

Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy

Topline results from rounds 6 and 10
of the European Social Survey

ESS Topline
Results Series

Issue

13

Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy: Topline results from rounds 6 and 10 of the European Social Survey

Message from the Director

The health of democracy has come into question in recent years. The rise of populism in many countries and growing international crises - including climate change and immigration - mean democratic institutions are under considerable pressure. But has this led to a fundamental breakdown in public trust in and support for democracy?

We are delighted to be able to shed some light on this very important issue in our latest report and to provide reliable data that contrasts with media speculation.

Our most recent dataset allows us to assess whether public attitudes towards the importance and national effectiveness of different aspects of democracy have remained stable or changed over almost a decade.

In Round 6 (2012/13) of the European Social Survey, we included around 30 questions on democracy for the first time. This module was successfully proposed by a team led by Hanspeter Kriesi (University of Zurich) and was analysed for our September 2014 report: [Europeans' Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy](#).

One of Kriesi's team members at the time was Mónica Ferrín Pereira (now of the Universidade da Coruña), who led a new team who successfully applied to revisit many of the original questions in Round 10 (2020-22) of our survey.

The latest iteration of our survey was perhaps the most challenging as it coincided with national measures to help prevent the spread of Coronavirus.

This meant that our fieldwork period was extended, and nine countries were forced to interview respondents using only self-completion methods (online and postal questionnaires). It is, therefore, worth noting that care should be taken when comparing data collected in different modes (please see our [note on ESS Round 10 data releases](#)).

I am particularly thankful to all our incredible national teams who managed to collect survey data in the most trying of circumstances.

I am also thankful to the team who applied and successfully implemented the Round 6 module, and those involved in proposing and eventually fielding the repeat module.

This includes, of course, the authors of this report, the members of the questionnaire design team and everyone at the ESS Core Scientific Team (CST) who helped ensure this module was fielded to the highest possible standards.

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ESS ERIC Director
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The authors were members of the Questionnaire Design Team (QDT) that developed this repeat module on democracy. Other QDT members were: Hanspeter Kriesi (European University Institute) and Levente Litvay (Central European University)

Introduction

In the last decade, European democracies have witnessed multiple crises, ranging from the Euro crisis and Syrian refugee crisis to the COVID-19 pandemic. With the rise of populism, new political parties could mobilise against established ones and have reshaped party systems in numerous countries, drawing on resentment and discontent with crisis management. Exacerbated pressures on democratic governments at both the national and European level must be assumed to also affect what citizens expect of democracy and how they evaluate it. Round 10 (2020-22) of the ESS repeats the democracy module first fielded in Round 6 (2012/13) and provides us with insights on change and stability in citizens' understandings and evaluations of democracy in times of crisis.

The repeat module will enable a better understanding of the way in which the multiple crises of the last decade have impacted Europeans' attitudes to democracy. We assume that citizens' attitudes are a significant factor for democracy's resilience under pressure. It will thus be important to see whether, and to what degree, frustration with government performance results in more negative evaluations of democracy or even a loss of support for central democratic principles. Whether European democracies can be said to be in greater trouble now than they were

in 2012/13 is not left for academics alone to decide, but ultimately also depends on their citizens' verdict. Using the established set of indicators aimed at capturing the meaning Europeans attach to the concept of democracy, as well as their views on democratic performance in their own country, findings from the repeat module will be relevant for public as much as academic debates.

Round 10 of the European Social Survey was conducted in 31 countries between September 2020 and August 2022. Even under the restrictive conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, 22 countries could conduct face-to-face interviews, while nine countries decided to switch to a self-completion fieldwork approach. Given that the pandemic and its political management must be expected to influence political attitudes, the longer duration of the fieldwork period and exact timing of fieldwork in individual countries must be taken into consideration when interpreting the data.

Moreover, the different social situation in self-completion and face-to-face interviews must be taken into account. Particular care is required when comparing results from 2012/13 and 2020-22 for countries with different access modes in the two rounds, given that the access mode can affect response behavior, for example through social desirability bias.

This report presents key findings for the majority of participating countries (30 countries in total), focusing for purposes of comparison on those that have participated in both rounds 6 and 10, and including: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro,

Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Given that these countries differ in terms of democratic performance and vary with regard to the severity of both the Coronavirus and economic crises, the new data enable more thorough investigation of democratic support under stress.

Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy: Measuring Europeans views and evaluations of democracy

Numerous surveys have shown support for democracy to be consistently high not only in liberal democracies, but also in authoritarian regimes. These days, democracy is an approval concept with almost exclusively positive connotations - almost all political parties and actors, as well as citizens themselves, describe themselves and want to be viewed as 'good democrats'. At the same time, democracy is also a contested concept: people disagree about how to weight and prioritise democratic principles, and about how these should be institutionalised.

Understanding citizens' democratic aspirations - what they expect of democracy or how they view it - and their assessments of democratic performance - how they evaluate democracy in their own country - therefore requires a multi-dimensional approach. Both the first module on democracy in Round 6 and this repeat module go beyond a minimalist liberal-electoral model of democracy and measure support for electoral, liberal, social, direct and populist models.

Based on the theoretical assumption that alternative, although not necessarily mutually exclusive, models of democracy are held by citizens, we assess attitudes to each of them.

