

# 10 key insights on youth and Europe

A disillusioned Europe

or

Why young people no longer feel European

## **TWO STUDIES**

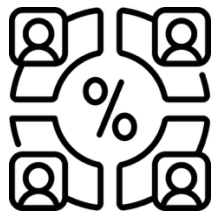
# **DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF CITIZENS' RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**17,647 people interviewed**

# Cluster 17 **METHODOLOGY**



The study was conducted online using the CAWI method, based on a sample of 10,572 respondents across nine EU countries: France (1,319), Italy (1,257), Spain (1,539), Germany (1,407), Belgium (1,000), the Netherlands (1,020), Poland (1,003), Romania (1,014), and Denmark (1,013).



The samples are representative of the national populations surveyed, with quotas applied by age, gender, socio-professional category, municipality size, and region of residence.

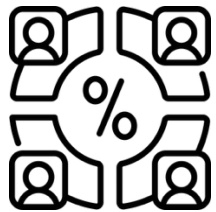


Data was collected through self-administered online questionnaires. Fieldwork was carried out from March 11 to 14, 2025.

# Cluster17 **METHODOLOGY**



This study was conducted by Cluster17 in collaboration with Le Grand Continent, based on a sample of 7,075 respondents drawn from Cluster17's online panels across five countries: 1,485 in France, 1,513 in Germany, 1,004 in Italy, 1,514 in Spain, and 1,559 in Belgium.



The samples are representative of the populations surveyed, with quotas applied according to age, gender, socio-professional category, municipality size, and region of residence.



The data was collected through self-administered online questionnaires. Fieldwork was carried out from November 12 to 16, 2024.

# 1. Young people don't feel more european than others – quite the opposite Europe has been created, but europeans have not yet been formed

## How do you primarily identify yourself?

Across all five countries:

Age	Only [Country]	[Country] and European	European	Citizen of the world	Other
18-24	23%	49%	5%	10%	13%
25-34	28%	50%	8%	9%	4%
35-49	29%	44%	6%	17%	4%
50-64	24%	50%	9%	13%	4%
65-74	24%	46%	9%	17%	4%
75+	17%	58%	11%	9%	4%
Overall	25%	48%	8%	14%	5%

## 2 e 3. Young people are also the most critical of how the European Union works: They see it as less democratic, more distant, more corrupt, and more bureaucratic than older generations

In your opinion, to what extent do the following words describe how the European Union functions?

Across all five countries:

### Democratic

Age	Very well	Fairly well	Fairly badly	Very badly	Don't know	Well	Badly
18-24	16%	29%	29%	26%	0%	45%	55%
25-34	10%	39%	27%	19%	5%	49%	46%
35-49	12%	37%	25%	22%	3%	50%	47%
50-64	9%	41%	25%	22%	3%	50%	47%
65-74	8%	42%	28%	19%	2%	50%	48%
75+	8%	53%	29%	10%	1%	61%	39%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>47%</b>

### Corrupt

Age	Very well	Fairly well	Fairly badly	Very badly	Don't know	Well	Badly
18-24	20%	25%	28%	15%	12%	45%	43%
25-34	18%	21%	26%	17%	18%	39%	43%
35-49	18%	27%	27%	15%	14%	45%	41%
50-64	11%	26%	26%	24%	13%	37%	50%
65-74	10%	22%	30%	23%	15%	33%	52%
75+	9%	33%	26%	15%	17%	42%	41%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>46%</b>

## Disconnected

Age	Very well	Fairly well	Fairly badly	Very badly	Don't know	Well	Badly
18-24	30%	28%	34%	7%	2%	58%	41%
25-34	22%	31%	26%	13%	8%	53%	39%
35-49	21%	28%	25%	15%	12%	48%	40%
50-64	16%	24%	34%	17%	9%	39%	52%
65-74	10%	25%	28%	25%	11%	35%	53%
75+	8%	28%	35%	15%	15%	35%	50%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>46%</b>

## Bureaucratic

Age	Very well	Fairly well	Fairly badly	Very badly	Don't know	Well	Badly
18-24	38%	29%	19%	13%	1%	67%	32%
25-34	35%	19%	19%	21%	6%	54%	40%
35-49	33%	19%	15%	27%	7%	52%	41%
50-64	28%	11%	18%	39%	4%	39%	57%
65-74	16%	15%	21%	43%	4%	31%	64%
75+	18%	11%	26%	43%	3%	28%	68%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>51%</b>

## 4. Young people are clearly more supportive of a European university system

In your opinion, for each of the following areas, should decisions be made exclusively at the national level (France, Germany, Italy...) or as part of a common policy with other EU countries?

