



Public Consultation on EU Citizenship 2015

EU citizens' opinions on our common values,
rights and democratic participation

#EUCitizenship2016

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The Commission invited citizens and organisations all over Europe to share their experiences, and express their expectations for the future, on EU citizenship rights, including democratic participation, and EU common values. The public consultation on EU citizenship was held from 14 September to 7 December 2015.

Who took part?

2170 citizens and organisations from all 28 EU countries took part. The majority of the respondents (56%) were under the age of 40. The balance between female and male respondents was respectively 47% and 53%.

In terms of nationality, the largest proportion of respondents was Italians (14%), closely followed by the British, Germans and Greeks (each 11%). Irrespective of nationality, the largest proportion of responses came from Europeans living in Belgium (16%), Italy (11%), and Germany (10%).

Citizens moving within the EU

- 98% of respondents had travelled within the EU at least once in their lifetime. More than 4 in 5 respondents who had travelled to another EU country did so more than once per year. For the vast majority of respondents, the main reason for travelling to another EU country was for a holiday (94%), work-related reasons (66%) and visiting family or friends (58%).
- 60% of respondents had lived or were living in another EU country for at least 3 months. The majority of those did so for work (66%), for education or volunteering (64%) and for family reasons (25%).
- 36% of those who had lived or were living in another EU country indicated that they had experienced difficulties in relation to the exercise of their rights as EU citizens after having moved. Among those, 69% said this was due to lengthy or unclear administrative procedures and 51% said they could not find enough information or were not sufficiently aware of their rights as EU citizens.

Citizens views on what could be done to make it easier to move to another EU country

When planning to move to another EU country

82% of respondents thought that practical information online (e.g. on how to register as a resident and in electoral rolls, set up a business, take up a job, enrol children at school, how to register a car, retire, etc. in the country in which they are planning to move) would be most useful.

73% of respondents thought that administrative e-services, including the possibility to fill in administrative forms online, would help those who plan to move.

56% of respondents called for more cooperation between the authorities of the country of origin and the country of destination to ease formalities when settling down in a new EU country.

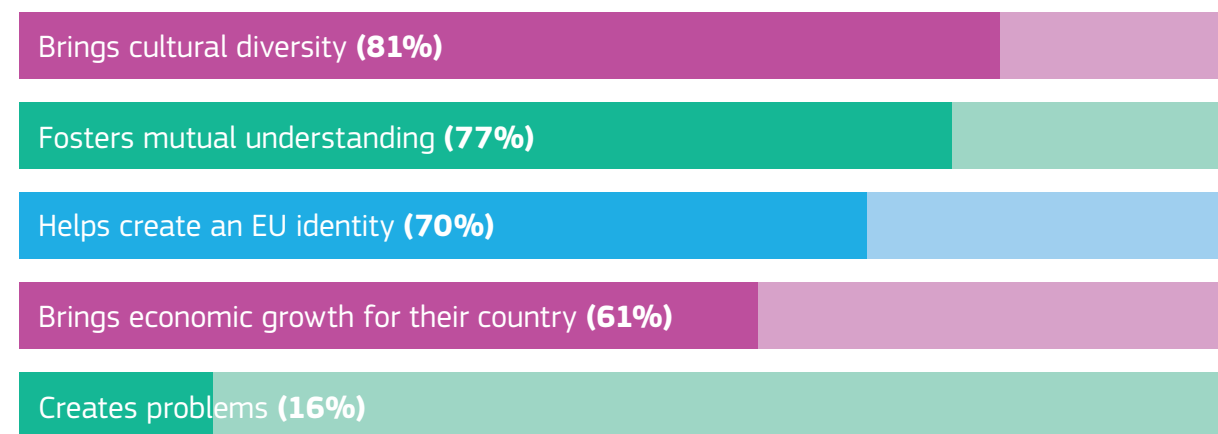
When settling in another EU country

87% of respondents thought that information and assistance responding to the individual needs and questions of newcomers through one-stop-shop web portals provided by the authorities would be a good way to help settle down.

