



Democracy and the Rule of Law in the European Union

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Description

The Eurozone crisis has pushed reform of the European Union (EU) to the forefront of political debate. How can a Union of 27 states with a population of almost half a billion be reformed to weather future economic crises and political challenges? Finding an answer to this question is extremely difficult not only because current reform proposals are so varied, but even more so because we lack insights into the preferences for reform amongst national elites and publics. Although EU support has interested scholars for over three decades now, we virtually know nothing about public support for EU reform. Current research focuses almost exclusively on the causes of support for the current project and fails to provide a sufficient basis for effective reform decisions. Surely, the feasibility and sustainability of EU reform crucially hinges on the support amongst national publics. eupinions examines public support for EU reform by developing a theoretical model and employing cutting-edge data collection techniques. Our findings will aid policy makers to craft EU reform proposals that can secure widespread public support.

Executive Summary

For politicians across the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic is a stress test for governance. Curbing the coronavirus pandemic calls for swift and strong executive action. Indeed, many government leaders have resorted to extraordinary and, in some cases, draconian measures, which include placing restrictions on individual movement, introducing physical distancing requirements, and mandating businesses to close. And while lockdown measures across the EU clearly derive from public health needs, they also open up avenues for states to place further restrictions on fundamental democratic rights. Current measures run the risk of allowing leaders to engage in more lasting executive overreach and thus undermine key liberal democratic norms in society.

In some EU member states, we have seen protests and unrest in the streets, as well as the outright rejection among some citizens of the virus's existence and the health threat it poses. Balancing the duty to protect public health with the right to dissent and protest is no easy task for any state actor and has potentially long-term implications for public trust in government action. Concerns about pandemic-related democratic backsliding and the risk of weakening public support for appropriate measures underscore the importance of examining how European citizens view democracy and the rule of law. In this report, we examine not only how European citizens evaluate the state of democracy in their country and the EU more generally, but also what they think characterizes a good democracy.

This report addresses three questions regarding EU citizens' perceptions in this regard:

1. *What are the most important characteristics of democracy?*
2. *How well does democracy function in their own country and in the EU?*
3. *To what extent do they trust their country's government or the EU with regard to delivering an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic?*

This report seeks to answer these questions by presenting evidence based on a survey conducted in December 2020 in which we interviewed just under 12,000 citizens across the EU. In doing so, we present two sets of data. One for the European Union as a whole, another for seven individual member states (i.e., Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain).

The results can be summarized as follows:

- Within the EU27, citizens attach great importance to rule-of-law issues when it comes to democracy. The importance of “governments abiding by laws like everyone else” was rated, on average, 9.1 on a 10-point scale by

respondents across the EU27. They also feel strongly that “courts should treat everyone equally,” which received an average 9 out of 10 points. Fundamental aspects of representative democracy like “free and fair elections” and “freedom of speech,” which both received a rating of 8.9, are also considered to be very important. Respondents also attach high importance to accepting election results, giving this item 8.6 out of 10 points in terms of its importance for democracy.

- EU-wide, European citizens are, on average, somewhat more satisfied with how democracy works in the EU (60 percent) as compared to their own country (54 percent). There are major discrepancies across member states, however. Satisfaction with how democracy works in one’s own country is highest in the Netherlands (74 percent) and Germany (70 percent), and lowest in Spain (46 percent), Italy (40 percent) and Poland (35 percent).
- Most respondents in the EU27 state that they trust their government to do the right thing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (58 percent), and an even larger share express trust in the EU in this regard (66 percent). As Figure 17 shows, there is nonetheless considerable variation on these points across member states. While a majority of Belgian, German, Italian and Spanish respondents trust their national government to manage the pandemic effectively, only a minority of French and Polish respondents feel the same about their government.

Introduction

For or politicians across the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic is a stress test for governance. Curbing the coronavirus pandemic calls for swift and strong executive action. Indeed, many government leaders have resorted to extraordinary and sometimes draconian measures, which include placing restrictions on individual movement, introducing physical distancing requirements, and mandating businesses to close. And while lockdown measures clearly derive from public health needs, they also open up avenues for states to place further restrictions on fundamental democratic rights. Current measures run the risk of allowing leaders to engage in more lasting executive overreach and thus undermine key liberal democratic norms in society.

Concerns about pandemic-related democratic backsliding and the risk of weakening public support for appropriate measures underscore the importance of examining how European citizens view democracy and the rule of law. In this report, we examine not only how European citizens evaluate the state of democracy in their country and the EU more generally, but also what they think democracy ought to be.

Specifically, this report addresses three questions regarding EU citizens' perceptions in this regard:

1. *What are the most important constituent elements of democracy? Free and fair elections? Freedom of speech? Press freedoms? Judicial independence? Or governments abiding by the law?*
2. *How well does democracy function in their own country and in the EU?*
3. *Finally, we close with a closer look at the pandemic situation in order to examine the third and final question: To what extent do European citizens trust their country's government or the EU with regard to delivering an effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic?*

This report seeks to answer these questions by presenting evidence based on a survey conducted in December 2020 in which we interviewed just under 12,000 EU citizens. In doing so, we present two sets of data. One set is based on a sample capturing public opinion across the EU27, while the other completes the picture with a more in-depth focus on respondents from the member states of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Spain. Finally, we collate our data for these seven member states by party support to examine how partisan leanings might be associated with different views about democracy and how it is evaluated.

This report is organized into five parts. First, we briefly review the research on public support for democracy and introduce our methodology for measuring views on democracy and evaluations of how well it works. Second, we examine

what European citizens believe are the most important constituent elements of democracy and how these perceptions differ across EU member states and party affiliation. Third, we explore how European citizens evaluate the way democracy works in their country and the EU, and how these evaluations differ across EU member states and party affiliation. Fourth, we investigate the extent to which European citizens trust that their government and the EU can respond effectively to the pandemic and how this differs across EU member states and party affiliation. Finally, we close by reflecting on the possible lessons for political leaders in defending democracy, the rule of law and democratic practices in the context of a pandemic or similar crisis.

In Focus

Public support for democracy

Citizens' support for their country's political system is a classical theme within political science. In his pioneering study of political support as the set of shared views and evaluations held by a population regarding its political system, David Easton (1965, 1975) distinguished between *specific* and *diffuse* support. The aspect of diffuse support refers to evaluations of the regime, broadly defined as the system of government and the constitutional arrangements underlying it. Specific support relates more to everyday policy, that is, the binding collective decisions and actions taken by political actors operating in the broader system of government (see also Norris 1999). Whereas specific support constitutes a running mental tally that fluctuates with government performance, diffuse support derives from a loyalty to the underlying principles and institutions of a political system (Citrin et al. 1975).

Diffuse support, because it refers to the constituent principles and institutions of a political order, is seen to be essential to this order. While specific support may fluctuate as political systems falter in responding to external shocks or natural disasters, the political system nonetheless survives because people maintain a deeper loyalty to its essential principles and institutions. Diffuse support thus functions like a "reservoir of goodwill" toward the system, even when its performance doesn't always prove satisfactory for everyone (Easton 1965: 125).

At the core of citizen support for representative democracy is their commitment to its essential democratic principles and institutions. The political theorist Robert Dahl (1998) suggests that representative democracy depends not only on its substance but also on its procedures. In terms of substance, political representatives must ensure that their actions deliver citizens the public goods and services they prefer — at least some of the time. However, majority rule makes it unlikely that each individual will receive their preferred goods and services most of the time. If individuals fail to obtain those goods and services they value most, broader faith in effective institutions that provide a fair articulation of different interests should nonetheless result in popular (or diffuse) support for the system overall. This broader faith in the system should also ensure losers' consent, that is, support for the rules of the game among those who support the opposition (Anderson and Guillory 1997). Democracy needs to rely on a specific set of procedures that are widely accepted and perceived to be fair if the system as a whole is to endure. The stability of democracy is undermined when a significant share of the public questions democratic procedures.

While the concept of diffuse support has been very influential in the literature, it has not proved easy to conceptualize empirically (Inglehart 2003; Rose et al. 1999).

First, it is difficult to determine which items should be used to capture diffuse political support. Different countries have different ways of codifying democratic procedures, as constitutional arrangements differ. Second, there might be a difference between how a person thinks about democracy as an ideal, and the way in which they evaluate how democracy works in practice. Third, to what extent is there a consensus regarding the essential democratic procedures within a specific representative democracy? In order to deal with this complexity and make it easier to capture political support for democracy in empirical terms, Mónica Ferrín and Hanspeter Kriesi (2016) distinguish between people's *views about democracy* and *their evaluations of democracy*. While views about democracy refer to normative ideals of democracy (i.e., ideas “about what democracy should be”), evaluations of democracy refer to assessments of how democracy has been implemented in one's country (i.e., evaluations of how “democracy works”) (Ferrín and Kriesi 2016: 10). Both components are important when measuring empirically citizens' support for democracy.

In this report, we capture *people's views about democracy* by asking respondents to rate, on a scale from 1 (not important) to 10 (very important), the importance of certain items for democracy. Our survey included a list of eleven items that are often considered to be constituent elements of a democracy.

1. *Government abides by the law, like everyone else*
2. *Courts keep the government from acting beyond its authority*
3. *Courts treat everyone equally*
4. *Minority groups' rights are protected*
5. *Freedom of speech*
6. *Media is free to criticize government*
7. *Opposition is free to criticize government*
8. *Political parties offer distinct alternatives*
9. *Strong leadership*
10. *The Peaceful acceptance of election results*
11. *Free and fair elections*

In a next step we captured people's *evaluations of democracy* by asking respondents how satisfied they are with the way democracy works in their country, and in the EU. Respondents could choose one of the following answers: 1. Very satisfied, 2. Somewhat satisfied, 3. Somewhat not satisfied, 4. Not at all satisfied. We recoded these answers, categorizing responses 1 and 2 as “satisfied”, and responses 3 and 4 as “dissatisfied”.

Finally, we sought to capture respondents' trust in their own government as well as the EU by posing the following question: “How much do you trust your national government/ EU to do the right thing in response to the COVID-19 virus health emergency?” Respondents could again choose among four responses: 1. Completely, 2. Somewhat, 3. Not really, 4. Not at all. We recoded these answers, categorizing responses 1 and 2 as having trust in the COVID-19 response, and responses 3 and 4 as distrusting the COVID-19 response.

Europeans' views regarding democracy

Let us first explore what European citizens think democracy should entail. Figure 1 shows the importance European citizens in the EU27 and several individual member states attach to certain things when they think about democracy. Recall that respondents were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 (not important) to 10 (very important), the importance of each item listed in Figure 1. Overall, respondents within the EU27 think that all of the listed items are important for democracy, as all items received a rating of 7.9 or higher, on average. Interestingly, with an average rating of 8, having a “strong leadership” was also considered to be important.

FIGURE 1 **EU27: How important are the following elements for democracy?**
Scale of 1 (little importance) to 10 (high importance)

	EU27	BEL	FRA	DEU	ITA	NLD	POL	ESP
Governments abide by laws like everyone else	9.1	9.1	8.9	8.8	9.2	8.8	9.1	9.1
Courts treat everyone equally	9.0	8.8	8.7	8.9	9.1	8.7	9.1	9.1
Free & fair elections	8.9	8.7	8.5	9.2	8.9	8.6	8.7	9.0
Freedom of speech	8.9	8.8	8.6	9.2	8.7	8.6	8.8	8.8
Accept election results	8.6	8.4	8.1	9.0	8.5	8.2	8.5	8.8
Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	8.5	8.4	8.3	8.3	8.4	8.2	8.8	8.7
Protection of rights of minority groups	8.2	8.2	7.9	8.4	8.6	8.3	8.2	8.5
Strong leadership	8.0	7.6	7.0	8.1	8.1	7.9	8.2	8.3
Parties offer clear alternatives	7.9	7.4	7.4	8.0	8.3	7.7	7.1	8.4
Opposition free to criticize government	7.9	7.7	7.4	8.3	7.7	7.9	7.5	7.8
Media free to criticize government	7.9	7.9	7.6	8.3	7.6	7.8	7.6	8.3

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Figure 1 also shows that respondents within the EU27 attach great importance to rule-of-law issues when it comes to democracy. Indeed, they gave both “governments abide by laws like everyone else” and “courts should treat everyone equally” high ratings on the scale (9.1 and 9, respectively).

