

**Flash Eurobarometer 383**

## **Firearms in the European Union**

Conducted by TNS Political & Social  
at the request of the European Commission,  
Directorate-General for Home Affairs

Survey co-ordinated by the European Commission,  
Directorate-General for Communication  
(DG COMM "Research and Speechwriting" Unit)

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## INTRODUCTION

The control of firearms trafficking is a high priority for the European Commission, which has enacted a number of EU-wide measures to complement and reinforce the strategies of individual Member States. The European Commission aims to boost cooperation between the national administrations tasked with enforcing firearms controls, and to improve the monitoring of the movement of firearms into and within the EU.

In March 2013, the European Commission proposed<sup>1</sup> that the EU institutions should now ratify the UN Firearms Protocol (UNFP). The UNFP came into effect in 2005, and was designed to tighten controls on the manufacture and trafficking of small firearms, such as handguns and pistols. Implementing the UNFP involves three main legal measures: criminalising the illicit manufacture and trafficking of firearms; introducing a system of authorising or licensing legitimate manufacturers and vendors of firearms; and establishing marking and recording regimes to ensure effective tracing of firearms. Most, but not all, Member States have themselves ratified the UNFP, and EU ratification will now follow subject to the approval of the European Parliament.

The European Commission also announced plans in April 2013 to establish an expert group<sup>2</sup> on measures against illicit trafficking in firearms, and in June it launched a public consultation with a view to collecting opinions from European citizens about the action needed to reduce the threat posed by these weapons. This Flash Eurobarometer seeks to complement that exercise by providing the European Commission with data on public perceptions of firearms and the ways in which they should be controlled ahead of a communication being prepared by the European Commission for adoption on 21 October this year.

This survey begins by examining the level of firearm ownership among European citizens. It then looks at perceptions of firearms-related crime and whether stricter regulation is the most effective way to address the problem. The role of the EU is also considered, in terms of whether common European laws might improve the control of firearms, whether the EU is the institution best placed to address firearms trafficking, and whether the EU should work with non-Member States to improve firearms control outside the EU.

This survey was carried out by TNS Political & Social network in the 28 Member States of the European Union between 16 September and 18 September 2013. Some 26,555 respondents from different social and demographic groups were interviewed via telephone (landline and mobile phone) in their mother tongue on behalf of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Home Affairs. The methodology used is that of Eurobarometer surveys as carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication ("Research and Speechwriting" Unit)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2013/130508/LDM\\_BRI\(2013\)130508\\_REV1\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/bibliotheque/briefing/2013/130508/LDM_BRI(2013)130508_REV1_EN.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/trafficking-in-firearms/docs/firearms\\_expert\\_group\\_setup\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/trafficking-in-firearms/docs/firearms_expert_group_setup_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)

A technical note on the manner in which interviews were conducted by the Institutes within the TNS Political & Social network is appended as an annex to this report. Also included are the interview methods and confidence intervals<sup>4</sup>.

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

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

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

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

\*\*\* The NMS13 are the 12 'new Member States' which joined the European Union during the 2004 and 2007 enlargements and Croatia, which joined the EU in 2013.

\* \* \* \* \*

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

<sup>4</sup> The results tables are included in the annex. It should be noted that the total of the percentages in the tables of this report may exceed 100% when the respondent has the possibility of giving several answers to the question.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Firearms ownership

- One in ten European citizens own or have previously owned a firearm.
- The highest incidence of firearms ownership in the EU is seen in Cyprus where three out of 10 respondents either own or used to own a firearm.
- More men than women state that they own or have owned a firearm (8% vs. 1%).
- Most people who own firearms have them for hunting, sports or for professional reasons.
- The reasons for owning a firearm differ considerably from country to country: for example, 73% of firearm owners in Finland have one for hunting, while 71% in Romania have one for professional reasons.

### Firearms trafficking and related crime

- Respondents are divided on the level of firearms-related crime in their country: 49% say the level is high, 48% think it is low.
- People in EU15 Member States are more likely than those in NMS13 countries to think there is a high level of firearms-related crime (51% vs. 41%).
- Perceptions vary considerably at country level: in Estonia, 78% of people say there is a low level of firearms-related crime; in Italy, 76% say the level is high.
- Women are more likely than men (57% vs. 41%) to think the level of firearms-related crime is high.
- Most (58%) think the level of firearms-related crime will increase over the next five years while only 6% think it will decline.
- Around two thirds (64%) of European citizens think that the EU, working in cooperation with national authorities, is best placed to address the issue of firearms trafficking to the EU from outside the EU.
- There is a higher level of support among EU15 respondents for the EU working with national authorities on this issue than NMS13 respondents (67% vs. 52%).
- The proportion that supports the EU working with national authorities to address firearms trafficking ranges from 77% in Belgium to 42% in Slovakia.
- A large majority of people (87%) think the EU should cooperate with non-EU countries to help them control firearms.

## Regulating ownership and trading of firearms

- A majority of respondents (53%) support stricter regulation of who is allowed to own, buy or sell firearms in their country, while 39% of people favour other ways to reduce the level of firearms-related crime.
- Respondents who own firearms are relatively unlikely to support stricter regulation.
- Around six in ten Europeans (58%) think that there should be minimum common standards across the EU concerning laws on firearms.
- However, while a majority of people in the EU15 (63%) support minimum common standards, most people in the NMS13 (55%) would prefer individual countries to make their own laws.
- A large majority of those who support minimum common standards at an EU level support standards specifically concerning: the types of firearms that can be sold for private use (73%); marking each firearm to identify its owner (95%); licensing the possession of firearms (88%); and how illegal trafficking in firearms is punished (86%).
- The trade in firearms over the Internet is a more contentious issue: 52% of people support the idea of minimum standards, but 46% disagree. Given the strong support for common standards elsewhere, this seems to imply a generally negative view of online trade in firearms.

## I. FIREARMS OWNERSHIP

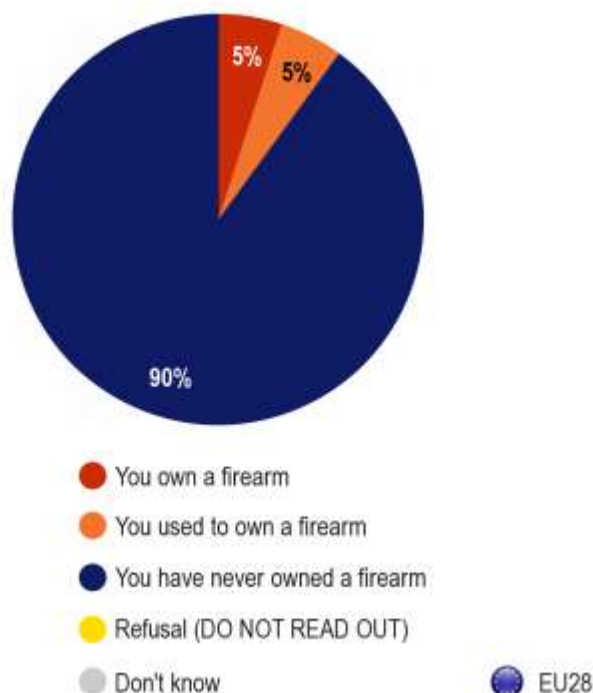
The opening chapter of the report focuses on the extent of firearms ownership within the EU, and also considers the reasons for private ownership of firearms.

### 1.1. Firearms in the EU

#### – Nine out of ten EU respondents have never owned a firearm –

Firearms ownership is relatively uncommon across the EU: just 5% of European citizens own a firearm, while another 5% used to own one. Nine out of ten (90%) have never owned a firearm.

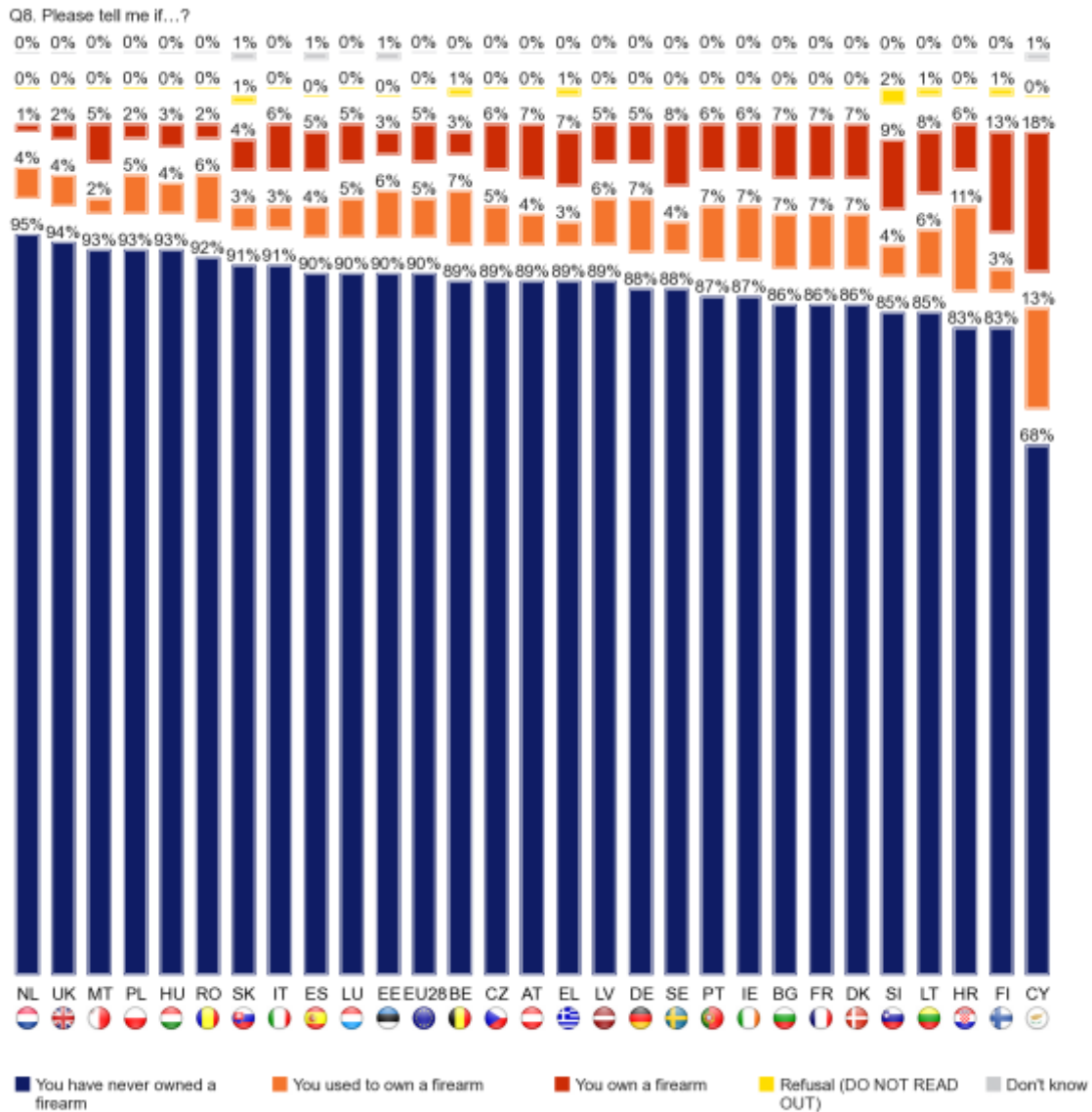
Q8. Please tell me if...?



However, the country results show that firearms ownership is much more common in some Member States than in others. Cyprus has by far the highest ownership rate: 18% of respondents own a firearm, and 13% used to own one. Finland also has a relatively high ownership rate – 13% of respondents own a firearm, and 3% used to – while Croatia reports a high incidence of previous ownership (11% of respondents used to own a firearm, while 6% do so today).

In all other Member States, both current and prior firearms ownership is relatively low.

However, it is noticeable that in some cases current ownership is somewhat higher than former ownership – such as in Slovenia, where 9% of respondents own a firearm now but only 4% used to – while elsewhere we can observe the opposite pattern, such as in Belgium, where 3% of respondents own a firearm now but 7% did so previously.





The **socio-demographic** results show that men are more likely than women to own a firearm now (8% vs. 1%) and to have previously owned a firearm (9% vs. 2%). Older people are more likely to own or to have previously owned a firearm. People who live in rural areas are more likely to own a firearm than those who live in large towns (7% vs. 3%). Self-employed people (8%) are also more likely to possess a firearm than those in other occupations (4%-5%).

