



Flash Eurobarometer 375

EUROPEAN YOUTH: PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE

SUMMARY

Fieldwork: April 2013

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This survey has been requested by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture and co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication.

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 375 - TNS Political & Social

Flash Eurobarometer 375

**European Youth:
Participation in Democratic Life**

Conducted by TNS Political & Social
at the request of the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Education and Culture

Survey co-ordinated by the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Communication
(DG COMM "Research and Speechwriting" Unit)

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INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of the Flash Eurobarometer survey "*European Youth: Participation in Democratic Life*" (No 375) was to study young EU citizens' participation in society, with special reference to attitudes towards participation in elections and intentions to participate in the European elections in 2014. Only respondents aged 15 to 30 were considered for this survey.

This issue is of particular interest for the European Union, as its Treaties¹ stipulate that it shall encourage the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe. The EU Youth Strategy² also underlines the need to support young people's participation in representative democracy and civil society.

The survey examined the following issues:

- young people's involvement in a range of groups and clubs such as sports clubs, youth organisations and cultural organisations. The findings are compared with those from the same question which was previously asked in a Flash Eurobarometer survey "*Youth on the Move*" (No 319a) conducted in early 2011
- young people's participation in political elections at the local, regional or national level, the results of which are again compared with those from "*Youth on the Move*" (No 319a)
- young EU citizen's awareness and intended participation in forthcoming European elections
- respondents' awareness of how the members of the European Parliament are elected
- probability of voting in the European elections in 2014
- reasons behind their expected level of participation in the 2014 European elections.

Please note: voting is compulsory for at least some elections in Belgium, Cyprus, Luxembourg and Greece. The voting age is 18 for most of the elections in the EU Member States and in Croatia, with the exception of Austria where the voting age is 16.

¹ Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union

² http://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/eu-youth-strategy_en.htm

This survey was carried out by TNS Political & Social network in the 27 Member States of the European Union and in Croatia between the 2nd and the 19th of April 2013. 12,927 respondents at EU level from different social and demographic groups, aged between 15 and 30 years old, were interviewed via telephone (landline and mobile phone) in their mother tongue on behalf of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture. The methodology used is that of Eurobarometer surveys as carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication ("Research and Speechwriting" Unit)³. A technical note on the manner in which interviews were conducted by the Institutes within the TNS Political & Social network is appended as an annex to this report. Also included are the interview methods and confidence intervals⁴.

Note: In this report, countries are referred to by their official abbreviation. The abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

ABBREVIATIONS			
BE	Belgium	LV	Latvia
CZ	Czech Republic	LU	Luxembourg
BG	Bulgaria	HU	Hungary
DK	Denmark	MT	Malta
DE	Germany	NL	The Netherlands
EE	Estonia	AT	Austria
EL	Greece	PL	Poland
ES	Spain	PT	Portugal
FR	France	RO	Romania
IE	Ireland	SI	Slovenia
IT	Italy	SK	Slovakia
CY	Cyprus	FI	Finland
LT	Lithuania	SE	Sweden
		UK	The United Kingdom
HR	Croatia	EU27	European Union – 27 Member States
	EU15	BE, IT, FR, DE, LU, NL, DK, UK, IE, PT, ES, EL, AT, SE, FI**	
	NMS12	BG, CZ, EE, CY, LT, LV, MT, HU, PL, RO, SL, SK***	

** EU15 refers to the 15 countries forming the European Union before the enlargements of 2004 and 2007

*** The NMS12 are the 12 'new Member States' which joined the European Union during the 2004 and 2007 enlargements

* * * * *

We wish to thank the people throughout Europe who have given their time to take part in this survey. Without their active participation, this study would not have been possible.

³ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

⁴ The results tables are included in the annex. It should be noted that the total of the percentages in the tables of this report may exceed 100% when the respondent has the possibility of giving several answers to the question.

