



EUROBAROMETER 75

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

EUROPEANS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY

Fieldwork: May 2011

Publication: August 2011

This survey has been requested and co-ordinated by Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM "Research and Speechwriting" Unit).

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

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

Standard Eurobarometer 75 Spring 2011

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
1. THE EUROPEANS AND THE CRISIS	6
1.1 The economic crisis: has it already "reached its peak", or is "the worst still to come"?	6
1.2 The role of the different actors in confronting the crisis	9
1.3 Measures to improve the performance of the European economy ..	11
1.4 Measures to tackle the crisis	12
1.5 Reforming global financial markets	14
1.6 Who acted effectively against the crisis?	15
2. EUROPE 2020	16
2.1 Perceived importance of the EU's Europe 2020 strategy initiatives	16
2.2 Opinions on the Europe 2020 objectives	17
2.3 Is the EU going in the right direction?	20
CONCLUSION	21
TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS	23

Introduction

This report presents the first results of the Standard Eurobarometer 75 which was carried out from 6 May to 26 May 2011¹. Interviews took place in 33 countries or territories: the 27 European Union Member States, the five candidate countries (Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Iceland and Montenegro²), 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 a selection of questions on two different themes: the first focuses on the economic crisis and how it is perceived by Europeans and the second analyses public support for the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The survey results show a general improvement in peoples' perception of the response to the economic crisis and efforts to regulate global financial markets since the previous Eurobarometer in autumn 2010. Europeans are increasingly asking for EU action to tackle the crisis and avoid future crises. They also think that the various Europe 2020 Strategy objectives are achievable.

The Spring 2011 survey shows that the economic recovery, which was first glimpsed in the Eurobarometer in autumn 2010, is now gathering strength. EU27 Gross Domestic Product increased by 0.8 percentage points during the first quarter of 2011 and is up as much as +2.5 points³ on a year-on-year basis. Furthermore, unemployment fell from 9.7% in April 2010 to 9.4% in April 2011⁴.

The survey shows a divergence in the recovery's pace across the EU. Unemployment fell by 1.0 point or more in Germany, Malta and Sweden since April 2010 but rose by more than 1.0 point in Bulgaria, Ireland, Cyprus, Portugal and Slovenia. This is confirmed by the results of this Eurobarometer: beyond the positive trend at EU level, variations between Member States are still apparent. While some countries have already emerged from the crisis, others are still in recession.

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 addresses questions related to the present financial and economic crisis, governance measures to emerge from the crisis, measures to improve the governance of the financial markets and the perceived role of the various global actors.

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

² Montenegro has been a candidate country since December 2010. Respondents were interviewed for the first time in the Standard Eurobarometer.

³ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/2-13052011-AP/EN/2-13052011-AP-EN.PDF

⁴ http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-31052011-BP/EN/3-31052011-BP-EN.PDF

The second focuses on Europeans' views on the Europe 2020 Strategy: how important are the different initiatives of this strategy? Are its objectives achievable? And is the European Union going in the right direction to overcome the crisis and confront the new global challenges?

Many of these questions have been asked in previous standard Eurobarometer surveys, and trends will be analysed.

* * *

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 intervals⁵.

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

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

We wish to thank the people throughout Europe who have given their time to take part in this survey. Without their active participation, this survey would not have been possible.

* * *

⁵ 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
ME	Montenegro

* 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*].

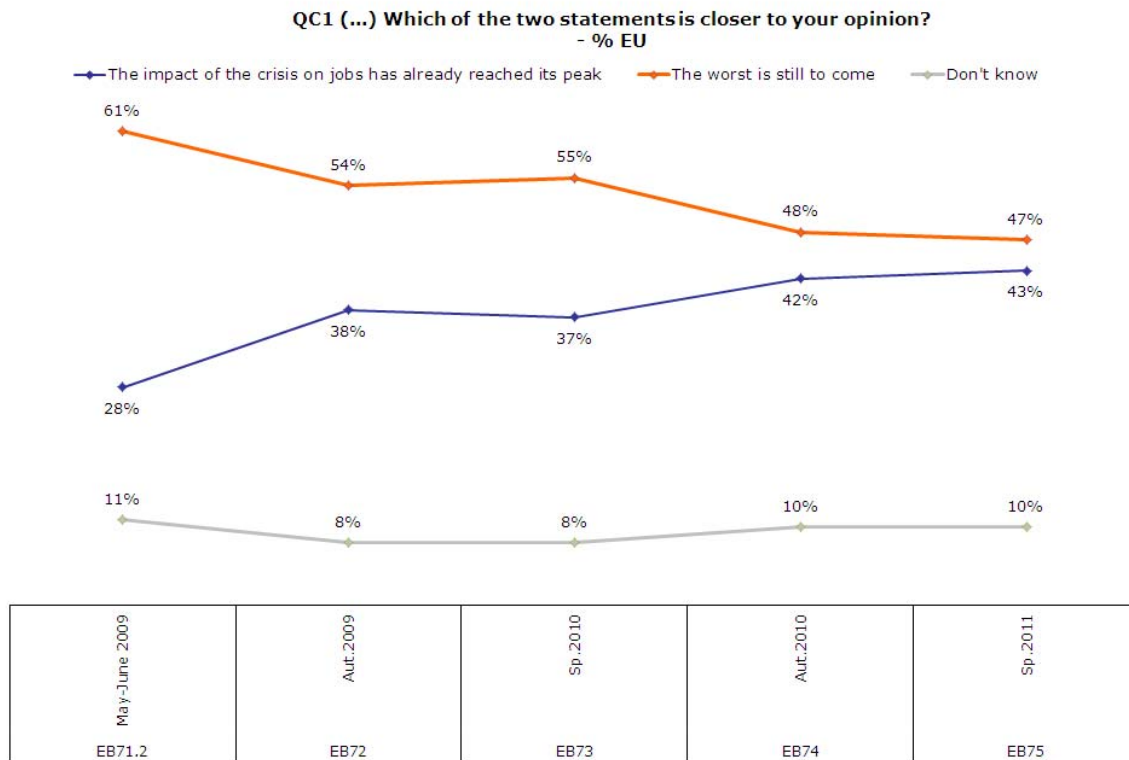
** Provisional code which does not prejudice in any way the definitive nomenclature for this country, which will be agreed following the conclusion of negotiations currently taking place at the United Nations.

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 important positive shifts observed last Autumn are confirmed -

European public opinion is stable regarding the impact of the crisis on jobs: 43% (+1) of Europeans think that the crisis's impact on the job market has already reached its peak⁶. The survey shows that optimism is returning. There are now fewer people who say that the worst is still to come. The positive trend seen since spring 2009 is gaining ground.

