



YOUNG EUROPE 2018

**What people aged
between 16 and 26 think**

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This document may use the male form of nouns in certain cases for the sake of ease of reading. Nevertheless, the contents naturally relate to people of both sexes.

EDITORIAL

DEAR READER,

Is Europe making a comeback? Brexit certainly seems to have been a wake-up call for the younger generation. We have started to talk about the European Union's strengths, achievements and future prospects again – a positive trend confirmed by the TUI Foundation's latest Youth Study, "Young Europe". On the one hand, it reflects an enthusiasm for the European project: more of the young people surveyed said they would vote for their country to remain in the EU in a referendum (71 %) than was the case last year (61 %). In addition, more young people aged 16 to 26 now identify not only as a citizen of their home country, but also as a European.

Yet the figures, on the other hand, make clear that, along with growing enthusiasm for Europe, scepticism is also on the rise across the continent. Young adults do not trust authorities and institutions; only 33 % of those surveyed said they trust EU institutions. There is also a growing appetite for political change. Indeed, less than one in five (17 %) of those surveyed thought the political system in their respective home country functions as it should.

The results of the study give an insight into the minds of young people in a time often dominated by turmoil and upheaval and when isolationism is proposed as a solution in place of cooperation. It also reveals that all too many young people

share a view of democracy in which the rights of parliamentary minorities or the independent mandates of elected representatives could feasibly be sacrificed in favour of more "effective" polities. Political education therefore remains an important task for all civic actors, and not merely for those in the political sphere. No matter whether sport, business or culture, every part of society needs to reflect on how Europe and democracy can inspire citizens. Through its programmes, the TUI Foundation helps raise awareness among young people of the benefits of an open and democratic Europe and also provides them with detailed information on the topic – so they can form their own opinions.

With regards to Europe, there is a lesson our society would do well to learn: political discourse is healthy. All too often in the public debate, the EU is presented as a bureaucratic monster that slows down progress – as opposed to a transformative force in an age of digitalisation and globalisation. With our Youth Study, we hope to make a valuable contribution to the debate and provide new impetus. The young people of today are Europe's leaders of tomorrow. As a society, therefore, we would be wise to take the hopes and fears of this generation seriously today, and work to discuss them with openness and transparency. ●



**Thomas
Ellerbeck**

**Chairman of the
Board of Trustees of
the TUI Foundation**

EUROPE – A NEW LOVE?

Following the United Kingdom’s decision to leave the European Union, many people fear growing disenchantment with Europe. Yet the truth appears to be quite different. The EU is considerably more popular with young people than it was last year – even if a few reservations remain, as the TUI Foundation’s latest Youth Study shows.

Though the United Kingdom self-assuredly announced its decision to leave the Common European Home, this proud posturing has been followed by frantic haggling over the myriad aspects the Brits did not want to lose after all. The ties that bind us are simply not that easy to sever. On the whole, however, young people and young adults in Europe do not see Brexit as a courageous departure; instead of marvelling at some bold awakening, Brexit has sparked a debate on how closely interwoven the destinies of European states have become.

While Brexit loses its initial appeal, the European Union (EU) – often dismissed as toothless – has used the exit negotiations to show just how robust it can be. This sense of resolve appears to have gone down well with the 6,080 young men and women from seven EU member states surveyed by the TUI Foundation for its “Young Europe 2018” study. The

aim of the study is to gauge young people’s views on Europe. What do they expect from the EU? What issues worry them? Or do they simply not care about the Union?

Working on behalf of the TUI Foundation, the public opinion research company YouGov collated and evaluated the hopes and concerns of young people aged 16 to 26 in France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. Though the results are complex and sometimes somewhat contradictory, nevertheless they also show some clear trends.

No Frexit or Grexit

The survey received a resounding response to one core question in particular, namely: “If there was a referendum tomorrow on your country’s membership of the European Union, how would you vote?”

As far as young Europeans are concerned, a Frexit is as unlikely as a Grexit. The same goes for Poland, Italy, Spain, Germany – and even the United Kingdom. Last year, 27 per cent of young people in the UK said they supported Brexit; this figure has now fallen to 23 per cent. At the same time, the proportion of young Brits who support the EU has risen from 58 per cent to 63 per cent (p. 10).

Things just do not work without the European Union – or at least, not as well. Young Europeans are clear: their countries and the EU need each other in equal measure – an opinion shared by 35 per cent of those surveyed, compared to only 29 per cent last year. The proportion of respondents convinced of the mutual benefits has risen significantly in two countries: Poland (from 20 per cent to 32 per cent) and Spain (from 22 per cent to 32 per cent). Further proof can be found in the fact that only one-fifth of young Europeans think the EU needs their country more than their country needs the EU (p. 14).

Consequently, support for the European Union as a whole has also grown: while 61 per cent would have voted “Yes” twelve months ago, this figure is now a striking 71 per cent. Only 15 per cent of the young people surveyed would now vote for their country to leave the European Union – down from 21 per cent in 2017. Incidentally, German youth are not the most pro-EU: in Spain, a significant majority of 85 per cent stated they would vote for their country to remain a member of the European Union. In France, Italy and Poland, the level of support for the Union is around 70 per cent. Even in Greece – a country with first-hand experience of the consequences of EU policy – two-thirds of young people gave the Union a thumbs up, compared to just half a year ago (p. 10).

Democracy in need of reform

Despite these positive developments, it would be a mistake to conclude that young people in Europe

see the EU as some sort of emotional home. Though 52 per cent of the young people surveyed would identify as “European” to some extent (including in addition to their nationality) – 7 percentage points higher than last year’s figure (p. 8) – on the whole, the EU is primarily regarded as an economic alliance. At the same time, the EU remains unconvincing as a political union. Young people continue to criticise its democratic processes as lethargic and non-transparent, and remain mistrustful of EU politicians’ actions – though these criticisms are also directed at the systems in the respondents’ respective home countries (p. 20).

Although 58 per cent of young Europeans regard democracy as the best system of government in principle, they also believe there is considerable scope and need for change. Only 17 per cent believe that the political system in their home country operates as it should. Almost half of young people believe the democratic system is in need of reform; 28 per cent even fundamentally dispute the current construct and would like to see radical change (p. 24).

The proportion of such radical views is particularly high in Greece (52 per cent), Italy (43 per cent) and Spain (35 per cent) – countries where soaring rates of youth employment are making it difficult for young people to envision a better, brighter future. Those affected do not consider this state of affairs to be a matter of personal destiny by any means, instead holding the state responsible. This correlates with the finding that young people across Europe see “economic growth” and “reducing social inequality” as the most important duties of their national governments (at 39 per cent and 35 per cent respectively).

While young people consider economic and socio-political topics to be the primary duties of national governments, they regard the EU as responsible for security-related and environmental issues. In first place is the fight against terrorism, which 44 per cent consider to be the top priority for the European

Union, followed by protecting the climate and environment as well as regulating immigration (p. 16).

Compromise = stalemate?

Young people – and particularly those with populist attitudes – cast doubt on the idea that the EU fulfils its duties. But what exactly do these “populist attitudes” entail? As part of the “Young Europe 2018” study, YouGov formulated 15 statements based on proven scientific models from research into populist movements. Respondents who agreed to twelve or more of these statements were identified as holding “populist views”. The survey asked, for instance, whether the study participants believed that members of parliament are interested in their constituents’ needs and whether elected members are in touch with those they represent. Another topic explored in the survey was whether the electorate should have the last word on the most important political issues through referendums.

The results showed that populist attitudes and tendencies are particularly prevalent among young people in two countries: Poland (23 per cent) and France (21 per cent). The proportions in other countries are significantly lower. Only 11 per cent of young people in the United Kingdom hold such views, while populist opinions were espoused by just 7 per cent of young people surveyed in Germany (p. 22).

One trend that transcends national boundaries, however, is that young Europeans with populist tendencies regard politicians and parties with greater scepticism and consider the system of political compromise as the cause of the perceived standstill. A common suggestion is to appoint experts to make decisions rather than politicians. More than one-third of Europeans with populist views even agree that restricting the rights of political opponents could sometimes be justified – as, in some circumstances, could the suspension of democratic rules (p. 26). Indeed, 39 per cent say that the political system in

their country is so dysfunctional that radical changes need to be brought about (p. 28).

Who believes what they see on Facebook?

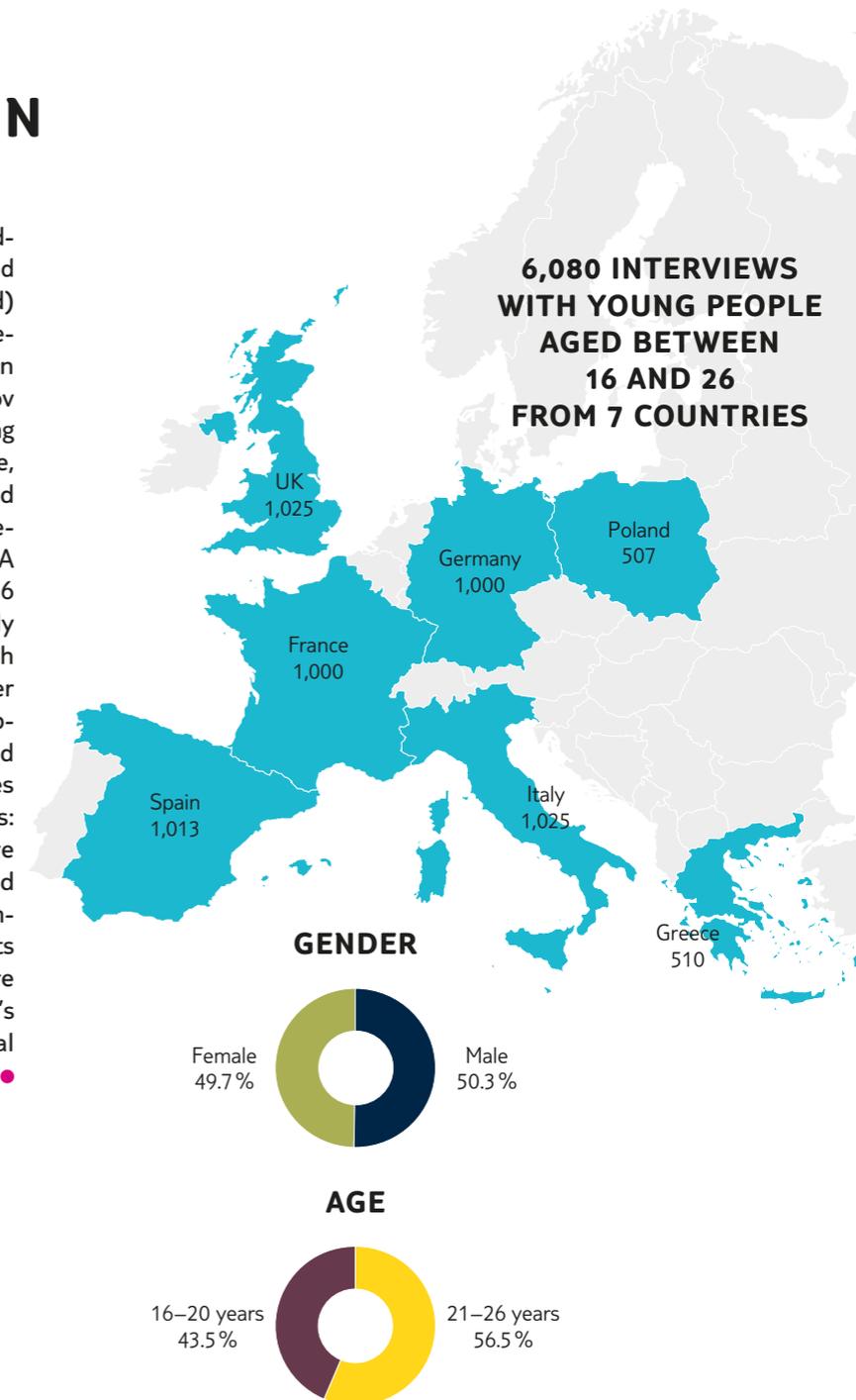
Such viewpoints are often disseminated away from established media. In fact, 82 per cent of those surveyed look to the Internet for information on political goings-on, with Facebook the most commonly used resource. More than two-thirds of young Europeans say that they never regularly pick up a printed newspaper or magazine (p. 34). This scepticism towards established and mainstream media is particularly pronounced in Italy, Greece and Poland. Public broadcasters enjoy above-average levels of trust from young people in Germany, with one in three saying they trust such broadcasting to a greater or lesser extent. By implication, however, this means that two-thirds of young people are sceptical or mistrustful of the country’s public broadcasters (p. 38).