The liberal model captures liberal and electoral dimensions of democracy and constitutes the core of any proceduralist understanding of democracy. Whereas freedom of the press, respect for minority rights and the rule of law refer to citizens' protection from the government, competitive elections, decision-making by national governments, accountability and responsiveness concern the electoral process and thus citizens' positive participation rights. Social-democratic, direct and populist models of democracy partly expand on and partly diverge from the liberal democratic model.

The social democratic model views substantive equality in income distribution and the protection from poverty as necessary components of democracy and can thus be viewed as expanding on the liberal model. The direct model partly diverges from

the representative understanding of democracy entailed in the liberal model by highlighting the importance of citizens having the final say on important matters in referendums. Finally, the populist model of democracy is clearly opposed to the liberal model in that it is based on an anti-elitist and anti-pluralist understanding of democracy

according to which the will of the people should prevail over liberal rights and constitutional precautions. Items measuring support for a populist model of democracy were added in the repeat module in order to capture effects of an increased 'supply' of populist parties and candidates in the last decade on citizens' attitudes to democracy.

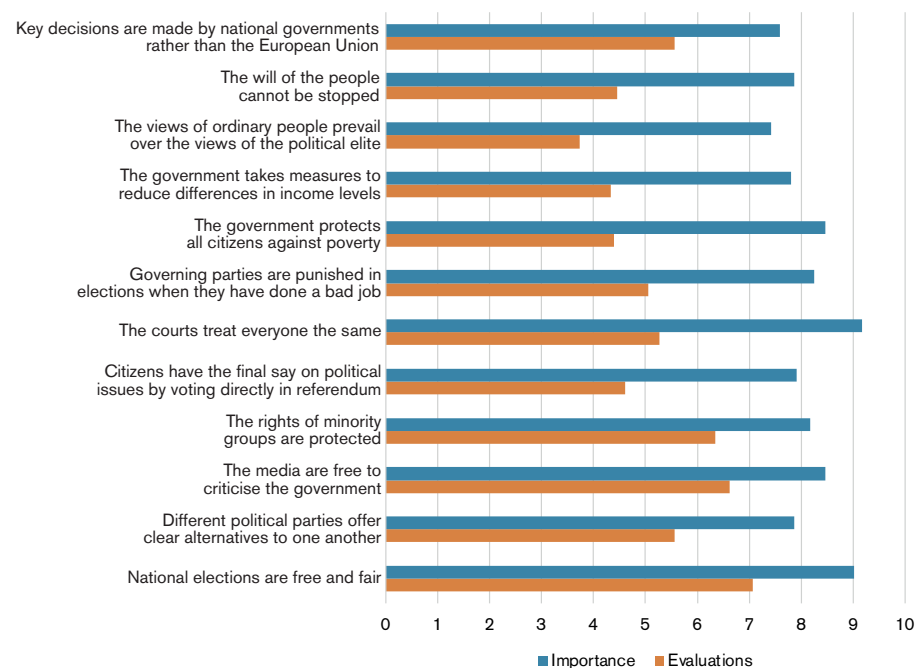
Table 1. Models of democracy and their dimensions

LIBERAL MODEL	
Competition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiated offer • Free and fair elections
Vertical accountability (retrospective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governing parties punished in elections for bad job
Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should change / stick to decisions in response to public opinion*
Freedom – freedom of the press	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media free to criticize the government
Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights of minority groups respected
Rule of law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courts treat everyone the same
SOCIAL DEMOCRACY MODEL	
Equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government protects citizens against poverty • Government takes measures to reduce differences in income levels
DIRECT MODEL	
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens have final say by voting directly in referendums
POPULIST MODEL	
Anti-Elitism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views of ordinary people prevail over elite
Unrestricted popular sovereignty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will of the people cannot be stopped
MULTILEVEL MODEL	
Multi-level democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key decisions made by national governments rather than EU

For each of the sub-dimensions of the four models of democracy, two questions were posed to respondents, distinguishing citizens' normative aspirations and their evaluations of democracy in their own country. On 0-10 scales, respondents were thus asked in a first question to rate how important each component is to democracy, and then in a second question to rate to what extent this component is realized in their own country.

For the responsiveness dimension (marked with asterisk* in table 1), a different measurement strategy was applied to capture the trade-off between responsive and responsible government inherent in this sub-dimension. The analyses that follow provide an overview of citizens' understandings and evaluations of democracy in 2020-22 and show changes in both between 2012/13 and 2020-22, zooming in on a set of items with particularly significant changes that can elucidate the effects of multiple crises on citizens' attitudes to democracy.

Figure 1. Democratic views and evaluations in 2020-22



Source: European Social Survey Round 10, 2020; post-stratification weights are used; questionnaire self-completion countries were: Austria, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden.

Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy: Europeans' Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy

Have the multiple crises of the last decade affected Europeans' support for and understandings of democracy? Have they become less supportive of democracy itself or are they merely disappointed by its performance? To begin with, support for democracy as a regime remains strong in Europe. As in Round 6, agreement with the statement that *it is important to live in a country governed democratically* is above 8 on a 0-10 scale in the majority of countries. But citizens supportive of the general idea of democracy can attach different meanings to the concept. Figure 1 shows the mean importance different elements of democracy have for citizens (blue) as well as their evaluation of the degree to which democracy in their own country meets these expectations (orange).

