

European solidarity at a crossroads

Citizen views of the future of the European Union

Niccolò Donati

Università degli Studi di Milano

niccolo.donati@unimi.it

Alessandro Pellegata

Università degli Studi di Milano

alessandro.pellegata@unimi.it

Francesco Visconti

Università degli Studi di Milano

francesco.visconti@unimi.it

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS	4
2. BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF SHARING: THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL UNION	6
2.1 The mission of the EU: granting the stability of the EMU or protecting EU citizens?	6
2.1.1 EU Social protection: a matter of socio-economic position?	8
2.1.2 Ideas about poverty and solidarity	10
2.2 Who should provide social protection? National vs EU responsibilities	11
2.2.1 EU role in social protection: ideology and identity	12
2.3 The EU image	13
2.4 What legitimates the EU?	15
3. CROSS-NATIONAL FISCAL SOLIDARITY: WHEN, HOW, AND WHY?	17
3.1 Solidarity in time of crisis	17
3.1.1 Cross-national financial help: a matter of ideology?	17
3.1.2 Reasons to be in favour of cross-national fiscal solidarity	20
3.1.3 Putting your money where your mouth is	21
3.1.4 Reasons to be against cross-national fiscal solidarity	21
3.2 Solidarity with weaker MSs or poorer regions	22
4. CROSS-NATIONAL SOLIDARITY IN THE REFUGEE CRISIS	24
4.1 Asylum-seekers relocation across the EU	24
4.2 Closing the EU borders	24
4.2.1 Who is in favour of a “fortress Europe”?	25
5. TRANSNATIONAL SOLIDARITY	29
5.1 EU social citizenship: movers’ social rights	29
5.1.1 Who favours the opening of national welfare systems to fellow Europeans?	30
5.2 Interpersonal solidarity	32
5.3 Service-market chauvinism	35
6. BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF TRUST IN THE EU	38
6.1. Furthering European integration	38
6.1.1 Confessions of a Euro-enthusiast	40
6.2. Material benefits from the EU	43
6.3 Fairness of the EU	44

6.3.1 Unfair, yes. But favouring who?	45
6.3.2 EU's economic fairness	46
6.4 Who do you trust? The EU or your national government?	47
6.5 Fears about the process of EU integration: loss of jobs and social security and loss of national identity	49
6.5.1 EU integration fears and objective social status	50
6.5.2 EU integration fears and subjective perceptions	51
6.5.3 EU integration fears across time	53
6.6 Why some member states fared better during the crisis?	53
6.6 What comes before? National and European identity	54
6.8 Supranational political efficacy	55
6.9 EU's most positive results	56
7. TRANSNATIONALISM	59
7.1 Valuing EU membership	63
7.2 How to strengthen EU citizenship?	64
7.3 Awareness of EU programs	66
8. CONCLUDING REMARKS	68
REFERENCES	70
METHODOLOGICAL NOTE	72

1. Introduction and key findings

The European Union (EU) has experienced a series of unprecedented and interrelated crises over the last decade: the great recession, the sovereign debt crisis, a massive inflow of migrants and asylum seekers, and Brexit. On top of this, in March 2020, Europe, like the rest of the world, was hit by a sudden and unexpected crisis due to the spread of the COVID-19 disease, with dramatic consequences for both public health and economic growth.

All these crises have reinforced existing conflicts and have generated new and intertwined divides regarding the role of the EU. What is now debated is whether and how the EU should play a more proactive role in the social sphere by helping member states in economic and financial difficulties, and European citizens in need, irrespective of their country of residence. In the past, these lines of tension have contributed to polarise both political elites and public opinions on European integration, and, more precisely, on the issue of European solidarity, namely the individual willingness to share economic risks and obligations among EU member states and European citizens (Baute et al. 2018; Ciornei and Recchi 2017; Ferrera 2017; Gerhards et al. 2019). What is the absolute state of EU solidarity in 2019? Are the EU citizens more willing to take care of each other, regardless of their nationality?

This report analyses the relevant results of a public opinion survey conducted in a sample of ten EU member states – Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden – in July 2019, just after the European Parliament (EP) elections held in May 2019. In line with the structure of the survey, this report is divided into three main sections. The first section investigates citizen attitudes towards the issue of European solidarity. More precisely, it looks at two main analytical dimensions of the concept of European solidarity. The first dimension is termed *cross-national solidarity* and refers to individual willingness to help other EU member states by paying out EU-level financial contributions to countries in economic and financial difficulties, and enforcing a redistribution of migrants and asylum seekers among various member states. The second dimension of European solidarity is termed *transnational solidarity* and refers to individual willingness to help European citizens in need. We investigated citizens' attitudes toward the inclusion of foreigners in domestic social security systems and individual support for EU-level programs aimed at providing help for the unemployed, the poor, and disadvantaged children, irrespective of their country of origin.

The second section of the report investigates public attitudes towards different dimensions of diffuse support for the EU (Boomgaarden et al. 2011; De Vreese et al. 2018). These dimensions include support for further European integration, perceptions of whether and how much the EU is a fair political union, trust in EU institutions, feelings of European identity and subjective perceptions of threat coming from the EU.

Finally, we devoted part of the survey to investigating the concept of *Transnationalism*, which refers to direct and indirect interactions with peoples and cultures of other EU member states. This deserves more attention, since the existing literature demonstrates that transnational experiences are positively related to support for the EU. It is thus interesting to study the relationship between Transnationalism and European solidarity.

The key findings of our analysis can be summarised as follows:

- In general, we detected a high level of public support for all aspects of European solidarity. This confirmed what we observed in the previous REScEU mass survey conducted in 2016¹: *More solidarity than meets the eye!* (Ferrera and Pellegata 2017). Our findings show that European public opinion is more prone to support EU-level initiatives aimed at strengthening European solidarity than is commonly depicted by many political parties and large sectors of the media.
- Many cross-country differences emerged in the average levels of support for European solidarity. Citizens in Southern countries (Greece, Italy and Spain) tend to express higher levels of support for European solidarity than Northern countries (Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden, and to a lesser extent France and Germany). Citizens living in Eastern Europe – Hungary and Poland – tend to express lower average levels of solidarity than Southern countries but higher than Northern countries. Overall, EU solidarity tends to be a less divisive issue than expected: the majority of respondents are generally in favour of some form of cross-national solidarity exerted at the EU level. We also detected some differences in the dimensions of solidarity. Citizens in few Northern countries declare themselves to be hostile toward financial support for member states in economic and financial difficulties, while supporting solidarity towards poorer regions, and Hungarians and Poles tend to oppose migrant redistributions, in particular.
- A much more nuanced scenario was seen when we investigated different aspects pertaining to diffuse support toward the EU. Southern European citizens believe that their countries have not received what they deserve from the EU, and that the EU does not treat their countries fairly and with the respect they deserve. At the same time, they support a strengthening of the integration process and a more proactive role of the EU in the social dimension. Moreover, Contrary to common wisdom, citizens in Hungary and Poland express high levels of diffuse support for the EU.
- Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents explain only a small part of the variation in public attitudes toward the EU and European solidarity, and other factors stressed by the REScEU analytical framework are relevant. Objective situations experienced by individuals, subjective perceptions of intertemporal material deprivation and cultural threat, and European traits and interactions are strongly associated with both diffuse support for the EU and public attitudes toward European solidarity.

¹ Available at: <https://www.resceu.eu/publications/working-papers/can-economic-and-social-europe-be-reconciled-citizens%E2%80%99-view-on-integration-and-solidarity.html>.

2. Building a community of sharing: the European Social Union

The development of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), starting with the Treaty of Maastricht, meant that the logic of market and economic integration began to erode the social policies and political autonomy of the Member States (MSs). This erosion was exacerbated by the Great Recession and the sovereign debt crisis, when a large number of member states, especially from Southern and Eastern Europe, had to implement structural reforms and austerity programmes in order to reduce their public debt and safeguard the stability of the EMU. Following the social, economic and political tensions spurred by the great recession, and with the outbreak of the Eurozone crisis, the EU has initiated a public debate about how to strengthen its political and social dimensions, in addition to the economic.

A large part of the debate has focused on the nexus between social and the political integration. The Great Recession tested the willingness and capacity of the Member States to share their resources with one another. In this regard, while the last decade has witnessed many steps forwards, European solidarity is still an underdeveloped political good. Political trust among the MSs and the EU citizens from different states, is acknowledged as a precondition for sharing resources. At the same time, solidarity between the Member States mutually reinforces trust. In the past, the Member States have often claimed that substantial transfers of fiscal resources between EU members would create frictions within national electorates. Is this preconceived notion true? Are EU citizens mostly concerned with the EU's economic and fiscal stability, or are they willing to support the creation of a community of sharing?

2.1 The mission of the EU: granting the stability of the EMU or protecting EU citizens?

The Great Recession has shown, especially within the Eurozone, that there is a growing tension around the primary objective of the EU: promoting fiscal stability and economic competition, and ensuring social protection for all EU citizens. In order to preserve the fiscal stability of the Eurozone, many MSs had to cut their public social expenditure, thus weakening their welfare states.

To understand whether EU citizens do prioritise fiscal stability over social protection, or vice versa, the survey asked respondents to define the ultimate mission of the European Union. A binary response category was given: the ultimate objective could be either “ensuring fiscal stability as well as the market competitiveness of the EU economy” or “ensuring high levels of social protection and progress for all EU citizens”. The first option was in favour of strengthening the economic dimension of the EU (*market-making* logic), the second option in favour of the social dimension (*market-correcting* logic).

As depicted in Figure 1, about 61% of respondents of the EU10 countries investigated were in favour of strengthening the social component of the EU, and only 39% believed that fiscal stability and market competitiveness should be the primary objective of the EU.

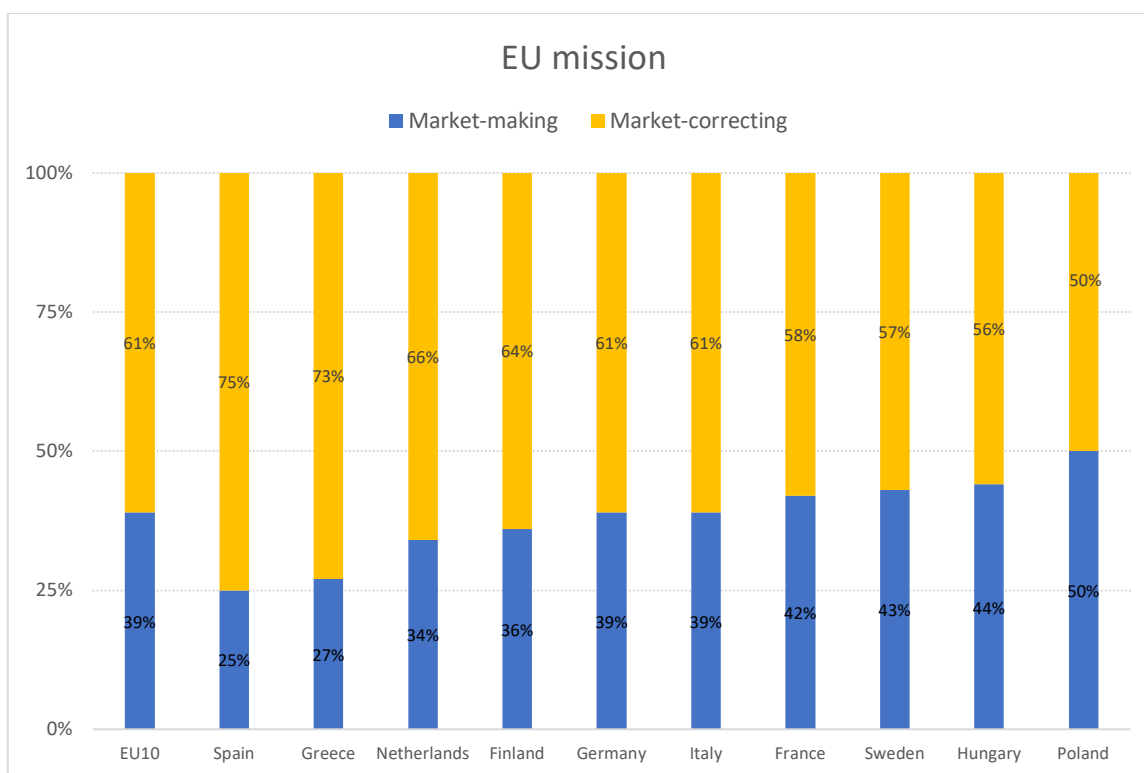


Figure 1 Respondents' opinion on EU mission.

Note: percentages computed based on the question: *In your opinion, which of the following objectives should be given top priority at the EU level? 1) Ensuring fiscal stability as well as the market competitiveness of the EU economy; 2) Ensuring high levels of social protection and progress for all EU citizens; 99) Don't know.* Respondents who answered "Don't know" were excluded from the analysis.

Frequency distributions in different sample countries show that the policy stance in favour of the social component of the EU is stronger in every Member State except for Poland, where there is the greatest polarisation between respondents favouring fiscal stability (50%) and those for social protection (50%). There are two Southern European MSs among those with more favourable views on the social priority, Spain (75%) and Greece (73%). Most surprisingly, people in the Northern European Member States support the social dimension, especially the Netherlands (66%), Finland (64%) and Germany (61%). This goes against the rather pervasive narrative that depicts Northern European Member States as the staunchest supporters of the market-making logic and fiscal austerity.

The 2016 REScEU mass survey and the IntUne surveys conducted in 2007² and 2009³, which include the same question, enabled us to provide a longitudinal comparison in five out of ten countries. Figure 2 shows that in Poland the percentage of respondents supporting the market-making position increased between 2007 and 2019. By contrast, France had an increasing share of respondents choosing the market-correcting option, a 14% increase from 2007 to 2019. Italy, Germany, and Spain show less difference over time.

² Dataset available at this link: <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/ICPSR/studies/34421>.

³ Dataset available at this link: <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/ICPSR/studies/34272/export>.

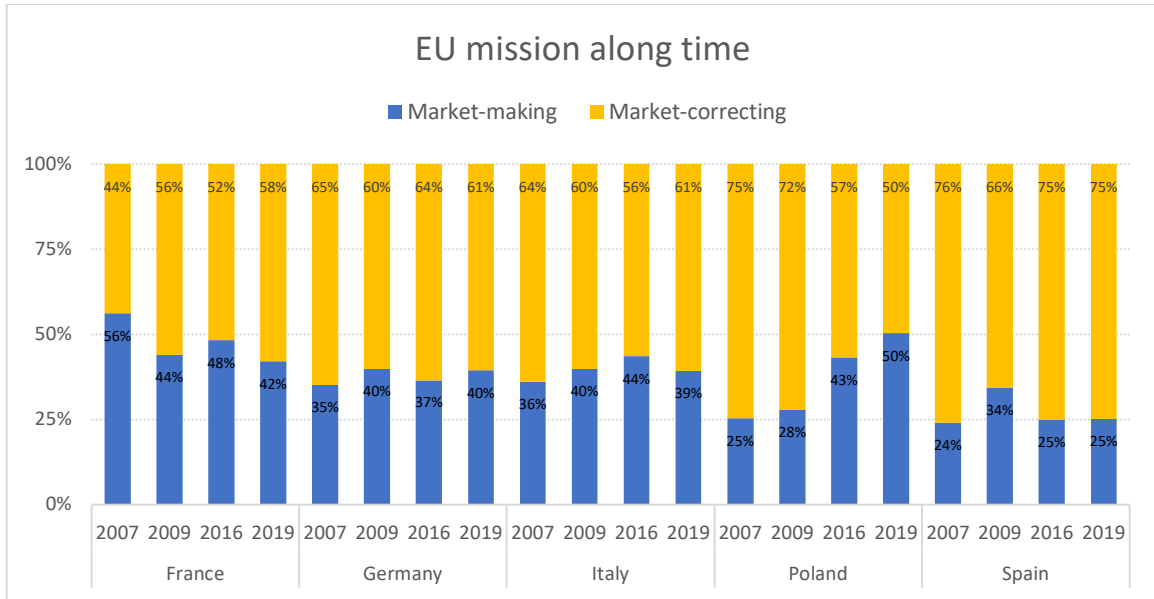


Figure 2 EU mission preference along time in selected EU countries.

2.1.1 EU Social protection: a matter of socio-economic position?

If preferences about the objective of the EU are not particularly associated with national interests, then what can explain them at the individual level? One of the usual suspects is the socio-economic background of respondents. If people feel insecure about their economic and social circumstances, especially in terms of job security, they are often more inclined to support some form of social protection that can shelter them from an excessively competitive labour market. The survey's data for the ten EU countries confirms this expectation. When our findings about the mission of the EU were compared with the occupations of the respondents as in Figure 3, we found a particularly strong association: the unemployed are especially in favour of granting the EU market-correcting policy goals compared to people who were employed and welfare recipients.

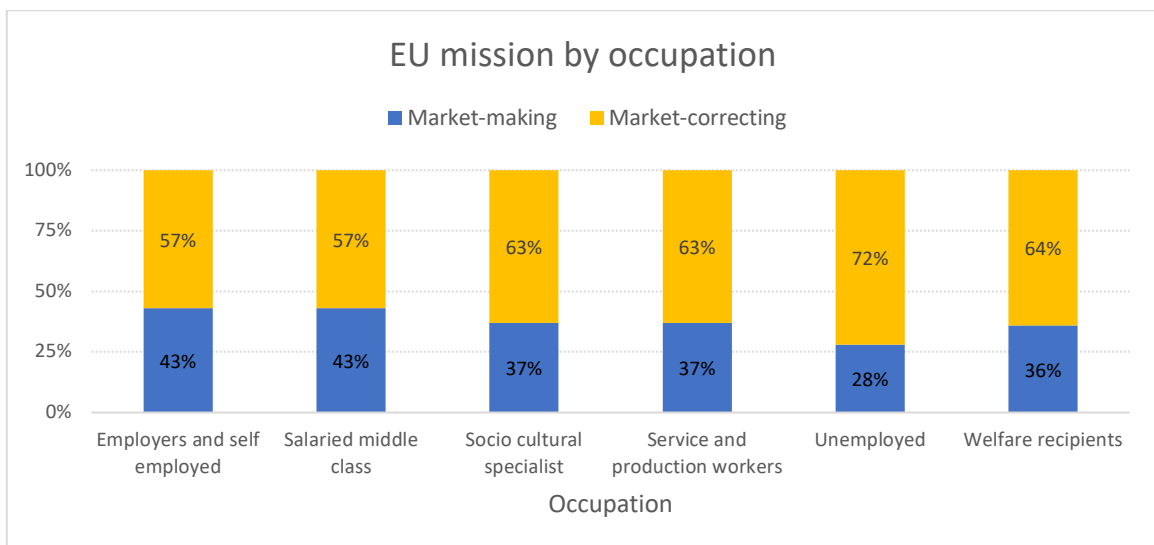


Figure 3 EU mission by occupation in EU10 countries.

Similarly, households who find it (very) difficult to cope with their present income are much more in favour of an EU in which primary aim is ensuring high levels of social protection and progress for all European citizens.

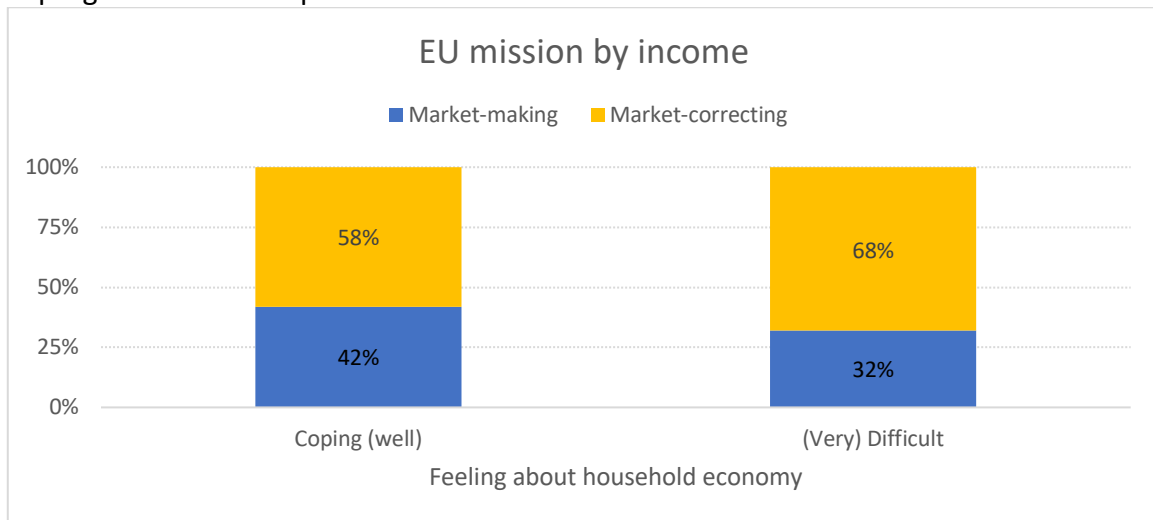


Figure 4 EU mission by income in EU10 countries.

Note: question on economic self-perception: *Which of the descriptions comes closest to how you feel about your household's income nowadays?* 1) Living comfortably on present income; 2) Coping on present income; 3) Finding it difficult on present income; 4) Finding it very difficult on present income; 99) Don't know. Respondents who answered "Don't know" have been excluded from the analysis.

Finally, some interesting insight emerges from an examination of the association between political behaviour in the 2019 EP elections and the answers to the EU priority question. Those who voted for liberal and conservative parties (*Renew EU* and *European People's Party*) were more in favour of an EU that prioritises fiscal discipline and economic competition, while more than two-thirds of left (*GUE/NGL*) and centre-left (*Greens/EFA* and *S&D*) voters would opt for a market-correcting EU. Interestingly, the majority of people voting for right-wing and extreme/radical-right voters (*ECR* and *Identity Party*) supports a social EU.

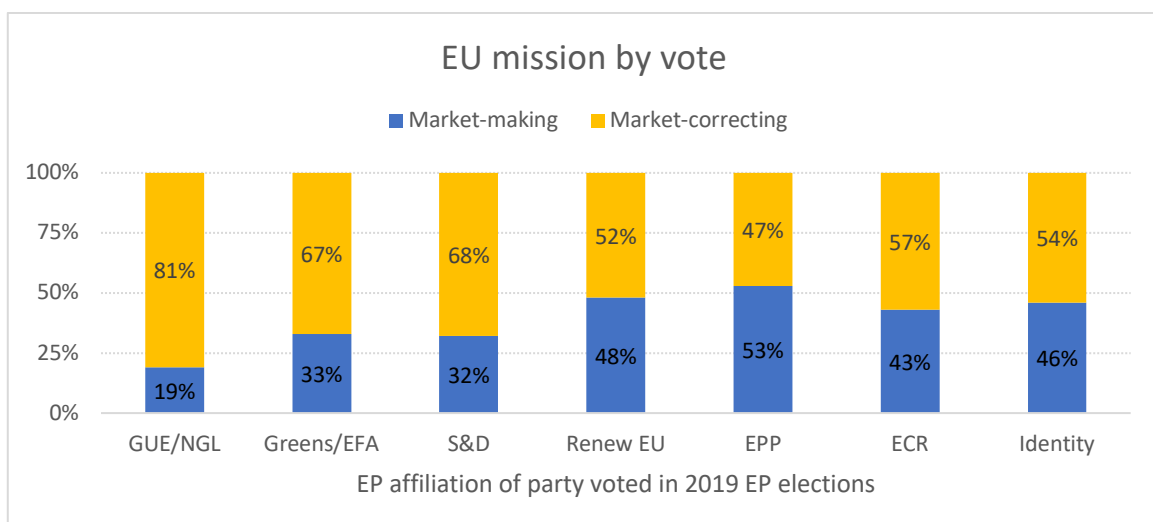


Figure 5 EU mission by vote in 2019 election in EU10 countries.

Note: question on vote: *Which party did you vote for in the European Parliament elections held on the [COUNTRY DATE].?*

2.1.2 Ideas about poverty and solidarity

During the Great Recession, but also during the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the tensions between Northern and Southern European Member States were epitomised by the popular narrative counter-posing “Northern saints” and “Southern sinners” (Matthijs and McNamara 2015). In this narrative, Southerners were characterised as *bons vivants* who paid little to no attention to planning ahead for harsh times. Poverty was well deserved, and the EU did not have to do anything to correct this situation. Do beliefs about poverty orient preferences about the EU solidarity? According to our survey, the answer is a resounding “yes”. Respondents who believed that poverty is a matter of laziness were more prone to support financial stability as the mission of the EU. Respondents who believed that poverty is caused by social injustice were instead more inclined to support EU solidarity and a market-correcting mission for the European Union.

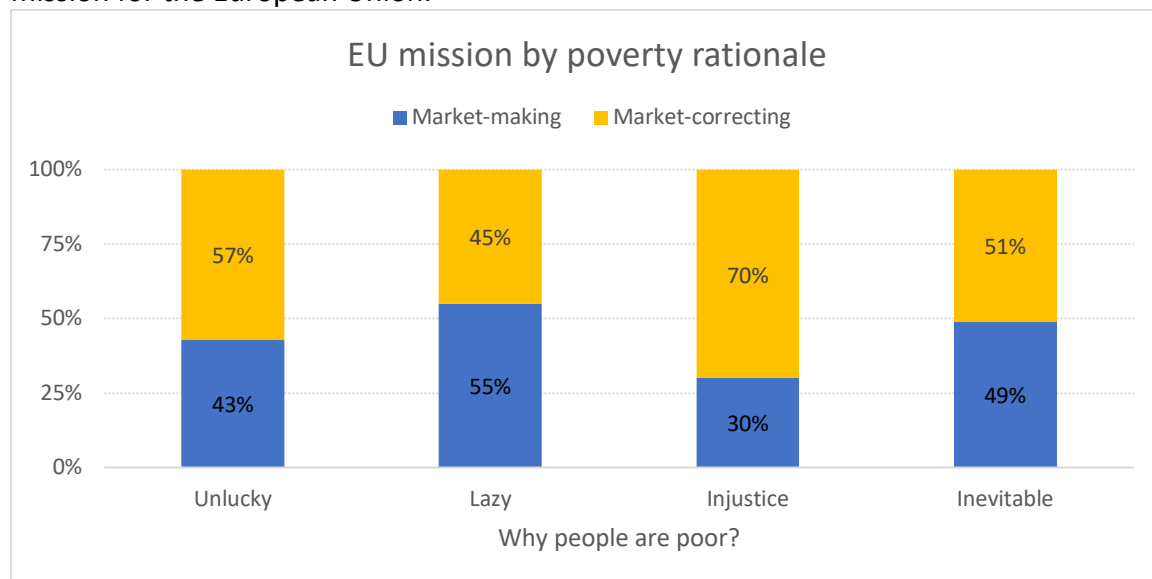


Figure 6 EU mission by main rationale for poverty in EU10 countries.

Note: Why in your opinion are there people who live in poverty? Here are four ideas: which is closest to yours? 1) Because they have been unlucky; 2) Because of laziness and a lack of willpower; 3) Because there is much injustice in our society; 4) Because some poverty is an inevitable part of progress; 99) Don't know. Respondents who answered “Don't know” were excluded from the analysis.

2.2 Who should provide social protection? National vs EU responsibilities

Preferences about social expenditure also involve the level of government that should provide them. We surveyed this preference by asking respondents to place themselves on a 0-10 scale, where 0 means “the EU should not interfere with national policies” and 10 means “the EU should have more responsibility for the protection of vulnerable people”. As shown in Figure 7, the majority of respondents (61% representing those in the categories from 6 to 10) tend to be in favour of attributing more responsibility to the EU level.

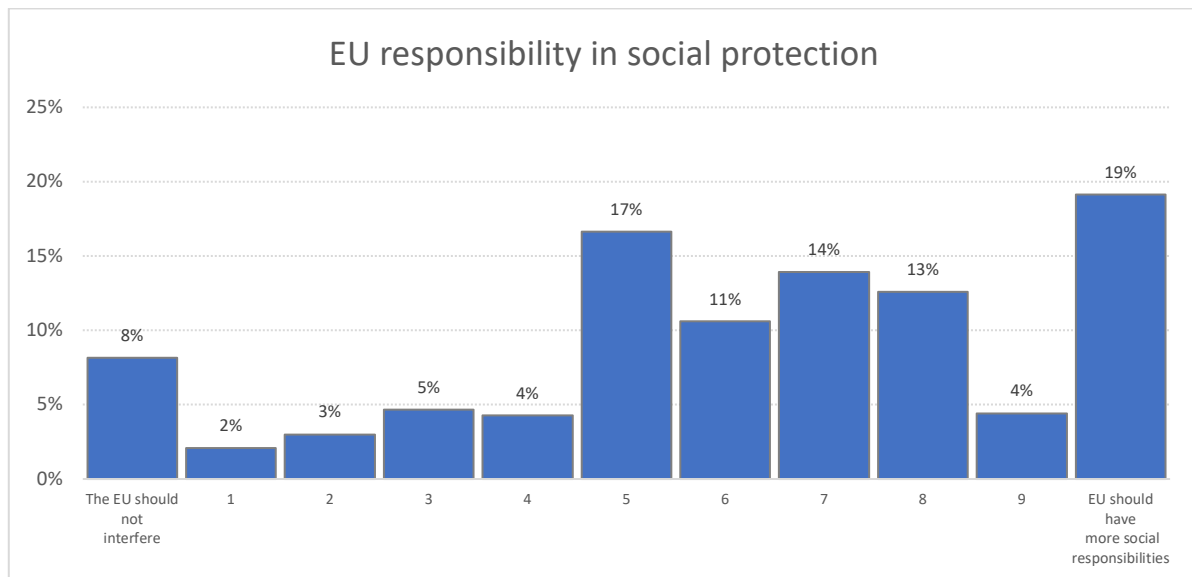


Figure 7 EU responsibility in social protection in EU10 countries.

Note: question: Some say that the EU should take more responsibility for the protection of vulnerable people in the EU. Others say it should not interfere with national policies. Please indicate your views using a scale from 0 to 10, where '0' means "the EU should not interfere" and '10' means it "should have more responsibilities". Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

Large majorities of respondents in each Member State favour an EU with a proactive role in protecting vulnerable people, with the highest levels of agreement that are found in Spain (78%), Italy (72%), and Hungary (70%).

