Flash Eurobarometer

European Commission

Monitoring the social impact of the crisis: public perceptions in the European Union

Wave 5

Summary

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Flash Eurobarometer 311 – *The Gallup Organization*

Flash EB Series #311

Monitoring the social impact of the crisis: public perceptions in the European Union *Wave 5*

Survey conducted by The Gallup Organization, Hungary upon the request of Directorate-General Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

EUROBAROMETER

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.

THE GALLUP ORGANIZATION

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Introduction

With the launch of the EU's growth and jobs strategy in March 2000, EU leaders pledged to make "a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty" by 2010. Many people, however, still live in destitution with no access to basic services such as healthcare. Furthermore, almost 80 million Europeans live below the poverty threshold. To focus attention on the situation, 2010 has been designated as the "European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion", in order to recognise that:

- all people have a right to live in dignity and take part in society
- the public and private sectors share the responsibility to combat poverty and social exclusion
- eradicating poverty for a more cohesive society benefits all
- a commitment from all levels of society is needed to achieve this goal[1].

In response to the current global economic crisis, on 26 November 2008, the European Commission presented a comprehensive action plan to protect Europe's citizens from the worst effects of the financial crisis. It included extensive action at national and EU levels to help households and industry and concentrate support on the most vulnerable[2].

It is in this context that the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities decided to regularly monitor public opinion about the social impact of the global economic crisis. The current report presents results of the fifth wave – Flash Eurobarometer survey N°311 (conducted in October 2010). Earlier waves were conducted in July 2009 (Flash EB N° 276), December 2009 (Flash EB N° 286), March 2010 (Flash EB N° 288) and May 2010 (Flash EB N° 289).

The objectives of the Flash Eurobarometer survey – "FL311 *Monitoring the social impact of the crisis: public perceptions in the European Union (Wave 5)*" – were:

- to investigate perceptions about the existence of poverty
- to gain knowledge about the degree of financial difficulty of households – at present and in the 12 months leading up to the survey
- to measure changes in healthcare and social-care affordability in the past six months
- to understand how people feel about their future pension entitlements and their concerns about their financial situation in their old age.

In addition, the survey looked at the near-term perceptions of EU citizens, i.e. in the following 12 months. More precisely it covered the following issues:

- General expectations about households' financial situation
- Perceptions about the risk of falling behind with various payments
- The ability of respondents to afford their current accommodation
- The likelihood of respondents to keep their job.

The survey obtained interviews – fixed-line, mobile phone and face-to-face – with nationally representative samples of EU citizens (aged 15 and older) living in the 27 Member States. The target sample size in most countries was 1,000 interviews; in total, 25,776 interviews were conducted by Gallup's network of fieldwork organisations from October 6 to October 10, 2010. Statistical results were weighted to correct for known demographic discrepancies. Please note that due to rounding, the percentages shown in the charts and tables do not always exactly add up to the totals mentioned in the text.

[1] Source: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=637
[2] See, for example: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=89&langId=en&newsId=422&furtherNews=yes

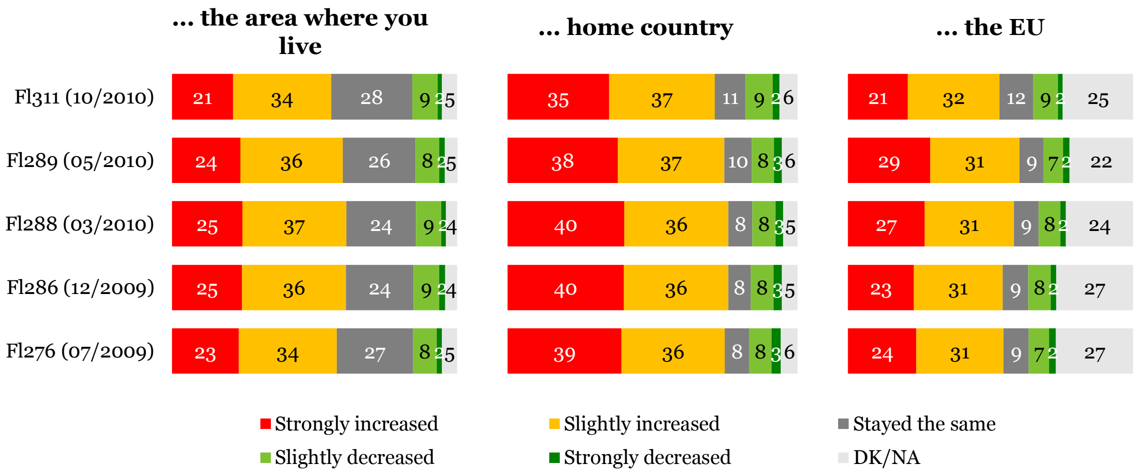
1. Perceptions about the existence of poverty

1.1 Perceived trends in poverty at local, national and EU levels

More than 7 in 10 (72%) EU citizens said that poverty had *strongly* or *slightly increased* **in their country** in the 12 months prior to the survey, but they were less likely to think that poverty **in their local area** had increased in that timeframe; this opinion was held by 55% of interviewees.

As in previous waves, respondents found it more difficult to express an opinion about the change in the amount of **poverty at EU level**: 25% said they did not know or did not answer the question. Nonetheless, in line with perceptions about changes in the degree of poverty at local and national levels, a slim majority (53%) thought that poverty had *strongly* or *slightly increased* across the EU.

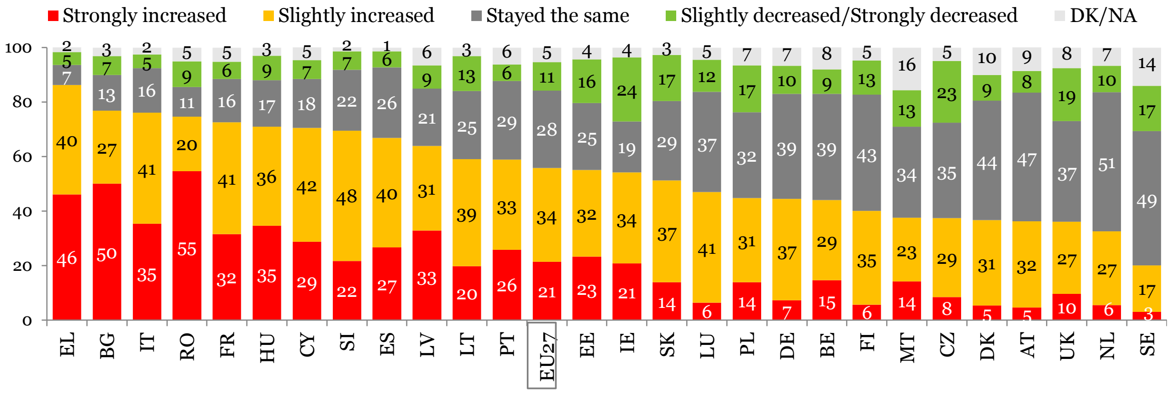
Perceived changes in the level of poverty in the past 12 months in...



Q1. Generally speaking, would you say that poverty has strongly decreased, slightly decreased, slightly increased or strongly increased in the last 12 months in...?
Base: all respondent, % EU27

Individual country results – once again – showed the greatest degree of variation in respondents' perceptions regarding changes in poverty levels in their area. Greek respondents were the most likely to think that **poverty in their local area** had *strongly* or *slightly increased* in the 12 months prior to the survey (86%). Conversely, just one in five Swedes thought that poverty in their local area had increased in that timeframe; the Netherlands was the closest to Sweden with a third of respondents who felt that poverty around them was *getting worse*.

