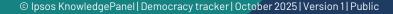


STATE OF DEMOCRACY TRACKER

October 2025



KEY TAKEAWAYS 2025





Satisfaction with democracy continues to be poor in most countries in this study, with satisfaction dropping since 2024 in Netherlands and France, both countries that experienced political instability in the last year.

Sweden is again the only country where a majority are satisfied with how democracy is working.

Across the 9 countries in this study, more people say democracy has got worse rather than better, with Poland as the only exception where more people say it has got better. Views are particularly stark in France and Netherlands.



Yet strong support for maintaining democracy

Despite dissatisfaction with how democracy is working in practice, majorities across most countries say democracy is crucial to society and should be maintained. Croatia is the only country where we find more saying democracy is only worth keeping if it delivers good quality of life.

Nonetheless, we also find strong support for radical change, often linked with perceptions of the system being rigged. At same time, we find continued support for democratic principles like cooperation and democratic checks and balances.



Fake news, extremism and corruption – threats to democracy

Majorities in all countries aside from Sweden are worried about the state of democracy in the next 5 years.

Fake news, lack of accountability, extremism and corruption are seen as the main threats to democracy. Fake news is the top in UK, Sweden, Netherlands, Poland and France. In the US and countries in the South of Europe – Spain, Croatia, and Italy, corruption is seen as the top threat.

No government or international organisations is seen as doing a good job defending democracy in most countries, though there are more positive perceptions of the EU and NATO in some Northern European countries such as Sweden, and Poland.



Stronger legislation and regulations, and civic education

Strengthening anti-corruption laws and enforcement and protecting the independence of the courts are seen as effective solutions for strengthening democracy in nearly all countries.

Stronger regulation of social media is among the top solutions in France, the UK, Netherlands and Sweden – all countries where fake news is seen as a threat.

Better civic education is seen as particularly important in Poland, Italy and France, while in the UK and the US stronger regulation and transparency of political donations is seen as effective by one in two.



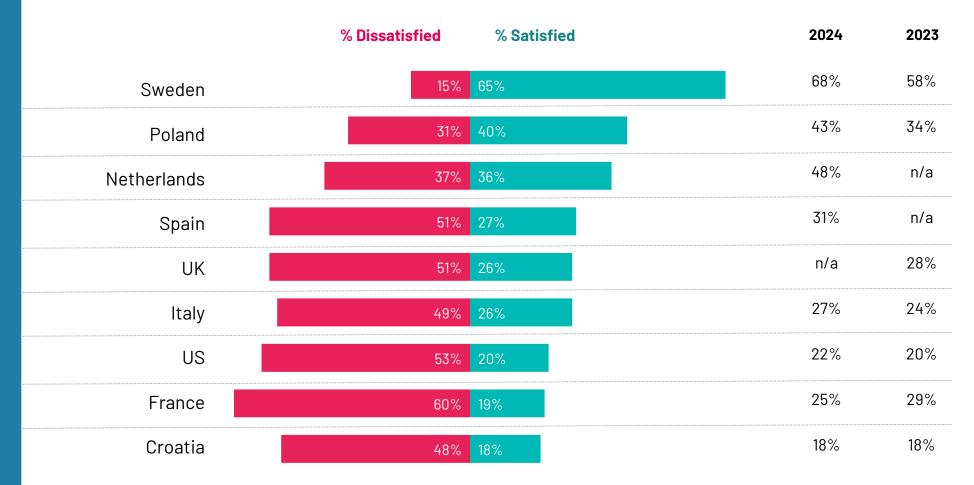
IS DEMOCRACY WORKING?

1



Satisfaction with democracy continues to be highest in Sweden, but has dropped in the Netherlands and in France since 2024

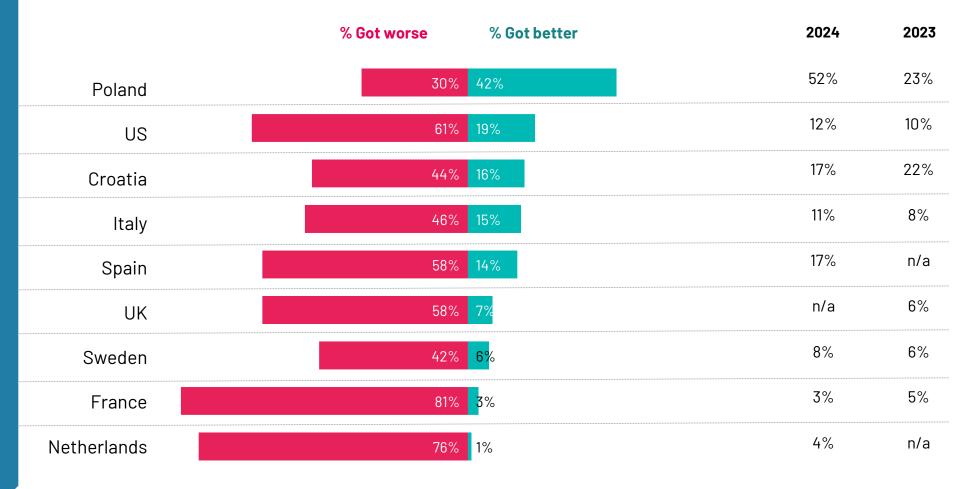
Q: Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way democracy is working in your country?