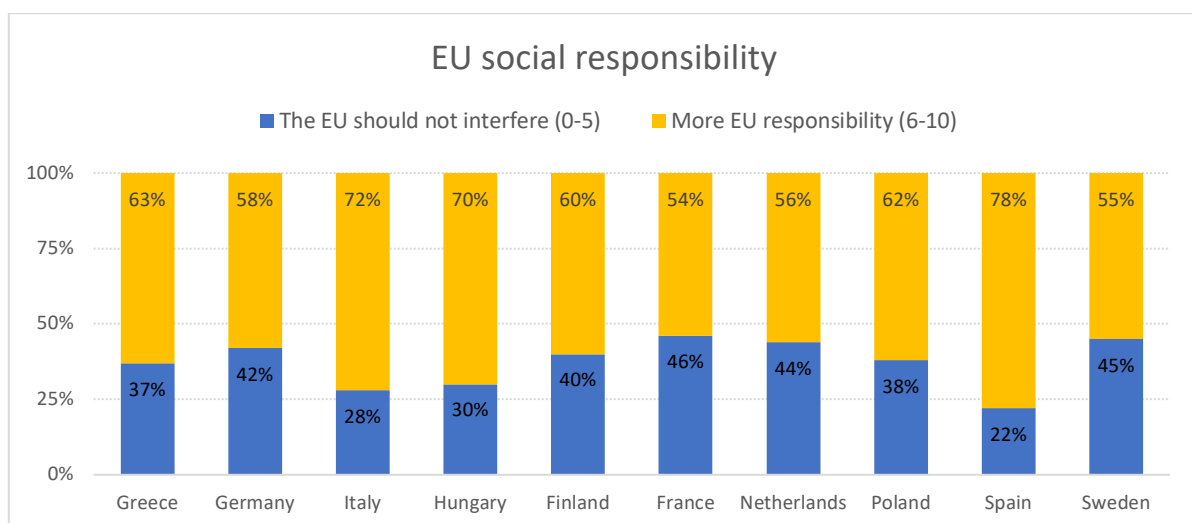


Figure 8 EU social responsibility preferences in selected EU countries.

2.2.1 EU role in social protection: ideology and identity

What explains people’s preferences for the level of government that should provide social protection? In this regard, the survey shows that the ideological positioning on the left-right scale is associated with attitudes toward “social” integration. Left-wing respondents consistently prefer attributing more competences for social protection to the EU than people on the right. However, it is interesting to note that half the respondents placing themselves to the right of the political spectrum are in favour of shifting social protection competences to the supranational level.

The same is true for national identity: people who consider themselves to have both a national and European identity are more favourable, on average, to shifting competences for social protection to the EU. However, even people who consider themselves to have an exclusively national identity do not lag far behind, given that half are in favour of attributing more social responsibility to the EU.

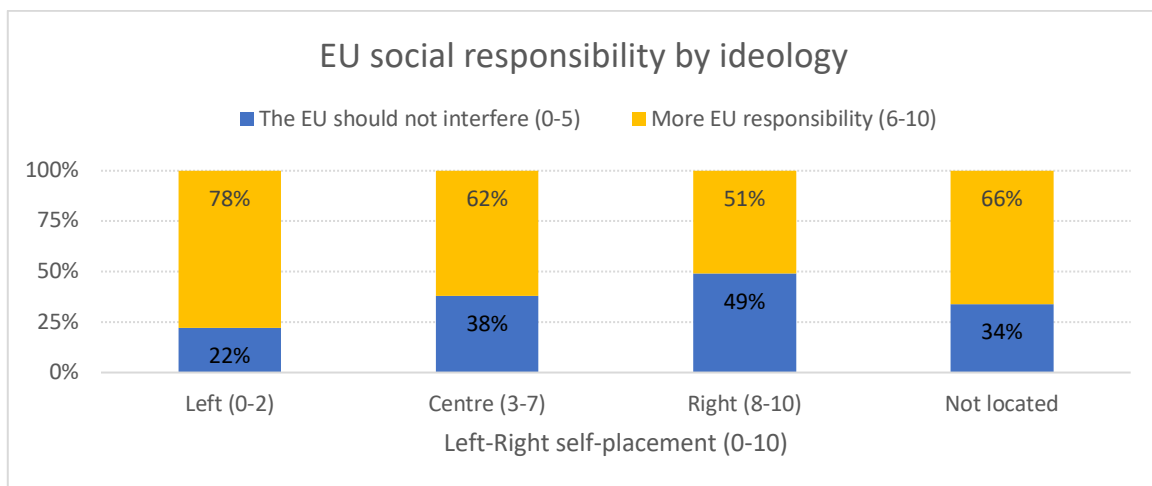


Figure 9 EU social responsibility preferences by Left-Right self-placement in EU10 countries.

Note: question on Left-Right self-placement: *In political matters people talk of "the left" and "the right". What is your position? Please use a scale from 0 to 10, where '0' means "left" and '10' means "right". Which number best describes your position? Don't know* responses were excluded from the analysis.

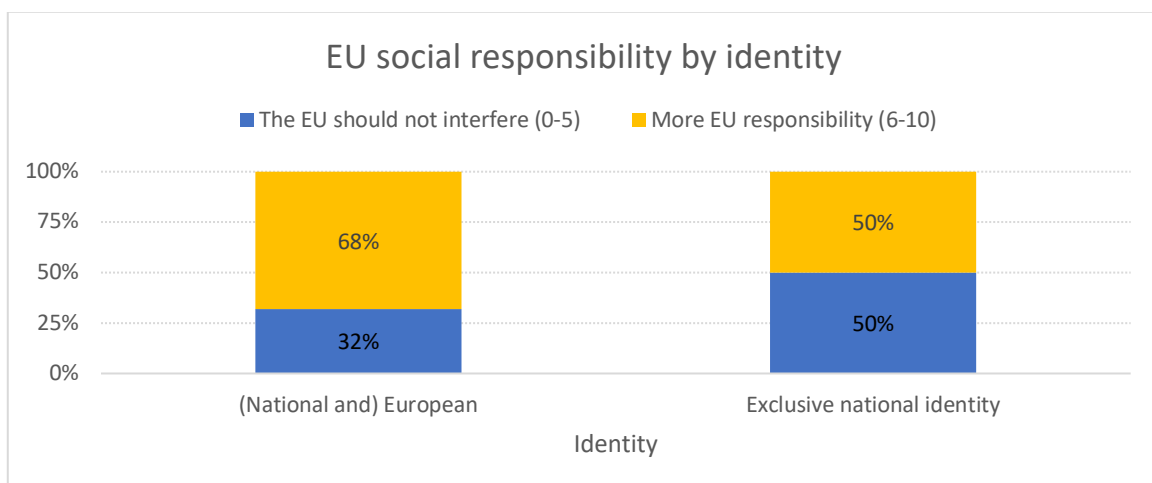


Figure 10 EU social responsibility by respondents' identity.

Note: question on respondents' identity: *Do you see yourself as ...? 1) (NATIONALITY) only; 2) (NATIONALITY) and European; 3) European and (NATIONALITY); 4) European only; 5) None of the above; 99) Don't know.* Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

2.3 The EU image

We repeated in the REScEU 2019 survey a question firstly introduced in the 2016 survey that tries to picture the summary image citizen have of the EU after the multifaceted crisis that the EU has faced. The question distinguishes among four different images adopted to describe the Union: the 'common house' of all European citizens, an 'apartment building' in which national peoples live next to each other like good neighbours, a 'playground' that facilitates (mutually beneficial) economic exchanges among Member States and citizens and, finally, as a 'sinking ship' from which Member States should escape as fast as they can. The first image undoubtedly represents the most solidaristic and communitarian view, while the second one refers to an idea of Europe in which different Member States retain nation-based diversities, but have decided to pool sovereignty and to empower EU institutions in a number of key policy areas. The third image – the EU as a playground – suggests that the Union basically helps different Member States to trade with each other by establishing and regulating a common economic space, while the image of the EU as a sinking ship describes the view of Eurosceptic political forces supporting the 'exit' option.

By looking at Figure 11 and considering the EU10 sample the most appealing image turned out to be the playing ground (30%), followed by the common house and apartment building (27%) and finally, the sinking ship (16%). In Greece (30%), Italy (31%), Poland (39%) and Spain (37%) people opted for the most solidaristic option of the common house. By contrast, in Germany (37%), Hungary (37%), and Sweden (31%) a plurality identified themselves with the 'apartment building' option. Finally, 41% of Dutch, 38% of Finnish and 27% of French respondents saw the EU as a playing ground. In no country the image of a 'sinking ship' that should be abandoned as soon as possible prevails over the others. Still, in France and Sweden it attracted about a quarter of valid responses.

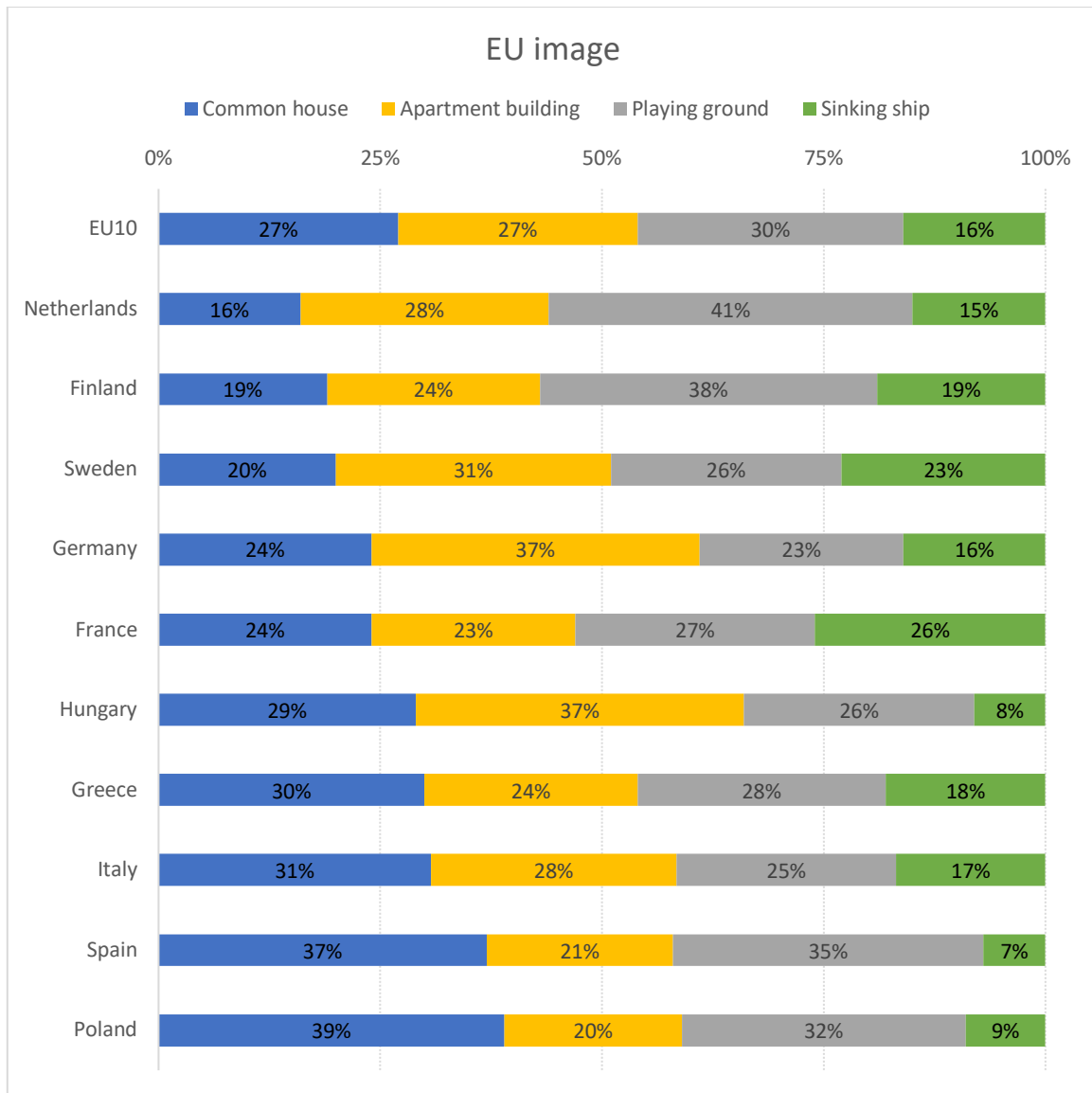


Figure 11 EU image in selected countries.

Note: question *In talking about the European Union, media and people sometimes use the following images. Could you please indicate which one comes closest to your view?* 1) *The EU is the common house of all European citizens;* 2) *The EU is like an apartment building: national peoples live next to each other like good neighbours;* 3) *The EU is a playing ground that facilitates (mutually advantageous) economic exchanges among member states and between citizens;* 4) *The EU is a sinking ship: Member States should escape it as fast as they can;* 99) *Don't know.* Don't know responses were excluded from the analysis.

The very same question was asked in the first REScEU mass survey conducted in 2016 and allows to compare citizens' answers in these two time points in 6 countries included in both samples. The common house image attracted more responses in 2019 than in 2016 in Germany, Poland, and Spain. On the contrary, the only country that experienced a decline of respondents choosing this category is Italy (-7 points). The apartment building option remained stable in all countries but in Germany and Poland, where it reduced significantly its share. This suggests that in these two countries the public moved from this last category to the more communitarian image of the common house. The playing ground option instead has grown in Italy, France, and Poland; while it decreased in Germany and Sweden. Finally, the

share of respondents seeing the EU as a sinking ship has slightly increased in Germany and Sweden only.

Country	Common house		Apartment building		Playing ground		Sinking ship	
	2016	2019	2016	2019	2016	2019	2016	2019
Germany	7%	24%	55%	37%	27%	23%	12%	16%
Italy	38%	31%	26%	28%	15%	25%	20%	17%
France	22%	24%	22%	23%	22%	27%	33%	26%
Poland	32%	39%	31%	20%	24%	32%	13%	9%
Spain	31%	37%	23%	21%	34%	35%	13%	7%
Sweden	19%	20%	28%	31%	35%	26%	19%	23%

Table 1 EU image preferences in selected countries across time.

2.4 What legitimates the EU?

As a follow-up question to the previous one we investigated even further the motivations of citizens that do not see the EU as a sinking ship. To do so we asked the reasons legitimising the EU to those respondents that see the EU as a common house, an apartment building or a playing ground. We asked them to indicate their favoured view among three options: ‘despite all its drawbacks, EU membership is better than facing on its own the growing international instability and threats’; ‘exiting from the EU would be too complicated and unpredictable’; ‘the EU rests on a set of fundamental values (such as peace, prosperity, democracy, and social justice) which are deeply felt and shared by member states and citizens’.

Results reported in Figure 12, show that in the overall sample the first form of EU legitimacy is the preferred option with 45% of respondents, followed by a 33% believing the EU shares a set of fundamental values like peace, prosperity, democracy, and social justice. Finally, those believing that there is no alternative and the exiting would be too dangerous for their country attracted 22% of the EU10 respondents. Looking at each country separately, this last option never represents a plurality of preferences. Still, it attracts a large share of respondents in Greece (34%), Italy (32%), and in The Netherlands (28%). The protection given by the EU against global competition results as the preferred response category in most countries: Greece (48%), Germany (43%), Italy (42%), France (45%), Netherlands (46%), Poland (55%), Spain (47%), and Sweden (46%). In Finland (42%) and Hungary (45%) the plurality thinks that EU legitimacy is based upon fundamental values shared by Europeans. A belief shared also by 40% of German respondents.

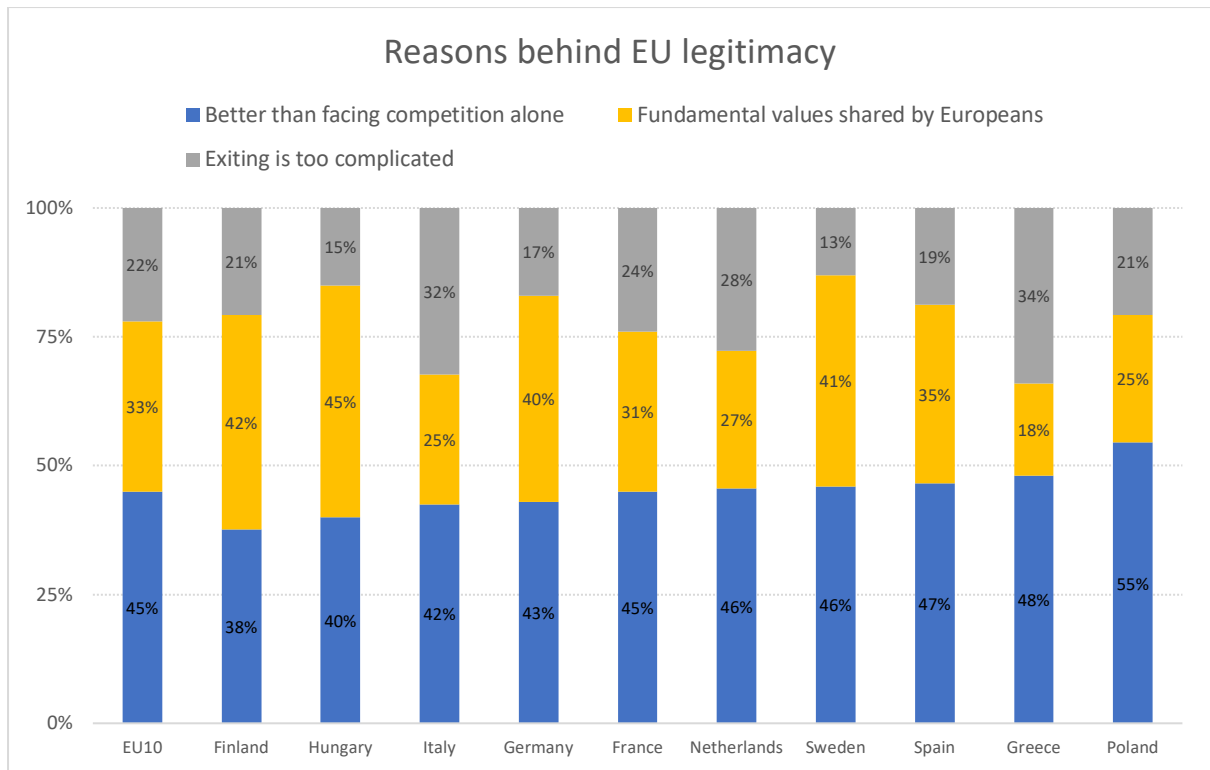


Figure 12 Share of respondents for each rationale for EU legitimacy.

Note: question: Which of the following statements comes closest to your view? 1) Despite all its drawbacks, for a member state EU membership is better than facing on its own the growing international instability and threats; 2) Exiting from the EU would be too complicated and full of unpredictable obstacles and consequences; 3) The EU rests on a set of fundamental values (such as peace, prosperity, democracy, and social justice) which are deeply felt and shared by member states and citizens; 99) Don't know. Don't know responses were excluded from the analysis.

3. Cross-national fiscal solidarity: when, how, and why?

3.1 Solidarity in time of crisis

The Great Recession and the following sovereign debt crisis have shown how the Eurozone was ill-equipped to face an economic shock that hit the monetary union asymmetrically. In order to provide fiscal stabilisation for the MSs facing a financial shock, many commentators proposed introducing forms of fiscal solidarity to share risks between MSs. One of the proposals was to create a new stabilisation fund that could intervene when such an event occurred. Is there political support among the EU public for this type of policy?

We asked respondents whether their country should contribute to a common EU fund to help any other Member States potentially facing severe economic and financial difficulties in times of crisis and reported the share for answer categories in Figure 13. A clear majority of EU10 respondents were in favour of creating a similar fund (71%).

Even in countries that have traditionally opposed such interventions, such as Finland (52%) and the Netherlands (52%) or Sweden (69%) the majority of respondents are in favour of providing EU financial help. Public support for this initiative even increases in Italy (79%), Hungary (81%), Poland (82%), Spain (85%) and Greece (87%).

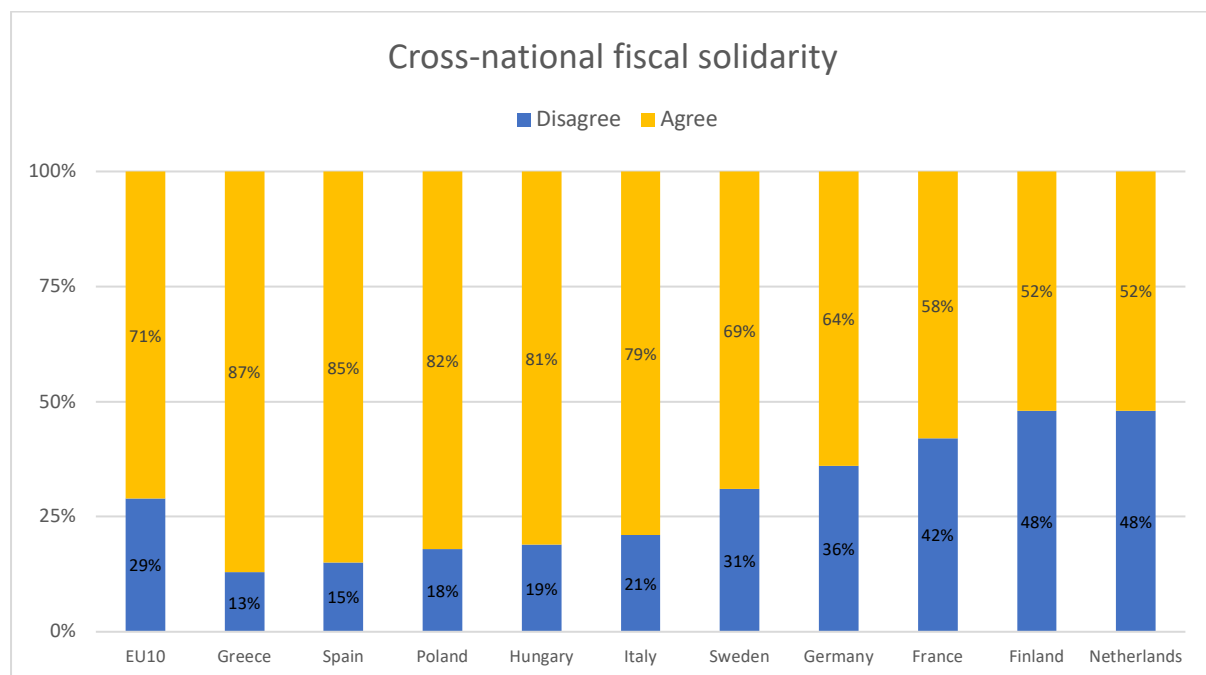


Figure 13 Support for cross-national fiscal solidarity in EU10 countries.

Note: question: *To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: All EU Member States, including (COUNTRY), should contribute to a common EU fund to help any other Member State potentially facing severe economic and financial difficulties in times of crisis.* 1) Strongly agree; 2) Somewhat agree; 3) Somewhat disagree; 4) Strongly disagree; 99) Don't know. 1) + 2) = Agree; 3) + 4) = Disagree. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

3.1.1 Cross-national financial help: a matter of ideology?

According to our data, the socio-economic status of respondents was not associated with differences in attitudes towards intra-EU redistribution. Do, instead, ideological leanings contribute to explain preferences in favour of redistributing resources across the Member States? This question is not unimportant: if preferences towards cross-national redistribution are only explained by a “country effect”, then there is little hope of changing them in a short time. On the contrary, if ideological positioning is involved in explaining this type of preference, we could expect that when a government’s ideology changes, then so will their preferences for EU solidarity.

According to our survey, there is little evidence of such an effect in the aggregate sample: while people who declare themselves on the left-side of the spectrum are consistently more in favour of cross-national financial help, the same can be said for people on the right, although to a lesser extent (see Figure 14). A greater level of polarisation emerges regarding the issue if we look at data disaggregated by country. Figure 15 below reports for each country the share of respondents that agree with the creation of an EU level fund among those who position themselves on the left (0-2) and those on the right (8-10). There are higher levels of polarisation regarding the issue in France (40%), in the Netherlands (31%), and in Germany (30%). Given our findings, the position of the Dutch centre-right government in negotiations about the recovery fund (March-April 2020) to cope with the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis does not come as a surprise.

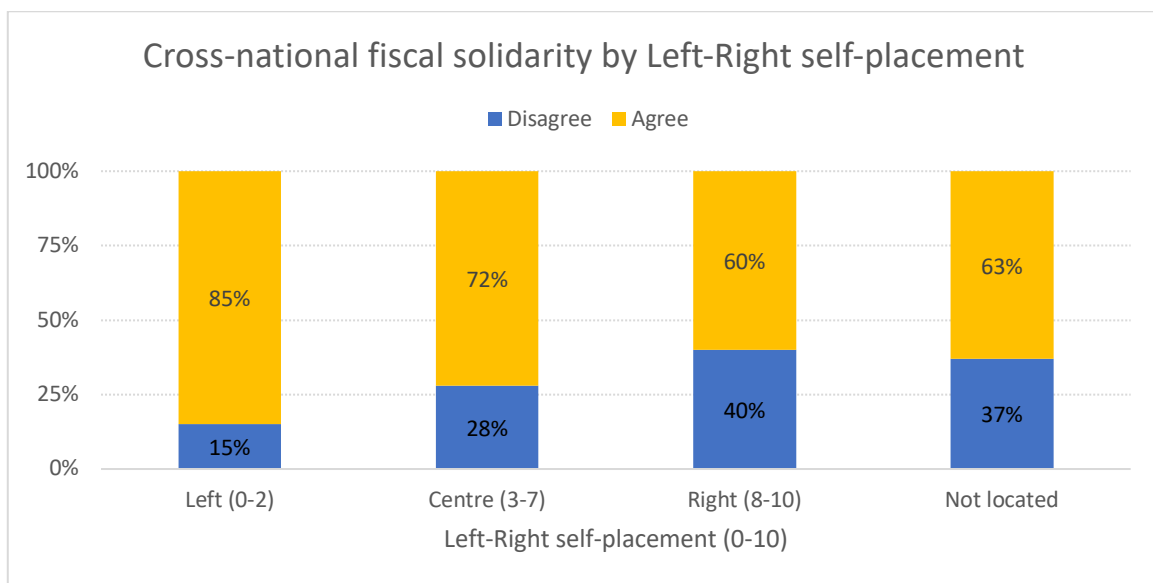


Figure 14 Public support for cross-national fiscal solidarity by Left-Right self-placement in EU10 countries.

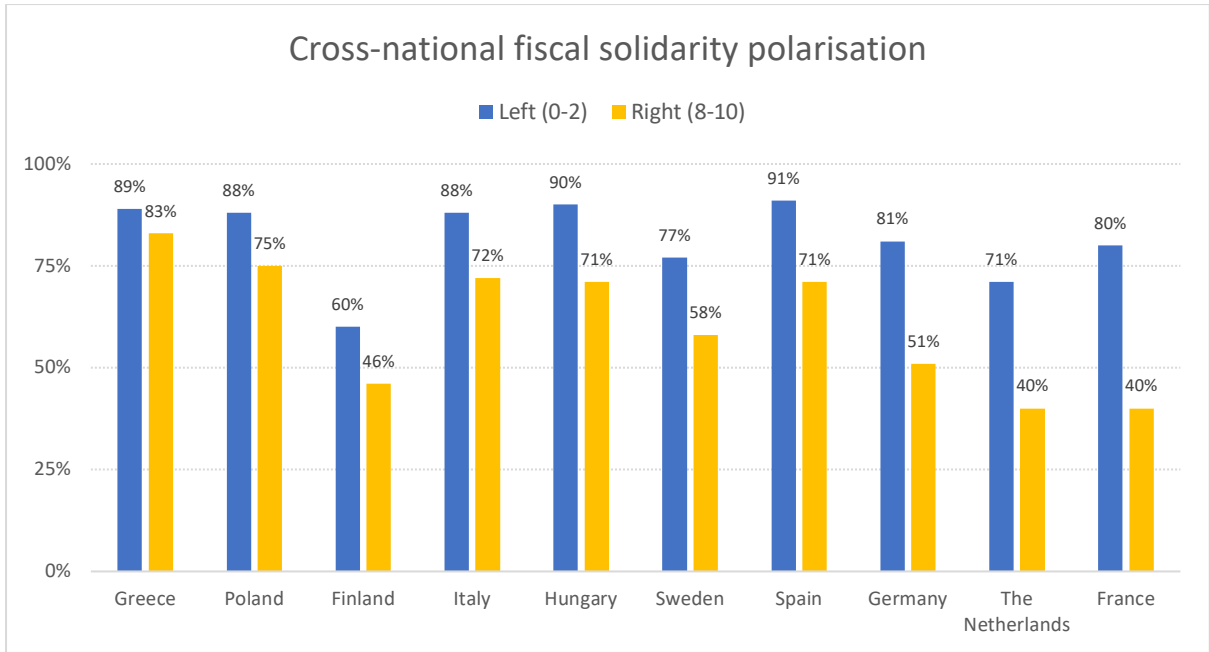


Figure 15 Share of support for cross-national fiscal solidarity by respondents' ideology in selected EU countries.

A similar picture emerges when looking at the EP affiliations of parties voted by respondents in the 2019 elections: Europeans are in favour of cross-national redistribution across the board. The only exception, in this case, were voters from the Identity group which is divided in half: only 50% of the respondents voting for radical right-wing parties in the 2019 European elections were in favour of transferring financial resources across Member States in times of crisis.

