

Germany and Europe

Doubt or Confidence?

Results of a representative survey by TNS Infratest Policy Research
regarding German attitudes towards Europe and the European Union

62% of Germans are of the opinion that the EU and its member states are not on the right track.

59% of Germans think that Germany should expand its leadership role in Europe.

73% of Germans believe that Germany has been left in the lurch by the other EU member states in the refugee crisis.

67% of Germans think that Brexit has weakened the cohesion of the remaining EU member states.

25% of Germans welcome the rising influence of Eurosceptic movements.

96% of Germans would like to see an EU that is more transparent and closer to its citizens.

42% of Germans demand a referendum on Germany's EU membership.

Doubt or Confidence? What Germans Think about Europe

Brexit, refugee crisis, transatlantic alienation: The list of internal and external challenges facing Europe is long. The European project is in one of the most profound crises of its 60-year history. What do Germans think about Europe at this critical juncture? Does the EU still have a future? And if so, what should this future look like? In an attempt to respond to these questions, in October 2016 Körber Foundation commissioned TNS Infratest Policy Research to carry out a nationwide representative survey of 1,001 people aged 18 and above on Europe and German foreign policy.

The most important results at a glance:

- Germans are unhappy with the state of the EU. A clear majority believes that the EU and its member states are not on the right track. They consider Brexit to have considerably weakened the cohesion of the remaining EU member states. Only 39% believe that Germany gains more advantages than disadvantages from its EU membership.
- Despite the skepticism regarding the EU's current direction, Germans would like to see more integration in the long term. 95% consider a stronger convergence and more cooperation between the EU member states as desirable.

■ However, Germans would like to have a greater say in European decision-making as well as more influence on politics in Brussels. They are almost unanimous in calling for an EU that is more transparent and closer to its citizens.

■ Germans widely support Germany's leadership role within the European Union. If need be, Berlin should assert its interests in Brussels even in the face of resistance from other member states.

■ According to 73% of Germans, a solution to the refugee crisis is only possible at the European level. Two thirds are of the opinion that Germany has been left in the lurch by the other EU member states in the refugee crisis.

A compilation of more detailed results is available on the website of Körber Foundation's Berlin Foreign Policy Forum

www.koerber-stiftung.de/europa-umfrage

DATA POOL:

1001 individuals in Germany; the German-speaking population over 18 years

Survey period: 4–15 October 2016

Sampling/survey methods:

