



Flash Eurobarometer 514

EU's response to the energy challenges

Summary

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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.

Flash Eurobarometer 514 – Ipsos European Public Affairs

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(DG COMM "Media Monitoring and Eurobarometer" Unit)

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Introduction

On 24 February 2022, the Russian armed forces launched a large-scale invasion of Ukraine. As a result of this unprovoked and unjustified aggression, substantial areas of the Ukrainian territory became areas of war from which many people fled. The **European Commission supports Ukraine with emergency assistance** and is closely cooperating with Ukraine's neighbouring countries to support them in providing protection for people fleeing the invasion.¹ In addition, the European Union has adopted **comprehensive and robust packages of sanctions against Russia**. Since the second half of 2021, there has been a **sharp increase in energy prices in the EU** (and worldwide). The price of fuels has further risen as a consequence of the war in Ukraine. This has also led to concerns related to the security of energy supply in the EU, and Russia's decision to suspend gas deliveries to several EU member states has further impacted the situation. The European Commission has proposed the **'REPowerEU' action plan** aimed at making Europe independent from Russian fossil fuels well before 2030.²

A Flash Eurobarometer survey was commissioned by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communication, to obtain input from citizens in the EU about their attitudes toward the EU's response to the energy challenges and the war in Ukraine. This survey represents the second Flash Eurobarometer measuring EU citizens' attitudes about the war in Ukraine and their opinions on the response of public authorities (see Flash Eurobarometer 506).³

Survey data presented in this report are weighted to known population proportions. The EU27 averages are weighted according to the size of the 15+ population of each country. Due to rounding, it may also happen that the percentages for separate response options shown in the charts do not exactly add up to the totals shown in charts and tables, or mentioned in the text.

The country abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

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

¹ https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/index_en

² <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/api/files/attachment/871871/Factsheet%20-%20REPowerEU.pdf.pdf>

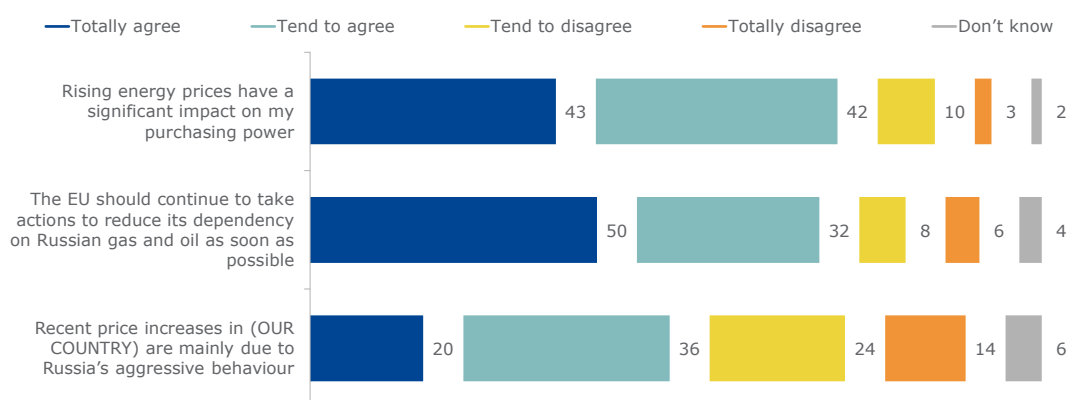
³ <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2772>

Section 1. The EU's energy challenges

1.1. Opinions about rising energy prices

Over 80% of respondents agree that **rising energy prices have a significant impact on their purchasing power** (43% 'totally agree' and 42% 'tend to agree'). A similar share also agree that the EU should continue to **take actions to reduce its dependency on Russian gas and oil as soon as possible** (50% 'totally agree' and 32% 'tend to agree'). In comparison, respondents tend to agree less frequently with the statement that **recent price increases in their country are mainly due to Russia's aggressive behaviour** (20% 'totally agree' and 36% 'tend to agree').

Q6 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (% EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=26 337)

The country-level analysis shows that the impact of rising energy prices is substantial across all Member States. The proportion of respondents agreeing that **rising energy prices have a significant impact on their purchasing power** ranges from 75% in Sweden and 76% in the Netherlands to 92% in Greece, 93% in Cyprus and 94% in Portugal.

There is somewhat more variation across Member States in the level of agreement about **measures to reduce the EU's dependency on Russian gas and oil as soon as possible**. In Slovakia, 54% of respondents 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' that these measures should continue to be taken, compared to 94% replying the same in Portugal.