In each country aside from Poland, more people think democracy is working worse than 5 years ago rather than getting better. **Perceptions of** change have slightly improved in the US, but worsened in France and the **Netherlands**

Q: Compared to 5 years ago, would you say that the way democracy is working in your country today has got better, got worse or stayed the same?



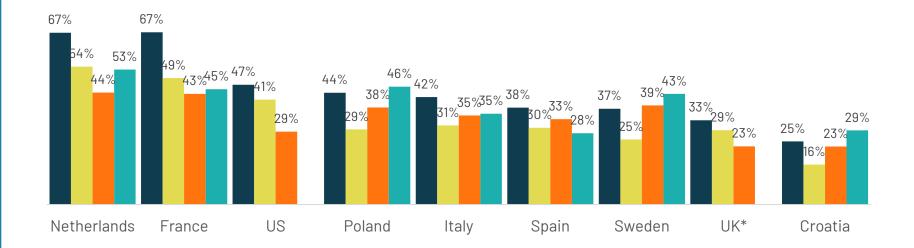


Across most countries, more people tend to feel better represented at the local than national level of government

Q: To what extent, if at all, do you feel like the following institutions represent your views and priorities?

% great deal/fair amount





^{*}Regional government only asked in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: 'the Welsh government', 'the Scottish Government', The Northern Ireland Executive'



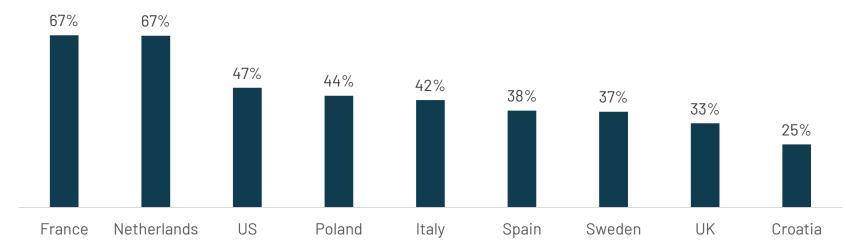
Feeling represented by city/local councils has remained stable across countries, with some improvements in Croatia

Q: To what extent, if at all, do you feel like the following institutions represent your views and priorities?

% great deal/fair amount

■ city/local council

2023	63%	n/a	43%	39%	35%	n/a	27%	33%	15%
2024	71%	64%	50%	45%	44%	42%	37%	n/a	18%





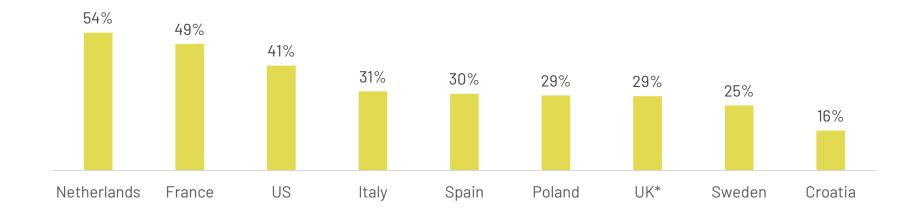
Feeling represented by regional/state government has dropped in Italy and France, and is stable in other countries

Q: To what extent, if at all, do you feel like the following institutions represent your views and priorities?

% great deal/fair amount

regional/state governement

2023	n/a	41%	35%	28%	n/a	23%	29%*	19%	13%
2024	57%	54%	42%	37%	31%	31%	n/a	29%	15%



^{*}Regional government only asked in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: 'the Welsh government', 'the Scottish Government', The Northern Ireland Executive'



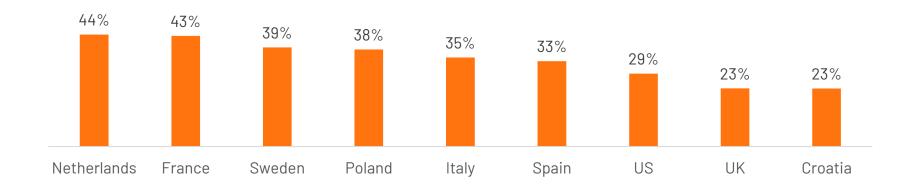
Netherlands has seen a drop in people saying they feel represented by the national government since 2024, while in the UK this has increased slightly since 2023

Q: To what extent, if at all, do you feel like the following institutions represent your views and priorities?

% great deal/fair amount

national government

2023	n/a	33%	24%	26%	23%	n/a	22%	17%	18%
2024	51%	46%	40%	41%	31%	37%	30%	n/a	21%





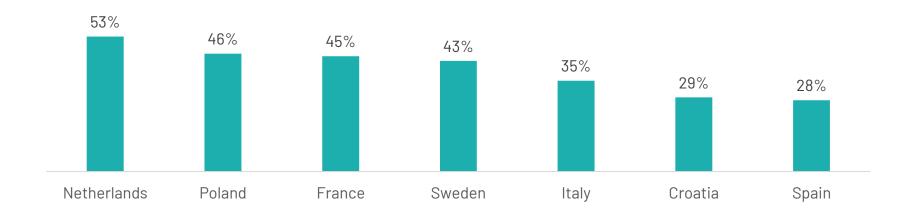
Feeling represented by the EU has dropped marginally across some countries, but gone up in Sweden

Q: To what extent, if at all, do you feel like the following institutions represent your views and priorities?

