



Special Eurobarometer 540

Europeans and their languages

Report

Fieldwork : September-October 2024

Special Eurobarometer 540 Europeans and their Languages September - October 2023

Survey conducted by Verian on behalf of Verian Belgium
at the request of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC)
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Document prepared by Pierre Dieumegard for [Europe-Democracy-Esperanto](#)

The purpose of this "provisional" document is to enable more people in the European Union to become aware of documents produced by the European Union (and financed by their taxes).

If there are no translations, citizens are excluded from the debate.

This document "Eurobarometer" [only existed in English](#), in a pdf-file . From the initial file, we created a odt-file, prepared by Libre Office software, for machine translation to other languages. The results are now [available in all official languages](#).

It is desirable that the EU administration takes over the translation of important documents. "Important documents" are not only laws and regulations, but also the important information needed to make informed decisions together.

In order to discuss our common future together, and to enable reliable translations, the international language Esperanto would be very useful because of its simplicity, regularity and accuracy.

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INTRODUCTION



The European Union is home to a multitude of languages, encompassing 24 official languages, over 60 regional and minority languages native to the area, and various languages spoken by immigrant populations. Although education and language policy fall under the jurisdiction of each Member State, limiting the EU's direct role, the Union remains dedicated to preserving and fostering its rich linguistic diversity. This commitment is rooted in the belief that cultural identity, social integration, and cohesion are strengthened through language, and that multilingualism can enhance citizens' access to the socio-economic benefits of a unified Europe. Language competences are indispensable for mobility, cooperation, and mutual understanding across borders.

The 2019 Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages¹ is the main policy document in the field of language learning. It says that every European student should have the opportunity to learn two languages in addition to the language of schooling.

The Recommendation underlines the importance of fully mastering the language of schooling as a basis for learning and educational achievement, while valuing linguistic diversity and supporting linguistically sensitive teaching. Member States are recommended to promote innovative, inclusive and multilingual pedagogies, using European tools and platforms, such as the European School Education Platform (ESEP).

A key European instrument to promote language learning is the Erasmus+ programme. The programme provides training and youth mobility opportunities in programme and partner countries. It also finances cooperation projects between schools, including on language learning and language awareness.

The present survey is a way to gauge whether citizens agree with the European objectives towards multilingualism and if they are progressing in that direction. The survey addresses the language knowledge of Europeans, covering skills, use of languages and attitudes towards languages.

The survey was conducted by Verian across the 27 EU Member States from September to October 2023, involving 26,523 respondents from 15 years of age and from diverse demographic backgrounds in their native languages, commissioned by Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC).

The methodology used is that of Eurobarometer surveys as carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication ("Media monitoring and Eurobarometer" Unit). In all countries interviews were conducted face-to-face, supplemented with self-completion interviews in Czechia, Denmark, Malta and Finland. A technical note on the manner in which the interviews were conducted by the institutes within the Verian network is appended as an annex to this report. Also included are the interview methods and the confidence intervals. Analysis of the

survey results was performed at both the EU level and individual country levels. Additional insights were drawn from various socio-demographic and behavioural data, such as age, education, occupation, social status, internet usage, financial stability, urbanisation levels, and metrics based on language learning activities and the number of foreign languages spoken. Whenever possible, the results of the present survey were compared with the results of the previous survey on the topic, which was carried out in 2012 as part of Eurobarometer wave 77.1. To allow for an accurate comparability of the results, EU-level averages as presented in the 2012 were recalculated to account for the UK leaving the EU and Croatia becoming a member.

Note: In this report, countries are referred to by their official abbreviation. The abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

Belgium	BE	Lithuania	LT
Bulgaria	BG	Luxembourg	LU
Czechia	CZ	Hungary	HU
Denmark	DK	Malta	MT
Germany	DE	The Netherlands	NL
Estonia	EE	Austria	AT
Ireland	IE	Poland	PL
Greece	EL	Portugal	PT
Spain	ES	Romania	RO
France	FR	Slovenia	SI
Croatia	HR	Slovakia	SK
Italy	IT	Finland	FI
Republic of Cyprus	CY*	Sweden	SE
Latvia	LV		

*Cyprus as a whole is one of the 27 EU Member States. However, the *acquis communautaire* has been suspended in the part of the country not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews carried out in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are included in the "CY" category and the EU27 average.

1 [Council Recommendation of 22 May 2019 on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32019L0022)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Citizens' attitudes on multilingualism

- 86% of respondents (no change since 2012) believe that everyone in the European Union should be able to speak at least one foreign language, whilst 69% (-4) endorse the idea that individuals in the EU should speak more than one language in addition to their mother tongue.
- Nine out of ten respondents (90%, +5) aged 15-24 agree that Europeans should speak at least one additional language. Likewise, 90% (+1) of the respondents who studied beyond the age of 20 agree with this perspective, much higher compared to their less- educated counterparts.
- Three quarters of Europeans (76%, -2) agree that improving language skills should be prioritized as a policy objective, with 35% (+ 1) expressing strong agreement.
- Younger respondents aged 15-24 (80%, +2) are even more convinced that improving language skills should be a priority policy objective. Similar proportions can be observed for individuals who pursued education beyond the age of 20, who are more likely (82%, =) to support this idea compared to those who left school at 15 or younger.
- More than eight in ten (84%) Europeans support safeguarding regional and minority languages.

Multilingualism in the EU

- Approximately six in ten (59%) Europeans are able to have a conversation in at least one other language than their mother tongue, marking an increase from 56% in 2012 (+3 percentage points) and 55% in 2005. About 28% (+ 1) report they can converse in at least two and 11% (+1) at least three languages.
- Women, younger individuals, and those with higher education levels exhibit a greater propensity for multilingualism. Notably, 79% (+5 since 2012) of individuals aged 15-24 can converse in at least one additional language than their mother tongue (compared to 44%, +6 among those aged 55 and above) and 39% (+2) can speak in at least two. Furthermore, there has been a 3 percentage points increase since 2012, with 15% of them being able to converse in three additional languages. Moreover, individuals in managerial positions or belonging to higher social classes are more likely to be proficient in additional languages. For instance, 83% (+6) of managers have the ability to speak one language besides their native tongue, while 44% (+6) can speak two additional languages, and 19% (-1) are proficient in three.

- English is most prevalent, with 47% (+5) of the Europeans claiming they speak it well enough to have a conversation. This is followed by French (11%, =) and German (10%, -2). English- speaking skills have grown substantially, with the biggest increases seen in Spain (38%, +16), Czech Republic (41%, +14), and Portugal (41%, +14).
- Regarding the most prevalent mother tongue,² not surprisingly and in line with population, German is at 19%, followed by French (15%), Italian (13%), Spanish (9%), and Polish (9%). At the European level, 2% of the respondents answered that they spoke an additional language they also considered as their native language.
- Among the regional or minority languages, the most prevalent as mother tongue at EU level is Catalan (slightly under 1% of total European population). Among the languages from migration, Arabic and Turkish are the most common (both a bit under 1%).

Motives and Methods for language learning

- Among the languages other than the mother tongue, learning English stands out with 77% (-1) considering it crucial for personal development, followed by German (14%, -3), French (13%, -1), and Spanish (12%, =)³.
- Younger respondents (aged 15-24) exhibit a greater inclination towards seeing the benefits of language learning, with 18% (=) having commenced learning a new language in the last 2 years, compared to only 2% (-1) among those aged 55 and above.
- In general, higher education levels correlate with finding multilingualism important. Financial stability and higher social status also align with an appreciation for languages like English, German, and French.
- When asked which foreign language is most important for one's children to learn with their future in mind, Europeans see English (85%, -3) as the most important language. Other languages follow at quite a distance, with German (13%, -6), Spanish (13%, =), French (12%, -4) and Chinese (11%, -2) as the most important. Between Member States there are large variations on which languages are most important. If most countries widely mention English with the Netherlands and Sweden both registering the highest figures at 96%, others like Slovenia (55%) or Slovakia (45%) also put a strong emphasis on the German language.

2 These figures represent the mother tongue, as well as second mother tongues when indicated by the respondent (D48a.f.mtongues.ex.NNDK).

3 These figures exclude the respondent's mother tongue as choice of language being most important for their personal development: it only considers languages other than one's mother tongue.

- Main benefits of learning a new language include job opportunities abroad (51%), to be able to understand people from other cultures (45%), getting a better job in the country where they live (42%), using it on holidays abroad (42%) and using it at work (including travelling abroad on business (40%).
- Regarding language learning, Europeans mainly learn a foreign language through their education (47%) followed by watching tv/listening to radio (20%) and talking informally to a native speaker (17%). About 20% (-1 pp. compared to 2012) are currently learning a language, whilst 9% intend to start learning a language (+1). 48% (+3) have not learned a language recently, and do not intend to start in 2024. 21% (=) have never learned any other language than their mother tongue. Interest in learning another language is higher among men and younger individuals.
- Respondents of the youngest demographic (15-24-year-olds) are much more likely than the older generation (55 years old and more) to say they have learnt by teaching themselves online (27% vs 7%) or by watching TV/films or listening to the radio (34% vs 12%). Young Europeans are also more likely to say they used "one to one" lessons with a teacher (6% vs 3%), teaching themselves using offline audio-visual material (13% vs 5%) or doing a language course in a country where the language is spoken (12% vs 7%).
- Europeans are most likely to think that free lessons are the best incentive to learning or improving language skills (27%, -2), followed by having the opportunity to learn in a country where the language is spoken (18%, =), if there was a prospect of travelling abroad at a later stage (18%, +2), and if they were paid for it (17%, -1).
- Motivation plays a pivotal role in language learning. Almost four in ten (39%, +3) respondents express that a lack of motivation is an important reason that discourages them from learning an additional language, while 28% (=) cite time constraints as a hindrance. The possibility to use machine translation does not appear to be an important reason not to learn languages (5%). About 60% of respondents say they rarely or never use machine translations.

Use of Languages in Different Contexts

- Amongst Europeans who speak at least one additional language other than their mother tongue, 31% use their first other language on a daily basis (+8). English is the most spoken on a daily basis (20%, +8), followed by German (4%, =), French (3%, +1), and Spanish (3%, =). 46% speak English 'often' or daily. 7% speak German often or daily (-1), 7% French (+2) and 5% Spanish (=).
- Respondents indicated to mostly use their first foreign language during holidays abroad (50%, +5), followed by using it on the internet (44%, +9), and for entertainment (39%, +4), such as watching films/TV or listening to the radio. 35% (+5) of Europeans indicated to use their best other language for communicating with friends. 29% say they use it for reading news, 28% (+3) for work related conversations.
- In terms of media consumption, the majority (53%) expressed a preference for subtitled content over dubbed foreign films and programs, a preference that has notably increased by 11 percentage points since 2012 (42%) and 16 since 2005.

I. MULTILINGUALISM IN THE EU

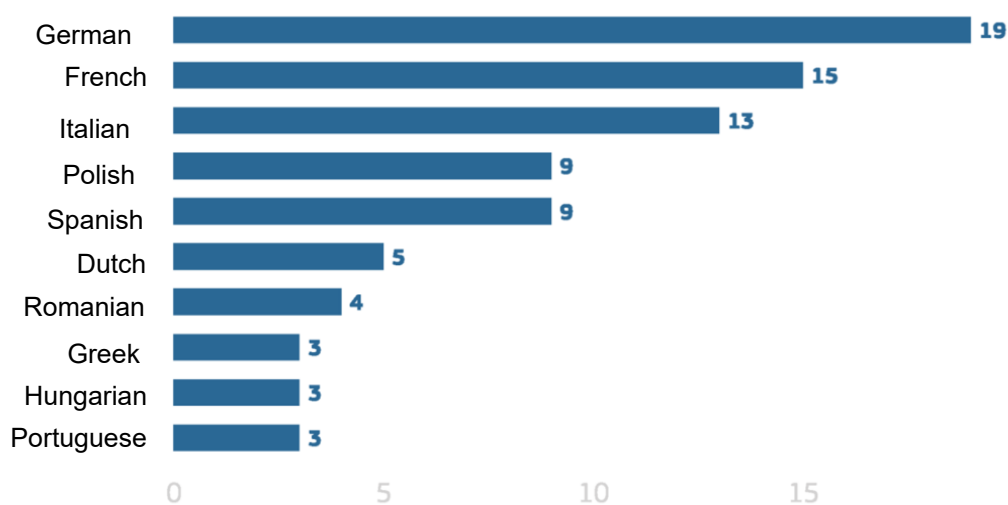


In this initial segment of the report, we delve into the present state of linguistic diversity within the EU. The section starts with the primary languages that Europeans identify as their native tongues. It then goes into the additional languages that Europeans can converse in fluently, pinpointing the ones that enjoy widespread proficiency across Europe and within the individual Member States. The report proceeds to scrutinize the commonly spoken additional languages, evaluating the self-assessed competency levels before wrapping up with an exploration of additional languages that Europeans use for more receptive activities, such as understanding news broadcasts, reading articles, and composing emails.

Overall, German is the most widely spoken as native language, with close to one in five (19%) Europeans saying it is their mother tongue, followed by French (15%), Italian (13%) then Spanish (9%) and Polish (9%). Dutch is spoken as the mother tongue by 5% of respondents, while all other languages are spoken by less than 5% of the participants⁵.

Since the previous report, published in June 2012, two changes took place, the accession of Croatia to the European Union on 1 July 2013 and the United Kingdom leaving the EU on 31 January 2020. Particularly the latter event impacted the relative preponderance of the different languages in the block. Most obvious is a large drop in the proportion of native English speakers, from 13% in 2012 to

D43afim tongues.ex.NNDK. Total mother-tongue (EU27) (%)



● Sept/Oct 2023

Base: 26129 (All respondents except those who answered “Don’t know” and “None” to D48a)

1. Mother tongues of European citizens

The most widely spoken mother tongue is German, French, Italian, Polish and Spanish.

Participants in the survey identified their native language⁴, meaning their first language, the one they speak with their family, or at home or in the community. Their responses were then catalogued based on a predetermined list encompassing 38 languages. Any additional languages mentioned were grouped into an ‘other’ category. Where individuals indicated to have more than one native language, they have been counted and integrated in this section.

The variety of native languages within Europe is vast, mirroring the broad demographic spread across the EU. The frequency of languages spoken natively tends to align with the population distribution and immigration trends observed within the Union.

2% in 2023. Likely as a result of this same shift, the relative proportion of native German and French speakers has increased, from 16% to 19% and from 12% to 15% respectively. The change is less visible or negligible for smaller language groups.

⁴ D48a. Thinking about the languages that you speak, which language is your mother tongue?

⁵ For this section, the results were recalculated as to account for the first and second mother tongue excluding “Don’t know” and “None” answers: D48a.f.mtongues.ex.NNDK. Total mother-tongue. These results need to be interpreted with caution due to the low base observed for certain languages. For additional information on the margin of errors associated with sample size, the reader is advised to consult the technical specifications provided at the end of this report.

At the national level, we see that for the majority of Europeans, not surprisingly, their mother tongue is one of the official languages of the country in which they reside.

Respondents in Hungary and Portugal (99% and 98%), are particularly likely to use an official language of their country as their mother tongue, followed by Czechia (96%), Greece (95%) Finland, Sweden Italy and Denmark (all at 94%). In contrast, those in Latvia (72%) and Estonia (73%) are the least likely to use an official language. In both of these countries a significant proportion of respondents say that their native language is Russian, (28%) and (25%) respectively. In other cases, like in Spain, co-official languages such as Catalan (7%), Galician (4%) would explain the relative low number of Spaniards having Spanish as a mother tongue (85%).

Other countries with a relatively large minority speaking an unofficial language of the country are Luxembourg, where 19% mention Portuguese as their mother tongue; Slovakia and Romania where 9% and 6% of respondents respectively cite Hungarian as their native language.

Malta and Denmark are the only countries where at least one in ten have two mother tongues.

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Respondents were also asked whether, they spoke an additional language they also considered as their native language⁶, allowing the respondent to indicate more than one mother tongue. As this question was not asked in

At the European level, 2% of the respondents answered that they spoke an additional language they also considered as their native language.

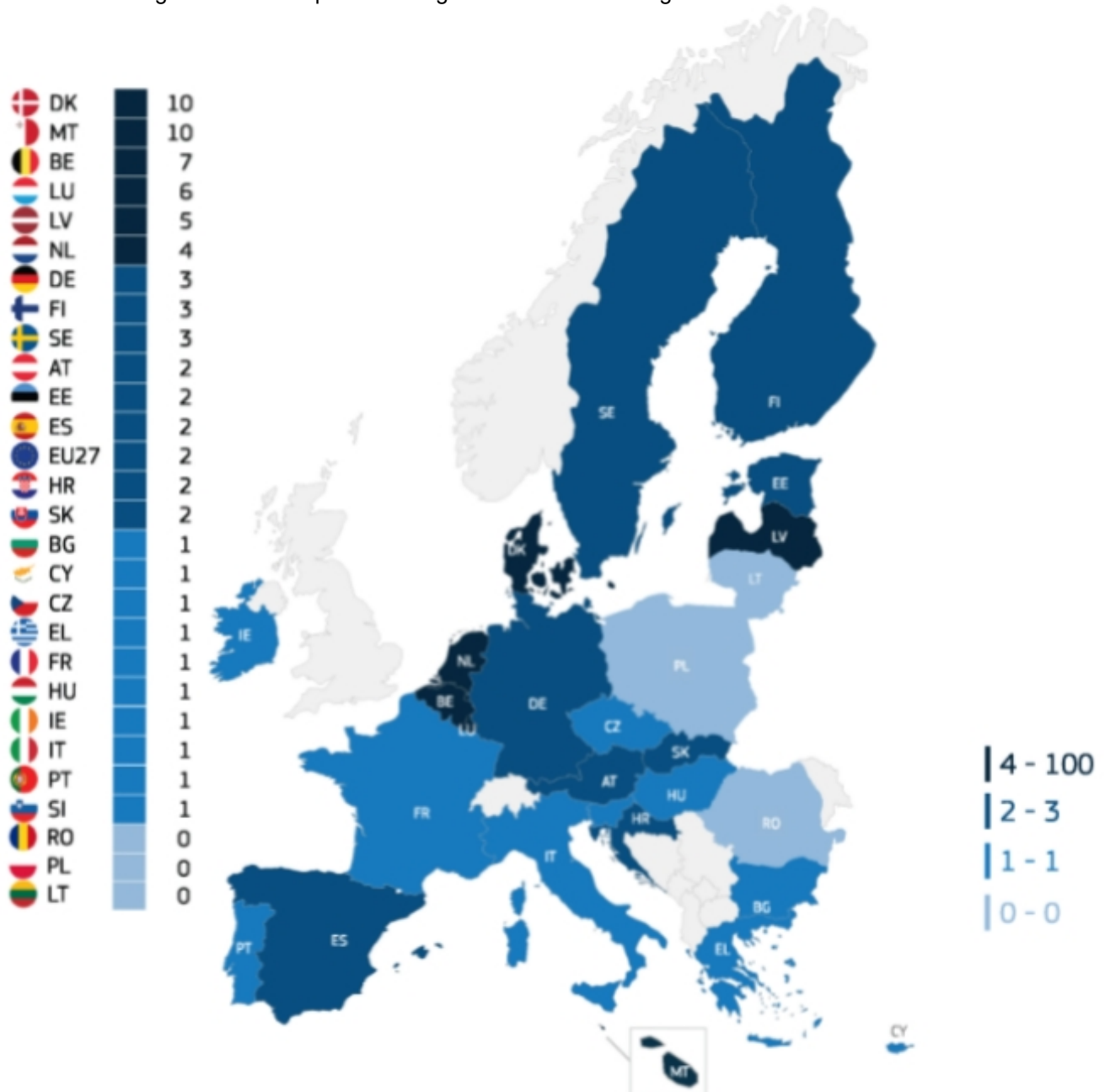
D48a. Thinking about the languages that you speak, which language is your mother tongue?																															
	EU27	AT	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DW	DE	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
German	19	84			1	1	86	88	95		1			1	1	1				7				84				1	1	1	1
French	14	1	36								1		1	89	1					17	1		1		1						
Italian	13		1				1	1						1		92				3	1										
Spanish	9		1				1	1			1		83	1		1				3											1
Polish	8		1				2	2	1		3								4	1				94							1
Dutch	5		50			1	1													1			93								
Romanian	4		1				1	1			1		1			1	1			1							89				
Greek	3											94					90			1		1									
Hungarian	3	1									1										97			1			6		8		
Portuguese	3		1								1			1						19					97						
Bulgarian	2			85												1	1														
Czech	2	1			93																		1						1		
English	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	80	1	1	1	3	1	6	1		3	1	5	1	1	3		2	1	2	2	1
Swedish	2																													3	93
Catalan	1												7	1																	
Croatian	1	1					1	1			1				89								1					1			
Danish	1					92									1																
Finnish	1									1																			94	1	
Lithuanian	1										1							1	91	1											
Slovak	1				1						1																		85		
Slovenian	1																										93				
Turkish	1	2		9			2	2	1			2												2							
Arabic			1			1	1	1					1	2						1			1								1
Galician												4																			
Latvian																		71													
Estonian										72																					
Maltese																						91									
Romany				4																									1		
Serbian/ Bosnian/ Montenegrin		1													2					2			1					3			
Irish/Gaelic											4																				

D48a.f.rntongues.ex.NNDK. Total mothertongue (%)

previous surveys, trend data is absent from the figures presented below.

⁶ Q48f.rntongues. Is your a second mother tongue/native language?

D48.f2ndmthongues. % of Europeans having a second mother tongue



At the national level, there are only two countries where at least one in ten respondents say that they speak a second language they also considered as their native language: Malta (10%) and Denmark (10%), followed by Belgium (7%), Luxembourg (6%), Latvia (5%) and the Netherlands (4%). In three countries (Romania, Poland, and Lithuania) less than 1% of the population mention having a second mother tongue.

The socio-demographic data indicates that individuals in the younger demographic (aged 15-24) are more prone to having a second mother tongue compared to those in the older demographic (aged 55 and above), with a prevalence of 3% versus 1%, respectively.

D48f_2ndmtongues is your ... Total second mother tongue / native language ? (% EU)	
	(Second) mother tongue
EU27	2
Gender	
Man	2
Woman	2
Age	
15-24	3
25-39	2
40-54	2
55 +	1
Education (End of)	
15-	0
16-19	1
20+	2
Still studying	4
Socio-professional category	
Self- employed	1
Managers	2
Other white collars	2
Manual workers	2
House persons	0
Unemployed	2
Retired	1
Students	4
Difficulties paying bills	
Most of the time	2
From time to time	2
Almost never/ Never	2
Consider belonging to	
The working class	2
The lower middle class	2
The middle class	2
The upper middle class	3
The upper class	1
Activity as language learner	
Very active	3
Active	2
Not active	1

2. Other languages spoken

Just over half of all Europeans claim to speak at least one other language in addition to their mother tongue.

Respondents were asked how many languages they were able to speak well enough to hold a conversation, other than their (first) mother tongue⁷.

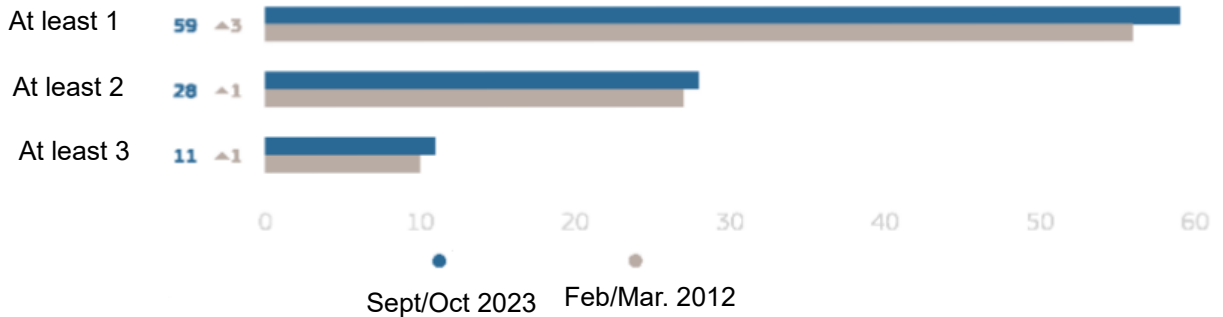
The majority of Europeans (59%) are able to hold a conversation in at least one additional language, just over a quarter (28%) are able to speak at least two additional languages, and just over one in ten (11%) at least three. On the other hand, just above a third of all Europeans (39%) are not able to speak any additional language well enough to hold a conversation.

Compared to 2012, we see an increase in the proportion of respondents who speak at least one language in addition to their (first) mother tongue (56% to 59%). This also suggests a slight progression compared to the rate of 56% in 2005. For respondents who are able to speak at least two and three languages, the current results are similar to those recorded in 2005 with 28% and 11%

in Poland (33%, -17), Romania (34%, -14), and Hungary (38%, +3).

In terms of the long-term EU objective that every citizen has practical skills in at least two additional languages, there are only nine Member States where at least half are able to do this, with the highest proportions seen in Luxembourg (91%, +7), the Netherlands (74%, -3), Slovenia (68%, +1), Denmark (63%, +5) and Latvia (64%, +10), Malta (59%, =), Finland (57%, +9), Estonia (56%, +4) and Belgium (56%, +4). Respondents the least likely to be able to speak at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue are in Poland (7%, -15), Romania (11%, -11), Hungary (14%, + 1), Italy (16%, =6), Portugal (17%, +3), Greece, Ireland, and Bulgaria (all three at 18%, +3, =, -1 respectively).

D4Bcount. Languages that you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation - TOTAL (EU27) (%)



Base: 26523 (All respondents)

respectively⁸.

At the national level, we see a lot of variation:

In seven countries, at least nine in ten respondents are conversant in at least one additional language, with the highest proportions seen in Luxembourg (99%, +1), the Netherlands (97%, +3), and Sweden (97%, +5). In six countries, less than half of the respondents speak more than their native tongue, with the lowest proportions seen

⁷ For this section, the results were recalculated to sum up the number of languages spoken by respondents other than their first mother tongue (d48a)

⁸ The 2005 figures pertain to the period when the EU had 25 members

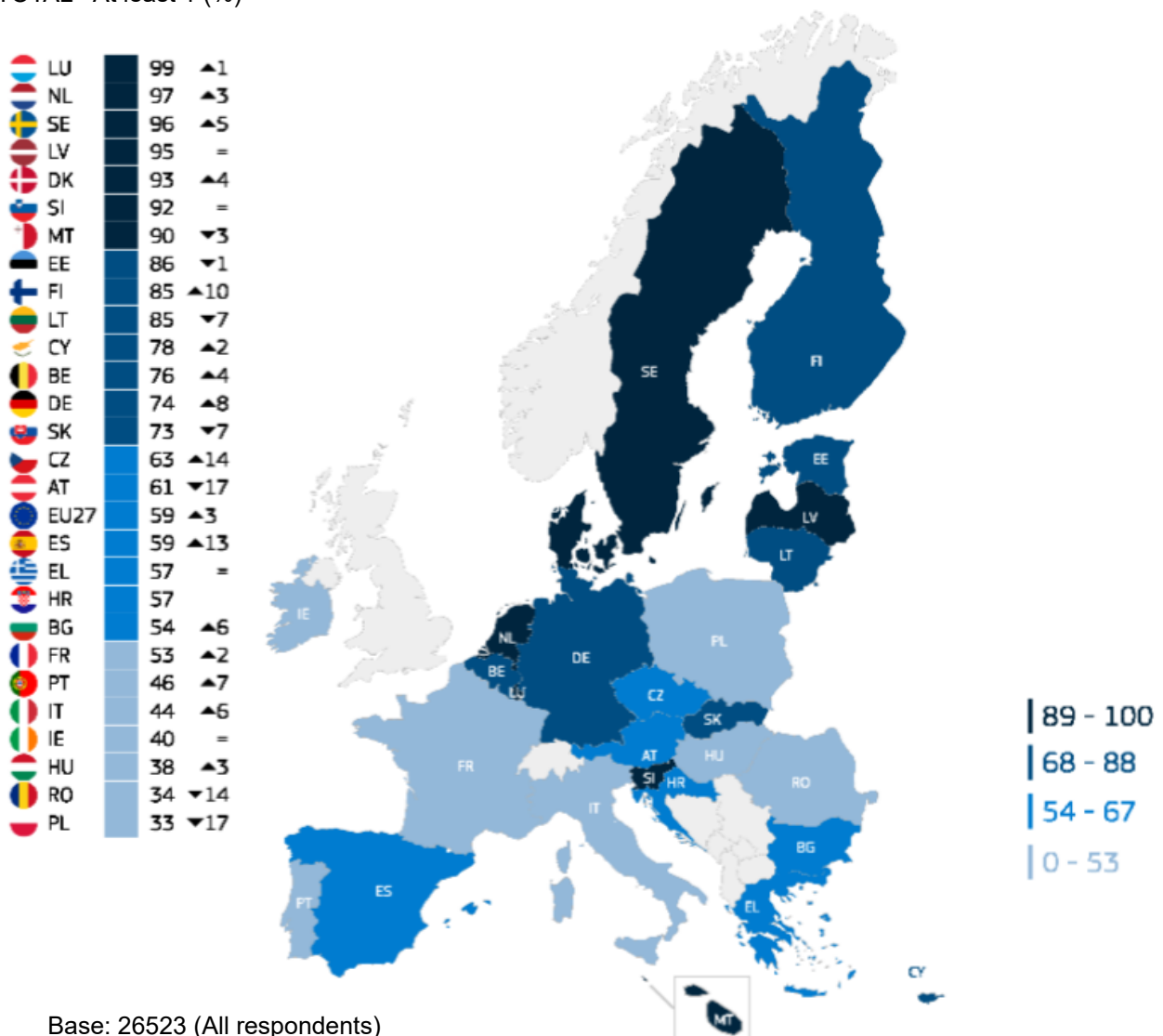
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The ability to speak at least three languages is more widespread in EU countries ranging from 1% for Poland to 76% in Luxembourg. In only one country, the majority of respondents are able to speak three additional languages than their mother tongue: Luxembourg (76%, +15) followed by the Netherlands (42%, +5), Slovenia (41%, +7) with more than 4 in ten respondents who can converse in three other languages. Respondents the least likely to speak at least three other languages than their mother tongue are in Ireland (5%, +1), Greece (4%, =), Portugal (4%, =), Romania (3%, -5), Hungary (3%, -1) and Portugal (1%, -6).

and Finland (85%, +10). In six countries it has decreased: Austria (61%, -17), Poland (33%, -17), Romania (34%, -14), Slovakia (73%, -7), Malta (90%, -3), and Estonia (86%, -1). In 16 countries, the proportion of those who speak two additional languages has increased, with the biggest rise seen Czechia (33%, +11), Spain (28%, +10), Latvia (64%, +10), and Finland (57%, +9). Substantial decreases are registered in Poland (7%, -15), Romania (11%, -11), Lithuania (45%, -7), and Italy (16%, -6).

Comparing 2012 and 2023, we see that in 15 Member States, the proportion of respondents who speak one

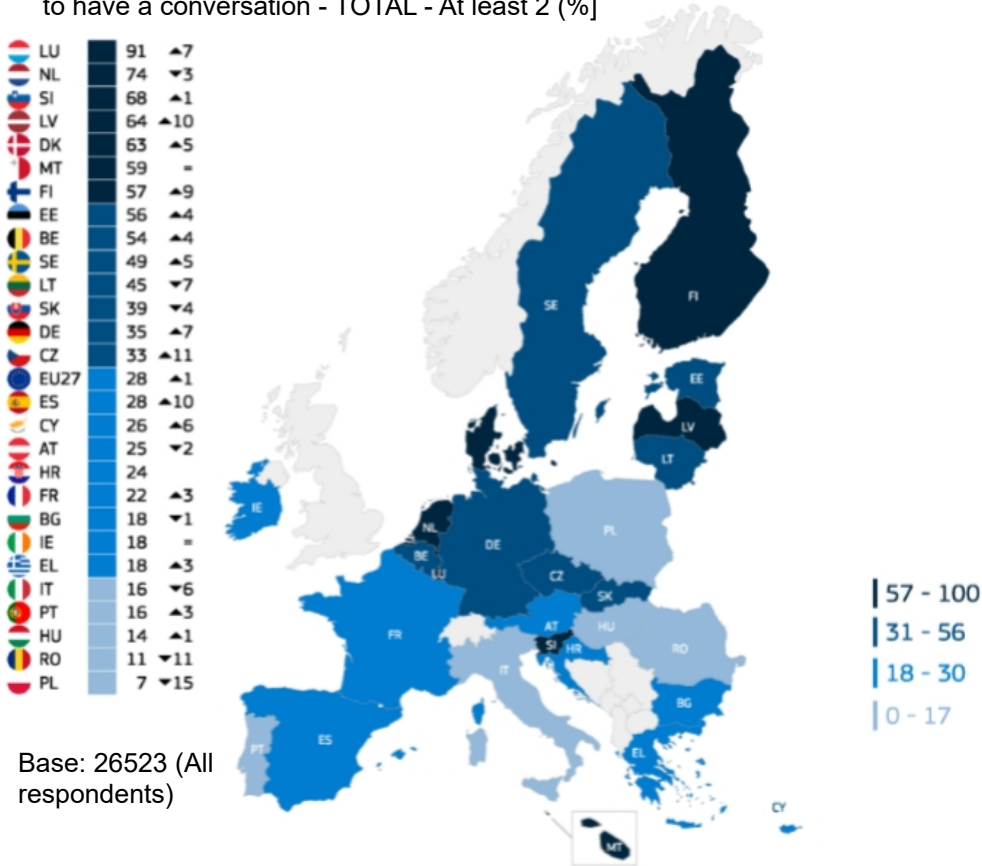
D48count. Additional languages that you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation - TOTAL - At least 1 (%)



Base: 26523 (All respondents)

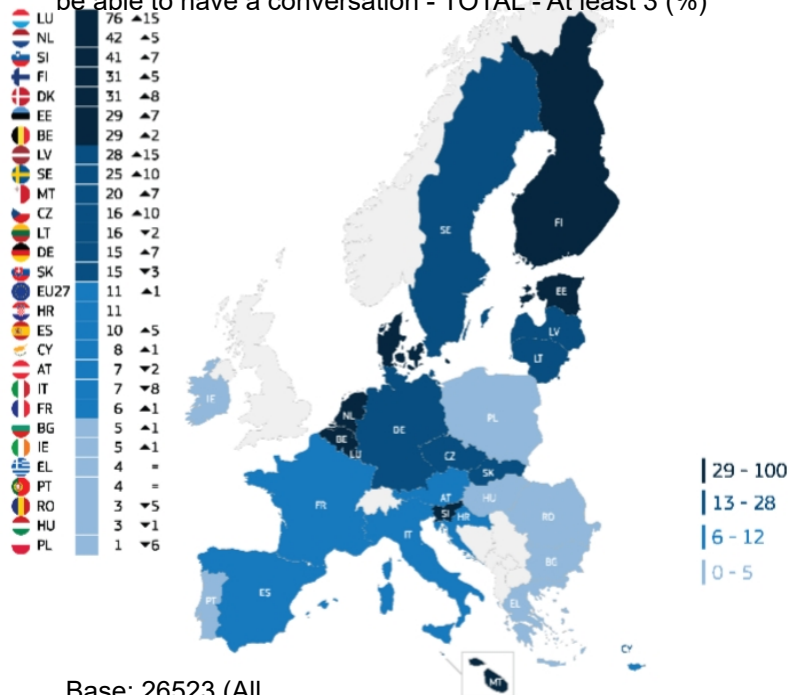
language in addition to their mother tongue has increased, most notably in Czechia (63%, +14), Spain (59%, +13),

D4Bcount Additional languages that you speak well enough In order to be able to have a conversation - TOTAL - At least 2 (%)



Base: 26523 (All respondents)

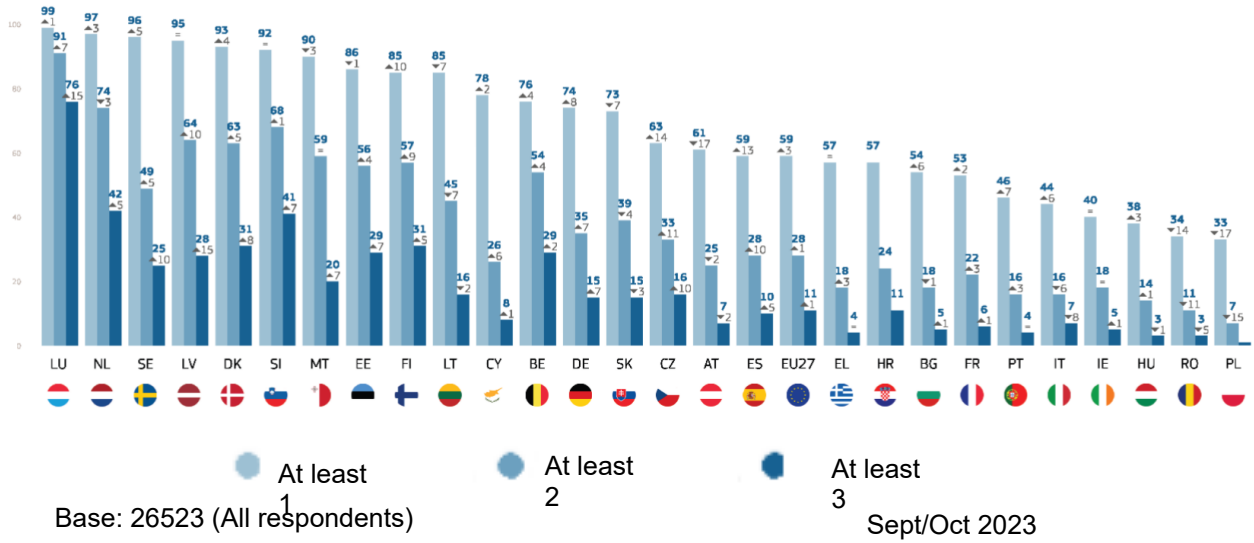
D4Bcount. Additional Languages that you Speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation - TOTAL - At least 3 (%)



Base: 26523 (All respondents)

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D4Bcount. Languages that you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation - TOTAL (%)



There are socio-demographic and behavioural differences between those who do and those who do not speak any additional language well enough to hold a conversation. The most notable variations are linked to age, terminal education age, occupation, social positioning, internet usage and the ability to pay household bills (a measure of affluence).

- Men are more likely than women (62% vs 56%) to speak at least one additional language well enough to hold a conversation, and slightly more likely to speak two (29% vs 27%).
- Younger people, particularly 15-24-year-olds (79%), are more likely compared with older people, most notably those aged 55+ (44%) to speak one additional language, and double more likely to speak two (39% vs 21%). A closer look at the category of young Europeans aged 15-24 reveals a substantial increase over time in their ability to speak one additional language. Compared to both 2005 (74%) and 2012 (74%), an increase by 5 percentage points can be observed. This increase over time is even higher when considering young Europeans aged 15-24 who can speak two additional languages. If in 2005 and in 2012 11% and 37% of respondents aged 15-24 could speak two additional languages respectively, in 2023 this proportion has increased to 39%.
- Respondents who finished their full-time education at age 20 or older are more likely (80%), than to those finishing at 15 or below (23%) to speak one additional language well enough to hold a conversation. The same is true for those who speak two additional languages (43% vs 7%). Students are also predominantly proficient in additional languages with 85% speaking at least one, 46% at least two and 18% at least three. Those holding managers positions are most likely to speak at least one additional language (83%), particularly when compared with housepersons (33%), manual workers (51%), and retirees (41%). Those who place themselves high on the social ladder are more likely to speak at least one other language. For instance, we observe this with respondents who consider belonging to the upper middle class (87%), compared to the working class (40%).
- People who use the internet daily are six times as likely to at least speak two other languages compared with those who never use it (32% vs 5%).
- Unsurprisingly, there is a relationship between the number of additional languages spoken and the extent to which people are engaged in learning new languages. Thus, people who are very active in learning new languages are also much more likely than those who are inactive to be able to understand at least

two additional¹ languages well enough to hold a conversation in them (53% vs. 19% respectively)⁹.

9 The distinction between active learners is made on the basis of the question QB3. Very active language learners are those respondents who have started or continued learning a new language in the past 2 years, as opposed to Active learners, who instead have not learned a new language recently but intend to do so, and Not active learners, namely those respondents who have never learned any language other than their mother tongue and do not intend to do so in the coming year.

