



Standard Eurobarometer 82

**PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
Autumn 2014**

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 82 / Autumn 2014 – TNS Opinion & Social

Table of Contents

Introduction

I. Citizens' trust in their national government and the European Union	2
1. Trusting the national government	2
2. Trusting the European Union.....	2
II. Understanding how the EU works	3
1. Country analysis	3
2. Socio-demographic analysis	3
III. Concerns of EU citizens.....	4
1. Important issues at national level	4
2. Important issues at individual level.....	5
IV. Does the EU make the quality of life better in Europe?	6
1. Country analysis	6
2. Socio-demographic analysis	6
V. Feeling like a citizen of the EU.....	7
1. Country analysis	7
2. Socio-demographic analysis	7
VI. Information about EU citizens' rights.....	8
1. Country analysis	8
2. Socio-demographic analysis	8
CONCLUSION	9

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on fieldwork conducted across the European Union (EU) between 8 and 17 November 2014, with a total of 27,901 face-to-face interviews.

Part of the survey was conducted in the United Kingdom (UK), where a total of 1,317 people were interviewed.

Standard Eurobarometers are conducted twice every year and seek to give continuing feedback on EU citizens' opinions and feelings.

This report covers a number of the key issues and looks at recent changes in beliefs and attitudes across the 28 Member States, as well as socio-demographic data from the UK.

I. Citizens' trust in their national government and the European Union

1. Trusting the national government (QA8a.11)

Country analysis

The proportion of EU citizens who trust their national governments has risen marginally in the past six months from 27% to 29%.

This average is made up of a wide spread of figures, ranging from just 11% in Greece and Spain to 54% in Sweden and 56% in Malta.

In the UK, the figure has increased from 25% to 31%. However, both the EU and the UK figures are still less than a third of those surveyed.

Socio-demographic analysis

While no clear variation emerges through analysis of gender, age or occupation, education is a major driver. Only 25% of respondents who had finished their education aged 15 or younger trusted the national government, compared with 32% of those educated to age 20 or above and a majority (51%) of those still studying.

2. Trusting the European Union (QA8a.13)

Country analysis

Turning to citizens' trust in the European Union, the figures, although still small, are higher than those relating to trust in national governments and show a noticeable increase over the past 6 months.

Accordingly, 37% of total EU respondents tend to trust the European Union, in contrast to 31% just six months previously.

In the UK, this increase in trust is even more striking. From a figure of just 16% in Spring 2014, trust increased to 26% in the autumn of the same year. This growth appears to have come not from a migration of those citizens saying they tended not to trust the EU, where the figure remains static, but rather from a decrease in the 'don't know' camp from 23% to 13%.

It is worth noting that the UK and a few other countries, such as Sweden, the Netherlands and Germany, have a higher level of trust in their national government than in the EU – a sentiment at variance with the general average across the EU28.

Socio-demographic analysis

Age has a major effect upon citizens' trust levels towards the European Union, with 48% of those aged 15-24 having confidence in the EU, compared with just a third of this figure (16%) amongst citizens aged 55 or more.

A similar variation is noted by level of education, with 12% of those who had left education aged 15 or less trusting the EU, compared with 35% of those educated to age 20 or beyond.

When response by occupation is analysed, similar wide variations are noted, ranging from 15% of the retired to 24% of managers, 29% of manual workers, 34% of the self-employed and, combining the factors of age and education, 63% of those still studying.

II. Understanding how the EU works (QA21a.1)

1. Country analysis

A key element in having valid opinions is to understand the subject under discussion and how it functions.

In the autumn of 2014, 52% of EU citizens surveyed claim they understand how the EU works. The lowest figures are noted in Italy (38%), Spain (42%) and Malta (44%). At the other end of the spectrum, figures of 68% and 72% are noted in Poland and Sweden respectively.