Perceived changes in the level of poverty in the past 12 months in the area where respondents live



Q1. Generally speaking, would you say that poverty has strongly decreased, slightly decreased, slightly increased or strongly increased in the last 12 months in...?
Base: all respondents, % by country

When asking EU citizens about changes in poverty trends, the results at EU level showed a positive trend – i.e. lower proportions who felt there had been an increase at each of the various levels (local, national and EU level). Such a positive trend was, of course, also noticeable within many individual countries. For example, in October 2010, there were less Germans who thought that poverty had increased *in their local area* (from 57% in May 2010 to 44% in October 2010). Similarly, in May 2010, 80% of Lithuanians felt that the level of poverty *in their country* had increased in the past year; in October 2010, this proportions has decreased to 68%.

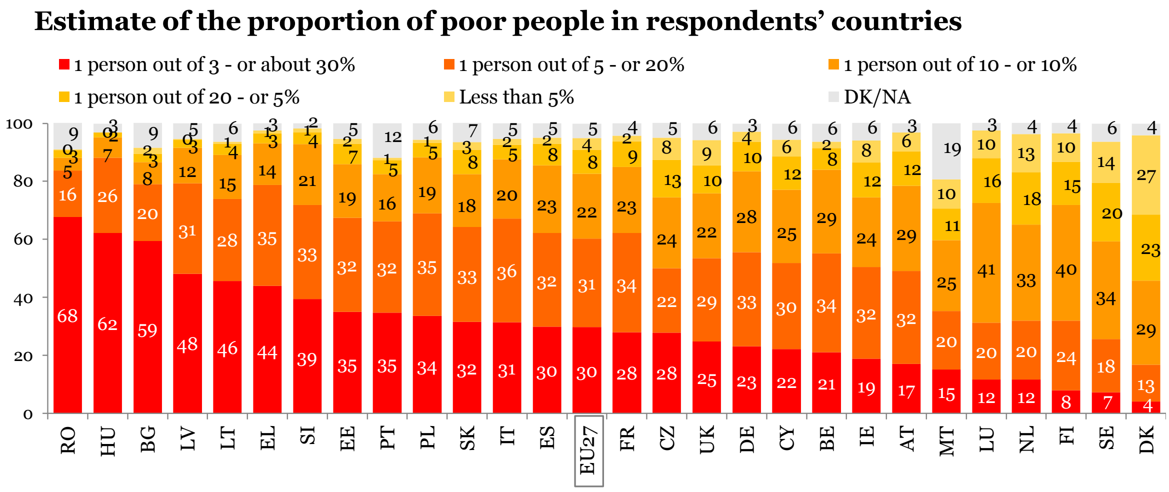
The 15-24 year-olds – and full-time students – were less likely than their older counterparts to consider that poverty had *strongly* or *slightly increased* in the 12 months prior to the survey *in their local area* and *in their country*. For example, while 47% of 15-24 year-olds felt that the level of poverty had risen in their local area, between 54% and 61% of the other age groups had a similar view.

Within occupational segments, manual workers were the most likely to sense that poverty had increased in their *local area* and *in the EU*. For example, 61% of manual workers felt that poverty had *strongly* or *slightly increased* in the area where they lived, compared to 55%-56% of employees, the self-employed and non-working respondents. When asked about the level of poverty *at EU level*, employees were somewhat more likely to state that poverty had risen.

1.2 Estimating the proportion of poor people in the respondent's country

As in previous waves of this trend survey, a majority of EU citizens considered that poverty was rather widespread in their country: 30% estimated that *one person in three* (i.e. roughly 30% of the country's population) was poor, and a similar proportion (31%) said that *one person in five* was poor in their country (i.e. a poverty rate of 20%).

The proportions of respondents who thought that poverty was rather widespread in their country – i.e. it affected *at least 20%* of their country's inhabitants – were higher in eastern and south-eastern European countries than in the Nordic countries and certain northern and central European Member States. For example, 88% of Hungarians and 84% of Romanians thought that *at least one-fifth* of their fellow citizens lived in poverty, compared to just 17% of Danes, 25% of Swedes and 32% of Dutch, Finnish and Luxembourgish respondents.



Q2. If you were to say how many poor people there are in (OUR COUNTRY), would you say that... ?
Base: all respondents, % by country

Women, respondents with a low or average level of education and manual workers tended to be more pessimistic about the proportion of poor people in their country. For example, while 38% of manual workers considered that *about 30%* of the population in their respective countries lived in poverty, between 24% and 32% of respondents in other occupational groups felt that way.

2. Degree of financial difficulty

One in six EU citizens surveyed in October 2010 stated that, on at least one occasion *in the past 12 months*, their household had had insufficient money to pay ordinary bills, buy food or other daily consumer items. Furthermore, a fifth of EU citizens answered that their household was having difficulties in keeping up with household bills and credit commitments *at the time of the survey*.

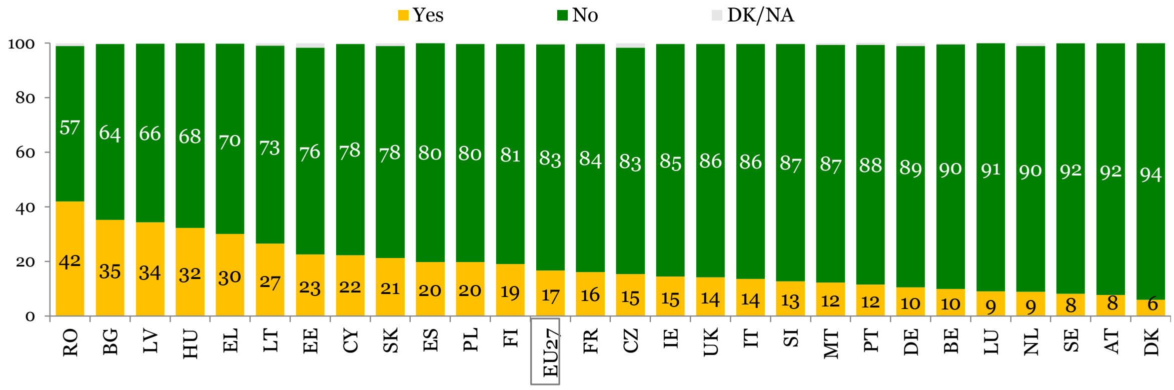
Both measures of the degree of financial difficulty showed stability in the results across the different waves of this trend survey (from July 2009 to October 2010) – in other words, the proportions of respondents who reported that their households were having serious financial problems remained fairly constant at EU level.

2.1 Running out of money to pay for essential goods and services

As in previous waves of the survey, respondents in Romania, followed by those in Bulgaria, Latvia and Hungary, remained the most likely to state that their household had had no money to pay ordinary bills, buy food or other daily consumer items, on at least one occasion, in the 12 months prior to the survey. Until the previous wave, Lithuania had had very similar results to Bulgaria and Hungary; however, in the current wave, this country saw a decrease in the proportion of respondents stating that their household had had a similar experience (from 33% in May 2010 to 27% in October 2010).

In Denmark, Austria, Sweden, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, on the other hand, less than a tenth (6%-9%) of interviewees stated that their household had run out of money to pay for essential goods and services in the period under consideration.

Have respondents' households run out of money to pay ordinary bills, buy food or other daily consumer items in past 12 months?



Q9. Has your household at any time during the past 12 months run out of money to pay ordinary bills or buying food or other daily consumer items?
Base: all respondents, % by country

Those most affected by serious financial problems in the year prior to the survey – i.e. they had run out of money to pay ordinary bills, buy food or other daily consumer items on at least one occasion – were women (18% vs. 15% of men), 25-54 year-olds (19%-23% vs. 13% of 15-24 year-olds and 12% of over 54s), those with low or average levels of education (19%-20% vs. 12% of full-time students and 13% of the most educated) and manual workers (24% vs. 14% of employees, 17% of the self-employed and non-working respondents).

