

Views on European Union enlargement

Summary

Fieldwork: February 2009

This survey was requested by DG ENLARGEMENT-A-2: Information, Communication and coordinated by Directorate General 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.

Flash EB Series #257

Views on European Union enlargement

Conducted by
The Gallup Organization, Hungary
upon the request of the DG Enlargement A.2
"Information, Communication"



Coordinated by Directorate-General
Communication

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THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION

Introduction

This Flash Eurobarometer survey on the “*Views on European Union Enlargement*” was conducted at the time of the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain. The survey aimed to: a) collect citizens’ views on the impact of the integration of 10 Central and Eastern European countries¹ on the 27 Member States of the enlarged union, and b) assess citizens’ views about factors that could be important when policymakers consider further expansions.

This analytical report also includes the average results for the EU and highlights the variances in responses based on the interviewees’ country of residence and on their socio-demographic background.

The fieldwork was conducted from 26 January – 1 February, 2009. More than, 27,000 randomly selected individuals aged 15 and over were interviewed in the 27 EU Member States. Interviews were predominantly carried out via fixed-line telephones, with approximately 1,000 being conducted in each Member State. Due to the relatively low fixed-line telephone coverage in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, face-to-face (F2F) interviews were also conducted (700 telephone and 300 F2F interviews) in those countries.

Note: Flash Eurobarometer surveys systematically include mobile phones in samples in Austria, Finland, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

To correct for sampling disparities, a post-stratification weighting of the results was implemented, based on the main socio-demographic variables. More details on survey methodology are included in the full Analytical Report (see section ‘Survey details’).

¹ In this report, "CEE countries" refers to Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Main findings

The fall of the Iron Curtain

- In the enlarged EU, people are convinced that the fall of the Iron Curtain has:
 - brought **more freedom** to all parts of Europe (79% agreed)
 - provided **good business opportunities** for western enterprises in the CEE region (80%)
 - contributed to the **free movement** of people within Europe (86%).
- A large majority (about two-thirds) of EU citizens feel that the changes due to expansions have brought a **better quality of life** and an improved situation to the countries of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) CEE region.
- Polish respondents are overwhelmingly positive, with three-quarters in agreement that their **standard of living** has **improved considerably** since 1989 and only 14% disagreeing. Similar positive results can be seen in the Czech Republic (70% agreed vs. 23% disagreed), Slovenia (68% vs. 28%) and Estonia (67% vs. 18%).
- The **responses are mixed** on living standards and security, however. In Hungary and Bulgaria, the majority (51% and 50%, respectively) disagree that the post-1989 freedoms has resulted in an improved standard of living in their country. The majority in the enlarged EU (51%) feel that the demise of a divided Europe and the subsequent social, political and economic changes have **made life more insecure** in their own country.
- Relatively few (19%) respondents indicated that, compared to today, **the situation in the CEE countries was better before the Iron Curtain was demolished**: this proposition finds agreement with 28% of citizens in the CEE countries and only 17% in the EU15 countries².

The 2004-2007 enlargements

- An overwhelming majority (92%) in the EU agree that the integration of the CEE countries has led to increased possibilities to freely move and travel within the EU (92%).
- About three-quarters of respondents agree that the expansions have
 - contributed to the modernisation and growth in CEE economies (76%)
 - facilitated the spread of democratic values and protection of human rights (73%)
 - increased the EU's global role (73%).

² The 15 pre-2004 Member States: Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain, Ireland, Greece, Finland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom

About 6 in 10 citizens (58%) agreed that the enlargement with the CEE countries has helped to preserve security and stability in Europe and the same proportion thought that it has increased security due to improvements in the fight against organised crime and the control of illegal immigration.

- Opinions in the EU15 and CEE are relatively close in regard to the benefits of the enlargement of the EU. One exception is the appreciation of Europe's increased security and stability; this has been confirmed more often in the CEE countries (67%) than in the EU15 (56%).
- The most widely accepted benefit of the EU enlargement is the **freedom to move and travel**. In each Member State, at least 9 in 10 respondents agreed that this was one of the (positive) consequences resulting from the integration of the CEE region.
- Over half of the EU respondents consider that enlargement has:
 - made the enlarged EU **more difficult to manage** (66%)
 - contributed to **job losses** in their country (56%)
 - caused **problems because of the divergent cultural traditions** of the new Member States (54%),
 - led to an increased **feeling of insecurity** (50%) in the EU as a whole.
- Respondents in the EU15 countries are much more likely to believe that the enlargement of the EU brought up issues resulting from increased cultural diversity across Member States (EU15: 57%, CEE: 42%).
- Similarly, respondents from the EU15 are more likely to assume that the enlargement of the EU has made it more difficult to manage (EU15: 69%, CEE: 51% -- 20% in the CEE countries have no clear opinion on the subject) and that they have increased feelings of insecurity (EU15: 52%, CEE: 44%).

Considerations for future enlargements

The key issues which respondents want to be taken into consideration when deciding future EU enlargement are *freedom and democratic values* and *Economic issues*. Freedom and democratic values constitute the most essential value in EU decisions and personal decisions by citizens regarding future enlargement of the European Union. Economic issues were given prominence for national decisions concerning future EU enlargement.

- **Freedom and democratic values:** In Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and, to a lesser extent, in Spain, respondents considered freedom and democratic values more important than respondents in other countries. It garnered less support in Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, and Bulgaria.
- **Economic issues:** Relatively speaking, residents in Latvia, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal and Slovenia considered this issue particularly important. This aspect received less attention, though, in Denmark, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

- ***Cultural / religious issues:*** In relative terms, respondents in only one Member State, Italy, considered this to be an important issue to be considered when deciding future EU expansions. In contrast, those from the Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Portugal, Sweden and Slovakia attached less importance to such differences.
- Others factors are more of a secondary consideration for considering future expansions: *stability at the EU's borders* (except in Slovenia, Estonia, Greece Finland, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania where it is still important), *the EU's role in the world* (except in Germany, France and Luxembourg) and *ageing European population*.

