

# PLENARY INSIGHTS

## Public opinion at a glance

October 11 2024



Each plenary session, DG Communication's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit (POMU) provides Members with relevant public opinion data on key agenda topics.

- **Managing migration:** Two thirds of EU citizens (67%) support a common migration policy. In 25 Member States, a majority of respondents support a common European policy on migration. The highest levels of support can be seen among respondents in Spain and the Netherlands (both 83%) and Luxembourg (81%). In two Member States, a minority support a common European policy on migration: Czechia (40% "for" vs 50% "against") and Hungary (43% vs 52%). Three in four respondents (75%) support "a reinforcement of EU external borders with more European border guards and coast guards." Three-quarters of Europeans (75%) consider that their country should help refugees and more than half of respondents (56%) agree that immigrants contribute positively to their country. ([Standard Eurobarometer – Spring 2024](#))
- **EU Budget 2025:** 27% of EU citizens put competitiveness, economy and industry among the top aspects the EU should focus on, in order to reinforce its position in the world – the fourth rank in list, after defence and security (37%), energy issues, resources and infrastructure (30%) and food security and agriculture (30%). ([EP Spring 2024 Eurobarometer survey](#))
- **Financial assistance to Ukraine:** 70% of citizens in the EU support financial assistance to Ukraine, with more than 90% support in Sweden, Finland and Denmark. ([Standard Eurobarometer – Spring 2024](#))
- **Closing the EU skills gap:** Companies in the EU Member States report difficulties in finding employees with the right skills as the most serious problem they are currently facing. The difficulty is increasing with company size, ranging from 53% in micro-companies to 72% in large companies. Technicians is the job profile that is most difficult to fill. ([Eurobarometer survey on SMEs and skills shortages](#))
- **Animal health and sanitary crises:** Only 15% of Europeans think an animal or plant disease outbreak is among the risks their country is currently most exposed to, according to findings of the [Eurobarometer survey on disaster risk awareness and preparedness](#).

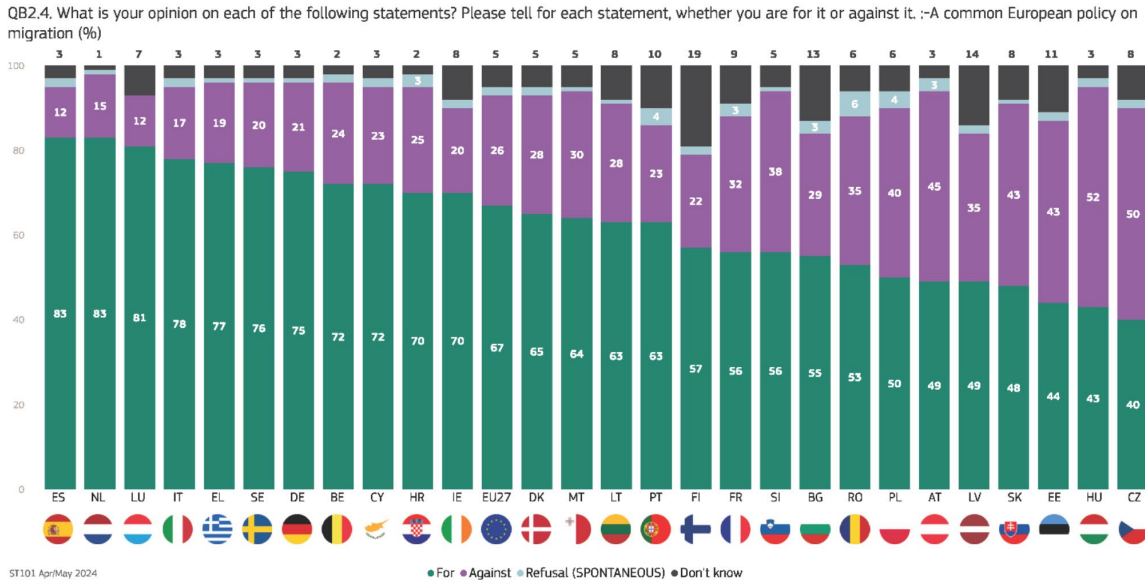
For more information on the topics covered in this edition, the methodology of our surveys or on additional services offered to Members by **DG COMM's Public Opinion Monitoring Unit**, please contact: [dgcomm-pom@europarl.europa.eu](mailto:dgcomm-pom@europarl.europa.eu)

 @EP\_Trends

# Managing migration

On Wednesday 23 October, MEPs will discuss with the Commission potential changes to EU legislation to make the return of third-country nationals who do not have the legal right to stay in Europe easier and facilitate a more orderly management of migration.