Agreement with the statement that **recent price increases in their country are mainly due to Russia's aggressive behaviour** tends to be lower. In 13 Member States, less than half of respondents 'totally agree' or 'tend to agree' with this statement. The share agreeing is once again the lowest in Hungary (35%), Greece (36%) and Bulgaria (43%), while it is the largest in Denmark (74%) and Finland (76%).

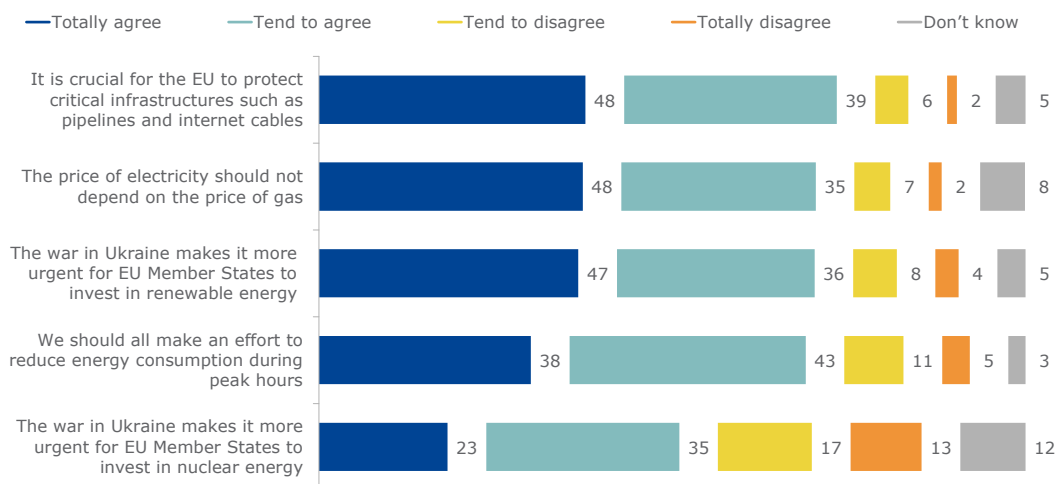
1.2. Support for EU measures related to the energy challenges

The results of this survey show that **support for EU measures** aimed at securing energy supply and mitigating rising energy prices **is very high**. Well over eight in ten respondents agree that:

- **the EU must protect critical infrastructures such as pipelines and internet cables** (48% 'totally agree', 39% 'tend to agree');
- **the price of electricity should not depend on the price of gas** (48% 'totally agree', 35% 'tend to agree');
- **the war in Ukraine makes it more urgent for EU Member States to invest in renewable energy** (47% 'totally agree', 36% 'tend to agree'); and
- **everyone should make an effort to reduce energy consumption during peak hours** (38% 'totally agree', 43% 'tend to agree').

A smaller share of respondents agree that the war in Ukraine makes it more urgent for EU Member States to **invest in nuclear energy**, with 23% 'totally agreeing' with this statement and 35% who 'tend to agree'.

Q7 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (% EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=26 337)

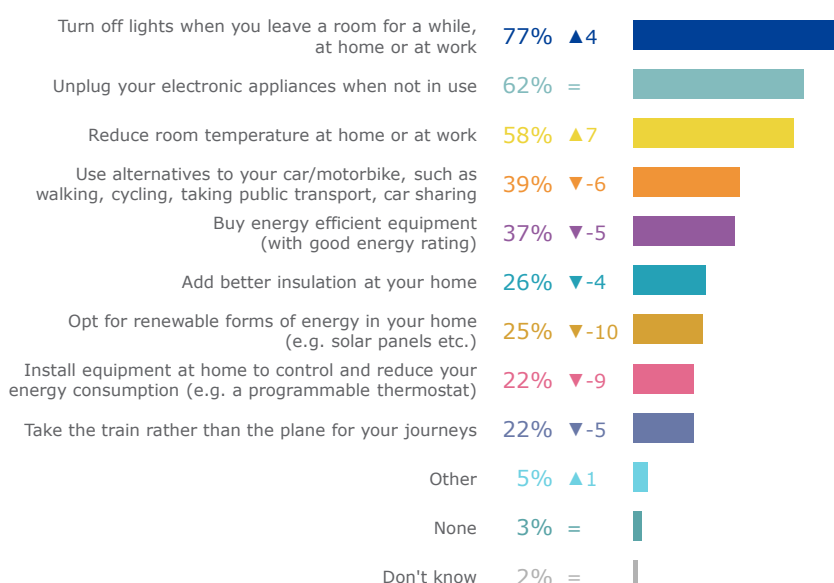
1.3. Willingness to cut down on energy consumption

Respondents in this survey were also asked what kind of actions they are already taken or that they would be willing to take to cut down on their energy consumption and energy bills. **As in April 2022, a vast majority of respondents are prepared to take at least some actions to cut down on their energy consumption and bills** (3% are not prepared to take any action and 2% reply that they 'don't know'); there is, however, a clear shift in the most popular type of actions selected by respondents.

