



SPECIAL EUROBAROMETER 568

# Protecting and promoting democracy

EUROBAROMETER REPORT  
MAY 2025



This survey has been requested by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) and co-ordinated by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication (DG COMM 'Public Opinion & Citizens Engagement' Unit)

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

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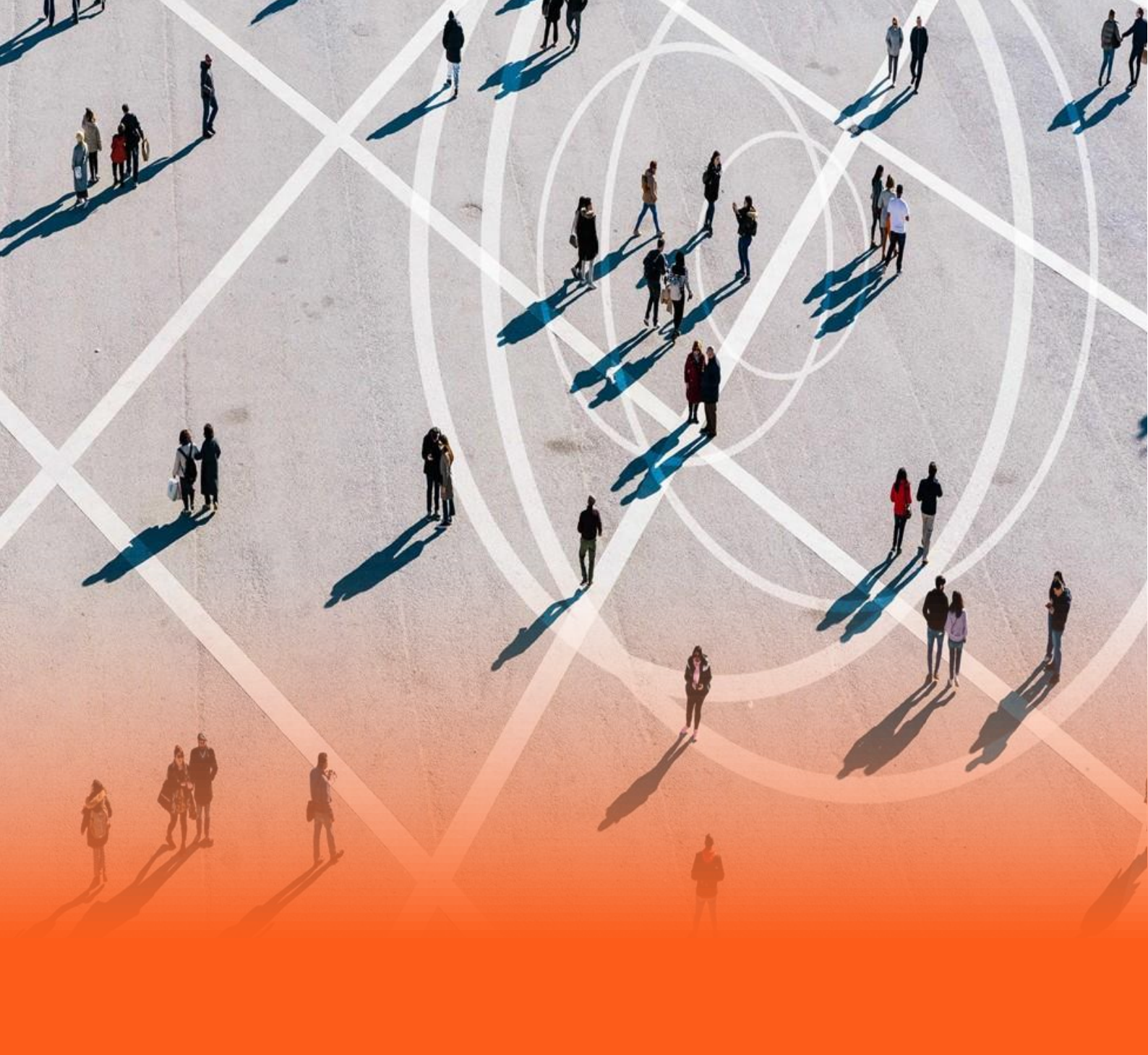
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# Introduction



## Introduction

Democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights are founding values of the European Union. They underpin EU's achievements in fostering peace, prosperity, economic competitiveness, social cohesion and stability. The essence of democracy is that citizens can freely express their views and participate in democratic life, choose their political representatives, and have a say in their future. Citizens should be able to form their own opinions in a public space where they have access to reliable information from a plurality of sources, where different views can be expressed, where they have a right to disagree and to cast their votes in elections that are free from interference. Democracies in the EU are facing significant challenges and there has been a rise in the number of threats from hostile actors, taking various forms, including foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI)<sup>1</sup> and disinformation,<sup>2</sup> as well as threats to the integrity of elections and democratic processes, such as cyber-attacks, covert political funding or manipulated boosting of specific political content, actors or parties online.

In December 2020, the European Commission presented its European Democracy Action Plan (hereafter 'EDAP'<sup>3</sup>) to empower citizens and build more resilient democracies across the EU by:

- promoting free and fair elections;
- strengthening media freedom and pluralism;
- countering disinformation.

In the Political Guidelines for 2024-2029<sup>4</sup>, President von der Leyen announced a new European Democracy Shield to respond to the most serious challenges and increase the resilience of our democratic systems and societies. The initiative will build on the European Democracy Action Plan (2020) and the Defence of Democracy Package<sup>5</sup> (2023) and respect democratic values and fundamental rights, including the EU's enduring commitment to preserving and promoting freedom of expression.

In this context, a Special Eurobarometer survey was commissioned by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST) to explore a range of topics associated with strengthening societal resilience in democratic societies, as well as fostering citizens' active participation and engagement in decision-making processes in the European Union.

It explores how Europeans perceive disinformation, their involvement in decision-making processes in the EU, including the role and involvement of civil society organisations, and the most important elements of free and fair elections. The topics covered include perceptions about the following:

- Citizens' involvement in decision-making processes in the EU, e.g., citizens' assemblies or youth dialogues.
- Fact-checking of news, and source trustworthiness when sharing content online.
- Spread of disinformation, and citizens' skills to tackle it.
- Democratic processes, and challenges to democracy in the European Union.
- The role of civil society organisations in strengthening democracies across the EU, including against the threats they are facing.

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<sup>1</sup> FIMI is a pattern of behaviour that threatens or has the potential to negatively impact values, procedures and political processes. Such activity is manipulative in character, conducted in an intentional and coordinated manner. Actors of such activity can be state or non-state actors, including their proxies inside and outside of their own territory. In the survey, we frequently refer to FIMI also as "foreign interference" or "other forms of information manipulation".

<sup>2</sup> False or misleading content that is spread with an intention to deceive or secure economic or political gain, and which may cause public harm.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-a-new-push-for-european-democracy/file-european-democracy-action-plan>

<sup>4</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/publications/documents-european-democracy-action-plan\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/publications/documents-european-democracy-action-plan_en)

<sup>5</sup> [Communication from the commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Defence of Democracy](#)

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**Protecting and promoting democracy**

## Methodology

This Special Eurobarometer 568 on protecting and promoting democracy was part of the Eurobarometer wave 103.4 and was conducted between 5 May 2025 and 29 May 2025. Some 26,410 respondents from different social and demographic groups were interviewed in the appropriate national language. This survey was commissioned by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST).

The methodology used was that of the Standard Eurobarometer surveys carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication (“Public Opinion & Citizens Engagement” Unit)<sup>6</sup>. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, either physically in people’s homes or through remote video interaction in the appropriate national language. Interviews with remote video interaction (“online face-to-face” or CAVI, Computer Assisted Video Interviewing), were only conducted in Czechia, Denmark, Malta, the Netherlands and Finland. A technical note concerning the interviews conducted by the member institutes of the Verian network is annexed to this report.

**We would like to thank the people across the European Union who have offered their time to take part in this survey.**

**Without their active participation, this study would not have been possible.**

Note: In this report, EU countries are referred to by their official abbreviations, as listed below:

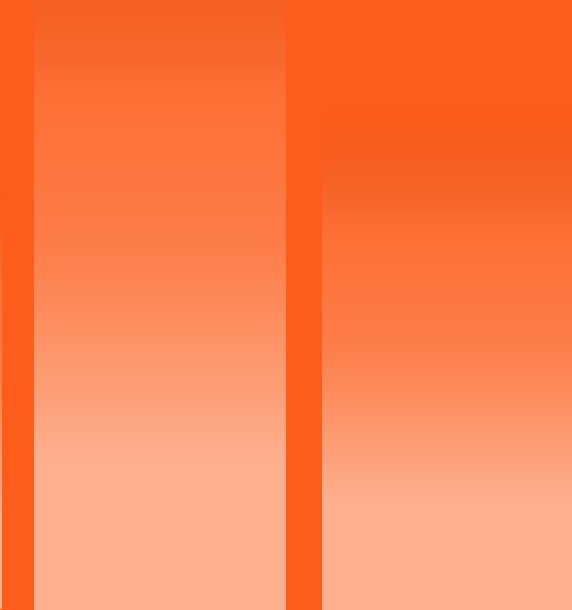
Belgium	BE	Lithuania	LT
Bulgaria	BG	Luxembourg	LU
Czechia	CZ	Hungary	HU
Denmark	DK	Malta	MT
Germany	DE	The Netherlands	NL
Estonia	EE	Austria	AT
Ireland	IE	Poland	PL
Greece	EL	Portugal	PT
Spain	ES	Romania	RO
France	FR	Slovenia	SI
Croatia	HR	Slovakia	SK
Italy	IT	Finland	FI
Republic of Cyprus	CY *	Sweden	SE
Latvia	LV		
European Union – weighted average for the 27 Member States			EU27

\* Cyprus as a whole is one of the 27 European Union Member States. However, the *acquis communautaire* has been suspended in the part of the country not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews carried out in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are included in the ‘CY’ category and in the EU27 average.

<sup>6</sup> The Eurobarometer methodological approaches:  
<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/about/eurobarometer>



# Key findings



## **Over nine in ten Europeans have never been directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union in the last five years**

- In the past five years, over nine in ten Europeans (91%) have not taken part in decision-making activities in the European Union like citizens' assemblies, panels, youth dialogues, or juries. Only 9% reported such involvement;
- At the national level, participation rates vary, with Austria (21%), Malta (20%), and Croatia (17%) showing the highest levels of involvement, while Greece (3%), France, and Sweden (4%) have the lowest;

## **Almost eight in ten Europeans are unfamiliar with direct citizen participation in decision-making in the European Union**

- Across the EU, nearly eight in ten (78%) report having low or no familiarity with activities that involve direct citizen participation in decision-making processes in the EU;
- The highest level of familiarity is seen in Poland (39%), Malta (36%), and Austria (35%), and lowest is in Greece (10%), Sweden (12%), and France (13%);

## **Greater transparency and easier access to participation information most encourage citizens to engage in decision-making in the EU**

- Four in ten (40%) Europeans reported that more transparency and access to information on ways to participate in policymaking would encourage them the most, followed by more debates at local level to address local matters (34%);
  - Transparency and access to information are particularly valued in Sweden (54%), the Netherlands (45%), Finland, and Italy (both 44%). More debates at local level, in the area where respondents live, to address local matters is the most frequently chosen in Greece (49%), Slovakia (48%), and Croatia (43%);

## **Nearly half of citizens say that the most serious challenge to democracy in the EU is growing public distrust towards democratic institutions and processes**

- Growing public distrust towards democratic institutions and processes is seen as the most serious challenge to democracy (49%), followed by foreign information manipulation and interference (42%) and the lack of transparency regarding political content promoted through AI (32%);
- In 23 EU Member States, public distrust of democratic institutions is the top challenge, with highest levels in the Netherlands (67%), Finland and Germany (both 57%), Cyprus and Denmark (both 56%);

## **Access to accurate and accessible information is considered the most important element of free and fair elections**

- Over half (53%) of respondents ranked accurate and accessible information to make informed choices as the key factor in free and fair elections. The highest shares are seen in the Netherlands (63%), Denmark (62%), and Spain (59%);
- This is followed by over four in ten reporting that candidates and political parties are given equitable media coverage (43%). This is most notably the case in Finland (58%), Cyprus (52%) and Croatia (46%);
- The same share of respondents report that election debates and campaigns are not marked by disinformation (43%). It is highest in Greece (61%);

## **Over eight in ten Europeans consider each listed measure ensuring the fairness of online electoral campaigns as important**

- Transparency on the origin and source of political messages, online platforms working to avoid the possible risks of manipulation of their services via fake accounts or AI-generated bots, equal opportunities for political parties and candidates to access online services to compete for voters' attention are seen as equally important to ensure the fairness of online electoral campaign for over eight in ten citizens (85%), followed by transparency regarding political opinion polls (82%);

## **The issues Europeans are most concerned about regarding elections in Europe are voters basing decisions on disinformation, cyberattacks or foreign countries influencing elections**

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- Nearly eight in ten indicated concern about voters making decisions based on disinformation (79%), most notably in Sweden (89%), Spain (87%), and in Ireland (86%);
- Cyberattacks influencing elections (71%) ranks second at EU level. This concern is especially high in Ireland (80%), Luxembourg (79%), and Spain (78%);
- Finally, seven in ten citizens are concerned about foreign countries influencing elections (70%), most notably in Spain, Hungary and Italy (all 76%);

### **Opinions about the role of journalism in democracy and society differ; roughly a third see it positively, while another third view it as just a form of consumption like others**

- Over a third (36%) of Europeans think journalism and professional news content in the EU play a positive role for democracy and society, while a slightly lower share (35%) see it simply as a form of consumption like others. Over a fifth (23%) consider it an unreliable source of information;
- In 14 countries, the prevailing opinion is that journalism and professional news content has a positive impact for democracy and society, particularly in Sweden (79%), Denmark (57%), and the Netherlands (55%);
- In 11 countries, including Hungary (54%), Italy (48%), and Poland (45%), most people view journalism and professional news content as just a form of consumption like others;
- Over half of citizens express satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence, and pluralism in the EU (56%);

### **Nearly three in ten Europeans feel exposed to disinformation daily. Education systems and independent factchecking are viewed as most effective ways to help citizens counter disinformation and information manipulation.**

- Over a quarter (28%) of respondents indicate they encounter disinformation or other types of information manipulation every day or almost every day;
- More than four in ten respondents (44%) identify the education system and other programmes to equip

people with critical thinking, media literacy, and digital literacy as the most effective means of enhancing citizens' skills to counter disinformation and information manipulation;

- This is followed by fact-checking provided by independent and trustworthy organisations (41%) and public awareness campaigns to help citizens identify disinformation and information manipulation (40%);

### **More than half of Europeans support each statement on foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics**

- More than half of respondents (56%) agree that the EU and Member States cooperate sufficiently to tackle foreign interference and disinformation. Similarly, more than half of respondents (55%) agree that the EU is sufficiently equipped to tackle foreign interference;
- When asked about challenges at the national level, over seven in ten (72%) respondents agree that covert foreign financing of political actors, campaigns or messages presents a serious challenge in their countries. The highest agreement is observed in Slovakia (83%), Malta (81%), and Germany (79%);

### **Slightly over half of Europeans verify information when using online platforms, at least sometimes. Moreover, similar shares never share information online when unsure about its source or trustworthiness**

- Nearly two in ten (18%) of respondents verify information when using online platforms very often, one third (33%) verify at least sometimes, while over one fifth (21%) rarely verify. Finally, over a quarter (26%) never verify information when using online platforms;
- Looking at the national level, at least half of citizens report verifying information very often and sometimes in 14 Member States, most notably in Sweden (81%), the Netherlands (71%), and Denmark (70%);
- Nearly half of Europeans (48%) never share information online when unsure about its source or its trustworthiness with Sweden (68%), Denmark (64%), and Slovenia (62%) showing the highest proportions;

**The roles and activities of civil society organisations (CSOs) are not well-known, while respondents recognise their contributions and identify challenges**

- Two thirds of Europeans (67%) are not familiar with the different roles and activities of civil society organisations (CSOs). The highest familiarity with CSOs is seen in Malta (61%), Sweden (60%), and the Netherlands (57%);
- Most Europeans have not been directly involved in the work of CSOs (78%), while the most common means of involvement are as a volunteer (9%) or as a donor (8%). The highest involvement is reported in the Netherlands (51%), Sweden (38%), Austria and Denmark (all 24%);
- Exposing corruption (42%), defending individual rights (41%), and providing essential services such as education or healthcare (39%) are seen as the most important contributions of CSOs;
- However, four in ten Europeans report that CSOs in their countries face difficulties such as administrative barriers (42%) and lack of funding (41%);



# **I. Citizens' participation and engagement in decision-making processes in the EU**

## 1. Decision-making processes in the EU

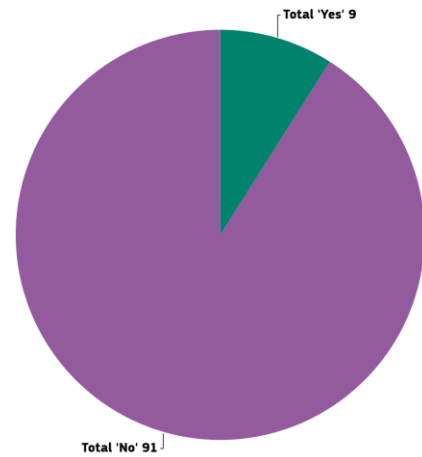
Over nine in ten Europeans have never been directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union

Respondents were asked whether they had been directly involved in decision-making processes in the EU in the last five years<sup>7</sup>.

Over nine in ten (91%) reported that they have **not been directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union over the last five years**, such as participation in citizens' assemblies, panels, youth dialogues, juries, or similar events. Conversely, less than one in ten (9%) indicated having direct involvement in these types of decision-making activities in the EU.

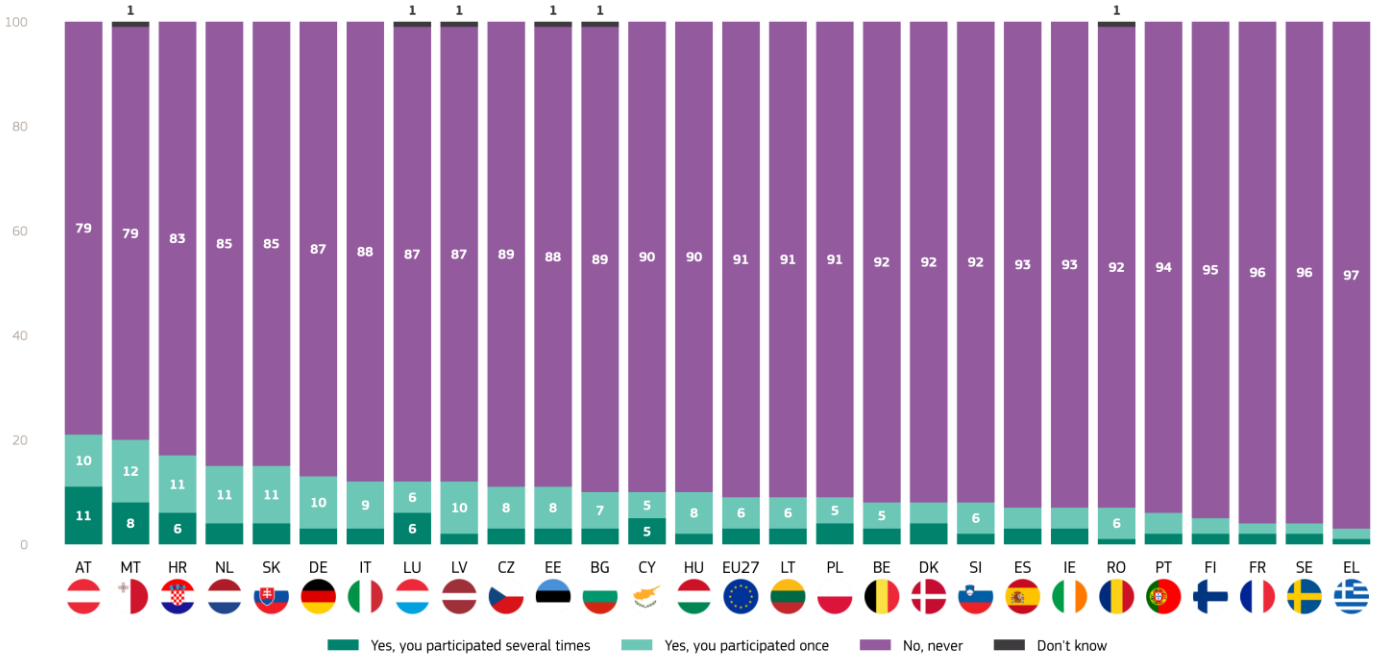
Looking at the national level, at least one in ten respondents **have been involved in decision-making processes in the EU over the last five years** in 14 Member States. The highest levels of participation are seen in Austria (21%), followed by Malta (20%), and Croatia (17%), while the lowest participation rates are observed in Greece (3%), France and Sweden (4%).

QCSD: In the last five years, have you been directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union, e.g., in citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, youth dialogues, citizens' juries, or other events related to the decision-making in the EU? (%)



May 2025

QCSD: In the last five years, have you been directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union, e.g., in citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, youth dialogues, citizens' juries, or other events related to the decision-making in the EU? (%)



May 2025

<sup>7</sup> QCSD. In the last five years, have you been directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union, e.g., in citizens' assemblies,

citizens' panels, youth dialogues, citizens' juries, or other events related to the decision-making in the EU?

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The **socio-demographic analysis** investigates reported involvement in decision-making processes in the European Union over the past five years, including participation in citizens' assemblies, panels, youth dialogues, and other related events:

- Individuals aged 15–39 are slightly more likely to report direct participation (11-12%) than older age groups aged 40 or more (8-9%).
- Respondents who stayed longer in full-time education or who are still studying are more likely to report higher involvement (11%), while those whose education ended at age 15 show the lowest levels (5%).
- Among socio-professional categories, self-employed individuals and students report the highest participation (13%), while the lowest is among unemployed and retired Individuals (7%).
- EU citizens satisfied with democracy in the EU report involvement at 11%, while those dissatisfied are slightly less likely to have participated (8%).

**QCSD** In the last five years, have you been directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union, e.g., in citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, youth dialogues, citizens' juries, or other events related to the decision-making in the EU?  
(% - EU)

	Total 'Yes'	Total 'No'
EU27	9	91
<b>Gender</b>		
Man	10	90
Woman	9	91
<b>Age</b>		
15-24	11	89
25-39	12	88
40-54	9	91
55+	8	92
<b>Education (End of)</b>		
15-	5	95
16-19	9	91
20+	11	89
Still Studying	11	89
<b>Socio-professional category</b>		
Self-employed	13	87
Managers	12	88
Other white collars	10	90
Manual workers	9	91
House persons	8	92
Unemployed	7	93
Retired	7	93
Students	13	87
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>		
Rural area or village	9	91
Small or middle sized town	10	90
Large town	10	90
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>		
Satisfied	11	89
Not satisfied	8	92

## 2. Familiarity with decision-making processes in the EU

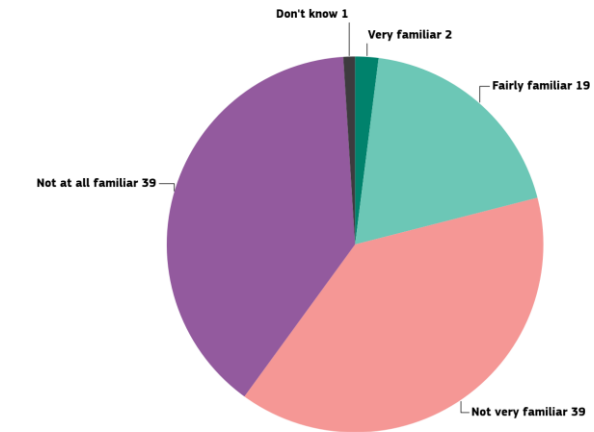
Nearly eight in ten Europeans are not familiar with activities involving people directly in decision-making processes in the EU

Respondents were asked how familiar they are with activities that involve people directly in decision-making processes in the European Union, such as citizens' assemblies or participatory planning.<sup>8</sup>

Across the EU, nearly eight in ten citizens report low or no familiarity with activities involving direct citizen participation in decision-making in the European Union (78%). Nearly two in five say they are 'not at all familiar' (39%), with an equal share (39%) saying that they are 'not very familiar'. Conversely, slightly over one in five indicate some degree of familiarity, with 19% being 'fairly familiar' and only 2% being 'very familiar'.

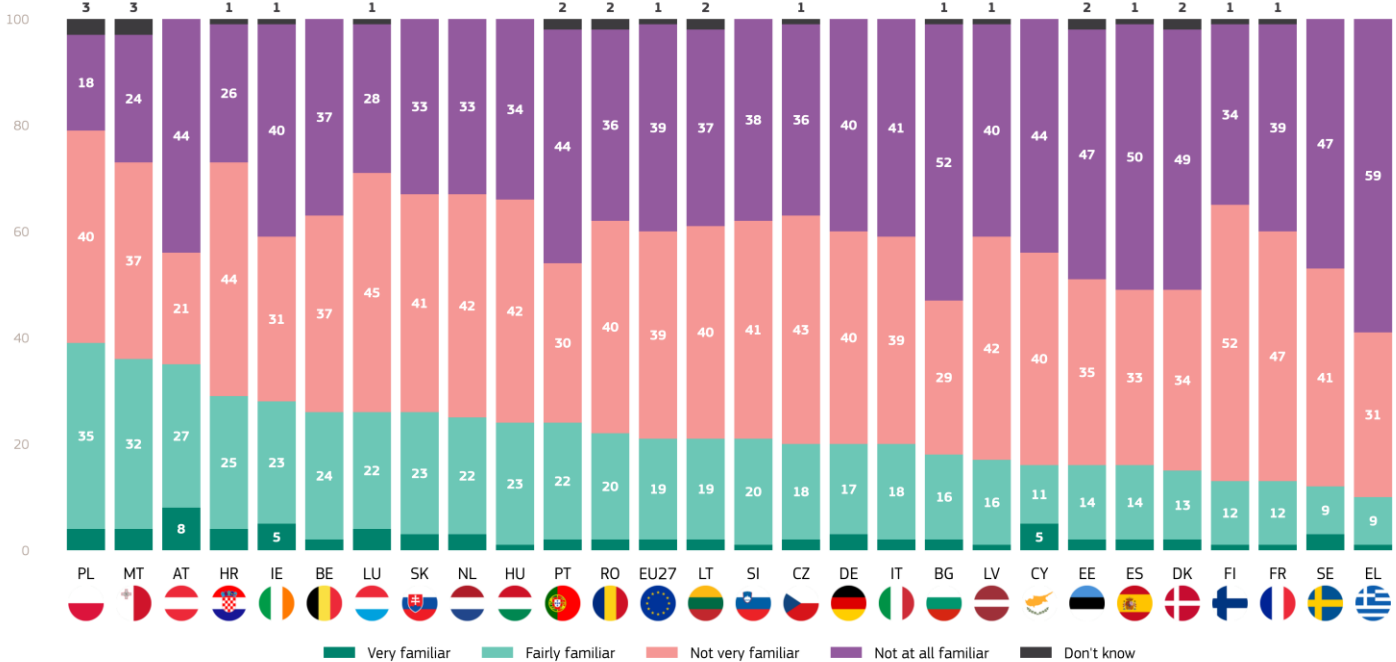
Looking at the national level, over a third of respondents are familiar with these processes in three countries: Poland (39%), Malta (36%), and Austria (35%). Conversely, the lowest familiarity is seen in Greece (10%), Sweden (12%) and France (13%).

QC4: How familiar are you with activities that involve people directly in decision-making processes in the European Union? (e.g. citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, scenario workshops) (%)



May 2025

QC4: How familiar are you with activities that involve people directly in decision-making processes in the European Union? (e.g. citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, scenario workshops) (%)



May 2025

<sup>8</sup> QC4. How familiar are you with activities that involve people directly in decision-making processes in the European Union? (e.g. citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, scenario workshops)

assemblies, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, scenario workshops)

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The **socio-demographic analysis** assesses levels of familiarity with activities that involve people directly in decision-making processes in the EU, such as citizens' assemblies, panels, juries, participatory planning, budgeting, and scenario workshops.

- Men (23%) are slightly more likely than women (19%) to be familiar with these activities.
- Individuals aged 25–39 show the highest familiarity (26%), followed by 15-24 (22%) and 40-54 (22%), while 17% of those aged 55 or older are familiar.
- Familiarity strongly differs across different educational attainment levels, with citizens remaining in education up to the age of 20 showing the highest level (24%), compared to those who ended formal education at age 15 or younger (10%).
- Among socio-professional groups, managers report the highest familiarity (27%), followed by self-employed and other white collars (all 25%), while house persons<sup>9</sup> and unemployed individuals show the lowest levels (11% and 14% respectively).
- Individuals involved in civil society organisations report higher familiarity (37%) compared to those not involved (16%).
- Those respondents reporting to be satisfied with media freedom are more likely to be familiar with these activities (26%) than those reporting to be dissatisfied (15%).
- Respondents reporting higher tendency of verifying online information, also show higher familiarity (31%) than those who never verify (11%).
- Those respondents showing higher levels of familiarity with CSOs in national contexts (48%) have greater awareness of such citizen decision-making processes than those unfamiliar with CSOs (8%).

**QC4** How familiar are you with activities that involve people directly in decision-making processes in the European Union? (e.g. citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, scenario workshops)  
(% - EU)

	Total 'Familiar'	Total 'Not familiar'	Don't know
EU27	21	78	1
<b>Gender</b>			
Man	23	77	0
Woman	19	80	1
<b>Age</b>			
15-24	22	77	1
25-39	26	74	0
40-54	22	78	0
55+	17	82	1
<b>Education (End of)</b>			
15-	10	88	2
16-19	20	79	1
20+	24	75	1
Still Studying	22	77	1
<b>Socio-professional category</b>			
Self-employed	25	74	1
Managers	27	73	0
Other white collars	25	74	1
Manual workers	20	79	1
House persons	11	86	3
Unemployed	14	86	0
Retired	16	82	2
Students	23	76	1
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>			
Rural area or village	20	79	1
Small or middle sized town	20	79	1
Large town	22	77	1
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>			
Satisfied	26	74	0
Not satisfied	16	83	1
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>			
Yes	60	40	0
No	16	83	1
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>			
Total 'Yes'	37	63	0
Total 'No'	16	83	1
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>			
Satisfied	26	74	0
Not satisfied	15	84	1
<b>Verifying information when using online platforms</b>			
Very often	31	69	0
Sometimes	26	74	0
Rarely	18	82	0
Never	11	88	1
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>			
Very often	43	56	1
Sometimes	40	60	0
Rarely	19	80	1
Never	12	87	1
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>			
Familiar	48	51	1
Not familiar	8	91	1

<sup>9</sup> House persons are individuals who are not in paid employment and not actively seeking for work. They cannot be classified as unemployed, students or retired, as the main activity is managing the household.

### 3. Measures fostering participation

More transparency and access to information on ways to participate in policymaking is the measure most encouraging citizens' direct involvement in decision-making initiatives in the EU

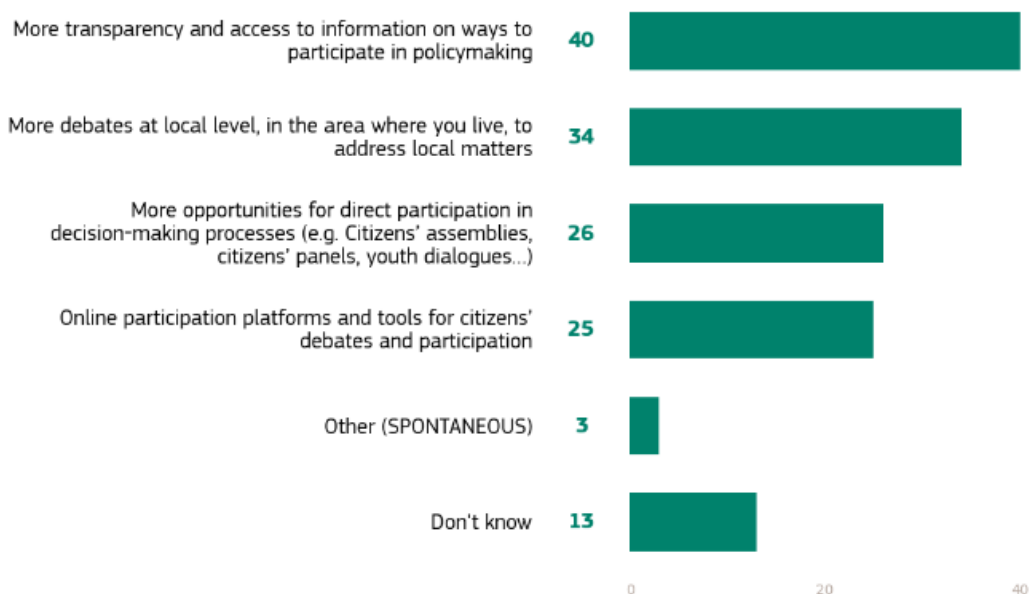
Respondents were asked which of the following four measures would encourage them the most to get directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union: more transparency and access to information on ways to participate in policymaking; more debates at local level to address local matters; more opportunities for direct participation in decision-making processes; and online platforms and tools for citizens' debates and participation<sup>10</sup>.

Four in ten (40%) respondents reported that **more transparency and access to information on ways to participate in policymaking** would encourage them the most, closely followed by **more debates at local level to address local matters** (34%).

**Greater opportunities for direct participation** in decision-making processes ranked third (26%), slightly higher than the existence of **online platforms and tools for citizens' debates and participation** (25%).

Finally, over one in ten respondents (13%) didn't know which measures would encourage them the most, and a small percentage (3%) mentioned other measures.

QCS: Which of the following measures would encourage you the most to get directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union? (e.g. in citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, scenario workshops, etc.) (MAX. 2 ANSWERS) (EU27) (%)



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<sup>10</sup> QCS. Which of the following measures would encourage you the most to get directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union?

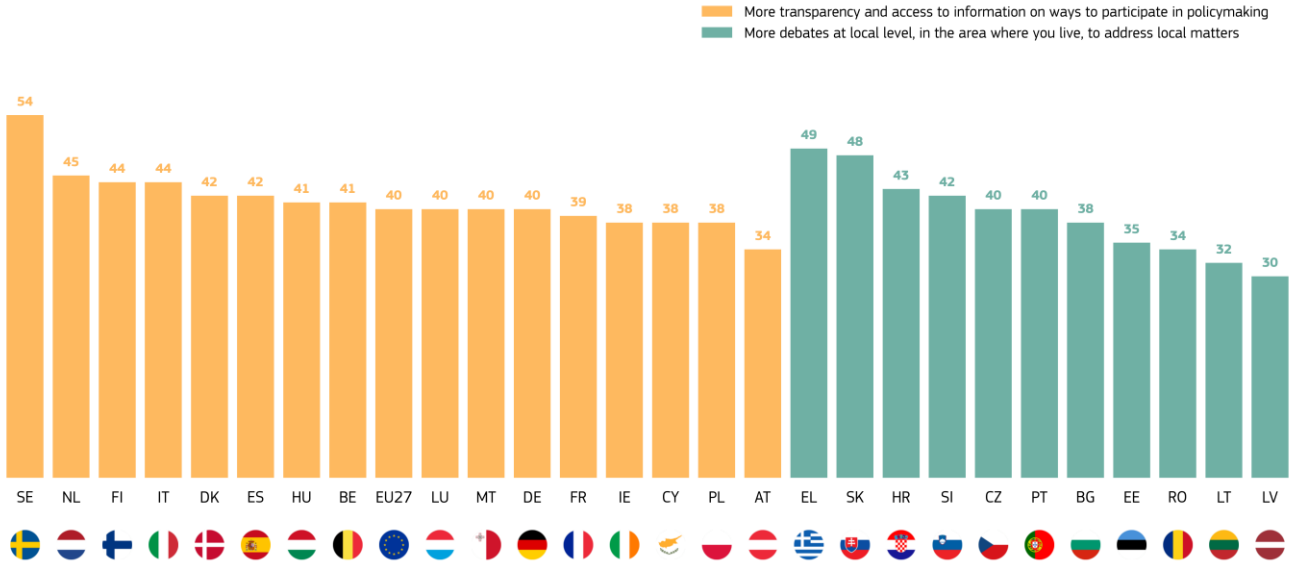
(e.g. in citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, scenario workshops, etc.)