D48count Languages that you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation - TOTAL (% - EU)			
	At least 1	At least 3	At least 3
EU27	59	28	11
Gender			
Man	62	29	12
Woman	56	27	11
Age			
15-24	79	39	15
25-39	71	33	13
40-54	62	28	12
55 +	44	21	9
Education (End of)			
15-	23	7	2
16-19	48	18	7
20+	80	43	19
Still studying	85	46	18
Socio-professional category			
Self-employed	71	36	15
Managers	83	44	19
Other white collars	67	27	11
Manual workers	51	20	8
House persons	33	14	5
Unemployed	54	21	7
Retired	41	20	8
Students	85	46	18
Difficulties paying bills			
Most of the time	45	18	8
From time to time	50	22	9
Almost never/ Never	65	32	13
Consider belonging to			
The working class	40	16	6
The lower middle class	53	23	9
The middle class	64	30	12
The upper middle class	87	53	25
The upper class	84	59	31
Activity as language learner			
Very active	89	53	24
Active	72	36	16
Not active	49	19	7

English dominates as the language that Europeans are most likely to be able to speak.

Respondents were asked which other language, if any, they speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation, either as their first, second, or third other language¹⁰.

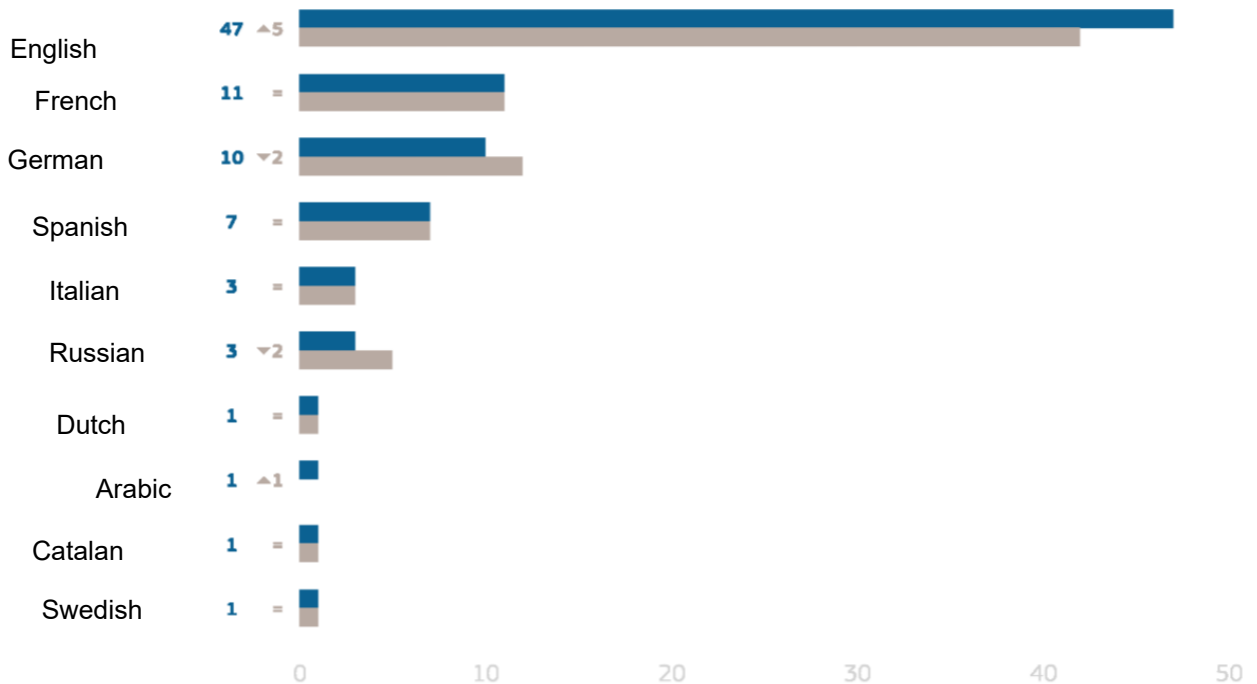
Amongst languages spoken not as (first) mother tongue, English dominates over all other languages by a wide margin. Nearly half of Europeans (47%) say they speak it, a slight increase (+5) compared to 2012. This is followed by more than one in ten who speak French (11%, =), German (10%, -2), Spanish (7%, =), Italian (3%, =), and Russian (3%, -2).

At the national level, English is the language most widely spoken as non-native language. in every EU Member State, with exception of Luxembourg. Here it is the second-most widely spoken foreign language. Luxembourgnians are most likely to mention French (77%), which is an official language in the country, followed by English (68%), and German, also an official language (59%).

Respondents in Netherlands (93%), Sweden (90%), Denmark (87%) Malta (86%), and Finland (81%) are particularly likely to speak English as a foreign language. Respondents are least likely to say this in Romania (25%), Poland (27%), and Bulgaria (29%). In Belgium, French, which is an official language in the country, is the second-most widely spoken language other than mother tongue (46%). Dutch and German, which are also official languages, are mentioned by 13% and 17% respectively. In Ireland, where English is an official language, Irish/Gaelic is the most common other than mother tongue language that respondents are able to speak well enough to hold a conversation (36%), followed by English (15%) French (12%).

Compared to 2012, in all EU Member States, English grows substantially as a first, second, or third other language that respondents speak well enough to have a conversation in, with the biggest increases seen in Spain (38%, + 16%), Czechia (41%, + 14), and Portugal (41%, +14).

D48.otherlang. And which other language, if any, do you Speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation? - First, second, and third other language (EU27)(%)



Base: 26523 (All respondents) ● Sept/Oct 2023 ● Feb/Mar. 2012

¹⁰ D48.otherlang. And which other language, if any, do you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation? - First, second, and third other language. The results were aggregated from D48b, D48c and D48d.

D48.otherlang. And which other language, if any, do you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation? - First, second, and third other language (%)

	EU27	AT	BE	BG	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	EL	ES	FI	FR	HR	HU	IE	IT	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	PL	PT	RD	SE	SI	SK	
English	47	54	58	29	73	41	65	87	58	51	38	81	40	41	30	15	33	44	68	54	86	93	27	41	25	90	61	38	
French	11	9	46	3	9	4	16	11	2	6	12	4	7	4	2	12	9	3	77	3	13	27	1	12	7	12	2	2	
German	10	7	17	5	7	19	11	49	14	7	3	18	6	15	13	7	3	12	59	18	4	61	5	1	2	25	33	19	
Spanish	7	4	9	3	1	2	8	9	2	2	14	4	13	1	2	6	6	1	12	2	4	9	1	8	3	8	4	2	
Italian	3	8	5	1	3	2	4	1	1	3	4	2	5	8	2	1	3	1	7	1	51	1	1	1	3	2	13	2	
Russian	3	1	1	14	4	14	3	0	50	2	0	4	0	1	2	1	1	62	0	66	1	0	5	0	1	1	2	14	
Dutch	1	1	13	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	
Czech	1	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	
Croatian	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	55	0
Catalan	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Slovak	1	1	0	0	1	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	
Swedish	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	1	0	0	48	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	0	0	
Finnish	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	18	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
Bulgarian	0	0	0	12	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Latvian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Irish/Gaelic	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Romanian	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	
Serbian/ Bosnian/ Montenegrin	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	0

Sept/Oct 2023 Base: 26523 (All respondents)

Regarding German as foreign language in which respondents can have a conversation, we see the sharpest increase in Cyprus (7%, +5) followed by Czechia (19%, +4), and Latvia (18%, +4). On the other hand, the sharpest decreases of German as foreign language are noted in Poland (5% - 14), the Netherlands (61%, -10) and Luxembourg (59%, -10). The sharpest increase of Spanish is notably seen in Luxembourg (12%, +7%), Denmark (9%, +5) Belgium (9%, +4) and Germany (8%, +4). The sharpest decrease of Spanish as another language is observed in Italy (11%, -5), followed by Portugal (8%, -2) and Romania (3%, -2).

English is spoken by half of the Europeans either as a mother tongue or as another language¹¹.

¹¹ For this section, the results were recalculated as to account for total of languages spoken by adding d48a, d48b, d48c and d48d except those who answered "Don't know" and "None" to D48a.

In this section, we explore Europeans' proficiency in speaking all their languages, including both their first and second mother tongues, as well as additional languages.

English is by far the most spoken language by Europeans by 50% (+6) of them followed by German (29%, -1), French (25%, =), Spanish (17%, +1) and Italian (16%, -1).

Mirroring to some extent the European population distribution, Polish comes next (9%, -1), followed by Dutch (6%, =), Romanian (5%, -1) and Portuguese (3%). Russian, which is recognised as a minority language in some countries, ranks 9th as a spoken language with 4% (-2).

At the national level, besides Ireland (97%, -2) that has English as an official language, we observe the same pattern as in the previous section. In the Netherlands, (95%, +4) of respondents are able to speak English, followed by Sweden (91%, +3), Malta (91%, -1) and Denmark (90%, +4). English is less likely to be spoken in

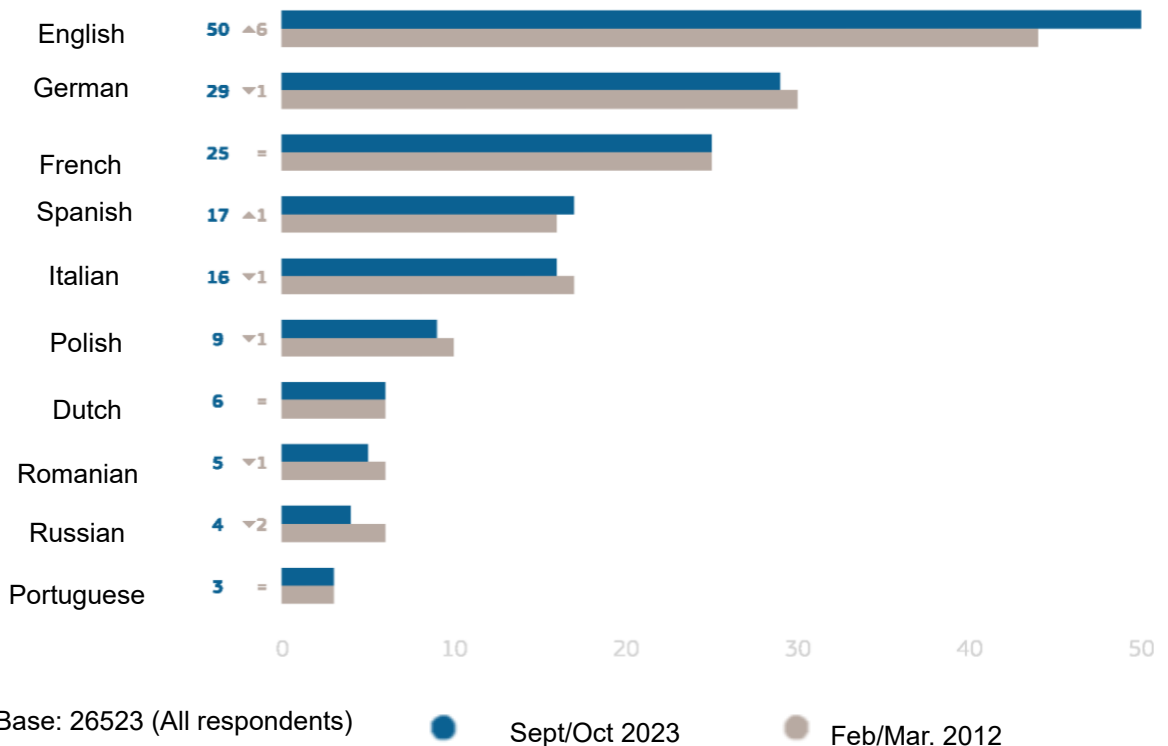
Romania (27%, -5), Poland (31%, -4), and Hungary (31% +11).

For the German language, Germany (98%, +1), and Austria (98%, -1) come first with similar figures. Among countries not having it as an official language, Netherlands comes first (61% - 12) followed by Denmark (50%, +2) and Slovenia (33%, - 9).

French naturally comes first in countries that have it as official language with France (97%, =), Luxembourg (94%, -2) and Belgium (83%, +2)., Among countries not having it as an official language, Netherlands comes first (27% - 3%) followed by Germany (16%, +2) and Portugal (13%, - 3)When it comes to Spanish, Spain is unsurprisingly first with 97% (-1). Amidst countries not having it as official language, Luxembourg (15%, +9) comes first followed by France (14%, =) and Sweden (10%, +4).

Finally, Italian is spoken by 97% of respondents in Italy where it is an official language. It is followed by Malta (52/0, -5), Slovenia (13%, -1) and Luxembourg (10%, -1).

D48.alllang. Thinking about the languages that you speak, which language is your mother tongue? And which other language, if any, do you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation? (EU27) (%)



3. Fluency in languages other than the mother tongue

The majority of Europeans who are able to speak English, German, French, or Spanish as additional languages believe they have relatively good skills.

For each additional language other than their mother tongue (up to three) that a respondent said they were able to speak well enough in order to be able to hold a conversation, they were asked to rate their ability using a simple three-point scale - very good, good, basic¹². This section focuses on Europeans' ability to speak other languages than their first mother tongue. The figures discussed here only relate to respondents who respectively speak a first, second or third language other than their mother tongue.

Overall, at the EU level, we see that three in ten (30%) of Europeans who speak at least one other language than their first mother tongue rate their ability to speak their first other language as very good, an increase of 4 percentage points. Four in ten (41%) rate it as good, a slight decrease (-4) compared to 2012, while one in four (24%, -4) think it is basic.

As regard to Europeans' second other language, 16% of Europeans who can speak at least two other languages than their mother tongue think their level is very good, a

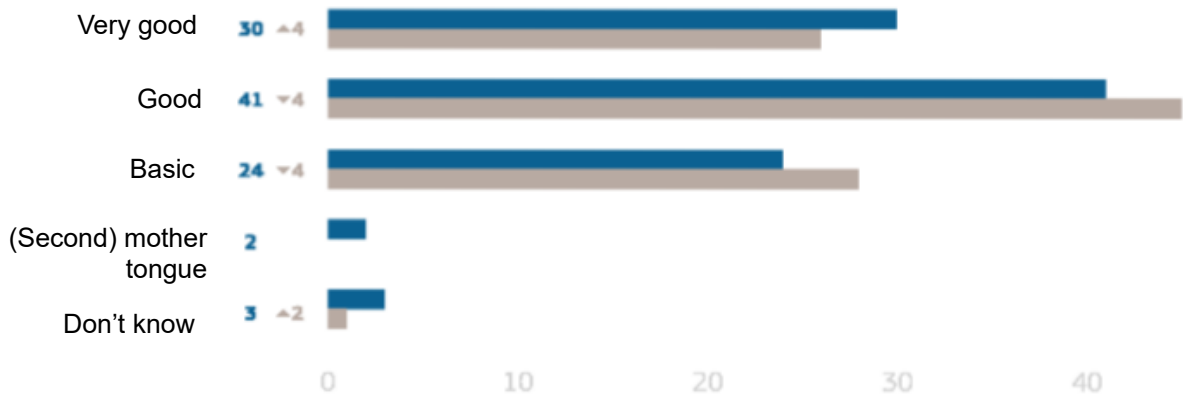
Looking at the national level, we see that in three countries, more than half of the respondents say they speak their first other language very well: Luxembourg (63%), Cyprus (54%), and Malta (51%). Respondents are least likely to say this in Poland (12%), Romania (13%), and Hungary and Portugal (18%). More than half say the level of their first other language is good in Italy (60%) and Poland (54%).

Respondents are most likely to say that their second other language level is very good in Luxembourg (54%), Spain (28%), and Croatia (26%). They are least likely to say this in Romania (2%), Poland (5%), and Estonia (10%). They are most likely to say that it is good in Italy (49%), Portugal (44%), and Czechia (43%), and basic in Poland (64%), Finland (59%), and Romania (56%).

Respondents are most likely to say that their third other language level is very good in Luxembourg (37%), Greece (35%), Spain, Slovakia, and Slovenia (22% all). They are least likely to say this in Hungary (3%), Estonia and Finland (both 4%), and Poland (5%). They are most likely to say that it is good in Croatia (38%), Poland (37%), and Italy (35%).

Comparing 2012 to 2023, in seven countries, respondents are now more likely to say they speak their first other language well or very well, with the largest increases seen

Q48f.1. Is your level of very good, good, basic, or is it a second mother tongue/native language? :-First other language (EU27) (%)



Base: 15725 (respondents who speak at least one language other than their mother tongue)

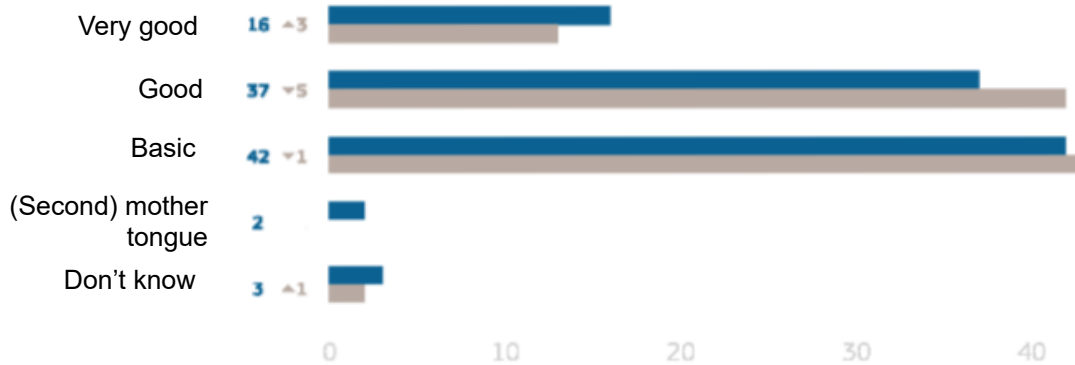
slight increase (+3) compared to 2012. More than one third (37%, -5) think they speak it well while four in ten (42% -1) think they speak it at a basic level.

Looking at the third other language, one in ten (11% +3) of Europeans who can speak one think their level is very good, while 25%. -4) think it is good and more than half (54%-1) think its basic.

in Portugal (66%, +11), Ireland (63%, +8), and Poland (66%, +6), with decreases registered in 18 Member States, most notably in Malta (75%, -11), Czechia (70%, -11), Denmark (73%, -10), and Latvia (73%, -9).

¹² D48f1, f2 and f3 for each additional language mentioned at d48b,c and CI "is your (first /second/ third additional language mentioned) very good, good or basic?"

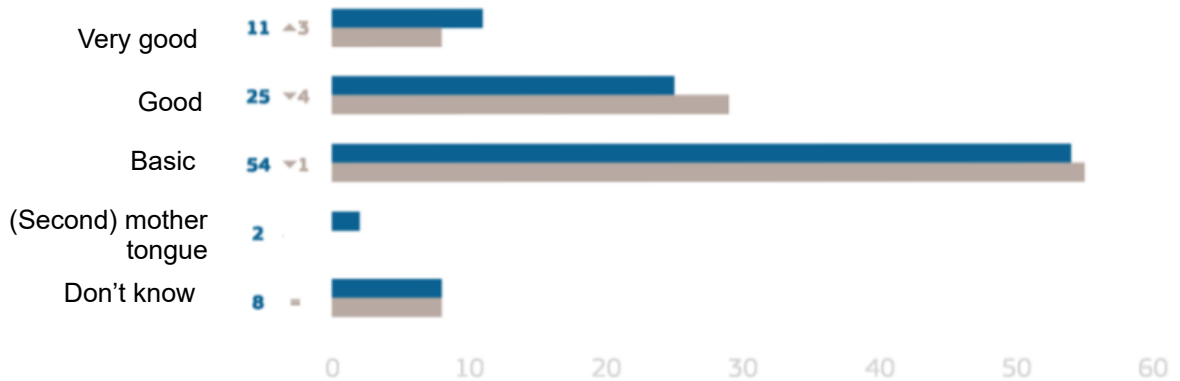
048f.2. Is your level of ... very good, good, basic, or is it a second mother tongue / native language?:-Second other language (EU27) (%)



Base: 15725 (respondents who speak at least one language other than their mother tongue)

● Sept/Oct 2023 ● Feb/Mar. 2012

Q48f.3. Is your level of very good, good, basic, or is it a second mother tongue / native language? : -Third other language (EU27) (%)



● Sept/Oct 2023 ● Feb/Mar. 2012

speaking other languages than their mother tongue, the socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

Looking at the second other language, we see a rise in the proportion of respondents who speak it at a better than basic level in eight countries, with the largest increases seen in Ireland (56%, +12), Italy (61%, +11), and Portugal (56%, +11). In 16 countries there has been a decrease, with the biggest drops seen in Cyprus (44%, -24), Romania (39%, -16), and Slovakia (65%, -12) and Czechia (61%, -12).

Comparing 2012 to 2023, in 11 countries, respondents are now more likely to say they speak their third other language well or very well, with the largest increases seen in Poland (42%, +25), Italy (44%, +18), and Portugal (44%, +12) and Romania (36%, +12), with decreases registered in 15 Member States, most notably in Denmark (27%, -19) and Austria (32%, -19). Amongst those able to

- Younger respondents are more likely to speak their first other language at a very good level, with close to four in ten (38%) of those aged 15-24 saying this, compared to one in four (24%) among those aged 55 and up (14 percentage points difference). The same is true regarding their second other language (18% vs 13%), and third other language (15% vs 9%). Respondents in the oldest category -55 years old and more are more likely (31%) to say their level of their first other language is basic, compared to respondents between 15 and 24 years old, the youngest demographic (14%).
- Europeans who went to school past the age of 20 are more likely to speak their first other language at a very good level than those who left school aged 15 or younger (35% vs 31%). The same is true for those who speak it at a good level (41% vs 33%). The better-

educated group is also more likely to speak their second other language at a good level than the lesser-educated group (42% vs 28%). The same is true for the third other language (29% vs 19%).

- Among socio-professional categories, students (41%) and managers (37%) are the most likely to speak their first other language at a very good level, compared to retirees (23%) and manual workers (22%).
- Respondents who never have trouble paying their bills are more likely (31%) to speak their first other language at a very good level than those who face such difficulties most of the time (23%). The same is true regarding those who speak their second language at a good level (38% vs 32%).

- Close to half (49%) of those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class say they speak their first other language at a very good level, compared to 29% of those in the middle class and 25% of those in the working class.

Q48f_1 Is your level of ... very good, good, basic, or is it a second mother tongue/native language? First other language (% - EU)

	Very good	Good	Basic	(Second) mother tongue	Don't know
EU27	30	41	24	2	3
Gender					
Man	30	41	23	2	4
Woman	29	41	24	3	3
Age					
15-24	38	42	14	3	3
25-39	34	42	19	2	3
40-54	27	41	26	2	4
55 +	24	39	31	2	4
Education (End of)					
15-	31	33	29	2	5
16-19	18	41	35	2	4
20+	35	41	19	2	3
Still studying	41	43	9	4	3
Socio-professional category					
Self-employed	32	39	24	1	4
Managers	37	44	15	2	2
Other white collars	25	45	24	3	3
Manual workers	22	40	31	2	5
House persons	31	35	31	1	2
Unemployed	29	34	29	3	5
Retired	23	36	35	2	4
Students	41	43	9	4	3
Difficulties paying bills					
Most of the time	23	39	30	3	5
From time to time	28	40	25	3	4
Almost never/ Never	31	41	23	2	3
Consider belonging to					
The working class	25	35	32	3	5
The lower middle class	26	40	28	2	4
The middle class	29	43	23	2	3
The upper middle class	43	41	12	2	2
The upper class	49	37	9	1	4
Activity as language learner					
Very active	39	41	14	3	3
Active	29	42	23	3	3
Not active	24	41	29	2	4

Q48f_2 Is your level of ... very good, good, basic, or is it a second mother tongue/native language? Second other language (% - EU)

	Very good	Good	Basic	(Second) mother tongue	Don't know
EU27	16	37	42	2	3
Gender					
Man	15	37	43	1	4
Woman	16	38	41	2	3
Age					
15-24	18	38	41	1	2
25-39	19	38	38	2	3
40-54	14	37	45	1	3
55 +	13	38	43	2	4
Education (End of)					
15-	18	28	48	1	5
16-19	10	30	53	2	5
20+	18	42	37	1	2
Still studying	18	40	37	2	3
Socio-professional category					
Self- employed	20	35	42	1	2
Managers	20	39	38	1	2
Other white collars	12	40	44	0	4
Manual workers	12	32	49	2	5
House persons	9	40	50	1	0
Unemployed	14	36	41	2	7
Retired	13	36	44	2	5
Students	18	40	37	2	3
Difficulties paying bills					
Most of the time	15	32	48	2	3
From time to time	16	35	41	2	6
Almost never/ Never	16	38	42	1	3
Consider belonging to					
The working class	16	31	45	3	5
The lower middle class	11	38	43	3	5
The middle class	16	37	43	1	3
The upper middle class	18	43	36	2	1
The upper class	25	41	29	0	5
Activity as language learner					
Very active	19	40	37	2	2
Active	14	36	45	1	4
Not active	13	36	46	1	4

Q48f_3 Is your level of ... very good, good, basic, or is it a second mother tongue/native language? Third other language (% - EU)

	Very good	Good	Basic	(Second) mother tongue	Don't know
EU27	16	37	42	2	3
Gender					
Man	15	37	43	1	4
Woman	16	38	41	2	3
Age					
15-24	18	38	41	1	2
25-39	19	38	38	2	3
40-54	14	37	45	1	3
55 +	13	38	43	2	4
Education (End of)					
15-	18	28	48	1	5
16-19	10	30	53	2	5
20+	18	42	37	1	2
Still studying	18	40	37	2	3
Socio-professional category					
Self- employed	20	35	42	1	2
Managers	20	39	38	1	2
Other white collars	12	40	44	0	4
Manual workers	12	32	49	2	5
House persons	9	40	50	1	0
Unemployed	14	36	41	2	7
Retired	13	36	44	2	5
Students	18	40	37	2	3
Difficulties paying bills					
Most of the time	15	32	48	2	3
From time to time	16	35	41	2	6
Almost never/ Never	16	38	42	1	3
Consider belonging to					
The working class	16	31	45	3	5
The lower middle class	11	38	43	3	5
The middle class	16	37	43	1	3
The upper middle class	18	43	36	2	1
The upper class	25	41	29	0	5
Activity as language learner					
Very active	19	40	37	2	2
Active	14	36	45	1	4
Not active	13	36	46	1	4

Most Europeans who are proficient in the five most widely spoken additional languages feel confident in their language skillset.

This first section focuses on the skills of respondents who do speak the five most widely spoken languages in Europe: English, French, German, and Spanish, and to a lesser extent Russian.

As discussed earlier, for each other language than their first mother tongue that a respondent said they were able to speak well enough in order to be able to hold a conversation (up to three), they were asked to rate their ability using a simple three-point scale - very good, good, basic¹³.

For respondents who speak English, more than four in ten consider having a good (43%) level, a slight decrease (-4) compared to 2012, or very good (27%, +7) level, with a further one in four (27%, -5) saying they speak it at a basic level.

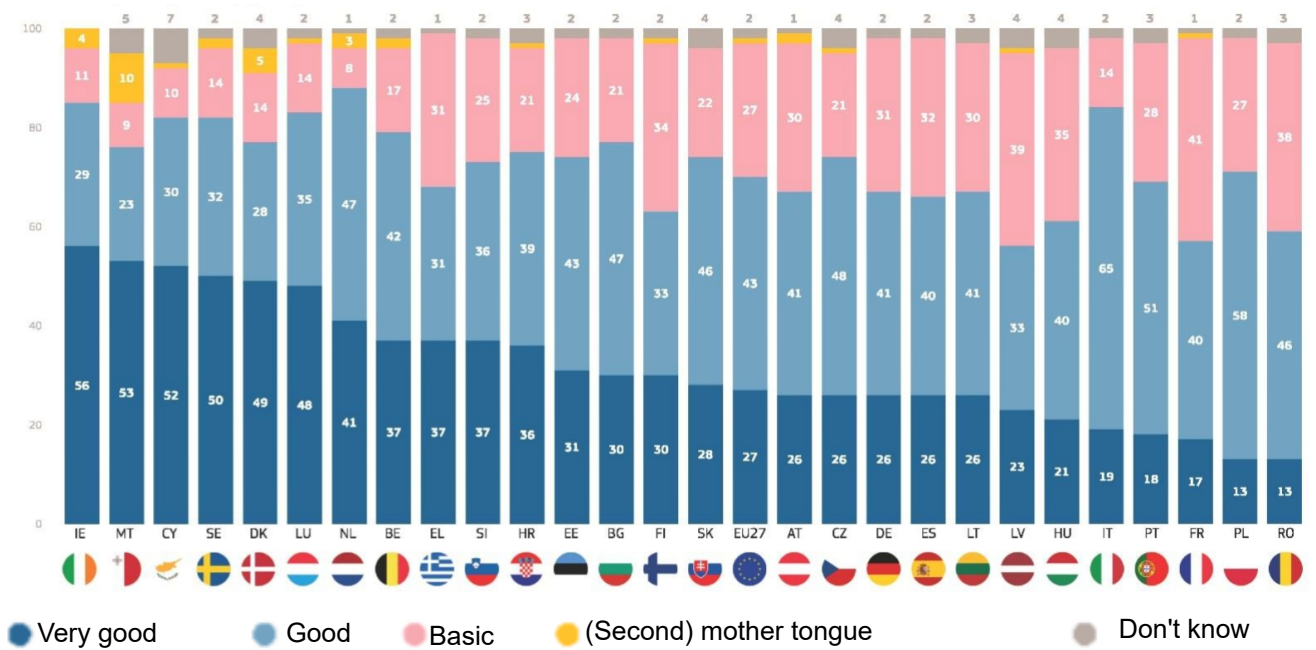
Among those who speak French as an additional language than their mother tongue, few rate their ability as “very good” (17%, +3) but most as “basic” (43%, -1). Almost two third of those who speak German (60%, -1) say they speak it well or very well, while 56% (-3) of those who speak Spanish state to have a good or very good level. Among Russian speakers, 47% (-11) indicate having better than basic skills.



Base: varies on language spoken. English: 12447 ; French : 2887 ; German : 2772 ; Spanish: 1931; Russian 2823

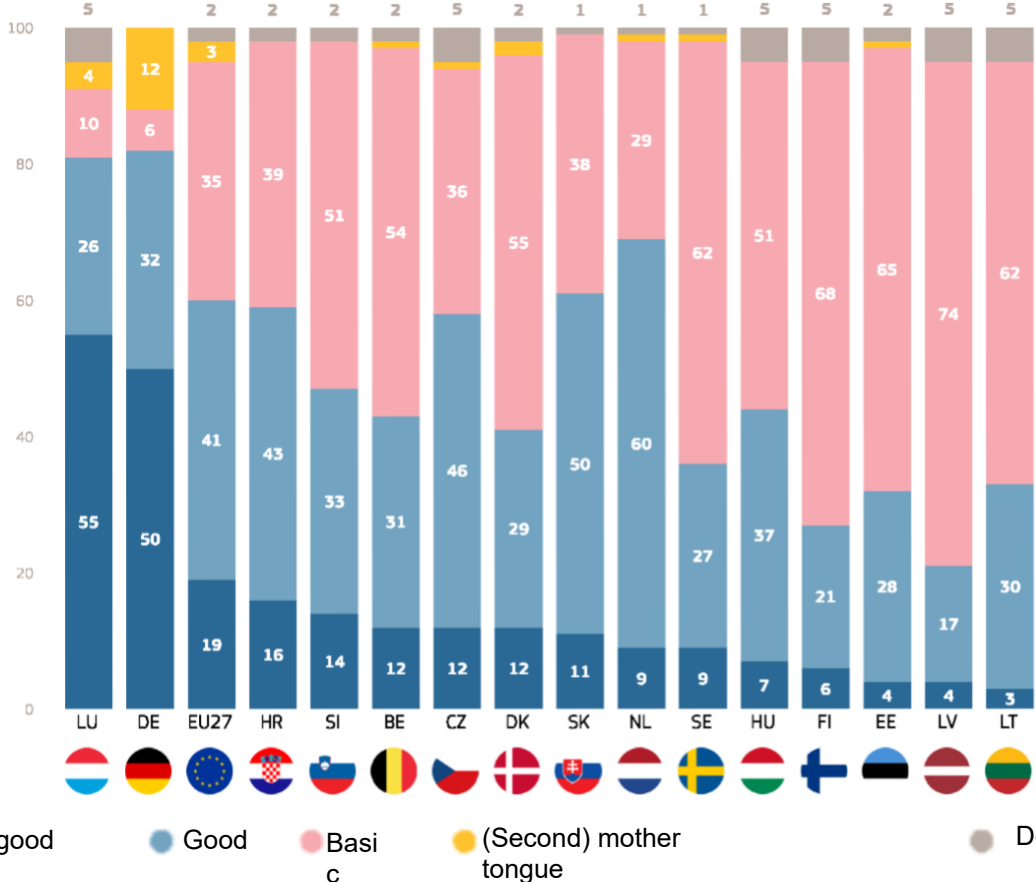
13 otherl.lv.vgood. Is your level of very good? good? basic?

Q48f.en. Is your English very good, good, basic? (%)



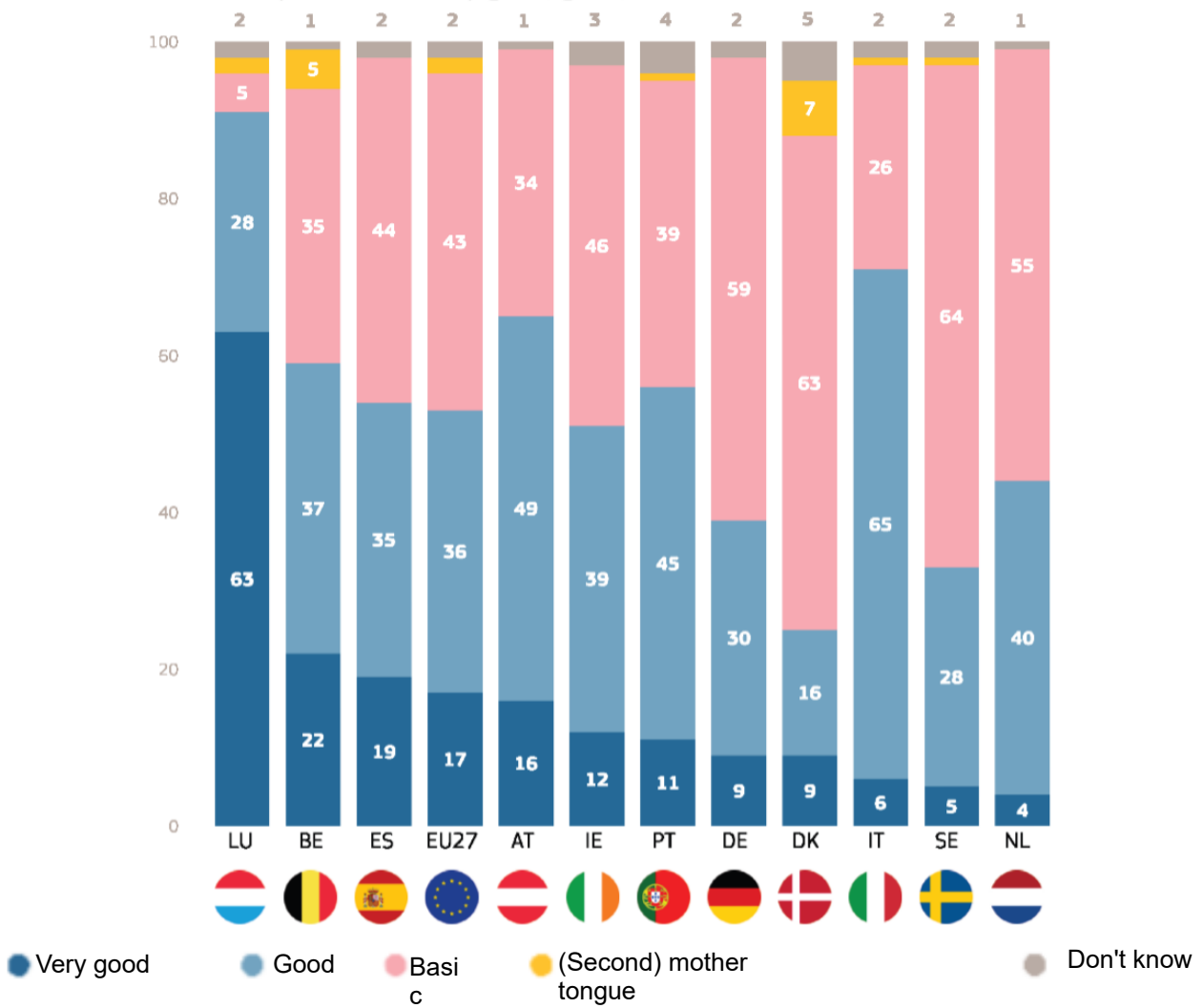
Base: 12447 respondents

Q48f.de Is your German very good, good, basic? (%)



Base: 2772 (respondents who speak German as first, second, or third other language, excluding countries with less than 100 respondents)

Q48f.fr. Is your French very good, good, basic? (%)



Base: 2887 (respondents who speak French as first, second, or third other language, excluding countries with less than 100 respondents)

Among all foreign languages, English stands out as the language Europeans have the best skills in.

This section will allow us to explore Europeans proficiency to use various languages. The figures discussed below only relate to respondents who can speak at least one other language than their mother tongue (59%)¹⁴.

Overall, we see that English is the first language spoken at any level by respondents who speak an additional language than their mother tongue. This is obviously the reflection of the fact that English is the first other language spoken by Europeans. For instance, slightly more than one in five say they speak it very well, followed by French, German and Spanish respectively at 3%.

A majority (55%) of respondents say they speak English at a very good level (21%, +6) or good level (34%), a slight decrease (-2) compared to 2012, with a further one in five (21%, -3) saying they speak it at a basic level.

Among those who speak another language, one in ten respondents (10% -1) declare to speak French at a very good level (3%) or good level (7%). It is spoken with a basic level by 8% (-1) of the same respondents. German is also spoken by 10% (-3) of respondents with 3% who mention having a very good level and 7% a good a level. Additionally, it is spoken at a basic level by 6% of respondents (- 2).

When it comes to Spanish, we observe the same figures as in 2012 with 7% of respondents saying that they speak it either at a good or very good level. On the other hand, it is spoken at basic level by 5% (=). Finally, Italian as the 5th most spoken other language, is practised at a good or very good level only by 3% (=) of respondents. A small minority (2%, =) speak it at basic level.

At the national level, we see that in 15 countries, the majority of Europeans who can speak another language than their first mother tongue, believe they that they speak English at a better than basic level. In five countries, at least seven in ten think this: the Netherlands (84%), Cyprus (77%), Sweden (76%), Malta (72%), Denmark (71%). Respondents are least likely to say this in Latvia (31%), Lithuania (35%), and Slovakia (39%). More than four in ten say that their level of English as a second language is very good in Malta (50%), where it is an official language, Cyprus (49%), and Sweden (46%).

Respondents are most likely to say that they have a better than basic level of French in Luxembourg (71%) and Belgium (35%) where it is an official language, followed by Italy, Portugal and Ireland (15% respectively).

Respondents are most likely to say that their level of German as foreign language is better than basic in Luxembourg (48%), where it is an official language, the Netherlands (44%), Denmark (21%), and Slovenia (17%). When it comes to Spanish, respondents are most likely to assess their skills as good or very good in Spain, where Spanish is an official language, France (12%), and Portugal (9%). For Spanish, the highest scores are seen in Spain (34%), a country that has other co-official languages, France (6%), and Ireland (4%).

Italian is most likely spoken at a better than basic level as a second language in Malta (36%), Slovenia and Croatia (both 9%), and Romania (6%).

As regards Russian, the highest proportions of people who speak it at a better than basic level as a second language are found in Lithuania (55%), Latvia (51%), and Estonia (39%), countries that have a sizeable Russian-speaking minority and are located adjacent to Russia. Substantial proportions of respondents who speak Russian well or very well are further found in Bulgaria (19%), Czechia (11%), and Slovakia (9%).