Starting with the two items referring to the core of liberal democracy, we see that mean support for *free and fair elections* and *courts treating everyone the same* (rule of law) is very high with 9.0 and 9.2 on the 0-10 scale. The almost unanimous support for these core attributes of democracy shows that Europeans do indeed have a shared understanding of democracy. At the same time, their expectations clearly go beyond the core of liberal democracy and tend to be more expansive. Support for each of the individual attributes is well over 7.0 on average. Importance attached to the elements of liberal democracy is clearly highest (mean above 8.0), but elements related to social and direct models of democracy are also considered quite important. Elements of

a populist model of democracy tend to be viewed as least important, even if in most countries a majority does support them.

Turning to the way citizens' views of democracy, or their democratic aspirations, compare to their evaluations of democracy in their own country, we see a clear mismatch between the two: for most respondents, democratic practice fails to realise elements of democracy that are important to them. This gap between democratic aspirations (what citizens expect of democracy) and evaluations of democracy (what citizens get from it) has been termed the 'democratic deficit' by Pippa Norris (2011) and may be expected to cause disillusionment and protest. However, the gap is larger and more concerning for some elements than for others. Regarding some core elements of liberal democracy (free and fair elections, minority rights and free media), mean evaluations remain clearly above 5.0. For the *courts treating everyone the same* in one's own country, a mean evaluation of 5.2 is worrying. Moreover, the mean evaluation for this core element of the rule of law and liberal democracy has deteriorated significantly between 2012/13 and 2020-22, especially in many eastern European countries.

Overall, evaluations are most critical where elements of social, direct and populist models of democracy are concerned. Interestingly, the mismatch between mean importance and mean evaluation is highest for elements that are also considered less important. In some

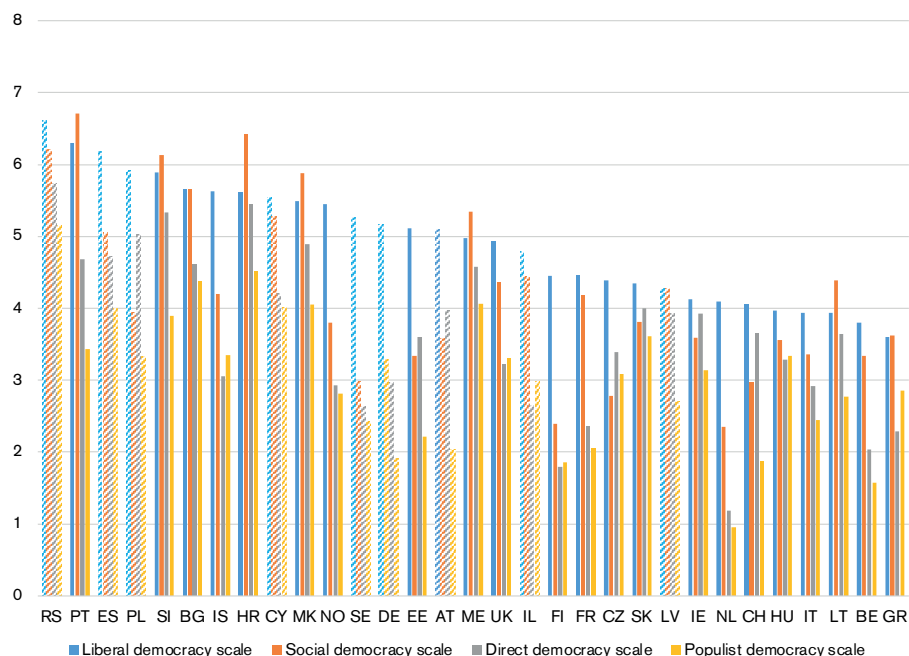
cases, such as *citizens having a final say by voting in referendums*, the evaluation simply reflects institutional reality in their own country. For other elements, evaluations seem more subjective and sensitive to recent developments and policy measures.

Turning to the support for the four different views or models of democracy, figure 2 shows differences in democratic aspirations across European countries. The importance scales measuring support for different models were built on the basis of a Mokken scale analysis (Kriesi, Saris, and Moncagatta 2016), which revealed good scaling properties

for the four models introduced in Table 1 above. The liberal democracy scale is composed of all items included under the liberal model there; the same applies to the social, direct and populist scales. The scale value is the result of summing the scores across all respective items and dividing them by the number of items composing the scale. The evaluation scales for the four models are built in the same way.