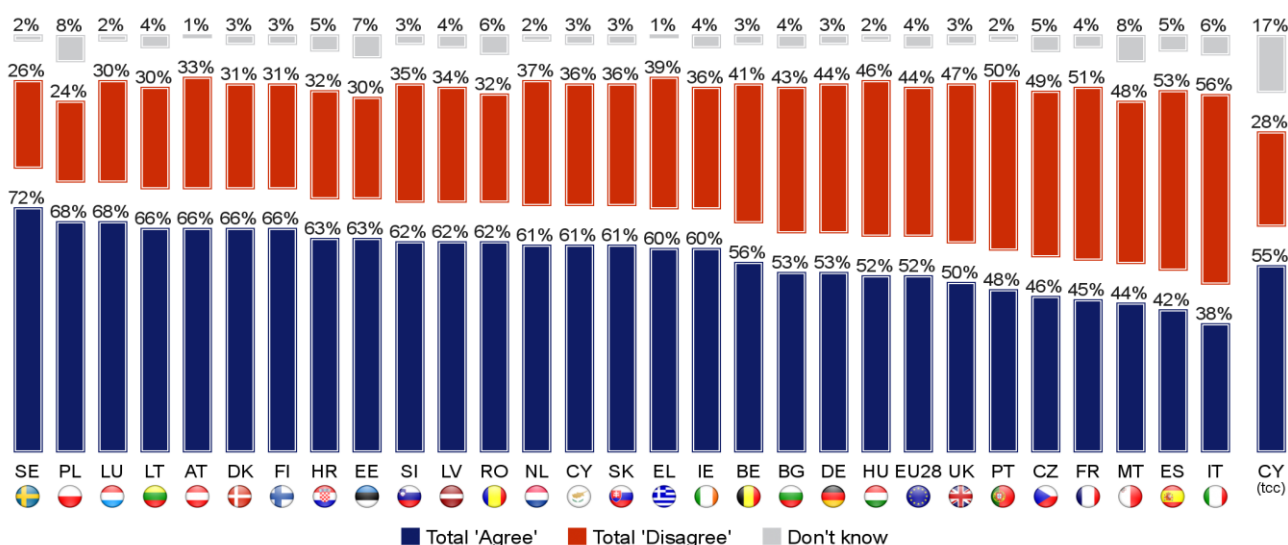
The converse of this is that 44% of total EU respondents say they do not understand how the EU works.

In the UK, the figures are broadly similar, with 50% saying they understand how the EU works (a 2 percentage point increase over the past six months and 6 percentage points over the figure a year ago).

Looking at those citizens who said they did not understand how the EU works, the UK shows an increase from 45% to 47% over the last 6 months. The reason that the positive and negative views have both increased by 2 percentage points is due to a fall in the 'don't knows' from 7% to 3%.

QA21a.1. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

I understand how the EU works



2. Socio-demographic analysis

There is a noticeable difference in response to this question based upon both age and education. Amongst 15 to 39 year-olds, a majority (55%) say they understand how the EU works compared with 44% of those aged 55 or more.

The level of education shows an even greater disparity, with just 34% of those who had left school aged 15 or less, compared with 60% of those educated to age 20 or beyond, saying that they understand how the EU works. In fact, the figure rises even further to 62% amongst those still studying.

There is also a wide variation based upon occupation, with the functioning of the EU being understood by 62% of managers compared with just 37% of house persons and the unemployed.

III. Concerns of EU citizens

When the survey asks respondents what they consider to be the two most important issues, there is a subtle but important distinction drawn between issues facing their country and issues facing them as individuals. It would appear that the former requires the respondent to give opinions they believe to be that of *vox populi* compared with a personal opinion based on their own experience.

1. Important issues at national level (QA3a)

	EU ranking	UK ranking
1	Unemployment (45%)	Immigration (38%)
2	Economic situation (24%)	Unemployment (22%)
3	Immigration (18%)	Health & social security (22%)

Table III.1 Most important issues at national level, as ranked by EU and UK respondents

Across the EU, **unemployment** remains as it has for the last three years the most important issue, averaging 45%.