## Q8 Please tell me if...?

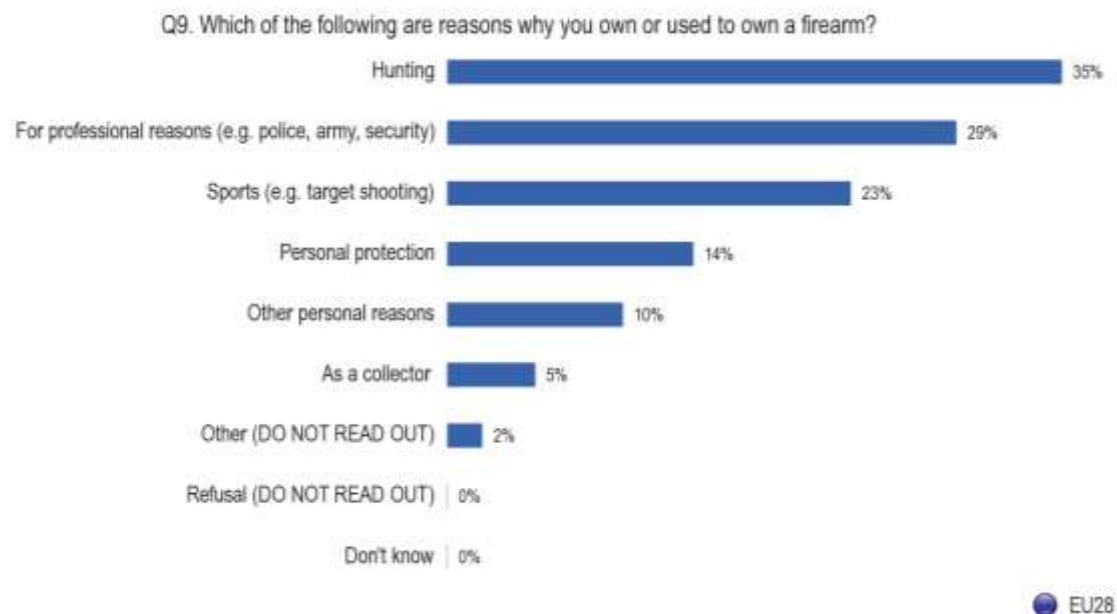
	You own a firearm	You used to own a firearm	You have never owned a firearm	Refusal (DO NOT READ OUT) / Don't know
EU28	5%	5%	90%	0%
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	8%	9%	82%	1%
Female	1%	2%	97%	0%
<b>Age</b>				
15-24	2%	2%	96%	0%
25-39	4%	3%	92%	1%
40-54	5%	4%	90%	1%
55 +	6%	8%	86%	0%
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>				
Rural village	7%	5%	88%	0%
Small/ Mid-size town	5%	5%	90%	0%
Large town	3%	5%	91%	1%
<b>Respondent occupation scale</b>				
Self-employed	8%	5%	86%	1%
Employee	5%	4%	91%	0%
Manual workers	4%	5%	90%	1%
Not working	4%	6%	90%	0%

## 1.2. Reasons for owning firearms

### – Most respondents who own firearms have them for hunting, sports, or for professional reasons –

Those who own or used to own firearms were then asked about their reasons for doing so (multiple answers were allowed). Over a third (35%) say that hunting is a reason, while professional reasons, such as service in the police or army, are mentioned by three in ten (29%). Almost a quarter (23%) says that they own or used to own a firearm for use in sports such as target shooting.

Other, less common, reasons given for possessing a firearm include personal protection (14%), other personal reasons (10%), and an interest in firearms as a collector (5%).




Multiple answers possible

Base: Those EU respondents who own or used to own a firearm (n=2563)

On this question, there are some interesting variations between the EU15 and NMS13 countries. EU15 citizens are more likely than those in NMS13 countries to own firearms for hunting (38% vs. 22%) and for sports (25% vs. 14%), whereas respondents in NMS13 countries are more likely to have them for professional reasons (48% vs. 24%) and for personal protection (23% vs. 11%).

## Q9 Which of the following are reasons why you own or used to own a firearm?

	Hunting	For professional reasons (e.g. police, army, security)	Sports (e.g. target shooting)	Personal protection	Other personal reasons	As a collector
 EU28	35%	29%	23%	14%	10%	5%
EU15	38%	24%	25%	11%	11%	5%
NMS13	22%	48%	14%	23%	5%	3%

Multiple answers possible






























Base: Those EU respondents who own or used to own a firearm (n=2563)

These results underline the considerable differences seen by Member State in reasons for owning firearms. In eight Member States, the majority of respondents who own a firearm do so for hunting: this is seen especially in Finland (73%), Greece (68%) and Spain (66%). In three other Member States, the majority have a firearm for professional reasons, namely Romania (71%), Cyprus (56%) and Bulgaria (53%).

In most Member States, these are the two main reasons for owning a firearm – but there are some exceptions. In Luxembourg (44%), the UK (44%) and Germany (33%), the most commonly cited reason for owning a firearm is for sports, while personal protection is the primary reason in the Czech Republic (43%), Lithuania (43%) and Belgium (34%).

A relatively small proportion mention other reasons for owning a firearm, although a fifth of respondents in Luxembourg and Malta (both 21%) say they own firearms as a collector, while a similar proportion in Germany (18%) state other personal reasons.

## Q9 Which of the following are reasons why you own or used to own a firearm?

	Hunting	For professional reasons (e.g. police, army, security)	Sports (e.g. target shooting)	Personal protection	Other personal reasons	As a collector	Other (DO NOT READ OUT)	Refusal (DO NOT READ OUT) / Don't know
 EU28	35%	29%	23%	14%	10%	5%	2%	0%
 BE	24%	21%	22%	34%	13%	16%	7%	1%
 BG	25%	53%	4%	24%	5%	3%	2%	0%
 CZ	27%	37%	30%	43%	8%	10%	0%	2%
 DK	54%	8%	21%	3%	10%	5%	6%	2%
 DE	15%	22%	33%	8%	18%	4%	6%	0%
 EE	25%	43%	15%	21%	1%	1%	3%	0%
 IE	59%	17%	26%	10%	5%	4%	5%	0%
 EL	68%	22%	8%	19%	8%	4%	1%	0%
 ES	66%	18%	22%	6%	7%	0%	2%	1%
 FR	51%	19%	13%	11%	13%	5%	1%	0%
 IT	28%	38%	23%	8%	7%	9%	2%	0%
 CY	49%	56%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%	0%
 LV	32%	40%	8%	23%	4%	5%	3%	0%
 LT	16%	28%	12%	43%	6%	1%	0%	0%
 LU	19%	35%	44%	10%	9%	21%	7%	1%
 HU	33%	34%	11%	28%	6%	0%	1%	0%
 MT	56%	12%	36%	2%	5%	21%	4%	0%
 AT	37%	29%	26%	26%	6%	8%	2%	0%
 NL	11%	44%	42%	5%	10%	3%	1%	0%
 PL	18%	49%	20%	20%	2%	0%	1%	0%
 PT	37%	41%	9%	21%	12%	3%	3%	0%
 RO	8%	71%	5%	11%	6%	2%	1%	0%
 SI	37%	24%	27%	7%	9%	3%	5%	2%
 SK	22%	39%	24%	34%	2%	17%	0%	4%
 FI	73%	9%	34%	3%	8%	3%	2%	0%
 SE	63%	12%	23%	0%	10%	6%	3%	0%
 UK	27%	28%	44%	23%	8%	8%	0%	0%
 HR	23%	46%	5%	16%	10%	5%	3%	1%

**Highest percentage per country** *Lowest percentage per country*  
**Highest percentage per item** *Lowest percentage per item*

Multiple answers possible

Base: Those EU respondents who own or used to own a firearm (n=2563)

Looking at **socio-demographic** differences, men are more likely than women to own firearms for professional reasons (31% vs. 15%), whereas women are more likely to own them for personal protection (21% vs. 12%) and for other personal reasons (15% vs. 9%).

Older respondents are the most likely to possess firearms for hunting, whereas younger respondents are the most likely to possess them for sports, and also for personal protection. Respondents aged 25 to 54 are the most likely to own firearms for professional reasons.

Hunting and sports are more likely to be reasons for firearm ownership by those living in rural areas, whereas those who live in large towns are more likely to possess firearms for professional reasons or for personal protection.

**Q9 Which of the following are reasons why you own or used to own a firearm? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)**

	Hunting	For professional reasons (e.g. police, army, security)	Sports (e.g. target shooting)	Personal protection	Other personal reasons	As a collector
EU28	35%	29%	23%	14%	10%	5%
<b>Sex</b>						
Male	35%	31%	23%	12%	9%	5%
Female	36%	15%	23%	21%	15%	5%
<b>Age</b>						
15-24	26%	16%	26%	23%	15%	2%
25-39	32%	34%	25%	16%	7%	3%
40-54	34%	33%	24%	10%	10%	6%
55 +	37%	26%	21%	13%	11%	5%
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>						
Rural village	45%	24%	24%	8%	11%	5%
Small/ Mid-size town	32%	27%	25%	15%	11%	5%
Large town	26%	38%	18%	18%	7%	5%

Multiple answers possible

Base: Those EU respondents who own or used to own a firearm (n=2563)

## II. FIREARMS TRAFFICKING AND RELATED CRIME

This chapter explores the perceived prevalence of firearms-related crime, and whether people expect that the level of firearm crime will increase or decrease. It then looks at citizens' views on the role the EU should play in tackling firearms trafficking by asking whether the EU is the institution best suited to address European firearms trafficking and whether there is a need for greater cooperation with non-EU neighbours.

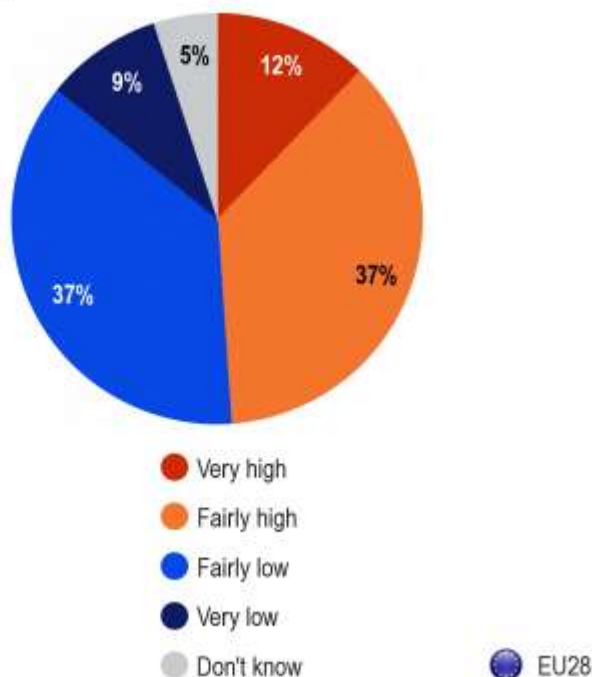
### 2.1. Perceptions of the current level of firearms-related crime

#### – European citizens are clearly divided on the perceived level of firearms-related crime –

Respondents are evenly divided on the question of the level of firearms-related crime in their country. Just under half (49%) think that there is a high level of firearms-related crime; of these, 12% perceive it to be very high and 37% consider it to be fairly high. However, virtually the same proportion (48%) think that the level of firearms-related crime in their country is low, with 9% estimating that it is very low and 37% saying that it is fairly low.

