

# The European Project in 2020

October 2020



# 01. Direction of the European Union – past and present

**Almost half (47%) of Europeans surveyed across nine countries, believe that Europe has been made stronger by the European Union, while near two in five (42%) say the same about their own country.**

- Only a minority think either Europe (22%) or their home nation (27%) has been made weaker by the European Union. There has been very little change in these figures since first asked in 2017.
- Three countries which have been EU members since its creation (France, Belgium, Italy) are the least likely to say it has strengthened Europe or their own nation. Sweden, Hungary, Poland and Spain tend to be more positive about the European project generally – although less so in Poland than in 2019.

**Just under half (45%) think the European Union is on the wrong track. This figure continues to fall since reaching nearer three in five (57%) three years ago. However, just three in ten (29%) say the EU is heading in the right direction.**

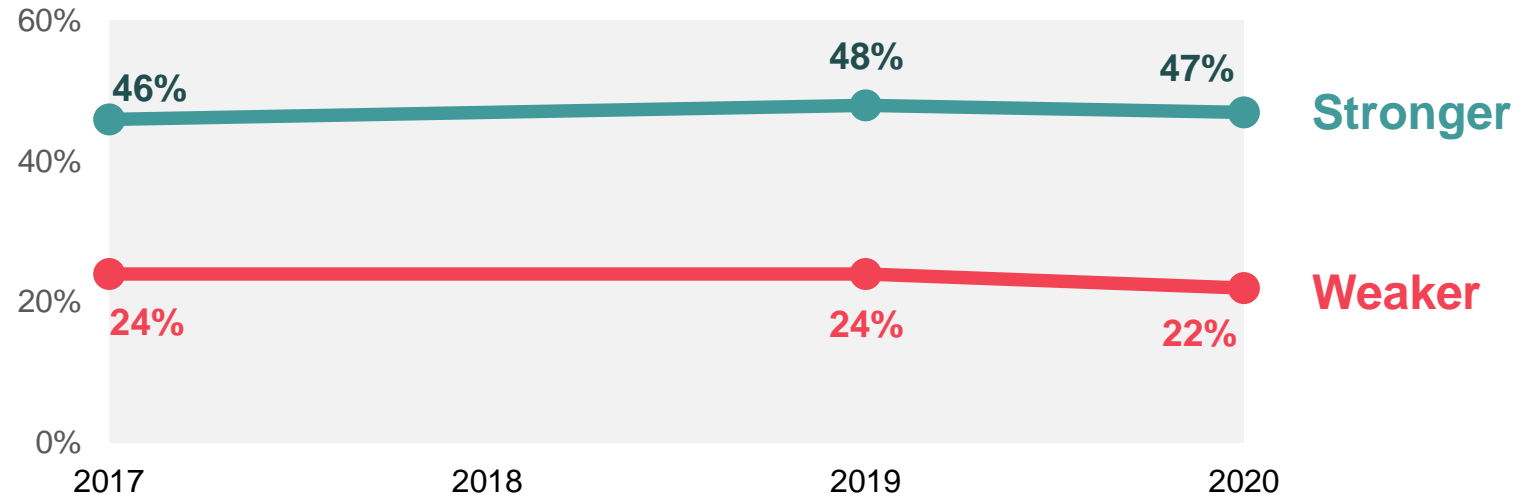
- Majorities in Belgium (54%), France (51%) and Italy (50%) are pessimistic about the EU's direction – Belgians are more so than a year ago (+6%) but slightly fewer in France (-3%) and Italy (-7%). Whereas, those in Hungary, Poland and Spain are more divided in their opinions, but still not outrightly optimistic.

## European Union averages

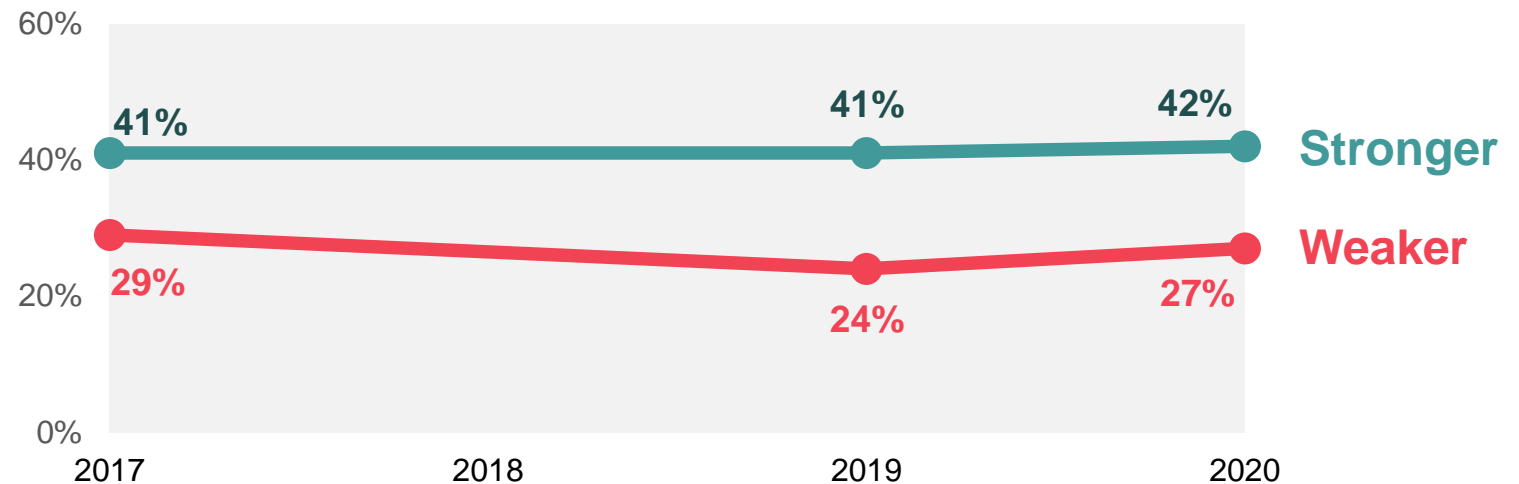
Nearing half of Europeans surveyed believe Europe has been made stronger by the European Union, while nearer two in five say the same about their own country.

These figures have been fairly stable since they were first asked in 2017.

