Special Eurobarometer 307

Committee of the Regions

European Commission

EUROBAROMETER

The role and impact of local and regional authorities within the European Union

Opinions on the different levels of public authorities and awareness of the Committee of the Regions

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The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

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Introduction

“There are many goals which we cannot achieve on our own, but only in concert. Tasks are shared between the European Union, the Member States and their regions and local authorities.” These are the words of Europe's Heads of States in their Berlin declaration at the European Union's 50th anniversary in 2007.

In today's European Union of 27 Member States, nearly 300 regions and 91 000 municipalities have major powers in key sectors such as education, the environment, transport and economic development, and they account for 2/3 of the total public investment expenditure.

Local and regional authorities are vital to the democratic life of the European Union and are key actors in the conception and implementation of common European policies.

At an institutional level the Committee of the Regions of the European Union (CoR) is the political assembly that provides regions and cities with a voice at the heart of the European Union.

Established in 1994, the CoR was set up to address two main issues. Firstly, about three quarters of EU legislation is implemented at local or regional level, so it makes sense for local and regional representatives to have a say in the development of new EU laws and to monitor compliance with the principle of subsidiarity, ensuring that decisions are taken as close to the grassroots as possible. Secondly, there were concerns that the public was being left behind as the EU steamed ahead. Involving the elected level of government closest to citizens was one way of closing the gap.

The CoR is consulted whenever new proposals are made in areas that have repercussions at regional or local level in 10 areas: economic and social cohesion, trans-European infrastructure networks, health, education and culture, employment policy, social policy, the environment, vocational training and transport, covering much of the scope of the EU's activity.

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This report presents the results of a Special Eurobarometer survey which was commissioned by the Directorate-General Communication of the European Commission on behalf of the Committee of the Regions. The aim of the survey was to obtain a better understanding of the importance the public gives to the various levels of public authorities and to measure public awareness of the CoR. The survey results will feed into two of the Committee's major political initiatives for 2009: the presentation of a White Paper on Multi-level Governance and the adoption of the CoR Mission Statement on the occasion of its 15th anniversary.

For this Special Eurobarometer survey, 26 618 interviews were conducted face-to-face in the 27 EU Member States, in respondents' homes and in their national language between the 6th of October and the 6th of November 2008[1].

The methodology used is that of the Standard Eurobarometer surveys of the Directorate-General for Communication ("Research and Political Analysis" Unit). A technical note concerning the interviews, carried out by the institutes within the TNS Opinion & Social network, is annexed at the end of this report. This note specifies the interview method used, as well as the confidence intervals[2].

In order to explore citizens' opinion comprehensively, for each question covered in the survey, our analysis looks at results for:

- The EU as a whole;
- Individual countries;
- Socio-demographic variables.

[1] For precise details of the fieldwork dates in each country, please refer to the technical specifications.
[2] 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 has the possibility to 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
D-E	*East Germany*
DE	Germany
D-W	*West Germany*
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
CY	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

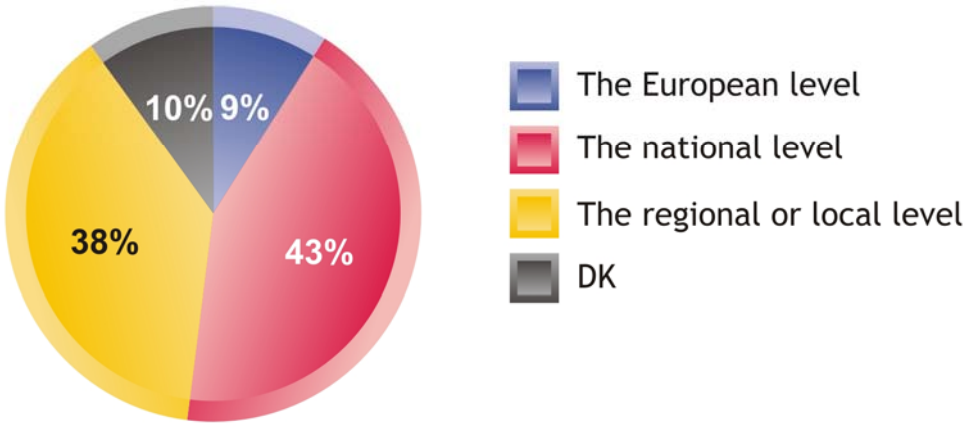
* Cyprus as a whole is one of the 27 European Union Member States. However, the "*acquis communautaire*" is suspended in the part of the country that is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews conducted in the part of the country controlled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

1. THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES ON PEOPLE'S LIVING CONDITIONS

- Europeans recognise that both regional and local authorities have an important impact on their living conditions, at a level close to the national level -

Even if a relative majority of Europeans find that the public authorities at the national level have the most impact on their living conditions (43%), **the view that this position should be assigned to regional or local authorities is also widely held in Europe**: nearly four out of ten citizens feel that it is that level which has the most impact on their living conditions (38%)[3].

Question: QH1. In your opinion, which of the different levels of public authorities, European level, national level, regional or local level, has the most impact on your life conditions?



Public authorities at the European level are not seen to have much impact on living conditions. Only around one citizen in ten believes that it's at that level that public authorities have the most impact on their living conditions (9%). One citizen in ten does not know at which level public authorities have the most impact on living conditions.

[3] QH1 In your opinion, which of the different levels of public authorities, European level, national level, regional or local level, has the most impact on your life conditions?

The table below presents for each response category the countries with the highest and lowest proportions:

QH1 IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH OF THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES HAS THE MOST IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE CONDITIONS?

National level		Regional or local level		European Level		Don't know	
EU27	43%	EU27	38%	EU27	9%	EU27	10%
DK	66%	CZ	47%	EL	23%	PT	21%
LU	65%	EE	46%	CY	20%	RO	19%
MT	62%	FI	46%	PT	18%	IT	16%
NL	61%	SE	46%	IT	17%	BG	15%
FR	56%	UK	44%	SK	17%	MT	15%
LT	56%	ES	42%	CZ	15%		
SI	54%	AT	42%	LU	14%		
EL	52%	PL	42%				
LV	51%	SK	41%				
HU	51%						
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
		NL	28%				
		DK	26%				
		LT	25%				
ES	39%	EL	24%	BG	4%	DK	4%
UK	37%	CY	23%	DK	4%	FR	4%
SK	33%	PT	16%	FI	4%	SE	4%
CZ	32%	LU	14%	EE	3%	BE	3%
RO	32%	MT	12%	SE	2%	EL	1%
IT	29%						

The country-by-country analysis reveals a heterogeneous pattern among the Member States when it comes to the impact which the different levels of public authorities are perceived to have on living conditions. **However, it appears that the tendency to focus on the national level is most present in the smaller EU Member States** (in terms of size and population). The following distinctions become evident from the national analysis:

- In 10 Member States an outright majority feels that **national public authorities** have the most impact on their living conditions. This view tends to be more forthright in smaller countries than in larger countries, although there are some exceptions. Four of the smallest countries (Denmark Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands) top the list and one of the largest EU Member States (Italy) is at the bottom of the ranking. However, France is an exception as it is one of the largest Member States where, nonetheless, the majority view is that national public authorities have the most impact.

- The opinion that **regional or local authorities** have the most impact on living conditions is expressed by nearly half of the citizens in the Czech Republic (47%), Estonia, Finland and Sweden (46%, each). However, in 8 Member States less than a third of citizens share this view, with the lowest proportions recorded in Malta (12%) and Luxembourg (14%).

- Greece (23%) and Cyprus (20%) are the only two countries where at least one-fifth of respondents indicated that public authorities at the **European level** have the most impact.