There has, however, been a fall of three percentage points since the previous survey in Spring 2014. The figure reaches 79% in Cyprus and 78% in Spain, while the lowest figures are seen in Malta (12%) and Germany (16%).

In the UK, the figure has fallen from 29% to 22% over the past 6 months.

While there was no marked variation by levels of education, respondents' age had a major bearing on this issue. 40% of 15 to 24 year-olds saw unemployment as one of their two most important issues, compared with just 23% of 25 to 39 year-olds and a modest 18% of those aged 55 or more.

Making up the 22% UK average are figures of 12% amongst white-collar workers, 28% of students and, predictably, 43% of the unemployed.

Nearly a quarter (24%) of total EU respondents see the **economic situation** as the major concern facing their country, although this figure is down from the 29% noted 6 months previously.

Particularly high figures are observed in Cyprus (68%) and Greece (46%), while the UK figure is one of the lowest, at just 13%.

Despite the fact that the sample size is relatively small, it is worth noting that this concern was felt by 17% of men compared with 10% of women.

Wide variation was also noted by level of education, with figures of 10% amongst those who had left school at the earliest opportunity – half the proportion noted amongst those educated to age 20 or more (20%).

Just 5% of house persons and 6% of the unemployed saw the economic situation as a major concern, compared with response levels of 20% amongst managers and 23% amongst the self-employed.

EU citizens' concern about **immigration** at a national level has increased noticeably in recent Eurobarometer surveys. A year ago, it was 12%; six months ago, 15%; and, in this latest survey, it is 18%, making it the third most cited issue.

Particularly high figures are noted in Malta (57%), while in Germany the figure shows an increase from 22% to 37% in just 6 months. In comparison, only 1% of respondents in Slovenia and Slovakia saw immigration as a concern.

In the UK, the figure is 38% – a small decrease from the 41% noted in Spring 2014.

This issue produced wide variation by age and levels of education. Only 31% of younger people (aged 15 to 39) had this as one of their two major concerns, compared with 47% of citizens aged 55 or more. Similarly, just 29% of those educated to age 20 or more were concerned, compared with 45% of those who had left school aged 15 or less.

While 24% of students and 25% of the unemployed cited this issue, the figures increase substantially to 43% amongst the retired and 44% amongst manual workers.

There was a noticeable discrepancy between the figures of 36% of people living in large towns, compared with 45% of those living in a rural environment.

Health and social security is cited by 16% of EU respondents – two percentage points higher than the previous survey in Spring 2014.

Making up the average figure there are wide disparities, ranging from 4% in Italy and 5% in Luxembourg to 23% in Denmark, 24% in Bulgaria and 29% in Estonia.

The UK figure, at 22%, makes it the second (equal with unemployment) most important issue cited by respondents.

No variation is noted by gender, but age is a major factor, with figures of 6% amongst 15 to 24 year-olds compared to at least 26% amongst those aged 40 or more.

While level of education makes little change to responses to this question, variations in attitude by occupation produce figures of 7% for students, 18% for the unemployed, 25% of house persons and 26% of the retired.

2. Important issues at individual level (QA4a)

	EU ranking	UK ranking
1	Rising prices & inflation (30%)	Rising prices & inflation (35%)
2	Unemployment (19%)	Health & social security (17%)
3	Household financial situation (19%)	Household financial situation (17%)

Table III.2 Most important issues at individual level, as ranked by EU and UK respondents

Rising prices and inflation is the most important issue at both the EU and UK level, with figures of 30% for the EU average and 35% in the UK.

The highest figures are noted in Lithuania (54%), the Czech Republic (42%) and France (40%), in contrast to 10% in Denmark, 13% in the Netherlands, 16% in Slovenia and 17% in Finland.

No clear patterns emerge based upon education or age.

