



**PARTICIPATION ERASMUS ALUMNI
FOR CIVIC ENGAGEMENT**

Report

YOU(TH) AND THE 2024 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS:

**A SURVEY TO UNDERSTAND THE CONCERNS OF
YOUNG EUROPEANS**

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Erasmus+



**ISTITUTO
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REPORT

YOU(TH) AND THE 2024 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS:

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This report (December 2024) on the youth survey *You(th) and the 2024 European elections: a survey to understand the concerns of young Europeans* was written in the context of the **TCA Participation Erasmus Alumni for Civic Engagement (PEACE)**, coordinated by INDIRE/Erasmus Agency Italy.

Section 1

You(th) and the 2024 European elections: a survey to understand the concerns of young Europeans

In March 2024, the INDIRE Erasmus National Agency launched a survey within the PEACE project for young European citizens, with as main objectives to understand young people's interest in politics and European issues and to get to know their concerns in a more in-depth fashion, also with the idea that they might become part of the European political agenda. A core objective of the survey is further to stimulate young people to vote in the upcoming European elections.

The questionnaire *You(th) and the 2024 European elections* has been developed in relation to the elections for the European Parliament, 6 to 9 June, 2024.

The short survey addresses young Europeans aged 16 to 35 years old and seeks to understand their political and social views.

The key foci of the questionnaire are youth concerns in relation to (European) politics. In general, the survey wants to understand what young people think about the European elections and the European Union, and to stimulate their engagement.

The questionnaire, in English, was developed by Paul Blokker, professor of Political Sociology at Alma Mater Studiorum, University of Bologna, together with Michele Fiorillo, Rossana Palladino, Esteban Octavio Scuzarello, and Tommaso Visone.

The survey closed on 10 June, 2024. The results of the survey are part of the PEACE research activities. This report discusses a selection of the final results.



Main take-aways

- Major obstacles remain for young people to engage in the Erasmus+ programme, including not having sufficient time in the educational trajectory, financial concerns, desire to remain in one's home country, and lack of information.
- A majority of the respondents claimed to have voted in the past and had the intention to vote in the 2024 European elections.
- Somewhat more than two-thirds of the respondents claimed to have some to good knowledge of the European Parliament and its tasks.
- While two-thirds believe their national democracy works (more or less), young people see democracy failing in terms of youth representation in the institutions and attention for young people's problems, they perceive great problems with corruption, democratic decline and rise of radicalism, lack of attention for the environment, and little action regarding discrimination and (gender) inequality.
- Few young people appear interested in a Federal Europe and a further federalisation of the EU.
- Young people seem little knowledgeable about what civil society and non-governmental organisations are.
- Young people think there is more than representative democracy and are in favour of democratic innovation and more participatory (citizens' assemblies) and direct democracy. A good part shows interest in a permanent European Youth Assembly.
- Young people face obstacles in voting for the European Parliament, particularly those engaged in learning mobility.
- The Erasmus+ programme is evaluated positively with regard to stimulating political and participatory skills, a European political identity and interest in engagement.
- Most respondents believe Erasmus+ is important if not essential for strengthening European Citizenship Education.

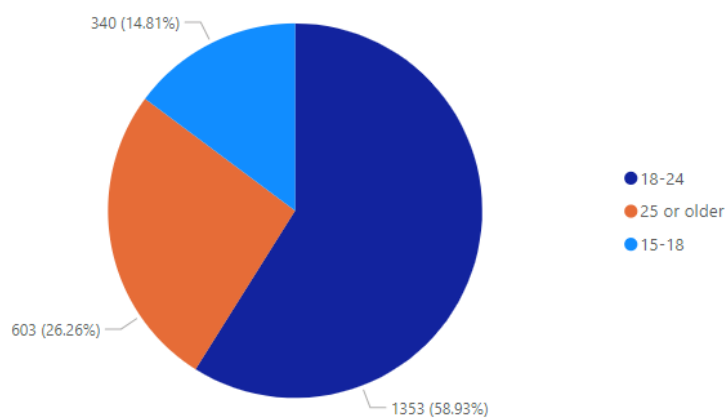
Section 2

Participants: age, gender, nationality, engagement in mobility

The questionnaire was fielded from March 2024 onwards, in the run-up to the European parliamentary elections. The idea was to stimulate young people to go out and vote and to think about European politics, as well as to gather data on young people's political predispositions towards, and views of, (European) politics. The questionnaire targeted young people/young Europeans from 16 to 35 years of age. Respondents (N=2296) are for a majority 18-24 years of age, while younger respondents (15-18 years) are around 21 % of the total responses, and 24 % is 25 years or older.

Figure 1.

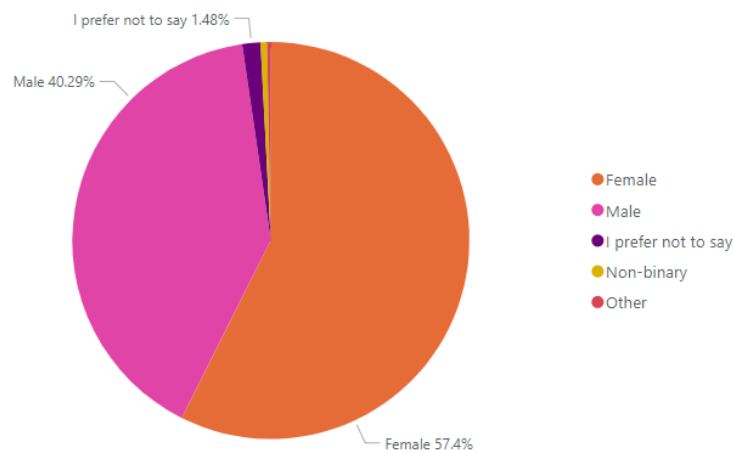
What is your age?



The majority of respondents is female (57.4 %), while male respondents are around 40.29 % and those indicating prefer not to say and other are around 1.5 % (figure 2).

Figure 2.

