



Department of Political Science

The Strategic Compass: Do we meet the citizens' expectations?

Conference « Strategic Compass and the Citizens »
University of Public Service Ludovika – European Citizens
Association, 13 April 2022

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(HR/VP J. Borrell foreword) « A Strategic Compass to make Europe a security provider »

3 questions:

1) Do the citizens want the EU to be a security provider?

2) (if yes) What kind of security shall the EU provide, in accordance with citizens' expectations?

3) (if yes) How does the Compass formulate the security the citizens expect?

Do the citizens want the EU to be a security provider?

ECA survey 2021 (515 respondents, 30% under age 35, 71% « professionals »)

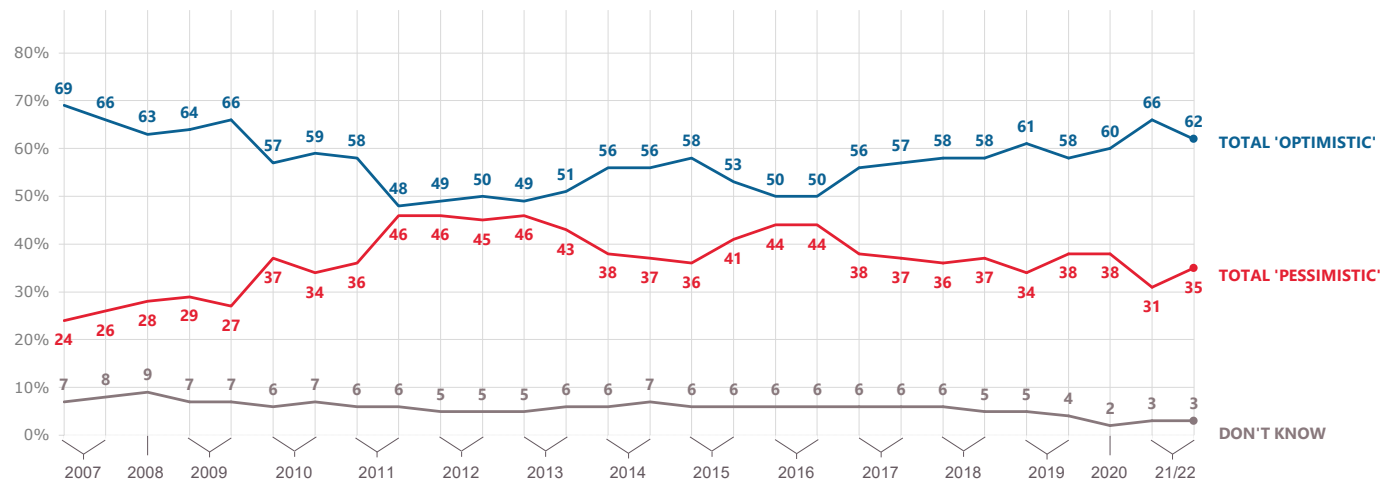
- Security professionals globally more optimistic about the future of the EU than the “public”
- Above 50% “felt safe” in the EU
- Generally, the EU MS “should spend more” on defence
- Relevance of “threats” was assessed but, at the time of the survey, the protection of the European territory was not inquired

Do the citizens want the EU to be a security provider?

Eurobarometer Winter 2021-2022 (18/01/22-14/02/22)

- Optimism vis-à-vis the future of the EU: 61-35%
- Increasing since 2011 (but declined since Spring 2021)
- 3 most “pessimistic”: BG, FR, EL

QA10 Would you say that you are very optimistic, fairly optimistic, fairly pessimistic or very pessimistic about the future of the EU?
(% - EU)