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Looking at the national level, **more transparency and access to information on ways to participate in policymaking in the EU** ranks as the top choice in 16 Member States, with the highest share observed in Sweden (54%), the Netherlands (45%), Finland and Italy (both 44%), Denmark and Spain (both 42%), Hungary and Belgium (both 41%), EU27 and Luxembourg (both 40%), Malta, Germany, France, Ireland, Cyprus and Poland (all 38%), Austria (34%).

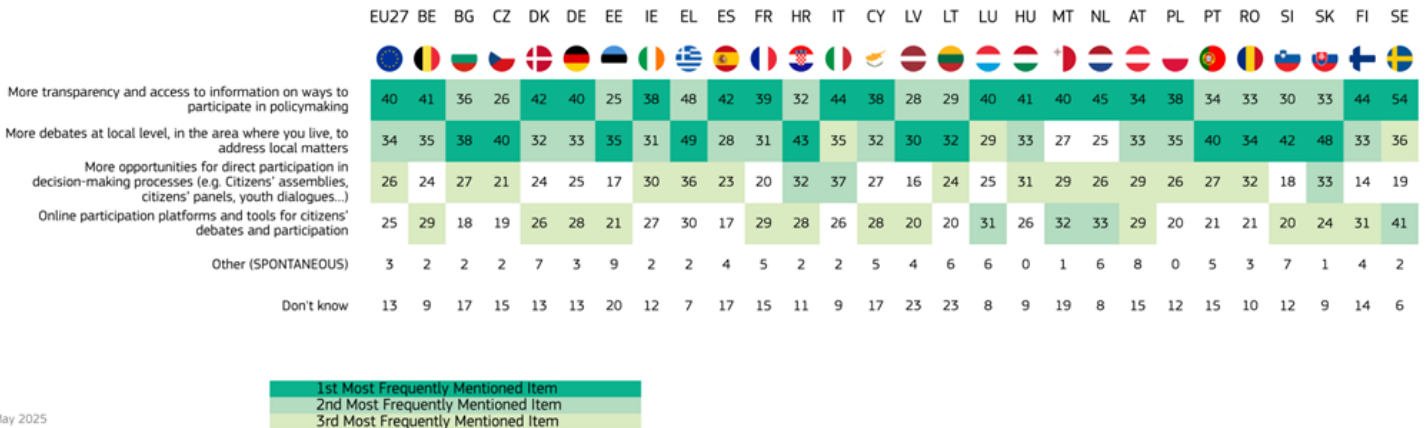
**More debates at local level, in the area where respondents live, to address local matters** is the most frequently chosen statement in 11 Member States, particularly Greece (49%), Slovakia (48%), Hungary (43%), Slovenia (42%), Czechia (40%), Portugal (40%), Bulgaria (38%), Estonia (35%), Romania (34%), Lithuania (32%) and Latvia (30%).

QCS: Which of the following measures would encourage you the most to get directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union? (e.g. in citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, scenario workshops, etc.) (MAX. 2 ANSWERS) (%)



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QCS: Which of the following measures would encourage you the most to get directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union? (e.g. in citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, scenario workshops, etc.) (MAX. 2 ANSWERS) (%)



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## Special Eurobarometer 568 Protecting and promoting democracy

The **socio-demographic analysis** outlines which measures are most likely to encourage EU citizens to participate in decision-making processes, comparing preferences across demographic profiles.

- There are no significant gender differences in the choice of measures, except for online participation platforms and tools: men (27%) are slightly more likely to choose this measure compared to women (24%).
- Citizens aged 15–24 (34%) and 35–39 (33%) report the strongest interest in online participation platforms and tools. The highest levels of preference for transparency and access to participation information on ways to participate appear among those aged 25–39 (43%), while those aged 55 or over express the most support for debates at local level (36%).
- Europeans still studying or educated to age 20 and older show the highest support for online participation platforms and tools (33–35%) and transparency and access to participation information on ways to participate (41–44%).
- Among socio-professional groups, self-employed, managers, and other white collars together with students rank highest for transparency and access to participation/information on ways to participate (43–45%) and more direct participation opportunities (28–31%). Managers (36%) and students (35%) also show strong support for online participation platforms and tools. Retired (37%), other white collars (30%), and unemployed (34%) favour debates at local level most.
- Residents of large towns express a higher preference for transparency and access to information on ways to participate (45%) and online participation platforms and tools (28%) than those in rural areas (28% and 22%, respectively).
- Those involved in decision-making processes report greater support for more direct participation opportunities and online participation platforms and tools (37% and 30%) compared with those not involved (33% and 25%, respectively).
- Individuals involved in the work of a civil society organisation report higher support for transparency and access to information on ways to participate (42% vs 39% of those not involved), debates at local level (38% vs 33%), more direct participation opportunities (31% vs 25%), and online participation platforms and tools (31% vs 24%).
- Those respondents familiar with participatory processes show higher support for more direct participation opportunities (36% vs 24% of those unfamiliar), debates at local level (37% vs 33%), online participation platforms and tools (30% vs 24%), and transparency and access to information on ways to participate (43% vs 39%).
- Individuals familiar with roles and activities of civil society organisations report higher support for transparency and access to information on ways to participate (44% vs 38% of those unfamiliar), debates at local level (36% vs 32%), more direct participation opportunities (31% vs 24%), and online participation platforms and tools (30% vs 24%).

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**QC5** Which of the following measures would encourage you the most to get directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union? (e.g. in citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, scenario workshops, etc.) (MAX. 2 ANSWERS)  
(% - EU)

	More transparency and access to information on ways to participate in policymaking	More debates at local level, in the area where you live, to address local matters	More opportunities for direct participation in decision-making processes (e.g. Citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, youth dialogues...)	Online participation platforms and tools for citizens' debates and participation	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't know
EU27	40	34	26	25	3	13
<b>Gender</b>						
Man	41	33	27	27	3	11
Woman	39	34	26	24	4	14
<b>Age</b>						
15-24	41	28	31	34	2	10
25-39	43	32	27	33	2	8
40-54	41	33	28	29	3	9
55+	37	36	23	17	4	18
<b>Education (End of)</b>						
15-	34	32	22	13	5	24
16-19	39	35	27	22	3	13
20+	44	33	26	33	3	8
Still Studying	41	28	32	35	2	10
<b>Socio-professional category</b>						
Self-employed	45	31	29	28	4	10
Managers	44	33	29	36	2	6
Other white collars	43	36	28	31	2	7
Manual workers	40	32	27	24	3	12
House persons	35	30	26	19	3	20
Unemployed	36	34	25	26	4	16
Retired	35	37	22	15	5	20
Students	43	27	31	35	2	9
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>						
Rural area or village	38	34	25	22	4	15
Small or middle sized town	38	34	26	26	3	13
Large town	45	32	28	28	3	10
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>						
Satisfied	42	35	29	29	2	9
Not satisfied	39	33	25	22	4	15
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>						
Yes	43	37	37	30	0	2
No	40	33	25	25	4	14
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>						
Total 'Yes'	42	38	31	31	3	4
Total 'No'	39	33	25	24	3	15
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>						
Familiar	43	37	36	30	1	2
Not familiar	39	33	24	24	4	15
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>						
Familiar	44	36	31	30	2	4
Not familiar	38	32	24	24	4	16



## **II. Democratic resilience and electoral integrity in the EU**

## 1. Most serious challenges to democracy in the EU

Growing public distrust towards democratic institutions and processes is seen as the most serious challenge to democracy in the EU, followed by foreign information manipulation

Respondents were asked about the most serious challenges to democracy in the European Union.<sup>11</sup>

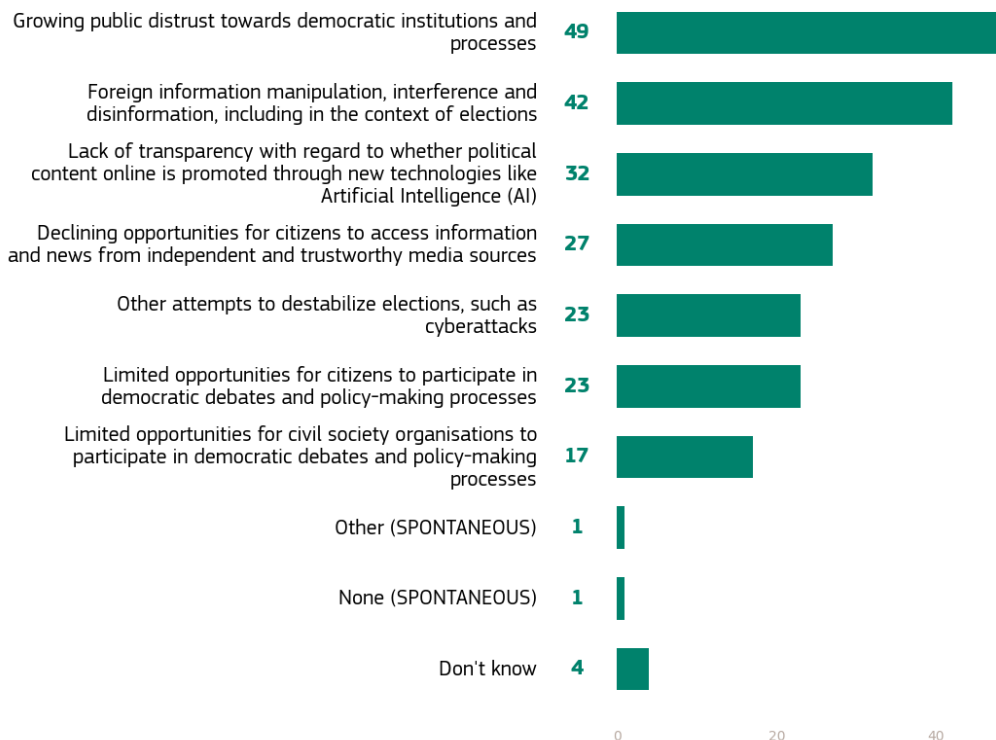
Nearly half (49%) of respondents reported a **growing public distrust towards democratic institutions and processes** as the most serious challenge to democracy.

**Foreign information manipulation, interference, and disinformation, including in the context of elections** (42%) ranked second, followed by the **lack of transparency regarding political content promoted through new technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI)** (32%).

**Other destabilisation attempts, such as cyberattacks** and **limited opportunities for citizens to participate in democratic debates and policy-making processes** are viewed as serious challenges by slightly more than a fifth of EU citizens (all 23%).

Finally, **limited opportunities for civil society organisations to participate in democratic debates and policy-making processes** is cited by almost one in five (17%).

QC7: Which of the following are the most serious challenges to democracy in the European Union? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (EU27) (%)



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<sup>11</sup> QC7. Which of the following are the most serious challenges to democracy in the European Union?

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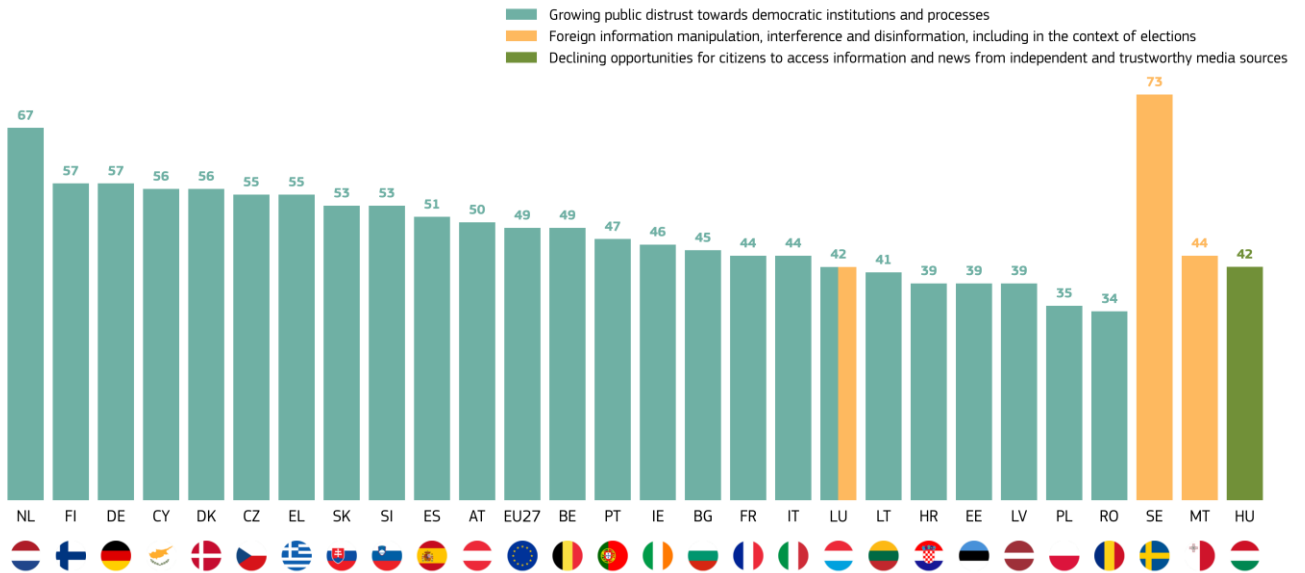
Looking at the national level, there is consensus on the most serious challenge to democracy in the European Union.

In 24 countries, **growing public distrust towards democratic institutions and processes** is the most frequently cited challenge. The highest shares are found in the Netherlands (67%), Finland and Germany (both 57%), Cyprus and Denmark (both 56%), Czechia and Estonia (both 55%), Slovakia and Slovenia (both 53%), Spain (51%), Austria (50%), EU27 (49%), Belgium (49%), Portugal (47%), Ireland (46%), Bulgaria (45%), France (44%), Italy (44%), Luxembourg (42%), Lithuania (41%), Hungary (39%), Estonia (39%), Latvia (39%), Poland (35%), Romania (34%), Sweden (73%), Malta (44%) and Hungary (42%).

In three countries, **foreign information manipulation, interference, and disinformation, including in the context of elections** is the most frequently cited challenge, from Sweden (73%) to Malta (44%) and Luxembourg, where it shares first place with growing public distrust towards democratic institutions and processes (42% for the two items).

Lastly, **declining opportunities for citizens to access information and news from independent and trustworthy media sources** is the most frequently mentioned challenge in Hungary (42%).

QC7: Which of the following are the most serious challenges to democracy in the European Union? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (%)



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QC7: Which of the following are the most serious challenges to democracy in the European Union? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (%)

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
Growing public distrust towards democratic institutions and processes	49	49	45	55	56	57	39	46	55	51	44	39	44	56	39	41	42	38	40	67	50	35	47	34	53	53	57	65
Foreign information manipulation, interference and disinformation, including in the context of elections	42	40	34	28	51	49	28	32	38	43	43	37	42	36	31	36	42	30	44	55	36	29	28	31	39	44	55	73
Lack of transparency with regard to whether political content online is promoted through new technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI)	32	30	28	23	41	29	26	36	39	33	33	28	40	44	20	34	34	34	37	30	32	30	36	28	28	28	27	26
Declining opportunities for citizens to access information and news from independent and trustworthy media sources	27	25	33	29	28	23	23	25	41	24	28	33	31	28	21	21	26	42	22	22	35	24	27	25	27	36	32	35
Other attempts to destabilize elections, such as cyberattacks	23	26	18	24	37	28	25	29	16	15	22	19	24	8	23	26	22	21	23	34	22	17	16	21	17	24	29	39
Limited opportunities for citizens to participate in democratic debates and policy-making processes	23	21	27	19	16	21	22	26	38	23	22	35	31	31	14	16	22	30	23	17	34	19	23	20	19	22	16	17
Limited opportunities for civil society organisations to participate in democratic debates and policy-making processes	17	19	23	16	11	13	14	18	35	17	18	30	11	22	11	15	13	28	23	14	26	21	19	20	17	25	7	12
Other (SPONTANEOUS)	1	1	0	0	0	1	4	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	1
None (SPONTANEOUS)	1	1	1	2	0	1	3	0	1	1	2	1	2	2	3	1	0	0	2	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	
Don't know	4	3	6	3	3	4	6	4	2	6	4	3	3	4	9	10	5	1	6	0	4	3	9	4	2	1	3	0

1st Most Frequently Mentioned Item  
2nd Most Frequently Mentioned Item  
3rd Most Frequently Mentioned Item

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The **socio-demographic analysis** explores which challenges to democracy in the European Union are viewed as most serious by citizens across different demographic and civic profiles.

- Those aged 15–24 show higher concern about lack of transparency regarding political content promoted through new technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) (35%), while older individuals aged 55 or over (50%) are more concerned about growing public distrust towards democratic institutions and processes.
- Those who remained in education up to the age of 20 and over are more likely to select growing public distrust towards democratic institutions and processes (53%), foreign information manipulation (48%), and other attempts to destabilise elections like cyberattacks (25%).
- Among socio-professional groups, managers report the highest figures for growing public distrust towards democratic institutions (56%) and foreign information manipulation and disinformation (49%).
- Citizens in large towns cite declining opportunities for citizens to access information from independent and trustworthy media sources (31%) and limited opportunities for civil society to participate in democratic debates and policy making (19%) more than rural residents (25% and 16%).
- Both satisfied and dissatisfied citizens with EU democracy report similar concern for growing public distrust towards democratic institutions (49%). The dissatisfied express less concern about declining opportunities for citizens to access information from independent and trustworthy media sources (19%) and limited opportunities for citizen participation (24%) compared with the satisfied ones (27% and 23%).
- Europeans involved in decision-making processes in the EU are less likely to cite growing public distrust towards democratic institutions (40%) compared to those not involved (49%). However, both groups show similar concern for foreign information manipulation and interference (42%).
- Individuals involved in civil society organisations report higher concern about other attempts to destabilise elections like cyberattacks (29% vs. 22%) and limited opportunities for civil society organisations to participate in democratic debates and policy-making processes compared to those not involved (19% vs. 16%).
- Those who never share unverified content cite growing public distrust towards democratic institutions more frequently (52%) than those who share often (38–43%).
- EU citizens familiar with EU participatory processes report lower concern for growing public distrust towards democratic institutions (41%) but higher awareness of limited opportunities for citizens to participate (26%) compared to unfamiliar EU citizens.
- Those familiar with roles and activities of national civil society organisations report slightly higher concern about limited opportunities for civil society to participate in democratic debates and policy making than those unfamiliar (21% vs. 15%).

## Special Eurobarometer 568

### Protecting and promoting democracy

**QC7** Which of the following are the most serious challenges to democracy in the European Union? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)  
(% - EU)

	Growing public distrust towards democratic institutions and processes	Foreign information manipulation, interference and disinformation, including in the context of elections	Lack of transparency with regard to whether political content online is promoted through new technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Declining opportunities for citizens to access information and news from independent and trustworthy media sources	Other attempts to destabilize elections, such as cyberattacks	Limited opportunities for citizens to participate in democratic debates and policy-making processes	Limited opportunities for civil society organisations to participate in democratic debates and policy-making processes	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	None (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't know
EU27	49	42	32	27	23	23	17	1	1	4
<b>Gender</b>										
Man	49	43	31	28	25	24	17	1	1	3
Woman	48	41	33	27	22	23	16	1	1	5
<b>Age</b>										
15-24	46	43	35	26	21	22	17	1	0	6
25-39	48	44	34	27	24	22	19	1	1	2
40-54	48	42	33	30	24	24	19	1	1	2
55+	50	41	30	27	23	24	15	1	2	5
<b>Education (End of)</b>										
15-	47	37	30	24	18	25	14	1	3	7
16-19	46	39	31	28	22	24	17	1	1	4
20+	53	48	34	27	26	22	18	1	1	2
Still Studying	46	42	34	27	24	22	17	1	0	7
<b>Socio-professional category</b>										
Self-employed	49	42	35	27	26	25	17	1	2	2
Managers	56	49	32	28	24	24	20	0	0	1
Other white collars	48	43	34	31	25	24	18	1	1	2
Manual workers	45	40	33	29	23	23	18	1	1	3
House persons	46	36	32	24	19	20	15	0	3	5
Unemployed	48	39	32	27	21	22	22	1	1	6
Retired	49	40	30	25	23	23	14	1	2	5
Students	49	46	33	27	22	22	16	1	0	6
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>										
Rural area or village	47	39	31	25	22	23	16	1	2	5
Small or middle sized town	49	43	32	27	25	23	16	1	1	4
Large town	50	43	34	31	22	24	19	0	1	3
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>										
Satisfied	49	45	34	27	27	23	18	0	1	2
Not satisfied	49	38	32	29	19	24	16	1	1	4
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>										
Yes	40	42	33	29	27	24	22	1	0	0
No	49	42	32	27	23	23	16	1	1	4
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>										
Total 'Yes'	51	47	32	28	29	23	19	1	0	1
Total 'No'	48	41	32	28	22	23	16	1	1	4
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>										
Very often	38	42	33	28	23	25	23	1	0	4
Sometimes	43	38	34	29	22	26	21	0	1	2
Rarely	48	42	32	29	24	24	18	1	1	2
Never	52	44	32	26	23	22	14	1	2	5
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>										
Familiar	41	41	34	27	25	26	24	1	0	1
Not familiar	51	42	32	28	23	23	15	1	1	4
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>										
Familiar	47	45	32	27	26	23	21	1	0	1
Not familiar	50	41	32	28	22	23	15	1	1	5

## 2. Most important elements of free and fair elections

Voters' access to accurate and accessible information to make informed choices on the electoral process is seen as the most important element of free and fair elections.

Respondents were asked about the most important elements of free and fair elections.<sup>12</sup>

Over half (53%) of respondents mentioned **access to accurate and accessible information to make informed choices on the electoral process** as the most important element of free and fair elections.

Over four in ten (43%) mentioned **candidates and political parties being given equitable media coverage to express their views** and **electoral debates and campaigns are not marked by disinformation and manipulation of information**.

Similarly, four in ten (40%) mentioned **the electoral process being protected against threats, such as cyberattacks**.

Finally, over a third (36%) of respondents mentioned that **political candidates are not subject to hate speech, violence, threats, or intimidation**.

QC8: In your view, what are the most important elements of free and fair elections? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (EU27) (%)



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<sup>12</sup> QC8. In your view, what are the most important elements of free and fair elections?

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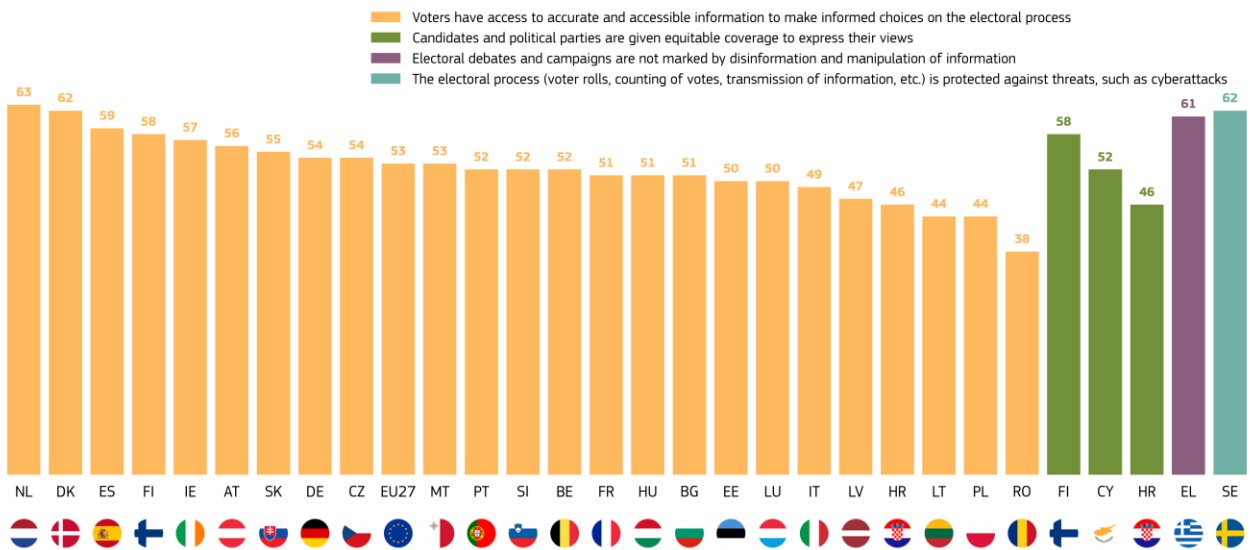
Looking at the national level, there is consensus on the most important element of free and fair elections.

In 24 countries, voters having **access to accurate and accessible information to make informed choices** is the most frequently selected answer. The highest shares are seen in the Netherlands (63%), Denmark (62%), and Spain (59%).

In three countries, **equitable coverage for candidates and political parties** is the mostly selected answer, from Finland (58%) to Cyprus (52%) and Croatia (46%).

**Electoral debates and campaigns not being marked by disinformation** and manipulation of information is selected as the top answer in Greece (61%), and the **electoral process being protected against threats, such as cyberattacks**, is selected as the top answer in Sweden (62%).

QC8: In your view, what are the most important elements of free and fair elections? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (%)



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QC8: In your view, what are the most important elements of free and fair elections? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (%)

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
Voters have access to accurate and accessible information to make informed choices on the electoral process	53	52	51	54	62	54	50	57	60	59	51	46	49	51	47	44	50	51	53	63	56	44	52	38	52	55	58	60
Candidates and political parties are given equitable coverage to express their views	43	45	40	44	46	44	46	42	57	34	47	46	44	52	31	43	35	44	39	47	48	39	34	33	33	44	58	53
Electoral debates and campaigns are not marked by disinformation and manipulation of information	43	41	40	35	55	39	34	40	61	50	43	43	44	47	35	32	36	47	44	49	50	34	40	34	38	48	40	53
The electoral process (voter rolls, counting of votes, transmission of information, etc.) is protected against threats, such as cyberattacks	40	40	43	45	51	43	38	41	43	33	36	40	40	27	31	39	36	43	42	47	37	38	44	35	32	44	37	62
Political candidates and elected representatives are not subject to hate speech, violence, threats or intimidation	36	30	30	27	36	43	26	34	39	28	31	42	39	40	22	24	33	41	42	39	40	34	29	29	33	37	45	47
Other (SPONTANEOUS)	1	1	1	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	0
None (SPONTANEOUS)	2	1	3	2	0	1	3	0	0	1	3	1	2	3	2	2	2	0	2	0	2	1	1	2	6	1	0	0
Don't know	3	2	3	3	3	4	5	3	1	4	3	1	3	3	7	11	4	0	4	0	4	1	8	3	1	1	1	0

1st Most Frequently Mentioned Item  
2nd Most Frequently Mentioned Item  
3rd Most Frequently Mentioned Item

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## Special Eurobarometer 568 Protecting and promoting democracy

The **socio-demographic analysis** assesses which elements are most strongly associated with free and fair elections, based on perceptions across EU demographic and civic groups.

- Men and women equally report voters having access to accurate and accessible information (53% and 52%, respectively), electoral processes are protected against cyber-attacks (40% and 39%, respectively), and candidate safety from hate speech and threats (35% and 36%, respectively) as key elements of free and fair elections. However, men are more likely than women to give importance to candidates and parties having equitable coverage (45% vs 41%) and that electoral campaigns and debates are not marked by disinformation (44% vs 41%).
- Respondents aged (25-39) are more likely to prioritise voters having access to accurate and accessible information (55% vs 50-53% of those in other age groups). For the rest of elements, there are no significant associations with the age.
- Individuals who continued their education until the age of 20 are consistently more likely to regard all elements as important, except for candidate safety from hate speech and threats where there is no difference based on education (35-37% among all groups). For instance, 58% of those holding tertiary education consider voters' access to accurate and accessible information important, compared to 48% of individuals who left education at age 15.
- Managers and self-employed are among those who are more likely to report that all elements are important. For example, 45-46% of respondents from these socio-professional categories say that candidates and parties having equitable coverage is important compared with 37% of house persons.
- While there are no significant variations based on type of residency, respondents from large towns are more likely to see electoral campaigns and debates not being marked by disinformation as important compared to those from rural areas (46% vs 40%).
- Citizens satisfied with democracy in the EU assign higher importance to voters having access to accurate and accessible information (55% vs. 50%), electoral processes are protected against cyber-attacks (44% vs. 35%), and candidate safety from hate speech and threats (39% vs. 32%) than those who are dissatisfied.
- Europeans involved in the work of civil society organisations more frequently mention voter access to accurate and accessible information (56% vs. 52%), electoral processes are protected against cyber-attacks (44% vs. 39%), and candidate safety from hate speech and threats (39% vs. 35%) than those who are not involved.
- Individuals who are satisfied with media freedom place more emphasis on voter access to accurate and accessible information (55% vs. 51%), electoral processes are being protected against cyber-attacks (42% vs. 37%), and candidate safety from hate speech and threats (39% vs. 33%) than those who are not satisfied.
- Those respondents who verify information very often cite voter access to accurate information (56% vs 47%) and electoral campaigns and debates are not being marked by disinformation (48% vs 37%) as important elements more frequently than those who never verify.
- Those who are familiar with roles and activities of civil society organisation are more likely than those unfamiliar to consider electoral campaigns and debates not being marked by disinformation (43% vs 39%) and candidate safety from hate speech and threats (39% vs 34%) as important. Conversely, candidates and parties having equitable coverage is seen as more important by those who are unfamiliar (44% vs. 41% of those who are familiar).

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**QC8** In your view, what are the most important elements of free and fair elections? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)  
(% - EU)

	Voters have access to accurate and accessible information to make choices on the electoral process	Candidates and political parties are given equitable coverage to express their views	Electoral debates and campaigns are not marked by disinformation and manipulation of information	The electoral process (voter rolls, counting of votes, transmission of information, etc.) is protected against threats, such as cyberattacks	Political candidates and elected representatives are not subject to hate speech, violence, threats or intimidation	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	None (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't know
EU27	53	43	43	40	36	1	2	3
<b>Gender</b>								
Man	53	45	44	40	35	1	2	2
Woman	52	41	41	39	36	1	2	4
<b>Age</b>								
15-24	50	41	44	38	35	1	1	5
25-39	55	41	45	41	34	1	1	2
40-54	53	44	44	42	36	1	1	2
55+	52	44	41	39	36	1	2	3
<b>Education (End of)</b>								
15-	48	39	38	36	35	1	3	6
16-19	50	42	41	38	35	1	2	3
20+	58	45	47	43	37	1	1	1
Still Studying	53	42	42	43	36	1	1	5
<b>Socio-professional category</b>								
Self-employed	56	46	46	38	37	1	2	1
Managers	57	45	48	45	39	0	1	1
Other white collars	54	43	46	44	35	1	1	1
Manual workers	50	40	42	39	34	1	2	3
House persons	48	37	39	37	31	2	3	4
Unemployed	52	40	40	38	34	1	2	5
Retired	51	44	39	38	37	1	2	4
Students	53	42	45	39	36	1	1	4
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>								
Rural area or village	52	42	40	37	34	1	2	3
Small or middle sized town	52	43	43	41	36	1	2	3
Large town	54	44	46	41	37	0	1	2
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>								
Satisfied	55	44	44	44	39	0	1	1
Not satisfied	50	42	41	35	32	2	3	3
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>								
Yes	52	39	43	42	37	0	0	0
No	53	43	43	40	36	1	2	3
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>								
Total 'Yes'	56	43	44	44	39	0	1	1
Total 'No'	52	43	43	39	35	1	2	3
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>								
Satisfied	55	45	44	43	39	0	1	2
Not satisfied	51	41	43	37	33	1	2	2
<b>Verifying information when using online platforms</b>								
Very often	56	43	48	42	34	1	1	2
Sometimes	56	43	47	42	37	1	1	1
Rarely	52	46	41	39	37	1	1	2
Never	47	40	37	36	34	1	3	6
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>								
Very often	48	41	43	43	29	1	3	4
Sometimes	51	41	41	40	35	0	1	2
Rarely	53	43	43	41	36	1	1	2
Never	53	44	43	39	36	1	2	4
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>								
Familiar	50	40	43	42	37	1	1	0
Not familiar	53	44	43	39	36	1	2	3
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>								
Familiar	52	41	44	43	39	1	1	1
Not familiar	53	44	43	39	34	1	2	4

### 3. Measures to ensure the fairness of online electoral campaigns

Over eight in ten Europeans consider all measures important to ensure the fairness of electoral campaigns carried out online

Respondents were asked about the degree of importance they would give to each of the following measures to ensure the fairness of electoral campaigns carried out online.<sup>13</sup>

**The origin and source of political messages are transparent**, (46% 'very important'), **online platforms working to avoid manipulation via fake accounts or AI-generated bots**, (48% rating 'very important'), **equal opportunities for political parties and candidates to access online services** (43% 'very important'), **transparency regarding political opinion polls** (43% 'very important'), **online platforms are transparent about how their services could support political parties and campaigns** (40% 'very important') are seen as important by over eight in ten respondents.

QC9: How important or not do you think the following measures are to ensure the fairness of electoral campaigns carried out online? (%)

The origin and source of political messages is transparent (e.g. paid political advertising, involvement of influencers in political campaigns)



Online platforms work to avoid the possible risks of manipulation of their services, for example via fake accounts or bots generated by artificial intelligence (AI) aiming to disturb democracy



Equal opportunities are provided to political parties and candidates to access online services to compete for voters' attention



Political opinion polls are transparent, notably about the methods used to conduct them and the person or entity requesting the poll



Online platforms are transparent about how their services could be used to support political parties, candidates and campaign organisations



Very important    Fairly important    Not very important    Not at all important    Don't know

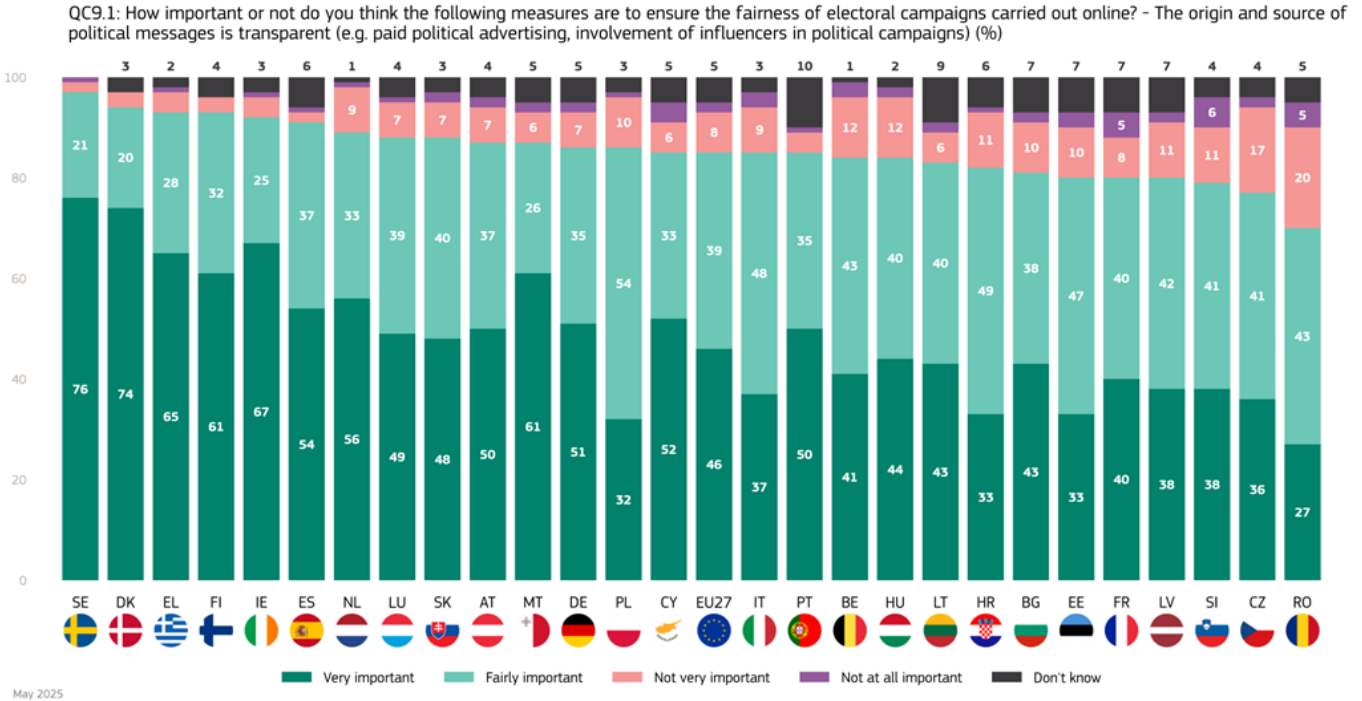
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<sup>13</sup> QC9. How important or not do you think the following measures are to ensure the fairness of electoral campaigns carried out online?