**Taking everything into account, do you think this European project has made Europe stronger or weaker today than it would have been without it?**



**And taking everything into account, do you think [COUNTRY] is stronger or weaker today because of this European project than it would have been without it?**

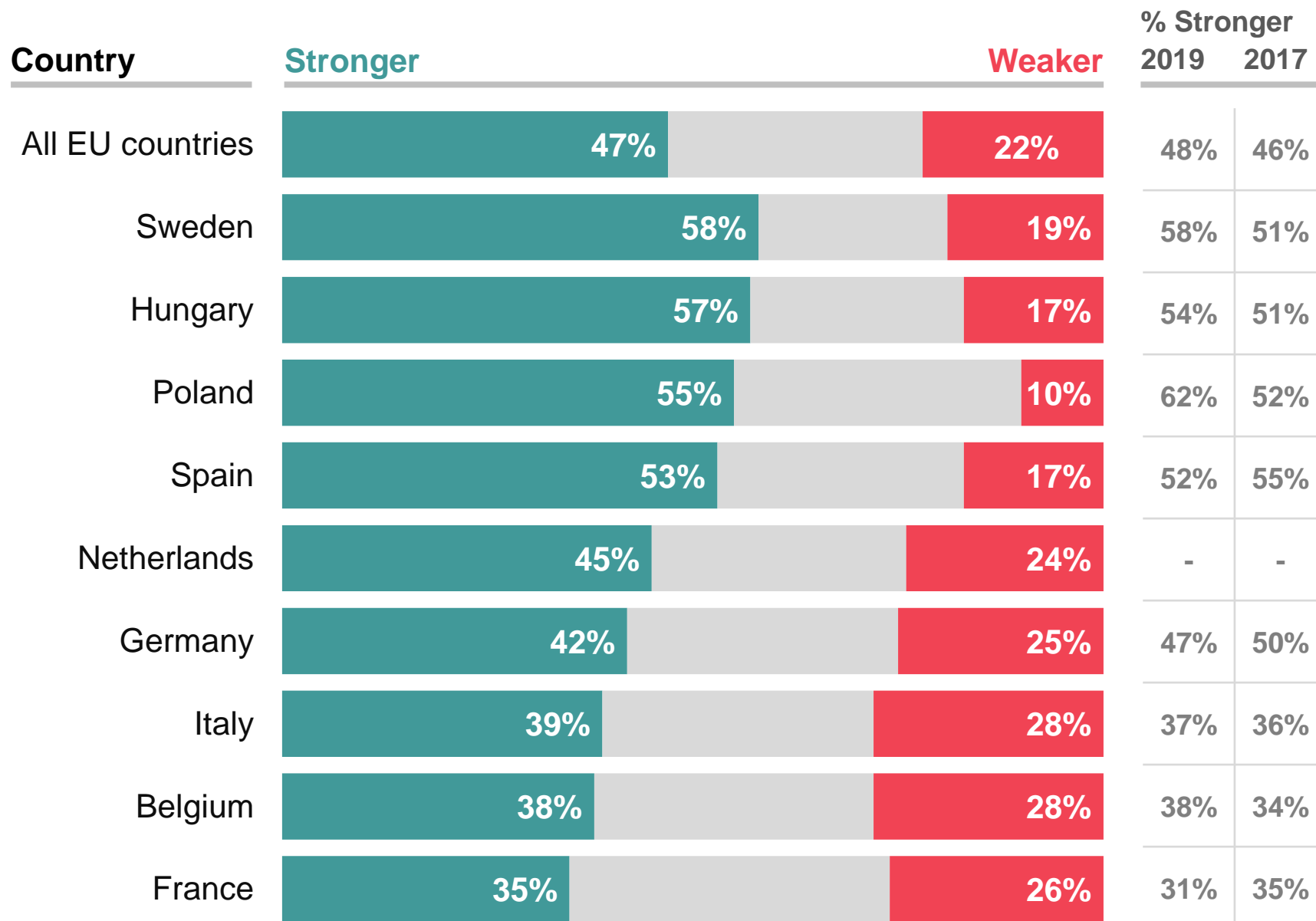


Base: 7,500 online adults aged 16-64 across 9 EU countries, 25 September - 9 October 2020. Countries included: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden (note that Great Britain was included in the 2017/19 averages).

# Q.

Taking everything into account, do you think this European project has made Europe stronger or weaker today than it would have been without it?

Countries which have been EU members since its creation (France, Belgium, Italy, Germany and the Netherlands) are less likely to think it has strengthened Europe as a whole, whilst later joiners, Sweden, Hungary and Poland are more positive.



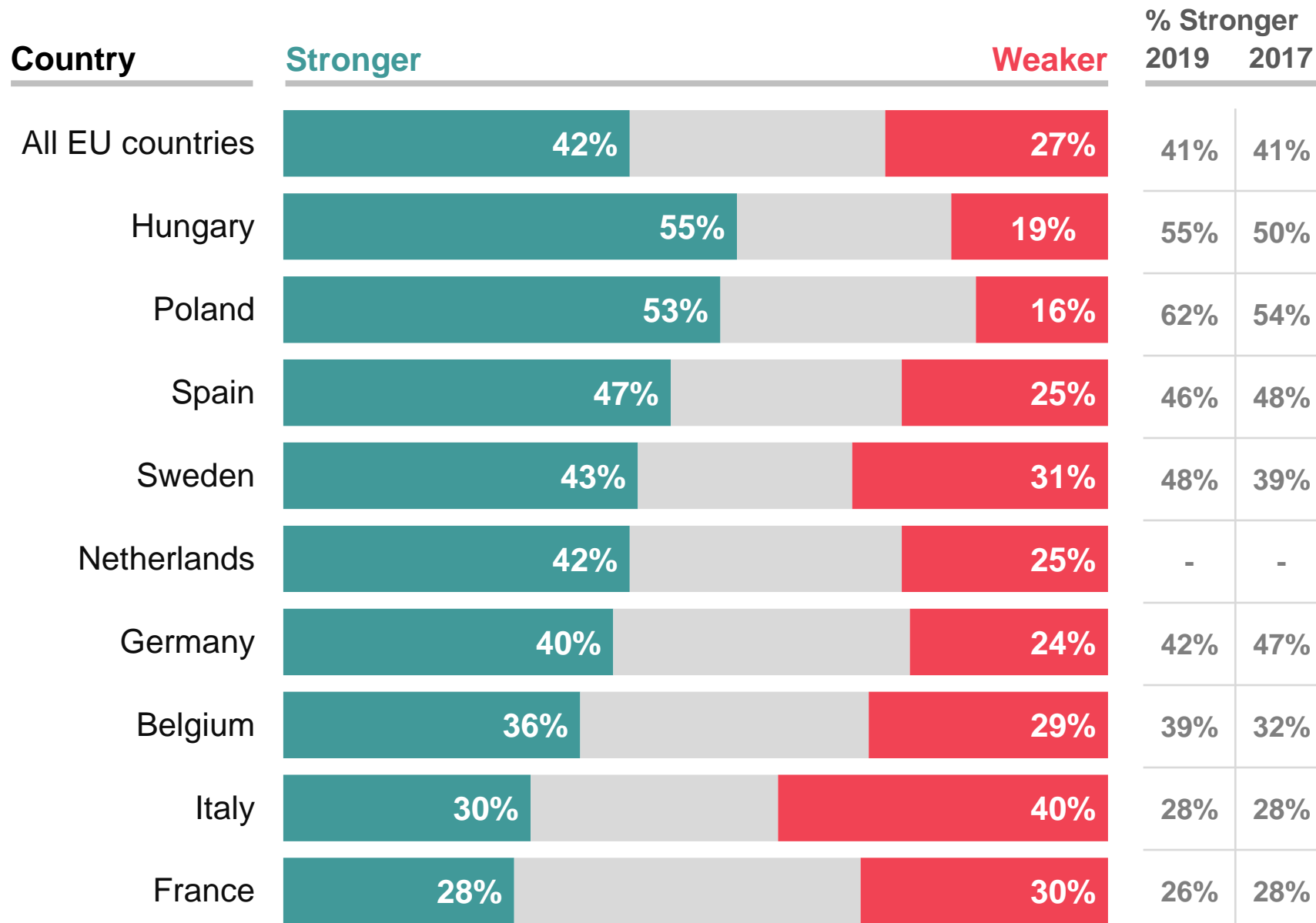
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# Q.

