



European Committee
of the Regions

Flash Eurobarometer

Local politicians of the EU and the future of Europe

Report



Fieldwork:

July-September 2021

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Survey requested and coordinated by the European Committee of the Regions

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

Flash Eurobarometer – Ipsos European Public Affairs



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Survey conducted by Ipsos European Public Affairs
at the request of the European Committee of the Regions

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Introduction

In the 27 Member States of the European Union (EU), there are more than one million politicians elected at the subnational level. These local politicians represent a highly diverse set of constituencies at various levels of government, including federal states, regions, provinces, counties, departments, districts, municipalities, boroughs, etc.

The Eurobarometer Flash survey that is the subject of this report, commissioned by the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) and carried out by Ipsos European Public Affairs (Ipsos), is the first ever **survey targeting all local politicians in the EU**. As such, the survey provides an important platform for local politicians in the EU to share their opinion, especially for those who are not CoR members and have not engaged with the CoR before.

The survey questionnaire was inspired by the momentum created by the **Conference on the Future of Europe**, a unique and timely opportunity for European citizens and politicians alike to debate on Europe's challenges and priorities. In the survey, local politicians were asked, for example, about their awareness of, and engagement in the Conference, as well as the importance they attach to the nine priority themes of the Conference (see Annex for the full questionnaire).

Key topics covered by the survey are:

- the contribution of regions, cities and villages to the future of Europe;
- the future of European democracy; and
- preferred measures to achieve a Europe closer to its citizens.






Technical note

Fieldwork

For this survey, Ipsos European Public Affairs attempted to interview a broadly representative sample of locally elected politicians (henceforth referred to as 'local politicians') in all of the 27 EU Member States. 'Broadly representative' means that the most important political levels and groups are represented among the respondents (see below); however, no specific quotas were set for feasibility reasons.

The survey was conducted via computer-assisted web interviewing (CAWI) and was hosted by Ipsos European Public Affairs. A sample of local politicians received a unique link to the survey via an email invitation sent by Ipsos, with an attached endorsement letter from the president of the CoR. Over 20,000 email invitation were sent. Up to five reminder emails were sent to each of the email addresses.

Fieldwork for the study took place between 21 July and 9 September 2021. In total, **3 276 interviews** were completed over this period. The table below shows the number of completed interviews per country. In order to take into account differences in the number of responses, the latter were weighted by the number of municipalities in the respective EU Member State.

Completed interviews		Completed interviews		Completed interviews	
BE 	131	HR 	57	PL 	124
BG 	40*	IT 	159	PT 	62
CZ 	107	CY 	38*	RO 	95
DK 	62	LV 	58	SI 	73
DE 	245	LT 	68	SK 	75
EE 	46*	LU 	45*	FI 	35*
IE 	70	HU 	77	SE 	879
EL 	58	MT 	42*		
ES 	199	NL 	144		
FR 	168	AT 	119	EU27 	3 276

*Small sample size; caution should be exercised when interpreting the results.

Presentation of survey data

In the survey, respondents were asked to specify the political level at which they have been elected (question SD1). In order to facilitate cross-country analysis, the country levels were recoded into three overall levels:

- LEVEL I – Regions, federal states
- LEVEL II – Provinces, counties, departments
- LEVEL III – Municipalities

The local politicians surveyed were also asked about their political affiliation through a question with a country-specific list of political parties (question SD2). To facilitate cross-country comparison and analysis in this report, the findings are reported at the level of the seven political groups in the European Parliament to which the parties of respondents belong, namely:

- Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP)
- Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D)
- Renew Europe Group (RE)
- Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)
- Identity and Democracy Group (ID)
- European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR)
- The Left group in the European Parliament (GUE/NGL)

Notes:

- 1) Survey data at the EU27 level were weighted by the number of municipalities in each country.
- 2) Due to rounding, the percentages shown in the charts and tables do not always exactly add up to the totals mentioned in the text.
- 3) In this report, countries are referred to by their official abbreviation. The abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

BE		Belgium	LT		Lithuania
BG		Bulgaria	LU		Luxembourg
CZ		Czechia	HU		Hungary
DK		Denmark	MT		Malta
DE		Germany	NL		Netherlands
EE		Estonia	AT		Austria
IE		Ireland	PL		Poland
EL		Greece	PT		Portugal
ES		Spain	RO		Romania
FR		France	SI		Slovenia
HR		Croatia	SK		Slovakia
IT		Italy	FI		Finland
CY		Rep. of Cyprus	SE		Sweden
LV		Latvia			

Key findings

Regions, cities and villages and the future of the European Union

- A majority of surveyed local politicians (64%) *disagree* that regions, cities and villages have enough **influence on the future of the EU**, while about a third (33%) *agree*.
- The proportion who disagree that regions, cities and villages have enough influence on the future of the EU differs substantially across countries, varying between 87% in Hungary and 12% in Greece.
- An overwhelming majority of surveyed local politicians find it **important that the influence of their country's regions and local authorities on EU policy-making increases** (87%) or that the access of regions and local authorities to EU funding is improved (94%).
- A smaller but still sizeable share of surveyed local politicians (71%) find it important **the EU plays a larger role in supporting policy-making** at the regional and local level.
- Local politicians do not only find that they should have more influence on EU decision-making: 90% think it is important that regions and local authorities increase their influence on national policy-making.
- When asked **which topics they think regions and cities should become more influential on in EU policy-making**, the surveyed local politicians most often mention 'a stronger economy, social justice and jobs' (61%), 'climate change and the environment' (59%) and 'education culture, youth and sport' (50%).

How to improve democracy in the EU?

- Ninety per cent of surveyed local politicians agree that '**better information** on democratic systems at EU, national, and subnational level' would make democracy in the EU work better. A similar proportion (86%) agree that '**strengthening the involvement of subnational/local government levels in EU decision-making**' would improve democracy in the EU.
- Fewer, although still a clear majority, agree that democracy in the EU would benefit from '... elements of **participatory democracy** such as citizens' assemblies or panels' (75%) or 'strengthening European political parties' (62%).
- More contentious is the introduction of **transnational lists** for European elections; 49% of surveyed local politicians agree this would make democracy in the EU work better, versus 41% who disagree.
- When asked how **the EU can get closer to its citizens**, the surveyed local politicians are most likely to select 'EU support for partnerships among regions and cities facilitating citizens' contacts' (52%) and 'partnerships between regional/local councils' (46%).

- Another measure aimed at increasing cooperation with local authorities in other European countries comes in fourth place: 'more European school and university partnerships' (40%). 'information for / training of local politicians' is also mentioned frequently (45%).
- A large majority of the surveyed local politicians totally or tend to agree that they **have sufficient information about how democracy works** at the national (88%) or subnational (84%) level. For the **EU level**, the corresponding figure is distinctly lower (66%).

Conference on the Future of Europe

- A narrow majority of surveyed local politicians (54%) are **aware of the Conference of the Future of Europe**, compared to 46% who are not aware of it. This includes 43% who have heard about the Conference, but who are not aware of any related activities in their constituency.
- Eleven per cent have either been **actively involved in the Conference themselves** (3%) or are **aware of related activities in their constituency** (8%).
- The most often **conducted activities** for the Conference are information events (47%), followed by citizens' debates (29%) and media activities (28%).

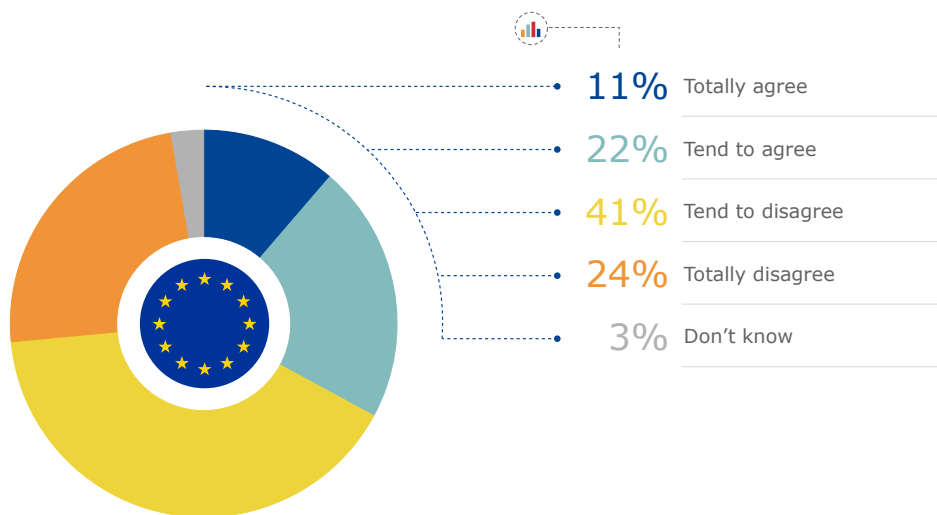
Section 1. Regions, cities and villages and the future of the European Union

1.1. Do regions, cities and villages have enough influence?

Local politicians participating in this survey were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that regions, cities and villages have enough influence on the future of the European Union.

Across the EU27, a third (33%) of local politicians surveyed *agree* with this statement, while almost two-thirds (64%) *disagree*. The proportion *disagreeing* consists of 24% who totally disagree and 41% who tend to disagree.

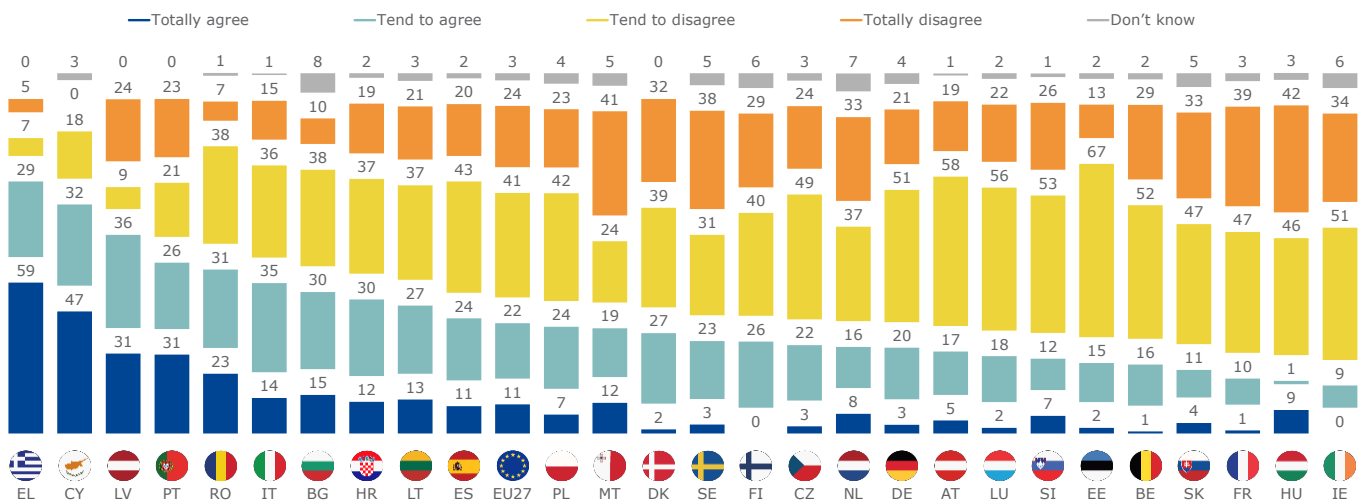
Q1 In general, do you agree or disagree that regions, cities and villages have enough influence on the future of the European Union? (% - EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

At country level, the proportion of local politicians surveyed who *disagree* that regions, cities and villages have enough influence on the future of the EU varies between 12% in Greece and 87% in Hungary. Other countries where many disagree include France and Ireland (both 86%). Apart from in Greece, few respondents disagree in Cyprus (18%)¹. The proportion of local politicians surveyed who *disagree* that regions, cities and villages have enough influence on the future of the EU is overall higher in western European countries, compared to all other regions of the EU (East, North and South)².

