



PARTICIPATION ERASMUS ALUMNI  
FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

## Workshop

# “Training the Trainers”: civic engagement and Erasmus+

Moderator:  
Paul Blokker





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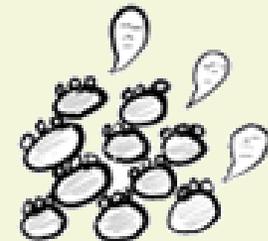
### 3 themes:

- 1) Youth civic and political engagement;
- 2) European citizenship education;
- 3) Social inclusion, diversity, non-discrimination

■ Background – reflections - statement (*moderator*)

■ Discussion of statement in roundtables

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## Key objectives

- Deeper knowledge (*cognitive*)
- Civic and political dimensions of programme (*awareness*)
- Critical-constructive view (*critical-reflexive mindset*)
- Participation and collaboration (*learning to participate*)



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## Theme 1: Civic and political engagement young people

**Background:** Young people generally participate less in domestic and European politics. For instance, abstention of the youngest voters in the latest European parliamentary elections of 2019 was 58%.



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## Theme 1: Civic and political engagement young people

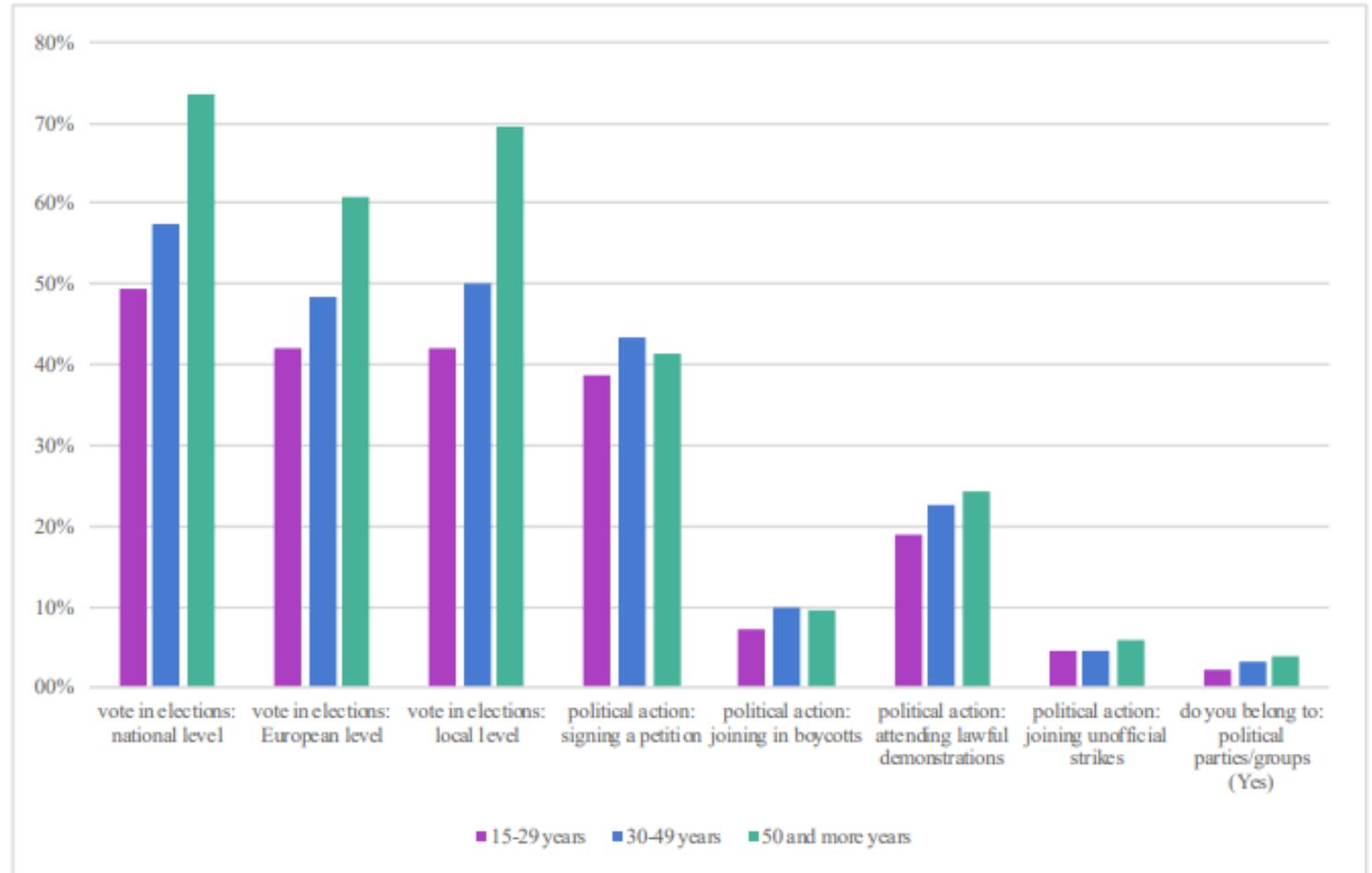
**Background:** Young people seem less and less inclined in interacting with institutional politics, and the gap between the younger and older generation is widening. With the upcoming European parliamentary elections in May 2024, this is a major concern.



