



YOUNG EUROPE 2023

**How people aged
between 16 and 26 think**

CONTENTS

- 3 Editorial
- 5 **From Perceptions of Future Opportunities to Satisfaction with Democracy: Subtle Processes of Erosion among Europe's Youth 2023**
by Prof. Thorsten Faas
- 12 **WORDS TOP 10 – Current Emotional State**
- 14 **WORDS TOP 10 – Situation of the Nation**
- 16 **SELECTED RESULTS OF THE YOUTH STUDY 2023**
- 30 **COMMENTS TO THE STUDY**
- 34 **METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**
- 35 **ABOUT THE TUI FOUNDATION**
- 35 Legal

You can find all results (PDF) of the Youth Study 2023 here:



Dear Reader,

Young people live in, for and with Europe – those are some of the good news from this year's TUI Foundation Youth Study. An encouraging 59 percent of respondents identify more with their European roots than their national ones. They wish for a more strongly integrated continent. 43 percent support a closer cooperation between European nations. Amid turbulent times, Europe emerges as a beacon of stability.

However, the results also show that times are challenging for young people. Despite their perennial optimism about the future — something the study has consistently shown in recent years, even in the face of numerous crises — 16- to 26-year-olds are increasingly feeling the strain. The prevailing economic climate is a significant factor contributing to this unease. A noteworthy observation from the data is that young people are less anxious about their personal financial situations and more concerned about the broader economic circumstances in their respective countries. In essence, the worries are more systemic than personal.

The TUI Foundation, for the seventh consecutive year, has presented its "Young Europe" study, involving more than 7,000 respondents aged between 16 and 26 across seven countries. For the first time, in Germany, a corresponding survey encompassing a representative cross-section of the overall population was carried out for selected questions. The comparative analysis of these two groups – the broader population and the youth – offers intriguing perspectives on contemporary issues.

For instance, 40 percent of young people in Germany believe that sit-in blockades or infrastructure obstructions are legitimate means of wielding political influence and public expression. This perspective resonates with only 24 percent of the overall population. Nonetheless, it's noteworthy that both groups predominantly disapprove of such actions, at 44 percent among the young and 63 percent among the overall population.

It should not be overlooked, however, that – and this is also shown by the current youth study – elections continue to enjoy broad support among young people as a means of expressing their opinions. 73 percent agree with the statement that voting is a "civic duty." 57 percent see them as an effective means of changing things in their country.

The findings from this year's youth study present a nuanced portrait of the next generation. There is evident criticism of the status quo and dissatisfaction with aspects like the educational system and the political response to issues that are close to young people's hearts. Simultaneously, fundamental democratic values are deeply ingrained, and the concept of the European Union resonates profoundly with this generation. These aspects are intertwined, reflecting how constructive criticism can stimulate positive transformation, particularly if accompanied by dialogue and exchange.



**Thomas
Ellerbeck**

**Chairman of the
Board of Trustees of the
TUI Foundation**

Through its initiatives, the TUI Foundation facilitates such dialogue. The foundation champions European values and mutual understanding, fostering cross-generational dialogues, all underpinned by the data-driven insights from the youth study.



YOUNG EUROPE 2023

How people aged between 16 and 26 think

From Perceptions of Future Opportunities to Satisfaction with Democracy: Subtle Processes of Erosion among Europe's Youth 2023

Prof. Thorsten Faas

The TUI Youth Study: An In-Depth Analysis of Europe's Youth Since 2017

Societies are constantly being assessed. From the local to the European level, statistical offices regularly produce a wide range of vital statistics. While these figures are undoubtedly important, the almost century-old Thomas' theorem still holds true: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences". Of course, this

principle applies equally to women. How circumstances, developments and responsibilities are perceived and interpreted is crucial. To recognise and understand this, however, we need more than official statistics; we need surveys, especially regular ones.

How individuals experience their lives is obviously a complex matter. Consider the subjective experience of an "economic situation". What is actually perceived? How is it processed? Is one's own economic situation the driving factor? Or is it about people who share a similar situation – for example, "the situation of the young"? Or is it ultimately about the situation of the country as a whole? Even more so: Is the situation perceived in real time? Or is the current situation compared to some point in the past, to a situation in a neighbouring country or to another generation? Perhaps the focus is entirely future-oriented? These different perspectives can lead to similar results, but they aren't necessarily the same. In short, it's worth an empirical test.



Thorsten Faas

is a Professor of Political Science and heads the "Political Sociology of the Federal Republic of Germany" division at the Otto-Suhr-Institute for Political Science at the Free University of Berlin.

Typically, surveys focus on societies as a whole. What do Germans think? How have their answers changed over time? Occasionally, the results are compared across different societal groups: Men versus women, East versus West, young versus old. Such comparisons often reveal fascinating differences, but they also present a pitfall: they imply that there are homogeneous groups, e.g., of 'women', 'East Germans' or 'young people', which is clearly not the case. There are significant differences within these groups, which regular surveys cannot reveal due to the complexity of the task. In order to explore these differences, we need studies that focus on specific sub-groups and are based on a substantial number of respondents from these groups.

This is precisely what the TUI Youth Study does: as a youth study, it provides a differentiated view of the life situations and experiences of young people. As the study has been conducted annually since 2017 – 2023 already being the seventh edition – it also tracks longer-term trends and developments from a comparative European perspective. Like a continuous electrocardiogram, it measures the pulse of Europe's youth.

A unique feature of the German part of the study is that it includes not only young people aged 16 to 26, but also the general population for comparison purposes. This method allows us to compare young people's perceptions with those of the wider population, providing a clearer understanding of youth-specific or cross-generational impacts on society.

The 2023 study takes place at a time of ambivalence, especially for young people. A series of undoubtedly serious crises – most recently the Corona pandemic and the war in Ukraine – are juxtaposed with a demographic trend in the labour market that paints a promising picture for young people. Against this background, the key question becomes even more interesting: How do young people see their situation? What is their view of the present and the future? Is it positive or negative? Is it getting better or worse? And what disparities exist – between European countries, but also within countries, for example between different social classes?

Looking to the future is not just about how young people perceive their situation. Young people's future and their opportunities are closely linked to their educational pathways and the education system. Political action and the questions, who participates in politics and how, and who and what is heard in politics are also crucial for future progress. These three pillars – young people's realities,

their views on the education system and their perceptions of politics and political participation – form the basis of the TUI Youth Study.

Europe's Youth: Predominantly Optimistic, but Pessimism on the Rise

"When you think about the future, are you generally optimistic or pessimistic about your personal situation?" The majority of young Europeans are optimistic, when asked this question, although the level of optimism varies from country to country, with 67% in Spain and 49% in France. Nevertheless, optimism prevails across the board. (See figure on page 17)

Does that mean all is well? Perhaps, for the time being. However, a comparative look at the results over time reveals a worrying trend – optimism among Europe's young people is gradually declining and pessimism is rising. This is not happening abruptly, but rather subtly, with the share of optimistic young people falling each year.

This gradual process suggests that the growing gloom is not a sudden reaction to dramatic events such as the 'Ukraine crisis' or the Corona pandemic. Instead, it appears to be a long-term, steady drift towards a more pessimistic outlook. Given the ongoing trend, a sudden reversal seems unlikely. The growing worries of Europe's youth certainly deserve attention.

Another area of concern is young people's beliefs about their own future, compared with that of their parents. In none of the European countries surveyed do young people think they will be better off than their parents. In fact, 52% think they will be worse off, while only 22% are more positive. This pattern is fairly consistent across countries, with slightly more optimism in Poland and Germany.

However, it is worth taking a closer look at these sentiments, especially in the light of recent developments. Traditionally, young Germans and Poles have been more optimistic about the future than their counterparts in other countries, with a majority expecting to be better off than their parents. But those days seem to be over. The latest edition of the TUI Youth Survey shows a dramatic drop in optimism in both countries, suggesting that the war in Ukraine has had a significant impact on young people's prospects at this point. (See chart on page 18)

Still focussing on the war in Europe and its economic consequences, the younger generation is feeling the effects, particularly by way of higher prices. Half of those surveyed said they had had to cut back their spending "a lot" or "quite a lot" because of rising price. The psychological toll is also significant, with 74% finding the situation stressful.

The economic burden shapes young people's attitudes to the war. Although they are still largely open to accepting refugees from Ukraine, their views on economic losses and financial costs are more ambivalent, even sceptical. For example, only 44% support economic sanctions against Russia if it hurts their own country, while 42% oppose them. Only 27% would tolerate higher food or energy costs as a result of the war, while 64% and 65% respectively would not. These responses suggest that the financial burden of the war in Ukraine is stretching young people's tolerance. (See figure on page 19)

This attitude contrasts sharply with their willingness to make sacrifices to tackle climate change. A strong majority – two-thirds – are prepared to make significant or moderate sacrifices to tackle climate change, although this is down slightly from 2022. The difference is striking when compared with their responses to war.

Even in difficult times, climate change remains a key concern for young people. This is reflected in the fact that it is still the most important political issue for young people in the EU (33%), just ahead of 'economic and financial policy' issues (31%). Foreign and defence policy issues rank lower in comparison.

Inequalities and Opportunities

Living in Europe in 2023 is quite challenging for young people, with prospects looking increasingly bleak. However, the values presented, represent a general outlook for Europe's youth as a whole. A closer look at the TUI Youth Study 2023 reveals significant differences within the group of young people. For example, 67% of young people who consider their parents' standard of living to be above average are optimistic about the future, compared with 29% who are pessimistic. On the other hand, young people from less affluent backgrounds are more divided: 50% optimistic versus 46% pessimistic. So 'youth' is obviously not a monolithic entity.

