

Participation: It's about EU (You)!

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**You(th) and the
2024 European elections**

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Democracy is changing

- e When talking about *civic and political engagement*, and democratic values, we need to be aware of the **changing context**: Democracy in Europe (and globally) is changing; engagement is changing
- e The classical model since the 1950s, *representative parliamentary democracy*, focussed primarily on *voting*, is showing various **signs of fatigue**



Changing democracy and new generations

Democracy fatigue

- e People less interested in voting: **high abstentionism**
- e Democracy in Europe deeply interrelated with the European Union, but now: **integration fatigue, sovereigntism**
- e Democracies increasingly **conflictual: polarization**
- e Re-emergence of non-democratic ideas and political forces: return of **authoritarianism**



Changing democracy and new generations

- e Young people have grown up in democratic societies that were ***already in decline*** (since at least the early 2000s)
- e Young people seem generally ***alienated*** from institutional politics, show less interest in participating, in voting but also in other forms of political participation
- e A core problem of contemporary democracies is a ***lack of interest of younger generations in upholding democracy***



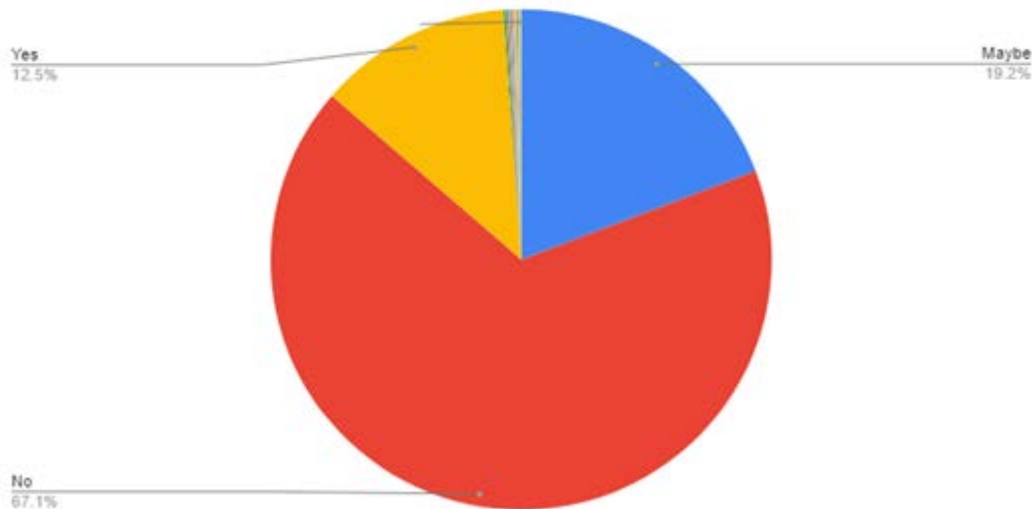
Gaps in Youth Representation

- e Young people are **disadvantaged politically**: Young people are not equally represented in formal political institutions and are importantly under-represented in processes of policy-making and democratic representation
- e In Europe, young people make up circa 15 to 20% of the entire population, but less than 3% of national parliaments have members that are under 30, with young women being around 1%. **In the current European Parliament, only 37 members are under 35**



Gaps in Youth Representation

In the current 705-member European Parliament, only 37 members are below 35 years of age. Have you yourself ever considered running for the European Parliament?



Youth participation

- Young people *participate much less* in institutional politics than older generations, also in European elections
- This is in direct contrast with the extent to which *young people are affected* by politics in terms of socio-economic possibilities, job security, housing, and the outlook for the future

	Voted 2014	Voted 2019	Diff. '19-'14
EU28	43	51	8
Gender			
Man	45	52	7
Woman	41	49	8
Age			
16/18-24	28	42	14
25-39	35	47	12
40-54	45	52	7
55 +	51	54	3
Education (End of)			
15-	43	46	3
16-19	38	47	9
20+	51	59	8
Still studying	37	51	14

