



ANNUAL SURVEY REPORT:
BELARUS

4th Wave (Spring 2019)

OPEN Neighbourhood —
Communicating for a stronger partnership:
connecting with citizens across the Eastern
Neighbourhood

MAY 2019

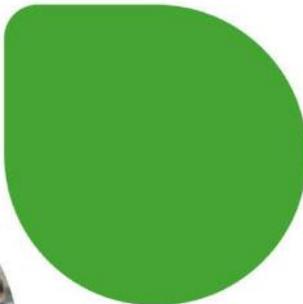
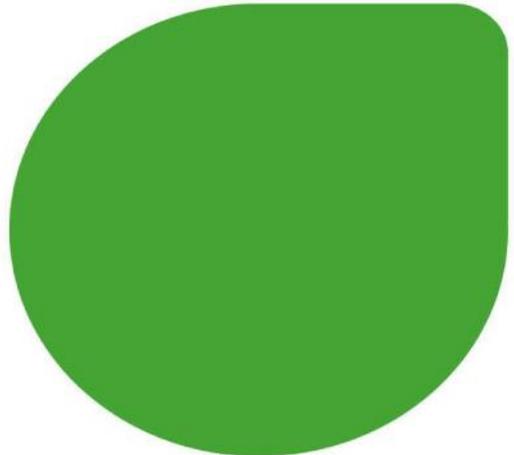


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*The surveys have been carried out in the six Eastern Partner countries by ACT LLC
and their network partners*

1. Background

Between February and March 2019, a fourth wave of annual surveys was carried out across the six Eastern Partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine). The research was conducted within the framework of the EU-funded 'OPEN Neighbourhood — Communicating for a stronger partnership: connecting with citizens across the Eastern Neighbourhood' ('**EU NEIGHBOURS east**') project.

The **EU NEIGHBOURS east** project aims to increase the understanding of EU support in the Eastern Partner (EaP) countries through improved communication. The **overall objective** of the project is to contribute to the improvement of public perception of the EU, as well as to a better understanding of European policies and their impact through the regional and bilateral EU support and cooperation programmes in the EaP countries.

The project develops information and communication materials, carries out public diplomacy, awareness-raising and information campaigns, and assesses the perception of the EU and its support through opinion polling and media monitoring.

The purpose of the annual surveys is to investigate the opinion and the level of information that citizens of the EaP countries have on the EU in general and, in particular, on EU-funded cooperation and development programmes/projects. In order to monitor changes over time, the surveys are being carried out annually from 2016 until 2020.

This document presents the results of the **4rd wave of annual surveys** (spring 2019) conducted in **Belarus**¹ and is organised around four main sections:

- **General perceptions of the EU**
This section looks at how citizens perceive the EU's image, the relationship between their country and the EU, their awareness of the EU's financial support and their opinion of its benefits, as well as their level of trust towards the EU, also compared with the role of other international institutions. During the third wave, a new set of questions that touched upon perceived myths about the EU, was also added, in order to gather greater insights on how the EU is perceived by citizens.
- **Sources of information**
This section looks at the main sources of information in the country, both in the national language and other foreign languages. Specific focus is placed on EU-related information, programmes financed by the EU and its institutional communication instruments.
- **Country evaluation and future expectations**
This section provides an assessment of how citizens view their country's and their personal future. Specific focus is placed on current functioning of democracy and most pressing concerns.
- **Profiling attitudes towards the EU**
This section is dedicated to profiling citizens with a positive and a neutral stance towards the EU. Attitudes are profiled against a comprehensive set of indicators, such as the main socio-demographic characteristics, passive and active exposure to EU-related information, awareness and effectiveness of EU's financial support, level of trust towards the EU and other foreign institutions, perceptions of the country's and personal future and main concerns, and common beliefs about the EU.

All sections, together with an analysis of the results of the 4th wave of the survey, also provide comparisons between the findings of the 2018, 2017 and 2016 surveys where relevant.

¹ A similar report has been produced for each Eastern partner country. In addition, a macro-area/regional overview report that compares the results across the region is available.

2. Research methodology in brief

The survey was conducted in February - March 2019, following the same methodology adopted in the previous rounds of data collection (spring 2018, 2017 and 2016): 1,000 face-to-face interviews were carried out and respondents were randomly selected according to the sampling strategy described below. In order to estimate the characteristics of the target population (i.e. general population aged 15 and over and living in the country), the sampling weights were calculated by applying a specifically designed estimation procedure.

Sampling strategy

The survey used a two-stage sample design, with settlements as primary sampling units (PSUs) and individuals as secondary units.

In the first stage, the sample was composed of 30 units (cities/towns) and stratified by unit size, expressed in terms of population, level of urbanisation and geographical area. Three groups of settlements² and three areas³ were used for a total of nine strata. Within each stratum, three or four sample units were randomly selected, with the probability of their selection proportional to their size. A compromise between an equal allocation and a proportional allocation was applied in order to distribute the secondary sampling units (1,000 individuals) by strata. In each selected settlement, a minimum of 20 interviews were carried out. The additional interviews that were carried out were distributed proportionally to the PSU's size.

The second-stage sample was also stratified. In this case, gender and age⁴ were considered for a total of six strata. In each selected settlement, secondary sampling units were distributed proportionally among strata.

The individuals to be interviewed were selected randomly, according to the random walk⁵ principle.

Estimation phase

An estimation procedure was carried out in order to estimate the characteristics of the target population from the survey respondents. The technique used for the construction of the survey estimator (i.e. sampling weights) was based on the predictive approach to regression estimator. In particular, a calibration estimator was built based on the general category of model-assisted estimators (Deville and Särndal 1992). The procedure included the computation of a sampling design weight for each sampled respondent by calculating the inclusion probability of both primary and secondary sampling units (i.e. settlements and individuals) and the calibration of the sampling design weights to known population totals. The calibration variables were the same as those used in the previous wave (settlement size, gender, age, employment status, geographical area, education level, religious faith and mother tongue).

² Groups of settlements: 1) Small settlements (less than 20,000 inhabitants); 2) Medium-sized settlements (20,000-150,000 inhabitants); 3) Large settlements (above 150,000 inhabitants) / Capital.

³ Geographical areas: 1) East (Mahilioŭ, Homiel'); 2) Centre (Viciebsk, Minsk city, Minsk region); West (Brest, Hrodna).

⁴ Age groups: 1) 15-34 years; 2) 35-54 years; 3) 55 or more years.

⁵ This technique is based on very precise instructions for the interviewers. First, a starting point should be selected for each cluster. Second, it is necessary to define a step. A step can be defined according to the size of the cluster. The third important consideration is the movement route. Each interviewer should have detailed instructions on how to follow the route in rural settlements and urban areas. Each interviewer should begin from the starting point, according to the predefined step size and route, and contact a total predefined number of households.

3. Survey findings

3.1. Executive summary

General perceptions of the EU

- **Belarusians are well aware of the European Union – the share of citizens who have no opinion or have never heard of it is 2%, the lowest figure since 2016.** Nevertheless, the **majority of the population continues to maintain a largely neutral stance towards EU (53%)** and ‘neutrality’ is even more widespread than in 2018 (up 10%). Over one in three citizens have a positive view (36%).
- The ‘cautious’ attitude of Belarusians can be related to the **value which they rate most important – ‘peace, security and stability’**, chosen by most of citizens for the fourth year in a row (60%). Nevertheless 46% of citizens ‘strongly’ or ‘very strongly’ link it with the European Union, suggesting a positive view towards more formal progress on closer integration with the EU. The democratic climate prevailing in the EU is also well perceived by Belarusians, with between 60% and 70% of citizens ‘strongly’ or ‘very strongly’ linking the European Union with most democratic values.
- **Around one in two Belarusians tend to trust the European Union (51%)**, the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) (48%) and the United Nations (UN) (47%). The NATO gathers a much lower level of trust (19%) – reflecting the more cautious attitude of citizens over NATO’s operations in the region.

EU relations with Belarus and awareness of EU financial support

- **Compared to 2018, more citizens positively acknowledge the relations between their country and the EU and currently 62% the population describe them as ‘fairly good’ (56%, up 10%) or ‘very good’ (6%, up 2%).** However, compared to last year, less citizens acknowledge the EU’s financial support to Belarus (37%, down 7%) and rate it as effective (41% of Belarusians aware of it, down 5%), possibly due to the slow progress on the consolidation of strategic relations and partnership with the EU, which, in turn, affects the launch of approved projects and programmes in the country.
- As in previous waves, the **most well-known EU-funded programmes in Belarus** relate to the field of **education** (52%). In addition to implementing the roadmap for higher education reform in line with the Bologna Process, Belarus participates in Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus, Jean Monnet projects and Horizon 2020. Around one in two citizens also mentioned programmes in the field of **culture** (48%, up 20 percentage points).
- As in 2018, 60% of the population said that the Russian Federation financially sustains Belarus ‘more’ than the EU and 25% that the support provided by the two organisations is almost ‘the same’. Conversely, over 60% of the population is convinced that the other organisations – such as United States, the United Nations and its agencies and the IMF/World Bank provide ‘the same’ or ‘less’ support to Belarus than the EU.
- The main positive effects of the EU’s support are the increase in ‘tourism’ – mentioned by 58% of the population – and ‘trade’ (57%), as well as ‘greater access to products and services’ (54%). **Belarusians would like the EU to strengthen its involvement in favouring ‘economic development’ (50%) and ‘employment opportunities’ in the country.** This finding can be linked both to the perception of the EU enjoying ‘economic prosperity and high standards of living’ and the contextual situation in the country: despite the stabilisation of the Belarusian economy, low economic growth persists and the economy remains vulnerable.

Media usage as sources of information

- **Television continues to be the most popular source of information in Belarus** – only 8% of the population ‘never’ watch it – followed by ‘word of mouth’ – 10% ‘never’ rely on it – and Internet – 26% ‘never’ access it. Other traditional media – such as print media and the radio – remain widely used in the country (66% and 65% of citizens respectively use them) and compete with social networks (64%). The official EU website is hardly ever used – only 11% of Belarusians access it for information, though a 3% increase was recorded.
- **Media in Russian are the most popular media source in the country: nearly all Belarusians – 38% ‘always’, 32% ‘often’ and 21% ‘sometimes’ use national media in Russian, and 70% use foreign media in Russian. In fact, not only Russian is the preferred language for most of the population, but also programmes of the leading Russian broadcasters that are received freely in the country. Around 60% of citizens also use national media in Belarusian – though only 4% ‘always’.** Only one in ten citizens use foreign or national media in other languages (12% and 10% respectively).

Sources of information about the EU

- Slightly **over half of the population (55%) claim to have seen or heard information about the EU in the last three months**, with no change compared to 2018. Passive exposure mostly stems from television (76%), the Internet (32%) and ‘word of mouth’ (18%). Social media and other traditional media provide very low coverage of EU-related information: only one in ten citizens saw or heard information on the European Union through social media (8%), print media (8%) and/or the radio (6%).
- ‘Frequent’ or ‘very frequent’ active exposure to EU-related information is very rare in Belarus and interests only 3% of citizens. If they do access it, they do it only sporadically and even in this case, it is only one in five citizens (20% ‘not very frequently’), with no change compared to 2018.
- **Nearly all individuals who search for information about the EU use Russian (99%).** Only 1% of active citizens used English and no one Belarusian. ‘Active’ citizens seem mostly interested in ‘general information about the EU’ (36%), ‘socio-political’ (34%) and ‘economic news’ (32%). Around one fourth of Belarusians searched for the ‘relations between their country and the EU’ (23%), ‘educational and cultural programmes’ (21%) and the ‘opportunities offered by the European Union’ (19%).
- No change was observed in the rating of EU-related information since 2018. **Positive opinions were recorded with regard of accessibility and user-friendliness from around 90% of active searchers.** Figures for **comprehensiveness were also high (79%)** and citizens seem only slightly more critical in their rating of reliability and trustworthiness, still over two third of citizens provided a positive opinion.

View of Belarus’s current situation

- Citizens’ trust in Belarusians’ public institutions has not changed much since 2018 and remains at moderate levels: **around half of the population trust the Government (56%), the Parliament (53%)** and regional and local authorities (48%). Confidence in political parties is low (32%) – reflecting the widespread lack of trust (53%) in their capability to solve common problems.
- As a result, **most citizens are dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their country (51%, up 4% since 2018)**, with 36% of them ‘not very satisfied’ and 15% ‘not at all satisfied’. Compared to 2018, a small step backwards in the path towards democratic governance was also observed. ‘Lack of corruption’ and ‘equality and social justice’ remain the most critical issues (only 35% and 44% of Belarusians believe these apply to their country), however these were joined at the lowest ranks by ‘freedom of the media’ (47%, down 7%) and freedom of speech (49%, down 4%), reflecting the effects of the increased pressure on the media by national authorities.
- While no change since 2018 was recorded in the attitudes of Belarusians towards their personal future (53% are ‘optimistic’), expectations towards the future of their country are somewhat less positive: 59% of citizens are in fact ‘not optimistic’ (it was 54% last year).

- **The current economic situation and all related issues are in fact the most pressing concerns for citizens.** More specifically, 60% of them mentioned ‘low salaries and pensions’, 44% ‘high prices and taxes’, 40% ‘the economic crisis’, 39% ‘low living standards and poverty’ and 37% ‘unemployment’. This finding can be explained by the contextual situation in the country: despite the stabilisation of the Belarusian economy, low economic growth persists and the economy remains vulnerable.

Profiling attitudes towards the EU: positive versus neutral

- **EU supporters** – around one third of the population (36%, up 2% since 2018) – and ‘neutral’ Belarusians – the largest group (53%, up 10%) – have two very distinct socio-demographic profiles. **The neutral Belarusians** are more commonly found among the following groups: women (57%), the older generation (39%), people with a low level of education (85%), villagers (40%) and residents of the west of the country (28%). Conversely nearly 80% of EU supporters are less than 55, over half are employed/self-employed (60%) and/or live in larger settlements (53%), one third live in the east and one fourth are highly educated (25%).
- ‘Passive’ and ‘active’ exposure to EU-related information is also a strong characterising factor: only 49% of ‘neutral’ Belarusians have seen or heard information about the EU (versus 66% for EU supporters) and only 14% of them have actively looked for it (versus 39%) – only 2% ‘frequently’ (versus 7%). Neutrally-oriented citizens are also more prone to rely on traditional media only (39% versus 23%) and less disposed towards new media (48% versus 69%). Even though three fourths use media in Russian (75%) – one fourth also frequently relies on media in Belarusian (24%), which is slightly more than EU supporters (20%).
- Individuals with a neutral stance are less positive than EU supporters in their assessment of the relations between Belarus and the EU (62% versus 72%) and, especially, in their levels of trust towards the European Union (41% versus 79%). Only 32% of neutrally oriented citizens also acknowledge the EU’s support and only 37% of them consider it effective – versus 49% and 48% of EU supporters.
- Most EU supporters tend to share positive common beliefs on the EU – levels of ‘strong’ agreement varied between 8% and 20% and that of ‘fair’ agreement between 45% and 56% – whereas ‘neutral’ citizens share a ‘somewhat’ negative view. ‘Neutral’ citizens were particularly critical with regard to EU’s commitment in fighting corruption and to its role as a holder of traditional values.
- ‘Neutral’ individuals are slightly less optimistic regarding the future of their country (38%) than EU supporters (42%). The gap is larger when prospects are related to personal future (49% versus 60%). In fact, neutrally oriented citizens tend to share the same concerns on the current economic situation (and all related issues) of EU supporters – such as ‘low salaries and pensions’, ‘high prices and taxes’, ‘the economic crisis’, ‘low living standards and poverty’ and ‘unemployment’. They seem only slightly more concerned about the issue of ‘corruption’ and the absence of ‘rule of law’.

3.2. Perceptions of the European Union

Belarusians are well aware of the European Union (EU) – the share of citizens who have ‘no opinion’ or ‘have never heard of it’ is 2%, the lowest figure since 2016. Nevertheless, the majority of the population continues to maintain a largely neutral stance towards it (53%) and ‘neutrality’ is even more widespread than in 2018 (up 10%). The ‘cautious’ attitude of Belarusians can be related to the desire to maintain ‘peace, security and stability’, the value which they rate as most important (60%). Compared to 2018, more citizens rated positively the relations between their country and the EU (62%, up 12%), although less are aware of its financial support to Belarus (37%, down 7%) and its effectiveness (41% of those aware of it, down 5%), possibly due to the slow progress on the consolidation of strategic relations and partnership with the EU, which, in turn, affects the launch of approved projects and programmes in the country. According to most citizens, the main positive effects of the EU’s support are the increase in ‘tourism’ (58%) and ‘trade’ (57%) and the ‘greater access to products and services’ (54%).

