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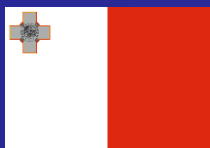


STANDARD EUROBAROMETER 100

Public opinion in the European Union

National Report: MALTA

Fieldwork: October – November 2023



This survey has been requested and co-ordinated by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication.

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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.

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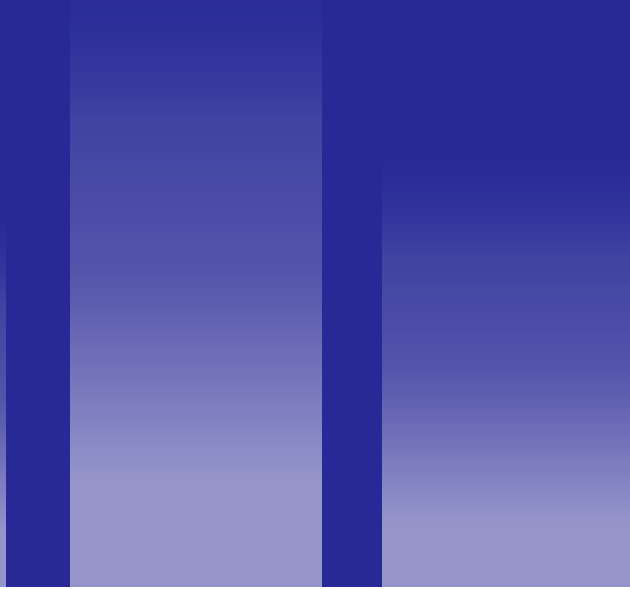
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INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS



INTRODUCTION

The national report outlines the main findings of Wave 100 of the Standard Eurobarometer. Fieldwork was conducted from the 23rd October 2023 to 11th November 2023. A total of 504 interviews were conducted with respondents residing in Malta, aged 15 years and over.

During 2023, the Maltese economy continued to grow but at a reduced rate. The economic environment was characterised by high inflation and increasing prices. This has tended to generate a negative sentiment which is likely to have had an impact on the results of the survey. A negative sentiment may have also been generated by a number of challenges related to aspects such as the environment, building development and public procurement.

The report covers a number of topics, namely perceptions on the respondents' own personal situation, the economic situation of the country and of the European Union; the policies of the European Union; immigration; trust in the institutions; and the media and sources of news. It also includes the opinions of Maltese respondents on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the EU and Malta's response to it

KEY FINDINGS

1. Perceptions of One's own Situation

- Respondents in Malta continue to have a very positive perception of their own situation. 90% stated that they are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the life they lead. 58% expect their life in general to remain the same over the coming twelve months. 25% expect it to get better and 13% expect it to get worse.
- Two out of three respondents also stated that they never or almost never have had difficulties in paying their bills at the end of the month during the last twelve months. 12% stated that they have difficulties in paying their bills most of the time and 20% stated that this happens from time to time.
- The two most important issues respondents in Malta are facing at the moment are rising prices, inflation, and cost of living, mentioned by 65% of respondents, and the environment and climate change, mentioned by 26% of respondents.

2. Perceptions on the Situation in Malta and Economic Situation

- Respondents' perceptions on the situation in Malta are equally divided. 49% described the situation in Malta as good and another 49% described the situation as bad.
- 52% of respondents stated that the most important issue facing Malta is inflation, rising prices and cost of living. This is followed by immigration, mentioned by 37% of respondents

and the environment and climate change, mentioned by 24% of respondents.

- 55% stated that things in Malta are moving in the wrong direction, and 30% stated that things are moving in the right direction.
- 56% of respondents stated that they judge the current economic situation of Malta as very good or rather good, but 30% expect the economic situation to get worse in the coming twelve months, 17% expect it to get better, and 45% expect it to remain the same.

3. Perceptions on the EU

- Sentiment in Malta about the European Union remains very positive. 53% of respondents stated that the EU a very positive or fairly positive image, while 12% stated that it conjures up a very negative or fairly negative image and 35% stated that it conjures up a neutral image.
- A large majority (three out of four respondents) stated that they disagree with the statement that Malta could better face the future outside the EU, while 20% agree with such a statement.
- In terms of the most positive results of the EU, 56% of respondents in Malta mentioned the free movement of people, goods, and services within the EU. This was followed by the euro, mentioned by 39%, and the level of social welfare, mentioned by 37% of respondents.

4. European Union Policies

- Overall, respondents in Malta are more favourable towards EU policies than the EU as a whole, in some cases very significantly so.
- 75% consider the EU Recovery plan, NextGenerationEU, to be very effective or fairly effective to respond to the current economic challenges.

5. Immigration

- Respondents in Malta are overwhelmingly in favour of a Common European Asylum System.
- 68% stated that immigration of people from other EU member states evokes a positive feeling for them.
- 76% stated that immigration of people from outside the EU evokes a negative feeling for them.