Across all five countries:

### Higher Education

Age	As part of a common EU policy	Only at the national level	Don't know
18-24	74%	23%	2%
25-34	59%	36%	4%
35-49	52%	45%	3%
50-64	50%	48%	2%
65-74	53%	46%	1%
75+	50%	46%	4%
Overall	54%	44%	3%

## 5. Defence: young people are the least supportive of a common European army

When it comes to defence, what do you think is the best way to ensure your country's security?

Across all nine countries:

Age	A European defence with a joint EU army	A national army managed exclusively at national level	An international alliance like NATO, led by the United States	Don't know
18-24	49%	33%	11%	7%
25-34	57%	24%	11%	8%
35-49	60%	21%	12%	8%
50-64	65%	16%	13%	5%
65-74	64%	21%	9%	7%
75+	70%	14%	12%	4%
Overall	61%	21%	11%	7%

**6. Young people are the most worried — and the most opposed — to the idea of a European military draft. This pattern holds true across nearly all countries.**

**Would you support or oppose the creation of a mandatory 12-month military service to contribute to Europe’s defence?**

Across all nine countries:

Age	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Support	Oppose
18-24	15%	24%	31%	31%	38%	62%
25-34	16%	25%	23%	36%	41%	59%
35-49	18%	28%	27%	27%	46%	54%
50-64	20%	31%	25%	23%	51%	49%
65-74	23%	30%	27%	19%	54%	46%
75+	26%	33%	25%	17%	59%	41%
Overall	21%	30%	25%	24%	51%	49%

## 7. On increasing defence spending, young people are also the most opposed

On average, EU member states spend 1.9% of their GDP on defence. Which of the following statements do you agree with most?

Across all nine countries:

Age	Defence spending should urgently be raised to 5% of EU GDP to protect against external threats	There are more pressing areas to invest in than defence	Neither	Don't know
18-24	35%	36%	21%	7%
25-34	38%	39%	15%	8%
35-49	39%	38%	18%	6%
50-64	43%	33%	19%	4%
65-74	47%	31%	16%	5%
75 e +	52%	29%	15%	3%
Overall	42%	35%	17%	6%

## 8. Young people are the least supportive of Ukraine joining the European Union

**Do you think Ukraine should become a member of the European Union by 2030?**

Across all nine countries:

Age	Strongly support	Somewhat support	Somewhat oppose	Strongh oppose	Support	Oppose
18-24	20%	30%	28%	21%	50%	50%
25-34	15%	34%	25%	26%	49%	51%
35-49	19%	32%	22%	27%	51%	49%
50-64	21%	33%	20%	26%	55%	45%
65-74	26%	31%	19%	24%	57%	43%
75+	32%	36%	14%	19%	68%	32%
Overall	21%	33%	21%	25%	54%	46%

## 9. But young people do not want to leave the EU — just like the rest of the population

Would you prefer that your country remain in the European Union or leave it?

Across all five countries:

Age	Stay in the EU	Leave the EU	Don't know
18-24	81%	17%	2%
25-34	77%	16%	7%
35-49	72%	20%	8%
50-64	74%	21%	5%
65-74	76%	19%	5%
75+	84%	12%	4%
Overall	76%	19%	5%

## 10. Young people aren't becoming federalists: they're less supportive of a federal Europe and more inclined to preserve the status quo

**In your view, which direction should European countries take in the future?**

Across all five countries:

Age	Strengthen integration to build a truly federal Europe	Maintain the current level of integration	Return more power to national governments	Leave the EU and restore full national sovereignty	Don't know
18-24	39%	29%	21%	9%	3%
25-34	51%	10%	23%	11%	4%
35-49	41%	14%	25%	15%	4%
50-64	47%	7%	28%	13%	4%
65-74	55%	8%	23%	13%	2%
75+	58%	4%	29%	8%	2%
Overall	48%	11%	26%	12%	3%