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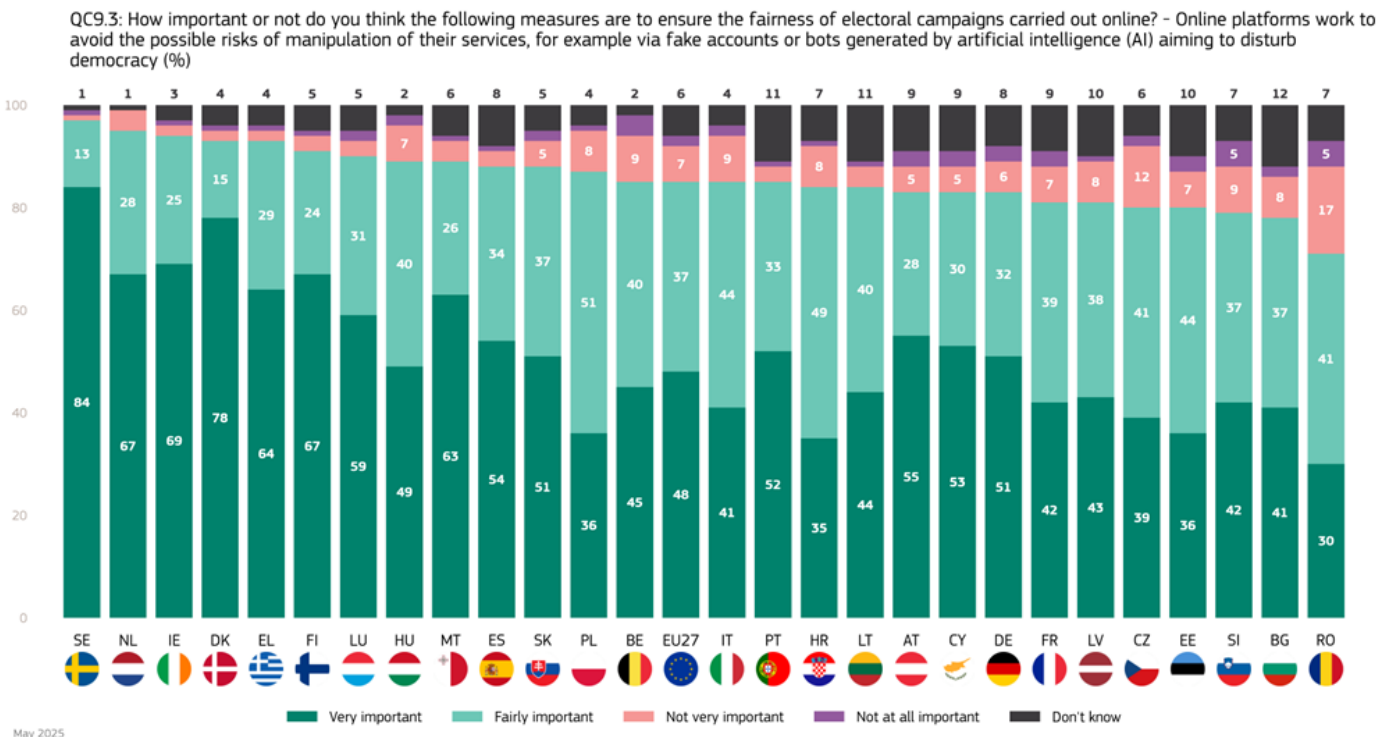
In all 27 Member States, at least seven in ten respondents deem **transparency of the origin and source of political messages** to be important to ensure fair online electoral campaigns.

Over nine in ten respondents find it important in Sweden (97%), Denmark (94%), Greece and Finland (both 93%). On the other side, Romania (70%), Czechia (77%) and Slovenia (79%) show the lowest shares of importance.



In 24 Member States, at least eight in ten respondents deem **online platform's work to avoid possible risks of manipulation of their services** important to ensure the fairness of electoral campaigns carried out online.

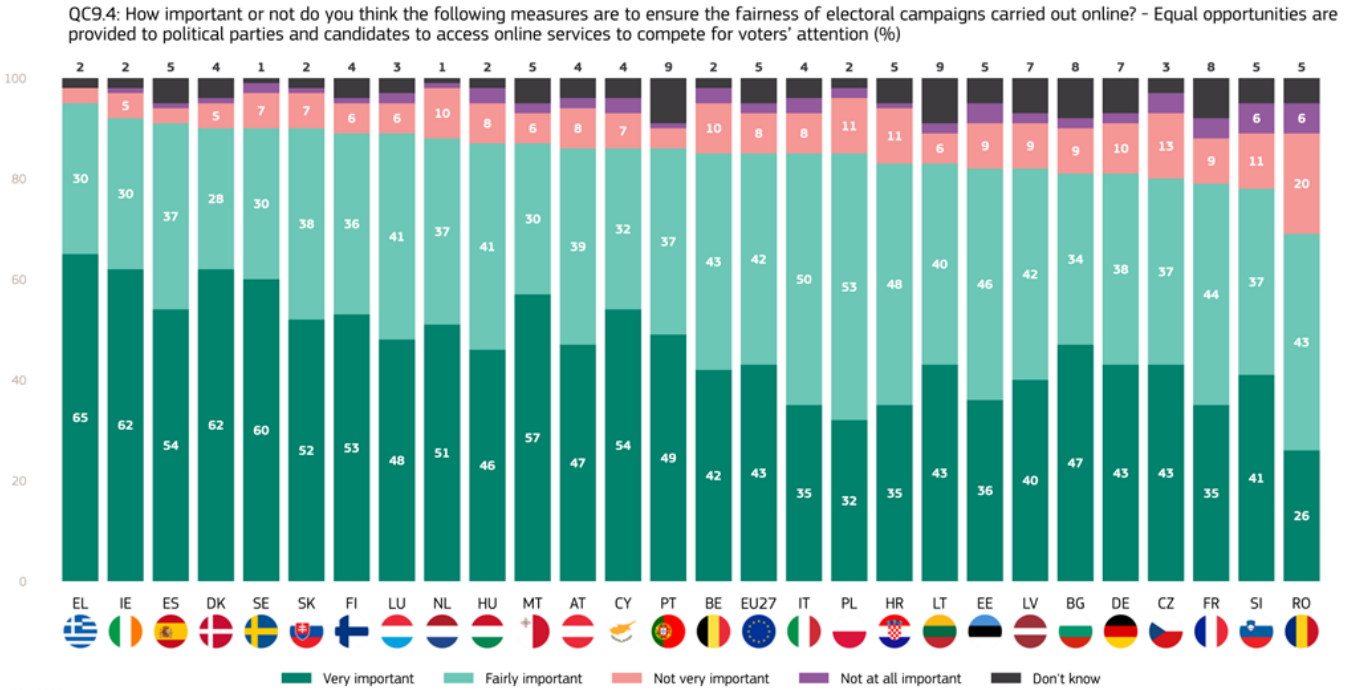
Over nine in ten respondents find it important in Sweden (97%), Netherlands (95%), and Ireland (94%). Conversely, the lowest importance is recorded in Romania (71%), Bulgaria (78%), and Slovenia (79%).



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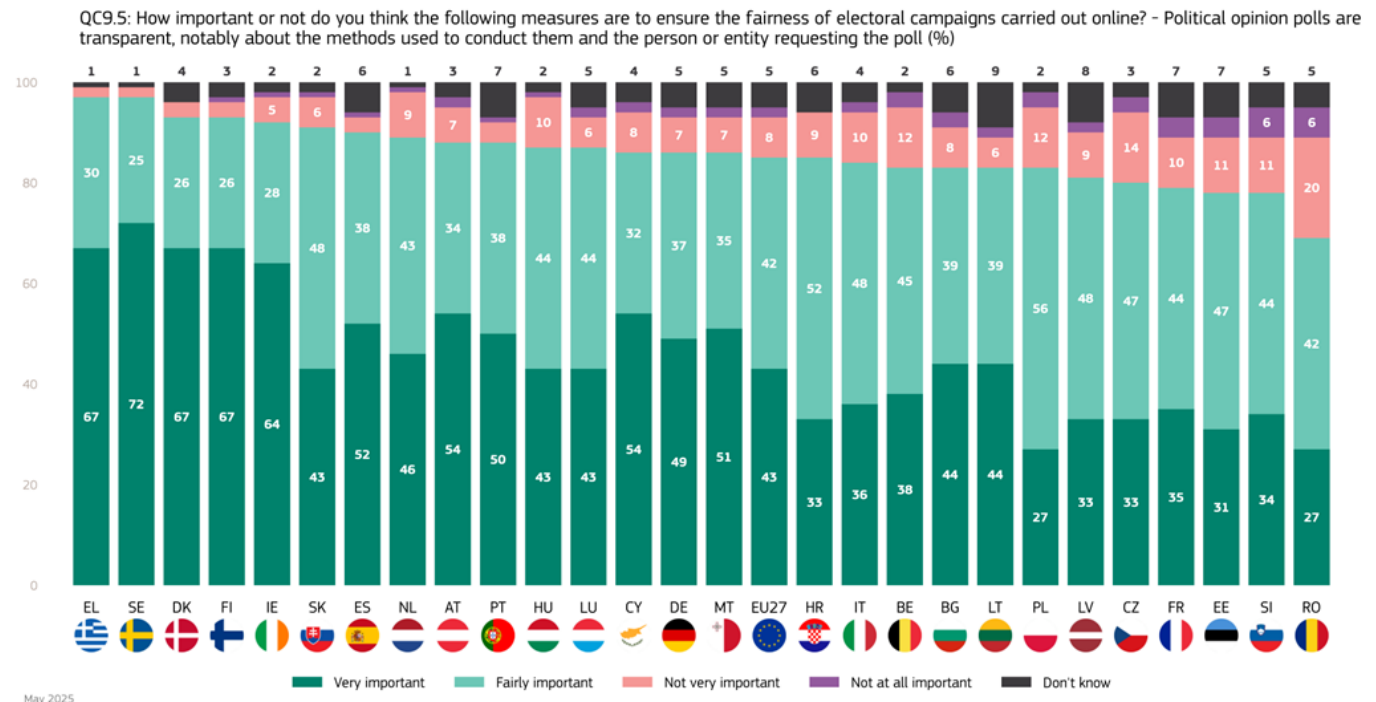
In 24 Member States, at least eight in ten respondents reported that **political parties and candidates being provided equal opportunities to access online services** is important to ensure fair online electoral campaigns.

Over nine in ten respondents find it important in Greece (95%), Iceland (92%), and Spain (91%), while the lowest share of respondents finding it important is recorded in Romania (69%), Slovenia (78%), and France (79%).



In 23 Member States, at least eight in ten respondents deem the **transparency of political opinion polls** important to ensure the fairness of online electoral campaigns.

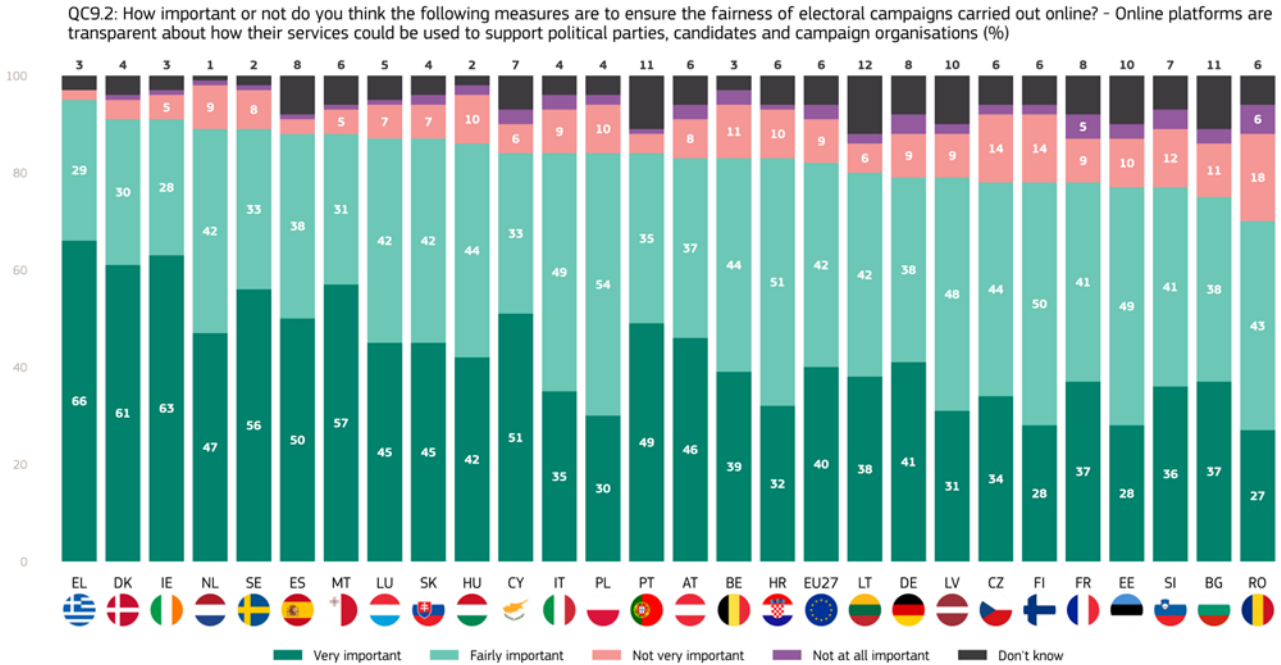
Over nine in ten respondents find it important in six Member States, most notably in Greece and Sweden (both 97%), Denmark and Finland (93%). In contrast, the lowest importance scores are found in Romania (65%), Slovenia (68%), and Estonia (68%).



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In 18 Member States, at least eight in ten respondents think that **the transparency of online platforms on how their services could be used to support political parties, candidates and campaign organisations** is important to ensure fair online electoral campaigns.

Over nine in ten respondents find it important in Greece (95%), Denmark (91%), and Ireland (91%). In contrast, the lowest shares of importance are seen in Romania (70%), Bulgaria (75%), and Slovenia (77%).



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The **socio-demographic analysis** examines views on key measures for ensuring fairness in online electoral campaigns.

- Europeans aged 25–54 express strongest support for all listed measures that ensure the fairness of electoral campaigns. For example, 88% of those aged 25–54 think that online platforms working to avoid the possible risks of manipulation is an important measure compared with 82% of those aged 55 or older.
- Citizens with tertiary education show strongest backing (around 88–90%) across all five measures, while those with lower education express less support (71–79%). Those still studying fall in between, with 84–88% endorsement.
- Residents of large towns show higher agreement (approximately 88%) for all five measures, compared to rural residents who report lower support (around 80%).
- Those satisfied with democracy and media freedom in the EU register significantly higher support (around 90–91%) for all measures, than those dissatisfied (around 78%).
- Frequent verifiers of online information express notably stronger support (around 90–92%) for online platforms working to avoid manipulation and transparency about how online platforms services could be used to support political parties, candidates, and campaigns compared to those who rarely or never verify (74–78%).
- Frequent sharers of information online when unsure about its trustworthiness show similar levels of support (86–89%) for online platforms working to avoid manipulation and transparency about how online platforms services could be used to support political parties, candidates, and campaigns, while non-sharers express lower support (around 80–83%).
- Familiarity with decision-making in the EU and civil society roles express higher support (about 89–92%) for all five key measures compared to those unfamiliar (80–84%).

QC9

How important or not do you think the following measures are to ensure the fairness of electoral campaigns carried out online?  
Total 'important'  
(% - EU)

	The origin and source of political messages is transparent (e.g. paid political advertising, involvement of influencers in political campaigns)	Political opinion polls are transparent, notably about the methods used to conduct them and the person or entity requesting the poll	Online platforms work to avoid the possible risks of manipulation of their services, for example via fake accounts or bots generated by artificial intelligence (AI) aiming to disturb democracy	Equal opportunities are provided to political parties and candidates to access online services to compete for voters' attention	Online platforms are transparent about how their services could be used to support political parties, candidates and campaign organisations
EU27	85	85	85	85	82
<b>Gender</b>					
Man	86	86	86	86	83
Woman	85	85	84	83	81
<b>Age</b>					
15-24	84	83	86	82	83
25-39	87	86	88	85	85
40-54	87	87	88	87	86
55+	83	83	82	83	79
<b>Education (End of)</b>					
15-	79	79	74	79	71
16-19	83	84	84	83	81
20+	90	89	90	88	87
Still Studying	87	85	88	84	85
<b>Socio-professional category</b>					
Self-employed	90	88	90	89	87
Managers	91	91	92	90	88
Other white collars	87	87	88	86	87
Manual workers	83	84	85	84	83
House persons	78	78	78	79	74
Unemployed	84	79	84	80	81
Retired	82	82	79	81	76
Students	87	85	88	83	85
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>					
Rural area or village	83	82	82	82	80
Small or middle sized town	85	85	85	84	83
Large town	88	88	88	86	85
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>					
Satisfied	90	89	90	89	87
Not satisfied	80	80	80	81	78
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>					
Yes	85	85	88	82	84
No	85	85	85	84	82
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>					
Total 'Yes'	88	88	89	84	86
Total 'No'	85	84	84	84	82
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>					
Satisfied	91	90	90	89	88
Not satisfied	80	80	80	79	78
<b>Verifying information when using online platforms</b>					
Very often	90	91	92	89	89
Sometimes	89	89	91	88	87
Rarely	86	85	86	84	83
Never	78	78	75	78	74
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>					
Very often	84	89	89	87	86
Sometimes	87	86	90	86	87
Rarely	86	85	86	84	84
Never	85	84	83	83	80
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>					
Familiar	90	91	92	89	89
Not familiar	84	83	84	83	81
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>					
Familiar	90	90	91	89	88
Not familiar	83	83	83	82	80

## 4. Concern about electoral integrity in Europe

Voters basing decisions on disinformation, or cyberattacks influencing elections are the most concerning issues regarding elections in Europe

Respondents were asked about their concern regarding the following issues on elections in Europe.<sup>14</sup>

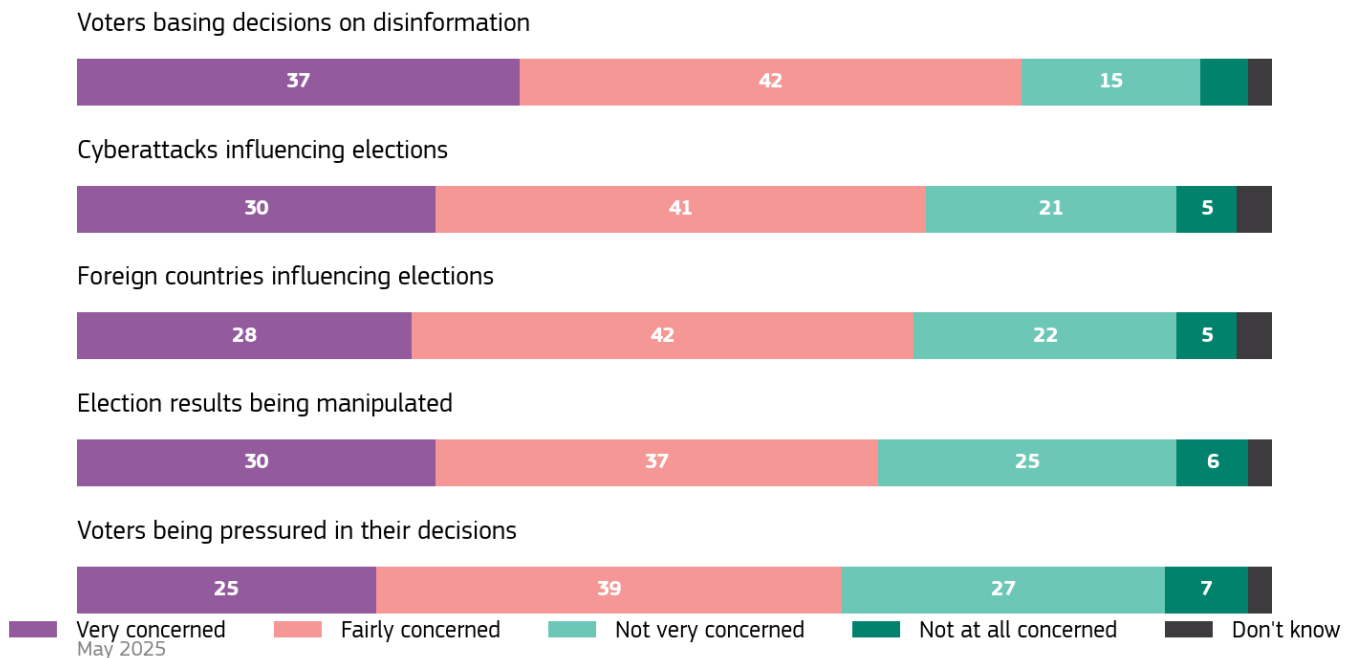
Nearly eight in ten (79%) of citizens are concerned about **voters basing decisions on disinformation**, (37% 'very concerned' and 42% 'fairly concerned').

Over seven in ten (71%) express concern about **cyberattacks influencing elections** (30% 'very concerned', 41% 'fairly concerned'), closely followed by those concerned about **foreign countries influencing elections** (70%, 28% 'very concerned' and 42% 'fairly concerned').

Two third of respondents (67%) are concerned about **election results being manipulated**, (30% 'very concerned' and 37% 'fairly concerned').

Finally, over six in ten (64%) are concerned about **voters being pressured in their decisions** (25% 'very concerned' and 39% 'fairly concerned').

QC16: Regarding elections in Europe, how concerned are you about the following? (%)

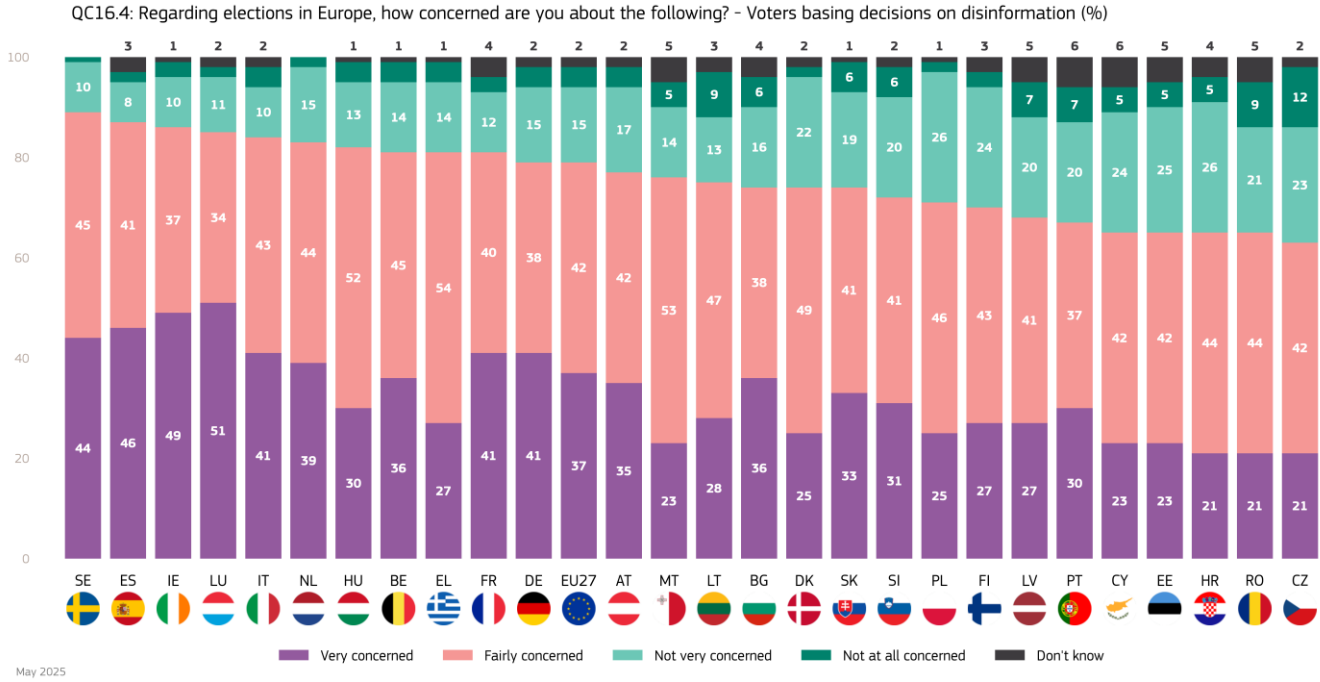


<sup>14</sup> QC16. Regarding elections in Europe, how concerned are you about the following?

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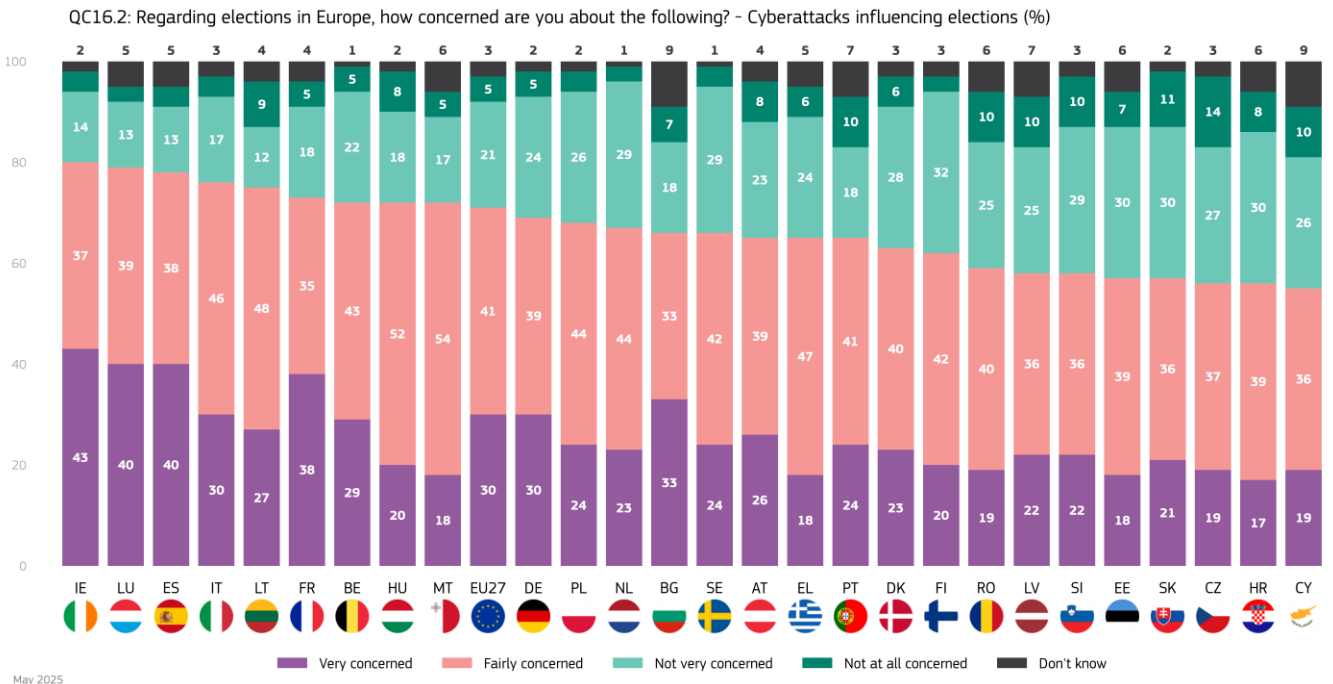
In ten Member States, at least seven in ten respondents are concerned about **voters basing decisions on disinformation**, most notably, in Sweden (89%, including 44% 'very concerned'), Spain (87%, 46% 'very concerned') and Ireland (86%, 49% 'very concerned').

In contrast, at least a quarter of respondents are not concerned about this issue, most notably in Czechia (35%, including 12% 'not at all concerned'), and Croatia (31%, 5% 'not at all concerned').



In nine Member States, at least seven in ten respondents are concerned about **cyberattacks influencing** elections, most notably in Ireland (80%, 43% 'very concerned'), Luxembourg (79%, 40% 'very concerned') and Spain (78%, 40% 'very concerned').

Conversely, at least a third of respondents are not concerned in 11 Member States, most notably in Czechia (41%, 14% 'not at all concerned'), Slovakia (41%, 11% 'not at all concerned') and Slovenia (39%, 10% 'not at all concerned').

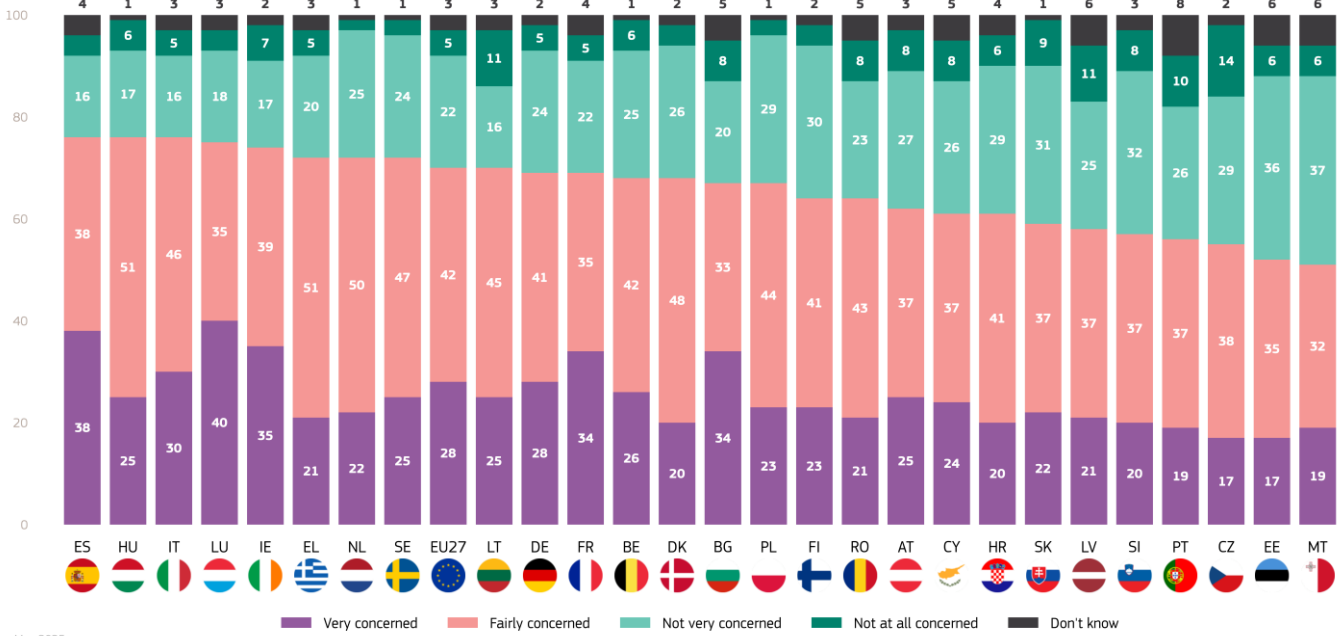


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In 15 Member States, at least two thirds of respondents seem to be concerned about **foreign countries influencing elections**, most notably in Spain (76%, 38% 'very concerned'), Hungary (76%, 25% 'very concerned') and Italy (76%, 30% 'very concerned').

In contrast, at least four in ten respondents are not concerned about this issue in five Member States, most notably in Malta (43%, 6% 'not at all concerned'), Czechia (43%, 14% 'not at all concerned') and Estonia (42%, 6% 'not at all concerned').

QC16.5: Regarding elections in Europe, how concerned are you about the following? - Foreign countries influencing elections (%)

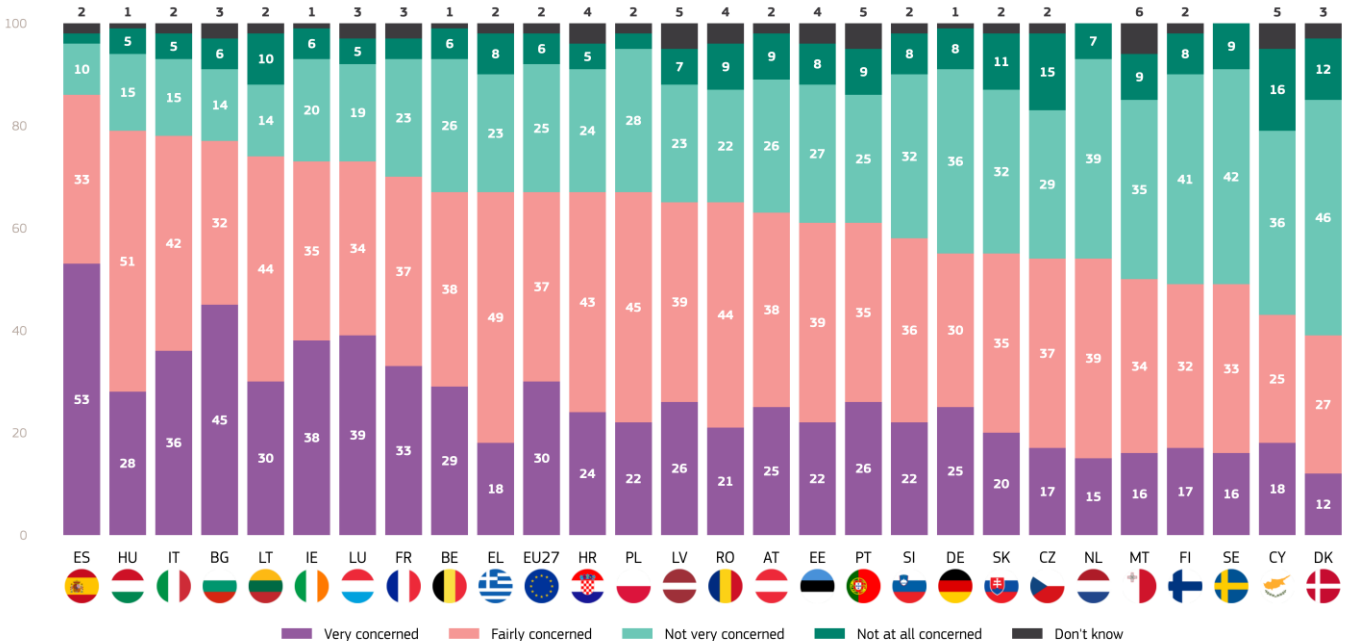


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In 17 Member States, at least six in ten respondents are concerned about **election results being manipulated**, most notably in Spain (86%, 53% 'very concerned'), Hungary (79%, 28% 'very concerned') and Italy (78%, 36% 'very concerned').

In contrast, at last four in ten respondents are not concerned about this issue in ten Member States, most notably in Denmark (58%, 12% 'not at all concerned'), Cyprus (52%, 16% 'not at all concerned') and Sweden (51%, 9% 'not at all concerned').

QC16.1: Regarding elections in Europe, how concerned are you about the following? - Election results being manipulated (%)



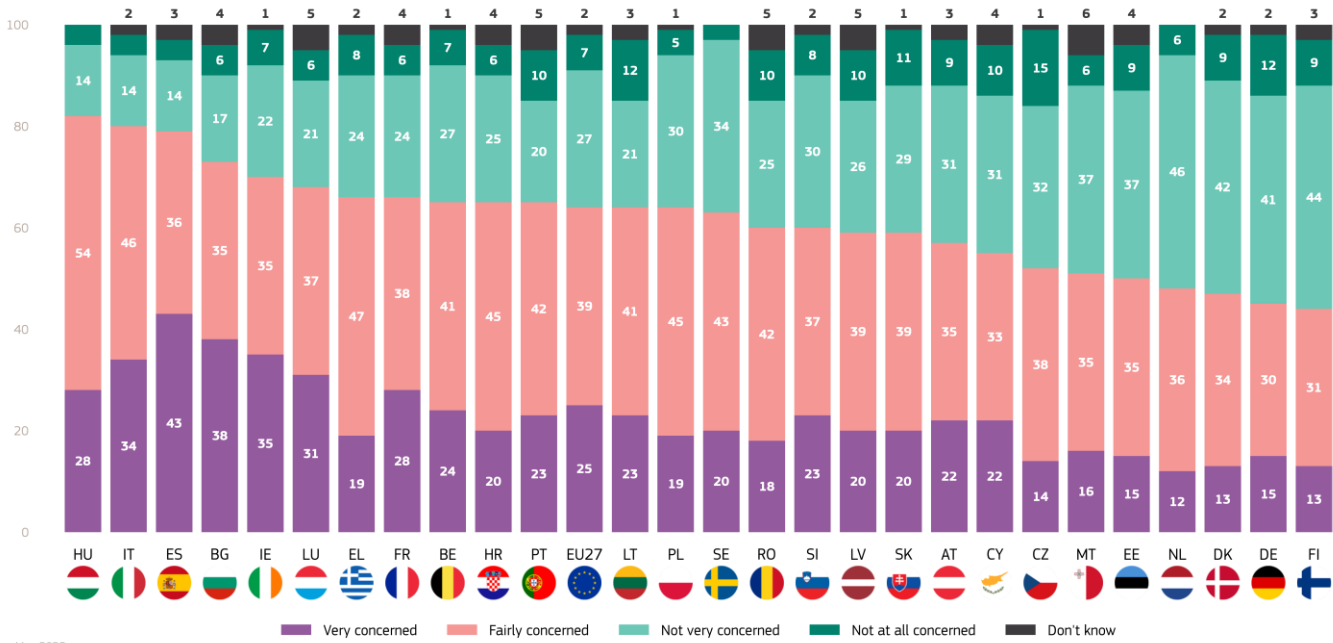
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In 23 Member States, at least half of respondents are concerned about **voters being pressured in their decisions**, most notably in Hungary (82%, 28% 'very concerned'), Italy (80%, 28% 'very concerned'), Italy (80%, 28% 'very concerned') and Spain (79%, 43% 'very concerned').