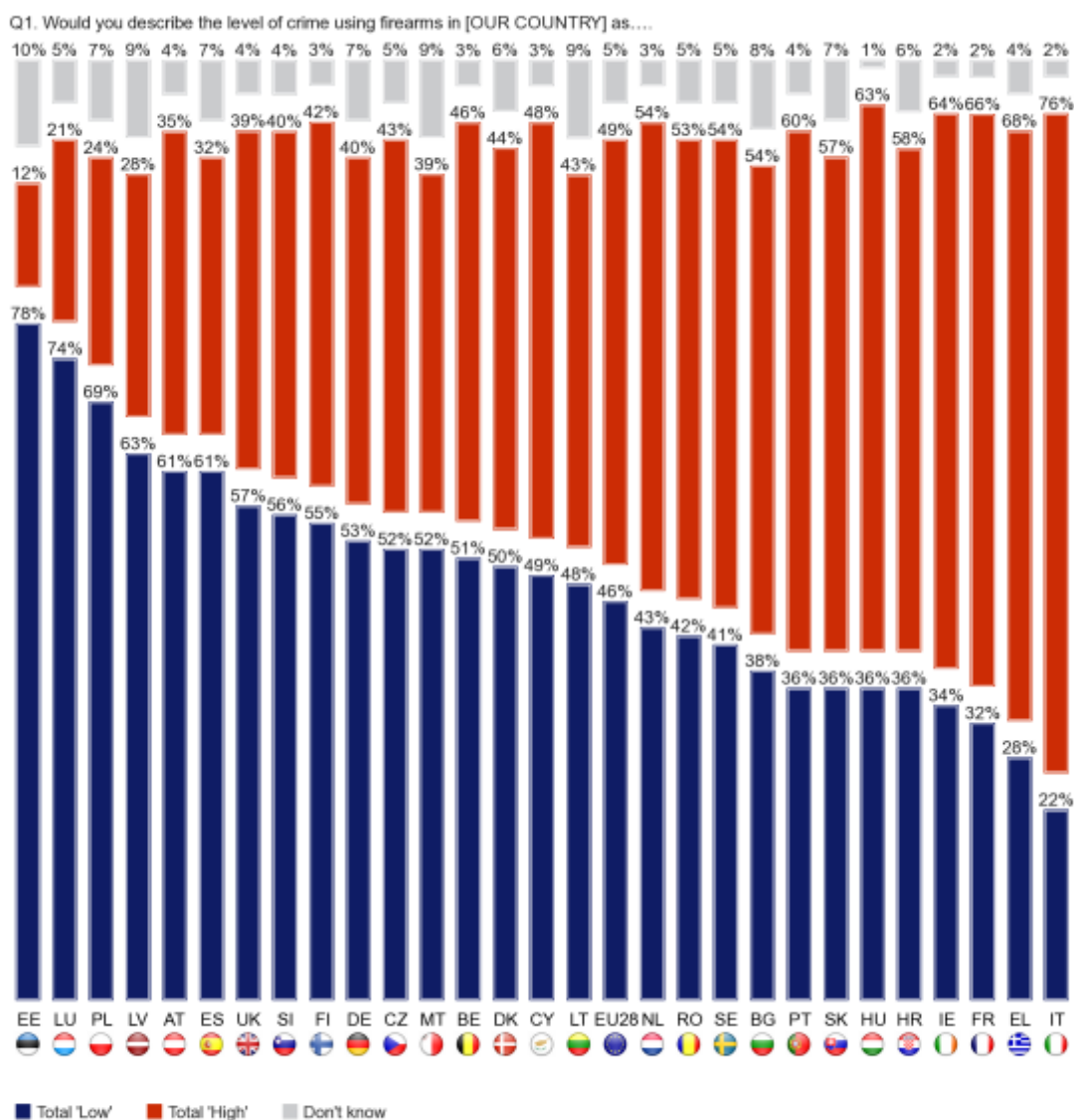
It is important to note here that this question relates to perceptions of firearms-related crime. While they are a useful measure of public concern, opinions are also likely to reflect differences in media coverage of such crimes.

Q1. Would you describe the level of crime using firearms in [OUR COUNTRY] as....



In this context, it is interesting to find that respondents in the EU15 countries are more likely than those in the NMS13 countries to think that there is a high level of firearms-related crime in their country (51% vs. 41).

Indeed, the perception of the level of firearms-related crime varies substantially across different parts of the EU. In 14 Member States, at least half of respondents say that the level of crime involving firearms is low in their country. This view is most widely held in Estonia (78%), Luxembourg (74%) and Poland (69%). However, in 12 Member States over 50% of respondents think that there is a high level of firearms-related crime. This perception is most widely observed in Italy (76%), followed by Greece (68%) and France (66%).



**Socio-demographic** differences can also be seen in perceptions of the level of firearms-related crime. Women are much more likely than men (57% vs. 41%) to feel that there is a high level of firearms-related crime in their country, as are older people: 58% of people aged 55 and over think there is a high level of crime involving firearms, compared with only 40% of 15-24 year-olds.

Education is also an important factor, with respondents who left school at a young age much more likely to believe there is a high level of firearms-related crime than those who finished their education aged 20 or over. A similar pattern occurs when looking at the respondents' occupation: while 55% of people who are not working perceive a high level of crime involving firearms, only 40% of self-employed respondents do so.

However, it is noticeable that firearm ownership makes relatively little difference here, with people who own firearms just as likely to consider the level of crime involving firearms to be high as those who do not own them.

**Q1 Would you describe the level of crime using firearms in [OUR COUNTRY] as....**

	Total 'High'	Total 'Low'	Don't know
EU28	49%	46%	5%
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	41%	55%	4%
Female	57%	38%	5%
<b>Age</b>			
15-24	40%	57%	3%
25-39	43%	53%	4%
40-54	47%	48%	5%
55 +	58%	36%	6%
<b>Education (End of)</b>			
15-	66%	28%	6%
16-19	54%	41%	5%
20+	43%	53%	4%
Still studying	36%	60%	4%
<b>Respondent occupation scale</b>			
Self-employed	40%	54%	6%
Employee	44%	53%	3%
Manual workers	45%	49%	6%
Not working	55%	40%	5%
<b>Own/used to own a firearm</b>			
Total 'Yes'	46%	50%	4%
No	49%	46%	5%

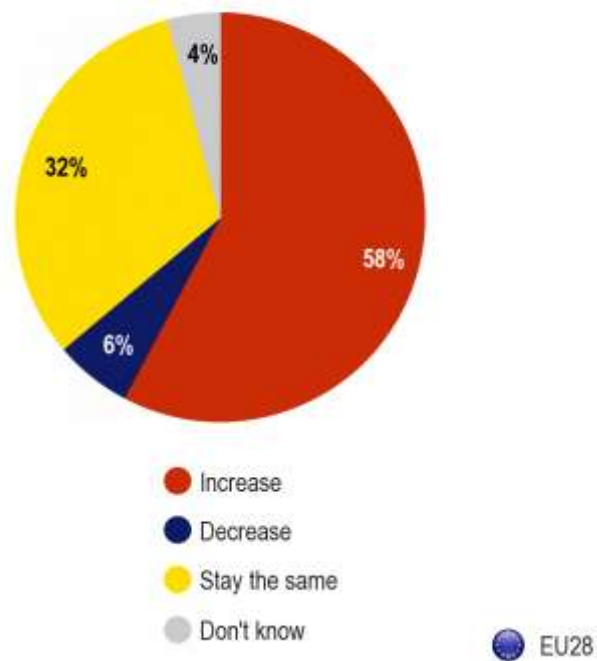


## 2.2. Whether firearms-related crime will increase or decrease

### – A majority of EU citizens expect the level of firearms-related crime to increase over the next five years –

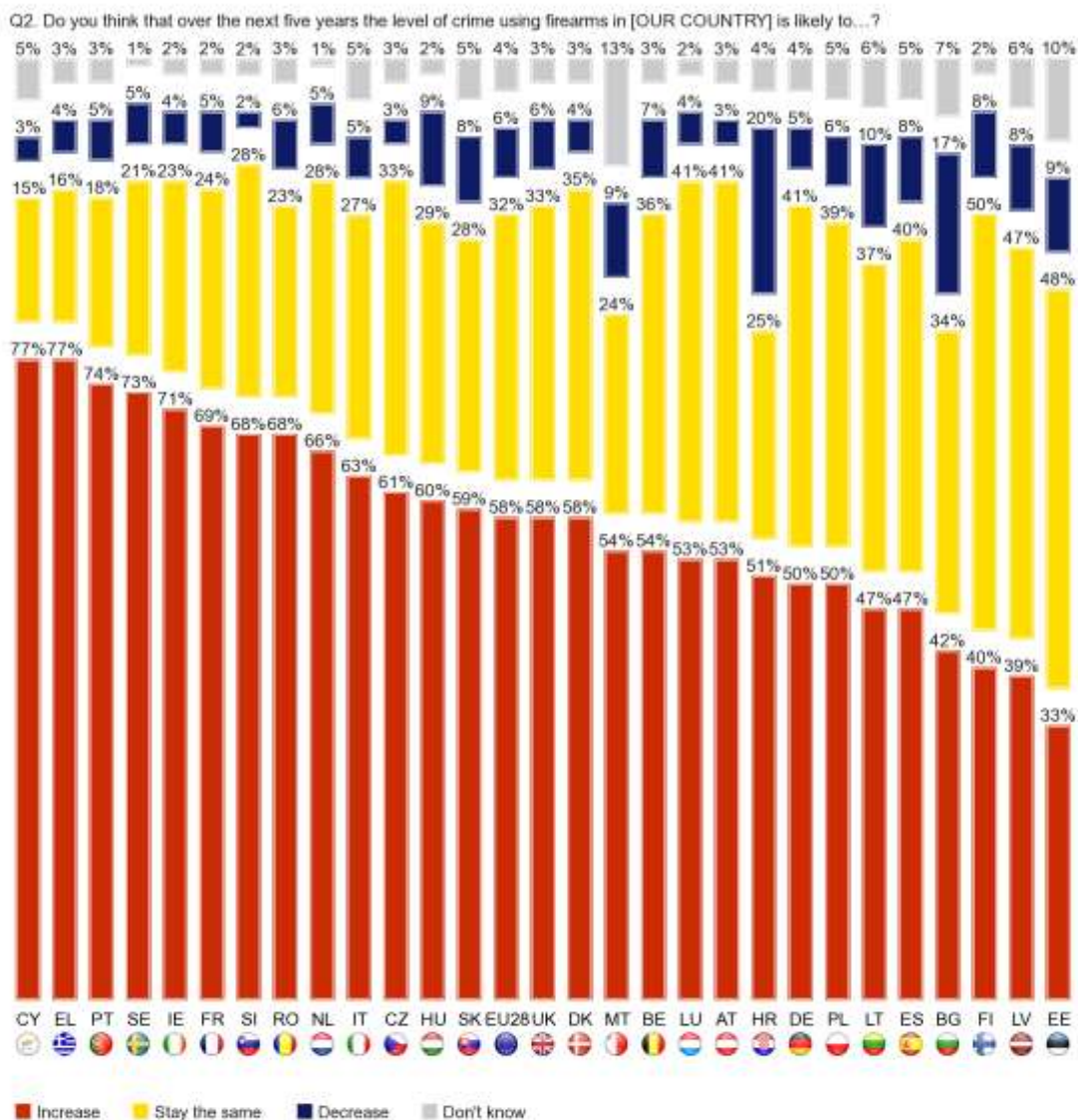
Most people in the EU believe the level of crime involving firearms is likely to increase over the next five years. Around six in ten (58%) believe that the level of firearms-related crime is going to increase. One third of respondents (32%) think it will stay the same, while only 6% believe that it will decrease.

Q2. Do you think that over the next five years the level of crime using firearms in [OUR COUNTRY] is likely to...?



In 22 out of 28 Member States, at least half the respondents believe that the level of firearms-related crime is going to increase, and over 70% of people take this view in five countries: Cyprus, Greece (both 77%), Portugal (74%), Sweden (73%) and Ireland (71%).

But in six Member States, less than half of the respondents think that the level of crime involving firearms will increase, and in three of these around half say that it will stay the same: Finland (50%), Estonia (48%) and Latvia (47%). Few people in most countries expect the level of firearms-related crime to decrease, although a relatively high proportion of respondents in Croatia (20%) and Bulgaria (17%) think that this will happen.



The **socio-demographic** data reveals that women are more likely than men to think that the level of crime involving firearms is going to increase (62% vs. 54%). Men are more likely to think that it will stay the same (36% vs. 29%).

People with a higher level of education are less likely to think firearms-related crime will increase than those who left school at a relatively young age, while by occupation type, manual workers (62%) are the most likely to think that the level of firearms-related crime will increase over the next five years, compared with, for example, 54% of self-employed people.

Firearms ownership does not appear to affect perceptions on whether the level of firearms-related crime will increase or decrease – there is no noticeable variation between current or previous firearm owners and those who have never owned one.

