

TransSOL Research Summary 3: Facts and Analysis on Solidarity in Europe

Individual forms of solidarity at times of crisis (WP3)

Introduction

Claims that international solidarity is dead – or at best severely at risk – have grown since the 2008 financial crisis and the rise of xenophobic and populist parties and protests. Our survey of 16,000 Europeans in 8 countries looked into whether these statements were true, whether European solidarity really is in retreat, how strongly solidarity is rooted at the individual level and what factors seem to contribute to or diminish solidarity in times of crisis. Our findings indicate that international solidarity is still very much alive and functioning in Europe, but faces contextual and issue dependent challenges.

Summary of Main Findings

Solidarity remains strong at the national level and externally.

A strong majority of survey respondents indicated support for EU development aid for non-EU countries and for redistributive public policies, considering the reduction of income inequality to be an important goal. A majority of respondents also indicated that they have participated in solidarity initiatives in their own countries, indicating a willingness to actively fight inequality.

Solidarity between Europeans does not have the same level of support.

Support for fiscal solidarity in relation to public debt with other European countries was stronger than opposition, but divisions exist between citizens of different countries.

Fewer respondents supported their government providing additional funds to the EU for refugee support than opposed it, and fewer respondents reported undertaking solidarity action for causes in other EU member states than for causes in their own countries.

Solidarity is conditional.

Survey findings indicate that Europeans see solidarity as an exchange rather than an unconditional act. Respondents tended to show a preference for providing support only to those that had also contributed. In respect to migrants, this plays out as strong preferences for access to social assistance only for those who have worked and paid taxes or have gained citizenship.

Support for EU membership is uncertain.

Despite a majority across the countries surveyed stating that being outside the EU would be negative for jobs and employment, more than two in five respondents were positive or ambivalent about the effect on jobs and employment if their country were outside the EU. A majority of respondents in Greece would vote to leave the EU – and a majority of Swiss respondents not join – if a referendum were held today. Attachment to the EU was also identified as the lowest form of attachment by respondents, compared to attachment to counties, regions and cities.

Non-economic migration and refugee solidarity is weak.

While most surveyed people accepted EU economic migration, support for non-economic and non-EU migration was low –

with almost one in two respondents looking for limits or prohibitions on non-EU migration. Few respondents indicated support for accepting more Syrian refugees, with the majority suggesting retaining current numbers or admitting lower numbers.

Context is important.

Results across several questions differed depending on the country. Support for financial and intra-European solidarity tended to be higher in Southern European states – as did a lack of belief that EU membership is beneficial, while support for the EU tended to be higher in Germany, Denmark and Poland, with France and the UK somewhere in between.

Interpretations

Several lessons can be drawn from the results of the survey that could be useful in shaping policies.

Solidarity mechanisms

Opportunities exist for maintaining or increasing state-level solidarity mechanisms, as reducing inequalities amongst citizens received strong support in all countries surveyed.

EU bailout funds

While support for and against EU level fund pooling for debt relief was relatively evenly split, a substantial number of people (29%) remain undecided and only 12% are strongly opposed, providing opportunities for further engagement.

EU membership

While support for EU membership is weak in some countries, a positive finding that could be built upon is that Europeans in general find

being part of the EU a good thing, even where they say that it has not been financially beneficial.

Refugees

More Europeans oppose EU level financial support for refugees than are for it, however 1 in 4 people are undecided and therefore are open to being convinced.

While a high number of people are not in favour of more Syrian refugees arriving, those more attached to the EU are more in favour of accepting more refugees, indicating the two may go hand-in-hand to some extent.

Migration

Support for migration is closely tied to employment opportunities in the EU, both for EU citizens and non-citizens. Policy measures that support employment and social redistribution are therefore more likely to lead to greater acceptance of migration.

Key Findings

European solidarity findings indicate that European solidarity remains strong. A large majority of Europeans support development aid (62%) and few think it is not a priority (14%) (see Table 1), more than half of Europeans have taken action to support the rights of people in their own country and around a third to support other EU citizens and persons living outside the EU (see Table 2). 68% of people believe in the importance of eliminating big inequalities between citizens, with few (9.3%) finding it not important (see Table 3).

