



Flash Eurobarometer 431

Summary

Electoral Rights

Fieldwork
November 2015
Publication
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Survey requested by the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
and co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication

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.

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(DG COMM "Strategy, Corporate Communication Actions and Eurobarometer" Unit)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
I. INCREASING TURNOUT IN EUROPEAN ELECTIONS	4
II. VOTING FOR CANDIDATES IN EUROPEAN AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS	6
III. THE RIGHT TO STAND AS A CANDIDATE FOR EXECUTIVE OFFICES – A POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF THE ELECTORAL RIGHTS OF NON-NATIONAL EU CITIZENS	9
IV. MEANS FOR IMPROVING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF NON-NATIONAL EU CITIZENS	10
V. LEVEL OF CONCERN OF EU CITIZENS TOWARDS ELECTRONIC, ONLINE AND POSTAL VOTING	12

ANNEXES

Technical specifications

INTRODUCTION

This Flash Eurobarometer survey on electoral rights (No 431) builds on the work of previous Electoral Rights Flash Eurobarometer surveys conducted in 2012¹, 2010², 2007³ and 2002⁴. It investigates Europeans' views on a range of questions associated with electoral issues and electoral rights within the EU, with a particular focus on the rights of EU citizens living in an EU country other than the country where they are a citizen. Specifically, Europeans were asked to offer their views on:

- Ways to increase voter participation in European Parliament elections
- Whether the inclusion of non-national candidates could attract more votes in European Parliament and local elections.
- If they were resident in a Member State other than their own, whether they would prefer to vote for the candidates of their country of residence or the candidates of their country of origin in European Parliament elections
- Whether local election rights should be extended to include the right to stand as a candidate for executive offices
- How participation in elections (both in the country of residence and country of origin) could be made easier; and
- How concerned they would be about certain risks associated with voting electronically, online or by post⁵.

This Flash Eurobarometer survey was carried out by the TNS Political & Social network in the 28 Member States of the European Union between the 3rd and the 5th of November 2015. Some 26,557 respondents from different social and demographic groups were interviewed via telephone (mobile and fixed line) in their mother tongue on behalf of the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers. The methodology used is that of Eurobarometer surveys as carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication ("Strategy, Corporate Communication Actions and Eurobarometer" Unit)⁶. A technical note on the manner in which interviews were conducted by the Institutes within the TNS Political & Social network is appended as an annex to this report. Also included are the interview methods and confidence intervals⁷.

The findings of the survey have been analysed firstly at an EU level and secondly by country. At an EU level, the results are based on the 28 Member States. Wherever possible, comparisons are made with the previous Flash Eurobarometer surveys conducted in 2012 and 2010.

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_364_en.pdf

² http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_292_en.pdf

³ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_213_en.pdf

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl133_en.pdf (EU15 Member States only)

⁵ This survey excludes some questions about electoral rights that were included in past Electoral Rights Flash Eurobarometer surveys which, in 2015, form part of a separate Flash Eurobarometer survey on EU Citizenship (No. 430).

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

⁷ 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 of giving several answers to the question.

Note: In this report, countries are referred to by their official abbreviation. The abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

Belgium	BE	Lithuania	LT
Bulgaria	BG	Luxembourg	LU
Czech Republic	CZ	Hungary	HU
Denmark	DK	Malta	MT
Germany	DE	The Netherlands	NL
Estonia	EE	Austria	AT
Greece	EL	Poland	PL
Spain	ES	Portugal	PT
France	FR	Romania	RO
Croatia	HR	Slovenia	SI
Ireland	IE	Slovakia	SK
Italy	IT	Finland	FI
Republic of Cyprus*	CY	Sweden	SE
Latvia	LV	United Kingdom	UK
European Union – weighted average for the 28 Member States			EU28
BE, IT, FR, DE, LU, NL, DK, UK, IE, PT, ES, EL, AT, SE, FI**			EU15
BG, CZ, EE, HR, CY, LT, LV, MT, HU, PL, RO, SI, SK***			NMS13

* Cyprus as a whole is one of the 28 European Union Member States. However, the ‘acquis communautaire’ has been suspended in the part of the country which is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews carried out in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are included in the ‘CY’ category and in the EU28 average.

** EU15 refers to the 15 countries forming the European Union before the enlargements of 2004, 2007 and 2013.

*** NMS13 refers to the 13 ‘new Member States’ which joined the European Union during the 2004, 2007 and 2013 enlargements.