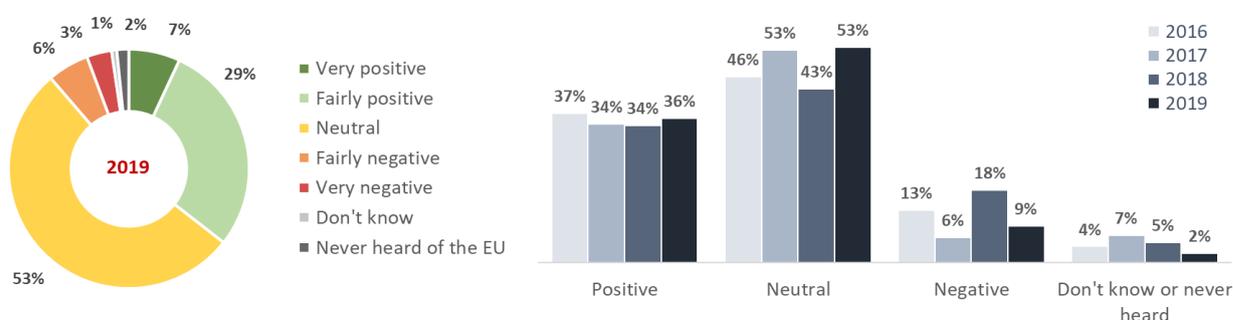
This section looks at how Belarusian citizens perceive the European Union and their opinion on the benefits of the EU’s financial support, also compared with the role of other international institutions.

3.2.1. General perceptions of the EU

Belarusians are well aware of the European Union – the share of citizens who have no opinion or have never heard of it is 2%, the lowest figure since 2016. Nevertheless, the **majority of the population continues to maintain a largely neutral stance towards the EU (53%)**. ‘Neutrality’ is even more widespread than in 2018 (up 10 percentage points) due to a large decrease in negative opinions: currently only around one in ten citizens are negatively oriented (6% ‘fairly negative’ and 3% ‘very negative’) versus around one in three who hold a positive view (29% ‘fairly positive’ and 7% ‘very positive’).

Positive attitudes towards the EU tend to prevail over neutral stances among younger (47% versus 42%), and highly educated individuals (46% versus 42% respectively). On the contrary, older citizens and residents of smaller settlements are the most likely to be neutral (63% and 62% respectively). Males are nearly three times more likely to be negative than females (13 versus 5%). Belarusians supporters of the EU are slightly more likely to be found in the east (40%), whereas the west hosts more ‘indifferent’ citizens (59%) and the north/centre – which includes both Minsk, the capital city, and the surrounding region – a slightly larger share of critics (12%)⁶.

FIGURE 1 – Do you have a ‘very positive’, ‘fairly positive’, ‘neutral’, ‘fairly negative’ or ‘very negative’ image of the European Union? (Q2.1)



The ‘cautious’ attitude of Belarusians can be related to the **value which they rate most important – ‘peace, security and stability’,** chosen by 60% of citizens for the fourth year in a row⁷ – which is

⁶ More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 1.

⁷ Respondents were asked to choose and rank the three most important personal values from a list of 13 items.

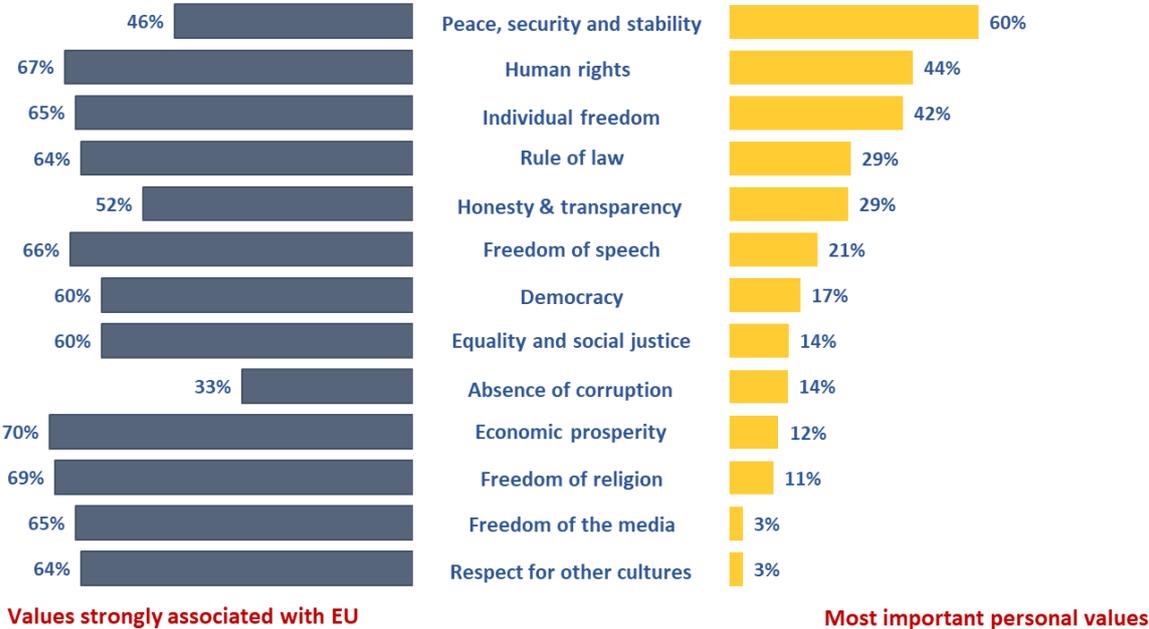
guaranteed by a policy of situational neutrality on regional manifestations of the confrontation between Russia and the West, including the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. It should also be noted that around one in two citizens (46%, down 5% since 2018) would ‘strongly’ or ‘very strongly’ link the European Union with the same value.

Over 40% of the population mentioned ‘human rights’ (44%) and ‘individual freedom’ (42%) among their most important personal values. At the same time, the democratic climate prevailing in the EU is well perceived by Belarusians, with between 60% and 70% of citizens ‘strongly’ or ‘very strongly’ linking the European Union with ‘human rights’ (67%), ‘respect for other cultures’ (64%), ‘democracy’ (60%) and the basic freedoms (‘religion’ – 69%, ‘speech’ – 66%, ‘media’ – 65% and ‘individual freedom’ – 65%).

In 2019 the strongest and weakest association with the European Union were, respectively, ‘economic prosperity’ (70%) and ‘absence of corruption’ (33%) – though important for only around one in ten Belarusians (respectively 12% and 14% of citizens mentioned them among their most important personal values)⁸.

FIGURE 2 – Values strongly or very strongly associated with the EU (Q2.3) & three most important personal values (Q4.7)

(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



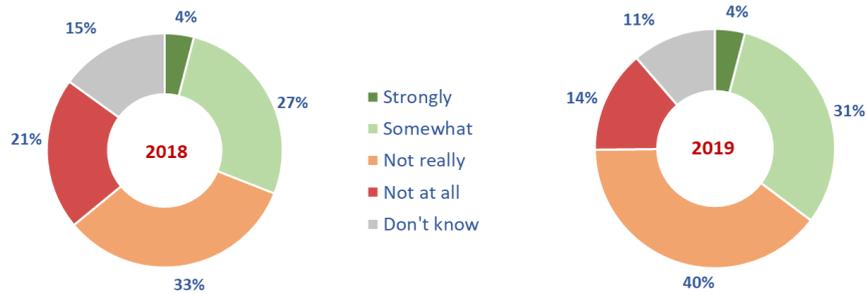
Confirming the prevailing ‘neutral’ stance towards the EU, 40% are Belarusians are ‘not really’ confident that ‘the EU fosters the preservation of traditional values in their society’, with an additional 31% of the population ‘somewhat’ agreeing with the above statement⁹. Compared to 2018, very negative views have recorded a decrease of 7 percentage points.

⁸ More details are provided in the Annex – Table 2.
⁹ The third wave saw the introduction of a new set of questions, targeted at gaining greater insights into how the European Union is perceived by the citizens. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the following set of statements according to a five-grade scale (‘strongly’, ‘somewhat’, ‘not really’, ‘not at all’, or ‘don’t know’): ‘the EU fosters the preservation of traditional values in our society’, ‘the EU provides tangible benefits to citizens in their everyday lives’, ‘the EU is committed to fighting corruption’, ‘the EU is an independent actor in foreign relations’ and ‘integration with the EU increases the country’s security and stability’.

FIGURE 3 – ‘The EU fosters the preservation of traditional values in our society’.

To what extent do you agree with this statement about the EU?

(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard about the EU)



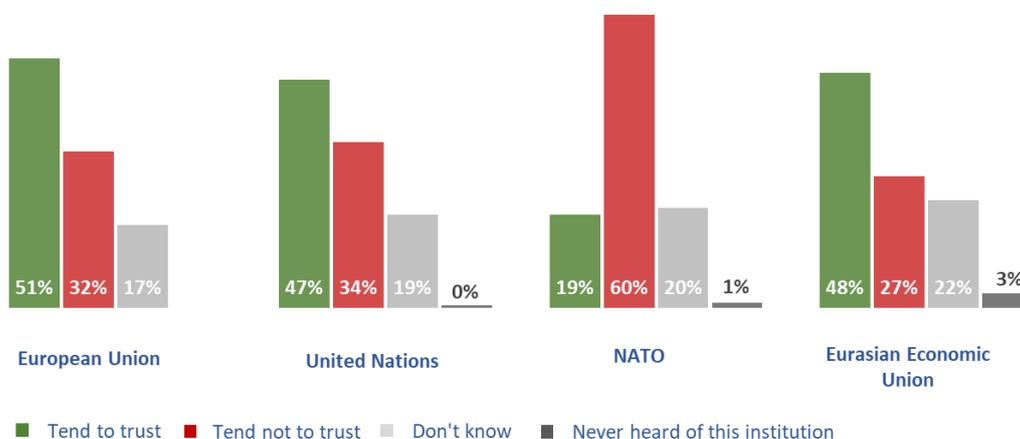
Perceptions of the EU were also assessed through an open-ended question, whereby respondents were asked to name the first issues that came to their mind when thinking of the EU. Again, Belarusians displayed a high degree of awareness of the EU, with only 10% of the population who found the question ‘too hard to answer’. Around one in three citizens mentioned the ‘economic/political union’ (34%), and around one in ten named the ‘EU member states’ (13%), the ‘Euro’ (11%) and/or the ‘Schengen zone’ (10%). Among positive free associations, ‘economic prosperity/high standards of living’ was again the most cited (20%), followed by ‘travelling/tourism’ (7%), ‘support to business’ (6%), ‘freedom of speech’ (5%), ‘peace/stability’ (3%), ‘good infrastructure’ (3%), ‘democracy’ (2%), ‘development/progress’ (2%) and rule of law/equality (2%). Negative associations were much less common though slightly more frequent than in 2018. More specifically, around 5% of individuals spontaneously mentioned ‘chaos/instability’, 3% linked the European Union with ‘sanctions’ or ‘being an enemy of Russia’, 2% cited the ‘different values’, and 1% were ‘against the EU/joining the EU’.

Around one in two Belarusians tend to trust the European Union (51%), the Eurasian Economic Union (48%) and the United Nations (47%), whereas around one in five citizens could not rate their level of confidence in these institutions (17%, 22% and 19% respectively). The NATO gathers a much lower level of trust (19%) – reflecting the more cautious attitude of citizens over NATO’s operations in the region.

In general, **younger citizens (63%) and residents of middle-sized settlements (62%) display a higher level of trust** as opposed to older individuals (39%) and residents of small settlements (47%). Females too are more likely to be confident in the EU than males (54% versus 49%). As for geographical residents, individuals living in the north and the centre of the country seem to be particularly critical: 38% of them openly distrust the EU – though much less than in 2018 (down 11 percentage points)¹⁰.

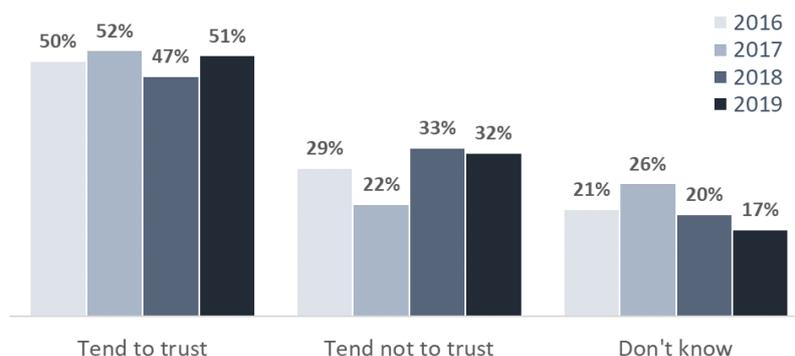
FIGURE 4 – Trust towards different institutions (Q2.11)

(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



¹⁰ More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 3.

FIGURE 5 – Trust towards the EU (Q2.11)
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



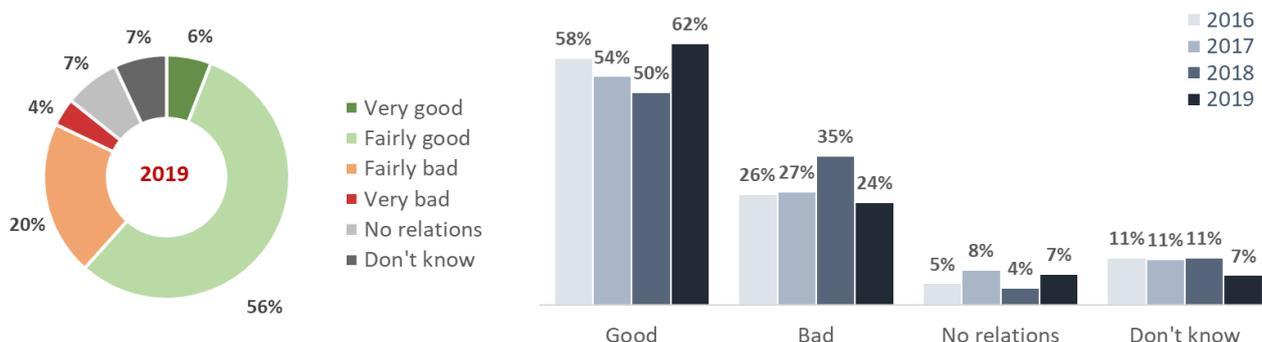
3.2.2. EU relations with Belarus and awareness of EU financial support

Compared to 2018, more citizens positively acknowledge the relations between their country and the EU and currently 62% the population describe them as 'fairly good' (56%, up 10%) or 'very good' (6%, up 2%).

Positive opinions are widespread, with residents of middle-sized settlements reporting the highest level of appreciation of Belarus-EU relations (78%). 'Active citizens' – such as employed/self-employed (28%), highly-educated (32%) and individuals aged 35-54 (30%) – tend to be slightly more critical than their socio-demographic counterparts, together with individuals living in smaller settlements (32%) and residents of the north and the centre – 29% gave a 'poor' rating to the Belarus-EU relations, though this figure recorded a decrease of 20 percentage points since the last wave¹¹.

FIGURE 6 – In general, how would you describe the relations that the European Union has with your country? (Q2.4)

(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



Over one in two Belarusians perceive the EU as 'an independent actor in foreign relations', with 44% of them 'somewhat' and 13% 'strongly' agreeing with the statement. Around one third of citizens are 'not really' (23%) or 'not all' (9%) convinced by it. No change was observed compared to 2018¹².

¹¹ More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 4.

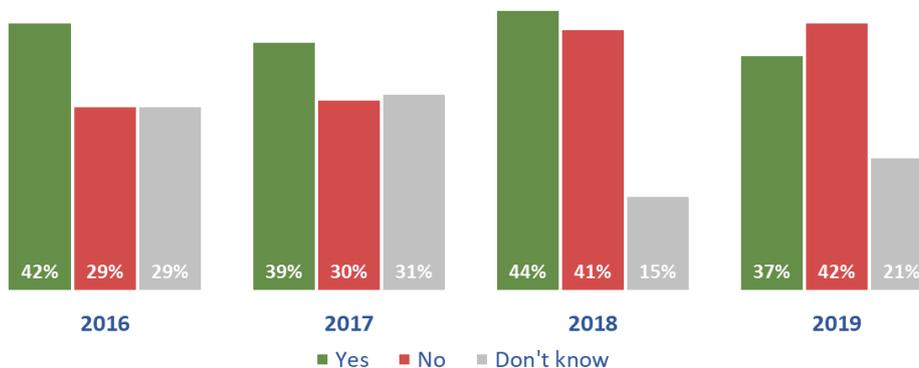
¹² The third wave saw the introduction of a new set of questions, targeted at gaining greater insights into how the European Union is perceived by the citizens. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the following set of statements according to a five-grade scale (('strongly', 'somewhat', 'not really', 'not at all', or 'don't know'): 'the EU fosters the preservation of traditional values in our society', 'the EU provides tangible benefits to citizens in their everyday lives', 'the EU is committed to fighting corruption', 'the EU is an independent actor in foreign relations' and 'integration with the EU increases the country's security and stability'.

FIGURE 7 – ‘The EU is an independent actor in foreign relations’.
To what extent do you agree with this statement about the EU?
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



Around 40% of citizens acknowledge the EU’s financial support to Belarus (37%). This figure has decreased by 7 percentage points since 2018. More specifically, over half of the individuals living in the north/centre of the country and/or in smaller settlements are convinced that the EU does not support their country (55% and 54% respectively). Residents of the medium sized settlements (50%) and of the east of the country (49%) are conversely the most likely to be informed on the issue¹³.