representative random selection/random selection using CATI

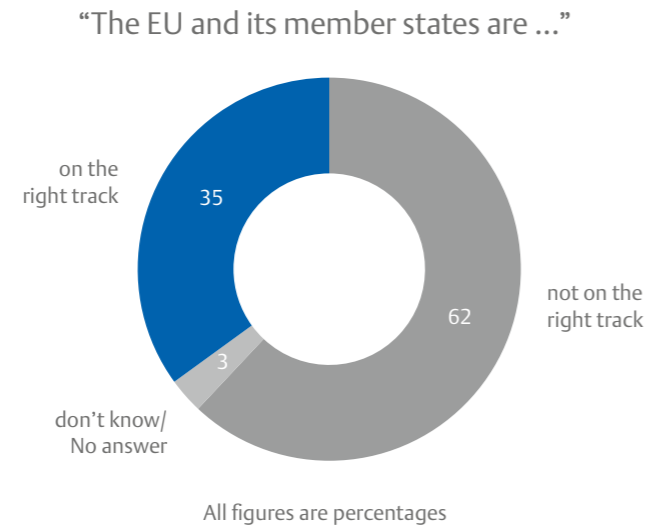
Conducted under the project management

of TNS Infratest Policy Research

Interviews: Infratel

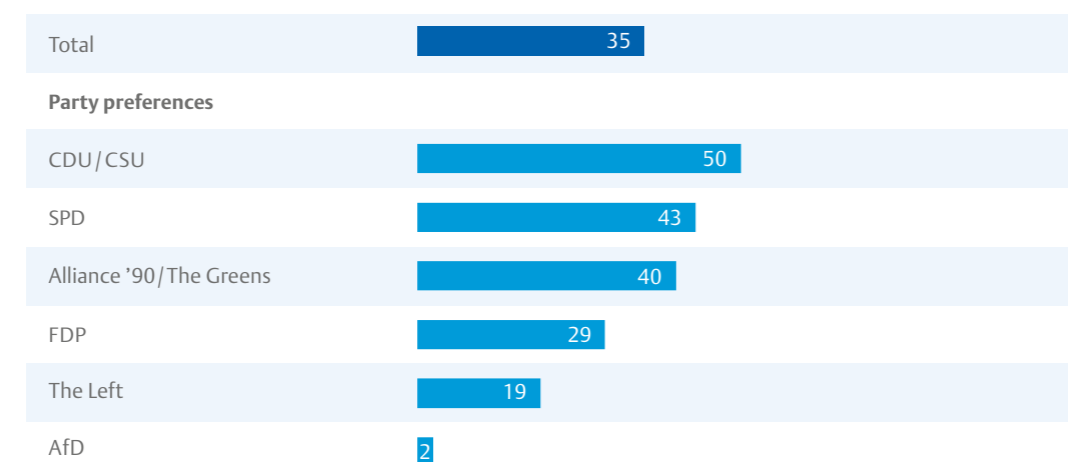
1. Europe Is Not on the Right Track

In the face of numerous challenges, Germans question whether the EU and its member states have taken the right measures to deal with the crises. A majority is of the opinion that the EU is not on the right track (62%). This critical perspective is shown to be above average among the younger people who were surveyed (18 to 29 year olds).



The dwindling trust in the EU’s course is tangible over and above party-political boundaries – albeit to varying degrees. It is notable that even among the supporters of the governing CDU/CSU and SPD, no clear majority considers the current course of the EU as on the right track (CDU/CSU: 50%; SPD: 43%). The Left and the AfD take the most skeptical view of the EU: 97% of AfD voters and 77% of The Left’s supporters are fundamentally against the current policies of the EU and its member states.

“The EU and its member states are on the right track.”



All figures are percentages
Missing values amounting to 100%: not on the right track, do not know, no answer

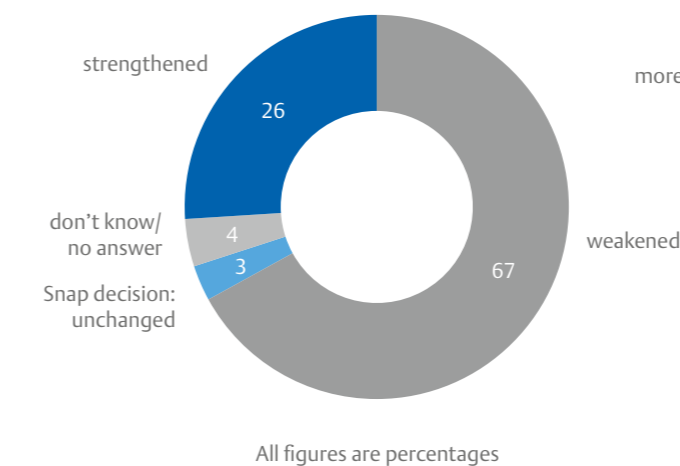
Dissatisfaction with the state of the EU and doubts about its future course have contributed to the success of Eurosceptic parties at elections across almost all European countries. Even in Germany, a quarter of the population welcomes the growing influence of political movements that are sceptical of the project of European integration.

