



SPECIAL EUROBAROMETER 553

Rule of Law

EUROBAROMETER REPORT
FIELDWORK: April – May 2024



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

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Introduction

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

The rule of law, as enshrined in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union, is one of the fundamental values upon which the European Union is founded. It is one of the threads that binds Member States together and is essential for the Union's cohesion and good functioning. Member States and all EU institutions have a common responsibility to uphold, defend and strengthen the rule of law in the Union. Since 2020, the European Commission annual reports on the developments, both positive and negative, as regards the rule of law in all Member States in its annual Rule of Law Report.

This Eurobarometer survey was commissioned by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers to inform this process and follows-up to the 2019 Special Eurobarometer 489 on Rule of Law. It provides insights into the importance to citizens of a number of aspects of the rule of law, as well as their opinions about whether these aspects improved or deteriorated in their respective countries over the past five years.

The survey looks into several key aspects key as covered in the Rule of Law Report Key topics are:

- The support for EU values and the rule of law including the perceived importance of the EU's fundamental values, the perceived role of the EU in upholding the rule of law and the perceived level of information about the EU's fundamental values and the rule of law.
- The general perception of the justice system on a national level and the improvements of national justice systems over the past five years.
- The perception of the anti-corruption framework within the respondents' country and the improvements made with regard to the situation of corruption and anti-corruption measures.
- The media freedom and pluralism within the Member States and the improvements made regarding media freedom and pluralism.
- The situation of checks and balances on a national level. Again, the survey gathers the perceived improvements made in this regard.

This survey was carried out by the Verian network in the 27 Member States of the European Union between 25 April and 22 May 2024. This Special Eurobarometer 553 on the rule of law was part of the Eurobarometer wave 101.4. Some 26,415 respondents from different social and demographic groups were interviewed face-to-face at home in their mother tongue. Where possible, comparisons were made with the data from the previous EBS survey 489 from April 2019, when the EU was composed of 28 Member States.

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Methodology

This Special Eurobarometer 553 on the rule of law was part of the Eurobarometer wave 101.4 and was conducted between 25 April and 22 May 2024. The methodology used was that of the Standard Eurobarometer surveys carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication (“Media monitoring and Eurobarometer” Unit)¹. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, either physically in people’s homes or through remote video interaction in the appropriate national language. Interviews with remote video interaction (“online face-to-face” or CAVI, Computer Assisted Video Interviewing) were conducted only in Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Finland and Malta. A technical note concerning the interviews conducted by the member institutes of the Verian network is annexed to this report. It also specifies the confidence intervals².

Throughout the report, results are compared to Special Eurobarometer 489 of April 2019, when applicable.

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

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

European Union – weighted average for the 27 Member States	EU27
BE, FR, IT, LU, DE, AT, ES, PT, IE, NL, FI, EL, EE, SI, CY, MT, SK, LV, LT, HR	euro area
BG, CZ, DK, HU, PL, RO, SE	Non-euro area

In accordance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation³ (GDPR), respondents were asked whether they would agree to be asked questions on issues that could be considered “sensitive”.

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

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

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

¹ <https://www.europa.eu/eurobarometer>

² Confidence intervals indicate the range in which the results being estimated for the population would most likely fall, depending on the sample size and the observed percentage, holding other factors constant.

³ 2016/679



Key Findings

For each aspect relating to the rule of law in the EU and other Member States, almost nine in ten Europeans (86%) think that it is important or essential to them personally.

- 89% of Europeans consider that it is essential or important **that all EU Member States respect the core values of the EU, including fundamental rights, the rule of law, and democracy.**
- A slightly smaller proportion of 86% of respondents say that it is essential or important for them personally that the **'media and civil society organisations in all other EU Member States than [their country] are able to operate freely and without pressure, even when they are critical'.**
- A similar proportion of 86% consider that it is essential or important for them personally that **when [they] live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, [they] can access an independent and impartial court there,** while 85% consider important that they can do so **under the same conditions as a national from that other Member State.**
- Another 86% of Europeans consider essential or important that **when [they] live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, [they] can trust its public authorities to take decisions based on the law, in a transparent manner.**
- The trend data available shows no major evolution, confirming the strong importance Europeans attach to the respect of these values.

Over seven in ten respondents consider that the EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law EU-wide and on a national level.

- 74% of respondents consider that **the EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law in all EU Member States** and a similar proportion of respondents consider that **the EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law in their country.**
- In this regard Finland (91%), as well as Ireland and Portugal (each 85%) stand out with particularly high proportions of respondents considering that

the EU plays an important role in upholding the rule of law in all EU Member States.

A majority of Europeans feel informed about the EU's fundamental values and the rule of law.

- 51% of Europeans feel well informed about **the EU's fundamental values,** while a strong minority of 48% does not feel informed about the EU's fundamental values. The proportion of Europeans who feel informed about fundamental values now prevails, whereas it was a minority opinion in the previous survey from 2019, when 43% felt informed and 56% felt not informed about them.
- 53% of Europeans feel informed about the rule of law, while 46% do not feel informed about it.
- Respondents in Luxembourg, Poland, Denmark and Finland feel best informed about EU's fundamental values, while the rule of law is best known in Finland, the Netherlands, Austria and, again, Denmark.

Over half of respondents have a positive perception of the independence of their national justice system.

- 75% of Europeans agree with the statement that **'if [their] rights are not respected [they] can have them upheld by an independent court',** and 53% consider that **'judges are independent and are not under the influence of political or economic interests'.**
- For the two aspects of the national justice system, opinions are systematically the most positive in the Nordic countries, namely Finland, Sweden and Denmark.

However, problems are identified in the justice system regarding the length of court proceedings and the application of court rulings.

- An overwhelming majority of respondents consider that **court proceedings are too lengthy in their country.** In total, 84% of respondents agree with this statement, including 46% who 'totally agree'. Negative perceptions also prevail with regard to another aspect. Almost six in ten respondents (58%) consider that **public authorities and politicians often do not respect and apply court rulings.**

A majority of Europeans consider that the situation of the justice system in their country has remained stable or improved over the past five years in the following four aspects.

- 66% of Europeans consider that the capacity of **'enforcement by an independent court of their rights if they are not respected'** has remained the same (53%) or improved (13%). On the other hand, around a quarter (24%) think that the situation regarding this issue has deteriorated over the past five years.
- 63% of Europeans think that **the independence of judges from the influence of political or economic interests** has remained unchanged (52%) or improved (11%) over the past five years. Conversely, three in ten respondents hold a negative opinion.
- Over six in ten respondents (61%) consider that **the respect and the application of court rulings by public authorities and politicians** has remained unchanged (50%) or improved (11%) over the past five years, while almost a third of respondents (32%) think that the situation has deteriorated.
- 54% think that **the duration of court proceedings** has remained unchanged (45%) or improved (9%) over the past five years. However, a strong minority of 38% considers that the situation has deteriorated.
- **Overall, in all four aspects a clear majority think that the situation has either remained stable or improved.**

Overall, negative opinions about corruption and the anti-corruption framework prevail.

- 76% of Europeans consider that **politicians and public officials are often not transparent enough about their contacts with lobbyists, their side-jobs and their incomes and assets.**
- Over seven in ten respondents (71%) think that **there are many cases where public officials and politicians making and applying laws are in situations of conflicts of interest and do not respect ethical standards.**
- While 43% agree with the statement that **'corruption involving politicians and public officials is properly investigated and all of those that are found guilty of corruption by a court are given appropriate punishment'**, and

therefore have a positive view of anti-corruption measures, negative opinions prevail. As a matter of fact, a majority of 51% do not agree with this idea.

- Opinions about the statement whether **'public authorities take decisions free from favouritism, preferential treatment (due to extra payments or a valuable gift or political party donations), for example in public contracting, education or healthcare'** or not, are evenly split (47% vs. 47%).
- **Overall, almost two-thirds** of respondents consider that **the situation with regard to corruption and anti-corruption measures has improved or remained the same with proportions reaching from 57% to 62%.** Only, a minority of respondents consider that the situation has deteriorated in their country (32%-37%).

A majority of Europeans consider their national media to be free, independent and pluralistic.

- 69% of Europeans consider that in their country **there is a wide range of media allowing for sufficient information and the expression of different opinions**, including 22% who 'totally agree' with this idea.
- 51% of Europeans think that in their country **the public broadcasters maintain a high degree of independence from public authorities.**

However, a majority also emphasises the difficulties for media operators and journalists in maintaining their independent operation and in accessing information held by public authorities.

- 59% of Europeans think that in their country **it is difficult for journalists and the public to access information held by public authorities.**
- Over half of respondents (53%) think that in their country **media and journalists cannot criticise the government, politicians or major economic interests without risk of intimidation, threats or other pressure.**
- When asked about the **evolution of the situation in their country over the past five years with regard to media freedom and pluralism, a majority of respondents consider that things remained the same or improved.**

A majority of Europeans emphasise the difficulties in following how legislation is adopted and in understanding what laws apply to them, but a majority also considers that civil society organisations are free of constraints and adequately supported.

- 66% of Europeans agree with the statement that in their country **it is difficult to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament**.
- Just under six in ten respondents (59%) consider that **'the laws applying to [their] everyday life, work or business are not clear and stable and that it is difficult to understand the legal consequences of [their] actions'**.
- 57% of Europeans think, with regard to the situation in their country, that **civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists can operate freely, criticise the government or major economic interests without adverse consequences and are adequately supported**.
- Public opinion is evenly balanced with regard to the following statement: **'The same laws and rules apply equally to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin'**. 49% of respondents agree with this statement while a similar proportion (49%) disagree. It is nevertheless noteworthy that the proportion of respondents who 'totally disagree' (17%) outnumbers that of those who 'totally agree' (13%).

A clear majority of respondents consider that the situation regarding checks and balances has improved or remained unchanged in their country.

- 64% of Europeans consider that **'the freedom of civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists to criticise the government or economic interests without negative consequences'** has improved (15%) or remained unchanged (49%) over the past five years.
- Respectively, 12% of Europeans think that the situation in their country with regard to **'an equal application of laws and rules to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of**

their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin', as well as **'the clarity, stability of laws applying to [their] everyday life, work and business and the ability to understand the legal consequences of [their] actions'** and **'the easiness to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament'** has improved. For these three topics, the overall proportion of respondents who consider that the situation has remained unchanged or improved holds a significant majority, as proportions range from 62% to 66%.

- Conversely, over a third of respondents consider that the situation has worsened regarding the **'equal application of laws and rules to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin'**.
- A slightly smaller proportion thinks that the situation has got worse for **'the clarity, stability of laws applying to your everyday life, work and business and the ability to understand the legal consequences of your actions'** and **'the easiness to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament'**.



I. Support for EU Values and the Rule of Law

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

This first section reviews the respondents' answers regarding the extent to which they feel informed about and to what extent they support the EU's fundamental values and the rule of law. It first analyses the perceived level of information about the EU's fundamental values and the rule of law and then scrutinises the perceived importance of these values for citizens. In the third part of this section respondents were asked whether the EU plays an important role in upholding the rule of law on a national and European level.

1. Perceived level of information about the EU's fundamental values and the rule of law

A majority of Europeans feel informed about the EU's fundamental values and the rule of law

A majority of Europeans (51%) feel informed about **the EU's fundamental values**, including 8% who say that they are 'very well informed' and 43% who are 'fairly well informed'. A slightly smaller proportion (48%) do not feel informed about the EU's fundamental values, including 12% who feel 'not at all informed'.

Since April 2019, the proportion of respondents who feel informed about the EU's fundamental values has improved. In total, increases are significant (+8 percentage points), while the proportion of those who do not feel informed about the EU's fundamental values has decreased similarly by eight percentage points. The proportion of Europeans who feel informed about fundamental values now prevails, whereas it was a minority opinion in 2019.

Over half of Europeans (53%) feel informed about **the rule of law**, including 9% who feel 'very well informed' and 44% who consider themselves to be 'fairly well informed'. Conversely, 46% of respondents do not feel informed about the rule of law, including 11% who say that they are 'not at all informed' about this fundamental value.

QA1. To what extent do you feel informed or not about (EU27) (%)



Apr/May 2024

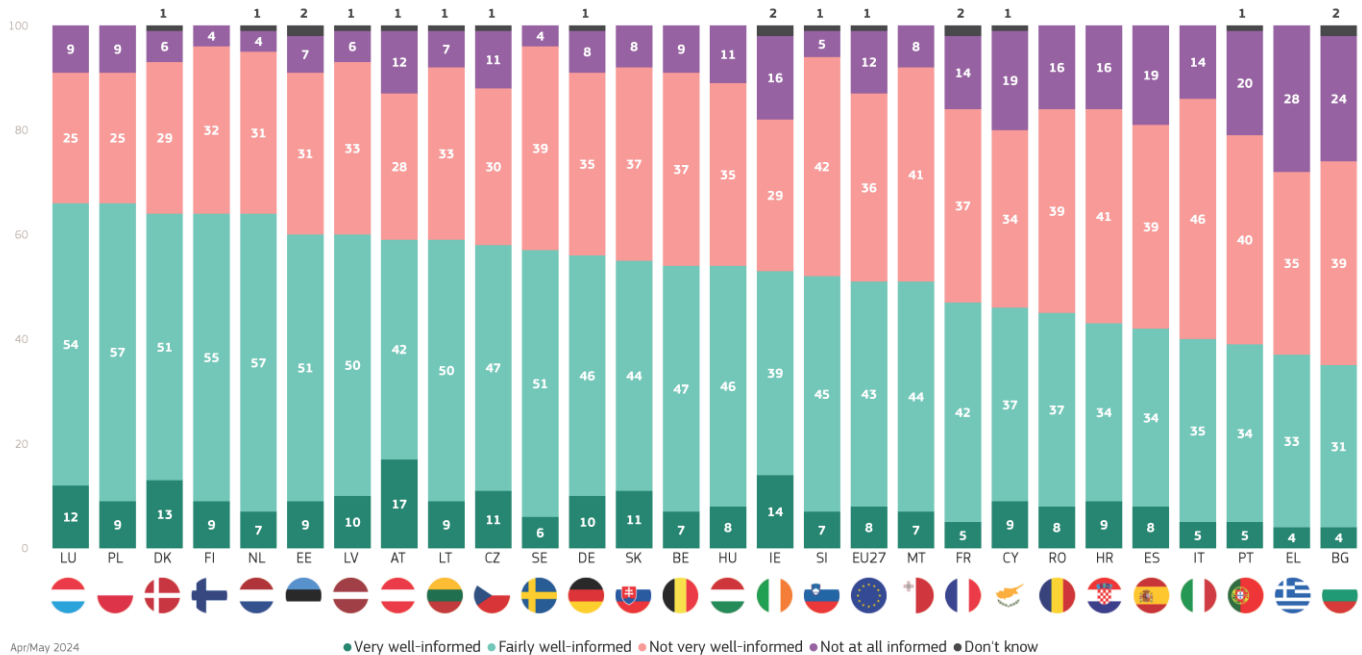
Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

The **country analysis** shows that levels of information vary notably amongst Member States. A majority of respondents in 18 Member States consider that they are either very well or fairly well informed about the **EU's fundamental values**. Within this group of countries, proportions vary from 66% in Luxembourg and Poland, and 64% in Denmark and Poland, where they are highest, to 51% in Malta, where they are highest, to 51% in Malta, where they are highest, to 51% in Malta, where they are highest, to 51% in Malta, where they are highest, to 51% in Malta, where they are highest.

Conversely, a majority in nine countries does not feel informed about the EU's fundamental values, most significantly Greece and Bulgaria, where over six in ten respondents don't feel informed. Moreover, in three countries at least a fifth of respondents does not feel informed at all: namely Greece (28%), Bulgaria (24%) and Portugal (20%).

QA1.1. To what extent do you feel informed or not about:-The EU's fundamental values (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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Since 2019, the feeling of being informed about the EU's fundamental values has increased in 23 Member States, most markedly in Czechia (58%, +17 percentage points), Poland (66%, +16) and Spain (42%, +14). In ten countries increases are of at least ten percentage points.

QA1.1 To what extent do you feel informed or not about
The EU's fundamental values (%)

Very well-informed	Apr/May 2024	8	11	11	14	13	10	9	8	9	9	7	10	8	9	5	9	17	9	5	8	5	7	7	4	12	7	4	6
	Δ Apr 2019	▲3	▲8	▲7	▲7	▲5	▲5	▲5	▲5	▲5	▲5	▲4	▲4	▲4	▲3	▲3	▲3	▲3	▲3	▲3	▲3	▲2	▲2	▲1	=	=	=	▼1	▼1
Fairly well-informed	Apr/May 2024	43	44	47	39	51	46	51	34	50	55	47	50	46	34	35	37	42	57	34	37	42	57	44	33	54	45	31	51
	Δ Apr 2019	▲5	▲1	▲10	▲2	▲3	▲2	▲6	▲9	▲5	▼1	▲8	▲4	▼3	▼8	▼1	▲9	▼4	▲13	▲7	▲1	▲10	▲7	▲10	▲8	▲3	▲4	▼3	▼1
Not very well-informed	Apr/May 2024	36	37	30	29	29	35	31	39	33	32	37	33	35	41	46	34	28	25	40	39	37	31	41	35	25	42	39	39
	Δ Apr 2019	▼6	▲1	▼12	▼6	▼3	▼6	▼10	▼11	▼10	▼5	▼11	▼7	▲1	▲3	▲5	▼15	▼1	▼10	▼12	▼2	▼11	▼9	▲1	▼10	▼5	▲1	▼1	▲1
Not at all informed	Apr/May 2024	12	8	11	16	6	8	7	19	7	4	9	6	11	16	14	19	12	9	20	16	14	4	8	28	9	5	24	4
	Δ Apr 2019	▼2	▼7	▼5	▼3	▼4	=	=	▼2	=	▲1	▼1	▼1	▼1	▲2	▼6	▲2	▲4	▼1	▲1	▼2	▼1	▼1	▼10	▲2	▲3	▼5	▲6	▲2
Don't know	Apr/May 2024	1	0	1	2	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
	Δ Apr 2019	=	▼3	=	=	▼1	▼1	▼1	=	=	=	=	=	▼1	=	▼1	▲1	▼2	▼5	▲1	=	=	▲1	▼2	=	▼1	=	▼1	▼1
Total 'Informed'	Apr/May 2024	51	55	58	53	64	56	60	42	59	64	54	60	54	43	40	46	59	66	39	45	47	64	51	37	66	52	35	57
	Δ Apr 2019	▲8	▲9	▲17	▲9	▲8	▲7	▲11	▲14	▲10	▲4	▲12	▲8	▲1	▼5	▲2	▲12	▼1	▲16	▲10	▲4	▲12	▲9	▲11	▲8	▲3	▲4	▼4	▼2
Total 'Not informed'	Apr/May 2024	48	45	41	45	35	43	38	58	40	36	46	39	46	57	60	53	40	34	60	55	51	35	49	63	34	47	63	43
	Δ Apr 2019	▼8	▼6	▼17	▼9	▼7	▼6	▼10	▼13	▼10	▼4	▼12	▼8	=	▲5	▼1	▼13	▲3	▼11	▼11	▼4	▼12	▼10	▼9	▼8	▼2	▼4	▲5	▲3

Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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The analysis of the **socio-demographic data** shows the following:

- Men (56%) are more likely to consider themselves well informed about the **EU's fundamental values** than women (43%).
- This is also slightly more often the case for those aged 25-39 years (54%) than other age groups.
- Those who finished full-time education at the age of 20 or later feel better informed about those values (63%), especially when compared to those who finished their full-time education at the age of 15 or earlier (27%).
- Managers (69%) also feel better informed than other occupational groups, especially compared to house persons (35%) and the unemployed (38%).
- The same pattern applies to those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class of society (66%) or upper middle class (69%), compared to 35% of those who see themselves as belonging to the working class.
- Finally, 71% of respondents who frequently talk about European political matters with their friends and relatives say this, while only 33% of those who never talk about those matters feel well informed.

QA1.1 To what extent do you feel informed or not about The EU's fundamental values (% - EU)

	Total 'Informed'	Total 'Not informed'	Don't know
EU27	51	48	1
Gender			
Man	56	43	1
Woman	44	55	1
Age			
15-24	47	52	1
25-39	54	45	1
40-54	53	46	1
55 +	47	52	1
Education (End of)			
15-	27	72	1
16-19	47	52	1
20+	63	37	0
Still studying	50	50	0
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	58	41	1
Managers	69	30	1
Other white collars	56	44	0
Manual workers	47	52	1
House persons	35	63	2
Unemployed	38	61	1
Retired	46	54	0
Students	49	50	1
Consider belonging to			
The working class	35	64	1
The lower middle class	47	52	1
The middle class	57	43	0
The upper middle class	69	31	0
The upper class	66	34	0
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	71	29	0
Occasionally	55	45	0
Never	33	66	1
Image of the EU			
Positive	10	38	0
Neutral	5	57	1
Negative	6	62	1
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	10	38	1
Wrong direction	6	55	1
Neither	9	48	1

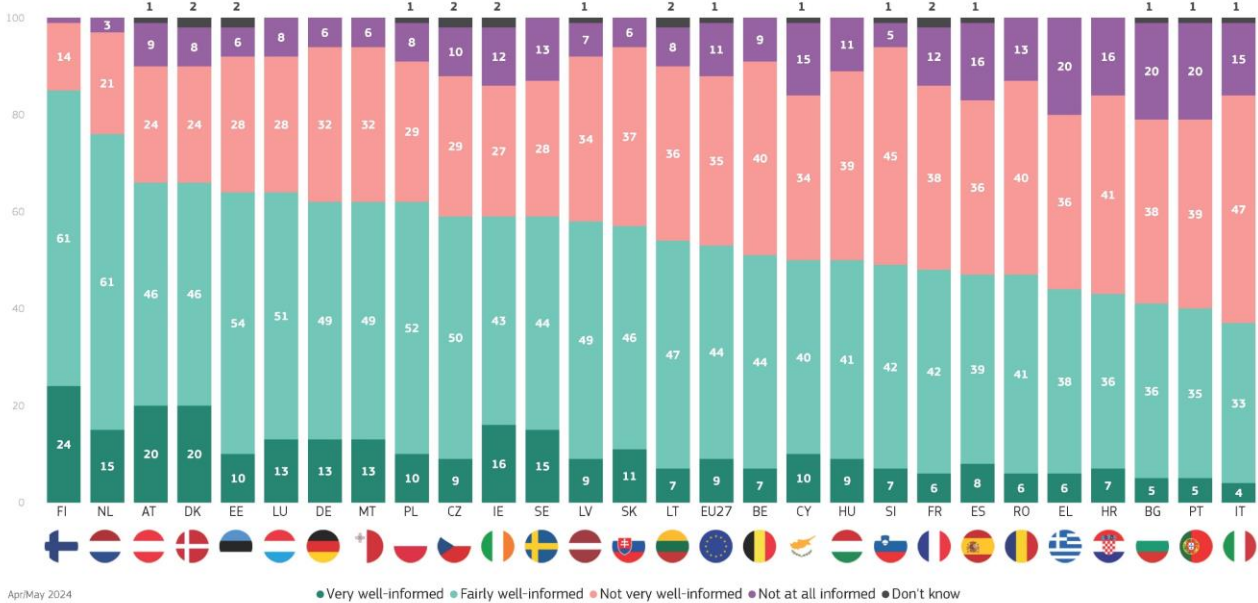
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In 17 Member States, a majority of respondents feel informed about the rule of law. Finland (85%) and the Netherlands (76%) stand out with over seven in ten respondents feeling informed about the rule of law. In Finland (24%) as well as Austria and Denmark (each 20%) at least a fifth of respondents feels very well informed. In Hungary information levels are evenly split (50% vs. 50%).

At the other end of the scale, 37% of respondents in Italy and 40% in Portugal feel informed about the rule of law. Thus, awareness levels vary widely amongst Member States. The highest and the lowest score are separated by 48 percentage points.

Two in ten respondents in Portugal, Bulgaria and Greece consider that they are not at all informed about the principles of the rule of law.

QA1.2. To what extent do you feel informed or not about-The rule of law (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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The analysis of the **socio-demographic data** shows the following:

- Men (58%) are more likely to consider themselves well informed about the **rule of law** than women (48%).
- This is also slightly more often the case for those aged 25-54 years (56% and 57% respectively) than other age groups.
- Those who finished full-time education at the age of 20 or later (66%) feel better informed, especially when compared to those who finished their full-time education at the age of 15 or earlier (32%).
- Managers (72%) also feel better informed than other occupational groups, especially compared to house persons (37%) and the unemployed (40%).
- The same pattern applies to those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class of society (70%) or upper middle class (71%), compared to 41% of those who consider themselves as being part of the working class.
- Finally, 75% of respondents who frequently talk about European political matters with their friends and relatives say this, while only 37% of those who never talk about those matters feel well informed.

QA1.2 To what extent do you feel informed or not about The rule of law (% - EU)

	Total 'Informed'	Total 'Not informed'	Don't know
EU27	53	46	1
Gender			
Man	58	41	1
Woman	48	51	1
Age			
15-24	50	49	1
25-39	56	43	1
40-54	57	43	0
55 +	50	49	1
Education (End of)			
15-	32	67	1
16-19	50	49	1
20+	66	34	0
Still studying	52	47	1
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	60	40	0
Managers	72	28	0
Other white collars	58	42	0
Manual workers	50	49	1
House persons	37	62	1
Unemployed	40	59	1
Retired	50	49	1
Students	51	48	1
Consider belonging to			
The working class	41	58	1
The lower middle class	50	49	1
The middle class	57	43	0
The upper middle class	71	29	0
The upper class	70	30	0
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	75	25	0
Occasionally	58	42	0
Never	37	62	1
Image of the EU			
Positive	63	37	0
Neutral	45	54	1
Negative	43	56	1
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	62	38	0
Wrong direction	48	51	1
Neither	54	45	1

2. Perceived importance of the EU's fundamental rights and the rule of law

This chapter explores the perceived importance of the respect of the rule of law in the EU and the Member States. The aspects covered concern the core values of the EU, whether all EU Member States respect these core; the freedom of media and civil society organisations to operate within the EU; the possibility of accessing an independent and impartial court when travelling; the trust in public authorities in other EU Member States; the possibility of accessing independent and impartial courts abroad in the same manner as nationals there; the trust in public authorities in other EU Member States to take decisions based on the law in a transparent manner when travelling of doing business there.

For each of the five questions⁴ on the rule of law in the EU and other Member States, at least 85% think that it is important or essential.

89% of Europeans consider essential or important **that all EU Member States respect the core values of the EU, including fundamental rights, the rule of law, and democracy**, including 47% who say that is essential. **Since 2019**, overall support for this aspect has remained unchanged. However, a more detailed analysis of the trend shows a decrease of six percentage points for the proportion of respondents who consider this aspect essential, while the proportion of those who say it is important has increased by six percentage points. 9% consider this aspect not important.

86% of respondents say that it is essential or important for them personally that the **'media and civil society organisations in all other EU Member States than [their country] are able to operate freely and without pressure, even when they are critical**. 10% say that this aspect is not important for them personally. **Since 2019**, the proportion of respondents who consider this aspect essential has decreased by six percentage points while the proportion of respondents who consider that important has increased by five percentage points.

A similar proportion of 86% consider essential or important for them personally that **when [they] live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, [they] can access an independent and impartial court there**, including 41% (-7 percentage points since 2019) who say it is essential and 45% (+6) who say that is important for them. Overall support declined by one percentage point.

Another 86% of Europeans think that it is essential or important for them personally that **'when [they] live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, [they] can trust its public authorities to take decisions based on the law, in a transparent manner'**, including 41% (-9) who say that this aspect is essential and 45% (+7) who say that this aspect is important. Overall support has declined by three percentage points.

85% of Europeans think that it is essential or important for them personally that **'when [they] live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, [they] can access an independent and impartial court there in the same conditions as a national from that other Member State'**, including 39% who say it is essential and 46% who say it is important. Conversely, 11% consider this aspect not important for them personally and 4% answer 'don't know'. As this question item was newly introduced, there is no trend data available.

When analysing the **trend data in general**, it is noteworthy that declines for the answer 'essential' are significant: between six and nine percentage points. These declines are compensated partially by increases in the proportion of respondents who answer 'important': between +5 and +7 percentage points. Furthermore, the proportion of respondents who answer 'important' systematically outnumber those who answer 'essential'.

⁴ How important are the following points for you? 1. All EU Member States respect the core values of the EU, including fundamental rights, the rule of law, and democracy; 2. When you live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, you can trust its public authorities to take decisions based on the law, in a transparent manner; 3. When you live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, you can access an independent

and impartial court there; 4. When you live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, you can access an independent and impartial court there in the same conditions as a national from that other Member State; 5. Media and civil society organisations in all other EU Member States than (OUR COUNTRY) are able to operate freely and without pressure, even when they are critical;

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QA10. How important are the following points for you? (EU27) (%)

All EU Member States respect the core values of the EU, including fundamental rights, the rule of law, and democracy



Media and civil society organisations in all other EU Member States than (OUR COUNTRY) are able to operate freely and without pressure, even when they are critical



When you live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, you can access an independent and impartial court there



When you live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, you can trust its public authorities to take decisions based on the law, in a transparent manner



When you live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, you can access an independent and impartial court there in the same conditions as a national from that other Member State



● Essential ● Important ● Not so important ● Not at all important ● Don't know

Apr/May 2024

Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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The results on a national level show that in all 27 Member States at least seven in ten respondents consider each of the tested aspects essential or important.

Given the large number of respondents considering each aspect important, the overall socio-demographic differences are very slight.

However, some variations amongst Member States occur when focusing on the country results. Thus, in all 27 Member States at over seven in ten respondents think that it is essential or important for them personally that **'all EU Member States respect the core values of the EU, including fundamental rights, the rule of law and democracy'**. Proportions vary from 97% in Sweden and 96% in Luxembourg, where they are the highest to 78% in Czechia and 77% in Croatia, where they are the lowest.

Since 2019, the proportion of respondents considering this issue essential or important has increased in 15 countries, most significantly in Luxembourg (96%, +11) and Estonia (90%, +10), while proportions have remained unchanged in Italy (89%) and Czechia (78%). Conversely, proportions dropped in 10 countries, most notably in Cyprus (85%, -11).

QA10.1 How important are the following points for you?

All EU Member States respect the core values of the EU, including fundamental rights, the rule of law, and democracy (%)

		EU27	LU	LV	MT	PT	CZ	SI	FI	DK	EE	SK	NL	RO	IE	ES	DE	AT	SE	IT	PL	EL	HR	HU	BE	FR	LT	BG	CY
Essential	Apr/May 2024	47	72	38	59	53	35	52	60	58	36	36	67	35	55	55	59	41	68	34	25	54	30	46	41	49	28	40	53
	Δ Apr 2019	▼6	▲20	▲7	▲7	▲6	▲4	▲4	▲3	=	=	=	▼2	▼2	▼3	▼4	▼5	▼5	▼5	▼6	▼6	▼8	▼9	▼9	▼11	▼11	▼13	▼16	▼19
Important	Apr/May 2024	42	24	48	31	38	43	40	35	34	54	54	28	47	36	36	33	43	29	55	57	40	47	44	48	41	59	44	32
	Δ Apr 2019	▲6	▼9	▲1	▼6	▼5	▼4	▲2	▼2	▲2	▲10	▲4	▲3	▲4	=	▲8	▲2	▲2	▲7	▲6	▲4	▲6	▲4	▲7	▲5	▲12	▲18	▲12	▲8
Not so important	Apr/May 2024	7	3	9	6	3	13	5	3	4	6	7	4	14	3	5	5	8	2	8	10	4	17	8	9	6	9	9	9
	Δ Apr 2019	▲3	▼1	=	▲4	=	=	▼3	=	▼2	=	=	=	▲2	=	▲3	▲3	▲1	=	▲2	▲3	▲2	▲5	▲3	▲6	▲4	▲1	▲6	▲8
Not at all important	Apr/May 2024	2	1	3	1	2	4	1	1	2	2	1	1	2	3	2	1	5	1	1	7	1	4	1	1	1	2	3	5
	Δ Apr 2019	=	▼2	▼3	=	▲1	▼1	▼1	▲1	▲1	▼2	▼2	▲1	▼1	▲3	▲1	=	▲2	=	=	▲4	▲1	=	=	=	▼1	▼4	▲1	▲5
Don't know	Apr/May 2024	2	0	2	3	4	5	2	1	2	2	2	0	2	3	2	2	3	0	2	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	4	1
	Δ Apr 2019	▼3	▼8	▼5	▼5	▼2	▲1	▼2	▼2	▼1	▼8	▼2	▼2	▼3	=	▼8	=	=	▼2	▼2	▼5	▼1	=	▼1	=	▼4	▼2	▼3	▼2
Total 'Important'	Apr/May 2024	89	96	86	90	91	78	92	95	92	90	90	95	82	91	91	92	84	97	89	82	94	77	90	89	90	87	84	85
	Δ Apr 2019	=	▲11	▲8	▲1	▲1	=	▲6	▲1	▲2	▲10	▲4	▲1	▲2	▼3	▲4	▼3	▼3	▲2	=	▼2	▼2	▼5	▼2	▼6	▲1	▲5	▼4	▼11
Total 'Not important'	Apr/May 2024	9	4	12	7	5	17	6	4	6	8	8	5	16	6	7	6	13	3	9	17	5	21	9	10	7	11	12	14
	Δ Apr 2019	▲3	▼3	▼3	▲4	▲1	▼1	▼4	▲1	▼1	▼2	▼2	▲1	▲1	▲3	▲4	▲3	▲3	=	▲2	▲7	▲3	▲5	▲3	▲6	▲3	▼3	▲7	▲13

Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Sorted by 'essential'

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In all 27 Member States at least seven in ten respondents think that it is essential or important for them personally that **‘when [they] live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, [they] can trust its public authorities to take decisions based on the law, in a transparent manner’**. Proportions vary from 94% in Luxembourg and 93% in Finland, where they are highest to 70% in Romania and 72% in Croatia, where they are lowest.