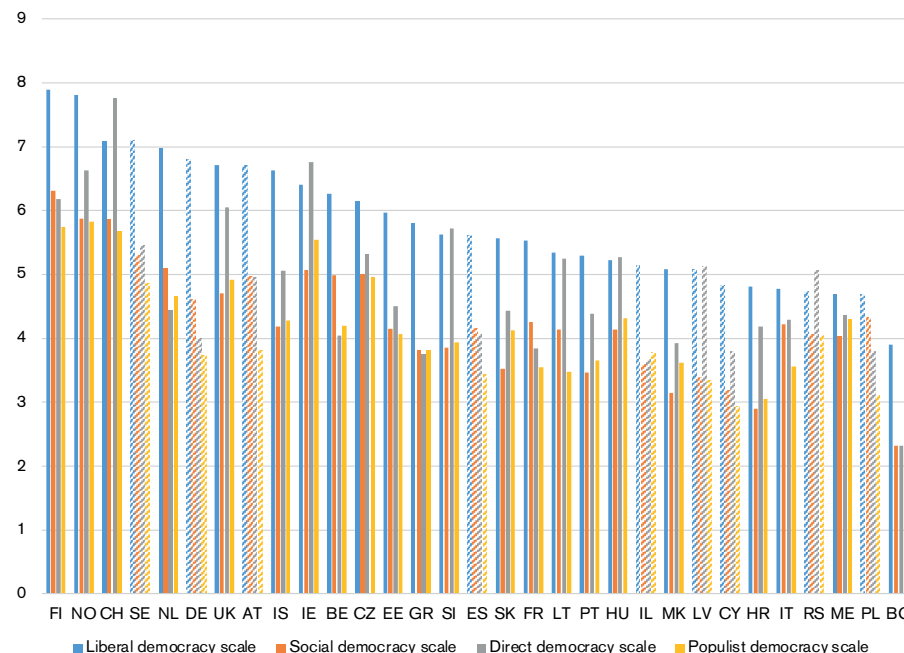
In most countries, we see consistently high support for both liberal and social models of democracy. While support for the liberal model is highest in the majority of countries, several countries

Figure 2. The four views of democracy (scales) in 2020-22



Source: European Social Survey Round 10, 2020; post-stratification weights are used; questionnaire self-completion countries were: Austria, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden.

Figure 3. Evaluations of democracy (scales) in 2020-22



Source: European Social Survey Round 10, 2020; post-stratification weights are used; questionnaire self-completion countries were: Austria, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden.

display stronger support for social democracy. Liberal democracy seems most dominant (having the strongest lead over alternative models) in Europe's wealthiest democracies, including those with a generous welfare state (Norway, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Netherlands and Sweden). Support for direct and populist models of democracy seems highest in the South-East of Europe (Serbia, Bulgaria and Croatia). Overall, results reveal considerable and interesting variation in the way Europeans in different countries view democracy.

Considering citizens' evaluations of democracy, Figure 3 shows mean scores

for each of four models across countries. The most positive evaluations of democratic performance can be found in Finland, Norway and Switzerland, where across the four models, mean evaluations are above 5.0 - that is, citizens on average consider them realised rather than not in their own country. At the bottom end, we find Montenegro, Poland and Bulgaria, where mean values across the four models are consistently below 5.0 and, in the case of Bulgaria, even below 4.0. In the majority of countries, liberal elements are evaluated most positively.

Evaluations of direct democracy are rather positive in some countries too.

In Switzerland, where direct democracy is strongly institutionalised, citizens apparently appreciate the degree to which *citizens have the final say in referendums*. Evaluations of direct democracy are also positive in the United Kingdom and Ireland, although the specific experiences with it in the two countries - the Brexit vote in the UK and constitutional referenda that, among other things, removed prohibition on divorce and abortion in Ireland, were quite different. Slovenia and Hungary, where evaluations regarding the direct model are quite positive as well, have also recently conducted national referendums on salient issues. However, the relatively favorable evaluations of the direct model might be due to the fact that the evaluation scale only contains a single item.

Given the rise of populist parties and candidates in many European countries over the last decade, it is interesting to

see to what degree citizens themselves view a populist model of democracy as being realised in their own country. The picture in Round 10 is pretty clear in this regard: in most countries, respondents on average do not evaluate democracy as meeting standards for a populist democracy. The only three countries where mean evaluations are over 5.0 are the same in which evaluations were generally the most sanguine: Finland, Norway and Switzerland. While populist parties were represented in parliament in all three countries and part of governing coalitions, neither country had a government dominated by populists. Reconsidering the items included in the scale for the populist model, that *the will of the people cannot be stopped* and that *the views of ordinary people prevail over those of the elite*, it becomes clear that both conditions may, according to citizen evaluations, obtain in a country without its government qualifying as populist.

Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy: Change and Stability in Europeans' Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy

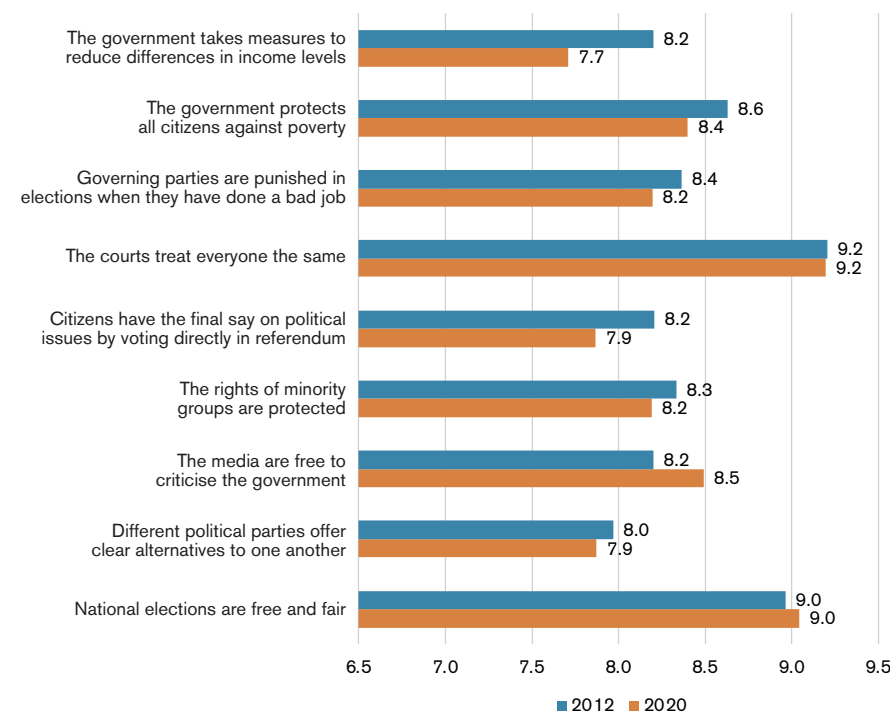
Turning to the question whether Europeans' understandings and evaluations of democracy are subject to change in a decade of multiple crises, Figure 4 shows changes in citizens' democratic aspirations, or views of democracy, between 2012/13 and 2020-22. Overall, changes in the importance attributed to elements of democracy seem relatively small. However, the cross-country means are likely to mask cross-country variation, which is why we will take a closer look at individual elements

below.

A first glance at the average importance assigned to elements of democracy shows that for the core elements of liberal democracy, free and fair elections and the rule of law (the courts treat everyone the same), no change can be observed: Europeans remain as supportive of both in 2020-22 as they were in 2012/13.

More change can be observed for elements of a social democratic model of democracy: In 2012/13, participants

Figure 4. Average importance by year/round

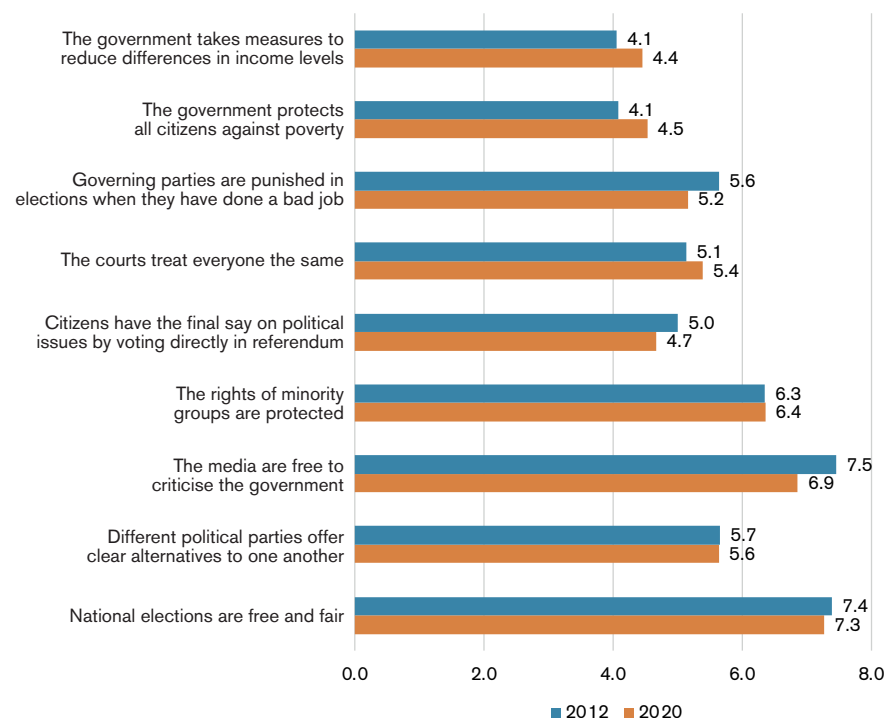


Source: European Social Survey Round 10, 2020; post-stratification weights are used; questionnaire self-completion countries were: Austria, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden.

assigned more importance to the *government protecting all citizens against poverty* and *taking measures to reduce differences in income levels* than in 2020-22. These changes can probably be explained with differences in economic context: Round 6 was fielded at the height of an economic recession and at a time of severe austerity measures in many countries. By contrast, Round 10 took place under the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, to which many governments and the European Union

responded with measures to countervail its economic consequences. Change can also be observed for aspirations to direct democracy and media freedom, items discussed in more detail below.

Figure 5 shows changes in citizens' evaluations of democracy between the two rounds. Again, the changes we see are overall rather small. In general, changes in evaluations tend to occur for the same items where change in the attached importance could be seen. Interestingly, the elements of social

