

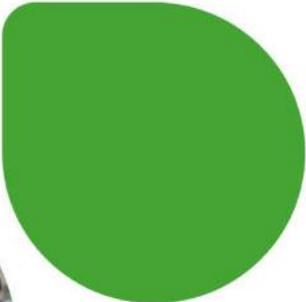
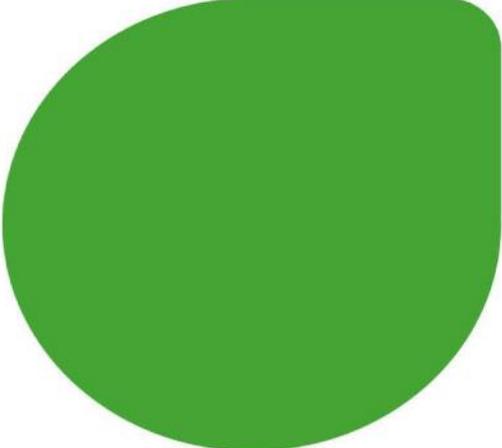


**ANNUAL SURVEY REPORT:**  
**BELARUS**

5<sup>th</sup> Wave (Spring 2020)

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

**MARCH 2020**



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**act**

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

# 1. Background

In February 2020, a fifth 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 the EU's support in the Eastern partner countries (EaP) 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 **5<sup>th</sup> wave of annual surveys** (Spring 2020 – **before COVID-19 crisis**) conducted in **BELARUS**<sup>1</sup> 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 the 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 5<sup>th</sup> wave of the survey, also provide comparisons between the findings of the 2019, 2018, 2017 and 2016 surveys where relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 (field work) took place between February and March 2020 (before COVID-19 crisis), following the same methodology adopted in the previous rounds of data collection (Spring 2019, 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 settlements<sup>2</sup> and three areas<sup>3</sup> 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 age<sup>4</sup> 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 walk<sup>5</sup> 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).

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<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

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

<sup>5</sup> 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** and only 4% of them have no opinion or have never heard of it. **Neutrality is the most common attitude towards the EU (46%), followed by a ‘fair’ appreciation (28%).** Compared to 2019, however, neutrality (down 7%) has transformed into slightly more marked opinions – either positive (38%, up 2%) or negative (12%, up 3%).
- The neutral attitude of Belarusians can be related to the **value which they rate most important – ‘peace, security and stability’** – chosen by around 60% of citizens for the fifth year in a row. 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 and economic climate prevailing in the EU is also well perceived by Belarusians, with between 60% and 70% of citizens ‘strongly’ or ‘very strongly’ linking the EU with most values.
- Levels of trust towards international institutions show a slight decline compared to 2019 and only NATO gains a slight increase in trust (23%, up 4%) – though most Belarusians remain cautious regarding its role in the region (47% do not trust NATO). In fact, **the EU is the most trusted institution in the country by around one in two Belarusians** (45%, down 6% since 2019).

### *EU relations with Belarus and awareness of EU financial support*

- **Most Belarusians positively acknowledge the relations between their country and the EU** (54%). However, compared to 2019, less citizens describe them as ‘fairly good’ (50%, down 6%) or ‘very good’ (4%, down 2%).
- **41% of citizens are aware that the EU financially supports Belarus, and 52% of them consider it effective. EU-funded programmes in the field of education enjoy a strong and rising popularity** (59% of citizens aware of the EU’s financial support know specific programmes, up 7 percentage points). 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 three citizens aware of specific programmes financed by the EU also mentioned programmes in the field of culture (33%).
- Most of the population is convinced that the Russian Federation financially sustains their country ‘more’ than the EU (52%). However, **compared to last year, this figure has recorded a decrease of 8% and citizens seem also less certain of their opinion:** 15% could not provide a definite answer. The EU is seen as providing ‘the same’ or ‘more’ financial support than the United States and the United Nations and its agencies by 59% of citizens and as providing ‘the same’ or ‘more’ financial support than the IMF/World Bank by 49% of citizens.
- **Belarusians identify and rate the most positive effects of the EU’s support in terms of greater movements of both people and products.** The increase in ‘tourism’ and ‘trade’, as well as the ‘greater access to products and services’ were the most mentioned areas, respectively by 57%, 52% and 47% of the population. Around 45% of citizens also acknowledged the positive effects of EU’s support on ‘education’ (45%) and ‘employment opportunities’ (43%).

### *Media usage as sources of information*

- **Television and ‘word of mouth’ continue to be the most popular source of information in Belarus** – only 10% and 11% of the population respectively ‘never’ rely on them. Other traditional media – such as print media and the radio – remain widely used in the country (61% and 53% of citizens, respectively, use them) and compete with Internet (69%) and social networks (60%), but only when it comes to sporadic usage. **In fact, if media usage is broken down into frequent usage, new media (52%) overtake traditional media (34%).**

- **Media in Russian are the most popular media source in the country: 92% of Belarusians** use national media in Russian and 65% 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 65% of citizens also use national media in Belarusian – though only 3% ‘always’. Only one in ten citizens use foreign or national media in other languages (10% and 6% respectively).
- Freedom of the media remains one of the most critical areas in Belarus – guaranteed for less than one third of citizens – and **‘word of mouth’ is the only source trusted by the overwhelming majority of the population** (74%), followed at a fair distance by national media in Russian (57%), television (52%) and Internet (49%). Sources in foreign languages – whether national or foreign – are trusted by only around 15% of citizens – although around 45% cannot rate their levels of trust due to lack of usage and awareness.

### *Sources of information about the EU*

- **Slightly over half of the population (54%) claim to have seen or heard information about the EU in the last three months, with no change compared to 2019.** Compared to previous waves, **passive exposure** increasingly depends on the **Internet** (48% of citizens who have seen/heard EU-related information were reached through this media, **up 16% since 2019**) and **social media** (17%, **up 9%**) – although the **television remains the main provider (68%, down 8% since 2019).**
- ‘Frequent’ or ‘very frequent’ search for EU-related information is very rare in Belarus and interests only 6% of citizens (it was 3% in 2019). Sporadic access is also uncommon (22% ‘not very frequently’), with no change compared to 2019.
- **Nearly all individuals who search for information about the EU use Russian (95%), the remaining 5% share use English (3%) and Belarusian (2%).** ‘Active searchers’ are mostly interested in the ‘EU’s lifestyle’ and/or in ‘general information’ about the EU (36% and 32% respectively), the most searched topics in 2019. ‘Educational and cultural programmes’ (28%, up 7%) received a greater interest, in line with the strong and rising popularity of EU-funded programmes in the field of education. 27% of Belarusians who look for EU-related information are interested in the ‘relations between their country and the EU’, but only 10% in the ‘relations with other EaP countries’.
- ‘Active searchers of information’ **tend to convey mostly positive opinions with regard to the EU-related information they access online and offline.** ‘Fair’ appreciation is widespread and around one in four of ‘Active searchers’ rated the EU-related information as ‘very’ accessible and comprehensive, around one in five as ‘very’ user-friendly and around one in ten as ‘very’ reliable and trustworthy.

### *View of Belarus’s current situation*

- Citizens’ trust in Belarus’s public institutions shows a drastic reduction since 2019 – when it already was at moderate levels – possibly reflecting the outcome of the 2019 Parliamentary polls. **Currently 46% of the population trust the Government** (down 10%), **41% the Parliament** (down 12%) and 39% regional and local authorities (down 8%). Confidence in political parties is even lower (26%, down 6%).
- **Belarusian citizens are largely dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their country (56%, up 5% since 2019),** with 41% of them ‘not very satisfied’ and 15% ‘not at all satisfied’. Citizens’ perceptions of the democratic process in Belarus also show a marked decrease. According to the majority of the population only ‘gender equality’ is present in their country – 65% (down 5% since 2019). ‘Lack of corruption’ and ‘equality and social justice’ are the most critical issues – only 17% and 25% of Belarusians believe these apply to their country – and were joined at the lowest ranks by ‘freedom of media’ (32%, down 7%) and ‘free and fair elections’ (33%, down 19%).
- Most Belarusians are not optimistic (60%) towards the future of their country, in line with 2019 and previous waves. Optimism towards personal future is more common, although the country seems basically split: 51% of citizens are ‘optimistic’ *versus* 47% who are ‘pessimistic’.

- **No significant change was observed compared to 2019 and the current economic situation and all related issues remain the most pressing concerns for citizens.** More specifically, 63% of them mentioned 'low salaries and pensions', 41% 'low living standards and poverty', 39% 'high prices and taxes' and/or 'unemployment', and 36% 'the economic crisis'.

### *Profiling attitudes towards the EU: positive versus neutral*

- **EU supporters** – 38% of citizens (up 2% since 2019) – and **'neutral' Belarusians** – 46% of citizens (down 7% since 2019) – **represent two very distinctive segments of the population.** The former are more likely to be female (57%), better educated (26%), employed/self-employed (62%) and aged under 34 years (43%). They are more easily found in the north/centre of the country – which includes Minsk, the capital city – or the western region. By contrast, **neutral Belarusians** are more easily found among people with a low level of education (85%), middle aged or older (69%), inhabitants of small villages (37%) or either big cities (50%), possibly in the east of the country (30%).
- 'Passive' and 'active' exposure to EU-related information is also a strong characterising factor: only 48% of 'neutral' Belarusians have seen or heard information about the EU (versus 62% of EU supporters) and only 22% of them have actively looked for it (versus 41%) – 2% 'frequently' (versus 11%). Neutrally-oriented citizens are also more prone to rely on traditional media only (38% versus 18%) or no media at all (19% versus 9%) and less disposed towards new media (43% versus 73%) and media in foreign languages other than Russian (1% versus 7%).
- 'Neutral' individuals are less positive than EU supporters in their assessment of the relations between Belarus and the EU (52% versus 68%) and, especially, in their levels of trust towards the EU (34% versus 73%). Only 33% of neutrally oriented citizens acknowledge the EU's financial support and only 35% of them consider it effective – while for the EU's supporters it is 60% and 66% respectively. 'Neutral' individuals are very critical towards the NATO – their level of trust stands at 16% versus 37% for EU supporters – but not particularly trustworthy towards the EAEU (39% versus 37%).
- Most neutrally oriented individuals consider 'the EU as an independent actor in foreign relations' (56%). However, they are not convinced that a greater engagement with it could bring along 'tangible benefits for all citizens' (only 38% support the statement), nor 'increase country's security and stability' (32%). It is worth noting that a high share is in fact undecided and figures of 'don't know' responses varied between 19% and 28%.
- By contrast, most EU supporters share a positive vision of the EU and agree on the five statements on common beliefs. Levels of 'fair' agreement vary between 51% and 64% and levels of 'strong' agreement between 6% and 24%. Only around 10% of them did not provide a definite answer – showing that they feel more confident in voicing their opinions.
- EU supporters seem more optimistic than the 'neutral' citizens regarding their personal future (57% versus 43%). Views on the future of their country are more aligned with the pessimistic mood prevailing in the country (38% and 35% respectively) and both groups share similar concerns, namely 'low salaries and pensions', 'unemployment', 'economic crisis', 'low living standards and poverty' and 'high prices and taxes'. Neutral citizens seem slightly more concerned about 'corruption, while EU supporters about the 'quality of education' and the 'absence of rule of law'.

## 3.2. Perceptions of the European Union

*Belarusians are well aware of the European Union (EU) and only 4% of them have no opinion or have never heard of it. **Neutrality is the most common attitude towards the EU (46%), followed by a positive view (38%).** 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 (58%). Most Belarusians well perceive the positive sides of the democratic and socio-economic model prevailing in the EU and between 60% and 69% of citizens ‘strongly’ or ‘very strongly’ link the EU with nearly all values. **EU is the most trusted institution in the country (45%) and most citizens rate positively the relations between their country and the EU (54%). 41% of citizens are aware that EU financially supports Belarus.** The EU-funded programmes in the field of education enjoy a strong and rising popularity: nearly 60% of Belarusians aware of specific programmes financed by the EU know about them. Other positive effects of the EU’s support are the increase in ‘tourism’ (57%) and ‘trade’ (52%), as well as the ‘greater access to products and services’ (47%).*

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 (EU) and only 4% of them have no opinion or have never heard of it. **Neutrality is the most common attitude towards the EU (46%), followed by a ‘fair’ appreciation (28%).** Compared to 2019, however, neutrality (down 7%) has turned into slightly more marked opinions – either positive (38%, up 2%) or negative (12%, up 3%).

There are some very distinctive characteristics linked to attitudes towards the EU. The younger the citizens, the more positive the attitude (51%) and the awareness of the EU (1% has never heard of the EU) – the related figures for middle-aged individuals are respectively 39% and 4%; and for older Belarusians are 25% and 7% respectively, possibly reflecting their past in what was still the USSR.

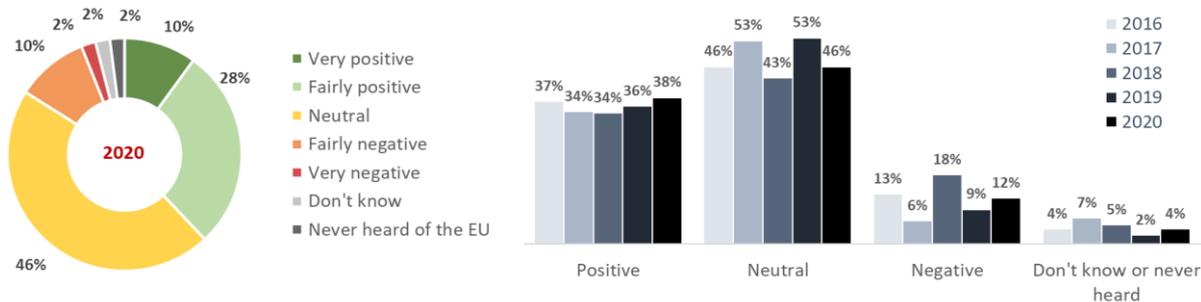
A west-east gradient is also observed: residents of the western region – which is the closest to Poland – have the most pro-European attitudes (41%); citizens living in the north/centre of the country – which includes Minsk, the capital city – are also positively inclined (41%), although around one in five is either negative (14%) or unaware (3%); around 70% of eastern residents – settled in the two regions of Mahilioŭ and Homieĺ which border Russia – are either neutral (53%), negative (8%) or unaware (9%).

Attitudes towards the EU seem sensitive also to settlement size, education, employment status, and, to a lesser extent, gender. Residents of medium-sized cities (54%), highly-educated (53%) or employed citizens (42%) and women (40%) tend to be more positive than their socio-demographic counterparts<sup>6</sup>.

