



Directorate General for Communication  
Direction C - Relations with citizens  
PUBLIC OPINION MONITORING UNIT

24/07/2009

## EB71.3 - EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2009

### Post-electoral survey First-results: European average and major national trends<sup>1</sup>

**Population: EU 18+ (in Austria 16+)**  
**Coverage: EU 27 (26.830 European citizens)<sup>2</sup>**  
**Dates of the fieldwork: 12th June - 6th July 2009**

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed analysis see the document "Analytical Summary" on the same study.

<sup>2</sup> The results of this post-electoral study have been weighted sociodemographically and politically to ensure their representativeness

## **I. PARTICIPATION AND POLITICAL PROXIMITY**

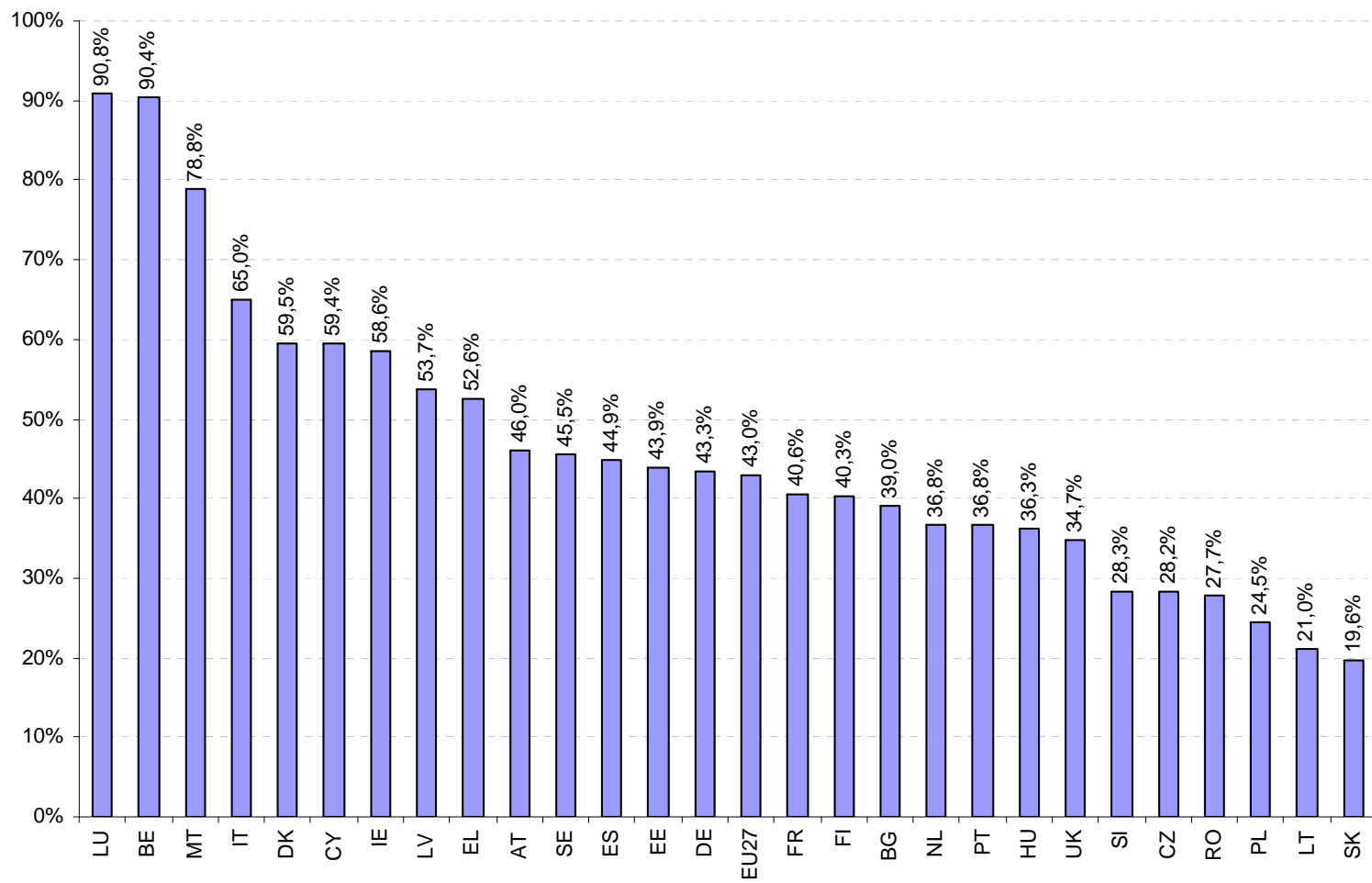
### **A. Participation in European elections 2009**