We wish to thank the people throughout the European Union who have given their time to take part in this survey. Without their active participation, this study would not have been possible.

I. INCREASING TURNOUT IN EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

The first chapter assesses Europeans' opinions on what they think would improve turnout at European elections.

Most respondents think that providing more information on the candidates and parties and on the European Parliament elections, as well as on the impact that the EU has on their daily life, would increase voter turnout

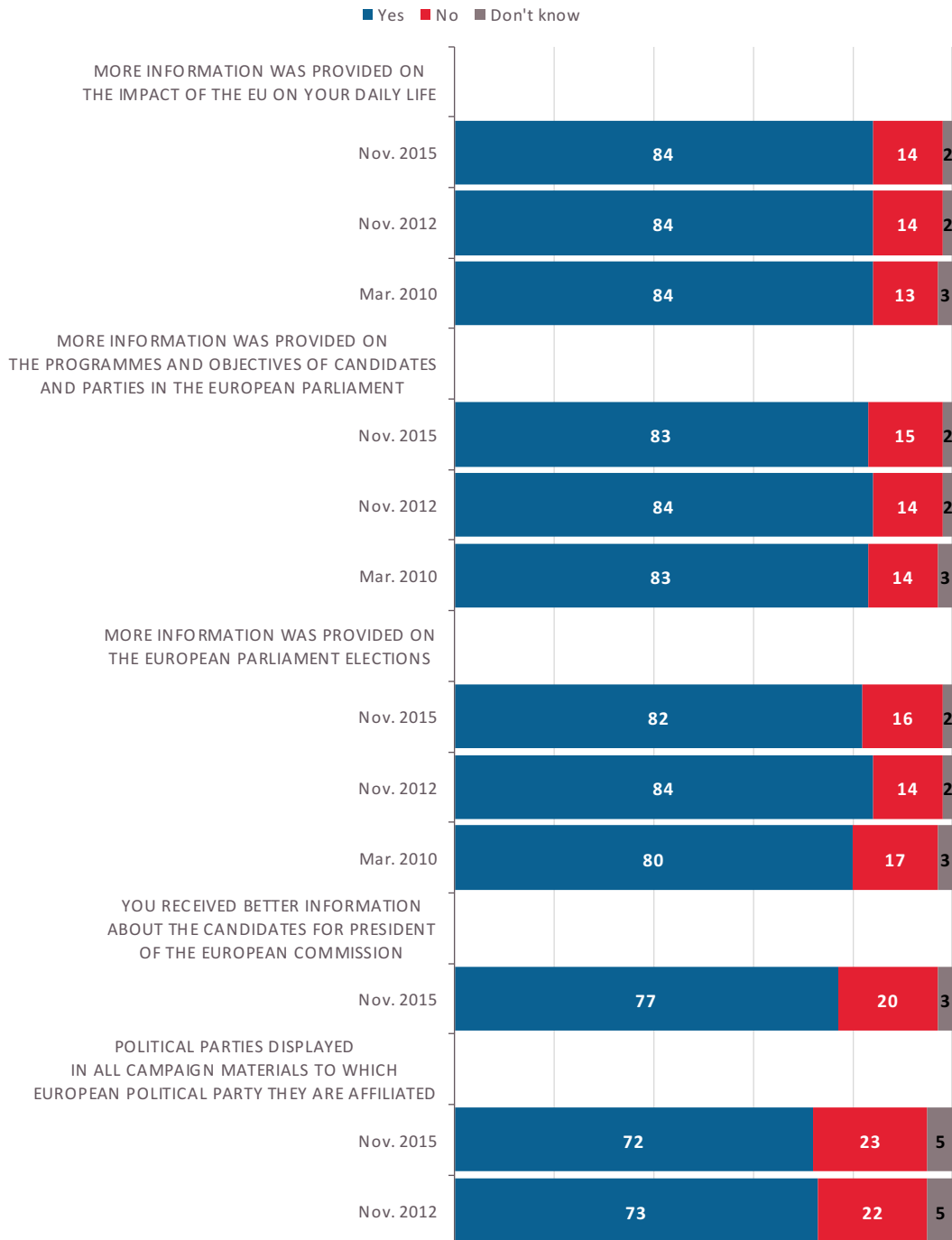
More than four in five respondents think that turnout at European elections would be higher if more information was provided:

- on the impact that the EU has on their daily lives (84%)
- on the programmes and objectives of the candidates and the parties in the European Parliament (83%)
- on the European Parliament elections (82%).

