



Social Situation Monitor



**The effect of the COVID-19
pandemic on young people's
perspectives on the future**

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INTRODUCTION

Since spring 2020, the European Union (EU) has experienced the full scale of the global pandemic triggered by the COVID-19 virus, with significant numbers of people fatally or severely affected by the disease. To contain the pandemic and avoid overloading the healthcare system, countries implemented various measures to contain the spread of the infection, such as travel and contact restrictions, lockdowns, closures of schools and educational facilities, and hygiene regulations (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2020a). While everybody felt the impact of these restrictions, there is emerging evidence that young people were disproportionately affected by the pandemic (European Commission, forthcoming; Eurofound, 2021; ILO, 2020b; Konle-Seidl and Picarella, 2021; Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2021a). The health crisis precipitated an economic recession and, despite their lower likelihood of developing severe complications from the virus, younger generations were more exposed to the economic and social consequences of the pandemic (ILO, 2020b; OECD, 2021a; Baarck et al., 2021).

For two years, social interactions with family and friends, education and learning experiences, and job opportunities were affected by the COVID-19 crisis, disrupting young people's development and well-being, in particular. For a number of reasons, young people are likely to have been more severely affected by the pandemic compared to the rest of the population. First, the school-to-work transition was particularly difficult, as only limited vacancies were available and work-based learning opportunities and apprenticeships scarce. Second young people were more likely to work in sectors most affected by pandemic restrictions, such as accommodation and food services. Third they were often in a more precarious situation in the labour market, such as working on temporary contracts. As a result, their self-reported mental health was affected more than that of older people, as they were more likely to report experiencing loneliness, depression and social isolation, particularly those no longer living with their parents or in other shared residences (Konle-Seidl and Picarella, 2021).

Since the onset of the pandemic, the impact on young people has been a major concern at international and national levels¹. This has led to the development of several surveys to shed light on self-reported well-being and mental health, perceptions of the future, trust in institutions, and labour market perspectives (among others). Different data, methodologies, and even definitions of 'young people' have been used, sometimes without the possibility to compare outcomes with older age groups. As young people are not a homogeneous group, some studies paid attention to more vulnerable sub-categories, such as young people with a migrant background, those working on temporary contracts, or those at risk of poverty.

Understanding the issues and concerns that affect young people in Europe, as well as their views on the EU and their government, is important in the post-pandemic era to avoid lingering adverse effects or even a lost generation². Attention to the impact on the young population is also relevant in relation

¹ A review of studies from international organisations and national studies from EU Member States found at least 17 studies covering the EU (see review section below).

² United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) made a call to 'avert a lost generation' in November 2020 (UNICEF, 2020). See Hafstad and Augusti (2021) for a more nuanced view.



to the 11 European Youth Goals in the EU Youth Strategy, such as achieving better mental well-being or guaranteeing an accessible labour market with opportunities that lead to quality jobs for all young people (see Appendix B). Some of these goals were particularly challenged by the pandemic.

This research note explores the impact of COVID-19 on young people's perspectives on the future in absolute terms and comparatively with older age groups when possible. It also examines the impact of COVID-19 (from outbreak until Spring 2022) on young people's views of the education system, their ability to be heard in the decision-making process at EU and country level, levels of optimism about their future, and their subjective well-being. The paper consists of two sections. The first section presents a review of recent surveys conducted after the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, at both international and national level³. The second section presents the results of a new survey carried out for this study ('2022 HIVA survey') in five Member States – Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Poland. The survey was innovative in that it used existing questions – keeping the exact wording – from previous surveys to allow for comparisons over time, sometimes as far back as the 1980s. This allows for some insight into the size and scale of observed changes in the longer term. The main drawback is that the timeframe for comparison extends beyond the period of COVID-19 and thus changes cannot be attributed solely to the pandemic. For example, the latest point of comparison for the question on confidence in the education system for Denmark is 2017-2018. A second note of caution in interpreting the results is that the survey was fielded in May 2022, after the Russian invasion of Ukraine⁴. While this may not matter so much for the question on confidence in the education system, it may have had an effect on the subjective well-being question (Ronen and Seeman, 2007)⁵.

The literature review of international surveys (OECD, ILO, Eurofound, and the European Parliament) showed that young people were indeed disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis in different ways. These surveys show that young people were overrepresented in most impacted sectors and many had to reduce their working hours or lost their jobs. The OECD found that 51 % of young people (aged 18-29) experienced job-related disruptions (job loss, job retention scheme, reduction in working hours and/or pay cut) in the first year of the pandemic, compared to 46 % among 30-49-year-olds and 37 % among 50-64-year-olds (OECD, 2021a). Those still in the education system had a more difficult transition to the labour market, with fewer vacancies and work opportunities. According to these surveys their self-reported mental health was also heavily affected, and the reported risk of depression or anxiety was higher than for older age groups. These negative impacts on the labour market and their self-reported mental well-being may be reflected in young people's perspectives on the future – young people fear the long-lasting effects of the pandemic on their financial or housing situation and career opportunities.

³ A number of Member States conducted large-scale representative surveys since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. For most of these surveys, research output is only starting to be published. An overview of the identified surveys and relevant results are available in Appendix A.

⁴ The survey for this study was planned in January and February 2022, prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but was only fielded in May 2022.

⁵ It is possible that the specter of war, even if remote, affects cohorts differently, but the authors are unaware of any research on this specific aspect.



The results from the survey in five countries broadly match the findings from the literature, although they tended to show smaller differences across age groups, with the exception of the expression of subjective well-being (happiness). Subjective well-being decreased markedly and reached the lowest level since the European Social Survey began in 2002. Young people's subjective well-being was affected somewhat more, dropping just below the subjective well-being of those aged 30 or above (it was previously slightly higher than among the over 30s)⁶. This picture was quite consistent across the five countries. The results suggest that the period since 2018-2019 has resulted in an unusually large drop in subjective well-being, with younger people more affected than people aged 30 or older. However, the results for subjective well-being are somewhat at odds with those found in Naumann et al. (forthcoming).

The results for subjective wellbeing were mirrored in expression of optimism about the future, with all five countries showing a substantial drop in optimism about the future. Across the five countries surveyed, on average, the number of people expressing some degree of optimism about the future fell by 17 percentage points (p.p.), from 64 % in 2016 to 47 % in 2022⁷. The decrease in optimism does not vary by age, except in Germany and France, where the negative change was larger for the older age category (30 years or older).

The share of people expressing confidence in the education system fell substantially in France, Italy and Poland compared to the survey wave in 2017-2018⁸. In Italy, this was a reversal of the levels from 1981 to 2010, whereas in Poland people now have the lowest level of confidence in the education system since 1990. Changes in Germany and Denmark were small. There were only small differences in the development of confidence in the education system between the young and old age categories. Since 2020, Denmark and Germany saw a large fall in the share of people believing that their voice counts in the EU. More people agreed that their voice counts in the Member States, but again the share fell markedly. In Italy, the fall was less strong, albeit from a very low start point. France and Poland showed only small changes in this respect.

The remainder of this research note is structured as follows. The first section reviews the findings of international surveys, followed by a brief overview of Member States' national surveys. The second section introduces a national survey for this study that was conducted in five countries. It sets out the purpose, methodology and implementation, then describes the survey results, focusing on differences in outcomes and trends between young people (under-30s) and older people (over-30s). The research note closes with a concluding section.

⁶ The question on subjective well-being read, 'Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?' and is answered on a scale from 0 to 10.

⁷ See Figure 13.

⁸ The surveys conducted in 2017 and 2018 were part the 2017-2020 European Value Survey wave. For the countries in this study, interviews were conducted in 2017-2018 in Denmark, Germany and Poland, and in 2018 in France and Italy.



REVIEW OF EXISTING INTERNATIONAL SURVEYS

In spring 2020, many economic and social restrictions, such as the closure of schools, universities, shops and restaurants or lockdowns, were implemented worldwide to limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of the population. This had a significant impact on working and living conditions, and self-reported mental well-being. A number of international and national institutions launched surveys to assess the impact of the pandemic. Surveys targeted the whole population or subgroups, such as young people, in order to review and adapt the policies in place. This section presents the main results of those existing surveys on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people.

While the pandemic disrupted many aspects of daily life, we focus on four of them in this study: the impact on young people's employment, self-reported mental health and well-being, perspectives on the future, and trust in their government and in the EU.

Several international institutions launched surveys to compare the impact of the pandemic across different countries. This literature review is based on four international surveys: Eurofound's Living, Working and COVID-19 e-survey; ILO's Global Survey on Youth and COVID-19; OECD's Risks That Matter 2020 survey; and the European Parliament's Youth Survey. Before presenting the main results, it is important to recall that the methodologies, sampling procedures and representativeness differed substantially, as did the number of countries covered (see Table A in Appendix A), complicating direct comparisons across surveys. The direction and broad outcomes can be compared, however. The definition of 'young people' also differed across the surveys. The OECD's Risks That Matter 2020 survey and the ILO's Global Survey on Youth and COVID-19 defined young people as those aged 18-29 years, Eurofound's Living, Working and COVID-19 e-survey used the range of 15-29 years, and the European Parliament's Youth Survey defined young people as 16-30 years old. Table 1 presents the key findings from these international surveys.



Table 1: International surveys' key findings for young people

Survey	Employment	Well-being/mental health	Perspectives on the future	Trust in institutions
OECD (September-October 2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 51 % experienced job-related disruptions (job loss, reduced working hours, pay cut, and/or unpaid leave)⁹, compared to 46 % among 30-49-year-olds and 37 % among 50-64-year-olds • 36 % reported financial difficulties, compared to 33 % among 30-49-year-olds and 26 % among 50-64-year-olds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More likely to report worsened self-reported mental health than older groups (35 % among 18-29-year-olds, compared to 28 % among 30-49-year-olds and 20 % among 50-64-year-olds) • Young women were more likely to report worsened mental health than men (36 % and 26 %, respectively). This gender difference was equally large for other age groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63 % were concerned about overall social and economic well-being and household finances (67 % in all age groups together) • Concerns about housing: 53 % were concerned about not being able to find/maintain adequate housing in the next year or two (44 % across all age groups) • Concerns about old age: 70 % were concerned about not being financially secure in old age (51 % in all age groups) • Women were more concerned than men (66 % and 60 %, respectively) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-thirds felt the government should be doing more to ensure their economic and social security and well-being (68 % for all age groups) • 40 % felt that the government did not incorporate the views of people like them when designing policies (49 % across all age groups)
ILO (April-May 2020) ¹⁰	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 % who worked before the COVID-19 outbreak had stopped working • 23 % in employment before the onset reported a reduction in working hours, which for 42 % of those meant a lower income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 % reported anxiety or depression • 23 % of those who lost their job were likely to report being affected by anxiety or depression compared to 14 % among the employed • Women were more likely to report possible anxiety or depression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns about the labour market: 38 % were uncertain and 16 % were fearful about their future career prospects 	/

⁹ This question focuses on job-related disruption in the household. Therefore, the result should be interpreted as about half of all young people reporting that either they or a household member had experienced job-related disruptions. As a consequence, this number also relates to the percentage of young people who might have been affected indirectly, through job-related disruptions experienced by other household members.

¹⁰ It is not possible to compare with older groups as the survey focuses on young people.



<p>Eurofound (1st round: April 2020 2nd round: June-July 2020 3rd round: February-March 2021)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2020, the unemployment increase was larger than among older groups (increase of 1.4 p.p. compared to 2019 for young people and 0.4 p.p. for all age groups) • Those working in accommodation and food services, wholesale and retail, and health and social work were at higher risk of job loss, as were those on temporary contracts. In Q1 2020, 12.1 % of all people of working age (15-64) in employment had a temporary contract in the 27 EU Member States (EU-27), compared to 46 % among young people aged 15-24. Unemployed or inactive young people were most likely to experience housing insecurity (17 %), difficulty making ends meet (43 %) and having no savings (39 %) (4 %, 10 % and 16 %, respectively, for employed young people) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reported life satisfaction and mental well-being among young people decreased to their lowest point in spring 2021. Life satisfaction went from 7.4 in 2016 to 6.3 in spring 2021 • Self-reported mental well-being was lowest in spring 2021, related to school closures (65 % of self-reported risk of depression for young people aged 18-29, compared to 60 % for people aged 30-59) • Self-reported risk of depression was particularly high among unemployed/inactive (10.1 compared to 12.8 for employed young people (out of a score of 25)) • Women reported lower mental well-being than men (12.3 compared to 12.5)out of a score of 25)) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General optimism about the future remained higher than for older groups throughout the pandemic • 52 % were optimistic about their future in spring 2020 (45 % for all age groups) • In spring 2021, optimism was lowest among young people experiencing job insecurity (35 %, compared to 58 % for those with no job insecurity), housing insecurity (28 %, compared to 51 % for those without job insecurity), or financial difficulties (20 %, compared to 55 % for those without financial difficulties) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people's trust in the EU was higher than their trust in government (5.6/10 compared to 4.2/10 in spring 2021) and always higher than older people's trust in the EU • Trust in the EU improved in summer 2020 compared to spring 2020 (6.1/10 and 5.6/10, respectively) and declined in spring 2021 (5.6/10) • Women had more trust in government than did men (5.7/10, compared to 4.8/10) • Young people with higher education reported stronger trust in government (5.6 compared to 5.0)
<p>European Parliament (June 2021)¹¹</p>	<p>/</p>	<p>/</p>	<p>- Top political concerns: tackling poverty and social inequality (43 %); combating climate change and protecting the environment (39 %) and combating unemployment or a lack of jobs (37 %)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53 % felt they did not have much or any say over decisions affecting their local area, rising to 70 % for the EU • 62 % were generally in favour of the EU • 21 % were quite sceptical about the EU

Note: '/' denotes a topic not included in a survey.

¹¹ It is not possible to compare with older groups as the survey only focuses on young people.



DESCRIPTION OF INTERNATIONAL SURVEYS

One of the pandemic's most visible effects was the impact on employment, as many sectors had to reduce or stop their activities. Most surveys showed that the impact on young people's employment was greater than for the older age population (ILO, 2020b; OECD, 2021a; Eurofound, 2021). More specifically, the Eurofound and ILO surveys showed that young people were overrepresented in the sectors most impacted by pandemic restrictions, such as accommodation and food services, and wholesale and retail. The crisis was also more likely to affect young people because of their comparatively precarious situation in the labour market, such as being employed temporarily or on part-time contracts (Eurofound, 2021). In both accommodation and food services and the wholesale and retail sectors, job losses from Q4 in 2019 to Q2 in 2020 were more heavily concentrated among young people¹². As a result, many young people were faced with either unemployment or reduced working hours.

The intensity of the effects vary somewhat across studies. For example, more than half of the young respondents (51 %) of the OECD survey reported that 'either they or a household member have experienced job-related disruptions since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in the form of a job loss, the use of a job retention scheme, a reduction in working hours, and/or a pay cut'. Similarly, the ILO survey highlighted that nearly one-quarter (23 %) of young workers reported a reduction in working hours and another quarter (23%) of young workers reported having stopped working since the start of the pandemic. According to the Eurofound survey, in early 2021, 17 % of young people working before the pandemic had lost their job and were unemployed, with ILO (2020b) finding a similar result (17.4 %). The restrictions impacted different groups differently: young people from low social classes were hit particularly hard, according to OECD (2021a), as were younger young people (18-24), who were more likely to stop work (23.1 %) (ILO, 2020b). Even if large differences are evident across countries (Eurofound, 2020; OECD, 2021a), these greater impacts on young people's employment can have lasting consequences for their futures. Indeed, this insecurity in the labour market, coupled with difficult transitions from the education system, could negatively impact young people's professional development and prospects, increasing housing insecurity and financial difficulties (Eurofound, 2021; OECD, 2021a)¹³.

More difficult entry into the labour market and unclear professional prospects are some of the factors that may reduce young people's reported mental health and well-being (Bell and Blanchflower, 2011). The main result from the surveys is that the COVID-19 crisis had a disproportionate negative impact on young people's self-reported life satisfaction and mental health compared to the older population

¹² See Eurostat table lfsq_egan2. Young people defined as 15-39 years of age.

¹³ The job disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affect two European Youth Goals: Goal 7, aiming to guarantee an accessible labour market with opportunities that lead to quality jobs for all young people, and Goal 8, aiming to integrate and improve different forms of learning.