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# Theme 1: Civic and political engagement young people

Figure 2: Political participation in Europe by age groups



Source: European Values Study, Wave 7 (2020)



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# Why **V**ote?



**INDIRE** ISTITUTO NAZIONALE DOCUMENTAZIONE INNOVAZIONE RICERCA EDUCATIVA

**COYV**  
VOTE FOR EUROPE

Co-funded by the European Union

**EUROPEAN ELECTIONS**

*Be the voice for the future of Europe*

**LIFELONG LEARNING PLATFORM**  
EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION

**EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF YOUNG EDUCATORS**

**OBESSU**  
Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions

**YOUNG EUROPEAN FEDERALISTS**



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**I learnt the EU and/or how to vote in my local voluntary association, sports group or other non-formal setting:**

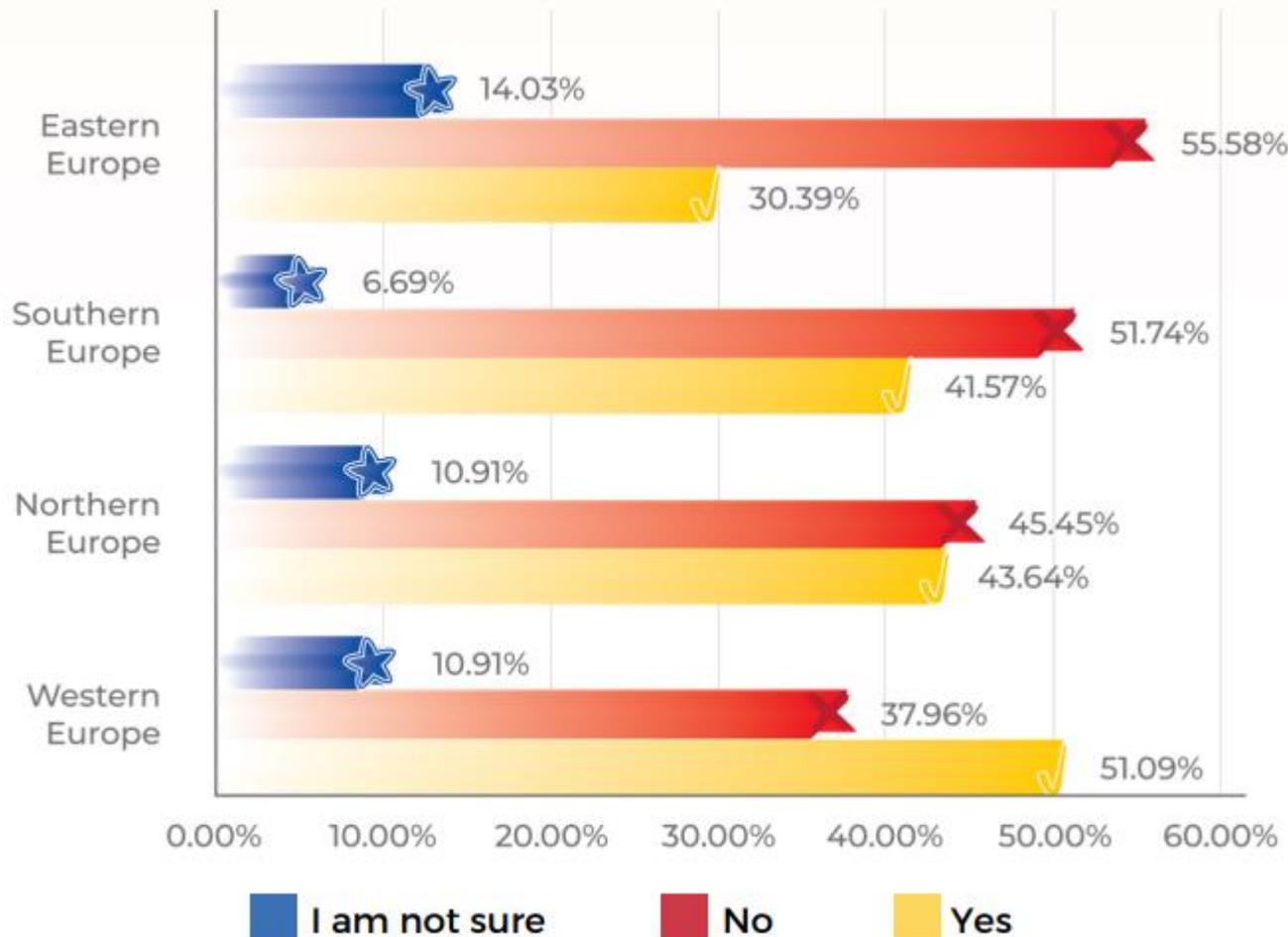


Table 9: Role of voluntary associations, divided by geographical areas



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At school and/or university, I learnt about the EU and voting:

