Europeans Face the World Divided

Many question national influence and obligations to allies, but share desire for greater EU role in global affairs

BY Bruce Stokes, Richard Wike and Jacob Poushter
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Table of Contents

About Pew Research Center ...................................................................................................................... 1
Overview: Europeans Face the World Divided .......................................................................................... 3
Europeans agree on top threats ................................................................................................................. 7
Mixed views on promoting human rights, some support for foreign aid .................................................. 8
The German-French divide .......................................................................................................................... 9
UK ambivalence ........................................................................................................................................ 10
Both sides of the Atlantic turn inward ..................................................................................................... 11
1. Europeans see ISIS, climate change as most serious threats ............................................................... 13
Europeans overall see ISIS, climate change, economic instability and cyberattacks as major threats..... 14
Refugee issue divides Europe geographically and politically ................................................................. 16
Russia, China and U.S. seen as less of a threat to Europeans ................................................................. 18
Most Europeans see U.S. as more important than Asia......................................................................... 19
2. Europeans question global engagement ............................................................................................ 20
Support for multilateralism far from universal ......................................................................................... 22
Despite criticism, aspirations for an influential EU ................................................................................. 23
3. Europeans disagree on promoting human rights, moderate support for development aid ........... 27
Human rights and foreign policy .............................................................................................................. 27
Relations with developing countries ........................................................................................................ 29
4. Europeans wary of hard power ............................................................................................................ 31
Acknowledgments .................................................................................................................................... 33
Methodology .............................................................................................................................................. 34
Topline Questionnaire ............................................................................................................................ 35
Europeans Face the World Divided

Many question national influence and obligations to allies, but share desire for greater EU role in global affairs

In the wake of prolonged economic stagnation, a massive influx of refugees, terrorist attacks and a strategic challenge posed by Russia, many Europeans are weary – and perhaps wary – of foreign entanglements, according to a new Pew Research Center survey. Views of their respective countries’ place in the world vary widely, but few see the past decade as a time of growing national importance. And across the continent publics are divided: Many favor turning inward to focus on domestic issues, while others question whether commitments to allies should take precedence over national interests.

Yet Europeans have not completely turned their backs on the world. Although deeply critical of how the European Union has handled the refugee crisis, the economy and Russia, they acknowledge the Brussels-based institution’s rising international prominence and want it to take a
more active role in world affairs. Involvement in the international economy is also widely supported and Europeans generally feel an obligation to help developing nations.

In seven of 10 EU nations, half or more of the public believes that their country should deal with its own problems and let other nations fend for themselves as best they can. In five countries, roughly half or more believe that in foreign policy their government should follow its own national interests, even when its allies strongly disagree. Notably, those who believe their government should first focus on national problems are far more likely to favor pursuing national interests regardless of the opinion of the country’s international partners.

Waning international confidence afflicts a number of European societies. Only the Germans and the Poles believe their countries play a more important role as a world leader today compared to a decade ago. And pluralities of Greeks, Italians, Spanish and French say their countries are less prominent today, not more.

At the same time, Europeans are quite clear that they want the EU to play a more active international role in the future. A median of 74% across the 10 countries surveyed in Europe support Brussels being more globally engaged. Notably, in Greece, Italy, Spain and France majorities or pluralities believe their nations have lost global influence, and in each of these nations more than three-quarters favor the EU taking on more responsibility around the world.

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### Some nations’ influence seen in decline

Our country plays a less important role in the world today compared to 10 years ago

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


“Europeans Face the World Divided”

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### Broad support for a more active EU

Do you think the EU should play a ___ in world affairs than it does today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Less active role</th>
<th>More active role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Volunteered categories “About the same” and “No role” not shown.


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These are among the key findings from a new survey by Pew Research Center, conducted in 10 EU nations and the United States among 11,494 respondents from April 4 to May 12, 2016. The EU portion of this survey covers countries that account for 80% of the member nations’ combined population and 82% of the EU-28 gross domestic product.

Views of global engagement divide along ideological and party lines in many of the surveyed publics. In most countries people on the right of the political spectrum are much more likely than those on the left to believe that their country should focus on its own problems and let other countries deal with their own problems as best they can.

### Those on political right more likely to favor focusing on domestic issues

*Our country should deal with its own problems and let other countries deal with their own problems as best they can*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Right</th>
<th>Right-Left Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>+24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
<td>+24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>+23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>+19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td></td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td></td>
<td>+18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td></td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>+11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td></td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Statistically significant differences in bold.*

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q29.  
“Europeans Face the World Divided”  
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
those on the left to say their nation should focus on domestic problems, not help others. And in six of the 10 countries polled people on the right are more likely than those on the left to believe that their government should pursue national interests in foreign policy even if allies strongly disagree.

This ideological division manifests itself in the views of supporters of right- and left-wing parties. Fully 85% of Euroskeptic United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) adherents favor focusing on national problems and letting others fend for themselves. Just 39% of Labour Party supporters agree. In France, 83% of those who identify with the right-wing National Front are inward looking, compared with 48% of Socialist Party supporters. In Germany, 65% of those who have a favorable view of the Euroskeptic Alternative for Germany take a nation-first stance. Meanwhile, 32% of Germans who identify with the Social Democratic Party hold this view.

Similarly, 85% of UKIP supporters, but just 39% of Labour adherents believe the British government should follow national interests in international affairs even if UK allies strongly disagree. Fully 68% of National Front supporters in France say Paris should pursue national interests in foreign policy irrespective of the opinion of France’s allies. Only 46% of ruling Socialist Party adherents agree.

