



Directorate General for Communication  
Direction C - Relations with citizens  
PUBLIC OPINION MONITORING UNIT

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## EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2009

### Pre-electoral survey - First wave First results: European average and major national trends

Population: EU 18+ (in Austria 16+)  
Coverage: EU 27 (27.218 European citizens)  
Date of fieldwork: 4th May - 15th May 2009

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**NB 1. This survey is not part of the Standard Eurobarometer EP which is always conducted in face-to-face interviews. It was carried out by TNS Opinion for the European Parliament. Interviews were mostly conducted over the telephone, combined with some number of face-to-face interviews in certain countries.**

**As the majority of questions are the same as in the last few EB EP Standard questionnaires, the results are compared. The differences in methodology must be always kept in mind when using such comparisons.**

**NB 2. Because of the legal restrictions on publishing the pre-electoral surveys in some countries, those were omitted from the report (Greece, Italy, Luxembourg). Nevertheless the EU averages shown are based on the data from all 27 EU Member States.**

## ***I. AWARENESS OF THE ELECTIONS***

### **A. Probability of vote**

*Q6. 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 June 2009? 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 indicates something in between these two positions.*

|                              | EB69 | EB70 | EB71 | Pre-EE 1    |
|------------------------------|------|------|------|-------------|
| 1. Definitely would not vote | 14%  | 15%  | 15%  | <b>10%</b>  |
| 2.                           | 3%   | 4%   | 4%   | <b>2%</b>   |
| 3.                           | 4%   | 5%   | 5%   | <b>4%</b>   |
| 4.                           | 3%   | 4%   | 4%   | <b>3%</b>   |
| 5.                           | 10%  | 10%  | 10%  | <b>9%</b>   |
| 6.                           | 6%   | 6%   | 6%   | <b>5%</b>   |
| 7.                           | 8%   | 7%   | 8%   | <b>7%</b>   |
| 8.                           | 10%  | 9%   | 9%   | <b>9%</b>   |
| 9.                           | 7%   | 6%   | 6%   | <b>6%</b>   |
| 10. Would definitely vote    | 30%  | 28%  | 28%  | <b>43%</b>  |
| Don't know                   | 5%   | 6%   | 5%   | <b>2%</b>   |
| Average                      | 6,6  | 6,3  | 6,4  | <b>7,26</b> |