Since 2019, the proportion of respondents considering this issue essential or important has increased in seven Member States, most significantly in Luxembourg (94%, +11) and in Slovenia (91%, +7), while proportions have remained unchanged in four countries. Conversely proportions have dropped in 16 countries, most significantly in Cyprus (83%, -11).

QA10.2 How important are the following points for you?

When you live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, you can trust its public authorities to take decisions based on the law, in a transparent manner (%)



		EU27	LU	MT	PT	AT	FI	LV	CZ	DE	IE	SI	SK	HU	PL	RO	NL	EE	ES	DK	BE	IT	SE	BG	FR	HR	EL	LT	CY
Essential	Apr/May 2024	41	61	54	46	40	55	31	28	55	52	40	33	46	24	28	55	26	47	45	34	26	52	41	41	25	44	17	44
	Δ Apr 2019	▼9	▲16	▲8	=	▼1	▼1	▼2	▼3	▼4	▼4	▼4	▼4	▼7	▼7	▼7	▼8	▼9	▼9	▼10	▼11	▼11	▼11	▼12	▼12	▼14	▼18	▼24	▼26
Important	Apr/May 2024	45	33	37	40	40	38	49	48	36	40	51	55	40	58	42	37	57	40	46	52	58	40	42	44	47	47	61	39
	Δ Apr 2019	▲7	▼5	▼4	▼4	=	▲1	▲5	▲3	▲1	▲3	▲11	▲8	▲4	▲5	▼1	▲4	▲13	▲9	▲13	▲3	▲6	▲9	▲9	▲10	▲7	▲18	▲22	▲15
Not so important	Apr/May 2024	8	4	4	5	11	3	9	14	5	4	7	7	10	10	18	5	8	7	4	12	12	5	9	6	18	5	11	9
	Δ Apr 2019	▲3	=	▲1	▲2	▼2	=	▲1	=	▲2	=	▼1	▼1	▲4	▲2	▲6	▲3	▲1	▲5	▼2	▲9	▲6	▲3	▲5	▲3	▲5	▲1	▲3	▲7
Not at all important	Apr/May 2024	3	1	2	3	6	1	5	4	3	1	1	1	3	6	8	2	3	2	1	1	2	1	4	2	7	2	7	5
	Δ Apr 2019	▲1	▼1	=	▲2	▲3	=	▼2	▼2	▲2	▲1	▼2	▼3	▲1	▲4	▲3	▲2	▼1	▲1	▼1	=	=	▲1	▲1	▲1	▲1	=	=	▲4
Don't know	Apr/May 2024	3	1	3	6	3	3	6	6	1	3	1	4	1	2	4	1	6	4	4	1	2	2	4	7	3	2	4	3
	Δ Apr 2019	▼2	▼10	▼5	=	=	=	▼2	▲2	▼1	=	▼4	=	▼2	▼4	▼1	▼1	▼4	▼6	=	▼1	▼1	▼2	▼3	▼2	▲1	▼1	▼1	=
Total 'Important'	Apr/May 2024	86	94	91	86	80	93	80	76	91	92	91	88	86	82	70	92	83	87	91	86	84	92	83	85	72	91	78	83
	Δ Apr 2019	▼2	▲11	▲4	▼4	▼1	=	▲3	=	▼3	▼1	▲7	▲4	▼3	▼2	▼8	▼4	▲4	=	▲3	▼8	▼5	▼2	▼3	▼2	▼7	=	▼2	▼11
Total 'Not important'	Apr/May 2024	11	5	6	8	17	4	14	18	8	5	8	8	13	16	26	7	11	9	5	13	14	6	13	8	25	7	18	14
	Δ Apr 2019	▲4	▼1	▲1	▲4	▲1	=	▼1	▼2	▲4	▲1	▼3	▼4	▲5	▲6	▲9	▲5	=	▲6	▼3	▲9	▲6	▲4	▲6	▲4	▲6	▲1	▲3	▲11

Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Sorted by 'essential'

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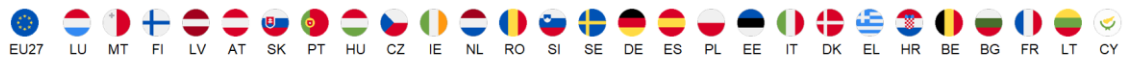
In all 27 Member States at least seven in ten respondents think that it is essential or important for them personally that **‘when [they] live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, [they] can access an independent and impartial court there’**. Proportions vary from 95% in Luxembourg and 94% in Finland to 73% in Romania and 76% in Czechia.

It is also noteworthy that overall approval levels vary slightly more than for other items. The overall proportion of respondents who consider this aspect important varies by 22 percentage points between the country where approval is highest and the country where it is lowest.

Since 2019, the proportion of respondents considering this issue essential has increased in 13 Member States, most notably in Luxembourg (95%, +13), while proportions remained unchanged in Czechia (76%). Conversely proportions have dropped in 13 countries, most markedly in Cyprus (86%, -10).

QA10.3 How important are the following points for you?

When you live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, you can access an independent and impartial court there (%)



		EU27	LU	MT	FI	LV	AT	SK	PT	HU	CZ	IE	NL	RO	SI	SE	DE	ES	PL	EE	IT	DK	EL	HR	BE	BG	FR	LT	CY
Essential	Apr/May 2024	41	63	55	56	34	43	35	44	49	25	53	57	29	40	54	52	49	25	30	30	47	47	26	32	41	37	18	44
	Δ Apr 2019	▼7	▲20	▲9	▲2	▲1	▲1	▲1	▼2	▼3	▼4	▼4	▼4	▼4	▼4	▼5	▼6	▼6	▼6	▼7	▼7	▼7	▼8	▼10	▼12	▼13	▼15	▼15	▼20
Important	Apr/May 2024	45	32	35	38	47	41	55	43	40	51	36	35	44	50	38	38	38	59	52	58	42	46	51	56	43	44	60	42
	Δ Apr 2019	▲6	▼7	▼4	=	▲3	▲1	▲4	▲1	▲5	▲4	=	▲2	▲1	▲10	▲4	▲3	▲7	▲8	▲12	▲5	▲10	▲12	▲9	▲9	▲14	▲9	▲19	▲15
Not so important	Apr/May 2024	8	4	7	3	7	8	5	4	7	14	4	6	17	7	4	6	6	9	9	9	5	4	12	10	9	7	11	7
	Δ Apr 2019	▲3	=	▲3	▼1	▼2	▼4	▼2	=	▼1	▲1	=	▲3	▲3	▼1	▲1	▲3	▲3	=	▲1	▲4	▼2	=	▲1	▲5	▲4	▲4	▲2	▲6
Not at all important	Apr/May 2024	2	0	0	0	4	6	1	3	3	4	2	1	5	1	1	2	2	5	3	1	1	1	8	1	3	1	6	3
	Δ Apr 2019	=	▼1	▼2	=	▼2	▲3	▼3	▲2	=	▼3	▲2	▲1	▲1	▼2	▲1	▲1	▲2	▲2	▼1	=	▼1	▼1	▲2	=	=	=	▼1	▲3
Don't know	Apr/May 2024	4	1	3	3	8	2	4	6	1	6	5	1	5	2	3	2	5	2	6	2	5	2	3	1	4	11	5	4
	Δ Apr 2019	▼2	▼12	▼6	▼1	=	▼1	=	▼1	▼1	▲2	▲2	▼2	▼1	▼3	▼1	▼1	▼5	▼4	▼5	▼2	▲1	▼1	=	▼1	▼3	▲2	=	▲1
Total 'Important'	Apr/May 2024	86	95	90	94	81	84	90	87	89	76	89	92	73	90	92	90	87	84	82	88	89	93	77	88	84	81	78	86
	Δ Apr 2019	▼1	▲13	▲5	▲2	▲4	▲2	▲5	▼1	▲2	=	▼4	▼2	▼3	▲6	▼1	▼3	▲1	▲2	▲5	▼2	▲2	▲2	▼3	▼4	▼1	▼6	▼1	▼10
Total 'Not important'	Apr/May 2024	10	4	7	3	11	14	6	7	10	18	6	7	22	8	5	8	8	14	12	10	6	5	20	11	12	8	17	10
	Δ Apr 2019	▲3	▼1	▲1	▼1	▼4	▼1	▼5	▲2	▼1	▼2	▲2	▲4	▲4	▼3	▲2	▲4	▲4	▲2	=	▲4	▼3	▼1	▲3	▲5	▲4	▲4	▲1	▲9

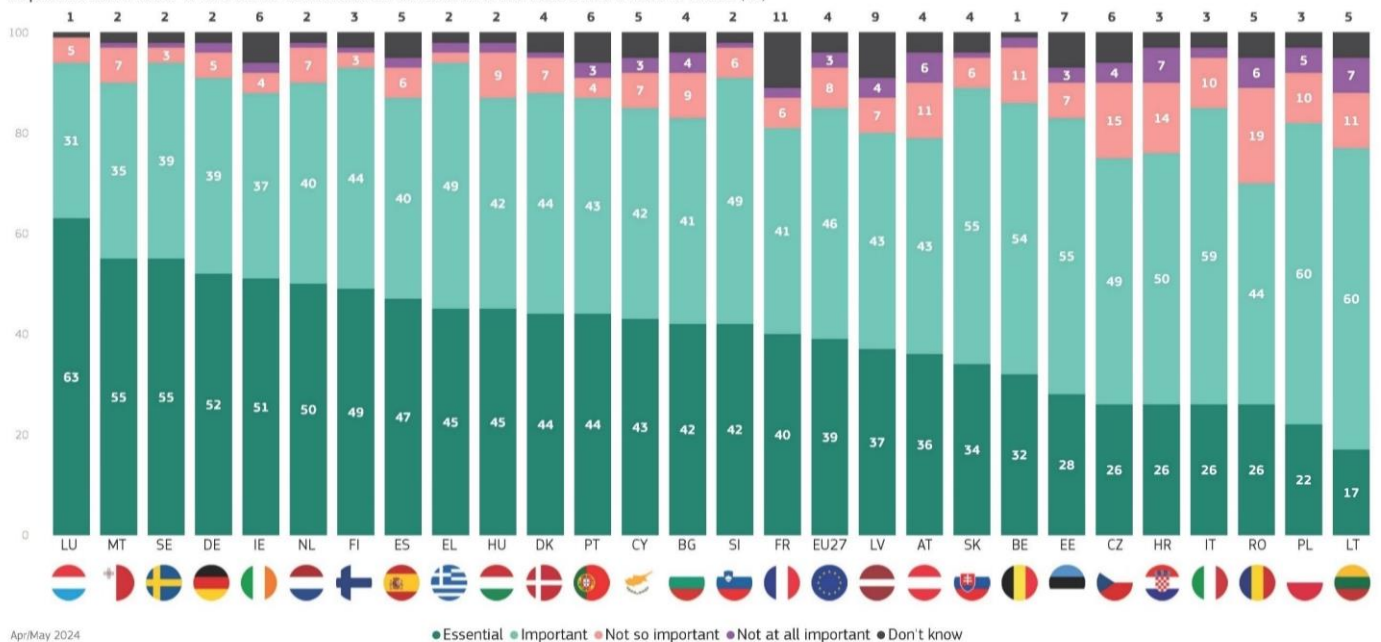
Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Sorted by 'essential'

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In all 27 Member States at least seven in ten respondents think that it is essential or important for them personally that **‘when [they] live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, [they] can access an independent and impartial court there in the same conditions as a national from that other Member State’**. Proportions vary from 94% in Luxembourg, where they are highest, to 70% in Romania where they are lowest, and 25% consider this idea not important for them personally.

QA10.4. How important are the following points for you?:-When you live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, you can access an independent and impartial court there in the same conditions as a national from that other Member State (%)



Apr/May 2024

Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Sorted by 'essential'

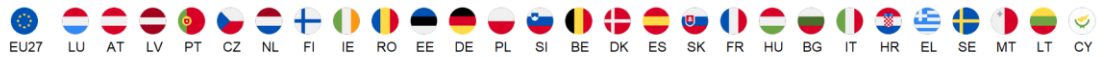
Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

In all 27 Member States at least seven in ten respondents think that it is essential or important for them personally that **'media and civil society organisations in all other EU Member States than (THEIR COUNTRY) are able to operate freely and without pressure, even when they are critical'**. Proportions vary from 96% in Luxembourg and 94% in the Netherlands and Sweden, where they are highest to 71% in Romania, where just over seven in ten respondents consider that essential or important for them.

Since 2019, the proportion of respondents considering this issue essential has increased in eight Member States, most notably in Luxembourg (96%, +16), followed by Latvia (79%, +7). Proportions have remained unchanged in Greece (92%) and in Denmark (87%), while they have dropped in 17 countries, including Cyprus (77%, -17) and Malta (73%, -15).

QA10.5 How important are the following points for you?

Media and civil society organisations in all other EU Member States than (OUR COUNTRY) are able to operate freely and without pressure, even when they are critical (%)



		EU27	LU	AT	LV	PT	CZ	NL	FI	IE	RO	EE	DE	PL	SI	BE	DK	ES	SK	FR	HU	BG	IT	HR	EL	SE	MT	LT	CY
Essential	Apr/May 2024	40	67	50	28	47	24	60	44	50	28	22	51	21	37	35	47	45	28	41	41	41	25	25	39	60	36	13	39
	Δ Apr 2019	▼6	▲23	▲10	▲3	▲2	▲1	▼1	▼2	▼3	▼3	▼5	▼6	▼6	▼6	▼7	▼7	▼7	▼7	▼7	▼9	▼9	▼10	▼10	▼11	▼12	▼12	▼14	▼24
Important	Apr/May 2024	46	29	36	51	40	51	34	42	40	43	51	38	61	48	50	40	44	60	43	45	42	60	48	53	34	37	65	38
	Δ Apr 2019	▲5	▼7	▼9	▲4	▼7	▲5	▲2	▲1	▲1	▼3	▲4	▲2	▲4	▲7	▲1	▲7	▲11	▲12	▲6	▲8	▲8	▲8	▲5	▲12	▲11	▼1	▲22	▲11
Not so important	Apr/May 2024	8	4	8	9	5	12	4	6	4	20	12	6	10	9	11	8	5	7	5	11	7	10	16	4	4	10	12	14
	Δ Apr 2019	▲2	▼4	▼1	▼5	▲2	▼6	▼1	▼3	=	▲6	▲2	▲3	▲2	=	▲5	▲1	▲2	▼3	=	▲3	▲2	▲3	▲2	▼1	▲2	▲8	▲2	▲12
Not at all important	Apr/May 2024	2	0	4	3	3	5	2	1	2	5	3	3	6	3	3	1	2	1	1	2	3	2	7	1	0	13	5	4
	Δ Apr 2019	=	▼2	▲1	▼4	▲2	▼3	▲1	▲1	▲1	▲1	▼1	▲2	▲3	▲1	▲2	▼1	=	▼2	=	=	▲1	=	▲2	=	=	▲11	▼1	▲3
Don't know	Apr/May 2024	4	0	2	9	5	8	0	7	4	4	12	2	2	3	1	4	4	4	10	1	7	3	4	3	2	4	5	5
	Δ Apr 2019	▼1	▼10	▼1	▲2	▲1	▲3	▼1	▲3	▲1	▼1	=	▼1	▼3	▼2	▼1	=	▼6	=	▲3	▼2	▼1	▼1	▲2	▲1	▼1	▼4	▲1	▲2
Total 'Important'	Apr/May 2024	86	96	86	79	87	75	94	86	90	71	73	89	82	85	85	87	89	88	84	86	83	85	73	92	94	73	78	77
	Δ Apr 2019	▼1	▲16	▲1	▲7	▼5	▲6	▲1	▼1	▼2	▼6	▼1	▼4	▼2	▲1	▼6	=	▲4	▲5	▼3	▼1	▼2	▼2	▼6	=	▼1	▼15	▼2	▼17
Total 'Not important'	Apr/May 2024	10	4	12	12	8	17	6	7	6	25	15	9	16	12	14	9	7	8	6	13	10	12	23	5	4	23	17	18
	Δ Apr 2019	▲2	▼6	=	▼9	▲4	▼9	=	▼2	▲1	▲7	▲1	▲5	▲5	▲1	▲7	=	▲2	▼5	=	▲3	▲3	▲3	▲4	▼1	▲2	▲19	▲1	▲15

Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Sorted by 'essential'

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Given the large number of respondents considering each aspect important, the overall **socio-demographic** differences are very slight.

However, when analysing more specifically the answers for those who consider each of the aspects **'essential'** some slight differences can be noted.

Those who finished full-time education at the age of 20 or later, managers, respondents who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class of society, those who frequently talk about European political matters with family and friends, and those who hold a positive image of the EU are more likely to consider each aspect 'essential' for them personally than their socio-demographic counterparts.

QA10.1 How important are the following points for you? All EU Member States respect the core values of the EU, including fundamental rights, the rule of law, and democracy (% - EU)

	Essential	Important	Not so important	Not at all important	Don't know
EU27	47	42	7	2	2
Gender					
Man	49	41	7	2	1
Woman	46	43	7	2	2
Age					
15-24	47	41	8	2	2
25-39	47	43	7	2	1
40-54	47	43	7	2	1
55 +	48	42	6	2	2
Education (End of)					
15-	41	43	9	2	5
16-19	42	46	8	2	2
20+	55	37	5	2	1
Still studying	51	40	6	1	2
Socio-professional category					
Self-employed	48	42	6	3	1
Managers	58	35	5	1	1
Other white collars	48	43	6	2	1
Manual workers	42	45	8	3	2
House persons	40	46	8	2	4
Unemployed	45	40	9	3	3
Retired	47	42	6	2	3
Students	49	42	6	1	2
Consider belonging to					
The working class	42	44	7	3	4
The lower middle class	43	45	8	2	2
The middle class	48	42	7	2	1
The upper middle class	61	32	5	2	0
The upper class	56	38	4	1	1
Talk about European political matters					
Frequently	57	35	6	2	0
Occasionally	48	43	6	2	1
Never	42	43	8	3	4
Image of the EU					
Positive	55	40	3	1	1
Neutral	41	46	9	2	2
Negative	40	40	12	4	4
Things in country are going in...					
Right direction	44	46	7	2	1
Wrong direction	49	39	8	2	2
Neither	53	40	4	1	2

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Rule of Law

QA10.2 How important are the following points for you? When you live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, you can trust its public authorities to take decisions based on the law, in a transparent manner (% - EU)

	Essential	Important	Not so important	Not at all important	Don't know
EU27	41	45	8	3	3
Gender					
Man	42	45	8	3	2
Woman	40	45	8	3	4
Age					
15-24	42	44	10	2	2
25-39	41	45	9	3	2
40-54	41	45	9	3	2
55 +	41	45	7	3	4
Education (End of)					
15-	36	45	9	3	7
16-19	37	47	9	4	3
20+	47	42	6	3	2
Still studying	46	42	7	2	3
Socio-professional category					
Self-employed	43	43	9	3	2
Managers	49	42	6	2	1
Other white collars	41	47	8	2	2
Manual workers	37	45	11	4	3
House persons	33	47	10	4	6
Unemployed	41	43	9	3	4
Retired	39	46	7	3	5
Students	45	43	8	2	2
Consider belonging to					
The working class	37	45	8	4	6
The lower middle class	38	47	8	3	4
The middle class	41	45	9	3	2
The upper middle class	54	37	6	2	1
The upper class	56	32	7	4	1
Talk about European political matters					
Frequently	51	37	8	3	1
Occasionally	41	47	8	2	2
Never	36	45	9	4	6
Image of the EU					
Positive	47	45	5	1	2
Neutral	37	46	10	4	3
Negative	34	41	13	6	6
Things in country are going in...					
Right direction	39	48	9	3	1
Wrong direction	42	42	9	3	4
Neither	46	43	5	2	4

QA10.3 How important are the following points for you? When you live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, you can access an independent and impartial court there (% - EU)

	Essential	Important	Not so important	Not at all important	Don't know
EU27	41	45	8	2	4
Gender					
Man	42	46	7	2	3
Woman	40	45	8	2	5
Age					
15-24	41	46	9	1	3
25-39	40	46	9	2	3
40-54	43	44	7	2	4
55 +	40	46	7	2	5
Education (End of)					
15-	35	47	7	3	8
16-19	38	47	8	3	4
20+	47	42	7	2	2
Still studying	44	45	7	1	3
Socio-professional category					
Self-employed	42	46	7	2	3
Managers	47	43	7	1	2
Other white collars	44	47	6	1	2
Manual workers	38	46	9	3	4
House persons	33	46	11	2	8
Unemployed	42	40	9	3	6
Retired	39	45	7	3	6
Students	42	47	7	1	3
Consider belonging to					
The working class	38	45	7	3	7
The lower middle class	37	47	9	2	5
The middle class	42	46	7	2	3
The upper middle class	52	40	6	1	1
The upper class	52	40	6	1	1
Talk about European political matters					
Frequently	51	39	7	2	1
Occasionally	41	47	7	2	3
Never	36	45	9	3	7
Image of the EU					
Positive	46	46	5	1	2
Neutral	37	46	9	3	5
Negative	35	42	12	4	7
Things in country are going in...					
Right direction	38	50	8	2	2
Wrong direction	43	42	8	3	4
Neither	43	45	5	2	5

Special Eurobarometer 553

Rule of Law

QA10.4 How important are the following points for you? When you live, travel or do business in another EU Member State, you can access an independent and impartial court there in the same conditions as a national from that other Member State
(% - EU)

	Essential	Important	Not so important	Not at all important	Don't know
EU27	39	46	8	3	4
Gender					
Man	41	46	8	2	3
Woman	38	46	8	3	5
Age					
15-24	41	45	9	2	3
25-39	39	46	9	3	3
40-54	40	46	8	2	4
55 +	39	46	6	3	6
Education (End of)					
15-	35	46	7	3	9
16-19	36	49	8	3	4
20+	46	43	7	2	2
Still studying	43	43	9	2	3
Socio-professional category					
Self-employed	40	48	7	2	3
Managers	46	45	7	1	1
Other white collars	42	45	8	2	3
Manual workers	37	45	9	4	5
House persons	29	50	9	3	9
Unemployed	38	45	8	3	6
Retired	39	46	6	3	6
Students	42	45	8	2	3
Consider belonging to					
The working class	38	44	7	4	7
The lower middle class	37	48	8	2	5
The middle class	40	47	8	2	3
The upper middle class	49	42	6	2	1
The upper class	48	39	10	2	1
Talk about European political matters					
Frequently	50	39	8	2	1
Occasionally	39	49	7	2	3
Never	35	44	9	4	8
Image of the EU					
Positive	43	47	5	2	3
Neutral	36	47	9	3	5
Negative	36	41	11	5	7
Things in country are going in...					
Right direction	37	50	9	2	2
Wrong direction	41	43	8	3	5
Neither	43	45	4	2	6

QA10.5 How important are the following points for you? Media and civil society organisations in all other EU Member States than (OUR COUNTRY) are able to operate freely and without pressure, even when they are critical
(% - EU)

	Essential	Important	Not so important	Not at all important	Don't know
EU27	40	46	8	2	4
Gender					
Man	41	46	7	2	4
Woman	38	46	8	3	5
Age					
15-24	40	46	8	2	4
25-39	40	45	9	3	3
40-54	40	46	8	3	3
55 +	39	47	6	2	6
Education (End of)					
15-	33	48	7	3	9
16-19	35	49	9	3	4
20+	48	42	6	2	2
Still studying	43	45	7	1	4
Socio-professional category					
Self-employed	41	45	8	3	3
Managers	51	39	6	2	2
Other white collars	40	50	6	2	2
Manual workers	37	45	10	4	4
House persons	28	50	11	3	8
Unemployed	41	43	8	3	5
Retired	38	48	6	2	6
Students	41	47	7	2	3
Consider belonging to					
The working class	37	47	7	3	6
The lower middle class	37	48	8	3	4
The middle class	40	47	8	2	3
The upper middle class	50	39	7	2	2
The upper class	55	36	4	3	2
Talk about European political matters					
Frequently	50	39	8	2	1
Occasionally	40	48	7	2	3
Never	35	47	8	3	7
Image of the EU					
Positive	44	48	5	1	2
Neutral	36	47	9	3	5
Negative	36	42	12	4	6
Things in country are going in...					
Right direction	37	50	8	3	2
Wrong direction	41	44	8	3	4
Neither	45	45	3	1	6

3. The perceived role of the EU in upholding the rule of law

Over seven in ten respondents consider that the EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law EU-wide and on a national level

74% of respondents consider that **the EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law in all EU Member States**, including 24% who totally agree with this idea and 50% who tend to agree. On the other hand, 20% think that the EU does not play such a role. 6% say that they don't know or do not provide an answer to this question

A slightly smaller proportion (72%) of Europeans consider that **the EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law in their country**, including 22% of respondents who totally agree with this statement. Conversely, 23% of respondents do not think that the EU plays such a role in their country. 5% answer 'don't know' or do not provide an answer.

QA11. Please tell me to what extent you agree with the following statement: The EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law in (EU27) (%)

All EU Member States



(OUR COUNTRY)



● Totally agree ● Tend to agree ● Tend to disagree ● Totally disagree ● Don't know

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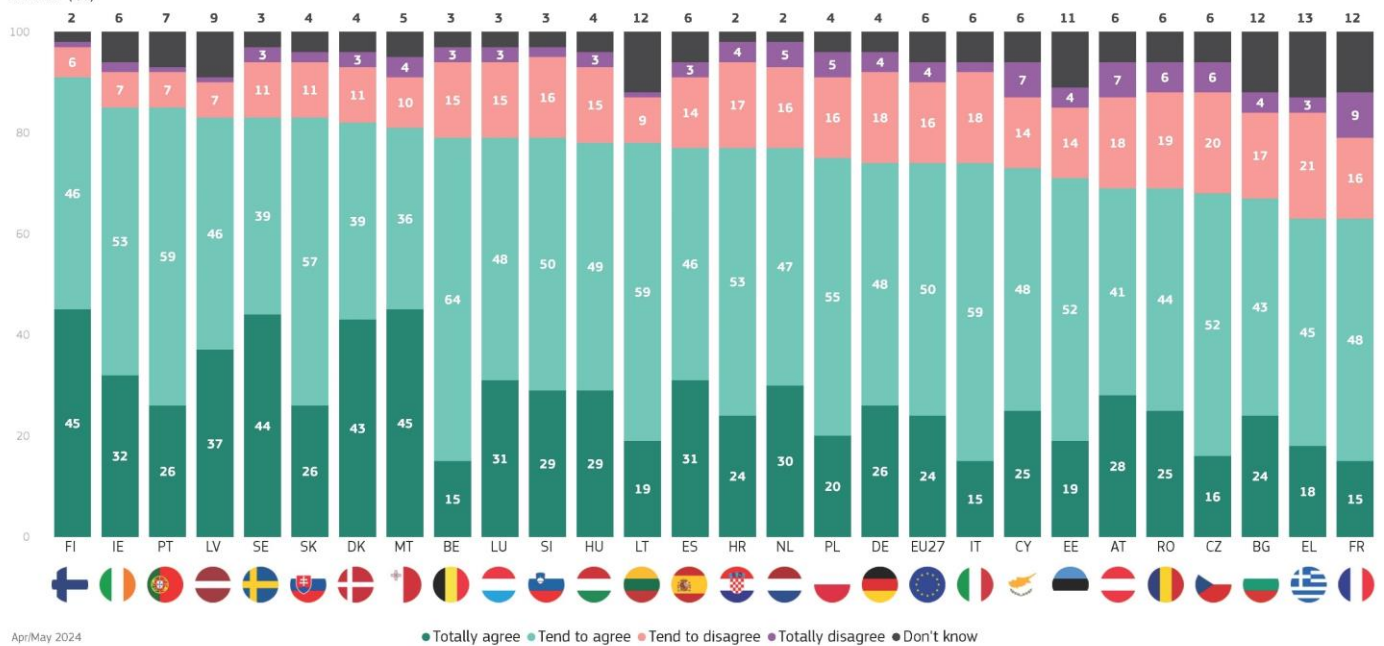
Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

A majority in all 27 Member States consider that **the EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law in all EU Member States**. Proportions range from 91% in Finland and 85% in Ireland and Portugal, where they are highest, to 63% in Greece and France at the other end of the scale.

Conversely, in Czechia (26%), Austria, Romania and France (25%) at least a quarter of respondents disagree.

QA11.2. Please tell me to what extent you agree with the following statement: The EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law in :-All EU Member States (%)



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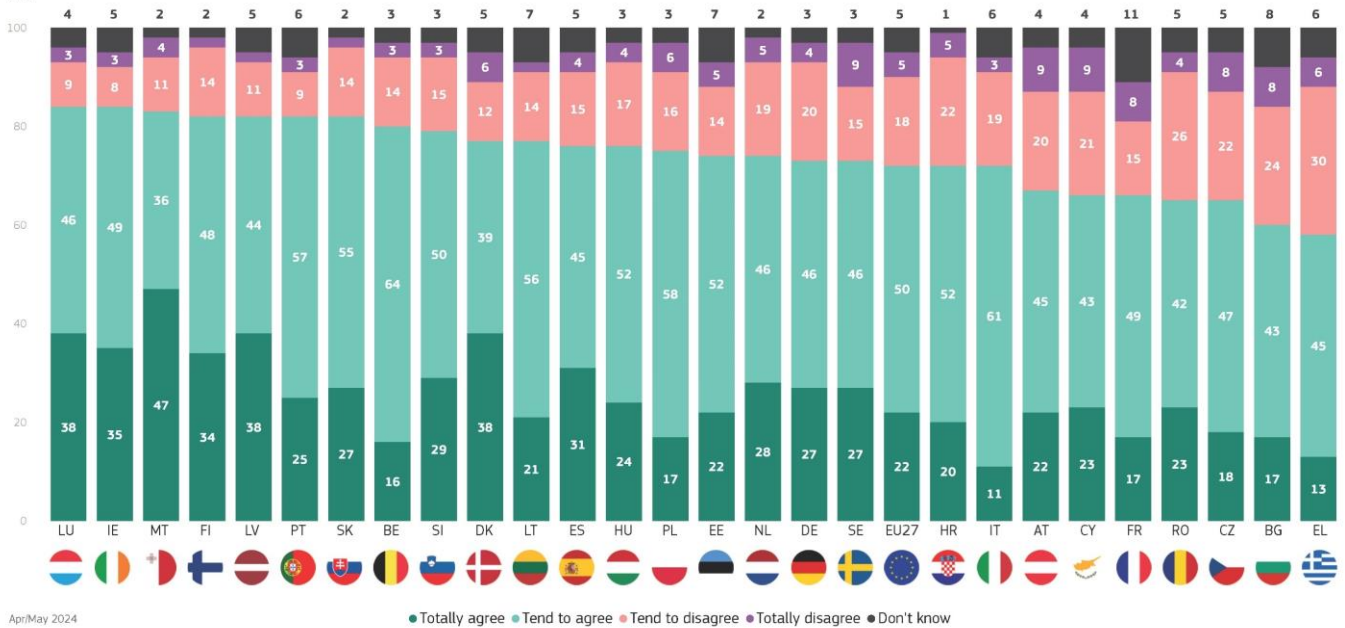
Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

A majority in all 27 Member States consider that **the EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law in their country**. Proportions range from 84% in Luxembourg and Ireland, 83% in Malta and 82% in Finland, Latvia, Portugal and Slovakia, where more than eight in ten respondents agree with this statement, to 58% in Greece and 60% in Bulgaria at the other end of the scale.

