



European  
Commission

STANDARD EUROBAROMETER 100

# Public opinion in the European Union

National Report: Ireland

Fieldwork: October – November 2023



This survey has been requested and co-ordinated by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication.

This report was produced for the European Commission's Representation in Ireland.

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

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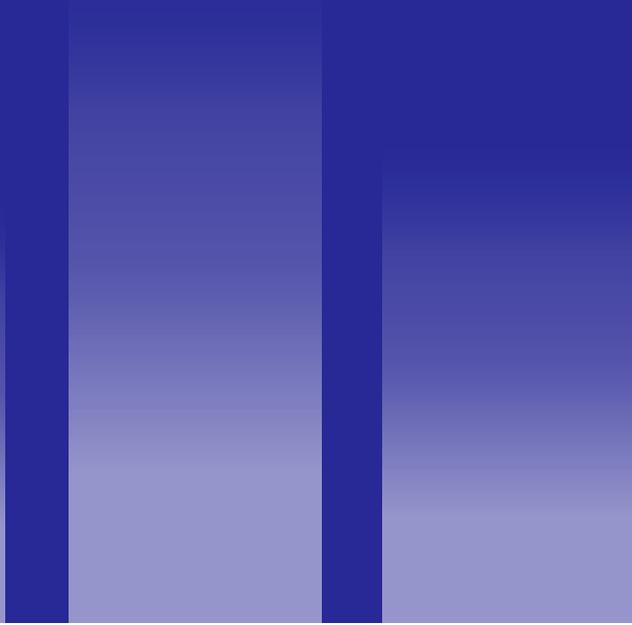
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# Introduction



## Standard Eurobarometer 100 Autumn 2023

The annual Eurobarometer report for Ireland is part of a long-standing series of reports probing Irish and European public opinion trends towards the European Union (EU) as well as political and social issues more generally. The data for this report is sourced in the Standard Eurobarometer (SEB), now in its 100th edition and is referred to throughout this paper as Autumn 2023.

Fieldwork for the Irish survey was undertaken by Ipsos B&A who interviewed 1,016 respondents aged 15+ between the 23<sup>rd</sup> October and 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The structure of the sample was a multi-stage random probability sample. Fieldwork was conducted using a face-to-face CAPI methodology<sup>1</sup>.

The national report covers a period of time when Ireland and the EU continued to experience high inflation and the resulting cost of living crisis. The Russian invasion of Ukraine continues and shows no signs of cessation, having a severe impact on the EU and its people both economically and socially. Within an Irish context, housing continues to be the primary concern. Inflation and interest rate hikes continue to dominate the news, as well as murmurings of recession.

Against this background, the report covers four core themes:

- Trust in the EU and EU direction for the future
- Immigration
- Important contextual issues
  - ▶ Local and EU Concerns
  - ▶ Financial Difficulties
  - ▶ Agreement with EU Responses to Russia's Invasion of Ukraine
- Trust in the media

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<sup>1</sup> For further details concerning the methodology, please see the technical specifications section in the AUTUMN 2023 results report



# Key findings

## Trust in the EU and EU direction for the future

- The Irish public holds the most positive view of the EU, sharing the top spot with Portugal. However, Ireland has seen a decrease in positivity, dropping from 71% in Spring 2023 to 64% in Autumn 2023, while the EU27 average has remained fairly stable (44%). 7% of the Irish public holds a negative view of the EU.
- Similarly, Ireland continues to lead the way in terms of an optimistic view of the future of the EU. Ireland shows much greater optimism when compared to the EU27 average (83% versus 61% respectively). However, there is some softening across the majority of countries, including Ireland (though this is slight).
- Among the Irish public, trust levels regarding the EU have decreased, from 64% in Spring 2023 to 57% in Autumn 2023. Ireland does however perform significantly better than the EU27 average (47%). Denmark continues to demonstrate highest trust levels at 68%, both in Spring 2023 and Autumn 2023 (though some reduction is seen). With that said, the EU27 average has remained steady between Spring 2023 and Autumn 2023, resulting in a narrowing gap between Ireland's trust levels and the EU27 average.
- Among the Irish public there is a much higher rate of people who feel well informed about the EU than the EU27 average, at 62%. The EU27 average is much lower with 36% of people feeling well informed; however, Luxembourg (66%), Poland (66%), and Denmark (63%) perform slightly better than Ireland.

## Immigration

- There have been reductions in support among the Irish public regarding common EU policies in the foreign policy and migration space. In terms of a common foreign policy, we see a substantial drop leading to Ireland now falling in line with the EU27 average (78% in Spring 2023 to 70% in Autumn 2023). However, support for a common European policy on migration among the Irish public is slightly more visible with 73% in favour, compared to an EU27 average of 69%. However, reductions have been recorded here from 79% in Spring 2023 to 73%.
- There has been an overarching shift in public sentiment regarding immigration and EU enlargement, with decreased levels of positivity and support.
  - Although there is a downward shift in positive sentiment, the Irish public remains one of the most positive of the EU27 regarding immigration. When asked whether immigration from outside the EU generates positive feelings, Ireland shows a reduction from 71% in Spring 2023 to 65%, but

shows much higher positivity compared to the EU27 average of 43%.

- There is also reduced agreement that immigrants contribute positively, from 80% in Spring 2023 to 75%. However, Ireland has one of the highest levels of agreement with this sentiment, compared to the EU27 average of 52%.

## Important Contextual Issues

### Local and EU Concerns

- Housing dominates public concern within an Irish context, with over half of Irish people surveyed (56%) now citing this as a concern. At 55%, cost of living / inflation is also a top concern. Ireland outperforms the EU27 average on these two issues, however it should be noted that concerns around housing are very specific to Ireland with only one in ten EU respondents citing concern on this issue (although Luxembourg shows similar levels of concern at 53%).
- On an EU level, when it comes to concern about immigration, Irish and EU respondents are broadly aligned with 25% of the Irish public noting this as a concern, compared to the 28% EU27 average. However, on a national level, concern among Irish people regarding immigration is much lower than the EU27 average (14% versus 20% respectively).

### Financial Difficulties

- While over one in three (36%) people across the 27 EU member states had difficulties paying bills in the last 12 months, more (49%) of the Irish public had difficulties. 9% of EU27 and 11% of Irish people, specifically, note they struggle most of the time. Ireland is positioned in sixth place, indicating the heavy toll of the cost-of-living crisis.

### Agreement with EU responses to Russia's invasion of Ukraine

- Almost three in five EU respondents are satisfied with the EU response to the Russian invasion, remaining stable since Spring 2023 (57%). However, when we focus on Irish people's satisfaction, there is notably more positivity, with 71% satisfied.
- 84% of EU respondents agree with the measures taken to welcome those fleeing the war in Ukraine into the EU. In Ireland, the support is stronger again with 88% agreeing. It should be noted that there is a softening in positive sentiment among both EU and Irish people.

## Media

- 70% of the Irish public agree misinformation is a problem, while the EU27 average is 77%.