**QC3** *Highest and lowest probability of voting on the scale\**

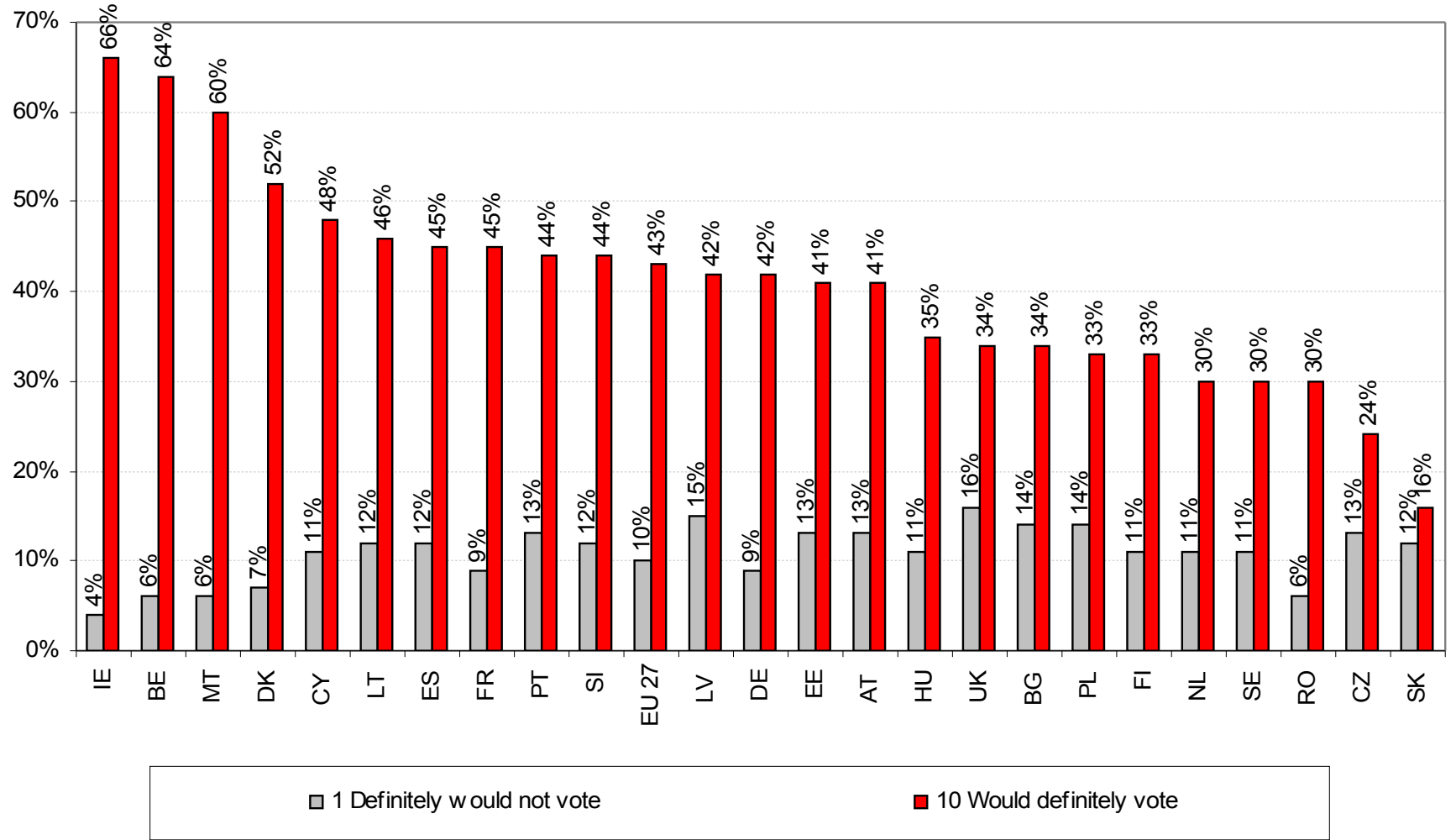
|                               | EB 69 | EB70 | EB71 | Pre-EE 1   |
|-------------------------------|-------|------|------|------------|
| Would definitely not vote (1) | 14%   | 15%  | 15%  | <b>10%</b> |
| Will probably vote (9-10)     | 37%   | 34%  | 34%  | <b>49%</b> |

❖ National variations:

- The share of respondents who are definitely going to vote (value 10 on the scale) is the highest in and Ireland (66%), Belgium (64%) and Malta (60%).
- The share of respondents who say they will definitely not vote is the largest in the UK (16%), Latvia (15%), Bulgaria and Poland (14%).

**NB ATTENTION: In the previous surveys the probability of vote was shown as the sum of answers 9 and 10. As it has been said before we can no longer assume that the participation on the day of the elections will be 49%. Still, the mobilisation is increasing and certain indicators lead us to believe that the final participation could be close to the one in 2004.**

### Q6 Probability of vote



## B. Knowledge of the date

*Q4. In your opinion, when will the next European elections be held, here in (OUR COUNTRY)?*

|                    | <i>EB69</i> | <i>EB70</i> | <i>EB71</i> | <b>Pre-EE 1</b> |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| <b>2009(total)</b> | 16%         | 26%         | 32%         | <b>68%</b>      |
| June 2009          | 4%          | 8%          | 16%         | <b>49%</b>      |
| Others 2009        | 9%          | 18%         | 16%         | <b>20%</b>      |
| <b>Other</b>       | 9%          | 7%          | 6%          | <b>4%</b>       |
| <b>Don't know</b>  | 75%         | 67%         | 62%         | <b>28%</b>      |

*\*EB69: spring 2008; EB70: autumn 2008; EB71 Jan-Feb 2009*

### ❖ National variations:

- Respondents are most aware that the elections will take place in June 2009 in Malta (80%), Hungary (74%) and Cyprus (71%).
- The share of "don't know" answers is highest in Finland (75%), Portugal (60%) and the Netherlands (53%).