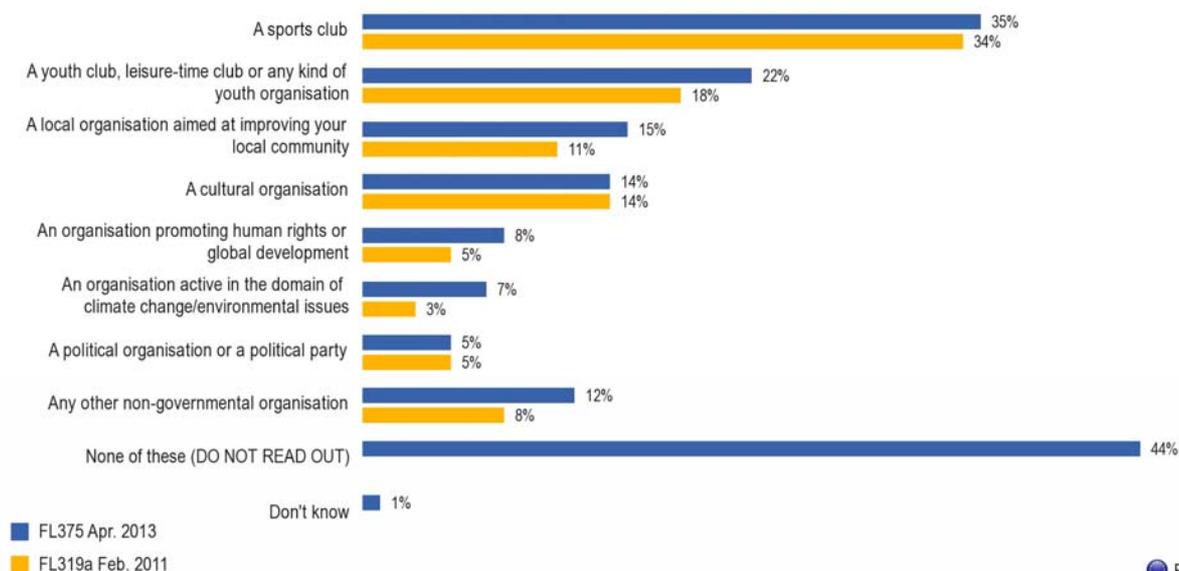
I. PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES OF VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS

--Involvement in a sports club is the most popular activity among young people--

Over a third of respondents say that they have been active in a sports club within the past year (35%). The next most popular activity is being involved in a youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation (22%). 15% of respondents are involved in a local organisation aiming to improve the local community, while 14% are active in a cultural organisation.

Fewer than one in 10 respondents say that they are part of other types of organisations: 8% participate in an organisation promoting human rights or global development; 7% are part of an organisation involved in climate change/environmental issues and 5% are involved in a political organisation or political party. In addition, one in eight respondents (12%) say that they are involved in another non-governmental organisation.

Q6. Have you in the past year participated in any activities of the following organisations?



Base: All respondents (12,927)

Sport is the most popular activity in each of the EU Member States. Respondents in the Netherlands are the most likely to have participated in a sports club in the last year (59%), followed by those in Ireland (53%), Sweden (48%), Luxembourg (48%), Denmark (48%) and Belgium (46%). A youth club, leisure-time club or any kind of youth organisation is the next most likely organisation mentioned by respondents. More than one in three respondents in Luxembourg (38%), Ireland (37%) and Belgium (32%) say that they have participated in this type of activity in the last year. Respondents in Ireland are particularly likely to be involved in a local organisation aimed at improving their local community (36%), which is significantly higher than in any other country.