6. Russia's invasion of Ukraine

- 61% of respondents in Malta stated that they are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with Malta's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and 64% stated that they are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the European Union's response.
- 86% stated that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a threat to the security of the EU, and 69% consider Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a threat to the security of Malta.

7. Trust in Institutions

- Trust in the European institutions and the European Union itself is among the highest in the European Union and well above the average for the whole of the EU.

8. Media and Sources of News

- Media usage in Malta is on a similar level as that for the whole of the EU.
- 82% agree with the statement that online social networks are a modern way of keeping abreast of political affairs, but 81% state that information on political affairs from online social networks cannot be trusted.
- 91% stated that news or information which they believe misrepresents reality or is even false is a problem in Malta.



I. PERCEPTIONS OF ONE'S OWN SITUATION

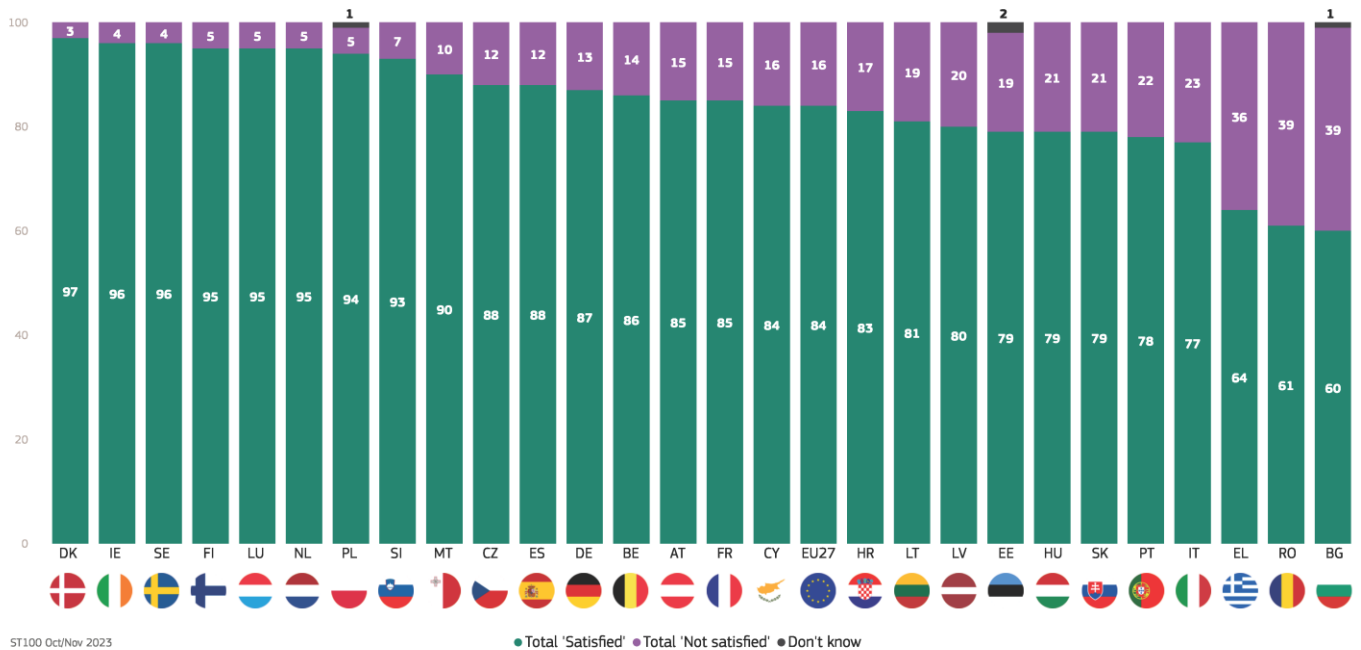
Standard Eurobarometer 100
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Respondents in Malta continue to have a very positive perception of their own situation. 90% stated that they are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the life they lead. This is a slight decrease compared to the previous wave, but still higher than the average for the 27 Member States which was 84%. 60% judge their current job situation to be very good or rather good, a slight increase over the previous wave. A positive judgement is also expressed about the financial situation of their household, with 77% stating it is very good or rather good.

Chart 1 below provides information on how respondents in each member state feel about the life they lead.

Chart 1:

D70. On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the life you lead? (%)



When asked whether at the present time things are moving in the right direction with regard to their life personally, 72% stated that it is going in the right direction, 12% stated that it is going in the wrong direction, and 16% did not express an opinion. Two out of three respondents also stated that they never or almost never have had difficulties in paying their bills at the end of the month during the last twelve months. 12% stated that they have difficulties in paying their bills most of the time and 20% stated that this happens from time to time.

When asked to choose the two most important issues they are facing at the moment from a pre-determined set of issues, respondents gave most mentions to rising prices, inflation, and cost of living. 65% of respondents mentioned this as one of their two main issues. This was followed by the environment and climate change, mentioned by 26% of respondents. Immigration and health were each mentioned by 13% of respondents,

and the education system was mentioned by 10% of respondents. EU rising prices, inflation and cost of living are the main issues which individuals are facing.