## C. Interest in the elections

*Q5. The next European elections will be held on the [DATE] 2009. How interested or disinterested would you say you are in these elections?*

|               | <i>EB69</i> | <i>EB70</i> | <i>EB71</i> | <b>Pre-EE 1</b> |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Interested    | 46%         | 44%         | 44%         | <b>53%</b>      |
| Disinterested | 51%         | 54%         | 53%         | <b>46%</b>      |
| DK            | 3%          | 2%          | 3%          | <b>1%</b>       |

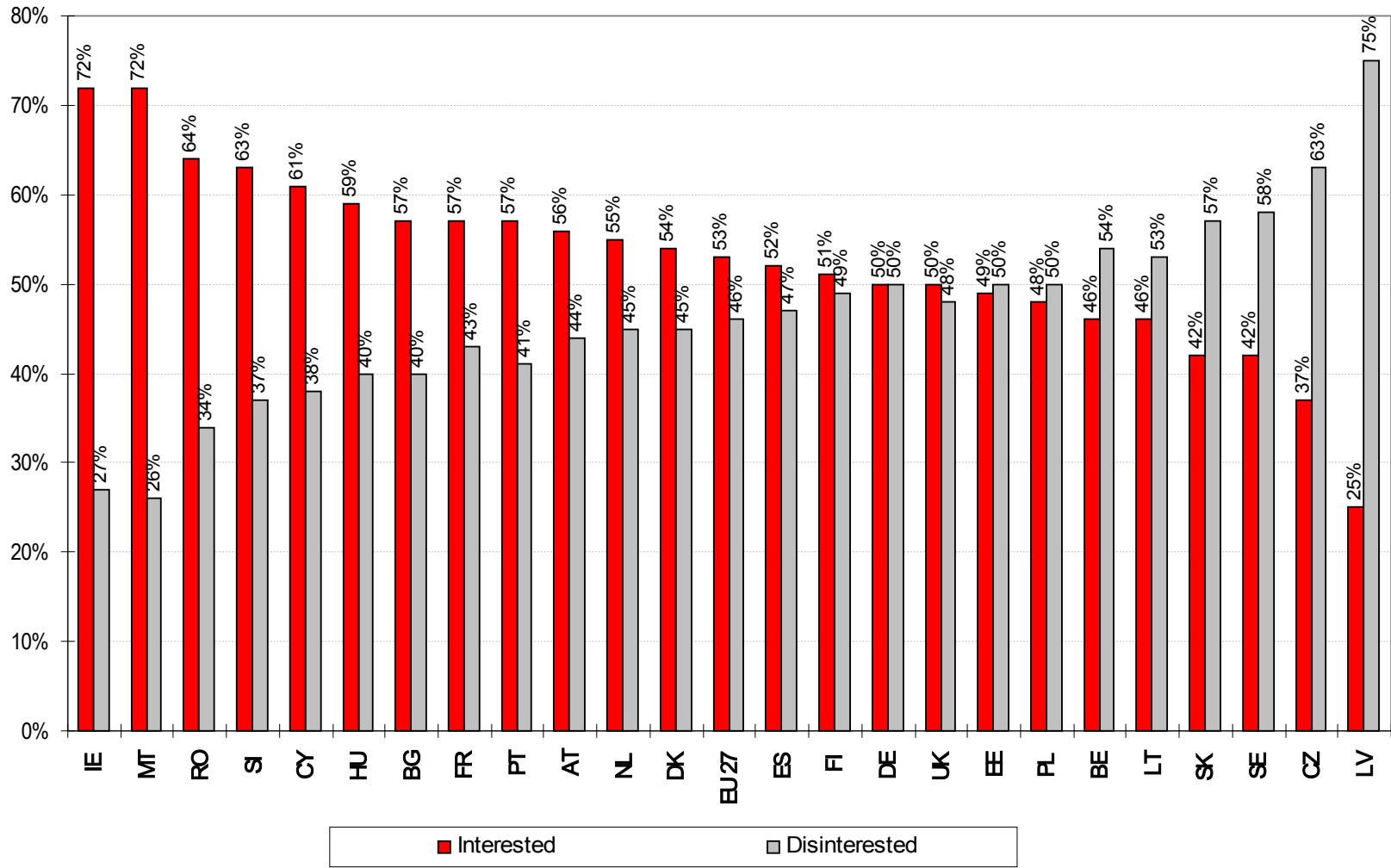
*Interested: sum of answers "very interested" and "somewhat interested"*

*Disinterested: sum of answers "somewhat disinterested" and "very disinterested"*

### ❖ National variations:

- The highest interest for the European elections is recorded in Ireland (72%), Malta (72%) and Romania (64%).
- It is lowest in Latvia (25%), Czech Republic (37%), Sweden and Slovakia (in both 42% respondents say they are interested).