And taking everything into account, do you think [COUNTRY] is stronger or weaker today because of this European project than it would have been without it?

Similarly, the founder EU nations are also the least likely to think their own country has been made stronger by the European project – especially in France and Italy.



Base: 7,500 online adults aged 16-64 across 9 EU countries, 25 September - 9 October 2020



# Q.

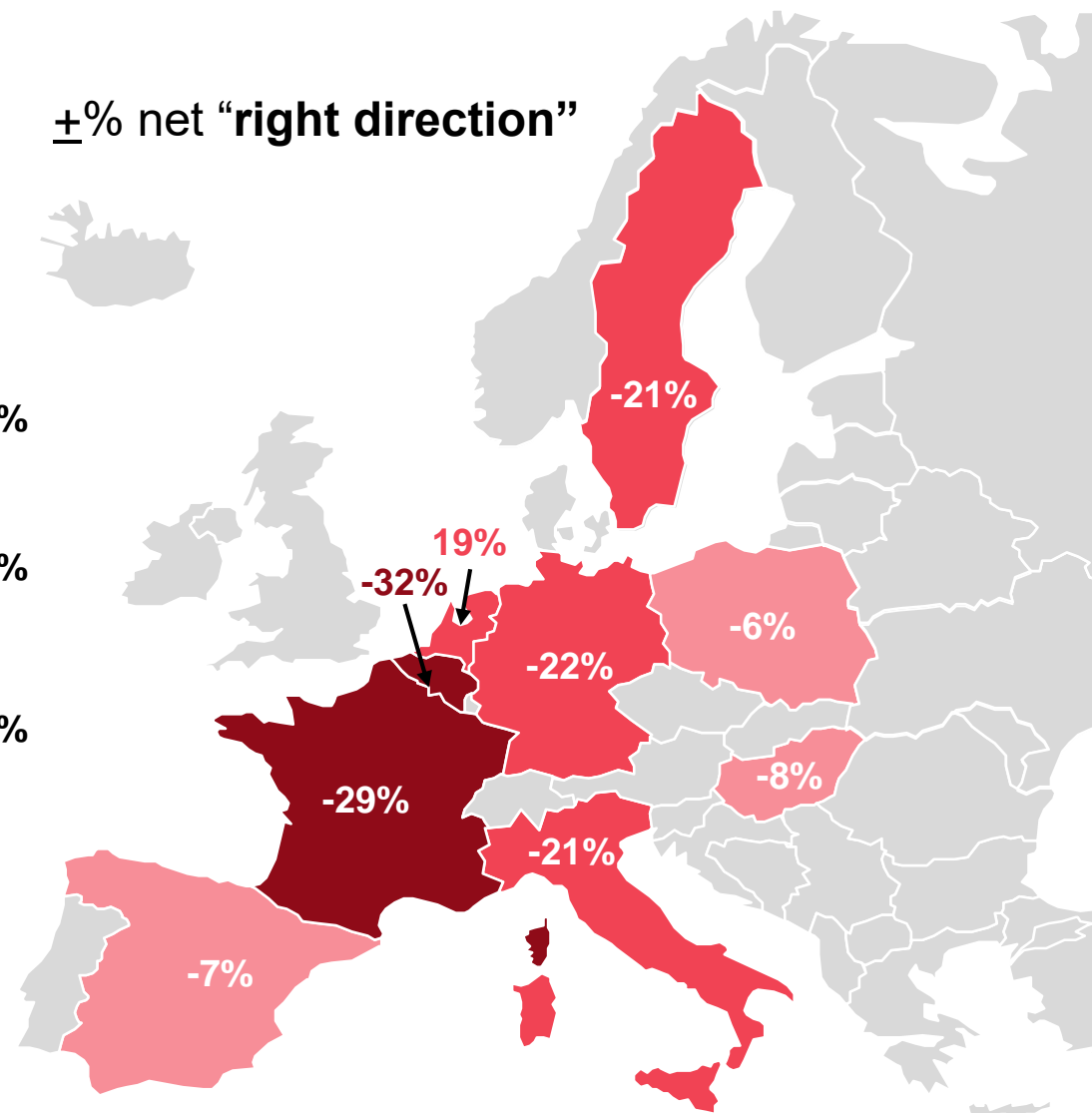
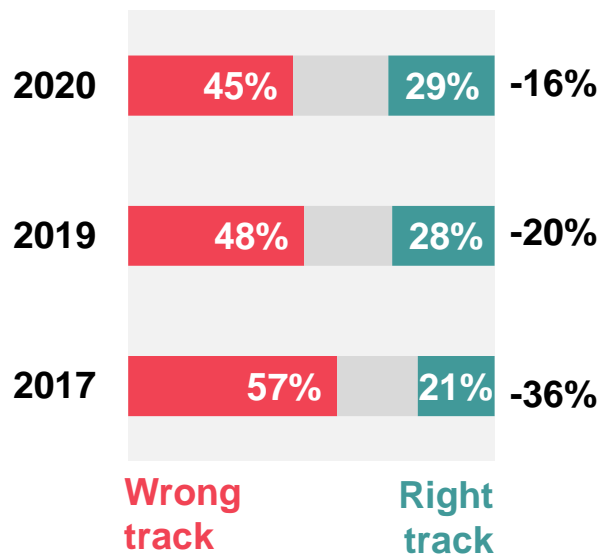
Generally speaking, would you say things across the European Union are heading in the right direction or are they off on the wrong track?