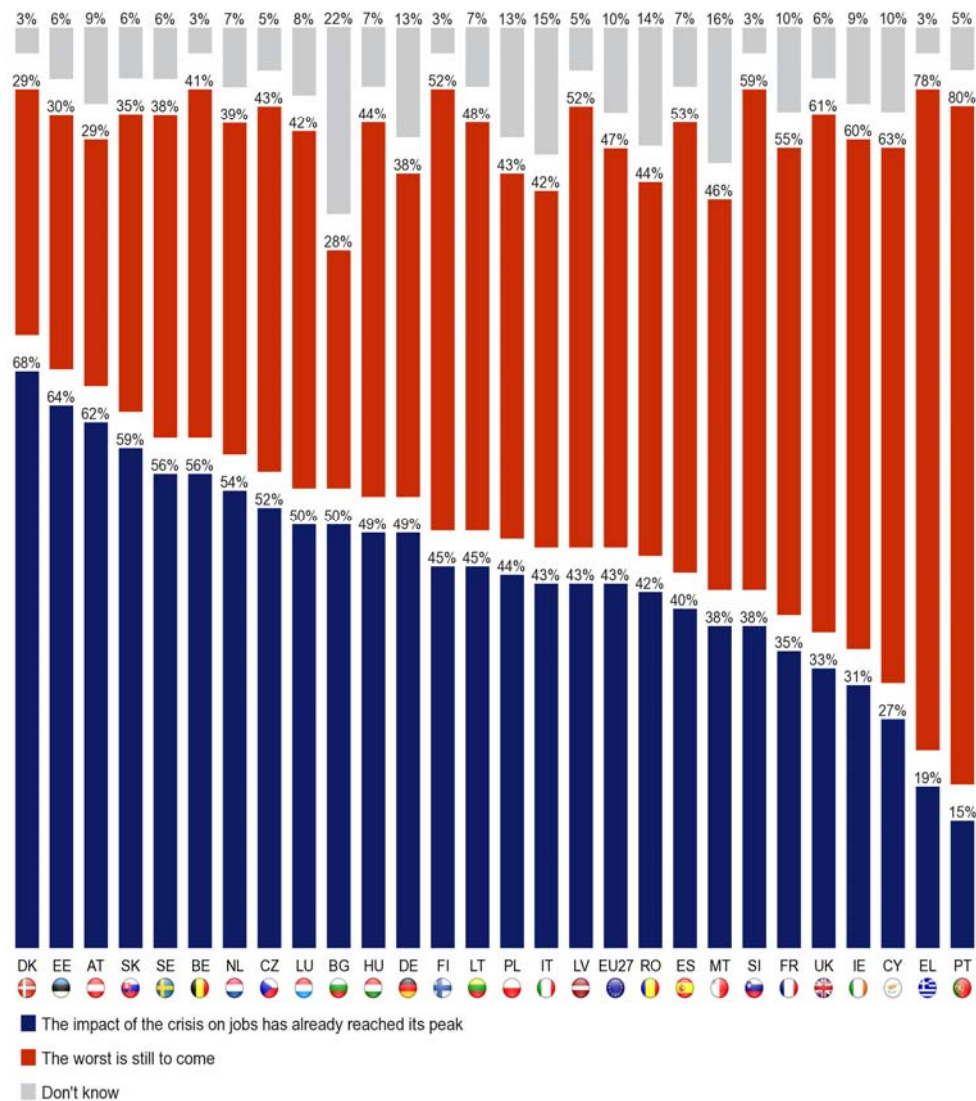


There are wide differences between Member States on this question. The view that the impact of the economic crisis on the job market has already reached its peak is held by a majority in 14 Member States, in particular Denmark (68%), Estonia (64%), and Austria (62%).

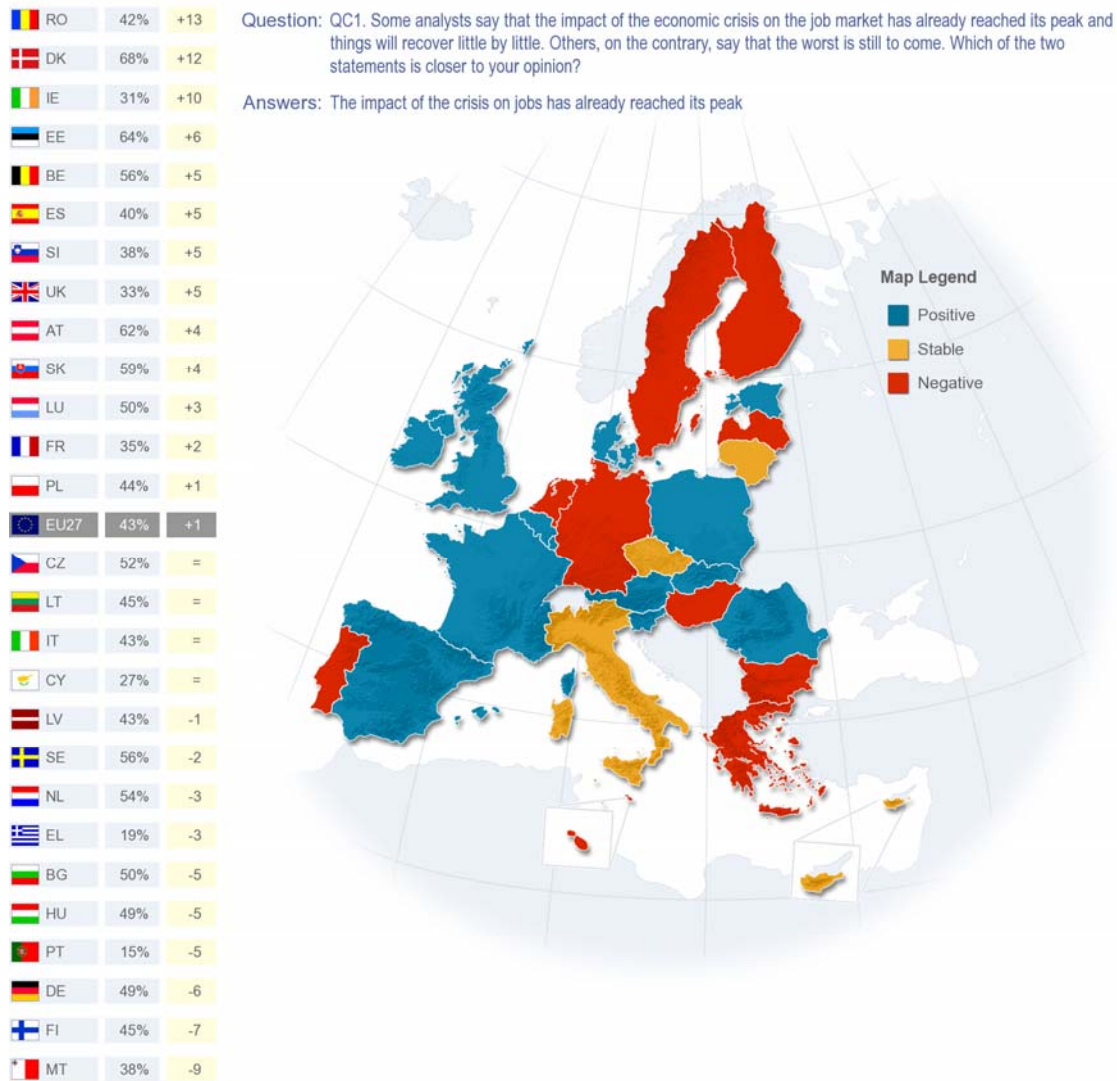
The opposite opinion is seen in 13 other countries: respondents in Portugal (80%) and Greece (78%) are most likely to take this view.

