

# Exploring public attitudes, informing public policy

Selected findings from the first seven rounds





**The European Social Survey is a great project of incredible value. The huge amount of scientific data collected on public attitudes and behaviour, enabling comparisons across European nations and also over time, makes it a very useful tool for effective policy-making, including in reducing social inequalities in health.**



**Vytenis Andriukaitis**

European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety  
(DG SANTE), March 2017

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# THE IMPACT OF THE ESS

**3 The European Social Survey provides high quality survey data for use by the academic, teaching and policy communities – the analysis of our data helps ensure that public policy can be shaped to deliver improvements to society**

An independent report published in September 2017 by Technopolis Group (UK) found that the European Social Survey (ESS) has high levels of research, teaching and non-academic impact across Europe.

The report found that our data continues to be highly regarded, offering a critical resource for researchers across the social sciences. ESS data is also widely used as a teaching resource at a number of leading academic institutions.

Additional research undertaken by the ESS found that 3,904 English-language academic publications and presentations – based on primary analysis of our data – were published in the period 2004-17, with over 500 in 2017 alone.

The ESS has seen further considerable academic impact in terms of influencing the design of other surveys: Eurofound's European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS), the European Values Survey (EVS), the Survey for Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP).

ESS data has influenced public policy, shaped changes in the law and is used widely by public, private and charitable organisations. The study found several examples of where the use of our data has led to non-academic impact – some of those are highlighted here:

- Supported decision making by the Austrian Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (BMASK).

- Contributed to the process of preparing the Strategy of Children and Families 2012-2020 by the Ministry of Social Affairs in Estonia.

- Included in several reports produced by France Stratégie - a public think tank attached to the Prime Minister's Office.

- Contributed to the regional extension of the Active Ageing Index (AAI) in Germany – a tool initially created by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the European Commission.

- ESS data was used by the Hättér Society in Hungary: their analysis of our data led to the inclusion of LGBTQI people as a disadvantaged group in the Budapest Equal Opportunity Programme 2017-19.

- The 'Lithuanian Action Plan for Citizenship Education 2016-2020' used ESS indicators.


- NordMod 2030 used ESS data on trust and satisfaction with public services in the Nordic countries.

- The Centre for Judicial Studies in Portugal now includes ESS data on the evaluation of the judiciary in the training of future public prosecutors.

- ESS data on wellbeing has been used in reports produced by The Institute of Macroeconomic Analysis and Development in Slovenia.

- The ESS has been used for research on migration by the Swedish delegation for migration studies (Delmi).

- ESS data fed into a strategic reorganisation of the Swedish police service and national efforts to strengthen local policing.

- Data from the ESS contributed to the development of wellbeing measures in the UK – something that is now measured by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). 

# MEASURING ATTITUDES SINCE 2002

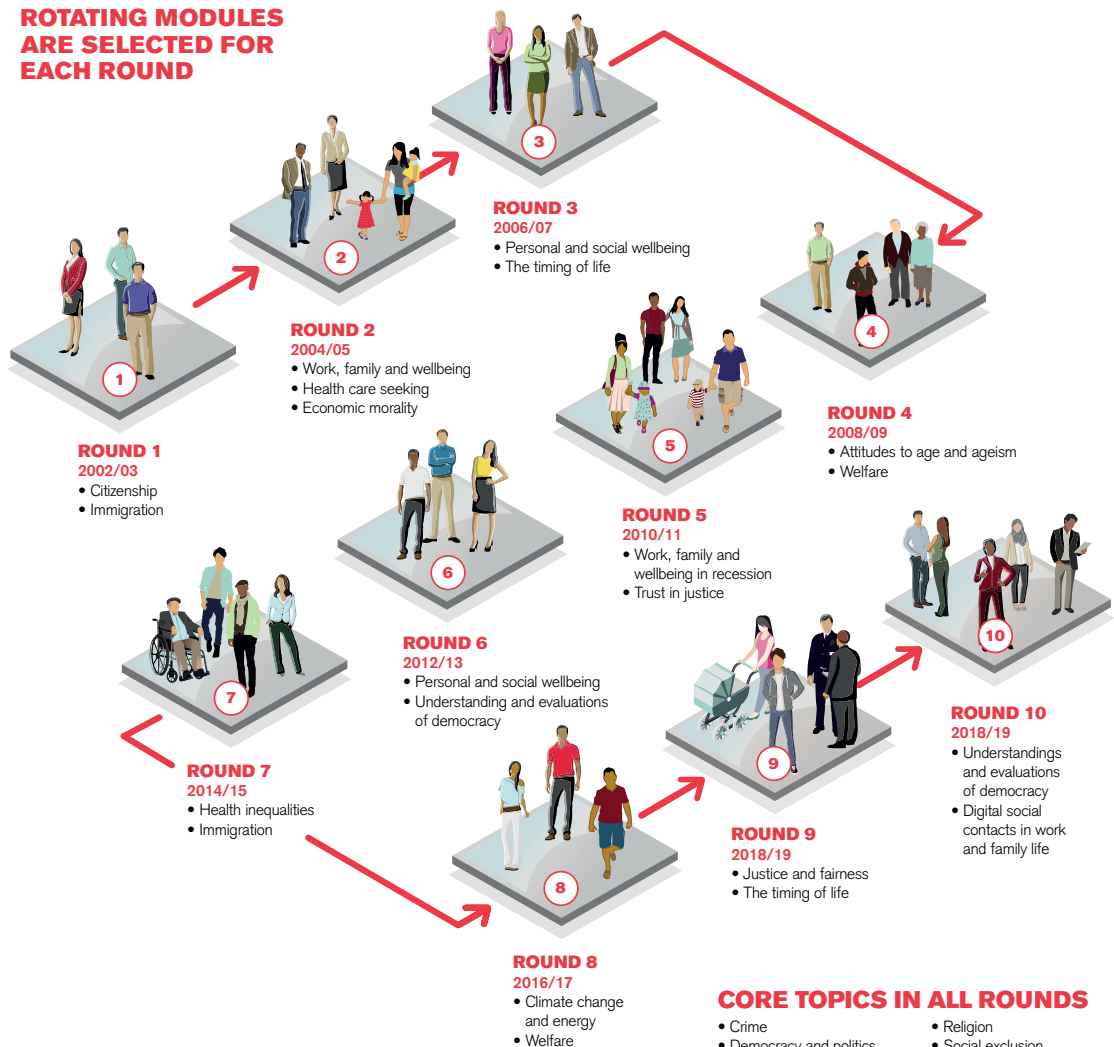
By gauging public opinion on a wide range of topics, the ESS provides comprehensive and comparable attitudinal data for use by researchers and policy makers

The ESS fields an hour long face-to-face survey with approximately 40,000 people across Europe every two years. The questionnaire comprises a main section – known as the ‘core module’ and supplements these items with two ‘rotating modules’ on specific topics.

Following an open call to external academics, the ESS selects two topics to include alongside the main questionnaire. Following an open call for applications, external academics apply to field around 30 questions on a single topic.

The successful applicants then work with the ESS Core Scientific Team (CST) to compose a section of questions. These ‘rotating modules’ can be repeated from previous rounds, or cover a subject entirely new to the ESS. ➔

## ROTATING MODULES ARE SELECTED FOR EACH ROUND




## CORE TOPICS IN ALL ROUNDS

- Crime
- Democracy and politics
- Human values
- Immigration
- Media use
- National and ethnic identity
- Perceived discrimination
- Religion
- Social exclusion
- Social trust/trust in institutions
- Subjective wellbeing
- Socio-demographics

# PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

The ESS aims to gather survey data from as many European nations as possible - the wider the coverage, the richer the data

36 countries have participated in at least one round of the ESS since the first round was fielded in 2002/03. Up until the eighth iteration of our survey, 15 countries took part in every round of the ESS. The ESS currently has the largest number of members of any European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC).

The ESS has always ensured comprehensive coverage in western and northern Europe, and is making efforts to ensure that the whole of Europe is represented. With over 30 participants, Round 9 (2018/19) of the ESS will see more countries take part than ever before. 

## 8 ROUNDS

1. Belgium
2. Finland
3. France
4. Germany
5. Hungary
6. Ireland
7. The Netherlands
8. Norway
9. Poland
10. Portugal
11. Slovenia
12. Spain
13. Sweden
14. Switzerland
15. United Kingdom