More than three quarters of respondents (77%) think turnout at European Parliament elections would be higher if they received better information about the candidates for President of the European Commission.

Just over seven in ten respondents (72%) think that, if political parties displayed the European political party to which they were affiliated in all campaign materials, voter turnout would be higher.

Q4 In 2014, turnout in the European Parliament elections was 43%. Do you think that turnout at European elections would be higher if...?
(% - EU)



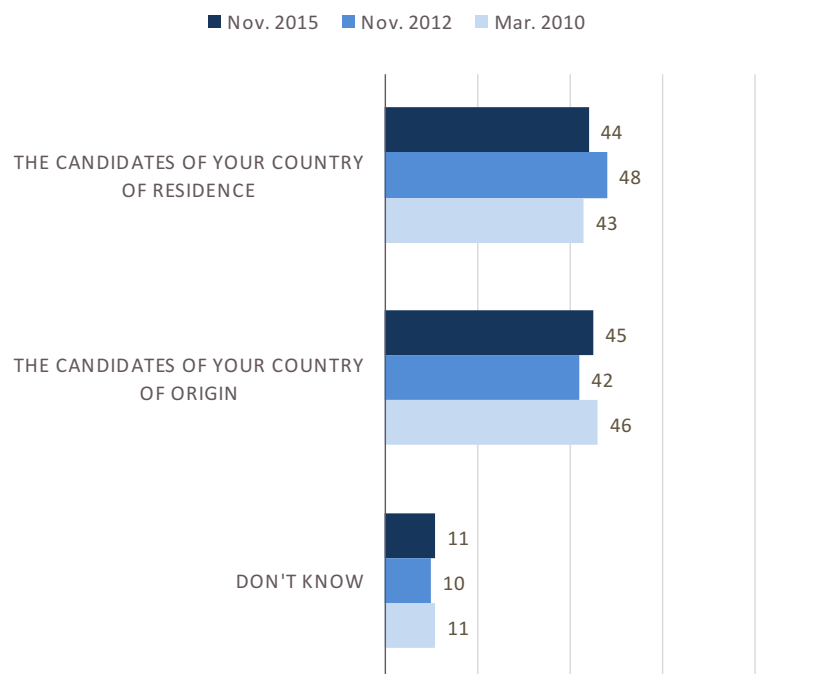
II. VOTING FOR CANDIDATES IN EUROPEAN AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Europeans who live in an EU country that is not their country of origin have the choice in European elections between voting in their country of residence and in their country of origin. The first section of this chapter examines Europeans' voting preference in European elections, should they be living in an EU country that is not their country of origin. It then assesses whether Europeans believe that including candidates who are nationals of other EU countries might attract more votes in the European elections and increase the general turnout in local elections.

Europeans have no strong preference for or against voting in European elections in their country of residence or in their country of origin

Just over two fifths of respondents (44%) say they would prefer to vote in European elections for the candidates in the country in which they are residing. A similar proportion (45%) would prefer to vote for candidates in their country of origin. One in nine respondents (11%) are unable to say what their voting preference would be in this situation.

- Q1** A citizen of the EU living in another EU country than his or her country of origin has the right to vote in European Parliament elections in his\her country of residence. If you are living or were to live in another EU country than your country of origin (i.e. of which you are a national) would you rather vote in European elections for...?
(% - EU)



