



Special Eurobarometer 386

EUROPEANS AND THEIR LANGUAGES

REPORT

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**Europeans and their
Languages**

Conducted by TNS Opinion & Social at the request of
Directorate-General Education and Culture, Directorate-General
for Translation and Directorate-General for Interpretation.

Survey co-ordinated by the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Communication
(DG COMM "Research and Speechwriting" Unit)

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INTRODUCTION

Within the European Union there are many languages spoken. There are 23 officially recognised languages¹, more than 60 indigenous regional and minority languages, and many non-indigenous languages spoken by migrant communities. The EU, although it has limited influence because educational and language policies are the responsibility of individual Member States, is committed to safeguarding this linguistic diversity and promoting knowledge of languages, for reasons of cultural identity and social integration and cohesion, and because multilingual citizens are better placed to take advantage of the economic, educational and professional opportunities created by an integrated Europe. A mobile workforce is key to the competitiveness of the EU economy.

The Commission's first ever Communication on Multilingualism "A New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism", adopted in November 2005 and now superseded by the 2008 Strategy, set out three basic strands to the EU's policy in this area:

- underlining the major role that languages and multilingualism play in the European economy, and finding ways to develop this further
- encouraging all citizens to learn and speak more languages, in order to improve mutual understanding and communication
- ensuring that citizens have access to EU legislation, procedures and information in their own language

This Strategy complements the Commission's Action Plan "Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity", adopted in 2003, which set out measures aimed at supporting initiatives carried out at local, regional and national levels designed to extend the benefits of language learning to all citizens as a lifelong activity; improve the quality of language teaching at all levels; and build an environment in Europe favourable to languages by embracing linguistic diversity, building language-friendly communities, and making language learning easier.

The EU encourages all citizens to be multilingual, with the long-term objective that every citizen has practical skills in at least two languages in addition to his or her mother tongue. This survey has been undertaken with the overall objectives of understanding European citizens' experiences and perceptions of multilingualism. As well as spoken ability, the study examines the level of understanding and use of other languages, learning behaviour, attitudes towards learning or improving language skills, perceptions of the most useful languages, views on EU policy in relation to language use and the role that translation has.

¹ Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Irish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish

This survey was carried out by TNS Opinion & Social network in the 27 Member States of the European Union between the 25th of February and the 11th of March 2012. Some 26.751 respondents from different social and demographic groups were interviewed face-to-face at home in their mother tongue on behalf of DG Education and Culture, DG for Translation and DG for Interpretation.

The methodology used is that of Eurobarometer surveys as carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication ("Research and Speechwriting" Unit)². A technical note on the manner in which interviews were conducted by the Institutes within the TNS Opinion & Social network is appended as an annex to this report. Also included are the interview methods and confidence intervals³.

The findings of this survey have been analysed firstly at EU level and secondly by country. Results have also been compared with the previous survey conducted in 2005⁴. There are a number of differences between this latest wave and that conducted in 2005: the questionnaire has been modified and is shorter and the wording of some questions has also altered; and in 2005 the survey was conducted in 29 countries – the 25 Member States plus Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey and Croatia. This survey includes Bulgaria and Romania (which joined the EU in 2007) but not Croatia and Turkey. Comparisons between the two surveys are based on EU25 (in 2005) and EU27. It is important to bear these changes in mind. Where appropriate a variety of socio-demographic and behavioural variables – such as respondents' age, terminal education age, occupation, social positioning, internet usage, ability to pay household bills and degree of urbanisation – and measures based on respondents' language learning activity and number of foreign languages spoken have been used to provide further analysis.

² http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

³ The results tables are included in the annex. It should be noted that the total of the percentages in the tables of this report may exceed 100% when the respondent has the possibility of giving several answers to the question.

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_243_en.pdf

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

ABBREVIATIONS			
BE	Belgium	LV	Latvia
CZ	Czech Republic	LU	Luxembourg
BG	Bulgaria	HU	Hungary
DK	Denmark	MT	Malta
DE	Germany	NL	The Netherlands
EE	Estonia	AT	Austria
EL	Greece	PL	Poland
ES	Spain	PT	Portugal
FR	France	RO	Romania
IE	Ireland	SI	Slovenia
IT	Italy	SK	Slovakia
CY	Republic of Cyprus***	FI	Finland
LT	Lithuania	SE	Sweden
		UK	The United Kingdom
		EU27	European Union – 27 Member States
		EU15	BE, IT, FR, DE, LU, NL, DK, UK, IE, PT, ES, EL, AT, SE, FI*
		NMS12	BG, CZ, EE, CY, LT, LV, MT, HU, PL, RO, SL, SK**
		EURO AREA	BE, FR, IT, LU, DE, AT, ES, PT, IE, NL, FI, EL, EE, SI, CY, MT, SK

* EU15 refers to the 15 countries forming the European Union before the enlargements of 2004 and 2007

** The NMS12 are the 12 'new Member States' which joined the European Union during the 2004 and 2007 enlargements

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

* * * * *

We would like to take the opportunity to thank all the respondents across the continent who gave their time to take part in this survey.

Without their active participation, this study would not have been possible.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- In accordance with the EU population, the **most widely spoken mother tongue** is **German** (16%), followed by Italian and English (13% each), French (12%), then Spanish and Polish (8% each).
 - **For the majority of Europeans** their **mother tongue** is **one of the official languages** of the country in which they reside.
 - Just over half of Europeans (**54%**) are **able to hold a conversation in at least one additional language**, a quarter (25%) are able to speak at least two additional languages and one in ten (10%) are conversant in at least three.
 - **Almost all respondents** in **Luxembourg** (98%), **Latvia** (95%), the **Netherlands** (94%), **Malta** (93%), **Slovenia** and **Lithuania** (92% each), and **Sweden** (91%) say that they are **able to speak at least one language** in addition to their mother tongue.
 - Countries showing the **most notable increases in the proportion** of respondents saying that they are **able to speak at least one foreign language** well enough to hold a conversation, compared to data from the previous edition of the Eurobarometer survey, are **Austria** (+16 percentage points to 78%), **Finland** (+6 points to 75%), and **Ireland** (+6 points to 40%).
 - In contrast the **proportion able to speak at least one foreign language** has **decreased** notably in **Slovakia** (-17 percentage points to 80%), the **Czech Republic** (-12 points to 49%), **Bulgaria** (-11 points to 48%), **Poland** (-7 points to 50%), and **Hungary** (-7 points to 35%). In these countries there has been a downward shift since 2005 in the proportions able to speak foreign languages such as Russian and German.
 - Few countries show a **noticeable increase in the proportion** of respondents **able to speak at least two foreign languages**, with the most marked being in **Italy** (+6 percentage points to 22%) and **Ireland** (+5 points to 18%).
- However nine Member States show a **significant drop** of more than 5 percentage points: **Belgium** (-16 percentage points to 50%), **Hungary** (-14 points to 13%), **Bulgaria** (-12 points to 19%), **Poland** (-10 points to 22%), **Portugal** (-10 points to 13%), Malta (-9 points to 59%), **Luxembourg** (-8 points to 84%), **Denmark** (-8 points to 58%), and **Estonia** (-6 points to 52%).
- **Countries** where respondents are **least likely** to be able **to speak any foreign language** are **Hungary** (65%), **Italy** (62%), the **UK** and **Portugal** (61% in each), and **Ireland** (60%).
 - The **five most widely spoken foreign languages** remain **English** (38%), **French** (12%), **German** (11%), **Spanish** (7%) and **Russian** (5%).

- At a national level **English** is the **most widely spoken** foreign language **in 19 of the 25 Member States** where it is not an official language (i.e. excluding the UK and Ireland).
- The **majority of Europeans who speak English, German, Spanish and Russian** as a foreign language **believe that they have better than basic skills**. Ratings of skill level are broadly similar to those seen in the 2005 survey.
- Just over two fifths (**44%**) of Europeans say that they are **able to understand at least one foreign language** well enough to be able to **follow the news on radio or television**. English is the most widely understood, with a quarter (25%) of Europeans able to follow radio or television news in the language. French and German are mentioned by 7% of respondents each, while Spanish (5%), Russian (3%) and Italian (2%).
- **Europeans are just as likely to be able to read a newspaper or magazine article** in a foreign language with just over two fifths (**44%**) of Europeans saying they can. Again English is the most widespread foreign language, with a similar proportion of Europeans (25%) able to read a newspaper or magazine article in the language. French is mentioned by 7% and German by 6% of Europeans. Spanish comes next, with 4% of answers, followed by Russian and Italian (2%).
- **Europeans are slightly less likely to say that they understand any foreign language well enough to be able to use it to communicate online** (e.g. using email, Twitter, Facebook etc.), with two fifths (39%) saying that they can use at least one foreign language in this way. Again, the most widely cited language is English, with a similar proportion of Europeans (26%) able to communicate online in the language. French and German are mentioned by 5% of Europeans each, followed by Spanish (3%) and Russian and Italian (1%).
- There is a clear relationship between the order in which a language is mentioned (i.e. perceived fluency) and the frequency with which that language is used. A quarter (24%) of respondents use their first foreign language every day or almost every day, a similar proportion (23%) use it often and the remainder (50%) use it on an occasional basis.

Around one in ten respondents use their second language every day or nearly every day (8%), with respondents much more likely to use it on an occasional basis only (65%).

Similarly, only 6% of respondents who speak a third foreign language use it on an 'everyday' basis, around one in eight (13%) use it often but not daily, and around seven in ten (69%) use it occasionally.

- **Europeans** say they **regularly use foreign languages when watching films/television or listening to the radio** (37%), **using the internet** (36%) and **communicating with friends** (35%). 27% of respondents report using foreign languages regularly for conversations at work and 50% during holidays abroad.
- The most notable changes since 2005 are an **increase in the proportion of Europeans who regularly use foreign languages on the internet** (+10 percentage points) and when **watching films/television or listening to the radio** (+8 points). The proportion of Europeans who do not use a foreign language regularly in any situation has fallen from 13% in 2005 to 9% in 2012.
- The **majority of Europeans do not describe themselves as active learners of languages**. Around a quarter (23%) of Europeans have never learnt a language, while just over two fifths (44%) have not learnt a language recently and do not intend to start.
- Only a minority (**14%**) **have continued learning a language in the last two years**; less than one in ten (7%) have started learning a new language in the last two years; and a similar proportion (8%) have not learnt a language recently, but intend to start in the coming year.
- Europeans are most likely to identify working in another country as a key advantage of learning a new language, with three fifths of Europeans (61%) holding this view. Just over half of Europeans (53%) perceive as such using the language at work (including travelling abroad). A slightly smaller proportion (46%) evoke here ability to studying abroad and possibility of using it on holidays abroad (47%).
- **88%** of Europeans **think that knowing languages** other than their mother tongue **is very useful**.
- Two thirds of Europeans (67%) consider English as one of the two most useful languages for themselves.
- Languages perceived as the most useful that come up right after are the following: German (17%), French (16%), Spanish (14%) and Chinese (6%).
- There has been a decrease in the proportion thinking that French is important (-9 percentage points), and in those thinking German is an important language for personal development (-5 points). **Europeans are more likely** now than they were in 2005 **to think that Chinese is an important language** (+ 4 points).
- **98%** of Europeans **consider mastering other foreign languages as useful for the future of their children**.

- Among languages perceived as such, French and German are mentioned by 20% of Europeans each, Spanish by 16% and Chinese by 14%. Around four in five Europeans (79%) consider English as one of the most useful languages for the future of the children.
- There has been a decrease (-13 percentage points) since 2005 in the proportion of Europeans thinking that French is important for children to learn for their future and a (-8 points) in the proportion thinking German important for children to learn.
- Whilst the perception that **Chinese** is a useful language for personal development is slightly more widespread now than in 2005 (+4 percentage points), the perception of its value **as an important language for children to learn** is **significantly more widespread than in 2005 (+12 points)**.
- **Europeans** are **most likely to say** that **free lessons would make them significantly more likely to learn or improve skills in a language**, mentioned by around three in ten (**29%**). Around a fifth of Europeans say they would be significantly more likely to learn or improve language skills if they were paid to learn (19%), if they were able to learn it in a country in which it is spoken (18%), and if it improved career prospects (18%).
- The **most widely mentioned barrier to learning another language is lack of motivation**, with a third (34%) of Europeans saying this discourages them. Around a quarter of Europeans cite **lack of time** to study properly (28%) **and that it is too expensive** (25%). A fifth (19%) of Europeans say that not being good at languages discourages them.
- The **most widespread method used to learn a foreign language** is through lessons at school. Just over two thirds of Europeans (68%) have learnt a foreign language in this way. Much smaller proportions of Europeans have learnt a foreign language by talking informally to a native speaker (16%), with a teacher outside school in group language lessons (15%), and by going on frequent or long trips to the country in which the language is spoken (15%). Europeans are most likely to think that school language lessons are the most effective way they have learnt a foreign language.
- There is a **broad consensus** among Europeans that **everyone** in the EU **should be able to speak at least one foreign language**, with more than four in five (84%) agreeing with this view.
- Europeans, for the most part, support the EU's vision that EU citizens should be able to speak at least two foreign languages; more than seven in ten (**72%**) **agree that people in the EU should be able to speak more than one language** in addition to their mother tongue.

- The majority of Europeans **(81%) agree that all languages spoken within the EU should be treated equally**. Even if around seven in ten (69%) think that Europeans should be able to speak a common language this view does not extend to believing that any one language should have priority over others.
- Slightly more than half of respondents **(53%) agree that EU institutions should adopt a single language when communicating with citizens**, whilst more than two in five disapprove of this idea.
- More than three-quarters **(77%)** of respondents **think that improving language skills should be a policy priority**.
- More than two in five respondents **(44%) agree that that they prefer subtitles** to dubbing when watching foreign films or TV programmes, but a slightly larger proportion (52%) disagree that they prefer subtitles.
- **Europeans recognise that translation has an important role to play in a wide range of areas across society**, most notably in education and learning (76%) and in health and safety (71%). European perceive translation as important while looking for a job (68%), getting news about events in the rest of the world (67%), participating in or getting information about EU activities (60%), accessing public services (59%) or enjoying leisure activities such as TV, films and reading (57%).
- Just over two in five Europeans **(43%)** say that **translation has an important role to play in their everyday lives**, and just under one in six **(16%)** consider this role to be **very important**.

Three in ten Europeans (30%) say that translation plays no role at all in their everyday lives.

I. MULTILINGUALISM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION TODAY

This first section of the report examines the current level of multilingualism in the EU. It begins with an overview of the languages that Europeans consider to be their mother tongue before exploring other languages Europeans are able to speak well enough to hold a conversation. The chapter then focuses on these other (non-mother tongue) languages – which will be referred to in this report as ‘foreign languages’ – identifying those most widely spoken both at a European level and within each Member State. For the most commonly spoken foreign languages, level of perceived ability is examined before the chapter concludes with a review of foreign languages that Europeans are able to use for more passive activities, such as listening to news, reading a paper and sending an email.

1. MOTHER TONGUE

The most widely spoken mother tongue is German, followed by Italian, English, French, Spanish and Polish

Respondents were asked to say which of the languages that they spoke was their mother tongue⁵. Answers were collected spontaneously and recorded using a pre-defined list of 38 languages, with any other languages recorded in a single ‘other’ category. If respondents mentioned more than one language each one they mentioned was recorded.

There is a diverse range of mother tongue languages spoken in Europe. The prevalence with which languages are spoken as the mother tongue broadly reflects the population distribution within the EU⁶.

Thus, **German is the most widely spoken, with 16% of Europeans** saying it is their first language, followed by Italian and English (13% each), French (12%), then Spanish and Polish (8% each). These results are broadly similar to those reported 2005.

The mother tongue for the majority of Europeans is an official language of the country in which they reside

For the majority of Europeans their mother tongue is one of the official languages of the country in which they reside.

Those in **Greece** and **Hungary** (99% in each), the **Czech Republic** (98%), **Italy** (97%) and **Malta** (97%) are particularly **likely to use an official language** of their country **as their mother tongue**.




























⁵ D48a. "Thinking about the languages that you speak, which language is your mother tongue? (ADD IF NECESSARY: By first language, I mean your mother tongue) Czech, Arabic, Basque, Bulgarian, Catalan, Chinese, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Galician, German, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Irish/Gaelic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luxembourgish, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Scottish Gaelic, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Urdu, Welsh, Other, None (SPONTANEOUS), Don't know".

⁶ http://europa.eu/about-eu/facts-figures/living/index_en.htm

In contrast, those in **Latvia** (71%) and **Estonia** (80%) are the **least likely to use an official language**. In both of these countries a significant proportion of respondents say that their first language is Russian (27% and 19% respectively), a reflection of the history and geography of the two countries.

Other **countries** with a relatively **large minority speaking an unofficial language** of the country are **Luxembourg**, where 19% mention Portuguese as their mother tongue; **Slovakia** and **Romania** where 9% and 8% of respondents respectively cite Hungarian as their first language, **and** the **UK** where 2% of respondents say Polish is their mother tongue, 1% mention German, French, Portuguese, Urdu and Welsh, and 4% mention a language not on the pre-defined list.

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

	State language(s), official languages that have an official status in the EU
 BE	Dutch 55%, French 38%, German 0.4%
 BG	95%
 CZ	98%
 DK	96%
 DE	87%
 EE	80%
 IE	English 93%, Irish 3%
 EL	99%
 ES	Spanish 82%, Catalan 8%, Galician 5%, Basque 1%
 FR	93%
 IT	97%
 CY	95%
 LV	71%
 LT	92%
 LU	Luxembourgish 52%, French 16%, German 2%
 HU	99%
 MT	Maltese 97%, English 4%
 NL	94%
 AT	93%
 PL	95%
 PT	95%
 RO	93%
 SI	93%
 SK	88%
 FI	Finnish 94%, Swedish 5%
 SE	93%
 UK	88%

2. OTHER LANGUAGES SPOKEN

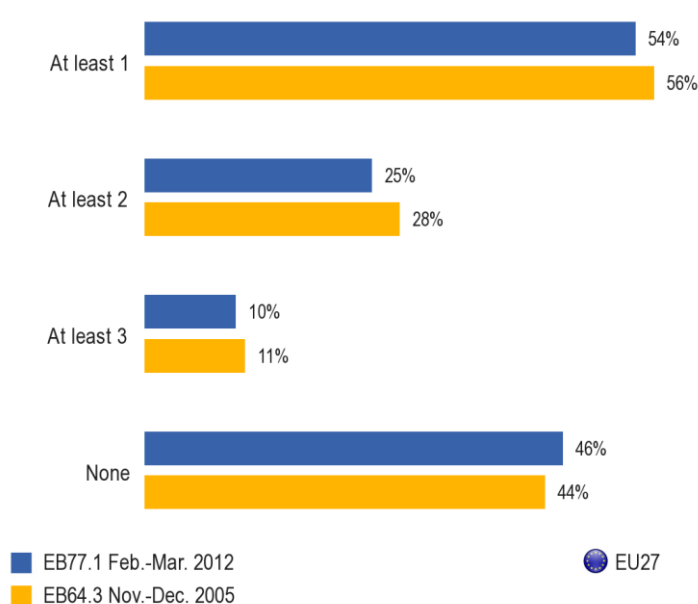
Respondents were asked what languages, other than their mother tongue, they were able to speak well enough to hold a conversation. Up to three additional languages were recorded in order of perceived fluency⁷.

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

The majority of Europeans (**54%**) are **able to hold a conversation in at least one additional language**, a quarter (**25%**) are **able to speak at least two additional languages** and one in ten (**10%**) are conversant in **at least three**.

Just under half of all Europeans (46%) are not able to speak any foreign language well enough to hold a conversation.

D48T2. Languages that you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation - TOTAL



⁷ D48b,c and d "And which other languages, if any, do you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation? (DO NOT SHOW CARD – CODE MOTHER TONGUE IN D48a AND UP TO 3 OTHERS IN ORDER OF FLUENCY IN D48b FIRST OTHER LANGUAGE , D48c SECOND OTHER LANGUAGE and D48d THIRD OTHER LANGUAGE) Czech, Arabic, Basque, Bulgarian, Catalan, Chinese, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Galician, German, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Irish/Gaelic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luxembourgish, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Scottish Gaelic, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Urdu, Welsh, Other, None (SPONTANEOUS), Don't know"

The proportions reported in this survey have decreased slightly relative to those reported in 2005, although the overall picture remains similar. These small drops may be explained in part by questionnaire changes.⁸ Secondly, analysis of results at a national level, covered a little later in this section of the report, shows some significant shifts in the pattern of languages spoken within some individual Member States, and this will impact on overall EU level results.

There is little difference in the number of foreign languages spoken between the fifteen Member States that were EU Members prior to 2004 (EU15) and the twelve Member States that joined subsequently (NMS12). EU15 (10%) is slightly more likely than NMS12 (8%) to be able to hold a conversation in at least three foreign languages.





























There is widespread national variation. In terms of the **long-term EU objective that every citizen has practical skills in at least two foreign languages** there are only **eight Member States** in which a **majority are able to do** this:

- Luxembourg (84%),
- the Netherlands (77%),
- Slovenia (67%),
- Malta (59%),
- Denmark (58%),
- Latvia (54%),
- Lithuania (52%) and Estonia (52%).

In Luxembourg, three fifths of respondents (61%) are able to speak at least three languages in addition to their mother tongue.

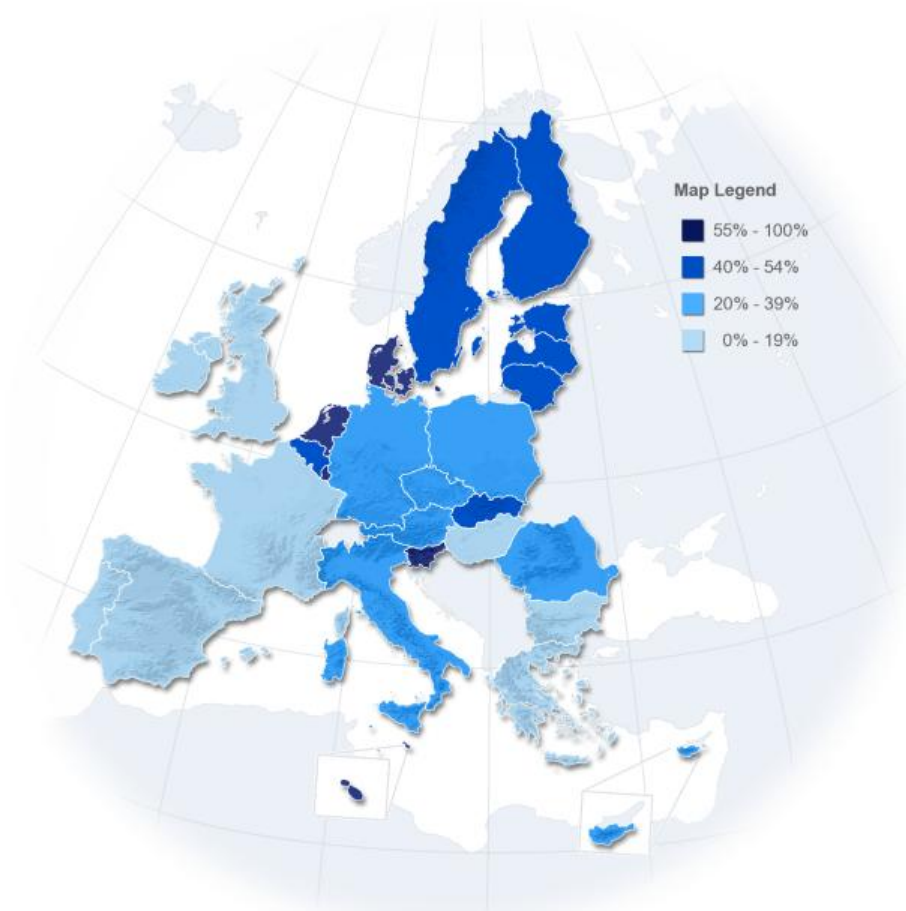
Those countries where respondents are least likely to be able to speak at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue are Portugal and Hungary (13% in each), the UK (14%) and Greece (15%).