Source: Eurobarometer June 2019

Youth participation

- Various *recent crises* have affected young people disproportionately, such as the Covid-19 pandemic or the economic crises
- Future prospects look dim*, with the increasing evidence of *rising costs of living* and *deterioration in their quality of life*, the evermore evident *environmental crisis* as well as the *tense geopolitical situation*



Youth participation

- e Young people have been *losing trust in politics*
- e Such decline is however *not the same across different segments of the youth*
- e Research finds that ***mobile young Europeans tend to be more optimistic and engage in politics***

	Currently abroad	Never been on exchange	Exchange alumni	Eurobarometer
High importance	79.74%	75.58%	80.53%	68%
Medium importance	16.99%	19.31%	16.16%	22%
Low importance	3.27%	5.11%	3.31%	9%

Table 4 - Turnout in 2019 EU elections (n=4,381)

Source: ESN Survey 2019

Youth participation

Table 4.1 Examples of components and indicators of active citizenship

	Civic engagement	Political engagement	Civic participation	Political participation (conventional)	Political participation (nonconventional)
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paying attention to news media on civic issues - Following civic affairs - Having civic knowledge or beliefs - Understanding civic institutions - Understanding civic values - Having feelings toward civic matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paying attention to news media on political issues - Following political affairs - Having political knowledge or beliefs - Understanding political institutions - Understanding political values - Having feelings toward political matters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Donating money to a charity - Fundraising activities for good causes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Voting in elections or referenda - Contacting political representatives or politicians - Running for public office - Donating money to political parties or organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Boycotting - Signing petitions - Handing out political leaflets - Civil disobedience - Writing letters to politicians or to the media - Join groups on the Internet with political focus - Wearing symbols in support of a political cause
Collective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belonging to a group with societal focus - Identifying with a specific civic movement or ideology - Lifestyle-related involvement (music, identity, dothes, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belonging to a political movement - Identifying with a specific political movement or ideology - Lifestyle-related involvement (e.g., veganism, right wing skinhead scene, left-wing anarcho-scene) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Informally assisting the well-being of others in the community - Community problem solving through community organizations - Volunteering in voluntary organizations - Membership of non-political organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Being a member of a political party or political organization - Activity within a political party, organizations or a trade union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active involvement in a new social movement or forum - Demonstrating, participating in strikes, protests and other actions - Squatting buildings - Participating in violent demonstrations - Violence confrontations with political opponents or police



Elaboration based on: Barrett and Zani (2015); Barrett and Brunton-Smith (2014); Ekman and Amnå (2012).

Source: Bee 2017

European politics: transnational sensibility

- e The future of the European integration project is importantly tied up with young people: **current and future generations**
- e Young people need to perceive European integration as important and ***of essence for their own future***
- e A ***transnational sensibility*** is crucial: the realization that nation-states cannot provide all solutions by themselves, a feeling of solidarity with others (beyond co-nationals), and respect for diversity and pluralism

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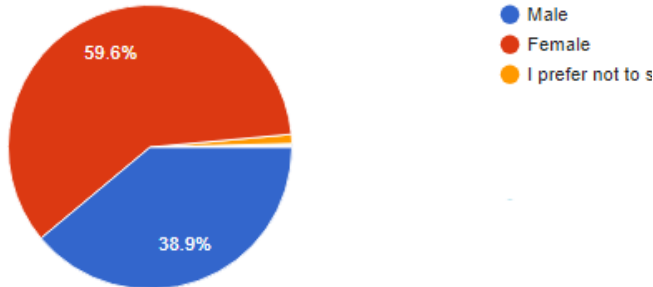
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Survey: You(th) and the 2024 European elections

- The survey gathers data/responses (*understanding*), but also tries to stimulate *awareness* and *knowledge*

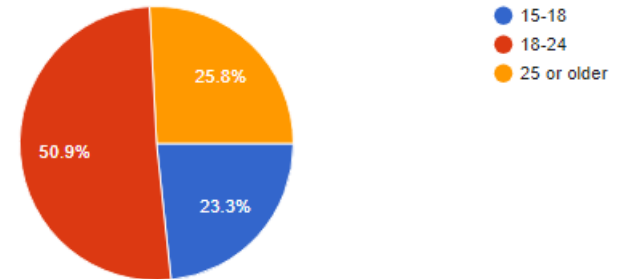
What is your gender?

