

A photograph of a protest at night. In the center, a person holds a large, hand-painted sign featuring a caricature of a man with a wide, toothy grin. The sign has the word "MURDERER" written across the top and "Started a war in UKRAINE" written in red across the face. The word "PUTIN" is partially visible at the bottom. A person in the background holds a Ukrainian flag. The scene is lit with streetlights, and a building with a star-shaped light fixture is visible in the background. A large white question mark is superimposed over the top half of the image.

mores

MORAL EMOTIONS IN POLITICS

How European Union Policies Feel

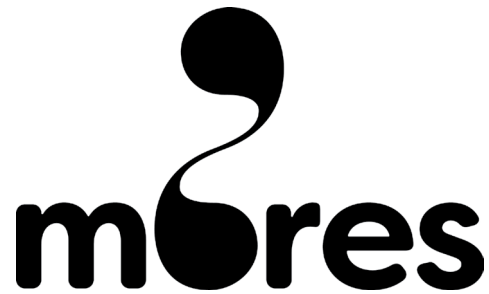
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WORKING PAPER SERIES



MORAL EMOTIONS IN POLITICS: HOW THEY UNITE, HOW THEY DIVIDE

Paper title: How European Union Policies Feel. Insights from a crowdsourcing study

Authors: Nicolò Triacca¹, Jonathan C. Kamkhaji², and Elisa Lironi³

Contact: contact@mores-horizon.eu

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1 ECAS (European Citizen Action Service), Brussels.

2 European University Institute, Florence.

3 ECAS (European Citizen Action Service), Brussels.



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Abstract

This working paper presents the results of a crowdsourcing exercise conducted within the MORES project to explore how moral emotions shape citizens' perceptions of European Union policies. Drawing on 1,363 responses collected between May and August 2025, the study examines emotional reactions, perceived appropriateness of EU action, policy familiarity, and identity across five salient policy domains: the war between Russia and Ukraine, migration and asylum, climate policy (Green Deal), food safety, and economic policy coordination.

Using descriptive statistics and exploratory bivariate analysis, the paper identifies distinct emotional and attitudinal configurations across policy areas. The findings show that EU support for Ukraine stands out as a unifying case, combining high familiarity, strong perceived legitimacy, and positive emotions such as pride and compassion closely aligned with European identity. By contrast, migration and asylum policy emerges as the most divisive domain, characterised by high familiarity but very low perceived appropriateness and strong negative emotions, indicating an area where attitudes are resistant to changing and largely driven by affective predispositions. Climate, fiscal, and food policies occupy intermediate positions, marked by ambivalence, conditional support, and varying emotional foundations.

The analysis highlights that familiarity does not automatically translate into legitimacy and that emotional structures differ significantly across policy domains. These results suggest the importance of integrating emotional awareness into EU policymaking and communication strategies. While the crowdsourcing sample is not representative of the EU population, the findings offer analytical insights into how emotionally and civically engaged citizens evaluate EU action, pointing to the need for differentiated approaches to strengthening trust, legitimacy, and democratic resilience.

Keywords: Moral Emotions, Governance, Public Policy, Crowdsourcing, European Policymaking



1. Introduction

Why emotions matter for policy: how citizens judge EU action through feelings, identity, and legitimacy

In contemporary democracies, political engagement and public discourse are increasingly shaped by emotions—particularly moral emotions—that mobilise, divide, and influence citizens. While emotions can foster solidarity and align citizens with democratic values, they can also intensify polarisation, reduce openness to differing views, or drive disengagement from politics. The **MORES—Moral Emotions in Politics: How They Unite, How They Divide** project addresses precisely these challenges, seeking a more balanced, insightful understanding of how moral emotions operate in politics and how this understanding can be leveraged to strengthen liberal democracy.

Public debates and political choices are never purely rational: they are deeply intertwined with emotions such as fear, anger, pride, or compassion. These emotions influence how citizens understand the world, evaluate political actors, and engage with democratic institutions.

As part of the project, ECAS conducted a crowdsourcing process to gather citizens' perspectives on a selection of key EU policy areas. The goal was to better understand what kinds of emotions are triggered by specific policy programmes and how these emotional reactions shape people's overall evaluations. Policies on climate protection, immigration, food security, and other pressing issues are often framed in technical or bureaucratic language. While this is important for precision, it can also alienate citizens by failing to connect with their lived experiences and emotional concerns.

Through this research, MORES aimed to bridge that gap. By listening to citizens and mapping their emotional responses, we were able to assess whether EU policies meet people's emotional needs and expectations. This effort is essential not only to improve communication and policy design but also to strengthen democratic participation and trust in European governance.

The crowdsourcing process focused on five policy areas of particular sa-

This report provides evidence on the interplay between emotions and politics, and how citizens' emotional reactions can inform policymaking



lience:

1. War between Russia and Ukraine,
2. Fiscal policy,
3. Immigration policy,
4. Climate policy,
5. Food safety policy.

The insights collected provide valuable evidence on the interplay between emotions and politics. They highlight how citizens' emotional responses can inform more responsive, inclusive, and citizen-centred policymaking, ultimately supporting the resilience of European democracy.



“ We focused on five policy areas of particular salience, including the war between Russia and Ukraine and immigration policy ”

Nicolò Triacca
MORES Researcher,
European Citizen Action Service,
Brussels



2. Methodology

MORES used a crowdsourcing process to capture the collective “wisdom of the crowd” about five EU policy areas

Crowdsourcing is a digital democracy tool that harnesses the collective “wisdom of the crowd” to address complex public policy challenges. As an e-participation method, it strengthens representative democracy by enabling direct citizen engagement in decision-making processes. By collecting diverse perspectives, crowdsourcing helps generate policy insights that reflect citizens’ real concerns and emotions, reaffirming a key democratic principle: policies should not only be designed for citizens but also with them.

In 2025, the MORES project launched a crowdsourcing process across several EU countries to explore the role of emotions in shaping citizens’ perceptions of public policies. An online questionnaire, published on the ECAS Crowdsourcing Platform and available in five EU languages (English, German, Hungarian, Italian, and Polish), invited citizens to share their feelings, concerns, and reflections on sensitive policy areas.

The questionnaire was open from May to August 2025 and disseminated both online and offline through ECAS’s network. A multiplier approach was used, engaging key partner organisations to spread the questionnaire at the local level in different countries. These included:

- Democracy International – GermanyEcoD – European Capital of Democracy
- European Union & You – European Network
- EYM – European Youth Movement – Bulgaria

A multiplier approach involved key partner organisations, which helped spread the questionnaire in eight European countries

- IKELOS – Association for Prevention and Promotion of Health Services – Greece
- JEF Italy – Young European Federalists – Italy
- JEF Lietuva – Young European Federalists – Lithuania
- LDUK – Lithuanian College of Democracy – Lithuania
- Lota's Box – Croatia
- Prizma Foundation – Hungary
- THE CIVICS Innovation Hub – Germany
- Volontariato Torino – Italy

Due to this collaborative strategy, combining social media outreach, organic dissemination, and partner networks, the questionnaire gathered 1,363 responses.

The process successfully captured the emotions, such as pride, fear, anger, and hope, that influence political judgments and democratic engagement, offering valuable insights into the emotional dimension of policymaking and citizen participation.

2.1 Survey design

The questionnaire was structured around five key EU policy areas—the war in Ukraine, fiscal policy, migration and asylum, climate policy (Green Deal), and food safety (Farm to Fork). Each policy block began with a short factual introduction to provide respondents with a common frame of reference, followed by a set of closed Likert-scale questions designed to capture both cognitive evaluations (such as perceived appropriateness or effectiveness of the EU's actions) and emotional reactions (including fear, pride, frustration, compassion, anger or enthusiasm). To complement these scaled items, each block also included an open-ended question, inviting participants to briefly describe their views in their own words.

Beyond the policy-specific sections, the questionnaire contained additional items on identity, asking respondents to self-assess the strength of their European, national and regional attachments. At the end, a set of socio-demographic questions gathered information on gender, age, education, income, citizenship, and country of residence.