2. Less Cohesion after Brexit

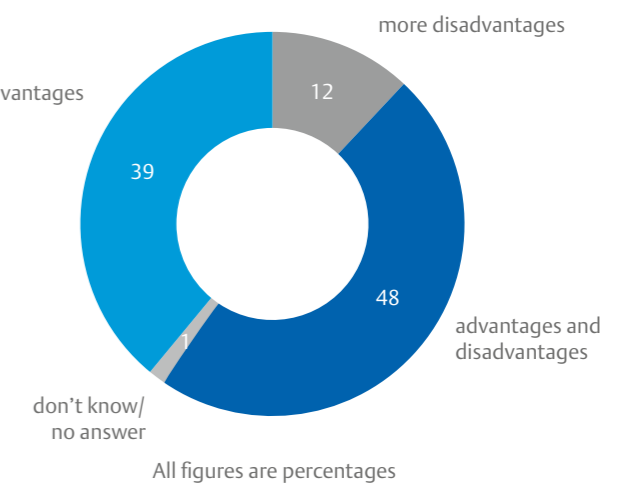
The Brexit referendum and the incipient negotiations about Britain’s exit from the EU in the coming years are weakening German confidence in the EU’s coherence and convergence. 67% of those surveyed think that the Brexit vote has weakened cohesion amongst the remaining members.

58% of the population call for hard negotiations with Britain over Brexit. This position is particularly pronounced amongst the supporters of conservative and centrist parties (CDU/CSU: 64%; FDP: 73%). However, AfD voters are prepared to compromise, with only 44% of them supporting an unrelenting negotiating position.

“The British vote has led cohesion in the EU to be ...”



“EU membership has provided Germany with ...”



3. What’s in It for Us?

Less Enthusiasm for German EU Membership

German dissatisfaction with the state of the EU is also further reflected in how those surveyed judge the advantages and disadvantages of German membership. Only four out of ten (39%) primarily see advantages in their country’s EU membership. For 48%, the advantages and disadvantages are basically in balance. 12% are convinced that EU membership holds more disadvantages for Germany than advantages.

The view is contradictory in as far as 40% of the young people surveyed (18 to 29 year olds) judge EU membership as providing more advantages than disadvantages, although a clear majority of this age group (66%) believe that the EU is not on the right track. The most positive view of German EU membership came from those with a higher level of education. Within this group, 57% tend to agree that EU membership is beneficial to Germany.

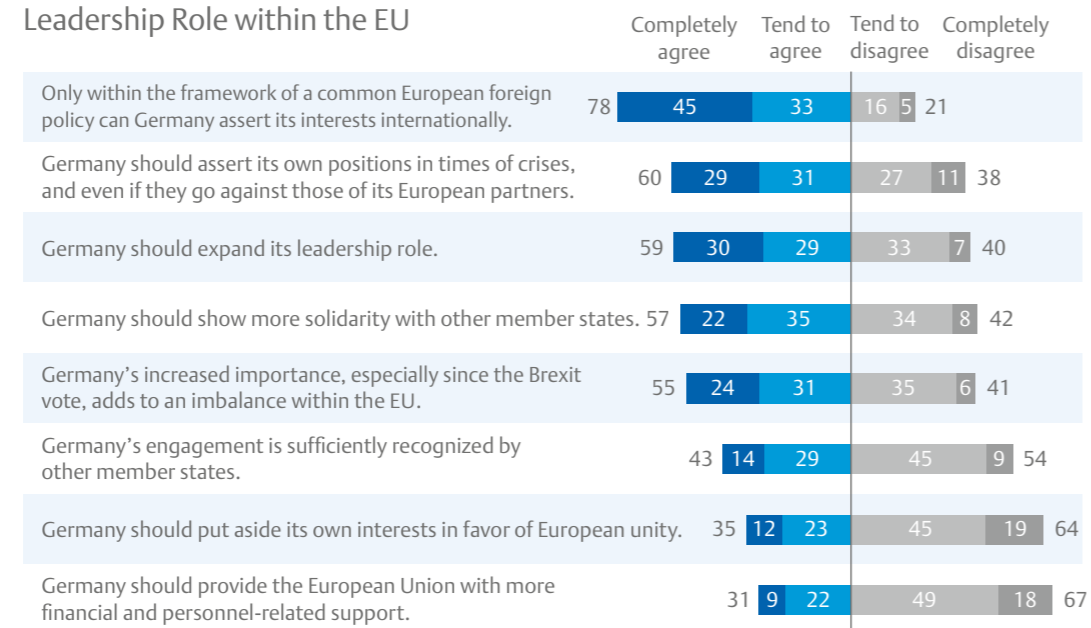
4. Daring to Lead?