## 7 ROUNDS

16. Austria
17. Czech Republic
18. Denmark
19. Estonia

## 6 ROUNDS

20. Israel

## 5 ROUNDS

21. Lithuania
22. Russia
23. Slovakia
24. Ukraine

## 4 ROUNDS

25. Bulgaria
26. Cyprus
27. Greece
28. Italy

## 3 ROUNDS

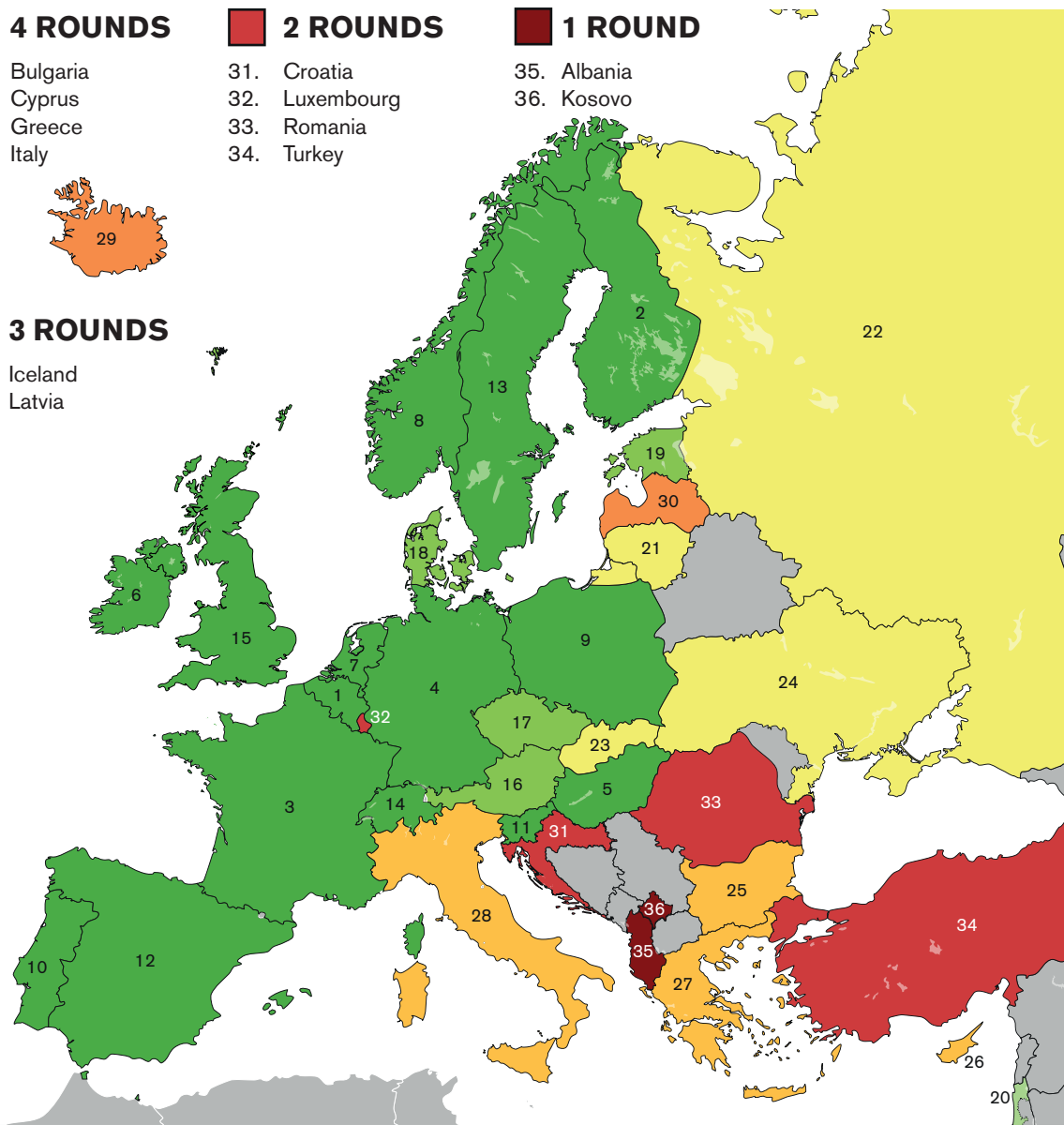
29. Iceland
30. Latvia

## 2 ROUNDS

31. Croatia
32. Luxembourg
33. Romania
34. Turkey

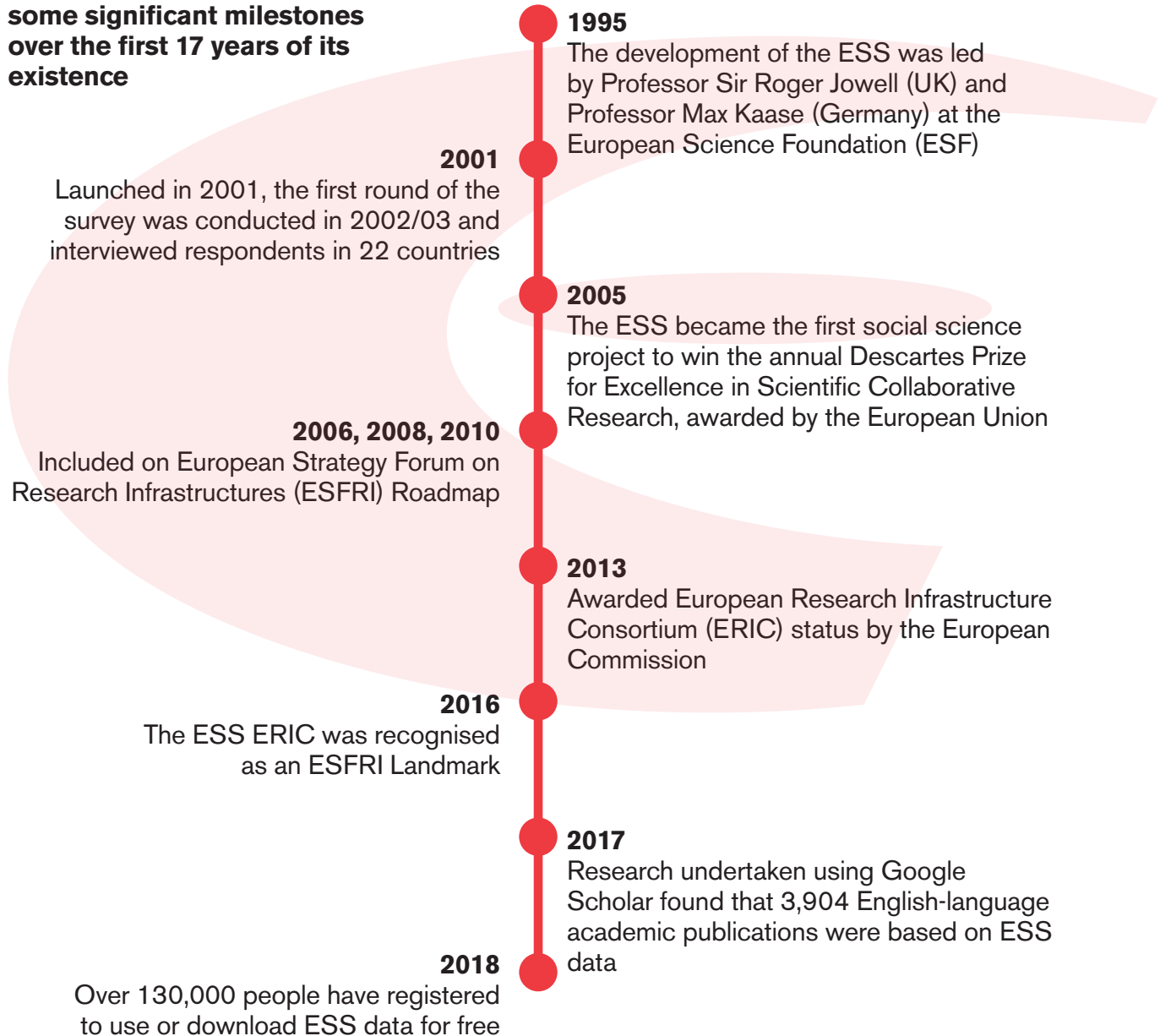
## 1 ROUND

35. Albania
36. Kosovo



## THE HISTORY OF THE ESS

**The ESS has achieved some significant milestones over the first 17 years of its existence**



# EUROPE: COMING TOGETHER OR PULLING APART

**Europe has experienced huge challenges since the ESS was first fielded in 2002/03. For much of this period, it appeared that the continent was coming together, but is it now in danger of breaking apart?**

When the ESS was first being fielded in 2002/03, there were only 15 members of the European Union. A further 10 countries joined in 2004, two more in 2007 and another in 2013. At various times between Round 1 (2002/03) and Round 7 (2014/15) of the ESS, 27 of these 28 EU members have participated in the survey, as well as several countries who are not part of the EU.

This publication includes research that has been undertaken using ESS data collected over the first seven waves. The analyses provide valuable information – about Europe as an entity; groups of countries; individual countries; and regions within countries.

As well as this, the wealth of data gathered during this period (over 350,000 interviews) means that the attitudes and behaviours of smaller sub-groups – such as migrants – can now be assessed in greater detail when combining survey data from several rounds.

Any data that covers the first 13 years of the ESS project must be viewed in the context of wider implications. The global financial crisis that culminated in the Great Recession in the late 2000s clearly had an impact on the responses to many survey questions, and this is exemplified in some of the research that we showcase in this document.

World Bank data shows that GDP in the European Union grew by 1.4% in 2002 and 3.1% in 2007 before slowing in 2008 (0.5%) and then falling in 2009 (-4.3%). GDP recovered by the time Round 7 was fielded to 2.3% (2015) but the effects of austerity in many ESS countries are still having an impact on public perceptions.


The Great Recession also had an effect on the EU-28 unemployment rate. According to Eurostat, unemployment was at 9.2% in early 2003 (when Round 1 of the ESS was in the field). This dropped to 6.9% in 2008 before rising to 10.9% in 2013. By the time Round 7 was fielded, the unemployment rate had dropped below 10%.

One of the great challenges facing many participating countries – particularly in the south of Europe – has been the perceived increase in the number of migrants from Africa and the Middle East. The European migrant crisis began in 2015, after the Round 7 repeat module on immigration had been fielded in most countries, and has therefore had no notable impact in the data covered in this publication.

However, what is clear when comparing ESS data from Round 1, is respondents in most countries have become slightly more positive about immigration, though there has also been more polarisation – an increase in the number of people most opposed and most in favour has been witnessed in most countries.

The proportion of the population aged over 65 has grown steadily since 2002 in all EU-28 countries. Eurostat data confirms that 18.9% of the population was aged over 65 when Round 7 was fielded. This has risen by around 3% since 2002 and the annual percentage growth continues to increase. It is a challenge facing Europe's policymakers, and ESS data can help shine a light on how an ageing population can impact on people's perceptions.

As for the future of Europe, EU and national leaders must collaborate to answer some of the grand societal challenges it faces. How it deals with issues such as climate change, immigration and an ageing population over the next decade will have an impact on the continent for generations.

As ever with ESS data, researchers have an opportunity to develop policy-relevant ideas that reflect the direction that the general population thinks we should take. Co-founder of the ESS, the late Roger Jowell, stated that governments can use ESS data to consider new policies that meet the preferences and needs of their citizens. With the current challenges ahead and the ever-increasing amount of ESS data available, tough choices must be made to avoid Europe falling apart. 

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT VITAL FOR WELLBEING OF YOUNG EUROPEANS

### Bettina Schuck and Nadia Steiber found that the education of young adults and their parents' education are important determinants of their wellbeing


Europe's current young generation is better educated than any that came before. Many young Europeans are better educated than their parents, but at the same time the risk of intergenerational downward mobility in educational attainment has increased.

Research using Round 4-7 data collected in 18 countries investigated how large the risk of intergenerational downward mobility in educational attainment is in Europe

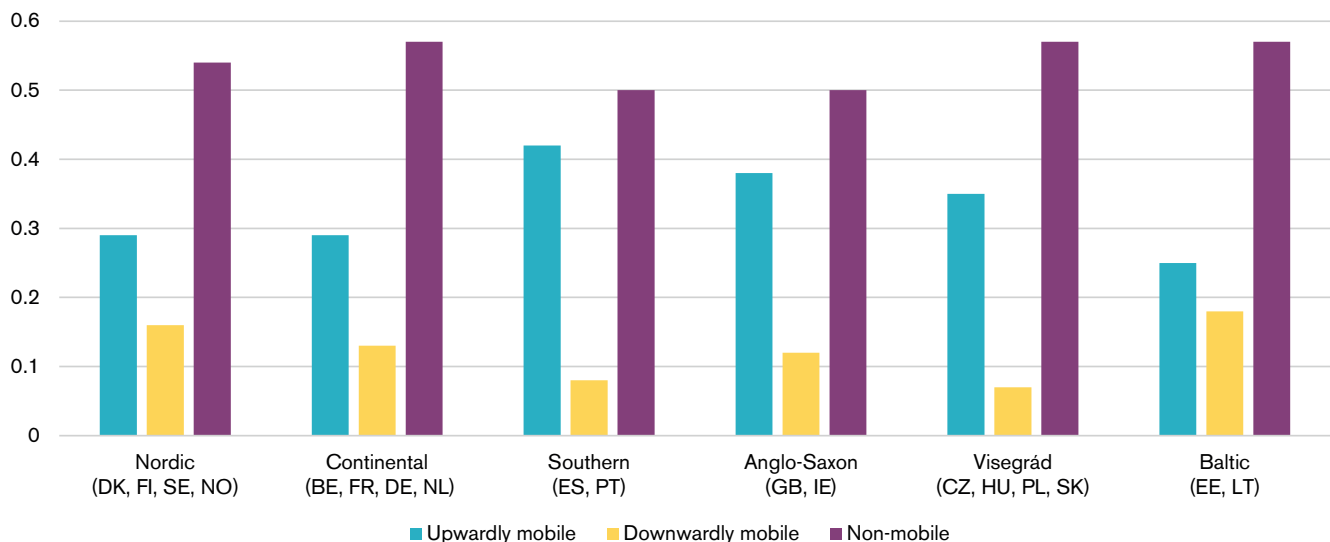
and how it shapes the life satisfaction of young Europeans.

The authors found that, in most European countries, the majority of young adults aged 25-34 have reached a similar level of education compared to their parents (regional variation between 50% and 57%). About a third of young people reached a higher level of education compared to their parents (regional variation between 25% and 42%) and a substantial minority failed to maintain the level of education reached by their parents (regional variation between 7% and 18%).

The authors found evidence that the experience of social mobility affects young Europeans' life satisfaction over and above the effects of own educational

attainment and parental education. Those with more highly educated parents report higher life satisfaction compared to those with less highly educated parents (effect of parental socio-economic status). Moreover, those who attained a higher level of education compared to their peers also report a higher life satisfaction (effect of own attainment). And finally, in addition to these level effects of parental and own attainment, the authors find independent mobility effects of experiencing a status loss/gain across generations using non-linear diagonal mobility models: downward mobility reduces life satisfaction whereas upward mobility increases it. Significant mobility effects (net of own and parental education) are found for the pooled sample of all 18 countries and for Continental Europe in particular. 

**Intergenerational mobility in educational attainment among young Europeans (Rounds 4-7)**





## WATCH TOO MUCH TV? EXERCISE MORE

### A team of researchers led by Adilson Marques found that future health problems from watching too much TV can largely be negated through physical activity


In high-income countries most adults spend their awake time in sedentary behaviours - television viewing is the most prevalent leisure behaviour. The behaviour, and particularly the time spent watching television, is associated with increased risk of mortality and chronic diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases and some cancers. Although the time watching television has a detrimental impact of people's health, higher levels

of physical activity may help to attenuate or even eliminate the increased risk associated with sedentary behaviours.