⁶ 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?

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?



The gap between countries where public opinions think that the impact of the crisis has already reached its peak and those who think that the worst is still to come has actually widened since autumn 2010: the proportion of optimistic respondents varies from 15% to 68%, whereas it ranged from 20% to 58% in the previous survey. Generally speaking, this means that the situation has continued to improve in the "optimistic countries", and to worsen in the "pessimistic" ones. At the top of the scale, optimism has grown in Denmark (68%, +12), Estonia (64%, +6), and Austria (62%, +6). Considerable improvement can also be noted in Romania (42%, +13) and Ireland (31%, +10). Conversely, at the other end of the scale, the situation has continued to deteriorate since autumn 2010 in Portugal (15%, -5) and in Greece (19%, -3); the largest decreases are seen in Malta (38%, -9) and in Finland (45%, -7).



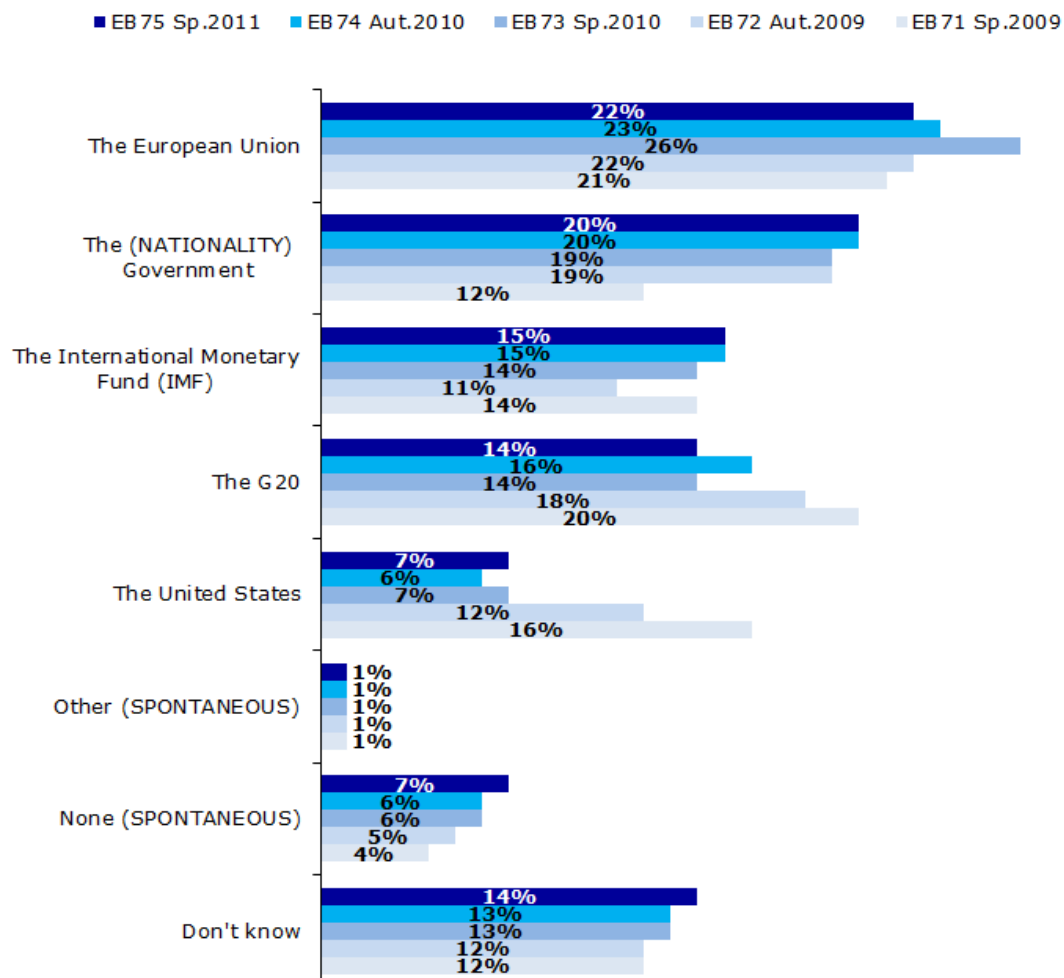
Different socio-economic categories perceive the crisis in varied ways. A majority of people belonging to the better-off socio-economic categories consider that the crisis has already reached its peak, while this is the minority view among the more precarious categories: 51% of managers, 48% of those who almost never have difficulties paying their bills, and 53% of Europeans who place themselves at the top of the social scale are optimistic, compared with 34% of the unemployed, 27% of those struggling to pay their bills most of the time, and 31% of those at the bottom of the social scale. Moreover, this gap between optimistic and pessimistic categories has increased since autumn 2010.

1.2 The role of the different actors in confronting the crisis

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

The hierarchy of actors best placed to take effective action against the effects of the financial and economic crisis has remained almost unchanged since the previous survey in autumn 2010: the EU remains in first place (22%, - 1 point)⁷. It is closely followed by the national governments (20%, stable). The G20 (14%, -2) has lost its third place to the International Monetary Fund (15%, stable). Finally, and for the third consecutive time since spring 2010 (EB73), the United States lags behind international organisations.

QC3a 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 vary between countries from the euro area and the others: respondents in the euro area first choose the EU (23%), whereas non-euro countries rank their national government first (24%), ahead of the EU (20%).

⁷ QC3a In your opinion, which of the following is best able to take effective actions against the effects of the financial and economic crisis?

Although there is just a two-percentage point difference between the EU (22%) and the national government (20%) at European level, the belief that the EU is best able to take effective action against the effects of the financial and economic crisis is held by a majority of respondents in 16 Member States.

The EU is most widely mentioned in Greece, Luxembourg and Poland (34% in these three countries).

Respondents in Malta (39%), the UK (35%), Sweden (35%) and France (21%) mostly trust **their national government**.

The IMF is thought best able to take effective action against the crisis in Finland (33%) and Germany (21%).

Finally, in four countries, **the G20** ranks first: the Czech Republic (42%), the Netherlands (32%), Latvia and Denmark (24% in both countries). Respondents in Hungary equally mention the G20 and the EU as the best actors to take effective actions against the effects of the financial and economic crisis (25% for both).

In terms of evolution, the EU has lost its first place since autumn 2010 in three countries: France (EU, 18%, -4; national government, 21%, +4), Germany (EU, 20%, -2; IMF, 21%, +3) and Malta (EU, 25%, -6; national government, 39%, +13). Conversely, the EU has become the actor best placed to take effective action against the negative effects of the crisis in Romania (EU, 27%, stable).

1.3 Measures to improve the performance of the European economy

- Improving education and professional training is seen as the best initiative for improving the performance of the European economy -

QC5. Which three initiatives could most improve the performance of the European economy?