Q1 In general, do you agree or disagree that regions, cities and villages have enough influence on the future of the European Union? (% by country)

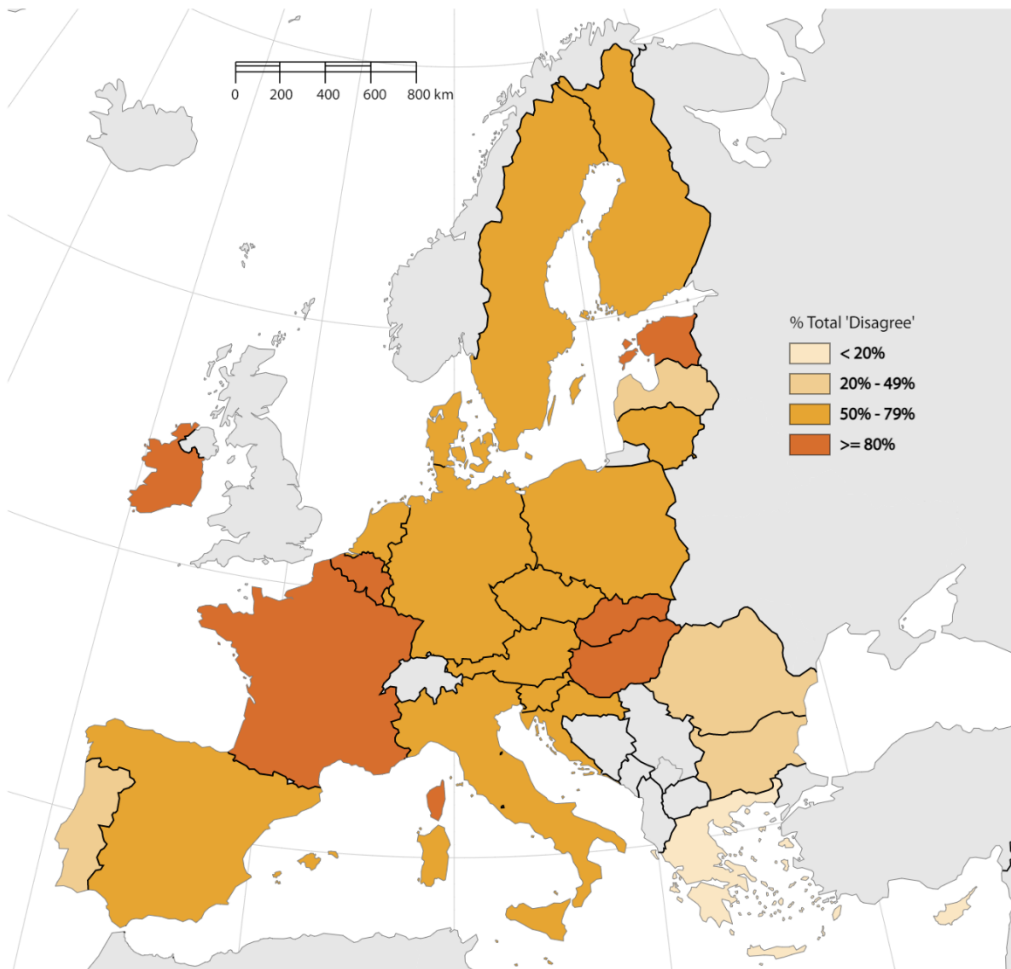


Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

¹ The results in Cyprus should be interpreted with care due to a low base size (n=38).

² The following country-division was applied: BG (East), CZ (East), HR (East), HU (East), PL (East), RO (East), SI (East), SK (East), CY (South), EL (South), ES (South), IT (South), MT (South), PT (South), AT (West), BE (West), DE (West), FR (West), IE (West), LU (West), NL (West), DK (North), EE (North), FI (North), LT (North), LV (North) and SE (North).

Q1 In general, do you agree or disagree that regions, cities and villages have enough influence on the future of the European Union? (% **total 'disagree'** by country)

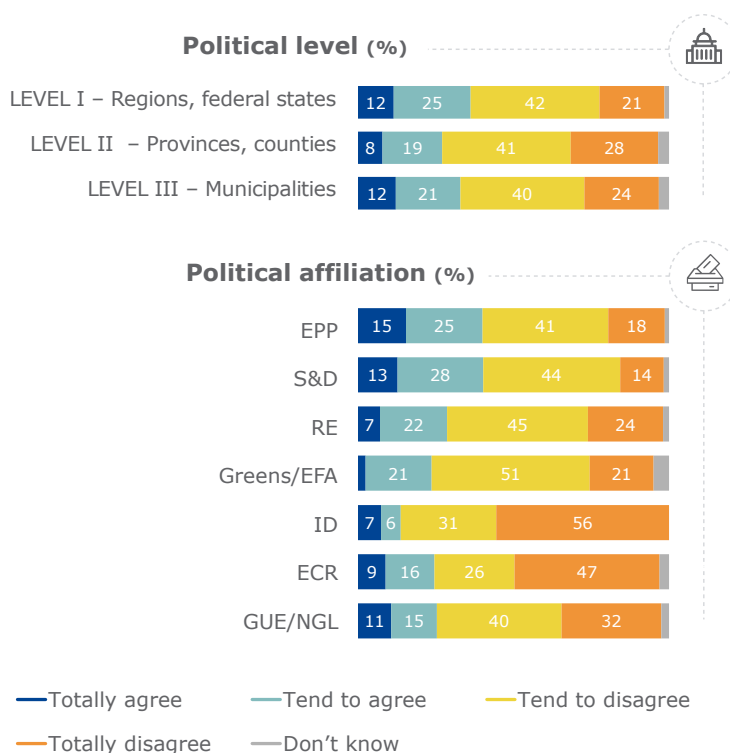


Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

Compared to local politicians representing regions and federal states (level I) or municipalities (level III), local politicians representing provinces and counties (political level II) are somewhat more likely to disagree that regions, cities and villages have enough influence on the future of the EU. At political level II, 69% of local politicians surveyed disagree, compared to 62% at level I and 64% at level III.

Local politicians representing a party that is a member of the ID group in the European Parliament³ are more likely than those in all other political groups to disagree that regions, cities and villages have enough influence on the future of the EU – 86% in the ID group disagree, compared to between 58% and 72% in the other political groups. Local politicians from political parties that are member of the EPP and S&D groups, on the other hand, are more likely to agree that regions, cities and villages have enough influence on the future of the EU – 40% of those who represent parties in the former two political groups do so, compared to 14%-29% of those representing parties in the other political groups.

Q1 In general, do you agree or disagree that regions, cities and villages have enough influence on the future of the European Union? (% by sub-group)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

³ See the technical note at the beginning of the report for an overview of the political groups and their abbreviations.

1.2. How to increase the influence of regions, cities and villages?

Considering the results for the question above, it is no surprise that the local politicians surveyed also tend to find that **the influence of their country's regions and local authorities on EU policy-making should be increased**. An overwhelming majority (87%) of respondents find this important, including 46% who find this 'very important'.

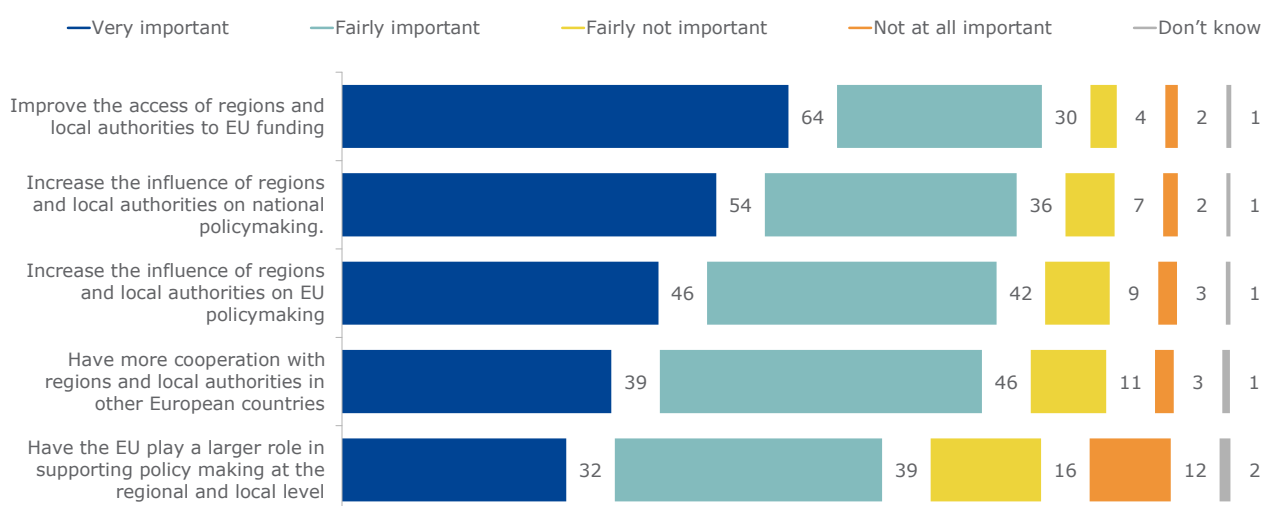
The local politicians surveyed are even more likely to find it important that the **access of regions and local authorities to EU funding is improved**. More than nine in ten (94%) find this important, including 64% who find this 'very important'.

A smaller but still sizeable share of respondents would like to see **the EU play a larger role in supporting policy-making at the regional and local level**. Seventy-one per cent find this important, including 32% who find this 'very important'.

Local politicians do not only find that they should have more influence on EU decision-making. A similarly large proportion (90%) feel it is important that **regions and local authorities in their country increase their influence on national policy-making**, with 54% who find this 'very important'.

The local politicians surveyed appear eager to cooperate with their peers abroad. Eighty-five per cent find it important to have **more cooperation with regions and local authorities in other European countries**, including 39% who find this 'very important'.

Q2 Thinking about the current situation in [YOUR COUNTRY], how important or not important is each of the following...? (% - EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

Overall agreement with the statements above is high across countries. For instance, the proportion of local politicians surveyed who find it *very* or *fairly* important that the influence of their country's regions and local authorities on EU policy-making increases is 74% or higher in all 27 EU Member States. Similarly, in all Member States, 77% or more find it important that the influence of their country's regions and local authorities on national policy-making increases.

More variation between countries is visible when looking at the proportion who find the statements *very* important. The proportion of respondents who find it very important that **the influence of their country's regions and local authorities on EU policy-making increases** ranges from a low of 15% in Estonia,⁴ to a high of 67% in Italy and 73% in Portugal. Looking across countries, it is noteworthy that local politicians in southern European countries, compared to those in other parts of the EU, often find it very important that that the influence of their country's regions and local authorities on EU policy-making increases.

The share of local politicians who find it very important that **the influence of regions and local authorities on national policy-making increases** ranges from 27% in Austria, 30% in Estonia and 31% in Finland⁵, to 82% in Portugal and 83% in both Bulgaria⁶ and Slovakia. Again, local politicians in southern European Member States appear more likely to find this very important, although in this case this also applies to those in eastern European Member States.

Improved access for regions and local authorities to EU funding is considered very important by more than half of respondents in 22 out of the 27 EU Member States. At individual country level, the proportion who find improved access for regions and local authorities to EU funding very important is highest in Bulgaria (88%), Italy and Romania (both 86%). This proportion is lowest in Belgium (40%), Denmark (42%), Sweden (43%) and the Netherlands (44%). Looking across countries, compared to their peers in northern and western Europe, local politicians in eastern and (especially) southern European countries more often find improved access for regions and local authorities to EU funding very important.

The share of surveyed local politicians who find **cooperation with regions and local authorities in other European countries** very important also tends to be higher in eastern and southern European countries than in northern and western European countries. At country level, this figure ranges from 15% in Denmark, to 60% in both Bulgaria and Portugal.





























Likewise, local politicians in eastern and southern European countries tend to be more likely than their peers in northern and western Europe to find it very important to have **the EU play a larger role in supporting policy-making at the regional and local level**. The highest proportions who find this very important are observed in Portugal (63%), followed by Cyprus (61%) and Greece (60%), while the lowest proportions are seen in Estonia (4%), Finland (6%) and Denmark (8%).

⁴ The results in Estonia should be interpreted with care due to a low base size (n=46).

⁵ The results in Finland should be interpreted with care due to a low base size (n=35).

⁶ The results in Bulgaria should be interpreted with care due to a low base size (n=40).