Yet despite Facebook now being the most commonly used source of political news for young Europeans, their mistrust of the social network is even more pronounced. Only 17 per cent trust the information they find on the platform (p. 40); in Germany, this figure is 8 per cent.

Against this backdrop of Facebook’s tremendous popularity on the one hand and the little trust placed in it on the other, these figures appear like something of a snapshot in time. Public approval of Europe is a volatile quantity. While used intensively, Facebook is not well-trusted, and the next wave of manipulated news stories could well swing the pendulum in the other direction. The increasing political and economic interrelations can be difficult to explain, and are certainly not easy to understand. As a result, straightforward opinions that can be quickly grasped have a head start. Only time will tell whether this renewed affection for Europe is truly a new love. ●

STUDY DESIGN

To gain a better understanding of the lives, attitudes and (sometimes multifaceted) identities of young Europeans in 2018, the TUI Foundation worked in collaboration with YouGov to conduct an online survey of young people in France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom. The participants were recruited via online access panels. A total of 6,080 young people aged 16 to 26 took part in the Youth Study between 14 February and 4 March 2018. Quotas were applied in order to ensure the participants were representative in terms of their age and gender in the respective countries (basis for representative quotas: Eurostat). Before the results were analysed, they were also weighted by age and gender in order to compensate for slight variances. Results recorded across all countries were also weighted so that each country’s results were collated with equal weighting. ●



EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Young people have a distinctly more favourable attitude towards Europe than in 2017.

The number of young people who solely identify as a citizen of their country has fallen sharply in the past year, particularly in France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom.



How would you be most likely to describe yourself? (values in per cent)

EU MEMBERSHIP

Fewer and fewer young Europeans would vote for their country to leave the EU in a referendum.

This trend can be seen across countries surveyed – including Poland and the United Kingdom. However, these countries also saw the lowest gains on this issue, of seven and five percentage points respectively.

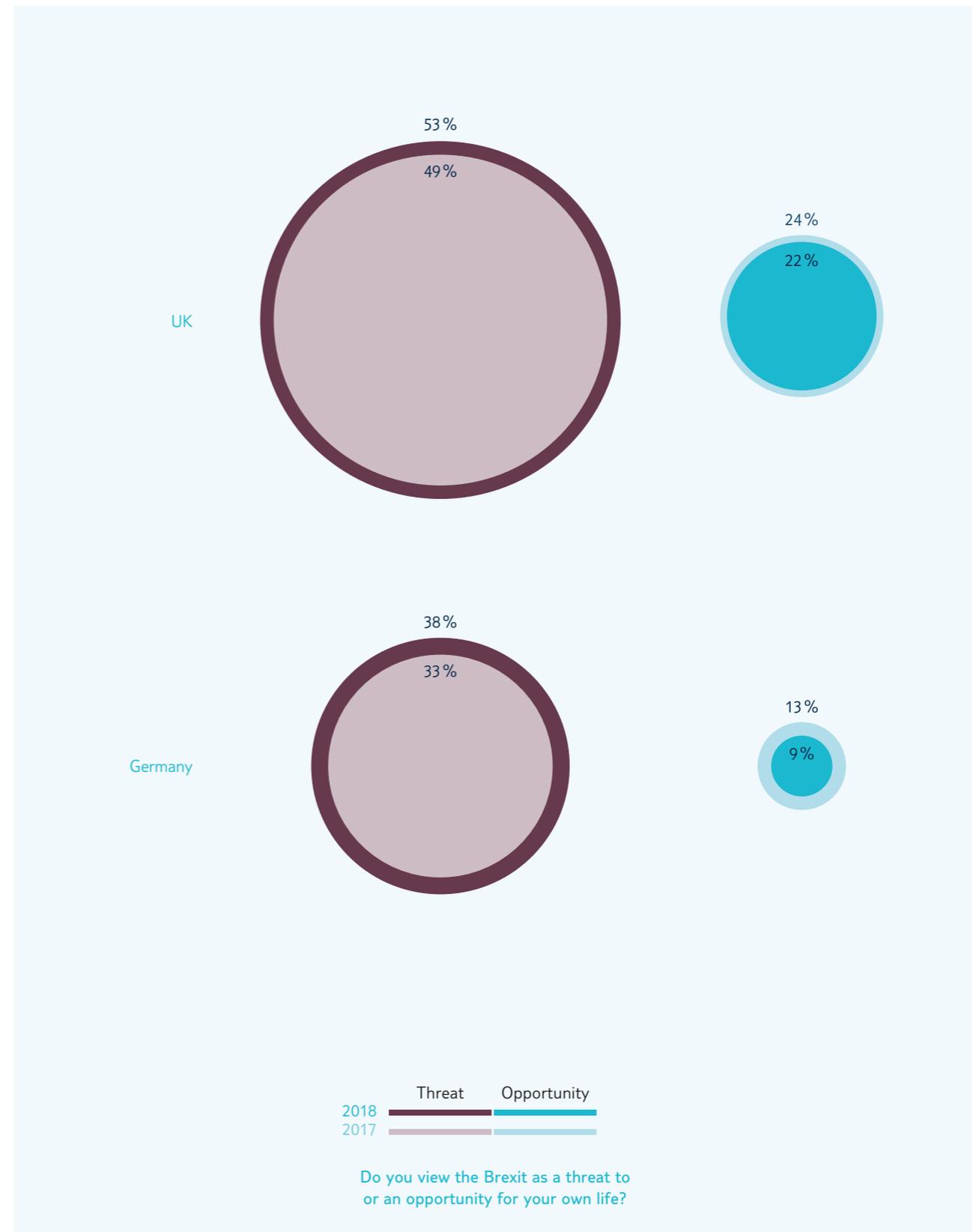


If a referendum was held tomorrow about the EU membership of your country: How would you vote? (values in per cent)

BREXIT

Young Britons are far more doubtful about Brexit today than in 2017.

Young people in Germany also say they are increasingly concerned by the potential consequences of the United Kingdom's decision to leave the EU.



RELATIONS WITH THE EU

An increasing number of young people agree that their country and the EU need one another to a similar extent.

This opinion is becoming particularly prevalent in Poland, Spain, France and Germany.



Country needs the EU more than the EU needs the country
 The EU needs the country more than the country needs the EU
 Country and the EU need each other equally
 Neither the EU nor country needs one another
 Do not know/not specified

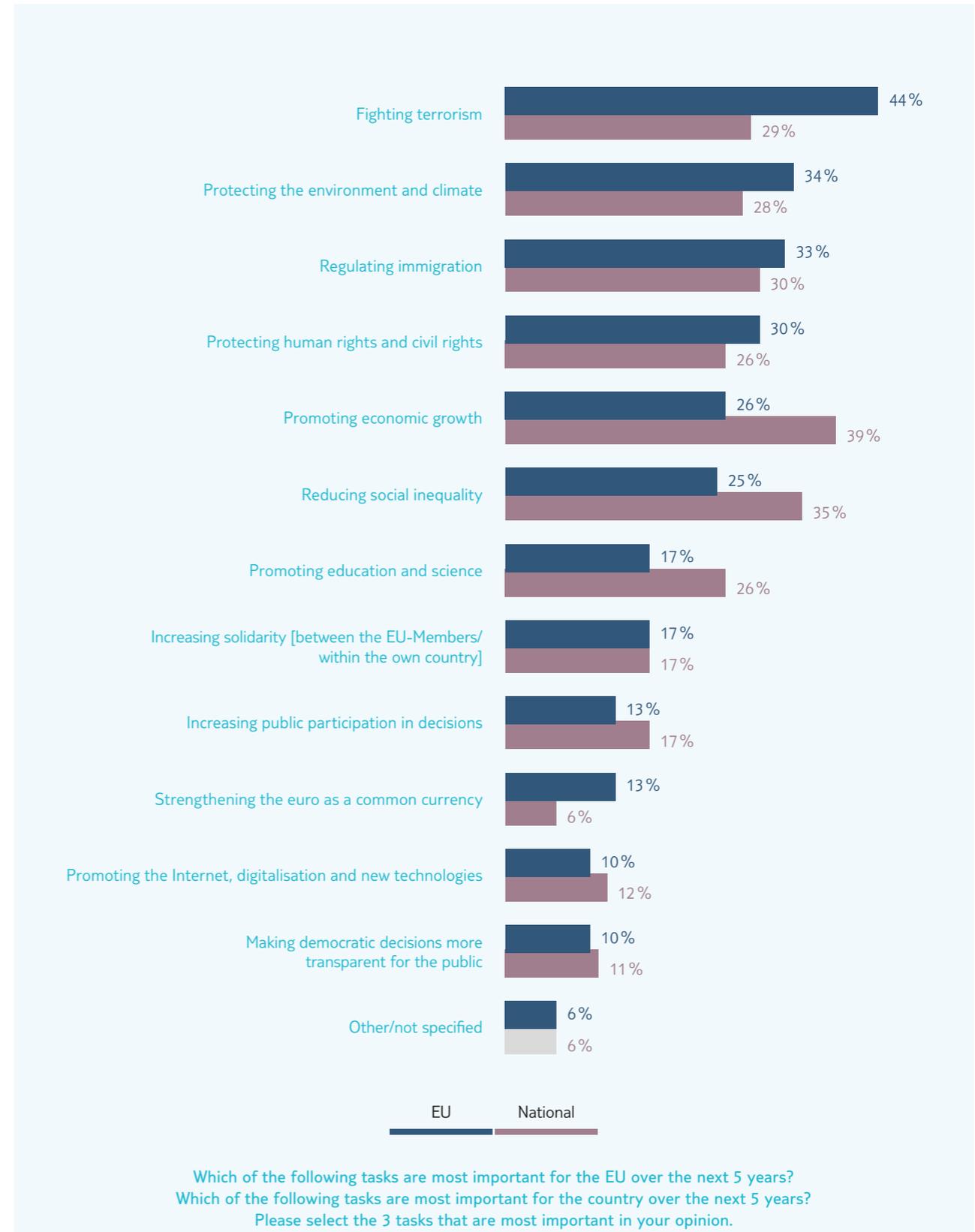
2018
 2017

When you think about the relationship between your country and the EU: Which of the following statements do you most agree with? (values in per cent)

POLITICAL DUTIES

The most important duties at the European level are to combat terrorism and protect the climate.