### Q5 Interest in the EE



## D. Criteria for choosing a candidate

*Q7. Among the following criteria, can you tell what would be the mains elements in your decision in view of the European elections?*

|   | EB69 | EB71 | Pre -EE 1  |
|---|------|------|------------|
| The experience of the candidate on European affairs         | 40%  | 39%  | <b>42%</b> |
| The experience of the candidates at the national level      | 29%  | 32%  | <b>34%</b> |
| The positions of candidates on national issues              | 37%  | 35%  | <b>31%</b> |
| The positions of candidates on European issues              | 36%  | 35%  | <b>31%</b> |
| The positions of the candidates' parties on European issues | 30%  | 31%  | <b>29%</b> |
| The personality of the candidates                           | 30%  | 30%  | <b>28%</b> |
| The notoriety of the candidates                             | 17%  | 16%  | <b>13%</b> |
| Others  | 1%   | 1%   | <b>4%</b>  |
| DK  | 17%  | 10%  | <b>7%</b>  |

*\*maximum 3 answers, % is the sum of all answers presented*

### ❖ National variations for the main four criteria:

- **The experience of the candidate on European affairs:**
  - Top three countries: Slovenia (62%), Belgium (56%) and Poland (54%).
  - Bottom three countries: UK (30%), the Netherlands (32%) and Romania (33%)
- **The experience of the candidates at the national level:**
  - Top three countries: Latvia (51%), Hungary (50%), Romania, Lithuania and Slovenia (43%)
  - Bottom three countries: Slovakia (20%), the Netherlands (21%) and Denmark (22%)
- **The positions of candidates on European issues:**
  - Top three countries: France (48%), Denmark (45%) and Belgium (44%).
  - Bottom three countries: Malta (19%), Slovakia (19%) and Latvia (20%).
- **The position of candidates on national issues:**
  - Top three countries: Bulgaria (51%), Romania (50%) and Lithuania (46%)
  - Bottom three countries: Estonia (19%), Portugal and Cyprus (22%).

## E. Level of information about the European elections

*Q3. In general, do you consider that you are very well, fairly well, fairly badly or very badly informed about the European elections?*

|                       | <b>Pre-EE 1</b> |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Well informed</b>  | <b>41%</b>      |
| Very well informed    | 5%              |
| Fairly well informed  | 37%             |
| <b>Badly informed</b> | <b>57%</b>      |
| Fairly badly informed | 41%             |
| Very badly informed   | 17%             |
| <b>DK / NSP</b>       | <b>2%</b>       |

### ❖ National variations:

- Respondents feel best informed (sum of very well and fairly well informed) in Malta (68%), Cyprus and Slovenia (60%).
- The shares of respondents who feel badly informed are largest in Sweden (77%), France, the Netherlands and Spain (63%).

## F. Reasons for not voting

*Q8. If you do not go to vote in the European elections of June 2009, will it be because... ? Firstly? And then (MAX 5 answers).*

*Base: those who are unlikely to vote (answers 1 to 5) on the probability scale (28% of total sample)*

|   | EB69 | EB71 | <b>Pre-EE 1</b> |
|---|------|------|-----------------|
| I believe that I am not sufficiently informed to go vote                              | 58%  | 59%  | <b>62%</b>      |
| My vote will not change anything  | 68%  | 62%  | <b>61%</b>      |
| I don't know enough about the role of the EP (M)                                      | 60%  | 64%  | <b>60%</b>      |
| I believe that the EP does not sufficiently deal with problems that concern me        | 57%  | 55%  | <b>59%</b>      |
| I do not feel I am sufficiently represented by the Members of the European Parliament | 53%  | -    | <b>55%</b>      |
| I am not interested in the European elections   | 59%  | -    | <b>51%</b>      |
| I am not interested in politics, by elections in general                              | 46%  | -    | <b>39%</b>      |
| I am not interested in European affairs   | 45%  | -    | <b>35%</b>      |
| I believe that the EP does not have enough power                                      | 26%  | -    | <b>33%</b>      |
| I believe that I will be held up, due to travelling, work, health, etc.               | 15%  | -    | <b>25%</b>      |
| I never vote  | 24%  | -    | <b>21%</b>      |
| I am against Europe, the European Union, the European construction                    | 23%  | 20%  | <b>18%</b>      |

*\*Yes/No/DNK for each possible answer, % given of Yes answers  
(M) modified item*

❖ National variations for the six main reasons:

➤ **I believe that I am not sufficiently informed to go vote:**

- Top three countries: Sweden (81%), Ireland (72%) and the UK (68%)
- Bottom three countries: Malta (30%), Slovenia (42%) and Romania (45%).

➤ **My vote will not change anything:**

- Top three countries: Czech Republic (81%), Bulgaria (80%) and Latvia (79%).
- Bottom three countries: Sweden (42%), Denmark (49%), the Netherlands (51%).