FIGURE 8 – As far as you know, does the European Union provide Belarus with financial support? (Q2.5)
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)

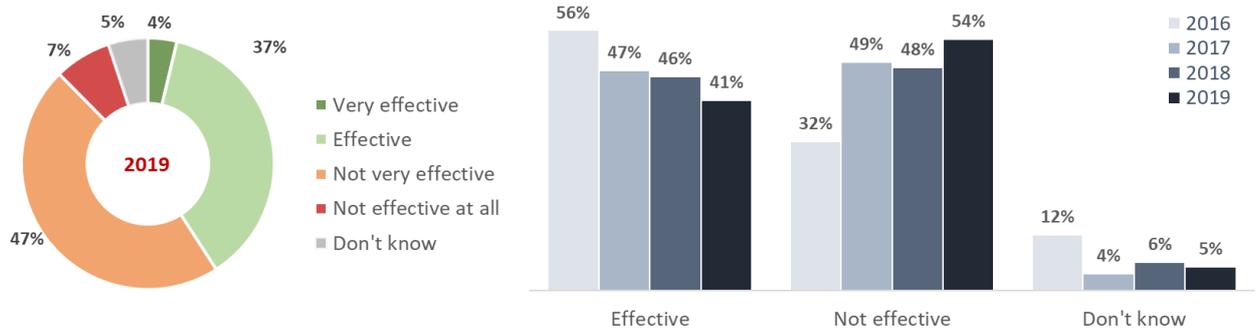


As shown in Figure 9, 41% of Belarusians who know about EU’s financial support consider it effective. This figure has recorded a decrease of 5 percentage points since 2018, in line with the slowly declining historical trend (it was 56% in 2016). Gender and employment status have a great influence on citizens’ opinions: around one in two females (49%) and unemployed/inactive individuals (51%) consider the EU’s support effective versus around one third of males (32%) and employed/self-employed citizens (34%). Residents of the west of the country (53%) are also much more likely to express appreciation towards the EU’s financial support than citizens living in the east and the north/centre (38% and 35% respectively)¹⁴.

¹³ More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 5.

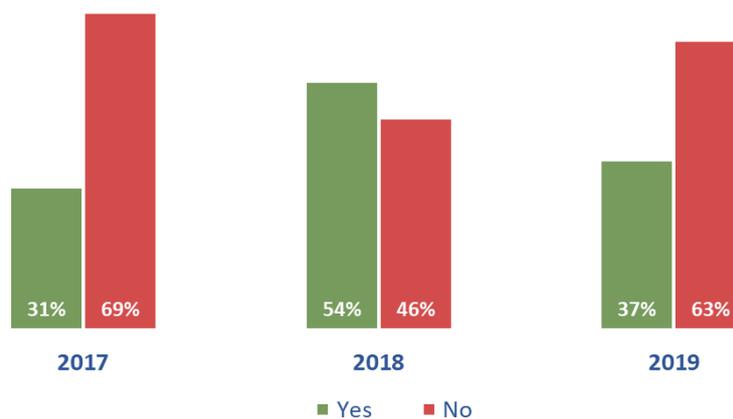
¹⁴ More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 6.

FIGURE 9 – How effective do you think the support has been? (Q2.5.1)
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who were aware of the EU's financial support)



In fact, the acknowledgment of specific programmes funded by the EU has also recorded a decrease compared to 2018 and stands currently at 37% (down 17%). Residents of large settlements (42%), highly educated individuals (49%) and residents of the east (49%) are much more informed than other socio-demographic sub-groups. Conversely, only 26% of western residents and 29% of citizens living in smaller settlements have heard of EU-financed programmes in Belarus¹⁵.

FIGURE 10 – Do you know of any specific programmes financed by the European Union in Belarus? (Q2.6)
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who were aware of the EU's financial support)



As in previous waves, the most well-known EU-funded programmes in Belarus relate to the field of education (52%). In addition to implementing the roadmap for higher education reform in line with the Bologna Process¹⁶, Belarus participates in Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus, Jean Monnet projects and Horizon 2020. Around one in two citizens also mentioned programmes in the field of culture (48%, up 20 percentage points); over one in three health and medicine programmes (33%, up 6%) and around one in five infrastructure development projects (21%, down 3%) and economic reforms/business promotion programmes (18%, down 16%). Citizens are least familiar with the EU's support to the sectors of justice and policy reforms (5%).

As in 2018, only 4% of Belarusians have personally been (or know someone who has been) involved in an EU-funded project, mainly as a participant or volunteer, in the last 12 months.

¹⁵ More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 7.

¹⁶ At a glance, EU-Belarus people-to-people contacts, European Parliament 2018. See

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/635605/EPRS_ATA\(2019\)635605_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/635605/EPRS_ATA(2019)635605_EN.pdf)

FIGURE 11 – Which specific programme(s) do you know? (Q2.6.1, multiple answers possible)
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who were aware of specific programmes financed by the EU)

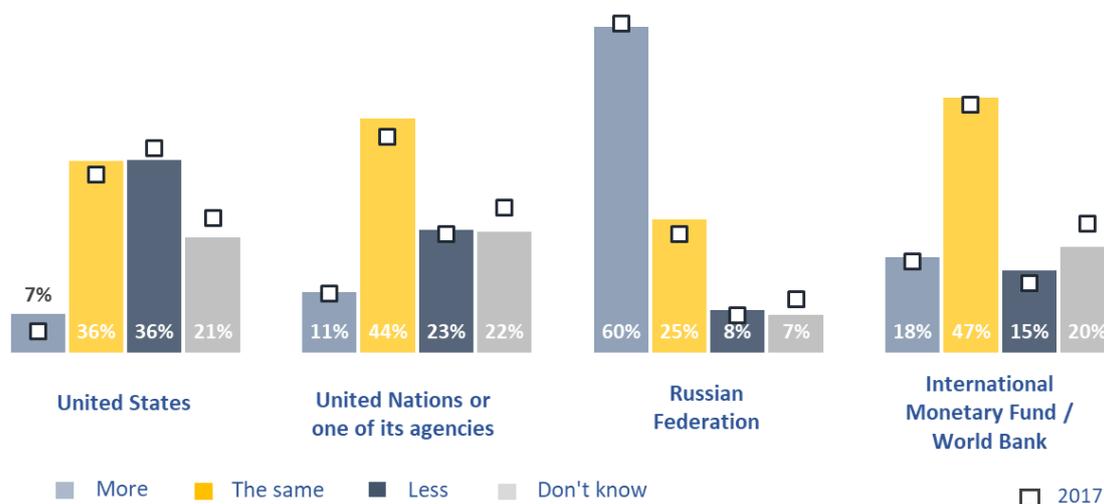


As in 2018, 60% of the population said that the Russian Federation financially sustains Belarus ‘more’ than the EU and 25% that the support provided by the two organisations is almost ‘the same’. Citizens are very certain of their opinion: less than one in ten did not provide a definite answer.

Conversely, over 60% of the population is convinced that the other international organisations provide ‘the same’ or ‘less’ support to Belarus than the EU: the United States (36% ‘the same’, 36% ‘less’), the United Nations and its agencies (44% ‘the same’, 23% ‘less’), and the IMF/World Bank (47% ‘the same’, 15% ‘less’). However, citizens were more uncertain: the share of ‘don’t know’ responses was around 20% for all other foreign institutions.

FIGURE 12 – As far as you know, for each of the following international institutions, would you say that it provides ‘more’, ‘the same’, or ‘less’ financial support to your country than the European Union? (Q2.7)

(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



As in 2018, nearly one in two Belarusians ‘strongly’ (7%) or ‘somewhat’ agree (40%) that ‘the EU provides tangible benefits to citizens in their everyday lives’¹⁷.

¹⁷ The third wave saw the introduction of a new set of questions, targeted at gaining greater insights into how the European Union is perceived by citizens. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the following set of statements according to a five-grade scale (‘strongly’, ‘somewhat’, ‘not really’, ‘not at all’, or ‘don’t know’): ‘the EU fosters the preservation of traditional values in our society’, ‘the EU provides tangible benefits to citizens in their everyday lives’, ‘the EU is committed to fighting corruption’, ‘the EU is an independent actor in foreign relations’ and ‘integration with the EU increases the country’s security and stability’.

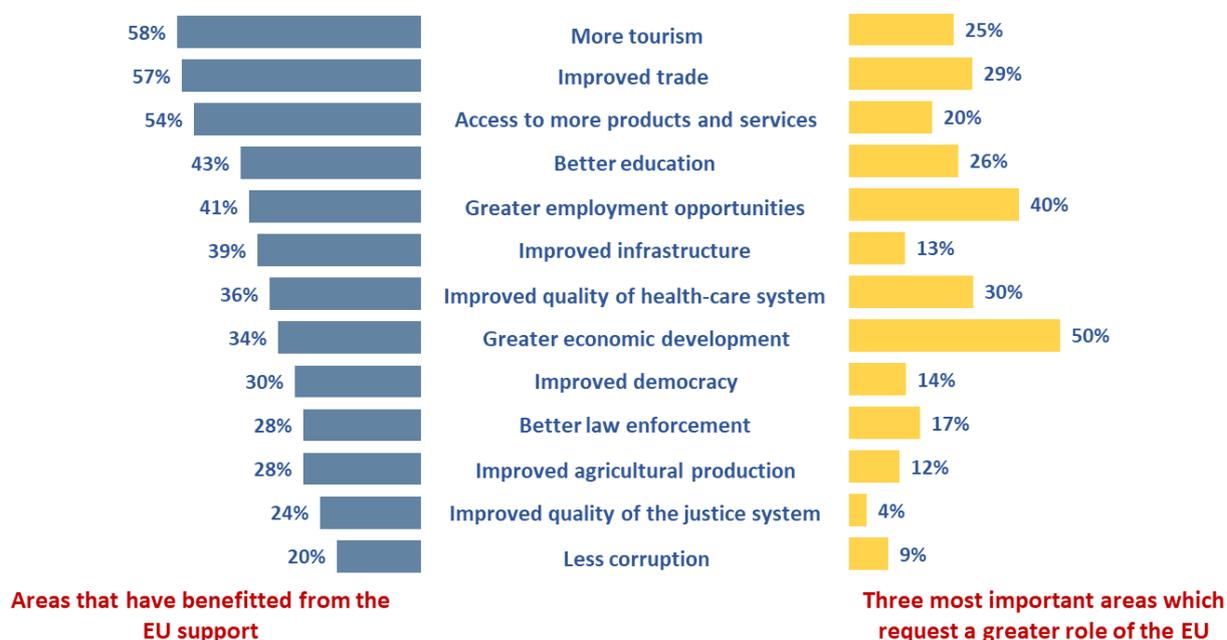
FIGURE 13 – ‘The EU provides tangible benefits to citizens in their everyday lives’.
To what extent do you agree with this statement about the EU?
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



It is believed that the main positive effects of the EU’s support are the increase in ‘tourism’ – mentioned by 58% of the population – and ‘trade’ (57%), as well as the enlargement of consumer market, meant as ‘greater access to products and services’ (54%)¹⁸. Around 40% of citizens also acknowledged the positive effects of EU’s support to ‘education’ (43%), ‘employment opportunities’ (41%) and ‘infrastructure development’ (39%).

As in 2018, Belarusians would like the EU to strengthen its involvement in favouring economic development in the country (50%) and employment opportunities (40%)¹⁹. This finding can be linked both to the perception of the EU enjoying ‘economic prosperity and high standards of living’ and the contextual situation in the country: despite the stabilisation of the Belarusian economy, low economic growth persists and the economy remains vulnerable²⁰.

FIGURE 14 – Areas that have benefitted ‘very much’ or ‘fairly’ from EU support (Q2.8) & three most important areas in which Belarusians request a greater role of the EU (Q2.9)
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



¹⁸ More details are provided in Annex – Tables 8 and 9.

¹⁹ Respondents were asked to name and rank the three most important areas in which the EU should play a greater role.

²⁰ See Eastern Partnership Index 2017, Charting Progress in European Integration, Democratic Reforms, and Sustainable Development Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, 2018, <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>

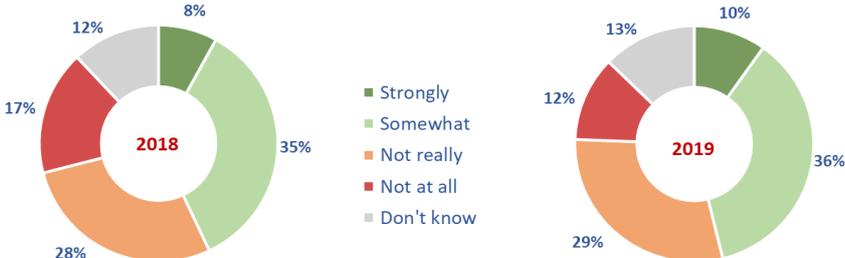
Around 40% of Belarusians ‘strongly’ (7%) or ‘somewhat’ agree (33%) that ‘the EU is committed to fighting corruption’ versus around 50% who are convinced that this is not the case (47%)²¹. This figure, which is consistent with 2018, can also be linked to the fact that ‘fighting corruption’ is not a value that Belarusians tend to associate with the EU. In fact, only one in five citizens ‘strongly’ links it the European Union and less than one in ten would request a greater role of the EU in tackling the issue (see Figure 14).

FIGURE 15 – ‘The EU is committed to fighting corruption’.
To what extent do you agree with this statement about the EU?
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



As previously noted, the ‘strong’ linkage between ‘peace, security and stability’ – Belarusians’ most important personal value – and the EU suggested a positive stance towards closer integration with the EU by around half of the population. In fact, when directly asked 46% of citizens are in fact convinced that ‘integration with the EU will in fact increase the country’s security and stability’²².

FIGURE 16 – ‘Integration with the EU increases the country's security and stability’.
To what extent do you agree with this statement about the EU?
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



²¹ The third wave saw the introduction of a new set of questions, targeted at gaining greater insights into how the European Union is perceived by citizens. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement with the following set of statements according to a five-grade scale (‘strongly’, ‘somewhat’, ‘not really’, ‘not at all’, or ‘don’t know’): ‘the EU fosters the preservation of traditional values in our society’, ‘the EU provides tangible benefits to citizens in their everyday lives’, ‘the EU is committed to fighting corruption’, ‘the EU is an independent actor in foreign relations’ and ‘integration with the EU increases the country’s security and stability’.

²² See footnote 20.

3.3. Sources of information on the EU

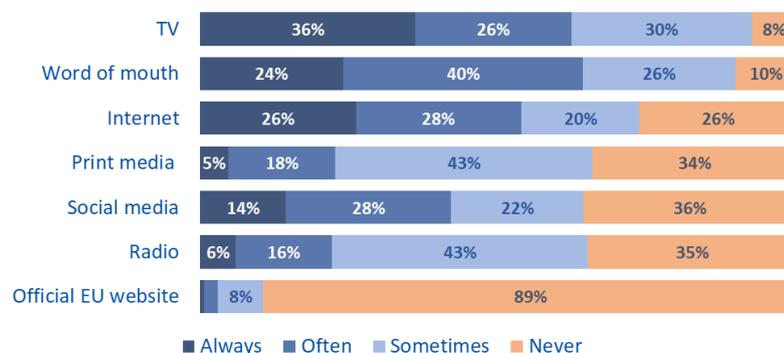
Slightly over half of the population (55%) claim to have seen or heard information about the EU in the last three months, with no change compared to 2018. Passive exposure mostly stems from television (76%), the Internet (32%) and ‘word of mouth’ (18%). Social media and other traditional media provide very low coverage of EU-related information: only one in ten citizens saw or heard information on the European Union through these sources. ‘Active’ exposure is also stable since 2018, and remains very low: only 3% of citizens ‘frequently’ looked/searched for EU-related information and only 20% ‘not very frequently’. Foreign media in Russian remain the most common source of information in the country for 70% of the population: not only Russian is the preferred language, but also programmes of the leading Russian broadcasters that are received freely in the country. According to nearly half of the population (47%), the image of the EU in the national media has been ‘positive’, with an increase of 15 percentage points since 2016.

This section looks at the main sources of information in Belarus, with a focus on specific information about the EU, its programmes and its institutional communication instruments.

3.3.1. Media usage as sources of information

Television continues to be the most popular source of information in Belarus – only 8% of the population ‘never’ watch it – followed by ‘word of mouth’ – 10% ‘never’ rely on it – and Internet – 26% ‘never’ access it. Other traditional media – such as print media and the radio – remained widely used in the country (66% and 65% of citizens, respectively, used them) and compete with social networks (64%). The official EU website is hardly ever used – 11% of Belarusians access it for information – with a small increase of 3 percentage points since 2018.

