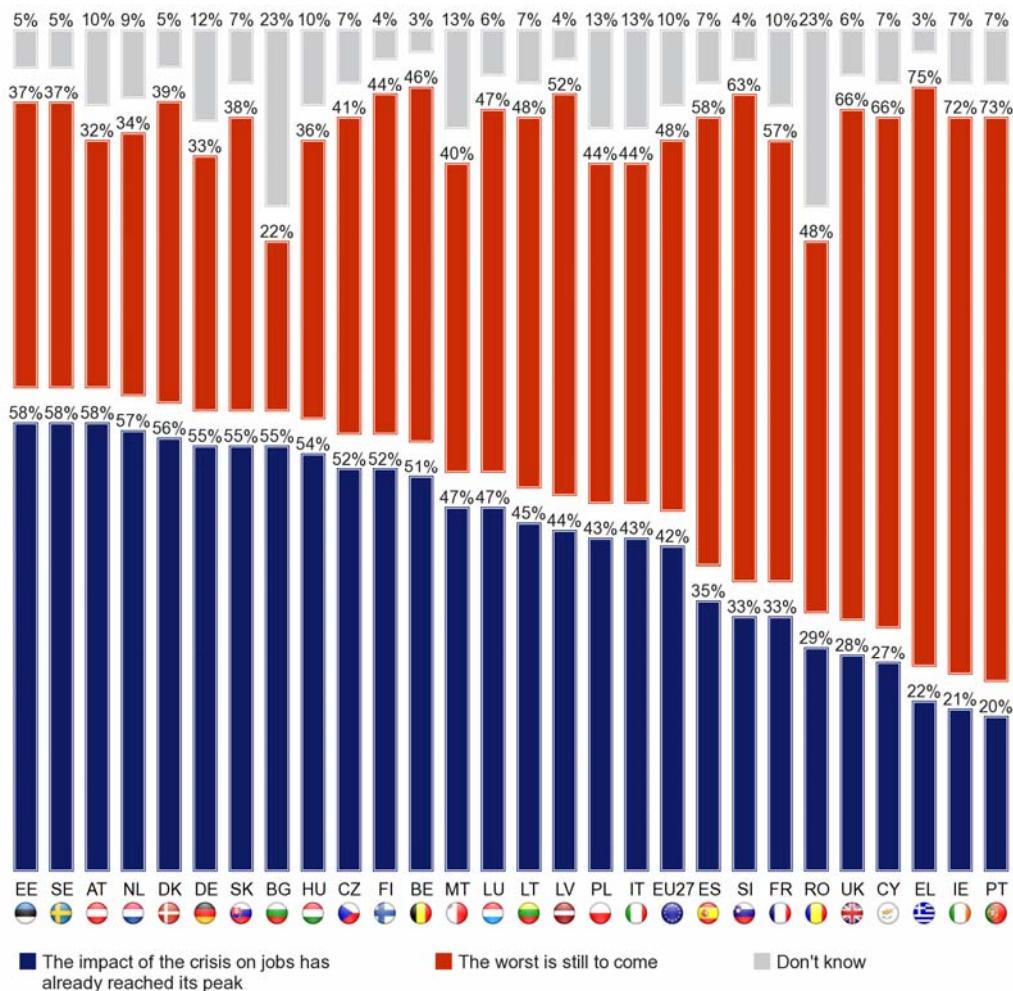
The economic crisis is not over, and a majority of Europeans continue to think that the worse is still to come regarding its impact on the job market⁷ (48%). However, this feeling has declined significantly since spring 2010 (from 55%, -7 points), while over the same period, the opposite opinion - that the crisis has already reached its peak - has grown (42%, +5 points).



If European public opinion is quite evenly divided on this topic, perceptions of the situation vary markedly from one country to the other. In 13 countries, the feeling that the impact of the economic crisis on the job market has already reached its peak is held by a majority, in particular in Estonia, Sweden and Austria (all 58%). The opposite opinion predominates in 13 other Member States: respondents in Greece (75%), Portugal (73%) and Ireland (72%) are most likely to take this view. Respondents in Luxembourg are evenly divided (47% / 47%).

⁷ QB1 Some analysts say that the impact of the economic crisis on the job market has already reached its peak and things will recover little by little. Others, on the contrary, say that the worst is still to come. Which of the two statements is closer to your opinion?

QC1. Some analysts say that the impact of the economic crisis on the job market has already reached its peak and things will recover little by little. Others, on the contrary, say that the worst is still to come. Which of the two statements is closer to your opinion?



Public opinions are evolving in different directions: optimism has risen spectacularly in Germany (55% think that the crisis has already reached its peak, +24 points), Luxembourg (47%, +21 points), and Austria (58%, +17 points). But in other Member States, the situation has deteriorated since spring 2010, most notably in Ireland (21%, -14 points)⁸ and the UK (28%, -11 points). This pattern can be seen across the results of this whole survey, with perceptions of the economic situation much better than six months ago in Germany, Austria and Luxembourg, and a rise of pessimism in Ireland and the UK.

⁸ During the survey fieldwork, Ireland was hit by a severe financial crisis.

A socio-demographic analysis reveals that different categories have very varied perceptions of the crisis: a majority of people belonging to the better-off socio-economic categories consider that the crisis has already reached its peak, whereas this is the minority view among the more precarious categories: 50% of managers and 47% of employees hold this opinion versus 35% of the unemployed and 35% of house persons.

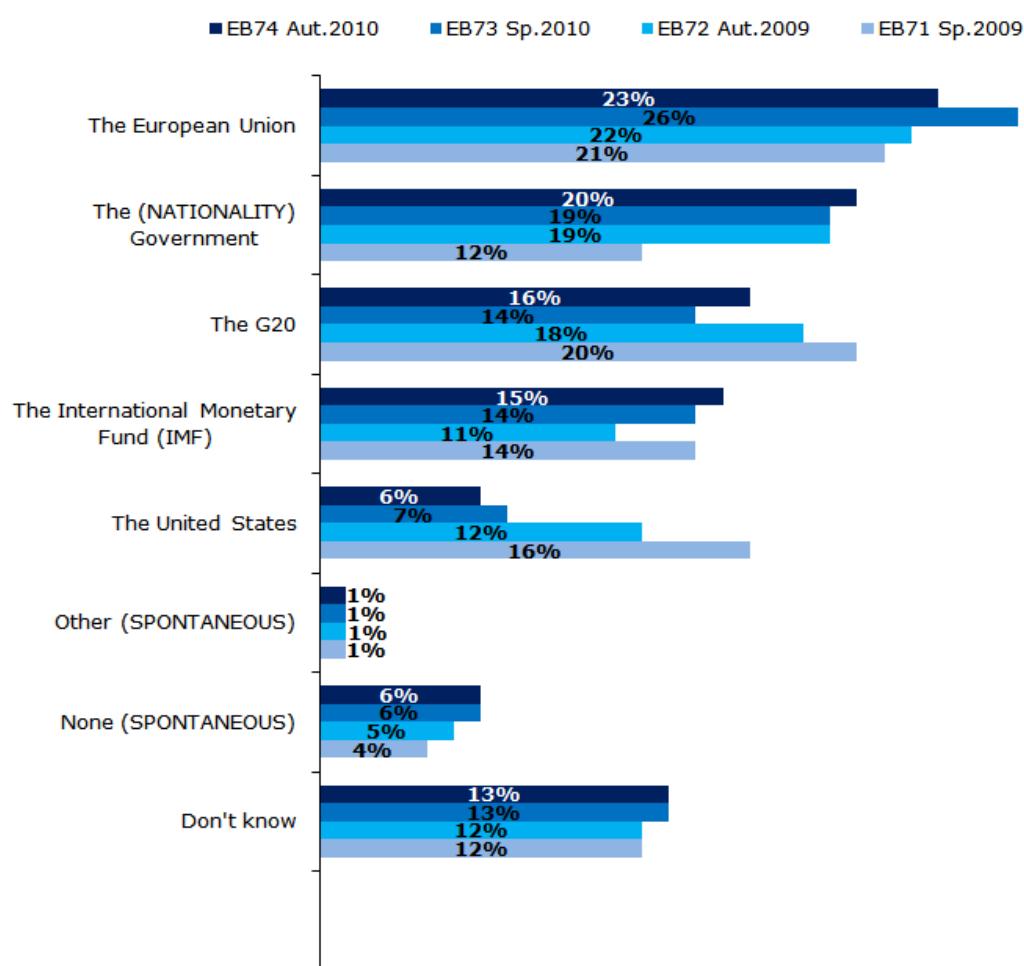
Similarly, 51% of Europeans who place themselves at the top of the social scale are optimistic, compared with 32% of those at the bottom. The same is true of respondents who almost never have difficulties paying their bills (46%) in contrast to 26% of those struggling to pay their bills most of the time.