“France First” or “Britain First” sentiment does not mean Europeans are unmindful of international challenges. Overwhelming majorities voice the view that the Islamic militant group in Iraq and Syria known as ISIS poses a major threat to their countries. Yet there is little support for boosting national defense spending (a median of just 33% across the 10 EU countries are in favor) and a reluctance (a median of only 41%) to use overwhelming military force to defeat terrorism.

Nor are all Europeans increasingly isolationist in any traditional sense of the word. The Germans and the Swedes in particular are outward looking and committed to multilateralism to a degree not found in France, Greece, Hungary, Italy or Poland. Nation-first sentiment is largely unchanged in the countries where this question on whether to deal with a country’s own problems or help other countries deal with their problems was also asked six years ago. Europeans have a sense of obligation to help those in developing nations: In seven of 10 countries half or more of the public supports increasing foreign aid. Similarly, in seven of 10 nations half or more voice the view that global economic engagement is a good thing for their nation.
Europeans agree on top threats

Among eight potential threats asked about in the survey, Europeans clearly see ISIS as the top danger to their countries. Roughly seven-in-ten or more in every country surveyed say that ISIS is a major threat, with the greatest concern coming from the Spanish (93%) and French (91%). (Deadly terrorist attacks hit the major European capitals of Paris and Brussels just months before this survey was conducted.) Europeans are also troubled by global climate change. More than half in all 10 countries polled say that climate change is a major menace, with 89% of Spanish and 84% of Greeks saying this. Many Europeans also say global economic instability and cyberattacks are major problems.

On the issue of refugees from countries such as Iraq and Syria, there are sharp divides. In Poland, Hungary, Greece and Italy people are much more concerned about the refugee crisis as a threat compared with publics in the Netherlands, Germany and Sweden. But there is also a divide within nations by political ideology. In eight European countries, those on the political right are more likely than those on the left to express concern about the refugee problem. This is most evident in France, where 61% on the right say the large number of refugees leaving the Middle East is a major threat to France, compared with only 29% who say this on the left.

### Right more worried than left about refugee threat

*A large number of refugees leaving countries such as Iraq and Syria is a major threat to the country*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Right</th>
<th>Right-Left DIFF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>+32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>+30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>+29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>+28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>+28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td></td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>+21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>+19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only statistically significant differences shown.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q22g

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Mixed views on promoting human rights, some support for foreign aid

On the role of human rights in making foreign policy, opinions vary considerably across the 10 nations surveyed. More than half of those polled in Spain, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands say human rights should be a top foreign policy priority. In contrast, Hungarians, Greeks, Poles and Italians tend to believe that while human rights are important, many other foreign policy goals matter more. Public opinion is roughly divided on this issue in the UK and France. In most nations, people on the political left put a greater emphasis on the importance of human rights than people on the political right.

Europeans tend to favor increasing foreign aid to developing countries. Half or more express this view in seven nations. The exceptions are Greece (69% oppose), Hungary (65%) and the UK (51%). And support for increasing foreign aid is higher on the ideological left in five of the 10 nations.

There is even greater support for increasing domestic companies’ investment in developing nations (a median of 76% across the 10 nations back this idea) and importing more goods from developing countries (a median of 64%).

### On balance, Europeans favor increasing foreign aid to developing countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIAN</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


“Europeans Face the World Divided”

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The German-French divide

More than a half century after the signing of the Élysée Treaty that called for a common stance between France and what was then West Germany on a range of issues, a profound gulf exists in how the German and French people see their respective places in the world. Germans are confident about their nation’s role on the international stage. They are outward looking and committed to multilateralism and engagement in the world economy. The French are downbeat about France’s stature, inward looking and wary of globalization and cooperation with their allies.

A majority of Germans think their country plays a greater role in the world today than it did a decade ago. But a plurality of French believe France has lost prominence on the world stage. More than half of Germans assert that their country should help other nations deal with their problems. A majority of French say their country should deal with its own problems first and let other countries fend for themselves. Roughly two-thirds of Germans believe that Berlin should take into consideration the interests of its allies, even if it means making compromises. But about half of French say that in foreign policy Paris should follow national interests, even if its allies strongly disagree. Half of Germans hold a favorable opinion of the EU, yet only 38% of the French agree. And seven-in-ten Germans say their involvement in the global economy is good for Germany, while just 51% of French say the same about France.
UK ambivalence

The June 23 British vote on whether to remain in or leave the European Union, known as Brexit, is just the latest example of long-running British ambivalence about membership in the Brussels-based institution. Many British voice a wariness of global engagement that belies the UK’s history as a major player on the world stage.

Roughly half the British (52%) believe that the UK should deal with its own problems and let other nations deal with their own problems as best they can. And a similar proportion (54%) says the UK should follow its own national interests even when its allies strongly disagree. Regardless of whether Brexit is approved, 65% of the British public believes that some EU powers should be returned to the British government. Some of this global circumspection may reflect the fact that four-in-ten British think the UK plays a less important part in the world today than it did a decade ago, compared with two-in-ten who believe it plays a more important role.

There is a prominent generational divide among the British on many of these issues. Nearly six-in-ten (59%) of older British – ages 50 and above – believe the UK should focus on dealing with its own problems. Just 42% of younger British (ages 18 to 34) agree. And 56% of older British believe that the UK should follow its own national interests even when its allies disagree, while only 46% of younger British concur. More than seven-in-ten of older British (73%) want to bring some EU powers back to London, but only 51% of younger British express that desire. And 47% of those ages 50 and older think the UK plays less of a role in world affairs today, while just 34% of those ages 18 to 34 hold this downbeat view.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q29, Q31a, Q32 & Q49.