Two in three EU citizens (67%) support a common migration policy. In 25 Member States, a majority of respondents support a common European policy on migration. The highest levels of support can be seen among respondents in Spain and the Netherlands (both 83%) and Luxembourg (81%). In two Member States, a minority support a common European policy on migration: Czechia (40% "for" vs 50% "against") and Hungary (43% vs 52%).

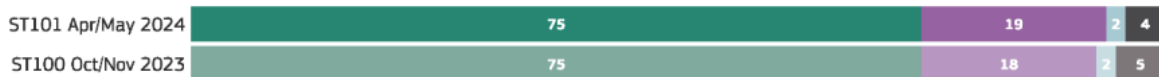


For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer – Spring 2024](#) (May 2024)

Three in four respondents (75%) support “a reinforcement of EU external borders with more European border guards and coast guards”, while 19% (+1 percentage point) are against such a policy and 6% (-1 pp) answered “don’t know” or refused to answer.

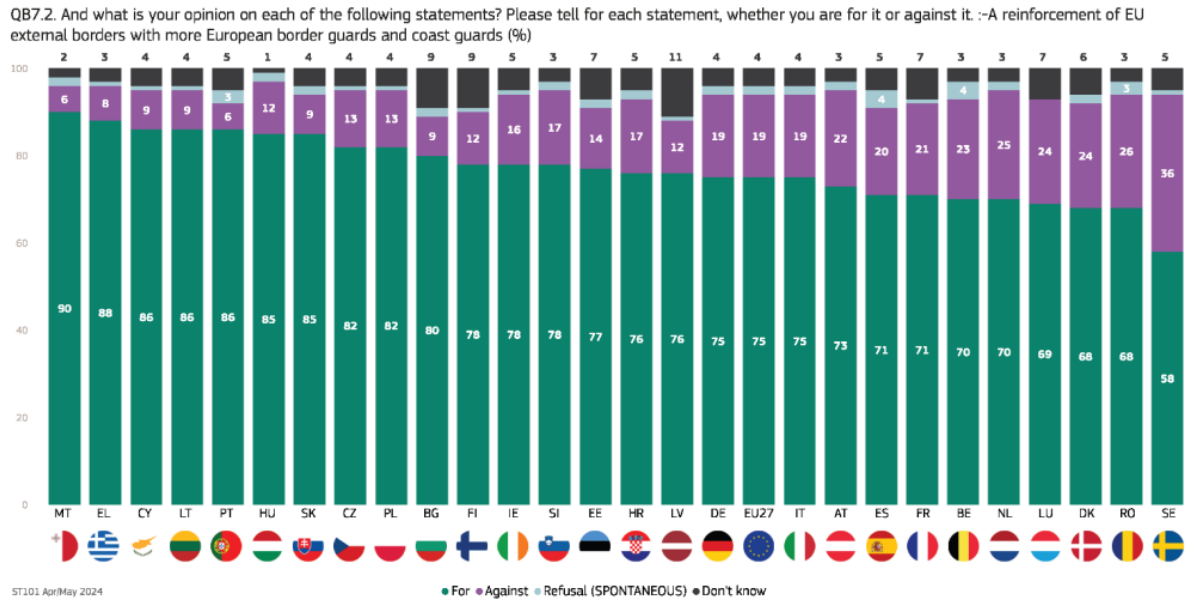
QB7. And what is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it. (EU27) (%)

A reinforcement of EU external borders with more European border guards and coast guards



For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer – Spring 2024](#) (May 2024)

Looking at the country level, more than half of respondents in all 27 Member States of the EU are in favour of a reinforcement of EU external borders with more European border guards and coast guards (no change since October 2023). However, levels of support range from 90% in Malta, 88% in Greece and 86% in each of Cyprus, Lithuania and Portugal, 86% in both Denmark and Romania to 58% in Sweden.



For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer – Spring 2024 \(May 2024\)](#)

The socio-demographic data show that a consistent proportion of over six in ten respondents in all categories support a reinforcement of EU external borders with more European border guards and coast guards. However, younger respondents (70% of 15-24 year-olds), managers (70%), unemployed people (67%) and students (68%) are less supportive of this idea, while retired people (79%) are most likely to be in favour.

A majority of Europeans see immigration of people from other EU Member States in a positive way, while a minority is positive about immigration from outside the EU. Europeans continue to have a positive view of the immigration of people from other EU Member States. Around two-thirds (68%, +2 percentage points since October 2023) view the “immigration of people from other EU Member States” positively, with 29% (+1 pp) viewing it negatively and 3% expressing no opinion (-3 pp). In contrast, less than half of respondents (46%, +3 pp) view the immigration of people from countries outside the EU positively, with 50% (no change) seeing it in a negative way and 4% expressing no opinion (-3 pp).