- In Portugal (21%) and Romania (19%), around one-fifth of respondents indicated that they **don't know** at which level public authorities have most impact on their living conditions.

For further information on country results, the reader is invited to consult the full data tables that are annexed to this report.

Finally, in socio-demographic terms, the view that the regional or local level has the most impact on living conditions is held by a (relative) majority of Europeans who:

- ...are house persons (45%) or unemployed (41%);
- ...have left school at an early age (aged 15-: 43%).

QH1 In your opinion, which of the different levels of public authorities, European level, national level, regional or local level, has the most impact on your life conditions?

	The European level	The national level	The regional or local level	DK
EU27	9%	43%	38%	10%
Age				
15-24	10%	41%	34%	15%
25-39	11%	44%	35%	10%
40-54	9%	45%	38%	8%
55 +	7%	42%	41%	10%
Education (End of)				
15-	8%	36%	43%	13%
16-19	10%	41%	39%	10%
20+	8%	54%	33%	5%
Still Studying	10%	45%	31%	14%
Respondent occupation scale				
Self- employed	13%	46%	35%	6%
Managers	7%	54%	33%	6%
Other white collars	12%	46%	34%	8%
Manual workers	9%	42%	38%	11%
House persons	8%	33%	45%	14%
Unemployed	10%	36%	41%	13%
Retired	6%	41%	42%	11%
Students	10%	45%	31%	14%
Subjective urbanisation				
Rural village	8%	42%	41%	9%
Small/mid-size town	9%	41%	38%	12%
Large town	10%	47%	32%	11%

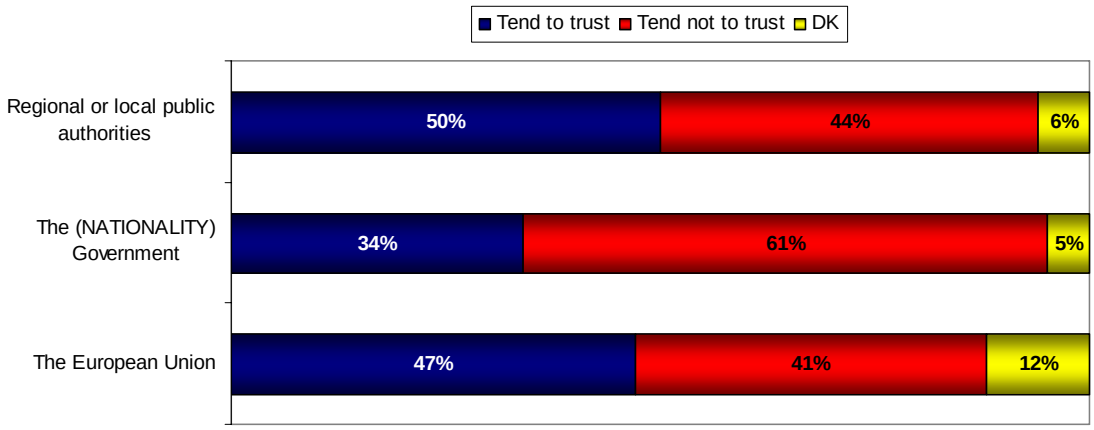
2. TRUST IN THE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF PUBLIC AUTHORITIES

- Europeans have considerable trust in local and regional authorities -

Democracy at regional and local level emerges as a stable piece of EU political legitimacy within an overall context of relatively low level of public trust in the Institutions.

While only one third of Europeans tend to trust their country's government (34%), half of the citizens trust their local and regional authorities (50%). This is slightly higher than the extent of trust expressed in the European Union (47%).

QA12 For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.



For each of the three political levels, the table below presents the countries with the highest and lowest proportions of citizens expressing trust:

QA12 I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.

Regional or local public authorities		National government		European Union	
EU27	**50%**	**EU27**	**34%**	**EU27**	**47%**
FI	72%	FI	68%	SK	70%
DK	70%	NL	66%	EE	67%
SE	68%	CY	65%	NL	64%
AT	67%	DK	60%	RO	63%
DE	65%	LU	60%	BE	61%
NL	64%	SE	56%	DK	60%
BE	63%	MT	50%	SI	60%
FR	62%	AT	50%		
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
SI	39%	CZ	20%		
RO	39%	PL	20%		
EL	34%	LT	16%		
BG	31%	HU	16%	AT	42%
LT	31%	LV	16%	IT	41%
IT	25%	BG	15%	UK	25%

The country-by-country analysis reveals a great degree of variation among the Member States when it comes to the extent of trust people have in the different political levels and we do not see a particular relationship between the three levels.

If we focus specifically on trust in the regional or local public authorities, we see that the highest levels are noted in Nordic countries, followed by several other Western European nations. Conversely, the six lowest levels of trust are noted in either Southern or Eastern European countries.

It is interesting to link these results to people's opinions about which political level is perceived to have the most impact on living conditions, as described in the previous section. This shows that among the countries with widespread trust in regional or local authorities, Finland, Sweden and Austria also have higher than average proportions of citizens who feel that this level has the most impact on living conditions. Similarly, in Lithuania and Greece, we find that low trust levels are matched by low proportions of citizens who feel that regional or local authorities have the most impact on living conditions. However, we do not find a particular relationship between the two measures in the other countries listed in the table above.

For further information on country results, the reader is invited to consult the full data tables that are annexed to this report.

Finally, in socio-demographic terms, trust in regional or local public authorities is most often voiced by Europeans who are managers (58%) and who have stayed in school until age 20 or older (56%). Conversely, a majority of unemployed people (52%) and self-employed people (51%) lacks trust in this political level.

The analyses also show that Europeans who live in rural villages more often voice trust in regional or local public authorities (53%) than is the case for Europeans who live in more urban areas (48% each).

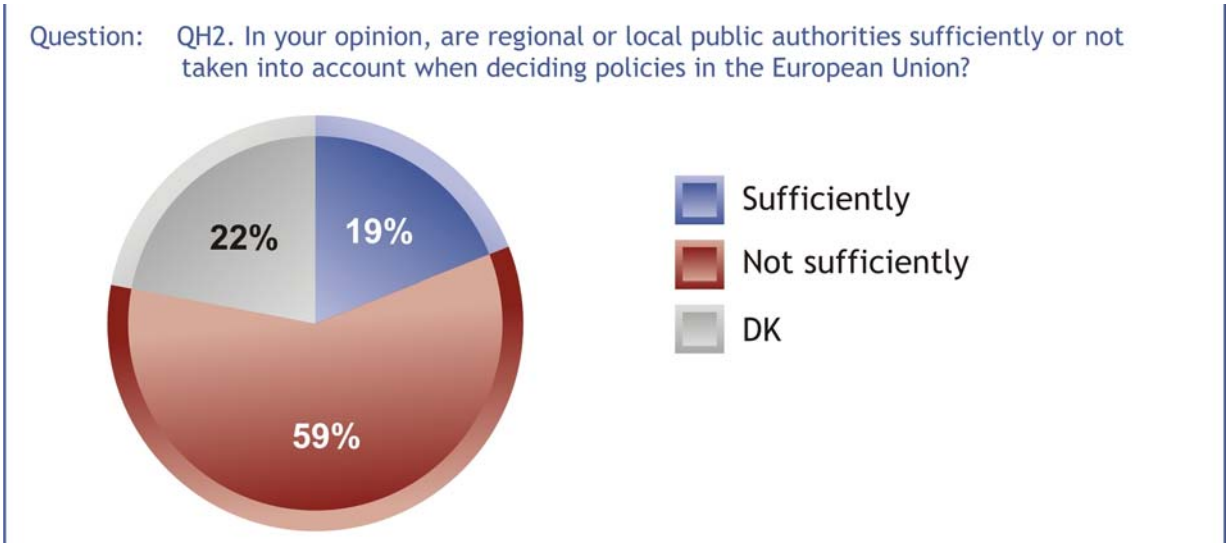
QA12.3 I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. - Regional or local public authorities