⁸ In 2005 the list of languages recorded was different and "Other regional languages" were separately identified and recorded from "Other" languages which may have affected the way in which regional languages were recorded.

 LU	84%
 NL	77%
 SI	67%
 MT	59%
 DK	58%
 LV	54%
 LT	52%
 EE	52%
 BE	50%
 FI	48%
 SE	44%
 SK	43%
 DE	28%
 AT	27%
 EU	25%
 RO	22%
 PL	22%
 IT	22%
 CZ	22%
 CY	20%
 FR	19%
 BG	19%
 ES	18%
 IE	18%
 EL	15%
 UK	14%
 HU	13%
 PT	13%





























Question: D48T2. Languages that you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation - TOTAL

Answers: At least 2



Some countries have seen some noticeable shifts since 2005 in the number of foreign languages that citizens are able to speak well enough to hold a conversation.

D48T Languages that you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation - TOTAL

	At least 1	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	At least 2	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	At least 3	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	None	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3
 EU27	54%	-2	25%	-3	10%	-1	46%	+2
 LU	98%	-1	84%	-8	61%	-8	2%	+1
 LV	95%	=	54%	+3	13%	-1	5%	=
 NL	94%	+3	77%	+2	37%	+3	6%	-3
 MT	93%	+1	59%	-9	13%	-10	7%	-1
 SI	92%	+1	67%	-4	34%	-6	8%	-1
 LT	92%	=	52%	+1	18%	+2	8%	=
 SE	91%	+1	44%	-4	15%	-1	9%	-1
 DK	89%	+1	58%	-8	23%	-7	11%	-1
 EE	87%	-2	52%	-6	22%	-2	13%	+2
 SK	80%	-17	43%	-5	18%	-4	20%	+17
 AT	78%	+16	27%	-5	9%	-12	22%	-16
 CY	76%	-2	20%	-2	7%	+1	24%	+2
 FI	75%	+6	48%	+1	26%	+3	25%	-6
 BE	72%	-2	50%	-16	27%	-26	28%	+2
 DE	66%	-1	28%	+1	8%	=	34%	+1
 EL	57%	=	15%	-4	4%	=	43%	=
 FR	51%	=	19%	-2	5%	+1	49%	=
 PL	50%	-7	22%	-10	7%	-9	50%	+7
 CZ	49%	-12	22%	-7	6%	-4	51%	+12
 RO	48%	+1	22%	-5	8%	+2	52%	-1
 BG	48%	-11	19%	-12	4%	-4	52%	+11
 ES	46%	+2	18%	-1	5%	-1	54%	-2
 IE	40%	+6	18%	+5	4%	+2	60%	-6
 UK	39%	+1	14%	-4	5%	-1	61%	-1
 PT	39%	-3	13%	-10	4%	-2	61%	+3
 IT	38%	-3	22%	+6	15%	+9	62%	+3
 HU	35%	-7	13%	-14	4%	-16	65%	+7

Those **countries** showing the **most marked improvement** in the **proportion** of respondents saying that they are **able to speak at least one** foreign **language** well enough to hold a conversation are **Austria** (+16 percentage points to 78%), **Finland** (+6 points to 75%), and **Ireland** (+6 points to 40%).

In contrast, those **Member States** where the **proportion** of respondents **able to speak at least one** foreign **language has decreased** notably include

- Slovakia (-17 percentage points to 80%),
- the Czech Republic (-12 points to 49%),
- Bulgaria (-11 points to 48%),
- Poland (-7 points to 50%) and Hungary (-7 points to 35%).

Within these countries the proportions of respondents able to speak foreign languages such as Russian and German have declined notably since 2005. For example, the proportion able to speak Russian has dropped in Bulgaria (-12 points), Slovakia (-12 points), Poland (-8 points) and the Czech Republic (-7 points). Similarly, the proportions speaking German are down in the Czech Republic (-13 points), Slovakia (-10 points) and Hungary (-7 points). It is likely that in these post-Communist countries these downward shifts are the result of a 'lost' generation. Many of those who were able to speak German (following the Second World War) or who learnt Russian at school (it is now much less commonly taught) are now deceased, or, as time has elapsed, have forgotten how to speak these languages.

Few countries show a **noticeable improvement** in the **proportion** of respondents **able to speak at least two** foreign **languages** with the most marked being in **Italy** (+6 percentage points to 22%) and **Ireland** (+5 points to 18%).

Indeed **nine Member States show a significant drop** of more than 5 percentage points: Belgium (-16 percentage points to 50%), Hungary (-14 points to 13%), Bulgaria (-12 points to 19%), Poland (-10 points to 22%), Portugal (-10 points to 13%), Malta (-9 points to 59%), Luxembourg (-8 points to 84%), Denmark (-8 points to 58%) and Estonia (-6 points to 52%).

Those countries where respondents are least likely to be able to speak any foreign language are Hungary (65%), Italy (62%), the UK and Portugal (61% in each) and Ireland (60%). There are a further five Member States where at least half of all respondents say they are unable to speak any foreign language: Spain (54%), Romania and Bulgaria (52% in each), the Czech Republic (51%) and Poland (50%).

In contrast, **almost all respondents in Luxembourg** (98%), **Latvia** (95%), the **Netherlands** (94%), **Malta** (93%), **Slovenia** and **Lithuania** (92% each) and **Sweden** (91%) say that they are **able to speak at least one language** in addition to their mother tongue.

There are socio-demographic and behavioural differences between those who do and those who do not speak any foreign language well enough to hold a conversation. The most notable variations are linked to age, terminal education age, occupation, social positioning, internet usage and the ability to pay household bills (a measure of affluence). Those **groups most likely to be able to speak at least two foreign languages** are:

- **younger people**, in particular **15-24 year olds** (37%), compared with older people, most notably those aged 55+ (17%)
- those **still studying** (45%), compared with the retired (16%)
- those **who finished** their **full-time education aged 20 or more** (42%), compared to those finishing at 15 or below (6%)
- those **holding management occupations** (38%), particularly when compared with housepersons (15%), manual workers and the unemployed (22% each)
- people **who use the internet daily** (35%), compared with those who never use it (7%)
- those **who place themselves high** on the self-positioning social staircase (35%), compared to those who position themselves low (17%)

Not surprisingly, there is a relationship between the number of foreign languages spoken and the extent to which people are engaged in learning new languages. Thus **people who are very active in learning new languages** are also much more likely than those who are inactive to be able to understand at least two foreign languages well enough to hold a conversation in them (62% vs. 18% respectively).⁹


⁹ These groups are defined from respondent answers at Q3 "Which of the following situations apply to you? (SHOW CARD – READ OUT – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) You have started to learn a new language in the last 2 years; You have continued to learn a new language in the last 2 years; You have not learned a language recently, but you intend to start in the coming year; You have not learned a language recently, and you don't intend to start in the coming year; You have never learned any language other than your mother tongue; Don't know" **Very active language learners** are those who say they have started to learn a new language in the last 2 years **and** have continued to learn a new language in the last 2 years; **Active language learners** are those who either started learning a new language in the last 2 years or continued to learn a new language in the last 2 years; **Inactive language learners** are those who have not learnt a new language recently and may or may not intend to start in the coming year **or** who have never learnt any language other than their mother tongue.

D48T2 - Languages that you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation - TOTAL


	At least 1	At least 2	At least 3	None
EU27	54%	25%	10%	46%

 Age

15-24	74%	37%	12%	26%
25-39	64%	31%	12%	36%
40-54	55%	25%	10%	45%
55 +	38%	17%	7%	62%

 Education (End of)

15-	22%	6%	2%	78%
16-19	48%	20%	7%	52%
20+	76%	42%	17%	24%
Still studying	86%	45%	16%	14%

 Respondent occupation scale

Self-employed	63%	33%	14%	37%
Managers	77%	38%	14%	23%
Other white collars	62%	31%	12%	38%
Manual workers	51%	22%	8%	49%
House persons	38%	15%	6%	62%
Unemployed	48%	22%	8%	52%
Retired	36%	16%	7%	64%
Students	86%	45%	16%	14%

Use of the Internet

Everyday	70%	35%	14%	30%
Often/ Sometimes	49%	21%	8%	51%
Never	25%	7%	3%	75%

Self-positioning on the social staircase

Low (1-4)	42%	17%	6%	58%
Medium (5-6)	52%	23%	9%	48%
High (7-10)	66%	35%	15%	34%

Activity as language learner

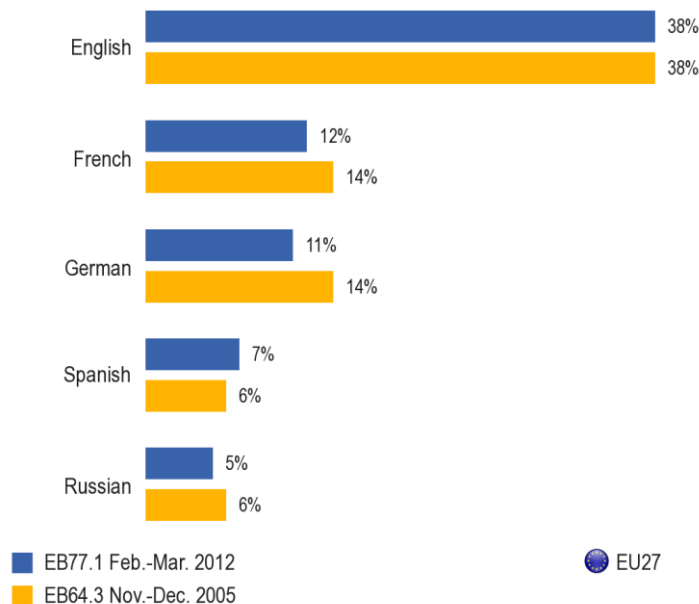
Very active	91%	62%	37%	9%
Active	87%	51%	21%	13%
Inactive	45%	18%	7%	55%

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

In terms of the most common foreign languages spoken, the linguistic map of Europe is similar to that presented in 2005, with the **five most widely spoken foreign languages** remaining **English** (38%), **French** (12%), **German** (11%), **Spanish** (7%) and **Russian** (5%).

There has been a slight drop in the proportions able to hold a conversation in German and French (-3 and -2 percentage points respectively).

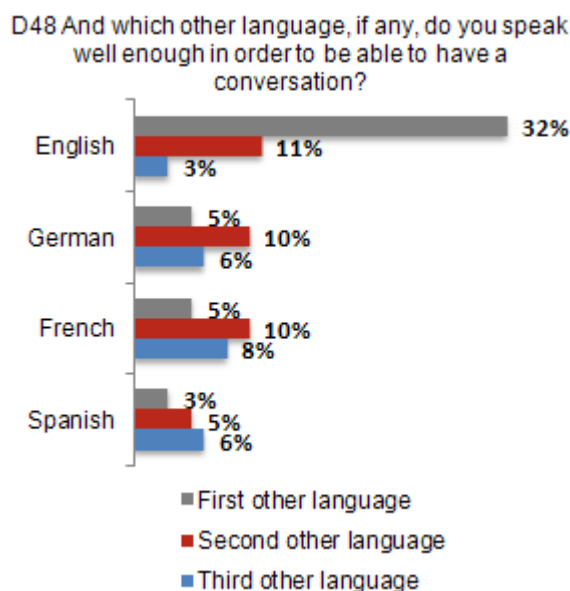
D48T1. Languages that you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation - TOTAL



Here it is worthwhile examining the order in which these five languages are mentioned by respondents. The interviewer was instructed to record each foreign language spoken in order of fluency (first being most fluent, second being next most fluent and third being the least fluent).

English is much **more likely to be cited** by respondents **as the first** i.e. **most fluent** foreign language spoken (32%), than the second (11%) or third (3%).





























In contrast **German, French and Spanish** are **more likely to be mentioned as the second most fluent** (10%, 10% and 5% of respondents respectively) **or third** most fluent (6%, 8% and 6% respectively) than the most fluent foreign language that a respondent can speak (5%, 5% and 3% respectively).



For the five most widely spoken languages within the EU there are differences between the EU15 and NMS12.

Respondents in **EU15** are particularly **more likely** than those in NMS12 **to speak French** (14% vs. 6% respectively) **and Spanish** (8% vs. 2%); and they are particularly **less likely** than respondents in NMS12 **to speak German** (10% vs. 15%) **and Russian** (2% vs. 16%).

D48T Languages that you speak well enough in order to be able to have a conversation - TOTAL
THREE MOST WIDELY KNOWN LANGUAGES (% per country)

	EU27			IE		LT		PT	
	English	38%		Irish/Gaelic	22%		Russian	80%	
	French	12%		French	17%		English	38%	
	German	11%		English	6%		German	14%	
	BE			EL		LU		RO	
	English	38%		English	51%		French	80%	
	French	45%		French	9%		German	69%	
	German	22%		German	5%		English	56%	
	BG			ES		HU		SI	
	English	25%		English	22%		English	20%	
	Russian	23%		Spanish	16%		German	18%	
	German	8%		Catalan	11%		French	3%	
	CZ			FR		MT		SK	
	English	27%		English	39%		English	89%	
	Slovakian	16%		Spanish	13%		Italian	56%	
	German	15%		German	6%		French	11%	
	DK			IT		NL		FI	
	English	86%		English	34%		English	90%	
	German	47%		French	16%		German	71%	
	Swedish	13%		Spanish	11%		French	29%	
	DE			CY		AT		SE	
	English	56%		English	73%		English	73%	
	French	14%		French	7%		French	11%	
	German	10%		Greek	5%		Italian	9%	
	EE			LV		PL		UK	
	Russian	56%		Russian	67%		English	33%	
	English	50%		English	46%		German	19%	
	Finnish	21%		Latvian	24%		Russian	18%	
								French	19%
								English	10%
								German	6%

At a national level **English** is the **most widely spoken** foreign language in **19 of the 25 Member States** where it is not an official language (i.e. excluding the UK and Ireland).

Respondents in the Netherlands (90%), Malta (89%), Denmark and Sweden (86% in each) are particularly likely to speak English as a foreign language, followed by those in Cyprus and Austria (73% in each) and Finland (70%).

In the remaining six Member States Russian is the most widely spoken foreign language in Lithuania (80%), Latvia (67%) and Estonia (56%); Croatian the most commonly spoken in Slovenia (61%); and Czech the most widely spoken in Slovakia (47%).

In Luxembourg respondents are most likely to mention French (80%), followed by German (69%), although both are official languages of the country.

In Ireland and the UK, French is the most common foreign language that respondents are able to speak well enough to hold a conversation (17% and 19% respectively).

In all but one Member State, Luxembourg, English is the first or second most common foreign language spoken by respondents. In Luxembourg it is the third most common after French and German.

At a national level, **English and Spanish** are the only two of these five languages that show **notable increases since 2005** in the **proportion of respondents** saying that they **know them well enough to be able to hold a conversation**.

For English the biggest improvements are in Austria (+15 percentage points to 73%), Finland (+7 points to 70%), Latvia (+7 points to 46%) and Lithuania (+6 points to 38%).

For Spanish the biggest increases are in Italy (+7 points to 11%) and Spain (+6 points to 16%).

For French, German and Russian there are **no significant increases** at a national level in the proportion knowing these languages well enough to hold a conversation. There are some **notable drops** since 2005 in the proportion able to speak these languages.

For German these are in **Luxembourg** (-19 points to 69%), the **Czech Republic** (-13 points to 15%), **Denmark** (-11 points to 47%), Slovakia (-10 points to 22%), Slovenia (-8 points to 42%), Hungary (-7 points to 18%) and Estonia (-7 points to 15%).

For French the biggest declines are in **Luxembourg** (-10 points to 80%), Portugal (-9 points to 15%), Romania (-7 points to 17%), Bulgaria (-7 points to 2%) and Malta (-6 points to 11%).

For Russian, the most significant drops are in **Bulgaria** (-12 points to 23%), **Slovakia** (-12 points to 17%), Estonia (-10 points to 56%), Poland (-8 points to 18%) and the Czech Republic (-7 points to 13%).

3. LEVEL OF SPOKEN LANGUAGE ABILITY

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

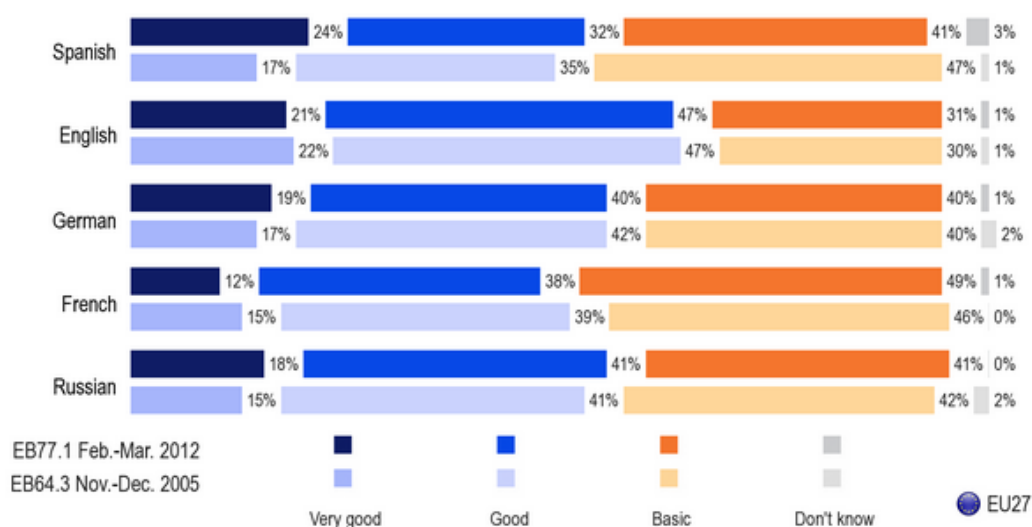
For each foreign language (up to three) that a respondent said they were able to speak well enough in order to be able to hold a conversation they were asked to rate their ability using a simple **three-point scale** – **very good, good, basic**¹⁰. This section focuses on Europeans' ability to speak the five most widely spoken languages in Europe.

The **majority of Europeans** who speak **English, German, Spanish** and **Russian** as a foreign language **believe** that they **have better than basic skills**.

Indeed, a quarter (24%) of those who speak Spanish as a foreign language rate their ability as **"very good"** as do around a fifth of those who speak English (21%), German (19%) and Russian (18%).

Those who speak **French** as a foreign language are **evenly split** between those who rate their ability at speaking it as **"basic"** (49%), and those who believe they have **better than basic** skill at speaking the language (50%), made up from 38% saying "good" and 12% saying "very good").

D48f. Is your ... Is very good, good, basic



¹⁰ D48f1, f2 and f3 FOR EACH ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE MENTIONED AT D48b,c and d "Is your (FIRST /SECOND/ THIRD ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE MENTIONED) very good, good or basic? (SHOW CARD WITH SCALE – ONE ANSWER PER LINE) Very good, Good, Basic, Don't know"

Ratings of skill level are broadly similar to those seen in the 2005 survey. The most notable differences are an improvement in the proportion of Europeans who rate themselves as "very good" at speaking Spanish (+7 percentage points), and a drop in the proportions saying their skill level is "good" (-3 points) and "basic" (-6 points); a small increase in the proportion of Europeans who rate themselves as "very good" at speaking Russian (+3 points); and a slight deterioration in the ability of Europeans to speak French, with a drop in the proportion rating their skill level as "very good" (-3 points) and an increase in the proportion saying their ability is "basic" (+3 points).

The most **notable differences** between **EU15** and **NMS12**, where there is the greatest relative difference between the two, are :

- **EU15** is **more likely** than NMS12 **to rate ability** at speaking **German** as "**very good**" (23% vs. 10% respectively), and much less likely to rate ability as "basic" (35% vs. 51%)
- **EU15** is **more likely** than NMS12 **to rate ability** at speaking **Russian** as "**very good**" (24% vs. 16%)

At a national level the scope to examine self-assessed skills in French, German, Spanish and Russian by country is limited by the base sizes for the majority of Member States, since these languages are only widely spoken in a small number of countries. Analysis at a country level is therefore restricted to English, which is spoken widely across most EU countries.

Countries where respondents are most likely to rate their level of skill in **English** as a foreign language as "**very good**", aside from Ireland and UK, where it is an official language, are **Malta** (52%), **Denmark** (44%), **Cyprus** (42%) and **Sweden** (40%). In Malta and Sweden this proportion has increased notably since 2005 (+11 percentage points and +5 points respectively).

Other countries showing a **marked increase** in the proportion of respondents rating their skill in English as "very good" include **Luxembourg** (+11 points to 33%), **Slovenia** (+7 points to 28%), **Romania** (+7 points to 22%), **Hungary** (+7 points to 21%) and **Latvia** (+7 points to 15%).

Groups more likely to perceive their skills as "very good" in each of these five languages vary. Those **demographic groups** more **likely to rate** their level of ability in **English** as "**very good**" are:

- **younger people**, particularly **15-24 year olds** (27%), compared with those aged 55+ (15%)
- those **who finished** their **full time education aged 20+** (26%), particularly when compared with those finishing aged 15 (7%)
- people **who live in large towns** (29%), particularly when compared with those who live in rural villages (15%)

- those who, in terms of occupation, are **still studying** (31%), **self-employed** (25%) **or managers** (25%), particularly when compared with housepersons (15%), manual workers (14%), and the retired (14%)
- people **who use the internet daily** (24%), when compared with those who use it sometimes (12%) or never use it (11%)

The **main groups** most **likely to rate** their skill in **French as "very good"** are:

- occupationally, those who are **housepersons** (21%) and the **unemployed** (18%), particularly when compared with manual workers (9%) and those who are self-employed (9%)
- those **who have difficulties paying bills** most of the time (22%), compared with those who struggle from time to time (13%) and those who 'almost never' have difficulties (11%)

Here, **very active language learners** (6%) are **less likely** than active language learners (14%) and those who are inactive (11%) **to rate their ability in French as "very good"**.

Groups particularly **likely to rate** their skill in **German as "very good"** are:

- those **aged under 55**, particularly 25-54 year olds (21%), compared with people aged 55+ (16%)
- those who, occupationally, are **housepersons** (30%), particularly when compared with the unemployed (8%), self-employed (15%) and the retired (15%)
- people **who use the internet daily** (21%), compared with those who use it often/sometimes (14%), and never (15%)
- those **who place themselves in the middle** of the social positioning staircase (22%), particularly when compared with those who place themselves low (16%)

The final group comprises people who are inactive language learners (19%), and those who are active but **not** very active language learners (21%) who are both more likely than those who say they are very active language learners (12%) to rate their skill in German as "very good".

The **main groups** most **likely to rate** their **Spanish as "very good"** are:

- people **aged 25-39** (28%), particularly when compared with those aged 15-24 (20%) and 40-54 (21%)
- those **living in rural villages** (34%), compared with those living in small/mid-size towns (19%) and large towns (19%)
- those who in terms of occupation are **unemployed** (50%), particularly when compared with those who are students (14%)

One further group with a greater likelihood of rating skill at Spanish as "very good" comprises those who can only speak one foreign language (24%), compared to those who can speak two (20%) and at least three (15%).

Finally, those **groups most likely to rate** their skill in **Russian as "very good"** are:

- **people aged under 55** (20%), compared with those aged 55+ (14%)
- **housepersons** (25%), particularly when compared with the retired (13%)
- people **who have difficulties paying bills**, particularly those who struggle most of the time (25%), compared with those who 'almost never' struggle (16%)

D48f - Is your ... Is very good, good, basic?