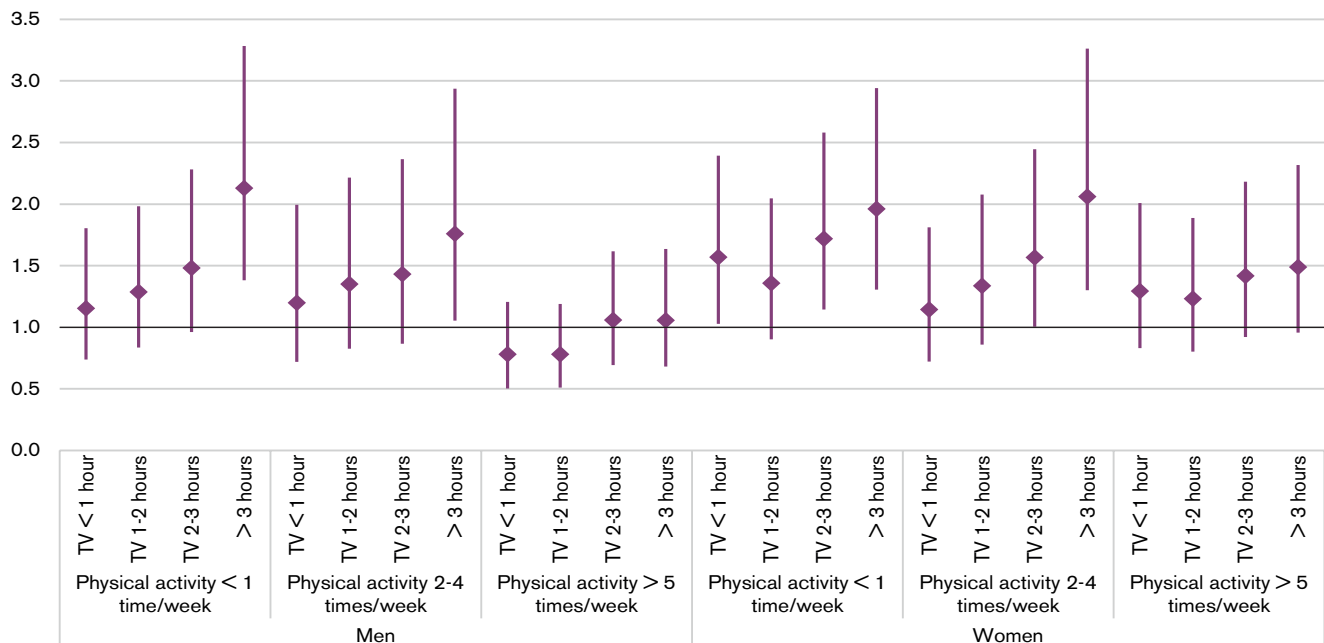
With the help of data from Round 7, a study was performed to analyse the association of television viewing, physical activity and multimorbidity to understand if physical activity attenuates or eliminates the detrimental association between television viewing and multimorbidity. Multimorbidity is defined as the co-occurrence of two or more chronic diseases.

Results showed that participants that spent more time watching television had increased odds of having multimorbidity. For those who undertook 30 minutes

of physical activity at least 5 days/week watching television was not associated with multimorbidity. This result means that the harmful association between television viewing and multimorbidity is attenuated or even eliminated by physical activity.

These results reinforce the need to promote physical activity as a healthy behaviour. There is clear evidence that physical activity is associated with several health benefits, including a lower risk of: cardiovascular diseases, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, cancer and obesity. Thus, physical activity has been recommended because of its effectiveness for primary and secondary prevention of chronic diseases. 

### Relationship between multimorbidity and time spend watching television, by sex and physical activity (Round 7)



Marques, A., Santos, D.A., Peralta, M., Sardinha, L.B. and González Valeiro M. (2018) 'Regular physical activity eliminates the harmful association of television watching with multimorbidity. A cross-sectional study from the European Social Survey', *Preventive Medicine* 109:28-33

# VALUES IN TIMES OF AUSTERITY: A CROSS-NATIONAL AND CROSS-GENERATIONAL ANALYSIS

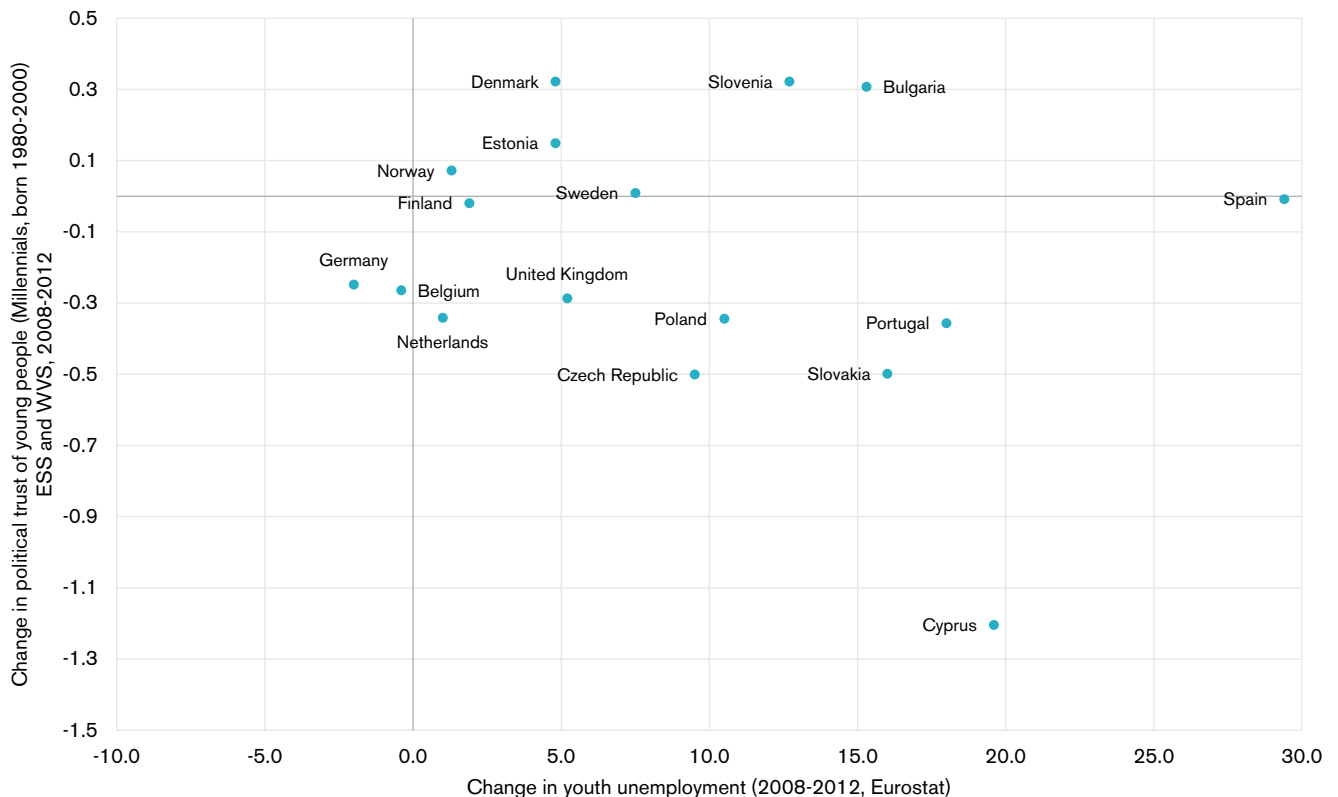
Research by Jan Germen Janmaat using ESS and World Values Survey (WVS) data assessed whether social and parliamentary trust was eroded as a result of the 2008 economic crisis, particularly amongst young people

It is common knowledge that in times of recession people lose confidence in the government and in other state institutions. Political scientists have pointed out that a loss of faith in a particular government or parliament does not necessarily amount to an erosion of civic culture as the broad cultural foundation of liberal democracy.

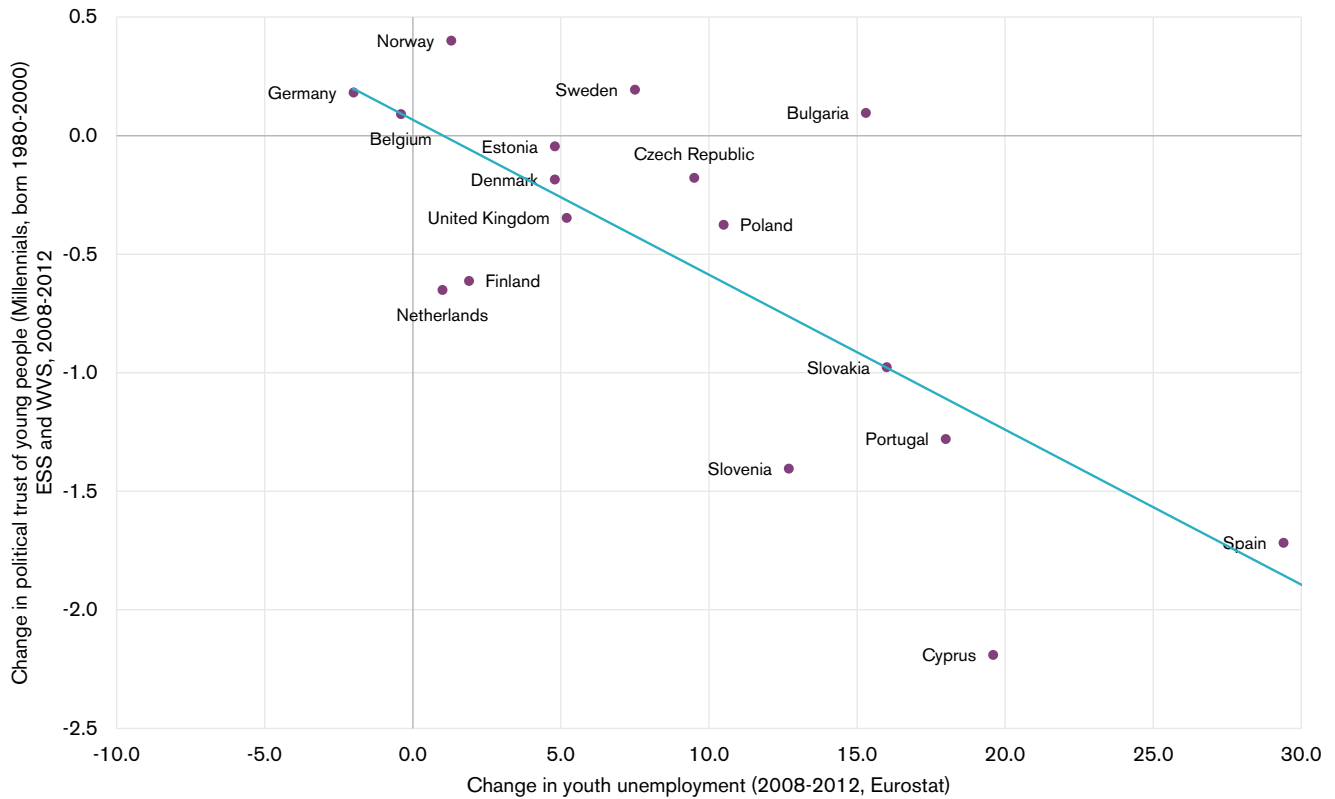
However, the recent recession has been unusually severe and long-lasting and some countries have only just started to climb out of it. It is an open question whether civic culture is so resilient that it can even weather exceptionally serious economic crises such as the recent one.

As often happens in times of crisis, young people have been most affected by the recent worldwide economic problems, and one may thus expect this age group to show the steepest drops in civic values.

Changes in social trust and youth unemployment, 2008-2012



### Changes in political trust and youth unemployment, 2008-2012




Research using European Social Survey (ESS) and World Values Survey (WVS) data examined the impact of the recession on the civic values of different generations across a selection of European and western states.

Analysing both short- and long-term trends, it finds that levels of social trust, tolerance, active civic participation and post-materialism values, as key indicators of civic culture, are not declining after 2008, neither among older nor younger

generations. This confirms the idea that civic values are not susceptible to economic downturns and need to be distinguished from trust in the institutions of democracy (sometimes called political trust) which is usually more volatile.

Moreover, zooming in on young people it finds that over time change in their support for civic values is not related to changes in a country's economic performance, offering further support for the idea that these values are largely

unaffected by deteriorating economic circumstances. However, support for such values is linked to overall levels of economic prosperity and performance, indicating that such dispositions are not wholly immune to material conditions.

This leads us to surmise that civic culture is more susceptible to enduring processes affecting people's life chances and wellbeing than to fleeting phenomena such as economic crises. 