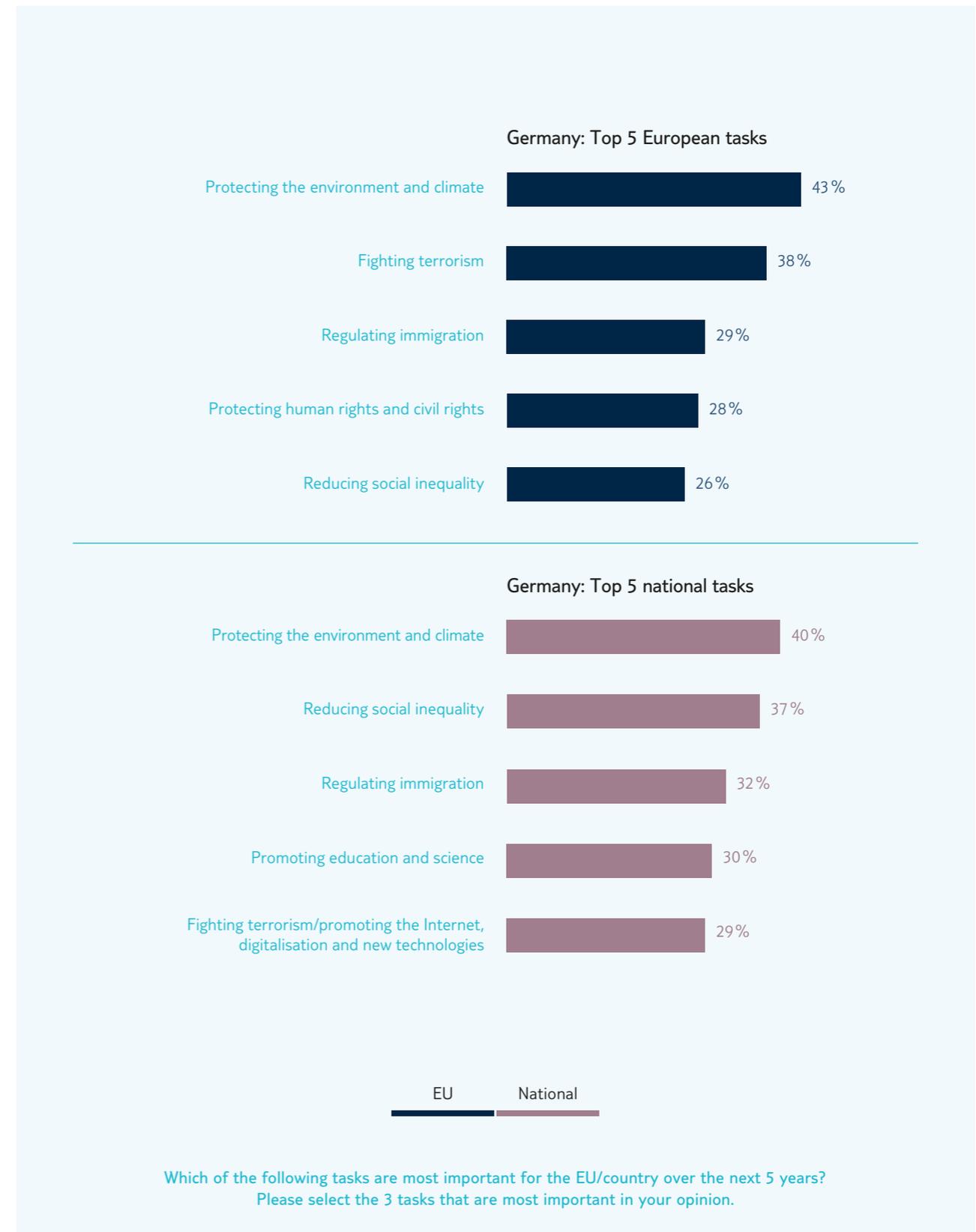
However, young Europeans believe that economic growth and social justice, as well as education and research, are rather the responsibilities of national governments.



POLITICAL DUTIES

Young Germans consider protecting the environment and climate to be the uppermost duty of politicians at both national and European levels.

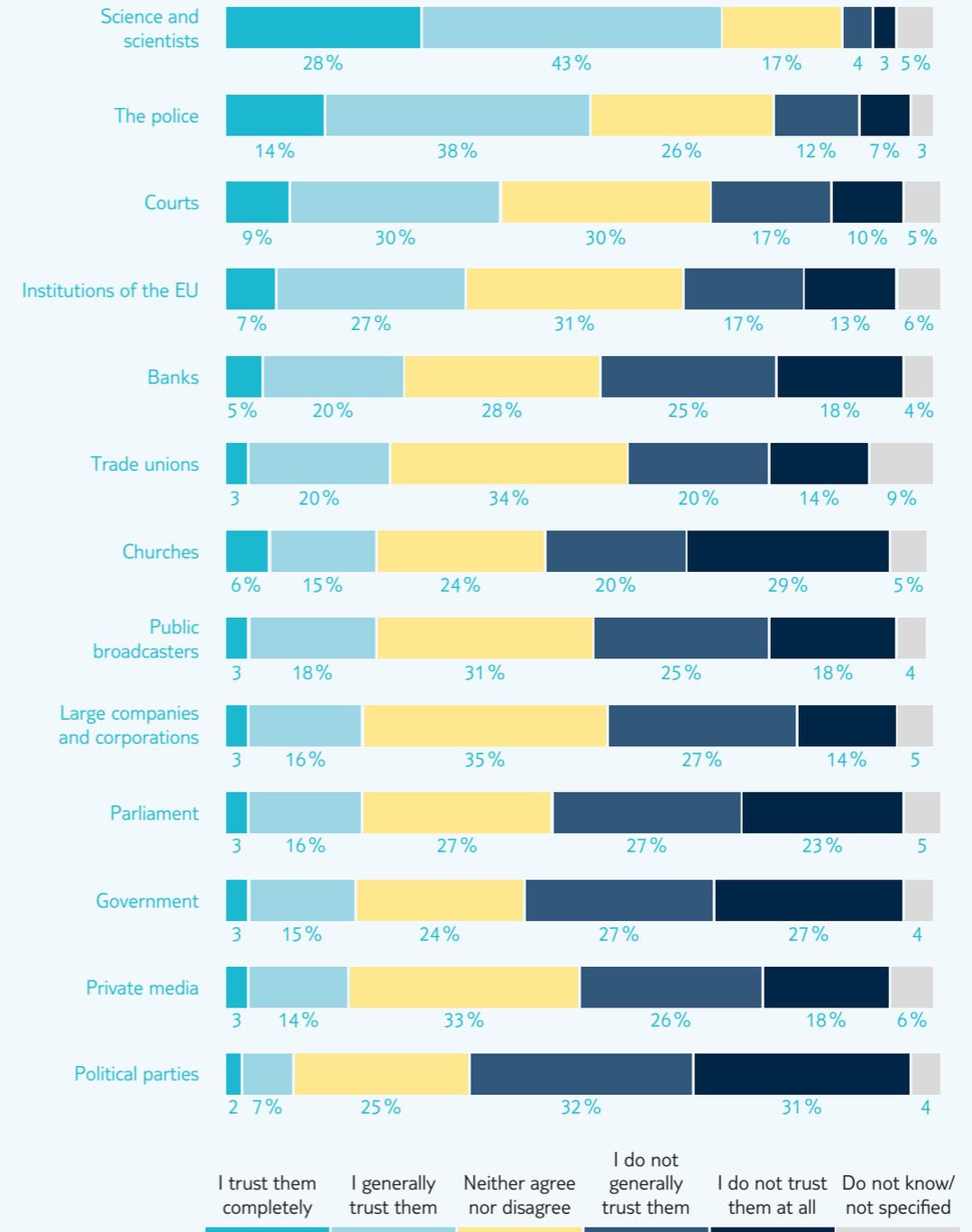
Young people in Germany do not regard promoting economic growth as a particular priority. At a national level, they even believe it more important that governments devote their attention to topics such as education, science and digitalisation. Such results stand out considerably from the European average.



POLITICAL ATTITUDES

In general, science and the police are well regarded, enjoying the trust of over half of young people.

On the other hand, young people in Europe trust political parties less than major companies and corporate groups.

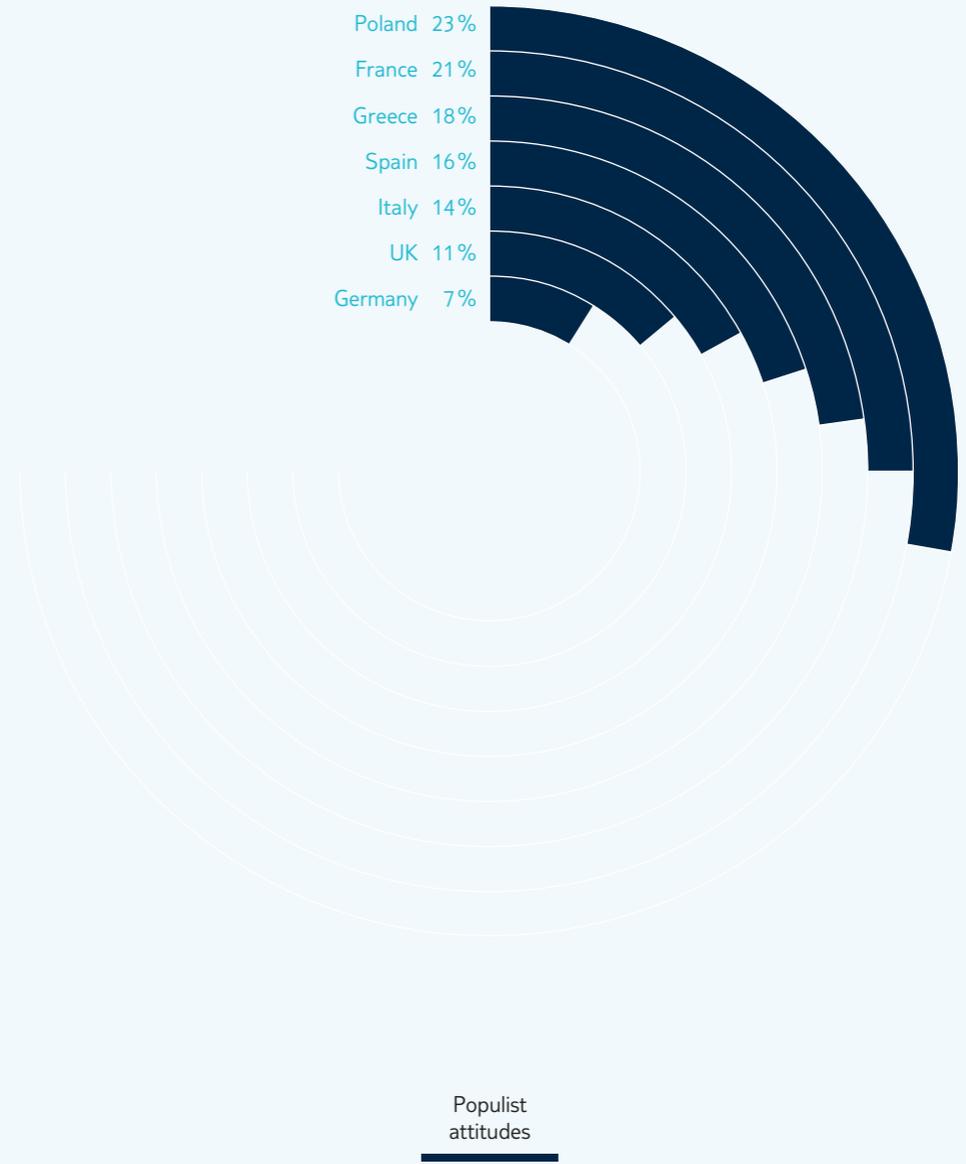


How much do you trust the following organisations and groups?