The same difference emerges when considering the impact of the current crisis, in particular the significant price increases. Only 7% of young people from affluent households said they had to 'cut back a lot' because of these price rises, compared with 26% of young people from less well-off households. While the crisis affects all young people, it affects some more than others. Whether and how well a crisis can be managed depends strongly on socio-economic circumstances. As a result, the perception of one's own reality is affected: 34% of young people surveyed in all countries found the current price rises 'very burdensome'. However, only 27% of the better off felt this way, compared to 45% of the less well off.

The conclusion is clear: the situations of young people are highly unequal. And the TUI Youth Study shows that young people are acutely aware of these inequalities. They perceive extreme differences in many aspects of life in European countries, such as the distribution of income and wealth, housing, career opportunities, state support, political influence and even safety. The majority consider these to be very or fairly unequally distributed in society. Access to education is perceived as the most 'equal' or least unequal area: 54% see access to education as fairly equal, compared with 37% who disagree. (See figure on page 20)

Perceptions of inequality depend to some extent on one's social standing. Those from less advantaged backgrounds perceive more inequality and may be more sensitive to it. This gap between top and bottom is present in all areas surveyed and amounts to a difference of around 10 percentage points. For example, 74% of respondents from below average households perceive income distribution as unequal, compared to 67% from above average households. Similarly, 52% and 41% respectively perceive inequality in health care. So while people's personal circumstances influence their perceptions, they do not dominate their overall view of societal conditions. Inequality is widely perceived as a problem across all social classes.

The question then becomes: where should governments focus their efforts to address and redress perceived inequalities? There is no simple answer. The need for action is spread across several areas. Income distribution is seen as the most pressing area for greater equality at 19%, followed by health care at 13%. There are regional differences: income distribution tops the list in Germany, France, Italy and Greece, healthcare in Poland, career opportunities in Spain and wealth in the UK. But no single

issue dominates in any country.

In summary, around three out of four young people in the countries surveyed observe significant social class differences in their countries. And they are not willing to accept these differences: only 30% think that social differences are 'fair', while over 70% think that governments should intervene to counteract these inequalities. Interestingly, this view is even more widespread among those from affluent backgrounds. These patterns are significant: perceived unfair inequalities can trigger strong protests, and there is a widespread perception of such unfairness among Europe's youth.

Education

The education system is where young people's present intersects with future prospects, as well as issues of inequality and the question of how to tackle them. First and foremost, young people recognise this: when asked about the factors that determine their success in life, access to education is at the top of the list. We've already seen, when comparing different aspects of life, that young people perceive access to education as the least unequal. At first glance this seems to create ideal conditions, but a closer look suggests otherwise. (See figure on page 21)

Indeed, the assessment of national education systems is overwhelmingly negative. Across all countries, only 5% rate their education system as 'very good' and a further 32% as 'fairly good'. The majority of respondents consider their education system to be 'rather bad' or even 'very bad', with 56% holding this view. This scepticism, particularly about the intersection of personal success and inequality, is also reflected in responses to questions about how equal educational opportunities are in different

countries and whether everyone can afford a good education. The majority disagrees with such statements.

What do these results imply? While the emphasis on the importance of a good education may be objectively valid, these results don't necessarily lead to optimism among young people. Instead, they are met with a multifaceted scepticism about the quality and fairness of national education systems. Nevertheless, trust in the institution with which young people have the most contact, i.e., the education system, is crucial.

Democracy, Institutions, and Representation

A gradual erosion of optimism, widespread perceptions of unfair inequality and scepticism about national education systems – it's not surprising that these sentiments translate into declining levels of satisfaction with democracy in European countries. Only 18% of young people surveyed are (somewhat) satisfied with democracy in their country, while 49% – that's one in two! – are dissatisfied. Germany is the only country where more young people are satisfied (35%) than dissatisfied (30%). Even there, however, the figures are quite low and show a downward trend over time. In Greece, only 9% are satisfied with democracy, in Poland it's 10% and in Italy 15%. These alarming figures have fallen significantly in recent years from an already low base. (See graph on page 22)

Functioning democracies require institutions that are met with a basic level of trust by citizens. However, this basic trust is declining among young people in Europe. For example, only 16% of respondents express trust in their national governments (Germany leads with 31%), 10% in political parties (Germany "leads" with 17%) and 22%

in public service media (Germany again leads with 39%). Slightly higher levels of trust are recorded for the police and the courts, institutions that might be associated less with the partisan aspect of governance and more with the rule of law. Academia tops the list, with 64% trusting it across Europe. But even these figures are worrying when compared with previous surveys, when they were much higher. In short, there's a crisis of confidence in democracy and state institutions in many European countries.

In addition to the country differences noted above – Germany typically at the top, Greece at the bottom – there are significant differences within countries. 42% of young people from affluent households trust the police, compared to 29% from less privileged households; it's 39% compared to 25% for the courts. Trust in the state and its institutions is particularly low in the lower socio-economic groups.

What is the reason for this? Perceived injustices certainly play a role. But there's a second critical factor: the promise of representative democracies that people (voters) elect others (representatives) to articulate and defend their interests in the relevant institutions. But young people don't feel well represented. When asked whether they feel that politicians represent their interests and those of similarly situated people, only 5% say yes. This is particularly the case for less advantaged groups. (See figure on page 24)

A look at the German sub-study shows that this disenchantment is more widespread among young people than in the general population. While 36% of young Germans believe that, on balance, politics favours the interests of the older generation (only 10% believe that the interests of the younger generation are taken into account),

the overall population sees things differently: 17% see a bias towards the interests of older people, 23% mainly towards the younger generation. In the eyes of young people, the promise of representative democracies is not being fulfilled.

But there is another aspect to consider: While young people's trust and sense of representation are low, their expectations of the state and political actors have become broader and more complex. It could be argued that they don't make things easy for the political system and its institutions and actors either. When asked about various social groups such as people on low or medium incomes, young people, people with a migration background and people of colour, young people consistently demand stronger consideration of these groups' interests in politics than before. Such high expectations can be found throughout Europe. The German sub-study particularly highlights that young people's perspectives towards individuals with a migration background, people of colour and members of sexual minorities or LGBTQ+ diverge significantly from the views of the rest of the population. It is clear that young people are voicing broader and louder demands on policymakers than they are used to, creating systemic tensions.

Political Participation

At its core, democracy implies that individuals actively participate in and influence the course of political events. Traditionally, for the majority of the population, participation has been limited to voting in elections, with relatively few people showing political activity beyond that. But times are changing, as the TUI Youth Study 2023 shows. Elections continue to enjoy widespread support among (many) young people, even if it is declining slightly: 73% believe that voting is a civic duty, 57% see elections as an effective

means of bringing about change and 52% disagree with the statement that their vote doesn't matter in elections.

At the same time, we observe a considerable and wide range in young people's willingness and acceptance of different forms of political participation. When asked which forms of participation they would personally engage in, voting tops the list, but collecting signatures and online petitions comes second with 48%, followed by demonstrations and meetings with 37%, citizens' forums/participation with 35% and product boycotts with 32%. Forms of participation related to specific concerns and issues are highly popular, only slightly less so than the willingness to vote.

When we broaden our perspective beyond personal participation and look at the general acceptance of different measures, we find a striking diversity: only in the cases of property-damage (56% vs. 28%) and hacker attacks (45% vs. 37%) do the proportions of young Europeans who consider such measures unjustified exceed those, who consider them justified. The ratio reverses in favour of disrupting events, occupying buildings or holding sit-ins. Given the initial pessimism and scepticism described above, it's not necessarily surprising that young people in Europe are at least supportive when it comes to broad political participation.

There's a clear divide between young and older people when it comes to methods of participation, especially when it comes to challenging elites and traditions – for example by occupying buildings, sit-ins or disrupting events. The German sub-study illustrates this by comparing youth and general population surveys. This is despite the fact that young Germans are somewhat more reluctant to engage in unconventional forms of participation than their counterparts in other European countries. (See [figure on page 25](#))

Conclusion

The future for young people is often portrayed as bright, with demographic change and the resulting shortages of skilled labour supposedly working in their favour. So why worry? But the picture painted by the TUI Youth Study 2023 tells a different story. Pessimism is on the rise, future prospects appear bleak and trust in and satisfaction with politics and democracy are at an all-time low. This trend is not just a short-term effect in the context of the ongoing conflicts in Europe, but rather a gradual and sustained erosion. Why is this the case?

First of all, it's important to dispel a misconception: the TUI Youth Study 2023 does not support the frequently voiced claim that work, money and success have become irrelevant for young people. On the contrary, they are still very important to them. Of course, other aspects such as safety, health and leisure are also important, but the importance of financial security, academic and professional success and a high income cannot be overestimated.

This insight brings us closer to understanding why today's young people are so pessimistic about their future: they have many expectations of life, society and politics. They have many aspirations, and they perceive that these aspirations are not being met. They perceive inequalities and injustices in various aspects of society – especially in education, which is particularly important to them. They feel let down by politics, its institutions and democracy. They feel unrepresented, have lost faith in politics and are therefore disillusioned with politics and democracy.