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

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

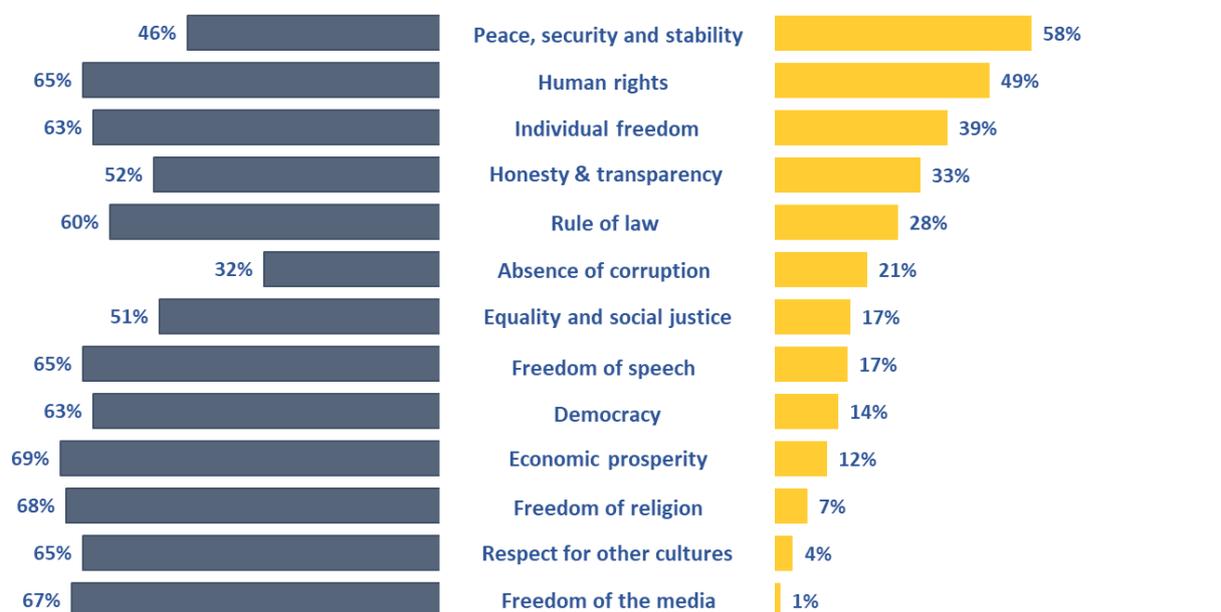


The neutral attitude of Belarusians can be related to the **value which they rate most important – ‘peace, security and stability’**, chosen by around 60% of citizens for the fifth year in a row (58%)<sup>7</sup> – which is guaranteed by a policy of situational neutrality<sup>8</sup> on regional manifestations 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%) would ‘strongly’ or ‘very strongly’ link the European Union with the same value.

Although cautiously non-aligned, most Belarusians well perceive the positive sides of the socio-economic model prevailing in the EU, especially with regard to the democratic and economic climate. In fact, between 60% and 69% of citizens ‘strongly’ or ‘very strongly’ link the EU with nearly all elements and particularly ‘economic prosperity’ (69%), ‘freedom of religion’ (68%) and ‘freedom of the media’ (67%).

The weakest association with the EU remains ‘absence of corruption’ (32%) – though important at a personal level for only one in five Belarusians (21%)<sup>9</sup>.

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



**Values strongly associated with EU**

**Most important personal values**

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

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

<sup>8</sup> Situational neutrality is a peacetime strategy generated, in many respects, by the existing issues in allied relations with Russia, and not by the wish to create such issues. It is also important to note that the driver of the Belarusian take on situational neutrality was not only the external configuration of international relations and the balance of forces in the region, but also the state of the Belarusian nation. According to a series of surveys by the Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies (BISS), there has been a steady increase in population support for the non-aligned status of Belarus (Source: <https://minskdialogue.by/en/research/opinions/situational-neutrality-a-conceptualization-attempt>).

<sup>9</sup> More details are provided in the Annex – Table 2.

Confirming the prevailing ‘neutral’ stance towards the EU, 35% of Belarusians are ‘not really’ confident that ‘the EU fosters the preservation of traditional values in their society’, with an additional 36% of the population ‘somewhat’ agreeing with the above statement<sup>10</sup>. Yet compared to previous waves, **very negative views continue to show a decreasing trend (down 4% since 2019 and down 11% since 2018)**.

**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 13% of the population finding the question ‘too hard to answer’. Around one in four citizens mentioned the ‘economic/political union’ (26%), and around one in ten named the ‘Euro’ (11%), the ‘EU member states’ (10%) and/or the ‘Schengen zone’ (9%). Among positive free associations, ‘economic prosperity/high standards of living’ was the most cited (20%), followed by ‘freedom of speech’ (8%), ‘travelling/tourism’ (7%), ‘developed infrastructure’ (7%), ‘rule of law/human rights/equality’ (4%) and ‘democracy’ (3%). Negative associations were much less common: 7% of individuals spontaneously mentioned ‘chaos/instability’, 2% ‘high prices’, 1% ‘different values’ and/or ‘moral decline’ and 1% were ‘against the EU/joining the EU’.

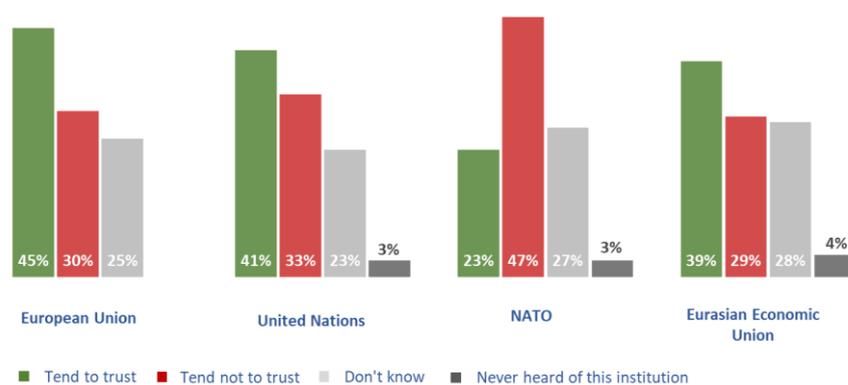
Levels of trust towards international institutions show a slight decline compared to 2019 and NATO is the only one gathering an increase in trust levels (23%, up 4%) – though most Belarusians remain cautious over its operations in the region (47% do not trust NATO). In fact, **the EU is the most trusted institution in the country by around one in two Belarusians (45%, down 6% since 2019)**, followed by the United Nations (41% down 6%) and the Eurasian Economic Union (39% down 9%). It is worth noting that the drop in trust levels reflects an increase in unawareness rather than distrust: around one in four citizens could not rate their level of confidence in these institutions (it was around one in five in 2019).

Citizens with high levels of education tend to display, on average, the highest levels of trust (57%) together with younger citizens (56%). However, while the former are also very aware (only 17% of them answered ‘don’t know’), the latter display higher levels of unawareness (27%). Individuals living in the north and the centre of the country are the most consciously diffident: 40% of them openly distrust the EU and only 17% provided a ‘don’t know’ response<sup>11</sup>. This finding is in line with 2019.

<sup>10</sup> 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’.

<sup>11</sup> More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 3.

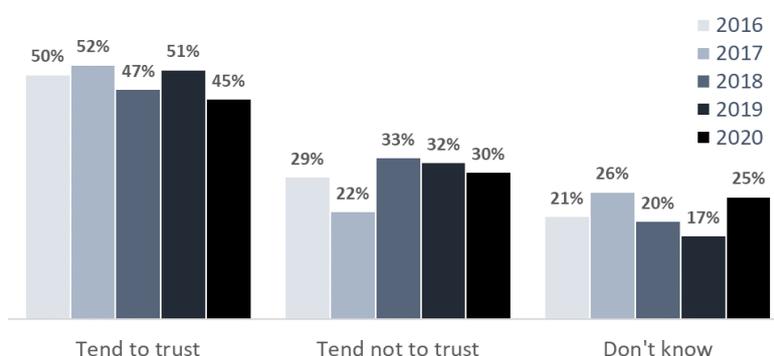
**FIGURE 4 – Trust towards different institutions (Q2.11)**



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

**FIGURE 5 – Trust towards the EU (Q2.11)**

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



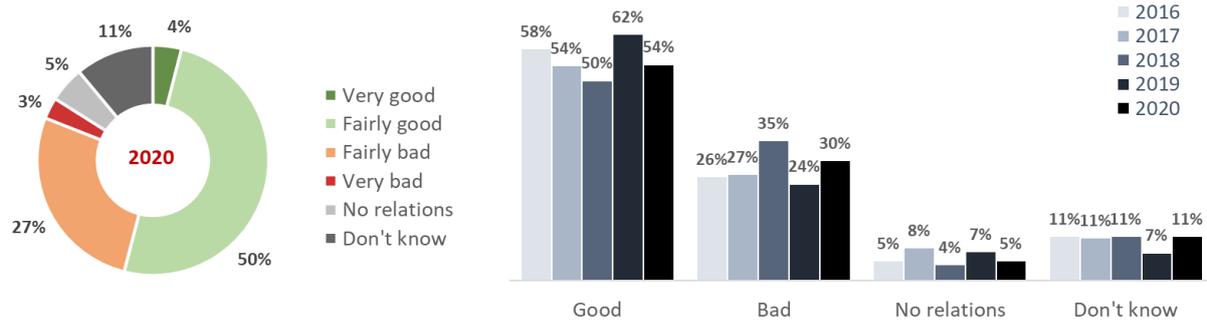
### 3.2.2. EU relations with Belarus and awareness of EU financial support

Most Belarusians positively acknowledge the relations between their country and the EU (54%). However, compared to 2019, less citizens describe them as ‘fairly good’ (50%, down 6%) or ‘very good’ (4%, down 2%). Positive opinions were observed across all socio-demographic group, with residents of middle-sized settlements reporting the highest level of appreciation of Belarus-EU relations (67%, although down 11% since 2019), followed by middle-aged (63%), employed/self-employed (60%) and highly-educated (58%) citizens. Geographically speaking, residents of the north and the centre are the most critical – 36% gave a ‘poor’ rating to Belarus-EU relations, with an increase of 7 percentage points since the last wave – versus 27% of eastern residents and 22% of western residents – which are the most positive (63%)<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 4.

**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)



Most Belarusians perceive the EU as ‘an independent actor in foreign relations’ (60%) in line with 2019 findings (57%), and only one in four citizens are ‘not really’ (18%) or ‘not all’ (7%) convinced by it<sup>13</sup>.

**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)



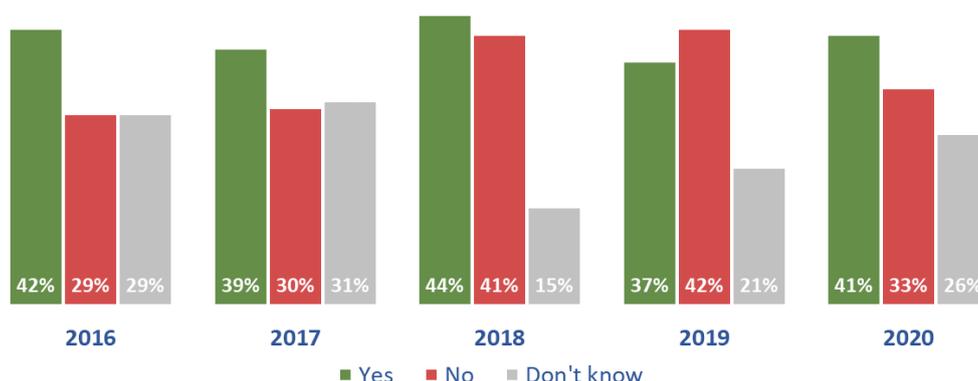
The share of citizens who acknowledge the EU’s financial support to Belarus has remained mostly stable at around 40% during all waves including this one: **41% of citizens who have heard of the EU are aware that it financially supports Belarus**. Higher figures were observed mainly among the socio-demographic groups who are most pro-EU, such as the residents of middle-sized settlements (53%) and highly-educated citizens (51%). Most western residents also recognise EU’s support (47%); and the same goes for eastern residents (45%) although they tend to display lower levels of confidence (29% provided a ‘don’t know’ response versus 18% of western residents). By contrast, inhabitants of the north/centre of the county are mostly convinced that the EU does not support their country (36%) or are largely unaware (29%). Females too, although mainly positive (42%), are less informed on the issue (29%), whereas around one third of older citizens (33%) and inhabitants of smaller settlements (31%) do not acknowledge the EU’s financial support to Belarus<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> 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’.

<sup>14</sup> More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 5.

**FIGURE 8 – As far as you know, does the European Union provide Belarus with financial support? (Q2.5)**

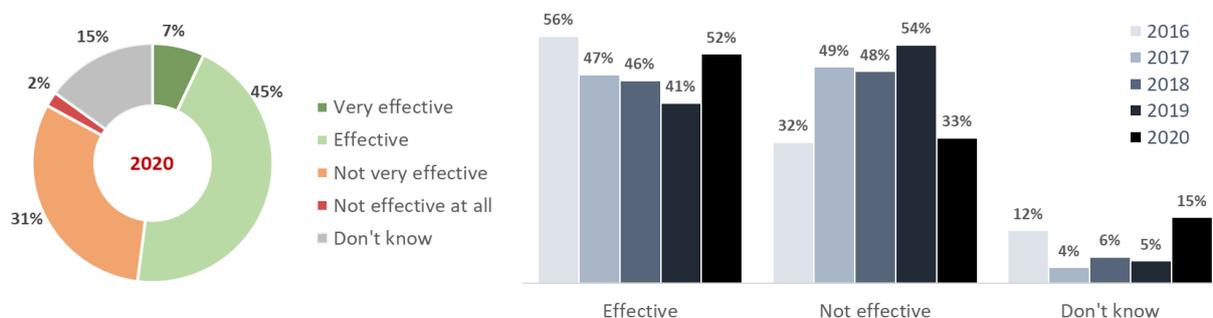
*(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)*



Most Belarusians who know about the EU’s financial support consider it effective (52%). This figure has increased by 11 percentage points since 2019, stopping the declining trend and realigning with the peak recorded in 2017 (56%). Gender, age and settlement size all seem to influence citizens’ opinions: 58% of women aware of the EU’s financial support, 63% of younger individuals and 58% of residents of larger cities consider it effective versus 46% of men, 42% of older citizens and 41% of residents of smaller settlements. Residents of the west of the country (65%) are also much more likely to express appreciation towards the EU’s financial support than citizens living in the north/centre (56%) and east of the country (33%, although it is worth noting that an overwhelming 38% provided a ‘don’t know response’)<sup>15</sup>.