Fundamental aspects of representative democracy like “free and fair elections” and “freedom of speech” are rated as very important (8.9). The need to peacefully accept election results also ranks highly in the minds of respondents across the EU27 (8.6).

The results for the seven member states we subjected to a more in-depth study reveal compelling differences. For example, compared to other member states, the presence of strong leadership is viewed as less important by French respondents (7). Spanish respondents (8.3) attach the greatest importance to the presence of strong leadership, though this is closely followed by Polish respondents (8.2) and German and Italian respondents (8.1).

While for Germans “free and fair elections” are most important to democracy, respondents in the other member states attribute the greatest importance to “governments abide by laws like everyone else”, which is followed by the “courts should treat everyone equally”. This suggests that the rule of law is perceived as crucially important by many, including Polish respondents. Political parties’ ability to offer distinct alternatives as well as the media and opposition’s freedom to criticize the government are viewed as slightly less important by Polish, Belgian and French respondents.

In a next step, we take a closer look at the seven states selected for in-depth analysis to see if and how views of democracy differ by political party affiliation. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 show the data for Belgian respondents split by region (i.e., Flanders and Wallonia). Flemish respondents, regardless of their partisan leanings, attach considerable importance to both “governments abide by laws like everyone else” and “courts should treat everyone equally.” Having “strong leadership” is most important among those who support Flemish nationalist centre-right party Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie and among supporters of the populist party Vlaams Belang. “Parties offering clear alternatives” is the least important among Vlaams Belang supporters (6.9), and most important among Groen supporters (7.9). Considering the recent developments around the acceptance of the US Presidential election outcome, it may be worth noting that supporters of the Vlaams Belang party attach quite high importance to the peaceful acceptance of election outcomes in a democracy.

FIGURE 2.1 **Belgium, Flanders: How important are the following elements for democracy?**
Scale of 1 (little importance) to 10 (high importance)

	PDVA	Groen	sp.a	CD&V	Open VLD	N-VA	VB
Governments abide by laws like everyone else	9.0	9.0	8.9	8.4	9.0	9.1	9.1
Courts treat everyone equally	8.8	8.8	9.1	8.6	8.9	8.8	8.5
Free & fair elections	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.5	9.0	8.6	8.6
Freedom of speech	9.0	8.7	8.5	8.3	8.6	8.8	8.8
Accept election results	8.2	8.6	8.6	8.0	8.7	8.5	8.1
Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	8.6	8.4	8.1	7.9	8.5	8.1	8.3
Protection of rights of minority groups	8.5	8.7	8.5	8.1	8.3	7.9	7.3
Strong leadership	8.1	7.6	7.7	7.8	8.4	8.4	8.3
Parties offer clear alternatives	7.2	7.9	7.3	7.3	7.8	7.4	6.9
Opposition free to criticize government	7.9	7.9	7.7	6.7	7.8	7.7	7.6
Media free to criticize government	8.0	7.6	8.4	7.5	7.8	7.9	7.8

FIGURE 2.2 **Belgium, Wallonia: How important are the following elements for democracy?**

Scale of 1 (little importance) to 10 (high importance)

	PTB	Ecolo	PS	DéFI	cdH	MR
Governments abide by laws like everyone else	9.6	9.0	9.3	9.2	8.5	9.1
Courts treat everyone equally	9.5	8.7	8.9	9.5	8.6	8.9
Free & fair elections	9.3	8.9	8.8	9.1	9.1	8.7
Freedom of speech	9.5	8.8	9.1	9.6	9.0	8.4
Accept election results	8.5	8.6	8.4	9.4	9.0	8.5
Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	9.5	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.5	8.1
Protection of rights of minority groups	8.9	8.7	8.5	8.2	8.8	8.1
Strong leadership	6.7	6.7	7.0	8.4	7.0	7.6
Parties offer clear alternatives	7.1	7.6	7.7	8.3	7.9	7.5
Opposition free to criticize government	8.7	7.9	7.5	8.8	7.9	7.3
Media free to criticize government	9.1	7.8	8.1	8.9	8.4	7.2

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Respondents from Wallonia, regardless of party support, consider rule-of-law items—particularly “governments abide by laws like everyone else”—important. Supporters of the Centre Démocrate Humaniste rate “free and fair elections” as most important (9.1), while supporters of the Démocrate Fédéraliste Indépendant say this about “freedom of speech” (9.6). Overall, Wallonia respondents, excepting Démocrate Fédéraliste Indépendant supporters, attach less importance to having “strong leadership” than do most of their Flemish counterparts.

Figure 3 shows how French respondents view democracy. As is the case for Flemish and Walloon respondents, the French consider rule-of-law related items to be very important for democracy. For them, “governments abide by laws like everyone else” and “courts should treat everyone equally” are the most important elements of democracy. Notably, supporters of the populist right-wing Rassemblement National rate the importance of accepting election outcomes (7.9) somewhat higher than do their counterparts who support the Parti Communiste (7.5). Moreover, Parti Communiste supporters are least likely to think that having a “strong leadership” is important for democracy (6.1). This item is most important for supporters of La République En Marche (7.5). Overall, compared with respondents in other member states, French respondents find it less important to have “strong leadership”.

FIGURE 3 **France: How important are the following elements for democracy?**
Scale of 1 (little importance) to 10 (high importance)

	P.C.F.	LFI	PS	La REM	Mo Dem	LR	RN
Governments abide by laws like everyone else	8.8	9.2	9.0	8.7	9.3	8.6	8.8
Courts treat everyone equally	8.6	9.0	8.8	8.8	8.9	8.2	8.4
Free & fair elections	7.7	8.9	8.7	8.6	7.7	8.2	8.4
Freedom of speech	8.3	9.0	8.7	8.6	8.4	8.5	8.5
Accept election results	7.5	8.5	8.3	8.3	7.7	8.1	7.9
Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	8.5	8.6	8.4	7.9	8.6	7.6	8.2
Protection of rights of minority groups	8.0	8.5	8.3	7.8	7.9	7.7	7.1
Strong leadership	6.1	6.7	7.2	7.5	7.0	7.1	7.4
Parties offer clear alternatives	7.3	7.8	7.7	7.4	7.6	7.3	7.7
Opposition free to criticize government	6.9	8.0	7.8	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.5
Media free to criticize government	7.4	8.5	8.1	7.1	7.7	7.3	7.6

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The views regarding democracy among German respondents are displayed in Figure 4. German respondents generally consider “free and fair elections” and “freedom of speech” to be most relevant for democracy. Having a “strong leadership” is ranked quite highly among supporters of the Christlich Demokratische Union and Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (8.4 and 8.5, respectively). Consistent with rankings among supporters of populist right-wing parties in Flanders and France, Alternative für Deutschland supporters in Germany also consider it very important to “accept election outcomes” (8.7).

FIGURE 4 **Germany: How important are the following elements for democracy?**
Scale of 1 (little importance) to 10 (high importance)

	Die Linke	B90/ Grüne	SPD	CDU/ CSU	FDP	AfD
Governments abide by laws like everyone else	8.9	9.0	8.9	8.8	8.6	8.9
Courts treat everyone equally	9.0	9.3	9.0	9.0	8.9	8.9
Free & fair elections	9.4	9.6	9.2	9.2	9.3	9.0
Freedom of speech	9.3	9.5	9.2	9.1	9.3	9.1
Accept election results	9.0	9.4	9.1	9.0	9.1	8.7
Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	8.6	8.5	8.3	8.3	7.9	8.3
Protection of rights of minority groups	8.8	8.9	8.7	8.5	8.1	7.4

	Die Linke	B90 / Grüne	SPD	CDU / CSU	FDP	AfD
Strong leadership	8.0	8.3	8.5	8.4	7.8	7.9
Parties offer clear alternatives	8.1	8.4	8.2	8.0	8.2	8.0
Opposition free to criticize government	8.7	8.8	8.4	8.2	8.6	8.3
Media free to criticize government	8.7	8.7	8.4	8.1	8.5	8.5

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Figure 5 provides an overview of what Italian respondents think are the most important elements of democracy. As in France, respondents in Italy attach considerable importance to the rule of law when thinking about what democracy should entail. The items “governments abide by laws like everyone else” and “courts treat everyone equally” are perceived to be very important. These items are followed closely by “free and fair elections”, which is also rated highly by supporters of the populist right-wing Lega and Fratelli d’Italia parties. Interestingly, although supporters of these parties attach significant importance to having a strong leadership (8.5 and 8.7, respectively), they also consider it important to accept the outcome of an election (8.1 and 8.5, respectively).

FIGURE 5 Italy: How important are the following elements for democracy?

Scale of 1 (little importance) to 10 (high importance)

	MVCS	PD	FI	LN	Bdl
Governments abide by laws like everyone else	9.1	9.4	9.2	8.9	9.3
Courts treat everyone equally	9.0	9.3	9.1	8.9	9.4
Free & fair elections	8.9	9.3	8.9	8.7	9.1
Freedom of speech	8.5	8.8	8.8	8.9	8.8
Accept election results	8.6	9.0	8.1	8.1	8.5
Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	8.2	8.7	8.4	8.4	8.3
Protection of rights of minority groups	8.7	9.0	8.5	8.5	8.1
Strong leadership	8.2	7.9	8.4	8.5	8.7
Parties offer clear alternatives	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5	8.6
Opposition free to criticize government	7.3	7.8	7.7	8.0	8.4
Media free to criticize government	7.2	7.8	7.4	7.6	8.2

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Figure 6 shows the views of Dutch respondents. Here, as in other member states, the rule-of-law items, “governments abide by laws like everyone else” and “courts treat everyone equally” are identified as very important by all respondents. In addition, however, the Dutch also consider “free and fair elections” to

be very important. Like their counterparts in Flanders, Germany, France and Italy, Dutch supporters of the populist right-wing Partij van de Vrijheid and Forum voor Democratie parties consider it important for democracy to accept the outcome of an election (8.3 and 8.1, respectively). For Forum voor Democratie supporters, “freedom of speech” is viewed as the most important element of democracy (9.1).

FIGURE 6 **The Netherlands: How important are the following elements for democracy?**
Scale of 1 (little importance) to 10 (high importance)

	SP	GL	DENK	PvdA	CU	D66	CDA	VVD	FvD	PVV
Governments abide by laws like everyone else	9.0	8.9	8.1	8.9	9.4	9.0	7.6	8.7	9.0	9.1
Courts treat everyone equally	8.7	9.2	8.2	8.8	9.1	9.2	8.0	8.7	8.7	8.5
Free & fair elections	9.0	9.0	8.3	8.8	8.8	9.1	8.3	8.7	9.0	8.5
Freedom of speech	8.9	8.6	8.4	8.7	8.6	8.6	7.8	8.6	9.1	8.7
Accept election results	8.5	8.6	7.3	8.5	8.9	8.7	7.7	8.4	7.9	8.1
Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	8.4	8.4	7.8	8.3	8.8	8.5	7.5	8.2	8.0	8.4
Protection of rights of minority groups	8.6	8.9	8.6	8.6	9.0	8.6	7.4	8.2	7.5	7.9
Strong leadership	8.3	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.6	7.5	7.9	8.2	8.1	8.3
Parties offer clear alternatives	8.0	8.0	7.5	7.5	8.1	8.0	7.5	7.7	7.7	7.8
Opposition free to criticize government	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.1	7.4	7.8	8.1	8.0
Media free to criticize government	8.3	8.2	8.0	8.0	7.9	8.7	6.7	7.8	8.0	7.9

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The views of Polish respondents are shown in Figure 7. Again, supporters of almost all parties attach very high importance to the rule of law items “governments abide by laws like everyone else”, “courts treat everyone equally” and “courts stop government to act beyond its authority”. Support for a “strong leadership” is very high (8.9) among those who support the ruling party Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, which contrasts significantly with the response among those in support of the opposition party Wiosna (6.7). Accepting an election outcome finds strong support across the spectrum of Polish respondents.