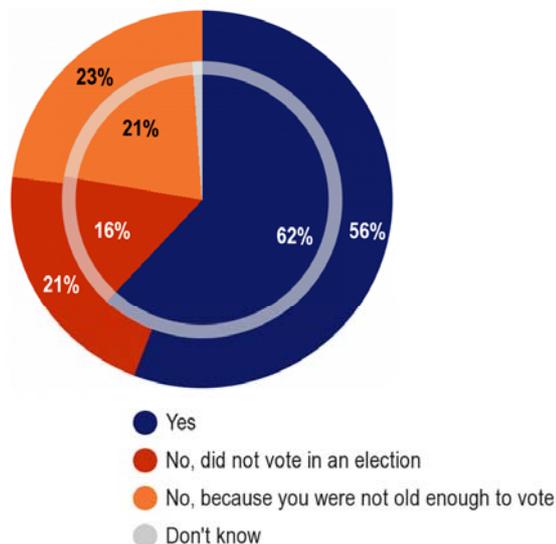
II. PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ELECTIONS

--73% of respondents who were old enough to do so have voted in a political election in the past three years--

Over half of those surveyed have voted in a political election at the local, regional or national level in the past three years (56%). Of the 44% of respondents who did not vote, only a fifth (21%) did so out of choice and a further 23% were not eligible to vote because of their age. These findings represent a decrease in participation since 2011, when 62% of respondents said that they had voted and 37% had not.

73% of respondents who were old enough to vote in a political election actually did vote in the past three years. This compares to 79% in 2011.

Q1. During the last 3 years, did you vote in any political election at the local, regional or national level? If you were, at that time, not eligible to vote, please say so.



Inner pie : FL319a Feb. 2011

Outer pie : FL375 Apr. 2013

EU27

Base: All respondents (12,927)

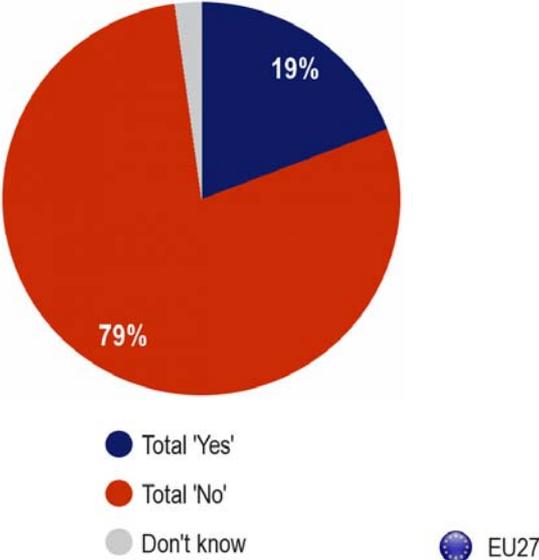
In 20 of the EU Member States a majority of respondents have voted in a political election in the past three years. In addition, a majority of those living in Croatia (67%) say that they have voted in the past three years. Voting among young people is particularly high in Malta (76%), Belgium (73%) and Italy (71%).

The countries where there has been a significant increase in the proportion of young people voting are: Italy (71%, +15 pp), Lithuania (48%, +14 pp), Finland (64%, +11 pp) and Malta (76%, +10 pp).

On the other hand, there are several countries that have seen a significant decrease in the proportion of young people voting. Participation in political elections has decreased the most in Hungary, from 67% in 2011 to 39% - a drop of 28 percentage points.

The majority of respondents (79%) would not consider standing as a candidate; 30% say probably not and 49% say certainly not. Almost one in five (19%) say that they would consider it.

Q2. Would you consider standing as a candidate in a political election at some point in your life?



Base: All respondents (12,927)

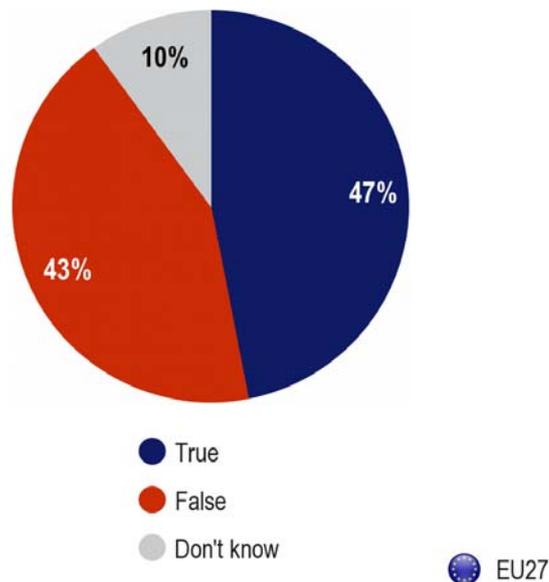
There is considerable variation in the findings by country. 29% of respondents in Sweden, 27% in Latvia and 24% in Romania would consider it, as would 22% of respondents in Italy, the UK, Poland and Bulgaria, 21% in Cyprus, Luxembourg and Germany and 20% of those in Ireland and Lithuania.