**Q2 Do you think that over the next five years the level of crime using firearms in [OUR COUNTRY] is likely to...?**

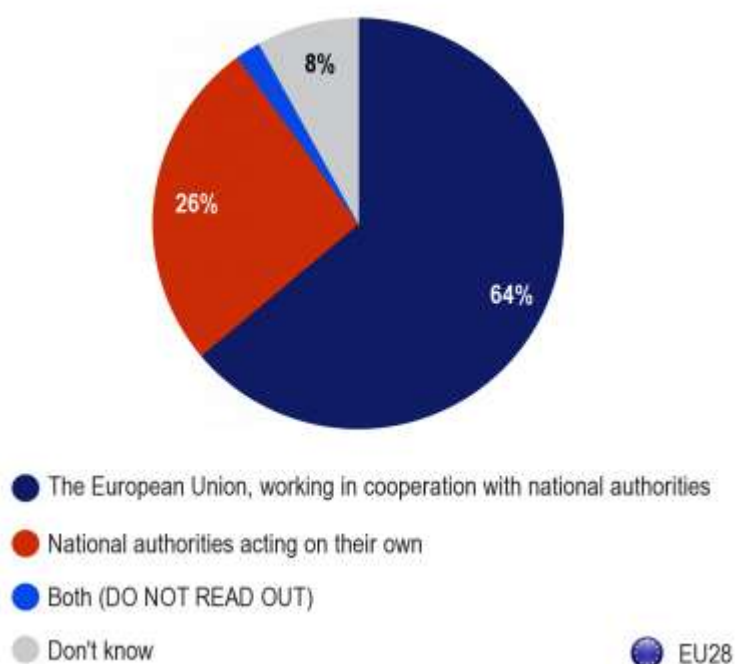
	Increase	Decrease	Stay the same	Don't know
EU28	58%	6%	32%	4%
<b>Sex</b>				
Male	54%	7%	36%	3%
Female	62%	5%	29%	4%
<b>Education (End of)</b>				
15-	66%	7%	21%	6%
16-19	62%	6%	28%	4%
20+	55%	5%	37%	3%
Still studying	49%	8%	41%	2%
<b>Respondent occupation scale</b>				
Self-employed	54%	6%	35%	5%
Employee	59%	5%	34%	2%
Manual workers	62%	5%	30%	3%
Not working	57%	7%	31%	5%
<b>Own/used to own a firearm</b>				
Total 'Yes'	56%	7%	33%	4%
No	58%	6%	32%	4%

### 2.3. Addressing the issue of firearms trafficking at EU level

**– The majority of Europeans believe that the EU, working with national authorities, is best placed to address firearms trafficking into the EU from outside –**

Almost two thirds (64%) think that the EU, working in cooperation with national authorities, is in the best position to address this issue, while a quarter (26%) of people say that national authorities should act on their own in tackling firearms trafficking.

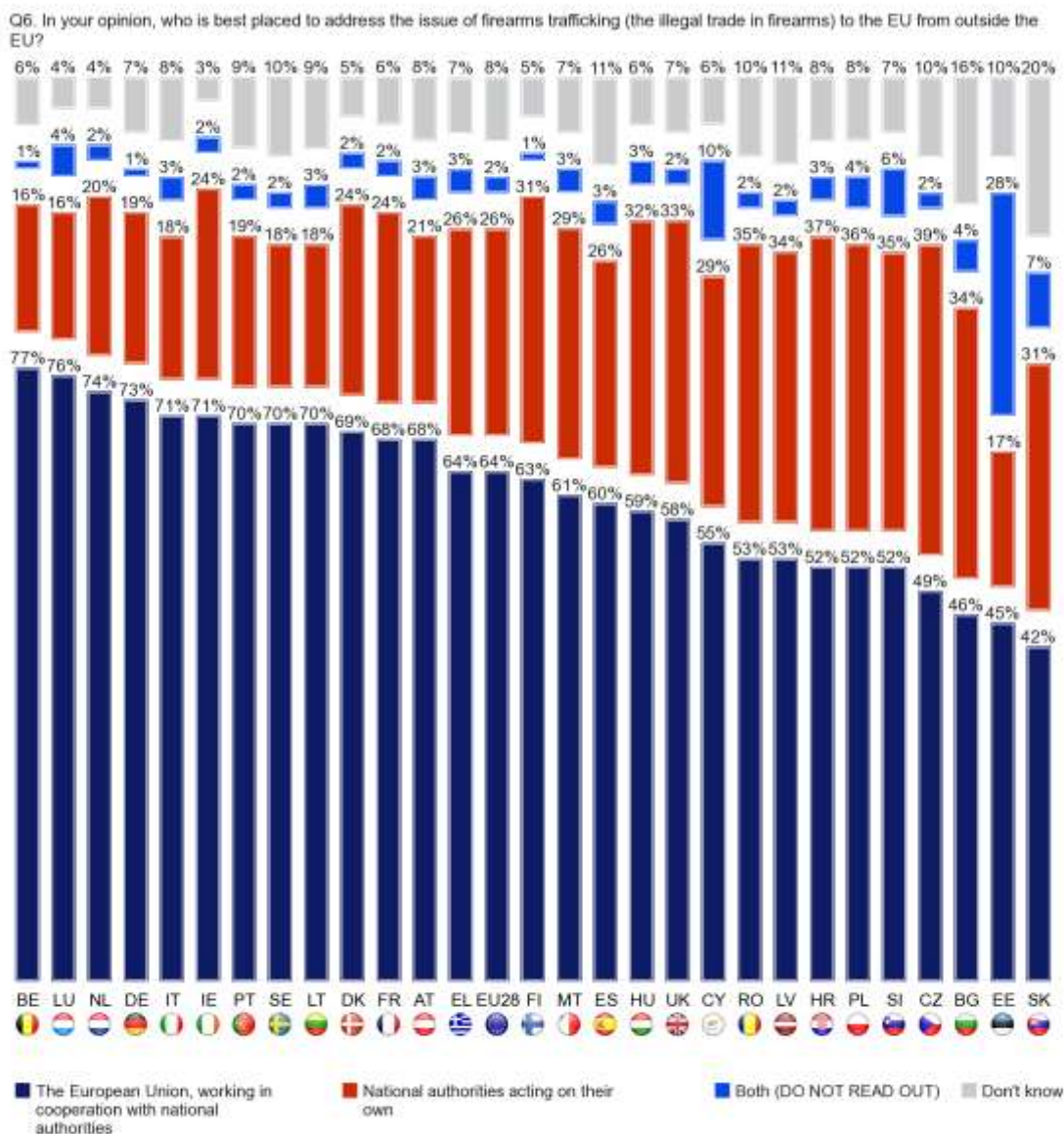
Q6. In your opinion, who is best placed to address the issue of firearms trafficking (the illegal trade in firearms) to the EU from outside the EU?



However, EU15 respondents are more in favour of the EU working with national authorities than those living in NMS13 countries (67% vs. 52%). In contrast, 34% of those living in NMS13 countries (compared with 23% of EU15 citizens) believe that national authorities acting on their own are best placed to address this problem.



In all Member States, the most commonly expressed view is that the EU, working with national authorities, is best placed to tackle firearms trafficking. This ranges from 77% in Belgium to 42% in Slovakia. However, a significant minority believe that this should be regulated at a national level.

In 11 Member States, at least three in ten say that national authorities should act on their own in addressing this issue, with almost four in ten in the Czech Republic (39%) expressing this view. With the exception of Estonia (28%), a relatively small proportion says (spontaneously) in all Member States that both options should be pursued.



There is little **socio-demographic** variation on this question. However, respondents who finished education aged 20 or over (70%) are more likely to believe that the EU should work in cooperation with national authorities than those who left school at 15 or below (54%). Employees (70%) are also the most likely to favour this approach, compared with 59% of manual workers.

**Q6 In your opinion, who is best placed to address the issue of firearms trafficking (the illegal trade in firearms) to the EU from outside the EU?**

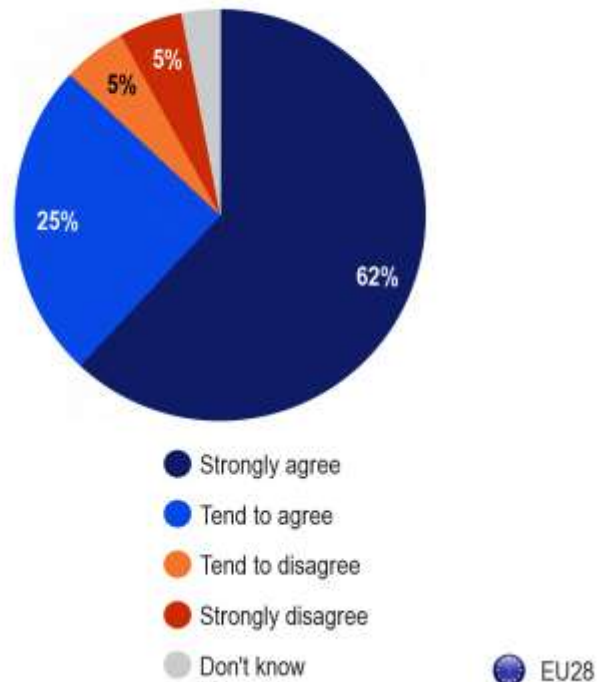
	The European Union, working in cooperation with national authorities	National authorities acting on their own	Both (DO NOT READ OUT)	Don't know
EU28	64%	26%	2%	8%
 <b>Education (End of)</b>				
15-	54%	27%	3%	16%
16-19	62%	28%	2%	8%
20+	70%	23%	2%	5%
Still studying	66%	28%	1%	5%
 <b>Respondent occupation scale</b>				
Self-employed	64%	27%	2%	7%
Employee	70%	23%	2%	5%
Manual workers	59%	31%	2%	8%
Not working	61%	26%	3%	10%

## 2.4. EU cooperation with neighbouring countries

### – A large majority agree that the EU should work with neighbouring countries to help them control firearms –

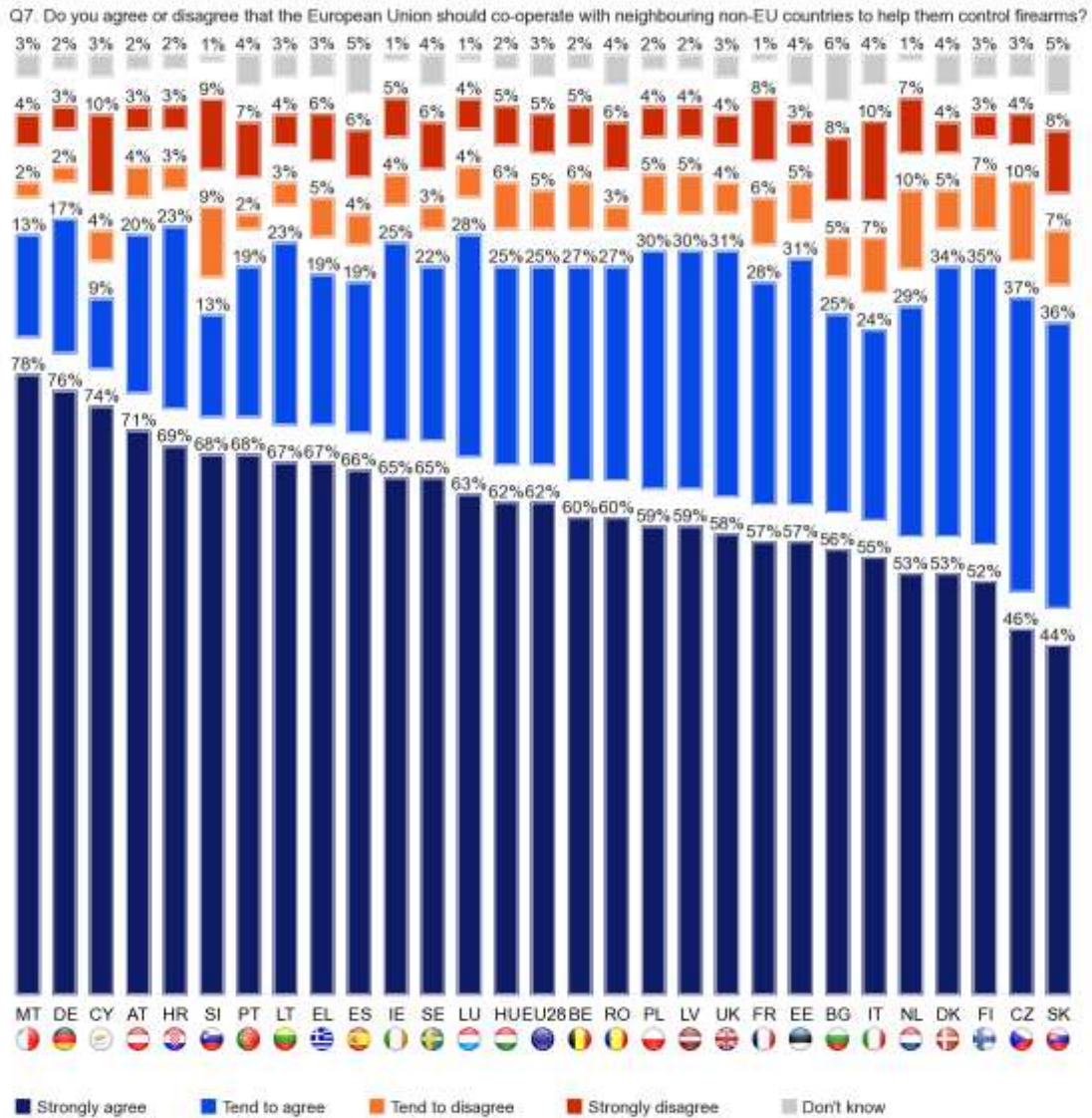
A very high proportion agree that the EU should cooperate with non-EU countries to help them control firearms: 87% agree in total, with 62% strongly agreeing and 25% tending to agree. Only one in ten (10%) disagree; of these, 5% strongly disagree and 5% tend to disagree.