FIGURE 7 **Poland: How important are the following elements for democracy?**
Scale of 1 (little importance) to 10 (high importance)

	Wiosna	PO	.Nowo	PiS	K'15
Governments abide by laws like everyone else	8.9	9.2	8.8	9.1	8.7
Courts treat everyone equally	8.9	9.1	7.9	9.3	8.8
Free & fair elections	8.4	8.8	8.4	9.0	8.4
Freedom of speech	8.7	9.1	8.1	8.5	8.6

	Wiosna	PO	.Nowo	PiS	K'15
Accept election results	8.1	8.7	7.5	8.7	8.0
Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	8.8	9.0	7.9	8.3	9.0
Protection of rights of minority groups	8.5	8.6	8.3	7.6	7.9
Strong leadership	6.7	8.2	7.4	8.9	8.3
Parties offer clear alternatives	7.0	7.3	6.2	7.4	7.1
Opposition free to criticize government	8.2	8.5	7.7	6.8	6.9
Media free to criticize government	8.3	8.6	7.0	6.7	7.1

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Figure 8 provides an overview of Spanish respondents' views regarding the substance of democracy. As is the case of Poland, respondents in Spain rate as very important the rule-of-law items "governments abide by laws like everyone else," "courts treat everyone equally," and "courts stop government to act beyond its authority," which are followed by "free and fair elections." Having "strong leadership" is most important for supporters of the populist right-wing VOX party (8.8), but also for those who support the center-right Ciudadanos party (8.7). This is least important among supporters of the ruling left-wing party, Podemos (7.9). As is the case in the other member states, respondents across the political spectrum, including VOX voters, think that accepting an election outcome is important (8.6).

FIGURE 8 **Spain: How important are the following elements for democracy?**
Scale of 1 (little importance) to 10 (high importance)

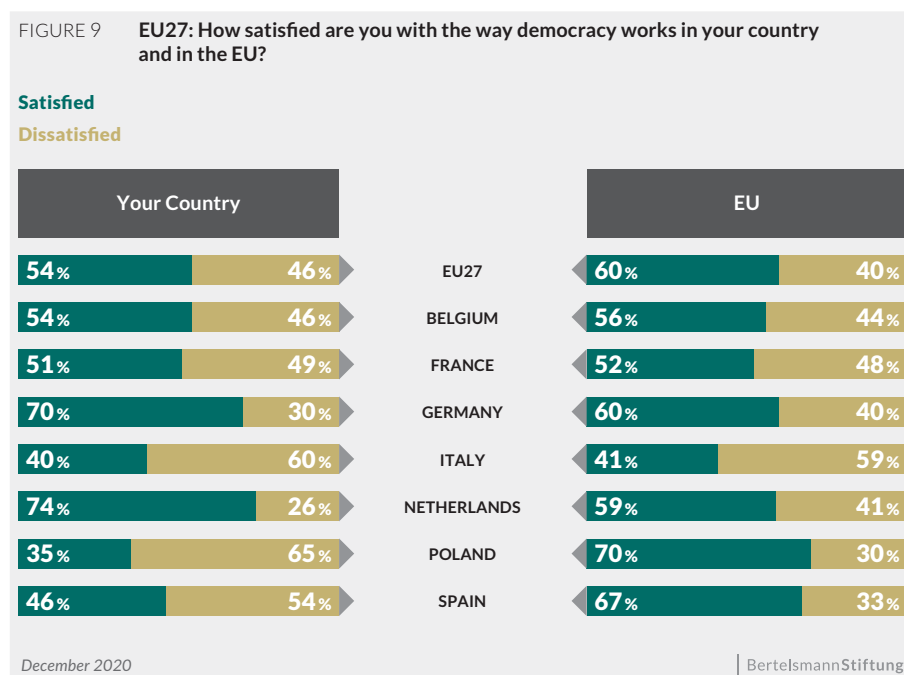
	Podemos	PSOE	C's	PP	Vox
Governments abide by laws like everyone else	9.3	9.1	9.3	8.5	9.1
Courts treat everyone equally	9.5	9.1	9.2	8.7	8.8
Free & fair elections	9.3	9.1	9.0	8.7	9.0
Freedom of speech	9.2	9.0	9.0	8.4	8.8
Accept election results	9.0	8.9	8.8	8.3	8.6
Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	8.7	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.7
Protection of rights of minority groups	9.1	8.7	8.5	8.2	7.7
Strong leadership	7.9	8.6	8.7	8.4	8.8
Parties offer clear alternatives	8.6	8.5	8.6	8.1	8.5
Opposition free to criticize government	7.9	7.7	8.3	7.9	8.2
Media free to criticize government	8.5	8.1	8.6	8.4	8.5

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Europeans' evaluations of democracy

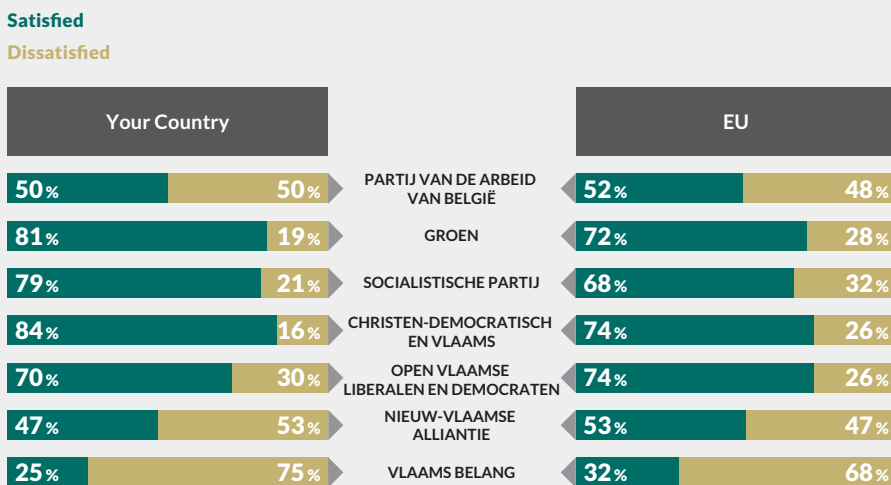
After having explored what European citizens think characterizes a good democracy, in a second step, we examine how they evaluate the ways in which democracy works in their own country and in the EU. Figure 9 below shows the degrees of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the EU27, as well as the seven individual member states. Figure 9 shows that European citizens are, on average, slightly more satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU than they are with how it works in their own country. Some 60 percent of EU27 respondents express satisfaction with the way democracy works in the EU, while 54 percent express the same about their own country. Figure 9 also suggests that numbers vary significantly across member states. Satisfaction with the way democracy works in one's own country is the highest in the Netherlands (74 percent) and Germany (70 percent). These figures stand in stark contrast to those in Poland (35 percent), Italy (40 percent) and Spain (46 percent). Interestingly, Polish and Spanish respondents are much more satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU (70 percent and 67 percent, respectively). Italian respondents are the least satisfied with how democracy works in the EU, with only 41 percent expressing satisfaction — which is also on par with their satisfaction levels for democracy at home. Respondents in Belgium and France are split more evenly when it comes to satisfaction with the way democracy works in their respective countries and in the EU, though both are slightly more positive about democracy in the EU.



Figures 10.1 and 10.2 show satisfaction levels with the way democracy works at the national and EU levels among Flemish and Walloon respondents. Supporters of the populist right-wing Vlaams Belang party are least satisfied with the way democracy works in Belgium and the EU. Only 25 percent of Vlaams Belang supporters state that they are satisfied with the way democracy works in Belgium, and 32 percent say they are satisfied with the way democracy works

in the EU. Supporters of the Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams party are most satisfied with democracy at both the national and EU levels (84 percent and 74 percent, respectively). When it comes to respondents in Wallonia, supporters of the Parti du Travail de Belgique party express the lowest levels of satisfaction: 22 percent are satisfied with how democracy works in Belgium, and 26 percent are satisfied with how democracy works in the EU. Supporters of the Ecolo party are most satisfied with the way democracy works at home (71 percent) and in the EU (77 percent). Supporters of the Ecolo party are most satisfied with the way democracy works at home (71 percent) and in the EU (77 percent).

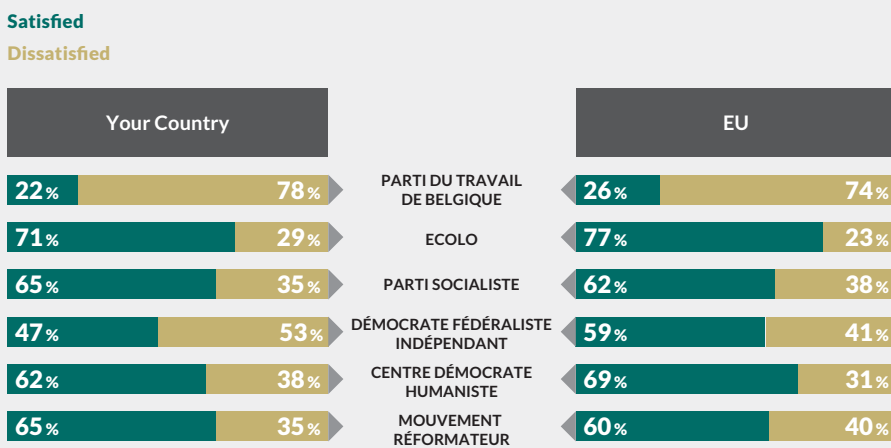
FIGURE 10.1 Belgium, Flanders: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country and in the EU?



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FIGURE 10.2 Belgium, Wallonia: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country and in the EU?



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The evaluations of French respondents are displayed in Figure 11. Supporters of the far left-wing Parti Communiste party and the populist right-wing Rassemblement National are least satisfied with the way democracy works in France (30 percent

and 32 percent, respectively) and in the EU (42 percent and 28 percent, respectively). Supporters of the ruling Le Republique en Marche party are most satisfied, with 84 percent expressing satisfaction with democracy at home and 79 percent with democracy in the EU.

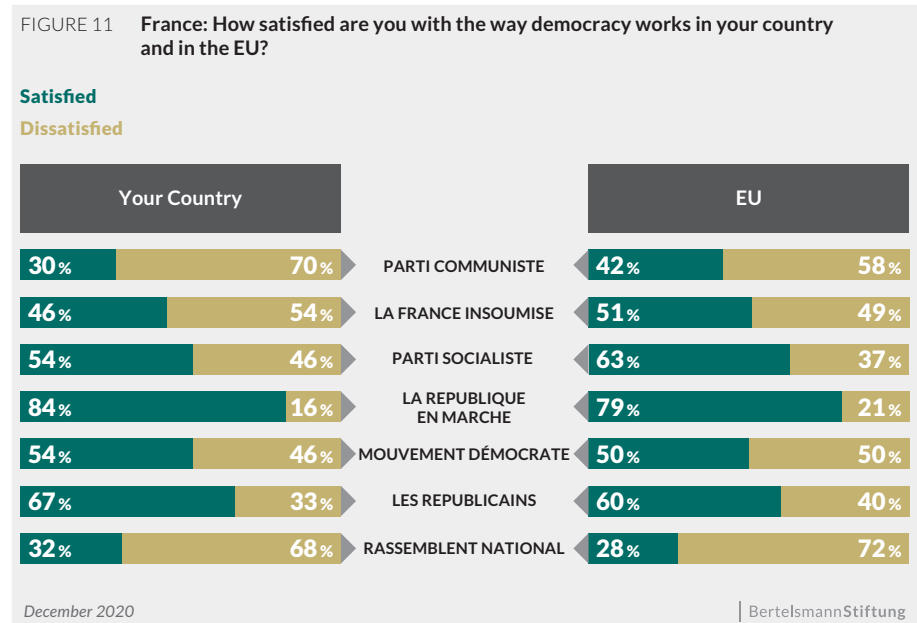


Figure 12 shows the percentage of German respondents expressing satisfaction with democracy in Germany and in the EU. The most satisfied are supporters of the Christlich Demokratische Union party. Some 88 percent of them state that they are satisfied with the way in which democracy works in Germany, and 72 percent are satisfied with the way it works in the EU. Supporters of the populist right-wing Alternative für Deutschland party are least satisfied. Only 25 percent of these respondents express satisfaction with the way democracy works in Germany, and only 26 percent express satisfaction with how it works in the EU.