Support for EU funds to assist other EU members having difficulties in paying debts, often referred to as bailout funds, is a more mixed picture. While Europeans are generally more supportive than not (41% to 30%), public willingness for debt support is often weaker in

Northern Europe than Southern and, perhaps surprisingly, almost as weak in Denmark and the UK, which are not participating in Euro bailout funds, as they are in Germany, which is (see Table 4, Figure 1).

When asked to assess which arguments are more reflective of feelings on why financial help may or may not be given to other EU member states, moral and self-beneficial arguments were seen to less convincing than arguments that at some point every member may need help (with 44% agreeing) and that money should not be given to countries who have proven poor at handling money (35%) (see Table 6).

When it comes to providing the EU with financial support for refugees, Europeans clearly need more convincing, with 35% indicating they are in favour against 39% who say they are not (see Table 5). Similarly, Europeans remain unconvinced on providing social assistance to migrants, with 42% saying these should come only after having worked and paid taxes for one year and 30% saying these should only come with citizenship (see Table 7)

Outliers in European solidarity

Findings suggest that in a few areas, respondents from certain countries do not match as closely to the European average as others with regards to European solidarity, meaning that policy interventions may need to be tailored differently. This includes:

- Support for development aid is weaker in Poland than the EU average, with 21% of respondents not finding it very or at all important.
- Redistributive social policies are thought of as less important in Denmark than the EU average, with 49% finding them fairly or very important and just over 19% finding them not very or not at all important.
- Pooling EU funds to support EU member states with debt challenges received more

than average support in Greece, Italy and Poland than other countries surveyed.

European membership and attachment

Responses to membership of the EU saw very different responses depending on the question asked and the nationality of the person responding.

On one of the fundamental questions of whether EU membership is positive on jobs and employment, the largest part of respondents still found it was positive (41%), however a larger proportion (43%) were neutral or thought EU membership was negative on jobs and employment (see Table 8).

Despite that finding, the greater part of respondents from Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and Poland would vote to stay in the EU, were a referendum to be held. Perhaps unsurprisingly a slight majority of UK respondents would vote to leave and a clear majority of Swiss respondents would not join, but also a majority of Greek respondents indicated they would vote to leave the EU and at a larger rate than British respondents (46% to 38%) (see Table 9).

On the UK question, respondents were largely split on whether or not the UK should remain an EU member (41.1% remain to 41.7% leave). Support for continued UK membership was particularly strong in Germany and Poland, while support for the UK to leave was stronger in France, Greece and Italy (see Table 10).

Outside of specifics and looking more generally, the greater number of respondents in all EU countries, except Greece but including the UK, thinks EU membership is a good thing (see Table 11). This is despite a greater number of respondents from France and Italy, as well as Greece, indicating that their country has not benefited from EU membership than respondents saying that it has (see Table 12).

When it comes to the question of attachment, though, respondents from all countries felt less – and, in most cases, much less – attached to the EU than to their cities, regions, countries and even the world and humanity in general (see Table 13).

Key outliers for EU membership

On the question of EU membership, countries were largely split on a number of questions, as listed above. Nevertheless, where there was uniformity to a large extent, a number of outliers can be identified:

- Greece was the only EU country in which more respondents indicated that being outside the EU would be more positive than negative on jobs and employment.
- Respondents from Germany and Poland would be more likely to vote to continue EU membership, and, as indicated above, Greece and the UK are the only current EU member states that would vote to leave.
- Switzerland would strongly vote to stay outside the EU, should a vote be held.
- Poland and Germany are also the countries where most respondents are likely to say the UK should stay in the EU, while France and Switzerland are the most likely to say they should leave.
- In Greece, Italy and, by a small margin, France, respondents are more likely to say that their country has not benefited from being in the EU than to say it has.