Q7. Do you agree or disagree that the European Union should co-operate with neighbouring non-EU countries to help them control firearms?



Overall agreement with the idea of cooperating with non-EU neighbours on this issue is consistently high across individual Member States, ranging from 93% in Germany to 79% in Italy.

At least half of the respondents in all except two Member States strongly agree with the idea of cooperating with neighbouring non-EU countries; in Malta (78%) and Germany (76%) over three quarters of people strongly agree. The two exceptions are Slovakia and the Czech Republic, where respectively 44% and 46% of respondents strongly agree. Disagreement is relatively low in all countries, though a significant minority disagree in Slovenia (18%), Italy (17%) and the Netherlands (17%).





The **socio-demographic** data show that, while the overall level of agreement is generally consistent across the different age groups, older citizens are much more likely to agree strongly that the EU should cooperate with its non-EU neighbours: 66% of people aged 40 and over strongly agree, compared with just 46% of 15-24 year-olds.

Overall agreement is higher among respondents who finished their education aged 20 or over (90%) than among those who left school aged 15 or under (79%). Employees (91%) are also more likely to agree that the EU should cooperate with its non-EU neighbours than respondents who are not working (84%).

**Q7 Do you agree or disagree that the European Union should co-operate with neighbouring non-EU countries to help them control firearms?**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'
EU28	62%	25%	5%	5%	3%	87%	10%

#### Age

15-24	46%	37%	9%	6%	2%	83%	15%
25-39	60%	29%	5%	5%	1%	89%	10%
40-54	66%	23%	4%	5%	2%	89%	9%
55 +	66%	19%	3%	7%	5%	85%	10%

#### Education (End of)

15-	60%	19%	5%	10%	6%	79%	15%
16-19	61%	25%	5%	6%	3%	86%	11%
20+	67%	23%	4%	4%	2%	90%	8%
Still studying	46%	37%	9%	6%	2%	83%	15%

#### Respondent occupation scale

Self-employed	66%	22%	4%	5%	3%	88%	9%
Employee	65%	26%	4%	4%	1%	91%	8%
Manual workers	64%	23%	6%	5%	2%	87%	11%
Not working	59%	25%	5%	7%	4%	84%	12%

### III. REGULATING OWNERSHIP AND TRADING OF FIREARMS

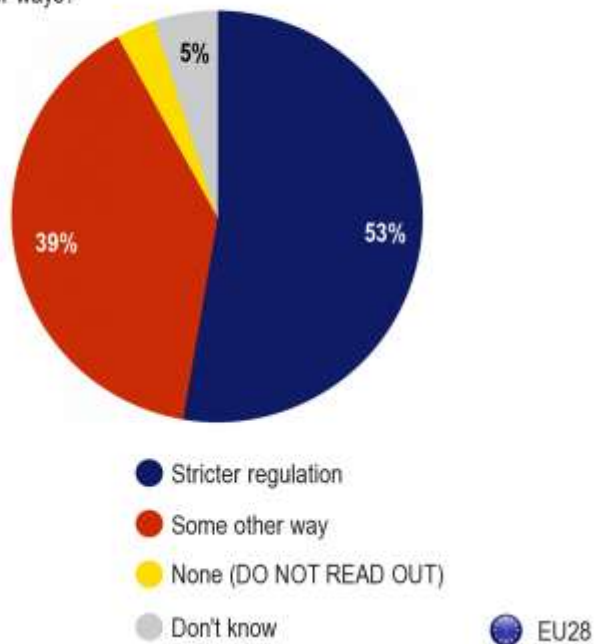
Finally this report explores perceptions of firearm trafficking and possible approaches to regulating the ownership and trading of firearms.

#### 3.1. Reducing the level of crime involving firearms

##### – A majority support stricter regulation of who can own, buy or sell a firearm –

A majority of respondents (53%) think that stricter regulation of who is allowed to own, buy or sell firearms in their country is the most effective way to reduce the level of firearms-related crime. However, four out of ten respondents (39%) think that this would be best achieved in some other way.

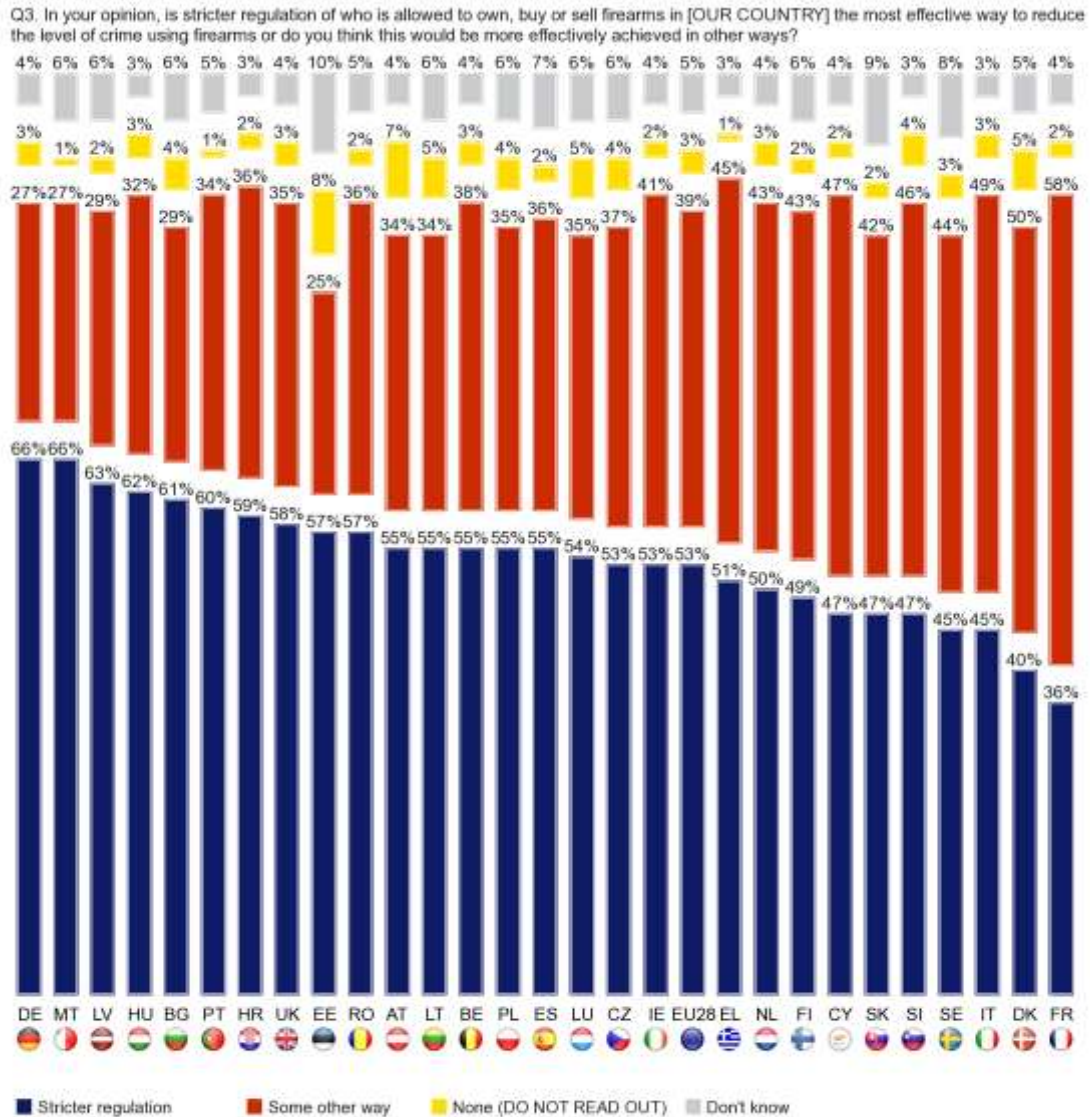
Q3. In your opinion, is stricter regulation of who is allowed to own, buy or sell firearms in [OUR COUNTRY] the most effective way to reduce the level of crime using firearms or do you think this would be more effectively achieved in other ways?



In 20 Member States, at least half are in favour of stricter regulation when it comes to owning, buying or selling firearms. Support for stricter regulation is highest in Germany and Malta (both 66%).

However, in three Member States a relative majority of people think that some other means should be used to tackle firearms-related crime, namely France (58% in favour of other means vs. 36% in favour of stricter regulation), Denmark (50% vs. 40%) and Italy (49% vs. 45%).

Opinion in Cyprus is evenly divided, with 47% supporting stricter regulation and the same proportion favouring other ways to address the issue. At least a quarter of respondents in all Member States think that some other way would be more effective in reducing the level of firearms-related crime.






Looking at **socio-demographic** differences, women are more likely to support stricter regulation than men (58% vs. 48%), whereas men are more inclined to think that some other way should be found to address the problem (45% vs. 34%).

Respondents with a higher level of education are less likely to favour stricter regulation: 59% of people who left school aged 15 or under favour this approach, but only 50% of those who finished their education aged 20 or over do so.

Gun ownership shows a notable difference. People who own or used to own a gun are less likely to be in favour of stricter regulation on owning, buying or selling firearms: only 42% of people in this group support stricter regulation, compared with 54% of those who have never owned a gun. Half of those (50%) who own or used to own a firearm would like to tackle firearms-related crime in some other way, compared with just 38% of those who have never owned one.

**Q3 In your opinion, is stricter regulation of who is allowed to own, buy or sell firearms in [OUR COUNTRY] the most effective way to reduce the level of crime using firearms or do you think this would be more effectively achieved in other ways?**

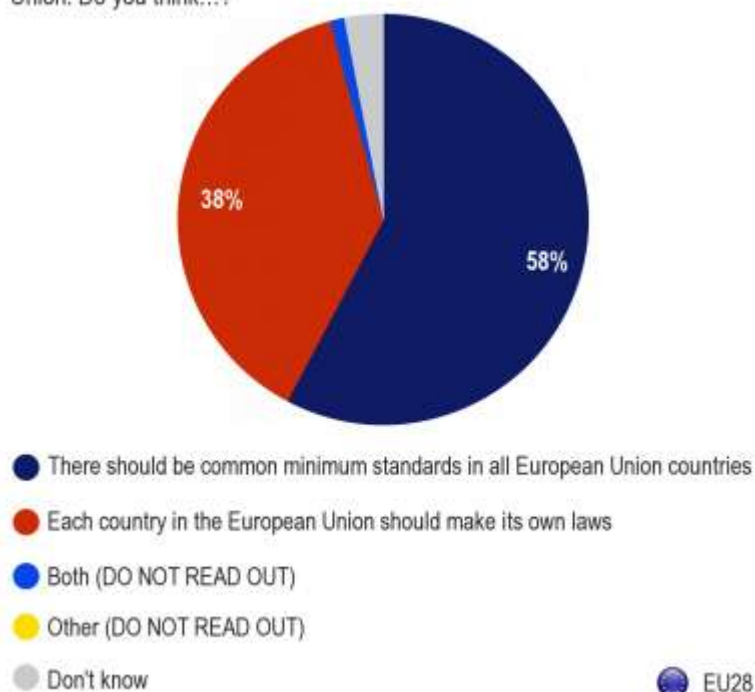
	Stricter regulation	Some other way	None (DO NOT READ OUT)	Don't know
EU28	53%	39%	3%	5%
 <b>Sex</b>				
Male	48%	45%	3%	4%
Female	58%	34%	2%	6%
 <b>Education (End of)</b>				
15-	59%	30%	3%	8%
16-19	55%	38%	3%	4%
20+	50%	43%	3%	4%
Still studying	56%	39%	2%	3%
 <b>Own/used to own a firearm</b>				
Total 'Yes'	42%	50%	4%	4%
No	54%	38%	3%	5%

### 3.2. Responsibility for firearms regulation

- **While EU15 citizens generally support minimum common standards in the EU on firearms regulation, NMS13 citizens would prefer countries to make their own laws –**