Perceptions about the future are also generally positive as 58% expect their life in general to remain the same over the coming twelve months. 25% expect it to get better and 13% expect it to get worse. These results are not too dissimilar from the rest of the EU. Expectations on the financial situation of one's household follow a similar pattern as 58% expect it to remain the same over the coming twelve months. 18% expect it to get better and 19% expect it to get worse. Expectations about respondents' personal job situation are also positive as 50% expect it to remain the same, 17% expect it to get better and 5% expect it to get worse.



II. PERCEPTIONS ON THE SITUATION IN MALTA AND THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

PERCEPTIONS ON MALTA

Respondents' perceptions on Malta are equally divided. 49% described the situation in Malta as good and another 49% described the situation as bad. Males and females tend to have similar views while Generation Z respondents tend to have a more negative view. Perceptions about the future are more negative. 32% expect the situation to get worse, 20% expect it to get better, and 42% expect it to remain the same.

52% of respondents stated that the most important issue facing Malta is inflation, rising prices and cost of living. This is followed by immigration, mentioned by 37% of respondents and the environment and climate change, mentioned by 24% of respondents. It is worth noting that since the previous wave of the

Eurobarometer, the percentage of respondents who mentioned crime as one of the two most important issues facing Malta increased from 6% to 17%.

When respondents were asked if, in general, things in Malta are moving in the right or in the wrong direction, 55% stated that they are moving in the wrong direction, compared to 47% who answered in the same way in the previous wave. 30% stated that things are moving in the right direction and 15% did not express an opinion.

56% stated that they are not satisfied with the way democracy is working in Malta while 43% stated that they are satisfied. 54% disagree with the statement that their voice counts in Malta while 43% agree with this statement.

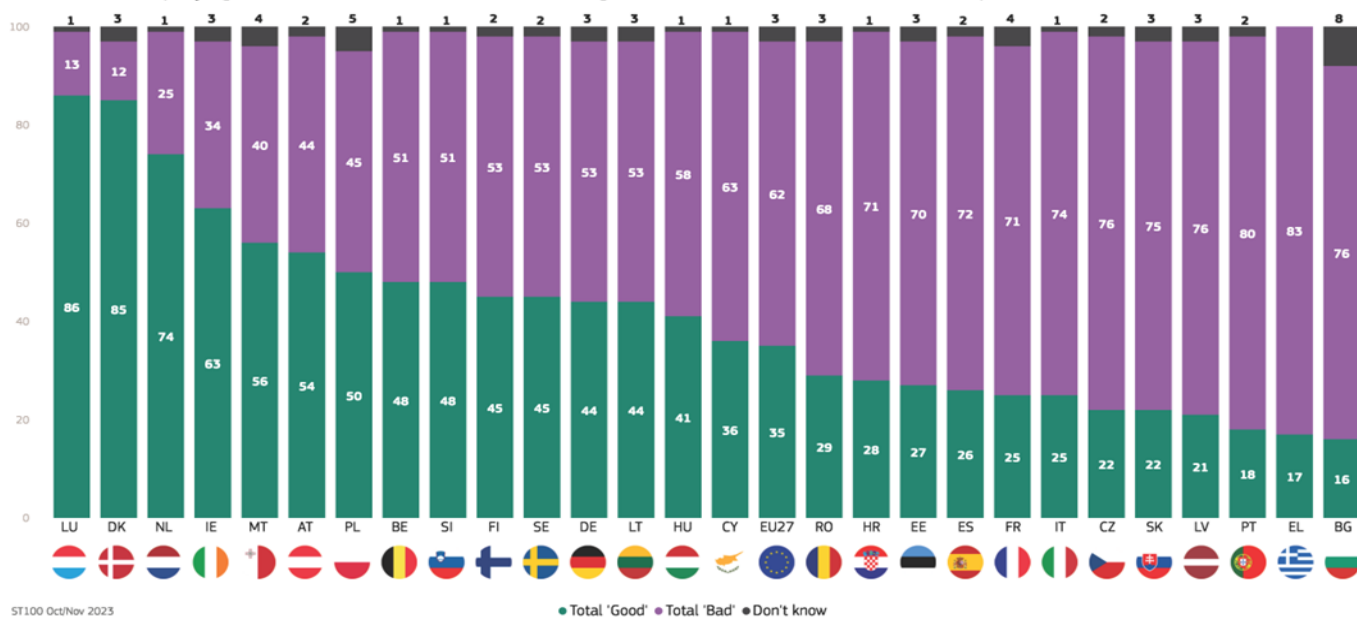
PERCEPTIONS ON THE ECONOMIC SITUATION

Views about the economic situation are positive. 56% of respondents stated that they judge the current economic situation of Malta as very good or rather good, compared to 40% for all the 27 Member States. A similar percentage, that is 56%, judge the current employment situation in Malta as very good or rather good, compared to 46% for the whole of the EU. Chart 2 below provides information about how respondents in each Member State judge the current situation of the economy in their respective country.