Answers : "Very good"

	English	French	German	Spanish	Russian
EU27	21%	12%	19%	24%	18%
Age					
15-24	27%	12%	20%	20%	19%
25-39	24%	12%	21%	28%	19%
40-54	18%	12%	21%	21%	21%
55 +	15%	12%	16%	24%	14%
Education (End of)					
15-	7%	12%	20%	26%	19%
16-19	13%	9%	21%	28%	17%
20+	26%	13%	17%	24%	19%
Still studying	31%	14%	19%	14%	19%
Subjective urbanisation					
Rural village	15%	11%	16%	34%	18%
Small/ Mid-size town	20%	12%	20%	19%	15%
Large town	29%	13%	21%	19%	21%
Respondent occupation scale					
Self-employed	25%	9%	15%	28%	20%
Managers	25%	11%	23%	24%	19%
Other white collars	21%	12%	20%	18%	15%
Manual workers	14%	9%	23%	24%	20%
House persons	15%	21%	30%	27%	25%
Unemployed	21%	18%	8%	50%	20%
Retired	14%	11%	15%	20%	13%
Students	31%	14%	19%	14%	19%
Use of the Internet					
Everyday	24%	12%	21%	24%	20%
Often/ Sometimes	12%	13%	14%	24%	19%
Never	11%	7%	15%	29%	15%
Difficulties paying bills					
Most of the time	21%	22%	8%	28%	25%
From time to time	19%	13%	18%	26%	22%
Almost never	22%	11%	21%	23%	16%
Self-positioning on the social staircase					
Low (1-4)	16%	13%	16%	24%	20%
Medium (5-6)	17%	12%	22%	24%	16%
High (7-10)	28%	12%	18%	23%	19%
Activity as language learner					
Very active	31%	6%	12%	18%	49%
Active	28%	14%	21%	23%	21%
Inactive	18%	11%	19%	25%	16%
Number of foreign languages - conversation					
One	21%	12%	19%	24%	18%
Two	27%	13%	19%	20%	19%
Three	35%	12%	20%	15%	23%

4. PASSIVE LANGUAGE SKILLS

So far, the focus of the report has been on foreign languages that Europeans are able to speak well enough to hold a conversation. This section investigates Europeans' ability to understand foreign languages in more passive situations.

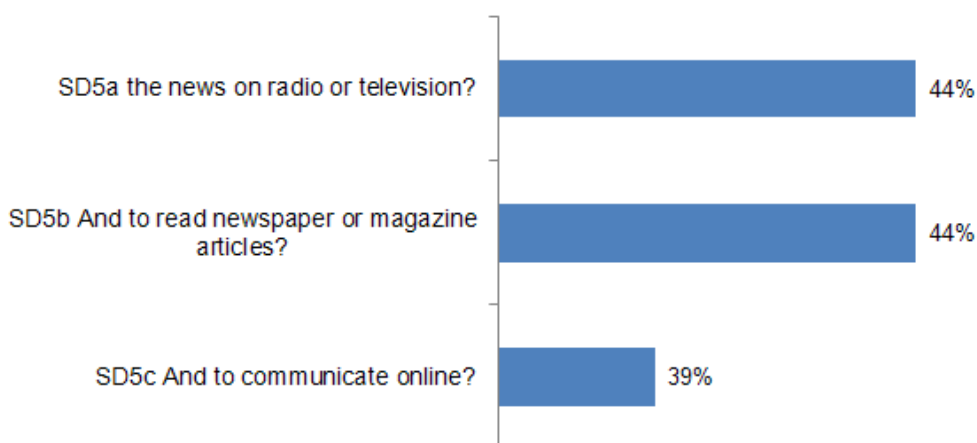
New to the 2012 survey, respondents were asked which foreign languages they understood well enough to use in a variety of passive situations¹¹.

The questions proposed by the Interpretation Services of the European Commission were related to the ability to follow the news on radio or television, to read newspaper or magazine articles and to communicate online in a language other than the mother tongue.

Just over two fifths of Europeans understand at least one foreign language well enough to listen to or watch the news, and a similar proportion to read newspapers or magazine articles. A slightly smaller proportion is able to communicate online in a foreign language.

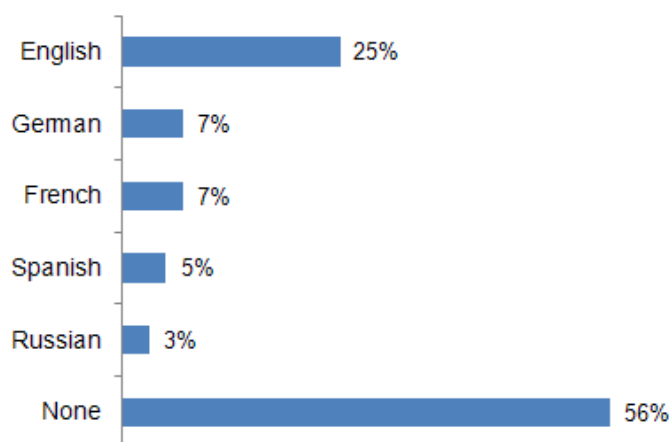
SD5 The previous questions were about the languages that you speak well enough to be able to have a conversation. Which languages other than your mother tongue do you understand well enough to follow...

(at least one language)



¹¹ SD5a, b and c. FOR EACH ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE MENTIONED AT D48b, D48c and D48d "The previous questions were about the languages that you speak well enough to be able to have a conversation. Which languages other than your mother tongue do you understand well enough to followSD5a. to follow the news on radio or television?.....SD5b. And to read newspaper or magazine articles?SD5c. And to communicate online (email, Facebook, Twitter, etc)? (DO NOT SHOW CARD – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) Czech, Arabic, Basque, Bulgarian, Catalan, Chinese, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Galician, German, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Irish/Gaelic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luxembourgish, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Scottish Gaelic, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Urdu, Welsh, Other, None (SPONTANEOUS), Don't know"

SD5a The previous questions were about the languages that you speak well enough to be able to have a conversation. Which languages other than your mother tongue do you understand well enough to follow the news on radio or television



Just over two fifths (44%) of Europeans say that they are able to understand at least one foreign language well enough to be able to follow the news on radio or television.

English is the **most widely mentioned foreign language** with a quarter (**25%**) of **respondents** saying that they **can follow radio or television news** in English.

Only a **minority of Europeans** say they **understand French** (7%), **German** (7%), **Spanish** (5%), **Russian** (3%) and Italian by 2% well enough to understand news on radio or television presented in these languages.

There are differences between **NMS12** and **EU15**.

Respondents in **NMS12** are much **more likely** than those in EU15 **to be able to follow news** on the television or radio **in Russian** (10% vs. 1% respectively).

They are **less likely** than EU15 to be able **to follow** broadcast news **in English** (20% vs. 26%), **French** (3% vs. 8%) and **Spanish** (2% vs. 6%).

There is national variation. **English** is the **most commonly cited** language that people understand well enough to follow the news on radio or television **in 19 Member States**. Those countries where respondents are most likely to say that they can follow television or radio news in English include Malta (85%), Cyprus (63%), Denmark and the Netherlands (57% in each) and Finland (50%).

Aside from the UK and Ireland, where the large majority of people speak it as their mother tongue, the Member States where respondents are least likely to say that they understand English well enough to follow radio or TV news are Spain and Hungary (12% in each), Slovakia (14%), Bulgaria and Poland (17% in each) and the Czech Republic (18%).





























French is most likely to be **mentioned** as a language in which people can follow television or radio news in the two countries other than France where it is an official language - **Luxembourg** (55%) and **Belgium** (30%). The only other countries where at least one in ten respondents say they can follow broadcast news in French are the Netherlands (17%), the UK (11%) and Portugal (10%).

German is most likely to be mentioned as a language in which people can understand broadcast news **in Luxembourg** (53%), where it is an official language, followed by the **Netherlands** (49%), **Denmark** (34%) and **Slovenia** (27%).

Very few people in any EU country other than Spain are able to understand **Spanish** well enough to follow broadcast news, with respondents **in Portugal** (13%), **France** and **Luxembourg** (11% in each) the most likely to say that they can.

Television and radio news in **Russian** is widely understood in the EU Member States which previously formed part of the Soviet Union, **Lithuania** (70%), **Latvia** (47%) and **Estonia** (44%). The only other country in which more than one in ten respondents say they understand broadcast news in Russian is **Bulgaria** (19%), a former Eastern Bloc country with a similar alphabet of Slavic origin.

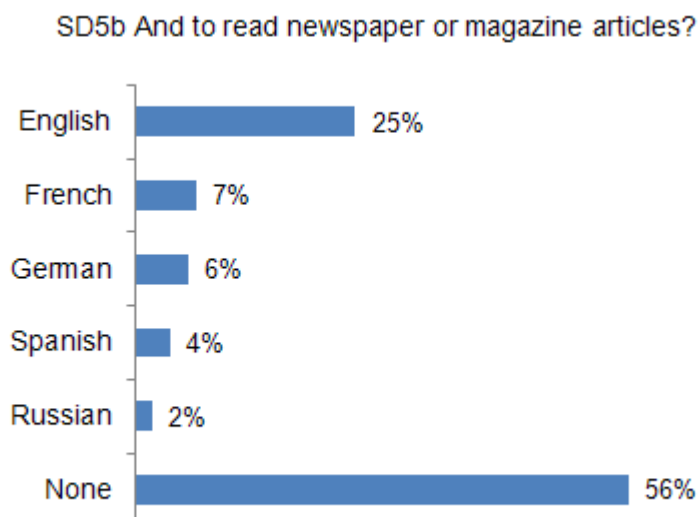
SD5a The previous questions were about the languages that you speak well enough to be able to have a conversation. Which languages other than your mother tongue do you understand well enough to follow the news on radio or television?

	English	French	German	Spanish	Russian	None
 EU27	25%	7%	7%	5%	3%	56%
 BE	41%	30%	18%	4%	0%	35%
 BG	17%	1%	4%	1%	19%	60%
 CZ	18%	1%	9%	0%	8%	40%
 DK	57%	5%	34%	3%	0%	24%
 DE	33%	5%	7%	2%	2%	55%
 EE	39%	1%	9%	1%	44%	19%
 IE	5%	8%	5%	2%	1%	61%
 EL	42%	5%	3%	0%	1%	53%
 ES	12%	6%	1%	13%	0%	60%
 FR	26%	3%	4%	11%	0%	59%
 IT	24%	9%	2%	3%	0%	65%
 CY	63%	5%	2%	1%	2%	31%
 LV	29%	1%	7%	1%	47%	17%
 LT	28%	1%	6%	1%	70%	12%
 LU	39%	55%	53%	11%	1%	12%
 HU	12%	1%	10%	0%	1%	75%
 MT	85%	5%	2%	1%	0%	7%
 NL	57%	17%	49%	7%	0%	25%
 AT	44%	6%	6%	2%	1%	47%
 PL	17%	1%	6%	1%	8%	64%
 PT	20%	10%	1%	13%	0%	64%
 RO	26%	8%	2%	5%	2%	52%
 SI	42%	2%	27%	4%	3%	16%
 SK	14%	1%	11%	1%	8%	33%
 FI	50%	4%	11%	4%	2%	39%
 SE	24%	5%	16%	4%	0%	44%
 UK	9%	11%	4%	3%	1%	60%

Highest percentage per country *Lowest percentage per country*

Highest percentage per item

Lowest percentage per item



Europeans are just as likely to be able to read a newspaper or magazine article in a foreign language as they are to follow the news on the radio or television, with just over two fifths (44%) of respondents saying they can do so.

Again **English** is the **most widespread** foreign language, **with a similar proportion** of Europeans **(25%) able to read a newspaper or magazine article** in the language and correspondingly smaller proportions able to do so in French (7%), German (6%), Spanish (4%) followed by Russian and Italian (2%).

Respondents in **NMS12** are **more likely** than those in EU15 **to be able to read newspaper and magazine** articles in Russian (8% vs. 1% respectively) and less likely than EU15 to be able to do so in English (19% vs. 27%), French (2% vs. 8%) and Spanish (1% vs. 5%).





























Again there is national variation.

Countries where respondents are most and least likely to say they understand each language well enough to be able to read newspaper and magazine articles are broadly similar to those countries where respondents are most and least likely to be able to follow the news on the radio or television.

For the most part national proportions are similar or slightly lower than the reported levels for understanding broadcast news.

However, **in a few instances a greater proportion of respondents** within a country **say that they understand a language well enough to be able to read a newspaper or magazine article.**

SD5b And to read newspaper or magazine articles?

	English	French	German	Spanish	Russian	None
 EU27	25%	7%	6%	4%	2%	56%
 BE	37%	28%	13%	3%	0%	42%
 BG	16%	1%	3%	1%	17%	64%
 CZ	17%	1%	8%	0%	6%	46%
 DK	58%	5%	31%	2%	0%	27%
 DE	33%	5%	7%	2%	2%	56%
 EE	36%	1%	7%	0%	35%	26%
 IE	4%	7%	4%	2%	1%	70%
 EL	40%	4%	3%	0%	1%	55%
 ES	15%	7%	1%	13%	0%	58%
 FR	32%	4%	5%	9%	0%	57%
 IT	26%	9%	1%	4%	0%	63%
 CY	46%	4%	1%	0%	1%	46%
 LV	27%	0%	6%	1%	46%	21%
 LT	23%	1%	5%	1%	61%	20%
 LU	35%	54%	52%	10%	1%	15%
 HU	12%	1%	9%	0%	1%	77%
 MT	74%	4%	2%	0%	0%	21%
 NL	56%	15%	46%	6%	0%	28%
 AT	43%	5%	6%	2%	1%	48%
 PL	18%	1%	6%	0%	6%	69%
 PT	20%	10%	1%	9%	0%	68%
 RO	20%	7%	1%	2%	1%	58%
 SI	39%	1%	24%	2%	1%	20%
 SK	18%	1%	12%	1%	8%	32%
 FI	49%	5%	11%	4%	1%	40%
 SE	28%	5%	13%	3%	0%	45%
 UK	10%	13%	3%	3%	1%	59%

Highest percentage per country *Lowest percentage per country*

Highest percentage per item Lowest percentage per item

Countries where respondents are **most likely** to say they **understand English** well enough to be able **to read** newspaper or magazine **articles** are **Malta** (74%), **Denmark** (58%), the **Netherlands** (56%), **Finland** (49%) and **Cyprus** (46%).

In both Malta and Cyprus the proportion of respondents saying that they can do this is significantly lower than the proportion who say they are able to understand broadcast news in English (-11 percentage points and -17 points respectively).

Again, (aside from UK and Ireland), Member States where respondents are least likely to say they understand English well enough to read press articles are Hungary (12%), Spain (15%), Bulgaria (16%), the Czech Republic (17%), and Poland and Slovakia (18% in each).

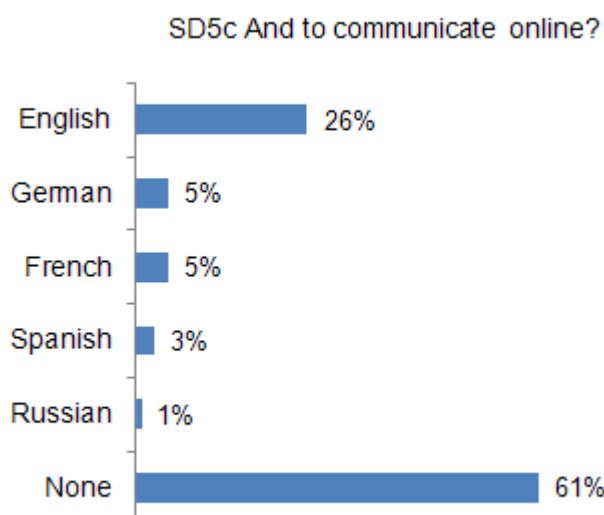
French is again most likely to be mentioned as a language which people understand well enough to read newspaper and magazine articles in the two countries other than France that have French as an official language - **Luxembourg** (54%) and **Belgium** (28%).

The only other countries where at least one in ten respondents say they can read press articles in French are the same as those where at least one in ten people are able to follow broadcast news - the Netherlands (15%), the UK (13%) and Portugal (10%).

The pattern of countries where respondents are most likely to understand **German** well enough to read press articles also mirrors that seen for broadcast news: **Luxembourg** (52%), where it is an official language, followed by the **Netherlands** (46%), **Denmark** (31%) and **Slovenia** (24%).

Again, only a very few people in any Member State other than **Spain** are able to understand Spanish well enough to be able to read magazine and newspaper articles, with respondents in **Luxembourg** (10%), **France and Portugal** (9% in each) the most likely to say that they can.

Similarly, respondents in the Member States which were formerly part of the Soviet Union are the most likely of all EU Member States to say they understand **Russian** well enough to be able to read magazine and newspaper articles: **Lithuania** (61%), **Latvia** (46%) and **Estonia** (35%). **Bulgaria** is once again the only other country in which more than one in ten respondents say they can read newspaper and magazine articles in Russian (17%).



Europeans are **slightly less likely to say** that **they understand** any foreign **language** well enough **to be able to** use it to **communicate online** (e.g. using email, Twitter, Facebook etc.) with two fifths (**39%**) saying that they can use at least one foreign language in this way.

Again, the **most widely cited language** is **English**, with a similar proportion of respondents (26%) saying they understand it well enough to use it for communicating online.

Much **smaller proportions** of respondents **are able to use French** (5%), **German** (5%), **Spanish** (3%) followed by **Russian** and Italian (1%) in this way.

NMS12 are **more likely** than EU15 to be able **to communicate online in Russian** (5% vs. <0.5% respectively) and **less likely** than EU15 to be able to do so **in English** (22% vs. 28%), French (2% vs. 6%) and Spanish (1% vs. 3%).

Nationally, those **Member States** where respondents are **most likely** to say they **understand English** well enough to be able **to use it for online communication** are **Malta** (64%), **Denmark** (58%), the **Netherlands** (56%), **Finland** (51%), **Greece** (46%), **Austria** (45%) and **Cyprus** (44%). Once again in Malta and Cyprus the proportion of respondents saying that they can use English to communicate online is significantly lower than the proportion who say they are able to understand broadcast news in English (-21 percentage points and -19 points respectively).

Member States where respondents are least likely to say they understand English well enough to use it for communicating online, with the exception of the UK and Ireland, are Hungary (16%), Spain and Slovakia (17% in each), the Czech Republic (19%) and Bulgaria, Poland and Portugal (20% in each).

In all of these Member States English is still more widely mentioned than French, German, Spanish or Russian as a language that respondents understand well enough to be able to communicate online.

Less than one in ten respondents are able to communicate online in French in all Member States other than Luxembourg (41%) and Belgium (19%), where French is an official language.





























Among the other Member States, **French** is **most likely to be used online** by respondents **in the UK** (8%), the **Netherlands** (7%) and **Ireland, Italy and Portugal** (6% in each).

German is most likely to be mentioned as a language which people understand well enough to use for online communication **in Luxembourg** (37%), where it is an official language, followed by the **Netherlands** (31%), **Denmark** (19%) and **Slovenia** (16%).

Very few people in any EU country other than Spain (9%) are able to understand **Spanish** well enough to use it to communicate online with respondents **in France** (6%), **Luxembourg** and **Portugal** (5% in each) the most likely to say that they can.

The ability to use **Russian** for online communication is most widespread in the EU Member States which previously formed part of the Soviet Union, **Latvia** (41%), **Lithuania** (40%) and **Estonia** (19%). The only other country in which at least one in ten respondents say they understand Russian well enough to be able to do this is **Bulgaria** (10%), a former Eastern Bloc country with a similar alphabet of Slavic origin.

SD5c And to communicate online?

	English	French	German	Spanish	Russian	None
 EU27	26%	5%	5%	3%	1%	61%
 BE	40%	19%	7%	2%	0%	47%
 BG	20%	0%	3%	1%	10%	69%
 CZ	19%	1%	7%	0%	2%	58%
 DK	58%	2%	19%	1%	0%	32%
 DE	32%	4%	7%	1%	1%	59%
 EE	42%	1%	5%	0%	19%	30%
 IE	4%	6%	3%	2%	1%	74%
 EL	46%	4%	2%	0%	1%	50%
 ES	17%	5%	1%	9%	0%	65%
 FR	29%	3%	2%	6%	0%	64%
 IT	29%	6%	2%	2%	0%	64%
 CY	44%	3%	1%	0%	1%	51%
 LV	28%	0%	3%	1%	41%	25%
 LT	31%	1%	4%	1%	40%	31%
 LU	33%	41%	37%	5%	1%	30%
 HU	16%	1%	8%	0%	1%	74%
 MT	64%	3%	1%	0%	0%	32%
 NL	56%	7%	31%	3%	0%	37%
 AT	45%	5%	5%	2%	0%	47%
 PL	20%	1%	5%	1%	4%	69%
 PT	20%	6%	0%	5%	0%	72%
 RO	24%	5%	1%	2%	1%	59%
 SI	43%	1%	16%	1%	1%	34%
 SK	17%	1%	9%	1%	3%	47%
 FI	51%	3%	8%	4%	1%	42%
 SE	30%	2%	4%	1%	1%	59%
 UK	10%	8%	2%	2%	2%	66%

Highest percentage per country *Lowest percentage per country*

Highest percentage per item

Lowest percentage per item

In terms of the total number of languages Europeans are able to use for these passive activities (i.e. including any foreign language mentioned, not just English, French, German, Spanish and Russian), around **three in ten respondents** say that they **know one language** well enough **to follow the news (29%)** a **similar proportion** that they **know one language** well enough **to read newspapers or magazines (29%)**, and a **slightly smaller proportion** that they understand one foreign language well enough to be able **to communicate online (27%)**.

Less than one in ten respondents understand two languages well enough to follow broadcast news (9%), read press articles (9%) and communicate online (7%). Only a small minority (3% or less) say they understand at least three languages.

There is a minority of Europeans who are not able to understand any foreign language well enough to be able to hold a conversation, but who can understand a foreign language well enough to undertake one of these passive activities.

Thus **8%** of respondents **who** say they **do not speak any foreign languages are able to follow the news on television or the radio** in a foreign language; **9%** are **able to read newspaper or magazine articles** in a foreign language; and **6%** are **able to communicate online** in a foreign language.

The **demographic and behavioural groups with the most notable likelihood** of understanding a foreign language well enough **to undertake these passive activities** are¹²:

- **younger people**, particularly those **aged 15-24**, when compared with those aged 55+
 - Communicating online (44% vs. 13% respectively)
 - Reading magazine and newspaper articles (41% vs. 20%)
 - Following news on television or radio (41% vs. 20%)
- those who, in terms of occupation, are **students**, particularly when compared with housepersons and the retired
 - Communicating online (51% vs. 18% and 11% respectively)
 - Reading magazine and newspaper articles (46% vs. 22% and 18%)
 - Following news on television or radio (46% vs. 22% and 20%)

¹² This analysis is based on respondents who say they know one foreign language well enough to be able to undertake the activity

- those **who finished their full-time education aged 20+**, particularly when compared with those finishing aged 15
 - Communicating online (37% vs. 9% respectively)
 - Reading magazine and newspaper articles (38% vs. 14%)
 - Following news on television or radio (37% vs. 16%)
- people **living in large towns**, particularly when compared with those living in rural villages
 - Communicating online (32% vs. 23% respectively)
- people **who use the internet daily**, particularly when compared with those who never use it
 - Communicating online (38% vs. 7% respectively)
 - Reading magazine and newspaper articles (37% vs. 16%)
 - Following news on television or radio (36% vs. 18%)
- those **who position themselves higher** on the social positioning staircase, particularly those who place themselves high when compared to those who position themselves low
 - Communicating online (31% vs. 20% respectively)
 - Reading magazine and newspaper articles (32% vs. 24%)
 - Following news on television or radio (33% vs. 24%)

People **who are very active or active language learners** are, understandably, more likely than those who are inactive to understand a foreign language well enough to undertake all of these passive activities:

- Communicating online (44% and 43% vs. 23% respectively)
- Reading magazine and newspaper articles (37% and 43% vs. 25%)
- Following news on television or radio (42% and 43% vs. 26%)

SD5abc.2 The previous questions were about the languages that you speak well enough to be able to have a conversation. Which languages other than your mother tongue do you understand well enough to ...?

