



# Special Eurobarometer 512

## Summary

### EU citizens and development cooperation

Fieldwork  
November-December 2020  
Publication  
April 2021

Survey requested by the European Commission,  
Directorate-General for International Partnerships  
and co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication

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

Special Eurobarometer 512 – Wave EB94.2 – Kantar





# Special Eurobarometer 512

## Summary

### EU citizens and development cooperation

Survey conducted by Kantar Brussels at the request of the European Commission,  
Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA)

Survey co-ordinated by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication  
(DG COMM "Media monitoring and Eurobarometer" Unit)

Project title

Special Eurobarometer 512  
“EU citizens and development cooperation”  
Report

© European Union, 2021

<https://www.europa.eu/eurobarometer>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>I. IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION</b>	<b>4</b>
1 Importance of the EU partnering with other countries to reduce poverty around the world	4
2 Tackling poverty in developing countries as one of the main priorities for the EU and national governments	6
3 Importance of tackling social inequalities in developing countries	11
4 Importance of tackling climate change in developing countries	13
<b>II. SUCCESS OF EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION</b>	<b>15</b>
1 Perceived success of the EU tackling poverty around the world	15
2 Perceived success of the EU tackling climate change around the world	17
<b>III. UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES FACING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>IV. STRENGTHENING THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE EU AND AFRICA</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>V. IMPORTANCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN TACKLING CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES</b>	<b>25</b>
1 Importance of young people tackling environmental challenges in developing countries	26
2 Importance of young people tackling economic and social challenges in developing countries	27
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>ANNEXES</b>	
Technical specifications	
Questionnaire	
Tables	



## INTRODUCTION

The European Union and its Member States are still the biggest global donors of official development aid. Preliminary figures by the OECD indicate Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided by the EU and its Member States to be EUR 75.2 billion in 2019, representing 0.46% of EU Gross National Income (GNI), providing 55% of global ODA<sup>1</sup>.

In 2019, EU development assistance slightly increased in nominal terms compared to 2018 levels (by EUR 501 million). ODA as a share of GNI actually decreased slightly between 2018 and 2019<sup>2</sup>.

EU development policy is aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which provides a framework for action and a shared vision for Member States in assisting developing countries. The focus of this shared vision remains the eradication of poverty, but also integrates economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainable development, as well as links with other policy fields like peace and security, and migration.

Within the 2030 timeframe of the 2030 Agenda, the EU is committed to providing 0.7% of Gross National Income as development assistance. Luxembourg, Sweden and Denmark already meet or exceed this target.

This survey follows previous surveys on this topic, including those conducted annually since 2009<sup>3</sup>. The objectives of the current survey are to:

- Review the attitudes of EU citizens towards the importance of helping people in developing countries and tackling poverty in these areas, in addition to opinions towards doing so through partnerships with developing countries;
- Assess the degree to which EU citizens feel that tackling poverty should be a priority for the EU, as well as for national governments;
- Estimate the importance EU citizens attribute to helping people in developing countries in the areas of social inequalities and climate change;
- Evaluate the perceived success, as seen through the lens of EU citizens, of the EU's efforts at tackling poverty and addressing climate change around the world;
- Understand EU citizens' perceptions of the challenges they consider most pressing for the future of developing countries;
- Assess the level of support for strengthening the EU-Africa partnership;
- Evaluate EU citizens' opinions about the importance of young people tackling economic, social, and environmental challenges in developing countries.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP\\_20\\_674](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_674)

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/memo-qa-on-preliminary-figures-2019-oda\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/memo-qa-on-preliminary-figures-2019-oda_en.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> For the most recent report (2019) see

[https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2252\\_91\\_5\\_494\\_ENG](https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2252_91_5_494_ENG)

This survey was carried out by the Kantar network in the 27 EU Member States between the 20<sup>th</sup> of November and the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 2020. Some 27,213 respondents from different social and demographic groups were interviewed in their mother tongue. This survey was commissioned by the European Commission, Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) as it was called at the time of project commission, now Directorate General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA).

The methodology used is that of Eurobarometer surveys as carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication (“Media monitoring and Eurobarometer” Unit). Given the impact of COVID-19 and subsequent health safety measures, the face-to-face methodology was either not possible or only to a certain extent in some countries. In Bulgaria, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, and Romania all interviews were conducted face to face. Face to face was complemented with online interviews in Denmark, Germany, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia, and Sweden. Lastly, in Belgium, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, and Slovenia all interviews were conducted online<sup>4</sup>. A technical note on the manner in which the interviews were conducted by the institutes within the Kantar network is appended as an annex to this report. Also included are the interview methods and the confidence intervals.

**Note:** In this report, Member States are referred to by their official abbreviation. The abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

Belgium	BE	Lithuania	LT
Bulgaria	BG	Luxembourg	LU
Czechia	CZ	Hungary	HU
Denmark	DK	Malta	MT
Germany	DE	The Netherlands	NL
Estonia	EE	Austria	AT
Greece	EL	Poland	PL
Spain	ES	Portugal	PT
France	FR	Romania	RO
Croatia	HR	Slovenia	SI
Ireland	IE	Slovakia	SK
Italy	IT	Finland	FI
Republic of Cyprus*	CY	Sweden	SE
Latvia	LV		
European Union – weighted average for the 27 EU Member States			EU27

\* Cyprus as a whole is one of the 27 EU Member States. However, the *acquis communautaire* has been suspended in the part of the country not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews carried out in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are included in the “CY” category and the EU28 average.

*We wish to thank the people throughout Europe  
who have given their time to take part in this survey.  
Without their active participation, this study would not have been possible.*

<sup>4</sup> Online interviewing took the form of probabilistic panels and access panels, depending on what is available in the country.



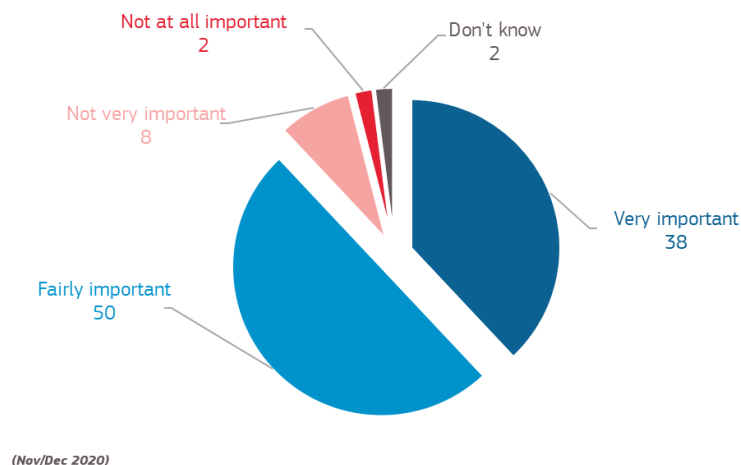
## I. IMPORTANCE OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The first part of this summary focuses on opinions about the importance of development cooperation. Firstly, it presents the perceived importance of the EU partnering with other countries to reduce poverty in developing countries, and whether tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities for the EU or national governments. Subsequent sections look into the importance of tackling social inequalities in developing countries, and the extent to which respondents think it is important to tackle climate change in developing countries.

### 1 Importance of the EU partnering with other countries to reduce poverty around the world

A clear majority (88%) of EU citizens say it is important for the EU to partner with other countries to reduce poverty around the world. Over one third of respondents (38%) think it is very important for the EU to partner with other countries to reduce poverty around the world, while 50% say it's fairly important. On the other hand, only 8% think it is not very important, while 2% think it's not important at all<sup>5</sup>.

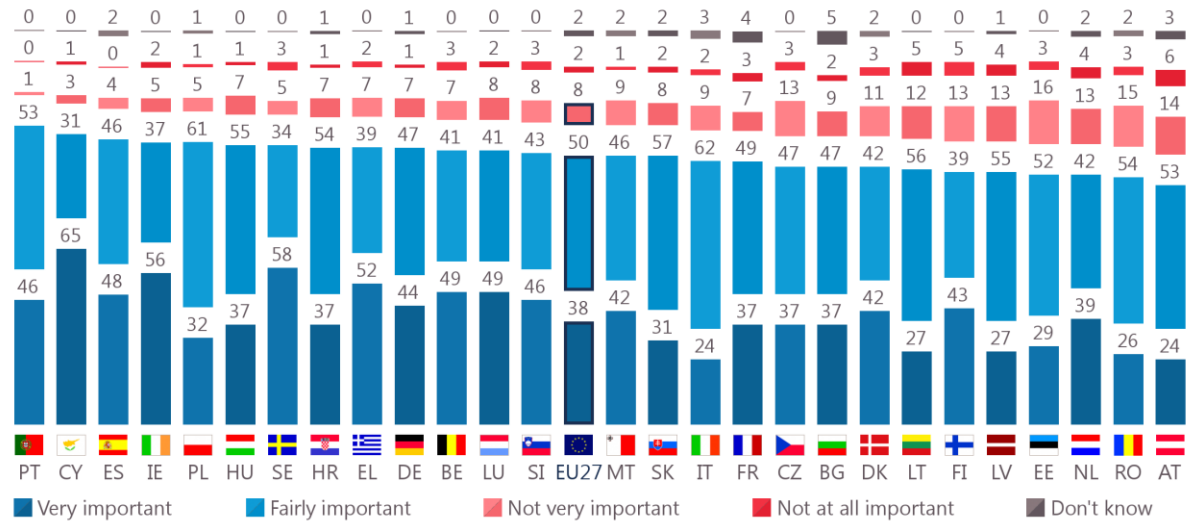
**QE1** In your opinion how important or not is it to partner with countries outside the EU to reduce poverty around the world? (% - EU)



<sup>5</sup> QE1. In your opinion how important or not is it to partner with countries outside the EU to reduce poverty around the world? Very important; fairly important; not very important; not at all important; don't know

Country-specific patterns reveal some differences. In ten countries, more than nine in ten respondents think it's important for the EU to partner with other countries to reduce poverty around the world. Proportions range from 99% in Portugal, 96% in Cyprus, 94% in Spain, 93% in Ireland and Poland to 77% in Austria, 80% in Romania and 81% in the Netherlands, and Estonia.