*Q1. Participation in the European Parliament elections 2009*

<b>EU27</b>	
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>ABSTENTION</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>GENDER</b>	
Men	44%
Women	42%
<b>AGE</b>	
18-24 years	29%
25-39 years	36%
40-54 years	44%
55 years or older	50%
<b>EDUCATION (end of)</b>	
at 15 years or younger	43%
16-19 years	40%
20 years or older	52%
Still studying	34%
<b>FEEL ATTACHED TO EUROPE</b>	
yes	49%
no	34%
<b>EXPOSURE TO THE EE CAMPAIGN</b>	
yes	67%
no	30%

All respondents were asked this question

## Turnout - European elections 2009



## B. Participation in national elections

*Q9 Participation in the last national elections*

<b>EU27</b>	
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>72%</b>
<b>ABSTENTION</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>GENDER</b>	
Men	72%
Women	72%
<b>AGE</b>	
18-24 years	38%
25-39 years	64%
40-54 years	77%
55 years or older	82%
<b>EDUCATION (end of)</b>	
at 15 years or younger	76%
16-19 years	70%
20 years or older	80%
Still studying	40%
<b>FEEL ATTACHED TO OWN COUNTRY</b>	
yes	72%
no	51%

All respondents were asked this question

## C. Cross profile of participation in general and/or European elections

	<b>EU27</b>
Voted in last general elections and EE2009	<b>39%</b>
Voted in the last general elections but not EE2009	<b>33%</b>
Did not vote in the last general elections nor EE2009	<b>22%</b>
Did not vote in the last general elections but voted in EE2009	<b>3%</b>

## D. Political proximity

Q10. Do you feel close to any one of the political parties?

EU27	
Yes, very close	13%
Yes, somewhat close	30%
No, not really close	28%
No, not close at all	26%
DK	3%

	yes	no
<b>EU27</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>54%</b>
GENDER		
Men	45%	52%
Women	41%	57%
AGE		
18-24 years	30%	68%
25-39 years	36%	61%
40-54 years	42%	55%
55 years or older	52%	46%
EDUCATION (end of)		
at 15 years or younger	45%	53%
16-19 years	40%	57%
20 years or older	50%	48%
Still studying	36%	61%

All respondents were asked this question

### ❖ National variations:

- Feelings of being close to a certain political party are expressed by the largest share of respondents in Malta (78% of respondents say they feel "very" or "somewhat" close to a political party), the Netherlands (62%) and Cyprus (60%).
- They are declared the least often in the UK (22%), Romania (26%) and Poland (31%).

## **II. EXPOSURE TO THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN**

Q8. Personally, do you remember having seen on TV, in the Internet or on posters, read in newspapers or heard on the radio a campaign encouraging people to go to vote on the European elections?

	yes	no	DK
<b>EU27</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>GENDER</b>			
Men	69%	28%	3%
Women	64%	33%	3%
<b>AGE</b>			
18-24 years	66%	31%	3%
25-39 years	64%	32%	4%
40-54 years	69%	29%	2%
55 years or older	67%	37%	3%
<b>EDUCATION (end of)</b>			
at 15 years or younger	60%	37%	3%
16-19 years	67%	30%	3%
20 years or older	73%	25%	2%
Still studying	68%	30%	2%