Answers: "1 language"

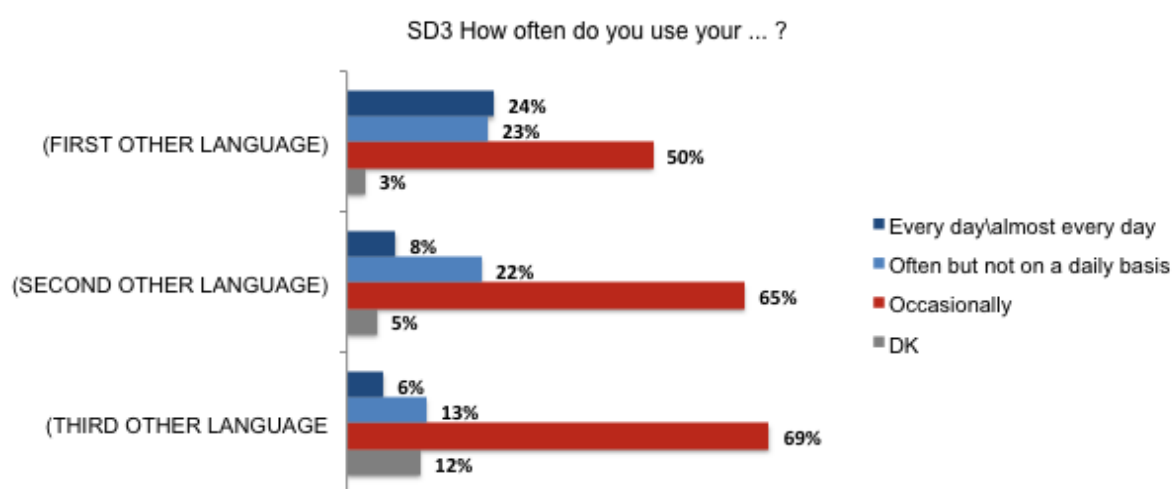
	follow the news on radio or television	read newspaper or magazine articles	communicate online
EU27	29%	29%	27%
Age			
15-24	41%	41%	44%
25-39	33%	36%	37%
40-54	30%	29%	26%
55 +	21%	20%	13%
Education (End of)			
15-	16%	14%	9%
16-19	27%	27%	23%
20+	37%	38%	37%
Still studying	46%	46%	51%
Subjective urbanisation			
Rural village	27%	26%	23%
Small/ Mid-size town	28%	29%	27%
Large town	34%	33%	32%
Respondent occupation scale			
Self-employed	34%	32%	32%
Managers	37%	39%	39%
Other white collars	35%	35%	34%
Manual workers	29%	28%	27%
House persons	22%	22%	18%
Unemployed	27%	29%	27%
Retired	20%	18%	11%
Students	46%	46%	51%
Use of the Internet			
Everyday	36%	37%	38%
Often/ Sometimes	28%	26%	23%
Never	18%	16%	7%
Self-positioning on the social staircase			
Low (1-4)	24%	24%	20%
Medium (5-6)	30%	29%	27%
High (7-10)	33%	32%	31%
Activity as language learner			
Very active	42%	37%	44%
Active	43%	43%	43%
Inactive	26%	25%	23%

II. USE OF LANGUAGES

Having explored the level of multilingualism in Europe, this chapter of the report looks at the way in which Europeans utilise foreign languages that they understand well enough to be able to hold a conversation, in terms of how often they use them, and what they use them for, before concluding with a section on recent and planned language learning activity.

1. FREQUENCY OF USE

There is a clear relationship between the order in which a language is mentioned (i.e. perceived fluency) and the frequency with which that language is used.



Respondents were asked how frequently they used each foreign language that they said they could speak well enough to hold a conversation, up to a maximum of three¹³.

Thus a quarter (24%) of respondents use their first foreign language every day or almost every day, a similar proportion (23%) use it often and the remainder (50%) use it on an occasional basis.

Respondents are much less likely to use their second language every day or nearly every day (8%), and correspondingly more likely to use it on an occasional basis only (65%).

Similarly, only 6% of respondents who speak a third foreign language use it on an 'everyday' basis, around one in eight (13%) use it often but not daily, and around seven in ten (69%) use it occasionally.




























There is widespread national variation.

¹³ SD3. FOR EACH ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE MENTIONED AT D48b, D48c and D48d "How often do you use your.....? (ONE ANSWER PER LINE) First additional language, Second additional language, Third additional language? Every day/almost every day, Often but not on a daily basis, Occasionally, Don't know"

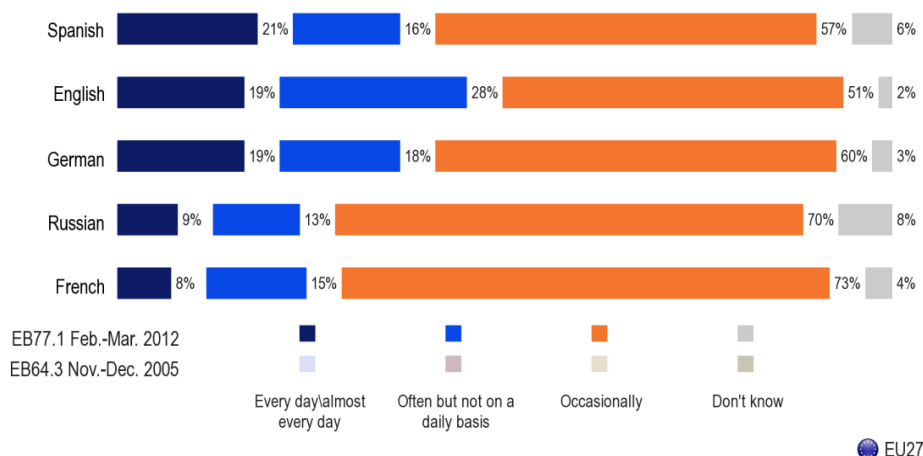
Of all the first mentioned foreign languages, Member States in which these **languages** are most **likely to be used every day or almost every day** are **Luxembourg** (67%), **Malta** (49%), **Spain** and **Latvia** (44% in each), **Denmark** (41%), **Cyprus** (39%) and **Sweden** (38%).

Member States in which these **languages** are most **likely to be used on an occasional basis** are **Portugal** (68%), **Italy** (61%), the **Czech Republic** and the **UK** (60% in each), **Poland** (59%), **Austria** (58%) and **Hungary** (57%).

SD3.1 How often do you use your (FIRST OTHER LANGUAGE)?

		Every day/almost every day	Often but not on a daily basis	Occasionally	Don't know
	EU27	24%	23%	50%	3%
	BE	29%	27%	44%	0%
	BG	18%	29%	49%	4%
	CZ	10%	29%	60%	1%
	DK	41%	25%	33%	1%
	DE	26%	22%	50%	2%
	EE	34%	30%	34%	2%
	IE	22%	21%	51%	6%
	EL	15%	31%	54%	0%
	ES	44%	21%	32%	3%
	FR	19%	24%	55%	2%
	IT	9%	26%	61%	4%
	CY	39%	26%	35%	0%
	LV	44%	24%	31%	1%
	LT	22%	25%	49%	4%
	LU	67%	17%	16%	0%
	HU	15%	27%	57%	1%
	MT	49%	23%	28%	0%
	NL	31%	32%	37%	0%
	AT	12%	24%	58%	6%
	PL	11%	24%	59%	6%
	PT	7%	23%	68%	2%
	RO	20%	25%	51%	4%
	SI	23%	27%	49%	1%
	SK	18%	29%	51%	2%
	FI	33%	24%	42%	1%
	SE	38%	23%	39%	0%
	UK	28%	10%	60%	2%

SD3. How often do you use your ...?



In terms of the five most widely spoken foreign languages within the EU, and amongst those Europeans who are able to speak each, English is most likely to be the language used on more than just an occasional basis.

Just under half (**47%**) of respondents who speak **English** say they **use it on more than an occasional basis**, with a fifth (19%) saying that they use it every day or almost every day, and over a quarter (28%) saying they use it often but not on a daily basis.

Just **under two fifths of respondents who speak Spanish (37%)** and the same proportion of those who speak **German (37%)** say they **use the language on more than an occasional basis**. Those speaking Spanish are slightly more likely to say that they use it on a daily or almost daily basis (21%), compared with those who speak German and English (19%).

French and Russian are **the most likely** of the five languages **to be used only occasionally**, with seven in ten (70%) of those who speak Russian, and a slightly higher proportion of those who speak French (73%) saying that they do so on an occasional basis.

Less than one in ten Europeans use French (8%) and Russian (9%) every or almost every day.

It is not possible to compare the results with those obtained in 2005 because the way in which the information has been collected has changed.¹⁴

¹⁴ In 2005 respondents were asked a series of 3 questions: "Which languages apart from your mother tongue do you use almost everyday?"... "And often but not on a daily basis?"... "And occasionally, for instance on trips abroad, or with foreign visitors?" with multiple answers possible at each question.

Respondents in **EU15 tend to use foreign languages more frequently than** those in **NMS12**, and, in particular, to use them every day or almost every day, most notably:

- German (23% of those in EU15 vs. 7% of those in NMS12)
- Spanish (22% vs. 3% respectively)
- French (9% vs. 3%)
- Russian (15% vs. 7%)

Member States where those who speak English as a foreign language are most likely to use it every or almost every day are - with the exception of the UK and Ireland where it is an official language - Malta (48%), Denmark (41%), Sweden (37%), Cyprus (36%), Finland and Luxembourg (31% in each) and Estonia (28%).

Those where speakers of English as a foreign language are most likely to be using it occasionally are Portugal (66%), Italy (63%), Austria (61%), Germany (58%) and France (57%).

The scope to examine self-assessed skills in French, German, Spanish and Russian at a national level is limited by the base sizes for the majority of Member States, since these languages are only widely spoken in a small number of countries.

Analysis at a country level is therefore restricted to English, which is spoken widely across most EU countries.

2. SITUATION OF USE

This section focuses on how Europeans use the foreign languages that they can speak.

Foreign languages reported as a useful tool to access internet and other media

Respondents who spoke a foreign language were presented with a card showing various situations and asked, for up to two foreign languages they could speak, when they regularly used each¹⁵. This information was collected and recorded separately for the first and second mentioned foreign languages¹⁶. Respondents were able to mention as many situations as applied to them.

The situation in which Europeans are most likely to regularly use their first foreign language is on holidays abroad, with just under half (45%) of respondents saying that they do.

Around **a third of Europeans regularly use** their **first foreign language** when watching **films/television** or listening to the **radio** (34%), on the **internet** (34%) and when **communicating with friends** (31%).

A quarter of respondents use the **first foreign language in conversations at work** (25%) and when reading **books, newspapers** or **magazines** (24%).

Somewhat fewer - around a sixth of respondents - use their first foreign language either when writing e-mails or letters at work (17%) or reading at work (16%), and a similar proportion (16%) when communicating with family members.

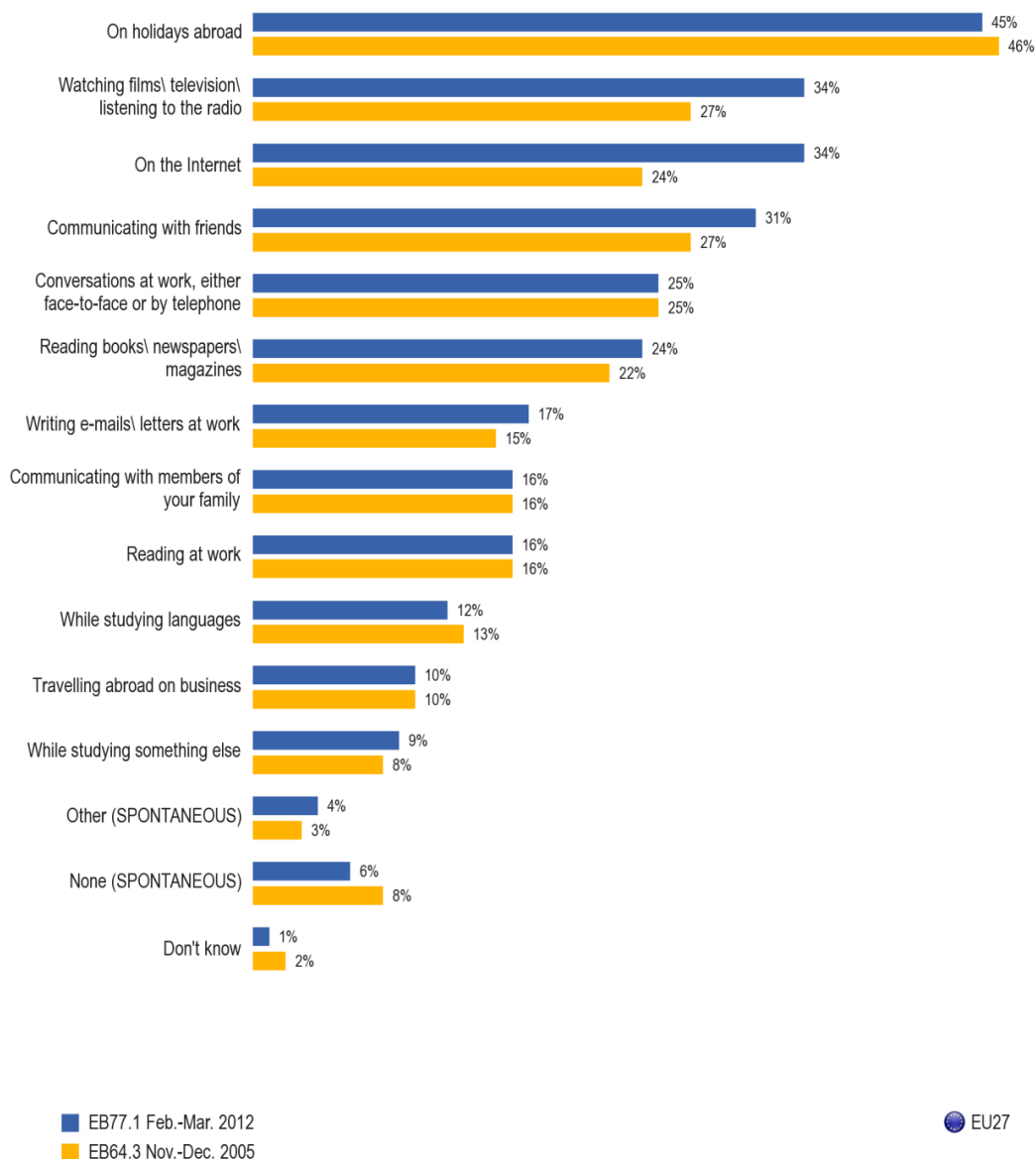
Europeans are least likely to regularly use their first foreign language when studying languages (12%), studying something else (9%) and when travelling abroad on business (10%).

A minority of Europeans **(6%) do not regularly use** their **first foreign language in any situation**.

¹⁵ SD4a. and SD4b. FOR FIRST AND SECOND ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE MENTIONED AT D48b and D48c "When do you regularly use (FIRST/SECOND LANGUAGE MENTIONED)? (SHOW CARD – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) Conversations at work, either face-to-face or by telephone; Reading at work; Writing e-mails/letters at work; Travelling abroad on business; While studying languages; While studying something else; Communicating with members of your family; Communicating with friends; On holidays abroad; Watching films/television/listening to the radio; Reading books/newspapers/magazines; On the Internet; Other (SPONTANEOUS); None (SPONTANEOUS); Don't know"

¹⁶ Up to three foreign languages were recorded at D48b-d in order of fluency. This question uses only the first and second language mentioned.

SD4a. When do you regularly use (FIRST OTHER LANGUAGE)?



The most notable changes since 2005 are an **increase in the proportion of Europeans who regularly use their first mentioned foreign language on the internet (+10 percentage points), when watching films/television or listening to the radio (+7 points) and when communicating with friends (+4 points).**

Among those speaking at least two foreign languages, the most common way in which they use their second language regularly is, like the first, on holidays abroad, with a slightly lower proportion (42%) of respondents saying that they do this.

However, for all other situations, the proportions of respondents who use their second language regularly are, not surprisingly, much lower.

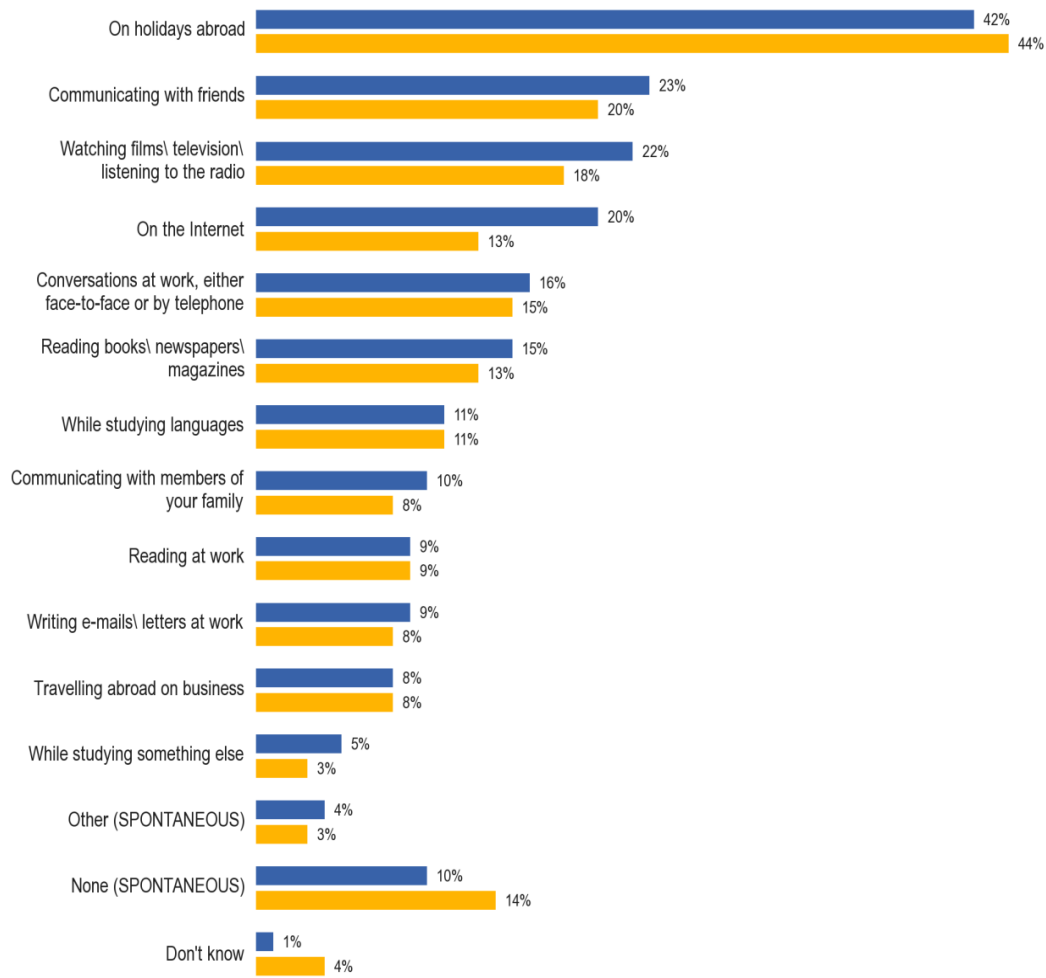
Between a fifth and a quarter of these respondents **regularly use their second foreign language** when **communicating with friends** (23% vs. 31% for their first language), watching **films/television or** listening to the **radio** (22% vs. 34% respectively) and **on the internet** (20% vs. 34%).

A slightly smaller proportion of respondents regularly use this foreign language in conversations at work (16% vs. 25% for their first language) and when reading books, newspapers or magazines (15% vs. 24%).

Europeans are least likely to regularly use their second foreign language when studying something other than languages (5% compared with 9% for their first language), when travelling abroad on business (8% vs. 10%), when writing e-mails/letters at work (9% vs. 17%) and when reading at work (9% vs. 16%).

One in ten Europeans (**10%**) **do not use** their **second foreign language in any situation**, compared with 6% for their first language.

SD4b. When do you regularly use (SECOND OTHER LANGUAGE)?



■ EB77.1 Feb.-Mar. 2012
 ■ EB64.3 Nov.-Dec. 2005



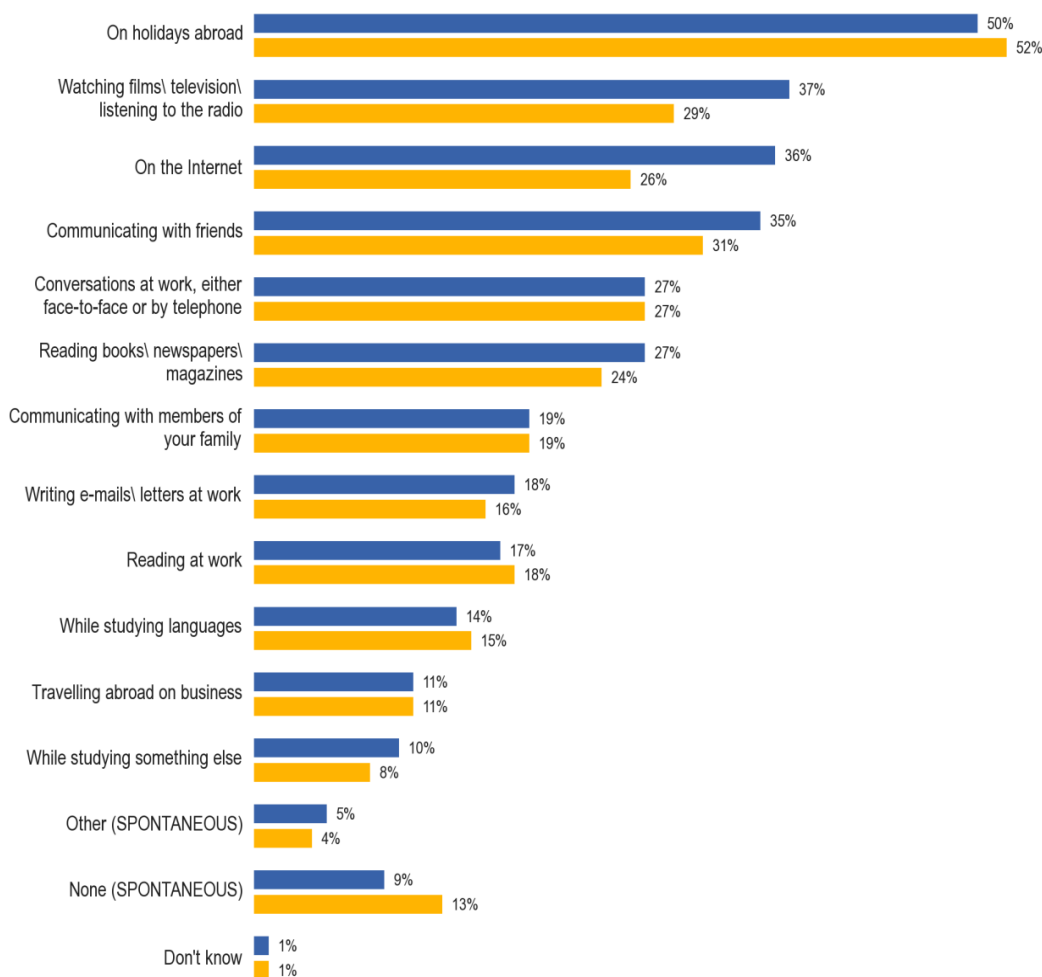
The most notable changes since 2005 are broadly similar to those seen on first mentioned languages.

There is **an increase** in the **proportion of Europeans who regularly use their second mentioned foreign language on the internet (+7 percentage points), when watching films/television or listening to the radio (+4 points) and when communicating with friends (+3 points).**

The **proportion of respondents saying that they do not use their second language for any activities has decreased** from 14% in 2005 to 10% in 2012.

The chart below shows total usage of languages in each of the situations, combining answers that respondents gave for first and second mentioned foreign languages.

SD4T. When do you regularly use (FIRST OTHER LANGUAGE)\(SECOND OTHER LANGUAGE)? -TOTAL



EB77.1 Feb.-Mar. 2012
EB64.3 Nov.-Dec. 2005



These results very closely reflect those for respondents' first languages, with small increases in the proportion who say that they use their languages in the different situations.

Hence, the most common usage of foreign languages is on holidays abroad (50%), followed by when watching films/television or listening to the radio (37%), using the internet (36%) and communicating with friends (35%).

The most notable **changes since 2005** again reflect those **for first and second mentioned languages**, with an **increase in the proportion of Europeans who regularly use foreign languages on the internet** (+10 percentage points), **when watching films/television/listening to the radio** (+8 points) and **when communicating with friends** (+4 points).

There has been **an increase in the proportion saying that they regularly use foreign languages** in some way illustrated by a drop in the proportion of Europeans who say "none" (-4 points)¹⁷.