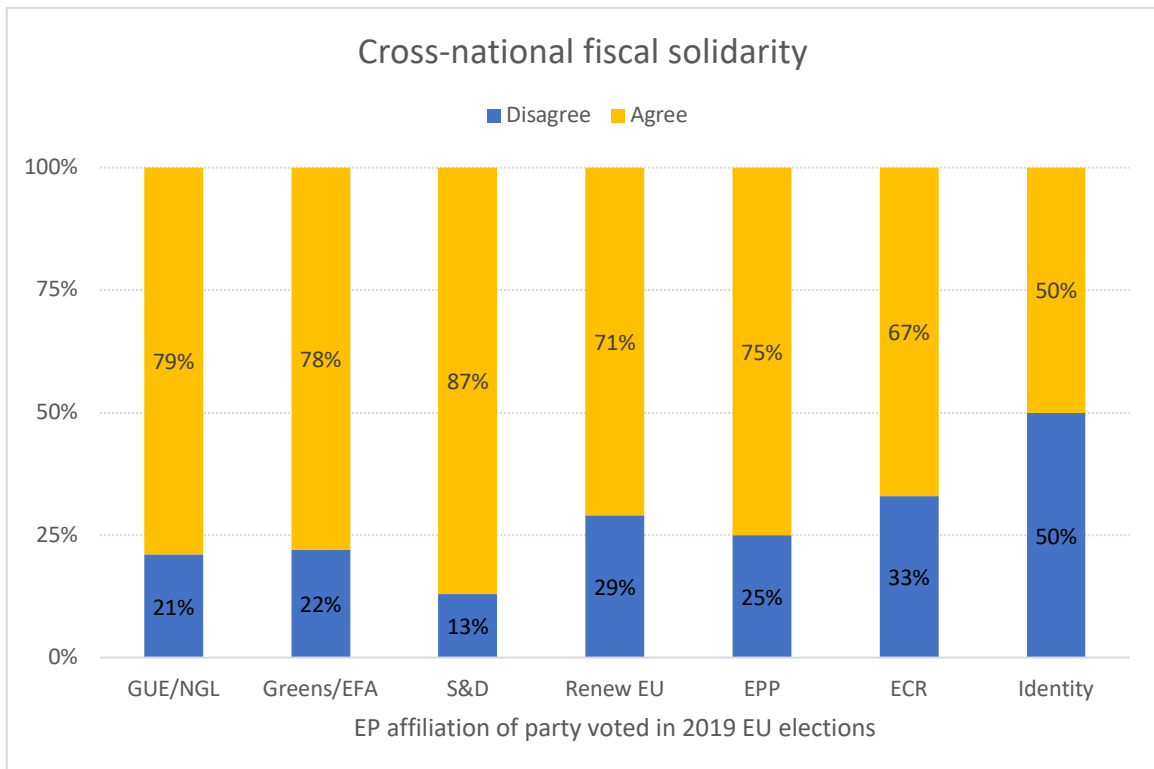


Figure 16 Cross-national fiscal solidarity preferences by EP affiliation of party voted in 2019.

3.1.2 Reasons to be in favour of cross-national fiscal solidarity

Support for fiscal redistribution across the Member States in time of crisis is consistently high. What explains this type of support? As a follow-up question, we asked respondents the reasons behind their agreement with the establishment of an EU fund for countries in economic distress. We identified three hypothetical reasons behind support: self-interest, prospective interest, and solidarity. For the people living in countries hit by a crisis the (self-) interest in having cross-national transfers is self-evident. It is less so for people living in more affluent countries. In these countries public support for poorer countries could bring about economic benefits, such as increased trade with other EU partners, or social benefits, such as less intra-EU migration and (therefore) less competition in the labour market. The second reason for supporting cross-national transfer is some form of “enlightened” interest: what happened in 2012 to Greece could happen in the future to Germany; thus, it is in our interest to establish a strong bond of solidarity between the Member States. Mutual help is the last hypothetical reason why someone should support cross-national fiscal solidarity: the EU Member States are tied by strong bond of solidarity that pushes us to support each other in time of difficulty, no matter whether or not individual EU citizens and their member states will benefit from it. It is the purest form of solidarity.

In all the sample countries, public opinions were polarised about the reason for establishing a common EU fund to help member states in economic difficulties. Interesting country differences emerge, however. As shown in Table 3, Germany and the Netherlands had the largest share of utilitarian respondents, who believed that establishing such a fund would be in their country’s interest. The prospective rationale is instead more popular in Italy and Poland, while pure solidarity is the most common motivation in Greece, Hungary, Spain, and quite interestingly, in Sweden.

Country	It is in our country’s interest	Our country could be in need some day	EU membership implies a commitment to mutual help
EU10	25% (17%)	34% (22%)	41% (24%)
Greece	20% (17%)	30% (24%)	50% (41%)
Germany	41% (24%)	28% (16%)	31% (18%)
Italy	21% (14%)	42% (29%)	38% (26%)
Hungary	19% (14%)	33% (25%)	49% (37%)
Finland	30% (14%)	39% (18%)	31% (14%)
France	26% (13%)	36% (18%)	38% (19%)
Netherlands	38% (18%)	24% (11%)	37% (17%)
Poland	22% (16%)	47% (35%)	31% (23%)
Spain	22% (18%)	29% (23%)	49% (39%)
Sweden	26% (16%)	31% (19%)	43% (26%)

Table 2 Reasons to support cross-national fiscal help among its supporters in selected countries (in parentheses percentages over the total sample).

Note: question *What is the main reason you think that (COUNTRY) should contribute to a common EU fund helping any other EU Member States facing potential severe economic and financial difficulties in times of crisis?* 1) *It is in the interest of (COUNTRY) to safeguard economic and financial stability throughout the EU;* 2) *Our own country could get into economic and financial troubles someday;* 3) *EU membership implies a commitment to mutual help between Member States in times of economic or financial crisis;* 99) *Don’t know.* “Don’t know”

responses were excluded from the analysis. In parentheses percentages based on the total number of respondents.

3.1.3 Putting your money where your mouth is

As the famous saying goes people “should put money where [their] mouth is”: it is one thing to declare yourself in favour of solidarity, but it is another to actively support it by showing willingness to pay for it. In this spirit, we asked EU citizens who agreed with the establishment of a EU recovery fund whether they would be personally willing to support this initiative with a 1% increase in income tax, and results are shown in Table 4. In this way, the payoff for solidarity should become clearer. In the pooled dataset, about 57% of the respondents who support the creation of an economic-emergency fund at the EU level would be willing to pay part of their income to finance its budget (28% if we consider all survey respondents).

The most willing respondents came from peripheral MSs in both Southern and Eastern Europe: Hungary (77%), Poland (69%), Spain (67%) and Greece (65%). The majority of the respondents in favour of cross-national fiscal solidarity support such a measure also in Sweden (54%) and in France (52%). People against international financial help through a personal tax of 1% are the majority in Germany, although with a narrow margin (3%). The Netherlands (58%) is the only country where the respondents are overwhelmingly in favour of providing no support if this involves a personal tax.

International financial help	
Country	Willing to support it with a personal tax of 1%
EU10	57% (28%)
Hungary	77% (47%)
Poland	69% (36%)
Spain	67% (41%)
Finland	66% (23%)
Greece	65% (42%)
Italy	56% (28%)
Sweden	54% (25%)
France	52% (21%)
Germany	47% (23%)
Netherlands	42% (14%)

Table 3 Share of respondents agreeing with cross-national fiscal help willing to support it with a personal tax (in parentheses percentages over the total sample).

Note: question *Would you personally be willing to support this fund with a 1% increase in your income tax?* 1) Yes; 2) No; 99) Don't Know. “Don't know” responses were excluded from the analysis. In parentheses percentages based on the total number of respondents.

3.1.4 Reasons to be against cross-national fiscal solidarity

On the other side, what is the rationale behind those opposing the creation of such a fund? Three different options were offered to respondents disagreeing with this: it is not in our country's economic interest, each MS should take care of its own troubles, and help from the EU would induce moral hazard: it would discourage recipient countries from maintaining

more responsible financial behaviour. As depicted in Table 5, the latter was the favourite option in the pooled sample, but it only represents a clear plurality in Hungary, France, the Netherlands, and Poland. In Greece, Italy, Spain, and Sweden, the *souverainiste*-option was more commonly chosen. In Germany and Finland, we found a balanced distribution of respondents across the three categories.

Country	Help from the EU would discourage more responsible behaviour	Each MS should take care of its own troubles	It is not in our country's economic interest
EU10	40% (10%)	35% (9%)	25% (6%)
Finland	36% (15%)	32% (14%)	32% (14%)
France	42% (15%)	34% (12%)	24% (9%)
Germany	35% (11%)	34% (11%)	31% (9%)
Greece	31% (4%)	57% (7%)	12% (1%)
Italy	34% (6%)	44% (8%)	22% (4%)
Hungary	42% (7%)	22% (4%)	36% (6%)
Netherlands	56% (26%)	27% (12%)	18% (8%)
Poland	44% (7%)	34% (5%)	22% (3%)
Spain	39% (5%)	40% (5%)	21% (3%)
Sweden	32% (9%)	40% (11%)	29% (8%)

Table 4 Reasons to oppose cross-national fiscal help in selected EU countries (in parentheses percentages over the total sample).

Note: question: *What is the main reason why you think that (COUNTRY) should not contribute to a common EU fund helping any other EU Member State facing potential severe economic and financial difficulties in times of crisis? 1) It is not in the economic interest of my (COUNTRY) to pay for the difficulties of other EU member states; 2) Each member state should take care of its own troubles; 3) Help from the EU would discourage a more responsible behaviour on the side of the country recipient of help; 99) Don't know.* "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis. In parentheses percentages based on the total number of respondents.

3.2 Solidarity with weaker MSs or poorer regions

One of the functions of the EU budget is to create inter-territorial redistribution, by offering public investments to less developed countries and regions. We surveyed whether this type of support is seen as something desirable among the EU public, with two different questions whose aggregate answers are reported in Figure 17. About two thirds of the respondents in the EU10 sample (68%) agreed with the statement "The EU should support public investments in weaker member states, even if this means wealthier countries would have to pay more". The staunchest supporters of this type of EU investment were distributed among Southern and Eastern MSs, who are the main beneficiaries from the EU cohesion funds: Greece (88%), Poland (83%), Spain (80%) and Hungary (76%). Similar and strong support is also found in Italy (76%). The majority of respondents of continental and Northern European MSs also support public investments in poorer territories. The only exception are the Netherlands, where a majority does not support public investments in weaker MSs (56%), although not by a great margin.

The share of respondents who agreed with the second statement, that "The EU should do more to help people living in poorer regions, even if this means wealthier countries would have to pay more" (72%), is even higher than the share of those who support public

investments in weaker Member States (68%). Strong levels of support for public investments in poorer regions are widespread not only in Southern and Eastern Europe, but also in Northern and continental MSs. Quite surprisingly, the support for this type of measure is especially strong in Germany (65%) and in Sweden (68%), but also in the Netherlands (51%) it has a majority of supporters.

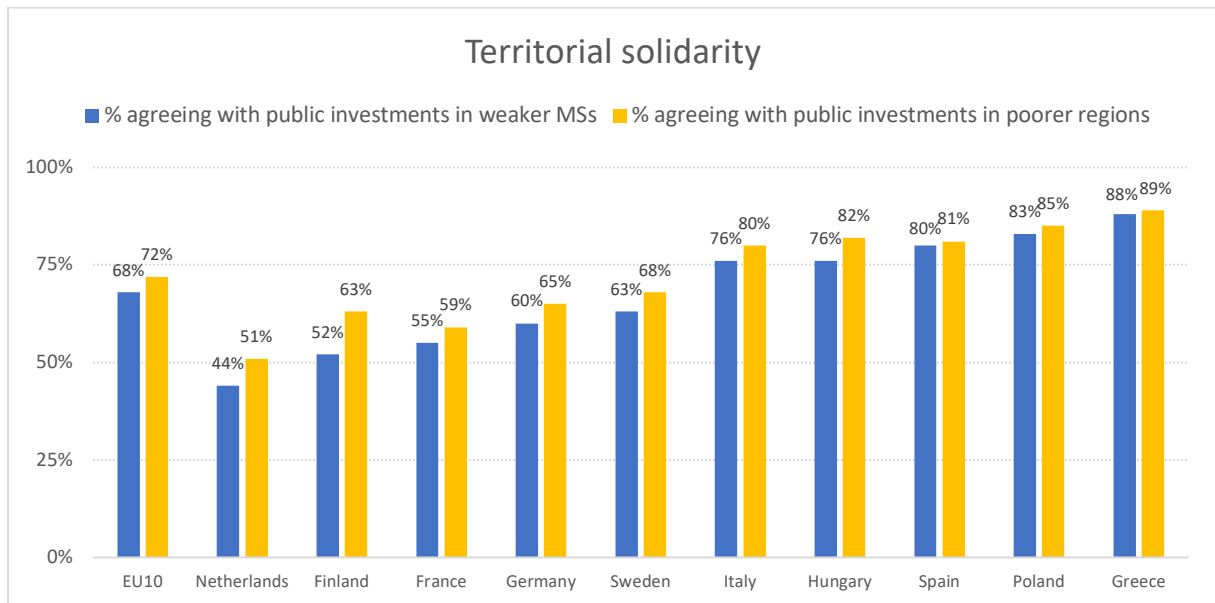


Figure 17 Support for territorial solidarity across selected EU countries.

Note: questions *There are differences between countries and regions in Europe. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. The EU should support public investments in weaker member states, even if this means wealthier countries would have to pay more. / The EU should do more to help people living in poorer regions, even if this means wealthier countries would have to pay more.* 1) Strongly agree; 2) Somewhat agree; 3) Somewhat disagree; 4) Strongly disagree; 99) Don't know. 1) + 2) = Agree; 3) + 4) = Disagree. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

4. Cross-national solidarity in the refugee crisis

4.1 Asylum-seekers relocation across the EU

A different form of cross-national solidarity involves the redistribution of asylum-seekers across the EU. After the peak of the refugee crisis in the summer of 2015, when peripheral Member States were overwhelmed by asylum applications, national leaders negotiated an EU policy for relocating migrants across Member States. The policy has not very effective to this day, due to the lack of willingness of MSs to respect relocation plans. In surveying the EU public about asylum-seekers' redistribution, most of the respondents (75%) agreed with the statement "The EU should redistribute asylum seekers among the various member states, regardless of the country of first entry". Most of the people disagreeing with this statement come from Eastern European Member States, however: in particular, Hungary, the main destination of the Balkan route, is the only country with a majority of respondents who disagrees with the mechanism of asylum seekers' redistribution. This kind of redistribution instead found high level of support among respondents living in Italy (91%) and Greece (82%), two countries which were the first landing place for migrants coming from Africa. Poland (53%) and Finland (56%) show the highest level of polarisation among their publics.

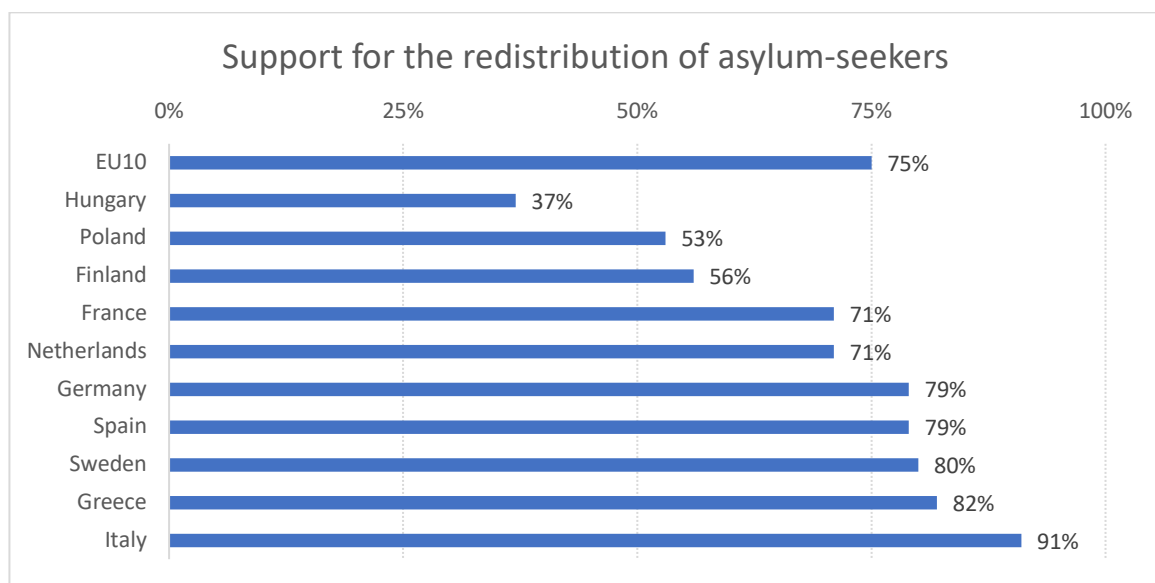


Figure 18 Public support for the redistribution of asylum-seekers across selected EU countries.

Note: question: *To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. The EU should redistribute asylum seekers among the various member states, regardless of the country of first entry.* 1) Strongly agree; 2) Somewhat agree; 3) Somewhat disagree; 4) Strongly disagree; 99) Don't know. 1) + 2) = Agree; 3) + 4) = Disagree. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

4.2 Closing the EU borders

The closure of the EU external borders was highly debated during the refugee crisis. When asked, Europeans were polarised on this issue, with a small majority of respondents (52%) who tend to agree with the statement "The EU should close the external borders to prevent

the entry of new asylum seekers, even if this violates the EU’s humanitarian goals” (see Figure 19). Unsurprisingly, the idea of closing the EU external borders seems to gain most sympathy in Hungary (61% in favour) and Poland (62%), two countries belonging to the “Visegrád Group”, whose governments strongly oppose the migration of people from third countries. Strong support for closing the borders, however, is also found in Sweden (59%), Finland (59%) and France (60%). In Spain, instead, most of the respondents (64%) do not support the notion of a “fortress Europe”, which has been especially backed by radical-right parties. Spain is followed, although with a very small margin, by Germany (49%) and Italy (49%).

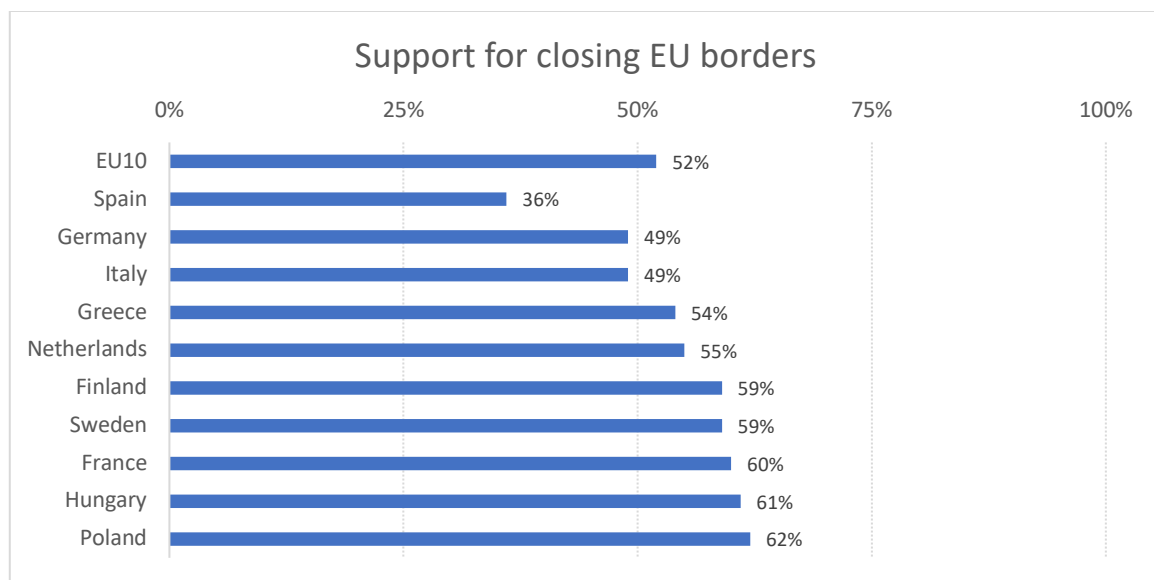


Figure 19 Public support to closing EU borders to asylum seekers in selected EU countries.

Note: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements. The EU should close the external borders to prevent the entry of new asylum seekers, even if this violates the EU’s humanitarian goals. 1) Strongly agree; 2) Somewhat agree; 3) Somewhat disagree; 4) Strongly disagree; 99) Don’t know. 1) + 2) = Agree; 3) + 4) = Disagree. “Don’t know” responses were excluded from the analysis.

4.2.1 Who is in favour of a “fortress Europe”?

The 2015 proposal to create a quota system among the MSs to relocate asylum-seekers across Europe was considered controversial by many national governments, and especially those belonging to the Visegrád Group (Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia). When looking at how the preferences on the relocation of asylum-seekers are distributed among European public opinions, however, we instead observed a widespread consensus on the fairness of such a proposal. Even respondents’ ideological affiliations, while being associated with this preference, do not seem to be so decisive. Indeed, while left-leaning respondents are mostly in favour of relocating migrants (86%), the same is true for those placing themselves on the right side of the ideological spectrum (61%).

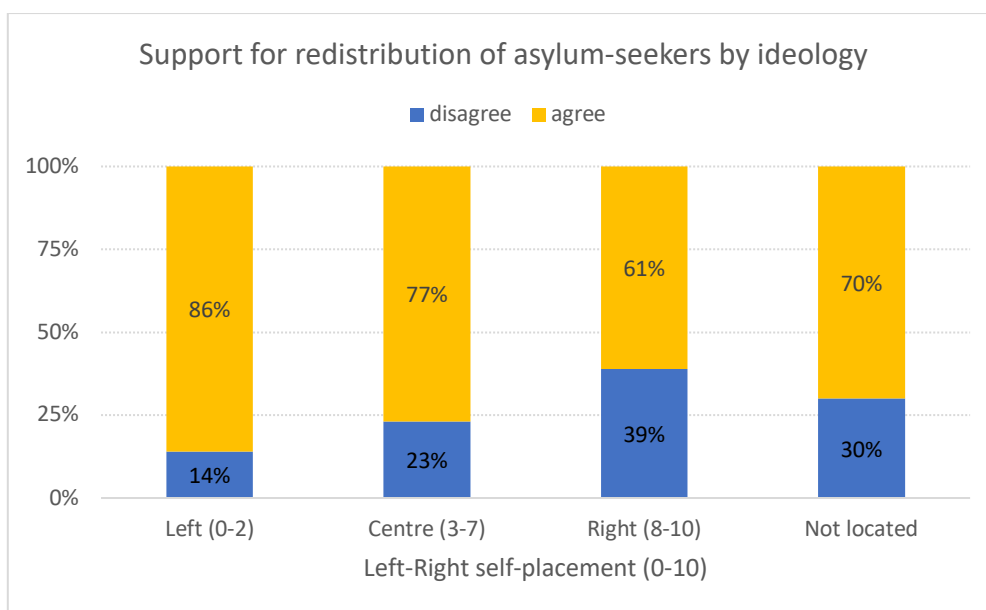


Figure 20 Support for the redistribution of asylum-seekers by Left-Right self-placement of EU10 respondents.

The issue of immigration has become increasingly salient and contentious since the mid-2000s, especially with the outbreak of the refugee crisis. When investigating what are the reasons for supporting closing the EU external borders, the main ones tend to be individual material conditions. Low-skilled workers and people in a situation of deprivation, the so-called “losers of globalisation” (Kriesi et al. 2008; 2012), may feel themselves threatened by foreigners, and thus oppose immigration. If we take education as a measure of the skills of the respondents, we would expect the less educated to be associated with stronger support for closure. As can be seen, respondents with tertiary education tend to be more in favour of accepting migrants: while a minority (44%) wants to close the borders. This is the most preferred option for those with primary and secondary education. It is, however, a polarising topic, and education does not seem to explain all the variance.

Education level	Closing EU borders	
	Disagree	Agree
Up to lower secondary	44%	56%
Upper secondary	45%	55%
Tertiary	56%	44%

Table 5 Share of respondents agreeing(disagreeing) with closing EU borders to asylum-seekers by education levels in EU10 countries.

When looking at the occupational class (Table 6), service and production workers are more in favour of closing the borders (60%). This may suggest that disposition regarding migrants may result from feeling threatened in their material interests. When looking at the perceived economic status of respondents in Table 7, this intuition seems to hold: more people who feel economically “deprived” compared to the past tend to agree more with the preference for closure (57%) than those who do not feel deprived (50%).

Occupational class	Closing EU borders	
	Disagree	Agree
employers and self employed	46%	54%
salaried middle class	48%	52%
socio cultural specialist	58%	42%
service and production workers	40%	60%
unemployed	49%	51%
welfare recipients	46%	54%
other inactive	55%	45%
Total	48%	52%

Table 6 Share of respondents agreeing(disagreeing) with closing EU borders to asylum-seekers by occupation in EU10 countries.

Intertemporal material deprivation	Closing EU borders	
	Disagree	Agree
Not deprived	50%	50%
Deprived	43%	57%

Table 7 Share of respondents agreeing(disagreeing) with closing EU borders to asylum-seekers by intertemporal material deprivation in EU10 countries.

Note: questions: *There are people who tend to be towards the top of our society and people who tend to be towards the bottom. Where would you place yourself nowadays on a scale from 0 to 10, where '0' means "at the bottom of our society" and '10' means "at the top of our society"? / And where would you have placed yourself on the same scale 5 years ago? "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis. The category deprived gathers respondents for which the current position is worse than the previous one.*

According to our survey, however, material interests are not a strong determinant of the perceptions of threat and ideological stances. First, public support for closing external EU borders is particularly strong among respondents who perceive an increase in the number of immigrants living in their area in the previous five years, and at the same time believe that immigration is a threat to the cultural homogeneity of their society as shown in Table 8. Three-quarters of those that we consider culturally threatened by immigration, are in favour of the closure of EU external borders, against only 40% of those who are not. This suggests that the perception of the level of immigration is a relevant factor in explaining anti-immigrant attitudes.

Culturally threatened by immigration	Closing EU borders	
	Disagree	Agree
Not threatened	60%	40%
Yes	25%	75%

Table 8 Share of respondents agreeing(disagreeing) with closing EU borders to asylum-seekers by perception of being threatened culturally by immigrants in EU10 countries.

Note: question: *Would you say that [COUNTRY]'s cultural life is generally enriched or undermined by people coming to live here from other countries? / Generally speaking, would you say that the number of immigrants living in the area where you live has increased, decreased or stayed about the same in the last five years? 1) Strongly increased; 2) Somewhat increased; 3) Somewhat decreased; 4) Strongly decreased; 5) Stayed about the same; 99) Don't know. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis. Culturally threatened*

individuals are those who believe that immigrants in their area have increased and that think their cultural life is undermined by immigration.

We detected moreover a strong association with ideological leanings (see Figure 21). The vast majority of people identifying as “right-wing” (82%) tend to be in favour of closing the borders, versus a small fraction of people identifying as left-wing (28%). Centrists are split in two equal halves by this issue.

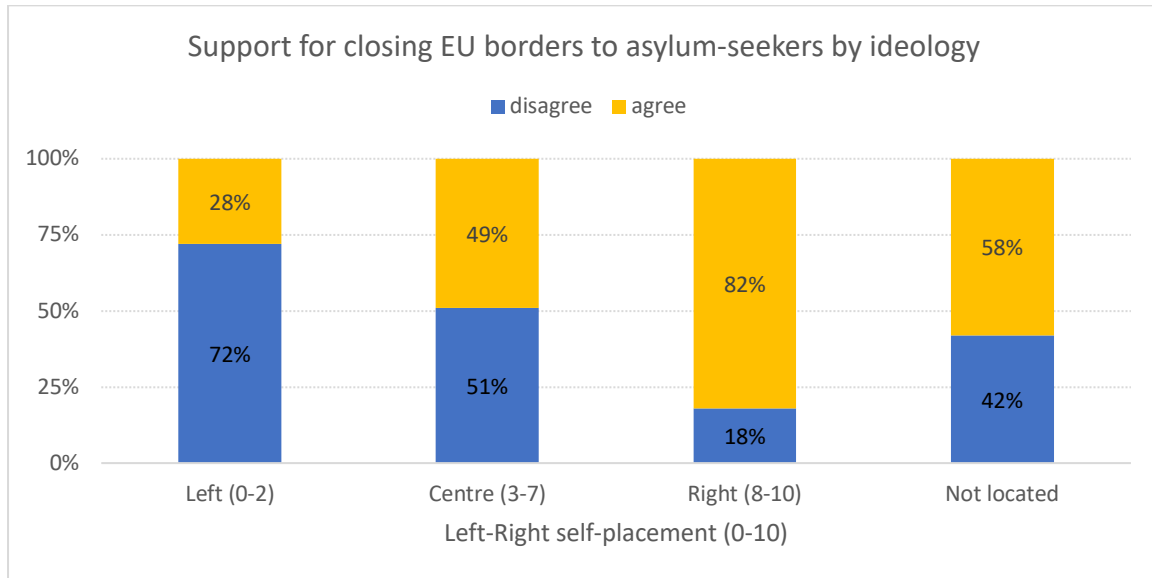


Figure 21 Support for closing EU borders to asylum seekers by Left-Right self-placement in EU10 countries.

5. Transnational solidarity

5.1 EU social citizenship: movers' social rights

The so-called “movers” are EU citizens who study, work and live in a different European country in respect of their national citizenship. Free movement became increasingly contentious after the Eastern European enlargement that took place in 2004. When a large group of MSs with lower average income accessed the Union, some commentators and politicians feared the possibility that intra-EU migrant workers could exploit local welfare systems until they reached a breaking point.

As depicted in Figure 22, most respondents (65%) in the pooled sample agreed that EU nationals – if legally resident in any other member states - should receive the same social security benefits as nationals of that country. However, when looking at the distribution across countries, support for this statement is far stronger in peripheral MSs such as Greece (88% in favour), Italy (86%), Poland (77%), Hungary (75%), and Spain (72%). Public support for free movement is lower in continental and Northern MSs such as Germany (51%), Finland, France, and the Netherlands (53%).