III. AWARENESS OF HOW THE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ARE ELECTED

--47% of respondents are aware of how members of the European Parliament are elected--

Almost half (47%) of respondents are correct when they say that the following statement is true: 'the members of the European Parliament are directly elected by the citizens of each EU Member State'.

Q3. Could you please tell me whether you think the following statement is true or false: the members of the European Parliament are directly elected by the citizens of each EU Member State?



Base: All respondents (12,927)

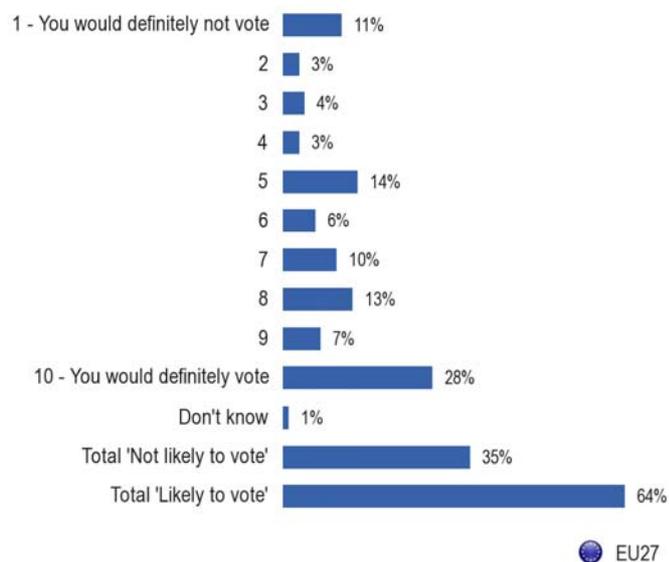
A particularly high proportion of respondents in the following countries are correct in saying that members are directly elected by the citizens of each Member State: 70% of respondents in Lithuania, 66% in Malta and Romania, 65% in Ireland and 61% in Slovenia, the UK and Portugal. On the other hand, awareness is low in the Netherlands (32%), the Czech Republic (32%) and Germany (35%).

IV. PROBABILITY OF VOTING IN THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS IN 2014

--64% say they are likely to vote in the 2014 European elections--

Approximately two thirds of respondents (64%) say that they are 'likely' to vote in the next European elections, that is, they gave scores of six or above for their answers to this question. A third (35%) say they are unlikely to vote, giving scores of between one and five. There are approximately three in ten (28%) respondents who say they will definitely vote, who gave a score of ten in response to this question, and one in ten (11%) who say they will definitely not vote, who gave a score of one.

Q4. Can you tell me on a scale of 1 to 10 how likely it is that you would vote in the next European elections in 2014? Please place yourself at a point on this scale where '1' indicates that you would "definitely not vote", '10' indicates that you would "definitely vote" and the remaining numbers indicate something in between these two positions?



Base: If at least 17 years old (except Austria – all respondents) = 11,702
(91% from the total number of respondents)

In Belgium, where voting in the European elections is normally compulsory, four in five (80%) of respondents say they are likely to vote. There are six other countries with high proportions of respondents showing positive intentions towards voting in the next European elections: the Netherlands (76%), Sweden (76%), Italy (76%), Ireland (76%), Luxembourg (75%) and Malta (75%).