**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)*



The awareness of specific EU-funded programmes follows the increase observed in the acknowledgment of EU’s financial support and stands currently at 47% (up 10%). Residents of medium settlements (64%), highly educated individuals (57%), younger citizens (55%) and residents of the north/centre of the country (49%) are much more informed than other socio-demographic sub-groups. Conversely the least informed appear to be the citizens living in smaller settlements: only 37% of those aware of the EU’s financial support have heard of EU-financed programmes in Belarus – although there has been an increase of 8 percentage points since 2019<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 6.

<sup>16</sup> More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 7.

**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)*

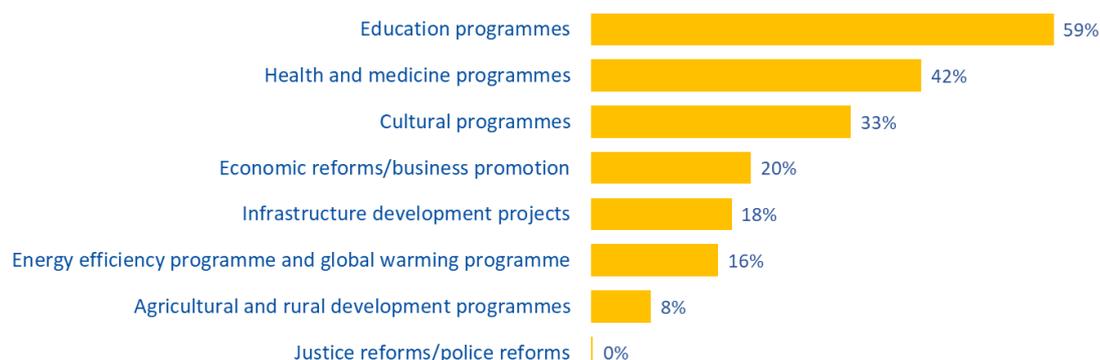


EU-funded programmes in the field of education enjoy a strong and rising popularity: nearly 60% of Belarusians aware of specific programmes financed by the EU know about them (59%, up 7 percentage points)<sup>17</sup>. In addition to implementing the roadmap for higher education reform in line with the Bologna Process<sup>18</sup>, Belarus participates in Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus, Jean Monnet projects and Horizon 2020. Around one in three citizens also mentioned programmes in the field of culture (33%); and around one in five programmes related to ‘economic reforms/business promotion’ (20%), ‘infrastructure development’ (18%) and/or ‘energy efficiency and global warming’ (16%) – possibly reflecting the acknowledgement of the 2019 programme EU4Climate to support Belarus in the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the promotion of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Stronger acknowledgement is reflected in stronger involvement: around one in ten Belarusians aware of specific EU-financed programmes have personally participated (or know someone who has) in an EU-funded project in the last 12 months (9%, up 5% since 2019).

**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)*



Belarus – together with Armenia – is one of the EaP countries which enjoys strong economic ties with Russia. In fact, most of the population is convinced that the Russian Federation financially sustains their country ‘more’ than the EU (52%). However, compared to last year, this figure has recorded a decrease of 8% and citizens seem also less certain of their opinion: 15% could not provide a definite answer.

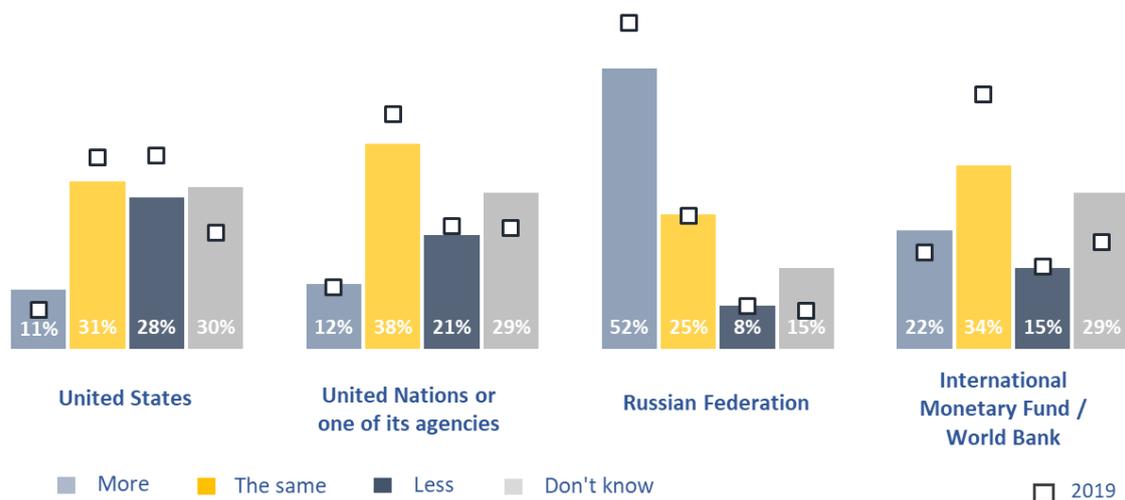
<sup>17</sup> The importance of education programmes needs to be underlined: not only young people acquire and raise competencies through them, but they build neighbourly relationships and ties with other EU countries which, in turn, impacts on their pro-EU attitudes. *Source:* [https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261509/Overview+of+Youth+Policy+in+EaP+Countries\\_EN.pdf/6ceab34b-8cde-ca21-f8fd-8d78386b1038](https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261509/Overview+of+Youth+Policy+in+EaP+Countries_EN.pdf/6ceab34b-8cde-ca21-f8fd-8d78386b1038)

<sup>18</sup> At a glance, EU-Belarus people-to-people contacts, European Parliament 2018. *See source:* [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)

Belarusians are even more uncertain when it comes to the evaluation of the role of the EU in comparison with that of other international organisations – the share of ‘don’t know’ responses was around 30% (up around 10% since 2019). In general, the EU is seen as providing ‘the same’ or ‘more’ financial support than the United States and the United Nations and its agencies by 59% of citizens and as providing ‘the same’ or ‘more’ financial support than the IMF/World Bank by 49% of citizens.

**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 previous waves, **nearly one in two Belarusians ‘strongly’ (9%) or ‘somewhat’ agree (40%) that ‘the EU provides tangible benefits to citizens in their everyday lives’<sup>19</sup>.**

**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)*



Belarusians identify and rate the most positive effects of the EU’s support in terms of greater movement of both people and products<sup>20</sup>. The increase in ‘tourism’ and ‘trade’, as well as the ‘greater access to products and services’ (54%) were the most mentioned areas, respectively by 57%, 52% and 47% of the

<sup>19</sup> 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’.

<sup>20</sup> This finding may also reflect the effect of the signature in January 2020 of the agreements on facilitating visa requirements and on readmission which may come into force in June 2020.

population<sup>21</sup>. Around 45% of citizens also acknowledged the positive effects of the EU’s support to ‘education’ (45%) and ‘employment opportunities’ (43%).

As in previous waves, **Belarusians would like the EU to strengthen its involvement in favouring economic development in the country (49%) and employment opportunities (42%)**<sup>22</sup>. 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<sup>23</sup>.

**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)**



Areas that have benefitted from the EU

Three most important areas which

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

The statement on ‘corruption’ triggered greater appreciation in 2019: around 45% of citizens ‘strongly’ (4%) or ‘somewhat’ agree (40%) that ‘the EU is committed to ‘fighting corruption’ versus 37% who believe the contrary<sup>24</sup> (it was 40% versus 47% in 2019). Formerly negative opinions have also switched to uncertainty, with one in five citizens providing a ‘don’t know’ response (19% versus 13% in 2019).

**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)



<sup>21</sup> More details are provided in Annex – Tables 8 and 9.

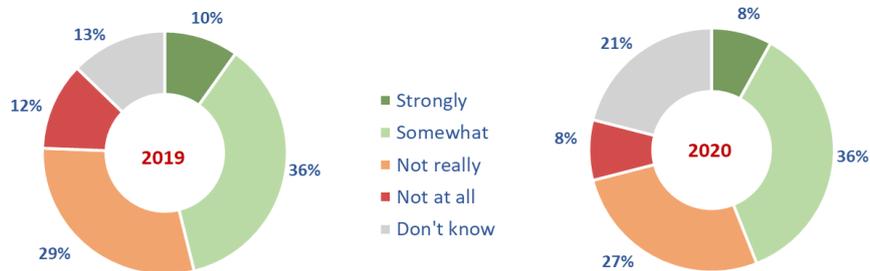
<sup>22</sup> Respondents were asked to name and rank the three most important areas in which the EU should play a greater role.

<sup>23</sup> See Eastern Partnership Index 2017, Charting Progress in European Integration, Democratic Reforms, and Sustainable Development Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, 2018 (Source: <https://eap-csf.eu/eastern-partnership-index/>)

<sup>24</sup> 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’.

Similarly, 44% of citizens agreed with the statement ‘integration with the EU increases the country’s security and stability’ versus 35% who disagreed (it was 46% versus 41% in 2019). It is worth noting that, also in this case, many more citizens seem uncertain about their opinion and provided a ‘don’t know’ response compared to 2019 (21%, up 8 percentage points)<sup>25</sup>.

**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)*



### 3.3. Sources of information on the EU

*Slightly over half of the population (54%) claim to have seen or heard information about the EU in the last three months, with no change compared to 2019. Passive exposure increasingly depends on the Internet (48% of citizens who have seen/heard information about the EU were reached through this media, up 16% since 2019) and social media (17%, up 9%) – although the television remains the main provider (68%). ‘Active’ exposure is also stable since 2019, and remains very low: only 6% of citizens ‘frequently’ looked/searched for EU-related information and only 22% ‘not very frequently’. The Internet is where most citizens turn when searching for specific content, and more so each year (83%, up 17% since 2018). Access to EU informational websites is slowly increasing and currently 10% of Belarusians have used them at least once.*

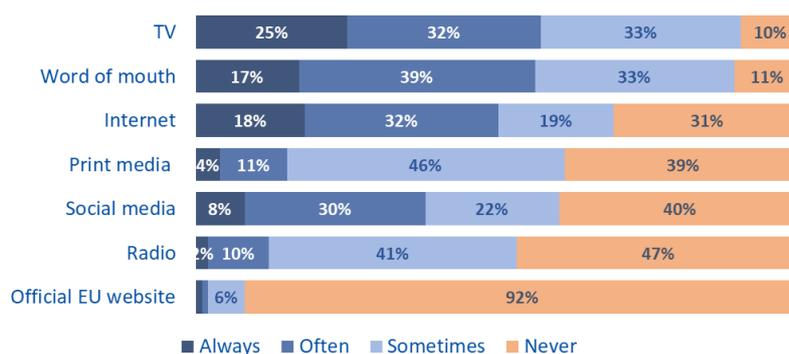
This section looks at the main sources of information in Belarus, with a focus on specific information about the EU, its programmes and its institutional communication instruments.

#### 3.3.1. Media usage as sources of information

**‘Television’ and ‘word of mouth’ continue to be the most popular source of information in Belarus** – only 10% and 11% of the population respectively ‘never’ rely on them. Other traditional media – such as print media and the radio – remain widely used in the country (61% and 53% of citizens, respectively, used them) and compete with Internet (69%) and social networks (60%), but only when it comes to sporadic usage. The official EU website is hardly ever used – only 8% of Belarusians access it for information – with a small decrease of 3 percentage points since 2019.

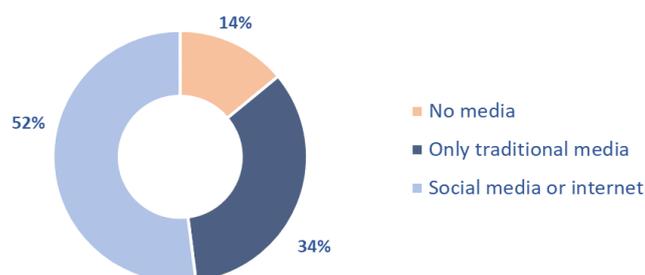
<sup>25</sup> See footnote 20.

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



In fact, if media usage is broken down into frequent usage, new media (52%) outdistance traditional media only (34%) – as shown in Figure 18<sup>26</sup>. Quite predictably, the younger generation (74%) and highly educated individuals (74%) are keener users of new media. However, while the former are very reluctant towards traditional media (3%), 14% of the latter use them (14%). Frequent usage of new media is less prevalent in the eastern part of the country (42%), where residents are equally keen on traditional media (43%). One in five residents of bigger cities do not ‘frequently’ rely on any media (21%) and three quarters of older citizens rely exclusively on traditional media (74%, up 5% since 2019)<sup>27</sup>.

**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 – 22% ‘always’, 41% ‘often’ and 29% ‘sometimes’ – use national media in Russian, and 65% 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<sup>28</sup>. Around 65% of citizens also use national media in Belarusian – though only 3% ‘always’. Only one in ten citizens use foreign or national media in other languages (10% and 6% respectively).

<sup>26</sup> The ‘Only traditional media’ group includes all individuals who ‘always’ or ‘often’ use only traditional media (such as television, radio and print media); the ‘Social media or internet’ 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.

<sup>27</sup> More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 10.

<sup>28</sup> 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.

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

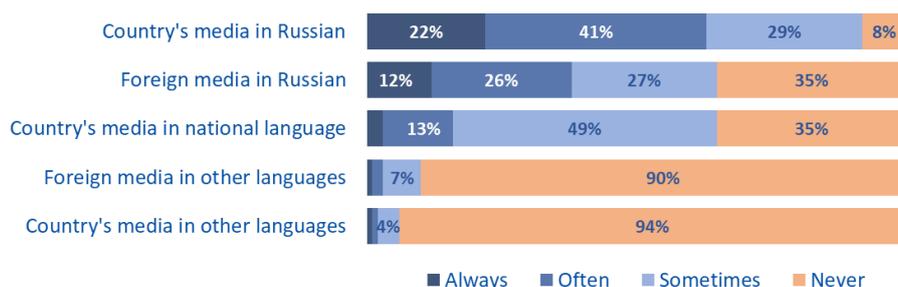
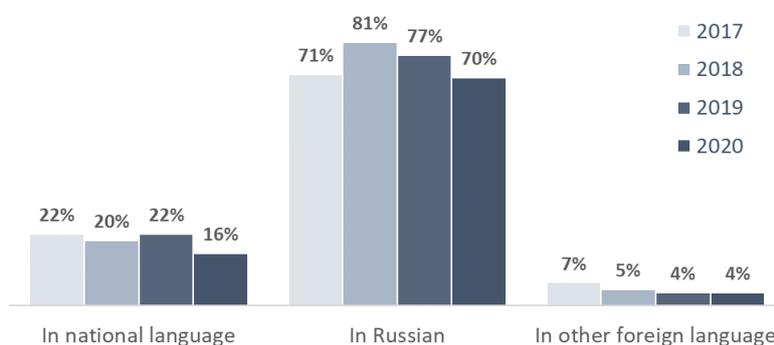


Figure 20 shows how frequent the usage of media in Russian, Belarusian and other foreign languages is among the population, regardless of whether the media are national or foreign<sup>29</sup>. Again, it can be observed how frequent usage of media in Russian is widespread (70%) compared to that of media in Belarusian (16%) and particularly in other foreign languages (4%). High shares of users of media in Belarusian were found only among older individuals (27%) who are the greatest users of media in Russian too (87%). Residents of middle-sized cities, younger citizens and inhabitant of the West of the country are the most likely to use media in other foreign languages – although frequent usage does not exceed 10% in all these sub-groups. It is also worth noting that less than one in two younger citizens frequently rely on media in Russian (49%)<sup>30</sup>.