755 responses



What is your age?

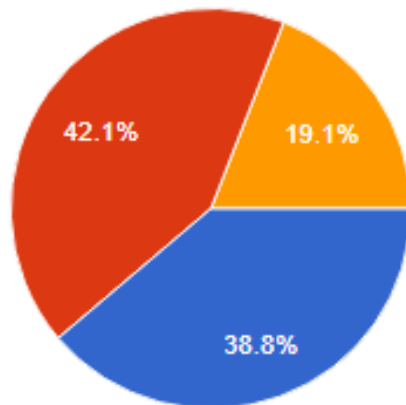
755 responses



Survey: You(th) and the 2024 European elections

Do you have an Erasmus mobility experience?

755 responses

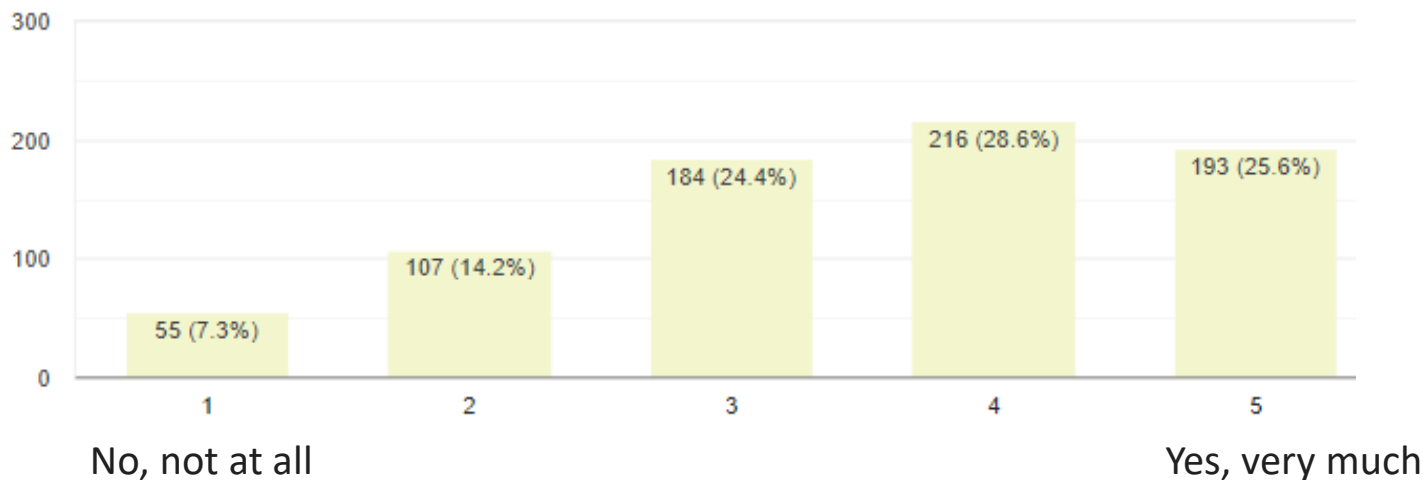


- Yes, I do
- No, I do not
- I am thinking about it

Survey: You(th) and the 2024 European elections

Do you have an interest in politics/political issues?