	Tend to trust	Tend not to trust	DK
EU27	50%	44%	6%
Age			
15-24	51%	40%	9%
25-39	48%	47%	5%
40-54	48%	47%	5%
55 +	52%	43%	5%
Education (End of)			
15-	46%	48%	6%
16-19	49%	46%	5%
20+	56%	40%	4%
Still studying	54%	37%	9%
Respondent occupation scale			
Self- employed	44%	51%	5%
Mana-gers	58%	38%	4%
Other white collars	49%	46%	5%
Manual workers	48%	47%	5%
House persons	45%	48%	7%
Unem-ployed	42%	52%	6%
Retired	52%	42%	6%
Students	54%	37%	9%
Subjective urbanisation			
Rural village	53%	41%	6%
Small/mid size town	48%	46%	6%
Large town	48%	45%	7%

3. THE POSITION OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- Regional and local public authorities are not sufficiently taken into account in the EU's policy making process -

Less than two out of ten Europeans feel that regional and local authorities are sufficiently taken into account in EU policy-making (19%). A **large majority of Europeans feel that public authorities at this level are not sufficiently taken into account (59%)**[4]. However, the survey also points to a lack of knowledge about the role of regional and local public authorities in deciding policies in the EU: 22% of respondents answered "don't know" to the question.



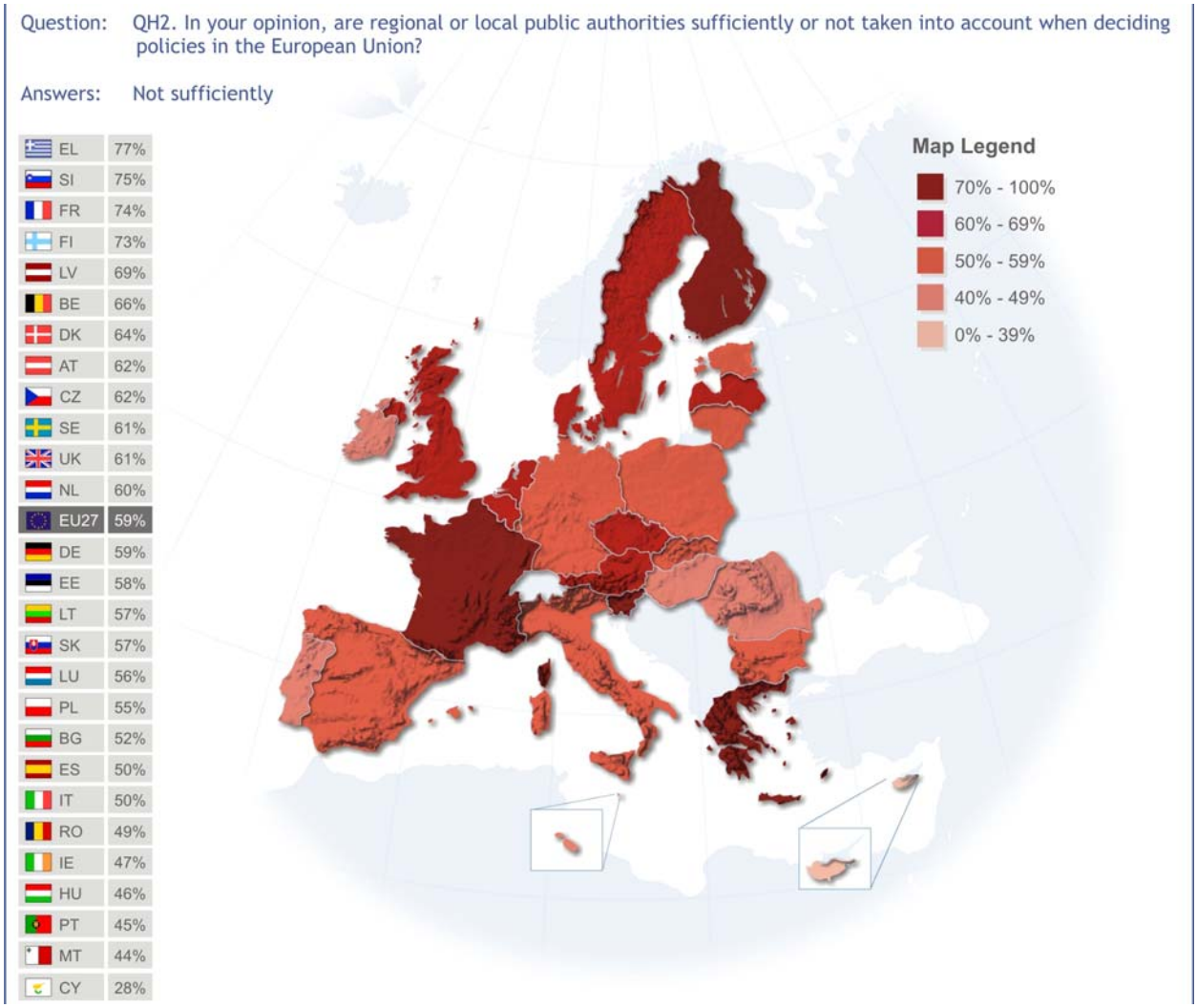
It is important to note that citizens who feel that regional and local public authorities have the most impact on their lives (38% of Europeans) are the least satisfied with these authorities' level of involvement in decision-making regarding EU policies. Only 14% of these citizens feel that regional and local public authorities are sufficiently taken into account.

QH2 In your opinion, are regional or local public authorities sufficiently or not taken into account when deciding policies in the European Union?

	Sufficiently	Not sufficiently	DK
EU27	19%	59%	22%
QH1			
The European level	43%	46%	11%
The national level	21%	64%	15%
The regional or local level	14%	66%	20%
DK	7%	22%	71%

[4] QH2 In your opinion, are regional or local public authorities sufficiently or not taken into account when deciding policies in the European Union?

An examination of the country results shows that **the view that regional or local public authorities are <u>not</u> sufficiently taken into account is particularly widespread in Greece (77%), Slovenia (75%), France (74%) and Finland (73%)**. On the contrary, Cyprus is the only Member State where a relative majority of citizens feels that regional or local public authorities are sufficiently taken into account in this context (44%). In all other countries, less than a third of citizens agree.



The need for more information about the role of regional or local public authorities in deciding policies in the EU appears particularly pertinent in Bulgaria, where more than four out of ten respondents answered "don't know" (41%). Over a third of citizens in Romania (38%), Malta (35%) and Ireland (33%) were also unable to answer the question.

Finally, socio-demographic analyses reveal relatively small differences among the various groups in the population: the proportion of citizens who feel that regional or local public authorities are sufficiently taken into account ranges from 16% to 23% for the groups shown in the table below.

The analyses are helpful, however, in pointing out which socio-demographic groups are particularly in need of information: we find the highest 'non-response' among Europeans who:

- ...are house persons (31%);
- ...are young or still studying (28% each);
- ...left education at aged 15 or younger (28%).

QH2 In your opinion, are regional or local public authorities sufficiently or not taken into account when deciding policies in the European Union?