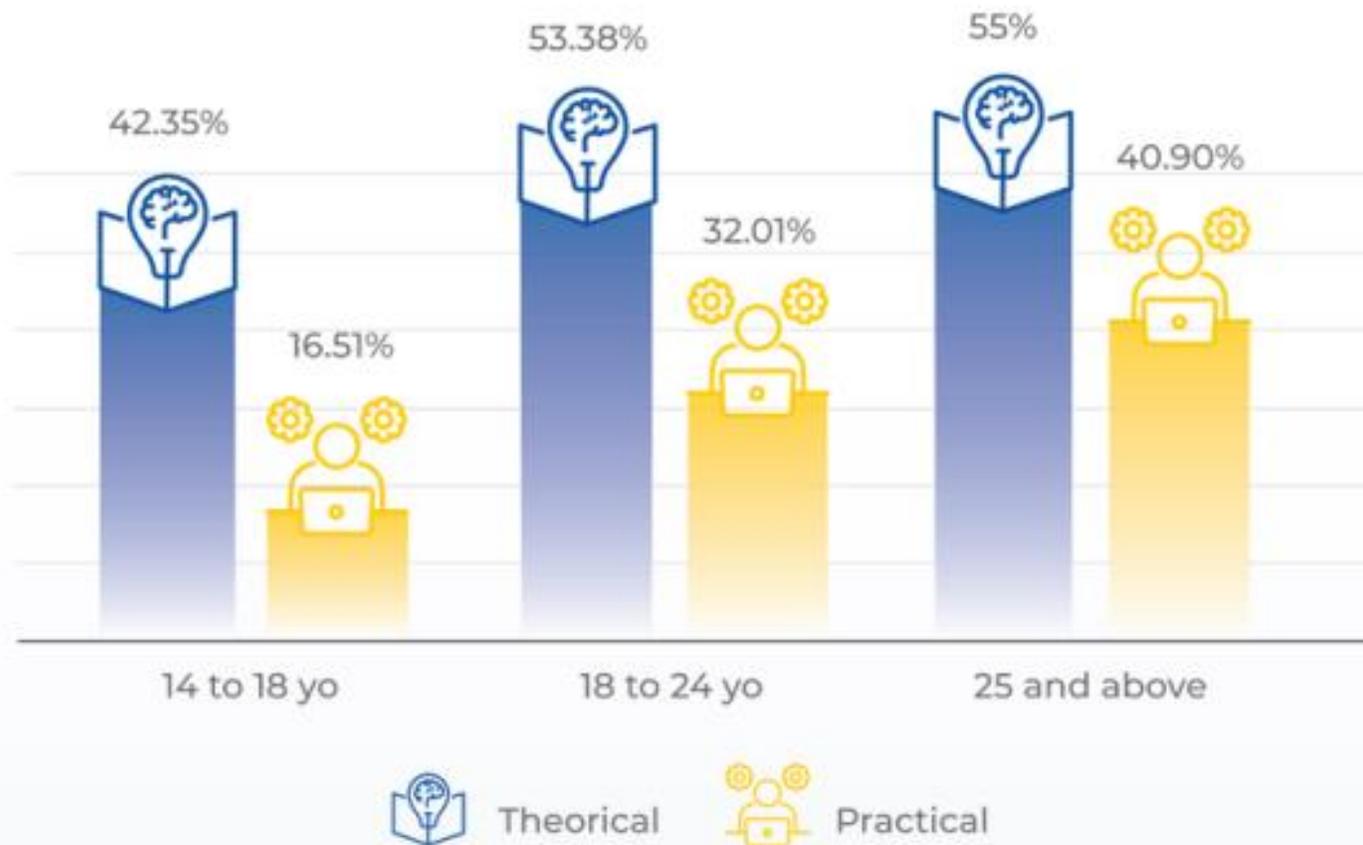


Table 11: Information received about the EU at school, by age of respondents



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Generally, I am interested in politics