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



Freedom of the media is one of the most critical areas in Belarus – guaranteed for less than one third of citizens (see Figure 30)<sup>31</sup>. In fact, **the only source trusted by the overwhelming majority of the population is ‘word of mouth’ (74%)**, followed at a fair distance by national media in Russian (57%), television (52%) and Internet (49%). Sources in foreign languages – whether national or foreign – are trusted by only around 15% of citizens – although around 45% cannot rate their levels of trust due to lack of usage and awareness. The official EU websites score better in terms of trust (24%) – but not in terms of awareness and 49% of citizens provided a ‘don’t know’ response<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> 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.

<sup>30</sup> More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 11.

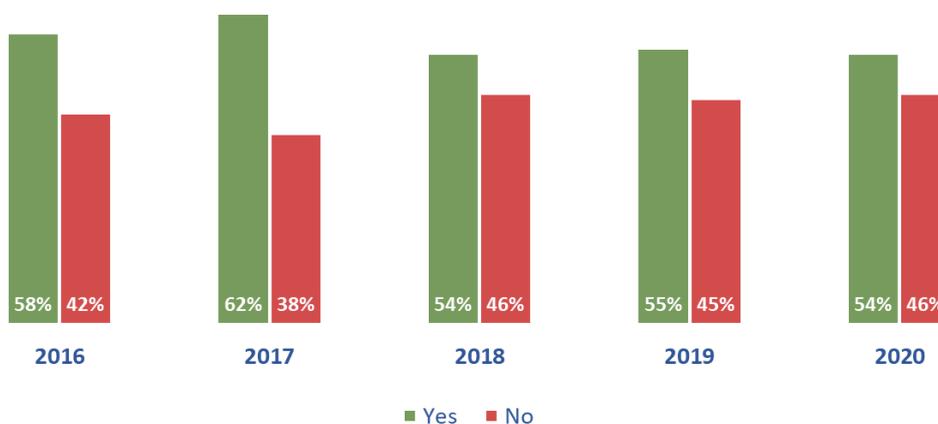
<sup>31</sup> Media space is restricted in the country: most media outlets are state-owned, while foreign media and journalists are banned from reporting on national issues without state accreditation. Since 2018, the registration procedure applies to news websites too; in addition, online anonymity is not guaranteed. In 2018 Belarus ranked 153rd out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders (*Source*: <https://www.indexoncensorship.org/2019/09/in-a-country-that-keeps-its-media-under-a-dome-belarus-independent-journalists-face-mounting-fines/>)

<sup>32</sup> More details are provided in Annex – Table 12.

### 3.3.2. Sources of information about the EU

Slightly over half of the population (54%) claim to have seen or heard information about the EU in the last three months, with no change compared to 2019. Although common to all socio-demographic sub-groups, passive exposure peaks among highly-educated citizens (72%), residents of middle-sized settlements (66%), males (61%) and middle-aged individuals (60%). Western residents are, by far, the most geographically exposed (65%) compared to citizens living in the East (57%) and the North/Centre (47%) of the country. Considering that TV usage is widespread, these regional differences may stem from a diverse habit of relying on new media and media in foreign languages other than Russian (western resident are indeed the most frequent users of both), but also from the relative closeness of East Belarus to Poland, which probably facilitates higher exposure to EU-related matters<sup>33</sup>.

**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)*

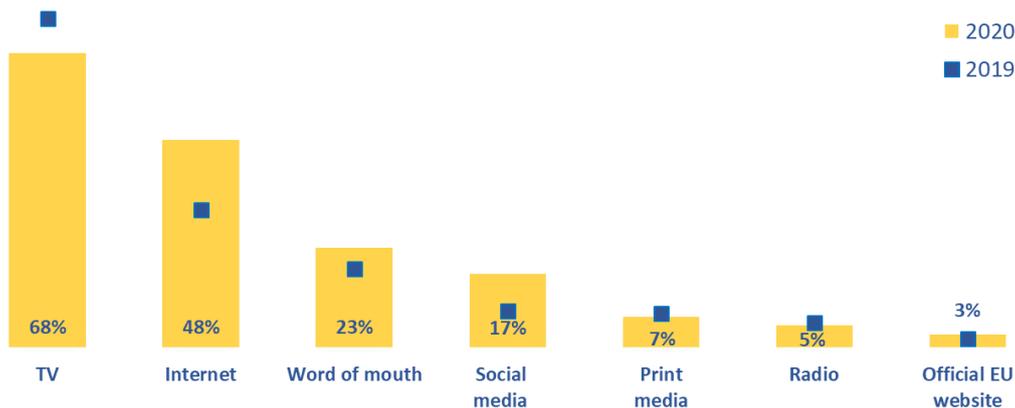


Compared to previous waves, passive exposure increasingly depends on the Internet (48% of citizens who have seen/heard information about the EU did it through this media, up 16% since 2019) and social media (17%, up 9%) – although television remains the main provider (68%, down 8% since 2019). Less than one in ten citizens accessed EU-related information through traditional media (7% print media, 5% the radio) and Belarusians are also not too keen on circulating EU-related information through ‘word of mouth’ (23%). Only 3% of Belarusians, who have seen any information about the EU, saw it on the official EU websites.

<sup>33</sup> More details on exposure to information about the EU and socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 13.

**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)**

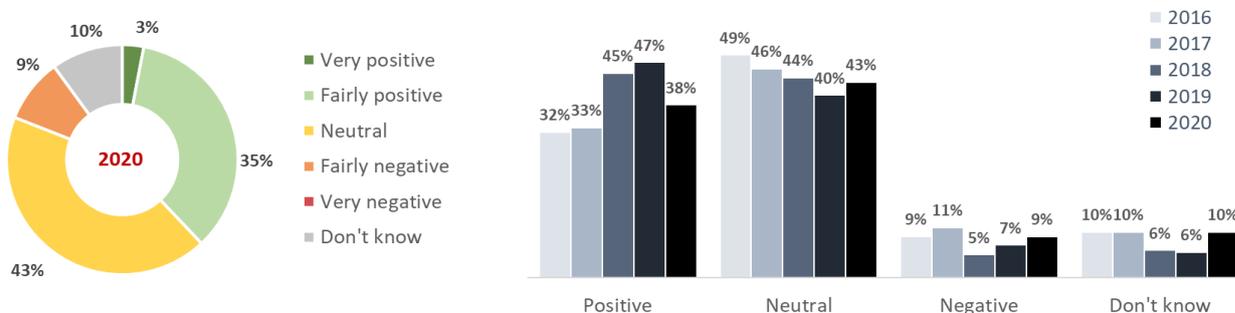
*(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard any information about the EU in the last three months)*



Citizens who have been passively exposed to EU-related information through national media received a neutral (43%) or positive (38%) representation of the EU – an inversion of the 2019 results - when the evaluation was more positive (47%) than neutral (40%). Residents of medium settlements are the most positive (48%) together with residents of the north/centre (43%) and middle-aged citizens (41%); one in two younger citizens and/or residents of the west of the country is ‘neutral’ (50% and 52% respectively), while the highest share of ‘negative’ opinions was recorded among older citizens (14%)<sup>34</sup>.

**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 critical about the quality of the information they receive. In fact, around 70% of the population claim that the information they read, watch or access online does not help them ‘very much’ (38%) or ‘at all’ (29%) to have a better understanding of the EU. Only one in four citizens consider the information helpful, either ‘fairly’ (22%) or ‘very much’ (4%).

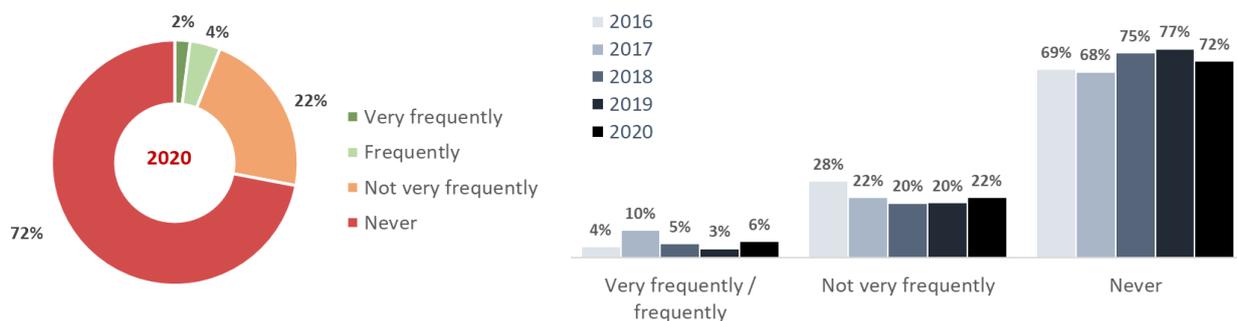
The following section looks specifically at sources of information about the EU, and therefore only refers to Belarusians who actively look for/access information on the EU.

‘Frequent’ or ‘very frequent’ search/access to EU-related information is very rare in Belarus and interests only 6% of citizens (it was 3% in 2019). Sporadic access is also uncommon (22% ‘not very frequently’), with no change compared to 2019. In particular, around 80% of older individuals, residents of smaller settlements and residents of the East and the North/Centre of the country never access/search for EU

<sup>34</sup> For the distribution according to main socio-demographic characteristics, see Table 14 in Annex.

related information (80%, 76%, 77% and 76% respectively). Double-digit figures for frequent access were recorded only among younger individuals and western residents (11% both)<sup>35</sup>.

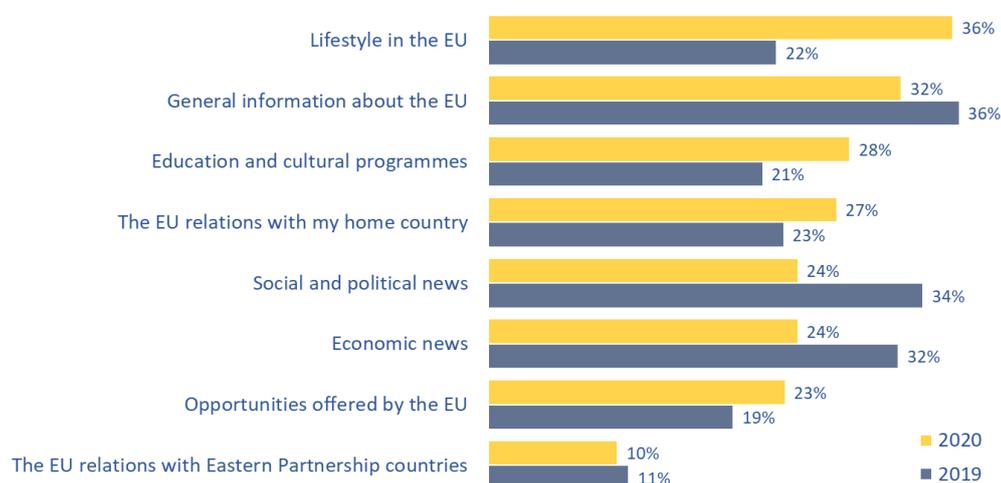
**FIGURE 24 – How often do you look for/access information on the EU? (Q3.1)**  
(Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU)



Nearly all individuals who search for information about the EU use Russian (95%), the remaining 5% use English (3%) and Belarusian (2%).

Around one third of ‘active searchers of information’ are interested in the ‘EU lifestyle’ and/or in ‘general information’ about the EU (36% and 32% respectively), the most searched topics in 2020. ‘Educational and cultural programmes’ (28%, up 7%) and ‘opportunities offered by the EU’ (23, up 4%) received a greater interest, in line with the strong and rising popularity of EU-funded programmes in the field of education. Although 27% of ‘active searchers’ are interested in the ‘relations between their country and the EU’, only one in ten citizens, who searched/looked for information on the EU, focused on ‘relations with other EaP countries’ (10%).

**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)

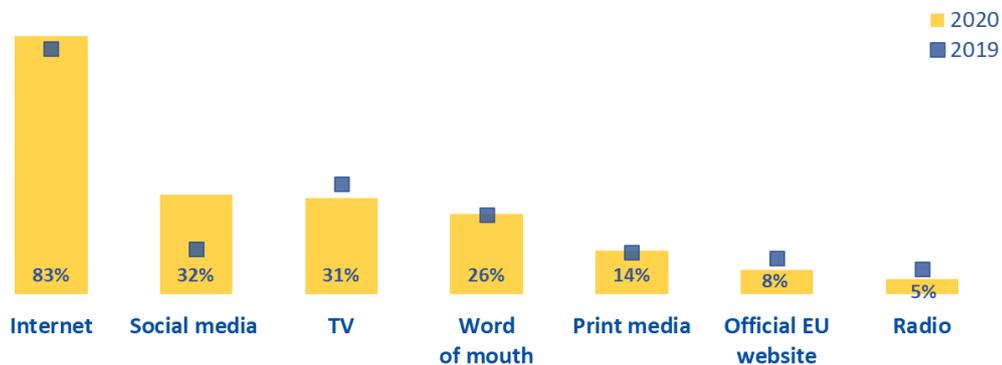


The Internet is where most citizens turn when searching for specific content, and more so each year: **83% of ‘active searchers’ use the Internet** versus 79% in 2019 and 66% in 2018. Social media usage is also increasing among ‘active’ citizens (32%, up 17%) and it is slowly surpassing TV (31%) and ‘word of mouth’

<sup>35</sup> More details on the distribution according to the main socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 15.