1.2 The role of the different actors in confronting the crisis

- The EU is the best placed to take effective action against the effects of the crisis -

European public opinion sees the EU as best able to take effective actions against the effects of the financial and economic crisis, despite a small decrease since Spring 2010 (23%, -3 points). It is followed closely by the national government (20%, +1). The G20 (16%, +2) and the IMF (15%, +1) have improved their position slightly. The EU has consistently been ranked above the other actors since spring 2009, when this question was first asked.

QC3 In your opinion, which of the following is best able to take effective actions against the effects of the financial and economic crisis? - %EU



Answers in the euro area vary somewhat from those in the countries that have not adopted the euro. Respondents in the euro area firstly choose the EU (25%), ahead of the IMF (17%), with their national government in third position, equal with the G20 (both 16%) whereas the non-euro area countries rank their national government first (26%), ahead of the EU (21%).

The belief that the EU is best able to take effective action against the effects of the financial and economic crisis is held by majority of respondents in 18 Member States. It is most widely voiced in Greece (37%), Bulgaria (36%) and Poland (35%).

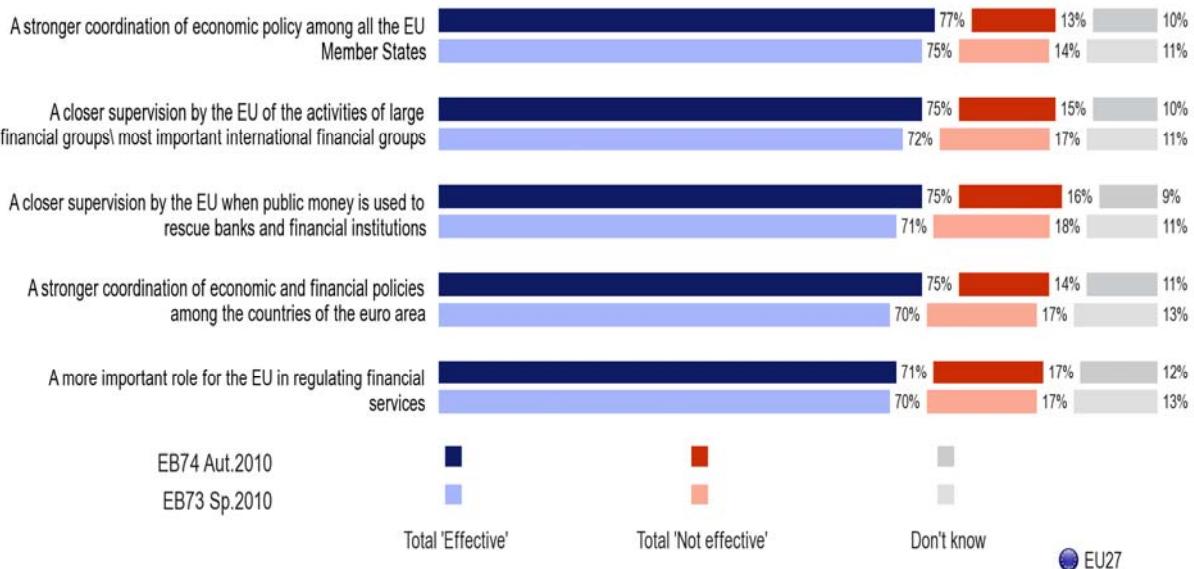
Respondents in the UK, Sweden and Romania mostly trust their national government (40%, 34% and 29% respectively). The G20 is thought best able to take effective action against the crisis in the Czech Republic (37%), the Netherlands (35%), Hungary (27%), Latvia (26%), and Denmark (25%). Finally, respondents in Finland (36%) select the IMF first.

1.3 Measures to tackle the crisis

- More coordination between countries and an increased role for the EU are considered effective in tackling the crisis -

In line with the opinion that the EU is best able to fight the impact of the crisis effectively, all the suggested measures are considered effective by more than seven Europeans in ten, and this opinion has grown in strength since spring 2010 for all the propositions tested.⁹

QC7. A range of measures to tackle the current financial and economic crisis is being discussed in the European institutions. For each, could you tell me whether you think it would be effective or not?



The need for more coordination among Member States, within the EU (77%, +2 points since Spring 2010), and the euro area (75%, +5 points)¹⁰, **is forcefully expressed by Europeans**: they seem to feel that acting independently at the national level would not be sufficient to combat the crisis.

Furthermore, a large majority of Europeans consider that the European Union should play a more important role in tackling the crisis. Firstly, by supervising the activities of banks and financial institutions more closely (75%, +3 points) and the way in which public funds are used to support them (75%, +4 points); and secondly, in the regulation of financial services, where 71% of Europeans believe that it would be effective for the European Union to play a more important role (+1 point).

The feeling that the various measures proposed would be effective is shared by an absolute majority of respondents in all the Member States. However, a detailed analysis reveals differences in the extent of this belief. Slovakia, Belgium and Cyprus record the highest rates of perceived effectiveness. However, respondents in the United Kingdom are the least enthusiastic, with "effective" answers varying between 51% and 57% according to the measure tested.

In terms of evolutions, support for the various measures has increased in many Member States, in particular in Italy and Portugal: in these two countries, the perceived effectiveness of each of the proposals has increased significantly (by 8 points or more) since spring 2010.