*All respondents were asked this question*

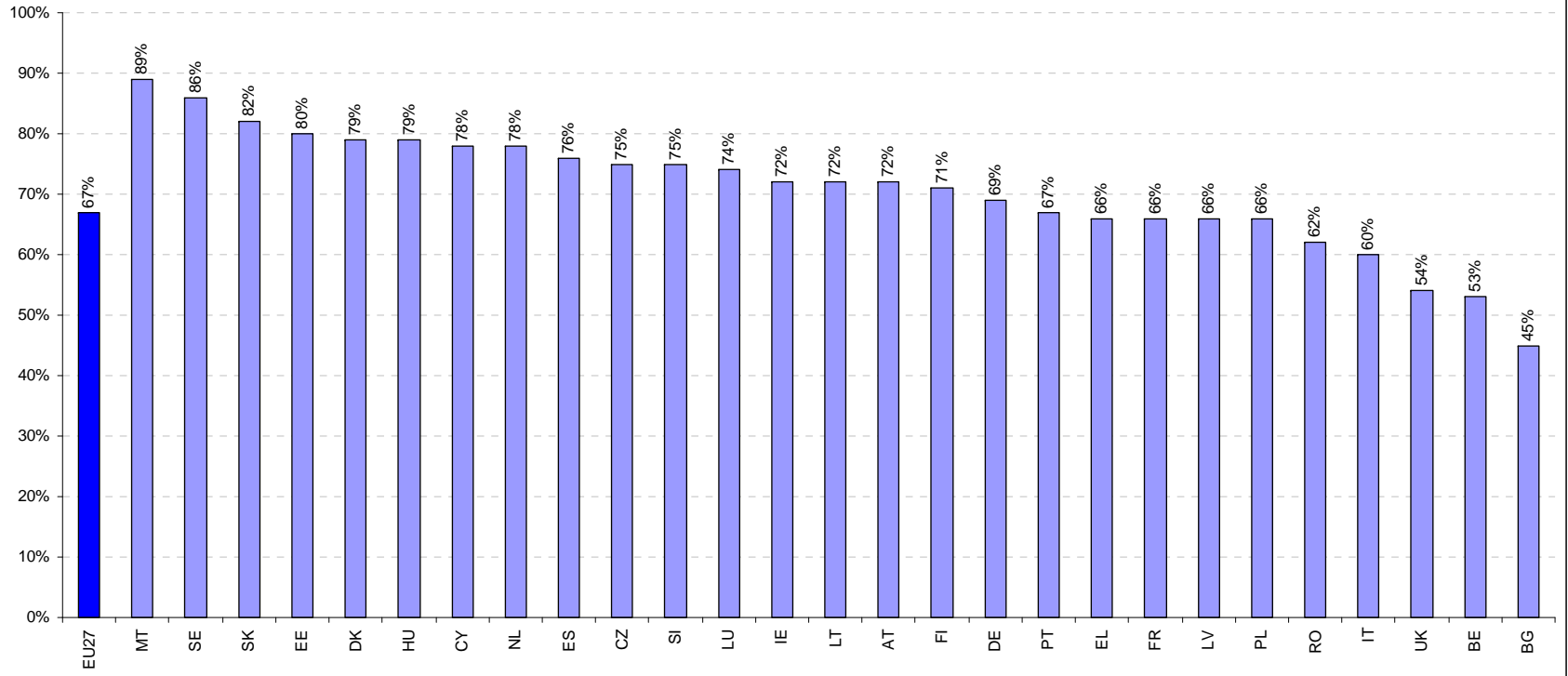
### ❖ National variations:

- Recall of the European elections pre-electoral campaign is highest in Malta (89%), Sweden (86%) and Slovakia (82%).
- It is lowest in Bulgaria (45%), Belgium (53%) and the UK (54%).

### ❖ Socio-demographic variations:

- As shown in the table above, there is a difference of 5 percentage points between women and men on recall of the EE campaign (64% vs. 69%).
- Age is not a determinant indicator in this case but age at the end of education produces small differences (the more time spent in education the better the recall).
- Internet connection at home is important: 70% of respondents who have it recall the campaign, vs. 61% of respondents without internet connection at home.
- Attachment to Europe is an indicator of recall of exposure to EE campaign. 73% of respondents who are attached report they remember the campaign, compared to 57% of those who are not attached to Europe (there is a similar pattern with feeling that one is a citizen of the EU).
- 73% of people who voted in the last European elections recall the campaign but so do 61% of those who did not show at the polls.

### Campaign awarress



### III. THE VOTERS - PROFILE AND REASONING

NB. The following questions (Q3a, Q4d and Q5) were only posed to the respondents who declare to have voted in European elections 2009 (43%).

#### A. Timing of the decision of who to vote for

Q3a. When did you decide to vote for the political party or candidate you voted for in the recent European Parliament elections?

	EU27
You have always voted like this	50%
You decided a few months ago	21%
You decided a few weeks ago	13%
You decided a few days before the elections	9%
You decided on the day of the election	6%

Respondents who declared they had voted in the European elections were asked this question