(Eurofound, 2021a; OECD, 2021a). The ILO survey found that '50 % of young people are possibly subject to anxiety or depression, while a further 17 % are probably affected by it'¹⁴, while the Eurofound survey found that in spring 2021, 65 % of young people believed they were at risk of depression, compared to 60 % of 35-49-year-olds and 53 % of over-50s. Self-reported mental health was worse for young women than for young men, and for unemployed and inactive young people (Eurofound, 2021; ILO, 2020b; OECD, 2020a). For example, the ILO survey found that 'young workers who had lost their job were almost twice as likely to be affected by probable anxiety or depressions as those who continued to be employed (23 % and 14 %, respectively)'¹⁵.

A combination of factors led to this deterioration of young people's reported mental health. Poorer education and work opportunities were relevant factors, as were limited mobility and access to physical activity, and the prohibition of social gatherings, which resulted in social isolation, especially for those who were not living with their parents, families or friends during lockdowns (Eurofound, 2021; OECD, 2021a). Even if the concept of 'self-reported or reported mental health' is subjective, it is important to note that in the OECD survey, young people were more likely than older respondents (30-49) to report worsened mental health for their households and for themselves in nearly all OECD countries. Not being able to look positively to the future, and the feeling of being left behind may greatly impact their expectations¹⁶. Finally, young people with existing mental health issues before the pandemic were among the most vulnerable groups (Eurofound, 2021), and limited access to mental health support during that period could have longer-term consequences.

Young people's perspectives of the future were evident in the different concerns they raised and their general level of optimism about the future¹⁷. One of the most urgent concerns is financial security (Eurofound, 2021; OECD, 2021a). The impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on the labour market and the relatively insecure position of younger workers make young people particularly 'concerned about their ability to pay the bills and losing their job, both in the short term and beyond the next decade, with higher shares of young people reporting such worries than the total population for both risks'¹⁸ (OECD, 2021a). They were concerned about the long-term effects of the pandemic, including whether they would be able to find or maintain adequate housing in the long run (61 % of young people reported this worry in the context of the next 10 years, compared to around 40 % in the full population), or whether they would be financially secure in old age (70 %), which is lower than for older people (OECD,

¹⁴ The ILO survey uses the Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale to estimate young people's mental well-being. Based on the answers given to seven statements on their thoughts and feelings, the final score indicates probable, possible or no anxiety or depression in the respondent; ILO, *Youth and COVID-19: impacts on jobs, education, rights, and mental well-being: survey report 2020*, 2020b, p. 28.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Youth Goal 5 aims to achieve better mental well-being and end stigmatisation of mental health issues. It was negatively impacted by the pandemic.

¹⁷ The length of the time period considered (short, mid, and long term) is important to take into account and can differ across surveys.

¹⁸ OECD, 'Young people's concerns during COVID-19: Results from risks that matter 2020', *OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19)*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2021, p. 7.



2021a)¹⁹. The ILO survey found that 16 % of young people were fearful about their future career prospects, and that feeling was stronger for those who had stopped working since the onset of the pandemic (24 %). In general, women were less confident and more worried about the future than men, especially during the first year of the pandemic (Eurofound, 2021; ILO, 2020b; OECD, 2021a). Interestingly, even though their self-reported mental health and career prospects were heavily affected during the crisis, young people's optimism about the future²⁰ remained higher than the rest of the population throughout the pandemic (Eurofound, 2021). However, optimism about the future depended on the different conditions in which they lived, being lowest among those who experienced job and housing insecurity, as well as financial difficulties (Eurofound, 2021). By contrast, those with no difficulties making ends meet were among the most optimistic (Eurofound, 2021). As the proportion of optimistic people also varied depending on the measures in place (e.g. young people were more pessimistic during strict lockdowns periods (Eurofound, 2021), it is important to review attitudes towards the institutions that implemented those measures to determine whether the COVID-19 crisis improved or reduced young people's confidence in their government or in the EU.

Similar to levels of optimism about the future, trust in government was higher among young people than among older respondents since the onset of the pandemic, with scores of 4.2/10 and 3.9/10, respectively, in spring 2021 (Eurofound, 2021). The heterogeneity of young people is relevant, as those who have a higher level of education, those still in the education system, and women had a higher level of trust in their government (Eurofound, 2021). Despite this higher level of trust, two-thirds of young people believed their government should be doing more to ensure their economic and social security and well-being (OECD, 2021a). Nor did they feel sufficiently represented (European Parliament, 2021; OECD, 2021a). The OECD survey found that 40 % of the young respondents 'feel that the government does not incorporate the views of people like them when designing or reforming public benefits and services'²¹. This was slightly more optimistic than across all age groups, with 49 % believing that the government did not incorporate their views. The European Parliament survey found that the more distant the sphere of governance, the fewer young people felt they had influence over important decisions, laws, and policies affecting them. For example, 53 % felt they did not have much, or any, say over decisions at local level, while the number rose to 60 % for decisions at national level and 70 % at EU level (European Parliament, 2021a). Trust in the EU was found to be higher among young people than among older groups, as was trust in government before the onset of the pandemic (Eurofound, 2021). Indeed, according to the European Parliament survey, in 2021, the majority of young people were generally in favour of the EU (62 %), including 34 % who were dissatisfied with the way the EU is working at present and 28 % who were satisfied. Interestingly, 45 % of respondents reported that their image of the EU remained stable in 2020, while 31 % said it had worsened and 17 % said it had improved.

¹⁹ For the full sample of respondents, OECD (2021b) reported that 80.2 % were concerned about financial security in old age.

²⁰ In the Eurofound survey, respondents had to answer the following question: 'I am optimistic about my future' and choose between different options, from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

²¹ OECD, 'Young people's concerns during COVID-19: Results from risks that matter 2020', *OECD Policy Responses to Coronavirus (COVID-19)*, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2021, p. 10.



In order to retain high levels of trust among young people, their voices should be systematically included in EU policy-making, notably through the implementation of the Youth Goals²². One solution could be to consider their political priorities higher on the European agenda. Based on the European Parliament survey, in 2021, young people's top priorities were tackling poverty and social inequalities, followed by combating climate change and protecting the environment, with combating unemployment or a lack of jobs in third place. These priorities can be tracked back in time using the Eurobarometer 'Future of Europe' surveys²³. Table 2 shows that social inequalities and unemployment were the two main challenges for the EU, as reported by young people (15-34 years old) from 2012 to 2021. Some results can be linked to the economic situation. For example, the fact that the public debt of EU Member States was one of the main reported challenges in 2012 and 2014 could reflect the topics high on the agenda during the 2008 crisis recovery (34.5 % in 2012, compared to 17.5 % in 2021). Terrorism and security issues were also more reported after the 2015 terrorist attacks in the EU (31 % in 2016, compared to 16 % in 2021). Table 3 shows the survey results for older respondents (over-35s), highlighting that young and older respondents were globally in line, reporting social inequalities and unemployment among the main challenges for the EU. For older respondents, in 2021, environmental issues (30.2 %) were their fourth highest concern, after social inequalities (36.4 %), unemployment (31.6 %) and migration issues (31.4 %), whereas young respondents worried more about environmental issues (37 %). Older respondents also reported global health issues in 2020 (30.6 %), during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, compared to only 7.5 % of young respondents.

A 2022 Eurobarometer survey on 'Youth and Democracy in the European Year of Youth' asked 15-30-year-olds what they expected from the EU for their generation. Respondents could select up to three answers. The first priority was to 'preserve peace, reinforce international security and promote international cooperation' (37 %), followed by 'increasing job opportunities for young people' (33 %) and 'fighting poverty and economic and social inequalities' (32 %). This survey was launched in February and March 2022 and could thus be interpreted in light of the outbreak of the war in Ukraine in February 2022. Young people were also asked which policy measures would be most effective to mitigate the effect of COVID-19 on youth (again, they could select up to three answers from a list of seven options). They believed the most effective measure to be 'ensuring young people - can have access to psychological, including non-medical, to provide support and prevent mental health problem' (46 %), followed by 'financial assistance for those who have been forced out of work due to the pandemic' (38 %) and 'job creation schemes for young people' (33 %).

²² The 11 European Youth Goals are presented in the Annex.

²³ Eurobarometer 'Future of Europe' surveys started in 2006. Since 2012, one question is dedicated to the main challenges for the EU in order to face the future. It is important to note that the answer options vary across surveys, as do the formulation of the questions, making direct comparison of all results impossible.



Table 2: ‘Future of Europe’ Eurobarometer surveys – young respondents (15-34)

Topics	2021	2020	2018	2017	2016	2014	2012
Ageing of the EU population	15	18	15.75	15	13.5	14.5	20
Social inequalities	36	43	36	35.5	37.5	31	22
Competition from emerging countries	10	12.7	12	11	10	11.5	16.5
Insufficient economic growth	18	20.2	21	20	20	23	12
Public debt of Member States	17.5	24.5	24	20.5	26	28	34.5
Unemployment	34	38.7	41	40	44.5	56	47
Instability in the regions bordering the EU	12	13.7	12	11	12.5	6	
Environmental issues and climate change	37	37.2	23	20	15	9	6.5
Migration issues	30	37.7	33	32	36.5	/	/
Terrorism and security issues	16	29.7	30	33.5	31	/	/
Digital transformation of the economy and of society	11	7.5	/	/	/	/	/
Handling global health issues	14	7.25	/	/	/	/	/
Access to jobs for young people	/	/	/	/	/	/	6.5
Number of observations	6551	7222	7570	7626	7647	8282	7821

Note: Results based on 15-34-year-old respondents’ answers. Three main challenges can be found in bold. Weighted answers expressed in percentage points.

Questions: In your opinion, what are the two main challenges for the EU in order to face the future? (2012, 2014, 2016) / Which of the following do you think are the main challenges for the EU? (2017, 2018, 2020, 2021)
Example: In 2021, 36 % of respondents aged 15-34 in the EU thought that social inequalities was one of the main challenges for the EU²⁴.

²⁴ For more information, see <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/browse/all/series/4962>

**Table 3: ‘Future of Europe’ Eurobarometer surveys – older respondents (35+)**

Topics	2021	2020	2018	2017	2016	2014	2012
Ageing of the EU population	16.8	22.8	21.2	18.8	18.2	18	27.4
Social inequalities	36.4	44.8	37.2	35.6	34.6	32.8	21.8
Competition from emerging countries	9.4	14.4	13.4	9.8	10.2	11.2	15.2
Insufficient economic growth	18.6	26	22.4	18.2	20.4	20.6	11.8
Public debt of EU Member States	21	29.4	29.6	22.2	24.8	28.6	35.2
Unemployment	31.6	43.4	40.8	38.6	46.2	51.2	44.8
Instability in the regions bordering the EU	12.4	17.2	13.4	12	13.4	6.4	/
Environmental issues and climate change	30.2	36.8	20.4	17	11.6	7.2	5.2
Migration issues	31.4	43.8	34.6	34.4	35.2	/	/
Terrorism and security issues	19.8	40.8	25.6	31.2	30.6	/	/
Digital transformation of the economy and of society	7.2	13	/	/	/	/	/
Handling global health issues	15	30.6	/	/	/	/	/
Access to jobs for young people	/	/	/	/	/	/	21
Number of observations	19979	19810	19769	20255	20121	19457	18918

Note: Results based on over-35s’ answers. Three main challenges can be found in bold. Weighted answers expressed in percentage points.

Questions: In your opinion, what are the two main challenges for the EU in order to face the future? (2012, 2014, 2016) / Which of the following do you think are the main challenges for the EU? (2017, 2018, 2020, 2021)
Example: In 2021, 36.4 % of respondents aged 35 and more in the EU thought that social inequalities was one of the main challenges for the EU²⁵.

Table 4 compares the EU-27 countries for the three main challenges reported in the Eurobarometer ‘Future of Europe’ 2021 survey. Large differences are evident. The national economic and social situation in each country impacted the way young people self-reported the main challenges for the EU. For example, young people in Spain and Greece were more concerned about unemployment (66 % and 62.5 %, respectively), as the unemployment rate for young people in those two countries is among the highest in Europe. By contrast, young people in Germany tended to focus more on environmental issues or social inequalities, as their unemployment rate is the lowest in the EU²⁶. The influence of the local context and specific problems may explain the heterogeneity of the answers.

²⁵ For more information, see <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/browse/all/series/4962>

²⁶ Based on Eurostat data, the unemployment rate for young people (15-24 years old) in 2020 was 38.3 % in Spain, 38 % in Greece and 7.9 % in Germany, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data-browser/view/UNE_RT_A_custom_2435473/default/table?lang=en



Table 4: 'Future of Europe' Eurobarometer 2021 survey – three main challenges highlighted by young respondents, by country

Country	Social inequalities (EU:36)	Unemployment (EU:34)	Environmental issues and climate change (EU: 37)	Number of respondents
AT	30.5	37.5	42.4	265
BE	44	32.5	44	292
BG	25.5	29.5	16.5	237
CY	34.5	58.5	26.5	170
CZ	28.5	15	25.5	264
DE	40	17	53.5	395
DK	43	15.5	52	291
EE	29	24.5	22.5	246
EL	33.5	62.5	19	243
ES	45.5	66	23	243
FI	32	24	43	197
FR	46	40.5	42.5	269
HR	24.5	42.5	26.5	271
HU	26.5	23.5	29	247
IE	26	33	35.5	272
IT	23	45.5	26.5	216
LT	39.5	31	32	289
LU	34.5	34	40.5	159
LV	41.5	37.5	20.5	265
MT	36.5	23	29.5	181
NL	45.5	18	53.5	172
PL	22	19	22.5	276
PT	63.5	54	25	238
RO	13	25.5	24	280
SE	50.5	18	61.5	259
SI	40.5	32	29.5	234
SK	28.5	28	27	280

Note: Results based on 15-34 year old respondents' answers. Weighted answers expressed in percentage points.

Example: In 2021, 30.5 % of respondents aged 15-34 in AT thought social inequalities was one of the main challenges for the EU.

Numbers in green indicate countries in which the share of respondents choosing a specific challenge was the highest. Number in orange indicate countries in which the share of respondents choosing a specific challenge was the lowest²⁷.

²⁷ For more information, see <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/browse/all/series/4962>



Globally, by taking into account young people's political concerns, such as social inequalities, unemployment and environmental issues, Youth Goals 1 and 9²⁸ could be achieved more easily, i.e. foster the sense of young people belonging to the European project and strengthen young people's democratic participation and autonomy.

NATIONAL SURVEYS

A number of Member States undertook large-scale representative surveys since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. For most of these surveys, research output is only starting to be published. An overview of the identified surveys and relevant results are available in Appendix A. Relevant findings of these national surveys are mentioned in the main text in the section below, alongside the presentation of the results of the survey undertaken for this study.

NEW SURVEY ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE FUTURE

METHODOLOGY

The 2022 HIVA survey carried out for this study was a cross-national survey examining people's well-being, trust in institutions and perceptions about the future in five EU Member States: Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Poland. The survey was planned in January and February 2022 and fielded during May 2022. It drew on a representative sample of 800 people in each country, aged 16-70 years old (4 000 people in total). The countries were chosen to represent EU geographically and the structure of the population.

Sampling was conducted through quotas, with sex, age group and education level used as the sampling criteria²⁹. Survey weights were constructed ex post to ensure representativeness based on these criteria. As the aim of the survey was to analyse young people's well-being and perspective on the future compared to older people, half of the respondents (400 per country) were under 30 years old at the time of the survey. The weights of older respondents were adjusted to get representative samples for both the young and old age categories.

²⁸ The Youth Goals are detailed in Appendix B: Youth Goal 1: Connecting EU with Youth: Foster the sense of young people belonging to the European project and build a bridge between the EU and young people to regain trust and increase participation; Youth Goal 9: Space and participation for all: strengthen young people's democratic participation and autonomy, as well as provide dedicated youth spaces in all areas of society.

²⁹ The survey was implemented online by Bilendi and Respondi. A random proportional sampling method stratified on age, gender and education was applied to achieve a sample of 800 respondents for each country from the company's online research panel. Weighting factors based on age, gender and education were applied in order for the sample to be representative of the population in each country (within the relevant age range).