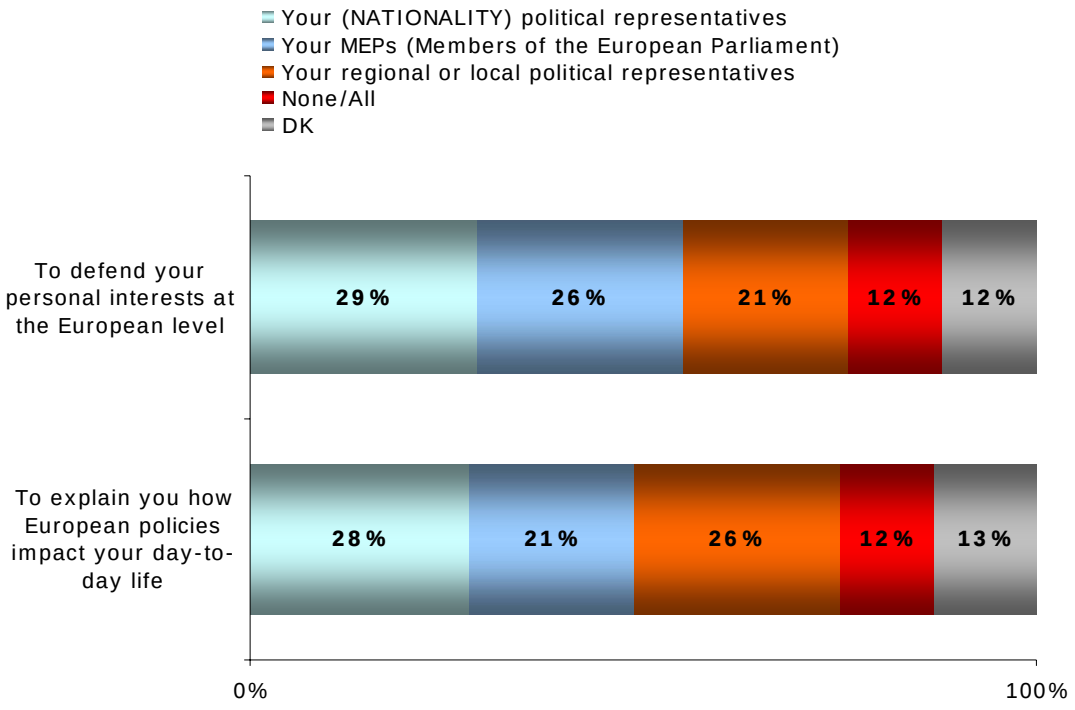
	Sufficiently	Not sufficiently	DK
EU27	19%	59%	22%
Age			
15-24	21%	51%	28%
25-39	21%	59%	20%
40-54	17%	63%	20%
55 +	18%	58%	24%
Education (End of)			
15-	16%	56%	28%
16-19	18%	61%	21%
20+	22%	63%	15%
Still Studying	22%	50%	28%
Respondent occupation scale			
Self- employed	22%	61%	17%
Managers	21%	65%	14%
Other white collars	23%	61%	16%
Manual workers	18%	60%	22%
House persons	17%	52%	31%
Unemployed	16%	57%	27%
Retired	17%	58%	25%
Students	22%	50%	28%
Subjective urbanisation			
Rural village	16%	62%	22%
Small/mid-size town	20%	57%	23%
Large town	22%	56%	22%

4. AN EVALUATION OF THE VARIOUS POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES WITHIN THE EU

- Representing citizens' interest at EU level is seen as a responsibility shared between local and regional politicians, MEPs and national politicians, with a slight preference for the latter. -

On average, Europeans are slightly more inclined to view their national political representatives as best placed to defend their personal interests at the European level (29%) and to explain how European policies impact day-to-day life (28%)[5].
However **EU citizens view the European Union project more as project for multi-level governance, which can be advanced through fully sharing responsibility among the Institutions and elected politicians at all levels.**
Asked who is better placed to defend their personal interests at EU level, EU citizens split their preferences between their Members of the European Parliament (26%), their national political representatives (29%) and their local and regional representatives (21%).
Citizens also stressed the legitimacy and relevance of decentralised communication in Europe. Asked who was better placed to explain how EU policies affect daily life, citizens answered as follows: Members of the European Parliament (21%), national representatives (28%) and local and regional representatives (26%).

QH3 Representatives of the different levels of public authorities, European level, national level and regional or local level, are all present in the European institutions. From the following political representatives, which ones are best placed…? %EU



[5] QH3.1 Representatives of the different levels of public authorities, European level, national level and regional or local level, are all present in the European institutions. From the following political representatives, which ones are best placed...? 1. To defend your personal interests at the European level; 2. To explain you how European policies impact your day-to-day life.

It is important to note that people's evaluation of the various political levels in the EU is influenced by which level they believe has the most impact on their living conditions.

Accordingly , the survey reveals that those **who believe the regional or local level has the most impact on their living conditions are also most likely to believe that their regional or local political representatives are best placed to defend their personal interests at the European level (34%) and to explain how European policies impact their day-to-day lives (39%).**

QH3 Representatives of the different levels of public authorities, European level, national level and regional or local level, are all present in the European institutions. From the following political representatives, which ones are best placed...? (by answer categories of QH1 - which level has the most impact on life conditions)

		The European level	The national level	The regional or local level	DK	EU27 total
QH3.1 To defend your personal interests at the European level	Your MEPs (Members of the European Parliament)	**39%**	29%	23%	10%	26%
	Your (NATIONALITY) political representatives	31%	**39%**	21%	13%	29%
	Your regional or local political representatives	12%	15%	**34%**	10%	22%
	None of them (SPONTANEOUS)	6%	6%	6%	9%	6%
	All together (SPONTANEOUS)	6%	4%	6%	12%	6%
	DK	7%	7%	10%	**46%**	12%
QH3.2 To explain you how European policies impact your day-to-day life	Your MEPs (Members of the European Parliament)	**35%**	23%	18%	8%	21%
	Your (NATIONALITY) political representatives	31%	**39%**	20%	12%	28%
	Your regional or local political representatives	15%	20%	**39%**	10%	26%
	None of them (SPONTANEOUS)	6%	6%	6%	12%	6%
	All together (SPONTANEOUS)	6%	4%	6%	11%	6%
	DK	7%	8%	11%	**47%**	13%

The country-by-country analysis reveals that in 16 and 19 Member States, respectively, a (relative) majority of citizens feel that national politicians are best placed to defend their personal interests at the European level and to explain how European policies impact day-to-day life.

This view is most widely expressed in two of the smaller Member States, namely the Netherlands (51% and 50%, respectively) and Luxembourg (49% and 47%, respectively) [6]. Hence, the survey further confirms that a country's geographical size in some instances has an influence on the extent to which citizens focus their attention on the national political level. In smaller countries it would appear that regional or local politics play a less important role.

In 11 Member States, a relative majority of citizens consider their MEPs as best placed to defend their personal interests at the European level. This opinion is most widely held in the Czech Republic, Finland (49% each) and Cyprus (48%). Conversely, in Austria (11%) and Spain (13%) less than one-fifth of citizens share this view.

There are no Member States where a (relative) majority believes that regional or local political representatives are best placed to defend people's personal interests at the European level. However, a comparatively high proportion of people in France (31%) and Poland (24%) take this position.

[6] The first % is for QH3.1; the second is for QH3.2.

Conversely, when it comes to explaining how European policies impact on day-to-day life, there are 4 Member States where a relative majority of citizens believe their regional or local political representatives are best placed: France (37%), Poland (30%), the UK (28%) and Latvia (26%). Whilst it is not the most frequently voiced opinion in Austria and Sweden, we find a similar proportion of citizens holding this view in these two countries (31% and 29% respectively).