Migration

Europeans are largely homogenous in their views on internal EU migration. Some, albeit limited, support for unconditional migration exists (15%). There is large support for migra-

tion for employment (46%), some support for numerical limits on migration (25%) and almost no support for ending free movement (5.5%) (see Table 15). Results are similar for non-EU migrants, but with a lower degree of support for open borders (6.3%) and higher support for completely closed ones (11%), with a greater degree of balance between those supporting migration linked to employment (37%) and those supporting strict numerical limits (36%) (see Table 16).

Results of our survey looking at support for accepting refugees from the war in Syria shows that most people believe that their country should keep admitting around the same number (27%) or should admit lower numbers (31%), with 12% saying higher numbers should be admitted and 20% saying no one at all should be accepted (see Table 17, Figure 2).

Key outliers for migration

- A higher proportion of Greek respondents are in favour of intra-EU migration without conditions than the average, and a lower than average number from France, Switzerland and the UK are in favour of the same.
- Support for lower numbers of Syrian refugee admissions were higher than average in Greece and Germany, although a higher number of Germans than average also suggest keeping numbers about the same.
- Support for admitting more Syrian refugees than currently was particularly high in Denmark and the UK, and support for admitting no Syrian asylum seekers at all was particularly high in Poland and higher than average in France.

Annex: Tables and Figures

Table 1: The European Union provides development aid to assist certain countries outside the EU in their fight against poverty and in their development. How important do you think it is to help people in developing countries?

	Not at all important	Not very important	Neither	Fairly important	Very important	Total N
DK	4%	8%	26%	43%	19%	2183
FR	5%	9%	32%	38%	16%	2098
GER	3%	6%	18%	46%	28%	2064
GRE	6%	7%	21%	44%	22%	2061
IT	4%	7%	18%	46%	26%	2087
PL	5%	16%	35%	35%	8%	2119
UK	6%	9%	27%	37%	21%	2083
CH	3%	8%	20%	44%	25%	2221
Total	5%	9%	25%	42%	20%	16916

Table 2: Have you ever done one of the following in order to support the rights of people/groups?

	People in your own country	People in other countries within the EU	People in countries outside the EU	Disability rights	The unemployed	Refugees/asylum seekers	Total N
DK	47%	23%	35%	44%	27%	30%	2183
FR	47%	25%	30%	50%	24%	20%	2098
GER	51%	31%	40%	52%	27%	34%	2064
GRE	62%	35%	36%	62%	58%	36%	2061
IT	47%	32%	33%	49%	36%	28%	2087
PL	59%	35%	37%	65%	40%	27%	2119
UK	38%	19%	25%	35%	19%	22%	2221
CH	59%	34%	45%	67%	33%	33%	2083
Total	51%	29%	35%	53%	33%	29%	16916

*at least one of the following was named: protest, donate money or time, bought or boycotted goods, passive or active membership

Table 3: Eliminating big inequalities in income between citizens

	Not at all important	Not very important	Neither	Fairly important	Very important	Total N
DK	5.4%	12.7%	33.1%	32.8%	16%	2183
FR	2.4%	5.8%	20.3%	37.5%	34%	2098
GER	2%	6.2%	22.8%	39.3%	29.7%	2064
GRE	1.8%	3.5%	16.7%	35.1%	42.9%	2061
IT	1.4%	3%	14.9%	40%	40.7%	2087
PL	2.6%	5.4%	21.7%	36.5%	33.8%	2119
UK	3.6%	6.7%	28.5%	35.8%	25.4%	2083
CH	3.2%	7.9%	22.3%	38.9%	27.7%	2221
Total	2.8%	6.5%	22.6%	37.00%	31.1%	16916

Table 4: The EU is currently pooling funds to help EU countries having difficulties in paying their debts. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this measure?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly agree	Total N
DK	14%	24%	34%	23%	5%	1939
FR	15%	19%	30%	28%	8%	1903
GER	15%	26%	25%	27%	6%	1914
GRE	7%	4%	24%	38%	26%	1975
IT	5%	11%	18%	47%	19%	1928
PL	8%	12%	42%	33%	6%	1938
UK	18%	23%	25%	27%	7%	1861
CH	14%	22%	31%	28%	5%	1992
Total	12%	18%	29%	31%	10%	15455

Table 5: Would you support or oppose your country's government offering financial support to the European Union in order to help refugees?