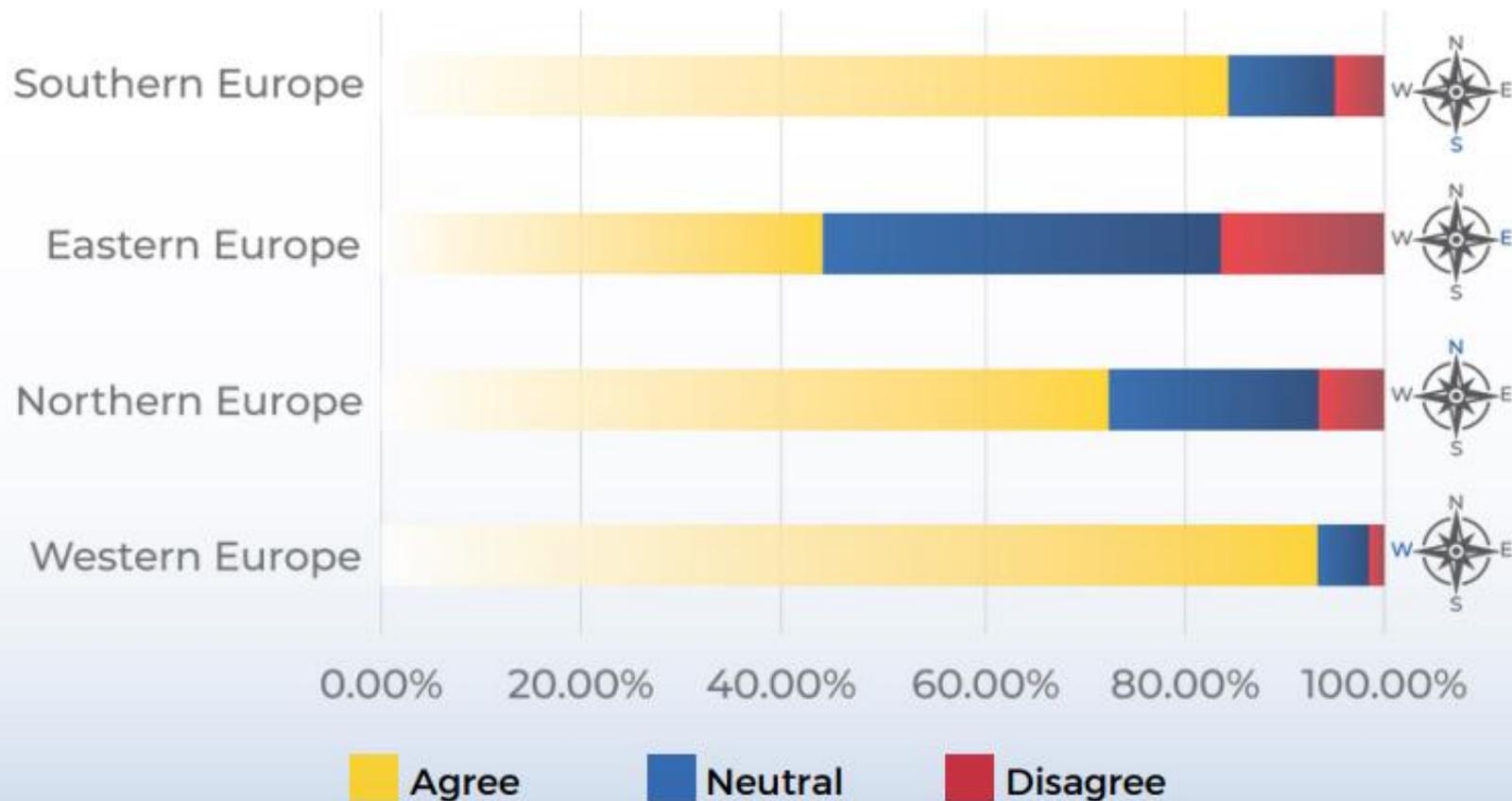


Table 13: Levels of political interest, by geographical areas



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### Interest in EU politics, by geographical area:

