



European
Commission

STANDARD EUROBAROMETER 102

Public opinion in the European Union

National report: Ireland

Fieldwork: October-November 2024



Survey requested and coordinated 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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Table of contents

Introduction.....	4
Main findings	5
1. Satisfaction with life	7
2. Quality of life in Ireland.....	8
3. Attachment to town/country/EU	9
4. Main concerns at national level.....	10
5. Main concerns at EU level.....	11
6. Attitudes to migration.....	12
7. Trust and image of the EU.....	13
8. Trust in the media	14
9. Social media as a news source on political matters	15
10. Satisfaction with how democracy works in the country.....	16
Conclusions	17

Introduction

The 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 102nd (Autumn 2024) edition. This Standard Eurobarometer 102 (Autumn 2024) was conducted at the request of the Directorate-General for Communication.

The survey is designed to assess the **views of EU citizens living in the 27 EU Member States, as well as citizens living in the current candidate and potential candidate countries (except Ukraine) and the United Kingdom**¹.

This report details the results of the Standard Eurobarometer survey for **Ireland**. The survey was carried out between 10 and 31 October 2024. The fieldwork was conducted by Ipsos B&A among a nationally representative sample of 1,006 respondents aged 15 years and over.

• Major international developments

The report comes at a time of major international developments, including Russia's ongoing war of aggression in Ukraine and the Middle East crisis.

• EU economy

The Autumn 2024 Economic Forecast², published in November 2024, projects GDP growth to be 0.9% in the EU in 2024. GDP growth projections for 2025 are now 1.5% for the EU. Inflation in the EU decreased from a peak of 9.2% in 2022 to 6.4% in 2023. Continuing this trend, inflation fell to 2.6% and is projected to continue easing to 2.4% in 2025.

The labour market continues to perform strongly, the unemployment rate is stabilising at a low level: in October 2024, the EU unemployment rate reached a new historic low of 5.9%.

• EU-related events

The tenth European elections³ were held in the 27 EU Member States between 6 and 9 June 2024, with 50.74% of eligible voters going to the polls, the highest turnout since 1994.

On 18 July 2024, Ursula von der Leyen was re-elected by the European Parliament for a second mandate as President of the European Commission⁴.

Since the Spring 2024 Eurobarometer survey, several European countries, namely Lithuania, Bulgaria, Belgium, France, Austria, but also Georgia and Moldova have held elections and referendums marked by political instability, contested results, and shifts in leadership⁵.

The summer of 2024 was the hottest on record in Europe, with surface air temperatures averaging 1.54°C above the 1991-2020 baseline, surpassing the previous record set in 2022.

• National events in Ireland since the Autumn 2023 survey⁶:

November 2023 marked a violent escalation of anti-immigration sentiment, with the Dublin riots. However, polls around the 29 November 2024 general election showed that the strength of concerns on immigration had diminished. Issues of housing have continued to feature prominently in public discourse, with homelessness continuing to rise. The cost of living and health have been other issues high on people's minds. The local and European elections were held on 7 June 2024.

Against this backdrop the report covers the following core topics:

- Satisfaction with life
- Quality of life in Ireland
- Attachment to town/country/EU
- Main concerns at national level
 - Housing
 - Rising costs/Inflation
 - Immigration
- Main concerns at EU level
- Attitudes to migration
- Trust in the EU and image of the EU
- Trust in the media
- Social media as a news source on political matters
- Satisfaction with how democracy works in the country

¹ Some questions were asked also in 11 other countries or territories between 10 October and 5 November: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Turkish Cypriot Community in the part of the country that is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus, Kosovo (this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence), Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye and the United Kingdom.

² [Autumn 2024 Economic Forecast: A gradual rebound in an adverse environment - European Commission](#)

³ [Publications - Fondation Robert Schuman](#)

⁴ [President von der Leyen on the next College of Commissioners](#)

⁵ [Publications - Fondation Robert Schuman](#)

⁶ <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/the-european-elections-monitor/2023/>

Main findings

Satisfaction with life

- The Irish public shows near universal satisfaction with life (98%). This has increased by 2% since Spring 2024.
- Although there is strong satisfaction across the EU27 (86%), Ireland ranks first in the EU, 12% points above the EU27 average. Denmark (97%), Sweden (97%), and Finland (96%) all follow closely behind Ireland.
- When examining overall satisfaction, demographic variations are relatively minor. However, a more nuanced analysis reveals disparities among those who report being 'very satisfied'. Specifically, individuals from lower socio-economic and lower-middle-class backgrounds, as well as those with fewer years spent in formal education, exhibit lower rates of 'very satisfied', highlighting differences by socio-economic class.

Quality of life in Ireland

- When focusing on quality of life, Ireland again shows encouraging signs. For almost two in three respondents, quality of life has not changed, while there has been a marked decrease in those who say it has deteriorated – down from 23% in Spring 2024 to 16% in Autumn 2024.
- A notable contrast exists between the EU27 average and Ireland regarding perceived quality of life. While 25% of EU27 respondents report a decline in their quality of life, with only 14% experiencing an improvement, the Irish public presents a more optimistic trend. A growing proportion of Irish respondents (rising from 16% to 19%) report an improvement in their quality of life.

Attachment to town/country/EU

- The Irish public displays strong local, national, and European attachment, outperforming the EU27 average across all three metrics. While the Irish show greater attachment to their country (97%) and town (94%), there has been a marked increase in attachment to the European Union, increasing from 64% in Spring 2024 to 70% in Autumn 2024.
- Compared to the EU27, Irish people show more attachment to their town (89% EU27 versus 94% Ireland), country (92% EU27 versus 97% Ireland), and the European Union (63% EU27 versus 70% Ireland).

- Looking at specific demographic groups, older cohorts show more attachment to their town and country, while age is not a determining factor in regard to attachment to the European Union. Indeed, those under 24 show highest levels of attachment to the European Union at 73%.

