



Standard Eurobarometer 80

**PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
Autumn 2013**

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.

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Standard Eurobarometer 80 / Autumn 2013 – TNS Opinion & Social

Introduction

This is the UK report on the more important results of the Standard Eurobarometer 80 survey conducted between 2 – 17 November 2013 in the 28 EU Member States.

The main findings of the report are:

- only half of the citizens in the EU and 44% of those in the UK claim they understand how the EU works;
- on average, across the Member States, trust in the EU (31%) is higher than trust in national governments (23%). The comparable UK figures are 19% and 24%.
- there is a healthy demand for more information on the rights of EU citizens both as an EU average of 59% and 48% in the UK;
- rising prices and inflation are of major concern to 40% of the EU poll and that conducted in the UK;
- UK citizens with higher levels of education are, overall, substantially more pro-EU than those with less formal education.

Note: All socio-demographic data in this report refer to the UK sample.

Understanding how the EU works

QA 19a

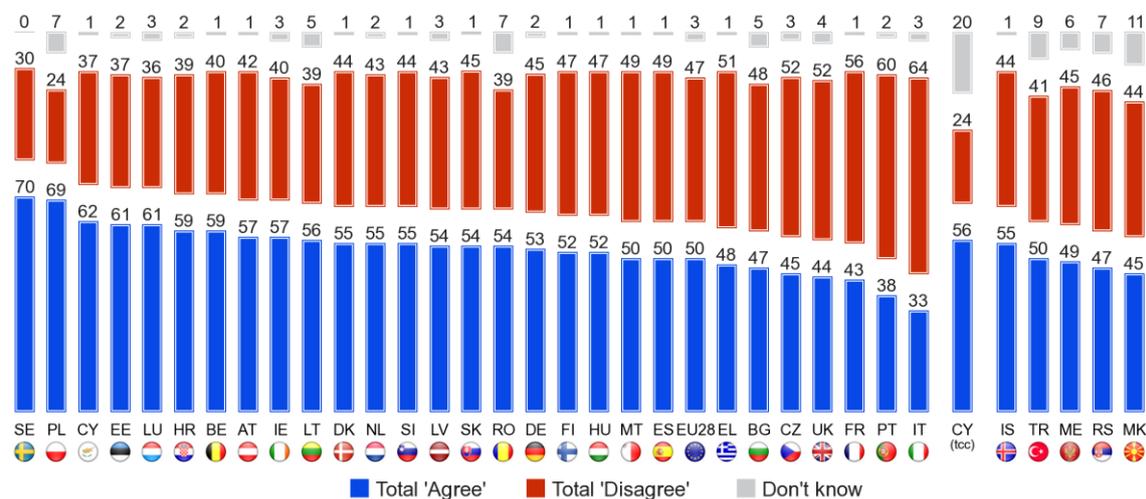
A fundamental building block in the process of having opinions and trusting organisations is to understand what a particular body does and how it functions.

Just 50% of EU citizens polled say they understand how the EU works, with 47% stating the contrary.

In the UK, the figures show a lower level of understanding of the EU's workings with just 44% of those polled saying they understood how it worked. With 52% of the UK poll admitting they didn't understand the EU's processes, there is now an 8 percentage point gap – an increase from the 5 points noted earlier in the year.

QA19a.1. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

I understand how the EU works



55% of the male poll said they understood how the EU works compared with only 34% of females.

There was a similar disparity based upon level of education with just 30% of those who had left school aged 15 or less claiming to understand the functioning of the EU compared with nearly twice that proportion (58%) educated to age 20 or more.

60% of managers and 53% of other white collar workers understood how the European Union works compared with just 20% of house persons.

No clear pattern emerges when responses are analysed by age-group.

Citizens' trust in the EU and national government

Q 10.8 and 10.6

A high level of cynicism is noted generally across the EU towards governmental institutions at all levels. Fewer than a third (31%) of EU citizens polled trust the EU and this figure falls to just 19% in the UK – a figure 2 percentage points less than the 21% noted in Greece and Spain.

21% of men in the UK compared with 16% of women trust the EU.

Age has a major influence on responses to this question. While 29% of UK citizens aged 15 to 24 tended to trust the EU, this figure falls steadily from 23% for 25 to 39 years olds to 19% in the 40 to 54 age band and 11% amongst those aged 55 or more.

A further major influence on trust is education. While one in ten (10%) of the least educated group trusts the EU, this figure rises to 15% for those educated to age 16 to 19, 28% for those educated to 20 or beyond and to more than a third (36%) of those still studying.

However, the figures above relating to trust in the EU appear relatively positive when compared with citizens' trust in national governments.