755 responses



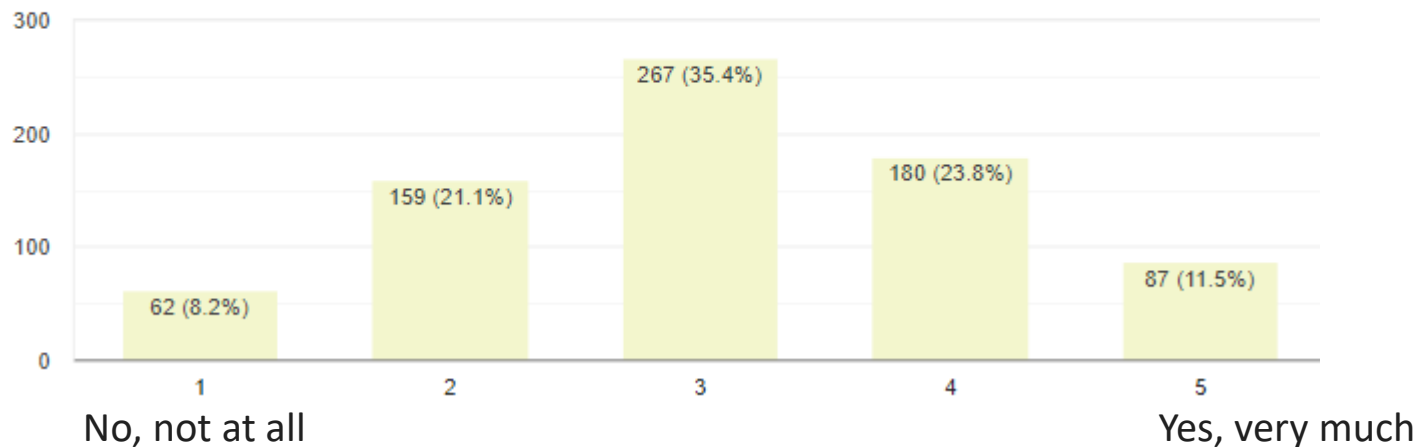
No, not at all

Yes, very much

Survey: You(th) and the 2024 European elections

Do you think you have a good idea of what the European Parliament is and what it does?

755 responses

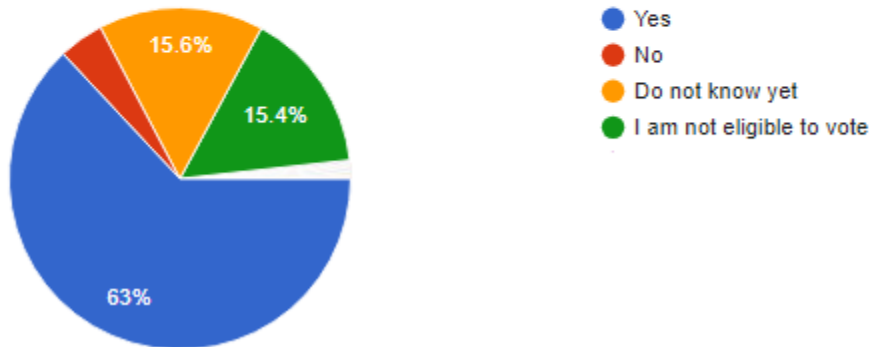


Survey: You(th) and the 2024 European elections

In June 2024, 720 new members of European Parliament will be elected by citizens of the 27 member states.

Do you intend to vote in these European elections ?

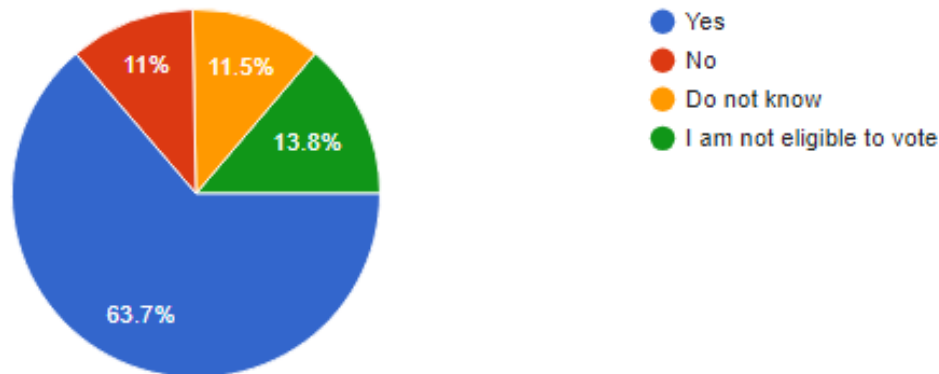
749 responses



Survey: You(th) and the 2024 European elections

With regard to the upcoming European Parliament elections, do you feel **your vote** is important?