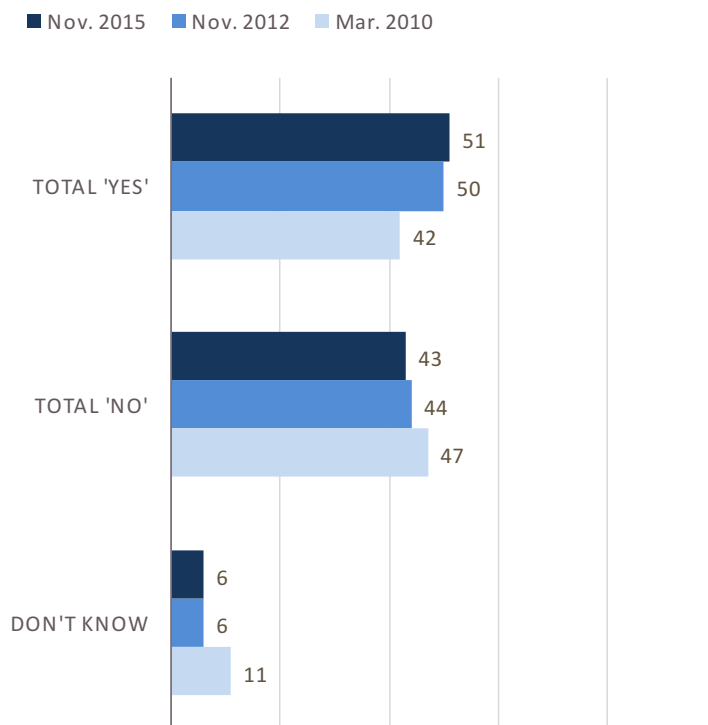
There are only five Member States where a majority of respondents say they would prefer to vote for the candidates in their country of residence rather than for candidates in their country of origin.

A slight majority of Europeans think that including nationals from other EU countries on a candidate list could attract more voters in a European election

Around half of respondents (51%) think that including candidates who are nationals of other EU countries on a list of candidates in the European elections can attract more votes.

Just over two fifths of respondents (43%) do not think that including candidates who are nationals of other EU countries would attract more votes.

Q2 Do you think that a list of candidates in the European elections can attract more votes if it includes candidates who are nationals of other EU countries?
(% - EU)

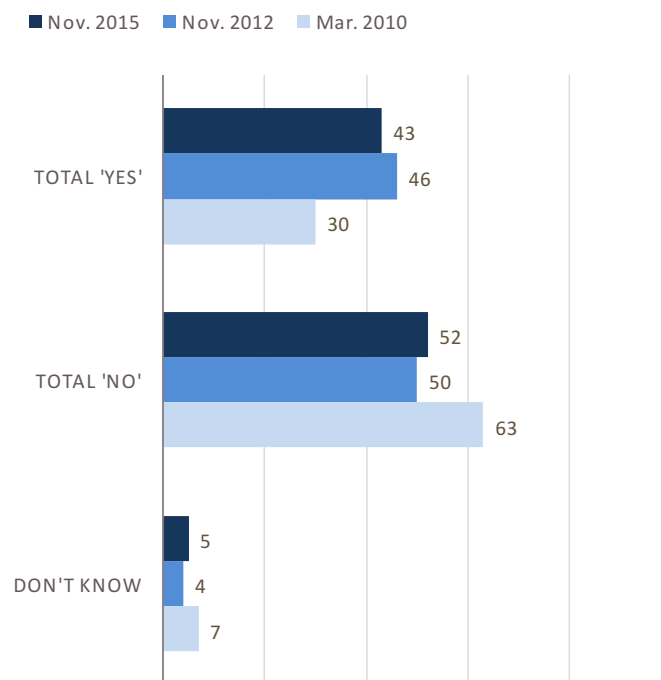


In 13 Member States, a majority of respondents think that including non-national EU candidates in the lists for European elections could attract more votes. Respondents in Belgium and Portugal are the most likely to think this (both 63%), closely followed by those in Ireland (62%) and Luxembourg (62%).

Over two fifths of Europeans think that the inclusion of candidates who are nationals of other EU countries could increase turnout in local elections

Just over two fifths of respondents (43%) think that the inclusion of candidates who are nationals of other EU countries could increase local election turnout. A slight majority of respondents (52%) do not think that including these candidates could increase the general turnout.

- Q3** Do you think that the presence of candidates who are nationals of other EU countries can increase the general turnout in local elections?
(% - EU)



There are eight Member States⁸ where a majority of respondents think that the presence of candidates who are nationals of other EU countries can increase the general turnout in local elections. Reflecting some of the earlier findings, in all but one of these eight⁹, a majority also think that the inclusion of such candidates could attract more votes in local elections.

