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KEY FINDINGS

YOUTH SURVEY 2024



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AUTHORS

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KEY FINDINGS

Most important values of young people

Protecting human rights, democracy and peace emerges as young people's top-ranking value, with 45% of respondents selecting it. This is followed by **freedom of speech and thought** (selected by 41%). Lower shares mention values, such as human dignity, including the prohibition of the death penalty, torture or slavery (28%), tolerance and respect for diversity in society (27%), gender equality (26%) and the fight against discrimination and the protection of minorities (24%).

Priorities for the EU in the next five years

The top three topics that young people would most like to see prioritised by the EU in the next five years are **rising prices, cost of living** (40%), **the environment and climate change** (33%), and **the economic situation and creation of jobs** (31%), closely followed by **social protection, welfare and access to healthcare** (29%). Each of the following topics are seen as a priority for the EU by more than one in five respondents: education and training (27%), housing (23%) and the EU's defence and security (21%).

Support for the EU project

Around three in five respondents are **generally in favour of the EU** – although this includes 31% who are **in favour of the EU and the way it is working at present** and almost an equal proportion (32%) who are **rather in favour of the EU, but not the way it is working at present**. A further 21% of respondents are rather sceptical of the EU but could change their opinion if the way it works really changes, while 6% are opposed to the idea of the EU in general.

A comparison with the 2021 survey results shows that there is a small increase in the share of young people who are in favour of the EU and the way is working at present (+4 pp), while there is a small decrease in the share who are rather in favour of the EU, but not the way it is working at present (–2 pp).

Opinion about the European Parliament

Among young EU citizens, about four in ten have a **'very positive' (12%) or 'fairly positive' (29%) image of the European Parliament**, while **37% have a neutral image**. Less than two in ten respondents hold a **'fairly negative' (11%) or a 'very negative' (5%) view of the European Parliament**.

National, local or European identity?

The largest share of young people surveyed (34%) reply that they **feel primarily attached to their country and national identity**. The second most common response is feeling **primarily attached to their local community and region**, chosen by 23% of respondents. About one in seven respondents (15%) answer that they **feel primarily attached to Europe and a European identity** and a similar proportion (14%) report **feeling equally attached to their local community, country and Europe**.

Benefits of EU Membership

More than a third of young people surveyed (37%) believe that **increased opportunities for young people in their country to study, volunteer, work and travel abroad (e.g., Erasmus+, European Solidarity Corps, etc.)** are a benefit of being a member of the EU. Around three in ten young people (31%) think that **improved cooperation between their country and other EU Member States** is a benefit of being a member of the EU. **Protecting peace and strengthening security in their country** (27%) and **promoting economic growth and creating more job opportunities** in their country (26%) are each mentioned as a benefit of EU membership by just over a quarter of respondents.

Main sources of information on political and social issues

Social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, etc.) are young people's **top source for information on political and social issues** (mentioned by 42% of respondents), although closely followed by **TV** (selected by 39%). The next three sources are each mentioned by roughly one in four respondents: **online press and/or news platforms** (26%), **friends, family or colleagues** (25%) and **video platforms** (e.g. YouTube, etc.).

Social media platforms used for information on political and social issues

When respondents were asked which social media and platforms they use to obtain information on political and social issues, **Instagram** emerges as the most commonly used one (47%), followed by **TikTok** (39%) and **YouTube** (37%). Lower shares obtain information from **Facebook** (27%) and **X (Twitter)** (21%). **WhatsApp** is used for information on political and social issues by 16% of respondents. A small proportion of respondents (8%) indicate that **they do not use social media to find information on political and social issues**.

Understanding of local, national and EU governments

A slim majority of young people surveyed feel they **know 'a great deal' (13%) or 'a fair amount' (43%) about the government in their country**. Similarly, 12% of respondents feel they **know 'a great deal'** and 39% **'a fair amount'** about the government in their local area or region.

Understanding of the EU is slightly lower, with 11% feeling they know 'a great deal' and 35% 'a fair amount'.

A comparison with the 2021 survey shows a small increase in young people's level of understanding of the government in their local area or region (+5 pp for 'a great deal') and the European Union (+3 pp for 'a great deal').

Exposure to disinformation and fake news

More than three-quarters of young people surveyed think they have **been exposed to disinformation and fake news over the past seven days**: 32% report having been exposed 'sometimes', 29% 'often' and 15% 'very often'. In contrast, 14% indicate they have 'rarely' been exposed to disinformation and fake news in the past seven days and 5% think they were not exposed at all ('never') in the past seven days.

A majority of young people **report feeling confident that they can recognise disinformation: 18% feel 'very confident' and 52% 'somewhat confident'**. Less than one in five respondents indicate not feeling confident (22% 'not very confident' and 4% 'not at all confident').

Adoption of AI-based applications

When asked whether they **have used AI-based applications for text, images or video in the past 12 months**, 57% of young people surveyed answer they indeed have done so, while 38% have not. The most common reason, among young people, for having used AI-based applications in the past 12 months is **studying and doing research** (selected by 36% of respondents). The second most frequent purpose is for **entertainment** (29%), closely followed by **assistance in schoolwork** and **creative work** (both mentioned by 28% of respondents).

Participation in political and civic activities

Voting in local, national or European elections is the most common form of political and civic participation among young people in the EU, with 39% indicating they have done so. The second most popular form of participation is **creating or signing petitions (on paper or online)**, indicated by 26% of respondents. About one in five respondents report having done the following: **volunteering for a charity or campaign organisation** (20%), **posting opinions online or on social media about political or social issues** (19%) or **boycotting or buying certain products for political, ethical, or environmental reasons** (19%). It is also worth noting that 15% of respondents indicate they **have not engaged in any of the activities listed in the survey**.

Reasons for not having voted in the June 2024 European elections

Young people's reasons for not having voted in the June 2024 European elections are **other commitments** (16%) and **not having enough information to make a choice** (16%), followed by

not finding any relatable candidate or political party that represented their views (15%) and a **general distrust or dissatisfaction with politicians and politics** (15%).

Reasons for choosing a party or candidate in the June 2024 European elections

The most common reason for having voted for a specific party or candidate in the June 2024 European Elections is that **their ideas aligned with the respondent's views** (selected by 30% of respondents). The second most-mentioned reason is **the belief that the chosen party or candidate can change things**, selected by 25% of respondents. About one in six respondents say they voted for a party or candidate because they **heard or read positive things about them** (17%); similar shares are found for **voted strategically to avoid the electoral success of another party** (16%) and **the party or candidate prioritizes matters important to young people** (16%).