



PUBLIC OPINION MONITORING *at a glance*

The European Parliament and the expectations of European citizens

Plenary - October (II) 2020



Each plenary session DG Communication's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit provides general public with relevant public opinion data on key topics on the agenda as well as insights into citizens' opinion on current European issues.

We would like to especially draw your attention to the latest survey commissioned by the European Parliament, published last week and available for your detailed information via [Public opinion in times of Covid-19 \(second round\)](#). Next to the general survey results you will also find national factsheets for all 27 Member States, a full report as well as detailed results annexes.

Results give **insights on citizens' recall of and satisfaction with the measures taken by the EU and national governments to fight the virus**. It will shed a light on the Europeans' **level of satisfaction with European solidarity**, the need for more **EU competences**, the **citizens' top priorities** for fighting the pandemic and the public opinion towards the **Recovery Program** and the **EU budget**. Results also cover how limitations to individual freedoms are perceived and accepted, but as well how people feel and what is their state of mind in the midst of the crisis.

As all regular face-to-face surveying activities have been paused due to the pandemic, this survey again was carried out online according to a different methodology than the standard Eurobarometer

For the October plenary session, relevant survey data is available on:

- **Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 15 and 16 October 2020**
- **Commission Work Programme 2021**
- **EU measures to mitigate social and economic impact of Covid-19 - Council and Commission statements**
- **Joint debate - Common Agricultural Policy**
- **Deforestation**

Parliament's surveys focus primarily on citizens' perception of the European Parliament and the EU as well as Europe's main policy challenges. In combination with the European Commission's Eurobarometer surveys, the results presents **a detailed and up-to-date insight into citizens' opinions, expectations and perceptions**.

For more information on the topics covered in this edition, the methodology and reliability of the Eurobarometer surveys or on additional services offered to Members by DG COMM's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit, please contact:

Philipp M. Schulmeister

Head of Public Opinion Monitoring Unit

philipp.schulmeister@ep.europa.eu

dqcomm-pom@europarl.europa.eu

@EP_Trends

1

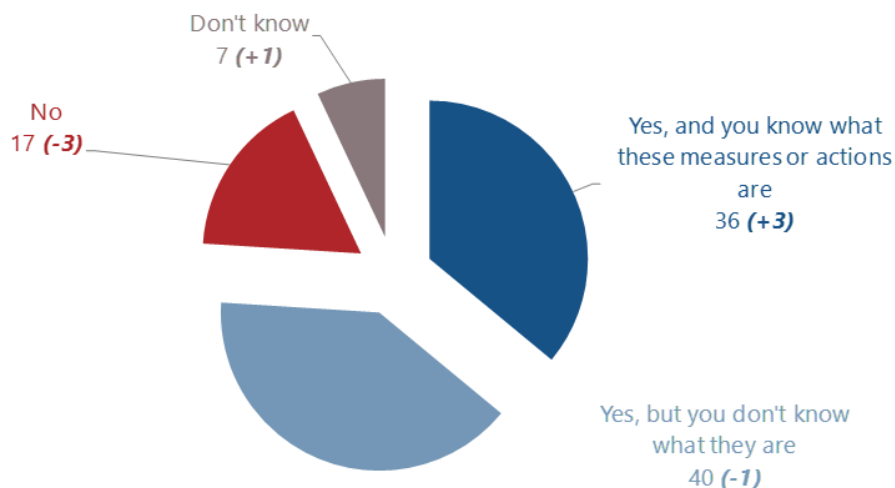
Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 15 and 16 October 2020

Last week, EU leaders met in Brussels to discuss the epidemiological situation, relations with the United Kingdom, as well as climate change and relations with Africa. On Wednesday, Members will discuss, with Presidents Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel, the [Conclusions of the European Council meeting of 15 and 16 October 2020](#).

According to the [Parliament's second special survey on European citizens' attitudes and opinions over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic](#), published last week, **around three-quarters of respondents (76%) say that they have heard, seen or read about measures or actions initiated by the EU to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic**, with just over a third (36%) also saying that they know what these measures or actions are. The remainder of respondents either say that they haven't heard, seen or read about measures or actions initiated by the EU (17%), or don't know (7%).

There has been a slight increase in awareness since the first wave of the survey (May 2020, with more respondents now saying that they have heard, seen or read about measures or actions and know what they are (+3 pp).

Q5 Have you already heard, seen or read about measures or actions initiated by the EU to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic?
(% - EU27)