The survey questions were selected and implemented with identical wording in national languages as the existing international survey³⁰. This naturally limited the questions that could be asked but provided clear benchmarks for the findings and for certain questions, allowing a longer-term perspective on observed changes. In total, five questions were asked, on topics such as self-reported level of well-being and trust in institutions. More specifically, respondents were asked if they thought their voice counted in the EU and in their country;³¹ and about their confidence in the education system,³² their level of happiness³³ and optimism about their future³⁴. The four surveys from which the questions were drawn – European Value Survey, European Social Survey, the Eurobarometer ‘Future of Europe’, and the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) – differed in when they were last implemented. All surveys were last conducted before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, except for the Eurobarometer ‘Future of Europe’ (measuring trust in institutions), for which data were collected in October and November 2020. The European Value Survey (measuring confidence in the education system) was last conducted in 2017-2018, the European Social Survey (measuring well-being) in 2019, and the EQLS (measuring optimism about the future) in 2016.

This methodology means that observed differences in outcomes between the 2022 HIVA survey and previous surveys cannot be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic *alone*. This is most apparent for measurement of trust in institutions (data for the Eurobarometer Future of Europe were collected after the beginning of the pandemic) and for the measurement of optimism about their future (data collection for the EQLS goes back to 2016). Important events related to migration occurred in 2015-2016, affecting Italy and Germany, in particular, and to a lesser extent France (Ademmer et al., 2017). Results should be interpreted in light of these caveats. The same argument applies, albeit less strongly, to the question about confidence in the education system, which was last asked in the European Value Survey in 2017-2018. The time period until 2022 is long, but it is difficult to find events with equally broad and deep impact on the education sector as the COVID-19 pandemic. Well-being was last measured (with an identical question as in the 2022 HIVA survey) in 2019 in the European Social Survey. The concern here was not the length of time from 2019 to the start of the pandemic, but, rather, that the 2022 HIVA survey was fielded in May 2022, after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, when media attention was directed particularly towards this conflict. Negative news have been shown to affect mental health and general well-being (see overview in Hoog and Verboon (2019)). The measurement of optimism in the future may have been similarly affected by current events.

While we cannot attribute reported changes to the COVID-19 pandemic alone, these results nevertheless give a precise measure of people’s perspectives and well-being today relative to the recent past.

³⁰ Wording taken from original national language questionnaires.

³¹ Two questions selected from the [Eurobarometer 500 Future of Europe](#).

³² Question selected from the [European Value Survey](#).

³³ Question selected from the [European Social Survey](#).

³⁴ Question selected from the [EQLS](#).



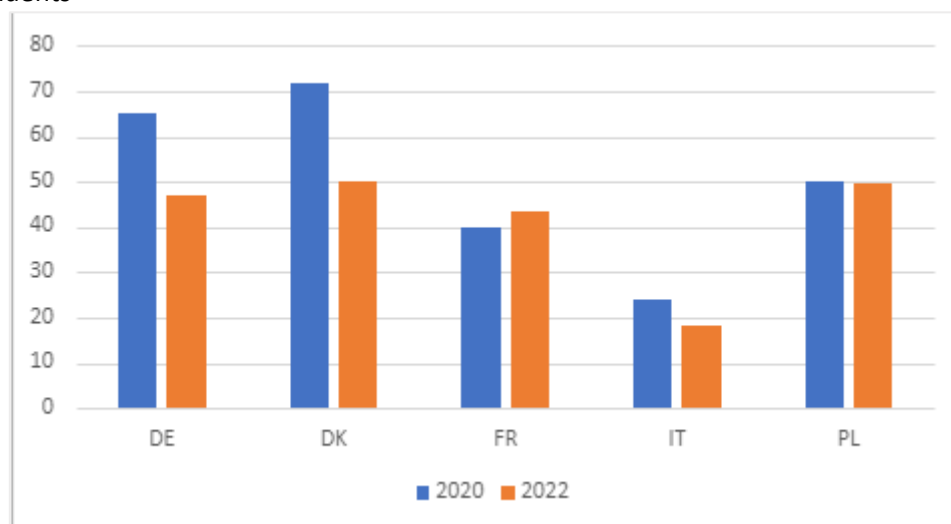
RESULTS

When presenting the results we do not state the statistical significance level related to each comparison or change. Rather, below each figure we provide the percentage points difference needed for the comparison to be significant at the 5% confidence level. This difference depends on sample size and share of respondent agreeing to a claim. We state the difference in the conservative case (the case yielding the largest percentage point difference for statistical significance) at the point of 50 percent agreeing to the statement. These 'critical percentage points differences' are based on two-sided test statistics for the equality of means from two binomial distributed variables (Mohr et al., 2022).

Trust in institutions

The first two questions focus on trust in institutions. Respondents were asked about the degree to which they felt their voice counted in the EU and in their country of residence. Figure 1 shows that the share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in the EU decreased after two years of the COVID-19 pandemic in Germany, Denmark and Italy. That decrease was particularly notable in Denmark, falling from around 70 % in 2020 to 50 % in 2022. In Italy, the vast majority of people thought their voice did not count in the EU, with only 23 % agreeing in 2020 and 18 % in 2022. The share of the population agreeing slightly increased in France, from 40 % in 2020 to 44 % in 2022, and stayed the same in Poland, at 50 %.

Figure 1 – Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in the EU, 2020 and 2022 (%)
All respondents



Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in the EU'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 4.6 percentage points.

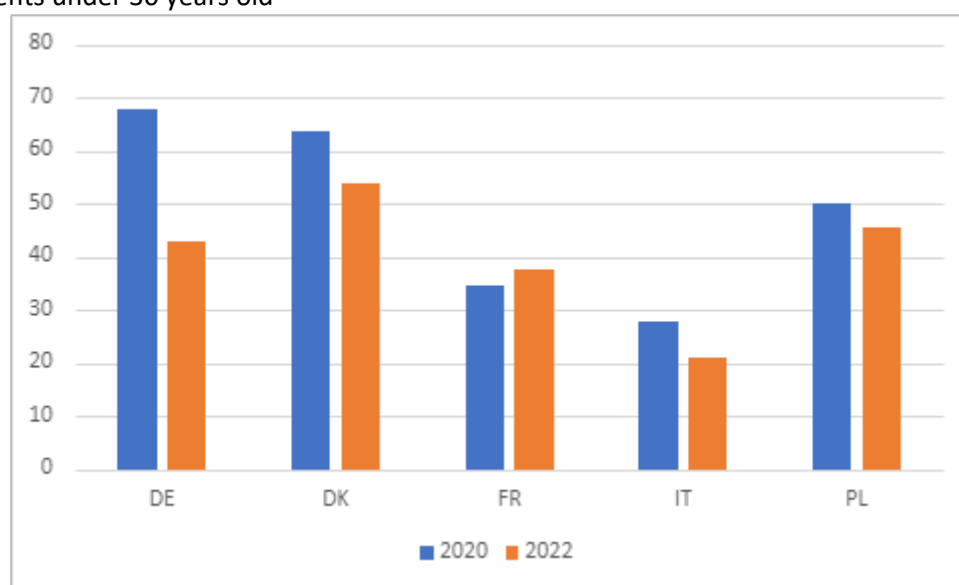
Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe survey (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).

Figure 2 compares young respondents' answers in 2020 and 2022. For all countries, except France, the share of young people agreeing that their voice counted in the EU decreased. The largest drop was



observed in Germany, from 68% in 2020 compared to 43% in 2022. The lowest level is found in Italy, with 21% in 2022. Comparing with respondents aged 30 and older in Figure 3 shows no clear pattern across countries. In Germany, France and Poland, respondents under 30 were less likely to think that their voice counted in the EU, compared to older respondents. The opposite was evident in Denmark and in Italy. The case of France is special in 2022 as the French presidency of the Council of the European Union started in January 2022 and with the start of the war in Ukraine in February, the French president was quite active and present at the EU level. This could explain why French respondents (both young and older) had the feeling that their voice counted in the EU especially during this period compared to 2020.

Figure 2 - Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in the EU, 2020 and 2022 (%)
Respondents under 30 years old

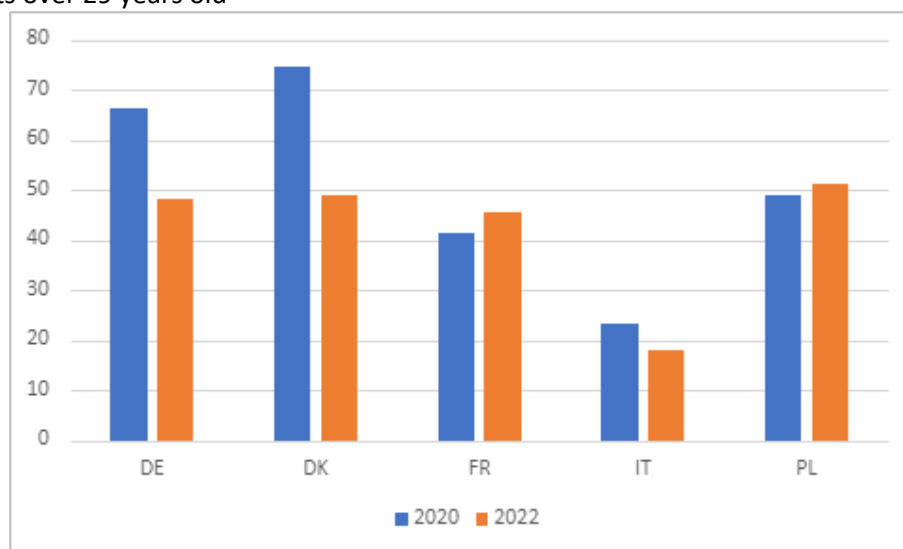


Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in the EU'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 9,6 percentage points.

Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe survey (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).



Figure 3 - Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in the EU, 2020 and 2022 (%)
Respondents over 29 years old



Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in the EU'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 6 percentage points.

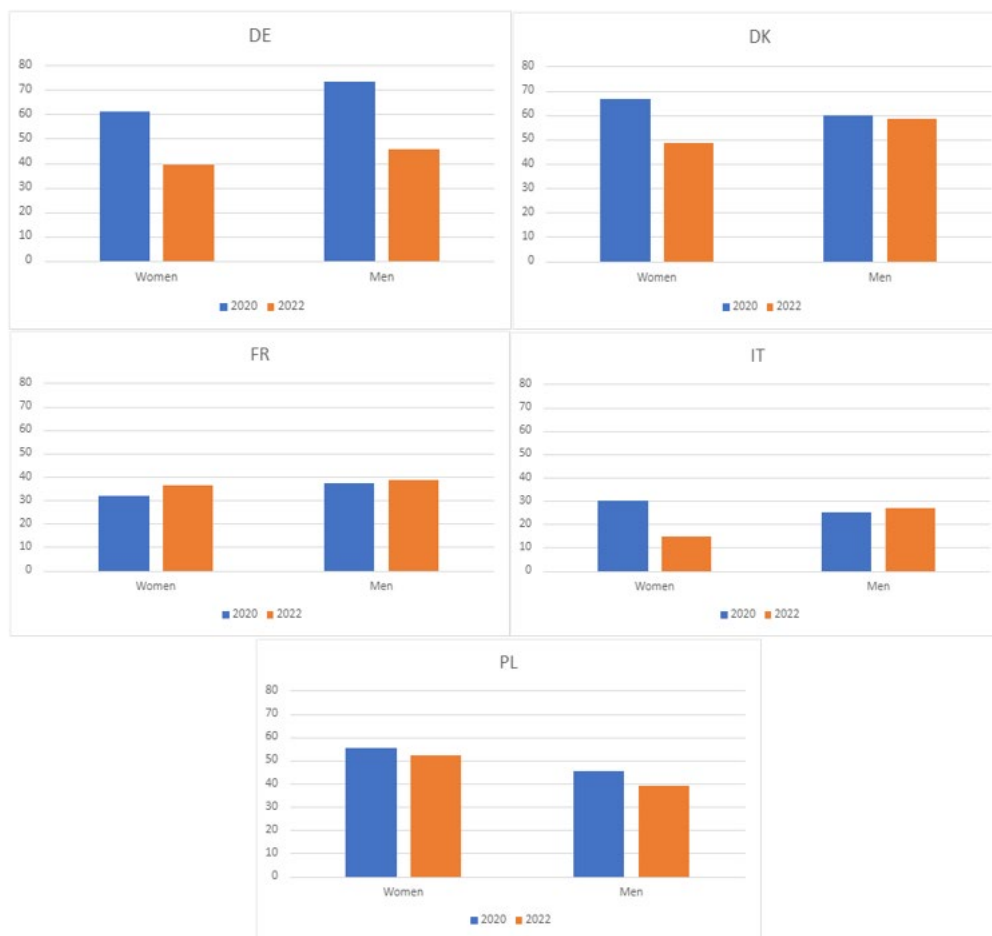
Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe survey (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).

Looking at respondents aged less than 30 years old, some differences can be observed between women and men. In every country except Poland, men tended to think more often that their voice counted in the EU compared to women (Figure 4). In 2022, the difference was especially high in Italy, where 15 % of women agreed, compared to 27 % of men. In Denmark, 59 % of men agreed, compared to 49 % of women. In Poland, 52 % of women agreed, compared to 39 % of men. The lowest gender gap is evident in France (39 % for men and 36 % for women). Older respondents gave similar answers across genders, with more men than women often thinking that their voice counted in the EU. The same pattern is evident in Poland, where men aged 30 or older tended to be more optimistic than women, whereas the opposite is observed for young Poles in 2022. Very little gender difference is observed for older respondents in Denmark (around 50 % agreed in both cases in 2022) (Figure C1 in Appendix C). Comparing with 2020 shows that the share of respondents agreeing that their voice counted in the EU decreased for both women and men in 2022, except in France and for Italian men, for young respondents and for older respondents in France and Poland.



Figure 4 - Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in the EU, by gender, 2020 and 2022 (%)

Respondents under 30 years old



Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in the EU'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 14.3 percentage points.

Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe survey (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).

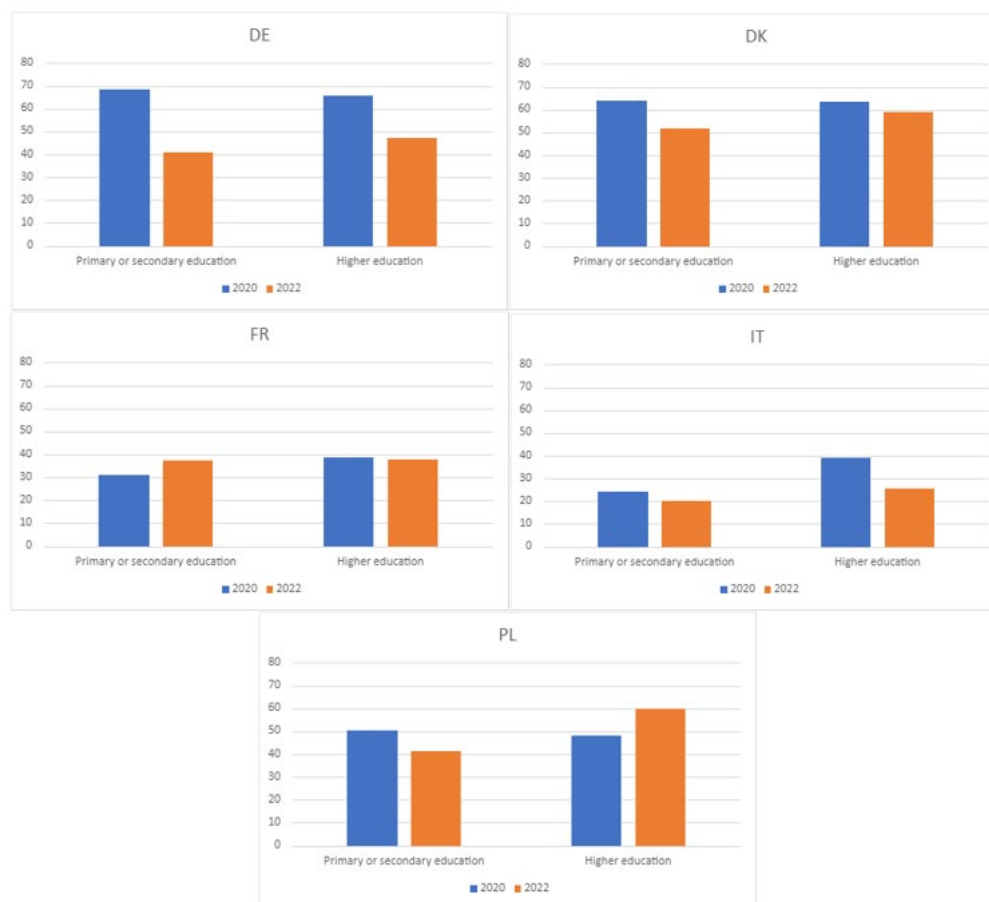
The level of education also seemed to play a role in respondents' views of their voices in the EU. Figure 5 shows that in 2022, young people with a higher level of education tended to think more often that their voice counted. This is especially the case in Poland (60 % of people with higher education, compared to 41 % of people with primary or secondary education). In 2020 no clear pattern was found across countries, the share of young people with higher education agreeing was higher in Germany and France whereas the opposite situation was found in Denmark, Italy and Poland.