Q2 Thinking about the current situation in [YOUR COUNTRY], how important or not important is each of the following...? (% **'very important'** by country)

		Improve the access of regions and local authorities to EU funding	Increase the influence of regions and local authorities on national policy-making	Increase the influence of regions and local authorities on EU policy-making	Have more cooperation with regions and local authorities in other European countries	Have the EU play a larger role in supporting policy making at the regional and local level
EU27		64	54	46	39	32
BE		40	36	29	24	13
BG		88	83	65	60	58
CZ		53	51	29	22	21
DK		42	37	24	15	8
DE		48	36	30	22	11
EE		48	30	15	20	4
IE		83	74	54	54	30
EL		85	57	57	55	60
ES		68	58	60	50	52
FR		53	58	44	30	14
HR		77	56	40	49	37
IT		86	62	67	56	52
CY		82	42	55	45	61
LV		72	66	41	38	26
LT		54	49	43	41	46
LU		51	44	27	42	13
HU		57	47	42	26	36
MT		67	50	38	48	45
NL		44	54	33	22	15
AT		56	27	33	32	11
PL		76	67	55	49	48
PT		82	82	73	60	63
RO		86	73	60	58	43
SI		64	63	37	41	29
SK		76	83	53	29	23
FI		57	31	26	26	6
SE		43	35	36	23	17


Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

There is also substantial variation visible when looking at **political affiliation**. Respondents whose political party is a member of the ID group in the European Parliament are more likely to find it very important to increase the influence of regions and local authorities on national or EU policy-making, while this is of less importance to those whose political party is part of the RE and Greens/EFA groups. For example, 63% of those representing a party that is part of the ID group find it very important to increase the influence of regions and local authorities on EU policy-making, compared to 29% and 35%, respectively, for those representing a party that is a member of the Greens/EFA and RE groups. For the remaining groups, this figure varies between 42% and 50%.

Surveyed local politicians whose political party is a member of the EPP or S&D groups are more likely to find it important to improve the access of regions and local authorities to EU funding; respectively, 68% and 67% of those representing parties in the latter two political groups find this very important, compared to between 52% and 63% for those whose party is a member of the other political groups.

Those whose party is a member of the EPP or S&D groups are also more prone than those representing a party in other groups to find it very important to have the EU play a larger role in supporting policy-making at the regional and local level. Respectively, 37% and 36% of local politicians whose party is in the latter two groups find this very important, compared to between 15% and 28% of those representing parties in the other political groups.

Q2 Thinking about the current situation in [YOUR COUNTRY], how important or not important is each of the following...? (% **'very important'** by political affiliation)

		Improve the access of regions and local authorities to EU funding	Increase the influence of regions and local authorities on national policy-making	Increase the influence of regions and local authorities on EU policy-making	Have more cooperation with regions and local authorities in other European countries	Have the EU play a larger role in supporting policy making at the regional and local level
EU27 		64	54	46	39	32
EPP		68	57	50	41	68
S&D		67	53	45	42	67
RE		59	48	35	35	59
Greens/EFA		60	37	29	31	60
ID		53	65	63	34	53
ECR		49	43	42	29	49

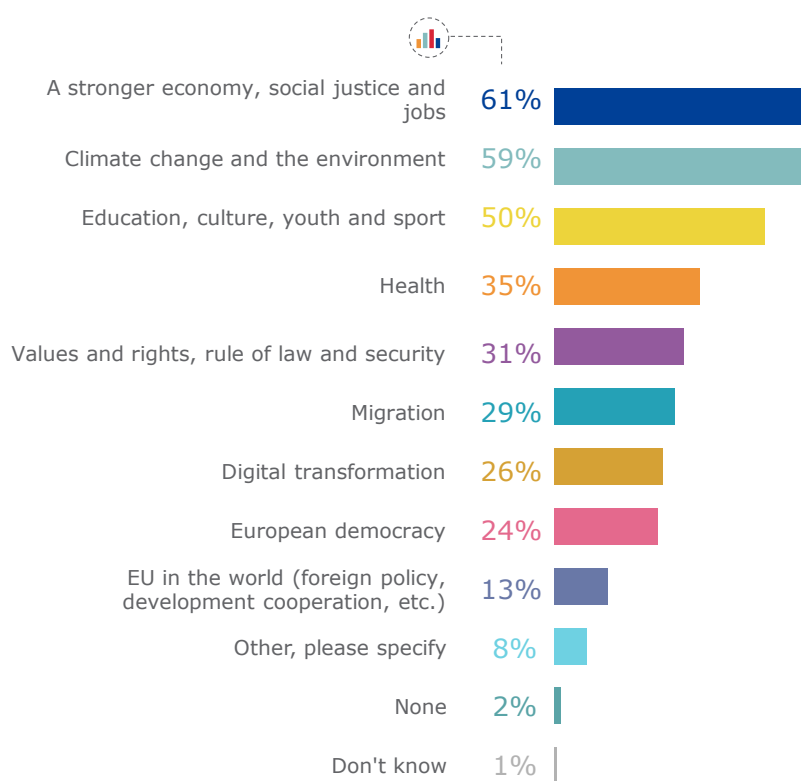
Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

1.3. Key EU-related topics for regions, cities and villages

Local politicians participating in the survey were shown a list of key priorities and challenges for the EU and they were asked on which ones they prefer regions and cities to become more influential in EU policy-making (up to four answers were allowed). The list of topics is the one chosen to be discussed in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

The local politicians surveyed most often mention **'a stronger economy, social justice and jobs'** (61%) and **'climate change and the environment'** (59%). Another topic mentioned frequently is **'education culture, youth and sport'** (50%). Less commonly mentioned topics are 'health' (35%), 'values and rights, rule of law and security' (31%), 'migration' (29%), 'digital transformation' (26%), 'European democracy' (24%) and 'EU in the world', including foreign policy, development cooperation, etc. (13%).

Q3 On which of these topics would you prefer to see regions and cities to become more influential in EU policy-making? Please select up to four answers. (% - EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

In 13 out of 27 EU Member States, local politicians surveyed most frequently mention **‘a stronger economy, social justice and jobs’** as a topic on which regions and cities should have more influence in EU policy-making. In another 10 Member States, **‘climate change and the environment’** is seen as the most important topic in this regard. In Czechia, ‘climate change and the environment’ and ‘education, culture, youth and sport’ are jointly in first position, and in Estonia, this is the case for ‘a stronger economy, social justice and jobs’ and ‘education, culture, youth and sport’; the latter topic comes first in Czechia and Slovakia.

Respondents in eastern, northern and southern European Member States are more likely than their peers in western European Member States to consider ‘a stronger economy, social justice and jobs’ a topic which regions and cities should have more influence on at the EU level. Conversely, local politicians in western and southern European Member States are more likely than their peers in eastern and northern Europe to select ‘climate change and the environment’ as key topic. Those in eastern European Member States relatively often find ‘education, culture, youth and sport’ a topic regions and cities should have more influence on at the EU level.

Q3 On which of these topics would you prefer to see regions and cities to become more influential in EU policy-making? Please select up to four answers. (% mentioned by country)

		A stronger economy, social justice and jobs	Climate change and the environment	Education, culture, youth and sport	Health	Values and rights, rule of law and security	Migration	Digital transformation	European democracy	EU in the world
EU27		61	59	50	35	31	29	26	24	13
BE		51	60	37	35	30	34	21	38	15
BG		73	48	70	33	13	5	15	5	8
CZ		47	51	51	30	29	17	39	17	7
DK		37	81	27	27	27	23	18	37	13
DE		45	56	37	14	32	42	34	36	14
EE		72	35	72	35	20	28	20	11	11
IE		57	77	51	24	31	10	26	29	11
EL		74	67	57	55	22	28	36	9	9
ES		67	66	49	23	35	28	43	25	13
FR		61	69	39	31	23	32	16	31	19
HR		81	56	72	28	26	21	42	14	4
IT		55	53	48	37	25	38	25	18	13
CY		53	55	53	40	53	37	21	5	26
LV		67	53	66	41	45	19	28	26	14
LT		77	34	74	54	28	37	13	16	7
LU		51	62	47	24	22	44	9	38	11
HU		71	62	40	43	42	20	13	30	7
MT		48	71	69	33	38	41	21	17	14
NL		42	63	25	26	34	33	17	24	12
AT		53	59	40	26	29	44	18	37	13
PL		60	66	65	51	41	12	26	25	12
PT		86	58	58	48	21	21	29	19	16
RO		73	43	60	56	30	12	39	17	18
SI		75	56	55	41	38	18	23	12	10
SK		67	63	75	32	28	15	19	16	8
FI		74	66	69	46	29	31	29	23	6
SE		55	54	27	21	38	49	14	39	10

(Most mentioned topic in highlighted) Base: all respondents (n=3 276)


Respondents who represent a municipality (political level III), on average, find ‘a stronger economy, social justice and jobs’ the most important topic on which regions and cities should have more influence at the EU level. For those who represent a region or federal state (political level I) or province or county (level II), ‘climate change and the environment’ is the key priority.

Local politicians’ political affiliation influences their opinion on the priority themes regions and cities should have more influence on at the EU level. For respondents whose party belongs to the EPP, S&D or ECR groups in the European Parliament, ‘a stronger economy, social justice and jobs’ is the most important topic. This is especially the case for local politicians whose party is a member of the S&D group, of which 70% mention a ‘stronger economy, social justice and jobs’ as a topic on which regions and cities should have more influence at the EU level, compared to 61% across other political groups.

For those whose party belongs to the RE, Greens/EFA or GUE/NGL groups, ‘climate change and the environment’ is ranked highest. Especially for those whose party is a member of the Greens/EFA or GUE/NGL groups, this is a key topic where more influence is preferred, with 81% and 72% mentioning this, respectively, compared to 59% across other political groups. Local politicians who represent a political party that is a member of the ID group in the European Parliament, are most likely to consider migration as the most important topic – 62% mention this, compared to an average of 29% across political groups.

The young local politicians participating in this survey are much more likely than their older peers to find that ‘climate change and the environment’ is a key topic for regions and cities to have more influence on at the EU level – 83% of those aged 18 to 24 select this topic, compared to between 58% and 61% in age groups 25-39, 40-54 and 55+. The young local politicians surveyed are also much more likely than older local politicians to mention ‘digital transformation’ as where more influence is preferred; 50% those aged 18 to 24 share this view, compared to 22% of those aged 55+ and 28% of those aged 25-39 or 40-54.

Q3 On which of these topics would you prefer to see regions and cities to become more influential in EU policy-making? Please select up to four answers. (% mentioned by sub-group)

	A stronger economy, social justice and jobs	Climate change and the environment	Education, culture, youth and sport	Health	Values and rights, rule of law and security	Migration	Digital transformation	European democracy	EU in the world
EU27 	61	59	50	35	31	29	26	24	13
Political level									
Level I	56	60	45	34	25	30	30	26	13
Level II	54	61	46	31	35	24	26	26	13
Level III	65	59	54	36	32	29	23	23	12
Political affiliation									
EPP	63	56	50	39	32	29	30	18	15
S&D	70	64	52	37	29	28	26	26	14
RE	51	58	49	26	29	27	32	29	12
Greens/EFA	51	81	41	20	20	25	25	36	12
ID	46	23	30	25	38	62	15	25	8
ECR	52	43	44	37	36	32	34	23	9
Age group									
18-24	70	83	83	17	18	24	50	20	14
25-39	58	61	60	31	28	23	28	22	11
40-54	63	58	53	35	27	28	28	21	10
55+	59	60	42	36	36	32	22	28	14

Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

Section 2. How to improve democracy in the EU?

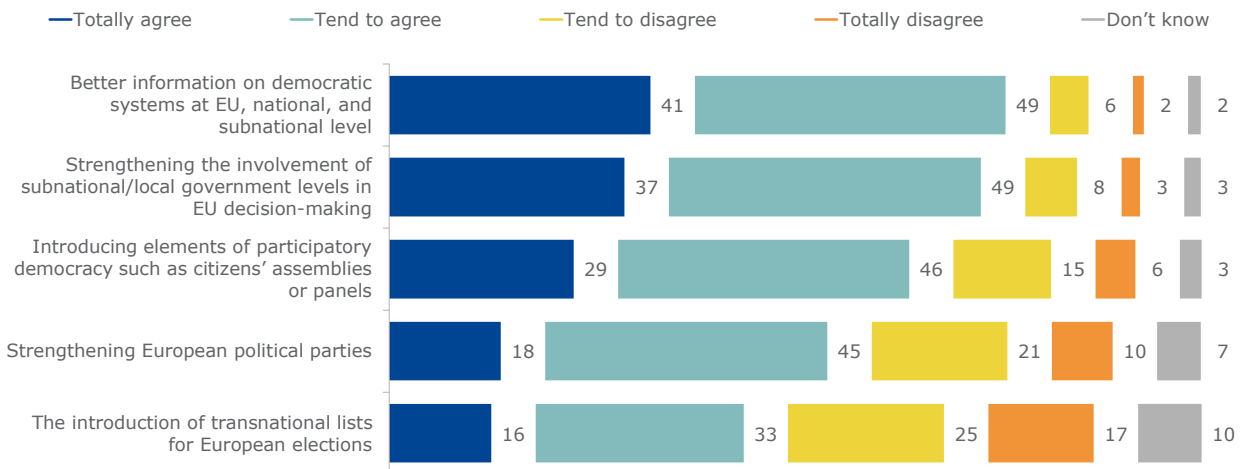
2.1. Measures to make democracy in the EU work better

Local politicians were also asked whether they agreed or disagreed that a number of measures could make democracy in the EU work better.