Their expectations are broad: they want the complexity of society to be accurately reflected in politics, especially with regard to underrepresented groups – such as people with a migrant background or members of the

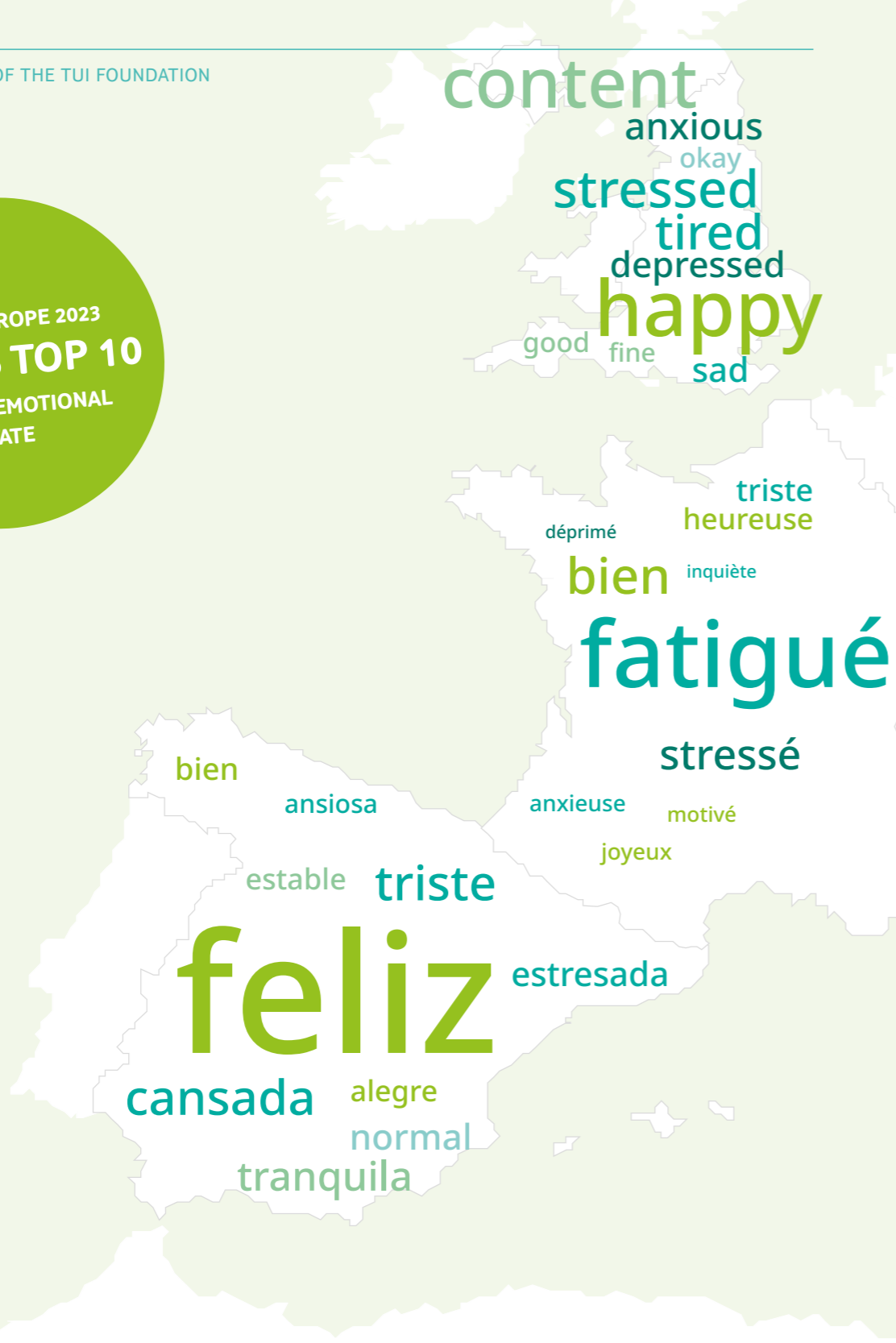
LGBTQ+ community. As the German sub-study in particular showed, young people's demands are very different from those of the general population. Politicians have so far been struggling to keep pace with these broader, more inclusive demands.

So how are young people responding? They are challenging the elites – or at least they are willing to do so. They are not just relying on traditional forms of political participation such as voting. Instead, we see a wide range of forms of participation that young people across Europe are willing to engage in – or at least view as justified. These range from disrupting events, occupying buildings and sit-ins to other forms of political action. Of course, they get involved in causes they consider to be legitimate – although German youth are somewhat more reluctant to do so.

Reversing these gradual processes, including the increasing alienation of youths from politics, is no easy task. It requires dialogue, understanding and mutual exchange between all segments of society, including politics, the young and the old. Politicians need to listen – and this would be all the easier if they were more diverse and inclusive. Recognising and acting on this is a challenge, but political actors and institutions are beginning to pay attention, as evidenced by their increasing efforts to address these issues.

Society, politics and democracy have faced challenges before – and have managed to overcome them in the past. It may not always have been as quickly as the mostly young challengers would have liked, but they did it eventually. Why shouldn't it be possible this time to channel young people's discontent into productive change for the better? Future editions of the Youth Survey will provide the answer.

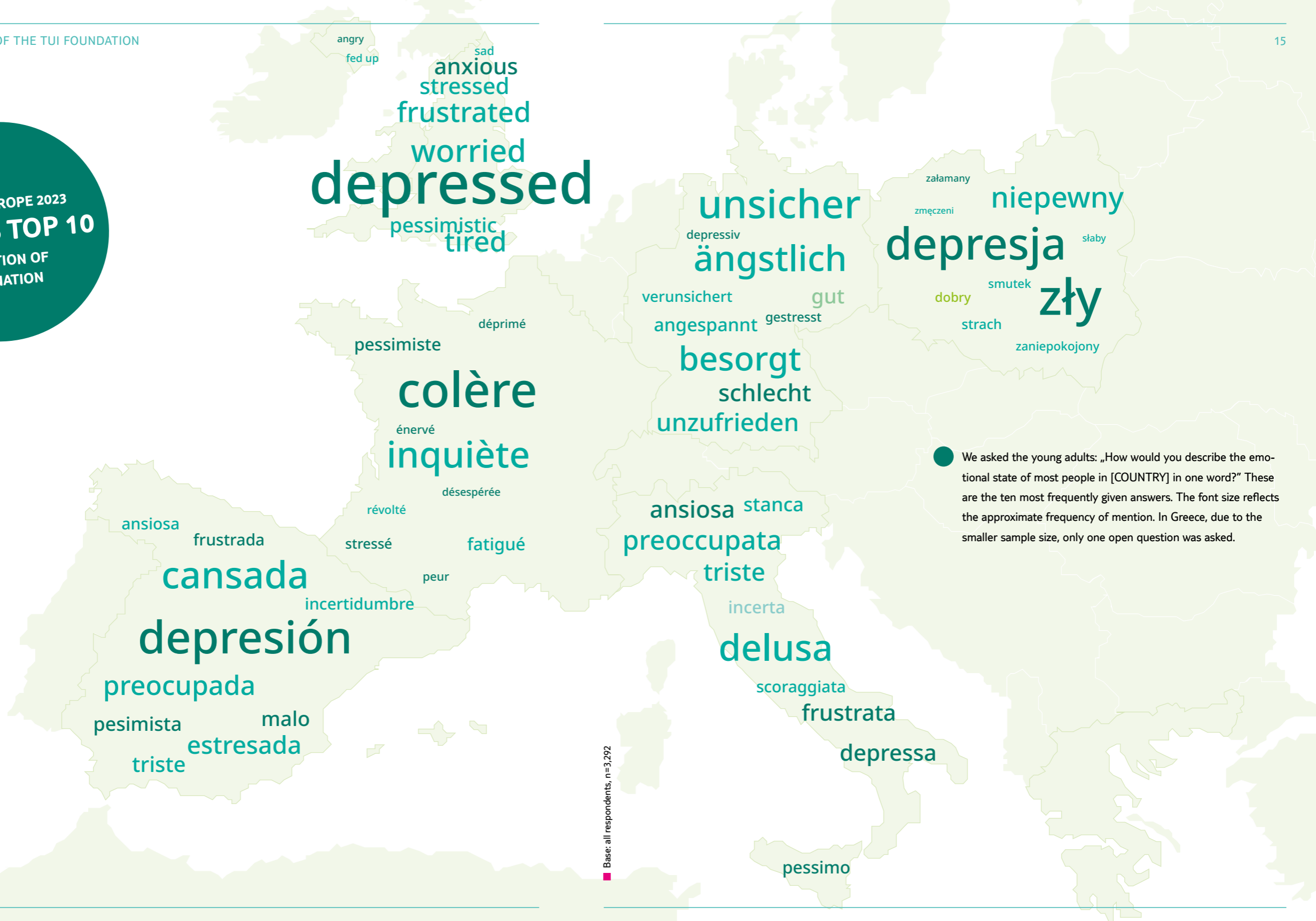
YOUNG EUROPE 2023
WORDS TOP 10
 CURRENT EMOTIONAL STATE



We asked the young adults: „Please describe your current emotional state in one word!” These are the ten most frequently given answers. The font size reflects the approximate frequency of mention.

Base: all respondents, n=3,793

YOUNG EUROPE 2023
WORDS TOP 10
 SITUATION OF
 THE NATION



angry
 fed up
 sad
 anxious
 stressed
 frustrated
 worried
depressed
 pessimistic
 tired

unsicher
 depressiv
ängstlich
 verunsichert
 angespannt
 gestresst
 gut

złamany
 zmęczeni
 niepewny
depresja
 słaby
 smutek
zły
 strach
 zaniepokojony

déprimé
 pessimiste
colère
 énervé
inquiète
 désespérée

besorgt
 schlecht
unzufrieden

ansiosa
 frustrada
 stressé
 révolté
 fatigué
 peur
cansada
 incertidumbre
depresión
 preocupada
 pesimista
 malo
 triste
 estresada