In contrast, over four in ten respondents are not concerned in eight Member States, most notably in Finland (53%, 9% 'not at all concerned'), Germany (53%, 12% 'not at all concerned') and the Netherlands (52%, 6% 'not at all concerned').

QC16.3: Regarding elections in Europe, how concerned are you about the following? - Voters being pressured in their decisions (%)



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The **socio-demographic analysis** reveals key differences across European groups with regard to five core election-related issues:

- Men and women show similar levels of concern about voters basing decisions on disinformation (80% and 78%), cyberattacks influencing elections (71% and 69%), and foreign countries influencing elections (70% and 69%). Women are slightly more concerned about election results manipulations (68% vs 66%).
- Respondents aged 40–54 are more concerned about cyberattacks affecting elections (72%) than the 15–24 age group (68%). Along with those aged 25–39, they also show greater worry about voters being influenced by disinformation (81%).
- Citizens with higher education levels express greater concern about voters basing decisions on disinformation (83%) and foreign interference (73%), while those with lower education report less concern, for cyberattacks (66%) and foreign countries influencing elections (67%).
- Among socio-professional groups, those unemployed report the highest concern for election results being manipulated (73%) and voters being pressured (71%), whereas managers show the lowest concern for these issues (62% and 60%, respectively).
- Individuals who frequently verify online information show the highest concern about voters basing their decision on disinformation (90%) and foreign interference (78%), while those who never verify express the lowest concern, particularly for voter pressure (58%) and foreign interference (60%).
- Those respondents reporting to be dissatisfied with media freedom express greater concern about election manipulation (74%) and voter pressure (70%) compared to those who are satisfied (63% and 61%, respectively).
- Individuals who frequently verify online information show the highest concern about voters basing their decision on disinformation (90%) and foreign interference (78%).
- Those who very often share unverified information online express greater concern about all listed issues. For example, voters basing their decision on disinformation is a concern for 87% of those who share very often compared to 78% of those who never shares.
- Citizens familiar with decision-making in the EU and civil society organisations show higher concern about cyberattacks and foreign interference influencing elections (76–78%) than those unfamiliar, who report lower concern levels, especially for disinformation (78%) and voter pressure (62%).

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### Protecting and promoting democracy

**QC16** Regarding elections in Europe, how concerned are you about the following?  
Total 'concerned'  
(% - EU)

	Voters basing decisions on disinformation	Cyberattacks influencing elections	Foreign countries influencing elections	Election results being manipulated	Voters being pressured in their decisions
EU27	79	71	70	67	64
<b>Gender</b>					
Man	80	71	70	66	63
Woman	78	69	69	68	64
<b>Age</b>					
15-24	78	68	65	67	64
25-39	81	70	71	66	64
40-54	81	72	71	68	66
55+	77	69	69	67	62
<b>Education (End of)</b>					
15-	76	66	67	71	65
16-19	77	69	69	69	65
20+	83	73	73	63	60
Still Studying	81	67	63	63	63
<b>Socio-professional category</b>					
Self-employed	80	71	71	64	64
Managers	83	70	73	62	60
Other white collars	81	72	72	69	66
Manual workers	78	71	70	70	65
House persons	75	65	65	71	64
Unemployed	82	75	70	73	71
Retired	76	68	68	65	61
Students	82	67	65	64	62
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>					
Rural area or village	76	68	66	66	61
Small or middle sized town	80	71	72	68	64
Large town	81	71	71	66	65
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>					
Satisfied	81	73	71	65	62
Not satisfied	79	68	68	71	67
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>					
Yes	80	73	73	65	64
No	79	70	69	67	64
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>					
Total 'Yes'	85	75	75	64	64
Total 'No'	78	69	68	67	63
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>					
Satisfied	80	72	71	63	61
Not satisfied	80	69	71	74	70
<b>Verifying information when using online platforms</b>					
Very often	90	78	78	73	70
Sometimes	84	74	75	68	65
Rarely	77	70	68	66	63
Never	69	62	60	63	58
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>					
Very often	87	82	77	79	74
Sometimes	81	75	74	73	69
Rarely	79	70	68	67	64
Never	78	69	68	63	60
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>					
Familiar	83	78	77	73	70
Not familiar	78	68	68	65	62
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>					
Familiar	84	76	76	68	67
Not familiar	76	67	67	67	62



### **III. Perceptions of media freedom and pluralism in the EU**

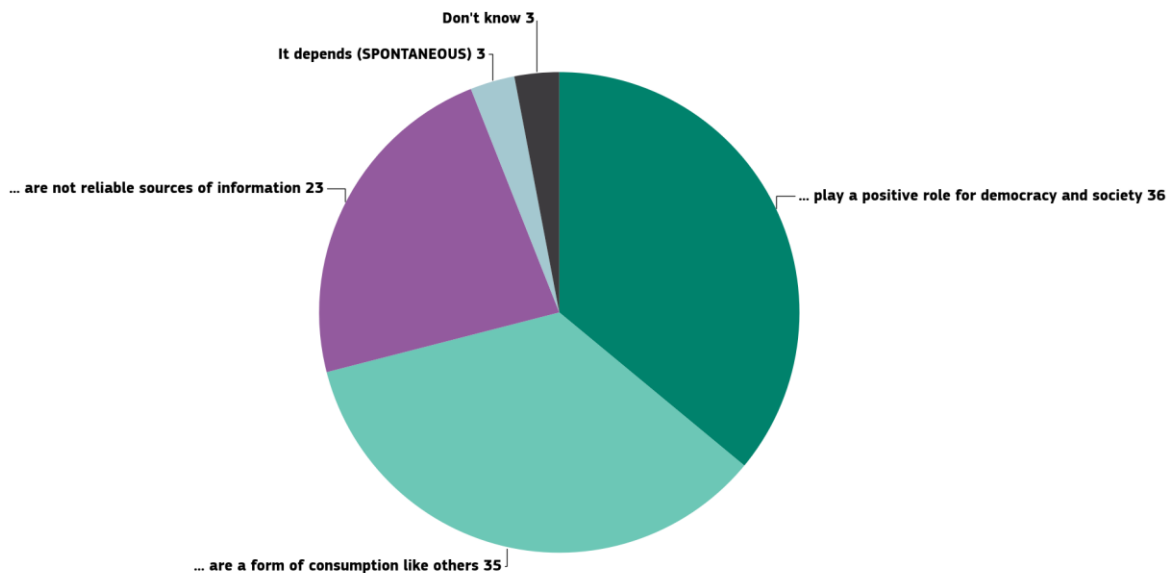
## 1. Views on the role of journalism and professional news content in the EU

Nearly four in ten Europeans think that journalism and professional news content play a positive role for democracy and society in the EU

Respondents were asked about their views on news reporting and professional media in the European Union.<sup>15</sup>

Over one third (36%) of individuals believe journalism and professional news content play a **positive role** for democracy and society. A similar share (35%) sees it as a **form of consumption like any other**, while over one fifth (23%) consider it **an unreliable source** of information. Finally, a small share (3%) of respondents say *spontaneously* that their opinion **depends on the situation**.

QC13: Which of the following statements best reflects your views on news reporting and professional media: In the European Union, journalism and professional news content, which is news produced by professional journalists... (%)



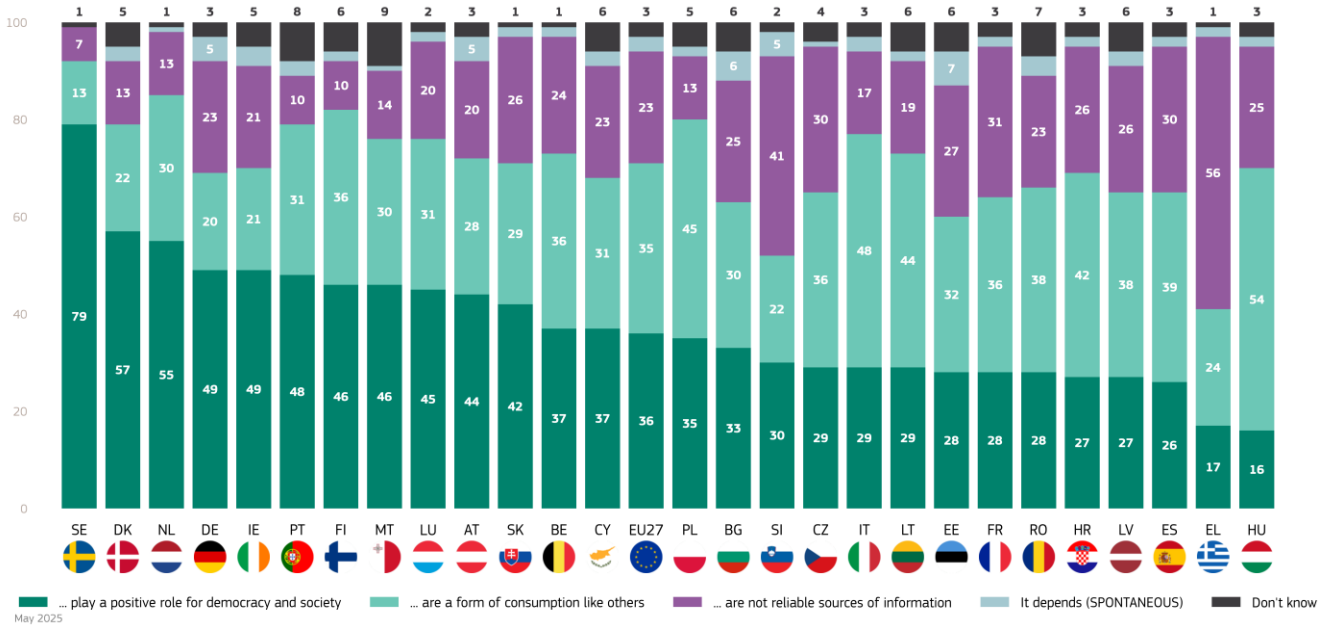
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<sup>15</sup> QC13. Which of the following statements best reflects your views on news reporting and professional media: In the European Union, journalism

and professional news content, which is news produced by professional journalists...

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QC13: Which of the following statements best reflects your views on news reporting and professional media: In the European Union, journalism and professional news content, which is news produced by professional journalists... (%)



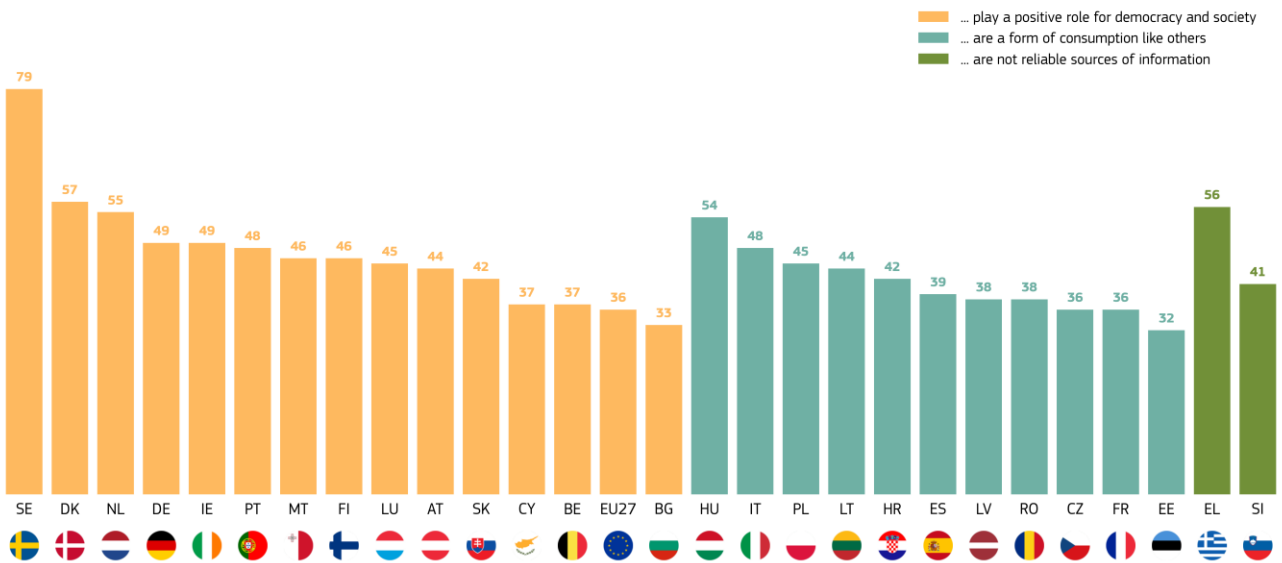
Looking at the national level, there is a spread of opinions on the role of news reporting and professional media in the European Union.

In 14 countries, the view that journalism plays a **positive role** is the most common response, notably in Sweden (79%), Denmark (57%) and the Netherlands (55%).

In 11 countries, the most common response is that journalism is a **form of consumption like any other**, notably in Hungary (54%), Italy (48%), and Poland (45%).

In two Member States, the most frequent view is that journalism is **not a reliable source**: Greece (56%) and Slovenia (41%).

QC13: Which of the following statements best reflects your views on news reporting and professional media: In the European Union, journalism and professional news content, which is news produced by professional journalists... (%)



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The **socio-demographic analysis** outlines how citizens across the EU perceive the role and reliability of professional journalism.

- Over a third of both men and women say professional journalism plays a positive role for democracy (36%) as well as another form of consumption (35%), while slightly more men consider it unreliable source of information (24% vs. 22%).
- Citizens aged 55 or over are the most likely to endorse journalism's democratic role (39%), whereas those aged 15–39 are more inclined to view it as a form of consumption (38–39%). Those aged 40 and over are more likely to see journalism as an unreliable source of information (24–25%) than those aged 15–39 (21%).
- Managers (46%) and students (40%) are the most likely to associate journalism with a democratic role. View on journalism as an unreliable source of information peaks among the unemployed (29%) and manual workers (26%), while seeing journalism as a form of consumption is more common among manual workers and other white collars (both 39%) compared with other socio-professional groups.
- Residents of large towns express the most positive views (41%), while those living in rural areas report the highest level of journalism being an unreliable source of information (25%).
- Respondents that are satisfied with democracy in the EU are more likely to see journalism as playing a positive role (47%), whereas those being dissatisfied are more prone to see professional media as unreliable (38%).
- Over a half (53%) of those satisfied with media freedom recognise the positive role of journalism, while only 9% consider it as an unreliable source.
- Individuals who never share information online are more likely to see the democratic benefit of journalism (39%) compared to frequent sharers (34%), who also report greater journalism unreliability (29%).
- EU citizens that are familiar with decision-making initiatives in the EU are more likely to view journalism positively (40%) and less likely to find it unreliable (17%) than those unfamiliar (36% positive, 25% unreliable).
- Similarly, nearly half (45%) of those familiar with civil society roles say journalism plays a democratic role, while only 17% view it as unreliable.

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### Protecting and promoting democracy

**QC13** Which of the following statements best reflects your views on news reporting and professional media: In the European Union, journalism and professional news content, which is news produced by professional journalists...  
(% - EU)

	... play a positive role for democracy and society	... are a form of consumption like others	... are not reliable sources of information	It depends (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't know
EU27	36	35	23	3	3
<b>Gender</b>					
Man	36	35	24	2	3
Woman	36	35	22	3	4
<b>Age</b>					
15-24	35	39	21	2	3
25-39	35	38	21	3	3
40-54	34	37	25	2	2
55+	39	30	24	3	4
<b>Education (End of)</b>					
15-	31	29	30	3	7
16-19	33	37	24	3	3
20+	43	32	21	2	2
Still Studying	40	38	16	3	3
<b>Socio-professional category</b>					
Self-employed	39	34	22	2	3
Managers	46	31	19	2	2
Other white collars	35	39	22	2	2
Manual workers	29	39	26	3	3
House persons	29	35	25	6	5
Unemployed	28	35	29	4	4
Retired	40	29	24	3	4
Students	40	37	18	2	3
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>					
Rural area or village	34	34	25	3	4
Small or middle sized town	35	36	23	3	3
Large town	41	33	21	2	3
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>					
Satisfied	47	35	14	2	2
Not satisfied	21	34	38	4	3
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>					
Yes	39	42	17	1	1
No	36	34	24	3	3
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>					
Total 'Yes'	46	34	17	2	1
Total 'No'	34	35	25	3	3
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>					
Satisfied	53	34	9	2	2
Not satisfied	14	36	44	3	3
<b>Verifying information when using online platforms</b>					
Very often	42	29	27	1	1
Sometimes	39	38	20	2	1
Rarely	35	39	21	3	2
Never	31	32	26	5	6
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>					
Very often	34	33	29	2	2
Sometimes	34	42	21	2	1
Rarely	33	40	22	3	2
Never	39	29	25	3	4
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>					
Familiar	40	40	17	2	1
Not familiar	36	33	25	3	3
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>					
Familiar	45	35	17	2	1
Not familiar	33	34	26	3	4

## 2. Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU

Nearly six in ten Europeans are satisfied with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the European Union

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU.<sup>16</sup>

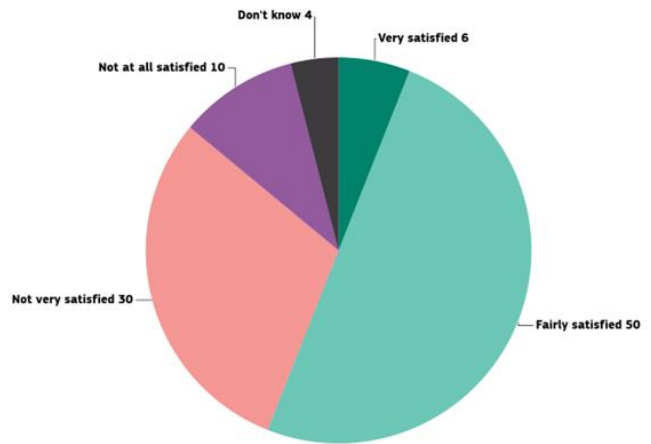
Over half (56%) of respondents are **satisfied** with the state of media freedom, independence, and pluralism in the EU, (6% very satisfied and 50% “fairly satisfied”).

Four in ten (40%) of respondents are **not satisfied** (30% not very satisfied and 10% not at all satisfied).

Finally, a small share of respondents answer that they don’t know (4%).

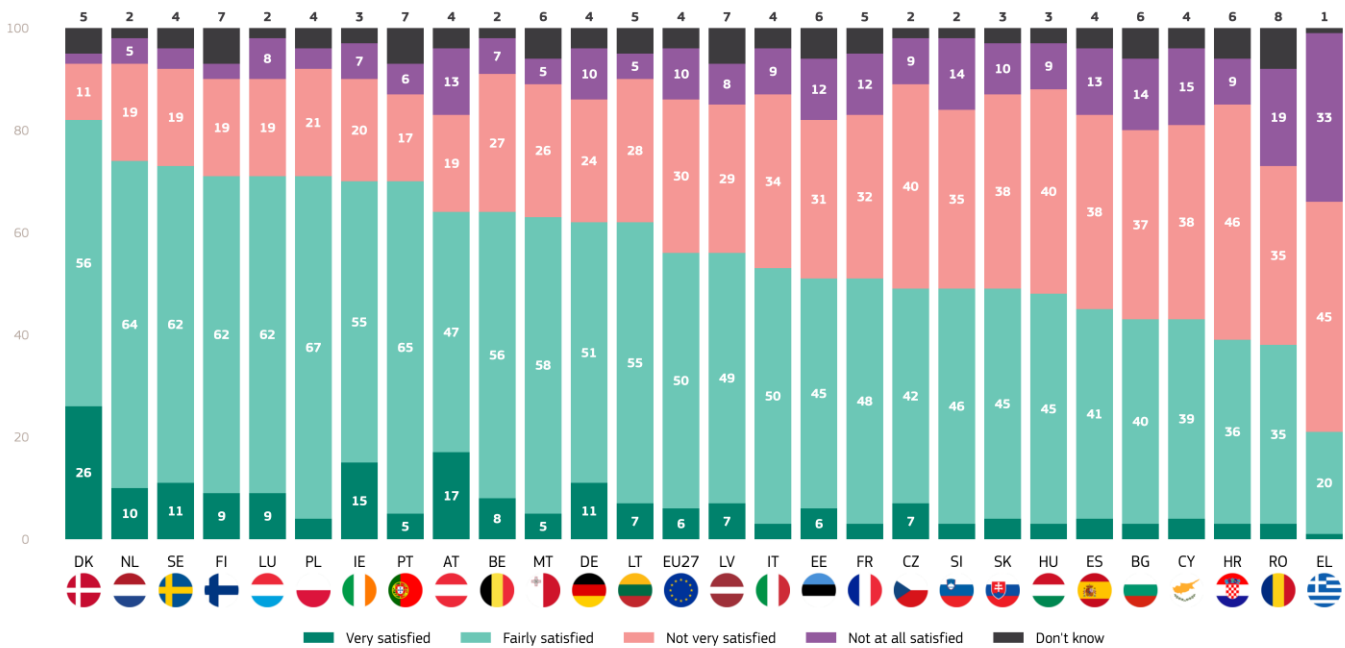
Looking at the national level, over half of respondents are **satisfied** with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU in 17 Member States, most notably in Denmark (82%), the Netherlands (74%) and Sweden (73%). Conversely, the lowest levels of satisfaction are recorded in Greece (21%), Romania (38%), and Croatia (39%).

QC14: How satisfied are you with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU? (%)



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QC14: How satisfied are you with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU? (%)



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<sup>16</sup> QC14. How satisfied are you with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU?

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The **socio-demographic analysis** describes how citizens across the EU perceive the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism.

- Men and women are equally satisfied with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism (56%), while men report slightly more dissatisfaction (41% vs. 39%).
- Citizens aged 15–24 are slightly more satisfied (58%) than those aged 55 or over (55%).
- Among socio-professional groups, managers express the highest satisfaction (64%), followed by students (62%) and white-collar workers (59%). Dissatisfaction is highest among the unemployed (51%), manual workers (45%), and house persons (44%).
- Large town residents report higher satisfaction (58%), followed by those living in small or mid-sized towns (56%) and rural areas (54%).
- Satisfaction levels tend to be higher among those involved in decision-making processes in the EU (63%), compared to those respondents who are not involved (55%).
- Citizens who verify information sometimes show the highest satisfaction (60%), followed by those rarely verifying (58%), verifying often (55%), and never verifying (52%).
- Those respondents sharing information online sometimes when unsure about the source's trustworthiness report the highest satisfaction (64%), while those who share very often (55%) or never (54%) show lower satisfaction levels.
- Respondents that are familiar with EU participatory processes are more satisfied with media freedom than those who are unfamiliar (70% vs 52%).
- Respondents that are familiar with the roles and activities of CSOs in their countries are more prone to be satisfied than those who are unfamiliar (68% vs 51%).

**QC14** How satisfied are you with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU?

	Total 'Satisfied'	Total 'Not satisfied'	Don't know
EU27	56	40	4
<b>Gender</b>			
Man	56	41	3
Woman	56	39	5
<b>Age</b>			
15-24	58	36	6
25-39	57	40	3
40-54	56	41	3
55+	55	39	6
<b>Education (End of)</b>			
15-	48	46	6
16-19	53	42	5
20+	61	36	3
Still Studying	64	30	6
<b>Socio-professional category</b>			
Self-employed	54	42	4
Managers	64	34	2
Other white collars	59	38	3
Manual workers	52	45	3
House persons	49	44	7
Unemployed	45	51	4
Retired	56	37	7
Students	62	33	5
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>			
Rural area or village	54	41	5
Small or middle sized town	56	40	4
Large town	58	38	4
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>			
Satisfied	75	23	2
Not satisfied	30	66	4
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>			
Yes	63	36	1
No	55	40	5
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>			
Total 'Yes'	64	34	2
Total 'No'	54	41	5
<b>Verifying information when using online platforms</b>			
Very often	55	42	3
Sometimes	60	37	3
Rarely	58	39	3
Never	52	41	7
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>			
Very often	55	41	4
Sometimes	64	33	3
Rarely	53	44	3
Never	54	40	6
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>			
Familiar	70	29	1
Not familiar	52	43	5
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>			
Familiar	68	31	1
Not familiar	51	44	5



## **IV. Disinformation, information manipulation and foreign interference**

## 1. Citizens' actions to tackle disinformation

The education systems and other critical-thinking programmes, or fact-checking by independent and trustworthy organisations are the most spread actions or resources to enhance citizens' skills in tackling disinformation and information manipulation

Respondents were asked about the actions or resources that would best enhance citizens' skills to effectively tackle disinformation and information manipulation.<sup>17</sup>

Over four in ten (44%) view the **education system and related programmes that equip people with critical thinking, media, and digital literacy** as the best response to strengthening citizens' skills against disinformation and information manipulation.

Following, there is **fact-checking provided by independent and trustworthy organisations** (41%) and **public awareness campaigns to help citizens identify disinformation and information manipulation** (40%).

Over a third (35%) mentioned **tools and technologies for verifying the origin or credibility of sources**, while three in ten (30%) mentioned **easy access to studies and research from independent and trustworthy experts and scientists** as a useful resource.

QC3: What actions or resources do you believe would best enhance citizens' skills to effectively tackle disinformation and information manipulation? (IF NECESSARY: Disinformation is false information deliberately spread with the intention of influencing public opinion.) (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (EU27) (%)



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<sup>17</sup> QC3. What actions or resources do you believe would best enhance citizens' skills to effectively tackle disinformation and information manipulation?

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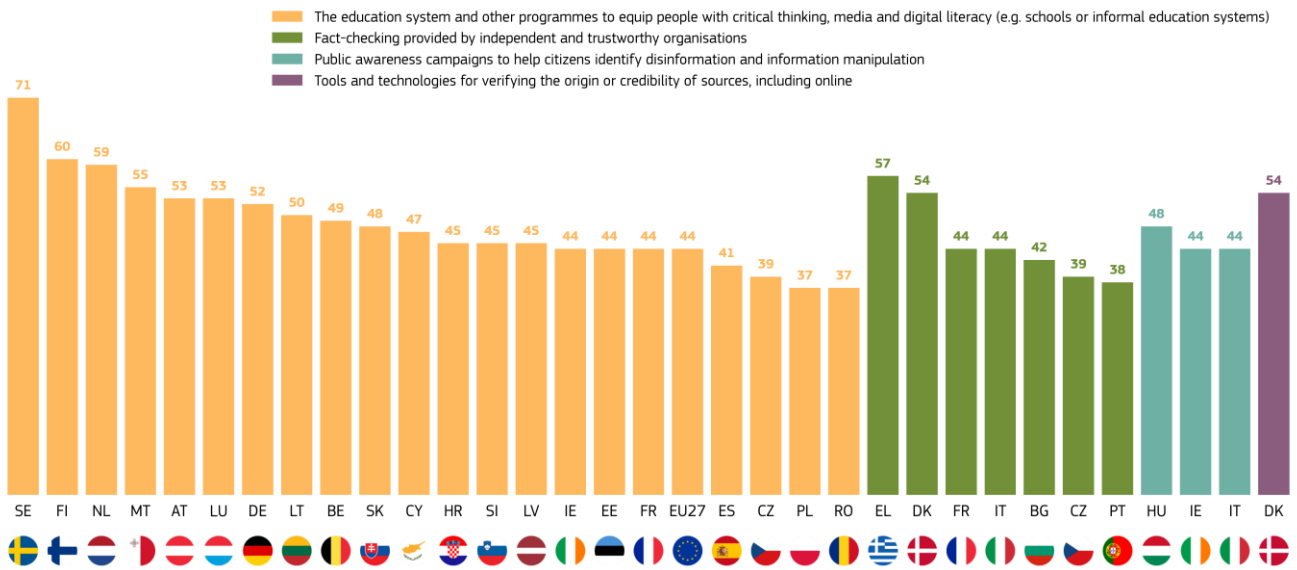
**Educational systems and other programmes aimed at developing critical thinking, media awareness, and digital skills** is the most cited measure in 21 Member States, most notably in Sweden (71%), Finland (60%), and the Netherlands (59%).

**Fact-checking by independent and trustworthy organisations** ranks first in seven Member States, with Greece (57%) and Denmark (54%) showcasing the highest results, followed by France and Italy (44% each).

**Public awareness campaigns** to help citizens identify disinformation and information manipulation are the top choice in three Member States: Hungary (48%), Ireland and Italy (both 44%).

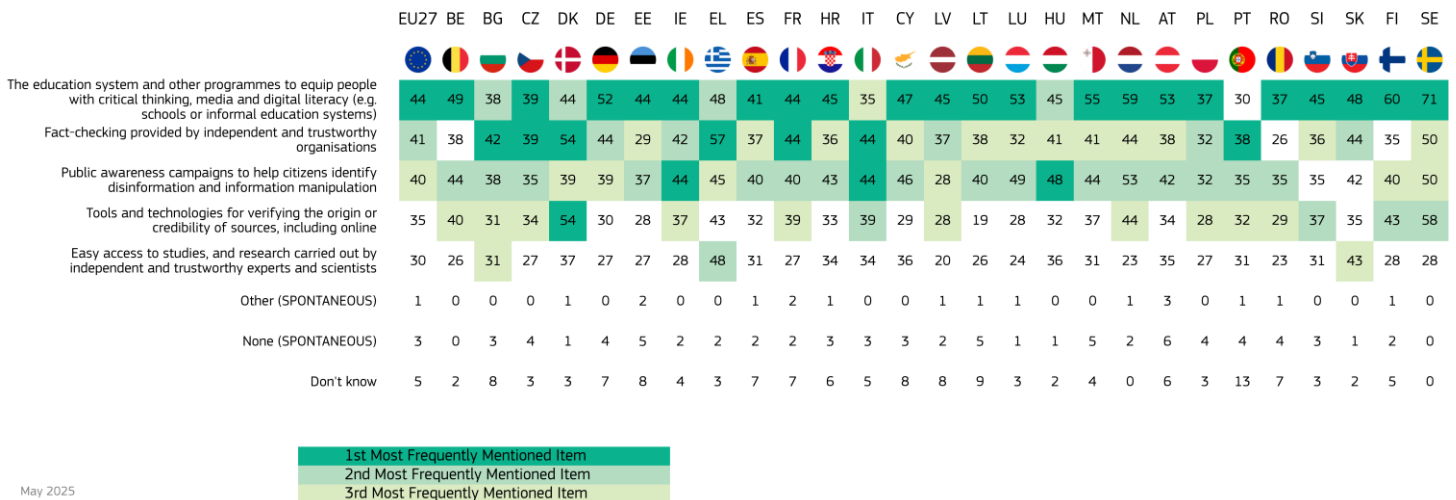
Finally, **tools and technologies for verifying the origin or credibility of sources** are ranked as the top priority in Denmark (54%).

QC3: What actions or resources do you believe would best enhance citizens' skills to effectively tackle disinformation and information manipulation? (IF NECESSARY: Disinformation is false information deliberately spread with the intention of influencing public opinion.) (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (%)



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QC3: What actions or resources do you believe would best enhance citizens' skills to effectively tackle disinformation and information manipulation? (IF NECESSARY: Disinformation is false information deliberately spread with the intention of influencing public opinion.) (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (%)



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The **socio-demographic analysis** examines how citizens across the EU believe disinformation and information manipulation can best be tackled.

- Men slightly more often select educational initiatives (45% vs. 44%) and fact-checking (42% vs. 40%), while women prefer public awareness campaigns (41% vs. 40%).
- Preference for educational initiatives declines with age, from 15–24-(49%), to 25–39-(48%), to 55 or over (39%). Similarly, endorsement of verification tools is higher among younger adults (41% for 15–24 and 39% for 25–39) than seniors (30%).
- Managers (53%) and students (52%) most frequently endorse educational initiatives, while verification tools are especially popular among students (43%) and the self-employed (41%). By contrast, house persons and retirees report the lowest endorsement of educational initiatives (37–38%) and verification tools (25–28%).
- Residents of large towns more frequently endorse educational initiatives (49%) and public awareness campaigns (43%) compared to those in rural areas (42% and 40%, respectively). Similarly, selection of verification tools (36% vs. 32%) and independent research access (31% vs. 28%) is higher among urban residents.
- EU citizens who verify information online sometimes express the strongest support across key measures, as educational initiatives (58%), fact-checking services (46%), and verification tools (44%), whereas those who never verify show significantly lower support, especially for verification tools (25%) and educational initiatives (33%).
- Individuals that are familiar with decision-making processes in the EU are more likely to select access to independent research (34%) than those unfamiliar (29%), and those who are aware of civil society organisations endorse educational initiatives (51%), public awareness campaigns (42%), and verification tools (37%) more frequently than those who are not aware (42%, 40%, and 34%, respectively).