There are **differences between EU15 and NMS12**. Respondents in **EU15** are **more likely** than those in NMS12 **to regularly use foreign languages for the majority of activities**, most notably on holidays abroad (55% vs. 32% respectively), when communicating with family members (22% vs. 8%), reading at work (20% vs. 9%), writing e-mails/letters at work (20% vs. 12%) and having conversations at work (29% vs. 21%).

At a national level there is widespread variation.

Using foreign languages on holidays abroad is the **most commonly cited** way of using them **in 14 Member States**.

Countries where respondents are most likely to say they regularly use foreign languages in this situation are Denmark (84%), Sweden (77%), the Netherlands (74%), Austria (71%), Finland (65%) and Germany (64%).

Those countries where respondents are least likely to do so are Latvia (15%), Lithuania (18%), Bulgaria (19%), and Spain and Romania (21% in each).

Member States where respondents are **most likely to regularly use foreign languages** when watching **films/television** or listening to the **radio** are **Malta** (82%), **Luxembourg** (73%), **Sweden** (72%), **Denmark** (71%), **Lithuania** (70%), **Slovenia** (68%) and **Latvia** (65%). It is also the most common way of using foreign languages in Slovakia (58%), Cyprus (51%), Bulgaria (46%) and Romania (45%).

It is the least common way foreign languages are used in Italy (15%), Austria (22%), Hungary (23%) and Poland (24%).

¹⁷ 'None' is here defined as those respondents who say 'None' at either FIRST or SECOND MENTIONED language

Those **countries** where respondents are **most likely to regularly use foreign languages** on the **internet** are **Sweden** (71%), **Denmark** (69%) and **Finland** (61%).

Greece is the only Member State in which respondents are **more likely to regularly use foreign languages** on the **internet than use them for anything else** (52%).

Internet usage is least likely to be mentioned by respondents in Ireland (14%).

Regularly using foreign languages to communicate with friends is most widespread in **Luxembourg** (66%) and in **Spain** (55%). It is the most common way that respondents regularly use foreign languages in Spain, and also in Portugal (30%).

This way of regularly using foreign languages is least widespread in Poland (21%).

Regularly using foreign languages in conversations at work (either face-to-face or by telephone) is most likely to take place in **Latvia** where three-fifths of respondents (61%) say that they do this. It is also the most common way of using foreign languages in **Estonia** (55%).

Whilst foreign languages are regularly used for other activities, none of these activities are the most widely adopted activity in any Member State.

The **majority of respondents** in **Luxembourg** (69%), **Malta** (57%) and **Sweden** (52%) **use foreign languages** when reading **books/newspapers/magazines**.

Use of foreign languages in this way is least likely to be cited by respondents in Poland (10%), Italy and Hungary (13% in each) and Portugal (14%).

Regularly using foreign languages when communicating with family members receives most mentions by respondents in **Luxembourg** (39%), **Spain** (32%), followed by **Ireland** and the **UK** (31% in each).

It is least likely to be mentioned as a way in which foreign languages are regularly used in Poland (5%), Greece and Romania (6% in each), and Bulgaria and Italy (7% in each).

Regularly using foreign languages when writing **e-mails/letters at work** is most widespread in **Luxembourg** (40%), **Malta** (38%) and **Sweden** (34%).

It is least widespread in Bulgaria and Ireland (8% in each).

Those countries where respondents are most likely to say they use foreign languages when reading at work are Luxembourg (42%), Sweden (37%), Finland (33%) and Denmark (32%).

Countries least likely to use foreign languages in this way are Romania and the Czech Republic (6% each), and Poland (8%).

Regularly using foreign languages when studying a language is most widely cited by respondents in **Hungary** (27%), followed by those in the **Czech Republic** (21%).

Foreign languages are least likely to be used in such a way in Austria (5%) and the Netherlands (7%).

Regularly using foreign languages when studying something else is most likely to take place in **Sweden** (18%), and least likely to be undertaken in Poland (4%).

Finally, the country where respondents are **most likely to be regularly using foreign languages when travelling abroad on business** is **Sweden** (23%).

SD4T When do you regularly use (FIRST OTHER LANGUAGE)(SECOND OTHER LANGUAGE)? - TOTAL

	On holidays abroad	Watching films\ television\ listening to the radio	On the Internet	Communicating with friends	Conversations at work, either face-to-face or by telephone	Reading books\ newspapers\ magazines	Communicating with members of your family	Writing e-mails\ letters at work	Reading at work	While studying languages	Travelling abroad on business	While studying something else	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	None (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't know
EU27	50%	37%	36%	35%	27%	27%	19%	18%	17%	14%	11%	10%	5%	9%	1%
BE	59%	49%	38%	38%	38%	27%	25%	17%	20%	8%	9%	7%	3%	3%	0%
BG	19%	46%	31%	33%	16%	17%	7%	8%	10%	9%	10%	7%	11%	9%	1%
CZ	56%	37%	31%	35%	23%	22%	10%	14%	6%	21%	12%	7%	3%	9%	0%
DK	84%	71%	69%	38%	36%	42%	22%	26%	32%	10%	15%	12%	2%	4%	0%
DE	64%	30%	40%	35%	24%	30%	23%	23%	19%	15%	9%	15%	3%	11%	0%
EE	29%	54%	38%	38%	55%	24%	9%	19%	20%	13%	11%	10%	3%	8%	0%
IE	40%	26%	14%	28%	24%	16%	31%	8%	10%	13%	10%	6%	9%	5%	4%
EL	35%	44%	52%	27%	23%	25%	6%	17%	11%	12%	9%	8%	3%	7%	0%
ES	21%	39%	30%	55%	39%	40%	32%	14%	20%	15%	7%	10%	5%	6%	0%
FR	55%	36%	35%	31%	28%	26%	24%	17%	19%	11%	9%	5%	8%	5%	0%
IT	47%	15%	25%	24%	21%	13%	7%	14%	12%	18%	14%	5%	6%	11%	1%
CY	49%	51%	44%	43%	43%	26%	16%	24%	15%	8%	9%	6%	4%	2%	0%
LV	15%	65%	38%	54%	42%	30%	18%	17%	16%	17%	13%	11%	10%	4%	0%
LT	18%	70%	27%	35%	26%	25%	10%	14%	14%	9%	15%	6%	8%	10%	1%
LU	56%	73%	51%	66%	61%	69%	39%	40%	42%	9%	14%	10%	6%	2%	0%
HU	37%	23%	27%	28%	16%	13%	18%	16%	12%	27%	10%	8%	3%	9%	1%
MT	46%	82%	50%	34%	41%	57%	24%	38%	29%	11%	18%	16%	1%	2%	0%
NL	74%	61%	53%	37%	33%	36%	22%	25%	25%	7%	11%	9%	3%	4%	0%
AT	71%	22%	32%	28%	24%	23%	9%	22%	16%	5%	13%	6%	9%	3%	2%
PL	32%	24%	28%	21%	16%	10%	5%	10%	8%	19%	12%	4%	3%	22%	6%
PT	29%	28%	24%	30%	18%	14%	12%	12%	9%	9%	10%	9%	4%	6%	1%
RO	21%	45%	38%	26%	23%	17%	6%	12%	6%	14%	8%	7%	10%	6%	3%
SI	63%	68%	44%	44%	25%	37%	12%	19%	15%	12%	18%	9%	6%	4%	0%
SK	37%	58%	31%	39%	19%	40%	14%	11%	10%	17%	11%	8%	2%	9%	1%
FI	65%	57%	61%	35%	39%	36%	16%	29%	33%	19%	16%	15%	6%	7%	0%
SE	77%	72%	71%	43%	40%	52%	19%	34%	37%	9%	23%	18%	2%	4%	0%
UK	55%	27%	25%	40%	29%	25%	31%	20%	18%	14%	16%	15%	6%	13%	1%

Highest percentage per country
Lowest percentage per country
Highest percentage per item
Lowest percentage per item

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

- **men**, for using foreign languages **when travelling abroad on business** (14% vs. 8% amongst women)
- **15-24 year olds**, particularly when compared with those aged 55+, for using foreign languages on the **internet** (50% vs. 19% respectively); **studying languages** (41% vs. 4%); and **studying something else** (21% vs. 4%)
- **25-39 year olds**, particularly when compared with those aged 55+, for using foreign languages watching **films/television/listening to the radio** (41% vs. 31% respectively)

- **25-54 year olds**, compared with under 25's and those aged 55+, for using foreign languages **in conversations at work** (38% vs. 16% and 16% respectively); **reading at work** (23% vs. 13% and 9%); writing **e-mails at work** (24% vs. 16% and 11%); and **travelling abroad on business** (15% vs. 6% and 8%)
- **those who finished their full-time education aged 20+**, compared with those finishing at 15 or below, for using foreign languages on **holidays** abroad (60% vs. 28% respectively); on the **internet** (42% vs. 13%); reading **books** (31% vs. 18%); **conversations at work** (35% vs. 20%); writing **e-mails/letters at work** (26% vs. 6%); **reading at work** (25% vs. 7%); watching **films/television**/listening to the **radio** (41% vs. 25%); and **travelling abroad on business** (16% vs. 5%)
- **those who finished their full-time education aged 15**, compared with those finishing aged 20+, for using foreign languages when **communicating with family members** (28% vs. 19% respectively)
- **those who live in large towns**, particularly when compared with those who live in rural villages, for using foreign languages when watching **films/television or** listening to the **radio** (43% vs. 32% respectively); **communicating with friends** (39% vs. 30%); on the internet (40% vs. 31%); and reading **books** (31% vs. 21%)
- **housepersons**, particularly when compared with managers/other white collar workers, the self-employed and students, for using foreign languages **communicating with family members** (31% vs. 16% and 17% and 16% respectively)
- the **unemployed**, particularly when compared with managers/other white collar workers, for using foreign languages **communicating with friends** (42% vs. 30% respectively)
- **students and the unemployed**, particularly when compared with the self-employed, for using foreign languages watching films/television or listening to the **radio** (46% and 40% vs. 32% respectively)
- **people using the internet daily**, particularly when compared with those who never use it, are, naturally, using foreign languages on the **internet** (45% vs. 2% respectively). They are also more likely to be using them on **holidays** abroad (56% vs. 26%); watching **films/television or** listening to the **radio** (39% vs. 26%); in **conversations at work** (31% vs. 16%); writing **e-mails/letters at work** (23% vs. 2%); reading **books** (29% vs. 17%); **travelling abroad on business** (14% vs. 5%); **studying languages** (17% vs. 1%); and **studying something else** (12% vs. 3%)

Other groups with a greater tendency to be using foreign languages for these activities include **very active language learners**, particularly when compared with the inactive:

- using foreign languages on the **internet** (61% vs. 32%); watching **films/television** or listening to the **radio** (58% vs. 34%); reading **books/newspapers/magazines** (46% vs. 24%); **communicating with friends** (47% vs. 32%); **studying languages** (44% vs. 4%); **studying something else** (25% vs. 7%); writing **e-mails/letters at work** (25% vs. 16%); and **reading at work** (23% vs. 16%)

3. ATTITUDES TO LEARNING

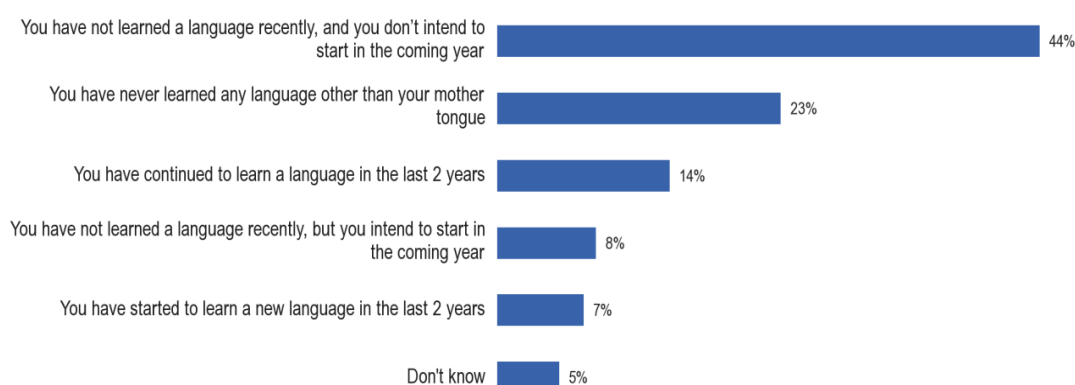
Having explored the way in which Europeans are utilising foreign languages, in terms of how frequently they use them and how they use them, this final section of the chapter looks at Europeans' behaviour in relation to learning new languages.

The majority of Europeans do not describe themselves as active learners of languages. Only a small proportion started to learn a new language in the last 2 years (7%), with a similar proportion (8%) intending to do so in the next year.

A slightly higher proportion (14%) have continued learning a language in the last 2 years.

Respondents were asked about their past, current and future plans in relation to learning a language. They were presented with a card showing various situations and were able to mention as many situations as applied to them¹⁸.

QE3. Which of the following situations apply to you?



 EU27

Just over two fifths of Europeans (44%) have not learnt a language recently and do not intend to do so in the next year.

Around a quarter (23%) of Europeans say they have never learnt a language, other than their mother tongue.

Only a minority of Europeans (14%) have continued learning a language in the last two years.

¹⁸ Q3. "Which of the following situations apply to you? (SHOW CARD – READ OUT – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) You have started to learn a new language in the last 2 years; You have continued to learn a new language in the last 2 years; You have not learned a language recently, but you intend to start in the coming year; You have not learned a new language recently, and you don't intend to start in the coming year; You have never learned any language other than your mother tongue; Don't know"

Less than one in ten Europeans have started learning a new language in the last two years (7%), and a similar proportion say they have not learnt a language recently but they intend to start in the coming year (8%).

The results can be summarised into **three categories of language learners**:

- **Very active** language learners – those who started learning a new language in the last 2 years and have continued to learn a new language in the last 2 years
- **Active** language learners – those who either started learning a new language in the last 2 years or continued to learn a new language in the last 2 years
- **Inactive** language learners – those who have not learnt a language recently and may or may not intend to start in the coming year or who have never learned any language other than their mother tongue

The majority of Europeans (**75%**) are **inactive language learners**.

A fifth of Europeans (**20%**) are **active**.

Only a very small minority (**1%**) are **very active** language learners.

The main notable **difference** between **EU15** and **NMS12** is that respondents in **EU15** are **more likely** than those in **NMS12 to say they have never learnt any language** (26% vs. 12% respectively).

There is **national variation**.

Respondents in Malta are particularly likely to say they have not learnt a language recently and do not intend to start in the next year, with almost three quarters (73%) saying this.

Other Member States where the majority classify themselves in this way include Denmark (59%), Cyprus (58%), the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Sweden (57% in each), Lithuania (55%), Germany and Poland (54%), Bulgaria (53%) and Greece (51%).

Respondents in Spain (28%) are least likely to say they have not learnt a language recently and do not intend to start in the next year.

Only a minority of respondents across all Member States say they have never learnt any language other than their mother tongue.

Respondents in Portugal (48%) and Spain (41%) are most likely to say they have never learnt a language, followed by those in Italy and the UK (32% in each).

Those in Luxembourg (2%), Latvia (3%) and Sweden (4%) are the least likely to say they have never learnt a language.

Countries where respondents are **most likely to say they have continued learning a language in the last two years** are **Sweden** (26%), **Latvia** (24%), **Finland** (23%) and **Slovakia** (20%).

Countries where respondents are least likely, and where less than one in ten respondents say they have continued learning a language in the last two years, are Malta (7%), Portugal (8%), Greece and the UK (9% in each).

Member States with the **greatest proportion of respondents intending to start learning a language in the next year** are **Luxembourg** (15%), **Denmark** and **the Netherlands** (14% in each), and Belgium, Estonia, Latvia and Finland (13% in each).





























Respondents in Greece and Portugal (5% in each) are the least likely of all EU respondents to have such intention.

Finally, those **countries** where respondents are most **likely to say they have started learning a new language in the last two years** are **Luxembourg** (16%), followed by **Estonia** and **Romania** (12% in each).

Respondents in Greece (2%) are the least likely to have started learning a new language recently.

It is worth noting that in two countries, Romania and the Netherlands, a relatively large proportion of respondents felt they were unable to answer the question (20% and 13% respectively).

QE3 Which of the following situations apply to you?

	You have not learned a language recently, and you don't intend to start in the coming year	You have never learned any language other than your mother tongue	You have continued to learn a language in the last 2 years	You have not learned a language recently, but you intend to start in the coming year	You have started to learn a new language in the last 2 years	Don't know
 EU27	44%	23%	14%	8%	7%	5%
 BE	44%	17%	15%	13%	9%	7%
 BG	53%	19%	12%	8%	6%	2%
 CZ	57%	15%	14%	7%	6%	2%
 DK	59%	5%	16%	14%	8%	2%
 DE	54%	16%	15%	6%	7%	5%
 EE	48%	6%	18%	13%	12%	7%
 IE	47%	27%	10%	8%	6%	3%
 EL	51%	31%	9%	5%	2%	2%
 ES	28%	41%	12%	9%	7%	4%
 FR	42%	22%	16%	9%	7%	6%
 IT	39%	32%	14%	8%	4%	4%
 CY	58%	10%	14%	11%	11%	2%
 LV	48%	3%	24%	13%	11%	4%
 LT	55%	10%	19%	8%	5%	5%
 LU	49%	2%	18%	15%	16%	4%
 HU	43%	29%	12%	12%	5%	1%
 MT	73%	6%	7%	7%	3%	5%
 NL	46%	5%	18%	14%	7%	13%
 AT	47%	19%	18%	10%	7%	1%
 PL	54%	7%	18%	8%	6%	7%
 PT	34%	48%	8%	5%	4%	2%
 RO	36%	12%	15%	8%	12%	20%
 SI	57%	6%	18%	11%	10%	2%
 SK	49%	11%	20%	12%	8%	2%
 FI	41%	12%	23%	13%	10%	3%
 SE	57%	4%	26%	7%	7%	3%
 UK	41%	32%	9%	8%	9%	3%

Highest percentage per country

Lowest percentage per country

Highest percentage per item

Lowest percentage per item

There are **socio-demographic and behavioural differences**, most notably:

- **15-24 year olds**, particularly when compared with those aged 55+, are much **more likely** to have:

- continued to learn a new language in the last 2 years (45% vs. 5% respectively)
- started to learn a new language in the last 2 years (18% vs. 3%)

and much **less likely** to have:

- never learnt any language (6% vs. 40%)
- not learnt a language recently and have no intention of starting (24% vs. 42%)

- **those who finished their full-time education aged 20+**, particularly when compared with those finishing at 15 or below, are much **more likely** to have:

- continued to learn a new language in the last 2 years (19% vs. 2% respectively)
- not learnt a language recently and have no intention of starting (52% vs. 30%)

and much **less likely** to have:

- never learnt any language (5% vs. 60%)

- **students** are much **less likely** than any other occupational group to have:

- not learnt a language recently and not intend to start (12%, compared with, for example, 53% of managers, white collar workers and manual workers)

and particularly when compared with the retired, they are **more likely** to have:

- continued to learn a new language in the last 2 years (61% vs. 5% respectively)
- started learning a new language in the last 2 years (23% vs. 3%)

and **less likely** to have:

- never learnt any language (2% vs. 41%)

- **those who use the internet daily**, particularly when compared with those who never use it, are **more likely** to have:

- continued learning a new language in the last 2 years (22% vs. 2% respectively)
- started learning a new language in the last 2 years (10% vs. 1%)
- not learnt a language recently but intend to (11% vs. 2%)

and are much **less likely** to have:

- never learnt any language (10% vs. 51%)

- **people in larger households**, particularly **4+** when compared with single occupancy households, are **more likely** to have:

- continued to learn a new language in the last 2 years (19% vs. 11% respectively)

and much **less likely** to have:

- never learnt any language (14% vs. 30%)

- **those who have difficulties paying bills** most of the time, particularly when compared with those who 'almost never' struggle, are **more likely** to have:

- never learnt any language (32% vs. 21%)

- **those who position themselves 'low'** on the social positioning staircase, particularly when compared with those who place themselves 'high', are **more likely** to have:

- never learnt any language (30% vs. 17%)

and are **less likely** to have:

- continued to learn a new language in the last 2 years (10% vs. 19%)

Those who speak foreign languages, and particularly those who speak **at least three** compared with those who speak none, have a **greater tendency to say** they have:

- continued to learn a new language in the last 2 years (32% vs. 3% respectively)
- started learning a new language in the last 2 years (17% vs. 3%)
- not learnt a language recently but intend to start in the next year (12% vs. 6%)

QE3 Which of the following situations apply to you?

	You have started to learn a new language in the last 2 years	You have continued to learn a language in the last 2 years	You have not learned a language recently, but you intend to start in the coming year	You have not learned a language recently, and you don't intend to start in the coming year	You have never learned any language other than your mother tongue
EU27	7%	14%	8%	44%	23%
Age					
15-24	18%	45%	10%	24%	6%
25-39	8%	14%	13%	50%	12%
40-54	5%	10%	9%	52%	19%
55 +	3%	5%	4%	42%	40%
Education (End of)					
15-	2%	2%	3%	30%	60%
16-19	5%	7%	9%	54%	20%
20+	8%	19%	11%	52%	5%
Still studying	23%	61%	9%	12%	2%
Household composition					
1	6%	11%	8%	41%	30%
2	6%	10%	7%	44%	29%
3	7%	17%	9%	45%	18%
4+	8%	19%	9%	47%	14%
Respondent occupation scale					
Self-employed	7%	15%	11%	46%	18%
Managers	8%	18%	11%	53%	6%
Other white collars	6%	13%	13%	53%	11%
Manual workers	6%	9%	9%	53%	19%
House persons	5%	5%	6%	39%	38%
Unemployed	7%	11%	10%	44%	24%
Retired	3%	5%	4%	43%	41%
Students	23%	61%	9%	12%	2%
Use of the Internet					
Everyday	10%	22%	11%	45%	10%
Often/ Sometimes	6%	10%	8%	52%	20%
Never	1%	2%	2%	39%	51%
Difficulties paying bills					
Most of the time	6%	9%	8%	40%	32%
From time to time	6%	12%	10%	44%	24%
Almost never	7%	15%	8%	46%	21%
Self-positioning on the social staircase					
Low (1-4)	5%	10%	8%	43%	30%
Medium (5-6)	7%	13%	8%	45%	23%
High (7-10)	8%	19%	10%	44%	17%
Number of foreign languages - conversation					
None	3%	3%	6%	42%	42%
One	11%	24%	11%	46%	6%
Two	13%	30%	12%	39%	4%
Three	17%	32%	12%	35%	4%

III. ATTITUDES TO LANGUAGE LEARNING

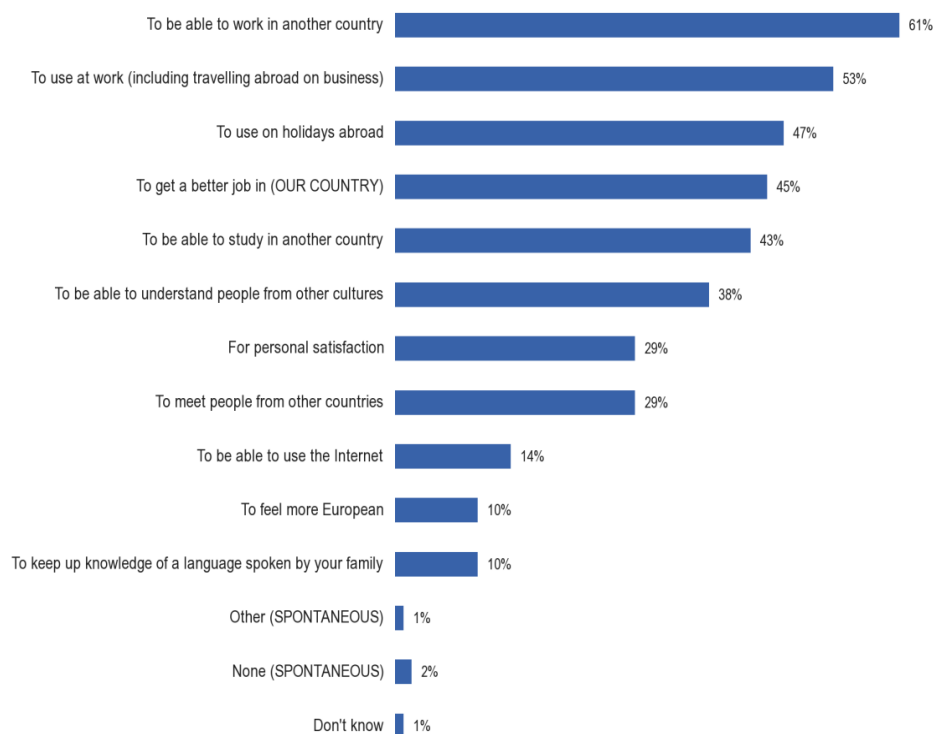
This chapter begins by examining Europeans' perceptions of the main advantages to learning a new language. It then looks at what languages Europeans believe are the most useful languages, both for their own personal development and for children to learn. Facilitators and barriers to learning a new language are explored before concluding with a look at the methods Europeans have used to learn languages and which is seen as the most effective.