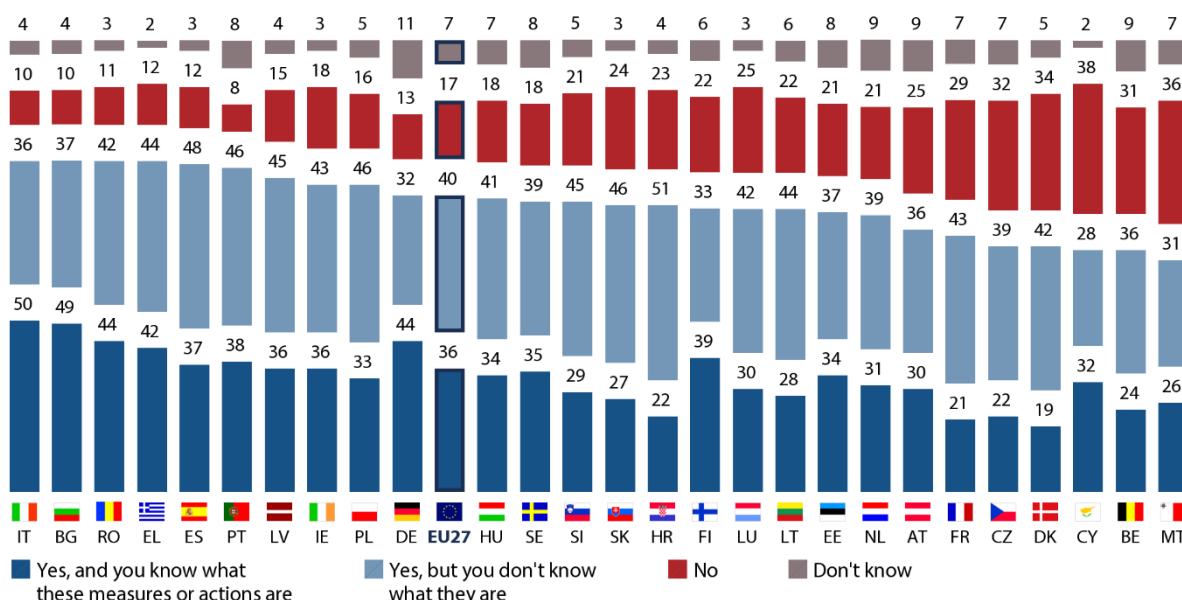
Wave 2 (06/2020) - Wave 1 (04-05/2020)

For more detailed information: [Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis 2 \(June 2020\)](#)

In every country covered by the survey, a majority of respondents say that they have heard, seen or read about measures or actions initiated by the EU to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic (even if they do not know what they are). The proportion ranges from 86% in Italy, Bulgaria, Romania and Greece to 57% in Malta.

Looking at the proportion that recall EU measures or actions and know what they are, this is highest in Italy (50%), Bulgaria (49%), Germany (44%), Romania (44%) and Greece (42%), and lowest in Denmark (19%), France (21%), Czechia and Croatia (both 22%).

Q5 Have you already heard, seen or read about measures or actions initiated by the EU to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic? (%)



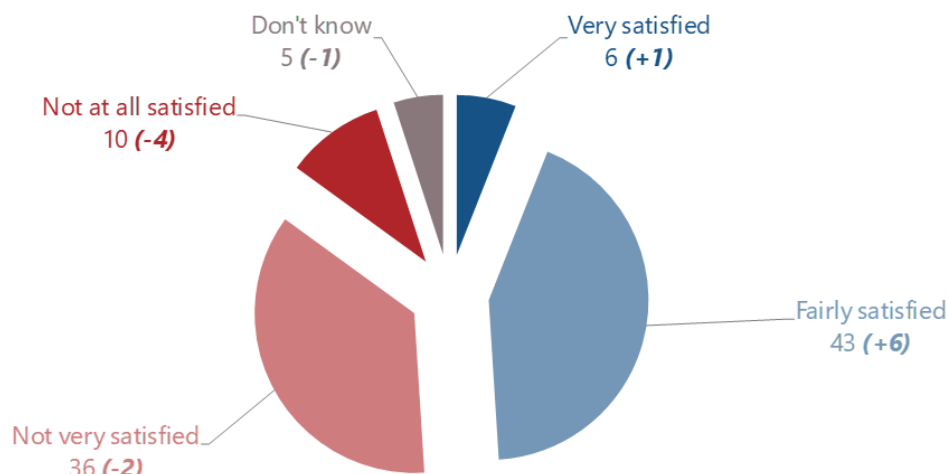
For more detailed information: [Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis 2 \(June 2020\)](#)

Furthermore, respondents who said they have heard, seen or read about EU measures or actions were then asked how satisfied they were with the measures taken by the EU so far.

Overall, around half of respondents (**49%**) **say they are satisfied** with the measures the EU has taken so far against the Coronavirus pandemic; this includes 6% who are very satisfied and 43% who are fairly satisfied. Just under half of respondents (46%) are not satisfied; specifically, 36% are not very satisfied and 10% are not at all satisfied.

Attitudes have become more favourable towards the measures taken by the EU, with an increase in satisfaction since wave 1 (+7 pp) and a decrease in the proportion who are not satisfied (-6 pp).