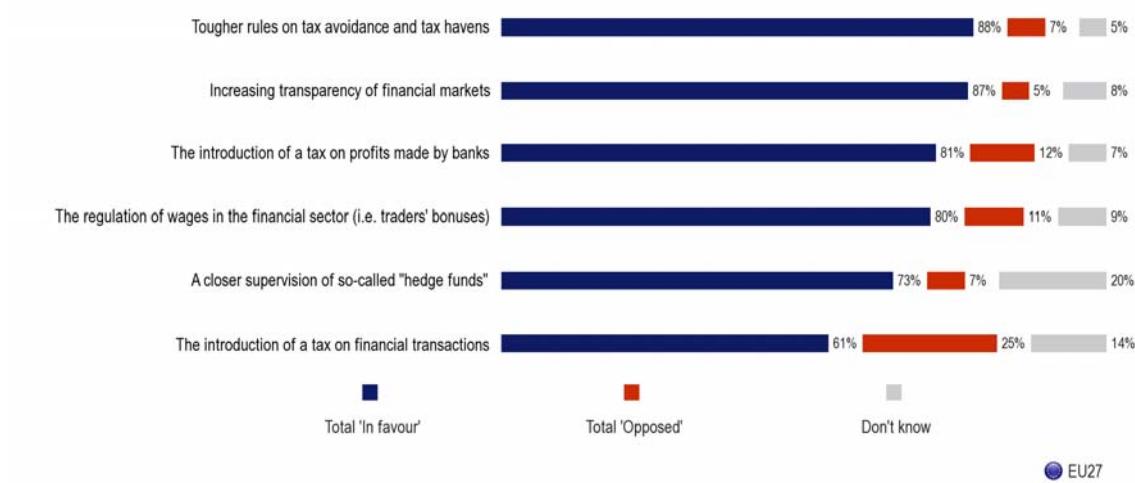
¹⁰ QC7 Certain measures aimed at combating the current financial and economic crisis are currently being discussed within the European institutions. For each of these measures, could you tell me whether you think it would be effective or not? 1. A more important role for the EU in regulating financial services 2. A closer supervision by the EU of the activities of large financial groups\ most important international financial groups 3. A stronger coordination of economic policy among all the EU Member States 4. A closer supervision by the EU when public money is used to rescue banks and financial institutions 5. A stronger coordination of economic and financial policies among the countries of the euro area - 1) Very effective 2) Fairly effective 3) Not very effective 4) Not at all effective

1.4 Reforming global financial markets

- Europeans are strongly in favour of the different measures aiming to reform global financial markets... -

Europeans **strongly support the various measures that the European Union could adopt to reform the global financial markets**. At least eight out of ten Europeans support four of the proposals, namely **tougher rules on tax avoidance and tax havens, increasing the transparency of financial markets, the introduction of a tax on profits made by banks and the regulation of wages in the financial sector (i.e. traders' bonuses)**.

QC8. Thinking about reform global financial markets, please tell me whether you are in favour or opposed to the following measures to be taken by the EU.



A slightly smaller proportion of Europeans are in favour of **closer supervision of so-called “hedge-funds”** (73%). However, opposition to this proposal is still very marginal, standing at only 7%. This slightly lower level of support is linked to the large proportion of ‘don’t know’ answers (20%).

Finally, although Europeans are the least enthusiastic about **the introduction of a tax on financial transactions**, this proposal is nevertheless supported by more than six out of ten respondents (61%). A quarter of Europeans are against it, possibly because of the fear that they themselves might be subject to this tax.

-...but the strength of support varies considerably from one country to another -

There is a real consensus on some proposals, in particular those related to **tougher rules on tax avoidance and tax havens** and **increasing the transparency of financial markets**. Almost 70% or more of respondents in all the Member States are in favour of these two measures.

The strength of support is more mixed for three other measures: **the introduction of a tax on profits made by banks**, **the regulation of wages in the financial sector (i.e. traders' bonuses)** and **closer supervision of so-called "hedge funds"**. A majority of respondents are in favour, but levels of support are more moderate. That is the case in particular in Malta for **the introduction of a tax on profits made by banks** (51% support it, while 26% are against it).

Respondents in Denmark are the least supportive of **the regulation of wages in the financial sector** (62% are in favour, while 31% reject it).

Countries are far more divided on the question of the introduction of **a tax on financial transactions**: in some Member States, a majority of respondents even oppose such a tax, in particular in Malta (30% in favour versus 46% against) and the Netherlands (36% versus 53%). Respondents in Sweden (45% versus 46%) and the United Kingdom (43% versus 41%) are evenly divided.

1.5 Best placed actors to reform and regulate the global financial market; EU role in developing new rules to reform the global financial markets

- The EU is well placed to regulate and reform global financial markets, just behind the IMF -

Although the European Union is seen as the best placed actor to take effective action against the impact of the crisis, the IMF is ranked ahead of the European Union for the purpose of regulating and reforming the global financial system. A quarter of Europeans mentioned the Washington-based international institution (25%) ahead of the European Union (21%), and the G20 (18%). When it comes to reforming global financial markets, national governments are seen as less well placed (9%) and the United States obtained the lowest score (7%).

QC9. In your opinion, which of the following is best placed to regulate and reform the global financial market?



The IMF obtained the highest score in 12 Member States. The IMF was the most frequently mentioned actor in the Nordic countries in particular: Finland (55%), Denmark (39%) and Sweden (36%).

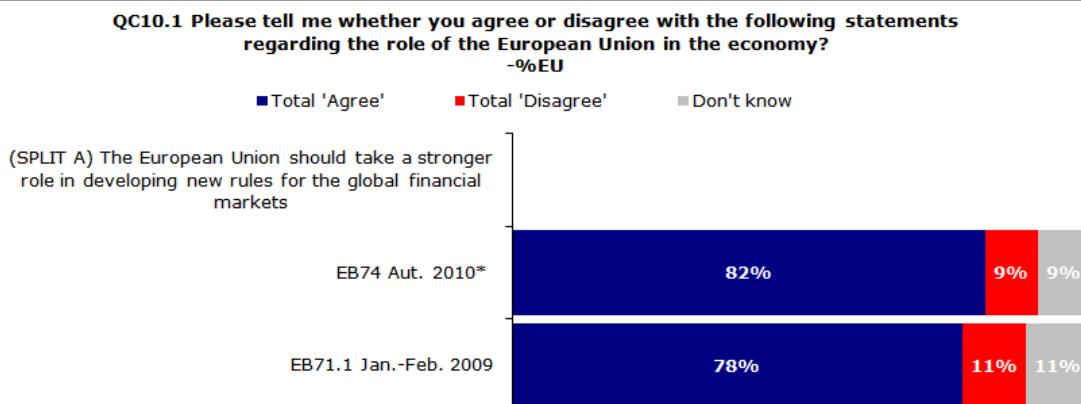
It was also the most frequently mentioned actor in four of the largest European Union countries: France (33%), Germany (28%), Spain (28%) and the United Kingdom (24%).

The European Union was the most frequently mentioned actor in 12 other Member States, beginning with Greece (33%) and Ireland (32%): these two countries, in the throes of a major crisis in recent months, thus consider that the European Union is best placed to regulate and reform global financial markets.

Finally, respondents in the Netherlands (36%), the Czech Republic (32%) and Hungary (29%) consider that the G20 is the best placed actor.

- Eight Europeans out of ten want the European Union to play a more important role in financial market regulation -

82% of Europeans agree (including 34% who *totally agree*) that the European Union should play a more important role in developing new rules for global financial markets¹¹. This opinion has gained 4 points since January – February 2009¹².