% great deal/fair amount

■ European Union

2023	n/a	37%	34%	21%	28%	24%	n/a
2024	50%	50%	50%	38%	39%	33%	33%





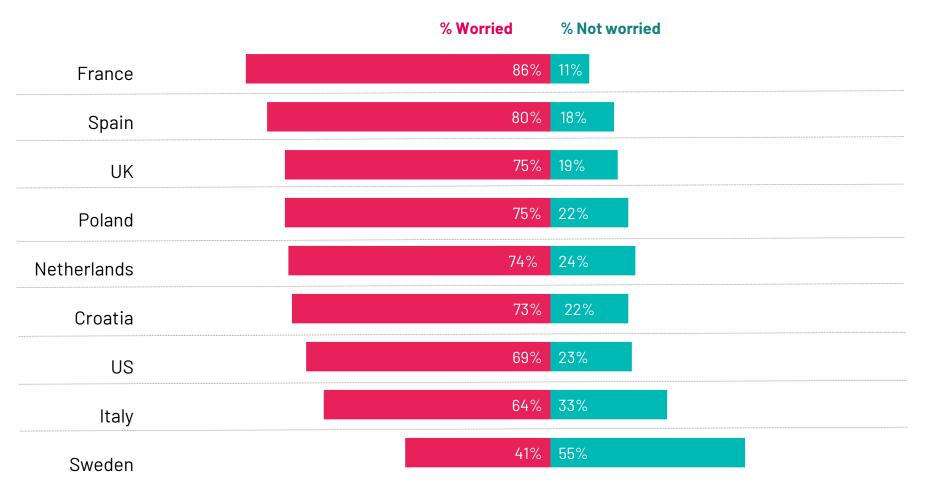
THREATS TO DEMOCRACY

2



In all countries
except Sweden,
majorities are
worried about the
state of democracy
in the next 5 years

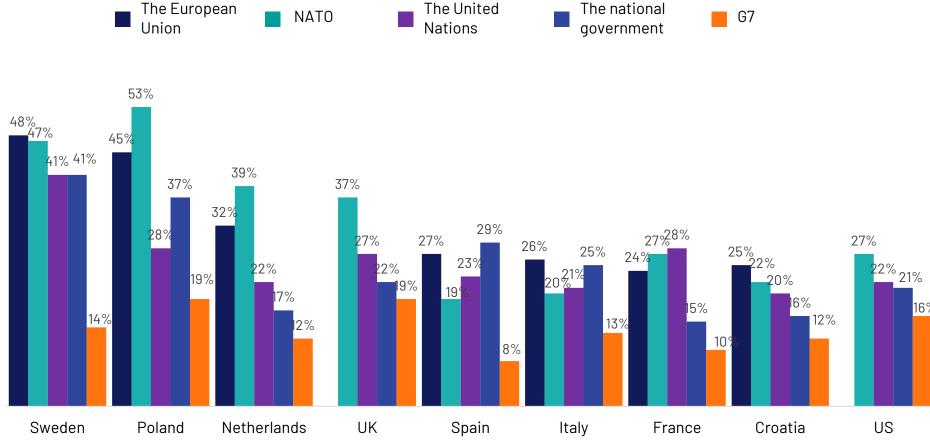
Q: How worried, if at all, are you about the state of democracy in your country in the next 5 years?





Only a minority in most countries think their government or international organisations are doing a good job defending democracy, though there are more positive perceptions of the EU and NATO in some Northern **European countries**

Q: Would you say the following organisations are doing a good or bad job when it comes to helping protect democracy? % good job



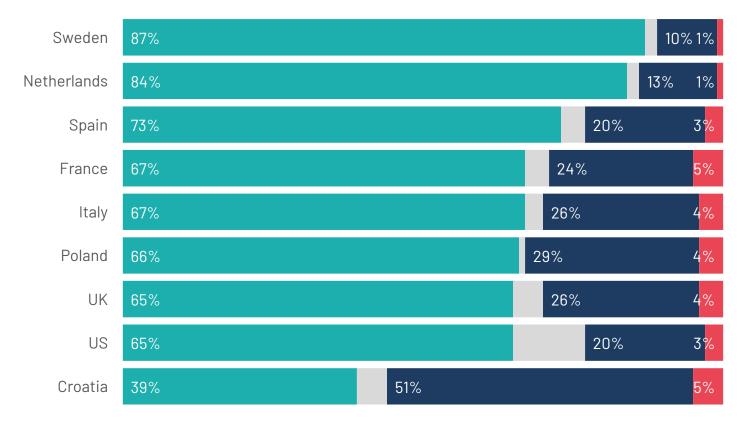
Base: Adults aged 16+/18+, Croatia =1,001, France = 1,001, Italy = 1,003, Netherlands = 882, Poland = 801, Spain = 800, Sweden = 1,002, UK = 2,380, US = 1,024; Interviewed via Ipsos KnowledgePanel, 12-29 September 2025



In most countries, majorities say democracy is crucial to their society. In Croatia, half support democracy only contingent on it providing a good quality of life

Q: Which of the statements below, if any, best represents your views?

- Democracy is crucial to our society and we should do everything to maintain it
- Democracy is only worth keeping if it delivers a good quality of life for people
- Democracy is not worth keeping and we should try other forms of government





Fake news is seen as the top threat to democracy in countries in **Northern Europe** and France, while, in the US and countries in the South of Europe, corruption is seen as the top threat

Q: Which, if any, of the below do you think pose the biggest threat to democracy in your country?