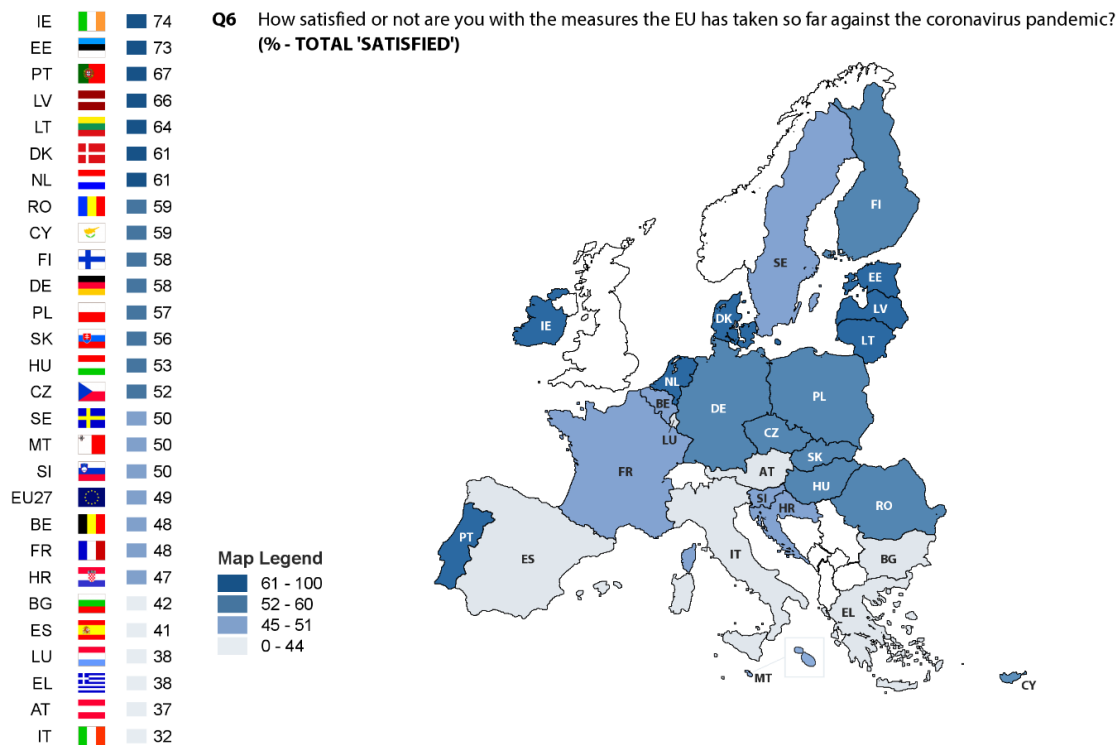
Q6 How satisfied or not are you with the measures the EU has taken so far against the coronavirus pandemic? (% - EU27)



(Wave 2 (06/2020) - Wave 1 (04-05/2020))

For more detailed information: [Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis 2 \(June 2020\)](#)

In 18 out of 27 Member States, at least half of respondents say that they are satisfied with the measures the EU has taken so far against the Coronavirus pandemic. Satisfaction is highest in Ireland (74%), Estonia (73%), Portugal (67%), Latvia (66%), and Lithuania (64%). The lowest levels of satisfaction are seen in Italy (32%), Austria (37%), Luxembourg and Greece (both 38%).



For more detailed information: [Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis 2 \(June 2020\)](#)

2

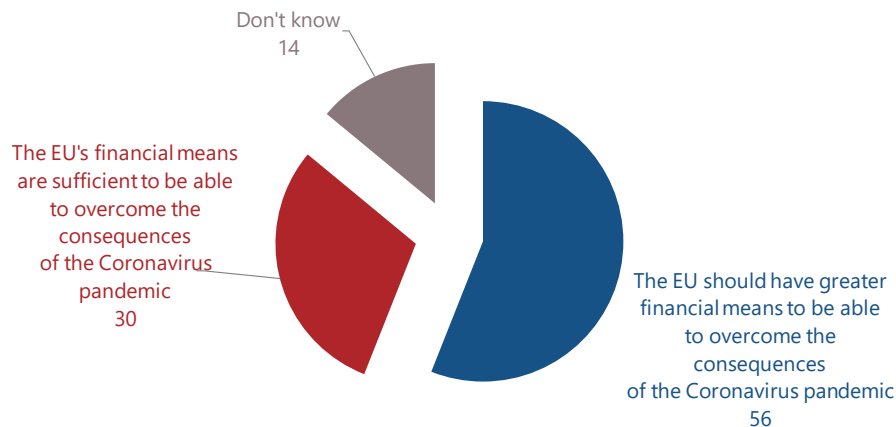
Commission Work Programme 2021

On Tuesday afternoon, Members will discuss the next [European Commission annual work programme](#) with the German Council Presidency and Commission President von der Leyen. This will be the second work programme to be presented by this Commission. To support EU citizens, businesses and countries in the recovery from the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, should be at the heart of the discussions.

In the [last Parliament survey](#), EU citizens were asked which of two statements came closer to their own view: 'the EU should have greater financial means to be able to overcome the consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic' or 'the EU's financial means are sufficient to be able to overcome the consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic'.

The majority of respondents in the EU27 (56%) think that the EU should have greater financial means to tackle the pandemic, while three in ten (30%) say that the EU's current financial means are sufficient. One in seven (14%) do not express an opinion.

Q9 Which of the following statement is closest to your opinion?
(% - EU27)