Respondents were further asked whether they agreed or disagreed with two statements about helping refugees and the contribution of immigrants to their country. Three in four Europeans (75%) agree that their country should help refugees (+3 percentage points since October 2023). Around one in five (22%, -1 pp) disagree and 3% (-2 pp) say that they don't know. More than half of respondents (56%) agree that immigrants contribute positively to their country (+4 pp since October 2023). Around two in five disagree with this statement (39%, -2 pp) and 5% (-2 pp) don't know.

QB9. For each of the following statements, please tell whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree (EU27) (%)

(OUR COUNTRY) should help refugees



Immigrants contribute positively to (OUR COUNTRY)



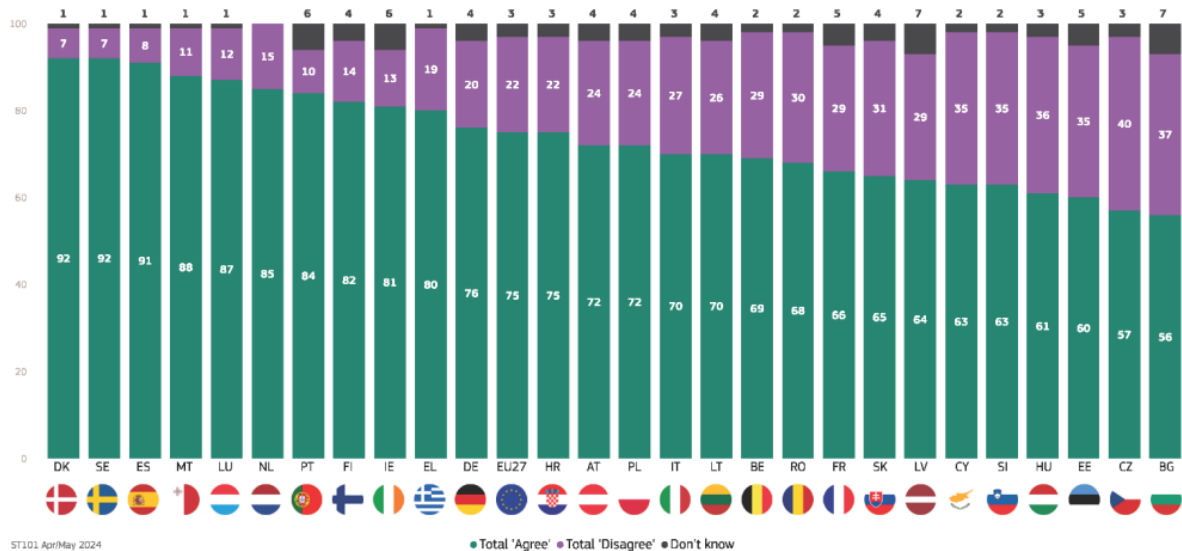
● Total 'Agree' ● Total 'Disagree' ● Don't know

ST101 Apr/May 2024

For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer – Spring 2024 \(May 2024\)](#)

In all 27 Member States, a majority of respondents agree that their country should help refugees (as was the case in October 2023). Proportions are the highest in Denmark and Sweden (both 92%), Spain (91%) and Malta (88%). Respondents are least likely to agree in Bulgaria (56%), Czechia (57%) and Estonia (60%).

QB9.2. For each of the following statements, please tell whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree :-(OUR COUNTRY) should help refugees (%)



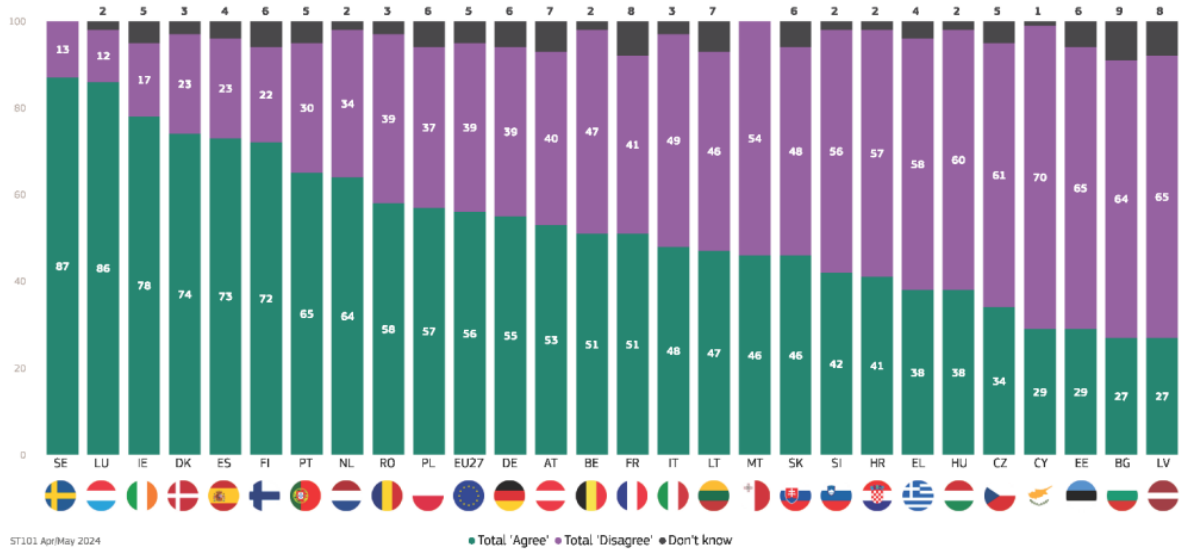
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● Total 'Agree' ● Total 'Disagree' ● Don't know