The proportion of Europeans saying that the European Union is heading in the wrong direction has continued to fall since three years ago, whilst those saying its on the right track stand at around three in ten.

Belgium – whose capital, Brussels, is home to the European Parliament – remains the most negative, closely followed by France.

±% net “right direction”

### European averages 2017 - 2020



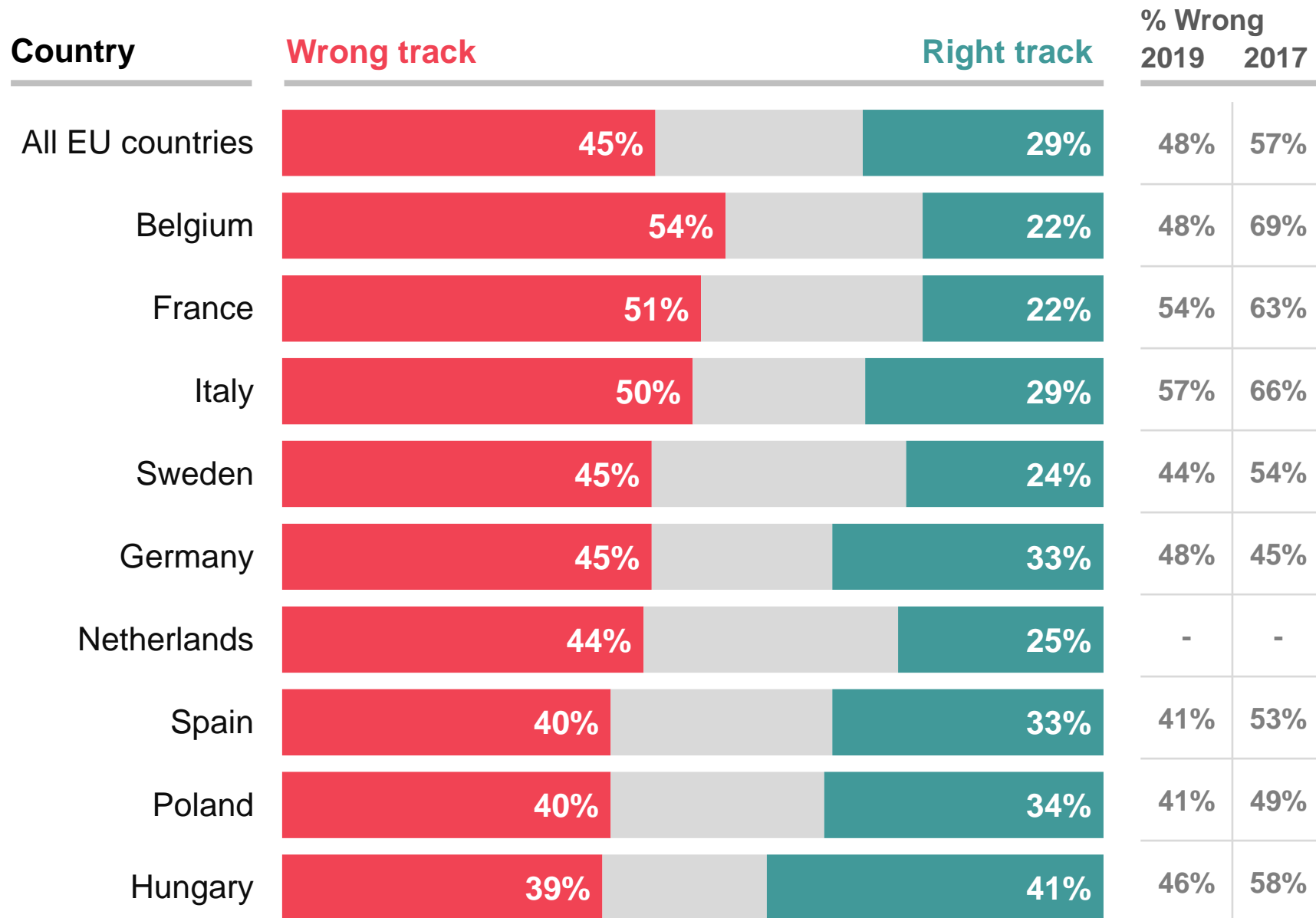
Base: 7,500 online adults aged 16-64 across 9 EU countries, 25 September - 9 October 2020

# Q.

Generally speaking, would you say things across the European Union are heading in the right direction or are they off on the wrong track?

Majorities in Belgium, France and Italy think that the European Union is heading in the wrong direction - increasingly so amongst Belgians, whilst slightly fewer Italians think so compared to a year ago.

Hungary, Poland and Spain are more divided in their opinions.



Base: 7,500 online adults aged 16-64 across 9 EU countries, 25 September - 9 October 2020

# 02. How can the European Union impact the world by acting together?

Half agree that together the countries of the European Union have more influence on the rest of the world (46%) and are stronger in solving global problems (47%). This first measure has dropped slightly from 2017 (from 51%), whilst the second is unchanged.

- On both statements only one in five disagree (20%, 21% respectively) – again stable compared with three years ago.
- Sweden, the Netherlands and Hungary are the most positive about the EU boosting their global influence and ability to solve problems, but France and Italy are the least.
- For both statements there has been considerable declines in the proportions agreeing compared to 2017 in Spain, Germany and Poland. France and Belgium have seen slight improvements, but their scores remain subdued – whereas Sweden is also more agreeable and now leads the nine countries across each measure.



# Q.

And to what extent, if at all do you agree or disagree that together, the countries of the European Union...

Across the nine countries surveyed almost half agree that together the countries of the European Union have more influence on the rest of the world (46%) and are stronger in solving global problems (47%).