When comparing 2012 to 2023, we see that in 18 countries, respondents who can speak another language than their mother tongue are more likely to speak English as a language at a good or very good level, with the biggest increases seen in Portugal (61%, +21), Ireland (30%, +18), where it is an official language, and Spain (43%, +14). A substantial decrease is noted in Malta (72%, -10), where it is an official language, and Greece (60%, -7).

French rises in six countries, most notably in France (12%, +5), where it is an official language, with the biggest decrease among those who speak it as an additional language at a good or very good level registered in Italy (15%, -9) and Romania (9%, -8).

In five countries, respondents are slightly more likely than in 2012 to say they speak German as an additional language at a good or very good level, for instance in Greece (7%, +2), but in most countries these proportions have dropped, most notably in Luxembourg (48%, -20), where it is an official language, Hungary (14%, -11), and the Netherlands (44%, -11).

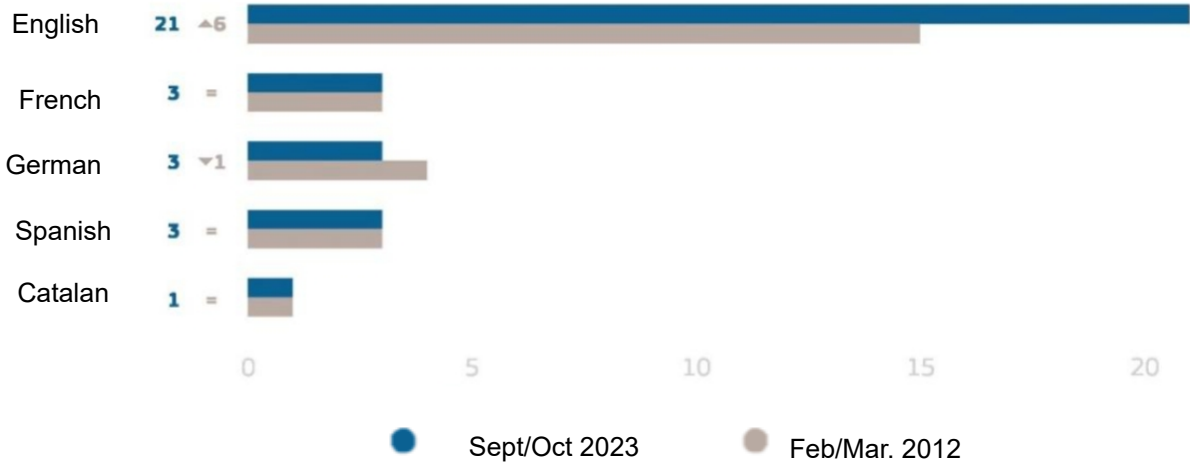
Compared to 2012, respondents are substantially less likely to say they speak Spanish as an additional language at a good or very good level in Spain (21%, -14), Portugal (9%, -4), and Romania (2%, -4), with minor increases

¹⁴ For this section, the results were aggregated from Q48f_1, Q48f_2 and Q48f_3 responses on respondents' level of their first, second and third other language(s) than their mother tongue.

seen in other countries, for instance in Luxembourg (8%, +3) and Czechia (4%, +3).

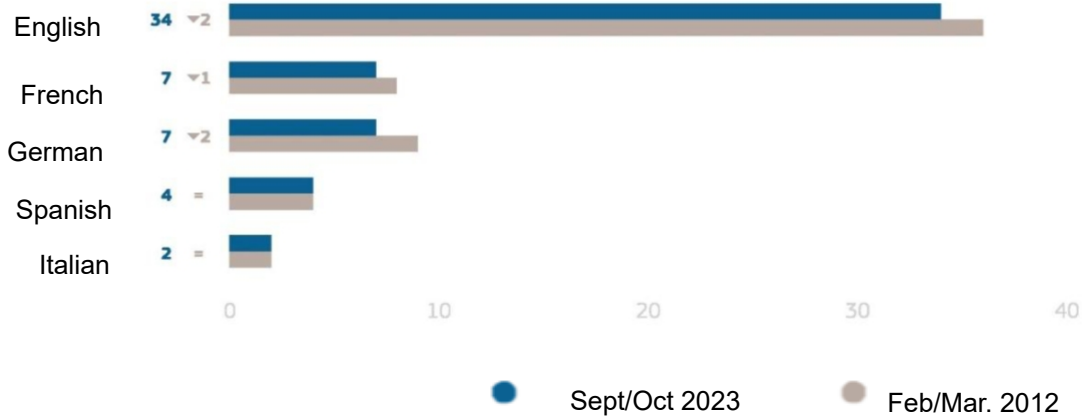
Proportions regarding Italian in this respect have stayed more or less constant except notable decreases in Malta (36%, -6) and Romania (6%, -4). Russian has decreased in 14 countries, most notably in Bulgaria (19%, -23), Lithuania (55%, -16), Estonia (39%, -10), and Latvia (51%, -8).

otherl.lvl.vgood. Is your level of ... very good? (EU27) (%)



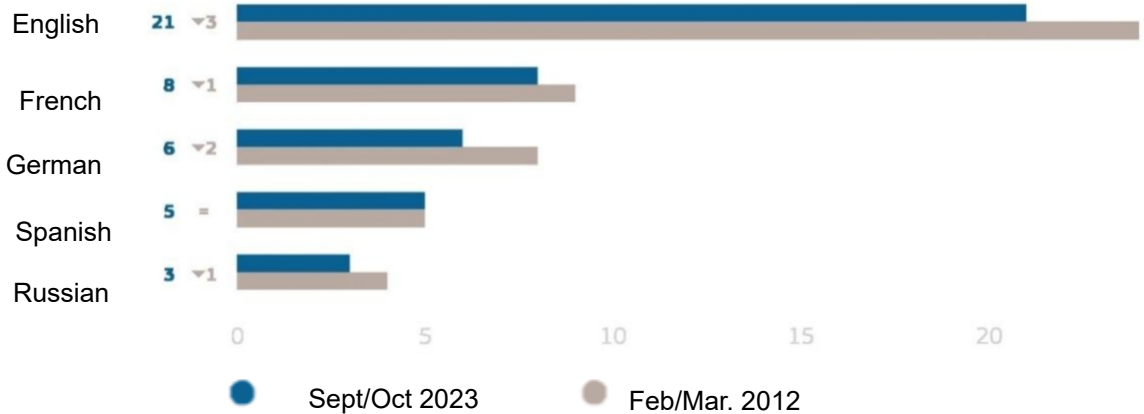
Base: 15725 (respondents who speak at least one language other than their mother tongue)

otherl.lvl.good. Is your level of ... good? (EU27) (%)



Base: 15725 (respondents who speak at least one language other than their mother tongue)

otherl.lvl.basic. Is your level of ... basic? (EU27) (%)



Base: 15725 (respondents who speak at least one language other than their mother tongue)

II. USE OF LANGUAGES IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS



Having explored the level of multilingualism in Europe, this chapter of the report looks at the way in which Europeans use additional languages that they understand well enough to be able to hold a conversation. More specifically, in terms of how often they use them, and what they use them for. The chapter concludes with a section on the fruition of media in a foreign language.

1. Frequency of use of languages other than the mother tongue

A third of Europeans use their foreign languages on a daily basis.

Respondents were asked how frequently they used each language other than their mother tongue that they said they could speak well enough to hold a conversation (up to a maximum of three languages)¹⁵.

One in three (31%) of respondents use their first additional language every day or almost every day, compared to 23% in 2012, a similar proportion (28%, +3) use it often

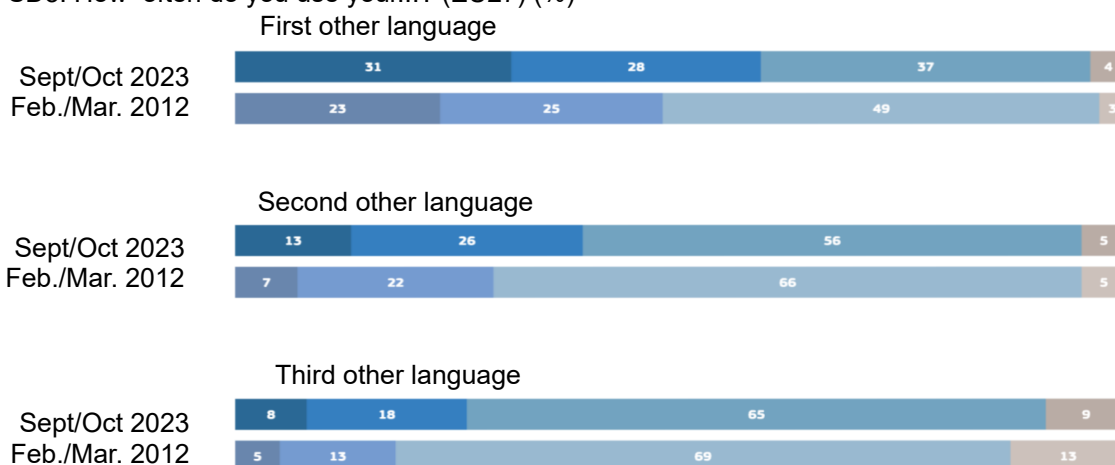
often but not daily, and around two thirds (65%, -4) use it occasionally.

There is widespread national variation.

For the first language other than mother tongue, Member States in which it is most likely to be used every day or almost every day are Luxembourg (70%), Malta (63%), Cyprus (58%), Sweden (52%), and the Netherlands (50%). This is least likely the case in Portugal (12%), Poland (14%), and Czechia and Romania (both 15%). In comparison, respondents are most likely to say they use their second other language every day or almost every day in Luxembourg (57%), Cyprus (25%), and Spain and Latvia (both 22%), with the lowest scores in this regard seen in Hungary (5%), Poland, Romania (both 6%), and Finland (9%).

Respondents are most likely to say they use their first other language often but not on a daily basis in Portugal and Italy (both 41%), Romania and Croatia (both 39%), and Austria (34%), with the lowest scores seen in Ireland (19%), Sweden (20%), and Latvia (22%).

SD3. How often do you use your...? (EU27) (%)



● Every day / almost every day ● Often but not on a daily basis ● Occasionally ● Don't know

and the remainder (37%, -12) use it on an occasional basis.

If respondents speak a second other language, they are much less likely to use their it every day or nearly every day (13%, +6), and correspondingly more likely to use it often but not on a daily basis (26%, +4) and on an occasional basis only (56%, -10). Similarly, only 8% of respondents who speak a third additional language use it on an everyday basis, an increase of 3 percentage points compared to 2012, around one in five (18%, +5) use it

In comparison, respondents are most likely to say they use their second other language often but not on a daily basis in Croatia (36%), Estonia (34%), and Greece (33%), with the lowest scores in this regard seen Poland (15%), Cyprus (17%), and France (21%).

Member States in which the respondent's first other language is most likely to be used on an occasional basis are Poland (52%), Slovenia (47%), and Hungary (45%). Respondents are least likely to do so in Luxembourg (7%), Cyprus (11%), and Malta (14%).

15 SD31. How often do you use your...? First other language, Second other language, Third other language.

Respondents are most likely to say they use the second other language occasionally in Poland (75%), Romania (64%), and France (62%).

Comparing 2012 and 2023 we can see some notable changes. For instance, in 24 Member States, respondents are more likely to speak their first other language every day or almost every day, with the biggest increases seen in Cyprus (58%, +19), Ireland (38%, +16), and the Netherlands (50%, +19). The only countries where this metric has decreases are Spain (39%, -5) and Romania (15%, -5). In 22 countries, there has been an increase among those who speak their second other language every day, most notably in Bulgaria (16%, +11), Slovakia (14%, +9), and Latvia (22%, +8). Slight decreases are registered in Finland (9%, -2) and Hungary (5%, -1). In 17 Member States, the proportion of those who say they speak their third other language every day has risen, with the biggest increases registered in Greece (14%, +9), Italy (13%, +9), Czechia (12%, +8), and Latvia (16%, +7). Decreases are seen in Malta (7%, -6), Ireland (4%, -5), Denmark (4%, -2), and Slovakia (6%, -2).

compared to house persons (31%), manual workers (29%), other white-collar workers (28%), and retirees (20%). Regarding the second language the unemployed are the most likely (21%) to say they use it every day or almost daily, compared to managers (15%), manual workers (12%), and house persons and retirees (both 8%). The third language is most commonly spoken every day by students (12%), compared with managers, manual workers, house persons (8% all) and other white-collar workers (6%), and retirees (5%).

- Respondents who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class are more likely (44%) to indicate using their first other language every day than those pertaining to the working class (34%), the middle class (29%), or the lower middle class (27%). The second other language is most commonly spoken every day or almost every other day by those in the upper-middle class (16%), and least often by those in the middle class (13%) and lower- middle class (12%).

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

- Men are slightly more likely to indicate using their first other language every day than women (32% vs 29%). The same goes for the second other language (14% vs 12%). Regarding the third other language, women are more likely to use it occasionally than men (67% vs 62%).
- Respondents aged 15-24 are more likely (41%) to say they use their first other language every day than those aged 25-39 (36%), 40-54 (29%), and 55 and up (22%). The same is true for the second other language (18%, 16%, 13%, 9%) and the third language (12%, 9%, 8%, 5%). Conversely, the oldest age group is much more likely than the youngest to use the first-mentioned additional language occasionally (50% vs 21%). Respondents aged 15-24 are also more likely to say they use often their first (35%) and second other language (32%) compared to older peers aged 25-39 (30% and 26%), 40-54 (28% and 25%), and 55 and up (22% for both first and second other language).
- Respondents who left school aged 15 or below are more likely to indicate using their first other language every day than those who left school beyond the age of 20 (42% vs 32%). The same is true for the second other language (19% vs 14%). Regarding the third other language, it is the other way around (7% vs 4%).
- Students (42%) and managers (38%) are the most likely to use their first other language on a daily basis,

SD3_1 How often do you use your . . ? First other language (% - EU)

	Every day / almost every day	Often but not on a daily basis	Occasionally	Don't know
EU27	31	28	37	4
Gender				
Man	32	29	35	4
Woman	29	28	39	4
Age				
15-24	41	35	21	3
25-39	36	30	30	4
40-54	29	28	39	4
55 +	22	22	50	6
Education (End of)				
15-	42	13	38	7
15-19	22	24	48	6
20+	32	31	34	3
Still studying	42	37	18	3
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	27	33	36	4
Managers	38	30	30	2
Other white collars	28	30	38	4
Manual workers	29	25	41	5
House persons	31	21	46	2
Unemployed	32	23	39	6
Retired	20	20	54	6
Students	42	37	18	3
Difficulties paying bills				
Most of the time	34	24	35	7
From time to time	29	30	36	5
Almost never / Never	31	28	37	4
Consider belonging to				
The working class	34	21	39	6
The lower middle class	27	29	39	5
The middle class	29	29	38	4
The upper middle class	39	31	28	2
The upper class	44	33	19	4

SD3_2 How often do you use your...? Second other language (% - EU)

	Every day / almost every day	Often but not on a daily basis	Occasionally	Don't know
EU27	13	26	56	5
Gender				
Man	14	27	54	5
Woman	12	25	57	6
Age				
15-24	18	32	46	4
25-39	16	26	54	4
40-54	13	25	57	5
55 +	9	22	62	7
Education (End of)				
15-	19	19	52	10
15-19	8	22	61	9
20+	14	25	57	4
Still studying	18	34	44	4
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	13	26	57	4
Managers	15	27	55	3
Other white collars	12	26	58	4
Manual workers	12	24	57	7
House persons	8	22	60	10
Unemployed	21	19	52	8
Retired	8	20	64	8
Students	18	34	44	4
Difficulties paying bills				
Most of the time	14	25	56	5
From time to time	16	28	48	8
Almost never / Never	12	25	58	5
Consider belonging to				
The working class	15	27	50	8
The lower middle class	12	23	60	5
The middle class	13	26	56	5
The upper middle class	16	27	55	2
The upper class	13	26	53	8

SD3_3 How often do you use your...? Third other language (% - EU)

	Every day / almost every day	Often but not on a daily basis	Occasionally	Don't know
EU27	8	18	65	9
Gender				
Man	9	20	62	9
Woman	7	16	67	10
Age				
15-24	12	24	57	7
25-39	9	19	63	9
40-54	8	19	64	9
55 +	5	14	71	10
Education (End of)				
15-	4	10	71	15
15-19	9	20	59	12
20+	7	17	69	7
Still studying	12	20	61	7
Socio-professional category				
Self-employed	10	14	67	9
Managers	8	17	68	7
Other white collars	6	24	62	8
Manual workers	8	20	59	13
House persons	8	17	64	11
Unemployed	10	11	68	11
Retired	5	14	70	11
Students	12	20	61	7
Difficulties paying bills				
Most of the time	12	11	72	5
From time to time	9	29	53	9
Almost never / Never	7	15	68	10
Consider belonging to				
The working class	7	20	59	14
The lower middle class	8	17	63	12
The middle class	8	17	66	9
The upper middle class	9	16	70	5
The upper class	12	29	57	2

One in four Europeans who are able to use English do it every day.

This section focuses on Europeans' use frequency of the five most widely spoken languages in Europe: English, French, German, and Spanish, and to a lesser extent Russian.

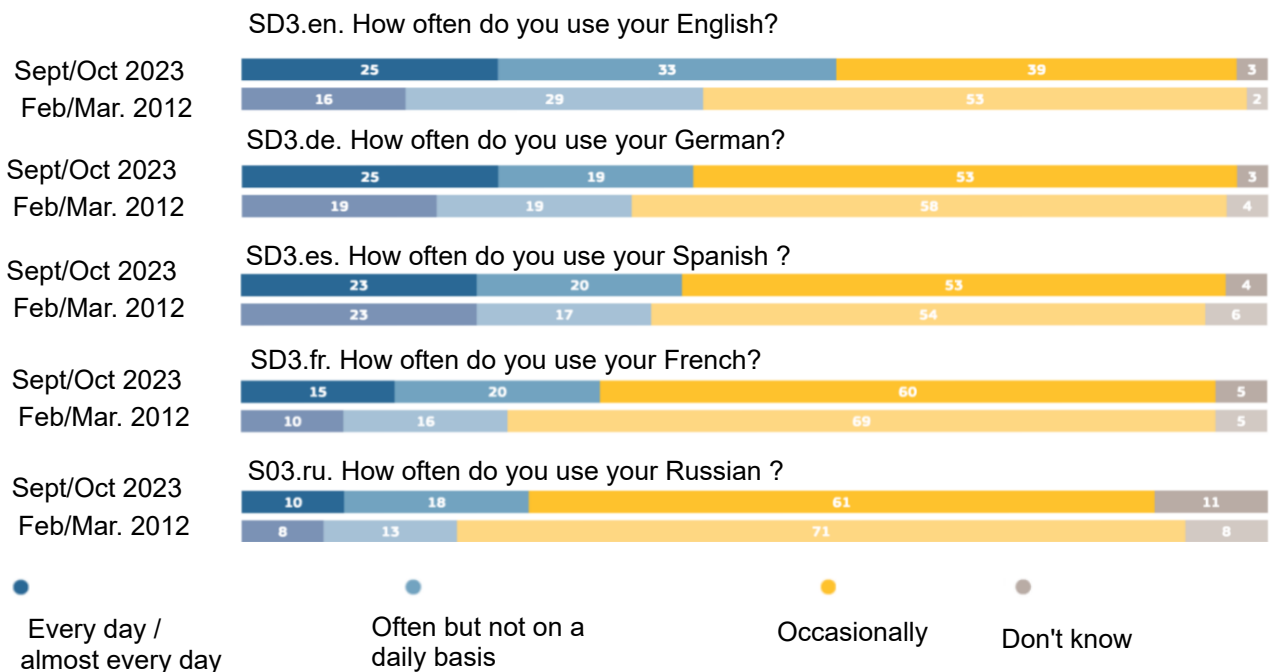
Across the EU we see that one in four (25%) of respondents who use English as their second, third, or fourth language, use it every day or almost every day, a substantial increase (+9) compared to 2012. A third (33%, +4) use it often but not on a daily basis. Almost four in ten (39%, -14) use English occasionally.

Respondents who speak German are using it on a daily basis by 25% (+6) of Europeans, 19% (=) use it often but not daily, while more than half (53%, -5) use it occasionally.

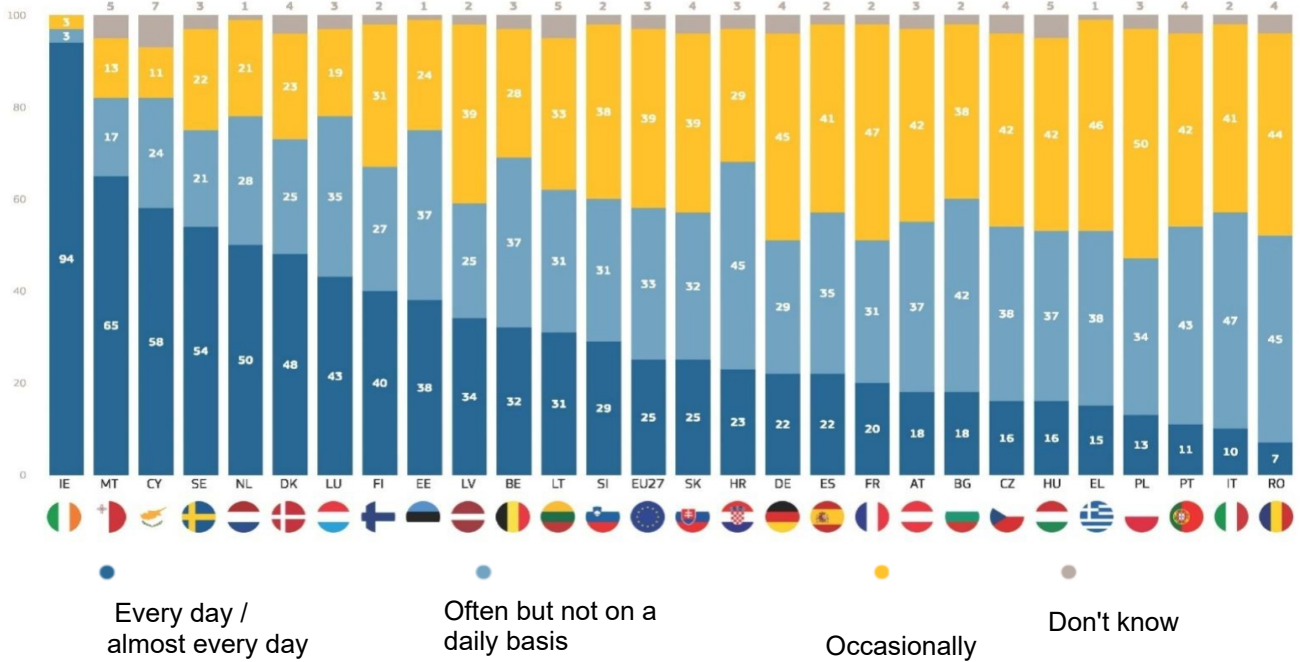
Among respondents who speak French as an additional language 15% use it daily (+5), 20% often but not on a daily basis (+4), while six out of ten are using it occasionally (60, -9).

Regarding Spanish users, 23% are using it every day (=), while 20% (+3) often but not on a daily basis. Finally, 53% are using it occasionally which is very consistent in comparison with 2012 (- 1).

The vast majority of respondents able to speak Russian as one of the languages other than their mother tongue use it occasionally (61%, -10). One in ten (10%, +2) are using it on daily basis, while 18% (+5) often but not every day.

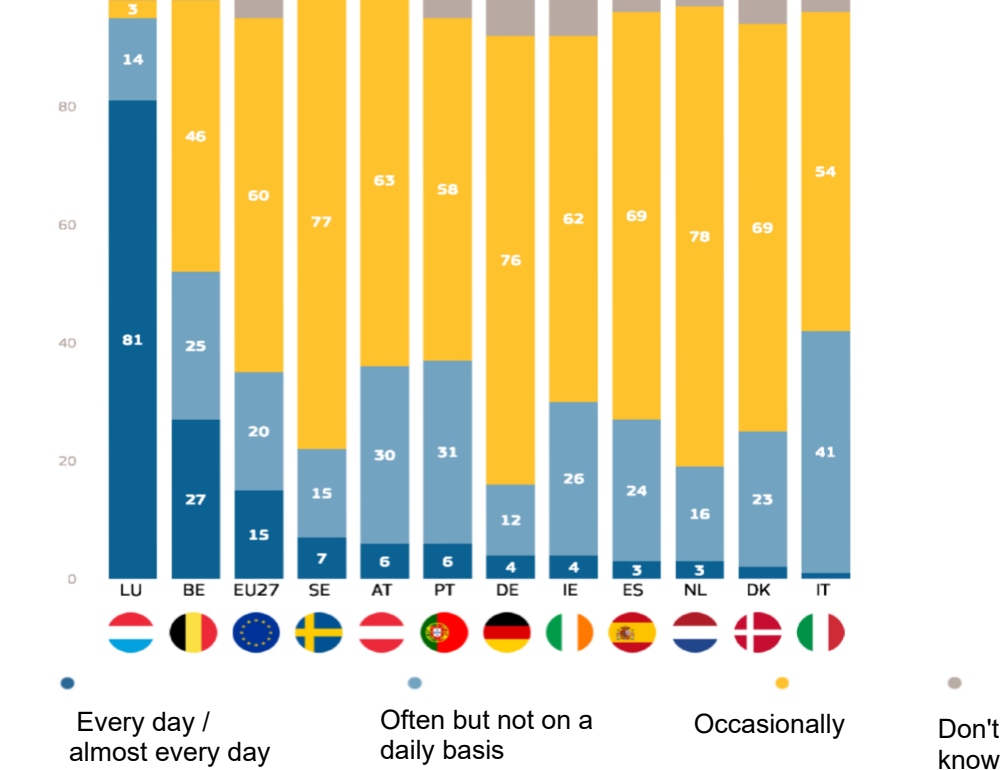


SD3.en. How often do you use your English? (%)

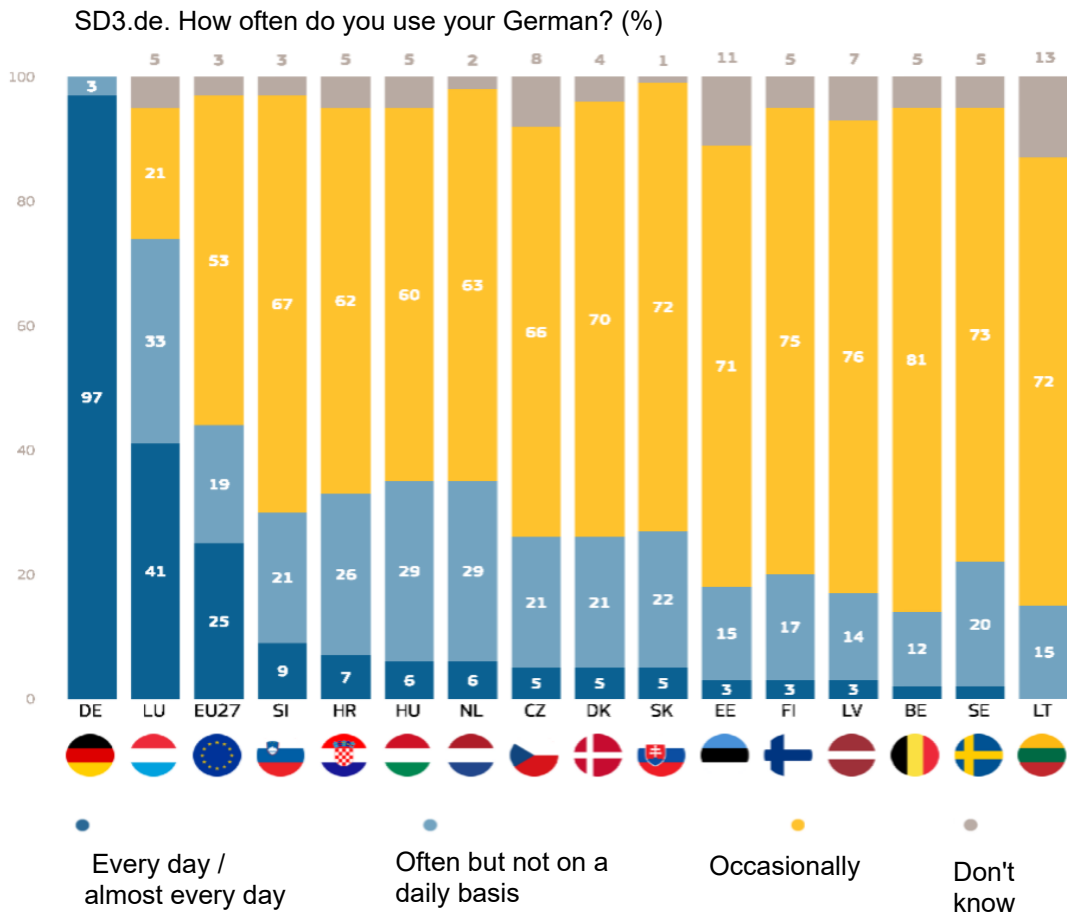


Base: 12447 (respondents who speak English as first, second, or third other language)

SD3.fr. How often do you use your French? (%)



Base: 2887 (respondents who speak French as first, second, or third other language, excluding countries with less than 100 respondents)



Base: 2772 (respondents who speak German as first, second, or third other language, , excluding countries with less than 100 respondents)

Regarding Russian, it is 1% (=), 1%, (=), and 3%, (-3) respectively.

One in five of Europeans using a language other than their mother tongue every day are using English.

Among the respondents who can speak at least one language other than their mother tongue and speak it every day, the most widely spoken is English (20%), a substantial increase (+8) compared to 2012. One in four (26%, +4) use English often but not on a daily basis. Three in ten (31%, -9) use it occasionally.

4% (=) of respondents who speak at least one language other than their mother tongue speak German daily, 3% (-1) use it often but not daily, while one in ten (9%, -4) use it occasionally.

French is used daily by 3%, a slight uptick compared to 2012 (+1), with a further 4% (+1) indicating they use it often but not on a daily basis. Just over one in ten (11%, -3) use it occasionally.

Similar small proportions of respondents use Spanish every day (3%, =), compared to 2% (=) who use it often but not every day, and 7% (=) who occasionally do so.

At the national level, we see that in three countries at least half of the respondents who can speak a language other than their mother tongue use English daily: Malta (62%), where it is an official language, Cyprus (55%), and Sweden (50%). They are most likely to say they use it often but not daily in Portugal (38%), Italy (35%), and Austria (33%). Respondents are most likely to use it occasionally in Poland (41%), Germany (40%), and Portugal (38%).

German is most likely spoken daily in Luxembourg (24%), Germany (14%), and Austria (11%) where it is an official language, with less than 5% doing so elsewhere. One in five (20%) report using it often but not daily in Luxembourg, with substantial proportions saying the same in the Netherlands (18%) and Denmark (11%). In 15 countries, more than one in ten respondents use it occasionally, with the highest proportions found in Slovenia (24%), Slovakia (19%), Sweden (18%), and Belgium (18%), where it is an official language.

Respondents who can speak at least one language other than their mother tongue are most likely to use Spanish every day in Spain (20%), where it is an official language, followed by Ireland, Italy, and Luxembourg (all 2%). It is most likely to be used often but not daily in Portugal (6%) and France (5%) and occasionally in France (18%) and Portugal (10%).

French is most likely used daily in Luxembourg (63%), Belgium (16%), and France (12%), where it is an official language, often but not on a daily basis in Belgium (15%) and Luxembourg (11%), where it is an official language, but also in Italy (9%), Ireland and Portugal (both 8%). It is most likely used occasionally, as a second, third, or fourth language, in Belgium (27%), the Netherlands (22%), and Ireland (18%).

Looking at the evolution between 2012 and 2023, we see English advancing in every EU Member State except Romania, where now 5% (-6) respondents use English every day. Conversely, the biggest increases in this regard are seen in Ireland (33%, +21), the Netherlands (48%, +21), and Cyprus (55%, +20). Often but not daily use increases most in Portugal (38%, +20), Romania (32%, +14), Italy (35%, +12), Spain (23%, +10), Luxembourg (24%, +10), and Hungary (29%, +10). Correlating with these increases is the fact that occasional use decreases in most countries, most notably in Italy (31%, -25), Cyprus (10%, -24), and Austria (37%, -20).

Regarding German, we see daily use decreasing substantially in Luxembourg (24%, -7). Since it is spoken relatively more often on an occasional basis, it is more revealing to look at changes at this level, with substantial decreases seen in Poland (11%, -14), Hungary (20%, -14), the Netherlands (39%, -12), and Slovenia (24%, -6) and Sweden (18%, -6).

Regarding the use of French, the most notably shifts occur at the level of occasional use, which increases slightly in Czechia (4%, +3), Malta (11%, +2), and Sweden (10%, +2), but falls substantially in Italy (12%, -19), Portugal (16%, -17), and Romania (13%, -15).

Occasional use of Spanish increases slightly in Belgium (8%, +4), and decreases substantially in Italy (6%, -12) and Portugal (10%, -10). We can also see occasional use of Russian decreasing substantially in a number of countries, for instance: Bulgaria (17%, -18), Poland (11%, -17), and Lithuania (40%, -10).

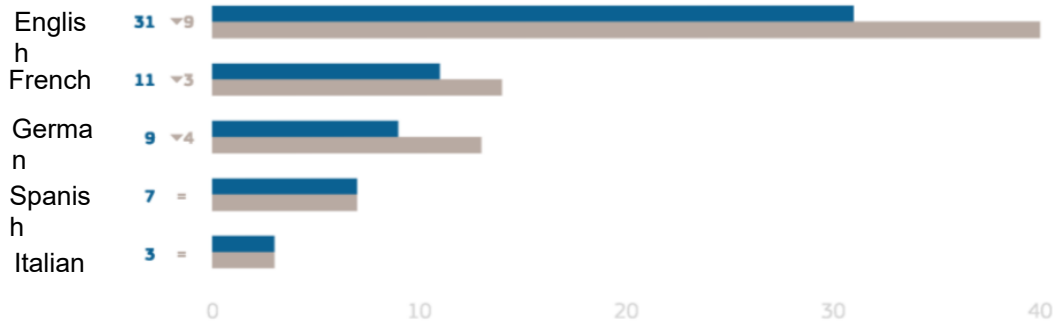
The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

- Men are more likely than women to use English as a first, second, and third other language every day (22% vs 17%), while women are more likely to use it occasionally (34% vs 29%). Women are also slightly more likely than men to use French occasionally (12% vs 10%).

- Younger respondents are substantially more likely to use English every day, with one in three (33%) among those aged 15- 24, compared to 26% of those aged 25-39, and 9% of those aged 55 and up. Older respondents in contrast are more likely to use it occasionally; 39% of those aged 55 and up compared to 19% of the youngest demographic. German follows the same pattern (13% vs 7%), as does French (13% vs 10%).
- Those who remained in school past the age of 20 are more likely to use English every day than those who left school before the age of 15 (25% vs 4%). For German as a second, third, and fourth language it is the other way around (4% vs 11%). Spanish is also more likely to be spoken every day by those who left school early compared to the better-educated demographic (8% vs 3%).
- Looking at socio-professional categories, we see that English is most likely to be used every day by students (35%) and managers (30%), compared to 18% among the self-employed, and only 6% among house persons. In contrast, house persons are substantially more likely (7%) to speak Spanish everyday as a second, third, or fourth language than managers (2%).
- Those who never have trouble paying their bills are much more likely (22%) to speak English as a second, third, and fourth language every day than those who face such difficulties most of the time (12%). The latter group in contrast is more likely than the former to daily speak German (7% vs 4%), French (6% vs 3%), and Spanish (5% vs 3%).
- Close to four in ten (37%) of those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class speak English as a second, third, and fourth language every day, compared to around one in five (19%) among the middle class, and one in ten (11%) among the working class. French is more likely spoken often but not on a daily basis by those pertaining to the upper class (7%) compared to the working class (2%).
- English, as a second, third, and fourth language, is also more likely spoken daily by 'very active' language learners (34%), compared to those who are just 'active' (22%) or not active at all (12%). Regarding German, French, or Spanish, there is barely any difference among these groups¹⁶.

¹⁶ Very active language learners are those respondents who have started or continued to learn a new language in the past 2 years, as opposed to Active learners, who instead have not learned a new language recently but intend to do so, and Not active learners, namely those respondents who have never learned any language other than their mother tongue and do not intend to do so in the coming year.

SD3.T3. How often do you use your... - Occasionally (EU27) (%)



Base: 15725 (respondents who speak at least one language other than their mother tongue)

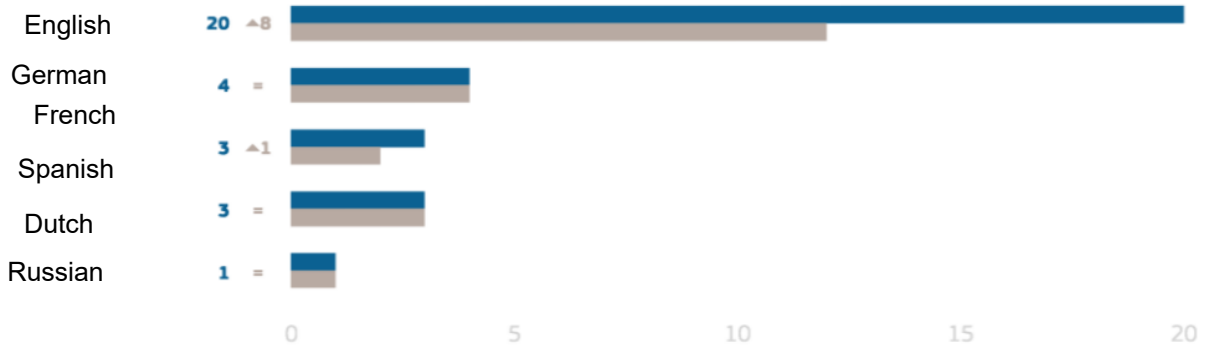


Sept/Oct 2023



Feb/Mar. 2012

SD3.T1. How often do you use your... - Every day\almost every day (EU27) (%)



Base: 15725 (respondents who speak at least one language other than their mother tongue)

● Sept/Oct 2023 ● Feb/Mar. 2012

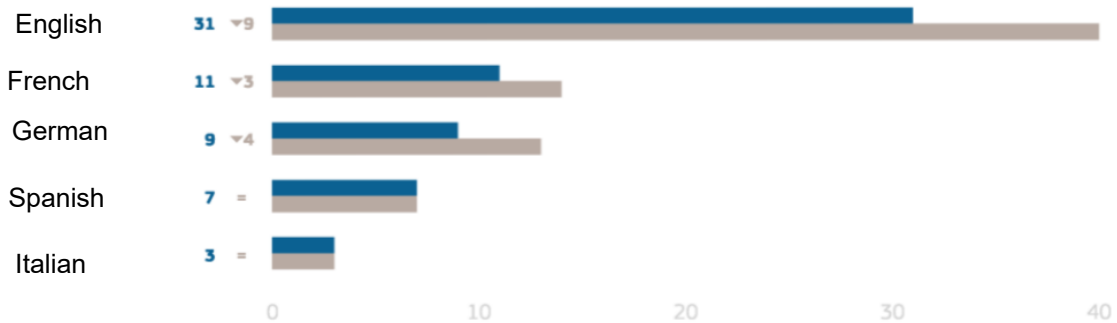
SD3.T2. How often do you use your... - Often but not on a daily basis (EU27) (%)



Base: 15725 (respondents who speak at least one language other than their mother tongue)

● Sept/Oct 2023 ● Feb/Mar. 2012

SD3.T3. How often do you use your... - Occasionally (EU27) (%)



Base: 15725 (respondents who speak at least one language other than their mother tongue)

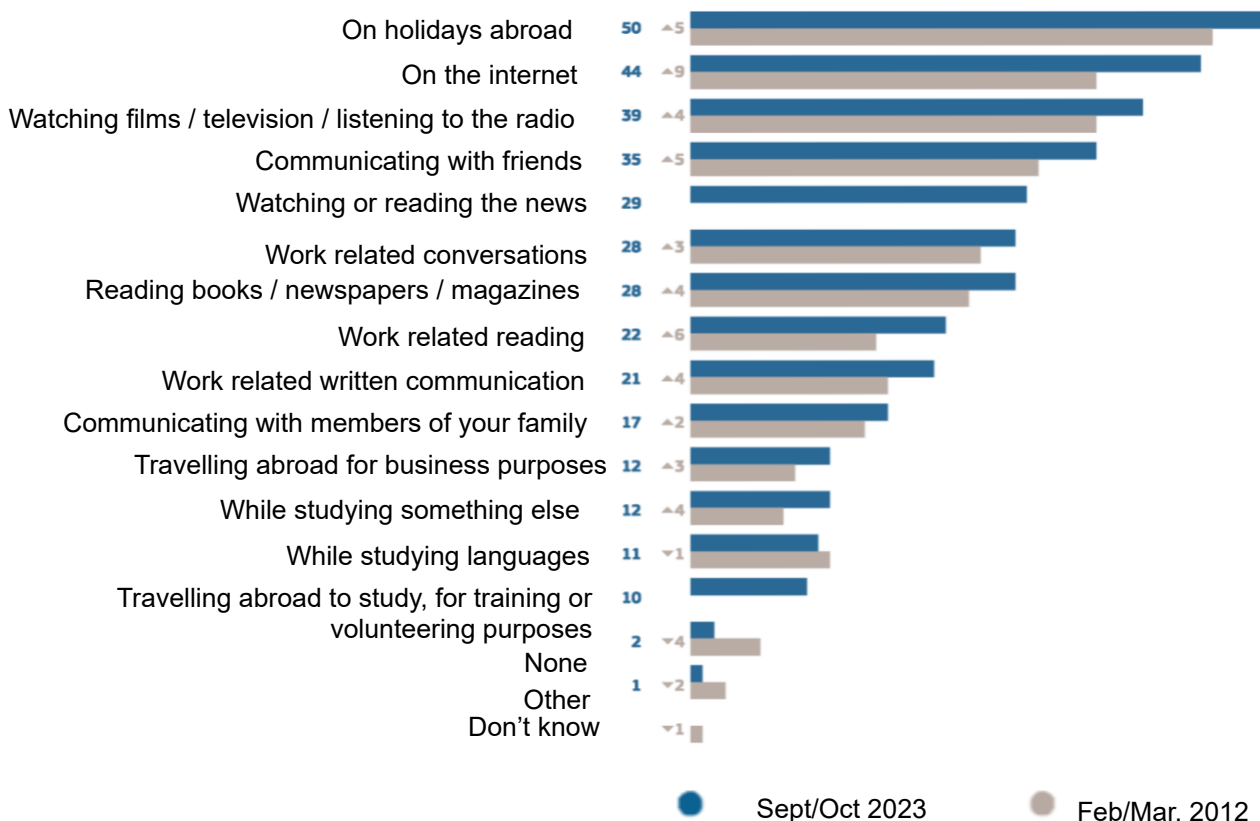
● Sept/Oct 2023 ● Feb/Mar. 2012

2. Situations where languages are regularly used

Most Europeans regularly use their first other language on holidays abroad.

their first other language on holidays abroad, with half (50%) of respondents saying this, compared to 45% who said this in 2012. The second and third languages are also mostly used on holidays abroad (45% and 43%

SD4a. When do you regularly use...? First other language (EU27) (%)



Base: 15725 (respondents who speak at least one language other than their mother tongue)

This section focuses on how Europeans use the other languages that they can speak. Respondents who spoke a language other than their mother tongue were presented with a card showing various situations and asked, for up to three additional languages they could speak, when they regularly used each¹⁷. Respondents were able to mention as many situations as applied to them.