⁸ Luxembourg, Belgium, Portugal, Romania, Ireland, Italy, Latvia and Greece

⁹ Latvia

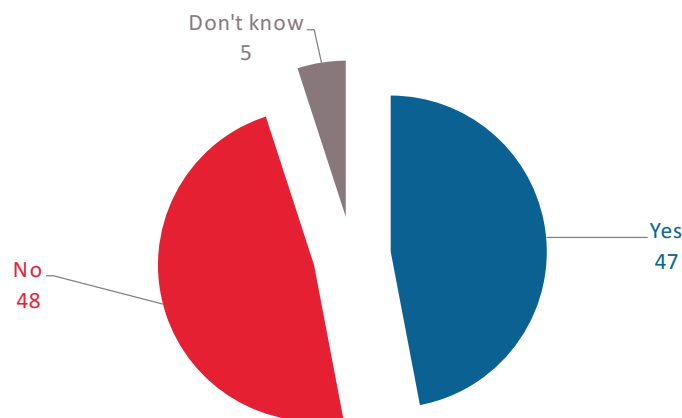
III. THE RIGHT TO STAND AS A CANDIDATE FOR EXECUTIVE OFFICES – A POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF THE ELECTORAL RIGHTS OF NON-NATIONAL EU CITIZENS

EU citizens living in another EU country have the right to stand as candidates in municipal elections, but EU law allows Member States to exclude them from certain executive offices. This chapter examines whether Europeans think that non-national EU citizens from other EU countries should also have the right to stand as a candidate for executive offices (with the exception of mayor).

There is no strong preference for or against giving non-national EU citizens the right to stand as candidates for executive offices

Almost half of respondents (47%) agree that citizens from other EU countries should be able to stand as candidates for certain executive offices, currently open only to nationals in some Member States. A similar proportion (48%) do not agree that they should be able to do so. Only a small minority (5%) are unable to give an opinion.

- Q5** EU citizens living in another EU country have the right to stand as candidates in municipal elections but are excluded from certain executive offices where only nationals of the country may run as candidates. Do you agree that citizens from other EU countries should also have the right to stand for these offices (except the office of mayor)? (% - EU)



There are only six countries where a majority of respondents think that EU citizens who are residing in a Member State that is not their own should have the right to stand for certain executive offices: Ireland (59%), Portugal (55%), Spain (55%), Italy (54%), Luxembourg (54%) and Germany (52%).

IV. MEANS FOR IMPROVING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF NON-NATIONAL EU CITIZENS

This chapter focuses on Europeans' perceptions of what might make voting in European and local elections easier for non-national EU citizens, firstly when voting in their country of residence, and secondly when voting in their country of origin.

Europeans are most likely to think that individual letters outlining how to register and vote, and automatic registration on the electoral roll, would make voting in elections in their country of residence easier for non-national citizens

Four in five respondents (80%) agree that it would be easier for non-national EU citizens to vote in their country of residence if they received individual letters outlining how to register and vote. One in six respondents (17%) disagree.

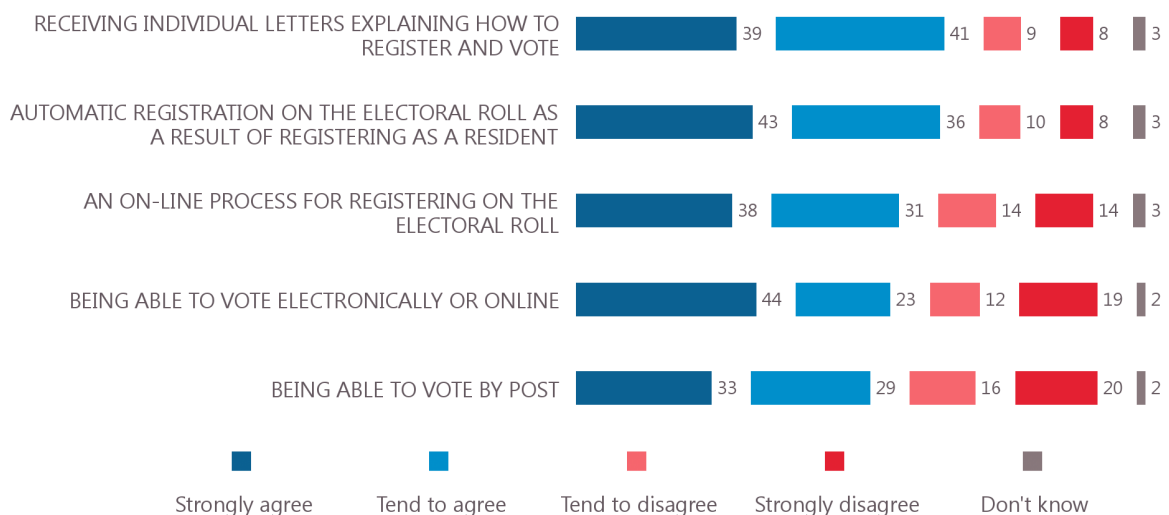
A similar proportion (79%) agree that automatic registration on the electoral roll as a result of registering as a resident would make voting in the country of residence easier for non-national citizens. Around one in five respondents (18%) disagree that this would make voting easier.