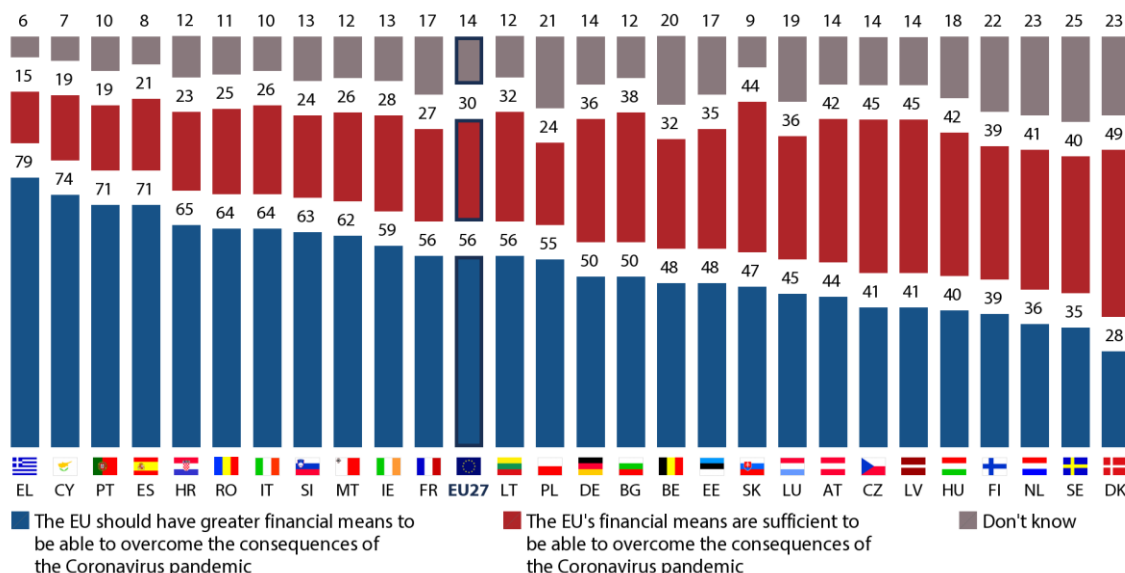


For more detailed information: [Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis 2 \(June 2020\)](#)

The findings vary considerably by country. In four countries, more than two-thirds of respondents say that the EU should have greater financial means: Greece (79%), Cyprus (74%), Portugal and Spain (both 71%). However, respondents in Denmark (28%), Sweden (35%) and the Netherlands (36%) are much less likely to hold this view.

Respondents are most likely to say that the EU's financial means are sufficient in Denmark (49%), Czechia, Latvia (both 45%) and Slovakia (44%).

Q9 Which of the following statement is closest to your opinion?
(%)

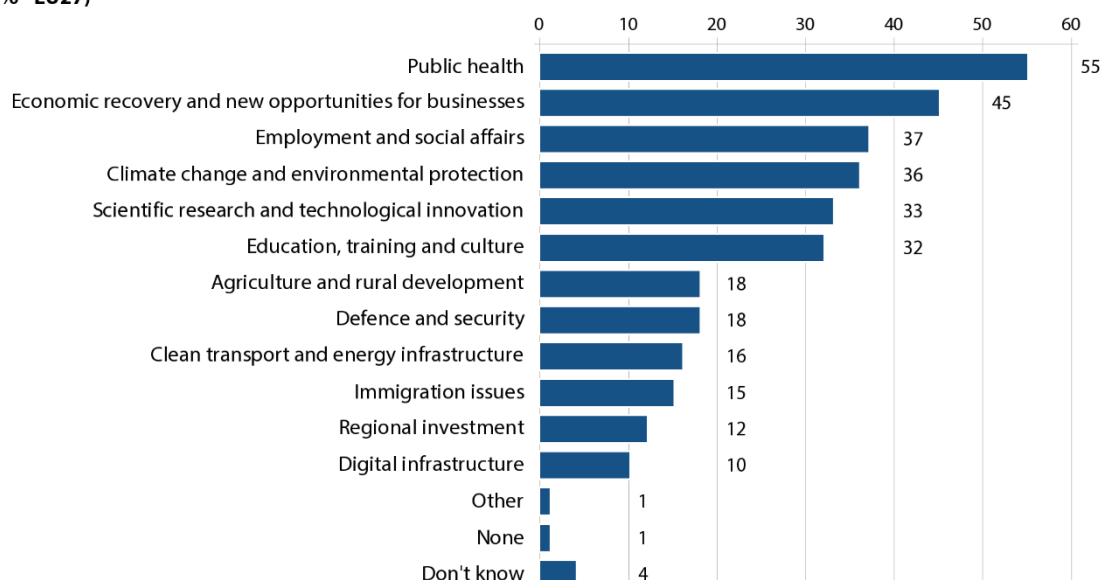


For more detailed information: [Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis 2 \(June 2020\)](#)

Looking at citizens' priorities on **how they think the EU budget should be spent**, more than half of respondents (55%) put public health on top of their list of EU priorities, ahead of economic recovery and new opportunities for businesses (45%), employment and social affairs (37%) and climate change and environmental protection (36%).

Around a third would like to see spending on scientific research and technological innovation (33%) or on education, training and culture (32%). The other policy areas are less likely to be seen as a priority: agriculture and rural development (18%), defence and security (18%), clean transport and energy infrastructure (16%), immigration issues (15%), regional investment (12%) and digital infrastructure (10%).