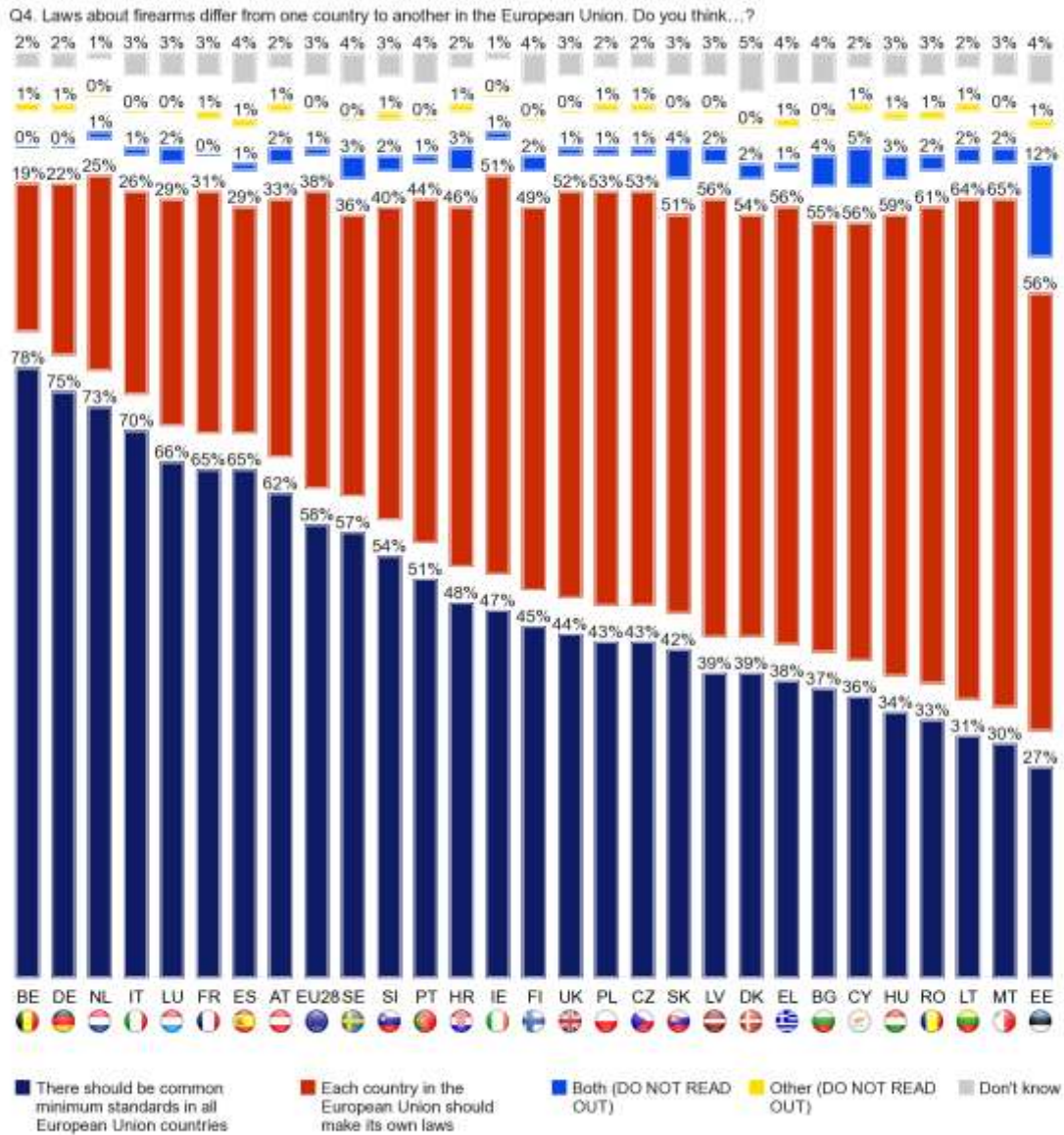
Bearing in mind that laws about firearms differ from one country to another in the EU, respondents were asked whether there should be minimum common standards across the EU, or whether each country in the EU should make its own laws. A majority of European citizens (58%) think that there should be minimum common standards, compared with 38% who say that each Member State should make its own laws.

Q4. Laws about firearms differ from one country to another in the European Union. Do you think...?





There is a noticeable difference between the EU15 and the NMS13 on this issue: people in EU15 Member States are much more likely to think that there should be minimum common standards across the EU (63% vs. 39%), whereas people in the NMS13 are more likely to recommend that each country should make its own laws (55% vs. 33%).

In 11 Member States, over 50% of respondents think that there should be minimum common standards; of these, only one, Slovenia, is an NMS13 country. Respondents in Belgium (78%) and Germany (75%) are most likely to be in favour of an EU-wide approach. In 15 Member States, over 50% of respondents would prefer each country in the EU to make its own laws, notably in Malta (65%) and Lithuania (64%).



There is little variation by **socio-demographic** profile on this question. Education has some impact, however: 62% of people who finished their education aged 20 or over favour minimum common standards, compared with 51% of people who left school aged 15 or under. Similarly, employees (62%) are the most likely to support minimum common standards, while people who are not working are the least likely to do so (55%).

**Q4 Laws about firearms differ from one country to another in the European Union. Do you think...?**

	There should be common minimum standards in all European Union countries	Each country in the European Union should make its own laws	Both (DO NOT READ OUT)	Other (DO NOT READ OUT)	Don't know
EU28	58%	38%	1%	0%	3%
 <b>Education (End of)</b>					
15-	51%	42%	1%	0%	6%
16-19	57%	39%	1%	1%	2%
20+	62%	34%	1%	1%	2%
Still studying	57%	40%	0%	1%	2%
 <b>Respondent occupation scale</b>					
Self-employed	58%	38%	1%	1%	2%
Employee	62%	35%	1%	0%	2%
Manual workers	57%	39%	1%	1%	2%
Not working	55%	40%	1%	1%	3%

### 3.3. EU role in setting minimum common standards

#### – Respondents are strongly in favour of common standards in most potential areas of regulation, with the exception of the sale of firearms on the Internet –

People who said they were in favour of minimum common standards for firearms in all EU countries were then asked whether the EU should set standards in five specific areas.

An overwhelming majority (95%) agree that the EU should set minimum common standards for **marking each firearm to identify its owner**; of these, 84% strongly agree and 11% tend to agree. Only 4% of respondents disagree (2% strongly, 2% tending to disagree).

There is strong support for the EU to set minimum common standards for **licensing the possession of firearms**. Nearly nine out of ten (88%) agree with this approach, with 69% strongly agreeing and 19% tending to agree. One in ten (10%) disagree (6% strongly, 4% tending to disagree).

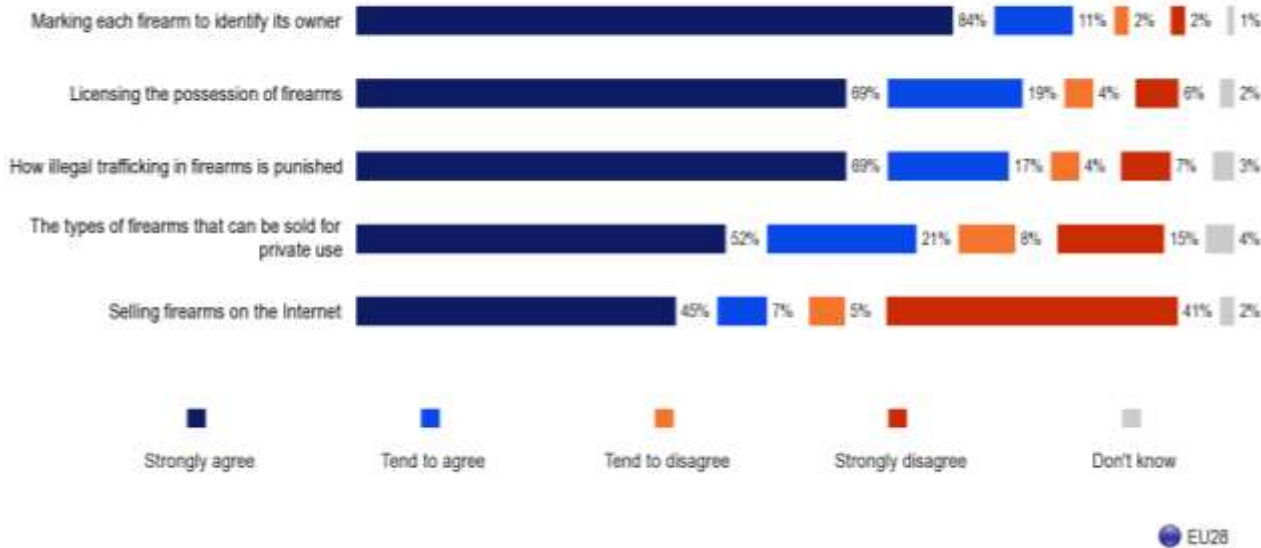
Over eight in ten (86%) agree that the EU should set minimum common standards for **how illegal trafficking in firearms is punished**. Seven in ten (69%) strongly agree, and 17% tend to agree. Around one in ten (11%) do not think that there should be common EU standards for this, with 7% strongly disagreeing and 4% tending to disagree.

Almost three quarters (73%) agree that the EU should apply minimum standards to **the types of firearms that can be sold for private use**: a majority of respondents (52%) strongly agree with this, while 21% tend to agree. Around a quarter of people (23%) disagree that minimum standards should be applied here, with 15% strongly disagreeing and 8% tending to disagree.

However, there is much less of a consensus on the question of whether there should be minimum common standards for **selling firearms on the Internet**. A majority of respondents (52%) agree that there should be common standards for this, with 45% strongly agreeing and 7% tending to agree. However, 46% of people disagree with this approach, and of these 41% strongly disagree, with just 5% tending to disagree. The apparent contradiction implies a strong resistance to the online sale of firearms in itself.



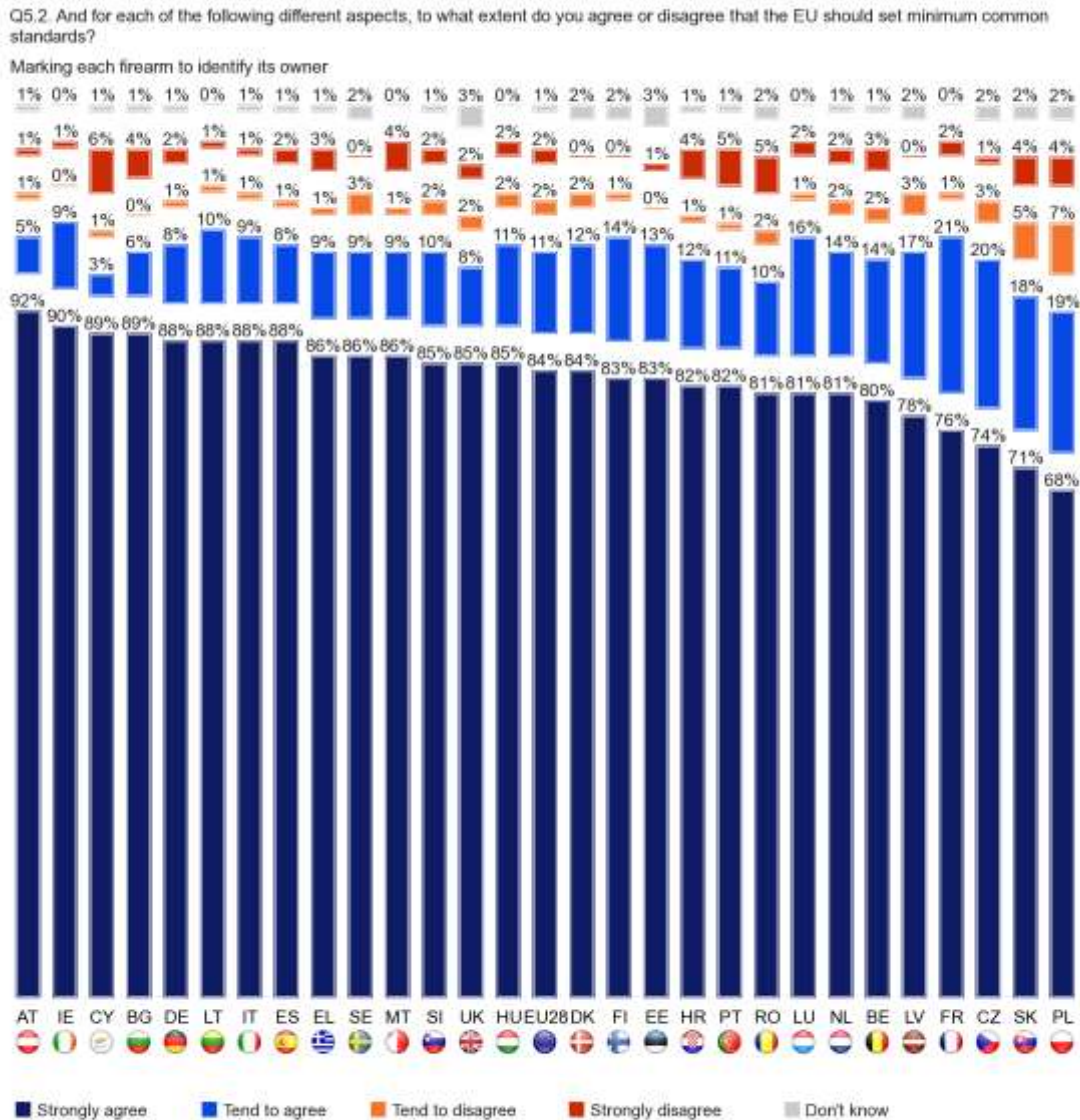
Q5. And for each of the following different aspects, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the EU should set minimum common standards?