Acceptance of Germany's Leadership Role in the EU

Germany's leadership role in the European Union is widely accepted amongst Germans, with as many as 59 % keen for Germany to expand on this leading role. A majority of those surveyed advocate that German interests be asserted in times of crisis even against those of other member states (60%). Only 35 % support abandoning German interests in favor of European integration. A clear majority rejects providing the EU with more financial and human resources. However, 57 % believe that Germany also has to exercise solidarity with the other member states.

Despite broad support for Germany's leadership role in the EU, a clear majority (78 %) concludes that Germany needs a common European foreign policy to be established if it is to safeguard its own interests.

Leadership Role within the EU



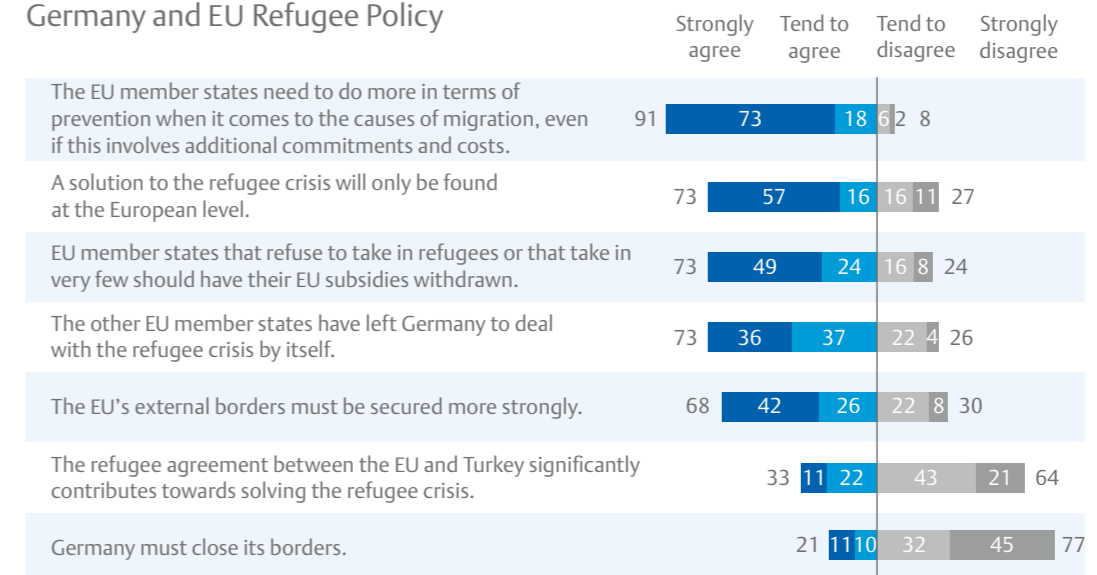
All figures are percentages
Missing values amounting to 100 %: don't know, no answer

5. Germany Left Alone in the Refugee Crisis

According to 73 % of Germans, a solution to the refugee crisis is only possible at the European level. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority calls for a stronger commitment of EU member states towards preventing the root causes of migration – even if this means accepting additional costs (91 %).

A large majority rejects the closing of German borders as a means of solving the refugee crisis (77 %). Almost three quarters of Germans think that the other EU member states have left Germany by itself in coping with the refugee crisis (73 %). In addition, 73 % of those surveyed advocate cutting EU subsidies for member states that take in no or very few refugees. Although the number of refugees reaching Europe has drastically declined, a majority of those surveyed do not consider the refugee agreement with Turkey as effective.