Expectations about the future for the Maltese economy are not positive as 30% expect the economic situation to get worse in the coming twelve months, 17% expect it to get better, and 45% expect it to remain the same. A similar negative sentiment is expressed about the employment situation with 25% of respondents stating that they expect the employment situation in Malta to get worse in the coming twelve months, 13% expect it get better and 51% expect it to remain the same.

Chart 2:

QA1.2. How would you judge the current situation in each of the following?: The situation of the (NATIONALITY) economy (%)



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● Total 'Good' ● Total 'Bad' ● Don't know



III. PERCEPTIONS ON THE EU

Sentiment in Malta about the European Union remains very positive. 53% of respondents stated that the EU evokes a very positive or fairly positive image, while 12% stated that it conjures up a very negative or fairly negative image and 35% stated that it conjures up a neutral image. This positive image is confirmed by the fact that 65% of respondents in Malta feel very attached or fairly attached to the EU. Moreover 85% stated that they feel they are citizens of the EU either definitely or to an extent. Only 2% stated that they definitely do not feel a citizen of the EU.

Three out of four respondents stated that they disagree with the statement that Malta could better face the future outside the EU, while 20% agree with such a statement.

In spite of such a positive sentiment, respondents in Malta feel that matters in the EU could be better. 32% stated that things, in general, are moving in the right direction in the European Union, while 28% stated that they are moving in the wrong direction, and 30% stated neither one nor the other. 49% judge the current economic situation in the European Union to be very good or rather good, and 34% judge it negatively. 13% expect the economic situation to get better in the coming twelve months, 18% expect it to get worse, and 54% expect it to remain the same. 15% did not express an opinion. 65% of respondents stated that they are very optimistic or fairly optimistic about the future of the European Union and 31% stated that they are very pessimistic or fairly pessimistic.

55% are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the way democracy works in the EU. 48% agree with the statement that their voice counts in the EU while 47% have an opposite view. 51% of respondents believe that that the interests of Malta are well taken into account within the EU. This is lower by eight percentage points when compared to the average for the whole of the EU. Yet, 59% believe that more decisions should be taken at EU level. These results indicate that some negative perceptions are not the result of an anti-EU feeling but rather a desire for things to be run better.

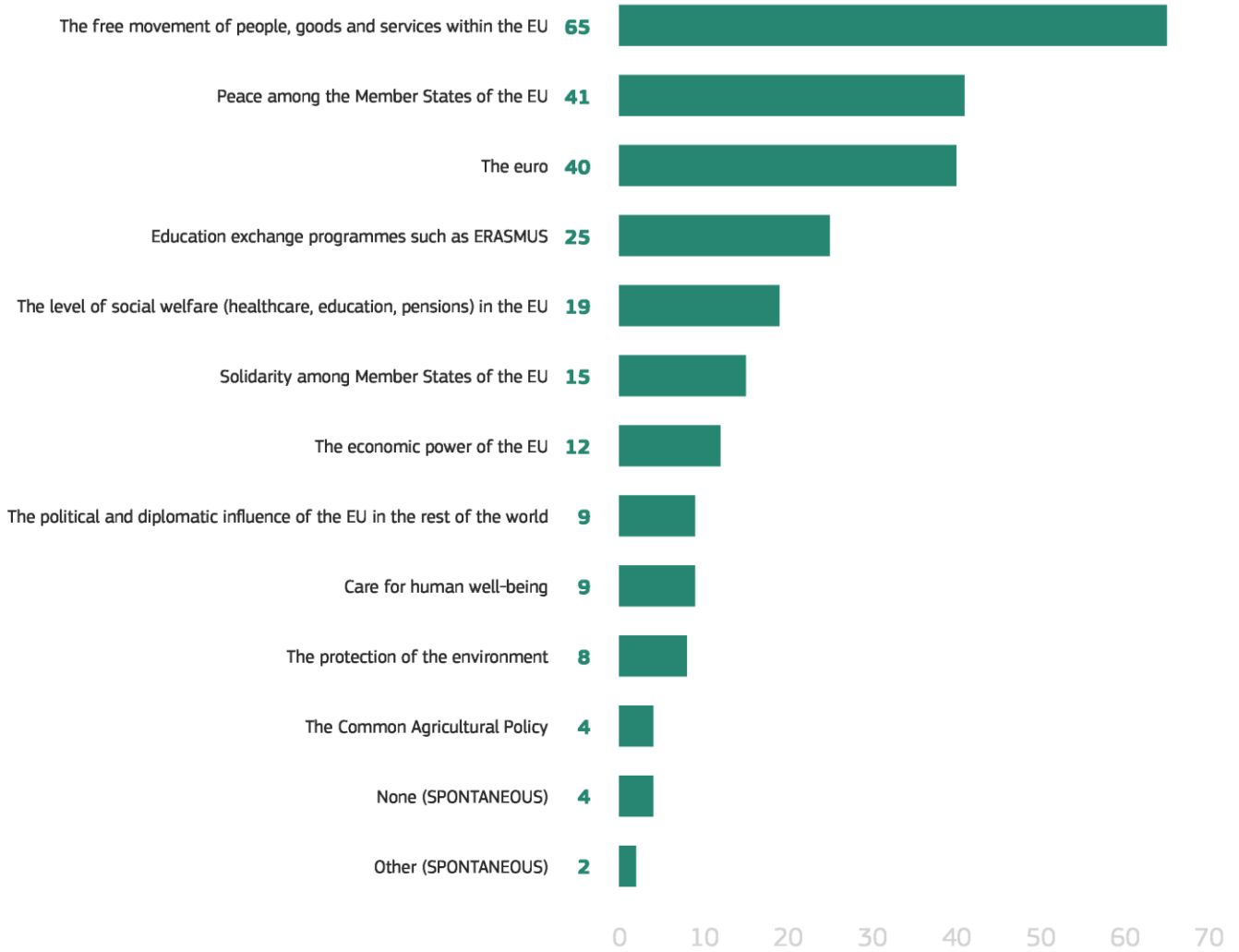
According to respondents in Malta, the main issue being faced by the EU at the moment is the war in Ukraine, mentioned by 44% of respondents. This issue was followed by the international situation mentioned by 34% of respondents and immigration, mentioned by 31% of respondents. These concerns very much reflect the challenges mentioned in the news. In the whole of the EU, it is these three same issues that have been mentioned the most, in the following order: the war in Ukraine (28%), immigration (28%), and the international situation (24%).