*In EB74 this item was asked only to half of the sample (Split A)

A majority of respondents in all EU countries support this opinion, with levels of support varying from 93% in Belgium and Cyprus to 65% in the United Kingdom.

An analysis of changes reveals that this opinion has gained the most ground in Ireland (81%, +15 points), Latvia (81%, +15) and Portugal (82%, +14).

¹¹ QC10.1 Please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding the role of the European Union in the economy? 1. (asked only to split A) The EU should take a stronger role in developing new rules for the global financial markets - 1) Totally agree 2) Tend to agree 3) Tend to disagree 4) Totally disagree

¹² Special Eurobarometer no 308: *The Europeans in 2009*

1.6 Have the different actors acted effectively against the crisis?

- Europeans are split on the effectiveness of the EU since the beginning of the crisis while a majority of 55% are critical of the actions of their national governments -***

Whereas an absolute majority of Europeans consider that their government has not acted effectively to tackle the crisis since its outbreak (55% versus 39% who consider that it has acted effectively), respondents are almost split down the middle as regards the European Union's role: 45% consider that it has acted effectively compared with 44% who take the opposite view. Finally, just over a third of Europeans consider that the United States has acted effectively to date (35% versus 49%).

QC11. Since the beginning of the economic crisis, would you say that each of the following actors has acted effectively or not to combat the crisis up till now?

The European Union 

The (NATIONALITY) Government 

The USA 



Total 'Effectively'



Total 'Not effectively'
effectively'



Don't know



Although opinions seem to be divided on the European Union's actions, a detailed analysis of the results by country shows that a majority of Member States are positive about its role: thus, an absolute majority of respondents in 14 Member States¹³ – and a relative majority in five more¹⁴ – consider that the European Union has acted effectively to tackle the crisis.

¹³ Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

¹⁴ Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Portugal and Finland.

Conversely, a majority of respondents are critical of its actions in eight countries, in particular in Greece (71% “ineffective”) and Cyprus (65%). The feeling that the European Union was ineffective in tackling the crisis is also predominant in three of the largest European Union countries: Spain (58%), the United Kingdom (54%) and France (51%).

2. EUROPE 2020

2.1 Priorities within Europe 2020's flagship initiatives

The objective of the Europe 2020 strategy, launched by the European Commission in March 2010 to prepare the EU economy for the next decade's challenges, is to achieve a **smart**, **sustainable** and **inclusive** European economy¹⁵ while exiting the crisis. To that end seven flagship initiatives have been determined and these are to be implemented jointly at European, national and regional levels.

We asked Europeans which policy areas they thought should be given priority within each of these seven flagship initiatives¹⁶. First, the interviewee was asked to name the most important priority (*Firstly?*), with one answer only; secondly, the others (*and then?*), with several answers possible. The combined answers to both parts of the question gave an overall ranking. In this report, we focus on this combined result (*total answers*), but also on the results for the first priority named (*first answer*).

Their answers reveal strong expectations regarding employment and reflect the importance that they attach to social issues, equality between all European citizens and environmental issues.

For each flagship initiative, most of the proposed actions appear to be largely endorsed by European citizens. However, some of the proposed actions are given slightly lower priority.

Furthermore, the relatively low rate of 'don't know' answers¹⁷ is striking: Europeans have clear ideas about the various initiatives and the policies to be given priority in order to ensure that the initiatives are successful. **In a way, this also shows that they consider them to be relevant.** The only exception concerns the question on digital strategy and the Internet (20% of 'don't know' responses).

¹⁵ See <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/225> and http://europa.eu/press_room/pdf/complet_en_barroso_007_europe_2020_en_version.pdf

¹⁶ QB2-QB8 Thinking about innovation / young people / Internet / energy / industry / jobs and skills / poverty, what do you think should be the EU's priority? Firstly? And then?

¹⁷ Appearing as 'DK' in the data tables

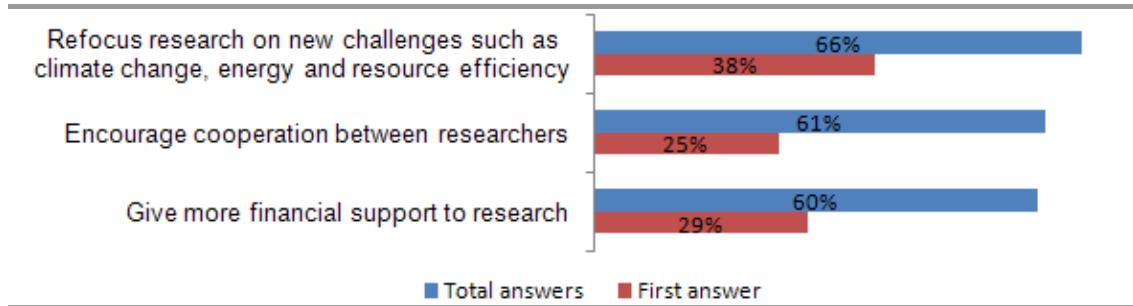
EUROPEANS' PRIORITIES WITHIN THE SEVEN FLAGSHIP INITIATIVES

		 EU27	Total answers	First answer
Innovation	<i>Refocus research on new challenges such as climate change, energy and resource efficiency</i>	66%	38%	
	Encourage cooperation between researchers	61%	25%	
	Give more financial support to research	60%	29%	
Young People	<i>Getting more young people into employment</i>	82%	50%	
	Increasing the overall quality of all levels of education	79%	36%	
	Encouraging students to study in another EU country	37%	11%	
Internet	<i>Extending broadband access to all European citizens</i>	57%	34%	
	Develop further Internet services to the citizens (e.g. E-government, online health)	52%	23%	
	Increase consumer confidence in e-commerce (buying goods and services online)	49%	23%	
Energy	<i>To promote renewable sources of energy</i>	71%	37%	
	To give financial support to small business and households to make their energy consumption more efficient	61%	31%	
	To lower carbon emissions (CO2) from the transport sector	61%	26%	
Industry	<i>To change the rules to make it easier to set up and run a business, especially small and medium sized businesses</i>	67%	36%	
	To make the most of the opportunities of the green economy (i.e. environmental technologies, recycling, renewable energy)	61%	31%	
	To restructure those industries in difficulty	58%	26%	
Job and Skills	<i>To promote education and training opportunities for all those of working age ("lifelong learning")</i>	74%	41%	
	To help people adapt to new working conditions and potential career shifts	74%	37%	
	To safeguard people's rights to live and work in another EU country	46%	18%	
Poverty	<i>To ensure the sustainability of social protection and pension systems and better access to health care systems</i>	72%	39%	
	To provide innovative education, training and employment opportunities to the most vulnerable	66%	32%	
	To fight discrimination and help those groups at risk (such as one-parent families, elderly women, minorities, Roma, people with a disability and homeless people)	59%	25%	

Results for the different initiatives are the following:

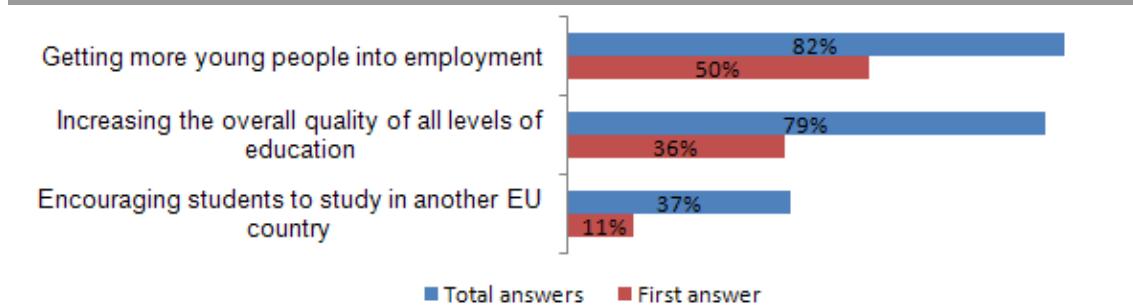
Innovation

Europeans prioritise a refocusing of research on new challenges such as climate change, energy and resource efficiency (66%). Further, this answer tops the list of *priorities mentioned first* (38%) by a comfortable margin. Next, they tend to be divided between encouraging cooperation between researchers (61%) and giving more financial support to research (60%).