The largest shares of respondents are already or would be willing to **turn off lights** when they leave a room for a while, at home or at work (77%, +4 pp compared to April 2022), **unplug electronic appliances when not in use** (62%, no change), or **reduce room temperature at home or work** (58%, +7 pp). About four in ten respondents are already using or are prepared to **use alternatives to their car/ motorbike**, such as walking, cycling, taking public transport, car sharing (39%, -6 pp), or **buy energy efficient equipment with a good energy rating** (37%, -5 pp).

Fewer respondents are prepared to take some of the more costly actions/ actions with a higher impact on their personal life. Moreover, compared to April 2022, the shares of respondents ready to take these actions has decreased: add better insulation in their home (26%, -4 pp), opt for renewable forms of energy at their home, such as solar panels etc. (25%, -10 pp), install equipment at home to control and reduce their energy consumption (22%, -9 pp) and to take the train rather than the plane for journeys (22%, -5 pp).

Q9 And you, personally, what kind of action(s) are you already taking or would you be ready to take to cut down on your energy consumption and your energy bills? [MULTIPLE ANSWERS] (% EU27)



Base: all respondents (26 337)
▼▲ Evolution Nov 2022-Apr 2022

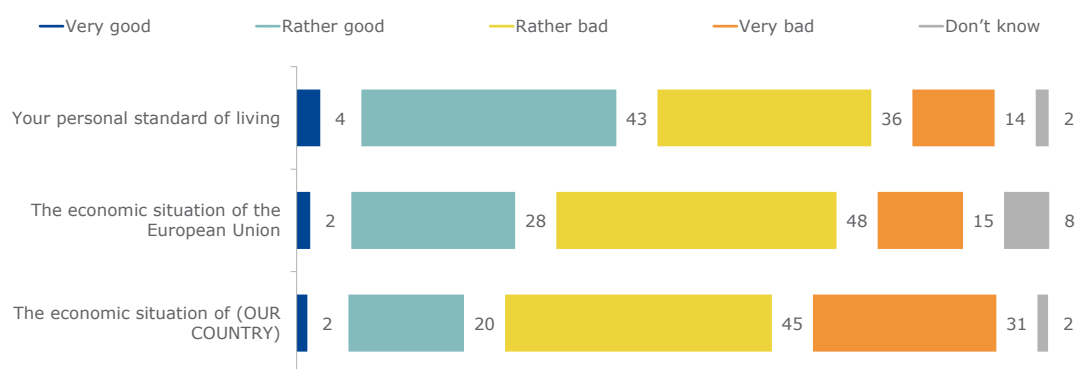
Section 2. Views about the current economic situation and expected impact of national and EU measures

2.1. Perceptions of the current economic situation

Three-quarters of respondents evaluate their country's economic situation as bad (31% 'very bad' and 45% 'rather bad'), compared to less than a quarter replying it is good (2% 'very good' and 20% 'rather good'). Similarly, **about two-thirds of respondents evaluate the economic situation of the EU as bad** (15% 'very bad' and 48% 'rather bad').

Respondents are divided when asked to assess the current state of their personal standard of living. Half of respondents evaluate their standard of living to be bad: 14% find it 'very bad' and 36% 'rather bad'. The other half of respondents reply that their standard of living is good (4% 'very good' and 43% 'rather good').

Q5 How would you judge the current state of each of the following? (% EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=26 337)

2.2. Expectations about the impact of EU and national measures

About half of respondents think that measures taken by the EU to improve the overall economic situation will have a positive impact, including 9% who think the impact will be significant and 40% who think there will be a limited positive impact. A similar picture emerges when respondents are asked about the impact of measures taken by their national government. **Close to four in ten respondents (38%) think these measures will have a limited positive impact** and less than one in ten (8%) think there will be significant positive impact.