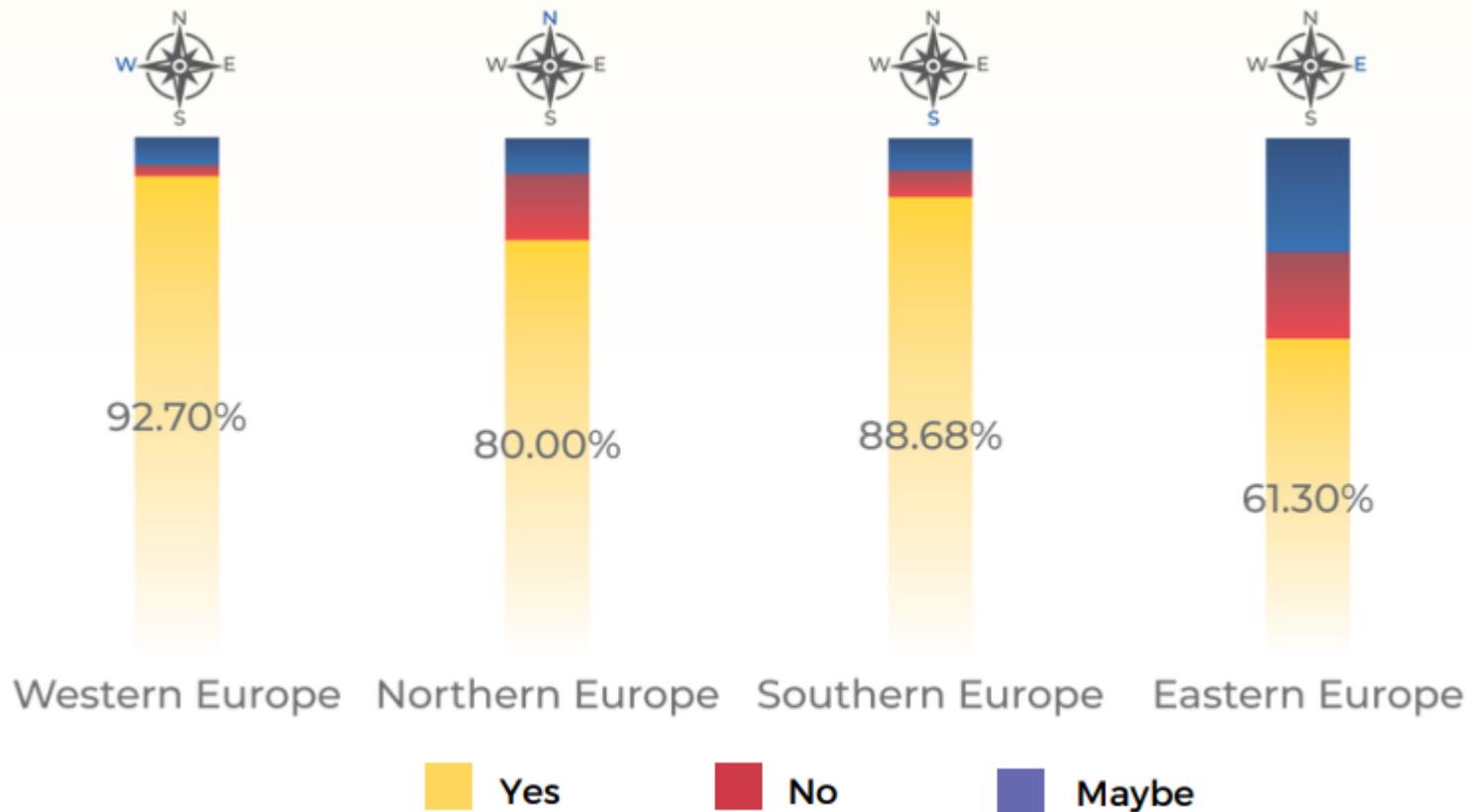


Table 18: Interest in EU politics, by UN geoscheme



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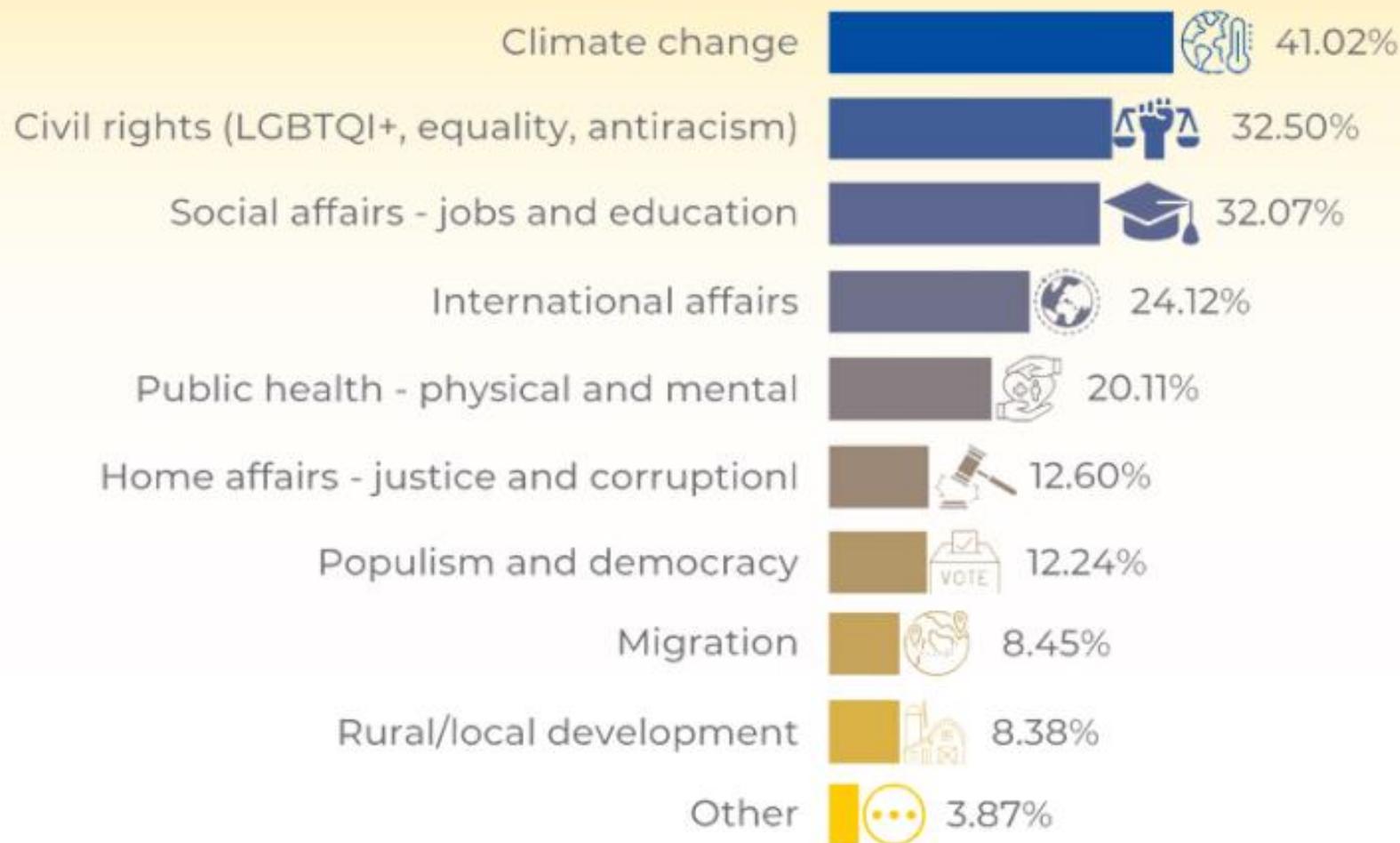


Table 20: Top political issues of interest amongst survey respondents



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## Theme 1: Civic and political engagement young people

***Reflections:*** How much are young people aware of the European Union being an important way of tackling complex problems: climate change, migration, digital technology and AI?



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## Theme 1: Civic and political engagement young people

***Reflections:*** International mobility could play a more important role in making young people aware of the crucial role of the EU and stimulating the interest of youth in politics.