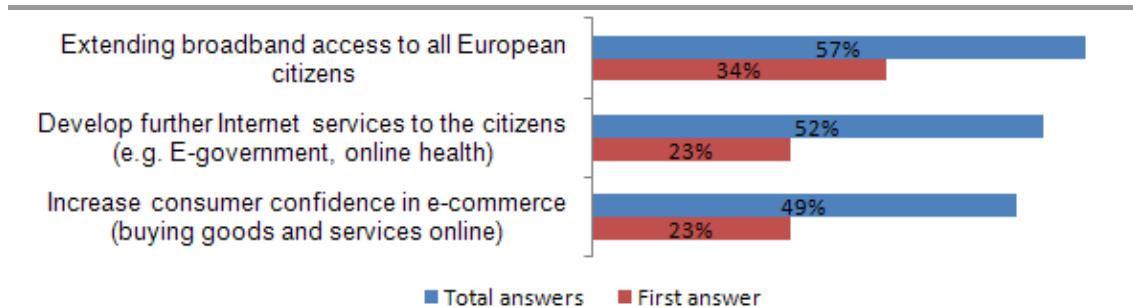
Young people

Europeans want above all to increase the number of young people in employment (82%, but 50% of *first* answers). Increasing the overall quality of all levels of education was also mentioned frequently (79%), but relatively less frequently as a *first answer* (36%). However, the idea of encouraging students to study in other countries lags behind the first two priorities (37%).



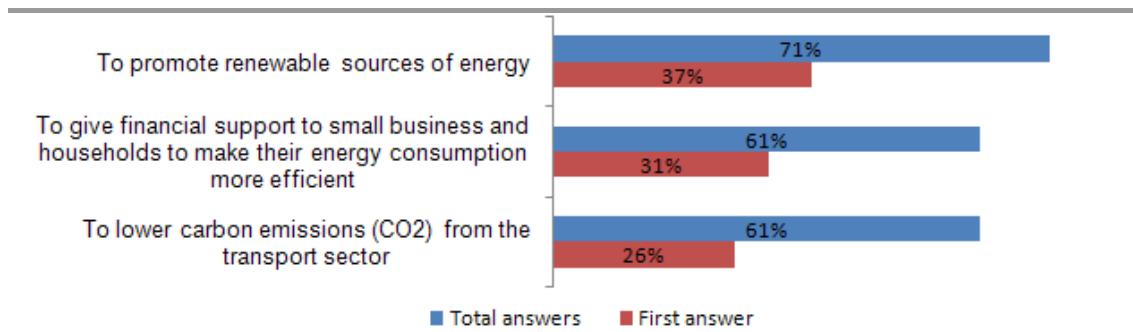
Internet

The top priority is to extend broadband access to all Europeans (57%), while 52% want online services to be developed further and 49% mentioned increasing consumer confidence in e-commerce. It should also be borne in mind that 20% of Europeans expressed no opinion. Consequently, there were fewer responses than for the other initiatives.



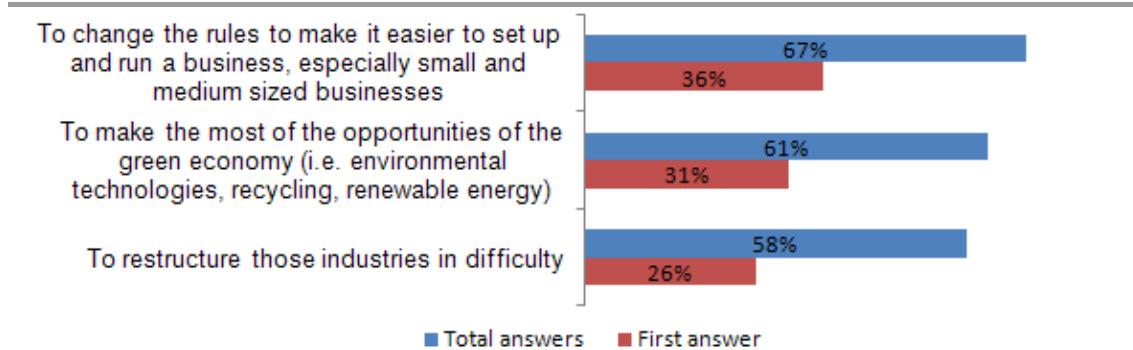
Energy

Results are also fairly mixed, but the promotion of renewable sources of energy (71%) seems to have slightly more support than the other two priorities. Giving financial support to small businesses and households to encourage them to change their energy consumption behaviour and reducing carbon emissions in the transport sector each received 61% of mentions.



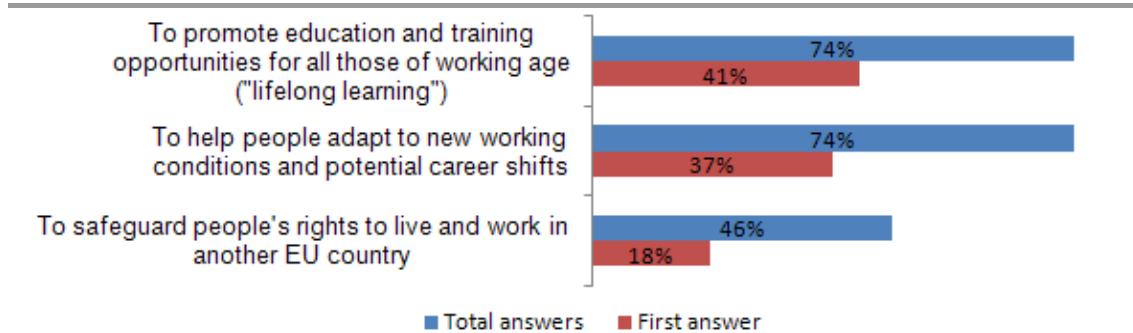
Industry

Respondents gave first place to changing the rules to make it easier to set up and manage a business (67%), as a potential means of job creation. Making the most of the opportunities of the green economy was ranked second (61%), closely followed by restructuring industries in difficulty (58%).



