

Press release – 77% of Europeans insist EU funds be linked to respect for Rule of Law



In a new survey commissioned by the European Parliament and conducted at the beginning of October 2020, nearly eight out of ten participants (77%) across the EU support the concept that the EU should only provide funds to Member States if the national government implements the rule of law and democratic principles. At least seven in ten participants agree with this statement in 26 EU Member States.

An absolute majority of Europeans continues to call for a larger EU budget to fight COVID-19

54% of Europeans believe the EU should have greater financial means to be able to overcome the consequences of the Coronavirus pandemic. In 20 EU Member States, a majority of the participants agrees with this claim; in 14 EU Member States, an absolute majority of participants supports a larger EU budget.

Asked about which policy fields this enlarged EU budget should be spent on, **more than half of participants (54%) say that public health should be a priority, followed by economic recovery and new opportunities for businesses (42%), climate change and environmental protection (37%)** and employment and social affairs (35%). At EU level, climate change and the environment has replaced employment in the top three spending priorities compared to the last survey conducted in June 2020.

Public health is the top spending priority for respondents in 18 countries. Estonia, Latvia and Czechia put the economic recovery on top, whilst in Austria, Denmark and Germany citizens favoured most the fight against climate change. In Croatia, Slovakia and Finland, participants chose employment and

social affairs as their top spending priority.

Broad majority of citizens fear direct impact on their personal financial situation

Taking the necessary decisions on the Recovery Package and the MFF as soon as possible is clearly vital, as demonstrated by the worrying personal financial situation of European citizens since the beginning of the pandemic. A **broad majority of citizens fear the pandemic will a direct impact on their personal financial situation** –or have already suffered it: 39% of participants say that the COVID-19 crisis has already impacted their personal income, while a further 27% expect such an impact in the future. Only 27% expect the COVID-19 situation not to have an impact on their personal income. In 20 countries, most participants say that the current crisis has already impacted their personal income.

Citizens continue to see the EU as part of the solution to this crisis

Two-thirds of participants (66%) agree that the EU should have more competences to deal with crises such as the Coronavirus pandemic. Only a quarter (25%) disagrees with this statement. These findings are consistent with the results from both previous surveys conducted by the European Parliament in April and June 2020 respectively.

Note to Editors

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the European Parliament has commissioned three dedicated surveys measuring European public opinion in times of COVID-19. The latest survey was conducted online (and via telephone in Malta) by Kantar between 25 September and 7 October 2020, among 24,812 participants in all 27 EU Member States. The survey was limited to those aged between 16 and 64 (16-54 in Bulgaria, Czechia, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia). Quotas on gender, age, and region at national level ensure the survey is representative. The total EU results are weighted according to the size of the population of each country surveyed.

The publication of the full report for this survey, including the complete data set, is planned for early November 2020.