Base: Those EU respondents who think that the EU should set minimum common standards (n=15617)

The level of agreement for marking each firearm to identify its owner is somewhat stronger in the EU15 Member States (96%) than NMS13 (91%).

The overall level of agreement that the EU should set minimum common standards ranges from 99% in Ireland to 87% in Poland, while the number of respondents who strongly agree ranges from 92% in Austria to 68% in Poland.



Base: Those EU respondents who think that the EU should set minimum common standards (n=15617)

The level of agreement is high across all **socio-demographic** groups, although there are some minor variations. For example, young people are less inclined to agree strongly that the EU should set minimum common standards than older people, while respondents with a higher level of education are more likely to agree. Employees (87%) are the most likely to strongly agree with this approach, while manual workers (79%) are the least likely.

**Q5.2 And for each of the following different aspects, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the EU should set minimum common standards?**

**Marking each firearm to identify its owner**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
EU28	84%	11%	2%	2%	1%

<b>Age</b>					
15-24	77%	17%	3%	2%	1%
25-39	86%	11%	2%	1%	0%
40-54	86%	10%	1%	2%	1%
55 +	84%	10%	1%	3%	2%

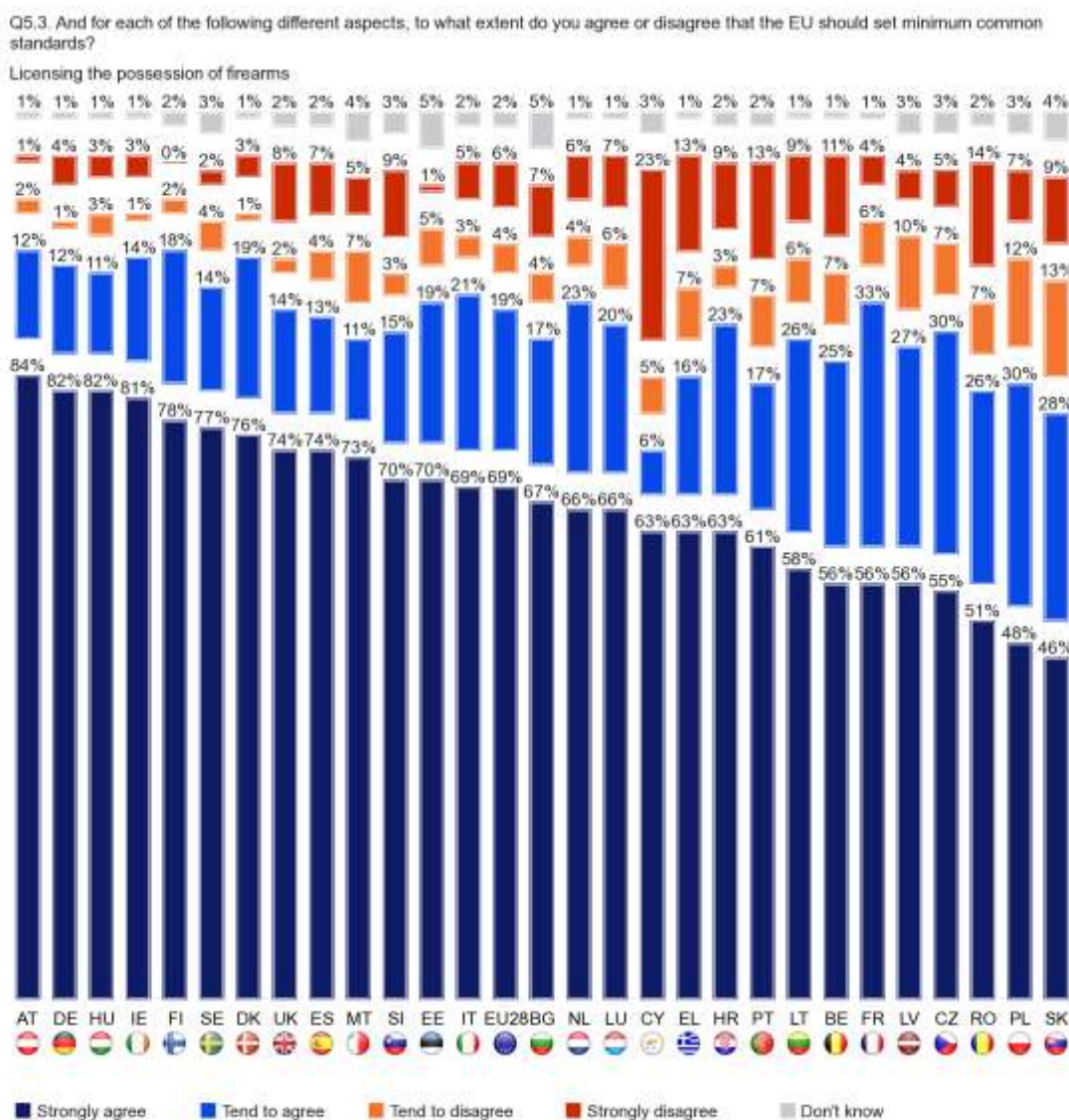
<b>Education (End of)</b>					
15-	80%	11%	2%	4%	3%
16-19	84%	11%	2%	2%	1%
20+	86%	10%	1%	2%	1%
Still studying	79%	16%	3%	1%	1%

<b>Respondent occupation scale</b>					
Self-employed	86%	11%	1%	1%	1%
Employee	87%	10%	1%	2%	0%
Manual workers	79%	15%	2%	3%	1%
Not working	82%	12%	2%	2%	2%

Base: Those EU respondents who think that the EU should set minimum common standards (n=15617)

People in the EU15 are more in favour of imposing minimum common standards for licensing the possession of firearms: 71% agree with this approach, compared with only 55% of NMS13 respondents.

Overall agreement on this point ranges from 96% in Austria and Finland to 69% in Cyprus. The proportion who strongly agree also varies substantially, ranging from 84% in Austria to 46% in Slovakia. Poland (48%) is the only other Member State in which less than half strongly agree. Cyprus has a relatively high level of disagreement: 23% of people in Cyprus do not think that there should be minimum common standards for licensing the possession of firearms and 23% strongly disagree. This may reflect the relatively high level of gun ownership seen in Cyprus.




Base: Those EU respondents who think that the EU should set minimum common standards (n=15617)


Looking at **socio-demographic** differences, respondents aged 15-24 (56%) are again less likely to strongly agree with minimum common standards for licensing the possession of firearms than older respondents (69%-73%). Overall agreement is also higher among respondents who finished their education aged 20 or older (92%) than among people who left school aged 15 and under (78%).

**Q5.3 And for each of the following different aspects, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the EU should set minimum common standards?**

**Licensing the possession of firearms**

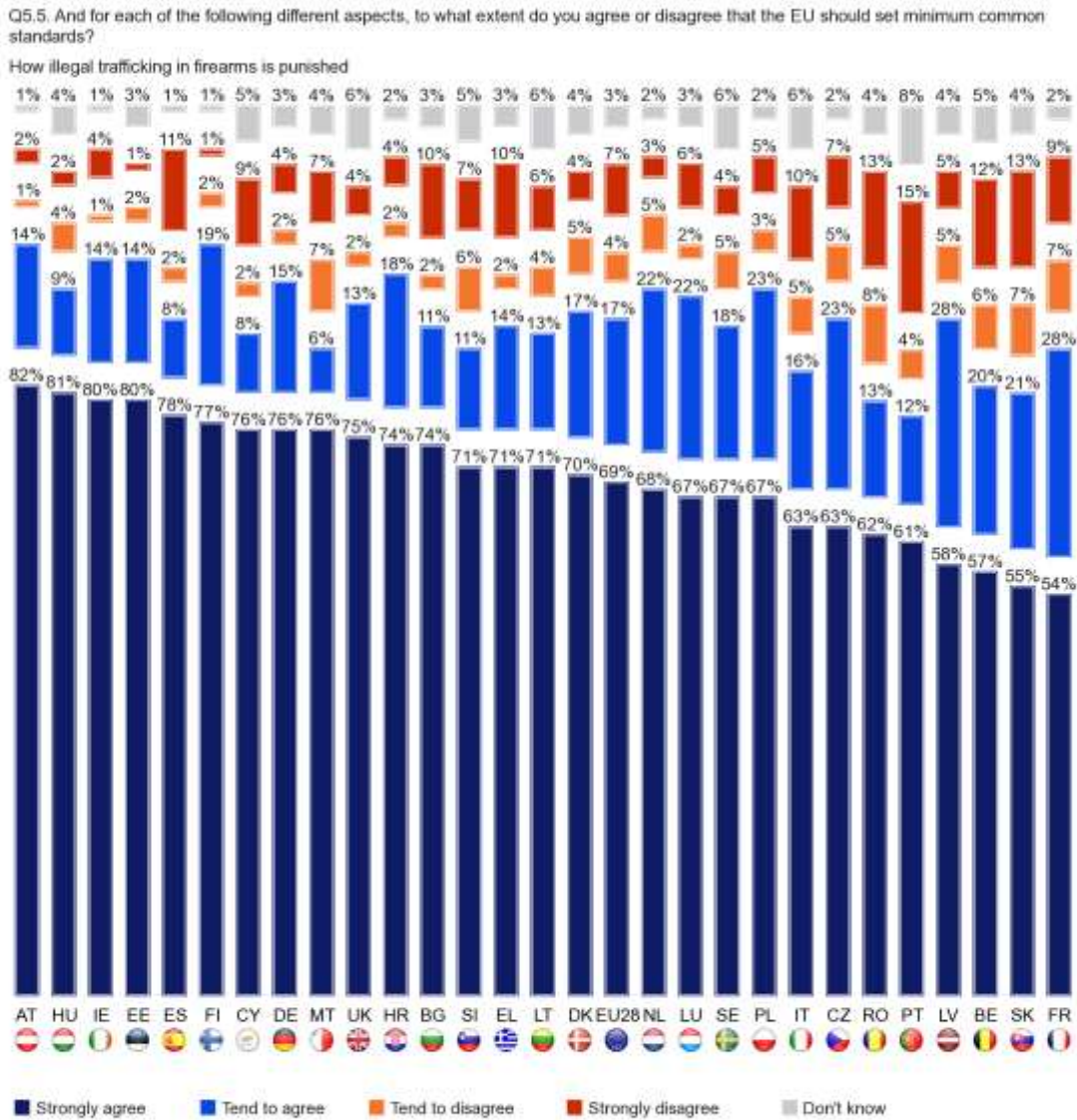
	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
EU28	69%	19%	4%	6%	2%

 <b>Age</b>					
15-24	56%	32%	6%	6%	0%
25-39	69%	22%	5%	4%	0%
40-54	73%	17%	3%	5%	2%
55+	70%	15%	4%	8%	3%

 <b>Education (End of)</b>					
15-	63%	15%	5%	13%	4%
16-19	69%	19%	4%	6%	2%
20+	73%	19%	3%	4%	1%
Still studying	54%	33%	7%	6%	0%

Base: Those EU respondents who think that the EU should set minimum common standards (n=15617)

The level of agreement to set minimum common standards on how illegal trafficking in firearms is punished is high in all Member States, ranging from 96% in Austria and Finland to 73% in Portugal, and a majority of respondents strongly agree in all countries. Romania (21%) and Slovakia (20%) have the most people who disagree with this approach.



Base: Those EU respondents who think that the EU should set minimum common standards (n=15617)

Looking at the **socio-demographic** analysis, people who finished their education aged 20 or over (87%) are more likely to agree than people who left school aged 15 or under (77%), while employees (88%) are more inclined to agree than people who are not working (82%).