ansiosa stanca
preoccupata
 triste

incerta
delusa
 scoraggiata
 frustrata
depressa

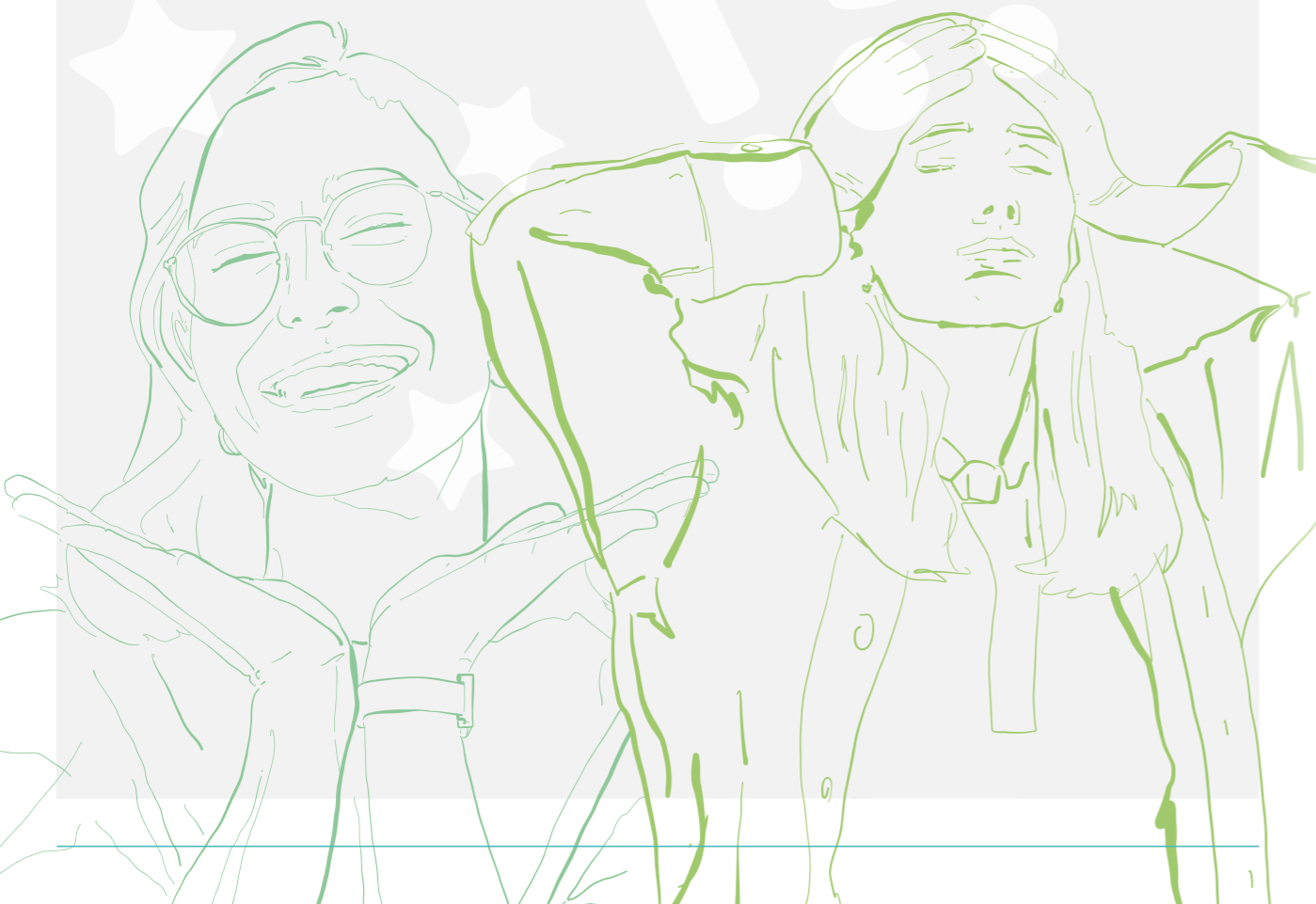
pessimo

● We asked the young adults: „How would you describe the emotional state of most people in [COUNTRY] in one word?“ These are the ten most frequently given answers. The font size reflects the approximate frequency of mention. In Greece, due to the smaller sample size, only one open question was asked.

■ Base: all respondents, n=3,292

SELECTED RESULTS OF THE YOUTH STUDY 2023

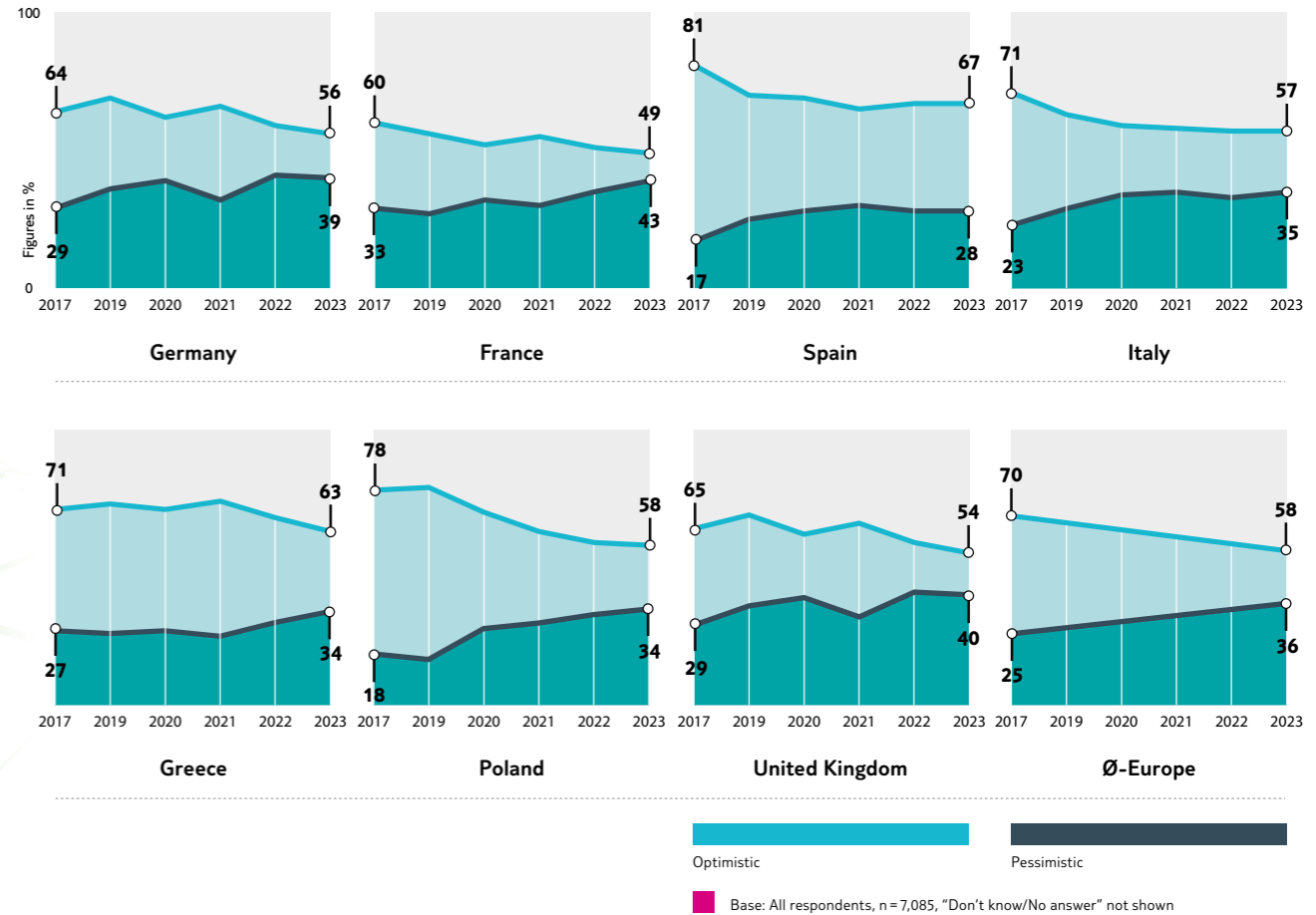
You can find all results (PDF) of the Youth Study 2023 here:



QUESTION:

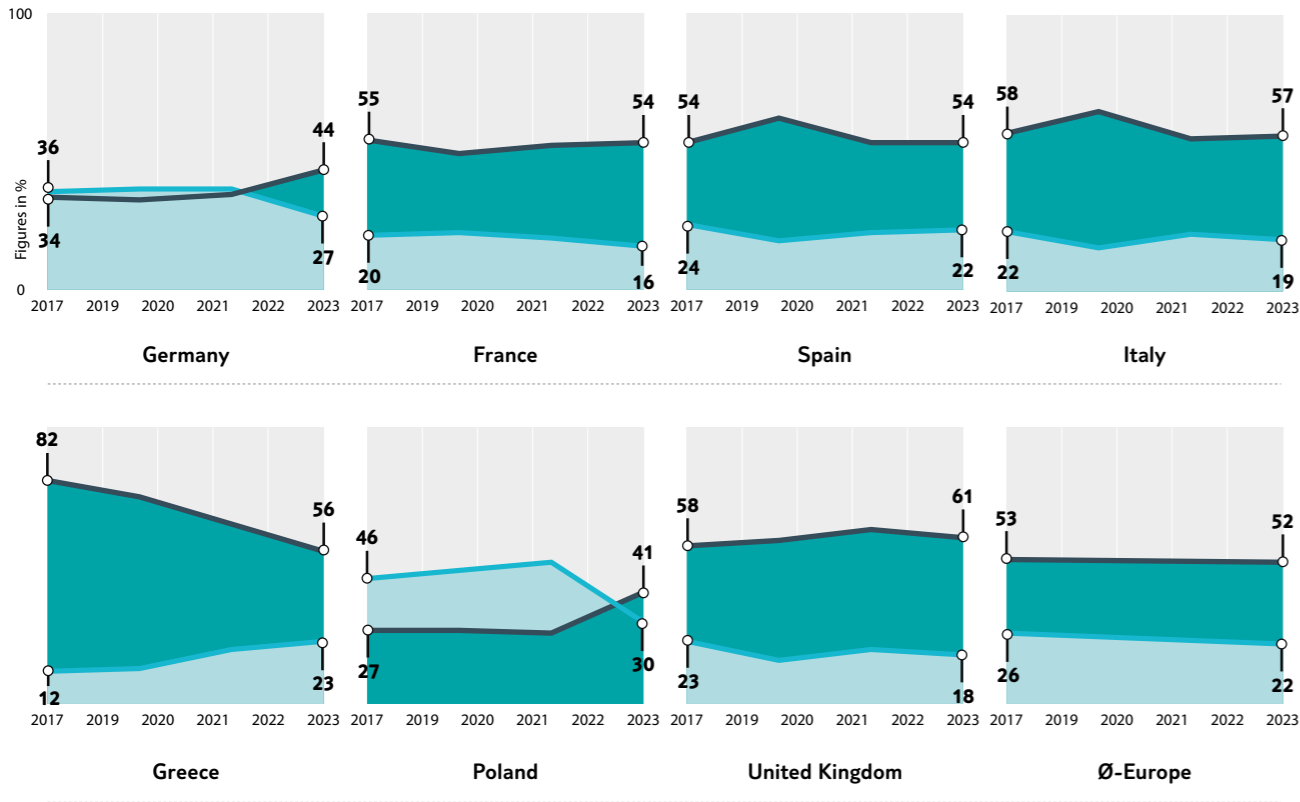
When you think about the future, are you generally optimistic or generally pessimistic about your personal situation?