Conversely, in Greece (36%), Bulgaria (32%), Czechia, Romania and Cyprus (all 30%) at least three in ten respondents disagree.

QA11.1. Please tell me to what extent you agree with the following statement: The EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law in :- (OUR COUNTRY) (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

The analysis of the **socio-demographic data** shows only very small differences between categories. However, some differences should be underlined:

- For example, those who finished full-time education at the age of 20 or later (75%) are more likely to consider that the EU plays an important role in upholding the rule of law in their country and in all EU Member States than those who finished their full-time education at the age of 15 or earlier (68%).
- As do younger respondents (75%) and students (77%), especially when compared to housepersons (66%) and the unemployed (64%).
- Finally, 74% of respondents who frequently talk about European political matters with their friends and relatives say the same, while only 65% of those who never talk about those matters do so.

QA11.1 Please tell me to what extent you agree with the following statement:
The EU plays an important role in helping to uphold the rule of law in
(OUR COUNTRY)
(% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	72	23	5
Gender			
Man	71	25	4
Woman	73	21	6
Age			
15-24	75	18	7
25-39	72	24	4
40-54	72	24	4
55 +	71	23	6
Education (End of)			
15-	68	22	10
16-19	70	25	5
20+	75	22	3
Still studying	78	16	6
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	71	27	2
Managers	76	21	3
Other white collars	76	21	3
Manual workers	70	25	5
House persons	66	25	9
Unemployed	64	28	8
Retired	71	22	7
Students	77	17	6
Consider belonging to			
The working class	67	24	9
The lower middle class	71	25	4
The middle class	75	21	4
The upper middle class	73	25	2
The upper class	72	24	4
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	74	24	2
Occasionally	76	21	3
Never	65	25	10
Image of the EU			
Positive	84	13	3
Neutral	69	24	7
Negative	43	51	6
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	83	15	2
Wrong direction	65	29	6
Neither	75	16	9



II. Justice Systems

This second section reviews respondents' answers about their perception of the efficiency and functioning of justice system in their country. The respondents were then asked if they consider that the state of justice system in their country has improved, worsened or remained the same over the past five years.

1. The general perception of justice system on a national level

Respondents have been given four statements about justice system in their country. Two of them were positive and two of them negative⁵.

Over half of respondents agree with each of the statements about justice system in their country, whether those statements have a positive formulation or not.

Positive statements

75% of Europeans agree with the statement **'if your rights are not respected you can have them upheld by an independent court'**, including 27% who 'totally agree'. Conversely, a fifth (20%) disagree with this statement, including 4% who 'totally disagree'. 5% answer 'don't know' or do not provide an answer.

53% of respondents agree with the statement that **'judges are independent and are not under the influence of political or economic interests'**, including 16% of respondents who 'totally agree' with this statement. However, 41% disagree with this statement, 6% answer 'don't know' or do not provide an answer to this question.

Negative statements

An overwhelming majority of respondents consider that **court proceedings are too lengthy in their country**. In total, 84% of respondents agree with this statement, including 46% who 'totally agree' and 38% who 'tend to agree'. Conversely, just over one in ten respondents oppose this idea and 5% answer 'don't know' or do not provide an answer.

Negative perceptions are less important for the second statement, although they still hold a majority. Almost six in ten respondents (58%) consider that **public authorities and politicians often do not respect and apply court rulings**, including 16% who 'totally agree'. Conversely, over a third (34%) of respondents disagree with this statement.

⁵ QA2. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards justice in (OUR COUNTRY)? 1. If your rights are not respected, you can have them upheld by an independent court; 2. In general, court proceedings are too lengthy; 3. Judges are independent and are not under

the influence of political or economic interests; 4. Public authorities and politicians often do not respect and apply court rulings

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

QA2. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards justice in (OUR COUNTRY)? (EU27)
(%)

In general, court proceedings are too lengthy



If your rights are not respected, you can have them upheld by an independent court



Public authorities and politicians often do not respect and apply court rulings



Judges are independent and are not under the influence of political or economic interests



● Totally agree ● Tend to agree ● Tend to disagree ● Totally disagree ● Don't know

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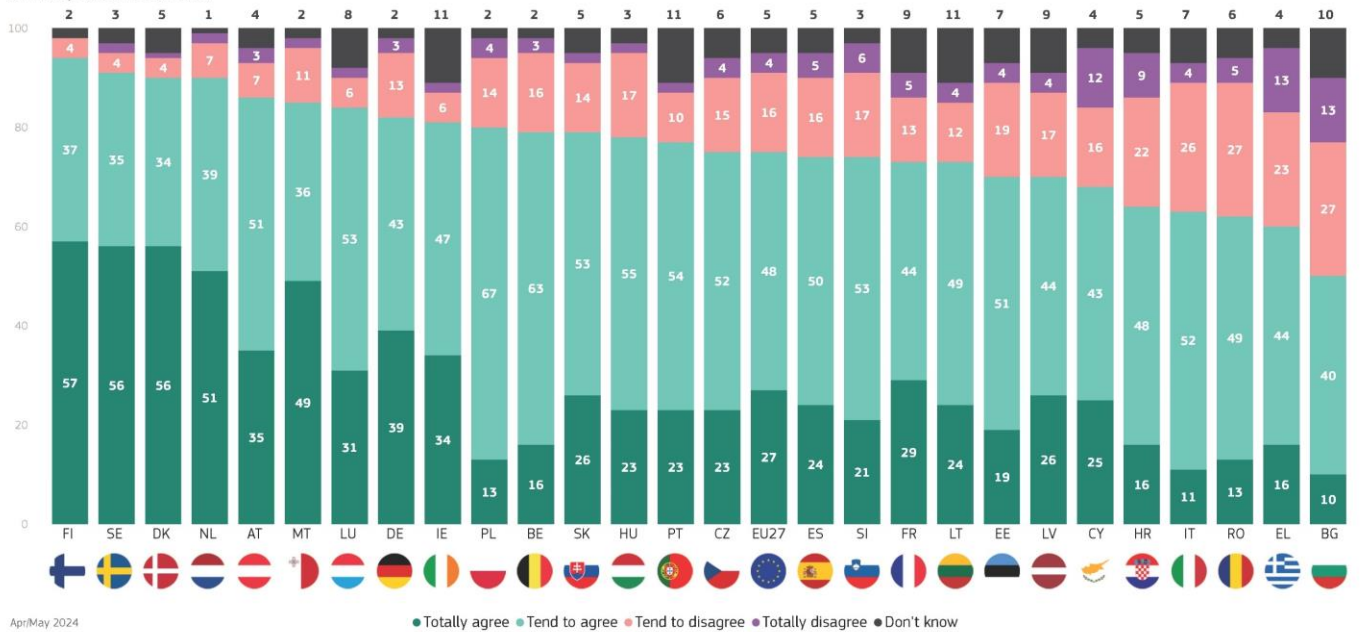
Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

In all 27 Member States a majority of respondents agree that **'if [their] rights are not respected, [they] can have them upheld by an independent court'**. However, approval rates vary widely amongst Member States. They vary from 94% in Finland, 91% in Sweden and 90% in Denmark and the Netherlands, where at least nine in ten respondents say so, to 50% in Bulgaria and 60% in Greece, where they are lowest. In nine countries over three in ten respondents 'totally agree', namely, Finland (57%), Sweden (56%), Denmark (56%), the Netherlands (51%), Malta (49%), Luxembourg (53%), Germany (43%), Ireland (47%) and Poland (67%).

Conversely, in Italy (30%), Croatia (31%), Romania (32%), Greece (36%) and Bulgaria (40%) at least three in ten respondents disagree.

QA2.1. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards justice in (OUR COUNTRY)?:-If your rights are not respected, you can have them upheld by an independent court (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

The analysis of the **socio-demographic data** only shows very little differences between categories. However:

- Those who finished full-time education at the age of 20 or later (82%) are more likely to agree that **'If [their] rights are not respected, [they] can have them upheld by an independent court'**, especially when compared to those who finished their full-time education at the age of 15 or earlier (61%).
- Managers (85%) are also more likely to agree than other occupational groups, especially when compared to house persons (65%) and the unemployed (69%).
- The same pattern applies to those who consider themselves as being part of the upper class of society (82%) or upper middle class (85%), vs. 70% of those who see themselves as belonging to the working class.
- Finally, 83% of respondents who frequently talk about European political matters with their friends and relatives say this, while only 68% of those who never talk about those matters do.

QA2.1 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards justice in (OUR COUNTRY)? If your rights are not respected, you can have them upheld by an independent court (% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	75	20	5
Gender			
Man	76	19	5
Woman	73	21	6
Age			
15-24	78	16	6
25-39	78	18	4
40-54	76	21	3
55 +	73	21	6
Education (End of)			
15-	61	29	10
16-19	73	22	5
20+	82	14	4
Still studying	81	12	7
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	77	20	3
Managers	85	12	3
Other white collars	78	18	4
Manual workers	72	24	4
House persons	65	27	8
Unemployed	69	23	8
Retired	71	22	7
Students	81	13	6
Consider belonging to			
The working class	70	23	7
The lower middle class	73	23	4
The middle class	77	18	5
The upper middle class	85	13	2
The upper class	82	14	4
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	83	15	2
Occasionally	78	18	4
Never	68	23	9
Image of the EU			
Positive	84	12	4
Neutral	71	24	5
Negative	60	34	6
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	80	16	4
Wrong direction	72	23	5
Neither	77	14	9

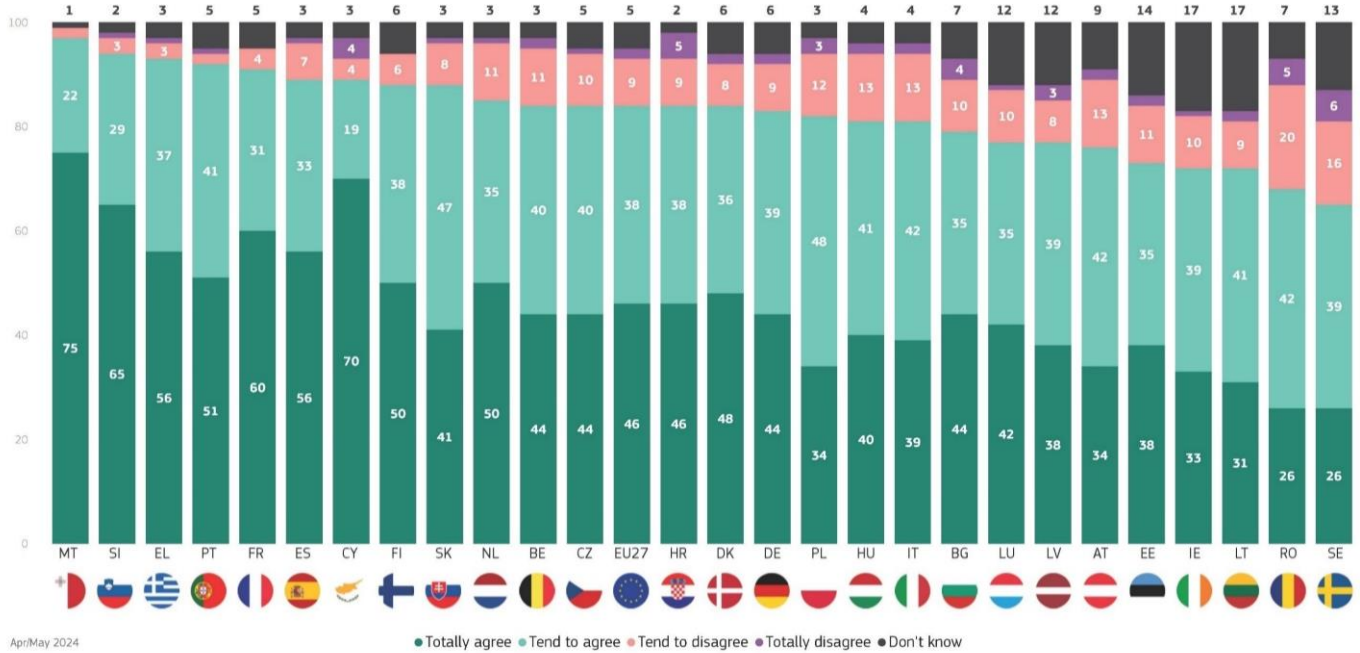
Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

In all 27 Member States a majority of respondents agree with the statement **'in general, court proceedings are too lengthy'**. Proportions are highest in Malta (97%), Slovenia (94%), Greece (93%), Portugal (92%) and France (91%), where over nine in ten respondents say this. At the other end of the scale stand Sweden (65%) and Romania (68%), where less than seven in ten respondents agree with this statement.

In four countries at least six in ten respondents 'totally agree' with this statement, namely in Malta (75%), Cyprus (70%), Slovenia (65%) and France (60%).

Conversely, in two countries at least a fifth of respondents disagree, namely in Sweden (22%) and Romania (20%).

QA2.2. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards justice in (OUR COUNTRY)?:-In general, court proceedings are too lengthy (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553

Rule of Law

The analysis of the **socio-demographic data** only shows very little differences between categories. However, there are some slight differences in perception according to the age of the respondent.

- Older respondents (86% of those aged 55+ and 85% of those aged 40-54) are more likely to agree with the statement that **'in general, court proceedings are too lengthy'** than younger respondents (78% of those aged 15-24).

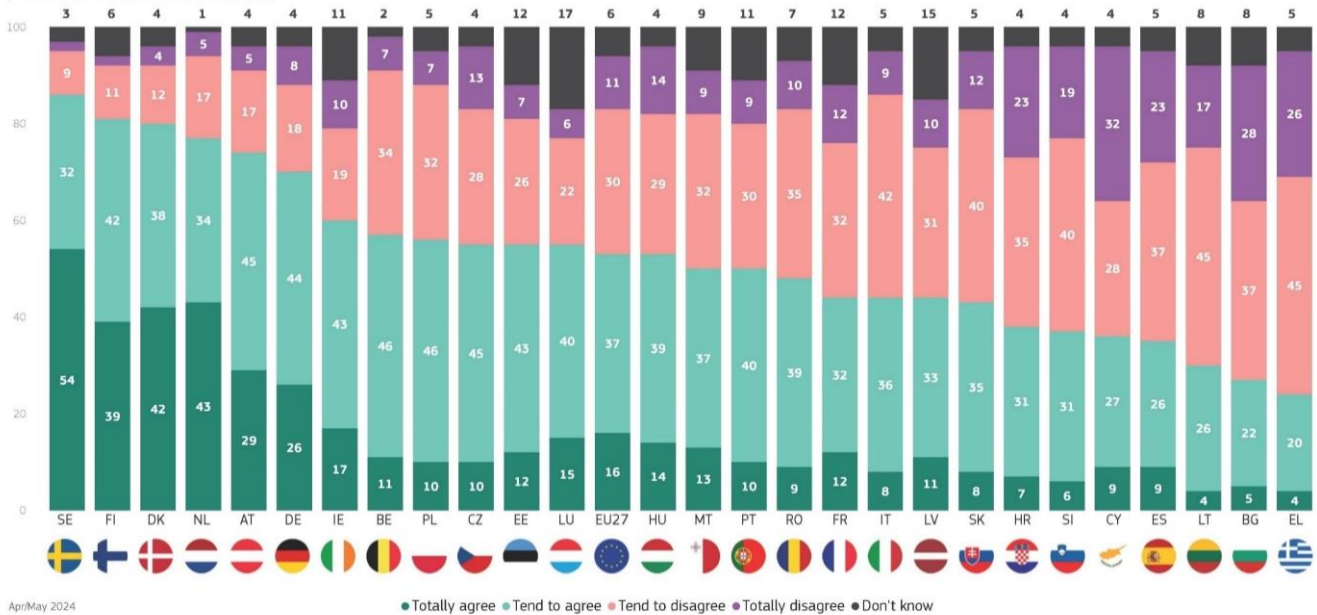
QA2.2 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards justice in (OUR COUNTRY)? In general, court proceedings are too lengthy (% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	84	11	5
Gender			
Man	84	11	5
Woman	84	11	5
Age			
15-24	78	14	8
25-39	81	13	6
40-54	85	11	4
55 +	86	10	4
Education (End of)			
15-	83	11	6
16-19	85	11	4
20+	85	11	4
Still studying	78	12	10
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	87	11	2
Managers	85	11	4
Other white collars	84	12	4
Manual workers	83	13	4
House persons	80	13	7
Unemployed	86	8	6
Retired	85	10	5
Students	78	13	9
Consider belonging to			
The working class	83	10	7
The lower middle class	84	11	5
The middle class	84	12	4
The upper middle class	83	13	4
The upper class	86	12	2
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	84	13	3
Occasionally	85	11	4
Never	82	11	7
Image of the EU			
Positive	86	9	5
Neutral	83	12	5
Negative	82	15	3
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	83	13	4
Wrong direction	85	11	4
Neither	82	8	10

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

At least half of respondents in 15 Member States consider that **judges are independent and are not under the influence of political or economic interests**. Within this group of countries, agreement with this statement is strongest in Sweden (86%, including 54% of respondents who ‘totally agree’), Finland (81%), Denmark (80%), where at least eight in ten respondents agree, while proportions are lowest in Portugal (50% vs. 39% ‘disagree’ and 11% ‘don’t know’). In Romania (48% vs. 45% ‘disagree’ and 7% ‘don’t know’) and Latvia (44% vs. 41% and 15%) only a relative majority of respondents agree with this statement. In the remaining countries, the proportion of respondents who disagree with this statement prevails. Negative views are most significant in Greece (71% ‘disagree’ vs. 24%), Bulgaria (65%), Lithuania (62%) and Spain (60%).

QA2.3. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards justice in (OUR COUNTRY)?:-Judges are independent and are not under the influence of political or economic interests (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

The analysis of the **socio-demographic data** only shows very little differences between categories. However:

- Those who finished full-time education at the age of 20 or later (59%) are more likely to agree that **'judges are independent and are not under the influence of political or economic interests'**, especially when compared to those who finished their full-time education at the age of 15 or earlier (41%).
- Managers (66%) are also more likely to agree than other occupational groups, especially when compared to house persons (45%) and the unemployed (40%).
- The same pattern applies to those who consider themselves as being part of the upper class of society (65%) or upper middle class (71%), compared to 43% of those who see themselves as belonging to the working class.
- Finally, 62% of respondents who frequently talk about European political matters with their friends and relatives agree, while only 44% of those who never talk about those matters do.

QA2.3 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards justice in (OUR COUNTRY)? Judges are independent and are not under the influence of political or economic interests (% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	53	41	6
Gender			
Man	55	40	5
Woman	52	41	7
Age			
15-24	55	37	8
25-39	55	39	6
40-54	54	42	4
55 +	52	42	6
Education (End of)			
15-	41	47	12
16-19	51	43	6
20+	59	37	4
Still studying	56	36	8
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	55	41	4
Managers	66	31	3
Other white collars	55	41	4
Manual workers	50	43	7
House persons	45	47	8
Unemployed	40	52	8
Retired	50	43	7
Students	58	35	7
Consider belonging to			
The working class	43	48	9
The lower middle class	50	44	6
The middle class	56	39	5
The upper middle class	71	27	2
The upper class	65	29	6
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	62	36	2
Occasionally	57	39	4
Never	44	45	11
Image of the EU			
Positive	63	32	5
Neutral	49	45	6
Negative	32	62	6
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	64	32	4
Wrong direction	46	48	6
Neither	57	32	11

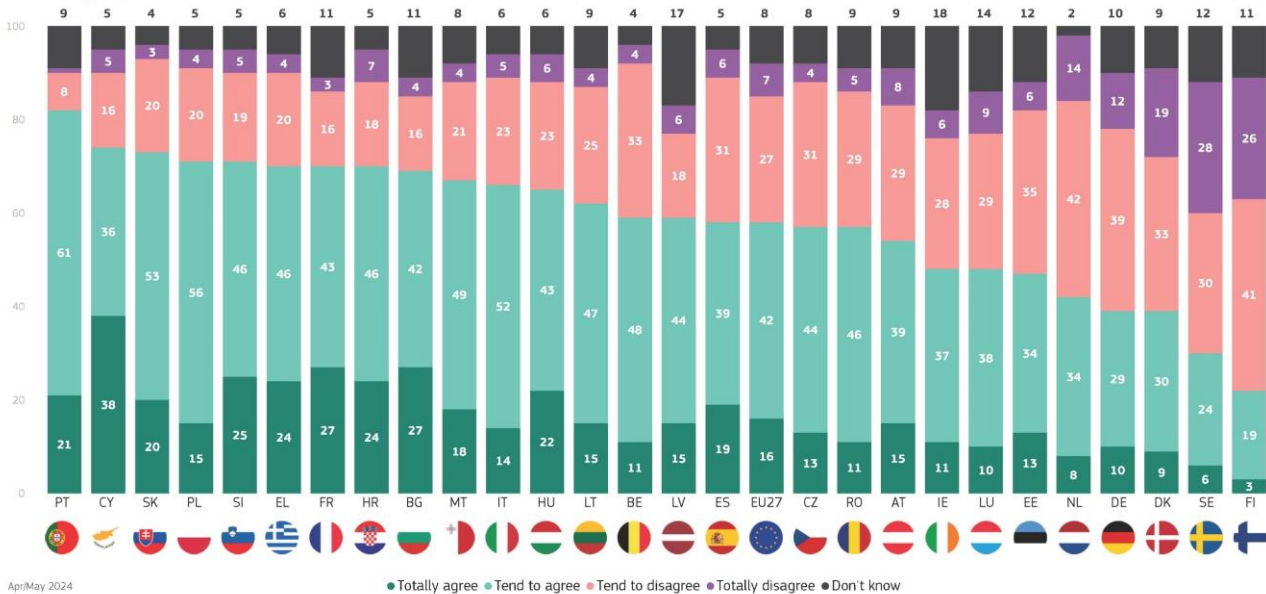
Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

At least half of respondents in 19 Member States consider that **public authorities and politicians often do not respect and apply court rulings**. Within this group of countries, agreement is strongest in Portugal (82%), followed by Cyprus (74%) and Slovakia (73%), while it is lowest in Austria (54%) as well as in Czechia and Romania (each 57%).

In Ireland (48% vs. 34% 'disagree' and 18% don't know), Luxemburg (48% vs. 38% and 14%) and Estonia (47% vs. 41% and 12%) only a relative majority of respondents agree with this statement.

In the remaining countries, the proportion of respondents who disagree prevails, most notably in Finland (67%), Sweden (58%) and the Netherlands (56%).

QA2.4. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards justice in (OUR COUNTRY):-Public authorities and politicians often do not respect and apply court rulings (%)



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● Totally agree ● Tend to agree ● Tend to disagree ● Totally disagree ● Don't know

Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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The analysis of the **socio-demographic data** only shows very little differences between categories regarding the statement **'public authorities and politicians often do not respect and apply court rulings'**. However, there are some slight differences in perception according to the age of the respondent and the occupational status.

- Older respondents (59% of those aged 55+ and 58% of those aged 40-54) are more likely to agree with this statement than younger ones (55% of those aged 15-24).
- Managers (51%) and students (52%) are least likely to say so, especially when compared to the unemployed (61%).
- Conversely, respondents who hold a negative image of the EU are more likely to agree with this statement (64%), than those who hold a positive image (55%).

QA2.4 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards justice in (OUR COUNTRY)? Public authorities and politicians often do not respect and apply court rulings (% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	58	34	8
Gender			
Man	59	35	6
Woman	57	34	9
Age			
15-24	55	35	10
25-39	56	36	8
40-54	58	36	6
55 +	59	33	8
Education (End of)			
15-	57	30	13
16-19	61	31	8
20+	54	41	5
Still studying	51	38	11
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	60	36	4
Managers	51	45	4
Other white collars	60	35	5
Manual workers	59	33	8
House persons	60	29	11
Unemployed	61	29	10
Retired	58	32	10
Students	52	37	11
Consider belonging to			
The working class	58	29	13
The lower middle class	61	32	7
The middle class	59	35	6
The upper middle class	48	49	3
The upper class	50	48	2
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	57	40	3
Occasionally	58	36	6
Never	58	29	13
Image of the EU			
Positive	55	38	7
Neutral	58	33	9
Negative	64	28	8
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	56	39	5
Wrong direction	62	31	7
Neither	43	39	0

2. Improvements of the national justice system over the past five years

Regarding the four statements about justice, respondents were then asked if in their opinion the national justice system had improved over the past five years.

For all four aspects a majority of Europeans consider that the situation of the justice system in their country has remained the same or improved.

66% of Europeans consider that the capacity of **'enforcement by an independent court of their rights if they are not respected'** has remained the same (53%) or improved (13%). Almost a quarter (24%) think that the situation regarding this issue has deteriorated over the past five years, and one in ten respondents answer 'don't know'.

63% of Europeans think that **the independence of judges from the influence of political or economic interests** has remained unchanged (52%) or improved (11%) over the past five years. Conversely, three in ten respondents hold a negative opinion. As a matter of fact, 30% consider that the independence of judges has deteriorated and 7% of respondents answer 'don't know' or do not provide an answer.

61% of respondents consider that **the respect and the application of court rulings by public authorities and politicians** has remained unchanged (50%) or has improved (11%) over the past five years, while almost a third of respondents (32%) think that the situation has deteriorated. 7% say that they don't know or do not provide an answer.

A majority of respondents (54%) think that **the duration of court proceedings** has remained unchanged (45%) over the past five years or has improved (9%). However, a strong minority of 38% consider that the situation has deteriorated, while 8% say that they don't know or do not provide an answer to this question.

QA3. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. (EU27) (%)

The enforcement by an independent court of your rights if they are not respected



The independence of judges from the influence of political or economic interests



The respect and application of court rulings by public authorities and politicians



The duration of court proceedings



● Improved ● Remained the same ● Worsened ● Don't know

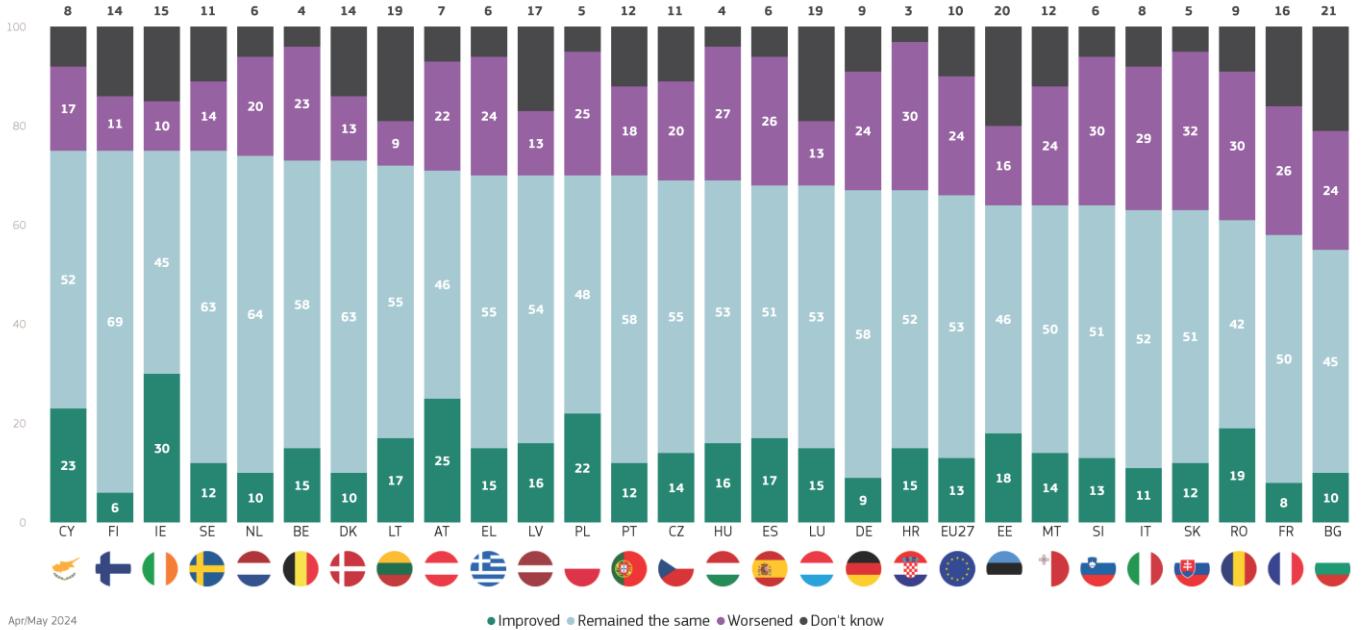
Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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The opinion that the situation has **remained unchanged or improved** with regard to the question of the **enforcement by an independent court of their rights if they were not respected** prevails in all 27 Member States, with the highest levels observed in Cyprus, Finland, Ireland and Sweden (all 75%), while they are lowest in Bulgaria (55%). A more detailed analysis shows that proportions of respondents who think that the situation has remained **unchanged** are highest in Finland (69%), the Netherlands (64%) as well as in Denmark and Sweden (each 63%). At the other end of the scale proportions are lowest in Romania (42%) as well as Ireland and Bulgaria (each 45%).

The proportion of respondents who think that the situation has **improved** is strongest in Ireland (30%), where three in ten respondents say this. They are followed by those in Austria (25%), Cyprus (23%) and Poland (22%), where over a fifth of respondents consider that the situation has improved. When comparing positive to negative opinions, the proportion of respondents who think that the situation has improved outnumbers those who think it has worsened in seven countries, namely in Ireland (30% vs. 10%), Austria (25% vs. 22%), Cyprus (23% vs. 17%), Estonia (18% vs. 16%), Lithuania (17% vs. 9%), Latvia (16% vs. 13%) and Luxembourg (15% vs. 13%). Conversely, in nine countries at least a quarter of respondents consider that the situation has **worsened**, in Slovakia (32%) followed by Romania, Croatia and Slovenia (all 30%).

QA3.1. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years:-The enforcement by an independent court of your rights if they are not respected (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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When analysing the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** according to **socio-demographics**, the differences between categories are slight. However, younger respondents (16% of those aged 15-39) and students (16%) are more likely to say this. The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class (25%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (11%). To a slightly lesser extent, those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (21%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (9%). Differences are also noticeable between those who hold a positive image of the EU (17%) compared to those who hold a negative image (7%).