Q10 Given the current context, on which of the following would you like the EU budget to be spent? (MAX. 4 ANSWERS)
(% - EU27)

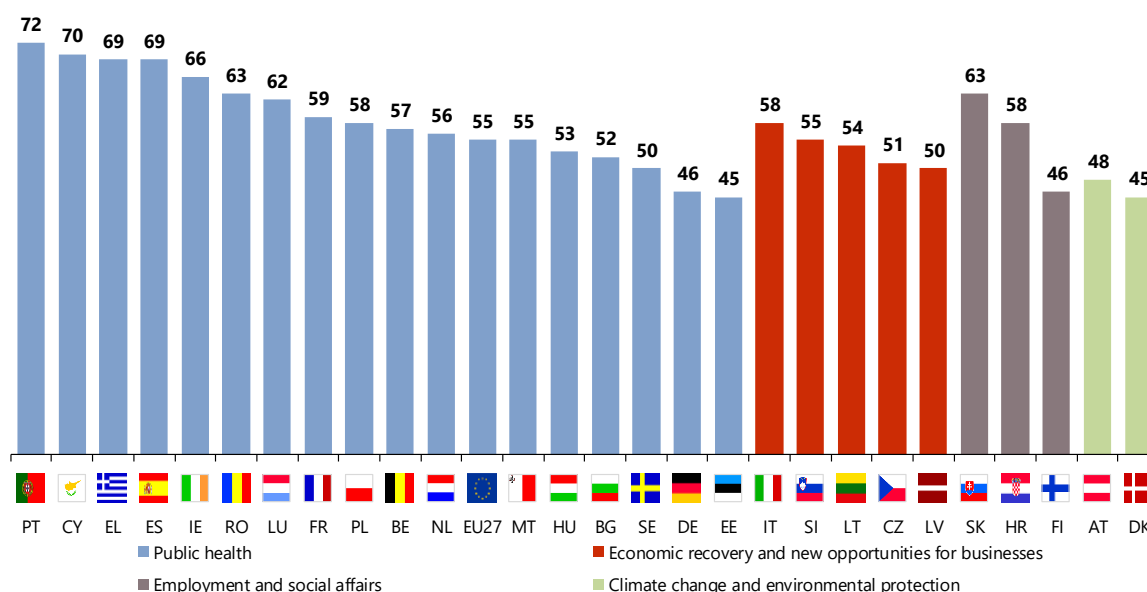


For more detailed information: [Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis 2 \(June 2020\)](#)

Public health ranks highest as a spending priority for the EU in 17 of the 27 Member States.

Five countries see economic recovery and new opportunities for businesses as the most important area for spending: Italy, Slovenia, Lithuania, Czechia and Latvia. Employment and social affairs is the top priority in Slovakia, Croatia and Finland, while Austria and Denmark are the two countries where climate change and environmental protection rank highest.

Q10 Given the current context, on which of the following would you like the EU budget to be spent? (MAX. 4 ANSWERS)

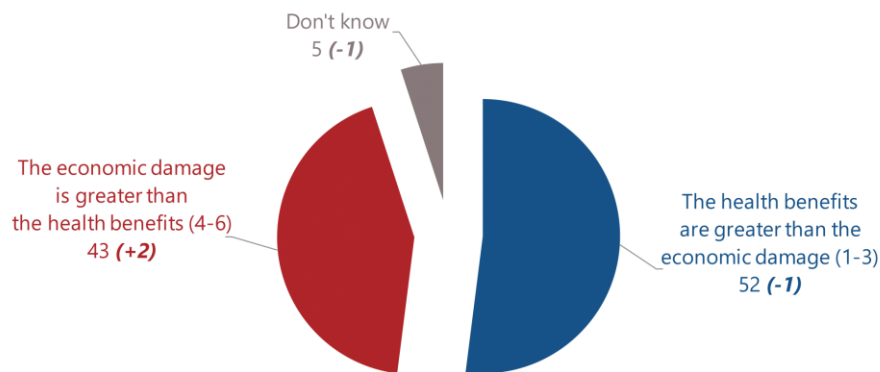


For more detailed information: [Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis 2 \(June 2020\)](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic constitutes an unprecedented challenge with very severe socio-economic consequence. Therefore, an EU coordinated and comprehensive strategy is necessary to deal with health emergency needs, to support economic activity and to prepare the ground for the recovery. On Wednesday afternoon, the different aspects of [EU measures](#) will be debated in plenary.

According to the last [Parliament survey](#), overall, respondents are more likely to say that the **health benefits** of restriction measures in their country offset the economic damage incurred (52%), rather than the **economic damage** compensates for health benefits (43%).

Q3 Where do you position yourself between these two statements regarding the consequences of the restriction measures in (OUR COUNTRY)? Please use this scale from 1 to 6, where "1" means that the health benefits are greater than the economic damage, and "6" that economic damage is greater than the health benefits, the remaining numbers indicate something in between these two positions.
(% - EU27)