When asked how the performance of the economy could be improved, Europeans give great importance to education and training. **Improving education and professional training is the most frequently mentioned initiative**, cited as a priority by almost half of respondents (48%, +1 since autumn 2010). Next, two other initiatives are cited by just over a third of respondents: reducing public deficits and debt (34%, -1), and making it easier to set up a business (34%, +1).

in research and innovation (29%, -1), using energy more efficiently (25%, +4), strengthening regulation of financial markets (21%, -3) and making it easier for companies to access credit (20%, -1). Other initiatives are mentioned by 15% or less of respondents.

Four initiatives are then cited by a fifth or more of Europeans: investing

There are some differences between Europeans living in countries that acceded to the European Union before the enlargements of 2004 and 2007⁸ (EU15 countries) and the rest⁹ (NMS12 countries). The former are more likely than the latter to mention three initiatives:

- Improve education and professional training: 50% and 39% respectively;
- Reduce public deficit and debt: 35% and 29%;
- Invest in research and innovation: 30% and 22%.

Conversely, investing in transport (motorways, railways, etc.) is far more likely to be cited in the NMS12 countries (18%) than in the EU15 countries (10%).

⁸ The "EU15 countries" are Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

⁹ Countries that acceded to the EU in 2004 are: Czech Republic, Estonia, Republic of Cyprus, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia. Countries that acceded in 2007 are: Bulgaria and Romania. These are known as "NMS12 countries" (New Member States).

In line with these differences by group of countries, strong variations exist between Member States: **improving education and professional training** is seen as the best initiative for improving the European economy in 18 Member States, and is most widely cited in Cyprus (63%), Germany (60%), Denmark and Sweden (54% both).

The reduction of public deficits and debt is the most mentioned initiative in Greece (50%), Hungary (47%), Finland and Slovenia (45% both) and the Czech Republic (44%). Respondents in Cyprus are also likely to cite this initiative (49%), although not in first position.

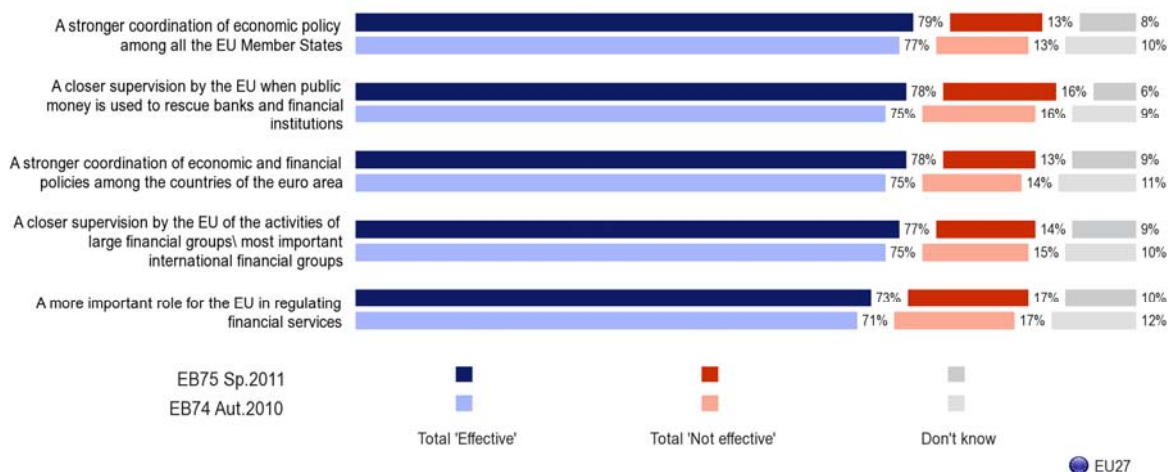
Respondents in Lithuania (53%), in Bulgaria (52%) and in Spain mostly believe that **making it easier to set up a business** would do most to improve the European economy.

1.4 Measures to tackle the crisis

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

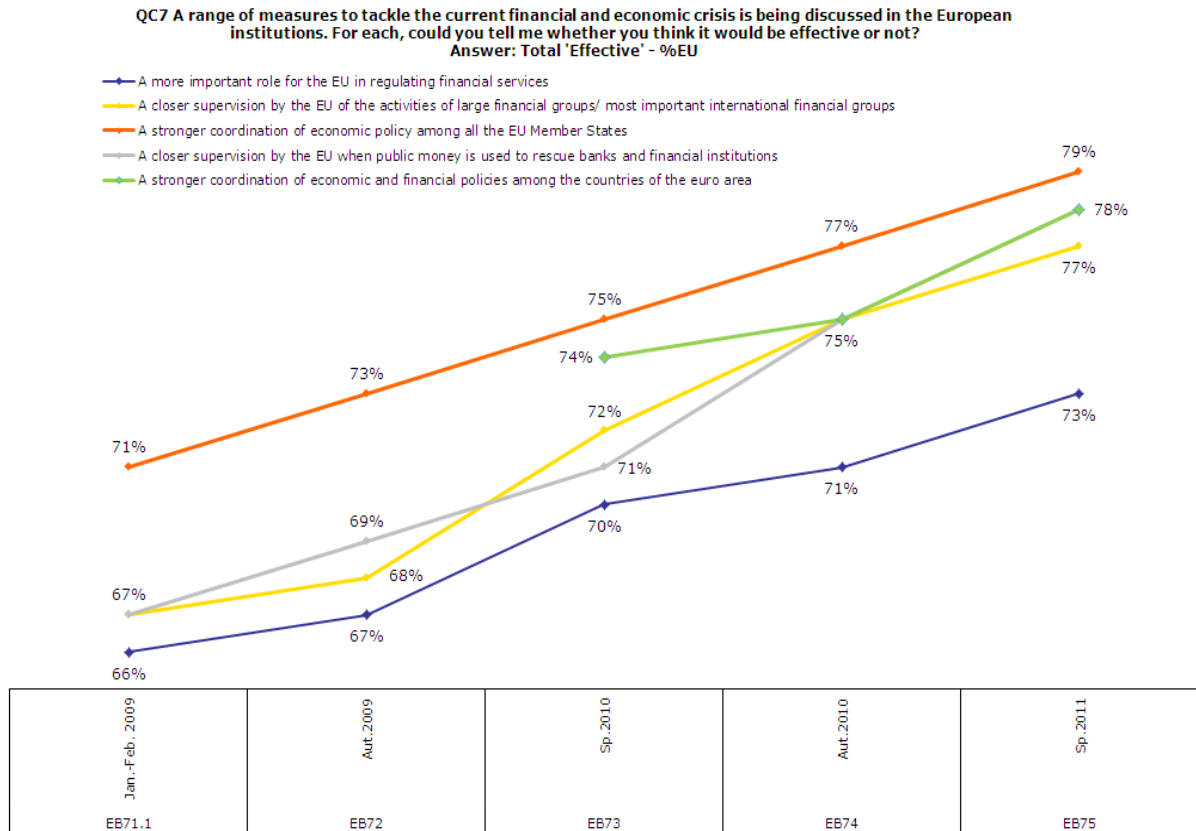
Europeans continue to show a high level of trust in the effectiveness of the different measures currently under discussion in the European institutions for tackling the crisis: **all the measures proposed are considered effective by more than seven in 10 Europeans.**

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?