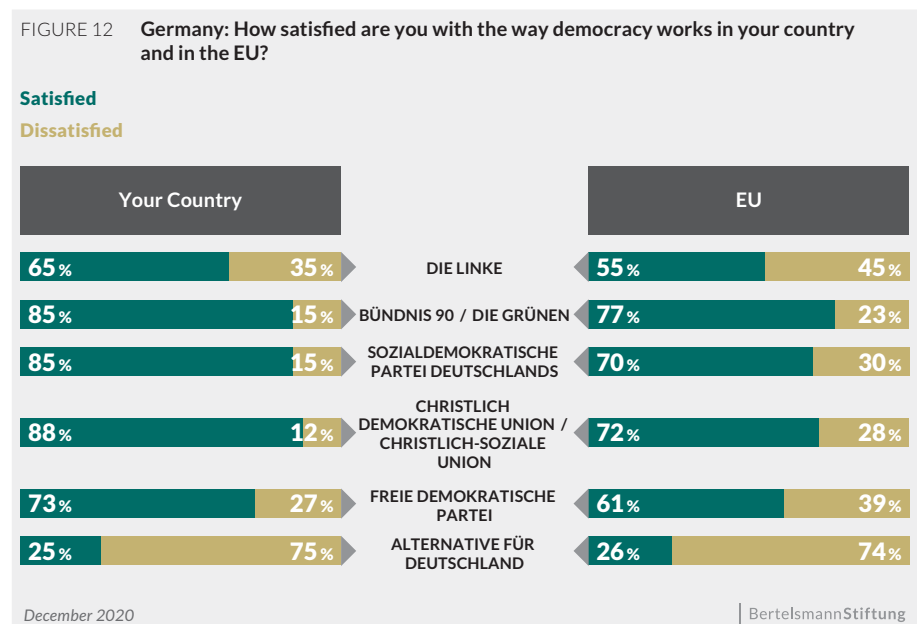


Figure 13 depicts Italian respondents' evaluations of how democracy works in Italy and in the EU. Supporters of the populist right-wing Fratelli d'Italia party are least satisfied with how democracy works at home (19 percent) and in the EU (20 percent). Supporters of the center-left Partito Democratico party are most satisfied with how democracy works in Italy (66 percent) and in the EU (68 percent).

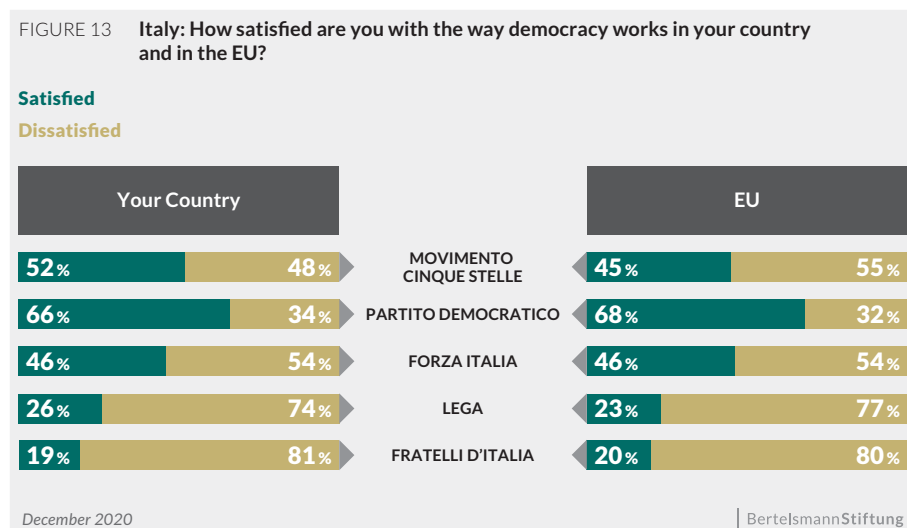
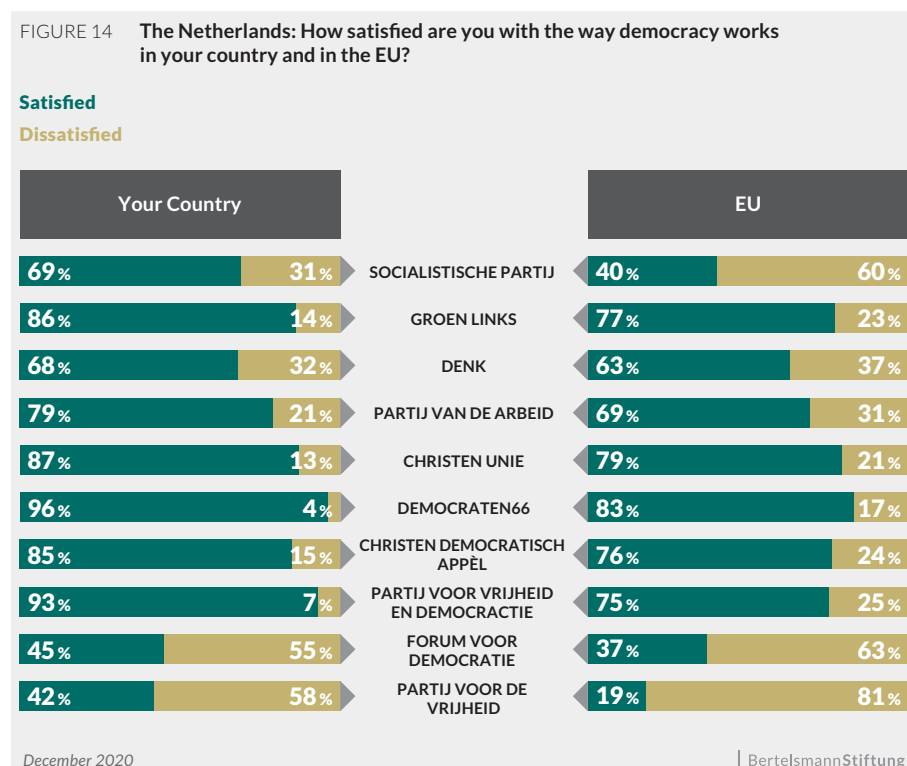
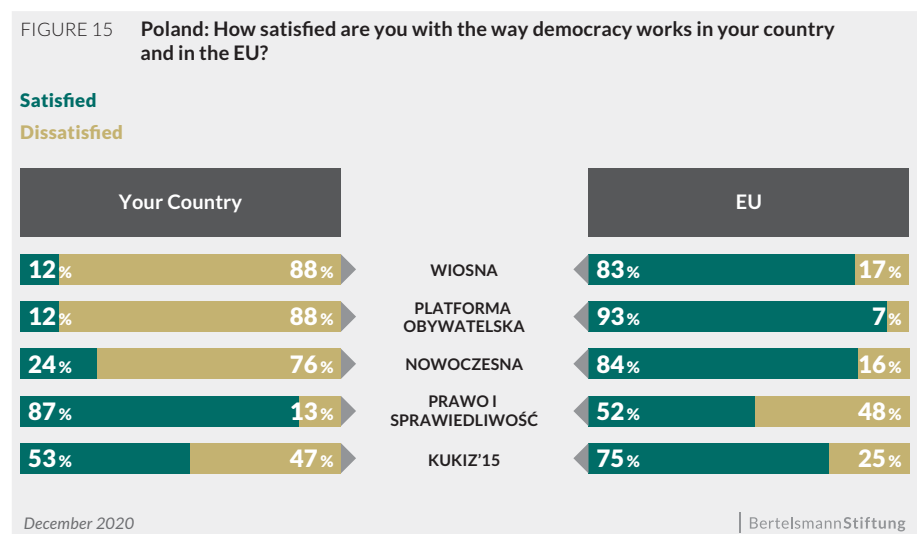


Figure 14 displays the ways in which different Dutch respondents evaluate how democracy works in the Netherlands and in the EU. As is the case in Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands, supporters of populist right-wing parties are least satisfied with the way in which democracy works — both in the Netherlands and in the EU. Only 42 percent of Partij van de Vrijheid supporters are satisfied with democracy in the Netherlands and only 19 percent are satisfied

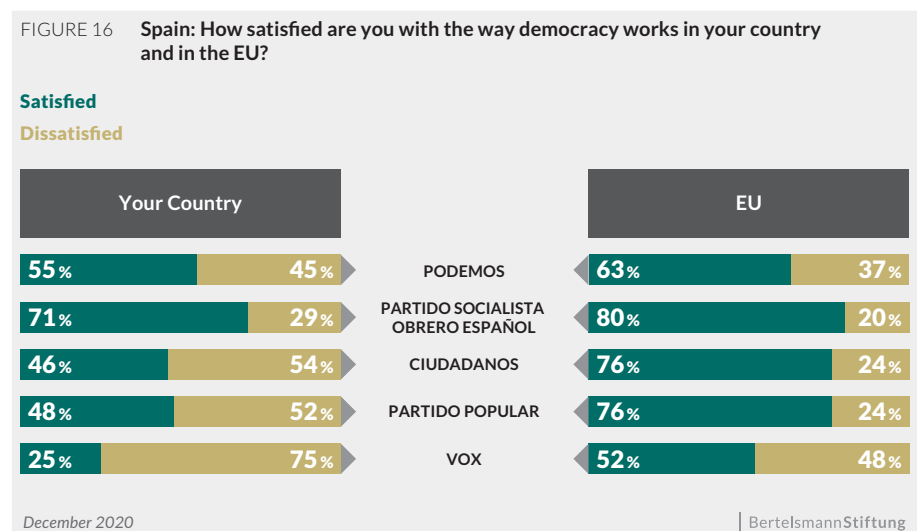


with democracy in the EU. Forum van Democratie supporters are somewhat more satisfied with democracy in the Netherlands (45 percent), and considerably more satisfied with democracy in the EU (37 percent). Supporters of the ruling party Partij voor Vrijheid en Democratie are most satisfied: 93 percent express satisfaction with democracy in the Netherlands, and 75 percent with democracy in the EU.

As Figure 15 shows, supporters of Poland’s ruling party, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, are most satisfied with how democracy works in their country (87 percent), but less satisfied with how it works in the EU (52 percent). Supporters of the opposition party Wiosna are the least satisfied with how democracy works at home (12 percent), but they are very satisfied with how democracy works in the EU (83 percent).