Main concerns at national level

Housing

- Irish people are outliers in their concerns surrounding housing, with nearly two in three mentioning housing as one of the two most important factors facing Ireland. This is compared to an EU27 average of 13%. This is a concern that is quite specific to Ireland; however, Luxembourg and the Netherlands also stand out here with about half citing housing as an issue. Furthermore, Spain shows a stark increase in housing being cited, increasing from 17% in Spring 2024 to 35% in Autumn 2024.
- In the case of the Irish population, it is interesting to note that housing concerns are shared across all age groups, likely due to older generations seeing their children struggle to enter the property market.

Rising costs/inflation

- Irish people are also more likely to mention rising costs/inflation as an issue of concern when compared to the EU27 average (33% EU27 average versus 39% Ireland). Furthermore, health is another issue that is somewhat specific to Ireland with one in three mentioning this compared to 15% of the EU27 average.
- Notably, the other top two concerns among the Irish public tend to be more age-dependent. Health is much more likely to be cited by older cohorts (40% of those over 55 compared to 29% of 25-39 year olds), while rising costs/inflation are much more likely to be mentioned by those under 40.

Immigration

- The concern about immigration continues to increase both among Irish respondents and across the EU27 generally (22% among the Irish public compared to 20% of the EU27).

Main concerns at EU level

- The war in Ukraine continues to be the most important issue facing the EU for those interviewed in Ireland and the EU27 as a whole (although this is decreasing among the EU27).
- Immigration is the second most important issue facing the EU, among both the Irish population (33%) and the EU27 (28%). While concern among the Irish public is declining, the EU27 concern is increasing.

Attitudes to migration

- Ireland displays more positive views on immigration when compared to the EU27 average. Three in four Irish people agree that immigrants contribute positively to their country, compared to just over half of the EU27. In addition, 84% of the Irish public believe their country should help refugees, compared to 73% of the EU27.
- While there has been increasing mention of immigration as a top concern both at national and EU level, it is clear that the Irish public is largely positive toward immigration and aiding refugees. This is reflected in an increase in support for the country to help refugees (increasing by 3%).
- Lower socio-economic cohorts are less positive about immigration and refugee aid, as are those who state they 'struggle to pay their bills most of the time'.

Trust in the EU and image of the EU

- Irish respondents continue to view the EU in a very positive light compared to the EU27 average. Ireland has the second most positive image of the EU among EU member states after Portugal, with consistent positivity recorded in recent Eurobarometer polls. However, there is an indication that positivity may be waning slightly (decreasing by 2% since Spring 2024).
- When focusing on the level of trust in the EU, the Irish public has higher rates of trust than the EU27 average (56% versus 51% EU27 average). Denmark (68%) and Lithuania (67%) are most trusting of the EU. Trust among Irish people has remained steady with no decline recorded.
- When considering demographics, age is less of a determinant in regard to views on the EU. However, respondents from lower socio-economic cohorts trust the EU less.

Trust in the media

- The Irish public continues to be more trusting than the average EU member state, with over three in four stating they trust the Irish traditional media, compared to seven in ten of the EU27 average.
- Encouragingly, the level of trust has shown steady increases since 2016 in Ireland. Indeed, this same pattern can be seen across the EU27, with trust in media increasing by 9% since Autumn 2023 (60% in Autumn 2023 versus 69% in Autumn 2024).
- Ireland is positioned in eighth place among the EU27, with Finland (92%) and Sweden (91%) being the most trusting. Older cohorts show higher levels of trust with 82% of those over 55 stating they trust the media.

Social media as a news source on political matters

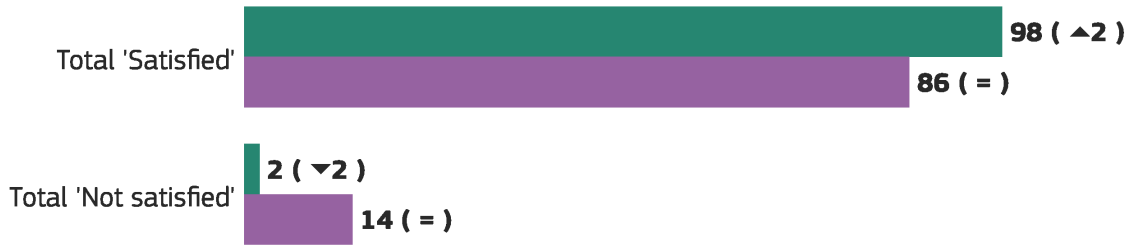
- The rate at which social networks are mentioned as a news source on political matters has declined both among the Irish public and the wider EU27. Among the Irish population, mentions of social networks has decreased from 31% in Autumn 2023 to 26% in Autumn 2024, while in the EU27, these have declined from 30% in Autumn 2023 to 24% in Autumn 2024. Ireland is ranked thirteenth out of the 27 states in regard to usage of social networks as a news source on political matters, with Cyprus (57%) and Malta (41%) being the leading users of social networks.
- Younger cohorts show much higher usage of social networks as a political news source, with just under half of those under 25 citing this. This is compared to just 9% of those over 55. This usage, paired with the higher level of trust in traditional media among older cohorts hints at a generational divide in the sourcing of information.

Satisfaction with how democracy works in the country

- Irish respondents show clear satisfaction in regard to the way democracy works in Ireland, with 77% of the public noting their satisfaction. This is significantly higher than the EU27 average of 55%, with Ireland ranking sixth among the EU27 member states.
- When reviewing satisfaction levels across previous waves, the Irish public has remained largely steady since 2004, with a relatively brief downturn during and after the 2007-2009 economic crisis.
- Socio-economic class is a key determinant of satisfaction, with lower income cohorts showing lower satisfaction.