This opinion has become more widespread since the last survey for all the propositions tested¹⁰. This follows a general trend: **Europeans' conviction that these measures can tackle the crisis effectively has grown continuously since January-February 2009.**

¹⁰ 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 between Member States is now mentioned by more than three-quarters of Europeans: within the EU as a whole (79%, +2 points since autumn 2010; +8 points since January-February 2009), and in the euro area (78%, +3 points since autumn 2010; +4 points since spring 2010).

Europeans also expect the EU to play a more important role in tackling the crisis: by providing closer supervision of both the activities of banks and financial institutions (77%, +2 points since autumn 2010; +10 points since January-February 2009) and the way in which public funds are used to support them (78%, +3; +11); but also in the regulation of financial services (73%, +2; +7).

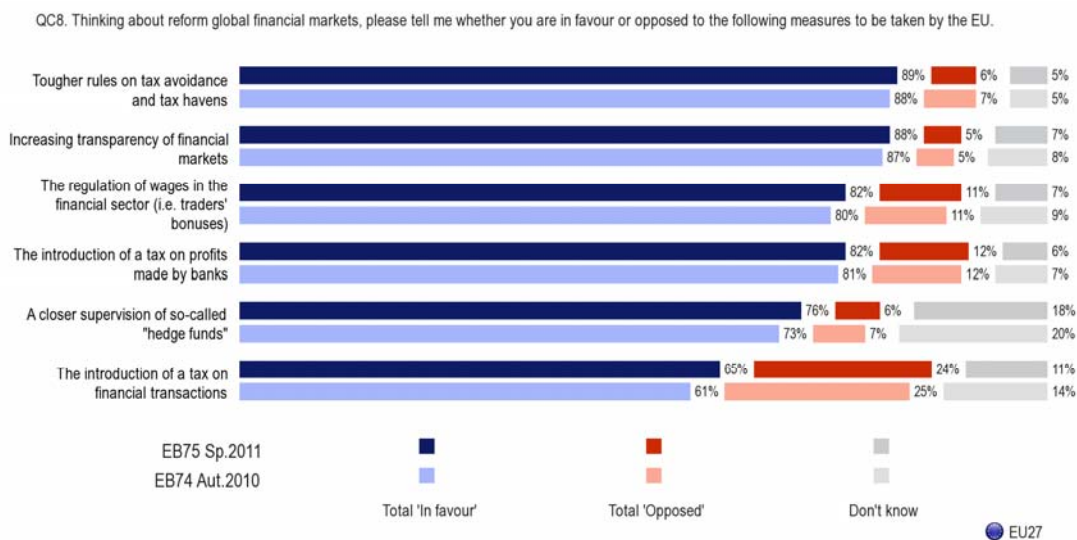
The country-by-country analysis reveals that Cyprus, Slovakia, Belgium and Spain record the highest rates of perceived effectiveness, whereas respondents in the United Kingdom, Estonia, Lithuania and Sweden are the least enthusiastic. **However, the feeling that the various measures proposed would be effective is shared by an absolute majority of respondents in all Member States.**

If the respondents in the United Kingdom continue to be among the least likely to consider the five different measures as effective, interesting positive evolutions should be noted: their support for all the five proposed measures has increased significantly (by 7 points or more) since autumn 2010.

1.5 Reforming global financial markets

- The already strong support for the different measures aiming to reform global financial markets has increased slightly -

Europeans seem convinced of the need to reform the global financial markets: they **strongly support the various measures that the European Union could adopt in this respect; this support has even increased slightly since autumn 2010, for all the measures proposed**¹¹. The strongest support is expressed for tougher rules on tax avoidance and tax havens (89%, +1 since autumn 2010) and increasing the transparency of financial markets (88%, +1). Also supported by more than eight in 10 Europeans are the regulation of wages in the financial sector (such as traders' bonuses) (82%, +2) and the introduction of a tax on profits made by banks (82%, +1).



More than three-quarter of Europeans are in favour of closer supervision of hedge-funds (76%, +3), the proportion of 'don't know' answers being the highest for this measure (18%, -2).

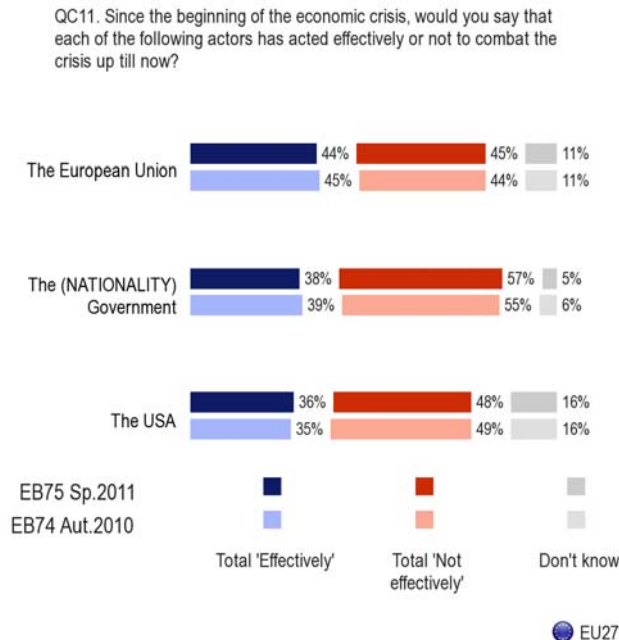
As was the case in the last survey in autumn 2010, the support to the introduction of a tax on financial transactions is less marked: nevertheless 65% of Europeans approve of this proposal, and the support has increased more than for any of the other measures proposed to the respondents (+4). Support to this measure has increased in 22 of the 27 Member States since the autumn 2010 survey.

The trend is therefore towards strong and growing public support for action by the European institutions; both for the measures to combat the crisis and those intended to regulate the global financial markets.

¹¹ 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.

1.6 Who acted effectively against the crisis?

- The European Union is seen to have acted more effectively than national governments or the United States since the beginning of the crisis -



Europeans are quite critical of the way their governments have acted to tackle the crisis since its outbreak: 57% (+2 points since autumn 2010) consider that it has not been effective (compared with 38% who consider that it has acted effectively, -1)¹². European public opinion is much more evenly divided about the actions of the EU: if the slimmest majority consider that it has not acted effectively (45%, +1), a similar proportion take the opposite view (44%, -1). Finally, just over a third of Europeans consider that the United States has acted effectively to combat the crisis (36%, +1 vs. 48%,

-1). Though a majority of Europeans consider that none of these three entities has acted effectively, **the EU continues to emerge as the most effective of the three.**

Although opinions seem to be divided on the European Union's actions, a detailed analysis of the results by country shows that 14 Member States are positive about its role: a majority of respondents consider that the European Union has acted effectively to tackle the crisis. The effectiveness of the EU's actions is most widely recognized in Romania (68%), Bulgaria (62%) and Belgium (60%)¹³.