Here, we present the rationale behind each question and the emotion, value, or information it seeks to capture in relation to the policy:



“ The MORES crowdsourcing successfully captured the emotions, such as pride, fear, and anger, that influence political judgements and democratic engagement ”

Elisa Lironi

MORES researcher, European Citizen Action Service, Brussels

**Table 1 – EU’s policy on the war between Russia and Ukraine**

QUESTION	RATINALE	EMOTION	VALUE
I am familiar with the EU’s policy on the war in Ukraine.	Familiarity	-	
The political, financial, military, and humanitarian support provided by the EU to Ukraine is appropriate.	Appropriateness/ Effectiveness	-	
The EU approach to the war scares me.	Negative emotions	Fear	
I am proud that the EU supports Ukraine in its defence of freedom and democracy.	Positive emotions	Pride	Democracy Freedom
I am frustrated by the EU’s policy on the war between Russia and Ukraine. It has not worked. My compassion for the victims makes me a supporter of the EU’s policy of solidarity with Ukraine.	Negative emotions	Frustration	
My compassion for the victims makes me a supporter of the EU’s policy of solidarity with Ukraine.	Positive emotions	Compassion	Solidarity

**Table 2 – Economic Policy Coordination Framework**

QUESTION	RATINALE	EMOTION	VALUE
I am familiar with the EU's economic policy coordination framework.	Familiarity	-	
The EU's economic policy coordination framework ensures the sustainability of public finance in EU Member States.	Appropriateness/ Effectiveness	-	
The EU's economic policy coordination framework is harmful to social policy and prosperity.	Negative emotions	Concern	
I am pleased that the EU's economic policy coordination framework supports long-term social cohesion and stability in EU Member States.	Positive emotions	Satisfaction	Cohesion Stability
I am disappointed with the EU's economic policy coordination framework because it fails to sanction the recurrent rule-breakers	Negative emotions	Disappointment	
The fact that the EU's economic policy coordination framework promotes responsible fiscal policies at the Member States' level is a great relief to me.	Positive emotions	Relief	Responsibility Security

**Table 3 – EU Migration and Asylum Policies**

QUESTION	RATINALE	EMOTION	VALUE
I am familiar with the EU's migration and asylum policies.	Familiarity	-	
The current European migration and asylum policies take advantage of the opportunities of increased cross-border mobility.	Appropriateness/ Effectiveness	-	
The current European migration and asylum policies adequately address the challenges of increased cross-border mobility.	Appropriateness/ Effectiveness	-	
The EU's migration and asylum policies create incentives for irregular migration. This worries me.	Negative emotions	Fear	
I am proud that the EU's migration and asylum policies save lives and protect those in need of shelter.	Positive emotions	Pride	Solidarity Protection
I am angered by the fact that the EU's migration and asylum policies have led to a poor handling of recurrent refugee crises.	Negative emotions	Anger	
I am satisfied that the EU's migration policy protects external borders thus ensuring the free movement of EU citizens.	Positive emotions	Satisfaction	Security Free movement

**Table 4 – EU Climate Policies/ Green Deal**

QUESTION	RATINALE	EMOTION	VALUE
I am familiar with the EU's climate policy/Green Deal.	Familiarity	-	
The EU's climate policy/ Green Deal is an appropriate response to climate change.	Appropriateness/ Effectiveness	-	
I am afraid that the EU's climate policy/Green Deal is detrimental to the future of the EU's economy.	Negative emotions	Fear	
I am enthusiastic about the EU's climate policy/Green Deal, making Europe more resilient to the climate crisis.	Positive emotions	Enthusiasm	Resilience Optimism
I am frustrated by the failure of the EU's climate policy/ Green Deal to prevent the catastrophic natural and social consequences of climate change.	Negative emotions	Frustration	
I am pleased with the EU's significant progress towards renewable energy.	Positive emotions	Satisfaction	Security Renewables

**Table 5 – EU Food Safety Policy**

QUESTION	RATINALE	EMOTION	VALUE
I am familiar with the EU's food safety regulations.	Familiarity	-	
The EU's integrated regulatory framework appropriately addresses the challenges of food safety, animal and plant health.	Appropriateness/ Effectiveness	-	
I fear that EU's food safety regulations are weakening the competitiveness of European agriculture and food production.	Negative emotions	Fear	
I am a passionate supporter of Farm to Fork and food safety regulations.	Positive emotions	Passion	Support Sustainability Health
I am angered by the fact that EU's food safety regulations are ineffective in counteracting the loss of biodiversity in Europe.	Negative emotions	Anger	
I feel safe when I eat, thanks to the EU strong rules that control the system.	Positive emotions	Safety	Trust Protection

In addition to descriptive analysis, we analysed the data using basic statistical techniques, including means, standard deviations, and exploratory bivariate correlations. These analyses were used to examine how familiarity with EU policies, perceived appropriateness of EU action, emotional responses, and European identity relate to each other across policy domains. While the sample is not representative and relies on self-selection, this approach allows for the identification of consistent attitudinal and emotional patterns within a civically engaged population (see Technical Annex).



3. Sample Composition

A highly educated and civically engaged crowd, strongly European, offering insight into emotional reactions to policy fields

A total of 1,363 citizens participated in the MORES crowdsourcing process, representing a wide variety of backgrounds across Europe and beyond.

Gender

The participant pool was balanced in terms of gender, with 49% female (665) and 47% male (636) respondents. A smaller share, 5% (62 participants), identified as “other” or preferred not to disclose their gender.

Age

The majority of participants were young and middle-aged adults. Almost half (49%, 662 respondents) were between 25 and 44 years old, while 24% (328) were under 25. Participants aged 45–64 represented 19% (254), and 7% (97) were over 64. A negligible number (less than 1%) selected “other” or did not answer.

Education

Respondents were highly educated overall. Half (50%, 678) had attained a master’s degree or higher, and 22% (304) held a bachelor’s degree. Another 21% (281) reported completing high school, while 4% (57) had vocational training. Only 3% indicated “other” or did not answer.

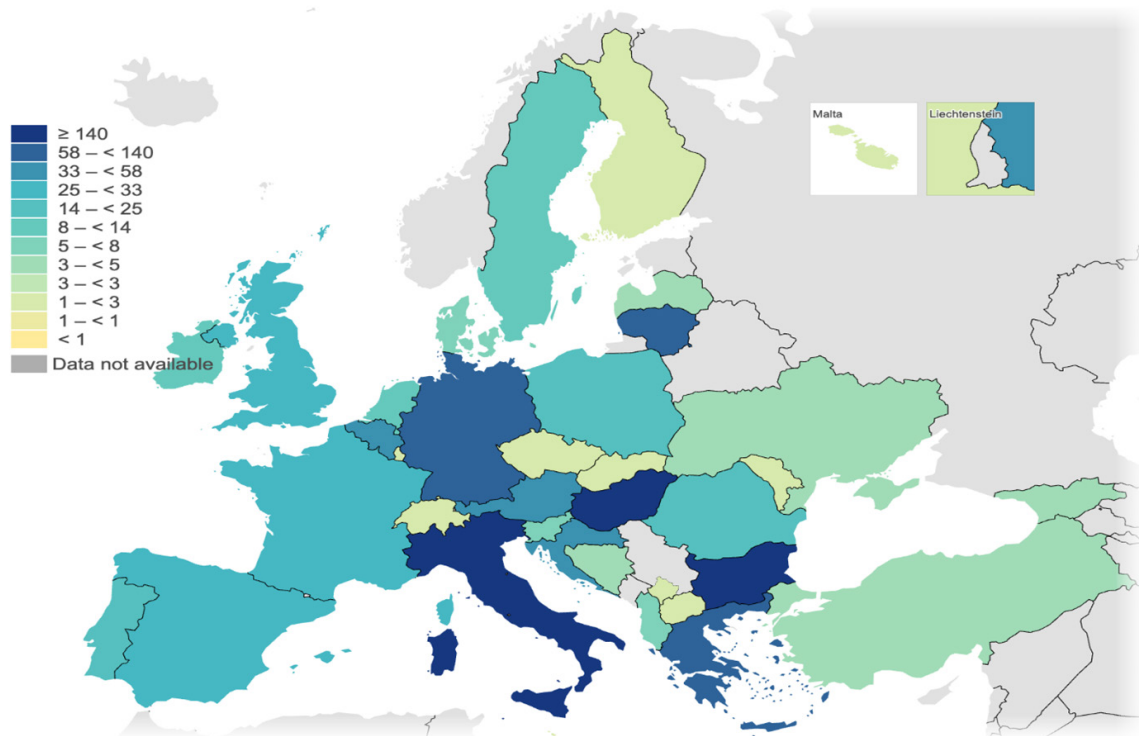
Income Position

When asked to situate themselves relative to the national mean income, nearly half (49%, 665) of participants considered themselves around the national average. About 26% (360) placed themselves above the mean, while 21% (287) identified as below it. The remainder either selected “other” or did not respond.

Despite this diversity, a clear profile emerged for most respondents: a man or woman aged between 25 and 44, holding a master’s degree or higher, and



Country of residence



Mores - Crowdsourcing questionnaire 2025

Administrative boundaries: © EuroGeographics © OpenStreetMap
Cartography: Eurostat – IMAGE, 09/2025
Kosovo* - This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

reporting an income around the national average.

Regional and National Representation

Participants came from across all European regions, with particularly strong representation from Southern Europe (32%) and Eastern Europe (34%). Respondents from Western Europe (18%) and Northern Europe (8%) were also well represented. A small group of 1% (16 participants) came from outside Europe, including the United States, Brazil, Cameroon, Mexico, Morocco, and others.

At the national level, the largest respondent groups were Italian (231), Hungarian (206), and Bulgarian (203), followed by Greek (79), German (128), Croatian (56), and Lithuanian (62). This distribution reflects the engagement of MORES civil society partners and their networks across Member States.

Citizenship and Residence

The vast majority of participants (86%, 1171 respondents) resided in their country of citizenship, while 14% (192 respondents) were living abroad.