Finally, the country-by-country analysis shows that there are 4 countries where a relative majority of citizens considers MEPs as best placed to explain how European policies impact their day-to-day life. These are Cyprus (48%), the Czech Republic (36%), Finland (35%) and Bulgaria (22%). As the table below shows, although the proportion of people holding this view is higher than in Bulgaria, it is not the majority view in Denmark (32%), Greece (27%), Germany, the UK (26% each) and Belgium (25%).

QH3 POLITICAL REPRESENTATIVES IN EU INSTITUTIONS BEST PLACED TO ...?

... To defend your personal interests at the European level					...To explain you how European policies impact your day-to-day life				
Your MEP's			Your regional or local political representatives		Your MEP's			Your regional or local political representatives	
EU27	26%		EU27	21%	EU27	21%		EU27	26%
CZ	**49%**		FR	31%	CY	**48%**		FR	**37%**
FI	**49%**		PL	24%	CZ	**36%**		AT	31%
CY	**48%**				FI	**35%**		PL	**30%**
DK	**37%**				DK	32%		SE	29%
EL	**36%**				EL	27%		UK	**28%**
BG	**33%**		⋮	⋮	DE	26%		LV	**26%**
SK	**33%**				UK	26%			
BE	31%				BE	25%			
IE	**31%**							⋮	⋮
UK	**30%**		DK	15%					
			EL	15%					
			IE	15%	⋮	⋮			
⋮	⋮		EE	14%				CZ	18%
			FI	14%				EE	18%
			BG	11%				BG	17%
			CZ	11%	LT	14%		DK	17%
IT	20%		PT	11%	HU	13%		LU	13%
PT	20%		LU	10%	SE	12%		PT	13%
ES	13%		MT	8%	ES	9%		MT	10%
AT	11%		CY	5%	AT	9%		CY	7%

For further information on country results, the reader is invited to consult the full data tables that are annexed to this report.

Finally, if we focus on Europeans who regard their regional or local political representatives as being best placed, we find that in socio-demographic terms the profile is homogeneous: there are few differences between the lower educated (22% for the item "defend your personal interests at the European level", and 26%

for “explain you how European policies impact your day-to-day life”) and those who left school at the age of 20 or older (respectively 20% and 26%). In terms of age of the respondent, we observe a similar pattern: the proportions of those who think that their regional or local political representatives are best placed to defend their personal interests at the European level range from 21% for the 15-24 year olds to 22% for those aged 55+.

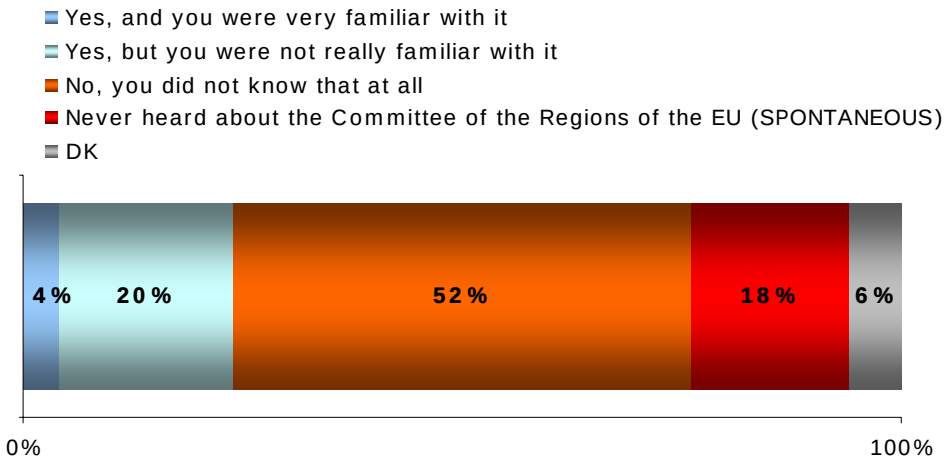
5. AWARENESS OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- Almost one quarter of the respondents is aware of the Committee of the Regions (CoR) -

Prior to the survey, less than a quarter of respondents were aware of the role of the CoR (24%)[7]. These findings are very much in line with previous Eurobarometer results which show that the CoR is the least well-known of the European institutions and bodies[8].

In fact, this current survey shows that **only 4% of respondents feel very familiar with the CoR, whereas 20% are not really familiar with it**. Over half of the respondents indicate that they do not know the role of the CoR (52%) and a further 18% spontaneously indicated that they had never heard of the CoR prior to the survey. To the group of 'unaware' respondents we can add the 6% that answered "don't know" to the question.

QH4 The Committee of the Regions of the European Union represents the point of view of regional and local public authorities of all Member States when deciding policies in the European Union. Before this interview, did you know that? - %EU



This overall situation at the EU level is reflected in the country results: in no single Member State is more than one respondent in ten very familiar with the CoR. The highest score is noted in Luxembourg (9%).

[7] QH4 The Committee of the Regions of the European Union represents the point of view of regional and local public authorities of all Member States when deciding policies in the European Union. Before this interview, did you know that?

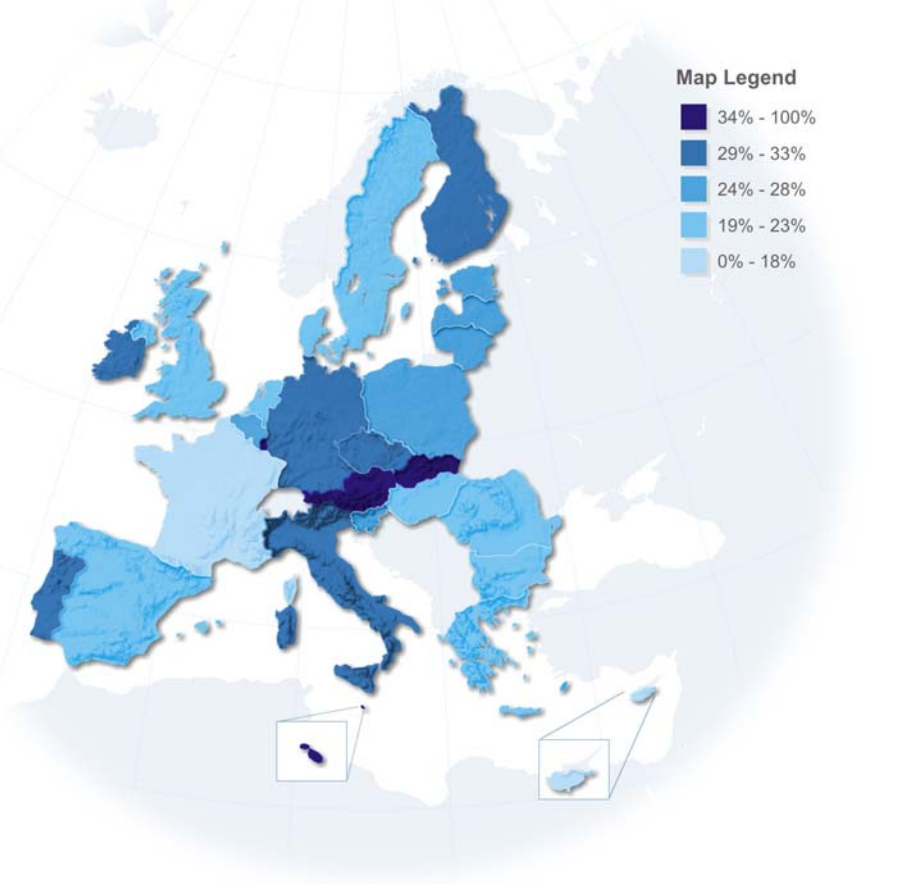
[8] The Eurobarometer has a 'trend' question which measures awareness of 9 European institutions and bodies, including the CoR. The autumn 2007 survey (EB68.1) shows that 26% of Europeans had heard of the CoR.