# MEASURING ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION CROSS-NATIONALLY

## Harmonisation of alcohol measures across Europe meant that the ESS was able to compare levels of intake in Round 7

30 questions measuring people's views about their own health were included during ESS Round 7 (2014/15). This included the reporting of behaviour that has an impact on health, such as fruit and vegetable consumption, frequency of physical activity and whether people smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol. By asking for their height and weight, researchers are also able to determine the body mass index (BMI) of respondents.

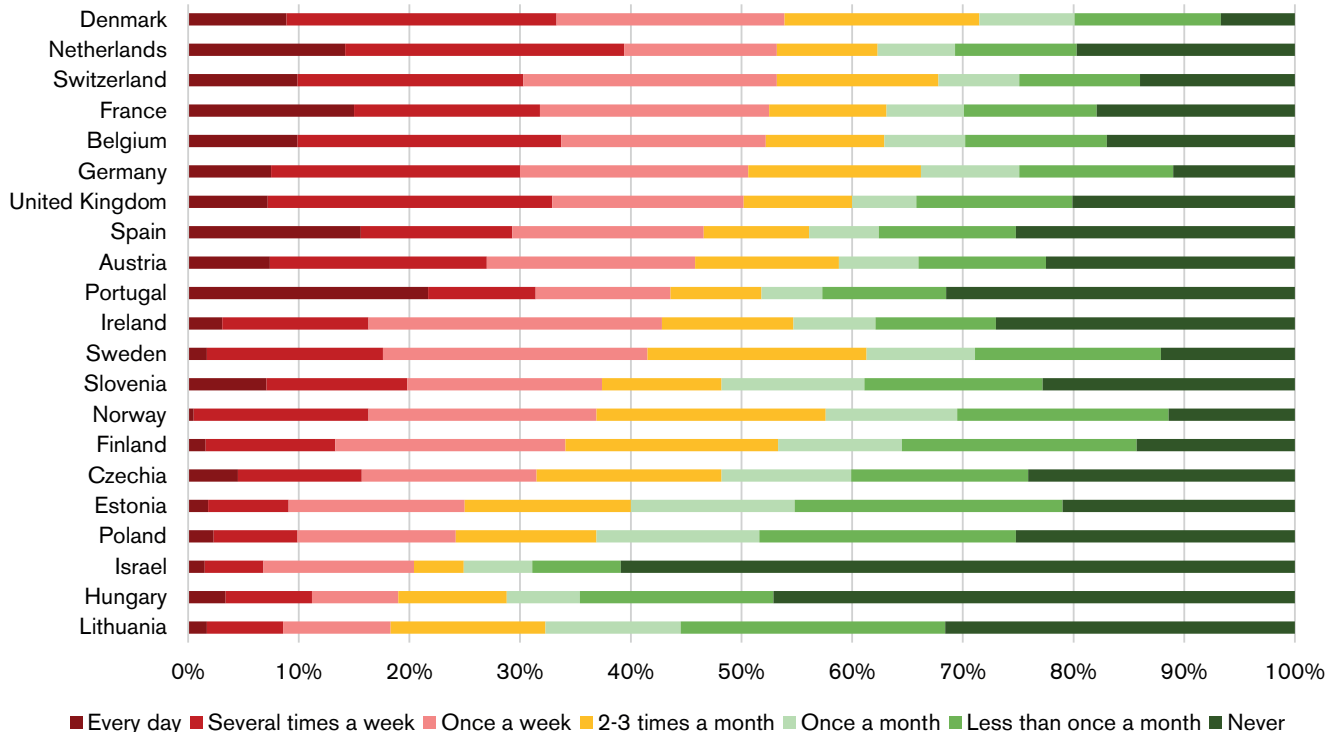
As part of this newly fielded module, the ESS posed three items specifically on the topic of alcohol consumption. The data shows that Portugal has the highest number of respondents who drink alcohol every day (21.7%), followed by Spain (15.6%) and the Netherlands (14.2%). However, over half of the population in seven countries (Denmark, the Netherlands, Switzerland, France, Belgium, Germany and the UK) consume

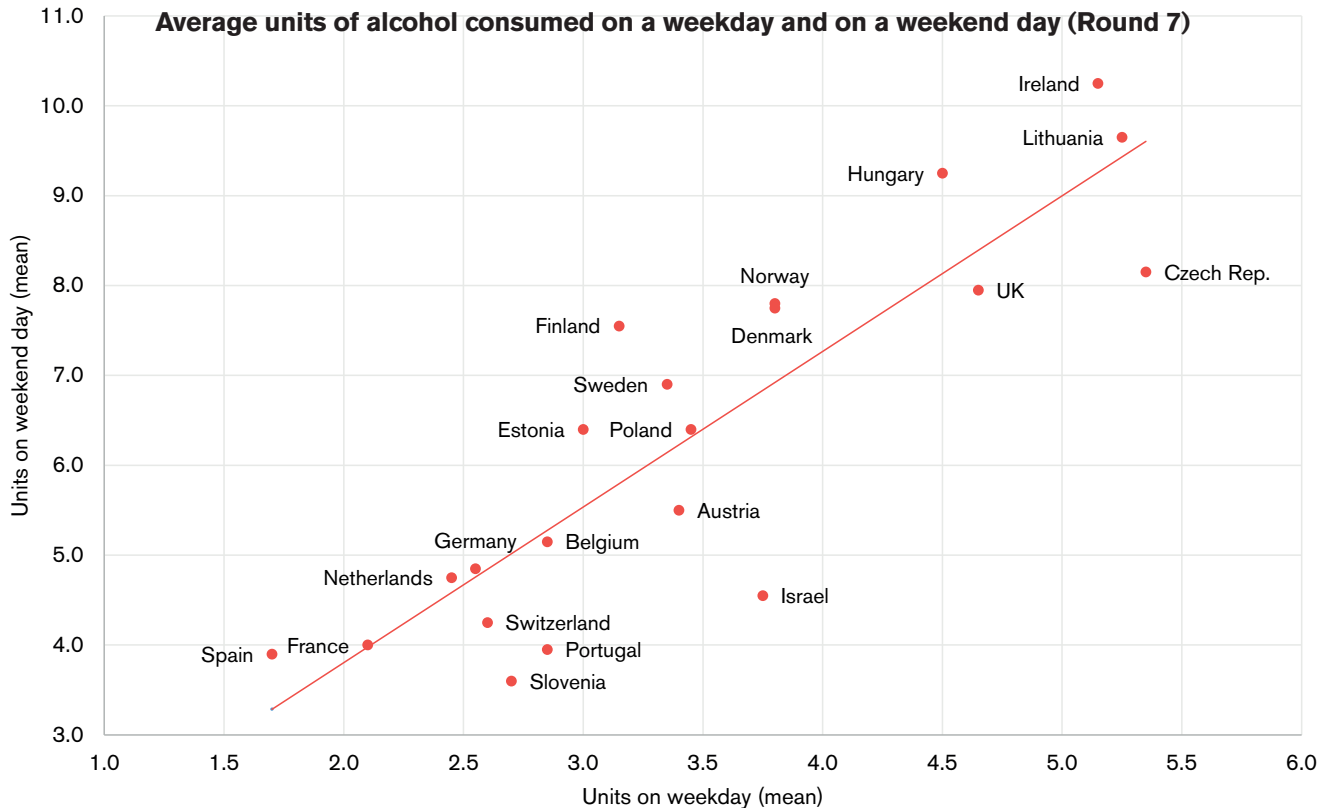
alcohol at least once a week. At the other end of the scale, 60.9% of Israelis and 47.1% of Hungarians stated that they never drink alcohol.

This measure showing the reported frequency of alcohol consumption was supplemented by two additional items that established how many grams of alcohol the respondent last consumed on a weekday (Monday to Thursday) and how many grams of alcohol they last consumed on a weekend day (Friday to Sunday).

The ESS blueprint was devised as a direct result of the problems that

How often do you drink alcohol? (Round 7)





researchers faced when attempting to compare survey data across countries using existing datasets.

Measuring the mean amount of alcohol consumed cross-nationally in Round 7 posed a particular challenge. A new approach to measuring alcohol consumption was created. All countries asked the same questions, but national teams designed different showcards for interviewers to offer respondents. Each country also designed a chart that calculated the number of grams in the types of drink usually served.


For example, the ESS source questionnaire is created in the United Kingdom in English, where beer is mainly served using the British imperial unit of a pint (equal to 568ml). But a large beer in much of mainland Europe is served in

half-litre measures (equal to 500ml). By establishing the average percentage of alcohol in beer in each country, the ESS was able to determine average grams of alcohol in each alcoholic beverage consumed by the respondent.


This exercise was undertaken for all alcoholic drinks regularly served in each of the 21 participating countries. By multiplying the number of drinks a respondent had by the average number of grams in each drink, the ESS was able to establish the total number of grams respondents consumed the last time they drank alcohol.

By comparing the number of grams of alcohol consumed, the ESS Round 7 dataset is able to determine the mean amount of units of alcohol consumed in each country, on a weekday and on a weekend day.

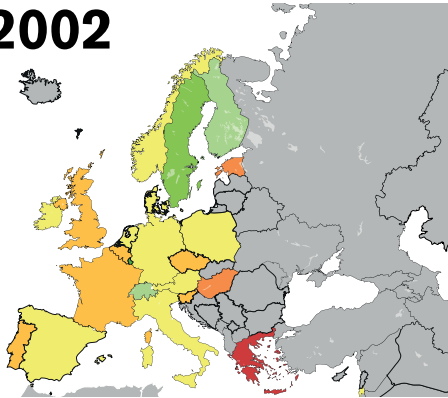
So, who drinks the most units of alcohol? During a weekday, those interviewed in the Czech Republic (5.4 units), Lithuania (5.3 units) and Ireland (5.2 units) consumed the most amount of alcohol. Spanish respondents consumed the least – the only country where fewer than two units were consumed per day.

As expected, weekend day consumption is higher than weekday consumption in all 21 countries – almost double in seven countries; and more than double in a further seven. There is more than double the weekday consumption in weekends in all Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden). Irish respondents consume the most – over 10 units of alcohol on a weekend day – with Lithuanians and Hungarians consuming over nine units. 

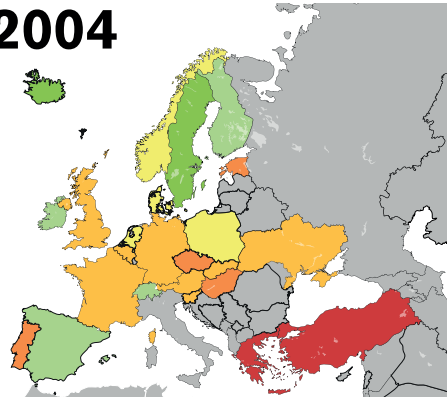
## ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRATION

By combining three survey items included in every round of the ESS, a mean score on attitudes towards immigration was developed for each country, using a scale of 0-10. The three questions asked respondents for their opinion on: whether they think immigration is generally good or bad for the economy; whether they think their cultural life is enriched or undermined; and whether immigrants make their country a better or worse place to live. The higher the combined mean score, the more accepting a country is of immigrants. More positive countries – such as Sweden – are highlighted in green, with the less positive (e.g. Russia) shown in red. 