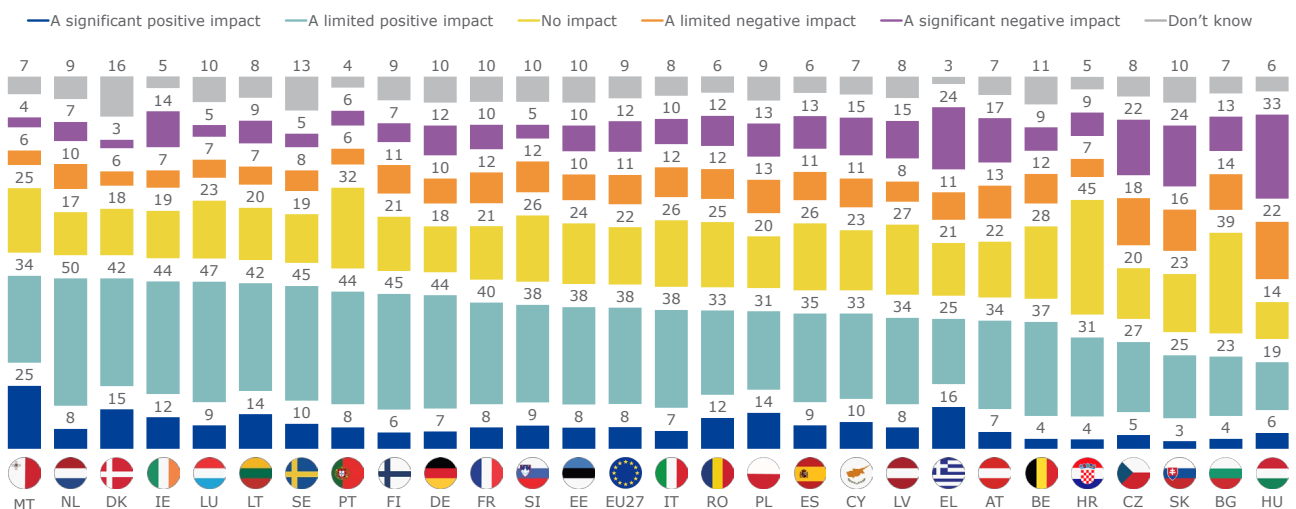
In almost all Member States, the largest share of respondents expect that **measures taken by their national authorities to improve the overall economic situation** will have a limited positive impact, for example, this view is shared by 50% of respondents in the Netherlands, 47% in Luxembourg and 45% in Sweden. In Bulgaria and Croatia, on the other hand, the largest share of

respondents think that the national measures will have no impact on the overall economic situation (39% and 45%, respectively). In Hungary, the largest share of respondents think that national measures will have a significant negative impact (35%).

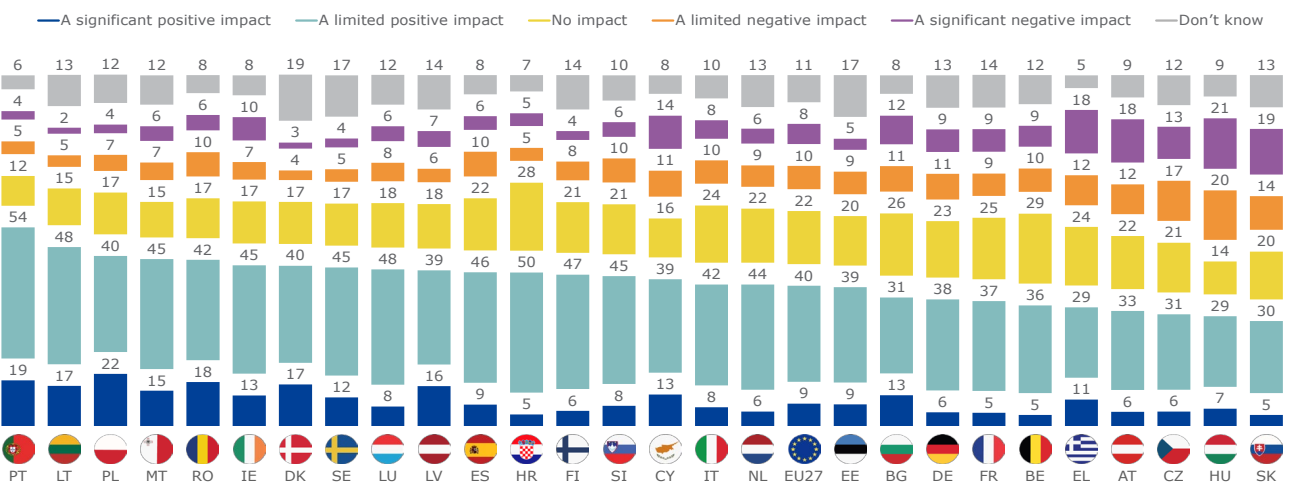
The largest share of respondents, across all Member States, expect the **impact of EU measures on the current economic situation** to be limited, but positive. This view is most commonly held in Portugal (54%), followed closely by Lithuania (48%), while it is least commonly held in Hungary (29%) and Slovakia (30%). In Hungary, a large number of respondents are divided between expecting that EU measures will have a limited negative impact (20%) or a significant negative impact (21%). The opinion that EU measures will have no impact is most prevalent in Croatia (28%) and Belgium (29%).