**Q5.5 And for each of the following different aspects, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the EU should set minimum common standards?**

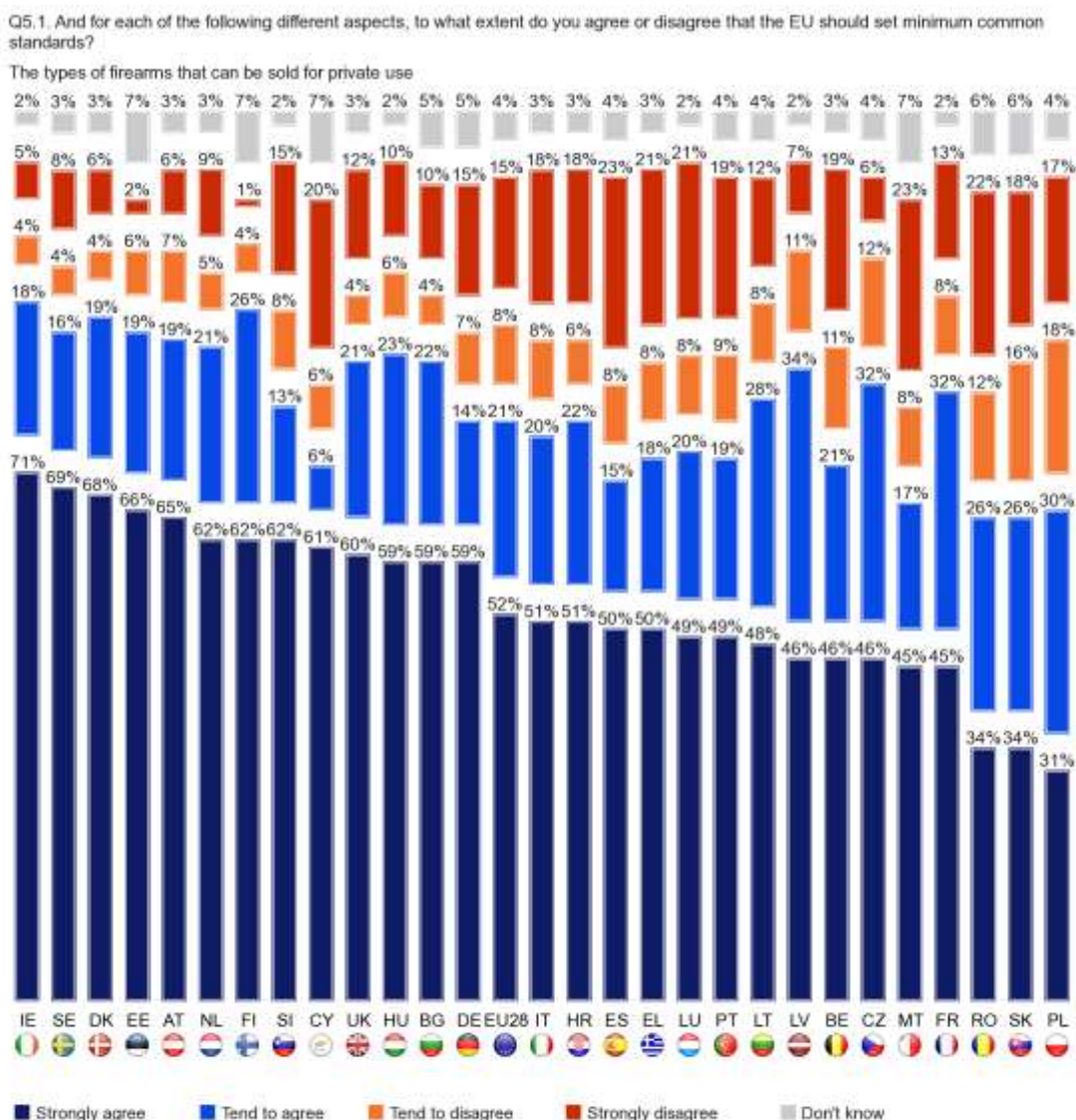
**How illegal trafficking in firearms is punished**

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU28	86%	11%	3%
<b>Education (End of)</b>			
15-	77%	18%	5%
16-19	86%	11%	3%
20+	87%	10%	3%
Still studying	85%	12%	3%
<b>Respondent occupation scale</b>			
Self-employed	85%	12%	3%
Employee	88%	9%	3%
Manual workers	86%	12%	2%
Not working	82%	14%	4%

Base: Those EU respondents who think that the EU should set minimum common standards (n=15617)

People in EU15 Member States are slightly more likely than those in NMS13 countries to support minimum standards concerning the types of firearms that can be sold for private use (74% vs. 68%).

A majority of respondents in all Member States agree that minimum common standards should be applied here, and in 17 countries at least 50% of people strongly agree. Overall agreement is highest in Ireland (89%) and Finland (88%) and lowest in Slovakia and Romania (both 60%).



Base: Those EU respondents who think that the EU should set minimum common standards (n=15617)



The **socio-demographic** results show that men are somewhat more likely than women to agree that the EU should set minimum common standards for the types of firearms that can be sold for private use (76% vs. 71%). Older respondents are the least likely to agree: 66% of people aged 55 and over do so, compared with 75%-77% of other respondents. Respondents with a higher level of education are more likely to support minimum common standards, while employees (80%) are more likely to do so than manual workers or people who are not working (both 68%).

**Q5.1 And for each of the following different aspects, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the EU should set minimum common standards?**

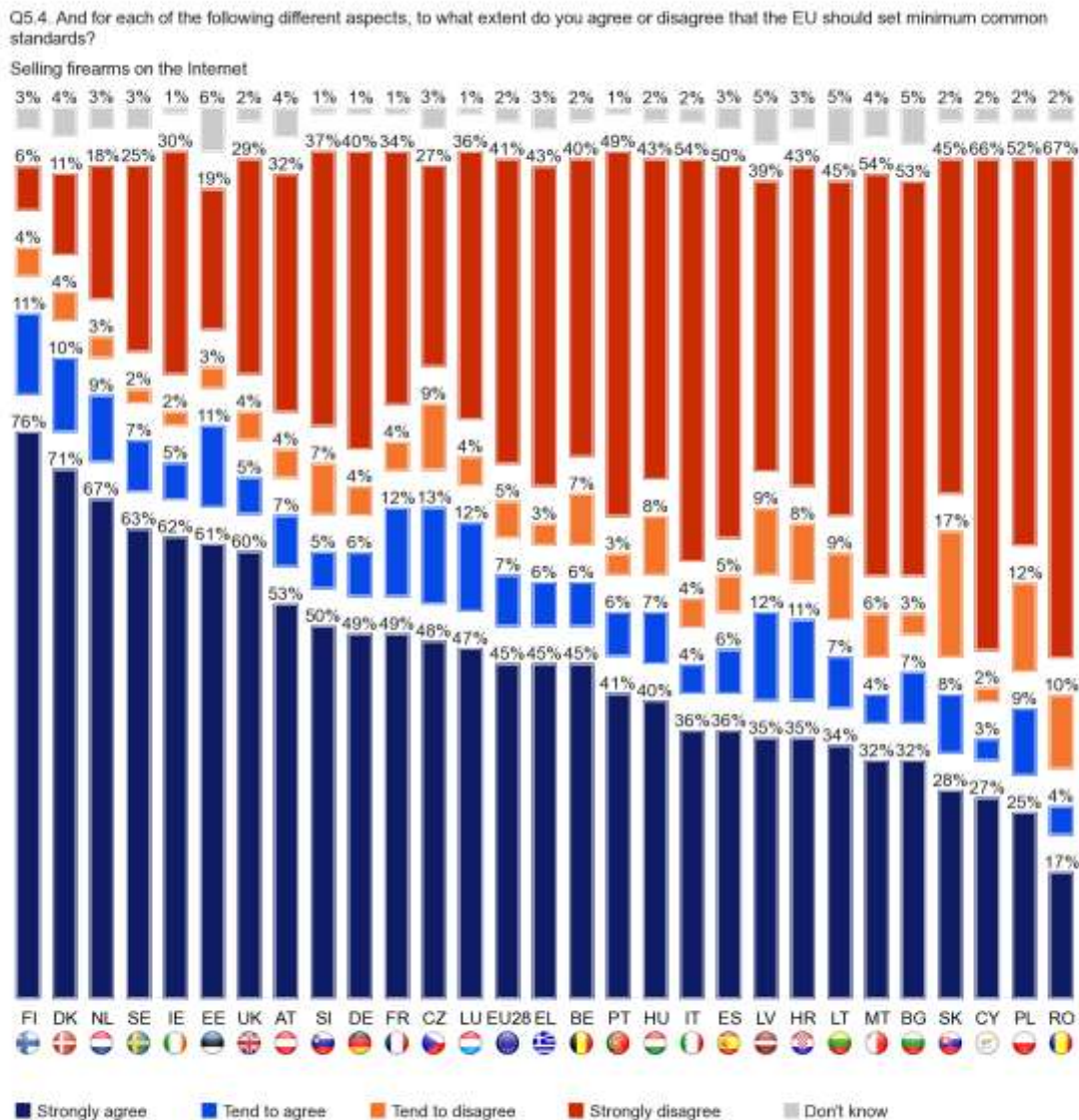
**The types of firearms that can be sold for private use**

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU28	73%	23%	4%
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	76%	21%	3%
Female	71%	25%	4%
<b>Age</b>			
15-24	75%	23%	2%
25-39	77%	21%	2%
40-54	77%	20%	3%
55 +	66%	28%	6%
<b>Education (End of)</b>			
15-	58%	37%	5%
16-19	72%	24%	4%
20+	78%	19%	3%
Still studying	73%	24%	3%
<b>Respondent occupation scale</b>			
Self-employed	78%	18%	4%
Employee	80%	18%	2%
Manual workers	68%	28%	4%
Not working	68%	28%	4%

Base: Those EU respondents who think that the EU should set minimum common standards (n=15617)

In the EU15 Member States, a majority of people agree (55% vs. 43% who disagree) that there should be minimum common standards for selling firearms on the Internet. This compares with a majority of people in NMS13 countries who disagree (59% vs. 39% who agree).

The country-level results also reveal large differences. A majority of people agree with the idea of common EU standards in 15 Member States, ranging from 87% in Finland to just 21% in Romania. In nine Member States, led by Finland (76%), at least half of the respondents strongly agree with this approach. However, in 12 Member States a majority of people do not agree with minimum common standards for selling firearms on the Internet. Romania (77%) shows the highest level of disagreement, compared with 10% in Finland.



Base: Those EU respondents who think that the EU should set minimum common standards (n=15617)

On the issue of selling firearms on the Internet, the **socio-demographic** data suggest that respondents aged 55 and over are less likely to favour minimum common standards than people in younger age groups (45% vs. 54%-58%). Differences are also seen by education level: 59% of people who finished their education aged 20 or over support minimum common standards, but only 37% of people who left school aged 15 or under agree.


**Q5.4 And for each of the following different aspects, to what extent do you agree or disagree that the EU should set minimum common standards?**

**Selling firearms on the Internet**

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU28	52%	46%	2%

 **Age**

15-24	56%	43%	1%
25-39	58%	41%	1%
40-54	54%	44%	2%
55 +	45%	52%	3%

 **Education (End of)**

15-	37%	60%	3%
16-19	48%	50%	2%
20+	59%	39%	2%
Still studying	57%	42%	1%

Base: Those EU respondents who think that the EU should set minimum common standards (n=15617)

## CONCLUSIONS

Firearms ownership is relatively low in most EU Member States, with a few notable exceptions.

Ownership itself seems to have surprisingly little influence on the opinions of respondents when it comes to firearms-related issues: in most cases, the views of current or previous owners are broadly in line with those of people who do not own firearms, with the exception of whether to impose stricter regulation on possession (something present or past gun owners are more likely to be against).

What is striking is the proportion of people across the EU who, irrespective of whether they possess firearms themselves, believe that there is a high level of firearms-related crime in their own country. This is clearly a matter of perception rather than of crime statistics, and many people may be over-estimating the level of gun crime which really occurs in their country. Nonetheless, the fact that a majority of people in 12 Member States believe there is a high level of firearms-related crime points to the significant public concern about this issue.

Most people think that EU policy action is the best way to address the trafficking of firearms into the EU from outside: two thirds of respondents say that the EU should cooperate with national authorities to tackle the problem, and three quarters think the EU should be helping our non-EU neighbours to control firearms within their own jurisdictions.

Most respondents believe that stricter regulation will be the most effective way to reduce firearms-related crime, although it is important to note that a sizeable minority believe other methods should be adopted. There is also strong support for the introduction of EU-wide common standards governing various aspects of the owning, buying and selling of firearms, against a backdrop of widespread public concern that firearms-related crime is an increasingly serious problem.