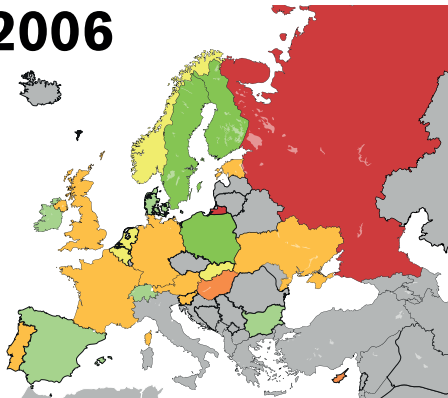
**2002**



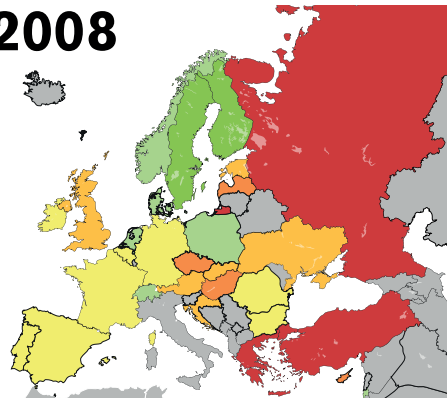
**2004**



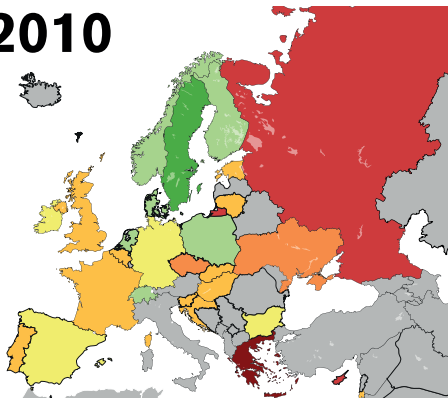
**2006**



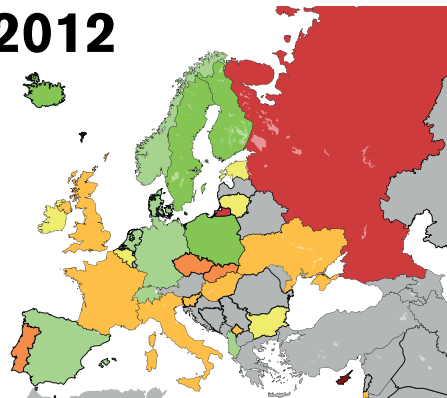
**2008**



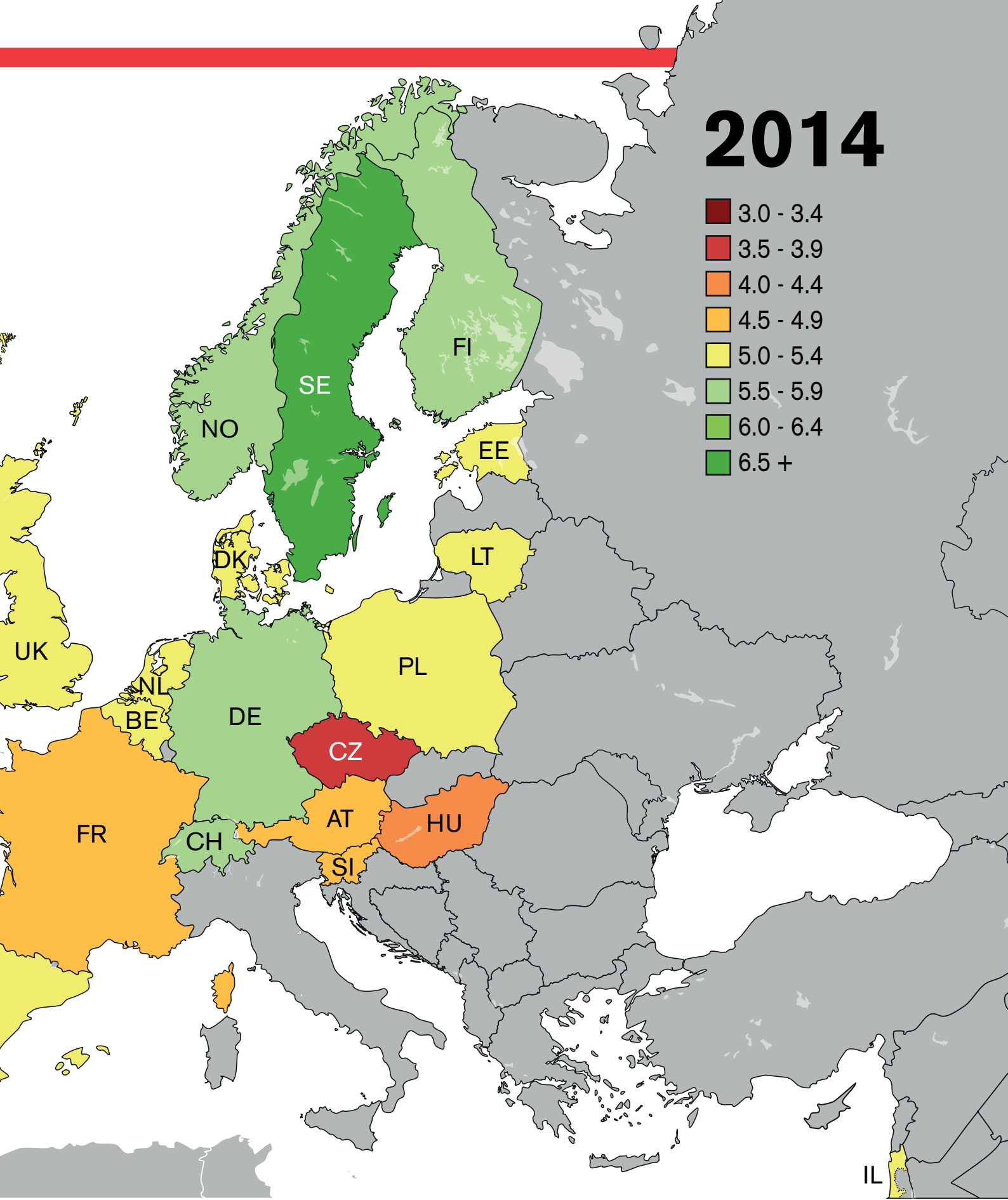
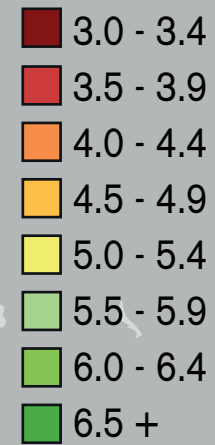
**2010**



**2012**

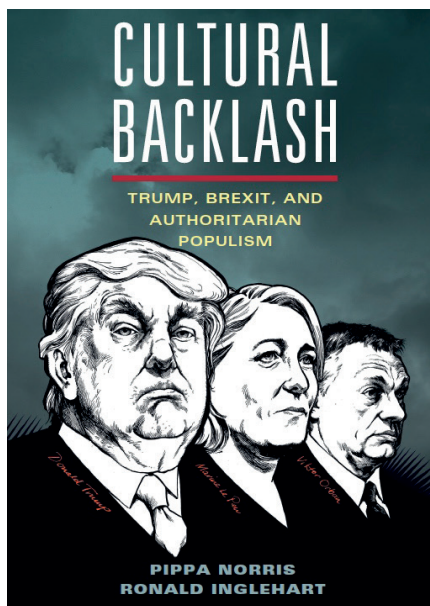


# 2014



# TRUMP, BREXIT AND THE RISE OF POPULISM: ECONOMIC HAVE-NOTS AND CULTURAL BACKLASH

Drawing on ESS data collected over the first six rounds, Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris seek to understand what fuelled support for Populist political parties and leaders in the US and Europe



Do demographics, economic insecurities and cultural values act as predictors of voting for populist political parties? The authors of the book "Cultural Backlash: Trump, Brexit and Authoritarian Populism" (Cambridge University Press 2019) drew on a number of datasets – including pooled ESS data collected from Round 1-6 – to find out.

The authors used a cumulative ESS dataset that included 293,856 respondents, providing a large enough sample to identify the electoral base of smaller parties with some degree of reliability.

To identify populist parties, they relied on the 2014 Chapel Hill Expert Survey

(CHES). In the CHES, political experts were asked to estimate the ideological and policy positions of political parties. The study included 268 political parties from 31 European countries, including all EU member states as well as Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.

These experts rated the position of European parties in 13 categories that tend to define the characteristics of a political party, such as support for traditional values, liberal lifestyles, and multiculturalism, as well as their economic stance towards market deregulation, state management of the economy and preferences for either tax cuts or public services.

The book established that, overall, Authoritarian populist support in Europe is generally stronger among the older generation, men, the less educated, the religious and ethnic majorities.

Generation is a significant predictor of voting support, with younger generations proving less likely to vote for populist parties than older generations. The consistent gender gap, documented in many previous studies, is also further confirmed here, with men proving more favorable towards populist parties than women.

Education also proves significant, as expected, with populist parties winning greater support from the less educated sectors of the population. Not surprisingly, given authoritarian populist rhetoric, members of ethnic minorities are less inclined to support these parties.

Populist parties did receive significantly greater support among those who reported financial difficulties, and survey respondents who had ever experienced unemployment for at least three months.

But other measures do not consistently confirm the claim that populist support is due to resentment of economic inequality and social deprivation. For example, in terms of occupational class, populist voting was strongest among the petty bourgeoisie (typically small proprietors like self-employed plumbers, or family-owned small businesses), and not unskilled manual workers.

Populists also received significantly less support among individuals who are dependent on social welfare benefits. Voting support for these parties is more likely to come from older generations living in rural villages, rather than inner-city urban areas.

Even after applying social and demographic controls, all of the five cultural value scales – created by the authors using ESS items – proved consistent predictors of voting support for populist parties and pointed in the expected direction. Authoritarian populist support was strengthened by anti-immigrant attitudes, mistrust of global and national governance, support for authoritarian values – measured by the Schwartz scale – and left-right ideological self-placement.

A combination of several standard demographics (age, sex, education, religiosity and ethnic minority status)




with cultural values can provide the most useful explanation for support for these parties. Authoritarian populist support is concentrated among the older generation, men, the religious, majority populations and the less educated – sectors generally left behind by progressive tides of cultural value change. The electoral success of these parties at the ballot box can be attributed mainly to their appeal to traditional values.

It is important to understand this topic since it is apparent that the consequences

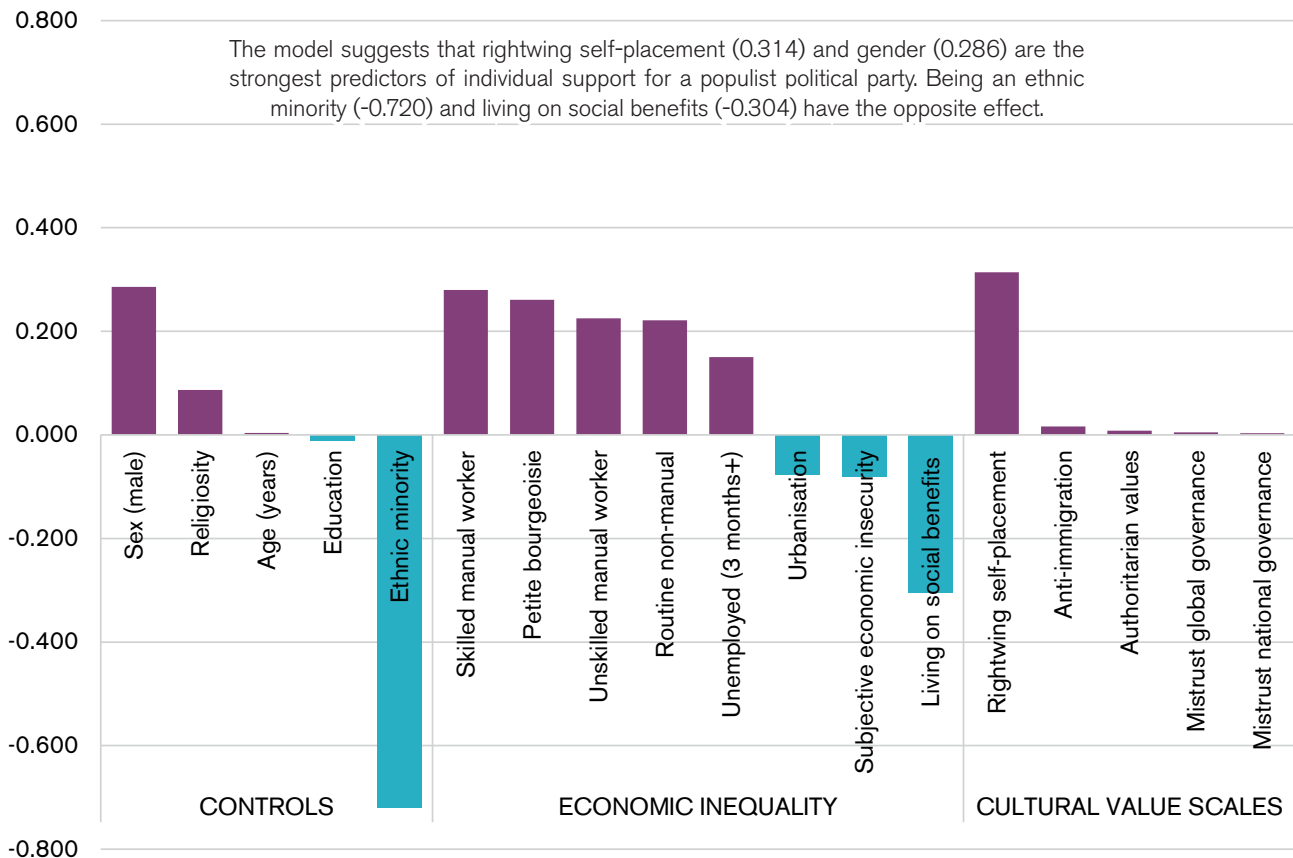
of the rise of populism continue to play out and they are likely to be profound. Populist forces have proven decisive for the outcome of the British Referendum on membership of the EU, with their leaders igniting anti-immigrant and nativist sentiment.