**QE1** In your opinion how important or not is it to partner with countries outside the EU to reduce poverty around the world? (%)



The socio-demographic analysis shows no difference in opinion between men and women, but does illustrate the following:

- Among socio-professional categories students are most likely to think it is important to partner with countries outside the EU, especially compared to house persons (92% vs. 81% respectively).
- A respondent's financial situation also slightly impacts their opinion: the less difficulty they have paying the bills, the more likely they are to think that partnering with other countries to reduce poverty is important. For example, 89% of those with the least financial difficulties say this is important, compared to 84% of those who experience the most difficulties.
- Respondents who use the Internet every day are more likely to say it is important for the EU to partner with other countries to reduce poverty than those who never go online (89% vs. 81% respectively).
- Respondents who identify as being on the left (94%) or centre (89%) are much more likely to say that partnering with other countries to reduce poverty around the world is important than those on the right (83%).
- Those who hold a positive image of the EU are much more likely to agree with the proposed statement than those who hold a negative image (95% vs. 71%). Respondents who agree that tackling poverty in developing countries should be a priority for the EU are also more likely (95%) to think it's important to partner with countries outside the EU to reduce poverty around the world than those who don't think this should be a priority (66%).

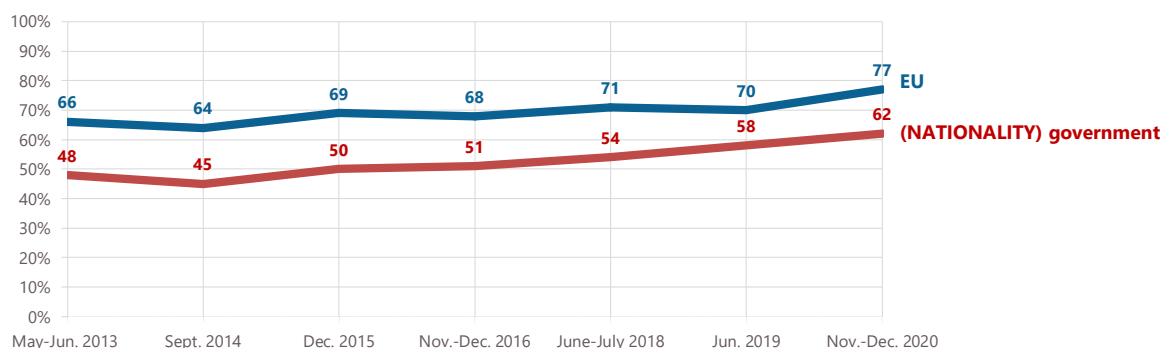
## 2 Tackling poverty in developing countries as one of the main priorities for the EU and national governments

### More than seven in ten agree that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU, while about six in ten say this about their national government

Respondents are more likely to think that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU than to think that it should be a priority of their national government. This pattern continues what has been witnessed in previous surveys.

**QE2.1-2** To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the...

Total 'Agree' (% - EU)



Nearly eight in ten (77%) think that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU, with 30% saying they totally agree and 47% tending to agree<sup>6</sup>. Fewer respondents (62%) agree that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of their national government, with 21% 'totally agreeing' and 41% who 'tend to agree'<sup>7</sup>.

Compared to 2018, respondents are slightly more likely to think that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of their national government (+4 percentage points), while this increase is more marked for the EU (+7 pp).

The long-term trends show that in both cases, agreement has steadily, if gradually, increased since 2013, after dipping slightly in 2014. The gap over the past four years has persistently been more than ten percentage points.

<sup>6</sup> QE2.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU. Totally agree; Tend to agree; Tend to disagree; Totally disagree; Don't know.

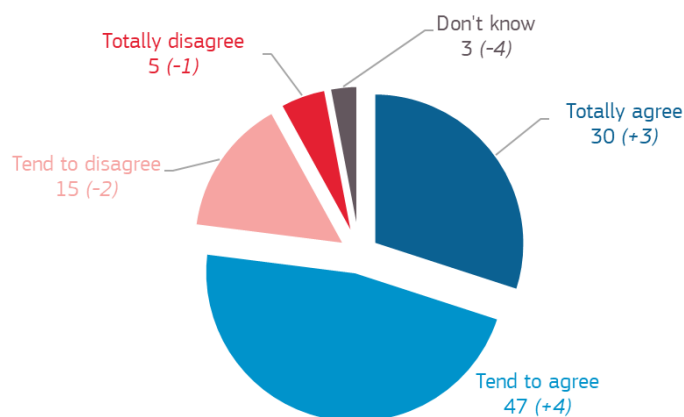
<sup>7</sup> QE2.2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the (Nationality) government. Totally agree; Tend to agree; Tend to disagree; Totally disagree; Don't know.

## Tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU

A clear majority (77%) of EU citizens say tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU. Close to one third of respondents (30%) 'totally agree' that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU, while 47% tend to agree, 15% 'tend to disagree' and 5% 'totally disagree'. Few respondents (3%) say they "don't know", a 4-percentage points reduction since 2019.

Between 2019 and 2020 the proportion of respondents who say tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU has increased notably (+7 pp).

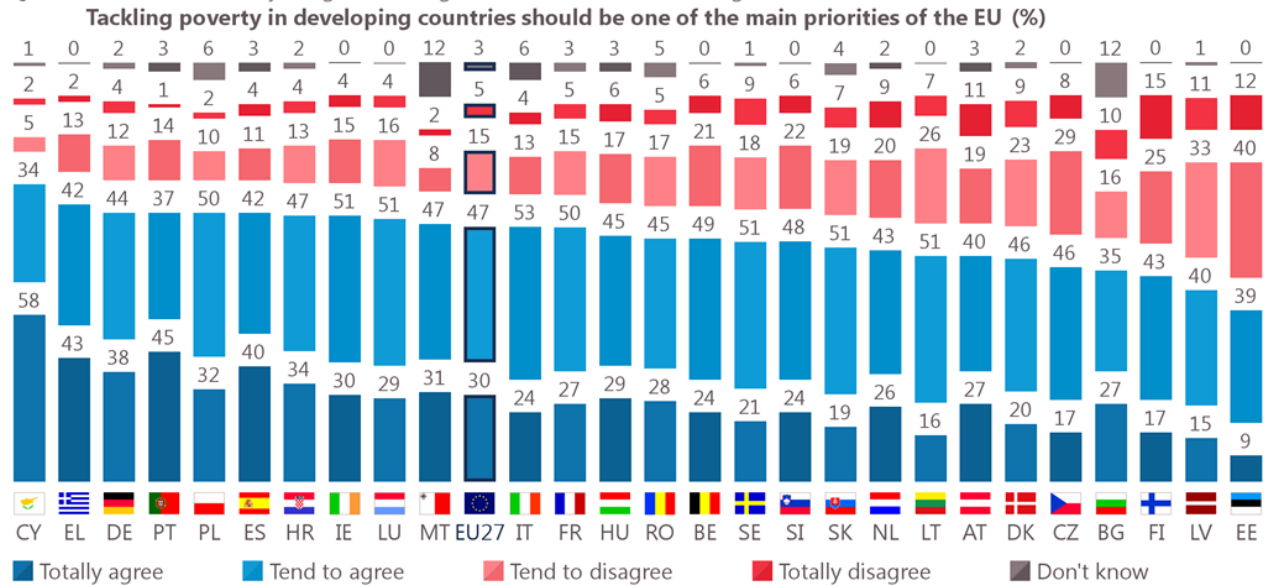
**QE2.1** To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:  
**Tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU (% - EU)**



(Nov/Dec 2020 - June/July 2019)

Although 77% of respondents think tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU, considerable differences exist at the country level. Although in all but one EU country more than half agree, proportions range from 92% in Cyprus, 85% in Greece, and 82% in Portugal, Poland, Spain, and Germany, to 55% in Latvia and 60% in Finland. In Estonia fewer than half of the respondents (48%) agree that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU.

QE2.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:



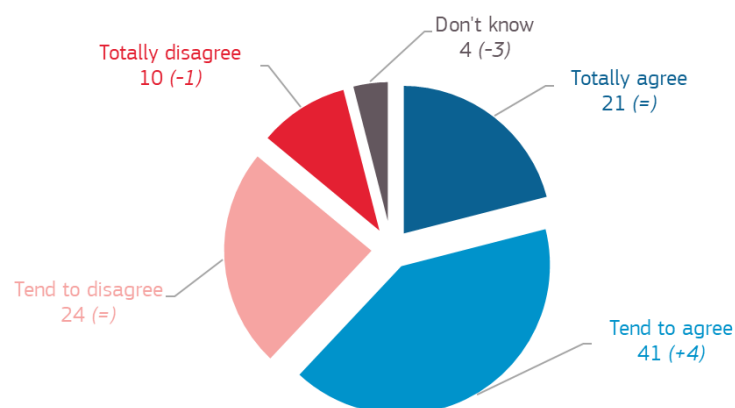
The trends since 2019 are fairly uniform. In two countries – Finland (-7 pp) and Denmark (-4 pp) – respondents are now less likely to think tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU. Conversely, there are 25 countries where respondents are more likely to agree, with the largest increase seen in Estonia (+14 pp).

## Tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the national government

A clear majority (62%) of EU citizens say that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the national government, with 21% of respondents 'totally agreeing' that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the national government. Nearly double the percentage of respondents tend to agree (41%), while 24% 'tend to disagree' and 10% 'totally disagree'.

Between 2019 and 2020 the proportion of respondents who 'tend to agree' that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the national government has increased (+4 pp).

**QE2.2** To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:  
**Tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the (NATIONALITY) government (% - EU)**

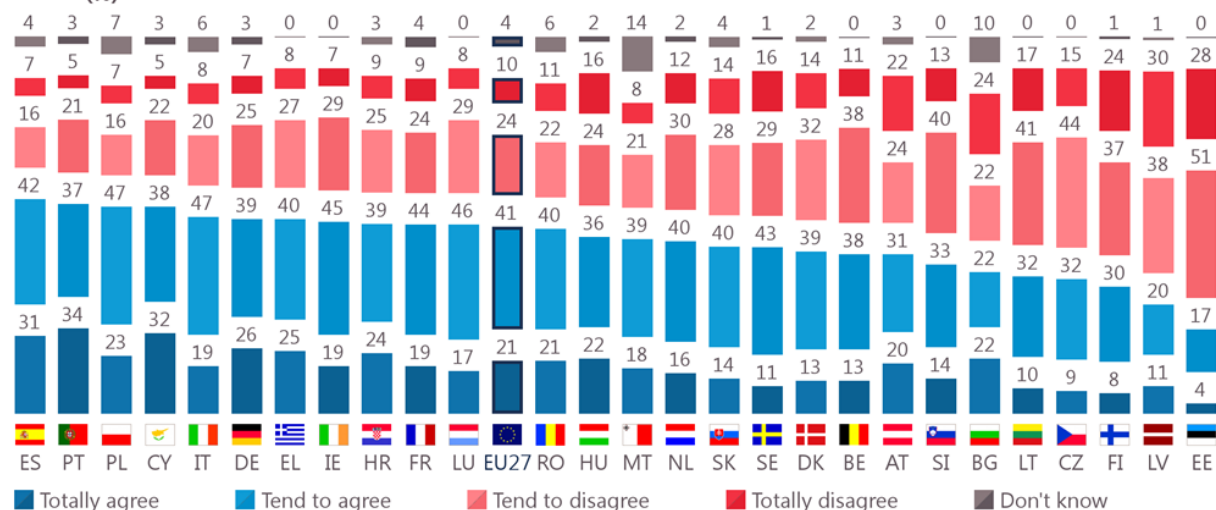


(Nov/Dec 2020 - June/July 2019)

There are 20 countries where more than half think tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the national government, with the highest proportions in Spain (73%), Portugal (71%), and Poland and Cyprus (70%). At the other end of the scale, 21% in Estonia, 31% in Latvia, 38% in Finland and 41% in Czechia think the same.

QE2.2 To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

**Tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the (NATIONALITY) government (%)**



The trends are also fairly uniform regarding the question of tackling poverty in developing countries as one of the main priorities of the national government. In 20 countries, respondents are now more likely to agree this should be one of the main priorities of their national government. The largest increases are seen in Greece (+23 percentage points), Lithuania (+15 pp), and Croatia (+14 pp). Conversely, respondents in Belgium (-5 pp), and Slovenia and Denmark (-4 pp) are now less likely to think this way than they were in 2019.

The socio-demographic analysis shows no difference in opinion between men and women, but does illustrate the following:

- There are only minor differences between age groups regarding both questions. For example, 79% of respondents aged 15-24 think that this should be one of the main priorities of the **EU** while 77% of those aged 55 and over think this. Differences in that respect were more pronounced in 2019.
- Respondents who are still studying (79%) are more likely than those who finished education aged 15 or younger (74%) to think this should be a priority for the **EU**.
- Respondents who state they never / almost never having difficulties paying their bills (78%) are more likely to say tackling poverty in developing countries should be a main priority for the **EU** than those who have difficulty paying bills most of the time (72%).
- The difference is more pronounced in terms of Internet use of the respondents, with those who indicate using the Internet every day more likely (78%) than their counterparts who never use the Internet (72%) to think this should be a priority of the **EU**.
- Finally, respondents who think that tackling poverty in developing countries should be a priority for the **EU** are much more likely to also agree that tackling poverty in developing countries should be a priority for their **national government** than those who do not think it should be a priority (79% vs. 10%).

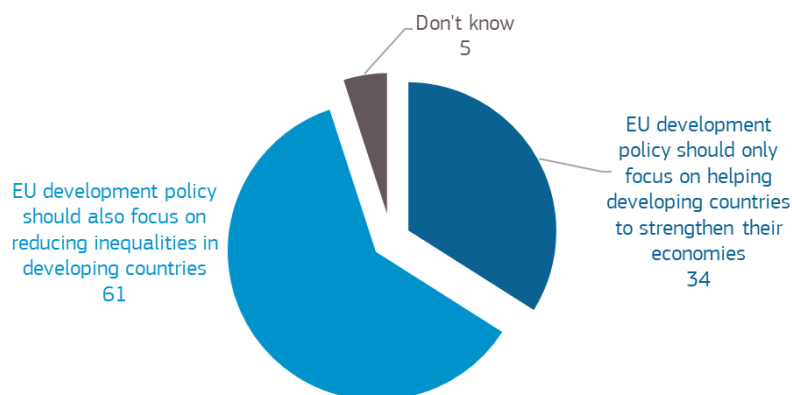
### 3 Importance of tackling social inequalities in developing countries

#### **More than six in ten respondents think that EU development policy should focus on reducing inequalities in developing countries and not only on helping developing countries strengthen their economies**

61% of respondents in the EU think that EU development policy should focus on reducing inequalities in developing countries, while 34% think that EU development policy should only focus on helping developing countries to strengthen their economies. 5% indicate that they don't know<sup>8</sup>.

As this is a new question, no trend data is available.

**QE6** When you think about European Union development policy, which of the following statement is closest to what you think? (% - EU)



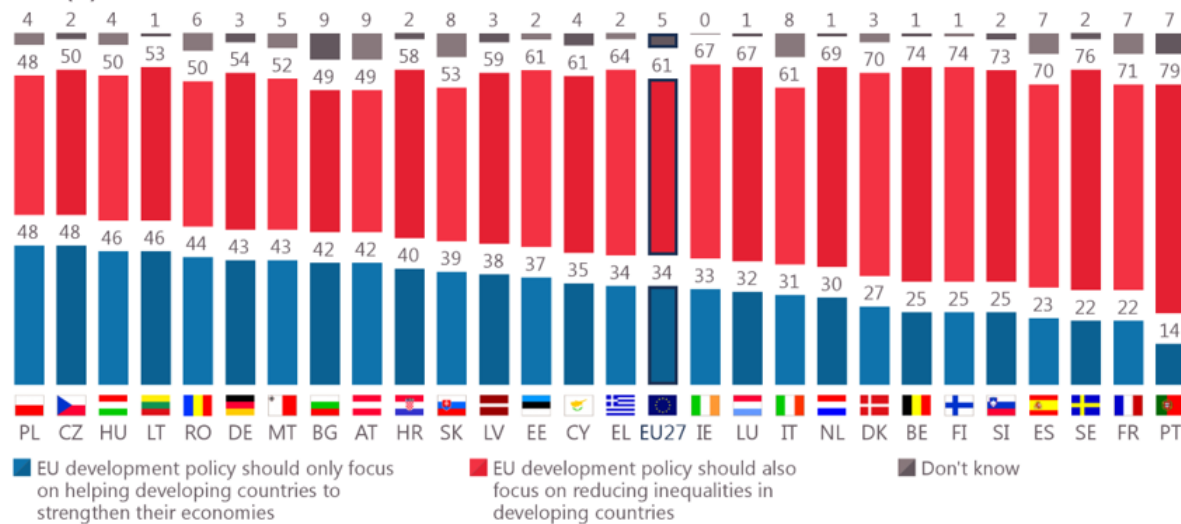
(Nov/Dec 2020)

There are eight countries where 70% or more of respondents think that EU development policy should focus on reducing inequalities in developing countries, with the highest proportions found in Portugal (79%), Sweden (76%), and Finland and Belgium (both 74%). The highest proportions of respondents who think that EU development policy should only focus on helping developing countries to strengthen their economies are found in Czechia and Poland (both 48%), Hungary and Lithuania (both 46%), and in Romania (44%).

<sup>8</sup> When you think about European Union development policy, which of the following statement is closest to what you think? EU development policy should only focus on helping developing countries to strengthen their economies; EU development policy should also focus on reducing inequalities in developing countries; don't know.