QA3.1 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The enforcement by an independent court of your rights if they are not respected (% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	13	24	53	10
Gender				
Man	14	24	54	8
Woman	12	25	52	11
Age				
15-24	16	20	51	13
25-39	16	23	52	9
40-54	13	27	53	7
55 +	11	25	54	10
Education (End of)				
15-	9	29	51	11
16-19	14	27	51	8
20+	13	21	57	9
Still studying	15	18	53	14
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	14	29	51	6
Managers	15	21	56	8
Other white collars	15	24	54	7
Manual workers	14	27	51	8
House persons	13	26	48	13
Unemployed	11	26	51	12
Retired	10	24	55	11
Students	16	19	52	13
Consider belonging to				
The working class	11	25	53	11
The lower middle class	11	28	50	11
The middle class	15	24	53	8
The upper middle class	13	20	59	8
The upper class	25	19	51	5
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	17	29	49	5
Occasionally	14	23	55	8
Never	11	24	51	14
Image of the EU				
Positive	17	18	56	9
Neutral	11	27	53	9
Negative	7	40	44	9
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	21	20	53	6
Wrong direction	9	29	53	9
Neither	9	12	62	17

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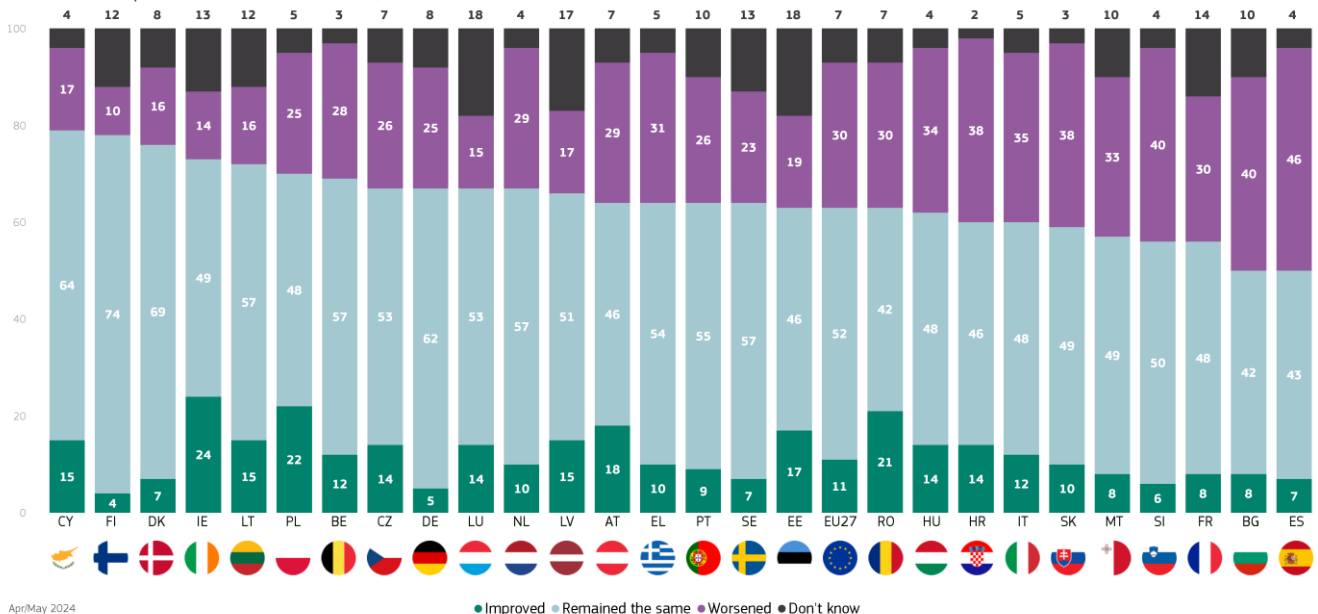
The opinion that the situation has **remained unchanged or improved** with regard to the question of the **independence of judges from the influence of political or economic interests** prevails in all 27 Member States and is highest in Cyprus (79%) and Finland (78%) and lowest in Spain and Bulgaria (both 50%).

In detail, proportions of respondents thinking that the situation has remained **unchanged** are highest in Finland (74%), Denmark (69%) and Cyprus (64%).

The proportion of respondents who think that the situation has **improved** is the highest in Ireland (24%), followed by Poland (22%) Romania (21%) and Austria (18%). It is noteworthy that Ireland is the only country where the proportion of respondents who think that the situation has improved outnumber those who think it has worsened: 24% 'improved' vs. 14% 'worsened'.

Conversely, in Spain a majority of respondents say that the situation has **worsened**: 46% 'worsened' vs. 43% 'remained the same' vs. 7% 'improved'. Negative views are highest in Spain (46%), followed by Bulgaria and Slovenia (each 40%).

QA3.3. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years.-The independence of judges from the influence of political or economic interests (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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When analysing the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** according to **socio-demographics**, the differences between categories are slight. Younger respondents (13% of those aged 15-39) are the most likely to think that the situation has improved. The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class (21%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (8%). Those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (17%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (7%) and those who hold a positive image of the EU (13%), compared to those who hold a negative image (6%).

QA3.3 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The independence of judges from the influence of political or economic interests (% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	11	30	52	7
Gender				
Man	11	31	52	6
Woman	10	30	51	9
Age				
15-24	13	26	49	12
25-39	13	30	50	7
40-54	12	31	52	5
55 +	8	31	53	8
Education (End of)				
15-	7	34	49	10
16-19	11	32	50	7
20+	11	28	55	6
Still studying	11	26	51	12
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	13	34	48	5
Managers	12	25	57	6
Other white collars	12	29	54	5
Manual workers	11	32	51	6
House persons	10	35	44	11
Unemployed	7	36	48	9
Retired	8	30	53	9
Students	12	27	50	11
Consider belonging to				
The working class	8	32	50	10
The lower middle class	9	33	50	8
The middle class	12	29	53	6
The upper middle class	11	27	58	4
The upper class	21	21	54	4
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	13	33	50	4
Occasionally	11	30	53	6
Never	8	30	50	12
Image of the EU				
Positive	13	24	56	7
Neutral	9	31	52	8
Negative	6	49	39	6
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	17	23	55	5
Wrong direction	7	37	49	7
Neither	7	17	61	15

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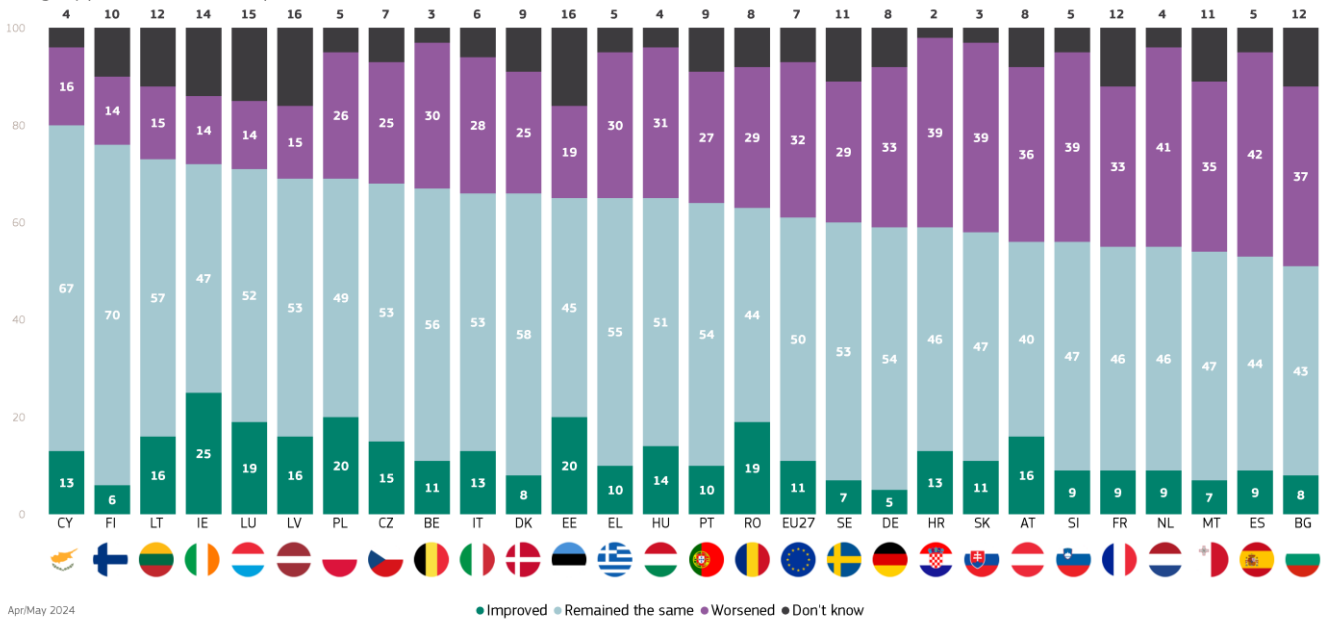
The opinion that the situation has **remained unchanged or improved** with regard to the question of the **respect and application of court rulings by public authorities and politicians** prevails in all 27 Member States. They are highest in Cyprus (80%) and Finland (76%) and lowest in Bulgaria (51%).

The proportion of respondents who say the situation remained unchanged varies from 70% in Finland and 67% in Cyprus, where they are highest, to 40% in Austria and 43% in Bulgaria, where they are lowest.

The proportion of respondents who think that the situation has **improved** is highest in Ireland (25%), followed by Poland and Estonia (each 20%). In five countries the proportion of respondents who think that the situation has improved outnumbers that of those who think that it has worsened: Ireland (25% 'improved' vs. 14% 'worsened'), Estonia (20% vs. 19%), Luxembourg (19% vs. 14%) as well as Lithuania and Latvia (each 16% vs. 15%).

Conversely, in Spain (42%) and the Netherlands (41%), over four in ten respondents consider that the situation has **worsened**.

QA3.4. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years:-The respect and application of court rulings by public authorities and politicians (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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When analysing the number of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** according to **socio-demographics**, the differences between categories are slight. However, younger respondents (14% of those aged 15-24), especially when compared to those aged 55+ (8%), are more likely to say the situation has improved. Similarly, students (14%) and the self-employed (15%) are also more likely to say the situation has improved, when compared to retirees (8%), housepersons and the unemployed (both 9%).

Again, the sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves belonging to the upper class (20%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (9%). Those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (18%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (7%). The same difference applies to those who hold a positive image of the EU (14%) compared to those who hold a negative image (6%).

QA3.4 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The respect and application of court rulings by public authorities and politicians (% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	11	32	50	7
Gender				
Man	11	32	50	7
Woman	10	31	50	9
Age				
15-24	14	25	49	12
25-39	13	32	48	7
40-54	12	33	50	5
55 +	8	32	52	8
Education (End of)				
15-	7	33	50	10
16-19	11	33	49	7
20+	10	32	52	6
Still studying	12	24	52	12
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	15	33	48	4
Managers	12	31	51	6
Other white collars	11	31	52	6
Manual workers	11	34	49	6
House persons	9	32	46	13
Unemployed	9	33	49	9
Retired	8	32	51	9
Students	14	24	51	11
Consider belonging to				
The working class	9	32	49	10
The lower middle class	9	33	50	8
The middle class	12	31	51	6
The upper middle class	11	31	52	6
The upper class	20	30	48	2
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	13	36	48	3
Occasionally	11	31	52	6
Never	9	31	48	12
Image of the EU				
Positive	14	26	53	7
Neutral	9	32	51	8
Negative	6	49	38	7
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	18	24	53	5
Wrong direction	7	39	47	7
Neither	8	18	60	14

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The opinion that the situation has **remained unchanged or improved** with regard to the question of the **duration of court proceedings** prevails in 24 Member States, with the highest numbers found in Cyprus (81%) and Lithuania (70%), while proportions are lowest in Finland (43% vs. 41% worsened).

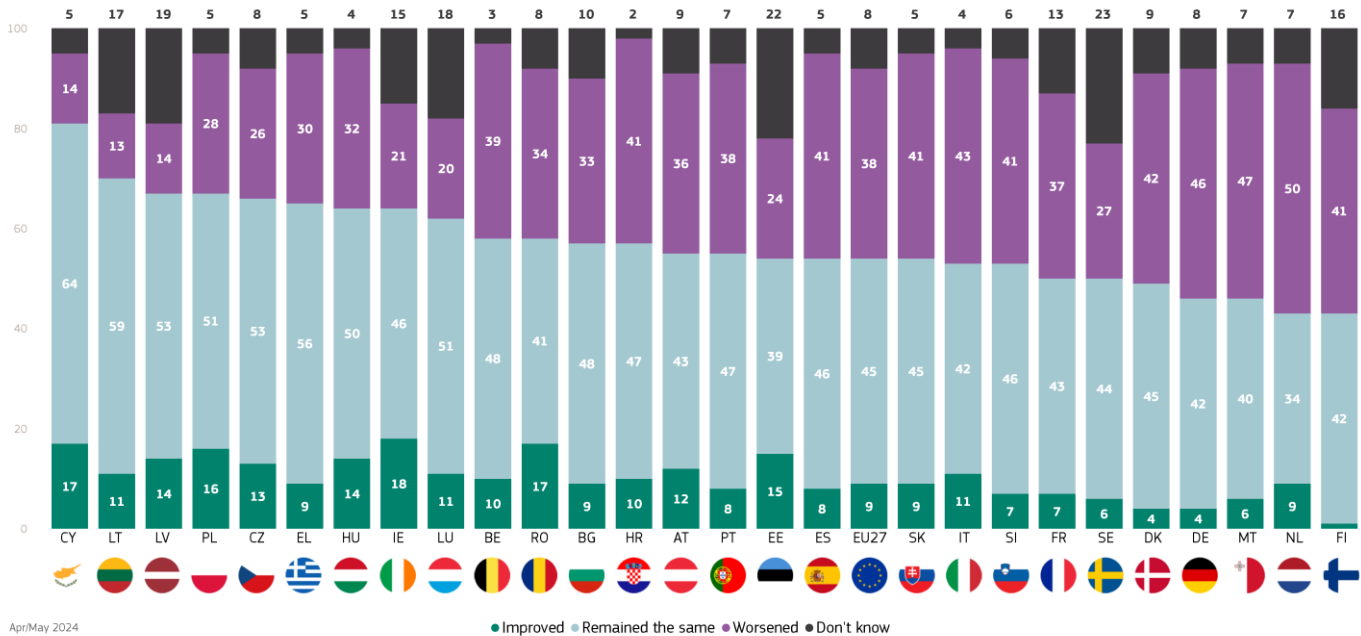
In Cyprus (64%), Lithuania (59%) and Greece (56%) proportion of respondents who consider that the situation has remained unchanged are highest.

The proportion of respondents who think that the situation has **improved** do not exceed twenty percent in any Member State. It is highest in Ireland (18%), followed by Cyprus and Romania (each 17%). It is noteworthy that Cyprus is the only country where the proportion of respondents who think that the situation has improved outnumber those who think that it has worsened: 17% 'improved' vs. 14% 'worsened'. In Latvia positive and negative opinions are evenly balanced: 14% vs. 14%.

Conversely, in two countries a majority of respondents consider that the situation has **worsened**: the Netherlands (50% 'worsened' vs. 34% 'remained the same' vs. 9% 'improved') and Malta (47% vs. 40% vs. 6%).

It is noteworthy that in nine countries at least a tenth of respondents don't give an answer. Numbers are highest in Sweden (23%) and Estonia (22%), where at least a fifth of respondents say this.

QA3.2. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years:-The duration of court proceedings (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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When analysing the **socio-demographic data** according to the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has improved, some differences can be emphasised. Younger respondents (11% of those aged 15-39) are the most likely to say that the situation has improved compared to their older counterparts. The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves belonging to the upper class (17%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (7%). Those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (15%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (6%). This finding scheme also applies to those who hold a positive image of the EU (11%) compared to those who hold a negative image (6%).

QA3.2 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The duration of court proceedings (% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	9	38	45	8
Gender				
Man	9	38	45	8
Woman	9	38	44	9
Age				
15-24	11	28	49	12
25-39	11	35	46	8
40-54	10	40	44	6
55 +	7	42	43	8
Education (End of)				
15-	6	43	42	9
16-19	10	39	45	6
20+	9	39	44	8
Still studying	10	26	51	13
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	9	42	43	6
Managers	11	38	43	8
Other white collars	11	36	47	6
Manual workers	10	39	44	7
House persons	8	38	44	10
Unemployed	6	39	45	10
Retired	7	42	43	8
Students	11	26	51	12
Consider belonging to				
The working class	7	37	46	10
The lower middle class	10	38	43	9
The middle class	10	38	45	7
The upper middle class	7	41	44	8
The upper class	17	39	40	4
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	11	45	39	5
Occasionally	9	38	46	7
Never	8	36	45	11
Image of the EU				
Positive	11	35	46	8
Neutral	8	39	45	8
Negative	6	49	39	6
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	15	32	47	6
Wrong direction	6	44	43	7
Neither	6	28	51	15



III. Anti-Corruption Framework

The third section deals how corruption is addressed in the respondents' country. For this purpose, respondents were presented with four statements on corruption and anti-corruption measures and were asked to what extent they agree with each of the statements. The final part of the report is devoted to the question of how the situation regarding those four aspects of corruption has evolved over the past five years.

1. The general perception of dealing with corruption in the respondents' country

Respondents were shown four statements about corruption and the anti-corruption framework in their country, and they were asked whether they agree with each of them or not⁶.

Overall, negative opinions about corruption and the anti-corruption framework prevail. Over seven in ten Europeans think that public officials and politicians lack transparency about their contacts with officials and that they often do not respect ethical standards when applying laws. Furthermore, a majority of respondents do not think that corruption involving politicians and public officials is properly investigated and opinions are divided about whether public authorities take decisions free from favouritism or not.

76% of Europeans consider that **politicians and public officials are often not transparent enough about their contacts with lobbyists, their side-jobs and their incomes and assets**, including over three in ten respondents (31%) who totally agree. Less than a fifth (19%) think the opposite and 5% say that they don't know.

Over seven in ten respondents (71%) think that **there are many cases where public officials and politicians making and applying laws are in situations of conflicts of interest and do not respect ethical standards**, including 21% who totally agree. Conversely, 21% of Europeans disagree with this and 8% say that they don't know or do not provide an answer.

Opinions about whether **'public authorities take decisions free from favouritism, preferential treatment (due to extra payments or a valuable gift or political party donations), for example in public contracting, education or healthcare'** or not are evenly split. 47% of respondents agree with this statement (including 10% who totally agree) while 47% do not agree (including 11% who totally disagree). 6% answer don't know or do not provide an answer.

While 43% agree that **'corruption involving politicians and public officials is properly investigated and all of those that are found guilty of corruption by a court are given appropriate punishment'**, negative opinions prevail. A majority of 51% do not agree with this statement, including 16% who totally disagree. 6% answer don't know or do not provide an answer.

⁶ QA4. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? 1. Public authorities take decisions free from favouritism, preferential treatment [due to extra payments or a valuable gift or political party donations], for example in public contracting, education or healthcare; 2. Politicians and public officials are often not transparent enough about their contacts with lobbyists, their side-jobs and their incomes and assets;

3. Corruption involving politicians and public officials is properly investigated and all of those that are found guilty of corruption by a court are given appropriate punishment; 4. There are many cases where public officials and politicians making and applying laws are in situations of conflicts of interest and do not respect ethical standards

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QA4. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? (EU27) (%)

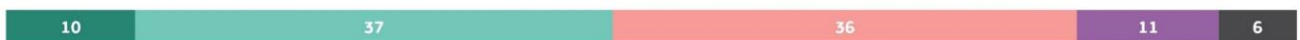
Politicians and public officials are often not transparent enough about their contacts with lobbyists, their side-jobs and their incomes and assets



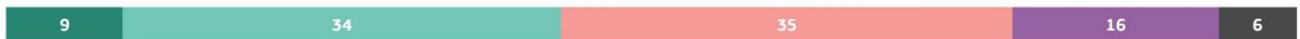
There are many cases where public officials and politicians making and applying laws are in situations of conflicts of interest and do not respect ethical standards



Public authorities take decisions free from favouritism, preferential treatment [due to extra payments or a valuable gift or political party donations], for example in public contracting, education or healthcare



Corruption involving politicians and public officials is properly investigated and all of those that are found guilty of corruption by a court are given appropriate punishment



● Totally agree
 ● Tend to agree
 ● Tend to disagree
 ● Totally disagree
 ● Don't know

Apr/May 2024

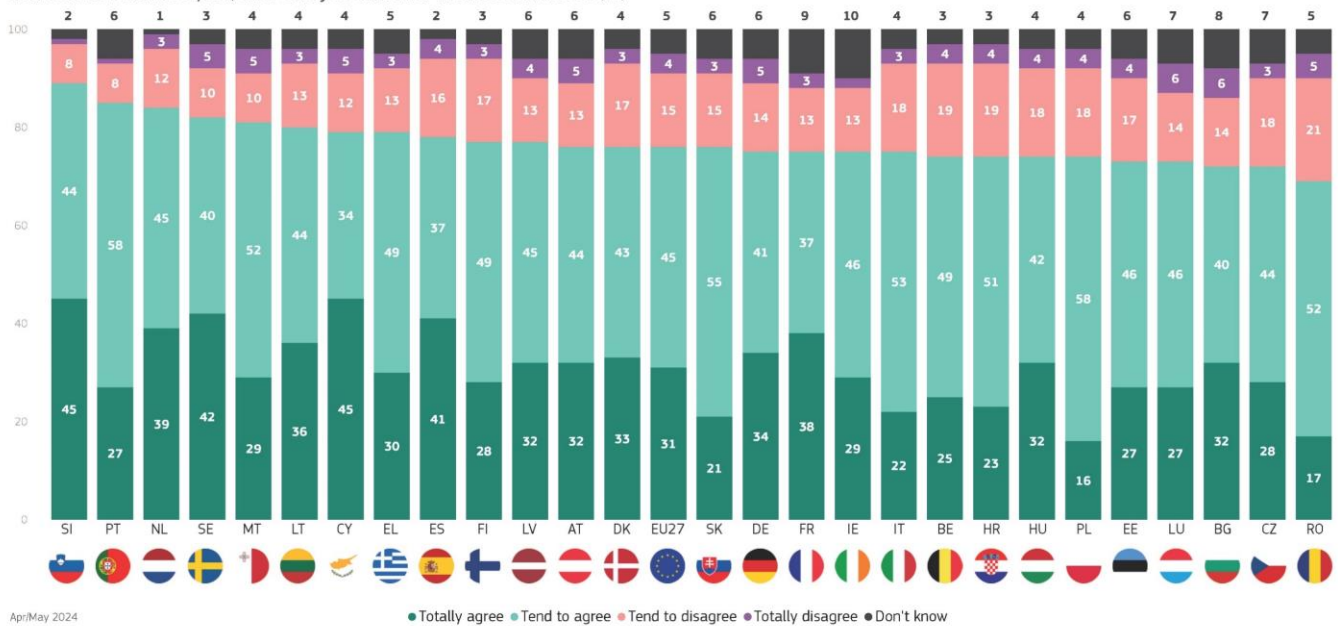
Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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In all 27 Member States a majority of respondents consider that **politicians and public officials are often not transparent enough about their contacts with lobbyists, their side-jobs and their incomes and assets**. Rates of agreement reach 89% in Slovenia, 85% in Portugal and 84% in the Netherlands, where they are the highest, and 69% in Romania and 72% in Czechia, where they are the lowest. In four countries, proportion of respondents who totally agree exceed forty percent, including Cyprus and Slovenia (each 45%), Sweden (42%) and Spain (41%).

Conversely, one in five respondents disagree with the statement in 13 countries, most significantly in Romania (26%). Ireland is the only country where one in ten respondents answer don't know (10%).

QA4.2. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)?:-Politicians and public officials are often not transparent enough about their contacts with lobbyists, their side-jobs and their incomes and assets (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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Given the high level of agreement with the statement **'politicians and public officials are often not transparent enough about their contacts with lobbyists, their side-jobs and their incomes and assets'** the **socio-demographic** differences are slight. However, it is noteworthy that older respondents (77% of the 55+) are more likely to agree than the 15-24 years old (71%). Those who left full-time education at the age of 20 or later (78%) are also more likely to say so than those who finished education at the age of 15 or earlier (71%). In addition, managers are the most likely to agree (79%) compared to other occupational groups.

QA4.2 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? Politicians and public officials are often not transparent enough about their contacts with lobbyists, their side-jobs and their incomes and assets (% - EU)

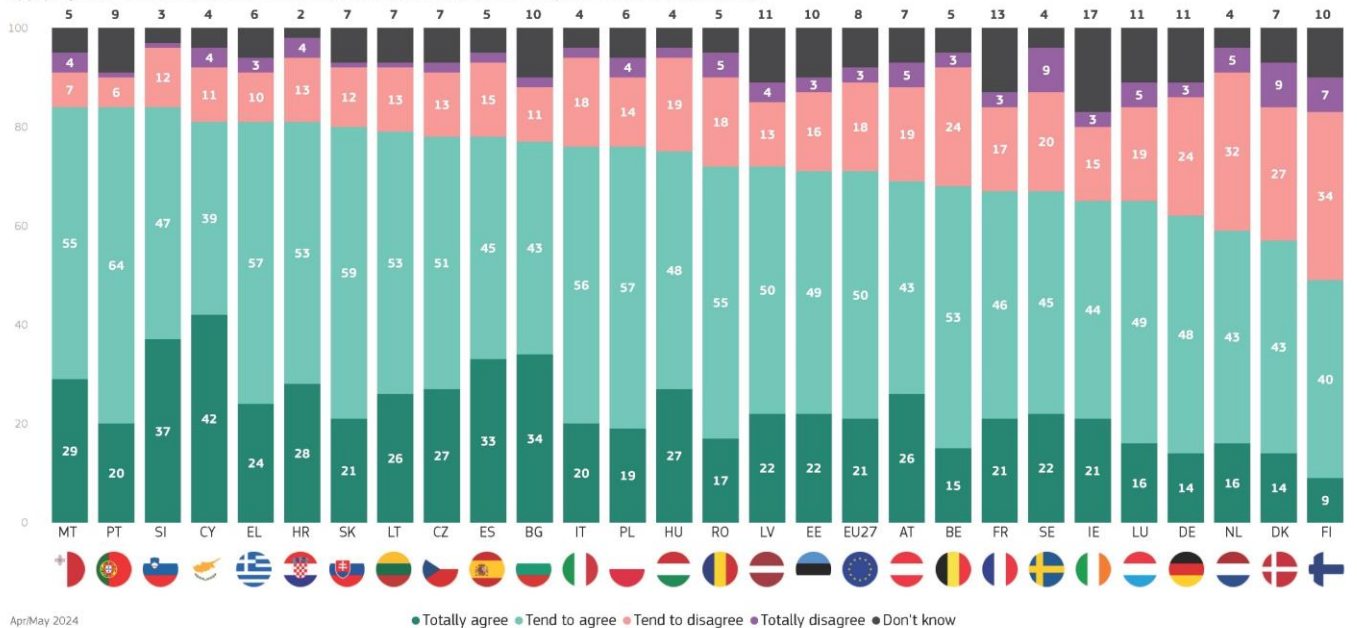
	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	76	19	5
Gender			
Man	77	19	4
Woman	74	20	6
Age			
15-24	71	21	8
25-39	75	20	5
40-54	76	21	3
55 +	77	18	5
Education (End of)			
15-	71	21	8
16-19	76	19	5
20+	78	19	3
Still studying	72	18	10
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	76	21	3
Managers	79	19	2
Other white collars	78	19	3
Manual workers	75	21	4
House persons	72	21	7
Unemployed	76	18	6
Retired	76	18	6
Students	71	20	9
Consider belonging to			
The working class	72	20	8
The lower middle class	77	18	5
The middle class	78	19	3
The upper middle class	75	22	3
The upper class	73	22	5
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	78	20	2
Occasionally	78	18	4
Never	71	21	8
Image of the EU			
Positive	77	18	5
Neutral	74	21	5
Negative	74	22	4
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	74	23	3
Wrong direction	78	18	4
Neither	73	15	12

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In all 27 Member States a majority of respondents consider that **there are many cases where public officials and politicians making and applying laws are in situations of conflict of interest and do not respect ethical standards**. However, proportions of approval of this statement vary widely amongst Member States. They reach 84% in Malta, Portugal and Slovenia, where they are highest, and go down to 49% in Finland and 57% in Denmark, where they are lowest. In Cyprus (42%), Slovenia (37%), Bulgaria (34%) and Spain (33%) at least a third of respondents totally agree with this statement.

Disagreement with the statement exceeds thirty percent in Finland (41%), the Netherlands (37%), and Denmark (36%). It is noteworthy that in eight countries at least one in ten respondents answer don't know, most strikingly in Ireland (17%).

QA4.4. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)?:-There are many cases where public officials and politicians making and applying laws are in situations of conflicts of interest and do not respect ethical standards (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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Rule of Law

The **socio-demographic data** only shows very slight differences regarding the level of agreement with the statement **‘there are many cases where public officials and politicians making and applying laws are in situations of conflict of interest and do not respect ethical standards’**. However, it is noteworthy that the youngest respondents (67%) and students (66%) are least likely to agree with it. Those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class of society (59%) are also less likely to say so, especially when compared to those who see themselves as being part of the working class or lower middle class (71%).

QA4.4 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? There are many cases where public officials and politicians making and applying laws are in situations of conflicts of interest and do not respect ethical standards (% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	71	21	8
Gender			
Man	71	22	7
Woman	70	21	9
Age			
15-24	67	20	13
25-39	71	22	7
40-54	72	22	6
55 +	71	21	8
Education (End of)			
15-	69	19	12
16-19	73	19	8
20+	69	26	5
Still studying	66	21	13
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	74	21	5
Managers	67	29	4
Other white collars	72	22	6
Manual workers	72	21	7
House persons	70	19	11
Unemployed	76	15	9
Retired	70	21	9
Students	66	21	13
Consider belonging to			
The working class	71	17	12
The lower middle class	71	21	8
The middle class	72	22	6
The upper middle class	61	34	5
The upper class	59	35	6
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	71	25	4
Occasionally	72	21	7
Never	68	20	12
Image of the EU			
Positive	69	23	8
Neutral	72	20	8
Negative	74	19	7
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	70	25	5
Wrong direction	73	20	7
Neither	59	21	20

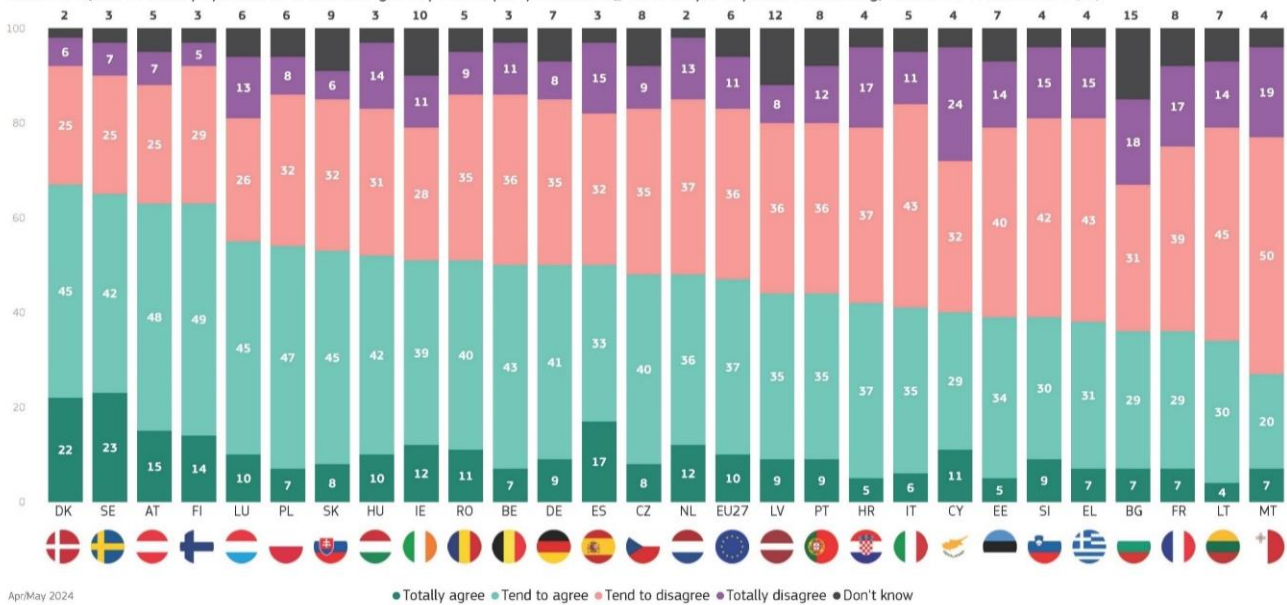
Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

In 13 Member States a majority of respondents agree **that public authorities take decisions free from favouritism, preferential treatment, for example in public contracting, education or healthcare**. However, within this group of countries levels of agreement vary widely amongst countries, the highest rates can be seen in in Denmark (67%) and in Sweden (65%), while the lowest can be found in Czechia (48% vs. 44% disagree).

In Latvia opinions are evenly split: 44% 'agree' vs. 44% 'disagree' and 12% 'don't know'.

Conversely, a majority of respondents disagree with the statement in 13 countries, including most significantly Malta (69%), Lithuania (59%) and France (56%).

QA4.1. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)?:-Public authorities take decisions free from favouritism, preferential treatment [due to extra payments or a valuable gift or political party donations], for example in public contracting, education or healthcare (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553

Rule of Law

The **socio-demographic** data show only very slight differences for the statement **'public authorities take decisions free from favouritism, preferential treatment, for example in public contracting, education or healthcare'**. However, it is noteworthy that those who left full-time education at the age of 20 or later (51%) are more likely to agree compared to those who finished education at the age of 15 or earlier (39%). Also, managers are the most likely to agree (55%) compared to other occupational groups. Those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class (59%) are also more likely to say so, especially when compared to those who see themselves as being part of the working class (39%).