For respondents aged 30 years and older, people with higher education also tended to agree more often than respondents with primary and secondary education in 2022, except in France, where higher educated people had a slightly lower share of respondents agreeing that their voice counted in the EU (Figure C2 in Appendix C). In 2020, older respondents with higher education agreed more often than respondents with a lower education level that their voice counted in the EU in all countries.



Figure 5 - Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in the EU, by educational level, 2020 and 2022 (%)

Respondents under 30 years old



Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in the EU'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 14.1 percentage points (for Poland the difference needs to exceed 22.3 percentage points due to smaller sample size).

Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe survey (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).

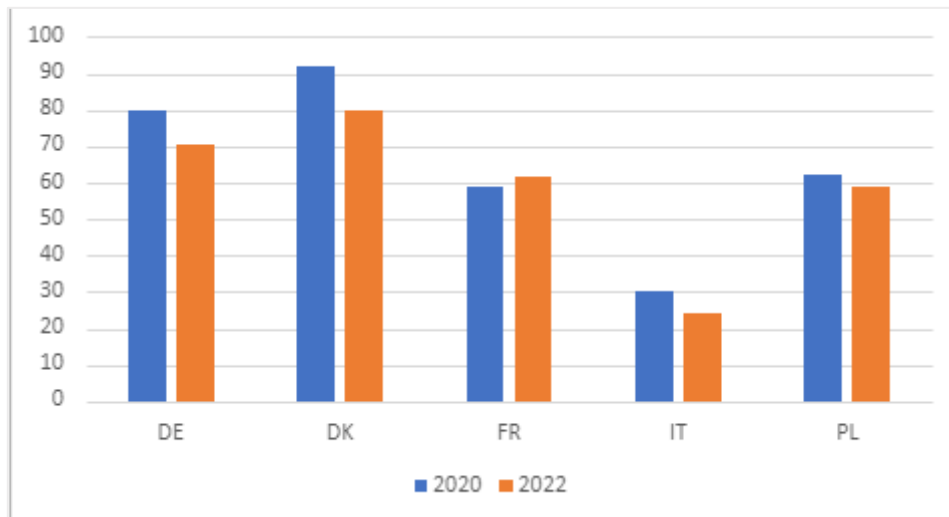
Looking at respondents' perceptions of their voice in their country of residence, the first general observation is that the share of respondents who agreed was higher in all countries than the EU-level question. This is in line with the findings from a 2021 European Parliament study, which found that the level of citizens agreeing that their voice counted in their country was higher than the level for the EU since 2009 (European Parliament, 2021b). Comparing 2020 and 2022, the share of respondents agreeing that their voice counted in their country decreased in 2022, except in France, where the share stayed broadly the same (Figure 6). In 2022, the share of respondents agreeing was especially high in Denmark, with 80 % of respondents agreeing, compared to 70 % in Germany, about 60 % in France and Poland, and 22 % in Italy. The situation in France is particular in 2022 as the Presidential elections were held during spring. These elections are especially important in France and this could



explain why the share of French respondents agreeing that their voice counted in their country was slightly higher in 2022 compared to 2020 (61% compared to 59%).

Figure 6 – Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in their country, 2020 and 2022 (%)

All respondents



Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in the EU'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 4.6 percentage points.

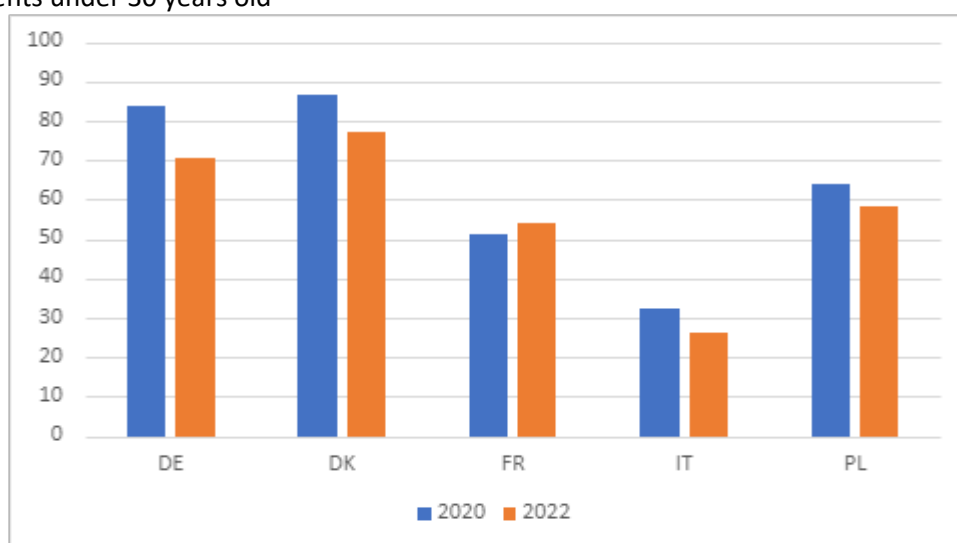
Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).

Comparing Figure 7 and Figure 8 shows that the differences between young and older respondents were negligible, except in France, where 54 % of under-30s thought their voice counted, compared to 64 % of older respondents in 2022.



Figure 7 – Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in their country, 2020 and 2022 (%)

Respondents under 30 years old

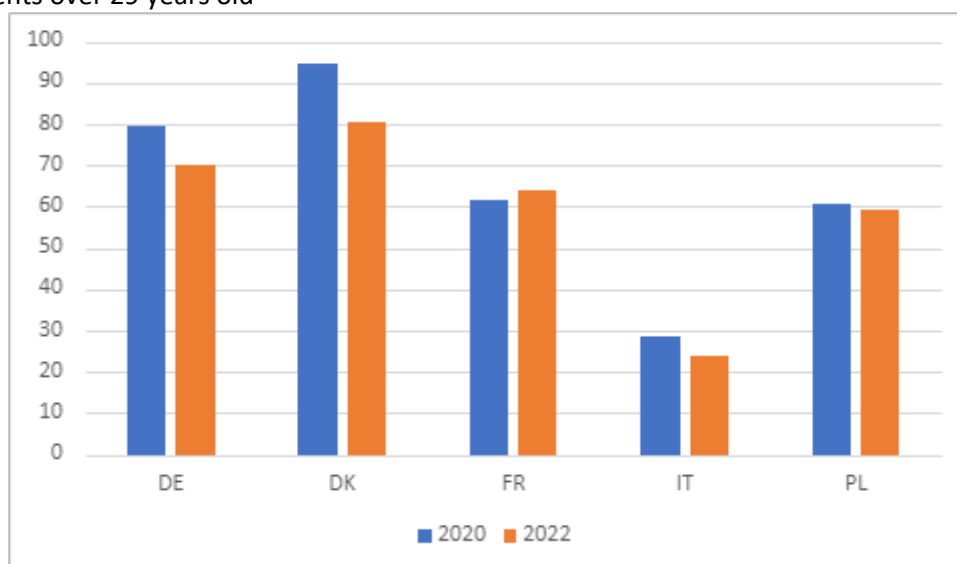


Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in the EU'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 9.6 percentage points.

Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).

Figure 8 – Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in their country, 2020 and 2022 (%)

Respondents over 29 years old



Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in the EU'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 6 percentage points.

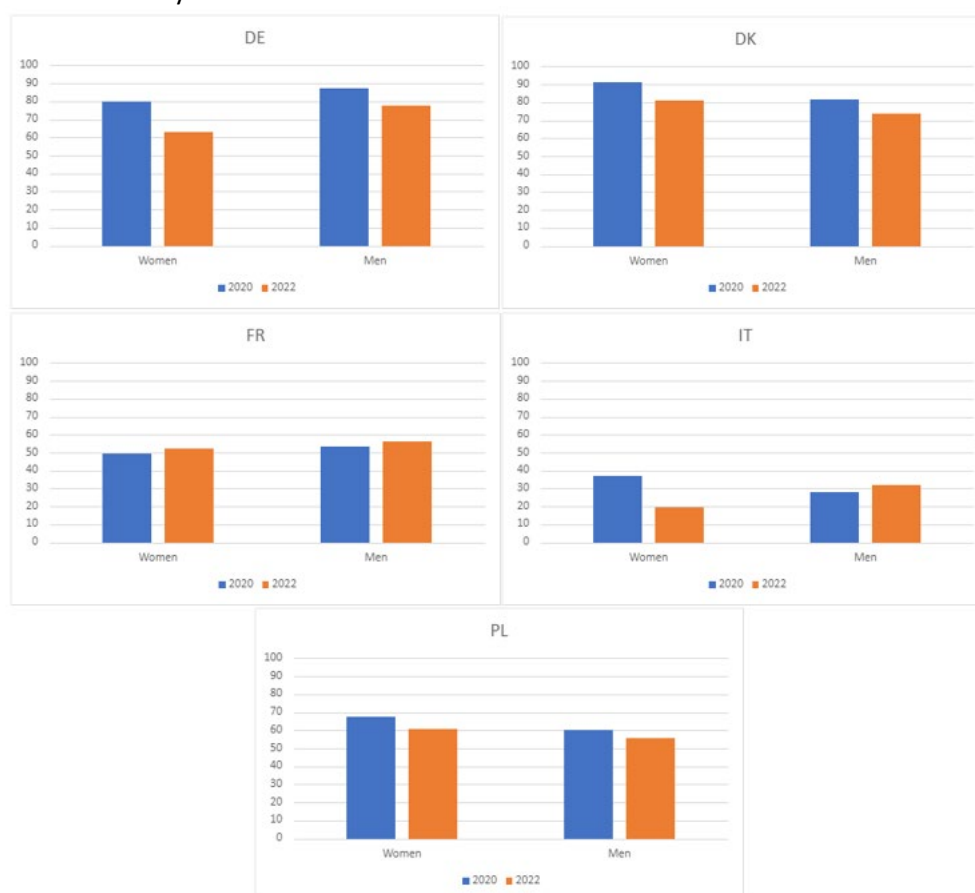
Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).



Gender differences for young respondents were not substantial in 2022 in Denmark, France, and Poland, whereas men tended to agree more often than women in Germany (78 % and 61 %, respectively) and in Italy (31 % and 20 %, respectively) (Figure 9). In general, the gender differences for young people were similar to the earlier EU-level question (Figure 4). Men tended to agree that their voice counted in their country more often than women, except in Poland in 2022. The only difference was in Denmark, where the share of women agreeing that their voice counted was higher at national level (and lower at EU level). Comparing young people with older respondents aged 30 and above, gender differences were similar, except in Italy and Poland in 2022. In Italy, women older than 29 years old tended to agree more than men (29 %, compared to 19 % in 2022). In Poland, almost no gender difference is evident for older respondents (Figure C3 in Appendix C).

Figure 9 - Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in their country, by gender, 2020 and 2022 (%)

Respondents under 30 years old



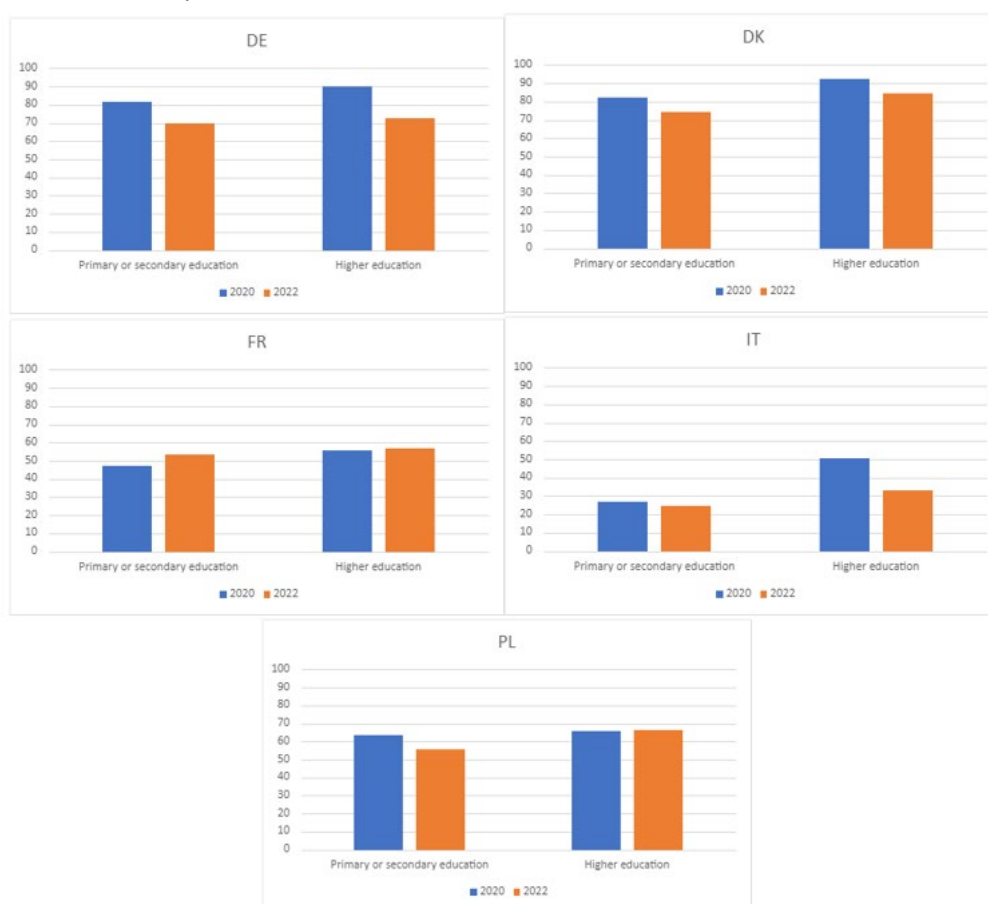
Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in your country'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 14.3 percentage points.

Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe survey (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).



Similar to the EU-level question (Figure 5), young people with a higher level of education in all countries tended to think their voice counted in their country more often than people with primary or secondary education (Figure 10). That share was especially high in Denmark in 2022, with 85 % of young respondents with a higher level of education thinking that their voice counted in the own country. The lowest level was observed in Italy, at 32 %. Comparing with 2020, except in France, the share of young respondents agreeing decreased in 2022, for both low and higher education levels. Similar trends were observed for older respondents (Figure C4 in Appendix C).

Figure 10 - Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in their country, by educational level, 2020 and 2022 (%)
Respondents under 30 years old



Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in your country'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 22.3 percentage points.

Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe survey (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).