“Europeans Face the World Divided”

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Both sides of the Atlantic turn inward

In how they see their country’s place in the world, people on both sides of the Atlantic tend to be inward looking, and many question their country’s importance in world affairs. Americans, however, are much more pessimistic about the benefits of global economic engagement. (For an in-depth look at how Americans view their place in the world, see this recent Pew Research Center survey.)

A median of 56% across the 10 EU nations surveyed and 57% of Americans believe their country should deal with its own problems and let other nations deal with theirs as best they can. But while this nation-first sentiment has seen little change in recent years in Europe, it has grown by 11 percentage points since 2010 in the U.S. The Greeks, Hungarians, Italians, Poles and French are all more inward looking than the Americans. The Swedes, Germans and Spanish are far less so.

In the U.S., 46% voice the view that their country is less important today than it was a decade ago. Among Europeans, a median of 37% share this view. But European opinions vary widely: While 62% of Germans see their country as more important, only 19% of Italians and 17% of Greeks are more confident in their homeland.

### European and American views on global engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% who say country should deal with its own problems</th>
<th>Country is less important than it was 10 years ago</th>
<th>Global economic engagement is a bad thing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Median</strong></td>
<td><strong>56%</strong></td>
<td><strong>37%</strong></td>
<td><strong>32%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Question wording in U.S.: “Do you think the United States plays a more important and powerful role as a world leader today compared to 10 years ago, a less important role, or about as important a role as a world leader as it did 10 years ago?” Question wording in Europe: “Do you think (survey country) plays a more important role in the world today compared to 10 years ago, a less important role or about as important a role in the world as it did 10 years ago?”


“Europeans Face the World Divided”

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The greatest difference in views between Americans and Europeans involves the economy: 49% of Americans say global economic engagement is bad for their country, but 32% of Europeans view such involvement negatively. Only the Greeks see international economic engagement as a worse thing than Americans do.
1. Europeans see ISIS, climate change as most serious threats

Among the myriad threats that Europe faces in 2016, the scourge of ISIS registers most strongly. In fact, ISIS is either tied or seen as the greatest threat in nine of the 10 European countries surveyed. But it is not the only high-profile threat felt in Europe. More than half in all European countries surveyed say global climate change is a major threat to their country, and many also cite global economic instability as a dire threat, especially in places hit hard by the euro crisis such as Greece and Spain. And many Europeans fear the threat of cyberattacks from other countries.

The refugee crisis also concerns many people across the European countries surveyed, but the threat assessment varies across the continent. Majorities in Poland, Hungary, Greece and Italy say that a large number of refugees leaving places like Iraq and Syria are a major threat to their countries, compared with only about a third or less of people in Germany and Sweden, both of which have taken in a disproportionately large number of migrants. Within European countries, those on the political right or who support right-wing parties are more concerned about the refugee issue.

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**Europeans agree ISIS is a top threat**

*% saying each is a major threat to their country*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>ISIS</th>
<th>Global climate change</th>
<th>Global economic instability</th>
<th>Cyberattacks from other countries</th>
<th>Large number of refugees leaving Iraq/Syria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q22d-h.

*“Europeans Face the World Divided”*
Other threats such as tensions with Russia, China’s emergence as a world power and U.S. power and influence are perceived as less dire, though most people still perceive them as at least minor threats. But when asked to choose between the U.S. and Asia as the region that is more important to Europe, politically and economically, many Europeans choose the U.S.

(For comparison data from the U.S., see Chapter 3 of “Public Uncertain, Divided Over America’s Place in the World,” released May 5.)

**Europeans overall see ISIS, climate change, economic instability and cyberattacks as major threats**

Looking across the 10 European countries surveyed, a median of 76% say that the Islamic militant group in Iraq and Syria known as ISIS is a major threat to their country, with only two-in-ten saying that ISIS is either a minor threat (17%) or no threat at all (3%). Europeans arguably have reason to be wary: The past year has seen major terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels perpetrated by ISIS or its affiliates, and the level of alert across Europe remains high.¹

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### Europeans name ISIS, climate change and economic instability as top threats

*Median saying ___ is a ...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threat</th>
<th>Major threat</th>
<th>Minor threat</th>
<th>Not a threat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISIS</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global climate change</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global economic instability</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyberattacks from other countries</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The large number of refugees from Iraq/Syria</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensions with Russia</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China’s emergence as a world power</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. power and influence</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages are medians based on 10 European countries.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q22a-h.

*Europeans Face the World Divided*

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¹ The survey was conducted before the downing of Egypt Air Flight 804 on May 16, which may or may not have been the work of extremists associated with ISIS.
After ISIS, the greatest threat named by Europeans among the eight issues tested is climate change. Just months after the signing of a historic climate accord in Paris, a median of 66% say global climate change is a major threat. In fact, more than half in every EU country surveyed say that climate change is a chief concern.

The perceived level of threat from climate change has increased from that of 2013 in six of seven countries surveyed where trends are available. The biggest increase comes from Spain, where 89% say that climate change is a major threat, up from 64% in 2013.

In six European countries, people on the left are more likely than those on the right to name climate change as a major threat to their country. For example, 70% of those who identify themselves as on the left of the political spectrum in the Netherlands say that global warming is a major threat to their country, compared with only 45% who say this on the political right. However, this pattern is reversed in Italy.