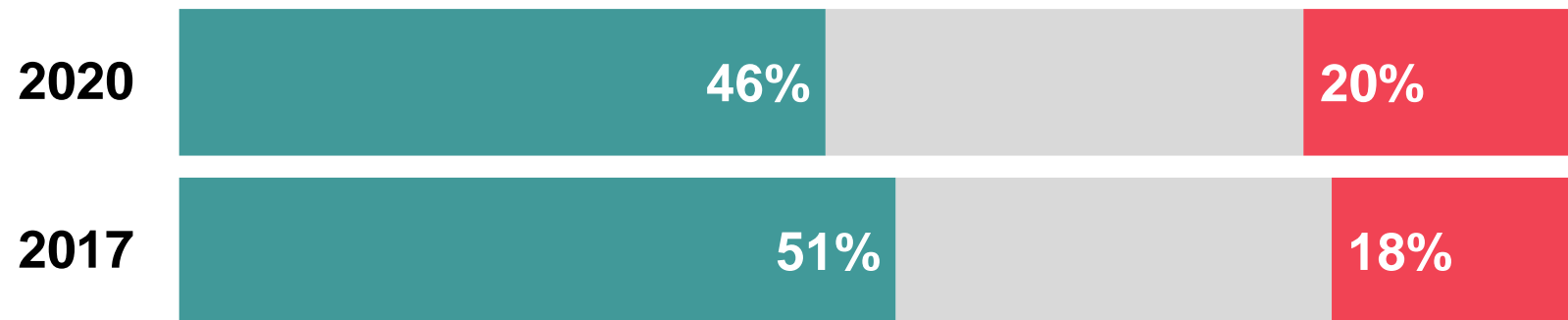
These figures are relatively unchanged since last asked three years ago, although the proportion saying the EU increases their global influence has dropped slightly (down 5 points).

## Among nine European Union countries

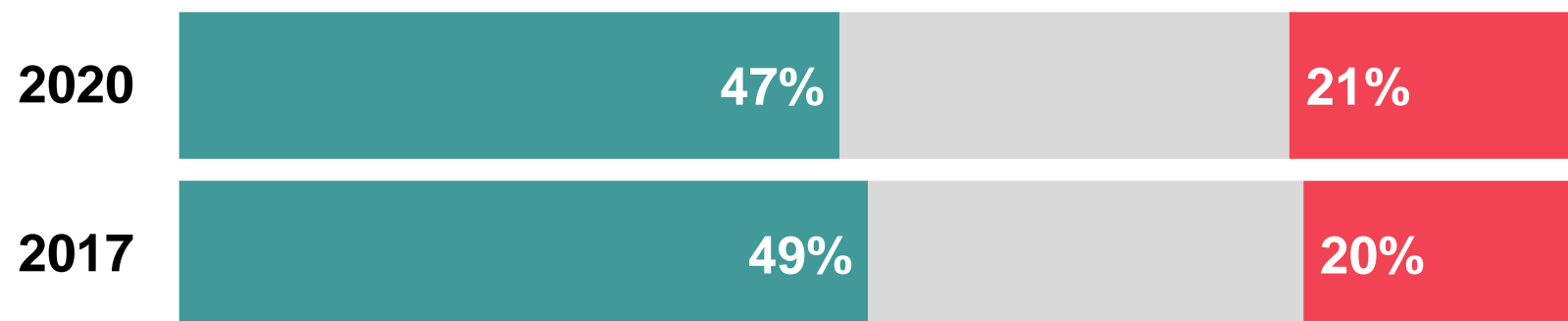
Agree

Disagree

...have more influence on the rest of the world?



... are stronger in solving global problems



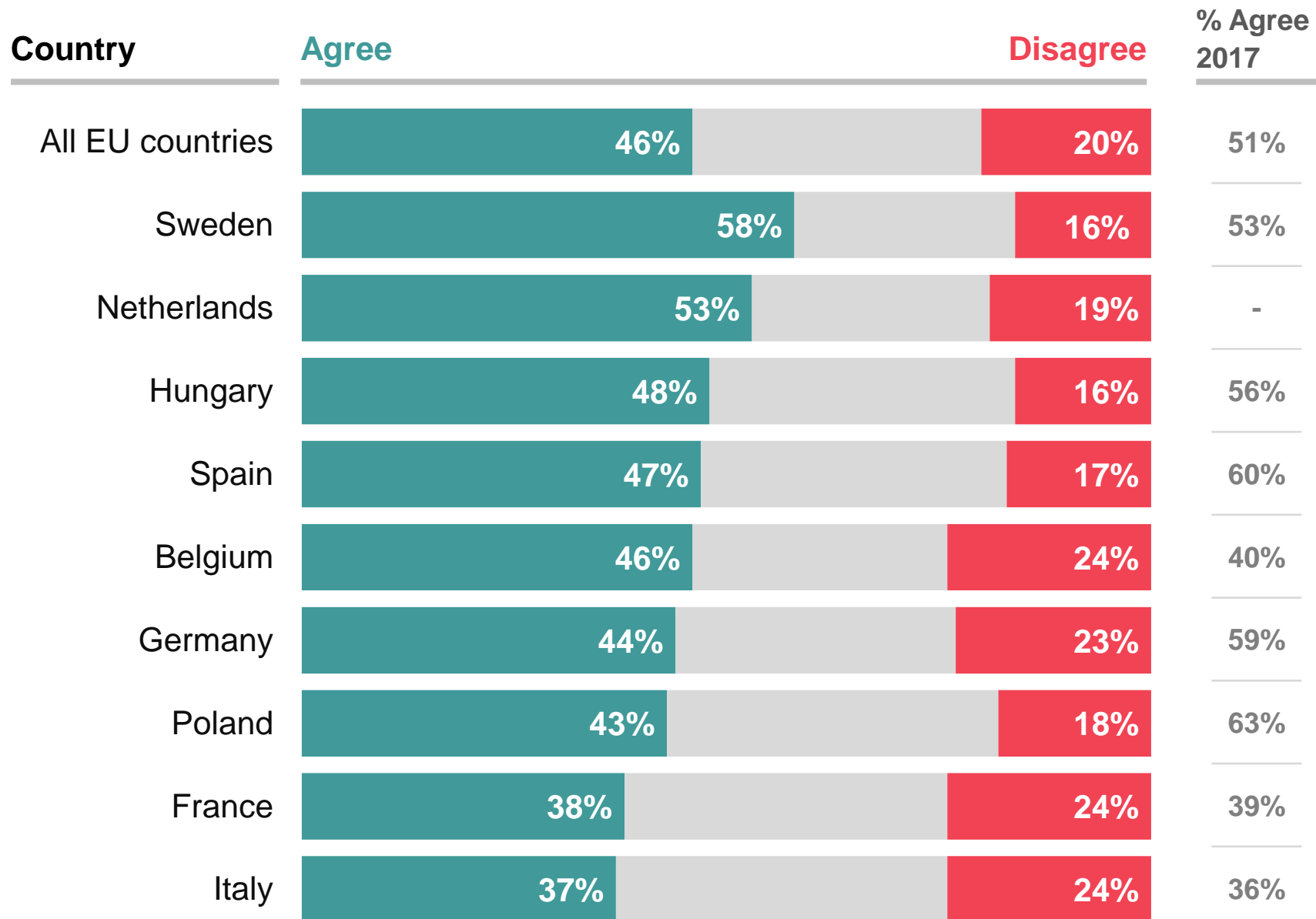
Base: 7,500 online adults aged 16-64 across 9 EU countries, 25 September - 9 October 2020  
Countries included: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden  
(note that Great Britain was included in the 2017 average).