1. The fall of the Iron Curtain

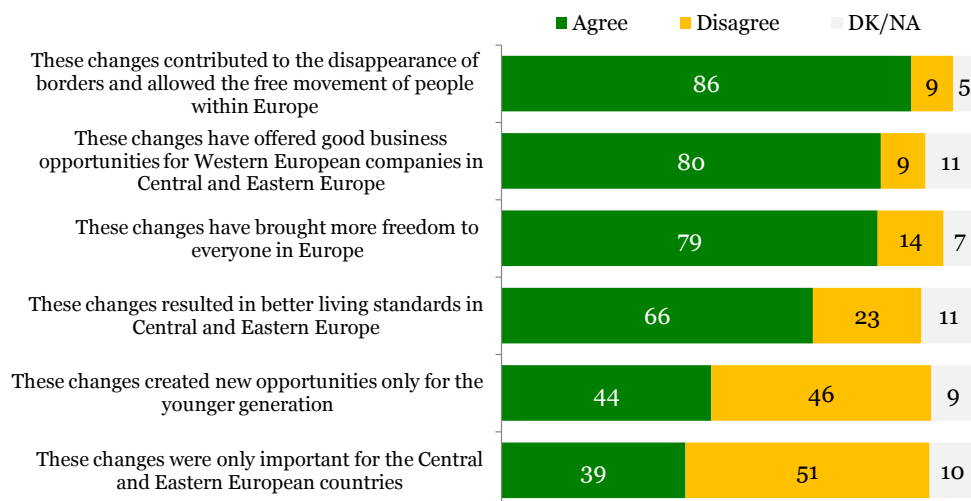
The Iron Curtain divided Europe into two distinct areas from the conclusion of World War II until the end of the Cold War in 1989, preventing the free movement of people, ideas and goods between these divided areas of Europe.

In May 1989, Hungary started to remove its controls on the Austrian border (both countries are now EU Member States with no border controls), and during that year, on 9 November, the process culminated in the fall of the Berlin Wall. While the chain of events that led to the removal of the Iron Curtain effectively liberated several Central and Eastern European countries from direct Soviet rule (even if not from a military presence, which ended in 1994), some EU Member States only regained their independence in 1991 when the Soviet Union was dissolved. Yugoslavia, and thus, Slovenia, was never formally behind the Soviet-managed Iron Curtain and its people were free to travel. However, both countries do share a similar communist past as do the other countries in the CEE group.

Opportunities

Twenty years on, popular perceptions acknowledge the historic nature of these events, i.e. that it has brought several important opportunities for Europe as a whole. Respondents were asked to comment on six statements regarding the consequences of the fall of the Iron Curtain.

Consequences of the changes following "the fall of the Iron Curtain"



Q1. Bearing in mind the changes following "the fall of the Iron Curtain" in 1989, would you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

In the EU, where nine current Member States (and East Germany) were behind the Iron Curtain (or, from the opposite perspective, 18 current Member States were cut off from significant cooperation with the Eastern Bloc), there was very little doubt that the end of the Iron Curtain:

- contributed to the **free movement** of people within Europe (86%).
- provided **good business opportunities** for western enterprises in the CEE region (80%)
- brought **more freedom** to all parts of Europe (79% agreed)

As to whether or not the liberation of the CEE nations brought prosperity and better living standards to the nations of this “eastern” region, opinions are less clear cut. The majority of EU citizens were of the opinion that the end of the Cold War, and the newly-gained liberty of the CEE countries, has brought a better standard of living (66% agreed, 23% disagreed). However, while a significant number of EU citizens saw immediate benefits (e.g. 46% *disagreed* that the changes *only* brought opportunities for younger people), 44% felt that the true benefits of the end of the Cold War could only be enjoyed by future generations. Almost 4 in 10, (39%) agreed that these changes were only important for the CEE region, and significantly more, 51% felt that the benefits could not only be seen in the CEE region.

Opinions in the two areas of the EU that belonged to different parts in the bipolar world of the Cold War era (the CEE countries and the 15 pre-2004 EU Member States³) did not differ much in their responses. As the table below shows, the difference in agreement – between the citizens of the two areas - was the highest as far as the standard of living was concerned: those in the EU15 region (including Germany, part of which was also behind the Iron Curtain) were somewhat more likely to perceive a positive change (67%) compared to those countries that were behind the Iron Curtain for several decades (62%). From a western perspective, fewer EU15 citizens (85%) felt the disappearance of the eastern borders contributed to the free movement of people and goods compared to their former COMECON counterparts (90%).

	EU15			CEE		
	Agree	Disagree	DK/NA	Agree	Disagree	DK/NA
Q1_A. These changes have brought more freedom to everyone in Europe	79	14	7	81	12	7
Q1_B. These changes resulted in better living standards in Central and Eastern Europe	67	22	12	62	28	10
Q1_C. These changes created new opportunities only for the younger generation	44	46	10	47	46	7
Q1_D. These changes contributed to the disappearance of borders and allowed the free movement of people within Europe	85	10	5	90	5	4
Q1_E. These changes were only important for the Central and Eastern European countries	38	53	9	41	45	14
Q1_F. These changes have offered good business opportunities for Western European companies in CEE countries	80	10	10	80	7	12

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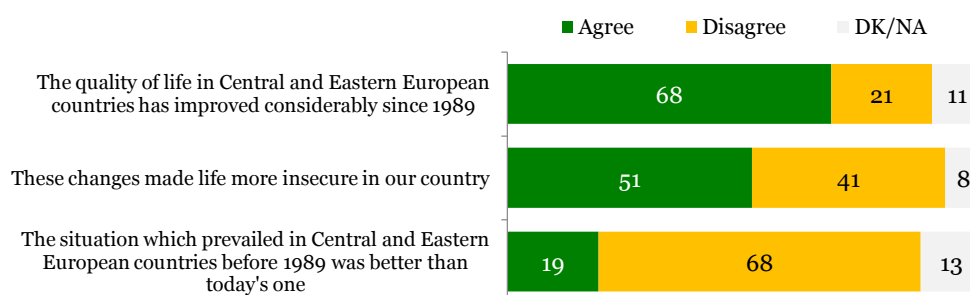
Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Spain, Ireland, Greece, Finland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Note that Cyprus and Malta are only included in the EU27 average.

In addition, respondents in the EU15 countries were slightly more likely to see immediate benefits (with 44% agreeing, and 46% disagreeing, that the changes would only be beneficial for the younger generations), compared to those coming from CEE countries, where a slim relative majority (agreed: 47%, disagreed: 46%) felt that these changes would only be important for younger people.