FIGURE 17 – Type of media used as a source of information (Q3.7)

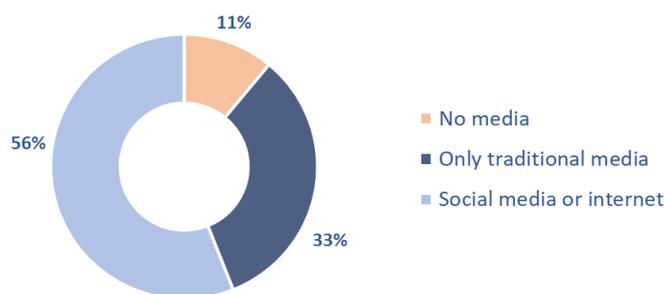


The breakdown of frequent users of traditional media only, new media and no media is shown in Figure 18²³. 56% of citizens rely on social media or the Internet, 33% only on traditional media and 11% do not use any media. Quite predictably, the younger generation (79%) and highly educated individuals (75%) are more keen users of new media. However, while the former either use new media or no media at all (16%) – with only 5% relying exclusively on traditional media – the latter are more likely to consider traditional media (18%) rather than no media at all (7%). Around 70% of older citizens rely exclusively on traditional media (69%)²⁴.

²³ The first includes all individuals who ‘always’ or ‘often’ use only traditional media (such as television, radio and print media); the second group includes all individuals who always or often use either the Internet (including the official EU website) or social media; while the last group includes all individuals who do not ‘always’ or ‘often’ use any of the surveyed media.

²⁴ More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 10.

FIGURE 18 – Type of media frequently used as source of information



Media in Russian are the most popular media source in the country: nearly all Belarusians – 38% ‘always’, 32% ‘often’ and 21% ‘sometimes’ – use national media in Russian, and 70% use foreign media in Russian. In fact, not only Russian is the preferred language for most of the population, but also programmes of the leading Russian broadcasters that are received freely in the country²⁵. Around 60% of citizens also use national media in Belarusian – though only 4% ‘always’. Only one in ten citizens use foreign or national media in other languages (12% and 10% respectively), with no change compared to 2018.

FIGURE 19 – Usage of media in Belarusian, Russian and other languages (Q3.7)

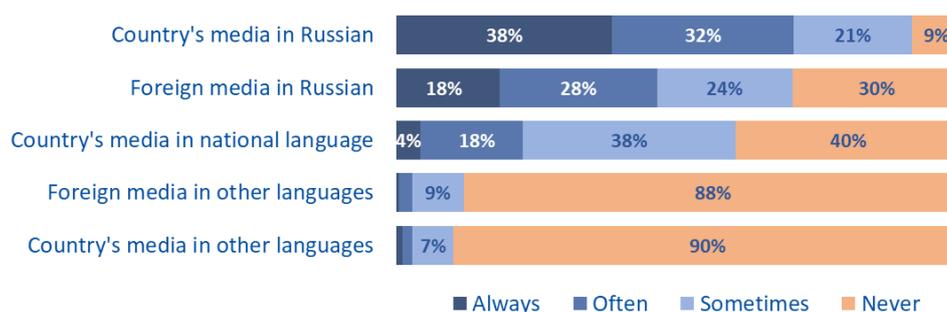


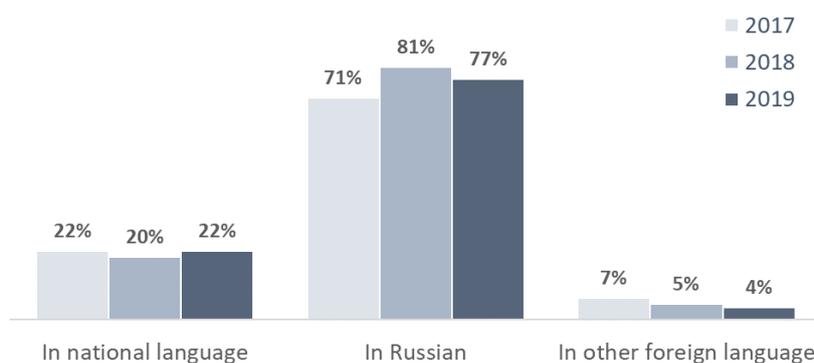
Figure 20 shows how frequent the usage of media in Russian, Belarusian and other foreign languages is, regardless of whether the media are national or foreign, among the population²⁶. Again it can be observed how frequent usage of media in Russian is widespread (77%) compared to that of media in Belarusians (22%) and particularly in other foreign languages (4%). High shares of users of media in Belarusian were found only among older individuals (40%). Citizens living in the north and centre of the country (26%) are also slightly more likely to use them compared to eastern (20%) and western residents (18%)²⁷.

²⁵ In Belarus, programmes of the leading Russian broadcasters are received freely (through terrestrial transmitters) – either based on intergovernmental agreements or through the so-called ‘hybrid channels’ (NTV-Belarus, RTR-Belarus). In addition, they are also available on different local broadcasters. Furthermore, dozens of other Russian TV channels are available to those who are subscribers of cable television services. In addition, although Belarusian is the official language, the majority of people prefer to speak Russian and use it to communicate in their day-to-day lives. See, Monitoring of Russian channels by MEMO 98, Final report, 2015.

²⁶ Frequent users of media in Belarusian are defined as all individuals who ‘always’ or ‘often’ use media in the national language; those who ‘always’ or ‘often’ use the country’s or foreign media in Russian are seen as frequent users of media in Russian. Finally, frequent users of media in foreign languages are those who ‘always’ or ‘often’ use the country’s or foreign media in other languages. The frequent use of media in one language is not exclusive, in the sense that individuals might also access media in other languages.

²⁷ More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 11.

FIGURE 20 – Frequent usage of media in Belarusian, Russian and other languages



As in 2018 **‘word of mouth’ is the most trusted source of information** (by 79% of the population), followed by the Internet (60%) and television (62%). One in two citizens also trust print media (50%), social media (49%) and the radio (48%) – which is consistent with their widespread usage. The official EU websites gather an overall level of trust of 28%, just like last year – again it is worth noting that 39% of individuals did not answer the question, which is an indication of their lack of use and awareness of such a source of information.

If the language and the provider of the media is considered – rather than the media itself – levels of trust are somewhat lower: only one in two citizens trust national media in Belarusians (50%). Citizens are also more likely to trust media in Russian if they are foreign (50%) rather than national (35%), and the same goes for media in other foreign languages (35% if the media is foreign versus 15% if it is nationally owned). It may be that, readers/users see them in fact as less politically biased hence they are more willing to trust them ²⁸.

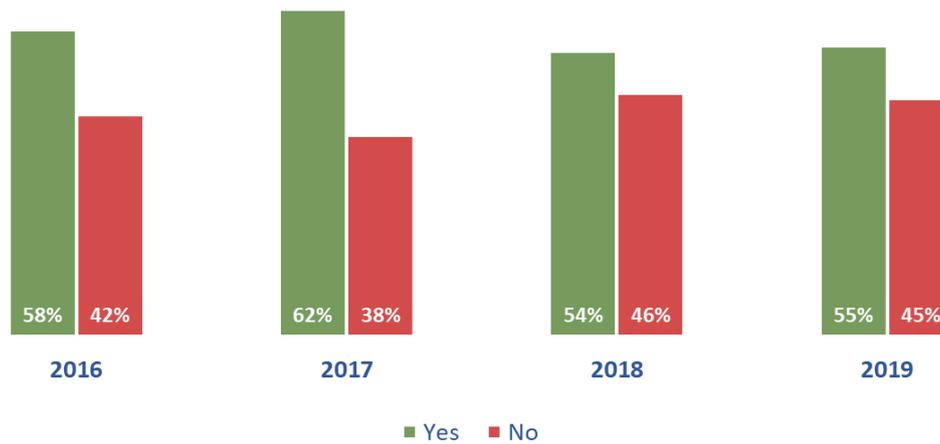
3.3.2. Sources of information about the EU

Slightly over half of the population (55%) claim to have seen or heard information about the EU in the last three months, with no change compared to 2018. The size of the settlement, geographical residence and, to a lesser extent, education appear to be the variables mostly linked with passive exposure. In fact, 68% residents of larger settlements, 68% of individuals living in the west of the country and 61% of highly educated individuals have seen or heard information on the EU, respectively 39% of residents of smaller settlement, 46% of individuals living in the east of the country and 53% of citizens with a low/medium level of education²⁹. Considering that the usage of TV is widespread in the country, these gaps may be related to the influence of ‘word of mouth’ and the Internet in circulating information about the European Union – ‘word of mouth’ and the Internet are in fact the next most important source of information in the country after TV, as well as the most trusted.

²⁸ More details are provided in Annex – Table 12.

²⁹ More details on exposure to information about the EU and socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 13.

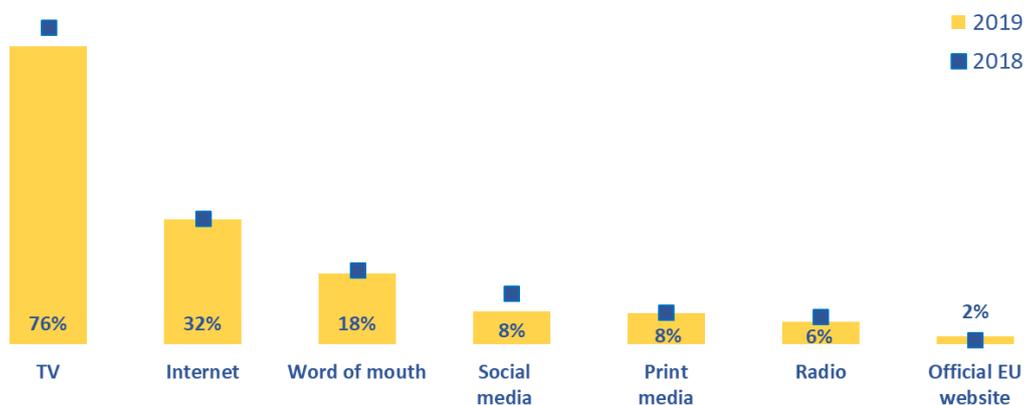
FIGURE 21 – Have you seen or heard any information about the EU in the last three months? (Q3.2)
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



As in previous waves passive exposure mostly stems from television (76%, though down 5% since 2018), the Internet (32%) and word of mouth (18%). Social media as well as other traditional media provide very low coverage of EU-related information: only one in ten citizens saw or heard information on the EU through social media (8%), print media (8%) and/or the radio (6%). The official EU websites are a source of information for only 2% of the population (it was 1% in 2018).

FIGURE 22 – Where or from whom have you seen or heard information about the EU in the last three months? (Q3.2.1, multiple answers possible)

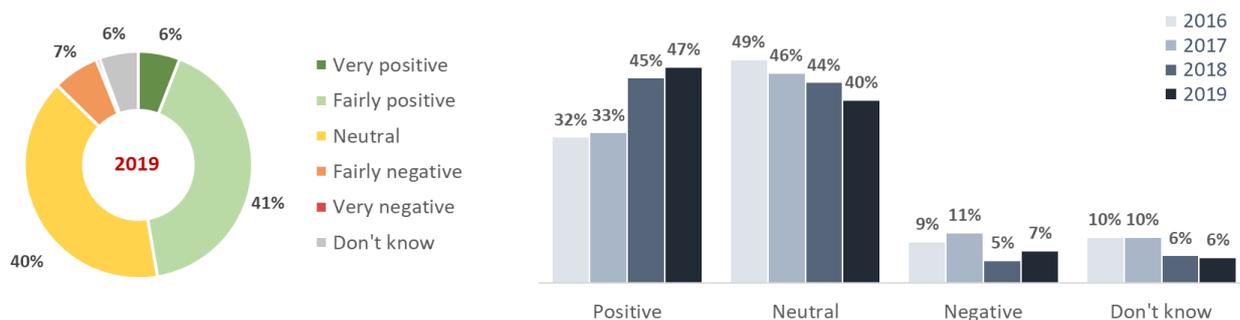
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard any information about the EU in the last three months)



In general, citizens who have been passively exposed to EU-related information through national media gathered a positive or neutral representation of the European Union (47% ‘very’ or ‘fairly positive’, 40% ‘neutral’). This figure has increased by 2 percentage points since last year and 15 percentage points since 2016 and is in fact the highest recorded up to now. Positive opinions were recorded mainly among residents of large and medium settlements (53% and 56% respectively), eastern residents (54%) and younger citizens (55%). Conversely residents of smaller settlements and of the west of the country tend to be more ‘neutral’ (48% and 45% respectively) or ‘negative’ (13% and 11% respectively) than the average³⁰.

³⁰ For the distribution according to main socio-demographic characteristics, see Table 14 in Annex.

FIGURE 23 – In general, how would you say the EU was presented in the national media? (Q3.3)
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)

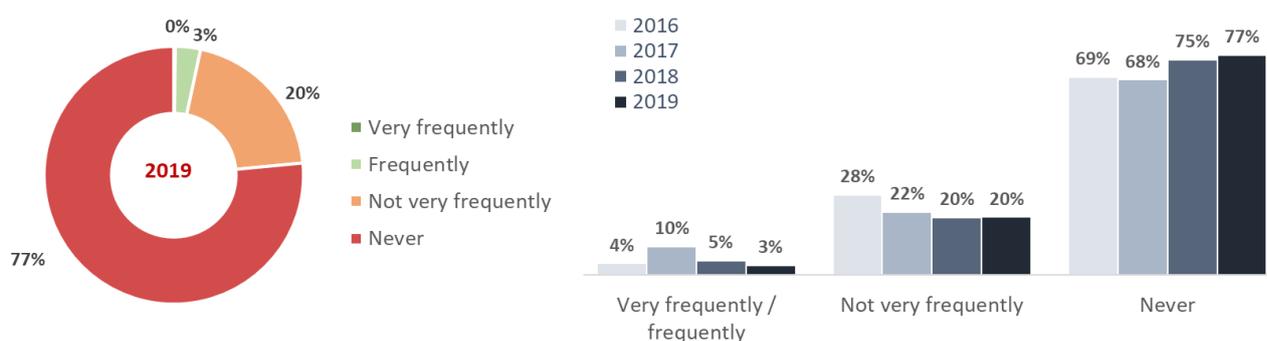


Belarusians are somewhat critical about the quality of the information they receive. In fact, around three quarters of the population claim that the information they read, watch or access online does not help them ‘very much’ (41%) or ‘at all’ (36%) to have a better understanding of the EU. Only one in five citizens consider the information helpful, either ‘fairly’ (19%) or ‘very much’ (1%), with no change compared to 2018.

The following section looks specifically at sources of information about the EU, and therefore only refers to Belarusians who actively look for/access information on the EU.

Frequent or very frequent active exposure to EU-related information is very rare in Belarus and interests only 3% of citizens. If they do access it, they do it only sporadically and even in this case, it is only one in five citizens (20% ‘not very frequently’), with no change compared to 2018. In particular, around 85% of older individuals and residents of small settlements never access/search for EU related information (89% and 84% respectively). Around 80% of females (79%), individuals with a low/medium level of education (78%), residents of the east (78%) and the north/centre (80%) of the country have also not been actively exposed³¹.

FIGURE 24 – How often do you look for/access information on the EU? (Q3.1)
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



Nearly all individuals who search for information about the EU use Russian (99%). Only 1% of active citizens use English and no one searched in Belarusian. Findings are consistent with last year.

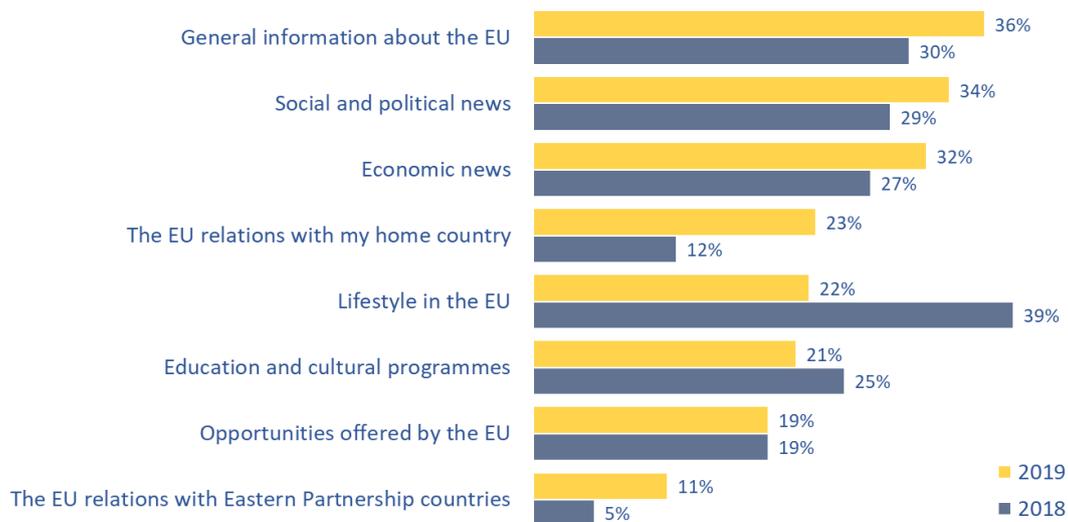
Compared to 2018, searches targeting ‘lifestyle in the EU’ – the most searched topic last year – have witnessed a huge decrease (22%, down 17%) and currently Belarusians seem mostly interested in ‘general information about the EU’ (36%), ‘social and political news’ (34%) and ‘economic news’ (32%). Around one fourth of Belarusians are also interested in the ‘relations between their country and the EU’ (23%, up 9%), ‘educational and cultural programmes’ (21%) and the ‘opportunities that the EU could offer them’

³¹ More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 15.