1. MAIN ADVANTAGES TO LEARN A LANGUAGE

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

Respondents were presented with a list of possible advantages of learning a new language and asked what they felt the main advantages of learning a new language were. If respondents mentioned more than one advantage each one they mentioned was recorded¹⁹.

QE2. In your opinion, what are the main advantages of learning a new language?



EU27

¹⁹ Q2. "In your opinion, what are the main advantages of learning a new language? (SHOW CARD –READ OUT – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) To use on holidays abroad, To use at work (including travelling abroad on business), To be able to study in another country, To be able to work in another country, To meet people from other countries, To be able to understand people from other cultures, To feel more European, To be able to use the internet, Other (SPONTANEOUS), None (SPONTANEOUS), Don't know"

Europeans are most likely to think that a **key advantage of learning a new language** is that **it enables working in another country**, with three fifths of Europeans (**61%**) holding this view.

Just over half of Europeans (**53%**) cite **using the language at work** (including travelling abroad on business), and a slightly smaller proportion using it on holidays abroad (47%) as advantages of learning a new language.

A little over two fifths of respondents think that learning a new language would help them **to get a better job in their own country (45%)** and **study in another country (43%)**. Just under two fifths (**38%**) believe learning a new language would **help with understanding people from other cultures**.

A little under a third of respondents believe personal satisfaction (29%) and meeting people from other countries (29%) are benefits of learning a language.

Much smaller proportions cite using the internet (14%), feeling more European (10%) and maintaining knowledge of a language spoken within the family (10%) as key advantages of learning a new language.

It is not possible to compare the results with those obtained in 2005 because the way in which the information has been collected has changed²⁰.

There are some **differences** between **EU15** and **NMS12**. Most notably, respondents in **EU15** are **more likely** than those in NMS12 **to think that the main advantages of learning a new language** are:

- to understand people from other cultures (41% vs. 28% respectively)
- to meet people from other countries (31% vs. 23%)
- to keep up knowledge of a language spoken by the family (12% vs. 6%)

At a national level, **Member States** where respondents are **most likely to cite working in another country** as an advantage of learning a new language are **Spain** (79%), **Greece** (73%), **Lithuania** (72%) and **Hungary** (71%). It is seen as an advantage by the majority of respondents in all but four countries: Malta (29%), Cyprus (38%), the Netherlands (46%) and Italy (50%).

Using a new language at work is most widely mentioned as a reason for learning one in **Denmark** (72%), **Sweden** (70%), the **Netherlands** (67%) and **Germany** (66%). It is the most commonly cited advantage in these countries along with Luxembourg (63%), Finland (61%), Belgium (60%) and Italy (53%).

²⁰ In 2005 respondents were asked: "What would be your main reasons for learning a new language?" (SHOW CARD – READ OUT – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) To use on holidays abroad, To use at work (including travelling abroad on business), To be able to study in another country, To be able to work in another country To get a better job in (OUR COUNTRY), For personal satisfaction, To keep up knowledge of a language spoken by my family, To meet people from other cultures, To know a language that is widely spoken around the world, Because someone told me to (e.g. employer, parents), To feel more European, To be able to use the internet, Would never learn another language (SPONTANEOUS), Other (SPONTANEOUS), Don't know"

Respondents in Portugal (29%) are least likely to think that using a new language at work is a key benefit to learning one.

Respondents in **Denmark** (68%), **Austria** (64%), **Sweden** (61%) and **Poland** (60%) are most likely to mention using the new language **on holidays abroad** as an advantage. It is the most widely cited advantage in Austria, along with the UK (57%), Cyprus (55%) and Malta (52%).

Improving job prospects in the home country is most likely to be mentioned by respondents in **Greece** (69%), followed by those in **Belgium** (60%) where it receives more mentions than any other advantage, and **Spain** (60%).

Respondents in Malta (25%), the UK and Ireland (27% in each) are least likely to think that this is a key benefit of learning a new language.

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

Enabling study in another country is a view held by the majority in eight countries: **Denmark** (64%), **Lithuania** (59%), **Germany**, **Estonia** and **Latvia** (56% in each), and Greece, Slovenia and Sweden (54% in each).

It is least likely to be seen as an advantage by respondents in Malta (20%).

Enabling an understanding of people from other cultures is a view held by the majority in four Member States: **Sweden** (66%), **Denmark** (64%), **Austria** (63%) and **Luxembourg** (54%).

Respondents in Romania (19%) are least likely to think this is an advantage of learning a new language.

Meeting people from other countries is a view held by the majority in two Member States: **Denmark** (57%) and **Sweden** (51%).

It is the least widely held opinion in Hungary (11%).

For those advantages where only a minority of Europeans in every Member State think they are important benefits of learning a new language,

personal satisfaction is most likely to be mentioned by respondents in **Sweden** (48%), and least likely to be mentioned by those in Hungary and Slovakia (19% in each);

enabling internet use is most likely to be mentioned in **Denmark** (44%), and least likely to be a view held in Ireland (2%);

keeping up knowledge of a language spoken by the family is most widely cited in **Luxembourg** (25%), with least mentions in Bulgaria (2%);

and **feeling more European** is most likely to be quoted as an advantage in **Denmark** (18%), with respondents in Ireland (4%) the least likely of all Member States to think this.

QE2 In your opinion, what are the main advantages of learning a new language?

	To be able to work in another country	To use at work (including travelling abroad on business)	To use on holidays abroad	To get a better job in (OUR COUNTRY)	To be able to study in another country	To be able to understand people from other cultures	For personal satisfaction	To meet people from other countries	To be able to use the Internet	To keep up knowledge of a language spoken by your family	To feel more European	Other (SPONTA NEOUS)	None (SPONTA NEOUS)	Don't know
EU27	61%	53%	47%	45%	43%	38%	29%	29%	14%	10%	10%	1%	2%	1%
BE	48%	60%	58%	60%	36%	36%	37%	28%	16%	14%	10%	1%	1%	1%
BG	67%	39%	16%	46%	37%	31%	22%	28%	17%	2%	15%	1%	2%	2%
CZ	67%	61%	41%	44%	50%	45%	25%	26%	11%	4%	9%	0%	2%	1%
DK	69%	72%	68%	48%	64%	64%	44%	57%	44%	20%	18%	1%	0%	0%
DE	64%	66%	59%	52%	56%	45%	28%	37%	20%	13%	11%	0%	1%	0%
EE	67%	61%	52%	51%	56%	45%	31%	38%	31%	9%	15%	0%	2%	2%
IE	59%	43%	45%	27%	35%	31%	25%	22%	2%	6%	4%	2%	1%	1%
EL	73%	51%	39%	69%	54%	43%	31%	37%	23%	5%	8%	1%	1%	0%
ES	79%	49%	27%	60%	50%	31%	29%	26%	10%	7%	6%	0%	1%	1%
FR	62%	61%	55%	32%	41%	44%	33%	36%	15%	13%	10%	0%	1%	1%
IT	50%	53%	36%	47%	33%	33%	29%	20%	8%	6%	12%	1%	3%	1%
CY	38%	44%	55%	46%	30%	40%	39%	18%	17%	5%	8%	1%	2%	0%
LV	67%	50%	41%	50%	56%	37%	23%	42%	21%	7%	11%	0%	1%	1%
LT	72%	37%	35%	46%	59%	28%	22%	32%	22%	7%	13%	2%	1%	2%
LU	53%	63%	47%	50%	46%	54%	38%	39%	16%	25%	17%	2%	1%	1%
HU	71%	40%	26%	56%	38%	29%	19%	11%	8%	7%	7%	0%	2%	1%
MT	29%	39%	52%	25%	20%	38%	44%	36%	17%	8%	7%	0%	2%	2%
NL	46%	67%	51%	35%	42%	41%	27%	30%	18%	11%	8%	1%	0%	0%
AT	59%	57%	64%	55%	44%	63%	34%	36%	19%	13%	12%	3%	2%	0%
PL	62%	45%	60%	50%	46%	24%	32%	26%	17%	7%	14%	0%	2%	2%
PT	66%	29%	18%	46%	34%	25%	24%	20%	6%	7%	6%	1%	6%	2%
RO	60%	39%	31%	42%	33%	19%	26%	17%	21%	6%	8%	2%	4%	5%
SI	69%	60%	55%	55%	54%	41%	42%	34%	37%	11%	15%	2%	1%	0%
SK	68%	52%	36%	56%	46%	39%	19%	29%	17%	5%	13%	0%	1%	0%
FI	55%	61%	56%	46%	46%	48%	30%	42%	31%	12%	9%	1%	1%	0%
SE	65%	70%	61%	39%	54%	66%	48%	51%	31%	20%	10%	1%	0%	0%
UK	50%	42%	57%	27%	33%	43%	26%	27%	4%	16%	9%	1%	3%	1%

Highest percentage per country Lowest percentage per country
 Highest percentage per item Lowest percentage per item

There are **differences between socio-demographic and behavioural groups and their perceptions** of the **main advantages to learning a new language**. The most notable are:

- **younger people**, particularly **15-24 year olds** when compared with those aged 55+, thinking advantages are:
 - the ability to **study** in another country (54% vs. 39% respectively)
 - using the **internet** (19% vs. 10%)
- **those who finished their full-time education** aged **20+**, particularly when compared with those finishing at 15 or below, thinking advantages are:
 - using it **at work** (63% vs. 42% respectively)
 - **understanding people** from other cultures (47% vs. 27%)
 - personal satisfaction (37% vs. 21%)
 - the ability to **study** in another country (48% vs. 33% respectively)
 - using it on **holidays** abroad (52% vs. 38%)
 - using the **internet** (19% vs. 7%)
 - **meeting people** from other countries (35% vs. 23%)
 - keeping up **knowledge** of a **family language** (13% vs. 6%)
 - **feeling** more **European** (13% vs. 6%)
- **students**, more than any other occupational group, thinking advantages are:
 - the ability to **study** in another country (62%), particularly when compared with the retired, housepersons and the unemployed (39% in each)

and, **along with managers**, they are **more likely** than any of the other occupational groups **to think advantages** are:

- using it **at work** (61% of students and 66% of managers), particularly when compared with housepersons (45%)
- using it on **holidays** abroad (52% for both), particularly when compared with the unemployed (38%)
- **understanding people** from other cultures (46% and 49%), particularly when compared with housepersons (32%)
- **meeting people** from other countries (37% and 34%), particularly when compared with housepersons (24%)

- using the **internet** (21% and 18%), particularly when compared with housepersons (8%)
- keeping up **knowledge of a family language** (14% for both), particularly when compared with housepersons (8%)
- **those who use the internet daily are more likely** than those who never use it **to mention all the advantages**, with the most notable differences on:
 - using it **at work** (60% vs. 41% respectively)
 - **understanding people** from other cultures (44% vs. 28%)
 - personal **satisfaction** (34% vs. 20%)
 - using the **internet** (19% vs. 6%)
 - using it on **holidays** abroad (52% vs. 40%)
 - the ability to **study** in another country (47% vs. 36%)
 - **meeting people** from other countries (33% vs. 23%)
- **those who 'almost never' have difficulties paying bills**, particularly when compared with those who struggle most of the time, thinking the advantage is:
 - using it on **holidays** abroad (52% vs. 37% respectively)

Active language learners, and particularly those who are very active, are **more likely** than the inactive **to mention all reasons** as advantages to learning a new language. Those advantages where there is the greatest relative difference between the proportions of active learners and the inactive holding the view are:

- the ability to **study** in another country (69% vs. 41% respectively)
- using it **at work** (71% vs. 51%)
- **meeting people** from other countries (45% vs. 27%)
- **understanding people** from other cultures (50% vs. 36%)
- personal **satisfaction** (39% vs. 28%)
- using the **internet** (25% vs. 13%)
- keeping up **knowledge** of a **family language** (19% vs. 10%)

There is a clear **relationship between knowledge of at least one foreign language** and the **frequency with which advantages are cited**.

For every advantage, those who speak at least one foreign language have a greater likelihood than those who speak none of mentioning it as a benefit to learning a new language. This relationship doesn't extend to the number of foreign languages understood i.e. those who speak two or more languages don't always have a greater likelihood of mentioning an advantage compared with those who only speak one.

Advantages that are particularly likely to receive more mentions **by those who know at least one foreign language** compared with those who know none are:

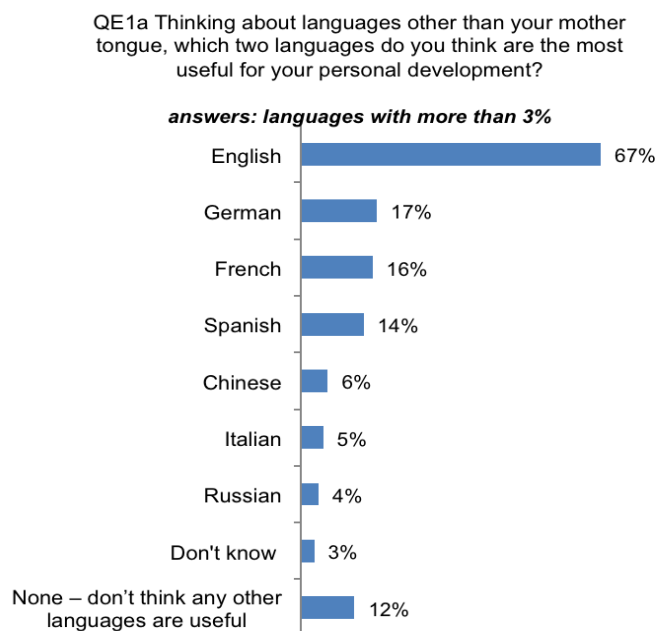
- using it **at work** (1 language: 60% vs. none: 45%)
- **understanding people** from other cultures (45% vs. 30% respectively)
- being able to **study** in another country (49% vs. 37%)
- personal **satisfaction** (35% vs. 23%)
- **meeting people** from other countries (35% vs. 23%)
- using the **internet** (19% vs. 9%)
- keeping up **knowledge** of a **family language** (13% vs. 7%)

2. MOST USEFUL LANGUAGES

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

Most Europeans think that English is the most useful language

Respondents were asked to name the two languages, apart from their mother tongue, that they believed to be most useful for their personal development²¹.



Two thirds of Europeans (**67%**) think that **English** is **one of the two most useful languages**. It is much more likely to be considered useful for personal development than any other language.

Less than one in five Europeans mention **German (17%)**, **French (16%)** and **Spanish (14%)**;





























around one in sixteen mention **Chinese (6%)**; one in twenty **Italian (5%)** and one in twenty five Europeans think **Russian (4%)** is one of the two most useful languages for personal development.

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

Around one in eight Europeans (**12%**) **do not think any language is useful** for their personal development.

²¹ Q1a. "Thinking about languages other than your mother tongue, which two languages do you think are the most useful for your personal development? (DO NOT SHOW CARD – MAX. 2 ANSWERS) Czech, Arabic, Basque, Bulgarian, Catalan, Chinese, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Galician, German, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Irish/Gaelic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luxembourgish, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Scottish Gaelic, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Urdu, Welsh, Other, None – don't think any other languages are useful, Don't know"

QE1a Thinking about languages other than your mother tongue, which two languages do you think are the most useful for your personal development?

	English	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	French	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	German	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Spanish	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Chinese	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Italian	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Russian	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	None – don't think any other languages are useful	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Don't know	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3
 EU27	67%	-1	16%	-9	17%	-5	14%	-2	6%	+4	5%	+2	4%	+1	12%	+2	3%	-2
 BE	76%	-7	49%	-4	6%	-2	8%	+3	4%	+3	3%	+2	0%	=	7%	+2	0%	-3
 BG	57%	-8	5%	-6	20%	-14	7%	+2	0%	=	4%	+2	14%	+3	24%	+8	6%	-2
 CZ	59%	-11	3%	-3	32%	-23	1%	-2	0%	=	1%	=	7%	=	25%	+13	0%	-4
 DK	92%	-2	9%	+1	48%	-7	14%	+4	5%	+4	1%	=	0%	=	4%	+1	0%	-1
 DE	82%	+1	21%	-7	10%	+5	13%	+1	4%	+2	3%	=	6%	+1	7%	-1	2%	-3
 EE	75%	-1	4%	+2	10%	-4	2%	+1	2%	+2	0%	=	47%	-1	4%	-2	1%	-3
 IE	6%	+2	38%	-20	25%	-12	24%	-10	9%	+6	4%	-2	1%	=	20%	+13	5%	-4
 EL	74%	=	13%	-8	20%	-10	3%	-1	5%	+5	5%	-1	2%	+2	21%	=	0%	=
 ES	82%	+9	15%	-18	14%	+3	10%	+5	13%	+11	1%	=	1%	+1	8%	-8	2%	-2
 FR	79%	-3	6%	+4	13%	-7	33%	-4	8%	+5	5%	-2	0%	-1	10%	+4	1%	-4
 IT	70%	-10	11%	-13	8%	-5	9%	-6	7%	+4	14%	+13	1%	=	13%	+5	1%	-6
 CY	94%	=	18%	-17	10%	-9	4%	=	1%	+1	6%	-1	19%	+14	3%	-1	0%	=
 LV	72%	-2	2%	-1	17%	=	2%	+1	0%	=	0%	=	50%	-4	3%	=	1%	-3
 LT	66%	-21	2%	-2	13%	-15	2%	+1	1%	+1	0%	-1	62%	+12	7%	+7	3%	=
 LU	40%	+3	72%	-9	47%	-13	3%	+2	0%	=	1%	=	1%	+1	0%	-1	0%	-1
 HU	64%	+2	5%	+1	48%	-7	2%	+1	1%	+1	2%	-1	2%	=	16%	-6	3%	-3
 MT	94%	+3	9%	-3	3%	-3	2%	=	1%	+1	59%	-5	1%	+1	2%	-3	1%	=
 NL	95%	+1	13%	-6	44%	-3	18%	+2	7%	+6	1%	+1	1%	+1	0%	-2	0%	=
 AT	76%	+4	18%	+2	10%	+8	7%	-1	2%	+1	10%	+1	5%	+2	15%	-3	2%	-4
 PL	65%	-7	3%	-2	31%	-15	2%	=	1%	+1	1%	=	8%	-1	14%	-1	7%	+2
 PT	53%	-6	22%	-13	4%	-2	11%	+5	1%	+1	1%	+1	0%	=	32%	+1	2%	-2
 RO	59%	-5	25%	-9	13%	-4	5%	-2	1%	+1	9%	+1	2%	=	19%	+2	8%	=
 SI	79%	+1	4%	=	50%	-11	3%	+1	2%	+2	11%	-1	2%	+1	3%	-4	5%	+3
 SK	63%	-9	4%	-1	44%	-17	2%	=	0%	=	1%	-1	8%	+2	12%	+1	6%	+3
 FI	88%	=	5%	-3	13%	-6	7%	+3	2%	+2	1%	=	25%	+15	2%	-2	1%	-1
 SE	93%	-4	11%	-2	29%	-8	18%	-4	4%	+3	2%	+1	0%	-1	2%	=	0%	=
 UK	19%	+14	34%	-28	12%	-15	26%	-8	11%	+9	5%	+1	2%	+1	15%	+11	8%	-4

Compared with the **results** from the **2005 survey**, the **proportion** of Europeans **believing the languages are important for personal development** remain broadly **similar** for **English** (-1 percentage point), **Spanish** (-2 points), **Italian** (+2 points) and **Russian** (+1 point).

However, there has been a notable decrease in the proportion thinking that French is important (-9 points), and a somewhat smaller decrease in those thinking German is an important language for personal development (-5 points).

Europeans are also slightly **more likely** than they were in 2005 **to think** that **Chinese** is an **important** language (+ 4 points).

The proportion of Europeans believing that there are no languages important for personal development is broadly similar to that in 2005 (+2 points).

There are some countries where there has been a notable change in opinion since 2005 on the perceived usefulness of a language.

In terms of English, countries showing the **greatest improvement** in the belief that it is one of the most useful languages for personal development are the **UK** (+14 percentage points) followed by **Spain** (+9 points).

Countries with the most notable worsening of opinion on its usefulness are Lithuania (-21 points), the Czech Republic (-11 points), Italy (-10 points), Slovakia (-9 points), Bulgaria (-8 points), Belgium and Poland (-7 points in each).

Few countries show **improvements in the perception** that **French is useful** for personal development, and any increases are small, with the greatest in **France** (+4 percentage points).

Member States where respondents are particularly less likely to think French useful than in 2005 are the UK (-28 points), Ireland (-20 points), Spain (-18 points), Cyprus (-17 points), Italy and Portugal (-13 points in each).

The greatest **increase in the proportion thinking German useful** for personal development is among respondents in **Austria** (+8 percentage points).

The most significant worsening of opinion on its usefulness is in the Czech Republic (-23 points), Slovakia (-17 points), Lithuania, Poland, and the UK (-15 points in each), Bulgaria (-14 points) and Luxembourg (-13 points).

For most Member States opinion on the **usefulness of Spanish** remains **broadly similar** to that in 2005.

Those countries where respondents are particularly less likely to think it useful compared with the view expressed in 2005 are Ireland (-10 percentage points) and the UK (-8 points).

The most notable **improvements** in the perception of its usefulness are among respondents in **Spain** and **Portugal** (+5 points in each).

Respondents in all Member States are at least as likely, if not more likely than they were in 2005, to think that Chinese is useful for personal development. The **most notable increases** in the share of those mentioning it as an important language are in **Spain** (+11 percentage points) and the **UK** (+9 points).

There is **very little change** in Europeans' perception of the **usefulness of Italian**, with the most notable being an **increase** in the proportion of respondents in **Italy** thinking it important (+13 percentage points), and a relatively small decrease in the proportion in Malta (-5 points).

Finally, opinion on the usefulness of **Russian** remains **largely unchanged** across all Member States, with the exception of **Finland, Cyprus and Lithuania** where respondents are **much more likely** than they were in 2005 **to think it is an important language** for personal development (+15 percentage points, +14 points and +12 points respectively).

There are **differences** between **EU15** and **NMS12**.

Respondents in **EU15**, compared with those in NMS12, are particularly **more likely** than those in NMS12 **to think that Spanish** (17% vs. 3% respectively), **French** (18% vs. 8%), **Chinese** (7% vs. 1%) and **Italian** (5% vs. 3%) **are important**.

They are **less likely** than NMS12 **to rate German** (14% vs. 28%) and **Russian** (2% vs. 9%) as important languages for personal development.

At a national level, almost all respondents in the **Netherlands** (95%), **Cyprus** and **Malta** (94% in each), **Sweden** (93%) and **Denmark** (92%) **think that English is one of the two most useful languages** for personal development.

Countries where respondents are **least likely to mention English as useful** are, with the exception of both Ireland (6%) and the UK (19%) where it is the national language, **Luxembourg** (40%), **Portugal** (53%), **Bulgaria** (57%), and the **Czech Republic** and **Romania** (59% in each).

Member States with the greatest likelihood of respondents **believing French** is an **important language** for their personal development - apart from Luxembourg (72%) and Belgium (49%), where it is an official language - are **Ireland** (38%), the **UK** (34%), followed by **Romania** (25%).