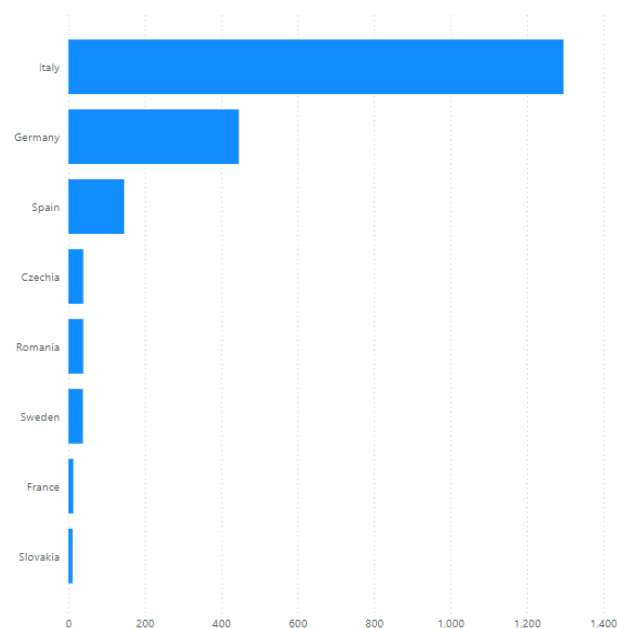
What is your gender?



As the survey was launched in Italy in March 2024, an important part of respondents (roughly half) is of Italian citizenship (1296 respondents). The second largest group is German youth (446), and main further nationalities include Spanish, Czech, Romanian, Swedish, French, Slovak, and other (also extra-EU) nationalities (figure 3).

Figure 3.

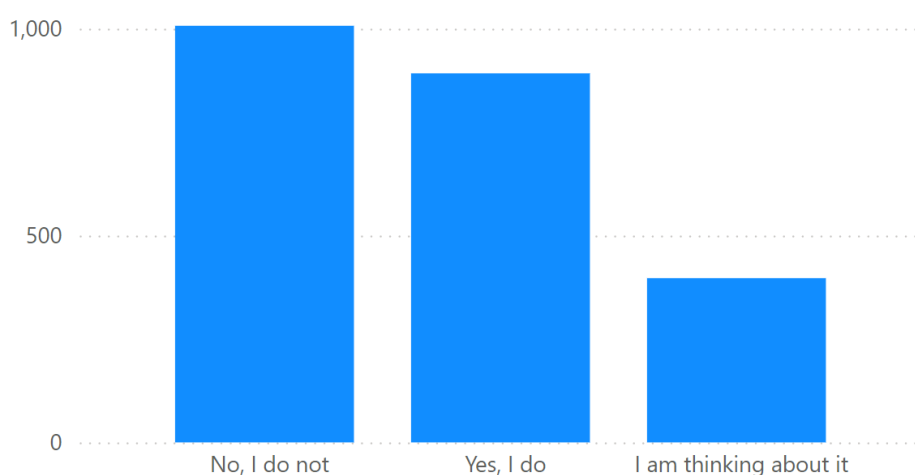
What is your country of origin? (top 8)



More than a third of the respondents (892) has a mobility experience, roughly a fifth is contemplating going on a mobility experience (397), while almost half has no mobility experience (1007).

Figure 4.

Do you have an Erasmus mobility experience?



It is significant to scrutinize the variegated reasons given by respondents for not participating in learning mobility (responding to the question “Is there a more specific reason for not engaging with Erasmus?”). The responses reveal several key reasons for not engaging with the Erasmus program. A common theme is lack of time and concerns about falling behind academically, showing that students are wary of slowing down their studies. Family restrictions and financial concerns also play a significant role, with some students mentioning strict parents or the program’s perceived high costs. Personal preferences, such as a desire to remain in their home country or discomfort with hosting strangers, were also mentioned. Additionally, some students missed registration deadlines or lacked information about the program.

These insights suggest that time, financial aid, and clearer communication are key areas for improving Erasmus participation. At the same time, many answers show that there are students who are planning to engage with the Erasmus program or who have already been accepted for future mobility (see Box 1).

Box 1.

“ I don't think I would be able keep up with my current school program when I get back from the Erasmus experience.

I did not have the opportunity to do an experience, since I missed out the registration. I really want to do it.

I was supposed to carry it out but the Covid happened and the program got cancelled.

I consider myself not enough mature to spend much time outside my home and my family.

I can't manage to do university and work at the same time, as I am allowed to do in my university, which has flexible learning.

I haven't had the economic possibility in the past and now I don't have the time to dedicate myself to this kind of experience, but I would love to do something like an Erasmus experience. ”

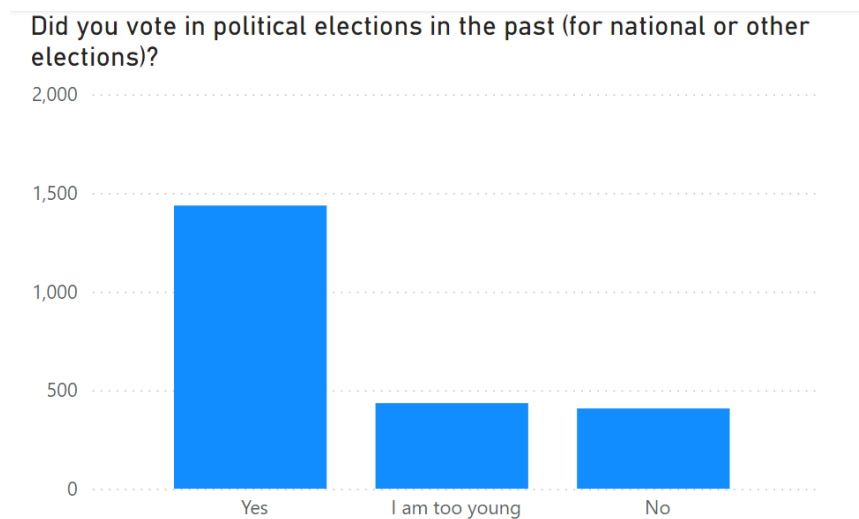
Section 3

Youth political predisposition towards, and views on, European politics

A significant part of the questionnaire focused on democracy and politics, the state of health of (representative) democracy, the ways young people engage with democratic politics, and young people's knowledge and views of (European) politics. One reason for this questionnaire is that in particular in the context of European learning mobility and Erasmus+, there is little systematic knowledge of the civic and political dispositions, needs, and experiences of people engaging in mobility.

