



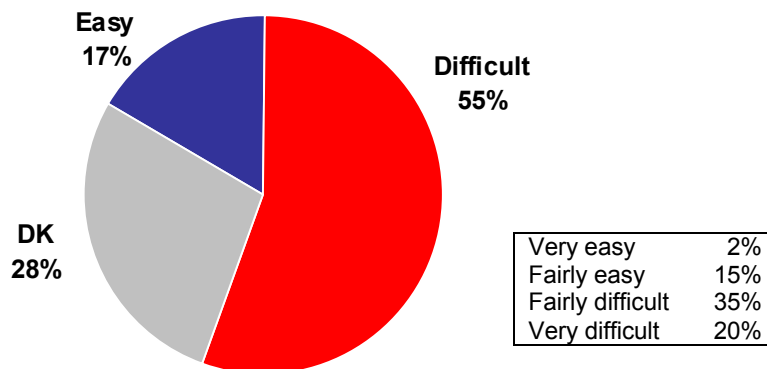
TNS POLITICAL & SOCIAL FACTS AND FIGURES – EUROBAROMETER

ACCESS TO CIVIL JUSTICE IN ANOTHER MEMBER STATE IS PERCEIVED AS DIFFICULT BY A MAJORITY OF EU CITIZENS

London (UK), May 27th, 2008 – Over half of EU citizens (55%) believe it is difficult to access civil justice in another Member State, whilst only two in ten Europeans (17%) believe it is easy, and three in ten (28%) do not know, according to the findings of a recently published special Eurobarometer survey conducted by TNS Opinion for the European Commission.

Perceived difficulty of access to civil justice abroad – EU 27 percentage

In your opinion, how easy or difficult do you think it is to access civil justice in a Member State other than (OUR COUNTRY)?