Global economic instability ranks third on the list of threats in Europe, with a median of 60% citing it as a major threat. However, the perceived threat in each country differs substantially depending on the economic situation there. In Greece, which has suffered greatly from the euro crisis, fully 95% name economic instability as a major threat. And majorities in Spain (84%), France (73%), Italy (71%), Poland (64%) and Hungary (56%) agree. However, only 39% in Germany and 35% in
Sweden, two countries in which the economic crisis did not hit as hard, name economic uncertainty as a major threat.

The threat of cyberattacks also worries many people in Europe. Half or more in eight of the 10 European countries surveyed say attacks over the internet from other countries represent a major threat.

**Refugee issue divides Europe geographically and politically**

Overall, a median of 49% across Europe say the large number of refugees leaving countries such as Iraq and Syria are a major threat. But this median masks dramatic differences within the countries surveyed. For example, in Poland and Hungary, both countries where right-leaning governments have made it a point to slow the flow of migrants to their countries, 73% and 69% respectively say the refugee issue is a major threat to them. In Poland this level of worry ties ISIS as the top threat among the eight tested.

However, in some countries relatively few people see the threat as major. This includes around a third or less in the Netherlands (36%), Germany (31%) and Sweden (24%), the latter of which has taken in an outsized number of child migrants relative to other European countries.

In the UK, roughly half (52%) say the large number of refugees leaving Iraq and Syria is a major threat to their country.

The divide on the refugee issue is not just a matter of location. Political orientation also plays a key role in the threat assessment. In eight of the 10 European countries surveyed, those on the political right are more concerned about the refugee threat than those on the political left. In France, 61% of those who put themselves on the right side of the spectrum say the refugees coming from the Middle East are a major threat, compared with only 29% on the political left. Double-digit differences between right and left are also found in the UK, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Greece, Spain and Sweden.

As would be expected based on the ideological divides, those Europeans who support or have a favorable view of right-wing, generally Euroskeptic and anti-migrant parties are more likely to see the refugee issue as a major threat. For example, in the UK, 87% of supporters of UKIP say that the refugee issue is a major threat, compared with 61% of Conservatives and 35% of Labour supporters. And in France, 86% of supporters of the National Front say refugees are a major threat, compared with only 52% of supporters of the Republicans and 30% of Socialist Party adherents. Similar divisions are found between PiS and PO in Poland.
In countries where major right-wing, anti-immigrant parties exist but there are not enough data to analyze party supporters, there are still differences on the refugee issue by favorability toward those parties. For example, among those Germans with a very or somewhat favorable view of the AfD (Alternative for Germany) 63% see the movement of refugees as a major threat, compared with 26% of Germans who have an unfavorable view of AfD. Similar divisions are seen between those with favorable views of the Swedish Democrats in Sweden, the PVV in the Netherlands and the Lega Nord (LN) in Italy, and those who view these parties unfavorably.

Additionally, there is an educational split on this question. Those with a lower level of education generally are more likely to see the refugee crisis as a major threat compared with those who are more-educated. For example, in the UK, among those with only a secondary education, 62% see the refugee issue as a major threat, compared with only 30% among the more highly educated cohort (postsecondary education or more).

### Those with less education more likely to see refugees as a threat

*A large number of refugees leaving countries such as Iraq and Syria is a major threat to our country*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Less education</th>
<th>More education</th>
<th>Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>-11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only statistically significant differences shown. For the purpose of comparing educational groups across countries, we standardize education levels based on the UN’s International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). The lower education category is secondary education or below and the higher category is post-secondary or above.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q22g.

“Europeans Face the World Divided”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Russia, China and U.S. seen as less of a threat to Europeans

Overall, the threat of tensions with Russia, China’s emergence as a world power and the United States’ power and influence are seen as lesser threats to most Europeans. Medians of only around one-in-three or less of Europeans name these as major threats. But there are some noticeable exceptions.

For instance, 71% of Poles say that tensions with Russia are a major threat, a far greater percentage than any of the other countries surveyed. In the past year, there have been multiple examples of Russian aircrafts threatening NATO allies, and the expansion of U.S. missile defense in Poland (and Romania) is a major geopolitical issue. Meanwhile, many Eastern Europeans are probably still thinking about the 2014 annexation of Crimea by Russia and the continuing conflict in eastern Ukraine.

### Europeans generally see Russia, China and U.S. as low-level threats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Tensions with Russia</th>
<th>China’s emergence as a world power</th>
<th>U.S. power and influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most Europeans see U.S. as more important than Asia

When asked whether the U.S. or the nations of Asia are more important to Europe, a median of 55% across 10 European countries name the U.S. as more important, while 31% say the nations of Asia. This is similar to the 52% of Americans who chose Europe over the nations of Asia (32%).

In all, half or more in eight of the 10 EU nations surveyed say the U.S. is more important than Asia. The countries most in favor of political and economic ties with the U.S. over Asia are Italy and Poland (both 60%). Notably, the only two countries that are more split on the issue are the more economically sound northern European countries of Sweden and Germany. Germany in particular is among China’s largest trading partner and HSBC declared that “over the long term, we expect Germany’s import and export bases to become more diversified geographically, with South and South East Asian countries taking an increasing share of the German market.”

Interestingly, there are ideological gaps on this issue. Generally, those on the right end of the political spectrum say the U.S. is more important for Europe than do those on the political left. For example, in France, 68% of those on the right favor the U.S. over Asia, compared with only 48% on the left.