4. Analysis

Comparing how different policy fields trigger distinct emotional responses and legitimacy judgements

In this chapter, we delve into the intricate analysis of five distinct policies and the spectrum of emotions they elicit. Our exploration is not merely confined to identifying the types of emotions triggered by these policies but extends to examination of how these emotional responses intersect with the concepts of familiarity and appropriateness. By cross-referencing the emotional reactions with the level of familiarity and the perceived appropriateness of each policy, we aimed to uncover nuanced insights into the public's reception and the underlying psychological mechanisms at play.

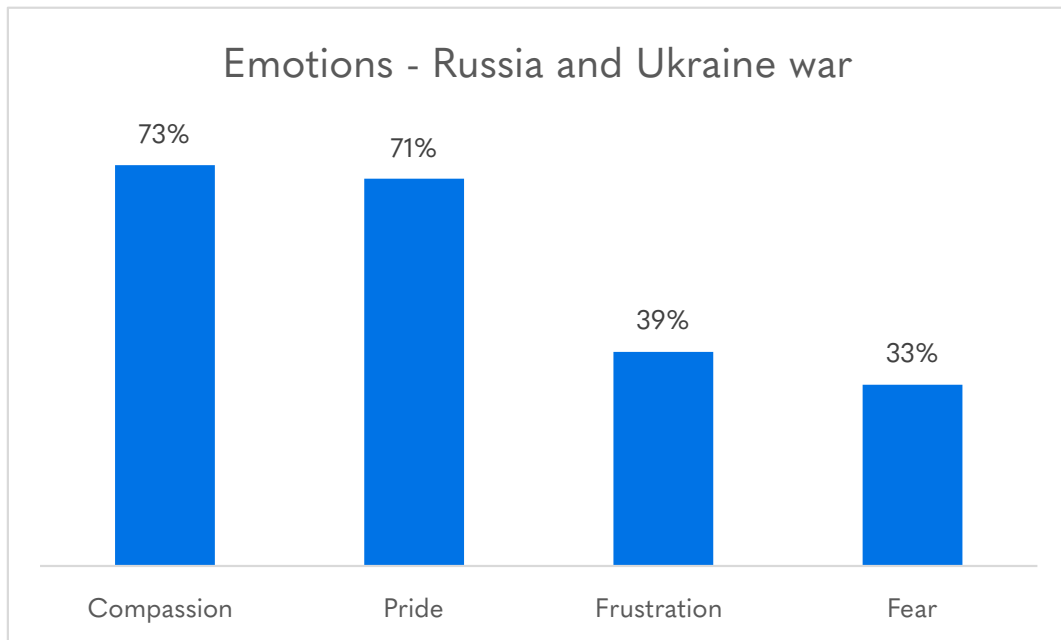
4.1 War between Russia and Ukraine

Ukraine stands out as the most emotionally powerful and widely recognised of all EU policies. With 71% familiarity, citizens are not only highly aware of the EU's role but also respond with overwhelmingly positive emotions: compassion (73%) and pride (71%) dominate, making this the strongest emotional driver across all policy areas. Importantly, appropriateness perceptions are also the highest (53%), suggesting that citizens believe the EU is the right actor to be involved.

Exploratory statistical analysis confirms the exceptional coherence of attitudes in this policy domain. Perceived appropriateness of EU action, pride, compassion, familiarity with the policy, and European identity are all strongly and positively associated, forming a single, aligned support structure. Negative emotions such as fear and frustration systematically occupy the opposite pole, indicating a clear bipolar emotional configuration. Ukraine thus stands out as the only policy area combining high visibility, strong legitimacy, and emotional and identity-driven support.

Yet, frustration (39%) and fear (33%) reveal that doubts about effectiveness and escalation risks persist. The combination of high familiarity, strong perceived legitimacy, and deep positive emotions makes Ukraine policy a unifying force, but it remains vulnerable to disappointment if expectations are not met.

Ukraine: High familiarity, strong legitimacy, overwhelmingly positive emotions, but vulnerable to frustration if delivery falters



4.2 Food policy

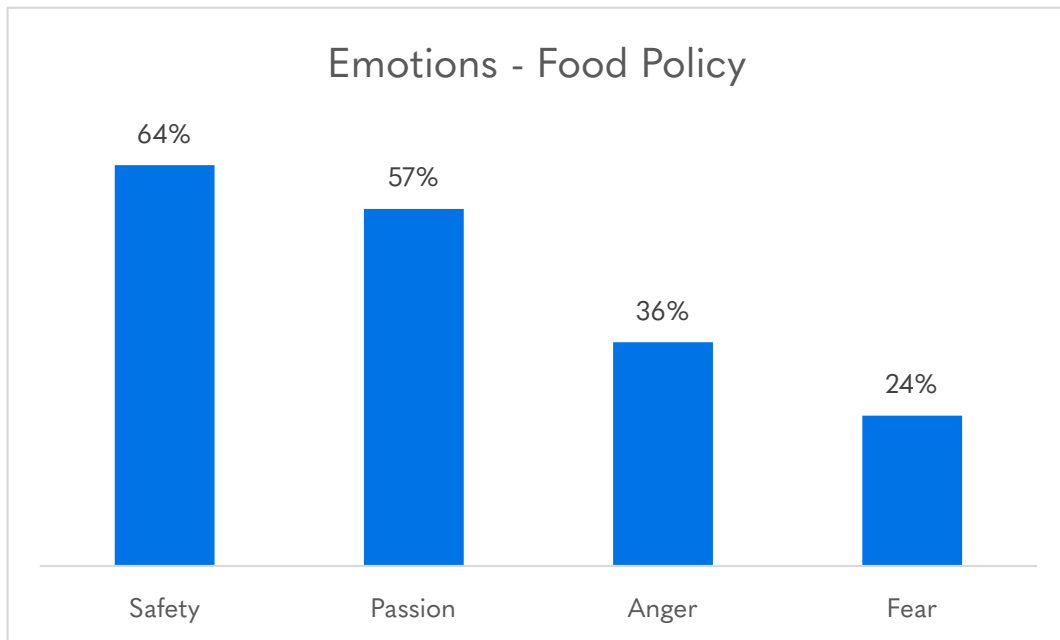
Food policy is less visible than others, with relatively low familiarity (42%), yet appropriateness is fairly high (51%), suggesting that citizens do accept EU involvement in principle.

Statistical analysis helps explain this apparent paradox. Support for EU food safety policy is primarily structured around perceptions of safety, trust, and regulatory effectiveness, rather than identity or geopolitical considerations. Familiarity is positively associated with perceived appropriateness, and negative emotions remain comparatively weaker than in other policy domains. This indicates that food policy enjoys a form of latent legitimacy: while not highly visible, it is broadly accepted when recognised.

Emotions show a dual but less polarised profile compared to other policies: on the positive side, safety (64%) and passion (57%) highlight a solid base of support grounded in health, wellbeing, and enthusiasm for sustainable practices. On the negative side, anger (36%) and fear (24%) remain significant, though not dominant.

This means food policy is emotionally charged but not overwhelmingly conflictual: positive associations with safety and passion outweigh negatives, while anger and fear still mark it as a contested area that requires careful framing and communication.

Low familiarity, relatively high legitimacy, dominated by Safety and Passion

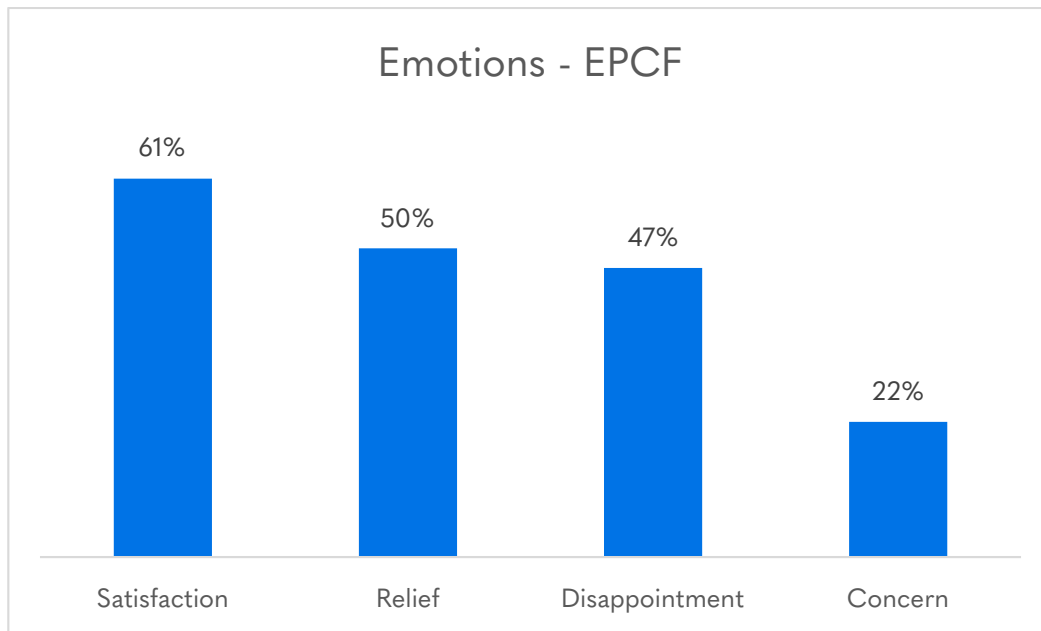


4.3 Economic policy coordination framework

The EPCF occupies a middle ground in both visibility and legitimacy. Familiarity is moderate at 53%, showing that over half of citizens are aware of EU fiscal governance. On appropriateness, however, the score drops to 44%, indicating scepticism about whether the EU is the best actor to coordinate fiscal rules. Emotionally, the policy evokes mixed feelings: satisfaction (61%) and relief (50%) demonstrate trust in stability and rules, yet disappointment (47%) remains high, alongside concerns about fairness and enforcement.