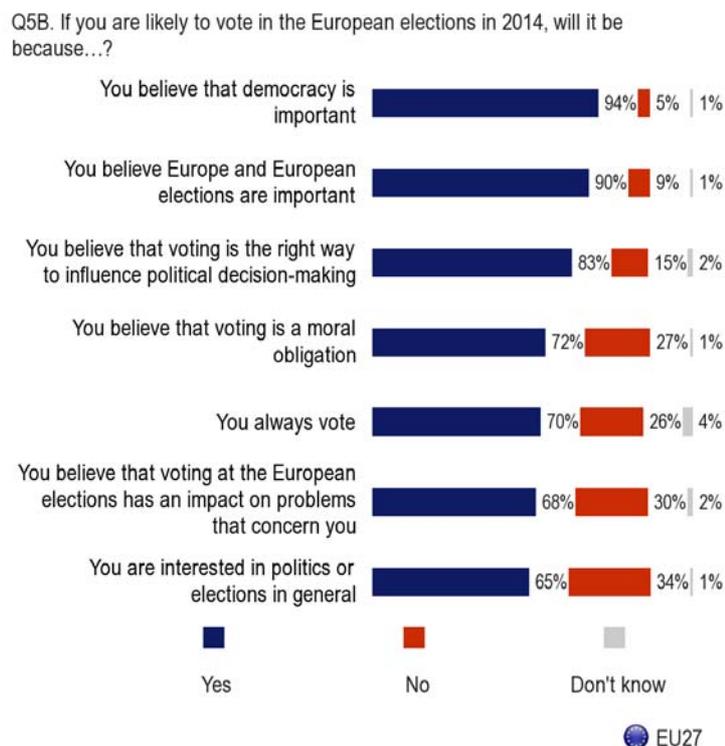
The country with the lowest level of respondents indicating they are likely to vote is Slovenia (47%). There are two other countries where slightly less than half of respondents say that they are likely to vote: Estonia (48%) and the Czech Republic (48%).

Respondents who have participated in at least one organisation (such as a youth group, non-governmental organisation, etc.) are more likely to vote than those who have not participated in any organisation (70% vs. 57%).

V. REASONS TO VOTE IN THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS IN 2014

--94% of respondents state that their belief in democracy is an important reason why they are likely to vote in the 2014 European elections--

The reason with the highest proportion (94%) of respondents saying it affects their intention to vote is the belief that democracy is important. Nine in ten (90%) respondents say that their belief that Europe and European elections are important, while approximately four in five (83%) say that they believe voting is the right way to influence political decision-making. Slightly less than three quarters of respondents (72%) say their belief that voting is a moral obligation affects their position, while seven in ten (70%) simply say that they always vote.



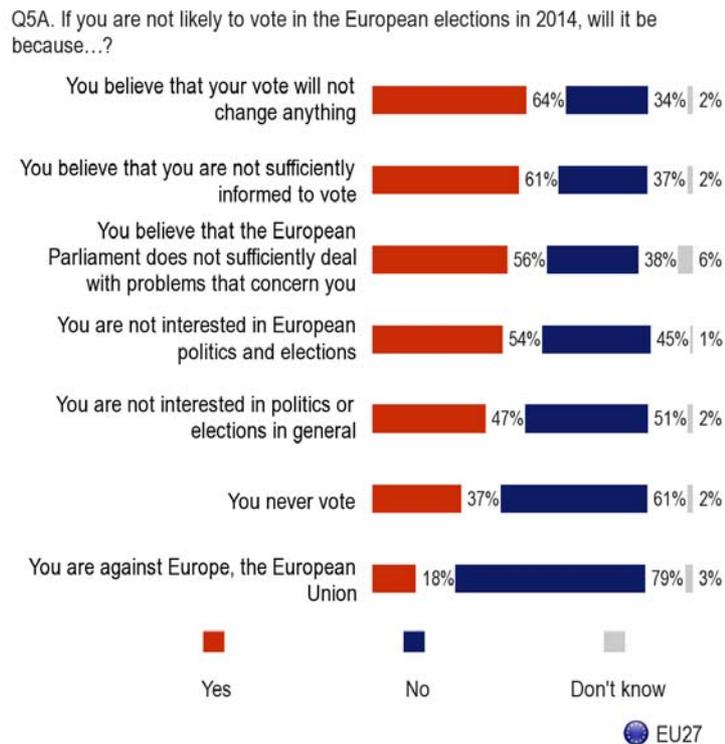
Base: Respondents who are likely to vote in the European election in 2014 = 7,506
(58% from the total number of respondents)