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## Theme 1: Civic and political engagement young people

***Reflections:*** International mobility brings youth into contact with other societies and their problems and may raise awareness of the relevance of the European dimension to democratic politics.



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## Theme 1: Civic and political engagement young people

***Reflections:*** Experience with international mobility also brings out the *difficulties* of international collaboration and integration, in terms of different norms and cultural understandings, bureaucratic obstacles, difficulties in intercultural communication etc.



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## Theme 1: Civic and political engagement young people

***Discussion topic:*** The Erasmus+ programme is focussed on improving educational and employment opportunities. In addition, it should strengthen dimensions of promotion of European values, but also *practical* skills of democratic engagement and civic participation.



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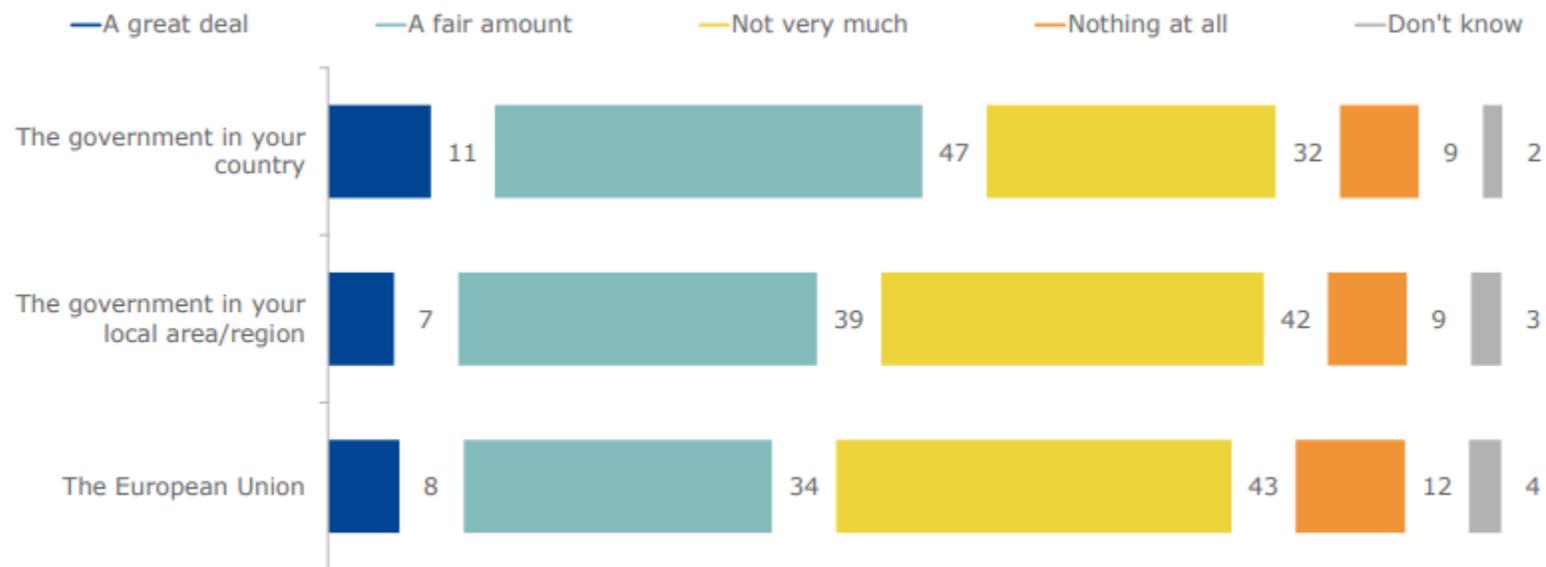
## Theme 2: European citizenship education

**Background:** The knowledge of EU institutions of young people (Under30) is uneven across the EU. An EP Youth Survey found that in some countries (e.g. Croatia), only 25 % of the respondents thought to understand a great deal or fair amount about the EU. In others, such as the Netherlands or Belgium, this increases to 31/2 %, while in Portugal 63 % claimed to have fair knowledge.



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### Q3 How much, if anything, do you feel you understand about...? (% - EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=18 156)



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## Theme 2: European citizenship education

**Background:** A robust form of European citizenship education would need to go beyond a type of “**banal cosmopolitanism**” that consists in an general, rather superficial intercultural exchange about for instance culturally diverse food, drinks, typical habits and musical taste.