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### Protecting and promoting democracy

**QC3** What actions or resources do you believe would best enhance citizens' skills to effectively tackle disinformation and information manipulation? (IF NECESSARY: Disinformation is false information deliberately spread with the intention of influencing public opinion.) (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)  
(% - EU)

	The education system and other programmes to equip people with critical thinking, media and digital literacy (e.g. schools or informal education systems)	Fact-checking provided by independent and trustworthy organisations	Public awareness campaigns to help citizens identify disinformation and information manipulation	Tools and technologies for verifying the origin or credibility of sources, including online	Easy access to studies, and research carried out by independent and trustworthy experts and scientists	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	None (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't know
EU27	44	41	40	35	30	1	3	5
<b>Gender</b>								
Man	45	42	40	36	31	1	3	4
Woman	44	40	41	34	29	1	3	7
<b>Age</b>								
15-24	49	41	37	41	33	1	1	4
25-39	48	41	40	39	33	1	2	3
40-54	47	42	43	37	30	1	2	3
55+	39	41	41	30	27	1	4	9
<b>Education (End of)</b>								
15-	31	36	37	24	24	1	6	15
16-19	41	40	40	33	29	1	3	5
20+	52	44	43	40	31	1	2	2
Still Studying	52	43	37	46	34	1	1	3
<b>Socio-professional category</b>								
Self-employed	45	42	43	41	35	2	2	3
Managers	53	44	42	43	31	0	1	2
Other white collars	49	43	44	37	31	1	2	2
Manual workers	42	40	41	34	30	1	2	4
House persons	37	36	36	25	23	0	4	12
Unemployed	46	37	39	39	28	1	5	4
Retired	38	40	39	28	26	1	4	11
Students	52	43	38	43	34	1	1	2
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>								
Rural area or village	42	39	40	32	28	1	4	7
Small or middle sized town	43	42	40	37	30	1	2	5
Large town	49	43	41	36	31	1	2	4
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>								
Satisfied	48	44	44	37	31	0	2	3
Not satisfied	40	39	36	33	28	1	4	6
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>								
Total 'Yes'	53	45	43	38	30	1	1	1
Total 'No'	42	40	40	34	29	1	3	6
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>								
Satisfied	49	44	45	37	31	0	2	4
Not satisfied	40	39	36	34	30	1	3	5
<b>Verifying information when using online platforms</b>								
Very often	58	43	43	44	31	2	1	1
Sometimes	49	46	45	40	32	1	1	1
Rarely	42	43	40	35	31	1	1	4
Never	33	35	35	25	26	1	7	13
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>								
Familiar	50	38	40	35	34	1	1	1
Not familiar	43	42	41	35	29	1	3	6
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>								
Familiar	51	41	42	37	32	1	2	1
Not familiar	42	41	40	34	29	1	3	7

## 2. Exposure to disinformation or other forms of information manipulation

Nearly three in ten Europeans feel exposed to disinformation or other forms of information manipulation every day or almost every day

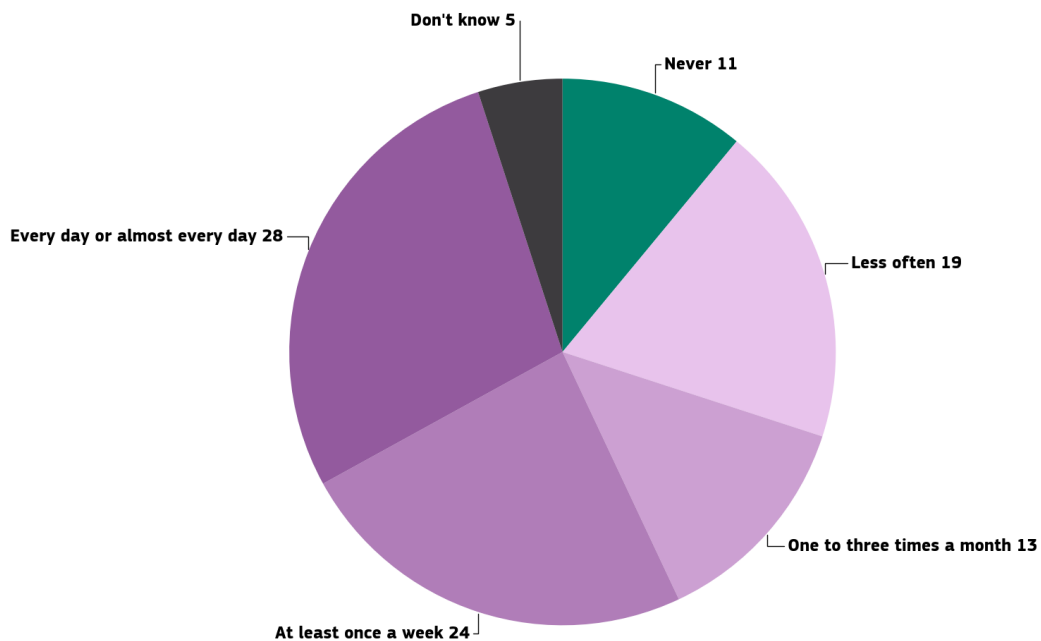
Respondents were asked how often they felt personally exposed to disinformation or other forms of information manipulation.<sup>18</sup>

Nearly two in three (65%) of Europeans feel exposed to disinformation or other forms of information manipulation at least once a month. Over a quarter (28%) of citizens report being exposed to disinformation or other forms of information manipulation **every day or almost every day**. Similarly, almost a fourth (24%) report it **at least once a week**, and nearly two in ten (19%) **less often**.

Over one in ten (13%) feel exposed **between one to three times a month**.

Finally, slightly over one in ten (11%) **never** feel exposed to disinformation or other forms of information manipulation.

QC15: How often do you think that you are personally exposed to disinformation or other forms of information manipulation? (%)



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<sup>18</sup> QC15. How often do you think that you are personally exposed to disinformation or other forms of information manipulation?

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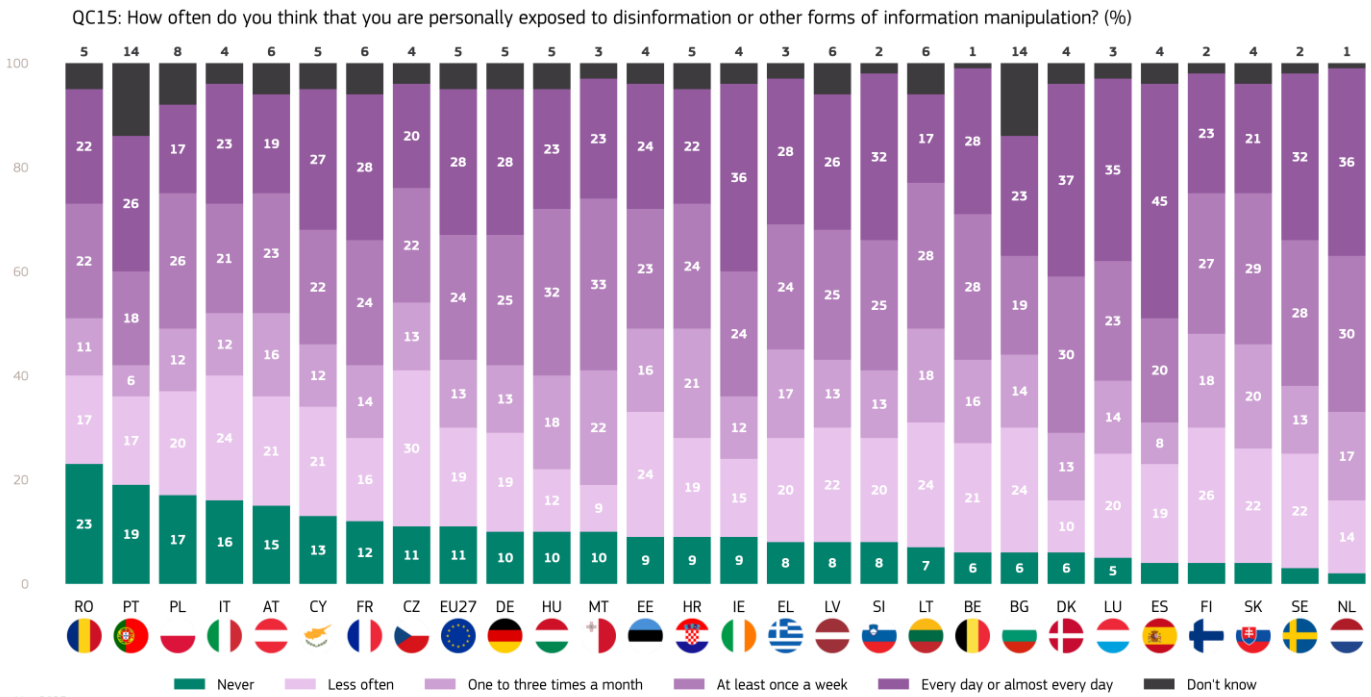
Looking at the national level, in all Member States citizens feeling exposed to disinformation and other forms of information manipulation is the majority view.

The frequency of respondents being exposed to disinformation or other forms of information manipulation **every day or almost every day** is highest in Spain (45%), Denmark (37%), Ireland and the Netherlands (both 36%), while the lowest shares are recorded in Lithuania and Poland (both 17%) and Austria (19%).

The highest percentages of citizens feeling exposed **at least once a week** are found in Malta (33%), Hungary (32%), the Netherlands and Denmark (both 30%).

Meanwhile, the highest shares of respondents feeling personally exposed to disinformation or other forms of information manipulation **one to three times a month or less often** are seen in Finland (44%), Czechia (43%), Lithuania and Slovakia (both 42%).

On the contrary, the share of respondents **never** personally exposed to disinformation, is higher in Romania (23%), Portugal (19%) and Poland (17%).



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The **socio-demographic analysis** presents how frequently citizens across the EU perceive exposure to disinformation or information manipulation.

- Men (30%) feel slightly more exposed to disinformation and information manipulation than women (26%).
- Perceived daily exposure is higher across respondents aged 25–39 (32%), followed by 15–24 and 40–54 (both 29%), and those aged 55 or older (25%).
- Among socio-professional categories, managers (35%) and unemployed citizens (33%) most frequently report daily exposure, followed closely by students (31%). Retirees (23%) and house persons (25%) report the lowest perceived daily exposure.
- Large town residents (30%) are more likely to report daily exposure than those in rural areas or villages (26%).
- Those individuals who verify information very often perceive daily exposure more frequently (51%), compared to those who never verify (18%). Among non-verifiers, 25% claim they never encounter disinformation.
- Respondents sharing content very often despite uncertainty about source credibility report higher daily exposure (47%), than those who never share (29%).

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### Protecting and promoting democracy

**QC15** How often do you think that you are personally exposed to disinformation or other forms of information manipulation?  
(% - EU)

	Every day or almost every day	At least once a week	Less often	One to three times a month	Never	Don't know
EU27	28	24	19	13	11	5
<b>Gender</b>						
Man	30	24	19	13	10	4
Woman	26	23	20	13	12	6
<b>Age</b>						
15-24	29	29	17	11	10	4
25-39	32	27	16	14	8	3
40-54	29	24	20	14	9	4
55+	25	21	21	12	14	7
<b>Education (End of)</b>						
15-	25	18	20	9	18	10
16-19	24	24	21	13	13	5
20+	33	25	17	15	6	4
Still Studying	28	28	17	12	10	5
<b>Socio-professional category</b>						
Self-employed	29	24	19	16	7	5
Managers	35	27	15	15	5	3
Other white collars	29	25	19	15	9	3
Manual workers	26	25	21	12	11	5
House persons	25	19	15	13	20	8
Unemployed	33	23	21	9	9	5
Retired	23	20	22	12	15	8
Students	31	29	17	11	8	4
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>						
Rural area or village	26	24	20	13	12	5
Small or middle sized town	27	24	20	13	11	5
Large town	30	25	18	13	10	4
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>						
Satisfied	24	27	20	14	11	4
Not satisfied	33	21	18	12	11	5
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>						
Yes	22	36	14	22	5	1
No	28	23	20	12	11	6
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>						
Total 'Yes'	30	30	16	18	4	2
Total 'No'	27	22	20	12	13	6
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>						
Satisfied	22	28	22	13	10	5
Not satisfied	37	20	16	13	11	3
<b>Verifying information when using online platforms</b>						
Very often	51	26	9	9	4	1
Sometimes	28	32	16	16	5	3
Rarely	20	22	28	17	8	5
Never	18	15	23	10	25	9
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>						
Very often	47	27	10	7	7	2
Sometimes	25	34	16	17	5	3
Rarely	25	25	23	16	8	3
Never	29	20	19	11	15	6
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>						
Familiar	27	32	15	16	9	1
Not familiar	28	22	20	12	12	6
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>						
Familiar	29	30	16	15	8	2
Not familiar	27	21	21	12	12	7

### 3. Foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics

#### Over half of Europeans agree with each of the five statements on foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics

Respondents were asked whether they agreed with five statements about foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics.<sup>19</sup>

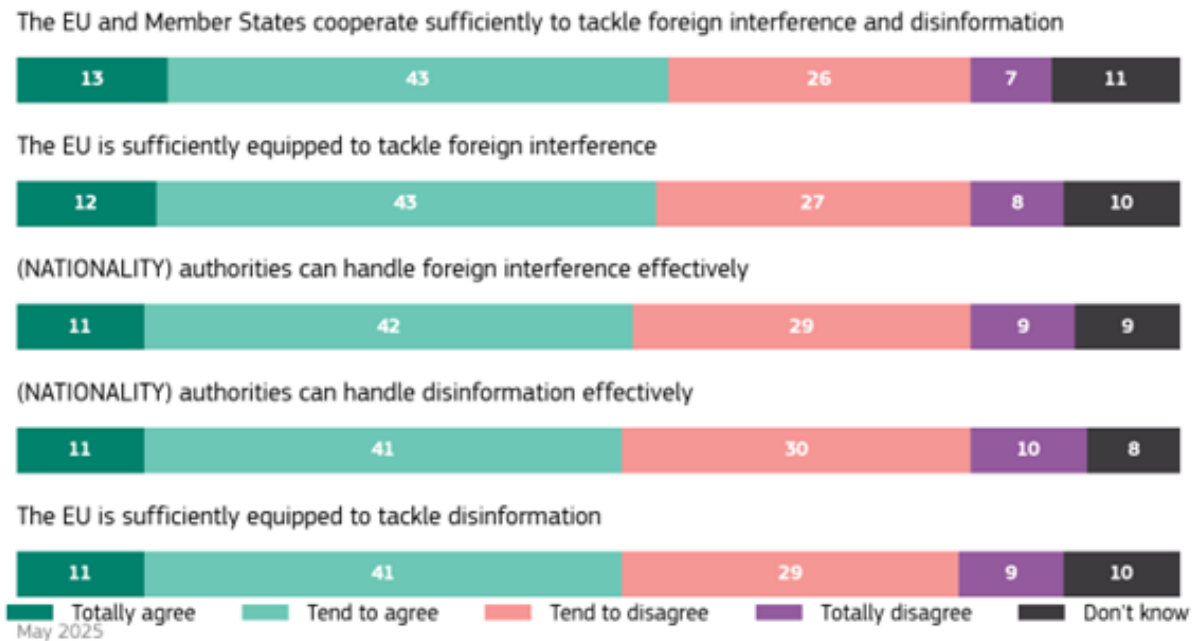
Nearly six in ten (56%) respondents agree that **the EU and Member States cooperate sufficiently to tackle foreign interference and disinformation** (13% 'totally agree' and 43% 'tend to agree'). One third (33%) disagree (26% 'tend to disagree' and 7% 'totally disagree').

Similarly, over five in ten (55%) agree that the **EU is sufficiently equipped to tackle foreign interference** (12% 'totally agree' and 43% 'tend to agree'). In contrast, over a third (35%) disagree (27% 'tend to disagree' and 8% 'totally disagree').

Over half (53%) of citizens agree that **national authorities can handle foreign interference effectively** (11% 'totally agree' and 42% 'tend to agree'). Conversely, nearly four in ten (38%) disagree (29% 'tend to disagree' and 9% 'totally disagree').

A slightly lower share of respondents (52%) agree on the **ability of national authorities to handle disinformation effectively** (11% 'totally agree' and 41% 'tend to agree'). In contrast, four in ten (40%) disagree (30% 'tend to disagree' and 10% 'totally disagree'); the same share of respondents (52%) agree that the **EU is sufficiently equipped to tackle disinformation** (11% 'totally agree' and 41% 'tend to agree'), while nearly four in ten (38%) disagree (29% 'tend to disagree' and 9% 'totally disagree').

QC17: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics? (%)



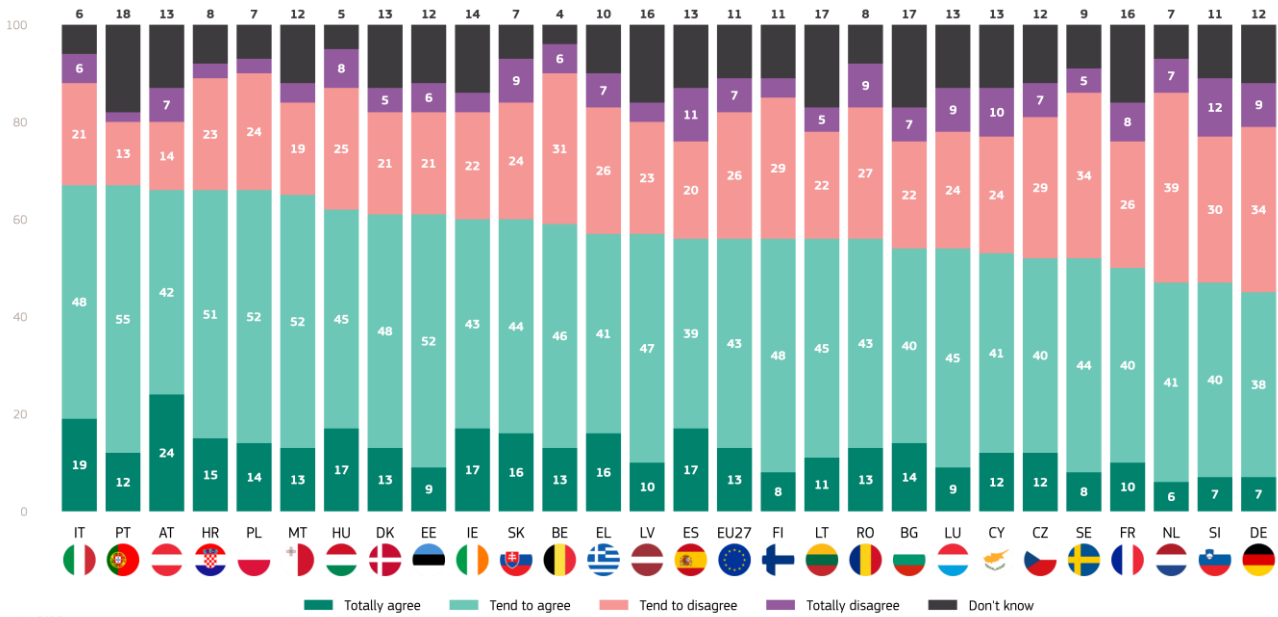
<sup>19</sup> QC17. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics?

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In nine Member States, over six in ten respondents agree that **the EU and Member States cooperate sufficiently to tackle foreign interference and disinformation**, most notably in Italy (67%, 19% *'totally agree'*), and Portugal (67%, 12% *'totally agree'*).

In contrast, over a third of respondent disagree with the statement in nine Member States, most notably in the Netherlands (46%, 7% *'totally disagree'*), Germany (43%, 9% *'totally disagree'*) and Slovenia (42%, 12% *'totally disagree'*). However, the majority of respondents in all the EU Member States still agree with the statement.

QC17.5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics? - The EU and Member States cooperate sufficiently to tackle foreign interference and disinformation (%)

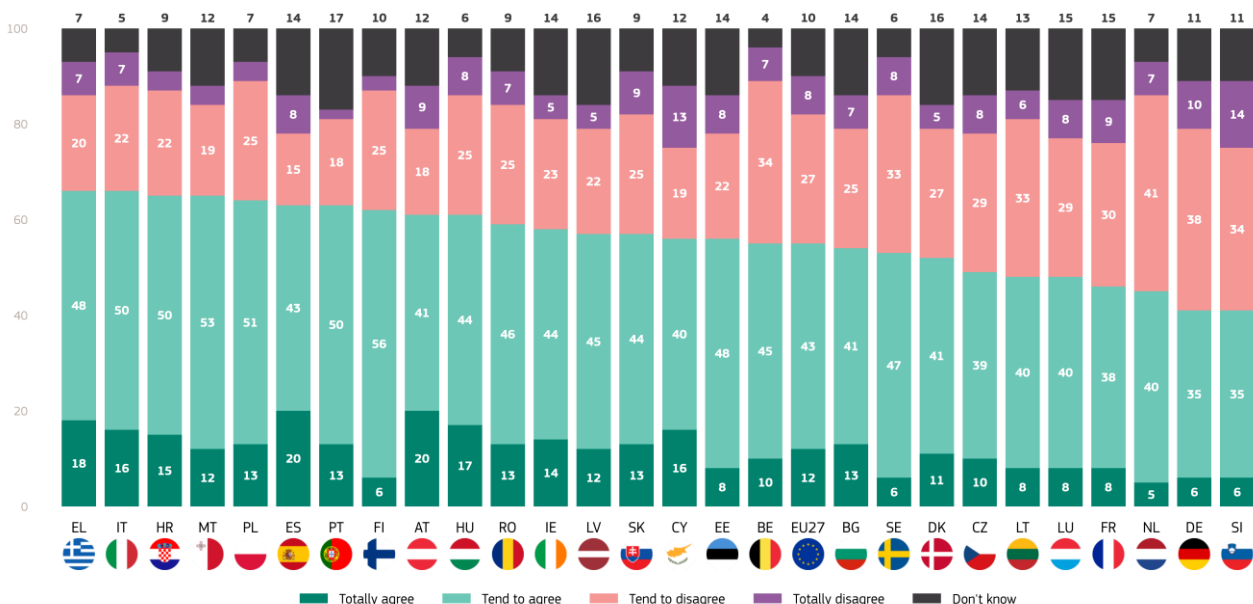


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In ten Member States, over six in ten respondents agree that **the EU is sufficiently equipped to tackle foreign interference**, most notably in Greece (66%, 18% *'totally agree'*), Italy (66%, 16% *'totally agree'*), Croatia (65%, 15% *'totally agree'*), and Malta (65%, 12% *'totally agree'*).

In contrast, over four in ten respondents disagree with the statement in five Member States, most notably in Slovenia (48%, 14% *'totally disagree'*), Germany (48%, 10% *'totally disagree'*) and the Netherlands (48%, 7% *'totally disagree'*).

QC17.3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics? - The EU is sufficiently equipped to tackle foreign interference (%)



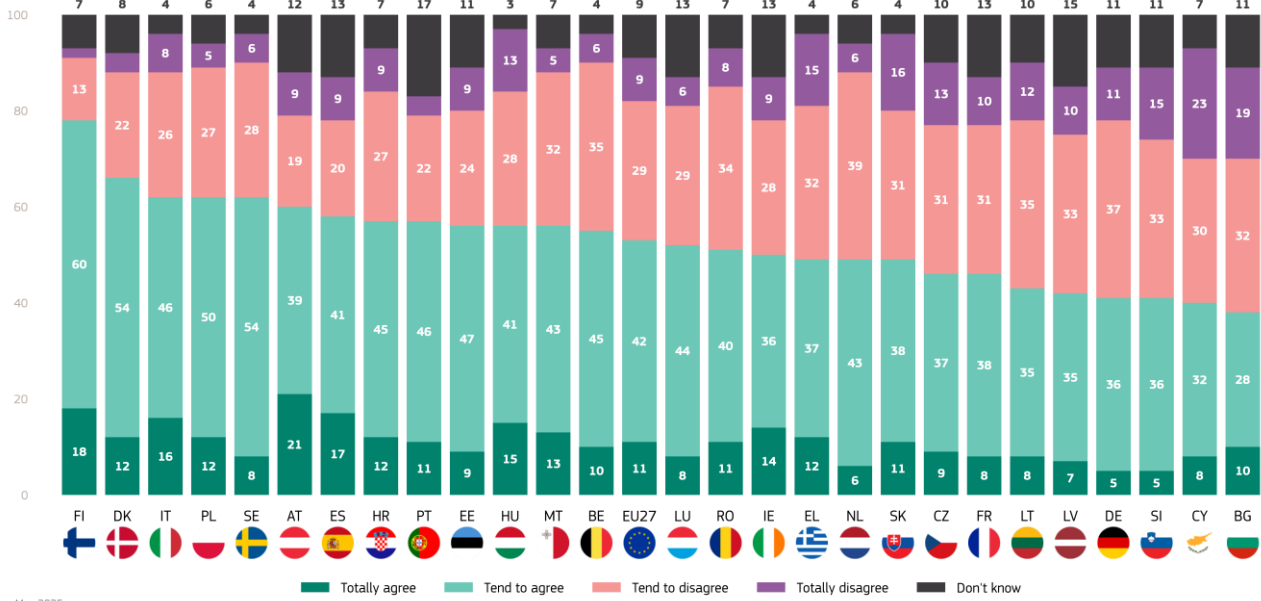
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In five Member States, over six in ten respondents agree that their **national authorities can handle foreign interference effectively**, most notably in Finland (78%, 18% 'totally agree'), and Denmark (66%, 12% 'totally agree').

In contrast, over four in ten respondents disagree with the statement in 15 Member States, most notably in Cyprus (53%, 23% 'totally disagree'), Bulgaria (51%, 19% 'totally disagree'), Germany (48%, 11% 'totally disagree') and Slovenia (48%, 15% 'totally disagree').

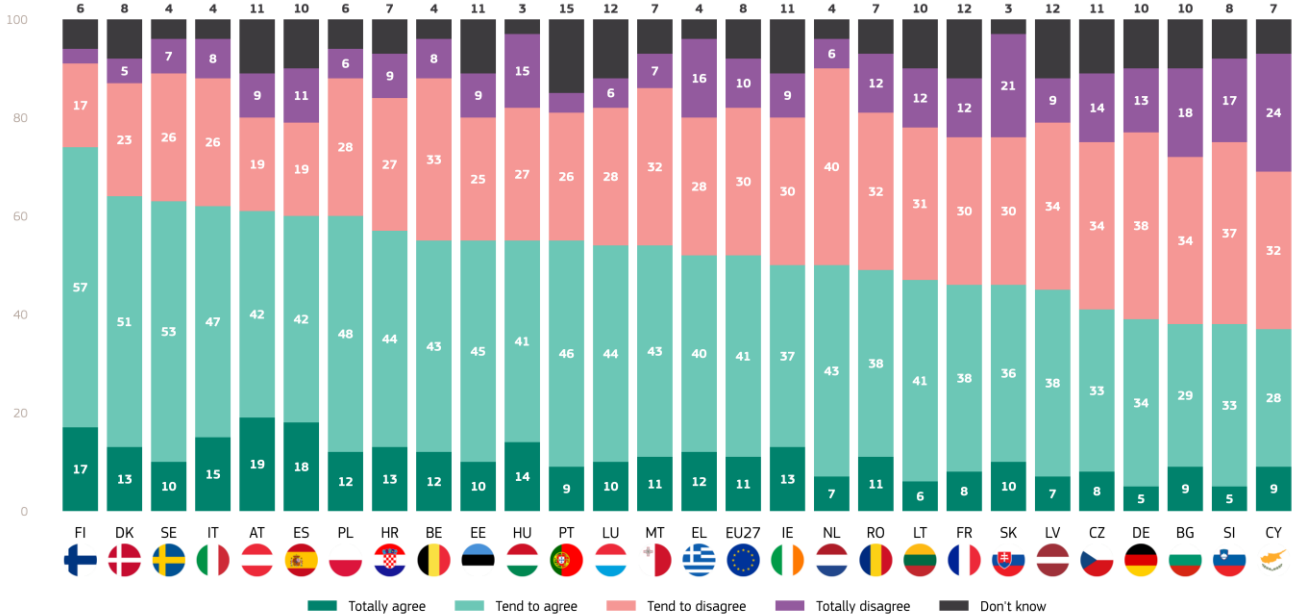
QC17.1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics? - (NATIONALITY) authorities can handle foreign interference effectively (%)



In five Member States, over six in ten respondents agree that their **national authorities can handle disinformation effectively**, most notably in Finland (74%, 17% 'totally agree'), Denmark (64%, 13% 'totally agree') and Sweden (63%, 10% 'totally agree').

In contrast, over four in ten respondents disagree with the statement in 15 Member States, most notably in Cyprus (56%, 24% 'totally disagree'), Bulgaria (51%, 19% 'totally disagree'), Slovenia (54%, 17% 'totally disagree') and Bulgaria (52%, 18% 'totally disagree').

QC17.2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics? - (NATIONALITY) authorities can handle disinformation effectively (%)

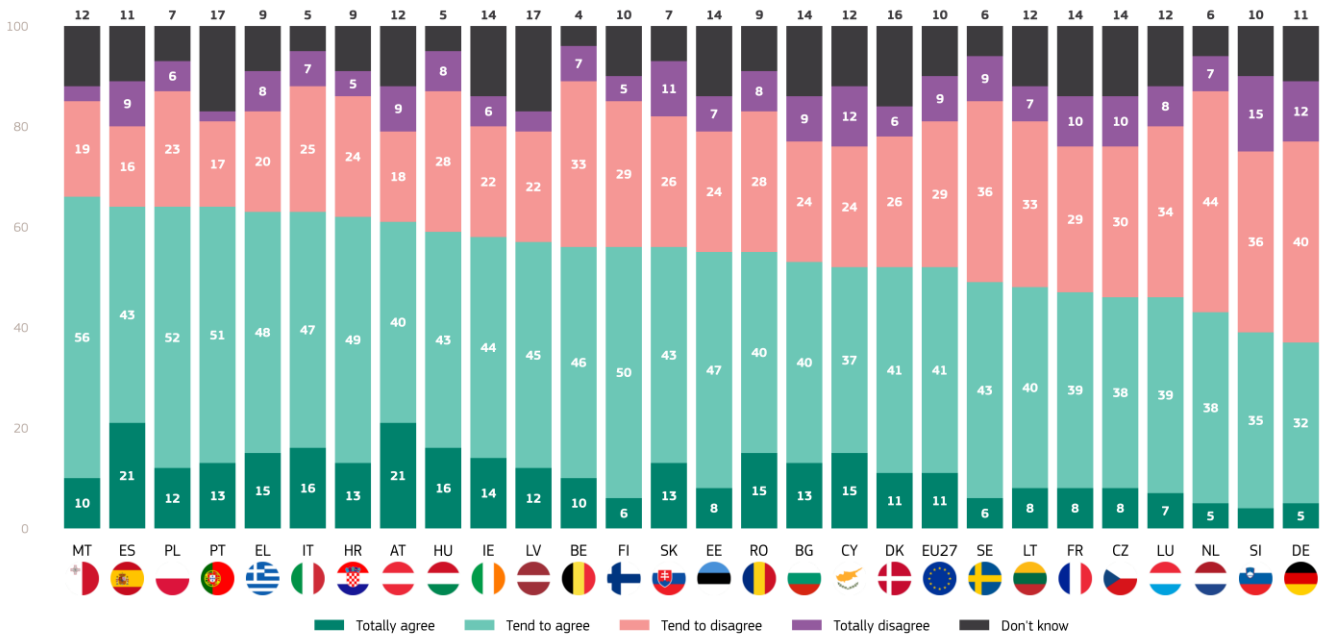


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In eight Member States, over six in ten respondents agree that **the EU is sufficiently equipped to tackle disinformation**, most notably in Malta (66%, 10% 'totally agree'), Spain (64%, 21% 'totally agree'), Poland (64%, 12% 'totally agree'), Portugal (64%, 12% 'totally agree') and Portugal (64%, 13% 'totally agree').

In contrast, over four in ten respondents disagree with the statement in five Member States, most notably in Germany (52%, 12% 'totally disagree'), Slovenia (51%, 15% 'totally disagree') and the Netherlands (51%, % 'totally disagree').

QC17.4: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics? - The EU is sufficiently equipped to tackle disinformation (%)



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The **socio-demographic analysis** seeks to delineate the levels of agreement regarding the EU and national authorities' capacity to address foreign interference and disinformation in political affairs.

- Citizens aged 25–39 show the highest levels of agreement, whereas those aged 55 or over report lower agreement.
- Europeans educated to age 16–19 report higher agreement on institutional capacity, including who say the EU is sufficiently equipped to tackle disinformation (55%). Agreement is lower among those who ended their education before 16 on national authorities handling disinformation effectively (50%).
- Among socio-professional groups, self-employed, other white collars and manual workers (58%) are showing the highest agreement with the view that the EU and Member States cooperate sufficiently to tackle foreign interference and manipulation.
- Respondents living in small or middle-sized towns (57%), and rural areas or villages (54%) are more likely to agree on the sufficient cooperation between the EU and Member States, whereas those living in large towns are split between this statement, and the EU being sufficiently equipped to tackle foreign interference (56%).

**QC17** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics?  
Total 'agree'  
(% - EU)

	The EU and Member States cooperate sufficiently to tackle foreign interference and disinformation	The EU is sufficiently equipped to tackle foreign interference	(NATIONALITY) authorities can handle foreign interference effectively	The EU is sufficiently equipped to tackle disinformation	(NATIONALITY) authorities can handle disinformation effectively
EU27	56	55	53	52	52
<b>Gender</b>					
Man	56	55	52	53	53
Woman	55	54	52	53	51
<b>Age</b>					
15-24	55	55	52	52	48
25-39	58	58	54	55	52
40-54	57	55	53	53	53
55+	54	52	51	51	52
<b>Education (End of)</b>					
15-	53	52	50	53	50
16-19	57	56	53	55	53
20+	54	53	52	50	51
Still Studying	56	55	53	52	50
<b>Socio-professional category</b>					
Self-employed	58	55	52	52	53
Managers	55	54	55	50	53
Other white collars	58	58	55	57	55
Manual workers	58	56	53	54	51
House persons	52	52	46	50	49
Unemployed	48	49	46	49	48
Retired	55	52	53	53	52
Students	54	54	50	49	48
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>					
Rural area or village	54	53	51	52	51
Small or middle sized town	57	55	54	53	54
Large town	56	56	51	52	51
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>					
Satisfied	66	64	62	62	61
Not satisfied	43	43	42	42	41
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>					
Yes	67	64	64	60	62
No	54	53	52	52	51
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>					
Total 'Yes'	59	58	58	56	57
Total 'No'	55	53	50	52	50
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>					
Satisfied	67	65	64	63	63
Not satisfied	43	42	39	41	38
<b>Verifying information when using online platforms</b>					
Very often	53	52	51	49	49
Sometimes	58	57	54	54	52
Rarely	59	58	55	56	56
Never	54	52	51	52	51
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>					
Very often	58	55	53	54	51
Sometimes	66	66	63	65	63
Rarely	58	56	54	54	53
Never	50	49	47	48	47
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>					
Familiar	71	69	68	67	67
Not familiar	52	51	49	49	48
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>					
Familiar	65	64	64	61	63
Not familiar	52	51	47	50	47

## 4. Perception of democratic values and media pluralism at national level

The statement most agreed to is that covert foreign financing of political actors, campaigns or messages is a serious challenge at national level

Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed with some statements about their own countries.<sup>20</sup>

Over seven in ten (72%) respondents agree that **covert foreign financing of political actors or messages is a serious challenge in their countries** (29% 'totally agree' and 43% 'tend to agree'). In contrast, two in ten (20%) disagree (16% 'tend to disagree' and 4% 'totally disagree').

Nearly two-thirds (64%) agree that **citizens have access to information from independent and pluralistic media**, 64% agree (19% 'totally agree' and 45% 'tend to agree'), while over three in ten (31%) disagree (23% 'tend to disagree' and 8% 'totally disagree').

Similarly, 64% of respondents agree that **citizens have the possibility to participate in democratic processes and policymaking in their countries**, (20% 'totally agree' and 44% 'tend to agree'). Nearly a third (32%) disagree (24% 'tend to disagree' and 8% 'totally disagree').

Over half (56%) agree that **all parties and political candidates can campaign on equal footing** (18% 'totally agree' and 38% 'tend to agree'), while four in ten (40%) disagree (27% 'tend to disagree' and 13% 'totally disagree').

A slightly lower proportion (51%) agree that **there is transparency and accountability in political funding**, (15% 'totally agree' and 36% 'tend to agree'), while over four in ten (44%) disagree (29% 'tend to disagree' and 15% 'totally disagree').

Finally, slightly under half of respondents (49%) agree that **elections are free from any interference** (14% 'totally agree' and 35% 'tend to agree'), while over four in ten (45%) disagree (30% 'tend to disagree' and 15% 'totally disagree').

QC6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about (OUR COUNTRY)? (%)

Covert foreign financing of political actors, campaigns or messages is a serious challenge in (OUR COUNTRY)



Citizens have access to information and news provided by independent and pluralistic media



Citizens have the possibility to take part in democratic processes, debates and policy making



All parties and political candidates can campaign on equal footing



There is transparency and accountability as regards funding in politics (parties, campaigns, the spread of political messages...)



Elections are free from any interference



Legend: Totally agree (dark green), Tend to agree (light green), Tend to disagree (red), Totally disagree (purple), Don't know (black). May 2025

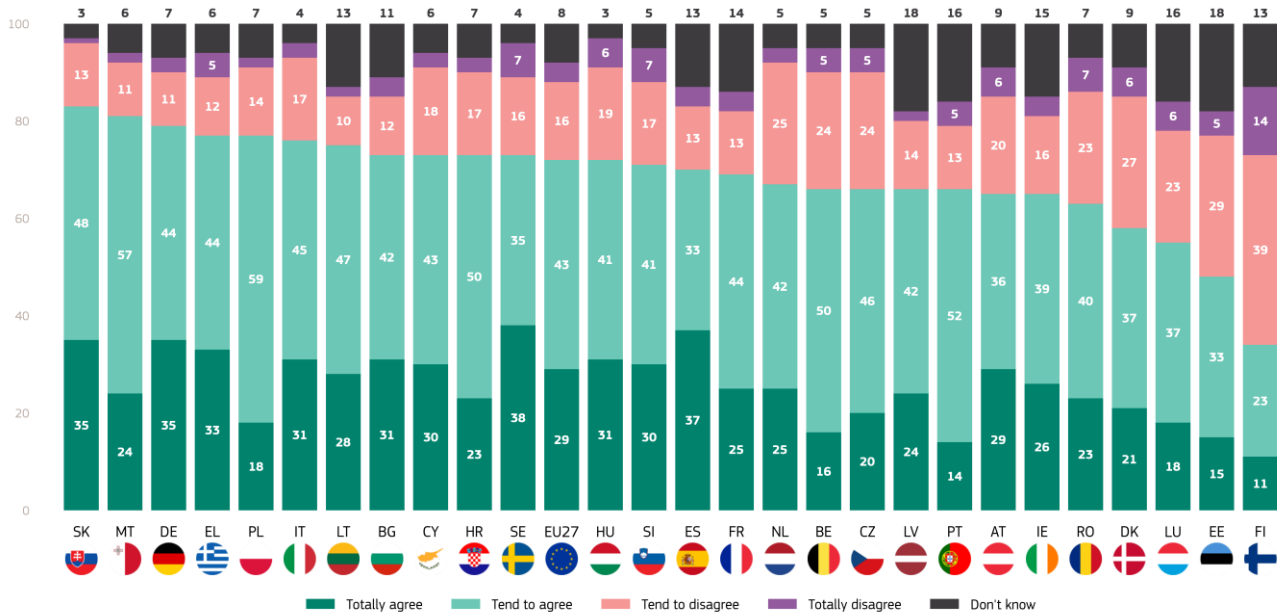
<sup>20</sup> QC6. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about (OUR COUNTRY)?