France	UK	Sweden	Netherlands	Poland	US	Spain	Croatia	Italy
Fake news 56%	Fake news 64%	Fake news 67%	Fake news 75%	Lack of accountability among politicians 76%	Corruption 63%	Corruption 73%	Corruption 80%	Corruption 47%
Lack of accountability among politicians 49%	Rise of extremist parties/ politicians 55%	Rise of extremist parties 59%	Political polarisation 68%	Fake news 76%	Lack of accountability among politicians 61%	Political polarisation 55%	Lack of accountability among politicians 66%	Economic inequality 47%
Rise of extremist parties/ politicians 48%	Lack of accountability among politicians 54%	Interference by foreign govt's/orgs 44%	Rise of extremist parties/ politicians 62%	Political polarisation 60%	Fake news 59%	Lack of accountability among politicians 53%	Lack of trust in institutions 61%	Lack of accountability among politicians 43%



Biggest threats to Democracy

Q: Which, if any, of the below do you think pose the biggest threat to democracy in your country?

	France	UK	Sweden	Netherlands	Poland	US	Spain	Croatia	Italy
Lack of accountability among politicians	49%	54%	42%	47%	76%	61%	53%	66%	43%
The spread of false information / 'fake news'	56%	64%	67%	75%	76%	59%	51%	51%	38%
Corruption	43%	49%	42%	19%	56%	63%	73%	80%	47%
The rise of extremist political parties/politicians	48%	55%	59%	62%	53%	55%	51%	39%	30%
Political polarisation / people are unable to find common ground	33%	38%	43%	68%	60%	50%	55%	38%	18%
Lack of trust in institutions	37%	44%	41%	41%	53%	39%	51%	61%	37%
Economic inequality	44%	41%	37%	31%	42%	38%	38%	50%	47%
Interference by foreign governments or organisations in [country]'s affairs	38%	40%	44%	44%	42%	29%	24%	32%	27%
The influence of wealthy donors and corporate money in politic	34%	49%	31%	32%	51%	53%	26%	54%	20%
Bias in the media	36%	50%	11%	30%	40%	47%	45%	40%	25%
Low public engagement with politics e.g. low turnout at elections, political participation	34%	40%	41%	34%	48%	24%	28%	48%	36%
Weakening of the rule of law	33%	29%	29%	38%	55%	42%	41%	41%	34%
Erosion of civil liberties e.g. freedom to express your views, to take part in political activities	24%	42%	36%	32%	35%	45%	32%	35%	32%
A decline in the freedom of the press and media	31%	28%	37%	34%	47%	38%	33%	37%	35%
Military conflict/war	42%	31%	35%	33%	56%	18%	23%	33%	34%
Lack of civic education in schools	42%	25%	27%	17%	47%	33%	33%	34%	39%



Strong anticorruption efforts and protecting the independence of the courts are seen as important to strengthening democracy in most countries, while stronger social media regulation is also key especially in countries where fake news is seen as a threat

Q: Which, if any, of the below would be most effective in strengthening democracy in your country?

France	UK	Sweden	Netherlands	Poland	US	Spain	Croatia	Italy
Stronger regulation of social media to combat the spread of hate speech and disinformation 55%	Stronger regulation of social media to combat the spread of hate speech and disinformation 52%	Protecting the independence of the courts and justice system 58%	Stronger regulation of social media to combat the spread of hate speech and disinformation 58%	Protecting the independence of the courts and justice system 70%	Stronger anti- corruption laws and enforcement 55%	Stronger anti- corruption laws and enforcement 76%	Stronger anti- corruption laws and enforcement 78%	Better civic education in schools 54%
Better civic education in schools 54%	Stronger anti- corruption laws and enforcement 51%	Stronger anti- corruption laws and enforcement 47%	Protecting the independence of the courts and justice system 57%	Better civic education in schools 65%	Stronger regulation and transparency of political donations 49%	Protecting the independence of the courts and justice system 62%	Protecting the independence of the courts and justice system 61%	Stronger anti- corruption laws and enforcement 49%
More opportunities for people to directly influence political decision e.g. referenda, citizen assemblies 51%	Stronger regulation and transparency of political donations 50%	Stronger regulation of social media to combat the spread of hate speech and disinformation 45%	Better civic education in schools 37% Stronger regulation and transparency of political donations 37%	Stronger anti- corruption laws and enforcement 63%	Protecting the independence of the courts and justice system 42%	Better civic education in schools 49%	More opportunities for people to directly influence political decision e.g. referenda, citizen assemblies 56%	Stronger regulation of social media to combat the spread of hate speech and disinformation 40%



What strengthens democracy

Q: Which, if any, of the below would be most effective in strengthening democracy in your country?