For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer – Spring 2024 \(May 2024\)](#)

The impression that immigrants contribute positively to the country is shared by a majority of respondents in 15 Member States (compared with 13 in October 2023). Agreement is highest among respondents in Sweden (87%), Luxembourg (86%) and Ireland (78%). In contrast, in 12 EU Member States only a minority agree that immigrants contribute positively to the country. Within this group of countries, support for this idea is lowest in Bulgaria and Latvia (both 27%) and Cyprus and Estonia (both 29%).

QB9.1. For each of the following statements, please tell whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree :-Immigrants contribute positively to (OUR COUNTRY) (%)



For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer – Spring 2024](#) (May 2024)

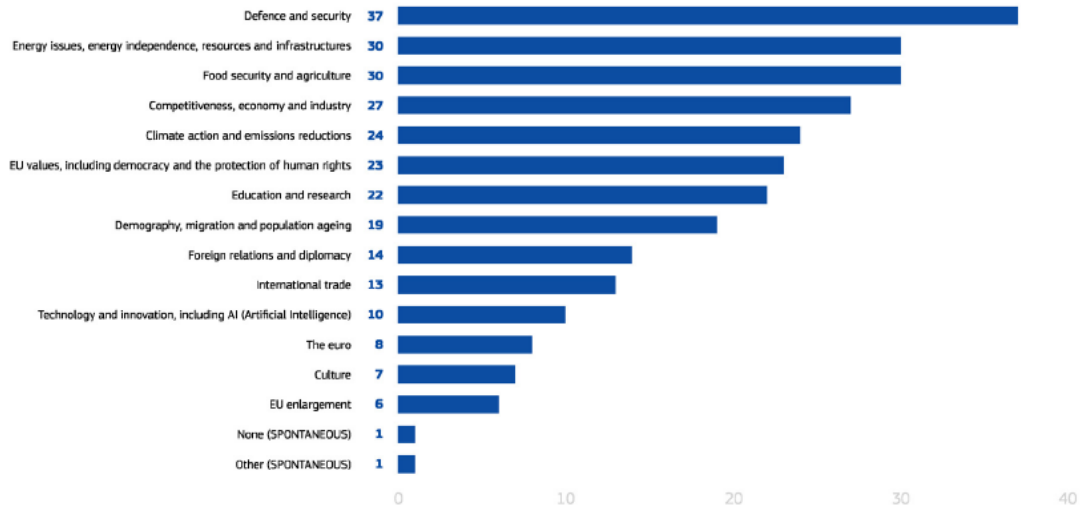
## EU Budget 2025

On Tuesday 22 October, Parliament will debate the 2025 EU budget that focuses on improving people’s lives, boosting competitiveness, and addressing further current challenges. The plenary vote will kick-start three weeks of talks with Council, aiming to reach a deal to be voted on by Parliament before the end of 2024.

In the [EP Spring 2024 Eurobarometer Survey](#), EU citizens were asked on which aspects the EU should focus in order to reinforce its position in the world. Competitiveness, economy and industry ranked fourth in the list (27%), after defence and security (37%), energy issues, energy independence, resources and infrastructure (30%) and food security and agriculture (30%).

**QA11ab**

Thinking about the future, which of the following aspects should the EU focus on in order to reinforce its position in the world? Firstly? And Then? (EU27) (%)



Feb/Mar 2024

For more detailed information: [EP Spring 2024 Eurobarometer survey \(April 2024\)](#)

In the [Eurobarometer survey EU Challenges and Priorities](#), 11% of the respondents put competitiveness and industry among their top three priorities for the EU to address. The countries in which the approval is strongest are Estonia (18%), Germany (16%) and Latvia (15%).