Only 23% of the total EU poll trusted their own national governments compared with the 31% noted above who trusted the EU. However, in the UK, the percentage of those trusting their government is higher than for the EU (24% v.19%).

A similar pattern to that noted above for trust in the EU is shown when these data on trust in national governments is examined by age and education.

30% of citizens aged 15 to 24 trust the government, while this figure falls to 22% of everyone aged 40 or more. 39% of students and 31% of those educated to age 20 or more compared with just 19% of those who left school aged 15 or less.

35% of the self-employed compared with only 17% of the unemployed and 15% of manual workers expressed trust in the government.

Image of the EU

Q 11

A relative majority (39%) of all EU citizens polled felt 'neutral' towards the EU, i.e. having neither positive nor negative feelings and, in the UK, the figure is similar at 36%.

While 28% of the total EU sample had a negative image of the EU, in the UK, this figure shows a noticeable decrease from the 43% recorded in EB 79 six months previously. The UK figure reaches 39% with just slightly more women (40%) than men (37%) holding a negative image of the EU.

However, substantial variations are seen when responses by age are analysed. While just one in five (19%) of 15 to 24 year olds held this negative view, this figure rises steadily by age and, for UK citizens aged 55 or more, is more than half of that segment of the poll at 52%.

Similar wide variations are seen by level of education with only 14% of those still studying having this negative image of the EU compared with 51% of those who had left school at the earliest opportunity.

Main concerns at national level

Q A 4a

Across the EU, unemployment is seen by those polled as the most important problem facing their country, being cited in 22 Member States and averaging 49% across the Union. There has, however, been a fall of 2 percentage points since the last survey.

The figure rises to 77% in Cyprus and 74% in Spain, while particularly low figures of 11% are seen in Malta. In the UK, the highest figure also relates to unemployment at 35%.

Noticeably more women (39%) than men (31%) listed this as one of the main concerns facing the country.

Respondents aged between 15 and 24 were most concerned about unemployment, with a figure of 43%, compared with 28% of those aged between 40 and 54 and 34% of those aged 55 and over. High levels of concern (49%) are also seen amongst those still studying who, for the most part, will be of a younger age.

33% of the UK poll cited immigration as a concern for the country which, across the EU as a whole, is only mentioned by 12% of the poll. A particularly high figure of 63% is recorded in Malta.

While there was no variation by gender, 39% of UK citizens polled aged 55 or more compared with 26% or less of people aged under 40 cited immigration as a concern for the UK.

Level of education was again a determining factor on this issue with 41% of those educated to age 15 or less and 36% of those educated to age 16 to 19 compared with 25% of those educated to age 20 or beyond. When young age and education are combined in those still studying, the figure falls to just 16%.

Main concerns at personal level

QA 5 a

Across the EU, rising prices and inflation is the main concern facing the individual citizens taking part in the survey, with 40% being both the EU average and the largest UK figure.

No clear pattern emerges from a socio-demographic analysis by gender or age. Students appear to be relatively immune from any effects of rising prices and inflation with only 26% of UK citizens studying believing rising prices and inflation to be a major concern.

Across the EU, the second most important personal issue is unemployment at 20%, with figures of 33% noted in Ireland, 38% in Cyprus and 39% in Spain. The UK figure is relatively low at just 15%, and is down from the 18% noted six months previously.

While unemployment is cited by 29% of those aged 15 to 24, this figure falls steadily by age to just 6% of those aged 55 or more.

In the UK, the household financial situation is the second most important concern at 21%. This is above the 16% EU average.

No clear patterns emerge by age or gender or education.

The situation of the national economy

Q A 2a.1

In the EB 80 results, an improving perception of national economies is observed.

While the EU figure is still less than a third (31%) of the total poll, it is a marked improvement on the 26% recorded just 6 months previously.

However, this average hides large variations. While a highly positive view is observed in Sweden (85%), the figure tumbles to just 2% in Greece, 3% in Cyprus and Portugal, and 4% in Spain.

In the vanguard of this improvement are Denmark (58% to 74%) and the UK (24% to 38%).

Analysing the UK socio-demographic data, it is seen that a noticeably higher proportion of men (43%) than of women (33%) hold this positive view of the national economy, while no clear pattern emerges by age or education.

Particularly optimistic views are held by managers (50%) and the self-employed (48%) compared with just 32% of white-collar workers and 30% of manual workers.