### Which is more important to Europe, U.S. or nations of Asia?

Which area do you think is more important to Europe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Asia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIAN</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Volunteered category “Equally important” not shown.
“Europeans Face the World Divided”

### Ideological right in Europe say U.S. more important than Asia

The U.S. is more important to Europe than Asia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Right</th>
<th>Right-left Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>+20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>+19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>+16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>+15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only statistically significant differences shown.
“Europeans Face the World Divided”

www.pewresearch.org
2. Europeans question global engagement

Some Europeans are experiencing a crisis of confidence about their nations’ role in the world. Among countries surveyed, only in Germany and Poland do a majority or plurality (62% and 45% respectively) believe their country plays a more important role in the world today compared with 10 years ago. About two-thirds (65%) of Greeks, roughly half of Italians (52%) and Spanish (50%), and a plurality of the French (46%) say their nations now play a less important part on the world stage. The Dutch (45%) and Swedes (43%) hold the view that their countries enjoy as important a role as they did a decade ago.

A majority of Germans of all ages express the opinion that Germany is now more powerful. In Poland, about half the young (52%) see their country as more important, but only 37% of those ages 50 and older agree. In contrast, young, middle-aged and older people in Italy, Greece and Spain all believe that their nation is less important than it was 10 years ago.

Against a backdrop of a perceived decline in global stature many Europeans are looking inward. Fully 83% of Greeks, 77% of Hungarians, 67% of Italians and 65% of Poles believe their countries should deal with their own problems and let other nations deal with their own problems as best they can. The French (60%), British (52%) and Dutch (51%) tend to agree that their nations should just deal with their own problems.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Less important</th>
<th>As important</th>
<th>More important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Only in Spain (55%), Germany (53%) and Sweden (51%) do half or more support their country helping other nations. Just 12% of Greeks, 18% of Hungarians, 21% of Poles and 22% of Italians express the view that they should come to the assistance of others.

Ideology divides many Europeans on this issue of global engagement. In eight of 10 EU nations surveyed people on the right of the political spectrum are more likely than those on the left to say their country should focus on domestic problems rather than help others. This is a particularly strong view held by the Greek right (88%), the Italian right (79%) and the French right (72%). At the same time, those on the left in Germany (70%), Sweden (66%) and the Netherlands (65%) especially favor helping other countries with their problems.

Older Europeans also tend to be more inward looking than younger ones. Among those who favor dealing with their own problems, there is a 17-percentage-point generation gap in the UK between those ages 50 and older, who are more inward looking, and their countrymen ages 18 to 34. A similar 16-point divide exists in Sweden and the Netherlands, a 14-point division in Italy and a 12-point generation gap in Greece.
Support for multilateralism far from universal

A commitment to multilateralism was a bitter lesson Europe learned from two world wars. It was one of the reasons European nations were founding members of both the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. But today, public commitment to this ideal is far from robust.

In just three of 10 EU nations does half or more of the public subscribe to the view that in foreign policy their country should take into account the interests of allies even if it means making compromises. Only Germans (67%) are strongly committed to such multilateralism. Just over half the Swedes (54%) and half the Dutch agree.

At the same time 74% of Greeks, 54% of the British, 52% of the French, 51% of Hungarians and 50% of Italians say that in foreign affairs it would best if their countries followed their own national interests, even when allies strongly disagree.

Again this is an ideologically divisive issue in a number of European societies. In Germany 79% of people on the left think Berlin should compromise with its allies, compared with 57% of Germans on the right. There is a similar left-right split of 21 points in the UK (59% to 38%) and 20 points in France (53% to 33%).

Europe divided on following national interests or compromising with allies

*In foreign policy, our country should …*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Follow its national interests even when allies strongly disagree</th>
<th>Take allies’ interests into account even if it means compromising</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIAN</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Volunteered category “Neither/Both equally” not shown.
Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q32.

“Europeans Face the World Divided”

Left more in favor of multilateralism in certain EU countries

*In foreign policy, our country should take into account the interests of its allies, even if it means making compromises*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Right</th>
<th>Right-left Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>-17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only statistically significant differences shown.
Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q32.

“Europeans Face the World Divided”

www.pewresearch.org
Despite criticism, aspirations for an influential EU

Europeans are dissatisfied with the European Union, which has responsibility for Europe’s trade relations with the rest of the world and a growing role in European foreign policy. Yet a plurality of Germans, Hungarians, Italians, Dutch, Poles, Swedes and British believe that the EU plays a more important role in the world today than it did a decade ago. And by huge margins, in all the EU member states surveyed publics want the EU to play a more active role in world affairs than it does today.

A median of just 51% hold a favorable view of the Brussels-based institution. The most unhappy are the Greeks (27%), French (38%), British (44%) and Spanish (47%). And favorable opinion of the EU is down in five of the six nations surveyed in both 2015 and 2016.

Europeans are quite critical of the EU’s current handling of the refugee situation, relations with Russia and European economic problems.

Overwhelming majorities disapprove of the EU’s management of the refugee crisis. Fully 94% of Greeks, 88% of Swedes, 77% of Italians, and 75% of Spanish disapprove of the EU’s efforts. Roughly seven-in ten Hungarians, Poles, British and French take the same position.

Majorities or pluralities in all the EU member states surveyed disapprove of the job being done by the institution in dealing with Russia. The strongest criticism comes from Greece (69%), Sweden (55%), France (53%), Italy and Hungary (both 52%).