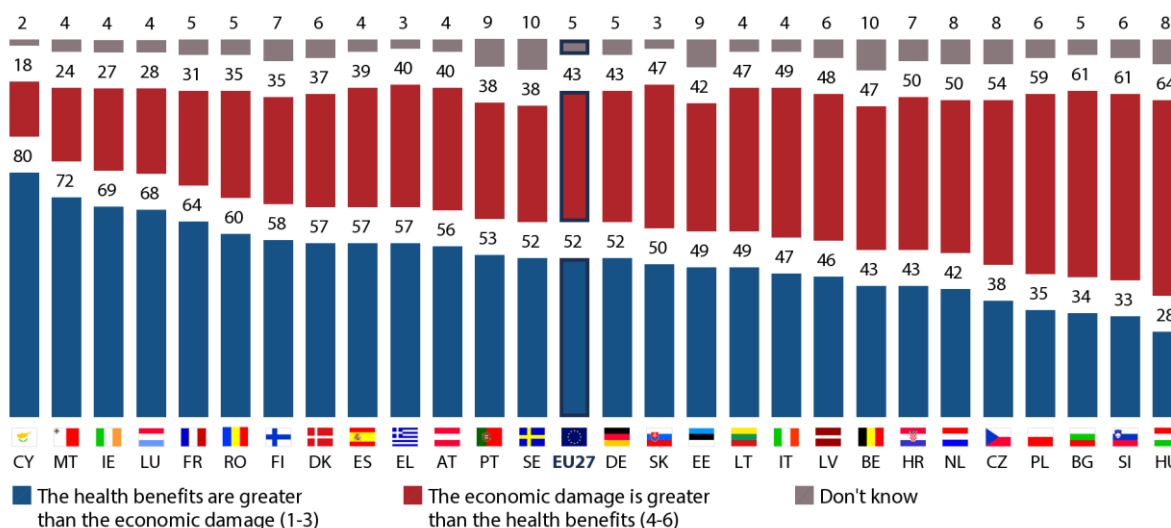


(Wave 2 (06/2020) - Wave 1 (04-05/2020))

For more detailed information: [Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis 2 \(June 2020\)](#)

Respondents are most likely to say health benefits compensate for economic damage in Cyprus, Malta, Ireland and Luxembourg, while the opposing view is held most strongly in Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Czechia. There has been little change since wave 1, although there has been a small shift towards the view that the economic damage offsets health benefits (+2 pp).

Q3 Where do you position yourself between these two statements regarding the consequences of the restriction measures in (OUR COUNTRY)? Please use this scale from 1 to 6, where "1" means that the health benefits are greater than the economic damage, and "6" that economic damage is greater than the health benefits, the remaining numbers indicates something in between these two positions.
(%)

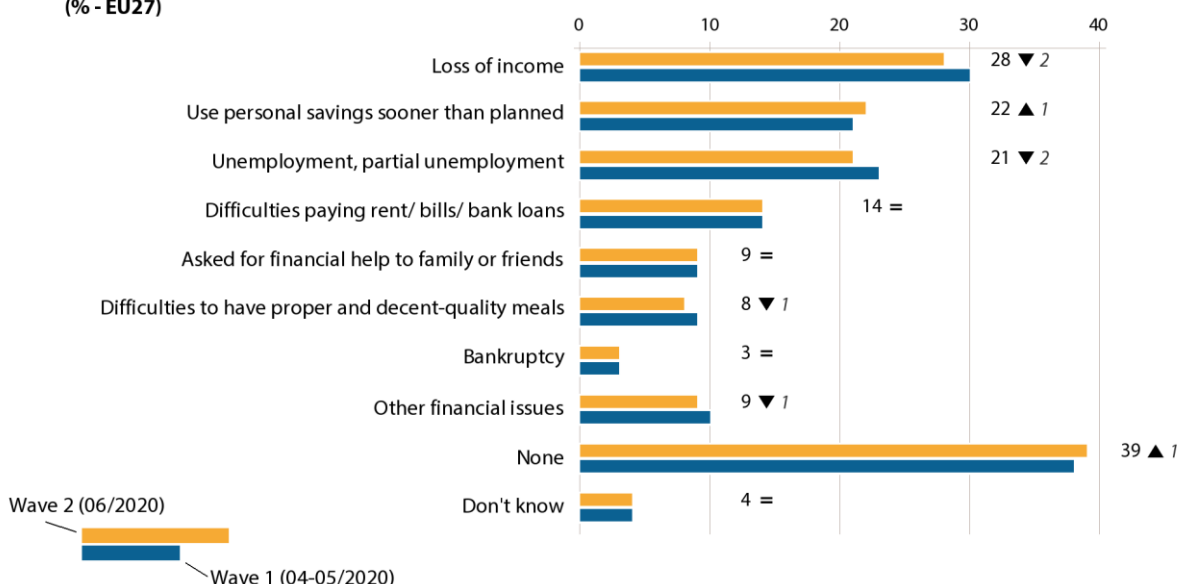


For more detailed information: [Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis 2 \(June 2020\)](#)

Furthermore, a majority of EU citizens (57%) say that they have experienced personal **financial difficulties** since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, virtually identical to the first wave of the survey. Problems include a loss of income (28%), using personal savings sooner than planned (22%), unemployment or partial unemployment (21%), difficulties paying rent, bills or bank loans (14%), asking family or friends for financial help (9%), difficulties having proper and decent-quality meals (8%) and bankruptcy (3%).

This is a very similar picture to what was observed in the first wave of the survey (May 2020). The proportions who say they have experienced a loss of income (-2 pp) or unemployment or partial unemployment (-2 pp) are now slightly lower.

