



Standard Eurobarometer 76

**PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
Autumn 2011**

NATIONAL REPORT

UNITED KINGDOM

This survey has been requested and co-ordinated by the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Communication.

This report was produced for the European Commission's Representation in the UK.

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 76 / Autumn 2011 – TNS Opinion & Social

INTRODUCTION

This UK report is based on data gathered from Standard Eurobarometer EB76 for which the fieldwork was conducted between 3rd and 20th November 2011, with 1312 face-to-face interviews across the UK.

This report looks specifically at four important areas:

1. What do citizens feel are the important issues, and what should be objectives of EU action and priorities?
2. How well informed do UK citizens feel about European matters?
3. Do the UK media give the EU a fair hearing?
4. Do online social media have a role to play in informing UK citizens about European matters?

THE BROAD PICTURE

The first part of this report looks at several key issues from three different perspectives.

- How important are the different focuses of the EU to exit the present financial and economic crisis and prepare for the next ten years?
- Do the EU's objectives match those of citizens?
- What should the EU's priorities be?

THE FOCUS OF EU ACTION:

What areas do UK citizens see as being important?

Nearly nine out of ten (89%) of UK citizens polled believed that **helping the poor and socially excluded** and enabling them to play an active part in society was an important EU initiative in exiting the financial and economic crisis and preparing for the next ten years.

This view was held by 93% of the most educated and of larger (4+) households and 94% of managers.

88% of UK citizens polled agreed that **labour markets should be modernised** with a view to raising employment levels.

96% of white collar workers agreed with this as did 95% of students.

84% of the poll expressed the view that **promoting entrepreneurship and developing new skills** was an important initiative that the EU should take.

This figure rises to 87% amongst the most educated segment.

A further 84% of the UK poll also believed that it was important to support an economy that **uses fewer natural resources and emits less greenhouse gas**

This rises to 93% among those still studying and managers.

More than three quarters (79%) of the same sample believed it was important **to enhance the quality and appeal of the EU's higher education system**

Among those still studying the figure reaches 90% compared with 72% of those who had left school aged 15 or less. This view was only held by a relatively small proportion (69%) of the retired.

78% of the sample believed it was important **to increase the support for research and development policies and turn inventions into products.**

88% of managers agreed with this compared with 71% of the unemployed.

EU OBJECTIVES

Do the objectives the EU has set for 2020 appear to be in line with public opinion?

A clear majority (60%) of the UK poll believed that the objective that **three quarters of men and women aged between 20 and 64 should have a job by 2020** was about right.

This sentiment was particularly high among white collar workers at 68% while 23% of the most educated segment considered the target to be “too low.”

A similar 59% of the poll also believed that the objective that **energy efficiency should be increased by 20%** over the same time scale was about right.

65% of managers agreed with this although another 20% said the objective was too low as did 21% of students.

57% of the UK poll thought that the EU objective that **renewable energy should account for 20% of the total consumed** by 2020 was about right.

Relatively high figures of 64% were noted amongst students

EU PRIORITIES

This part of the report looks at what UK citizens believe should be the EU's priorities in a number of key areas.

- Given a choice of priorities for the EU in the important field of **innovation and research**, more than a third (35%) of the UK poll said that research should be focused on new challenges such as climate change, energy and resource efficiency.
- On the subject of **priorities for young people**, 57% said the first priority should be to get young people into employment.
- Extending broadband access to all European citizens was seen by 36% of the poll as being the EU's priority in the area of **Internet**
- In the **field of energy**, 38% said the EU's priority should be to produce renewable sources of energy while substantial support (35%) was given to the idea of giving financial support to small businesses and households to make their energy consumption more efficient.
- 42% of the UK poll thought that changing the rules to make it easier **to set up and run a business** (especially small and medium sized ones) should be the first priority of the EU in this area.
- 53% of the UK poll believed that in the field of **jobs and skills**, life long learning (i.e. education and training for all those of working age) should be the EU's first priority.
- Turning to the EU's priorities in **combatting poverty**, 34% of the UK poll thought action should be taken to provide innovative education, training and employment opportunities to the most vulnerable.

This is slightly higher than the 32% who feel the first priority should be to ensure the sustainability of social protection and pension systems as well as better access to health care.