It is **least likely** to be perceived as useful in **Latvia** and **Lithuania** (2% in each), the **Czech Republic** and **Poland** (3% in each), **Greece, Slovenia** and **Slovakia** (4% in each), and **Bulgaria, Hungary** and **Finland** (5% in each).

The view that **German** is **one of the most useful languages** for personal development is most widespread in **Slovenia** (50%), **Denmark** and **Hungary** (48% in each), **Luxembourg** (47%), and the **Netherlands** and **Slovakia** (44% in each).

It is the **least widely held view** in **Malta** (3%), **Portugal** (4%) and **Belgium** (6%).





























Respondents in **France** (33%), the **UK** (26%) and **Ireland** (24%) are more likely than those in any other Member State to **believe Spanish is an important language**, with respondents in the Czech Republic (1%), Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Poland, and Slovakia (2% in each), and Greece and Luxembourg and Slovenia (3% in each) least likely to think so.

Those **countries** with the **greatest likelihood of respondents thinking Chinese useful** are **Spain** (13%), the **UK** (11%) and **Ireland** (9%).

In terms of Italian being **one of the most useful languages** for personal development, this is the majority **view held by** respondents in its close geographical neighbour **Malta** (59%). There are only three other Member States, with the exception of Italy (14%) where it is the official language, where around one in ten Europeans believe it is important: **Slovenia** (11%), **Austria** (10%) and **Romania** (9%).

Finally, **Russian** is most widely **perceived to be useful in** countries neighbouring Russia, namely **Lithuania** (62%), **Latvia** (50%), **Estonia** (47%) and **Finland** (25%).

QE1a Thinking about languages other than your mother tongue, which two languages do you think are the most useful for your personal development?

	English	French	German	Spanish	Chinese	Italian	Russian	None – don't think any other languages are useful	Don't know
 EU27	67%	16%	17%	14%	6%	5%	4%	12%	3%
 BE	76%	49%	6%	8%	4%	3%	0%	7%	0%
 BG	57%	5%	20%	7%	0%	4%	14%	24%	6%
 CZ	59%	3%	32%	1%	0%	1%	7%	25%	0%
 DK	92%	9%	48%	14%	5%	1%	0%	4%	0%
 DE	82%	21%	10%	13%	4%	3%	6%	7%	2%
 EE	75%	4%	10%	2%	2%	0%	47%	4%	1%
 IE	6%	38%	25%	24%	9%	4%	1%	20%	5%
 EL	74%	13%	20%	3%	5%	5%	2%	21%	0%
 ES	82%	15%	14%	10%	13%	1%	1%	8%	2%
 FR	79%	6%	13%	33%	8%	5%	0%	10%	1%
 IT	70%	11%	8%	9%	7%	14%	1%	13%	1%
 CY	94%	18%	10%	4%	1%	6%	19%	3%	0%
 LV	72%	2%	17%	2%	0%	0%	50%	3%	1%
 LT	66%	2%	13%	2%	1%	0%	62%	7%	3%
 LU	40%	72%	47%	3%	0%	1%	1%	0%	0%
 HU	64%	5%	48%	2%	1%	2%	2%	16%	3%
 MT	94%	9%	3%	2%	1%	59%	1%	2%	1%
 NL	95%	13%	44%	18%	7%	1%	1%	0%	0%
 AT	76%	18%	10%	7%	2%	10%	5%	15%	2%
 PL	65%	3%	31%	2%	1%	1%	8%	14%	7%
 PT	53%	22%	4%	11%	1%	1%	0%	32%	2%
 RO	59%	25%	13%	5%	1%	9%	2%	19%	8%
 SI	79%	4%	50%	3%	2%	11%	2%	3%	5%
 SK	63%	4%	44%	2%	0%	1%	8%	12%	6%
 FI	88%	5%	13%	7%	2%	1%	25%	2%	1%
 SE	93%	11%	29%	18%	4%	2%	0%	2%	0%
 UK	19%	34%	12%	26%	11%	5%	2%	15%	8%

Highest percentage per country

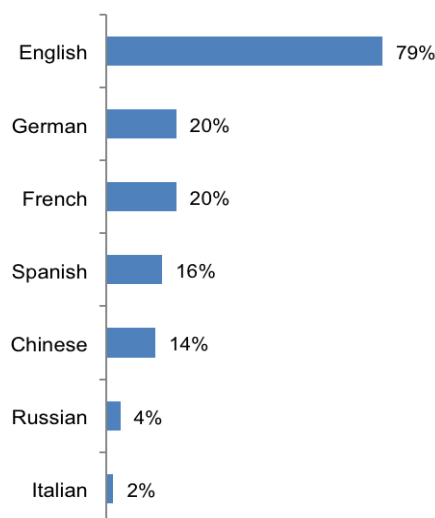
Highest percentage per item

Lowest percentage per country

Lowest percentage per item

QE1b And for children to learn for their future?

answers: languages with more than 3%



Respondents were also asked to name the **two languages** they believed to be **most useful for children to learn for their future**²².

English is, again, perceived to be the most useful language. More than three quarters (**79%**) of Europeans think it an important language for children to learn, slightly higher than the proportion believing it important for their personal development (67%). Again, it is much more likely than any other language to be considered useful for a child's future.

One in five Europeans mention **French and German (20% each)**, slightly smaller proportions **Spanish (16%)** and **Chinese (14%)**, with only a minority thinking **Russian (4%)** and **Italian (2%)** are the most useful languages for children to learn.

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

Almost all Europeans think that learning a language is important for a child's future, with only 2% saying they don't think any languages are useful.

Compared with the results from the 2005 survey and in line with the trends seen on languages that are useful for personal development, the **proportion** of Europeans **believing English, Spanish and Russian** are **important** languages for children to learn **remain broadly similar** (+2 percentage point, -3 points and +1 point respectively).

²² Q1b. "(Thinking about languages other than your mother tongue, which two languages do you think are the most useful) And for children to learn for their future? (DO NOT SHOW CARD – MAX. 2 ANSWERS) Czech, Arabic, Basque, Bulgarian, Catalan, Chinese, Croatian, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Galician, German, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Irish/Gaelic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Latvian, Lithuanian, Luxembourgish, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Scottish Gaelic, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Urdu, Welsh, Other, None – don't think any other languages are useful, Don't know"

Similarly, there has been a decrease in the proportion of Europeans thinking that French is important (-13 points), and in the proportion thinking German (-8 points) important for children to learn.

However, whilst the perception that **Chinese** is a useful language for personal development is slightly more widespread now than in 2005 (+4 points), the perception of its importance as a language for children to learn is now significantly more widespread (**+12 points**).

The **proportion of Europeans believing** that there are **no languages** that are **important for a child** to learn for their future remains **the same (2%)**.

There are some countries where there has been a notable **change in opinion since 2005** on the perceived usefulness of a language for children to learn.

In terms of English, the greatest **improvements** in the belief it is useful are in **Luxembourg** (+12 percentage points), and the **UK** (+11 points), followed by **Austria** (+9 points), and **Spain** and **Malta** (+7 points in each).

Unlike the trends in perceptions of the usefulness of English for personal development, **no country has seen a notable decline** in the proportion of respondents thinking it useful for children to learn for their future.

As with views held on the usefulness of **French** for personal development, **very few countries show any improvement** in the perception that it is useful for children to learn, and increases are small, with, again, the greatest in France (+3 percentage points).

Member States where respondents are particularly less likely to think French useful for a child's future than they were in 2005 are Portugal and the UK (-28 points in each), Spain (-25 points), Italy, Cyprus and Luxembourg (-20 points in each) followed by Germany and Greece (-18 points in each).

The **greatest increases in the proportion thinking German useful** for a **child's future** are among respondents in Germany and **Romania** (+6 percentage points in each) and Austria (+4 points).

The most significant worsening of opinion on its usefulness is in Denmark (-32 points), followed by Poland (-29 points), the Czech Republic (-22 points), Sweden (-20 points), Greece and Luxembourg (-16 points), Lithuania and Slovakia (-15 points in each), Hungary and the UK (-14 points) and Bulgaria (-13 points).

As with perceptions of **Spanish** as a useful language for personal development, opinion on its usefulness for a child's future remains **broadly similar to** that in **2005**.

Those countries where respondents are particularly less likely to think it useful compared with the view expressed in 2005 are France (-17 percentage points) and Ireland (-10 points).

The most **notable improvements** in the perception of its usefulness are among respondents in **Denmark** and Spain (+7 points) and the **Netherlands** (+6 points).





























Across all Member States respondents are, as with their belief in the importance of **Chinese** as a language for personal development, at least as likely, if not more likely than they were in 2005, to think it a useful language for children to learn for their future. Indeed, in some Member States, the perception that it is useful for children has increased much more than the perception that it is useful for personal development. Countries with the **most notable increases** in the proportion holding such a view are **Denmark** (+25 percentage points), **Spain** and **France** (+23 points in each) and **Ireland** and the **UK** (+18 points).

There is **very little change** in Europeans' **perception of the usefulness of Italian**, with the most notable being a decrease in the proportion of respondents in Malta (-13 percentage points) thinking it a useful language for children to learn.

Similarly, views on how useful **Russian** is as a language for a child to learn for their future remain **largely unchanged** across all Member States.

The exceptions, and where respondents are **much more likely** than they were in 2005 to think it a useful language, are **Finland** (+24 percentage points), **Cyprus** (+22 points), **Slovakia** (+9 points) and **Latvia** and **Lithuania** (+6 points in each).





























QE1b And for children to learn for their future?

	English	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	French	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	German	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Spanish	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Chinese	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Russian	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Italian	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	None – don't think any other languages are useful	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Don't know	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3
 EU27	79%	+2	20%	-13	20%	-8	16%	-3	14%	+12	4%	+1	2%	=	2%	=	3%	=
 BE	88%	=	48%	-2	4%	-3	8%	-1	9%	+7	1%	+1	1%	=	1%	-1	0%	-1
 BG	90%	+3	5%	-8	36%	-13	9%	+4	1%	+1	14%	=	3%	+2	1%	=	4%	-2
 CZ	92%	+3	5%	-4	44%	-22	2%	-2	1%	=	10%	+1	1%	+1	1%	=	0%	-1
 DK	96%	+2	7%	-6	30%	-32	20%	+7	26%	+25	1%	+1	0%	=	0%	-1	0%	-1
 DE	94%	+5	27%	-18	9%	+6	17%	+1	9%	+7	6%	=	1%	-1	1%	-1	1%	-1
 EE	91%	-3	4%	-2	12%	-10	2%	+1	3%	+3	48%	+1	0%	=	1%	=	1%	-1
 IE	5%	+2	50%	-14	42%	=	25%	-10	20%	+18	1%	=	4%	=	1%	=	5%	-2
 EL	92%	-4	16%	-18	34%	-16	3%	=	13%	+12	3%	+3	4%	-2	2%	+2	1%	+1
 ES	92%	+7	19%	-25	15%	+1	11%	+7	24%	+23	1%	+1	0%	-1	2%	-2	2%	-5
 FR	92%	+1	5%	+3	15%	-9	28%	-17	28%	+23	0%	=	1%	-5	1%	=	1%	-2
 IT	84%	=	14%	-20	10%	-7	11%	-6	12%	+9	2%	+2	5%	+5	4%	+2	2%	-2
 CY	98%	=	29%	-20	16%	-3	4%	+2	1%	+1	26%	+22	5%	+1	0%	=	0%	=
 LV	92%	-2	5%	-1	21%	-7	1%	=	0%	=	48%	+6	0%	=	0%	=	1%	-1
 LT	95%	+2	4%	-2	19%	-15	2%	=	2%	+2	49%	+6	0%	=	1%	+1	2%	=
 LU	71%	+12	63%	-20	27%	-16	5%	+3	9%	+9	0%	=	1%	=	1%	+1	0%	=
 HU	85%	=	6%	+2	59%	-14	2%	-1	2%	+2	2%	=	1%	-1	3%	-2	2%	-1
 MT	97%	+7	21%	-3	9%	-4	3%	+1	1%	+1	0%	=	48%	-13	0%	=	1%	=
 NL	96%	+6	11%	-11	31%	-9	27%	+6	16%	+14	0%	=	0%	=	0%	-1	0%	-1
 AT	93%	+9	27%	-2	6%	+4	9%	-1	4%	+3	8%	+4	10%	-1	2%	-2	1%	-6
 PL	87%	-3	4%	-3	40%	-29	2%	+1	4%	+4	7%	-3	1%	=	2%	=	4%	+3
 PT	87%	-3	32%	-28	5%	-3	10%	+3	4%	+4	0%	=	0%	=	3%	+2	5%	=
 RO	68%	+4	36%	+2	23%	+6	4%	-3	1%	+1	1%	-1	8%	=	10%	-7	10%	+2
 SI	93%	-3	8%	+2	58%	-11	5%	+2	6%	+5	3%	+3	8%	-4	0%	=	1%	=
 SK	87%	=	6%	-1	60%	-15	3%	=	3%	+3	15%	+9	1%	=	1%	=	1%	-2
 FI	89%	+4	7%	-3	17%	-7	5%	+2	5%	+5	34%	+24	0%	=	1%	-1	0%	-1
 SE	95%	-4	9%	-8	15%	-20	34%	+3	19%	+17	1%	=	0%	=	1%	+1	1%	+1
 UK	16%	+11	43%	-28	20%	-14	34%	-5	23%	+18	2%	+1	2%	-1	4%	+2	10%	+4

There are **differences** between **EU15** and **NMS12**. Respondents in **EU15**, compared with those in NMS12, are particularly **more likely to think** that **Spanish** (20% vs. 3% respectively), **French** (22% vs. 12%) and **Chinese** (17% vs. 3%) are **important**.

They are **less likely** than NMS12 **to rate German** (15% vs. 38%), **Russian** (3% vs. 9%) and **Italian** (2% vs. 3%) as important languages for children to learn for their future.

QE1b And for children to learn for their future?

	English	French	German	Spanish	Chinese	Russian	Italian	None – don't think any other languages are useful	Don't know
 EU27	79%	20%	20%	16%	14%	4%	2%	2%	3%
 BE	88%	48%	4%	8%	9%	1%	1%	1%	0%
 BG	90%	5%	36%	9%	1%	14%	3%	1%	4%
 CZ	92%	5%	44%	2%	1%	10%	1%	1%	0%
 DK	96%	7%	30%	20%	26%	1%	0%	0%	0%
 DE	94%	27%	9%	17%	9%	6%	1%	1%	1%
 EE	91%	4%	12%	2%	3%	48%	0%	1%	1%
 IE	5%	50%	42%	25%	20%	1%	4%	1%	5%
 EL	92%	16%	34%	3%	13%	3%	4%	2%	1%
 ES	92%	19%	15%	11%	24%	1%	0%	2%	2%
 FR	92%	5%	15%	28%	28%	0%	1%	1%	1%
 IT	84%	14%	10%	11%	12%	2%	5%	4%	2%
 CY	98%	29%	16%	4%	1%	26%	5%	0%	0%
 LV	92%	5%	21%	1%	0%	48%	0%	0%	1%
 LT	95%	4%	19%	2%	2%	49%	0%	1%	2%
 LU	71%	63%	27%	5%	9%	0%	1%	1%	0%
 HU	85%	6%	59%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%
 MT	97%	21%	9%	3%	1%	0%	48%	0%	1%
 NL	96%	11%	31%	27%	16%	0%	0%	0%	0%
 AT	93%	27%	6%	9%	4%	8%	10%	2%	1%
 PL	87%	4%	40%	2%	4%	7%	1%	2%	4%
 PT	87%	32%	5%	10%	4%	0%	0%	3%	5%
 RO	68%	36%	23%	4%	1%	1%	8%	10%	10%
 SI	93%	8%	58%	5%	6%	3%	8%	0%	1%
 SK	87%	6%	60%	3%	3%	15%	1%	1%	1%
 FI	89%	7%	17%	5%	5%	34%	0%	1%	0%
 SE	95%	9%	15%	34%	19%	1%	0%	1%	1%
 UK	16%	43%	20%	34%	23%	2%	2%	4%	10%

Highest percentage per country
Highest percentage per item

Lowest percentage per country
Lowest percentage per item

At a national level, almost all respondents in **Cyprus** (98%), **Malta** (97%), **Denmark** and the **Netherlands** (96% in each), **Lithuania** and **Sweden** (95% in each), **Germany** (94%), **Austria** and **Slovenia** (93% in each), the **Czech Republic**, **Greece**, **Spain**, **France** and **Latvia**, (92% in each), **Estonia** (91%) and **Bulgaria** (90%) think that **English** is **one of the two most useful** languages for children to learn for their future.

Countries where respondents are least likely to mention English as useful are (with the exception of both Ireland (5%) and the UK (16%) where it is the national language and where respondents in question come from other linguistic communities than the English-speaking one), Romania (68%) and Luxembourg (71%). Member States with the greatest likelihood of respondents believing **French** is an **important language** for children to learn for their future - apart from Luxembourg (63%) and Belgium (48%), where it is one of the official languages - are **Ireland** (50%), the **UK** (43%) and **Romania** (36%).

Countries where the view that French is a useful language is least widespread include Estonia, Lithuania and Poland (4% in each), Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, Latvia, France (5% in each) and Hungary and Slovakia (6% in each).

In France, it is perceived as one of the two most useful languages for the future of the children by 5% of respondents with a mother tongue other than French. The view that **German** is **one of the most useful languages** for a child's future is most widespread, and a majority opinion, in **Slovakia (60%)**, **Hungary (59%)** and **Slovenia** (58%).

It is the least likely to be seen as a useful language in Belgium (4%), Portugal (5%) and Malta (9%).

In Germany and in Austria it is perceived as one of the two most useful languages for the future of the children respectively by 9% and by 6% of respondents with a mother tongue other than German.

Respondents in **Sweden** and the **UK** (34% in each), **France** (28%), the **Netherlands** (27%), **Ireland** (25%) and **Denmark** (20%) are more likely than those in any other Member State to **believe Spanish** is an **important language**.

On the other hand, respondents in Latvia (1%), the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Hungary and Poland (2% in each), Greece, Malta and Slovakia (3% in each) and Cyprus and Romania (4% in each) are least likely to think so.

Member States where the view that **Chinese** is a **useful** language for children to learn is most widespread include **France** (28%), **Denmark** (26%), **Spain** (24%) and the **UK** (23%).

In terms of **Italian** being **one of the most useful languages** for children to learn, as with the belief in its usefulness for personal development, respondents in **Malta** (48%) are the most likely to think it an important language.

It receives much lower mentions by respondents in all other countries, with the highest, and where only one in ten say it is a useful language, in Austria (10%).

Finally, and similar to views expressed on languages important for personal development, **Russian** is most widely perceived to be **useful** in countries neighbouring Russia - **Lithuania** (49%), **Estonia** and **Latvia** (48% in each) and **Finland** (34%).

In terms of the most notable **socio-demographic and behavioural differences**:

- **younger people**, particularly **15-24 year olds** when compared with those aged 55+, are more likely to mention English (79% vs. 56% respectively), German (20% vs. 14%), Spanish (18% vs. 11%) and Chinese (8% vs. 4%) as most useful languages for personal development.
- **those who finished their full-time education aged 20+**, particularly when compared with those finishing at 15 or below, are, for personal development, more likely to mention English (50% vs. 80% respectively), German (20% vs. 10%), Spanish (17% vs. 8%), Chinese (8% vs. 4%) and Russian (5% vs. 2%), and less likely to mention Italian (4% vs. 6%).

For children to learn, they are more likely to mention Spanish (20% vs. 12%), Chinese (21% vs. 8%) and Russian (5% vs. 2%) and less likely to mention French (17% vs. 25%)

- occupationally:
 - **students** are more likely than any other group to mention, for personal development, English (84% compared with 53% among the retired) and Chinese (11% compared with 4% among the retired and housepersons)
 - **managers** are more likely than any other group to mention, for personal development, Spanish (21% compared with 10% among retired).

For languages most useful for children, they are most likely to mention Spanish (25% compared with 13% among retired), Chinese (24% compared with 9% among housepersons) and Russian (5% compared with 1% among housepersons)

- **people using the internet daily**, particularly when compared with those who never use it, are more likely to mention, for personal development, English (77% vs. 50% respectively), German (19% vs. 13%), Spanish (18% vs. 7%) and Chinese (8% vs. 2%).

For children to learn for their future they are more likely to mention Spanish (20% vs. 9%) and Chinese (18% vs. 7%)

- **those who place themselves high** on the self-positioning social staircase, particularly when compared with those who place themselves low, are, for personal development, more likely to mention French (19% vs. 13% respectively) and German (20% vs. 15%)

The other groups with a greater tendency to mention the usefulness of these languages include **very active language learners**, particularly when compared with the inactive. They are notably more likely to mention English (92% vs. 63% respectively), Chinese (9% vs. 5%) and Russian (6% vs. 4%) as useful for personal development;

and Spanish (21% vs. 16%) and Chinese (25% vs. 13%) as useful languages for children to learn for their future.

Those who understand at least one foreign language, and in particular those who can speak at least three, compared with those who know none, are more likely to mention all languages, with the exception of Italian, as useful for personal development: English (83% vs. 53% respectively), French (20% vs. 14%), German (23% vs. 12%), Spanish (15% vs. 10%), Chinese (8% vs. 5%) and Russian (6% vs. 2%).

In terms of languages that are useful for children's futures they are particularly more likely than those who know no foreign languages to mention English (87% vs. 72% respectively), Chinese (18% vs. 11%) and Russian (6% vs. 3%).

3. BUILDING A LANGUAGE FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

The next section begins by examining what might motivate Europeans to learn a language, or improve existing skills in one. It then explores barriers that might be preventing the learning of another language.

3.1. Facilitators for learning

Respondents were presented with a list of reasons that might encourage someone to learn a language and asked what would make them significantly more likely to either learn a language, or improve their existing skills in one. If respondents mentioned more than one reason each that they mentioned was recorded²³.

Europeans are most likely to think that free lessons are the best incentive to learning or improving language skills.

The most commonly cited reason that would make Europeans significantly more likely to learn or improve skills in a language is the **provision of free lessons**.

Just under a third of Europeans (**29%**) state that this would encourage them to do so. Around a fifth of Europeans say that they would be encouraged **if they were paid for it (19%)**, **learnt it in the country where it is spoken (18%)** and if it improved career prospects (18%).

A slightly smaller proportion, and around a sixth of Europeans, say that a course that fitted in with their schedule (16%), the prospect of travelling abroad at a later stage (16%), the prospect of working abroad at a later stage (16%) and their employer allowing them time off from work for lessons would make them much more likely to learn a language or improve their skills in it.

Europeans are less likely to state that the availability of good internet courses (10%) and good television or radio courses (7%) would motivate them to improve language skills or learn a new language.