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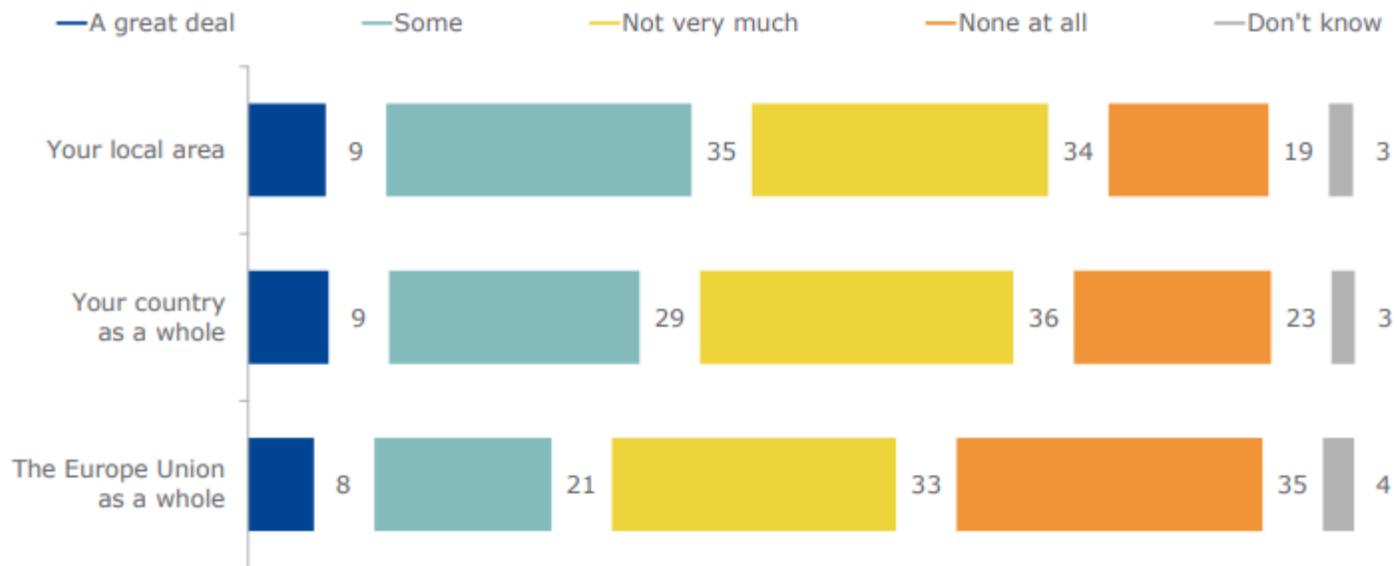
## Theme 2: European citizenship education

**Background:** European citizenship education needs to involve the development of civic and political skills, which includes a dimension of “*learning to participate*” and to “*learn to have influence*”.



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Q4 How much of a say do you feel you can have over important decisions, laws and policies affecting...? (% - EU27)



Base: all respondents (n=18 156)



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## Theme 2: European citizenship education

**Background:** “Introduce a “*Youth-check*” of legislation, including both an impact assessment and a consultation mechanism with 80 representatives of young people, when legislation is deemed to have an impact on young people.”

(Conference on the Future of Europe proposal 36.9)



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## Theme 2: European citizenship education

*Reflections:* Young(-er) people have insufficient knowledge of the EU.



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## Theme 2: European citizenship education

***Reflections:*** International mobility does not in and by itself strengthen European citizenship.



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## Theme 2: European citizenship education

**Reflections:** EU citizenship education should not be just “celebratory”, but should facilitate critical reflection, also on the EU’s past, and differences between countries, making EU citizenship an open, inclusionary concept and create competencies in dealing with conflict and difficult legacies from the past (e.g. colonialism).



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## Theme 2: European citizenship education

***Discussion topic:*** The lack of youth participation in European politics calls for a comprehensive development of a European citizenship education – including participation and promotion of youth inclusion - as a core and obligatory part of the Erasmus+ programme.



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## Theme 3: Social inclusion, diversity, non-discrimination

**Background:** The Erasmus+ programme pays attention to two types of inclusion:

- 1) making the mobility programme itself more inclusive by targeting “people with fewer opportunities” and
- 2) by stressing the importance for inclusion in society at large.



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## Theme 3: Social inclusion, diversity, non-discrimination

**Background:** “Fewer opportunities” involve among others *socio-economic obstacles or barriers due to discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or disability.*



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## Theme 3: Social inclusion, diversity, non-discrimination

**Background:** The recent SiEM project of the ESN (2021) has conducted a very valuable survey on inclusion, which found, among the ca. 12.000 students surveyed, that 24% of the participants experienced some form of discrimination while abroad on a mobility programme.



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SiEM

Social Inclusion &  
Engagement in Mobility



**“Maybe it will  
be different  
abroad.”**

Student and Staff Perspectives  
on Diversity and Inclusion in  
student exchanges



Erasmus+

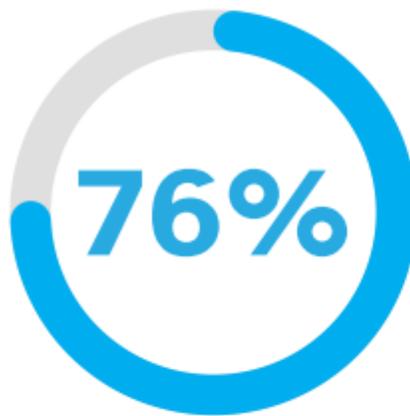
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## Experiences of discrimination while abroad



had **positive** experiences while abroad.

However,

**10%** of respondents felt that they were treated differently or unfairly at their host university, and

**15%** felt that they did not have equal access to resources and opportunities compared to home students.

**24%**

reported experiencing some form of discrimination while abroad on a mobility programme.