#### ❖ National variations:

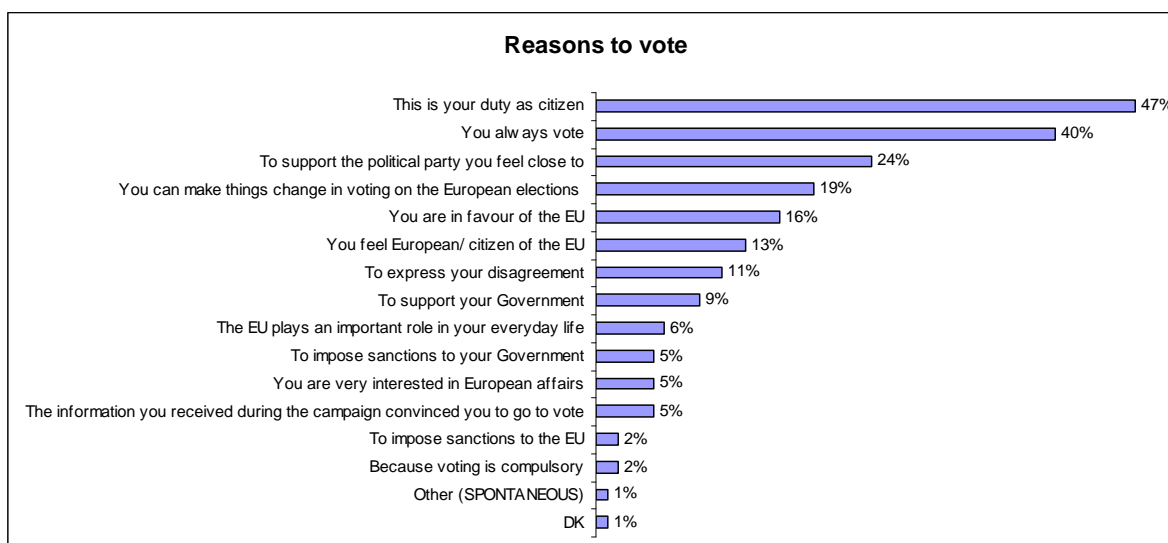
- **You have always voted like this:**
  - Top three countries: Cyprus (76 %), Malta (66%) and Greece (63%).
  - Bottom three countries: Latvia (17%), Sweden (26%) and Finland (38%).
- **You decided a few months ago:**
  - Top three countries: Bulgaria (32%), Latvia (28%), Ireland and Sweden (both 26%).
  - Bottom three countries: Greece, Slovenia, Lithuania and France (in all countries 15%).
- **You decided a few weeks ago:**
  - Top three countries: Latvia (23 %), Ireland and Sweden (both 20%)
  - Bottom three countries: Cyprus (4%), Malta (4%) and Greece (9%).
- **You decided a few days before the elections:**
  - Top three countries: France (19 %), Sweden and Denmark (both 17%).
  - Bottom three countries: Spain (5%), Hungary and Italy (both 4%).
- **You decided on the day of the elections:**
  - Top three countries: Latvia (17 %), France, Netherlands and UK (all 11%).
  - Bottom three countries: Hungary (1%), Italy, Portugal and Bulgaria (all 2%).

### Socio-demographic variations:

- Gender does not influence the timing of the decision of who to vote for.
- **You have always voted like this:**
  - Always voting for the same party increases with the age (30% for the youngest age group, 58% for the oldest).
  - The longer the respondent studied, the least likely he/she is to always vote for the same party.
  - People who always vote for the same party are twice as likely to have voted in the last national elections too (52% compared to 26% who did not vote in the last national elections).
- **You decided a few days or a few weeks before the elections:**
  - The highest above average share of respondents who decide a few weeks or even days before the elections is amongst students (38% compared to 22% EU average).
  - The same is true for those respondents who did not vote in the last national election (37% decided who to vote for a few weeks or days before the elections).
- **Decision taken on the day of the elections:**
  - With the EU average at 6%, unemployed respondents are twice as many to make the decision at the last moment on the day of the elections (but it must be stressed that their participation is below average).

## B. Reasons for voting

Q4d. What are the main reasons why you decided to go to vote in the recent EP elections?



### ❖ National variations for the three main motives:

#### ➤ **It is my duty as a citizen:**

- Top three countries: Cyprus (78 %), Malta (74%) and Romania (73%).
- Bottom three countries: Czech Republic (29%), Hungary (30%), Austria and Italy (35%).

#### ➤ **I always vote:**

- Top three countries: Denmark (59%), Finland (54%) and Cyprus (both 53%).
- Bottom three countries: Luxembourg (19%), Spain (27%) and Greece (29%).

#### ➤ **Support for the party I am close to:**

- Top three countries: Bulgaria (45%), Cyprus (42%) and Slovakia (41%).
- Bottom three countries: Portugal (10%), Poland (14%), Luxembourg and Spain (both 17%).

### ❖ Socio-demographic variations for three main motives:

#### ➤ **It is my duty as citizen:**

- The share of respondents who voted in EE 2009 and quote the feeling of duty as the reason behind it, is lowest amongst people with low attachment to their own country (27%) and those who did not vote in the last national elections (38%).