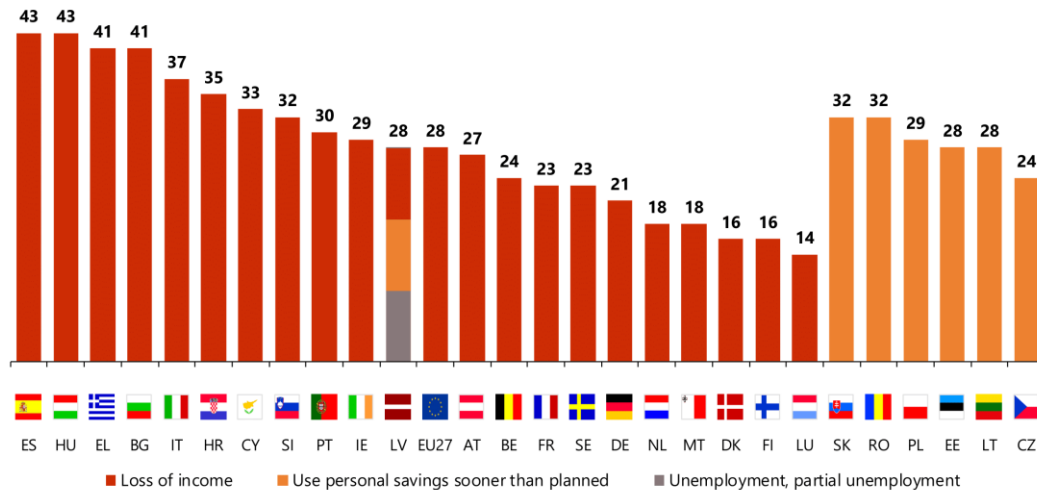
Q14 Have you experienced any of the following, since the start of the coronavirus pandemic in (OUR COUNTRY)?
(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)
(% - EU27)



For more detailed information: [Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis 2 \(June 2020\)](#)

Overall, respondents in Greece, Hungary, Bulgaria, Italy and Romania are most likely to have experienced financial difficulties, while those in Denmark, Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands are least likely to report troubles.

Q14 Have you experienced any of the following, since the start of the coronavirus pandemic in (OUR COUNTRY)?
(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)
(% - THE MOST MENTIONED ANSWER BY COUNTRY)



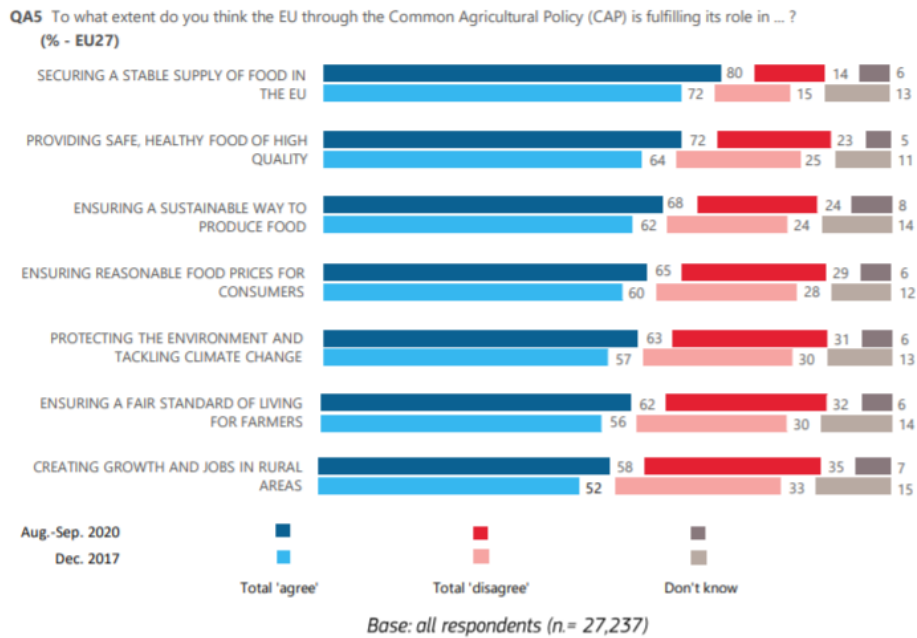
For more detailed information: [Public opinion in the EU in time of coronavirus crisis 2 \(June 2020\)](#)

5

Joint debate - Common Agricultural Policy

Launched in 1962, the European Union's common agricultural policy (CAP) is a partnership between agriculture and society, and between Europe and its farmers. On Tuesday morning, Members will have a [joint debate with the Commission and the Council on the Common Agricultural Policy](#) and more especially on its financing in the future.

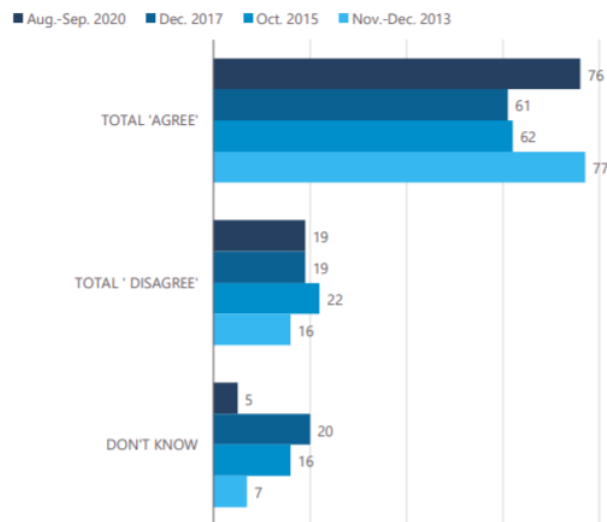
In a recent survey on [Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP \(August 2020\)](#), **published last week, a majority Europeans think that the EU is fulfilling its role regarding the key objectives of the CAP.** In comparison with 2017, all areas including food security, sustainability, safe and quality food increased by at least 5 p.p. The area where citizens believe that the EU is most fulfilling its role is food security, with 80% of respondents agreeing to that, an 8p.p. increase since 2017.



For more detailed information: [Special Eurobarometer on Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP \(August 2020\)](#)

Around **three quarters of Europeans (76%, +15pp since 2017)** agree that the CAP benefits all European citizens and not only farmers. Conversely, less than one in five respondents (19%, unchanged) disagree with this statement.