QA4.1 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? Public authorities take decisions free from favouritism, preferential treatment [due to extra payments or a valuable gift or political party donations], for example in public contracting, education or healthcare (% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	47	47	6
Gender			
Man	48	47	5
Woman	46	47	7
Age			
15-24	47	45	8
25-39	51	44	5
40-54	49	47	4
55 +	44	49	7
Education (End of)			
15-	39	53	8
16-19	46	48	6
20+	51	45	4
Still studying	47	43	10
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	46	50	4
Managers	55	42	3
Other white collars	52	44	4
Manual workers	49	46	5
House persons	43	50	7
Unemployed	40	53	7
Retired	42	50	8
Students	49	42	9
Consider belonging to			
The working class	39	52	9
The lower middle class	44	50	6
The middle class	51	45	4
The upper middle class	57	40	3
The upper class	59	37	4
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	56	42	2
Occasionally	48	47	5
Never	41	50	9
Image of the EU			
Positive	54	40	6
Neutral	45	49	6
Negative	31	65	4
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	60	37	3
Wrong direction	40	55	5
Neither	44	42	14

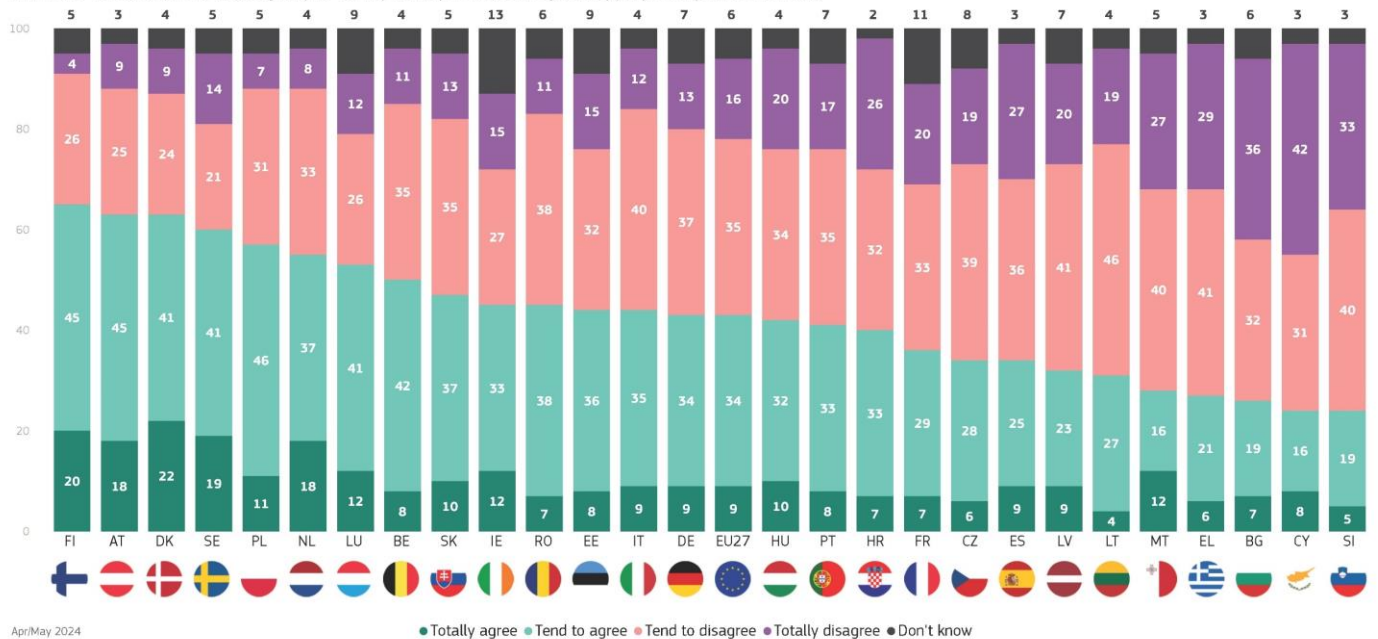
Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

In nine Member States a majority of respondents agree with the statement that **'corruption involving politicians and public officials is properly investigated and all of those that are found guilty of corruption by a court are given appropriate punishment'**. Within this group of countries, proportions are highest in Finland (65%) as well as in Denmark and Austria (63%), while they are lowest in Ireland (45% vs. 42% 'disagree') and Belgium (50%). Finland is also the only country where one in five respondents 'totally agree'.

Conversely, a majority of respondents in 18 countries disagree with this statement. Levels of disagreement are highest in Slovenia and Cyprus (each 73%), where over seven in ten respondents disagree, followed by Greece (70%) and Bulgaria (68%). In Cyprus (42%), Bulgaria (36%), Slovenia (33%) at least a third of respondents totally disagree with the statement.

In Ireland (13%) and France (11%) proportions of respondents who answer don't know exceed ten percent.

QA4.3. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)?-Corruption involving politicians and public officials is properly investigated and all of those that are found guilty of corruption by a court are given appropriate punishment (%)



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Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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Rule of Law

The **socio-demographic** data show some variations amongst categories with regard to the level of agreement with the statement '**corruption involving politicians and public officials is properly investigated and all of those that are found guilty of corruption by a court are given appropriate punishment**'. For example, it is noteworthy that those who left full-time education at the age of 20 or later (47%) are more likely to agree compared to those who finished education at the age of 15 or earlier (37%). Also, managers are most likely to agree (52%) compared to other occupational groups. This also applies to those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class (54%), especially when compared to those who see themselves as being part of the working class (36%).

QA4.3 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? Corruption involving politicians and public officials is properly investigated and all of those that are found guilty of corruption by a court are given appropriate punishment (% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	43	51	6
Gender			
Man	44	51	5
Woman	42	51	7
Age			
15-24	43	48	9
25-39	45	50	5
40-54	43	53	4
55 +	43	51	6
Education (End of)			
15-	37	55	8
16-19	42	52	6
20+	47	49	4
Still studying	44	47	9
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	43	53	4
Managers	52	46	2
Other white collars	46	50	4
Manual workers	42	52	6
House persons	40	53	7
Unemployed	32	61	7
Retired	41	51	8
Students	45	46	9
Consider belonging to			
The working class	36	55	9
The lower middle class	41	53	6
The middle class	46	50	4
The upper middle class	53	44	3
The upper class	54	43	3
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	52	46	2
Occasionally	46	49	5
Never	35	55	10
Image of the EU			
Positive	52	43	5
Neutral	39	54	7
Negative	26	69	5
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	57	39	4
Wrong direction	35	60	5
Neither	42	44	14

2. Improvements with regard to corruption and the anti-corruption framework in the respondents' country

A majority of respondents consider that the situation with regard to corruption has remained unchanged or improved in their country.

62% of Europeans consider that **the fact that justice carries out proper investigations and hands out appropriate punishments to those found guilty in cases of corruption involving politicians and public officials** has remained unchanged (48%) or improved (14%) over the past five years in their country. However, 32% think that the situation in this regard has worsened, while 6% answer don't know or do not provide an answer.

Over six in ten Europeans (61%) also consider that the situation regarding **the assurance that public officials and politicians making and applying laws avoid conflicts of interest and live up to high ethical standards** has remained unchanged (49%) or improved (12%) over the past five years in their country. However, 32% think that the situation has worsened, and 7% answer don't know or do not provide an answer.

60% of Europeans consider that **the absence of favouritism and preferential treatment in decisions made by public authorities, for example in public contracting, education or healthcare or political party finance** has remained unchanged (48%) or improved (12%) over the past five years in their country. However, 34% think that the situation in this regard has worsened, while 6% answer don't know or do not provide an answer.

A slightly smaller proportion, but still over half of respondents (57%), think that **the transparency of politicians and public officials about their contacts with lobbyists, their side-jobs and their incomes and assets** has remained unchanged (46%) or improved (11%) over the past five years in their country. However, 37% think that the situation in this regard has worsened, while 6% answer don't know or do not provide an answer.

QA5. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. (AB27) (%)



Apr/May 2024

Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

The opinion that the situation has **remained unchanged or improved** with regard to the question of **the absence of favouritism and preferential treatment in decisions made by public authorities, for example in public contracting, education or healthcare or political party finance** prevails in 26 Member States. Proportions of respondents who think that are highest in Cyprus and Lithuania (both 73%), while they are lowest in Malta (45%), where only a minority holds this opinion.

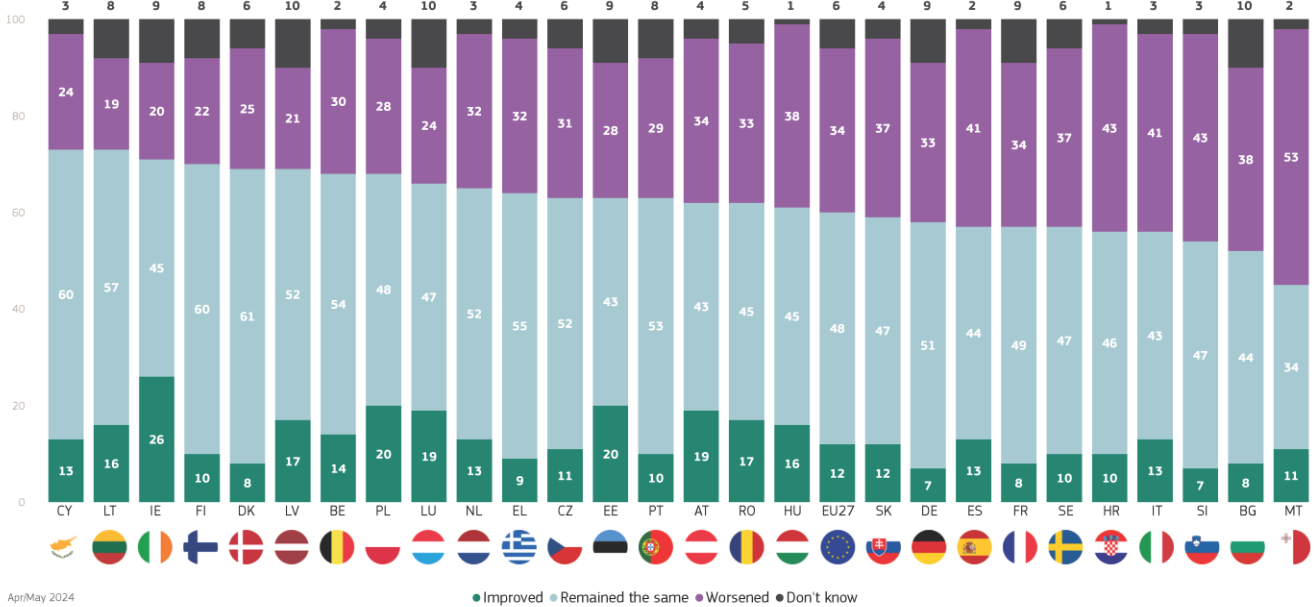
In Denmark (61%), followed by Finland and Cyprus (each 60%) proportions of respondents considering that the situation has remained unchanged are highest.

The proportion of respondents who think that the situation has **improved** are highest in Ireland (26%) as well as in Estonia and Poland (each 20%), where at least a fifth of respondents say this. When comparing positive to negative opinions, respondents who think that the situation has improved outnumber those who think that it has worsened only in Ireland (26% vs. 20% 'worsened').

Conversely, in Malta (53% 'worsened') a majority of respondents consider that the situation has **worsened**. Moreover, negative opinions exceed a third of respondents in 13 countries. Thus, apart from Malta, proportions are particularly high in Slovenia and Croatia (each 43%) as well as in Italy and Spain (each 41%), where proportions exceed forty percent.

It is noteworthy that in Luxembourg, Latvia and Bulgaria (each 10%) a tenth of respondents don't give an answer.

QA5.1. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years.-The absence of favouritism and preferential treatment in decisions made by public authorities, for example in public contracting, education or healthcare or political party finance (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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Rule of Law

When analysing, according to **socio-demographics**, the proportion of respondents who consider that the situation has **improved**, the differences between categories are slight. However, younger respondents (15% of those aged 15-24), especially when compared to respondents aged 55+ (9%), and students (14%) but also the self-employed (15%) are more likely to say that than other occupational categories. The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class (17%) and those who see themselves as part of the working class (9%). Those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (19%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (7%). It is the same for those who hold a positive image of the EU (15%), compared to those who hold a negative image (6%).

QA5.1 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The absence of favouritism and preferential treatment in decisions made by public authorities, for example in public contracting, education or healthcare or political party finance
(% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	12	34	48	6
Gender				
Man	12	34	49	5
Woman	11	35	47	7
Age				
15-24	15	30	45	10
25-39	14	33	47	6
40-54	12	35	49	4
55 +	9	36	49	6
Education (End of)				
15-	8	38	46	8
16-19	12	36	47	5
20+	12	32	52	4
Still studying	13	28	47	12
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	15	36	45	4
Managers	13	30	53	4
Other white collars	13	32	51	4
Manual workers	11	37	47	5
House persons	10	37	44	9
Unemployed	9	38	45	8
Retired	9	35	50	6
Students	14	30	45	11
Consider belonging to				
The working class	9	36	47	8
The lower middle class	11	36	46	7
The middle class	13	34	49	4
The upper middle class	13	30	54	3
The upper class	17	32	48	3
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	16	37	44	3
Occasionally	12	33	50	5
Never	9	35	47	9
Image of the EU				
Positive	15	27	52	6
Neutral	9	37	48	6
Negative	6	52	37	5
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	19	26	51	4
Wrong direction	8	42	45	5
Neither	7	20	61	12

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

The opinion that the situation has **remained unchanged or improved** with regard to the question of **the transparency of politicians and public officials about their contacts with lobbyists, their side-jobs and their incomes and assets** prevails in 26 Member States. Proportions of respondents who think this are highest in Cyprus (73%), Lithuania (71%) and Poland (71%), while they are lowest in Malta (42%).

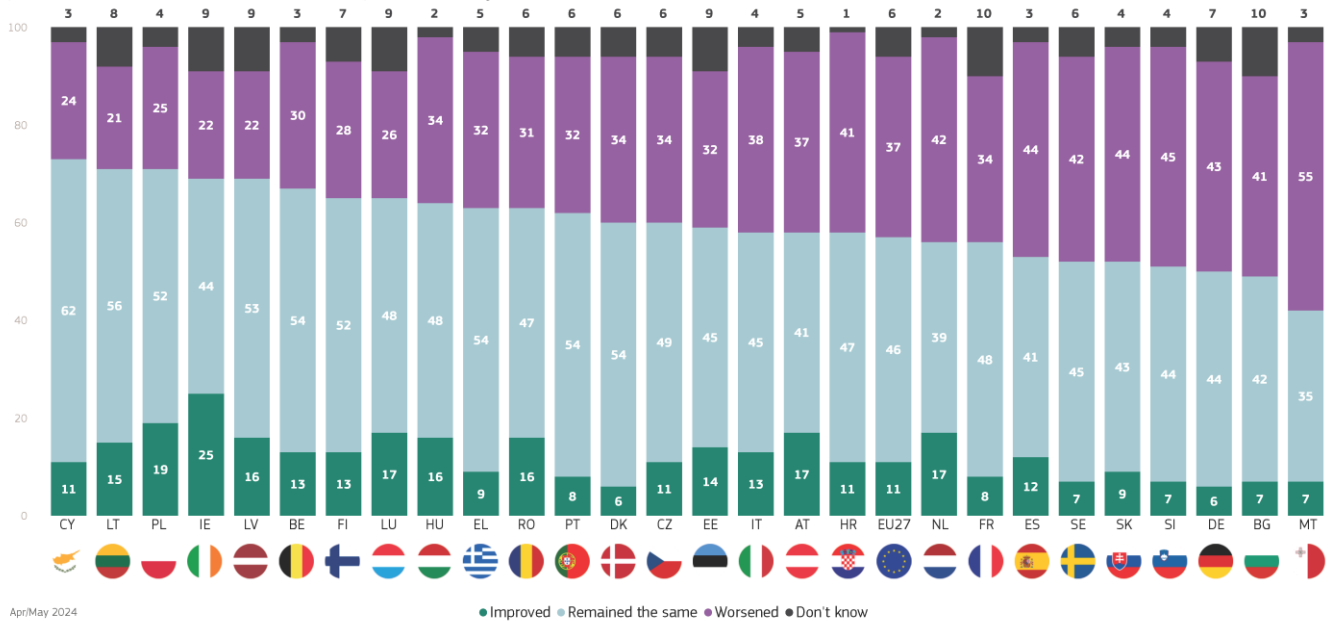
Cyprus (62%) and Lithuania (56%) have also the highest proportion of respondents who say that things have remained unchanged.

The proportion of respondents who think that the situation has **improved** are strongest in Ireland (25%), followed by Poland (19%), the Netherlands and Austria (each 17%). The proportion of respondents who think that the situation has improved outnumber those who think it has worsened only in Ireland (25% vs. 22% 'worsened').

Conversely, in Malta (55%) a majority of respondents consider that the situation has **worsened**. Proportions are also high in Slovenia (45% vs. 44% 'remained unchanged' and 7% 'improved'), Spain (44% vs. 41% and 12%), Slovakia (44% vs. 43% and 9%) and the Netherlands (42% vs. 39% and 17%).

It is noteworthy that in France and in Bulgaria (each 10%) a tenth of respondents don't give an answer.

QA5.2. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years:--The transparency of politicians and public officials about their contacts with lobbyists, their side-jobs and their incomes and assets (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553

Rule of Law

When analysing, according to **socio-demographics**, the proportion of respondents who consider that the situation has **improved**, the differences between categories are slight. However, younger respondents (14% of those aged 15-39), especially when compared to respondents aged 55+ (9%), and students (14%), managers (14%) but also the self-employed (14%), are more likely to say that than other occupational categories. The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class (18%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (8%). To a slightly lesser, those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (19%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (8%). So do those who hold a positive image of the EU (15%) compared to those who hold a negative image (6%).

QA5.2 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The transparency of politicians and public officials about their contacts with lobbyists, their side-jobs and their incomes and assets (% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	11	37	46	6
Gender				
Man	12	37	46	5
Woman	11	36	47	6
Age				
15-24	14	35	43	8
25-39	14	34	47	5
40-54	12	38	46	4
55 +	9	38	47	6
Education (End of)				
15-	7	40	44	9
16-19	11	38	46	5
20+	13	36	48	3
Still studying	13	33	45	9
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	14	39	44	3
Managers	14	35	47	4
Other white collars	12	36	48	4
Manual workers	10	38	48	4
House persons	10	38	43	9
Unemployed	11	38	43	8
Retired	8	38	47	7
Students	14	34	43	9
Consider belonging to				
The working class	8	37	46	9
The lower middle class	10	37	46	7
The middle class	12	37	47	4
The upper middle class	15	36	47	2
The upper class	18	32	46	4
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	15	40	43	2
Occasionally	12	37	47	4
Never	9	36	46	9
Image of the EU				
Positive	15	31	48	6
Neutral	9	38	47	6
Negative	6	51	38	5
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	19	27	50	4
Wrong direction	7	45	43	5
Neither	8	25	55	12

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

The opinion that the situation has **remained unchanged or improved** with regard to the question of **the fact that justice carries out proper investigations and hand out appropriate punishments to those found guilty in cases of corruption involving politicians and public officials** prevails in 26 Member States. Proportions of respondents who think that are highest in Finland (81%) and Denmark (75%), while they are lowest in Malta (48%). Finland and Denmark also hold the highest proportion of respondents who think that the situation has remained unchanged (70% and 64% respectively).

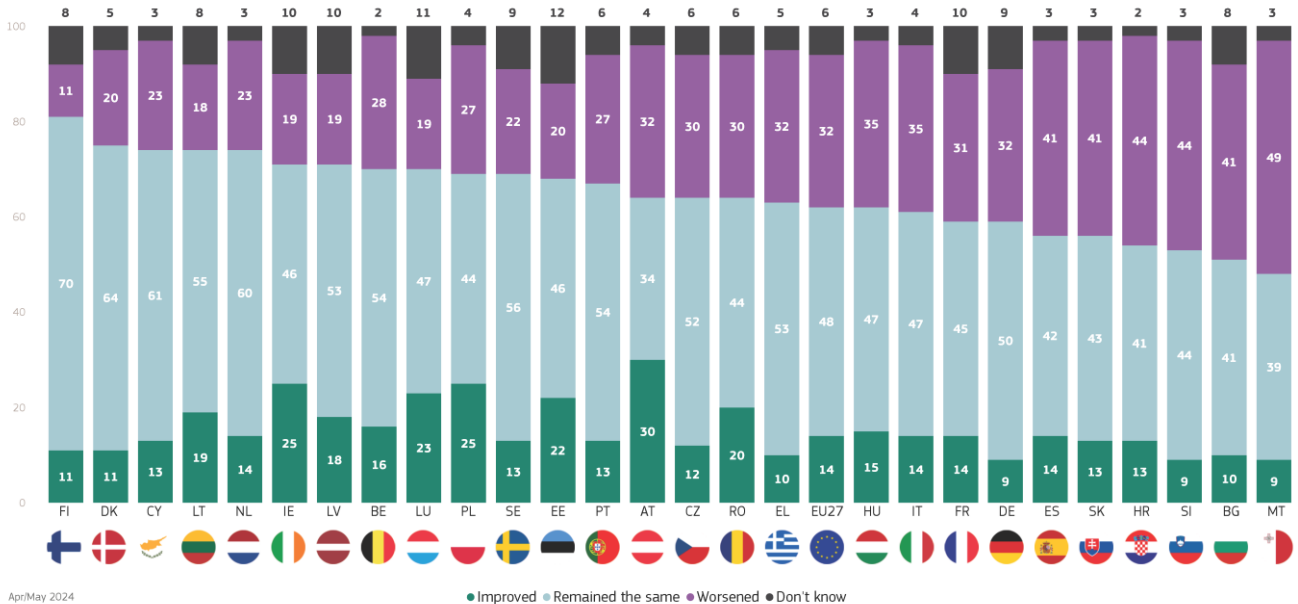
In Malta a majority of respondents consider that the situation has **worsened**: 49% vs. 39% 'remained unchanged' and 9% 'improved'.

It is noteworthy that in France, Latvia, Ireland (each 10%) and Luxembourg (11%) and Estonia (12%) at least a tenth of respondents don't give an answer.

The proportion of respondents who think that the situation has **improved** are highest in Austria (30%), followed by Ireland and Poland (each 25%). The proportion of respondents who think that the situation has improved outnumber those who think it has worsened only in Ireland (25% vs. 19% 'worsened'), Luxembourg (23% vs. 19%), Estonia (22% vs. 20%) and Lithuania (19% vs. 18%).

In Bulgaria (41% 'remained the same' and 41% 'worsened') and in Slovenia (44% vs. 44%) opinions are evenly split between those who consider that the situation has worsened and those who think it has remained unchanged.

QA5.3. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years.--The fact that justice carries out proper investigations and hand out appropriate punishments to those found guilty in cases of corruption involving politicians and public officials (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553

Rule of Law

When analysing **the socio-demographic data** regarding the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has **improved**, the differences between categories are as follows. Those who finished full-time education at the age of 20 or later (16%) are more likely to say that than those who finished their full-time education earlier (9%).

The same pattern applies to managers (18%) and students (17%), especially when compared to the unemployed (9%). The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class (21%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (11%).

Those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (23%) are also more likely to say that the situation has **improved** than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (9%). As are those who hold a positive image of the EU (19%) compared to those who hold a negative image (8%).

QA5.3 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The fact that justice carries out proper investigations and hand out appropriate punishments to those found guilty in cases of corruption involving politicians and public officials
(% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	14	32	48	6
Gender				
Man	15	31	48	6
Woman	14	32	47	7
Age				
15-24	16	30	46	8
25-39	16	30	47	7
40-54	15	32	48	5
55 +	13	32	49	6
Education (End of)				
15-	9	36	46	9
16-19	14	33	47	6
20+	16	28	52	4
Still studying	15	29	46	10
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	16	34	46	4
Managers	18	26	52	4
Other white collars	16	30	50	4
Manual workers	15	34	46	5
House persons	11	33	46	10
Unemployed	9	36	47	8
Retired	12	32	49	7
Students	17	29	45	9
Consider belonging to				
The working class	11	33	47	9
The lower middle class	13	34	46	7
The middle class	16	31	49	4
The upper middle class	18	28	51	3
The upper class	21	32	44	3
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	19	34	44	3
Occasionally	15	30	50	5
Never	12	32	46	10
Image of the EU				
Positive	19	24	51	6
Neutral	12	34	48	6
Negative	8	48	39	5
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	23	24	49	4
Wrong direction	9	39	46	6
Neither	12	19	57	12

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

The opinion that the situation has **remained unchanged or has improved** with regard to the question of **the assurance that public officials and politicians making and applying laws avoid conflicts of interest and live up to high ethical standards** prevails in 26 Member States. Figures are highest in Lithuania (74%) followed by Poland (73%) and Belgium (70%), where at least seven in ten respondents say so.

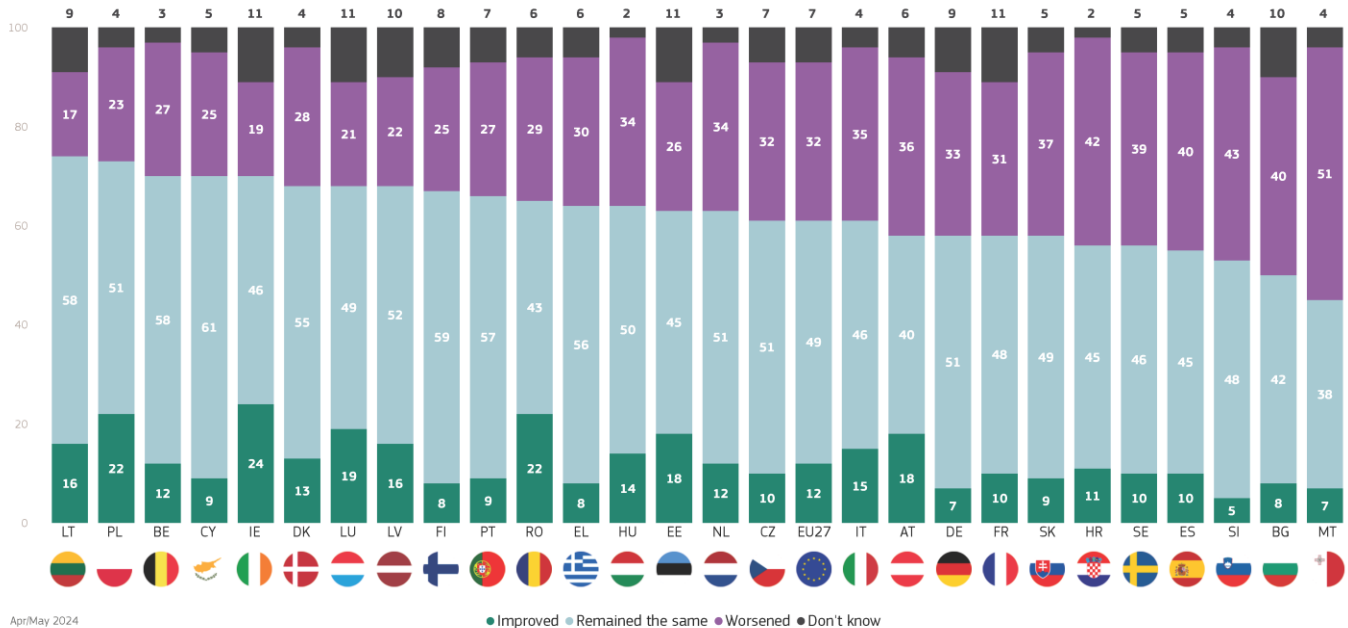
The highest rates for those who consider that the situation has remained unchanged can be observed in Cyprus (61%), followed by Finland (59%), Lithuania and Belgium (each 58%).

The proportion of respondents who think that the situation has **improved** are highest in Ireland (24%), followed by Poland and Romania (each 22%), where over a fifth of respondents say this. Only in Ireland (24% vs. 19% 'worsened') does the proportion of respondents who think that the situation has improved outnumber those who think it has worsened.

In five countries at least four in ten respondents consider that the situation has **worsened**, namely in Malta (51%), where a majority says so, followed by Slovenia (43%), Croatia (42%), Spain and Bulgaria (each 40%).

It is noteworthy that in six countries at least a tenth of respondents don't give an answer, most significantly in Ireland, Luxembourg, Estonia and France (each 11%).

QA5.4. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years:--The assurance that public officials and politicians making and applying laws avoid conflicts of interest and live up to high ethical standards (%)



April/May 2024

Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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Rule of Law

When analysing **socio-demographic data** with regard to the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has **improved**, the following can be observed. Younger respondents (14% to 15% of those aged 15-39), especially when compared to respondents aged 55+ (10%), and students (15%) but also the self-employed (17%) are more likely to say so than other occupational categories. The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class (21%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (8%). Those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (21%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (7%). This is also the case for those who hold a positive image of the EU (15%), compared to those who hold a negative image (6%).

QA5.4 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The assurance that public officials and politicians making and applying laws avoid conflicts of interest and live up to high ethical

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	12	32	49	7
Gender				
Man	13	33	49	5
Woman	11	32	49	8
Age				
15-24	14	30	47	9
25-39	15	32	47	6
40-54	12	33	50	5
55 +	10	33	50	7
Education (End of)				
15-	7	35	48	10
16-19	12	33	48	7
20+	13	31	51	5
Still studying	13	29	47	11
Socio-professional category				
Self- employed	17	35	45	3
Managers	14	31	51	4
Other white collars	13	32	50	5
Manual workers	11	34	49	6
House persons	11	34	44	11
Unemployed	9	35	47	9
Retired	10	32	50	8
Students	15	28	47	10
Consider belonging to				
The working class	8	34	48	10
The lower middle class	11	33	48	8
The middle class	14	31	50	5
The upper middle class	14	33	50	3
The upper class	21	31	45	3
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	16	37	45	2
Occasionally	12	32	51	5
Never	10	31	48	11
Image of the EU				
Positive	15	26	53	6
Neutral	10	34	49	7
Negative	6	50	39	5
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	21	23	52	4
Wrong direction	7	40	47	6
Neither	8	20	57	15



IV. Media Freedom and Pluralism

Special Eurobarometer 553
Rule of Law

This section analyses the general perception of media freedom and pluralism before scrutinizing the evolution on a national level regarding four different points of media freedom and pluralism.

1. The general perception of media freedom and pluralism

A majority of Europeans consider their national media to be free, independent and pluralistic. However, a majority also emphasises the difficulties for media to maintain their independence and to access information held by public authorities.

69% of Europeans consider that in their country **there is a wide range of media allowing for sufficient information and the expression of different opinions**, including 22% who ‘totally agree’ with this idea. Conversely, 28% disagree with this statement, including 6% who totally disagree. 3% answer don’t know.

However, 59% of Europeans think that in their country **it is difficult for journalists and the public to access information held by public authorities**, including 16% who ‘totally agree’ with this idea. Conversely, 33% disagree with this statement, including 7% who totally disagree. 8% answer don’t know.

Over half of respondents (53%) think that in their country **media and journalists cannot criticise the government, politicians or major economic interests without risk of intimidation, threats or other pressure**, including 15% who ‘totally agree’ with this idea. Conversely, 44% disagree with this statement, including 13% who totally disagree. 3% answer don’t know.

51% of Europeans think that in their country **the public broadcasters maintain a high degree of independence from public authorities**, including 12% who ‘totally agree’ with this idea. Conversely, 43% disagree, including 12% who totally disagree. 6% answer don’t know.