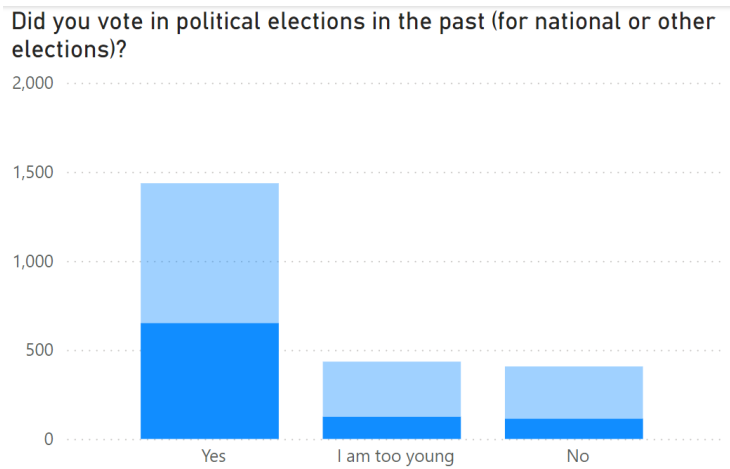
Starting with the formal dimensions of political participation, the first question addressed voting behaviour. On the question whether young people did vote in the past, 1436 respondents stated they have (in national, local, or European elections), while 407 respondents stated they had not, and 434 stated they were still too young.

Figure 5.



Of those who declared to have an Erasmus experience, 650 respondents declared to have voted in the past (figure 6).

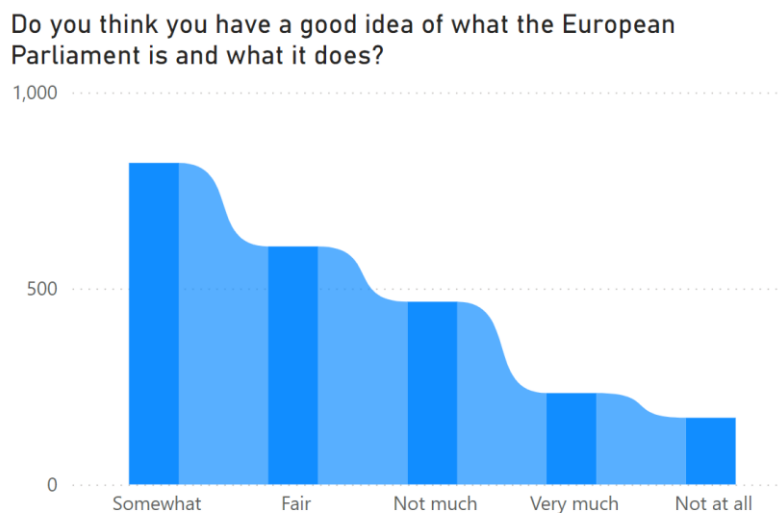
Figure 6.



Of those who declared not to have an Erasmus experience, 565 respondents declared to have voted in the past. Of those thinking about a future Erasmus experience, 221 respondents declared to have voted in the past.

Around a third of the respondents (820) believes it has a somewhat good idea of what the European Parliament (EP) is and what it does. 607 respondents thought they have a fair idea, and 233 respondents have a very much good idea of the EP's functioning. 170 respondents did not at all have a firm idea of what the EP does (figure 7).

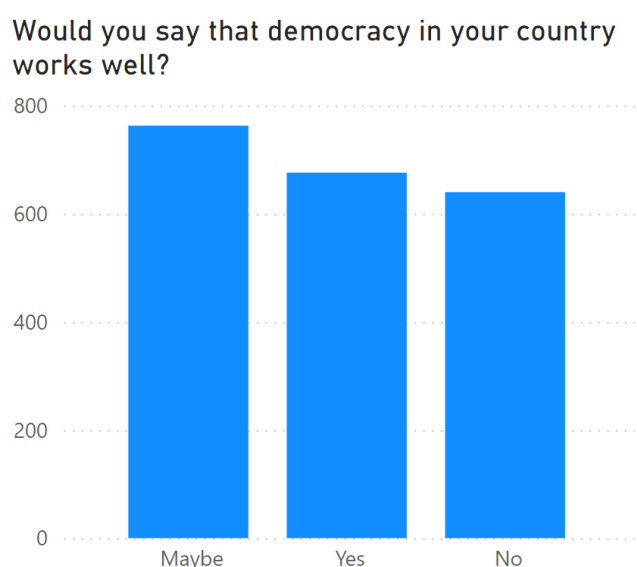
Figure 7.



On the question 'Would you say that democracy in your country works well?', 676 respondents answered yes, 640 respondents thought no, while 763 responded maybe (figure 8). Circa 200 respondents added various qualifications,

such as 'Democracy itself functions but unfit politicians are in charge', 'It works well but it's slowly decreasing', 'I used to be more faithful, but I started losing faith after they refused to hold a referendum about euthanasia despite having collected the amount of signatures required' or 'It depends of the subject. I don't feel like most people feel represented by our government. Before and after the elections'.

Figure 8.



To the follow-up question 'What is not working in your country's democracy?', many rich answers were provided. The many answers refer to the lack of representation young people have in the current institutions. There are frequent references to the problem of corruption, lobbying, and self-interested politicians that care about staying in power rather than in people's problems and needs. A further concern is growing polarisation, which includes the emergence of populist, radical right, and authoritarian forces. Some refer to the political ignorance or lack of knowledge of citizens, but also with regard to the political elites who frequently appear not fit for their jobs. There is also concern for police violence and the lack of an effective political response. Also socio-economic dimensions are frequently mentioned, in relation to the job market, rising inflation, and the persisting gender pay gap. Finally, various remarks indicate the need for solid education, including education on civic values and citizenship.

“ I believe that in my country young people’s voices are not heard. The people working at the government just try to save their place and they do not compare their generation to ours.

In some demonstrations the police has shown a violent behaviour against the demonstrators.

There's more and more censorship, politicians often do their personal interests and there is not a healthy political debate but only people yelling and being cruel to minorities.

First of all, there is no real freedom of speech, especially in the field of journalism (TV and newspapers), which doesn't give the right information to us, citizens. Then I would say, the complete lack of the will of understanding people's needs, especially young people.

There is too much polarization and no one really listens to others' opinions.

The lies, the corruption and, above all, the poor education of the people who sometimes vote against the human rights. Hitler was chosen by a democratic system. The problem is not democracy, but the citizens.

In our country, I think that the concept of democracy is being set aside and not observed. The more the years go by, the more I realise that gender difference, racism and environmental struggle are topics that my government does not think about at all.

Because the voting system (first past the post) is a scam, and results in a Parliament whose composition is very different from the results of the National Popular Vote.