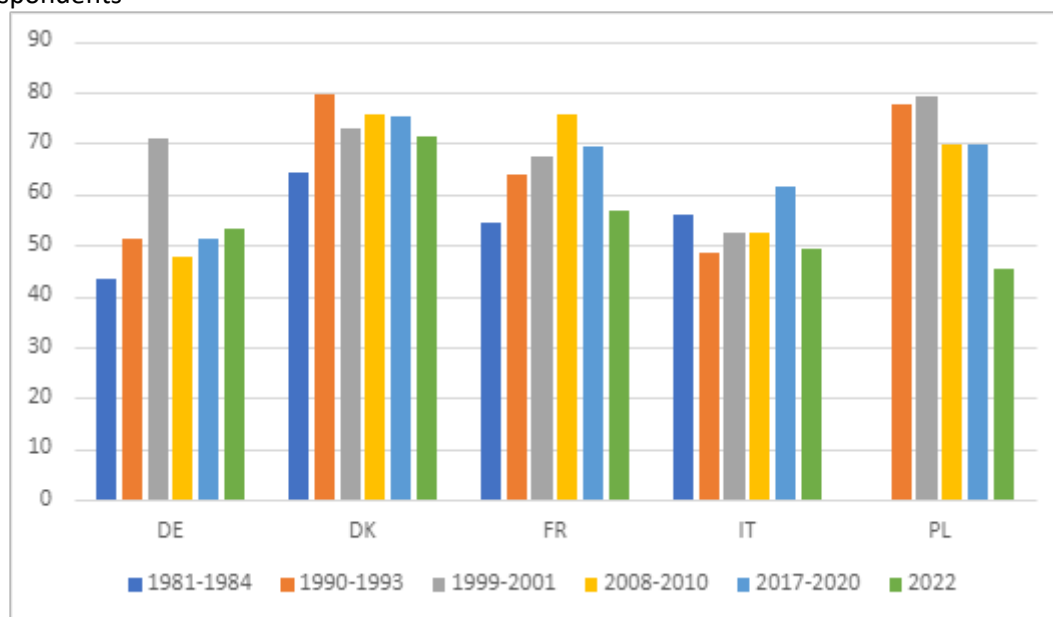
Confidence in the education system

To analyse the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic had affected trust in important institutions, the 2022 HIVA survey asked respondents about their confidence in the education system. The key advantage of this question is that it has been asked in the European Values Survey five times since 1981, allowing comparison of results over 40 years.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, trust in the education system has trended upwards in Germany and Denmark, while remaining broadly unchanged in Italy (Figure 11). In Poland, there was a fall in trust between 1999-2001 and 2008-2010. In France, trust in the education system declined since the 2017-2020 wave. The period of the COVID-19 pandemic changed these trends in the case of Poland and France. In Poland, trust in the education system fell from around 70 % expressing 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' of trust in the education system in 2017 to 45 % in the 2022 HIVA survey. Poland now has the second-lowest measure of trust in the education system measured in 40 years among the five countries. In France, trust in the education system decreased in the 2017-2020 wave compared to 2008-2010, but the decline was particularly substantial after the COVID-19 pandemic, falling from around 70 % trust in 2017-2020 to 57 % in 2022.

Figure 11 - Share of the population with confidence in the education system, 1981-2022 (%)

All respondents



Note: The figure shows the average value of responses to the question 'Please tell us how much confidence you have in the education system'. This figure shows the share of respondents who have 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' of confidence. The response options were 'none at all', 'not very much', 'quite a lot' and 'a great deal'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Within country differences (over time) are statistically significant if they exceed 4.7 percentage points.

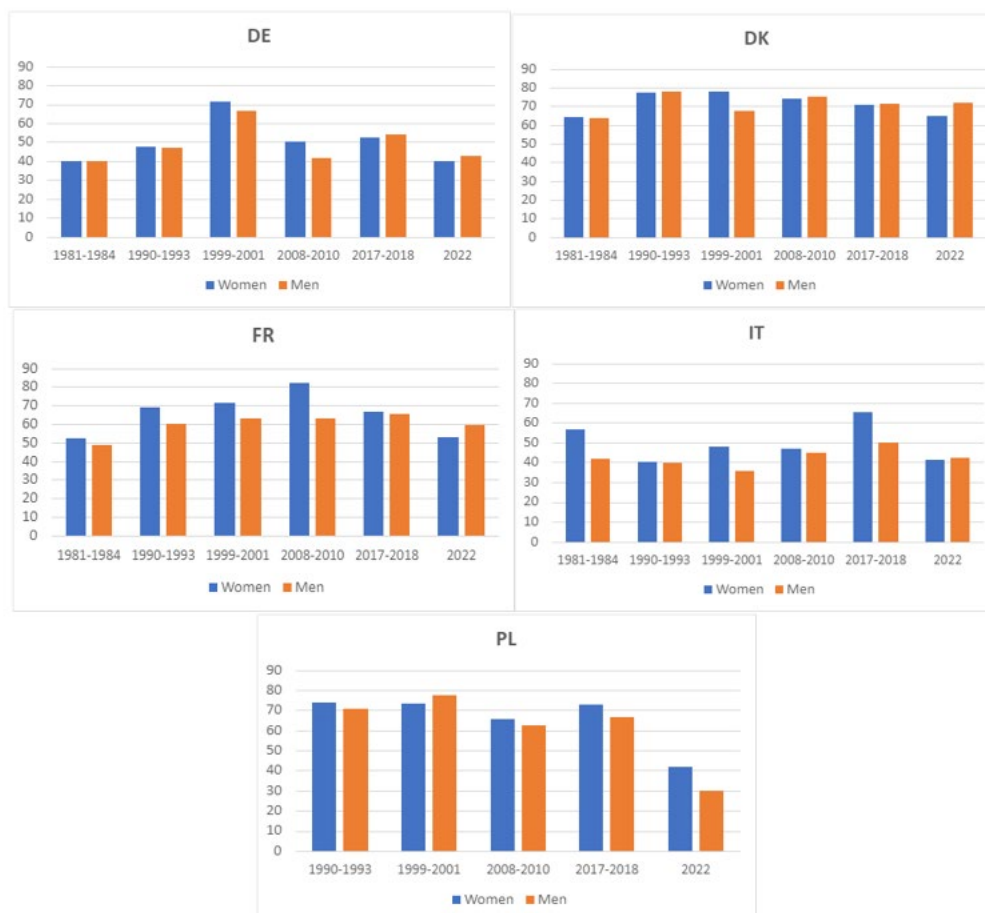
Source: [European Value Survey](#) 1981, 1990, 1999, 2008 and 2017 waves; 2022 HIVA survey. For the last wave of the European Value Survey, interviews were conducted in 2017 and 2018 for the selected countries.



Looking at the age groups of those above and below 30 years, the trends over time and the impact of the recent COVID-19 pandemic were very similar (Figure C5 and Figure C6 in Appendix C). People aged 30 and above tended to have slightly higher trust in the education system. The 2022 HIVA survey found small gender differences for younger respondents (under-30s), with those differences most marked in Denmark, France and Poland. Danish men were 7.5 p.p. more likely to have confidence in the education system compared to women (72 % vs. 64.5 %). In France, men were 6 p.p. points more likely to have confidence in the education system compared to women (59 % vs. 53 %), whereas more women than men have confidence in the education system in Poland (42 % vs. 30 %) (Figure C7 in Appendix C). Figure 12 shows that gender differences among young people over time were small and relatively stable in all countries. In 2022, the gender gap in Poland was the biggest since the first wave in 1990. Regarding educational level, in all five countries, young people with higher education were more likely to express confidence than people with primary or secondary education only (Figure C8 in Appendix C).

Figure 12 - Share of the population with confidence in the education system by gender, 1981-2022 (%)

Respondents under 30 years old



Note: The figure shows the average value of responses to the question 'Please tell us how much confidence you have in the education system'. This figure shows the share of respondents who have 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' of confidence. The response options were 'none at all', 'not very much', 'quite a lot' and 'a great deal'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 10.6 percentage points.

Source: European Value Survey 1981, 1990, 1999, 2008 and 2017 waves and 2022 HIVA survey.

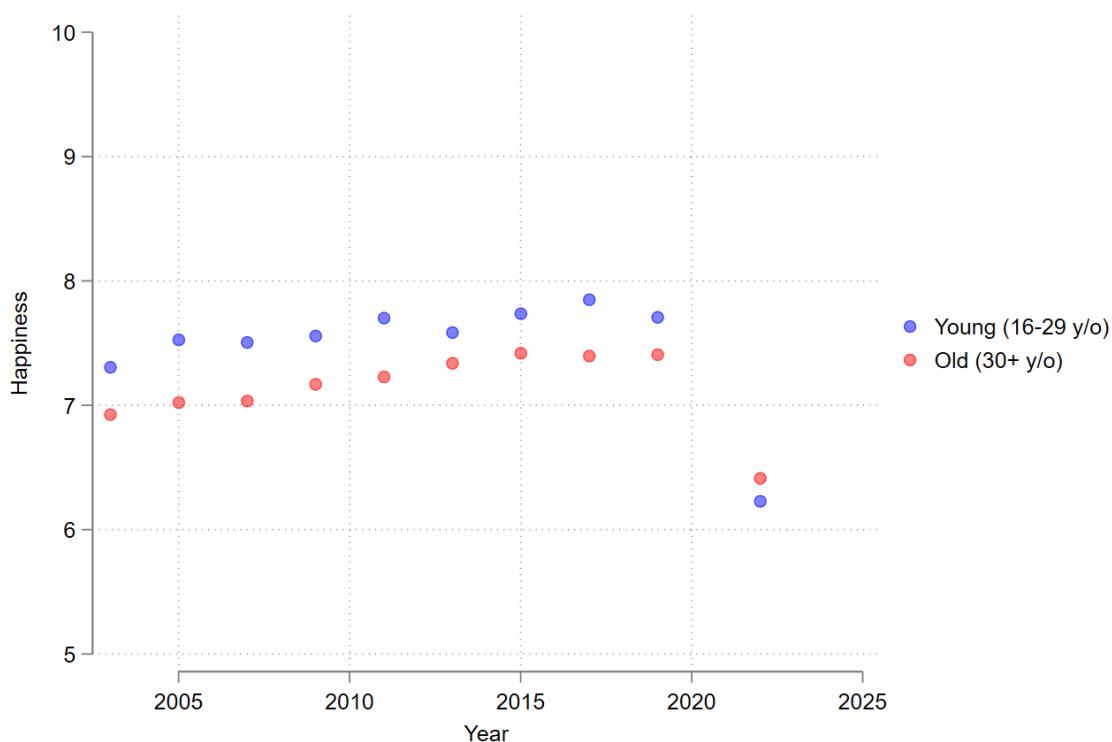


Subjective well-being

The evolution of subjective well-being was examined through the question ‘Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?’, which was answered on a scale from 0 to 10. This question has been asked biannually in the European Social Survey since 2002, with the latest available data collected in 2018-2019. The long time series facilitated an assessment of recent changes since 2018-2019, as well as the scale of those changes from a longer-term perspective.

For the five countries as a whole, subjective well-being decreased markedly, to the lowest level measured over the observed period (Figure 14). While young individuals generally scored higher on subjective well-being compared to their peers, their subjective well-being was affected somewhat more, to a level below that of the over-30s in 2022.

Figure 13 - Evolution in average subjective well-being by age in five EU countries (DE, DK, FR, IT, PL), 2002-2022



Note: This figure shows the average value of responses to the question ‘Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?’, measured on a scale from 0 to 10. Between and within (over time) differences are statistically significant if they exceed 0.15 points on the happiness scale.

Source: [European Social Survey](#) round 1-10 and 2022 HIVA survey.

This picture is quite consistent across the five countries (Figure 14). The only exception was Denmark, where people aged 30 years or above had higher subjective well-being than younger people. However, the fall in reported well-being for the younger group was larger than for the older age group. These

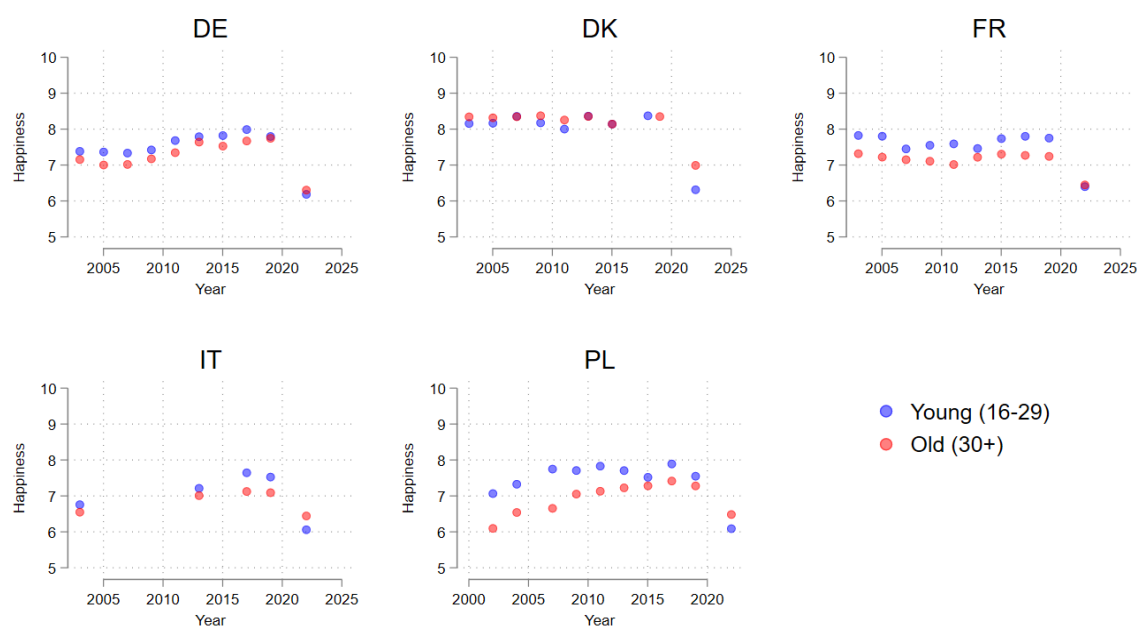


results suggest that the period since 2018-2019 resulted in an unusually large drop in subjective well-being and that younger people were most affected.

The drop in subjective well-being (equivalent to a loss of 0.8 standard deviations relative to 2019) is large and somewhat at odds with other studies (Naumann et al., 2022). They indicate that in France and Germany subjective well-being decreased slightly from the beginning of the pandemic to spring 2021 (0.13 and 0.07 standard deviations, respectively)³⁵. Reconciling these results would imply that subjective well-being decreased markedly in the past year in both countries, and by much more than the fall from pre-pandemic to spring 2020 (as reported by Naumann et al., 2022). The main factor likely to explain such a rapid drop is the onset of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but other external data sources would be needed to validate this.

The fall in subjective well-being was similar across genders for both the old and young age groups (Figure C9 and Figure C10 in Appendix C).

Figure 14 - Evolution in average subjective well-being by age, 2002-2022



Note: This figure shows the average value of responses to the question ‘Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?’, measured on a scale from 0 to 10. Between and within (over time from 2019 to 2022) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 0.3 points on the happiness scale.

Source: [European Social Survey](#) round 1-10 and 2022 HIVA survey.

A drop in subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic was reported in national surveys of young people in Cyprus (from 85 % being ‘quite’ or ‘very’ satisfied with their life in January-February

³⁵ European Social Survey data from wave 10 for France (but not for the other four countries) are now available. These data were collected in autumn 2021 (September to November) and show little change relative to the 2019 wave. Thus, for France at least, the drop in well-being recorded in the 2022 HIVA survey happened between autumn 2021 and May 2022.



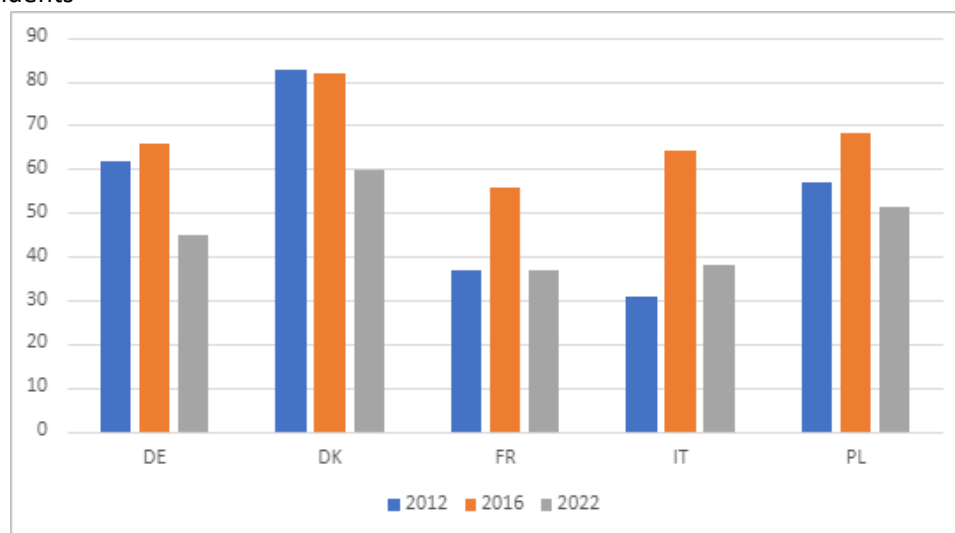
2020, to 70 % in July-August 2021), Luxembourg (41.6 % stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had negatively impacted 'life as a whole', 46.8 % reported no change, and a small minority saw a positive impact), and the Netherlands (the share of young people aged 18-25 stating that they were happy fell from around 90 % to 84 % from the period before COVID-19 until April 2021).