2.2 Keeping up with household bills and credit commitments

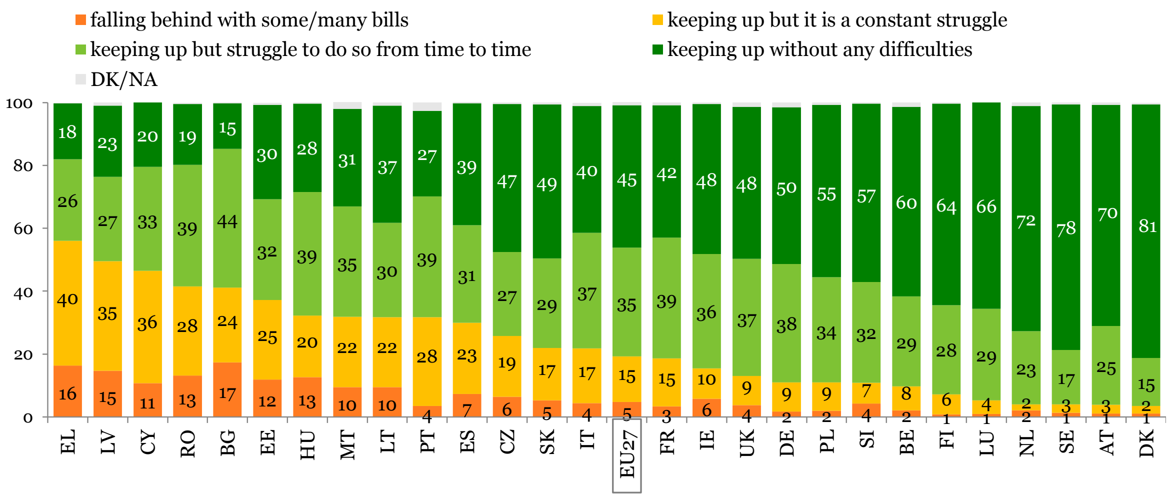
This survey also measured whether respondents were having difficulties in keeping up with household bills and credit commitments *at the time of the survey*; this measure allowed for a more detailed analysis of the degree of financial difficulties faced by EU citizens:

- Focusing solely on respondents who reported having difficulties in keeping up with household bills and credit commitments: 15% said that this was a *constant struggle*, 3% had fallen behind with *some* bills and credit commitments, and 2% were having real financial problems and had fallen behind with *many* such payments.

- Focusing solely on respondents who reported being able to keep up with day-to-day bills and credit commitments: 46% said that making such payments was *never a problem* and 34% said that they *occasionally struggled* to do so.

In total, 56% of Greek respondents answered that their household was having difficulties in keeping up with day-to-day bills and credit commitments – i.e. they were *struggling constantly* to keep up with bills and credit commitments or had fallen behind with *some* or *many* such payments. In four further countries, at least 4 in 10 respondents reported similar problems: Latvia (50%), Cyprus (47%), Romania and Bulgaria (both 41%).

Respondents' ability to keep up with household bills and credit commitments



Q3. Which of the following best describes how your household is keeping up with all its bills and credit commitments at present?
Base: all respondents, % by country

Focusing solely on respondents who reported being able to keep up with household bills and credit commitments showed that roughly 8 in 10 (81%) respondents in Denmark answered that they had *absolutely no difficulty* in keeping up with such payments. In three further countries, at least 7 in 10 respondents selected this response: Sweden (78%), the Netherlands (72%) and Austria (70%).

Socio-demographic considerations

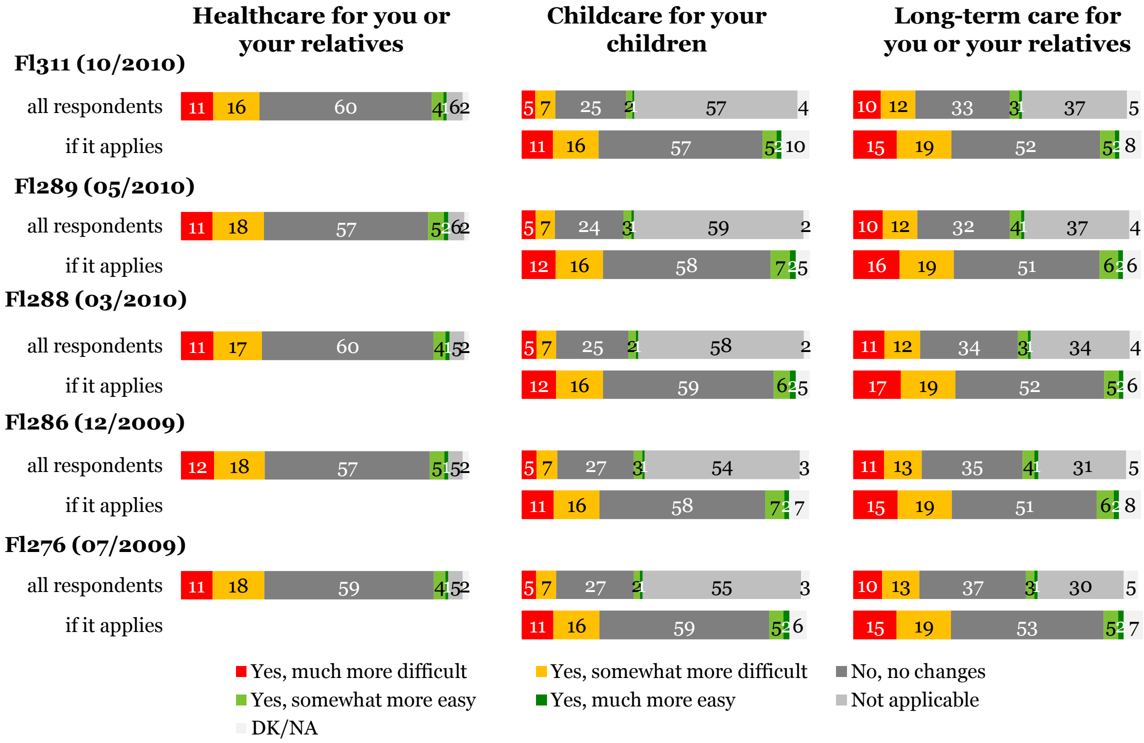
More than a quarter (28%) of respondents with the lowest level of education stated that their household was having difficulties in keeping up with day-to-day bills and credit commitments (as defined above) compared to 14% of respondents with the highest level of education. Across occupational groups, manual workers were the ones the most often encountering difficulties in keeping up with day-to-day bills and credit commitments; employees were the least likely to have such a problem (27% vs. 16%). Although the proportion of respondents who stated that their household was having financial difficulties was somewhat higher for over 54 year-olds than for 15-24 year-olds, the former were more likely to state that they had *absolutely no difficulty* in keeping up with day-to-day bills and credit commitments (54% vs. 39% of 15-24 year-olds).

3. Changes in healthcare and social-care affordability

More than a quarter (27%) of EU citizens reported that it had become more difficult to cope with the costs of **general healthcare** for themselves or their relatives in the past six months: 11% felt that it had become "much more difficult" and 16% thought it had become "somewhat more difficult".

Where the question about **childcare** was relevant, more than a quarter of respondents thought that it had become *somewhat* (16%) or *much more* difficult (11%) to afford childcare in the six months prior to the survey. As for **long-term care** for themselves and their relatives, where this was relevant, more than a third now found it more difficult to cope with the costs involved in long-term care services than six months ago (15% "much more difficult" and 19% "somewhat more difficult").