Germany and EU Refugee Policy



All figures are percentages
Missing values amounting to 100 %: don't know, no answer

6. No Confidence in the Franco-German Tandem

In view of the various challenges, the EU urgently requires a new stimulus for consolidation and further development. Germans have little confidence in the Franco-German tandem in this regard. A large number of the people surveyed (44 %) believe in the cooperation of all member states as far as reform and further development of the EU is concerned. Further cooperation between the six founding states, Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, also forms a viable framework in the German view.

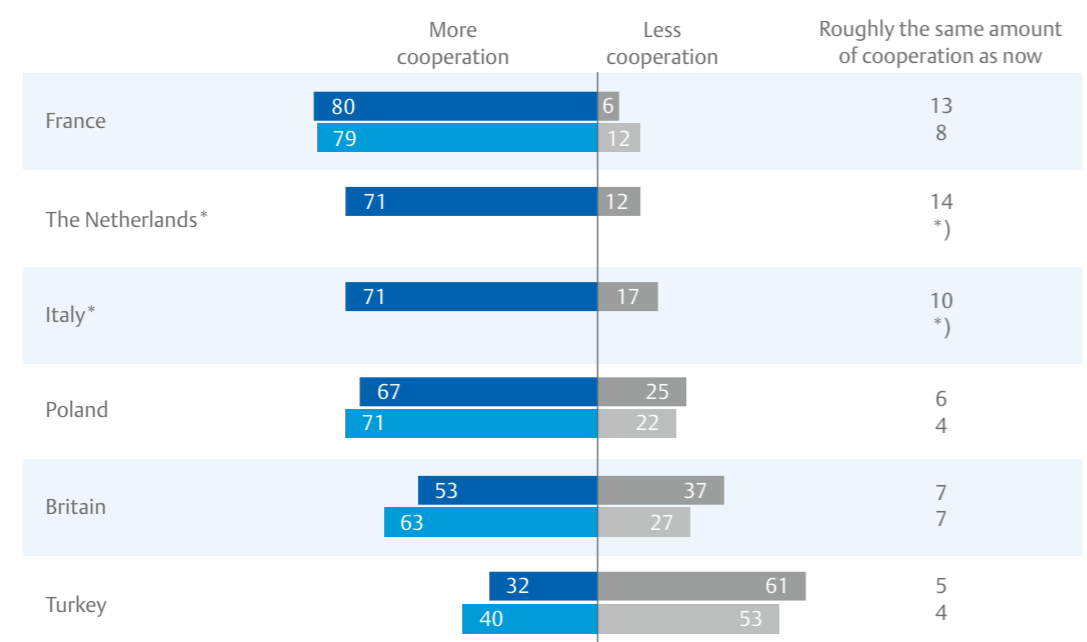
Important Partnerships to Push the EU Forward



All figures are percentages
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Even if there is skepticism with regard to established formats such as the Franco-German tandem and the Weimar Triangle, a majority of those surveyed still would like to see more bilateral cooperation with the most important European partners: France (80 %), Italy and the Netherlands (both 71 %), and Poland (67 %). By contrast, approval of cooperation with Britain has declined significantly (53 %). More than a third of those surveyed want to cooperate less closely with the United Kingdom in future. Germans continue to be skeptical about Turkey as an EU candidate country: 61 % favor less future cooperation with Ankara.