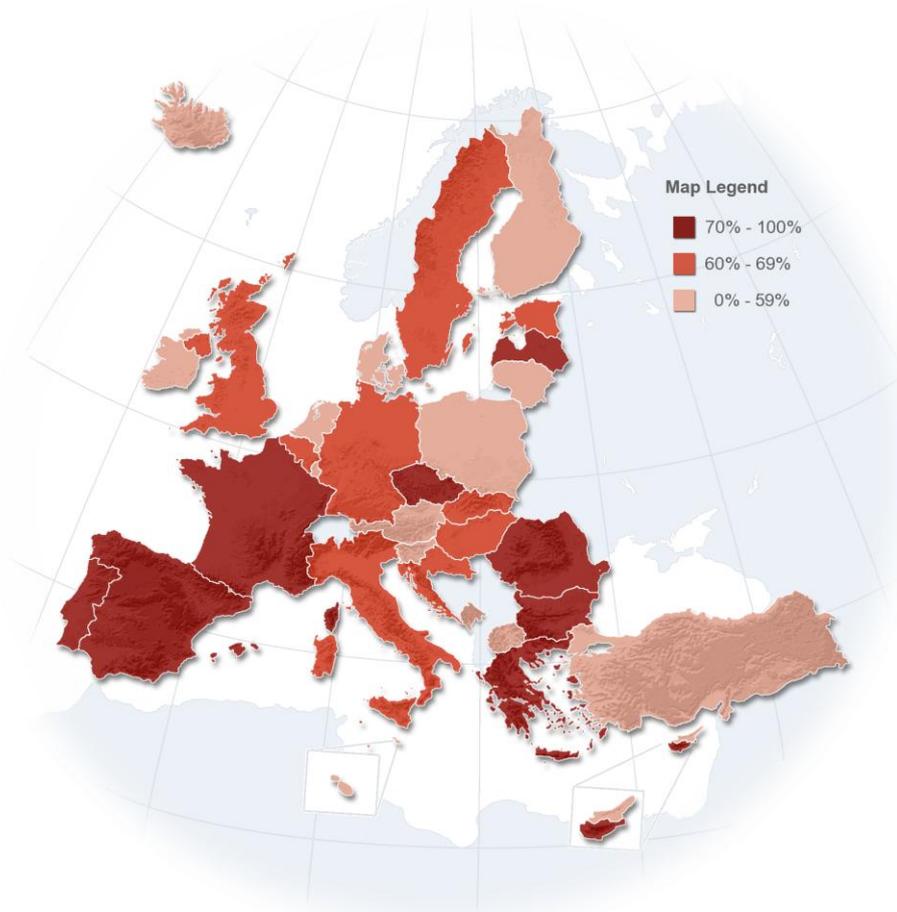
26% of the UK poll believed the first priority should be fighting discrimination and helping those at risk (e.g. one-parent families, elderly women, minorities, Roma etc).

ARE YOU, AS AN INDIVIDUAL, WELL-INFORMED ON EUROPE?

Q D2 Overall, to what extent do you think you are well informed or not about European matters?

 ES	79%
 CY	76%
 FR	73%
 EL	71%
 LV	71%
 CZ	70%
 RO	70%
 BG	70%
 PT	70%
 HU	69%
 BE	68%
 EU	66%
 IT	66%
 EE	65%
 SE	63%
 DE	63%
 UK	62%
 SK	61%
 MT	59%
 SI	59%
 LT	59%
 AT	58%
 NL	58%
 PL	57%
 DK	55%
 FI	53%
 IE	51%
 LU	48%
<small>CY (cc)</small>	56%
 HR	64%
 MK	56%
 IS	56%
 ME	53%
 TR	48%

Question: QD2. And overall, to what extent do you think that you are well informed or not about European matters?
 Answers: Total 'Not well informed'