(19%). Only one in ten ‘active’ citizens searched/looked for information on the ‘relations with other EaP countries’ (11%, up 6%).

FIGURE 25– What type of information do you normally look for? (Q3.1.2, multiple answers possible)

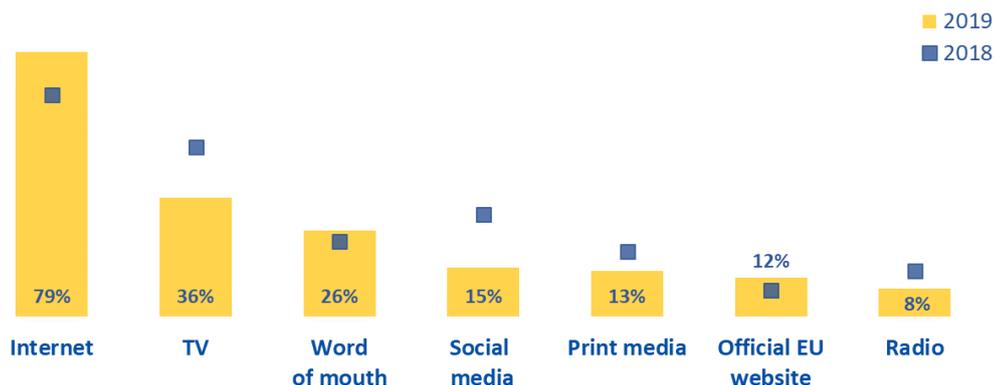
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have looked for/accessed information on the EU)



The Internet is where most citizens turn when searching for specific content, and more so compared to 2018: **79% of active searchers use the Internet** versus 66% last year. Around one in three citizens also rely on TV (36%) and one out of five citizens on word of mouth (26%). Social media, print media and the radio all recorded a decrease in ‘active’ usage and stand respectively at 15%, 13% and 8%. Around one in ten citizens visited the official EU website (12% up 4% since 2018).

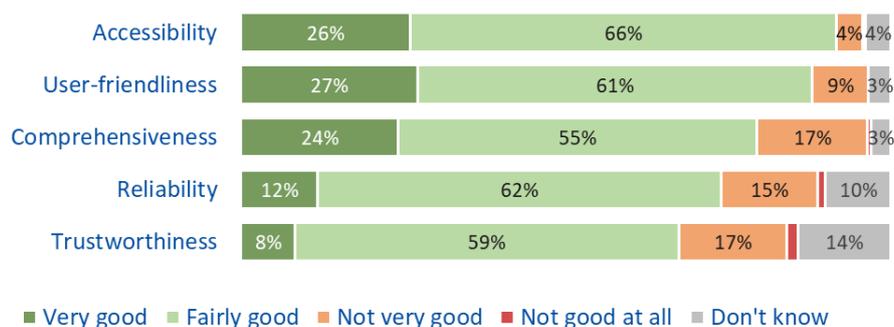
FIGURE 26 – Where do you go to find information about the EU? (Q3.1.4, multiple answers possible)

(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have looked for/accessed information on the EU)



No change was observed in the **rating of EU-related information** since 2018. **Positive opinions were recorded with regard of accessibility and user-friendliness from around 90% of active searchers** – of which around 25% ‘very good’ and around 65% ‘fairly good’. Figures for comprehensiveness were also high (24% ‘very good’ and 55% ‘fairly good’). Belarusians seem slightly more sceptical only in the rating of the reliability and the trustworthiness of EU-related information, still over two third of citizens provided a positive opinion (74% and 67% respectively).

FIGURE 27 – How would you rate the information in terms of...? (Q3.1.5)
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have looked for/accessed information on the EU)



Overall, 8% of Belarusians have used EU informational websites³² at least once (it was 5% in 2018). The EU Facebook page (5%) and the institutional website (3%) are the most commonly used source, whereas all other instruments are very rarely accessed – less than 2% each.

3.4. View of Belarus’s current situation and future expectations

Citizens’ trust in Belarusians’ public institutions has not changed much since 2018 and remains at moderate levels: around half of the population trust the Government (56%), the Parliament (53%) and regional and local authorities (48%). Confidence in political parties is lower (32%) and most citizens are dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their country (51%). Compared to 2018, ‘lack of corruption’ and ‘equality and social justice’ remain the most critical issues, however these were joined at the lowest ranks by ‘freedom of the media’ and ‘freedom of speech’. The current economic situation and all related issues (‘unemployment’, ‘low salaries and pensions’, ‘low living standards and poverty’) remain the most pressing concerns for citizens: despite the stabilisation of the Belarusian economy, low economic growth persists and the economy remains vulnerable.

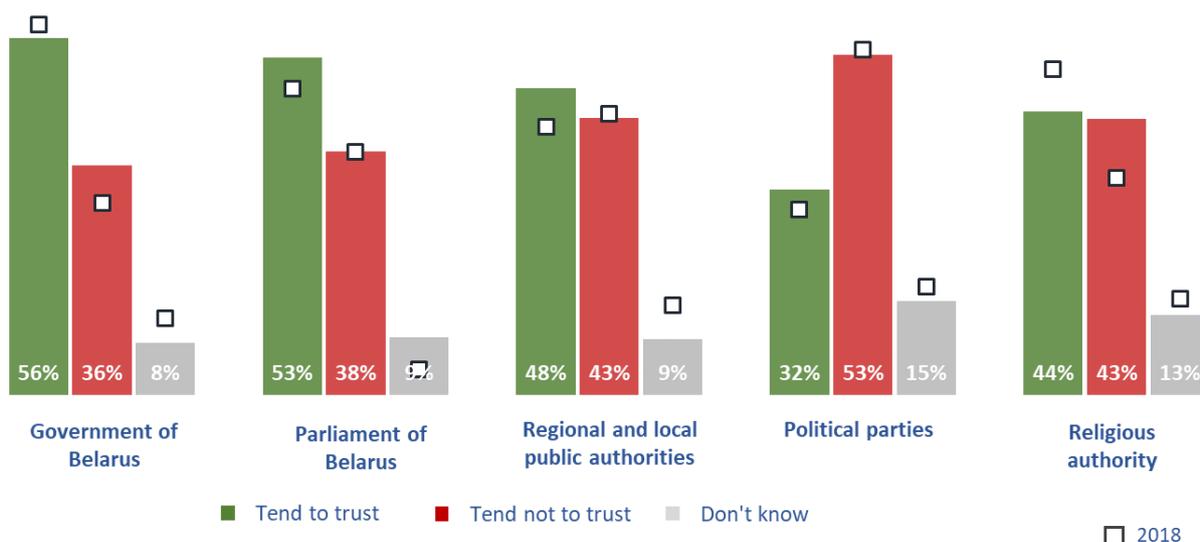
This section presents an assessment of Belarus’s current and future situation, with regard to the current functioning of democracy and most pressing problems.

3.4.1. View of Belarus’s current situation

An important indicator of people’s attitudes towards various state institutions is the level of trust, which, in fact, encompasses many other indicators (agreement, sympathy etc.). Citizens’ trust in Belarusians’ public institutions has not changed much since 2018 and remains at moderate levels: **around half of the population trust the Government (56%), the Parliament (53%)** and regional and local authorities (48%) – which are in fact subordinated to the central authorities. Confidence in political parties is lower (32%).

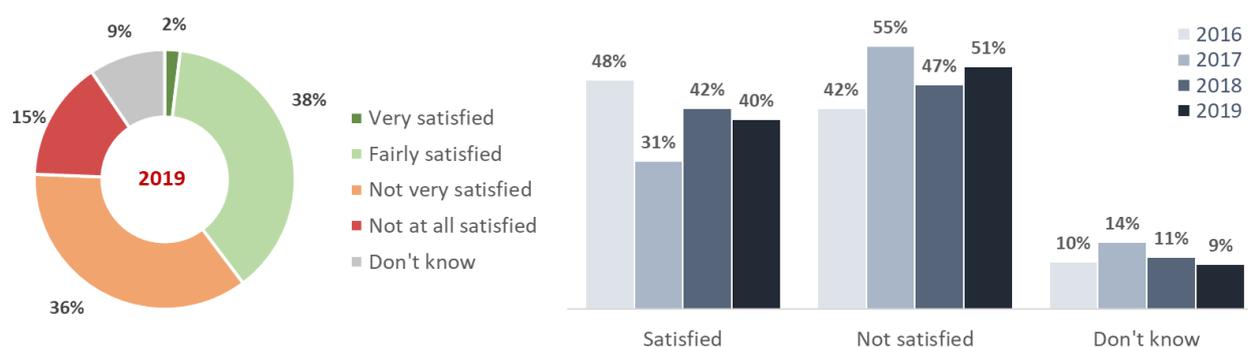
³² This refers to EU institutions’ websites; the EU Delegation website; EU projects’ websites; the ‘EU NEIGHBOURS’ website; and EU Twitter and EU Facebook pages.

FIGURE 28 – Please tell us your level of trust in the following institutions (Q4.1)



Belarusian citizens are dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their country (51%, up 4% since 2018), with 36% of them ‘not very satisfied’ and 15% ‘not at all satisfied’. In essence the relative structure of disapproval towards the functioning of democracy has remained the same: males, middle-aged individuals, employed/self-employed citizens and those who live in larger settlements and/or in the north/centre of the country proved to be the most critical (between 55% and 60% are ‘not satisfied’). In addition, it should be noted that dissatisfaction has grown in these socio-demographic groups compared to last year: among individuals living in the north/centre – which include Minsk residents – dissatisfaction has increased from 40% to 55%³³.

FIGURE 29 – On the whole, are you ‘very satisfied’, ‘fairly satisfied’, ‘not very satisfied’ or ‘not at all satisfied’ with the way democracy works in Belarus? (Q4.3)

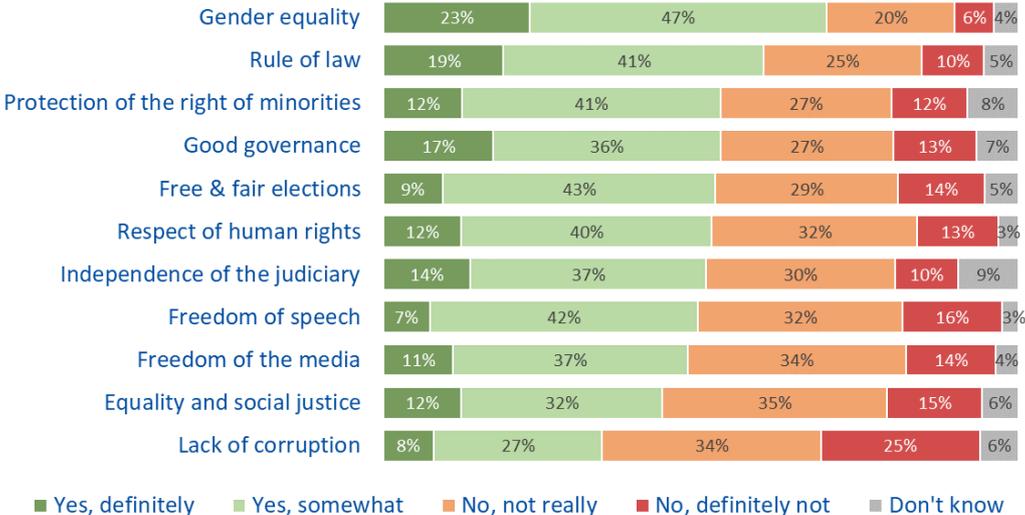


While in 2018 there was an improvement in respondents’ perceptions of the democratic process in Belarus, figures for 2019 show a small step backwards. According to the majority of the population, most democratic indicators still apply to their country, however ‘gender equality’ is present for 70% of the population (down 5%), ‘rule of law’ for 60% (down 6%), ‘protection of the rights of minorities’ for 53% (no change), ‘good governance’ for 53% (down 3%), ‘free and fair elections’ for 52% (down 2%), ‘respect for human rights’ for 52% (down 8%), and ‘independence of the judiciary system’ for 51% (down 3%). ‘Lack of corruption’ and ‘equality and social justice’ are still the most critical issues (only 35% and 44% of

³³ More details on satisfaction with democracy and socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 16.

Belarusians believe these apply to their country, however these were joined at the lowest ranks by 'freedom of the media' (48%, down 7%) and freedom of speech (49%, down 4%), reflecting the effects of the increased pressure on the media by national authorities.

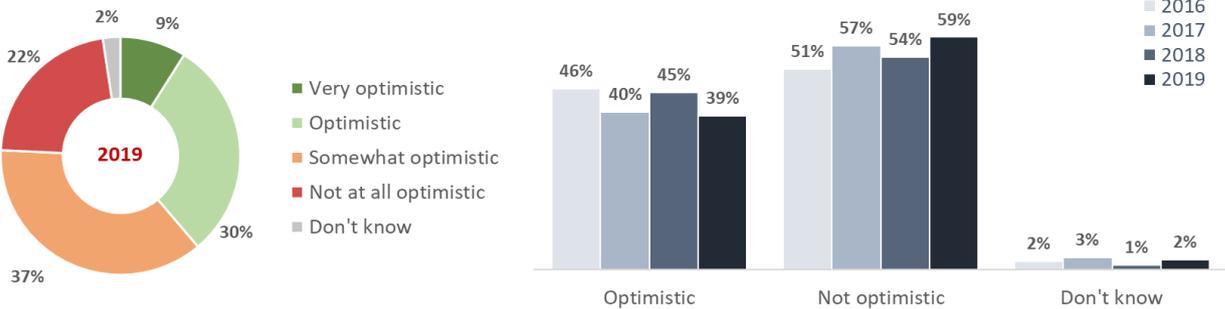
FIGURE 30 – To what extent do you think that the following elements apply in Belarus? (Q4.4)



3.4.2. Future expectations

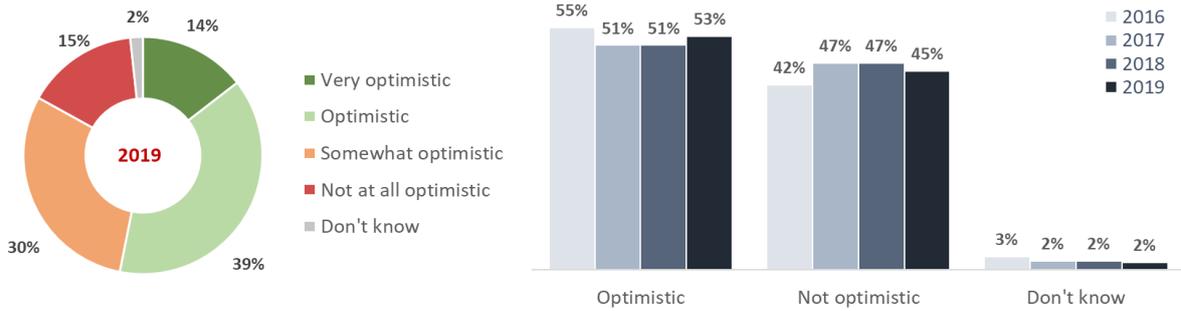
While no change since 2018 was recorded in the attitudes of Belarusians towards their personal future (53% are 'optimistic'), expectations towards the future of their country are somewhat less positive: 59% of citizens are in fact 'not optimistic' (it was 54% last year). Middle aged individuals (69%), residents of larger settlements (66%), employed/self-employed individuals (66%) and, to a lesser extent, males (63%) tend to more concerned about Belarus' future than their socio-demographic counterparts. In general, individuals living in the east (62%) and the west (64%) are also more pessimistic than those living in the north/centre of the country (54%)³⁴.

FIGURE 31 – How optimistic are you about the future of your country? (Q4.5)



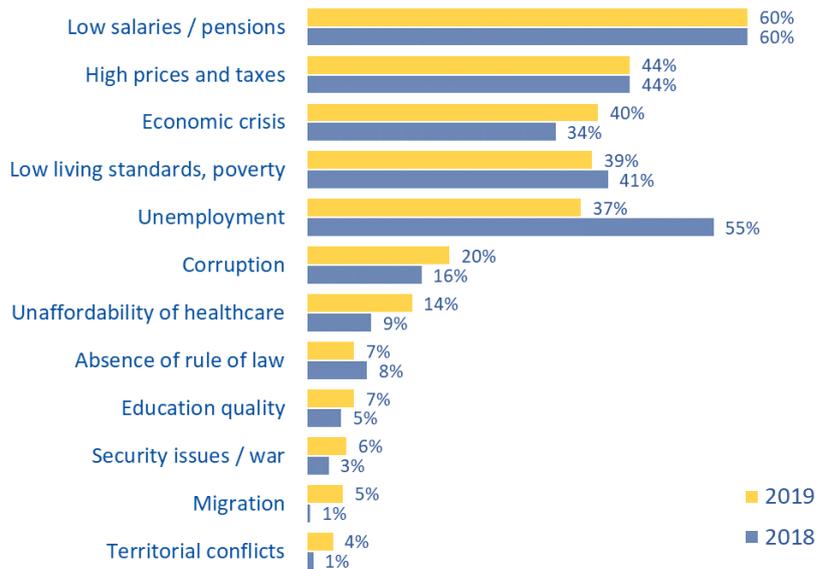
³⁴ More details on optimism regarding citizens' personal future and the country's future and socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Tables 17 and 18.