The outcome has generated a deep financial, political and constitutional existential crisis within the United Kingdom and the decision threatens to re-energise populist forces across Europe.

Support for populism also exists in the United States, where Donald Trump has been able to appeal to older, religious, white traditionalists who find themselves left behind by growing support in America for such issues as same-sex marriage, rights for transsexuals, gender equality and immigration rights.

The net result is that Western societies face more unpredictable contests, anti-establishment populist challenges to the legitimacy of liberal democracy and potential disruptions to long-established patterns of party competition. 

### Logistic regression models predicting whether respondents voted for a populist party (Round 1-6)



## VALUES OF FARMERS VS THE GENERAL POPULATION

**Research led by Ivo Baur assessed data from seven countries to find that farmers are psychologically different – they are more conservative and more concerned about common welfare than the general population**


Using data from the Schwartz model for measuring human values, collected over the first six waves of the ESS, Ivo Baur and colleagues compared the psychological disposition of farmers to the general population. They compared the basic psychological patterns of farmers in Austria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland with the respective national general population.

Results revealed that farmers are psychologically different from the general population. Farmers are significantly more conservative, while the rest of the population is more open to change.

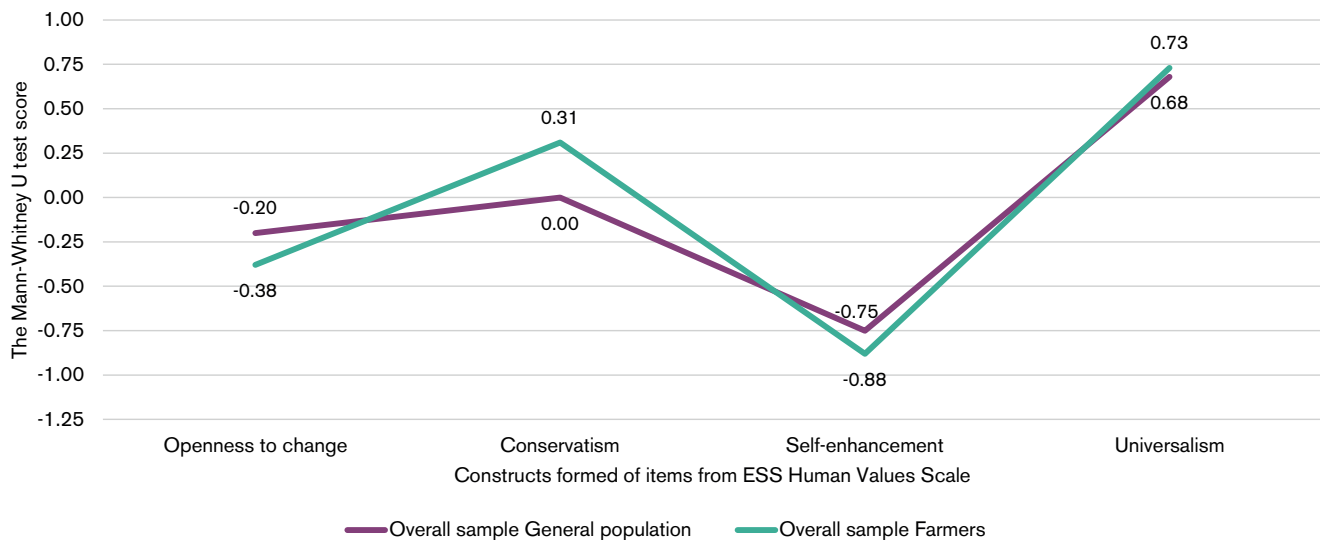
Furthermore, farmers tend to be more concerned about common welfare and less self-interested when compared with the respective national population. The figure illustrates the differences between farmers and the rest of the population on scores of self-enhancement (individualism, self-orientation), universalism (concern about general wellbeing), openness to change and conservatism (traditional values).

Comparing the farmers across these seven countries further shows that the typical farmer profile – conservative value

orientation and concern for common welfare – is particularly pronounced amongst Finnish, German and Austrian farmers.

These value profiles also allowed the authors to draw various policy relevant conclusions. For example, conservative value orientation suggests that farmers are more sceptical about policy changes and that agri-environmental measures gain greater acceptance if presented as a continuation of existing options. Furthermore, scepticism about policy innovations may explain delayed reaction to new direct payment incentives. 

**Differences in human values of farmers and the general population (Round 1-6)**



# WHAT DO EUROPEAN OLDER GENERATIONS THINK ABOUT THE LGBT COMMUNITY?

Using data collected in the first seven rounds of the ESS, Gianmaria Bottoni and Elissa Sibley discovered that older adults are typically the least accepting of homosexuality, with the over 75s almost 20% less accepting than 15-24 year olds

Public attitudes towards homosexuality vary across Europe, with the Northern European countries tending to be the most accepting, and the Central and Eastern European countries the least accepting (Kuyper, Iedema & Keuzenkamp, 2013).

In recent decades, legal and policy developments in Europe have included mandatory protection of LGBT rights across the EU. Most recently, we have seen the legalisation of same-sex marriage in 13 member states, with

others introducing civil partnerships or recognising same-sex marriages that were performed overseas.

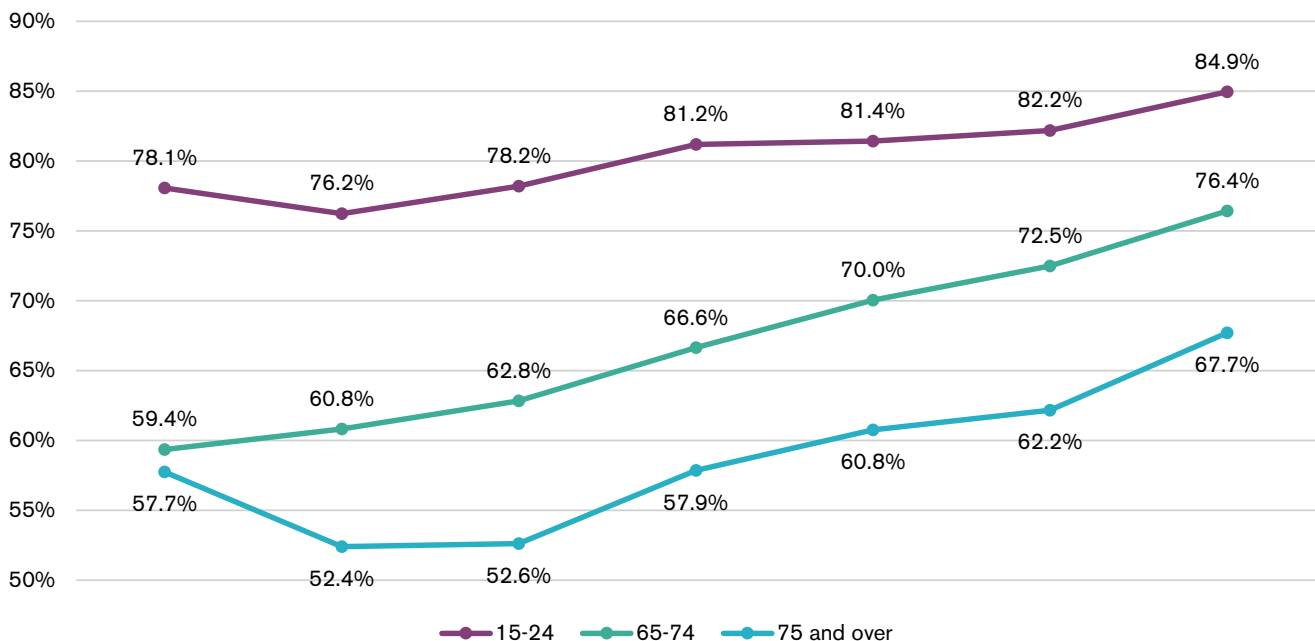
When comparing public attitudes across age groups, older adults are typically the least accepting of homosexuality. Is this changing as time and public policy move on? The ESS offers a valuable insight.

Using data from the 16 countries that participated in rounds 1-7 (2002-14) of

the ESS, responses of older adults to the item 'Gays and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish' are examined. Possible responses are strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree and strongly disagree.

The figure below shows the proportion of respondents who said that they either strongly agree or agree, in three age groups: 75 and above (n = 17,642), 55-74 (n = 25,838) and, for comparison, 15-24 (n = 26,333).

**Gays and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish (Round 1-7, by age group)**



## WHAT DO EUROPEAN OLDER GENERATIONS THINK ABOUT THE LGBT COMMUNITY?

Pooling all ESS data for the 16 countries between 2002 and 2014, the proportion of respondents who agree or strongly agree increased from 73% to 81.1%.

Looking at Round 7 data only, in general, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries show a higher level of acceptance of the LGBT community (Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark each score above 90%), while those in the Soviet Bloc score lower, with agreement on this item at around 50% in Poland and Hungary.

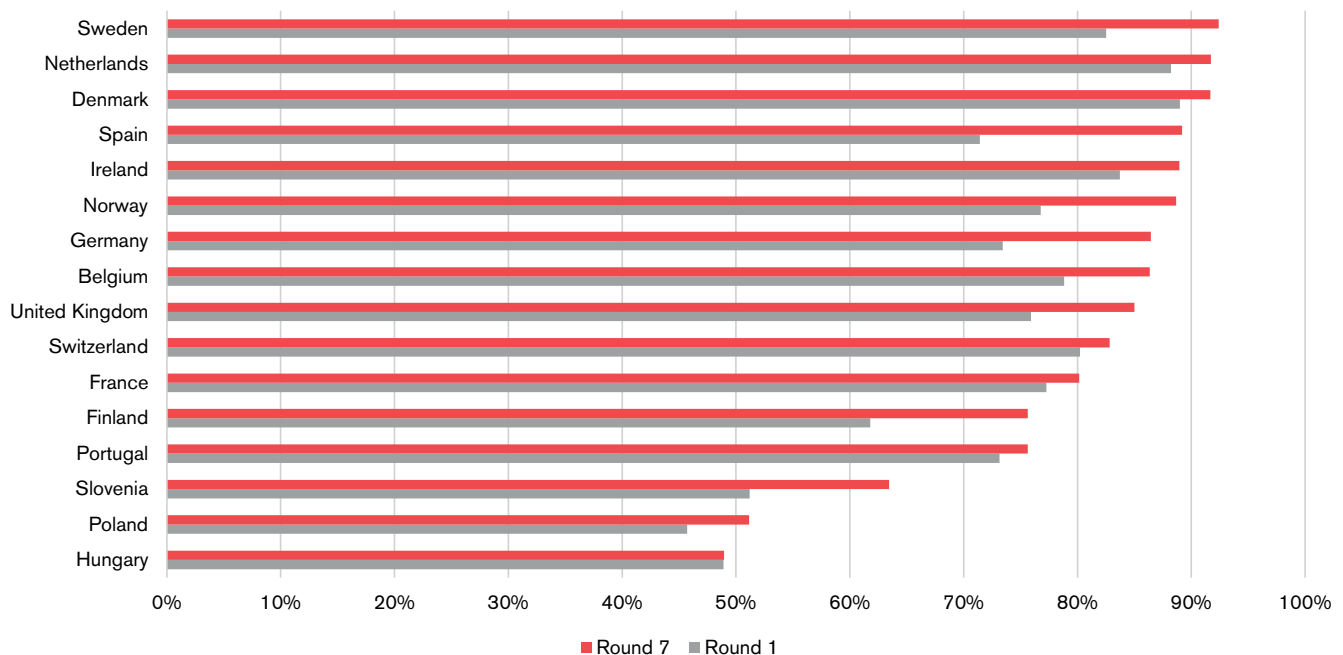
When assessing the data for this item by three different age groups, in 2014 almost 85% of people aged 15-24 agreed or strongly agreed that gays and lesbians should be free to live as they wish, compared to 67.7% of those aged 75 and above and 76.4% of those aged 65-74.