Agreement is highest with regard to **'better information on democratic systems at EU, national, and subnational level'**; 90% totally or tend to agree this would make democracy in the EU work better. Slightly fewer (86%) agree that **'strengthening the involvement of subnational/local government levels in EU decision-making'** would improve democracy in the EU.

Fewer, although still a clear majority, agree that democracy in the EU would be improved by **'introducing elements of participatory democracy such as citizens' assemblies or panels' (75%)** or **'strengthening European political parties' (62%)**. 'The introduction of transnational lists for European elections' appears more controversial; 49% of surveyed local politicians agree this would make democracy in the EU work better, versus 41% who disagree.

Q7 For each of the following measures, to what extent do you agree or disagree that they would make democracy in the European Union work better? (% - EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

In all of the 27 EU Member States, two thirds or more of the local politicians surveyed agree that **'better information on democratic systems at EU, national, and subnational level'** would make democracy in the EU work better. This figure ranges from 66% in Denmark to 97% in Cyprus, Romania and Spain.

'Strengthening the involvement of subnational/local government levels in EU decision-making' also receives majority support across all EU Member States. The proportion of local politicians who agree that this would make democracy in the EU work better varies between 69% in Denmark and 97% in Spain.

'Introducing elements of participatory democracy such as citizens' assemblies or panels' is also supported by at least half of local politicians surveyed across all EU Member States. Nonetheless, the level of support also varies substantially across countries. The proportion agreeing that this would make democracy in the EU work better ranges from a low of 52% in Estonia, 60% in the Netherlands and 61% in Germany, to a high of 91% in Luxembourg⁷, 92% in Cyprus, 93% in Romania and 94% in Portugal.





























The share of local politicians surveyed who agree that **'strengthening European political parties'** would improve democracy in the EU is highest in Malta⁸ (81%), followed by Austria (80%) and Romania (79%). The proportion agreeing is lowest in Czechia (38%), Estonia (39%) and Slovakia (43%).

Support for **'the introduction of transnational lists for European elections'** differs substantially across countries. At the low end of the country ranking, in Finland and Denmark, one in six of surveyed local politicians agree that this measure would make democracy in the EU work better. In Romania, at the high end of the country ranking, seven in ten agree.

⁷ The results in Luxembourg should be interpreted with care due to a low base size (n=45).

⁸ The results in Malta should be interpreted with care due to a low base size (n=42).


Q7 For each of the following measures, to what extent do you agree or disagree that they would make democracy in the European Union work better? (% **total 'agree'** by country)

	Better information on democratic systems at EU, national, and subnational level	Strengthening the involvement of subnational/ local government levels in EU decision-making	Introducing elements of participatory democracy such as citizens' assemblies or panels	Strengthening European political parties	The introduction of transnational lists for European elections
EU27 	90	86	75	62	49
BE 	90	84	68	60	64
BG 	93	95	88	65	53
CZ 	86	80	63	38	31
DK 	66	69	73	57	18
DE 	84	81	61	69	51
EE 	78	74	52	39	39
IE 	96	90	80	59	31
EL 	93	91	85	67	59
ES 	97	97	70	77	61
FR 	90	86	74	52	61
HR 	93	91	84	67	61
IT 	93	93	78	74	54
CY 	97	95	92	68	55
LV 	90	91	81	53	41
LT 	93	81	81	65	46
LU 	89	82	91	78	42
HU 	83	87	69	49	44
MT 	91	88	88	81	64
NL 	85	74	60	59	49
AT 	88	86	71	80	59
PL 	94	87	79	50	25
PT 	94	89	94	65	58
RO 	97	91	93	79	70
SI 	88	88	88	52	52
SK 	93	91	68	43	44
FI 	94	86	77	54	17
SE 	87	72	63	54	26

Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

Respondents who represent a municipality (political level III) are somewhat more likely than those representing a region or federal state (level I) or province or county (level II) to think that introducing elements of participatory democracy such as citizens' assemblies or panels would improve democracy in the EU. Seventy-eight percent of those representing level III agree with this, compared to 72% representing level I and 70% representing level II. Those representing municipalities also more often think that the introduction of transnational lists for European elections would improve democracy in the EU – 53% at political level III agree with this, compared to 46% at level I and 42% at level II. The local politicians who represent a region or federal state are somewhat more likely than their peers at other political levels to agree that 'strengthening European political parties' would make democracy work better in the EU (67% agree at political level I, versus 58% at level II and 61% and level III).

Q7 For each of the following measures, to what extent do you agree or disagree that they would make democracy in the European Union work better? (% **total 'agree'** by sub-group)

	Better information on democratic systems at EU, national, and subnational level	Strengthening the involvement of subnational/ local government levels in EU decision-making	Introducing elements of participatory democracy such as citizens' assemblies or panels	Strengthening European political parties	The introduction of transnational lists for European elections
EU27 	90	86	75	62	49
Political level					
Level I	90	86	72	67	46
Level II	90	87	70	58	42
Level III	91	86	78	61	53
Political affiliation					
EPP	90	87	69	68	42
S&D	95	89	82	81	58
RE	89	82	70	65	51
Greens/EFA	94	83	88	71	67
ID	77	87	62	39	26
ECR	82	77	51	31	20

Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

The introduction of elements of participatory democracy such as citizens' assemblies or panels is seen in a particularly favourable light by local politicians whose party is a member of the Greens/EFA, GUE/NGL or S&D groups in the European Parliament – more than eight in ten (88%, 89% and 82%, respectively) of those whose party belongs to these three political groups support this measure, compared to between 51% and 70% for those whose party is a member of the other political groups.

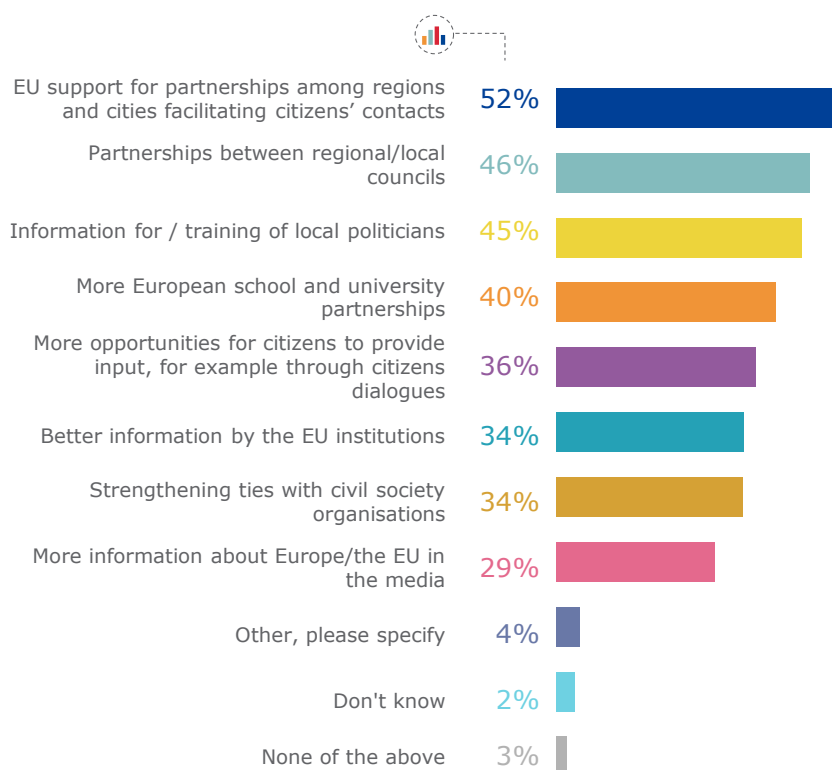
The introduction of transnational lists for European elections and the strengthening of European political parties is something that is particularly supported by local politicians whose party is a member of the Greens/EFA or S&D groups, while those in the ECR or ID groups see few merits in these measures. For example, of those whose party belongs to the Greens/EFA or S&D groups, more than seven in ten (71% and 81%, respectively) support the strengthening European political parties as a measure to make democracy in the EU work better, while the respective figures for the ECR or ID groups are about half as high (31% and 39%, respectively).

2.2. Measures to achieve a 'European Union closer to its citizens'

Respondents in the online survey were next asked which specific measures, if any, they consider most appropriate to achieve a 'European Union closer to its citizens'.

In line with the results discussed in section 1.2, which show a high level of support for cooperation with regions and local authorities in other European countries, the two measures chosen most frequently for this question are **'EU support for partnerships among regions and cities facilitating citizens' contacts'** (52%) and **'partnerships between regional/local councils'** (46%). The related measure of **'more European school and university partnerships'** comes in fourth place (mentioned by 40%). **'Information for / training of local politicians'** is also mentioned frequently (by 45% of local politicians surveyed).

Q8 Which of the following measures, if any, do you consider most appropriate to achieve a "European Union closer to its citizens"? Please select up to four answers. (% - EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

'EU support for partnerships among regions and cities facilitating citizens' contacts' is the most mentioned measure to bring the EU closer to its citizens in 14 of the 27 EU Member States. In five of the remaining Member States, **'partnerships between regional/local councils'** comes in first place.

'Information for / training of local politicians' is the most mentioned measure in two countries (France and Sweden). In Malta, the latter two measures are selected by the same number of respondents. In Italy and Finland, the most frequently selected measure is 'more European school and university partnerships', and in Croatia and the Netherlands, this place is taken by 'more opportunities for citizens to provide input'. Finally, the most frequently mentioned measure in Spain is 'better information by the EU institutions'.

Q8 Which of the following measures, if any, do you consider most appropriate to achieve a "European Union closer to its citizens"? (% mentioned by country)


		EU support for partnerships among regions and cities	Partnerships between regional/ local councils	Information for / training of local politicians	More European school and university partnerships	More opportunities for citizens to provide input	Better information by the EU institutions	Strengthening ties with civil society organisations	More information about Europe/the EU in the media
EU27		52	46	45	40	36	34	34	29
BE		57	41	32	28	39	44	29	37
BG		70	68	40	53	33	20	28	8
CZ		44	32	21	37	23	39	26	36
DK		50	36	24	24	36	36	44	26
DE		51	45	29	39	40	29	30	31
EE		65	54	28	35	33	17	35	15
IE		40	61	51	39	44	29	36	34
EL		66	64	52	57	28	29	36	28
ES		50	26	52	29	39	55	47	37
FR		46	47	61	39	36	42	32	26
HR		56	35	54	47	58	28	32	26
IT		47	51	52	54	22	41	33	37
CY		58	53	53	47	50	24	34	34
LV		64	62	52	31	50	19	41	21
LT		62	56	50	29	35	28	35	22
LU		44	51	44	49	42	29	24	24
HU		51	29	43	35	35	33	43	34
MT		36	62	62	33	57	33	24	26
NL		39	30	31	27	43	35	23	36
AT		54	40	40	30	43	40	26	31
PL		57	50	39	40	34	23	40	27
PT		60	53	55	58	37	29	39	21
RO		64	71	60	51	30	26	30	19
SI		45	55	51	27	29	32	34	14
SK		51	63	41	44	28	36	28	28
FI		60	51	43	66	34	23	31	29
SE		35	26	44	33	41	38	36	27

(Most mentioned topic in highlighted) Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

'Information for / training of local politicians' is particularly often seen as an appropriate means to achieve an EU closer to its citizens by local politicians representing a municipality (48%) or province or county (47%), and less often by those representing a region or federal state (36%). Those representing a region or federal state, on the other hand, often see 'better information by the EU institutions' as an appropriate way to bring the EU closer to its citizens; 39% of local politicians representing political level I select this measure, compared to 32% of those representing levels II or III.

When looking at local politicians' party affiliation and their support for measures to bring the EU closer to its citizens, it can be noted that those representing parties that are a member of the S&D group in the European Parliament are more likely to think that 'EU support for partnerships among regions and cities facilitating citizens' contacts' is an appropriate measure. Fifty-eight per cent of the local politicians surveyed whose party is a member of the S&D group select this measure, compared to an average of 52% across other political groups.

