



MILLENNIAL DIALOGUE ON EUROPE

PRESS RELEASE

EUROPE'S MILLENNIALS WANT MORE SOCIAL PROTECTION, MAJOR SURVEY SHOWS

Millennials value the EU, support an EU army, and want progressive policies like minimum wages and unemployment benefits

Brussels, November 27, 2018 (EMBARGOED) – Millennials want the European Union to do much more to support social welfare policies like the minimum wage, according to a major new opinion survey published in Brussels on Tuesday, November 27.

With just six months until the 2019 European Parliament elections, the Millennial Dialogue survey shows that they favour policies that provide a strong social safety net in uncertain times. The survey reveals that 52% of millennials believe tackling poverty and reducing social and economic inequalities should be among the EU's top priorities. An overwhelming 83% of millennials believe the EU should ensure a minimum wage for all workers, 81% want more EU financial aid for children, and 47% believe reducing gender gaps in salaries and pensions is one of the best ways to tackle gender inequalities.

These priorities show that millennials are willing to speak up and to be engaged in the political debate. More than half, 53.5%, also say that the EU is headed in the wrong direction, a worrying figure for decision makers, and 58% say they think more countries will leave the EU after Brexit.

When it comes to the EU itself, the survey found that millennials are much more enthusiastic than the general public: 79.8% say they believe in the value of the EU, defying fears that the crises over the past few years have dented support for the European project.

Indeed, more than half of millennials, 54.7%, support the creation of a single European army, an issue that is often thought of as politically sensitive.

The Millennial Survey is one of the biggest opinion polls ever conducted in Europe: it reached 10,000 respondents in 10 countries that jointly account for 78% of the EU's population: France, Germany, Poland, Greece, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Sweden, Belgium and Portugal. It is commissioned by FEPS in cooperation with ThinkYoung, and with the support of three business partners, Coca-Cola, BCW (Burson Cohn & Wolfe) and Microsoft. The survey builds on FEPS's long standing millennials research, with more than 23,000 taking part in its surveys across the globe between 2015-2017.



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A number of distinct millennial viewpoints stand out in the survey:

- The 79.8% support for the EU is significantly higher than the score amongst the general public, which is usually less than 60%.
- That enthusiasm is tempered by uncertainty about where the EU is headed: 53.5% of millennials say it is going in the wrong direction. However, this is much better than the figure from the previous Millennial Dialogue survey, in 2015, which showed that 73% thought the EU was headed in the wrong direction.
- Engagement is a big concern: 89.5% of millennials want politicians to do a better job communicating what EU is doing and how it impacts daily life – meaning that only one in 10 believe they are hearing enough about the EU’s roles, responsibilities and benefits.
- Just 27% of 18-to-24-year-olds voted in the 2014 elections, compared to the 42.5% overall average. This survey suggests that millennials were put off voting because they felt the EU did not speak to their generation: 85% say they want the EU to involve and empower more young people in decision-making.
- The 54.7% backing for an EU army contrasts with the caution shown across many political debates on this emerging issue. It comes from a generation that has been spared military service, but nonetheless gives the EU credit for the peace and stability on the continent.
- The millennial support for the EU comes at a decisive moment, not just with the European elections on the horizon but also with the UK preparing to leave the bloc. Yet the millennials surveyed do not think Brexit will be the only time a member state will depart: 58% say they think more countries will leave the EU in the future.
- However, the survey also shows that millennials do not share the same priorities as national governments or EU institutions. When asked about the most important issues facing the EU, they mentioned poverty and inequality (52%), environmental challenges (40%), the migration crisis (33%), and corruption (32%). When it comes to specific policies, an overwhelming 83% support EU measures to set a minimum wage.

Maria Freitas, Policy Advisor at FEPS says the survey opens the door for policy makers to engage with younger generations. *“Millennial enthusiasm for the EU and its values presents a unique opportunity for pro-European parties and EU institutions to engage with a demographic that represents over quarter of Europe’s entire population. This is also a chance to help bridge the divide between policy-makers and young people,”* she said.

ThinkYoung’s Founder and Chief Thinker Andrea Gerosa said the survey should raise awareness about a much-misunderstood generation. *“Millennials are often ignored in the political process, but they represent our future. This survey asks about their hopes and ideals, and the result is a distinct set of political priorities. It is up to our political leaders now to listen to these voices,”* he said.

For the full survey, embargoed until 00.00 CET on November 26, click [here](#).



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About the Methodology

The survey was conducted between August 27 and September 3, 2018. There were over 1,000 respondents in each country, and a total sample size of 10,138. Hard quotas were applied on the basis of age, gender, country and region. Data were weighted based on socio-economic status and educational level to ensure representativeness using a random iterative method (RIM), based on Eurostat (2017) and European Social Survey (2016) statistics. Considering the weighting and hard quotas, the margin of error for the sample size is 1.05 percentage points.

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