**QE6** When you think about European Union development policy, which of the following statement is closest to what you think? (%)



The socio-demographic analysis shows no clear difference in opinion between men and women, nor among different age groups, but does illustrate the following:

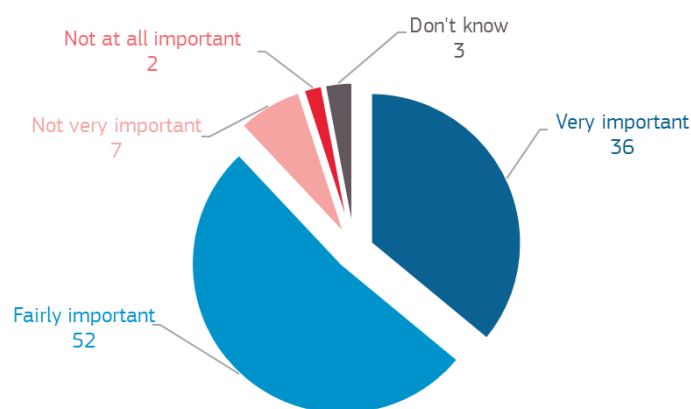
- Respondents who completed their education aged 20 or older are substantially more likely (64%) than those who finished their education when they were 15 or younger (55%) to think that EU development policy should also focus on reducing inequalities in developing countries.
- Those who indicate using the Internet every day are more likely (63%) than their counterparts who never use the Internet (53%) to think that EU development policy should also focus on reducing inequalities in developing countries.
- Those who experience the most difficulties paying bills are the least likely to say EU development policy should only focus on strengthening developing countries' economies: 29% of those who experience difficulties paying bills most of the time think so compared to 34% who experience the least difficulties paying bills. Interestingly, there is no difference between these respondents' answers when it comes to EU development policy also focusing on reducing inequalities in developing countries (62% for both), likely due to respondents who have difficulty paying bills most of the time being twice as likely as those who never / almost never have difficulty paying bills to say they "don't know" (9% vs. 4% respectively).
- Attitudes concerning the need to partner with countries to reduce poverty also influences opinions on EU development policy: 63% of those who say it is important to partner with countries to reduce poverty also agree that EU development policy should also focus on reducing inequalities in developing countries, compared to 51% of those who don't.
- In addition, 64% of those who say that tackling poverty in developing countries should be a priority for the EU also agree that EU development policy should also focus on reducing inequalities in developing countries compared to 54% of those who disagree that tackling poverty in developing countries should be a priority for the EU.

## 4 Importance of tackling climate change in developing countries

### EU citizens overwhelmingly agree that it is important for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries

A clear majority (88%) of EU citizens say it is important for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries. Of these, 36% of respondents say it is very important for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries, 52% think it's fairly important, 7% think it's not very important and 2% think it's not important at all<sup>9</sup>.

**QE5** The European Green Deal, which aims to provide a just and inclusive climate transition for Europe, also applies to the EU's partnerships with developing countries. In your opinion, how important or not is it for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries? (% - EU)



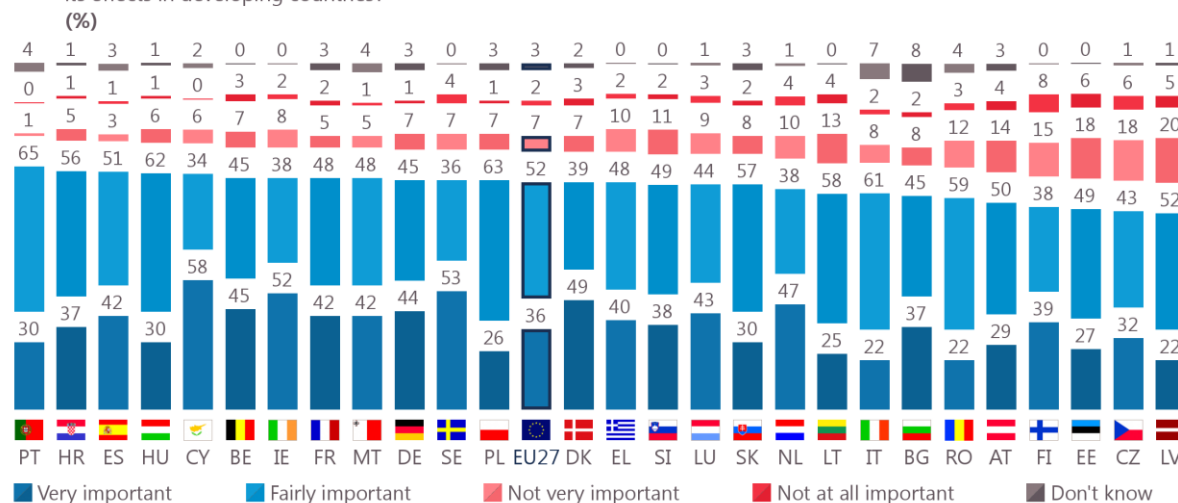
(Nov/Dec 2020)

There are seven countries where more than 90% think it is important for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries, with the highest proportions in Portugal (95%), Croatia and Spain (93%), and Hungary and Cyprus (92%). At the other end of the scale, 74% in Latvia, 75% in Czechia, and 76% in Estonia think the same.

Cyprus (58%), Sweden (53%) and Ireland (52%) are the only countries where at least half of the respondents think it is very important for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries. At the other end of the scale 22% in Italy, Latvia, and Romania, 25% in Lithuania, 26% in Poland and 27% in Estonia say this.

<sup>9</sup> QE5. The European Green Deal, which aims to provide a just and inclusive climate transition for Europe, also applies to the EU's partnerships with developing countries. In your opinion, how important or not is it for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries? Very important; fairly important; not very important; not important at all; don't know

**QE5** The European Green Deal, which aims to provide a just and inclusive climate transition for Europe, also applies to the EU's partnerships with developing countries. In your opinion, how important or not is it for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries?



The socio-demographic analysis shows no discernable difference in opinion between men and women, but does illustrate the following:

- The youngest respondents are slightly more likely than those aged 55 and over to think it is important for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries (90% vs. 86% respectively). These differences are more pronounced when looking at respondents who think it is “very important” (41% of those aged 15-24 vs. 34% of those aged 55 and over).
- Respondents who completed their education aged 20 or older (90%) are more likely to think it is important for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries than those who finished their education when they were aged 15 or younger (81%).
- Respondents who experience difficulties paying bills most of the time (81%) are the least likely to think it is important for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries, especially when compared to those who never / almost never experience such difficulties (89%).
- The difference is also very pronounced in terms of the Internet use of respondents, with those who indicate using the Internet every day more likely (89%) than their counterparts who never use the Internet (77%) to agree with this statement.
- Respondents who identify as being on the left of the political spectrum are more likely (94%) than those in the centre (88%) or on the right (82%) to agree with the statement.
- Opinion is also influenced by attitudes to development cooperation and tackling poverty in developing countries, with respondents who think that tackling poverty in developing countries should be a priority of the EU (93%) much more likely to also think it is important for the EU to also tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries compared to respondents who disagree that tackling poverty in developing countries should be a priority of the EU (69%).



## II. SUCCESS OF EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Previous chapters demonstrate that EU citizens are largely in favour of the EU and their national governments prioritising tackling poverty in developing countries. EU citizens also overwhelmingly agree that it is important for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries, with many people also thinking that EU development policy should focus on reducing inequalities in developing countries.

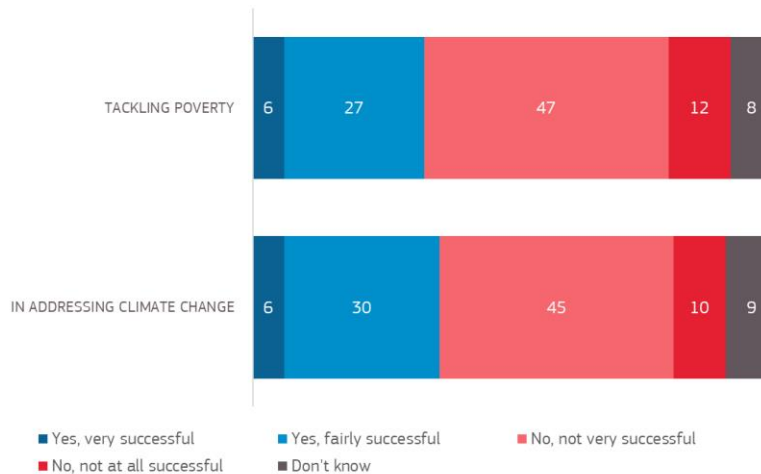
### 1 Perceived success of the EU tackling poverty around the world

#### More than half of all EU citizens think that the EU is not successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world, in tackling poverty or climate change

A majority (59%) of EU citizens think that the EU is not successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world, in terms of tackling poverty. Only 33% of respondents think the EU is successful on this front. Twice as many people (12%) think the EU is not at all successful in tackling poverty than those who think the EU is very successful (6%) on this topic<sup>10</sup>.

The numbers are very similar in terms of the EU's efforts to address climate change. 36% of respondents think the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world, in terms of addressing climate change. 6% think the EU is very successful on this front. A total of 55% of respondents think the EU is not successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world, in terms of addressing climate change, with 10% thinking the EU is not at all successful on this question.