Compared to 2012, a general overview of the results reveals that, the use of languages other than the mother tongue has increased in almost all possible scenarios that were presented to the respondents. This general trend applies to the use of both the first and second other language. Data on the usage of the third other language was first collected in the current wave.

Respondents who can speak at least one language other than their mother tongue are most likely to regularly use

respectively).

More than four in ten (44%, +9) regularly use their first other language on the Internet, while over one in four (27%, +6) use their second other language this way, and one in five (19%) their third.

Close to four in ten (39%, +4) respondents who can speak at least one language other than their mother tongue regularly use their first other language when watching films/television or listening to the radio, compared to 23% (+ 1) who use their second other language this way among those who speak at least two other languages, and 18% their third.

More than three in ten (35%, +5) regularly communicate with friends using their first other language. Regarding the second other language it is 27% (+5), and 23% for the third.

Close to three in ten (29%) use their first other language watching or reading the news¹⁸. Regarding the second

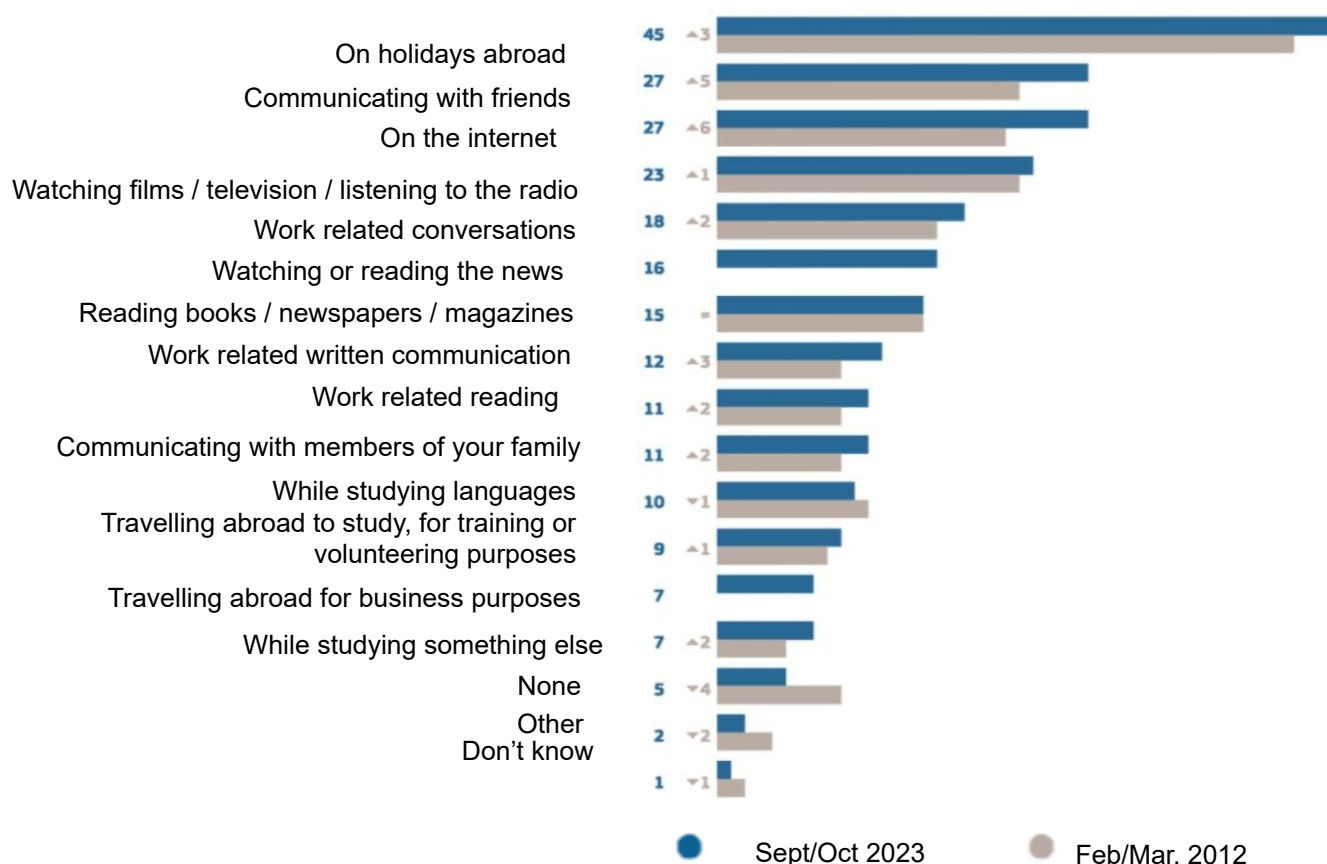
¹⁸ This question was not asked in 2012.

¹⁷ SD4a. When do you regularly use...? First other language; SD4b. When do you regularly use...? Second other language; SD4c. When do you regularly use...? Third other language

other language it is 16%, and 10% for the third other language.

Reading books, newspapers or magazines is done regularly in the respondent's first other language by 28% (+4), in the second other language by 15% (=), and the third by 13%.

SD4b When do you regularly use ? Second other language (EU27) (%)



Base: 7406 (respondents who speak at least two languages other than their mother tongue)

At the national level there is widespread variation.

Respondents who can speak at least one language other than their mother tongue are more likely (28%, +3) to regularly use their first other language in conversations at work. The second other language is used by 18% (+2) of those who can speak at least two other languages, whereas the third other language is used this way by 12% of those who can speak at least three. For work-related reading it is 22% (+6), 11% (+2), 8%, and work-related written communication 21% (+4), 12% (+3), and 8% respectively.

Close to five in ten (17%, +2) regularly use the first other language communicating with family members. For the second and third languages it is 11% (+2).

Other options were: Whilst studying something else than languages: 12% (+4), 7% (+2), and 7%; when travelling abroad on business: 12% (+3), 9% (+1), and 7%; studying languages: 11% (-1), 10% (-1), and 10%; travelling abroad to study for training or volunteering purposes: 10%, 7%, and 5%¹⁹.

Using the first other language on holidays abroad is the most commonly cited way of using them in 13 Member States.

Countries where respondents are most likely to say they regularly use their first other language in this situation are Denmark (74%), Sweden (70%), and the Netherlands (68%). Those countries where respondents are least likely to do so are Latvia (16%), Croatia (22%), Spain (25%), and Lithuania (30%).

Those countries where respondents are most likely to regularly use their first other language on the Internet are Sweden (69%), Greece and Malta (both 68%), and Denmark (62%). Internet usage is least likely to be mentioned by respondents in Ireland (28%).

Member States where respondents are most likely to regularly use their first other language when watching films/television or listening to the radio are Malta (75%), Sweden (73%), and the Netherlands (63%). The first other languages are least commonly used this way in Poland (22%), Italy (24%), and Austria (29%).

¹⁹ This question was not asked in 2012.

Regularly using their first other language to communicate with friends is most widespread in Luxembourg (63%), in Malta (53%), and in Sweden (49%). This way of regularly using other languages is least widespread in Poland (22%).

Respondents are most likely to use their first other language to watch or read the news in Sweden (52%), Luxembourg (50%), and Denmark (42%), with the lowest scores in this regard seen in Poland (17%), Portugal and Cyprus (both 20%), and Italy (22%).

The majority of respondents in Malta (64%) and Sweden (55%) use their first other language when reading books/newspapers/ magazines. Respondents are least likely to mention this in Poland (11%), Bulgaria (15%), and Hungary (17%).

Regularly using one's first other language in conversation at work (either face-to-face or by telephone) is most likely to take place in Luxembourg and Cyprus (both 49%), followed by Malta (46%) and the Netherlands, Estonia, and Sweden (42% all).

Regularly using one's first other language for work-related reading is most widespread in Malta (43%), Sweden (42%), and Luxembourg (40%), with a much lower

prevalence in Italy (13%), Czechia (15%), and Croatia, Austria, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia (16% all).

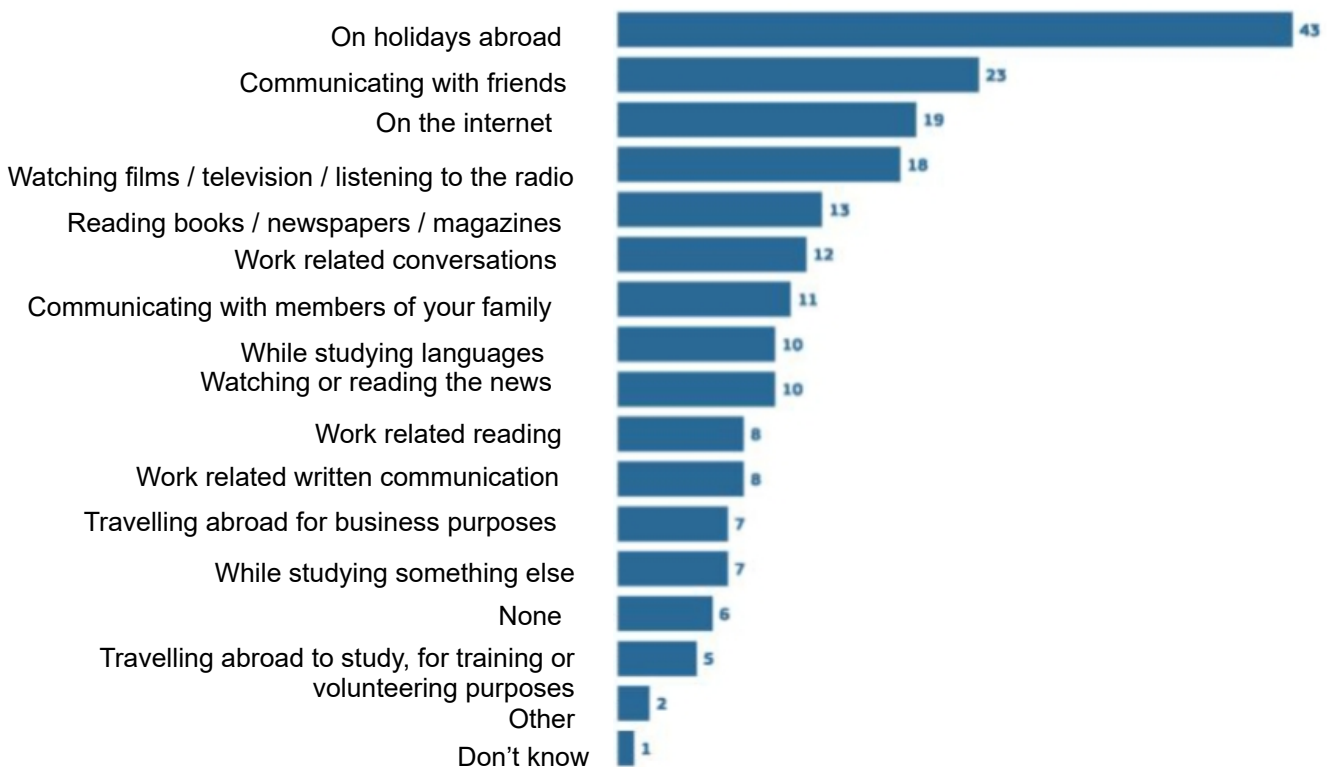
Work-related written communication is most often mentioned in Malta (43%), Sweden (38%), and Cyprus (36%), with the lowest scores seen in Greece (14%), Romania and Poland (both 15%), and Czechia and Hungary (both 16%).

Regularly using one's first other language when communicating with family members receives most mentions by respondents in Malta (33%), Luxembourg (32%), and Spain (27%). It is least likely to be mentioned as a way in which other languages are regularly used in Poland (6%), Estonia (8%), and Czechia, Lithuania, and Slovenia (9% all).

Respondents are most likely to say they use their first other language while studying something else in Malta (31%), Sweden (24%), and Estonia and Germany (both 16%), with the lowest scores in this regard seen in France (6%), Bulgaria (7%), and Belgium and Hungary (8%).

Travelling abroad for business purposes is most often mentioned as a context for speaking one's first other

SD4c. When do you regularly use...? Third other language (EU 27) (%)



Base: 3038 (respondents who speak at least three languages other than their mother tongue)

language in Malta (24%), Italy (19%), and Luxembourg and Denmark (18%). Use of other languages in this way is least likely to be cited by respondents in Denmark and Spain (both 7%), Belgium (9%), and Latvia, Hungary, and Slovakia (all 11%).

Regularly using one's first other language when studying a language is most widely cited by respondents in Malta (25%), Poland (21%), and Ireland (19%). Languages different than mother tongue are least likely to be used in such a way in Cyprus (3%), the Netherlands and Austria (both 5%), and Denmark (6%).

SD4a. When do you regularly use...? First other language

Base: 15725 (respondents who speak at least one language other than their mother tongue)

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	D-W	DE	D-E	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
On holidays abroad	50	49	33	55	74	54	55	58	33	33	49	25	51	22	52	44	16	30	41	48	67	68	65	53	47	37	61	44	57	70
On the Internet	44	44	44	42	62	41	42	47	43	28	68	34	42	47	38	54	40	34	47	40	68	57	49	39	43	49	45	38	61	69
Watching films\ television\ listening to the radio	39	49	39	37	65	33	32	25	46	30	53	30	42	46	24	49	59	56	46	30	75	63	29	22	38	33	52	50	56	73
Communicating with friends	35	35	36	28	38	34	32	23	37	45	36	43	35	32	33	40	43	37	63	24	53	34	35	22	43	30	33	45	32	49
Watching or reading the news	29	30	26	26	42	27	26	16	31	29	30	34	25	29	22	20	36	30	50	25	62	40	26	17	20	21	34	30	38	52
Work related conversations	28	30	22	20	41	27	25	18	42	24	20	31	25	21	26	49	37	23	49	26	46	42	27	21	33	21	25	21	41	42
Reading books\ newspapers\ magazines	28	28	15	20	45	31	29	17	23	27	25	31	27	22	19	25	27	18	48	17	64	41	30	11	18	15	25	30	34	55
Work related reading	22	27	21	15	36	18	17	12	27	22	16	21	28	16	13	33	23	20	40	22	43	38	16	16	19	16	16	19	32	42
Work related written communication	21	23	18	16	34	23	22	14	22	19	14	19	20	15	16	36	19	17	37	16	43	32	26	15	19	15	17	18	31	38
Communicating with members of your family	17	24	12	9	18	15	15	11	8	31	9	27	21	15	12	10	15	9	32	12	33	16	18	6	11	14	9	16	11	18
Travelling abroad for business purposes	12	9	13	14	18	7	7	6	12	12	13	7	12	13	19	17	11	17	18	11	24	16	13	17	14	12	14	11	13	16
While studying something else	12	8	7	13	13	17	16	13	16	17	11	10	6	10	11	10	15	9	12	8	31	11	9	14	9	11	14	11	11	24
While studying languages	11	7	9	14	6	10	9	8	11	19	7	11	11	10	15	3	10	9	12	15	25	5	5	21	9	10	13	11	9	
Travelling abroad to study, for training or volunteering purposes	10	14	9	5	13	8	7	3	9	13	14	7	12	8	15	10	8	9	9	10	15	17	7	11	11	10	8	8	2	10
None	2	0	3	3	1	3	4	9	1	3	1	2	2	1	1	2	1	7	0	2	1	0	4	1	2	1	1	3	2	
Other	1	0	2	1	0	1	1	2	4	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	4	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	3	1	1	1	
Don't know	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	

Respondents are most likely to say they use their first other language while travelling abroad to study, for training or volunteering purposes in the Netherlands (17%), Malta and Italy (both 15%), and Greece and Belgium (both 14%), with the lowest scores in this regard seen in Finland (2%), Czechia (5%), and Germany, Spain, and Austria (7% all).

Comparing 2012 and 2023, some notable changes can be seen at the level of the Member States. For instance, in 18 countries, respondents are more likely to use their first other language on holidays abroad, with the sharpest increases seen in Malta (67%, +25), Poland (53%, +24), and Slovakia (44%, +18). This has slightly decreased in Luxembourg (41%, -8), Denmark (74%, -4), Sweden (70%, -2), Finland (57%, -2), Cyprus (44%, -2), and Germany (55%, -2). Substantial increases can also be observed in 24 Member States regarding usage of respondents' first other language on the Internet, most notably in Portugal (43%, +21), Malta (68%, +19), and Greece (68%, +18). Denmark is the only country where this has decreased (62%, -5). While communicating with family members has stayed more or less constant overall, respondents are now substantially more likely to use their first other language for it in Austria (18%, +11), Malta

(33%, +10), and Romania (14%, +9). As regards the second other language, between 2012 and 2023, in 17 Member States, respondents are more likely to use it to communicate with friends, with the most notable increases in Italy (29%, +16), Greece (39%, +16), Ireland (29%, +13), Malta (27%, +10), and Austria (38%, +10).

The socio-demographic and behavioural groups with a greater likelihood of regularly using additional languages in these different ways are most notably:

- Men, for using their first additional language online (47% vs 41% among women), and work-related reading (25% vs. 18% for women). The relative proportions are similar with regard to the second other language, with men using it more for work-related conversations than women (21% vs 14%), although women use it more than men for watching films/television/listening to the radio (22% VS 24%).
- 15-24-year-olds, particularly when compared with those aged 55+, use their first additional language on the internet (62% vs.30% respectively); studying languages (29% vs. 4%); and studying something else (26% vs. 5%). Conversely, those aged 55 and up are more likely to use their second other language on holidays abroad

than those aged 15-24 (48% vs 41%). The same goes for their third other language (52% vs 30%). Younger respondents aged 15-24 are also more likely to use their first (49%) and second (28%) other language when watching films/television/listening to the radio than older peers aged 25-39 (42% and 21%), 40-54 (36% and 19%), and 55+ (33% and 25%). A similar pattern can be observed with regard to the use of the first and second other languages when travelling abroad to study, for training or volunteering purposes. Younger respondents aged 15-24 are in fact more likely to use their first (16%) and second (15%) other language in this context than older individuals aged 25-39 (12% and 7%), 40-54 (9% and 5%), and 55+ (6% and 5%).

- 25-54-year-olds, compared with under 25's and those aged 55+, for using their first additional language in conversations at work (37%-38% vs. 19% and 17% respectively); reading at work (28%-29% vs. 18% and 13%); writing work-related written communication (27%-29% vs. 15% and 12%); and travelling abroad on business (15%-17% vs. 7% and 8%).

Those who finished their full-time education aged 20+, compared with those finishing at 15 or below, for using their first additional language on holidays abroad (58% vs. 23% respectively); on the Internet (48% vs. 21%); reading books (31% vs. 26%); conversations at work (37% vs. 16%); writing work-related written communication (30% vs. 10%); reading at work (31% vs. 8%); watching films/television/listening to the radio (41% vs. 35%); and travelling abroad on business (17% vs. 3%). The proportions are comparable to those regarding the second other language, which those who enjoyed the longest education use more on holidays than those who left school aged 15 or younger (50% vs 32%). For the third other language it is 51% VS 26%.

Those who finished their full-time education aged 15, compared with those finishing aged 20+, for using additional languages when communicating with family members: 40% vs. 15% for the first other language, 17% vs 11% for the second, and 14% vs 10% for the third.

- The unemployed, particularly when compared with managers/other white-collar workers, for using their first additional language communicating with friends (41% vs. 30%) students and house persons, particularly when compared with the self-employed, for using their first additional language watching films/television or listening to the radio (52% and 45% vs. 31%).

Those who experience financial difficulties most of the time when compared to those who never face such difficulties, for using their first other language for watching or reading the news (35% vs 28%).

Other groups with a greater tendency to be using additional languages for these activities include very active language learners, particularly when compared with the inactive: using their first additional language on the Internet (54% vs. 39%); watching films/television or listening to the radio (46% vs. 36%); reading books/newspapers/magazines (36% vs. 24%); communicating with friends (41% vs. 33%); studying languages (23% vs. 4%); studying something else (20% vs. 7%); work-related written communication (26% vs. 19%); and reading at work (28% vs. 19%)²⁰.

²⁰ Very active language learners are those respondents who have started or continued to learn a new language in the past 2 years, as opposed to Active learners, who instead have not learned a new language recently but intend to do so, and Not active learners, namely those respondents who have never learned any language other than their mother tongue and do not intend to do so in the coming year

SD4a When do you regularly use...? First other language (% - EU)

	Work related conversations	Work related reading	Work related written communication	Travelling abroad for business purposes	Travelling abroad to study, for training or volunteering purposes	While studying languages	While studying something else	Communicating with members of your family	Communicating with friends	On holidays abroad	Watching films\ television \listening to the radio	Reading books\ \ newspapers \ magazines	Watching or reading the news	On the Internet	Other	None	Don't know
EU27	28	22	21	12	10	11	12	17	35	50	39	28	29	44	1	2	0
Gender																	
Man	31	25	24	15	10	10	12	15	35	50	39	28	30	47	1	2	0
Woman	26	18	19	9	11	11	12	18	35	51	39	28	27	41	1	3	0
Age																	
15-24	19	18	15	7	16	29	26	14	42	51	49	36	35	62	0	1	0
25-39	37	29	29	15	12	10	14	15	36	51	42	29	30	53	1	1	0
40-54	38	28	27	17	9	7	9	16	31	51	36	25	26	41	1	2	0
55 +	17	13	12	8	6	4	5	19	34	49	33	24	26	30	2	4	0
Education (End of)																	
15-	16	8	10	3	2	3	5	40	52	23	35	26	34	21	2	6	0
16-19	24	15	15	9	6	6	7	16	30	46	31	19	23	35	1	4	0
20+	37	31	30	17	12	8	10	15	34	58	41	31	29	48	1	1	0
Still studying	15	17	15	7	19	32	32	14	44	51	52	42	38	63	1	1	0
Socio-professional category																	
Self-employed	40	31	31	25	12	6	8	10	32	54	31	24	26	43	0	1	0
Managers	47	40	40	22	13	9	11	13	30	59	41	31	29	50	0	1	0
Other white collars	35	26	26	14	9	9	11	14	30	57	38	24	27	47	0	1	0
Manual workers	33	20	18	8	7	6	9	20	35	42	36	21	25	38	1	2	0
House persons	10	10	11	5	6	9	8	34	42	41	45	28	30	45	1	2	1
Unemployed	17	14	12	6	7	9	8	23	41	36	34	25	26	45	2	4	0
Retired	7	5	5	4	5	3	4	20	36	47	34	25	27	27	2	5	0
Students	15	17	15	7	19	32	32	14	44	51	52	42	38	63	1	1	0
Difficulties paying bills																	
Most of the time	24	15	16	8	9	9	11	23	41	39	44	28	35	42	1	3	0
From time to time	26	19	19	12	12	12	12	18	37	44	37	27	28	42	1	3	0
Almost never/ Never	30	24	23	12	10	10	12	16	34	54	39	28	28	45	1	2	0
Consider belonging to																	
The working class	25	16	15	5	5	7	8	24	40	32	35	25	30	34	1	4	0
The lower middle class	22	15	14	7	8	10	13	15	35	47	39	28	30	47	1	2	0
The middle class	28	22	22	13	11	11	12	16	33	54	38	28	26	44	1	2	0
The upper middle class	41	36	33	22	15	10	14	13	36	61	45	34	33	53	0	1	0
The upper class	42	45	41	26	18	12	17	9	33	67	37	31	32	48	0	0	0
Activity as language learner																	
Very active	33	28	26	14	15	23	20	17	41	52	46	36	34	54	0	1	0
Active	30	22	22	15	13	10	14	13	33	52	39	28	28	46	0	1	0
Not active	25	19	19	11	7	4	7	17	33	50	36	24	26	39	1	3	0

SD4b When do you regularly use ? Second other language (% - EU)

	Work related conversations	Work related reading	Work related written communication	Travelling abroad for business purposes	Travelling abroad to study, for training or volunteering purposes	While studying languages	While studying something else	Communicating with members of your family	Communicating with friends	On holidays abroad	Watching films\television\listening to the radio	Reading books\newspapers\magazines	Watching or reading the news	On the Internet	Other	None	Don't know
EU27	18	11	12	9	7	10	7	11	27	45	23	15	16	27	2	5	1
Gender																	
Man	21	13	14	10	7	9	7	11	26	45	22	15	17	29	2	4	0
Woman	14	10	9	8	7	11	7	11	27	45	24	16	15	25	2	6	1
Age																	
15-24	11	9	9	5	15	27	18	10	29	41	28	18	16	38	1	4	1
25-39	22	15	15	11	7	9	6	14	30	43	21	14	18	30	2	4	0
40-54	25	14	16	11	5	6	4	10	23	47	19	13	13	23	2	5	1
55 +	12	7	7	8	5	5	3	10	25	48	25	17	16	21	3	8	1
Education (End of)																	
15-	8	4	6	3	3	3	2	17	34	32	20	10	13	22	3	9	3
16-19	17	8	9	7	4	5	4	11	22	40	17	11	13	24	2	7	1
20+	21	15	15	12	6	7	5	11	27	50	24	16	17	25	2	4	1
Still studying	10	8	8	6	16	29	19	12	32	41	30	22	18	39	1	4	0
Socio-professional category																	
Self-employed	25	16	16	16	6	7	5	10	27	49	20	13	14	25	1	3	1
Managers	27	18	19	14	7	8	5	10	27	50	22	16	17	28	2	4	0
Other white collars	24	17	19	12	6	7	6	11	22	50	20	14	13	24	1	3	1
Manual workers	21	10	11	6	4	7	4	11	24	39	19	9	13	23	2	6	1
House persons	5	1	6	5	4	5	2	18	24	32	27	12	11	26	1	9	1
Unemployed	9	6	4	4	7	4	6	16	33	26	21	14	19	29	8	4	0
Retired	4	3	3	5	4	4	2	12	25	47	23	17	16	21	3	9	1
Students	10	8	8	6	16	29	19	12	32	41	30	22	18	39	1	4	0
Difficulties paying bills																	
Most of the time	15	8	7	8	7	11	8	11	32	40	23	14	13	30	1	5	1
From time to time	14	11	12	9	8	10	8	13	29	38	22	16	18	27	2	6	1
Almost never/ Never	19	12	12	9	7	10	6	11	25	47	23	15	15	27	2	5	1
Consider belonging to																	
The working class	16	9	10	5	4	7	5	15	27	29	20	13	17	25	4	10	0
The lower middle class	13	7	9	6	5	11	6	12	27	42	21	17	16	29	3	4	1
The middle class	18	12	13	10	8	11	7	10	25	47	24	15	16	27	2	4	1
The upper middle class	21	16	14	13	10	10	6	11	31	55	24	16	13	26	1	4	0
The upper class	22	14	8	12	4	13	5	11	18	50	14	18	14	27	3	6	0
Activity as language learner																	
Very active	20	14	14	10	10	19	11	11	32	45	27	21	18	33	2	3	0
Active	18	12	13	9	8	8	6	12	23	41	21	17	17	30	1	4	0
Not active	16	9	10	8	4	4	3	11	24	46	21	11	14	22	3	7	1

SD4c When do you regularly use...? Third other language
 (% - EU)

	Work related conversations	Work related reading	Work related written communication	Travelling abroad for business purposes	Travelling abroad to study, for training or volunteering purposes	While studying languages	While studying something else	Communicating with members of your family	Communicating with friends	On holidays abroad	Watching films\television\listening to the radio	Reading books\newspapers\magazines	Watching or reading the news	On the Internet	Other	None	Don't know
EU27	12	8	8	7	5	10	7	11	23	43	18	13	10	19	2	6	1
Gender																	
Man	14	8	11	9	7	8	8	11	22	43	15	13	11	20	2	8	0
Woman	10	8	6	5	4	11	6	11	24	45	20	13	9	18	2	5	1
Age																	
15-24	9	4	5	3	7	25	16	12	23	30	18	14	8	23	3	6	1
25-39	14	12	10	11	8	9	7	8	21	40	17	13	10	21	2	6	1
40-54	15	10	13	9	4	8	4	14	23	45	15	9	8	18	1	4	1
55 +	9	5	4	5	4	4	4	11	24	52	20	15	13	16	2	8	1
Education (End of)																	
15-	6	3	3	5	2	5	6	14	22	26	13	6	10	15	0	12	7
16-19	13	7	9	7	4	6	7	12	21	39	13	11	8	16	1	9	1
20+	13	10	9	8	5	7	4	10	24	51	19	13	12	19	2	5	1
Still studying	7	6	4	4	8	26	17	12	23	31	22	14	8	24	4	7	0
Socio-professional category																	
Self-employed	16	14	15	13	5	2	5	9	21	44	17	10	12	29	2	3	0
Managers	16	10	10	10	6	6	3	12	22	51	15	16	10	17	1	4	1
Other white collars	16	14	14	8	4	10	7	10	24	43	17	10	9	21	1	5	1
Manual workers	15	9	9	4	5	9	4	10	20	39	14	9	7	14	3	8	1
House persons	7	0	1	4	0	2	13	4	13	44	13	10	4	8	0	10	2
Unemployed	12	10	8	15	7	11	18	11	36	28	13	11	20	18	3	3	1
Retired	5	2	2	4	4	4	4	12	25	50	21	15	13	15	3	9	2
Students	7	6	4	4	8	26	17	12	23	31	22	14	8	24	4	7	0
Difficulties paying bills																	
Most of the time	14	4	2	7	3	5	6	16	30	37	14	12	11	24	2	2	0
From time to time	11	9	12	9	8	16	11	13	23	32	17	15	9	21	2	8	0
Almost never/ Never	12	8	8	7	5	8	5	10	22	48	18	12	10	18	2	6	1
Consider belonging to																	
The working class	16	7	7	7	4	11	8	15	25	28	10	8	8	17	4	9	2
The lower middle class	14	7	6	6	6	10	9	9	32	40	21	14	15	20	2	10	0
The middle class	11	9	9	7	5	10	7	12	20	44	19	13	9	21	2	5	1
The upper middle class	10	9	8	9	6	7	5	9	21	53	17	15	9	15	1	4	1
The upper class	14	12	11	6	10	6	1	9	21	49	16	15	14	8	5	2	0
Activity as language learner																	
Very active	12	9	9	8	8	17	10	13	25	43	20	16	11	20	1	3	1
Active	10	9	11	9	6	8	8	11	21	46	21	13	9	20	2	5	0
Not active	12	7	7	5	3	3	4	9	22	43	14	10	10	17	3	10	1

3. Media preferences

A majority of Europeans prefer subtitled over dubbed foreign films and programmes.

At the EU level, more than half (53%) of the respondents prefer to watch foreign films and programmes with subtitles, rather than dubbed. This is an increase of 11 and 16 percentage points compared to 2012 (42%) and 2005 (37%), where the preference was for dubbed films. Three in ten (29%, +5 compared to 2012) totally agree with this statement²¹. One in four (24%, +4) tend to agree, while 16% (-3) tend to disagree. Just over one in four (27%, -9) totally disagree.

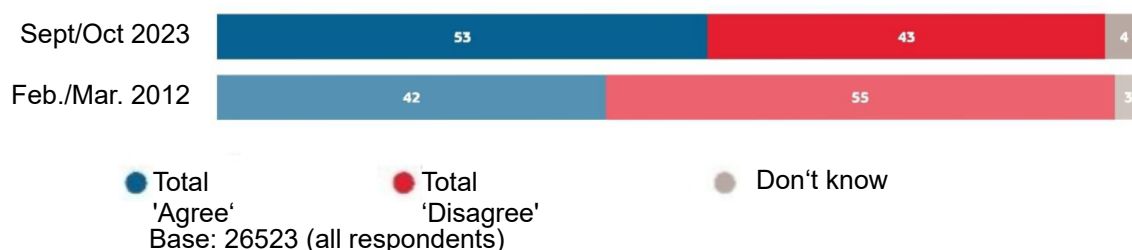
At the national level we see appreciable differences between EU Member States.

In 18 Member States more than half of the respondents

- Younger respondents tend to prefer subtitles over dubbed programmes and films, with two thirds (65%) of those aged 15- 24 saying this, followed by six in ten (59%) of those aged 25-39, 53% of those aged 40-54, and 44% of those aged 55 and up.
- Education plays a substantial role, with more than six in ten (63%) of those who went to school beyond the age of 20 saying they prefer subtitled over dubbed programmes compared with 36% of those who left school aged 15 or younger.
- Managers are the most likely (63%) to agree with the proposed statement, compared with 50% of manual workers, 47% among the unemployed, and 40% of house persons.
- Those who never have financial difficulties are more likely (53%) to prefer subtitled over dubbed

QB7. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements. (EU27) (%)

You prefer to watch foreign films and programmes with subtitles, rather than dubbed



say they prefer to watch foreign films and programmes with subtitles, rather than dubbed. In five countries, at least nine in ten say this: Sweden and Finland (both 95%), the Netherlands (93%), Cyprus and Denmark (both 90%). Respondents are least likely to say this in Germany 34%), (Austria (36%), and Slovakia (38%).

Over eight in ten strongly prefer subtitles over dubbed programming in Sweden (89%), and Finland and the Netherlands (both 82%).

In 18 Member States, respondents are now more likely than in 2012 to prefer watching foreign films and programmes with subtitles, as opposed to dubbed, with the biggest increases seen in Malta (59%, +26), Luxembourg (73%, +24), and Czechia (39%, +18). The only countries where these proportions slightly decreased, albeit from very high levels, are Estonia (65%, -6), Denmark (90%, -3), Belgium (70%, -1), Slovenia (85%, -1), and Sweden (95%, -1).

programmes than those who face such difficulties most of the time (47%).

- Europeans who consider themselves as belonging to the upper-middle class are the most likely (69%) to concur with the proposed statement, followed by those in the upper class (64%), the middle class (56%), the lower-middle class (49%), and the working class (42%).
- More than half (56%) of those who use the Internet every day say they prefer subtitled over dubbed programmes compared to one in three (32%) of those who never go online.

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

²¹ QB7.3. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements.

QB7.3 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements. You prefer to watch foreign films and programmes with subtitles, rather than dubbed (% - EU)

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'
EU27	29	24	16	27	4	53	43
Gender							
Man	29	24	16	27	4	53	43
Woman	29	23	16	28	4	52	44
Age							
15-24	38	27	16	17	2	65	33
25-39	34	25	17	21	3	59	38
40-54	29	24	18	27	2	53	45
55 +	23	21	15	35	6	44	50
Education (End of)							
15-	17	19	12	44	8	36	56
16-19	23	23	18	32	4	46	50
20+	39	24	15	19	3	63	34
Still studying	40	28	16	14	2	68	30
Socio-professional category							
Self- employed	34	25	18	21	2	59	39
Managers	38	25	16	20	1	63	36
Other white collars	33	26	17	21	3	59	38
Manual workers	26	24	17	29	4	50	46
House persons	20	20	16	35	9	40	51
Unemployed	26	21	13	34	6	47	47
Retired	23	19	14	38	6	42	52
Students	40	28	16	14	2	68	30
Difficulties paying bills							
Most of the time	24	23	16	31	6	47	47
From time to time	27	26	17	26	4	53	43
Almost never/ Never	31	22	16	28	3	53	44
Consider belonging to							
The working class	23	19	14	38	6	42	52
The lower middle class	23	26	17	30	4	49	47
The middle class	31	25	17	24	3	56	41
The upper middle class	47	22	14	15	2	69	29
The upper class	49	15	20	16	0	64	36

III. LANGUAGE-LEARNING METHODS



1. Most important languages for personal development

This section examines Europeans' attitudes towards those languages they believe are most useful, firstly for their own personal development, and then for children to learn for their future.

Most Europeans think that English is the most useful language for their personal development.

Respondents were asked to name the two languages, apart from their mother tongue, that they believed to be the most useful for their personal development²².

English is much more likely to be considered useful for personal development than any other language (77%, +1 percentage point compared to 2012)²³.

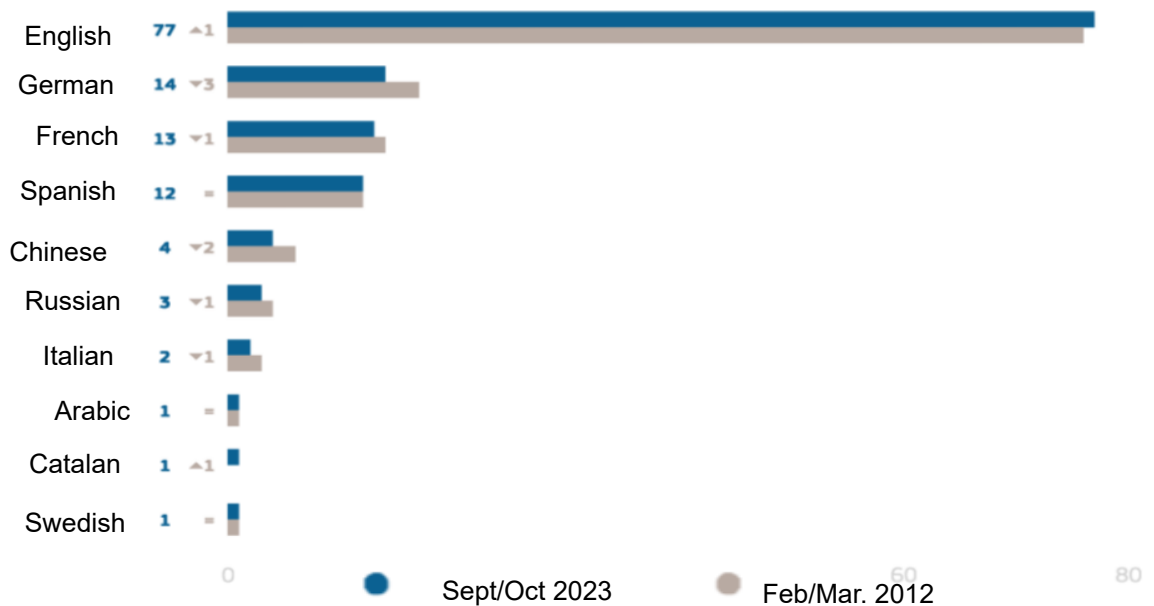
Less than one in five Europeans mention German (14%, -3), French (13%, -1), Spanish (12%, =); followed by Chinese (4%, -2), Russian (3%, -1), and Italian (2%, -1).