	France	UK	Sweden	Netherlands	Poland	US	Spain	Croatia	Italy
Stronger anti-corruption laws and enforcement	50%	51%	47%	26%	63%	55%	76%	78%	49%
Protecting the independence of the courts and justice system	47%	46%	58%	57%	70%	42%	62%	61%	36%
Better civic education in schools	54%	38%	43%	37%	65%	40%	49%	47%	54%
Stronger regulation of social media to combat the spread of hate speech and disinformation	55%	52%	45%	58%	52%	35%	45%	43%	40%
More opportunities for people to directly influence political decision e.g. referenda, citizen assemblies	51%	36%	37%	28%	60%	26%	44%	56%	30%
Stronger regulation and transparency of political donations	29%	50%	33%	37%	51%	49%	44%	39%	25%
Harsher penalties for breaking electoral law	44%	33%	14%	11%	55%	40%	44%	50%	20%
Making it easier for people to vote in elections	28%	31%	28%	21%	35%	36%	25%	41%	26%
Strengthening the independence of public service broadcasters	26%	25%	38%	30%	43%	24%	9%	35%	33%
Giving local government more powers / more devolution	34%	23%	12%	17%	41%	15%	13%	29%	13%
Reforming the electoral system to give winning parties/coalitions a bigger majority of seats	22%	16%	13%	25%	24%	10%	28%	16%	18%
Reforming the electoral system to give smaller parties more seats in Parliament	15%	25%	4%	5%	27%	18%	21%	31%	9%



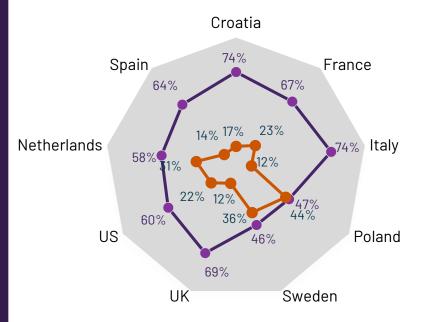
DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES

3



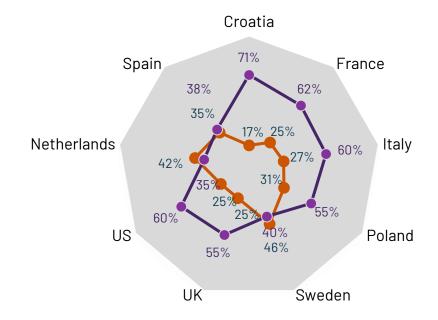
In most countries, there is a strong perception that the system is rigged

Q: From the pair of statements below, please select the one that best represents your views, even if neither is exactly right.







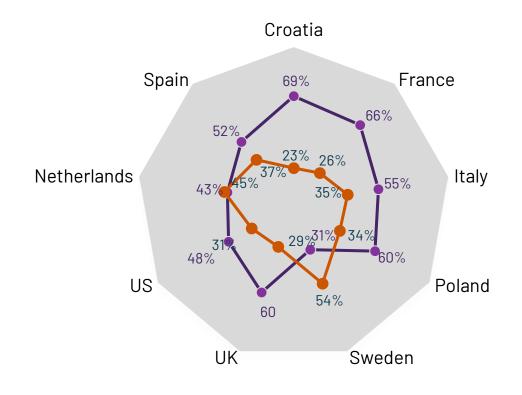


- The people who run the country put the **needs of the rich and powerful first**, they don't care much about everyone else
- The people who run the country are doing their best to **make life better for everybody**, even if they don't always get it



There is a broad desire for radical change aside from Sweden where a majority think it would be too risky

Q: From the pair of statements below, please select the one that best represents your views, even if neither is exactly right.

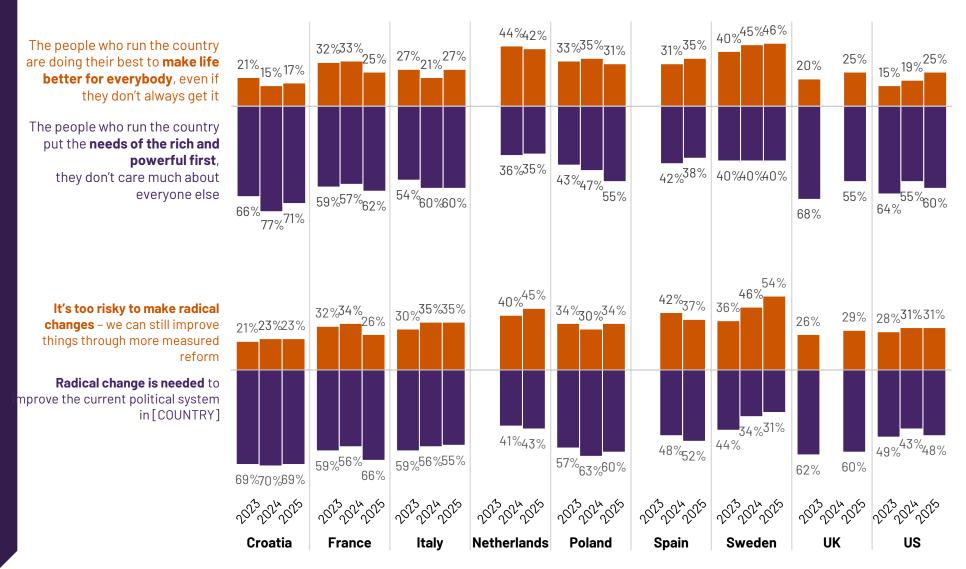


- Radical change is needed to improve the current political system in [COUNTRY]
- It's too risky to make radical changes we can still improve things through more measured reform



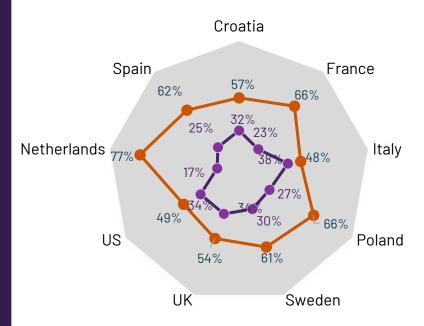
In France and
Poland perceptions
of rigged system
have increased,
while desire for
radical change is
also slightly
increasing in France
and US

Q: From the pair of statements below, please select the one that best represents your views, even if neither is exactly right.