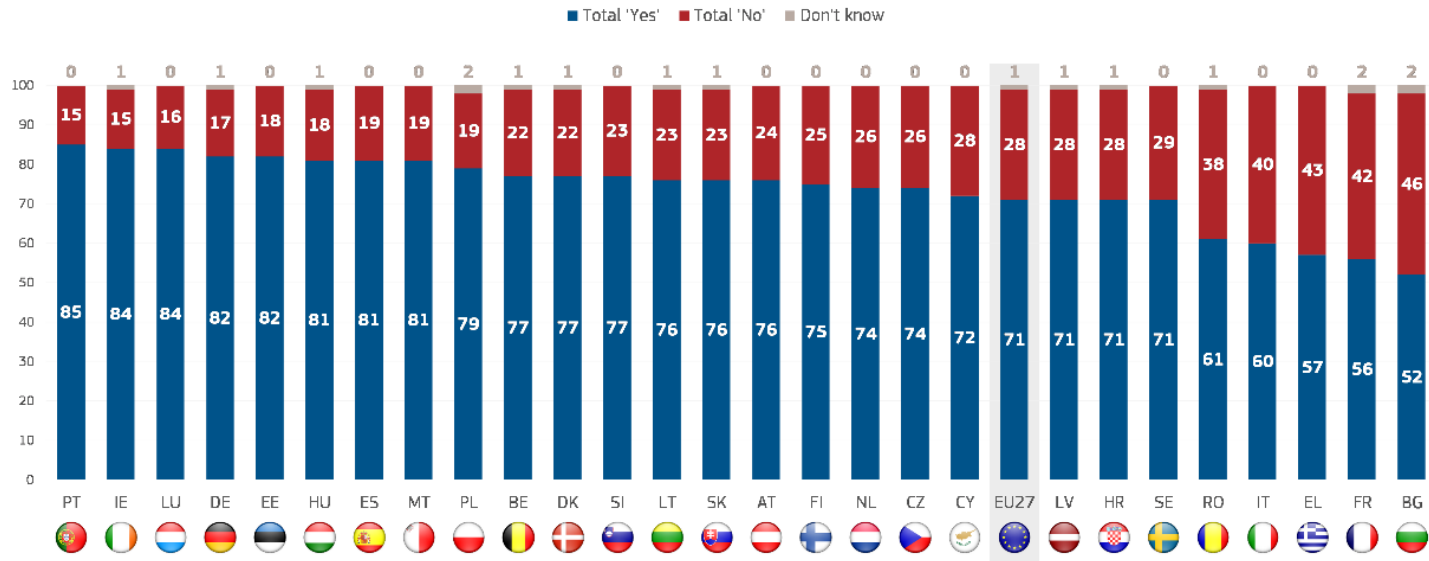


Do the citizens want the EU to be a security provider?

Eurobarometer Winter 2021-2022 (18/01/22-14/02/22)

- Feeling as an EU citizen: 71%
- Globally stable since Spring 2021
- 3 less “EU-citizen feeling”: EL, FR, BG

QC2.1 For each of the following statements, please tell to what extent it corresponds or not to your own opinion.
 (% - You feel you are a citizen of the EU)



Do the citizens want the EU to be a security provider?

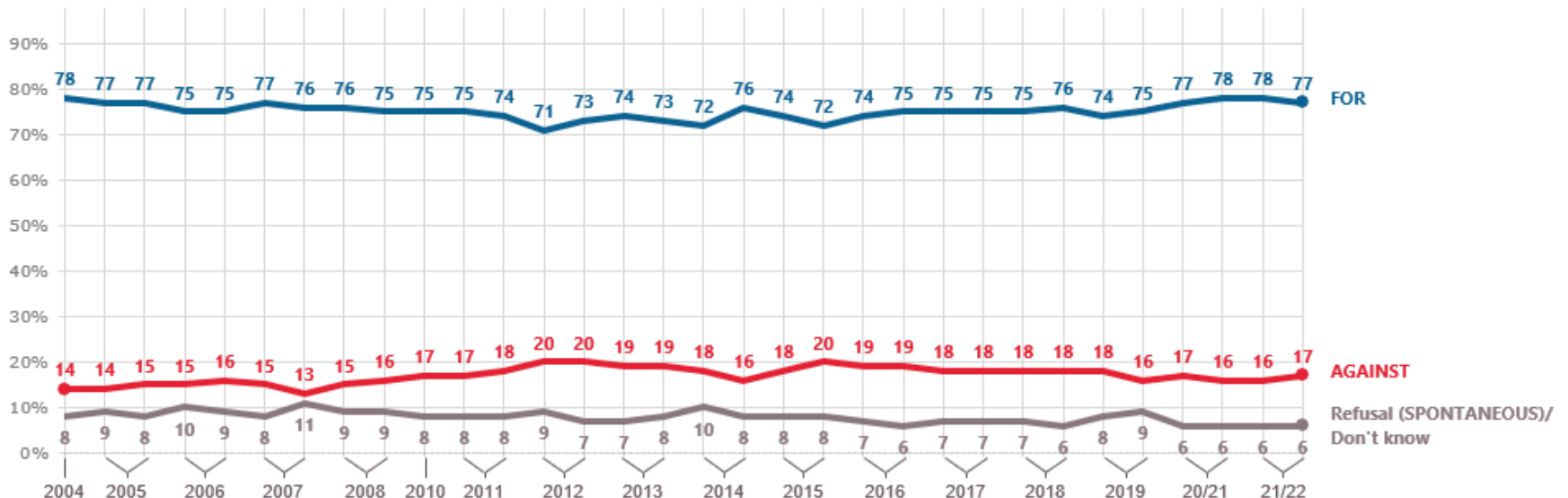
Eurobarometer Winter 2021-2022 (18/01/22-14/02/22)