QE8.1-2 Do you think that currently, the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world, in the following areas:  
(% - EU)



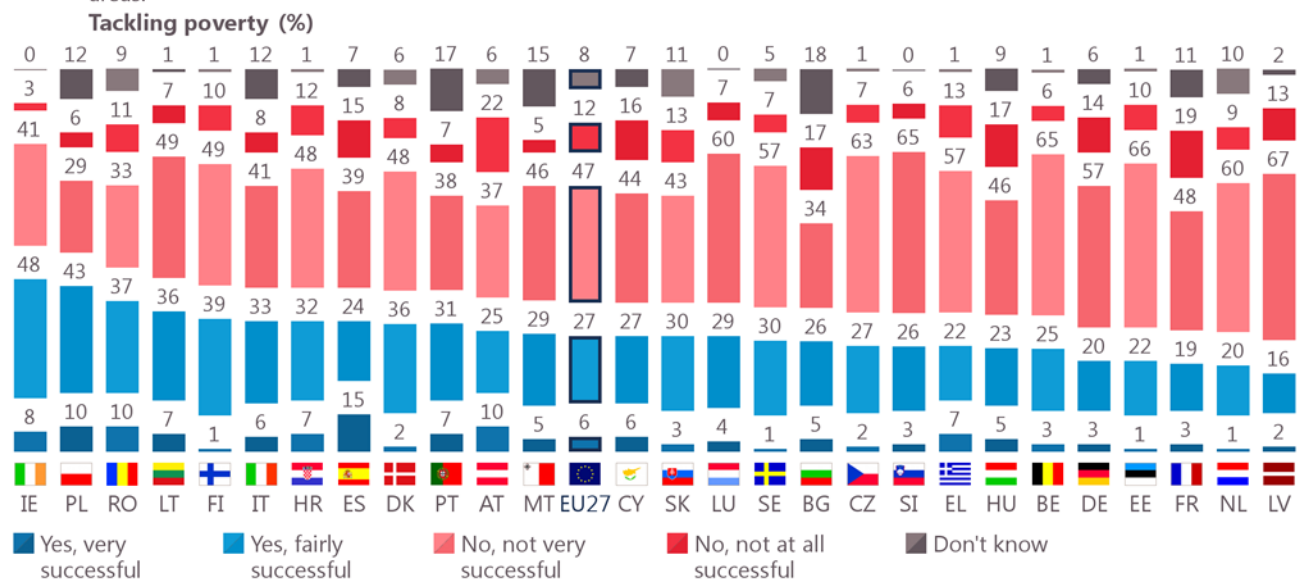
There are only two countries where more than 50% of respondents think the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world, in terms of tackling poverty: Ireland (56%) and

<sup>10</sup> QE8.1 - Do you think that currently, the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world, in the following areas: in tackling poverty? Yes, very successful; Yes, fairly successful; No, not very successful; No, not successful at all; don't know  
QE8.2 - Do you think that currently, the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world, in the following areas: in tackling climate change? Yes, very successful; Yes, fairly successful; No, not very successful; No, not successful at all; don't know

Poland (53%). At the other end of the scale, 18% in Latvia, 21% in the Netherlands, and 22% in France think this.

Countries with the most negative appraisal of the EU’s success in driving positive, sustainable change around the world in terms of tackling poverty are Latvia (80%), Estonia (76%), and Slovenia, Belgium and Germany (all 71%), where more than seven in ten respondents say that the EU has been unsuccessful on this front.

**QE8.1** Do you think that currently, the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world, in the following areas:



The socio-demographic analysis shows no discernable difference in opinion between men and women, nor according to education levels or whether or not they have difficulties paying their bills. The analysis does illustrate the following:

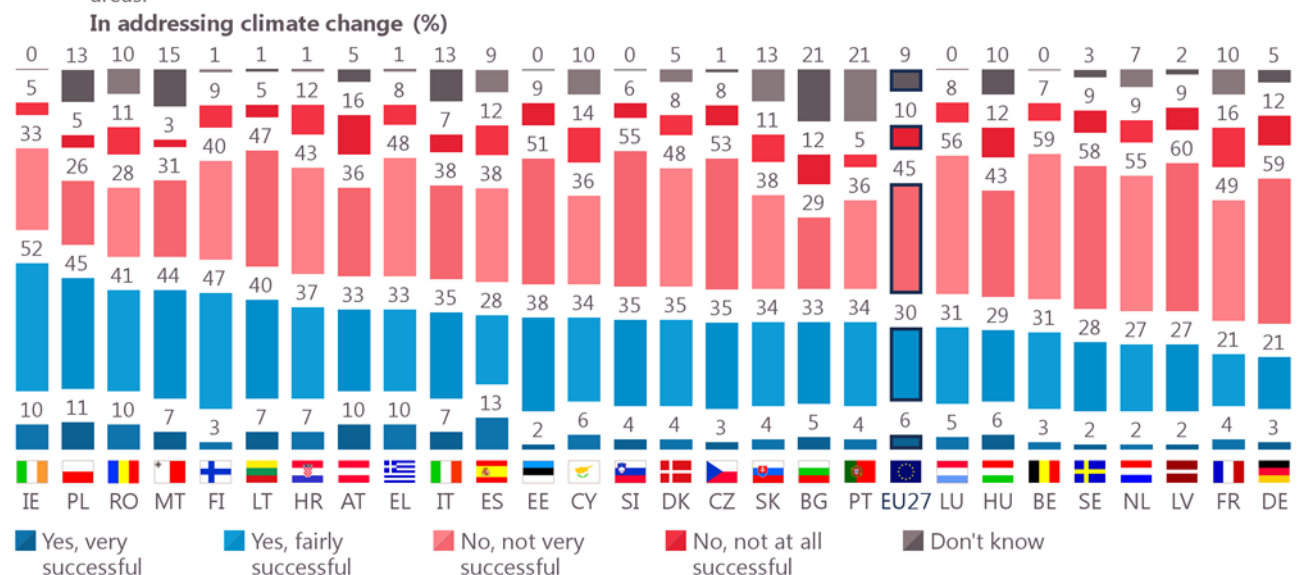
- The youngest (aged 15-24) respondents are more likely than those aged 55 and over to think the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world in terms of tackling poverty (37% vs. 29% respectively).
- Among socio-professional categories, students are the most likely (38%) to think the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world in terms of tackling poverty. Retired and unemployed people are the least likely (28%) to think that this is the case.
- In terms of the Internet use of respondents, those who indicate never using the Internet are less likely (49%) than those who indicate using the Internet every day (60%) to think the EU is unsuccessful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world in terms of tackling poverty, though there are no noticeable differences when it comes to saying the EU is successful. The difference could be explainable by a high rate (18%) of respondents indicating they ‘don’t know’ among those who never use the Internet.
- Opinion is also influenced by attitudes to partnering with countries to reduce poverty, with respondents who think partnering with countries to reduce poverty is important much more likely (34%) to think the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world in terms of tackling poverty, than those who don’t think partnering with other countries to reduce poverty is important (21%).

## 2 Perceived success of the EU tackling climate change around the world

There are only five countries where at least 50% of respondents think the EU is successful in driving positive sustainable change in climate change around the world: Ireland (62%), Poland (56%), Romania and Malta (both 51%) and Finland (50%). At the other end of the scale, 24% in Germany, 25% in France, and 29% in Latvia think the same way.

Countries with the most negative appraisal of the EU's success in driving positive, sustainable change around the world in terms of addressing climate change are Germany, Latvia, and Sweden where 71%, 69%, and 67% of respective respondents say the EU has been unsuccessful on this front.

**QE8.2** Do you think that currently, the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world, in the following areas:



The socio-demographic analysis shows no discernable difference in opinion between men and women, but does illustrate the following:

- The youngest respondents (aged 15-24) are more likely than those aged 55 and over to think the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world in terms of addressing climate change (41% vs. 32%).
- In terms of the Internet use of respondents, those who indicate never using the Internet are less likely (32%) than those who indicate using the Internet every day (37%) to think the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world in terms of addressing climate change. Here too, the rate of respondents indicating they 'don't know' among those who never use the Internet is high (21%).
- Opinion is also influenced by attitudes to partnering with countries to reduce poverty. Respondents who think partnering with countries to reduce poverty is important are much more likely (39%) to think the EU is successful in driving positive, sustainable change around the world in terms of addressing climate change, than those who don't (23%).

### III. UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES FACING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Respondents were given a list of challenges and asked which they considered the most pressing for the future of developing countries<sup>11</sup>. Respondents could give up to three answers maximum. A group of challenges is mentioned by around a third of respondents: health (36%), education (35%), peace and security (32%), and economic growth and employment (29%).

Around one quarter mention water and sanitation (27%), democracy and human rights (26%) and food security and agriculture (24%). Environmental protection and climate change, and social equality are mentioned by 14% of respondents.

Gender equality, and migration and hosting refugees are mentioned by 8% of respondents, energy by 7%, and trade, and urban development and population growth by 6%. Digitalisation, which was a new item proposed this year, was mentioned by 1% of respondents.