We also asked whether respondents agree that also non-EU citizens, if legally resident in the country of the respondent, should receive the same social security benefits as their national fellows. As we can see, two Europeans out of three tend to support this statement, a share that is slightly higher than those supporting free movement among European citizens. When analysing cross-country differences, it is interesting to note that in Southern and Eastern European countries respondents tend to prefer sharing social security rights with other European citizens than with citizens coming from third countries, whereas in Northern and continental countries the situation is exactly the opposite. This is particularly true for Dutch and Swedish respondents.

Finally, we asked respondents whether they agree that nationals should have priority access to social security benefits. Also this idea is largely uncontroversial across countries. Three-quarters of EU10 respondents agree with this statement, that finds the lowest support in Eastern European countries – Hungary (63%) and Poland (67%) – and the highest support in Nordic countries - Finland (81%) and Sweden (80%).

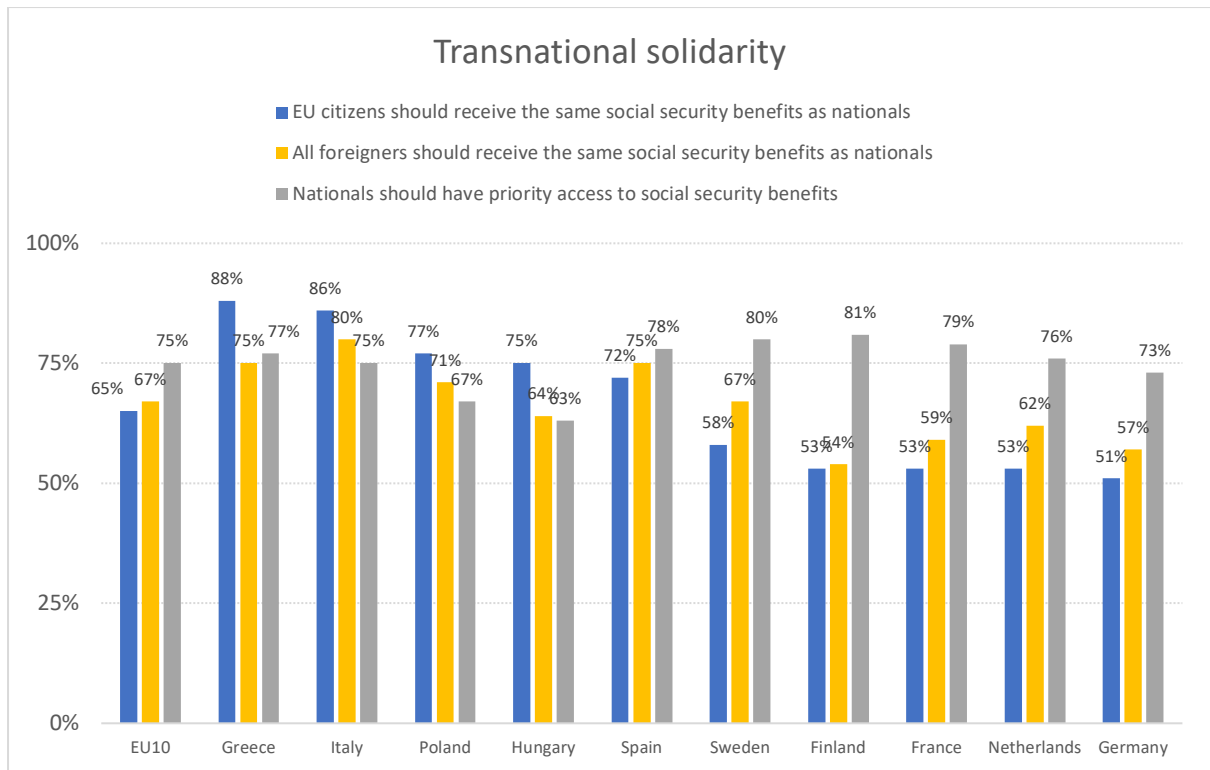


Figure 22 Public support for transnational solidarity across selected EU countries.

Note: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about freedom of movement of citizens and services. EU citizens who reside in (COUNTRY) should receive the same social security benefits as (NATIONALITY); All foreigners legally residents in (COUNTRY) should receive the same social security benefits as (NATIONALITY); (NATIONALITY) should have priority access to social security benefits. 1) Strongly agree; 2) Somewhat agree; 3) Somewhat disagree; 4) Strongly disagree; 99) Don't know. 1) + 2) = Agree; 3) + 4) = Disagree. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

5.1.1 Who favours the opening of national welfare systems to fellow Europeans?

What individual factors are associated with public support for sharing social security benefits with other European citizens? Interestingly, a respondent's socio-economic status does not contribute to explaining support for cross-border welfare rights, with no significant variation across educational attainments or occupational classes. On the contrary, subjective perceptions of cultural threat and national identity are strongly related with preferences in favour of cross-border welfare rights. Figure 23 shows that those perceiving an increase in immigrants in their area and at the same time feeling culturally threatened by them are more polarised (54%), than their counterparts who tends to agree (72%) with this issue. Not surprisingly, in Figure 24 those who consider themselves exclusively as citizens of their country tend to be less supportive of cross-border welfare rights (50%) than respondents who feel themselves to be European citizens, or both national and European citizens (71%).

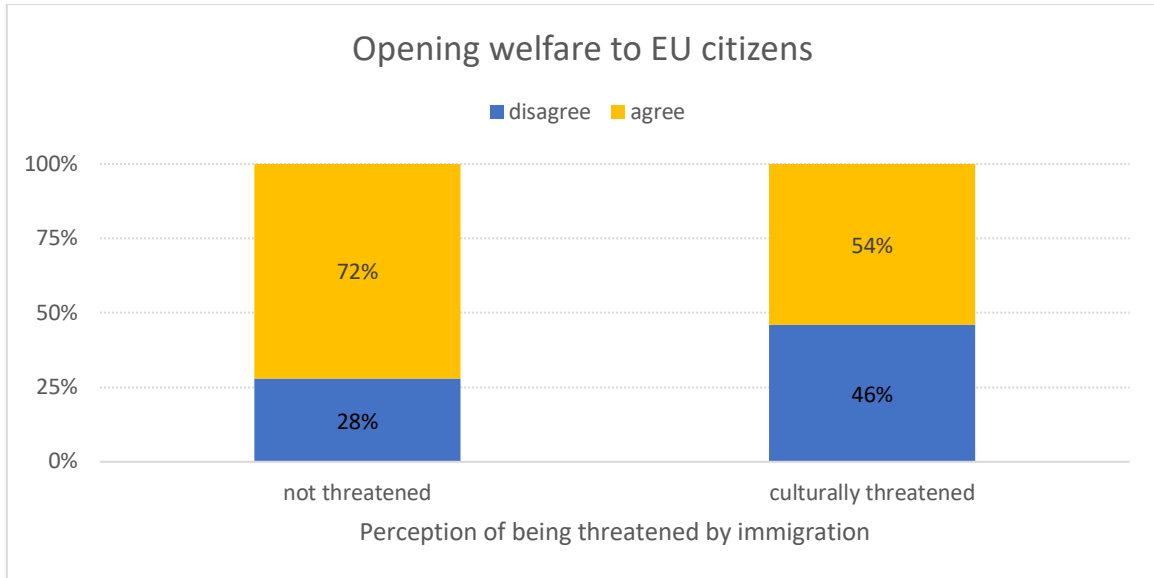


Figure 23 Public support for opening welfare to EU citizens by perceived immigration threat in EU10 countries.

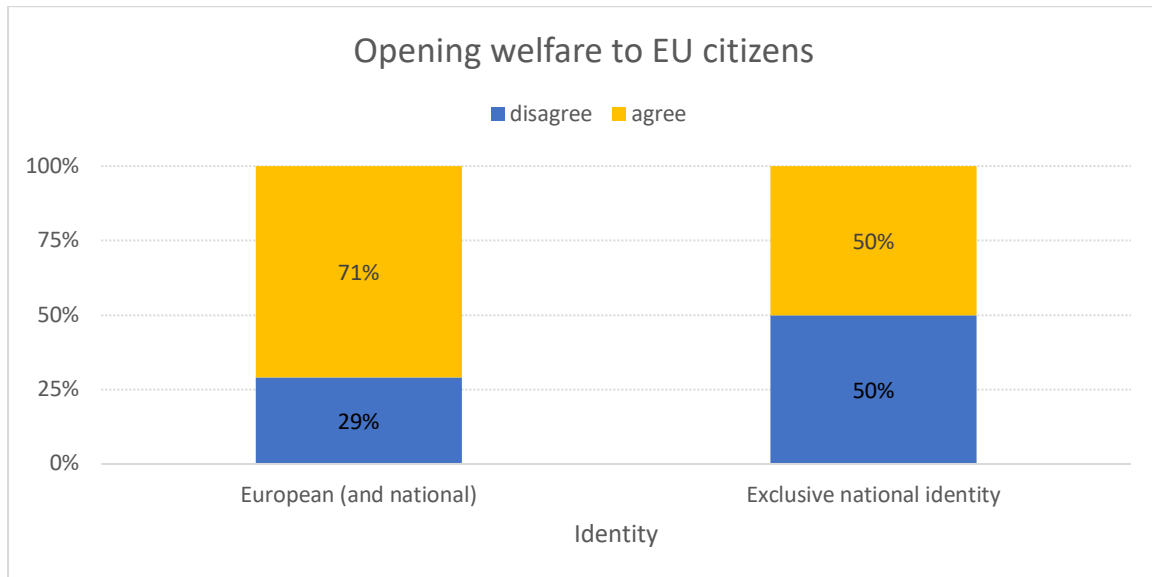


Figure 24 Public support for opening welfare to EU citizens by respondents' identity in EU10 countries.

5.2 Interpersonal solidarity

EU citizens also expressed their support or opposition for EU-level social schemes aiming to help European citizens in need, irrespective of their country of origin and residence. We asked the citizens of the ten countries about their preferences regarding three different policy proposals to provide financial help for disadvantaged children, poor people, and the unemployed. Lifting 20 million people from the risk of poverty or social exclusion was one of the objectives of Europe 2020. Anti-unemployment measures taken through EU policy are also a crucial social issue in the EU. As we saw during the Great Recession, the instruments available to the EU did not allow to effectively mitigate mass unemployment in the areas of the Union most affected by the crisis. Following that juncture, many commentators proposed creating an EU instrument to counteract asymmetric shocks and soaring unemployment (Vandenbroucke et al. 2013). How would the EU public react to such proposals? When asking for their preferences we controlled for social-desirability bias, by explicitly mentioning that each MS would have to pay more into the EU budget if such schemes were introduced. Results are reported in Figure 25.

Anti-poverty measures targeted at disadvantaged children were the least controversial issue among the three proposals surveyed. 72% of respondents in the EU10 sample approved the introduction of an EU policy with this aim. The rift between Northern and continental member states, on the one hand, and Southern and Eastern member states, on the other hand was still present, but was lower than with generic anti-poverty EU policies. The support for anti-poverty measures targeted at disadvantaged children was very high in Greece (86%) but also in the other member states the vast majority of respondents support this type of intervention. On average, across the 10 Member States surveyed, the level of support for an EU level social scheme targeted to disadvantaged children is 72%. According to these statistics, the “ending child poverty” proposal, which is one of the proposals supported by EC President Ursula Van Der Leyen, could gather generous popular support all across the EU.

The majority of EU10 citizens (59%) also tend to agree with the statement that “the EU should provide financial help to all poor people. Support for this type of social intervention is not evenly spread across the MSs, however. Let us start by taking stock of the member states where the support for fighting poverty, as a European policy, is greatest: Greece (82%), Hungary (75%), Spain (72%), Italy (69%) and Poland (66%). The strong presence of Southern and Eastern European MSs in this group, should come to no surprise. The situation is different in the Netherlands (38%) and in France (44%), while the majority of the respondents support anti-poverty measures in Finland (49%), Sweden (50%) and Germany (45%).

Finally, according to our survey anti-unemployment measures taken at the EU level split the sample exactly in two groups. Some 49% of respondents are in favour, while 51% are against it. Once again, the distribution is not evenly spread across the EU. Southern and Eastern European member states are largely in favour of an EU anti-unemployment policy, especially Greece (74%) and Spain (70%), while Northern and continental member states remain more sceptical of this type of intervention.

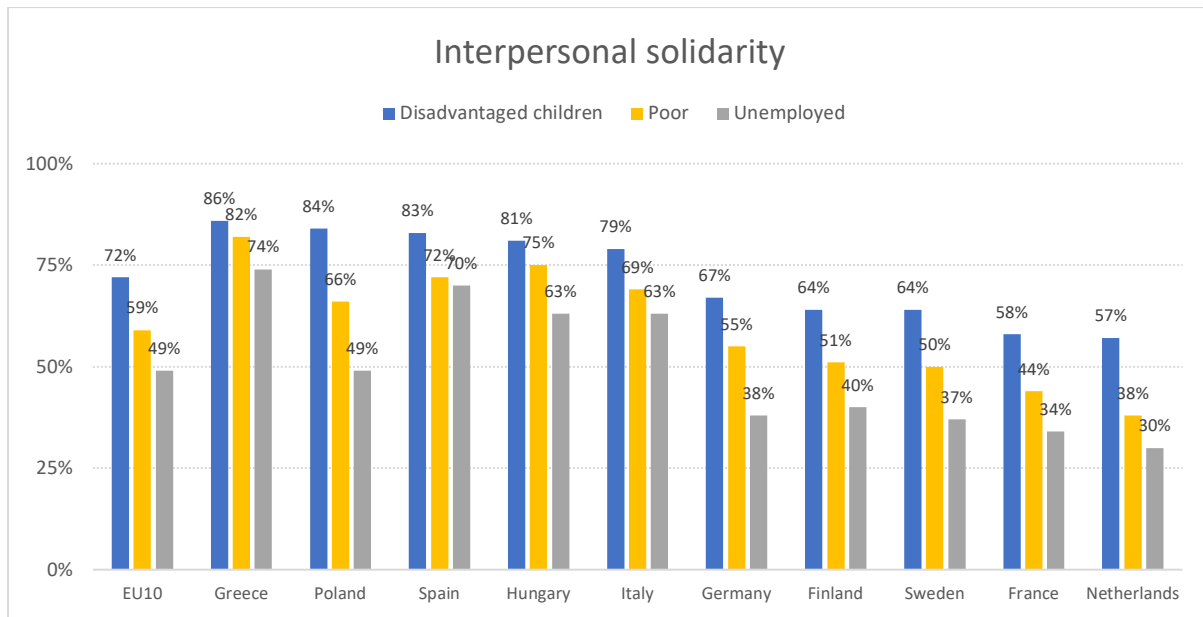


Figure 25 Public support for interpersonal solidarity in selected EU10 countries.

Note: questions: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about whether the EU should help citizens in need in every European member state. The EU should provide financial help to all poor people, even if this means that all member states, including (COUNTRY), would have to pay more money to the EU / The EU should provide financial help to all disadvantaged children, even if this means that all member states, including (COUNTRY), would have to pay more money to the EU / The EU should provide financial help to all the unemployed even if this means that all member states, including (COUNTRY), would have to pay more money to the EU. 1) Strongly agree; 2) Somewhat agree; 3) Somewhat disagree; 4) Strongly disagree; 99) Don't know. 1) + 2) = Agree; 3) + 4) = Disagree. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

The type of target therefore matters in determining who deserves to be helped by the EU, and the order of priorities coincides in each country: children first, the poor second, and then the unemployed. What is most striking is that this order of priority is maintained even when a respondent is unemployed, although in this group support for financial help for the unemployed increases by 19 points (see Figure 26). This result matches the one in Figure 27 showing that people who are coping well with the economy are less prone to support both the poor (58%) and the unemployed (46%) than people experiencing economic difficulties, who are more willing to support such measures (63% support for EU measures favouring the poor, 55% for the unemployed). The level of support for EU-level measures targeted toward poor children is not associated with the respondent's socio-economic status. Public support for financial help for the poor and unemployed is also particularly low among respondents who place themselves on the right of the ideological spectrum (see Figure 28).

Alongside the ideological self-positioning, another factor is associated with individual support for interpersonal solidarity. Preferences for EU-level policies aiming to help poor, disadvantaged children and the unemployed are influenced by how people explain poverty as shown in Figure 29. Those who conceive poverty as a fundamental injustice, tend to show a higher level of support for measures in favour of the three aforementioned categories. Those who conceive poverty as the result of laziness tend to express less support, and overwhelmingly so for the poor (only 43% of those holding this belief support anti-poverty measures at the EU level) and the unemployed (35%). Most surprisingly, however, the level of support also seems decreases sharply for anti-poverty measures targeted at children: only

61% of those explaining poverty as laziness are in support of such measure, versus 76% of those characterising poverty as a fundamental injustice.

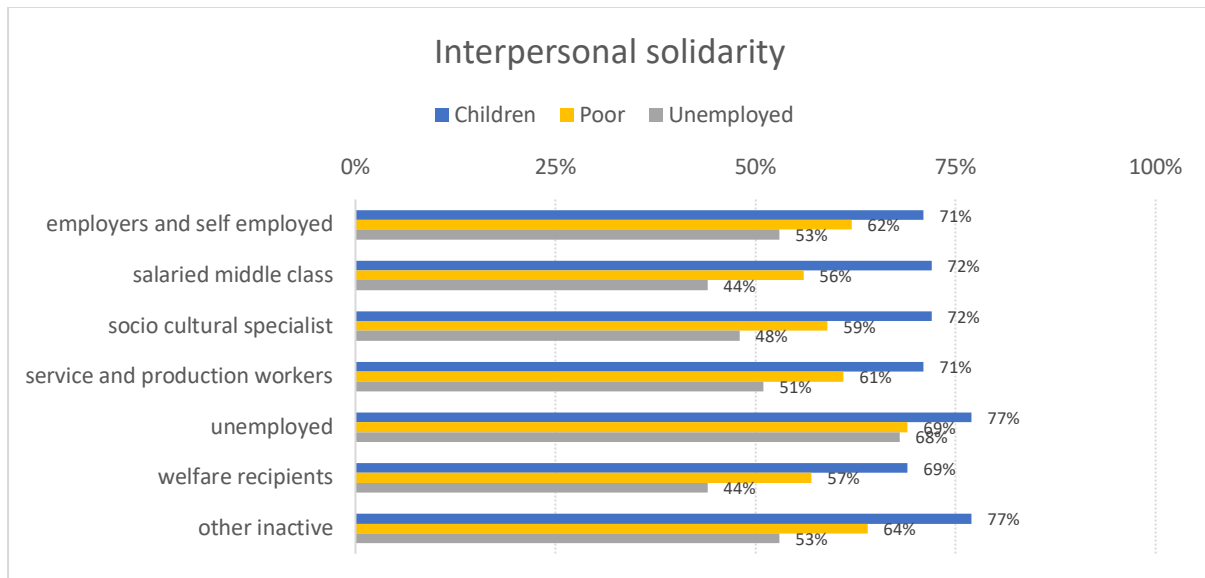


Figure 26 Public support for interpersonal solidarities by occupation of EU10 respondents.

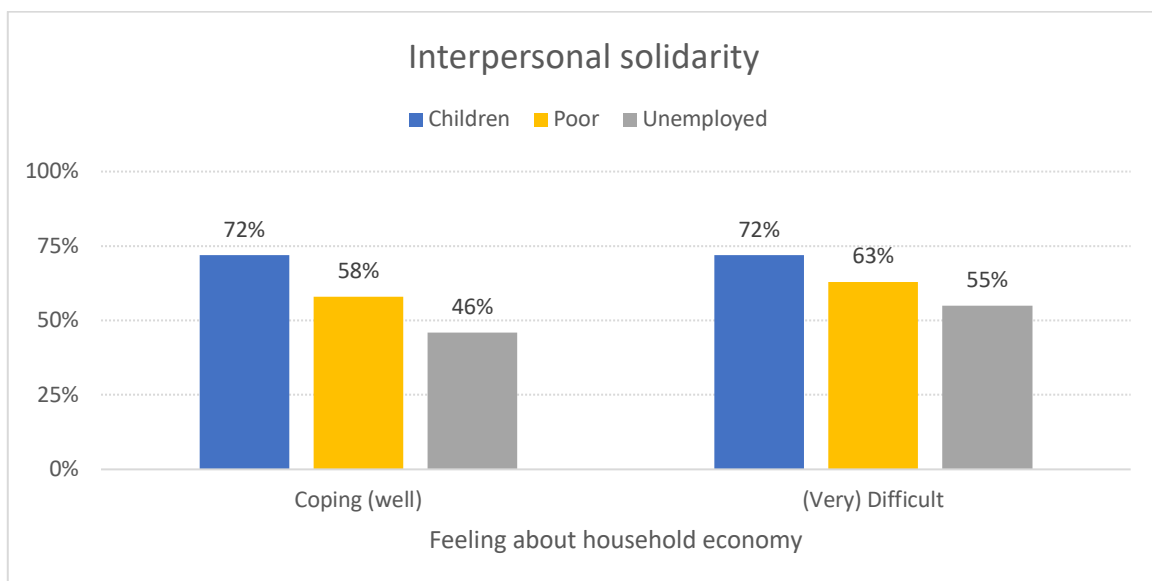


Figure 27 Public support for interpersonal solidarity by feeling about household economy in EU10 countries.

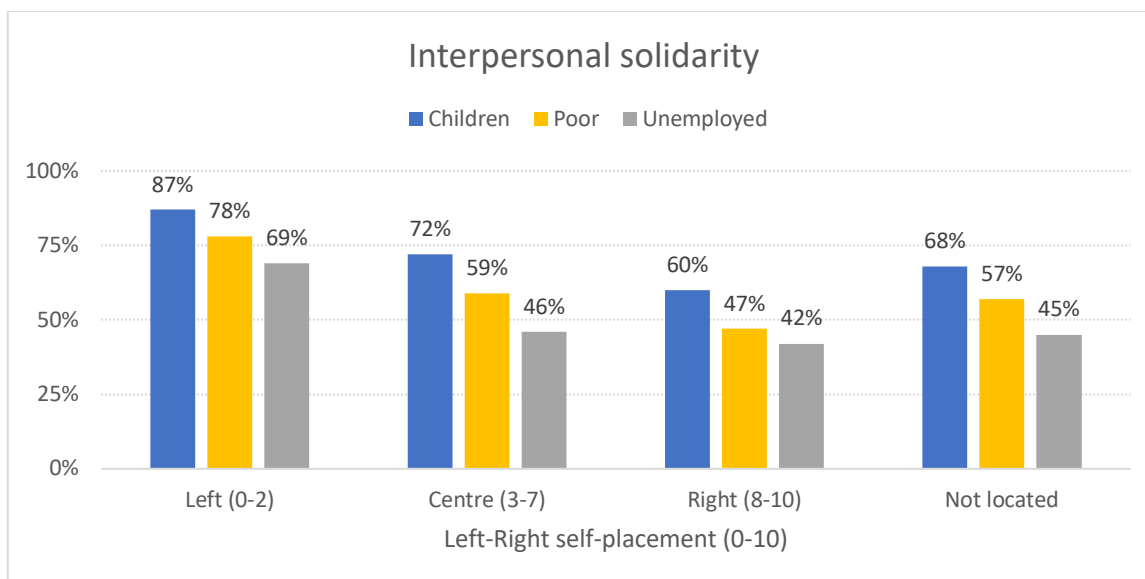


Figure 28 Public support for interpersonal solidarities by Left-Right self-placement of respondents in EU10 countries.

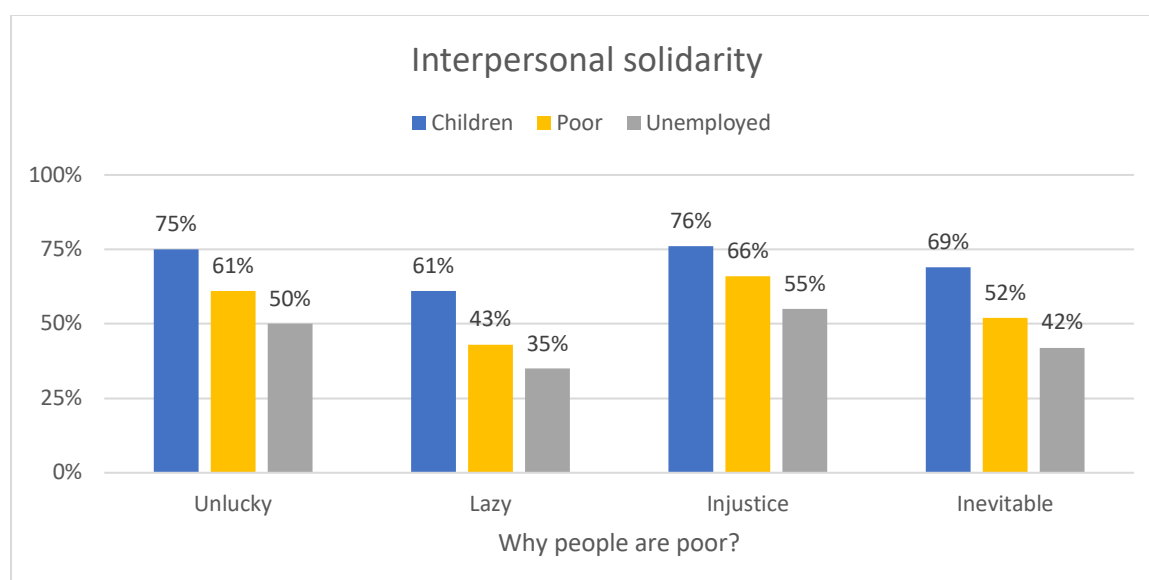


Figure 29 Public support for interpersonal solidarities by respondents' rationales for poverty in EU10 countries.

5.3 Service-market chauvinism

After the 2004 expansion to Central and Eastern European countries and the proposal of the Bolkestein Directive, the figure of the “Polish plumber” suddenly became salient in political debates around the EU. This is a stereotype for cheap Eastern European labour threatening jobs in Western Europe because of the single market for services allowing workers and companies to move freely between countries of the EU. In our survey we analysed whether citizens of the EU10 countries would like to impose restrictions on the freedom of companies to provide their services across the EU. The results in Figure 30 show that in the pooled sample a consistent share of respondents (43%) agrees with such a proposal. Looking at data disaggregated by country, we notice that Poland, Hungary, Germany, Spain, Finland, and the Netherlands have majorities against restrictions. People are instead more polarised on this issue in Greece, Italy, and Sweden. The French public is the only one clearly in favour of

changing the status quo by imposing restrictions on the freedom of companies to provide services across borders.

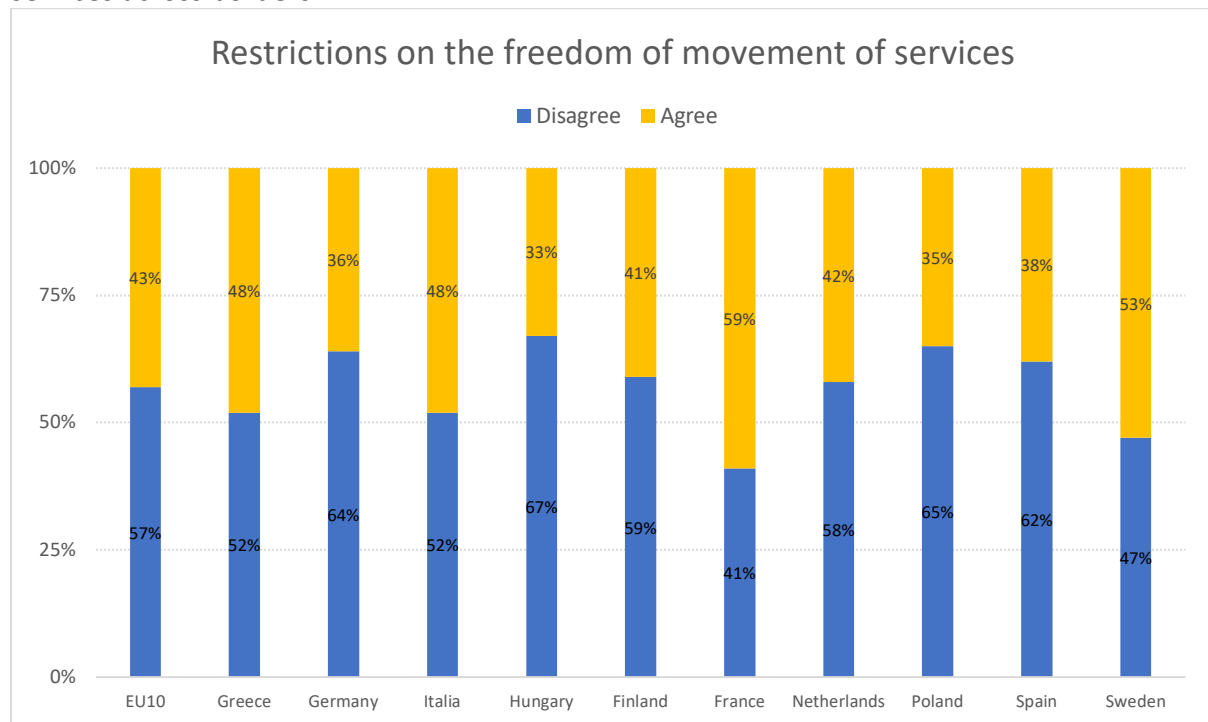


Figure 30 Public support for restricting the freedom of movement of services in EU10 countries.

Note: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about freedom of movement of citizens and services. The freedom of companies from other European member states to provide their services in (COUNTRY) should be restricted. 1) Strongly agree; 2) Somewhat agree; 3) Somewhat disagree; 4) Strongly disagree; 99) Don't know. 1) + 2) = Agree; 3) + 4) = Disagree. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

Figure 31 shows the percentage of respondents agreeing with the introduction of restrictions for each occupational category, but with percentages computed for three macro-regions: Southern countries (Greece, Italy, and Spain), Eastern countries (Hungary and Poland), and Northern countries (Germany, France, Finland, Netherlands, and Sweden). Service and production workers in the north are much more in favour of such restrictions than those in the other regions.