**Q6** Which of the following areas do you think the EU should address as a priority? Please select up to three answers. [MULTIPLE ANSWERS]

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
Environment and climate change	33	34	22	17	45	36	11	30	28	35	34	20	40	30	12	18	37	29	48	41	33	25	32	24	20	23	29	39
Irregular migration	33	32	22	45	25	35	32	41	31	35	36	32	27	50	25	32	31	19	41	37	41	41	39	17	36	24	17	31
Security and defence	29	31	27	33	32	31	52	22	25	22	31	29	20	32	45	51	38	26	23	34	26	38	37	36	23	27	45	33
The war in Ukraine	25	23	21	30	34	24	46	32	14	23	19	24	29	12	41	48	19	18	23	30	19	30	29	21	18	19	42	37
Public health	21	19	31	17	14	16	11	23	28	24	20	23	26	24	18	14	13	25	19	16	23	15	24	26	29	25	15	14
Jobs, social equality and skills	20	20	27	13	13	15	22	21	23	26	16	24	26	19	27	20	30	25	20	17	18	16	31	23	27	26	21	19
Democracy and rule of law	18	15	23	12	24	23	10	16	27	18	15	19	15	20	10	13	21	28	16	16	19	15	15	23	17	20	22	22
Agriculture and food security	18	19	18	21	13	12	20	16	18	19	27	33	13	11	17	10	13	22	21	17	17	22	14	23	32	31	18	11
Energy	17	17	16	28	16	15	22	18	21	11	19	19	18	10	15	14	16	18	20	16	15	22	10	18	18	22	11	16
Economy and public finances	15	17	20	13	9	9	19	19	28	17	17	19	17	31	19	18	11	12	18	11	11	15	17	19	17	17	18	13
Education and training	13	14	25	6	9	16	9	10	12	14	14	11	9	14	12	9	18	17	15	13	14	6	14	16	7	9	8	8
Industry and competitiveness	11	7	11	13	10	16	18	5	8	10	12	10	8	6	15	8	11	12	7	5	14	8	7	8	11	12	13	8
Research and innovation	8	6	5	7	8	8	7	6	6	11	6	5	10	6	6	5	12	9	6	3	10	5	6	9	6	10	7	9
Trade	6	5	5	6	10	6	4	7	6	5	5	5	6	5	6	4	2	5	5	5	5	4	4	7	6	6	5	9
Digital transformation	5	4	3	4	7	9	2	3	3	5	4	3	6	4	2	2	5	5	4	8	6	4	3	6	4	3	3	3
Other	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1
None	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1
Don't know	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	2	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1

X Most frequently mentioned response

For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on EU challenges and priorities \(July 2024\)](#)

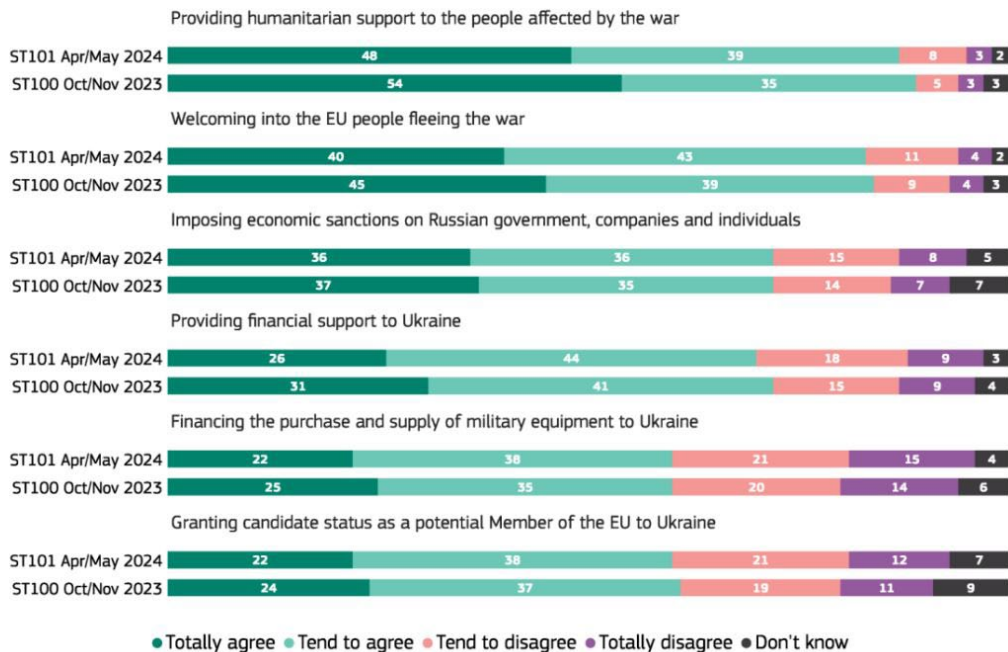
# Financial assistance to Ukraine

On Tuesday 22 October, MEPs will debate and vote on a €35 billion financial assistance package for Ukraine as part of the G7's support initiative. The package leverages extraordinary profits from frozen Russian assets and aims to address Ukraine's urgent financing needs in the face of Russia's war of aggression.