Q8 What impact do you think the following measures taken to improve the overall economic situation will have?

Measures taken by the (NATIONALITY) government (% by country)



Measures taken by the EU (% by country)



Base: all respondents (n=26 337)

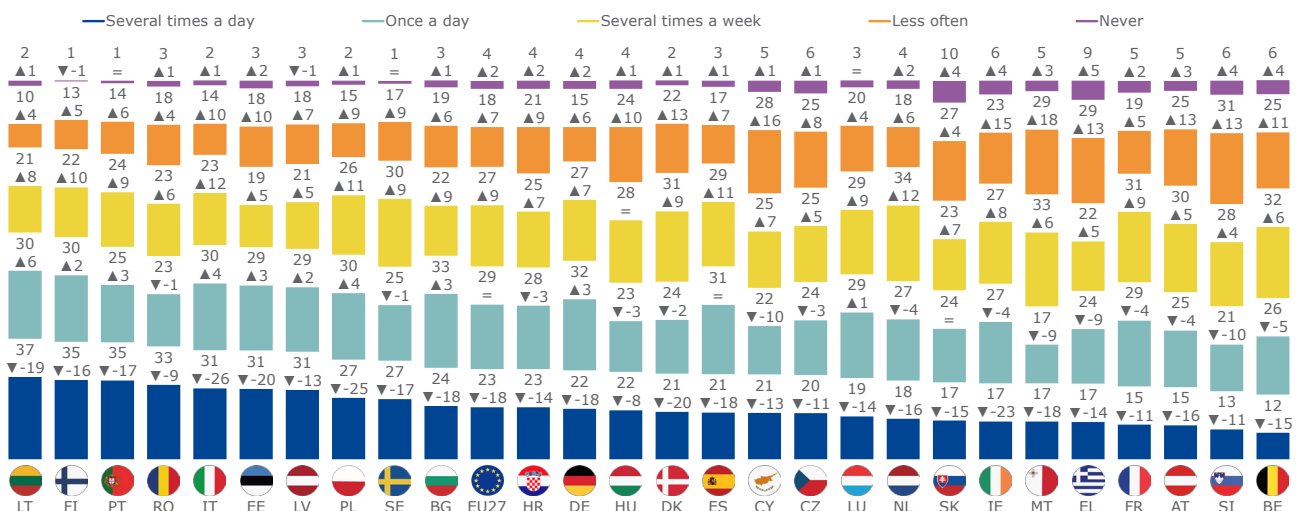
Section 3. General attitudes towards the war in Ukraine and the response of public authorities

3.1. Interest in the war in Ukraine

The survey results show that EU citizens tend to follow the news related to the war in Ukraine, but this to a lesser extent than in April 2022. **Close to eight in ten respondents follow news related to the war in Ukraine at least several times a week**; few reply that they never follow news related to the war in Ukraine (4%). Compared to April 2022, **respondents also less frequently discuss the war in Ukraine with friends and relatives: 9% do so several times a day and 12% daily.**

Although interest in the war in Ukraine has remained high, the frequency by which EU citizens consume news related to the war in Ukraine has decreased across all EU Member States. The proportion of respondents following news about the war in Ukraine at least several times a week is at least 60% in all Member States.

Q1_1 How often do you...follow news related to the war in Ukraine? (% by country)