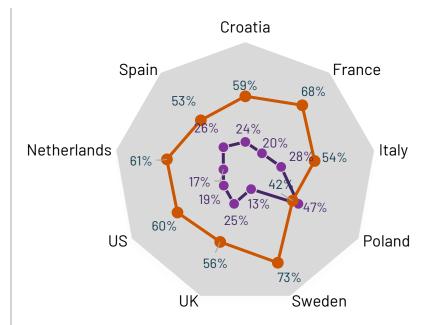


Across most countries there continues to be a preference for compromise and legislative checks and balances

Q: From the pair of statements below, please select the one that best represents your views, even if neither is exactly right.



- I prefer a political leader who sticks to their principles regardless of what others think
- I prefer a **political leader who is prepared to compromise** to build consensus with others

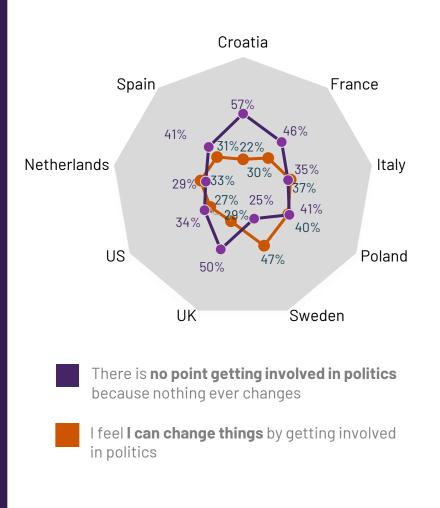


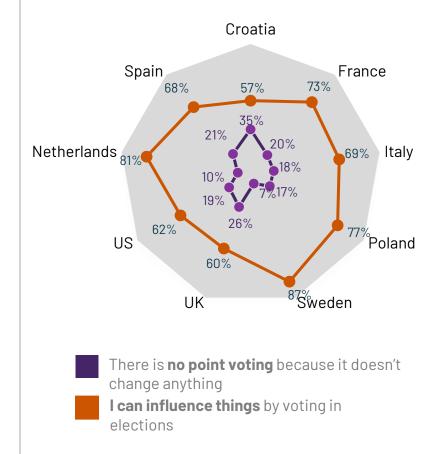
- Many of the country's problems could be dealt with more effectively if the Prime Minister/ President didn't have to worry so much about votes in Parliament/Congress
- It would be too risky to give the Prime Minister
 / President more power to deal directly with
 many of the country's problems



There continues to be a strong perception that voting can influence things, though across countries the public are split on whether getting involved in politics can change things

Q: From the pair of statements below, please select the one that best represents your views, even if neither is exactly right.

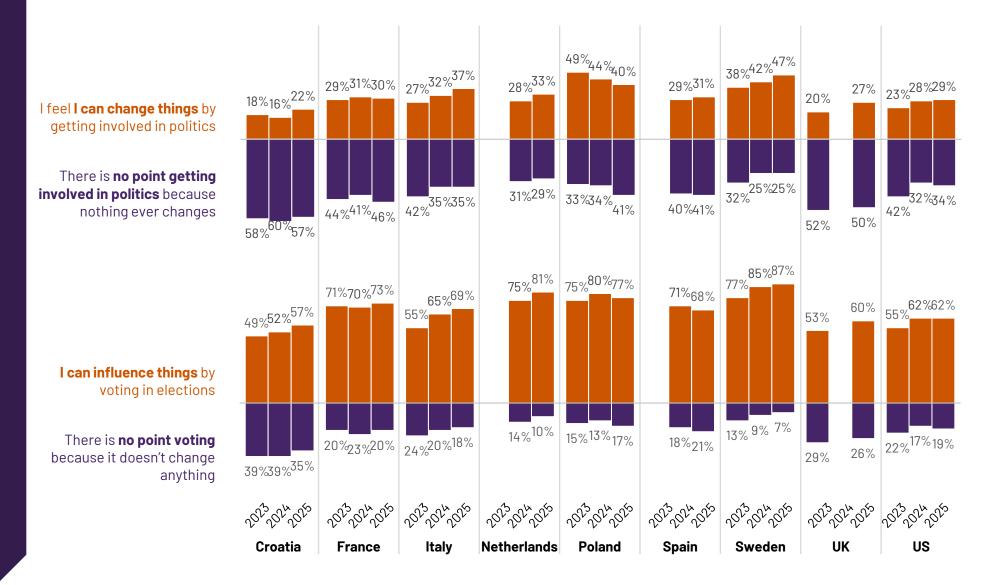






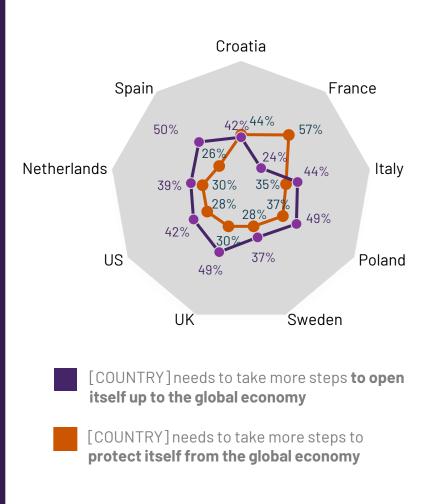
There are slightly more saying political participation leads to change in Croatia, Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands and **UK**, but declining perceptions in **Poland**