Correlation analysis shows that positive evaluations of the Economic Policy Coordination Framework are closely linked to European identity and perceptions of long-term stability and responsibility. At the same time, disappointment related to weak enforcement is more weakly connected to the broader support structure, suggesting that criticism in this area is driven less by emotional rejection and more by performance-based concerns. This produces an overall technocratic but ambivalent attitudinal profile.

Here, the emotional profile is one of ambivalence: citizens are reassured by EU involvement but remain unconvinced of its legitimacy, reflecting both a recognition of necessity and a lingering trust deficit.

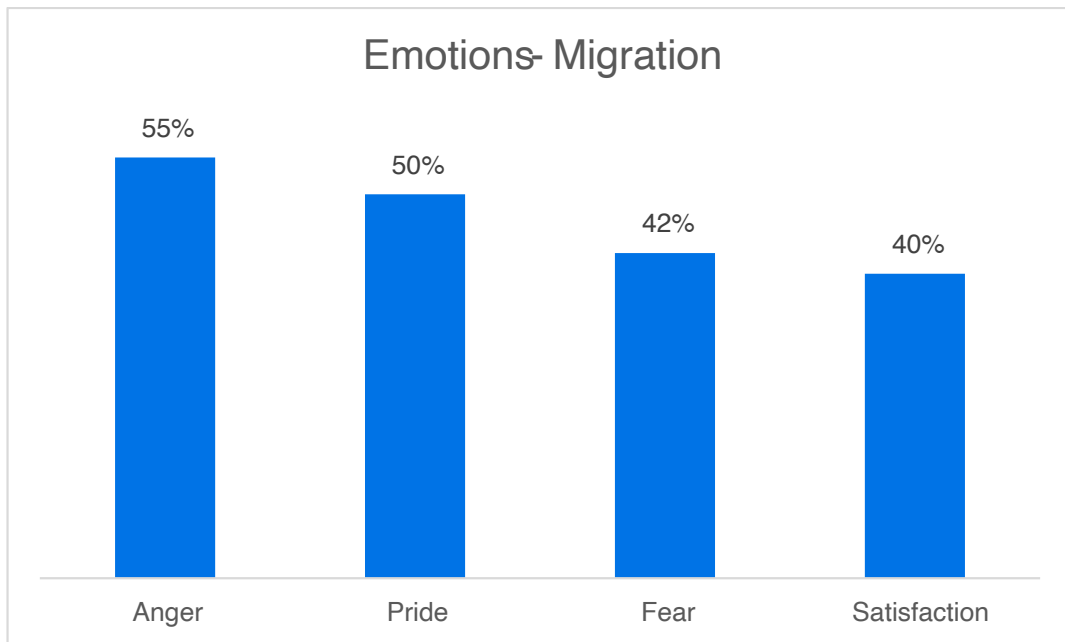


4.4 Immigration policy

Migration is among the most visible policies, with 62% familiarity. Citizens are highly engaged, but perceptions of appropriateness are strikingly low: only 17% see EU involvement as fitting. This legitimacy gap explains the intense polarisation of emotions. On the positive side, pride (50%) and satisfaction (40%) highlight humanitarian values and solidarity. On the negative side, anger (55%) and fear (42%) dominate, pointing to concerns over security, control, and cultural identity.

Unlike all other policy domains, greater familiarity with EU migration and asylum policy is not associated with higher perceived appropriateness. Exploratory analysis indicates that attitudes in this domain are weakly anchored in European identity and largely resistant to learning effects. This suggests that views on migration are driven primarily by affective predispositions and pre-existing beliefs rather than by information or exposure, making this policy area particularly vulnerable to emotional polarisation and disinformation.

Migration thus emerges as the most politically divisive of all EU policy areas: people know about it, they care deeply, but they are split almost evenly between support and opposition, with legitimacy perceptions heavily tilted against the EU.

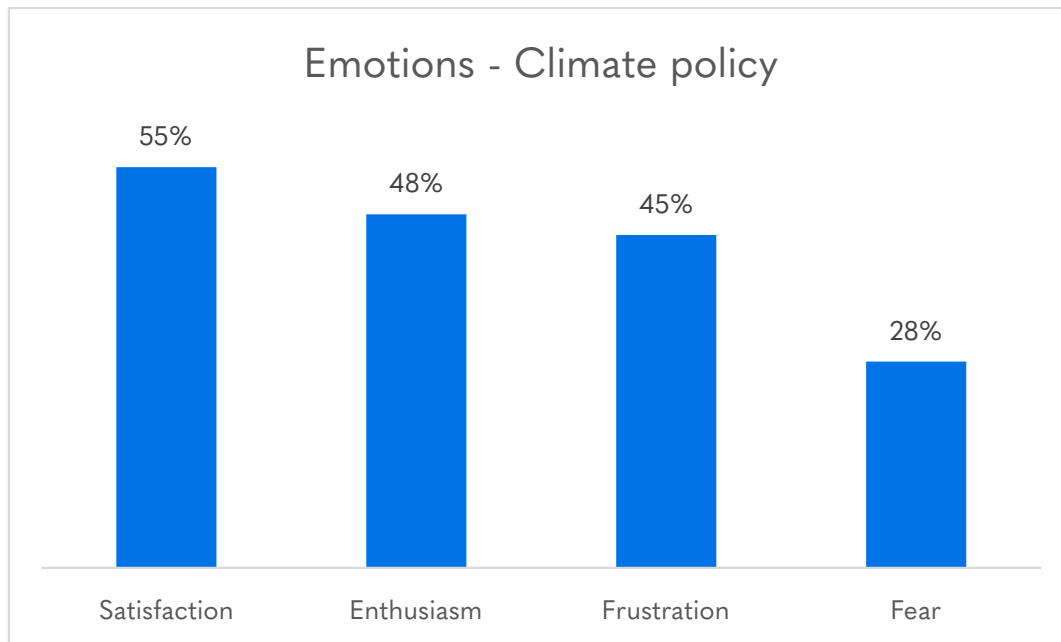


4.5 Climate policy

The Green Deal is both widely recognised and emotionally charged. Familiarity is relatively high at 60%, reflecting the salience of climate issues in EU politics. Positive emotions, satisfaction (55%) and enthusiasm (48%), show that citizens are hopeful and supportive of EU climate ambitions. However, frustration (45%) and fear (28%) indicate a fragility beneath the enthusiasm, as expectations often outpace perceived results. Appropriateness perceptions stand at only 44%, revealing doubts about whether the EU is truly capable or best placed to deliver.

Statistical patterns reveal a coherent pro-Green Deal support dimension in which enthusiasm, perceived progress, appropriateness, familiarity, and European identity are all positively associated. Opposition, however, is structured mainly around economic fear, which is negatively related to support and identity, while frustration reflects dissatisfaction with delivery rather than outright rejection. This layered emotional structure helps explain why support for EU climate action remains substantial but fragile.

Analysis reveals a coherent pro-Green Deal support dimension in which enthusiasm, perceived progress, and European identity are positively associated



4.6 EU identity

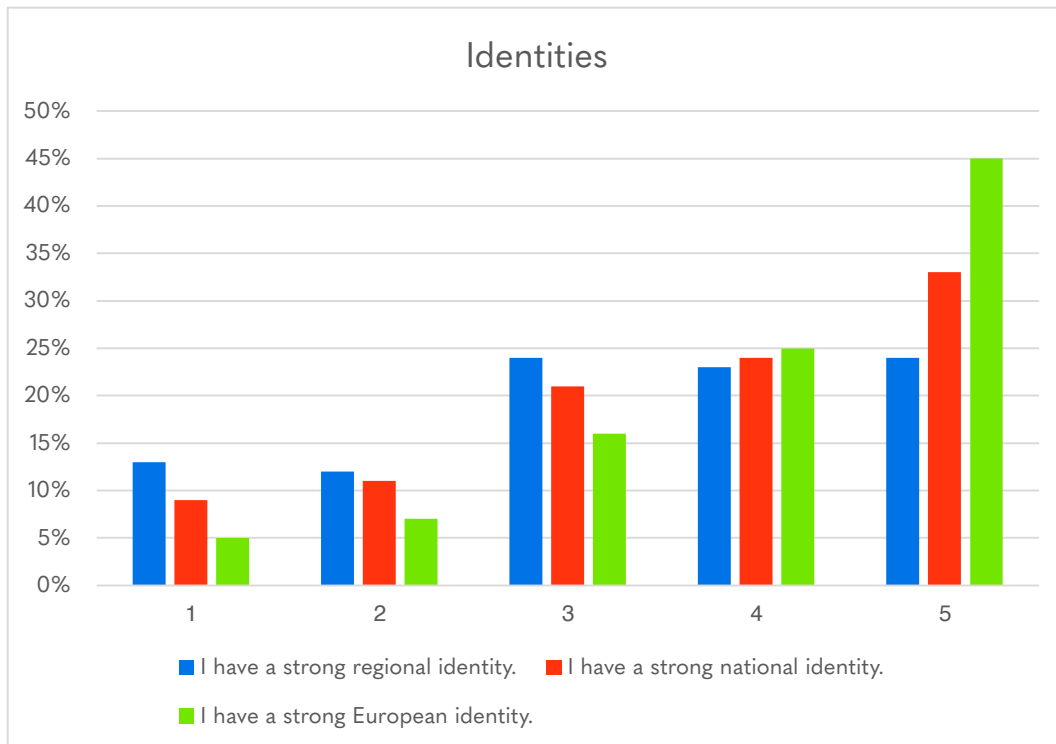
Beyond their emotional reactions to policies, respondents were asked to self-assess the strength of their regional, national, and European identity on a five-point scale. The results reveal a layered but unequal pattern of belonging. (See table on page 22.)