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**Autumn 2023**

- When focusing on national media specifically, we see that the Irish public are more likely to trust Irish media to deliver trustworthy information, with three in four (74%) agreeing with this. The EU27 average is much lower at 60%.
- Regarding online social networks, 60% of EU respondents agree that information on political affairs from online social networks cannot be trusted. In Ireland, agreement has decreased from 71% in Winter 2022-2023 to 61% in Autumn 2023, indicating an improvement in the level of trust.
- Among Irish people, television remains the primary information source when it comes to European matters. This is largely in line with the EU average. There is evidence of decreasing usage of social media in sourcing information on European political matters among Irish people, from 35% in Winter 2022-2023 to 31%. This brings Irish people more in line with the EU27 average of 30%.
- When asked where they look for information on the EU, its policies, and institutions, 51% of Irish people cite TV, radio, and written press, up from 45% in Winter 2022-2023. In Ireland, social networks are less popular sources of information on European matters at 22%, in line with the EU average of 19%.



# **I. Trust in the EU and EU direction for the future**

## Positivity toward the EU

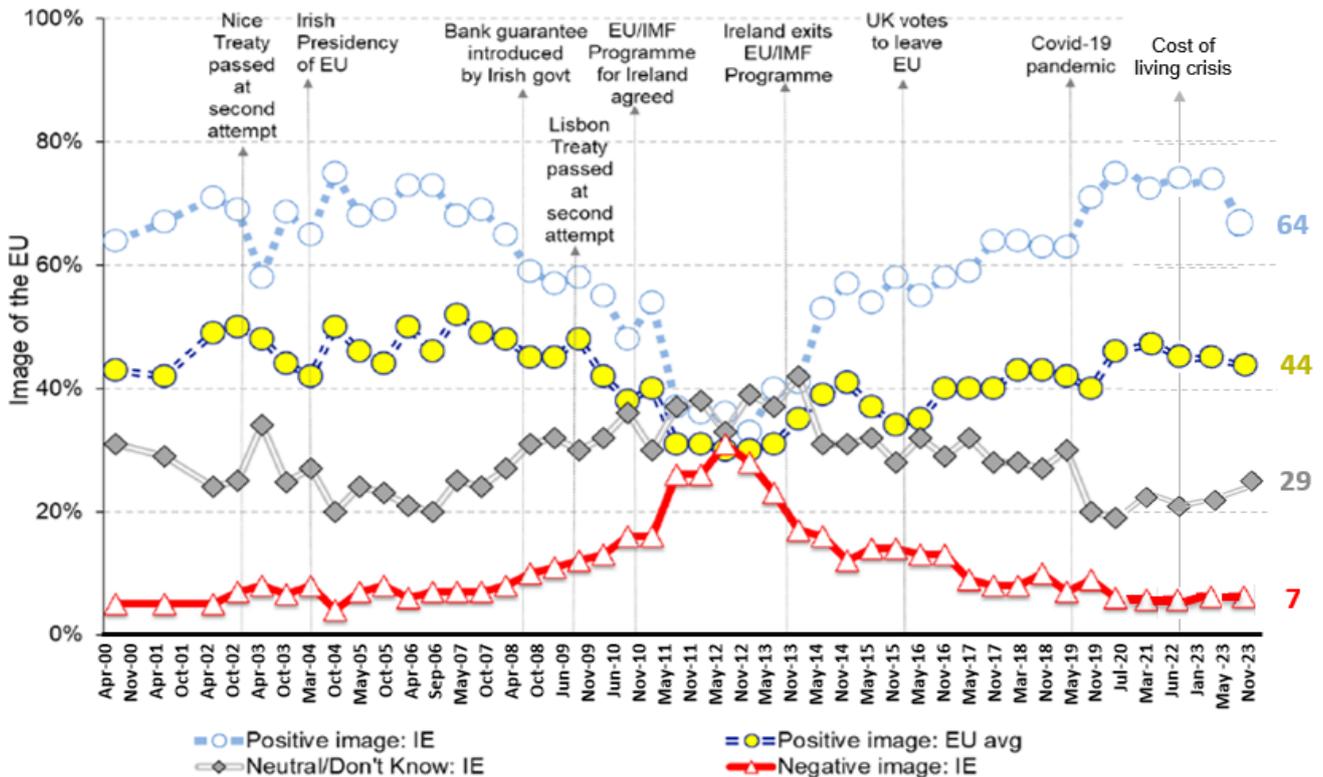
Overall, the Irish public hold a more positive view of the EU when compared to other EU member states with 64% feeling positive (18% very positive; 46% fairly positive). However, while positivity across the EU27 has remained stable, Ireland has seen a decrease since Spring 2023, from 71% to 64%. Notwithstanding this reduction, Ireland still remains the most positive EU member state, sharing the top position with Portugal. Positivity increases with age, with those over 55 showing the highest rates of positivity (67%). Positivity is lower amongst those who say they belong to the working class (56%), with positivity increasing among middle class, upper middle class, and upper class.

Figure 1 shows historical variances between Irish responses and the EU27 average. Historically, the Irish public has been among the most positive towards the EU across many indicators. When comparing historically, the slight drop in positivity for Ireland is in line with levels seen pre-COVID-19.

Looking at other member states that have seen a similar drop in positivity, Lithuania is down from 59% to 51%, Cyprus from 38% to 32%, and Hungary from 43% to 37%.

### 1 Positivity toward the EU throughout the years

D78. In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image? (%)



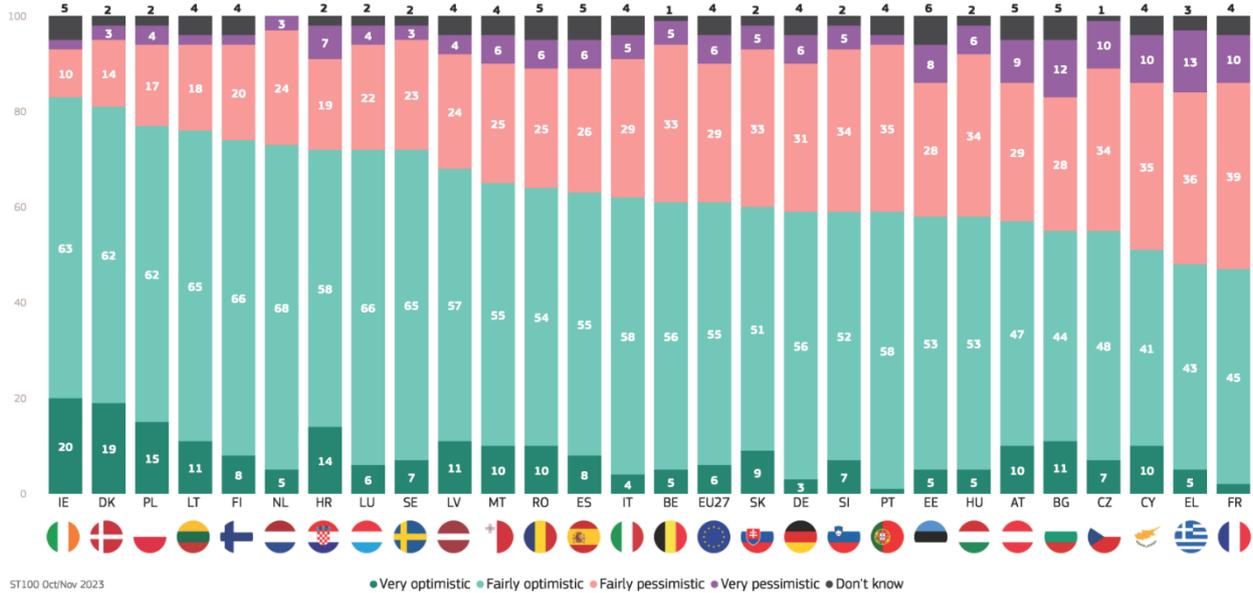
## Future of Europe

Figure 2 shows all EU27 countries' views on the future of the EU. The Irish public continues to lead the way in terms of an optimistic view of the EU. The gap between Ireland (83%) and the EU27 average remains stark with a difference of 22 percentage points (EU27 average 61%), with Denmark showing the closest level of optimism at 81%. We can see some softening in optimism across the majority of countries, though this is particularly felt in Portugal (70% in Spring 2023 down to 59% in Autumn 2023).