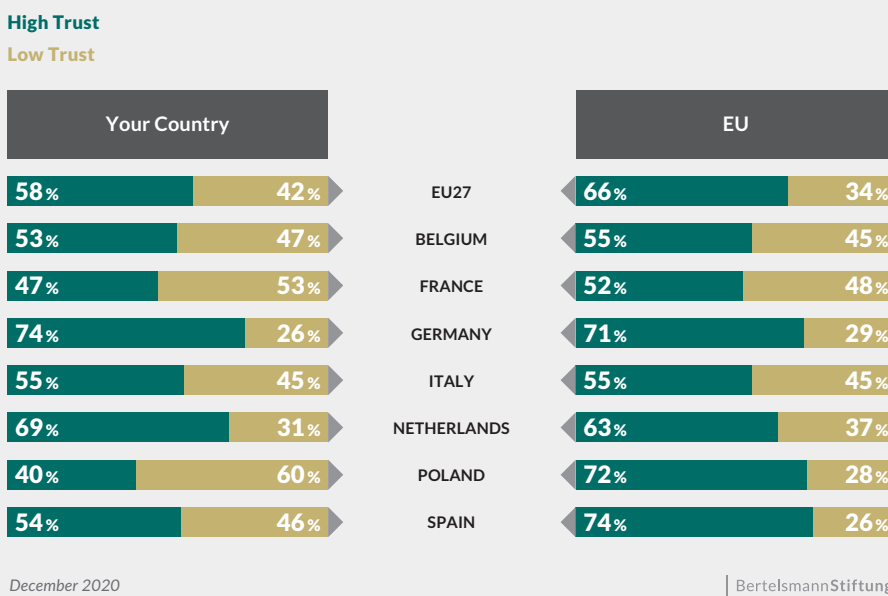
As Figure 16 shows, in Spain supporters of the populist right-wing VOX party are, similar to their counterparts in other member states, least satisfied with how democracy works at home (25 percent), but more satisfied with how it works in the EU (52 percent). Among Spanish respondents, supporters of the ruling party Partido Socialista Obrero Español are the most satisfied with how democracy works at home (71 percent), and they are even more satisfied with how it works at the EU level (80 percent).



Europeans' trust in the pandemic response

In a final step, after having reviewed European citizens' views and evaluations of democracy, we examine people's trust in national government and the EU in the context of the pandemic. Figure 17 shows the share of respondents in the EU27 that trust their national government or the EU to respond effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic. A majority of EU27 respondents (58 percent) state that they trust their government to do the right thing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and an even larger share (66 percent) trusts the EU in this regard. Figure 17 also displays considerable variation between member states. While a majority of Belgian, German, Italian and Spanish respondents trust their respective governments to deal effectively with the pandemic, this is true of only a minority of French (47 percent) and Polish (40 percent) respondents. Belgian, Dutch, German and Italian respondents express a similar level of trust in the EU as they do in their respective governments. French, Polish and Spanish respondents, however, are generally more trusting of the EU than of their own government in terms of responding to the pandemic.

FIGURE 17 EU27: How much do you trust your national government / the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?



Figures 18.1 and 18.2 show the levels of trust in the Belgian government and the EU to effectively respond to the COVID-19 pandemic among respondents in Flanders and Wallonia. In Flanders, supporters of the populist right-wing Vlaams Belang party are the least trusting of the Belgian government (37 percent) and the EU (39 percent) with regard responding effectively to the pandemic. Those who support the Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams party express the most trust in the Belgian government (84 percent) and in the EU (73 percent) with respect to delivering an effective pandemic response. In Wallonia, supporters of the Parti du Travail de Belgique party are least trusting of the Belgian government (20 percent) and the EU (29 percent), while those in support of the Ecolo party are most trusting of their own government (58 percent) and the EU (69 percent).

FIGURE 18.1 Belgium, Flanders: How much do you trust your national government / the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

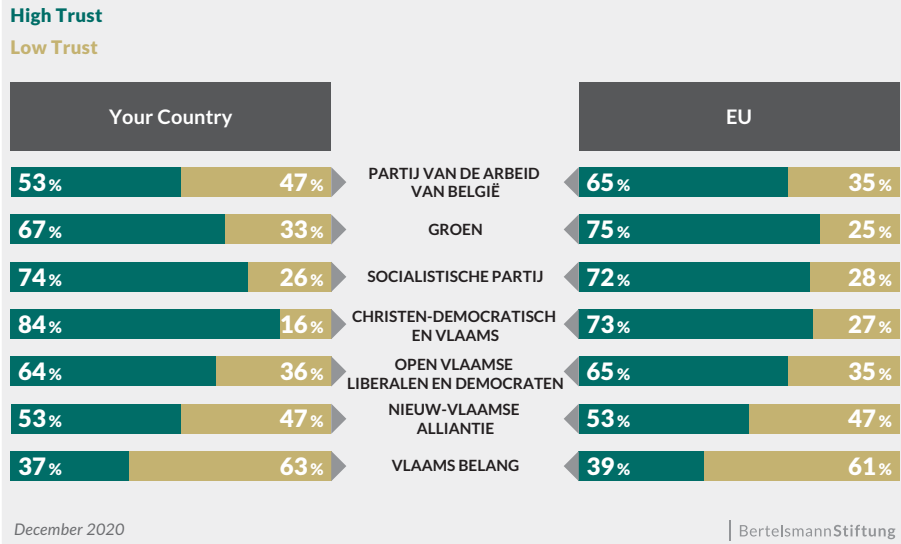


FIGURE 18.2 Belgium, Wallonia: How much do you trust your national government / the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

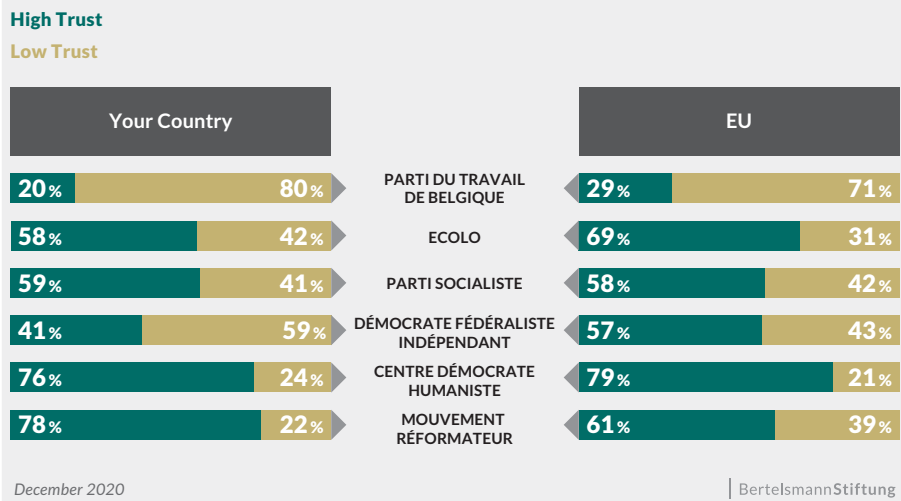


Figure 19 shows the share of French respondents who trust their national government and the EU to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. As is the case in Flanders, supporters of the populist right-wing Rassemblement National party have little trust in their own government and the EU in this regard. Only 35 percent of Rassemblement National supporters trust the French government, and 36 percent trust the EU. Supporters of the ruling party, Le Republique en Marche, are most trusting of their own government (77 percent) and the EU (79 percent) in their capacity to deal with the pandemic.

Figure 20 shows the percentage of German respondents stating that they trust their government and the EU to deliver an effective response to the pandemic. The most trusting are supporters of the Christlich Demokratische Union, with 85 percent expressing trust in the German government and 78 percent

FIGURE 19 France: How much do you trust your national government / the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

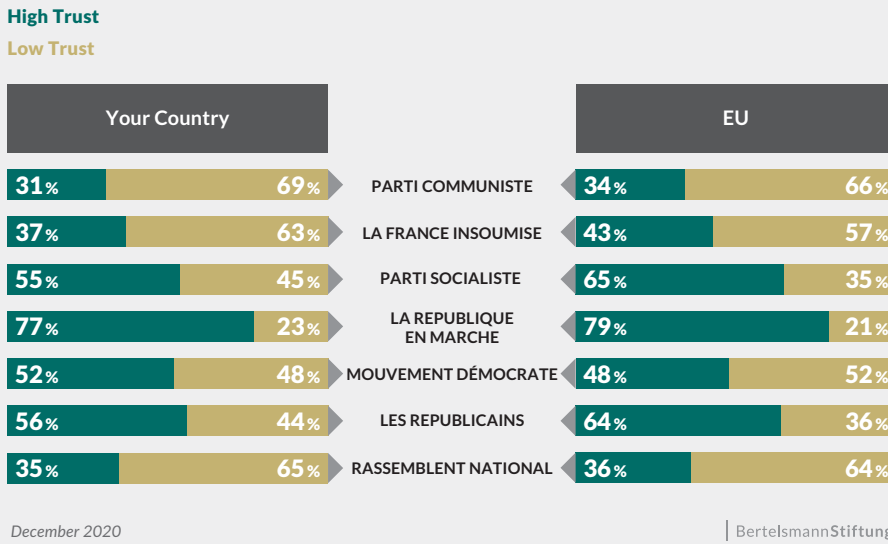
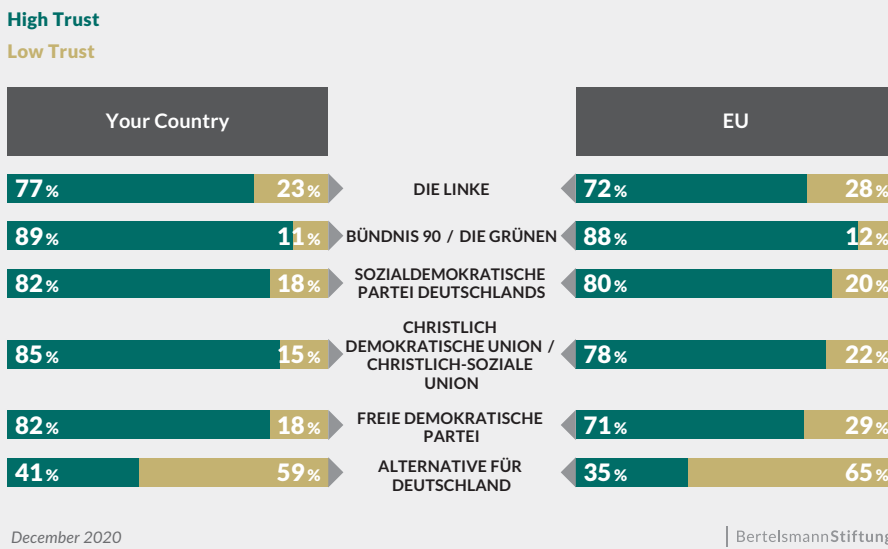


FIGURE 20 Germany: How much do you trust your national government / the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?



expressing trust in the EU to handle the situation well. Supporters of the populist right-wing Alternative für Deutschland are least trusting. Only 41 percent state that they trust the German government to respond effectively to the pandemic, and only 35 percent say the same of the EU.

Figure 21 shows the extent to which Italian party supporters trust the Italian government and the EU to respond effectively to the pandemic. Those who support the populist right-wing Fratelli d'Italia party are least trusting of the Italian government (28 percent) and the EU (39 percent) in this regard. Supporters of the center-left Partito Democratico party are most trusting of their government (80 percent) and the EU (81 percent) in terms of delivering an effective pandemic response.