At the regional level, 47% reported a strong sense of regional identity (scores 4 or 5), fewer than half of respondents. A quarter (25%) expressed weak regional attachment (scores 1–2), while the remainder reported moderate identity (24%). This indicates that while regional belonging is present, it is less central than national or European identity.

National identity is stronger, with 57% reporting high attachment (scores 4–5), and a third (33%) expressing the highest possible level (5). Only 20% placed themselves at the weak end of the spectrum. These findings confirm that national belonging remains a powerful reference point for our sample.

European identity emerged as the strongest attachment. Seven in ten respondents (70%) reported a strong European identity (scores 4–5), with nearly half (45%) selecting the maximum level (5). Only 12% reported weak attachment (scores 1–2). This suggests that identification with Europe is not only widespread but also deeply felt among participants.

In our sample, national belonging remains a powerful reference point; identification with Europe is not only widespread but also deeply felt among respondents



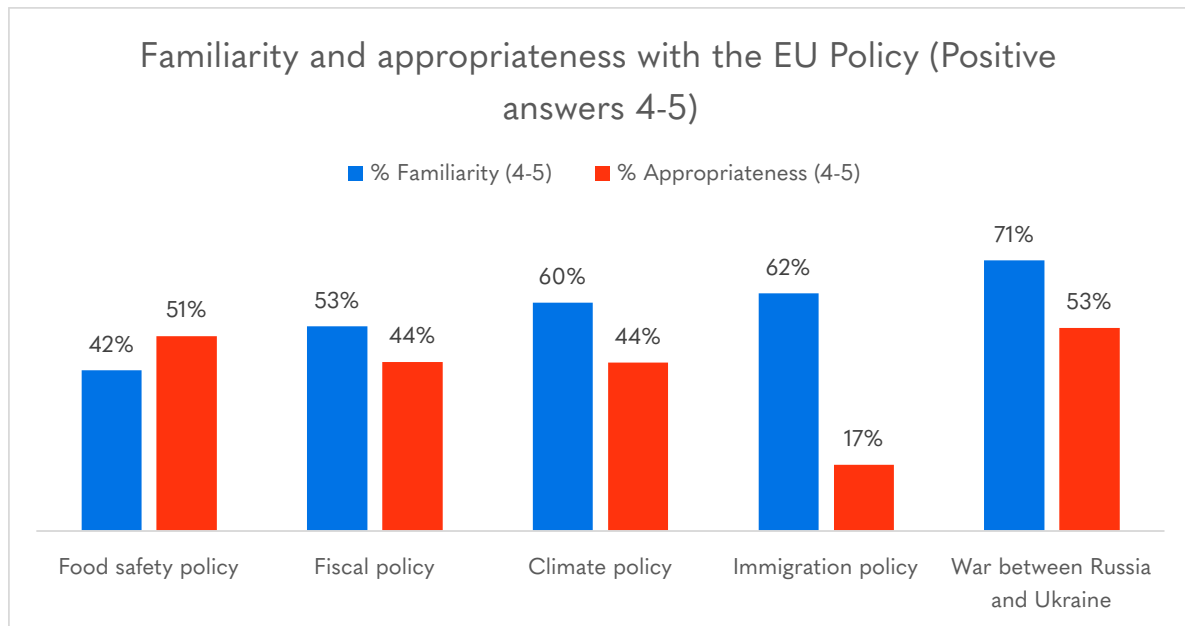
Taken together, these findings highlight a layered structure of identity. Regional, national, and European attachments coexist, but the hierarchy is clear: European > National > Regional. The high levels of European identity are particularly striking, indicating that for the surveyed citizens, belonging to Europe is more salient than to their nation or region. This has direct implications for how EU-level policies resonate emotionally, as demonstrated in the policy-specific chapters of this report.

4.7 Familiarity and appropriateness

In addition to emotional responses, the survey measured two cognitive dimensions across five policy areas: familiarity with EU policies and perceptions of their appropriateness (whether the EU is seen as the right level of governance to act).

Results reveal significant variation:

- 1. Ukraine policy:** Highest familiarity (71%) and highest perceived appropriateness (53%), reflecting both strong visibility and legitimacy of EU action.
- 2. Migration policy:** High familiarity (62%) but extremely low appropriateness (17%), highlighting migration as the most contested



and least legitimate policy domain.

3. Climate policy (Green Deal): High familiarity (60%) but low appropriateness (44%), reflecting awareness but doubts about EU effectiveness.

4. Fiscal policy (EPCF): Moderate familiarity (53%) but low appropriateness (44%), pointing to a legitimacy gap in EU fiscal governance.

5. Food safety policy: Low familiarity (42%) but relatively high appropriateness (51%), suggesting a hidden strength—while not widely known, EU action is accepted when recognised.

Across all policies, familiarity does not automatically translate into perceived appropriateness. Ukraine is the only case where both are high, while migration shows the opposite pattern—widely known but seen as illegitimate. Food policy stands out as the opposite case: little known but, once recognised, widely accepted. This mismatch highlights the need for more effective EU communication and delivery, especially in areas where awareness outpaces legitimacy.

**Table 6 – European Identity**

SCORES	I HAVE A STRONG REGIONAL IDENTITY	I HAVE A STRONG NATIONAL IDENTITY	I HAVE A STRONG EUROPEAN IDENTITY
1	13%	9%	5%
2	12%	11%	7%
3	24%	21%	16%
4	23%	24%	25%
5	24%	33%	45%
NA	3%	3%	3%



6. Conclusion

What emotional differences across key EU policies reveal about legitimacy gaps and democratic vulnerability

It is important to underline that this crowdsourcing process is not representative of the entire EU population. Instead, it offers valuable insights for policymakers into how emotions shape political perceptions and legitimacy. The findings should be read as the elaboration of a specific target group: a highly educated and civically engaged sample, with almost half of participants aged 25–44, balanced across gender, and with particularly strong representation from Southern and Eastern Europe. Many were reached through civil society and youth networks, which means the results capture the voices of citizens who are both attentive to EU issues and motivated to participate in democratic processes.

Within this context, the data show that citizens' views on EU policy are profoundly emotional and closely tied to identity. They react with strong moral emotions—pride, compassion, anger, frustration, fear—that shape their perceptions of legitimacy and effectiveness. These emotions are not marginal: they are central to how trust in the EU is sustained or eroded.

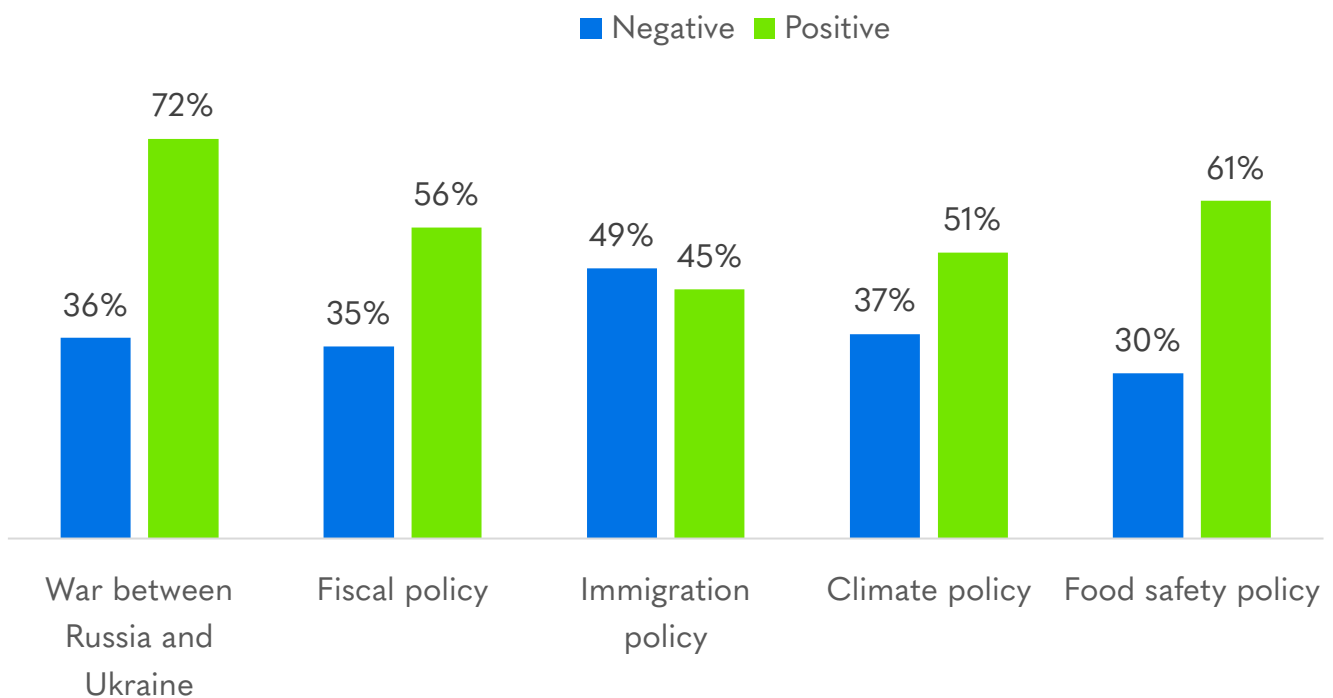
Across all policy domains except migration, higher self-assessed familiarity with EU policies is associated with more positive evaluations of their appropriateness. Migration constitutes a clear exception: despite high familiarity, perceived legitimacy remains very low, indicating a “non-learning” domain where information does not translate into support. By contrast, food safety displays the opposite pattern—low familiarity combined with relatively high legitimacy—while Ukraine is the only case where familiarity, legitimacy, positive emotions, and European identity fully align. These contrasts highlight that legitimacy gaps are not uniform across EU policies and require domain-specific communication and engagement strategies.