Interestingly, we see that, although younger cohorts show lower levels of positivity toward the EU, they are more likely to be optimistic regarding the future of the EU (86% of under 25s compared to 82% of over 55s).

### 2 Optimism regarding the future of the EU

QA12. Would you say that you are very optimistic, fairly optimistic, fairly pessimistic or very pessimistic about the future of the EU? (%)



ST100 Oct/Nov 2023

Very optimistic Fairly optimistic Fairly pessimistic Very pessimistic Don't know

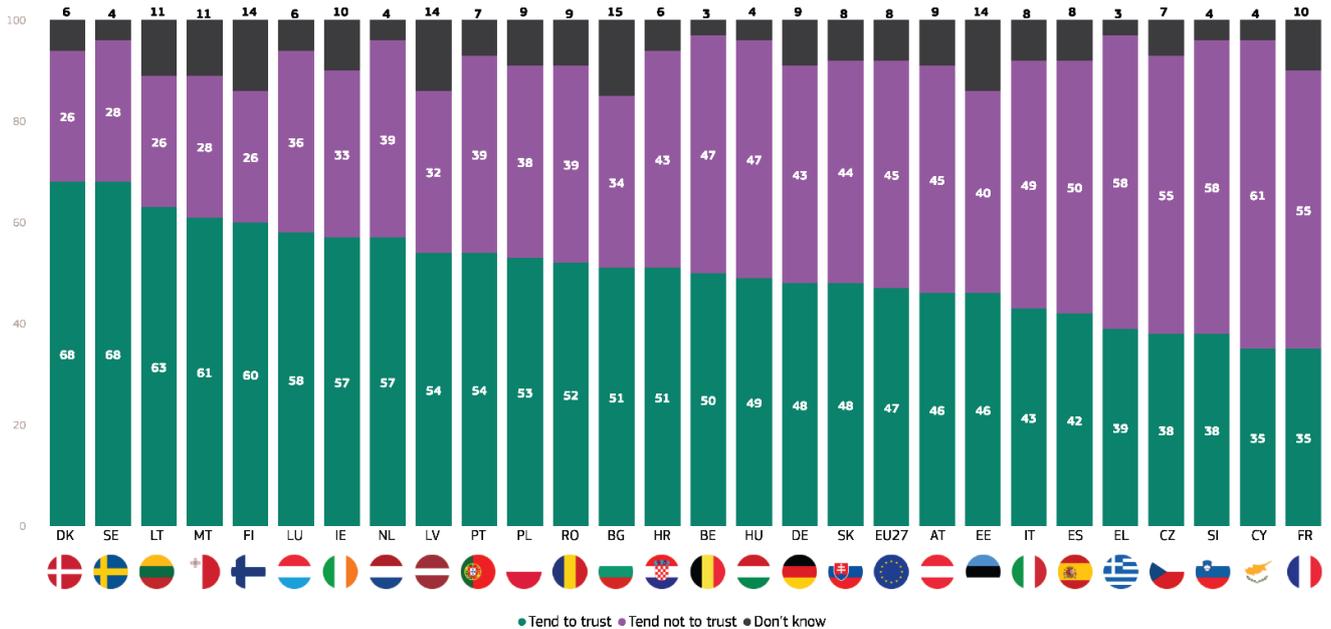
## Trust in the European Union

Trust in the EU among Irish people has fallen from 64% in Spring 2023 to 57% in Autumn 2023. However, Ireland once again continues to perform significantly better than the EU27 average (47%). With that said, the EU27 average has remained steady between Spring 2023 and Autumn 2023, resulting in a narrowing gap between Ireland's trust levels and the EU27 average. Denmark continues to demonstrate highest trust levels at 68%, both in Spring 2023 and Autumn 2023 (though some

reduction is recorded). Socioeconomic status is a key determinant with regard to trust, with those perceiving themselves to be more working class displaying much lower rates of trust in the EU (42%), compared to those stating they are more middle class (70%).

### 3 Tendency to Trust the European Union

QA6.4. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? --The European Union (%)



## Extent people feel well informed about European Matters

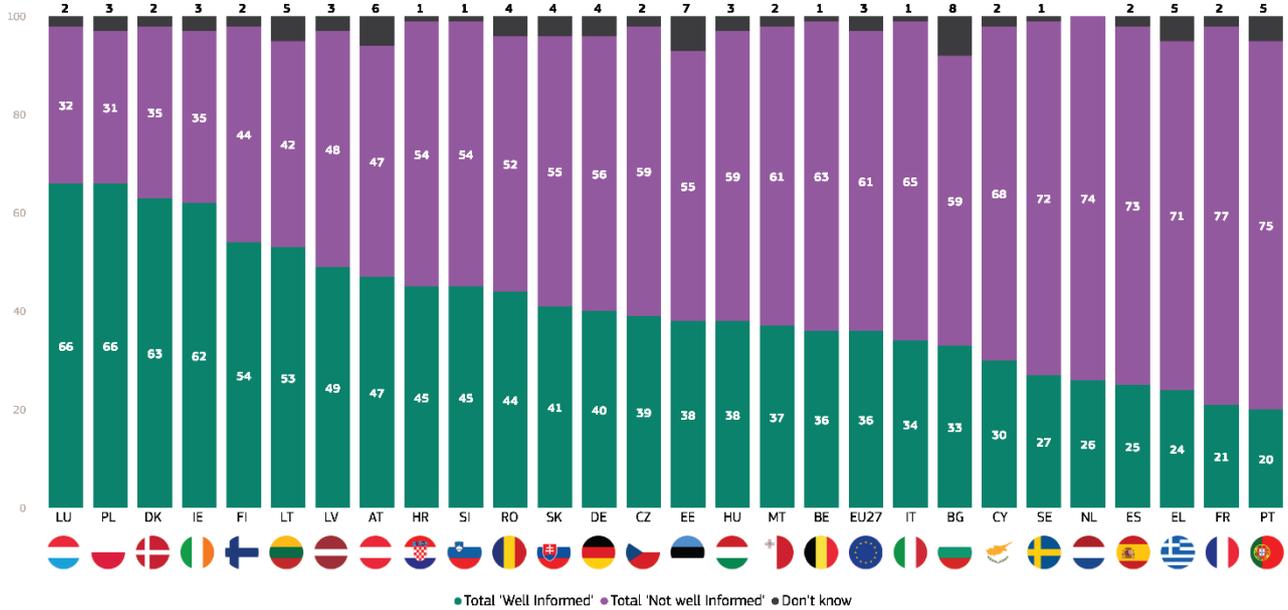
In figure 4, we have ranked how well-informed the Irish public feels about European matters in comparison to the other EU member states. The Irish public displays much higher rates of people who perceive themselves to be well informed about European matters (62%) compared to the

EU27 average of 36%. Only 3 EU member states show higher rates of informed people: Luxembourg (66%), Poland (66%), and Denmark (63%). Both Denmark and Poland have seen increases of 6% points, while Luxembourg has reported a drop of 3% points.