POPULISM

Populist attitudes are relatively common among young people in Poland, France and Greece.

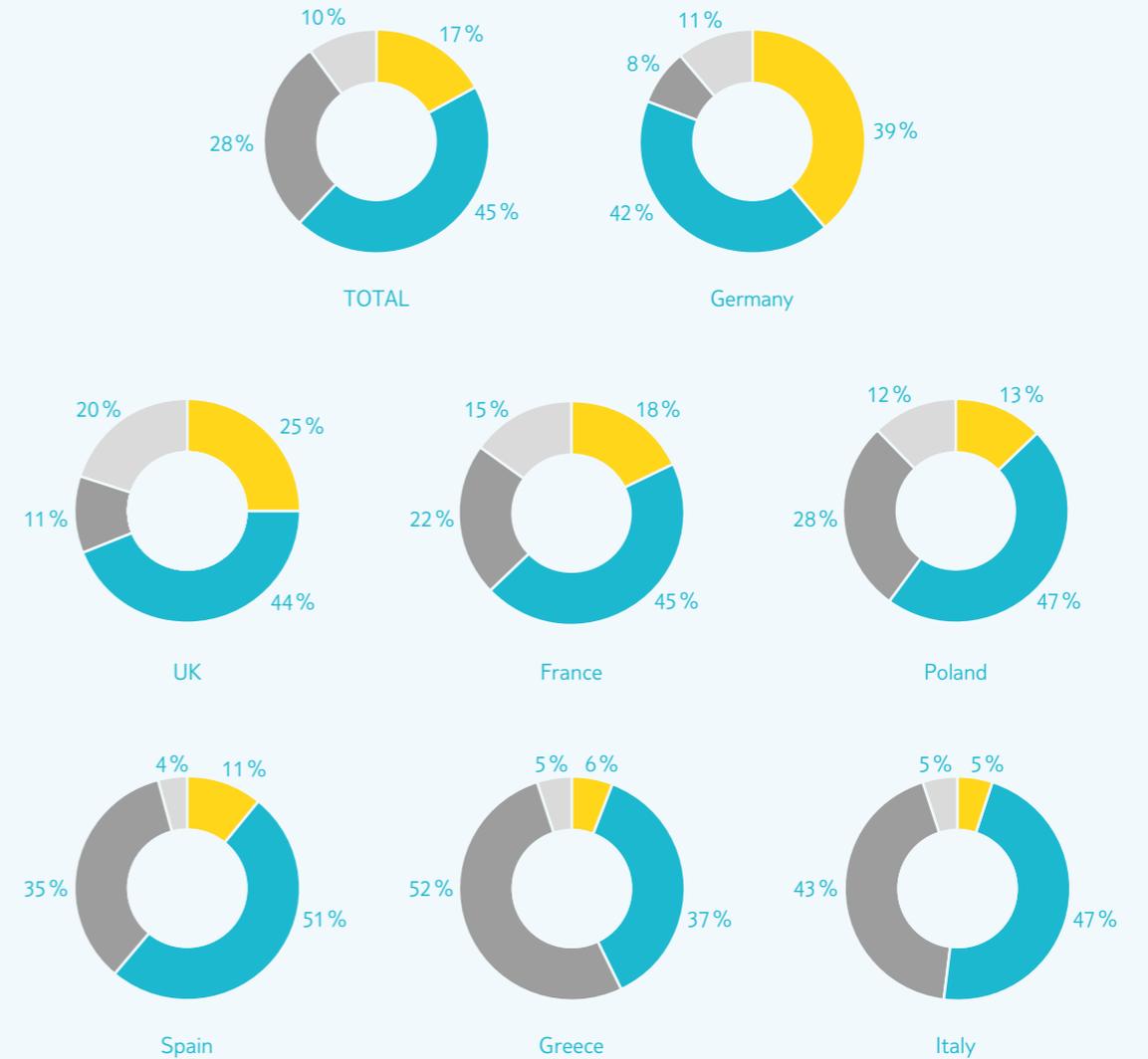
These “populist attitudes” were assessed through 15 questions across three dimensions: “anti-elitism”, “belief in unrestricted popular sovereignty” and the “notion of a homogeneous will of the people”.



NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

Only a minority of young people believe that the political system in their country “works by and large” as it should.

Around half of young Europeans believe their country’s political system is in need of reform. Almost one-third think radical change is required; in Greece, this figure rises to almost half. In Germany, young people are more satisfied with the country’s political system than the European average.



Do not know/not specified

By and large, the political system in [country] works the way it is supposed to.

The political system in [country] works so badly that only radical change could fix it.

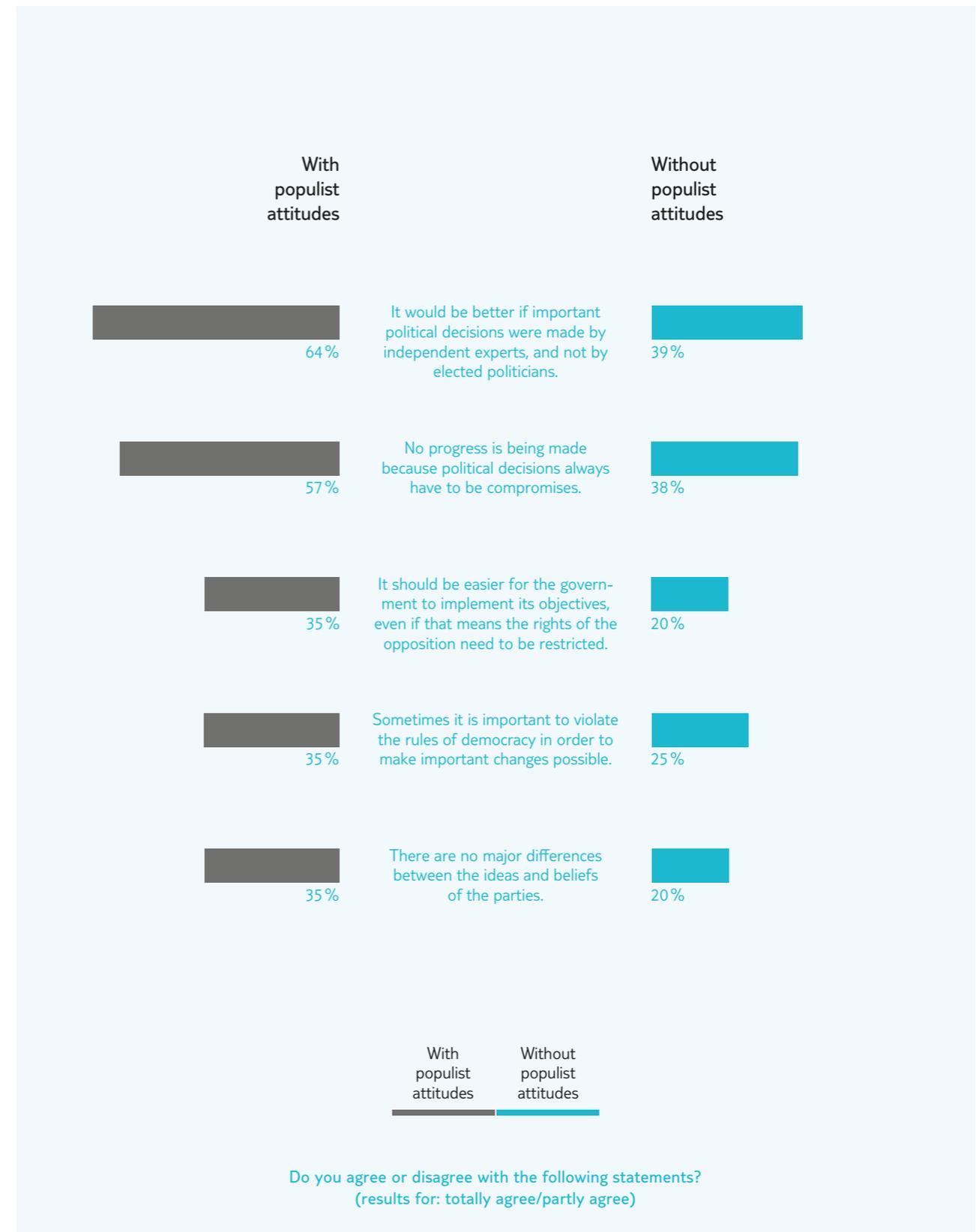
The political system in [country] does not work, but it could be fixed with a few changes.

When you think about the political system in your country, which of the following statements do you most agree with?

POPULISM

Young Europeans with populist attitudes are more likely to have an illiberal interpretation of democracy.

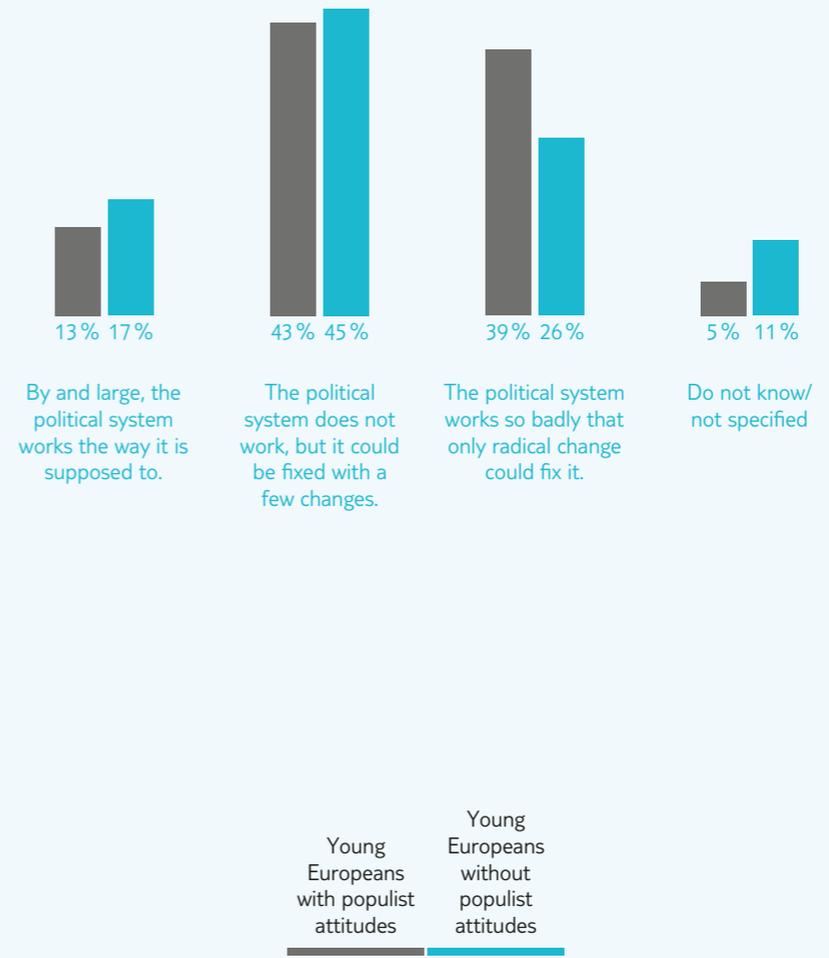
In their view, political decisions should be taken by independent experts rather than by politicians elected by the people. They would also be more prepared to restrict opposition rights and violate democratic rules.