Optimism about the future

To gauge the extent to which perspectives on the future may have changed after the COVID-19 pandemic and compare levels to previous years, respondents were asked how optimistic they were about their future. The same question was part of the EQLS in 2012 and 2016³⁶.

Figure 15 compares the share of the population answering 'strongly agree' or 'agree' when asked if they were optimistic about their future. All five countries showed a marked decrease since 2016 (latest round of the EQLS). While the levels of optimism differ for the five countries, the decreases are very similar at around 20 percentage points. Slightly larger in Denmark and Italy and somewhat smaller in Poland. For France and Italy, it was a reversal to the low level of 2012. The number of people optimistic about their future in 2012 in France and Italy was likely suppressed by the aftermath of the financial crisis and the subsequent ongoing sovereign debt crisis. In Denmark, the most optimistic of the five countries studied, the level of optimism was stable from 2012 to 2016. The fall in 2022 after the COVID-19 pandemic is clear, from 81 % to 60 %.

Figure 15 - Share of population optimistic about their future, 2012, 2016 and 2022 (%)
All respondents



Note: The figure shows percentage of population answering 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: I am optimistic about my future'. The response options were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 4.6 percentage points.

Source: [European Quality of Life Survey](#) 2012 and 2016 waves and 2022 HIVA survey.

The trends for the full sample were broadly mirrored in both the young and old age groups (Figure C11 and Figure C12 in Appendix C), with the fall in the share of people feeling optimistic about their

³⁶ This question was not included in EQLS 2007. In 2003, the answer options were different.



future being larger among the older age group in Germany and France, and no evident differences in the other three countries. There were generally no gender differences, except in France where in 2016 young women were more optimistic, on average, compared to young men (Figure C12 in Appendix C). In 2022, however, this pattern reversed as in France women (men) experienced a large (small) drop in optimism, with young men now generally feeling more optimistic than their female counterparts.

CONCLUSION

This study looked at the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various socioeconomic issues. It focused on the impact on young people and, where possible, compared it to the impact on older people. The



results were drawn from a review of existing comparable international studies, surveys from the OECD, ILO, Eurofound and the European Parliament. The study also looked at large national surveys in 12 Member States.

To complement the findings extracted from these surveys and gain a longer-term perspective on any changes, the 2022 HIVA survey was designed, including questions on self-reported levels of well-being, optimism about the future, and trust in institutions. More specifically, the survey asked respondents whether they felt their voice counted in the EU and in their country of residence, and about their confidence in the education system; their level of happiness; and their optimism about their future. The survey was fielded in Denmark, Germany, France, Italy and Poland. A key added value was the use of identical questions from previous surveys (European Social Survey, European Values Survey, EQS, Eurobarometer Future of Europe surveys).

Based on the literature review of international surveys, young people were found to be disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 crisis in different ways. They were more likely to reduce their working hours or lose their jobs, while those still in the education system had a more difficult transition to the labour market, where there were fewer vacancies and work opportunities. Their self-reported mental health was substantially affected and the reported risk of depression or anxiety was higher than for older groups. These negative impacts were evident in young people's perspectives on the future. Despite remaining more optimistic than the rest of the population, young people reported fearing the long-lasting effects of the pandemic on their financial or housing situation and career opportunities. Their trust in their government and in the EU was negatively impacted by COVID-19 restriction measures, but nevertheless remained higher than that of older groups.

The HIVA survey was conducted in May 2022, after the onset of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, meaning that the results cannot be linked to the impact of COVID-19 alone. The results from the five countries broadly match the findings from the literature, although the 2022 HIVA survey found small effects across age groups, with the exception of the expression of subjective well-being (happiness). Subjective well-being decreased markedly, reaching the lowest level measured since the European Social Survey began in 2002. Young people's subjective well-being was affected slightly more, falling below that of the over-30s (having previously been higher than over-30s). This picture was quite consistent across the five countries. The results suggest that the period since 2018-2019 prompted an unusually substantial drop in subjective well-being and that younger people were more affected than people over the age of 30 years.

The observed large drop in subjective well-being contradicted other studies' findings (Naumann et al., 2022). Compared to our study, only France and Germany had comparable results, showing a slight decrease in subjective well-being from the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to spring 2021. The discrepancy may reflect different wording in the questions used to study subjective well-being³⁷. Another factor might be the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which predated the 2022 HIVA survey. The latter is likely a more significant reason, but implies that subjective well-being decreased

³⁷ Results in this research note are based on four questions: 'In the past two weeks, have there been times when you felt happy?', 'How satisfied are you with the following areas of your life? With my work?, with my family?', 'How satisfied are you currently with your life overall?' and 'On a 0-10 scale, how happy are you?'



markedly as a result of the war, and by more than the fall from pre-pandemic to spring 2020 – a period of extreme stress on populations in France and Germany due to lockdowns. Additional external data sources would be needed to further investigate and draw firmer conclusions³⁸. Both studies found only minor differences in well-being among different age groups.

The results for subjective well-being were mirrored in the expression of optimism about the future, with all five countries showing a large fall in optimism. That decrease did not vary by age, except in Germany and France, where the negative change was greater for the over-30s.

The share of people expressing confidence in the education system fell substantially in France, Italy and Poland compared to 2017-2018. For Italy, this was a reversal to the levels from 1981 to 2010, whereas Poles now reported their lowest level of confidence in the education system since 1990. The changes in Germany and Denmark were small, with little difference in the developments of confidence in the education system between the young and old age categories.

Since October/November 2020, Denmark and Germany saw large decreases in the share of young people believing that their voice counted in the EU. More young people agreed that their voice counted in their own country, but the share fell markedly here too. In Italy, that reduction was less strong, but the share of young people agreeing that their voice counted was already very low. France and Poland showed only small changes in this area.

³⁸ European Social Survey data from wave 10 are due to be released in autumn 2022 and may shed more light on the expected well-being effects of the war in Ukraine for the five countries surveyed here. Those data were collected in autumn 2021 (September to November), with the same question wording as the 2022 HIVA survey in May 2022.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEYS

Description of international surveys

Table A: International surveys

Survey	Website	Date	Young people definition	Sample size	Sampling	Executing agency
OECD: Young people's concerns during COVID-19: Results from risks that matter (2020)	https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/young-people-s-concerns-during-COVID-19-results-from-risks-that-matter-2020-64b51763/	One round: September-October 2020	18-29 years old	25 000 respondents from 25 countries, about one-quarter of the respondents per country were young people (250 per country)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not representative • Implemented online using samples recruited via the Internet and over the Phone by Respondi Ltd • Remunerated survey • Sampling quota and weights based on sex, age, education level, income level, employment status 	OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs
ILO: Global Survey on Youth and COVID-19	https://www.ilo.org/budapest/whats-new/WCMS_753026/lang-en/index.htm	One round: April-May 2020	18-29 years old	12 605 respondents from 112 countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not representative • Online snowball sampling survey • Weighted by age, gender, country youth population 	Joint work: ILO, UN Major Group for Children and Youth, AIESEC, the European Youth Forum, the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, UN refugee Agency (UNHCR)



Eurofound: Living, Working and COVID-19 e-survey	https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef20036en.pdf	1 st round: April 2020 2 nd round: June-July 2020 3 rd round: February-March 2021	15-29 years old	1 st round: 68 000 respondents (7 381 young people) 2 nd round: 24 100 respondents (2 143 young people) 3 rd round: 46 800 respondents (3 828 young people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not representative • Survey online, via social media • Weighted by age, gender, education, urbanisation level, country 	Eurofound
European Parliament: Flash Eurobarometer: European Parliament Youth Survey	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/files/be-heard/eurobarometer/2021/youth-survey-2021/report.pdf	One round: June 2021	16-30 years old	18 156 respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer-Assisted Web Interviewing (CAWI) • Respondents selected from online access panels, groups of pre-recruited individuals who have agreed to take part in research • Sampling quota based on age, gender, geographical region 	Ipsos European Public Affairs

Table B: National surveys

Country	Survey	Website	Date	Young people definition	Sample size	Sampling	Executing agency
Austria	Austrian Corona Panel Data	https://viecer.univie.ac.at/en/projects-and-co-operations/austrian-corona-panel-project/austrian-corona-panel-data/method-report/	Ongoing, 28 waves since March 2020	/	Between 1 500 and 1 600 respondents per wave Age: 14-70+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveyed via computer or mobile devices -Sampled from a pre-existing online access panel -Sampling quotas based on age, gender, region, municipality size, education level 	Universität Wien - Marketagent.com online research GmbH



Cyprus	Youth Barometer	https://youthpolicy.onek.org.cy/portfolio-item/apotelesmata-erevnon/	1 st round: January-February 2020 2 nd round: November-December 2020 3 rd round: July-August 2021	14-35	1 st round: 1 000 2 nd round: 1 000 3 rd round: 1 000	-Selected using random stratified sampling technique -Surveyed by phone, online, in-person	IMR/University of Nicosia
Denmark	Survey on impact on health, mental health and working conditions	https://www.sdu.dk/da/sif/forskning/projekter/coronarelateret_forskning	1 st round: September-December 2019 2 nd round: September-December 2020	/	1 st round: 6 629 respondents 2 nd round: 6 687 respondents 5 000 respondents answered both rounds Age: 15-75	- Questionnaires sent via email (eBox)	Syddansk Universitet (SDU)
Estonia	COVID-19 surveys	https://www.riigikantselei.ee/uuringud	Ongoing, 37 waves since March 2020	/	Between 1 200 and 2 100 respondents Age: 15+	-Combined method of online and telephone interviews - Representative in terms of regions, settlement type, gender, age, ethnicity	State Chancellery commissioned the survey
France	Coping with COVID-19	https://www.sciencespo.fr/osc/en/node/2232.html	2 rounds: April 2020 2 rounds: May 2020 1 round: autumn 2020	/	1 400 respondents Age: 18-75	- Internet panel, -Representative of the French population via random sampling from census data (ELIPPS)	Sciences Po
Germany	Mannheim Corona Study	https://www.uni-mannheim.de/en/gip/corona-study/	Every week from 20 March to 10 July 2020	/	3 600 respondents Age: 16-75	-Voluntary online survey -Panel based on a random probability sample of the general population	University of Mannheim



Luxembourg	Young People and COVID-19 (YAC)	https://wwen.uni.lu/fhse/news_events/pan-demographic_year_2_study_on_young_people_in_luxembourg	1st round: June-July 2020 2nd round: August-September 2021	12-29	1st round: 3 768 2 nd round: 2 986	-Stratified random sample from the National Registry of Natural Persons -Online survey -Weighted by gender, age, residential district	University of Luxembourg
The Netherlands	Perceptions survey	https://www.cbs.nl/en-gb/onze-diensten/methods/surveys/korte-onderzoeken-beschrijvingen/perceptions	One round: February-April 2021	12-24	8 000 respondents	- Online survey - Random sample of individual respondents on the basis of the Personal Records Database (BRP) - Weighted by age, sex, marital status, migration background, household size, standardised household income, province, degree of urbanisation	Statistics Netherlands (CBS)
Poland	Next Generation Poland	https://www.britishcouncil.org/research-policy-insight/research-reports/next-generation-poland	One round: August-September 2020	18-30	2 000 respondents	- Online survey - CAWI method - Representative in terms of age group, gender, size of settlement, education	British Council
Slovenia	Youth 2020	https://dk.um.si/Dokument.php?id=154895	One round: August-October 2020	15-29	1 200 respondents	- In-person and online survey - Sampling based on data from the Central Population Register of Slovenia - Weighted by gender, age, type of settlement, region	University of Maribor and University of Ljubljana
Sweden	Omtanke	https://ki.se/en/node/87454	Monthly rounds from June 2020-June 2021	/	29 000 respondents Age: 18-94	- Participants invited through (social) media campaigns and personal invitation via ongoing studies at Karolinska Institutet	Karolinska Institutet



Description of national surveys

This section provides an overview of the national surveys, their content relevant to the 2022 HIVA survey, and available results.

Austria

The University of Vienna has run the Austrian Corona Panel Project since the first wave in March 2020. The survey is a panel of around 1 500 participants that is still running at monthly intervals. There are currently 31 waves of data collection (Kittel et al., 2021). The survey is well cited but does not appear to focus on specific age groups in the results published to date.

Cyprus

In Cyprus, three surveys of young people (14-35-year-olds) were conducted by the Youth Board in the period 2020-2021. Around 1 000 randomly sampled people were interviewed in each round. Data collection for the first survey was finished in February 2020, just before the outbreak of COVID-19 in Europe. The main purpose of the survey was to monitor ‘the views and perceptions of young people aged 14-35 in Cyprus’ (IMR, 2020a; IMR, 2020b; IMR, 2021)³⁹.

Two results of direct relevance to the 2022 HIVA survey are reported in the short summary studies. Life satisfaction of young people fell in the period between the first survey in January-February 2020 (pre-COVID) and July-August 2021 (3rd round), from 85 % being ‘quite’ or ‘very’ satisfied with their life, to 70 %. The decrease in life satisfaction was larger for the 2nd round (from November-December 2020), when it stood at 64 %. The second question relates to optimism about the future, which was affected at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. It fell from 80 % of respondents being optimistic about their future to 61 % in the second round. However, it returned to 80 % in the third round of the survey.

Denmark

University of Southern Denmark (SDU) ran a survey in September-November 2020 to investigate the consequences of the pandemic on health, mental health, employment and working conditions. The survey is a panel survey in that the same people who participated in the 2019 European Health Survey in Denmark were invited to participate in the COVID-19 survey (Møller et al., 2021). Results based on age groups are not (yet) publicly available, but special data extractions based on the age groups of under-35 (young) and over-35 (old) show that the share of young people with moderate to severe depressive symptoms increased from 14 % to 18 %. For the older sample, the increase was from 6 % to 8 %⁴⁰. A similar data extraction was carried out to look at differences in changes in mental health. Results showed that among young people, the share with low mental well-being increased from 21 % to 27 %, whereas the increase for older people was from 15 % to 18 %.

³⁹ Only limited information is available online, and the description here relies on the three short summary reports – one for each wave – references in the main text.

⁴⁰ With thanks to Lau Caspar Thygesen for providing the data extractions based on age groups.



A second study is based on the Danish Blood Donor Study, which had some 70 000+ participants (Unnarsdóttir et al., 2021). Three waves of interviews were conducted, starting in May 2000 and with the last round in August 2021. This study is part of the COVIDMENT project (see below).

France

In France, a survey was carried out in spring and autumn 2020 to assess the social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic: the COping with COvid-19 dataset (COCO). Topics included social practices, sociability, household arrangements, life plans, mental health conditions and socio-political attitudes. Based on the ELIPSS longitudinal survey, 1 400 people aged 18-75 were interviewed via an online survey. Unfortunately, the total number of young respondents (<34 years old) was limited (around 100 people, making it difficult to draw conclusions on the impact of COVID-19 on young people.

Germany

The Mannheim Corona Study was an intensive panel survey that followed some 3 600 respondents for 16 weeks between March and July 2020. The panel was the same as for the bimonthly German Internet Panel (GIP) survey that ran prior to the COVID-19 outbreak and continued throughout the pandemic. The survey included questions (in some waves) on satisfaction with work and family life (Möhring et al., 2020), but results were not reported for different age groups.

Italy

The University of Milan carried out a survey in four waves (first wave in April-July 2020 and last wave in December 2021) to study the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Italy under the project ReSPOnSE Covid-19 (Italian Public Opinion Response to the COVID-19 Emergency). More than 30 000 respondents were interviewed over the four waves (Naumann et al., forthcoming). However, there is little information available in English on results and methodology.

Lithuania

Under the project 'Social Policy Responses to the Consequences of the COVID-19 Crisis: Analysis of the Unemployment and Poverty Situation, International Experience and Recommendations for Lithuania', researchers from Vilnius University conducted a representative survey in November 2020 of around 1 000 people aged 18-74 years (Brazienė et al., 2020). Again, little information is available in English on the results.