Around seven in ten respondents (69%) agree that an online process for registering on the electoral roll would make it easier for non-national citizens to vote in their country of residence. More than a quarter of respondents (28%) disagree that this would make voting easier.

Around two thirds of respondents (67%) agree that the ability to vote electronically or online would make voting in the country of residence easier for non-national citizens. Just under a third of respondents disagree (31%).

Around three in five respondents (62%) agree that the ability to vote by post would make voting in the country of residence easier for non-national citizens. A little over a third of respondents (36%) disagree that voting by post would make the process easier.

Q6 EU citizens living in another EU country have the right to vote in European or local elections in that country. If you were living in another EU country than your country of origin, to what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following would make it easier for you to vote in elections there?
(% - EU)



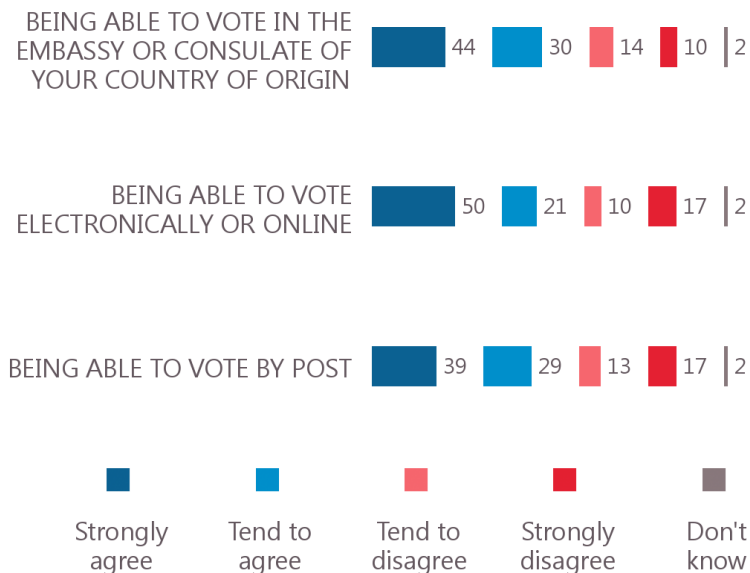
The majority of Europeans think that the ability to vote by post, electronically or online, and in the embassy or consulate of the country of origin, would make voting in elections in the country of origin easier for non-national citizens

Three quarters of respondents (74%) agree that, if they lived in another EU country, it would be easier for them to vote in elections taking place in the country of their nationality if they were able to vote in the embassy or consulate of their country of origin. A quarter of respondents (24%) disagree that this would make voting in elections taking place in their country of origin easier.

Just over seven in ten respondents (71%) think that having the ability to vote electronically or online would make it easier for them to vote in elections taking place in their country of origin. Just over a quarter of respondents (27%) disagree that being able to vote electronically or online would make it easier for them to vote.

Around two thirds of respondents (68%) agree that being able to vote by post would make it easier for them to vote in elections in their country of origin. Three in ten respondents (30%) disagree that this would make it easier for them to vote.

Q7 And if you were living in another EU country than your country of origin, to what extent do you agree or disagree that each of the following would make it easier for you to vote in elections in the country of your nationality?
(% - EU)



V. LEVEL OF CONCERN OF EU CITIZENS TOWARDS ELECTRONIC, ONLINE AND POSTAL VOTING

The final section looks at how concerned Europeans would be about certain risks associated with voting electronically, online or by post.