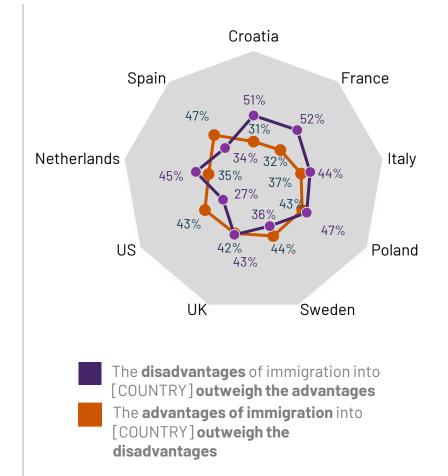
Q: From the pair of statements below, please select the one that best represents your views, even if neither is exactly right.



Most countries
slightly lean
towards open
economies (except
France), but are
split on the
advantages and
disadvantages of
immigration

Q: From the pair of statements below, please select the one that best represents your views, even if neither is exactly right.







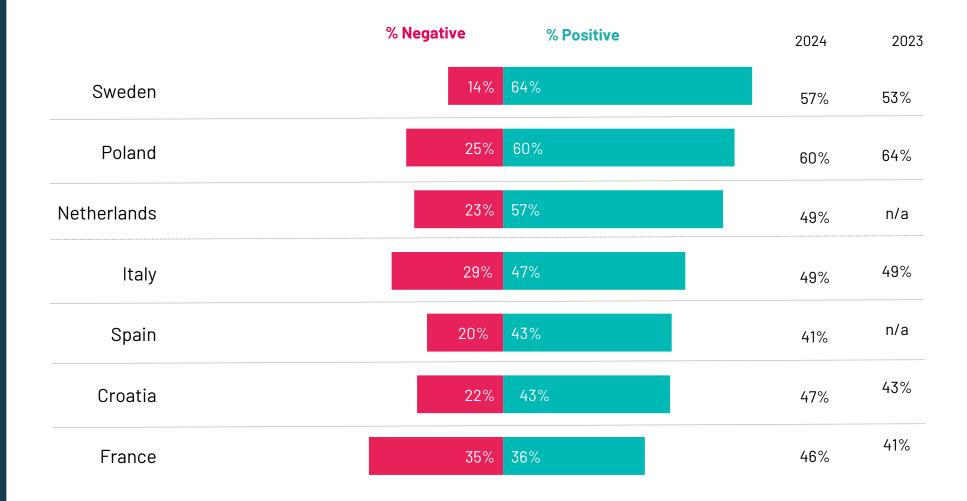
ATTITUDES TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

4



Attitudes towards the European Union have improved in Sweden and Netherlands, but deteriorated in France and Croatia

Q: In general, do you have a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image of the European Union?

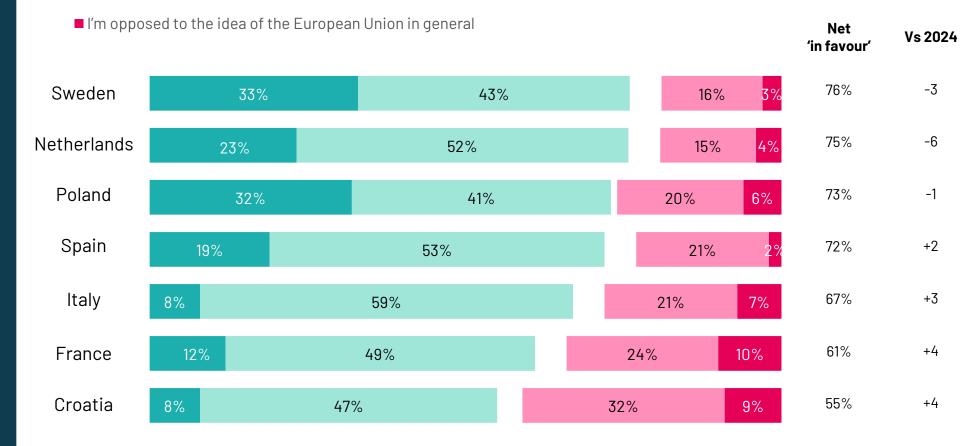




Despite general favourability towards the EU, only a minority think it is working well at the moment

Q: Which of the following statements regarding the European Union is closest to your opinion?

- I'm in favour of the European Union and the way it is working at present
- I'm rather in favour of the European Union, but not the way it is working at present
- I'm rather sceptical of the European Union, but could change my opinion if the way it works was really changed





METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX



About this study

This survey was conducted September 12 to 29, 2025 using KnowledgePanel®, Ipsos' probability-based panels in Croatia, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States.

The survey was based on nationally representative probability samples of 16/18+ y.o. The study was conducted in the official language of each European country and in English in the United Kingdom and the United States. Two reminder emails were sent for this study. No prenotification for this study was sent prior to field.

Data was weighed to match the profile of the respective country population. All polls are subject to a wide range of potential sources of error.