1. Satisfaction with life

D70. On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the life you lead? (%)

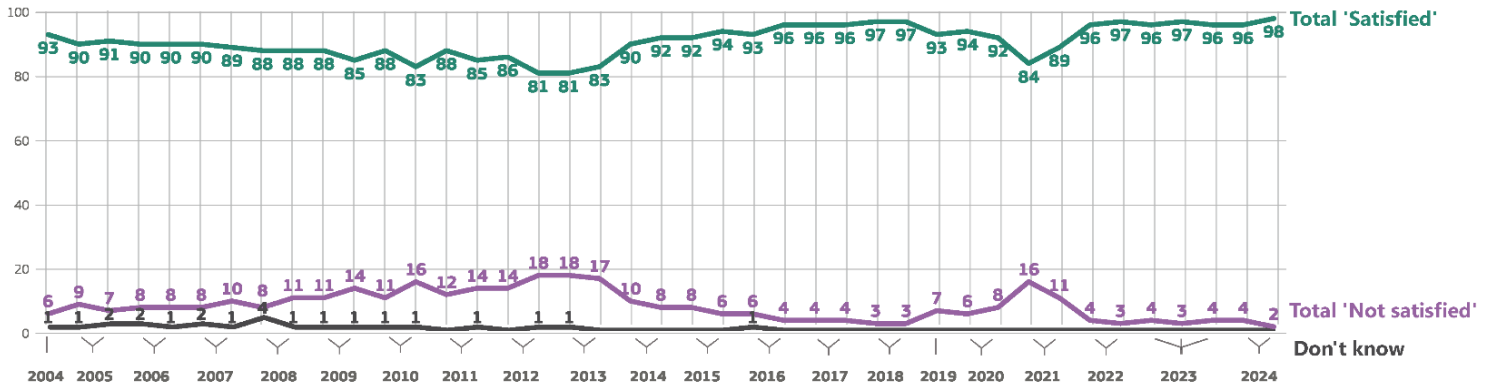


● IE ● EU27

▲▼ (ST102 Oct/Nov 2024 - ST101 Apr/May 2024)

ST102 Oct/Nov 2024

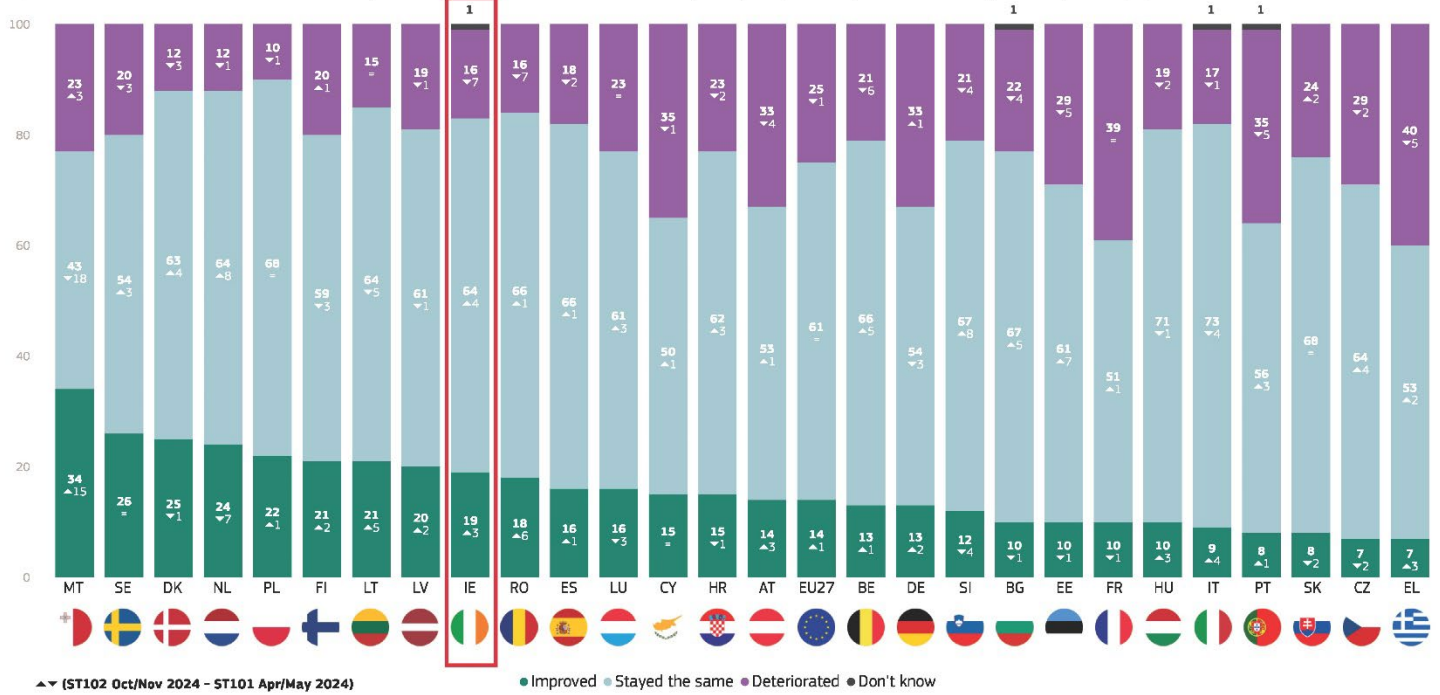
D70 On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the life you lead? (% - IE)



ST102 Oct/Nov 2024

2. Quality of life in Ireland

QA12. Which statement comes closest to your view? Within the last 12 months your quality of life (comfort or budget-wise) has... (%)



3. Attachment to town/country/EU

QC1. Please tell how attached you feel to... (%)