No other language is mentioned by more than 1% of respondents²⁴.

At the national level, almost all respondents in the Netherlands (96%), Sweden (95%), Denmark, Malta, and Finland (all 91%) think that English is the most useful language for personal development apart from their mother tongue. Countries where respondents are least likely to mention English as most useful are, with the exception of Ireland (17%) where it is the national language, Hungary (61%), Bulgaria (57%), and Luxembourg (46%).

The view that German is one of the most useful languages for personal development is mostly widespread in Slovenia (49%), Denmark (43%), and Croatia (39%). It is the least widely held view in Portugal (1%), Malta (3%), and Belgium (5%).

QB1a. Thinking about languages other than your mother tongue, which two languages do you think are the most useful for your personal development? (DO NOT SHOW SCREEN — DO NOT READ OUT — MAX. 2 ANSWERS) (EU27) (%)



Base: 22671 (Respondents who have indicated a language other than their mother tongue as most useful for personal development)

22 QB1a. Thinking about languages other than your mother tongue, which two languages do you think are the most useful for your personal development?

23 No comparison is made with the previous report since the original question was revised to highlight languages other than the mother tongue.

24 Results for languages showing small proportions should be interpreted with caution given the small sample size.

QB1a. Thinking about languages other than your mother tongue, which two languages do you think are the most useful for your personal development? (DO NOT SHOW SCREEN – DO NOT READ OUT – MAX. 2 ANSWERS)

Base: 22671 (Respondents who have indicated a language other than their mother tongue as most useful for personal development)

	EU27	AT	BE	BG	CZ	DK	D0W	DE	D0E	EE	IE	EL	ES	FI	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK
English	77	67	79	57	67	91	83	81	73	76	17	78	76	91	79	76	76	90	78	65	46	61	91	96	73	65	62	95	82	69
German	14	6	5	14	30	43	11	9	3	11	15	23	8	18	8	39	8	11	19	15	34	27	3	38	21	1	11	20	49	35
French	13	11	40	5	5	7	22	20	13	4	26	9	16	6	5	5	14	11	5	5	62	4	3	11	5	20	13	10	1	5
Spanish	12	5	9	5	4	14	12	11	7	7	28	4	13	9	28	1	12	3	4	4	3	2	5	21	4	10	4	13	4	3
Chinese	4	2	4	1	1	2	3	3	2	3	4	3	7	2	5	0	11	1	1	0	0	1	1	5	1	1	2	2	1	1
Russian	3	2	0	10	7	0	2	3	6	32	1	3	0	6	0	1	3	19	38	40	0	2	0	0	3	0	1	0	2	7
Italian	2	9	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	4	1	1	3	8	4	1	1	1	2	3	50	1	1	0	2	2	11	1
Arabic	1	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	0	0
Catalan	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dutch	1	1	17	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
Japanese	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Polish	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	5	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
Swedish	1	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	36	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	5	0	0
Estonian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

Member States with the greatest likelihood of respondents believing French is an important language for their personal development - apart from Luxembourg (62%) and Belgium (40%), where it is an official language - are Ireland (26%), Germany, Portugal (both 20%), and Spain (16%). It is least likely to be perceived as useful in Slovenia (1%), Malta (3%), and Estonia and Hungary (both 4%).

Respondents in Ireland, France (both 28%) and the Netherlands (21%) are more likely than those in any other Member State to believe Spanish is an important language for personal development, with respondents in Croatia (1%), Hungary (2%), and Cyprus, Luxembourg, and Slovakia (all 3%), least likely to think so.

Chinese is perceived as one of the most useful languages for personal development mostly in Italy (11%), Spain (7%), France and the Netherlands (both 5%).

The View that Russian is one of the most useful languages for personal development is most widespread in Lithuania (40%), Latvia (38%), and Estonia (32%).

Respondents are most likely to think Italian is one of the most useful languages for personal development in its close geographical neighbour Malta (50%), followed by Slovenia (11%), Austria (9%) and Croatia (8%).

- Men are slightly more likely than women (78% vs 76%) to think that English is one of the most useful languages for personal development
- Younger people, particularly 15-24-year-olds when compared with those aged 55+, are more likely to mention English (90% vs 66%) and Spanish (17% vs 10%) as most useful languages for personal development.
- Those who finished their full-time education aged 20+, particularly when compared with those finishing at 15 or below, are more likely to mention English (86% vs 50%), German (17% vs 8%), Spanish (16% vs 7%), and French (14% vs 11%).
- Students are more likely than any other group to mention English (92% compared with 62% among retirees). Spanish is mentioned most by students (18%) and managers (17%) compared to for instance manual workers (10%) and retirees (9%). Managers and other white-collar workers are more likely than any other group to mention German (17% and 18% compared with 12% among house persons).
- Respondents who have never trouble paying their bills are far more likely to think English is useful for self-development than those who face such issues most of the time (80% vs 64%).

- Respondents who place themselves high on the social ladder, particularly those who consider themselves as part of the upper class compared with those in the working class, are more likely to mention English (88% vs 63%), German (19% vs 11%), and French (17% vs 10% respectively). The difference is less pronounced inactive.²⁵ They are notably more likely to mention English (89% vs 72%), German (17% vs 13%), and French (15% vs 12%) as useful for personal development.

QB1a Thinking about languages other than your mother tongue, which two languages do you think are the most useful for your personal development? (DO NOT SHOW SCREEN - DO NOT READ OUT - MAX. 2 ANSWERS)

	Chinese	English	French	German	Italian	Russian	Spanish
EU27	4	77	13	14	2	3	12
Gender							
Man	5	78	12	15	2	2	12
Woman	4	76	13	13	3	3	13
Age							
15-24	6	90	14	14	2	2	17
25-39	5	84	13	16	3	2	14
40-54	5	80	11	15	3	3	12
55 +	3	66	13	12	2	3	10
Education (End of)							
15-	2	50	11	8	2	2	7
16-19	3	73	11	13	2	3	10
20+	5	86	14	17	3	3	16
Still studying	8	92	16	14	2	2	18
Socio-professional category							
Self-employed	3	78	11	14	4	3	15
Managers	6	89	14	17	3	2	17
Other white collars	4	83	12	18	2	2	14
Manual workers	4	75	12	13	3	3	10
House persons	3	66	9	12	2	1	10
Unemployed	6	72	12	13	1	3	12
Retired	2	62	12	11	2	3	9
Students	8	92	16	14	2	2	18
Difficulties paying bills							
Most of the time	3	64	12	12	3	4	10
From time to time	5	72	12	12	2	3	11
Almost never/ Never	4	80	13	15	2	3	13
Consider belonging to							
The working class	3	63	10	11	2	3	10
The lower middle class	5	74	11	12	2	3	11
The middle class	4	81	14	15	2	3	13
The upper middle class	6	89	15	18	4	2	17
The upper class	1	88	17	10	6	2	13
Activity as language learner							
Very active	7	89	15	17	3	3	17
Active	5	81	13	14	3	3	15
Not active	3	72	12	13	2	2	11

regarding Spanish (13% vs 10%).

The other groups with a greater tendency to mention the usefulness of these languages include very active language learners, particularly when compared with the

²⁵ Very active language learners are those respondents who have started or continued to learn a new language in the past 2 years, as opposed to Active learners, who instead have not learned a new language recently but intend to do so, and Not active learners, namely those respondents who have never learned any language other than their mother tongue and do not intend to do so in the coming year.

2. Most important languages for children development

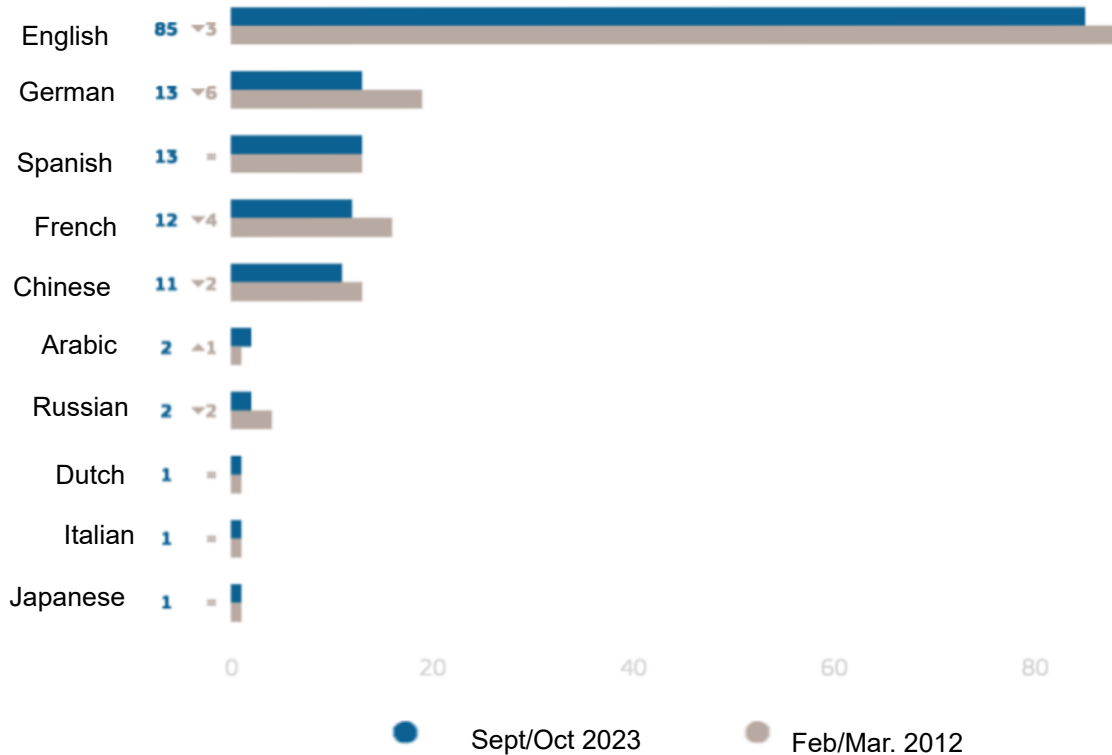
Most Europeans think that English is the most useful language for children to learn.

Respondents were also asked to name the two languages apart from their mother tongue that they believed to be the

Overall, almost all Europeans think that learning a language is important for a child's future, with 5% (+3) saying they don't think any languages are useful.

At the national level, more than nine in ten respondents in the Netherlands, Sweden (both 96%), Greece, Finland (both 94%), and Slovenia (93%) think that English is one

QB1b. And for children to learn for their future? (DO NOT SHOW SCREEN - DO NOT READ OUT - MAX. 2 ANSWERS) (EU27) (%)



Base: 25639 (Respondents who have indicated a language other than their mother tongue as most useful for their children to learn)

most useful for children to learn for their future²⁶.

English is, again, perceived to be the most useful language. More than three quarters (85%, -3 percentage points compared to 2012) of Europeans think is the most useful language for children to learn, substantially more than the proportion believing it is important for their personal development (77%).

Around one in six Europeans mention German (13%, -6) as the most useful languages for children to learn, along with Spanish (13%, =), French (12%, -4), and Chinese (11%, -2). Apart from Arabic and Russian (both 2%, +1 and -2 respectively), no other language is mentioned by more than 1% of respondents.²⁷

of the two most useful languages for children to learn for their future.

Countries where respondents are least likely to mention English as useful are Luxembourg (73%), Romania (74%) and Austria (79%). Ireland forms a special exception (13%), where English is the national language and where respondents indicating English come from other linguistic communities than the English-speaking one.

Countries where the view that German is a useful language for children to learn is most widespread, include Slovenia (55%), Slovakia (45%), and Greece (40%). Respondents are least likely to think this in Malta (1%), Belgium and Portugal (both 4%), and Italy (6%). Germany (6%) and Austria (3%) represent an exception since German is the official language of these countries. Respondents indicating German in these countries come from other linguistic communities than the German-speaking one.

26 QB1b. And for children to learn for their future? (DO NOT SHOW SCREEN — DO NOT READ OUT — MAX. 2 ANSWERS).

27 Results for languages showing small proportions should be interpreted with caution given the small sample size.

Spanish is most likely to be seen as useful languages for the future of children in Ireland (35%), the Netherlands (29%), Sweden (24%), and France (23%), with the lowest scores in this regard observed in Croatia (2%), Hungary (3%), and Romania, Poland, Malta, Lithuania, and Cyprus (all 4%). The 4% of respondents in Spain who perceive Spanish as one of the most useful languages for their children to learn come from other linguistic communities than the Spanish-speaking one.

- Younger people, particularly 15-24-year-olds when compared with those aged 55+, are slightly more likely to mention English (87% vs 85%), Spanish (15% vs 13%) and Chinese (11% vs 9%) as most useful languages for children to learn for their future, but not French (11% vs 14%).
- Those who finished their full-time education aged 20+, particularly when compared with those finishing at 15 or

QB1b. And for children to learn for their future? (DO NOT SHOW SCREEN – DO NOT READ OUT – MAX. 2 ANSWERS)

Base: 25639 (Respondents who have indicated a language other than their mother tongue as most useful for their children to learn)

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	D0W	DE	D0E	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
English	85	85	81	89	90	87	88	90	86	13	94	87	86	88	82	91	90	91	73	84	91	96	79	83	89	74	93	89	94	96
German	13	4	20	31	30	6	6	3	12	22	40	9	10	38	6	12	27	23	19	35	1	19	3	19	4	18	55	45	20	10
Spanish	13	9	7	5	18	16	15	10	8	35	5	4	23	2	12	4	6	4	5	3	4	29	9	4	9	4	5	7	12	24
French	12	34	5	9	6	22	21	15	6	31	13	16	2	5	10	16	11	8	38	4	5	7	14	4	28	24	5	9	9	6
Chinese	11	9	2	3	15	7	6	6	6	10	13	18	17	2	17	4	3	3	7	2	2	15	3	1	6	2	5	4	5	12
Arabic	2	3	0	0	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	1	4	0	4	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	5
Russian	2	1	7	5	0	2	2	5	21	1	3	0	1	0	4	17	25	18	0	3	0	0	3	1	0	1	2	9	4	0
Dutch	1	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Italian	1	0	3	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	3	0	2	5	1	1	1	2	1	1	30	0	9	1	0	2	9	1	0	0
Swedish	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	3
Estonian	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Member States with the greatest likelihood of respondents believing French is an important language for children to learn for their future are Ireland (31%), Portugal (28%), Romania (24%), and Germany (21%). It is the least likely to be seen as a useful language in Hungary and Poland (4%), Bulgaria, Croatia, Slovenia, and Malta (all 5%). Luxembourg (38%), Belgium (34%) are to be seen as an exception since French is one of the official languages in these countries. In France (2%), respondents indicating French come from other linguistic communities than the French-speaking one.

Respondents are most likely to see Chinese as a useful language for children to learn in Spain (18%), France and Italy (both 17%), and the Netherlands and Denmark (15%).

Italian receives high scores in Malta (30%) and Austria (9%).

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

- Women are slightly more likely than men (14% vs 12%) to think that Spanish is one of the most useful languages for children to learn for their future.

below, are more likely to mention English (88% vs 81%), German (14% vs 10%), Spanish (16% vs 7%), Chinese (15% vs 5%), and less likely to mention French (11% vs 17%).

- Students, managers, other white-collar workers, self-employed and unemployed are more likely to mention English (87% compared with 81% among house persons). Managers are also the most likely (15%) to mention Chinese, compared with 7% among house persons).
- Respondents who never have trouble paying their bills are far more likely to think English is useful for children to learn for their future than those who face such issues most of the time (88% vs 82%) as well as Spanish (14% vs 9%), and Chinese (11% vs 9%).

Respondents who see themselves as part of the upper middle class compared with those in the working class, are, for children, more likely to mention English (87% vs 83%), Spanish (18% vs 8%), and Chinese (17% vs 8%).

The other groups with a greater tendency to mention the usefulness of these languages include very active language learners, particularly when compared with the inactive. They are notably more likely to mention English

(88% vs 85%), Chinese (15% vs 9%) and Spanish (17% vs. 11%) as useful languages for children to learn for their future²⁸.

QB1b And for children to learn for their future? (DO NOT SHOW SCREEN - DO NOT READ OUT - MAX. 2 ANSWERS) (% - EU)

	Chinese	English	French	German	Italian	Russian	Spanish
EU27	11	85	12	13	1	2	13
Gender							
Man	12	86	12	14	1	2	12
Woman	9	85	12	13	1	2	14
Age							
15-24	11	87	11	14	2	2	15
25-39	11	86	11	14	2	2	12
40-54	12	86	12	14	1	2	12
55 +	9	85	14	12	1	2	13
Education (End of)							
15-	5	81	17	10	1	2	7
16-19	8	85	12	13	2	3	12
20+	15	88	11	14	1	2	16
Still studying	13	87	12	13	1	2	15
Socio-professional category							
Self-employed	11	87	11	13	1	3	14
Managers	15	87	12	13	1	2	16
Other white collars	12	87	11	15	2	2	13
Manual workers	9	84	13	13	1	3	10
House persons	7	81	12	14	2	2	9
Unemployed	14	87	9	14	1	2	9
Retired	8	84	14	12	1	2	13
Students	13	87	12	13	1	2	15
Difficulties paying bills							
Most of the time	9	82	13	12	2	3	9
From time to time	10	81	11	14	1	3	11
Almost never/ Never	11	88	13	13	1	2	14
Consider belonging to							
The working class	8	83	13	13	2	2	8
The lower middle class	11	83	10	13	1	4	12
The middle class	11	87	13	14	1	2	14
The upper middle class	17	87	12	12	2	2	18
The upper class	8	85	12	17	2	0	18
Activity as language learner							
Very active	15	88	11	14	1	3	17
Active	14	82	12	14	2	3	12
Not active	9	85	13	13	1	2	11

²⁸ Very active language learners are those respondents who have started or continued to learn a new language in the past 2 years, as opposed to Active learners, who instead have not learned a new language recently but intend to do so, and Not active learners, namely those respondents who have never learned any language other than their mother tongue and do not intend to do so in the coming year.

3. Benefits of learning a new language

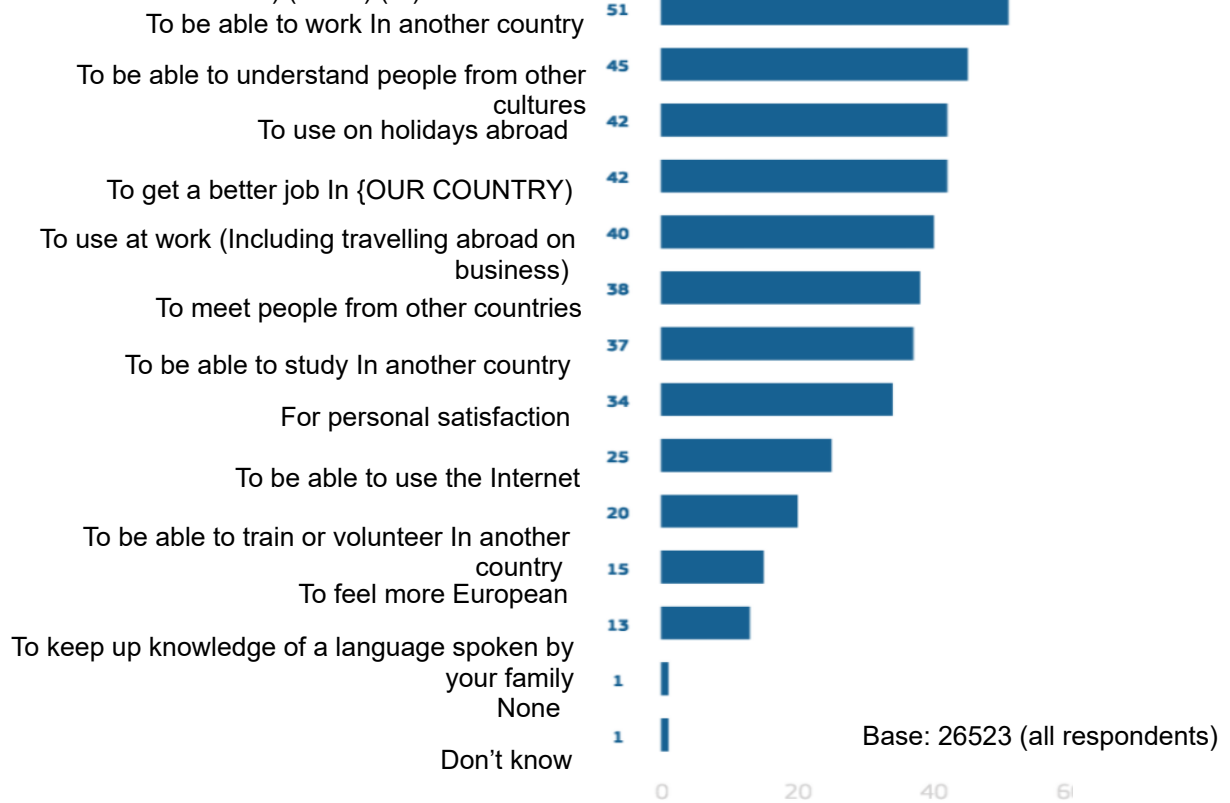
Most Europeans think that a key advantage of learning a new language is the ability to work in another country.

Respondents were presented with a list of possible advantages of learning a new language and asked what they felt the main advantages of learning a new language were. If respondents mentioned more than one advantage, each one they mentioned was recorded²⁹.

Around four in ten (42%) mention getting a better job in their country, using it on holidays abroad (42%), using it at work (including travelling abroad on business (40%), and meeting people from other countries (38%) as advantages of learning a new language.

A little over a third of respondents think that learning a new language would help them to be able to study in another country (37%), or for personal satisfaction (34%).

QB2. In your opinion, what are the main advantages of learning a new language ...? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (EU27) (%)



● Sept / Oct. 2023

Europeans are most likely to think that a key advantage of learning a new language is that it enables working in another country, with half of respondents (51%) holding this view, which combined with the newly introduced option of being able to train or volunteer in another country (20%), makes it a very important motivation to learn languages. This is followed by 45% who cite being able to understand people from other cultures³⁰.

One in four respondents believe being able to use the Internet (25%) are benefits of learning a language, while one in five (20%) cite being able to train or volunteer in another country.

Smaller proportions cite feeling more European (15%) and maintaining knowledge of a language spoken within the family (13%) as key advantages of learning a new language.

²⁹ QB2. "In your opinion, what are the main advantages of learning a new language?"

³⁰ Comparison with the results of the previous wave is maintained for the sake of completeness. However, the substantial deviations of the current results from the results observed in the previous wave need to be interpreted with caution, for the question now includes new answer options that were not part of the question formulation in 2012.

At the national level, in 17 Member States at least half of the respondents cite working in another country as an advantage of learning a new language, with the highest scores seen in Greece (84%), Lithuania (75%), Slovakia (67%), and Portugal (64%). Respondents are least likely to say this in the Netherlands (33%), Belgium (39%), and Malta (40%).

Enabling an understanding of people from other cultures is most widely mentioned as a reason for learning one in Sweden (69%), and Denmark (67%). It is the most commonly cited advantage in these countries along with Malta (63%), the Netherlands (57%), Austria (54%), Luxembourg (53%), and Germany (48%). Respondents in Romania (27%), Poland (31%), and Cyprus (36%) are least likely to think this.

Sweden (30%) are least likely to think that this is a key benefit of learning a new language.

Use on holidays abroad is the most cited reason for learning an additional language in France (48%), with the overall highest scores seen in Malta (61%), Slovakia (59%), and Austria (58%), and the lowest in Croatia (28%) and Bulgaria, Poland, and Spain (31% all).

No other advantage is the most commonly quoted in any EU country. However, for some of these advantages they are still perceived to be key benefits to learning a new language by the majority of respondents in some Member States.

Use at work is a view held by the majority in two Member States: Finland (60%) and Greece (58%). Respondents in Romania (23%) are least likely to think this is an

QB2. In your opinion, what are the main advantages of learning a new language?(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)
(%)

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	D0W	DE	D0E	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
To be able to work in another country	51	39	51	60	55	45	45	45	56	58	84	61	48	49	51	48	60	75	47	58	40	33	49	50	64	45	58	67	60	50
To be able to understand people from other cultures	45	42	41	50	67	48	48	48	52	44	64	49	45	48	40	36	41	55	53	39	63	57	54	31	44	27	53	54	54	69
To use on holidays abroad	42	41	31	44	48	44	46	55	51	42	62	31	48	28	40	39	41	57	45	40	61	46	58	31	34	34	49	59	45	39
To get a better job in (OUR COUNTRY)	42	46	43	29	32	40	38	33	51	37	82	58	29	36	47	55	47	60	50	49	31	24	45	41	46	36	46	54	44	30
To use at work (including travelling abroad on business)	40	41	31	43	44	42	42	41	45	37	58	41	38	27	40	42	41	48	45	45	36	50	48	27	26	23	45	43	60	53
To meet people from other countries	38	35	38	35	54	41	42	43	42	38	64	37	40	37	31	27	44	54	47	29	53	38	42	32	44	27	42	50	40	49
To be able to study in another country	37	30	30	46	38	37	37	36	45	39	73	41	34	25	32	34	50	61	40	39	22	27	35	32	45	29	44	56	48	41
For personal satisfaction	34	36	34	30	35	32	30	23	32	33	40	40	31	31	39	40	34	39	43	28	57	27	29	35	30	32	43	30	29	44
To be able to use the Internet	25	24	30	25	31	23	26	38	41	18	49	18	19	35	22	39	30	47	22	27	46	26	37	20	24	30	44	29	32	28
To be able to train or volunteer in another country	20	20	8	13	31	23	24	29	34	23	26	20	17	18	16	7	26	41	23	25	14	24	32	14	12	16	26	17	25	22
To feel more European	15	10	21	11	16	17	16	10	19	20	26	11	9	19	19	11	23	42	21	23	36	8	21	22	11	18	19	24	8	11
To keep up knowledge of a language spoken by your family	13	17	8	7	15	15	14	10	11	21	15	13	14	7	14	9	15	26	27	15	19	11	22	12	7	11	14	10	6	20
None	1	1	3	2	0	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	2	4	2	3	0	1	0	2	1	1	3	1	5	2	1	0	0	0
Don't know	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

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Base: 26523 (all respondents)

Improving job prospects in the home country is most likely to be mentioned by respondents in Greece (82%), followed by those in Lithuania (60%), Spain (58%), and Slovakia (54%). It is the most cited reason in Cyprus (55%) and Belgium (46%). Respondents in the Netherlands (24%), France and Czechia (both 29%), and

advantage of learning a new language.

Meeting people from other countries is a view held by the majority in four Member States: Greece (64%), Denmark and Lithuania (both 54%), and Malta (53%). It is the least widely held opinion in Romania (27%).

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Being able to study in another country is cited mostly in Greece (73%), Lithuania (61%), and Slovakia (56%), and least mentioned in Malta (22%) and Croatia (25%).

Personal satisfaction is most likely to be mentioned by respondents in Malta (57%), and least likely to be mentioned by those in the Netherlands (27%) and Hungary (28%).

For those advantages where only a minority of respondents in every Member State think they are important benefits of learning a new language, enabling internet use is most likely to be mentioned in Greece (49%), and least likely to be a view held in Poland (20%); being able to train or volunteer in another country is most widely cited in Lithuania (41%), with the least mentions in Cyprus (7%), feeling more European scores the most in Lithuania (42%) and the Netherlands (8%), keeping up

most widely cited in Lithuania (26%), with least mentions in Finland (6%).

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

- Men are slightly more likely than women to cite using the language at work, for instance for travelling abroad on business (41% vs 38%).
- The younger demographics score higher overall on all the cited advantages of learning a new language. For instance, those aged 15-24 compared to those aged 55 and up are more likely to cite being able to work in another country (58% vs 47%) or meeting people from other countries (45% vs 35%).

QB2 In your opinion, what are the main advantages of learning a new language?(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)(% - EU)

	To use on holidays abroad	To use at work (including travelling abroad on business)	To be able to study in another country	To be able to work in another country	To be able to train or volunteer in another country	To get a better job in (OUR COUNTRY)	For personal satisfaction	To keep up knowledge of a language spoken by your family	To meet people from other countries	To be able to understand people from other cultures	To feel more European	To be able to use the Internet	Other	None	Don't know	
EU27	42	40	37	51	20	42	34	13	38	45	15	25	0	1	1	
Gender																
Man	42	41	36	52	19	41	33	13	39	46	16	26	0	2	1	
Woman	42	38	38	51	20	42	34	14	37	45	15	23	0	1	1	
Age																
15-24	47	44	51	58	26	46	34	17	45	51	15	30	0	0	0	
25-39	42	44	38	54	20	43	34	14	40	49	16	29	0	1	0	
40-54	43	41	34	52	20	44	36	14	39	44	15	23	0	1	1	
55 +	40	35	33	47	17	39	32	12	35	42	15	22	0	3	2	
Education (End of)																
15-	33	31	33	51	16	44	29	11	30	36	12	19	0	5	3	
16-19	42	36	32	49	18	41	32	12	35	40	15	24	0	1	1	
20+	46	47	40	53	21	42	37	15	43	53	16	26	0	0	0	
Still studying	45	47	54	57	28	45	35	17	47	56	16	31	0	0	0	
Socio-professional category																
Self-employed	39	46	34	55	18	41	33	11	39	45	16	24	0	1	0	
Managers	47	49	39	53	24	42	38	15	43	55	18	25	0	0	0	
Other white collars	46	42	35	51	19	46	37	13	40	48	18	25	0	1	0	
Manual workers	40	36	35	51	19	43	32	14	37	41	14	25	0	2	1	
House persons	34	30	33	48	17	42	33	14	31	37	14	26	0	3	3	
Unemployed	39	37	32	49	15	44	34	13	37	42	12	26	0	3	2	
Retired	40	34	34	48	17	37	31	12	34	41	15	21	0	3	2	
Students	45	47	54	57	28	45	35	17	47	56	16	31	0	0	0	
Difficulties paying bills																
Most of the time	35	37	36	55	17	45	30	14	37	41	14	23	0	4	1	
From time to time	39	36	33	50	18	43	33	14	37	41	16	25	0	2	1	
Almost never/ Never	44	42	38	51	21	41	35	13	39	48	15	25	0	1	1	
Consider belonging to																
The working class	38	35	35	53	18	45	32	13	36	41	14	23	0	3	2	
The lower middle class	38	35	35	47	16	39	31	13	38	41	13	23	0	2	1	
The middle class	44	42	37	51	21	42	35	14	39	47	16	26	0	1	1	
The upper middle class	46	52	41	53	25	40	34	15	41	54	19	26	0	0	0	
The upper class	48	44	43	49	19	37	35	13	37	47	12	29	0	0	0	

knowledge of a language spoken by the family is also

- Those who finished their full-time education aged 20+, when compared with those finishing at 15 or below, also score higher overall on all the cited advantages to learning a new language, such as being able to understand people from other cultures (53% vs 36%) or feeling more European (16% vs 12%).
- The students are most likely (57%) to cite being able to work in another country, especially when compared to manual workers and white collars (both 51%) but also house persons (48%). Managers are more likely (55%) to cite being able to understand people from other cultures, compared to the self-employed (45%) and house persons (37%). Students, more than any other occupational group, thinking advantages are the ability to study in another country (54%), particularly when compared with retirees (34%), house persons (33%), and the unemployed (32%).

Those who 'almost never' have difficulties paying bills, particularly when compared with those who struggle most of the time, think the advantage is using it on holidays abroad (44% vs. 35%).

Respondents who see themselves as belonging to the upper- middle class are the most likely (54%) to mention being able to understand people from other cultures as a reason for learning an additional language, especially compared to those in the working or lower-middle class (both 41%). Conversely, those pertaining to the working class are substantially more likely (45%) to cite getting a better job in their country compared to those of the lower-middle class (39%) or the upper class (37%).

Active language learners, and particularly those who are very active, are more likely than the inactive to mention all reasons as advantages to learning a new language. Those advantages where there is the greatest relative difference between the proportions of active learners and the inactive holding the view are: the ability to study in another country (46% vs. 35% respectively); using it at work (49% vs. 37%); meeting people from other countries (45% vs. 36%); understanding people from other cultures (57% vs. 42%); personal satisfaction (40% vs. 32%); using the internet (29% vs. 24%); keeping up knowledge of a family language (17% vs. 12%)³¹.

One in four Europeans are currently learning a language or intend to start in the coming year.

Respondents were also asked about their attitude towards learning a new language³².

31 Very active language learners are those respondents who have started or continued to learn a new language in the past 2 years, as opposed to Active learners, who instead have not learned a new language recently but intend to do so, and Not active learners, namely those respondents who have never learned any language other than their mother tongue and do not intend to do so in the coming year.

32 QB3. Which of the following situations apply to you?

Nearly half (48%, +3) of the respondents say they have not learned a language recently, and do not intend to start in the coming year. One in five (21%, =) say they have never learned any language other than their mother tongue. Around one in seven (14%, -1) have continued to learn a language in the last 2 years, while close to one in ten (9%, +1) have not learned a language recently, but intend to start in the coming year. A minority (6%, =) have started to learn a new language in the last 2 years.

At the national level we see that in 15 countries, more than half of the respondents say they have not learned a language recently, and do not intend to start in the coming year, with the highest scores seen in Malta (69%), Lithuania (66%), and Denmark (60%). They are least likely to say this in Cyprus and Ireland (both 32%), Luxembourg and Spain (both 38%), and Romania (40%).

Respondents are most likely to say they have never learned any language other than their mother tongue in Romania (40%), Ireland (38%), and Portugal (33%), with the lowest scores in this regard observed in Sweden (2%), Denmark, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (3% all), and Slovenia (4%).

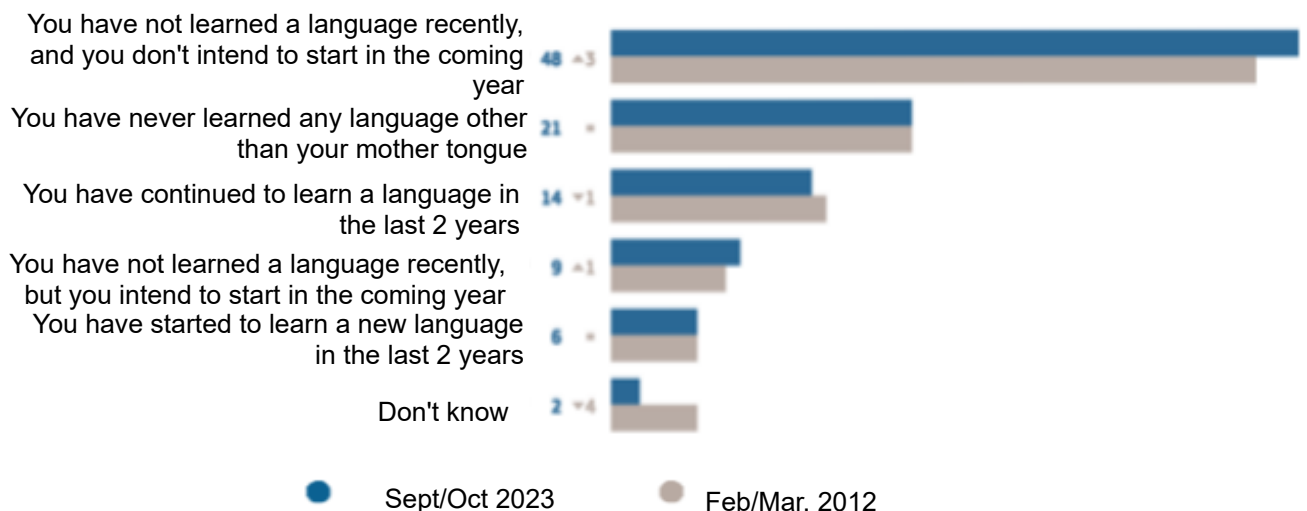
Close to three in ten (29%) in Cyprus say they have continued to learn a language in the last 2 years, followed by Finland (24%), and Sweden (22%). They are least likely to say so in Malta (7%), Portugal and Greece (both 8%), and Croatia (10%). Respondents are most likely to say they have not learned a language recently but intend to start in the coming year in Luxembourg (21%), Poland and Estonia (both 15%), and Hungary, Austria, and Belgium (13% all). They are least likely to say this in Greece (5%), Spain (6%), and Bulgaria, Ireland, France, Lithuania, and Romania (7% all).

The highest likelihood of respondents saying they have started to learn a new language in the last 2 years is found in Luxembourg (17%), followed by the Netherlands (14%), Belgium (13%), Sweden (11%), and Latvia (10%), with all the other Member States scoring less than one in ten in this regard.

Comparing 2012 to 2023, we see some interesting shifts at the country level. In 16 Member States, respondents are more likely to say they have not learned a language

recently and don't intend to start in the coming year, with the biggest increases seen in Portugal (49%, +15), Lithuania (66%, +11), and Spain (38%, +10). Among the nine countries where these proportions have decreased, the most notable are Cyprus (32%, -26), Ireland (32%, -15), and Luxembourg (66%, -11). Among the most notable increases of respondents saying they have never learned any language other than their mother tongue are Romania (40%, +28), Ireland (38%, +11), and Poland (18%, +11), with considerable drops registered in Portugal (33%, -15) and Spain (30%, -11). In five countries, respondents are more likely to say they have continued to learn a language in the last 2 years; the most notable are: Cyprus (29%, +15), Spain (19%, +7), with substantial decreases in Romania (7%, -8), Latvia (16%, -8), Lithuania (14%, -5), and Poland (13%, -5). A substantial increase in the proportion of respondents saying they have not learned a language recently but intend to start in the coming year are found in Poland (15%, +7) and Italy (13%, +5). Respondents are more likely to say they have started to learn a new language in the last 2 years in the Netherlands (14%, +7), Belgium (13%, +4), Sweden (11%, +4), Malta (6%, +3), Ireland (8%, +2), and Greece (3%, +1).

QB3. Which of the following situations apply to you ? (EU27) (%)



Base: 26523 (all respondents)

QB3. Which of the following situations apply to you?

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	D-W	DE	D-E	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
You have started to learn a new language in the last 2 years	6	13	3	8	9	9	7	3	7	8	3	6	7	4	3	7	10	4	17	3	6	14	6	3	3	3	8	3	7	11
You have continued to learn a language in the last 2 years	14	15	11	13	15	12	12	12	18	11	8	19	14	10	13	29	16	14	19	11	7	16	14	13	8	7	16	19	24	22
You have not learned a language recently, but you intend to start in the coming year	9	13	7	8	12	9	8	5	15	7	5	6	7	12	13	9	11	7	21	13	8	11	13	15	5	7	12	9	10	9
You have not learned a language recently, and you don't intend to start in the coming year	48	45	53	56	60	49	51	57	52	32	59	38	50	58	41	32	54	66	38	45	69	53	45	50	49	40	59	58	51	54
You have never learned any language other than your mother tongue	21	11	23	14	3	20	20	20	6	38	24	30	18	13	29	16	7	7	3	26	7	3	21	18	33	40	4	10	5	2
Don't know	2	3	3	1	1	1	2	3	2	4	1	1	4	3	1	7	2	2	2	2	3	3	1	1	2	3	1	1	3	2

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

- Women are slightly more likely than men (23% vs 20%) to say they have never learned any language other than your mother tongue.
- Older respondents are much more averse to learning languages than young ones. For instance, half (50%) of those aged 55 and up say they have not learned a language recently, and don't intend to start in the coming year, compared to 22% of those aged 15-24. The same is true for those who say they have never learned any language other than your mother tongue (35% vs 6%). Close to one in five (18%) of those aged 15-24 have started to learn a new language in the last 2 years compared to 2% of those aged 55 and up.
- More than half (54%) of those who stayed in school beyond the age of 20 are more likely say they have not learned a language recently, and don't intend to start in the coming year, compared to one in three (32%) of those who left school aged 15 or younger. Conversely, the better-educated group is seven times more likely to have started to learn a new language in the last 2 years than their less-educated peers (7% vs 1%).
- Other white-collar workers are the most likely (14%) to say they have not learned a language recently, but you intend to start in the coming year, compared to the self-employed (12%), manual workers and students (both 10%), the unemployed (8%), house persons (5%), and retirees (4%).
- Respondents who have trouble paying their bills most of the time are more likely (34%) to say they have never learned any language other than their mother tongue than those who never face such issues (18%).
- One in four (26%) among those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper class say they have continued to learn a language in the last 2 years, compared to 15% of those in the middle class, and 8% of those in the working class.