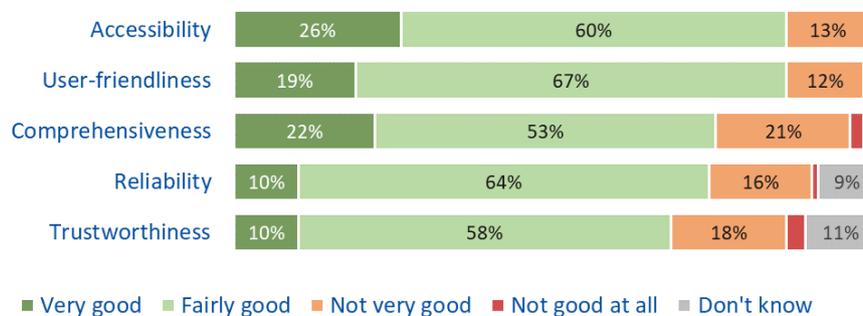
(26%). Other traditional media are virtually ignored by ‘active searchers’ (14% and 5% respectively). Around one in ten ‘active searchers’ visited the official EU website (8%, down 4%).

**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)*



‘Active searchers of information’ tend to hold mostly positive opinions with regard to the EU-related information they access online and offline. ‘Fair’ appreciation is widespread (figures ranging between 53% and 67% for all five characteristics) and around one in four individuals rated it as ‘very’ accessible and comprehensive, around one in five as ‘very’ user-friendly and around one in ten as ‘very’ reliable and trustworthy.

**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)*



Access to EU informational websites<sup>36</sup> is slowly increasing and currently 10% of Belarusians have used them at least once versus 8% in 2019 and 5% in 2018. On average all sites – except the EU Delegation website which is virtually never accessed (0.8%) – record a 2-3% share of access.

<sup>36</sup> This refers to EU institutions’ websites; the EU Delegation website; EU projects’ websites; the ‘EU NEIGHBOURS’ website; and EU Twitter and EU Facebook pages.

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

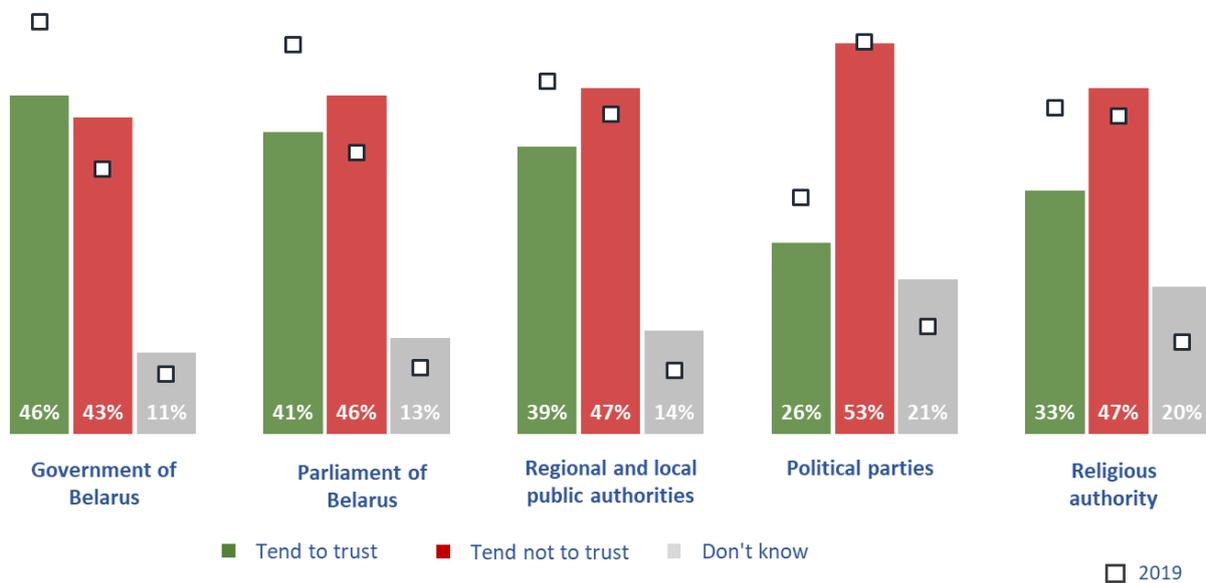
*Citizens’ trust in Belarusians’ public institutions shows a drastic reduction since 2019 – when it was already at moderate levels – possibly reflecting the outcome of the 2019 Parliamentary polls: currently 46% of the population trust the Government (down 10%), 41% the Parliament (down 12%) and 39% regional and local authorities (down 8%). Belarusian citizens are largely dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their country (56%, up 5% since 2019): according to 65% of the population only ‘gender equality’ is present in their country. ‘Lack of corruption’ and ‘equality and social justice’ are the most critical issues – only 17% and 25% of Belarusians believe these apply to their country – however these were joined at the lowest ranks by ‘freedom of the media’ (32%, down 7%) and ‘free and fair elections’ (33%, down 19%). Accordingly, 60% of Belarusians are not optimistic towards the future of their country.*

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

Citizens’ trust in Belarus’s public institutions shows a drastic reduction since 2019 – when it was already at moderate levels – possibly reflecting the outcome of the 2019 Parliamentary polls, when the opposition failed to win a single seat. **46% of the population trust the Government (down 10%), 41% the Parliament (down 12%)** and 39% regional and local authorities (down 9%), and confidence in political parties is even lower (26%, down 6%).

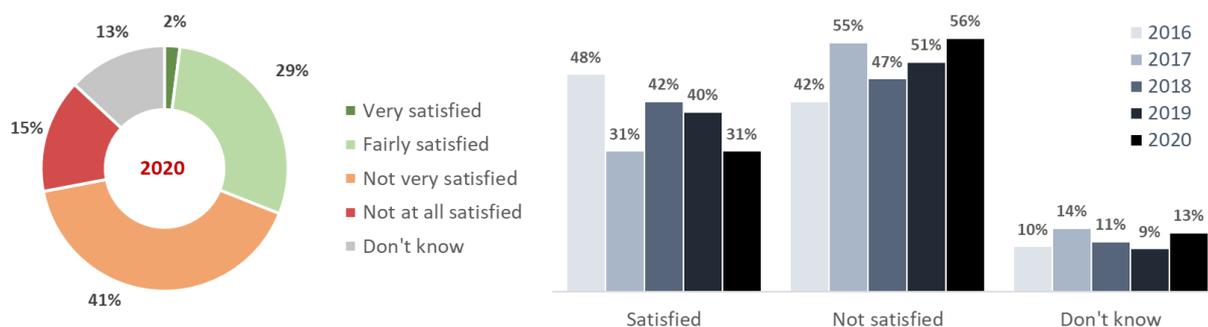
**FIGURE 28 – Please tell us your level of trust in the following institutions (Q4.1)**



**Belarusian citizens are largely dissatisfied with the way democracy works in their country (56%, up 5% since 2019 and up 9% since 2018),** with 41% of them ‘not very satisfied’ and 15% ‘not at all satisfied’. Levels of dissatisfaction seem directly related to attitudes towards the EU and, in fact, the most pro-EU socio-demographic subgroups – such as younger, highly-educated citizens and, particularly, residents of the West of the country – tend also to be the most openly critical (67%, 60% and 73% respectively)<sup>37</sup>.

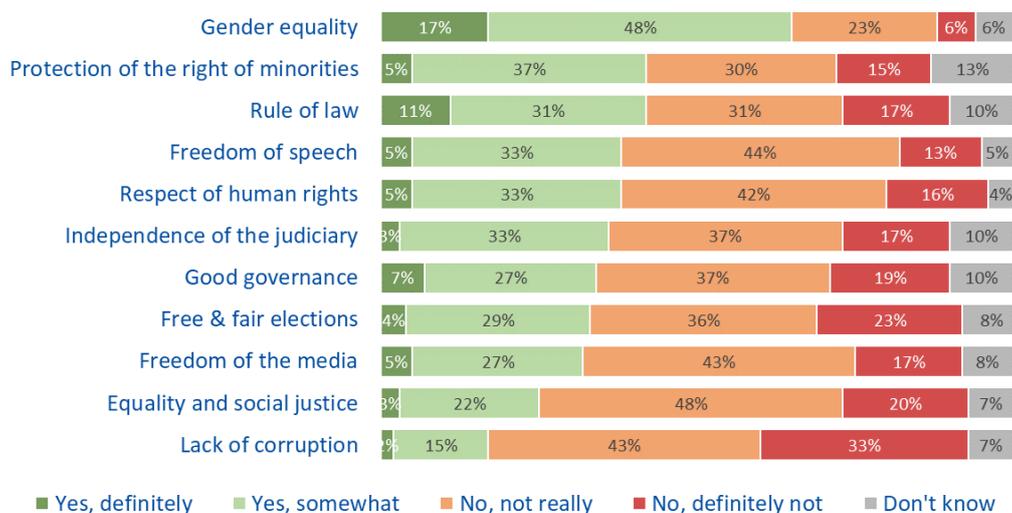
<sup>37</sup> More details on satisfaction with democracy and socio-demographic characteristics are provided in Annex – Table 16.

**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)**



Citizens’ perceptions of the democratic process in Belarus also show a markedly decreasing trend. According to the majority of the population only ‘gender equality’ is present in their country – 65% (down 5% since 2019 and down 10% since 2018). ‘Protection of the rights of minorities’ (42%, down 11%), ‘rule of law’ (42% down 18%), ‘freedom of speech’ (38%, down 11%) and ‘respect of human rights’ (38%, down 14%) are guaranteed for only around 40% of the population. ‘Lack of corruption’ and ‘equality and social justice’ are still the most critical issues – only 17% and 25% of Belarusians believe these apply to their country – however these were joined at the lowest ranks by ‘freedom of the media’ (32%, down 16%) and ‘free and fair elections’ (33%, down 19%) – which perhaps reflect the outcome of the 2019 parliamentary elections and the anticipated outcome of the 2020 presidential elections.

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

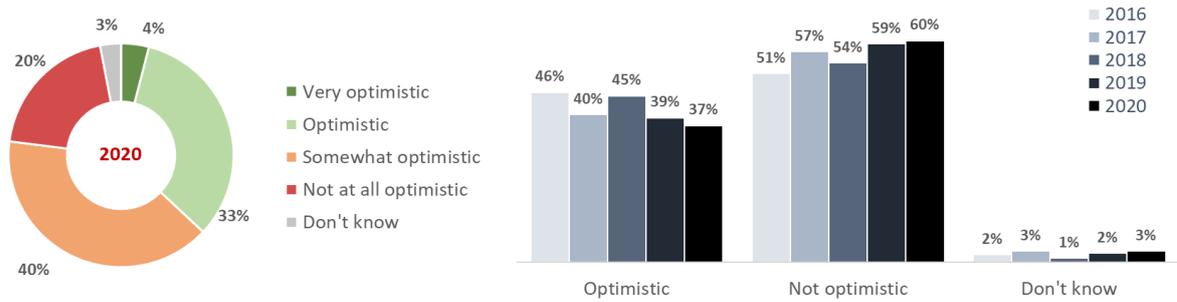


### 3.4.2. Future expectations

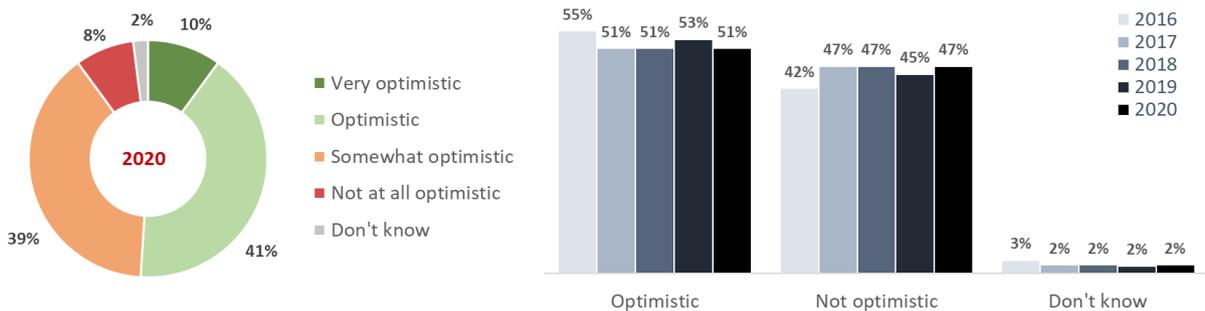
Most Belarusians are not optimistic towards the future of their country in line with 2019 and previous waves (60%). Optimism towards their personal future is more common, although the country seems split (51% are ‘optimistic’ versus 47% who are ‘pessimistic’). Western residents are the most concerned about both the future of Belarus (77% are not ‘optimistic’) and their personal future (62%) – by contrast individuals living in the north/centre of the country are the most optimistic (46% and 56% respectively)<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> 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 31 – How optimistic are you about the future of your country? (Q4.5)**



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



No significant change was observed compared to 2019. The current economic situation and all related issues remain the most pressing concerns for citizens. More specifically, 63% of them mentioned ‘low salaries and pensions’, 41% ‘low living standards and poverty’, 39% ‘high prices and taxes’ and/or ‘unemployment’, and 36% ‘the economic crisis’. Around one in four Belarusians also cited ‘corruption’ (22%) and ‘the unaffordability of healthcare’ (19%). All other elements – such as ‘rule of law’, ‘the quality of education’, ‘security issues/war’, ‘territorial conflicts’ and ‘migrations’ – were mentioned by less than 10% of the population.

**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 (38% of citizens) and ‘neutral’ Belarusians (46% of citizens) represent two very distinctive segments of the population. The former are more likely to be female (57%), better educated (26%), employed/self-employed (62%) and aged under 34 years (43%). They are more easily found in the north/centre of the country – which includes Minsk, the capital city – or the western region. By contrast, neutral Belarusians are more readily found among people with a low level of education (85%), middle aged or older (69%), inhabitants of small villages (37%) or either big cities (50%), possibly in the east of the country (30%). EU supporters and ‘neutral’ citizens are also ‘different’ in terms of the respective levels of passive (62% versus 48%) and active exposure (41% versus 22%) to EU-related information, and their media preference. Neutrally-oriented citizens are also more prone to rely on traditional media only (38% versus 18%) or no media at all (19% versus 9%) and less disposed towards new media (43% versus 73%) and media in foreign languages other than Russian (1% versus 7%). 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 similar levels of pessimism over the future and similar concerns over the economic situation.*

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 neutral<sup>39</sup>.

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

**Pro-EU citizens** – who represent more than one third of Belarusians (38%, up 2% since 2019) – constitute a very distinctive segment of the population. Compared to the general population, they are more likely to be **female** (57%), **better educated** (26%), **employed/self-employed** (62%) and aged **under 34 years** (43%). Geographically speaking, they are more easily **found in the north/centre of the country** – which includes Minsk, the capital city – or the **western region** – which is the closest to Poland, hence the EU.

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<sup>39</sup> Individuals that were mostly negatively oriented were excluded from the comparison, as their number was too small for the results to be statistically significant.