German Cooperation with Other Countries



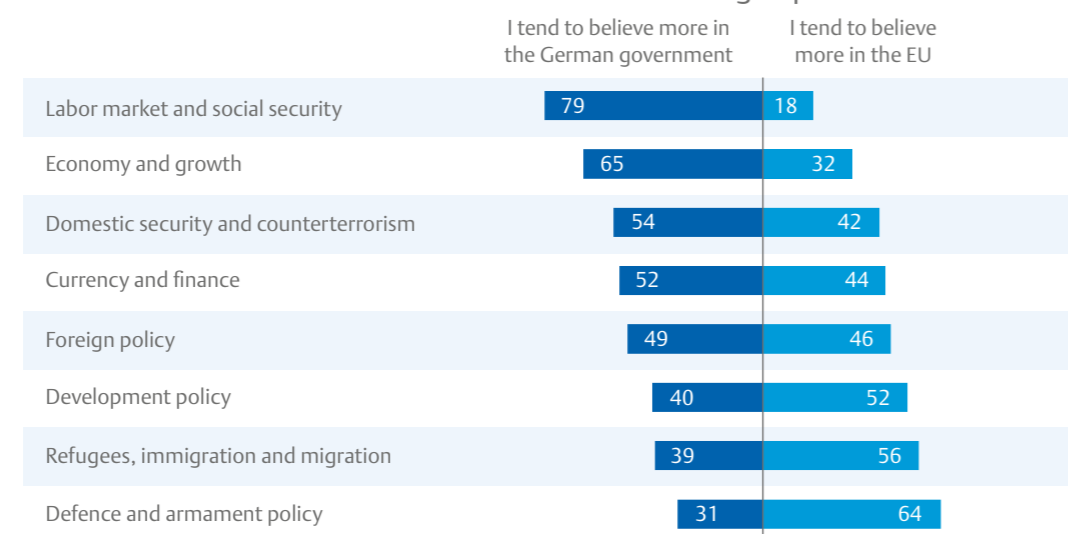
Figures are percentages
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■ October 2016 ■ April 2014 * No comparable figures available

7. Armament and Defence Policy: A Job for the EU

Germans are convinced that the German government can manage projects within the realms of employment and social care, the economy, and internal security/anti-terrorism better than the EU can: 79% consider the German government to be more trustworthy than the EU on matters such as employment and social security, 65% on the economy and growth, 54% on internal security/anti-terrorism and 52% on currency and fiscal questions. Overall, Germans do not consider the EU to be a competent actor in economic policy. This also explains why almost half of those surveyed (47%) reject the statement that the EU is improving Germany's standard of living.

The EU and the German Government's Problem-Solving Capacities



All figures are percentages
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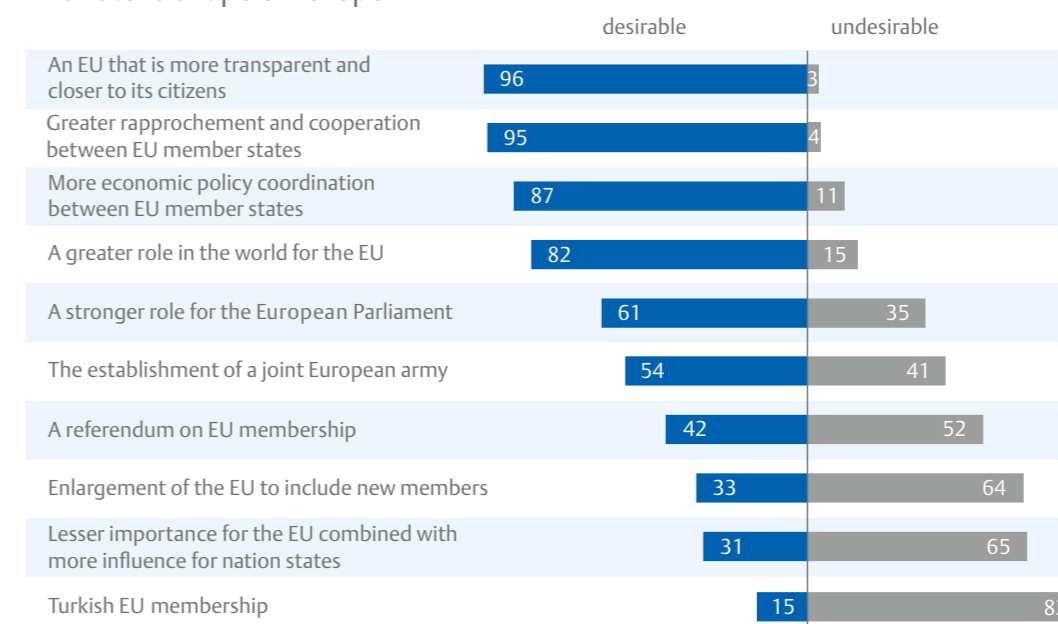
In particular with regard to foreign policy, it is notable that those surveyed almost consider the German government and the EU as equally competent when it comes to problem-solving (German government: 49%; EU: 46%). Germans place much more trust in the EU than in their own government in matters such as development policy (52%) and defence and armament policy (64%). Set against this background, it is not surprising that more than 50% of those surveyed were in favor of creating a European army. In dealing with refugee issues, immigration and migration, a majority of those surveyed (56%) also consider that the EU has greater problem-solving expertise than the German government.