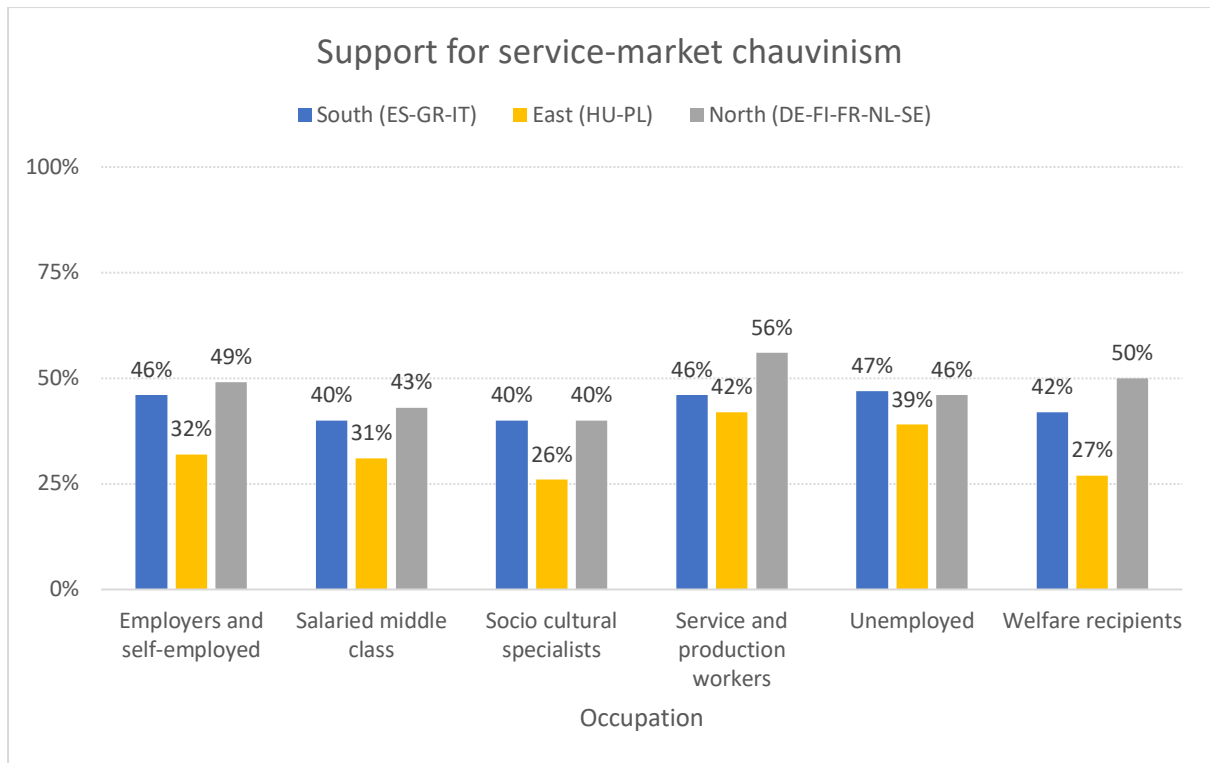


Figure 31 Public support for restriction on services' freedom of movement across occupation across European macro-regions.

6. Building a community of trust in the EU

No political community can survive if most of its citizens do not trust the political institutions that govern the community and do not consider their political authority to be legitimate. A minimum level of political trust and legitimacy is necessary to build stable schemes of solidarity through which citizens can share obligations, economic risks and mutual help (Ferrera 2017).

The following sections investigate the level of diffuse support expressed by European citizens toward the EU, its political authority and its performance. Following a consolidated literature (Boomgaarden et al. 2011; De Vreese et al. 2018), we tap citizen attitudes toward different aspects related to public support for the EU: utilitarian, strengthening, affective, identity and performance.

6.1. Furthering European integration

One of the most contentious aspects of EU politics is the question of the widening of European Union competences. In other words, has European integration already gone too far or should it instead be strengthened? When surveyed on this topic, EU10 citizens are slightly in favour of furthering the integration process (see Figure 32). They indeed score on average 5.6 on a scale ranging from 0, meaning “EU integration has already gone too far”, to 10, meaning “EU integration should be strengthened”. As depicted in Figure 33, somehow surprisingly, the MSs with more “Euroenthusiasts” are those who were hit hardest by the Sovereign Debt Crisis, and had been on the receiving end of austerity policies, such as Spain (7.1), Italy (6.1) and Greece (6.1). The opinions of the Eastern European citizens are also notable, since they are often characterised by the media as hostile to the process of integration. Polish citizens (6.1) and Hungarians (6.1) do not seem to be of this opinion. Still in favour of furthering the process of integration, albeit to a lesser extent, are the citizens of Germany (5.2). On the opposite side are those who think that the process of integration should be halted: according to our survey citizens in Sweden (4.2), the Netherlands (4.6), France (4.6), and Finland (4.9) seem to think so.

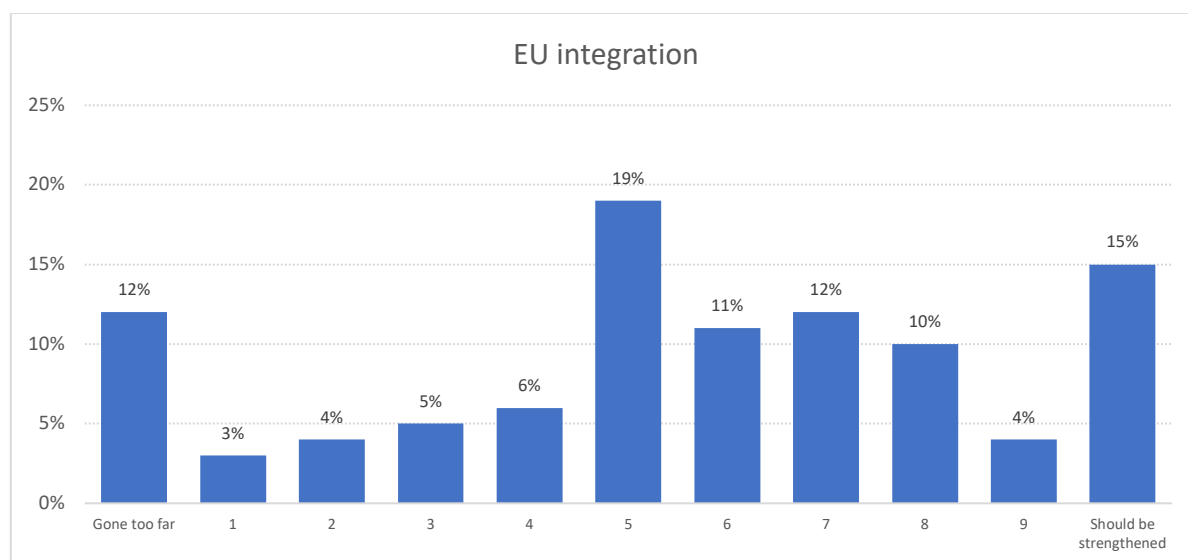


Figure 32 Preference for EU integration in EU10 countries.

Note: Some say European integration should be pushed further. Others say it has already gone too far. Please indicate your views using a scale from 0 to 10, where '0' means integration "has already gone too far" and '10' means it "should be pushed further". "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

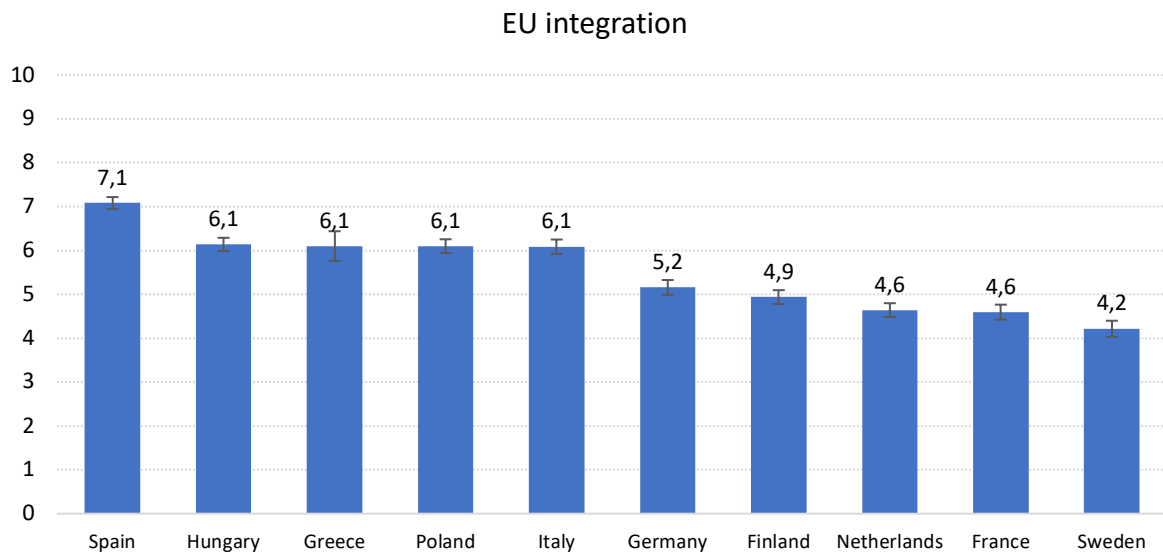


Figure 33 Average support for EU integration in selected countries.

Using data from the European Electoral Study⁴ we computed the average position of respondents for each country in 2004, 2009, and 2014 on this very same question. Apart from France, in all the ten sample countries the average level of support for EU integration in 2019 has increased or remained the same as in 2004, with ups and downs in 2009 and 2014. Most interestingly, there has been a significant shift in the last five years towards pro-integration attitudes in most countries. This is particularly interesting in the Southern and Eastern European countries.

⁴ Datasets available at: <http://europeanelectionstudies.net/>.

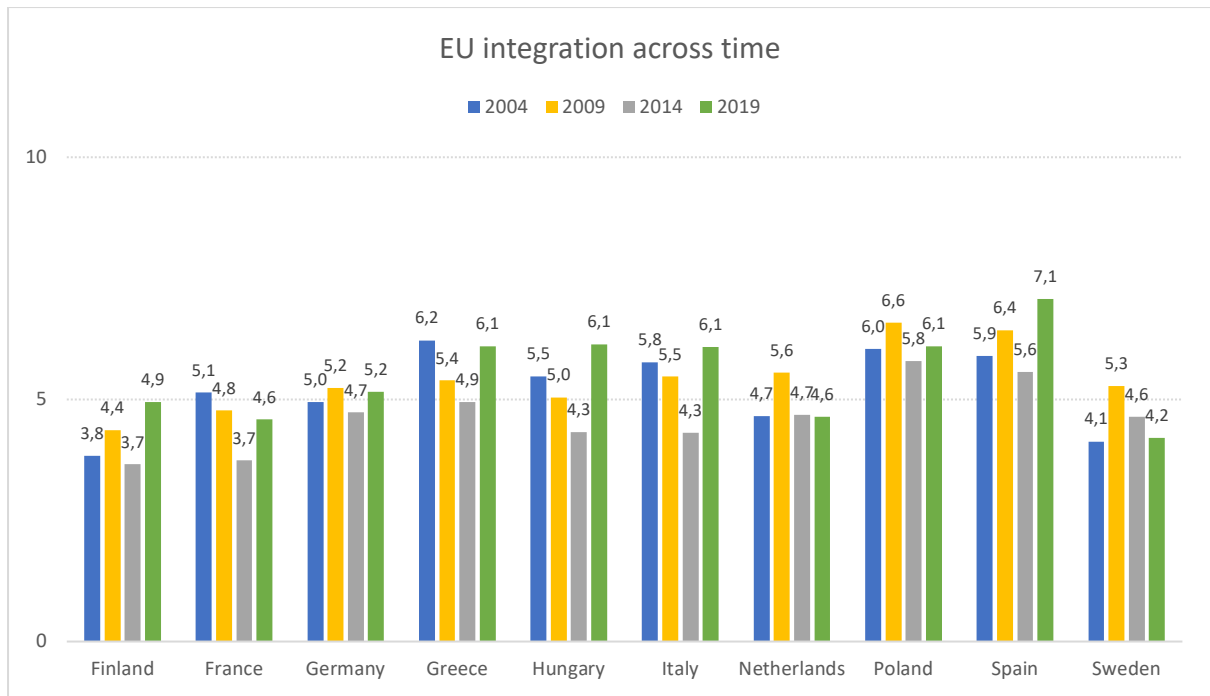


Figure 34 Average support for EU integration across time in EU10 countries.

6.1.1 Confessions of a Euro-enthusiast

What individual level characteristics are associated with support for the integration process? According to our survey, the variables that best explain a view favourable to furthering European integration are strongly associated with the level of educational attainment. It is, in fact, easier to find people more supportive of EU integration among those who have achieved tertiary education (see Figure 35): 60% are in favour of advancing the process of integration, while only 47% of those who attained lower secondary education are “Euroenthusiasts”. This is in line with the cognitive mobilisation theory (Inglehart 1970), according to which, in post-industrial societies, better educated citizens are better able to cope with “an extensive political community” such as the EU. Less education means a lesser willingness to cope with complex political systems such as the EU.

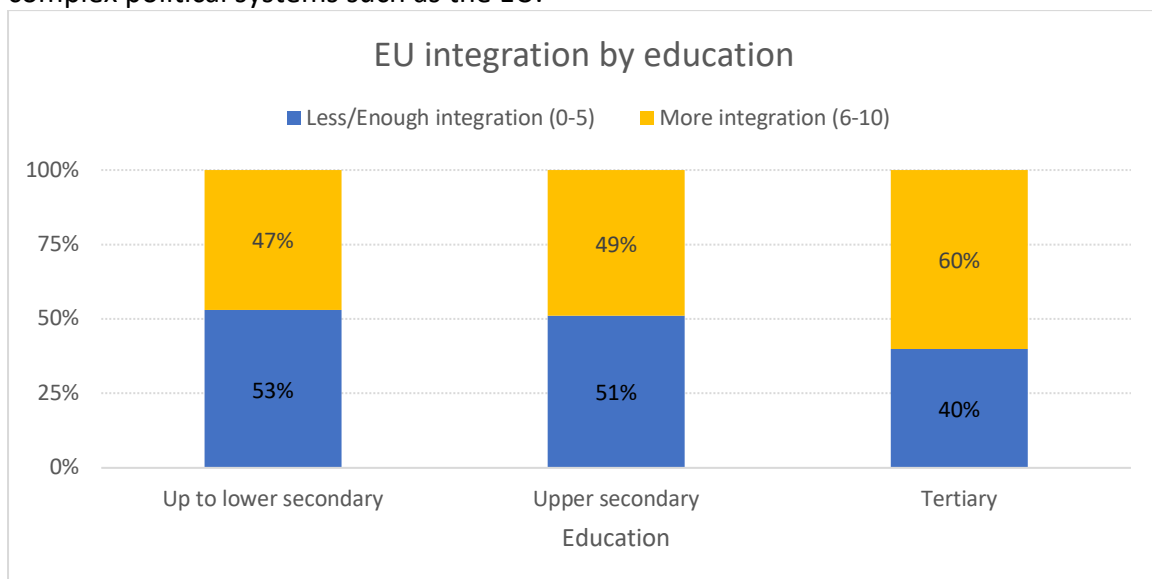


Figure 35 Public support for EU integration by levels of education in EU10 countries.

There are, indeed, also material determinants. Figure 36 shows that people who are “coping well” with their household income are more likely to support the integration process: 55% are in favour of more integration. This proportion is inverted when surveying people who are having consistent difficulties coping with their household economy: only 46% are willing to expand the powers of the EU. When surveying people about the economic situation of their country, we saw something analogous: those who consider the economy to have improved, or at least to have stayed about the same, are in favour of more integration, respectively, 59% and 56%. However, when the respondent’s sociotropic economic evaluation is negative, the opinion of EU integration changes drastically: only 43% are in favour of furthering the integration process.

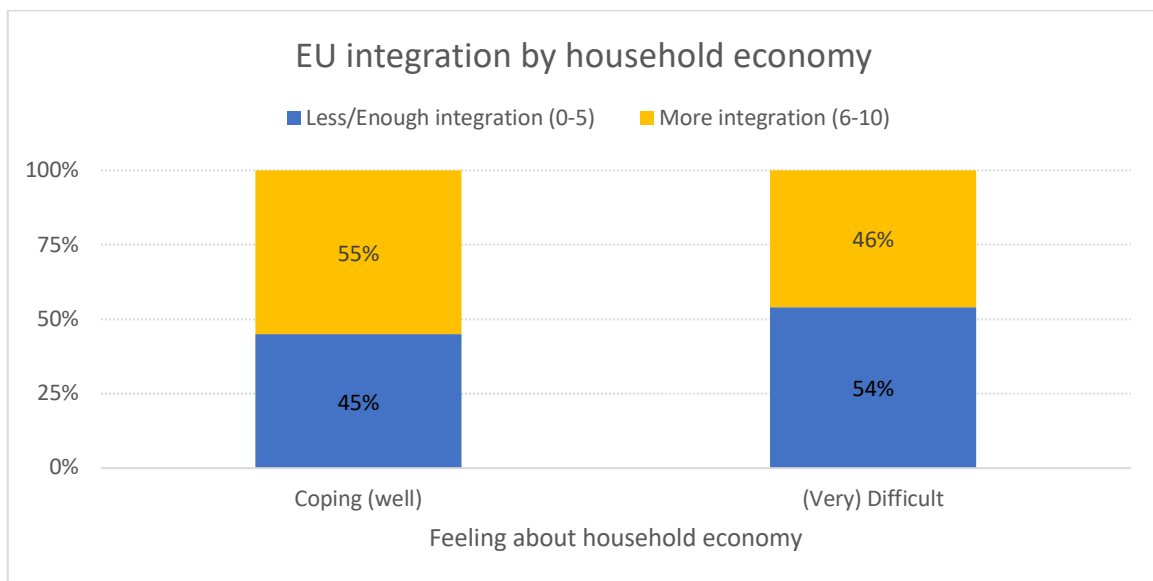


Figure 36 Public support for EU integration by household economic situation in EU10 countries.

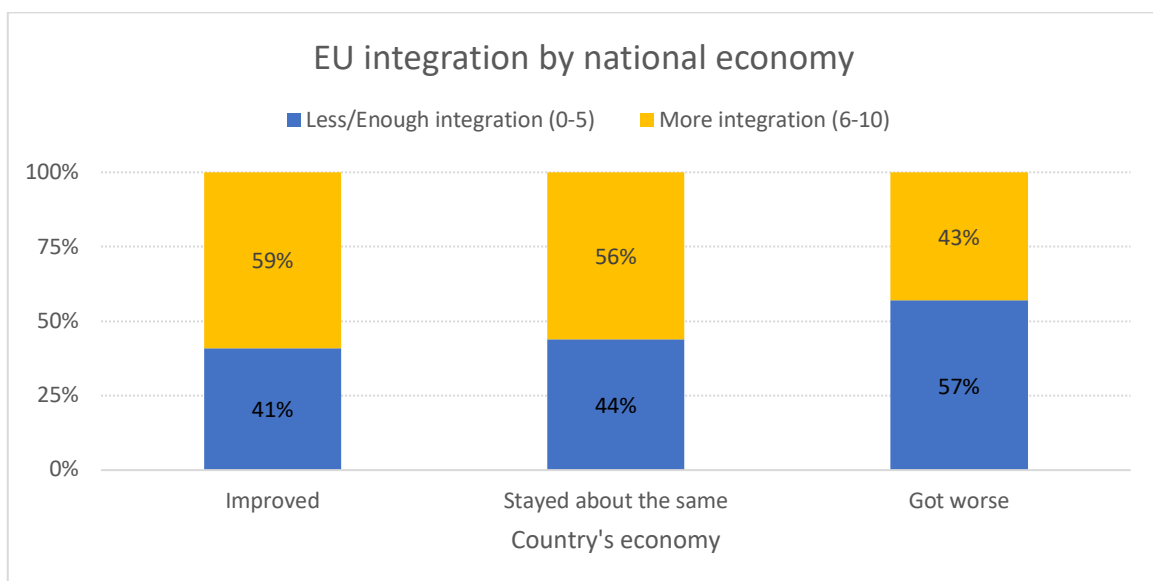


Figure 37 Public support for EU integration by national economic situation in EU10 countries.

Note: What do you think about the economy? Compared to 5 years ago, do you think that the general economic situation in (COUNTRY) ...? 1) Is a lot better; 2) Is a little better; 3) Has stayed the same; 4) Is a little worse; 5) Is

a lot worse; 99) Don't know. 1) + 2) = improved; 4) + 5) = got worse. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

Finally, there was clear variation in respondent opinions about EU integration according to their political attitudes. As shown in Figure 38, respondents who identified as left-leaning were consistently in favour of EU integration (68%), while people on the right were either content with the current level of integration or wanted less of it (61%). This result suggests that the traditional economic dimension and preferences regarding EU integration are not necessarily orthogonal in the mind of citizens. There is a strong support among both left-leaning and centre-right parties for more integration; especially among the S&D voters, who are championing the EU cause with a 76% level of support for "more integration" (see Figure 39). Conversely, the support decreases drastically among far-right and populist formations: only 39% of the ECR voters are in favour of more integration, and the percentage is even lower among the voters of the Identity party: only 23% are in favour of "more integration".

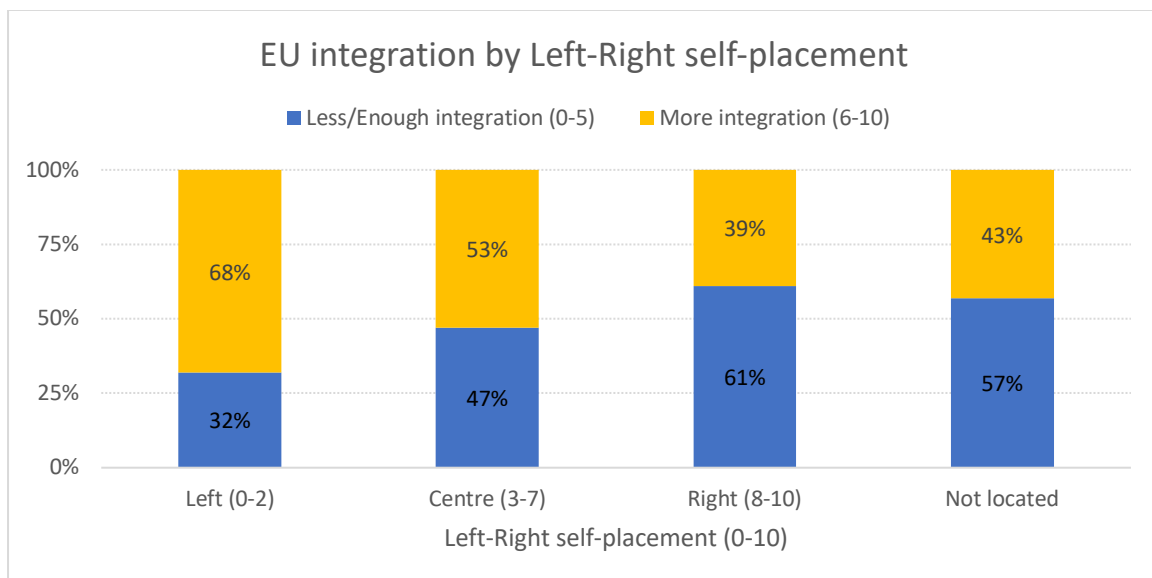


Figure 38 Public support for EU integration by Left-Right self-placement of respondents in EU10 countries.

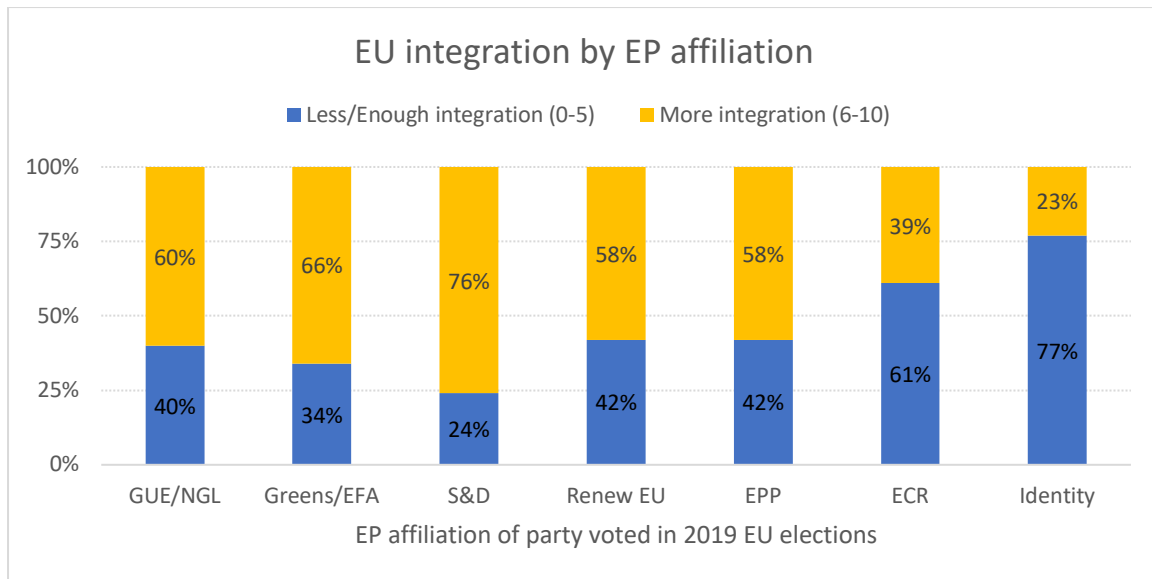


Figure 39 Public support for EU integration by EP affiliation of parties voted in 2019 EP elections in EU10 countries.

6.2. Material benefits from the EU

While the attachment to the EU as a community of trust is largely immaterial, it is indeed influenced by the perception that the EU provides some material benefit to our everyday life. It is thus important to understand how European citizens conceive their “net balance” with the EU. Is it positive? By looking at Figure 40, most of the respondents seem to think so: 66% of the respondents across our sample countries think that their country has benefited from being a member of the EU. The perception of having received benefits is particularly strong in the Eastern European countries, especially Poland (90%), with Hungary not far beyond (85%). When looking at Western European countries, Spain (75%), Germany (70%) and the Netherlands (64%) are among those which have benefitted the most from EU integration. Overall, the percentage of respondents who think that their country benefitted from the European integration exceeds the percentage of those with the opposite opinion. There is, however, a notable exception: in Italy most respondents (55%) seem to think that their country has not received material benefits from being a member of the European Union. Still, as seen in the previous section Italians tend to favour more EU integration, regardless of their negative opinion of membership.

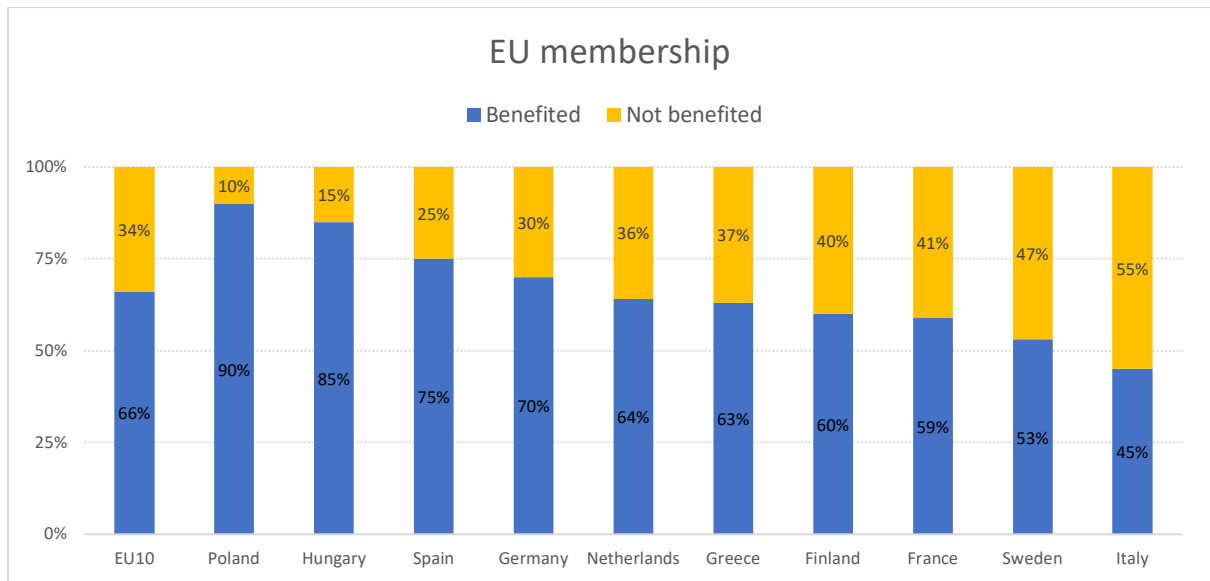


Figure 40 Public support for EU membership in EU10 countries.

Note: Taking everything into consideration, would you say that (COUNTRY) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union? 1) has benefited; 2) has not benefited; 99) don't know. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

6.3 Fairness of the EU

Trust is built not just on material benefits but also on the perception of being treated fairly by our shared supranational institutions. In this regard, the EU is not faring well. When asked whether the EU treats all MSs fairly and with equal respect, respondents seem to think that this is not the case. Figure 41 shows that only 20% of respondents think that the EU is fair (sum of categories from 6 to 10), and 62% hold the opposite opinion (sum of categories from 0 to 4). Figure 42 informs that citizens who think that the EU is somehow unfair are mostly concentrated in the Southern and Eastern peripheral Member States: this opinion is especially present in Greece (average of 2.9), Italy (2.86), Poland (3.4) and Spain (3.32). Although this is generally not controversial, there is a notable exception: Germany, in which respondents on average believe that the EU is not completely fair. Our data suggests that the EU has to take the notion of "political equality" seriously among the Member States if it wants to establish itself as a fair, and thus credible institution.