QA6. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? (EU27) (%)

There is a wide range of media allowing for sufficient information and the expression of different opinions



It is difficult for journalists and the public to access information held by public authorities



Media and journalists cannot criticise the government, politicians or major economic interests without risk of intimidation, threats or other pressure



The public service broadcasters maintain a high degree of independence from public authorities



● Totally agree ● Tend to agree ● Tend to disagree ● Totally disagree ● Don't know

Apr/May 2024

Base all respondents (N=26,415)

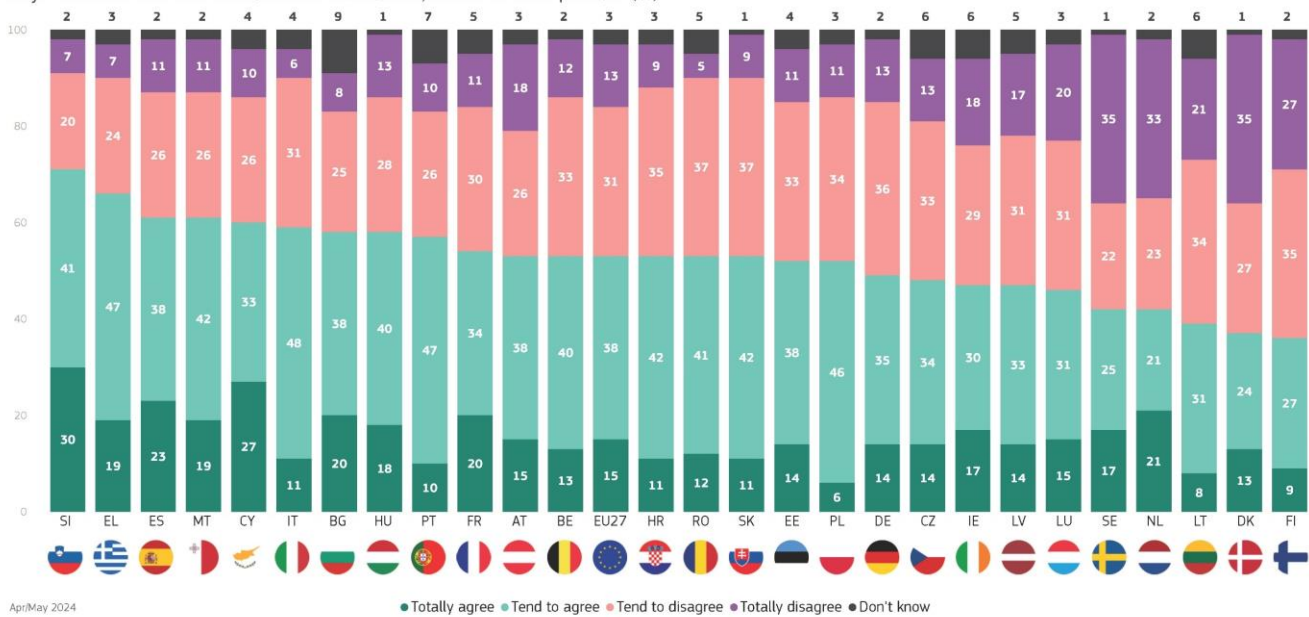
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In 18 Member States a majority of respondents consider that **‘the media and journalists cannot criticise the government, politicians or major economic interests without risk of intimidation, threats or other pressure’**. However, proportions vary widely amongst countries. They vary from 71% in Slovenia and 66% in Greece, where they are the highest, to 36% in Finland, where only a minority of respondents hold this opinion. In Slovenia (30%), Cyprus (27%) and Spain (23%) over a fifth of respondents ‘totally agree’.

Perceptions are evenly split in Germany (49% vs. 49%) and Ireland (47% vs. 47%).

Conversely, in seven countries a majority of respondents disagree with this idea, most significantly in Finland and Denmark (each 62%).

QA6.1. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)?:-Media and journalists cannot criticise the government, politicians or major economic interests without risk of intimidation, threats or other pressure (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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When looking at the **socio-demographic data**, it is noteworthy to underline that respondents who finished their full-time education at the age of 15 or earlier (56%) are more likely to agree with the statement that **'the media and journalists cannot criticise the government, politicians or major economic interests without risk of intimidation, threats or other pressure'** than those who finished full-time education latest (50%). House persons and the unemployed (each 59%) are also more likely to say that than other occupational categories. So do those who consider that things are going in the wrong direction in their country (57% vs. 51%) who think that things are going in the right direction.

QA6.1 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? Media and journalists cannot criticise the government, politicians or major economic interests without risk of intimidation, threats or other pressure (% - EU)

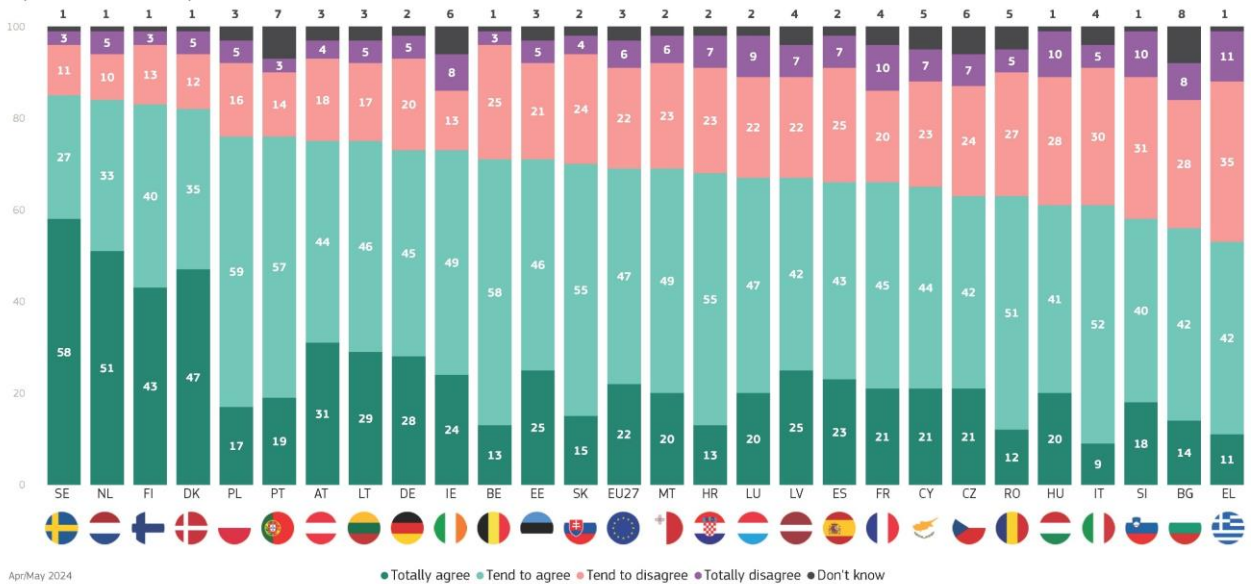
	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	53	44	3
Gender			
Man	53	44	3
Woman	54	42	4
Age			
15-24	52	45	3
25-39	53	45	2
40-54	53	44	3
55 +	54	42	4
Education (End of)			
15-	56	38	6
16-19	55	42	3
20+	50	48	2
Still studying	49	47	4
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	55	42	3
Managers	48	50	2
Other white collars	55	43	2
Manual workers	55	42	3
House persons	59	37	4
Unemployed	59	38	3
Retired	52	43	5
Students	51	46	3
Consider belonging to			
The working class	54	41	5
The lower middle class	56	41	3
The middle class	55	43	2
The upper middle class	42	56	2
The upper class	44	54	2
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	55	44	1
Occasionally	54	44	2
Never	51	43	6
Image of the EU			
Positive	52	46	2
Neutral	54	42	4
Negative	57	40	3
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	51	47	2
Wrong direction	57	40	3
Neither	45	49	6

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A majority of respondents in all 27 Member States consider that in their country **‘there is a wide range of media allowing for sufficient information and the expression of different opinions’**. Proportions of agreement range from 85% in Sweden, 84% in the Netherlands and 83% in Finland, where they are the highest, to 53% in Greece and 56% in Bulgaria, where they are the lowest. It is noteworthy that in Sweden (58%), the Netherlands (51%), Denmark (47%) and Finland (43%) over four in ten respondents ‘totally agree’.

Conversely, in Greece (46%) and Slovenia (41%) over four in ten respondents disagree with this statement.

QA6.2. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)?:-There is a wide range of media allowing for sufficient information and the expression of different opinions (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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When looking at the **socio-demographic data**, it is noteworthy to underline that respondents who finished their full-time education at the age of 20 or later (73%) are more likely to agree with the statement that **'there is a wide range of media allowing for sufficient information and the expression of different opinions'** than those who finished full-time education earlier (62%). Managers (74%) and students (71%) are also more likely to agree than other occupational categories. So do those, who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class (80%) compared to those who see themselves as being part of the working class (64%). This is also the case of those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (78% agree vs. 62%).

QA6.2 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? There is a wide range of media allowing for sufficient information and the expression of different opinions

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	69	28	3
Gender			
Man	70	27	3
Woman	68	28	4
Age			
15-24	70	26	4
25-39	69	29	2
40-54	69	29	2
55 +	68	28	4
Education (End of)			
15-	62	32	6
16-19	67	29	4
20+	73	26	1
Still studying	71	25	4
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	69	30	1
Managers	74	26	0
Other white collars	70	27	3
Manual workers	66	31	3
House persons	63	33	4
Unemployed	67	28	5
Retired	69	26	5
Students	71	25	4
Consider belonging to			
The working class	64	31	5
The lower middle class	67	30	3
The middle class	70	28	2
The upper middle class	78	22	0
The upper class	80	18	2
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	72	27	1
Occasionally	71	27	2
Never	64	30	6
Image of the EU			
Positive	79	19	2
Neutral	65	31	4
Negative	49	48	3
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	78	20	2
Wrong direction	62	35	3
Neither	79	16	5

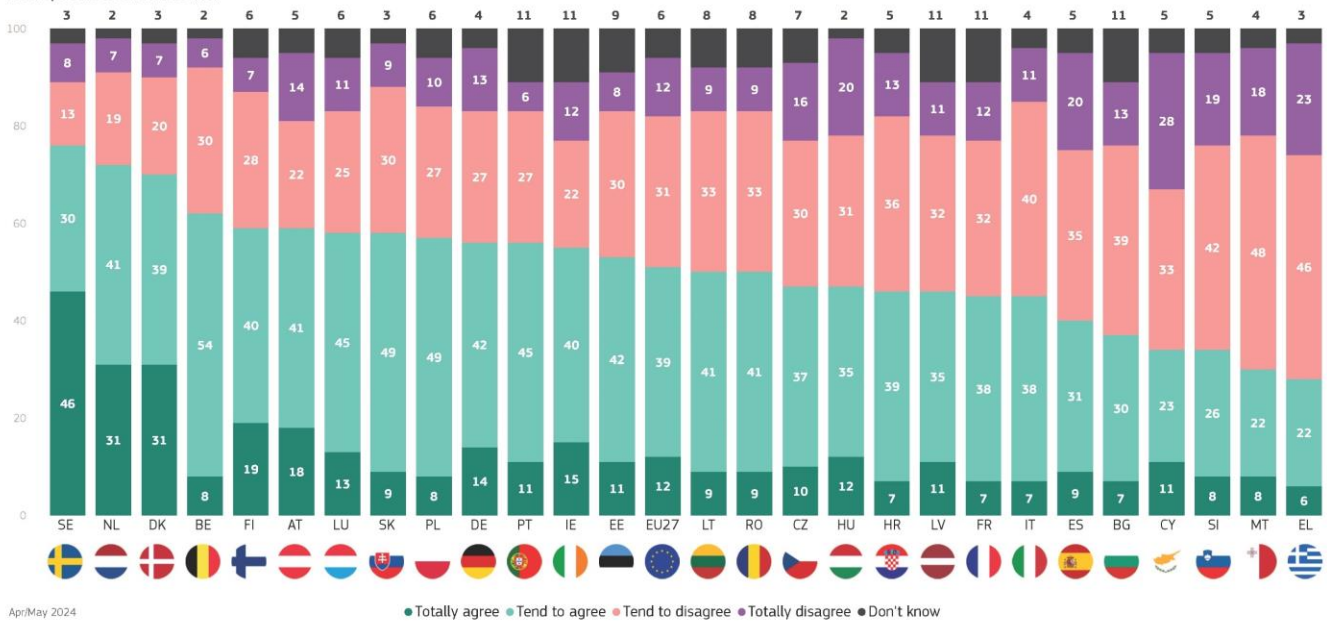
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In 18 Member States a majority of respondents consider that **‘the public service broadcasters maintain a high degree of independence from public authorities’**. The highest rates can be seen in Sweden (76%), the Netherlands (72%) and Denmark (70%), while the lowest can be found in France (45% vs. 44% ‘disagree’) within this group of countries. In Sweden (46%), the Netherlands and Denmark (each 31%), over three in ten respondents totally agree.

Conversely, in the remaining nine countries a majority of respondents disagree with this idea. Proportions are highest in Greece (69%) and Malta (66%), where at least two thirds of respondents disagree. In Cyprus (28%) over a quarter of respondents totally disagree.

It is noteworthy that in five countries, namely in Portugal, Ireland, Latvia, France and Bulgaria (each 11%), over one in ten respondents answer don't know.

QA6.3. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)?-The public service broadcasters maintain a high degree of independence from public authorities (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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When looking at the **socio-demographic data**, it is noteworthy to underline that respondents who finished their full-time education at the age of 20 or later (55%) are more likely to agree that **‘the public service broadcasters maintain a high degree of independence from public authorities’** than those who finished full-time education earlier (45%). Managers (57%) and students (54%) are also more likely to agree than other occupational categories. So do those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class of society or upper middle class (each 63%) compared to those who see themselves as being part of the working class (45%). Similarly, those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country agree (63%), compared to those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (42%).

QA6.3 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? The public service broadcasters maintain a high degree of independence from public authorities (% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	51	43	6
Gender			
Man	50	45	5
Woman	51	42	7
Age			
15-24	53	39	8
25-39	51	45	4
40-54	51	45	4
55 +	50	43	7
Education (End of)			
15-	45	45	10
16-19	49	46	5
20+	55	42	3
Still studying	53	39	8
Socio-professional category			
Self- employed	47	50	3
Managers	57	40	3
Other white collars	53	44	3
Manual workers	48	47	5
House persons	46	47	7
Unemployed	44	48	8
Retired	51	41	8
Students	54	38	8
Consider belonging to			
The working class	45	46	9
The lower middle class	46	49	5
The middle class	53	42	5
The upper middle class	63	35	2
The upper class	63	35	2
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	56	42	2
Occasionally	54	42	4
Never	44	46	10
Image of the EU			
Positive	62	34	4
Neutral	45	48	7
Negative	30	65	5
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	63	33	4
Wrong direction	42	53	5
Neither	58	30	12

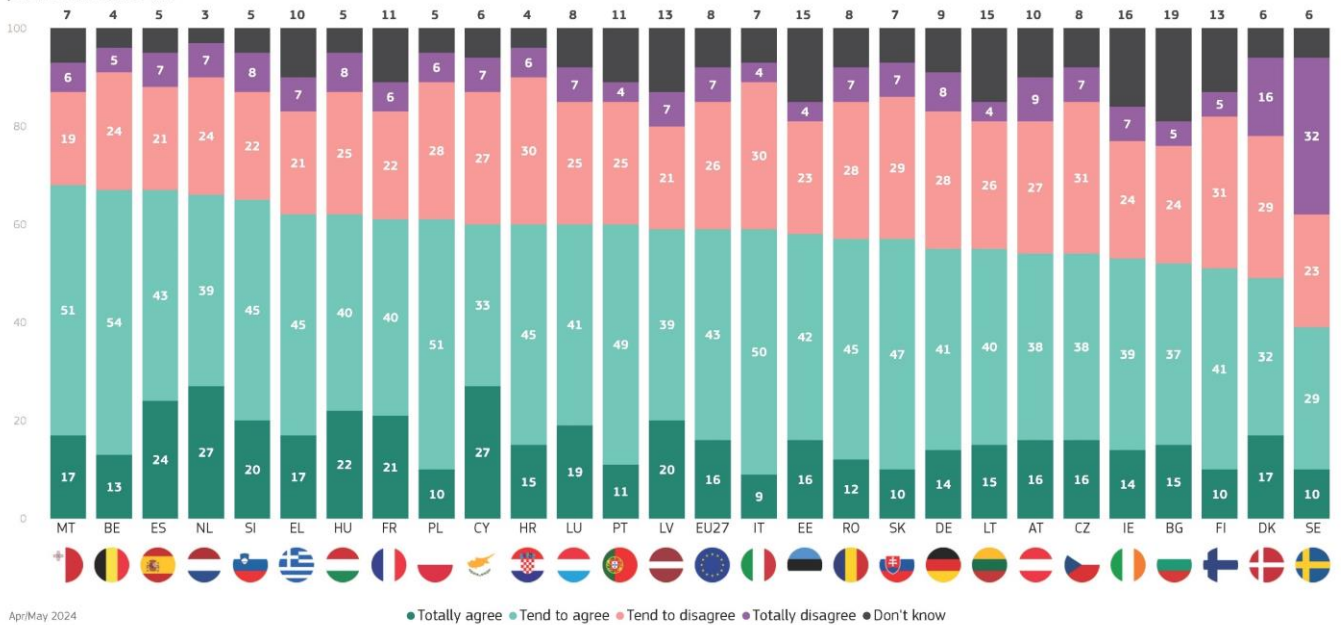
Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

In 26 Member States a majority of respondents consider that **'it is difficult for journalists and the public to access information held by public authorities'**. Within this group of countries proportions are highest in Malta (68%), Belgium (67%), Spain (67%) and the Netherlands (66%), where at least two thirds of respondents agree with this statement, while they are lowest in Denmark (49%). In the Netherlands and Cyprus (each 27%) over a quarter of respondents totally agree.

Conversely, Sweden is the only country where a majority of respondents disagree (55%), including 32% of respondents who totally disagree.

It is noteworthy that in ten countries at least one in ten respondents answer don't know, most particularly in Bulgaria (19%).

QA6.4. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)?-It is difficult for journalists and the public to access information held by public authorities (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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When looking at the **socio-demographic data**, it is noteworthy to underline that the unemployed (69%) are more likely to agree that **'it is difficult for journalists and the public to access information held by public authorities'**, than other occupational categories. So do those who consider themselves as belonging to the working class of society (61%), compared to those who see themselves as part of the upper class (51%).

QA6.4 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? It is difficult for journalists and the public to access information held by public authorities
(% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	59	33	8
Gender			
Man	59	34	7
Woman	60	32	8
Age			
15-24	57	32	11
25-39	57	37	6
40-54	59	34	7
55 +	60	31	9
Education (End of)			
15-	58	30	12
16-19	62	31	7
20+	56	38	6
Still studying	57	32	11
Socio-professional category			
Self- employed	55	37	8
Managers	56	39	5
Other white collars	60	35	5
Manual workers	59	34	7
House persons	59	32	9
Unemployed	69	24	7
Retired	61	29	10
Students	57	32	11
Consider belonging to			
The working class	61	29	10
The lower middle class	60	32	8
The middle class	59	34	7
The upper middle class	54	42	4
The upper class	51	45	4
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	62	33	5
Occasionally	61	33	6
Never	56	32	12
Image of the EU			
Positive	59	34	7
Neutral	59	33	8
Negative	62	30	8
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	58	37	5
Wrong direction	62	31	7
Neither	53	32	15

2. Improvements with regard to media freedom and pluralism

When asked about the evolution of the situation in their country over the past five years with regard to media freedom and pluralism, a majority of respondents consider that things have remained the same or improved.

Half of respondents (50%) consider that the public broadcasters' degree of independence from public authorities has remained unchanged in their country over the past five years, while 13% think that the situation has improved. 32% state, on the contrary, that the situation has worsened. 5% answer don't know.

Just under half of respondents (48%) consider that the easiness for journalists and the public to access information held by public authorities has remained unchanged in their country over the past five years, while 16% think that the situation has improved. Just under three in ten (29%) state, on the contrary, that the situation has worsened, and 7% answer don't know.

45% of Europeans state that media and journalists' freedom to criticise the government, politicians or major economic interests without risk of intimidation or threats has remained unchanged in their country over the past five years, while 16% think that the situation has improved. Over a third of respondents (36%) think, on the contrary, that the situation has worsened, and 3% answer don't know.

Finally, 22% of respondents consider that the diversity of media, allowing for sufficient information and the expression of different opinions has improved in their country over the past five years. while 45% think that the situation has remained unchanged in this regard. However, 29% of respondents consider that the situation has worsened. 4% of respondents answer don't know.

QA7. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. (AB27) (%)

The diversity of media, allowing for sufficient information and the expression of different opinions



The easiness for journalists and the public to access information held by public authorities



The public service broadcaster's high degree of independence from public authorities



Media and journalists' freedom to criticise the government, politicians or major economic interests without risk of intimidation or threats



● Improved ● Remained the same ● Worsened ● Don't know

Apr/May 2024

Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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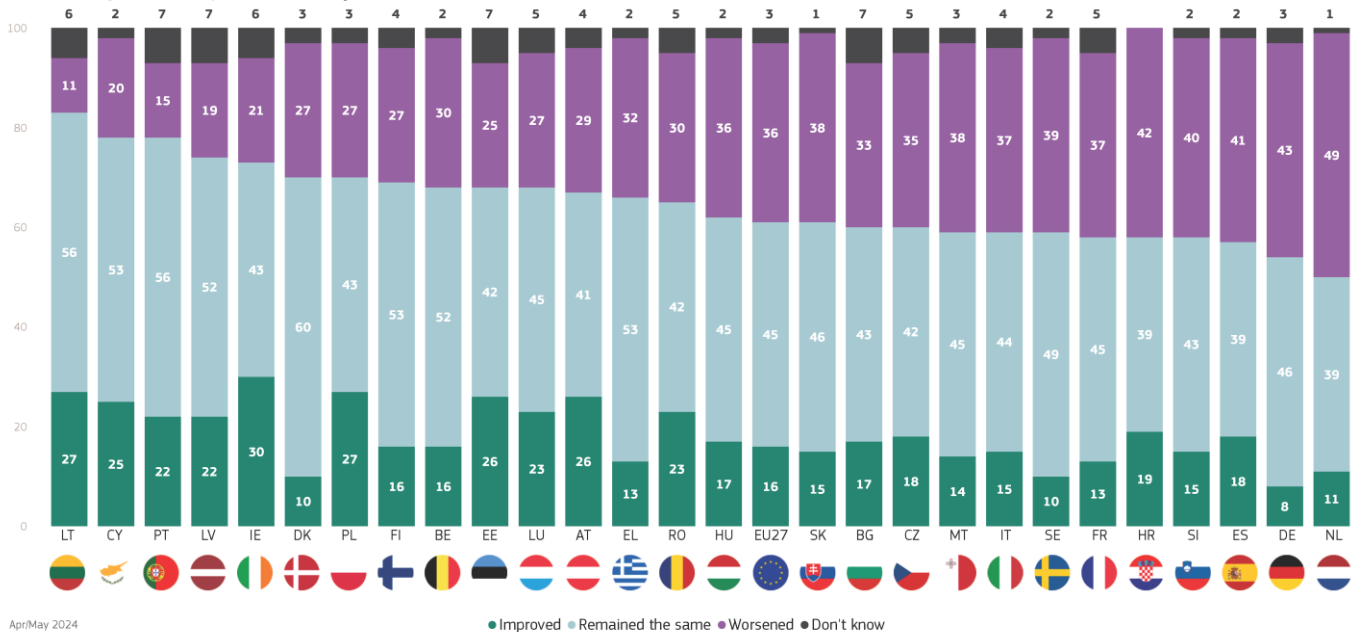
In all 27 Member States, a majority of respondents consider that **media and journalists' freedom to criticise the government, politicians or major economic interests without risk of intimidation or threats has** remained unchanged or has improved over the past five years in their countries. Proportions of respondents saying this are highest in Lithuania (83%) and Cyprus (78%), while they are lowest in the Netherlands (50%).

Proportions of respondents who consider that the situation has remained unchanged are highest in Denmark (60%), followed by Lithuania and Portugal (56%).

Albeit not a majority in any country, in ten countries at least a fifth of respondents consider that the situation with regard to media and journalists' freedom has **improved**. Proportions are most significant in Ireland (30%), followed by Lithuania and Poland (each 27%). In Ireland (30% vs. 21%), Lithuania (27% vs. 11%), Estonia (26% vs. 25%), Cyprus (25% vs. 20%), Latvia (22% vs. 19%) and Portugal (22% vs. 19%) positive views outnumber negative ones. In Poland positive and negative views are evenly balanced (27% vs. 27%).

Conversely, negative views are highest in Croatia (42% 'worsened', 39% 'remained the same' and 19% 'improved'), in the Netherlands (49% vs. 39% and 11%) and in Spain (41% vs. 39% and 18%).

QA7.1. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years:-Media and journalists' freedom to criticise the government, politicians or major economic interests without risk of intimidation or threats (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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When analysing the socio-demographic data regarding the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has **improved**, the differences between categories are slight. However, younger respondents (18% of those aged 15-39), especially when compared to respondents aged 55+ (13%), and students (18%) but also the self-employed (18%) are more likely to say that than other occupational categories. The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class of society (23%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (14%). Those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (25%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (10%). This is also the case for those who hold a positive image of the EU (19%), compared to those who hold a negative image (9%).

QA7.1 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. Media and journalists' freedom to criticise the government, politicians or major economic interests without risk of intimidation or threats (% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	16	36	45	3
Gender				
Man	16	36	45	3
Woman	16	36	44	4
Age				
15-24	18	35	42	5
25-39	18	37	42	3
40-54	16	38	43	3
55 +	13	35	48	4
Education (End of)				
15-	13	35	46	6
16-19	15	38	44	3
20+	17	35	46	2
Still studying	17	34	43	6
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	18	38	41	3
Managers	15	37	46	2
Other white collars	17	37	44	2
Manual workers	16	37	44	3
House persons	14	37	43	6
Unemployed	14	41	41	4
Retired	14	34	48	4
Students	18	34	42	6
Consider belonging to				
The working class	14	37	44	5
The lower middle class	14	37	45	4
The middle class	17	35	45	3
The upper middle class	14	39	45	2
The upper class	23	36	40	1
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	18	41	40	1
Occasionally	16	36	46	2
Never	14	35	44	7
Image of the EU				
Positive	19	31	47	3
Neutral	14	37	45	4
Negative	9	53	35	3
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	25	26	47	2
Wrong direction	10	45	42	3
Neither	12	25	58	5

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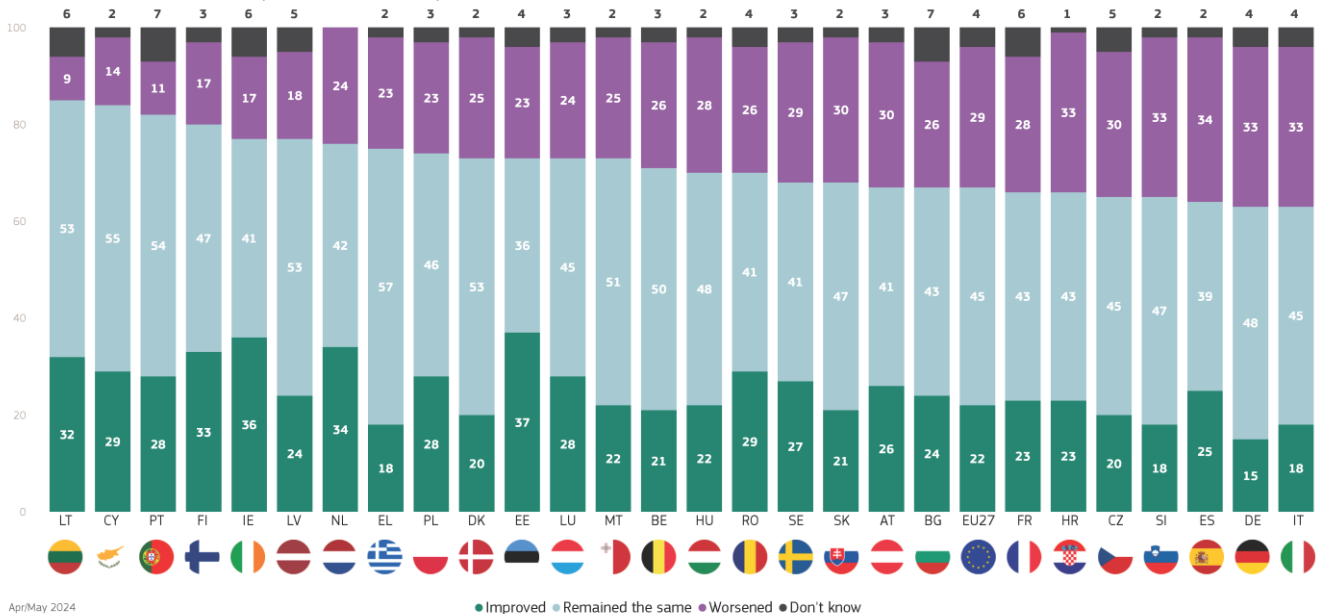
In all 27 Member States a majority of respondents consider that **the diversity of media, allowing for sufficient information and the expression of different opinions** has remained unchanged or improved in their country over the past five years. Proportions vary from 85% in Lithuania and 84% in Cyprus, where they are highest to 63% in Italy.

Proportions of respondents who consider that the situation has remained **unchanged** are the highest in Greece (57%), followed by Cyprus (55%) and Portugal (54%).

In Estonia a majority of respondents consider that the situation has **improved** (37% vs. 36% 'remained unchanged' and 23% 'worsened'). Overall, in 11 countries, positive opinions outnumber negative views. Moreover, in Estonia (37%), Ireland (36%), the Netherlands (34%), Finland (33%) and Lithuania (32%) over three in ten respondents say the situation has improved.

Conversely, at least three in ten respondents in eight countries consider that the situation has **worsened**, most significantly in Spain (34%).

QA7.2. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years.:The diversity of media, allowing for sufficient information and the expression of different opinions (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

When analysing the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** according to **socio-**

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demographics, the following differences can be observed. However, younger respondents (31% of those aged 15-39), especially when compared to respondents aged 55+ (18%), those who remained in fulltime education until the age of 20 or beyond (25% vs. 16% for those who left fulltime education aged 15 or younger) and students (33%) who are also more likely to say the situation has improved than other occupational categories. The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class (36%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (19%). Those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (30%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (18%), and those who hold a positive image of the EU (28%) compared to those who hold a negative image (14%).

QA7.2 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The diversity of media, allowing for sufficient information and the expression of different opinions
(% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	22	29	45	4
Gender				
Man	23	29	45	3
Woman	23	28	45	4
Age				
15-24	31	24	39	6
25-39	25	30	42	3
40-54	23	30	44	3
55 +	18	29	49	4
Education (End of)				
15-	16	28	49	7
16-19	21	31	45	3
20+	25	28	45	2
Still studying	32	23	39	6
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	22	34	42	2
Managers	25	29	45	1
Other white collars	26	27	45	2
Manual workers	21	30	46	3
House persons	16	34	43	7
Unemployed	22	32	41	5
Retired	19	28	49	4
Students	33	22	39	6
Consider belonging to				
The working class	19	31	46	4
The lower middle class	21	29	45	5
The middle class	24	28	45	3
The upper middle class	25	27	46	2
The upper class	36	30	32	2
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	24	33	42	1
Occasionally	23	28	46	3
Never	21	27	45	7
Image of the EU				
Positive	28	23	46	3
Neutral	19	30	47	4
Negative	14	44	38	4
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	30	21	47	2
Wrong direction	18	36	43	3
Neither	20	20	54	6

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In all 27 Member States a majority of respondents consider that **‘the public service broadcaster’s high degree of independence from public authorities’** has remained unchanged or improved in their country over the past five years. Proportions vary from 84% in Cyprus and 82% in Lithuania, where they are highest, to 55% in Slovenia.

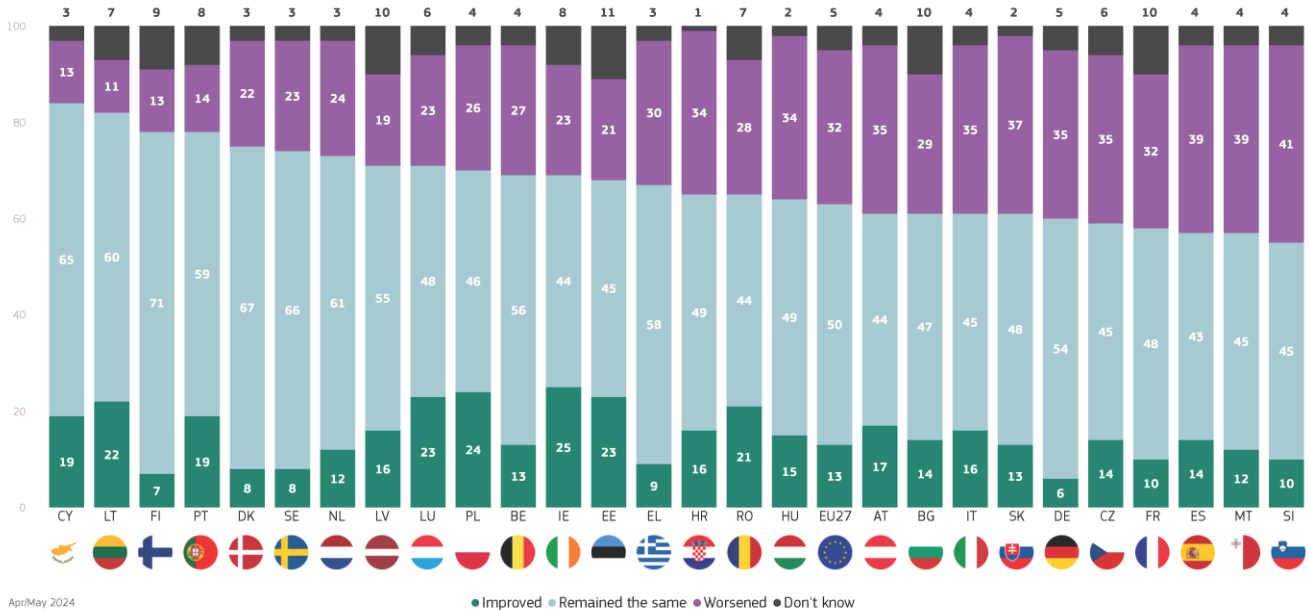
Proportions of respondents considering that the situation has remained **unchanged** are highest in Finland (71%), Denmark (67%) and Sweden (66%), while they are lowest in Spain (43%).