- Support of a common security and defence policy: 77-17%
- Since the question was introduced in autumn 2004, support for a common defence and security policy reached its highest levels in winter 2020-2021 and spring 2021
- In all EU Member States (unchanged since spring 2021) a majority of respondents support a CSDP among EU MS

Do the citizens want the EU to be a security provider?

- It was 10 days before the Russian invasion
- Presumably: these trends “are accelerating” (HR/VP)

QB6.2 What is your opinion on each of the following statements? Please tell for each statement, whether you are for it or against it.
A common defence and security policy among EU Member States (% - EU)



What kind of security shall the EU provide, in accordance with citizens' expectations?

Eurobarometer

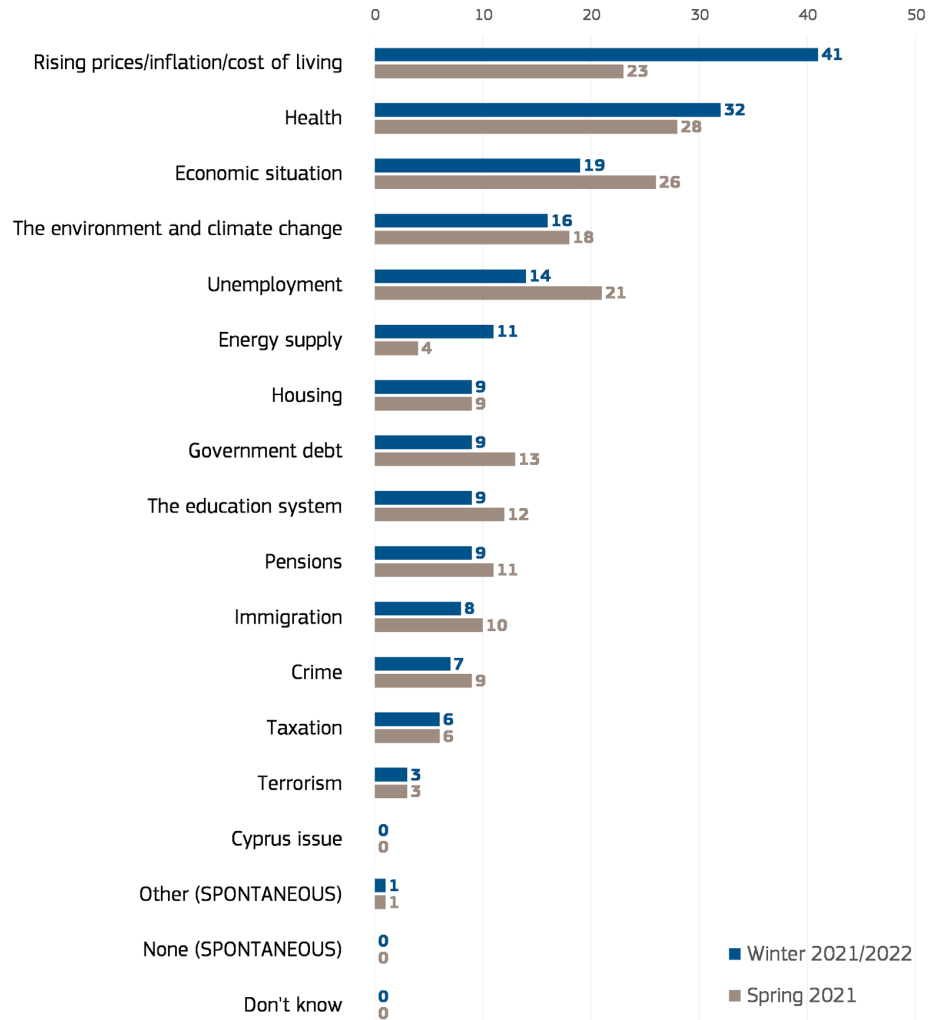
Winter

2021-2022

(18/01/22-14/02/22)

- The most important issues facing the EU

QA3 What do you think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment? (MAX. 2 ANSWERS)
(% - EU)



How does the Compass formulate the security the citizens expect?