755 responses

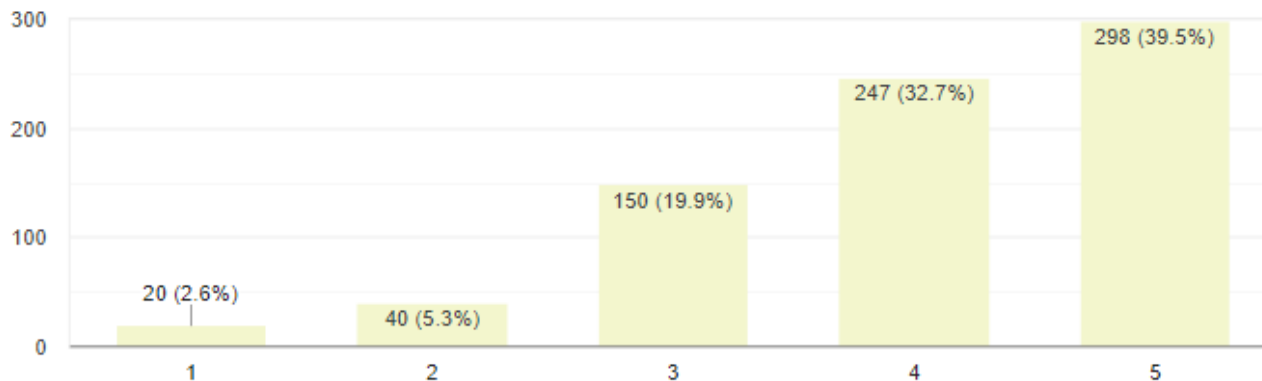


Survey: You(th) and the 2024 European elections

The Future of Europe:

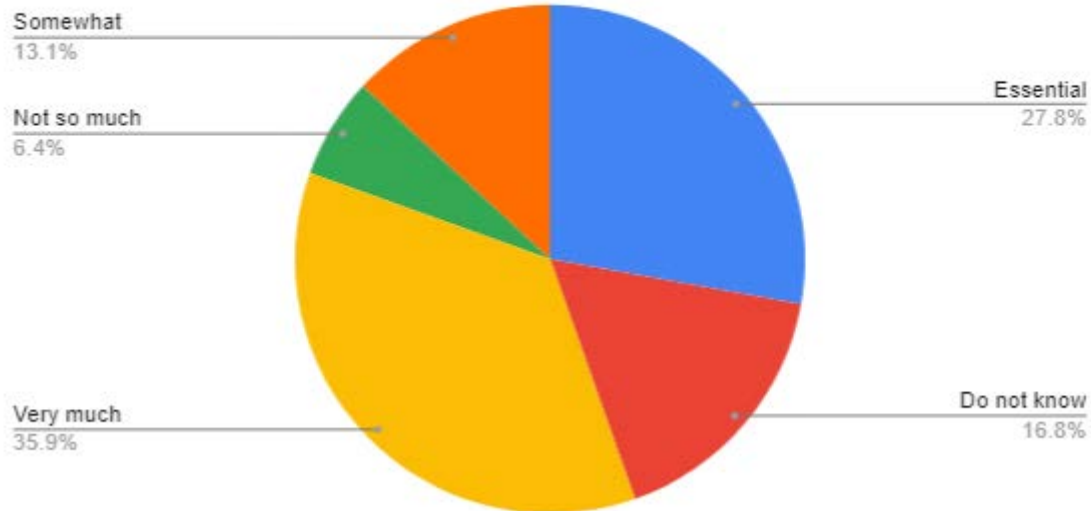
Is the EU an important actor for combatting democratic decline and the emergence of authoritarianism?