Perceived changes in healthcare and social-care affordability



Q4. In the last six months, have you noted any changes in your ability to afford healthcare for you or your relatives? (IF YES) Has it become much more easy, somewhat more easy, somewhat more difficult, much more difficult?
Base: all respondent, % EU27

In Romania and Greece, a majority of respondents said that, in the half year prior to the survey, it had become *somewhat* or *much more difficult* to cope with the costs of **general healthcare** for themselves or their family members (63% and 53%, respectively). In Poland, Cyprus, Estonia, Bulgaria and Latvia, between 40% and 50% of respondents also felt that it was now harder for them to afford general healthcare.

Based on individual country results regarding EU citizens' perceptions about changes in the affordability of general healthcare, childcare or long-term care services, a few conclusions can be drawn:

- Lithuania's results in May 2010 represented an improvement in perceptions about healthcare and social-care affordability compared to those measured in March 2010; this positive trend has continued in the current wave.

- Portugal's results in May 2010, on the other hand, represented a deterioration in respondents' perceptions about healthcare and social-care affordability, while the country's current results represented an improvement in perceptions compared to those measured in March 2010. For example, in October 2010, 38% of Portuguese respondents said that it had become more difficult to afford long-term care (-13 percentage points compared to March 2010).

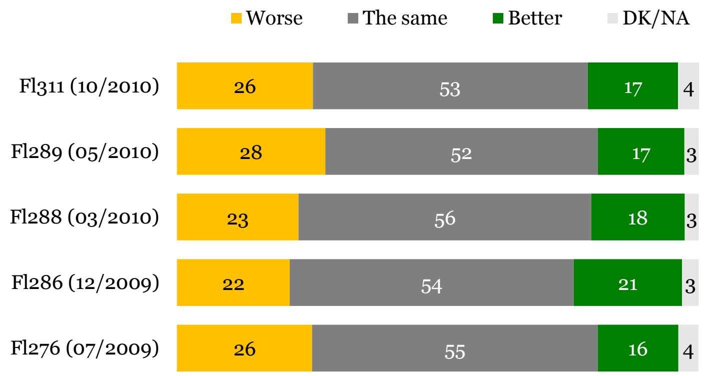
Socio-demographic considerations

The older the respondents, the more likely they were to feel that it had become harder to afford general healthcare and long-term care for themselves or their family. Among respondents who had completed their education, the least educated respondents were the most likely to have problems bearing the costs of healthcare and social-care services. Similarly, manual workers and inactive respondents were more likely than respondents in other occupational groups to say that, in the past six months, it had become harder to afford general healthcare for themselves or their family. The socio-demographic analysis also revealed that men were somewhat less likely to say that, in the past six months, it had become *somewhat* or *much more difficult* to afford all types of healthcare.

4. Expectations about households' financial situation

Looking ahead, a sixth (17%) of EU citizens anticipated that their household's financial situation would *improve* in the 12 months following the survey, and a slim majority (53%) thought their financial situation would be *stable*. Roughly a quarter (26%) of EU citizens said they expected their household's financial situation to *deteriorate* during the next 12 months.

Expectations about the financial situation of respondents' households in the next 12 months... will it be?



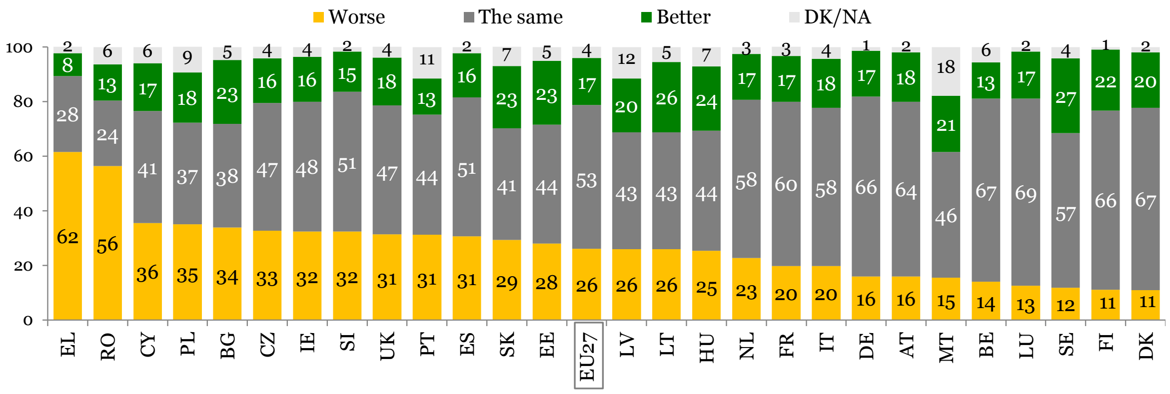
Q7. What are your expectations for the 12 months to come, will the next 12 months be better, worse or the same when it comes to the financial situation of your household?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

In about half of the Member States, a majority of respondents anticipated that their household's financial situation would *remain the same* in the following 12 months; respondents in Germany, Finland, Belgium, Denmark and Luxembourg were the most likely to select this response (66%-69%).

Similar to the previous waves, Romania and Greece stood out from the pack with a majority of interviewees who expected their household's financial situation *to be worse* in the next 12 months (62% and 56%, respectively).

Respondents in Sweden (27%) and Lithuania (26%), on the other hand, were the most likely to expect an *improvement* in their household's financial situation in the year to come. In Bulgaria, Slovakia, Estonia and Hungary, slightly less than a quarter (23%-24%) of respondents shared this view.

Expectations about the financial situation of respondents' households in the next 12 months... will it be?

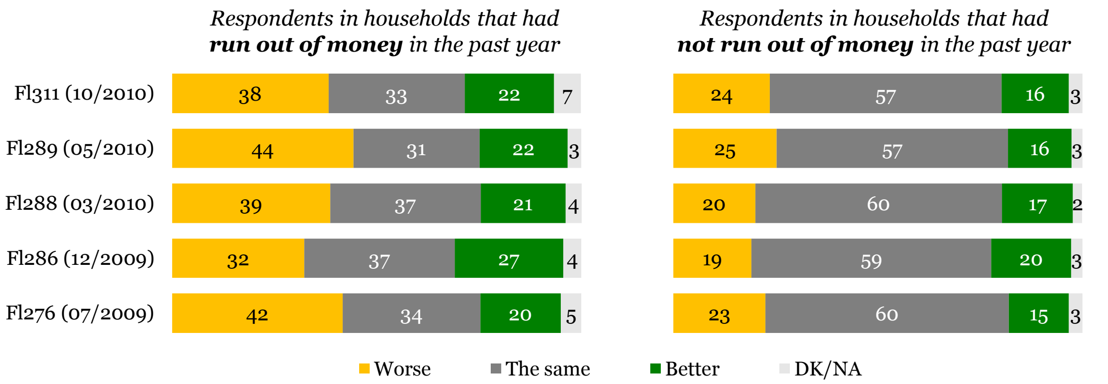


Q7. What are your expectations for the 12 months to come, will the next 12 months be better, worse or the same when it comes to the financial situation of your household?
Base: all respondents, % by country

Relationship between households' financial situation in the past 12 months and in the future

Comparing the results of October 2010 with those of May 2010, it could be seen that respondents who had experienced serious financial problems were the ones who were the most likely to answer more optimistically in the current survey. The proportion of respondents who expected a *deterioration* of their household's financial situation has decreased from 44% to 38% for respondents who had experienced serious financial problems. The results for respondents who had not had such problems remained practically unchanged compared to May 2010.

Expectations about the financial situation of respondents' households in the next 12 months ... will it be?