## Special Eurobarometer 568 Protecting and promoting democracy

In 13 Member States, over seven in ten respondents agree that the **covert financing of political actors, campaigns or messages is a serious challenge in their countries**, most notably in Slovakia (83%, 35% 'totally agree'), Malta (81%, 24% 'totally agree') and Germany (79%, 35% 'totally agree').

In contrast, at least three in ten respondents disagree with the statement in five Member States, most notably in Finland (53%, 14% 'totally disagree'), Estonia (34%, 5% 'totally disagree') and Denmark (33%, 6% 'totally disagree').

QC6.6: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about (OUR COUNTRY)? - Covert foreign financing of political actors, campaigns or messages is a serious challenge in (OUR COUNTRY) (%)

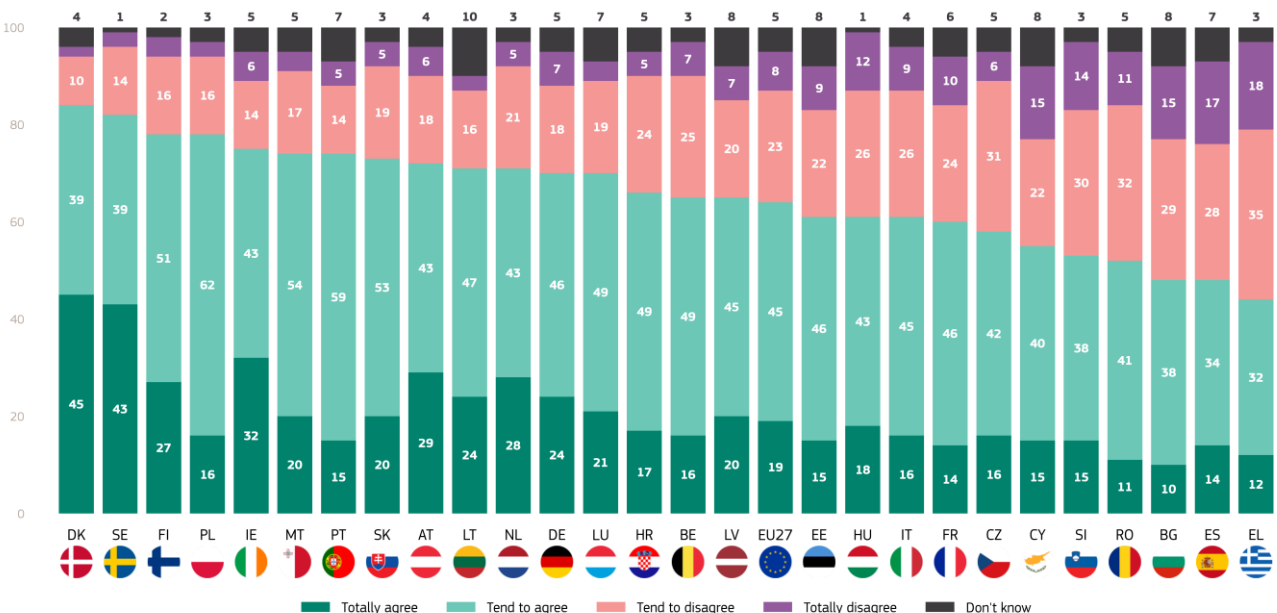


May 2025

In 11 Member States, over seven in ten respondents agree that the **citizens have access to information and news provided by independent and pluralistic media in their countries**, most notably in Denmark (84%, 45% 'totally agree'), Sweden (82%, 43% 'totally agree'), Finland (78%, 27% 'totally agree') and Poland (78%, 16% 'totally agree').

In contrast, at least three in ten respondents disagree with the statement in 13 Member States, most notably in Greece (53%, 18% 'totally disagree'), Spain (45%, 17% 'totally disagree'), Bulgaria (44%, 15% 'totally disagree') and Slovenia (44%, 14% 'totally disagree').

QC6.4: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about (OUR COUNTRY)? - Citizens have access to information and news provided by independent and pluralistic media (%)



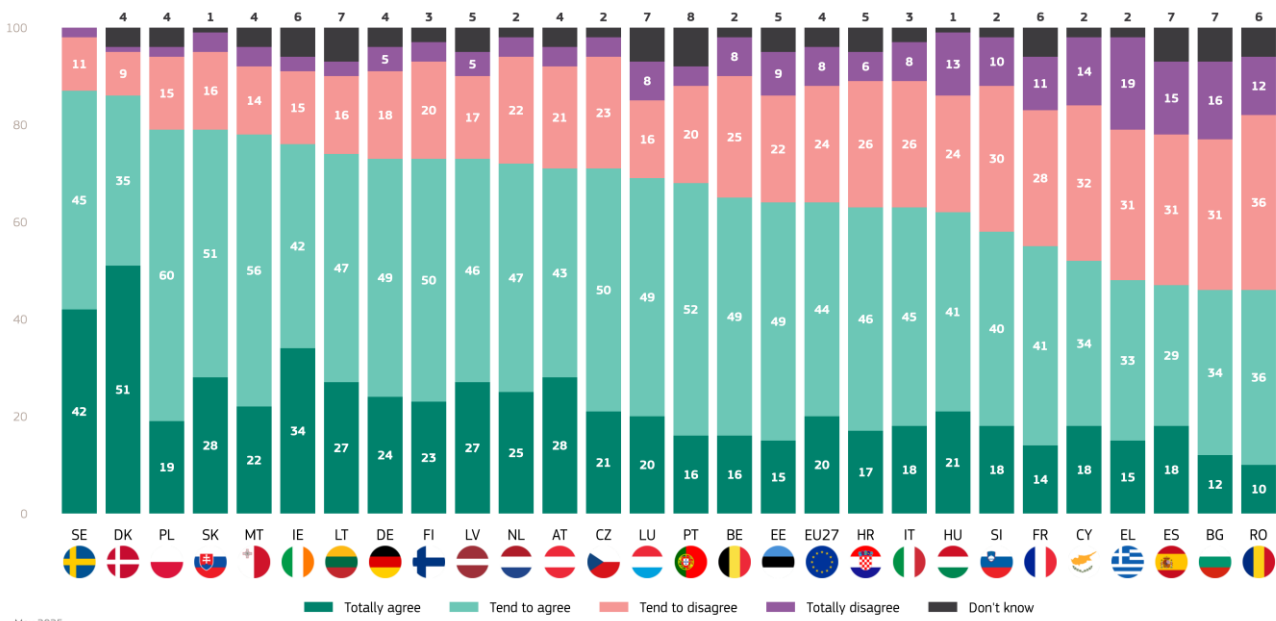
May 2025

## Special Eurobarometer 568 Protecting and promoting democracy

In 13 Member States, over seven in ten respondents agree that the **citizens have the possibility to take part in democratic processes, debates and policy making in their countries**, most notably in Sweden (87%, 42% 'totally agree'), Denmark (86%, 51% 'totally agree'), Poland (79%, 19% 'totally agree') and Slovakia (79%, 28% 'totally agree')

In contrast, at least three in ten respondents disagree with the statement in 13 Member States, most notably in Greece (50%, 19% 'totally disagree'), Romania (48%, 12% 'totally disagree'), and Bulgaria (47%, 16% 'totally disagree').

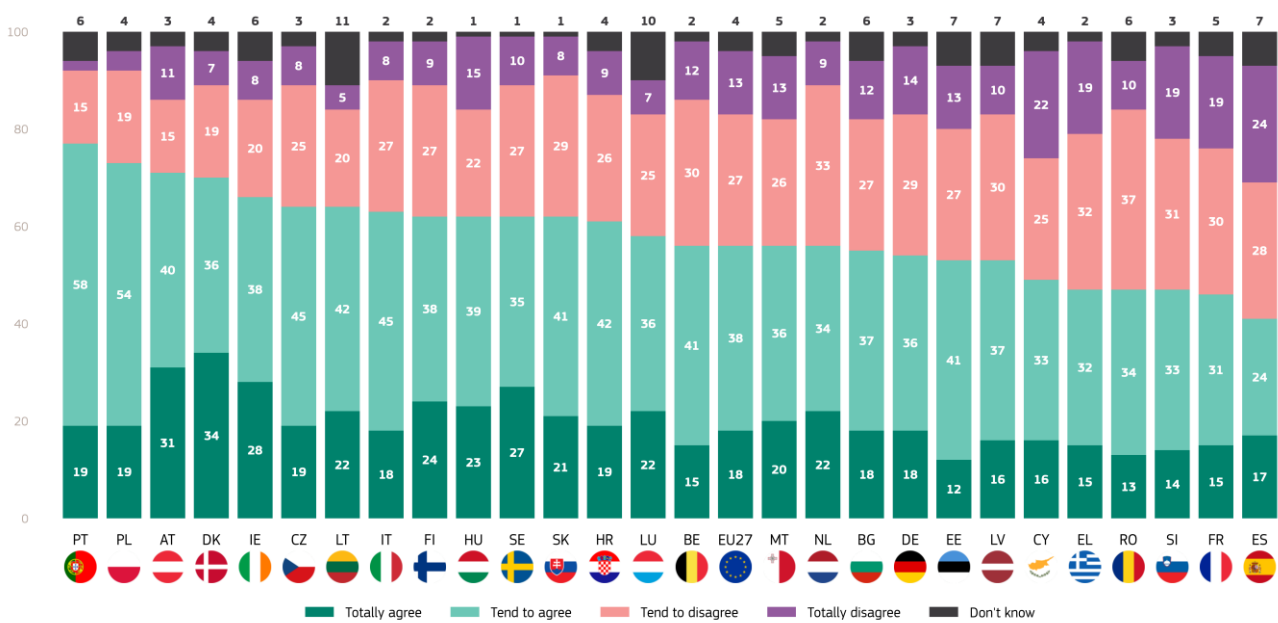
QC6.5: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about (OUR COUNTRY)? - Citizens have the possibility to take part in democratic processes, debates and policy making (%)



In 13 Member States, over six in ten respondents agree that **all parties and political candidates can campaign on equal footing in their countries**, most notably in Portugal (77%, 19% 'totally agree'), Poland (73%, 19% 'totally agree'), and Austria (71%, 31% 'totally agree').

In contrast, at least four in ten respondents disagree with the statement in 12 Member States, most notably in Spain (52%, 24% 'totally disagree'), Greece (51%, 19% 'totally disagree'), and Slovenia (50%, 19% 'totally disagree').

QC6.2: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about (OUR COUNTRY)? - All parties and political candidates can campaign on equal footing (%)

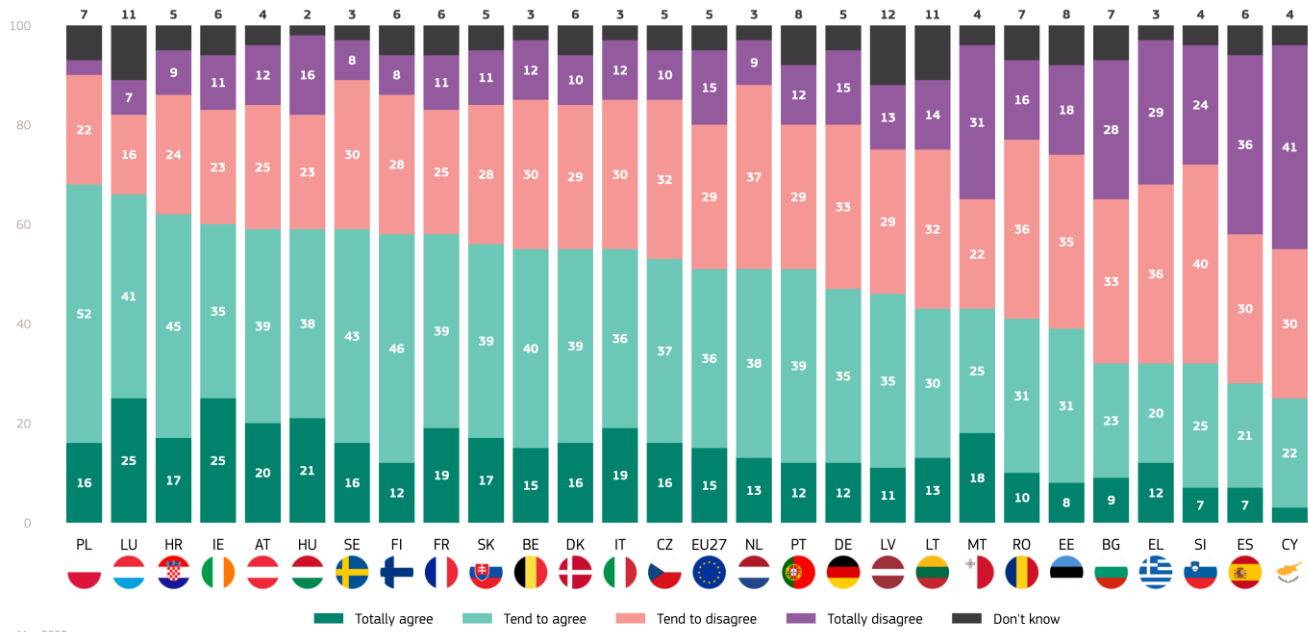


## Special Eurobarometer 568 Protecting and promoting democracy

In 16 Member States, over half of respondents agree that **there is transparency and accountability as regards funding in politics in their countries**, most notably in Poland (68%, 16% *'totally agree'*), Luxembourg (66%, 25% *'totally agree'*), and Croatia (62%, 17% *'totally agree'*).

In contrast, at least four in ten respondents disagree with the statement in 17 Member States, most notably in Cyprus (71%, 41% *'totally disagree'*), Spain (66%, 36% *'totally disagree'*), and Greece (65%, 29% *'totally disagree'*).

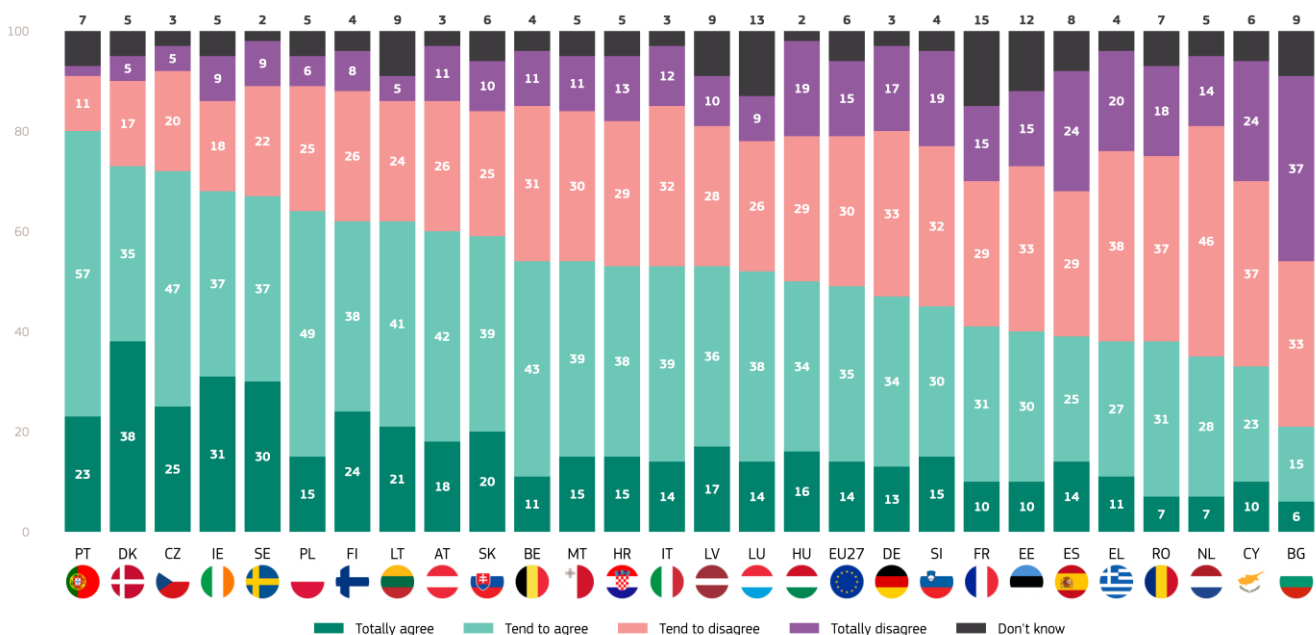
QC6.3: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about (OUR COUNTRY)? - There is transparency and accountability as regards funding in politics (parties, campaigns, the spread of political messages...) (%)



In eight Member States, over six in ten respondents agree that **elections are free from any interference in their countries**, most notably in Portugal (80%, 23% *'totally agree'*), Denmark (73%, 38% *'totally agree'*), and Czechia (72%, 25% *'totally agree'*).

In contrast, at least four in ten respondents disagree with the statement in 15 Member States, most notably in Bulgaria (70%, 37% *'totally disagree'*), Cyprus (61%, 24% *'totally disagree'*), and the Netherlands (60%, 14% *'totally disagree'*).

QC6.1: To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about (OUR COUNTRY)? - Elections are free from any interference (%)



## Special Eurobarometer 568 Protecting and promoting democracy

The **socio-demographic analysis** delves into the agreement levels on core democratic and institutional conditions across EU citizens.

- Men (73%) are slightly more prone than women (71%) to agree that covert foreign financing of political actors, campaigns or messages is a serious challenge.
- Respondents aged 25–39 show the highest agreement on foreign financing challenges (74%), democratic participation (66%), and media access (65%); whereas older citizens (55 or over) report lower agreement on transparency and accountability in political funding (48%).
- Among socio-professional categories, managers, white-collar, and self-employed report strong agreement (74%); while house persons and unemployed report the lowest on transparency in funding (41–44%) and free elections (45–46%).
- Large town residents show slightly higher agreement on foreign financing (73%) and democratic participation (67%) compared to rural residents.
- Those respondents satisfied with democracy express higher agreement on covert financing (76%), media access (75%), and citizens participating in democratic processes (74%).
- Those respondents verifying information very often show greater agreement on covert foreign financing (77%) and media access (66%), while those never sharing unverified information report higher agreement on covert financing (67%) and citizens participating in democratic processes (66%).

## Special Eurobarometer 568

### Protecting and promoting democracy

**QC6** To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about (OUR COUNTRY)?  
**Total "Agree"**  
 (% - EU)

	Covert foreign financing of political actors, campaigns or messages is a serious challenge in (OUR COUNTRY)	Citizens have the possibility to take part in democratic processes, debates and policy making	Citizens have access to information and news provided by independent and pluralistic media	All parties and political candidates can campaign on equal footing	There is transparency and accountability as regards funding in politics (parties, campaigns, the spread of political messages...)	Elections are free from any interference
EU27	72	64	64	56	51	49
<b>Gender</b>						
Man	73	65	64	56	51	49
Woman	71	64	64	56	50	50
<b>Age</b>						
15-24	69	66	68	55	53	50
25-39	74	66	65	57	52	50
40-54	73	64	64	56	51	50
55+	71	63	62	56	48	49
<b>Education (End of)</b>						
15-	65	57	53	52	43	47
16-19	72	63	63	57	52	51
20+	75	68	69	57	51	48
Still Studying	69	69	70	57	54	52
<b>Socio-professional category</b>						
Self-employed	74	63	63	58	50	48
Managers	74	72	72	59	56	52
Other white collars	74	65	66	58	53	52
Manual workers	73	61	61	54	49	49
House persons	63	57	57	55	41	46
Unemployed	68	56	55	50	44	45
Retired	71	65	63	57	50	50
Students	70	69	69	55	52	49
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>						
Rural area or village	70	63	61	55	49	47
Small or middle sized town	73	64	65	57	52	51
Large town	73	67	66	55	50	50
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>						
Satisfied	76	74	75	66	60	59
Not satisfied	69	51	48	42	38	38
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>						
Yes	80	77	73	62	63	58
No	71	63	63	55	49	48
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>						
Total 'Yes'	76	74	72	61	58	55
Total 'No'	71	62	62	55	49	48
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>						
Satisfied	76	78	80	70	62	62
Not satisfied	68	47	43	39	35	34
<b>Verifying information when using online platforms</b>						
Very often	77	64	66	53	48	46
Sometimes	76	67	67	57	53	51
Rarely	71	66	64	57	51	50
Never	67	61	59	58	51	50
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>						
Very often	80	65	64	54	52	53
Sometimes	77	70	71	66	63	60
Rarely	71	64	63	54	50	48
Never	70	63	62	54	46	46
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>						
Familiar	85	82	79	73	71	64
Not familiar	69	60	60	52	45	45
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>						
Familiar	80	78	77	67	66	61
Not familiar	69	58	58	51	44	44



## **V. Europeans' practices in verifying and sharing online information**

## 1. Verifying information when using online platforms

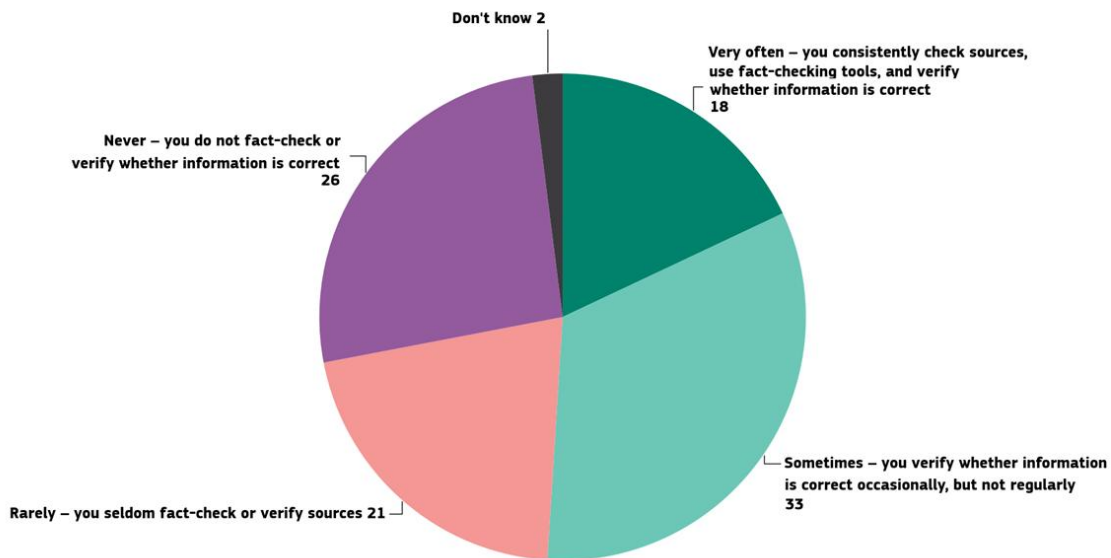
### Slightly over half of Europeans verify information when using online platforms, at least sometimes

Respondents were asked about their habit of verifying information when using online platforms.<sup>21</sup>

Nearly two in ten (18%) of respondents verify **very often** (18%), one third (33%) verify at least **sometimes**, while over two in ten (21%) **rarely** verify.

Finally, over a quarter (26%) **never** verify information when using online platform.

QC1: Which of the following statements most accurately describes how often you personally verify information when using online platforms? (%)



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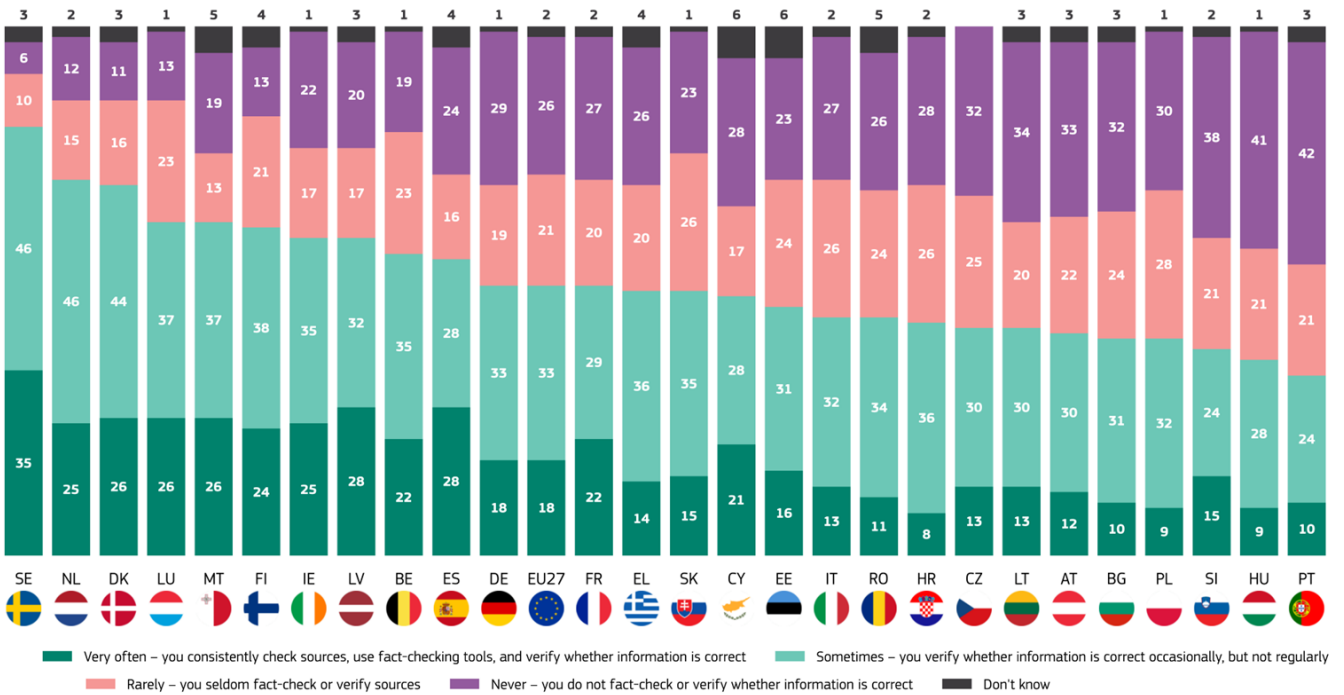
<sup>21</sup> QC1. Which of the following statements most accurately describes how often you personally verify information when using online platforms?

## Special Eurobarometer 568 Protecting and promoting democracy

Looking at the national level, at least half of citizens report verifying information **very often** and **sometimes** in 14 Member States, most notably in Sweden (81%), the Netherlands (71%), and Denmark (70%). On the contrary, the lowest shares are found in Portugal (34%), Hungary (41%) and Slovenia (39%).

In contrast, at least a third of respondents **never** verify information when using online platforms in five Member States, most notably in Portugal (42%), Hungary (41%), and Slovenia (38%).

QC1: Which of the following statements most accurately describes how often you personally verify information when using online platforms? (%)



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## Special Eurobarometer 568 Protecting and promoting democracy

The **socio-demographic analysis** examines how EU citizens engage with online fact-checking, highlighting notable differences across demographic profiles.

- Men are more prone to verify information very often than women (20% vs 16%) and are less likely to never verify (24% vs 28% of women).
- Individuals aged 15–39 are more likely to verify information very often (23%) compared to those aged 55 or over (13%). Conversely, individuals aged 55 or over are more prone to never verify information (37%), than those aged 15–39 (17–18%).
- Individuals educated to the age of 20 or older verify information very often more frequently than those educated to the age of 15 or younger (26% vs 6%). The latter also are more likely to never verify information (52% vs 17% of those who remained in education up to the age of 20).
- Among socio-professional groups, managers are more likely to verify information very often (27%), and less likely to never verify it (13%). Retired individuals and house persons report the lowest frequency of never verifying (40–43%).
- Individuals living in rural areas or villages are more likely to never verify information (30%) compared with those in small towns (25%) and large towns (24%).
- Individuals satisfied with democracy in the EU verify information, at least sometimes, slightly more often (54%) than those dissatisfied (48%).
- Individuals satisfied with media freedom, independence, and pluralism verify information, at least sometimes, more frequently (53%) than those dissatisfied (50%). Moreover, those dissatisfied (27%) are slightly more likely to never verify information than those satisfied (24%).
- Respondents that are familiar with participatory EU processes verify information very often more frequently (27%) than those who are unfamiliar (16%). Similarly, those familiar with roles and activities of civil society organisations verify very often more frequently (27%) than those who are unfamiliar (14%).

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**Protecting and promoting democracy**

**QC1** Which of the following statements most accurately describes how often you personally verify information when using online platforms?  
(% - EU)

	Very often – you consistently check sources, use fact-checking tools, and verify whether information is correct	Sometimes – you verify whether information is correct occasionally, but not regularly	Rarely – you seldom fact-check or verify sources	Never – you do not fact-check or verify whether information is correct	Don't know
EU27	18	33	21	26	2
<b>Gender</b>					
Man	20	34	20	24	2
Woman	16	32	22	28	2
<b>Age</b>					
15-24	23	37	21	18	1
25-39	23	39	21	17	0
40-54	20	36	22	21	1
55+	13	26	20	37	4
<b>Education (End of)</b>					
15-	6	18	17	52	7
16-19	14	32	23	29	2
20+	26	37	19	17	1
Still Studying	22	39	22	16	1
<b>Socio-professional category</b>					
Self-employed	22	39	20	18	1
Managers	27	41	18	13	1
Other white collars	20	37	23	19	1
Manual workers	16	33	25	25	1
House persons	12	26	18	40	4
Unemployed	22	29	21	26	2
Retired	11	23	19	43	4
Students	24	39	22	14	1
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>					
Rural area or village	16	30	21	30	3
Small or middle sized town	19	33	21	25	2
Large town	19	34	21	24	2
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>					
Satisfied	19	35	21	24	1
Not satisfied	18	30	21	29	2
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>					
Satisfied	18	35	22	24	1
Not satisfied	19	31	21	27	2
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>					
Familiar	27	40	18	14	1
Not familiar	16	30	22	30	2
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>					
Familiar	27	39	18	15	1
Not familiar	14	30	22	32	2

## 2. Sharing information online when unsure of its trustworthiness

### Slightly less than half of Europeans never share information online when unsure about its source or its trustworthiness

Respondents were asked how often they share information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness.<sup>22</sup>

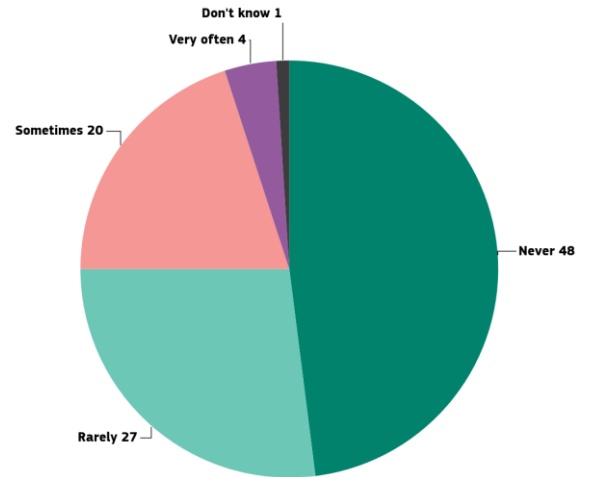
Nearly half (48%) of respondents say they **never** share information online when unsure about its source or trustworthiness.

Over a fourth (27%), **rarely** do, followed by two in ten (20%), who do it **sometimes**. Finally, 4% of respondents share information **very often**, even if they are unsure about the source and its trustworthiness.

Looking at the national level, at least half of respondents **never** share information when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness in 13 countries. Most notably in Sweden (68%), Denmark (64%), and Slovenia (62%).

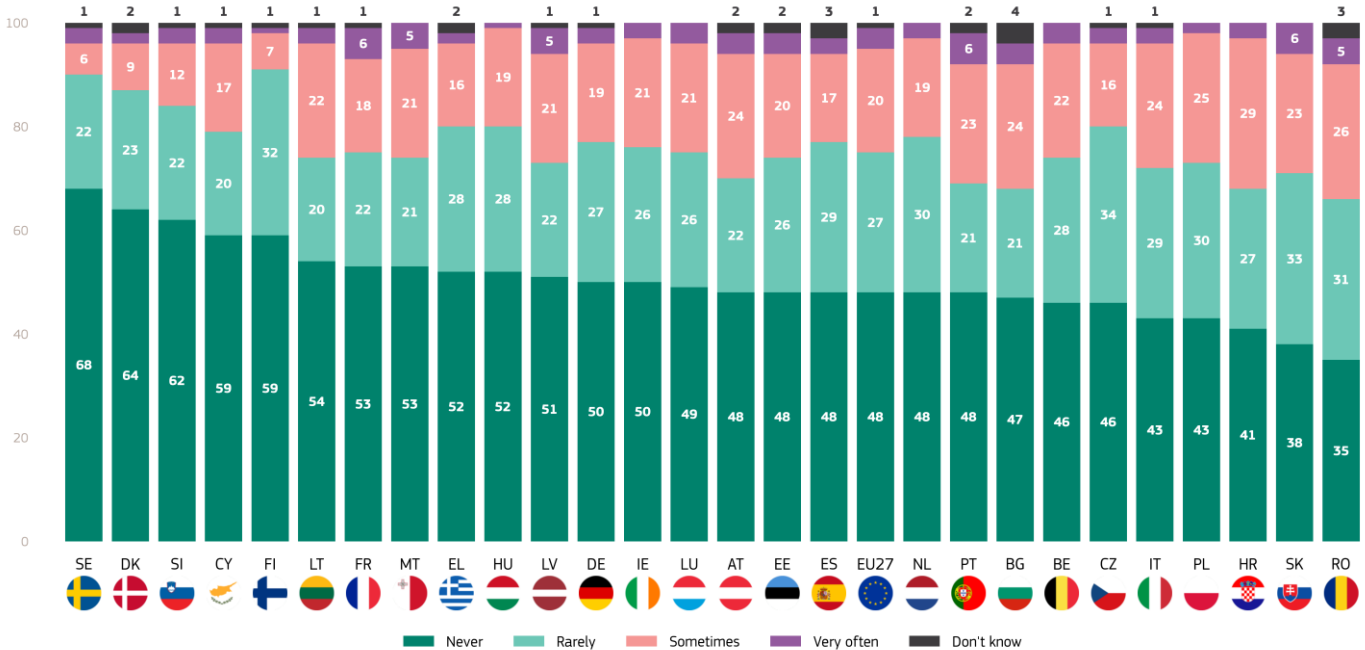
On the contrary, over two in ten respondents share this information at least **sometimes** in 16 countries, most notably in Croatia (32%), Romania (31%), and Portugal (29%).

QC2: How often do you share information online when you are unsure about the source or its trustworthiness? (%)



May 2025

QC2: How often do you share information online when you are unsure about the source or its trustworthiness? (%)



May 2025

<sup>22</sup> QC2. How often do you share information online when you are unsure about the source or its trustworthiness?

## Special Eurobarometer 568 Protecting and promoting democracy

The **socio-demographic analysis** maps how EU citizens behave when sharing online content when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness.

- Women (50%) are slightly more cautious than men (47%) in never sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness.
- Young respondents aged 15 to 24 are the most likely to share information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness (6% very often and 26% sometimes). In contrast, those aged 55 or over are the least likely to ever engage in this behaviour (58%).
- Citizens who are still studying are more likely to share sometimes (27%), compared to those who ended their education around the age of 20 (19%). By contrast, those who left education at the age of 15 or younger show the strongest view to never share (67%, compared to those educated up to the age of 20 (49%).
- Among socio-professional categories, students and unemployed are the most likely to share uncertain content very often (6%). Students (26%) and self-employed (24%) are also more likely to share it sometimes compared to other groups. In contrast, retired (63%) and house persons (54%) are the most cautious, saying they never share.
- Those who verify information very often when using online platforms are more likely to share uncertain content very often (10%), compared to those who verify rarely or never (2-3%).
- Those respondents who are familiar with EU participatory activities are more likely to say they sometimes share uncertain content (39%) compared to those who are unfamiliar (15%).
- Similarly, familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations is linked to less cautious sharing profiles. Those familiar with CSOs are more likely to sometimes share uncertain content (30%) than those who are not unfamiliar (16%).