Young people are not represented, so they lose interest in political affairs. Very often, in my opinion, the people's demands are not listened to enough and solutions are unfortunately not always adapted to the needs. I also believe that many choices are sometimes not impartial.

In today's Spanish democracy, there are challenges that need to be addressed to improve its functioning. Some problem areas may include political polarization, corruption, lack of transparency and social inequality. In addition, the political system could benefit from reforms to strengthen democratic institutions and promote more effective citizen participation.

Too few different political parties, there are not enough differences between the parties; most of them are still serving the status quo and uphold the rule of the rich and wealthy.

I’m feeling like a lot of politicians are not brave enough, to make big and new decisions because they think it could have a bad impact on their votes. Also, decisions are made way too slow so we should find new ways, to work on quicker solutions. “

One question sought to stimulate young people's political and European imagination by using a quote from Altiero Spinelli, co-author of the *Manifesto di Ventotene* and famous European politician and federalist:

What is your opinion on the following statement on European integration as a project?

"... Europe has captured the biggest fish of its life, but it will have to bring it ashore. Let us be careful, because there will always be sharks trying to devour it. Let us try not to return to the port with only a bone."

(cit. Altiero Spinelli, Speeches to the European Parliament 1976-1986, edited by Pier Virgilio Dastoli, Mulino 1986, p. 333).

This quote from a famous speech by Altiero Spinelli (famous at least for experts of European integration) - received mixed reactions by the young respondents. First of all, as one could expect, not all respondents knew the quote. A large part of the answers indicated doubts: "I don't know" (78 times), "non so" (4 times), "don't understand" (20 times), "non capisco" (1 time) "I'm not sure" (26 times), in some cases, respondents requested explicitly for more context to judge (e.g. "sorry, but I do not fully understand it out of context" or "missing the context to this topic and not enough knowledge to have an opinion about it"). A majority of the answers is in agreement with the sentence ("I agree" 244 times; "correct" 7 times; "sono d'accordo" 7 times; "I totally/completely/ fully agree/totally agreed" 33 times; "sono pienamente d'accordo" 2 times; "I generally agree" 2 times; "partially agreed" 1 time; "interesting" 12 times). Explicit indications of disagreement occurred only 20 times (and in one case the metaphor is radically questioned: "I don't agree. What fish? What have we accomplished? ").

But "What is the **fish**?" is the pertinent question of one of the German respondents:

[F]or some is to be identified with the **freedom of movement and mobility** allowed by Schengen ("The possibility of travelling without the fear of being stopped at a frontline or seeing your rights violated by the police of some other country is something we must be grateful everyday, beside the economic factor. In these years, we had the proof that we mustn't take this right as something natural and always guaranteed, everyone must be aware of this and defend this conquest or push for an expansion of it"). But not for everyone this type of fish - the free movement - is good ("Always growing integration isn't always good - we already got plenty of fishes like Schengen, Euro, Free Trade....", and for others this fish is still not big enough ("We have to solve existing problems in the EU (e.g. complete Schengen inclusion for Romania) before we accept new

members" - in this line: "Romania although is part of the European Union, it is still considered a third class country.")

For others, the most urgent fish to take care of is the (solution of?) the **climate crisis**:

"There are much bigger fish we should worry about: climate change and the rights of living things"; "there is a widespread crisis regarding climate justice and democracy"; "the biggest future challenges, such as climate change, can only be faced together"; "we need to start taking action like we had with Russia over the War, but with countries outside the union that are not climate friendly".

Or, the fish is our **democracy** in danger:

"Democracy is constant fight for stability. A democratic Europe striving for human rights, intercultural awareness and freedom, and affordable good living standards is not easy and all efforts must be put on long-term policies that will bring a better future. Authoritarian forces must be contained and recognized as unconstitutional. We must not be tolerant towards intolerance." "It is true especially regarding democracy and how we have a responsibility to help those in need and not be ruled by the ones who have money and power who try to rule internationally by pulling strings."

Or, stressing ironically the metaphor, the fish becomes in some answers an instrument to criticize **capitalism**:

"If the fish is a metaphor for money, it arrived safely at the shore"; "I don't think that it's a few "sharks" who are the biggest threat, the system is the problem and under capitalism there will never be true equity between people"; "Spinelli told us the Truth: greenwashing, rainbow washing, female empowerment... all are the disgusting combination of private capitalism and alt right think-tanks from circa 2012 trying to bring us to the 1930s."

The actual fish to which Spinelli was referring to - the **Constitution (of a Federal Europe)** - is mentioned only in very few answers (3):

"is about the finalization of the process of European Integration and about the strive for the constitution of Federal Europe. Personally, I think that a Federal Europe is the only solution that could make us able to face the big challenges of our time: climate change, rise of the war within and outside Europe, inequalities, migrations, strategic irrelevance etc."; "a call for a European constitution (...) this would be positive for European integration and in order to protect the EU from its opponents, however at the moment under a quite anti-European climate I doubt that more integration is possible or would contribute to the protection of

the current level of cooperation between members and would rather lead to more conflict”; “member countries are not cohesive and continue to hate each other. The policies of individual states are often discordant and competitive (see the fiscal regime adopted in Ireland), there is no constitution or common army. What then is Europe?”.

A discrete number of answers (17) is referring explicitly to a **Federal Europe or European Federation** horizon (which is actually the **shore - connected to the fish of Constitution**- of which Spinelli was talking about): calling it also as “*federated states of Europe*”, or *European Federal Republic* (“The fish is the dream of the European Federal Republic, and the sharks are the Eurosceptics who want to sell us to Putin.”), or 4 times as *Unites States of Europe* (eg. “We must realize the project of the United States of Europe: it is our only future path to greater equity”) - in one case as a negative objective (“I am in favor of European integration, it should not be reversed. It should not end up in the United States of Europe either. I do not want Europe to end like the US”), while in another case the US Federation is at the contrary taken as the model (“European leaders should seriously think about creating a European Federation, such as the US. If we won't change, Europe will probably become a third world area”). An interesting mix of federalism and Marxism emerge in one case: “I guess he is referring to national bourgeois and their fear of a possible European Federation”, while another answer connect federalism with democracy: “I think that an united (federal) Europe is the key to preserve the democracy in the decades and to truly project it around the world.”