Europeans are divided about how to treat Russia going forward. About nine-in-ten Greeks believe it is more important to have a strong economic relationship with Russia than to be tough with Moscow on foreign policy disputes. Smaller majorities of Hungarians (67%),

### Widespread disapproval of EU’s policy on Russia

*Do you ___ of the way the EU is dealing with Russia?*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Disapprove</th>
<th>Approve</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIAN</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q50c.

“Europeans Face the World Divided”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Germans (58%) and Italians (54%) agree. Swedes (71%) say being tough is more important, while other European countries are split.

Europeans are also unhappy with the EU’s handling of economic problems. About nine-in-ten Greeks (92%) disapprove of how the EU has dealt with the issue. Roughly two-thirds of Italians (68%), French (66%) and Spanish (65%) similarly disapprove. (France and Spain are the two nations where the favorability of the EU has recently experienced the largest decline.) Majorities in Sweden (59%) and the UK (55%) – the latter includes 84% of UKIP supporters – also disapprove of the EU’s job in dealing with economic challenges. The strongest approval of Brussels’ economic efforts is in Poland and Germany (both 47%).

At a time when Europeans are generally downbeat about the EU’s recent international record, many see the EU playing a larger role in the world. Roughly half the Dutch (51%) and the Swedes (49%) say the EU is more important today than it was a decade ago. And a plurality of Germans (46%), Hungarians (43%), Poles (42%), Italians (41%) and British (39%) agree.

In several societies it is young people (those ages 18 to 34) more than older people (those 50 and older) who see Brussels playing a larger international role today. Such a generational gap exists in Germany, Poland, Sweden, and the UK.

And a median of 74% of Europeans want the EU to take a more active international stance in the years ahead. Only in the UK (33%) and the Netherlands (31%) is there a sizable minority that favors the EU playing a less active role in the future.

Such public sentiments illustrate a contrast between a fairly negative assessment of the EU’s handling of key problems and public hopes for the EU’s future role in the world. This may in part be explained by people’s idealism about the EU’s potential. A 2014 Pew Research Center survey found that strong majorities in seven EU nations believed the EU promotes peace.
Europeans are quite supportive of the United Nations. A median of 66% hold a favorable view of the New York-based international institution. This includes roughly eight-in-ten Swedes (82%), seven-in-ten Dutch (72%) and about two-thirds of the British (68%) and Germans (65%). Notably, just 41% of Greeks are positively disposed toward the UN, the lowest rating in Europe.

But the generally pro-UN sentiment is slipping in a number of EU nations. The recent high point in favorable rating for the UN was in 2011 in France, Spain and the UK. Since then support is down in all these countries.

Views of the UN do not neatly track with ideological orientation. People on the left in Germany are more likely than those on the right to hold a positive view of the UN. In France, Greece and Spain those on the right are more favorably disposed toward the organization.

There is also widespread European support for NATO, the post-World War II security alliance. A median of 59% say they have a favorable opinion of the multilateral institution (nine of the 10 European nations in the survey are members, Sweden is not). The strongest support is in the Netherlands (71%) and Poland (70%).

The lowest rating for the military partnership is in Greece (25%). There has been a drop-off in French backing, from 64% in 2015 to 49% in 2016, although this may be attributable to a rise in the number of people who express no opinion.

The Swedes have long debated joining NATO, and 58% have a favorable view of the organization. But the Swedish public is split on membership: 45% say they back the country becoming a NATO member, while 44% oppose such a move.

In most European countries surveyed there is not an overwhelming ideological difference of opinion regarding NATO. However the left-right splits are quite large in Sweden (72% favorable on the right, 35% on the left) and Spain (56% positive on the right, 27% on the left).
European economies are deeply dependent on international commerce, and most Europeans have supported international trade in recent years. Roughly half or more of those in eight of the 10 EU nations surveyed believe their involvement in the global economy is a good thing because it provides their country with new markets and opportunities for growth. The Dutch (72%), Swedes (71%) and Germans (70%) are the strongest supporters of such engagement. By contrast, less than half of Italians (44%) and only about a third of Greeks (35%) are positive about their countries’ role in the world economy.

Those with a better education are significantly more likely than the less-educated to think involvement in the global economy is a good thing in six of the EU countries surveyed. And the differences in opinion can be quite high: 28 points in the Netherlands, 20 points in Spain and 17 points in France.

### Generally strong European support for economic engagement

*Our country’s involvement in the global economy is a good thing because it provides our country with new markets and opportunities for growth*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q43.

“Europeans Face the World Divided”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
3. Europeans disagree on promoting human rights, moderate support for development aid

Previous Pew Research Center surveys have found broad support for democratic principles in Europe, but the latest poll reveals less consensus on promoting human rights in the international arena. Among the 10 European nations surveyed, there are only four in which half or more say human rights should be a top priority for their country’s foreign policy.

Opinions about economic relations with the developing world vary as well. Most respondents want their nation’s companies to invest more in developing countries. There is also support for importing more goods from developing countries and increasing foreign aid, although opinions on these two issues vary across European publics. Overall, the desire to engage economically with the developing world is strongest in Spain, Sweden and Germany, while the Greeks, Hungarians and Italians are the most reluctant.

**Human rights and foreign policy**

European publics express widely divergent opinions about the importance of human rights in making foreign policy. In Spain, Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands, half or more think improving human rights around the world should be one of their country’s most important foreign policy priorities. In the United Kingdom and France, just over four-in-ten hold this view; similar shares say improving human rights is important, but that many other goals should be more important. The view that many other foreign policy objectives are more important

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**Mixed views on human rights as a foreign policy goal**

*Improving human rights around the world ...*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Should be one of our country’s most important foreign policy goals</th>
<th>Is important, but many other foreign policy goals should be more important</th>
<th>Should not be an important foreign policy goal for our country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDIAN</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Volunteered category “None of the above” not shown.


