

74% of EU citizens consider competition has positive impact on them, says citizens survey

Brussels, 16 March 2015

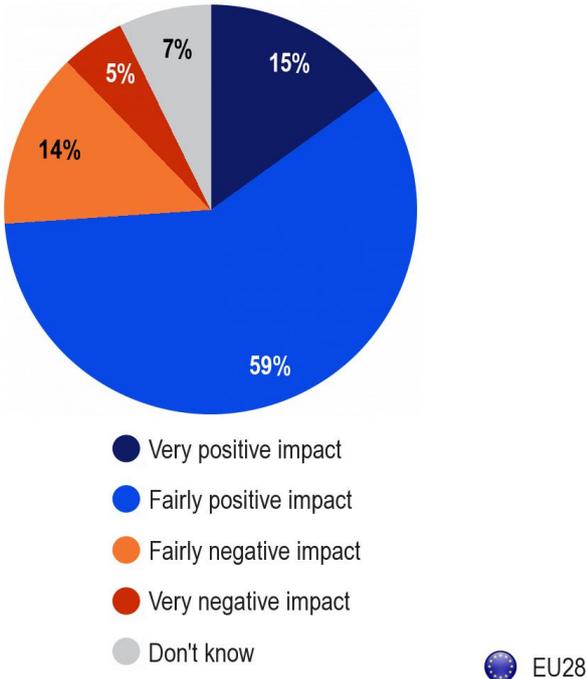
- Large majority of EU citizens believe in the value of competition and the positive impact it has on them as a consumer. Areas in which most citizens have personally experienced competition related problems were the energy sector, followed by transport services, the pharmaceuticals and the telecoms sector.
- Professional stakeholders overall very positive about the quality and impact of DG Competition's actions, with some areas for improvement (e.g. transparency of procedures).

The results of two surveys carried out for the European Commission's competition services (DG Competition) show positive reactions. 74% of citizens say that competition has a positive impact on them. In a separate survey, most professional stakeholders evaluate the work of DG Competition as effective in detecting infringements. Decisions are globally perceived as clear and comprehensible. The surveys were carried out by independent market research companies in all EU Member States. DG Competition will use the results of the surveys to strengthen its interaction and communication with competition professionals and citizens.

1) Quantitative Flash Eurobarometer Citizens Survey

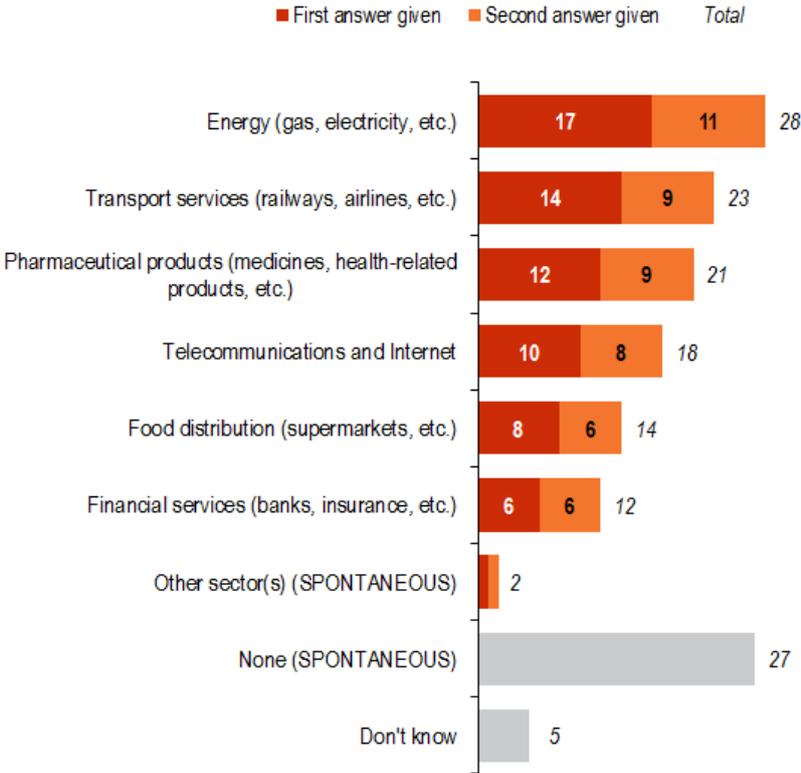
EU citizens have positive views about the effects of competition between companies. 74% consider that effective competition has a positive impact on them as a consumer. The impact is more likely to be seen as 'fairly positive' (59%) rather than 'very positive' (15%). One in five respondents (19%) says that the impact is negative.

Q9. What impact does effective competition have on you as a consumer?