Effects of the fall of the Iron Curtain

The results of the survey showed that relatively few EU citizens are nostalgic about the days before the fall of the Iron Curtain. Even so, almost a fifth (19%) of those citizens indicated that in their opinion, compared to today, the situation in the CEE countries was better before the Iron Curtain was demolished (21% disagreed that the quality of life had improved in the CEE region as a result of the post-1989 changes). The majority of EU citizens (51%) felt that the demise of a divided Europe and the subsequent social, political and economic changes made life more insecure in their own country.

Overall impact of the changes following "the fall of the Iron Curtain"



Q2. Now, I would like to ask you to evaluate the overall impact of these changes. Would you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Although the contrast between CEE countries and the pre-2004 Member States is evident (see Table 2.), there are strong similarities. In both groups of countries:

- the dominant opinion was that the changes in the past 20 years have increased insecurity (although this was felt more strongly in the former communist bloc)
- the majority felt that the changes brought a better quality of life and an improved situation in the countries of the CEE region.

In both regards, EU15 citizens had a more favourable opinion compared to those living in the CEE countries. The sharpest contrast was in the proportion of those who felt that the pre-1989 situation in the CEE countries was better than the present one: this proposition found agreement with 28% in the CEE countries and only 17% in the EU15.

	EU15			CEE		
	Agree	Disagree	DK/NA	Agree	Disagree	DK/NA
Q2_A. The quality of life in Central and Eastern European countries has improved considerably since 1989	69	20	11	64	27	9
Q2_B. The situation which prevailed in	17	70	13	28	59	13

Central and Eastern European countries before 1989 was better than today's one						
Q2_C. These changes made life more insecure in our country	50	43	7	58	32	11

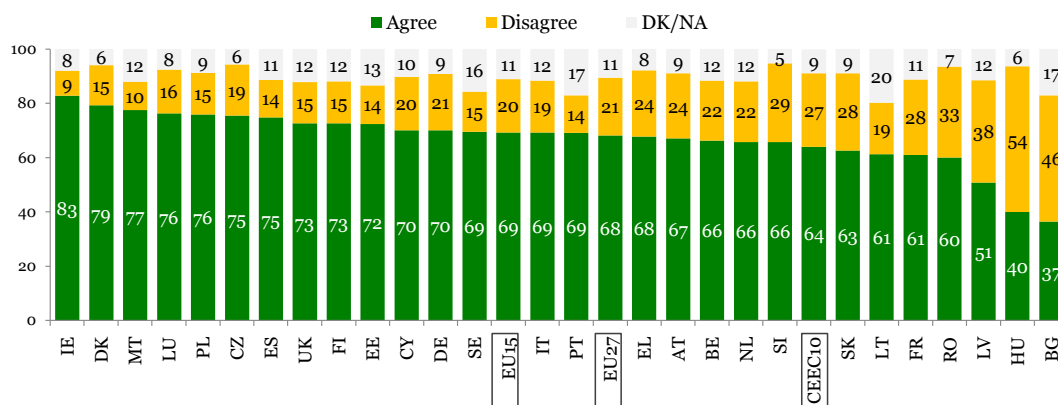
In 12 Member States, more people agreed that **life is now more insecure than it was before 1989**. This was especially the case in Bulgaria and Hungary (where 76% agreed); similar response rates were seen in Portugal (73%) and in Greece (72%). Those who did not feel such an adverse change in the security climate were particularly found in the greatest numbers in Finland (68% did not have an increased feeling of insecurity in their country), Sweden (65%) and the Netherlands (60%). Overall, there were eight Member States where favourable assessments clearly outnumbered the negative ones.

Women were more likely (53% vs. 49% of men) to see a decreased level of security in their own country due to the effect of these changes, and such perceptions increase linearly with age: the gap found between the youngest segment (15-24 years-of-age: 37%) and those aged 55 or older (59%) is remarkable. While the gender gap was smaller in the CEE countries (M: 57%, F: 59% vs. 47% and 52% in the EU15), the age slope was even steeper: the EU15 results ranged between 36% in the 15-24 group and 58% among the 55+. The matching numbers recorded in the CEE zone were 40% and 66%.

Regarding occupation, manual workers stood out in both regions as the occupational group that perceived less security in their countries due to the changes (on EU27 level 60% shared such concern compared to the average of 51%). Especially in the EU15 zone, the level of education had a profound effect on the replies received: 39% of those with higher education diplomas versus 53% with secondary and 61% with primary education agreed that the fall of the Iron Curtain made life more insecure in their country.

There was a consensus in most Member States that the changes that took place since 1989 have led to **an increase in the quality of the life of the countries** in the CEE region. The western Member States of the EU, in particular, agreed with this proposition (Ireland: 83%, Denmark: 79%, Malta: 77%, Luxembourg: 76%), but the vast majority of some respondents in CEE region countries (Poland: 76%, the Czech Republic: 75%) also acknowledged such progress in living standards.

The quality of life in Central and Eastern European countries has improved considerably since 1989



Q2. Now, I would like to ask you to evaluate the overall impact of these changes. Would you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: all respondents, % by country

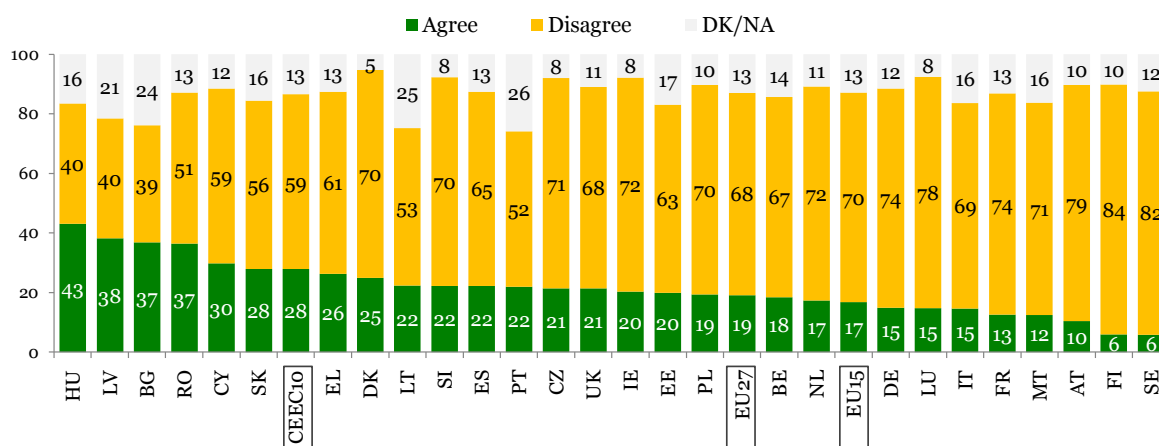
This is, however, not true for all Member States. Opinions were clearly less favourable – as indicated – in the CEE countries overall, and specifically in three EU Member States. In Latvia, only 51% agreed that the quality of life had improved since it declared independence from the Soviet Union, and the majority in Hungary (54%) and Bulgaria (46%) actually disagreed.