4

### Ranking of perceived well-informed people regarding European Matters

QE1. Overall, to what extent do you think that in (OUR COUNTRY) people are well informed or not about European matters? (%)





## II. Immigration

## Agreement with common practices among EU member states regarding migration

In figure 5, when focusing on issues of foreign policy and migration, and a common approach across the EU27, Ireland continues to perform well. However, positive attitudes have declined, resulting in Ireland falling more in line with the EU27 average. Looking at support for a common EU foreign policy, we see that Ireland ranks in line with the EU average but has dropped back to tenth place from 78% in Spring 2023 to 70% in this survey, Autumn 2023).

Support for a common European policy on migration among the Irish public is higher, with 73% in favour. Ireland ranks in joint fifth position among the EU27 member states. Support for both policies is lower among more working class cohorts. Younger cohorts are more likely to support a common European policy on migration (though there are no significant differences by age) compared to a common foreign policy (80% of under 25s versus 66% of under 25s respectively).

### 5 Agreement among EU member states regarding migration practices

QB2. What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it. (IE) (%)

A common European policy on migration



A common foreign policy of the Member States of the EU



● For ● Against ● Refusal (SPONTANEOUS) ● Don't know

## Feelings toward immigration and EU enlargement

When considering feelings toward immigration and enlargement of the EU, we can see that there has been a downward shift in positive sentiment.

Focusing on EU enlargement, Ireland again ranks above the EU27 average, despite some reductions in support among the Irish public. This reduction is seen in the EU27 average also, down from 53% in favour in Spring 2023 to 51%. In comparison, 58% of the Irish public is in favour of EU enlargement (62% in Spring 2023). There are no significant trends across the demographics, although younger cohorts appear to be slightly more supportive.

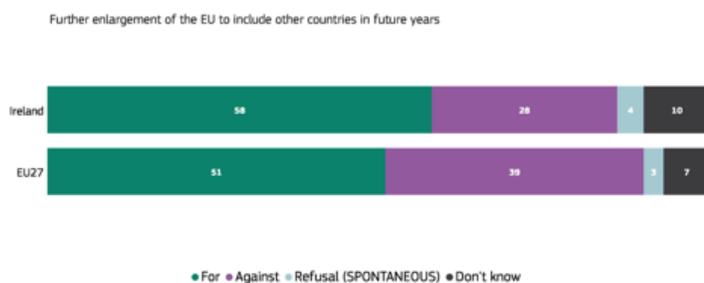
When asked whether immigration from outside the EU generates positive feelings, Ireland shows a reduction from 71% in Spring 2023 to 65%. However, it is important to note that Ireland outperforms the EU27 average (43%) significantly

on this question. (EU27 average is also down from 48% in Spring to 43%). Those over 55 (59%) and those considering themselves to be working class (59%) display lowest levels of positivity to immigration from outside the EU.

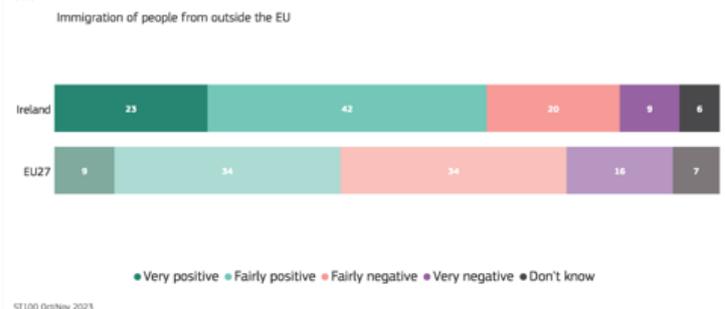
Turning to how immigrants are perceived to contribute to Ireland, we see that although the number of people who agree that immigrants contribute positively to Ireland has decreased (from 80% in Spring 2023 to 75% in Autumn 2023), the Irish public remain one of the most positive in the EU when considering how immigrants contribute to the country. Ireland is ranked in the top four EU member states in this regard, with the EU27 average also reducing from 55% in Spring 2023 to 52%. In Ireland, younger cohorts (85% of under 25s) and middle class and above (82% of middle class) show much higher rates of positivity towards immigrants.

### 6 Feelings toward immigration and EU enlargement

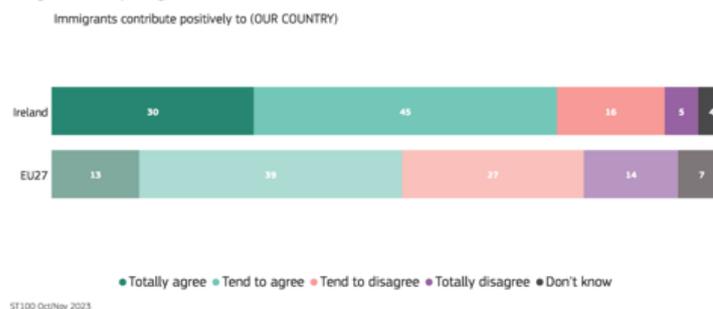
QB2. What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it. (IE) (%)