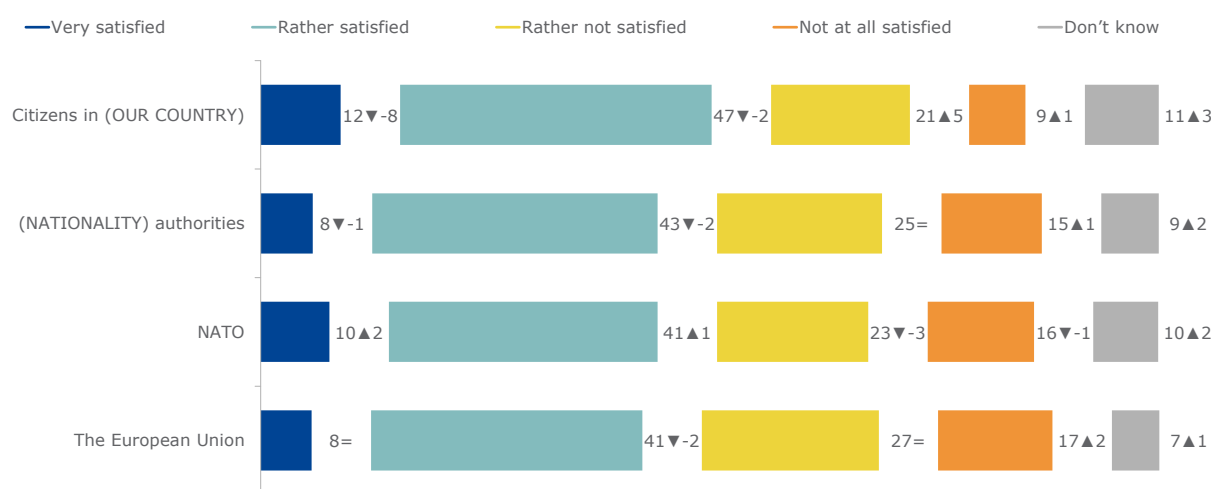
Base: all respondents (n=26 337)
▼▲ Evolution from April to November 2022

3.2. General satisfaction with the response to the war in Ukraine

Over half of respondents are satisfied with how citizens in their country have reacted to the war in Ukraine, including 12% who are 'very satisfied' and 47% who are 'rather satisfied' with the reaction of their fellow citizens. Respondents in Slovakia are the least satisfied with how citizens in their country have reacted to the war in Ukraine (33%) and respondents in Poland (83%), Finland (81%) and Denmark (80%) are the most satisfied. Compared to April 2022, the proportion of respondents being satisfied with the response of their fellow citizens has decreased in almost all countries.

Since the last wave, satisfaction with how public authorities have reacted to the war in Ukraine has remained nearly the same (there are minor, although statistically significant decreases in satisfaction). **Each time about one in two respondents report being satisfied with how the national authorities, NATO and the EU have reacted to the war in Ukraine.** This mainly consists of respondents who are **'rather satisfied'** with how these authorities have reacted (41%-43%), while smaller shares report being **'very satisfied'** (8%-10%). The proportion of respondents who are **not** satisfied with the response of these authorities ranges from 39% for NATO and 40% for the national authorities to 44% for the EU.

Q2 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way the following have reacted to the war in Ukraine? (% EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=26 337)
▼▲ Evolution from April to November 2022

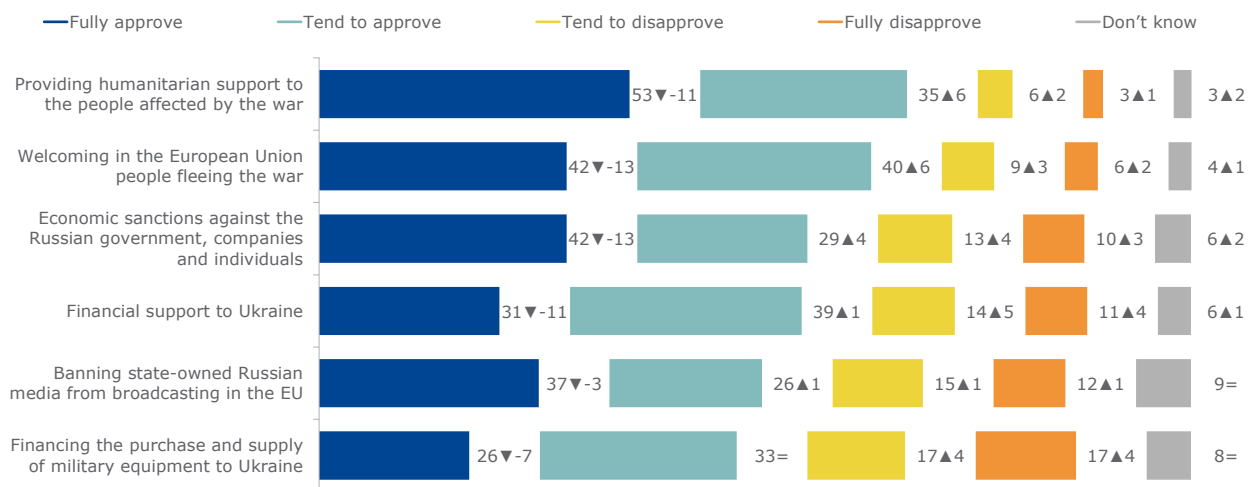
3.3. Opinions on specific EU measures to respond to the war in Ukraine

Approval of EU humanitarian aid to Ukraine is still high, although it has slightly decreased since April 2022. Close to nine in ten approve of providing humanitarian support to the people affected by the war, including 53% who 'fully approve' and 35% who 'tend to approve' of this measure. Similarly, somewhat more than eight in ten respondents support **welcoming people fleeing the war into the EU**, including 42% who 'fully approve' and 40% who 'tend to approve' of this measure.