# Q.

And to what extent, if at all do you agree or disagree that together, the countries of the European Union have more influence on the rest of the world?

The proportion agreeing that together EU countries have more influence on the rest of the world has fallen in almost every country since 2017, especially in Poland.

Only Sweden and Belgium have seen increases, with the former being the most positive of the nine countries; nearing three in five Swedes agree.



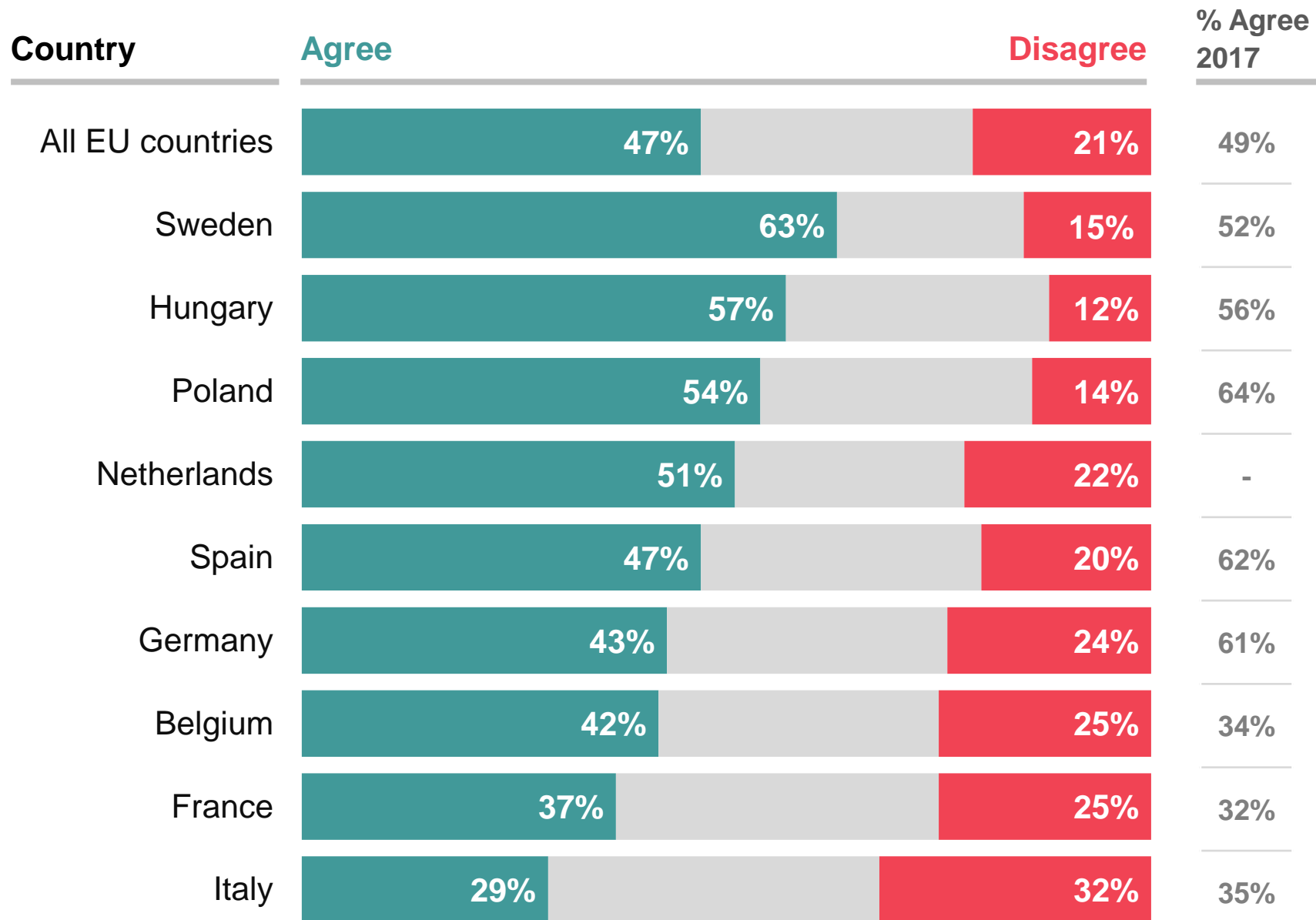
Base: 7,500 online adults aged 16-64 across 9 EU countries, 25 September - 9 October 2020

# Q.

And to what extent, if at all do you agree or disagree that together, the countries of the European Union are stronger in solving global problems?

Almost two in three Swedes agree that the countries of the EU are stronger in solving global problems together, which has increased significantly since three years ago, making them among the most positive, along with Hungary and Poland.

Belgium and France are the only other countries to see an increase since 2017, while elsewhere there has been significant declines in Germany, Spain and Poland.



Base: 7,500 online adults aged 16-64 across 9 EU countries, 25 September - 9 October 2020



# 03. The European Union's handling of the Coronavirus

One in five (20%) say that the European Union has helped reduce the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic in their country, whilst just over one in four (27%) say it has been involved the right amount in helping manage the crisis.

However, around two in five think the EU has either made no difference to the impact (44%) or not been involved enough (39%).

- Only a minority say it has either made the effects worse or been involved too much.
- The eastern European nations of Poland and Hungary are most positive about the EU's response to the pandemic. Around a third in both nations say they it has helped reduce the effects, and just under half of Hungarians say the EU has been involved the right amount.
- France, Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium are the least impressed by the impact of the EU's involvement during the pandemic. Desire for the EU to have played more of a role is highest in Belgium, France, Spain, and the Netherlands.

## European Union averages

One in five (20%) say that the European Union has helped reduced the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic in their country, and just over one in four (27%) say it has been involved the right amount in managing the pandemic in their country.