As to perceptions regarding living standards, **marked differences could be identified in the CEE countries** (and essentially none in the EU15 zone). The social segment least likely to agree that living standards improved in the CEE zone was those aged 55 or over: only slightly over half in this group agreed that the quality of life has improved since the fall of the Iron Curtain (as mentioned, such age-specific pattern was not identified in the EU15 countries).

The gap between those CEE residents who are currently employed (73%) and who are not working (59%) is remarkable, but not too surprising. The agreement that the 1989 transition brought positive changes in life quality was progressively decreasing with the level of urbanisation in the CEE zone: 72% in large cities, 65% in smaller towns and 58% in villages provided such a favourable reply. Similarly, the better educated the respondent was, the more likely he or she was to give a favourable reply (primary: 54%, secondary: 64%, higher education: 73%).

In 26 of the 27 Member States the majority did not agree that **the situation in the CEE countries was better in communist times**. This was most clearly the case in the following EU15 countries: Finland, 84% disagreed with that proposition, Sweden 82%, Austria 79% and Luxembourg 78%. The only Member State where nostalgia for the communist era attracted the – relative – majority of the citizens was in Hungary: 43% agreed that the general situation was better before 1989 and 40% disagreed. The general public in Latvia and Bulgaria was also almost evenly split; however, in those two countries, the nostalgic camp was in a slight minority.

The situation which prevailed in Central and Eastern European countries before 1989 was better than today's one



Q2. Now, I would like to ask you to evaluate the overall impact of these changes.
Would you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: all respondents, % by country

In the EU15 countries the opinions varied only moderately (e.g. within 4-5 percentage points) across these broader segments, whereas **in the CEE zone the differences were more pronounced**. E.g. only 19% of those aged 15-24 agreed that the pre-1989 situation was better compared to 37% of those aged

55 or over (there was no such pattern in the EU15 countries, in which obviously no regime change took place). Just over a third (34%) of CEEC rural respondents provided such a nostalgic response versus 20% of metropolitan residents (again, no such difference in the EU15 was found). Thirty-eight percent of those with primary education versus 17% of those higher education degrees agreed (there is a very slight similar tendency in the EU15, with a range of 5 percentage points between those with less education and those with more education). Finally, over 3 in 10 of the manual workers (31%) and those not working (32%) felt that the situation before 1989 was more favourable than the current one in the CEE countries, as opposed to 19% of employees (a similar tendency was observed in the EU15 countries as well, but within a range of 5 percentage points).

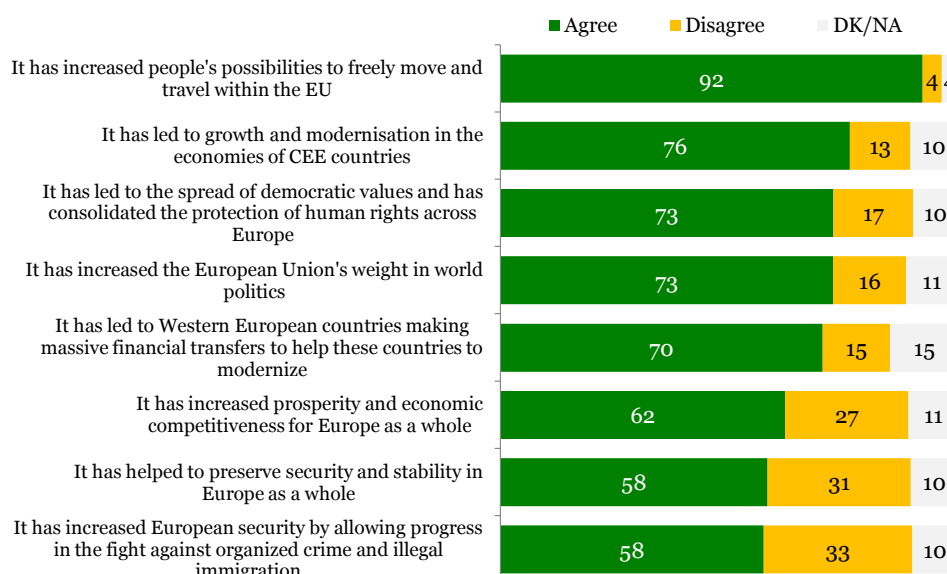
2. The 2004-2007 enlargements

The survey tested several statements regarding the EU's enlargement by the addition of the CEE countries from the CEE region in 2004 and 2007; each statement reflected one of the most frequent stereotypes that occur in the public discourse in relation with these events. Eight of these propositions were generally positive (or neutral), and five were generally negative.

Perceived advantages

A strong majority (92%) of respondents agreed that the integration of the CEE region (meaning those countries that already joined the EU) had led to increased possibilities to freely move and travel within the EU (92%). About three-quarters of respondents agreed that the enlargements had contributed to the modernisation and growth in CEE economies (76%), facilitated the spread of democratic values and protection of human rights (73%) and increased the EU's global role (73%). Positive consequences were mainly seen by the young people (those aged 24 or younger), the more educated (who left school/college at the age of 20 or later), and the Europeans living in metropolitan centres.

Positive consequences of the integration of CEE countries into the European Union



Q3. Regarding the consequences of the integration of Central and Eastern European countries into the European Union, would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Base: all respondents, % EU27

Almost as many, 7 out of 10 respondents agreed that western European countries performed “massive financial transfers” to take part in the modernisation of these countries (70%). Just over 6 in 10 (62%) confirmed that, in their opinion, the enlargement of the EU had increased the prosperity and economic competitiveness of the EU as a whole. However, almost 3 in 10 citizens (27%) disagreed with this statement (note that the survey was conducted in a very pessimistic economic mood shaded by the increasing effect of the global financial and economic crisis). Opinions were similar in the questions related to internal and external security: 58% agreed that the enlargement with the CEE countries had helped to preserve security and stability in Europe and the same proportion acknowledged that it had increased security due to improvements in the fight against organised crime and the control of illegal immigration. However, about 3 in 10 citizens disagreed with both statements (31% and 33%, respectively).