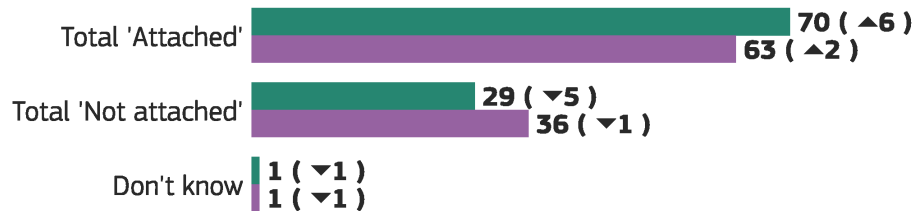
Your city/ town/ village



(OUR COUNTRY)



The European Union



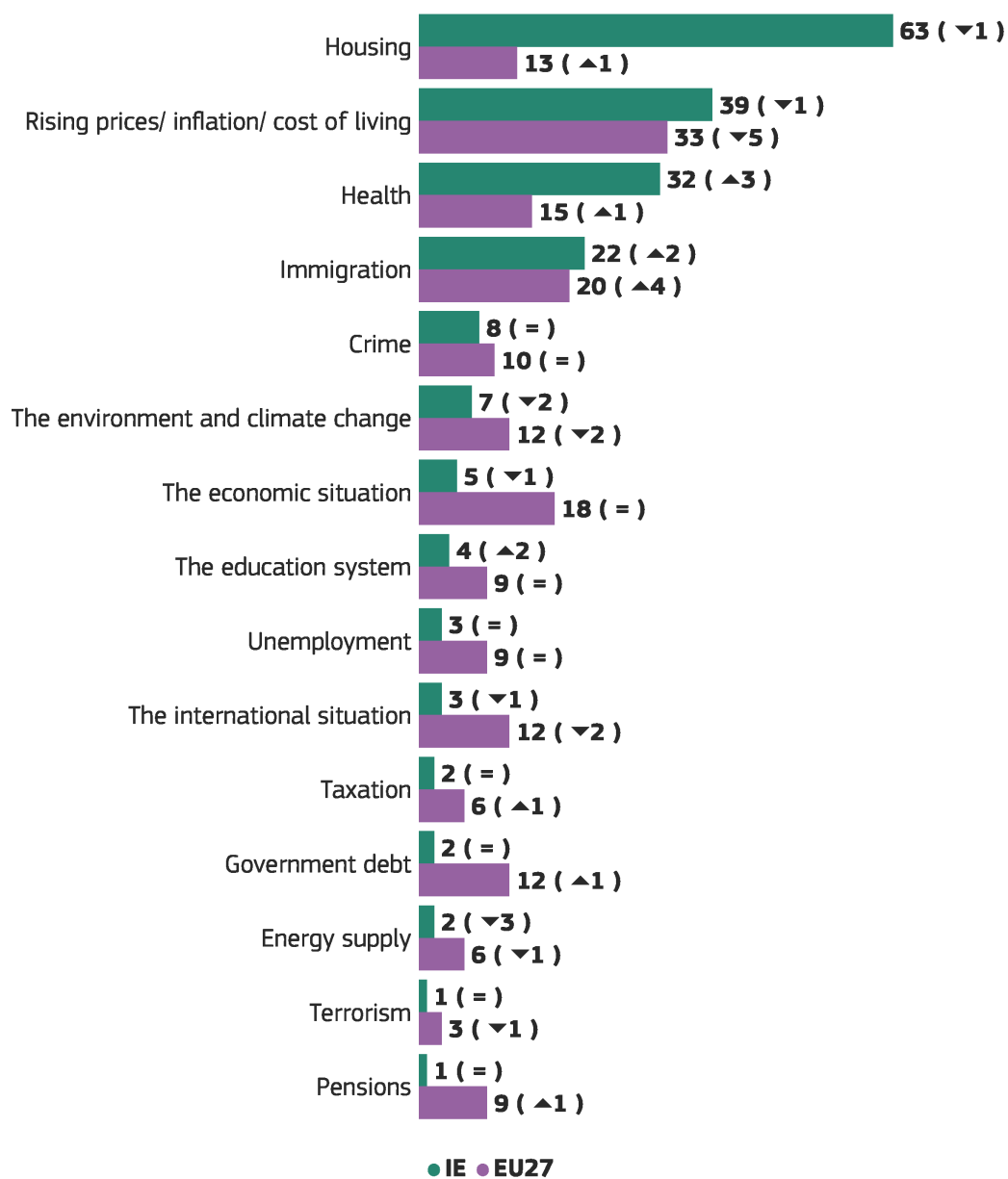
● IE ● EU27

▲▼ (ST102 Oct/Nov 2024 - ST101 Apr/May 2024)

ST102 Oct/Nov 2024

4. Main concerns at national level

QA3. What do you think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment? (MAX. 2 ANSWERS) (%)