Luxembourg

The University of Luxembourg ran two surveys focusing on young people aged 12-29 years. The first survey took place between August and September 2020 and the second followed around one year later. Some 3 000 young people were surveyed and preliminary results reported (Residori et al., 2020; Schomaker et al., 2021). As the survey focuses on young people, it does not allow for comparison of results with older age groups. Similar to the 2022 HIVA survey, respondents were asked to indicate the negative or positive impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various areas of life. Mental health and expectations about the future had deteriorated, and the same was true for subjective well-being, as measured by responses to the state of 'your life as a whole'.



The Netherlands

As part of its annual Perception Survey, the Central Statistical Office (CBS) of the Netherlands interviewed around 2 000 young people (12-25 years) from February to April 2021 about their life situation (CBS, 2021). A modest decrease in both happiness and life satisfaction was reported compared to previous years. The share of young people between 18 and 25 years stating that they were happy fell from around 90 % to 84 %. A similar decrease was reported for life satisfaction. Due to the survey design – with a focus on young people only – it was not possible to compare outcomes with older age groups.

Poland

The Next Generation Poland survey (financed by the British Council) interviewed around 2 000 young people (18-30 years) during 2020 (British Council, 2020). The aim was to better understand young people's attitudes and aspirations, and support better policy-making in the areas affecting young people. While some of the questions concerned the same domains explored here, it is difficult to compare results, given the lack of comparison to pre-COVID-19 outcomes.

Slovenia

Two surveys in Slovenia were relevant to the research questions examined here. The Youth Survey (Mladina 2020 study) from University of Maribor and University of Ljubljana was conducted from August to October 2020. Around 1 200 young people aged between 15 and 29 years were interviewed (Deželan, 2021). It was a broad survey, covering several topics related to conditions for young people and their well-being. Similar surveys were run in 2000 and 2010, making it possible to compare responses over time, though the long time span between surveys made it difficult to attribute changes to the COVID-19 pandemic alone. The second survey was the SI-PANDA panel data survey, which has run for 19 rounds since the outbreak of the pandemic. Unfortunately, there is little documentation of results in English⁴¹. Interestingly, the Slovenia Youth Survey reported a broad measure of trust in 'institutions and politicians', where around 55 % of young people stated that they have no influence over authorities (Deželan, 2021). This number was unchanged since 2010.

The Youth Survey had two questions on views of the future - the personal future and societal future. There was an increase in the share of people envisioning a better personal future since 2010, but the share of young people thinking that the future for society will be 'the same' (whether worse or better) or 'better' has shrunk. Concerns about unemployment for young people declined since 2018⁴². The share of people not concerned about finding employment increased from 19 % to 40 % from 2018 to 2020. Related to trust in institutions and politicians, around 55 % of young people agreed that they had *no* influence on the work of authorities, unchanged since 2010.

⁴¹ The Slovenian language website for the SI-PANDA project is available at: [Results of si-panda panel survey | www.nijz.si](https://www.nijz.si/en/results-of-si-panda-panel-survey)

⁴² Fear of unemployment as a problem was measured in 2018 as part of the Youth Survey Slovenia (Popadić et al., 2019).



COVIDMENT project (Denmark, Estonia, Scotland, Sweden and Iceland, Norway)

Denmark, Estonia, Scotland and Sweden, together with Iceland and Norway, participated in the COVIDMENT project⁴³. Harmonised panel surveys administered from March 2020 to August 2021 in the six countries measured mental health, and happiness, among other things (Unnarsdóttir et al., 2021). There has been limited reporting of the findings. In total over the period considered, young people (aged 18-29 years old) were most at risk of depressive symptoms in all six countries, but there was no comparison made to the pre-pandemic period.

⁴³ [Mental Morbidity trajectories in COVID-19 - COVIDMENT](#)



APPENDIX 2: EUROPEAN YOUTH GOALS

The 11 European Youth Goals are a collection of goals representing young people's vision for youth policy in the EU. Developed during the 6th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue and based on a non-representative 2018 Europe-wide survey, the Youth Goals are implemented by EU Youth Dialogue and included in the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027⁴⁴:

1. Connecting EU with youth: foster the sense of young people belonging to the European project and build a bridge between the EU and young people to regain trust and increase participation.
2. Equality of all genders: ensure equality of all genders and gender-sensitive approaches in all areas of the life of a young person.
3. Inclusive societies: enable and ensure the inclusion of all young people in society.
4. Information and constructive dialogue - access to reliable information: ensure that young people have better access to reliable information, support their ability to evaluate information critically, and engage in participatory and constructive dialogue.
5. Mental health and well-being: achieve better mental well-being and end stigmatisation of mental health issues, thus promoting social inclusion of all young people.
6. Moving rural youth forward: create conditions that enable young people to fulfil their potential in rural areas.
7. Quality employment for all: guarantee an accessible labour market with opportunities that lead to quality jobs for all young people.
8. Quality learning: integrate and improve different forms of learning, equipping young people for the challenges of an ever-changing life in the 21st century.
9. Space and participation for all: strengthen young people's democratic participation and autonomy, as well as providing dedicated youth spaces in all areas of society.
10. Sustainable Green Europe: achieve a society in which all young people are environmentally active, educated, and able to make a difference in their everyday lives.
11. Youth organisations and European programmes: ensure equal access for all young people to youth organisations and European youth programmes, building a society based on European values and identity.

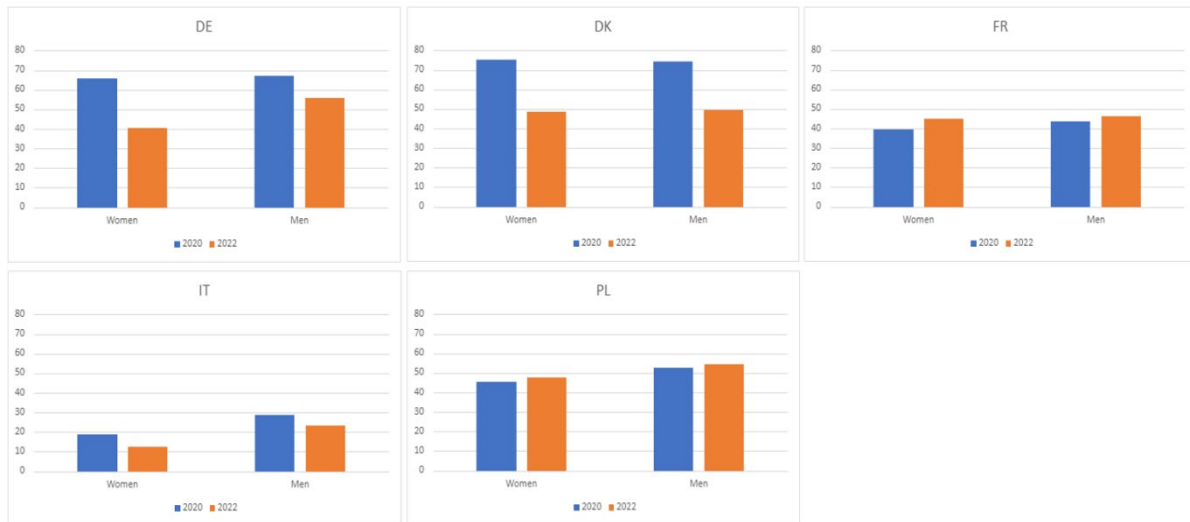
⁴⁴ <https://youth-goals.eu/>



APPENDIX 3: DETAILS FROM THE 2022 HIVA SURVEY

Figure C1 - Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in the EU, by gender, 2022 (%)

Respondents over 29 years old

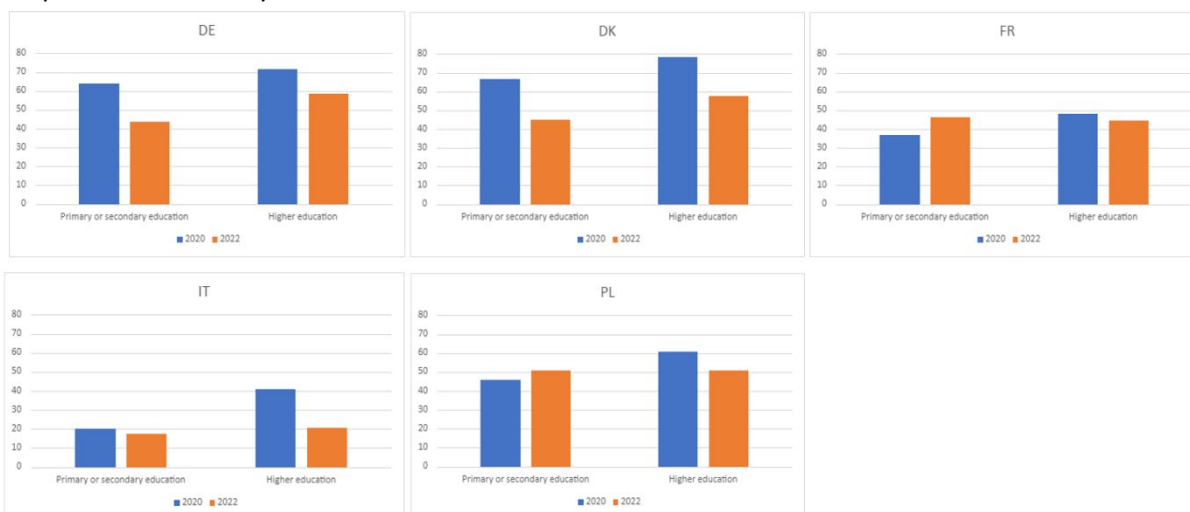


Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in the EU'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 9.4 percentage points.

Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe survey (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).

Figure C2 - Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in the EU, by educational level, 2022 (%)

Respondents over 29 years old



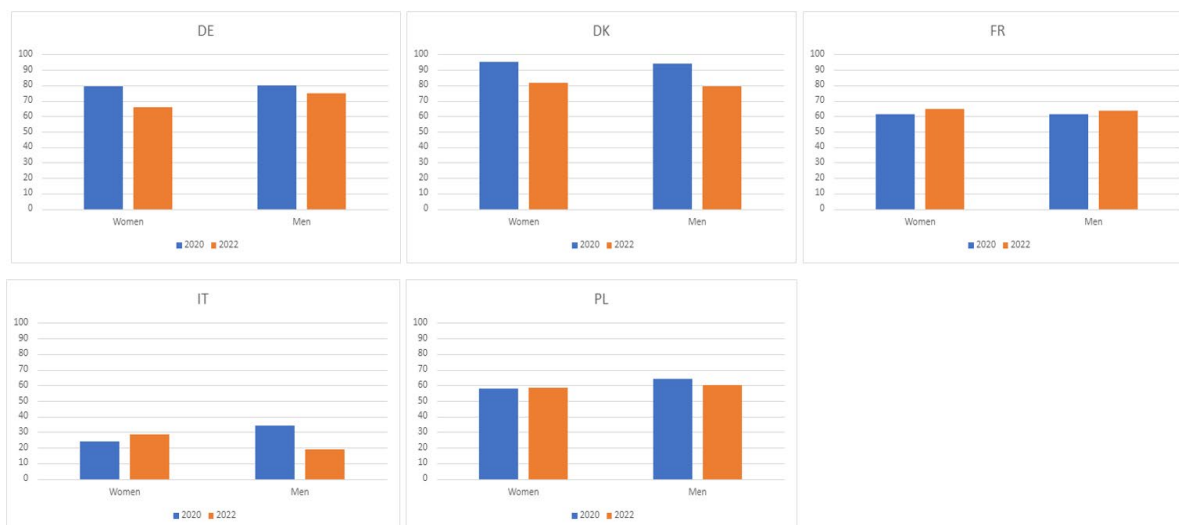
Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in the EU'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 12.6 percentage points.

Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe survey (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).



Figure C3 - Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in their country, by gender, 2022 (%)

Respondents over 29 years old

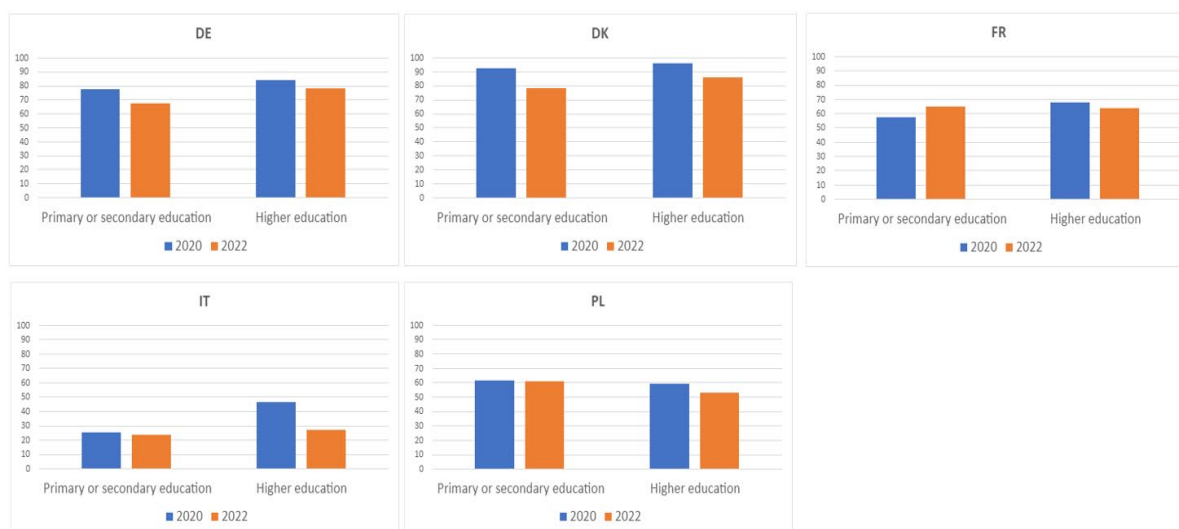


Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in your country'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 9.4 percentage points.

Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe survey (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).

Figure C4 - Share of the population agreeing that their voice counted in their country, by educational level, 2020 and 2022 (%)

Respondents over 29 years old

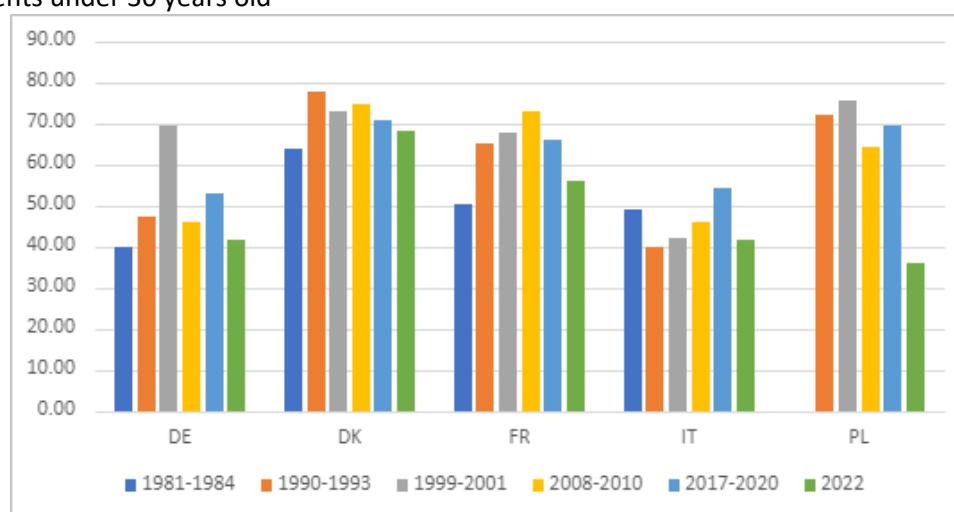


Note: The figure shows the share of respondents who answered 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: my voice counts in your country'. The response options were 'totally agree', 'tend to agree', 'tend to disagree' and 'totally disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 12.6 percentage points.

Source: Eurobarometer Future of Europe survey (data collection in October-November 2020) and 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).