FIGURE 21 Italy: How much do you trust your national government / the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

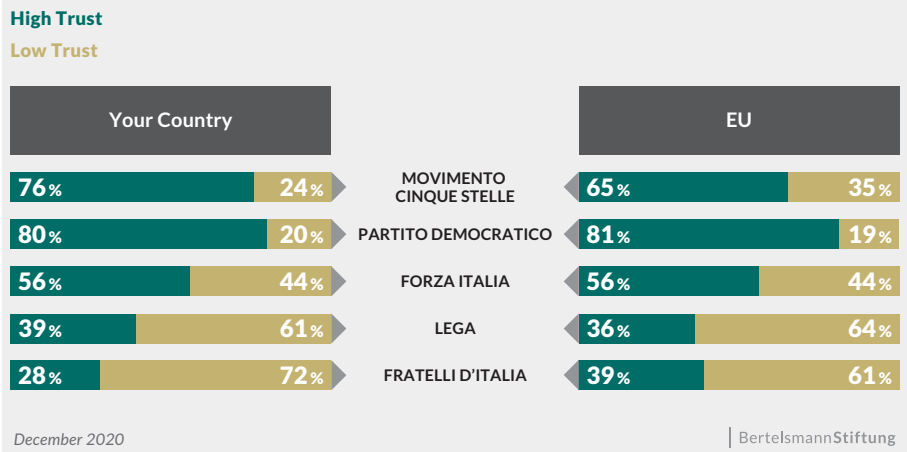
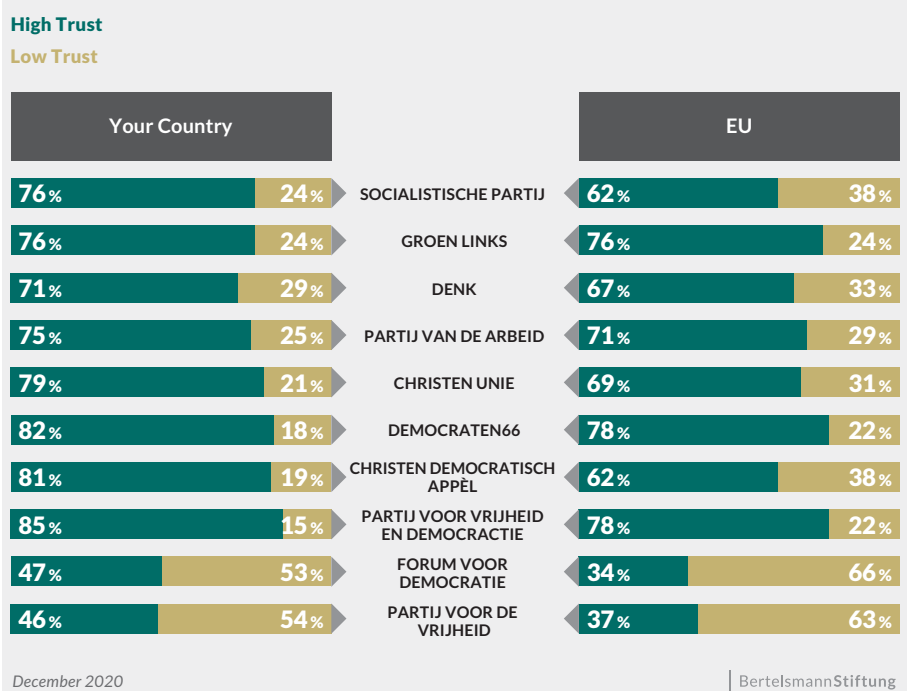


Figure 22 highlights differences in the extent to which Dutch respondents trust their own government and the EU in dealing with the pandemic. As is the case in Flanders, France, Germany and the Netherlands, supporters of populist right-wing parties are least trusting of the Dutch government and the EU when it comes to handling the pandemic. Some 46 percent of Partij van de Vrijheid supporters trust the Dutch government to do what’s necessary to curb the pandemic, while only 37 percent trust the EU to do the same. Whereas a total of 47 percent of Forum van Democratie supporters express trust in the Dutch government in this regard, only 34 percent of them trust the EU. Supporters of the ruling party, Partij voor Vrijheid en Democratie, are most trusting of their own government (85 percent) and the EU (78 percent).

FIGURE 22 The Netherlands: How much do you trust your national government / the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?



As Figure 23 shows, supporters of Poland’s ruling party, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, are most trusting of their government’s ability to deal with the pandemic (85 per cent). And while they express less trust in the EU’s ability to handle the pandemic, they are nonetheless relatively trusting (72 percent) of the EU. Supporters of the opposition party Wiosna express the least trust in the Polish government’s ability to respond effectively to the pandemic (15 percent), but they express considerable trust in the EU’s ability (79 percent).

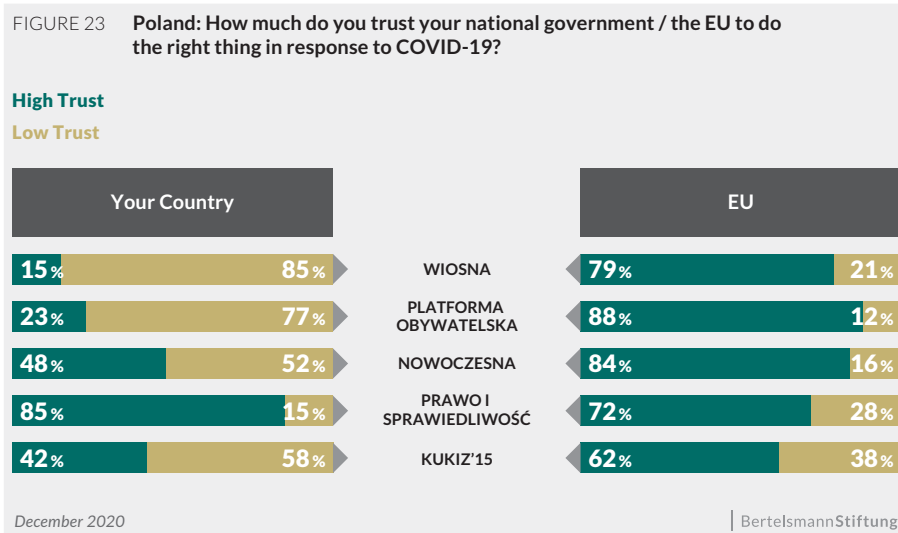
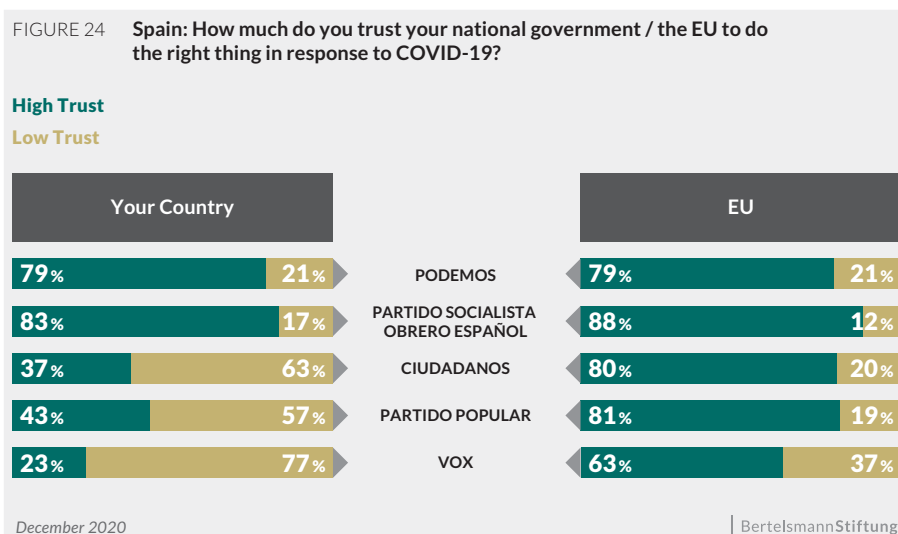


Figure 24 shows that in Spain, supporters of the populist right-wing VOX party are least trusting of their government’s ability to deal with the pandemic (23 percent). At the same time, most of this cohort has faith in the EU’s ability to deal with the pandemic (63 percent). Supporters of the ruling party Partido Socialista Obrero Español are the most trusting of their government’s ability to deal with the pandemic (83 percent), and they express even greater trust in the EU’s ability (88 percent).



Concluding Remarks

Given the widespread worry in the public debate about further democratic backsliding in the wake of the pandemic, accompanied by the risk of waning public support for health-related restrictions, we examined how European citizens view democracy and the rule of law in this report. Not only did we examine how European citizens evaluate the state of democracy in their country and the EU more generally, but also what they think democracy should be. Our results suggest that citizens attach great value to the rule of law when it comes to democracy. Europeans think that “governments abiding to the law” and “courts treating everyone equally” are two crucial pillars of what characterizes a good democracy. These two factors are not only the most important for the EU27 as a whole, but also for respondents from five of the six countries surveyed individually, namely Belgium, France, Italy, Poland and the Netherlands. Only German citizens consider “free and fair elections” and freedom of expression to be even more important, although these fundamental aspects of representative democracy are also considered very important in the other countries.

Fundamental aspects of representative democracy like free and fair elections and freedom of speech are also viewed to be of key importance. When it comes to evaluating how democracy works, a majority of Europeans is satisfied both with how democracy works in the EU and in their own country. However, it is striking that a full 60 percent of Europeans are satisfied with democracy in the EU, while only 54 percent say the same about democracy in their own country. Beyond that, we also find country-level variation. While Dutch and German citizens are very satisfied with the way democracy works in their countries, only a minority of Spanish, Italian and Polish citizens are satisfied. Poland stands out in two respects. Although only 35 percent of Poles are satisfied with the democracy in their own country, a full 70 percent express positive views on the state of democracy in the EU. These findings feed into the larger narrative that many Europeans welcome the EU as a supervisory agent that’s capable to jump in if individual member states falter.

Another interesting pattern emerges when analysing individually polled countries for respondents with different party affiliations. In general, one finds that those who affiliate themselves with parties on the far-right end of the spectrum are much more sceptical about the state of democracy both within their country and the EU. A notable exception is Poland, where it is exactly the other way around. Supporters of the two most right-wing parties — among them the governing PIS party — are most satisfied about the way democracy works in their country, though least so with how it works in the EU. Supporters of the left-wing Wiosna party, on the other hand, are least happy with the state of democracy in their country.

What about Europeans’ confidence in the EU and their own country to respond appropriately to the ongoing Corona crisis? While 58 percent trust their country’s crisis management, two out of three Europeans (66 percent) have confidence

in the EU. Once again, however, there are differences between countries: while Belgians, Germans, Italians and Spaniards trust their country in this respect, only a minority of French (47 percent) and Poles (40 percent) do. Polish citizens, in particular, are hoping for the EU to deal with the pandemic because trust in their own government to deliver an adequate response remains low. When looking at supporters of different parties within countries, one again finds a left-right pattern. Respondents tending towards the far-right end of the political spectrum are significantly less likely to trust both their own country and the EU to do the right thing in response to the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis. Again, Poland sticks out for breaking this pattern in that it is supporters of the left-wing Wiosna opposition party that are least likely to trust their current government to respond appropriately to the pandemic.

Looking back, it is good news that Europeans stand by their democratic values and are largely satisfied with the way they are implemented, be it on a national or European level, even during a time of crisis. Do these figures imply that there is nothing to worry about when it comes to democracy in Europe? We think not.

The often out of the ordinary survey results from Poland show why. Poles are increasingly dissatisfied with the development of democracy in their country. Their trust in their own government to do the right thing is dropping significantly, and not only in times of pandemic. However, thus far, this general frustration of the Poles with their own leadership has not rubbed off on the EU. On the contrary. Their trust in the EU's democracy and crisis management is steadily increasing and is clearly above the values of the other countries surveyed individually. This is consistent with our longer-term [eupinions trend data](#), in which a majority of Poles are positive about the direction of the EU and their approval ratings for their country remaining in the EU exceed those of all other countries. In other words, the Polish population is turning towards the EU, hoping that it will compensate for the shortcomings of their own government.

What follows for decision makers in the EU? First, that they are blessed with a leap of faith when it comes to EU citizens' trust in the EU's capacity to adequately respond to the ongoing COVID-19 health crisis. This trust is particularly strong in Spain, Poland and France where citizens trust the EU's crisis management much more than they trust their own government's one. Notably, this even goes for supporters of far-right parties in France, Italy, Spain and Poland, whose discontent with the pandemic response appears to be largely directed against their own governments. With the EU-organised COVID-19 vaccination rollout having picked up in pace since then, chances are that the EU stands to keep and possibly extend this trust.