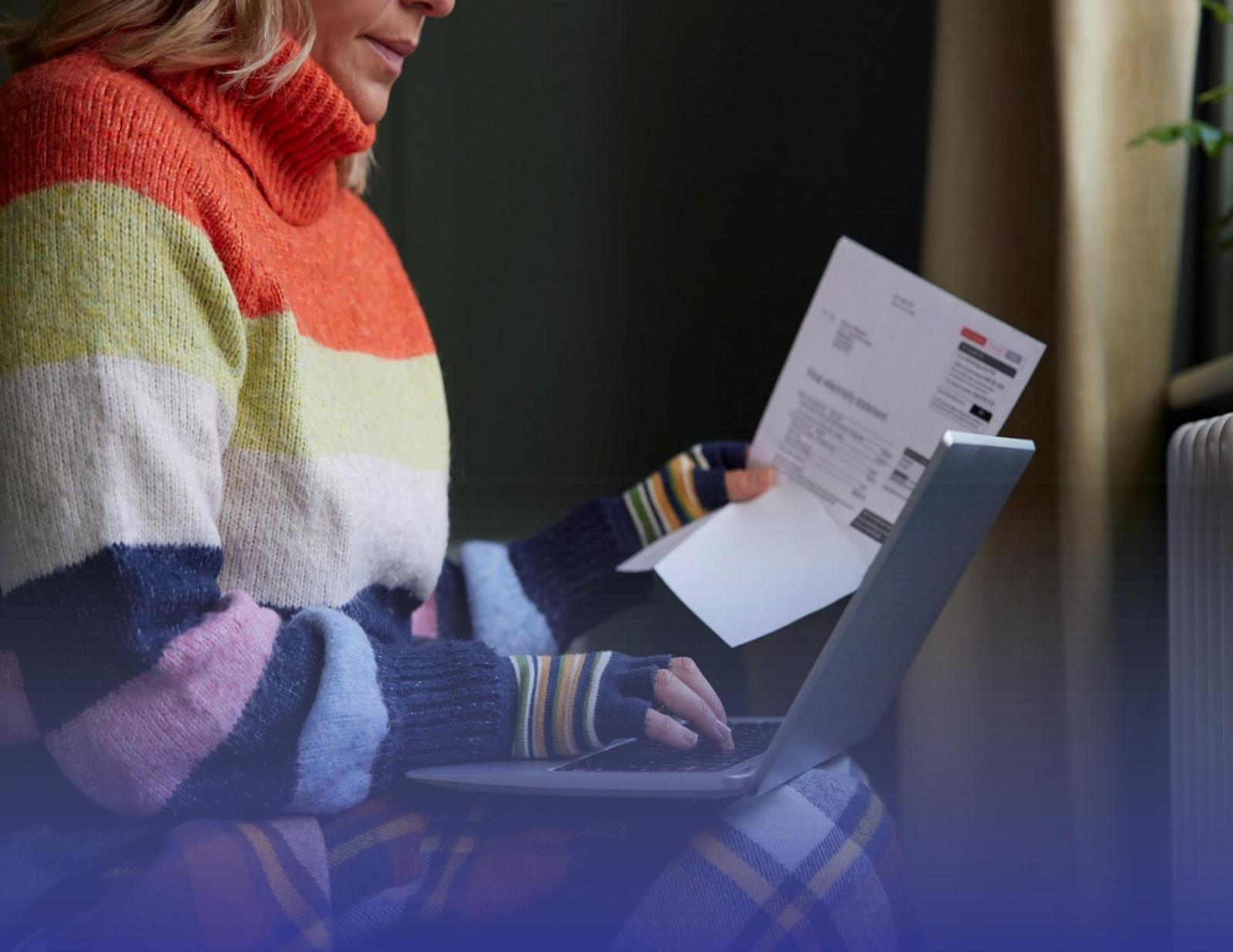


QB7. Please tell whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you? (IE) (%)



QB8. For each of the following statements, please tell whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree (IE) (%)





## III. Important Contextual Issues

When considering the shift in the manner in which the EU and European institutions, policies and practices are viewed amongst the EU27 member states and in Ireland, it is vital to understand what the key contextual issues are for both Ireland and the EU according to its people.

## Local and EU concerns

Housing is still the defining issue facing Ireland, with 56% of Irish people surveyed citing it as their primary concern. This is down from 61% (Spring 2023). When we compare this to the EU average of 10%, we see that housing is not as stark an issue for most member states. The (close) second most cited concern for Ireland is the cost of living crisis / inflation at 55%. This has increased by a dramatic 11% since Spring 2023. The comparative EU27 result for cost of living is 44%.

When focusing on the Irish public's concerns in relation to issues facing the 27 EU member states as a whole, the war in Ukraine is the primary concern, with 46% of Irish people mentioning this, while EU27 respondents

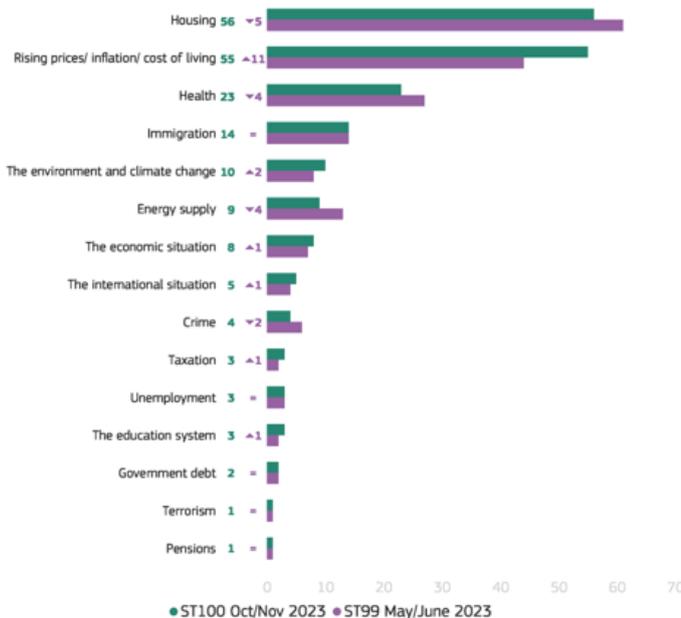
demonstrate much lower concern in this regard (28% EU average). Again, we see that the Irish public indicate greater concern for rising inflation within a EU27 context, than the average EU respondent does, with 27% of Irish people citing this compared to the 20% EU average.

Where concerns do align at EU level is regarding immigration, with 25% of the Irish public noting this as a concern at the EU level, compared to the 28% EU27 average. In Ireland, we saw the citation of immigration as a concern decrease by 8% points. This compares with the EU27 average increasing by 4% points since Spring 2023. Focusing on the country-specific context, we see that immigration plays on Irish people's minds less than the EU27 average (20% EU27 average compared to 14% in Ireland).

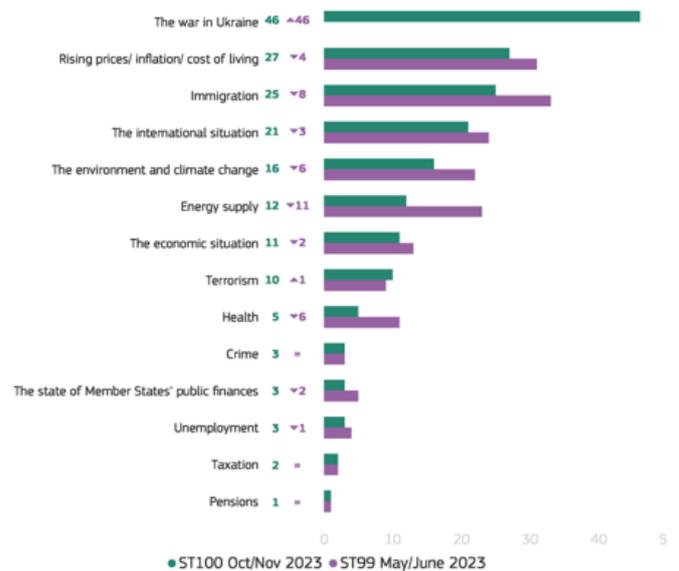
Concerns surrounding energy supply are diminishing among the Irish public both with regard to Ireland (13% to 9%) and in the wider EU27 context (23% to 12%). The number of people citing health as a key concern has also decreased.