Conversely, a majority of respondents are critical of EU actions in 12 countries, in particular in Greece (75% "ineffective") and Cyprus (66%). In the Czech Republic, public opinion is evenly divided in this respect (46% vs. 46%). Public opinion in Germany is also very close to be evenly divided (45% vs. 46%).

¹² 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?

¹³ It is also the case in Luxembourg (57%), Poland (56%), Slovakia (54%), Malta (54%), Austria (53%), Denmark (52%), Lithuania (52%), Italy (48%), Netherlands (48%), Estonia (48%) and Ireland (45%).

2. EUROPE 2020

2.1 Perceived importance of the EU's Europe 2020 Strategy initiatives

- Public support for the EU's initiatives to prepare the EU for the future, already strong, has grown since spring 2010 -

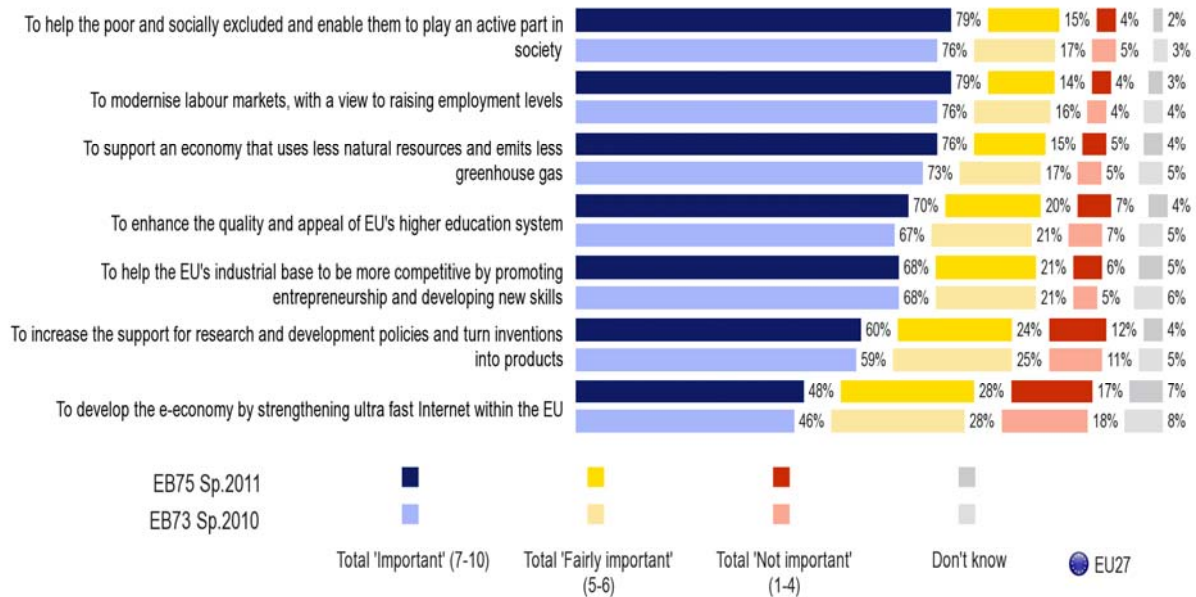
The Europe 2020 Strategy, launched by the European Commission in March 2010 to prepare the EU economy for the new decade¹⁴, **is fully supported by European citizens: all seven Europe 2020 strategic initiatives are rated as important.**

Three initiatives are considered important by more than three-quarters of Europeans: "helping the poor and socially excluded and enabling them to play an active part in society" (79% important, +3 compared to the standard Eurobarometer 73 in spring 2010) and "modernising labour markets with a view to raising employment levels" (79%, +3) top the list. This confirms the perceived importance of employment and the fight against social exclusion in European public opinion. Nearly as many Europeans (76%, +3) believe that a greener economy is also an important initiative. These are followed by two initiatives considered important by around seven Europeans in 10: "enhancing the quality and appeal of the EU's higher education system" (70%, +3) and "helping the EU's industrial base to be more competitive by promoting entrepreneurship and developing new skills" (68%, stable). A slightly lower proportion of Europeans think that "increasing the support for research and development policies and turning inventions into products" is also an important initiative if the EU is to emerge from the present financial and economic crisis (60%, +1). The European public appears to be least interested in the initiative aimed at "developing the e-economy by strengthening ultra-fast Internet within the EU" (48%, +2).

This support, which has grown over the last year, suggests that Europeans are getting behind the objectives set out by the European Commission in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

¹⁴ <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/10/225>

QB1. For each of the following initiatives, please tell me how important or not you think they are in order for the EU to exit the present financial and economic crisis and prepare for the next decade. Please use a scale from 1 to 10, where '1' means that you think this initiative is "not at all important" and '10' means that it is "very important".



Five of the seven initiatives are considered as important by an absolute majority of respondents in all Member States.

"Increasing support for research and development policies and turning inventions into products" is an important initiative for a majority of respondents in all Member States, the UK being the only exception in this respect (47%).

The greatest range of results concerns **the e-economy initiative**, with a proportion of "important" answers varying from 25% in Sweden, to 66% in Lithuania and Ireland: an absolute majority of respondents think that it is an important initiative in 18 Member States.

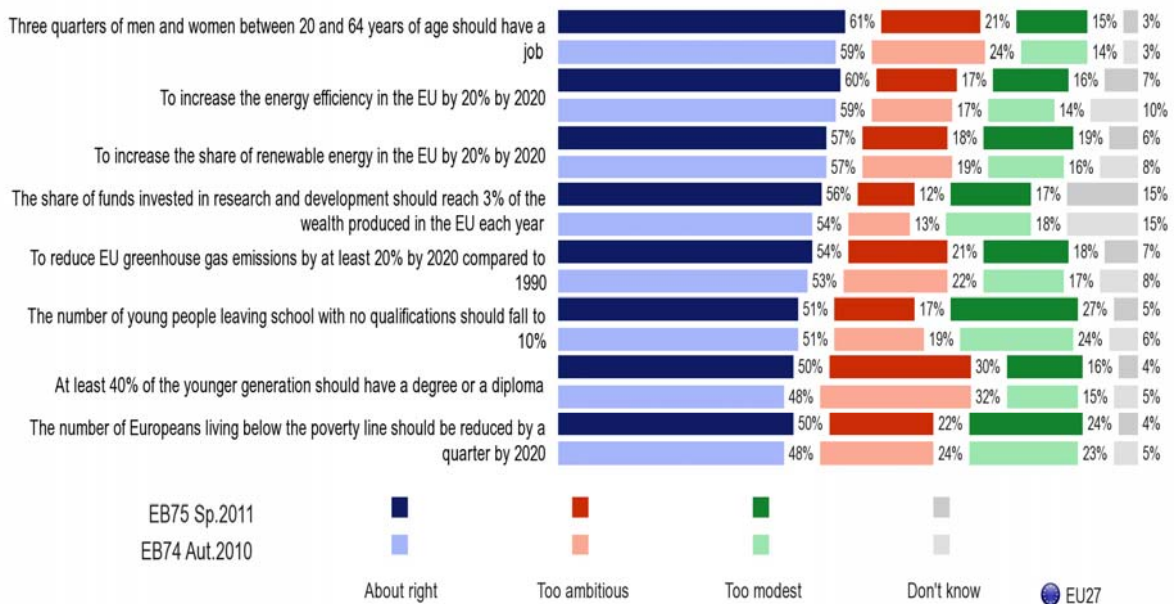
2.2 Opinions on the Europe 2020 objectives