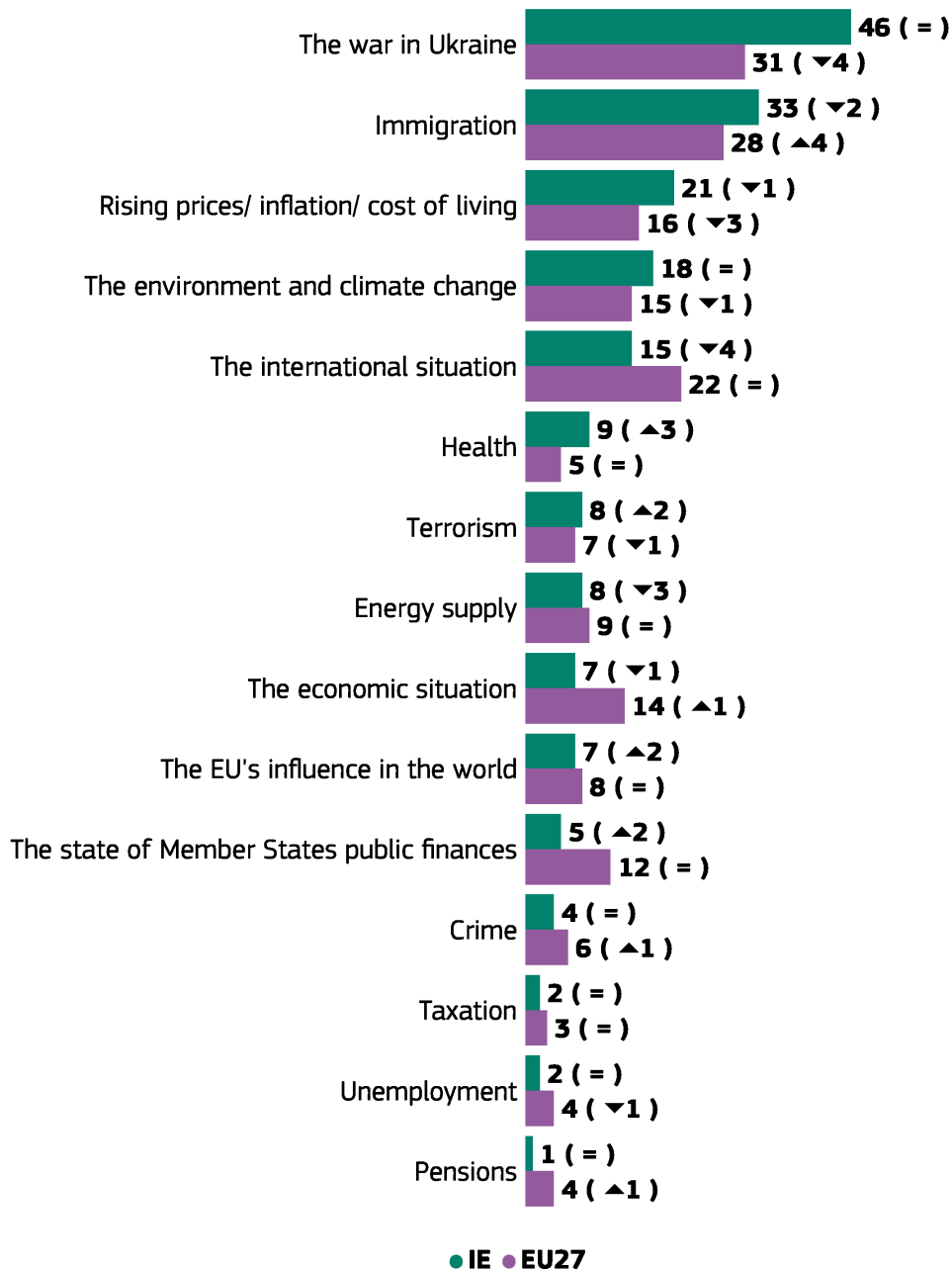


ST102 Oct/Nov 2024

▲▼ (ST102 Oct/Nov 2024 - ST101 Apr/May 2024)

5. Main concerns at EU level

QA5. What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment? (MAX. 2 ANSWERS) (%)



ST102 Oct/Nov 2024

▲▼ (ST102 Oct/Nov 2024 - ST101 Apr/May 2024)

6. Attitudes to migration

QB5. For each of the following statements, please tell whether you totally agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or totally disagree (EU27) (%)

Immigrants contribute positively to (OUR COUNTRY)



(Our COUNTRY) should help refugees



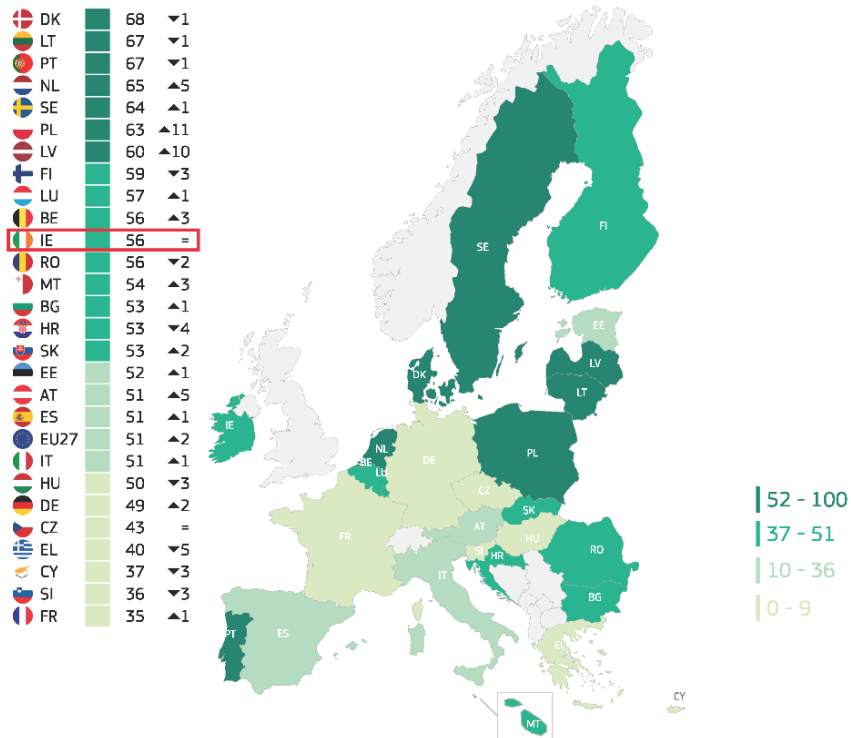
● Totally agree ● Tend to agree ● Tend to disagree ● Totally disagree ● Don't know

\blacktriangle ∇ (ST102 Oct/Nov 2024 - ST101 Apr/May 2024)