For six years, young Europeans have been becoming increasingly pessimistic about their own future.





QUESTION:
When you think about your parents' generation:
Do you think your own generation will be better or worse off in terms of income and quality of life?



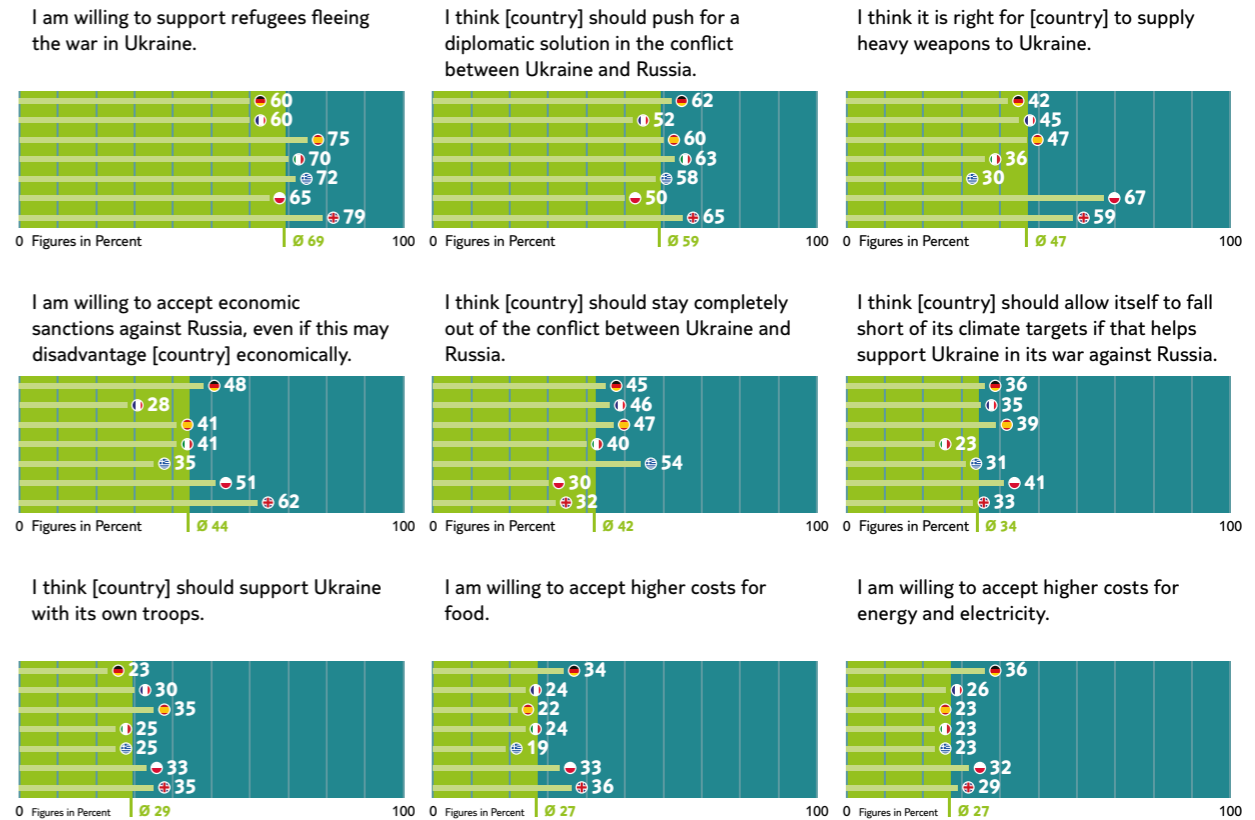
Also, in Germany and Poland, the outlook for young people is darkening.

■ Better
■ Worse
■ Base: all respondents, n=25,357, "Don't know/No answer" not shown



QUESTION:
To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with the following statements with regard to Russia's attack on Ukraine?

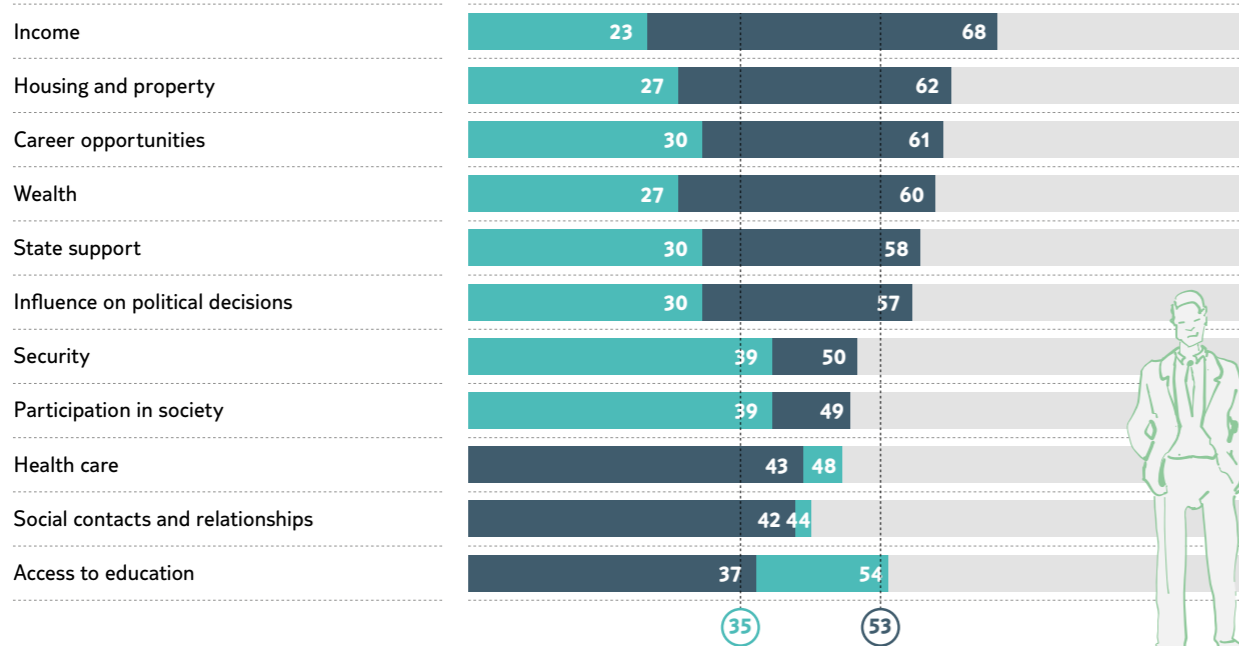
High support for Ukraine, less willingness to bear personal costs.



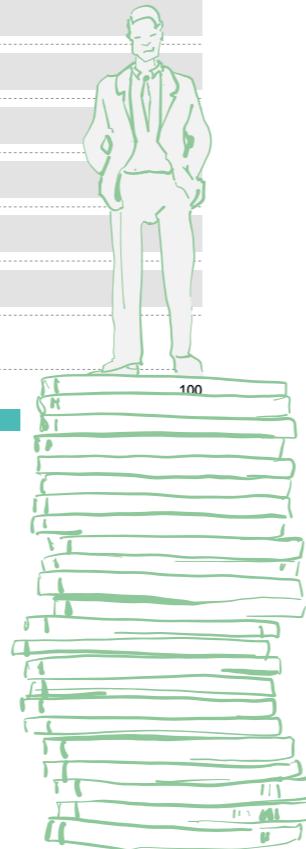
■ Agreement
■ Base: all respondents, n=7,085

QUESTION:
How equally or unequally are the following areas and aspects of life distributed in [country]?