## 7 Local and EU concerns

QA3. What do you think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment? (IE) (%)



QA5. What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment? (IE) (%)



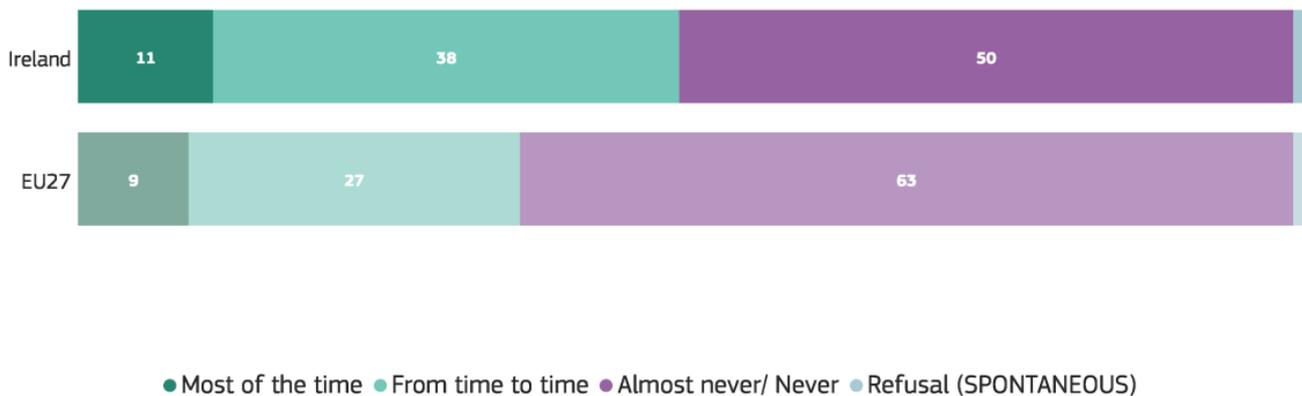
## Prevalence of Financial Difficulties

From the previous section, it is clear that rising prices / inflation and the cost-of-living crisis is a concern for many, both within the EU and in Ireland. If we investigate this further, the financial impact is evident with over one in three EU member states and just under half of the Irish public reporting difficulties paying bills in the last 12 months, with 9% of EU27 and 11% of Irish people noting they struggle

most of the time. Financial struggles are most prominent in Greece with 81% of its people having struggled to pay bills in the last 12 months. In Ireland, those perceiving themselves to be more working class appear to have most difficulty paying bills (just under two in three note they have struggled). Younger cohorts also cite more difficulties with paying bills.

### 8 Prevalence of difficulties paying bills over the last 12 months

D60. During the last twelve months, would you say you had difficulties to pay your bills at the end of the month...? (IE) (%)



ST100 Oct/Nov 2023

## Agreement with EU responses to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine

Since the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine by Russia it has remained important to gauge public sentiment and determine how people feel the EU has responded to the war.

Nearly three in five EU respondents are satisfied with the response. This figure remains stable since Spring 2023 (57%). However, when we focus on Irish people’s satisfaction, there is a notable differentiation with 71% satisfied (albeit a decrease from 77% in Spring 2023). Ireland is positioned seventh out of 27 EU Member States, with Poland leading the way at 81%. In Ireland, those perceiving themselves to be middle class show higher satisfaction at 82%, while those under 25 show much lower satisfaction at 63%.

It is also vital to gauge EU respondents’ views on welcoming those fleeing the war in Ukraine into the EU. Strong support exists for this measure, with 84% of EU respondents agreeing with the measures taken to welcome those fleeing the war into the EU (this is down slightly from 86% in Spring 2023). In Ireland, the support is stronger again with 88% agreeing, though again we see a reduction from 92%, in Spring 2023 so a softening in sentiment is clear. Although agreement is lower among working class cohorts, there is still clear support within this grouping (84%).

### 9 Level of agreement with EU responses to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine

QD1. In general, how satisfied are you with the response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine by ...? (IE) (%)

The European Union



● Very satisfied ● Fairly satisfied ● Not very satisfied ● Not at all satisfied ● Don't know

ST100 Oct/Nov 2023

QD2. The EU has taken a series of actions as a response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. To what extent you agree or disagree with each of these actions taken. (IE) (%)

Welcoming into the EU people fleeing the war



● Totally agree ● Tend to agree ● Tend to disagree ● Totally disagree ● Don't know

ST100 Oct/Nov 2023



## IV. Media

Media and information sources continue to dominate public discourse, with aspects of trust and misinformation often being considered as a key part of the conversation. This section focuses on gaining an understanding of the level of trust Irish and EU respondents have in these sources, trust in social networks, and determines how people usually acquire information on European matters.

## Opinion of Media and Disinformation

Firstly, focusing on Irish and EU respondents' perceived prevalence of news that is believed to misrepresent reality or be false, it is evident that the Irish public's observation of such false reporting in Ireland has declined to 70% (although still high) compared to 80% in Winter 2022-2023. This decrease brings Ireland more in line with the EU27 average of two in three people stating that they encounter false news (68%). In terms of the identification of false news, we can see that Ireland continues to show slightly higher rates of identification with 66% of the Irish public noting they can easily identify news that is misleading compared to the EU

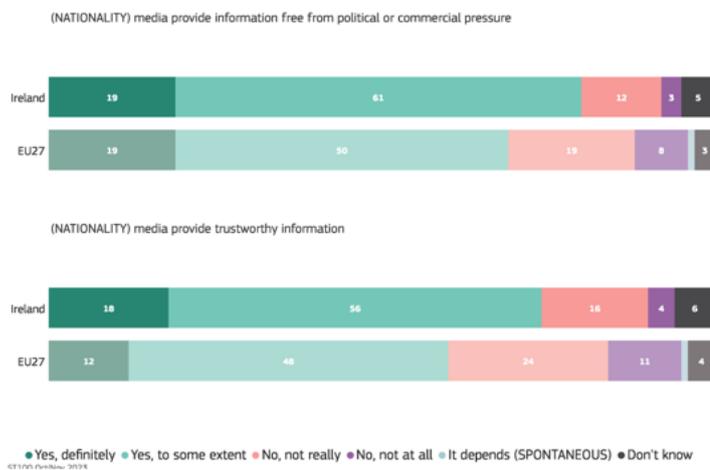
average of 60%. This is a decrease from 69% in Winter 2022-2023.

This decrease in perceived prevalence and easy identification of news or information that misrepresents reality or is false has had little impact on concern surrounding false news, with 70% of the Irish public continuing to agree it is a problem (no change since Winter 2022-2023). The EU27 average is higher at 77%.

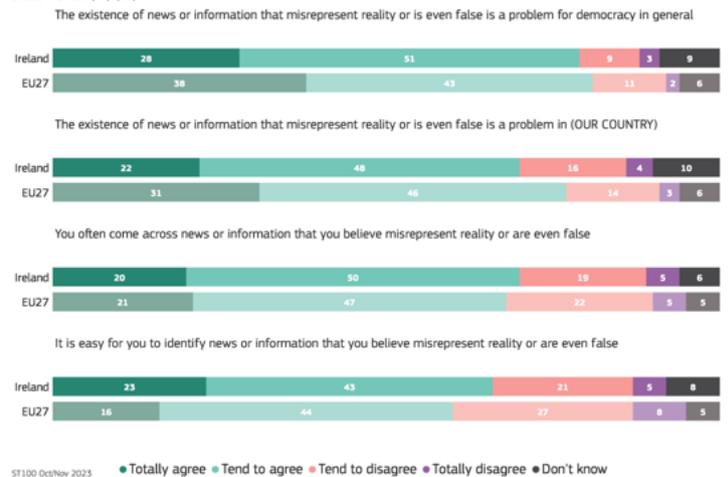
When focusing on national media specifically, we see that the Irish public is more likely to trust the Irish media to deliver trustworthy information, with three in four (74%) continuing to agree with this (no change since Winter 2022-2023). The EU average continues to be much lower with 60% agreeing. Although this is a positive result for Ireland, it should be noted that there is a substantial reduction in the Irish public's agreement that the Irish media provide information that is free from political / commercial pressure, dropping from 68% in Winter 2022-2023 to 60% in Autumn 2023. As is often the case, Ireland continues to perform better than the EU average (45% agree), however this decrease is noteworthy.