POPULISM

Those with populist viewpoints are more likely to support radical changes – indeed, almost 40 per cent of this group would do so.

However, more than a quarter of young Europeans who do not hold populist views also believe that radical changes are necessary.

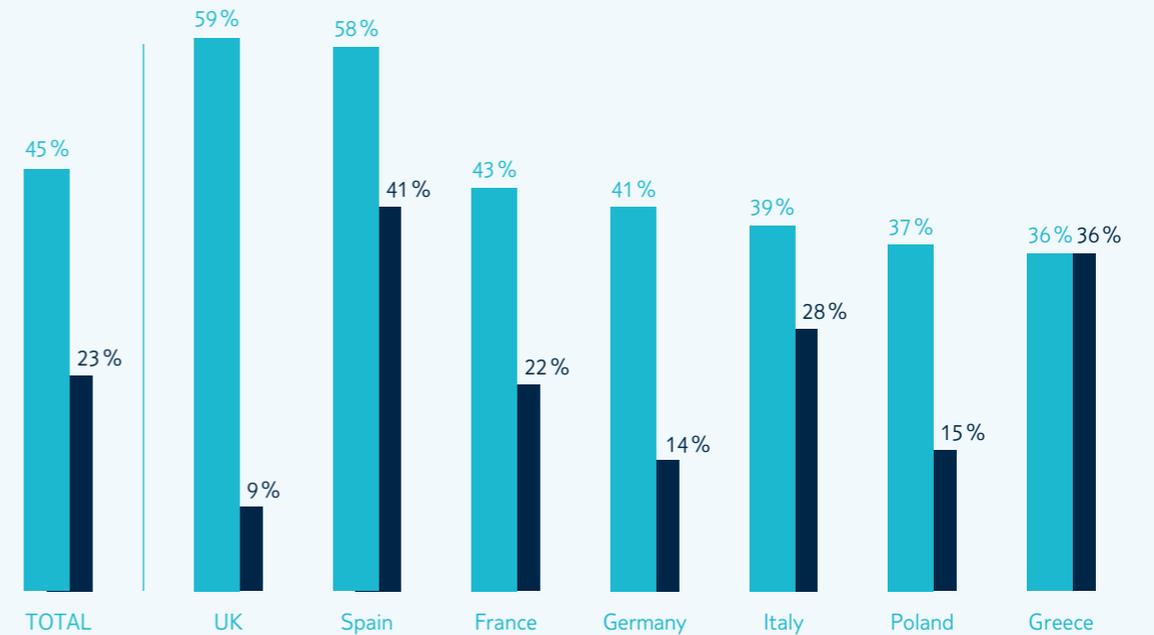


When you think about the political system in your country, which of the following statements do you most agree with?

PARTICIPATION

If young Europeans want to protest, they use the Internet. They prefer to voice their political opinions online rather than offline – which is also easier.

Digitalisation is also changing forms of political protest. However, street demonstrations remain a more popular form of protest in Greece, Italy and Spain.



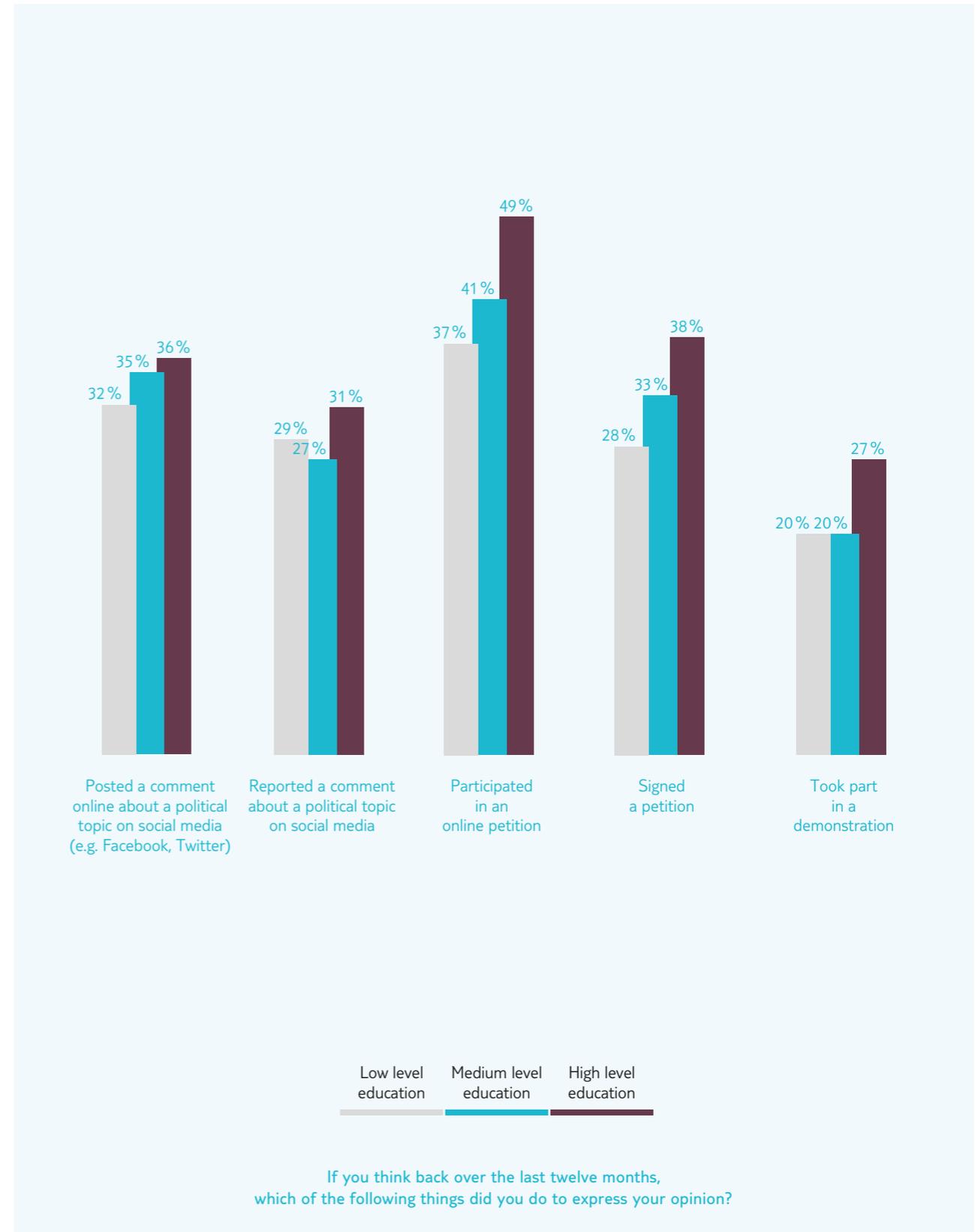
Participated in an online petition
Took part in a demonstration

If you think back over the last twelve months, which of the following things did you do to express your opinion?

PARTICIPATION

Well-educated young people engage more with political topics online, particularly in the form of online petitions.

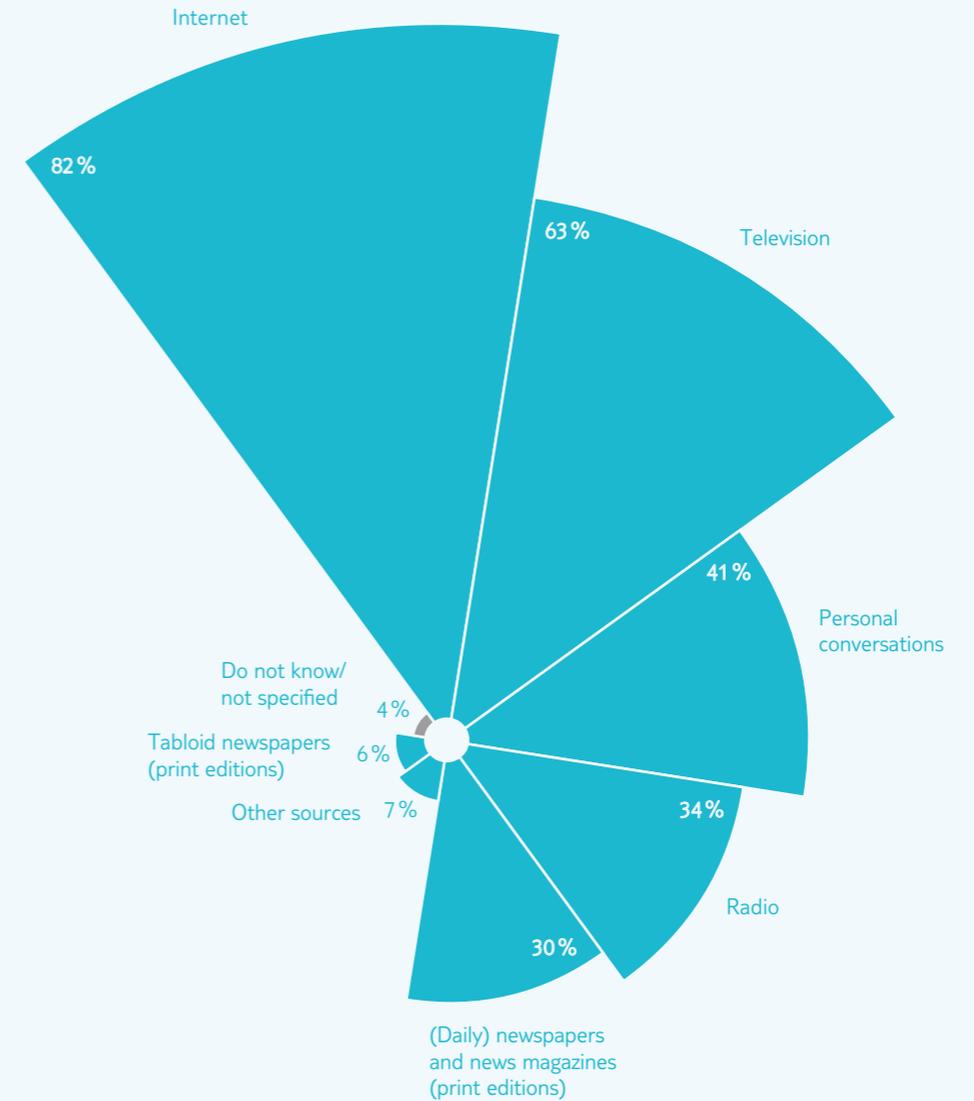
Young people’s willingness to post a comment on social media is less dependent on their level of education. Around one-third have done so at least once – a figure true for those with low, average and high levels of education.