If we look at the total proportion of 'aware' respondents (i.e. those who knew the role of the CoR prior to the survey and are very familiar with it and those who knew the role of the CoR but who are not very familiar with it), we find that 'awareness' levels are highest in Austria (38%), Luxembourg, Slovakia (36% each), Malta (35%) and Ireland (31%). Conversely, in France (13%), Cyprus (15%), the UK, Sweden, Denmark and Bulgaria (19% each) less than one out of five respondents know the role of the CoR.

Question: 2. QH4 The Committee of the Regions of the European Union represents the point of view of regional and local public authorities of all Member States when deciding policies in the European Union. Before this interview, did you know that?

Answers: Yes

AT	38%
LU	36%
SK	36%
MT	35%
IE	31%
DE	30%
PT	30%
CZ	30%
IT	29%
FI	29%
LT	27%
LV	26%
PL	26%
EE	25%
SI	25%
EU27	24%
BE	24%
EL	23%
ES	23%
NL	21%
HU	21%
RO	21%
DK	19%
SE	19%
UK	19%
BG	19%
CY	15%
FR	13%



'Unaware' respondents can be divided into three groups: those who did not know the role of the CoR prior to the survey, those who had never heard of the CoR and those who were unable to answer the question. The first group of respondents is most widely present in France (80%), followed by the Netherlands (72%), Estonia (67%), Denmark (64%) and Latvia (61%). The highest proportions of respondents who had never heard of the CoR are noted in Sweden (40%), Spain (35%) and Hungary (32%). Finally, the 'non-response' rate is highest in Romania (17%), followed by Bulgaria, Ireland and Italy (13% each).

It is interesting to note that Europeans who feel that the regional or local level has the most impact on living conditions are not more aware of the CoR than other Europeans. In fact, as the table below shows, awareness levels are considerably higher among Europeans who believe the EU level has the most impact.

QH4 The Committee of the Regions of the European Union represents the point of view of regional and local public authorities of all Member States when deciding policies in the European Union. Before this interview, did you know that?

	Yes, and you were very familiar with it	Yes, but you were not really familiar with it	No, you did not know that at all	Never heard about the Committee of the Regions of the EU (SPONTANEOUS)	DK
EU27	4%	20%	52%	18%	6%
QH1					
The European level	11%	32%	43%	10%	5%
The national level	5%	22%	54%	15%	3%
The regional or local level	3%	17%	54%	21%	5%
DK	1%	6%	38%	29%	26%

If we look at the socio-demographic breakdown of 'awareness' levels the importance of education is again evident as a European who is aware of the role of the CoR is most likely to:

- ...be a manager (33%) or self-employed (32%);
- ...have stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or over (31%);
- ...rate his or her knowledge of the EU as good (31%).

QH4 The Committee of the Regions of the European Union represents the point of view of regional and local public authorities of all Member States when deciding policies in the European Union. Before this interview, did you know that?

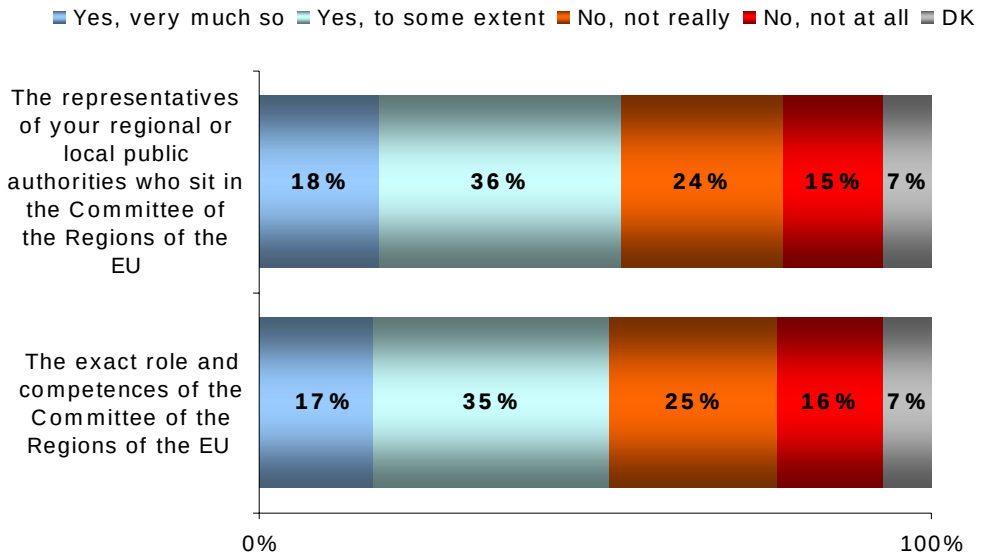
	Yes	No / Never heard of	DK
EU27	24%	70%	6%
Age			
15-24	20%	72%	8%
25-39	25%	69%	6%
40-54	27%	68%	5%
55 +	23%	70%	7%
Education (End of)			
15-	17%	75%	8%
16-19	24%	70%	6%
20+	31%	65%	4%
Still Studying	23%	70%	7%
Respondent occupation scale			
Self-employed	32%	62%	6%
Managers	33%	63%	4%
Other white collars	28%	66%	6%
Manual workers	23%	72%	5%
House persons	17%	76%	7%
Unemployed	18%	73%	9%
Retired	21%	72%	7%
Students	23%	70%	7%
Objective knowledge of the EU			
Bad	10%	77%	13%
Average	22%	72%	6%
Good	31%	65%	4%

6. THE DESIRE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- Over half of Europeans would like to receive more information about their CoR representatives and about the exact role of the CoR –

Over half of Europeans would like to receive more information about their CoR representatives (54%) and about the exact role of the CoR (52%)[9]. Around a quarter are not really interested and around one European in six is not at all interested. 7% of respondents lack an opinion.

QH5 Would you like to receive more information about…?
%EU



The country results indicate that the desire for more information is most widely expressed by citizens in Greece (75% each[10]) and Slovakia (73% and 75%). They are the only two countries where over seven out of ten respondents desire more information about both aspects of the CoR. Conversely, citizens in the UK least express a desire for more information (29% and 32%), followed by citizens in Ireland (42% and 43%) and Spain (45% each).