Figure 5. Average evaluations year/round

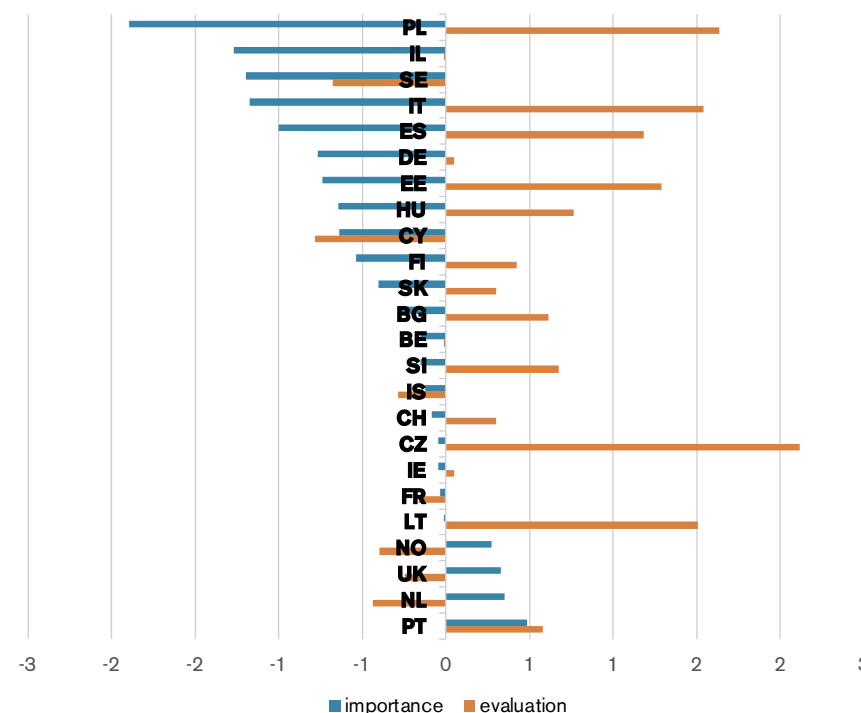
Source: European Social Survey Round 10, 2020; post-stratification weights are used; questionnaire self-completion countries were: Austria, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden.

democracy, which have diminished in importance, were evaluated significantly more positively. A decline in evaluations occurs for the *media being free to criticize the government* and for *governments being punished in elections when they have done a bad job* (retrospective accountability) items. Given that both are core elements of liberal democracy, this development warrants further scrutiny.

Since cross-country averages are likely to mask relevant cross-country variation, we now want to draw attention to the

individual items that display the most interesting pattern of change. Figure 6 shows changes in aspirations and evaluations regarding *the government taking measures to reduce differences in income levels*.

As noted above, the different economic circumstances under which rounds 6 and 10 were fielded account for some of the differences observed here. Whereas the recession and the salience of growing inequality in public discourses at the beginning of the decade likely contributed to stronger aspirations for

Figure 6. The government takes measures to reduce differences in income levels

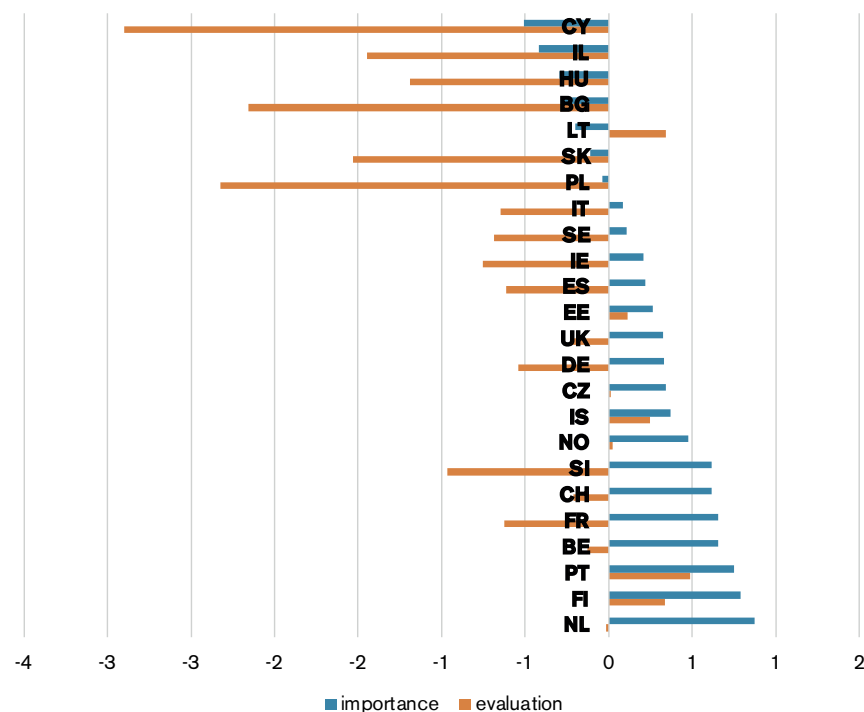
Source: European Social Survey Round 10, 2020; post-stratification weights are used; questionnaire self-completion countries were: Austria, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden.

social democracy in 2012/13, measures adopted to counteract the pandemic's effects on the economy clearly have an effect on the more positive evaluations in 2020-22. Looking at individual countries, this positive effect on evaluations fails to occur only in traditionally generous welfare states like Norway and the Netherlands, probably as the result of a ceiling effect.

The only element that has in most countries gained in the importance citizens attach to it is the media being free to criticize the government, shown

in Figure 7. This higher awareness for freedom of speech, and especially freedom of the press, is likely to reflect discussions about media change and ownership, including the increased role of social media, and concern about reactionary backlash movements targeting media and journalists. The more negative evaluations of media freedom may in part be accounted for by citizens' greater scrutiny.

