Special Eurobarometer Survey: Europeans' attitudes towards security

A Special Eurobarometer opinion survey published today provides a snapshot of the Europeans' attitudes towards security.
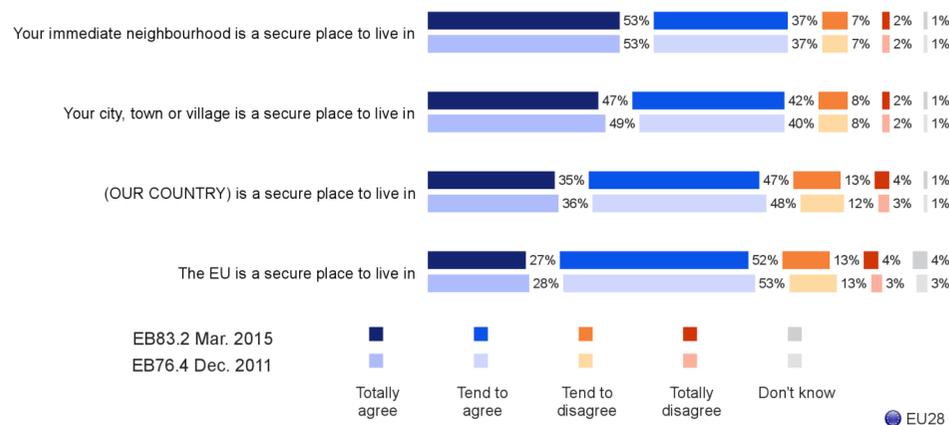
Some 28,082 respondents participated in this survey which was carried out in the 28 Member States of the European Union between 21 and 30 March 2015.

Overall perception of security

Europeans, generally speaking, **feel safe.** Nine out of ten people say they feel secure in their immediate surroundings, and eight out of ten people think that their country and the EU are secure places to live.

It is also clear, though, that people in some countries feel a lot more secure than people in others: 98% of people in Denmark and Finland feel secure in their city, town or village, as opposed to 71% in Bulgaria, for example.

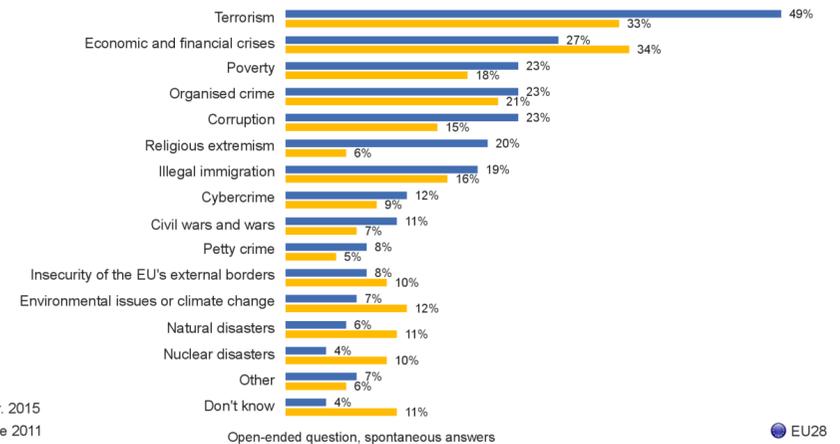QA1. To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about public security?

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know
Your immediate neighbourhood is a secure place to live in (EB83.2 Mar. 2015)	53%	37%	7%	2%	1%
Your immediate neighbourhood is a secure place to live in (EB76.4 Dec. 2011)	53%	37%	7%	2%	1%
Your city, town or village is a secure place to live in (EB83.2 Mar. 2015)	47%	42%	8%	2%	1%
Your city, town or village is a secure place to live in (EB76.4 Dec. 2011)	49%	40%	8%	2%	1%
(OUR COUNTRY) is a secure place to live in (EB83.2 Mar. 2015)	35%	47%	13%	4%	1%
(OUR COUNTRY) is a secure place to live in (EB76.4 Dec. 2011)	36%	48%	12%	3%	1%
The EU is a secure place to live in (EB83.2 Mar. 2015)	27%	52%	13%	4%	4%
The EU is a secure place to live in (EB76.4 Dec. 2011)	28%	53%	13%	3%	3%

EB83.2 Mar. 2015
EB76.4 Dec. 2011
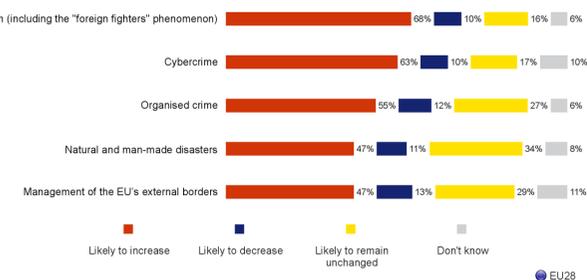
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Perceived threats and challenges

Yet at the same time, there is **rising concern about certain security threats,** especially terrorism and religious extremism, no doubt reflecting recent incidents such as the Paris attacks.
Half of all respondents now see terrorism as an important challenge to the security of EU citizens, up from one-third in 2011; and a fifth see religious extremism as an important challenge, whereas only one in 20 did so four years earlier.