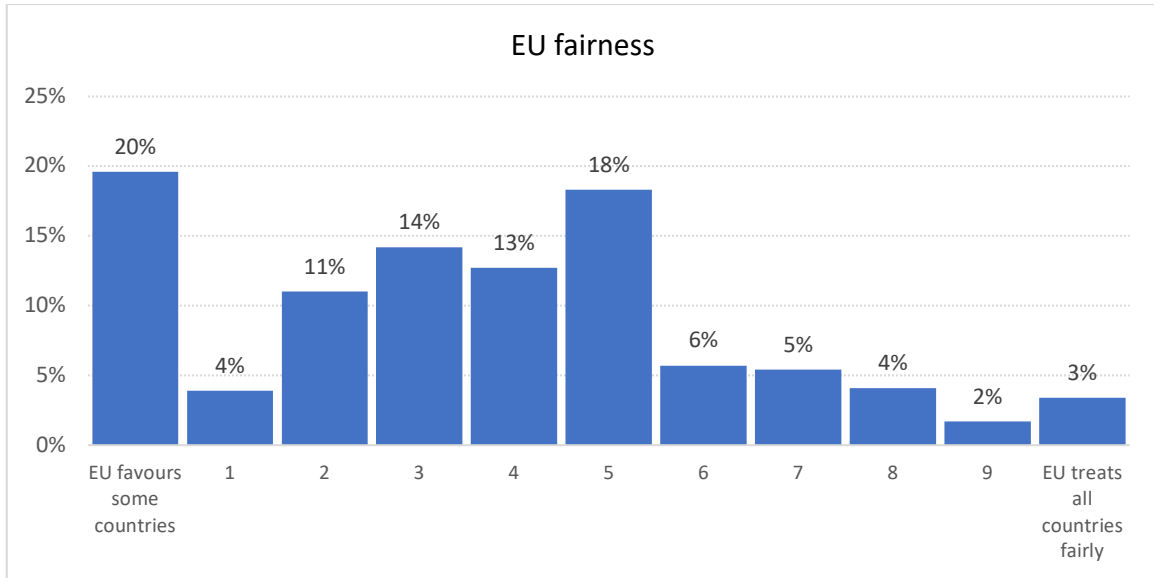


Figure 41 Public evaluation of EU fairness in EU10 countries.

Note: In your opinion, does the EU treat all member states fairly and with equal respect or does it favour some countries over the others? Please position yourself on a scale from 0 to 10, where '0' means "The EU treats all member states fairly and with equal respect" and '10' means "The EU favours some countries more than others". "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

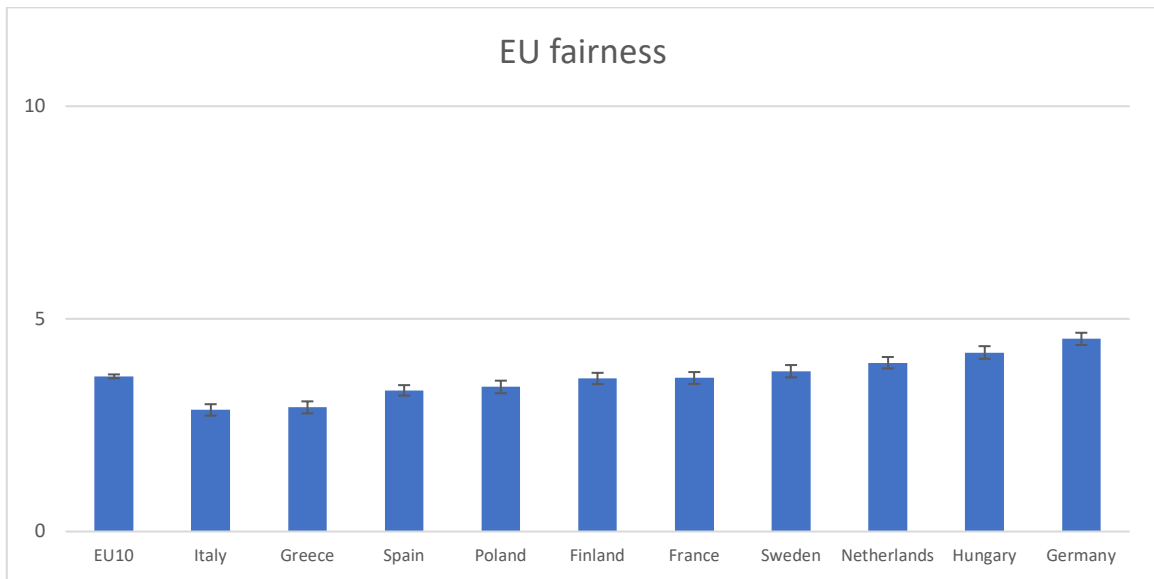


Figure 42 Average evaluation of EU fairness across Eu10 countries.

6.3.1 Unfair, yes. But favouring who?

In a follow-up question we asked all respondents who believed that the EU favours some countries (answers 0 to 4 on the 0-10 scale on fairness) to indicate the most favoured country. According to Table 9, there is a widespread perception among the general public that Germany is somewhat favoured by the process of European integration. Germany was considered the most favoured member state in all surveyed countries, except Germany and

the Netherlands. For the Germans Greece is the most favoured country, while for the Dutch it is France, though Germany comes second.

Country	Germany most favoured
Netherlands	22% (11%)
Germany	25% (10%)
Sweden	32% (13%)
Finland	51% (28%)
Hungary	58% (30%)
France	60% (28%)
Poland	69% (42%)
Spain	73% (44%)
Italy	79% (54%)
Greece	86% (62%)

Table 9 Share of respondents believing the EU is unfair to their country and favors Germany (in parentheses shares over total samples).

Note: Which country do you think the EU favours the most? All the 28 EU countries (UK included) appeared as response categories. 99) Don't know. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

6.3.2 EU's economic fairness

We also investigated a more material perception of European institutions' fairness. Indeed, we asked respondents whether they believe their country received more (about or less) than its fair share of the money spent by the EU on all its programs. Figure 43 shows that about half of the EU10 sample considers that their country receives about its fair share of transfers from the EU, while 40% believes that their country should be entitled to more funds. Ten percent of respondents instead believe their country receives more than its fair share. Meaning that about 60% of all citizens interviewed think that the EU is fair in spending its budget across countries. The first response is chosen by 30% of Hungarian respondents, and 15% of Polish ones suggesting that in Eastern Europe there is a larger share of the population aware of the importance of EU funds and of their country being a net recipient. The middle response represents the plurality of preferences in all countries but Italy, Finland, Netherlands, and Sweden. In these countries it is indeed greater the perception of receiving a smaller slice of the EU cake they are entitled to. Interestingly, this perception pools together a Southern country as Italy and three Northern member states such as Finland, Netherlands, and Sweden.

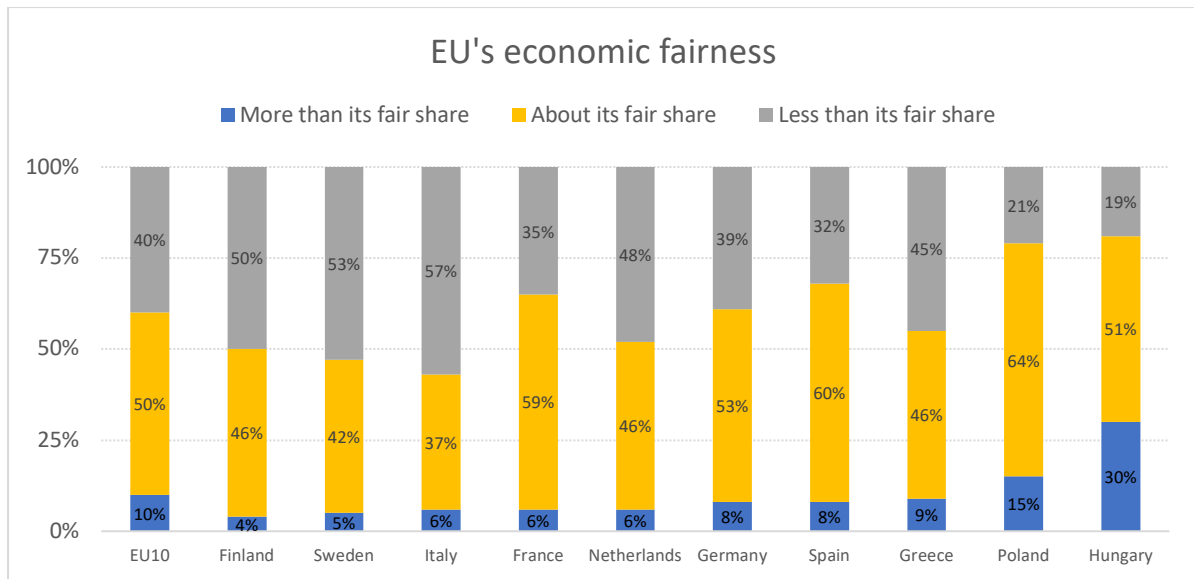


Figure 43 Share of respondents across EU10 countries based on opinions on EU's economic fairness.

Note: Considering all the money that the EU spends on different programs do you think that [COUNTRY] receives its fair share? 1) More than its fair share; 2) About its fair share; 3) Less than its fair share; 99) Don't know. Don't know responses have been excluded from the analysis.

6.4 Who do you trust? The EU or your national government?

One of the “lines of conflict” characterising European politics today, is that dealing with the tension between “national autonomy” and “supranational integration”. This line of conflict intertwines to a great extent, with the trust that people have with their national governmental institution *vis-à-vis* the trust they place in the EU institutions (De Vries 2018).

We asked respondents to express their level of trust in their national government and in the EU institutions by self-placing themselves on a scale ranging from 0 (No trust at all) to 10 (Complete trust). From Figure 44 it emerges that, quite interestingly, trust in the national government is quite low on average in all ten sample countries, with only Dutch citizens showing an average score closer to the right extreme of the scale. Hungary, Poland, Spain and Greece have a poor opinion of their government. When comparing the level of trust in the national government and the level of trust in the EU institutions, the numbers show three different patterns. A first set of countries, Hungary, Poland, Spain, and Greece, show higher average trust in the EU than their national executive. A second cluster, composed of the Netherlands, Finland, and Sweden, show the opposite trend: greater confidence in their national government. Finally, French, Germans, and Italians on average show similar levels of trust. These results are in line with those discussed by De Vries (2018) in support of her *benchmark theory* of public support for the EU.

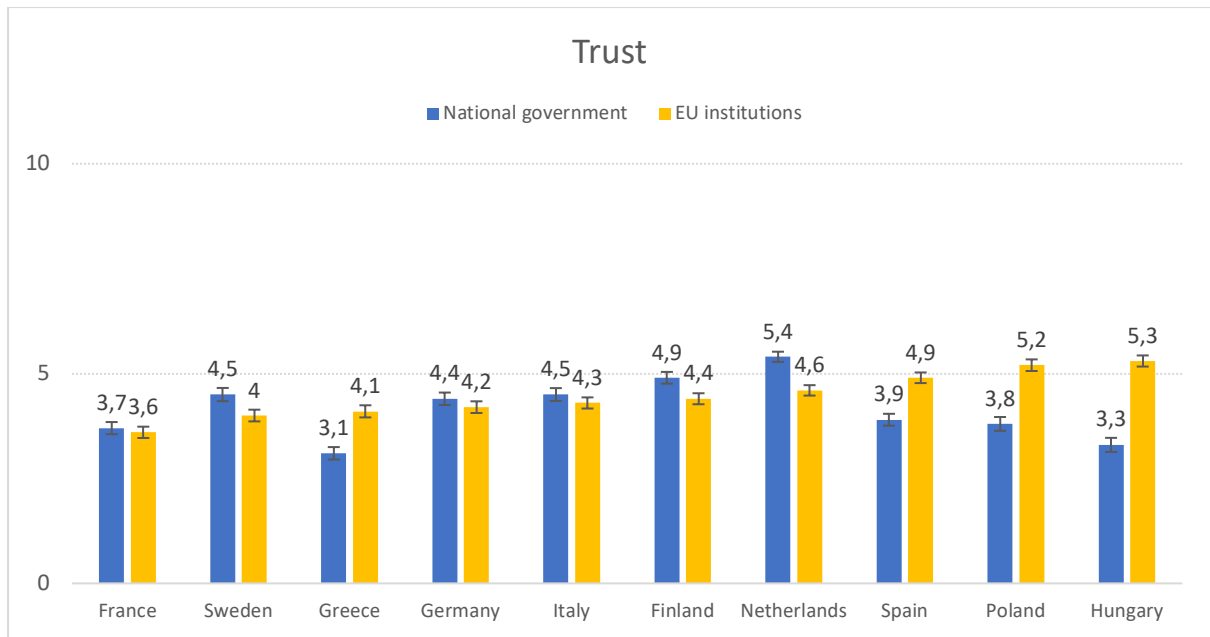


Figure 44 Average trust for national government and EU institutions in selected EU countries.

Note: questions asked: Please indicate your level of trust in the following institutions using a scale from 0 to 10, where '0' means "no trust at all" and '10' means "Complete trust". The (NATIONALITY) government / EU institutions. 99) Don't know. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

A second battery of survey items was used to compare the respondents' trust in other EU MSs, the USA, China and Russia. Results depicted in Figure 45 show that the average trust in other EU MSs is generally higher than average trust in the USA, China and Russia. However, in Greece and Italy the average trust in Russia and China is very close to the average trust in other EU countries.

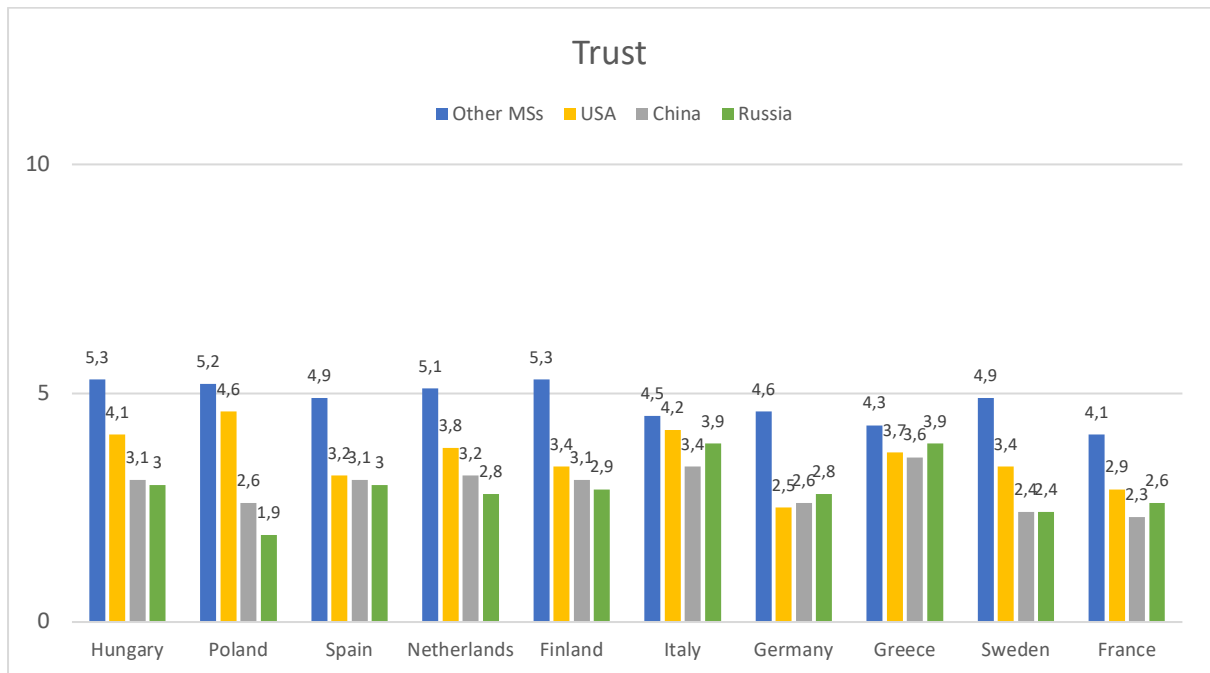


Figure 45 Average trust in other MSs, USA, China, and Russia in selected EU countries.

Note: questions asked: Please indicate your level of trust in the following institutions using a scale from 0 to 10, where '0' means "no trust at all" and '10' means "Complete trust". Other Member States / China / Russia / USA. 99) Don't know. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

6.5 Fears about the process of EU integration: loss of jobs and social security and loss of national identity

According to citizens' views, the EU integration process can be accompanied by many fears, which have to be addressed when discussing further steps forward. Our survey evaluated two different fears associated with the EU. The first relates to material interests and the second to symbolic ones. As material benefits can strengthen trust in the European Union, fears associated with the loss of jobs and social security can potentially hinder it. Many of the fears associated with the process of European Integration are symbolic in nature, however: one such dread is that of losing national identity. We found a clear demarcation among Member States when looking at how those fears are distributed in their population.

When asked how afraid they are that the process of European unification will cause a loss of jobs and social security, there is a generalised fear across the sample countries. Figure 46 shows that the number of respondents declaring themselves afraid of the loss of jobs and social security was only below 50% in Poland (40%), Germany (45%) and Hungary (48%). Unsurprisingly, the percentage skyrockets when focusing on Southern European Member States: Greece (83%), Italy (77%) and Spain (71%). A similar percentage is also present in France (78%). To a lesser extent, this fear also characterises countries with strong social security: Finland (59%), the Netherlands (58%) and Sweden (55%) In this regard, however, the cause might be different: while the fear of losing social rights and jobs in the Southern European Member States is associated with austerity plans, in France and the Nordic countries it is traditionally associated with the EU internal migration of foreign workers.

A lower share of respondents is instead afraid of losing their national identity: 52% of respondents across the EU10 sample share this fear. This is true everywhere but in Germany and in the Netherlands, where symbolic fears trump the material one. Conversely, a clearly defined pattern seems to emerge when looking at the countries where this fear is less present. On average, respondents are less scared of losing their national identity due to EU integration in Poland (61%), Spain (60%) and Hungary (57%), three countries where the democratic transition coincided with accession to the EU. The only notable exception, in this regard, is Greece, where the fear of losing national identity was the strongest (73%) among the countries surveyed.

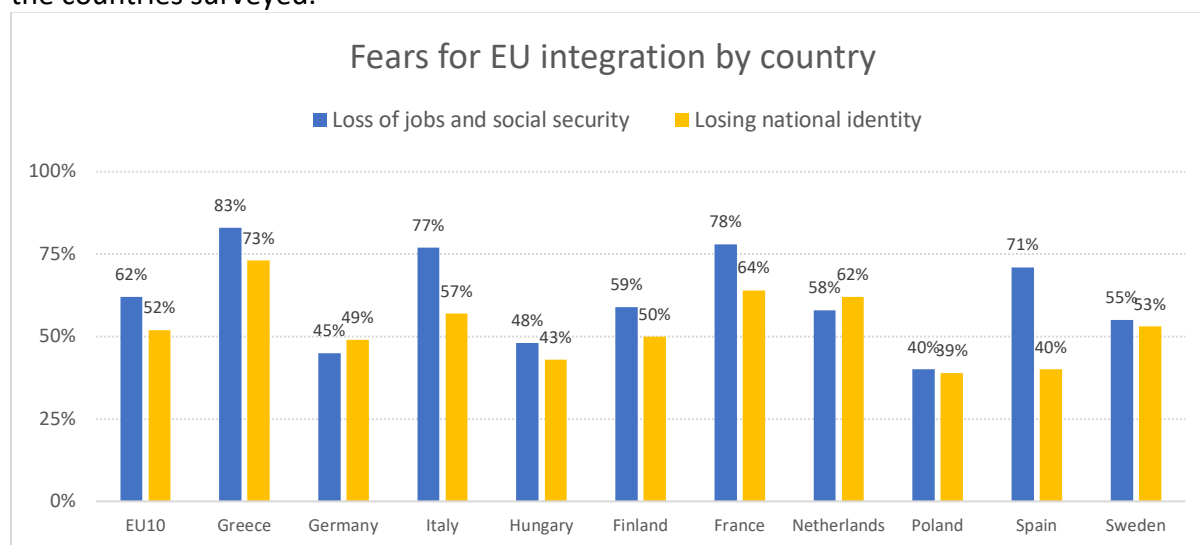


Figure 46 Shares of respondents afraid for EU integration in selected EU countries.

Note: questions: *Some people have fears about the process of European unification. How much are you currently afraid of ... The loss of jobs and social security in (COUNTRY) / The loss of national identity and culture.* 1) Very much afraid; 2) Somewhat afraid; 3) Not much afraid; 4) Not afraid at all; 99) Don't know. 1) + 2) = Afraid; 3) + 4) = Not afraid. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

6.5.1 EU integration fears and objective social status

What are the individual level factors that may dilute these fears? The first is education as depicted in Figure 47. In line with cognitive mobilisation theory (Inglehart 1970) less educated respondents are more afraid that the EU will take away their jobs (74% among those with up to lower secondary education, 60% among those with upper secondary education), than those with a tertiary education (55%), though they also seem to be worried about this. The fear of losing identity follows a similar pattern: 60% of the respondents who achieved up to a lower secondary diploma are afraid in this regard. The percentage decreases in respondents with upper secondary education (53%), while only a minority of respondents who attained a university degree fear the process of integration in this regard (43%).

The second association we found was with occupational class (see Figure 48). When they are unemployed, respondents tend to be more afraid that EU integration is hindering their prospects of gaining a job (80%) than other occupational classes. The same fear is shared by a large majority of service and production workers (68%). Similarly, the fear of losing national identity is also relatively strong among both the unemployed and the service and production workers (57%). Socio-cultural specialists appear less scared about the consequences of the integration process.

The EU has in place programmes to improve the employability of both production workers who lose their jobs because of trade integration and the unemployed in general: the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund and the European Social Fund. We could expect that those who are aware of EU co-financed social programmes which aim to improve the quality of service in the area where they live tend to be less scared about the integration process. By looking at Figure 49, our data provides preliminary evidence supporting this intuition concerning both the fear of losing jobs and social security and the fear of losing national identity.

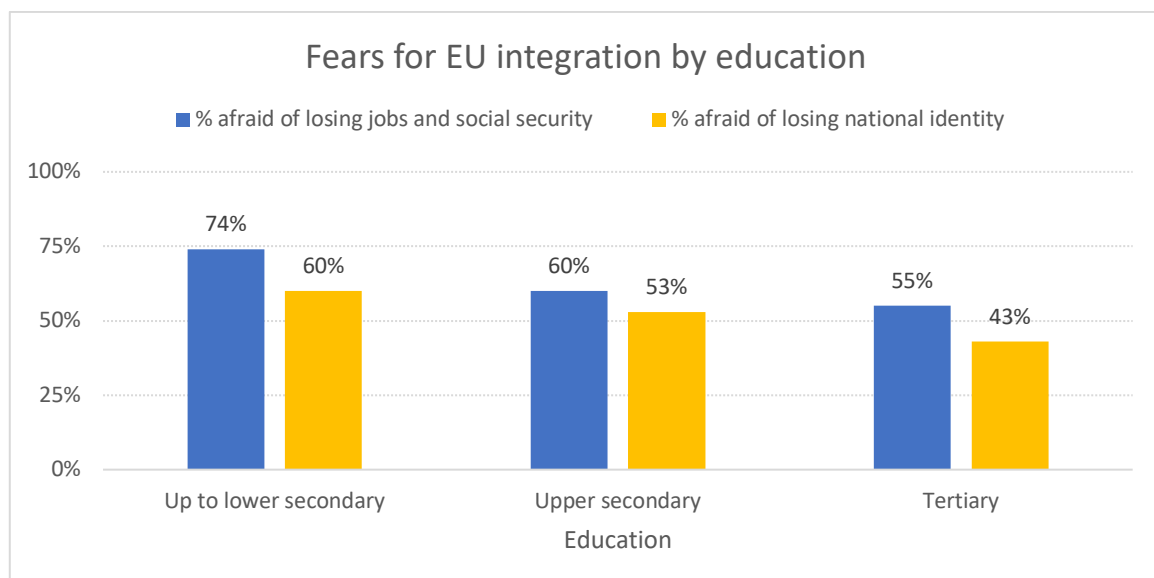


Figure 47 Share of respondents afraid for EU integration by education levels in EU10 countries.

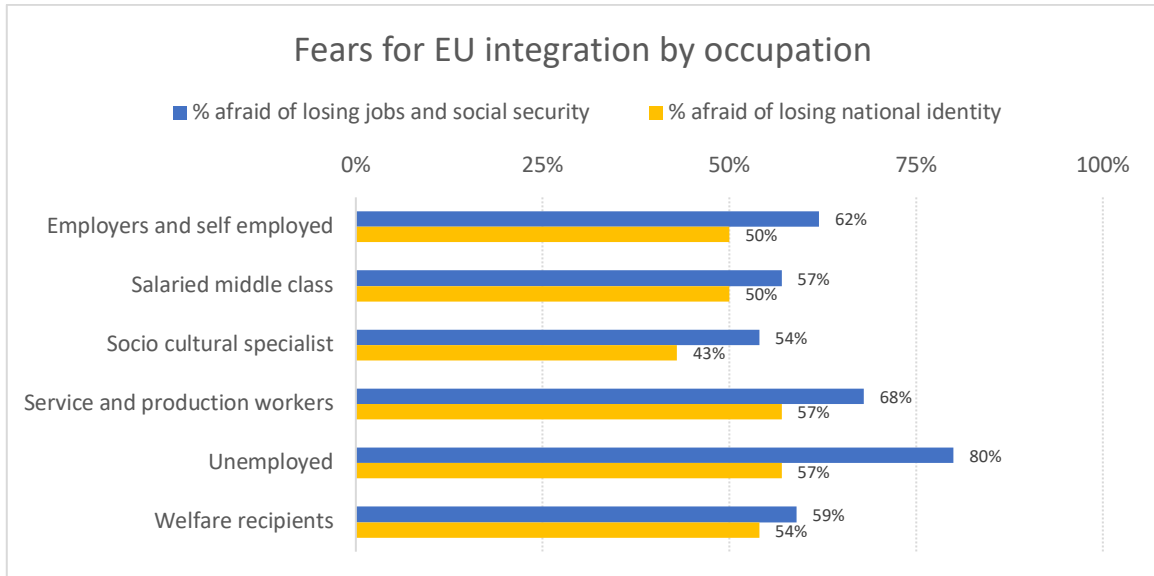


Figure 48 Share of respondents afraid for EU integration by education levels in EU10 countries.

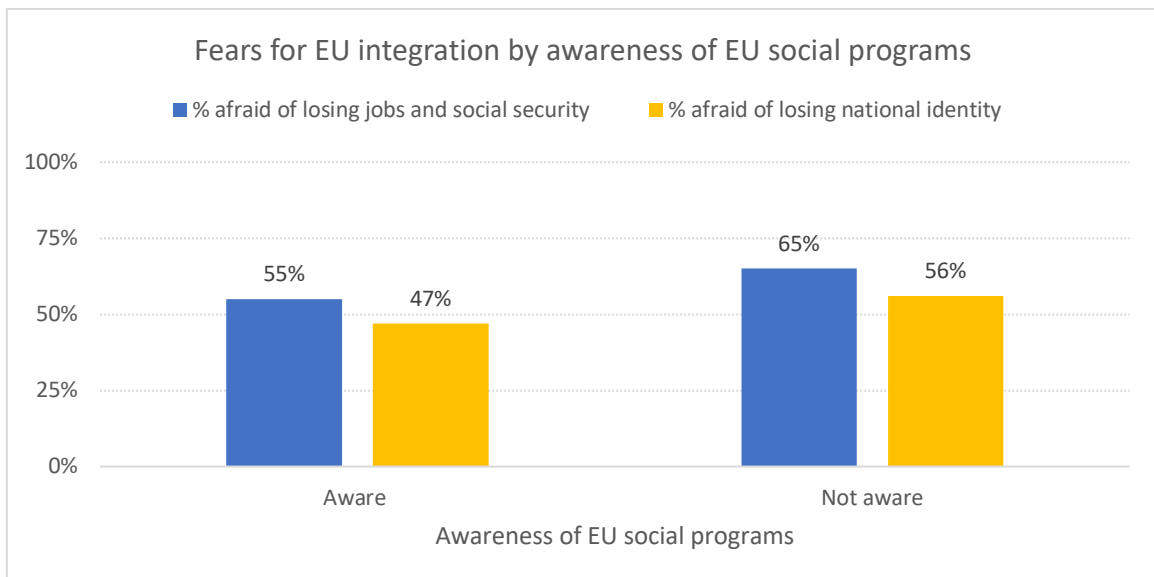


Figure 49 Share of respondents afraid of EU integration by awareness of EU social programs.

Note: Europe provides financial support to region and cities so that they can improve their social and economic situation. Have you heard about any EU co-financed projects to improve the area where you live and cater the needs of people like you? 1) Yes; 2) No; 99) Don't know. "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

6.5.2 EU integration fears and subjective perceptions

In addition to objective factors such as a respondent's socio-economic status, a citizen's subjective perceptions are also related to their fears about European integration. In particular, we found a significant association between citizens' fear and their perceptions of intertemporal material deprivation and cultural threat. As depicted in Figure 50, people who perceive their social position as worse than in the past tend to be more scared of losing their jobs and social security through the European Union (73%) than those who do not now feel

themselves more deprived than five years ago (57%). The perception of having lost ground in society also seems to foster respondents' fears that the EU is a threat to their country's national identity, although to a lesser extent. Among those who feel materially deprived compared to the past, 59% also share the belief that EU integration will foster an erosion of their country's national identity. This share decreases to 49% among those who do not feel themselves to be deprived.

Respondents' fears of losing national identity are, however, mostly associated with individual perceptions that immigration has increased compared to the past, and that this is a threat to a country's culture (see Figure 51). Those who share this perception tend to be more scared about the negative consequences of the EU integration on their national identity (75%) than those who do not feel culturally threatened by immigration (40%).