	Strongly oppose	Somewhat oppose	Neither	Somewhat support	Strongly support	Total N
DK	16%	17%	25%	27%	14%	2183
FR	26%	19%	29%	21%	5%	2098
GER	12%	17%	24%	35%	12%	2064
GRE	24%	15%	23%	31%	8%	2061
IT	21%	25%	28%	23%	4%	2087
PL	18%	19%	33%	24%	5%	2119
UK	20%	18%	27%	26%	10%	2221
CH	21%	25%	20%	28%	6%	2083
Total	20%	19%	26%	27%	8%	16916

Table 6: There are many reasons to state for or against financial help for EU countries in trouble. Which one of the following best reflects how you feel? Multiple answers possible

	DK	FR	GER	GR	IT	PL	UK	CH	Total
Financial help has also beneficial effects for the own country	20%	13%	15%	19%	16%	24%	15%	13%	17%
It is our moral duty to help other member states that are in need	18%	16%	21%	27%	20%	20%	17%	15%	19%
member states should help each other, as somewhere along the way every country may require help	33%	37%	45%	59%	52%	49%	31%	42%	44%
Financial help should not be given to countries that have proven to handle money badly	40%	37%	40%	22%	26%	38%	42%	38%	35%
Don't know	19%	17%	9%	8%	13%	11%	16%	12%	13%
Total N	2183	2098	2064	2061	2087	2119	2083	2221	16916

Table 7: When should migrants obtain rights to social benefits and services as citizens do?

	Immediately on arrival	After living 1Y (worked or not)	After worked & paid taxes 1Y	After Citi- zanship	Never	Total N
DK	7%	9%	37%	36%	11%	2183
FR	5%	9%	41%	26%	18%	2098
GER	9%	13%	46%	24%	7%	2064
GRE	8%	8%	34%	35%	15%	2061
IT	8%	7%	38%	36%	12%	2087
PL	7%	8%	43%	32%	10%	2119
UK	6%	8%	46%	27%	14%	2083
CH	6%	9%	52%	23%	10%	2221
Total	7%	9%	42%	30%	12%	16916

Table 8: Effect on jobs and employment if country was *outside* the EU (in %)

	Would be good	Would be bad	Would make no difference	Don't know
Denmark	16.2	37.8	21.7	24.3
France	23.8	27.6	27.8	20.8
Germany	14.4	43.7	26.5	15.4
Greece	38.4	31.2	16.5	14.0
Italy	25.9	35.4	21.9	16.8
Poland	10.6	52.1	18.1	19.2
Switzerland	11.3*	49.6*	25*	14.1*
UK	26.5	33	24.3	16.1
Total	20.8	38.9	22.7	17.6

*in Switzerland we asked if the country was *in* the EU

Table 9: If there was a referendum on your country's membership of the EU how would you vote? (in %)

	Remain <i>*Become a member</i>	Leave <i>*Stay outside</i>	Would not vote	Don't know
Denmark	47.6	32.1	4.2	16.1
France	42.7	30.3	7.6	19.4
Germany	61.3	23.5	6.0	9.3
Greece	37.7	46.3	7.9	8.1
Italy	43.1	36.1	6.4	14.5
Poland	64.0	14.8	7.8	13.4
Switzerland*	10.5*	74.3*	5.7*	9.5*
United Kingdom	44.3	45.2	3.7	6.8
Total	48.7	32.6	6.2	12.6

*in Switzerland we asked about joining the EU

Table 10: Should the UK remain a member or leave the EU? (in %)