Respondents were also asked what the European Union stands for. 96% of respondents in Malta believe that all EU Member States should respect the core values of the EU, such as fundamental rights, rule of law and democracy. The three values which are best seen to represent the European Union are human rights, democracy, and solidarity.

In terms of the most positive results of the EU, 56% of respondents in Malta mentioned the free movement of people, goods, and services within the EU. This was followed by the euro, mentioned by 39%, and the level of social welfare, mentioned by 37% of respondents. In the whole of the EU, the most positive results are seen to be the free movement of people, goods and services, peace among EU member states, and solidarity among the member states of the EU. Chart 3 below provides information on what respondents in Malta consider to be the most positive results of the EU.

Chart 3:

QC3T. Which of the following do you think is the most positive result of the EU?
Firstly? And then? (EE) (%)



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IV. EUROPEAN UNION POLICIES

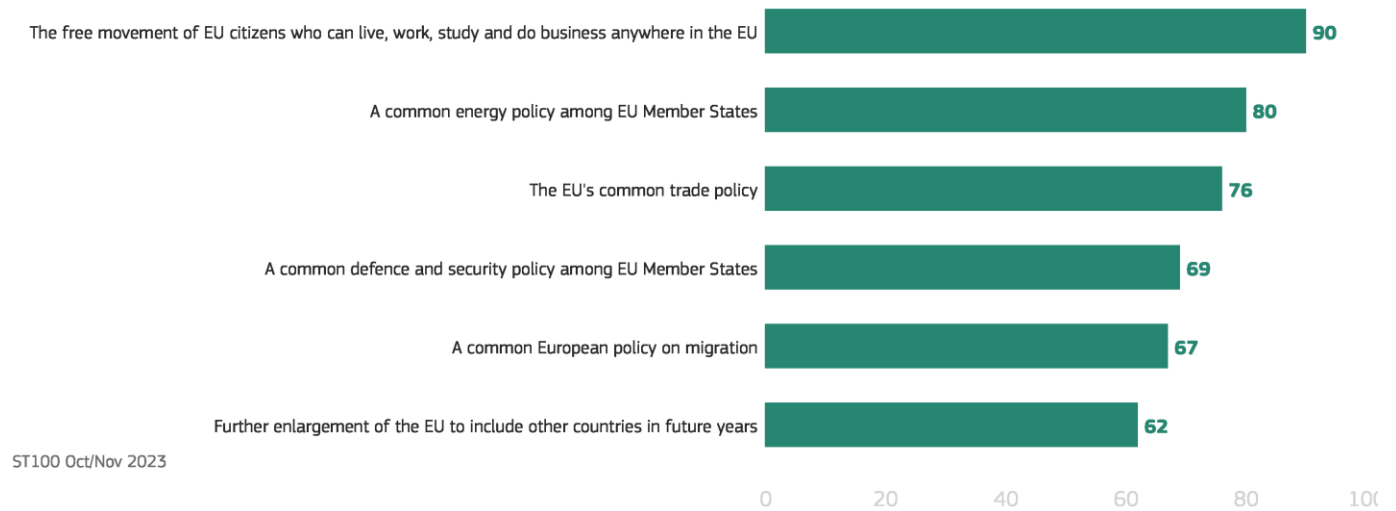
Standard Eurobarometer 100
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The survey asked for respondents' opinions about a number of EU policies. The results indicate a strong opinion in favour of some policies with some exceptions. Overall respondents in Malta are more favourable towards EU policies than the EU as a whole, in some cases very significantly so. The exceptions are in the field of foreign policy, defence policy, and whether the EU is a place of stability around the world. These exceptions are reflective of the neutrality stance Malta has often taken with regard to these issues.