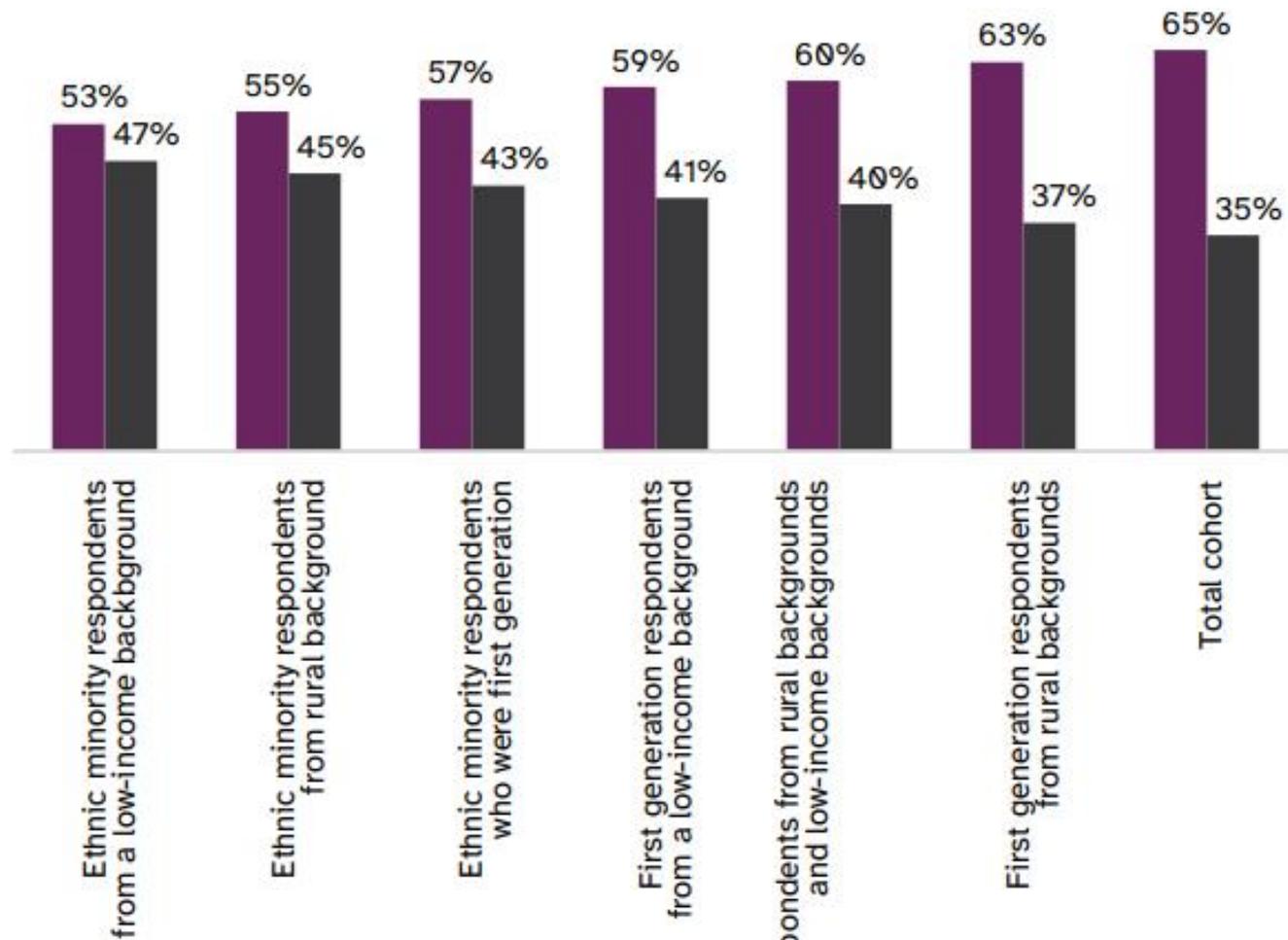
**16%** experienced discrimination based on **nationality**, while

**6%** reported experiencing discrimination on the basis of **race or ethnicity**, and **5%** on the basis of **gender**.

For the report's target groups, respondents from **low-income households** reported a **slightly higher rate** (30%) of experiencing discrimination while abroad. These respondents reported being discriminated against **based on social status** (4% vs 2% for high income households). **Almost a third** (32%) of respondents from **ethnic minority backgrounds** reported experiencing discrimination, with 14% reporting this on the **basis of race or ethnicity** (compared to 3% for white respondents), and 1 in 5 reported this on grounds of **nationality** (20%, compared to 15% for white respondents).



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 mobile students

 non-mobile students

**Figure 28: Mobility participation across intersectional demographic groups**



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## Theme 3: Social inclusion, diversity, non-discrimination

***Reflections:*** We currently know little of the diversity of Erasmus participants in terms of ethnic/migrant background.



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## Theme 3: Social inclusion, diversity, non-discrimination

***Reflections:*** - The notion of “fewer opportunities” remains rather vague; what does this mean on the ground?



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## Theme 3: Social inclusion, diversity, non-discrimination

**Reflections:** The Erasmus+ programme might be counter-productive with regard to reaching the most difficult groups (those that live in peripheral areas, have socio-economic problems, come from poorer backgrounds). In other words, the “high achievers” are specifically incentivized, while the less mobile are left further behind.



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## Theme 3: Social inclusion, diversity, non-discrimination

***Discussion topic:*** The Erasmus+ programme does not pay sufficient attention to structural forms of exclusion, particularly in the form of intersectional exclusion (different obstacles/barriers experienced by the same person).



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Thank you!



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