Overall, it is striking that Germans consider the EU to be as competent as or even more competent than their own government within a range of policy areas that are deemed to be core areas of national sovereignty, such as foreign and security policy. This is in line with the desire of a clear majority of those surveyed (82%) for the EU to assume a greater global role.

8. In the Long Term: More Europe, Please!

Although Germans are eyeing current developments in the EU with great skepticism, they still would like to see a strong EU that is capable of taking unified action. All those surveyed almost unanimously call for a stronger convergence and cooperation at the European level (95%). Germans think that closer economic and political coordination among member states is of particular significance (87%). At the same time, 65% consider less importance for the EU combined with increased relevance for nation-states as an undesirable scenario. By contrast, a majority of Germans (64%) reject EU enlargement. In particular, this applies to EU membership for Turkey (82%).

The Future Shape of Europe



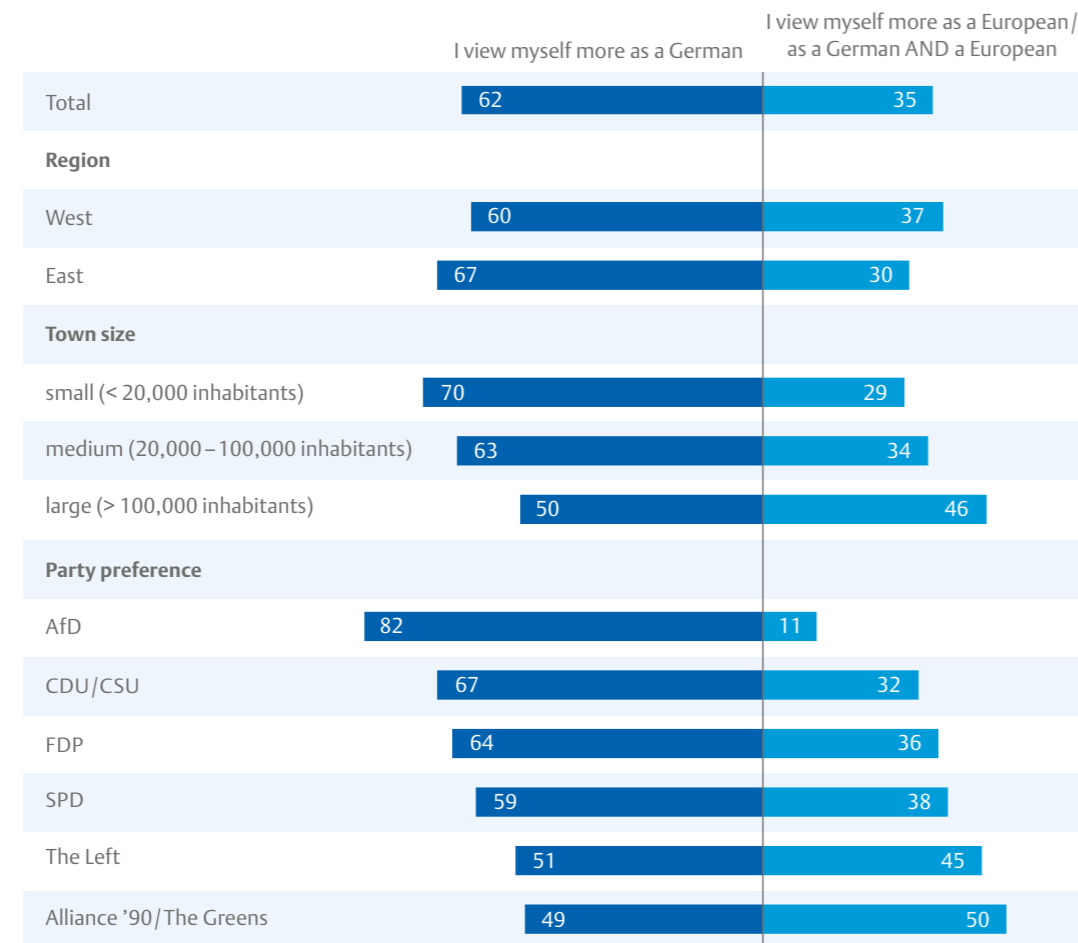
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Germans see a particular need for reform when it comes to increasing the citizens' say in EU decision-making. Those surveyed almost unanimously called for a more transparent EU that is closer to its citizens. The strengthening of the European Parliament ranks high on the German wish list for reforms (61 %). Still, almost half of those surveyed (42 %) advocate a referendum on Germany's membership of the EU.