Other than these issues, respondents in Malta can be described as pro-EU and its policies, including a European economic and monetary Union with one single currency, a digital single market, and that public money should be used to stimulate private sector investment at EU level. Males and Generation Z respondents tend to have more favourable views about European Union policies. Chart 4 below provides the percentage of respondents who state that they are in favour of the various EU policies.

Chart 4:

QB2. What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it. - For (%)



Respondents in Malta also consider favourably the European Recovery plan of 800 billion euros, 'NextGenerationEU', to support the economy through grants and loans. 75% consider it to be very effective or fairly effective to respond to the current economic challenges compared to 53% for all the 27 member states.



V. IMMIGRATION

Respondents were asked for their opinions regarding immigration. Respondents in Malta are overwhelmingly in favour of a Common European Asylum System, with 80% of respondents stating they are in favour and 10% stating they are against. The other 10% did not express an opinion or stated that they did not know. This is the second highest level of approval in the whole of the EU, where the average rate of approval is at 68%.

An even larger percentage, 93% of respondents in Malta, are in favour of a reinforcement of EU external borders with more European border guards and coast guards, well above the EU average of 75%.

Respondents in Malta do not appear to have a negative sentiment against immigration of people from other EU member states, with 68% stating that it evokes a positive feeling for them. 30% stated that it evokes a negative feeling. This data is similar to that obtained for all the EU member states grouped together.

On the other hand, only 22% of respondents stated that immigration of people from outside the EU evokes a positive feeling and 76% stated that it evokes a negative feeling. This level of negative feeling is well above the average for the whole of the EU which stands at 50%, and in fact is one of the highest among the 27 member states.

In Malta, males tend to have a more favourable sentiment towards immigration from other EU member states, but there is not distinction between genders with regard to sentiment about immigration of people from outside the EU.

34% of respondents stated that immigrants contribute positively to Malta, compared to 52% for the whole of the EU. This represents a decrease since the last wave of the Eurobarometer. Respondents in Malta seem to make a distinction between immigrants and refugees as 75% stated that Malta should help refugees, similar to the EU average.



VI. RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE

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Respondents were asked for their opinion on the response of Malta and the European Union to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. 61% of respondents in Malta stated that they are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with Malta's response, 22% stated that they are not very satisfied or not all satisfied, while 17% did not express an opinion. 64% stated that they are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the European Union's response, 27% stated that they are not very satisfied or not all satisfied, and 9% did not express an opinion. For the whole of the EU, 57% stated that they are very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the response of the EU to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

This wave has also shown that respondents in Malta linked Russia's invasion of Ukraine to a security threat. 86% stated that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a threat to the security of the EU, and 69% consider Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a threat to the security of Malta. 71% believe that by standing against Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the EU is defending European values.



VII. TRUST IN THE INSTITUTIONS

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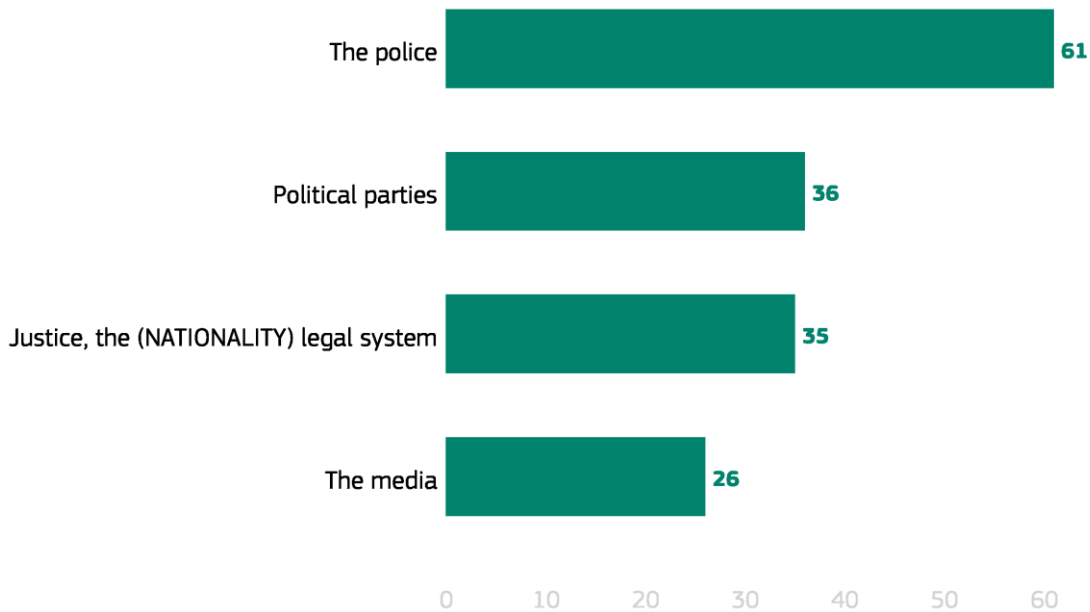
A set of questions measured the level of trust which respondents have in various local and European institutions. Trust in European institutions and the European Union itself is among the highest in the European Union and well above the average for the whole of the EU. On the other hand trust in Maltese institutions is either at the same level or lower than the EU average.