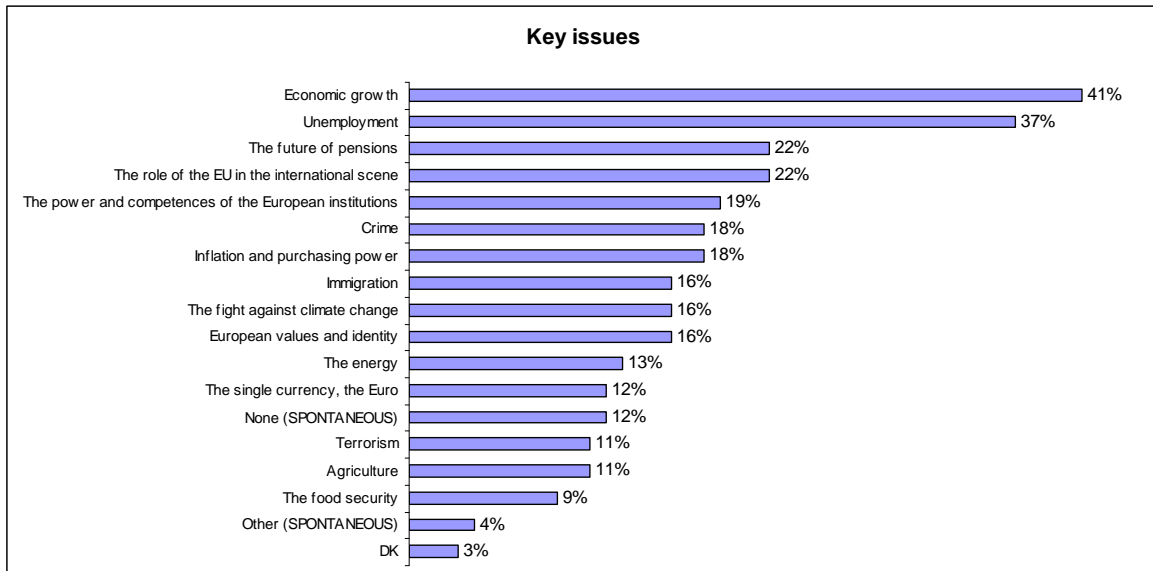
- **I always vote:**
  - Because of their age logically the share of this response is much lower than average in the groups of students (27%). It is very low amongst people who declare not to have voted in the last national elections (22%) and it is also much lower amongst the unemployed (30%).
  
- **Support for the party I am close to:**
  - Voting as expression of support for the party one feels close to is given as a reason by the smallest share of respondents with low attachment to their country (18% vs. 24% EU average).

### C. Issues that motivated the vote

QK5. What are the issues which make you vote to the European elections?

	Pre-EE2009 - march	Post-EE2009
Economic growth	52%	41%
Unemployment	57%	37%
The future of pensions	32%	22%
The role of the EU in the international scene	17%	22%
The power and competences of the European institutions	12%	19%
Crime	39%	18%
Inflation and purchasing power	28%	18%
Immigration	20%	16%
The fight against climate change	23%	16%
European values and identity	10%	16%
The energy	-	13%
The single currency, the Euro	15%	12%
Terrorism	23%	11%
Agriculture	19%	11%
The food security	-	9%
Other (SPONTANEOUS)	3%	4%
None (SPONTANEOUS)	-	12%
DK	2%	3%

- NB :
- Sum of answers, maximum three choices available
  - When comparing the two surveys, the differences in methodology must be taken into consideration as the pre-electoral survey was conducted over the phone and EB71.3 was conducted in face-to-face interviews.
  - Respondents who declared they had voted in the European elections were asked this question



❖ National variations for four main issues:

➤ **Economic growth:**

- It was the strongest motivating issue in Bulgaria (63%), Ireland (62%) and Hungary (59%).
- It had the least power as a motivation to vote in EE2009 in the UK (23%), France (29%), Finland and the Netherlands (both 31%).

➤ **Unemployment:**

- It is given as the motivational issue by the largest shares of respondents in Spain (65%), Ireland (64%) and Greece (60%).
- On the other hand unemployment is chosen as the main election issue by the smallest shares of respondents in the Netherlands (11%), Finland (22%), the UK and Denmark (both 25%).

➤ **The future of pensions:**

- Regarding this issue as a major election theme, the largest shares of respondents were in Hungary (49%), Romania (48%) and Bulgaria (43%).
- The future of the pensions was not important in shaping the European elections according to respondents in the Netherlands (6%), Denmark and Sweden (both 8%).

➤ **The role of the EU in the international scene:**

- Respondents in Germany (33%), Austria (29%), Denmark and the Netherlands (both 27%) are the ones that quote the role of the EU in the international scene as the major motive behind their decision to vote in EE2009.
- The share of respondents who see the same issue as a motivation for voting in EE2009 is lowest in Spain, Latvia (both 10%), the UK and Ireland (both 11%).

❖ Socio-demographic variations for four main issues:

➤ **Economic growth:**

- More men than women say this was the main issue in EE2009 (44% vs. 38%).
- It is much less important for respondents who are aged 55 years or more (36%).
- It is more often given as a reason by people who remember seeing the EU pre-electoral campaign (43%) than those who do not recall it (35%).

➤ **Unemployment:**

- Again much less important for respondents who are aged 55 years or more (32% vs. 41% EU average).
- Less important for managers (27%) than other professions and especially the already unemployed (62%).
- Very important issue for people who have difficulties paying their bills at the end of the month most of the time (57%).

- **The future of pensions:**
  - Of hardly any concern for the youngest group of respondents, aged 18-24 years, in which only 11% name this is an important election issue (EU average is double at 22%).
  - Naturally named as an issue by a very high share of already retired (29%).
  