ST102 Oct/Nov 2024

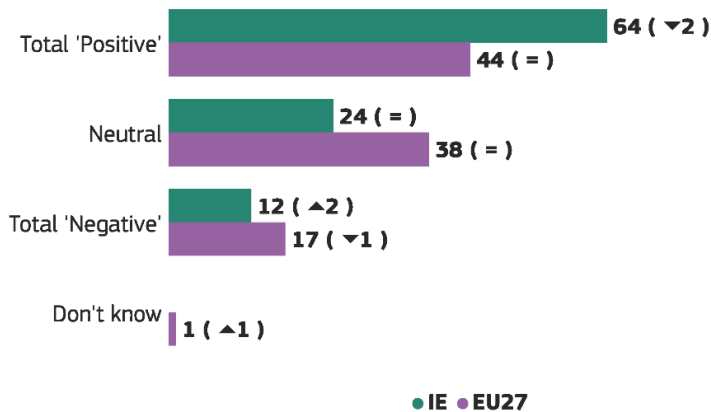
7. Trust and image of the EU

QA6.8. 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 - Tend to trust (%)



	EU27	IE
Tend to trust	51 ▲2	56 =
Tend not to trust	43 ▲1	33 ▲3
Don't know	6 ▼3	11 ▼3

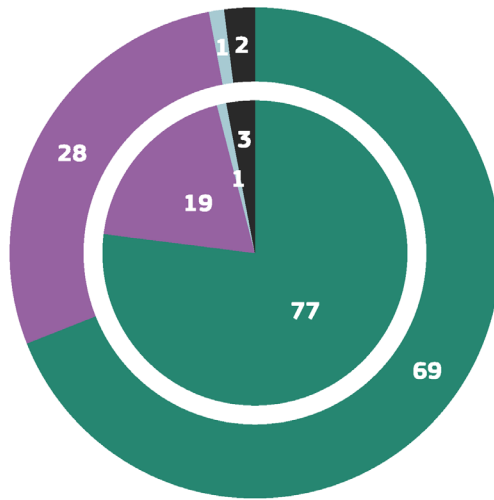
D78. In general, does the EU conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image? (%)



▲▼ (ST102 Oct/Nov 2024 - ST101 Apr/May 2024)

8. Trust in the media

QE8.1. For each of the following statements, please tell to what extent it corresponds or not to the situation of the (NATIONALITY) traditional media. - (NATIONALITY) media provide trustworthy information (%)



● Total 'Yes' ● Total 'No' ● It depends (SPONTANEOUS) ● Don't know

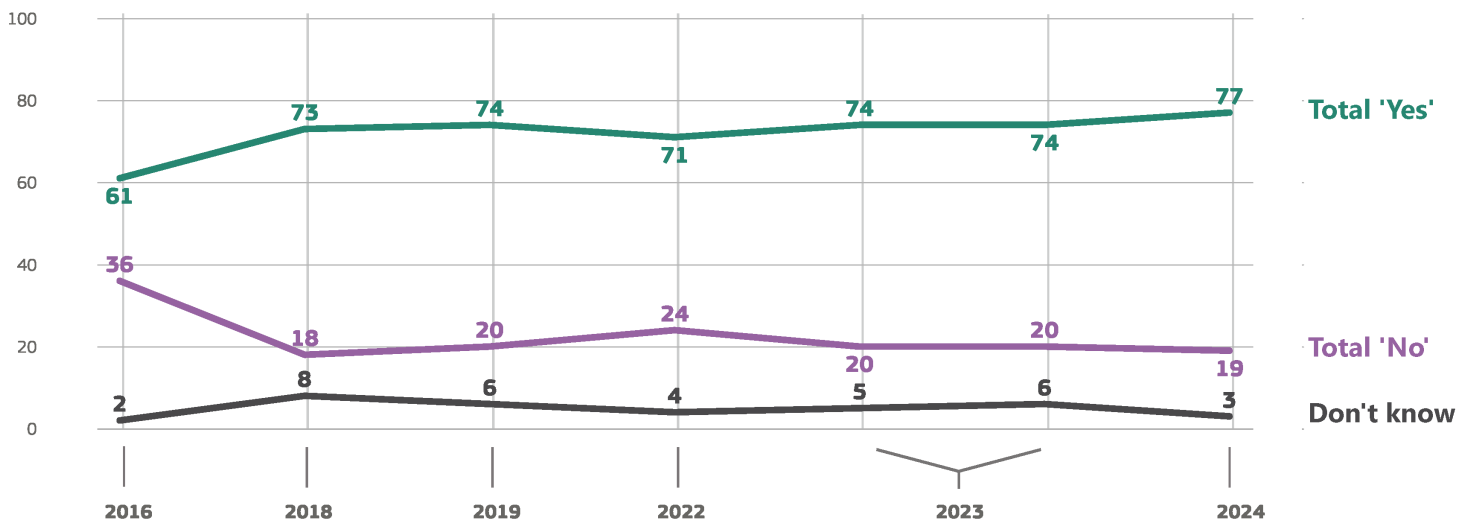
EU27 Outer pie

IE Inner pie

	EU27	IE
Total 'Yes'	69 ▲9	77 ▲3
Total 'No'	28 ▼7	19 ▼1
It depends (SPONTANEOUS)	1 =	1 ▲1
Don't know	2 ▼2	3 ▼3