QA2. What do you think are the most important challenges to the security of EU citizens at the moment? (MAX. 3 ANSWERS)

Challenge	EB83.2 Mar. 2015	EB75.4 June 2011
Terrorism	49%	33%
Economic and financial crises	27%	34%
Poverty	23%	18%
Organised crime	23%	21%
Corruption	23%	15%
Religious extremism	20%	6%
Illegal immigration	19%	16%
Cybercrime	12%	9%
Civil wars and wars	11%	7%
Petty crime	8%	5%
Insecurity of the EU's external borders	8%	10%
Environmental issues or climate change	7%	12%
Natural disasters	6%	11%
Nuclear disasters	4%	10%
Other	7%	6%
Don't know	4%	11%

EB83.2 Mar. 2015
EB75.4 June 2011

Open-ended question, spontaneous answers

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QA5. Would you say that the following challenges to the internal security of the EU are likely to increase, decrease or remain unchanged over the next three years?

Challenge	Likely to increase	Likely to decrease	Likely to remain unchanged	Don't know
Terrorism (including the "foreign fighters" phenomenon)	68%	10%	16%	6%
Cybercrime	63%	10%	17%	10%
Organised crime	55%	12%	27%	6%
Natural and man-made disasters	47%	11%	34%	8%
Management of the EU's external borders	47%	13%	29%	11%

Likely to increase Likely to decrease Likely to remain unchanged Don't know
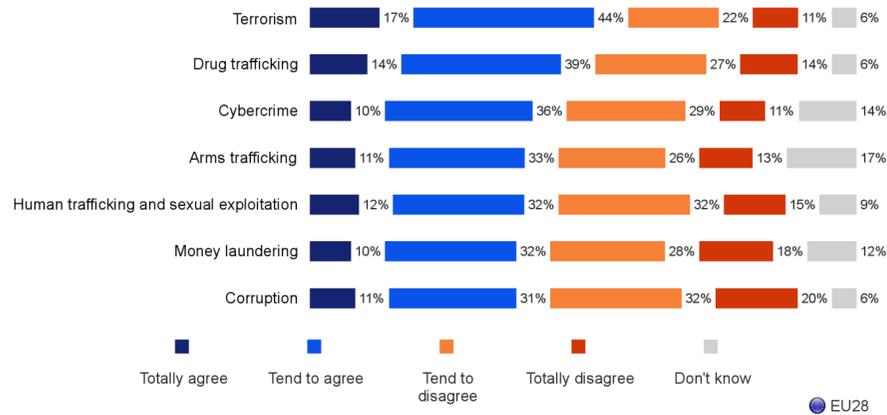
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Respondents also believe that many of the security threats we face are becoming more severe: two-thirds of respondents think that the challenge of terrorism is likely to increase over the next three years (up from 51% in 2011), whereas only a tenth believe it is likely to decrease.
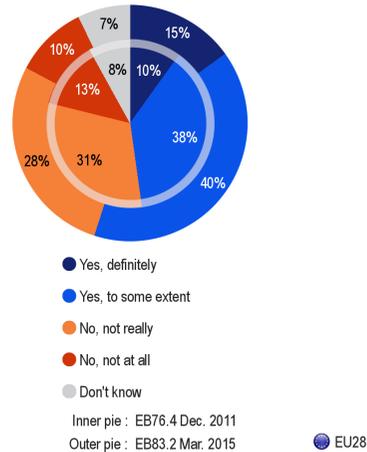
Responses to address security challenges

Respondents think that the **police and the judicial system are mainly responsible for protecting citizens** from most forms of security threats. Additionally, a majority think that the police are doing enough to tackle some of the most serious threats, including terrorism and drug trafficking. However, there is a sense that the police could do more to combat other threats, namely corruption and money laundering.

QA4. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements: The police and other law enforcement authorities in (OUR COUNTRY) are doing enough to fight…

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know
Terrorism	17%	44%	22%	11%	6%
Drug trafficking	14%	39%	27%	14%	6%
Cybercrime	10%	36%	29%	11%	14%
Arms trafficking	11%	33%	26%	13%	17%
Human trafficking and sexual exploitation	12%	32%	32%	15%	9%
Money laundering	10%	32%	28%	18%	12%
Corruption	11%	31%	32%	20%	6%

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There also appears to be some caveats to the struggle to protect European security. A majority of respondents say that **citizens' rights and freedoms have been restricted** for reasons related to fighting terrorism and crime, whereas less than half felt this to be the case in 2011.

QA7. Do you consider that fundamental rights and freedoms have been restricted in the EU for reasons related to the fight against terrorism and organised crime?

Inner pie (EB76.4 Dec. 2011): 10%, 38%, 31%, 13%, 8%
Outer pie (EB83.2 Mar. 2015): 15%, 40%, 28%, 10%, 7%

- ● Yes, definitely
- ● Yes, to some extent
- ● No, not really
- ● No, not at all
- ● Don't know

Inner pie : EB76.4 Dec. 2011
Outer pie : EB83.2 Mar. 2015

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Some question marks exist over the application of **new technologies to help protect citizens' security.** While half of the respondents think that new technologies have a positive impact on the security of citizens in the EU, a quarter express concerns that these technologies might actually have negative implications for European security.

QA10. In your view, what impact does the development of new technologies (such as the Internet, tablets, smartphones, etc.) have on… ?

	Very positive impact	Fairly positive impact	No impact	Fairly negative impact	Very negative impact	Don't know
The economic activities of companies in the EU	24%	45%	12%	8%	2%	9%
The action of public authorities to ensure the security of citizens in the EU	16%	45%	15%	12%	2%	10%
The rights and freedoms of citizens in the EU	14%	37%	17%	19%	3%	10%
The security of citizens in the EU	13%	38%	15%	22%	3%	9%

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