- Confidence in achieving the objectives has increased; a majority of Europeans now think that all objectives are about right -

The specific targets set by the European Commission to shape the Europe 2020 Strategy and to measure its results seem reasonable to European citizens: **an absolute majority of respondents believe that the eight Europe 2020 objectives are "about right"**¹⁵. Furthermore, after the declining figures registered between spring 2010 and autumn 2010, scores have now improved - for six objectives - or have remained unchanged, while the proportion of respondents who believe that these targets are too ambitious has fallen slightly for seven of them. **There is an increasing sense in European public opinion that these objectives are realistic.**

¹⁵ QB2 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?

QB2. Thinking about each of the following objectives to be reached by 2020 in the EU, would you say that it is too ambitious, about right or too modest?



Despite these improvements, confidence in achieving these objectives by 2020 is still lower than in spring 2010 for six of the eight objectives. For the last two, the proportion of “about right” answers has returned to the level seen in spring 2010.

A more detailed analysis of answers reveals the following:

Economic and social objectives

- 61% 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 (+2 points since autumn 2010), while for 21% it is “too ambitious” (-3) and 15% think that it is “too modest” (+1).
- 56% (+2) of Europeans interviewed consider that the objective of ensuring that **the proportion of funds invested in research and development reaches 3% of the wealth produced in the EU each year** is realistic, while for 12% it is too ambitious (-1) and 17% think that it is too modest (-1).
- 50% of respondents agree that the objective of **reducing the number of Europeans living below the poverty line by a quarter by 2020** is realistic (+2 points), while for 22% this target is too ambitious (-2) and 24% think that it is too modest (+1).

Sustainable development objectives

- 60% of Europeans believe that the objective of **increasing energy efficiency in the EU by 20% by 2020** is realistic (+1), while for 17% it is too ambitious (stable) and 16% think that it is too modest (+2). The proportion of “about right” answers is at the same level as in spring 2010.

- The objective of **increasing the share of renewable energy in the EU by 20% in 2020** is realistic for 57% of Europeans (unchanged), while 18% think that it is too ambitious (-1) and 19% that it is too modest (+3).
- 54% of Europeans think that the objective of **reducing EU greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% by 2020 compared to 1990** is realistic (+1), while for 21% it is too ambitious (-1) and 18% think that it is too modest (+1).

The proportions of "too modest" answers have increased for all three objectives since the previous survey: as the recovery gains ground in the EU, ambitions for sustainable development have grown.

Educational objectives

- 51% of Europeans believe that the objective of **reducing to 10% the number of young people leaving school with no qualifications** is realistic (stable), while 17% feel that it is too ambitious (-2) and 27% that it is too modest (+3).
- Finally, the target of ensuring that **at least 40% of the younger generation have a degree or a diploma** is viewed as realistic by 50% of Europeans (+2 points), while for 30% it is too ambitious (-2) and 16% think that it is too modest (+1). Despite this small fall, and as we saw in spring and autumn 2010, this remains the objective which Europeans are by far the most likely to view as "too ambitious".

The proportion of respondents who believe that the objectives are "too modest" outnumbers the proportion who thinks them "too ambitious" for four of the eight objectives in question, which was the case for only two of them in autumn 2010. **Optimism is rising, and Europeans are now more ambitious about the Europe 2020 strategy.**

Some specific national trends emerge:

As was the case in autumn 2010, 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 of them.

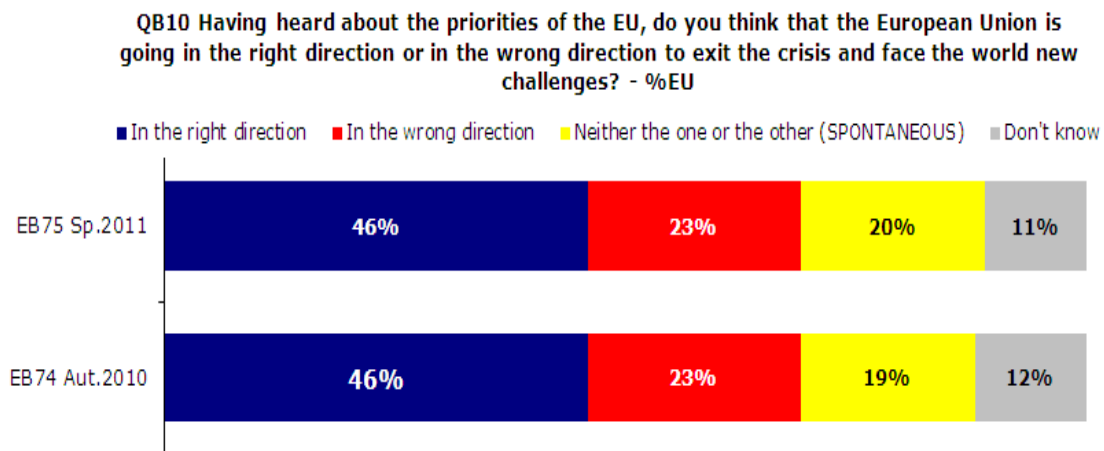
In Sweden, there is a pronounced desire to take the Europe 2020 objectives further: the proportion of "too modest" answers is at least ten points above the European average for all eight objectives. The proportion of "too modest" answers is also at least ten points above the European average in Belgium (for seven of the eight objectives) and Luxembourg (six of the eight objectives).

Cyprus stands out with the highest percentage of respondents who consider that three of the objectives are "too ambitious". It should also be noted that 58% of German respondents think that the objective of ensuring that at least 40% of the younger generation have a degree or a diploma is too ambitious, compared with a European average of 30%.

2.3 Is the EU going in the right direction?

- Close to half of Europeans support the European Union strategy to emerge from the crisis and face the new world challenges -

Europeans give credit to the European Union for its strategy to emerge from the crisis and face the new challenges: a majority of them believe that the European Union is going in the right direction (46%, unchanged since autumn 2010). Less than a quarter hold the opposite opinion (23%, stable), while 20% (+1) *spontaneously* answered “neither the one nor the other”¹⁶. European public opinion has remained unchanged since autumn 2010.



Important variations exist between Member States, even though in all countries except Greece, “in the right direction” answers outnumber “in the wrong direction” answers. As in autumn 2010, **a net majority of 46% (EU average) or more consider that the European Union is going in the right direction in 21 Member States: the highest proportions are recorded in Sweden and Lithuania (66% both), Finland (63%), Estonia and Bulgaria (62%).**

Beyond the stability at EU level, important evolutions have occurred at national level: the perception of Europe 2020 strategy has improved most in the UK (49% of “in the right direction” answers, +12 since autumn 2010), and in Cyprus (57%, +11). Conversely, the positive outlook is significantly less widespread in Poland (59%, -10) and Slovakia (55%, -10).