Q8 Which of the following measures, if any, do you consider most appropriate to achieve a "European Union closer to its citizens"? (% mentioned by sub-group)

	EU support for partnerships among regions and cities	Partnerships between regional/local councils	Information for / training of local politicians	More European school and university partnerships	More opportunities for citizens to provide input	Better information by the EU institutions	Strengthening ties with civil society organisations	More information about Europe/the EU in the media
EU27 	52	46	45	40	36	34	34	29
Political level								
Level I	50	43	36	39	36	39	35	34
Level II	51	48	47	35	31	32	31	30
Level III	53	47	48	42	38	32	35	26
Political affiliation								
EPP	54	51	45	47	29	35	31	32
S&D	58	44	51	42	39	38	39	35
RE	50	45	45	38	33	37	31	33
Greens/EFA	48	41	38	38	53	28	47	32
ID	28	40	29	23	32	41	7	18
ECR	45	42	42	24	27	39	11	19

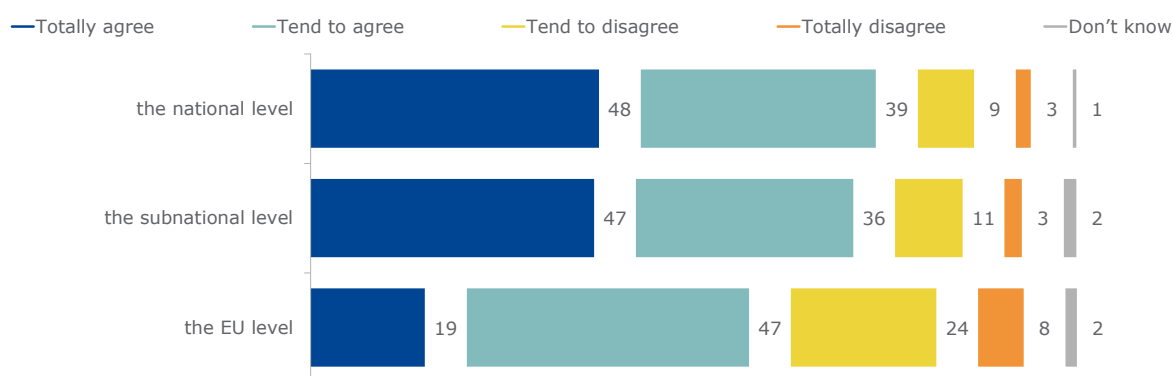
Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

2.3. Information needs

A large majority of local politicians surveyed totally or tend to agree that they have sufficient information about how democracy works at the **national** (88%) **or subnational levels** (84%). For **the EU level, the corresponding figure is markedly lower** (66% totally or tend to agree), nonetheless, it still constitutes a clear majority.

The proportions who 'totally agree' are generally much lower, especially for the EU level (19% 'totally agree'). About half of local politicians surveyed totally agree when asked if they have sufficient information about how democracy works at the national (48%) or subnational (47%) levels.

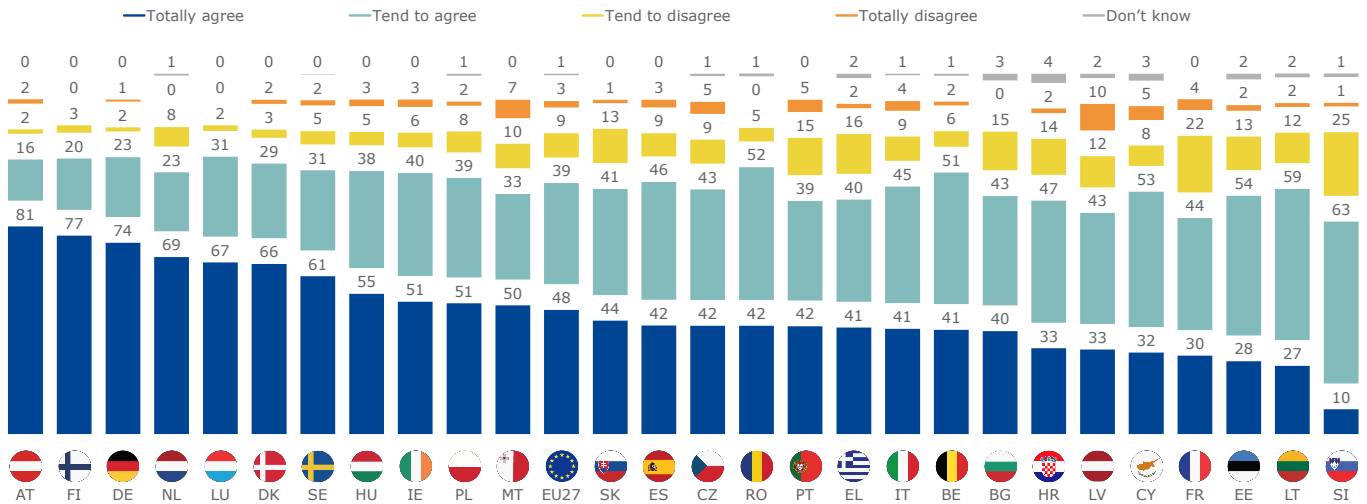
Q6 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I have sufficient information about how democracy works at...?". (% - EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

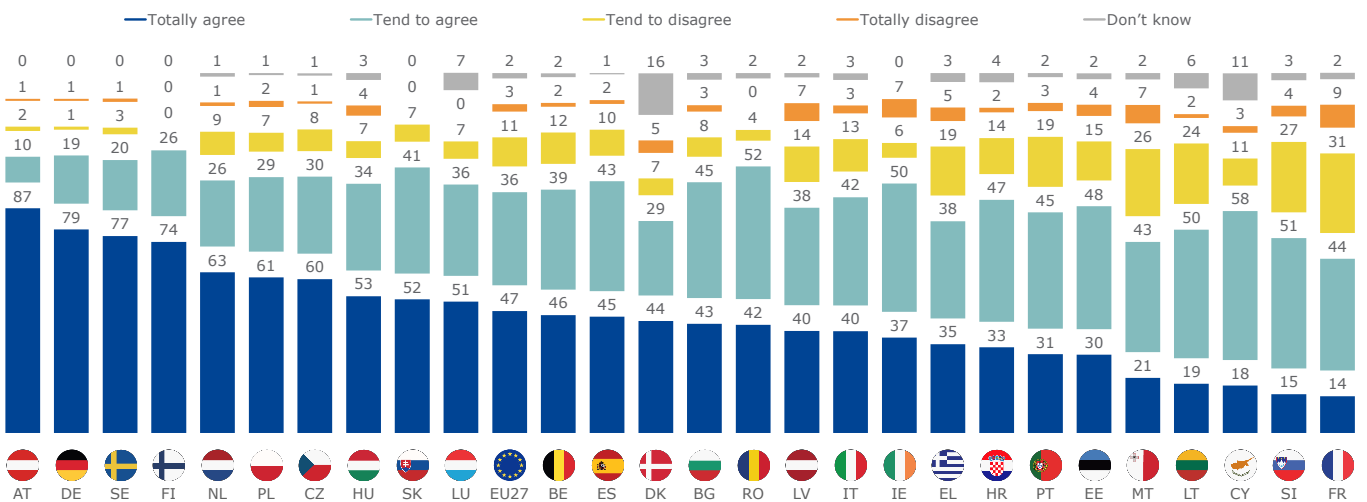
The proportion of local politicians surveyed who totally agree to have sufficient information about how democracy works **at the national level** ranges from 10% in Slovenia to 74% in Germany, 77% in Finland and 81% in Austria. When it comes to the **subnational level**, the proportion who totally agree that they have sufficient information about how democracy works at this level is highest in Austria (87%), followed by Germany (79%) and Sweden (77%). Notably fewer respondents totally agree with this statement in France (14%) and Slovenia (15%).

Q6 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: “I have sufficient information about how democracy works at...?”
the national level (% by country)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

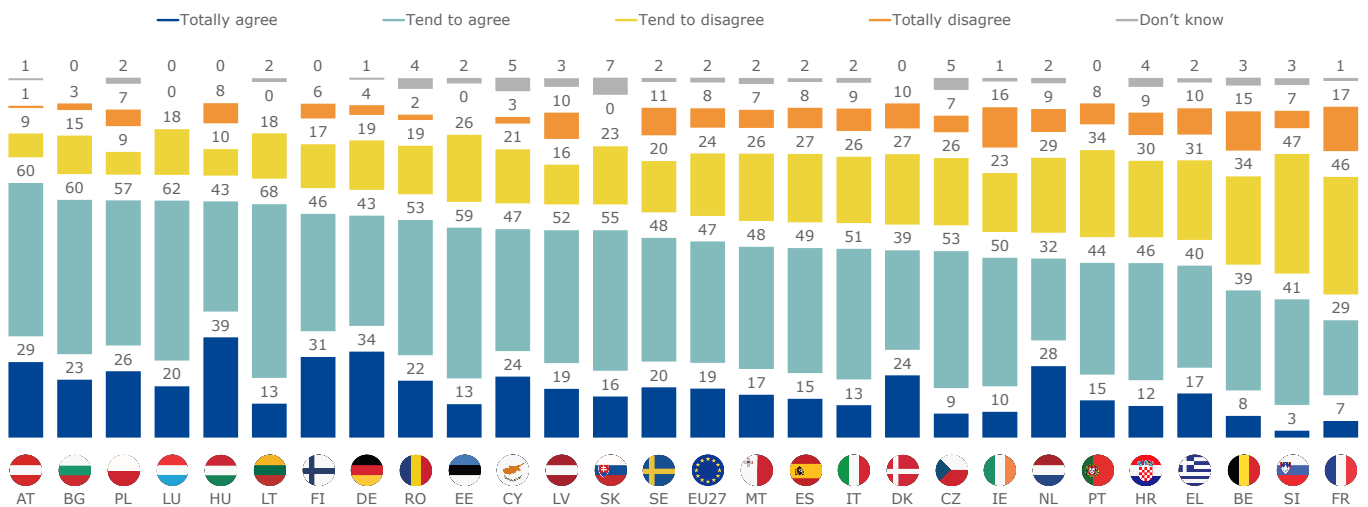
Q6 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: “I have sufficient information about how democracy works at...?”
the subnational level (% by country)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

In all EU Member States, less than four in ten local politicians surveyed totally agree that they have **sufficient information about how democracy work at the EU level**. Similar to the results for the subnational and national levels, the proportion who (totally or tend to) agree that they have sufficient information about how democracy works at the EU level is high in Austria (89%) and low in France (36%) and Slovenia (44%). Belgium is this time also found at the bottom of the country ranking, with 47% agreeing with this statement.

Q6 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: “I have sufficient information about how democracy works at...?”
the EU level (% by country)

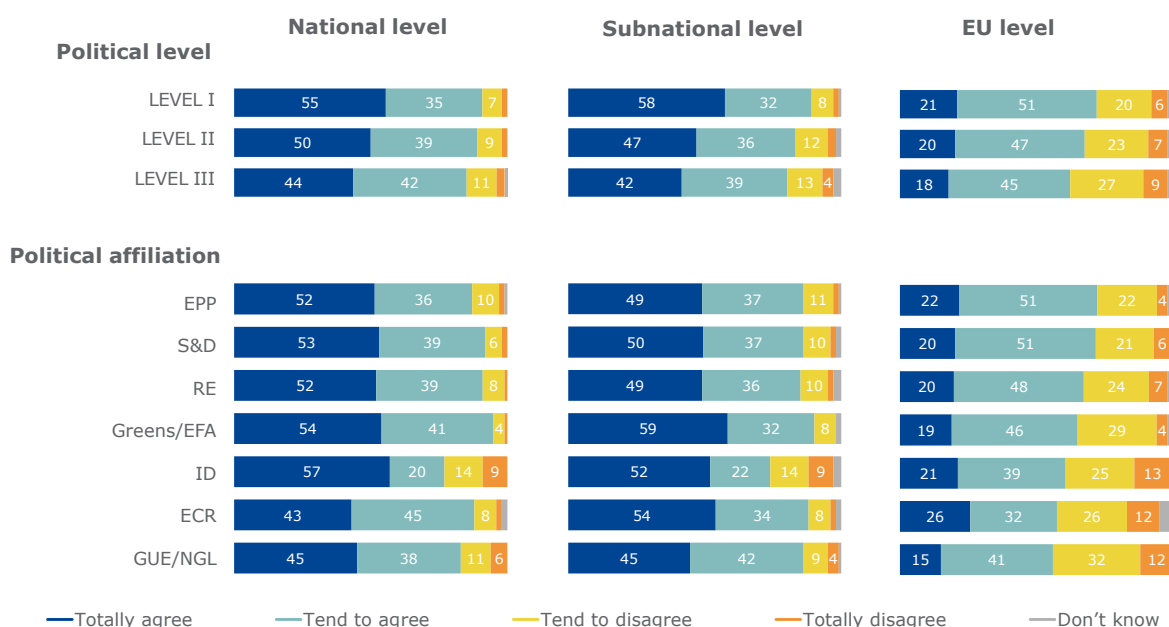


Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

Local politicians representing a region or federal state are the most likely to agree they have sufficient information about how democracy works at the EU, national or local level, while those representing a municipality are the least likely to do so. For example, 72% of local politicians representing a region or federal state agree to have sufficient information about how democracy works at the EU level, compared to 63% of those representing a municipality.