Immigration emerges as the most negative and divisive policy domain. While pride and satisfaction reflect humanitarian values, these are overshadowed by high levels of anger and fear. Only 17% of respondents see EU action as appropriate in this area, making it the least legitimate policy field. Immigration policy is a particularly delicate area in policy-making, as evidenced by the

Immigration is the most negative and divisive policy domain. Pride and satisfaction with EU immigration policy is overshadowed by anger and fear



Emotion index (4-5)



significant negative emotions it evokes among citizens. Brendan Nyhan's theory of directionally motivated reasoning suggests that individuals are inclined to accept information that aligns with their pre-existing beliefs and emotions while dismissing contradictory evidence. This phenomenon is particularly relevant in the context of immigration, where negative emotions such as fear and frustration can drive the spread of disinformation and fake news. Addressing these emotional drivers is crucial to prevent the legitimacy gap and ensure that immigration policies are perceived as appropriate and trustworthy by the public.

Ukraine policy, by contrast, represents the opposite pattern. Conducted between May and August 2025, the survey captured a moment of deep solidarity, with compassion (73%) and pride (71%) as the highest emotional responses across all policies. Ukraine is the only area combining high familiarity, legitimacy, and overwhelmingly positive emotions. Yet, even here, frustration (39%) and fear (33%) remind us that if expectations are not met, positive emotions can turn into disappointment.

The other three policies—Green Deal, fiscal policy, and food safety—are perceived as important but elicit more ambivalent and “colder” reactions. They generate satisfaction, relief, or passion, but also frustration, disappointment, or anger. Citizens recognise their relevance, yet these areas are not strongly perceived as distinctly European. Familiarity is moderate to high, but appro-

priateness scores remain low, suggesting a gap between awareness and a sense of EU ownership.

Taken together, the results show that citizens are emotionally invested in Europe, but the intensity and direction of these emotions vary widely across policy domains. The EU's challenge is twofold: to sustain solidarity where it exists (Ukraine), and to close legitimacy gaps where emotions are negative or ambivalent (especially migration, but also climate, fiscal, and food). Failing to do so risks not only weakening trust but also leaving space for disinformation and polarisation to undermine the very democratic values that European identity so strongly affirms.

Main takeaways

The results of the MORES crowdsourcing process demonstrate that emotions are at the core of how citizens perceive and evaluate EU policies. Far from being purely rational, public opinion is deeply shaped by moral emotions—such as pride, fear, anger, or compassion—that influence not only legitimacy and trust but also vulnerability to manipulation. This insight strongly resonates with the reflections presented in the MORES Horizon article “Can democracies inoculate against populist manipulation?”, which warns that emotional resonance, when left unacknowledged or unaddressed, can be exploited by populist narratives to erode democratic trust.

In the MORES data, immigration emerges as the most emotionally divisive policy domain, marked by high familiarity but very low perceived legitimacy and strong negative emotions (anger, fear). This makes it a prime example of how emotional disconnection between citizens and institutions can fuel disinformation and populist exploitation. Conversely, EU support for Ukraine shows that when citizens feel emotionally aligned—through pride, compassion, and perceived legitimacy—policies can reinforce unity, trust, and resilience against manipulation. The Green Deal and fiscal governance occupy a middle ground: citizens recognise their importance but feel ambivalent, suggesting a need for better communication and stronger emotional engagement.

Based on these findings, ECAS's experience in promoting democracy and citizen engagement, and insights from the MORES Horizon project regarding the development of democratic “emotional immunity,” the following recommendations to policymakers can be drawn:

- 1. Acknowledge emotions in policymaking:** EU and national institutions should openly recognise and engage with citizens' emotional responses. Ignoring emotions leaves space for populist framing; integrating them fosters legitimacy and trust.
- 2. Communicate beyond facts:** policy communication must connect

EU and national institutions should recognise and engage with citizens' emotional responses. Ignoring them opens the room for populist framing

data with values and human stories. As the MORES articles and works note, countering manipulation requires not only facts but emotionally resonant narratives rooted in democratic principles.

- 3. Close legitimacy gaps:** in areas such as migration and fiscal governance, where trust is weakest, participatory and transparent approaches can help rebuild perceived appropriateness and ownership of EU action.
- 4. Build emotional resilience:** Civic education and media literacy should strengthen citizens' capacity to recognise emotional manipulation and disinformation, fostering "democratic inoculation."
- 5. Leverage positive emotions:** policies that evoke pride, compassion, and hope, like EU solidarity with Ukraine or progress on Climate Action, should be amplified to reinforce collective identity and optimism toward the European project.
- 6. Institutionalise emotional monitoring:** regularly assessing citizens' emotional responses, as in the MORES crowdsourcing, can help anticipate polarisation trends and guide more adaptive, emotionally intelligent policymaking.

Democracy's strength lies not in eliminating citizens' emotions, but in understanding and channelling them toward constructive engagement. By learning to listen to emotions, both positive and negative, democracies can become more resilient, inclusive, and resistant to populist manipulation.



“ Democracy’s strength lies not in eliminating emotions, but in understanding and channelling them toward constructive engagement ”

Nicolò Triacca

MORES researcher, European Citizen Action Service, Brussels



7. Technical Annex

Methods and statistical evidence underpinning the analysis of emotional and attitudinal patterns

First of all, our sample is not representative nor randomised. It is a convenience sample of self-selected proEU individuals, as the answers on identity show.

QUESTION	MEAN	SD
I have a strong European Identity.	4,01	1,16
I have a strong national identity.	3,62	1,30
I have a strong regional identity.	3,35	1,34

How familiar is our sample with the surveyed EU policies?

QUESTION	MEAN	SD
I am familiar with the EU's policy on the war in Ukraine.	3,89	1,17
I am familiar with the EU's migration and asylum policies.	3,63	1,09
I am familiar with the EU's climate policy/Green Deal.	3,61	1,12
I am familiar with the EU's food safety regulations.	3,18	1,22
I am familiar with the EU's economic policy coordination framework.	3,08	1,17



Most familiar with: War in Ukraine; least familiar with: Economic policy coordination. Highest SD/heterogeneity: Food safety.

How does our sample rank these policies in terms of appropriateness?

QUESTION	MEAN	SD
The EU's integrated regulatory framework appropriately addresses the challenges of food safety, animal and plant health.	3,46	1,05
The political, financial, military, and humanitarian support provided by the EU to Ukraine is appropriate.	3,43	1,16
The EU's economic policy coordination framework ensures the sustainability of public finance in EU Member States.	3,29	1,02
The EU's climate policy/ Green Deal is an appropriate response to climate change.	3,19	1,17
The current European migration and asylum policies adequately address the challenges of increased cross-border mobility.	2,49	1,10

Best ranked: Food safety. Worst ranked: Migration & asylum. Highest SD/heterogeneity: Climate.

What are the dominant positive emotions and around what policies do they cluster? (See table on the following page.)



POSITIVE EMOTIONS	MEAN	SD
My compassion for the victims makes me a supporter of the EU's policy of solidarity with Ukraine.	3,99	1,17
I am proud that the EU supports Ukraine in its defence of freedom and democracy.	3,98	1,28
I feel safe when I eat, thanks to the EU strong rules that control the system.	3,76	1,18
I am pleased that the EU's economic policy coordination framework supports long-term social cohesion and stability in EU Member States.	3,67	1,05
I am a passionate supporter of Farm to Fork and food safety regulations.	3,64	1,13
I am pleased with the EU's significant progress towards renewable energy.	3,51	1,13
The fact that EU's economic policy coordination framework promotes responsible fiscal policies at the Member States' level is a great relief to me.	3,44	1,06
I am proud that the EU's migration and asylum policies save lives and protect those in need of shelter.	3,33	1,30
I am enthusiastic about the EU's climate policy/Green Deal, making Europe more resilient to the climate crisis.	3,32	1,21
I am satisfied that the EU's migration policy protects external borders, thus ensures the free movement of EU citizens.	3,05	1,29



Compassion toward Ukraine; pride towards EU's defence of Ukraine, relief (safety) with respect to food regulation.