USE OF MEDIA

The Internet is the primary source of political information. More than three-quarters of young Europeans find information on political news and current events online.

The Internet beats television into second place by some distance. Even further back, radio and printed newspapers are comparatively unpopular.

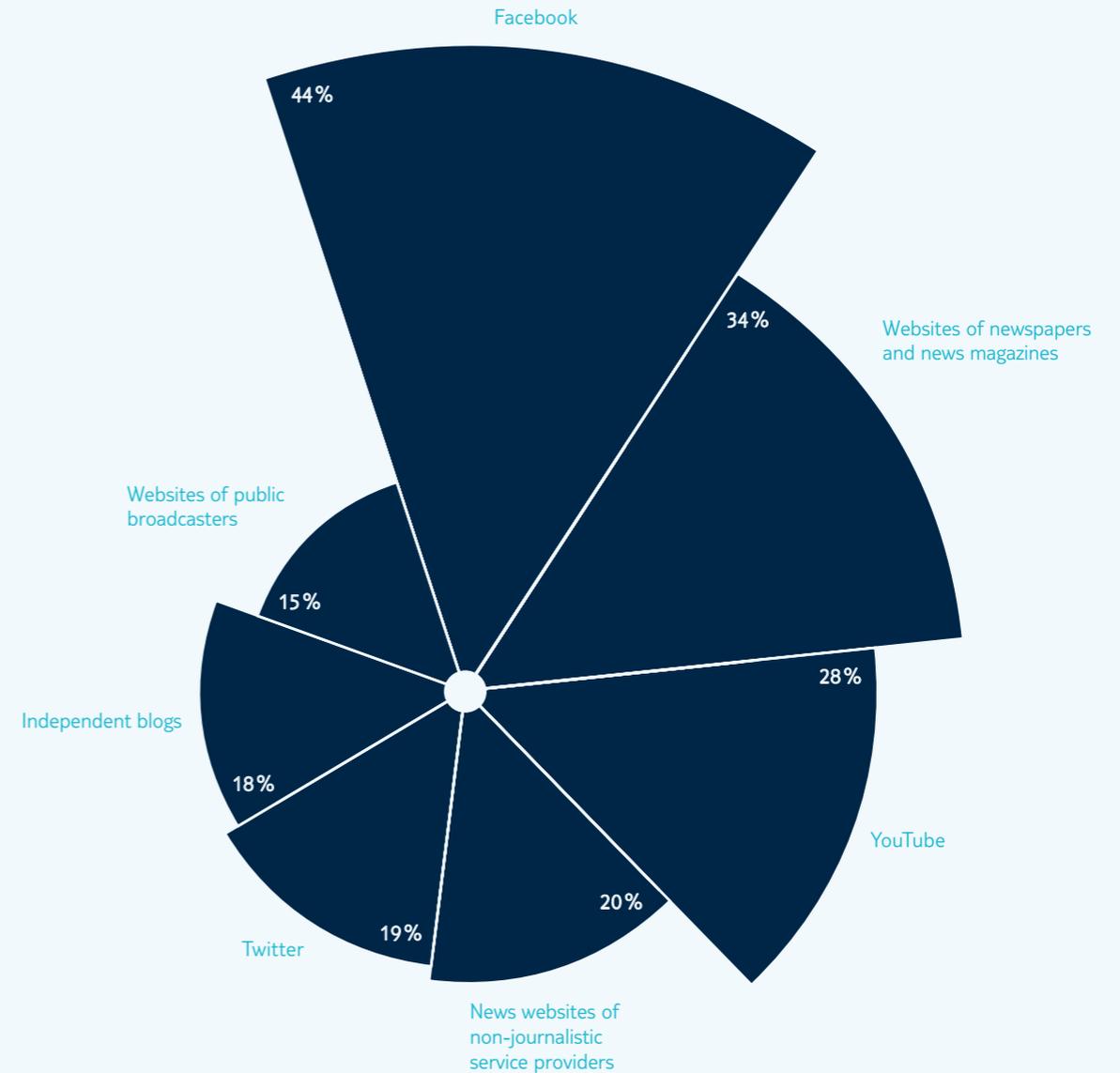


There are many ways to stay informed about current political events. Where do you generally obtain the most information about politics?

USE OF MEDIA

Generally speaking, Facebook is the main source of political information. Almost half of young Europeans use Facebook for this purpose.

Although the online editions of newspapers and news magazines enjoy considerable popularity, the corresponding platforms of public broadcasters go relatively unused.

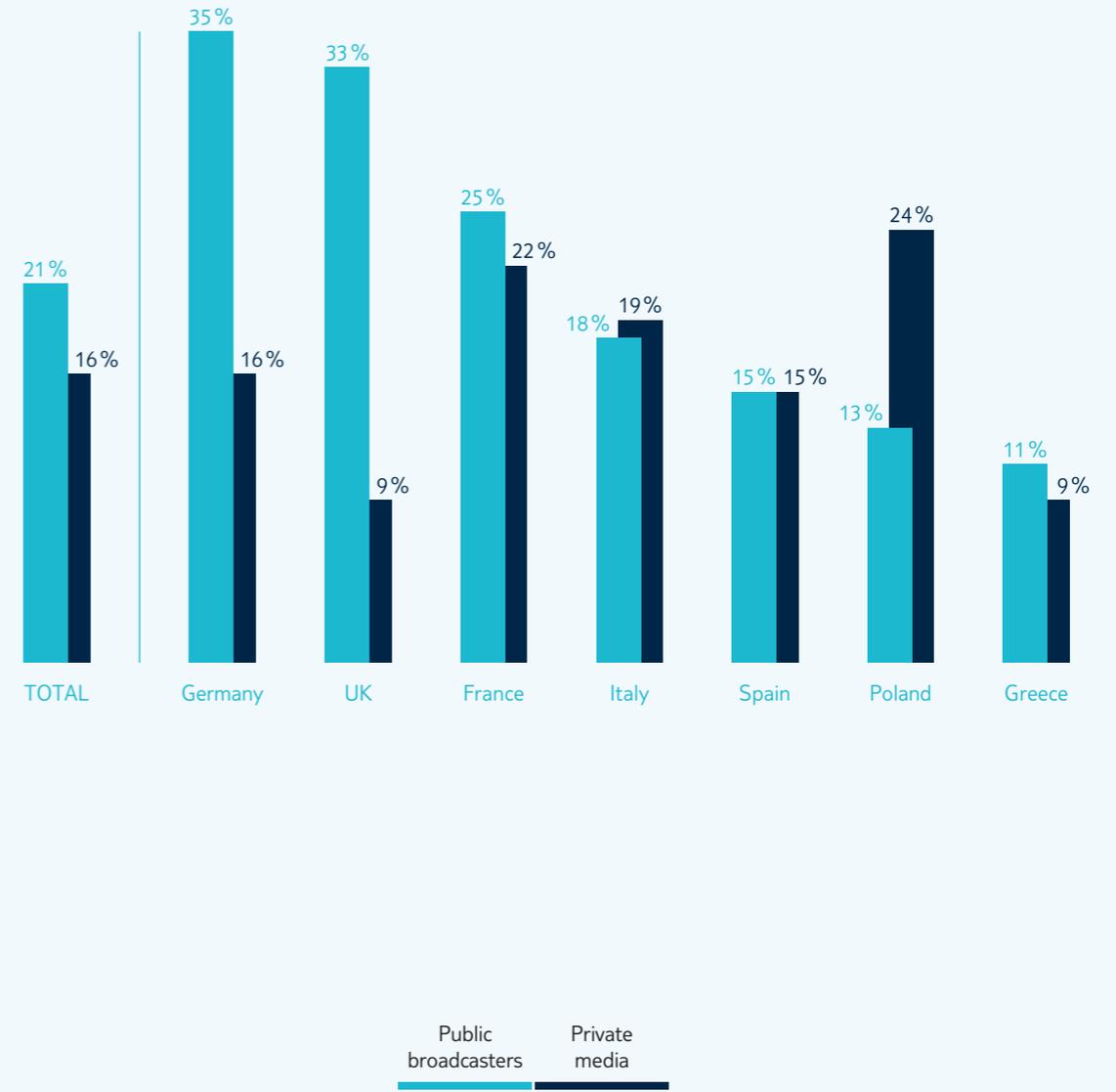


There are many ways to stay informed about current political events. Where online do you usually find the most information about politics?

USE OF MEDIA

Are public broadcasters under threat? Only one young European in five still trusts such media sources.

In Germany and the United Kingdom, public broadcasters continue to enjoy the trust of one-third of young people. In Poland and Greece, however, public broadcasters are held in particularly low esteem.

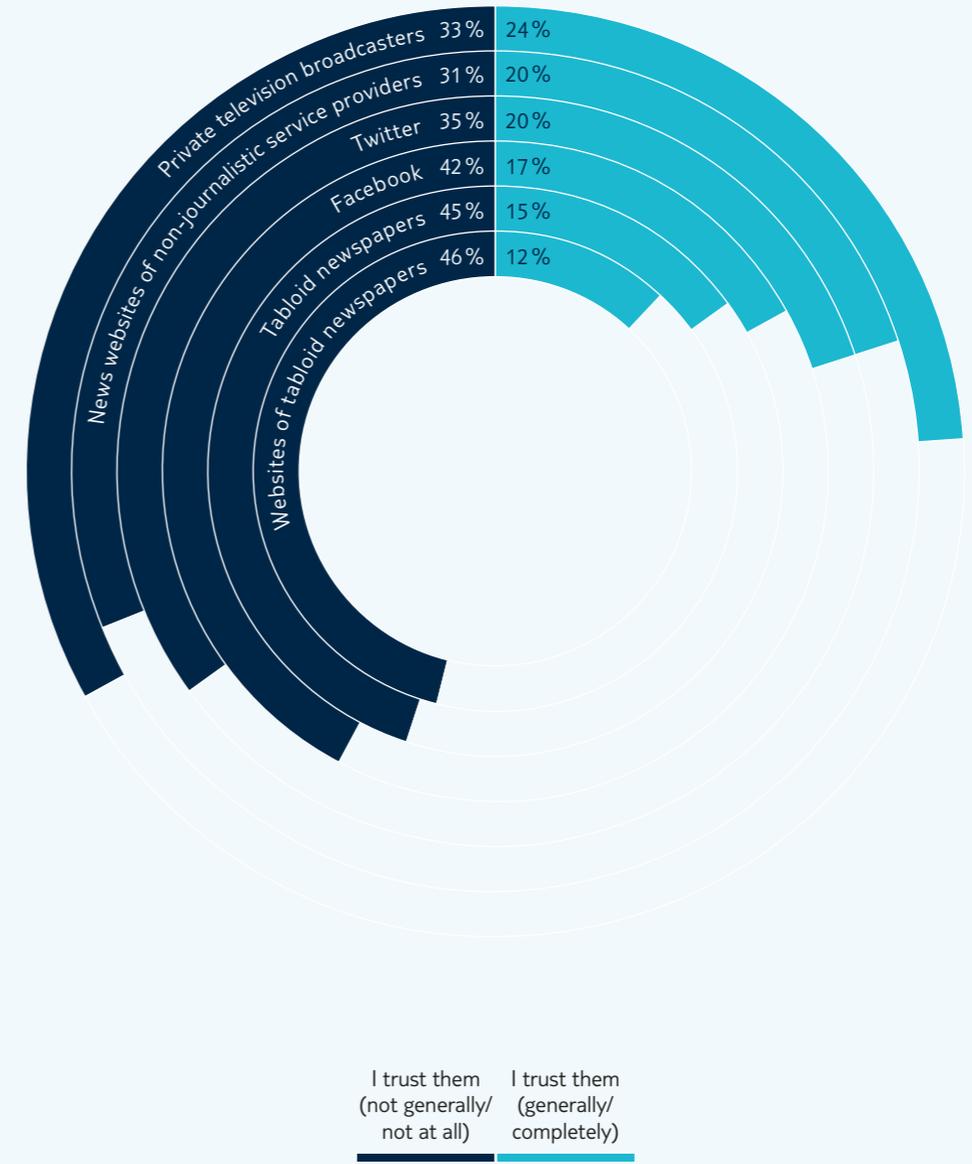


How much do you trust the following organisations and groups?
(results for: do generally trust/trust them completely)

USE OF MEDIA

Despite the fact so many young people use Facebook as a source of information, they do not trust the information they find there.