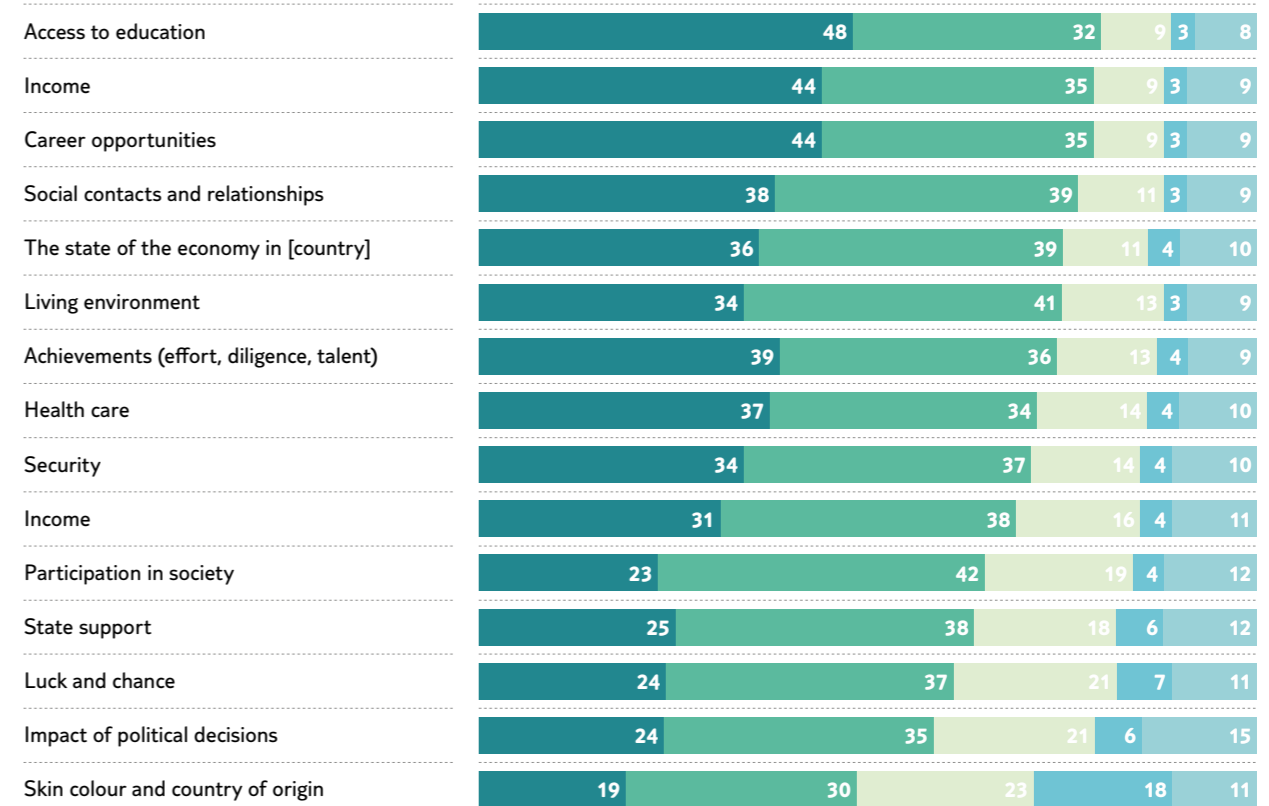
Great sense of inequality in many areas of life.



0 Figures in %
Very/fairly unequally Very/fairly equally
Base: all respondents, n = 7,085, "Don't know/No answer" not shown



QUESTION:
We would like to know what factors you think determine whether someone succeeds in [country] or not. With this in mind, how important or unimportant is...

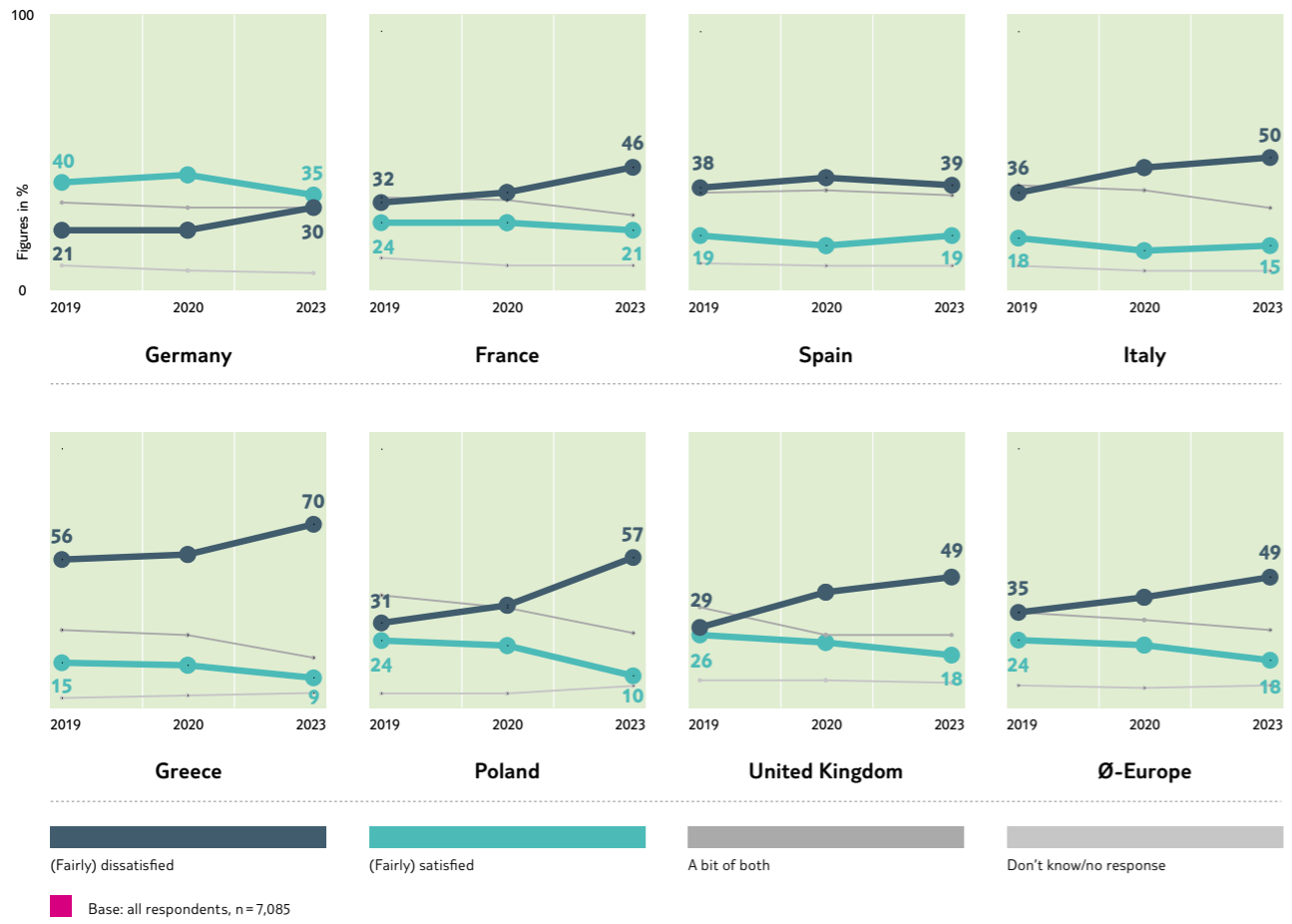


Figures in %
Very important Fairly important Fairly unimportant Very unimportant Don't know/no response
Base: all respondents, n = 7,085

Education is regarded as a key factor for individual success.

QUESTION:
And how satisfied or dissatisfied are you, all in all, with democracy as it exists in [country]?

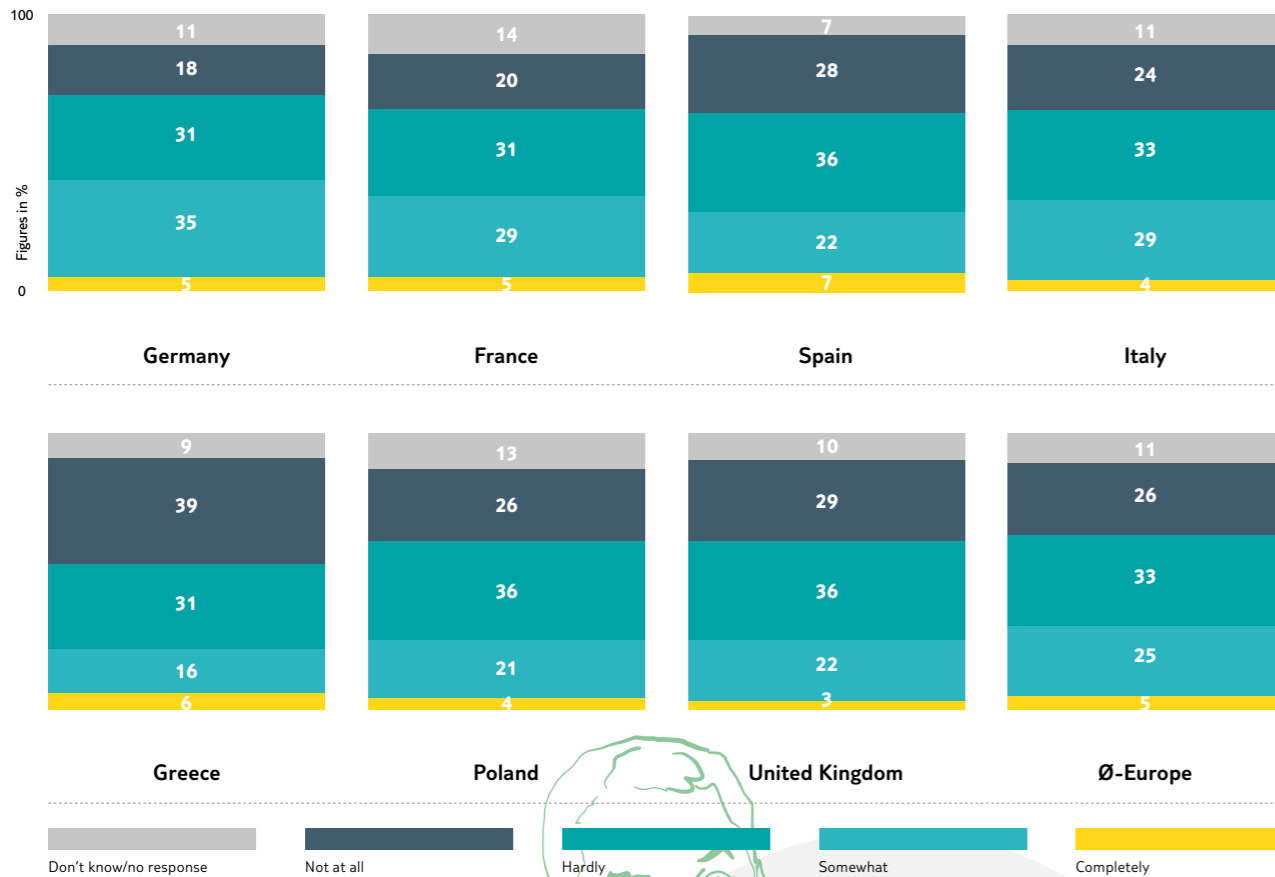
Dissatisfaction with existing democracies is growing across Europe.