In six countries, including most significantly Ireland (25%) and Poland (24%), over a fifth of respondents consider that the situation has **improved**. In five countries, positive opinions outnumber negative ones, namely Ireland (25% vs. 23%), Estonia (23% vs. 21%), Lithuania (22% vs. 11%), Cyprus (19% vs. 13%) and Portugal (19% vs. 14%). Negative and positive opinions are evenly balanced in Luxembourg (23% vs. 23%).

However, in ten countries, over a third of respondents hold a negative view, i.e. they say the situation has **worsened**, most notably in Slovenia (41%), where over four in ten respondents say so.

In Estonia (11%) don’t know answers are notably high.

QA7.3. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years:-The public service broadcaster’s high degree of independence from public authorities (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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When analysing the socio-demographic data of the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has **improved**, the differences between categories are as follows. Younger respondents (17% of those aged 15-24), especially when compared to respondents aged 55+ (11%). The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class (21%) when compared to their counterparts. Those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (22%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (8%). This is also the case for those who hold a positive image of the EU (16%) compared to those who hold a negative image (6%).

QA7.3 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The public service broadcaster's high degree of independence from public authorities
(% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	13	32	50	5
Gender				
Man	14	32	49	5
Woman	12	31	51	6
Age				
15-24	17	28	46	9
25-39	15	33	47	5
40-54	12	34	50	4
55 +	11	30	53	6
Education (End of)				
15-	10	30	51	9
16-19	13	33	49	5
20+	13	31	53	3
Still studying	16	28	46	10
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	14	36	47	3
Managers	12	32	53	3
Other white collars	15	32	51	2
Manual workers	13	33	49	5
House persons	12	33	45	10
Unemployed	11	38	44	7
Retired	11	29	53	7
Students	18	27	46	9
Consider belonging to				
The working class	12	34	47	7
The lower middle class	11	33	50	6
The middle class	14	31	51	4
The upper middle class	12	29	56	3
The upper class	21	28	48	3
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	14	37	47	2
Occasionally	13	31	52	4
Never	11	30	49	10
Image of the EU				
Positive	16	25	54	5
Neutral	11	33	50	6
Negative	6	49	39	6
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	22	22	53	3
Wrong direction	8	40	47	5
Neither	10	19	63	8

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In all 27 Member States a majority of respondents consider that **'the easiness for journalists and the public to access information held by public authorities'** has remained unchanged or improved in their country over the past five years. Proportions vary from 81% in Cyprus and 78% in Portugal to 58% in Germany, where just over half of respondents say so.

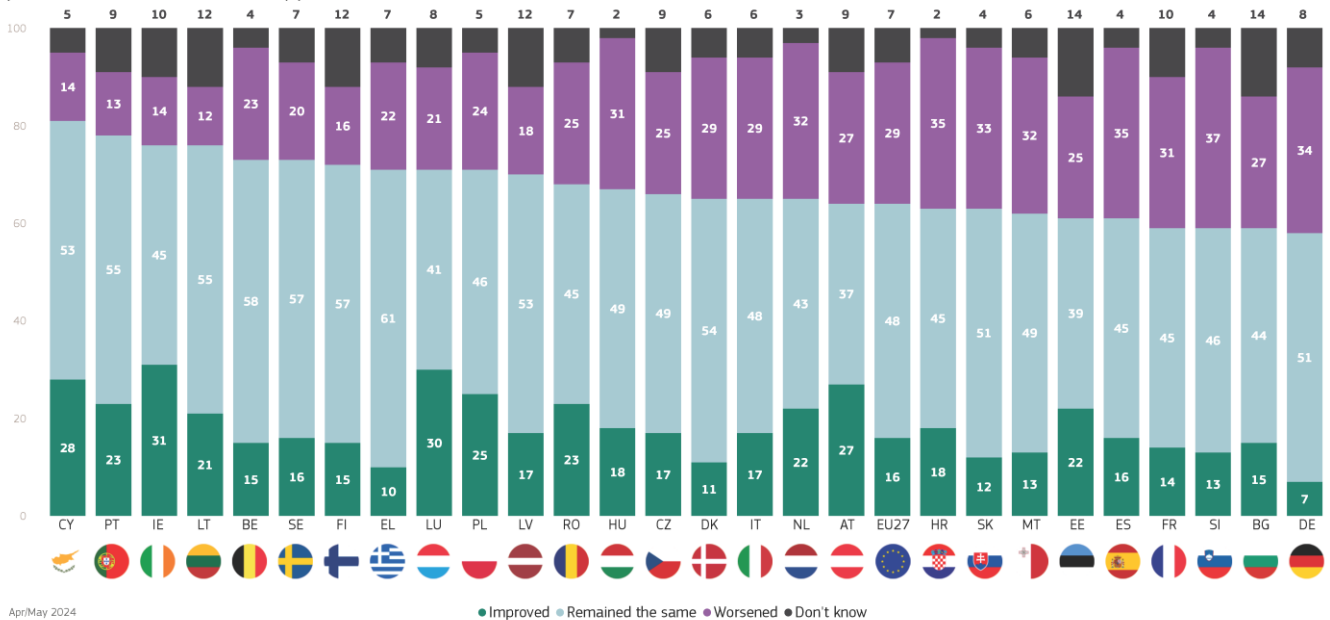
Proportions of respondents considering that the situation has remained **unchanged** are highest in Greece (61%) and Belgium (58%), while they are lowest in Austria (37%) and Estonia (39%).

In ten countries at least a fifth of respondents consider that the situation has **improved**, most significantly in Ireland (31%) and Luxembourg (30%), where at least three in ten respondents say this. In five countries positive perceptions outnumber negative perceptions: Ireland (31% vs. 14%), Luxembourg (30% vs. 21%), Cyprus (28% vs. 14%), Poland (25% vs. 24%), Portugal (23% vs. 13%) and Lithuania (21% vs. 12%). In Austria negative and positive opinions are evenly split (27% vs. 27%).

Conversely, in nine countries at least three in ten respondents consider that the situation has **worsened**, most strikingly in Slovenia (37%) and Spain (35%).

It is noteworthy that in seven countries at least one in ten respondents answer don't know, most markedly in Estonia and Bulgaria (each 14%).

QA7.4. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years.:The easiness for journalists and the public to access information held by public authorities (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553

Rule of Law

The socio-demographic data regarding the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** shows the following differences. Younger respondents (21% of those aged 15-39), especially when compared to respondents aged 55+ (13%), those who remained longest in fulltime education (18% vs. 12% for those who left fulltime education earliest) and students (21%) are more likely to say so than their counterparts in the respective socio-demographic categories. The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class of society (26%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (13%). In a slightly lesser extent those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (24%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (11%). Finally, those who hold a positive image of the EU (20%) are also more likely to hold this opinion, especially when compared to those who hold a negative image (9%).

QA7.4 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The easiness for journalists and the public to access information held by public authorities
(% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	16	29	48	7
Gender				
Man	16	30	48	6
Woman	16	28	48	8
Age				
15-24	21	24	45	10
25-39	19	29	46	6
40-54	16	31	48	5
55 +	13	29	50	8
Education (End of)				
15-	12	28	50	10
16-19	15	32	47	6
20+	18	28	49	5
Still studying	19	22	48	11
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	20	29	46	5
Managers	18	28	50	4
Other white collars	18	29	49	4
Manual workers	15	30	49	6
House persons	15	33	42	10
Unemployed	14	35	44	7
Retired	12	29	50	9
Students	21	23	46	10
Consider belonging to				
The working class	13	32	47	8
The lower middle class	14	32	46	8
The middle class	17	27	50	6
The upper middle class	18	29	49	4
The upper class	26	28	45	1
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	18	34	45	3
Occasionally	16	28	51	5
Never	15	28	46	11
Image of the EU				
Positive	20	24	50	6
Neutral	14	30	49	7
Negative	9	43	40	8
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	24	21	51	4
Wrong direction	11	36	46	7
Neither	12	22	54	12



V. Checks and Balances

This section analyses the general perception of the justice system and the checks and balances in the respondent's country. Respondents have been asked about the difficulties in following how and why laws are adopted, if laws are clear and stable and easy to understand, if human rights defenders and civil society organisations are adequately supported and if the same laws and rules apply to every person in the same way. The second part of this chapter scrutinises the evolution of these aspects over the past five years.

Public opinion is evenly balanced with regard to the statement: **'The same laws and rules apply equally to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin'**. 49% of respondents agree, while a similar proportion (49%) disagree. It is nevertheless noteworthy that the proportion of respondents who 'totally disagree' (17%) outnumber those who 'totally agree' (13%). 2% answer don't know or do not provide an answer.

1. The general perception of checks and balances

A majority of Europeans emphasise the difficulties in following up legislation, in understanding what laws are applied but a majority also considers that human rights organisations are free of constraint and are adequately supported

66% of Europeans agree with the statement that in their country **it is difficult to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament**, including 22% who totally agree. Conversely, 30% disagree with this statement and 4% answer don't know.

Just under six in ten respondents (59%) consider that **'the laws applying to [their] everyday life, work or business are not clear and stable. It is difficult to understand the legal consequences of [their] actions'**, including 16% who totally agree with this statement. Conversely, 36% disagree, including 9% who totally disagree, while 5% answer don't know.

57% of Europeans think with regard to the situation in their country, that **civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists can operate freely, criticise the government or major economic interests without adverse consequences and are adequately supported**, including 14% who totally agree with this statement. Conversely, 36% disagree, including 9% who totally disagree, while 7% answer don't know.

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QA8. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? (EU27) (%)

It is difficult to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament



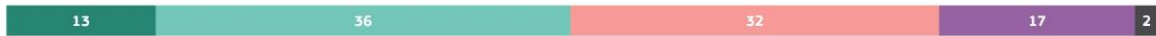
The laws applying to your everyday life, work or business are not clear and stable . It is difficult to understand the legal consequences of your actions



Civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists can operate freely, criticise the government or major economic interests without adverse consequences and are adequately supported



The same laws and rules apply equally to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin



● Totally agree
 ● Tend to agree
 ● Tend to disagree
 ● Totally disagree
 ● Don't know

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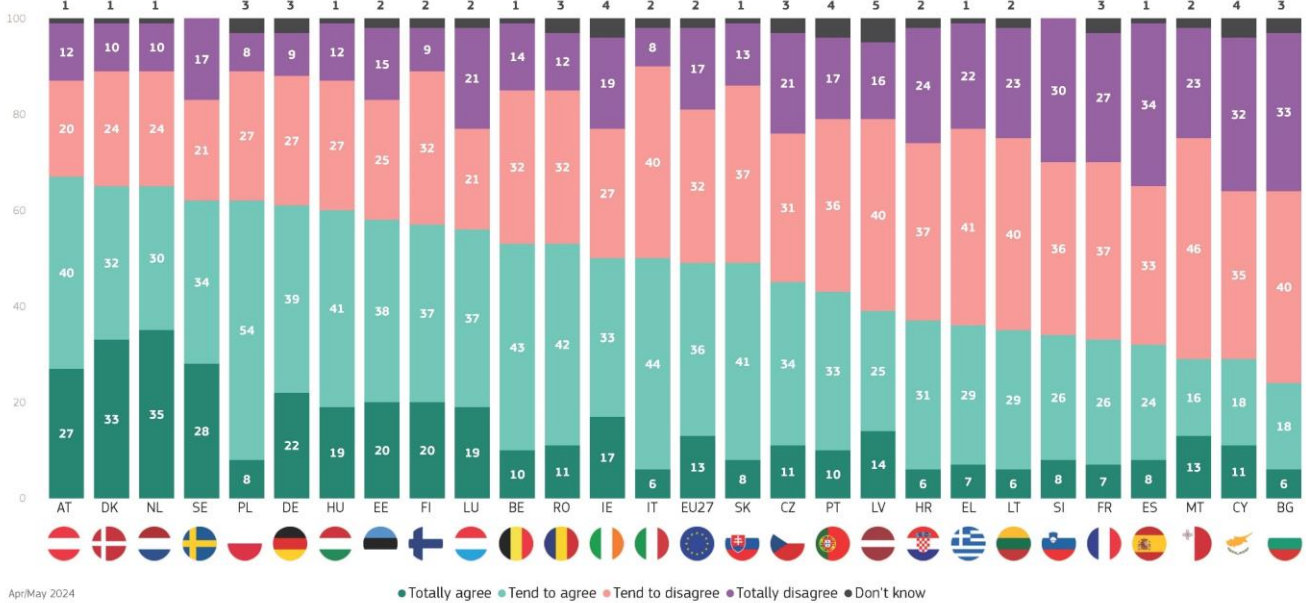
Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

In 14 Member States a majority of respondents consider that in their country **‘the same laws and rules apply equally to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin’**. Within this group of countries agreement reaches 67% in Austria and 65% in Denmark and the Netherlands and drops to 50% in Ireland and Italy. In the Netherlands (35%) and Denmark (33%) at least a third of respondents totally agree.

Conversely, negative opinions prevail in 13 countries, most significantly in Bulgaria (73%), Malta (69%) as well as Cyprus and Spain (each 67%), where over two-thirds of respondents disagree with this statement. In Spain (34%) and Bulgaria (33%) at least a third of respondents totally disagree.

QA8.1. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)?:-The same laws and rules apply equally to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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Rule of Law

The **socio-demographic** data show only very slight differences for the statement **‘the same laws and rules apply equally to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin’**. However, it is noteworthy that those who left full-time education at the age of 20 or later (51%) tend to agree more compared to those who finished education at the age of 15 or earlier (44%). Furthermore, managers are the most likely to agree (58%) compared to other occupational groups. Those who consider themselves to be part of the upper class (68%) are also the most likely to agree, especially when compared to those who see themselves as belonging to the working class (42%).

QA8.1 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? The same laws and rules apply equally to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin (% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	49	49	2
Gender			
Man	50	48	2
Woman	48	49	3
Age			
15-24	52	45	3
25-39	51	47	2
40-54	49	50	1
55 +	48	49	3
Education (End of)			
15-	44	52	4
16-19	49	49	2
20+	51	48	1
Still studying	52	44	4
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	48	50	2
Managers	58	41	1
Other white collars	51	48	1
Manual workers	46	52	2
House persons	46	51	3
Unemployed	43	55	2
Retired	47	50	3
Students	54	42	4
Consider belonging to			
The working class	42	55	3
The lower middle class	46	52	2
The middle class	53	46	1
The upper middle class	62	37	1
The upper class	68	31	1
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	58	42	0
Occasionally	52	46	2
Never	40	56	4
Image of the EU			
Positive	57	41	2
Neutral	47	51	2
Negative	31	67	2
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	63	36	1
Wrong direction	41	57	2
Neither	54	42	4

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

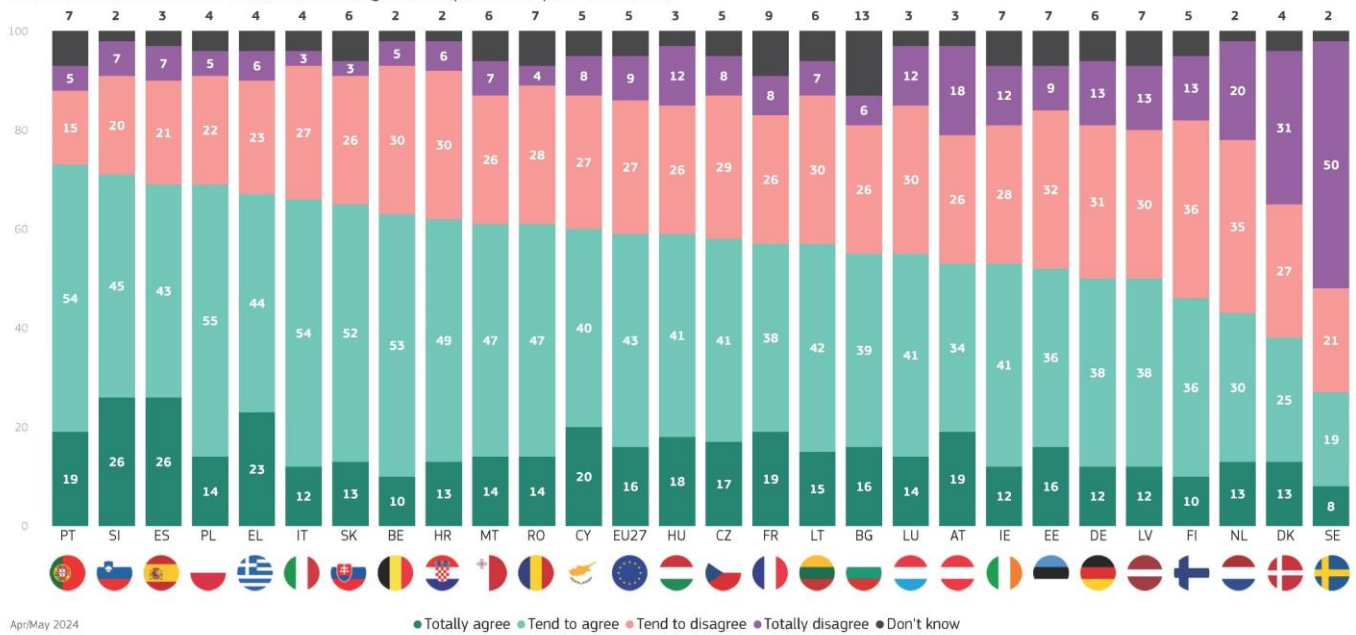
In 23 Member States a majority of respondents agree that **the laws applying to [their] everyday life, work or business are not clear and stable. It is difficult to understand the legal consequences of [their] action.**

Within this group of countries proportions are highest in Portugal (73%) and Slovenia (71%), while they are lowest in Germany and Latvia (each 50%).

Conversely, disagreement with this statement prevails in four countries, namely in Sweden (71%), Denmark (58%), the Netherlands (55%) and Finland (49% vs. 46% 'agree').

It is noteworthy that in Bulgaria over one in ten respondents answer don't know (13%).

QA8.2. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)?:-The laws applying to your everyday life, work or business are not clear and stable. It is difficult to understand the legal consequences of your actions (%)



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● Totally agree ● Tend to agree ● Tend to disagree ● Totally disagree ● Don't know

Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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Rule of Law

The **socio-demographic** data show only very slight differences for the statement **'the laws applying to your everyday life, work or business are not clear and stable. It is difficult to understand the legal consequences of your action'**. However, it is noteworthy that those who left full-time education at the age of 15 or earlier (64%) tend to agree more compared to those who finished education at the age of 20 or later (54%). Also, the unemployed are most likely to agree (67%) compared to other occupational groups. Those who consider themselves as belonging to the working class of society (61%) are also more likely to say so, especially when compared to those who see themselves as being part of the upper middle class (51%).

QA8.2 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? The laws applying to your everyday life, work or business are not clear and stable . It is difficult to understand the legal consequences of your actions
(% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	59	36	5
Gender			
Man	58	38	4
Woman	58	36	6
Age			
15-24	56	38	6
25-39	57	40	3
40-54	59	38	3
55 +	60	33	7
Education (End of)			
15-	64	27	9
16-19	62	32	6
20+	54	44	2
Still studying	52	42	6
Socio-professional category			
Self- employed	58	40	2
Managers	51	47	2
Other white collars	61	36	3
Manual workers	60	36	4
House persons	62	30	8
Unemployed	67	26	7
Retired	59	32	9
Students	53	41	6
Consider belonging to			
The working class	61	30	9
The lower middle class	58	36	6
The middle class	59	38	3
The upper middle class	51	47	2
The upper class	59	39	2
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	59	39	2
Occasionally	58	38	4
Never	60	32	8
Image of the EU			
Positive	58	38	4
Neutral	60	34	6
Negative	58	36	6
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	59	38	3
Wrong direction	59	36	5
Neither	53	36	11

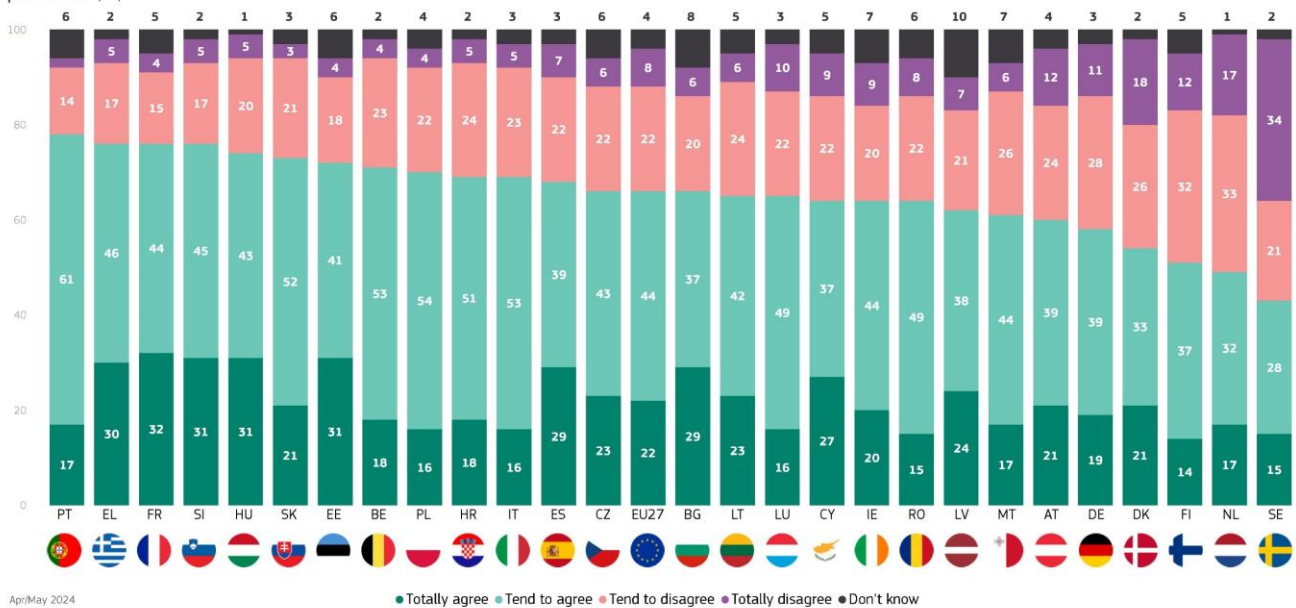
Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

In 25 Member States a majority of respondents consider that **it is difficult to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament**. Within this group of countries proportions reach 78% in Portugal and 76% in Greece, where over three quarters of respondents agree with this statement and drop to 51% in Finland and 54% in Denmark.

Conversely, in Sweden (55%) and the Netherlands (50%) a majority of respondents disagree with the statement that it is difficult to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament.

It is noteworthy that in Latvia (10%) at least one in ten respondents answer don't know.

QA8.3. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)?:-It is difficult to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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Rule of Law

The **socio-demographic** data show only very slight differences for the statement **'it is difficult to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament'**. However, it is noteworthy that those who left full-time education at the age of 15 or earlier (72%) tend to agree more, compared to those who finished education aged 20 or over (60%). In addition, the unemployed (73%) and house persons (72%) are most likely to agree compared to other occupational groups. Those who consider themselves as belonging to the working class of society (70%) are also more likely to say so, especially when compared to those who see themselves as being part of the upper middle class (54%).

QA8.3 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? It is difficult to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament (% - EU)

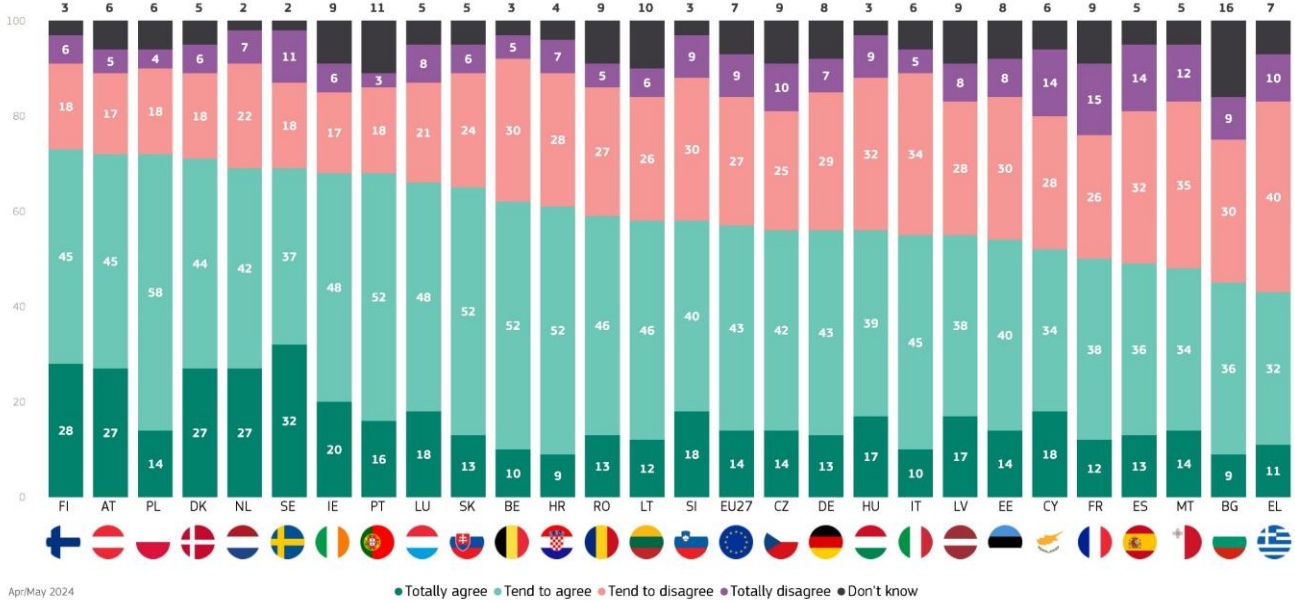
	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	66	30	4
Gender			
Man	65	32	3
Woman	68	28	4
Age			
15-24	66	28	6
25-39	63	34	3
40-54	67	31	2
55 +	67	29	4
Education (End of)			
15-	72	22	6
16-19	70	26	4
20+	60	38	2
Still studying	63	31	6
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	63	34	3
Managers	57	41	2
Other white collars	68	30	2
Manual workers	68	29	3
House persons	72	24	4
Unemployed	73	23	4
Retired	68	27	5
Students	63	31	6
Consider belonging to			
The working class	70	24	6
The lower middle class	67	29	4
The middle class	65	32	3
The upper middle class	54	45	1
The upper class	56	42	2
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	61	38	1
Occasionally	66	31	3
Never	69	25	6
Image of the EU			
Positive	64	33	3
Neutral	67	29	4
Negative	70	27	3
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	62	35	3
Wrong direction	68	29	3
Neither	65	27	8

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In 26 Member States a majority of respondents agree with the statement that **civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists can operate freely, criticise the government or major economic interests without adverse consequences and are adequately supported** in their country. However, rates of agreement vary somewhat amongst Member States: from 73% in Finland and 72% in Austria and Poland, to 45% in Bulgaria (vs. 39% 'disagree' and 16% 'don't know').

Greece is the only country where a majority of respondents disagree: 50% vs. 43% 'agree'.

QA8.4. Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)?:-Civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists can operate freely, criticise the government or major economic interests without adverse consequences and are adequately supported (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

Special Eurobarometer 553 Rule of Law

The **socio-demographic** data show only very slight differences for the statement **‘civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists can operate freely, criticise the government or major economic interests without adverse consequences and are adequately supported’**. However, it is noteworthy that those who left full-time education at the age of 20 or later (60%) tend to agree more compared to those who finished education at the age of 15 or earlier (52%). Also, managers are most likely to agree (64%) compared to other occupational groups. In addition, those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class of society are most likely to agree (69%), compared to those who see themselves as being part of the working class (51%).

QA8.4 Please tell me if you agree with the following statements as regards (OUR COUNTRY)? Civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists can operate freely, criticise the government or major economic interests without adverse consequences and are adequately supported
(% - EU)

	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'	Don't know
EU27	57	36	7
Gender			
Man	60	34	6
Woman	55	37	8
Age			
15-24	57	36	7
25-39	57	38	5
40-54	59	35	6
55 +	56	36	8
Education (End of)			
15-	52	36	12
16-19	57	35	8
20+	60	36	4
Still studying	56	36	8
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	59	36	5
Managers	64	33	3
Other white collars	60	35	5
Manual workers	58	36	6
House persons	53	35	12
Unemployed	49	42	9
Retired	55	35	10
Students	57	35	8
Consider belonging to			
The working class	51	38	11
The lower middle class	56	37	7
The middle class	60	35	5
The upper middle class	68	29	3
The upper class	69	29	2
Talk about European political matters			
Frequently	63	35	2
Occasionally	60	35	5
Never	51	38	11
Image of the EU			
Positive	64	31	5
Neutral	55	37	8
Negative	42	49	9
Things in country are going in...			
Right direction	71	25	4
Wrong direction	49	44	7
Neither	57	29	14

2. Improvements regarding checks and balances over the past five years

A majority of respondents consider that the situation regarding the situation of checks and balances has remained unchanged or improved in their country

15% of Europeans consider that **'the freedom of civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists to criticise the government or economic interests without negative consequences'** has improved over the past five years, while 49% consider that the situation has remained unchanged. However, 30% think that the situation has worsened. 6% answer don't know or do not provide an answer.

12% of Europeans think that the situation in their country with regard to **'an equal application of laws and rules to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin'**, as well as **'the clarity, stability of laws applying to [their] everyday life, work and business and the ability to understand the legal consequences of [their] actions'** and **'the easiness to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament'** has improved in their countries. For these three topics the proportion of respondents who consider that the situation has remained unchanged ranges from 50% to 54%.

Conversely, over a third of respondents consider that the situation has worsened regarding **'an equal application of laws and rules to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin'**.

A slightly smaller proportion thinks that the situation has got worse regarding **'the clarity, stability of laws applying to [their] everyday life, work and business and the ability to understand the legal consequences of [their] actions'** and **'the easiness to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament'**.