The results of this question also show that there is still **a majority of respondents approving of economic sanctions against Russia, although support has decreased compared to April 2022.** About seven in ten respondents approve of economic sanctions against the Russian government, companies and individuals, including 42% who 'fully approve' and 29% who 'tend to approve'. Close to two-thirds of respondents approve **banning state-owned Russian media from broadcasting in the EU**, of which 37% report that they 'fully approve' and 26% that they 'approve' of this measure.

There is also **continued support for economic and military aid to Ukraine, although the level of support has decreased since April 2022**. Seven in ten respondents approve of **financial support for Ukraine**, encompassing 31% who 'fully approve' and 39% who 'tend to approve' such support. About six in ten respondents approve of **financing the purchase and supply of military equipment to Ukraine**, including 26% who 'fully approve' and 33% who 'tend to approve' of this type of financing.

Q3 For each of the following measures that have been announced by the EU to respond to the war in Ukraine, please tell me if you approve of them or not. (% EU27)

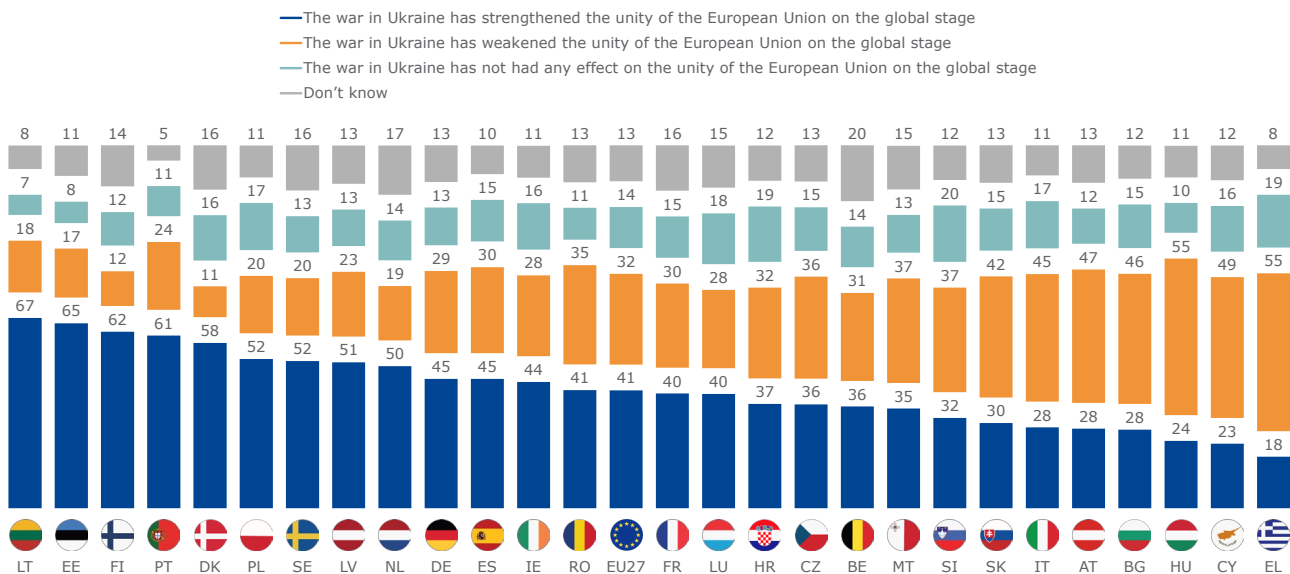


Base: all respondents (n=26 337)
▼▲ Evolution from April to November 2022

3.4. EU unity on the global stage: the effect of the war in Ukraine

About four in ten EU citizens (41%) share the view that the war in Ukraine has **strengthened the unity of the EU on the global stage**, while about one in three (32%) think that it has had a weakening effect. In Greece, Cyprus and Hungary, 18%-24% of respondents think the war in Ukraine has strengthened the unity of the EU on the global stage. In contrast, about three times as many respondents share this view in Lithuania (67%). In Greece and Hungary, 55% of respondents think the war in Ukraine has **weakened** the unity of the EU on the global stage.