This kind of connection leads one of the answers interestingly to imagine a Federation as a large geopolitical project: “The end goal should be a united European federation, built on the principles of liberty, equality and brotherhood. A federation stretching from the Atlantic to the Bering strait, a burning torch of freedom and democracy illuminating an otherwise dark world”. In fact, intended as the finalization of the process of European Integration, for another respondent the “Federal Europe is the only solution that could make us able the face the big challenges of our time: climate change, rise of the war within and outside Europe, inequalities, migrations, strategic irrelevance etc.”

The role of a **European youth** self-conscious of its constituent role appears crucial to achieve this, as underlined in this answer “we are still here to ask for a more federal Europe despite all these years. I think - and I feel, as young person that we, European People - especially young people - don't doing enough for letting this situation change.”

But without **participation**, no change will be possible, as underlined by some other answers: “That it clearly shows how the project of a European Union must be preserved everyday through active participation”; “no right must be taken for granted, we must continue to strive for rights, possibilities and participation”.

In many answers, there is rather a focus on the **sharks** metaphor, for one respondent to be identified with internal threads such as nationalist parties and anti-EU forces, even inside the EU institutions (“The sharks are already in parliament - that is anti-European MEPs”) or external like Russia’s interference on EU (in one case proposing another interesting quote from Von Clausewitz: ““The conqueror is always a lover of peace; he would prefer to take over our country unopposed”) or more generally speaking the superpowers (“I agree that strong and united Europe isn’t desirable for a lot of geopolitical hegemony like China, Russia or USA” - China is mentioned 8 times, Russia 13; Iran 1; USA 7, e.g. “I think that now like now EU is only the garden of house of USA. And there is nothing democratic in its power, unrecognizable, and [not] aligned [with] the interested of his people”; “We are still from having a consciousness as European citizens, which would allow the EU as a whole to interact with other powerful countries, such as the USA or China. Europe is still scattered and divided by national and mostly shortsighted interests.” In a couple of cases emerges a quite disillusioned vision, where even Europe is seen as a shark in the dangerous ocean of the multipolar world where (“The EU is a shark itself, it's just the USA is stronger and won't let it bite”) or the sharks are combination of the external threats and the corporate lobbies (“Are the sharks Russia and China? Is USA a shark? Or the sharks are the Bruxelles system of meetings with representatives of interest groups?”).

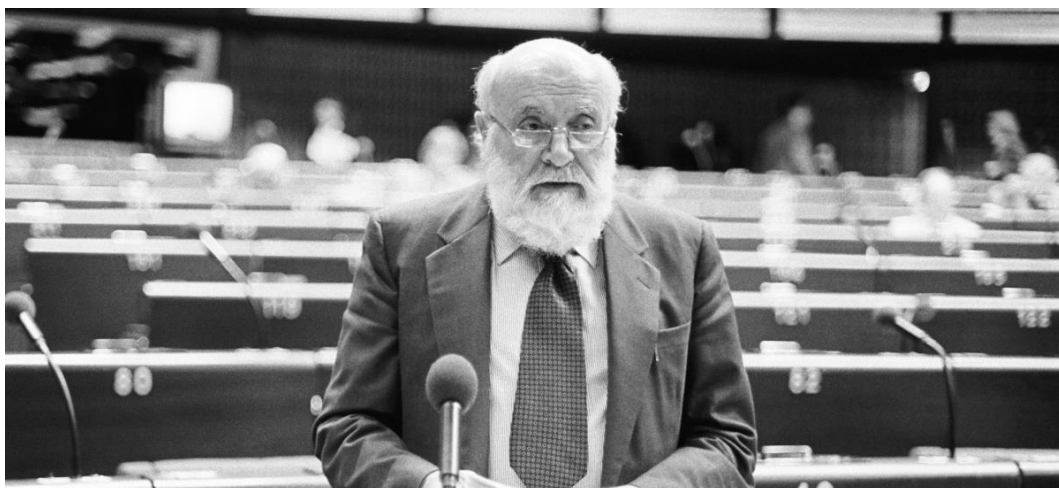
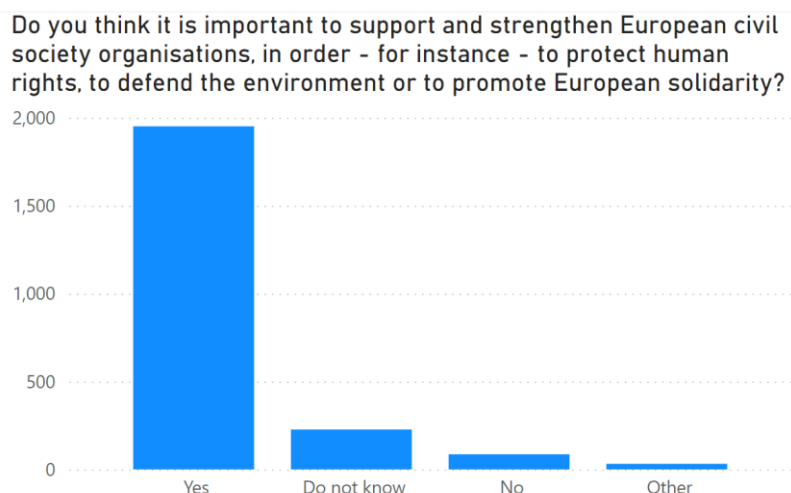


Photo: Licia Pastore (2017), ‘Altiero Spinelli, nel libro di Mario Leone la forza del pensiero di chi sognò l’Europa unita’, *Left*, <https://left.it/2017/09/07/altiero-spinelli-nel-libro-di-mario-leone-la-forza-del-pensiero-di-chi-sogno-leuropa-unita/>.

In a following question, a further dimension investigated was that of civil society and the relation of the European Union with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). To the question ‘Do you think it is important to support and strengthen European CSOs, a great majority answered yes (1956), while only 86 respondents answered no (figure 9).

Figure 9.