Moreover trust in the European Union and EU institutions has increased or remained at the same level since the last wave of the Eurobarometer, while trust in the Maltese Government and the Maltese Parliament has decreased.

Chart 5 below provides information on the percentage of respondents in Malta who stated that they tend to trust the institutions.

Chart 5:

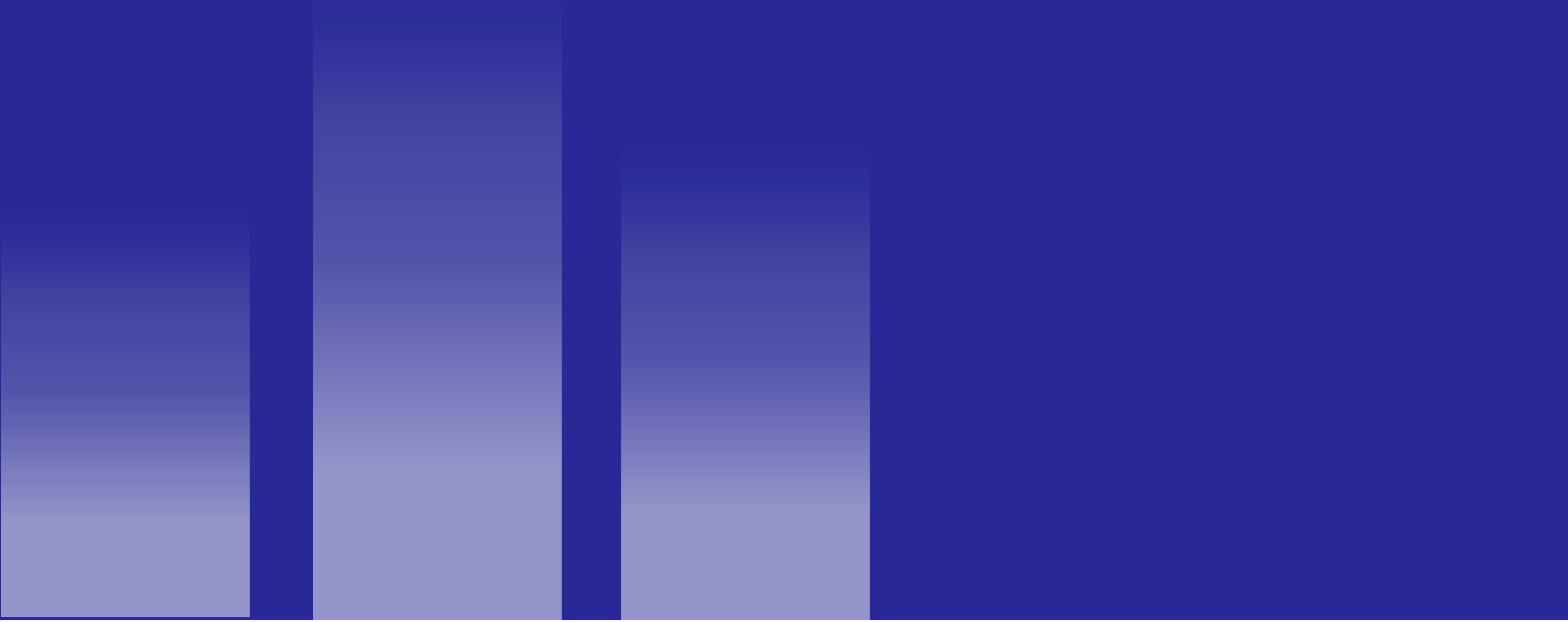
QA6. How much trust do you have in certain institutions? For each of the following institutions, do you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it? - Tend to trust (%)



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VIII. MEDIA AND SOURCES OF NEWS



Another set of questions dealt with media usage, sources of news, online social networks and the national media. An index was computed to measure media usage. Media usage in Malta is on a similar level as that for the whole of the EU. 25% of respondents in Malta are very high users of the media and 49% are high users. 24% are poor users of the media and only 2% are considered as non-users. In Malta the younger the respondent, the more likely they are to have a high level of media usage. Respondents in Malta are higher users of internet than the average for the EU. 89% stated that they use internet every day, compared to 88% for the whole of the EU.

Malta registers a higher usage of television via internet than the average for the EU, but registers a lower level of tv usage on a tv set. Radio listenership, reading the news on internet, and usage of online social networks is higher, but readership of the written press is lower.

High usage of online social networks is reflected in the fact that 82% agree with the statement that online social networks are a modern way of keeping abreast of political affairs. In spite of this high level of usage, 81% state that information on political affairs from online social networks cannot be trusted. 76% believe that online social networks can get people interested in political affairs, and 68% stated that online social networks are a good way to have their say on political issues.