At least eight in 10 respondents in all countries would vote in the 2014 European elections because they believe that democracy is important. The same proportion would vote because they believe that Europe and the European elections are important (except in Cyprus, 77% and Croatia, 78%). More than eight in 10 respondents in 20 Member States would vote because they believe that voting is the right way to influence political decision-making.

VI. REASONS NOT TO VOTE IN THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS IN 2014

--64% say they are not likely to vote in the 2014 European elections because they believe that their vote will not change anything--

The most frequent response to this question (64%) is because of a belief that their vote will not change anything. Approximately three in five respondents (61%) say it is because they believe they are not sufficiently informed to vote, while 56% say it is due to their belief that the European Parliament does not sufficiently deal with problems that concern them. Slightly greater than half (54%) of respondents say they are not likely to vote because they are not interested in European politics and elections and just under half (47%) say it is because they are not interested in politics or elections in general.



Base: Respondents who are not likely to vote in the European election in 2014 = 4,071
(31% from the total number of respondents)

More than half of respondents in all countries - except in Luxembourg (49%), Malta (48%), Denmark (46%) and Sweden (47%) - say they would not vote in the next European elections because their vote will not change anything. More than half of respondents in all countries except Hungary and Croatia would not vote because they believe they are not sufficiently informed.

In all countries except Slovakia (48%), Spain (47%), Cyprus (37%) and Italy (36%), a majority say they would not vote because they are not interested in European politics and elections.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

FLASH EUROBAROMETER 375

"European Youth: Participation in Democratic Life"

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Between the 2nd and the 19th of April 2013, TNS Political & Social, a consortium created between TNS political & social, TNS UK and TNS opinion, carried out the survey FLASH EUROBAROMETER 375 about "European Youth: Participation in Democratic Life".

This survey has been requested by the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General for Education and Culture. It is a level B survey (specific target: population aged 15-30 years old) co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication ("Research and Speechwriting" Unit). The FLASH EUROBAROMETER 375 covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, resident in each of the 27 Member States and aged 15-30 years old. It was also conducted in Croatia. The survey covers the national population of citizens in Croatia as well as the population of citizens of all the European Union Member States that are residents in this country and have a sufficient command of the national language to answer the questionnaire. All interviews were carried using the TNS e-Call center (our centralized CATI system). In every country respondents were called both on fixed lines and mobile phones. The basic sample design applied in all states is multi-stage random (probability). In each household, the respondent was drawn at random following the "last birthday rule".

TNS has developed its own RDD sample generation capabilities based on using contact telephone numbers from responders to random probability or random location face to face surveys, such as Eurobarometer, as seed numbers. The approach works because the seed number identifies a working block of telephone numbers and reduces the volume of numbers generated that will be ineffective. The seed numbers are stratified by NUTS2 region and urbanisation to approximate a geographically representative sample. From each seed number the required sample of numbers are generated by randomly replacing the last two digits. The sample is then screened against business databases in order to exclude as many of these numbers as possible before going into field. This approach is consistent across all countries.