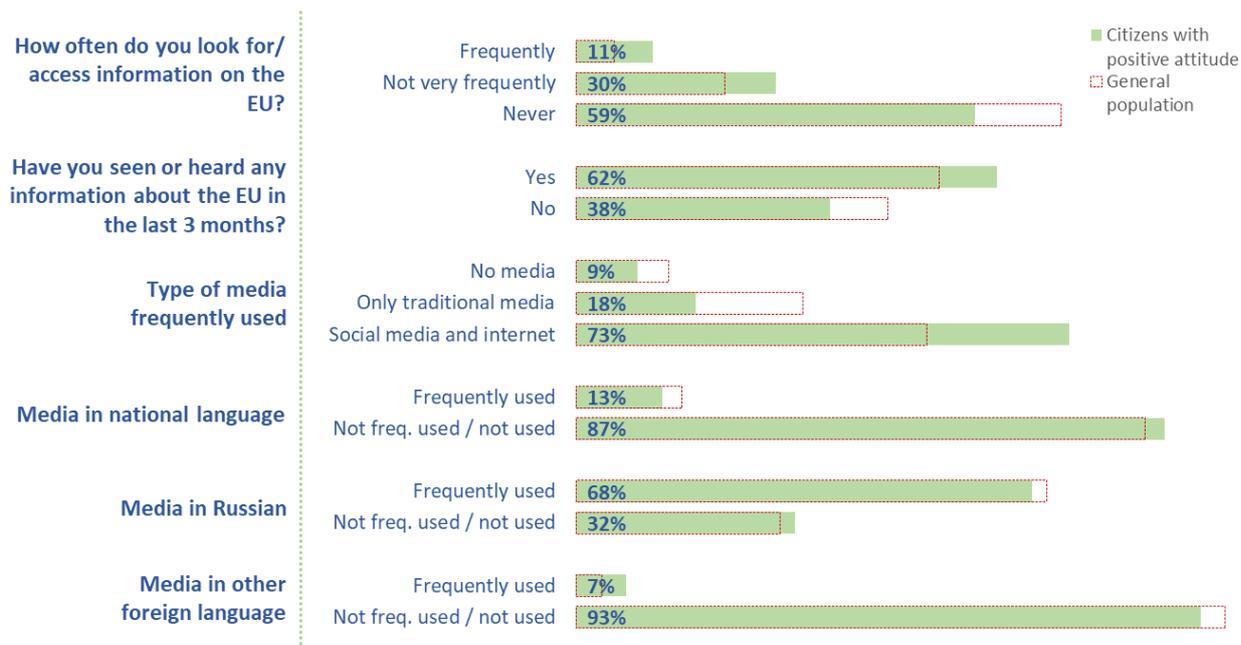
**FIGURE 34 – Socio-demographic characteristics and geographical location of Belarusians with a positive image of the EU**



Passive and active exposure to EU-related information is more common among EU supporters. 62% of them have seen or heard information about the EU and 41% of them have actively looked for it – although only 11% of them ‘frequently’ (versus 54%, 28% and 6% for the general population).

Although media sources in Russian are still their preferred choice, this is much less so in 2020 (68%, down 15% since 2019) and EU supporters tend to be characterised by a slightly greater usage of media in other foreign languages (7%) than the general population (4%). EU supporters are also less disposed towards the exclusive usage of traditional media (18% versus 34%) and are stronger users of new media (73% versus 52%). If actively searching, they tend to be engaged more often in broad queries – targeting ‘general information’ (41%), ‘economic news’ (35%) and ‘socio-political news’ (36%) and ‘lifestyle in the EU’ (26%).

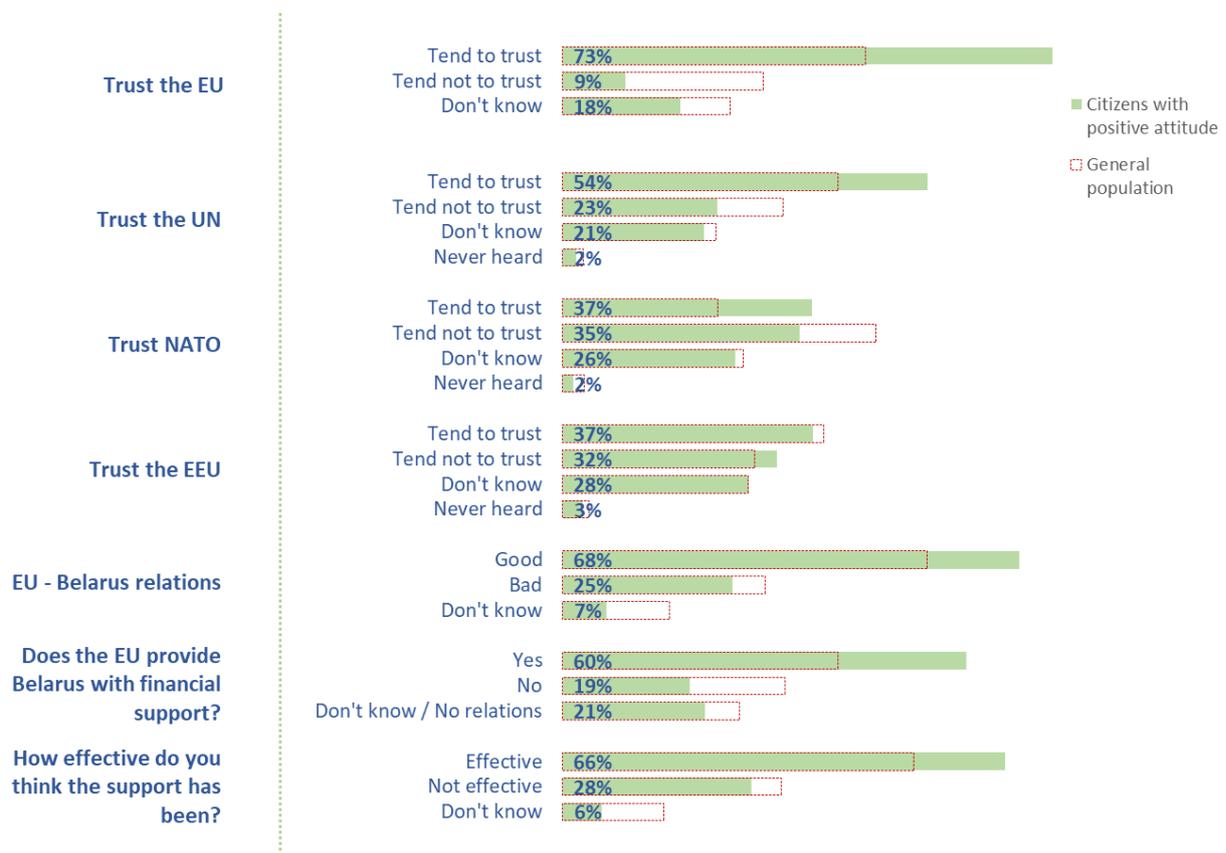
**FIGURE 35 – Exposure to information about the EU and media usage among Belarusians with a positive image of the EU**



Around 70% of positively oriented individuals have a positive image of the relations between the EU and their country (68%) and openly trust the EU (73%) – figures in the general population are much lower at 54% and 45% respectively. A positive attitude towards the EU goes together with a higher level of trust in the UN (54% versus 41%) and even NATO (37% versus 23%). In addition, distrust towards the NATO (35%) mirrors that towards the EAEU (32%) among EU supporters.

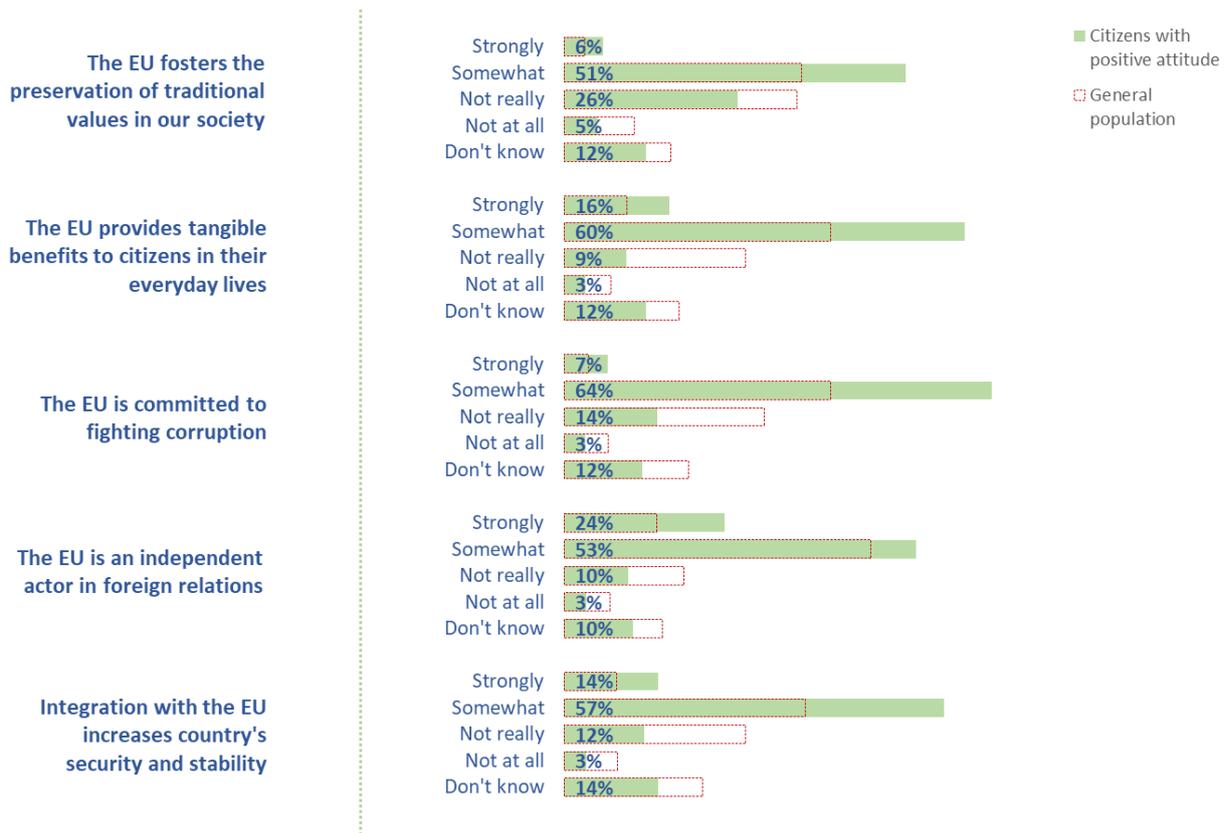
The overwhelming majority of pro-EU citizens acknowledge its financial support (60% versus 41% for the general population) and rate it as effective (66% versus 52%) – and both figures have greatly increased since 2019 – by respectively 11 and 18 percentage points.

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



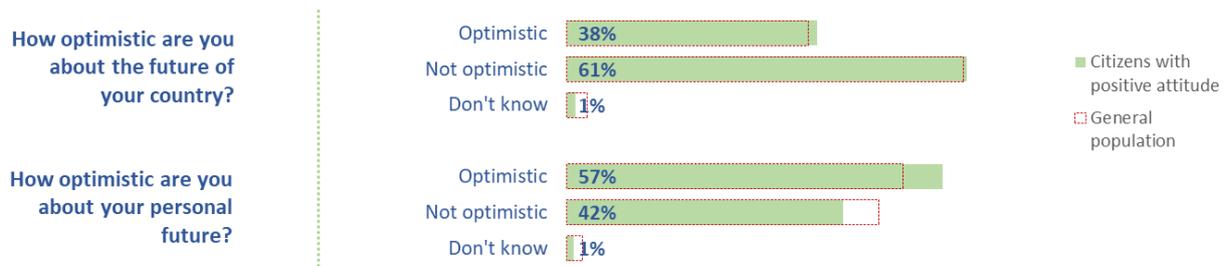
Most EU supporters share a positive vision of the EU and agree on the five statements on common beliefs. Levels of ‘fair’ agreement varied between 51% and 64% (36% and 46% for the general population) and levels of ‘strong’ agreement between 6% and 24% (3% and 14% for the general population). The statement ‘the EU fosters the preservation of traditional values in our society’ received a lower level of appreciation, still 57% of EU supporters agree with it (up 4% since 2019). The low shares of ‘don’t know’ responses recorded among EU supporters – only around one in ten citizens did not provide a definite answer – also shows that they feel more confident in voicing their opinions.

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



Most EU supporters are optimistic regarding their personal future (57%) – and they are more positive than the average (51%). Views on the future of their country are more aligned with the mood recorded in the country and most EU-supporters are pessimistic towards it (61%) and share similar concerns: 60% are worried about ‘low salaries and pensions’, around 40% about ‘unemployment’, ‘the economic crisis’ and/or ‘the low living standards and poverty’, and 35% about ‘high prices and taxes’. However, it is worth noting that EU supporters tend to be more concerned about the ‘quality of education’ (17%) and the ‘absence of rule of law’ (11%) than the general population (10% and 8% respectively).

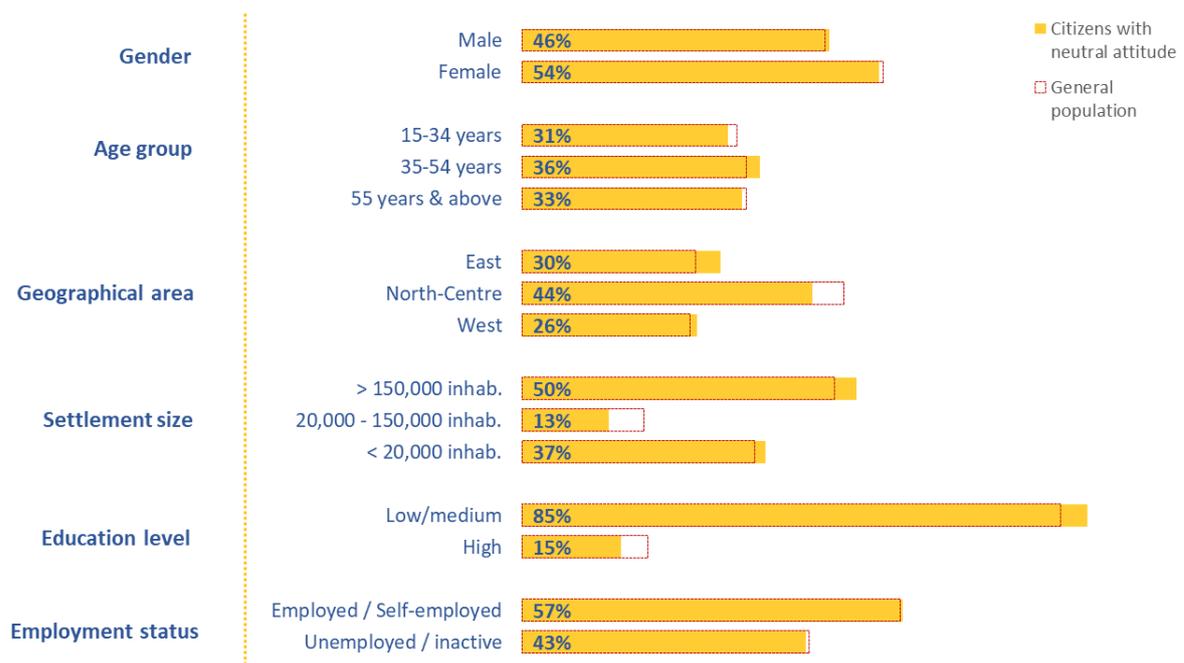
**FIGURE 38 – View of the future among Belarusians with a positive image of the EU**



### 3.5.2. Neutral attitudes

Belarusians with a neutral view of the EU are the largest group of the population – 46% of all citizens – though their share has decreased compared to 2019 (down 7%). As such, they can be readily found in all population sub-groups. Still, compared to EU supporters, they are more likely to have a **low level of education** (85% versus 74%), be **middle aged or older** (69% versus 57%), **live in small villages** (37% versus 30%) or **either big cities** (50% versus 44%), possibly in the **east of the country** (30% versus 21%).