- **The role of the EU in the international scene:**
  - Respondents who ended education at 15 years or younger do not attribute much importance to the role of the EU in the international scene (14%). This changes with the length of education (30% for those who studied till age 20 or more) and is highest amongst students (32%).

## IV. NON-VOTERS - PROFILE AND REASONING

NB. The following questions, Q3b and Q4b, were only posed to the respondents who declared NOT to have voted in European elections 2009 (57%).

### A. Timing of the decision not to vote

Q3b. When did you decide NOT to vote in the recent European Parliament elections?

	EU27
You never vote	22%
You decided a few months ago	18%
You decided a few weeks ago	15%
You decided a few days before the elections	16%
You decided on the day of the election	16%

Respondents who declared they had not voted in the European elections were asked this question

#### ❖ National variations:

- **You never vote:**
  - Top three countries: Luxembourg (57 %), Belgium<sup>3</sup> (50%) and the UK (39%).
  - Bottom three countries: Romania (6%), Greece (8%), Slovakia and Cyprus (both 11%)
- **You decided a few months ago:**
  - Top three countries: Cyprus (39 %), Malta (38%) and Greece (35%).
  - Bottom three countries: Luxembourg (8%), the UK (9%), the Netherlands, Ireland and Belgium (all 12%)
- **You decided a few weeks ago:**
  - Top three countries: Greece (24 %), Austria (23%) and Italy (21%).
  - Bottom three countries: Luxembourg (4%), France and Cyprus (both 10%).
- **You decided a few days before the elections:**
  - Top three countries: Slovakia (27 %), Romania and Slovenia (both 23%).
  - Bottom three countries: Luxembourg (4%), Malta (5%) and Belgium (6%).

<sup>3</sup> As voting is obligatory in Luxembourg and Belgium, the turnout there is much higher than average. But amongst those who abstain from voting there is a large share of people (small in comparison to the total registered voters) who never vote as a principal.

➤ **You decided on the day of the elections:**

- Top three countries: the Netherlands (29 %), Sweden and Denmark (both 26%).
- Bottom three countries: Belgium (3%), Luxembourg (6%) and Malta (8%).

❖ Socio-demographic variations:

➤ **You never vote:**

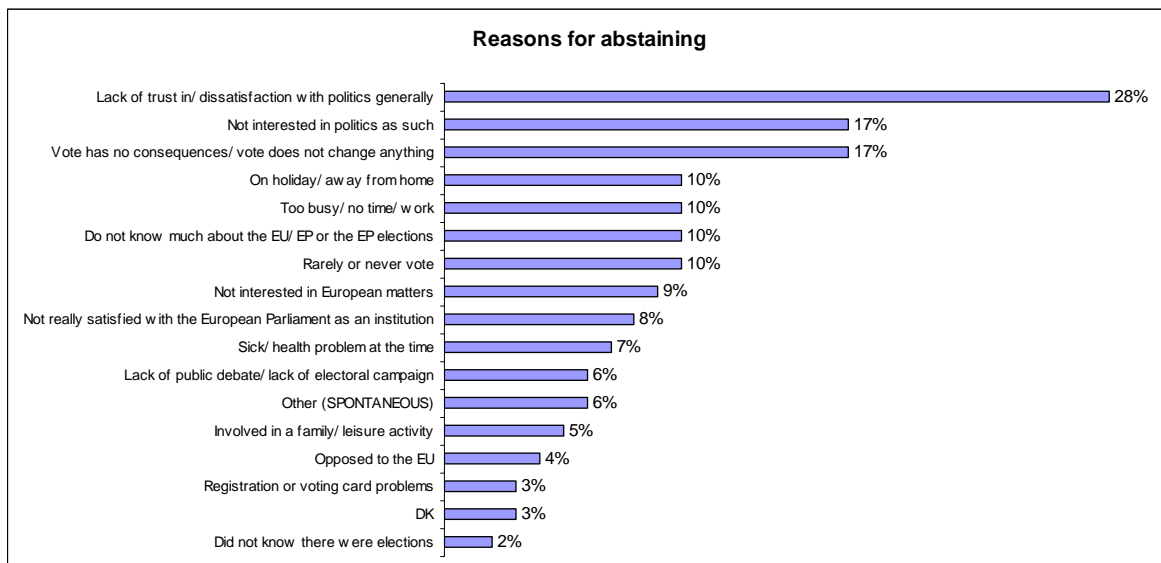
- The biggest share of youngest respondents (18-24 years old) never vote (33%), compared to 28% of 25-39 years old, 18% of 40-54 year old respondents and only 16% of respondents aged 55 and more.
- On the occupational scale, the unemployed are most often the ones who never vote (38%).
- Absence of attachment to one's own country is a strong indicator of abstention (39% of people who say they are not attached to their country say they never vote, compared to only 20% of people who declare themselves attached to their country), as it is with the lack of attachment to the EU (27% compared to 18%).