There is also a level of distrust in national media. 53% disagree with the statement that Maltese media provide trustworthy information, even though 68% agree that they provide a diversity of views and opinions. 76% of respondents believe that the public service media are not free from political pressure and another 78% do not believe that national media provide information free from political or commercial pressure.

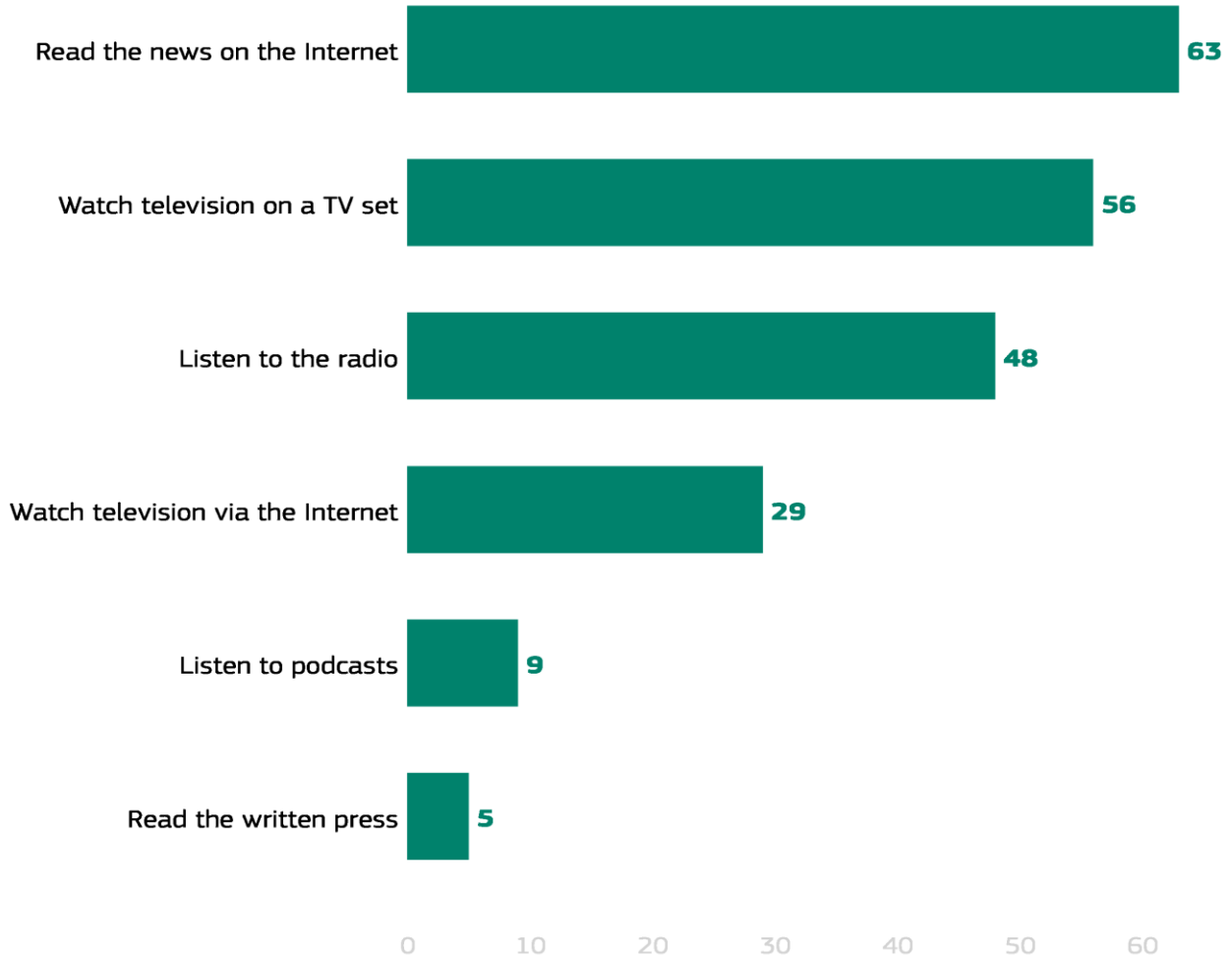
News or information, which respondents believe misrepresents reality or is even false, is a problem in Malta. 91% of respondents said that they often come across such news. 57% stated that it is easy for them to identify news or information that they believe misrepresent reality or are even false. 92% are of the opinion that the existence of such news or information is a problem for democracy in general.

Regarding European matters, internet is the key source of news. In fact, 61% stated that they get most of their news on European political matters from information websites and 48% mentioned online social networks. 45% mentioned television news channels and 39% mentioned television generalist channels. When looking for information about the EU, its policies, its institutions, respondents in Malta rely mainly on information websites, television, and online social networks.

Chart 6 below provides information on usage of each individual medium daily or almost daily.

Chart 6:

QE3. Could you tell to what extent you...? - Everyday/ Almost everyday (%)



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