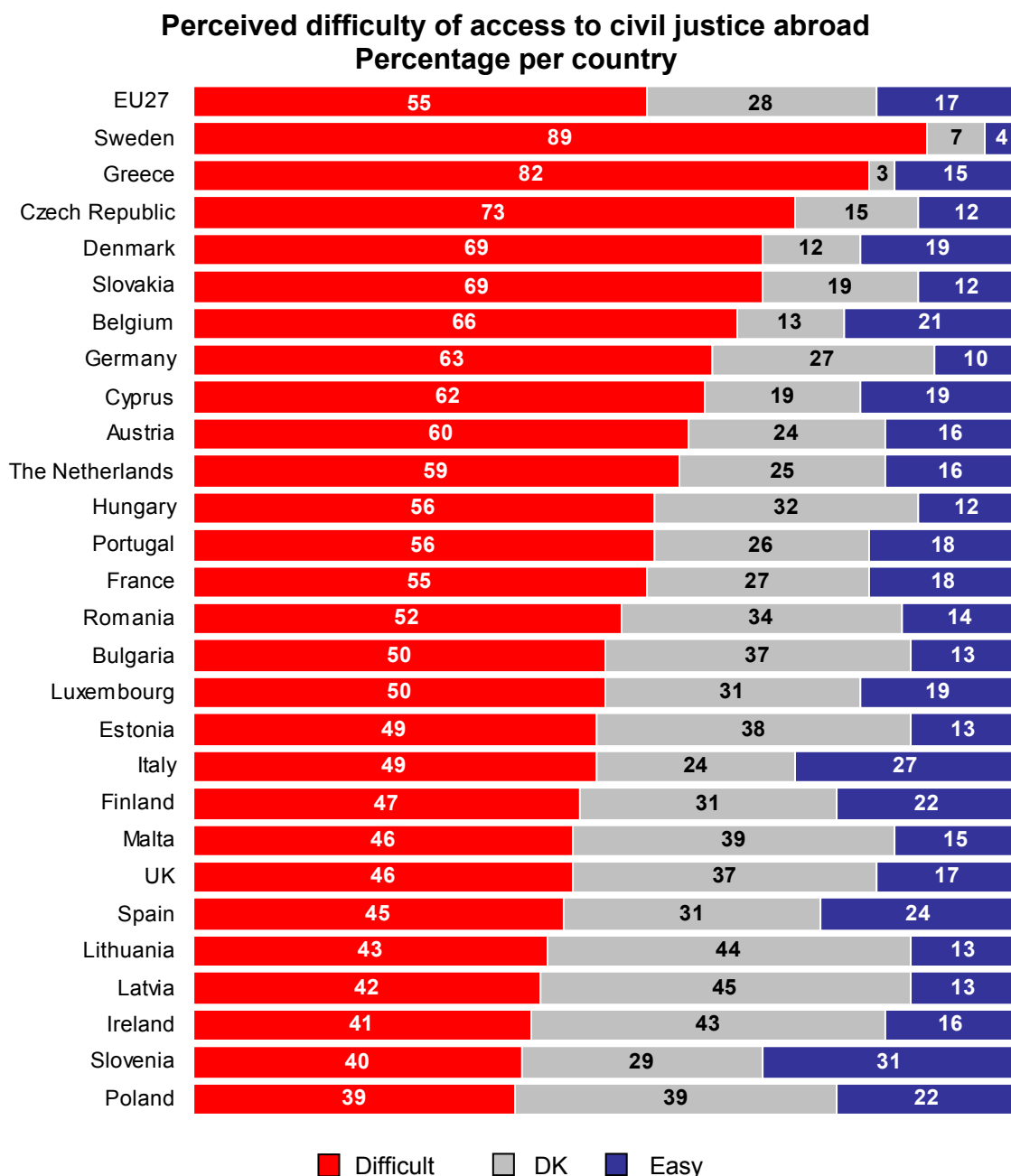


Source: TNS Opinion for the European Commission – Eurobarometer 68.2

The survey, which interviewed over 26,700 people across the 27 Member States, also shows that, although the majority view in all Member States is that access to civil justice is difficult outside one's own country, the strength of feeling varies from one country to another. The perception that access is easy is highest in Slovenia (31%) and Italy (27%) with over one-fifth sharing this view in Spain (24%), Poland and Finland (both 22%), and Belgium (21%).

Conversely, over 8 in 10 people in Sweden (89%) and Greece (82%) feel that access to civil justice in another Member State is difficult. It should be noted that fluctuations in the strength of responses are to a significant degree explained by large variations in the extent

of “don’t know” responses, which range from 3% in Greece and 7 % in Sweden, to 45% in Latvia, 44% in Lithuania, and 43% in Ireland.



Source: TNS Opinion for the European Commission – Eurobarometer 68.2

People’s assessment vary significantly depending on a number of sociodemographic characteristics, most notably place of birth, age and education. The perception that access to civil justice in another Member State is difficult increases with age (difficult: 57% of the respondents above 55 years old vs. 52% of those between 15 and 24) while the reverse holds for education: the longer people have stayed in full-time education the more likely they are to consider access to be easy (25% of the students and 20% of respondents who studied until 20 years old or more vs. 13% of those who abandoned school at the age of 15 or less). Large differences in opinion are also noted according to the place where the respondent was born. Whilst 17% of individuals who were

born in the country surveyed think access to justice abroad is easy, this opinion is held by 25% of those who were born in a different EU country. In the case of non EU citizens, access to justice abroad is easy for 11% of Europeans from countries outside the EU, and for people from other continents, this proportion is 21%.

Europeans' main concerns about access to justice abroad – EU 27 percentage

If you needed to have access to civil justice in a country other than (OUR COUNTRY), which of the following, if any, would be your main concerns about the procedures? (MAX. 2 ANSWERS)



Source: TNS Opinion for the European Commission – Eurobarometer 68.2

The survey conducted by TNS Opinion also asked Europeans which would be their main concerns should they need to access civil justice in another country. Five in ten respondents declared that they wouldn't know the procedural rules in that country (52%). Language barriers are the second main concern regarding access abroad, voiced by four in ten respondents (40%). The cost of procedures (27%) and lack of trust in the proceedings (20%) also concern a considerable proportion of Europeans. Finally, other concerns mentioned were the length of procedures (14%) and the distance between countries (10%). Only 3% of respondents indicated that they would have no concerns should they need access to civil justice in another Member State.

The analysis of results by country shows a division in the type of concerns mentioned by citizens living in the EU15 and those in the twelve new Member States. In the EU15, respondents cite more frequently not knowing the rules (54% vs. 47% in the NMS), a lack of trust in procedures (23% vs. 11%) and the length of procedures (15% vs. 11%) as concerns. Conversely, in the twelve new Member States, the cost of procedures (37% vs. 24% in the EU15) and the distance between their country and the country in question (12% vs. 9%) are cited more frequently.

“Not knowing the rules of procedures in the other country” is the main concern in 22 of the 27 Member States and, in Malta and Portugal, it shares the first place with “the cost of procedures” (45%) “language barriers” (36%), respectively. The countries with the highest proportions of

respondents voicing this concern are Sweden (71%), Denmark (67%) and France (67%). Contrarily, the lowest percentages are found in Austria (34%), Portugal (36%), and Spain (39%).

Language barriers are the most widely expressed concern in Poland, Hungary (both 51%) and Austria (37%). Though not the top concern, France counts the highest proportion of people who would worry about this issue if they needed access to civil justice in another country (54%). At the opposite side, this issue is least widespread in Malta (15%).