QA3 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) benefits all European citizens and not only farmers.
(% - EU)

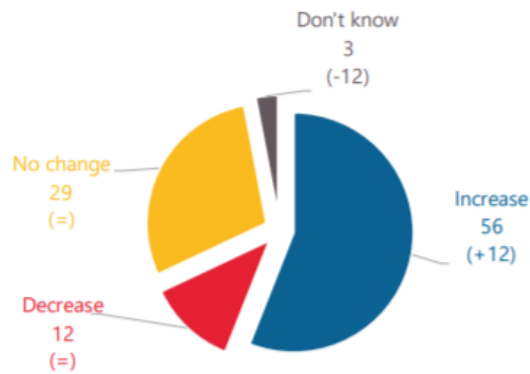


Base: all respondents (n. = 27,237)

For more detailed information: [Special Eurobarometer on Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP \(August 2020\)](#)

Finally, **nearly six in ten respondents (56%, +12pp since 2017)** would like to see an 'increase' in EU financial support to farmers over the next ten years. Slightly more than one in ten (12%, unchanged) would like to see a 'decrease' in this support and close to three in ten (29%, unchanged) would like to see 'no change'.

QA11 And over the next 10 years, would you like to see an increase, decrease or no change in EU financial support to farmers?
(% - EU)



(Aug.-Sep. 2020 - Dec. 2017)

Base: all respondents (n. = 27,237)

For more detailed information: [Special Eurobarometer on Europeans, Agriculture and the CAP \(August 2020\)](#)

5

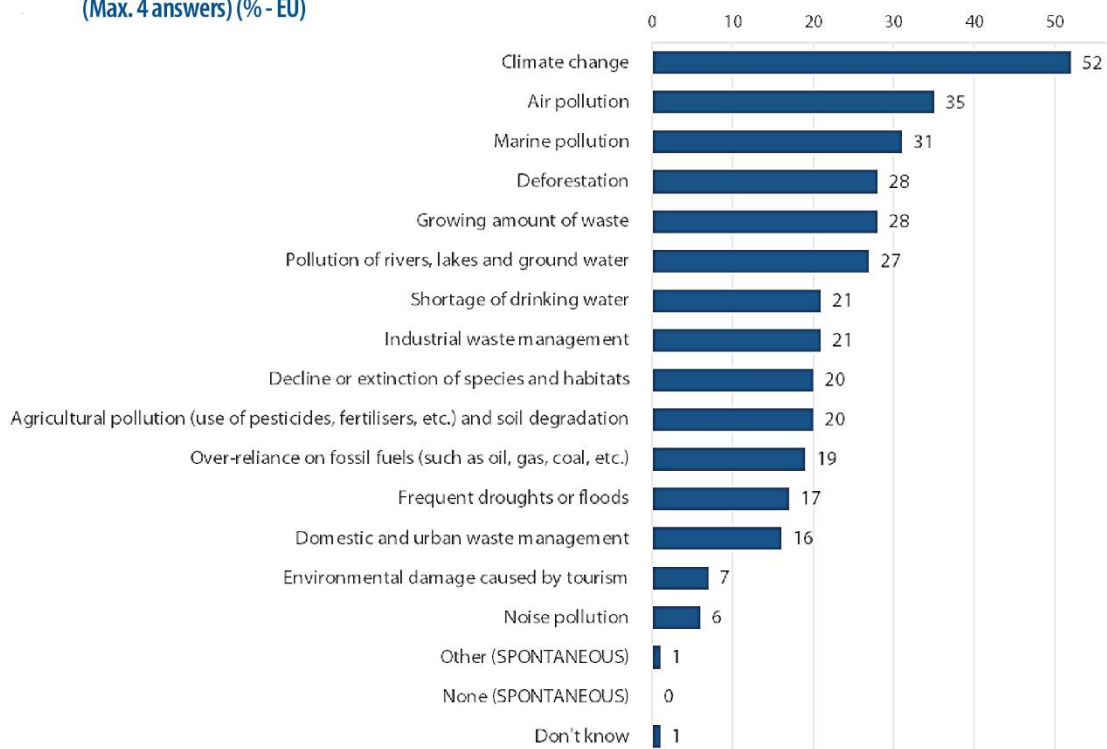
Deforestation

A total of 13 million hectares are deforested each year and almost all of it is happening in tropical forests (96%). The main driver (80%) of deforestation is expansion of agricultural land. In [its last communication \(July 2019\), the Commission set the objective of protecting and improving the health of existing forests](#), especially primary forests, and significantly increasing sustainable, biodiverse forest coverage worldwide. On Wednesday afternoon, Member will discuss this vital issue with the Commission.

52% of EU citizens consider climate change as the most important environmental issue, according to the [Parlemeter 2019 \(October 2019\), the European Parliament's own Eurobarometer survey](#). Respondents also state their concerns about air pollution (35%), marine pollution (31%), **deforestation (28%)** and growing amount of waste (28%). The frequent droughts or floods are also mentioned by a significant share of Europeans (17%).



From the following list, please pick the environmental issue which you consider the most important. Firstly?
And then?
(Max. 4 answers) (% - EU)



Source: Parlemeter 2019 (92.2), QB10T

For more detailed information: [Parlemeter 2019 \(October 2019\)](#)