At the same time, a majority of European citizens continue to be satisfied with how democracy works in the EU. This observation is also confirmed by our [long-term eupinions trend data](#), where the number of EU citizens' who are satisfied with the EU's democracy has risen from 55 percent at the beginning of the crisis (March, 2020) to 59 percent a year later (March, 2021). Having said that, this should not lead us to neglect the challenges to democracy ongoing in individual member states such as Poland. Just over 1/3 (35 percent) of Polish citizens are satisfied with how democracy works in their country, compared to almost 3/4 (70 percent) being satisfied with the EU's functioning of democracy. Our long-term eupinions trend data confirms this finding, showing an [astonishing gap](#) opening up between EU citizens overall satisfaction with democracy in their respective countries (currently 54 percent), and Polish citizens' trust in their country's state

of democracy (currently 37 percent). Their satisfaction in this regard has dropped from 52 percent to just 37 percent within the last two years.

Our data in this study also shows, however, that European citizens are quite clear about what they think makes for a good democracy. Factors establishing the rule of law rank particularly high on their list of priorities, meaning that, where these are under threat, the EU has reason to count on their citizens support in safeguarding these elements.

Glossary

ORG. ABBREVIATION	ORIGINAL NAME	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Belgium Flanders & Brussels		
PDVA	Partij van de Arbeid van België	The Workers' Party of Belgium
sp.a	Socialistische Partij Anders	Socialist Party Differently
Groen	Groen	The Greens
CD&V	Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams	Christian Democratic and Flemish
Open VLD	Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten	Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats
N-VA	Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie	The New Flemish Alliance
VB	Vlaams Belang	Flemish Belang
Belgium Wallonia & Brussels		
PTB	Parti du Travail de Belgique	Workers' Party of Belgium
Ecolo	Ecolo	Ecolo
PS	Parti Socialiste	Socialist Party
DéFI	Démocrate Fédéraliste Indépendant	Democratic Federalist Independent
cdH	Centre Démocrate Humaniste	The Humanist Democratic Centre
MR	Mouvement Réformateur	The Reformist Movement
France		
P.C.F.	Parti Communiste française	Communist Party of France
LFI	La France Insoumise	Unsubmissive France
PS	Parti Socialiste	Socialist Party
LaREM	La République en Marche !	The Republic on the Move

MoDem	Mouvement Démocrate	Democratic Movement
LR	Les Républicains	The Republicans
RN	Rassemblement National	National Rally
Germany		
Die Linke	Die Linke	The Left
B90/Grüne	Bündnis 90/Die Grünen	Alliance 90/The Greens
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	Social Democratic Party of Germany
CDU/CSU	Christlich Demokratische Union/Christlich-Soziale Union	Christian democratic political alliance/Christian Social Union
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei	Free Democratic Party
AfD	Alternative für Deutschland	Alternative for Germany
Italy		
MVCS	Movimento 5 Stelle	5 Star Movement
PD	Partito Democratico	Democratic Party
FI	Forza Italia	Forward Italy
LN	Lega Nord/Lega	Northern League/League
Bdl	Fratelli D'Italia	Brothers of Italy
Netherlands		
SP	Socialistische Partij	Socialist Party
GL	Groen Links	Green Left
DENK	Beweging DENK	Movement DENK
PvdA	Partij van de Arbeid	Labour Party
CU	Christen Unie	Christian Union
D66	Democraten66	Democrats66
CDA	Christen-Democratisch Appèl	Christian Democratic Appeal
VVD	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy

FvD	Forum voor Democratie	Forum for Democracy
PVV	Partij voor de Vrijheid	Party for Freedom
Poland		
Wiosna	Wiosna	Spring
PO	Platforma Obywatelska	Civic Platform
.Nowo	Nowoczesna	Modern
PiS	Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	Law and Justice
K'15	Kukiz'15	Kukiz'15
Spain		
Podemos	Podemos	We can
PSOE	Partido Socialista Obrero Español	Spanish Socialists Workers Party
C's	Ciudadanos	Citizens
PP	Partido Popular	People's Party
Vox	Vox	Vox

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Method

— This report presents an overview of a study conducted by Dalia Research for Bertelsmann Stiftung between 2020-12-01 and 2020-12-20 on public opinion across 27 EU Member States. The sample of n=11,857 was drawn — across all 27 EU Member States, taking into account current population distributions with regard to age (16–69 years), gender and region/country. In order to obtain census representative results, the data were weighted based upon the most recent Eurostat statistics. The target weighting variables were age, gender, level of education (as defined by ISCED (2011) levels 0–2, 3–4, and 5–8), and degree of urbanization (rural and urban). An iterative algorithm was used to identify the optimal combination of weighting variables based on sample composition within each country. An estimation of the overall design effect based on the distribution of weights was calculated at 1.26 at the global level. Calculated for a sample of this size and considering the design-effect, the margin of error would be 1 percent at a confidence level of 95 percent.

Data Appendix

EU27: How important are the following elements for democracy?

	Governments abide by laws like everyone else	Courts treat everyone equally	Free & fair elections	Freedom of speech	Accept election results	Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	Protection of rights of minority groups	Strong leadership	Parties offer clear alternatives	Opposition free to criticize government	Media free to criticize government
EU27	9.1	9.0	8.9	8.9	8.6	8.5	8.2	8.0	7.9	7.9	7.9
Belgium	9.1	8.8	8.7	8.8	8.4	8.4	8.2	7.6	7.4	7.7	7.9
France	8.9	8.7	8.5	8.6	8.1	8.3	7.9	7.0	7.4	7.4	7.6
Germany	8.8	8.9	9.2	9.2	9.0	8.3	8.4	8.1	8.0	8.3	8.3
Italy	9.2	9.1	8.9	8.7	8.5	8.4	8.6	8.1	8.3	7.7	7.6
Netherlands	8.8	8.7	8.6	8.6	8.2	8.2	8.3	7.9	7.7	7.9	7.8
Poland	9.1	9.1	8.7	8.8	8.5	8.8	8.2	8.2	7.1	7.5	7.6
Spain	9.1	9.1	9.0	8.8	8.8	8.7	8.5	8.3	8.4	7.8	8.3

Belgium, Flanders: How important are the following elements for democracy?

	Governments abide by laws like everyone else	Courts treat everyone equally	Free & fair elections	Freedom of speech	Accept election results	Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	Protection of rights of minority groups	Strong leadership	Parties offer clear alternatives	Opposition free to criticize government	Media free to criticize government
Partij van de Arbeid van België	9.0	8.8	8.8	9.0	8.2	8.6	8.5	8.1	7.2	7.9	8.0
Groen	9.0	8.8	8.8	8.7	8.6	8.4	8.7	7.6	7.9	7.9	7.6
Socialistische Partij	8.9	9.1	8.8	8.5	8.6	8.1	8.5	7.7	7.3	7.7	8.4
Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams	8.4	8.6	8.5	8.3	8.0	7.9	8.1	7.8	7.3	6.7	7.5
Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten	9.0	8.9	9.0	8.6	8.7	8.5	8.3	8.4	7.8	7.8	7.8
Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie	9.1	8.8	8.6	8.8	8.5	8.1	7.9	8.4	7.4	7.7	7.9
Vlaams Belang	9.1	8.5	8.6	8.8	8.1	8.3	7.3	8.3	6.9	7.6	7.8

Belgium, Wallonia: How important are the following elements for democracy?

	Governments abide by laws like everyone else	Courts treat everyone equally	Free & fair elections	Freedom of speech	Accept election results	Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	Protection of rights of minority groups	Strong leadership	Parties offer clear alternatives	Opposition free to criticize government	Media free to criticize government
Parti du Travail de Belgique	9.6	9.5	9.3	9.5	8.5	9.5	8.9	6.7	7.1	8.7	9.1
Ecolo	9.0	8.7	8.9	8.8	8.6	8.6	8.7	6.7	7.6	7.9	7.8
Parti Socialiste	9.3	8.9	8.8	9.1	8.4	8.6	8.5	7.0	7.7	7.5	8.1
Démocrate Fédéraliste Indépendant	9.2	9.5	9.1	9.0	9.0	8.5	8.8	7.0	7.9	7.9	8.4
Centre Démocrate Humaniste	8.5	8.6	9.1	9.0	9.0	8.5	8.8	7.0	7.9	7.9	8.4
Mouvement Réformateur	9.1	8.9	8.7	8.4	8.5	8.1	8.1	7.6	7.5	7.3	7.2

France: How important are the following elements for democracy?

	Governments abide by laws like everyone else	Courts treat everyone equally	Free & fair elections	Freedom of speech	Accept election results	Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	Protection of rights of minority groups	Strong leadership	Parties offer clear alternatives	Opposition free to criticize government	Media free to criticize government
Parti Communiste	8.8	8.6	7.7	8.3	7.5	8.5	8.0	6.1	7.3	6.9	7.4
La France Insoumise	9.2	9.0	8.9	9.0	8.5	8.6	8.5	6.7	7.8	8.0	8.5
Parti Socialiste	9.0	8.8	8.7	8.7	8.3	8.4	8.3	7.2	7.7	7.8	8.1
La Republique en Marche	8.7	8.8	8.6	8.6	8.3	7.9	7.8	7.5	7.4	7.3	7.1
Mouvement Démocrate	9.3	8.9	7.7	8.4	7.7	8.6	7.9	7.0	7.6	7.4	7.7
Les Républicains	8.6	8.2	8.2	8.5	8.1	7.6	7.7	7.1	7.3	7.3	7.3
Rassemblement National	8.8	8.4	8.4	8.5	7.9	8.2	7.1	7.4	7.7	7.5	7.6

Germany: How important are the following elements for democracy?

	Governments abide by laws like everyone else	Courts treat everyone equally	Free & fair elections	Freedom of speech	Accept election results	Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	Protection of rights of minority groups	Strong leadership	Parties offer clear alternatives	Opposition free to criticize government	Media free to criticize government
Die Linke	8.9	9.0	9.4	9.3	9.0	8.6	8.8	8.0	8.1	8.7	8.7
Bündnis 90/Die Grünen	9.0	9.3	9.6	9.5	9.4	8.5	8.9	8.3	8.4	8.8	8.7
Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	8.9	9.0	9.2	9.2	9.1	8.3	8.7	8.5	8.2	8.4	8.4
Christlich Demokratische Union/Christlich-Soziale Union	8.8	9.0	9.2	9.1	9.0	8.3	8.5	8.4	8.0	8.2	8.1
Freie Demokratische Partei	8.6	8.9	9.3	9.3	9.1	7.9	8.1	7.8	8.2	8.6	8.5
Alternative für Deutschland	8.9	8.9	9.0	9.1	8.7	8.3	7.4	7.9	8.0	8.3	8.5

Italy: How important are the following elements for democracy?

	Governments abide by laws like everyone else	Courts treat everyone equally	Free & fair elections	Freedom of speech	Accept election results	Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	Protection of rights of minority groups	Strong leadership	Parties offer clear alternatives	Opposition free to criticize government	Media free to criticize government
MoVimento Cinque Stelle	9.1	9.0	8.9	8.5	8.6	8.2	8.7	8.2	8.2	7.3	7.2
Partito Democratico	9.4	9.3	9.3	8.8	9.0	8.7	9.0	7.9	8.3	7.8	7.8
Forza Italia	9.2	9.1	8.9	8.8	8.1	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.4	7.7	7.4
Lega	8.9	8.9	8.7	8.9	8.1	8.4	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.0	7.6
Fratelli D'Italia	9.3	9.4	9.1	8.8	8.5	8.3	8.1	8.7	8.6	8.4	8.2

The Netherlands: How important are the following elements for democracy?