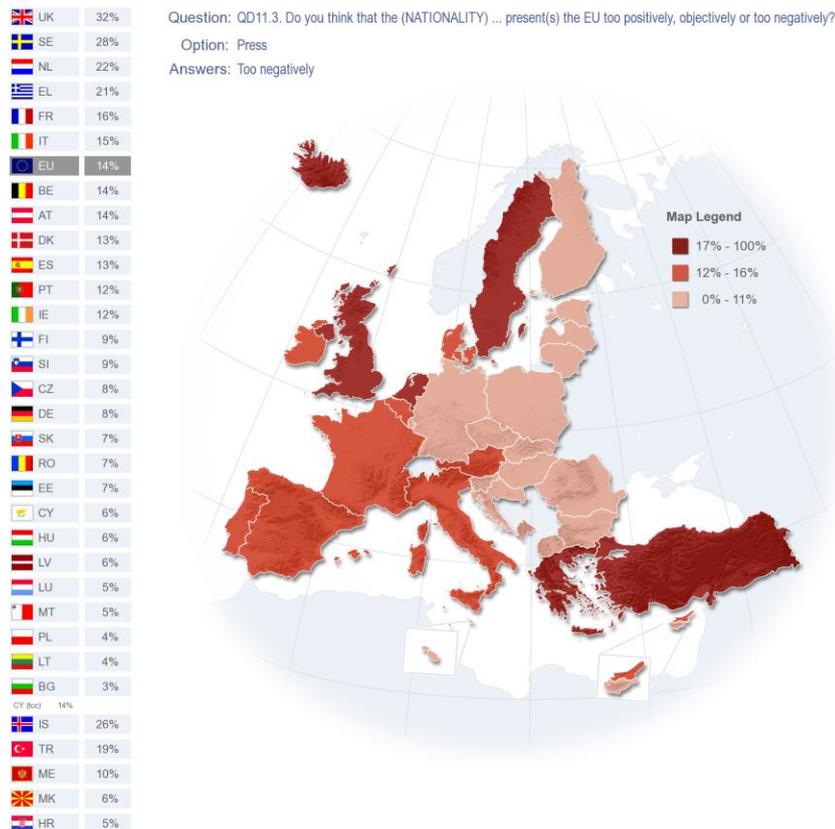


66% of all EU citizens and 62% of UK citizens think they are not well informed on European matters.

In the UK, this view is held by 69% of women and 54% of men. While there is virtually no variance by age, education has a major effect with just 49% of the most educated segment saying they were not well-informed compared with 71% of the least educated while, amongst those still studying, the figure reaches 58%.

BIAS OF INFORMATION

Q D11 Do you think that British media present the EU too positively, objectively or too negatively?



When asked whether the **press** presented the EU too negatively, nearly a third (32%) of the UK poll agreed – up from the 27% recorded a year before (EU27: 14%, up from 12%).

In the UK, this view was held by 36% of men compared with 28% of women, 39% of the youngest age-group, 44% of the most educated and 48% of managers.

Nearly one in four (24%) of UK citizens believes **television** gives an overly negative view of the EU – a figure up from 19% a year previously. A small increase is noted from 12% to 14% across the EU27, with particularly high figures noted in the latest results from the Netherlands (23%), France (24%) and Greece (29%).

In the UK, this perception of television is more prevalent amongst the most educated (28%) and managers (32%).

Radio was seen as providing fairly objective coverage of the EU with just 10% of the total poll and 15% of the UK poll believing that these views were too negative.