### 10 Opinions of media and disinformation

QE7. For each of the following statements, please tell to what extent it corresponds or not to the situation of the (NATIONALITY) media: (IE) (%)



QE8. Do you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements. (IE) (%)



## Trust in Social Networks

When investigating both Irish and EU respondents' relationships with online social networks, there is a marked level of hesitancy to trust these platforms in terms of political information. Three in five EU respondents agree that information on political affairs from online social networks cannot be trusted (60%). This remains unchanged from Winter 2022-2023. In contrast, the level of agreement in Ireland has decreased from 71% in Winter 2022-2023 to 61%, indicating an increased level of trust in Ireland, which now falls in line with the EU27 average.

Interestingly, when we ask the same question of those who regularly use online social networks (at least once a week), there is no clear increase in trust levels among Irish people

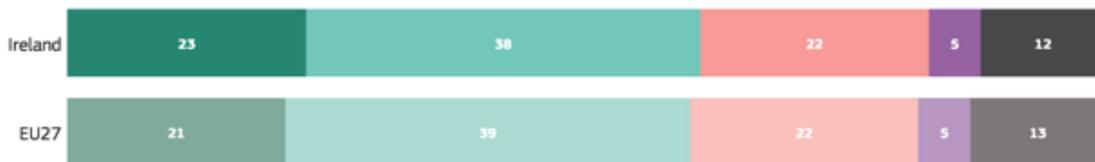
using social networks and those who are not, with 60% agreeing that the information cannot be trusted. What is different however is the decrease in agreement from 77% in Winter 2022-2023, indicating that the level of trust is rising at a significant pace. Among EU27 respondents using online social networks regularly, we see that agreement is unchanged at 65%, indicating a more guarded perspective towards social networks, compared to Ireland.

Among the Irish public, we see that younger cohorts tend to be more trusting of information received from online social networks, both among those using the platforms regularly and younger cohorts generally.

### 11 Trust in Social Networks

QE6. Regardless of whether you participate in online social networks or not (social networking websites, blogs, video hosting websites), please tell whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements: (IE) (%)

Information on political affairs from online social networks cannot be trusted



● Totally agree ● Tend to agree ● Tend to disagree ● Totally disagree ● Don't know

QE6R. Regardless of whether you participate in online social networks or not (social networking websites, blogs, video hosting websites), please tell whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree with each of the following statements (%)

Information on political affairs from online social networks cannot be trusted



● Totally agree ● Tend to agree ● Tend to disagree ● Totally disagree ● Don't know

## Sources of Information

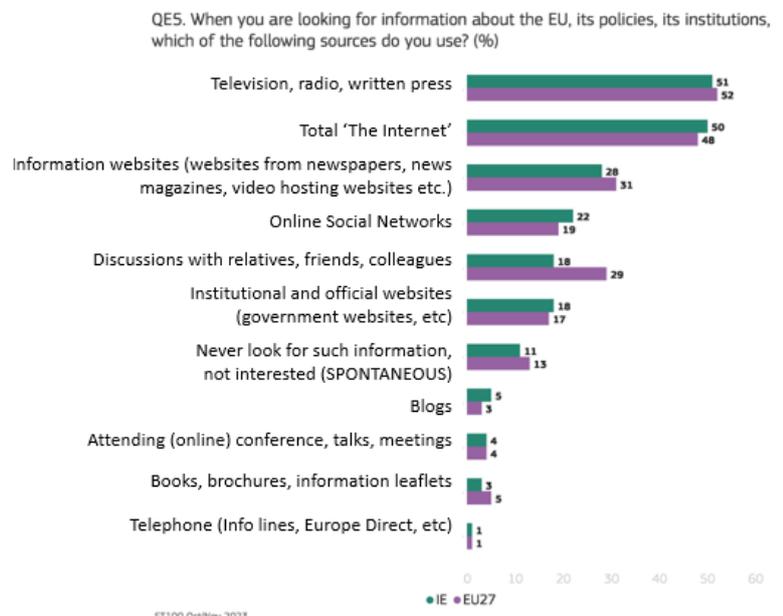
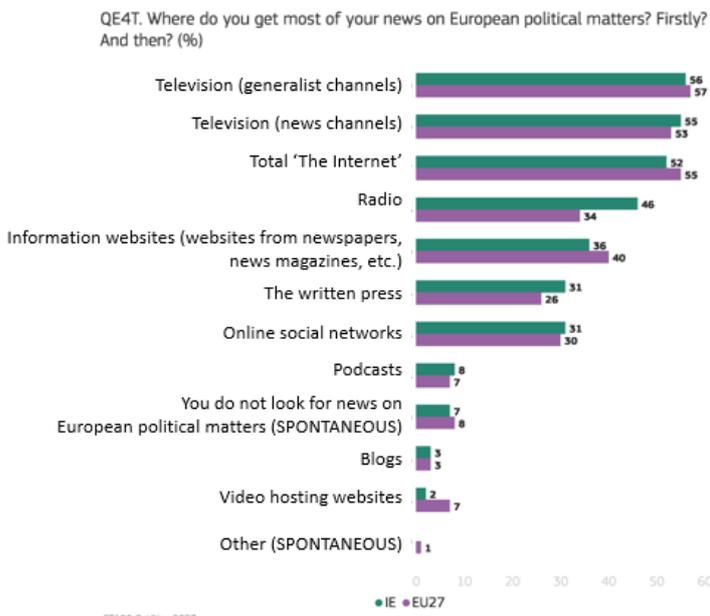
When considering sources of information for European matters, and EU policies and institutions, we see that there are varying levels of usage depending on demographics.

Firstly, focusing on media sources on European political matters, it is clear that television remains a key information source in Ireland, with 56% citing TV generalist channels and 55% citing TV news as primary information sources (both show a significant increase of 11 and 6 percentage points respectively since Winter 2022-2023). Among Irish people, these sources are much more popular among older cohorts (66% and 65% of over 55s respectively). When considering the EU27 average, we see that the Irish public falls largely in line with Europe as a whole. Interestingly, we see that although there are growing levels of trust in Ireland with regard to social networks, we see a decreasing usage of social media in sourcing information on European political matters, from 35% in Winter 2022-2023 to 31%. Although, there is a decrease, the Irish public falls in line with the EU27 average of 30%. However, we continue to see social

networks playing a primary role among under 25s when it comes to information sourcing on European matters, with half of those under 25 noting this is a key information source for them – the most cited information source among this demographic.