Base 2025: Adults aged 18+, Croatia = 1,001, France = 1,001, Italy = 1,003 Netherlands = 882, Poland = 801, Spain = 800, Sweden = 1,002, US = 1,024, UK = 2,380 adults aged 16+, Ipsos KnowledgePanel, 12-29 September 2025

Base 2024: Adults aged 18+, Croatia = 1,002, France = 1,005, Italy = 1,006 Netherlands = 1,001, Poland = 1,001, Spain = 500, Sweden = 1,002, US = 1,091, Ipsos KnowledgePanel, 13-27 September 2024

Base 2023: Adults aged 16/18+ Croatia = 998, France = 1,310, Italy= 1,224, Poland = 1151, Sweden = 1,413, US = 1,053, Ipsos KnowledgePanel, 21-30 September 2023



Weighting procedures

For each country, the data were weighting to adjust for unequal probabilities of selection. Additionally, calibration weights were applied as follows:

Croatia

Gender by Age (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Region (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Education (based on 2023, Eurostat) Employment status (based on 2023, Eurostat)

France

Gender by Age (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Region (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Education (based on 2023, Eurostat) Employment status (based on 2023, Eurostat)

Italy

Gender by Age (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Region (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Education (based on 2023, Eurostat) Employment status (based on 2023, Eurostat)

Netherlands

Gender by Age (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Region (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Education (based on 2023, Eurostat) Employment status (based on 2023, Eurostat)

Poland

Gender by Age (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Region (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Education (based on 2023, Eurostat) Employment status (based on 2023, Eurostat)

Spain

Gender by Age (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Region (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Education (based on 2023, Eurostat) Employment status (based on 2023, Eurostat)

Sweden

Gender by Age (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Region (based on 2023 population statistics, Eurostat) Education (based on 2023, Eurostat) Employment status (based on 2023, Eurostat)

US

Gender by Age (based on 2024 Current Population Survey, US Census Bureau)

Race/Hispanic Ethnicity (based on 2024 Current Population Survey, US Census Bureau)

Education (based on 2024 Current Population Survey, US Census Bureau) Census Region (based on 2024 Current Population Survey, US Census Bureau)

Metropolitan status (based on 2024Current Population Survey, US Census Bureau)

Household Income (based on 2024 Current Population Survey, US Census Bureau)

Party ID (based on 2024 National Public Opinion Reference Survey)

UK

Gender by Age (based on ONS 2022 mid-year population estimates)
Region (based on ONS 2022 mid-year population estimates)
Education (Highest Level of Qualification Achieved by People Living in UK Regions, 2018)

Ethnicity (based on Annual Population Survey year ending September 2023) Index of Multiple Deprivation (quintiles) (based on ONS 2022 mid-year population estimates)

Number of adults in the household (Census 2021/2022)



About Ipsos KnowledgePanel®

KnowledgePanel® is Ipsos' random probability panel and a source of statistically-valid, nationally representative data at speed. The recruitment process for the KnowledgePanel® employs scientifically developed sampling methodologies.

In the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the United States, panelists are recruited via addressbased sampling methods using databases with full or near full coverage of the population:

- BAG, the official cadaster register in the Netherlands,
- PESEL, Polish national population register
- Catastro inmobiliario, the official cadaster register in Spain,
- SPAR, the Swedish state personal address register in Sweden,

- the Postcode Address File in the UK
- and the Delivery Sequence File of the USPS in the U.S.

In these countries, letters are sent to selected individuals or addresses inviting them to become members of the panel. Invited households can sign up to the panel by completing a short online survey or by returning a paper form.

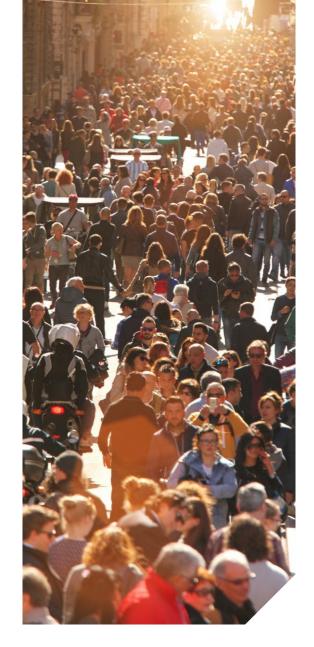
In Croatia, France, Italy, panelists are recruited via random probability telephone-based sampling method. Telephone numbers are randomly generated using an algorithm that conforms to the properties of valid phone numbers in a country to obtain a representative sample of the country population. A dual frame design ensures coverage of households with only a landline phone and maximises contact with dual phone owners. People are

called for the short recruitment survey.

In France and Poland, a combination of probability telephone-based and address-based sampling were employed for panel recruitment.

Those who join the panel and who are selected to participate in a survey are sent a unique log-in and are only able to complete it one time. KnowledgePanel® members receive a per survey incentive in points, that can be redeemed for cash or prizes.

In the UK and US, panelists who do not already have internet access are provided a tablet and internet connection at no cost to the panel member. In the other countries, those who are digitally excluded are registered to the KnowledgePanel by telephone and are then interviewed for surveys via telephone.





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At Ipsos we believe our clients need more than a data supplier, they need a partner who can produce accurate and relevant information and turn it into actionable truth.

This is why our passionately curious experts not only provide the most precise measurement, but shape it to provide True Understanding of Society, Markets and People.

To do this we use the best of science, technology and know-how and apply the principles of security, simplicity, speed and substance to everything we do.

So that our clients can act faster, smarter and bolder. Ultimately, success comes down to a simple truth: **You act better when you are sure.**

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Ipsos KnowledgePanel STATE OF DEMOCRACY TRACKER

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