Information about EU citizens' rights

Q D 3.3

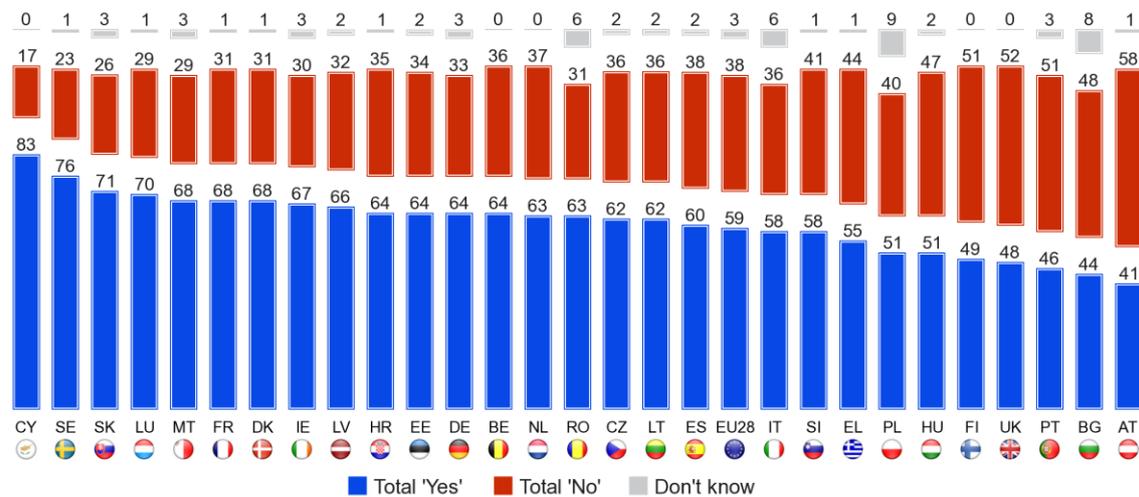
Across the EU, a substantial majority (59%) of citizens polled would like to be better informed about their rights as EU citizens. There is relatively lesser desire for information in the UK (48%), although these figures still show a healthy appetite for this material.

A relatively small proportion (38%) of UK citizens aged 55 or more would like more information about their rights as EU citizens. However, for all other age groups, the figure is at least 49% and rises to 57% for those aged between 25 and 39.

A high demand (61%) is also noted amongst those educated to age 20 or more compared with just 35% of those who had the lowest level of education.

When occupation is analysed, little variation is noted except that there is only small interest (36%) shown by the retired.

QD3.3. For each of the following statements, please tell me to what extent it corresponds or not to your own opinion.
You would like to know more about your rights as a citizen of the EU



The most effective level at which to tackle the financial and economic crisis

Q C3a

Between EB 79 (Spring 2013) and EB 80 (Autumn 2013), there has been minimal change in EU citizens' views as to who is the best party to tackle the financial and economic crisis. Accordingly, national governments and the EU now rank equally in the latest poll at 22%.

However, there are substantial variations making up these averages such as the 36% of the Maltese poll compared with just 10% of the UK poll favouring the EU to find the solution.

36% of the UK sample favours action at national government level.

Looking at the UK data from a socio-demographic point of view, it is interesting to see what segments of the poll favoured the EU as the most effective level at which to tackle the crisis.

17% of 15 to 24 year olds favoured this approach compared with just 7% of those aged 55 or more.

An even greater variation is noted by level of education with figures of 24% amongst those still studying and 13% of those educated to age 20 or more compared with only 7% of those who had left school at the earliest opportunity.

Although the figures are relatively small, it is worth noting that 11% of people living in large towns compared with only 7% of those living in rural villages favoured this approach.

While just 2% of house persons and 6% of the retired saw the EU as the answer, the figure rises to 14% amongst managers.

Feeling like a citizen of the EU

Q D3.1

In 23 of the EU Member States, absolute majorities feel like citizens of the EU with particularly high figures noted in Luxembourg (85%), Malta (74%), and Germany and Finland (73%).

Although showing a fall from the 62% in Spring 2013, 59% of EU citizens polled held this opinion on EU citizenship.

In contrast, just 42% of the UK poll has this sense of belonging – a figure shared with Greece and similar to the 45% in Italy and 46% in Cyprus.

It is interesting to note that the UK figure shows a fall from the 48% recorded just 6 months previously.

Noticeably more men (46%) than women (38%) felt they were citizens of the EU.

51% of citizens aged 15 to 24 and 50% of those aged 25 to 39 felt they were citizens of the EU compared with just 35% of those aged 55 or more.

When education is viewed as a driver of this sentiment, high figures of 60% are noted amongst those educated to age 20 or beyond compared with just 24% of those who had left school at the earliest opportunity.

60% of managers and 61% of students compared with just 35% of manual workers and house persons and 32% of the retired see themselves as EU citizens.