In the face of the pandemic, critical and balanced information and reporting came to be viewed as particularly important

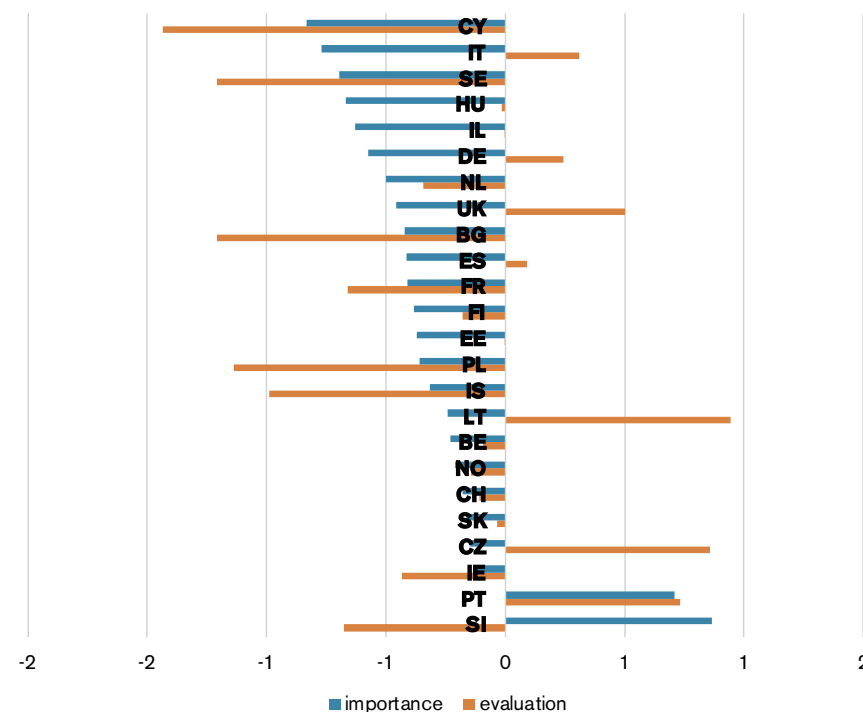
Figure 7. The media are free to criticize the government

Source: European Social Survey Round 10, 2020; post-stratification weights are used; questionnaire self-completion countries were: Austria, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden.

and sometimes lacking. Moreover, discussions around an alleged 'cancel culture' have probably given rise to more sceptical attitudes. At the same time, changes probably also reflect a perception of authoritarian trends in countries like Hungary and Poland, and growing concern about Russian attempts to influence public opinion in Europe. A pessimistic interpretation of the comparison of aspirations and evaluations of media freedom across countries would highlight the fact that more critical evaluations are generally not accompanied by an increase, but by

a decrease in the importance attached to it. Only countries that, according to expert opinion, have not experienced democratic backsliding or curtailment of liberal rights display consistently higher averages in the importance attached to media freedom as a core element of liberal democracy.

Finally, significant change can also be observed in support for a direct model of democracy or the importance citizens attach to having the final say in referendums, shown in Figure 8. In all countries except Serbia and Portugal,

Figure 8. Citizens have the final say on political issues by voting directly in referendums

Source: European Social Survey Round 10, 2020; post-stratification weights are used; questionnaire self-completion countries were: Austria, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden.

less importance is attached to direct democracy in 2020-22 than it was in 2012/13. In many countries where the decrease in aspirations to direct democracy was particularly strong, the evaluation of direct democracy in their own country has improved. This effect is strongest in the United Kingdom, where it seems to be an obvious consequence of the Brexit vote.

But across Europe, the detrimental consequences of the Brexit referendum for the UK economy have been witnessed and may have caused doubts about

the promises of direct democracy (see Steiner and Landwehr 2022). Salient secession referenda in Scotland and Catalonia may also have contributed to the impression that citizens having the final say in referenda may have severe and problematic consequences for democracy. The direction of change for evaluations varies across countries where direct democracy is concerned and partly seems to reflect opportunities citizens had to vote in referenda.

Understandings and Evaluations of Democracy: Conclusion

Overall, results from our repeat module on democracy in the latest wave of the ESS show that support for core elements of liberal democracy remains strong among Europeans. In a decade of multiple crises that may have been expected to cause growing dissatisfaction with democratic performance - or even disillusionment with democracy itself - there is little in the new data to indicate either. As in 2012/13, support for liberal and social-democratic models of democracy was strongest in most countries, with the liberal model being dominant in the wealthiest countries.

By comparison, support for direct and populist models of democracy, which diverge from or even oppose the liberal model, is lower, albeit still considerable. The populist model was added in the repeat module, which is why a comparison between 2012/13 and 2020-22 is not possible. Both items that were used to capture populist understandings of democracy, referring to the unobstructed will of the people and the views of ordinary people always prevailing over those of elites, have mean values of support in the upper quartile of the scale. However, this support does not come at the price of dwindling support for liberal democracy.

The 'democratic deficit' or gap between democratic aspirations and evaluations that already became apparent in Round 6 (see Ferrin and Kriesi 2016) could be replicated in the repeat module. Across the different dimensions, democratic

performance fails to match citizens' aspirations. At the same time, the comparison of evaluations in 2012/13 and 2020-22 does not show the consistently more negative evaluations that might have been expected in the face of multiple crises.