FIGURE 32 – How optimistic are you about your personal future? (Q4.6)



As in 2018, the current economic situation and all related issues are the most pressing concerns for citizens. More specifically, 60% of them mentioned ‘low salaries and pensions’, 44% ‘high prices and taxes’, 40% ‘the economic crisis’, 39% ‘low living standards and poverty’ and 37% ‘unemployment’. Around one out of four Belarusians also cited ‘corruption’ (20%) and ‘the unaffordability of healthcare’ (14%). All other elements – such as ‘rule of law’, ‘the quality of education’, ‘security issues/war’, ‘territorial conflicts’ and ‘migrations’ – were mentioned each by less than 10% of the population. Considering that some of these are in fact important personal values, the above findings can be explained by the contextual situation in the country: as previously noted, despite the stabilisation of the Belarusian economy, low economic growth persists and the economy remains vulnerable.

FIGURE 33– What do you consider to be the most pressing problems facing your country? (Q4.2, multiple answers possible)



3.5. Profiling attitudes towards the EU: positive versus neutral

EU supporters – around one third of the population (36%, up 2% since 2018) – and ‘neutral’ Belarusians – the largest group (53%, up 10%) – have two very distinct socio-demographic profiles. The neutral Belarusians are more commonly found among the following groups: women (57%), the older generation (39%), people with a low level of education (85%), villagers (40%), residents of the west of the country (28%) and those who seldom use the Internet (54%) and social media (67%). Conversely nearly 80% of the former are less than 55, over 60% are frequent users of new media (69%) and/or employed/self-employed (60%), over half are and/or live in larger settlements (53%), one third live in the east and one fourth are highly educated (25%). EU supporters and ‘neutral’ citizens are also ‘different’ in terms of the respective levels of passive (66% versus 49%) and active exposure (39% versus 14%) to EU-related information. These, in turn, impact on their ‘common’ perception of the EU, their levels of trust in it and the acknowledgement of its support: not only ‘neutral’ individuals are less positive than EU supporters, they are also less aware. When it comes to their country, however both groups tend to share the same concerns on the current economic situation, with around 60% of them worried about low salaries and pensions.

In this section, the attitude of Belarusians towards the EU has been analysed according to two main profiles: individuals who have a positive image of the EU and those who are mostly neutral³⁵.

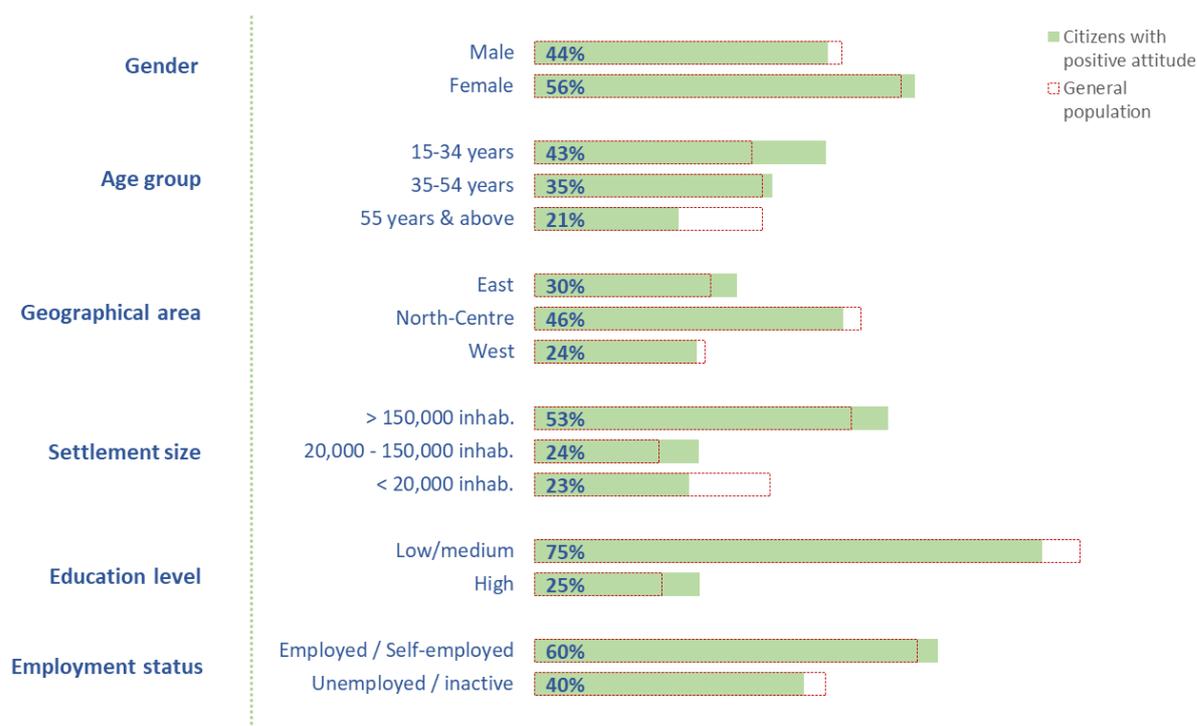
Attitudes were profiled against a comprehensive set of indicators, starting with the main socio-demographic characteristics, followed by passive and active exposure to EU-related information (including main language used and subjects of interest), assessment of the relationship between Belarus and the EU, awareness and effectiveness of its financial support and level of trust towards the EU and other foreign institutions, and finally the perception of the country’s and citizens’ personal futures and main concerns.

3.5.1. Positive attitudes

In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, holders of a positive view of the EU – who represent around one third of Belarusians (36%, up 2% since 2018) – have a very definite profile compared to that of the general population. Nearly 80% are less than 55 – 43% are between 15 and 34 and 35% between 35 and 55 – over half are employed/self-employed (60%), females (56%) and/or live in larger settlements (53%), one third are eastern residents and one fourth are highly educated (25%).

³⁵ Individuals that were mostly negatively oriented were excluded from the comparison, as their number was too small for the results to be statistically significant.

FIGURE 34 – Socio-demographic characteristics and geographical location of Belarusians with a positive image of the EU

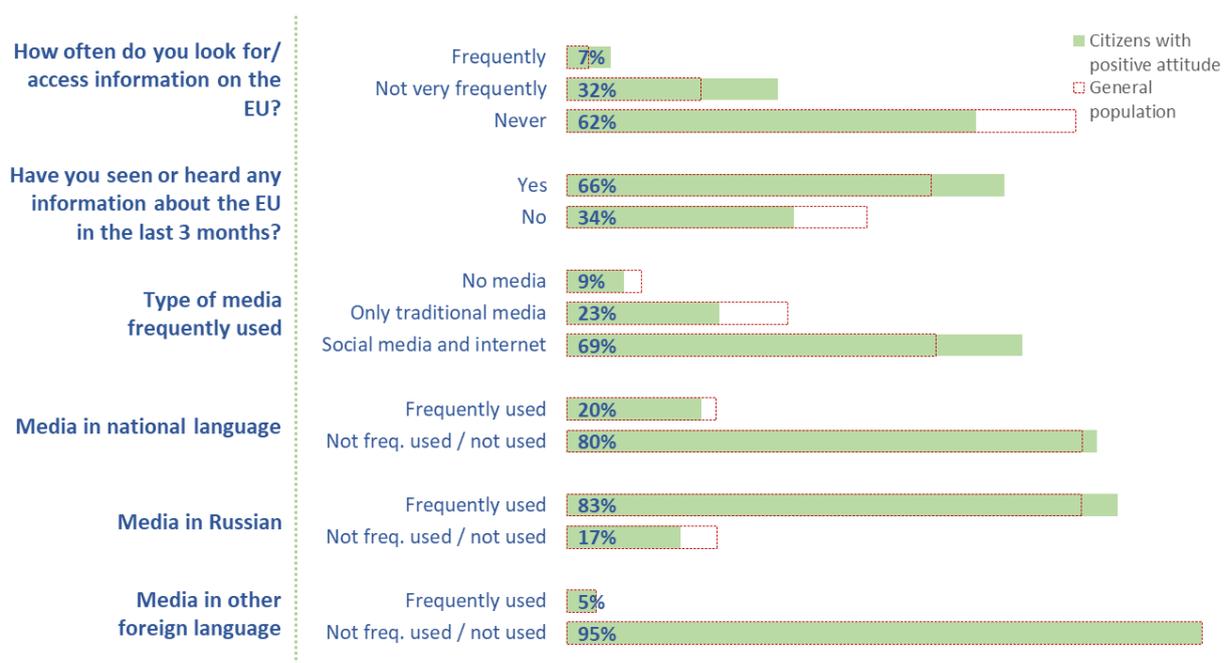


EU supporters are also much more likely to have been passively and actively exposed to EU-related information. In fact, 66% of individuals holding a positive image of the EU have seen or heard information about the EU and 39% of them have actively looked for it (versus 55% and 23% for the general population).

Media sources in Russian are their preferred choice, and more so compared to 2018 (83%, up 4 percentage points); followed by media in Belarusian (20%) and in other foreign languages (5%). In particular, EU supporters are less disposed towards the exclusive usage of traditional media (23% versus 33%) and stronger users of new media (69% versus 56% for the general population).

If actively searching, EU supporters are more interested in broad queries – such as ‘general information’ (41%), ‘lifestyle in the EU’ (26%), ‘economic’ (35%) and ‘socio-political news’ (36%) – rather than ‘the relations between their country and the European Union’ (21%) and/or ‘other EaP countries’ (8%). They seem slightly more interested in ‘the opportunities offered by the EU’ than the general population (21% versus 19%).

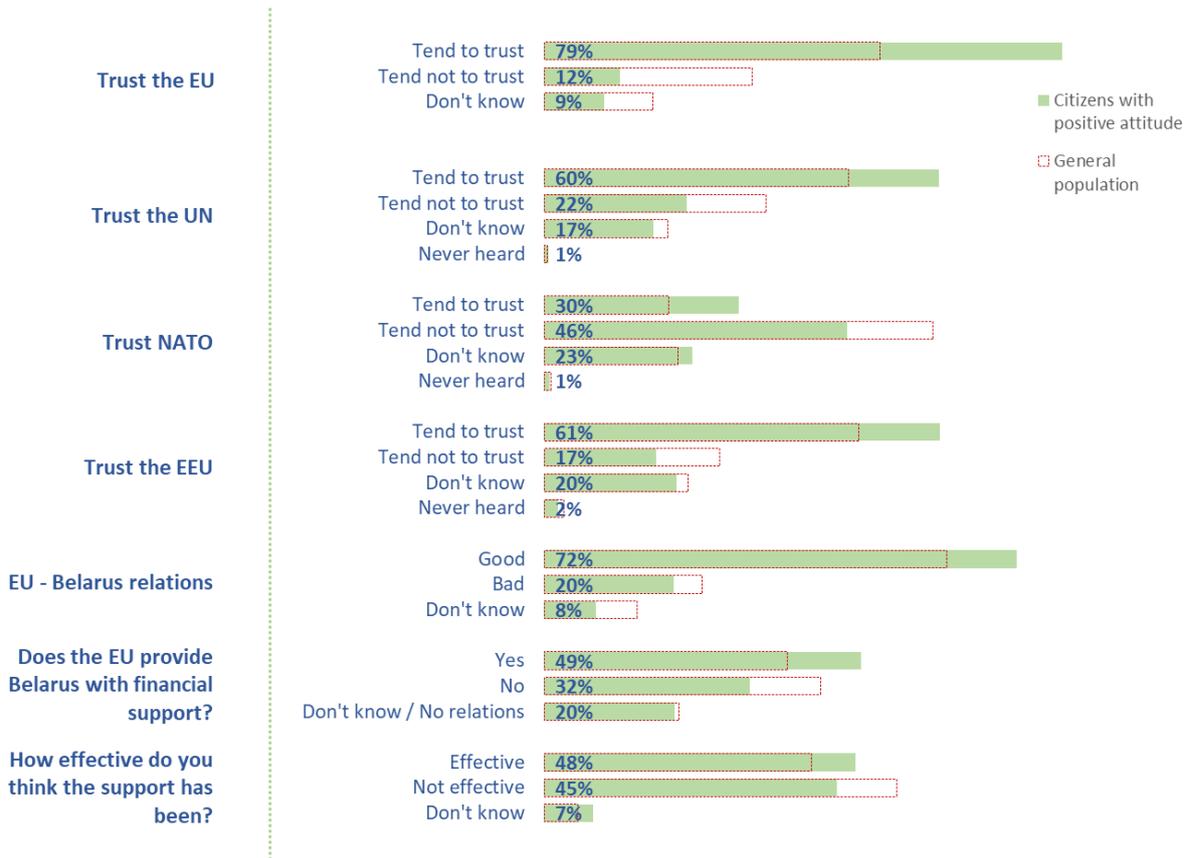
FIGURE 35 – Exposure to information about the EU and media usage among Belarusians with a positive image of the EU



Over 70% of positively oriented individuals have a positive image of the relations between the EU and their country (72%) and 79% openly trust the EU (versus 62% and 51% for the general population). A positive attitude towards the EU goes together with a higher level of trust in the EEU (61% versus 48%) as well as in the UN (60% versus 47%). In fact, even if almost half of EU supporters do not trust NATO (46%), the share of those who trust it is much higher than for the general population (30% versus 19%).

EU supporters are also more likely to acknowledge the EU's financial support (49% versus 37% for the general population) and rate it as effective (48% versus 41%) – although both these figures have greatly decreased since 2018 – by respectively 14 and 10 percentage points. As previously noted, the slow progress on the consolidation of strategic relations and partnership with the EU, which, in turn, affected the launch of approved projects and programmes in the country, may have impacted on the perception of its effectiveness.

FIGURE 36 – Attitudes toward the EU among Belarusians with a positive image of the EU

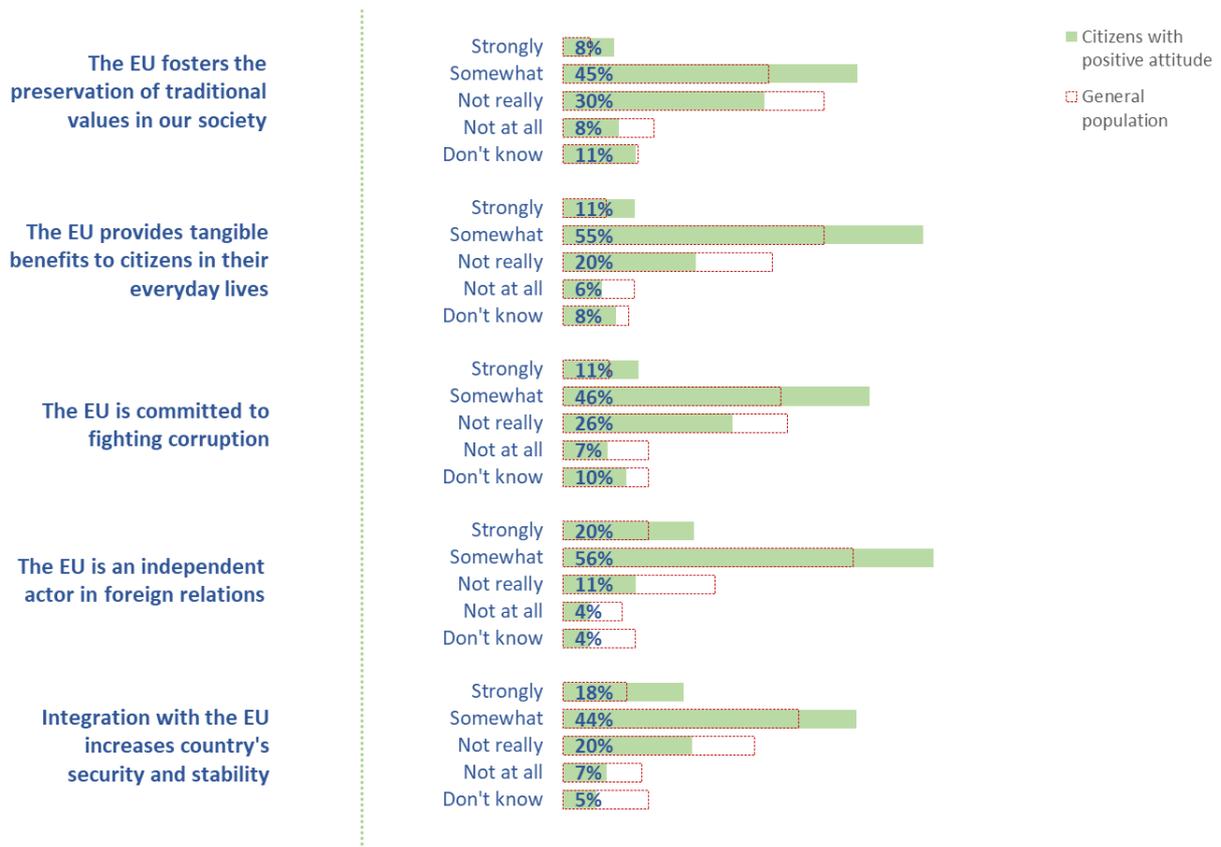


Most EU supporters tend to share a positive vision of the EU: in fact each one of the five statements on common beliefs collected a higher level of agreement than among the general population. Levels of ‘strong’ agreement varied between 8% and 20% (4% and 13% for the general population) and that of ‘fair’ agreement between 45% and 56% (31% and 44% for the general population). It is important to note that as much as three fourths of EU supporters consider ‘the EU as an independent actor in foreign relations’ (76%).