9. The Citizens' Identity: More German than European

Approximately three quarters of Germans (74 %) do not fear losing their national identity as a result of European integration. 74 % of those surveyed were also of the opinion that the EU is contributing to Europe's populations growing closer together. 62 % consider themselves more German than European, while 35 % consider themselves either more European than German or as both European and German. With regard to the perception of a "European" identity, there is also a clear difference between East and West: Citizens in the Western federal states consider themselves to be more European than citizens in the Eastern ones. Furthermore, residents of larger towns and cities also have a more developed European self-perception. There is also a broad bandwidth along the party spectrum: While 50 % of supporters of Alliance '90/The Greens consider themselves to be European, only 11 % of AfD voters do so.

Perceptions about Identity – Subgroups



All figures are percentages
Missing values amounting to 100 %: don't know, no answer



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Körper Foundation

Social development calls for critical reflection. Through its operational projects, in its networks and in conjunction with cooperation partners, the Körper Foundation takes on current social challenges in areas of action comprising demographic change, innovation and international dialogue. At present its work focuses on three topics: “New Working Lifetime”, “Digital Literacy” and “Russia in Europe”.

Inaugurated in 1959 by the entrepreneur Kurt A. Körper, the foundation is now actively involved in its own national and international projects and events. In particular, the foundation feels a special bond to the city of Hamburg. Furthermore, the Foundation holds a site in the capital of Germany, Berlin.

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International Dialogue

For over 50 years, the Körper Foundation has been committed to international understanding and dialogue across political, national and religious boundaries. It helps to overcome the absence of discussion, to build bridges and to initiate debate.

The foundation strengthens constructive dialogue with dialogue formats, competitions, encounters and networks – open-ended, on equal terms and transparently. In doing so, it focuses on diversity. In keeping with the motto “Talk to, not about each other” the goal is to bring as many of the relevant actors to the table as possible. The Körper Foundation sheds light on the historical aspects of current conflicts and highlights perspectives for overcoming them. It examines different identities and promotes a culture of mutual recognition. It sounds out the scope for political action and shows practically orientated ways of working together. In this way the Körper Foundation contributes to the identification of common values and interests and to the building of trust.

The target groups of the Körper Foundation are social thought leaders, (foreign)political decision-makers and multipliers of international understanding. It places particular emphasis on strengthening the capacity for dialogue of decision-makers in the next generation. The programmes of the Körper Foundation concentrate geographically on Eastern Europe and the role of Russia in the European context, as well as the regional conflicts in the Middle East and China as a global player.

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