The second major concern relates to **unemployment**. Making up the EU28 average of 19% are figures ranging from 6% in Malta and 9% in Austria to 27% in Greece, 32% in Cyprus and 41% in Spain.

The UK figure, at 13%, shows a minimal increase (one percentage point) since Spring 2014.

19% of total EU respondents see the **financial situation of their household** as being one of the two most important issues facing them personally at the moment. Cyprus (47%), Greece (43%) and Bulgaria (35%) are the three EU Member States with the highest perceived problem, while this issue concerned only 10% of respondents in Luxembourg, 14% in Germany and 16% in the UK.

Making up the 16% EU28 average citing **health and social security** as one the two most important personal issues being faced are figures ranging from 8% in Italy and Luxembourg, 9% in France and 10% in Belgium and Spain to 38% in Sweden, 40% in the Netherlands and 43% in Finland.

The UK figure, at 17%, is almost identical to the EU28 average.

IV. Does the EU make the quality of life better in Europe? (QA15.8)

1. Country analysis

In the Spring of 2014, EU citizens' opinion was equally divided as to the effects that the EU had on the quality of life in Europe, with 45% believing that the EU improved it and 44% taking the contrary view.

In just six months between EB81 and EB82, there has been a noticeable change in attitude. In the latest survey, nearly half (49%) of citizens surveyed take a positive view of the effects that the EU has on life in Europe compared with 42% taking the opposite view.

Making up this 49% average are figures ranging from 34% in Spain and Cyprus, and 35% in Italy, to 71% in Lithuania and 78% in Malta.

In the UK, the shift in attitude is even more pronounced, with a substantial ten percentage point increase from 35% to 45% of those who believe the EU improves the quality of life in Europe compared with a fall from 43% to 41% of those disagreeing.

2. Socio-demographic analysis

There is stronger support for this view from men (51%) than women (39%).

Age also has a major impact on results in this area, with figures of 62% amongst 15 to 24 year-olds, 52% amongst those aged 25 to 39 and a noticeably smaller 37% amongst those aged 40 or more.

Education has a major effect upon respondents' opinions on this issue, with figures of 32% amongst those only educated to age 15, 36% of those educated to age 16-19 and a substantial 59% of those educated to age 20 or over.

Similar substantial variations are noted by occupation. Accordingly, figures of 37% are noted amongst house persons and the retired, compared with 60% amongst the self-employed and 71% amongst students.

V. Feeling like a citizen of the EU (QD2.1)

1. Country analysis

63% of total EU respondents feel they are citizens of the EU – a slight fall from the 65% noted six months previously.

However, it should be noted that this 'yes' statistic includes respondents who replied 'yes, definitely' (23%) as well as a weaker 'yes, to some extent', where the figure is 40%.

Particularly high figures are noted in Luxembourg (89%) and Malta (85%), while the figure falls to 47% in Italy and 45% in Greece.

The UK figure, at 50%, is one of the lowest recorded across the EU and is itself made up of just 18% who said 'yes, definitely' and a much larger 32% who gave a more conditional reply of 'yes, to some extent'.

2. Socio-demographic analysis

65% of younger people (age 15 to 24) feel like a citizen of the EU, in contrast to 56% of people aged 25 to 39, 49% of those aged 40 to 54 and just 41% of those aged 55 and over.

Education has a major effect on response to this question, with twice as many (66%) of those educated to age 20 or beyond feeling they are EU citizens, compared with the 33% recorded amongst those who had left school aged 15 or less.

Occupation is another factor, with figures of 39% amongst the retired and 44% amongst house persons, compared with 64% of the self-employed and 66% of students.

There is also a variation depending on where people live, with a figure of 39% for small villages and a substantially larger 52% for large towns.