As Table 3 below shows, apart from two notable exceptions, opinions were relatively close in the former two areas of the divided Europe as far as the benefits of the EU’s enlargement were concerned. One of the exceptions was the appreciation of increased security and stability of Europe; this was confirmed more often in the CEE countries (67%) than in the EU15 (56%). In a related matter, the latter were also slightly less optimistic as to whether or not the EU’s eastward expansion has led to better results in fighting organised crime or controlling illegal immigration (EU15: 56%, CEE: 65%).

	EU15			CEE		
	Agree	Disagree	DK/NA	Agree	Disagree	DK/NA
Q3_A. It has helped to preserve security and stability in Europe as a whole	56	34	10	67	21	12
Q3_C. It has led to the spread of democratic values and has consolidated the protection of human rights across Europe	73	18	9	72	15	13
Q3_E. It has increased the European Union's weight in world politics	73	17	11	72	14	14
Q3_G. It has increased prosperity and economic competitiveness for Europe as a whole	62	28	10	62	23	14
Q3_I. It has increased European security by allowing progress in the fight against organized crime and illegal immigration	56	35	9	65	23	13
Q3_J. It has led to growth and modernisation in the economies of Central and Eastern European countries	78	13	10	72	16	13
Q3_K. It has led to Western European countries making massive financial transfers to help these countries to modernize	71	14	15	67	19	15
Q3_L. It has increased people's possibilities to freely move and travel within the European Union	92	5	3	93	3	4

Respondents in the EU15 countries were more likely to say that the EU’s enlargements had led to growth and modernisation of the economies in the former communist Member States (EU15: 78%,

CEE: 72%). In addition, 7 out of 10 (71%) of EU15 citizens agreed that it has led to western European countries making massive monetary transfers to help the accession countries in the modernisation process; this was compared to two-thirds (67%) of those in the CEE countries. In the other dimensions, the opinions did not differ.

The most widely accepted benefit of the EU enlargement was the broadened geographical space where people were **free to move and travel**. In each Member State, at least 9 in 10 respondents agreed that this was one of the (positive) consequences resulting from the integration of the CEE region. The opinions recorded in each of the broader socio-demographic segments were over overwhelmingly positive, the differences were only minimal – and they were not different in the EU15 and CEE zones either.

Opinions were more varied when it came to the **economic benefits for the CEE region**; while the citizens of most Member States had very little doubt that the economies of the region had benefited from the enlargement (the level of disagreement was equal to or less than 15% in 20 Member States), a significant minority – especially in some CEE countries – had not seen such benefits (e.g. 34% in Latvia, 27% in Hungary). However, even in the most sceptical countries the absolute majority agreed that the integration of Central and Eastern European countries had facilitated the growth and modernisation of the economies in the region.

The dominant majority in each Member State agreed that the EU enlargement had **contributed to the consolidation of human rights protection and the spread of democratic values**. Even in the most sceptical countries, the proportion of those who disagreed with this proposition did not exceed a quarter of respondents: Hungary: 27%, Greece: 26%. Agreement was the highest in Luxembourg (82%), Slovenia and Denmark (both 81%), Ireland and Malta (both 80%).

Similarly, there was relatively little doubt in the EU that the addition of the newest Member States had **increased the European Union's weight in world politics**: those who confirmed this proposition outnumbered those who held the opposite viewpoint by at least a 2:1 margin in each country. In this regard, Czech respondents were most sceptical (27% disagreed), while agreement was highest in Slovenia (84%), Luxembourg (83%) and Finland (82%).

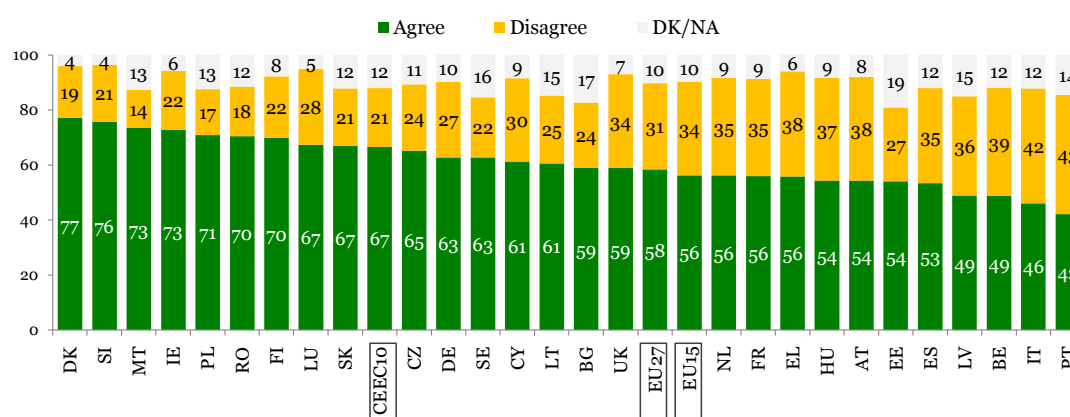
In Luxembourg (86%), Germany (84%) and Austria (83%) most respondents felt that the EU's enlargement had induced **massive money transfers** from the western Member States to the newer ones in the CEE region. Agreement was widespread throughout the EU; most people who disagreed were found in the Czech Republic (29%), Hungary (23%) and Finland (22%). Curiously, manual workers in the EU15 countries were of all occupation groups the most likely to agree (75% -- in contrast with the 71% EU15 average), while their counterparts in the CEE countries the most likely to *disagree* (of course only relatively speaking, with a rate of 21%, compared to the average of 19% in that region) that such massive transfers took place.

In 25 Member States, a majority agreed that the EU's enlargement had **increased competitiveness and prosperity in Europe**; in most of these Member States there was overwhelming agreement. The Irish (81%), Maltese (77%) and Slovak (75%) respondents were particularly positive in this regard.

Although most people agreed, the larger proportion of “don’t know” replies in Bulgaria (26%), Lithuania (23%), Latvia (20%) and even Portugal (17%) indicated relatively widespread doubts as to whether or not the EU’s enlargement had really boosted the European economy. Hungarian respondents were alone in the EU with being more likely to believe that the enlargement had no positive effect on the prosperity and competitiveness in Europe (48%) than the opposite (41%).