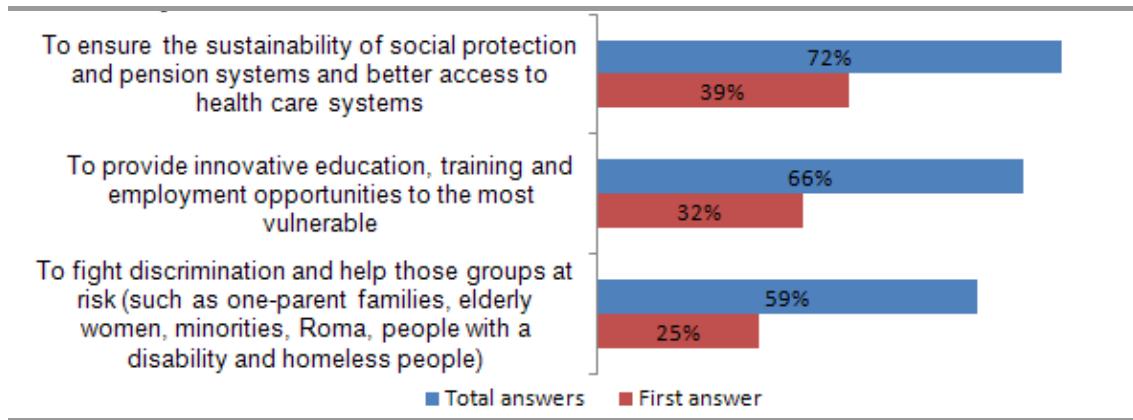
Jobs and skills

Lifelong learning opportunities, and helping people to adapt to new working conditions and potential career shifts (74% each) are seen as priority actions. However, education and training opportunities for all those of working age was mentioned slightly more frequently as the *first answer* (41%). Safeguarding people's rights to live and work in another EU country seems to be seen as less important (46%).



Poverty

Europeans want above all to ensure the sustainability of social protection and pension systems and better access to health care systems (72%). They then want priority to be given to providing training and employment opportunities to the most vulnerable (66%), followed by fighting discrimination and helping groups at risk of poverty (59%).



The analysis of these results by country reveals some distinctive national tendencies for each of the initiatives:

Innovation

The desire to refocus research on climate change or energy efficiency is particularly strong in Cyprus, but is also evident in Finland, Sweden and Germany. Generally speaking, these environmental issues are a more acute cause of concern in countries to the north of the European Union.

The Netherlands stands out as the country where respondents are most likely to mention cooperation between researchers.

Young people

There is particular support for getting more young people into employment in Finland.

In the Netherlands and Latvia, more than half the interviewees gave improving the overall quality of all levels of education as their *first response*. It should be noted that respondents in the Netherlands are generally more likely than the European average to mention priorities in the area of education.

Internet

The high proportions of respondents in Hungary and Poland whose first answer was extending broadband access to all may indicate that these countries lag behind in this respect. This item was also frequently cited in Denmark and Slovenia.

Energy

Unsurprisingly, respondents in the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Germany were the most likely to cite the promotion of renewable energy sources as the *first priority*. Other countries, experiencing significant economic difficulties, preferred support for small businesses and households to help them to be more efficient in their energy consumption. In Ireland this was the *first priority* mentioned by 50% of respondents.

Industry

Respondents in those countries which have been hard hit by unemployment¹⁸ – Latvia, Estonia, Ireland and also Spain - are most likely to prioritise measures to make it easier to set up a business.

Jobs and skills

The Nordic countries, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom record a marked preference for lifelong learning. In Cyprus, Greece and Hungary the first response selected was helping people to adapt to new working conditions and to potential career shifts.

Poverty

In Latvia, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, at least half of respondents *first* mentioned the sustainability of social protection and pension systems and better access to health care.

Although there are sometimes quite marked differences between Member States for all these questions, **there are rather few differences according to the socio-demographic profile of the respondents**. This is fairly striking, inasmuch as certain Europe 2020 flagship initiatives may be seen as targeting certain categories. By way of example, the answers of the youngest and oldest respondents are extremely close as regards the European Union's priorities in favour of young people: both groups want to prioritise increasing the number of young people in employment (81% of those aged 15-24 versus 82% of the oldest respondents) and improving the overall quality of all levels of education (77% of those aged 15-24 versus 77% of the oldest age group). The only slight difference is that the youngest respondents are a little more likely to mention encouraging students to study in another EU Member State (40% of those aged 15-24 versus 34% of those aged 55 or over).

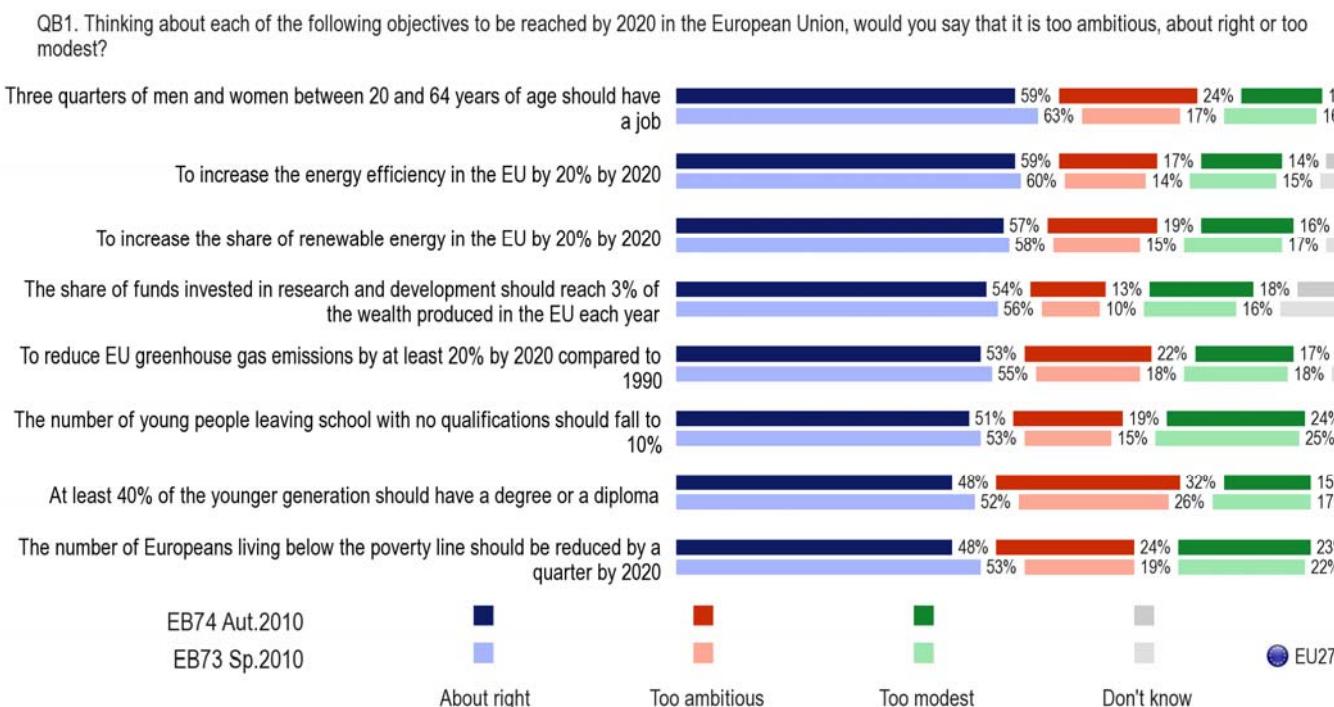
¹⁸ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-30112010-BP/EN/3-30112010-BP-EN.PDF

2.2 Opinions on Europe 2020's objectives

- Europeans are confident of achieving the objectives -

In order to shape its Europe 2020 strategy and to measure its results, the European Commission has set a number of specific targets to be achieved by 2020.