Overall, between 2002 and 2014, acceptance of homosexuality increased for all three age groups analysed. However, this change was more pronounced in older adults.

For people aged 75 and above, from 2002 to 2014 the percentage of people agreeing that gays and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish, increased by 10%. The rise has been even greater in the 65-74 age group, who showed an increase of 17%.

Meanwhile, the younger cohort showed a more modest rise (6.8%); this is perhaps due to the already more liberal views evidenced in this age group.

Gays and lesbians should be free to live their own life as they wish (Round 7)



Looking cross-nationally at the first and the last rounds of the ESS, across all age groups, the biggest increase in liberal attitudes towards gays and lesbians is shown in Spain (17.8%), followed by Finland (13.8%), Germany (13%), Slovenia (12.2%) and Norway (11.9%).

Meanwhile, those in Portugal, Switzerland, Denmark and France showed the smallest increases (2.5%, 2.6%, 2.7% and 2.9%, respectively), and there was no change at all in Hungary.

Examining these changes by age group reveals that overall, in almost all of the countries and age groups studied,

acceptance of homosexuality has increased, and this increase is generally higher in the older population. This is particularly so in Germany and Spain, where we see increases of 30% and 32% (respectively) in the 65-74 age group, and 26.5% and 26.1% among those aged 75 and above.

There are, however, some exceptions. In Portugal, the proportion of people aged 75 and above who reported acceptance decreased by 18.2%.

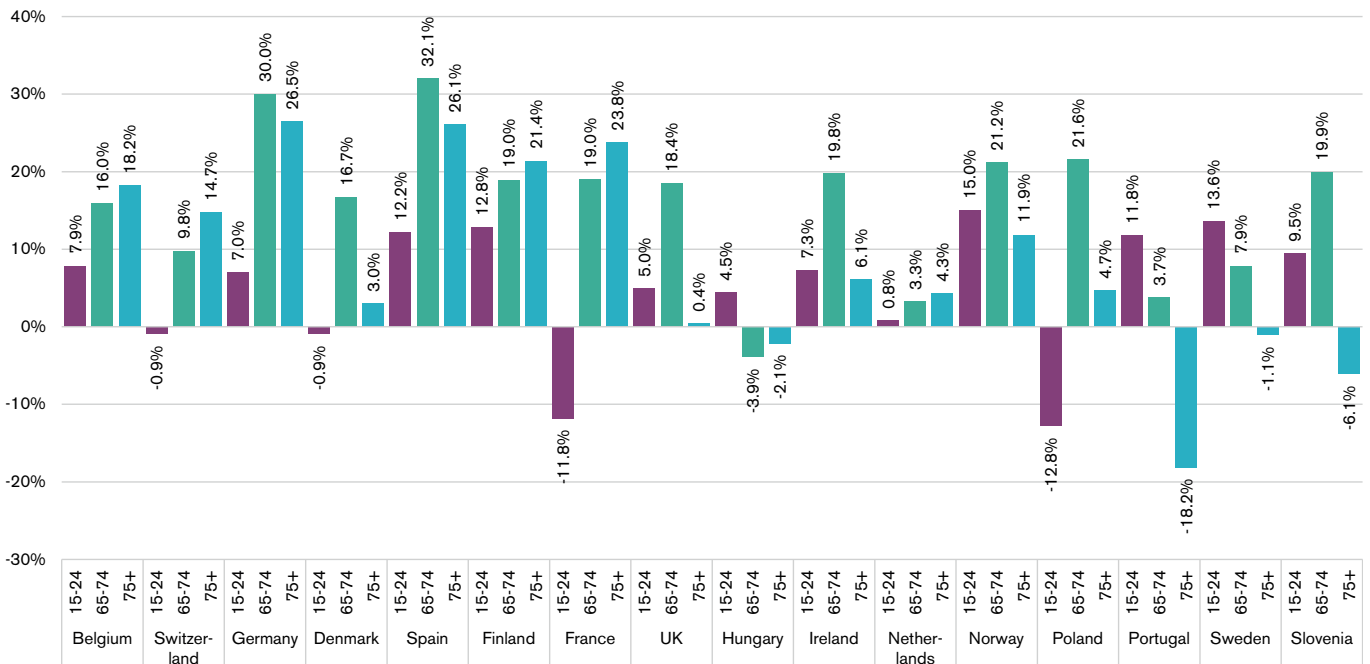
Similarly, but to a much lesser extent, in Slovenia this age group registered a decrease of 6.1%, and in Sweden a drop

of 1.1%. In Hungary, we see a decline in acceptance (3.9% and 2.1%) in both of the two older cohorts.

Unexpectedly, in some countries we see a drop in acceptance among those aged 15-24. In France there is a decline of 11.8%, and in Poland a drop of 12.8%.

In most of the countries studied, amongst older adults there is indeed an increase in acceptance of homosexuality. In part, this may be a cohort effect as the populations within each age group renew over time. However, there may also be a reciprocal effect between changes in policy and in public attitudes. ☺

Differences in acceptance of homosexuality (Round 1 to Round 7, by country age group)



## DID THE ESS PREDICT THAT THE UK PUBLIC WOULD VOTE TO LEAVE THE EU?

### Ian Simpson assessed ESS data to determine whether there were clues to the actual result of the Brexit Referendum held in June 2016

On 23 June 2016, a referendum took place in the United Kingdom (UK), in which 52% of voters expressed the view that the United Kingdom should leave the European Union (EU). Since this date it has been the policy of the UK government to pursue an exit from the EU, with the UK triggering Article 50 of the Treaty on European Union (the process by which any EU Member state may decide to leave the EU) in March 2017.

The UK's original departure date of 29 March 2019 passed with no agreement in relation to the UK's exit from the EU. This has raised fears that the UK may leave the EU with no procedures in place to secure an orderly exit, or Brexit as it has been widely dubbed.

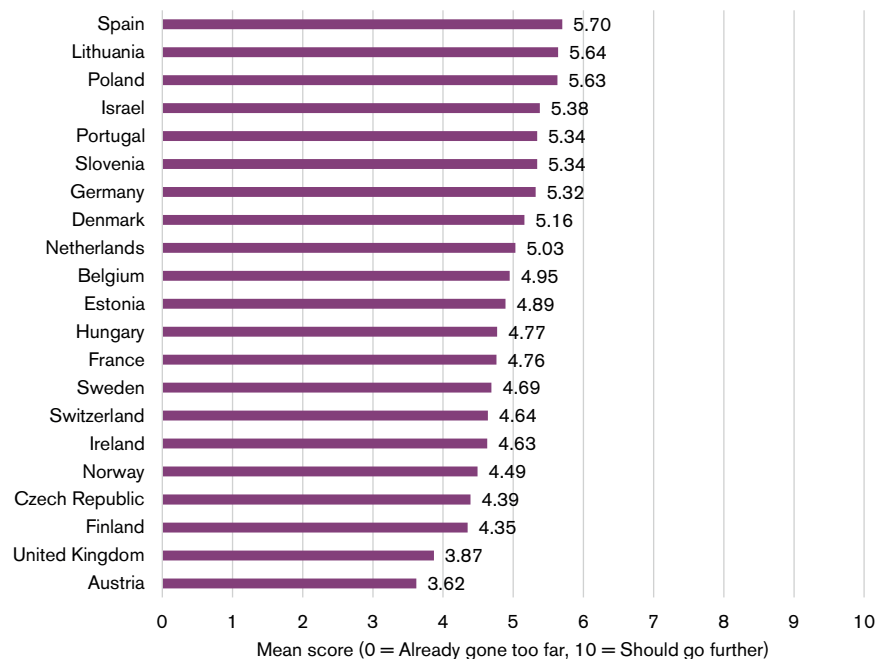
The UK referendum was the first time a public vote has resulted in a recommendation that a country should leave the EU. Indeed, no country has ever attempted to leave the EU before. The result of the referendum started a chain of tumultuous events in UK politics: the resignation of one Prime Minister; the calling of an unscheduled general election culminating in an unexpected result; and the resulting parliamentary gridlock and breakdown of party discipline that has made it so difficult for a UK withdrawal agreement to be finalised.

The result of the referendum itself was widely viewed as a shock, with most commentators and gambling firms expecting a Remain victory. However, should the result have come as such a surprise? Does ESS data collected prior to the referendum show signs that such an outcome was likely? Does the data show that other countries might be susceptible to demands from their populations to leave the EU?

In order to explore whether the referendum outcome was likely, ESS Round 7 data - which was collected in 2014/15 - might offer some clues. Questions on attitudes towards European integration and trust in the European Parliament are clearly relevant to the question of whether there were signs that the British public were ready to vote in favour of leaving the EU.

Both items used a 0-10 scale, with European integration ranging from 0 (already gone too far) to 10 (should go further). The scale for trust in the European Parliament ranged from 0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust).

#### European unification (Round 7)



Those looking for clues as to whether a Leave vote might be on the cards in 2016 would have found strong evidence from the responses to these items.

It is possible to create a mean score for each of the 21 countries that took part in Round 7. After creating such a score for each country, it becomes clear that in 2014/15 only two of the 21 countries had a mean score of less than four, indicating a fairly strong leaning that European unification has already gone too far.

However, respondents from the UK (3.87) and Austria (3.62) posted the lowest mean scores - all of the other 19 countries had a mean score between four and six.

It is also possible to produce a mean score for every country on the second question, regarding trust in the European Parliament.

If UK supporters of remaining in the EU had studied the data in relation to this question, prior to the referendum, their concern at the potential outcome may only have increased.

Only one country recorded a mean score showing lower trust in the European Parliament than the UK. That country – Israel – is not a member of the EU and is therefore not represented in the European Parliament.

The UK features at the bottom of the distribution, clustered with Israel, Slovenia and Portugal. The UK scored significantly lower on trust in the European Parliament than the other 17 countries.


Trust in the European Parliament was not particularly high in any country, with only Lithuania recording a mean score above five (the midpoint of the scale).

Looking back further to ESS Round 6, where data was collected in 2012/13, another question was asked that is also highly relevant to public satisfaction with a key aim of the European Union, the pooling of sovereignty in order to take some decisions on a multi-national basis:

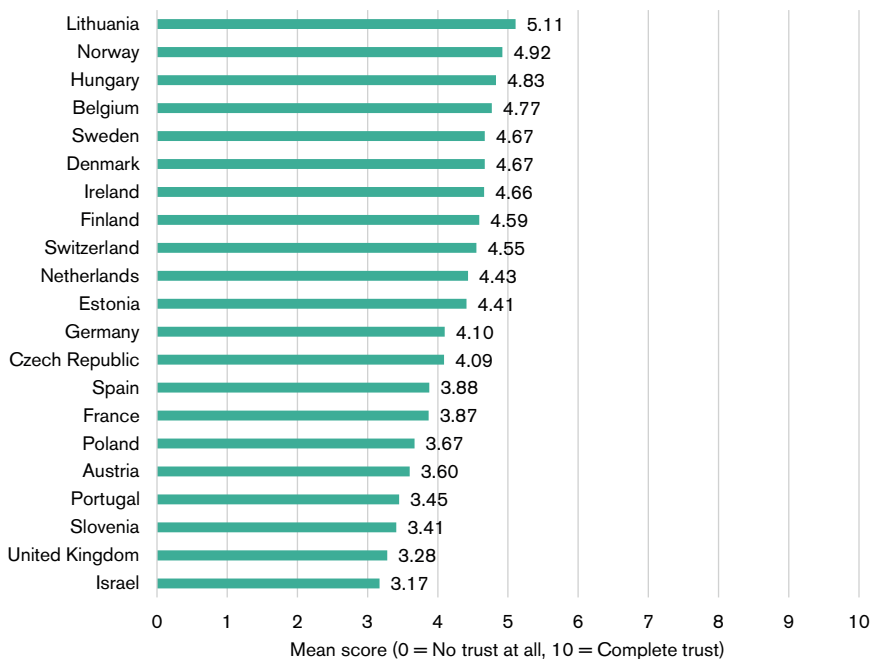
*How important is it that politicians take into account the views of other European governments?*

The UK, with a mean score of 5.84, was clustered with Denmark, Slovakia and Sweden toward the bottom of the distribution. There were only two countries that recorded lower scores for this item than the UK: Israel (5.45) and the Russian Federation (5.00). However, these two countries are not EU member states.