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QB3 Which of the following situations apply to you? (% - EU)

	You have started to learn a new language in the last 2 years	You have continued to learn a language in the last 2 years	You have not learned a language recently, but you intend to start in the coming year	You have not learned a language recently, and you don't intend to start in the coming year	You have never learned any language other than your mother tongue	Don't know
EU27	6	14	9	48	21	2
Gender						
Man	6	15	9	48	20	2
Woman	6	13	9	47	23	2
Age						
15-24	18	42	11	22	6	1
25-39	8	18	14	48	10	2
40-54	4	10	10	58	16	2
55 +	2	5	6	50	35	2
Education (End of)						
15-	1	2	3	32	60	2
16-19	3	6	9	56	24	2
20+	7	17	12	54	8	2
Still studying	22	49	10	16	2	1
Socio-professional category						
Self-employed	6	13	12	53	14	2
Managers	8	18	13	54	6	1
Other white collars	6	12	14	56	11	1
Manual workers	4	8	10	53	23	2
House persons	3	3	5	44	42	3
Unemployed	5	14	8	45	26	2
Retired	2	5	4	48	39	2
Students	22	49	10	16	2	1
Difficulties paying bills						
Most of the time	5	8	7	44	34	2
From time to time	6	11	11	44	26	2
Almost never/ Never	6	15	9	50	18	2
Consider belonging to						
The working class	4	8	5	45	36	2
The lower middle class	6	11	9	46	26	2
The middle class	6	15	11	50	16	2
The upper middle class	10	22	12	49	5	2
The upper class	6	26	10	50	8	0

4. Incentives for learning a new language

Respondents were presented with a list of reasons that might encourage someone to learn a language and asked what would make them significantly more likely to either learn a language or improve their existing skills in one. If respondents mentioned more than one reason each that they mentioned was recorded³³.

Europeans are most likely to think that free lessons are the best incentive to learning or improving language skills, followed by mobility prospects.

The most commonly cited reason that would make Europeans significantly more likely to learn or improve skills in a language is the provision of free lessons. More than a quarter of Europeans (27%, -2 percentage points compared to 2012) state that this would encourage them to do so. Close to a fifth of Europeans say that they would be encouraged if there was a prospect of travelling abroad at a later stage (18%, +2), or if they had the opportunity to learn it in a country where the language is spoken (18%, =).

Other common incentives cited by respondents are if they were paid for it (17%, -1), or if they could find a course which suited their schedule (17%, +1), if it would lead to a promotion/better career prospects (16%, -2) or if there was a prospect of working abroad at a later stage (16%, =).

A slightly smaller proportion mention their employer allowing time off work for lessons (13%, -2), the availability of good online apps or courses (11%, +1) or of good courses on offline media (e.g. television or the radio) (7%, =).

One in ten respondents (10%, -4) say that they do not want to learn or improve any language, and one in nine (12%, -1) respondents say, unprompted, that none of the reasons would significantly increase their likelihood of learning or improving language skills.

At the national level we see that countries where respondents are most likely to say free lessons would encourage them to learn a language or improve skills in one are Cyprus (44%), followed by Greece (42%), and Luxembourg (34%). Finland is the least likely of all EU Member States to hold such a view (13%).

The prospect of travelling abroad at a later stage is most likely to be mentioned as something that would motivate learning in Greece (30%), France (27%), and Slovakia (25%), and least likely to be a view held in Portugal and

Spain (both 12%), Cyprus (13%), and Malta and Germany (both 14%).

Respondents in Sweden (40%) are most likely to think learning a language in the country where it is spoken would encourage them, and those in Portugal (11%) the least likely.

33 QB6. "Which of the following, if any, would make you significantly more likely to learn a language, or improve your skills in it?"

QB6. Which of the following, if any, would make you significantly more likely to learn a language, or improve your skills in it? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (EU27) (%)



QB6. Which of the following, if any, would make you significantly more likely to learn a language, or improve your skills in it? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	D-W	DE	D-E	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
If lessons were free	27	27	27	31	29	31	30	26	29	33	42	21	23	27	31	44	31	32	34	19	23	22	22	26	19	27	26	24	13	20
If you had the opportunity to learn it in a country where the language is spoken	18	19	14	21	26	20	20	20	26	20	21	11	21	17	17	14	12	17	18	15	15	27	23	13	11	15	19	25	28	40
If there was a prospect of travelling abroad at a later stage	18	19	22	16	21	13	14	16	21	19	30	12	27	12	17	13	17	22	20	15	14	24	19	15	12	18	19	25	18	19
If you were paid for it	17	21	18	21	18	14	14	15	27	23	29	14	15	27	15	26	15	16	21	14	18	19	16	13	18	23	22	18	20	30
If you could find a course which suited your schedule	17	24	14	12	27	23	23	20	23	18	20	13	12	16	17	23	14	13	27	14	20	18	19	13	9	13	17	16	18	28
If it would lead to a promotion/ better career prospects	16	17	16	22	21	14	14	14	24	15	31	17	11	21	12	32	21	21	21	12	11	22	19	16	10	19	24	23	20	23
If there was a prospect of working abroad at a later stage	16	13	23	21	25	12	12	12	20	18	33	13	15	16	12	22	15	24	15	19	12	27	17	14	12	21	24	28	25	24
If your employer allowed you time off work for lessons	13	23	8	21	19	14	14	14	22	14	18	10	11	12	9	22	12	14	30	13	13	16	17	9	10	13	13	17	16	29
None	12	9	9	10	8	15	15	15	7	14	11	14	14	12	10	13	12	9	7	17	13	7	16	7	22	11	8	6	8	6
If good online apps or courses were available	11	14	8	8	14	15	15	14	13	14	14	7	9	12	11	17	10	13	15	10	14	15	13	11	6	9	11	9	14	17
You do not want to learn or improve any language	10	6	13	6	5	7	9	18	9	8	10	19	9	8	11	5	6	19	3	10	24	4	11	7	18	8	10	8	5	2
If good courses were available on offline media (e.g. television or the radio)	7	11	4	4	7	5	5	6	8	9	7	4	8	10	9	9	6	6	6	8	8	6	12	10	5	9	5	6	7	7
Don't know	2	1	3	3	4	1	1	1	4	2	1	2	4	1	2	0	4	1	2	3	2	1	3	6	4	2	0	2	4	1
Other	1	2	0	1	4	1	1	0	2	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1

Base: 26523 (all respondents)

Countries with the most widely held view that being paid for it would significantly increase the likelihood of learning or improving language skills are Sweden (30%), Greece (29%), and Estonia (27%). It is least likely to be seen as something that would encourage learning among respondents in Poland (13%) and Spain and Hungary (both 14%).

Finding a course that fits into the personal schedule is most likely to be mentioned as a motivating factor in Denmark and Luxembourg (27% in each), and least likely to be cited as such in Portugal (9%) and France and Czechia (both 12%). The belief that better career prospects would greatly improve the chances of learning is strongest in Cyprus (32%), Greece (31%), Slovenia (24%), and weakest in Portugal (10%).

The prospect of working abroad at a later date is most commonly cited as a reason that would encourage learning by respondents in Greece (33%), Slovakia (28%), and the Netherlands (27%). It receives the lowest

mentions in Italy, Portugal, and Malta (12% all) and Belgium and Spain (both 13%).

There is greater national variation on the views held on being given time off work by the employer, with respondents in Luxembourg most likely (30%), and those in Bulgaria (8%) least likely, to think this would significantly improve their likelihood of learning.

Availability of good courses either on the Internet, or on television or the radio are the two reasons that show least variation between countries. Respondents in Sweden (17%) are the most likely to think that good apps or internet courses would encourage learning, with those in Portugal (6%) the least likely.

Respondents in Austria (12%) and Belgium (11%) are most likely to cite good television or radio courses, with those in Bulgaria, Czechia, and Spain (4% all) the least likely.

Countries in which respondents appear particularly unmotivated to learn a language or improve existing skills are Malta (24%), and Lithuania and Spain (both 19%), where respectively close to one in four and one in five spontaneously say that they do not want to learn or improve any language. Comparing the results from 2012 to those of 2023 we see that in five Member States lessons being free are more prone to make respondents significantly more likely to learn a language, or improve their skills in it, most notably in Luxembourg (34%, +9) and Italy (31%, +6), with significant decreases seen Poland (26%, -14), Estonia (29%, -13), and Spain (21%, -13) among 18 countries where these proportions have dropped. In 11 countries the opportunity to learn it in a country where the language is spoken is increasingly cited, with the biggest increases seen in Greece (21%, +8) and Malta (15%, +6), with a substantial decrease registered in Luxembourg (18%, -12). Considerable rises are also registered with regard to the prospect of travelling abroad at a later stage in Greece (30%, +12), Italy (17%, +9), and Slovakia (25%, +8), being paid for it in Greece (29%, +9), Estonia (27%, +8), Portugal (18%, +5), and Sweden (30%, +5), and finding a course which suits their schedule in Cyprus (23%, +10), Estonia (23%, +7), and Belgium (24%, +5).

Regarding the remainder of the reasons, relatively small shifts have occurred between 2012 and 2023, yet a few things stand out. Better career prospects are increasingly mentioned in Greece (31%, +14) and Cyprus (32%, +8); with the same being said about the prospect of working abroad at a later stage; 33% (+10) and 22% (+9) respectively. Respondents are slightly more likely to say that if their employer allowing them time off work for lessons would make them significantly more likely to learn a language, or improve their skills in it time off work for lessons in Portugal (10%, +5), while the availability of good online apps or courses is increasingly mentioned in the Netherlands (15%, +6) and Germany (15%, +5).

Respondents are substantially more likely to say they do not want to learn or improve any language in Lithuania (19%, +12) and Estonia (9%, +6), with larger proportions of respondents saying that nothing would make them significantly more likely to learn a language, or improve their skills in it registered in Hungary (17%, +11), Austria (16%, +7), and Portugal (22%, +7).

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

Women are more likely than men they say they would learn a language or improve their skills in it if they were free (28% vs 24%).

Younger respondents particularly 15-24-year-olds when compared with those aged 55+, as would be expected with their whole lives ahead of them, are more likely to cite each reason as one that would significantly increase their

likelihood of learning or improving any language. For instance, the younger group would learn a language or improve their skills in it if there was the prospect of working abroad at a later stage (29% vs 7%), if it leads to better career prospects/promotion (23% vs 7%), if they were being paid for it (25% vs 10%), or if there were good apps or internet courses (17% vs. 7%).

Respondents who finished their full-time education aged 20+, particularly when compared with those finishing at 15 or below, are more likely to mention the availability of good internet courses (13% vs 4%), the opportunity to learn it in the country where the language is spoken (24% vs 7%), the employer allowing time off work for lessons (18% vs 5%), or finding a course that suits personal schedule (21% vs 7%).

Looking at socio-professional categories, students are more likely than any other group, and particularly when compared with retirees, to mention the availability of good apps or courses on the internet (19% vs 5%); if it improved career prospects (24% vs 5%); the opportunity to learn in the country where the language is spoken (33% vs 12%); if there was the prospect of travelling abroad (32% vs. 13%); and if there was the prospect of working abroad (30% vs. 6%). Students are the most likely (22%) to mention being paid for it, particularly when compared with managers (17%) and retirees (8%). Students (25%), along with managers (23%), are most likely to mention finding a course that suits their personal schedule, compared with 8% among retirees.

Those who have difficulties paying bills most of the time, particularly when compared with those who 'almost never' struggle, are, not surprisingly, more likely to say they would be encouraged to learn if they were paid for it (21% vs 15%) and if lessons were free (27% vs 24%).

Respondents who place themselves high on the social ladder, for instance those who see themselves as belonging to the upper class, are more likely (22%) to mention finding a course that suited personal schedule than those belonging to the working class (12%). The same is true as regards having the opportunity to learn in the country where the language is spoken (25% vs 12%), their employer giving them time off work to study (18% vs 10%) and the availability of good internet courses (15% vs 8%).

Unsurprisingly, active language learners, and particularly very active language learners when compared with those who are inactive, have a greater tendency to mention each of the reasons. The greatest relative differences are on mentions of having the opportunity to learn it in the country where the language is spoken (33% vs 13% respectively), the availability of good internet courses (18% vs 8%), the prospect of working abroad at a later stage (27% vs 12%), and the prospect of travelling abroad at a later stage (29% vs 14%).

QB6 Which of the following, if any, would make you significantly more likely to learn a language, or improve your skills in it? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (% - EU)

	If you were paid for it	If your employer allowed you time off work for lessons	If lessons were free	If good courses were available on offline media (e.g. television or the radio)	If good online apps or courses were available	If you could find a course which suited your schedule	If it would lead to a promotion\ better career prospects	If you had the opportunity to learn it in a country where the language is spoken	If there was a prospect of travelling abroad at a later stage	If there was a prospect of working abroad at a later stage	Other	You do not want to learn or improve any language	None	Don't know
EU27	17	13	27	7	11	17	16	18	18	16	1	10	12	2
Gender														
Man	18	13	24	7	11	16	18	19	19	17	1	9	12	2
Woman	15	12	28	7	12	17	14	18	17	14	1	11	12	3
Age														
15-24	25	15	35	11	17	22	23	32	31	29	1	2	4	2
25-39	21	20	31	8	16	22	22	21	20	21	1	4	5	2
40-54	19	17	29	7	12	19	20	17	17	18	1	6	8	2
55 +	10	6	20	6	7	11	7	14	14	7	1	18	20	3
Education (End of)														
15-	11	5	20	4	4	7	5	7	7	5	0	28	25	3
16-19	16	11	27	6	11	15	13	14	16	13	1	10	13	2
20+	18	18	25	8	13	21	21	24	22	20	1	4	8	2
Still studying	22	15	38	13	19	25	24	33	32	30	1	1	3	1
Socio-professional category														
Self- employed	16	8	26	6	12	21	17	22	19	18	1	6	8	2
Managers	17	22	24	8	15	23	25	24	20	21	0	3	7	1
Other white collars	21	22	32	7	15	21	23	20	20	22	1	3	5	2
Manual workers	20	16	28	7	11	18	16	15	16	15	1	8	9	3
House persons	15	6	27	5	8	11	8	9	11	9	1	21	17	3
Unemployed	21	9	34	5	8	12	14	16	17	15	1	13	11	1
Retired	8	3	19	6	5	8	5	12	13	6	1	20	24	4
Students	22	15	38	13	19	25	24	33	32	30	1	1	3	1
Difficulties paying bills														
Most of the time	21	13	27	5	8	13	14	14	16	16	0	14	13	2
From time to time	19	13	31	8	11	18	15	16	18	15	0	9	11	2
Almost never/ Never	15	13	24	7	12	17	16	20	18	16	1	10	12	3
Consider belonging to														
The working class	15	10	24	5	8	12	12	12	12	12	1	19	18	3
The lower middle class	19	11	29	6	10	14	14	16	17	14	1	10	12	2
The middle class	17	14	28	8	13	19	17	20	21	17	1	7	9	2
The upper middle class	16	18	23	9	16	20	20	31	21	23	1	2	9	1
The upper class	9	18	26	11	15	22	22	25	12	21	0	3	10	0
Activity as language learner														
Very active	19	19	33	11	18	25	23	33	29	27	1	1	3	1
Active	19	19	31	12	19	27	20	26	23	19	1	1	4	1
Not active	16	10	24	6	8	13	13	13	14	12	1	14	15	3

5. Obstacles to learning new languages

Respondents were asked about the different reasons that may discourage them from learning an additional language³⁴.

The most important obstacles for learning new languages are lack of motivation and lack of time.

Around four in ten (39%, +3 percentage points compared to 2012) respondents say they are not motivated enough to learn a new language. Close to three in ten (28%, =) say they don't have time to study properly, while one in four (25%, +4) say they are not good at languages. For one in five (20%, -6) respondents, learning a new language is too expensive, followed by 17% (+1) who say they don't have enough opportunities to use the language with people who speak it. One in ten (10%, +2) mention poor teaching\ boring methods\ inadequate learning materials (books, offline audio-visual materials, etc.), with smaller proportions of respondents saying they don't get enough exposure to the language in TV, radio, newspapers, etc. (7%, +2), it is hard to find information about what's available (5%, +1), the nearest place where they could learn the language is too far (5%, -1), there is no course available in the language you want to learn (5%, +2), there is no course available for your level of knowledge (5%, +1), they've had negative experiences in the past (5%, +3), or that the availability of online translation tools makes learning new languages unnecessary (5%). One in ten (10%, -5) cite none of the above. Availability of online translation tools was a new option in this Eurobarometer, since their availability has become generalised in the last few years, but it seems that it is not a significant reason for Europeans not to learn languages.

At the national level, we see that a lack of motivation is the most important reason in every Member State, except Cyprus, where the most cited reason is the lack of time. In four countries, more than half of the respondents say they are not motivated enough: Sweden (56%), Latvia (53%), Malta (52%), and Greece (51%). They are least likely to say this in Poland (27%), Cyprus (30%), and Bulgaria (31%).

Not having the time to study properly is the most cited reason in Cyprus (48%), with the same proportion of respondents mentioning this in Malta (48%), followed by Greece (41%), and Sweden (39%). Respondents are least likely to say this in Czechia (23%), and Lithuania and Romania (both 25%).

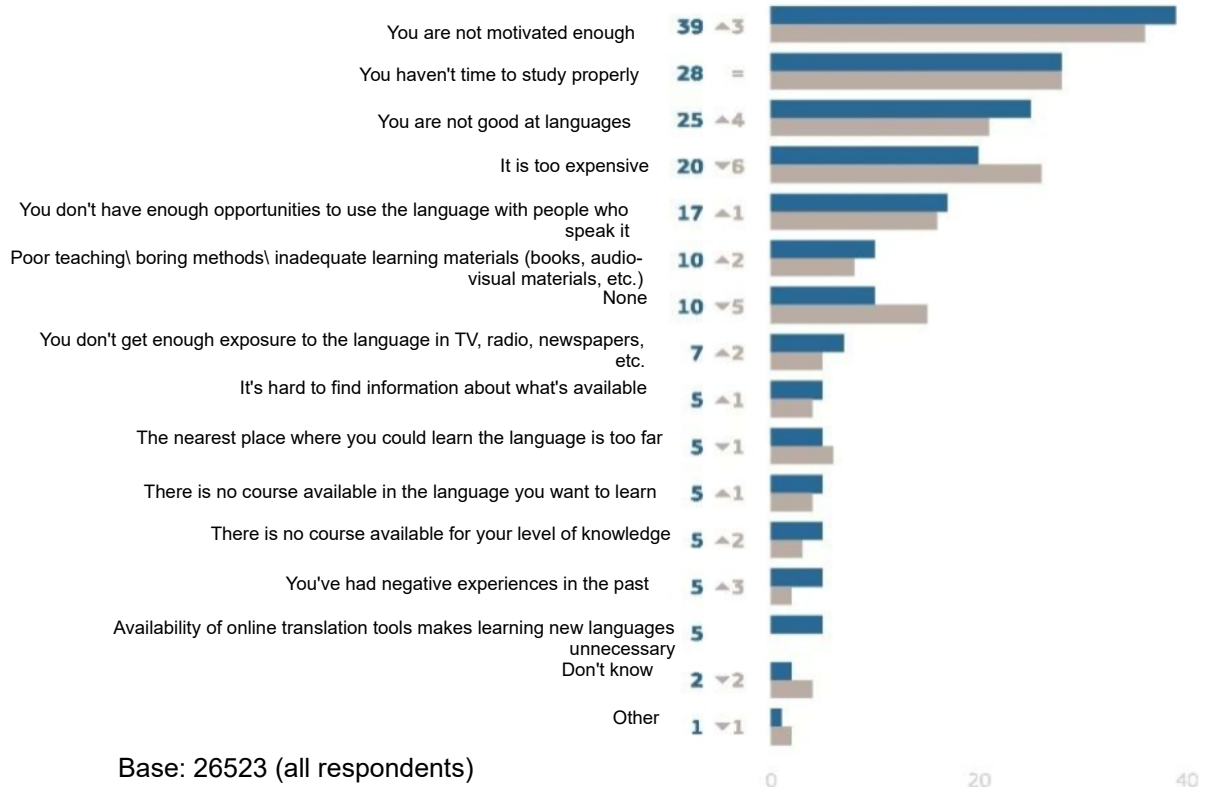
Respondents are most likely to say they are not good at languages in Czechia, Austria, and Slovakia (32% all), Bulgaria (30%), and Belgium and Hungary (both 29%). The lowest scores in this regard are seen in Portugal (11%), Cyprus (15%), and Malta (16%).

In five countries, more than one in four say it is too expensive: Greece (41%), Cyprus (34%), Estonia (27%), and Hungary and Austria (both 26%), with the lowest scores found in Finland (4%), Malta (5%), and Sweden (7%).

Respondents are most likely to say they don't have enough opportunities to use the language with people who speak it in France (25%), Sweden (24%), and Finland (23%). They are least likely to say this in Spain (8%), Portugal (9%), and Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Poland (11% all).

34 QB5. I am going to read out a list of different reasons that may discourage people from learning another language. Which, if any, of these reasons would apply to you? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE):

QB5. I am going to read out a list of different reasons that may discourage people from learning another language. Which, if any, of these reasons would apply to you?(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) (EU27) {%}



Sept/Oct 2023



Feb/Mar. 2012

Special Eurobarometer 540 Europeans and their Languages September - October 2023

QB5. I am going to read out a list of different reasons that may discourage people from learning another language. Which, if any, of these reasons would apply to you? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
You are not motivated enough	39	39	31	46	49	43	38	38	51	38	40	39	35	30	53	44	40	34	52	46	37	27	45	28	49	40	41	56
You haven't time to study properly	28	33	27	23	34	33	32	30	41	26	18	32	26	48	30	25	34	27	48	37	31	23	23	25	27	30	30	39
You are not good at languages	25	29	30	32	19	29	24	27	21	21	21	17	25	15	23	24	20	29	16	28	32	24	11	20	27	32	24	15
It is too expensive	20	14	25	25	17	20	27	20	41	19	14	18	27	34	13	23	20	26	5	15	26	25	13	18	18	20	4	7
You don't have enough opportunities to use the language with people who speak it	17	23	11	20	18	19	22	14	18	8	25	14	14	13	15	11	21	11	14	16	19	11	9	16	15	14	23	24
Poor teaching\ boring methods\ inadequate learning materials (books, audio-visual materials, etc.)	10	12	3	6	10	11	11	10	7	8	14	7	9	8	9	7	7	5	5	9	11	8	3	7	8	11	17	11
None	10	7	12	7	6	14	8	11	6	13	9	12	8	11	5	12	3	12	9	12	12	6	15	11	8	6	9	6
You don't get enough exposure to the language in TV, radio, newspapers, etc.	7	7	3	6	6	7	6	8	5	2	11	6	7	6	6	5	5	6	8	7	11	7	3	10	5	8	7	22
It's hard to find information about what's available	5	4	2	2	6	6	6	7	3	3	3	5	7	5	3	3	4	6	3	3	9	7	3	6	2	6	3	5
The nearest place where you could learn the language is too far	5	7	3	2	6	8	10	7	4	2	4	6	6	5	5	4	7	5	3	3	10	6	4	6	4	6	4	6
There is no course available in the language you want to learn	5	5	2	2	6	6	8	6	1	2	3	4	6	4	4	5	6	8	5	2	9	7	2	6	2	4	5	7
There is no course available for your level of knowledge	5	5	3	3	5	7	7	8	3	2	3	5	6	6	4	6	6	5	5	2	8	4	2	8	2	6	6	7
You've had negative experiences in the past	5	4	4	8	6	5	8	6	4	3	6	5	5	3	6	4	5	7	2	3	7	6	2	6	5	7	6	5
Availability of online translation tools makes learning new languages unnecessary	5	8	4	4	6	5	7	5	3	2	3	4	5	4	3	3	5	5	4	11	9	6	4	5	3	6	4	7
Don't know	2	1	3	2	3	1	2	2	1	2	3	1	1	0%	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	4	3	2	0%	2	3	1
Other	1	2	1	0%	3	1	4	1	3	2	2	1	1	0%	1	3	2	1	0%	1	2	0%	2	1	2	0%	1	1

Base: 26523 (all respondents)

In seven countries more than one in ten cite poor teaching\ boring methods\ inadequate learning materials (books, offline audio- visual materials, etc.), with the highest scores seen in Finland (17%), France (14%), and Belgium (12%).

Insufficient exposure to the language in TV, radio, newspapers, etc. is most mentioned in Sweden (22%), France and Austria (both 11%), and Romania (10%), difficulties finding information about what's available in Austria (9%), Ireland, Poland, and Italy (7% all), the nearest place where you could learn the language being too far in Estonia (10%), no course being available in the language they want to learn in Austria (9%) and Estonia (8%), no course being available for their level of knowledge in Austria, Ireland and Romania (8% all), and negative experiences in the past in Estonia and Czechia (both 8%), and Austria and Slovakia (both 7%).

Respondents are most likely to say that availability of online translation tools makes learning new languages unnecessary in the Netherlands (11%). They are least likely to say this in Malta and Portugal (both 2%).

In 12 countries, more than one in ten respondents say that no reason discourages them from learning an additional language, with the highest scores seen in Portugal (15%), Germany (14%), and Spain (13%).

In some countries there has been a notable change in opinion since 2012, with the most striking on views relating to motivation, time, cost, and language ability.

Countries where respondents are particularly more likely to think that they are not motivated enough to learn any language are Malta (52%, +23), Portugal (45%, +21), and Estonia (38%, +13).

Only one Member State shows a marked decrease in the proportion citing lack of motivation as a reason for discouraging the learning of any language and that is Austria (37%, -7).

QB5 I am going to read out a list of different reasons that may discourage people from learning another language. Which, if any, of these reasons would apply to you?(MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)(% - EU)

	It's hard to find information about what's available	The nearest place where you could learn the language is too far	It is too expensive	There is no course available in the language you want to learn	There is no course available for your level of knowledge	You haven't time to study properly	You are not good at languages	You are not motivated enough	You don't get enough exposure to the language in TV, radio, newspapers, etc.	You don't have enough opportunities to use the language with people who speak it	Poor teaching\ methods\ inadequate learning materials (books, audio-visual materials, etc.)	You've had negative experiences in the past	Availability of online translation tools makes learning new languages unnecessary	Other	None	Don't know
EU27	5	5	20	5	5	28	25	39	7	17	10	5	5	1	10	2
Gender																
Man	5	5	17	5	5	29	24	40	8	17	10	5	5	2	9	2
Woman	5	6	23	5	5	26	25	38	7	17	9	5	4	1	11	2
Age																
15-24	6	6	25	6	6	31	22	40	10	19	17	7	7	1	9	1
25-39	6	7	23	5	4	36	21	37	9	19	11	6	6	1	7	1
40-54	5	5	21	4	5	35	26	39	7	17	10	5	5	1	7	1
55 +	4	5	16	4	4	18	27	40	6	15	6	4	3	2	15	3
Education (End of)																
15-	4	4	16	3	4	15	29	40	4	10	3	2	2	3	19	3
16-19	5	5	22	5	5	26	27	40	7	15	7	5	5	1	9	2
20+	4	6	18	5	4	33	21	38	8	20	13	5	6	1	9	2
Still studying	6	7	27	6	7	33	19	38	10	21	19	7	7	1	9	1
Socio-professional category																
Self- employed	3	6	21	6	6	36	23	37	6	16	8	4	4	1	7	1
Managers	5	5	18	5	4	39	22	38	9	20	14	6	6	1	8	0
Other white collars	7	7	23	5	5	35	24	39	8	17	10	6	7	0	7	1
Manual workers	5	6	21	5	5	30	25	39	7	16	9	5	5	1	7	2
House persons	5	5	20	4	5	22	29	36	6	12	4	4	3	4	12	1
Unemployed	3	4	25	5	5	19	27	42	7	16	8	4	5	1	7	4
Retired	3	5	15	4	4	13	27	40	5	15	6	4	3	2	17	3
Students	6	7	27	6	7	33	19	38	10	21	19	7	7	1	9	1
Difficulties paying bills																
Most of the time	5	5	25	4	5	23	28	41	5	15	8	4	5	2	9	3
From time to time	7	7	23	6	6	26	24	37	7	16	10	6	6	1	9	2
Almost never/ Never	4	5	18	5	4	29	24	40	8	17	10	5	5	1	11	2
Consider belonging to																
The working class	4	5	19	4	5	22	29	40	5	13	6	4	3	2	13	3
The lower middle class	5	5	22	5	5	27	23	39	6	16	10	6	4	2	9	2
The middle class	5	6	20	5	5	29	24	39	8	18	11	5	5	1	10	1
The upper middle class	6	6	16	4	4	36	21	39	9	20	14	5	6	1	9	1
The upper class	6	5	23	10	7	41	23	32	9	17	13	4	12	3	3	1

The proportion of respondents citing lack of time as an obstacle has significantly risen in some countries, notably Greece (41%, +14), Cyprus (48%, +13), and the Netherlands (37%, +10). There are, however, some striking decreases in the proportion of respondents thinking that they are discouraged from learning a language because they have not the time to study properly. The country where respondents are notably less likely to think this a reason than in 2012 is France (18%, -13).

In terms of cost, and the expense of learning a language dissuading people from doing so, some national decreases in the proportion of respondents citing this are substantial, with the most marked in Bulgaria (25%, -21), Hungary (26%, -18), Latvia (13%, -16), and Slovakia (20%, -16). Among the countries where this view is somewhat more widespread now than in 2012 are Luxembourg (20%, +5) and Austria (26%, +4).

The view that not being good at languages discourages learning an additional language is held broadly by increased proportions of respondents now compared with 2012 in most countries. It is a notably more common opinion in Bulgaria (30%, +10), the Netherlands (28%, +12%), Latvia (23%, +10), and Luxembourg (20%, +10).

For the other reasons that dissuade language learning the most notable shifts in national opinion are in Belgium (23%, +9), Estonia (22%, +7) and Greece (18%, +6), where the view that there are not enough opportunities to use it with people who speak it is more widespread; in Estonia, where the view that poor teaching/boring methods/inadequate learning materials is more widespread (11%, +6); and in Sweden and Malta, where the view that there is not enough exposure to the language in the media is more widespread (22%, +8 and 8%, +6 respectively).

Finally, respondents in Lithuania are somewhat more likely now than they were in 2012 to spontaneously say that none of the reasons would discourage them from learning (12%, +6). In contrast, those in Portugal (15%, -18), Italy (8%, -13), and Estonia (8%, -12) are notably less likely to say unprompted that none of the reasons would dissuade them.

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

- When comparing women to men responses, learning language is too expensive (23% vs 17%).
- Respondents aged 25-54, those most likely to be working, are more likely to say that they don't have time to study properly (35%-36%), compared to those aged 15-24 (31%) and those aged 55 and up (18%). The youngest demographic is also more likely (25%) to say that it is too expensive, compared to those aged 40-54 (21%), and those aged 55 and up (16%). Poor

teaching\ boring methods\ inadequate learning materials (books, offline audio- visual materials, etc.) is also cited more (17%) by those aged 15- 24, compared to 6% among those aged 55 and up.

- Respondents who left school aged 15 or younger are more likely (29%) to say that they are not good at languages than those who studied beyond the age of 20 (21%). You don't have enough opportunities to use the language with people who speak it is cited more by the latter group (20%) compared to their lesser-educated peers (10%).
- Among different socio-professional categories, the unemployed are the most likely (42%) to say they are not motivated, compared to for instance the self-employed (37%). Students are the most likely to say they don't have enough opportunities to use the language with people who speak it (21%), compared to retirees (15%), and house persons (12%). Students are the most likely to say it is too expensive (27%), compared to the unemployed (25%), managers (18%), and retirees (15%).
- Those who see themselves as part of the working class are more likely (40%) to say they are not motivated enough than those in the upper class (32%). Working class respondents are also more likely to say they are not good at languages (29%), compared to 24% of the middle class, and 21% of the upper-middle class.

6. How Europeans learn new languages skills

This chapter investigates the ways in which Europeans have ever learnt a foreign language, and, from the methods they have used, which they perceive to be the most effective way of learning a foreign language.

The most common way foreign languages are learnt is at school. Nearly half of Europeans (47%) have learnt a language in this way. Teaching themselves by watching TV, films or listening to the radio has increased significantly.

Respondents were presented with various different ways of learning a foreign language and asked which they had ever used. Respondents were able to mention as many ways as applied to them³⁵.

The most widespread method used by Europeans to learn a foreign language is through language lessons at school, university or through vocational education and training. Close to half of respondents (47%) mention that they have learnt a foreign language in this way. One in five (20%) teach themselves by watching TV, films, or listening to radio.

All other ways of learning are mentioned by much smaller proportions of people. Around one in six Europeans say they have learnt a foreign language by talking informally to a native speaker (17%), teaching themselves by reading books (15%) or by using online apps or courses (15%), or

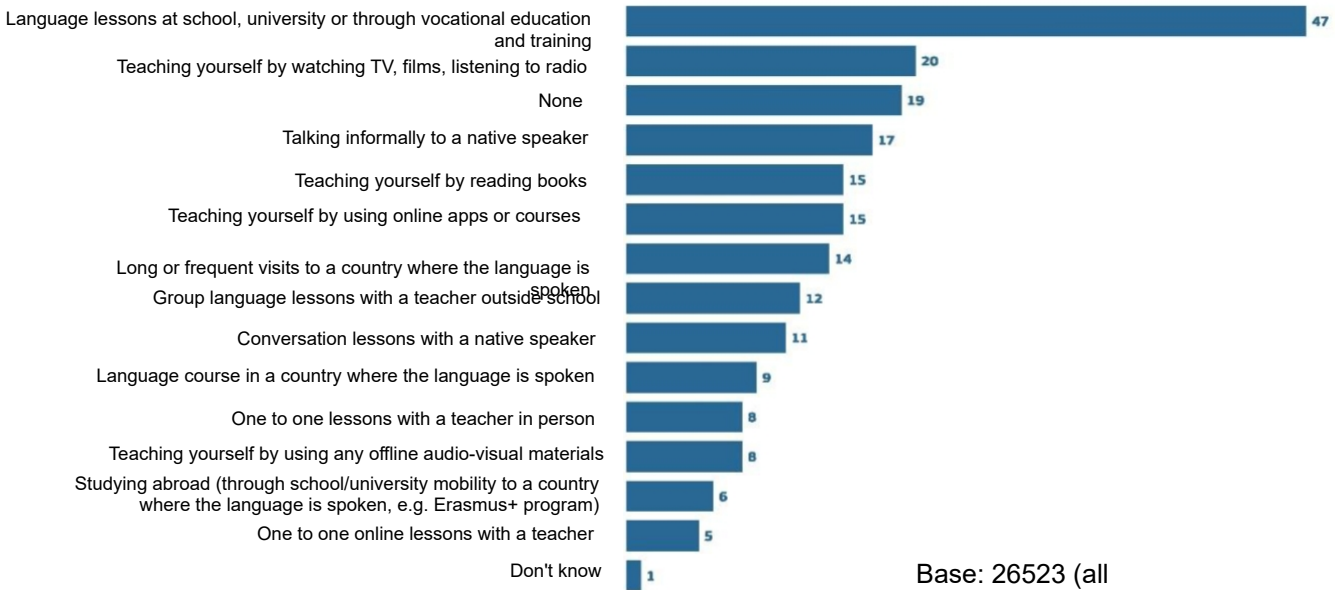
by going on frequent or long trips to the country in which the language is spoken (14%).

Around one in ten use group language lessons with a teacher outside school (12%), a language course in a country where the language is spoken (9%), one to one lessons with a teacher in person (8%), or teaching themselves by using any offline audio-visual materials (8%).

A small proportion cite studying abroad (through school/university mobility to a country where the language is spoken, e.g. Erasmus+ program) (6%) or one to one online lessons with a teacher (5%)³⁶.

A fifth (19%) of Europeans say they have not used any of the methods for learning a foreign language.

QB4a. I am going to read out several ways of learning a foreign language. Please tell me which of these ways you have ever used. (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)



35 Q4a. "I am going to read out several ways of learning a foreign language. Please tell me which of these ways you have ever used. (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

36 This question was not asked in 2012.

The national analysis shows widespread variation between different Member States.

Portugal (32%) and Ireland (31%) stands out as countries with an exceptionally high proportion of respondents spontaneously saying that they have never used any of the methods to learn a foreign language (reported as 'None'). Other countries with relatively high proportions of respondents spontaneously saying they have never used any of methods include Spain and Bulgaria (both 28%), Greece (26%), Italy (25%), and Hungary and Romania (both 24%).

Learning a language through school lessons is the most common method that has been used by respondents in every Member State. Countries where respondents are particularly likely to have used school lessons, are Lithuania (74%), Sweden and Denmark (both 73%), and Finland (70%). It is mentioned by only a minority in: Ireland (29%), Bulgaria (31%), Portugal (36%), Italy (38%), Poland and Romania (both 44%), Cyprus (47%), Belgium and Croatia (both 48%), and Austria and Greece (both 49%).

Respondents are most likely to mention teaching themselves by watching TV, films, listening to radio in Sweden and Malta (both 54%), Finland (47%), and the Netherlands (46%). They are least likely to cite this in Greece (8%), Austria (11%), and Bulgaria and Ireland (both 12%).

Learning a language by talking informally to a native speaker is most commonly cited as a way that has been used by respondents in Sweden (42%), Finland (35%), and the Netherlands (34%).

Linked to this, these three countries also have the highest proportions of respondents who say they have learnt by using long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken, with large proportions adopting this method in Sweden (32%), Finland (23%), and the Netherlands (27%).

Sweden (44%) stands out from the rest of the EU in terms of teaching themselves by reading books, followed by 30% in Finland and the Netherlands, and 28% in Luxembourg saying they have learnt in this way. Respondents are least likely to say this in Greece (5%), Romania and Italy (both 8%), and Bulgaria (9%).

Respondents are most likely to prefer teaching themselves by using online apps or courses in Sweden and the Netherlands (both 36%), Luxembourg (25%), and Finland (23%), with the lowest scores seen in Greece (4%), Portugal (5%), and Bulgaria (6%).

For the other learning methods, which have all been used by around one in eight Europeans or fewer, Sweden stands out as the country with an exceptionally high proportion of respondents saying they have taught themselves by means of long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken (32%) and through conversation lessons with a native speaker (20%). They are also about twice as likely than Europeans as a whole to have used a language course in a country where the language is spoken (19% vs. EU average 9%).

Cyprus stands out as the country where one to one lessons with a teacher in person is particularly likely to be the method that has been used (31%), compared to the EU average of 8%), while one to one online lessons with a teacher are cited by a high proportion of respondents in Luxembourg (22%) compared to the EU average of 5%.