The statement ‘the EU fosters the preservation of traditional values in our society’ received conversely the lower level of appreciation; only around one in two EU supporters agree with it (53%). Considering the widespread usage of Russian media in the country (70%), this finding suggests a ‘fairly positive’ representation of the EU in such sources, only ‘somewhat’ less positive with regard to its role as a holder of traditional values compared to Russia, which may be presented as the main holder of the ‘collective identity’.

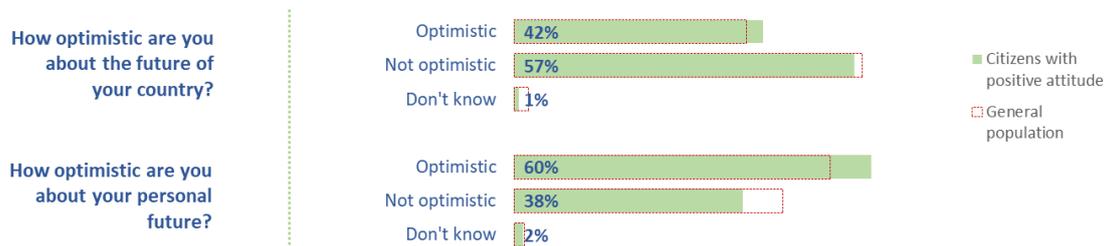
The lower shares of ‘don’t know’ responses recorded among EU supporters shows how individuals with a positive image of the EU are also more confident than the general population in sharing their beliefs.

FIGURE 37 – Common beliefs by Belarusians with a positive image of the EU



In general EU supporters tend to display a greater optimism than the general population regarding their personal future (60% versus 53%). They are slightly more positive also regarding the future of their country, still 57% of EU supporters are negative about it (59% for the general population). In fact, 61% of EU supporters are concerned about low salaries and pensions, 48% about high prices and taxes, 42% about unemployment, 41% about the economic crisis and 39% about the low living standards and poverty – very similar figures to those of the general population.

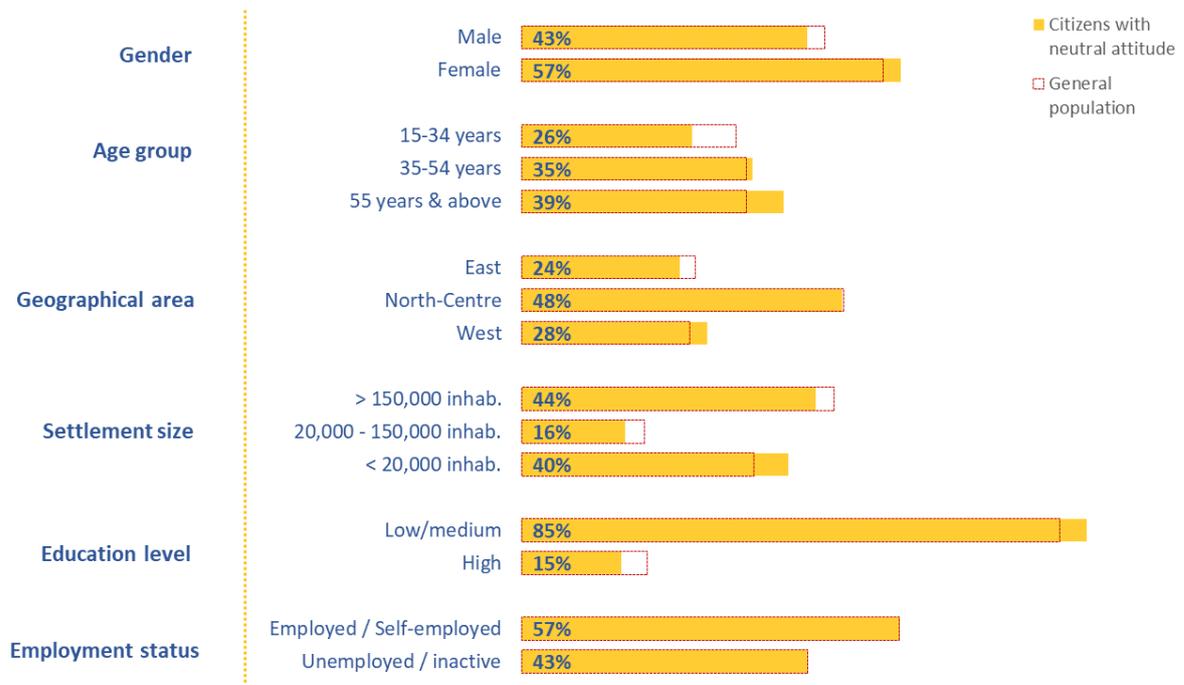
FIGURE 38 – View of the future among Belarusians with a positive image of the EU



3.5.2. Neutral attitudes

Belarusians with a neutral view of the EU are the largest group of the population – 53% of all citizens (43% in 2018). In general they are more easily found among the socio-demographic groups such as women (57%), the older generation (39%), people with a low level of education (85%), villagers (40%) and those who seldom use the Internet (48%, see also Figure 40). One in three also live in the west of the country (28%); the figure is 24% for EU supporters.

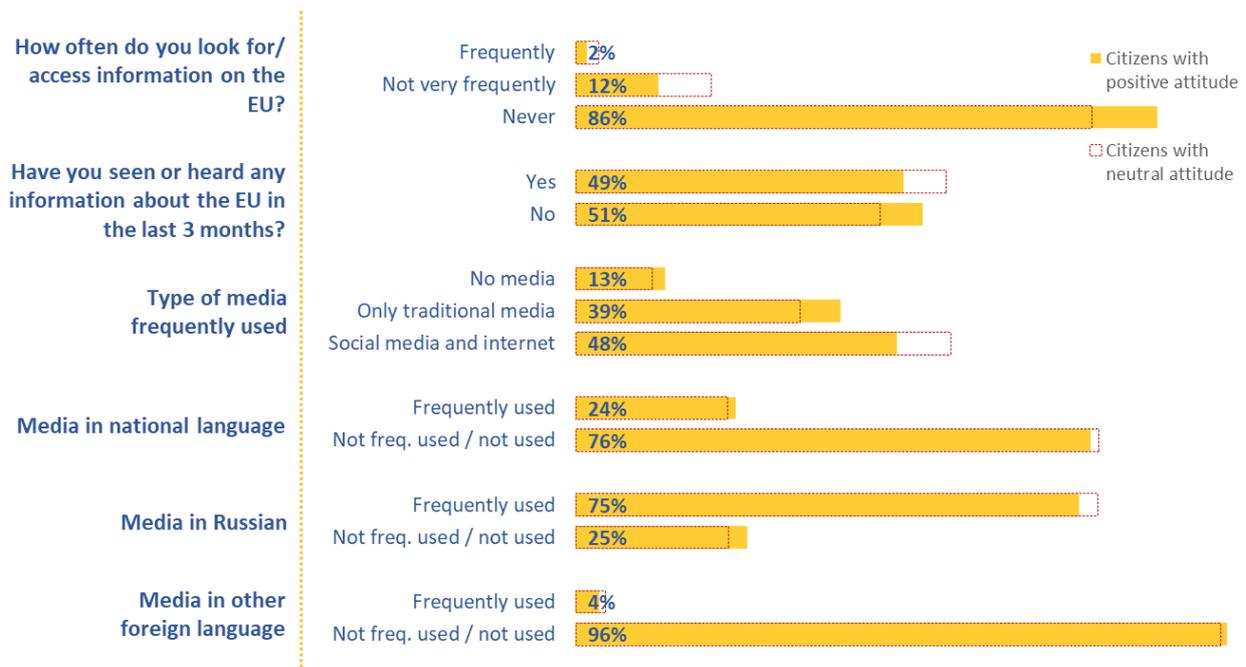
FIGURE 38 – Socio-demographic characteristics and geographical location of Belarusians with a neutral image of the EU



Their exposure to EU-related information is quite limited, especially if compared to that of EU supporters: only 49% have seen or heard information about the EU (versus 66% for EU supporters) and only 14% of them have actively looked for it (versus 39%) – only 2% ‘frequently’ (versus 7%). Neutrally-oriented citizens are more disposed towards traditional media than EU supporters (39% versus 23%) and less keen to frequently use new media (48% versus 69%). Even though three fourths frequently use media in Russian (75%) – one fourth also frequently relies on media in Belarusian (24%), which is slightly more than EU supporters (20%).

If actively searching, individuals with a neutral stance tend engage in generic searches less than EU supporters; while targeting more information on ‘the EU relations with Belarus’ (29% versus 21% for EU supporters) and/or ‘other EaP countries’ (13% versus 8%), as well as ‘education and cultural programmes’ sponsored by the EU (27% versus 21%).

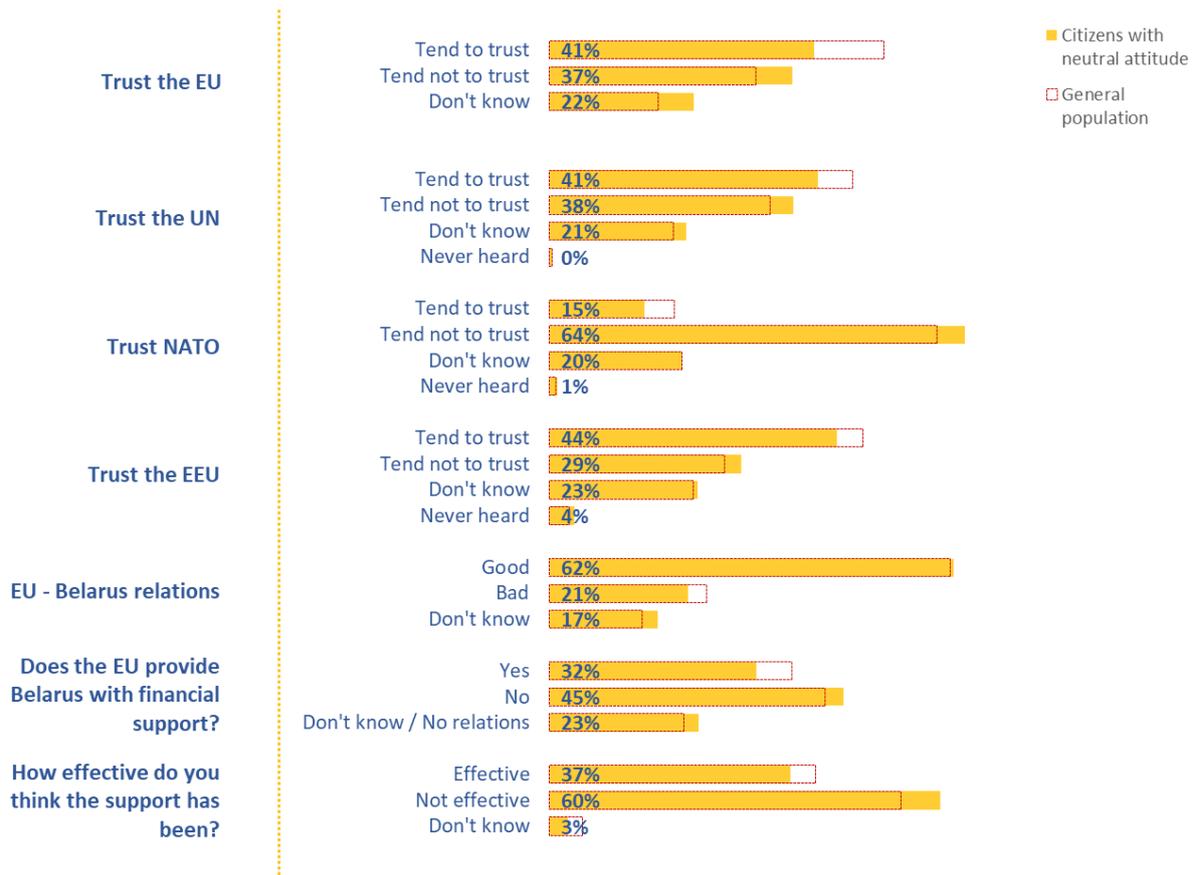
FIGURE 40 – Exposure to information about the EU and media usage among Belarusians with a neutral image of the EU



Individuals with a neutral stance are less positive than EU supporters in their assessment of the relations between Belarus and the EU (62% versus 72%) and, especially, in their levels of trust towards the EU (41% versus 79%). Around 40% trust the EEU (44%) and the UN (41%), and only 15% trust NATO. In fact, neutrally oriented citizens are very likely to provide a ‘don’t’ know’ response: around one in four citizens could not rate their level of trust in the above institutions (between 21% and 27%).

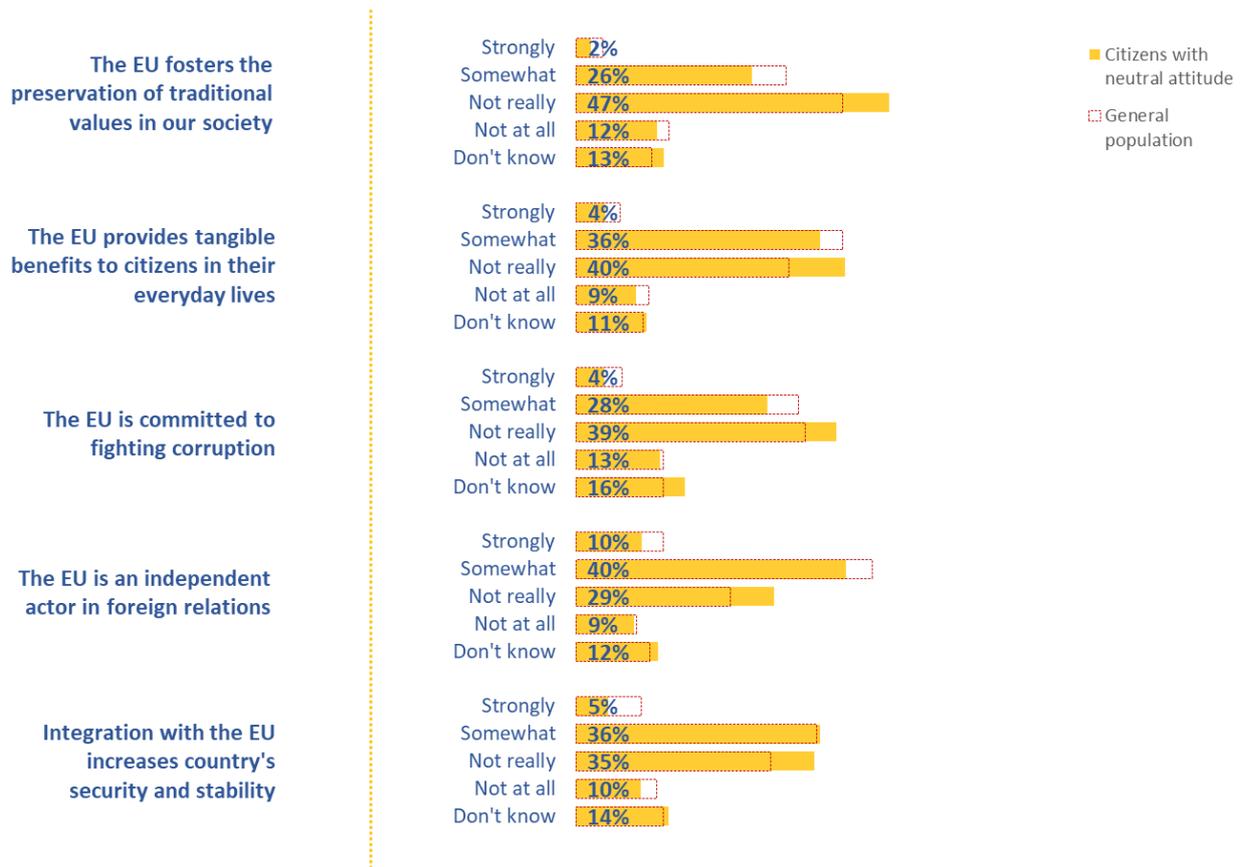
Lower levels of awareness of the EU go together with more criticism towards the weight and the effectiveness of the EU’s financial support: only 32% of neutrally oriented citizens acknowledge the EU’s support and only 37% of them consider it effective – the respective figures for EU supporters are 49% and 48%.