Obviously, the UK's scores on these measures did not mean that it was inevitable that a majority of the UK public would vote in favour of leaving the EU in 2016. However, what they did indicate was that there was clearly a high degree of latent scepticism about the EU, its aims (further integration and pooled sovereignty) and its institutions (the European Parliament) amongst the UK public.

Demand for a referendum may not have been a high priority for most people in the UK but, once a vote had been granted and people were asked to give their opinion, it could be argued that given these data, there should have been a greater level of understanding that the answer that people were to give might not have been the answer that the Prime Minister who called the referendum, David Cameron, wanted to hear. 

### Trust in European Parliament (Round 7)



# THE WELLBEING CONSEQUENCES OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND JOB INSECURITY

**A paper published by Jonas Voßemer and colleagues discovered that unemployed people and those in insecure jobs are less satisfied with life than those in secure jobs, but that the differences among people who are working are smaller**

Over the last three decades many European countries have witnessed periods of high unemployment and a rapid expansion of temporary employment. This has led researchers to examine how individuals' employment situations affect their health and wellbeing. These studies usually find that people who are unemployed are less satisfied with their lives and report worse health than those who have a job. Explanations for this include that they have to cope with financial problems and that the job they lost represented an integral part of their life.

In recent years, researchers also analysed differences among working individuals, comparing those with secure and insecure jobs. Some studies have suggested that workers in temporary jobs or those without any employment contract are less happy and healthy than workers who have a contract of unlimited duration and worry less about losing their job.

A study by Voßemer and colleagues based on six rounds of ESS data (2002-2012) and covering 26 different European countries has re-examined the relationship between individuals' employment situation and their life satisfaction and self-reported health.


The authors confirmed previous studies showing that across Europe the unemployed are substantially less satisfied with their life. They also showed that they are less likely to rate their own health as very good or good compared to people who have secure jobs. Individuals who worked in jobs with limited contracts or who had no contract were also less satisfied with their lives but the differences between workers in secure and insecure jobs with respect to their health were small.

Many researchers have hypothesised that the consequences of unemployment and insecure jobs for individuals' wellbeing and health depend on countries' arrangements for social and employment policies. Voßemer and colleagues used two specific features of the ESS - its wide geographic coverage and long time-series - to study this question.

This allowed the researchers to compare the consequences of joblessness and employment insecurity between different countries, as well as within countries over time. The idea was that if countries have different social and employment policies, or if countries changed their policies over time, the researchers can see how those differences and changes in policies affect the experience of unemployment and job insecurity.

To get a broad understanding of the role of different social and employment policies, the researchers looked at countries' unemployment insurance systems (e.g. income replacement and duration of benefits), their active labour market policies (e.g. training programmes or job creation programmes for the unemployed), and employment protection regulations (e.g. laws about the hiring and firing of workers).

Their study showed that these policies had little influence on differences in wellbeing and health between workers with secure and insecure jobs, but were important in shaping the experience of unemployment. In countries with more generous unemployment benefits, the negative consequences of unemployment for individuals' wellbeing were much smaller, while the arrangement of benefits had little impact on the negative consequences of having an insecure job.


An implication of this research is that politicians who want to alleviate the negative effects of joblessness should consider providing more generous unemployment benefits, for example by increasing the share of income that is replaced or the duration over which benefits are paid or increase levels of employment. 



# ESS RESOURCES: DATA, LEARNING AND PUBLICATIONS

**The ESS is a major research infrastructure with freely available data to inform academic, policy and public debate on a wide range of contemporary social, moral and political issues facing Europe. Find out how to join 130,000 other people who have accessed our survey data for free.**

The European Social Survey (ESS) has undertaken 381,351 face-to-face interviews since Round 1 was fielded in 2002/03. All the documentation and data – collected over the subsequent waves up to and including Round 8 (2016/17) – is available to download or view online ([europeansocialsurvey.org](http://europeansocialsurvey.org)).

The ESS became a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) in 2013, meaning all participants contribute to the budget of the project. During Round 8, there were 23 participating countries, including 17 ERIC Members. 

## Download ESS Data

Researchers can download data in a number of different ways. Data is available in SAS, SPSS and STATA formats for download by Round. Additionally, registered users can download a bespoke subset of data by selecting rounds, countries and/or variables in SPSS, STATA or CSV format through our Cumulative Data Wizard.

## Online Analysis

The ESS Online Analysis tool – NESSTAR – was created by NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data. The tool allows you to conduct simple analyses of our data without having to leave your web browser. It includes all data collected by the ESS since 2002/03 ([nesstar.com](http://nesstar.com)).

## E-learning Tool

The ESS e-learning tool, EduNet, provides hands-on examples and exercises to guide

users through the research process, from a theoretical problem to the interpretation of statistical results.

## Wellbeing Matters

Using data collected between rounds 1-6, several academics authored a report on wellbeing items explored through the ESS. The report – Measuring and Reporting on Europeans' Wellbeing – was expanded upon through the creation of a new website ([esswellbeingmatters.org](http://esswellbeingmatters.org)).

## Exploring Public Attitudes Informing Public Policy

This booklet is the third in the series of our compilation reports that bring together academic research undertaken using our data. Issue 1 relied on data collected from rounds 1-3 and Issue 2 included research based on rounds 1-5 data. The latter has also been translated by our Bosnian, Latvian and Luxembourgish national teams.

## Topline Results

Based on our rotating module subjects, we have now produced nine issues in our Topline Results series of publications. All nine issues are available to view or download on the ESS website:

1. Trust in Justice (also available in Croatian)
2. Welfare Attitudes in Europe (also available in Croatian, Cypriot Greek and Ukrainian)
3. Economic Crisis, Quality of Work and Social Integration (also available in Serbian)

4. Europeans' Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy (also available in Albanian, Bulgarian, Italian, Lithuanian and Slovak)
5. Europeans' Personal and Social Wellbeing (also available in Albanian, French, Lithuanian, Russian, Slovak and Slovene)
6. Social Inequalities in Health and their Determinants (also available in Danish, French, German, Irish Gaelic, Italian, Lithuanian, Romanian, Slovene and Spanish)
7. Attitudes towards Immigration and their Antecedents (also available in Georgian, German, Hebrew, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Slovene and Spanish)
8. The Past, Present and Future of European Welfare Attitudes (also available in German and Spanish)
9. European Attitudes towards Climate Change and Energy (also available in German, Slovak and Spanish)

## Other Publications

Two publications have additionally been produced by members of the Public Attitudes to Welfare, Climate Change and Energy in the EU and Russia (PAWCER) project:

1. Russian versus European Welfare Attitudes
2. Public Perceptions on Climate Change and Energy in Europe and Russia

## A SURVEY FUTURE ONLINE?

### The CROSS-National Online Survey Panel (CRONOS) is the world's first input-harmonised cross-national probability-based web panel

The ESS has been leading on the development of a CROSS-National Online Survey (CRONOS) panel. It is the first attempt to establish a cross-national probability-based online panel following a harmonised approach throughout – from the recruitment stage to data processing.

Part of the 'Synergies for Europe's Research Infrastructures in the Social Sciences (SERISS)' project, CRONOS is a pilot study to evaluate the effectiveness of panel recruitment on the back of an existing cross-national survey in terms of costs, sample representativeness, participation, attrition rates and data quality.


Although there is no intention to replace face-to-face data collection with an online survey in the immediate future, a follow-up online panel offers quick, flexible, cost-efficient and regular data collection from the same respondents over time.

CRONOS was designed and implemented alongside Round 8 in 2016/17. After completing the face-to-face interview, respondents in Estonia, Great Britain and Slovenia were invited to participate in a short introductory survey and six 20-minute surveys over 14 months.

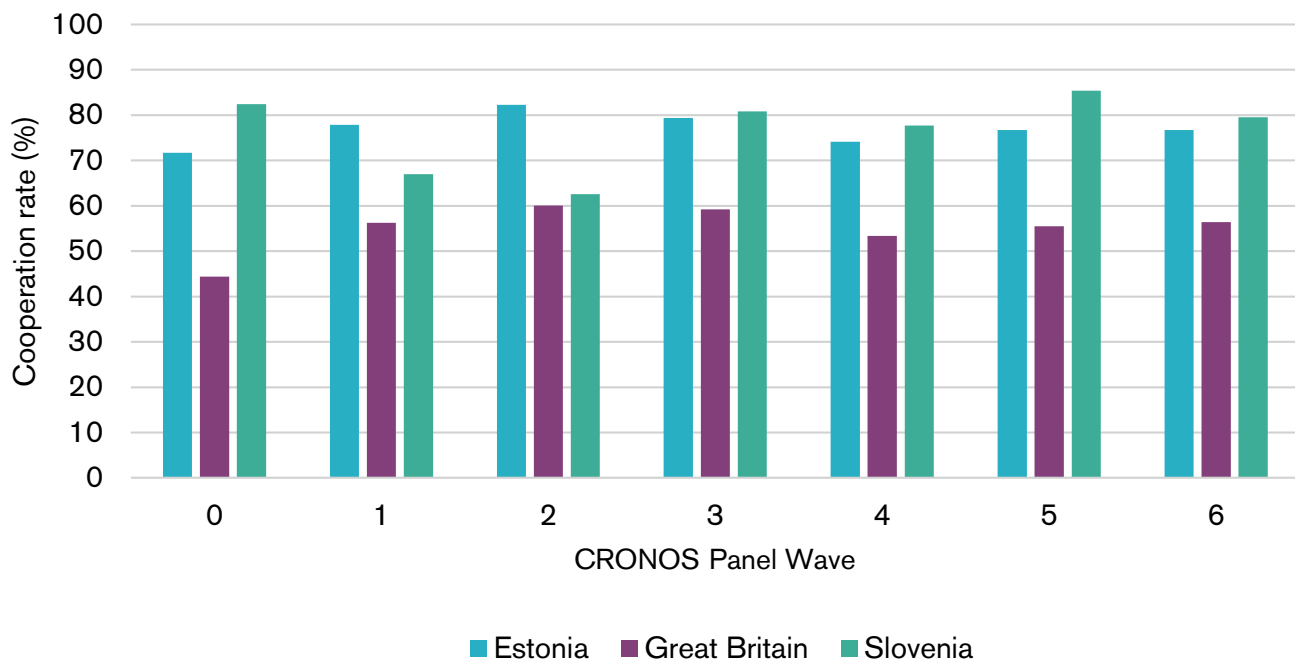
The CRONOS Panel was managed centrally with support from national teams,

who translated and adapted source documents, sent out postal and SMS communications, set up experiments and maintained a helpline. National teams worked with the central team in the design of recruitment strategies and experiments.

Data collection took place between December 2016 and February 2018. Over 100 questions were fielded on a range of topics, often borrowed from high-standard cross-national surveys (the ESS, European Values Study, Generations and Gender Programme, International Social Survey Programme and European Quality of Life Survey).

The graph below shows response rates for all seven surveys fielded (with 0 being the introductory survey). All the data collected is available to download from the ESS website. It is hoped that the panel will be extended in 2020. 

**Cross-National Online Survey (CRONOS) panel cooperation rates (2016-2018)**





**When considering new policies, governments in the past were often ignorant of their citizens' preferences and needs. Now European governments have a source for counteracting that ignorance.**



**Professor Sir Roger Jowell CBE**

Co-founder of the ESS



# FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE ESS

The European Social Survey is a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC) that provides cross-national data about public attitudes, beliefs and behaviours.

If you have a general enquiry about the European Social Survey or would like to find out more, please contact the ESS team based at City, University of London:

+44 (0)20 7040 4907

[ess@city.ac.uk](mailto:ess@city.ac.uk)

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