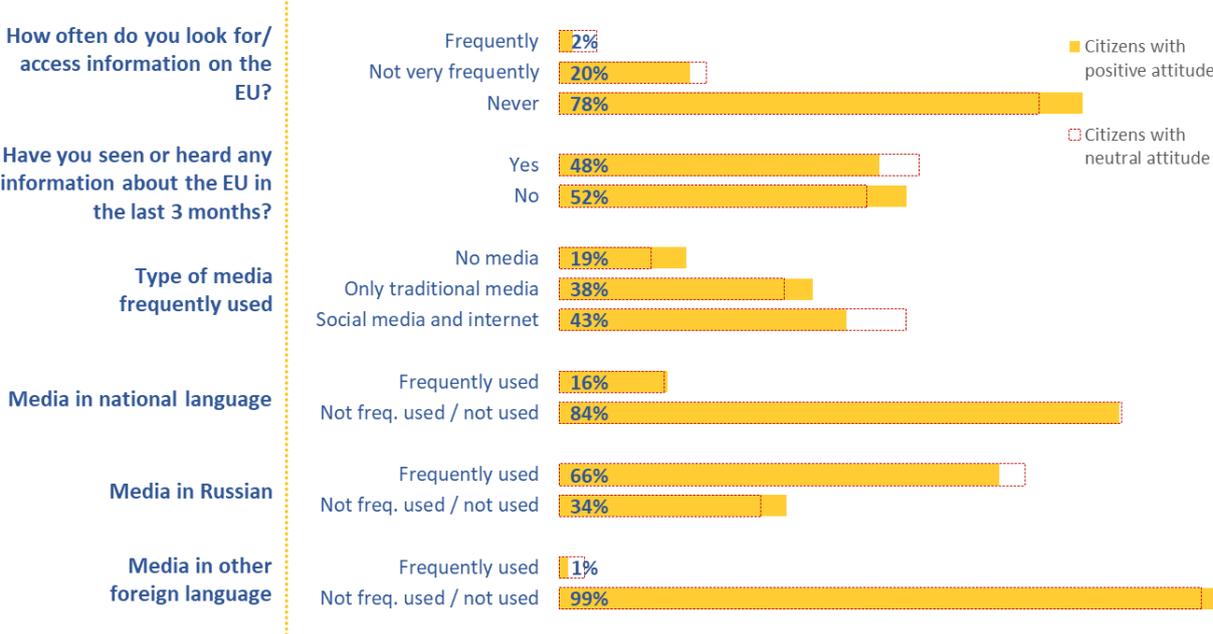
**FIGURE 38 – Socio-demographic characteristics and geographical location of Belarusians with a neutral image of the EU**



Their passive exposure to EU-related information is not so low – around half have seen or heard information about the EU in the three months before the survey (48%) – although their interest is limited: only one in five ‘neutral’ citizens actively searches/looks for information on the EU – and virtually no one does it ‘frequently’ (2%). In addition, their indifference is not confined to EU-related matters, in fact one in five ‘neutral’ citizens does not frequently rely on any media at all (19%). The rest is nearly equally split between those who use traditional media only (38%), and those who access new media (43%) – although new media penetration among them is still 9 percentage points below the average in the country.

Frequent usage of media in Russian is widespread (66%) – although decreasing compared to 2019 (down 9%). It is also worth noting that the fewer ‘neutral’ individuals who target EU-related information display a more focused interest on specific themes: 29% searched for ‘the EU relations with Belarus’ (versus 21% among EU supporters); 27% for ‘education and cultural programmes’ sponsored by the EU (versus 21%) and 13% for ‘the EU relations with the other EaP countries’ (versus 8%).

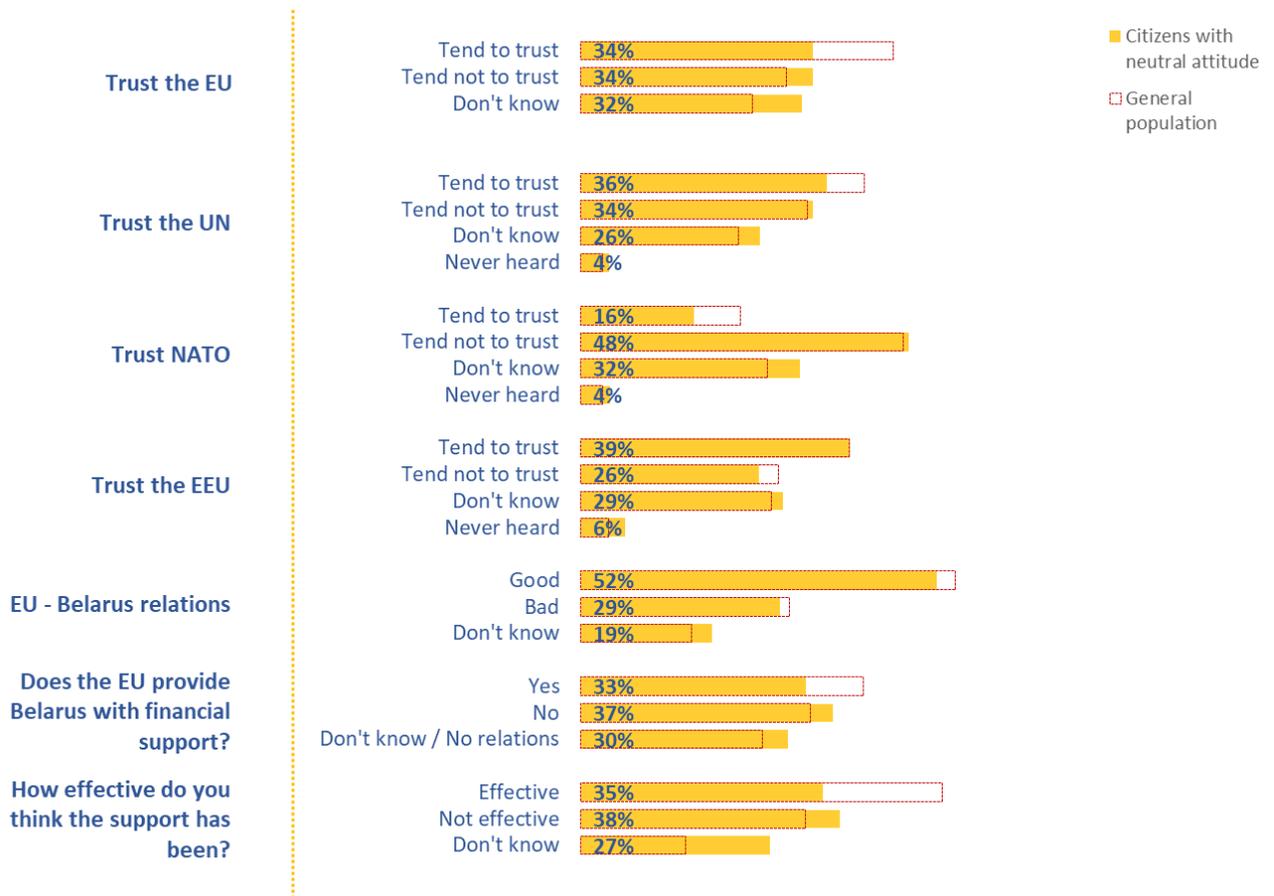
**FIGURE 40 – Exposure to information about the EU and media usage among Belarusians with a neutral image of the EU**



Unlike Belarusians who have a positive view of the EU, individuals with a neutral stance tend to be almost equally split when it comes to evaluating the relationship their country has with the EU, the UN and the EAEU. In fact, around one third of them has no opinion, and the remaining share alternates trust (figures varying between 34% and 39%) with distrust (figures varying between 26% and 34%). The issue of NATO is thornier – and half ‘neutral’ citizens definitely distrust NATO (48%).

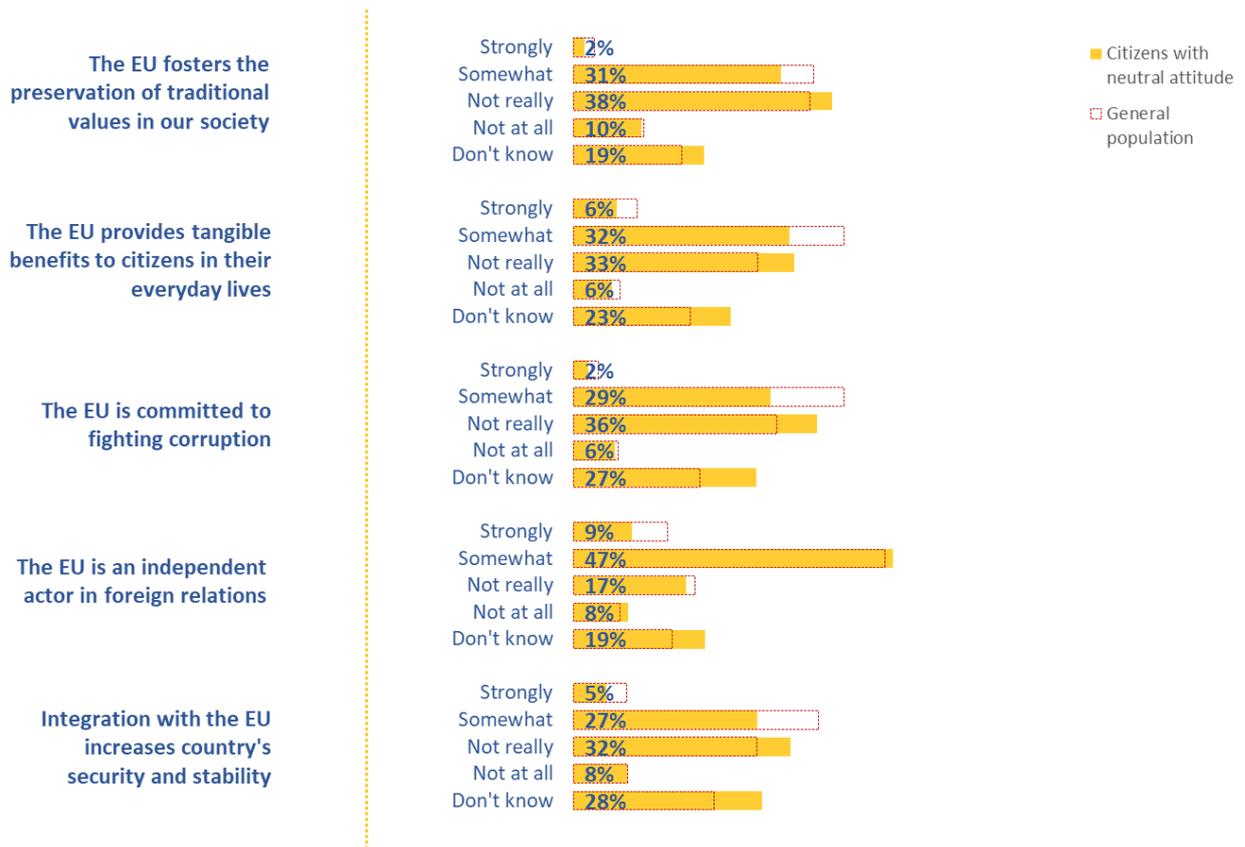
A similar situation was observed with regard to the acknowledgement and rating of the EU’s financial support: 33% of neutrally oriented citizens acknowledge it and 35% of them consider it effective (versus 60% and 66% respectively among the EU-supporters). ‘Neutral’ citizens are less critical when it comes to the relationships between Belarus and the EU and most citizens consider them as ‘good’ (52%, still much lower than 68% among positively-oriented citizens).

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



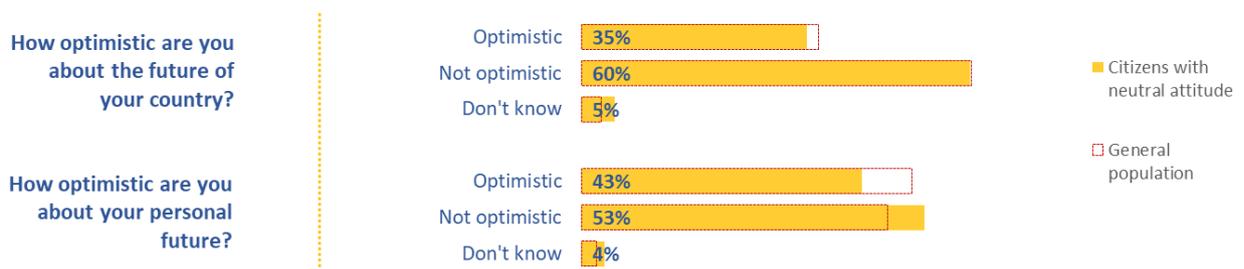
Most neutrally oriented individuals consider ‘the EU is an independent actor in foreign relations’ (56%). However, they are not convinced that a greater engagement with the EU could bring along ‘tangible benefits for all citizens’ (only 38% support the statement), nor ‘increase country’s security and stability’ (32%). Most ‘neutral’ citizens are also critical with regard to ‘EU’s commitment to fighting corruption’ (36% answered ‘not really’ and 13% ‘not at all’) and its role as ‘a holder of traditional values’ (38% answered ‘not really’ and 10% ‘not at all’). However, it is worth noting that a high share of them is in fact undecided and figures of ‘don’t know’ responses varied between 19% and 28%.