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QB4a. I am going to read out several ways of learning a foreign language.
Please tell me which of these ways you have ever used. (MULTIPLE ANSWERS
POSSIBLE)

	EU 27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	D0 W	DE	D0 E	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
Language lessons at school, university or through vocational education and training	47	48	31	50	73	42	43	48	60	29	49	43	51	48	38	47	55	74	39	45	52	69	49	44	36	44	68	50	70	73
Group language lessons with a teacher outside school	12	15	10	17	11	13	12	9	20	4	49	12	6	8	8	33	9	8	23	15	16	13	20	10	10	7	9	22	14	19
One to one lessons with a teacher in person	8	8	8	12	5	5	5	5	11	8	16	13	4	10	11	31	13	11	18	13	12	7	5	10	3	6	6	15	4	10
Conversation lessons with a native speaker	11	28	7	15	8	11	10	6	16	12	6	9	11	6	12	10	17	15	21	6	17	13	13	10	6	5	10	17	17	20
Talking informally to a native speaker	17	23	13	17	27	22	21	14	32	16	12	14	15	15	16	12	25	25	30	9	21	34	20	9	12	7	25	21	35	42
Long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken	14	16	9	15	27	19	18	14	18	6	6	8	17	9	11	7	9	15	19	7	11	27	15	11	7	6	17	19	23	32
Language course in a country where the language is spoken	9	12	4	7	13	12	11	8	15	6	4	4	15	4	9	9	10	7	13	8	8	7	12	8	3	3	6	14	10	19
Studying abroad (through school/university mobility to a country where the language is spoken, e.g. Erasmus+ program)	6	8	3	5	9	8	8	6	8	5	3	7	5	4	7	11	8	3	11	4	6	7	8	7	3	2	7	10	11	14
Teaching yourself by reading books	15	22	9	19	16	20	18	12	21	10	5	12	12	10	8	15	18	16	28	10	25	30	12	12	8	8	22	23	30	44
Teaching yourself by using any offline audiovisual materials	8	11	4	10	7	11	10	8	12	6	1	6	8	5	4	8	12	9	15	7	12	14	9	11	3	11	8	13	16	14
Teaching yourself by watching TV, films, listening to radio	20	38	12	24	36	17	16	13	39	12	8	14	25	23	13	19	34	30	34	15	54	46	11	13	16	16	41	25	47	54
Teaching yourself by using online apps or courses	15	22	6	19	19	16	16	15	23	14	4	11	19	10	7	9	18	17	25	11	17	36	12	12	5	10	22	15	23	36
One to one online lessons with a teacher	5	7	4	10	3	2	3	4	6	8	4	5	6	6	6	9	6	5	22	6	11	4	5	6	3	3	6	12	2	2
Other	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
None	19	7	28	13	4	21	21	22	5	31	26	28	17	12	25	10	5	8	1	24	9	2	21	12	32	24	4	6	4	1
Don't know	1	0	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	2	3	1	0	3	1	0

Base: 26523 (all respondents)

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

- 15-24-year-olds, unsurprisingly, having a greater tendency to have used all of the methods, particularly when compared with those aged 55+. Respondents of the youngest demographic are much more likely to say they have learnt by: teaching themselves online (27% vs 7%); watching TV/films or listening to the radio (34% vs 12%); having “one to one” lessons with a teacher (6% vs 3%); teaching themselves using offline audio-visual material (13% vs 5%); and using a language course in a country where the language is spoken (12% vs 7%).

Those who finished their full-time education aged 20+ also have a stronger tendency to have used all of the methods, particularly when compared with those finishing at 15 or below. They are especially more likely to say they have learnt by: watching TV/films or listening to the radio (28% vs 6%); using offline audio-visual materials (13% vs 2%); teaching themselves via online apps or courses (21% vs 2%), and by reading books (22% vs 4%); using a language course in a country where the language is spoken (14% vs 3%); and using conversation lessons with a native speaker (15% vs 4%).

Among different socio-professional categories, students, are much more likely than any other occupational group, and especially when compared to retirees, to have used language lessons at school (68% vs 36%). They also have the greatest tendency to have taught themselves online (30% vs 6%) and to have learnt foreign languages by watching TV/films or listening to the radio (37% vs 11%).

Respondents who ‘almost never or never’ have difficulties paying bills, particularly when compared with those who struggle most of the time, are more likely to have used: language lessons at school, university or through vocational education and trainings (51% vs 39%), self-teaching by using audio-visual materials (9% vs 5% respectively); long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken (17% vs 8%); self-teaching by reading books (17% vs 8%); talking informally to a native speaker (19% vs 13%); self-teaching by watching television/films or listening to the radio (22% vs 14%); and a language course in the country where the language is spoken (8% vs 3%).

Respondents who identify as belonging to the upper-middle class, have a stronger tendency to have used language lessons at school, university or through vocational education and training, as compared to the working class (59% vs 39%). The same is true regarding “teaching yourself by reading books” (26% vs 8%).

People who are active in language learning, and particularly those who are very active are, as to be expected, more likely than those who are inactive to say they have used each of the different methods as a way of

learning a language. This tendency is most marked on: self-teaching online (37% vs 7%); self-teaching by using offline audio-visual materials (18% vs. 5%); self-teaching by reading books (28% vs 10%); self-teaching by watching television/films or listening to the radio (37% vs 14%); conversation lessons with a native speaker (20% vs 8%); and talking informally with a native speaker (29% vs 14%)³⁷.

For the respondents who studied abroad through mobility programs like Erasmus, a generational gap is salient with more than double the number of respondents in the youngest age category (15-24 years old) compared to the oldest category (55 years old and above) (10% versus 4%). It is also notable that individuals identifying as belonging to the upper class (14%) and upper-middle class (14%) are the most likely to have participated, in contrast to those in the working class (3%) and lower-middle class (6%).

³⁷ Very active language learners are those respondents who have started or continued to learn a new language in the past 2 years, as opposed to Active learners, who instead have not learned a new language recently but intend to do so, and Not active learners, namely those respondents who have never learned any language other than their mother tongue and do not intend to do so in the coming year.

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QB4a. I am going to read out several ways of learning a foreign language. Please tell me which of these ways you have ever used. (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

	Language lessons at school, university or through vocational education and trainine	Group language lessons with a teacher outside school	One to one lessons with a teacher in person	Conversations lessons with a native speaker	Talking information to a native speaker	Long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken	Language course in a country where the language is spoken	Studying abroad (through school/University mobility to a country where the language is spoken, e.g. Erasmus + program)	Teaching yourself by reading books	Teaching yourself by using any offline audio-visual materials	Teaching yourself by watching TV, films, listening to the radio	Teaching yourself by using online apps or courses	One to one online lessons with a teacher	Other	None	Don't know
EU27	47	12	8	11	17	14	9	6	15	8	21	16	5	0	19	1
Gender																
Man	47	11	8	12	19	15	9	7	15	9	21	16	5	0	17	1
Woman	46	12	8	11	16	13	10	6	14	8	19	14	5	1	21	1
Age																
15-24	62	14	11	15	22	15	12	10	23	13	34	27	6	1	3	1
25-39	49	13	10	14	21	17	11	9	17	10	28	21	6	0	10	1
40-54	49	14	9	12	18	15	10	7	15	9	19	15	6	0	14	1
55 +	39	9	6	7	13	12	7	4	10	5	12	7	3	1	32	2
Education (End of)																
15-	19	5	4	4	8	6	3	2	4	2	6	2	2	0	56	2
16-19	43	9	6	8	13	10	6	3	9	6	14	10	4	1	22	1
20+	58	17	11	15	24	22	14	11	22	13	28	21	7	0	5	1
Still studying	68	16	12	18	25	19	13	11	27	13	37	30	5	0	2	1
Socio-professional category																
Self-employed	47	15	11	15	22	17	12	9	16	10	22	16	6	0	10	1
Managers	57	16	11	16	25	23	14	13	23	14	29	24	9	0	6	0
Other white collars	50	15	10	12	20	15	11	6	16	10	22	17	6	0	11	1
Manual workers	45	10	7	10	14	11	8	4	10	7	18	13	5	1	19	1
House persons	31	1	7	7	7	7	4	3	7	3	9	7	3	0	42	1
Unemployed	41	8	6	8	12	8	7	4	11	6	17	12	3	0	24	3
Retired	36	8	5	6	13	11	6	4	9	4	11	6	3	1	35	2
Students	68	16	12	18	25	19	13	11	27	13	37	30	5	0	2	1
Difficulties paying bills																
Most of the time	39	10	5	8	13	8	7	3	8	5	14	9	5	0	29	2
From time to time	40	11	9	11	15	10	8	5	12	8	17	12	5	1	23	1
Almost never/ Never	51	12	8	12	19	17	10	8	17	9	22	17	5	0	16	1
Consider belonging to																
The working class	39	7	5	8	11	8	5	3	8	5	13	9	3	1	32	32
The lower middle class	44	10	6	10	16	12	8	6	12	8	17	12	5	0	23	2
The middle class	48	13	10	12	19	16	11	7	16	9	22	16	6	0	15	1
The upper middle class	59	19	12	15	29	25	16	14	26	12	30	25	7	0	5	0
The upper class	49	10	19	29	28	28	18	14	33	16	24	24	7	0	3	2
Activity as language learner																
Very active	55	19	13	20	29	24	17	12	28	18	37	37	8	0	0	0
Active	46	14	14	14	22	18	13	10	21	14	27	24	8	0	3	1
Not active	45	9	6	8	14	11	7	4	10	5	14	7	4	1	27	1

7. Efficiency of learning methods

Respondents were also asked to consider which method, from any that they had ever used for learning a foreign language, was the most effective³⁸.

Europeans think that language lessons at school are the most effective way to learn a foreign language.

Europeans are most likely to think that language lessons at school are the most effective way they have learnt a foreign language, with just above one third (34%) saying this.

This reflects the fact that school lessons are by far the most common way in which Europeans have learnt a language.

Just under one in ten respondents (9%) cite talking informally to a native speaker as the most effective way in which they have learnt a language, followed by long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken (8%), group language lessons with a teacher outside school (7%), teaching yourself by watching TV, films, listening to radio (7%), and conversation lessons with a native speaker (6%), and one to one online lessons with a teacher (2%).

All other ways of learning are perceived to be the most effective method used by one in twenty Europeans or fewer with teaching yourself by using any offline audio-visual materials (2%) least likely of all to be considered the most effective way that has been used.

At the national level we see that respondents are most likely to perceive language lessons at school, university or through vocational education and training as effective in Lithuania (50%), Romania (45%), Denmark and Slovenia (both 44%), and Croatia (43%). They are least likely to think this in Greece (13%), Luxembourg (18%), and Cyprus (22%).

Talking informally to a native speaker is most likely to be seen as effective in Estonia (15%), Latvia and Luxembourg (both 14%), and Ireland and Finland (both 13%).

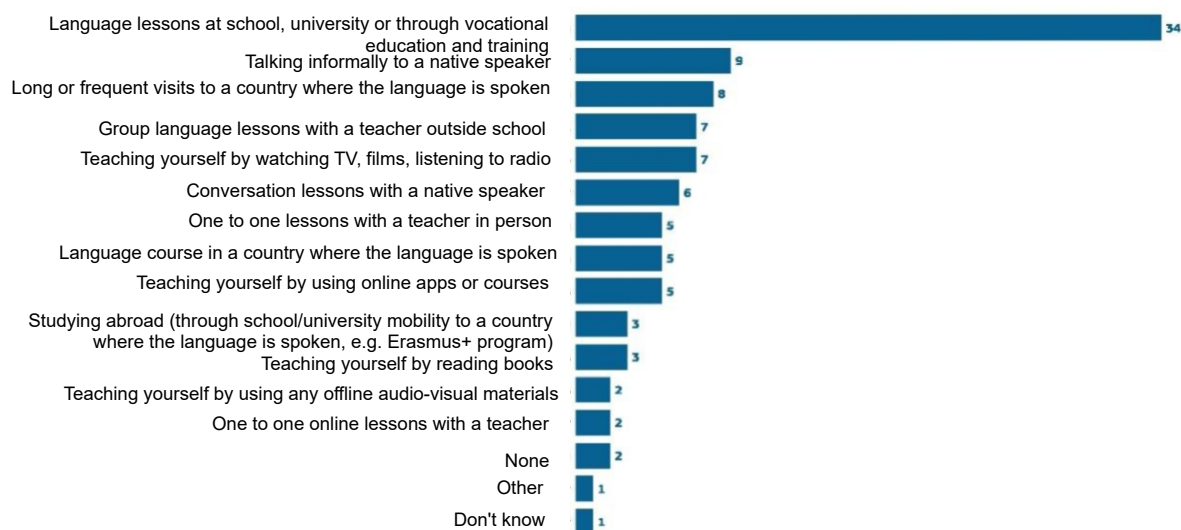
More than one in ten respondents think the same about long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken in: Sweden and Denmark (13%), the Netherlands (12%), and Finland and France (both 11%).

Greece stands out as concerns group language lessons with a teacher outside school, with nearly half (47%) estimating it as an effective method, followed by Cyprus (24%), Austria (12%), and Luxembourg and Portugal (both 11%), with no other country scoring higher than 10%.

Malta stands out as the only country where more than one in five (22%) cite teaching yourself by watching TV, films, listening to radio. Cyprus is the only country where more than one in five (21%) cite one to one lessons with a teacher in person.

Of the remaining methods, no country scores higher than 10%, except Luxembourg, where 11% deem one to one online lessons with a teacher effective.

QB4b. Which did you find the most effective?



Base: 21133 (Respondents who have used at least one of the learning methods in QB4a)

38 Q4b. Which way did you find the most effective?

QB4b. Which did you find the most effective?

	EU27	BE	BG	CZ	DK	DE	EE	IE	EL	ES	FR	HR	IT	CY	LV	LT	LU	HU	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	RO	SI	SK	FI	SE
Language lessons at school, university or through vocational education and training	34	26	33	30	44	34	24	28	13	37	31	43	33	22	29	50	18	36	36	36	33	30	37	45	44	29	38	37
Group language lessons with a teacher outside school	7	8	7	6	3	6	9	2	47	9	3	5	4	24	5	3	11	8	6	4	12	7	11	6	3	8	5	4
One to one lessons with a teacher in person	5	3	7	7	1	2	5	6	17	8	3	8	8	21	7	6	7	10	5	2	2	7	2	5	3	6	1	2
Conversation lessons with a native speaker	6	11	5	8	2	5	6	8	3	5	6	3	10	5	8	6	6	3	4	3	6	7	4	4	4	7	5	3
Talking informally to a native speaker	9	8	10	8	8	12	15	13	6	10	8	9	10	5	14	11	14	4	5	10	8	4	9	5	10	8	13	10
Long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken	8	7	8	8	13	10	10	5	2	5	11	4	9	2	5	6	8	6	1	12	8	7	6	4	6	8	11	13
Language course in a country where the language is spoken	5	6	3	3	4	5	5	3	1	1	9	2	6	3	3	2	4	6	3	2	6	5	2	2	2	5	3	5
Studying abroad (through school/university mobility to a country where the language is spoken, e.g. Erasmus+ program)	3	3	2	3	4	4	3	4	2	5	1	2	4	4	3	1	4	2	2	3	5	4	3	1	3	3	3	4
Teaching yourself by reading books	3	3	3	4	1	4	2	5	1	3	1	2	2	3	2	1	4	3	2	2	3	5	3	2	3	5	2	4
Teaching yourself by using any offline audio/visual materials	2	3	4	3	1	3	2	3	1	1	1	2	1	3	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	4	1	6	1	2	1	1
Teaching yourself by watching TV, films, listening to radio	7	11	7	7	6	4	8	6	1	6	9	9	6	4	11	5	5	8	22	13	2	5	10	10	11	4	8	10
Teaching yourself by using online apps or courses	5	7	3	4	5	5	4	8	1	4	8	4	4	1	4	3	4	3	7	8	5	5	2	5	5	2	6	6
One to one online lessons with a teacher	2	2	3	4	1	1	2	5	1	1	2	3	2	2	3	1	11	3	3	1	1	3	2	2	2	6	1	1
Other	1	1	1	2	4	2	1	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	2	2	1	0
None	2	1	3	1	1	2	2	2	3	3	4	2	1	1	2	1	1	3	1	0	4	2	3	2	0	1	1	0
Don't know	1	0	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	1	1	4	1	0	1	4	1	0

Base: 21133 (Respondents who have used at least one of the learning methods in QB4a)

The socio-demographic analysis indicates the following:

- Women are slightly more likely to see language lessons at school, university or through vocational education and training as effective than men (35% vs 32%).
- Respondents aged 55 and up are more likely (38%) to think this way than those aged 15-24 (34%), those aged 40-54 (33%), and those aged 25-39 (28%). The youngest demographic is most likely (11%) to think teaching themselves by watching TV, films, listening to radio is effective, compared to 5% among those aged 40 and up.
- More than one in three (35%) among those who went to school until the age of 15 think language lessons at school are effective, compared to 29% of those who left

school aged 20 or older. The latter group is more likely (11%) to be convinced of the effectiveness of long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken compared to their less-educated peers (6%).

- House persons are most likely (41%) to think language lessons at school are effective, compared to 35% among manual workers, and 29% of managers and the self-employed. Managers are more likely (12%) to be convinced of long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken, compared to manual workers and house persons (both 7%).
- Those who consider themselves as belonging to the working class are more likely (40%) to think language lessons at school are effective, compared to 32% of the middle class, and 28% of the upper class.
- People who are active in language learning, and particularly those who are very active are less likely than those who are inactive to say that language lessons at school, university or through vocational education and training are effective (23% vs 40%).
- Matching what was observed in the previous question, the youngest age category (15-24 years old) is two times more likely than the oldest category (55 years old and above) to find mobility programs like Erasmus as effective. We also observe that the effectiveness of these programs increases with the education level with respondents at primary education at lowest (3%) and doctoral level at the highest (9%).

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QB4b Which did you find the most effective? (% - EU)

	Language lessons at school, university or through vocational education and training	Group language lessons with a teacher outside school	One to one lessons with a teacher in person	Conversation lessons with a native speaker	Talking informally to a native speaker	Long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken	Language course in a country where the language is spoken	Studying abroad (through school/university mobility to a country where the language is spoken, e.g. Erasmus + program)	Teaching yourself by reading books	Teaching yourself by using any offline audio-visual materials	Teaching yourself by watching TV, films, listening to radio	Teaching yourself by using online apps or courses	One to one online lessons with a teacher	Other	None	Don't know
EU27	34	7	5	6	9	8	5	3	3	2	7	5	2	1	2	1
Gender																
Man	32	6	5	6	10	9	4	4	3	2	7	6	2	1	2	1
Woman	35	7	5	6	9	8	5	3	3	2	6	5	2	1	2	1
Age																
15-24	34	6	5	5	8	7	5	4	2	2	11	6	2	1	1	1
25-39	28	6	6	7	10	8	6	4	3	2	9	6	2	1	2	0
40-54	33	7	6	6	9	9	5	3	3	2	5	6	2	1	2	1
55 +	38	7	5	5	9	9	4	2	3	2	5	3	2	1	3	2
Education (End of)																
15-	35	7	3	6	11	6	4	2	4	1	7	3	2	1	6	2
16-19	38	6	5	5	9	7	4	2	3	2	6	5	2	1	3	2
20+	29	7	6	6	9	11	6	5	3	2	6	5	2	1	1	1
Still studying	35	6	5	6	8	8	5	5	2	2	10	5	1	1	0	1
Socio-professional category																
Self-employed	29	6	6	6	9	10	5	4	3	2	7	6	2	1	1	1
Managers	29	5	7	6	9	12	7	6	2	2	5	6	2	1	1	1
Other white collars	31	9	6	6	10	8	5	2	3	3	7	4	2	1	1	2
Manual workers	35	6	5	6	9	7	4	2	3	2	8	6	2	1	3	1
House persons	41	6	5	5	5	7	4	1	5	1	6	6	2	1	4	1
Unemployed	32	6	4	5	10	8	4	2	2	3	9	6	3	1	4	1
Retired	38	6	4	5	10	9	4	2	3	1	5	3	2	2	4	2
Students	35	6	5	6	8	8	5	5	2	2	10	5	1	1	0	1
Difficulties paying bills																
Most of the time	33	8	5	6	10	5	5	2	4	2	8	3	4	0	4	1
From time to time	32	7	6	7	8	7	5	2	3	3	8	6	2	1	2	1
Almost never/ Never	34	6	5	5	9	10	5	4	3	2	6	5	2	1	2	1
Consider belonging to																
The working class	40	6	4	5	9	6	3	2	3	2	7	4	1	1	5	2
The lower middle class	34	6	4	6	10	8	4	3	3	2	7	5	3	1	3	1
The middle class	32	7	6	6	9	9	5	3	3	2	7	6	2	1	1	1
The upper middle class	29	7	6	5	11	12	6	6	2	2	5	5	2	1	0	1
The upper class	28	4	8	13	9	10	9	3	3	1	5	5	1	0	0	1
Activity as language learner																
Very active	23	6	6	7	11	10	6	5	3	3	7	9	2	1	0	1
Active	21	7	8	6	10	8	6	3	4	3	10	8	3	1	1	1
Not active	40	7	4	5	8	8	4	3	3	1	6	3	2	1	3	2

8. Use of online machine translations

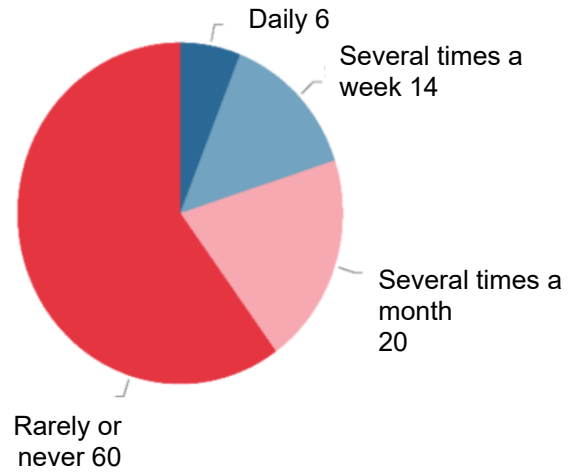
Most Europeans rarely or never use machine translations.

Respondents were asked how often they use online machine translations³⁹.

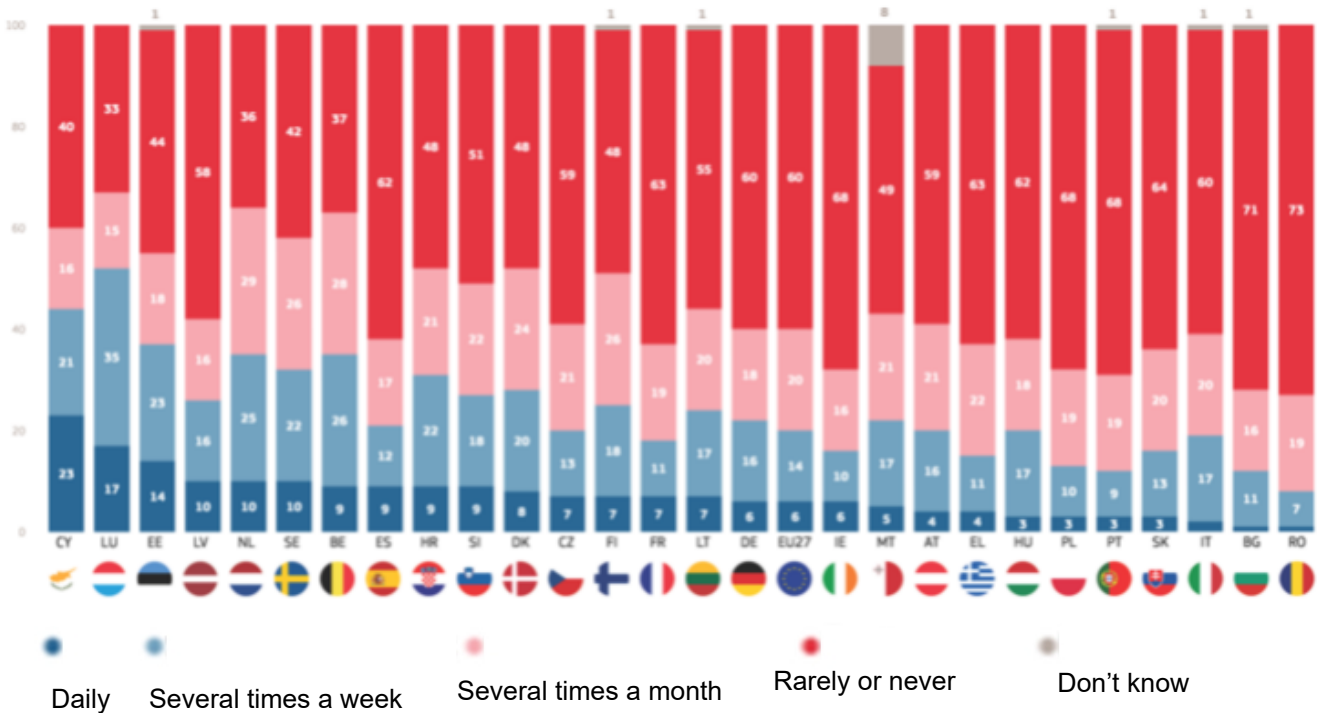
Six in ten (60%) respondents say they rarely or never use machine translations. One in five (20%) use it several times a month, with one in seven (14%) using it several times a week. A small minority (6%) use it daily. However, there are important country differences.

In 17 countries, more than half of the respondents say they never use machine translations, with the highest proportions seen in Romania (73%), Bulgaria (71%), Ireland, Portugal, and Poland (68% all), and Slovakia (64%). The lowest scores in this regard are seen in Luxembourg (33%), the Netherlands (36%), and Belgium

QB8. How often do you use online machine translations? (EU27) (%)



QB8. How often do you use online machine translations?



Base: 26523 (all respondents)

(37%).

Respondents are most likely to use machine translations several times a month in the Netherlands (29%), Belgium (28%), and Sweden and Finland (both 26%).

Luxembourg stands out with more than one in three (35%) saying they use machine translations several times a week, followed by Belgium (26%) and the Netherlands (25%).

Cyprus is the only country where more than one in five (23%) say they use machine translations on a daily basis, followed by Luxembourg (17%), Estonia (14%), and Latvia, the Netherlands, and Sweden (10% all). They are least likely to say this in Bulgaria and Romania (both 1%), Italy (2%), and Hungary, Poland, Portugal, and Slovakia (3% all).

39 QB8. How often do you use online machine translations?

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

- Women are more likely than men to say they rarely or never use machine translations (62% vs 57%).
- Younger respondents are more likely to use machine translations daily, with one in ten (11%) of those aged 15-24 saying this, compared with 5% of those aged 40-54 and 2% of those aged 55 and up.
- Education levels play a significant role. For instance, those who left school aged 20 and up are more likely (27%) to use machine translations several times a month compared with those who left school aged 15 or younger (5%). The same is true regarding those who use it several times a week (19% vs 4%) or daily (8% vs 1%).
- Students (12%) and managers (10%) are the most likely to use machine translations daily, compared with manual workers (5%), house persons (3%) and retirees (2%).
- Respondents who see themselves as belonging to the upper class are the most likely (43%) to use machine translations several times a month, compared with the middle class (22%) and the working class (12%).
- Respondents from large towns (7%) are more likely to use online machine translations on a daily basis than respondents from small towns (5%) and rural villages (4%). Along the same lines, they are also more likely to use online machine translations several times a week (17%) than respondents from small towns (15%) and rural areas (11%).
- Active language learners are substantially more likely to make use of machine learning daily compared with those who are inactive (13% vs 3%)⁴⁰.

QB8 How often do you use online machine translations? (% - EU)

	Daily	Several times a week	Several times a month	Rarely or never	Don't know
EU27	6	14	20	60	0
Gender					
Man	6	15	21	57	1
Woman	5	13	19	62	1
Age					
15-24	11	25	28	36	0
25-39	9	20	26	45	0
40-54	5	16	23	56	0
55 +	2	7	12	78	1
Education (End of)					
15-	1	4	5	89	1
16-19	4	11	17	68	0
20+	8	19	27	46	0
Still studying	12	29	30	29	0
Socio-professional category					
Self-employed	6	19	26	49	0
Managers	10	21	30	39	0
Other white collars	6	18	25	51	0
Manual workers	5	12	20	63	0
House persons	3	8	10	78	1
Unemployed	7	11	17	65	0
Retired	2	5	8	84	1
Students	12	29	30	29	0
Difficulties paying bills					
Most of the time	5	12	14	68	1
From time to time	5	16	18	61	0
Almost never/ Never	6	14	22	58	0
Consider belonging to					
The working class	3	8	12	76	1
The lower middle class	6	14	19	60	1
The middle class	6	16	22	56	0
The upper middle class	10	23	27	40	0
The upper class	9	14	43	34	0
Subjective urbanisation					
Rural village	4	11	18	66	1
Small/ Mid-size town	5	15	21	58	1
Large town	7	17	21	55	0
Activity as language learner					
Very active	13	28	28	31	0
Active	8	27	29	36	0
Not active	3	9	17	71	0

⁴⁰ Very active language learners are those respondents who have started or continued to learn a new language in the past 2 years, as opposed to Active learners, who instead have not learned a new language recently but intend to do so, and Not active learners, namely those respondents who have never learned any language other than their mother tongue and do not intend to do so in the coming year.

IV. CITIZENS' ATTITUDES ON MULTILINGUALISM



This chapter examines Europeans' attitudes in relation to a range of issues associated with the learning and usage of additional languages. Specifically, in the first section the chapter looks at the extent to which Europeans think that people in the EU should be able to speak languages other than their mother tongue. In the second section, the chapter delves into whether regional and minority languages should be protected. In the final section, the chapter tackles the topic of whether improving language skills should be a policy priority.

1. Speaking one or more languages in addition to the mother tongue

The large majority of Europeans think that everyone in the EU should speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue, and most that people should speak more than one language in addition to their mother tongue.

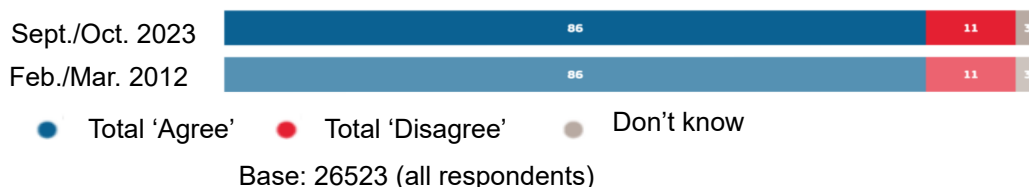
There is a broad consensus among Europeans that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue⁴¹.

(32%, -2) saying that they 'totally agree' with this view. The level of total disagreement with this view (28%, +4) is higher than in relation to the view that Europeans should speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue. Differences are mainly confined to those who tend to disagree (20%, +2) rather than 'totally' disagree (8%, +2). In all, respondents, for the most part, support the EU's vision that EU citizens should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue, and there is little evidence of strong disapproval of this vision.

At the national level, we see that in 11 Member States, more than nine in ten agree that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue, with near unanimity seen in Cyprus (99%), Luxembourg (98%), and Greece (97%). In 13 countries, more than half totally agree with this statement, with the highest scores seen in Luxembourg (77%), Greece (75%), and Latvia (72%). Referring to both those who totally agree and tend to agree, the lowest scores are seen in Romania (78%), Czechia and Bulgaria (both 80%), and Finland (81%).

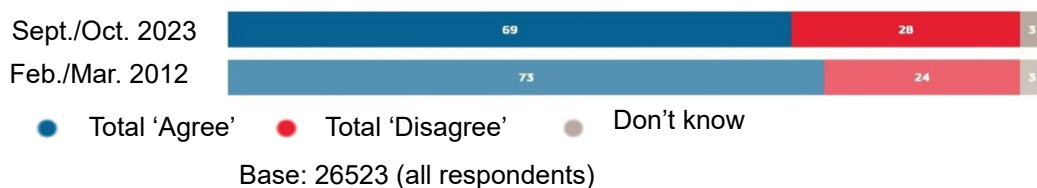
QB7. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements. (EU27) (%)

Everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue



QB7. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements. (EU27) (%)

Everyone in the EU should be able to speak more than one language in addition to their mother tongue



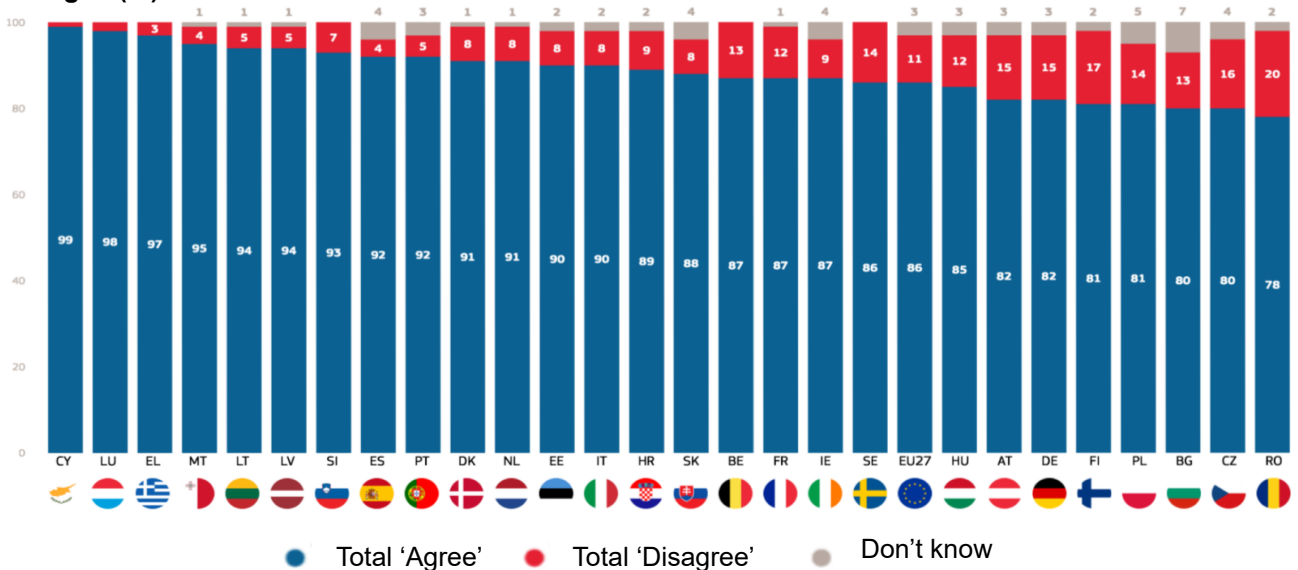
More than four in five Europeans (86%, same proportion as in 2012) agree should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue, with nearly half (48%, +2) totally agreeing. Around one in ten (11%, =) Europeans disagree with this view, with just 3% saying they 'totally disagree'.

Close to seven in ten Europeans (69%, -4) agree that people in the EU should be able to speak more than one language in addition to their mother tongue, with a third

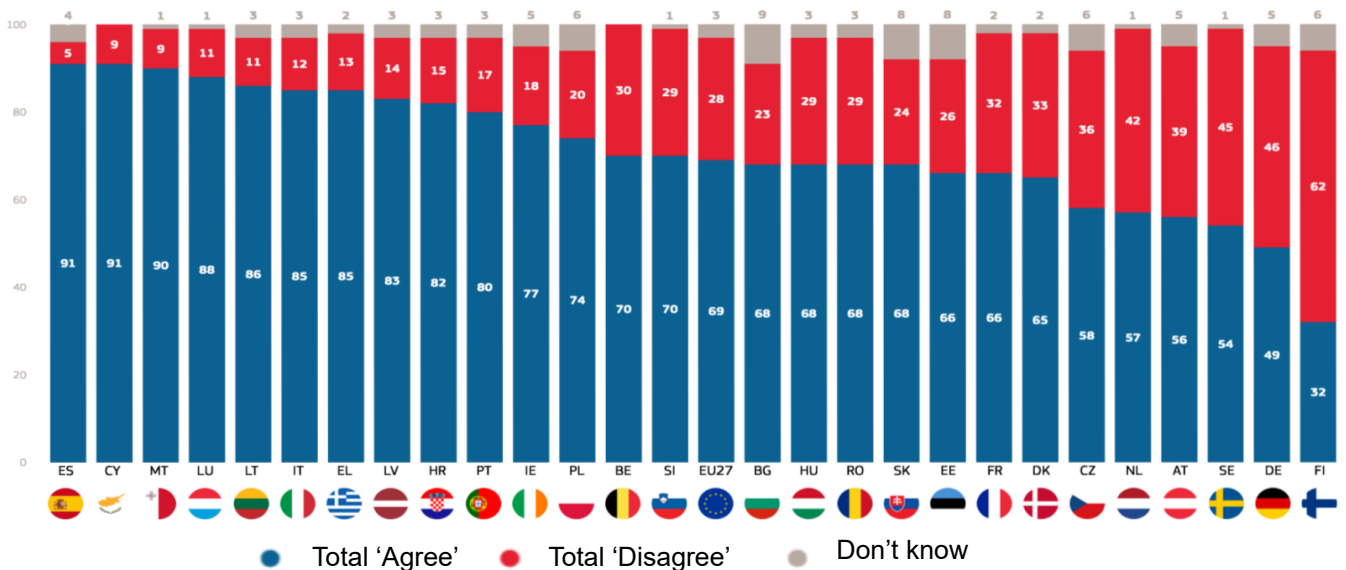
A majority of respondents agree that people in the EU should be able to speak more than one language in addition to their mother tongue in every Member State, except in Finland (32%) and Germany (49%). The highest scores are seen in Cyprus and Spain (both 91%), Malta (90%), and Luxembourg (88%).

⁴¹ Q7. "Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements."

**QB7.1. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements.-
Everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue (%)**



**QB7.2. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements.-
Everyone in the EU should be able to speak more than one language in addition to their mother tongue (%)**



Base: 26523 (all respondents)

Comparing 2012 to 2023, we see that in 17 countries respondents are more likely to agree that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue. The largest increases are seen in Ireland (87%, +9), Portugal (92%, +9), Bulgaria (80%, +7), and Lithuania (94%, +6). An even bigger increase is seen among those who totally agree with this statement, most notably Malta (76%, +27), Greece (75%, +24), and Bulgaria (45%, +18).

Respondents are more likely to agree that everyone in the EU should be able to speak more than one language in addition to their mother tongue in ten countries, with the biggest increase seen in Ireland (77%, +21), Cyprus (91%, +15), and Malta (90%, +15). Sharp declines are seen among other places in the Netherlands (57%, -24), Sweden (54%, -17), and Estonia (66%, -16).

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

- Younger respondents, particularly those aged 15-24 are more likely (90%, +5) to agree that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue, compared to 49% of those aged 25-39, 47% of those aged 40- 54, and 46% of those aged 55 and up. The respondents aged 15- 24 are slightly more likely (71%) to agree that people in the EU should be able to speak more than one language, compared to 67% among those aged 55 and up.
- Those who stayed in school past the age of 20 are more likely (90%) to agree that that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue, compared to those who left school aged 15 or younger (79%). The same is true regarding the ability to speak more than one language, with the most educated group more likely to totally agree (35%) compared to their less educated peers (31%).
- Students are the most likely (93%) to agree that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue, especially compared to unemployed respondents and house persons (both 82%). The self-employed are the most likely (74%) to agree that people in the EU should be able to speak more than one language, compared to the unemployed (64%) and retired respondents (65%).
- Those who never have trouble paying their bills are more likely (88%) to agree that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother than those who have difficulties most of the time (81%).
- Those who consider themselves as belonging to the upper- middle class are the most likely (93%) to agree that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one extra language compared to 81% of those in the working class. Those pertaining to the upper class are more likely (79%) to agree that people in the EU should be able to speak more than one language compared to 70% of the middle class, and 68% of the working class.