Q4 Which of these three statements comes closest to your view? (% by country)



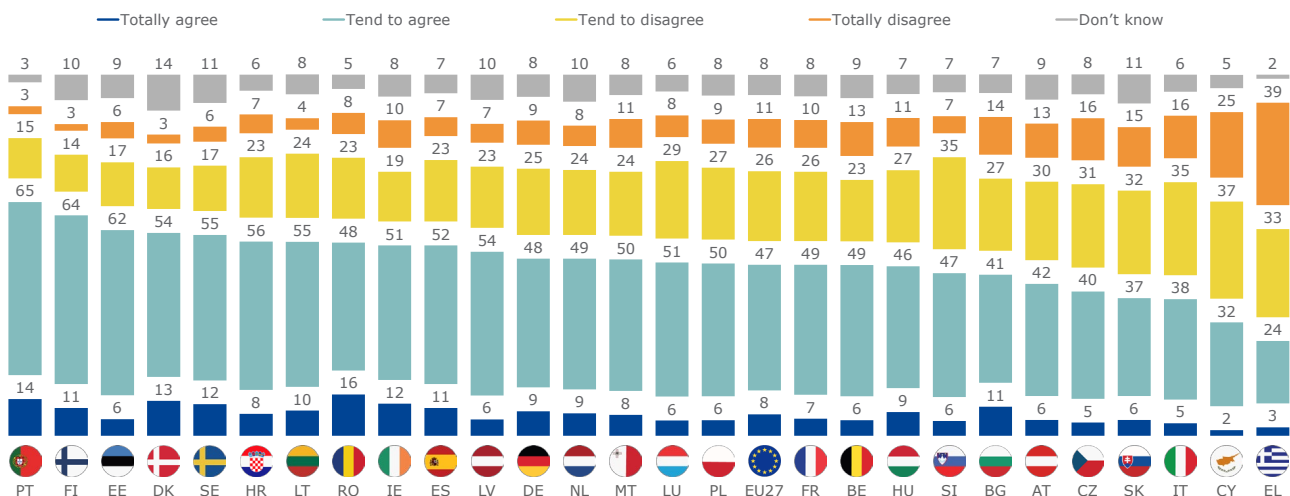
Base: all respondents (n=26 337)

Section 4. Solidarity and the state of democracy in the EU

A majority of respondents across the EU agree that there is solidarity among the EU Member States (8% 'totally agree' and 47% 'tend to agree'). The largest shares agreeing are observed in Finland (74%) and Portugal (79%). In three countries, on the other hand, more than half of respondents **disagree** that there is solidarity among Member States: Italy (51%), Cyprus (61%) and Greece (72%). The proportion disagreeing is also high in Czechia and Slovakia (both 47%).

Q10_1 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

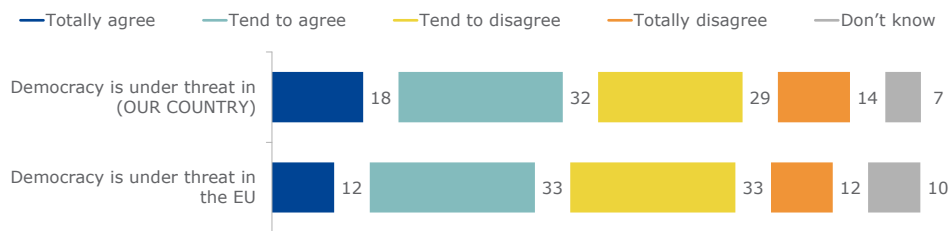
Overall, there is solidarity among Member States in the EU (% by country)



Base: all respondents (n=26 337)

Half of respondents agree that democracy is under threat in their country: 18% 'totally agree' and 32% 'tend to agree'; similar proportions 'totally disagree' (14%) and 'tend to disagree' (29%). Respondents are also divided in their view about the state of democracy in the EU: **45% agree that democracy is under threat in the EU** and the same share (45%) disagree that this is the case.

Q10 How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (% EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=26 337)

The proportion of respondents agreeing that **democracy is under threat in their country** ranges from 29% in Finland and Denmark to 67% in Croatia and Slovakia, and 71% in Hungary. In Hungary, the largest share of respondents 'totally agree' that democracy is under threat in their country (45%), followed by Greece, where 34% of respondents 'totally agree'.

When it comes to assessing the state of **democracy in the EU**, in ten Member States, more than half of respondents think that democracy is under threat. The highest share of respondents agreeing with this statement is observed in Greece (59%), followed closely by Cyprus (55%). The lowest level of agreement is observed in Denmark (33%) and Estonia (35%).