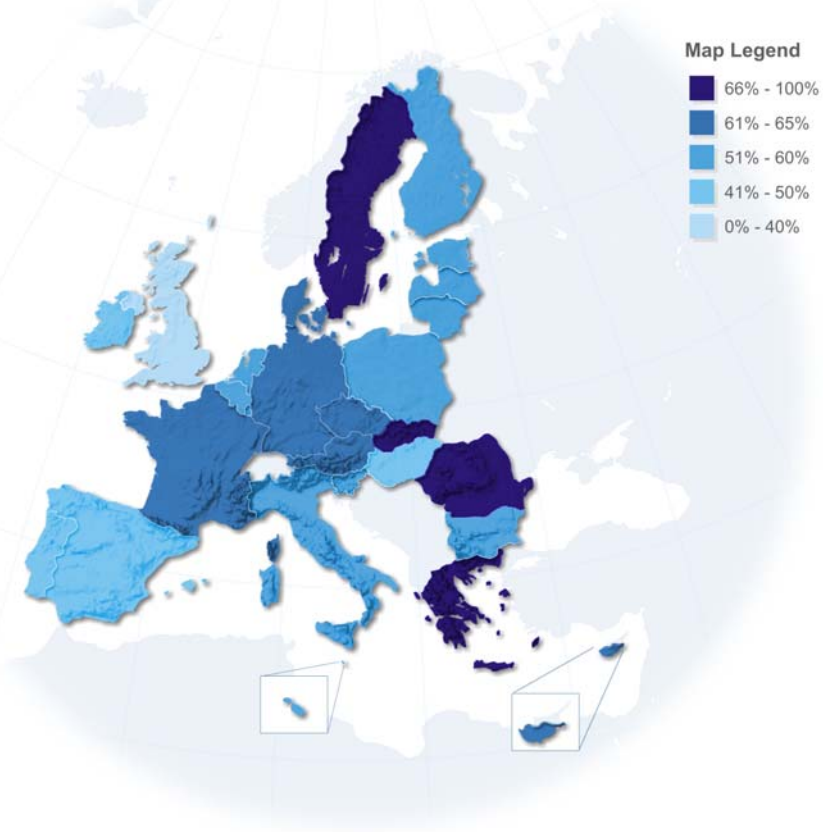
[9] QH5 Would you like to receive more information about…? 1 The exact role and competences of the Committee of the Regions of the EU. 2 The representatives of your regional or local public authorities who sit in the Committee of the Regions of the EU.
[10] Total % 'yes, very much so' and 'yes, to some extent' for QH5.1 and QH5.2, respectively.

Question: 4. QH5.2 Would you like to receive more information about...?

Option: The representatives of your regional or local public authorities who sit in the Committee of the Regions of the EU

Answers: Yes

EL	75%
SK	75%
SE	73%
RO	66%
DK	65%
AT	64%
CZ	64%
FR	63%
CY	63%
DE	62%
LU	58%
BG	58%
FI	57%
MT	57%
LV	56%
SI	56%
NL	55%
EU27	54%
IT	54%
LT	54%
BE	53%
EE	51%
PL	51%
PT	50%
HU	47%
ES	45%
IE	43%
UK	32%

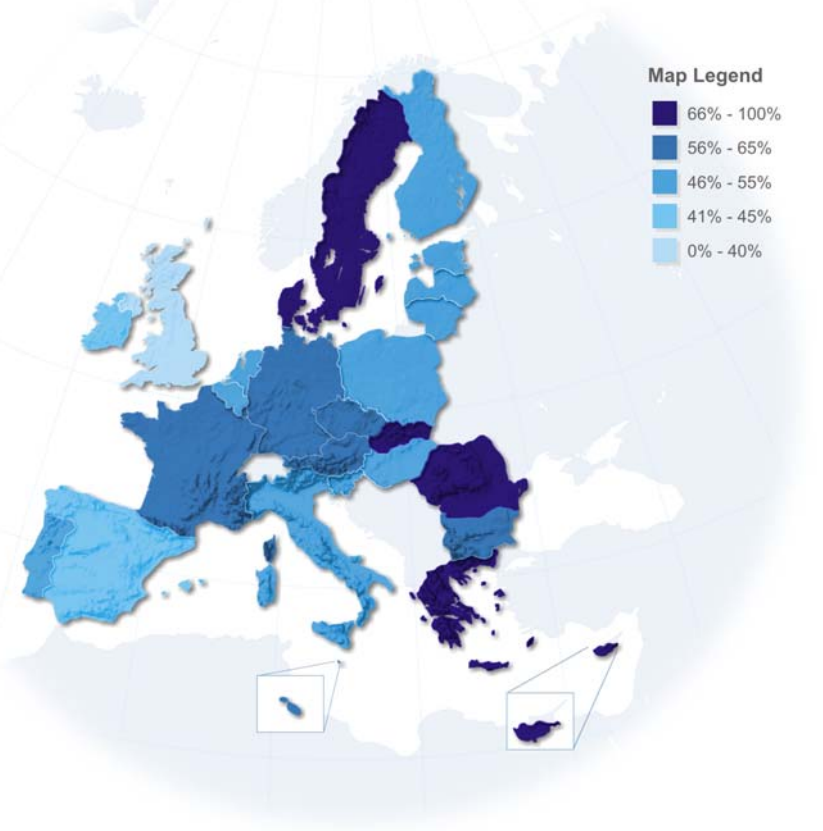


Question: 3. QH5.1 Would you like to receive more information about...?

Option: The exact role and competences of the Committee of the Regions of the EU

Answers: Yes

EL	75%
SK	73%
DK	68%
SE	68%
CY	68%
RO	67%
FR	62%
AT	61%
DE	60%
LU	59%
CZ	59%
MT	57%
BG	56%
NL	54%
FI	54%
LV	54%
SI	54%
EU27	52%
BE	52%
IT	52%
LT	52%
PT	51%
HU	48%
PL	47%
EE	46%
ES	45%
IE	42%
UK	29%



A more in-depth analysis of the intensity of this desire at the country level reveals that Cyprus is the only country where over one-third of citizens are very much interested in receiving more information about both aspects of the CoR (37% and 35%, respectively).

QH5 INTERESTED IN RECEIVING MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ...?

... The exact role and competences of the CoR					...The representatives of your regional or local public authorities who sit in the CoR				
Yes, very much so			Yes, to some extent		Yes, very much so			Yes, to some extent	
EU27	17%		EU27	35%	EU27	18%		EU27	36%
CY	37%		EL	48%	CY	35%		CZ	49%
DK	28%		AT	48%	SE	33%		EL	48%
SE	28%		SK	47%	SK	31%		AT	48%
EL	27%		CZ	46%	DK	27%		FI	45%
FR	27%		FI	44%	EL	27%		SK	44%
RO	27%		LU	41%	FR	27%		LU	41%
SK	26%				RO	26%		BG	40%
MT	23%							DE	40%
								IT	40%
								RO	40%
								SE	40%
⋮	⋮		⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮		⋮	⋮
PL	10%		EE	31%	PL	13%		ES	30%
FI	10%		CY	31%	PT	12%		IE	29%
UK	9%		ES	30%	FI	12%		CY	28%
HU	8%		IE	29%	UK	11%		UK	21%
			UK	20%	HU	8%			

In socio-demographic terms, a European who desires more information about the CoR is more likely to...

- ...have spent a longer time in education (64% and 65%)[11];
- ...have a good objective knowledge of the European Union (62% and 64%)[12].

Thus, the survey shows that those citizens who are most likely to be aware of the CoR in the first place are also most widely interested in receiving more information about it. The desire for more information is lower among citizens who arguably would be most 'in need' of knowing more information about the CoR. Less than one-third of citizens who feel they know very little about the EU would like more information (27% and 29%).

[11] Total % 'yes, very much so' and 'yes, to some extent' for QH5.1 and QH5.2, respectively.
[12] Objective knowledge on the EU calculated with a *quiz* question: QA24 of the standard Eurobarometer

In fact, further analyses show that respondents who feel very familiar with the CoR are nearly four times as likely to strongly desire more information about it than are respondents who had never heard of the CoR. As can be seen in the table below, over four out of ten respondents who are very familiar with the CoR are very interested in receiving more information about it (42% for each aspect) while this applies to just over one respondent in ten who had never heard of the CoR prior to the survey (11% and 12%, respectively for each aspect).