FIGURE 41 – Attitudes towards the EU among Belarusians with a neutral image of the EU



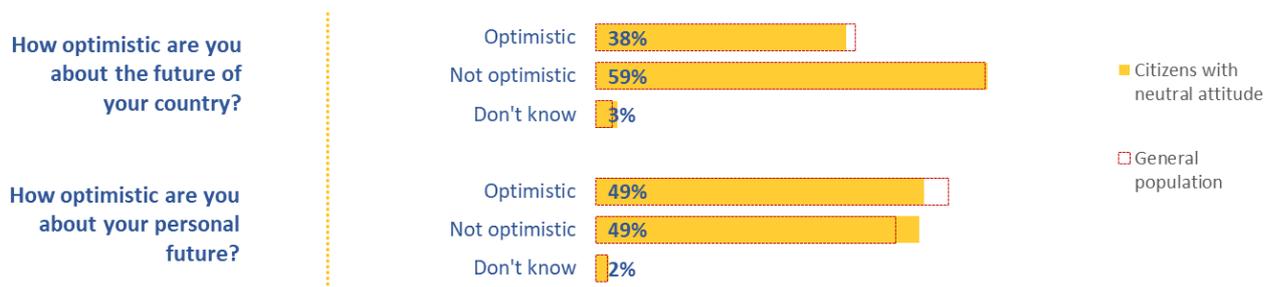
Most neutrally oriented individuals share a somewhat negative view when it comes to the assessment of common beliefs. In fact, one in two citizens agree only with the statement ‘the EU is an independent actor in foreign relations’. ‘Neutral’ were particularly critical with regard to EU’s commitment in fighting corruption (39% answered ‘not really’ and 13% ‘not at all’) and to its role as a holder of traditional values (47% answered ‘not really’ and 12% ‘not at all’).

FIGURE 42 – Common beliefs by Belarusians with a neutral image of the EU



'Neutral' individuals are slightly less optimistic regarding the future of their country (38%) than EU supporters (42%). The gap is larger when prospects are related to personal future (49% versus 60%). In fact, neutrally oriented citizens tend to share the same concerns on the current economic situation (and all related issues) of EU supporters: 59% of them mentioned 'low salaries and pensions', 44% 'high prices and taxes', 40% 'the economic crisis', 38% 'low living standards and poverty' and 36% 'unemployment'. They seem only slightly more concerned about the issue of corruption (22%) and the absence of rule of law (7%).

FIGURE 43 – View of the future among Belarusians with a neutral image of the EU



5. Annex

TABLE 1 – Perceptions of the EU

Q2.1. Do you have a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image of the European Union?						
		Positive	Neutral	Negative	Don't know / Never heard of the EU	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	39%	51%	9%	1%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	47%	45%	6%	2%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	24%	62%	10%	4%	100%
Gender	Male	34%	50%	13%	3%	100%
	Female	37%	56%	5%	2%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	47%	42%	7%	4%	100%
	35-54 years	37%	55%	8%	0%	100%
	55 years & above	22%	63%	12%	3%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	33%	56%	9%	2%	100%
	High level	46%	42%	11%	1%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	37%	54%	9%	0%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	33%	53%	9%	5%	100%
Geographical area	East	40%	49%	5%	6%	100%
	North/Centre	33%	53%	12%	2%	100%
	West	34%	59%	7%	0%	100%
Total		36%	53%	9%	2%	100%

TABLE 2 – Values associated with the EU

Q2.3. To what extent does the European Union represent the following values for you?						
	Very strong	Strong	Weak	Very weak	Don't know	Total
Economic prosperity	23%	47%	17%	5%	8%	100%
Freedom of Religion	20%	49%	19%	4%	8%	100%
Human Rights	20%	47%	22%	6%	5%	100%
Freedom of speech	11%	55%	23%	4%	7%	100%
Individual Freedom	20%	45%	23%	6%	6%	100%
Freedom of the media	19%	46%	24%	5%	6%	100%
Rule of Law	13%	51%	22%	6%	8%	100%
Respect for other cultures, minorities	13%	51%	23%	6%	7%	100%
Equality and social justice	13%	47%	25%	8%	7%	100%
Democracy	17%	43%	26%	8%	6%	100%
Honesty & Transparency	7%	45%	35%	5%	8%	100%
Peace, Security and Stability	13%	33%	39%	11%	4%	100%
Absence of corruption	7%	26%	44%	10%	13%	100%

Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU

TABLE 3 – Trust towards the European Union

Q2.11. I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in the EU. Please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it					
		Tend to trust	Tend not to trust	Don't know	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	51%	33%	16%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	62%	22%	16%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	47%	36%	17%	100%
Gender	Male	49%	35%	16%	100%
	Female	54%	29%	17%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	63%	24%	13%	100%
	35-54 years	53%	30%	17%	100%
	55 years & above	39%	42%	19%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	51%	31%	18%	100%
	High level	55%	33%	12%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	51%	32%	17%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	51%	32%	17%	100%
Geographical area	East	55%	25%	20%	100%
	North/Centre	48%	38%	14%	100%
	West	55%	27%	18%	100%
Total		51%	32%	17%	100%

Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU

TABLE 4 – Relations between the EU and Belarus

Q2.4. In general, how would you describe the relations that the European Union has with Belarus?					
		Good	Bad	Don't know / No relations	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	59%	23%	18%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	78%	13%	9%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	56%	32%	12%	100%
Gender	Male	60%	25%	15%	100%
	Female	63%	23%	14%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	62%	24%	14%	100%
	35-54 years	58%	30%	12%	100%
	55 years & above	64%	19%	17%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	63%	22%	15%	100%
	High level	56%	32%	12%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	60%	28%	12%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	64%	19%	17%	100%
Geographical area	East	60%	22%	18%	100%
	North/Centre	58%	29%	13%	100%
	West	70%	18%	12%	100%
Total		62%	24%	14%	100%

Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU

TABLE 5 – Provision of financial support by the EU

Q2.5. As far as you know, does the European Union provide Belarus with financial support?					
		Yes	No	Don't know	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	38%	40%	22%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	50%	28%	22%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	28%	54%	18%	100%
Gender	Male	37%	42%	21%	100%
	Female	37%	43%	20%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	40%	38%	22%	100%
	35-54 years	41%	42%	17%	100%
	55 years & above	30%	47%	23%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	37%	42%	21%	100%
	High level	38%	45%	17%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	39%	42%	19%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	35%	43%	22%	100%
Geographical area	East	49%	27%	24%	100%
	North/Centre	29%	55%	16%	100%
	West	40%	34%	26%	100%
Total		37%	42%	21%	100%

Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU

TABLE 6 – Effectiveness of the support

Q2.5.1. How effective do you think the support has been?					
		Effective	Not effective	Don't know	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	36%	57%	7%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	50%	47%	3%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	40%	56%	4%	100%
Gender	Male	32%	62%	6%	100%
	Female	49%	47%	4%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	43%	52%	5%	100%
	35-54 years	39%	53%	8%	100%
	55 years & above	41%	57%	2%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	40%	55%	5%	100%
	High level	44%	51%	5%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	34%	59%	7%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	51%	47%	2%	100%
Geographical area	East	38%	57%	5%	100%
	North/Centre	35%	58%	7%	100%
	West	53%	45%	2%	100%
Total		41%	54%	5%	100%

Percentages refer to Belarusians who were aware of the EU's financial support

TABLE 7 – Programmes financed by the EU

Q2.6. Do you know of any specific programmes financed by the European Union in Belarus?				
		Yes	No	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	42%	58%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	36%	64%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	29%	71%	100%
Gender	Male	36%	64%	100%
	Female	38%	62%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	42%	58%	100%
	35-54 years	40%	60%	100%
	55 years & above	28%	72%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	34%	66%	100%
	High level	49%	51%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	39%	61%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	34%	66%	100%
Geographical area	East	49%	51%	100%
	North/Centre	36%	64%	100%
	West	26%	74%	100%
Total		37%	63%	46%

Percentages refer to Belarusians who were aware of the EU's financial support

TABLE 8 – Benefits from current EU support

Q2.8. To what extent would you say that Belarus has benefitted from the current European Union support in the following areas?						
	Very much	Fairly	Not very much	Not at all	Don't know	Total
More tourism	13%	45%	22%	17%	3%	100%
Improved trade	14%	43%	23%	17%	3%	100%
Access to more products and services	10%	44%	28%	15%	3%	100%
Better education	8%	35%	31%	21%	5%	100%
Greater employment opportunities	11%	30%	31%	23%	5%	100%
Improved infrastructure	9%	30%	29%	25%	7%	100%
Improved quality of health-care system	5%	31%	33%	25%	6%	100%
Greater economic development	3%	31%	40%	22%	4%	100%
Improved democracy	1%	29%	39%	25%	6%	100%
Better law enforcement	5%	23%	36%	30%	6%	100%
Improved agricultural production	4%	24%	36%	28%	8%	100%
Improved quality of the justice system	5%	19%	38%	29%	9%	100%
Less corruption	4%	16%	41%	32%	7%	100%

Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU

TABLE 9 – Areas in which the EU should play a greater role

Q2.9. Please tell us in which sectors you think the European Union should play a greater role		
	The specific item was selected as the first most important area	The specific item was selected as the first or second or third most important area
Improve trade	28%	29%
Improve democracy	13%	14%
Promote a better education	12%	26%
Increase tourism	10%	25%
Reduce corruption	7%	9%
Promote access to more products and services	7%	20%
Create greater employment opportunities	5%	40%
Promote economic development	5%	50%
Promote better law enforcement	3%	17%
Improve quality of health-care system	3%	30%
Improve agricultural production	3%	12%
Improve infrastructure	1%	13%
Improve quality of the justice system	1%	4%

Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU

TABLE 10 – Type of media frequently used as source of information

		Type of media frequently used as source of information (Q3.8)				Word of mouth used as source of information (Q3.8)
		No media	Only traditional media	Social media or the Internet	Total	
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	14%	35%	51%	100%	55%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	14%	27%	59%	100%	56%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	7%	34%	59%	100%	81%
Gender	Male	13%	31%	56%	100%	60%
	Female	10%	35%	55%	100%	67%
Age group	15-34 years	16%	5%	79%	100%	63%
	35-54 years	11%	24%	65%	100%	68%
	55 years & above	7%	69%	24%	100%	62%
Education level	Low/medium level	12%	37%	51%	100%	63%
	High level	7%	18%	75%	100%	68%
Employment status	Employed/ Self-employed	13%	25%	62%	100%	64%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	9%	44%	47%	100%	64%
Geographical area	East	11%	29%	60%	100%	76%
	North/Centre	10%	35%	55%	100%	59%
	West	13%	34%	53%	100%	62%
Total		11%	33%	56%	100%	64%

TABLE 11 – Frequent usage of media in Belarusian, Russian and other languages

		Individuals that always or often use media		
		In national language	In Russian	In other foreign language
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	25%	76%	3%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	24%	87%	6%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	18%	74%	6%
Gender	Male	19%	71%	5%
	Female	26%	82%	4%
Age group	15-34 years	10%	66%	4%
	35-54 years	17%	79%	4%
	55 years & above	40%	87%	5%
Education level	Low/medium level	24%	77%	5%
	High level	17%	78%	4%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	19%	76%	5%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	26%	80%	4%
Geographical area	East	20%	80%	5%
	North/Centre	26%	77%	2%
	West	18%	74%	8%
Total		22%	77%	4%

TABLE 12 – Trust towards different type of media

Q3.9. & Q3.10. What is your level of trust for the following media as a source of information?				
	Tend to trust	Tend not to trust	Don't know	Total
Official EU websites	28%	33%	39%	100%
Television	59%	35%	6%	100%
Radio	48%	36%	16%	100%
Print media	51%	35%	14%	100%
Social media	49%	32%	19%	100%
Internet	60%	24%	16%	100%
Word of mouth	79%	14%	7%	100%
Country's media in Belarusians	50%	62%	21%	100%
Country's media in Russian	35%	30%	45%	100%
Country's media in other languages	15%	8%	34%	100%
Foreign media in Russian	50%	62%	21%	100%
Foreign media in other languages	35%	30%	45%	100%

TABLE 13 – Exposure to information about the EU

Q3.2. Have you seen or heard any information about the EU in the last three months?		Yes	No	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	68%	32%	68%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	49%	51%	49%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	39%	61%	39%
Gender	Male	57%	43%	57%
	Female	53%	47%	53%
Age group	15-34 years	52%	48%	52%
	35-54 years	58%	42%	58%
	55 years & above	55%	45%	55%
Education level	Low/medium level	53%	47%	53%
	High level	61%	39%	61%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	57%	43%	57%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	52%	48%	52%
Geographical area	East	46%	54%	46%
	North/Centre	53%	47%	53%
	West	68%	32%	68%
Total		55%	45%	100%

Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard about the EU

TABLE 14 – Representation of the EU in the national media

Q3.3. In general, how would you say the EU was presented in the national media?		Positive	Neutral	Negative	Don't know	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	53%	37%	5%	5%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	56%	33%	4%	7%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	35%	48%	13%	4%	100%
Gender	Male	45%	41%	9%	5%	100%
	Female	50%	40%	5%	5%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	55%	35%	4%	6%	100%
	35-54 years	44%	43%	7%	6%	100%
	55 years & above	44%	42%	10%	4%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	47%	41%	7%	5%	100%
	High level	48%	36%	9%	7%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	48%	41%	6%	5%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	47%	39%	8%	6%	100%
Geographical area	East	54%	36%	3%	7%	100%
	North/Centre	48%	40%	7%	5%	100%
	West	41%	45%	11%	3%	100%
Total		47%	40%	7%	6%	100%

Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard about the EU

TABLE 15 – Accessing information about the EU

Q3.1. How often do you look for/access information on the EU?					
		Frequently	Not very frequently	Never	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	5%	18%	77%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	4%	35%	61%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	2%	14%	84%	100%
Gender	Male	4%	22%	74%	100%
	Female	3%	18%	79%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	3%	30%	67%	100%
	35-54 years	5%	22%	73%	100%
	55 years & above	2%	9%	89%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	3%	19%	78%	100%
	High level	6%	23%	71%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	5%	22%	73%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	2%	17%	81%	100%
Geographical area	East	3%	19%	78%	100%
	North/Centre	3%	17%	80%	100%
	West	4%	27%	69%	100%
Total		3%	20%	77%	100%

Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU

TABLE 16 – Satisfaction with democracy in Belarus

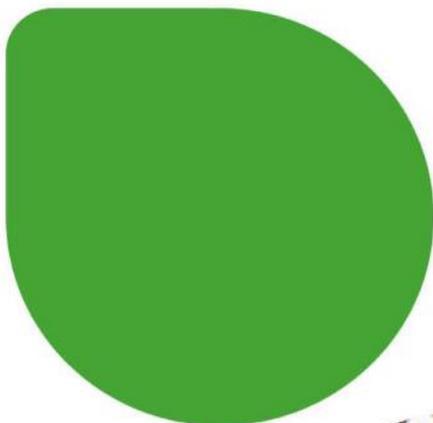
Q4.3. On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Belarus?					
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Don't know	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	32%	59%	9%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	48%	43%	9%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	46%	44%	10%	100%
Gender	Male	31%	60%	9%	100%
	Female	47%	43%	10%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	41%	47%	12%	100%
	35-54 years	33%	60%	7%	100%
	55 years & above	45%	45%	10%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	40%	50%	10%	100%
	High level	39%	55%	6%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	33%	60%	7%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	48%	39%	13%	100%
Geographical area	East	37%	47%	16%	100%
	North/Centre	40%	55%	5%	100%
	West	43%	45%	12%	100%
Total		40%	51%	9%	100%

TABLE 17 – Optimism regarding Belarus’s future

Q4.5. How optimistic are you about the future of your country?					
		Optimistic	Pessimistic	Don't know	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	31%	66%	3%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	44%	53%	3%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	47%	52%	1%	100%
Gender	Male	34%	63%	3%	100%
	Female	43%	55%	2%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	46%	54%	0%	100%
	35-54 years	29%	69%	2%	100%
	55 years & above	43%	52%	5%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	39%	58%	3%	100%
	High level	37%	62%	1%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	32%	66%	2%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	48%	49%	3%	100%
Geographical area	East	36%	62%	2%	100%
	North/Centre	44%	54%	2%	100%
	West	34%	64%	2%	100%
Total		39%	59%	2%	100%

TABLE 18 – Optimism regarding personal future

Q4.6. How optimistic are you about your personal future?					
		Optimistic	Pessimistic	Don't know	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	46%	51%	3%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	63%	35%	2%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	57%	43%	0%	100%
Gender	Male	52%	47%	1%	100%
	Female	54%	44%	2%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	66%	34%	0%	100%
	35-54 years	48%	49%	3%	100%
	55 years & above	46%	52%	2%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	52%	46%	2%	100%
	High level	56%	43%	1%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	50%	47%	3%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	57%	42%	1%	100%
Geographical area	East	49%	48%	3%	100%
	North/Centre	56%	43%	1%	100%
	West	52%	46%	2%	100%
Total		53%	45%	2%	100%



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