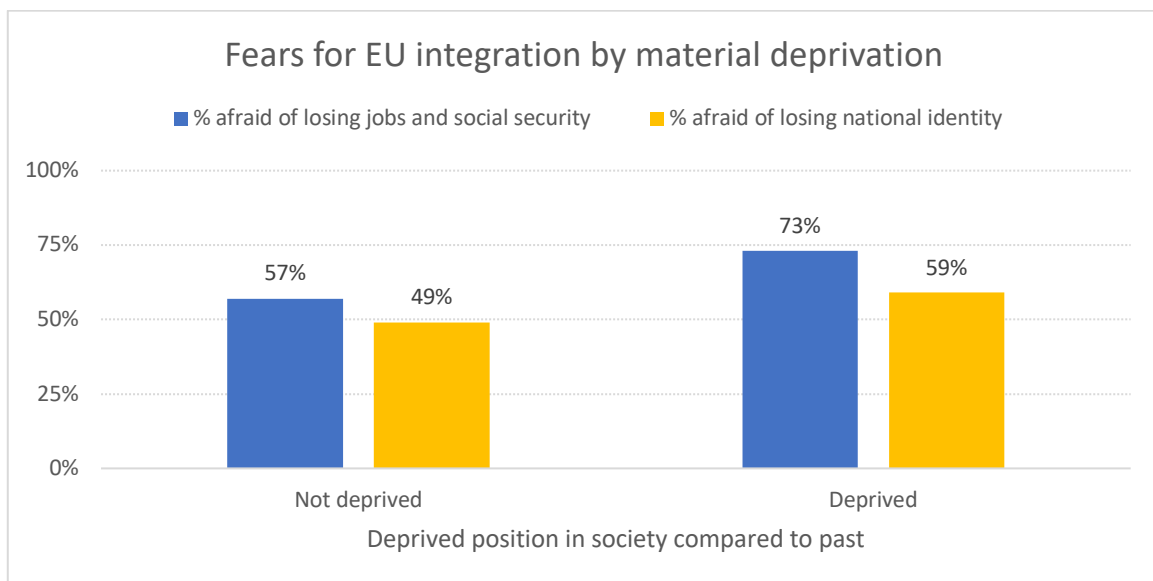


Figure 50 Share of respondents afraid for EU integration by intertemporal material deprivation in EU10 countries.

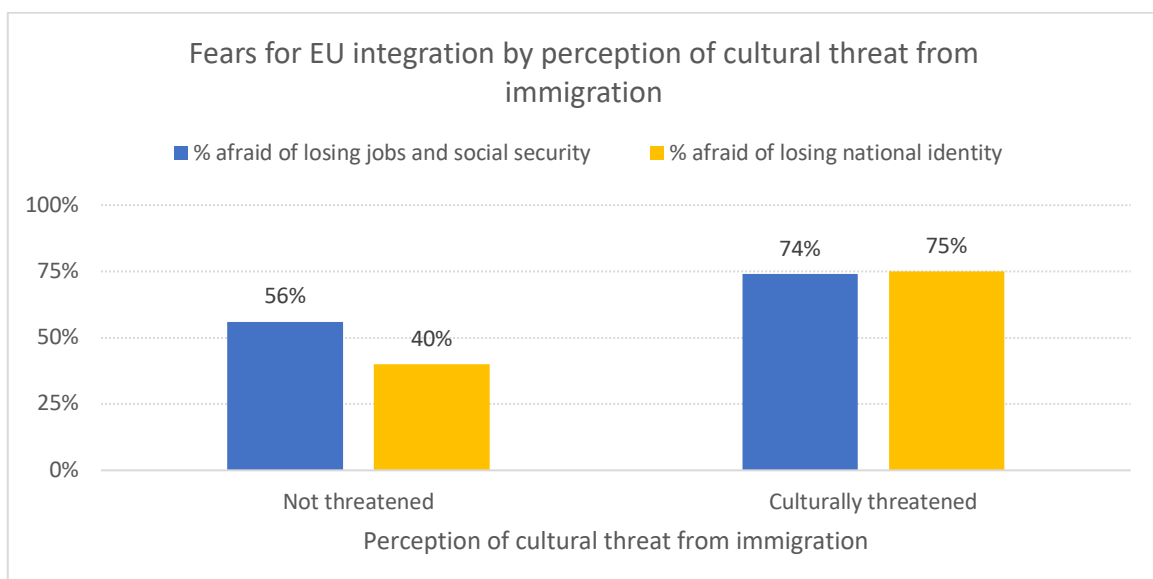


Figure 51 Share of respondents afraid for EU integration by perception of being culturally threatened by immigration in EU10 countries.

6.5.3 EU integration fears across time

Thanks to the 2016 REScEU survey we can also perform a longitudinal comparison of fears towards European integration in six of the EU10 countries. Figure 52 suggests that when it comes to the fear of losing of jobs and social security results show that the share of respondents afraid has grown in Italy and France, where it was already very high. On the contrary in Spain, Poland, and Germany this preoccupation associated with the unification process has decreased significantly. In Sweden no significant difference emerged. Looking instead at the fear for the loss of national identity and culture, smaller differences emerge in all countries but in Spain where it decreased of 24 percentage points. This worry has grown in Italy (+5%) and Sweden (+5%), remained stable in Germany and France, and decreased in Poland (-4%).

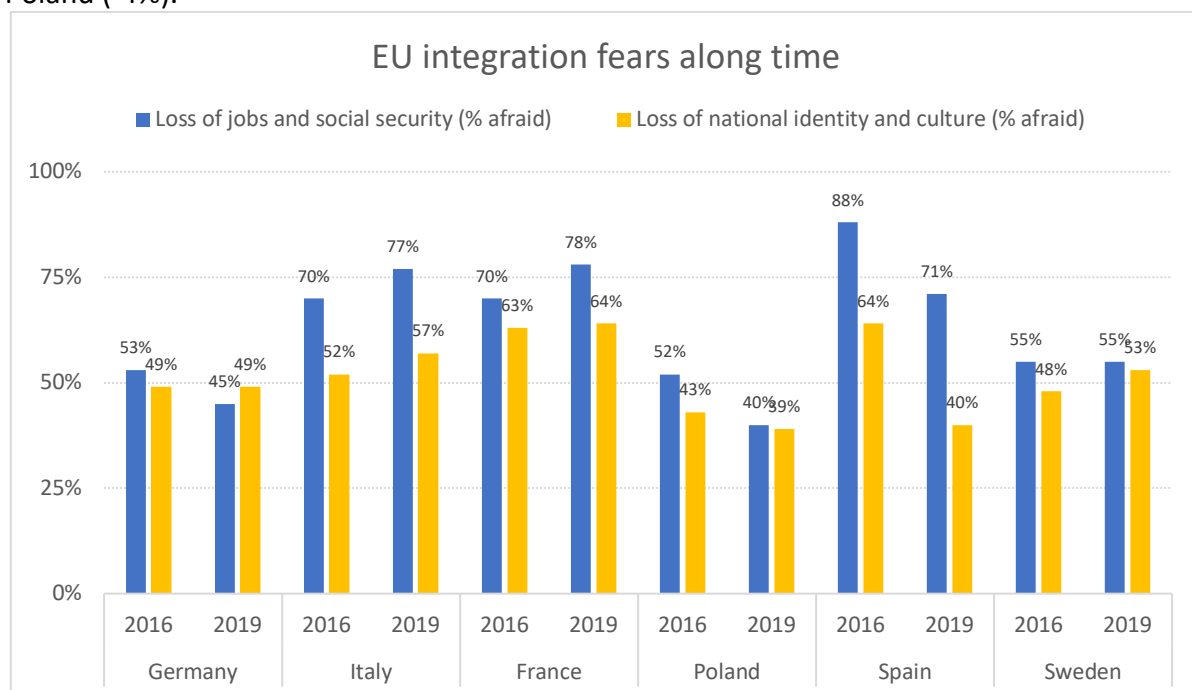


Figure 52 Share of respondents afraid of EU integration in selected EU countries in 2016 and 2019.

6.6 Why some member states fared better during the crisis?

As discussed above, during the Great Recession many of the tensions between Northern and Southern European Member States were epitomised by the popular narrative counter-posing “Northern saints” and “Southern sinners”. What do the publics think about this narrative? Do they buy it or not? To gauge the relevance of this line of conflict within the public opinions of EU10 countries we asked them whether they agree or not with three different statements on the reason why some member states have done better than others during the crisis: ‘the weaker member states have mismanaged their economy and public finances’, the ‘common currency brought more advantages to economically stronger member states’, and ‘the EU policies of fiscal austerity have worsened social and economic problems of weaker member states’.

Figure 53 tells us that the view that weaker member states have mismanaged their economy and public finances is predominant across the respondents of all EU10 countries investigated, with at least 70% of agreement (France) and a maximum of 87% in Sweden. Also the idea that the common currency brought advantages to economically stronger member

states is not particularly controversial if we consider that a large majority of respondents supports this view in all countries. Even in the Netherlands 57% of respondents agrees with this statement. Finally, the idea that financial austerity worsened social and economic problems of weaker member states is shared across countries by a large proportion of respondents. The only country with a majority disagreeing with this belief is indeed the Netherlands.

On the whole we can say that all three statements are widely perceived as concomitant truths across the EU: weaker member states have mismanaged their budgets, but the Euro has favoured stronger economies and financial austerity has not been an effective solution that has instead worsened the problems of poorer member states.

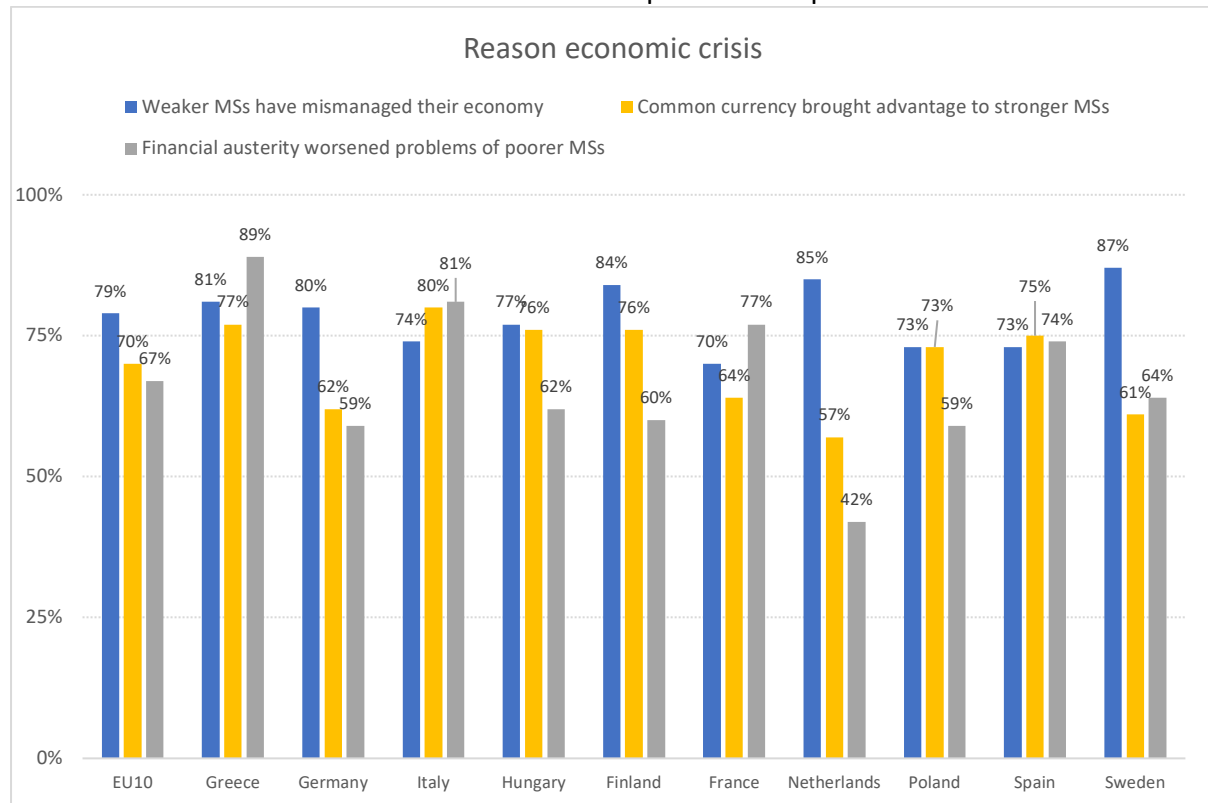


Figure 53 Public opinion beliefs on the reasons for the economic crisis in EU10 countries.

Note: question: *During the crisis some member states have done better than others (e.g. in terms of unemployment, poverty or growth rates). Please indicate to what extent do you agree with the following statements: 1) The weaker member states have mismanaged their economy and public finances; 2) The common currency has brought more advantages to the economically stronger member states; 3) The EU policies of fiscal austerity have worsened social and economic problems of weaker member states.* Answers: Strongly agree; Somewhat agree; Somewhat disagree; Strongly disagree; Don't know. Percentage shown: Strongly agree + Somewhat agree. Don't know responses were excluded from the analysis.

6.6 What comes before? National and European identity

In the view of its founders, the EU should be considered the home of all European peoples, but how many people in Europe currently perceive themselves (also) as European citizens? According to our results shown in Figure 54, some 29% of respondents in our sample identify with their nation only, refusing a European identity. Mixed (European and national) identities comprise 64%, while only 2% of respondents see themselves as only European citizens. At the country-level, exclusive nationalists are mostly concentrated in Northern Europe, especially

in Sweden (41%) and the Netherlands (39%). The number of respondents with this sort of multi-layered identity is higher among peripheral Member States, both in Eastern and Southern Europe: Greece (72%), Spain (74%) and Hungary (77%).

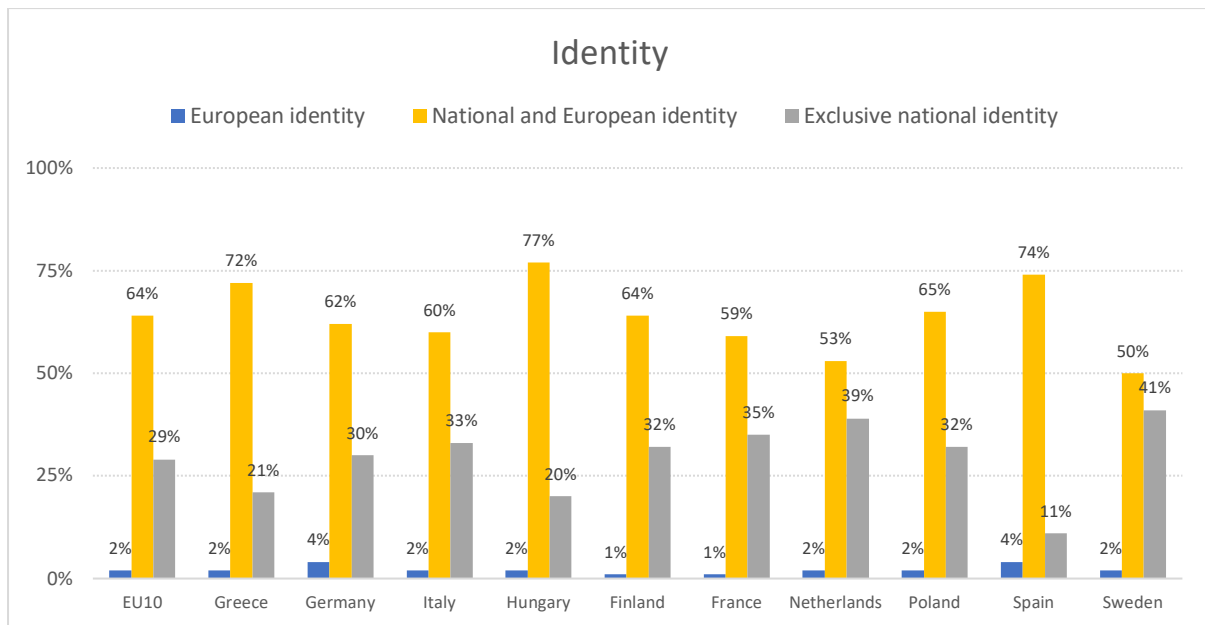


Figure 54 Respondents' identity in EU10 countries.

Note: Do you see yourself as ...? 1) (NATIONALITY) only; 2) (NATIONALITY) and European; 3) European and (NATIONALITY); 4) European only; 5) None of the above; 99) Don't know. 2) + 3) = "National and European identity". "None of the above" and "Don't know" responses were excluded from the analysis.

6.8 Supranational political efficacy

An indicator of the health of the civil society and the democratic process is political efficacy: citizens' trust in their ability to change the course of government and belief that they have the skills to understand and influence political affairs. Citizens with a low efficacy, believe that their actions cannot affect the government and their political leaders. Instead, citizens with high political efficacy, believe they matter for the political process and can affect the government.

We investigated two aspects of supranational political efficacy, as reported in Figure 55. The first is a socio-tropic form and evaluates whether respondents believe their country's voice counts in the EU. The second is an ego-tropic measure of efficacy and asks respondents whether the voice of people like them counts in the EU. Some differences emerged in the answers to these two questions. A majority of respondents in Germany (84%), France (73%), the Netherlands (57%), Poland (59%), Spain (62%), and Sweden (71%) thinks that their country's voice influences EU level political processes. Instead, the opposite is true in Greece (33%), Italy (32%), and to a less extent in Hungary (47%) and Finland (47%). So apart from the two Southern member states, in all other remaining countries a majority or a large share of the population believes that their country has a powerful voice in Brussels.

On the contrary the self-perception of EU level political efficacy is considerably lower in all countries. Only in Sweden a majority of respondents (54%) agrees with the statement that their voice counts in the EU. In the remaining countries the minority holding this belief spans from the 20% of Italians to the 39% of Polish respondents. On the whole, these figures

suggest that the surveyed publics perceive national elites as capable to influence supranational politics, but also that the democratic deficit the EU suffers from is still there. Citizens feel detached from Brussels and unable to have a direct say in defining the direction of the EU.

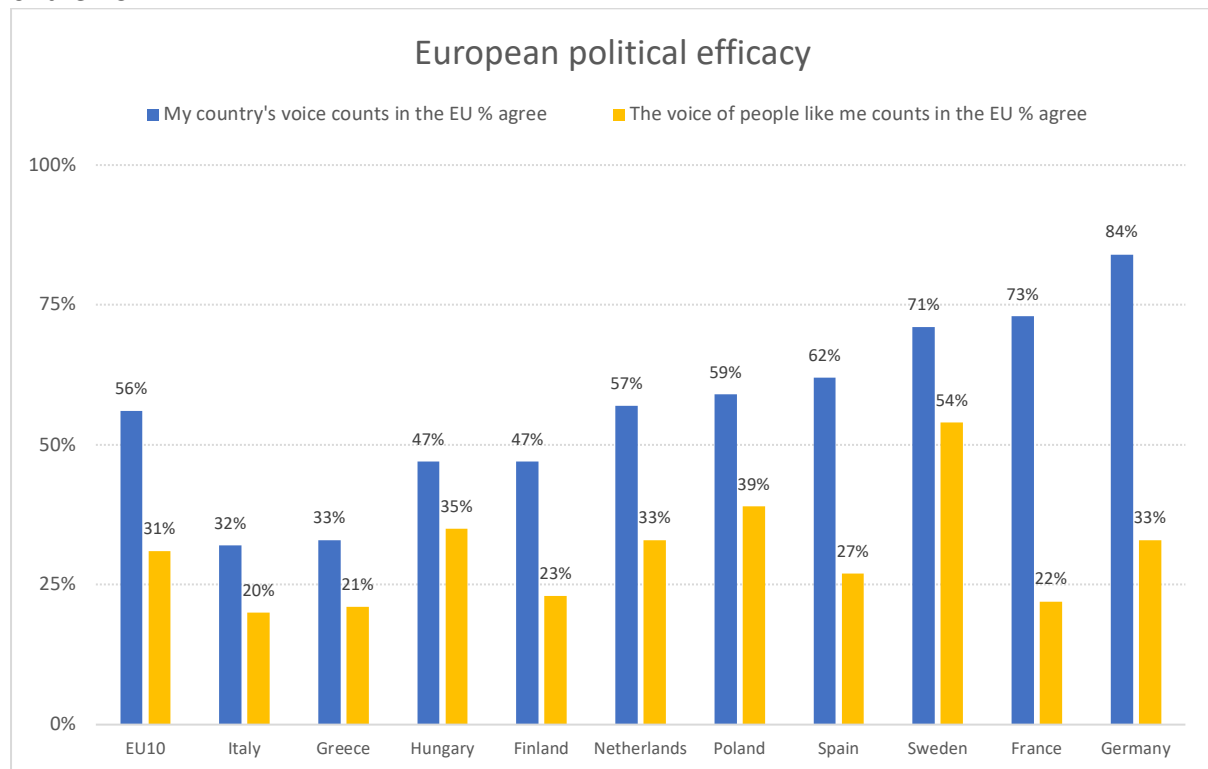


Figure 55 Share of respondents agreeing with supranational political efficacy in EU10 countries.

Note: question: Please tell me to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: 1) [COUNTRY]'s voice counts in the EU; 2) The voice of people like me counts in the EU. Answers: 1) Strongly agree; 2) Somewhat agree; 3) Somewhat disagree; 4) Strongly disagree; 99) Don't know. Percentage shown: Strongly agree + Somewhat agree. Don't know responses were excluded from the analysis.

6.9 EU's most positive results

We asked our respondents which is the first and second most positive results obtained by the EU. In Figure 56 below we present aggregated responses for the whole sample and in Table 10 each country separately. Among the 11 options, 'keeping the EU together in spite of the crisis' and 'safeguarding competition and freedom of movement' are the two items receiving the highest (17%) of support. A third most positive result according to respondents is 'protecting EU interests in the world' with 14%. These are the three answer categories that are more popular also in the sample countries taken one by one. Keeping the EU together is the most positive result according to Greeks (23%), Germans (17%), Italians (23%), and France (21%). Instead, 'safeguarding competition and freedom of movement' stands out in Hungary (21%), Finland (26%), the Netherlands (19%), Spain (18%) and in Sweden (16%) where it ties with 'protecting EU interests around the world'. This last positive result is also popular among Polish respondents (14%), who equally supported another important EU outcome: reducing disparities among member states and regions.

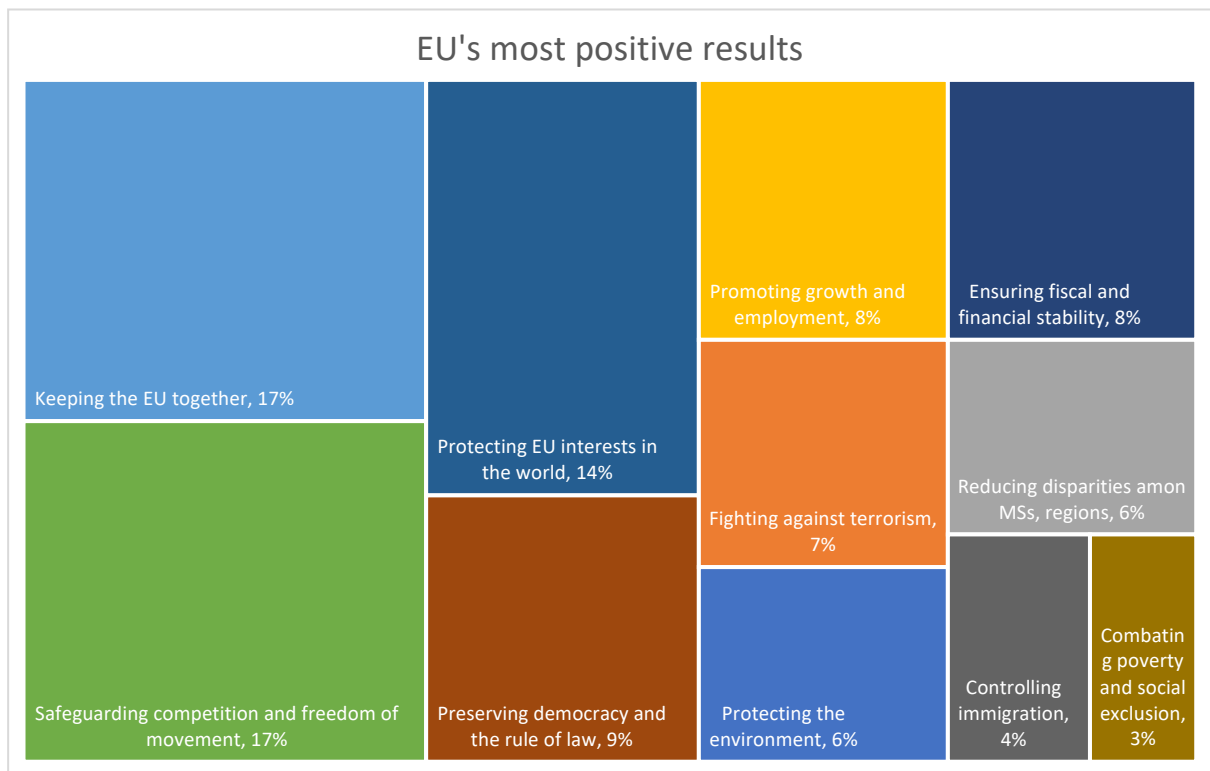


Figure 56 EU's most positive result in EU10 countries.

Note: In which of the following issues would you say that the EU has obtained the most positive results?/ And in your opinion, in which of the same issues has the EU obtained its second most positive result? Please select the first issue that applies from the list below: 1) Protecting the environment; 2) Fighting against; terrorism; 4) Reducing disparities among member states, regions; 5) Promoting growth and employment; 6) Keeping the EU together in spite of the crisis; 7) Safeguarding competition and freedom of movement; 8) Ensuring fiscal and financial stability; 9) Preserving democracy and the rule of law; 10) Controlling immigration; 11) Combating poverty and social exclusion; 12) Protecting European interests in the world; 99) Don't Know. Don't know responses were excluded from the analysis. Answers to the first and second most positive results questions were aggregated.

Most positive result	Greece	Germany	Italy	Hungary	Finland	France	Netherlands	Poland	Spain	Sweden
Protecting the environment	6%	5%	7%	6%	5%	4%	5%	9%	4%	8%
Fighting against terrorism	5%	6%	10%	5%	6%	10%	10%	6%	11%	6%
Reducing disparities among MSs, regions	5%	4%	5%	7%	5%	6%	5%	14%	7%	5%
Promoting growth and employment	8%	9%	5%	12%	5%	3%	8%	13%	6%	9%
Keeping the EU together	23%	17%	23%	17%	15%	21%	18%	10%	16%	13%
Safeguarding competition and freedom of movement	12%	15%	14%	21%	26%	15%	19%	8%	18%	16%
Ensuring fiscal and financial stability	9%	8%	7%	7%	9%	7%	8%	5%	9%	10%
Preserving democracy and the rule of law	8%	13%	10%	7%	9%	10%	8%	11%	10%	9%
Controlling immigration	2%	4%	5%	4%	3%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%
Combating poverty and social exclusion	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	1%	6%	3%	3%
Protecting EU interests in the world	18%	16%	12%	10%	13%	18%	15%	14%	13%	16%

Table 10 EU's most positive result according EU10 respondents.

7. Transnationalism

A number of recent works have emphasised how European transnationalism, direct and indirect interactions with other European citizens, may reduce fears towards foreigners, explain citizens' diffuse support for the EU, their identification with Europe, and support for European solidarity (among others, Kuhn 2015; Ciornei and Recchi 2017). Following this stream of research, this survey includes various items aimed to tap into transnationalism related to cross-border experiences within the EU. We consider three main analytical dimensions to this concept: *background*, registering whether respondents have a close relative born or living in another EU member state; *practices*, identifying the direct contacts individuals engage in with people living in other EU MSs; and, *human capital*, which refers to cognitive skills that should facilitate mobility across Europe, as well as indirect interactions with other European cultures. The transnationalism index is comprised of the sum of all fourteen items listed in the table below and rescaled from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 1. Concerning the ascriptive dimension of the concept, background is less varied across respondents compared to the items for the other two dimensions, which are given by the different life chances and experiences characterising respondents.

Dimensions	Items	EU10 %
Background	More than one citizenship	2.4%
	Parent born in another EU MS	10.4%
	Spouse/partner born in another EU MS	7.6%
	Family member or close relative living in another EU MS	30.9%
Practices	Friends from other EU MSs	50.5%
	Often communicate with foreign people living in other EU MSs	34.7%
	Job involves contacts with organisations or people who live in other EU MSs	23.1%
	In your workplace you are in contact with people from other EU MSs	33.4%
	Lived in another EU MS for at least 3 months	15.8%
Human capital	Visited another EU MS in the last 12 months	51.9%
	Read newspapers and online journals in a language different from your mother tongue	40.8%
	Watch TV programs, series or films in foreign languages	57.9%
	Enjoy reading foreign books in their original language	25.4%
	Purchase goods and services using a language other than your mother tongue	53.0%

N 15,149

Table 11 Share of respondents for each component of transnationalism in EU10 countries.

The cross-country variation of the average level of Transnationalism is higher in Greece, Sweden and Finland, and lower in France and Italy, an order that is also generally approximated when looking at each single dimension.

Country	Average Transnationalism (0-1)	Average Background (0-1)	Average Practices (0-1)	Average Human capital (0-1)
Finland	0.36	0.11	0.35	0.64
France	0.22	0.12	0.26	0.26
Germany	0.26	0.10	0.34	0.29
Greece	0.39	0.17	0.41	0.59
Hungary	0.27	0.13	0.29	0.37
Italy	0.24	0.11	0.29	0.32
Netherlands	0.32	0.09	0.35	0.51
Poland	0.30	0.17	0.35	0.37
Spain	0.29	0.12	0.35	0.36
Sweden	0.38	0.15	0.39	0.59

Note: averages of additive indexes rescaled from 0, no Transnationalism, to 1, maximum Transnationalism.

Rather than the distribution per country, it is more interesting to look at the association between transnationalism and traditional measures of cosmopolitanism: support for the EU, solidarity, and attitudes towards migrants. The results reported in the next six figures do match the expectations, or the results obtained in previous studies. In the pooled sample the average level of transnationalism is indeed significantly higher among those respondents who think that their country has benefited from EU membership (0,312) compared to their counterparts holding a negative opinion of integration (0,228). Moreover, citizens perceiving themselves exclusively as nationals report a lower level of cross-border experiences than those identifying partially or totally with Europe.