Q9. Has your household at any time during the past 12 months run out of money to pay ordinary bills or buying food or other daily consumer items?
Q7. What are your expectations for the 12 months to come, will the next 12 months be better, worse or the same when it comes to the financial situation of your household?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Socio-demographic considerations

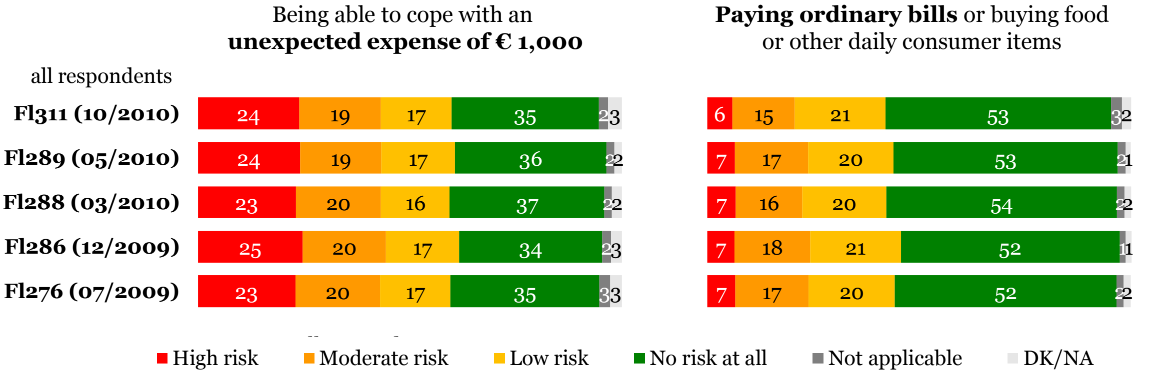
The younger the respondents, the more likely there were to anticipate a better financial situation for their household in the next 12 months. Non-working respondents were the least liable to expect a *better financial situation* for their household in the next 12 months (15%); self-employed respondents were the most likely to do so (24%). Men were somewhat more optimistic regarding the evolution of their household's financial situation in the next 12 months: 19% anticipated a *better* financial situation, compared to 15% of women. Similarly, respondents living in metropolitan areas were more likely than rural dwellers to expect their household's financial situation *to become better* in the 12 months following the study (20% vs. 16%).

5. Views about being able to cope financially

The survey also asked whether – in the next 12 months – there would be a risk of respondents falling behind with various payments. EU citizens were most likely to express a concern about their ability to cope with **an unexpected expense of €1,000** (or its equivalent in national currency). More precisely, 24% of EU citizens said that there was a *high risk* of not being able to cope with an unforeseen financial cost of €1,000 in the next year; a further 19% considered that there was a *moderate risk* and 17% thought there was a *low risk.*

Slightly more than 4 in 10 (42%) EU citizens envisaged *at least a low risk* of falling behind with ordinary payments (**paying bills, buying food or other daily consumer items**) in the year following the survey. This risk was perceived as being *low* by 21% of respondents and as *moderate* by 15%; not even half as many respondents, however, considered it to be a *high risk* (6%). Moreover, a slim majority of respondents answered that they were not at all concerned about their future ability to cope with day-to-day expenditures ("no risk at all", 53%).

Level of risk that respondents would not be able to cope financially over the next 12 months



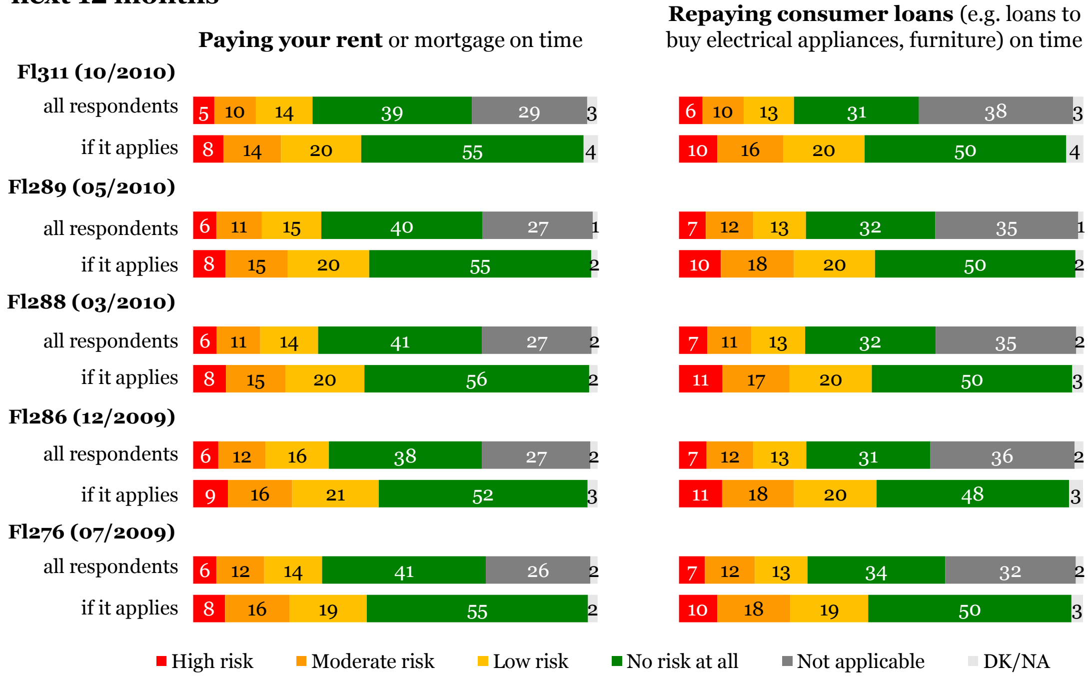
Q8. Looking at the next 12 months, would you say there is a high risk, a moderate risk, a low risk or no risk at all of falling behind with...?
Base: all respondent, % EU27

Latvians were most likely to be worried about their ability to cope with an unexpected expense of €1,000 (or its national equivalent) in the next 12 months; 87% said there was *at least a low risk* of being unable to cope with such an expense. As in previous waves, respondents in the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria and Sweden were the least likely to express a concern about their ability to cope with an unexpected expense of €1,000 in the year to come (between 28% and 32%).

Respondents in Romania were not only the most likely to have run out of money to pay ordinary bills, buy food or other daily consumer items during the 12 months prior to the survey, they were also the most likely to say that there was *at least a low risk* of falling behind with such payments in the year following the survey (72%). In Lithuania and Bulgaria, somewhat less than 7 in 10 (68%-69%) respondents said that there was *at least a low risk* that they would not be able to pay such day-to-day bills in the year to come.

Roughly 3 in 10 (29%) EU citizens felt that the question about **paying rent or mortgage** was not relevant to their personal situation (i.e. they had no rent or mortgage to pay) and 38% said the same for the question about **repaying consumer loans** (e.g. loans to buy electrical appliances or furniture). Among those who did reply, 42% said there was *at least a low risk* that they would not be able to pay the rent or mortgage on time in the year to come and 46% were pessimistic about repaying loans on time.

Level of risk that respondents would not be able to cope financially over the next 12 months



Q8. Looking at the next 12 months, would you say there is a high risk, a moderate risk, a low risk or no risk at all of falling behind with…? Base: all respondent, % EU27

Where relevant, about 7 in 10 interviewees in Romania, Latvia and Greece (69%-72%) thought that, in the year to come, there would be *at least a low risk* of being unable to make rent or mortgage payments on time; this proportion decreased to less than a fifth of respondents in Denmark and Sweden (18%-19%).