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



Most 'neutral' individuals are not optimistic regarding the future of their country (60%) nor their personal future (53%) – and seem particularly negative with regard to this second aspect if compared to the general population (47%) and EU-supporters (42%). In fact, neutrally oriented citizens seem very concerned about the current economic situation and the costs of living: 62% of them mentioned 'low salaries and pensions', 44% of them mentioned 'unemployment', 43% 'high prices and taxes', 35% 'the economic crisis', 38% 'low living standards and poverty' and 21% 'the unaffordability of the health care' among most pressing issues. Neutral citizens also seem more concerned about the issue of corruption (27%) than the average (22%).

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



## 4. 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
<b>Settlement size</b>	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	36%	50%	12%	2%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	54%	33%	6%	7%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	33%	49%	13%	5%	100%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	36%	47%	14%	3%	100%
	Female	40%	46%	9%	5%	100%
<b>Age group</b>	15-34 years	51%	44%	4%	1%	100%
	35-54 years	39%	49%	8%	4%	100%
	55 years & above	25%	46%	22%	7%	100%
<b>Education level</b>	Low/medium level	35%	49%	12%	4%	100%
	High level	53%	36%	9%	2%	100%
<b>Employment status</b>	Employed / Self-employed	42%	47%	9%	2%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	34%	46%	14%	6%	100%
<b>Geographical area</b>	East	30%	53%	8%	9%	100%
	North/Centre	41%	42%	14%	3%	100%
	West	41%	48%	10%	1%	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>38%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**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
<b>Economic prosperity</b>	26%	43%	17%	3%	11%	100%
<b>Freedom of Religion</b>	15%	53%	18%	4%	10%	100%
<b>Freedom of the media</b>	21%	46%	18%	3%	12%	100%
<b>Freedom of speech</b>	11%	54%	20%	2%	13%	100%
<b>Human Rights</b>	21%	44%	20%	4%	11%	100%
<b>Respect for other cultures, minorities</b>	15%	50%	17%	7%	11%	100%
<b>Individual Freedom</b>	19%	44%	20%	6%	11%	100%
<b>Democracy</b>	18%	45%	20%	6%	11%	100%
<b>Rule of Law</b>	11%	49%	24%	3%	13%	100%
<b>Honesty &amp; Transparency</b>	6%	46%	29%	5%	14%	100%
<b>Equality and social justice</b>	12%	39%	26%	8%	15%	100%
<b>Peace, Security and Stability</b>	7%	39%	33%	10%	11%	100%
<b>Absence of corruption</b>	4%	28%	38%	12%	18%	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	42%	31%	27%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	59%	22%	19%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	42%	32%	26%	100%
Gender	Male	46%	31%	23%	100%
	Female	45%	29%	26%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	57%	17%	26%	100%
	35-54 years	45%	31%	24%	100%
	55 years & above	33%	42%	25%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	43%	30%	27%	100%
	High level	56%	28%	16%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	46%	28%	26%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	44%	32%	24%	100%
Geographical area	East	50%	17%	33%	100%
	North/Centre	43%	40%	17%	100%
	West	45%	24%	31%	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>45%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>100%</b>

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	51%	30%	19%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	67%	21%	12%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	51%	36%	13%	100%
Gender	Male	52%	31%	17%	100%
	Female	56%	30%	14%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	49%	33%	18%	100%
	35-54 years	63%	25%	12%	100%
	55 years & above	51%	33%	16%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	53%	30%	17%	100%
	High level	58%	30%	12%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	60%	26%	14%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	47%	36%	17%	100%
Geographical area	East	53%	27%	20%	100%
	North/Centre	50%	36%	14%	100%
	West	63%	22%	15%	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>54%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>100%</b>

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
<b>Settlement size</b>	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	43%	31%	26%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	53%	18%	29%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	31%	44%	25%	100%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	39%	38%	23%	100%
	Female	42%	29%	29%	100%
<b>Age group</b>	15-34 years	45%	27%	28%	100%
	35-54 years	43%	32%	25%	100%
	55 years & above	33%	41%	26%	100%
<b>Education level</b>	Low/medium level	38%	34%	28%	100%
	High level	51%	28%	21%	100%
<b>Employment status</b>	Employed / Self-employed	42%	33%	25%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	38%	34%	28%	100%
<b>Geographical area</b>	East	45%	26%	29%	100%
	North/Centre	35%	36%	29%	100%
	West	47%	35%	18%	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>41%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>100%</b>

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
<b>Settlement size</b>	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	58%	27%	15%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	52%	35%	13%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	41%	40%	19%	100%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	46%	38%	16%	100%
	Female	58%	28%	14%	100%
<b>Age group</b>	15-34 years	63%	20%	17%	100%
	35-54 years	49%	42%	9%	100%
	55 years & above	42%	36%	22%	100%
<b>Education level</b>	Low/medium level	53%	29%	18%	100%
	High level	50%	42%	8%	100%
<b>Employment status</b>	Employed / Self-employed	54%	37%	9%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	51%	25%	24%	100%
<b>Geographical area</b>	East	33%	29%	38%	100%
	North/Centre	56%	35%	9%	100%
	West	65%	32%	3%	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>52%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>100%</b>

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	43%	57%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	64%	36%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	37%	63%	100%
Gender	Male	47%	53%	100%
	Female	46%	54%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	55%	45%	100%
	35-54 years	43%	57%	100%
	55 years & above	41%	59%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	43%	57%	100%
	High level	57%	43%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	46%	54%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	48%	52%	100%
Geographical area	East	41%	59%	100%
	North/Centre	51%	49%	100%
	West	46%	54%	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>47%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>46%</b>

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	15%	42%	24%	12%	8%	100%
Improved trade	11%	41%	30%	11%	8%	100%
Access to more products and services	9%	38%	31%	12%	9%	100%
Better education	6%	39%	29%	14%	11%	100%
Greater employment opportunities	11%	32%	29%	18%	10%	100%
Improved quality of health-care system	5%	31%	26%	24%	14%	100%
Improved infrastructure	3%	30%	33%	20%	14%	100%
Greater economic development	3%	25%	40%	23%	10%	100%
Improved democracy	1%	25%	36%	25%	13%	100%
Improved agricultural production	2%	24%	31%	28%	15%	100%
Better law enforcement	2%	21%	34%	30%	13%	100%
Improved quality of the justice system	3%	16%	34%	29%	18%	100%
Less corruption	1%	14%	35%	38%	12%	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
Greater economic development	30%	49%
Greater employment opportunities	12%	42%
Improved trade	9%	33%
Access to more products and services	9%	19%
Improved quality of health-care system	8%	36%
Improved democracy	8%	14%
More tourism	7%	21%
Better education	5%	24%
Improved infrastructure	3%	10%
Better law enforcement	2%	15%
Improved agricultural production	2%	9%
Less corruption	1%	14%
Improved 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	
<b>Settlement size</b>	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	21%	28%	51%	100%	<b>49%</b>
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	11%	33%	56%	100%	<b>49%</b>
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	5%	42%	53%	100%	<b>67%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	13%	32%	55%	100%	<b>53%</b>
	Female	14%	35%	51%	100%	<b>57%</b>
<b>Age group</b>	15-34 years	23%	3%	74%	100%	<b>49%</b>
	35-54 years	12%	24%	64%	100%	<b>60%</b>
	55 years & above	6%	74%	20%	100%	<b>56%</b>
<b>Education level</b>	Low/medium level	14%	38%	48%	100%	<b>53%</b>
	High level	12%	14%	74%	100%	<b>66%</b>
<b>Employment status</b>	Employed/ Self-employed	12%	26%	62%	100%	<b>57%</b>
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	16%	44%	40%	100%	<b>53%</b>
<b>Geographical area</b>	East	15%	43%	42%	100%	<b>53%</b>
	North/Centre	13%	31%	56%	100%	<b>55%</b>
	West	13%	29%	58%	100%	<b>57%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>14%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>55%</b>

**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
<b>Settlement size</b>	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	10%	62%	3%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	22%	73%	9%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	20%	78%	2%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	13%	69%	4%
	Female	18%	71%	4%
<b>Age group</b>	15-34 years	5%	49%	6%
	35-54 years	15%	72%	4%
	55 years & above	27%	87%	2%
<b>Education level</b>	Low/medium level	17%	70%	3%
	High level	12%	70%	6%
<b>Employment status</b>	Employed / Self-employed	15%	72%	4%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	16%	67%	4%
<b>Geographical area</b>	East	18%	75%	1%
	North/Centre	16%	64%	4%
	West	14%	75%	7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>16%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>4%</b>

**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	24%	27%	49%	100%
Television	52%	36%	12%	100%
Radio	38%	34%	28%	100%
Print media	44%	35%	21%	100%
Social media	38%	35%	27%	100%
Internet	49%	29%	22%	100%
Word of mouth	74%	14%	12%	100%
<b>Country's media in Belarusians</b>	44%	34%	22%	100%
<b>Country's media in Russian</b>	57%	31%	12%	100%
<b>Country's media in other languages</b>	14%	41%	45%	100%
<b>Foreign media in Russian</b>	42%	32%	26%	100%
<b>Foreign media in other languages</b>	15%	41%	44%	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
<b>Settlement size</b>	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	47%	53%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	66%	34%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	57%	43%	100%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	61%	39%	100%
	Female	48%	52%	100%
<b>Age group</b>	15-34 years	49%	51%	100%
	35-54 years	60%	40%	100%
	55 years & above	52%	48%	100%
<b>Education level</b>	Low/medium level	49%	51%	100%
	High level	72%	28%	100%
<b>Employment status</b>	Employed / Self-employed	60%	40%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	45%	55%	100%
<b>Geographical area</b>	East	56%	44%	100%
	North/Centre	47%	53%	100%
	West	65%	35%	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>54%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>100%</b>

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
<b>Settlement size</b>	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	35%	46%	8%	11%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	48%	28%	8%	16%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	37%	47%	12%	4%	100%
<b>Gender</b>	Male	37%	43%	8%	12%	100%
	Female	39%	43%	11%	7%	100%
<b>Age group</b>	15-34 years	32%	50%	6%	12%	100%
	35-54 years	41%	41%	9%	9%	100%
	55 years & above	41%	37%	14%	8%	100%
<b>Education level</b>	Low/medium level	37%	43%	10%	10%	100%
	High level	42%	42%	9%	7%	100%
<b>Employment status</b>	Employed / Self-employed	39%	42%	10%	9%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	36%	43%	10%	11%	100%
<b>Geographical area</b>	East	30%	45%	12%	13%	100%
	North/Centre	43%	37%	8%	12%	100%
	West	36%	52%	11%	1%	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>38%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>100%</b>

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%	25%	70%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	8%	22%	70%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	5%	19%	76%	100%
Gender	Male	8%	21%	71%	100%
	Female	4%	24%	72%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	7%	29%	64%	100%
	35-54 years	6%	22%	72%	100%
	55 years & above	4%	16%	80%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	4%	21%	75%	100%
	High level	11%	29%	60%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	6%	23%	71%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	5%	22%	73%	100%
Geographical area	East	3%	20%	77%	100%
	North/Centre	5%	19%	76%	100%
	West	11%	31%	58%	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>6%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Percentages refer to Belarusians who have heard of the EU

**TABLE 16 – Satisfaction with democracy in Belarus**

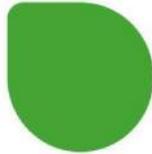
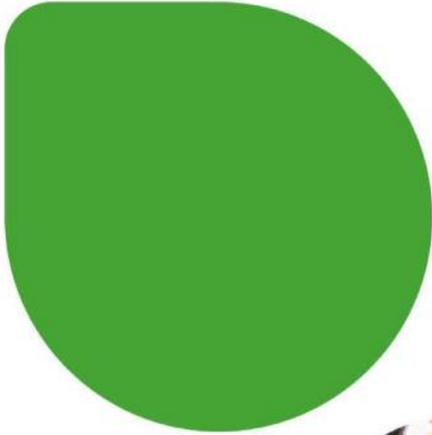
Q4.3. On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works in Belarus?					
		Satisfied	Not satisfied	Don't know	Total
Settlement size	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	23%	59%	18%	100%
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	32%	55%	13%	100%
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	41%	55%	4%	100%
Gender	Male	25%	61%	14%	100%
	Female	36%	53%	11%	100%
Age group	15-34 years	14%	67%	19%	100%
	35-54 years	32%	59%	9%	100%
	55 years & above	46%	44%	10%	100%
Education level	Low/medium level	31%	56%	13%	100%
	High level	32%	60%	8%	100%
Employment status	Employed / Self-employed	30%	60%	10%	100%
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	32%	52%	16%	100%
Geographical area	East	35%	55%	10%	100%
	North/Centre	35%	48%	17%	100%
	West	20%	73%	7%	100%
<b>Total</b>		<b>31%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TABLE 17 – Optimism regarding Belarus’s future**

<b>Q4.5. How optimistic are you about the future of your country?</b>					
		<b>Optimistic</b>	<b>Pessimistic</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Settlement size</b>	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	32%	64%	4%	<b>100%</b>
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	44%	53%	3%	<b>100%</b>
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	39%	59%	2%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	36%	59%	5%	<b>100%</b>
	Female	37%	62%	1%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age group</b>	15-34 years	28%	68%	4%	<b>100%</b>
	35-54 years	35%	63%	2%	<b>100%</b>
	55 years & above	46%	51%	3%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Education level</b>	Low/medium level	38%	59%	3%	<b>100%</b>
	High level	31%	67%	2%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Employment status</b>	Employed / Self-employed	36%	61%	3%	<b>100%</b>
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	38%	59%	3%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Geographical area</b>	East	33%	65%	2%	<b>100%</b>
	North/Centre	46%	49%	5%	<b>100%</b>
	West	22%	77%	1%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>37%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TABLE 18 – Optimism regarding personal future**

<b>Q4.6. How optimistic are you about your personal future?</b>					
		<b>Optimistic</b>	<b>Pessimistic</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Settlement size</b>	Equal to or more than 150,000 inhabitants	43%	54%	3%	<b>100%</b>
	Between 20,000 and 150,000 inhabitants	64%	35%	1%	<b>100%</b>
	Less than 20,000 inhabitants	53%	45%	2%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	52%	45%	3%	<b>100%</b>
	Female	49%	49%	2%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age group</b>	15-34 years	53%	45%	2%	<b>100%</b>
	35-54 years	54%	44%	2%	<b>100%</b>
	55 years & above	44%	54%	2%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Education level</b>	Low/medium level	49%	48%	3%	<b>100%</b>
	High level	54%	45%	1%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Employment status</b>	Employed / Self-employed	53%	45%	2%	<b>100%</b>
	Unemployed or temporarily not working / inactive	47%	51%	2%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Geographical area</b>	East	53%	45%	2%	<b>100%</b>
	North/Centre	56%	41%	3%	<b>100%</b>
	West	37%	62%	1%	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>51%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>



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