755 responses



Survey: You(th) and the 2024 European elections

How much do you think the Erasmus programme stimulates the following dimensions? [Enriching your political identity, beyond national or local identity]



Survey: You(th) and the 2024 European elections

How much do you think the Erasmus programme stimulates the following dimensions? [Knowledge of the EU]

Not so much
10.0%

Do not know
12.6%

Somewhat
23.5%

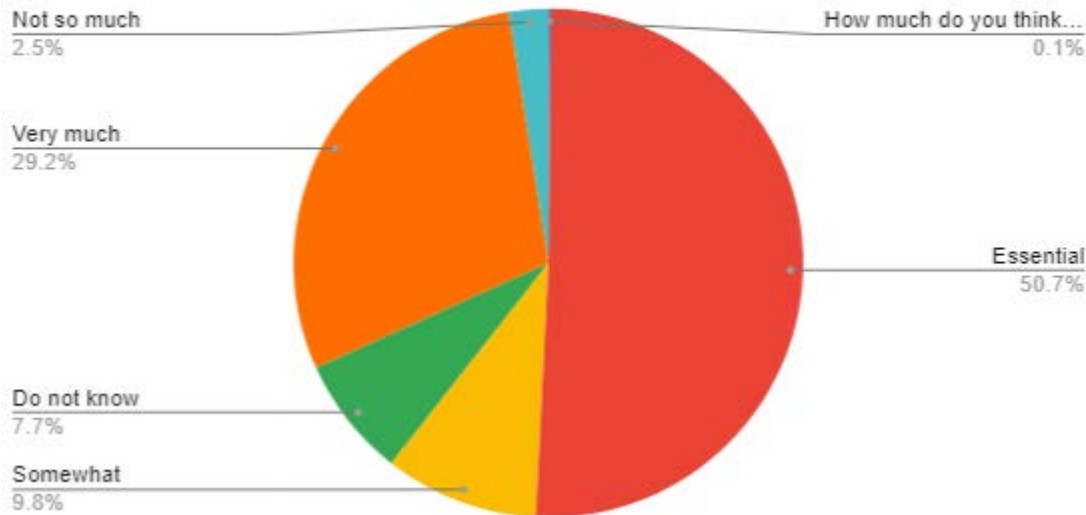
Very much
38.2%

Essential
15.6%



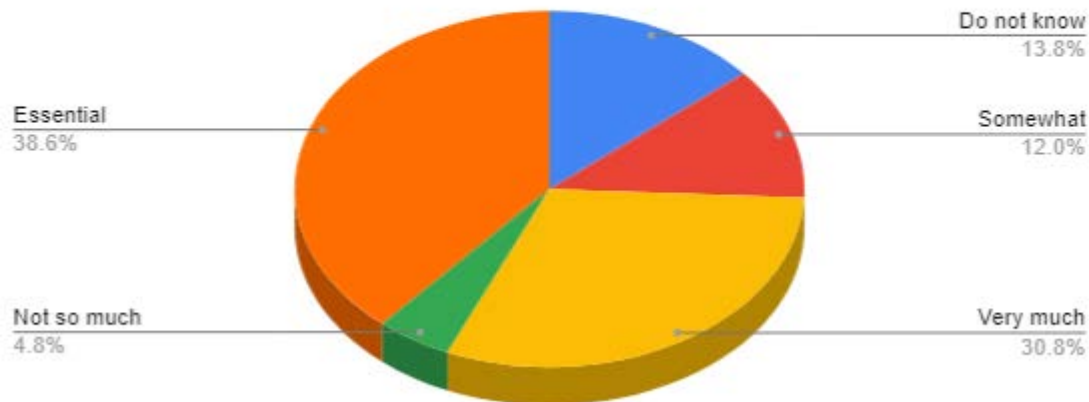
Survey: You(th) and the 2024 European elections

How much do you think the Erasmus programme stimulates the following dimensions? [Acquiring skills in language, participation, public speaking]



Survey: You(th) and the 2024 European elections

How much do you think the Erasmus programme stimulates the following dimensions? [Becoming more socially active outside of education and work]





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