Likewise, Greek respondents – where the question was relevant – were the most likely to see *at least a low risk* of being unable to repay consumer loans on time over the next 12 months (80%). In Poland, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Latvia and Romania, more than 7 in 10 respondents shared this concern (between 72% and 76%).

EU citizens' perceptions about being able to cope financially – October 2010 vs. May 2010

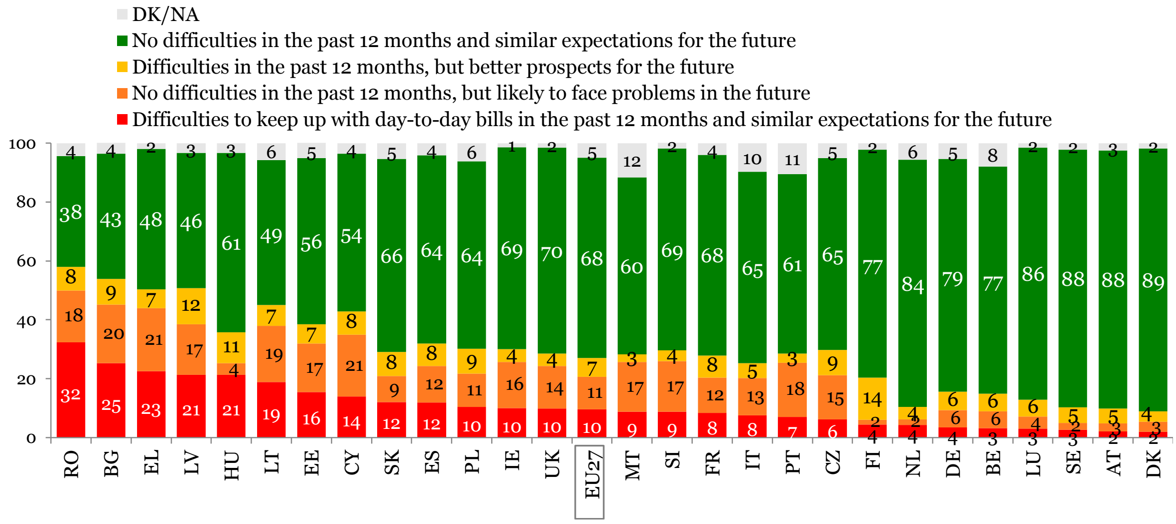
Portugal's current survey represented an improvement in perceptions about the risk of falling behind with various payments. For example, in May 2010, 84% of Portuguese respondents thought that there was *at least a low risk* of not being able to cope with an unexpected expense of €1,000 in the next year; this proportion has decreased to 68% in the current wave (-16 percentage points). Not only in Portugal, but also in some other countries (e.g. the Czech Republic and Italy), respondents were now less likely to feel they were at risk of falling behind with various payments.

In Bulgaria, on the other hand, the proportion of interviewees who thought there would be *at least a low risk* that they would not be able to cope financially increased significantly for the four types of payments: +10 percentage points for an unexpected expense of €1,000, +6 points for the payment of ordinary bills, +5 points for rent or mortgage payments and +12 points for the repayment of consumer loans (note: only for respondents who did respond).

Running out of money to pay ordinary bills – past experiences and future expectations

Combining respondents' answers for *Questions 8 and 9* showed how many households had run out of money to pay ordinary bills, buy food or other daily consumer items during the 12 months prior to the survey and also envisaged a *moderate* or *high* risk of falling behind with such payments in the year following the survey; as in May 2010, this segment represented 10% of EU citizens. Furthermore, individual country results showed that this segment was the largest in Romania (32%), Bulgaria (25%), Greece (23%), Latvia and Hungary (both 21%).

Running out of money to pay ordinary bills, buy food or other daily consumer items
Past experiences and future expectations



Q8. Looking at the next 12 months, would you say there is a high risk, a moderate risk, a low risk or no risk at all of falling behind with?
Q9. Has your household at any time during the past 12 months run out of money to pay ordinary bills or buying food or other daily consumer items?
Base: all respondents, % by country

Socio-demographic considerations

Coping with an **unexpected expense of €1,000** (or its national equivalent) in the next 12 months would involve *at least a low risk* for 7 in 10 manual workers (70% vs. 55%-61% in other occupational categories) and for roughly two-thirds of 25-39 year-olds (66% vs. 53% of the over 54s).

Over half (52%) of manual workers stated that in the next 12 months they envisaged *at least a low risk* of being unable to pay **ordinary bills, buy food or other daily consumer items**, compared to 39%-42% of the self-employed, employees and non-working respondents.

The over 54 year-olds, non-working respondents and those with a low level of education were more likely to state that the questions about **rental or mortgage payments** and the **repayment of consumer loans** were not relevant to them.

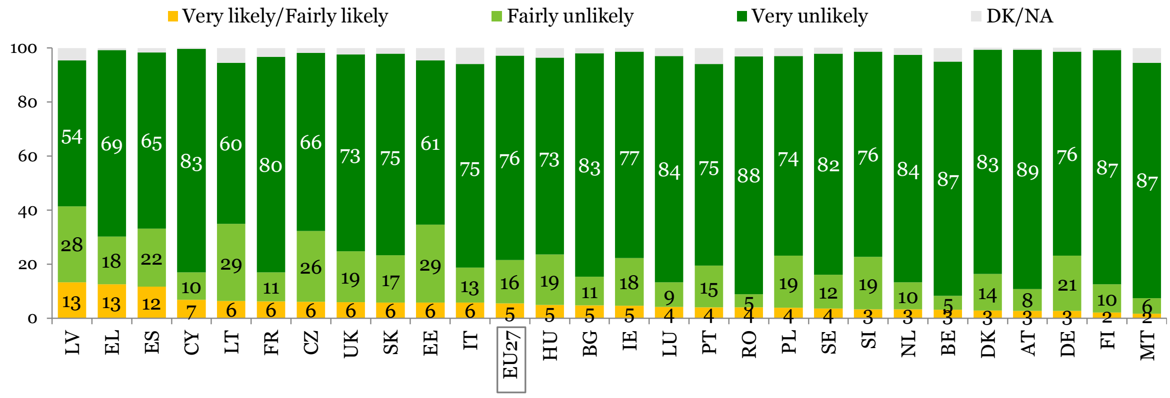
6. Views on the future affordability of accommodation

As in previous waves of this trend survey, 2% of EU citizens said that it was *very likely* that they would be forced by financial circumstances to leave their accommodation within the next 12 months; 3% saw this as being *fairly likely*.

Respondents in Spain (12%), Greece and Latvia (both 13%) were the most likely to say that it was *very* or *fairly likely* that they would have problems meeting the costs of their accommodation in the 12 months following the survey.

In all other Member States, less than 10% of respondents said that it was *very* or *fairly likely* that they would be forced by financial circumstances to leave their accommodation within the next 12 months, while more than 50% estimated that this would be *very unlikely*. The proportion of such "very unlikely" responses ranged from 54% in Latvia to 87%-89% in Belgium, Finland, Malta, Romania and Austria.

Likelihood that respondents would need to leave their current home, as it would be unaffordable, in the next 12 months



Q10. How likely do you think it is that you will need to leave your accommodation within the next 12 months because you can no longer afford it?
Base: all respondents, % by country

Some countries have seen an increase – between May and October 2010 – in the proportion of respondents considering it *fairly unlikely* that they would have problems meeting the costs of their accommodation, at the expense of those seeing this as being *very unlikely*. For example, in the previous wave, 78% of interviewees in Hungary said that it was *very unlikely* that they might be forced by financial circumstances to leave their accommodation within the next 12 months, and 14% saw this as being *fairly unlikely*. In October 2010, these proportions have changed to 73% and 19%, respectively.