The latest [Standard Eurobarometer](#) shows that the vast majority of Europeans agrees with providing financial support to Ukraine – 70% of the citizens do so, only a small decline of 2 pp from Oct/Nov 2023 to Apr/May 2024.

Agreement to financial support is below the agreement with providing humanitarian support to the people affected by the war (87%), with welcoming into the EU people fleeing the war (83%) and with imposing sanctions on Russia (72%) However, it is above the agreement with the EU financing the purchase and supply of military equipment to Ukraine and of the EU granting candidate status to Ukraine (both 60%).

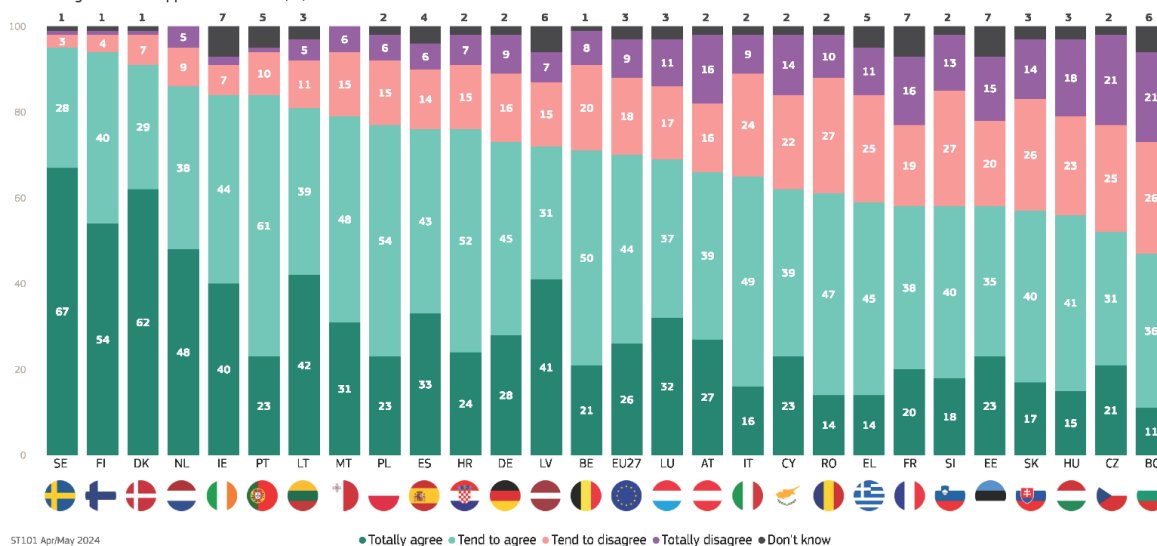
QD2. The EU has taken a series of actions as a response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. To what extent you agree or disagree with each of these actions taken. (EU27) (%)



For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer – Spring 2024 \(May 2024\)](#)

Levels of support vary from 95% in Sweden, 94% in Finland and 91% in Denmark to 47% in Bulgaria, 52% in Czechia and 56% in Hungary.

QD2.5. The EU has taken a series of actions as a response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. To what extent you agree or disagree with each of these actions taken.  
 :-Providing financial support to Ukraine (%)



For more detailed information: [Standard Eurobarometer - Spring 2024 \(May 2024\)](#)