➤ **You decided on the day of the elections:**

- Decision not to vote was taken at the last moment by a particularly high share of respondents who ended education aged 20 or more (22% compared to 16% EU average).
- The same is the share of respondents who voted in the last national elections but decided on the day of the European elections they would not take part in them.

**B. Reasons for not voting**

*Q4b. What are the main reasons why you did NOT vote in the recent EP elections?*



❖ National variations for the main three reasons:

- **Lack of trust in/ dissatisfaction with politics generally:**
  - Top three countries: Greece (51%), Bulgaria (45%), Cyprus and Romania (both 44%).
  - Bottom three countries: Denmark (8%), Luxembourg (11%), Finland and Belgium (both 18%).
- **Not interested in politics as such:**
  - Top three countries: Hungary, Malta (both 29%) and Spain (26%).
  - Bottom three countries: the Netherlands (6%), Sweden (8%) and France (10%).
- **Vote has no consequences/ vote does not change anything:**
  - Top three countries: Latvia (38%), Austria (35%) and Bulgaria (31%).
  - Bottom three countries: Luxembourg (5%), Denmark and Ireland (both 7%).

❖ Socio-demographic variations for the main three reasons:

- **Lack of trust in/ dissatisfaction with politics generally:**
  - This is not a very valid reason for the youngest respondents (only 19% give it as reason for ism) but much more for the older groups (32% amongst 40-54 years old, 31% amongst 55 years old and older).
  - It is more present amongst the respondents who do not feel attached to Europe (33%) than those who do feel attached (25%)
    - on the contrary there are no differences according to attachment to one's own country.
- **Not interested in politics as such:**
  - Not being interested in politics is most often given as a reason for not voting by the young (18-24 years old) respondents (20%).
  - Very high share of unemployed (25%) give this as a reason for not voting, same as those who left school at 15 years or younger (21%).
  - The share of answers is also above average amongst those who did not vote in the last national election.
- **Vote has no consequences/ vote does not change anything:**
  - This reason is given particularly often by those respondents who most of the time have problems paying bills at the end of the month (25%) and the unemployed (24%).

## V. OPINION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

### A. The European Parliament

Q7. For each of the following propositions, please tell me if it rather corresponds or rather does not correspond to your attitude or your opinion.

	Yes, somewhat	No, not really	DK
You had all the necessary information in order to choose for whom you were going to vote in the recent European elections	53%	42%	5%
The European Parliament takes into consideration the concerns of European citizens	46%	41%	13%

All respondents were asked this question

#### ❖ National variations:

- **You had all the necessary information in order to choose for whom you were going to vote in the recent European elections:**
  - Top three countries: Malta (90%), Cyprus (79%) and Luxembourg (75%).
  - Bottom three countries: the UK, Poland (both 42%) and Portugal (44%).
- **The European Parliament takes into consideration the concerns of European citizens:**
  - Top three countries: Sweden (72%), the Netherlands (65%), Belgium and Estonia (both 61%).
  - Bottom three countries: France (31%), Bulgaria (35%) and Latvia (37%).

#### ❖ Socio-demographic variations:

- **You had all the necessary information in order to choose for whom you were going to vote in the recent European elections:**
  - Men more than women (57% vs. 50%).
  - Least true for the 18-24 year old respondents (50%).
  - Increases with the increase in age at the end of education (from 47% to 61%).
  - Differences between respondents attached to Europe (62%) and those who are not (38%).
  - Very different shares of respondents who felt sufficiently informed amongst the voters and non-voters in the last European elections (69% vs. 37%).
- **The European Parliament takes into consideration the concerns of European citizens:**
  - Share of men who agree: 48%. Share of women: 44%.
  - 60% of students think so, only 38% of people who ended education at age of 15 or less.
  - Only 37% of unemployed think this is somehow true.

## B. The European Union

Q7. For each of the following propositions, please tell me if it rather corresponds or rather does not correspond to your attitude or your opinion.