The proportion who agree to have sufficient information about how democracy works at EU level is higher among local politicians surveyed whose party is a member of the EPP or S&D groups in the European Parliament. While more than seven in ten (73% and 71%, respectively) of those whose party is a member of the latter two political groups agree to have sufficient information about how democracy works at this level, this applies to around six in ten or less of those whose party is a member of the ECR (58%), GUE/NGL (57%) or ID (61%) groups.

Q6 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: “I have sufficient information about how democracy works at...?”. (% by sub-group)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

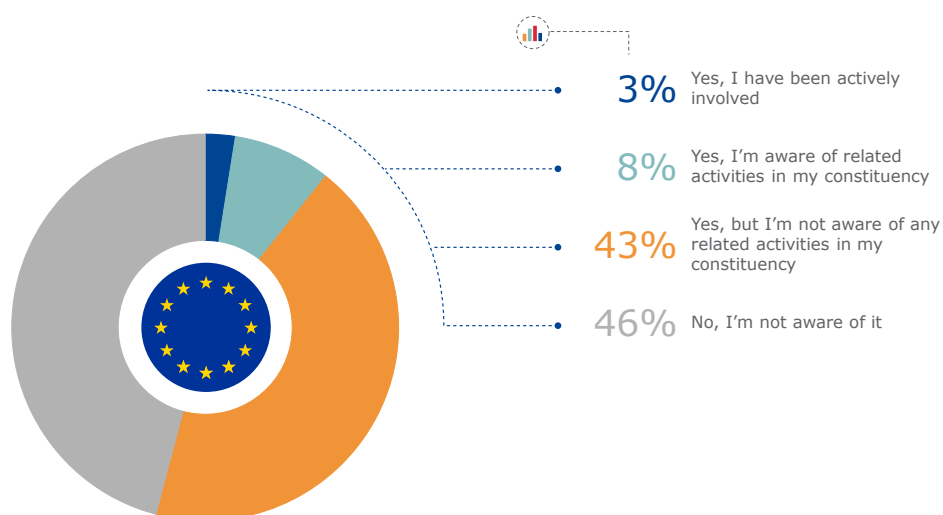
Section 3. Conference on the Future of Europe

3.1. Awareness about the Conference

A slim majority of local politicians surveyed (54%) are aware of the Conference of the Future of Europe, compared to 46% who are not aware of it.

Of those who have heard about the Conference, most are not aware of any related activities organised in their constituency (this group accounts for 43% of the total). About one in ten have either been actively involved themselves (3%) or are aware of activities related to the Conference of the Future of Europe in their constituency, but did not actively participate (8%).

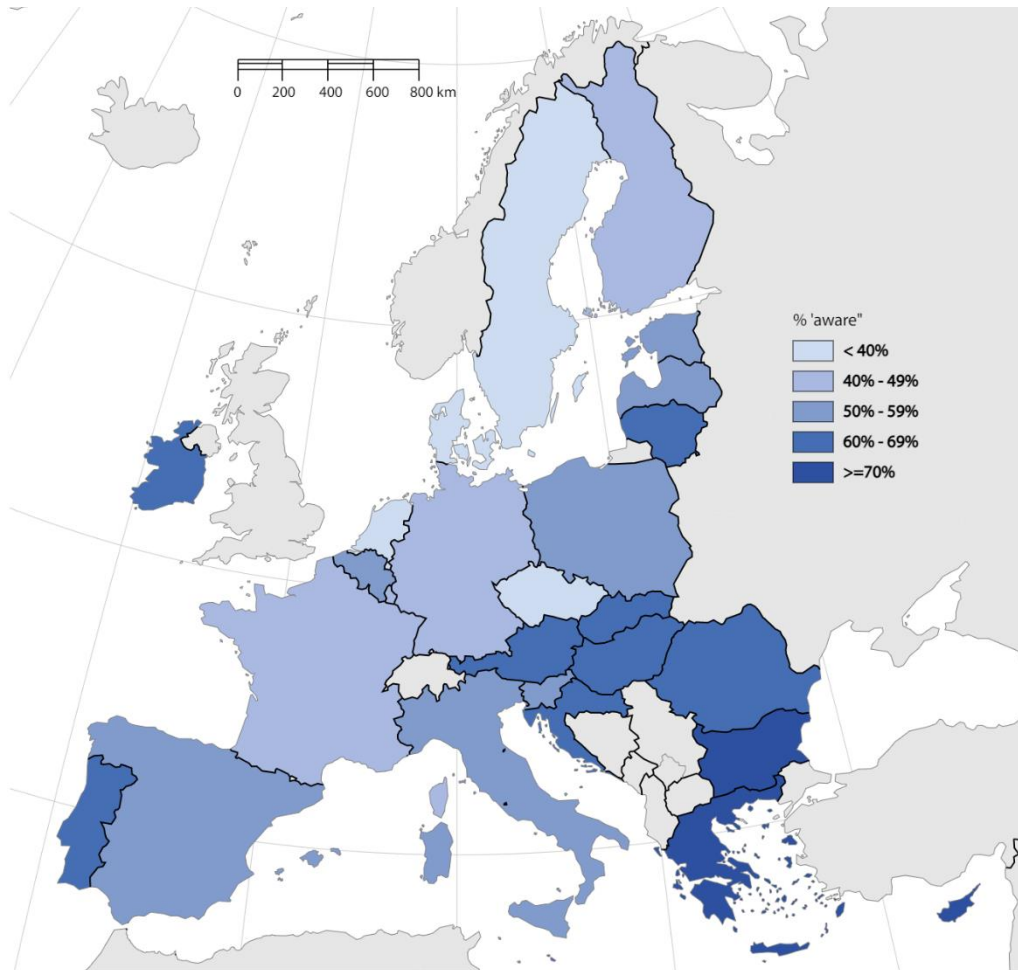
Q4 Are you aware about the Conference on the Future of Europe? (% - EU27)































Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

The proportion of local politicians surveyed who are **aware about the Conference on the Future of Europe** (because they have been actively involved, know of related activities in their constituency, or have heard about it but are not aware of any related activities in their constituency) varies between 23% in Sweden and 88% in Bulgaria. Apart from Bulgaria, other countries where most respondents are aware about the Conference are Greece (81%) and Cyprus (71%). Like in Sweden, relatively few are aware about the Conference in Denmark (31%) and the Netherlands (32%). On average, awareness about the Conference is higher in eastern and southern European Member States than in their northern and western European counterparts.

Q4 Are you aware about the Conference on the Future of Europe? (% 'aware' by country)

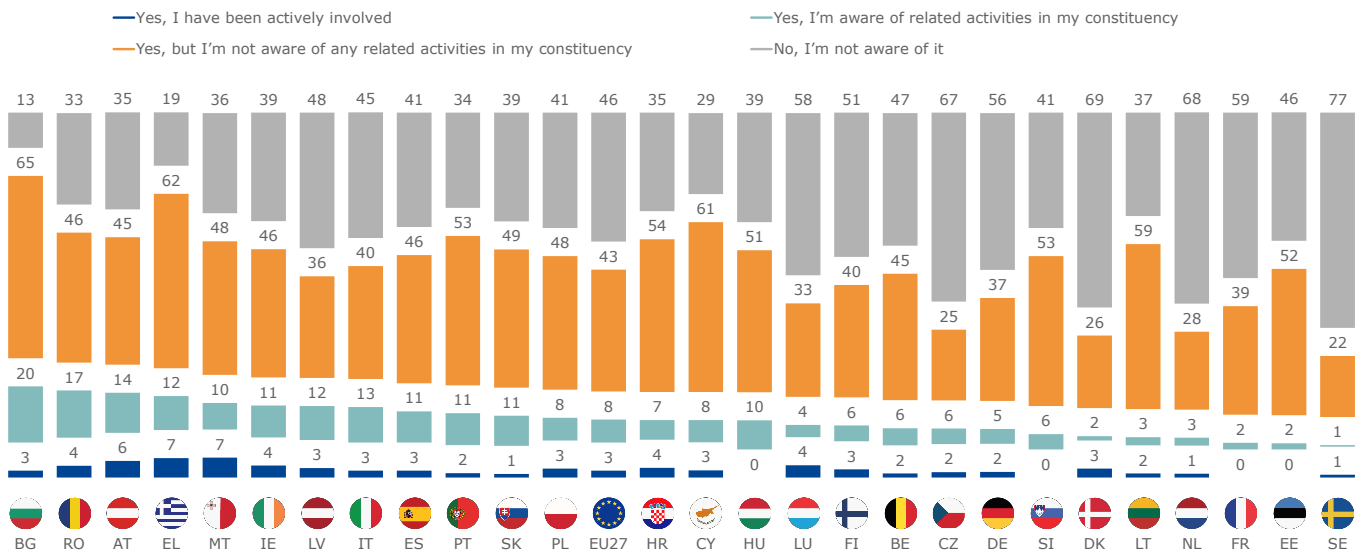


EU27  54%		
BE  53%	FR  41%	NL  32%
BG  88%	HR  65%	AT  66%
CZ  33%	IT  55%	PL  59%
DK  31%	CY  71%	PT  66%
DE  44%	LV  52%	RO  67%
EE  54%	LT  63%	SI  59%
IE  61%	LU  42%	SK  61%
EL  81%	HU  61%	FI  49%
ES  59%	MT  64%	SE  23%

Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

The share of local politicians surveyed who have either been **actively involved themselves or are aware of activities related to the Conference of the Future of Europe in their constituency**, is highest in Bulgaria (23%), followed by Romania (21%) and Austria (20%). This proportion is lowest in Estonia, France and Sweden (2% in all three countries). As is the case for awareness (see above), on average involvement in the Conference is higher in eastern and southern European Member States than in northern and western European Member States.

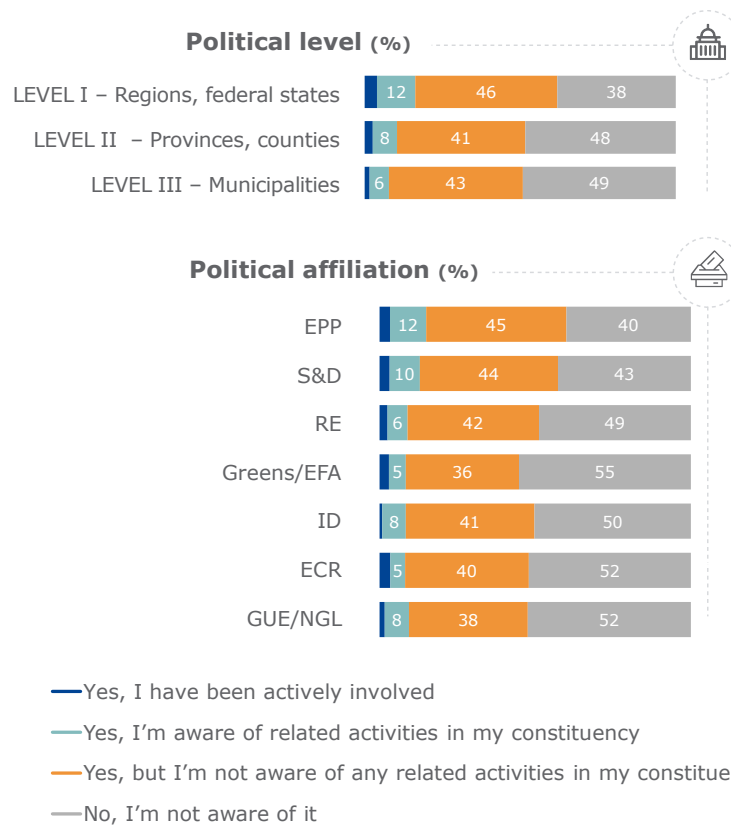
Q4 Are you aware about the Conference on the Future of Europe? (% by country)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

Overall awareness about the Conference of the Future of Europe is higher among local politicians who represent a region or federal state (62%), compared to those who represent a province or county (52%) or a municipality (51%). Awareness about the Conference is also higher among those representing a party that is a member of the EPP (60%) or S&D (57%) groups in the European Parliament, compared to those representing a party that is a member of one of the other political groups (45%-51%).