Overall, Europeans consider that the eight Europe 2020 objectives are realistic: an absolute majority believe that they are "about right" for six of them and a relative majority of 48% for the remaining two¹⁹. For each objective, however, the "about right" scores are slightly lower than those recorded in the spring 2010 Standard Eurobarometer. At the same time, the proportion of respondents who believe that these targets are too ambitious has increased slightly.



¹⁹ QB1 Thinking about each of the following objectives to be reached by 2020 in the European Union, would you say that it is too ambitious, about right or too modest?

A more detailed analysis of answers, starting with the **economic and social objectives**, reveals the following:

- 59% of Europeans consider that the objective of ensuring that **three quarters of men and women aged between 20 and 64 should have a job** is realistic (-4 points since spring 2010), while for 24% it is "too ambitious" (+7) and 14% think that it is "too modest" (-2).
- 54% (-2 points) of Europeans interviewed consider that the objective of ensuring that **the share of funds invested in research and development reaches 3% of the wealth produced in the EU each year** (-2 points) is realistic, while for 13% it is too ambitious (+3) and 18% think that it is too modest (+2).
- 48% of respondents agree that the objective of **reducing the number of Europeans living below the poverty line by a quarter by 2020** is realistic (-5 points), while for 24% this target is too ambitious (+5) and 23% think that it is too modest (+1).

As regards the **sustainable development objectives**:

- 59% of respondents believe that the objective of **increasing energy efficiency in the EU by 20% by 2020** is realistic (-1 point), while for 17% it is too ambitious (+3) and 14% think that it is too modest (-1).
- The objective of **increasing the share of renewable energy in the EU by 20% in 2020** is realistic for 57% of Europeans (-1 point), while 19% think that it is too ambitious (+4) and 16% that it is too modest (-1).
- 53% of Europeans think that the objective of **reducing EU greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% by 2020 compared to 1990** is realistic (-2 points), while for 22% it is too ambitious (+4) and 17% think that it is too modest (-1).

Finally, as regards the **educational objectives**:

- 51% of Europeans also believe that the objective of **reducing to 10% the number of young people leaving school with no qualifications** (-2 points) is realistic, while for 24% it is too modest (-1) and 19% feel that it is too ambitious (+4).
- Finally, the target of **at least 40% of the younger generation with a degree or a diploma** is viewed as realistic by 48% of Europeans (-4 points), while for 32% it is too ambitious (+6) and 15% think that it is too modest (-2). This is by far the objective which Europeans are the most likely to view as being "too ambitious".

A clear majority of Europeans thus consider that the objectives are realistic, but the proportion who fear that they will be difficult to achieve has increased since the last survey. Whereas in spring 2010 respondents who believed that the objectives were "too modest" outnumbered those who thought them "too ambitious" for five of the eight objectives in question, that is now the case for only two of them: first, the 3% target for the proportion of funds invested in research and development and, second, the 10% or less target for the number of young people leaving school with no qualifications. This development is probably due to the persistence of the economic crisis which intensifies pessimistic perceptions and expectations.

Some specific national trends emerge: for example, respondents in Italy are the most optimistic about the achievability of the objectives: the proportion of "about right" answers there is ten or more points above the European average for all the objectives.

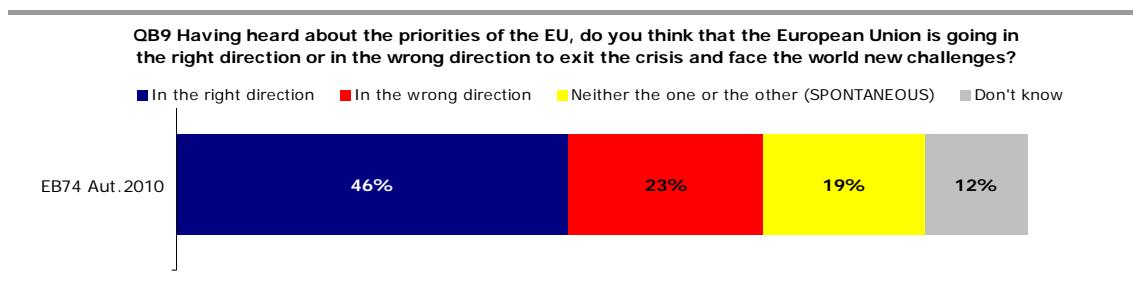
Greece stands out by its rather marked pessimism regarding the achievability of the objectives: the percentage of respondents who consider them too ambitious is ten or more points above the European average for half of the objectives, including the three economic and social objectives.

Conversely, respondents in Belgium, France, Luxembourg (for four of the eight objectives), and Sweden (for five of the eight objectives) are the most likely to believe that these objectives do not go far enough, with a proportion of "too modest" answers at least ten points above the European average.

Finally, Germany differs fairly sharply on one point: 61% of respondents consider that the 40% target of young people having a degree or diploma by 2020 is "too ambitious", compared with a European average of 32%.

2.3 Is the EU going in the right direction?

The majority of Europeans support the strategy put in place by the European Union to emerge from the crisis and deal with the new challenges: all in all, they believe that the European Union is going in the right direction (46%). Just under a quarter think that it is going in the wrong direction (23%), while 19% spontaneously answered “neither the one or the other”²⁰.



There is a difference between the euro zone countries and the others: the feeling that the European Union is going in the right direction is more pronounced in the countries which have not adopted the single currency (53% versus 21% who consider that it is going in the wrong direction) than in the euro zone countries (43% versus 23%)²¹.

The national differences are still more pronounced: **in seventeen Member States, an absolute majority consider that the European Union is going in the right direction**, including approximately two thirds of respondents in Poland, Bulgaria, Slovakia and Sweden, while this opinion is shared by fewer than four in ten respondents in Spain, the United Kingdom, Italy, Portugal and Greece. In Greece, the opposite view is dominant (45% believe that the European Union is going in the wrong direction, compared to 32% who think it is going in the right direction).

Socio-demographic patterns play an important role in shaping opinion on the direction in which the European Union is going in order to emerge from the crisis. For example, the younger, wealthier, better educated and more socially advantaged they are, the more likely respondents are to believe that the European Union is going in the right direction: 53% of those aged 15-24, 54% of those who studied beyond the age of 19, 53% of managers, 51% of those who almost never have problems paying their bills and 56% of those who place themselves at the top of the social scale consider that the European Union is on the right track, compared with 42% of those aged 55 or over, 34% of those who left school before the age of 16, 40% of unemployed people, 33% of those who struggle to pay their bills most of the time and 41% of those who place themselves at the bottom of the social scale.

²⁰ QB9 Having heard about the priorities of the EU, do you think that the European Union is going in the right direction or in the wrong direction to exit the crisis and face the world new challenges?

²¹ Estonia is not included in the euro zone results of this survey, conducted before the full accession of this country to the euro zone.