VI. Information about EU citizens' rights (QD2.3)

1. Country analysis

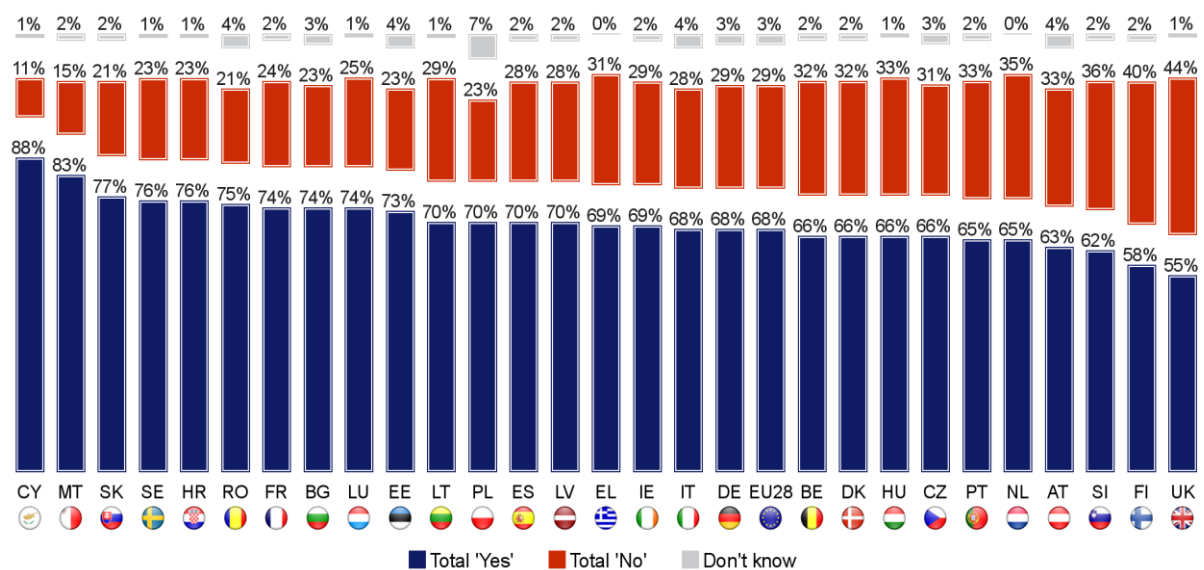
A generally positive aspect of EB82 is that 68% of total EU respondents would like to be better informed about their rights as EU citizens.

This figure reaches 88% in Cyprus and 83% in Malta.

Even in the UK, where this figure is relatively low at 55%, it still represents the majority of those surveyed and is seven percentage points higher than in EB81 six months previously.

QD2.3. 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



2. Socio-demographic analysis

Just 40% of those educated to age 15 or less would like to be informed about their rights as EU citizens, compared with 55% of those educated to age 16-19 and nearly two-thirds (63%) of those whose education had ended at age 20 or beyond.

Age is also a noticeable factor in responses to this question, with a figure of 66% amongst those aged 15 to 24 and a noticeably smaller 49% amongst those aged 55 or more.

While relatively high levels are noted amongst the unemployed (62%), the self-employed (61%) and managers (60%), interest falls to 50% amongst the retired and manual workers.

CONCLUSION

The following are some of the key findings from analysis of EB82:

- Across the Union, citizens' trust in the EU has risen noticeably in the past six months, with the trust factor rising from 31% to 37%.
- In the UK, trust in both the government and in the EU has risen at a rate noticeably faster than the EU averages.
- Younger and better educated UK citizens have a noticeably more positive view of the EU than their older and less well educated fellow-citizens.
- When asked what issues they consider their country to be facing, the largest segment across the EU as a whole cited unemployment. However, this is of relatively low concern to people in the UK, who are more concerned about immigration.
- When asked what their greatest personal concerns are, rising prices and inflation are most frequently cited by respondents both across the EU as a whole and in the UK.
- As a broad affirmative to European citizens' interest in the European Union, more than two-thirds of total EU respondents and 55% of those in the UK would like to be better informed about their rights as EU citizens.