Some of the respondents provided interesting elaboration of their answers. One said, “What human rights...Europe should promote diplomacy, solidarity, human ethics, values, culture. Instead it has been slave of US geopolitical and economical supremacy and it has been since it was born that they finance wars in any part of the world, never even trying to start diplomatic tables, both in current and past wars. All these words are pure hypocrisy”. An answer that stressed a feeling of deep disappointment due to the gap between the values affirmed by European civil society and the practice sustained by European governments and European common institutions during their history. Various answers indicate a form of “hypocrisy” or a kind of attitude that today is often related to the entire West (there are other answers that practically say the same: “you are assuming that Europe is the good guy here”; “yes, if they actually did what they're supposed to instead of protecting western imperialism”). Another answer stated “It depends, funding some NGOs that are supporting criminal organisations is bad, if done correctly yes”, which shows a critical perception of NGOs as mixed actors which can act for different goals and also hide “criminal interest”, a kind of perception which has been fuelled also by accusations made by some EU right-wing governments in relation to specific NGOs which were opposing their policies (an example is the Italian politician Salvini being embroiled in a court case regarding migrants and the aid towards migrants on the Mediterranean sea). In relation, other answers state that “You will have to

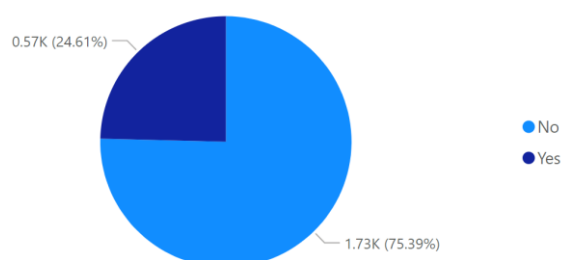
define those terms more precisely, as they are and have been used as trojan horses already". Another answer went into another direction by saying: "I think it would be important, but it doesn't have to be closed in European borders". In this case, the idea is to support not only European civil society organizations but to enlarge the support to organizations which are outside of the EU. Another answer stressed the relevance to not abandon question of deepening European political integration: "Yes, however, the action to solve problems in a definitive manner is just as important as the action taken to manage the problem now. Civil society organizations cannot solve a problem [that is] European in nature, nor Europe should abdicate this ambition".

A related questions asked whether respondents could name European civil society organisations that they felt were particularly important. Here a lot of answers show either the absence of any cognition about what is an European NGO (non-governmental organisation) or indicated a lot of confusion between NGOs and international agencies and organizations (like the UN) or the political institutions (such as the Parliament), including the European ones. Only a few answers are focused on true NGOs such as: Emergency, Amnesty, European Movement, Green Peace, WWF, Friday for Future, Red Cross, Surfeider foundation, reporter sans frontière, anticor, Coexister, Oxfam, The Good Lobby, Slow Food, Eurogroup for Animals, Fairtrade International, European Citizen Action Service, Protect Our Winters Europe, ALDA European Association for Local Democracy, Europa Nostra, ENGSO, European Federation for Intercultural Learning, Association of European Border Regions, and Refugees Welcome International.

The questionnaire further engaged with democratic renewal and innovation. One of the questions asked whether the respondents had ever been signing a European Citizens' Initiative. Three-fourths of the respondents declared to have ever signed a European Citizens Initiative (ca. 1730 respondents (figure 10)).

Figure 10.

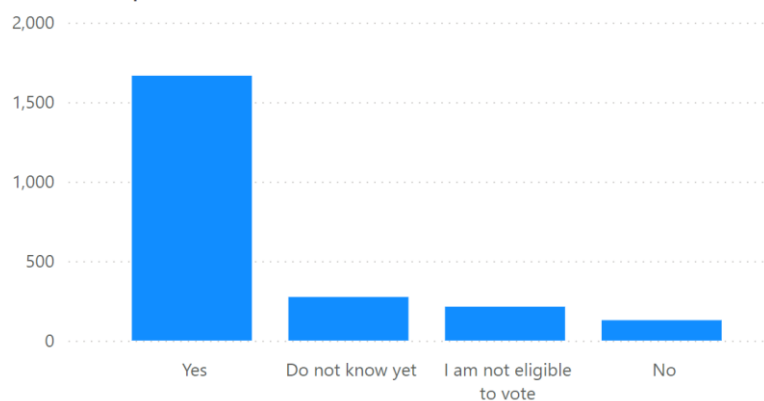
Democratic tools for participation: Have you ever signed a European Citizens' Initiative (e.g. the initiative on End the Cage Age, on Good Clothes, Fair Pay, or on Fur Free Europe)?



The survey closed on 10 June, 2024, and included as one of its questions the intention to vote in the June 2024 European elections. 1666 respondents declared to intend to vote in the upcoming European elections (figure 11).

Figure 11.

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?



The questionnaire also provided the option (box 3) to state why one would not want to go to vote. Some of the statements of the respondents with regard to reasons not to go to vote, or the obstacles they perceive that prevent them from voting, are of significance for investigating not least the lower turnout of young people in the 2024 elections (if compared to the 2019 elections).

Box 3.

“Because they don’t have any power or possibility to do anything, the real decisions are taken by European Commission, European Parliament is quite useless.

I am not knowledgeable at the moment and my vote wouldn’t reflect my beliefs.

Voting is useless if the parliament as only body representing the popular will does not have any weight.

One vote in 300 million is never important.

I feel like the people that my country votes into the European Parliament are the ones that are unwanted in the national parliament (because of scandals etc). Additionally, I've read reports from a former member of the European Parliament that decisions are rigged with corruption”

“ I intend to vote but, as for some time now, since there is no party that can represent us, I will express my NOT vote and dissent. It is a duty, it is a right to do it, it represents the choice of my clarity towards voting and for freedom of expression.

I would like to but I need to know first who I am voting for and why.

Yes, but I'll have to spend money to be able to reach my election booth and exert my right and perform my duty.

I am living abroad temporarily, so I am afraid I won't be able to.

I would want to vote, but I still have to understand the procedure for Italian voters living abroad.

Because we don't get to decide who are on the lists for receiving the votes. We do have, however, an unreal impression that our vote matters, but we are still voting between some individuals that we had no power in placing them there. If you go to a shop and on the counter there are 3 rotten breads, one worse than the other, you can say that you had a choice, but did you actually?

It is too expensive to travel back to the EU to vote.

Unfortunately, I won't be able to vote because I'm abroad.

I don't feel informed enough for voting.

I want to vote but I live outside of the EU, and I have no embassy close to me, so I see it difficult.

I would but do not know yet (due to circumstances beyond my control).

I'm not voting because it doesn't change anything. Elections can easily be manipulated, and all the politicians share the same agenda.