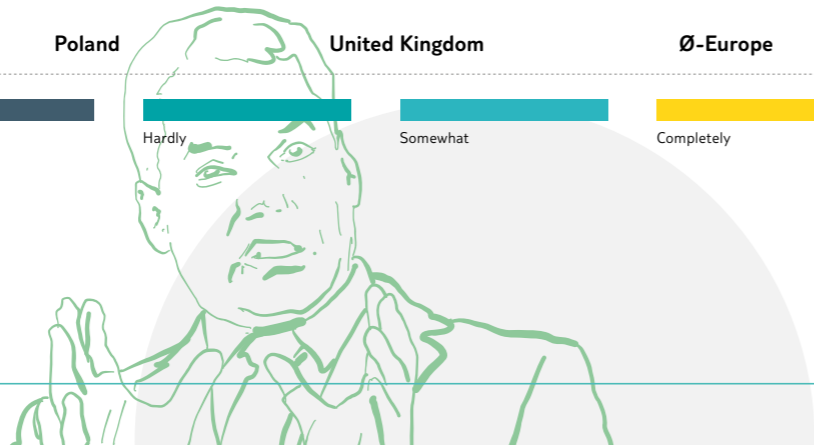
QUESTION:

In a society there are different interests and concerns. To what extent, if at all, do you feel that the politicians in [country] represent your interests and those of people who feel similarly to you?

Young Europeans feel politically under-represented.



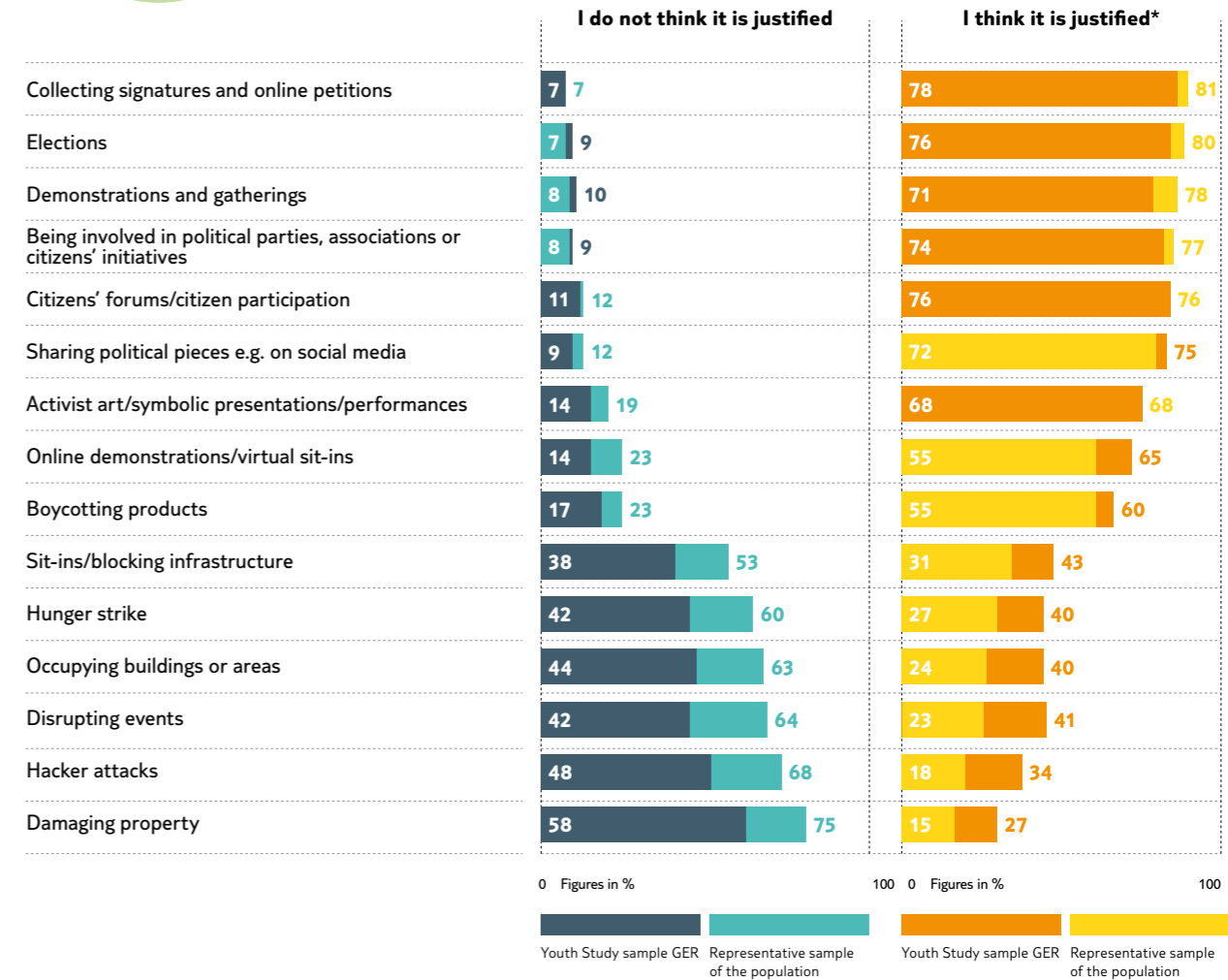
Base: all respondents, n = 7,085



QUESTION:

To what extent, if at all, do you consider the following to be justified and would you participate in order to exert political influence and make your point publicly?

Young Germans consider means of civil disobedience more justifiable than older generations.



Base: all respondents, Youth Study sample GER n = 1,122, Representative sample of the population n = 1,074, "Don't know/No answer" not shown

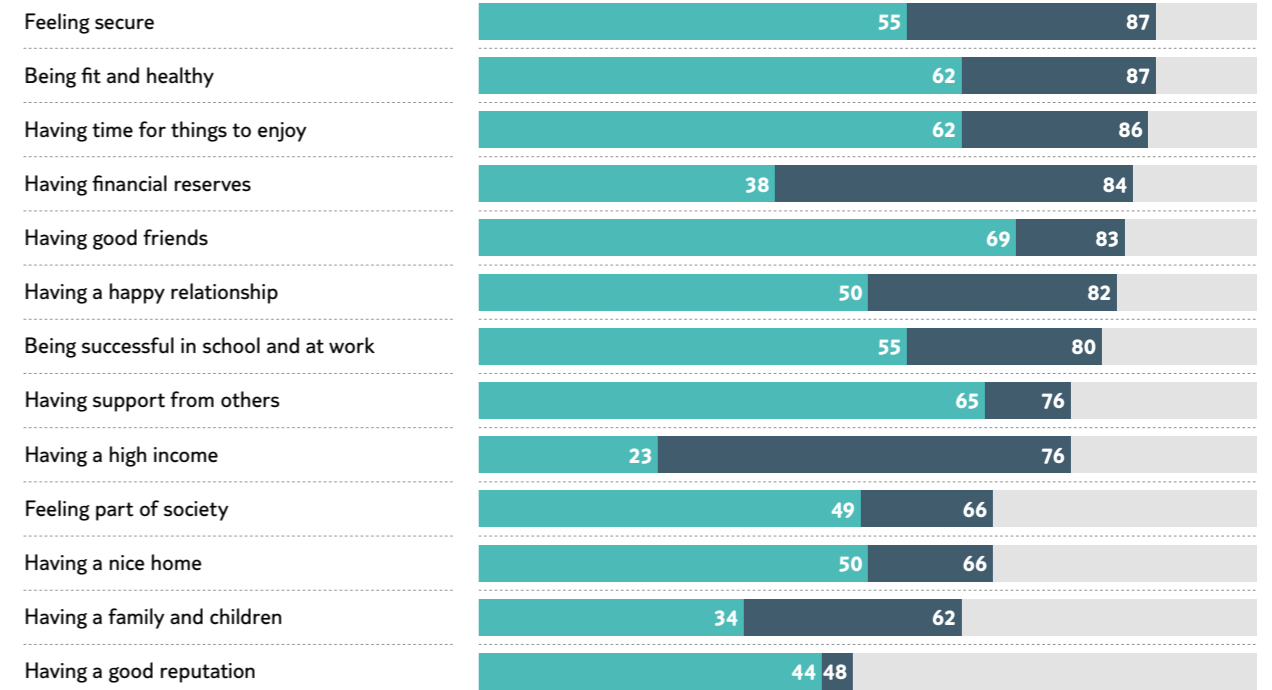
* I think it is justified: ("I think it is justified and would take part myself" + "I think it is justified but would not take part myself")

Note: Some of the respondents in the youth survey sample are not yet eligible to vote.



QUESTION:

How important, if at all, are the following aspects to you personally in leading a fulfilled life? Are the following aspects currently fulfilled or not fulfilled when thinking about your life?