“Europeans Face the World Divided”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
than human rights is the most common position in Hungary, Greece, Poland and Italy. Relatively few of those polled believe human rights should not be an important foreign policy goal at all, although one-in-five say this in Hungary.

There are deep ideological divisions on this issue, with those on the political left much more likely to consider human rights a top foreign policy priority. This is especially true in the UK, where 72% of those who place themselves on the left of the ideological spectrum say improving human rights should be one of Britain’s most important foreign policy goals, compared with just 32% of those on the right. Double-digit gaps between left and right are also found in six other nations.

As one might expect given these ideological differences, there are also significant divisions along partisan lines. For example, 47% of those who identify with the French Socialist Party say human rights should be one of the country’s most important foreign policy priorities, but just 32% of Republicans and 24% of National Front supporters agree.

**Sharp ideological differences on human rights and foreign policy**

*Improving human rights around the world should be one of our country’s most important foreign policy goals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Right</th>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Left-Right Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>+40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td></td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>+24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>+24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td></td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>+19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>+17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>+14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td></td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>+12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Relations with developing countries

A median of 76% across the 10 EU nations surveyed say they support companies from their country expanding investments in developing economies. Three-quarters or more back this idea in Spain, Sweden, Germany, the UK and the Netherlands. The only nation surveyed where less than half hold this view is Greece (47%).

In seven nations, those with higher incomes are especially likely to favor greater investment in the developing world, and in seven countries the same is true of respondents with higher levels of education.

There is also considerable support in several nations for importing more goods from the developing world. Seven-in-ten or more approve of this idea in five countries (a median of 64% approve across all 10 nations). However, 65% of Greeks and 50% of Italians oppose more imports, while Hungarians are closely divided (46% favor, 48% oppose).

In seven nations, half or more favor increasing foreign aid to developing countries (a median of 53% approve across the 10 nations). Support is particularly strong in Spain (83%), while 67% of Germans and 61% of Swedes also back increased foreign assistance. However, by a 51%-45% margin, the British public opposes more aid, and solid majorities hold this view in Greece (69%) and Hungary (64%).

People with higher levels of education consistently are more likely to support increasing aid to developing nations. Younger people also often express more support, and this is particularly true
in the UK, where 66% of those under age 35 endorse increased aid, compared with 49% of 35- to 49-year-olds and 32% of people 50 and older.

Attitudes toward foreign aid are also linked to ideology. People who place themselves on the political left are more supportive of increasing aid than those on the right in five nations. In France, the UK and Germany, the left-right gap is more than 20 percentage points.

Similarly, those who identify with parties on the left are also more favorable toward foreign aid. For instance, while 60% of UK Labour supporters endorse higher levels of aid, just 37% of Conservatives and 19% of UKIP supporters agree.

---

**More support on the left for foreign aid**

*Support our country increasing foreign aid to developing countries*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Right</th>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Left-Right Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>+28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>+27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>+22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>+19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>+13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only statistically significant differences shown.
Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q46a.
*“Europeans Face the World Divided”*
4. Europeans wary of hard power

Europeans overall appear reluctant to support the use of hard power in international affairs. There is little backing for boosting defense spending and, despite overwhelming concern about the threat posed by ISIS, many believe that relying too much on military force to defeat terrorism only creates hatred that can lead to more terrorism.

Median spending on defense is 1.2% of gross domestic product among the EU nations surveyed (the United States spends 3.3%). This outlay ranges from 0.8% in Hungary to 2.6% in Greece, but in 2015 such expenditures were down in eight of the 10 nations surveyed. Only in Poland (52%), which spends 2.2% of its GDP on the military, and the Netherlands (49%), which spends 1.2%, does roughly half the public support increasing outlays on national defense. Despite commitments by their governments to boost military spending, around half the public in France (52%) and Spain (52%) want to keep defense spending the same as it is today, as does a plurality in Germany and Greece (both 47%). A third of the public in Spain (33%) and about a quarter in Italy (23%) favors cutting military outlays.

A reticence to exercise hard power can also be seen in the lack of public support for the use of overwhelming military force to defeat terrorism. Despite large majorities in each society who say that ISIS is a major threat to their country, half or more in six of the 10 EU nations surveyed say relying too much on military force to defeat terrorism creates hatred that leads to more terrorism. The Dutch (66%), Germans (64%) and Greeks (64%) in particular share a concern that a strong military response to terrorism will only worsen the problem. At the same time, roughly half of
Poles (52%), Italians (52%) and Hungarians (51%) believe that using overwhelming military force is the best way to defeat terrorism. Swedes are divided on the issue.

As might be expected, there is a deep ideological divide on this issue. About half or more of people on the right of the ideological spectrum in Italy, Sweden, France and Spain support exercising overpowering military might. At the same time, people on the left for the most part are far more concerned than those on the right that such use of force would spawn more terrorism.

Views on the efficacy of overwhelming force also differ along educational lines. Those with a secondary education or less are more likely than those with more than a secondary education to believe that the use of overwhelming force is the best way to defeat terrorism. This is particularly the case in the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, France and the UK.