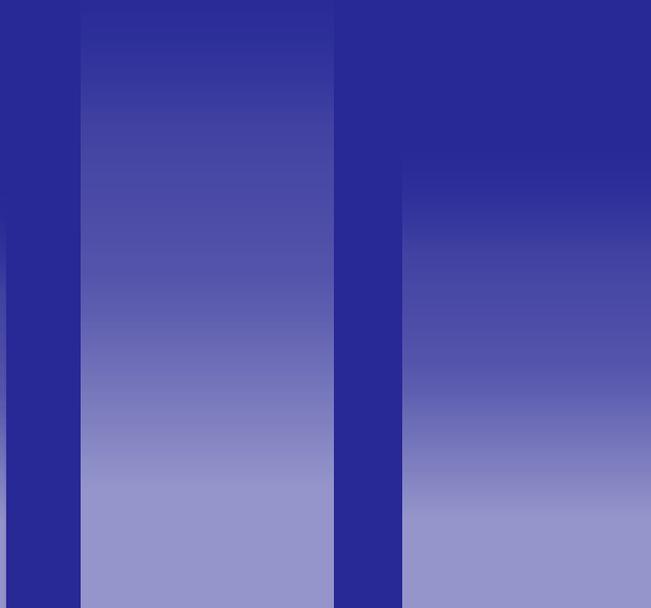
When considering where people source information on the EU, its policies and institutions, TV, radio, and the written press continue to dominate in this space in Ireland, with increased numbers citing these media outlets, from 45% in Winter 2022-2023 to 51% in this survey. The choice of social networks by Irish people as a source of information on the EU, its policies and institutions has also increased from 20% to 22%. Social networks are more popular among Irish people as a source for news on European political matters (31%).

### 12 Sources of information





# Conclusion



## Standard Eurobarometer 100 Autumn 2023

This Autumn 2023 edition of the Standard Eurobarometer shows Ireland's continued and enduring positivity toward the EU and its policies and practices. While reductions in positive sentiment are evident across the EU27 and, indeed, in Ireland, the report shows that Ireland remains a key supporter of the EU. Notwithstanding that, there are some clear negative shifts, particularly in relation to attitudes to housing, cost of living, and immigration that should be noted.

Positive sentiment towards the EU remains strong in Ireland at 64%. However, there has been a decrease of 7% since Spring 2023. A similar decrease can also be seen when we look at trust in the EU, down from 64% in Spring 2023 to 57% among Irish people. However, the Irish public continues to demonstrate more trust than the EU27 average (47%). That said, the EU27 average has remained steady between Spring 2023 and Autumn 2023, resulting in a narrowing gap between Ireland's trust levels and the EU27 average.

Irish people feel they are well informed about European matters, much more so than the EU27 average (62% compared to 32%). It is interesting that this has remained relatively steady among Irish people, which indicates that the reduction in terms of positivity and trust are not necessarily driven by a perceived lack of information on European matters.

When focusing on the future of the EU, we can see a very positive outlook among Irish people with 83% noting optimism for the future of the EU. The gap between Ireland and the EU27 average remains stark with a difference of 22% points (EU27 average 61%). It should be noted that there is some softening in optimism across most EU countries.

Although Irish people tend to show more positivity toward the EU, when we focus on issues of foreign policy and a common policy on migration across the EU, Ireland has seen greater alignment with the EU average. As regards a common foreign policy, we see that Ireland ranks in line with the EU27 average, following a substantial decrease (78% in Spring 2023 to 70% in Autumn 2023). Support for a common European policy on migration among the Irish public is more prominent with 73% in favour of this, again falling more in line with the EU27 average of 69%.

When we look at immigration, we see a dip in positive sentiment both at the EU and Irish level. Irish people's feelings of positivity toward immigration from outside the EU has gone down from 71% in Spring 2023 to 65%, while the EU27 average has dropped from 48% in Spring 2023 to 43%. However, when we look at how people view the contribution of immigrants to their country there are much higher levels of agreement that immigrants contribute

positively, although these have decreased since Spring 2023. 75% of Irish respondents agree that immigrants contribute positively, compared to the EU27 average of 52%. When focusing on demographics, we see that those identifying themselves as more working class are less positive.

Housing and rising prices/inflation/the cost of living continue to be the key areas of concern for Irish people. Housing is an issue that is quite unique to Ireland, with 10% of EU respondents citing housing as a concern overall, compared to 56% among Irish people. Rising prices/inflation/cost of living concerns have increased significantly among Irish people since Spring 2023, rising 11%, while the EU27 average has remained relatively stable. We see this play out in real terms when we see difficulties with paying bills a more common issue among the Irish public compared to the EU27 average (49% versus 37% respectively).

When focusing on EU-wide concerns, Irish people are much more likely to cite the war in Ukraine compared to the EU27 average (46% versus 28% respectively). Issues of rising prices/inflation/cost of living are also a key concern for the EU according to 27% of Irish people, compared to 20% of EU respondents. Irish and EU concerns are more aligned when it comes to immigration, with 25% of the Irish public noting this as a concern at the EU level, compared to the EU average of 28%. However, at the national level, we see that immigration plays on Irish people's minds less than the EU27 average of 20% compared to 14% in Ireland.

In the context of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, satisfaction with the EU's response is much stronger among Irish people than the EU27 average (71% versus 57%). However, there has been a reduction in satisfaction among Irish people from 77% in Spring 2023. Both Irish and EU respondents show strong agreement with the EU's welcoming of people fleeing the war, with 88% of Irish and 84% of EU respondents agreeing. It should be noted that this sentiment has softened somewhat since Spring 2023 (-2 percentage points among EU respondents; -4 percentage points among Irish people).

Media and misinformation are key areas of discussion in modern society with the rise of social media and 'fake news'. The vast majority of both Irish and EU respondents agree that misinformation is a problem, with 70% of Irish people and 77% of EU respondents agreeing. However, when we focus on each state's national media, we see that Irish people are much more likely to trust Irish media to deliver trustworthy information (74%), while the EU27 average is much lower (60%). Although this is a largely positive result for Ireland, we must acknowledge the substantial reduction in Irish people agreeing that the Irish media provide information that is free from political / commercial pressure,

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dropping from 68% in Winter 2022-2023 to 60% in Autumn 2023. Although Ireland continues to outperform the EU27 average (45% agree), this decrease is notable.

When we focus on both Irish and EU respondents' relationships with online social networks, we can see that there is substantial hesitancy to trust these platforms in terms of political information, with three in five EU27 respondents agreeing that information on political affairs from online social networks cannot be trusted (60%). This remains unchanged from Winter 2022-2023. In contrast, among Irish people, we see that agreement has decreased from 71% in Winter 2022-2023 to 61%, indicating an increasing level of trust in Ireland, which now falls in line with the EU27 average. Younger cohorts tend to show higher trust levels in this regard.

In terms of information sources used by both Irish and EU respondents we see that TV dominates, with Irish people tending to mirror the EU average for where they source their information. Social network usage has decreased among Irish people, now falling more in line with the EU27 average of 30%. Traditional media (TV, radio, print) also continues to dominate when it comes to sourcing information on the EU, its policies, and institutions.

Overall, this report highlights the enduring pro-EU stance of the Irish public, notwithstanding some decreases in positivity when compared to the previous two Eurobarometer surveys. This could in part be attributed to concerns around housing, rising prices/inflation/cost of living, immigration, and disinformation, which are well illustrated throughout the report.