**QC2** How often do you share information online when you are unsure about the source or its trustworthiness?  
(% - EU)

	Very often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Don't know
EU27	4	20	27	48	1
<b>Gender</b>					
Man	4	20	28	47	1
Woman	3	20	26	50	1
<b>Age</b>					
15-24	6	26	31	36	1
25-39	5	23	30	42	0
40-54	4	21	30	44	1
55+	2	16	22	58	2
<b>Education (End of)</b>					
15-	1	13	16	67	3
16-19	3	21	29	46	1
20+	4	19	27	49	1
Still Studying	5	27	32	35	1
<b>Socio-professional category</b>					
Self-employed	3	24	28	45	0
Managers	4	20	27	48	1
Other white collars	4	23	30	43	0
Manual workers	3	22	32	42	1
House persons	3	19	20	54	4
Unemployed	6	19	25	49	1
Retired	2	14	19	63	2
Students	6	26	32	35	1
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>					
Rural area or village	3	19	27	50	1
Small or middle sized town	4	20	26	49	1
Large town	4	20	28	47	1
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>					
Satisfied	3	22	27	47	1
Not satisfied	4	18	27	50	1
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>					
Yes	5	40	32	23	0
No	4	18	26	51	1
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>					
Total 'Yes'	5	27	29	39	0
Total 'No'	3	18	27	51	1
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>					
Satisfied	3	23	26	47	1
Not satisfied	3	17	30	49	1
<b>Verifying information when using online platforms</b>					
Very often	10	18	22	50	0
Sometimes	3	31	31	35	0
Rarely	2	20	41	37	0
Never	2	8	16	73	1
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>					
Familiar	7	39	25	29	0
Not familiar	3	15	27	54	1
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>					
Familiar	5	30	26	38	1
Not familiar	3	16	27	53	1



## **VI. Role of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and challenges**

## 1. Familiarity with the roles and activities of CSOs

### Nearly a third of Europeans are familiar with the different roles and activities of civil society organisations in their countries

Respondents were asked about their familiarity with the different roles and activities of civil society organisations in their countries<sup>23</sup>. Examples of roles and activities included advocacy, monitoring government actions, exposing corruption, representation of different groups, defending rights of individuals, delivering services such as education or healthcare, informing citizens.

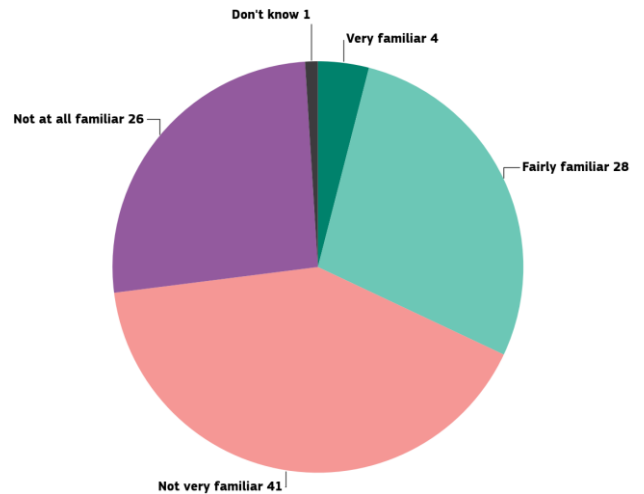
Almost a third (32%) of respondents are **familiar** with the roles and activities of civil society organisations, including advocacy, monitoring government actions, defending rights, or providing services. (4% 'very familiar' and 28% 'fairly familiar').

In contrast, two thirds (67%) are **not familiar** (41% 'not very familiar' and 26% 'not at all familiar').

Finally, 1% of respondents don't know.

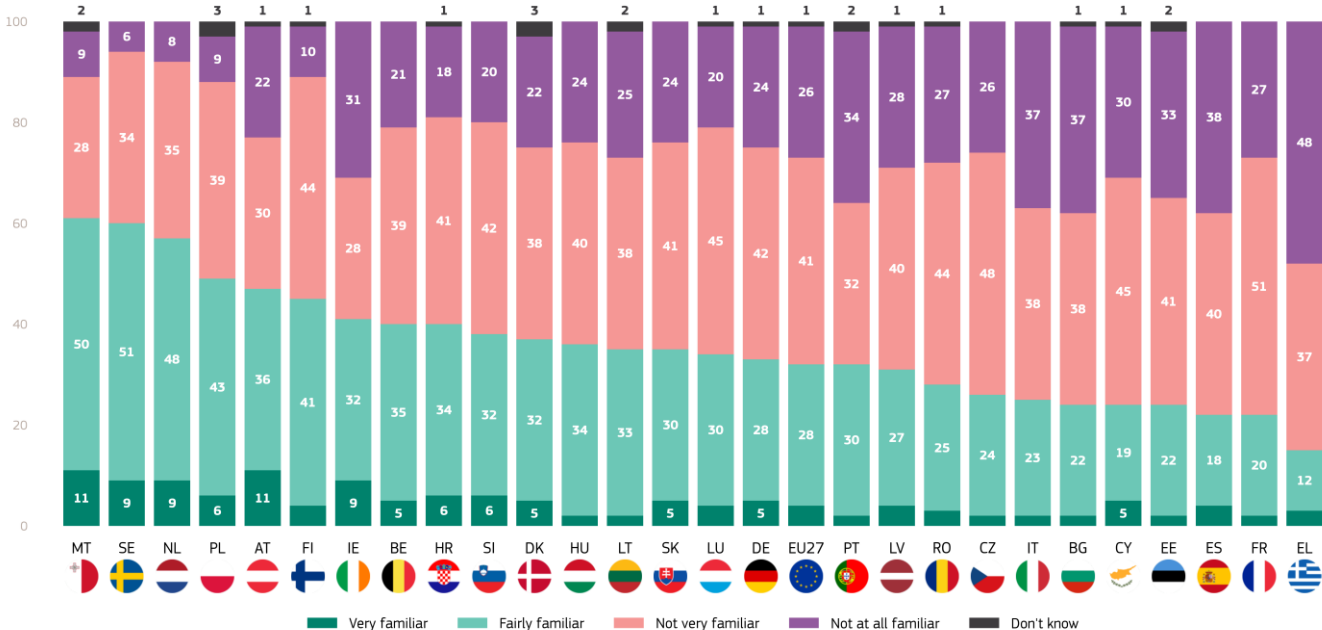
Looking at the national level, the countries in which the majority of respondents are familiar to very familiar with the roles and activities of CSOs are Malta (61%), Sweden (60%), and the Netherlands (57%).

QC10: How familiar are you with the different roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY) (e.g. advocacy, monitoring government actions, exposing corruption, representation of different groups, defending rights of individuals, delivering services such as education or healthcare, informing citizens)? (%)



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QC10: How familiar are you with the different roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY) (e.g. advocacy, monitoring government actions, exposing corruption, representation of different groups, defending rights of individuals, delivering services such as education or healthcare, informing citizens)? (%)



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<sup>23</sup> QC10. How familiar are you with the different roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY) (e.g. advocacy, monitoring government actions, exposing corruption, representation of different

groups, defending rights of individuals, delivering services such as education or healthcare, informing citizens)?

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The **socio-demographic analysis** describes familiarity levels with the roles and activities of civil society organisations across EU citizens.

- Men (34%) are slightly more familiar with the roles and activities of CSOs than women (29%).
- Respondents aged 25–39 (37%) show the highest familiarity, compared to those aged 15–24 and 55 or over (both 29%).
- Managers and self-employed individuals show the highest familiarity (46% and 38%), compared to house persons (21%) and unemployed persons (20%).
- Among respondents who seem to be satisfied with EU democracy, nearly four in ten (38%) are familiar with CSOs, compared to one quarter (25%) of those unsatisfied with EU democracy.
- Familiarity with the roles and activities of CSOs is higher among individuals involved in decision-making processes in the EU (66%), compared to those not involved (28%).

**QC10** How familiar are you with the different roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY) (e.g. advocacy, monitoring government actions, exposing corruption, representation of different groups, defending rights of individuals, delivering services such as education or healthcare, informing citizens)?

	Total 'Familiar'	Total 'Not familiar'	Don't know
EU27	32	67	1
<b>Gender</b>			
Man	34	65	1
Woman	29	70	1
<b>Age</b>			
15-24	29	70	1
25-39	37	62	1
40-54	34	66	0
55+	29	70	1
<b>Education (End of)</b>			
15-	18	81	1
16-19	29	70	1
20+	41	58	1
Still Studying	29	70	1
<b>Socio-professional category</b>			
Self-employed	38	61	1
Managers	46	53	1
Other white collars	34	66	0
Manual workers	29	70	1
House persons	21	79	0
Unemployed	20	79	1
Retired	28	71	1
Students	32	67	1
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>			
Rural area or village	32	67	1
Small or middle sized town	31	69	0
Large town	34	65	1
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>			
Satisfied	38	61	1
Not satisfied	25	74	1
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>			
Yes	66	34	0
No	28	71	1
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>			
Total 'Yes'	60	40	0
Total 'No'	24	75	1
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>			
Satisfied	39	61	0
Not satisfied	24	75	1
<b>Verifying information when using online platforms</b>			
Very often	47	52	1
Sometimes	38	62	0
Rarely	26	73	1
Never	19	80	1
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>			
Very often	48	51	1
Sometimes	47	53	0
Rarely	31	68	1
Never	26	73	1
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>			
Familiar	74	26	0
Not familiar	21	78	1

## 2. Direct involvement in the work of CSOs

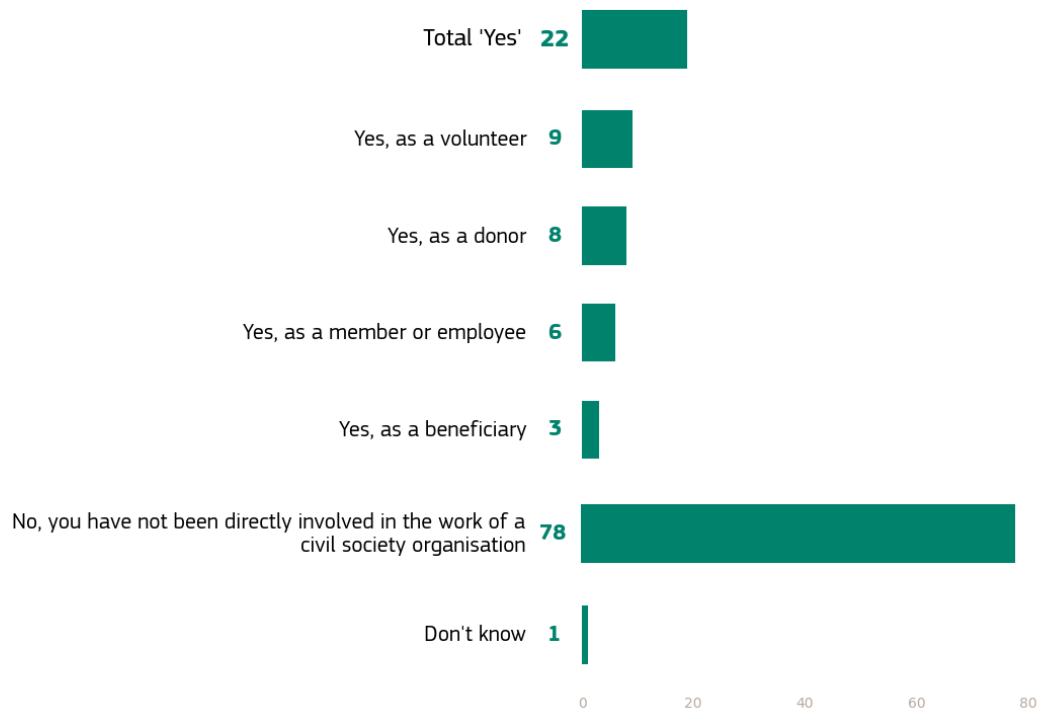
Nearly eight in ten Europeans have not been directly involved in the work of a civil society organisation. Out of those involved, volunteers are the most common, followed by donors

Respondents were asked whether they had been directly involved in the work of a civil society organisation, and if so, in what capacity.<sup>24</sup>

Nearly eight in ten (78%) respondents have **not been directly involved in the work of a civil society organisation**.

Over two in ten (22%) respondents have **been directly involved in the work of a civil society organisation**. Among these, involvement as volunteers is the most frequent (9%), closely followed by donors (8%), members or employees (6%), and beneficiaries (3%).

QC10b: Have you been directly involved in the work of a civil society organisation, if so, in what capacity? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (EU27) (%)

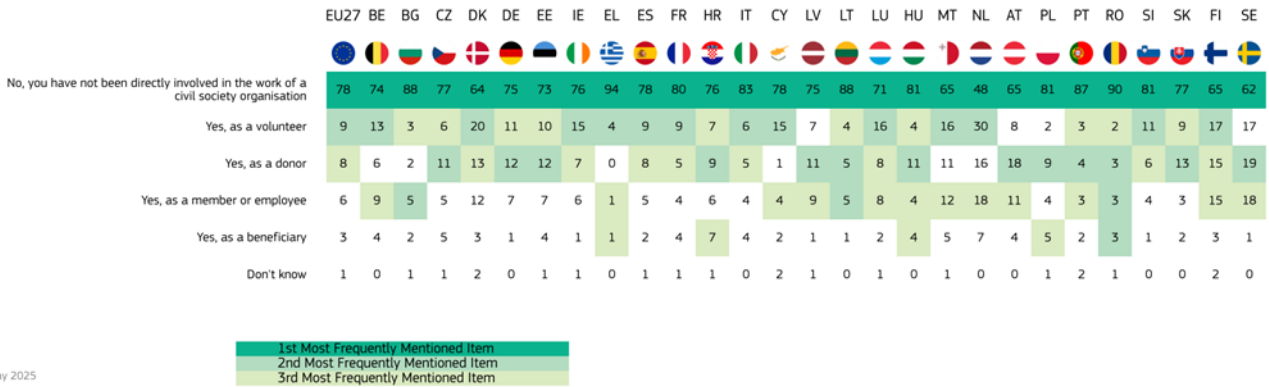


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<sup>24</sup> QC10b. Have you been directly involved in the work of a civil society organisation, if so, in what capacity?

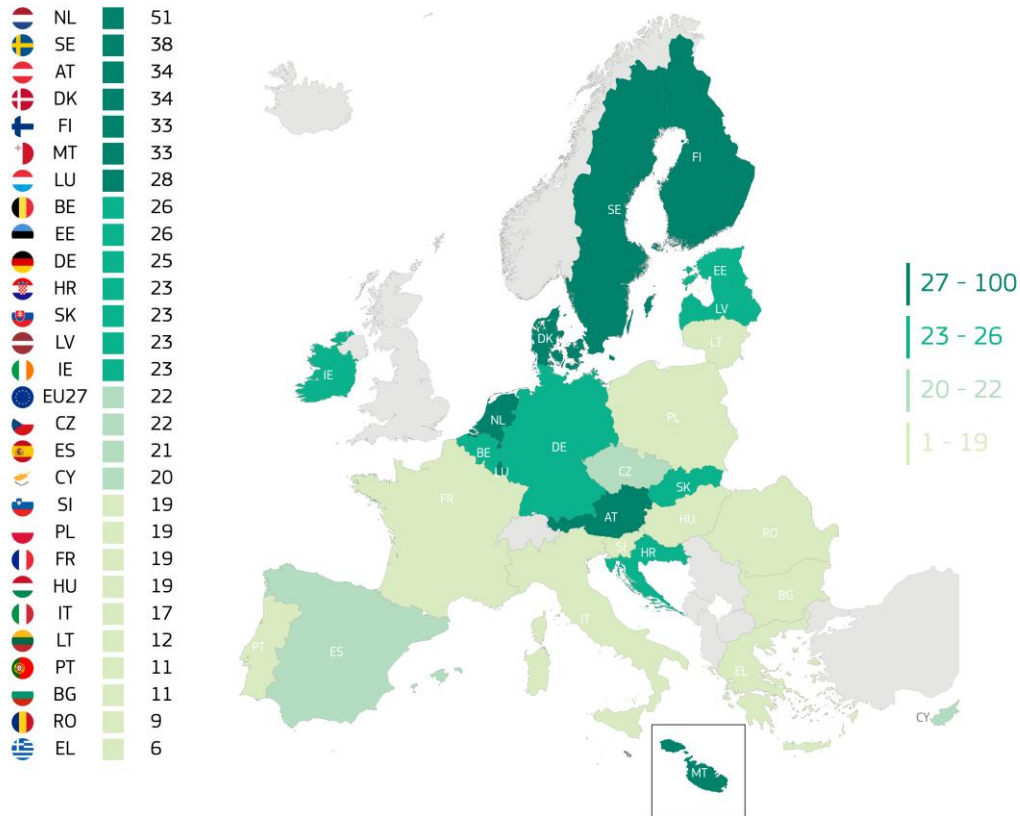
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QC10b: Have you been directly involved in the work of a civil society organisation, if so, in what capacity? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (%)



The **degree of involvement** widely differs across countries, from the Netherlands (51%), by Sweden (38%), Austria and Denmark (both 34%), to Greece (6%), Romania (9%), Bulgaria and Portugal (both 11%).

QC10bNET: Have you been directly involved in the work of a civil society organisation, if so, in what capacity? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) - Total 'Yes' (EU27) (%)



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The **socio-demographic analysis** shows direct engagement levels with civil society organisations across the EU.

- There is no significant gender difference in engagement levels with CSOs
- Respondents aged 15-24 are slightly less likely to be involved with CSOs (19%) than all the other age groups (22%).
- Citizens with tertiary education (20 and over) report the highest involvement (29%), compared to just 11% for those whose education ended by the age of 15.
- Among socio-professional groups, managers report the highest involvement (30%), followed by self-employed individuals (28%).
- Involvement is slightly higher among citizens in large towns (23%) compared to rural areas and small/mid-sized towns (21%).
- Those respondents who are satisfied with democracy report higher involvement (25%), than those dissatisfied (19%).
- Engagement with CSOs is higher among citizens involved in decision-making in the EU (61%), compared to those not involved (18%).
- EU citizens familiar with EU participatory processes report higher involvement (39%), compared to those who are unfamiliar (17%). Similarly, those familiar with the roles of CSOs show higher involvement than those who are not familiar (41% vs. 13%).

**QC10b** Have you been directly involved in the work of a civil society organisation, if so, in what capacity? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

	Total 'Yes'	Total 'No'	Don't know
EU27	22	77	1
<b>Gender</b>			
Man	21	78	1
Woman	22	77	1
<b>Age</b>			
15-24	19	81	0
25-39	22	77	1
40-54	22	77	1
55+	22	77	1
<b>Education (End of)</b>			
15-	11	88	1
16-19	19	80	1
20+	29	70	1
Still Studying	18	82	0
<b>Socio-professional category</b>			
Self-employed	28	72	0
Managers	30	69	1
Other white collars	20	79	1
Manual workers	18	81	1
House persons	19	81	0
Unemployed	18	81	1
Retired	22	77	1
Students	21	78	1
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>			
Rural area or village	21	78	1
Small or middle sized town	21	78	1
Large town	23	76	1
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>			
Satisfied	25	75	0
Not satisfied	19	80	1
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>			
Yes	61	39	0
No	18	82	0
<b>Satisfaction with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU</b>			
Satisfied	25	74	1
Not satisfied	18	81	1
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>			
Very often	29	70	1
Sometimes	30	70	0
Rarely	23	77	0
Never	17	82	1
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>			
Familiar	39	60	1
Not familiar	17	82	1
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>			
Familiar	41	59	0
Not familiar	13	87	0

### 3. Most significant areas of work of CSOs

Exposing corruption, defending rights of individuals and delivering services as education or healthcare are seen as the most significant areas of work of civil society organisations

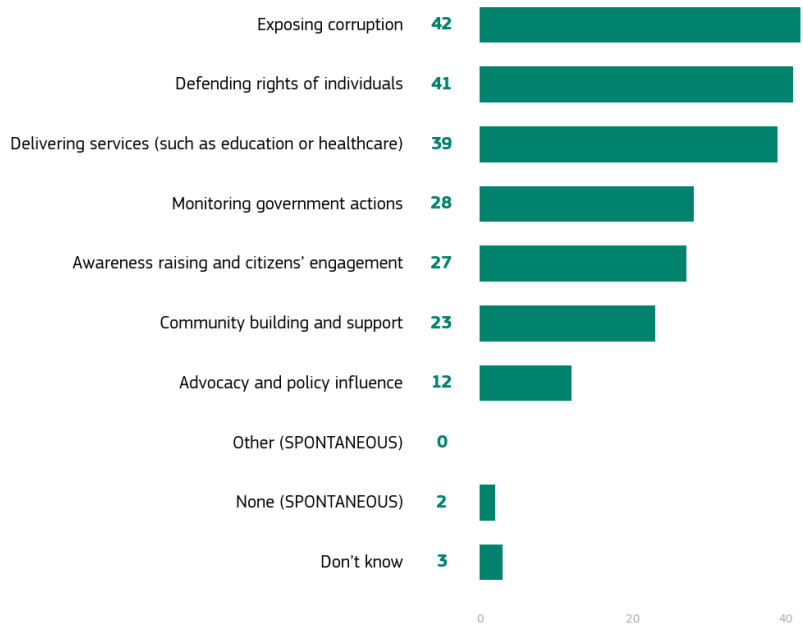
Respondents were asked about the most significant areas of work of civil society organisations for them.<sup>25</sup>

Over four in ten (42%) of respondents mentioned **exposing corruption** as the most significant area of work for civil society organisations, closely followed by **defending the rights of individuals** (41%) and **delivering services, such as education or healthcare**. (39%).

Nearly three in ten mentioned **monitoring government actions** (28%) and **awareness raising and citizen engagement** (27%).

Finally, over two in ten mentioned **community building and support** (23%), while over one in ten mentioned **advocacy and policy influence** (12%).

QC11: Which of the following areas of work of civil society organisations is the most significant for you? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (EU27) (%)



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<sup>25</sup> QC11. Which of the following areas of work of civil society organisations is the most significant for you?

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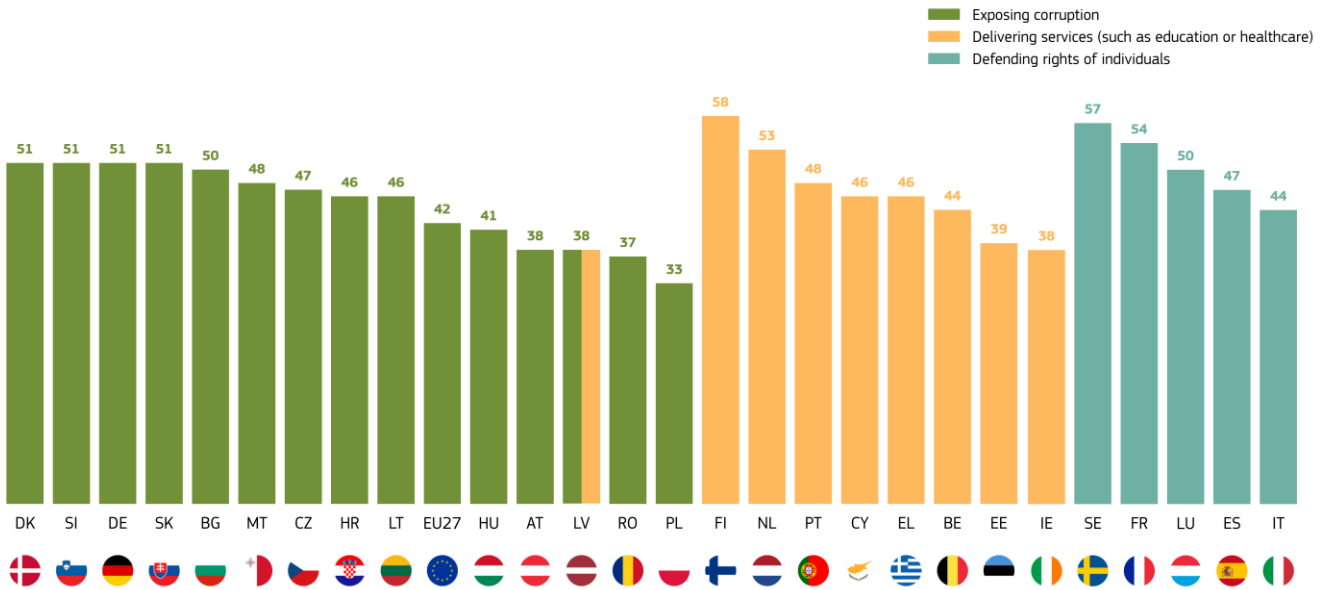
Looking at the national level, respondents are split on the most significant areas of work of civil society organisations.

**Exposing corruption** is the most selected area in 14 Member States, with the highest shares in Denmark, Germany, Slovakia, and Slovenia (all 51%),

**Delivering services (such as education or healthcare)** is the top issue in nine Member States, particularly in Finland (58%), the Netherlands (53%) and Portugal (47%).

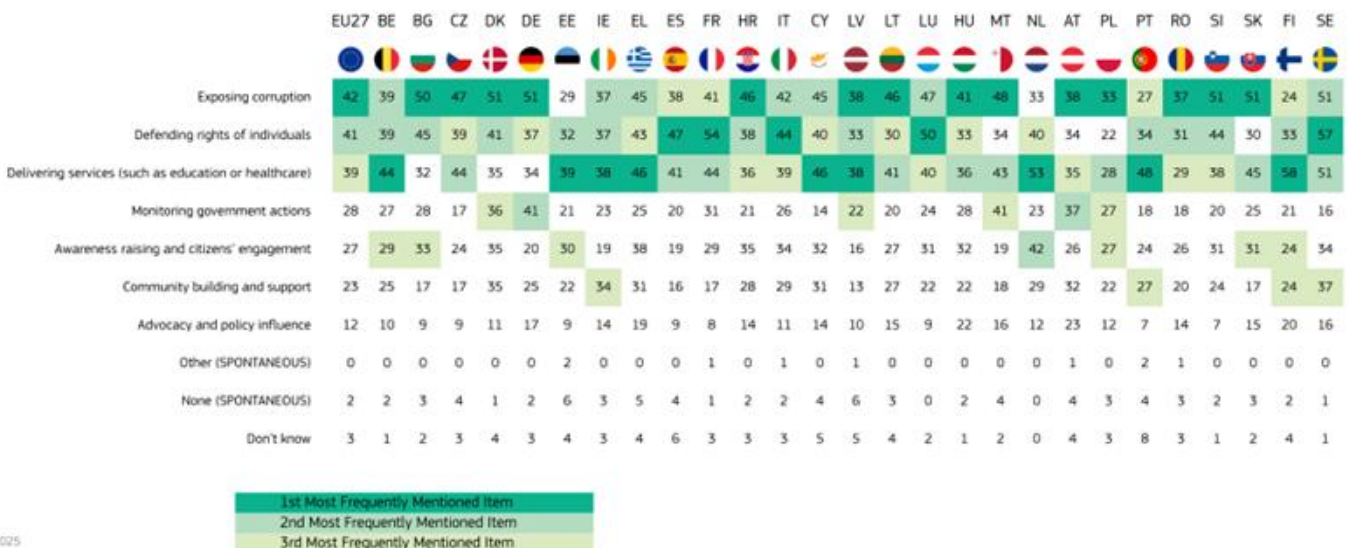
**Defending the rights of individuals** ranks highest in five countries, namely in Sweden (57%), France (54%) and Luxembourg (50%)

QC11: Which of the following areas of work of civil society organisations is the most significant for you? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (%)



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QC11: Which of the following areas of work of civil society organisations is the most significant for you? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (%)



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The **socio-demographic analysis** lays out the landscape of public perceptions regarding the most significant roles of civil society organisations across EU citizens.

- Men prioritize exposing corruption (43%) and monitoring government actions (31%), while women lean toward delivering services (41%) and defending rights (41%).
- Respondents aged 15–24 emphasize defending rights and delivering services (42–39%), while older citizens (55 or older) focus on exposing corruption (44%) and defending rights (41%).
- Those with tertiary education prioritise defending rights (43%), delivering services (41%), and monitoring government actions (31%), while lower-educated citizens lean toward exposing corruption (42%) with higher uncertainty (7%).
- Among socio-professional groups, managers (43%) and the self-employed (41%) stress delivering services, those who are unemployed prioritise defending rights (46%) and retirees focus on exposing corruption (45%).
- Citizens in large towns prioritise exposing corruption and defending rights (43–42%), while rural residents highlight delivering services (38%) and monitoring government actions (27%).
- Those involved in decision-making in the EU highlight awareness raising and citizens' engagement (31%) and advocacy and policy influence (19%), contrasting with broader support for exposing corruption (43%) and defending rights (41%) among the uninvolved.
- Those who are involved in the work of civil society organisations prioritise delivering services (44%), community building and support (32%), and awareness raising and citizens' engagement (32%); those who are not involved emphasise exposing corruption (44%) and defending rights (41%).

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**QC11** Which of the following areas of work of civil society organisations is the most significant for you? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)  
(% - EU)

	Exposing corruption	Defending rights of individuals	Delivering services (such as education or healthcare)	Monitoring government actions	Awareness raising and citizens' engagement	Community building and support	Advocacy and policy influence	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	None (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't know
<b>EU27</b>	42	41	39	28	27	23	12	0	2	3
<b>Gender</b>										
Man	43	40	37	31	28	23	13	0	2	2
Woman	40	41	41	25	27	23	12	0	2	4
<b>Age</b>										
15-24	38	42	39	24	28	24	12	1	2	4
25-39	41	41	38	30	27	25	13	0	2	2
40-54	41	41	39	30	28	25	14	0	2	2
55+	44	41	40	27	27	22	12	0	2	4
<b>Education (End of)</b>										
15-	42	42	39	23	25	22	10	1	4	7
16-19	43	39	37	28	26	22	13	0	2	3
20+	41	43	41	31	29	26	13	0	2	2
Still Studying	40	44	43	26	27	24	12	1	2	4
<b>Socio-professional category</b>										
Self-employed	41	40	41	26	30	26	14	1	2	1
Managers	39	42	43	32	31	26	13	0	2	1
Other white collars	42	40	39	30	30	27	14	0	2	2
Manual workers	42	38	37	29	26	22	13	0	2	3
House persons	40	40	38	25	24	21	10	1	2	7
Unemployed	42	46	38	30	26	21	12	1	3	4
Retired	45	41	39	26	26	21	11	0	2	4
Students	38	44	41	26	27	25	12	1	2	4
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>										
Rural area or village	40	37	38	27	26	21	12	0	3	4
Small or middle sized town	42	43	40	29	28	24	11	1	2	3
Large town	43	42	38	28	28	27	15	0	2	2
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>										
Satisfied	40	41	42	27	30	27	14	0	2	2
Not satisfied	45	40	34	31	25	19	11	1	3	3
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>										
Yes	34	35	34	26	31	29	19	0	1	0
No	43	41	40	28	27	23	12	0	2	3
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>										
Total 'Yes'	34	39	44	25	32	32	15	0	0	0
Total 'No'	44	41	38	29	26	21	12	0	3	4
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>										
Very often	44	43	35	28	25	21	10	0	3	3
Sometimes	39	40	35	28	29	26	15	0	2	1
Rarely	40	40	38	26	28	24	14	0	2	2
Never	44	42	42	29	27	23	11	0	2	4
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>										
Familiar	36	35	33	27	30	27	18	0	2	1
Not familiar	44	42	41	28	27	23	11	0	2	3
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>										
Familiar	40	39	38	28	30	28	16	0	1	1
Not familiar	43	42	40	28	26	21	11	0	3	4

## 4. Difficulties faced by CSOs

Excessive administrative barriers, lack of funding, and verbal or physical threats or attacks are seen as the most significant difficulties faced by civil society organisations at national level

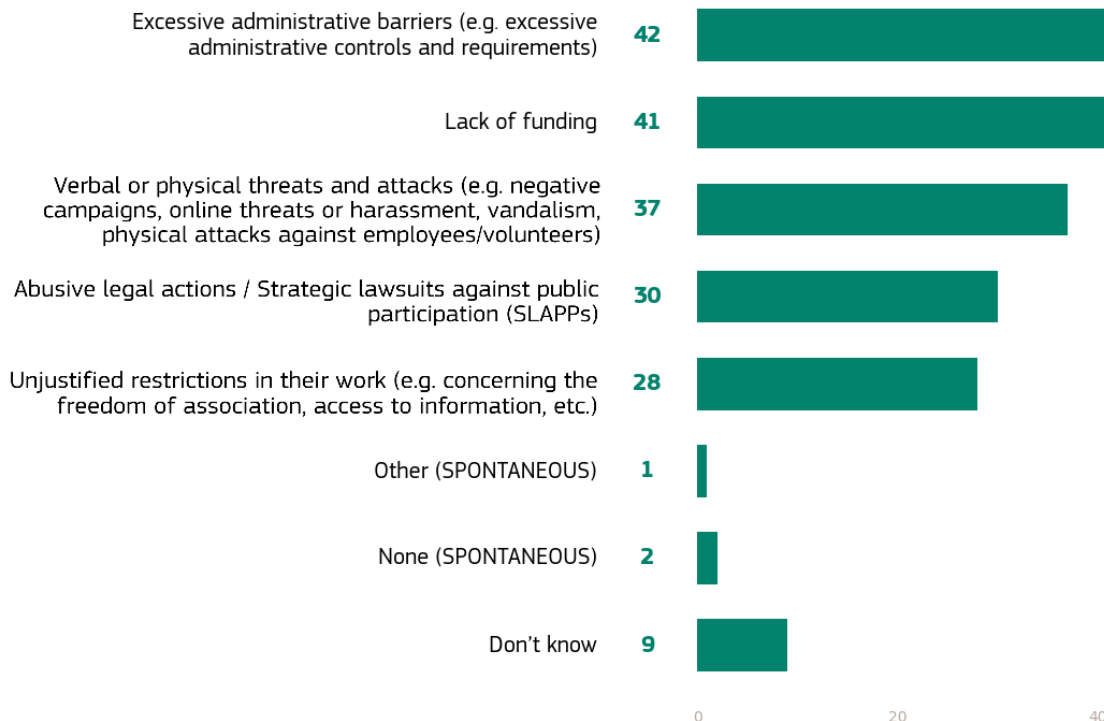
Respondents were asked about the most significant difficulties faced by civil society organisations in their countries.<sup>26</sup>

Over four in ten (42%) of individuals mentioned **excessive administrative barriers, such as controls and bureaucratic requirements**, as one of the main difficulties faced by civil society organisations, closely followed by the **lack of funding** (41%) and **verbal or physical threats and attacks, such as online harassment or vandalism** (37%).

Three in ten (30%) mentioned **abusive legal actions or SLAPPs**, followed by nearly three in ten (28%) mentioning unjustified **restrictions on the work of civil society organisations, such as barriers to association or limited access to information**.

Finally, nearly one in ten (9%) respondents don't know, while small shares of respondents mentioned other or none (1% and 2% respectively).

QC12: In your view, what are the most significant difficulties faced by civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (EU27) (%)



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<sup>26</sup> QC12. In your view, what are the most significant difficulties faced by civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)?

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Looking at the national level, respondents mention different ideas as the most significant difficulties faced by CSOs in their countries.