Security and stability was an issue where EU citizens, especially in the western, pre-2004 Member States were relatively less satisfied. While the dominant mood was generally positive, in most countries the proportion of those providing an unfavourable response was clearly higher than in the aspects discussed so far. It was the respondents in Denmark (77%), Slovenia (76%), Ireland and Malta (both 73%) who were once more the most positive. Some EU15 countries were at the bottom end of the scale: Portugal (42% vs. 43% disagreeing), Italy (46% agreed), and Belgium (49% agreed).

It has helped to preserve security and stability in Europe as a whole



Q3. Regarding the consequences of the integration of Central and Eastern European countries into the European Union, would you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: all respondents, % by country

More specifically, **progress in combating organised crime and controlling illegal immigration** was also an issue where many people in the EU did not see progress. While assessments were generally positive, significant minorities in many Member States did not feel that the enlargement had brought any improvement in this matter. The most sceptical countries were Italy (where 54%, a clear majority, disagreed) and Slovenia where the survey found a population split in their opinions (48% vs. 47%) as to whether the EU enlargement had decreased problems related to organised crime and illegal immigration. On the other hand, those from Poland (71%), Ireland (70%) or Slovakia (69%) saw very positive progress.

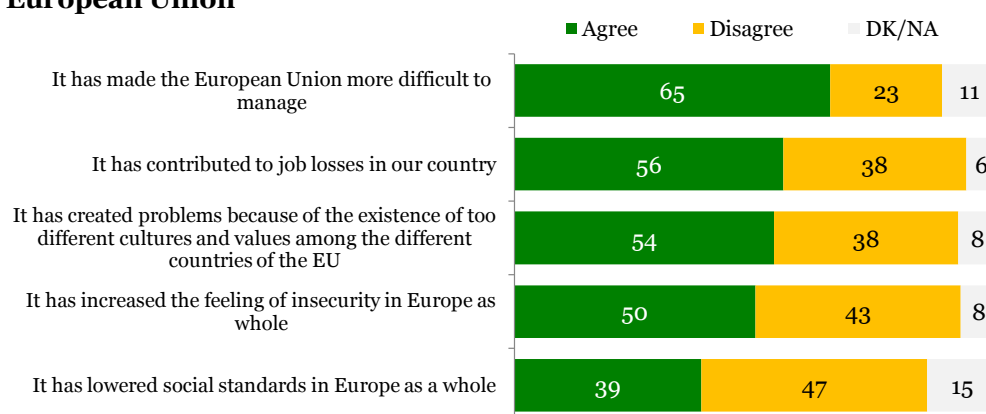
Remaining challenges

Of all these challenges, the one that found the highest level of agreement was that the integration of CEE countries into the European Union made it **more difficult to manage**. Two-thirds of EU citizens agreed with this statement. Over half of the EU respondents considered that the EU enlargement had contributed to **job losses** in their country (56%), that it has created **problems because of the divergent cultural traditions** of the new ex-communist Member States (54%), and exactly half considered that the EU enlargement had increased the **feeling of insecurity** in the EU as a whole. Note that – as discussed earlier – citizens had a generally positive assessment that the end of the Cold War

contributed positively to security in Europe in general, however they were less convinced about this aspect when it came to the EU's enlargement. While many acknowledged the contribution of the EU enlargement to fight against organised crime and illegal immigration as well as to the stability of Europe (see previous section), on balance and in the broader, existential sense of the word, the majority felt that the expansion of the EU has rather increased the feeling of insecurity in general.

Older respondents, manual workers and those in the rural areas were most likely to agree with each of these consequences.

Negative consequences of the integration of CEE countries into the European Union



Q3. Regarding the consequences of the integration of Central and Eastern European countries into the European Union, would you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

The proposition that the EU enlargement had **lowered social standards** in Europe was the one receiving the least amount of support; this was the only proposition where a relative majority of those questioned actually disagreed (47%). The level of agreement was very similar in the CEE countries and the EU15, 38% and 39%, respectively, agreed that social standards had suffered due to the EU enlargement (see Table 4.).

	EU15			CEE		
	Agree	Disagree	DK/NA	Agree	Disagree	DK/NA
Q3_M. It has made the European Union more difficult to manage	69	22	9	51	29	20
Q3_D. It has contributed to job losses in our country	55	39	6	58	34	8
Q3_B. It has created problems because of the existence of too different cultures and values among the different countries of the European Union	57	36	7	42	45	13
Q3_H. It has increased the feeling of insecurity in Europe as whole	52	42	6	44	44	12
Q3_F. It has lowered social standards in Europe as a whole	39	48	14	38	44	18

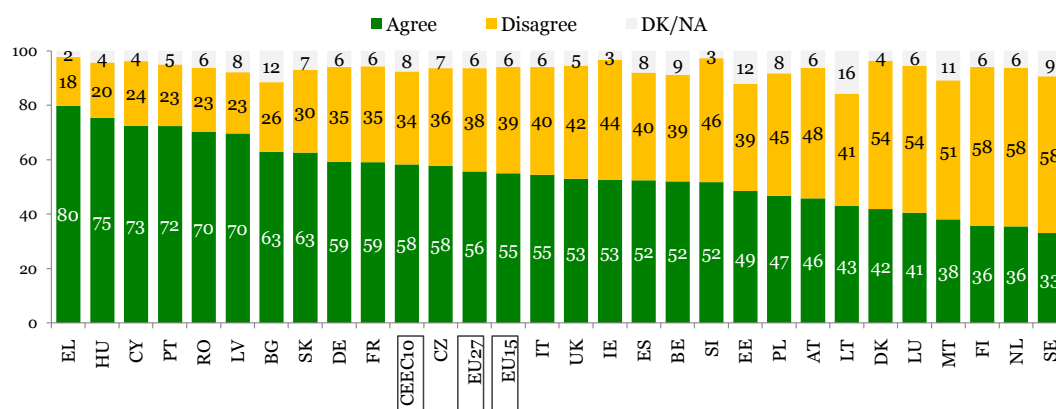
In other aspects, the opinions were more divergent. The EU15 citizens were much more likely to believe that the EU enlargement had brought up problematic cross-cultural issues (EU15: 57%, CEE: 42%). Similarly, those from the EU15 Member States were more likely to assume that the various enlargements had made the EU more difficult to manage (EU15: 69%, CEE: 51%, in the latter group 20% had no clear opinion) and that it had increased the feeling of insecurity in Europe (EU15: 52%, CEE: 44%). On the other hand, those from the former communist Member States were somewhat more likely to indicate that the accession to the EU had contributed to job losses in their country (EU15: 55%, CEE: 58%).