Special Eurobarometer 540 Europeans and their Languages September - October 2023

QB7.1 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements. Everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue (% - EU)

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'
EU27	48	38	8	3	3	86	11
Gender							
Man	48	39	8	3	2	87	11
Woman	47	39	8	3	3	86	11
Age							
15-24	55	35	6	3	1	90	9
25-39	49	38	9	3	1	87	12
40-54	47	40	8	3	2	87	11
55 +	46	39	8	3	4	85	11
Education (End of)							
15-	39	40	9	5	7	79	14
16-19	40	44	10	3	3	84	13
20+	58	32	6	3	1	90	9
Still studying	59	34	5	2	0	93	7
Socio-professional category							
Self- employed	51	38	7	3	1	89	10
Managers	57	34	6	2	1	91	8
Other white collars	48	40	8	2	2	88	10
Manual workers	41	43	10	4	2	84	14
House persons	42	40	9	3	6	82	12
Unemployed	42	40	10	4	4	82	14
Retired	46	38	8	4	4	84	12
Students	59	34	5	2	0	93	7
Difficulties paying bills							
Most of the time	46	35	10	5	4	81	15
From time to time	42	43	10	3	2	85	13
Almost never/ Never	51	37	7	3	2	88	10
Consider belonging to							
The working class	44	37	9	4	6	81	13
The lower middle class	44	42	8	4	2	86	12
The middle class	48	40	8	3	1	88	11
The upper middle class	62	31	4	2	1	93	6
The upper class	61	28	6	4	1	89	10

QB7.2 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements. Everyone in the EU should be able to speak more than one language in addition to their mother tongue (% - EU)

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'
EU27	32	37	20	8	3	69	28
Gender							
Man	32	36	21	8	3	68	29
Woman	33	37	19	7	4	70	26
Age							
15-24	34	37	18	8	3	71	26
25-39	34	36	20	8	2	70	28
40-54	33	37	20	7	3	70	27
55 +	30	37	20	8	5	67	28
Education (End of)							
15-	31	36	17	9	7	67	26
16-19	30	37	21	8	4	67	29
20+	35	36	20	7	2	71	27
Still studying	36	37	18	7	2	73	25
Socio-professional category							
Self- employed	36	38	18	6	2	74	24
Managers	33	37	22	7	1	70	29
Other white collars	34	36	20	8	2	70	28
Manual workers	32	38	19	8	3	70	27
House persons	33	36	16	7	8	69	23
Unemployed	30	34	21	11	4	64	32
Retired	29	36	20	9	6	65	29
Students	36	37	18	7	2	73	25
Difficulties paying bills							
Most of the time	33	33	18	11	5	66	29
From time to time	33	38	19	7	3	71	26
Almost never/ Never	32	36	21	8	3	68	29
Consider belonging to							
The working class	33	35	17	9	6	68	26
The lower middle class	28	39	21	8	4	67	29
The middle class	34	36	21	7	2	70	28
The upper middle class	31	37	21	9	2	68	30
The upper class	36	43	15	6	0	79	21

2. Protection of minority languages

Most Europeans agree that regional and minority languages should be protected.

Respondents were asked whether regional and minority languages should be protected.

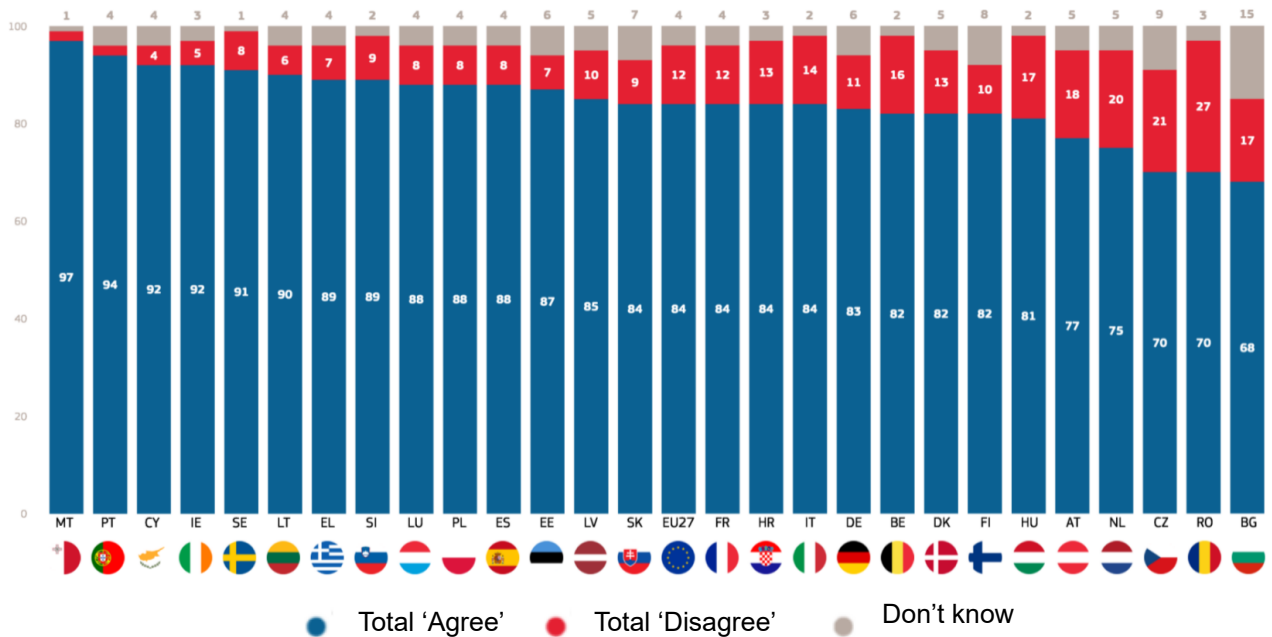
More than eight in ten (84%) agree that regional and minority languages should be protected, with more than four in ten (43%) totally agreeing, and 41% tending to agree. Just over one in ten (12%) disagree.

At the national level, in five countries, more than nine in ten agree that regional and minority languages should be protected: Malta (97%), Portugal (94%), Cyprus and Ireland (both 92%), and Sweden (91%). Respondents are least likely to think this in Bulgaria (68%), Czechia and Romania (both 70%), and the Netherlands (75%). In ten Member States, more than half totally agree, most notably in Malta (74%), Sweden (71%), and Slovenia (70%).

QB7. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements ('EU27') (%)
Regional and minority languages should be protected



QB7.4. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements:
 -Regional and minority languages should be protected (%)



Base: 26523 (all respondents)

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

- Respondents aged 25-54 are slightly more likely (84%-85%) to agree that regional and minority languages should be protected, compared with those aged 15-24, and those aged 55 and up (both 82%).
- Close to nine in ten (87%) among those who went to school beyond the age of 20 agree with the proposed statement, compared to eight in ten (80%) of those who left school aged 15 or younger
- Managers are the most likely (88%) to agree that regional and minority languages should be protected, compared to the self-employed, other white-collar workers, and students (84% all), the unemployed (80%), and house persons (77%).
- Those who never have financial difficulties are more likely (85%) to agree with the proposed statement than those who face such issues most of the time (78%).
- Very active language-learners, that is respondents who have started or continued to learn a new language in the past two years are more likely to agree with the proposed statement (87%) than those who are inactive (82%), namely respondents who have never learned any other language than their mother tongue nor they intend to do so soon.

QB7.4 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements Regional and minority languages should be protected (% - EU)

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'
EU27	43	41	9	3	4	84	12
Gender							
Man	41	42	9	4	4	83	13
Woman	43	40	9	3	5	83	12
Age							
15-24	42	40	10	3	5	82	13
25-39	42	43	9	3	3	85	12
40-54	43	41	10	3	3	84	13
55 +	42	40	8	4	6	82	12
Education (End of)							
15-	39	41	9	4	7	80	13
16-19	38	43	10	4	5	81	14
20+	49	38	8	2	3	87	10
Still studying	44	49	9	3	4	84	12
Socio-professional category							
Self-employed	42	42	8	4	4	84	12
Managers	47	41	7	2	3	88	9
Other white collars	42	42	10	3	3	84	13
Manual workers	41	42	10	3	4	83	13
House persons	38	39	11	4	8	77	15
Unemployed	37	43	10	5	5	80	15
Retired	43	39	8	4	6	82	12
Students	44	40	9	3	4	84	12
Difficulties paying bills							
Most of the time	42	36	11	5	5	78	16
From time to time	39	43	11	3	4	82	14
Almost never/ Never	44	41	8	3	4	85	11
Consider belonging to							
The working class	44	38	8	3	7	82	11
The lower middle class	39	43	10	3	5	82	13
The middle class	43	42	9	3	3	85	12
The upper middle class	44	40	11	3	2	84	14
The upper class	46	36	10	7	1	82	17
Activity as language learner							
Very active	51	36	7	3	3	87	10
Active	44	41	10	3	2	85	13
Not active	40	42	10	3	5	82	13

3. Improving language skills as a policy priority

Three quarters of Europeans think improving language skills should be a policy priority.

Respondents were asked whether improving language skills should be a policy priority.

More than three quarters respondents agree that whether improving language skills should be a policy priority (76%, -2 percentage point compared to 2012). More than one in three (35%, +1) totally agree. One in five (19%, +2) disagrees, with 5% (=) totally disagreeing.

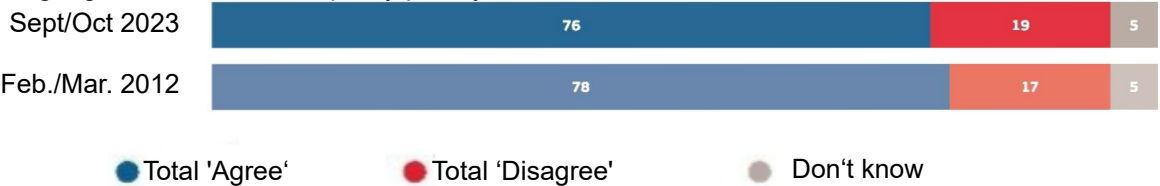
In twelve countries, more than eight in ten agree that improving language skills should be a policy priority. The highest scores are seen in Malta (92%), Luxembourg (89%), and Cyprus (88%). Respondents are least likely to agree with this statement in Estonia (60%), Austria and Slovakia (both 64%), and Romania (65%). In six countries,

at least half totally agree: Malta (68%), Cyprus (66%), Greece (52%), the Netherlands (51%), and Spain and Luxembourg (both 50%).

In 11 countries, respondents are more likely than in 2012 to agree that improving language skills should be a policy priority, with the biggest increases registered in Malta (92%, +17), Latvia (71%, +13), and Portugal (82%, +10). They are substantially less likely to think this way in Belgium (81%, -7), France (75%, -7), and Estonia (60%, -7).

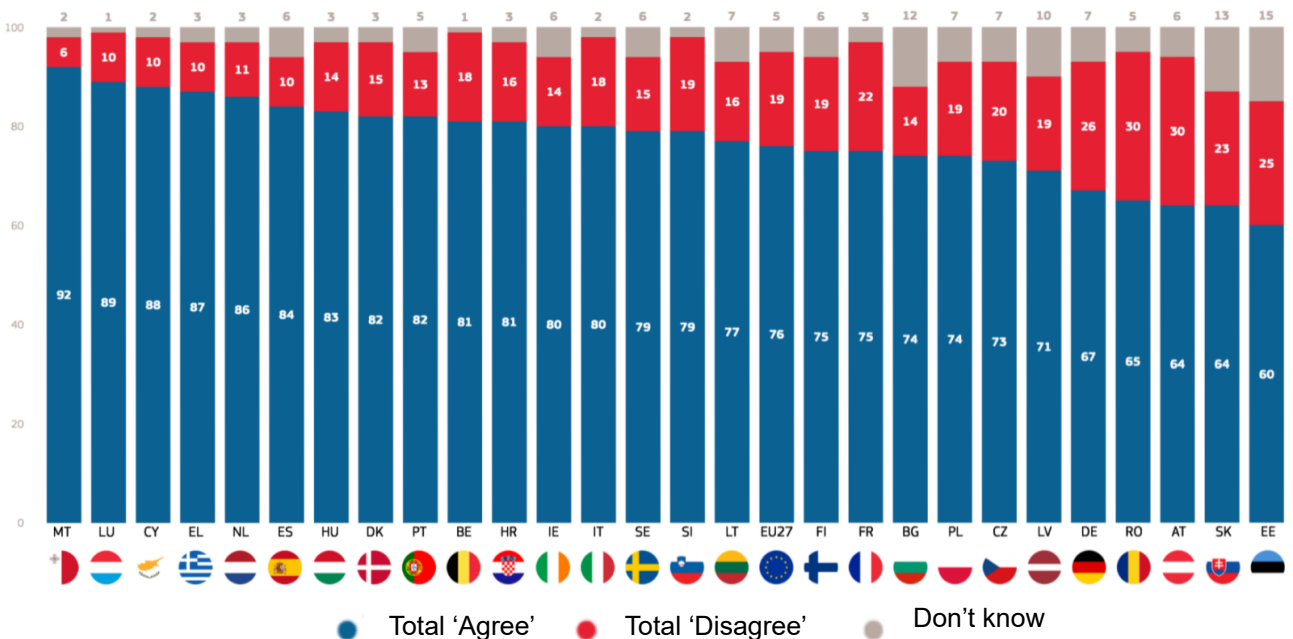
QB7.5. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree With each the following statements._(EU27)
(%)

Improving language skills should be a policy priority



Base: 26523 (all respondents)

QB7.5. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree With each the following statements. (%)
Improving language skills should be a policy priority



Base: 26523 (all respondents)

The socio-demographic analysis shows the following:

- Younger respondents are more likely to agree that improving language skills should be a policy priority, with eight in ten (80%, +2) among those aged 15-24 agreeing, compared to 73% among those aged 55 and up.
- Those who stayed in education beyond the age of 20 are more likely to agree with the proposed statement than those who left school aged 15 or younger (82% vs 64%). Regarding those who totally agree the proportions are even more pronounced (41% vs 26%).
- Looking at socio-professional categories, students are the most likely (83%) to agree that improving language skills should be a policy priority, compared with the self-employed (80%), manual workers (73%), retirees (71%), and the unemployed (68%).
- Those who never have difficulties paying their bills are more likely (78%) to agree with the proposed statement than those who face such difficulties most of the time (68%).
- Respondents who consider themselves as belonging to the upper or upper-middle class (both 82%) are slightly more likely to agree that improving language skills should be a policy priority compared with 78% of those in the middle class and 71% in the working class.
- Active language learners are more likely (85%) than those who are not active (72%) to agree that improving language skills should be a policy priority.

QB7.5 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements. Improving language skills should be a policy priority (% - EU)

	Totally agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Totally disagree	Don't know	Total 'Agree'	Total 'Disagree'
EU27	35	41	14	5	5	76	19
Gender							
Man	34	42	15	5	4	76	20
Woman	35	40	14	5	6	75	19
Age							
15-24	38	42	14	3	3	80	17
25-39	36	42	14	5	3	78	19
40-54	35	42	14	5	4	77	19
55 +	33	40	14	6	7	73	20
Education (End of)							
15-	26	38	16	9	11	64	25
16-19	31	43	15	6	5	74	21
20+	41	41	12	3	3	82	15
Still studying	40	43	12	2	3	83	14
Socio-professional category							
Self-employed	38	42	12	4	4	80	16
Managers	39	43	12	4	2	82	16
Other white collars	35	44	14	4	3	79	18
Manual workers	32	41	15	7	5	73	22
House persons	31	38	16	7	8	69	23
Unemployed	29	39	18	7	7	68	25
Retired	32	39	15	6	8	71	21
Students	40	43	12	2	3	83	14
Difficulties paying bills							
Most of the time	33	35	16	10	6	68	26
From time to time	32	43	16	5	4	75	21
Almost never/ Never	36	42	13	4	5	78	17
Consider belonging to							
The working class	33	38	13	7	9	71	20
The lower middle class	30	42	17	6	5	72	23
The middle class	35	43	14	4	4	78	18
The upper middle class	42	40	12	4	2	82	16
The upper class	43	39	14	3	1	82	17

CONCLUSIONS



This survey investigates European perspectives and actions regarding multilingualism, an area overseen by the Directorate- General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture. It allows a comparison with the 2012 findings, examining the evolution of public attitudes, behaviours, and opinions towards policies. The final section synthesizes the research outcomes and discusses implications for the European Commission.

1. Multilingualism in the EU

The EU's linguistic landscape is marked by diversity and a strong inclination towards multilingualism. German is the most common mother tongue (19%), overtaking English, which saw a significant drop from 13% in 2012 to 2% in 2023, due to the UK leaving the EU. French (15%), Italian (13%), Spanish (9%), and Polish (9%) are also widely spoken native languages.

Around six in ten (59%) Europeans are able to speak at least one language other than their mother tongue, an increase from 56% in 2012 (+3). About 28% (+1) can converse in at least two and 11% (+ 1) at least three languages. Looking at language ability, English is prevalent, with close to half of Europeans (47%) able to speak it well enough in order to be able to have a conversation, a slight increase (+5) compared to 2012. This is followed by smaller proportions of respondents who are able to speak French (11%, =), German (10%, -2), Spanish (7%, =), Italian (3%, =), and Russian (3%, -2). Compared to 2012, in all EU Member States, English grows substantially as a language that respondents speak well enough to have a conversation in, with the biggest increases seen in Spain (38%, +16), Czechia (41%, +14), and Greece (41%, +14).

Socio-demographic factors play a crucial role in language proficiency. Women, younger individuals, and those with higher education levels are more likely to be multilingual. For instance, 79% (+5 compared to both 2005 and 2012) of 15-24-year-olds can speak at least one additional language, compared to 44% of those aged 55+. Additionally, those in management positions or higher social classes are more likely to speak languages other than their mother tongue.

We also see an increase since 2012 in the ability to speak two languages other than their mother tongue, with notable rises in countries like Czechia (33%, +11), Latvia (64%, +10) and Spain (28%, +10). A noteworthy increase can be observed also in the European youth category, as young Europeans aged 15-24 who can speak two additional languages are 39%, a 2 percentage points increase since 2012 and 28 percentage points increase since 2005. English, while dominant, is still far from being

spoken universally across all member states, with lower levels of fluency in countries like Poland and Romania.

Overall, the data reflects a growing trend towards learning multiple languages and feeling more confident in the level of proficiency of those languages, aligning with EU policy objectives and cultural diversity goals. However, while progress in English learning is noticeable, particularly among the youth, it is clearly much less visible for other languages.

2. Use of languages in different contexts

A significant 31% of Europeans use their first foreign language every day, with English being the dominant choice (20%), followed by German (4%) and French (3%). English is also the most common second foreign language. Between 2012 and 2023, we see English use (by non-native speakers) advancing in almost every EU Member State most notably in Ireland (33%, +21), the Netherlands (48%, +21), and Cyprus (55%, +20). Demographically, men are more likely than women to use English daily (22% vs 17%). Across different age groups, younger respondents aged 15-24 are more likely to use English daily (33%) compared to older respondents. Education level also influences usage, with higher-educated individuals using English more frequently.

In the EU, the regular use of additional languages varies greatly depending on the context. The most common usage of the first additional language is during holidays abroad (50%), followed by the Internet (44%), and watching films/TV or listening to radio (39%), communication with friends (35%) and reading news (29%). Close to three in ten (28%) use their first additional language in conversations at work, and 22% for work-related reading. Interestingly, 17% use an additional language when communicating with family members.

In terms of media consumption, a majority (53%) prefer subtitled over dubbed foreign films and programs, a preference that is particularly high in Sweden and Finland (95%). This has been an important change (11 percentage points) since 2012, when a majority preferred dubbing. Younger audiences and those with higher education levels show a stronger inclination towards subtitled content.

3. Language learning: motives and methods

In Europe, English stands out with 77% (+1) considering it crucial for personal development, followed by German (14%, -3), French (13%, -1), and Spanish (12%, =). Women (23%, =) are slightly more likely than men (20%, -2) to have never learned a language other than their mother tongue. Younger respondents (aged 15-24) are more inclined to see the benefits of language learning,

with 18% (=) having started to learn a new language in the last 2 years compared to only 2% (-1) of those aged 55 and above. Additionally, highly educated individuals are seven times more likely to have started learning a new language in the last 2 years compared to those with less education.

Country-specific preferences vary, with English being especially valued for personal development in the Netherlands (96%, =), Sweden (95%, -2), and Denmark (91%, -1), while its importance is comparatively lower in Luxembourg (46%, +5), Bulgaria (57%, =), and Hungary (61%, -6). German is mostly favoured in Slovenia (49%) and Denmark (43%) and Spanish in Ireland, France (both 28%) and the Netherlands (21%), among others, albeit not as much as English. French scored highest in Ireland (26%), Germany and Portugal (both 20%), - apart from Luxembourg (62%) and Belgium (40%), where it is an official language.

Demographics play a role, as men (78%, +9) slightly favour English, and younger Europeans (15-24 years) strongly prefer it (90%, +10). Higher education levels correlate with a preference for various languages. Financial stability and higher social status also align with appreciation for languages like English, German, and French. In summary, while English leads, other languages maintain importance, influenced by nationality, demographic, and socio-economic factors. For instance, managers and white-collar workers tend to value German more than other professional categories.

Europeans emphasize the importance of English (85%, -3) for their children's future, with variations across countries. English's significance in this respect is particularly observed in the Netherlands 96% (=), Sweden (96%, -2), Greece (94%, +2), Finland (94%, +5), and Slovenia (93%, =).

The benefits of learning a new language include job opportunities (51%) and cultural understanding (45%). However, preferences differ by country. Greeks and Lithuanian highlight working abroad for instance (84% and 75% respectively).

Regarding language learning, 15% (+1) are currently learning or intend to start, while 48% (+3) have no plans to start. Interest is higher among men and younger individuals. When examining the motivations behind learning new languages, it becomes clear that motivation plays a pivotal role. Four in ten (39%, +3) respondents express that a lack of motivation discourages them from learning another language, while 28% (=) cite time constraints as a hindrance. 25% (+4) admit to not being good in languages, and 20% (-6) find the cost of learning an obstacle.

These factors vary by country. In Sweden, 56% (+4) express a lack of motivation, while Cyprus stands out with

48% (+13) emphasizing time constraints. Czechia, Austria, and Slovakia report the highest levels of self-perceived language inadequacy at 32%. Greece tops the list for considering language learning expensive (41%, +14), while France leads in the perception of insufficient opportunities for language use (25%, +1).

In exploring how Europeans acquire new language skills, school-based lessons remain the predominant method, with 47% of respondents learning this way, though this number has declined by 21% since 2012. Other methods lag behind, with 20% engaging in self-learning through TV, films, or radio. Informal conversations with native speakers (17%), self-learning through reading (15%), and online apps or courses (15%).

Nationally, learning at school is most prevalent in Lithuania (74%), while Ireland lags behind at 29%. Self-learning through media is most widespread in Sweden and Malta (54%). Native speaker interaction finds prominence in Sweden (42%), using online apps or courses is popular in Sweden and the Netherlands (36%), but less so in Greece (4%).

When evaluating the effectiveness of language acquisition methods, school-based lessons maintain their primacy, with 34% of respondents considering them the most effective. In second position, 9% view conversing with native speakers as the most effective method, while 8% endorse immersive learning through frequent visits to relevant countries. At the country level, respondents in Lithuania (50%) and Romania (45%) champion school lessons as most effective, while those in Greece (13%) and Luxembourg (18%) exhibit scepticism. Informal conversation with natives is highly valued in Estonia (15%) and Latvia (14%).

Six in (60%) of Europeans rarely use machine translation. Conversely, 20% engage several times a month, 14% several times a week, and 6% daily. Countries with the with low usage of machine translations include Romania (73%), Ireland, Portugal, and Poland (68%). In contrast, Luxembourg (33%), the Netherlands (36%), and Belgium (37%) have the lowest reluctance. Younger individuals aged 15-24 (11%) are twice as likely to use them daily compared to those aged 40-54 (5%) and those aged 55 and above (2%). Active language learners (13%) are considerably more likely to employ machine translations daily than inactive counterparts (3%).

4. Citizens' attitudes on multilingualism

Overwhelmingly, 86% (=) of respondents believe that everyone in the European Union should be able to speak at least one additional language, with nearly half (48%, +2) expressing strong agreement. Moreover, 69% (-4) of Europeans endorse the idea that individuals in the EU should speak more than one language in addition to their

mother tongue. Notably, this perspective garners significant support, with 32% (-2) totally agreeing and only 28% (+4) who disagree. The notion that Europeans should be proficient in multiple languages receives majority support in every Member State, except for Finland (32%, -5) and Germany (49%, -8).

In terms of demographic analysis, younger respondents, notably those aged 15-24, exhibit a higher likelihood (90%, +5) to agree that Europeans should speak at least one additional language. Moreover, those who extended their education beyond the age of 20 are more likely (90%, +1) to agree with this perspective compared to their less-educated counterparts. Socio-economic factors also play a role, with students (93%, +3) and upper-class individuals (79%) demonstrating stronger agreement with multilingualism.

A significant majority, 84%, support safeguarding regional and minority languages. Malta (97%), Portugal (94%), Cyprus (92%), Ireland (92%), and Sweden (91%) are among the nations where more than nine in ten respondents advocate for the protection of these languages.

Around three quarters of Europeans (76%, -2) agree that improving language skills should be prioritized as a policy objective, with 35% (-1) expressing strong agreement.

Younger respondents, especially those aged 15-24, are more inclined (80%, +2) to prioritize improving language skills as a policy objective. Additionally, individuals who pursued education beyond the age of 20 are more likely (82%, =) to support this idea compared to those who left school at 15 or younger. Other socio-economic factors also influence perspectives, with students (83%, +1) and upper-middle-class respondents (82%) demonstrating stronger agreement.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Between 29 September and 19 October 2023, Verian carried out the wave 100.1 of the Eurobarometer survey, on request of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, "Media monitoring and Eurobarometer" Unit.

Wave 100.1 covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, resident in each of the 27 Member States and aged 15 years and over.

The basic sample design applied in all countries is a stratified multi-stage, random (probability) one. In each country, the sample frame is first stratified by NUTS regions and within each region by a measure of urbanity (DEGURBA). The number of sample points selected in each strata reflects the stratum population 15+. At the second stage sampling points were drawn with probability proportional to their 0+ population size from within each stratum. The samples thus represent the whole territory of the countries surveyed according to the EUROSTAT NUTS II (or equivalent) and according to the distribution of the resident population of the respective nationalities in terms of metropolitan, urban, and rural areas⁴².

In each of the selected sampling points, a starting coordinate was drawn at random and a reverse geocoding tool used to identify the closest address to the coordinate. This address was the starting address for the random walk. Further addresses (every Nth address) were selected by standard "random route" procedures, from the initial address. In each household, the respondent was drawn, at random. The approach to the random selection was conditional on the household size. By way of example for households with two 15+ members the script was used to select either the informant (person responding to the screener questionnaire) or the other eligible member in the household. For households with three 15+ members the script was used to select either the informant (1/3 of the time) or the two other eligible members in the household (2/3 of the time). Where the two other members were selected, the interviewer was then told to either ask for the youngest or oldest. The script would randomly assign the selection to youngest or oldest with equal probability. This process continues for four 15+ household members - randomly asking for the youngest, 2nd youngest and oldest. For households with five 15+ members we revert to the last birthday rule.

If no contact was made with anyone in the household, or if the respondent selected was not available (busy), the interviewer revisited the same household up to three additional times (four contact attempts in total). Interviewers never indicate that the survey is conducted on behalf of the European Commission beforehand; they may give this information once the survey is completed, upon request.

The recruitment phase was slightly different in the Netherlands, Finland, and Sweden. In the two latter countries, a sample of addresses within each sampling point were selected from the address or population register (in Finland, selection is not done in all sample points, but in some where response rates are expected to improve). The selection of addresses was done in a random manner. Households were then contacted by telephone and recruited to take part in the survey. In the Netherlands, a dual frame RDD sample (mobile and landline numbers) are used as there is no comprehensive population register with telephone numbers available. The selection of numbers on both frames is done in a random manner with each number getting an equal probability of selection. Unlike Sweden and Finland, the sample is unclustered.

42 Urban Rural classification based on DEGURBA (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/degree-of-urbanisation/ba-ckground>)

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Countries	Institutes	N° Interviews	Fieldwork dates	Population 15+	Proportion EU27
BE Belgium	MCM Belgium	1,011	28/09/2023 16/10/2023	9,619,330	2.5%
BG Bulgaria	Kantar TNS BBSS	1,038	27/09/2023 15/10/2023	5,917,534	1.6%
CZ Czechia	STEM/MARK	1,013	27/09/2023 18/10/2023	8,982,036	2.4%
DK Denmark	Mantle Denmark (Kantar Public)	1,010	27/09/2023 16/10/2023	4,891,261	1.3%
DE Germany	Mantle Germany (Kantar Public)	1,532	28/09/2023 19/10/2023	71,677,231	18.9%
EE Estonia	Norstat Eesti	1,004	28/09/2023 17/10/2023	1,111,597	0.3%
IE Ireland	B and A Research	1,015	27/09/2023 17/10/2023	4,005,909	1.1%
EL Greece	Kantar Greece	1,014	28/09/2023 13/10/2023	9,167,896	2.4%
ES Spain	Mantle Spain (Kantar Public)	1,009	26/09/2023 10/10/2023	40,639,381	10.7%
FR France	MCM France	1,003	28/09/2023 16/10/2023	55,700,114	14.7%
HR Croatia	Hendal	1,033	25/09/2023 15/10/2023	3,461,468	0.9%
IT Italy	Testpoint Italia	1,047	25/09/2023 06/10/2023	51,599,668	13.6%
CY Rep. Of Cyprus	CYMAR Market Research	504	28/09/2023 15/10/2023	752,304	0.2%
LV Latvia	Kantar TNS Latvia	1,000	25/09/2023 16/10/2023	1,590,245	0.4%
LT Lithuania	Norstat LT	1,017	28/09/2023 15/10/2023	2,373,312	0.6%
LU Luxembourg	ILRES	508	27/09/2023 14/10/2023	533,335	0.1%
HU Hungary	Kantar Hoffmann	1,020	27/09/2023 11/10/2023	8,313,539	2.2%
MT Malta	MISCO International	510	28/09/2023 15/10/2023	446,788	0.1%
NL Netherlands	Mantle Netherlands (Kantar Public)	1,036	28/09/2023 15/10/2023	14,763,684	3.9%
AT Austria	Das Österreichische Gallup Ins.	1,012	27/09/2023 11/10/2023	7,647,176	2.0%
PL Poland	Research Collective	1,015	26/09/2023 15/10/2023	31,982,941	8.4%
PT Portugal	Intercampus SA	1,030	28/09/2023 15/10/2023	8,915,624	2.3%
RO Romania	CSOP SRL	1,054	26/09/2023 13/10/2023	16,174,719	4.3%
SI Slovenia	Mediana DOO	1,002	25/09/2023 15/10/2023	1,791,246	0.5%
SK Slovakia	MNFORCE	1,008	27/09/2023 15/10/2023	4,591,487	1.2%
FI Finland	Taloustutkimus Oy	1,004	27/09/2023 16/10/2023	4,672,932	1.2%
SE Sweden	Mantle Sweden (Kantar Public)	1,074	26/09/2023 13/10/2023	8,541,497	2.2%
		26,523	25/09/2023 19/10/2023	379,864,254	100%

* It should be noted that the total percentage shown in this table may exceed 100% due to the rounding

Interviewing mode per country

Interviews were conducted through face-to-face interviews, either physically in people's homes or through remote video interaction in the appropriate national language. Interviews with remote video interaction ("online face-to-face" or CAVI, Computer Assisted Video Interviewing, were conducted only in Czechia, Denmark, Malta, and Finland.)

Countries	N° of CAPI interviews	N° of CAVI interviews	Total N° Interviews
BE Belgium	1,011		1,011
BG Bulgaria	1,038		1,038
CZ Czechia	844	169	1,013
DK Denmark	863	147	1,010
DE Germany	1,532		1,532
EE Estonia	1,004		1,004
IE Ireland	1,015		1,015
EL Greece	1,014		1,014
ES Spain	1,009		1,009
FR France	1,003		1,003
HR Croatia	1,033		1,033
IT Italy	1,047		1,047
CY Rep. Of Cyprus	504		504
LV Latvia	1,000		1,000
LT Lithuania	1,017		1,017
LU Luxembourg	508		508
HU Hungary	1,020		1,020
MT Malta	362	148	510
NL Netherlands	1,036		1,036
AT Austria	1,012		1,012
PL Poland	1,015		1,015
PT Portugal	1,030		1,030
RO Romania	1,054		1,054
SI Slovenia	1,002		1,002
SK Slovakia	1,008		1,008
FI Finland	903	101	1,004
SE Sweden	1,074		1,074
TOTAL EU27	25,958	565	26,523

CAPI : Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing

CAVI : Computer-Assisted Video Interviewing

Response rates

For each country a comparison between the responding sample and the universe (i.e. the overall population in the country) is carried out. Weights are used to match the responding sample to the universe on gender by age, region, and degree of urbanisation. For European estimates (i.e. EU average), an adjustment is made to the individual country weights, weighting them up or down to reflect their 15+ population as a proportion of the EU 15+ population.

The response rates are calculated by dividing the total number of complete interviews with the number of all the addresses visited, apart from ones that are not eligible but including those where eligibility is unknown. For wave 100.1 of the EUROBAROMETER survey, the response rates for the EU27 countries, calculated by Verian, are:

Countries	Response rates	
BE	Belgium	40.3%
BG	Bulgaria	47.5%
CZ	Czechia	55.4%
DK	Denmark	35.6%
DE	Germany	24.5%
EE	Estonia	30.4%
IE	Ireland	35.5%
EL	Greece	29.9%
ES	Spain	35.1%
FR	France	36.7%
HR	Croatia	38.5%
IT	Italy	26.0%
CY	Rep. Of Cyprus	52.6%
LV	Latvia	37.1%
LT	Lithuania	44.4%
LU	Luxembourg	27.7%
HU	Hungary	61.1%
MT	Malta	54.5%
NL	Netherlands	63.8%
AT	Austria	38.9%
PL	Poland	40.6%
PT	Portugal	46.1%
RO	Romania	51.9%
SI	Slovenia	48.1%
SK	Slovakia	46.2%
FI	Finland	28.2%
SE	Sweden	77.6%

Margins of error

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

<u>Statistical Margins due to the sampling process</u>											
(at the 95% level of confidence)											
<i>various sample sizes are in rows</i>	<i>various observed results are in columns</i>										
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	
N=50	6,0	8,3	9,9	11,1	12,0	12,7	13,2	13,6	13,8	13,9	N=50
N=500	1,9	2,6	3,1	3,5	3,8	4,0	4,2	4,3	4,4	4,4	N=500
N=1000	1,4	1,9	2,2	2,5	2,7	2,8	3,0	3,0	3,1	3,1	N=1000
N=1500	1,1	1,5	1,8	2,0	2,2	2,3	2,4	2,5	2,5	2,5	N=1500
N=2000	1,0	1,3	1,6	1,8	1,9	2,0	2,1	2,1	2,2	2,2	N=2000
N=3000	0,8	1,1	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,6	1,7	1,8	1,8	1,8	N=3000
N=4000	0,7	0,9	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	N=4000
N=5000	0,6	0,8	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,3	1,4	1,4	1,4	N=5000
N=6000	0,6	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,3	1,3	N=6000
N=7000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,2	1,2	N=7000
N=7500	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=7500
N=8000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=8000
N=9000	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=9000
N=10000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=10000
N=11000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=11000
N=12000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=12000
N=13000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	N=13000
N=14000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=14000
N=15000	0,3	0,5	0,6	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=15000
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	

(Questionnaire not available here)

(DATA ANNEXES not available here)

COMMENTS

(Pierre Dieumegard)

This Eurobarometer on languages has been twelve years in the making!

Several Eurobarometer surveys on languages had been published between 2000 and 2012, but none had been published since EBS386 in 2012.

However, since 2012, Europe and the world have changed a great deal, and one might have imagined that Europeans' knowledge and opinions about languages might also have changed.

Yet this EBS540 Eurobarometer on languages is disappointing.

As usual, the press release is very positive and flattering for European Union policy.

"Regarding knowledge of foreign languages, the Eurobarometer survey shows positive, although modest, progress since the last survey in 2012."

Yes, that's very modest.

- For the first foreign language, we note the 3 percentage point increase in the "can have a conversation" response, from 56% to 59%. At this rate, it will take more than another century to reach 90%. That's really very modest when you consider the time and money spent on teaching English throughout the school system.

- Immediately after this sentence on the first foreign language, it is said that the EU is getting closer to its objective, which is to acquire knowledge of two other languages. No, because up until now there has been no mention of the second language.

- In the next paragraph, it is clearly stated that progress is more limited in the second foreign language: compared to 2012, only 28% are able to hold a conversation, an increase of one percentage point. At this rate, it will take almost four centuries for 50% of the European population to be able to hold a conversation in two foreign languages.

- The statement "English is spoken by almost half of Europeans (47%) as a foreign language" should be put into perspective. In fact, 47% of Europeans say they speak English well enough to have a conversation (question D48), although the level of this conversation is unknown. This is consistent with the Eurydice survey of 2023, according to which more than 90% of young Europeans are learning English, and at an increasingly early age: it is normal that after ten years of English teaching, a large proportion of young Europeans claim to

be able to hold a conversation in this language. But we should not forget the results of Surveylang (2012): at the end of school, only 28% of pupils reach level B2 in English, which is officially the expected level.

- The press release refers to an [OECD study](#) on how 15-year-olds learn English, but this study only covers 5 countries (Finland, Greece, Israel, the Netherlands and Portugal), only four of which are in Europe, and all of which have relatively small populations (17 million inhabitants maximum for the Netherlands). It's difficult to extrapolate for countries with large populations (Germany, France, Italy, with populations in excess of 60 million).

Text, graphics and tables are often at too low a resolution to be usable

Some tables are in the form of text, which can be easily copied to statistical analysis software, but others are in the form of a raster image (a table of pixels), which cannot be copied and pasted. These tables are often of low resolution, which means they cannot be used by automatic character recognition software.

This is also the case for graphs, where the legend is illegible. For example, the QB3 chart:



The same applies to graph QB8 :



Errors undermine the reliability of the document

In the French version published at the beginning of June, there were various typographical errors, as well as errors in the legends of graphs and tables, and errors in numerical values. These errors were corrected in the version available on 26 June 2024 (possibly following an email I sent to the contacts indicated in the press release).

Sensitive issues from the previous report have been removed

Reminder of the 2012 report

The 2012 Eurobarometer 386 asked the following questions (EQ7): "To what extent do you agree with the following statements?"

- "All languages spoken within the EU should be treated equally"; there were 81% positive responses ("totally agree" or "tend to agree")
- "Everyone in the EU should be able to speak a common language": there were 69% positive responses.
- "The European institutions should adopt one single language to communicate with European citizens": there was a very narrow majority (51% of positive responses).

There seems a paradox here: European citizens want all their languages to be respected and treated equally, and for everyone to be able to speak a common language. On the other hand, they are only moderately in favour of the European institutions adopting a single language to communicate with them.

These wishes expressed by Europeans are not in line with the practice of the European institutions, which favour English as the sole language of official communication, with no respect for other languages.

If we look at this paradox, it becomes clear that if we are to fulfil the wishes of Europeans (a common language, but respect for different languages), the current policy of all-English is not appropriate. What is needed is a common language that is fair, efficient, easy to learn and precise: the best language is the international language Esperanto.

What's new in the 2024 report

While there were several Eurobarometer reports on languages between 2000 and 2012, there were none at all until 2024.

In both cases (2012 and 2024) Part IV of the report is devoted to EU citizens' attitudes to multilingualism.

The proportion of positive responses to "Everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue" has not changed: 86% (QB7.1). But the text of the report is very positive, and refers to the 17 countries where this proportion has increased, not to mention those where it has decreased.

The proportion of positive responses to "Everyone in the EU should be able to speak more than one language in addition to their mother tongue" fell from 73% to 69% (QB7.2). We can therefore say that Europeans are less in agreement with the EU's official policy of two languages in addition to their mother tongue than they were in 2012. But the report is very positive, and talks about the 10 countries where this proportion has risen, passing quickly over the others where it has fallen.

Then there is no mention of the previous paradox, the desire to have a common language but for all languages to be treated equally. Instead, it says "Regional or minority languages should be protected": of course, the vast majority of people questioned agree. It's interesting to see that the countries that most want the protection of regional and minority languages (Malta and Portugal) do not have this problem. On the contrary, the countries that want it the least (Bulgaria and Romania) are much more confronted with the problem.

But it's still dishonest to remove questions that might show people's disagreement with the policy pursued by the institutions of the European Union.

This report has taken a long time to be published. On the one hand, it took 12 years between two reports on the same subject. Secondly, this Special Eurobarometer 540 was published on 21 May 2024, whereas the field survey was carried out in September-October 2023: it took 7 or 8 months to draw up the report, whereas in May 2024 a Eurobarometer on Europeans' attitudes to the environment was published, a survey carried out in March 2024 (just two months). One might think that the subject of

languages is particularly difficult, and that it took several months to come up with a positive report.