Only tabloid media outlets are held in lower regard, ranking slightly below the social network.

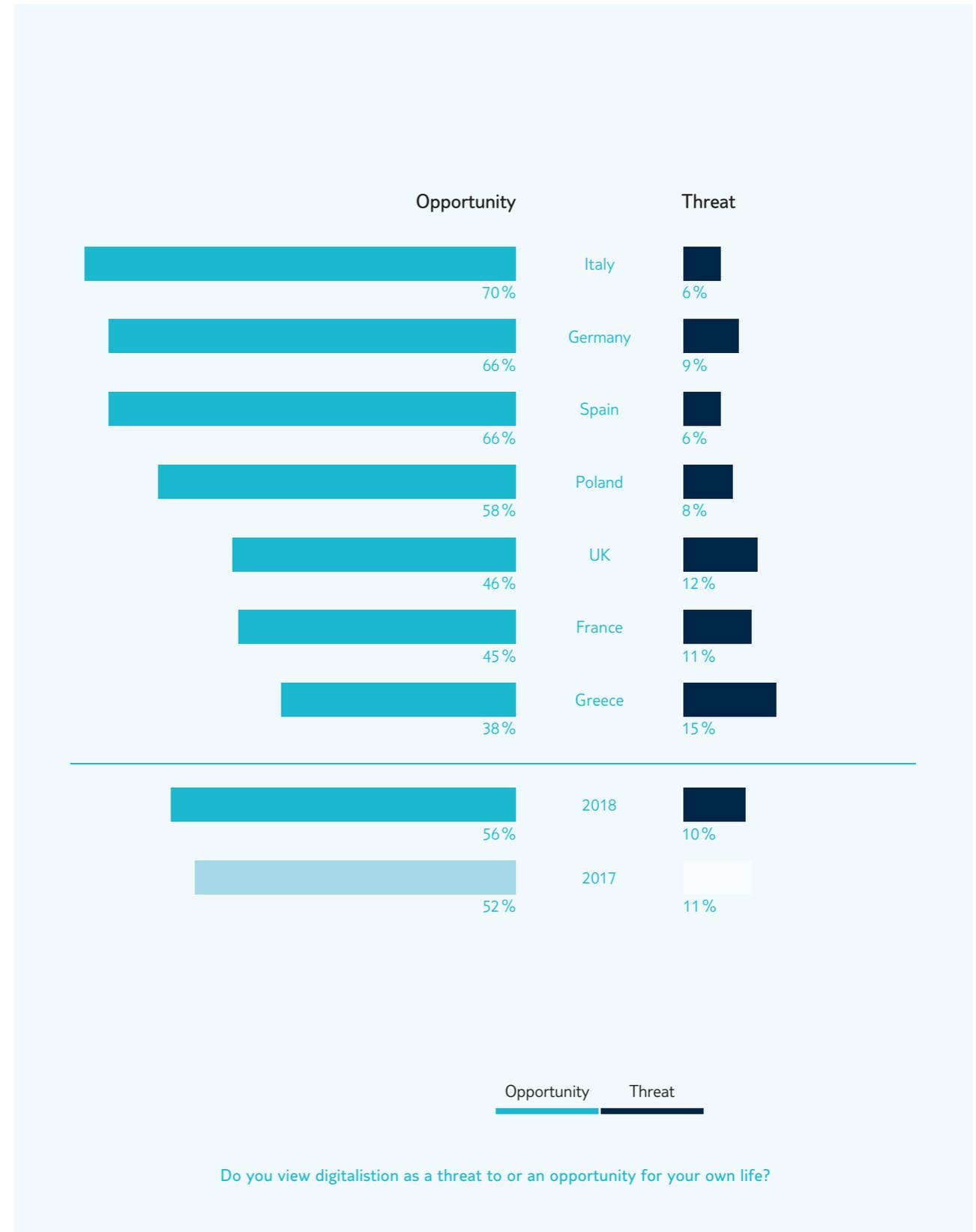


How much do you trust the following information sources in general?

USE OF MEDIA

Digitalisation is perceived as an opportunity – especially by young people in Italy, Germany and Spain.

On the whole, however, young Europeans believe the continent has a lot of catching-up to do in terms of digitalisation. More than one in ten young people in the United Kingdom, France and Greece see it as more of a threat than an opportunity.



YOUNG PEOPLE IN AN AGE OF POPULISM

The establishment of modern democracy was the most successful political achievement of the 20th century. The attitudes of today's European youth towards democracy, populism and the concept of a state under the rule of law will determine whether it stays that way.

by Marcus Spittler

In his latest book, "The People vs. Democracy", Yascha Mounk presents a rather daring hypothesis: he contends that democracy is under threat as right-wing populist parties, both in the USA and here in Europe, are actively working to dismantle liberal accomplishments like the state of law and freedom of the press. The lecturer in political theory at Harvard University argues that other warning signs are showing. Indeed, the Freedom House Index – an expert analysis of global developments, published each year – has identified a constant trend of reversing and reducing civil liberties since 2005. Mounk therefore concludes that the path of democratisation, long considered a one-way street, will have to be reconceptualised.

Even taking a less pessimistic view of the last decade or so, one of Mounk's central observations certainly provides food for thought: democracy no longer seems to be a key priority for young people. Mounk's evaluation of the World Values Survey shows that, in the USA, the youngest cohort surveyed considers democracy to be 40 percentage points less important than the oldest. In fact, only 29 per cent of under-30s said they considered living in a democracy to be "essential".¹

Similar deconsolidation effects can also be seen in other English-speaking countries, as well as in Sweden, Poland and the Netherlands. Yet while Mounk's results are indisputable, it remains unclear what firm conclusions can be drawn. Just as was the case for Mounk, a central finding of the TUI Foundation's "Young Europe" study is that young adults take a critical stance towards democracy. In 2017, a slim majority of 52 per cent of young people surveyed agreed that "overall, democracy is the best type of government"; this year saw a slight positive rise to 58 per cent. Nevertheless, the number of young people who would support moves to alternative systems must not be underestimated.

It is therefore entirely reasonable to take a closer look at the youngest members of "Generation Y" in the TUI Foundation's 2018 Youth Study in order to assess their impressions of our democratic system, the European Union and the recent political phenomenon of populism. After all, various questions remain: do young people just regard democracy as something natural, a matter of course? And is it only less important to them because they do not believe it is actually under threat? How does this generation of digital natives interact with old and new media, and has the way in which they participate in the political discourse changed? What are the effects of becoming politically aware and engaged in a time when populists are as much a part of the political landscape as the established mainstream parties?

Instilling European values

One thing is clear: the struggle to interpret and define democratic and liberal values is raging fiercely. Yet one of the 2018 Youth Study's most stable findings makes clear that populists are a long way from dominating the political sphere. In comparison with last year's figures, there was a moderate rise in the proportion of young people enthused by the European project. This can be seen in the question of whether the respondents' respective home countries should remain in the European Union, as well as the increase in respondents agreeing with the statement that their country and the EU need each other in equal measure.

Above all, however, there was an increase in the proportion of young people who describe themselves as having a "hybrid identity"; that is to say, they identify as both a citizen of their country and as a European. Quite surprisingly, this was also true for the young people in Spain, Italy and Greece in Southern

¹ cf. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/29/world/americas/western-liberal-democracy.html> (retrieved on 17/04/2018).

Europe, and a particularly marked increase was recorded in France. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the reforms to the European Union proposed by the new French President, Emmanuel Macron, have been positively received. This is despite the fact that, in last year's French presidential election, the majority of young French voters supported populist candidates in Jean-Luc Mélenchon or Marine Le Pen.

In his Europe speech – held at the Sorbonne University, a location chosen for its association with young French people – Macron very consciously incorporated the topic of sovereignty. Focusing on this term, often deployed by populists in anti-EU attacks, he reinterpreted the concept from a pro-European perspective. In doing so, he contributed to new growth in enthusiasm for the European project – in a country still battling with a youth unemployment rate of 21 per cent.

The importance of such new impetus for EU support has also been shown in more recent studies on Brexit. Research has shown that the Remain campaign made a major error in focusing too heavily on the high costs of Brexit. By choosing this line of attack, the pro-EU campaign failed to emphasise the benefits of the United Kingdom's EU membership, which would have gained much more traction.² In addition to the finding in last year's survey that economic inequalities have an effect on support for the EU, this year's Youth Study by the TUI Foundation makes clear that young people can be instilled with a positive attitude towards the EU. Doing so requires action to match from political representatives and leaders, not to mention a positive vision for the EU.

There is a catch, however: this year's results show once again that young people in the countries surveyed are not even remotely agreed on what the roles and objectives of the common European pro-

ject should be. There is overarching agreement insofar as respondents primarily regard the EU as an economic alliance. Only young Britons see the EU as an instrument by which to demonstrate and exercise influence in the international arena. Young French and German people overwhelmingly regard protecting the environment and climate as a key task for the EU.

Young Greeks consider the open borders within the EU as more of a threat than an opportunity; the opposite is true of young Spaniards. Compared to last year's results, Italian respondents have become

Young people can certainly be instilled with a positive view of the EU.

more critical of immigration, while those in Poland consider "regulating immigration" and "fighting terrorism" to be particularly high priorities. This lays bare the extent to which frameworks and political discourses diverge in the individual countries, and emphasises the continued lack of a European demos. The 2018 study has confirmed last year's finding that support for the EU remains somewhat fragile.

The delicate relationship between populism and democracy

In contemporary analyses of young people's attitudes towards democracy, there is simply no escaping the phenomenon of populism. The continued resurgence of right-wing populist parties across Europe not only causes political commentators and members of the media to look on wide-eyed at their growing support, it also triggers frenzied attempts by the supposed "establishment" parties to adapt, including

a programmatic shift to the right. Much has been written – and continues to be written – about right-wing populist parties' critical stances on asylum seekers and their lifestyles. What remains unclear, however, is whether and to what extent such parties' discourse actually represents a long-term threat to our democratic system and institutions such as the European Union, and how it influences the democratic values of young adults.

