



Eurobarometer: Europeans show support for digital principles

Brussels, 6 December 2021

According to a [special Eurobarometer](#) survey conducted in September and October 2021, an overwhelming majority of EU citizens think that the Internet and digital tools will play an important role in the future. Moreover, a large majority finds it useful for the European Union to define and promote European rights and principles to ensure a successful digital transformation.

1. Importance of digital in daily life

The findings of the survey show that more than eight in ten Europeans (81%) feel that by 2030, digital tools and the Internet will be important in their lives. More than 80% of EU citizens think that their use will bring at least as many advantages as disadvantages. While only a small minority (12%) expects more disadvantages than advantages from the use of digital tools and Internet by 2030.

2. Concerns about online harms and risks

More than half (56%) of the EU citizens surveyed expressed their concern about cyber-attacks and cybercrime such as theft or abuse of personal data, malicious software, or phishing. In addition, more than half (53%) of them also indicated worrying about the safety and well-being of children online, and close to half (46%) of EU citizens worry about the use of personal data and information by companies or public administrations. About a third (34%) of EU citizens worry about the difficulty of disconnecting and finding a good online/offline life balance, and around one in four (26%) are concerned with the difficulty of learning new digital skills necessary to take an active part in society. Finally, about one in five (23%) EU citizens expressed their worry about the environmental impact of digital products and services.

3. Need for more knowledge of rights online

According to the survey results, the majority of EU citizens think that the EU protects their rights in the online environment well. Still a significant number (almost 40%) of EU citizens are not aware that their rights such as the freedom of expression, privacy, or non-discrimination should also be respected online, but in six EU Member States, more than three in four are aware of these rights. Nonetheless, a large majority of EU citizens considers it useful to know more about these rights.*

4. Support for declaration on digital principles

A large majority (82%) of EU citizens considers it useful for the European Union to define and promote a common European vision on digital rights and principles. These principles should have concrete implications for citizens, for example nine in ten (90%) are in favour of including the principle that everyone, including people with disabilities or at risk of exclusion, should benefit from easily accessible and user-friendly digital public services. People want to be clearly informed about the terms and conditions that apply to their internet connection, be able to access the internet through an affordable and high-speed connection, and be able to use a secure and trustworthy digital identity to access a broad range of public and private online services.

Next Steps

The outcome of this first Eurobarometer survey will help develop the proposal for a European declaration on digital rights and principles of the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission. The Declaration will promote a digital transition that is shaped by European shared values and by a human-centric vision of technological change.

After this first survey, a recurring series of Eurobarometer surveys will be planned on an annual basis (from 2023 onwards) to collect qualitative data, based on citizens' perception of how the digital principles, once enshrined in the Declaration, are implemented in the EU.

Background

The special Eurobarometer (518) investigates the perception among EU citizens of the future of digital tools and the internet, and the expected impact that the internet, digital products, services and tools will have on their lives by 2030. It was conducted between 16 September and 17 October 2021 through a mix of online and face-to-face interviewing, where possible or feasible. 26,530 respondents from the 27 EU Member States were interviewed.

On 9 March 2021, the Commission laid out its vision for Europe's digital transformation by 2030 in its Communication on the [Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade](#), and proposed to compile a set of digital principles that embody the European way for the digital transformation and guide EU policy in digital. This covers areas such as access to internet services, to a secure and trusted online environment and to human-centric digital public services and administration, as well online freedoms.

Building on that, in September 2021, the Commission proposed a robust governance framework to reach the digital targets in the form of a [Path to the Digital Decade](#).

The Commission also conducted an open public consultation on the Digital Principles, which ran from 12 May to 6 September 2021. The [results](#) of this consultation showed broad support for European Digital Principles from respondents. The consultation received 609 responses, of which 65% were from citizens, and 10% from civil society organisations.

For More Information

[Eurobarometer report](#)

[Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade](#)

[Communication on the Path to the Digital Decade](#)

**Updated on 09/12/2021*

IP/21/6462

Press contacts:

[Johannes BAHRKE](#) (+32 2 295 86 15)

[Charles MANOURY](#) (+32 2 291 33 91)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)