The proposition that the **EU enlargement had made the Union more difficult to manage** was agreed by a majority in almost all Member States (with the smallest, Malta, being the exception with a public that was polarised on this issue, see graph on the next page). However, the level of agreement seemed to be largely determined by a Member State's accession date. Among the least convinced by this proposition featured 10 of the 11 countries that joined the EU in 2004 or later. On the other hand, only Slovenia appeared in the top 10 list of the countries where the majority thought that the increased complexity and size of the EU brought up management issues; the rest of the 10 highest-ranked countries were EU15 Member States. There was a considerable gap between the proportion of "don't know" answers (EU15: 9%, CEE: 20%). Concerns were found to be the most widespread in the aforementioned Slovenia (where 88% agreed that manageability was an issue), in Portugal (83%), France (79%) and Austria (78%).

Age was an important factor as to how much people in the EU Among the least convinced by this proposition featured 10 of the 11 countries that: among the youngest Europeans (aged 15-24) there is a very significant minority who did **not** see such problems, while this proportion shrunk gradually as the age of the respondents progressed to 18% among those aged 55 or older. Such a trend characterised the CEE and EU15 respondents similarly.

In 18 of the 27 Member States, the majority felt that the EU enlargement had contributed to **redundancies and job cuts** in their country. This feeling was the most prevalent in Greece (80%), Hungary (75%), Cyprus (73%), Portugal (72%), Romania and Latvia (both 70%). In the remaining nine Member States, the majority did not share this sentiment; the most people who rejected this proposition were seen in Sweden, the Netherlands and Finland (58% disagreed in each country).

It has contributed to job losses in our country



Q3. Regarding the consequences of the integration of Central and Eastern European countries into the European Union, would you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: all respondents, % by country

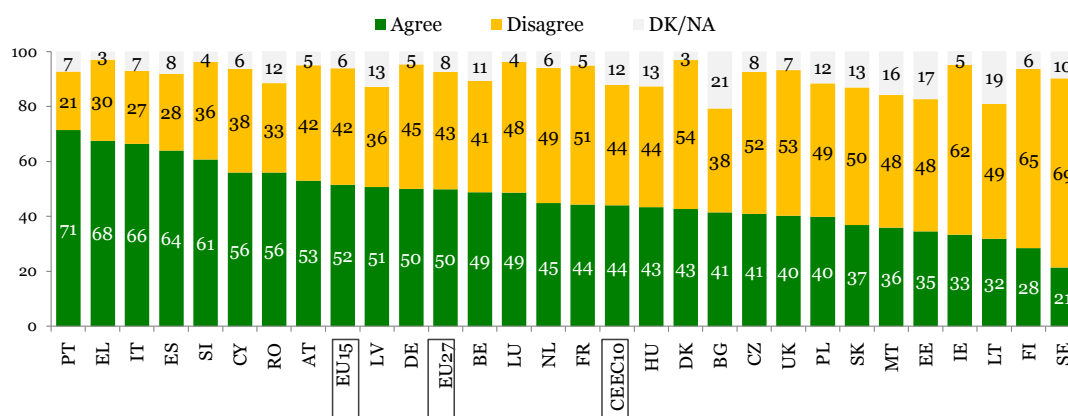
Women (58%) were more likely than men (53%) to attribute job losses to recent expansions of the EU (especially in the EU15 countries, where the gap between the two genders was six percentage points, versus only two percentage points in the CEE region). The most likely to agree with this statement were manual workers (67% on EU27 level). In the EU15 zone, manual workers provided the least favourable assessment of *all* segments analysed. At the same time in the CEE countries those aged 55 or older were most to attribute job losses to EU enlargement / or membership of all groups analysed (68%). Place of residence was also a major factor: metropolitan residents were least likely to provide unfavourable responses (47% on EU level) compared to those living in smaller towns (57%) or villages (58%).

There were only three EU countries where a clear majority *disagreed* that the expansions brought up issues related to an increased cultural diversity across Member States. In most countries, a – usually slim – majority believed that the inclusion of the CEE countries in the EU created **problems because of the existence of "too different" cultures and values among the different countries of the European Union**". This opinion was more frequently confirmed in the EU15 region, especially in Germany (65%), Austria (64%), Greece and Italy (both 63%), Portugal and Cyprus (both 61%). On the other hand, a clear majority disagreed in Romania and Ireland (both 50%) and Poland (47%). In some of the new Member States, the proportion of those without a clear opinion was well above average: Lithuania (19%), Bulgaria (17%) and Estonia (15%).

As we mentioned above, while in several questions the survey found relatively favourable opinions when security was mentioned (mostly in relation to organised crime and illegal immigration –, or geopolitical/military perspective; e.g. "security and stability"), this item was probably encompassing the broadest meaning of the word including existential connotations: the "state of being free of fears and dangers". In this sense, there were highly polarized perceptions concerning an **increase in the feeling of insecurity** in Europe due to the integration of Central and Eastern European countries: the majority disagreed in 12 Member States and agreed in 11 countries that these changes brought an elevated level of insecurity; in the rest of the countries the public was about evenly split on this issue. The feeling of increased insecurity was the most prevalent in some of the southern EU Member States: Portugal (71%), Greece (68%), Italy (66%) and Spain (64%). On the other hand, the vast majority in Sweden

(69%), Finland (65%) and Ireland (62%) disagreed with such a consequence of the expansion of the European Union.

It has increased the feeling of insecurity in Europe as whole



Q3. Regarding the consequences of the integration of Central and Eastern European countries into the European Union, would you agree or disagree with the following statements?
Base: all respondents, % by country

On the other hand, the vast majority in Sweden (69%), Finland (65%) and Ireland (62%) disagreed with such a consequence of the expansion of the European Union.