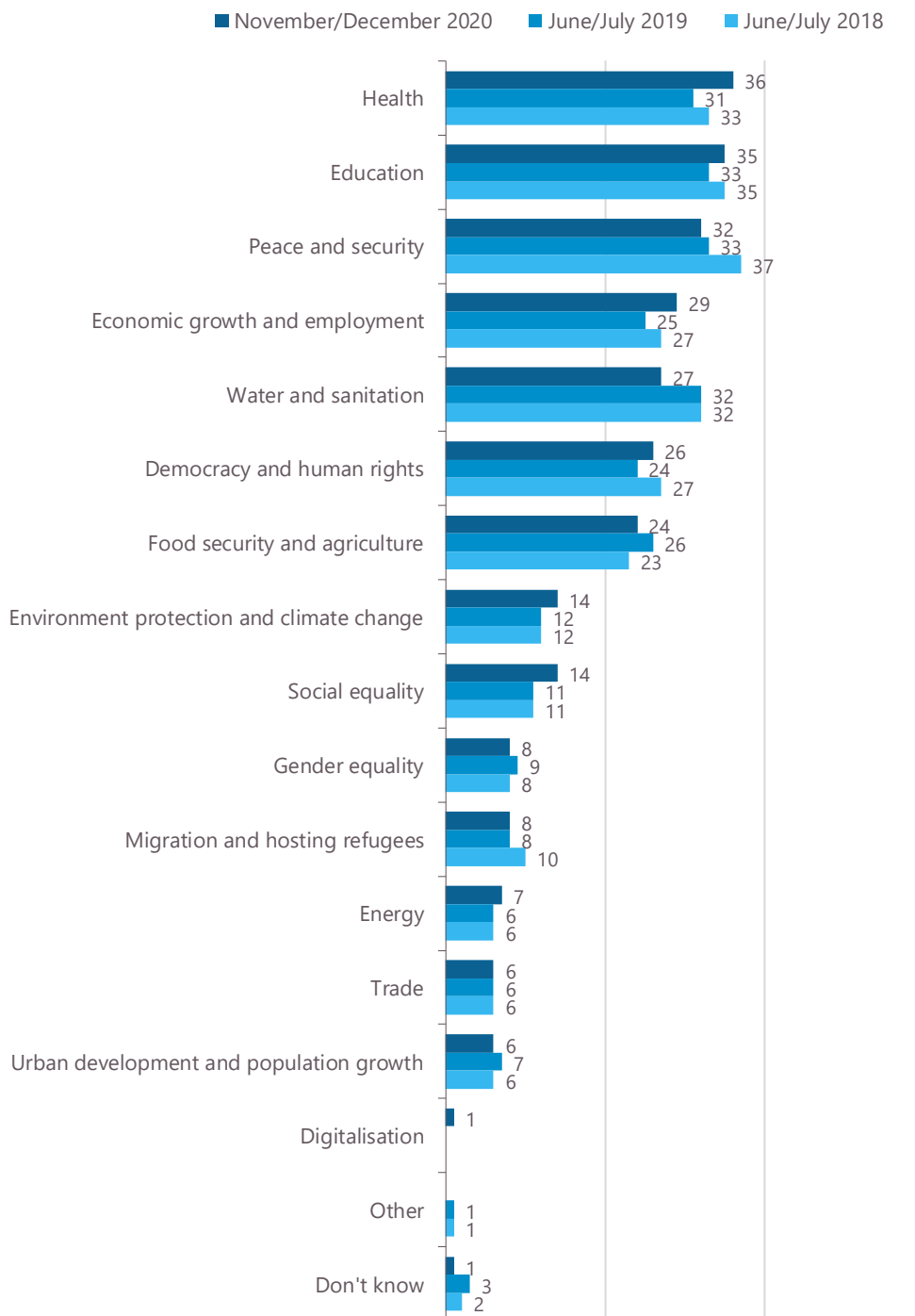
Compared to 2019, respondents are now slightly more likely to mention health (+5 percentage points), economic growth and employment (+4 pp), social equality (+3 pp), democracy and human rights, education and environment protection and climate change (all +2 pp), and energy (+ 1pp) but less likely to mention water and sanitation (-5 pp), food security and agriculture (-2 pp), and urban development and population growth, gender equality and peace and security (all -1 pp).

---

<sup>11</sup> QE3 Which of the following challenges do you consider the most pressing for the future of developing countries? Food security and agriculture; Health; Education; Gender equality; Migration and hosting refugees; Trade; Water and sanitation; Peace and security; Environmental protection and climate change; Democracy and human rights; Energy; Economic growth and employment; Urban development and population growth; Social equality; Digitalisation; Other (SPONTANEOUS); Don't know

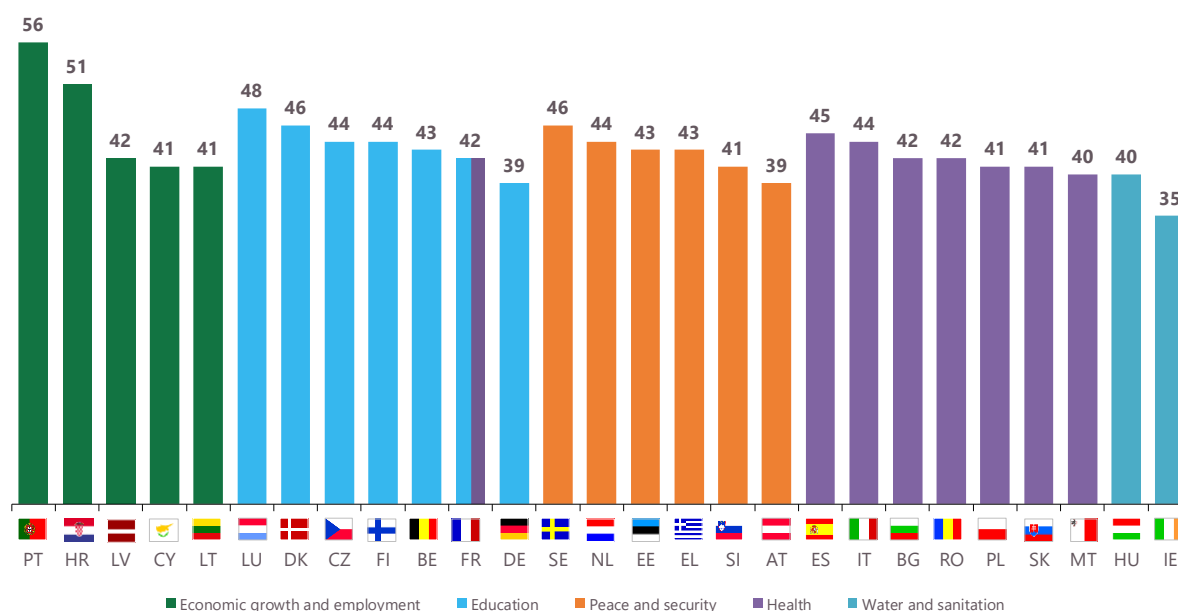


**QE3** Which of the following challenges do you consider the most pressing for the future of developing countries? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)  
 (% - EU27)



Health is the most mentioned challenge in eight countries: Spain (45%), Italy (44%), Bulgaria, Romania, and France (all 42%), Poland and Slovakia (41%) and Malta (40%). Education is also most mentioned in seven countries: Luxembourg (48%), Denmark (46%), Czechia and Finland (both 44%), Belgium (43%), France (42% - tied with health), and Sweden (39%). Peace and security is considered the most pressing challenge in six countries, these being Sweden (46%), the Netherlands (44%), Estonia and Greece (43%), Slovenia (41%) and Austria (39%), while economic growth and employment is most mentioned in five countries which are Portugal (56%), Croatia (51%), Latvia, (42%) and Cyprus and Lithuania (both 41%).

QE3 Which of the following challenges do you consider the most pressing for the future of developing countries? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)  
(% - THE MOST MENTIONED ANSWER BY COUNTRY)



The order of importance given to these challenges varies considerably across Member States. There is only one country (France) where the three most mentioned challenges for the EU as a whole – **health, education, and peace and security** – also rank in the top three.

**Health** is mentioned as one of the top three challenges in 14 countries, **education** in 18, and **peace and security** is in the top three for 20 countries.

**Economic growth and employment** is considered one of the three most urgent challenges in 12 countries, **water and sanitation** in nine countries, and **democracy and human rights** in seven countries. In six countries, **food security and agriculture** is considered one of the three most pressing concerns.

The table also shows changes in opinion since the previous survey in 2019. Highlights include:

- Respondents in 14 countries, including Italy (+22 pp), Bulgaria and Romania (+14 pp), and Poland (+12pp) are now more likely to mention **health** compared to 2019.
- Respondents in 21 countries, including Slovenia (+12 pp), Portugal (+11 pp), and Croatia, Latvia, and Lithuania (+10 pp) are now more likely to mention **economic growth and employment**.
- Respondents in 20 countries are now more likely to mention **democracy and human rights**, with the largest increases noted in Slovenia (+21 pp), Estonia (+13 pp), and Cyprus (+12 pp).
- Respondents in 21 countries, including Greece (-15 pp), Malta (-13 pp), and Austria, Lithuania, and Croatia (-11 pp) are now less likely to mention **water and sanitation**.
- Respondents in 16 countries are now more likely to mention **education**. The largest increases have been noted in Czechia (+22 pp), Romania (+12 pp), and Slovakia (+10 pp). At the same time, they are less likely to mention education in Portugal (-7 pp), the Netherlands (-6 pp), and Denmark (-4 pp).
- Respondents in 17 countries, including Sweden (+9 pp), Malta (+7 pp), and Bulgaria, Estonia Ireland, and Latvia (+6 pp in all four countries), are now more likely to mention **peace and security** as a main challenge.

The socio-demographic analysis for the top seven challenges illustrates the following:

- The older the respondent, the more likely they are to mention **economic growth and employment**: 30% of those aged 55 and over do so, compared to 26% of those aged 15-24. Respondents who are aged 55 and over are also more likely to mention **food security and agriculture** than the youngest (27% vs. 19% respectively). On the other hand, respondents who are aged 15-24 (39%) are more likely to mention education than those who are aged 55 and over (32%), as they are to mention social equality (18% vs. 13% respectively).
- Respondents who completed their education aged 20 or older are more likely (41%) to mention **education** than those who finished at 15 or younger (28%). Respondents who left education later are also more likely to mention **peace and security** than those who finished their education at age 15 or younger (36% vs. 28% respectively). **Democracy and human rights** are also mentioned more by those who have stayed in education for longer (30% vs. 21% of those who left education when they were 15 or younger), as is **environment protection and climate change** (16% vs. 9% respectively). On the other hand, **health** is mentioned less by those who completed their education aged 20 or older than by those who finished it when they were 15 or younger (32% vs. 39% respectively), as is **economic growth and employment** (27% vs. 35% respectively).
- In terms of the Internet use of respondents, those who indicate never using the Internet are less likely (24%) than those who indicate using the Internet every day (36%) to mention **education**. Regular Internet users are more likely (28%) to mention **democracy and human rights** as a pressing concern than those who never go online (18%). On the contrary, respondents who never use the internet (43%) are more likely to mention **health** than those that use it every day (35%).
- Additionally, respondents who think partnering with developing countries to reduce poverty is important are more likely to mention many of the issues, including **health, education, peace and security, economic growth and employment, water and sanitation, democracy and human rights, and food security and agriculture**. For example, 30% of those who think partnering with developing countries to reduce poverty is important mention **economic growth and employment**, compared to 23% who don't think this.
- The analysis also shows that respondents who think tackling poverty in developing countries should be a priority of the EU are more likely (37%) to mention health than those who don't think this (31%), as they are more likely to mention **environment protection and climate change** (15% vs. 10% respectively), or **social equality** (16% vs. 11% respectively).