Across the EU, citizens think that problems resulting from a lack of competition are most likely in the energy sector (28%), followed by transport services (23%) and pharmaceutical products (21%). Telecommunications and Internet sector (18%), food distribution (14%) and financial services (12%) were also mentioned.¹

Q2T. Have you ever experienced a lack of competition in the following sectors that resulted in problems such as higher prices, less product or supplier choice, lower quality, etc.? Firstly? Any other? (TWO ANSWERS POSSIBLE)



Base: all respondents, % EU28

39% of EU citizens say that they have heard or read about competition policies, such as cartels, merger or state aid control, in the last 12 months. The two main sources of information about competition policies are television (62%) and newspapers or magazines (60%). These are followed by the Internet (38%) and radio (34%). Online social networks are less commonly used (14%). Across the EU as a whole, 42% of respondents say that they would know where or who to turn to if they were to identify a major competition problem. The study also provides country specific results and socio-demographic information, which will be useful for establishing more targeted and dynamic communication with EU citizens. Therefore, the results are also shared with the national competition authorities.

¹ Respondents had the possibility of mentioning up to two sectors where they had experienced problems.

2) Qualitative Eurobarometer Stakeholder Survey

The qualitative study provides feedback from professional stakeholders on the perceived quality and impact of DG Competition's enforcement, policy and advocacy activities in 2010-2013.

Legal and economic analysis

Overall, the Commission's **decisions were praised** across stakeholder groups for being **clear** and **comprehensible**. The majority of stakeholders thought that the Commission's decisions are **detailed, well-structured** and **clear** about the Commission's concerns. They found that decisions appear **well-reasoned** and **explained** and are based on comprehensive analysis. Market understanding was generally considered to be good but with variations across sectors and case teams. The **quality of economic analysis** was seen **high** across all stakeholder groups. It was regarded as comprehensive, highly detailed, based on the best available data and therefore trustworthy.

Transparency

The majority of participants found that in most cases DG Competition is **transparent, listens well** and **informs** them in a timely fashion. However, some observed different levels of transparency at different stages of the investigative process and for different types of cases. The level of satisfaction with DG Competition's **consultation on new rules** was very high across all different stakeholder groups. On the one hand, stakeholders generally felt that DG Competition is very **thorough in following procedures**. On the other hand, respondents also found that DG Competition's information requests continue to be a heavy burden on businesses and that it still takes too long to publish non-confidential versions of decisions.

Economic effectiveness

The majority of participants considered that DG Competition is **effective in detecting infringements**, focusses on the right sectors and has a balanced and wide-ranging portfolio. There was widespread agreement that DG Competition's work generally promotes competition, raises awareness and acts as a deterrent. Competition enforcement was found to have a positive effect on economic growth. Mixed views were expressed on the timeliness of the Commission's decisions. Many felt that the decision making process takes too long, while others found this understandable, depending on the type of case.

Communication

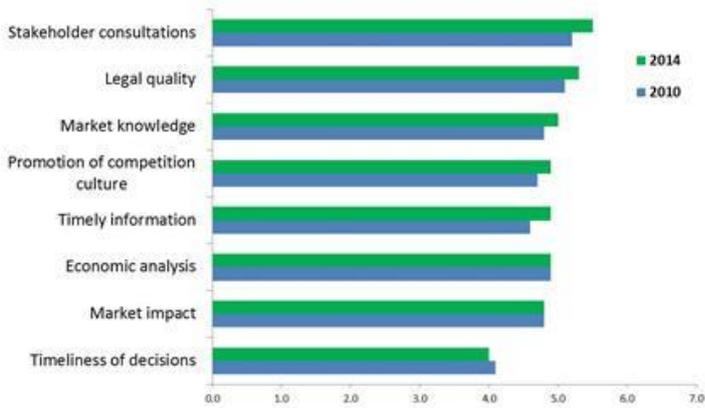
A majority across all stakeholder groups felt that DG Competition's **communication is of high quality**, using a wide variety of appropriate communication channels. In most stakeholder groups, DG Competition's website is held in high regard and participants were impressed by the breadth and depth of the information. The vast majority of law firms, economic consultancies, national competition authorities and Member State ministries were aware of DG Competition's work to promote a competition culture and policy convergence at international level and thought that it was doing good work.

Background

The Flash Eurobarometer Citizen survey 403 was carried out in September 2014 by phone among 26,549 citizens in all EU Member States by TNS Opinion and focussed on citizens' awareness of the impact of competition, lack of competition and applicable information channels.

The Qualitative Eurobarometer DG Competition Stakeholder Survey (based on 120 in-depth interviews) was conducted in June-July 2014 by TNS Qual+ among lawyers, companies, economic consultants, business and consumer associations, national competition authorities and Member States' ministries who were involved in the enforcement, policy or advocacy work of DG Competition in 2010-2013.

Similar surveys were already carried out in 2010.



Results of the 2014 survey are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/competition/publications/reports/surveys_en.html

Results of the 2010 surveys can be found at:

http://ec.europa.eu/competition/publications/reports/surveys_en.html