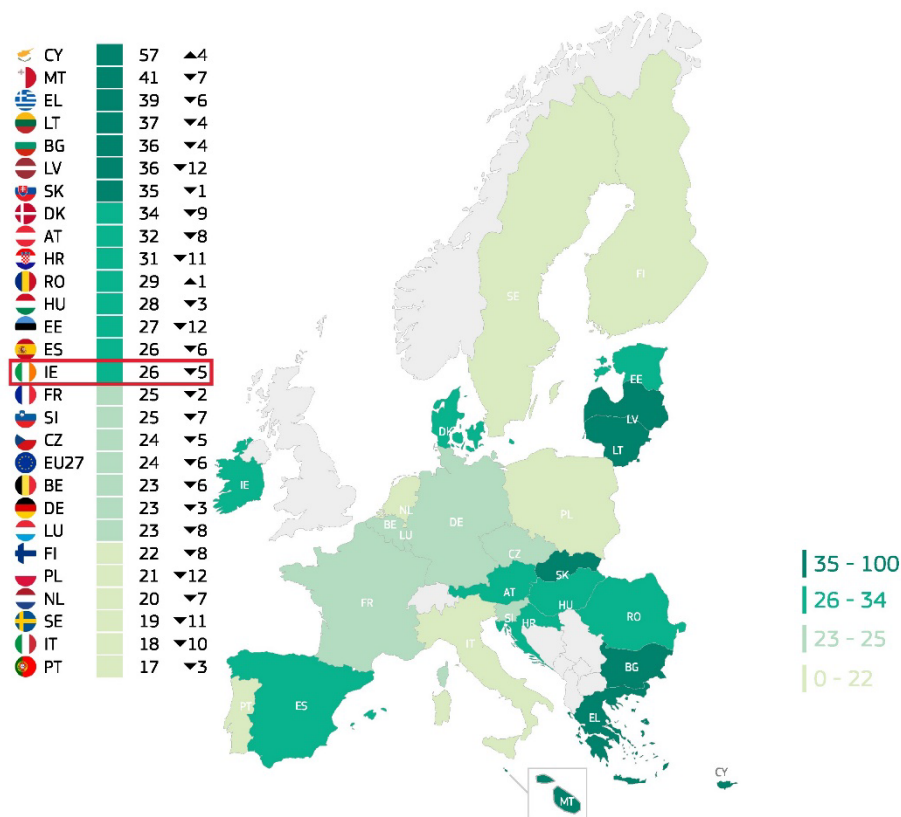
▲▼ (ST102 Oct/Nov 2024 - ST100 Oct/Nov 2023)

ST102 Oct/Nov 2024



9. Social media as a news source on political matters

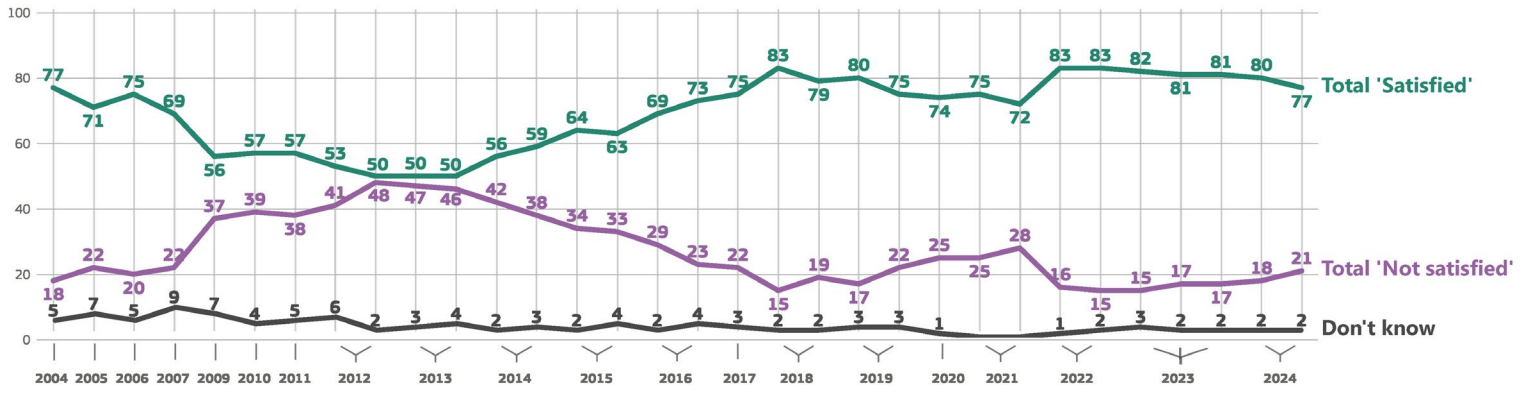
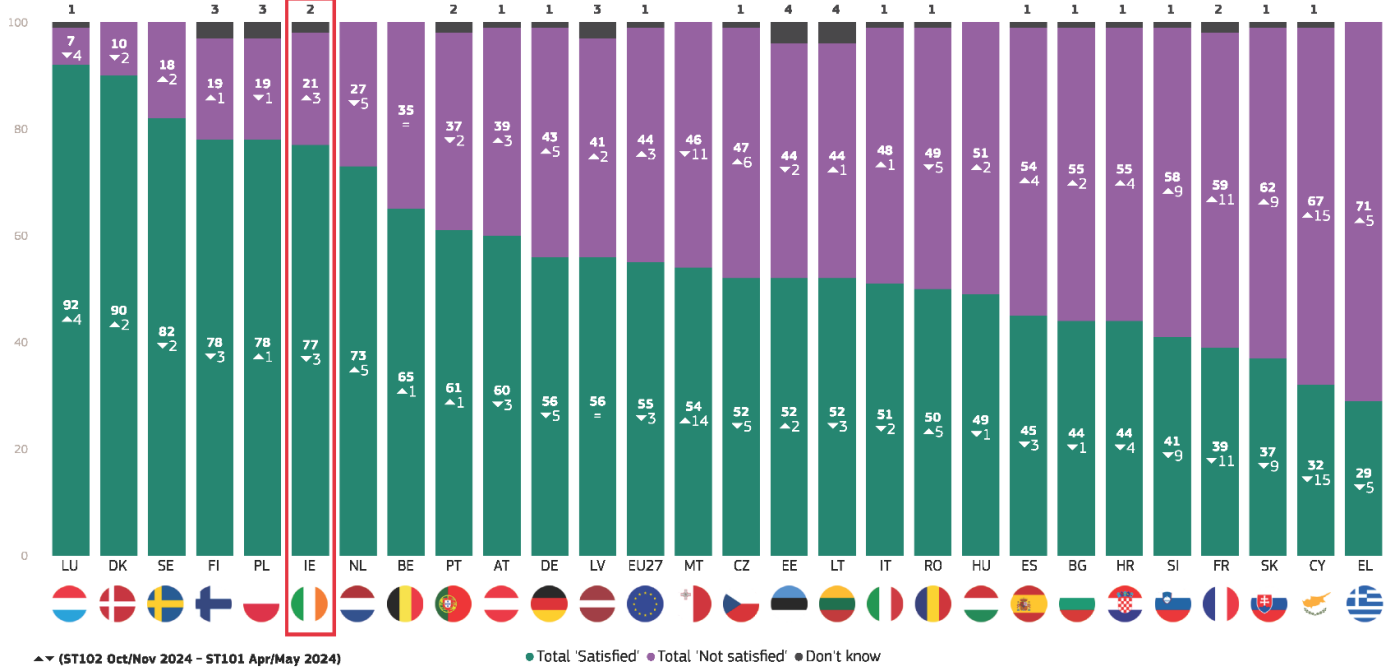
QE5ab. Where do you get most of your news on European political matters? Firstly? And then? - Online social networks (%)