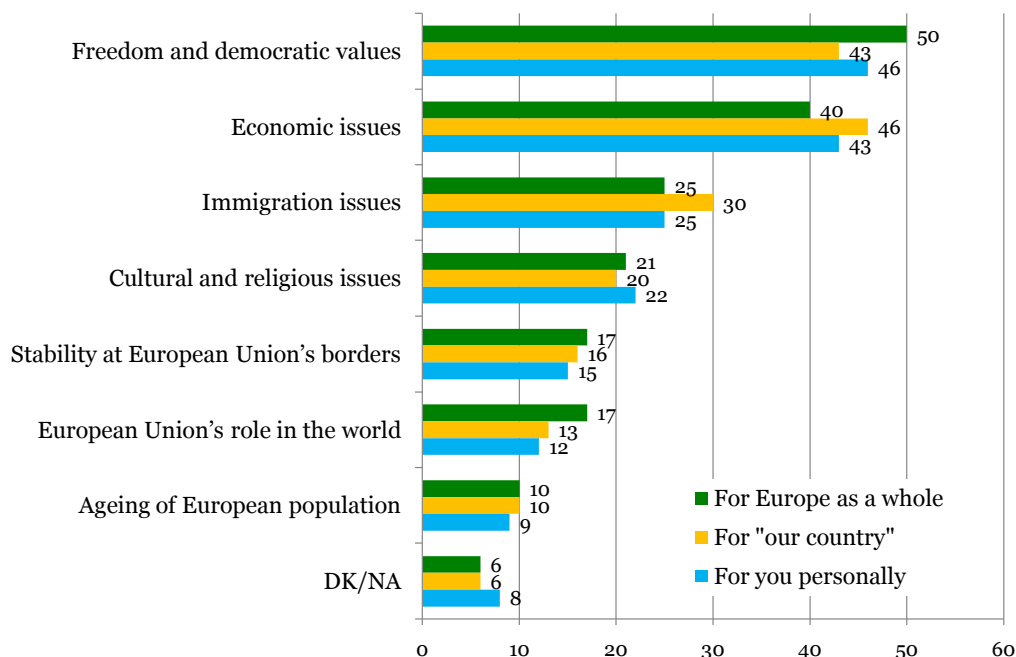
One of the most often voiced concerns about the 2004 enlargement was that the inclusion of a large number of countries that were significantly less affluent than the pre-2004 members of the Union would be to **lower the social standards** throughout Europe. Currently, the majority of respondents in 12 Member States did not confirm such a consequence of the expansion, with 10 of these countries belonging to the EU15. Even so, in several Member States, the majority felt that social standards were indeed lowered as the result of the EU's eastward expansion; this view was the most prevalent in Greece (62%). Curiously, the countries where this opinion was second and third most widespread were CEE countries: Slovenia (where 52% agreed) and Hungary (51%).

Those with primary education were more likely than the highly educated to feel such an effect (44% vs. 31%, respectively, on EU level), those aged 55 or over more likely than the youngest citizens (41% vs. 32%), and of all occupational segments, the manual workers emerged once again with most having an unfavourable perception (46%). Patterns were identical in the CEE and EU15 countries.

3. Considerations for future EU enlargement

The survey asked respondents for the views on which issues should be taken into account prior to future expansions; they were asked to give their opinions from a personal, national and EU-level viewpoint. Looking at the views of EU citizens in general, the ranking order of the issues did not fundamentally differ at the three levels, i.e. EU, national and personal:

Issues to be considered prior to further EU enlargements - two choices per respondent combined



Q4A. In case the European Union would consider accepting new Member countries in the future, according to you, what should be the two most important issues from the following list to be taken into account?
%, Base: all respondents

The rank order was similar for the three levels with the exception of the *economic issues* that citizens considered to be more important as a factor for their country than *freedom and democratic values*. The latter issue, however, was considered to be the most essential factor at both the EU and personal levels. These two aspects, nevertheless, emerged as the two key issues that citizens would like to be taken into consideration when further expansions are on the table.

The third most important issue was *immigration* (this was given more importance as a national issue than at the EU and personal levels) and this was followed by *cultural and religious issues*. The matter of *stability at the EU's borders* was only a secondary consideration in most Member States (not all, however, as will be seen later), and a similar ranking was given to the *EU's global role*, which was ranked sixth of the seven factors proposed to EU citizens. The last position was claimed by the issue of an *ageing European population*; this was the least frequently mentioned factor to be considered, on all levels.

As evident from these results, EU citizens do not have fundamentally different opinions about the factors to be considered prior to further expansions at the EU, national or personal levels. The differences are subtle at most, but some of these nuances could be important to the understanding the motives or underlying attitudes toward the potential support for or opposition to the inclusion of new EU Member States.

The same is true for the various socio-demographic segments: opinions did not vary when assessing the three levels. Generally, men were more interested in border stability, while women found immigration problems to be more relevant. Economic considerations were most pertinent for young

adults (aged between 25 and 34) and least so for the eldest segment of the population (aged 55 or older). The respondents' educational level was strongly correlated with freedom and democratic values: the higher the level of educational attainment, the more likely respondents were to attribute importance to those values. Finally, manual workers gave less importance to human rights and democratic values, and they were the most pragmatic in the sense that they considered economic criteria to be more important in comparison to the other occupational groups.

The various considerations were regarded as important to a somewhat varying level within Member States; however the two-three most important subjects also dominated most responses in each individual country.

- *Freedom and democratic values:* This was considered more important, than elsewhere in the EU, in Denmark, Sweden, Cyprus, the Netherlands and - to a lesser extent - in Spain. On the other hand, this issue garnered less support in Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, and Bulgaria.
- *Ageing of the EU's population:* This factor was seen to be particularly important in the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia. On the other hand, it had less support in Greece, Spain, Italy, Cyprus, the UK and Austria.
- *The EU's global role:* Compared to the rest of the EU, this issue was seen to be especially important for those in Germany, France and Luxembourg, and - to a lesser extent but still clearly above the average – the Czech Republic, Denmark and Slovakia. On the other hand, this was a factor that was given less weight – compared to the EU average - in Greece, Malta, Cyprus and Italy. .
- *Economic issues:* The citizens of each Member State ranked economic issues as either the most or the second most important factor to consider in regard to future expansions. The issue received particular importance – relatively speaking - in Latvia, Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal and Slovakia. This aspect received less attention, though, in Denmark, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.
- *Stability at the EU's borders:* This factor received the most importance in Slovenia, Estonia, Greece and Finland. a. It was seen to have less consequence in Italy and Malta.
- *Cultural / religious issues:* This was seen to be an important issue aspect – in relative terms - in one Member State only: Italy. In contrast, those from the Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Portugal, Sweden and Slovakia attached less importance to such differences.
- *Immigration issues:* In Italy, Malta, the UK and - to a certain extent - Austria, respondents were more likely to consider immigration as an important factor when it came to assessing future expansions. People in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, on the other hand, gave less importance to this specific concern.