7. Opinions about the employment situation

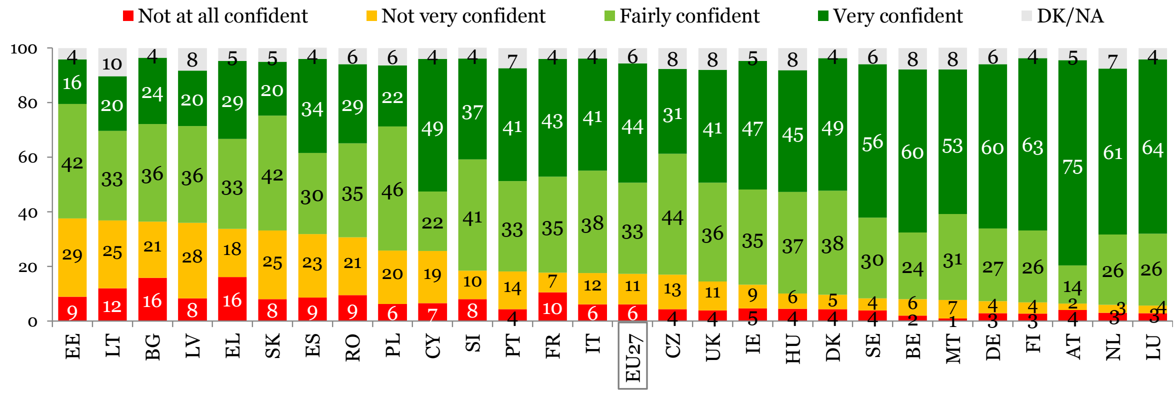
As in May 2010, a sixth of respondents actually in employment[3] were *not very* or *not at all confident* that they would be able to keep their current job in the next 12 months and roughly half (49%) thought it would be *fairly unlikely* or *not at all likely* that they would be able to find a new position within six months, in the event that they were laid off.

7.1 Respondents' confidence in their ability to keep their job

As in previous waves, respondents in eastern and south-eastern European countries (e.g. the Baltic states, Bulgaria and Greece) showed the highest level of pessimism about their ability to keep their current job in the next 12 months, while interviewees in the Nordic countries and in central European countries (e.g. the Netherlands, Finland, Austria and Luxembourg) showed the lowest level of pessimism.

The proportion of respondents in employment who were *not very confident* or *not at all confident* that they would be able to keep their current job in the 12 months following the survey remained below 10% in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Germany, Malta, Belgium, Sweden and Denmark (6%-9%). In Latvia, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Estonia, on the other hand, between 36% and 38% of respondents were concerned about keeping their job.

Level of confidence in respondents' ability to keep their job in the next 12 months



Q11. How confident would you say you are in your ability to keep your job in the next 12 months?
Base: respondents with a professional activity, % by country

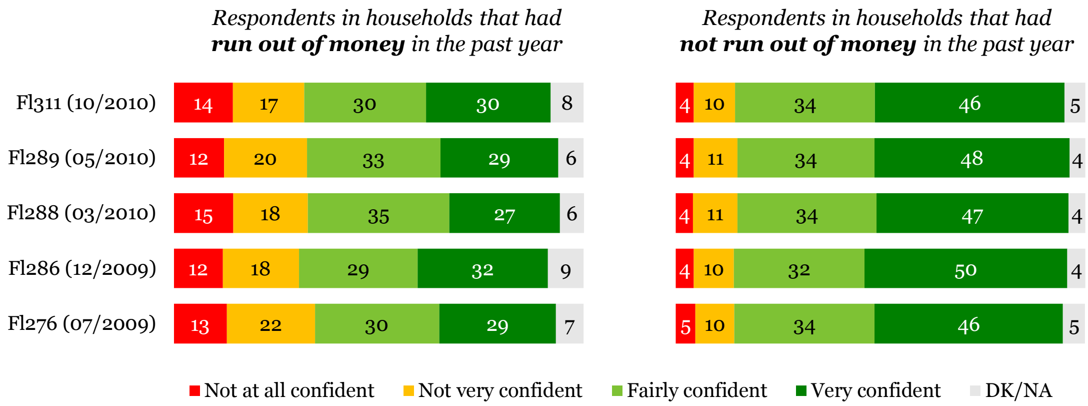
In most EU Member States, almost no differences were observed between May 2010 and October 2010 in terms of respondents' perceptions about their ability to keep their current job in the next 12 months. Portugal, the Czech Republic, Romania and Hungary, on the other hand, have seen a reduction in the level of pessimism about respondents' job situation. For example, in May 2010, 37% of Romanians were *not very* or *not at all confident* they would stay in their job in the next 12 months, while in October 2010, 31% lacked such confidence (-6 percentage points).

Links between households' financial problems and respondents' confidence in their ability to keep their job

About 3 in 10 (31%) respondents who had run out of money to pay ordinary bills, buy food or other daily consumer items on at least one occasion in the past 12 months were *not very* or *not at all confident* that they would stay in their job in the next 12 months – compared to 14% of those who had not had such an experience. Almost half (46%) of the latter group felt *very confident* about their ability to keep their job in the following 12 months compared to just 30% of the former.

[3] Interviewees without a professional activity, i.e. full-time students, respondents looking after a home, retirees and those looking for work were not asked the question.

Level of confidence in respondents' ability to keep their job in the next 12 months



Q9. Has your household at any time during the past 12 months run out of money to pay ordinary bills or buying food or other daily consumer items?
Q11. How confident would you say you are in your ability to keep your job in the next 12 months?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

Socio-demographic considerations

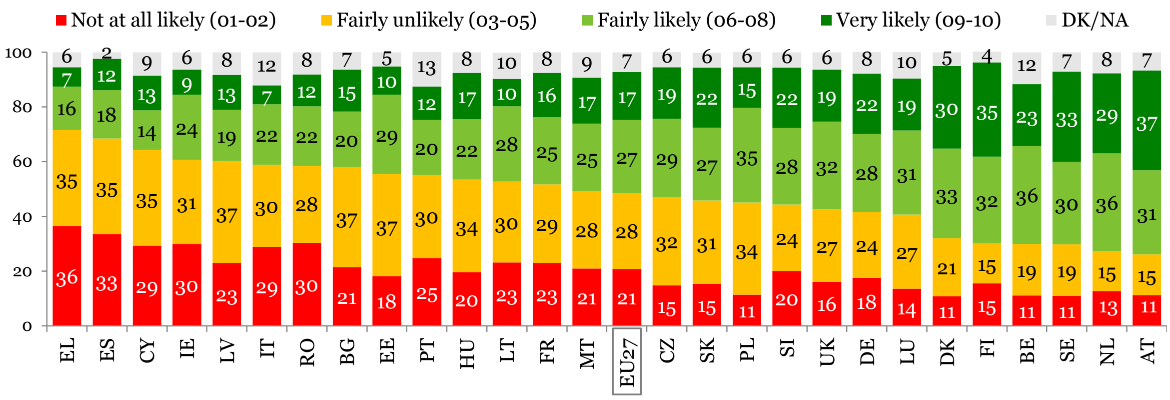
Among occupational groups, manual workers were almost twice as likely as other working respondents to lack confidence about their job situation in the next 12 months. There was also a relationship between respondents' level of education and their level of confidence in being able to keep their current job: the more educated the respondents were, the more confident they were that they would not be laid off in the next 12 months. The proportion of those respondents being *very confident* that they would keep their job ranged from 41% of those with the lowest level of education to 47% of the most educated.

7.2 Respondents' confidence in finding a job in the event of being laid off

A feeling of pessimism among respondents about their future job situation remained more common than one of optimism. About a fifth (21%) of respondents in employment considered it *not at all likely* that they would find a new job within six months of being laid off and 28% said that it would be *fairly unlikely*.