¹⁶ QB10 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?

Conclusion

This Eurobarometer survey was conducted when signs of economic renewal, which first surfaced in autumn 2010, became more apparent. While the general EU trend is positive, there is still some scepticism in countries that continue to face recession and rising unemployment. European public opinion, which is made up of 27 separate public opinions, remains very diverse.

The main lessons learnt from this survey are as follows:

- ◆ **Europeans have a more positive view of the crisis**, continuing the upward trend since this question was first asked. At national level, the gap between the countries that think that the crisis has already reached its peak (14 Member States) and those that think that the worst is still to come (13) has actually widened since autumn 2010.
- ◆ **For the fifth consecutive time since the question was first asked, the European Union is seen as the most effective level for tackling the effects of the economic crisis**, ahead of national governments. Despite the relative stability of the results, the IMF has gained one place, rising to third, while the G20 has slipped one place to fourth. The European Union tops the list in 17 Member States.
- ◆ **Almost half of Europeans believe education and professional training are essential in improving the performance of the European economy.** Cited by just over a third of respondents, reducing public deficits and debt and making it easier to set up a business are also seen as initiatives that could boost the European economy. This is also in line with the broad support to the Europe 2020 objectives and targets.
- ◆ All the measures currently under discussion in the European institutions to tackle the current financial and economic crisis are considered as effective by large majorities of Europeans. This opinion has even gained ground slightly since autumn 2010, continuing the positive trend which has been evident since January 2009, when this question was asked for the first time.
- ◆ Among these measures, **respondents would particularly welcome greater coordination between Member States**, in the European Union and within the euro area.
- ◆ Europeans also expect the EU to play a more important role in tackling the crisis and regulating the global financial system, and they support the various measures proposed to this effect.

- ◆ **The European Union is seen as having acted more effectively than national governments or the United States since the beginning of the crisis.**

*

*

*

Europeans strongly support the Europe 2020 Strategy intended to prepare the European economy for the challenges of the next decade; furthermore, this support has grown slightly since autumn 2010.

- ◆ **All seven Europe 2020 strategy initiatives are considered important by Europeans**, with particularly widespread support for initiatives aimed at helping the poor and socially excluded and raising employment levels. Indeed, perceived importance has risen for six of the seven initiatives.
- ◆ **A majority of Europeans consider that the targets set in the Europe 2020 strategy are realistic. Furthermore, the proportions of respondents who think that they are achievable have grown** - for six objectives out of eight - or remained unchanged. Meanwhile, proportions of respondents who believe that these targets are too ambitious have decreased slightly for seven of them.
- ◆ **Overall, almost half of Europeans consider that the European Union is going in the right direction to emerge from the crisis and confront the new global challenges.** Less than a quarter take the opposite view. These figures are unchanged since autumn 2010.

Technical specifications

TNS Opinion & Social, a consortium created between TNS plc and TNS opinion, carried out the wave 75.3 of the EUROBAROMETER, on request of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General for Communication, "Research and Speechwriting". Interviews took place between 6 May and 26 May 2011.

The STANDARD EUROBAROMETER 75 is part of wave 75.3 and 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 75 has also been conducted in the five candidate countries (Croatia, Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland and Montenegro) 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.

ABBREVIATIONS	COUNTRIES	INSTITUTES	N° INTERVIEWS	FIELDWORK DATES		POPULATION 15+
BE	Belgium	TNS Dimarso	1.020	06/05/2011	24/05/2011	8.939.546
BG	Bulgaria	TNS BBSS	1.000	06/05/2011	16/05/2011	6.537.510
CZ	Czech Rep.	TNS Aisa	1.022	07/05/2011	20/05/2011	9.012.443
DK	Denmark	TNS Gallup DK	1.007	06/05/2011	23/05/2011	4.561.264
DE	Germany	TNS Infratest	1.535	06/05/2011	22/05/2011	64.409.146
EE	Estonia	Emor	1.000	06/05/2011	24/05/2011	945.733
IE	Ireland	Ipsos MRBI	1.015	09/05/2011	22/05/2011	3.522.000
EL	Greece	TNS ICAP	1.000	07/05/2011	21/05/2011	8.693.566
ES	Spain	TNS Demoscopia	1.010	09/05/2011	24/05/2011	39.035.867
FR	France	TNS Sofres	1.022	06/05/2011	24/05/2011	47.756.439
IT	Italy	TNS Infratest	1.039	06/05/2011	22/05/2011	51.862.391
CY	Rep. of Cyprus	Synovate	501	06/05/2011	21/05/2011	660.400
LV	Latvia	TNS Latvia	1.007	06/05/2011	23/05/2011	1.447.866
LT	Lithuania	TNS Gallup Lithuania	1.026	07/05/2011	22/05/2011	2.829.740
LU	Luxembourg	TNS ILSReS	501	06/05/2011	19/05/2011	404.907
HU	Hungary	TNS Hungary	1.019	06/05/2011	22/05/2011	8.320.614
MT	Malta	MISCO	500	06/05/2011	21/05/2011	335.476
NL	Netherlands	TNS NIPO Österreichisches Gallup-	1.016	06/05/2011	22/05/2011	13.371.980
AT	Austria	Institut	1.018	06/05/2011	22/05/2011	7.009.827
PL	Poland	TNS OBOP	1.000	07/05/2011	23/05/2011	32.413.735
PT	Portugal	TNS EUROTESTE	1.048	07/05/2011	22/05/2011	8.080.915
RO	Romania	TNS CSOP	1.023	06/05/2011	20/05/2011	18.246.731
SI	Slovenia	RM PLUS	1.018	06/05/2011	22/05/2011	1.759.701
SK	Slovakia	TNS Slovakia	1.010	10/05/2011	25/05/2011	4.549.955
FI	Finland	TNS Gallup Oy	1.003	07/05/2011	26/05/2011	4.440.004
SE	Sweden	TNS GALLUP	1.044	06/05/2011	22/05/2011	7.791.240
UK	United Kingdom	TNS UK	1.309	06/05/2011	23/05/2011	51.848.010
TOTAL EU27			26.713	06/05/2011	26/05/2011	408.787.006
	Turkish Cypriot					
CY(tcc)	Community	Kadem	500	07/05/2011	19/05/2011	143.226
HR	Croatia	Puls	1.000	07/05/2011	25/05/2011	3.749.400
TR	Turkey	TNS PIAR	1.000	06/05/2011	22/05/2011	54.844.406
	Former Yugoslav					
MK	Rep. of Macedonia	TNS Brima	1.056	06/05/2011	12/05/2011	1.678.404
IS	Iceland	Capacent	500	06/05/2011	24/05/2011	252.277
ME	Montenegro	TNS Medium Gallup	1.000	07/05/2011	22/05/2011	492.265
TOTAL			31.769	06/05/2011	26/05/2011	469.946.984

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