QH5 Would you like to receive more information about …? (by responses to QH4)

		QH4 Yes, and you were very familiar with it	QH4 Yes, but you were not really familiar with it	QH4 No, you did not know that at all	QH4 Never heard about the Committee of the Regions of	QH4 DK	EU27 Total
QH5.1 The exact role and competences of the Committee of the Regions of the EU	Yes, very much so	42%	21%	17%	11%	7%	17%
	Yes, to some extent	40%	51%	35%	25%	20%	35%
	No, not really	8%	20%	28%	27%	16%	25%
	No, not at all	8%	6%	16%	25%	16%	16%
	DK	2%	2%	4%	12%	40%	7%
QH5.2 The representatives of your regional or local public authorities who sit in the Committee of the Regions of the EU	Yes, very much so	42%	22%	18%	12%	7%	18%
	Yes, to some extent	39%	51%	36%	26%	21%	36%
	No, not really	10%	19%	27%	25%	16%	24%
	No, not at all	7%	6%	16%	24%	16%	15%
	DK	2%	3%	4%	13%	40%	7%

Conclusion

This report presents the results of a Special Eurobarometer survey fielded in autumn 2008 that examines how citizens evaluate the importance of the various levels of public authorities and measures public awareness of the Committee of the Regions and the desire for more information.

1. Evaluation of the various levels of public authorities

The survey shows that citizens have trust in the regional and local level. They value democracy at regional and local level as a stable element in the EU's political legitimacy. **Through the survey, democracy at regional and local level emerges as a stable aspect of EU political legitimacy within an overall context of relatively low public trust in the Institutions.** 50% of EU citizens trust their local and regional authorities, a level slightly higher than for the European Union (47%). This level of trust in the local and regional authorities is considerably higher than the level of trust in national governments or parliaments (34%).

The majority of Europeans feel that regional or local public authorities are <u>not</u> sufficiently taken into account when deciding policies in the EU: fewer than one-fifth of Europeans feel that at this level public authorities are sufficiently taken into account (19%), compared with close to six out of ten respondents who disagree (59%). This tends to indicate that EU citizens are looking for a greater involvement of local and regional authorities within EU policy making.

This result is particularly striking when considering EU citizens' perceptions of the level of public authority having the most impact on living conditions. Europeans select the local and regional authorities, at a level fairly close to the national level.

A relative majority of respondents express the view that public authorities at the national level have the most impact on their living conditions (43%). Nonetheless, the survey shows that nearly as many Europeans believe that the public authorities at regional or local level have the most impact (38%).

The survey indicates that **the geographical size of countries has an impact on the extent to which people relate to regional or local public authorities**. In the smaller EU Member States, the tendency to focus on the national level tends to be more prominent than in larger Member States.

The survey also points out that there is a gap to fill with regard to the **level of knowledge about the role of regional or local public authorities in deciding policies in the EU**: 22% of respondents answered "don't know" to the question.

Representing citizens' interests at EU level appears to be a duty shared between local and regional politicians, MEPs and national politicians, with a slight preference for the latter. Asked who is better placed to defend their personal interests at EU level, EU citizens split their preferences almost equally between Members of the European Parliament (26%), national politicians (29%) and local and regional politicians (21%).

Citizens confirm the (legitimacy and) relevance of decentralised communication in Europe. Asked who is better placed to explain how EU policies affect daily life, citizens answered as follows: national representatives (28%), local and regional representatives (26%) and Members of the European Parliament (21%).

2. Awareness of the Committee of the Regions and the desire for more information

The Committee of the Regions, despite being founded relatively recently (in 1994), is finding its feet. It nevertheless still needs to raise its profile and inform citizens about its role, membership and powers.

Almost one quarter of the respondents is aware of the CoR. However, the current survey confirms that the CoR is still the least well-known of the European institutions and bodies, in line with earlier Eurobarometer studies: only 4% of respondents claim to be very familiar with the CoR, whereas 20% are not really familiar with it. Over half of the respondents indicate that they do not know the role of the CoR (52%) and a further 18% spontaneously indicated that they had never heard of the CoR prior to the survey.

Over half of Europeans would like to receive more information about their CoR representatives (54%) and about the exact role of the CoR (52%).
Europeans who are most aware of the CoR in the first place are also most widely interested in receiving more information about it, whilst the desire for more information is lower among citizens who arguably are most ‘in need’ of learning more about the CoR.

The **overall level of interest in more information is sufficiently widespread to call for action in order to help raise public awareness of the (role of the) Committee of the Regions and local and regional authorities in EU policy-making.**

Technical specifications

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Between the 6th of October and the 6th of November 2008, TNS opinion & social, a consortium created between Taylor Nelson Sofres and EOS Gallup Europe, carried out wave 70.1 of the EUROBAROMETER, at the request of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General for Communication, “Research and Political Analysis”.

Wave 70.1 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. 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	1.002	10/10/2008	06/11/2008	8.786.805
BG	Bulgaria	TNS BBSS	1.006	09/10/2008	20/10/2008	6.647.375
CZ	Czech Rep.	TNS Aisa	1.026	06/10/2008	22/10/2008	8.571.710
DK	Denmark	TNS Gallup DK	1.029	06/10/2008	02/11/2008	4.432.931
DE	Germany	TNS Infratest	1.526	10/10/2008	02/11/2008	64.546.096
EE	Estonia	Emor	1.000	10/10/2008	03/11/2008	887.094
EL	Greece	TNS ICAP	1.000	10/10/2008	02/11/2008	8.691.304
ES	Spain	TNS Demoscopia	1.000	09/10/2008	06/11/2008	38.536.844
FR	France	TNS Sofres	1.027	06/10/2008	31/10/2008	46.425.653
IE	Ireland	TNS MRBI	1.000	06/10/2008	31/10/2008	3.375.399
IT	Italy	TNS Infratest	1.061	08/10/2008	24/10/2008	48.892.559
CY	Rep. of Cyprus	Synovate	503	08/10/2008	02/11/2008	638.900
CY(tcc)	Turkish Cypriot Comm.	KADEM	500	07/10/2008	27/10/2008	143.226
LV	Latvia	TNS Latvia	1.002	10/10/2008	04/11/2008	1.444.884
LT	Lithuania	TNS Gallup Lithuania	1.011	09/10/2008	28/10/2008	2.846.756
LU	Luxembourg	TNS ILReS	500	06/10/2008	03/11/2008	388.914
HU	Hungary	TNS Hungary	1.002	10/10/2008	02/11/2008	8.320.614
MT	Malta	MISCO	500	09/10/2008	03/11/2008	335.476
NL	Netherlands	TNS NIPO	1.041	09/10/2008	05/11/2008	13.017.690
AT	Austria	Österreichisches Gallup-Institut	1.003	06/10/2008	28/10/2008	7.004.205
PL	Poland	TNS OBOP	1.000	11/10/2008	31/10/2008	32.155.805
PT	Portugal	TNS EUROTESTE	1.000	11/10/2008	03/11/2008	8.080.915
RO	Romania	TNS CSOP	1.053	07/10/2008	03/11/2008	18.246.731
SI	Slovenia	RM PLUS	1.006	07/10/2008	04/11/2008	1.729.298
SK	Slovakia	TNS AISA SK	1.006	09/10/2008	26/10/2008	4.316.438
FI	Finland	TNS Gallup Oy	1.004	15/10/2008	06/11/2008	4.353.495
SE	Sweden	TNS GALLUP	1.002	13/10/2008	03/11/2008	7.562.263
UK	United Kingdom	TNS UK	1.308	07/10/2008	02/11/2008	50.519.877
HR	Croatia	Puls	1.000	08/10/2008	29/10/2008	3.734.300
TR	Turkey	TNS PIAR	1.003	08/10/2008	05/11/2008	47.583.830
MK	Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	TNS Brima	1.009	07/10/2008	16/10/2008	1.648.012
TOTAL			30.130	06/10/2008	06/11/2008	453.865.399

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