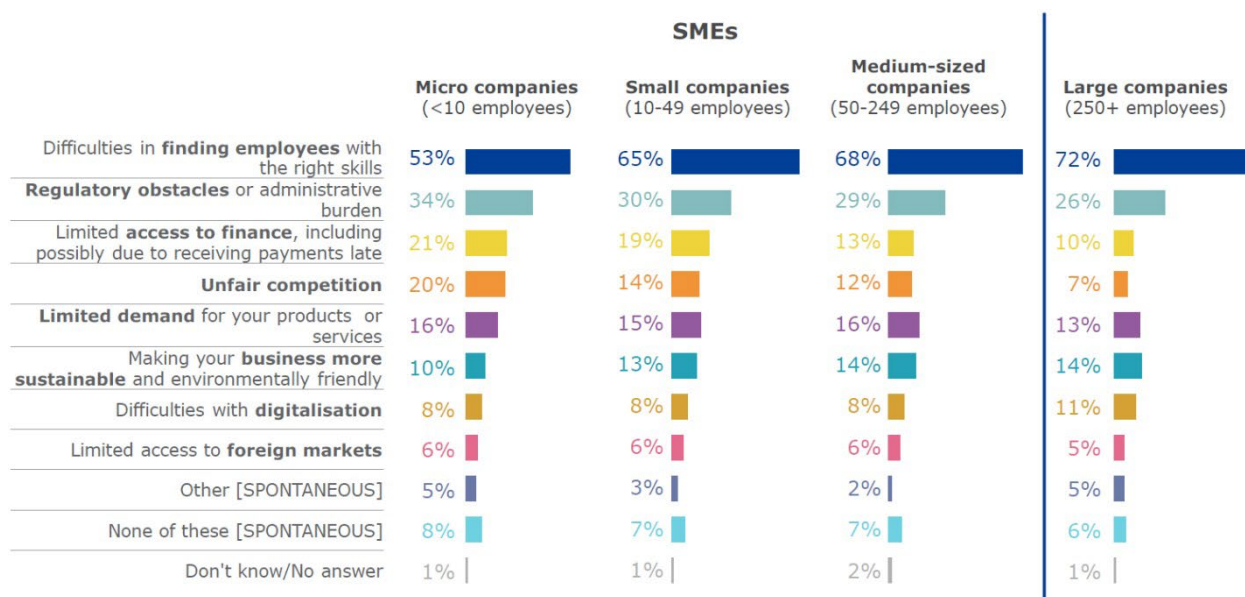
## Closing the EU skills gap

On Thursday 24 October, the Members will debate the Commission statement “Closing the EU skills gap: supporting people in the digital and green transitions to ensure inclusive growth and competitiveness in line with the Draghi report”. About a month ago, when Mario Draghi presented the report to the EP, he stressed the need for an “overhaul of Europe’s approach to skills, focused on using data to understand where skills gaps lie”. Eurobarometer surveys can provide some of these data.

According to the [Eurobarometer survey on SMEs and skills shortages](#), for which people with decision-making responsibilities from 13,253 SMEs as well as 855 from large companies in the EU were interviewed, skill shortages currently represent the most serious problem for their companies. The larger the company, the more pressing the issue: 53% of micro companies (<10 employees), 65% of small companies (10–49), 68% of medium-sized companies (50–249) and 72% of large companies (250+) report difficulties in finding employees with the right skills. This is by far the most listed problem, far ahead of regulatory obstacles, limited access to finance, unfair competition or limited demand for their products.



**Q1** Which three of the following problems are currently the most serious ones for your company? (Multiple answers allowed) (% by company size, EU27)



Base: all SMEs (n=13 253) & all large companies (n=855)

For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on SMEs and skills shortages](#) (November 2023)

Respondents in SMEs were also presented with seven job roles and asked for each of these whether the job role exists in their company and whether they face any skill shortages for this job role. 42% in these SMEs with technicians report that they face shortages for this job role – this is, by far, the most-identified job role with skills shortages.

**Q6b** Does your company face skill shortages for any of these job roles?



Base: for each job role, SMEs in which the job role exists (n=732 to 8 369)

For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on SMEs and skills shortages](#) (November 2023)

In SMEs with customer care experts, 23% of respondents answer that there is a skills shortage for this job role. The corresponding figures are 20% for R&D experts, 18% for IT experts and 12% for marketing experts. Although backroom and administrative staff (accountants, comptrollers, etc.) are job roles most likely to be present in SMEs (52% employ this role), respondents are less likely to reply that their company faces a skills shortage for this role (12%).

The main impact of skills shortages is an increased workload for existing staff – 48% of SMEs report this as a consequence in their company. 31% see an impact in terms of loss of sales or problems with expanding sales as a consequence of skills shortages in their company. Other types of impact are reduced profitability and growth (25%), reduced productivity (25%), increased production costs (23%) and problems in maintaining product/service quality (22%). Just 8% of SMEs see an impact of skills shortages in reduced R&D or reduced innovation activity.

SMEs that had difficulties finding and hiring staff in the past two years were presented with eight possible reasons for their skills shortage. Only two of these reasons were selected by large shares: 56% of respondents answer that their SME's skills shortage is caused by there being few or no applicants and 54% reply that applicants do not have the right qualifications, skills or experience. A much smaller share, but still about one in five (21%) SMEs reply that one of the main reasons they face a skills shortage is their inability to compete with offers made by other employers in terms of wage, benefits, work flexibility, etc.