What are the dominant negative emotions and around what policies do they cluster?

NEGATIVE EMOTIONS	MEAN	SD
I am angered by the fact that EU's migration and asylum policies have led to a poor handling of recurrent refugee crises.	3,55	1,22
I am disappointed with the EU's economic policy coordination framework because it fails to sanction the recurrent rule-breakers.	3,34	1,23
I am frustrated by the failure of the EU's climate policy/Green Deal to prevent the catastrophic natural and social consequences of climate change.	3,29	1,25
I am frustrated by the EU policy on the war between Russia and Ukraine. It has not worked.	3,13	1,24
The current European migration and asylum policies take advantage of the opportunities of increased cross-border mobility.	3,11	1,12
I am angered by the fact that EU's food safety regulations are ineffective in counteracting the loss of biodiversity in Europe.	3,06	1,19
The EU's migration and asylum policies create incentives for irregular migration. This worries me.	3,04	1,40
The EU approach to the war scares me.	2,76	1,42



NEGATIVE EMOTIONS (CONTINUED)	MEAN	SD
I am afraid that the EU's climate policy/Green Deal is detrimental to the future of EU's economy.	2,60	1,34
I fear that the EU's food safety regulations are weakening the competitiveness of European agriculture and food production.	2,57	1,25
The EU's economic policy coordination framework is harmful to social policy and prosperity.	2,56	1,20

Anger toward EU asylum and migration policies; disappointment toward the lack of bite of economic policy coordination; frustration toward the incapacity of climate policies to curb climate change.

What does the “crowd” agree with the most?

- European identity ≈ 4.01
- Support for (compassion with) Ukraine ≈ 3.99
- Pride in EU support to Ukraine ≈ 3.98
- Familiarity with Ukraine policy ≈ 3.89

= Strong normative and emotional alignment on Ukraine.

What does the “crowd” agree with the least?

- Migration policy adequacy ≈ 2.49
- Economic policy coordination harms prosperity ≈ 2.56
- Food regulation hurts competitiveness ≈ 2.57
- Green Deal harms economy ≈ 2.60

= EU policies are not “harmful”, scepticism mainly clusters around immigration and asylum policies.

Gap analysis

Is there a gap between familiarity with a policy and perceptions of its appropriateness? In general, a positive gap indicates that people support the

policy even without knowing much (normative/emotional support). A negative gap, instead, is a proxy for a critical evaluation (respondents are knowledgeable about the policy but don't find it fully appropriate).

- Ukraine: $3.43 - 3.89 = -0.46$, average negative gap
- Immigration and asylum: $2.49 - 3.63 = -1.14$, a big negative gap
- Food safety: $3.46 - 3.63 = -0.17$, small negative gap
- Climate: $3.19 - 3.61 = -0.42$, average negative gap
- Economic policy coordination: $3.29 - 3.08 = 0.21$, small positive gap

Expected correlations

Across all policy domains, greater self-assessed familiarity is associated with more positive evaluations of policy appropriateness, suggesting that knowledge and exposure tend to reinforce support. However, this relationship breaks down for migration and asylum, where familiarity is not significantly related to perceived appropriateness, indicating that attitudes in this domain are less information-driven and more likely anchored in pre-existing beliefs, identities, or affective predispositions. Immigration stands out as a “non-learning” domain, where increased familiarity does not translate into greater policy support, unlike more technical policy areas and opposite with respect to the war in Ukraine.

Having a strong EU identity is significantly and positively correlated with positive evaluations of policy appropriateness in all the areas. Also, evaluations of policy appropriateness are consistently and positively correlated across all policy domains, indicating a generalised pro-EU policy support orientation, rather than issue-specific judgments. This further suggests that citizens who see one EU policy as appropriate are systematically more likely to evaluate other EU policies positively, pointing to a common underlying attitudinal dimension (a “policy support predisposition”). EU identity reinforces this pattern (positively correlated with all domains), but more weakly for migration, confirming that migration attitudes are less embedded in generalised pro-EU sentiment and more domain-specific.

Having a strong EU identity is significantly and positively correlated with positive evaluations of policy appropriateness in all the areas we assessed



Exploring relationships between variables (bivariate correlations)

Ukraine:

Correlations

		Familiarity with EU policy on war in Ukraine	Appropriateness of EU policy on war in Ukraine	The EU approach towards the war in Ukraine scares me	The EU support to Ukraine makes me proud	The EU policy towards the war in Ukraine frustrates me	My compassion for the victims makes me a supporter of the EU's policy on war in Ukraine	I have a strong EU identity
Familiarity with EU policy on war in Ukraine	Pearson Correlation	1	,388**	-,230**	,438**	-,041	,416**	,360**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	<,001	,143	<,001	<,001
	N	1333	1283	1294	1306	1262	1279	1297
Appropriateness of EU policy on war in Ukraine	Pearson Correlation	,388**	1	-,283**	,481**	-,344**	,378**	,249**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	1283	1305	1272	1284	1243	1259	1268
The EU approach towards the war in Ukraine scares me	Pearson Correlation	-,230**	-,283**	1	-,417**	,430**	-,298**	-,235**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	1294	1272	1317	1290	1263	1265	1280
The EU support to Ukraine makes me proud	Pearson Correlation	,438**	,481**	-,417**	1	-,250**	,647**	,438**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	1306	1284	1290	1328	1264	1284	1289
The EU policy towards the war in Ukraine frustrates me	Pearson Correlation	-,041	-,344**	,430**	-,250**	1	-,156**	-,092**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,143	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001	,001
	N	1262	1243	1263	1264	1284	1237	1249
My compassion for the victims makes me a supporter of the EU's policy on war in Ukraine	Pearson Correlation	,416**	,378**	-,298**	,647**	-,156**	1	,364**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	1279	1259	1265	1284	1237	1300	1265
I have a strong EU identity	Pearson Correlation	,360**	,249**	-,235**	,438**	-,092**	,364**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	,001	<,001	
	N	1297	1268	1280	1289	1249	1265	1322

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



Food safety:

Correlations

		Familiarity with EU food safety policy	Appropriateness of EU food safety policy	Fear food safety policy weakens competitiveness of European agriculture and food production	I am a passionate supporter of Farm to Fork and food safety regulations	I am angered by the fact that EU's food safety regulations are ineffective in counteracting the loss of biodiversity in Europe	I feel safe when I eat, thanks to the EU strong rules that control the system	I have a strong EU identity
Familiarity with EU food safety policy	Pearson Correlation	1	,435**	,030	,282**	-,019	,226**	,134**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	,311	<,001	,537	<,001	<,001
	N	1256	1071	1128	1042	1073	1160	1234
Appropriateness of EU food safety policy	Pearson Correlation	,435**	1	-,200**	,391**	-,182**	,512**	,284**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	1071	1088	1063	988	1021	1062	1067
Fear food safety policy weakens competitiveness of European agriculture and food production	Pearson Correlation	,030	-,200**	1	-,166**	,262**	-,254**	-,182**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,311	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	1128	1063	1152	1027	1061	1122	1131
I am a passionate supporter of Farm to Fork and food safety regulations	Pearson Correlation	,282**	,391**	-,166**	1	,018	,342**	,240**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001		,570	<,001	<,001
	N	1042	988	1027	1058	1000	1033	1039
I am angered by the fact that EU's food safety regulations are ineffective in counteracting the loss of biodiversity in Europe	Pearson Correlation	-,019	-,182**	,262**	,018	1	-,157**	-,044
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,537	<,001	<,001	,570		<,001	,151
	N	1073	1021	1061	1000	1094	1072	1075
I feel safe when I eat, thanks to the EU strong rules that control the system	Pearson Correlation	,226**	,512**	-,254**	,342**	-,157**	1	,352**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	1160	1062	1122	1033	1072	1189	1169
I have a strong EU identity	Pearson Correlation	,134**	,284**	-,182**	,240**	-,044	,352**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	,151	<,001	
	N	1234	1067	1131	1039	1075	1169	1322

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).