In the first instance, however, one basic question needs to be answered: what is populism – beyond a negative label bandied about in the modern political arena? The prevailing view in political science is that populism is a "thin-centred ideology".³ This description is apt and highlights that populism cannot exist in and of itself; rather, it can only exist in combination with a core ideology. This core ideology might be nationalism and nativism, as in the case of right-wing populists; left-wing populists combine populism with socialism. A centrist populist ideology would also theoretically be possible. At its root, populism centres around the idea that society is composed of two opposing, antagonistic groups. On the one side are the "true people" – the "volonté générale" – who are prevented from implementing their will by the other side, the "corrupt elite". Populism is therefore a hostile, exaggerated criticism of these elites and also assumes that a homogeneous will of the people actually exists.

Populists are often happy to project an image of themselves as "saviours of democracy". Some political theorists, such as the radical democrat Chantal Mouffe, have even suggested that populism might be able to revitalise what they regard as "post-political" Western society. Populism, they argue, is rather like the drunken friend at a dinner party: released from their inhibitions, they speak uncomfortable supposed truths – perhaps annoying other guests, but ultimately harmless.

And, in truth, populist parties can be seen to have a positive influence – providing they remain in opposition, that is. For example, in some countries the emergence of populists has been accompanied by a rise in voter turnout. One reason for this lies in the fact that populists can successfully mobilise support in poorly represented, economically left-leaning but socially authoritarian demographics. Furthermore, voters feel directly challenged by the strong counter-movements that oppose populist parties. However, the negative effects of right-wing populist parties become quite clear when they assume governmental responsibility. In Poland and Hungary – but also in Italy and Austria – it has become clear that, on gaining power, right-wing populist parties have gradually worked to impede public reporting and news coverage, weaken the power of the courts and appoint their own supporters to such bodies.

Political scientist Jan-Werner Müller, who has written a popular scientific book on the subject, takes a rather clear stance. He believes that populists' desire to represent the people is anti-pluralistic and, therefore, at odds with democratic systems. When

On the one side are the "true people" – on the other is the "corrupt elite".

German populists chant "Wir sind das Volk" ("We are the people"), what they actually mean is: "We, and only we, represent the people".

So how do young people react to the populist narrative presented to them? Are they attracted by the idea of an "illiberal democracy", as Viktor Orbán describes it? Do slogans such as "Hol dir dein Land zurück!" ("Take back your country!") – as used by the German right-wing AfD party in the 2017 general

² cf. Goodwin, Matthew / Hix, Simon / Pickup, Mark (2018): "For and Against Brexit: A Survey Experiment of the Impact of Campaign Effects on Public Attitudes toward EU Membership". In: British Journal of Political Science, pp. 1–15.

³ cf. Mudde, Cas (2004): "The Populist Zeitgeist". In: Government and Opposition, 39/4, pp. 541–563.

election – entice young voters? In this context, young adults become particularly important: relatively stable, affective relationships are formed with certain political parties in these young years of engagement.

The idea of direct, popular sovereignty enjoys considerable support.

Even if the willingness to vote for another party on occasion has increased over the years, the party affiliations and attitudes acquired during this initial phase of socialisation remain relatively stable.

To this end, the TUI Foundation's Youth Study also looked into the attitudes of young Europeans in the topic areas of democracy and populism. It therefore provides interesting data for scientific analysis, as little research has been conducted into the concerns of populist parties beyond rudimentary concepts of political disillusionment. The results make clear that patterns of anti-elitist attitudes are considerably widespread. Some 70 per cent of young people agreed with the sentence "politicians talk too much and get too little done". The idea of direct, popular sovereignty also enjoys considerable support. A further 66 per cent agreed that "the politicians in parliament should comply with the will of the people" – which would suggest that those surveyed have little understanding of an elected member's individual mandate. However, considerably fewer young people were able to reconcile themselves with the concept of a homogeneous will of the people. Only 32 per cent of German respondents endorsed the idea that "the German people are a cohesive unit, and not just a whole of individual people".

The young people's attitudes towards criticism of the elites, popular sovereignty and homogeneity

were combined and applied as a measure of the level to which populist ideas had spread. To be on the safe side on this issue, only young people who agreed with populist statements for at least twelve out of fifteen questions across the three attitude complexes were identified as displaying "populist tendencies". While this does not necessarily mean that all such young people actually vote for populist parties in practice, it does reveal something about the parties' potential voters. The numbers of young people identified as showing such tendencies is particularly high in France and Poland, and lower in Germany and the United Kingdom – which also corresponds, to some extent, with the vote shares populist parties have received from young voters in these countries. An interesting aspect – and certainly one in line with expectations – is that these young people in no way identify themselves as being anti-democratic. They believe that others of the same age feel quite the same in terms of the importance and nature of democracy. Having said

Young adults have little confidence in political parties, governments and parliaments.

that, closer analysis leaves no doubt that young people with populist attitudes have a rather different perception of democracy, tending towards being illiberal.

Instead, they are more likely to favour restricting opposition rights, to delegate decisions to relevant experts and violate democratic rules. Some 39 per cent agreed that radical change is the only way to improve their country's political system.

However, these results cannot hide the fact that democracy is regarded as at least somewhat

problematic by the vast majority of young people surveyed. Parties, governments and parliaments generally enjoy little faith, and many young people, especially in the southern European countries, are calling for more transparency. This is also reflected in the below-average turnout of young voters – a feature of last year's general election in Germany that is also borne out in this study.

Young voters participate online

There is no doubt that young adults' participation in political processes has shifted into the online world. Nevertheless, studies into this issue clearly show that young adults' participation online is "genuine". This means that sheer fun or "slacktivism" are just as common motivations for political participation online as they are offline and are ultimately of little consequence.⁴ In the TUI Foundation's Youth Study, over one-third of young adults surveyed said they had posted a political comment or signed an online petition in the previous twelve months. However, the study also illustrated an effect that has long been referred to as "two-thirds democracy": the bottom third of the population from a socio-economic perspective – and, in this study, young adults with a lower level of education – participate less frequently in elections or other forms of civic participation, and are consequently afforded less representation.

Referendums on important topics – an idea supported by a narrow majority of young people – would not solve this problem. In fact, they would likely only exacerbate it. Instead, the objective should be to introduce very consciously the idea of democratic participation to young people. This remains important given the fact that younger

generations overwhelmingly source their information online, with social networks as their first port of call. The impact of election campaigns on voting intention is, on the whole, not as significant as the current data scandal engulfing Facebook and Cambridge Analytica might suggest. Nonetheless, it remains to be seen whether this will stay the same: young people report Facebook as their first source of information online, and populist parties understand very well how to get their messages heard online.

Are young generations of Europeans democracy's great hope?

There is a rich history of politicians and commentators proclaiming that democracy is in crisis. The results of the 2018 Youth Study can also be seen as something of a warning sign. Young adults today are more politicised than the same age group was two decades ago; though they participate online, they are critical of the current political system. A majority still support democratic systems, but have little confidence or trust in political parties and establishment elites. For a small proportion, though, populist parties represent a genuine alternative.

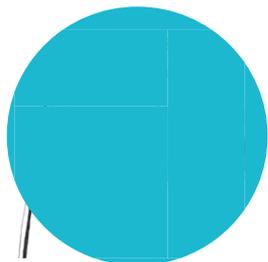
The fact that a large proportion of young people support radical change shows quite unequivocally that it will take considerable effort to regain their generation's trust in the political process. But such attempts can certainly succeed: the French president's grapple to wrestle back the domestic discourse around the European Union shows as much. Ultimately, the question of whether the contemporary populist zeitgeist will become a populist epoch is a matter for this generation to decide. ●

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⁴ cf. Ritz, Claudia / Wagner, Aiko (2016): "Symbolisch oder echt? Die politische Beteiligung junger Erwachsener in Deutschland online und offline". In: Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen, 47/2, pp. 304–326.

LEARNING TOGETHER

“Europe. Living and Understanding.” This is the guiding message of the TUI Foundation. Our work focuses on education programmes for school pupils and young adults.

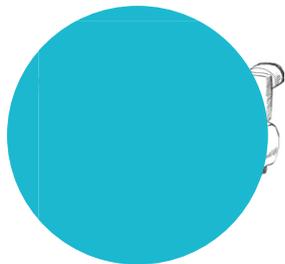


Understanding Europe

Europe is perceived as being a distant entity. How – and why – the various institutions of the European Union (EU) are intertwined is difficult to explain. “Understanding Europe” has set itself the task of doing so. The Schwarzkopf Foundation offers EU crash courses in schools in 15 countries. In collaboration with the TUI Foundation, the project has been implemented in Hamburg, the Netherlands and Spain. The 135 EU courses offered in Spain and the Netherlands alone are set to reach 3,300 pupils by the end of 2018.

We are Europe!

Does the EU influence my life? Barely. Or, at least, that is the majority view of socially disadvantaged young people aged between 16 and 18 with little or no access to political education. In order to engage this target group in educational work on European public policy issues, the TUI Foundation and IKAB training institute are working on a collaborative pilot project called “Europa sind wir!” (“We are Europe!”) – working closely with municipal youth welfare and employment services. The project will give young people the opportunity to formulate concepts of “their” Europe, and then implement these in guided projects like video productions. Set for launch in September 2018, the pilot project will start in Darmstadt, Dresden and Cologne.



Europe Live!

Young people today are growing up in a Europe of peaceful neighbours. The advantages – being able to travel freely, or the shared currency – are self-evident, but the European Union itself is often seen as a bureaucratic kraken, extending its tentacles. To counteract this scepticism, the TUI Foundation initiated the “Europe Live!” event series. Twice per year, the series gives pupils in the 9th and 10th grade in German schools the opportunity to engage with politicians and discuss divisive issues of European policy. The message is that the European project is a participative endeavour, not merely an abstract construct. The next round of discussions is scheduled for autumn 2018.

Kick for Europe!

In the stadium they cheer on their team. Now, young people from Vienna and Frankfurt are discovering what else they have in common as part of the first “Kick for Europe” meeting. In a series of workshops, the young people learn that topics of European policy like right-wing populism, migration and integration are also relevant to football. The venue is the world’s most beautiful classroom: the local team’s stadium – in this case the Commerzbank-Arena, home of the Bundesliga team Eintracht Frankfurt. The non-profit organisation Lernort Stadion e. V. makes it all possible. Its philosophy centres around a shared passion for the beautiful game. Football has the potential to integrate others: it offers countless connecting factors and opportunities to start discussions on socio-political topics and reinforce democratic competencies. Focusing on European public policy issues, the “Kick for Europe” education project is supported by the German Federal Foreign Office in collaboration with the TUI Foundation, the Allianz Cultural Foundation and the Schwarzkopf Foundation Young Europe.

THE TUI FOUNDATION

Following on from last year's inaugural international study, the TUI Foundation's "Young Europe 2018" study scrutinises the relation between young people and democracy in Europe. It represents a further step towards a new rapprochement.

The TUI Foundation supports and realises projects around the topic of "Young Europe" with the aim of reinforcing the concept of Europe. For this reason, it continues to invest in long-term regional, national and international projects with a focus on education, training and individual and professional development. Headquartered in Hanover, the independent and autonomous foundation is committed to serving the common good.

You can find further information on the Foundation's work and projects at: www.tui-stiftung.de

IMPRINT

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