Figure 57 Average transnationalism by opinion on EU membership in EU10 countries.

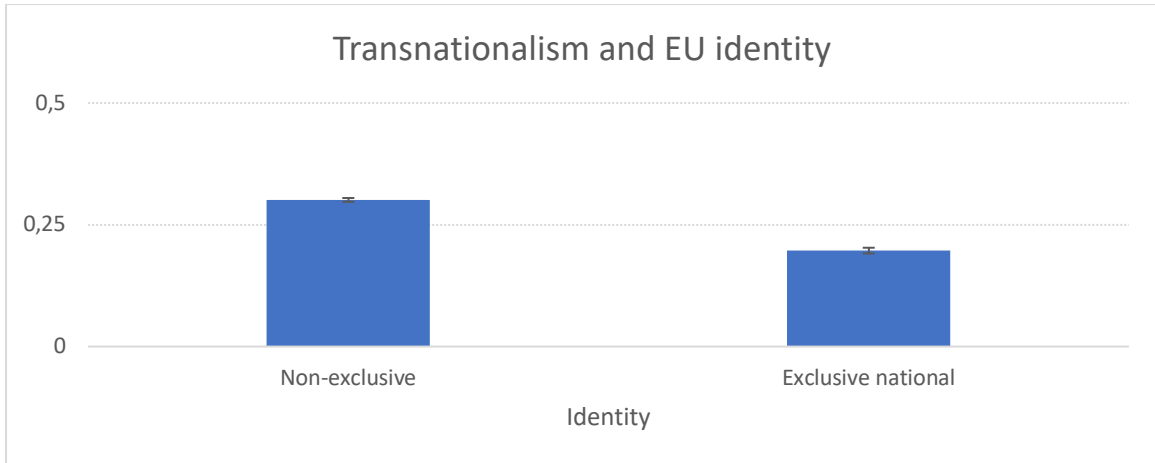


Figure 58 Average transnationalism by respondents' identity in EU10 countries.

Individuals who agree with the creation of an EU level fund to help countries facing an economic crisis have a higher level of transnationalism than those who disagree with the implementation of this policy (see Figure 59).

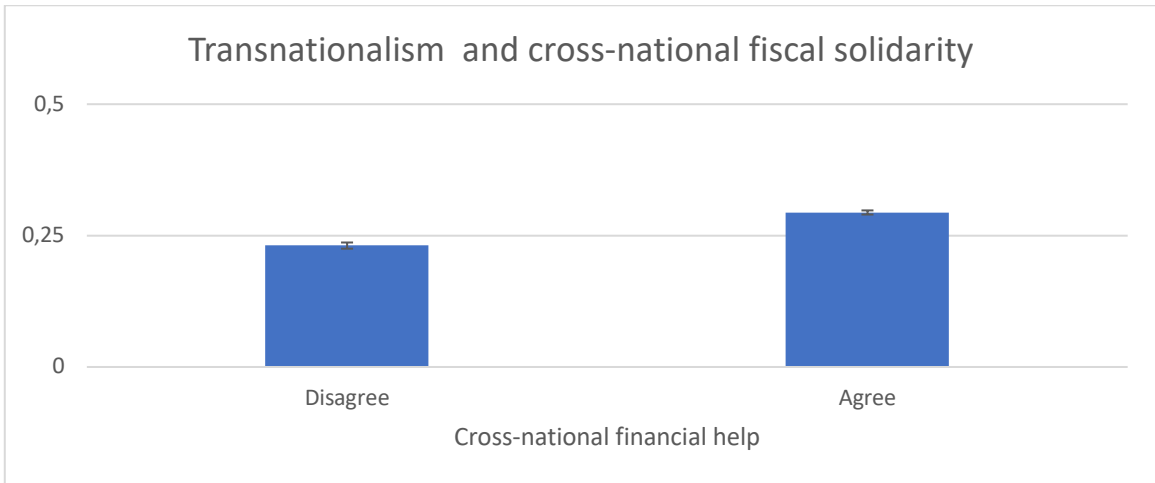


Figure 59 Average transnationalism by respondents' opinion on cross-national solidarity in EU10 countries.

There is an even stronger association between transnationalism and solidarity when looking at preferences for European social citizenship in Figure 60. Respondents who support access to social security benefits on behalf of other EU citizens indeed show a higher level of Transnationalism than those who disagree with the status quo.

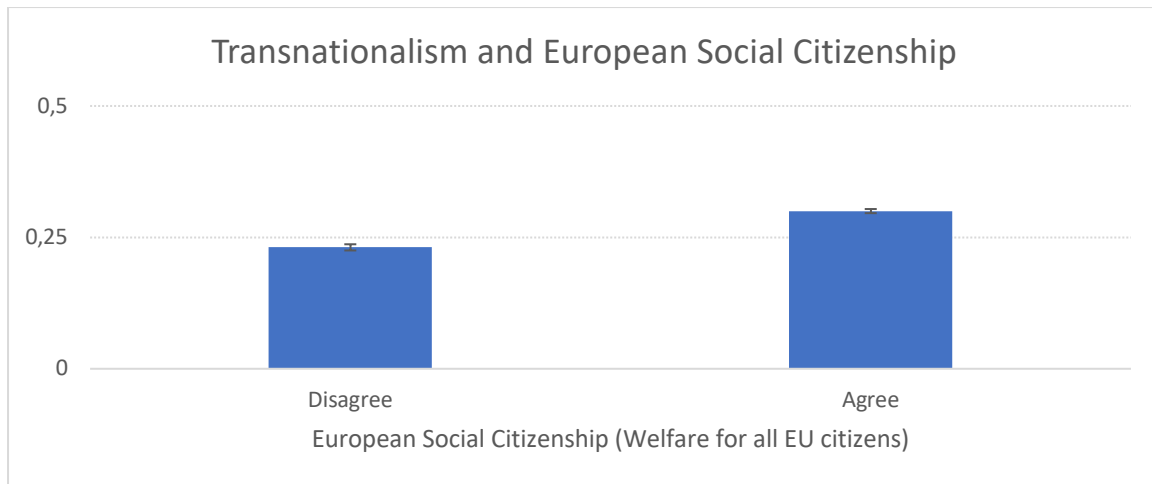


Figure 60 Average transnationalism by opinion on European Social Citizenship in EU10 countries.

Finally, it is worth looking at the average level of transnationalism among citizens who feel (or don't feel) threatened by immigration in Figure 61. Again, our survey shows that real and virtual cross-border experiences have the potential to dilute fears about immigrants. When looking at both the economic and the cultural threat posed by foreigners, individuals who feel less threatened have (on average) a higher level of Transnationalism. Those who tend to think that immigration is good for the economy show an average level of Transnationalism of 0.316, versus 0.218 of those who think immigration is bad. Similarly, respondents who think that their culture is enriched by immigration have an average Transnationalism level of 0.314, while those that think they undermine their culture score 0.241.

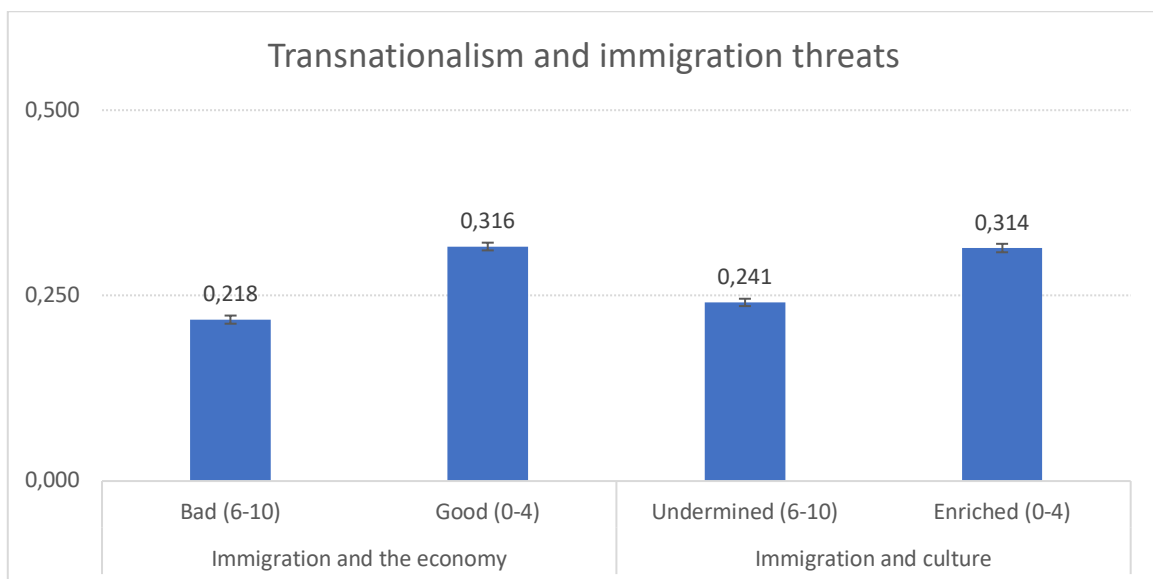


Figure 61 Average transnationalism by respondents' perceptions of immigration threats in EU10 countries.

7.1 Valuing EU membership

In this battery of questions, we asked respondents their level of agreement on six different attitudes towards the EU. The first two items in table 12 tap the identitarian dimension of EU support by asking agreement on whether the respondent is proud to be a European citizen or whether he/she considers the diversity of cultures, languages, and traditions within Europe as a positive value. The third and fourth items instead are related to the performance of the EU. They ask whether the respondent considers EU citizenship as having widened the range of opportunities and rights, and whether their vote in European elections gives a small contribution to select those who govern in Brussels. The two final questions instead look at the future of the EU by asking respondents whether they think the EU should care more about external global threats than about internal divisions, and whether the EU lacks a shared and forward-looking vision about the future.

Responses to all these questions depict a rather positive view of the EU in the ten countries surveyed. Indeed, 72% of respondents are proud of being European citizens, with a peak in Eastern Europe with 84% in Hungary and 82% in Poland. Also, the positive value of the diversity of Europe's cultures, languages, and traditions is not controversial across our sample: 81% holds this belief, with the lowest share found in the Netherlands (73%) and the highest in Hungary (90%). Similarly, the performance of the EU is positively evaluated. The idea that EU citizenship has enlarged the scope of rights and opportunities of people is shared by 74% of respondents, with clear majorities in each country investigated. The question on the contribution given by a vote in European elections is also agreed upon by a majority in each country but Finland where the sample is split exactly in two. Finally, on the visions of the future of the EU we find exactly the same level of agreement on the two items. The idea that the EU should devote its attention to fight economic and political threats originating from the external world rather than to its internal divisions is shared by 71% of EU10 respondents, with small variations across countries. Also, the belief that the EU lacks a shared and forward-looking vision about the future is shared by 71% of the overall sample and has a majority in each country. Still, this idea is more contested in the Netherlands (54%) and in Hungary (56%).

To sum up, it emerges a positive evaluation of the EU both in identitarian and performance terms, and the request of focusing on external threats rather than on internal conflicts and to define a shared vision of the future of the EU.

Country	I am proud to be a European citizen	The diversity of Europe's cultures, languages and traditions is a positive value	EU citizenship has widened the range of rights and opportunities of people	My vote in the European elections gives a small contribution to the selection of who governs in Brussels	The EU should care more about external global threats than about divisions	Nowadays the EU lacks a shared and forward-looking vision about the future
	% agree	% agree	% agree	% agree	% agree	% agree
EU10	72%	81%	74%	67%	71%	71%
Greece	72%	80%	75%	67%	72%	80%
Germany	64%	81%	70%	60%	67%	83%
Italy	65%	77%	69%	66%	73%	76%
Hungary	84%	90%	83%	63%	66%	56%
Finland	72%	82%	73%	50%	65%	71%
France	63%	79%	61%	83%	74%	83%
Netherlands	61%	73%	66%	64%	69%	54%
Poland	82%	82%	86%	72%	82%	76%
Spain	81%	88%	78%	71%	70%	59%
Sweden	74%	77%	75%	75%	69%	72%

Table 12 Public support for six EU attitudes in EU10 countries.

Note: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? 1) The diversity of Europe's cultures, languages and traditions is a positive value; 2) EU citizenship has widened the range of rights and opportunities of people; 3) The EU should care more about the big political and economic threats originating from the external world than about the internal tensions and divisions between its member states; 4) I am proud to be a European citizen; 5) Nowadays the EU lacks a shared and forward-looking vision about the future; 6) My vote in the European elections gives a small contribution to the selection of who governs in Brussels. Answers: 1) Strongly agree; 2) Somewhat agree; 3) Somewhat disagree; 4) Strongly disagree; 99) Don't know. Percentage shown: Strongly agree + Somewhat agree. Don't know responses were excluded from the analysis.

7.2 How to strengthen EU citizenship?

From a forward-looking perspective we investigated what would enhance respondents' feeling of being a European citizen. To do so we asked them to select one among six different policy options to further their feeling of being part of a community: a harmonised European social protection system; earmarking a fraction of their income tax directly to the EU; more support for studying, working, or moving in another EU member state after retirement; more tangible EU support to the social needs of people; to enhance work training and life-long learning programs; or to delegate social policy at the EU level.

Figure 62 shows that in the overall sample three categories attract about two-thirds of responses: the harmonisation of social protection schemes towards European standards and common principles (20%), a common scheme supporting work training for young people and life-long learning for adults (21%), and the residual category comprising those who do not know how to answer (22%). Then we find a set of three categories with a similar share of responses. 12% ask for more EU support for moving in another member state to study, work, or for retirement. Instead, 12% ask for more EU support for their social needs, and 12% would

like the EU to take more decisions on social policy. Finally, the answer category favoured the least regards the possibility of earmarking a portion of the income tax directly to the EU instead of the country of origin/ residence of the interviewed. This ranking of answer categories remains basically the same in each country with few exceptions (see Table 13).

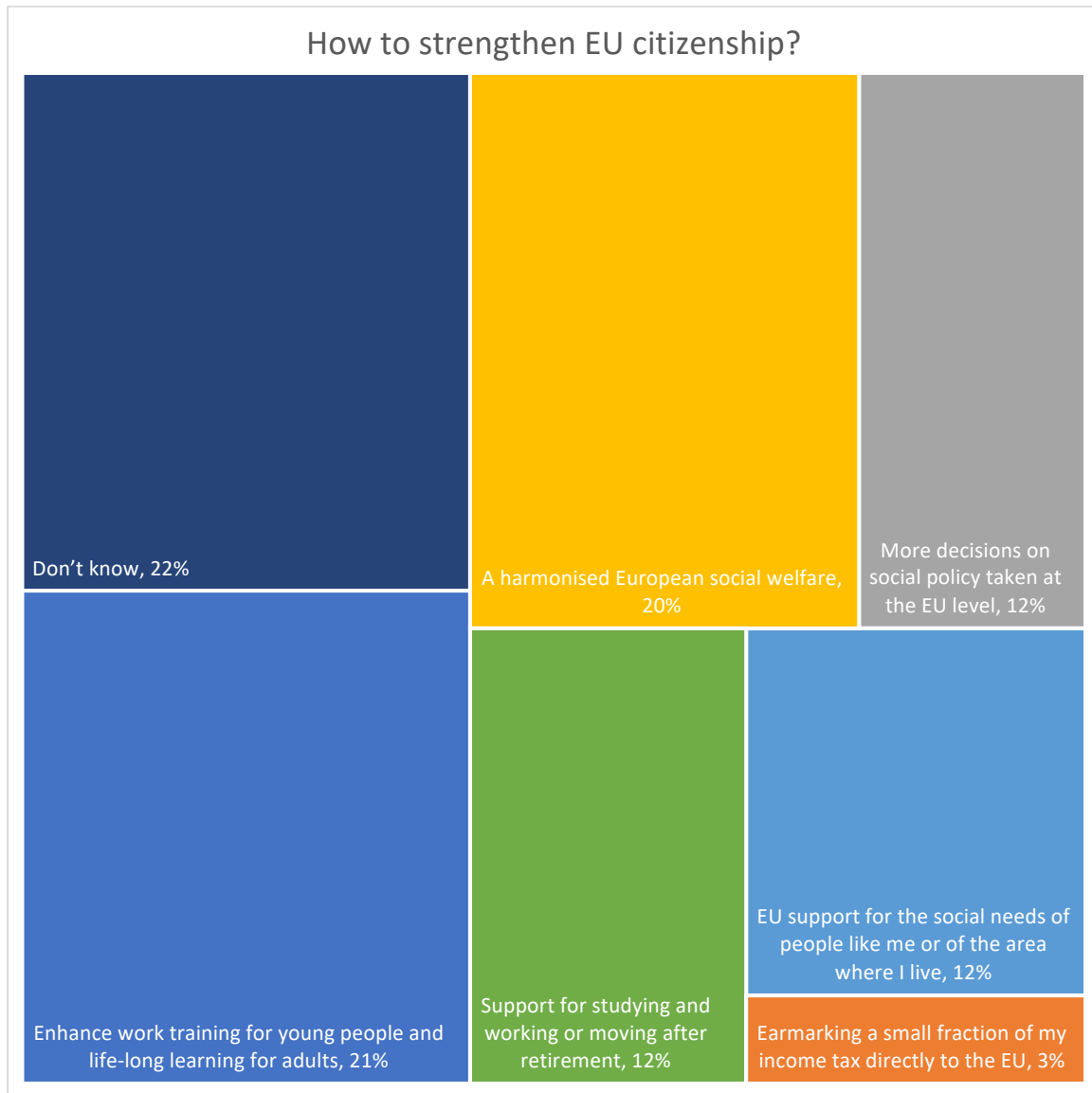


Figure 62 Public support for different ways of strengthening EU membership in EU10 countries.

Country	Enhance work training for young people and life-long learning for adults	A harmonised European social welfare	More decisions on social policy taken at the EU level	Support for studying and working or moving after retirement	EU support for the social needs of people like me or of the area where I live	Earmarking a small fraction of my income tax directly to the EU	Don't know	Total
Greece	30.2%	19.4%	14.5%	10.4%	12.0%	3.8%	9.6%	100%
Germany	20.3%	21.0%	13.1%	7.8%	11.2%	1.8%	24.8%	100%
Italia	22.9%	17.5%	10.6%	14.0%	13.2%	3.5%	18.3%	100%
Hungary	11.9%	19.7%	17.4%	16.6%	16.0%	4.7%	13.8%	100%
Finland	16.0%	20.8%	3.7%	15.3%	17.9%	3.8%	22.5%	100%
France	20.8%	21.6%	9.2%	8.4%	9.2%	2.8%	28.0%	100%
Netherlands	12.2%	17.9%	8.8%	13.6%	12.1%	2.8%	32.5%	100%
Poland	16.9%	21.0%	9.5%	18.5%	13.4%	3.3%	17.4%	100%
Spain	24.5%	20.0%	17.5%	11.5%	10.7%	2.7%	13.1%	100%
Sweden	17.4%	19.0%	4.7%	16.1%	8.9%	2.4%	31.5%	100%

Table 13 Public support for different ways of strengthening EU membership in selected EU countries.

Note: The European Union does various things to support citizen's rights, but some say that it could do more. Which of the following things would enhance your feeling of being a European citizen? 1) A more harmonised European social protection system, based on common principles and standards; 2) The possibility of earmarking a small fraction of my income tax directly to the EU instead of (COUNTRY); 3) Greater support for studying and working in any other EU member states or moving there after retirement; 4) More tangible EU support for the social needs of people like me or of the area where I live; 5) A common scheme in all EU member states to enhance work training for young people and life-long learning for all adult workers; 6) More decisions regarding social policy should be taken at the EU level; 99) Don't know. Don't know responses excluded from the analysis.

7.3 Awareness of EU programs

Citizens' awareness of EU financial support to the region and cities they live in could help strengthen support for the EU and the feeling of being part of a truly European community. Therefore, we asked respondents in our sample whether they knew (or not) about any EU co-financed project to improve their area of residence and cater their needs. About two-thirds of all EU10 respondents did not know about any project supported by the EU. Looking at data disaggregated by country we see that the two Eastern European countries included are the only ones with a strong majority acknowledging EU financed programs in their area. In Hungary 69% said to know such programs and in Poland 62%. Apart from Greece where there is small difference between those who know (46%) and those who don't (54%), in all remaining countries the share of respondents knowing about money spent by the EU in the regions or cities where they live rests between the 32% of Finland and the 20% of Sweden.

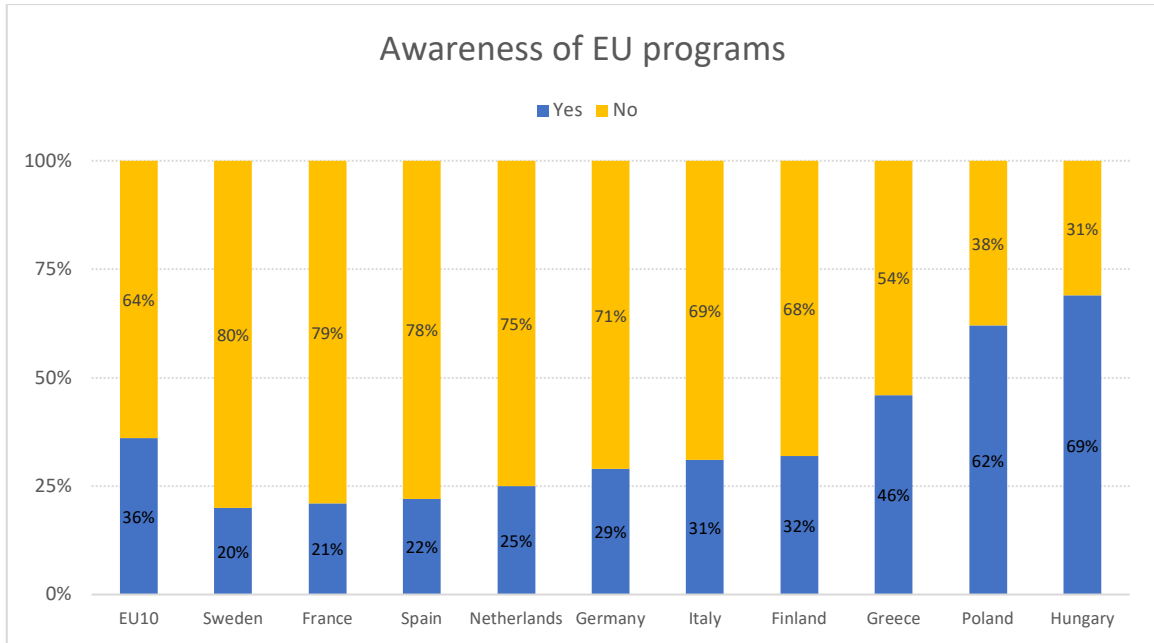


Figure 63 Public awareness of EU programs in selected EU countries.

Note: question: *Europe provides financial support to region and cities so that they can improve their social and economic situation. Have you heard about any EU co-financed projects to improve the area where you live and cater the needs of people like you?* Answers: 1) Yes; 2) No; 99) DK. Don't know responses were excluded from the analysis.

8. Concluding remarks

A number of EU politics studies have observed that European integration has become increasingly debated and politicised after the Treaty of Maastricht, not only among political elites, but also according to public opinion. Public attitudes toward the European integration shifted from a quiescent “permissive consensus” to a “constraining dissensus” that contests the authority of EU institutions (Hobolt and De Vries 2016; Hooghe and Marks 2009). The polarisation of citizen opinions about the EU has been exacerbated by the multiple crisis that Europe experienced in the last decade, encouraged by challenger parties (Caporaso 2018; De Vries and Hobolt 2020).

The findings presented and discussed in this report confirm that in correspondence with the European elections held in May 2019, public opinions around Europe were polarised over the role of the EU and the future of European integration. More importantly, however, our results depict a more complex scenario than that commonly reported by some political actors and large sectors of the media. There are interesting cross-country differences in public support for the EU. Citizens of the Southern European member states that were more affected by the great recession, the sovereign debt crisis and the refugee crisis tend to believe that their country has not benefited from membership of the EU, and that EU institutions do not treat their country with the same respect granted to the other member states. Greeks, Italians and Spaniards are also more afraid of the negative consequences associated with the integration process than citizens in Northern and continental countries.

Nevertheless, while sceptical about how the EU *is working*, the citizens of countries that have suffered the detrimental consequences of the multiple crises more than others do not seem to have lost hope in the European project, and have quite a clear idea of how the EU *should work*. Indeed, we detected high levels of support in the Eurozone periphery for the strengthening of the integration process, especially in its social dimension, which was historically neglected in spite of the creation of the single market and the Eurozone. Most of the respondents believe that the ultimate mission of the EU should be providing high levels of social protection for all EU citizens, and support financial help for member states in economic and financial difficulties as well as increasing investments in less developed regions. Furthermore, we found large majorities supporting free movement and the implementation of EU-level social schemes to help each European citizen in need, irrespective of their country of residence. Citizens in the countries most affected by the multifaceted crises that hit Europe in the last decade seem to be prone to support the EU as long it creates mechanisms to share the burden of the crisis among all EU member states. In other words, there are large majorities supporting EU-level initiatives strengthening European solidarity.

In line with previous public opinion surveys, our data shows different levels of support for European solidarity across Europe. Although public support for European solidarity is generally lower in core countries, it is worth noting that in Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, a majority of respondents is now supporting EU-level policies strengthening supranational solidarity. This finding has been also recently confirmed by the public mood observed, especially in Germany, that was largely in favour of the adoption of the EU recovery fund to help countries worst hit by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The analyses presented above show that negative attitudes toward the EU and European solidarity are associated with objective conditions and subjective perceptions of material deprivation and cultural threat. At the same time, however, those who are more informed about public investments and social schemes implemented by the EU and those

who experience direct and indirect interactions with other European citizens and cultures tend to express more positive attitudes toward European integration and solidarity. The policy recommendations that we can draw from our survey are thus that the EU should become more visible in citizens' everyday lives by adopting a proactive behaviour that helps and protecting citizens' social and economic conditions.

References

- Baute, S., B. Meleuman, K. Abts and M. Swyngedouw (2018). "Measuring attitudes towards social Europe: a multidimensional approach", *Social Indicators Research* 137: 353–378.
- Boomgaarden, H. G., Schuck, A. R. T., Elenbaas, M., and de Vreese, C. H. (2011) "Mapping EU attitudes: conceptual and empirical dimensions of Euroscepticism and EU support", *European Union Politics* 12(2): 241–266.
- Caporaso, J. (2018) "Europe's triple crisis and the uneven role of institutions: the Euro, refugees and Brexit", *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56(6): 1345–1361.
- Ciornei, I., and Recchi, E. (2017) "At the source of European solidarity: assessing the effects of cross-border practices and political attitudes", *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 55(3): 468–485.
- De Vreese, C. H., R. Azrout, and H. G. Boomgaarden (2018) "One size fits all? Testing the dimensional structure of EU attitudes in 21 countries", *International Journal of Public Opinion Research* 31(2): 195–219.
- De Vries, C. (2018) *Euroscepticism and the future of European integration*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- De Vries, C. and S. Hobolt (2020) *Political entrepreneurs: the rise of challenger parties in Europe*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ferrera, M. (2017) "The Stein Rokkan Lecture 2016. Mission impossible? Reconciling economic and social Europe after the euro crisis and Brexit". *European Journal of Political Research* 56(1): 3–22.
- Ferrera, M. and A. Pellegata (2017) "Can economic and social Europe Be reconciled? Citizen views on integration and solidarity", *RESCEU Working Paper*, Università degli Studi di Milano
- Gerhards, J., Lengfeld, H., Ignacz, S. Z., Kley, F. K. and Priem, M. (2019) *European solidarity in times of crisis. Insights from a thirteen-country Survey*, London: Routledge.
- Hobolt, S. B., and C. De Vries (2016) "Public support for European integration", *Annual Review of Political Science* 19: 413–32.
- Hooghe, L., and G. Marks (2009) "A Postfunctionalist theory of European integration: from permissive consensus to constraining dissensus", *British Journal of Political Science* 39(1): 1–23.
- Inglehart, R. (1970) 'Cognitive mobilization and European identity', *Comparative Politics* 3(1): 45–70.

- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschie, S., and Frey, T. (2008) *West European politics in the age of globalization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Dolezal, M., Helbling, M., Höglinger, D., Hutter, S., and Wüest, B. (2012) *Political conflict in Western Europe*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kuhn, T. (2015) *Experiencing European integration. Transnational lives and European identity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Matthijs, M. and K. McNamara (2015) "The Euro crisis' theory effect: Northern saints, Southern sinners, and the demise of the Eurobond", *Journal of European Integration* 37(2): 229–245.
- Vandenbroucke, F. (2013) "European Social Union: a political necessity and an urgent research programme", *Journal for a Progressive Economy*, 1(1): 45-49.

Methodological note

REScEU “Reconciling Economic and Social Europe: Values, Ideas and Politics” (<http://resceu.eu/>) is a research project funded by the European Research Council (ERC Advanced Grant: 340534) involving the University of Milan and the “Luigi Einaudi” Research Centre based in Turin. The project is directed by Professor Maurizio Ferrera (University of Milan) and aims to study the complex interplay between the European Union and national welfare states, and to analyse how the recent crisis has exacerbated the tensions between these two dimensions.

The data presented in this report is based on a public opinion survey conducted in ten countries: Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Sweden. The fieldwork was conducted after the 2019 European Parliament elections between 28 June and 2 August 2019 on a sample of about 1,500 respondents aged between 18 and 70 in each country, for a total of 15,149 respondents. The sample was built through quota sampling (based on 2018 Eurostat data) around gender (M-F), age (three categories: 18-34, 35-54, 55+), educational level (based on ISCED 2011 categories recoded into three macro-categories: up to lower secondary degree, upper secondary degree, university degree or more) and the macro-area of residence (NUTS-1 level). The survey was conducted using the CAWI method by IPSOS, who interviewed some 1,500 respondents who had voluntarily registered to join the company online panel in each country.

Post-stratification weights have been applied to our sample data to correct the coverage of the socio-demographic characteristics of the population (adult citizens resident in the ten countries based on Eurostat data).