	Remain	Leave	Don't know
Denmark	45.1	34.5	20.4
France	30.3	46.6	23.1
Germany	51.7	35.7	12.6
Greece	32.2	51.7	16.1
Italy	39.8	43.2	17
Poland	59	19.5	21.5
Switzerland	26.3	55.1	18.7
United Kingdom	45.3	47.1	7.6
Total	41.1	41.7	17.2

Table 11: Generally speaking, do you think that your country's membership of the European Union is ...? (in %)

	A good thing	A bad thing	Neither good nor bad	Don't know
Denmark	38.9	25.3	26.3	9.6
France	34.4	26.5	29.8	9.3
Germany	53.3	15.6	26.6	4.5
Greece	30.7	34	31.1	4.2
Italy	35.8	30.6	26.4	7.2
Poland	62.7	9.2	20.9	7.2
Switzerland*	8.0*	67.6*	18.1*	6.3*
United Kingdom	40.3	35.4	18	6.4
Total	37.8	30.8	24.6	6.9

*in Switzerland we asked about joining the EU (joining the EU would be...)/ TransSOL (Horizon2020, GA, no 649435)

Table 12: Taking everything into account, would you say that your country has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Union? (in %)

	Benefited	Not benefited	Don't know
Denmark	48.6	29.8	21.7
France	36.2	37.6	26.2
Germany	58.5	27.4	14.2
Greece	37.2	53.1	9.6
Italy	28.2	52.7	19.1
Poland	70.9	14.3	14.8
Switzerland*	70.3*	13.4*	16.3*
United Kingdom	43.7	37	19.3
Total	49.4	32.9	17.7

*in Switzerland we asked if the country benefited or not from NOT being a member of the European Union/TransSOL (Horizon2020, GA, no 649435)

Table 13: Please tell me how attached you feel to ...? (in %, fairly and very attached)

	European Union	The world/humanity	Country	Region	City
DK	33.4	64.1	90.8	62.2	80.3
FR	47.1	72.7	88.6	80.5	79
GER	53.3	69	83.7	79.1	82.1
GRE	32.3	73.8	90.5	85	85
IT	49.1	73.4	78.1	80.2	82.3
PL	65.8	79.9	89.8	87.8	87.6
CH	28.1	74.6	89.1	84.0	81.1
UK	40.1	67.7	82.5	75.8	79.7
Total	43.5	71.9	86.7	79.3	82.1

Table 14: Solidarity and attachment to the EU (in %)

Agreement with pooling funds to help countries in debt (see Table 4)	Attached to the EU
Strongly disagree	18.2
Disagree	31.2
Neither	43.5
Agree	59
Strongly agree	58.7
Don't know	30.6
Total	43.5

Table 15: For each of the following groups, what measures do you think the government should pursue? People from European Union coming to *****COUNTRY***** to work? (in %)

	Allow in all those who want to come	Allow people to come as long as there are jobs they can do	Put strict limits on the number allowed to come	Prohibit people from these countries coming here	Don't know
DK	14.6	52.1	18.9	3.8	10.7
FR	13	42.2	25.1	8.1	11.6
GER	16.3	46.2	26.1	4.8	6.7
GRE	22	44.7	23	4.2	6.1
IT	16.7	48.5	20.7	5.7	8.3
PL	20	44.2	19.1	5.3	11.5
CH	7.2	46.4	36.8	4.2	5.4
UK	9.7	41.2	31.8	8	9.4
Total	14.9	45.7	25.2	5.5	8.7

Table 16: For each of the following groups, what measures do you think the government should pursue? People from non-EU countries coming to *****COUNTRY***** to work? (in %)

	Allow in all those who want to come	Allow people to come as long as there are jobs they can do	Put strict limits on the number allowed to come	Prohibit people from these countries coming here	Don't know
DK	5.6	40.3	31.8	10.7	11.6
FR	6.2	32.8	34.3	14.5	12.2
GER	7	32.1	40.3	12.3	8.3
GRE	7.8	38	37.2	11.1	5.9
IT	8	46.6	27.4	9.3	8.8
PL	6.2	34.8	33.7	11.9	13.4
CH	4.5	35.3	45.1	9.2	5.8
UK	5.3	37	37.2	10.5	10
Total	6.3	37.1	35.9	11.2	9.5