49% of respondents thought that policies designed to promote inter-cultural dialogue, mutual understanding and inclusion (such as in schools) would be beneficial for the process of settling down.

47% of respondents thought that effective support and assistance in the enforcement of their EU rights through specialised bodies would be helpful.

Respondents to the consultation thought that free movement:



Those who stated that free movement creates problems tended to refer to practical reasons.

Citizens and democratic participation

EU citizenship gives every EU citizen the right to vote and stand as a candidate in European Parliament elections. EU citizens who are living in another EU country also have the right to vote and stand as candidates in local elections in the country in which they live. But to what extent are EU citizens exercising their rights? What are the problems they are encountering? What keeps them from fully participating in EU democratic life?

Participation of EU citizens in European and local elections

- 82% of respondents had voted in European Parliament elections in their country of origin while 22% of respondents had made use of the possibility to vote in the country in which they were living.
- 30% of respondents indicated that they had voted or stood as candidates in local elections while living in another EU country.
- 21% of respondents had experienced difficulties in trying to vote in EU or local elections whilst living in another EU country. 51% of them said the difficulties related to registering on the electoral roll and 47% to insufficient or unclear information on how to vote.

Citizens' views on what could be done to increase citizens' participation in the democratic life of the EU

What could be done to increase citizens' participation in European elections?

80% of respondents thought that explaining EU policies more clearly would encourage voting in EU elections.

65% of respondents called for more information on the candidates and parties in European Parliament elections.

57% of respondents said that more information should be provided on the European elections.

44% of respondents asked for more information to be provided on the aims and objectives of the lead candidates (the candidates nominated by European political families) to become President of the European Commission.

32% thought that voting should be made more accessible in practice to all, including to people with disabilities and older people.

Which specific practices could make it easier for citizens living in another EU country to vote in European or local elections in the country in which they live?

68% The possibility to vote using electronic/online tools.

63% Automatic registration on the electoral roll when citizens register as residents.

51% Individual letters explaining how to register and vote.

Which specific practices could make it easier for citizens living in another EU country to vote in elections in their country of origin?

81% The possibility to vote using electronic/online tools.

48% The possibility to vote by post.

Respondents were, at the same time, concerned that e-voting could lead to potential fraud (68%) or had concerns in relation to secrecy of the vote (54%).

Citizens and EU political broadcasting

The majority of European citizens would like to obtain more and better quality political information on the EU through media and the internet, not only from their own country but also from other EU countries.

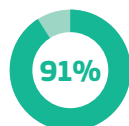
In order to obtain information on news and political broadcasting, such as on European elections:

- 72% of respondents used internet platforms, followed by newspapers (63%) and TV (62%).
- 65% of respondents said that they accessed news not only from their country of origin but also from other EU countries.
- 53% of respondents were only partially satisfied with the news and political broadcasting information they received. Respondents indicated that enhanced cross-border coverage could provide them with more objective political information.

Citizens' views on access to news and political broadcasting on EU matters



83% of respondents would like to access more news and political broadcasting from across national borders on issues related to European democracy and elections.



91% of respondents thought that access to such information across borders would help them form clearer opinions on issues relevant to democracy in Europe.

Citizens and EU common values

The EU is founded on common values such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights, including non-discrimination, inclusion, tolerance and respect for diversity.

- 90% of respondents thought that more should be done to promote and raise awareness about EU common values.
- 91% of respondents thought that this should be done through school education.
- 72% of respondents thought that this should be done through mobility of young people.
- 60% of respondents thought that this should be done through cultural activities.
- 54% of respondents were of the opinion that EU common values can be promoted through youth work or through university learning and research.

Citizens' views on the promotion of EU common values and enhanced participation



78% of respondents believed that local and regional authorities should play a more important role in promoting EU common values.



88% of respondents indicated that the EU should give a stronger voice to citizens, especially to young people, in democratic decision-making through online consultations and dialogue mechanisms.

More details on the results of the public consultation are available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen/document/2015_public_consultation_booklet_en.pdf

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<http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen>