The principle (self-justification) of the Strategic Compass

- Highlighted in the HR/VP foreword:
 - Ukraine – “We must use the new momentum to ensure that we, finally, equip ourselves with the mind-set, the means and the mechanisms to defend our Union, our citizens and our partners”
 - “Today, no one denies that we need robust capabilities and the willingness to use them against the full spectrum of threats we face »
 - “The purpose of the Strategic Compass is to guide the necessary development of the EU security and defence agenda for the next ten years”
- The SC is highly and timely relevant for the citizens, who need to see that the EU is at the rendez-vous of History
- The terms used: “we will”, “we are committed”

How does the Compass formulate the security the citizens expect?

The threat assessment on which the SC is based

- “Today, the EU is surrounded by instability and conflicts and faces a war on its borders. We are confronted with a **dangerous mix of armed aggression, illegal annexation, fragile states, revisionist powers and authoritarian regimes**. This environment is a **breeding ground for multiple threats to European security from terrorism, violent extremism and organised crime to hybrid conflicts and cyberattacks, instrumentalisation of irregular migration, arms proliferation and the progressive weakening of the arms control architecture**. **Financial instability, extreme social and economic divergences** can further exacerbate such dynamics and have a growing impact on our security”
- It operates a geopolitical and thematic analysis that is relevant from a citizen’s perspective (“what we see ourselves”)

How does the Compass formulate the security the citizens expect?

The orientations it provides speak to the citizens

- The Strategic Compass sets out concrete actions – with clear deadlines to measure progress (difference with the 2003 and 2016 strategies)
- Promotes “strategic autonomy” and “mutual assistance”
- But the SC is technical (and long). Focus (proposed) on some of the important orientations

How does the Compass formulate the security the citizens expect?

ACT:

- Up to 5,000 strong EU Rapid Deployment Capacity
 - the EU must be “credible”

- More rapid and flexible decision-making
 - the EU must be “agile and responsive”

How does the Compass formulate the security the citizens expect?

SECURE:

- Strengthening early warning/intelligence
 - the EU must “learn” the lessons from experience
- Hybrid Toolbox and Response Teams
 - the EU must demonstrate it is fit to “today’s threats”
- New EU Space Strategy and Boost defence technological innovation to reduce strategic dependencies :
 - the EU must be autonomous in its decisions

How does the Compass formulate the security the citizens expect?

SECURE:

- Promoting disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control
 - The EU must be a “model” of values
- Enhancing resilience to climate change, disasters and emergencies
 - The EU must think “comprehensively”

How does the Compass formulate the security the citizens expect?

INVEST:

- Spend more and better - defence spending and incentives for cooperation
 - the EU must enhance “coherence” among the EU MS
- Strategic competition at global level
 - The EU must be more « competitive »

How does the Compass formulate the security the citizens expect?

PARTNER:

- Strengthened strategic partnership with NATO and the UN :
 - the EU must be one of the protections of Europe
- Military assistance to partners through the European Peace Facility :
 - the EU must effectively act

How successful is the SC in meeting citizens' expectations?

Positively successful:

- The Compass is a relevant instrument (structure, commitments)
- Based on an updated risk assessment (including Ukraine)
- “Learning to speak the language of power” (HR/VP)

But raising questions:

- Did we need **commitments** or a « revolution » for **doing** things differently?

How successful is the SC in meeting citizens' expectations?

Overall:

- A compass is not “the North”, it shows where the North is
- “The history of European integration is full of plans and initiatives to strengthen the EU’s security and defence policy. Most have come and gone. Therefore, sometimes people ask me why this time should be any different” (HR/VP)

How successful is the SC in meeting citizens' expectations?

Overall:

- It is positive: the EU has shown that it can act with creativity beyond its formal competences during the pandemic
- It showed a similar spirit with the crisis in Ukraine (EPF supply, gas procurement initiative, e.g.)
- Therefore it raised expectations with regard to security and defence

Time has come!

Thank you!