Europeans' main concerns about an electronic, online or postal system of voting are the difficulties some people might have using the system, and potential fraud

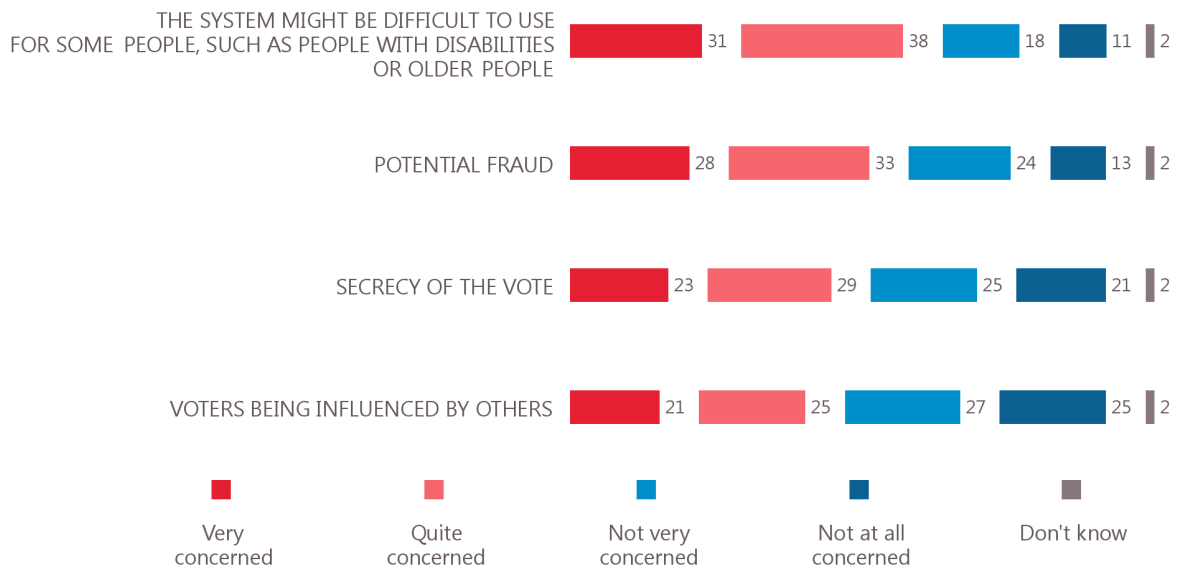
Around seven in ten respondents (69%) say they would be concerned, if they were able to vote electronically, online or by post, about the system being difficult for some people to use. Around three in ten respondents (29%) say they would not be concerned that the system might be difficult for certain people to use.

Around six in ten respondents (61%) would have concerns about potential fraud. Nearly four in ten respondents (37%) say they would not be concerned.

Respondents are more evenly divided on concerns they might have about the secrecy of the vote. Just over half of respondents (52%) say they would be concerned. Just under half of respondents (46%) would not be concerned about secrecy of the vote.

Respondents are also more evenly divided on concerns they might have about voters being influenced by others. Just under half of respondents (46%) say they would be concerned. Just over half of respondents (52%) would not be concerned.

Q8 If you were able to vote electronically, online or by post, how concerned would you be about each of the following?
(% - EU)



November 2015

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Between the 3rd and the 5th of November 2015, TNS Political & Social, a consortium created between TNS political & social, TNS UK and TNS opinion, carried out the FLASH EUROBAROMETER 431 survey on request of the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers. It is a general public survey co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication, "Strategy, Corporate Communication Actions and Eurobarometer" Unit.

The FLASH EUROBAROMETER 431 survey covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, resident in each of the 28 Member States and aged 15 years and over.