0 Figures in % 100

Important

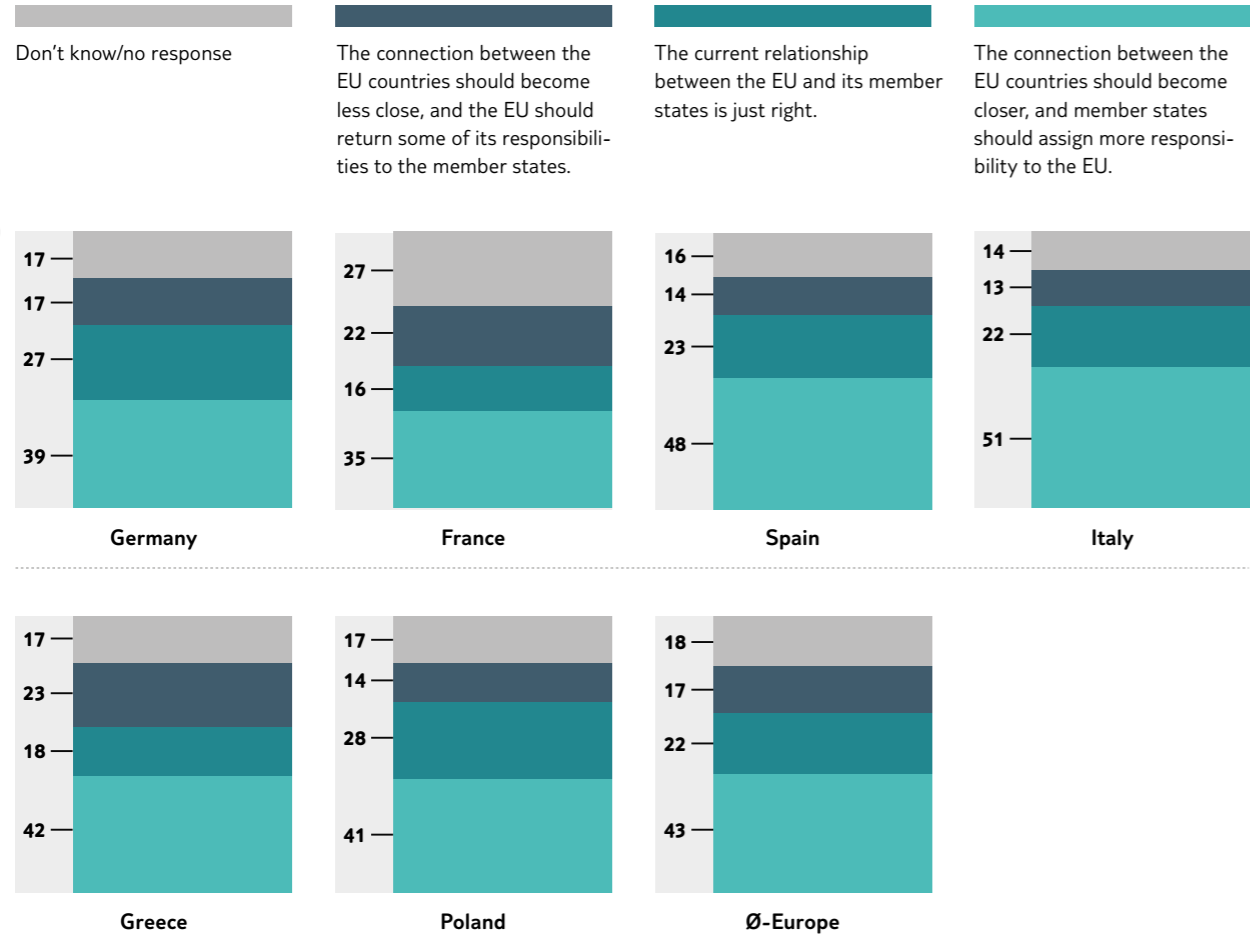
Fulfilled

Base: all respondents, n = 7,085, Important = "Very important" + "Fairly important" sorted in descending order by "Important"

Alongside financial reserves, social needs are important factors for living a fulfilled life.

QUESTION:

When you think about the relations between the EU and its member states: Which of the following statements do you most agree with?



Base: all respondents, n = 5,989; 2022 and 2023 not asked in the UK

The desire for more Europe is growing.



COMMENTS TO THE STUDY



Tiemo Wölken,
MEP

Photo: Jonathan Fafengut

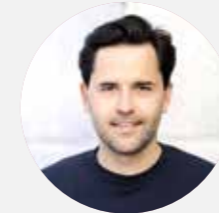
"It's great to see that many young people today identify with Europe. We must not take this trust for granted: For it is precisely in difficult political times that the European Union must remain a symbol of solidarity, justice and confidence. The fact that young people are becoming less optimistic about their future with each passing year shows that we are not yet doing this job adequately. The EU must become a promise for a good future!"

"Europe – for our parent's generation this sounded like a promise – a promise of peace, freedom and prosperity. Over the course of the last few years, the corona pandemic, the Russian attack on Ukraine, Inflation and the climate crisis made on thing clear: This promise has been taken for granted for too long. The Youth Study paints the picture of a young generation, painfully aware that peace, freedom and prosperity must be defended, argued and fought for. Young people across Europe wish for a democracy that is more responsive towards them, they wish for better education opportunities and more social justice. Let's go Europe!"



Franziska Brandmann,
Chairwoman Young Liberals
Germany

Photo: Laurence Chaperon



Johannes Winkel,
Chairman Young Union
of Germany

Photo: Tobias Koch

"The study's result, young people taking on an increasingly pessimistic stance, concerns me much. Especially the young generation should have a positive outlook towards the future. Because – despite all challenges – there are good reasons for that. Germany remains an economically strong country with bright and creative minds. The political youth organisations must be the political force for that to stay this way, as particularly demographic change cannot lead to disregard of the young generations interests. Hence we must be loud – and optimistic."

"Europe, like our democracy as a whole, thrives on participation, commitment and on having a say (far) beyond electoral action – democracy encourages, but it also demands. Especially in these very turbulent times, young people's commitment to values, democracy, dialogue and compromise is crucial. The results of the TUI Youth Study are an alarm signal for all of us. Yet, they are also an expression of the profound changes we are going through. Plural and above all parallel crises challenge confidence and our own resilience. At the same time, they remind us of what we can achieve together – young people in Europe have it in their hands more than ever to help shape this change. Together with them, we can meet the challenges of the times and preserve what is important to them: equal opportunities, a secure life and stability in a world that has become more uncertain."



Lena Düpont,
MEP

Photo: Martin Lahousse

COMMENTS TO THE STUDY

“The study clearly highlights the issues we need to address. Young people see the greatest inequalities in income, housing and career. At the same time, for them, income and career opportunities are two of the three most important factors for personal success. But the most important factor for them to succeed is access to education. Europe can be particularly helpful to young people in this regard. European projects like the Erasmus programme provide young people with access to a diverse education. We need to use the advantages of our Europe so that young people can explore different cultures and learn new things, thus gaining lifelong experience for their future path.”



Jan-Christoph Oetjen,
MEP

Photo: Johann Klopp

Magali Hübers,
Founder “AVIA – Europa, a family matter” and
Governance Officer at European Youth Forum



“My generation finds itself confronted with massive changes that demand us to act and be resilient. The study shows what’s important for young people and what they expect from politicians – it also shows that they don’t feel themselves to be sufficiently heard. To actively shape the future, the generations must stay in touch and make concessions, when needed. In my Project AVIA, I am fostering a dialogue between the silent creators of the last 70 years and young women that carry responsibilities in the present to close the gap between the seemingly so different generations.”



Elke Hlawatschek,
Managing Director
TUI Foundation

“Across all countries, merely 5% of the respondents rate their country’s education system as ‘very good’, about a third regards it as ‘rather good’. On the one hand it is a societal consensus that education is the best pathway to a self-determined and fulfilled life. On the other hand do those, that should profit off of it, issue a terrible testimony to their respective education systems. Not even half the young Europeans – 38% – find that all have equal education opportunities. Already at the start of adulthood, often-times, a strong sense of inequality prevails. Therefore, educational equity needs to be a priority on the political agenda.”

YOUNG EUROPE 2023: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Since 2017, the TUI Foundation has been conducting the „Young Europe“ study to gain a deeper understanding of the life experiences, identities, and political attitudes of young people in Europe.

During the period from March 7, 2023, to March 21, 2023, young people in the following countries were surveyed: Germany, United Kingdom, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Poland.

- In 2023, a total of 7,085 young people between the ages of 16 and 26 were interviewed through an online survey.
- In previous years, the survey included 6,000 participants in 2017, 6,080 in 2018, 6,192 in 2019, 6,011 in 2020, 6,253 in 2021, and 6,228 in 2022. These participants were from Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Poland.

- In each country, participants were selected to represent the actual distributions of age, gender, and education level in the population.

- The results were weighted by age, gender, and education level to account for minor discrepancies in the analysis. Additionally, results from all countries were weighted equally to ensure equal representation.

- This report presents results for individual countries, as well as aggregated results for all seven countries („Total“). For questions related to the European Union, separate values are provided for EU member states only, excluding the United Kingdom due to fundamental differences in perspectives.

Comparative Study: Representative Survey of the German Population

In addition to the Youth Study, a selection of questions was included in a representative survey of the German population. Participants for this survey were recruited from the German YouGov panel. A total of 1,074 individuals aged 18 and over completed the online survey, which took place from March 9 to March 16, 2023.



ABOUT THE TUI FOUNDATION

“Europe. Living and understanding” – this is what the TUI Foundation is committed to. The focus is on educational programs for students and young adults.

The TUI Foundation promotes and implements projects on the theme of “Young Europe”. Its goal is to strengthen the idea of Europe.

Therefore, it invests in regional, national, and international projects with a focus on education, training as well as individual and professional development. It is based in Hanover and, as an independent foundation, is committed to the common good.

LEGAL

Publisher:

TUI Stiftung
Managing Director Elke Hlawatschek
Karl-Wichert-Allee 4, 30625 Hanover, Germany

Implementation of the study:

YouGov Deutschland GmbH
Richmodstrasse 6, 50667 Cologne, Germany

Design: Andreas Mayer

Hasenbergstrasse 44, 70176 Stuttgart, Germany

Translation: Shawn Möller

Ostertorstrasse 6, 31157 Sarstedt, Germany

Board of Trustees of the TUI Foundation

Thomas Ellerbeck (Chairman)

Horst Baier

Sebastian Ebel

Frank Jakobi

Prof. Susanne Porsche

Anette Stempel

Franziska Stünkel