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QA9. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. (AB27) (%)

The clarity, stability of laws applying to your every day life, work and business and the ability to understand the legal consequences of your actions



The easiness to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament



The freedom of civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists to criticise the government or major economic interests without negative consequences



An equal application of laws and rules to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin



● Improved ● Remained the same ● Worsened ● Don't know

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Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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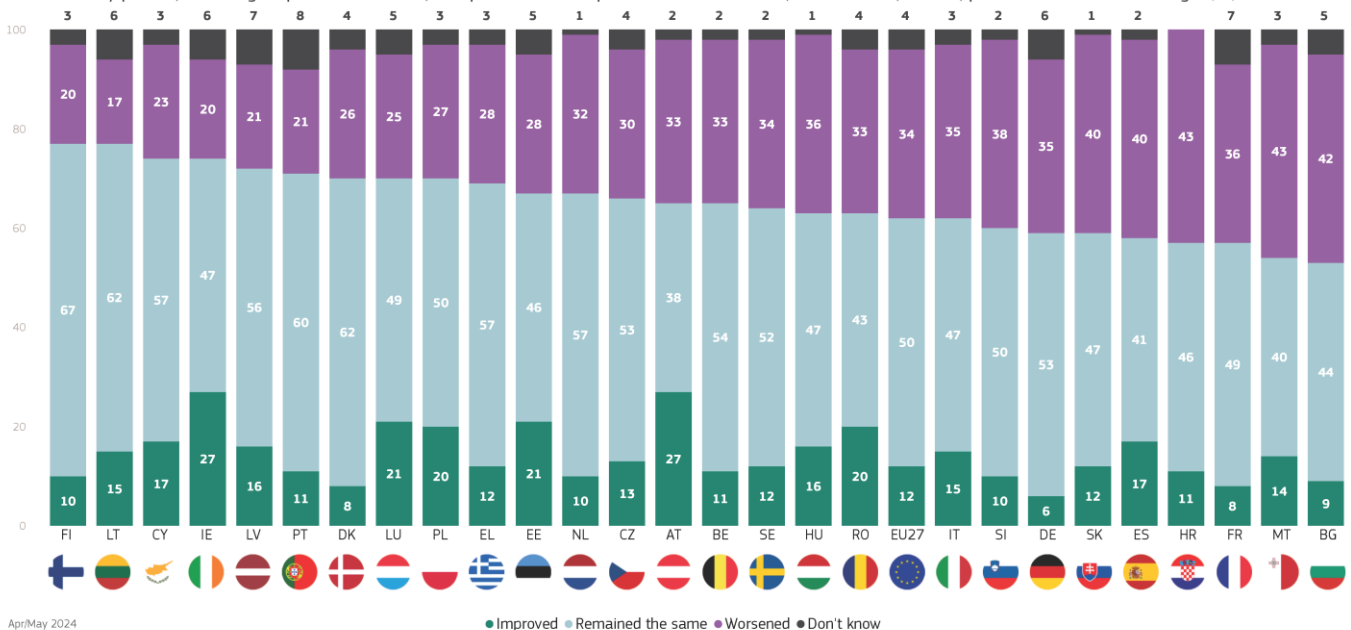
In all 27 Member States a majority of respondents consider that the situation in their country with regard to **‘an equal application of laws and rules to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin’** has **improved** or **remained unchanged** over the past five years. Proportions vary from 77% in Finland and Lithuania to 53% in Bulgaria, where just over half of respondents say so.

Proportions of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** are highest in Austria and Ireland (27%), where over a quarter of respondents say this. Conversely, proportions are lowest in Germany (6%), Denmark, France (each 8%) and Bulgaria (9%), where less than one in ten respondents say so.

A majority of respondents in 26 countries think that the situation has **remained unchanged**. Proportions are most significant in Finland (67%), Denmark and Lithuania (each 62%).

In Malta (43% **‘worsened’** vs. 40% ‘remained unchanged’) and 14% ‘improved’) a majority of respondents think that things have got worse over the past five years. Negative views are also high in Croatia (43%) and Bulgaria (42%).

QA9.1. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years:-An equal application of laws and rules to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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Rule of Law

The **socio-demographic data** for the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** shows that younger respondents (17% of those aged 15-24), especially when compared to respondents aged 55+ (10%), and students (17%) are more likely to say that the situation has improved. The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class of society (20%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (10%). Those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (20%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (8%). This is also the case for those who have a positive image of the EU (16%), compared to those who have a negative image (6%).

QA9.1 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. An equal application of laws and rules to every person, including all public authorities, irrespective of their personal circumstances, social status, wealth, political connections or origin
(% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	12	34	50	4
Gender				
Man	13	33	50	4
Woman	12	34	49	5
Age				
15-24	17	32	45	6
25-39	14	34	48	4
40-54	12	35	50	3
55 +	10	33	52	5
Education (End of)				
15-	10	34	49	7
16-19	13	35	48	4
20+	12	33	53	2
Still studying	15	30	48	7
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	15	35	48	2
Managers	12	32	53	3
Other white collars	14	33	51	2
Manual workers	14	35	48	3
House persons	12	37	45	6
Unemployed	11	39	45	5
Retired	10	32	52	6
Students	17	31	46	6
Consider belonging to				
The working class	10	34	49	7
The lower middle class	11	36	48	5
The middle class	14	33	50	3
The upper middle class	13	32	54	1
The upper class	20	28	50	2
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	15	38	46	1
Occasionally	13	32	52	3
Never	11	34	48	7
Image of the EU				
Positive	16	27	53	4
Neutral	11	35	50	4
Negative	6	52	39	3
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	20	25	53	2
Wrong direction	8	42	47	3
Neither	11	18	61	10

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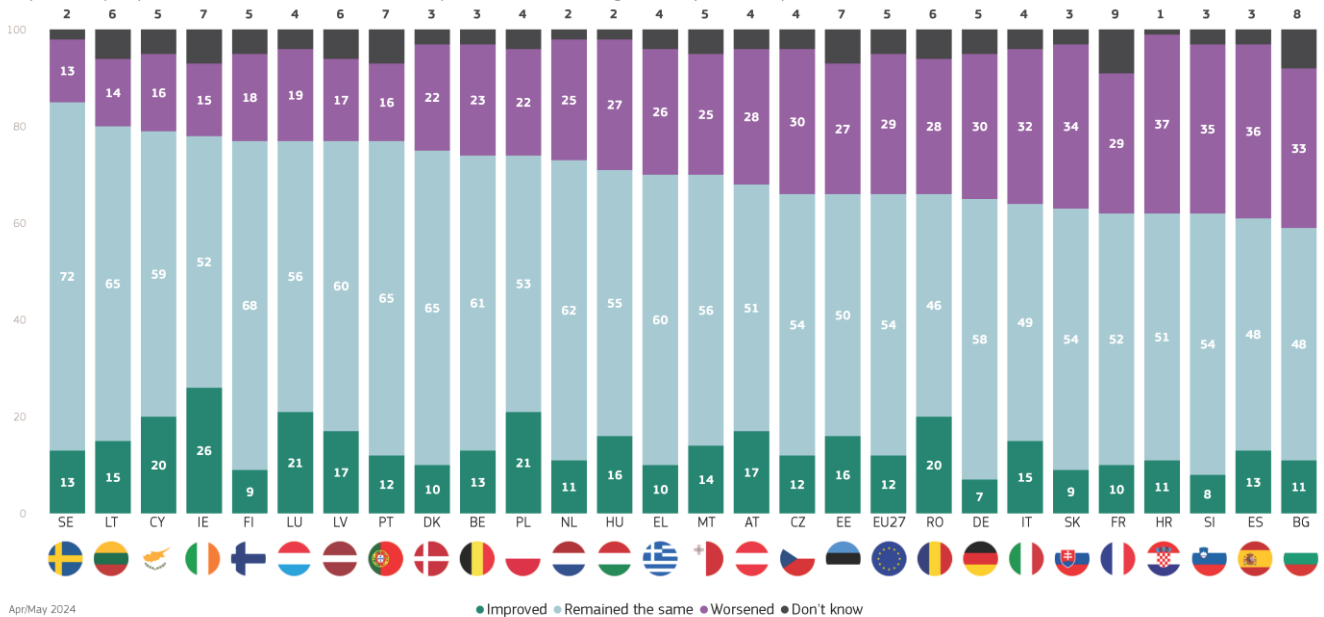
In all 27 Member States a majority of respondents consider that the situation in their country with regard to **‘the clarity, stability of laws applying to [their] everyday life, work and business and the ability to understand the legal consequences of [their] actions’** has **improved** or **remained unchanged** over the past five years. Proportions vary from 85% in Sweden and 80% in Lithuania, where they are highest, to 59% in Bulgaria.

Proportions of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** are highest in Ireland (26%), Luxembourg, Poland (each 21%) as well as in Cyprus and Romania (each 20%). At the other end of the scale, less than one in ten respondents say the same in Germany (7%), Slovenia (8%) and Slovakia as well as Finland (each 9%),

A majority of respondents in all 27 countries think that the situation has **remained unchanged**. Proportions are most significant in Sweden (72%), Finland (68%) as well as Denmark and Lithuania (both 65%).

In Croatia (37%) and Spain (36%), Slovenia (35%) and Slovakia (34%) over a third of respondents consider that the situation has **‘worsened’**.

QA9.2. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years.:The clarity, stability of laws applying to your every day life, work and business and the ability to understand the legal consequences of your actions (%)



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Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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Rule of Law

The analysis of the **socio-demographic data** regarding the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** shows the following. Younger respondents (20% of those aged 15-24), especially when compared to respondents aged 55+ (9%), and students (19%) are more likely to say so than other occupational and age groups. The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as being part of the upper class of society (19%) and those who see themselves as belonging to the working class (9%). Those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (20%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (8%). This is also the case for those who hold a positive image of the EU (16%), compared to those who hold a negative image (6%).

QA9.2 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The clarity, stability of laws applying to your every day life, work and business and the ability to understand the legal consequences of your actions (% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	12	29	54	5
Gender				
Man	12	29	55	4
Woman	12	28	54	6
Age				
15-24	20	24	49	7
25-39	15	27	54	4
40-54	12	29	56	3
55 +	9	30	55	6
Education (End of)				
15-	8	31	52	9
16-19	12	30	53	5
20+	12	27	58	3
Still studying	18	22	52	8
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	13	36	49	2
Managers	12	25	61	2
Other white collars	15	27	55	3
Manual workers	12	29	55	4
House persons	13	34	47	6
Unemployed	12	31	49	8
Retired	9	29	55	7
Students	19	22	52	7
Consider belonging to				
The working class	9	29	54	8
The lower middle class	10	29	55	6
The middle class	14	28	54	4
The upper middle class	12	29	57	2
The upper class	19	26	53	2
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	15	34	50	1
Occasionally	12	27	57	4
Never	12	28	51	9
Image of the EU				
Positive	16	23	57	4
Neutral	11	30	54	5
Negative	6	43	46	5
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	20	21	56	3
Wrong direction	8	36	52	4
Neither	10	16	63	11

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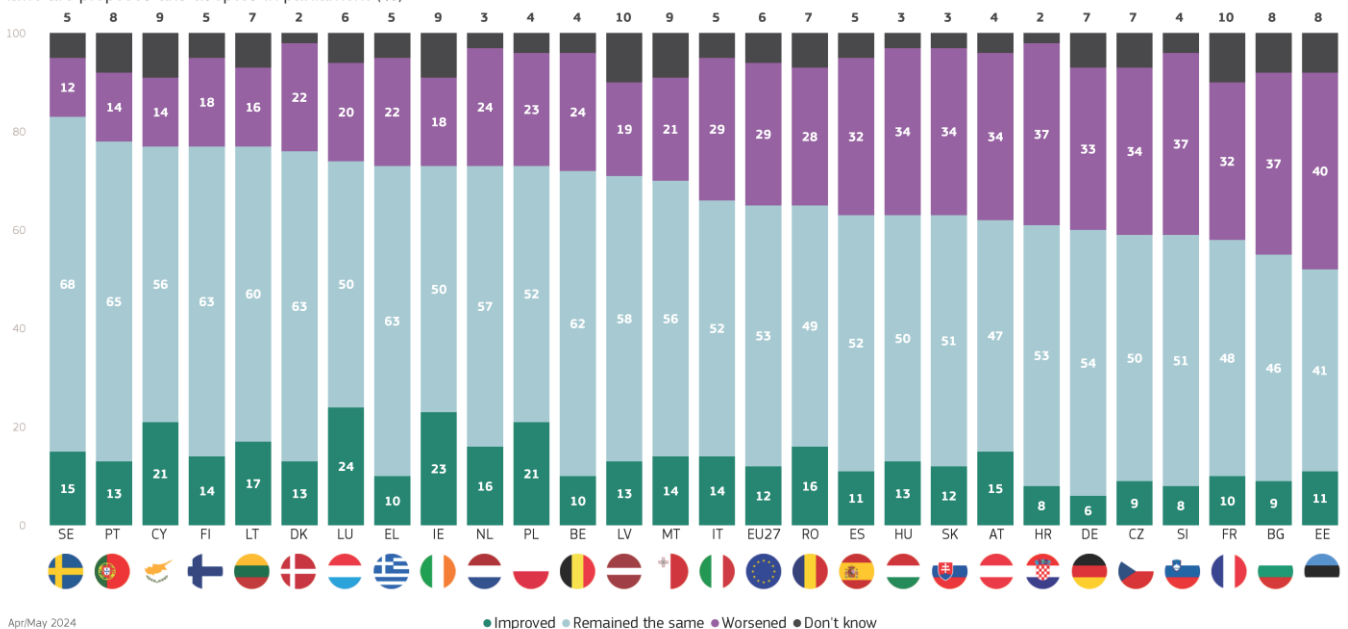
In all 27 Member States a majority of respondents consider that the situation in their country with regard to **‘the easiness to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament’** has **improved** or **remained unchanged** over the past five years. Proportions vary from 83% in Sweden and 78% in Portugal, where they are highest, to 52% in Estonia.

Proportions of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** are highest in Luxembourg (24%), Ireland (23%) as well as Cyprus and Poland (each 21%). At the other end of the scale, less than one in ten respondents say the same in Germany (6%), Slovenia and Croatia (each 8%) as well as Czechia and Bulgaria (each 9%).

A majority of respondents in all 27 countries think that the situation has **remained unchanged**. Proportions are most significant in Sweden (68%), Portugal (65%), Finland as well as Denmark and Greece (each 63%).

In Estonia (40%), Bulgaria, Slovenia and Croatia (each 37%) proportion of respondents who consider that the situation has **‘worsened’** are particularly high.

QA9.3. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years.-The easiness to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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The analysis of the **socio-demographic data** regarding the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** shows the following. Younger respondents (18% of those aged 15-24), especially when compared to respondents aged 55+ (9%). Students (19%) are more likely to say so than other occupational and age categories. The sharpest difference can be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class of society (25%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (9%). Those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (20%) are also more likely to say so than those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (8%). This is also the case for those who hold a positive image of the EU (16%), compared to those who hold a negative image (6%).

QA9.3 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The easiness to follow how and why laws are proposed and adopted in parliament (% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	12	29	53	6
Gender				
Man	13	29	53	5
Woman	12	28	53	7
Age				
15-24	18	26	48	8
25-39	14	29	52	5
40-54	12	29	55	4
55 +	9	30	54	7
Education (End of)				
15-	8	31	51	10
16-19	11	31	52	6
20+	13	27	56	4
Still studying	17	23	52	8
Socio-professional category				
Self- employed	13	34	50	3
Managers	13	24	59	4
Other white collars	14	28	55	3
Manual workers	11	30	54	5
House persons	12	32	48	8
Unemployed	11	32	50	7
Retired	9	30	53	8
Students	19	24	50	7
Consider belonging to				
The working class	9	29	54	8
The lower middle class	11	31	51	7
The middle class	13	28	54	5
The upper middle class	14	29	54	3
The upper class	25	21	52	2
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	15	33	50	2
Occasionally	13	28	55	4
Never	10	29	51	10
Image of the EU				
Positive	16	22	56	6
Neutral	10	30	54	6
Negative	6	46	43	5
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	20	20	57	3
Wrong direction	8	37	50	5
Neither	10	18	59	13

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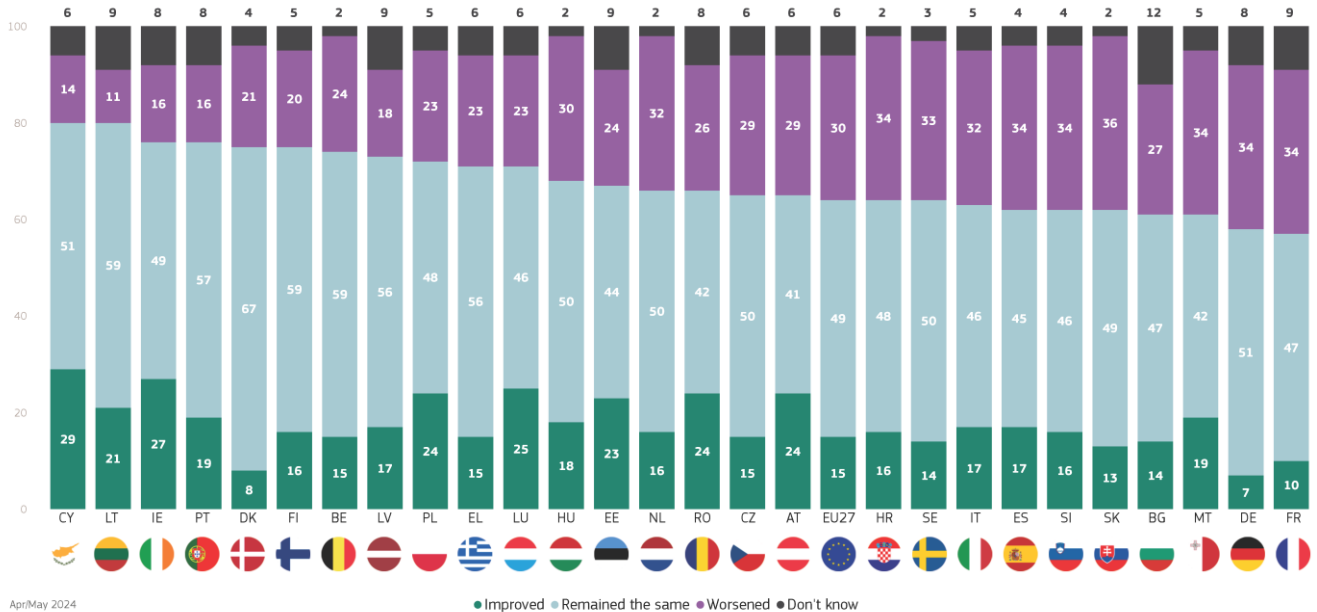
In all 27 Member States a majority of respondents consider that the situation in their country with regard to **‘the freedom of civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists to criticise the government or economic interests without negative consequences’** has **improved** or **remained unchanged** over the past five years. Proportions vary from 80% in Cyprus and Lithuania, where they are highest, to 57% in France.

Proportions of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** are most significant in Cyprus (29%), Ireland (27%) and Luxembourg (25%), where at least a quarter of respondents say this. At the other end of the scale, less than one in ten respondents say the same in Germany (7%) and Denmark (8%), with less than one in ten respondents holding a positive view.

A majority of respondents in all 27 countries think that the situation has **remained unchanged**. Proportions are most significant in Denmark (67%) as well as Lithuania, Finland and Belgium (each 59%), with around six in ten respondents saying this.

In Slovakia (36%) as well as in Malta, Spain, Croatia, Slovenia, France and Germany (all 34%), at least a third of respondents consider that the situation has **‘worsened’**.

QA9.4. Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years.-The freedom of civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists to criticise the government or major economic interests without negative consequences (%)



Base all respondents (N=26,415)

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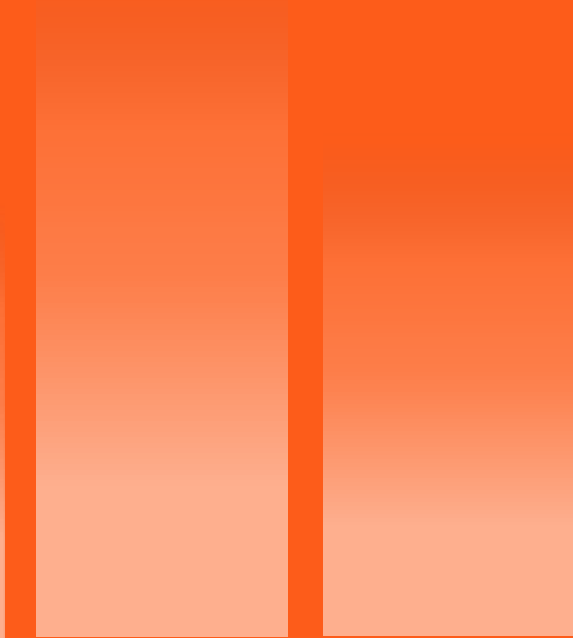
The analysis of the **socio-demographic data** regarding the proportion of respondents considering that the situation has **improved** shows the following. Younger respondents (19% of those aged 15-24), especially when compared to respondents aged 55+ (12%). Students (19%) are more likely to say so than other occupational or age categories. A difference can also be observed between those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class of society (24%) and those who see themselves as being part of the working class (12%). The sharpest difference can be found between those who think that things are going in the right direction in their country (24%) and those who think that things are going in the wrong direction (10%). To a lesser extent, those who hold a positive image of the EU (19%) are also more likely to say so, especially when compared to those who hold a negative image (9%).

QA9.4 Please tell me if the following have improved, worsened or remained the same in (OUR COUNTRY) over the past five years. The freedom of civil society organisations, human rights defenders and activists to criticise the government or major economic interests without negative consequences
(% - EU)

	Improved	Worsened	Remained the same	Don't know
EU27	15	30	49	6
Gender				
Man	15	31	49	5
Woman	15	30	49	6
Age				
15-24	19	29	44	8
25-39	17	31	47	5
40-54	16	30	50	4
55 +	12	30	51	7
Education (End of)				
15-	11	31	47	11
16-19	15	30	49	6
20+	16	30	51	3
Still studying	17	30	44	9
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	17	37	43	3
Managers	15	30	52	3
Other white collars	18	29	49	4
Manual workers	15	30	50	5
House persons	13	31	46	10
Unemployed	14	34	45	7
Retired	12	29	51	8
Students	19	29	44	8
Consider belonging to				
The working class	12	29	50	9
The lower middle class	11	35	47	7
The middle class	17	29	50	4
The upper middle class	17	31	50	2
The upper class	24	29	45	2
Talk about European political matters				
Frequently	18	35	45	2
Occasionally	15	30	51	4
Never	13	30	47	10
Image of the EU				
Positive	19	24	52	5
Neutral	13	32	49	6
Negative	9	45	40	6
Things in country are going in...				
Right direction	24	22	51	3
Wrong direction	10	38	46	6
Neither	11	16	60	13



Conclusion



Nearly nine out of ten Europeans (86%) consider important that the rule of law in the EU and its Member States is maintained. A significant 89% of Europeans believe it is crucial that all EU Member States uphold the EU's core values, which include fundamental rights, the rule of law, and democracy. About 86% of respondents feel it is essential that media and civil society organisations in EU Member States other than their own can operate freely and without pressure, even when critical. Similarly, 86% consider important that they have access to an independent and impartial court when living, traveling, or doing business in another EU Member State. The same percentage (86%) agrees that trusting public authorities to take decisions based on the law in a transparent manner in other EU Member States is essential. 85% of Europeans deem it crucial to access an independent and impartial court under the same conditions as nationals of that Member State. **Trend data indicates stability in these views.**

Over seven in ten respondents acknowledge the significant role of the EU in promoting and maintaining the rule of law both across the EU and within individual Member States. When taking a closer look, 74% of respondents agree that the EU is instrumental in upholding the rule of law in all EU Member States, and a similar percentage consider that the EU plays an important role in upholding the rule of law in their own countries. **Regarding awareness of the EU's foundational values and the rule of law, 51% of Europeans feel well informed about the EU's fundamental values, though 48% do not feel informed.** This marks a notable improvement from the Special Eurobarometer 489 conducted in April 2019, as a majority now feels informed, reversing previous trend. Citizens in Luxembourg, Poland, Denmark, and Finland feel the most informed about the EU's fundamental values, with Finland, the Netherlands, Austria, and Denmark having the highest awareness of the rule of law. The sharpest increases in the information level about fundamental values, can be observed for Czechia (+17 percentage points), Poland (+16) and Spain (+14), whereas for the rule of law no such trend data is available.

Concerning national justice systems, **75% of Europeans believe they can have their rights upheld by an independent court if needed,** and 53% view the judiciary as independent and free from political or economic influences. However, 41% still express scepticism about the independence of justice. However, the efficiency of justice systems concerning procedural duration and enforcement is criticised. 84% of respondents feel that court proceedings are too lengthy. Furthermore, nearly six out of ten (58%)

consider that public authorities and politicians often fail to respect and implement court rulings.

Europeans have a mixed perception of the stability and effectiveness of their justice systems across several key aspects. For example, **53% of Europeans believe that the enforcement of rights by an independent court has remained stable over the past five years,** while 13% see an improvement. However, 24% feel that this aspect has deteriorated. 52% think that the independence of judges from political or economic pressures has not changed, while 11% see an improvement and 30% view this negatively. 50% of respondents feel that the respect for and application of court rulings by public authorities and politicians has stayed the same, with 32% perceiving a deterioration, and 11% noting an improvement. In terms of court proceeding duration, 45% see no change, whilst 38% believe that the situation has worsened.

On the topic of corruption and transparency, 76% of Europeans consider that politicians and public officials are not transparent enough about their interactions and financial details. 71% suspect that many public officials and politicians are involved in conflicts of interest and fail to meet ethical standards. Although 43% believe that corruption involving politicians and public officials is adequately investigated and punished, a majority of 51% disagree. Views are split (47% vs. 47%) on whether public decisions are made without favouritism.

Regarding media freedom, 69% of Europeans feel that their country has a diverse range of media that facilitates the expression of various opinions. However, 59% say it is difficult for journalists and the public to access information from public authorities and more than half (53%) think that media and journalists in their country face risks when criticising the government or major economic interests.

A majority of Europeans highlight challenges in tracking legislative processes and understanding applicable laws, yet they also acknowledge the relative freedom and support available to human rights organisations. For example, **66% of Europeans find it difficult to follow the legislative process in their parliament, including how and why laws are proposed and adopted.** 59% express difficulties in understanding the laws that affect their daily life, work, or business, citing a lack of clarity and stability in the legal framework. However, 57% believe that civil society organisations, human rights defenders, and activists are able to operate freely, criticise the government or major economic interests without facing adverse consequences

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and receive adequate support. **Public opinion is divided on the application of laws: 49% agree that the same laws and rules are applied equally to everyone, including public authorities, irrespective of personal circumstances or social status, while another 49% disagree.** Regarding the status of checks and balances, a majority feel that the situation regarding checks and balances has not changed significantly. Only 15% see improvements in the freedom of civil society organisations to criticise the government or economic interests without repercussions. Similarly, modest improvements (12%) are noted in the equal application of laws and clarity of legal frameworks. A larger proportion, however, perceives a deterioration in these areas, with over a third indicating that the equal application of laws has worsened. A slightly smaller percentage feel that legal clarity and the legislative process have also deteriorated.

Technical Specifications

Between 25 April and 22 May 2024, Verian (former Kantar Public) on behalf of Verian Belgium carried out the wave 101.4 of the Eurobarometer survey, on the request and through the coordination of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication.

Wave 101.4 covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, resident in each of the 27 Member States and aged 15 years and over.

The basic sample design applied in all countries is a stratified multi-stage, random (probability) one. In each country, the sample frame is first stratified by NUTS regions and within each region by a measure of urbanity (DEGURBA). The number of sample points selected in each strata reflects the stratum population 15+. At the second stage sampling points were drawn with probability proportional to their 0+ population size from within each stratum. The samples thus represent the whole territory of the countries surveyed according to the EUROSTAT NUTS II (or equivalent) and according to the distribution of the resident population of the respective nationalities in terms of metropolitan, urban and rural areas⁷.

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

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

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

⁷ Urban Rural classification based on DEGURBA
(<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/degree-of-urbanisation/background>)

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COUNTRIES		INSTITUTES	N° INTERVIEWS	FIELDWORK DATES		POPULATION 15+	PROPORTION EU27
BE	Belgium	MCM Belgium	1,019	26-04-2024	15-05-2024	9,801,547	2.6%
BG	Bulgaria	Kantar TNS BBSS	1,018	25-04-2024	19-05-2024	5,533,938	1.4%
CZ	Czechia	STEM/MARK	1,019	29-04-2024	12-05-2024	9,075,934	2.4%
DK	Denmark	Mantle Denmark (Verian)	1,003	27-04-2024	22-05-2024	4,984,048	1.3%
DE	Germany	Mantle Germany (Verian)	1,603	29-04-2024	21-05-2024	72,405,020	19.0%
EE	Estonia	Norstat Eesti	1,002	26-04-2024	16-05-2024	1,141,759	0.3%
IE	Ireland	B and A Research	1,006	26-04-2024	16-05-2024	4,250,998	1.1%
EL	Greece	Kantar Greece	1,007	25-04-2024	18-05-2024	9,019,518	2.4%
ES	Spain	Mantle Spain (Verian)	1,000	30-04-2024	20-05-2024	41,533,486	10.9%
FR	France	MCM France	1,002	26-04-2024	16-05-2024	56,365,353	14.8%
HR	Croatia	Hendal	1,005	26-04-2024	14-05-2024	3,301,831	0.9%
IT	Italy	Testpoint Italia	1,037	29-04-2024	10-05-2024	51,632,657	13.5%
CY	Rep. Of Cyprus	CYMAR Market Research	504	25-04-2024	16-05-2024	772,320	0.2%
LV	Latvia	Kantar TNS Latvia	1,010	26-04-2024	17-05-2024	1,582,326	0.4%
LT	Lithuania	Norstat LT	1,014	26-04-2024	14-05-2024	2,429,823	0.6%
LU	Luxembourg	ILRES	507	26-04-2024	16-05-2024	555,900	0.1%
HU	Hungary	Kantar Hoffmann	1,012	29-04-2024	17-05-2024	8,205,783	2.1%
MT	Malta	MISCO International	500	29-04-2024	21-05-2024	473,015	0.1%
NL	Netherlands	MCM Netherlands	1,011	30-04-2024	15-05-2024	15,081,342	4.0%
AT	Austria	Das Österreichische Gallup Ins.	1,007	29-04-2024	14-05-2024	7,788,036	2.0%
PL	Poland	Research Collective	1,007	26-04-2024	15-05-2024	31,079,533	8.1%
PT	Portugal	Intercampus SA	1,029	01-05-2024	17-05-2024	9,113,419	2.4%
RO	Romania	CSOP SRL	1,042	26-04-2024	15-05-2024	15,981,575	4.2%
SI	Slovenia	Mediana DOO	1,003	25-04-2024	15-05-2024	1,799,078	0.5%
SK	Slovakia	MNFORCE	1,023	27-04-2024	14-05-2024	4,554,569	1.2%
FI	Finland	Taloustutkimus Oy	1,006	25-04-2024	16-05-2024	4,722,540	1.2%
SE	Sweden	Mantle Sweden (Verian)	1,019	29-04-2024	16-05-2024	8,541,497	2.2%
TOTAL EU27			26,415	25-04-2024	22-05-2024	381,726,845	100%

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

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Interviewing mode per country

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

COUNTRIES	N° OF CAPI INTERVIEWS	N° OF CAVI INTERVIEWS	TOTAL N° INTERVIEWS	
BE	Belgium	1,019		1,019
BG	Bulgaria	1,018		1,018
CZ	Czechia	820	199	1,019
DK	Denmark	700	303	1,003
DE	Germany	1,475	128	1,603
EE	Estonia	1,002		1,002
IE	Ireland	1,006		1,006
EL	Greece	1,007		1,007
ES	Spain	1,000		1,000
FR	France	1,002		1,002
HR	Croatia	1,005		1,005
IT	Italy	1,037		1,037
CY	Rep. Of Cyprus	504		504
LV	Latvia	1,010		1,010
LT	Lithuania	1,014		1,014
LU	Luxembourg	507		507
HU	Hungary	1,012		1,012
MT	Malta	349	151	500
NL	Netherlands	1,011		1,011
AT	Austria	1,007		1,007
PL	Poland	1,007		1,007
PT	Portugal	1,029		1,029
RO	Romania	1,042		1,042
SI	Slovenia	1,003		1,003
SK	Slovakia	1,023		1,023
FI	Finland	708	298	1,006
SE	Sweden	1,019		1,019
TOTAL EU27		25,336	1,079	26,415

CAPI : Computer-Assisted Personal interviewing

CAVI : Computer-Assisted Video interviewing

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Response rates

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

The response rates are calculated by dividing the total number of complete interviews with the number of all the addresses visited, apart from ones that are not eligible but including those where eligibility is unknown. For wave 101.4 of the EUROBAROMETER survey, the response rates for the EU27 countries, calculated by Verian (former Kantar Public), are:

	COUNTRIES	RESPONSE RATES
BE	Belgium	61.3%
BG	Bulgaria	48.3%
CZ	Czechia	51.4%
DK	Denmark	30.9%
DE	Germany	31.9%
EE	Estonia	78.9%
IE	Ireland	36.5%
EL	Greece	30.7%
ES	Spain	31.3%
FR	France	41.1%
HR	Croatia	45.9%
IT	Italy	28.5%
CY	Rep. Of Cyprus	63.5%
LV	Latvia	37.8%
LT	Lithuania	47.9%
LU	Luxembourg	29.1%
HU	Hungary	58.2%
MT	Malta	60.2%
NL	Netherlands	81.6%
AT	Austria	41.9%
PL	Poland	46.1%
PT	Portugal	49.4%
RO	Romania	59.8%
SI	Slovenia	41.0%
SK	Slovakia	53.6%
FI	Finland	35.9%
SE	Sweden	80.6%

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Margins of error

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

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

various sample sizes are in rows

various observed results are in columns

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