**Q7a** What are the main reasons for your company's skill shortages? (Multiple answers allowed)  
(% EU27)



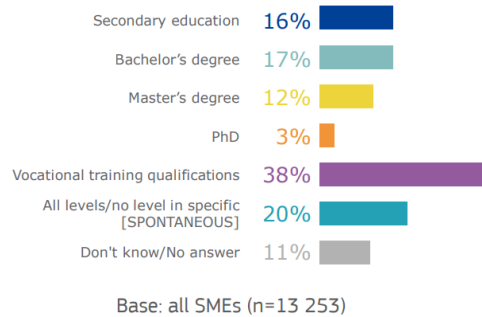
Base: n=9 342 (SMEs) – Faced with a skills shortage

For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on SMEs and skills shortages](#) (November 2023)

When asked about which qualification/educational levels their SME finds the most difficult to recruit, the largest share of SMEs (38%) report vocational training qualifications. 17% of SMEs mention bachelor's degrees, 16% secondary education, and

12% master’s degrees. 20% of respondents spontaneously say that this applies to all levels, or to no levels in particular.

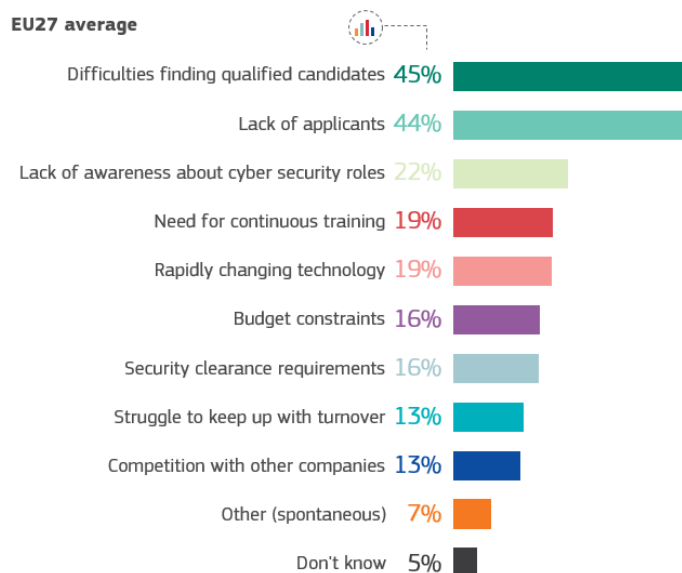
**Q5** Which qualification/educational levels does your company find the most difficult to recruit?  
(Multiple answers allowed) (% EU27)



For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on SMEs and skills shortages](#) (November 2023)

Turning the focus on the area of IT skills, the [Eurobarometer survey on Cyberskills](#) among manager responsible for IT or other decision makers in companies in the EU shows that businesses are facing severe difficulties in finding appropriate candidates in the field of cybersecurity. More than half of the companies that searched for adequate candidates experienced difficulties, especially in finding qualified candidates (45%), or because of an overall lack of applicants (44%).

**Q7** What are the main challenges for your company when it comes to recruiting staff with the right skills in cyber security?



For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on Cyberskills](#) (May 2024)

The [Eurobarometer survey on the Digital Decade](#), also shows an interesting development among the citizens of Europe. When asked if more education and training would facilitate

the use of digital services for them, the proportion of respondents who said this would significantly be the case increased by 5 pp from 67% to 72% between March 2023 and March/April 2024. This means that awareness of the need for skill building in this area is increasing among the people in general.

QC3. In your opinion, how significantly would the following improvements facilitate your daily use of digital technologies? (EU27) (%)



For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer survey on the Digital Decade \(May 2024\)](#)

## Animal health and sanitary crises

For Tuesday 9 October, the situation of animal health in Europe, and how to prevent and prepare for future sanitary crises in agriculture, is on the European Parliament's agenda.

The [Eurobarometer survey on disaster risk awareness and preparedness of the EU population](#) shows that awareness of this issue is not very high among Europeans at the moment. When asked which risks their country is most exposed to, an animal or plant disease outbreak ranks at the bottom of the list with 15%, at rank 12 of 13 topics to select from.

QC1ab. Which of the following risks do you think that (OUR COUNTRY) is most exposed to? Firstly? And then? (EU27) (%)



For more detailed information: [Eurobarometer on disaster risk awareness and preparedness of the EU population \(September 2024\)](#)

Respondents are most concerned about animal or plant disease outbreaks in Croatia (35%), Bulgaria (27%), and Slovakia (26%), and least concerned in Lithuania (6%), Germany (7%), and Luxembourg (8%).