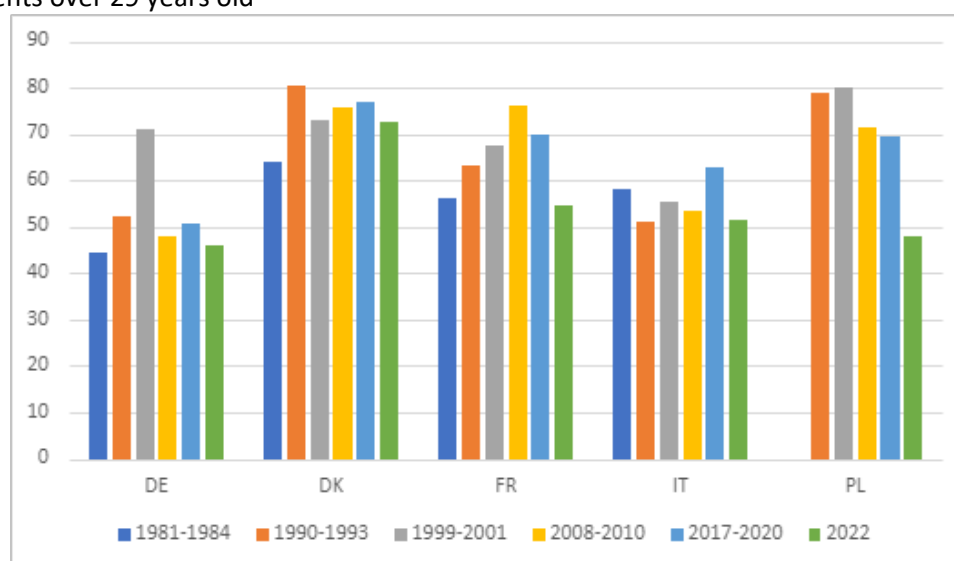
Figure C5 - Share of the population with confidence in the education system, 1981-2022 (%)
Respondents under 30 years old



Note: The figure shows the average value of responses to the question 'Please tell us how much confidence you have in the education system'. This figure shows the share of respondents who have 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' of confidence. The response options were 'none at all', 'not very much', 'quite a lot' and 'a great deal'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option.- Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 9 percentage points.

Source: [European Value Survey](#) 1981, 1990, 1999, 2008 and 2017 waves and 2022 HIVA survey.

Figure C6 - Share of the population with confidence in the education system, 1981-2022 (%)
Respondents over 29 years old

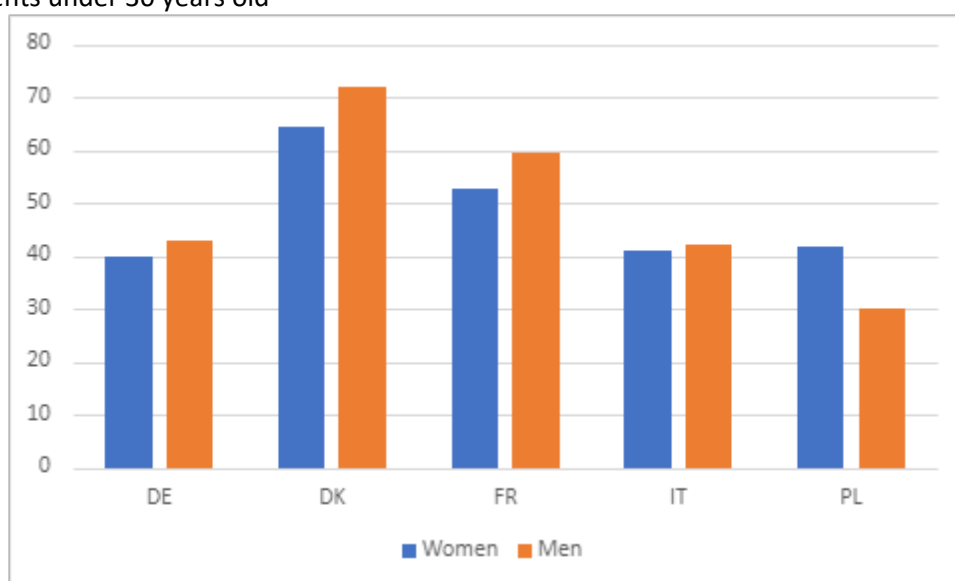


Note: The figure shows the average value of responses to the question 'Please tell us how much confidence you have in the education system'. This figure shows the share of respondents who have 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal' of confidence. The response options were 'none at all', 'not very much', 'quite a lot' and 'a great deal'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 6.1 percentage points.

Source: [European Value Survey](#) 1981, 1990, 1999, 2008 and 2017 waves and 2022 HIVA survey.

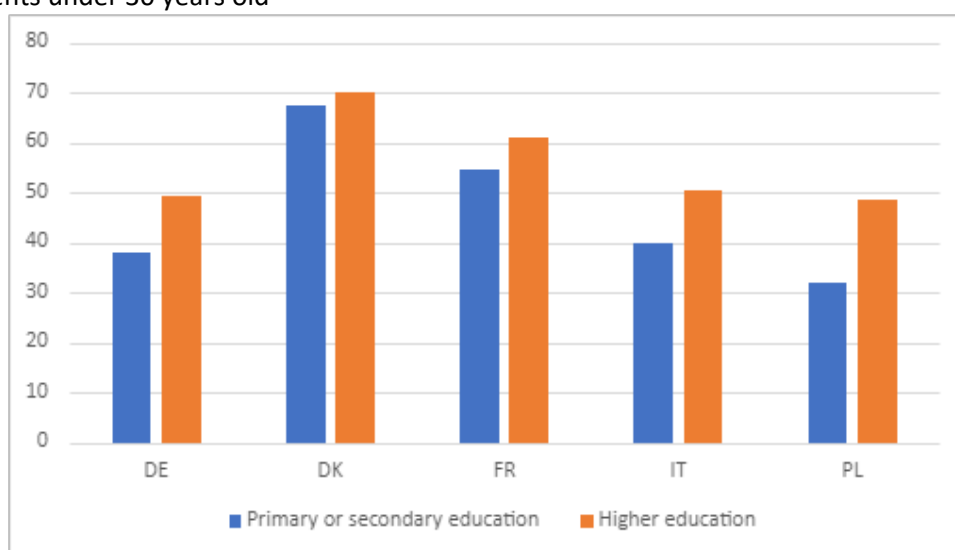


Figure C7 – Share of the population with confidence in the education system, by gender, 2022 (%)
Respondents under 30 years old



Note: The figure shows the average value of responses to the question ‘Please tell us how much confidence you have in the education system’. This figure shows the share of respondents who have ‘quite a lot’ or ‘a great deal’ of confidence. The response options were ‘none at all’, ‘not very much’, ‘quite a lot’ and ‘a great deal’. Respondents could also choose ‘don’t know’ as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 7.2 percentage points.
Source: 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).

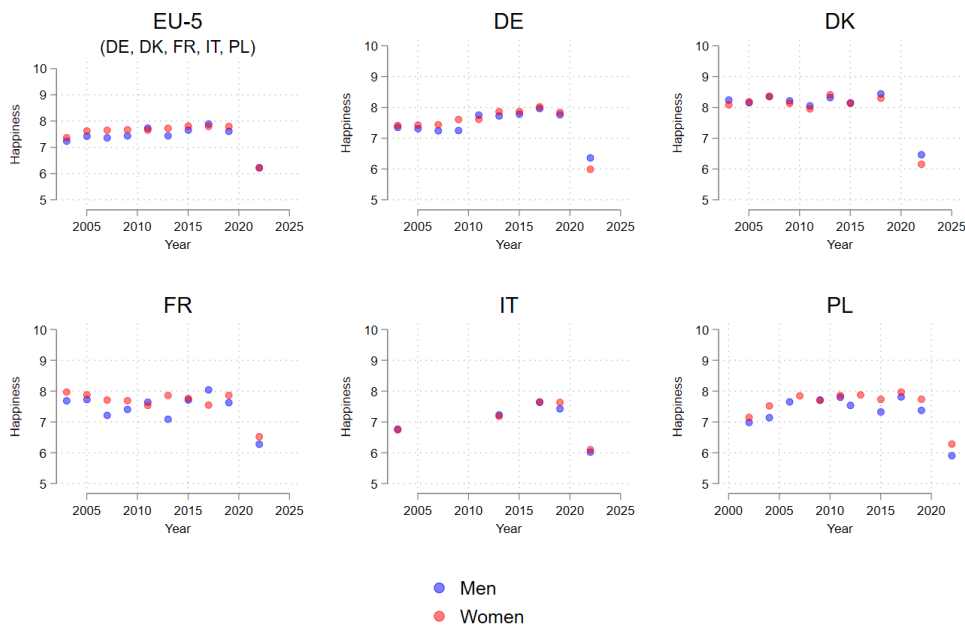
Figure C8 - Share of the population with confidence in the education system, by educational level, 2022 (%)
Respondents under 30 years old



Note: The figure shows the average value of responses to the question ‘Please tell us how much confidence you have in the education system’. This figure shows the share of respondents who have ‘quite a lot’ or ‘a great deal’ of confidence. The response options were ‘none at all’, ‘not very much’, ‘quite a lot’ and ‘a great deal’. Respondents could also choose ‘don’t know’ as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 11.8 percentage points.
Source: 2022 HIVA survey (data collection in May 2022).



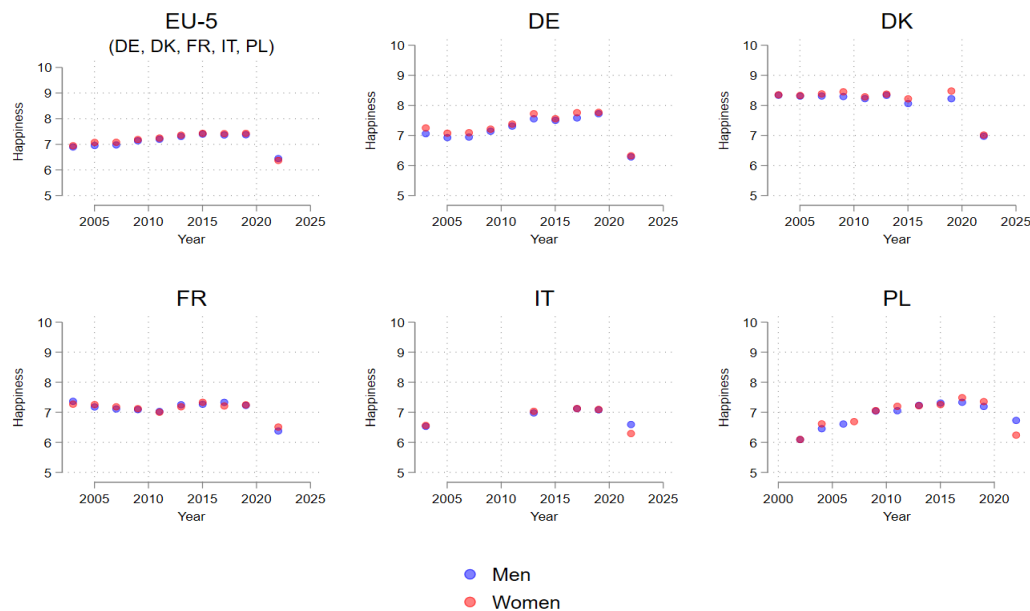
Figure C9 - Evolution in average subjective well-being, by gender, 2002-2022
Respondents under 30 years old



Note: The figure shows the average value of responses to the question 'Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?', measured on a scale from 0 to 10. Between and within (over time) differences are statistically significant if they exceed 0.15 points on the happiness scale for EU-5 and 0.3 points for individual countries.

Source: [European Social Survey](#) round 1-10 and 2022 HIVA survey.

Figure C10 - Evolution in average subjective well-being, by gender, 2002-2022
Respondents over 29 years old

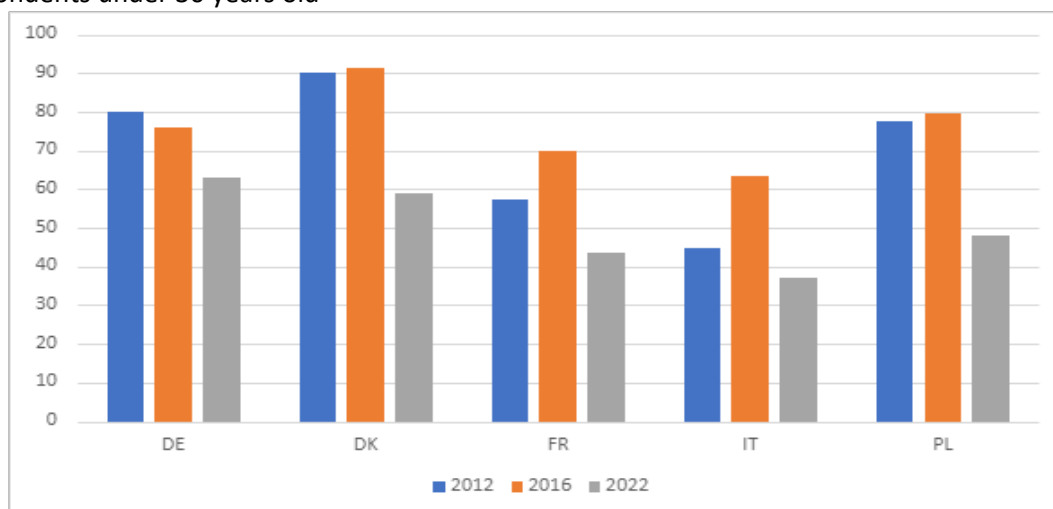


Note: The figure shows the average value of responses to the question 'Taking all things together, how happy would you say you are?', measured on a scale from 0 to 10. Between and within (over time) differences are statistically significant if they exceed 0.15 points on the happiness scale for EU-5 and 0.25 points for individual countries.

Source: [European Social Survey](#) round 1-10 and 2022 HIVA survey.



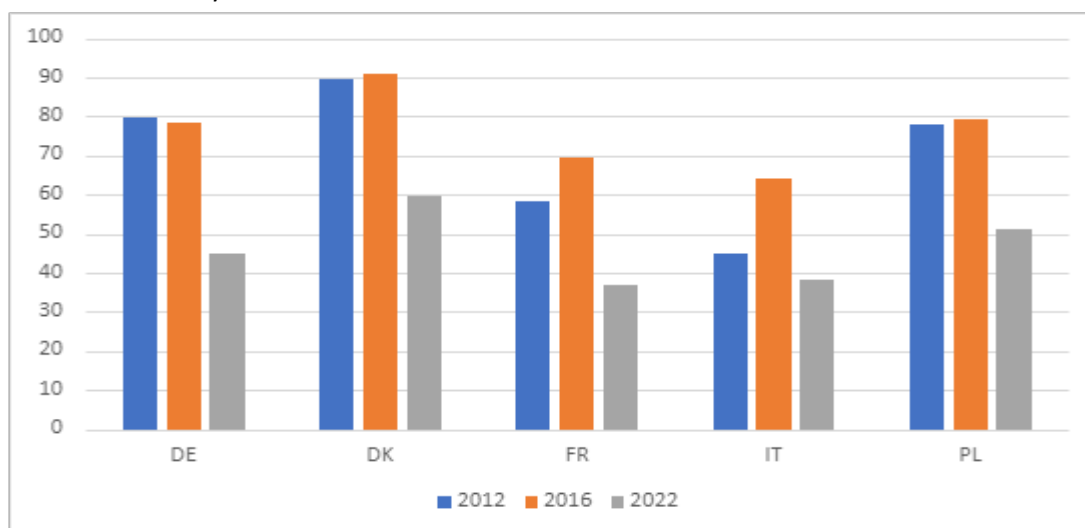
Figure C11 - Share of population optimistic about their future, 2012, 2016 and 2022 (%)
Respondents under 30 years old



Note: The figure shows percentage of population answering 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: I am optimistic about my future'. The response options were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 11 percentage points.

Source: [European Quality of Life Survey](#) 2012 and 2016 waves and 2022 HIVA survey.

Figure C12 - Share of population optimistic about their future, 2012, 2016, 2022 (%)
Respondents over 29 years old



Note: The figure shows percentage of population answering 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: I am optimistic about my future'. The response options were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 5.9 percentage points.

Source: [European Quality of Life Survey](#) 2012 and 2016 waves and 2022 HIVA survey.



Figure C13 – Share of population optimistic about their future, by gender, 2022 (%)
Respondents under 30 years old



Note: The figure shows percentage of population answering 'strongly agree' or 'agree' to the question 'Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: I am optimistic about my future'. The response options were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. Respondents could also choose 'don't know' as a response option. Between and within (over time) country differences are statistically significant if they exceed 16.6 percentage points.

Source: [European Quality of Life Survey](#) 2012 and 2016 waves and 2022 HIVA survey.

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