➤ **I don't know enough about the role of the EP:**

- Top three countries: Sweden (81%); Bulgaria and Denmark (72%).
- Bottom three countries: Malta (39%); Slovenia and Austria (42%).

➤ **I believe that the EP does not sufficiently deal with problems that concern me:**

- Top three countries: Latvia (80%), Hungary (75%) and Czech Republic (72%).
- Bottom three countries: Denmark (35%), the Netherlands (38%) and Sweden (42%).

➤ **I do not feel I am sufficiently represented by the Members of the European Parliament:**

- Top three countries: Czech Republic (68%), Hungary (67%) and Bulgaria (66%).
- Bottom three countries: Denmark (35%), Belgium (37%) and Sweden (38%).

➤ **I am not interested in the European elections:**

- Top three countries: Czech Republic (77%), Denmark (74%) and Finland (73%)
- Bottom three countries: Belgium (40%), Slovenia and Austria (44%).

## II. ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN THEMES

*Q9t. For you, among the following themes, which are the ones that the electoral campaign for the next European elections should concentrate on? Firstly? Which others? (MAX 5 answers)*

| CAMPAIGN THEMES   | EB 69 | EB 70 | EB71 | Pre-EE 1   |
|---|-------|-------|------|------------|
| Unemployment  | 47%   | 49%   | 57%  | <b>57%</b> |
| Economic growth   | 45%   | 51%   | 52%  | <b>45%</b> |
| Crime   | 37%   | 33%   | 29%  | <b>32%</b> |
| The future of pensions                                  | 32%   | 33%   | 32%  | <b>31%</b> |
| Inflation and purchasing power                          | 41%   | 47%   | 40%  | <b>29%</b> |
| The fight against climate change                        | 33%   | 29%   | 26%  | <b>24%</b> |
| Terrorism   | 35%   | 28%   | 24%  | <b>24%</b> |
| Immigration   | 32%   | 29%   | 24%  | <b>22%</b> |
| Agriculture   | 17%   | 17%   | 19%  | <b>18%</b> |
| The role of the EU in the international scene           |       |       |      | <b>18%</b> |
| The single currency, the Euro                           | 17%   | 17%   | 13%  | <b>15%</b> |
| The powers and competences of the European institutions | 12%   | 13%   | 10%  | <b>12%</b> |
| The preservation of the European social model           | 12%   | 13%   | 11%  | <b>12%</b> |
| European values and identity                            | 12%   | 13%   | 10%  | <b>10%</b> |
| Don't know  | 5%    | 6%    | 3%   | <b>2%</b>  |
| Other   | 1%    | 1%    | 1%   | <b>3%</b>  |

*\*Sum of answers for all choices*

*\*N = new theme, added in EB71*

### **III. PERCEPTION OF THE IMAGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT**

#### **A. The image of the European Union**

*Q1. In general, does the European Union conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?*

|          | EB68 | EB70 | EB71 | <b>Pre-EE 1</b> |
|----------|------|------|------|-----------------|
| Positive | 48%  | 45%  | 43%  | <b>48%</b>      |
| Neutral  | 35%  | 36%  | 38%  | <b>32%</b>      |
| Negative | 15%  | 17%  | 17%  | <b>17%</b>      |
| DK       | 2%   | 2%   | 2%   | <b>3%</b>       |

❖ National variations for the six main reasons:

- Biggest shares of respondents with the positive image are in Cyprus (63%), Ireland (61%) and Poland (61%)
- Biggest shares of respondents with negative image are in the UK (36%), Austria (31%) and Latvia (28%).

#### **B. The image of the European Parliament**

*Q11. In general, does the European Parliament conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?*

|            | <i>EB 68</i> | EB 70 | <b>Pre-EE 1</b> |
|------------|--------------|-------|-----------------|
| Positive   | 39%          | 34%   | <b>38%</b>      |
| Neutral    | 41%          | 43%   | <b>40%</b>      |
| Negative   | 15%          | 17%   | <b>20%</b>      |
| Don't know | 5%           | 6%    | <b>2%</b>       |

*Positive: sum of answers "very positive" + "fairly positive"*

*Negative: sum of answers "fairly negative" + "very negative"*

❖ National variations for the six main reasons:

- Biggest shares of respondents with the positive image are in Romania (60%), Slovenia (60%) and Cyprus (59%)
- Biggest shares of respondents with negative image are in the UK (41%), Sweden (34%) and Austria (30%).

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