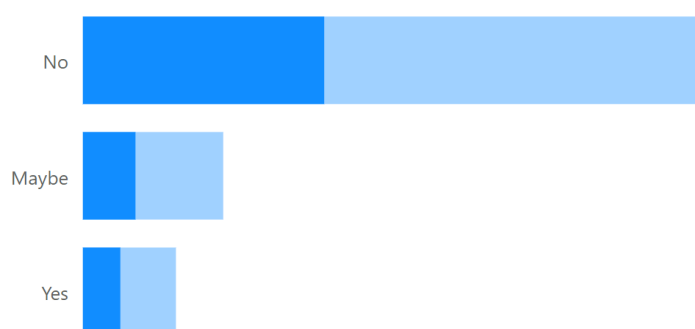
Yes but I don't really feel making a difference.

I believe just in democracy as direct participation, or maybe representative systems based in lottery between citizens, being representatives out of lobbies' influence. “

On the question of whether the young respondents had ever considered to stand for the European election in the future, 246 respondents answered positively (99 of which with mobility experience) (Figure 12).

Figure 12.

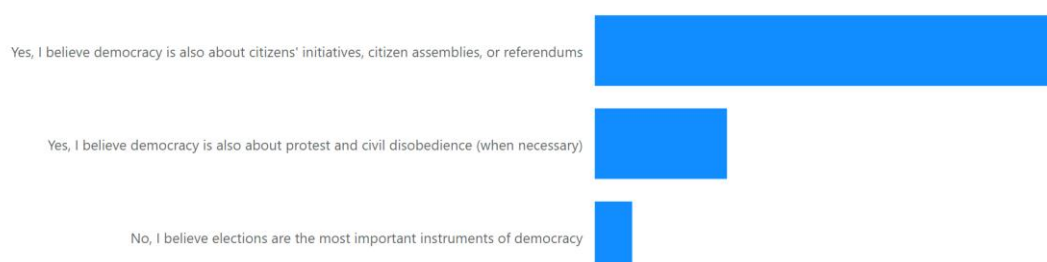
In the current 705-member European Parliament, only 37 members are below 35 years of age. Have you yourself ever considered running for the European Parliament?



The majority of the young respondents thought democracy is about more than just elections. 1614 respondents indicated that also citizens' initiatives, citizens' assemblies and referendums are important. 460 respondents also endorsed protest and civil disobedience (figure 13).

Figure 13.

Do you think democracy is more than just elections?



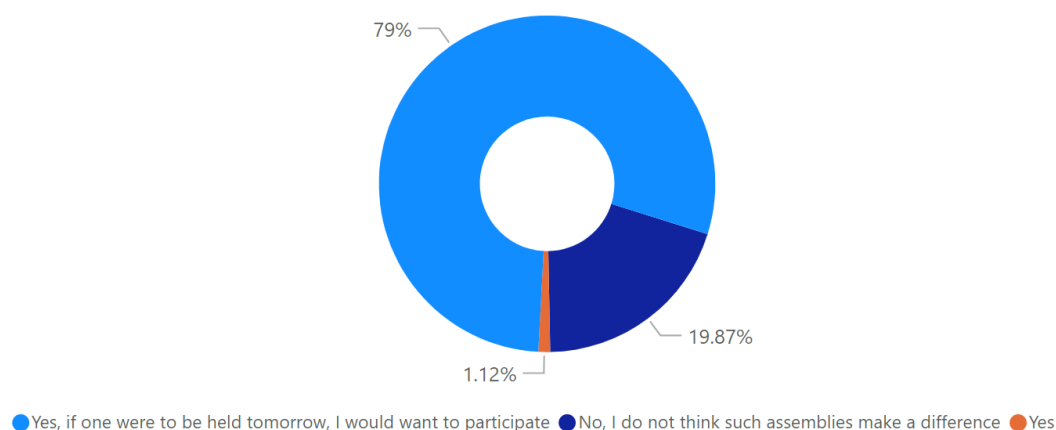
Very interesting to notice is that practically the totality of the answers is yes. But admittedly, these are two trends which are always expressed more or less with the same words. On the one side, there are the ones who affirm that democracy is also related to protest and civil disobedience, or to a kind of participation which is a kind of popular counter-power or opposition to the decisions which have been taken, something which could be part of what the French scholar

Pierre Rosanvallon called “counter-democracy”. On the other side, there are the ones who consider democracy to be “also about citizens' initiatives, citizen assemblies, or referendums”, exalting direct democracy and civic participation. In general, all the answers insist on the idea of direct participation as central for a democracy, which shows very well a distance from the idea that democracy has to be related just to election and vote procedures.

A majority also thought democracy that citizens' assemblies are important, 79% indicates that it would want to participate in one. Here the answers (figure 14) are divided between the ones who want to participate in an eventual future citizens' assembly and the ones who do not think that this kind of assembly makes a difference. It is clear that the issue of citizens' assemblies – and hence also the answer - is conditional on the particular kind of deliberative assembly one has in mind, which may include assemblies on highly debated and sensitive topics, which may polarize public opinion and on which there are different sensibilities. In this, follow-up investigation would be needed to understand how young people see assemblies.

Figure 14.

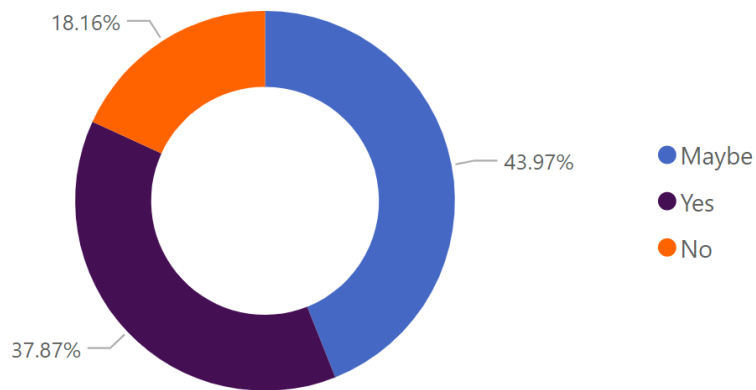
Do you think citizens' assemblies, such as the French Citizens Convention for Climate, are important?



In case the EU would create a permanent Youth Assembly. Here there are two main answers: yes and maybe. 38 percent would want to participate, and 44 percent indicated that maybe they would want to do so (figure 15). Some participants stressed the importance to know the scope, the organization, the power and the rules of this Assembly before to take a decision. Some also answered no 18 percent). In general, this shows a potential interest in a specific youth assembly.

Figure 15.