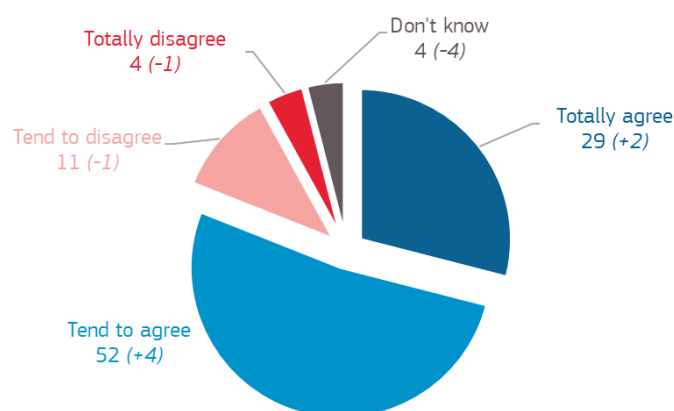
#### IV. STRENGTHENING THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE EU AND AFRICA

##### **EU citizens overwhelmingly agree that the EU should strengthen its partnerships with African countries to create jobs and ensure sustainable development on both continents**

A clear majority (81%) of EU citizens agree that the EU should strengthen its partnerships with African countries to create jobs and ensure sustainable development on both continents. Of these, 29% of respondents 'totally agree' while 52% 'tend to agree'. On the other hand, 11% of respondents 'tend to disagree', while 4% don't agree at all and 4% say they don't know<sup>12</sup>.

This is the second year that this question is asked, and between 2019 and 2020 the proportion of respondents who agree that the EU should strengthen its partnerships with African countries to create jobs and ensure sustainable development increased by six percentage points

**QE4** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement:  
The EU should strengthen its partnerships with African countries to create jobs and ensure sustainable development on both continents. **(% - EU)**



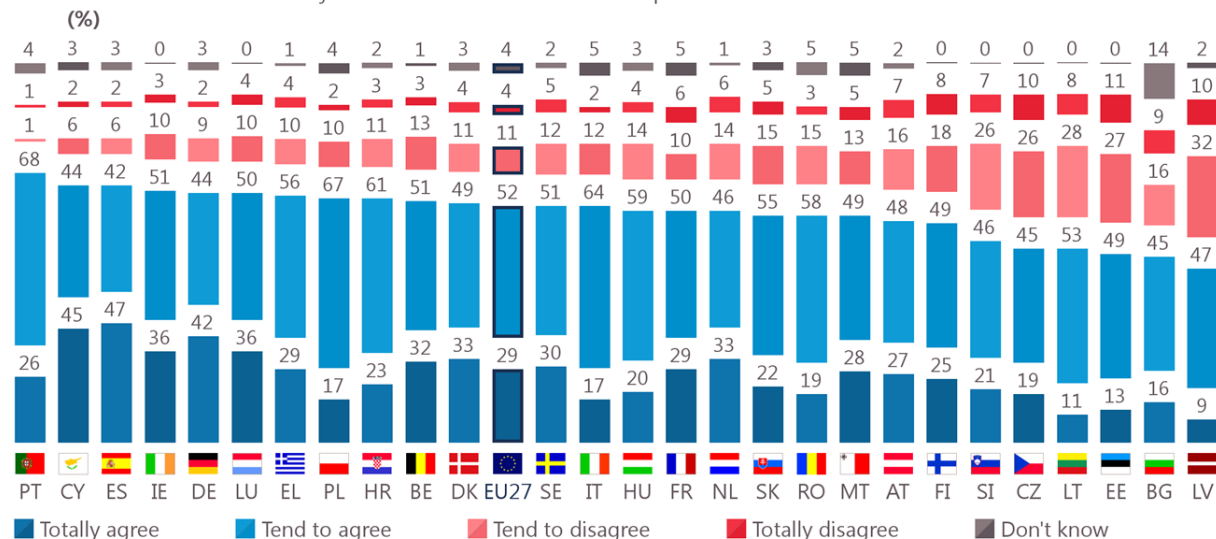
(Nov/Dec 2020 - June/July 2019)

In 26 Member States, at least six in ten respondents agree that the EU should strengthen its partnerships with African countries to create jobs and ensure sustainable development on both continents. In 13 Member States, at least 80% agree.

Overall, the level of agreement varies from 94% in Portugal, 89% in Cyprus and Spain, and 87% in Ireland to 56% in Latvia, 61% in Bulgaria, and 62% in Estonia.

<sup>12</sup> QE4 - To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The EU should strengthen its partnerships with African countries to create jobs and ensure sustainable development on both continents. Totally agree; tend to agree; tend to disagree; totally disagree; don't know.

**QE4** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The EU should strengthen its partnerships with African countries to create jobs and ensure sustainable development on both continents.



Trends regarding the question of the EU strengthening its partnerships with African countries to create jobs and ensure sustainable development on both continents are fairly uniform. In 25 countries, respondents are now more likely to agree to this statement. The largest increases are seen in Slovakia (+17 pp), Poland (+16 pp), and Croatia (+14 pp). Conversely, respondents in Finland (-6 pp), and Denmark (-4 pp) are now less likely to think this way than they were in 2019.

The socio-demographic analysis shows no discernable difference in opinion between men and women, but does illustrate the following:

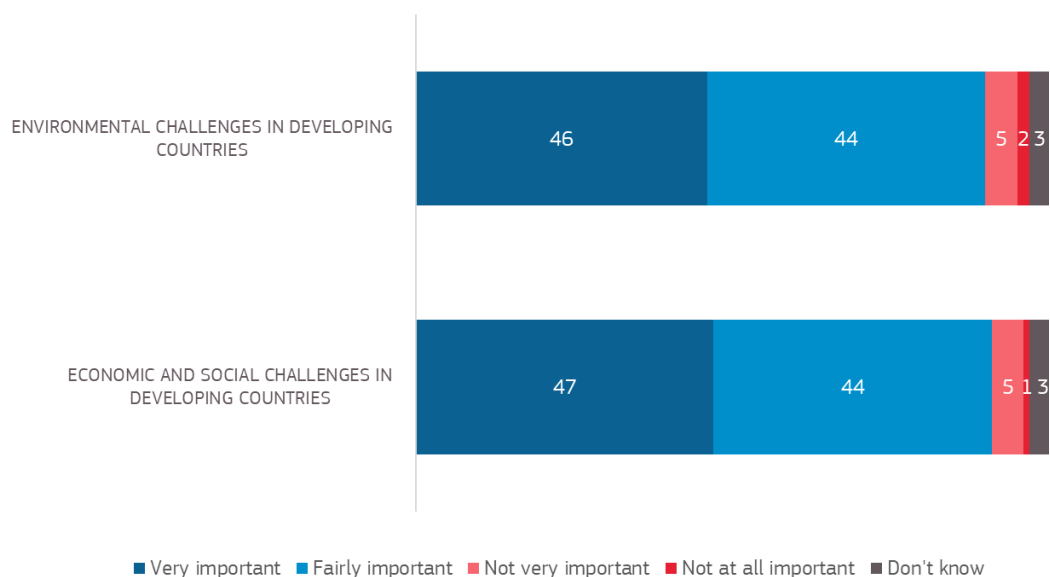
- Among different age groups the difference is minimal as well, with those aged 15-24 slightly more likely (84%) to agree that the EU should strengthen its partnerships with African countries to create jobs and ensure sustainable development on both continents than those aged 55 and over (80%).
- Respondents who completed their education aged 20 or older are more likely (85%) to agree with the proposed statement than those who finished at 15 or younger (77%).
- Respondents who never / almost never have difficulty paying their bills (84%) are also more likely to agree with the statement than those who have difficulty paying their bills most of the time (73%).
- In terms of the Internet use of respondents, those who indicate never using the Internet are less likely (74%) than those who indicate using the Internet every day (83%) to agree with the proposed statement.
- Additionally, respondents who agree tackling poverty in developing countries should be a priority for the EU, are more likely (90%) to think the EU should strengthen its partnerships with African countries to create jobs and ensure sustainable development on both continents, than those who don't agree (56%).

## V. IMPORTANCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN TACKLING CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

EU citizens, as analysed earlier in chapter 2, overwhelmingly agree that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of the EU, and as described in chapter 4, EU citizens also agree the EU should tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries. The following two questions investigate to what extent respondents across the EU think young people in developing countries play an important role in this.

Roughly nine in ten EU citizens think that young people in developing countries are important in tackling environmental challenges as well as economic and social challenges. The proportion of respondents who think they are ‘important’ vs. those who think it’s ‘very important’ are evenly balanced, with slightly more people indicating they are ‘very important’. For both statements, 6-7% of respondents do not think young people are important in tackling environmental or economic and social challenges<sup>13</sup>.