Instead, the picture is a more nuanced one, with more negative evaluations in some and considerable improvement in other dimensions. In particular, performance in dimensions associated with the social-democratic model was evaluated better in 2020-22 than in 2012/13 - possibly an effect of many governments' efforts to counteract economic effects of the pandemic. Regarding the populist model of democracy, the gap is particularly large, with citizens on average evaluating democracy in their own country as a little populist.

In sum, we see that in the face of multiple crises, European citizens remain strongly committed to the core elements of liberal democracy. Given authoritarian challenges and attempts to undermine public support for liberalism and democracy, the stability of support for democracy in a decade of multiple crises is reassuring. Even if the deficit between aspirations and evaluations persists and remains an ailment to be addressed in public debates and with institutional adaptations and reforms, attitudes predominantly supportive of liberal democracy are an important factor for the resilience of European democracies.

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ESS data and findings

Find out more about the European Social Survey

The European Social Survey (ESS) has undertaken 483,089 interviews since Round 1 was fielded in 2002/03. All the documentation and data - collected over the subsequent waves up to and including Round 10 (2020-22) - is available to download or view via the ESS Data Portal.

The ESS became a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC) in 2013, meaning all participants contribute to the budget of the project. During Round 10, 31 participating countries deposited data, including 27 ERIC Members. This is the highest number of members of any ERIC.

Research has found that 5,966 English-language academic publications include substantial primary analysis of our data (2003-21).

The ESS was the first social science project to win the Descartes Prize in 2005, awarded by the European Union.

The ESS was named on the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) Roadmap (2006, 2008, 2010) and a Landmark infrastructure (2016, 2018, 2021).

The ESS was given the Lijphart/Przeworski/Verba (LPV) Dataset Award in 2020 by the Comparative Politics Section of the American Political Science Association (APSA).

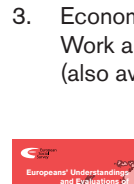
Publications

Other issues in the Topline Results series include:

1. Trust in Justice (also available in Croatian and Finnish)



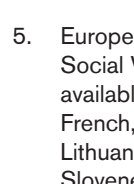
2. Welfare Attitudes in Europe (also available in Croatian, Cypriot Greek, Turkish and Ukrainian)



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, German, Italian, Lithuanian and Slovak)



5. Europeans' Personal and Social Wellbeing (also available in Albanian, French, Hungarian, Italian, Lithuanian, Russian, Slovak, Slovene and Swedish)



6. Social Inequalities in Health and their Determinants (also available in Danish, French, German, Irish Gaelic, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovene and Spanish)



7. Attitudes towards Immigration and their Antecedents (also available in Finnish, French, Georgian, German, Hebrew, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Slovene and Spanish)

8. The Past, Present and Future of European Welfare Attitudes (also available in Bulgarian, French, German, Icelandic, Lithuanian and Spanish)



9. European Attitudes towards Climate Change and Energy (also available in French, German, Icelandic, Lithuanian, Slovak and Spanish)



10. Justice and Fairness in Europe (also available in Bulgarian, French, German, Italian and Lithuanian)



11. The Timing of Life (also available in Lithuanian)

Measuring and Reporting on Europeans' Wellbeing: Findings from the ESS (also available in Estonian)



Findings Booklets

The following compilations of findings have been published and are available for download. These include summaries of several articles, authored by external academics using ESS data.

Exploring public attitudes, informing public policy: Selected findings from the first three rounds



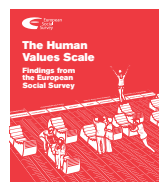
Exploring public attitudes, informing public policy: Selected findings from the first five rounds (also available in Bosnian, Latvian and Luxembourgish)

Exploring public attitudes, informing public policy: Selected findings from the first seven rounds (also available in Bulgarian)



Exploring public attitudes, informing public policy: Selected findings from the first nine rounds

The Human Values Scale: Findings from the European Social Survey



About the ESS

ESS is an academically-driven survey that has been conducted across Europe since 2002.

Undertaken every two years with newly selected, cross-sectional samples, the full dataset contains the results of over 475,000 completed interviews.

The European Social Survey has been a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC) since 2013.

ESS core topics asked in every round:

- Ancestry
- Crime and justice
- Democracy and government
- Education
- Employment
- Financial circumstances
- Household circumstances
- Immigration
- Health and wellbeing
- Institutional and social trust

- Media/Internet use
- National and ethnic identity
- Other socio-demographics
- Perceived discrimination
- Political affiliation, interest and participation
- Religion
- Social exclusion
- Values

Additionally, two topics are explored in more depth in every round, chosen by the ESS following a competition open to all academics.

31 countries participated in Round 10 of the ESS, fielded in 2020-22.

Members: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. **Observer:** Switzerland. **Round 10 Guests:** Greece, Montenegro and North Macedonia.

Multi-national advisory groups to the ESS ERIC General Assembly are the Methods Advisory Board (MAB), Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) and Finance Committee (FINCOM). The ESS ERIC Headquarters are located at City, University of London.

The ESS ERIC Core Scientific Team in Round 10 comprised: ESS ERIC HQ, City, University of London (UK), Centerdata (Netherlands), GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (Germany), Sikt - Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research (Norway), SCP - The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (Netherlands), Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Spain), University of Essex (UK) and University of Ljubljana (Slovenia).

The National Coordinators' (NC) Forum involves national teams from all participating countries.

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