Conclusion

This Eurobarometer survey was carried out at the time when Ireland, faced with a serious financial crisis, asked the European Union and the IMF for support to rescue its banking system. On the other hand, the economic outlook has become brighter in some countries. This context must therefore be taken into account when analysing the results of this survey: the apparent stability of certain indicators sometimes conceals situations and developments which vary considerably from one country to another.

The main lessons learnt from this survey are as follows:

- ◆ **At European level, the feeling that the worst is over as regards the impact of the crisis on employment is gaining ground, but remains the minority opinion.** At national level, while this opinion has gained ground spectacularly in some countries, the increase in pessimism in some countries has been just as striking. This mirrors the variety of economic situations in the various Member States.
- ◆ **The European Union is still seen as the most effective level for tackling the effects of the economic crisis,** ahead of national governments, the G20 and the IMF. The European Union tops the list in 18 Member States.
- ◆ A large majority of Europeans would like to see **greater coordination** between Member States, in the European Union and within the euro zone.
- ◆ They also consider that the various measures that could be taken at the European level for closer supervision of the financial sector activities as well as reforms to the global financial system would be effective or appropriate.
- ◆ Two institutions are seen as best placed to lead the reform of the global financial system, namely the IMF and the European Union. The latter tops the list in 12 Member States, including Greece and Ireland.
- ◆ Finally, a relative majority of Europeans consider that, since the outbreak of the crisis, **the European Union has acted effectively** to deal with its effects. This is also the majority opinion in 19 Member States.

When asked about the future and more specifically the European Union's plans to prepare the European economy for the challenges of the next decade, Europeans also approve of the direction taken by the European Union for the future: a majority support the Europe 2020 strategy.

- ◆ Most of the proposed actions which could be implemented within the seven flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy were mentioned by more than half of Europeans. Their answers reveal the strength of their concerns about employment and the importance that they attach to social issues, equality between all European citizens and environmental matters
- ◆ A majority of Europeans consider that the targets set in the Europe 2020 strategy are realistic. However, the proportion of respondents who fear that they may be difficult to achieve has increased.
- ◆ A majority of Europeans support the strategy put in place for emerging from the crisis and meeting the new challenges: they consider that the European Union is going in the right direction. Less than a quarter take the opposite view

Technical specifications

From November 11th to December 1st 2010, TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium created between TNS plc and TNS opinion, carried out the STANDARD EUROBAROMETER 74, on request of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General for Communication, "Research and Speechwriting" unit.

The STANDARD EUROBAROMETER 74 covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, resident in each of the Member States and aged 15 years and over. The STANDARD EUROBAROMETER 74 has also been conducted in the four candidate countries (Croatia, Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Iceland) and in the Turkish Cypriot Community. In these countries, the survey covers the national population of citizens and the population of citizens of all the European Union Member States that are residents in these countries and have a sufficient command of the national languages to answer the questionnaire. The basic sample design applied in all states is a multi-stage, random (probability) one. In each country, a number of sampling points was drawn with probability proportional to population size (for a total coverage of the country) and to population density.

In order to do so, the sampling points were drawn systematically from each of the "administrative regional units", after stratification by individual unit and type of area. They thus represent the whole territory of the countries surveyed according to the EUROSTAT NUTS II (or equivalent) and according to the distribution of the resident population of the respective nationalities in terms of metropolitan, urban and rural areas. In each of the selected sampling points, a starting address was drawn, at random. Further addresses (every Nth address) were selected by standard "random route" procedures, from the initial address. In each household, the respondent was drawn, at random (following the "closest birthday rule"). All interviews were conducted face-to-face in people's homes and in the appropriate national language. As far as the data capture is concerned, CAPI (*Computer Assisted Personal Interview*) was used in those countries where this technique was available.

ABBR.	COUNTRIES	INSTITUTES	N° INTERVIEWS	FIELDWORK DATES	POPULATION 15+
BE	Belgium	TNS Dimarso	1.003	11/11/2010	8.866.411
BG	Bulgaria	TNS BBSS	1.000	12/11/2010	6.584.957
CZ	Czech Rep.	TNS Aisa	1.024	12/11/2010	8.987.535
DK	Denmark	TNS Gallup DK	1.049	11/11/2010	4.533.420
DE	Germany	TNS Infratest	1.609	12/11/2010	64.545.601
EE	Estonia	Emor	1.000	12/11/2010	916.000
IE	Ireland	MRBI	1.007	11/11/2010	3.375.399
EL	Greece	TNS ICAP	1.000	11/11/2010	8.693.566
ES	Spain	TNS Demoscopia	1.001	15/11/2010	39.035.867
FR	France	TNS Sofres	1.036	12/11/2010	47.620.942
IT	Italy	TNS Infratest	1.019	12/11/2010	51.252.247
CY	Rep. of Cyprus	Synovate	504	11/11/2010	651.400
LV	Latvia	TNS Latvia	1.003	12/11/2010	1.448.719
LT	Lithuania	TNS Gallup Lithuania	1.005	12/11/2010	2.849.359
LU	Luxembourg	TNS ILReS	513	11/11/2010	404.907
HU	Hungary	TNS Hungary	1.031	12/11/2010	8.320.614
MT	Malta	MISCO	500	12/11/2010	335.476
NL	Netherlands	TNS NIPO	1.040	12/11/2010	13.288.200
AT	Austria	Österreichisches Gallup-Institut	1.000	11/11/2010	6.973.277
PL	Poland	TNS OBOP	1.000	12/11/2010	32.306.436
PT	Portugal	TNS EUROTESTE	1.018	19/11/2010	8.080.915
RO	Romania	TNS CSOP	1.001	12/11/2010	18.246.731
SI	Slovenia	RM PLUS	1.004	11/11/2010	1.748.308
SK	Slovakia	TNS AISA SK	1.031	12/11/2010	4.549.954
FI	Finland	TNS Gallup Oy	1.005	11/11/2010	4.412.321
SE	Sweden	TNS GALLUP	1.020	12/11/2010	7.723.931
UK	United Kingdom	TNS UK	1.300	12/11/2010	51.081.866
TOTAL EU27			26.723	11/11/2010	01/12/2010
IS	Iceland	Capacent	501	12/11/2010	252.277
CY(tcc)	Turkish Cypriot Community	Kadem	500	12/11/2010	143.226
HR	Croatia	Puls	1.000	12/11/2010	3.749.400
TR	Turkey	TNS PIAR	1.000	11/11/2010	52.728.513
MK	Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	TNS Brima	1.056	13/11/2010	1.678.404
TOTAL			30.780	11/11/2010	01/12/2010
					465.386.179

For each country a comparison between the sample and the universe was carried out. The Universe description was derived from Eurostat population data or from national statistics offices. For all countries surveyed, a national weighting procedure, using marginal and intercellular weighting, was carried out based on this Universe description. In all countries, gender, age, region and size of locality were introduced in the iteration procedure. For international weighting (i.e. EU averages), TNS Opinion & Social applies the official population figures as provided by EUROSTAT or national statistic offices. The total population figures for input in this post-weighting procedure are listed above.

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

Observed percentages	10% or 90%	20% or 80%	30% or 70%	40% or 60%	50%
Confidence limits	± 1.9 points	± 2.5 points	± 2.7 points	± 3.0 points	± 3.1 points