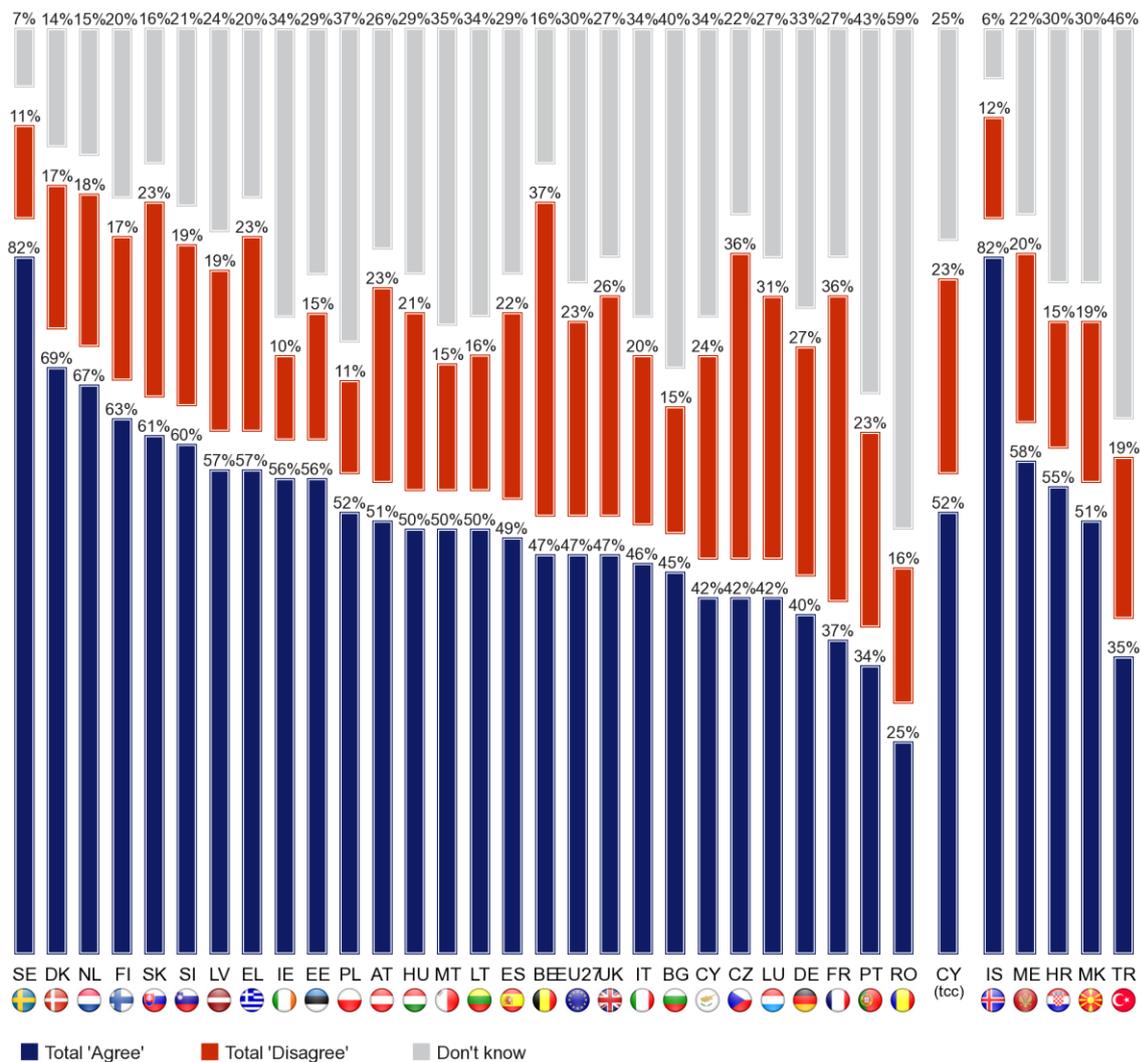
ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS

Q D13 Regardless of whether you participate in online social networks or not (social networking websites, blogs, video hosting websites), please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements:...

Getting people interested in political affairs: nearly half (47%) of the EU27 and UK polls believe that social networks could get people interested in political affairs, while in Sweden the figure reaches 82%.

QD13.3. Regardless of whether you participate in online social networks or not (social networking websites, blogs, video hosting websites), please tell me whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements.

Online social networks can get people interested in political affairs



In the UK, age had a major influence on responses to this question. Amongst the 55s and over, half (50%) gave a 'don't know' answer compared with 5% amongst the youngest age-group.

Agreeing with this statement were 58% of the most educated segment of the UK poll – twice the 29% observed amongst the least educated.

Efficiency: despite a high ‘don’t know’ response of 29%, nearly half (47%) of the EU27 poll thought online social networks were a modern way to keep abreast of political affairs.

In the UK, ‘don’t knows’ accounted for 27%, with 43% agreeing.

As might be anticipated with a new technology, this UK average ‘don’t know’ response of 27% is made up of widely varying results by group. Figures of 49% came from people over 55 and 51% of the least educated in contrast to 10% amongst 15-24 year olds and 9% of those still studying.

Trustworthiness: 40% of the EU27 poll said information on political affairs gathered from online social networks could not be trusted while in the UK the figure is 48%.

In the UK, an overall 30% ‘don’t know’ figure is made up of 11% amongst the youngest age-group in stark contrast to 52% of the oldest.

Having your say: 47% of the EU27 poll and 44% of the UK poll believed online social networks were a good way of having a say on political issues.

In the UK, this figure rises to two-thirds (66%) of the youngest segment in contrast to just 27% of those aged 55 or more. A similar variation was noted in responses from the most educated (54%) and the least educated where the figure reaches just 26%.