	Yes, somewhat	No, not really	DK
You trust the institutions of the EU	50%	40%	10%
The membership of (OUR COUNTRY) in the EU is a good thing	69%	22%	9%
You feel you are a citizen of the EU	64%	32%	4%
You feel attached to (OUR COUNTRY)	91%	7%	2%
You feel attached to Europe	64%	32%	4%
You are very interested in politics	39%	58%	3%

All respondents were asked this question

### ❖ National variations:

- **You trust the institutions of the EU:**
  - Top three countries: Finland (67%), Belgium, Estonia and Cyprus (all 66%).
  - Bottom three countries: the UK (29%), Latvia (41%), France and Czech Republic (both 46%).
- **The membership of (OUR COUNTRY) in the EU is a good thing:**
  - Top three countries: Luxembourg (85%), the Netherlands (84%) and Belgium (83%).
  - Bottom three countries: Latvia (49%), the UK (45%) and Hungary (36%).
- **You feel you are a citizen of the EU:**
  - Top three countries: Luxembourg (86%), Spain (82%) and Slovakia (78%).
  - Bottom three countries: the UK (37%), Bulgaria (47%) and Latvia (51%).
- **You feel attached to (OUR COUNTRY):**
  - Top three countries: Finland (99%), Cyprus and Malta (both 98%).
  - Bottom three countries: Romania (82%), the UK and Italy (both 86%).
- **You feel attached to Europe:**
  - Top three countries: Luxembourg (84%), Hungary (81%) and Denmark (80%).
  - Bottom three countries: the UK (34%), Lithuania (48%) and Greece (53%).
- **You are very interested in politics:**
  - Top three countries: Latvia (66%), Germany (62%) and Austria (55%).
  - Bottom three countries: Romania (20%), Bulgaria (22%) and Slovakia (23%).

❖ Socio-demographic variations:

- **You trust the institutions of the EU:**
  - More men than women agree with this statement (53% vs. 48%).
  - The largest share of agreement is amongst the students (54%) and in the group of respondents who ended education at 20 years or older (60%).
  - Increases with higher positioning on the social scale (40% on lowest levels, 62% on highest).
  
- **The membership of (OUR COUNTRY) in the EU is a good thing:**
  - There are differences between the genders (71% of men vs. 67% of women).
  - Again students are most convinced about the statement (82%).
  
- **You feel you are a citizen of the EU:**
  - Men more often feel citizens of Europe (66%) than women (61%).
  - Agreement with this statement increases with the age at the end of education and self-positioning on the social scale.
  
- **You feel attached to (OUR COUNTRY):**
  - Strong attachment is almost unrelated to any socio-demographic variable.
  - Interesting difference amongst respondents who feel attached to Europe (96%) and those who do not (86%).
  
- **You feel attached to Europe:**
  - Six point difference between men and women (67% vs. 61%).
  - 76% of students and 76% of those who ended education aged 20 or more agree with this opinion but only 56% of the unemployed do so too.
  - Only 48% of people who have difficulties paying the bills at the end of the month most of the time feel attached to Europe.
  - 67% of respondents who feel attached to their own country also feel attached to Europe. In comparison 32% of respondents who do not feel attached to their country do feel attached to Europe.
  
- **You are very interested in politics:**
  - Big difference between the genders (men: 46% vs. women: 33%).
  - The older the more interested respondents are.
  - Least interest in politics in the group who ended education aged 15 or less, most in the group who ended age 20 or more.
  - Above average interest amongst students (42% compared to 39% EU average).
  - Lowest interest amongst house persons (26%).
  - Strong indicator of attachment to Europe and participation at elections.

## **VI. IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTIONS**

*Q7. For each of the following propositions, please tell me if it rather corresponds or rather does not correspond to your attitude or your opinion.*

	<b>Yes, somewhat</b>	<b>No, not really</b>	<b>DK</b>
It is very important for you which particular candidates have been elected as MEPs in the European Parliament elections in (OUR COUNTRY)	49%	44%	7%
It is very important for you to know which particular political party has had the more MEPs in the European Parliament elections in (OUR COUNTRY)	50%	43%	7%

All respondents were asked this question

### ❖ National variations:

- **It is very important for you which particular candidates have been elected as MEPs in the EE:**
  - Top three countries: Malta (78%), Luxembourg (74%), Estonia and Cyprus (both (64%).
  - Bottom three countries: Slovenia (34%), the UK and Slovakia (both 38%).
- **It is very important for you to know which particular political party has had the more MEPs in the EE:**
  - Top three countries: Luxembourg (76%), Malta (72%) and Italy (61%).
  - Bottom three countries: Slovenia (30%), Romania (33%) and the UK (34%).

### ❖ Socio-demographic variations:

- **It is very important for you which particular candidates have been elected as MEPs in the EE:**
  - This is the opinion of 52% of men and 46% of women.
  - It is important for 42% of 18-24 years old vs. 52% of 55 years or older respondents.
  - 68% of respondents who voted in the last European elections agree with this statement but only 29% of those who did not vote find it important.
  - The higher the end age of education, the more importance is attributed to knowing which candidates were elected.
- **It is very important for you to know which particular political party has had the more MEPs in the EE:**
  - In general slightly but consistently more important than knowing which particular candidates were elected for all sub-groups.
  - Same pattern of agreement as in the previous paragraph.

*Unité de suivi de l'opinion publique*

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