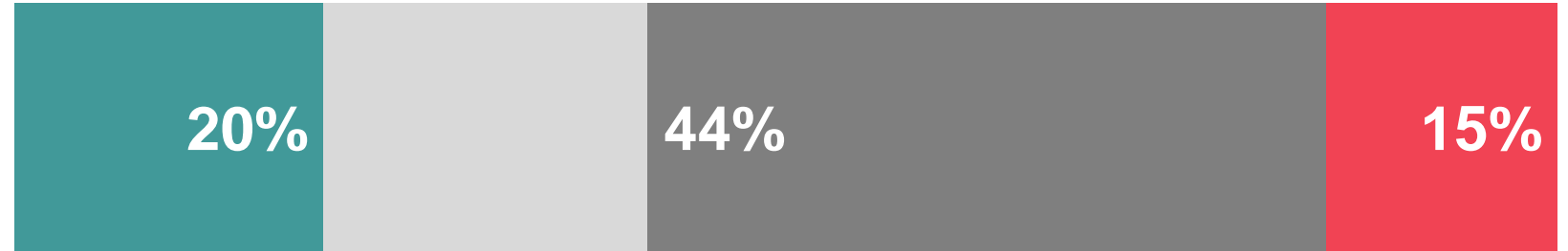
However, around nearer two in five say it has either made no difference to the impact of the virus (44%) or not been involved enough (39%). Only a minority say it has either made the effects worse or been involved too much.

Please indicate which of these three statements comes closest to your own opinion. The EU has ... on the effect of the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic in [COUNTRY]

Helped reduce the effects

Made no difference

Made the effects worse

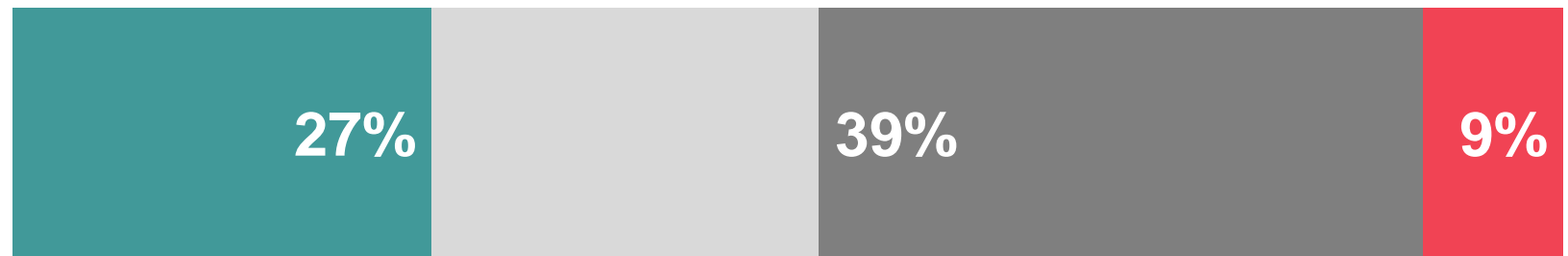


And which of the following is the closest to your own opinion about the European Union's role in managing the coronavirus/COVID-19...? The European Union has...

Been involved about the right amount

Not been involved enough

Been involved too much



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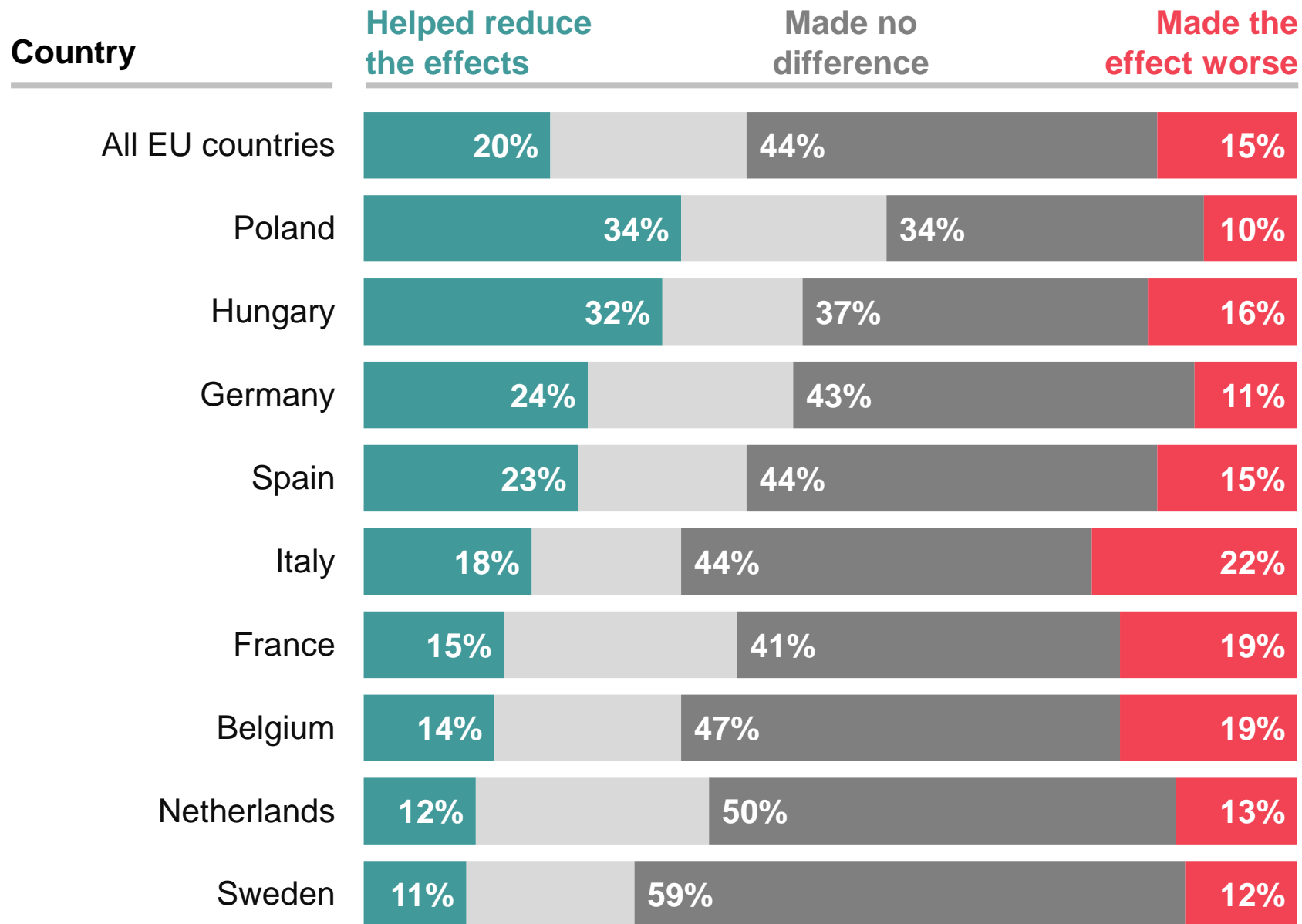
# Q.