Climate:

Correlations

		I am familiar with the EU's climate policy/Green Deal.	The EU's climate policy/Green Deal is an appropriate response to climate change.	I am afraid that the EU's climate policy/Green Deal is detrimental to the future of EU's economy.	I am enthusiastic about the EU's climate policy/Green Deal, making Europe more resilient to the climate crisis.	I am frustrated by the failure of the EU's climate policy/Green Deal to prevent the catastrophic natural and social consequences of climate change.	I am pleased with the EU's significant progress towards renewable energy.	I have a strong EU identity
I am familiar with the EU's climate policy/Green Deal.	Pearson Correlation	1	,238**	-,024	,244**	,041	,209**	,234**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	,406	<,001	,151	<,001	<,001
	N	1308	1247	1226	1250	1229	1249	1280
The EU's climate policy/Green Deal is an appropriate response to climate change.	Pearson Correlation	,238**	1	-,159**	,661**	-,210**	,507**	,247**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	1247	1255	1204	1229	1209	1222	1229
I am afraid that the EU's climate policy/Green Deal is detrimental to the future of EU's economy.	Pearson Correlation	-,024	-,159**	1	-,300**	,039	-,182**	-,164**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,406	<,001		<,001	,177	<,001	<,001
	N	1226	1204	1236	1211	1194	1206	1210
I am enthusiastic about the EU's climate policy/Green Deal, making Europe more resilient to the climate crisis.	Pearson Correlation	,244**	,661**	-,300**	1	-,148**	,572**	,247**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	1250	1229	1211	1260	1215	1232	1235
I am frustrated by the failure of the EU's climate policy/Green Deal to prevent the catastrophic natural and social consequences of climate change.	Pearson Correlation	,041	-,210**	,039	-,148**	1	-,140**	,063*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,151	<,001	,177	<,001		<,001	,028
	N	1229	1209	1194	1215	1239	1217	1215
I am pleased with the EU's significant progress towards renewable energy.	Pearson Correlation	,209**	,507**	-,182**	,572**	-,140**	1	,303**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	1249	1222	1206	1232	1217	1261	1236
I have a strong EU identity	Pearson Correlation	,234**	,247**	-,164**	,247**	,063*	,303**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	,028	<,001	
	N	1280	1229	1210	1235	1215	1236	1322

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



Asylum and immigration:

Correlations

		I am familiar with the EU's migration and asylum policies.	The current European migration and asylum policies adequately address the challenges of increased cross-border mobility.	The EU's migration and asylum policies create incentives for irregular migration. This worries me.	I am proud that the EU's migration and asylum policies save lives and protect those in need of shelter.	I am angered by the fact that EU's migration and asylum policies have led to a poor handling of recurrent refugee crises.	I am satisfied that the EU's migration policy protects external borders thus ensures the free movement of EU citizens.	I have a strong EU identity
I am familiar with the EU's migration and asylum policies.	Pearson Correlation	1	,045	-,017	,018	,086**	-,026	,186**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,118	,565	,521	,003	,368	<,001
	N	1299	1223	1220	1227	1221	1222	1265
The current European migration and asylum policies adequately address the challenges of increased cross-border mobility.	Pearson Correlation	,045	1	-,096**	,417**	-,330**	,493**	,116**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,118		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	1223	1241	1196	1193	1192	1196	1209
The EU's migration and asylum policies create incentives for irregular migration. This worries me.	Pearson Correlation	-,017	-,096**	1	-,252**	,224**	,004	-,147**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,565	<,001		<,001	<,001	,900	<,001
	N	1220	1196	1238	1197	1190	1193	1210
I am proud that the EU's migration and asylum policies save lives and protect those in need of shelter.	Pearson Correlation	,018	,417**	-,252**	1	-,240**	,436**	,234**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,521	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	1227	1193	1197	1250	1199	1208	1218
I am angered by the fact that EU's migration and asylum policies have led to a poor handling of recurrent refugee crises.	Pearson Correlation	,086**	-,330**	,224**	-,240**	1	-,280**	-,058*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,003	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001	,043
	N	1221	1192	1190	1199	1237	1197	1205
I am satisfied that the EU's migration policy protects external borders thus ensures the free movement of EU citizens.	Pearson Correlation	-,026	,493**	,004	,436**	-,280**	1	,182**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,368	<,001	,900	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	1222	1196	1193	1208	1197	1244	1215
I have a strong EU identity	Pearson Correlation	,186**	,116**	-,147**	,234**	-,058*	,182**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	,043	<,001	
	N	1265	1209	1210	1218	1205	1215	1322

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Economic policy coordination:
Correlations

		Familiarity with Economic Policy Coordination Framework	EPCF ensures the sustainability of public finance in EU Member States	EPCF is harmful to social policy and prosperity.	I am pleased that the EU's EPCF supports long-term social cohesion and stability in EU Member States.	I am disappointed with the EU's EPCF because it fails to sanction the recurrent rule-breakers.	The fact that EU's EPCF promotes responsible fiscal policies at the Member States' level is a great relief to me.	I have a strong EU identity
Familiarity with Economic Policy Coordination Framework	Pearson Correlation	1	,303**	-,009	,169**	-,002	,191**	,163**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	,766	<,001	,954	<,001	<,001
	N	1296	1138	1135	1165	1154	1106	1264
EPCF ensures the sustainability of public finance in EU Member States	Pearson Correlation	,303**	1	-,282**	,536**	-,088**	,549**	,302**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001	,003	<,001	<,001
	N	1138	1150	1096	1106	1099	1053	1117
EPCF is harmful to social policy and prosperity.	Pearson Correlation	-,009	-,282**	1	-,388**	,173**	-,286**	-,197**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,766	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	1135	1096	1150	1107	1104	1058	1122
I am pleased that the EU's EPCF supports long-term social cohesion and stability in EU Member States.	Pearson Correlation	,169**	,536**	-,388**	1	-,055	,509**	,381**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001		,066	<,001	<,001
	N	1165	1106	1107	1182	1124	1080	1153
I am disappointed with the EU's EPCF because it fails to sanction the recurrent rule-breakers.	Pearson Correlation	-,002	-,088**	,173**	-,055	1	,025	,080**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,954	,003	<,001	,066		,415	,006
	N	1154	1099	1104	1124	1175	1082	1145
The fact that EU's EPCF promotes responsible fiscal policies at the Member States' level is a great relief to me.	Pearson Correlation	,191**	,549**	-,286**	,509**	,025	1	,331**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	,415		<,001
	N	1106	1053	1058	1080	1082	1123	1097
I have a strong EU identity	Pearson Correlation	,163**	,302**	-,197**	,381**	,080**	,331**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	,006	<,001	
	N	1264	1117	1122	1153	1145	1097	1322

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation
Ukraine:

- Pro-EU attitudes cluster strongly: appropriateness, pride, compassion, familiarity, and EU identity are all positively and significantly correlated (up to $r = .65$), indicating a coherent pro-policy/affective support dimension.
- Negative emotions (fear and frustration) form the opposite pole: they are positively correlated with each other and systematically negatively correlated with support, pride, compassion, and EU identity.
- Overall, the structure is bipolar and emotionally anchored: support for EU Ukraine policy aligns with positive affect (pride, compassion, identity), while opposition aligns with threat-based emotions (fear, frustration).

Food safety:

- A coherent pro-policy cluster emerges: appropriateness, support

for Farm to Fork, perceived safety, familiarity, and EU identity are all positively correlated (up to $r = .51$), indicating a consistent pro-regulation attitude dimension.

- Opposition is structured around competitiveness concerns and anger, which correlate positively with each other and negatively with support, appropriateness, safety, and EU identity.
- Overall, attitudes are again bipolar but more policy-specific: support aligns with trust and safety perceptions, while opposition is driven less by identity threat and more by economic and performance-based concerns.

Food policy: support aligns with trust and safety perceptions, while opposition is driven less by identity threat and more by economic and performance-based concerns

Climate:

- A strong pro-policy cluster emerges: appropriateness, enthusiasm, perceived progress, familiarity, and EU identity are all positively and significantly correlated (up to $r = .66$), indicating a coherent pro-Green Deal support dimension.
- Opposition is driven mainly by economic fear, which is negatively correlated with support, enthusiasm, progress, and identity, while frustration plays a more ambivalent role (partly independent from economic concerns).
- Overall, attitudes are structured but less purely bipolar: support aligns with optimism and performance evaluations, while opposition splits between economic threat and policy dissatisfaction, suggesting more complex emotional layering than in the other domains.

Asylum and immigration:

- A pro-policy cluster is present but weaker: appropriateness, pride (humanitarian), and satisfaction (border control) correlate positively, indicating a mixed support dimension combining humanitarian and security logics.
- Opposition is structured around anger and irregular migration concerns, which correlate positively with each other and negatively with support and satisfaction, but less cleanly than in other domains.
- Overall, attitudes are less coherent and more fragmented: support splits between humanitarian and control narratives, while opposition blends threat and dissatisfaction, making migration the most internally divided policy domain.

Economic policy coordination:

- A clear pro-policy cluster emerges: sustainability, social cohesion, fiscal responsibility, familiarity, and EU identity are all positively correlated (up to $r = .55$), indicating a coherent pro-EPCF support dimension.
- Opposition is driven mainly by perceived social harm, which is negatively correlated with all support indicators, while disappointment (rule enforcement) is more weakly and independently structured.
- Overall, attitudes are structured but technocratic: support aligns with performance and stability evaluations, while opposition reflects policy trade-off concerns rather than strong emotional polarisation.



“ The attitudes are less coherent: support splits between humanitarian and control narratives, while opposition blends threat and dissatisfaction, making migration the most internally divided policy domain ”

Jonathan Kamkhaji
MORES researcher, European
University Institute, Florence