The highest proportions of pessimistic respondents – i.e. those saying that it would *not be at all likely* or *fairly unlikely* that they would find a new job within six months of a potential lay-off – were found in Greece (71%), Spain (68%), Cyprus (64%) and Ireland (61%).

Projected likelihood of respondents being able to find a job in the next six months (after being laid off)



Q12. If you were to be laid-off, how would you rate on a scale from 1 to 10, the likelihood of you finding a job in the next six months? "1" means that it "would not at all be likely" and 10 means that "it would be very likely".
Base: respondents with a professional activity, % by country

As seen in previous waves, respondents' level of pessimism regarding their chances of finding a new job within six months of a potential lay-off increased with age and decreased with level of education – these were the biggest disparities observed among the various socio-demographic segments.

A comparison across the two most recent waves showed that respondents in Lithuania, the Netherlands, Malta, Italy, Austria and the Czech Republic – who were in employment – were less likely to think that it would *not be at all likely* or *fairly unlikely* that they would find a new job within six months in the event that they were laid off.

The links between households' financial problems and respondents' confidence in finding a new job

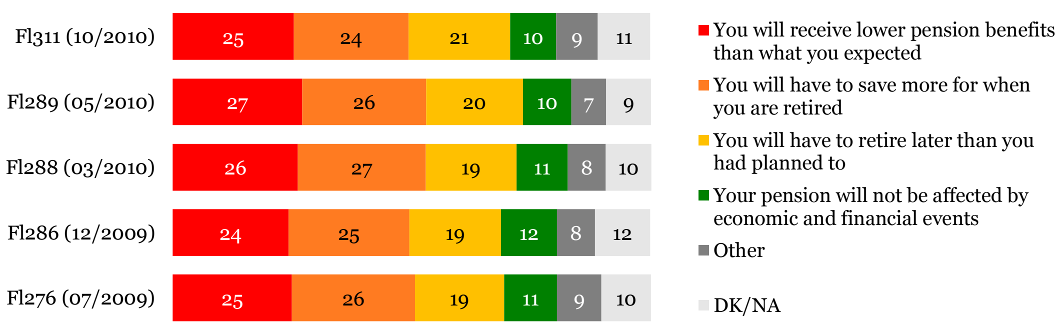
Among respondents who had been unable to pay day-to-day bills in the past year, those who thought that it would be *very* or *fairly likely* (36%) that they would find a new job within six months of being laid off were outnumbered by those who estimated that this would be *fairly unlikely* or *not at all likely* (58%). Among respondents who had not had difficulties in paying bills, however, a feeling of optimism (46%) about their future job situation was as common as one of pessimism (47%).

8. Personal concerns about future finances

8.1 The impact of changes in pension entitlements

Turning to EU citizens' views about how their pension entitlements might change in the future, 7 in 10 respondents either explicitly anticipated *lower pension benefits* or thought that they would have to *postpone their retirement* or *save more money* for when they reached old age. In sharp contrast, just 10% of respondents believed that their pension entitlements would not be affected by economic and financial events.

Respondents' feelings about the impact of their future pension entitlements



Q5. From the following possible answers, how would you say your pension will fare in the future?
Base: all respondents, % EU27

In Denmark and Finland, more than a quarter of respondents thought their pension would *not be affected by economic and financial events* (31% and 26%, respectively). Luxembourg followed with 19% of respondents who anticipated an "economic crisis-safe" pension.

As in the previous wave, respondents in Greece (44%) were the most likely to answer that they would receive *lower pension benefits* than expected. More than a quarter of respondents in France (35%), Slovenia (29%), Latvia and Austria (both 28%), and Estonia (26%) considered that they would have to *retire later than originally planned*. Respondents in the Czech Republic (42%), Belgium (33%) and Slovakia (31%), on the other hand, were the most likely to expect that they would have to *save more for their retirement*.

Socio-demographic considerations

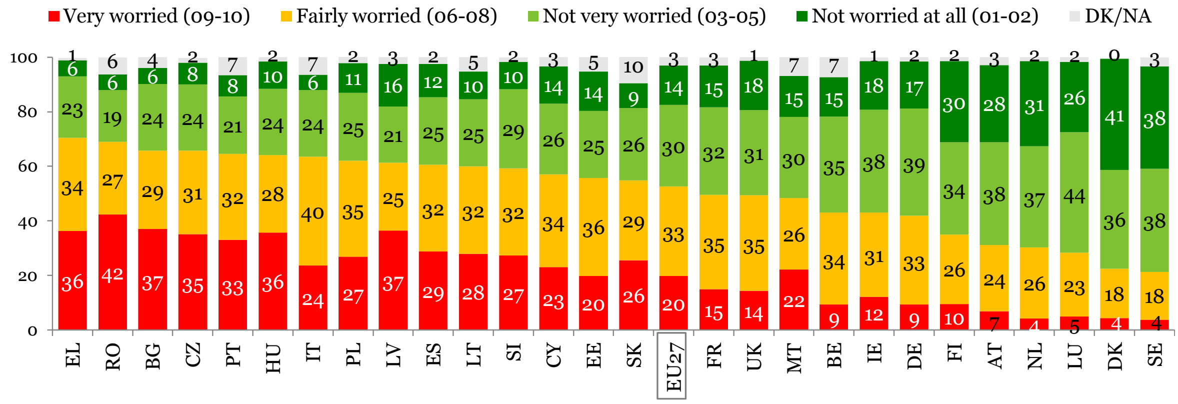
Respondents getting closer to retirement age (aged 55-64) were the most likely to expect *lower pension benefits* (35%), while the youngest respondents (aged 15-24) were the least likely to share this opinion (16%). Those closer to retirement age, and those likely to have already retired (aged 65 and over), were also more confident that their pension would *not be affected by economic and financial events*: 18% of over 64 year-olds and 13% of 55-64 year-olds anticipated an “economic crisis-safe” pension, compared to 5%-8% of younger respondents.

8.2 Concerns regarding their income in old age

As in the previous wave, EU citizens feeling negative about how they would cope financially in old age outnumbered those feeling positive about the future: 53% of respondents were *very* or *fairly worried* that their income in old age would not be adequate to enable them to live a dignified live, compared to 44% who were *not worried* by such an outlook.

In 15 Member States, more than half of respondents were *very* or *fairly worried* that their income in old age would not be adequate to enable them to live in dignity; respondents in Greece (70%) and Romania (69%) were the most likely to have such negative expectations regarding their income in old age. Furthermore, in about half of these Member States, a third – or more – respondents were *very worried* that their income in old age would not support a dignified life; this proportion was the highest in Romania (42%).

Respondents' level of concern about whether their income in old age would be sufficient to enable them to live in dignity



Q6. How worried are you, if at all, that your income in old age will not be adequate enough to enable you to live in dignity. Please express your opinion on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means 'Not worried at all' and 10 means 'Very worried'.
Base: all respondents, % by country

Socio-demographic considerations

Respondents who were the least worried about the possibility that their income in old age would not be adequate to enable them to live in dignity were those who were likely to have already retired (aged 65+) or to be close to retirement (55-64 year-olds), as well as members of the youngest group (aged 15 to 24).

Two-thirds (67%) of manual workers were *very* or *fairly worried* about their income in old age, compared to 53% of the self-employed and 55% of employees and non-working respondents (e.g. unemployed respondents, students).

A slim majority (56%-57%) of respondents with average or low levels of education were *very* or *fairly worried* about the possibility of a low income in old age, compared to less than half (45%-48%) of full-time students and respondents with the highest level of education.