	Governments abide by laws like everyone else	Courts treat everyone equally	Free & fair elections	Freedom of speech	Accept election results	Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	Protection of rights of minority groups	Strong leadership	Parties offer clear alternatives	Opposition free to criticize government	Media free to criticize government
Socialistische Partij	9.0	8.7	9.0	8.9	8.5	8.4	8.6	8.3	8.0	8.1	8.3
Groen Links	8.9	9.2	9.0	8.6	8.6	8.4	8.9	7.8	8.0	8.1	8.2
DENK	8.1	8.2	8.3	8.4	7.3	7.8	8.6	7.5	6.9	7.8	7.7
Partij van de Arbeid	8.9	8.8	8.8	8.7	8.5	8.3	8.6	7.8	7.5	8.1	7.9
Christen Unie	9.4	9.1	8.8	8.6	8.9	8.8	9.0	7.6	8.1	8.1	8.7
Democraten66	9.0	9.2	9.1	8.6	8.7	8.5	8.6	7.5	8.0	8.1	8.7
Christen Democratisch Appèl	7.6	8.0	8.3	7.8	7.7	7.5	7.4	7.9	7.5	7.4	6.7
Partij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.6	8.4	8.2	8.2	8.2	7.7	7.8	7.8
Forum voor Democratie	9.0	8.7	9.0	9.1	7.9	8.0	7.5	8.1	7.7	8.1	8.0
Partij voor de Vrijheid	9.1	8.5	8.5	8.7	8.1	8.4	7.9	8.3	7.8	8.0	7.9

Poland: How important are the following elements for democracy?

	Governments abide by laws like everyone else	Courts treat everyone equally	Free & fair elections	Freedom of speech	Accept election results	Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	Protection of rights of minority groups	Strong leadership	Parties offer clear alternatives	Opposition free to criticize government	Media free to criticize government
Wiosna	8.9	8.9	8.4	8.7	8.1	8.8	8.5	6.7	7.0	8.2	8.3
Platforma Obywatelska	9.2	9.1	8.8	9.1	8.7	9.0	8.6	8.2	7.3	8.5	8.6
Nowoczesna	8.8	7.9	8.4	8.1	7.5	7.9	8.3	7.4	6.2	7.7	7.0
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	9.1	9.3	9.0	8.5	8.7	8.3	7.6	8.9	7.4	6.8	6.7
Kukiz'15	8.7	8.8	8.4	8.6	8.0	9.0	7.9	8.3	7.1	6.9	7.1

Spain: How important are the following elements for democracy?

	Governments abide by laws like everyone else	Courts treat everyone equally	Free & fair elections	Freedom of speech	Accept election results	Courts stop government to act beyond its authority	Protection of rights of minority groups	Strong leadership	Parties offer clear alternatives	Opposition free to criticize government	Media free to criticize government
Podemos	9.3	9.5	9.3	9.2	9.0	8.7	9.1	7.9	8.6	7.9	8.5
Partido Socialista Obrero Español	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.0	8.9	8.6	8.7	8.6	8.5	7.7	8.1
Ciudadanos	9.3	9.2	9.0	9.0	8.8	8.6	8.5	8.7	8.6	8.3	8.6
Partido Popular	8.5	8.7	8.7	8.4	8.3	8.7	8.2	8.4	8.1	7.9	8.4
Vox	9.1	8.8	9.0	8.8	8.6	8.7	7.7	8.8	8.5	8.2	8.5

EU27: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country and in the EU?

	Your Country		EU	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
EU27	54 %	46 %	60 %	40 %
Belgium	54 %	46 %	56 %	44 %
France	51 %	49 %	52 %	48 %
Germany	70 %	30 %	60 %	40 %
Italy	40 %	60 %	41 %	59 %
Netherlands	74 %	26 %	59 %	41 %
Poland	35 %	65 %	70 %	30 %
Spain	46 %	54 %	67 %	33 %

Belgium, Flanders: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country and in the EU?

	Your Country		EU	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Partij van de Arbeid van België	50 %	50 %	52 %	48 %
Groen	81 %	19 %	72 %	28 %
Socialistische Partij	79 %	21 %	68 %	32 %
Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams	84 %	16 %	74 %	26 %
Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten	70 %	30 %	74 %	26 %
Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie	47 %	53 %	53 %	47 %
Vlaams Belang	25 %	75 %	32 %	68 %

Belgium, Wallonia: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country and in the EU?

	Your Country		EU	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Parti du Travail de Belgique	22 %	78 %	26 %	74 %
Ecolo	71 %	29 %	77 %	23 %
Parti Socialiste	65 %	35 %	62 %	38 %
Démocrate Fédéraliste Indépendant	47 %	53 %	59 %	41 %
Centre Démocrate Humaniste	62 %	38 %	69 %	31 %
Mouvement Réformateur	65 %	35 %	60 %	40 %

France: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country and in the EU?

	Your Country		EU	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Parti Communiste	30 %	70 %	42 %	58 %
La France Insoumise	46 %	54 %	51 %	49 %
Parti Socialiste	54 %	46 %	63 %	37 %
La République en Marche	84 %	16 %	79 %	21 %
Mouvement Démocrate	54 %	46 %	50 %	50 %
Les Républicains	67 %	33 %	60 %	40 %
Rassemblement National	32 %	68 %	28 %	72 %

Germany: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country and in the EU?

	Your Country		EU	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Die Linke	65 %	70 %	55 %	45 %
Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen	85 %	54 %	77 %	23 %
Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	85 %	46 %	70 %	30 %
Christlich Demokratische Union/Christlich-Soziale Union	88 %	16 %	72 %	28 %
Freie Demokratische Partei	73 %	46 %	61 %	39 %
Alternative für Deutschland	25 %	33 %	26 %	74 %

Italy: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country and in the EU?

	Your Country		EU	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
MoVimento Cinque Stelle	52 %	48 %	45 %	55 %
Partito Democratico	66 %	34 %	68 %	32 %
Forza Italia	46 %	54 %	46 %	54 %
Lega	26 %	74 %	23 %	77 %
Fratelli D'Italia	19 %	81 %	20 %	80 %

Netherlands: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country and in the EU?

	Your Country		EU	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Socialistische Partij	69 %	31 %	40 %	60 %
Groen Links	86 %	14 %	77 %	23 %
DENK	68 %	32 %	63 %	37 %
Partij van de Arbeid	79 %	21 %	69 %	31 %
Christen Unie	87 %	13 %	79 %	21 %
Democraten66	96 %	4 %	83 %	17 %
Christen Democratisch Appèl	85 %	15 %	76 %	24 %
Partij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	93 %	7 %	75 %	25 %
Forum voor Democratie	45 %	55 %	37 %	63 %
Partij voor de Vrijheid	42 %	58 %	19 %	81 %

Poland: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country and in the EU?

	Your Country		EU	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Wiosna	12 %	88 %	83 %	17 %
Platforma Obywatelska	12 %	88 %	93 %	7 %
Nowoczesna	24 %	76 %	84 %	16 %
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	87 %	13 %	52 %	48 %
Kukiz 15	53 %	47 %	75 %	25 %

Spain: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country and in the EU?

	Your Country		EU	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
Podemos	55 %	45 %	63 %	37 %
Partido Socialista Obrero Español	71 %	29 %	80 %	20 %
Ciudadanos	46 %	54 %	76 %	24 %
Partido Popular	48 %	52 %	76 %	24 %
Vox	25 %	75 %	52 %	48 %

EU27: How much do you trust your national government/the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

	Your Country		EU	
	High Trust	Little Trust	High Trust	Little Trust
EU27	58 %	42 %	66 %	34 %
Belgium	53 %	47 %	55 %	45 %
France	47 %	53 %	52 %	48 %
Germany	74 %	26 %	71 %	29 %
Italy	55 %	45 %	55 %	45 %
Netherlands	69 %	31 %	63 %	37 %
Poland	40 %	60 %	72 %	28 %
Spain	54 %	46 %	74 %	26 %

Belgium, Flanders: How much do you trust your national government/the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

	Your Country		EU	
	High Trust	Little Trust	High Trust	Little Trust
Partij van de Arbeid van België	53 %	42 %	65 %	35 %
Groen	67 %	47 %	75 %	25 %
Socialistische Partij	74 %	53 %	72 %	28 %
Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams	84 %	26 %	73 %	27 %
Open Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten	64 %	45 %	65 %	35 %
Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie	53 %	31 %	53 %	47 %
Vlaams Belang	37 %	60 %	39 %	61 %

Belgium, Wallonia: How much do you trust your national government/the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

	Your Country		EU	
	High Trust	Little Trust	High Trust	Little Trust
Parti du Travail de Belgique	20 %	80 %	29 %	71 %
Ecolo	58 %	42 %	69 %	31 %
Parti Socialiste	59 %	41 %	58 %	42 %
Démocrate Fédéraliste Indépendant	41 %	59 %	57 %	43 %
Centre Démocrate Humaniste	76 %	24 %	79 %	21 %
Mouvement Réformateur	78 %	22 %	61 %	39 %

France: How much do you trust your national government/the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

	Your Country		EU	
	High Trust	Little Trust	High Trust	Little Trust
Parti Communiste	31 %	69 %	34 %	66 %
La France Insoumise	37 %	63 %	43 %	57 %
Parti Socialiste	55 %	45 %	65 %	35 %
La République en Marche	77 %	23 %	79 %	21 %
Mouvement Démocrate	52 %	48 %	48 %	52 %
Les Républicains	56 %	44 %	64 %	34 %
Rassemblement National	35 %	65 %	36 %	64 %

Germany: How much do you trust your national government/the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

	Your Country		EU	
	High Trust	Little Trust	High Trust	Little Trust
Die Linke	77 %	23 %	72 %	28 %
Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen	89 %	11 %	88 %	12 %
Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	82 %	18 %	80 %	20 %
Christlich Demokratische Union/Christlich-Soziale Union	85 %	15 %	78 %	22 %
Freie Demokratische Partei	82 %	18 %	71 %	29 %
Alternative für Deutschland	41 %	59 %	35 %	65 %

Italy: How much do you trust your national government/the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

	Your Country		EU	
	High Trust	Little Trust	High Trust	Little Trust
Movimento Cinque Stelle	76 %	24 %	65 %	35 %
Partito Democratico	80 %	20 %	81 %	19 %
Forza Italia	56 %	44 %	56 %	44 %
Lega	39 %	61 %	36 %	64 %
Fratelli D'Italia	28 %	72 %	39 %	61 %

Netherlands: How much do you trust your national government/the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

	Your Country		EU	
	High Trust	Little Trust	High Trust	Little Trust
Socialistische Partij	76 %	24 %	62 %	38 %
Groen Links	76 %	24 %	76 %	22 %
DENK	71 %	29 %	67 %	33 %
Partij van de Arbeid	75 %	25 %	71 %	29 %
Christen Unie	79 %	21 %	69 %	31 %
Democraten66	82 %	18 %	78 %	22 %
Christen Democratisch Appèl	81 %	19 %	62 %	38 %
Partij voor Vrijheid en Democratie	85 %	15 %	78 %	22 %
Forum voor Democratie	47 %	53 %	34 %	66 %
Partij voor de Vrijheid	46 %	54 %	37 %	63 %

Poland: How much do you trust your national government/the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

	Your Country		EU	
	High Trust	Little Trust	High Trust	Little Trust
Wiosna	15 %	85 %	79 %	21 %
Platforma Obywatelska	23 %	77 %	88 %	12 %
Nowoczesna	48 %	52 %	84 %	16 %
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	85 %	15 %	72 %	28 %
Kukiz'15	42 %	58 %	62 %	38 %

Spain: How much do you trust your national government/the EU to do the right thing in response to COVID-19?

	Your Country		EU	
	High Trust	Little Trust	High Trust	Little Trust
Podemos	79 %	21 %	79 %	21 %
Partido Socialista Obrero Español	83 %	27 %	88 %	12 %
Ciudadanos	37 %	63 %	80 %	20 %
Partido Popular	43 %	57 %	81 %	19 %
Vox	23 %	77 %	63 %	37 %

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