If the European Union would create a permanent Youth Assembly, would you want to participate?

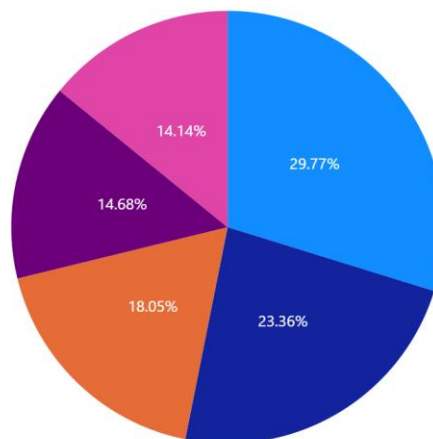


In relation to democratic participation and the EU, 30 percent indicated the European Citizens' Initiative as the best way to participate, followed by online campaigns (23 percent), and protest on the street (18 percent). (figure 16).

Figure 16.

Democratic tools for participation: If you would want the EU to do something, in which way would you express/channel it?

- Participate in an European Citizens' Initiative
- Create an online campaign
- Protest on the street
- Contact a national politician
- Petition the Parliament



Section 4

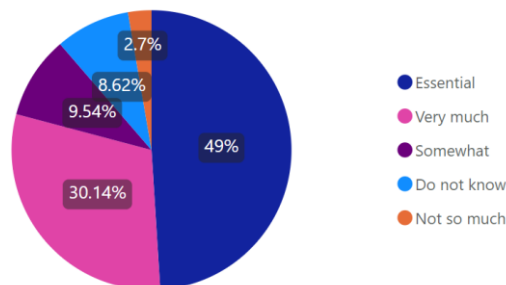
The relation of the Erasmus+ programme with civic and political engagement

The survey concluded with a number of questions on how young people think the Erasmus+ programme stimulates European identity, knowledge of other EU countries, social interaction with other Europeans, knowledge of the EU, becoming socially active, and strengthening European citizenship education.

General skills in terms of language, participation and public speaking – all skills that are clearly also very relevant for European citizenship and engagement on the transnational level – are seen by a large majority as importantly stimulated through Erasmus+ experiences (figure 17).

Figure 17

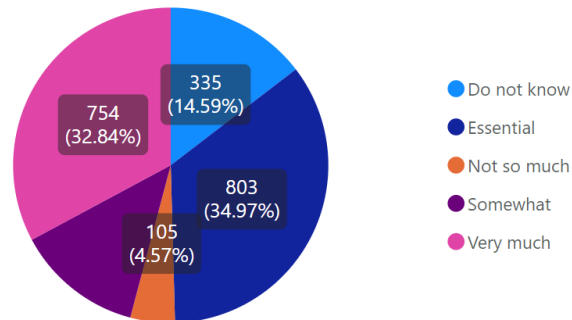
How much do you think the Erasmus programme stimulates the following dimensions? [Acquiring skills in language, participation, public speaking]



Erasmus+ is also seen as stimulating more general social engagement (figure 18).

Figure 18

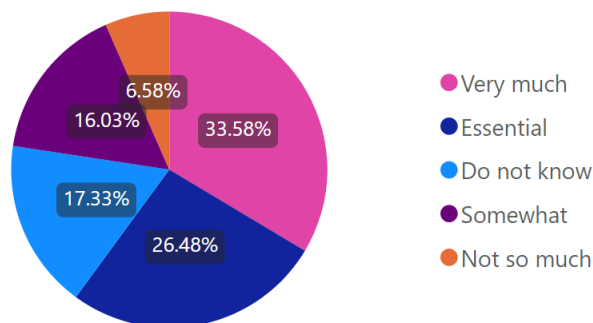
How much do you think the Erasmus programme stimulates the following dimensions? [Becoming more socially active outside of education and work]



A conditio sine qua for European citizenship would be a political self-identification that goes beyond national identity. Roughly 60 percent thinks that Erasmus+ stimulates such a European, post-national identity (figure 19).

Figure 19

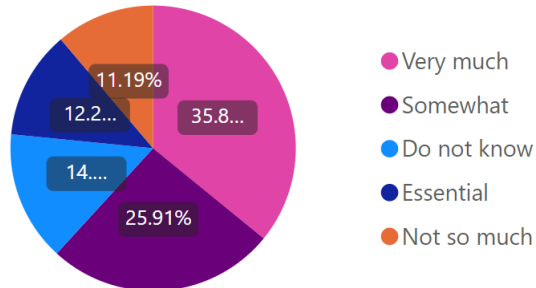
How much do you think the Erasmus programme stimulates the following dimensions? [Enriching your political identity, beyond national or local identity]



Purely cognitive knowledge of the EU is seen as another important benefit from learning mobility experiences (figure 20) (we need to keep in mind that close to half of the respondents has not had an Erasmus+ experience, and hence expresses expectations vis-à-vis the programme).

Figure 20

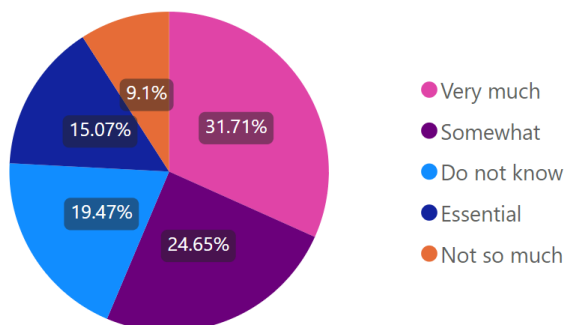
How much do you think the Erasmus programme stimulates the following dimensions? [Knowledge of the EU]



Respondents also confirm (56 percent) the great importance of the Erasmus+ programme to understand the European nature of specific problems (and hence beyond the scope of purely national answers to these problems, indicating a strong, practical necessity of European collaboration) (figure 21).

Figure 21

How much do you think the Erasmus programme stimulates the following dimensions? [Understanding the European nature of problems (such as migration)]



Finally, on a question that is at the heart of the PEACE project – on the strengthening of European studies and European Citizenship education – 68 percent thought the Erasmus programme is very much or essential in these areas (figure 22). Whereas this can be interpreted as the fact that Erasmus+ seems on the right track, it also confirms that European citizenship education should be seen as one of its core missions.

Figure 22

How much do you think the Erasmus programme stimulates the following dimensions? [Strengthening European studies/European citizenship education]