ST102 Oct/Nov 2024

10. Satisfaction with how democracy works in the country

SD18a. On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in (OUR COUNTRY)? (%)



Conclusions

This Autumn 2024 edition of the Eurobarometer displays Ireland's clear and enduring positivity toward the EU, as well as clear improvements in the public's own lived experiences. Notwithstanding that, there are obvious concerns in the areas of housing, cost of living, and immigration. Ireland leads the EU in terms of life satisfaction at 98%, significantly above the EU27 average of 86%. Furthermore, quality of life in Ireland is improving, with a decrease in reported deterioration paired with an increase in those noting improvement. However, this is not a universal sentiment, particularly when examining those who are 'very satisfied', with clear socio-economic disparities. Although there is strong satisfaction, addressing socio-economic disparities remains crucial.

The Irish public displays strong local (94%), national (97%), and EU (70%) attachment. Across all three metrics, Ireland outperforms the EU27 average. Encouragingly, there has been a notable increase in feelings of attachment toward the EU, increasing from 64% in Spring 2024 to 70% in Autumn 2024. The relatively recent European elections may have played a factor here. It is also interesting to highlight that, while older cohorts display higher levels of attachment to their town and country, there is no clear age disparity in regard to attachment to the EU. This strong local, national, and EU attachment could be leveraged for both domestic and EU-level initiatives.

As mentioned previously, though life satisfaction is high, there are clear areas of concern in Ireland, with housing top of the list. This is quite specific to Ireland, with 65% of the Irish population citing housing as one of the most important issues facing the country, far exceeding the EU27 average of 13%. However, there are some other outlier states, namely Luxembourg and the Netherlands where about half of the respondents cited housing as a concern, while Spain displayed a significant increase in housing being cited, increasing from 17% in Spring 2024 to 35% in Autumn 2024. These results may indicate that, over time, housing may no longer be an Irish-specific concern. Rising costs/inflation (39%) and health (33%) are also significant concerns for the Irish public, though these concerns are more age-specific, with younger cohorts citing rising costs/inflation, while older cohorts are more likely to cite health. Housing concerns span all age groups, suggesting a systemic issue. Immigration is the fourth most cited national concern in Ireland (22%), with increases noted both at an Irish and EU level.

When focusing on EU-level concerns we see a different picture forming among Irish respondents, with the war in Ukraine (46%) and immigration (33%) being the most cited

concerns. Although the EU27 average concern about immigration at the EU level is rising, the Irish public is showing decreased concern, with a 2% drop in mentions. This is paired with notably positive attitudes among the Irish population toward immigration, with 75% believing immigrants contribute positively, compared to just over half among the EU27 generally. In addition, 84% of Irish people agree that their country should help refugees, compared to 73% in the EU27. While concerns surrounding immigration are clear, there is also a strong sense of duty and positivity toward immigration, indicating a rather nuanced understanding of the issue. However, there are disparities here, with lower socioeconomic cohorts showing higher levels of disagreement and concern.

Ireland continues to hold a very positive image of the EU, ranking second among EU states behind Portugal. Furthermore, trust toward the EU among the Irish public also remains high, outperforming the EU27 average once again (56% among the Irish respondents compared to 51% EU27 average). Though this is a positive result, there is a clear disconnect between trust and positivity, with Ireland ranked eleventh among EU states in regard to trust. With that said, trust levels among the Irish public have remained steady compared to Spring 2024.

In Ireland, the level of trust in traditional media is very high at 77%, ranking eighth among the EU states. Trust in traditional media among the Irish public has increased gradually since 2016, while the EU as a whole has seen an increase in trust toward traditional media over the last year, increasing from 60% in Autumn 2023 to 69% in Autumn 2024. Unsurprisingly, younger cohorts show higher usage of social networks as a news source on political matters. Though there is significant usage of social networks among younger cohorts (just under half of those under 25 cite this), there is minimal usage among older cohorts (9% of those over 55). This has resulted in relatively low usage of social networks as a news source, decreasing to 26% in Autumn 2024 from 31% in Autumn 2023.

When considering the way in which democracy works in Ireland, it is clear that the Irish public are largely satisfied with 77% noting their satisfaction. This is significantly higher than the EU27 average of 55%. When reviewing satisfaction levels across previous years it is interesting to note the impact of the 2007-2009 economic crisis and the following period of austerity, which resulted in a brief but significant downturn in satisfaction. While overall satisfaction with democracy is high, addressing the concerns of lower socioeconomic cohorts will be crucial in maintaining social cohesion and democratic stability.

National report: **Ireland**

Overall, Ireland presents a picture of a largely satisfied population with strong attachments to various levels of community and positive attitudes towards the EU as well as their own quality of life. However, challenges remain, particularly in the areas of housing and socio-economic disparities.