Table 17: How do you think your country should handle refugees fleeing the war in Syria? (in %)

	Admit higher numbers	Keep numbers coming about the same	Admit lower numbers	Should not let any come in	Don't know
DK	17.1	29	27	16.8	10.1
FR	10	21.1	29.8	25	14.1
GER	9.3	35.8	37	12.7	5.3
GRE	8.6	18.9	49.5	16.9	6.1
IT	8.7	23.4	34.8	22	11.1
PL	9.2	24.5	15.8	36.3	14.2
CH	15.6	38	27.3	12.2	7
UK	18.1	24.9	24.8	20	12.3
Total	12.1	27	30.6	20.2	10

Table 18: Solidarity with Syrian Refugees and attachment to the EU (in %)

What should be done regarding refugees fleeing war in Syria (see Table 17)	Attached to EU
Admit higher numbers	61
Keep numbers coming about the same	53.6
Admit lower numbers	38.9
Should not let any come in	29.1
Don't know	38.6
Total	43.5

Figure 1: Solidarity and attachment to the EU

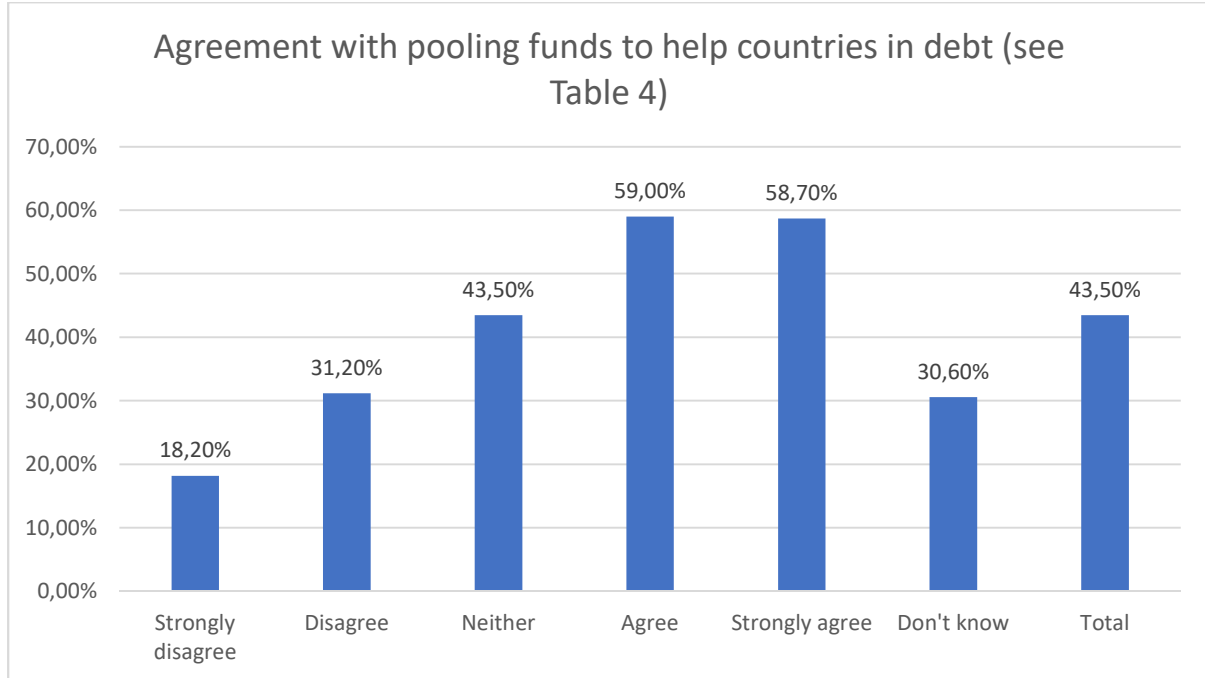


Figure 2: Solidarity with Syrian Refugees and attachment to the EU