Europeans' main concerns about access to justice abroad Percentage per country

	Not knowing the rules of procedures in the other country	Language barriers	Cost of procedures	Lack of trust in the procedures	Length of procedures	Distance between our country and the country in question
EU27	52%	40%	27%	20%	14%	10%
EU15	54%	40%	24%	23%	15%	9%
NMS12	47%	41%	37%	11%	11%	12%
Belgium	56%	47%	28%	22%	24%	7%
Bulgaria	53%	25%	32%	11%	13%	8%
Czech Republic	46%	39%	53%	14%	12%	10%
Denmark	67%	28%	21%	30%	24%	8%
Germany	55%	43%	23%	33%	13%	9%
Estonia	51%	39%	28%	9%	10%	10%
Greece	48%	38%	40%	22%	20%	19%
Spain	39%	35%	22%	14%	14%	12%
France	67%	54%	18%	20%	17%	8%
Ireland	51%	41%	31%	17%	12%	8%
Italy	51%	27%	22%	20%	17%	12%
Cyprus	56%	33%	48%	21%	20%	10%
Latvia	43%	40%	28%	13%	7%	8%
Lithuania	53%	47%	27%	7%	9%	10%
Luxembourg	58%	29%	26%	28%	18%	12%
Hungary	49%	51%	29%	16%	10%	7%
Malta	45%	15%	45%	8%	21%	13%
The Netherlands	59%	36%	19%	25%	18%	9%
Austria	34%	37%	35%	33%	19%	13%
Poland	45%	51%	34%	8%	8%	13%
Portugal	36%	36%	30%	17%	13%	14%
Romania	42%	26%	41%	10%	16%	14%
Slovenia	63%	24%	37%	19%	18%	9%
Slovakia	52%	43%	39%	16%	14%	13%
Finland	63%	44%	31%	18%	12%	10%
Sweden	71%	40%	35%	29%	9%	3%
UK	55%	40%	26%	20%	9%	4%

Figures highlighted in the light blue shade mark the most frequently cited concern within each country. Figures highlighted in the darker blue shade mark for each concern the country with the highest percentage of respondents citing the item.

Source: TNS Opinion for the European Commission – Eurobarometer 68.2

The cost of procedures is the top concern in the Czech Republic (53%) and shares this position with not knowing the rules in Malta (45%). These countries, together with Cyprus (48%), show the

highest levels of concern towards this issue, whilst French (18%), Dutch (19%) and Danish (21%) respondents mention this issue least frequently.

The proportion of citizens who lack trust in the procedures is highest in Germany and Austria (both 33%) whereas fewer than one in ten expresses this concern in Lithuania (7%), Malta, Poland (both 8%) and Estonia (9%).

For around a quarter of citizens in Denmark and Belgium (both 24%) the length of proceedings is a concern. It does not seem to be the case in Latvia (7%), Poland (8%), Lithuania (9%), Sweden (9%) and UK (9%). "Distance" is an issue for close to one-fifth of citizens in Greece (19%), whilst 3% of Swedish and 4% of British respondents concur. Finally, in all Member States, fewer than one respondent in ten has no concerns, and the proportion of "don't know" responses is relatively low throughout the Member States (from 16% in Estonia to 1% in Belgium, Greece and Finland).

Leendert de Voogd, Global Head of TNS Political & Social, comments: "One of the goals of European integration is that all EU citizens are able to fully exercise their civil rights in all Member States. The results of the Eurobarometer Survey show that there is still work to do in this field, as a majority of Europeans still perceive access to civil justice abroad as difficult, mainly because of lack of information related to legal procedures and language barriers".

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Note to Editors

About TNS Political & Social Facts and Figures:

The Eurobarometer report was posted at the following website on March 2008:

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

The European Commission has made data from this report available to relevant media since it was first published. To the best of our knowledge, the findings in the attached press release have not been released.

These findings are based on TNS Opinion research conducted between November and December 2007. All data discussed in the above announcement is based on the opinions of those surveyed. TNS will only support data which is published, in the context we have presented it and our own interpretation of these findings. We cannot be held responsible for any other interpretation.

As a leading information provider, TNS wants to cast new light on currently debated topics presenting data collected on a European or International basis. TNS Political & Social Facts & Figures will be published twice a month.

Methodological background:

Fieldwork: 11th of November to the 14th of December 2007

Number of interviews conducted: 26,730 persons interviewed face-to-face in the 27 Member States of the EU.

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For more information and detailed results on a country-by-country basis, please contact:

Leendert de Voogd, Global Head of TNS Political & Social
Tel: +32 (0) 2 66 118 66 or email: leendert.devoogd@tns-global.com

Pascal Chelala, Managing Director, TNS Opinion
Tel: +32 (0)2 66 118 66 or email: pascal.chelala@tns-opinion.com

Stuart Ridsdale, International PR Manager, TNS
Tel: +44 (0) 208 967 4787 or email: stuart.ridsdale@tns-global.com

Emily Luscombe / Maja Rode, Camargue
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7636 7366 or email: eluscombe@camarguepr.com / mrode@camarguepr.com