	COUNTRIES	INSTITUTES	N° INTERVIEWS	DATES FIELDWORK		POPULATION 15+	PROPORTION EU28
BE	Belgium	TNS Dimarso	1.005	03/11/15	05/11/15	8.939.546	2,17%
BG	Bulgaria	TNS BBSS	1.000	03/11/15	05/11/15	6.537.510	1,58%
CZ	Czech Rep.	TNS Aisa s.r.o	1.000	03/11/15	05/11/15	9.012.443	2,18%
DK	Denmark	TNS Gallup A/S	1.008	03/11/15	05/11/15	4.561.264	1,11%
DE	Germany	TNS Deutschland	1.000	03/11/15	05/11/15	64.336.389	15,59%
EE	Estonia	TNS Emor	1.000	03/11/15	05/11/15	945.733	0,23%
IE	Ireland	IMS Millward Brown	1.000	03/11/15	05/11/15	3.522.000	0,85%
EL	Greece	TNS ICAP	1.000	03/11/15	05/11/15	8.693.566	2,11%
ES	Spain	TNS Demoscopia S.A	1.001	03/11/15	05/11/15	39.127.930	9,48%
FR	France	TNS Sofres	1.011	03/11/15	05/11/15	47.756.439	11,57%
HR	Croatia	HENDAL	1.000	03/11/15	05/11/15	3.749.400	0,91%
IT	Italy	TNS Italia	1.000	03/11/15	05/11/15	51.862.391	12,57%
CY	Rep. Of Cyprus	CYMAR	502	03/11/15	05/11/15	705.360	0,17%
LV	Latvia	TNS Latvia	1.002	03/11/15	05/11/15	1.447.866	0,35%
LT	Lithuania	TNS LT	1.000	03/11/15	05/11/15	2.829.740	0,69%
LU	Luxembourg	TNS Dimarso	505	03/11/15	05/11/15	434.878	0,11%
HU	Hungary	TNS Hoffmann Kft	1.006	03/11/15	05/11/15	8.320.614	2,02%
MT	Malta	MISCO International Ltd	501	03/11/15	05/11/15	335.476	0,08%
NL	Netherlands	TNS NIPO	1.001	03/11/15	05/11/15	13.371.980	3,24%
AT	Austria	TNS Austria	1.002	03/11/15	05/11/15	7.009.827	1,70%
PL	Poland	TNS OBOP	1.000	03/11/15	05/11/15	32.413.735	7,86%
PT	Portugal	TNS Euroteste	1.001	03/11/15	05/11/15	8.080.915	1,96%
RO	Romania	TNS CSOP	1.005	03/11/15	05/11/15	18.246.731	4,42%
SI	Slovenia	RM PLUS	1.004	03/11/15	05/11/15	1.759.701	0,43%
SK	Slovakia	TNS AISA Slovakia	1.001	03/11/15	05/11/15	4.549.956	1,10%
FI	Finland	TNS Gallup Oy	1.001	03/11/15	05/11/15	4.440.004	1,08%
SE	Sweden	TNS Sifo	1.000	03/11/15	05/11/15	7.791.240	1,89%
UK	United Kingdom	TNS UK	1.002	03/11/15	05/11/15	51.848.010	12,57%
TOTAL EU28			26.558	3/11/15	05/11/15	412.630.644	100%*

* It should be noted that the total percentage shown in this table may exceed 100% due to

November 2015

All interviews were carried using the TNS e-Call centre (our centralised CATI system). In every country the respondents were called both on fixed lines and mobile phones. The basic sample design applied in all states is multi-stage random (probability). In each household, the respondent was drawn at random following the "last birthday rule".

TNS has developed its own RDD sample generation capabilities based on using contact telephone numbers from responders to random probability or random location face-to-face surveys, such as Eurobarometer, as seed numbers. The approach works because the seed number identifies a working block of telephone numbers and reduces the volume of numbers generated that will be ineffective. The seed numbers are stratified by NUTS2 region and urbanisation to approximate a geographically representative sample. From each seed number the required sample of numbers are generated by randomly replacing the last two digits. The sample is then screened against business databases in order to exclude as many of these numbers as possible before going into field. This approach is consistent across all countries.

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:

Statistical Margins due to the sampling process
(at the 95% level of confidence)

various sample sizes are in rows

various observed results are in columns

	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	
N=50	6,0	8,3	9,9	11,1	12,0	12,7	13,2	13,6	13,8	13,9	N=50
N=500	1,9	2,6	3,1	3,5	3,8	4,0	4,2	4,3	4,4	4,4	N=500
N=1000	1,4	1,9	2,2	2,5	2,7	2,8	3,0	3,0	3,1	3,1	N=1000
N=1500	1,1	1,5	1,8	2,0	2,2	2,3	2,4	2,5	2,5	2,5	N=1500
N=2000	1,0	1,3	1,6	1,8	1,9	2,0	2,1	2,1	2,2	2,2	N=2000
N=3000	0,8	1,1	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,6	1,7	1,8	1,8	1,8	N=3000
N=4000	0,7	0,9	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	N=4000
N=5000	0,6	0,8	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,3	1,4	1,4	1,4	N=5000
N=6000	0,6	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,3	1,3	N=6000
N=7000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,2	1,2	N=7000
N=7500	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=7500
N=8000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=8000
N=9000	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=9000
N=10000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=10000
N=11000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=11000
N=12000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=12000
N=13000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	N=13000
N=14000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=14000
N=15000	0,3	0,5	0,6	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=15000
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	