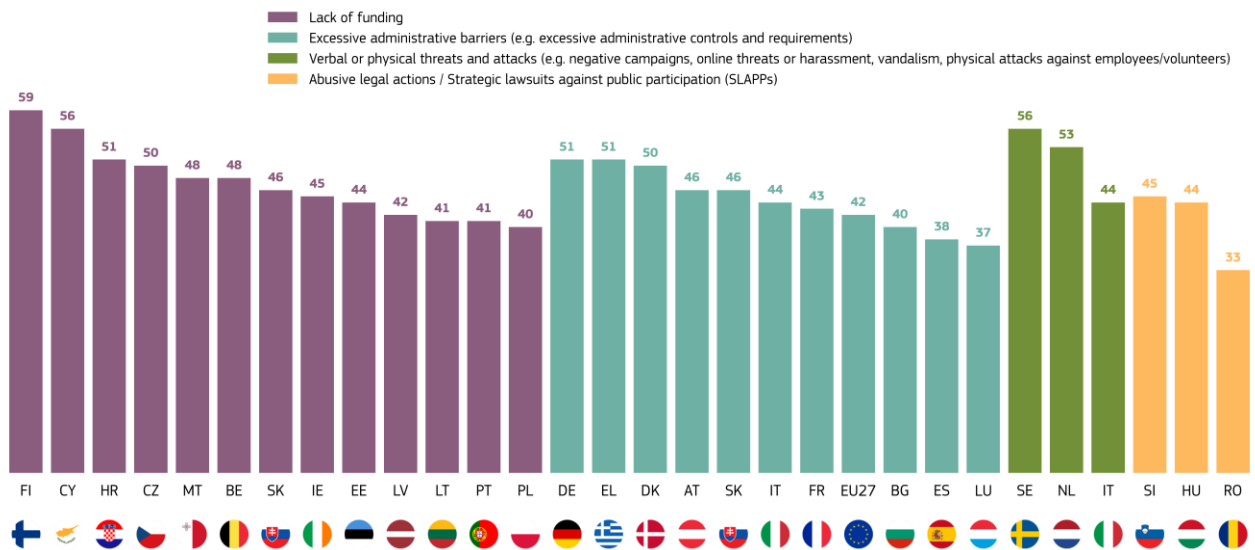
**Lack of funding** ranks as the top issue in 13 countries, most notably in Finland (59%), Cyprus (56%), and Croatia (51%).

**Excessive administrative barriers, such as controls and bureaucratic requirements** is the most selected issue in ten Member States, with the highest shares in Greece and Germany (51%) and Denmark (50%).

**Verbal or physical threats and attacks, such as online harassment or vandalism** rank as the top difficulty in three Member States: Sweden (56%), the Netherlands (53%), and Italy (44%).

**Abusive legal actions or SLAPPs** is the main issue in three Member States: Slovenia (45%), Hungary (44%) and Romania (33%).

QC12: In your view, what are the most significant difficulties faced by civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (%)



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QC12: In your view, what are the most significant difficulties faced by civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS) (%)

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
Excessive administrative barriers (e.g. excessive administrative controls and requirements)	42	47	40	35	50	51	29	36	51	38	43	44	44	41	37	38	37	37	39	47	46	34	34	25	30	46	37	40
Lack of funding	41	48	36	50	40	48	44	45	48	36	37	51	38	56	42	41	30	36	48	48	44	40	41	25	38	46	59	45
Verbal or physical threats and attacks (e.g. negative campaigns, online threats or harassment, vandalism, physical attacks against employees/volunteers)	37	34	34	25	43	39	20	32	31	31	40	40	44	23	17	23	26	41	40	53	35	29	30	32	39	38	31	56
Abusive legal actions / Strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs)	30	25	37	27	24	32	19	33	25	25	30	36	35	21	20	33	23	44	39	36	29	25	26	33	45	34	12	34
Unjustified restrictions in their work (e.g. concerning the freedom of association, access to information, etc.)	28	30	30	25	22	24	24	27	46	21	26	39	40	36	19	22	19	42	36	27	42	24	28	29	24	29	16	30
Other (SPONTANEOUS)	1	1	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	0
None (SPONTANEOUS)	2	1	2	3	2	2	5	1	3	2	1	1	3	4	2	2	3	1	4	0	3	2	2	3	2	1	3	1
Don't know	9	3	10	7	9	6	14	11	12	17	14	3	6	10	15	13	14	2	5	2	11	6	14	9	4	6	10	5

1st Most Frequently Mentioned Item  
2nd Most Frequently Mentioned Item  
3rd Most Frequently Mentioned Item

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## Special Eurobarometer 568 Protecting and promoting democracy

The **socio-demographic analysis** breaks down which challenges facing civil society organisations are perceived as most significant across EU demographic groups.

- Respondents aged 40-54 are more likely to say that administrative barriers are the most significant challenge faced by CSOs (45% compared to 35% of the youngest age group). No significant age differences were observed for the other items listed in the survey.
- Those with tertiary education report the greatest concern across key challenges compared with those who left education at the age of 15: administrative barriers (47% vs 41%), lack of funding (44% vs 34%), and verbal and physical threats (39% vs 34%).
- Self-employed individuals and managers report the highest levels of concern across administrative barriers (47-48% compared with 30% of house persons) and lack of funding (45-46% compared with 35% of house persons).
- Individuals of large towns report greater concern for lack of funding (44%) and SLAPPs (34%) compared to rural residents (38% and 28%, respectively).
- EU citizens satisfied with democracy in the EU express higher awareness of threats (41%) compared to dissatisfied individuals (34%).
- Those involved in decision-making processes in the EU report higher recognition of threats (41%) and SLAPPs (37%) than those not involved (37% and 30%, respectively).
- Individuals active in civil society organisations show significantly greater concern across all key difficulties, especially administrative barriers (47%), funding (45%), threats (42%), and SLAPPs (33%), compared to those not involved (41%, 40%, 36%, and 30%, respectively).
- Those respondents familiar with decision-making in the EU cite threats (42%) and SLAPPs (37%) more often than those who are unfamiliar (36% and 29%). Similarly, those familiar with the roles and activities of civil society organisations express greater concern for threats (43%) and SLAPPs (35%) compared to those who are not familiar (35% and 28%).

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**QC12** In your view, what are the most significant difficulties faced by civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)  
(% - EU)

	Excessive administrative barriers (e.g. excessive administrative controls and requirements)	Lack of funding	Verbal or physical threats and attacks (e.g. negative campaigns, online threats or harassment, vandalism, physical attacks against employees/volunteers)	Abusive legal actions / Strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) (READ IF NECESSARY: SLAPPs are unfounded and abusive legal actions that unjustified restrictions in their work (e.g. concerning the freedom of association, access to information, etc.))	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	None (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't know	
EU27	42	41	37	30	28	1	2	9
<b>Gender</b>								
Man	44	41	37	32	28	1	2	8
Woman	40	41	37	29	29	0	2	10
<b>Age</b>								
15-24	35	42	39	32	27	1	1	11
25-39	44	44	37	32	30	1	1	6
40-54	45	43	38	33	30	1	2	6
55+	42	39	37	28	27	1	2	11
<b>Education (End of)</b>								
15-	41	34	34	24	26	1	3	17
16-19	40	40	36	30	29	1	2	8
20+	47	44	39	33	29	0	2	6
Still Studying	38	45	42	32	29	0	1	10
<b>Socio-professional category</b>								
Self-employed	48	45	38	31	32	0	2	7
Managers	47	46	38	36	29	0	1	5
Other white collars	43	41	39	34	32	1	2	6
Manual workers	41	40	36	30	29	1	2	8
House persons	30	35	36	24	28	1	3	16
Unemployed	41	41	36	33	24	0	1	14
Retired	42	39	36	26	26	1	2	12
Students	39	45	40	33	27	0	1	10
<b>Subjective urbanisation</b>								
Rural area or village	41	38	35	28	25	1	2	12
Small or middle sized town	44	41	38	30	29	1	2	8
Large town	41	44	38	34	31	0	1	7
<b>Satisfaction with democracy in the EU</b>								
Satisfied	43	43	41	31	29	0	1	6
Not satisfied	42	40	34	31	29	1	2	9
<b>Involvement in decision-making processes in the EU</b>								
Yes	41	38	41	37	31	0	1	2
No	42	42	37	30	28	1	2	10
<b>Involvement in the work of a civil society organisation</b>								
Total 'Yes'	47	45	42	33	30	0	1	2
Total 'No'	41	40	36	30	28	1	2	11
<b>Sharing information online when unsure about the source or its trustworthiness</b>								
Very often	39	36	42	31	24	1	2	9
Sometimes	41	39	37	33	31	0	1	6
Rarely	42	43	37	33	28	1	1	7
Never	44	42	37	28	28	1	2	10
<b>Familiarity with activities involving people in decision-making processes in the EU</b>								
Familiar	41	37	42	37	32	1	1	2
Not familiar	43	42	36	29	28	1	2	10
<b>Familiarity with roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)</b>								
Familiar	43	40	43	35	30	0	2	2
Not familiar	42	42	35	28	28	1	2	12



# Conclusion

## Special Eurobarometer 568 Protecting and promoting democracy

The findings of this Special Eurobarometer survey 568 reveal that **direct involvement and familiarity with decision-making processes in the EU are generally low among Europeans**. More than nine in ten citizens have never participated in decision-making in the EU in the last five years, and nearly eight in ten report little to no familiarity with such activities. Additionally, when asked about what would encourage participation in such processes, more transparency and access to information emerge as the top measures.

**Participation in decision-making in the EU and familiarity with activities that involve people directly in decision-making processes in the EU vary widely between EU Member States**, with Austria, Malta, and Croatia showing the highest rates, and Greece, France, and Sweden the lowest. **Transparency and access to information are key motivators for engagement**, especially in Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, and Italy, while local debates to address local matters are preferred in Greece, Slovakia, and Croatia. Overall, results among Member States differ in both the direct involvement of citizens and the measures citizens value to encourage participation.

Younger people and those with higher education are slightly more engaged and familiar with activities that involve people directly in decision-making processes in the EU, and they are also more supportive of transparency and access to information regarding such activities and online platforms and tools for citizens' debates and participation.

**Across the European Union, citizens have concerns about challenges to democracy**. The most commonly cited challenge is the growing public distrust toward democratic institutions and processes, with nearly half of the respondents seeing it as the most serious challenge. Other prevalent concerns include foreign information manipulation and disinformation and lack of transparency with regard to whether political content is promoted online through new technologies. The integrity of elections is also a major issue of interest, with large shares of Europeans expressing concern about voters basing decisions on disinformation, cyberattacks influencing elections and foreign countries influencing elections.

The countries where respondents consider the growing public distrust toward democratic institutions and processes as the most serious challenge to democracy are the Netherlands, Finland, Germany, Cyprus, and Denmark. In a few countries like Sweden, Malta, and Luxembourg, foreign information manipulation, interference and disinformation rise to the top. In Hungary, declining opportunities for citizens to access to information from independent and

trustworthy media sources is the most frequently mentioned challenge (42%).

**When it comes to the most important elements for free and fair elections, respondents in most Member States prioritise access to accurate and accessible information for voters**, especially in the Netherlands, Denmark, and Spain. In Finland, Cyprus, and Croatia, equitable media coverage of candidates and political parties to express their views is highlighted, while respondents from Greece place top importance on electoral debates that are not marked by disinformation, and respondents from Sweden on protection of the electoral process against threats such as cyberattacks. Similarly, within each measure for ensuring the fairness of electoral campaigns online, respondents from Sweden, the Netherlands and Ireland report the highest support for transparency and measures to avoid possible risks of manipulation of online services, while the lowest importance attached to these aspects is recorded in Romania, Bulgaria and Czechia.

**Concerns about voters basing their decision on disinformation, cyberattacks influencing elections, foreign countries influencing elections, manipulation of election results, and pressure on voters also vary**, with Spain, Ireland, Sweden, and Hungary expressing the highest levels of concern, and Denmark, Finland, Czechia, and Malta often reporting much lower levels of concern.

The socio-demographic analysis reveals some consistent patterns across the EU. Generally, citizens with higher education levels, those living in large towns, managers, self-employed, and people satisfied with democracy or media freedom express greater support for transparency, fairness measures, and concern about challenges to democracy and election integrity. Younger respondents (15–24) are more concerned about issues like disinformation and transparency in online content, while older citizens (55 or older) are more likely to emphasise distrust in institutions and concerns over cybersecurity and manipulation of election result. Disinformation is a leading challenge among many categories, especially among those who actively verify the credibility of online information.

**Satisfaction with media freedom, independence, and pluralism is rather high, with a majority of respondents expressing contentment with the current state of the media landscape**, while the situation varies considerably among Member States. The belief that journalism and professional news content play a positive role democracy is shared by just over a third of respondents, while another third sees it as a form of consumption like others, illustrating that views on the reliability and importance of journalism are diverse.

**There are marked differences in attitudes across Member States regarding the role of journalism.** In Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands, a clear majority of respondents view journalism as playing a positive role in democracy and society. In contrast, seeing journalism as a non-reliable source of information dominates in Greece and Slovenia. Satisfaction with media freedom, independence, and pluralism exceeds 50% in 17 Member States, peaking in Denmark (82%), the Netherlands (74%), and Sweden (73%). At the opposite end, Greece (21%), Romania (38%), and Croatia (39%) record the lowest satisfaction levels.

**In summary, while concern about disinformation and related issues is high across the EU, especially among the respondents with the highest levels of education and engagement, satisfaction with media freedom and the perceived democratic value of journalism varies considerably by country and demographic group.** Education, engagement, and urbanisation consistently correlate with more positive perceptions, while less educated, unemployed, and rural residents tend to consider journalism as a non-reliable source of information.

Overall, the respondents **consider covert foreign financing of political actors as the most serious national challenge.** However, two thirds also agree that citizens have access to information from independent and pluralistic media and the possibility to participate in democratic processes and policymaking in their countries. At a national level, perceptions vary widely: respondents from Portugal, Denmark, Sweden and Poland show higher agreement that elections are free from interference and that citizens have the possibility to take part in democratic processes, while in Bulgaria, Cyprus, and Spain, respondents tend to disagree with the statements that there is transparency and accountability as regards funding in politics, that citizens have access to information and news from independent and pluralistic media and elections are free from any interference.

Respondents from Sweden, Finland, and Denmark are most likely to view educational initiatives as effective against disinformation and also report robust access to independent media; by contrast, in Portugal, Spain, Italy, and Poland, concerns about foreign interference and uneven campaign conditions are more pronounced. Socio-demographically, younger respondents, those with higher education, managers, and residents of large towns report the greatest confidence in democratic institutions and process, democratic participation, and access to information from independent and pluralistic media, as well as a higher perceived exposure to disinformation. Conversely, older citizens, those with a lower level of education, the unemployed, and rural residents show lower level of trust in

democratic institutions and processes and are more likely to be less aware and involved in decision-making processes. Those satisfied with democracy and media freedom, frequent verifiers of information, and individuals involved in decision-making processes in the EU or civil society consistently express higher trust in democratic institutions and processes and a greater sense of resilience to disinformation, highlighting the importance of education, and critical media literacy in tackling disinformation across the European Union.

**While a majority of respondents recognise the importance of verifying information online and behave cautiously when sharing unverified content, there remains a notable share who seldom or never check sources of information or who occasionally circulate information of uncertain trustworthiness.** At the national level, significant variations exist: respondents in Sweden, the Netherlands, and Denmark show the highest rates of regular verification of information and cautious sharing, whereas those in Portugal, Hungary, and Slovenia report the lowest verification habits and higher instances of sharing unverified content.

From a socio-demographic perspective, younger respondents, and those with higher education or managerial positions are more proactive in verifying information, while older citizens, the less educated, retired persons, and house persons tend to exercise more caution by refraining from sharing unverified material. Familiarity with decision-making processes in the EU and civil society organisations correlates with more active verification and more cautious sharing of information.

**Across the European Union, familiarity and involvement with civil society organisations (CSOs) remain low, with most respondents neither directly engaged nor fully aware of the roles CSOs play, though significant minorities report to have knowledge of the activities of CSOs or their direct participation.** Nationally, levels of engagement and awareness vary widely: respondents in Malta, Sweden, the Netherlands, and Poland show the highest levels of familiarity, while those in Romania and Greece stand out for their low direct involvement. The functions of CSOs considered to deliver the most important contributions are exposing corruption, defending rights, and delivering essential services. However, there are notable differences between Member States among the contributions cited, reflecting distinct local priorities. The most significant perceived challenges faced by CSOs are excessive administrative barriers and lack of funding which are notably pronounced in Finland, Cyprus, Croatia, Germany, Greece, and Denmark.

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The socio-demographic analysis reveals that higher education, managerial roles, urban living, and overall satisfaction with democracy or media freedom correlate with greater awareness and engagement in CSO activities, whereas less educated, unemployed, and rural residents tend to report lower involvement and familiarity with the work of CSOs. Importantly, no significant gender differences were found in levels of engagement, however, familiarity with the roles and activities of CSOs is slightly higher among men.

**In summary, the survey reveals widespread and nuanced concern among EU citizens about aspects of democracy, including elections integrity, media freedom, disinformation, and challenges faced by civil society organisations, shaped by differences depending on factors such as education, age, place of residence, and engagement with decision-making processes in the EU and familiarity with the work of civil society organisations.** While transparency, access to information, and democratic institutions and processes are valued across the Union, confidence levels vary markedly between Member States and demographic groups. **Engagement, education, and awareness consistently emerge as key determinants of trust and resilience.**

## Technical Specifications

Between 5 and 29 May 2025, Verian Belgium carried out the wave 103.4 of the Eurobarometer survey, on request of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, "Public Opinion & Citizen Engagement" Unit.

The Wave 103.4 covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, resident in each of the 27 Member States and aged 15 years and over.

The basic sample design applied in all countries is a stratified multi-stage, random (probability) one. In each country, the sample frame is first stratified by NUTS regions and within each region by a measure of urbanity (DEGURBA). The number of sample points selected in each strata reflects the stratum population 15+. At the second stage sampling points were drawn with probability proportional to their 0+ population size from within each stratum. The samples thus represent the whole territory of the countries surveyed according to the EUROSTAT NUTS II (or equivalent) and according to the distribution of the resident population of the respective nationalities in terms of metropolitan, urban and rural areas<sup>27</sup>.

In each of the selected sampling points, a starting coordinate was drawn at random and a reverse geo-coding tool used to identify the closest address to the coordinate. This address was the starting address for the random walk. Further addresses (every Nth address) were selected by standard "random route" procedures, from the initial address. In each household, the respondent was drawn, at random. The approach to the random selection was conditional on the household size. By way of example for households with two 15+ members the script was used to select either the informant (person responding to the screener questionnaire) or the other eligible member in the household. For households with three 15+ members the script was used to select either the informant (1/3 of the time) or the two other eligible members in the household (2/3 of the time). Where the two other members were selected, the interviewer was then told to either ask for the youngest or oldest. The script would randomly assign the selection to youngest or oldest with equal probability. This process continues for four 15+ household members – randomly asking for the youngest, 2<sup>nd</sup> youngest and oldest. For households with five 15+ members we revert to the last birthday rule.

If no contact was made with anyone in the household, or if the respondent selected was not available (busy), the interviewer revisited the same household up to three additional times (four contact attempts in total). Interviewers never indicate that the survey is conducted on behalf of the European Commission beforehand; they may give this information once the survey is completed, upon request.

The recruitment phase was slightly different in the Netherlands, Finland, and Sweden. In the two latter countries, a sample of addresses within each sampling point were selected from the address or population register (in Finland, selection is not done in all sample points, but in some where response rates are expected to improve). The selection of addresses was done in a random manner. Households were then contacted by telephone and recruited to take part in the survey. In the Netherlands, a dual frame RDD sample (mobile and landline numbers) are used as there is no comprehensive population register with telephone numbers available. The selection of numbers on both frames is done in a random manner with each number getting an equal probability of selection. Unlike Sweden and Finland, the sample is un-clustered.

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<sup>27</sup> Urban Rural classification based on DEGURBA  
(<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/degree-of-urbanisation/background>)

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COUNTRIES	INSTITUTES	N° INTERVIEWS	FIELDWORK DATES		POPULATION 15+	PROPORTION EU27	
BE	Belgium	MCM Belgium	1,025	05-05-2025	25-05-2025	9,892,796	2.6%
BG	Bulgaria	Kantar TNS BBSS	1,039	09-05-2025	26-05-2025	5,534,456	1.4%
CZ	Czechia	STEM/MARK	1,018	07-05-2025	19-05-2025	9,172,797	2.4%
DK	Denmark	Mantle Denmark (Verian)	1,017	05-05-2025	29-05-2025	5,022,981	1.3%
DE	Germany	Mantle Germany (Verian)	1,530	05-05-2025	26-05-2025	71,818,299	18.7%
EE	Estonia	B&B Research OÜ	1,009	05-05-2025	27-05-2025	1,154,359	0.3%
IE	Ireland	B and A Research	1,004	06-05-2025	24-05-2025	4,338,938	1.1%
EL	Greece	Kantar Greece	1,004	05-05-2025	25-05-2025	9,041,201	2.4%
ES	Spain	Mantle Spain (Verian)	1,000	05-05-2025	25-05-2025	42,189,318	11.0%
FR	France	MCM France	1,000	05-05-2025	26-05-2025	56,855,864	14.8%
HR	Croatia	Hendal	1,004	06-05-2025	25-05-2025	3,319,752	0.9%
IT	Italy	Testpoint Italia	1,035	05-05-2025	20-05-2025	51,784,963	13.5%
CY	Rep. of Cyprus	CYMAR Market Research	501	05-05-2025	22-05-2025	818,909	0.2%
LV	Latvia	Kantar TNS Latvia	1,021	06-05-2025	25-05-2025	1,579,066	0.4%
LT	Lithuania	Norstat LT	1,017	06-05-2025	25-05-2025	2,467,008	0.6%
LU	Luxembourg	ILRES	509	05-05-2025	23-05-2025	566,303	0.1%
HU	Hungary	Kantar Hoffmann	1,014	07-05-2025	26-05-2025	8,199,448	2.1%
MT	Malta	MISCO International	501	05-05-2025	29-05-2025	493,961	0.1%
NL	Netherlands	MCM Netherlands	1,010	05-05-2025	23-05-2025	15,228,902	4.0%
AT	Austria	Das Österreichische Gallup Ins.	1,003	05-05-2025	21-05-2025	7,842,929	2.0%
PL	Poland	Research Collective	1,019	06-05-2025	25-05-2025	31,082,980	8.1%
PT	Portugal	Intercampus SA	1,030	05-05-2025	25-05-2025	9,275,958	2.4%
RO	Romania	CSOP SRL	1,056	05-05-2025	25-05-2025	16,034,437	4.2%
SI	Slovenia	Mediana DOO	1,013	05-05-2025	25-05-2025	1,811,104	0.5%
SK	Slovakia	MNFORCE	1,004	05-05-2025	21-05-2025	4,557,290	1.2%
FI	Finland	Taloustutkimus Oy	1,007	05-05-2025	26-05-2025	4,771,619	1.2%
SE	Sweden	Mantle Sweden (Verian)	1,020	05-05-2025	25-05-2025	8,748,126	2.3%
TOTAL EU27			26,410	05-05-2025	29-05-2025	383,603,764	100%

\* It should be noted that the total percentage shown in this table may exceed 100% due to rounding.

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### Interviewing mode per country

Interviews were conducted through face-to-face interviews, either physically in people's homes or through remote video interaction in the appropriate national language. Interviews with remote video interaction ("online face-to-face" or CAVI, Computer Assisted Video Interviewing, were conducted only in Denmark, Malta, Netherlands, Finland and Sweden).

COUNTRIES	N° OF CAPI INTERVIEWS	N° OF CAVI INTERVIEWS	TOTAL N° INTERVIEWS	
BE	Belgium	1,025	1,025	
BG	Bulgaria	1,039	1,039	
CZ	Czechia	1,018	1,018	
DK	Denmark	693	324	1,017
DE	Germany	1,530	1,530	
EE	Estonia	1,009	1,009	
IE	Ireland	1,004	1,004	
EL	Greece	1,004	1,004	
ES	Spain	1,000	1,000	
FR	France	1,000	1,000	
HR	Croatia	1,004	1,004	
IT	Italy	1,035	1,035	
CY	Rep. Of Cyprus	501	501	
LV	Latvia	1,021	1,021	
LT	Lithuania	1,017	1,017	
LU	Luxembourg	509	509	
HU	Hungary	1,014	1,014	
MT	Malta	341	160	501
NL	Netherlands	898	112	1,010
AT	Austria	1,003	1,003	
PL	Poland	1,019	1,019	
PT	Portugal	1,030	1,030	
RO	Romania	1,056	1,056	
SI	Slovenia	1,013	1,013	
SK	Slovakia	1,004	1,004	
FI	Finland	720	287	1,007
SE	Sweden	740	280	1,020
TOTAL EU27	25,247	1,163	26,410	

CAPI : Computer-Assisted Personal interviewing

CAVI : Computer-Assisted Video interviewing

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### Response rates

For each country a comparison between the responding sample and the universe (i.e. the overall population in the country) is carried out. Weights are used to match the responding sample to the universe on gender by age, region and degree of urbanisation. For European estimates (i.e. EU average), an adjustment is made to the individual country weights, weighting them up or down to reflect their 15+ population as a proportion of the EU 15+ population.

The response rates are calculated by dividing the total number of complete interviews with the number of all the addresses visited, apart from ones that are not eligible but including those where eligibility is unknown. For wave 103.4 of the EUROBAROMETER survey, the response rates for the EU27 countries, calculated by Verian Belgium, are:

COUNTRIES	CAPI RESPONSE RATES	
BE	Belgium	48.5%
BG	Bulgaria	43.9%
CZ	Czechia	61.7%
DK	Denmark	53.4%
DE	Germany	29.6%
EE	Estonia	53.7%
IE	Ireland	49.5%
EL	Greece	32.1%
ES	Spain	39.8%
FR	France	44.5%
HR	Croatia	49.0%
IT	Italy	34.3%
CY	Rep. Of Cyprus	76.4%
LV	Latvia	60.2%
LT	Lithuania	44.1%
LU	Luxembourg	30.3%
HU	Hungary	61.5%
MT	Malta	79.1%
NL	Netherlands	91.9%
AT	Austria	42.5%
PL	Poland	50.0%
PT	Portugal	49.6%
RO	Romania	50.6%
SI	Slovenia	43.3%
SK	Slovakia	55.2%
FI	Finland	34.4%
SE	Sweden	78.0%

CAPI : Computer-Assisted Personal interviewing

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### Margins of error

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

Statistical Margins due to the sampling process  
(at the 95% level of confidence)

*various sample sizes are in rows*

*various observed results are in columns*

	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	
N=50	6,0	8,3	9,9	11,1	12,0	12,7	13,2	13,6	13,8	13,9	N=50
N=500	1,9	2,6	3,1	3,5	3,8	4,0	4,2	4,3	4,4	4,4	N=500
<b>N=1000</b>	<b>1,4</b>	<b>1,9</b>	<b>2,2</b>	<b>2,5</b>	<b>2,7</b>	<b>2,8</b>	<b>3,0</b>	<b>3,0</b>	<b>3,1</b>	<b>3,1</b>	<b>N=1000</b>
N=1500	1,1	1,5	1,8	2,0	2,2	2,3	2,4	2,5	2,5	2,5	N=1500
N=2000	1,0	1,3	1,6	1,8	1,9	2,0	2,1	2,1	2,2	2,2	N=2000
N=3000	0,8	1,1	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,6	1,7	1,8	1,8	1,8	N=3000
N=4000	0,7	0,9	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	N=4000
N=5000	0,6	0,8	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,3	1,4	1,4	1,4	N=5000
N=6000	0,6	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,3	1,3	N=6000
N=7000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,2	1,2	N=7000
N=7500	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=7500
N=8000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=8000
N=9000	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=9000
N=10000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=10000
N=11000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=11000
N=12000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=12000
N=13000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	N=13000
N=14000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=14000
N=15000	0,3	0,5	0,6	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=15000
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	

## Questionnaire

**QCSD** In the last five years, have you been directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union, e.g., in citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, youth dialogues, citizens' juries, or other events related to the decision-making in the EU?

(READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- 1 Yes, you participated several times
- 2 Yes, you participated once
- 3 No, never
- 4 Don't know

1QU NEW

**QC1** Which of the following statements most accurately describes how often you personally verify information when using online platforms? (READ OUT IF NECESSARY: An online platform is a digital service connecting two or more individuals together that facilitates interactions, or transactions between users. Facebook, YouTube, Amazon or Shopify are examples of online platforms.)

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- 1 Very often – you consistently check sources, use fact-checking tools, and verify whether information is correct
- 2 Sometimes – you verify whether information is correct occasionally, but not regularly
- 3 Rarely – you seldom fact-check or verify sources
- 4 Never – you do not fact-check or verify whether information is correct
- 5 Don't know

1QU NEW

**QC2** How often do you share information online when you are unsure about the source or its trustworthiness?

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- 1 Very often
- 2 Sometimes
- 3 Rarely
- 4 Never
- 5 Don't know

1QU NEW

**QC3** What actions or resources do you believe would best enhance citizens' skills to effectively tackle disinformation and information manipulation? (IF NECESSARY: Disinformation is false information deliberately spread with the intention of influencing public opinion.)

(SHOW SCREEN – READ OUT – MAX. 3 ANSWERS)

- 1 The education system and other programmes to equip people with critical thinking, media and digital literacy (e.g. schools or informal education systems)
- 2 Public awareness campaigns to help citizens identify disinformation and information manipulation
- 3 Easy access to studies, and research carried out by independent and trustworthy experts and scientists
- 4 Fact-checking provided by independent and trustworthy organisations
- 5 Tools and technologies for verifying the origin or credibility of sources, including online
- 6 Other (SPONTANEOUS)
- 7 None (SPONTANEOUS)
- 8 Don't know

1QU NEW

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**QC4 How familiar are you with activities that involve people directly in decision-making processes in the European Union? (e.g. citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, scenario workshops)**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- 1 Very familiar
- 2 Fairly familiar
- 3 Not very familiar
- 4 Not at all familiar
- 5 Don't know

1QU NEW

**QC5 Which of the following measures would encourage you the most to get directly involved in decision-making processes in the European Union? (e.g. in citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, citizens' juries, participatory planning, participatory budgeting, scenario workshops, etc.)**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - MAX. 2 ANSWERS)

- 1 More transparency and access to information on ways to participate in policymaking
- 2 More opportunities for direct participation in decision-making processes (e.g. Citizens' assemblies, citizens' panels, youth dialogues...)
- 3 Online participation platforms and tools for citizens' debates and participation
- 4 More debates at local level, in the area where you live, to address local matters
- 5 Other (SPONTANEOUS)
- 6 Don't know

1QU NEW

**QC6 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about (OUR COUNTRY)?**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - ONE ANSWER PER ITEM)

Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5

- 1 Elections are free from any interference
- 2 All parties and political candidates can campaign on equal footing
- 3 There is transparency and accountability as regards funding in politics (parties, campaigns, the spread of political messages...)
- 4 Citizens have access to information and news provided by independent and pluralistic media
- 5 Citizens have the possibility to take part in democratic processes, debates and policy making
- 6 Covert foreign financing of political actors, campaigns or messages is a serious challenge in (OUR COUNTRY)

3QU NEW

**QC7 Which of the following are the most serious challenges to democracy in the European Union?**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - MAX. 3 ANSWERS)

- 1 Foreign information manipulation, interference and disinformation, including in the context of elections
- 2 Other attempts to destabilize elections, such as cyberattacks
- 3 Lack of transparency with regard to whether political content online is promoted through new technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI)
- 4 Growing public distrust towards democratic institutions and processes
- 5 Limited opportunities for citizens to participate in democratic debates and policy-making processes

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	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5
6 Limited opportunities for civil society organisations to participate in democratic debates and policy-making processes					
7 Declining opportunities for citizens to access information and news from independent and trustworthy media sources					
8 Other (SPONTANEOUS)					
9 None (SPONTANEOUS)					
10 Don't know					

- 1 The origin and source of political messages is transparent (e.g. paid political advertising, involvement of influencers in political campaigns)
- 2 Online platforms are transparent about how their services could be used to support political parties, candidates and campaign organisations
- 3 Online platforms work to avoid the possible risks of manipulation of their services, for example via fake accounts or bots generated by artificial intelligence (AI) aiming to disturb democracy
- 4 Equal opportunities are provided to political parties and candidates to access online services to compete for voters' attention
- 5 Political opinion polls are transparent, notably about the methods used to conduct them and the person or entity requesting the poll

1QU NEW

**QC8 In your view, what are the most important elements of free and fair elections?**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - MAX. 3 ANSWERS)

- 1 Voters have access to accurate and accessible information to make informed choices on the electoral process
- 2 The electoral process (voter rolls, counting of votes, transmission of information, etc.) is protected against threats, such as cyberattacks
- 3 Candidates and political parties are given equitable coverage to express their views
- 4 Electoral debates and campaigns are not marked by disinformation and manipulation of information
- 5 Political candidates and elected representatives are not subject to hate speech, violence, threats or intimidation
- 6 Other (SPONTANEOUS)
- 7 None (SPONTANEOUS)
- 8 Don't know

1QU NEW

**QC9 How important or not do you think the following measures are to ensure the fairness of electoral campaigns carried out online?**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - ONE ANSWER PER ITEM)

2.5QU NEW

**QC10 How familiar are you with the different roles and activities of civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY) (e.g. advocacy, monitoring government actions, exposing corruption, representation of different groups, defending rights of individuals, delivering services such as education or healthcare, informing citizens)?**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- 1 Very familiar
- 2 Fairly familiar
- 3 Not very familiar
- 4 Not at all familiar
- 5 Don't know

1QU NEW

**Special Eurobarometer 568**  
**Questionnaire**

**QC10b Have you been directly involved in the work of a civil society organisation, if so, in what capacity?**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

- 1 Yes, as a volunteer
- 2 Yes, as a member or employee
- 3 Yes, as a donor
- 4 Yes, as a beneficiary
- 5 No, you have not been directly involved in the work of a civil society organisation
- 6 Don't know

1QU NEW

**QC11 Which of the following areas of work of civil society organisations is the most significant for you?**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - MAX. 3 ANSWERS)

- 1 Delivering services (such as education or healthcare)
- 2 Community building and support
- 3 Advocacy and policy influence
- 4 Monitoring government actions
- 5 Defending rights of individuals
- 6 Exposing corruption
- 7 Awareness raising and citizens' engagement
- 8 Other (SPONTANEOUS)
- 9 None (SPONTANEOUS)
- 10 Don't know

1QU NEW

**QC12 In your view, what are the most significant difficulties faced by civil society organisations in (OUR COUNTRY)?**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - MAX. 3 ANSWERS)

- 1 Unjustified restrictions in their work (e.g. concerning the freedom of association, access to information, etc.)
- 2 Abusive legal actions / Strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs) (READ IF NECESSARY: SLAPPs are unfounded and abusive legal actions that aim to silence those working in the public interest on matters such as fundamental rights, the environment, and public access to information.)
- 3 Excessive administrative barriers (e.g. excessive administrative controls and requirements)
- 4 Verbal or physical threats and attacks (e.g. negative campaigns, online threats or harassment, vandalism, physical attacks against employees/volunteers)
- 5 Lack of funding
- 6 Other (SPONTANEOUS)
- 7 None (SPONTANEOUS)
- 8 Don't know

1QU NEW

**QC13 Which of the following statements best reflects your views on news reporting and professional media: In the European Union, journalism and professional news content, which is news produced by professional journalists...**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT - ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- 1 ... play a positive role for democracy and society
- 2 ... are a form of consumption like others
- 3 ... are not reliable sources of information
- 4 It depends (SPONTANEOUS)
- 5 Don't know

1QU NEW

**Special Eurobarometer 568  
Questionnaire**

**QC14 How satisfied are you with the state of media freedom, independence and pluralism in the EU?**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- 1 Very satisfied
- 2 Fairly satisfied
- 3 Not very satisfied
- 4 Not at all satisfied
- 5 Don't know

1QU NEW

**QC15 How often do you think that you are personally exposed to disinformation or other forms of information manipulation?**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT – ONE ANSWER ONLY)

- 1 Every day or almost every day
- 2 At least once a week
- 3 One to three times a month
- 4 Less often
- 5 Never
- 6 Don't know

1QU NEW

**QC16 Regarding elections in Europe, how concerned are you about the following?**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT – ONE ANSWER PER ITEM)

Very concerned	Fairly concerned	Not very concerned	Not at all concerned	Don't know
1	2	3	4	5

- 1 Election results being manipulated
- 2 Cyberattacks influencing elections
- 3 Voters being pressured in their decisions

- 4 Voters basing decisions on disinformation
- 5 Foreign countries influencing elections

2.5QU NEW

**QC17 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about foreign interference and disinformation in EU politics?**

(SHOW SCREEN - READ OUT – ONE ANSWER PER ITEM)

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know
	1	2	3	4	5

- 1 (NATIONALITY) authorities can handle foreign interference effectively
- 2 (NATIONALITY) authorities can handle disinformation effectively
- 3 The EU is sufficiently equipped to tackle foreign interference
- 4 The EU is sufficiently equipped to tackle disinformation
- 5 The EU and Member States cooperate sufficiently to tackle foreign interference and disinformation

2.5QU NEW



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