Please indicate which of these three statements comes closest to your own opinion.

The EU has ... on the effect of the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic in [COUNTRY]

The eastern European nations of Poland and Hungary are the most likely to believe that the EU has helped reduce the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic in their country.

Italy, the first country in the EU to suffer a serious outbreak, has the highest proportion of those who believe the institution has made the effects worse, closely followed by France and Belgium.



Base: 7,500 online adults aged 16-64 across 9 EU countries, 25 September - 9 October 2020

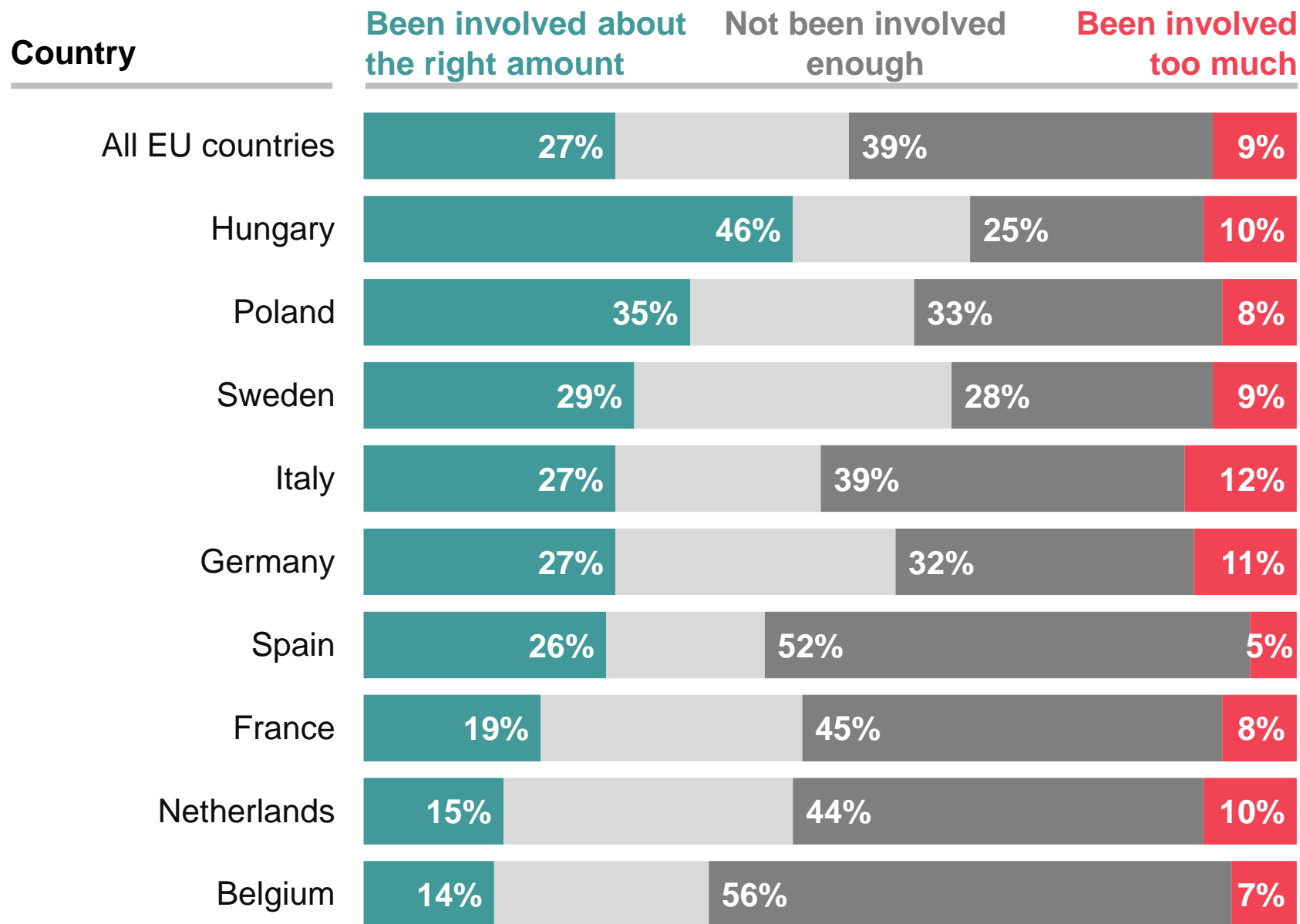


# Q.

And which of the following is the closest to your own opinion about the European Union's role in managing the coronavirus/COVID-19...? The European Union has...

A majority in Spain and Belgium both think that the EU has not been involved enough in managing the Coronavirus pandemic.

Almost half of Hungarians feel that it has been involved the right amount, but fewer than one in five say the same in France, the Netherlands and Belgium.



Base: 7,500 online adults aged 16-64 across 9 EU countries, 25 September - 9 October 2020



# Technical note

- These are the findings of a survey conducted in 9 countries via Global Advisor, the online survey platform of Ipsos, between 25 September - 9 October 2020. For this survey, Ipsos interviewed a total of **7,500** adults aged aged 16-74.
- The sample consists of 1,000+ individuals in each of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and of c.500 individuals in Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden.
- The data is weighted so each country's sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of its adult population according to the most recent census data, and to give each country an equal weight in the total "global" sample. Online surveys can be taken as representative of the general working-age population in all countries surveyed.
- Sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error. The precision of online surveys conducted on Global Advisor is measured using a Bayesian Credibility Interval. Here, the poll has a credibility interval of +/-3.5 percentage points for countries where the sample is 1,000+ and +/- 4.8 points for countries where the sample is 500+. For more information on the Ipsos use of credibility intervals, please go to: [https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/2017-03/IpsosPA\\_CredibilityIntervals.pdf](https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/2017-03/IpsosPA_CredibilityIntervals.pdf).
- Where results do not sum to 100, this may be due to computer rounding, multiple responses or the exclusion of don't knows or not stated responses.



# For more information

**Christine Tresignie**

**Managing Director European Public Affairs**

[christine.tresignie@ipsos.com](mailto:christine.tresignie@ipsos.com)

**Henri Wallard**

**Chairman Global Public Affairs**

[henri.wallard@ipsos.com](mailto:henri.wallard@ipsos.com)