Europeans at odds over use of force to defeat terrorism

Which statement comes closer to your own views?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Relying too much on force creates hatred, more terrorism</th>
<th>Using military force is the best way to defeat terrorism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only statistically significant differences shown. For the purpose of comparing educational groups across countries, we standardize education levels based on the UN’s International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). The lower education category is secondary education or below and the higher category is post-secondary or above.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q86.

More-educated are less in favor of using force against terrorism

Using overwhelming military force is the best way to defeat terrorism around the world

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Less education</th>
<th>More education</th>
<th>Diff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>-16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>-13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only statistically significant differences shown. For the purpose of comparing educational groups across countries, we standardize education levels based on the UN’s International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). The lower education category is secondary education or below and the higher category is post-secondary or above.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey. Q86.

“Europeans Face the World Divided”
Acknowledgments

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals.

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Travis Mitchell, Digital Producer
Bridget Parker, Research Assistant
Audrey Powers, Administrative Coordinator
Steve Schwarzer, Research Methodologist
Katie Simmons, Associate Director, Research
Margaret Vice, Senior Researcher
Ben Wormald, Associate Web Developer
Hani Zainulbhai, Research Analyst
Methodology

About the Pew Research Center’s Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey

Results for the survey are based on telephone and face-to-face interviews conducted under the direction of TNS BMRB and Princeton Survey Research Associates International. The results are based on national samples, unless otherwise noted. More details about our international survey methodology and country-specific sample designs are available on our website.

For more detailed information on survey methods for this report, see here:

For more general information on international survey research, see here:
http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/international-survey-research/
Topline Questionnaire

Pew Research Center
Spring 2016 Survey
June 13, 2016 Release

Methodological notes:

- Survey results are based on national samples. For further details on sample designs, see Methodology section and our international survey methods database.

- Due to rounding, percentages may not total 100%. The topline “total” columns show 100%, because they are based on unrounded numbers.

- Since 2007, the Pew Research Center has used an automated process to generate toplines for its Global Attitudes Surveys. As a result, numbers may differ slightly from those published prior to 2007.

- For more results from the U.S. survey conducted April 12-19, 2016, see “Public Uncertain, Divided Over America’s Place in the World.”

- Not all questions included in the Spring 2016 survey are presented in this topline. Omitted questions have either been previously released or will be released in future reports.
Q10c. Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion of ____. c. the European Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Spring, 2016</th>
<th>Very favorable</th>
<th>Somewhat favorable</th>
<th>Somewhat unfavorable</th>
<th>Very unfavorable</th>
<th>DK/Refused</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Spring, 2014</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spring, 2009</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>22</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring, 2007</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>Spring, 2004</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spring, 2016</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spring, 2016</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>2</td>
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### Q22f. I’d like your opinion about some possible international concerns. Do you think that ____ is a major threat, a minor threat or not a threat to (survey country)? f. cyberattacks from other countries

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### Q22h. I’d like your opinion about some possible international concerns. Do you think that ____ is a major threat, a minor threat or not a threat to (survey country)? h. global economic instability

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Q31b. Do you think ____ plays a more important role in the world today compared to 10 years ago, a less important role or about as important a role in the world as it did 10 years ago? b. the European Union

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>More important role</th>
<th>Less important role</th>
<th>As important as 10 years ago</th>
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Q32. Please tell me whether the first statement or the second statement comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right.

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>In foreign policy, (survey country) should take into account the interests of its allies, even if it means making compromises</th>
<th>In foreign policy, (survey country) should follow its own national interests, even when its allies strongly disagree</th>
<th>Neither/Both equally (VOL)</th>
<th>DK/Refused</th>
<th>Total</th>
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Q39. Do you think the EU should play a more active role or less active role in world affairs than it does today?

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<table>
<thead>
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<th>It is a good thing because it provides (survey country) with new markets and opportunities for growth</th>
<th>It is a bad thing because it lowers wages and costs jobs in (survey country)</th>
<th>Neither (VOL)</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Improving human rights around the world should be one of (survey country)'s most important foreign policy goals</th>
<th>Improving human rights is important, but many other foreign policy goals should be more important</th>
<th>Improving human rights around the world should not be an important foreign policy goal for (survey country)</th>
<th>None of the above (VOL)</th>
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</table>
Q46a. I’m going to read you a list of things (survey country) might do in dealing with developing countries. As I read each one, please tell me if you would support or oppose it. a. increasing foreign aid to developing countries

<table>
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<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
<th>DK/Refused</th>
<th>Total</th>
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Q46b. I’m going to read you a list of things (survey country) might do in dealing with developing countries. As I read each one, please tell me if you would support or oppose it. b. importing more goods from developing countries

<table>
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<th>DK/Refused</th>
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Q46c. I’m going to read you a list of things (survey country) might do in dealing with developing countries. As I read each one, please tell me if you would support or oppose it. c. increasing (SURVEY COUNTRY NATIONALITY) companies' investment in developing countries

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Q53. Europe has had strong political and economic ties with the United States on the one hand and the nations of Asia on the other hand. Which area do you think is more important to Europe?

<table>
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<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Nations of Asia</th>
<th>Equally Important</th>
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Q54. Thinking about our relations with Russia, in your view, which is more important?

<table>
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<th>Being tough with Russia on foreign policy disputes</th>
<th>Having a strong economic relationship with Russia</th>
<th>DK/Refused</th>
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Q86. Which statement comes closer to your own views, even if neither is exactly right?

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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<th>Using overwhelming military force is the best way to defeat terrorism around the world</th>
<th>Relying too much on military force to defeat terrorism creates hatred that leads to more terrorism</th>
<th>DK/Refused</th>
<th>Total</th>
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