Q4 Are you aware about the Conference on the Future of Europe? (% by sub-group)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

3.2. Activities conducted in relation to the Conference

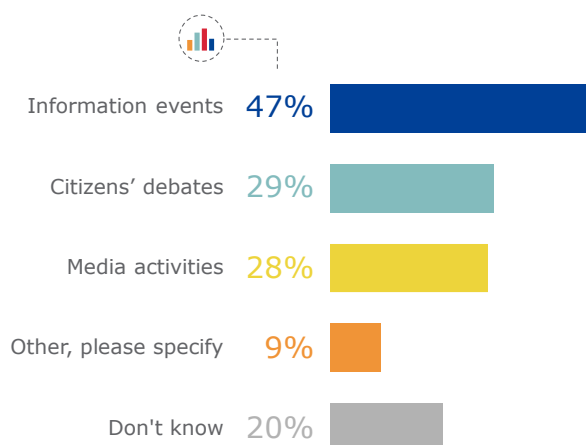
Respondents who indicated that they have been actively involved in, or are aware of activities related to the Conference of the Future of Europe in their constituency were asked what type of activities they or their constituency conducted in relation to the Conference.

The type of activities most often mentioned in reply to this question are information events (47%), followed at some distance by citizens' debates (29%) and media activities (28%). One in five (20%) say they do not know what type of activities their constituency organised for the Conference of the Future of Europe.

About one in ten (9%) of those who indicate that they have been actively involved in, or are aware of activities related to the Conference of the Future of Europe in their constituency note that they or their constituency organised 'another' activity related to the Conference of the Future of Europe. Based on an analysis of the open ended responses, it appears the latter includes a diverse set of actions, such as the participation in events and debates, as well as preparatory work for/discussions about the Conference in the constituency.

Given the small number of local politicians who indicated that they have been actively involved in or are aware of activities related to the Conference of the Future of Europe, it is not possible to analyse the results at country level.

Q4 What kind of activities did you or your constituency conduct in relation to the Conference of the Future of Europe? Please select all that apply. (% - EU27)

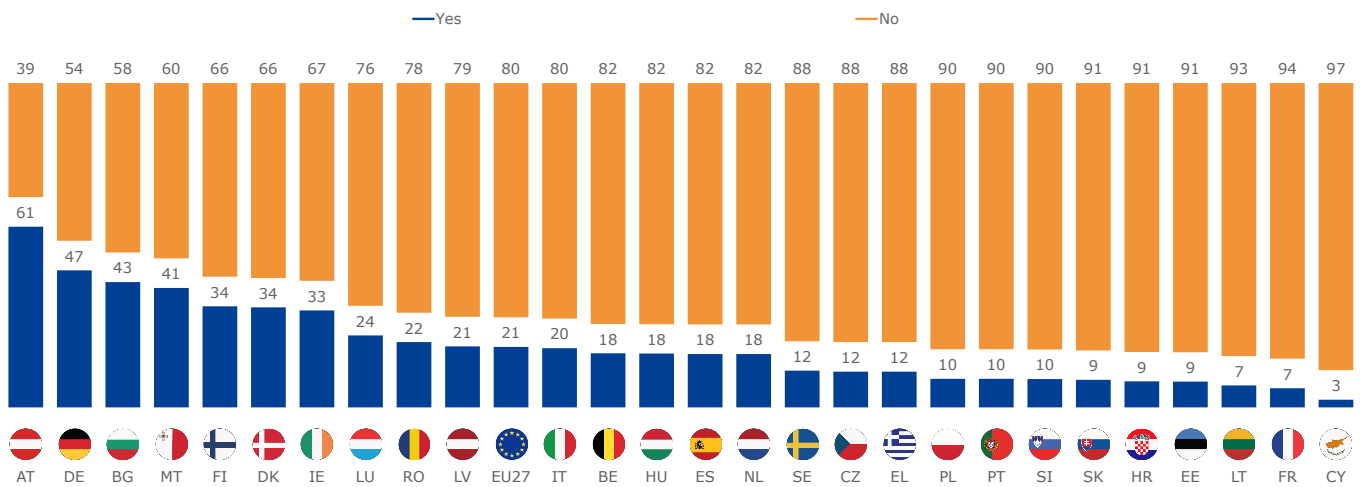


Base: all respondents (n=269)

Section 4. Engagement with the Committee of the Regions

About one in five (21%) of the local politicians surveyed have engaged with the Committee of the Regions before. At country level, the share of those who have engaged with the CoR before is highest in Austria (61%), followed by Germany (47%). Previous engagement with the CoR is lowest in Cyprus (3%), France and Lithuania (both 7%).

Q9 Have you engaged with the Committee of the Regions before? (% by country)



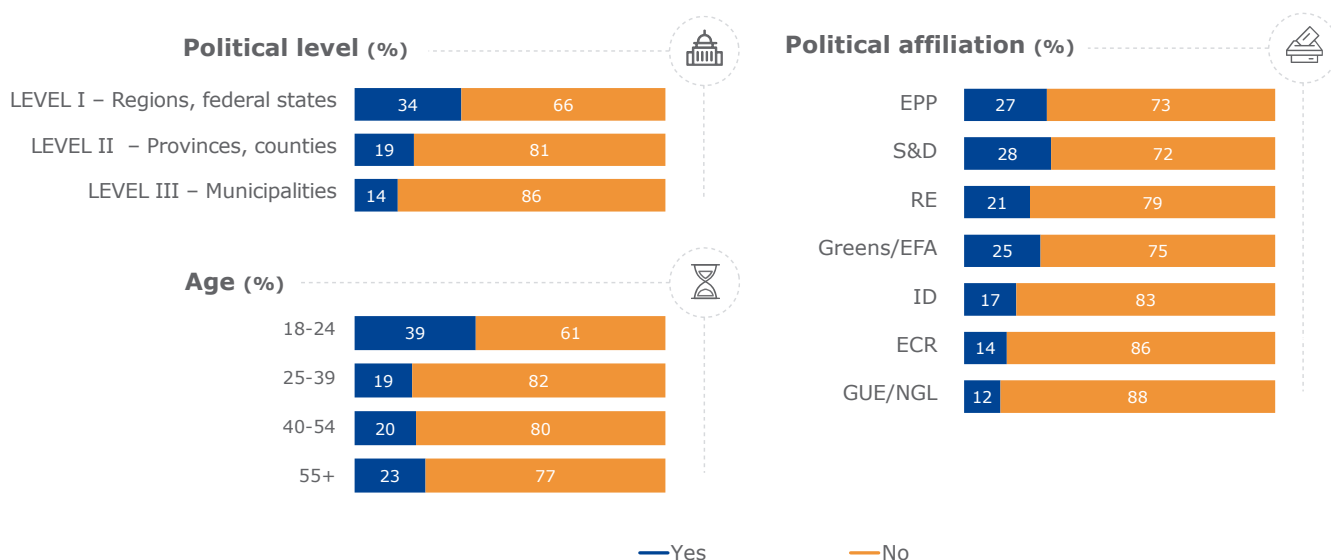
Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

The political level that respondents are elected at has an impact on the likelihood to have engaged with the Committee of the Regions. Those representing regions or federal states (political level I) are more likely to have engaged with the CoR than those representing provinces or counties (level II) or municipalities (level III) – 34% representing level I have engaged with the CoR, compared to 19% at level II and 14% at level III.

Political affiliation also plays a role, with those local politicians surveyed whose party is a member of the EPP, S&D or Greens/EFA groups being more likely to have engaged with the CoR than those in the other political groups.

Younger local politicians are also more likely to have engaged with the CoR than their older peers. Of those aged 18-25, 39% have engaged with the CoR, compared to between 19% and 23% in the 25-39, 40-54 and 55+ age groups.

Q9 Have you engaged with the Committee of the Regions before? (% by sub-groups)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

Questionnaire

SHOW ALL

INTRO Thank you very much for taking part in this survey by the Committee of Regions, the European Union's (EU) assembly of local and regional representatives.

The survey is an important opportunity to describe your views on the contribution of regions, cities and villages to the future of Europe and how to achieve an EU closer to its citizens.

Your participation will help ensure that the views expressed in the survey are representative of local elected politicians across the 27 EU Member States.

The survey will take about 10 minutes to complete.

All of the information you provide in the survey will be treated in the strictest confidence and used for research purposes only. It will not be possible to identify any particular individuals in the results.

If you would like to know more about the legal basis for the survey, how the data will be processed, how Ipsos will ensure the confidentiality of your responses or your rights under data protection regulations, you can view the project Privacy Notice here: [LINK TO PRIVACY STATEMENT]

ASK ALL

SD1 What political level do you represent as an elected politician?

(MULTIPLE ANSWERS)

[COUNTRY SPECIFIC LIST OF POLITICAL LEVELS]

1-74

National level [SCREENOUT UNLESS SELECTED IN ADDITION TO A POLITICAL LEVEL]

77

None, I'm not an elected politician (anymore) [SINGLE ANSWER. SCREEN OUT]

88

ASK ALL

SD2 Which political party do you represent?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

[COUNTRY SPECIFIC LIST OF POLITICAL PARTIES]

1-450

A local or regional political party

666

Another national political party

777

None, I'm not affiliated to a political party / I'm an independent

888

ASK ALL

SD3 What is the name of the constituency you represent as an elected politician? If you are elected at multiple levels, please provide the name of the most local level.

[OPEN TEXT BOX]

ASK ALL

Q1 In general, do you agree or disagree that regions, cities and villages have enough influence on the future of the European Union?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

Totally agree	1
Tend to agree	2
Tend to disagree	3
Totally disagree	4
Don't know	998

ASK ALL

Q2 Thinking about the current situation in [YOUR COUNTRY], how important or not important is each of the following...?

(ONE ANSWER PER LINE) (RANDOMISE STATEMENTS 1-5)

- Q2_1 increase the influence of regions and local authorities on national policy-making
- Q2_2 increase the influence of regions and local authorities on EU policy-making
- Q2_3 improve the access of regions and local authorities to EU funding
- Q2_4 have more cooperation with regions and local authorities in other European countries
- Q2_5 have the EU play a larger role in supporting policy making at the regional and local level

(RESPONSE SCALE)

Very important	1
Fairly important	2
Fairly not important	3
Not at all important	4
Don't know	998

ASK ALL

Q3 On which of these topics would you prefer to see regions and cities to become more influential in EU policy-making? Please select up to four answers.

(MAX. 4 ANSWERS) (RANDOMISE 1-9)

Climate change and the environment	1
Health	2
A stronger economy, social justice and jobs	3
EU in the world (foreign policy, development cooperation, etc.)	4
Digital transformation	5
European democracy	6
Values and rights, rule of law and security	7
Migration	8
Education, culture, youth and sport	9
Other, please specify	10
None	11
Don't know	998

SHOW ALL

CoFoE_ INTRO The “Conference of the Future of Europe” is a consultation process led by the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission. It brings together citizens, members of the European and national parliaments, EU institutions and civil society organisations to discuss challenges and prospects for the European Union.

ASK ALL

Q4 Are you aware about the Conference on the Future of Europe?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

Yes, I have been actively involved	1
Yes, I'm aware of related activities in my constituency	2
Yes, but I'm not aware of any related activities in my constituency	3
No, I'm not aware of it	4

ASK IF Q4=1 OR 2

Q5 What kind of activities did you or your constituency conduct in relation to the Conference of the Future of Europe? Please select all that apply.

(MULTIPLE ANSWERS)

Information events	1
Citizens' debates	2
Media activities	3
Other, please specify	4
Don't know	998

ASK ALL

Q6 Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: “I have sufficient information about how democracy works at...?”

(ONE ANSWER PER LINE) (DO NOT RANDOMISE)

Q6_1	the EU level	
Q6_2	the national level	
Q6_3	the subnational level	
	(RESPONSE SCALE)	
	Totally agree	1
	Tend to agree	2
	Tend to disagree	3
	Totally disagree	4
	Don't know	998

ASK ALL

Q7 For each of the following measures, to what extent do you agree or disagree that they would make democracy in the European Union work better?