**QE7.1-2** How important or not do you think young people in developing countries are in tackling the following challenges? (% - EU)



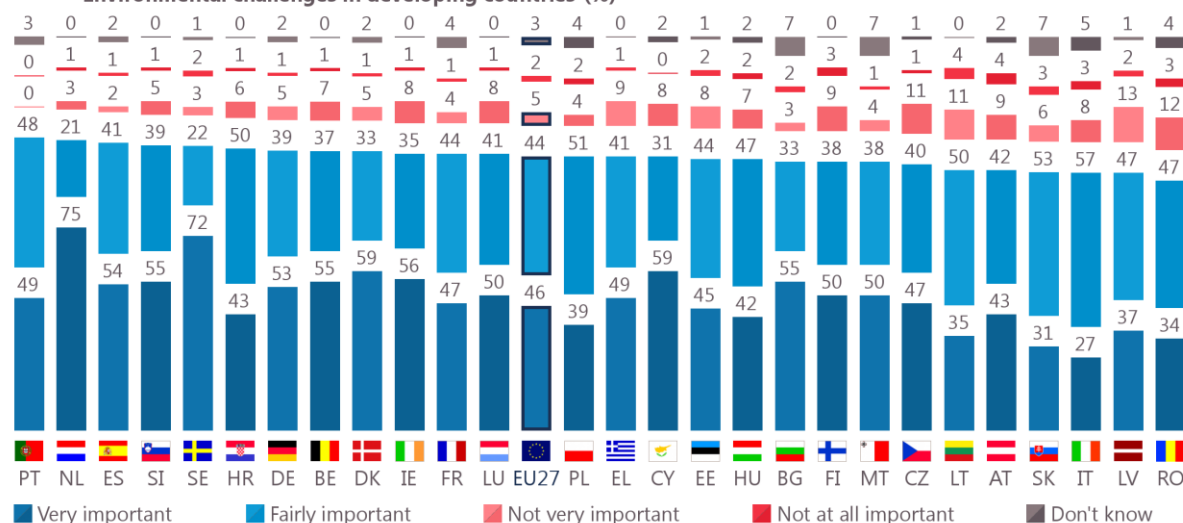
<sup>13</sup> QE7.1. How important or not do you think young people in developing countries are in tackling the following challenges? Environmental challenges in developing countries. Very important; fairly important; not very important; not at all important; don't know  
 QE7.2. How important or not do you think young people in developing countries are in tackling the following challenges? Economic and social challenges in developing countries. Very important; fairly important; not very important; not at all important; don't know

# 1 Importance of young people tackling environmental challenges in developing countries

A majority in all Member States think that young people in developing countries are important in tackling environmental challenges in those same developing countries. In 15 Member States, at least nine in ten respondents agree that it is important. In two Member States, the Netherlands and Sweden, more than 60% of respondents think young people are very important in this respect.

The highest proportions of respondents who think young people in developing countries are important in tackling environmental challenges are found in Portugal (97%), the Netherlands (96%), and Spain (95%). At the other end of the scale, 81% in Romania, 84% in Italy, Latvia, and Slovakia, and 85% in Lithuania think the same.

**QE7.1** How important or not do you think young people in developing countries are in tackling the following challenges?  
Environmental challenges in developing countries (%)



The socio-demographic analysis shows no discernable difference in opinion between men and women, but does illustrate the following:

- Among different age groups the difference is minimal, with those aged 15-24 only slightly more likely (92%) to agree that young people in developing countries are important in tackling environmental challenges in developing countries than those aged 55 and over (89%).
- Respondents who completed their education aged 20 or older are more likely (93%) to agree than those who finished at 15 (84%).
- Additionally, respondents who agree tackling poverty in developing countries should be a priority for the EU, are more likely (95%) to think that young people in developing countries are important in tackling environmental challenges in developing countries, than those who don't agree (78%).
- Finally, 97% of respondents who agree with the importance of young people tackling economic and social challenges in developing countries, also agree with the proposed statement, compared to 35% of those who don't.

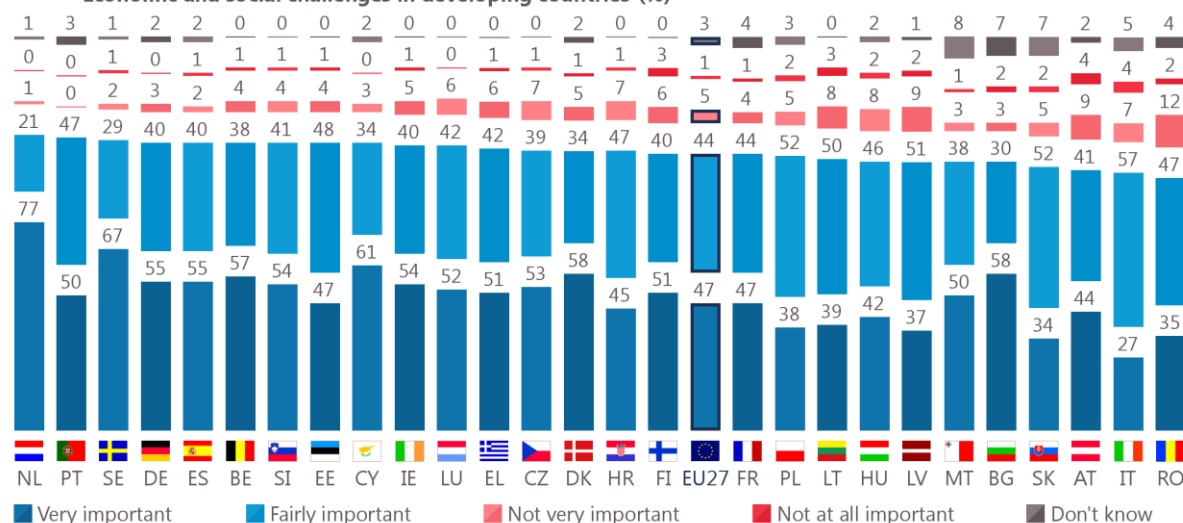


## 2 Importance of young people tackling economic and social challenges in developing countries

In all Member States, a majority agree that young people in developing countries are important in tackling economic and social challenges in those same developing countries. In 18 Member States, nine in ten or more respondents agree that they are important. In three EU countries, more than 60% of respondents think young people are very important in this respect.

The highest proportions of people who think young people in developing countries are important in tackling economic and social challenges are found in the Netherlands (98%), Portugal (97%), and Sweden (96%). At the other end of the scale, 82% in Romania, 84% in Italy, and 85% in Austria think the same way.

QE7.2 How important or not do you think young people in developing countries are in tackling the following challenges?  
Economic and social challenges in developing countries (%)



The socio-demographic analysis shows no discernable difference in opinion between men and women or age, but does illustrate the following:

- Respondents who completed their education aged 20 or older are more likely (94%) to feel that young people are important in tackling economic and social challenges in developing countries than those who finished their education at 15 or younger (85%).
- Respondents who indicate they never / almost never have difficulties paying bills are more likely (94%) to say they think young people are important in tackling economic and social challenges than those who regularly have trouble making ends meet (85%).
- Additionally, respondents who agree tackling poverty in developing countries should be a priority for the EU, are also more likely (96%) to agree that young people in developing countries are important in tackling economic and social challenges in developing countries, than those who don't (80%).
- Finally, 95% of respondents who agree with the importance of tackling climate change in developing countries, also agree with the proposed statement, compared to 68% of those who don't.



## CONCLUSION

This Eurobarometer survey is part of a series of regular surveys on development cooperation that have been conducted since 2009. The results from this edition confirm that a large majority of respondents believe it is important to support people in developing countries. Some annual variations exist, but support has gradually increased over the years, with more than two thirds in each country committed to the importance of helping people in developing countries.

A clear majority of EU citizens say that in order to reduce poverty around the world, it is important for the EU to partner with other countries. While 62% respondents think tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the main priorities of their national government, even more (77%) think the EU should make this a priority. Between 2019 and 2020 support for national governments prioritising tackling poverty in developing countries increased by four percentage points. Support for the EU doing the same increased seven percentage points. In both cases, this is the highest score recorded since the first time this question was asked in 2013 suggesting an increased awareness and support for the development action both by the EU and the national governments.

More than six in ten respondents think that EU development policy should also focus on reducing inequalities in developing countries, while a third think EU development policy should limit itself to helping developing countries strengthen their economies.

EU citizens overwhelmingly agree that it is important for the EU to tackle climate change and its effects in developing countries. This question, linked to the EU's European Green Deal, found approval among 88% of EU citizens.

EU citizens overwhelmingly agree that the EU should strengthen its partnerships with African countries to create jobs and ensure sustainable development on both continents. Support for such partnerships, currently at 81% of EU citizens, has increased by six percentage points since 2019. They also agree that young people in developing countries have an important role to play in tackling environmental as well as economic and social challenges.

Despite wide support for development cooperation at the national and EU level, a majority of respondents are not convinced that the EU is successful in the execution of these goals. More than half think the EU is not successful in tackling poverty, nor in addressing climate change. This is the first time that the evaluation of the success of this policy was measured and therefore it will be critical to assess how this indicator evolves over time. It is, however, clear that European citizens have growing expectations in that respect.

On a more granular level, respondents ranked a number of pressing issues for the future of developing countries. The most important challenges are now health, mentioned by 36% of respondents; education (35%), peace and security (32%), and economic growth and employment (29%), followed by water and sanitation (27%), and food security and agriculture (24%). Environmental protection and climate change, and social equality were mentioned by 14% of respondents.

Some patterns emerge from the socio-demographic analysis. While there is no appreciable difference in opinion along gender lines, those aged 15-24 are the most positive about the importance of supporting developing countries, as are those who place themselves on the left of the political spectrum, respondents with higher levels of education and less financial difficulties, and respondents who have a positive opinion about the EU. It must be noted, however, that differences in terms of age have decreased compared to previous editions suggesting a growing consensus in the European population over this issue.

Overall, respondents are increasingly positive about the importance of most aspects of development cooperation, yet sceptical about its current effectiveness. Notably they do express support for two important policies of the EU related to development cooperation: the EU green deal and the EU-Africa partnership.