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

Statistical Margins due to the sampling process (at the 95% level of confidence)											
<i>various sample sizes are in rows</i>						<i>various observed results are in columns</i>					
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	
N=50	6,0	8,3	9,9	11,1	12,0	12,7	13,2	13,6	13,8	13,9	N=50
N=500	1,9	2,6	3,1	3,5	3,8	4,0	4,2	4,3	4,4	4,4	N=500
N=1000	1,4	1,9	2,2	2,5	2,7	2,8	3,0	3,0	3,1	3,1	N=1000
N=1500	1,1	1,5	1,8	2,0	2,2	2,3	2,4	2,5	2,5	2,5	N=1500
N=2000	1,0	1,3	1,6	1,8	1,9	2,0	2,1	2,1	2,2	2,2	N=2000
N=3000	0,8	1,1	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,6	1,7	1,8	1,8	1,8	N=3000
N=4000	0,7	0,9	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	N=4000
N=5000	0,6	0,8	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,3	1,4	1,4	1,4	N=5000
N=6000	0,6	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,3	1,3	N=6000
N=7000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,2	1,2	N=7000
N=7500	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=7500
N=8000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=8000
N=9000	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=9000
N=10000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=10000
N=11000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=11000
N=12000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=12000
N=13000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	N=13000
N=14000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=14000
N=15000	0,3	0,5	0,6	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=15000
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	

ABBR.	COUNTRIES	INSTITUTES	N° INTERVIEWS	FIELDWORK DATES		POPULATION 15-30 y.o.
BE	Belgium	TNS Dimarso	500	02/04/2013	11/04/2013	2.191.848
BG	Bulgaria	TNS BBSS	500	02/04/2013	05/04/2013	1.423.552
CZ	Czech Rep.	TNS Aisa s.r.o	500	02/04/2013	09/04/2013	2.083.493
DK	Denmark	TNS Gallup A/S	503	02/04/2013	09/04/2013	1.085.001
DE	Germany	TNS Infratest	500	04/04/2013	19/04/2013	15.047.599
EE	Estonia	TNS Emor	500	02/04/2013	03/04/2013	295.806
EL	Greece	TNS ICAP	500	02/04/2013	11/04/2013	1.875.992
ES	Spain	TNS Demoscopia S.A	500	02/04/2013	12/04/2013	8.356.631
FR	France	TNS Sofres	501	02/04/2013	10/04/2013	12.321.756
IE	Ireland	IMS Millward Brown	500	02/04/2013	17/04/2013	1.023.986
IT	Italy	TNS ITALIA	501	03/04/2013	12/04/2013	10.211.911
CY	Rep. of Cyprus	CYMAR	300	02/04/2013	03/04/2013	209.972
LV	Latvia	TNS Latvia	501	02/04/2013	09/04/2013	445.259
LT	Lithuania	TNS LT	500	02/04/2013	04/04/2013	644.404
LU	Luxembourg	TNS Dimarso	300	02/04/2013	11/04/2013	88.103
HU	Hungary	TNS Hoffmann Kft	504	02/04/2013	13/04/2013	2.026.984
MT	Malta	MISCO International Ltd	300	02/04/2013	04/04/2013	83.452
NL	Netherlands	TNS NIPO	500	02/04/2013	17/04/2013	3.262.524
AT	Austria	TNS Austria	500	02/04/2013	12/04/2013	1.692.724
PL	Poland	TNS OBOP	500	02/04/2013	18/04/2013	8.959.451
PT	Portugal	TNS EUROTESTE	500	02/04/2013	11/04/2013	1.801.188
RO	Romania	TNS CSOP	505	02/04/2013	05/04/2013	4.691.208
SI	Slovenia	RM PLUS	502	02/04/2013	05/04/2013	389.950
SK	Slovakia	TNS AISA Slovakia	510	02/04/2013	11/04/2013	1.251.445
FI	Finland	TNS Gallup Oy	500	02/04/2013	08/04/2013	1.069.338
SE	Sweden	TNS SIFO	500	02/04/2013	19/04/2013	1.955.025
UK	United Kingdom	TNS UK	500	02/04/2013	18/04/2013	13.493.519
TOTAL EU27			12.927	02/04/2013	19/04/2013	97.982.121
HR	Croatia	Puls	500	02/04/2013	11/04/2013	854.626
TOTAL			13.427	02/04/2013	19/04/2013	98.836.747