(RANDOMISE STATEMENTS 1-5)

- Q7_1 Strengthening the involvement of subnational/local government levels in EU decision-making
- Q7_2 Introducing elements of participatory democracy such as citizens' assemblies or panels
- Q7_3 The introduction of transnational lists for European elections
- Q7_4 Strengthening European political parties
- Q7_5 Better information on democratic systems at EU, national, and subnational level

(RESPONSE SCALE)

Totally agree	1
Tend to agree	2
Tend to disagree	3
Totally disagree	4
Don't know	998

ASK ALL

Q8 Which of the following measures, if any, do you consider most appropriate to achieve a "European Union closer to its citizens"? Please select up to four answers.

(MAX. 4 ANSWERS) (RANDOMISE 1-8)

Information for / training of local politicians	1
Partnerships between regional/local councils	2
EU support for partnerships among regions and cities facilitating citizens' contacts	3
More European school and university partnerships	4
Better information by the EU institutions	5
More information about Europe/the EU in the media	6
More opportunities for citizens to provide input, for example through citizens dialogues	7
Strengthening ties with civil society organisations	8
Other, please specify	9
None of the above	10
Don't know	998

ASK ALL

Q9 Have you engaged with the Committee of the Regions before?

(SINGLE ANSWER)

Yes	1
No	2

Technical specifications

Collecting contact details

As no comprehensive contact databases of local politicians are publicly available in any of the 27 Member States,⁹ Ipsos collected the contact details of more than 20,000 local politicians across the EU. The lawful basis for the activities conducted as part of this survey is public interest and the results of the survey will be used to support the European Committee of the Regions (CoR) in their mission to involve regional and local authorities in the European decision-making process.

The contact details were looked up manually by researchers at Ipsos. Sources include the websites of the local political levels (regions, municipalities, etc.), political parties, electoral offices and statistical offices. In countries that maintain a centralised register of all local politicians (for example, France and Italy), all available data were compiled, and email addresses were looked up for a selection of local politicians. In countries where no centralised register of local politicians exists, eligible local politicians were identified by searching on individual websites of, for example, their municipality. In addition, the CoR shared with Ipsos contact details for a number of local politicians in Austria, Germany, Poland and Spain – also these contact details are publicly available.

An important aim was to ensure that the local politicians for whom contact details were collected were broadly representative of the population of local elected politicians in each country. This was done by including, to the extent possible,¹⁰ politicians from different geographical areas, political levels and political affiliations/parties in the contact database. The goal was not to achieve a proportional representation of political levels in the sample with contact data, as this would entail that in several countries >95% would be politicians at the municipal level (see the table in the next section), but to find sufficient contact details for the other levels of government as well.

To further increase the number of completed interviews, Ipsos shared an additional 'open' link to survey with national associations of regions and municipalities in all 27 EU Member States, with the request to forward the survey to their members. This approach delivered a large number of additional interviews in Sweden, but in the other countries, this had limited impact.

⁹ Countries such as France and Italy do maintain a centralised register of all local politicians. However, these registers do not include email addresses.

¹⁰ Its common that information is hardest to find at the municipal level.

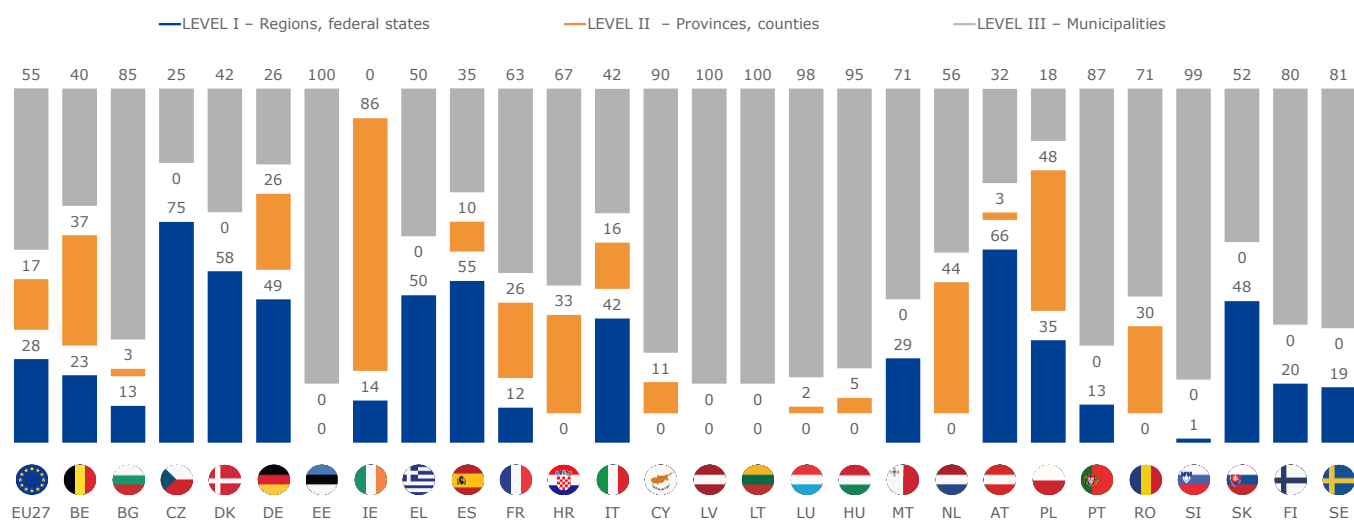
Profile of surveyed politicians

In the survey, respondents were asked to specify the political level at which they have been elected (question SD1). Country specific answer options were provided, based on information provided by the CoR.¹¹ The number of political levels varies by country. Hence, in order to facilitate cross-country analysis, the country levels were recoded into three overall levels:

- LEVEL I – Regions, federal states
- LEVEL II – Provinces, counties, departments
- LEVEL III – Municipalities

The figure below shows, per country, the political levels to which the surveyed local politicians belong (note that in some countries there exist(s) only one or two levels).

SD1 What political level do you represent as an elected politician? (% by country)



Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

¹¹ <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/divisionpowers/Pages/default.aspx>

The local politicians surveyed were also asked about their political affiliation through a question with a country specific list of political parties (question SD2). The list of parties from which respondents could choose was based on information from the website 'Europe Elects'.¹² To facilitate cross-country comparison and analysis in this report, the findings are reported at the level of the seven political groups in the European Parliament to which the parties of respondents belong, namely:





























- Group of the European People's Party – Christian Democrats (EPP)
- Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D)
- Renew Europe Group (RE)
- Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)
- Identity and Democracy Group (ID)
- European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR)
- The Left group in the European Parliament (GUE/NGL)

The table on the next page shows the politician affiliation of the local politicians who participated in the online survey – in each country as well as at EU27 level. It is interesting to note that the EU27 results fairly closely resemble the distribution of seats in the 2019-2024 European Parliament.¹³ There is no comprehensive statistical data available that confirms that this distribution also applies at the local level in the EU.

¹² <https://europeelects.eu>

¹³ The seat distribution in the 2019-2024 European Parliament per political group is as follows (as of March 2020): EPP 27%, S&D 21%, RE 14%, ID 11%, Greens/EFA 10%, ECR 9%, GUE/NGL 6% and Non-Inscrits 4%. See: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20190612ST054311/parliament-s-seven-political-groups>

SD2 Which political party do you represent? (recode into European Parliament political groups)
(% by country)

		EPP	S&D	RE	Greens/EFA	ID	ECR	GUE/NGL	None	A local/ regional party	Another national party	Independent
EU27		24	20	10	9	4	4	4	4	5	1	17
BE		19	15	15	18	5	14	1	2	5	0	6
BG		43	20	13	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	15
CZ		22	2	7	26	4	9	2	1	8	0	20
DK		3	37	37	8	7	0	5	3	0	0	0
DE		27	20	9	20	11	0	8	0	2	0	3
EE		11	4	37	0	9	0	0	2	9	0	28
IE		24	9	24	13	0	0	10	3	0	0	17
EL		40	14	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	2	35
ES		22	35	12	10	0	1	10	3	5	0	3
FR		15	13	8	13	2	0	2	1	1	2	44
HR		18	19	12	14	0	0	0	9	9	5	14
IT		4	30	1	1	20	4	0	10	12	1	17
CY		32	24	3	3	0	0	24	0	3	0	13
LV		10	10	10	7	0	21	0	24	12	2	3
LT		19	18	18	13	0	0	0	4	3	2	24
LU		22	22	13	18	0	2	2	0	0	0	20
HU		5	20	5	7	0	0	0	29	1	0	34
MT		48	52	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NL		18	10	25	16	2	8	7	1	12	0	1
AT		29	37	6	18	8	0	0	0	1	1	1
PL		31	1	2	0	0	22	0	2	5	0	38
PT		34	37	0	2	0	0	8	0	0	2	18
RO		59	17	21	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
SI		26	11	12	0	0	0	10	0	21	1	19
SK		24	7	3	0	3	4	0	0	0	5	55
FI		29	20	11	26	6	0	9	0	0	0	0
SE		26	32	17	6	0	8	6	0	4	1	1

Base: all respondents (n=3 276)

Number of subnational constituencies and elected politicians in EU27

The desk research for the current study was not limited to the collection of contact details, but in addition allowed to gain more insight in the number of subnational constituencies and elected politicians in the EU27. An overview of the data collected is provided in the table on the next page.

The data collected points to a total of +/-1.2 million local elected politicians across the EU27. In principle (see caveats below), this encompasses politicians in the legislature and executive, as well as politicians who have been elected indirectly or have been appointed, but who do have a democratic mandate, such as for example governors of provinces in Belgium, mayors in the Netherlands and district administrators in some states in Germany.





























The total figure includes +/-9 700 elected politicians at level I (which includes regions and federal states), +/-38 000 elected politicians at level II (which includes provinces, counties, departments and districts) and +/-1.1 million elected politicians at level III (which includes municipalities). Almost half of the latter are located in France, where 506 299 local elected politicians were counted at the municipal level.

All of this data is a snapshot and approximation, as due to, for example, municipal reclassifications numbers are regularly fluctuating and election data might no longer be accurate. Another important caveat is that it is not always easy to establish how many politicians are elected at the executive level (for example mayors, aldermen/-women), especially when these are not elected in separate elections but are elected indirectly from the legislature/parliament. Another challenge is that in some countries many local politicians are elected at more than one level – this is for example the case in Italy, where provincial councillors frequently have a municipal mandate as well. The aim was to prevent this kind of double counting and to identify individuals instead of the number of their political positions, however, data about this is often not available.

For some countries (for example France and Italy), the data in the tables is based on a count of all locally elected politicians. In other countries, it is based on figures from statistical or electoral offices, or other secondary sources. The figures were where possible compared to local election data provided by Prof. Arjan H. Schakel from the University of Bergen.

Note that the figures for level III in Germany are based on various secondary sources, as no data for this level could be identified.

Number of local elected politicians in the EU

	LEVEL I – Regions, federal states, etc.	# elected politicians	LEVEL II – Provinces, counties, etc.	# elected politicians	LEVEL III – Municipalities	# elected politicians
BE 	3	342	10	402	581	14 594
BG 	6	-	28	-	265	9 066
CZ 	14	675	0	-	6 258	61 950
DK 	5	205	0	-	98	2 432
DE 	16	1 879	401	17 345	11 130	~60 000**
EE 	0	-	0	-	79	1 729
IE 	3	-	31	949	3 441	-
EL 	13	716	7	-	332	9 470
ES 	19	1 258	50	-	8 121	66 979
FR 	18	1 914	101	4 049	35 358	506 299
HR 	0	-	21	857	556	7 418
IT 	20	998	107	1 347	7 960	107 676
CY 	0	-	6	-	39	517
LV 	0	-	0	-	42	724
LT 	0	-	0	-	60	1 482
LU 	0	-	12	-	102	600
HU 	0	-	19	414	3 178	19 964
MT 	5	69	0	-	68	532
NL 	0	-	12	642	352	10 391
AT 	9	509	94	-	2 095	42 000
PL 	16	552	314	6 244	2 411	40 292
PT 	2	104	0	-	308	35 231
RO 	8	-	42	1 281	3 166	44 581
SI 	12	-	0	-	212	11 194
SK 	8	416	79	-	2 891	23 550
FI 	19	38	0	-	309	8 999
SE 	0	-	21	4 600	290	35 900
EU27 	196	9 675	1 355	38 130	89 702	1 123 570
					Grand Total	1 171 375

*Source: Ipsos desk research with input from the CoR. Specific sources available upon request.

**Approximation based on secondary sources.

Data annex

Detailed data of the results of the survey can be found here:
<https://cor.europa.eu/EURegionalBarometer-Survey.go>