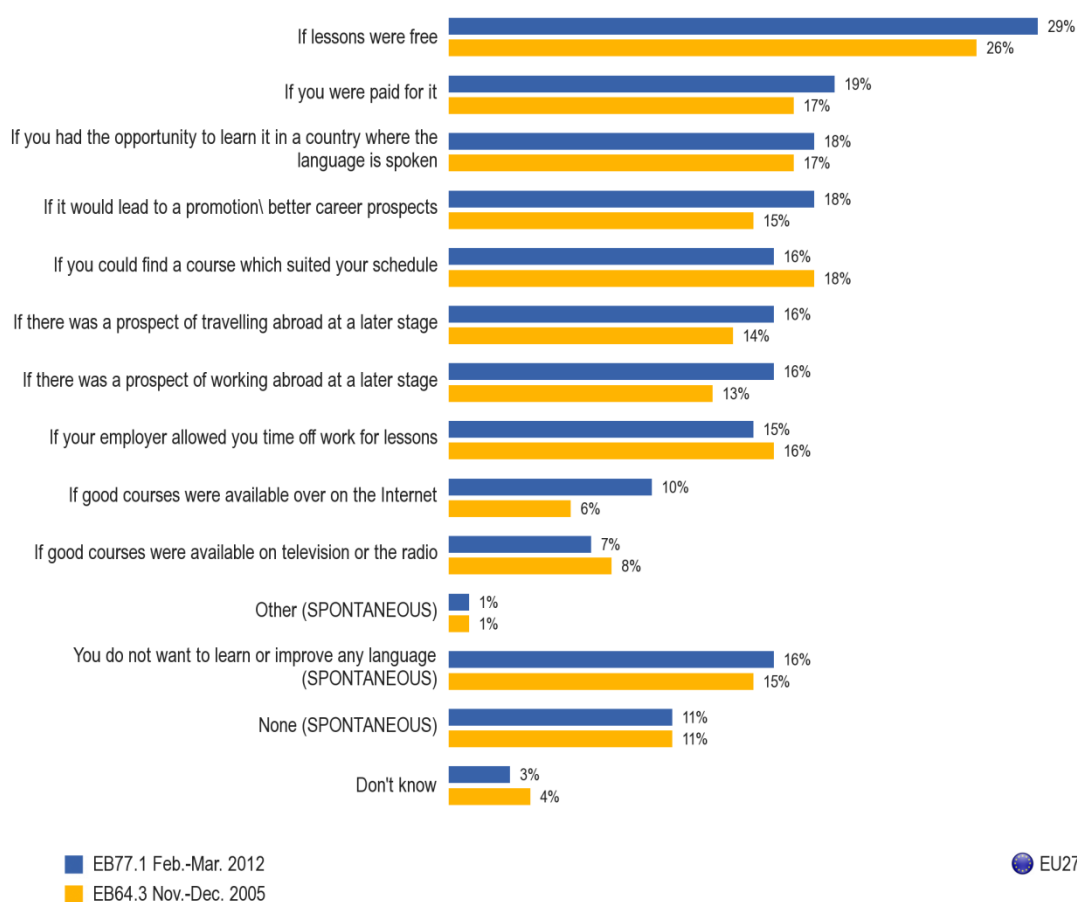
Around one in six respondents (16%) say, unprompted, that they do not want to learn or improve any language, and one in nine (11%) respondents say, unprompted, that none of the reasons would significantly increase their likelihood of learning or improving language skills.

The results are broadly similar to the 2005 survey.

²³ Q6. "Which of the following, if any, would make you significantly more likely to learn a language, or improve your skills in it? (SHOW CARD – READ OUT – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) If you were paid for it, If your employer allowed you time off work for lessons, If lessons were free, If good courses were available on television or the radio, If good courses were available over the Internet, If you could find a course which suited your schedule, If it would lead to a promotion/better career prospects, If you had the opportunity to learn it in a country where the language is spoken, If there was a prospect of travelling abroad at a later stage, If there was a prospect of working abroad at a later stage, Other (SPONTANEOUS), You do not want to learn or improve any language (SPONTANEOUS), None (SPONTANEOUS), Don't know"

The most notable changes are **small increases in the proportion of Europeans thinking good internet courses** (+4 percentage points), **free lessons** (+3 points), better **career prospects** (+3 points) and the **prospect of working abroad** (+3 points) **would make them significantly more likely to learn a language** or improve their skills in one.

QE6. Which of the following, if any, would make you significantly more likely to learn a language, or improve your skills in it?



In some countries there has been a notable change in opinion since 2005.

In terms of **free lessons** significantly increasing the likelihood of learning or improving language skills, only one country, Italy, shows a small decrease in the proportion of respondents holding this view (-3 percentage points).

The greatest increases in the proportion thinking this would encourage learning are in Cyprus (+13 points), Ireland and Spain (+12 points), Greece (+11 points), the Czech Republic and Hungary (+10 points) and Bulgaria (+9 points).

Countries showing the greatest changes in the proportion holding the view that **being paid** for learning/improving language skills would encourage take up are Cyprus (+7 percentage points) and the Netherlands, Malta and Latvia (+6 points in each).

In terms of **better career prospects** significantly increasing the likelihood of learning or improving language skills, countries where respondents are notably more likely to now hold this view are Sweden (+8 percentage points), the UK (+7 points) and Spain and Slovenia (+6 points).

Member States showing the greatest increases in the proportion of respondents thinking that the **ability to learn or improve skills in the country in which the language is spoken** would encourage them are Sweden (+14 percentage points), Slovenia (+10 points), Luxembourg (+9 points) and Austria and Finland (+7 points in each);

with Cyprus and the Czech Republic showing the greatest decreases in the proportion thinking this would motivate them (-7 points and -6 points respectively).

On the opinion that a **course fitting into the personal schedule** would motivate learning, the greatest national shifts are in a downward direction and in Malta (-9 percentage points), Cyprus and the Netherlands (-7 points in each).

Countries showing the most marked changes since 2005 in the view that the **prospect of working abroad** at a later stage would incentivise language learning are Slovenia (+14 percentage points), Greece (+ 12 points) and Sweden (+10 points).

The greatest national shifts on the opinion that the **prospect of travelling abroad** at a later stage would encourage learning are in France, Austria and Slovenia (+7 percentage points in each) and Germany (+6 points), with the most notable worsening of this view in Slovakia (-10 points).

In terms of **good courses being available on the internet**, the view that it would significantly increase the likelihood of learning is no less widespread than it was in 2005 in any Member State.

Those countries where it has become notably more widespread are Greece, Cyprus and Hungary (+9 percentage points in each), Denmark and France (+8 points) and Sweden (+7 points).

Finally, Malta is the only country showing a sizeable change in opinion on the availability of **good courses on television or the radio** increasing the likelihood of learning or improving language skills, and it is now a less widely held view (-7 points).

OE6 Which of the following, if any, would make you significantly more likely to learn a language, or improve your skills in it?

	If lessons were free	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	If you were paid for it	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	If it would lead to a promotion/ better career prospects	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	If you had the opportunity to learn it in a country where the language is spoken	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	If you could find a course which suited your schedule	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	If there was a prospect of travelling abroad at a later stage	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	If there was a prospect of working abroad at a later stage	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	If your employer allowed you time off work for lessons	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	If good courses were available over on the Internet	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	If good courses were available on television or the radio	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Other (SPONTA NEOUS)	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	You do not want to learn or improve any language (SPONTANEOUS)	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	None (SPONTA NEOUS)	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Don't know	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	
EU27	29%	+3	19%	+2	18%	+3	18%	+1	16%	-2	16%	+2	16%	+3	15%	-1	10%	+4	7%	-1	1%	=	16%	+1	11%	=	3%	-1	EU27
BE	25%	+1	19%	=	18%	+1	20%	-1	19%	-5	14%	-2	10%	-4	25%	-3	13%	+2	8%	-4	3%	=	17%	+4	9%	+2	1%	-1	BE
BG	37%	+9	17%	+1	21%	+2	14%	-2	15%	+3	16%	+4	19%	+2	13%	+1	8%	+4	3%	-4	0%	=	23%	-6	6%	=	2%	-2	BG
CZ	30%	+10	18%	+2	30%	+2	21%	-6	10%	-3	13%	=	21%	-2	17%	+1	7%	+3	6%	+1	2%	+1	14%	=	7%	-1	2%	-2	CZ
DK	31%	+6	19%	=	25%	+4	30%	+4	33%	+2	21%	=	25%	+6	27%	=	19%	+8	11%	=	2%	=	8%	+3	9%	-1	2%	=	DK
DE	27%	+1	15%	+2	20%	+1	24%	+2	24%	-1	18%	+6	15%	+3	16%	-2	10%	+4	7%	-3	1%	-1	18%	+4	10%	-3	2%	-1	DE
EE	42%	+4	19%	+6	19%	-2	23%	=	16%	-6	15%	-2	21%	-2	19%	-6	12%	+2	9%	-1	0%	-1	3%	-7	16%	+8	4%	-2	EE
IE	33%	+12	25%	=	16%	+3	13%	=	17%	-2	12%	=	14%	+2	13%	+1	11%	+6	9%	-1	0%	-1	17%	-2	11%	+4	4%	=	IE
EL	43%	+11	20%	+2	17%	+4	13%	-1	14%	+1	18%	=	23%	+12	9%	+1	10%	+9	6%	+2	0%	=	15%	-13	16%	+9	1%	+1	EL
ES	34%	+12	26%	+5	21%	+6	12%	+3	16%	=	13%	+3	13%	+4	14%	-1	7%	+1	4%	-2	2%	=	16%	-3	10%	-3	3%	-6	ES
FR	26%	+5	20%	+4	17%	+3	23%	+3	15%	-2	27%	+7	16%	+3	19%	=	14%	+8	10%	+1	1%	=	6%	-7	16%	+8	3%	-1	FR
IT	25%	-3	13%	-2	13%	+2	14%	=	14%	-5	8%	-3	9%	+2	10%	=	7%	=	7%	+1	1%	=	15%	-2	19%	+9	3%	=	IT
CY	51%	+13	26%	+7	24%	+3	10%	-7	13%	-7	9%	-3	13%	+2	18%	-1	14%	+9	8%	-1	2%	=	6%	-4	20%	+3	0%	-1	CY
LV	42%	+7	19%	+6	25%	+1	17%	+2	11%	-2	17%	-1	22%	+1	14%	=	12%	+5	8%	+2	1%	=	10%	-1	9%	+4	2%	-4	LV
LT	34%	+1	13%	-1	16%	=	17%	+1	14%	-1	25%	+1	29%	+2	11%	-4	10%	+3	9%	-4	2%	+1	7%	+4	10%	-3	5%	-2	LT
LU	25%	+3	20%	+1	27%	+3	30%	+9	33%	-3	24%	+4	19%	+4	34%	+5	14%	+2	11%	-2	3%	+1	9%	-7	5%	+1	1%	-2	LU
HU	28%	+10	16%	+4	12%	+3	14%	+3	12%	+1	11%	+2	19%	+7	11%	+1	12%	+9	8%	+3	1%	=	30%	+6	6%	-9	1%	-2	HU
MT	23%	+6	20%	+5	15%	-1	9%	-5	24%	-9	9%	-4	10%	-3	19%	-1	11%	+3	14%	-7	1%	=	20%	+3	18%	+5	4%	+3	MT
NL	22%	+4	21%	+6	25%	+2	25%	+1	15%	-7	21%	+1	26%	+3	17%	-5	9%	=	5%	-4	2%	-1	15%	+11	9%	-4	1%	-1	NL
AT	24%	=	19%	+1	21%	+5	23%	+7	24%	=	18%	+7	15%	+5	18%	-1	9%	+1	8%	=	3%	+1	22%	+1	9%	=	1%	-3	AT
PL	40%	=	18%	-4	14%	-4	9%	-5	9%	+1	11%	-5	13%	-4	11%	-1	11%	+5	9%	=	0%	-1	8%	=	17%	+4	8%	+4	PL
PT	28%	+5	13%	+2	6%	-2	5%	-2	8%	-3	7%	+2	10%	+4	5%	-3	3%	=	4%	-1	1%	-1	31%	-8	15%	+9	4%	-1	PT
RO	35%	+2	20%	+4	18%	+1	16%	+4	12%	-1	15%	-4	28%	+5	10%	=	8%	+2	8%	=	1%	=	15%	-4	9%	+1	7%	-2	RO
SI	30%	+3	20%	-1	28%	+6	21%	+10	16%	-1	21%	+7	31%	+14	11%	-4	13%	+5	7%	=	5%	+2	16%	-3	8%	-2	2%	-1	SI
SK	29%	=	22%	+5	25%	+4	24%	-4	17%	-3	17%	-10	26%	-5	21%	-2	9%	+3	9%	-4	0%	-1	13%	+2	5%	+2	1%	-1	SK
FI	15%	=	17%	=	20%	+4	30%	+7	27%	+4	22%	+1	22%	+4	17%	-1	12%	+5	7%	-1	4%	+2	12%	+2	6%	-4	0%	-2	FI
SE	23%	+5	25%	+4	26%	+8	43%	+14	22%	+4	23%	+3	30%	+10	32%	+1	19%	+7	11%	=	1%	-1	4%	-2	8%	+3	1%	-2	SE
UK	29%	+1	24%	=	17%	+7	17%	+4	15%	-4	17%	+2	15%	+5	12%	-4	11%	+3	8%	+2	2%	=	24%	+11	4%	-8	1%	-3	UK

The most **notable differences between EU15 and NMS12** are that respondents in **EU15** are **more likely** than those in NMS12 **to mention a course fitting into their schedule** (17% vs. 11% respectively) and **the opportunity to learn the language in a country where it is spoken** (19% vs. 14%) as factors that would make them significantly more likely to learn a language or improve skills.

They are less likely than respondents in NMS12 to think that free lessons (28% vs. 36%) and the prospect of working abroad at a later date (15% vs. 20%) would encourage them to learn or improve language skills.

Focusing on the **2012 national results**, countries where respondents are most likely to say **free lessons** would encourage them to learn a language or improve skills in one are Cyprus (51%), followed by Greece (43%), Estonia and Latvia (42% in each) and Poland (40%).

Finland is the least likely of all EU Member States to hold such a view (15%).

Free lessons, along with the opportunity to learn a language in the country in which it is spoken are the two incentives that show the greatest national variation in the proportion of respondents thinking such factors would significantly increase their likelihood of learning or improving language skills.

Respondents in Sweden (43%) are most likely to think **learning a language in the country where it is spoken** would encourage them, and those in Portugal (5%) the least likely.

Countries with the most widely held view that **being paid for it** would significantly increase the likelihood of learning or improving language skills are Spain and Cyprus (26% in each), Ireland and Sweden (25% in each) and the UK (24%).

It is least likely to be seen as something that would encourage learning among respondents in Lithuania and Portugal (13% in each).

There is greater national variation on the views held on **being given time off work** by the employer, with respondents in Luxembourg most likely (34%), and those in Portugal (5%) least likely, to think this would significantly improve their likelihood of learning.

The belief that **better career prospects** would greatly improve the chances of learning is strongest in the Czech Republic (30%) and Slovenia (28%), and weakest in Portugal (6%).

Finding a course that fits into the personal schedule is most likely to be mentioned as a motivating factor in Denmark and Luxembourg (33% in each), and least likely to be cited as such in Portugal (8%) and Poland (9%).

The **prospect of travelling abroad** at a later stage is most likely to be mentioned as something that would motivate learning in France (27%), and least likely to be a view held in Portugal (7%).

The **prospect of working abroad** at a later date is most commonly cited as a reason that would encourage learning by respondents in Slovenia (31%), followed by those in Sweden (30%).

It receives the lowest mentions in Italy (9%), the only country where less than one in ten respondents do not hold the view.

Availability of good courses either on the internet, or on television or the radio are the two reasons that show least variation between countries.

Respondents in Denmark and Sweden (19% in each) are the most likely to think that good internet courses would encourage learning, with those in Portugal (3%) the least likely.

Respondents in Malta (14%) are most likely to cite good television or radio courses, with those in Bulgaria (3%) the least likely.

Countries in which respondents appear particularly unmotivated to learn a language or improve existing skills are Portugal and Hungary, where around one in three citizens spontaneously say that they do not want to learn or improve any language (31% and 30% respectively).

Indeed, respondents in Portugal are the least or second least likely of all Europeans to mention all but one reason – free lessons – as factors that would significantly increase their likelihood of learning or improving language skills.

Other countries where a sizeable proportion of respondents, unprompted, say that they do not want to learn or improve any language are the UK (24%), Bulgaria (23%), Austria (22%) and Malta (20%).

QE6 Which of the following, if any, would make you significantly more likely to learn a language, or improve your skills in it?

	If lessons were free	If you were paid for it	If it would lead to a promotion/better career prospects	If you had the opportunity to learn it in a country where the language is spoken	If you could find a course which suited your schedule	If there was a prospect of travelling abroad at a later stage	If there was a prospect of working abroad at a later stage	If your employer allowed you time off work for lessons	If good courses were available over on the Internet	If good courses were available on television or the radio	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	You do not want to learn or improve any language (SPONTANEOUS)	None (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't know
EU27	29%	19%	18%	18%	16%	16%	16%	15%	10%	7%	1%	16%	11%	3%
BE	25%	19%	18%	20%	19%	14%	10%	25%	13%	8%	3%	17%	9%	1%
BG	37%	17%	21%	14%	15%	16%	19%	13%	8%	3%	0%	23%	6%	2%
CZ	30%	18%	30%	21%	10%	13%	21%	17%	7%	6%	2%	14%	7%	2%
DK	31%	19%	25%	30%	33%	21%	25%	27%	19%	11%	2%	8%	9%	2%
DE	27%	15%	20%	24%	24%	18%	15%	16%	10%	7%	1%	18%	10%	2%
EE	42%	19%	19%	23%	16%	15%	21%	19%	12%	9%	0%	3%	16%	4%
IE	33%	25%	16%	13%	17%	12%	14%	13%	11%	9%	0%	17%	11%	4%
EL	43%	20%	17%	13%	14%	18%	23%	9%	10%	6%	0%	15%	16%	1%
ES	34%	26%	21%	12%	16%	13%	13%	14%	7%	4%	2%	16%	10%	3%
FR	26%	20%	17%	23%	15%	27%	16%	19%	14%	10%	1%	6%	16%	3%
IT	25%	13%	13%	14%	14%	8%	9%	10%	7%	7%	1%	15%	19%	3%
CY	51%	26%	24%	10%	13%	9%	13%	18%	14%	8%	2%	6%	20%	0%
LV	42%	19%	25%	17%	11%	17%	22%	14%	12%	8%	1%	10%	9%	2%
LT	34%	13%	16%	17%	14%	25%	29%	11%	10%	9%	2%	7%	10%	5%
LU	25%	20%	27%	30%	33%	24%	19%	34%	14%	11%	3%	9%	5%	1%
HU	28%	16%	12%	14%	12%	11%	19%	11%	12%	8%	1%	30%	6%	1%
MT	23%	20%	15%	9%	24%	9%	10%	19%	11%	14%	1%	20%	18%	4%
NL	22%	21%	25%	25%	15%	21%	26%	17%	9%	5%	2%	15%	9%	1%
AT	24%	19%	21%	23%	24%	18%	15%	18%	9%	8%	3%	22%	9%	1%
PL	40%	18%	14%	9%	9%	11%	13%	11%	11%	9%	0%	8%	17%	8%
PT	28%	13%	6%	5%	8%	7%	10%	5%	3%	4%	1%	31%	15%	4%
RO	35%	20%	18%	16%	12%	15%	28%	10%	8%	8%	1%	15%	9%	7%
SI	30%	20%	28%	21%	16%	21%	31%	11%	13%	7%	5%	16%	8%	2%
SK	29%	22%	25%	24%	17%	17%	26%	21%	9%	9%	0%	13%	5%	1%
FI	15%	17%	20%	30%	27%	22%	22%	17%	12%	7%	4%	12%	6%	0%
SE	23%	25%	26%	43%	22%	23%	30%	32%	19%	11%	1%	4%	8%	1%
UK	29%	24%	17%	17%	15%	17%	15%	12%	11%	8%	2%	24%	4%	1%

Highest percentage per country	Lowest percentage per country
Highest percentage per item	Lowest percentage per item

There are **socio-demographic differences** with the most striking being:

- **younger people**, particularly **15-24 year olds** when compared with those aged 55+. They, as would be expected with their whole lives ahead of them, are more likely to cite each reason as one that would significantly increase their likelihood of learning or improving any language. Those with the greatest relative difference are:
 - if there was the prospect of working abroad at a later stage (29% vs. 6% respectively)
 - if it lead to better career prospects/promotion (29% vs. 6%)
 - being paid for it (29% vs. 8%)
 - the availability of good internet courses (17% vs. 5%)
- those **who finished their full-time education** aged **20+**, particularly when compared with those finishing at 15 or below, are also more likely to mention each of the reasons with those where the greatest relative difference is being:
 - the availability of good internet courses (14% vs. 3% respectively)
 - the opportunity to learn it in the country where the language is spoken (27% vs. 6%)
 - if the employer allowed time off work for lessons (22% vs. 5%)
 - finding a course that suits personal schedule (22% vs. 6%)
- **people in larger households of 4+**, particularly when compared with single occupancy households, are most notably more likely to mention:
 - finding a course that suits personal schedule (20% vs. 12% respectively)
 - if it improved career prospects (23% vs. 14%)
 - being paid for it (23% vs. 14%)
 - if there was the prospect of working abroad at a later stage (20% vs. 13%)
 - the availability of good internet courses (12% vs. 8%)

- occupationally:
 - **students** are more likely than any other group, and particularly when compared with the retired, to mention the availability of good courses on the internet (21% vs. 5% respectively);
 - if it improved career prospects (31% vs. 4%); the opportunity to learn in the country where the language is spoken (35% vs. 11%);
 - if there was the prospect of travelling abroad (31% vs. 11%); and if there was the prospect of working abroad (33% vs. 4%)
 - and **students, along with the unemployed**, are the most likely to mention being paid for it, particularly when compared with the retired (27% and 29% vs. 7% respectively);
 - and **students, along with managers**, are most likely to mention finding a course that suits personal schedule (25% and 26% respectively, compared with 5% among the retired)
 - **managers** and **other white collar workers** are the most likely to mention their employer giving them time off work to study, particularly, again, when compared with the retired (28% and 29% vs. 4%)
- **people using the internet daily**, particularly when compared with those who never use it, are more likely to mention each of the reasons with those where there is the greatest relative difference being:
 - availability of good internet courses (15% vs. 1% respectively)
 - if the employer allowed time off work for lessons (20% vs. 4%)
 - finding a course that suits personal schedule (22% vs. 5%)
 - the opportunity to learn it in the country where the language is spoken (25% vs. 6%)
- those **who have difficulties paying bills** most of the time, particularly when compared with those who 'almost never' struggle, are, not surprisingly, more likely to say they would be encouraged to learn if they were paid for it (26% vs. 17% respectively) and if lessons were free (37% vs. 26%)
- those **who place themselves high** on the self-positioning social staircase, particularly when compared with those who place themselves low, are particularly more likely to mention finding a course that suited personal schedule (20% vs. 12% respectively), having the opportunity to learn in the country where the language is spoken (24% vs. 15%), their employer giving them time off work to study (17% vs. 13%) and the availability of good internet courses (12% vs. 9%)

Not surprisingly, **active language learners**, and particularly very active language learners when compared with those who are inactive, have a greater tendency to mention each of the reasons. The greatest relative differences are on mentions of:

- having the opportunity to learn it in the country where the language is spoken (51% vs. 15% respectively)
- availability of good internet courses (26% vs. 8%)
- the prospect of working abroad at a later stage (39% vs. 13%)
- the prospect of travelling abroad at a later stage (40% vs. 14%)

Similarly, and as might be expected, those **who understand at least one foreign language** are more likely than those who know none to mention each of the reasons. Those where there is the greatest relative difference between people who don't understand any foreign languages and those who understand one foreign language are:

- availability of good internet courses (14% vs. 5% respectively)
- having the opportunity to learn it in the country where the language is spoken (26% vs. 10%)
- finding a course that suited personal schedule (22% vs. 9%)

3.2. Barriers to learning

Having explored what motivates Europeans to learn or improve any language the next section examines what might be discouraging them from doing so.

Respondents were presented with a list of reasons that might discourage someone from learning a language and asked which ones applied to them. All reasons mentioned were recorded²⁴.

Europeans are most likely to be discouraged from learning another language because they do not have a reason or incentive to do so, they lack the time and it is too expensive

A third (**34%**) of Europeans say they are **discouraged from learning another language** because they are **not motivated enough** to do so.

Around a quarter of Europeans cite **lack of time** to study properly (**28%**), and that it is **too expensive (25%)**.

A fifth (**19%**) of respondents think that **not being good at languages** discourages them, with a slightly smaller proportion (**16%**) citing **lack of opportunity to use the language** with people who speak it as a reason for not learning any language.

Other reasons that might put people off learning another language all receive relatively low levels of mentions, with less one in twelve Europeans (**8%**) thinking poor teaching/boring **methods/inadequate learning materials** discourages them, and only one in twenty Europeans or less believing that **lack of media exposure** for the language (**5%**), the nearest place for learning is too far away (5%), no course availability in the chosen language (4%), no course availability for their level of knowledge (3%), difficulty in finding information on what is available (4%), and negative experiences in the past (3%) discourages them from learning another language.

Around one in six Europeans (**16%**) spontaneously say **none of the listed reasons** applies to them.

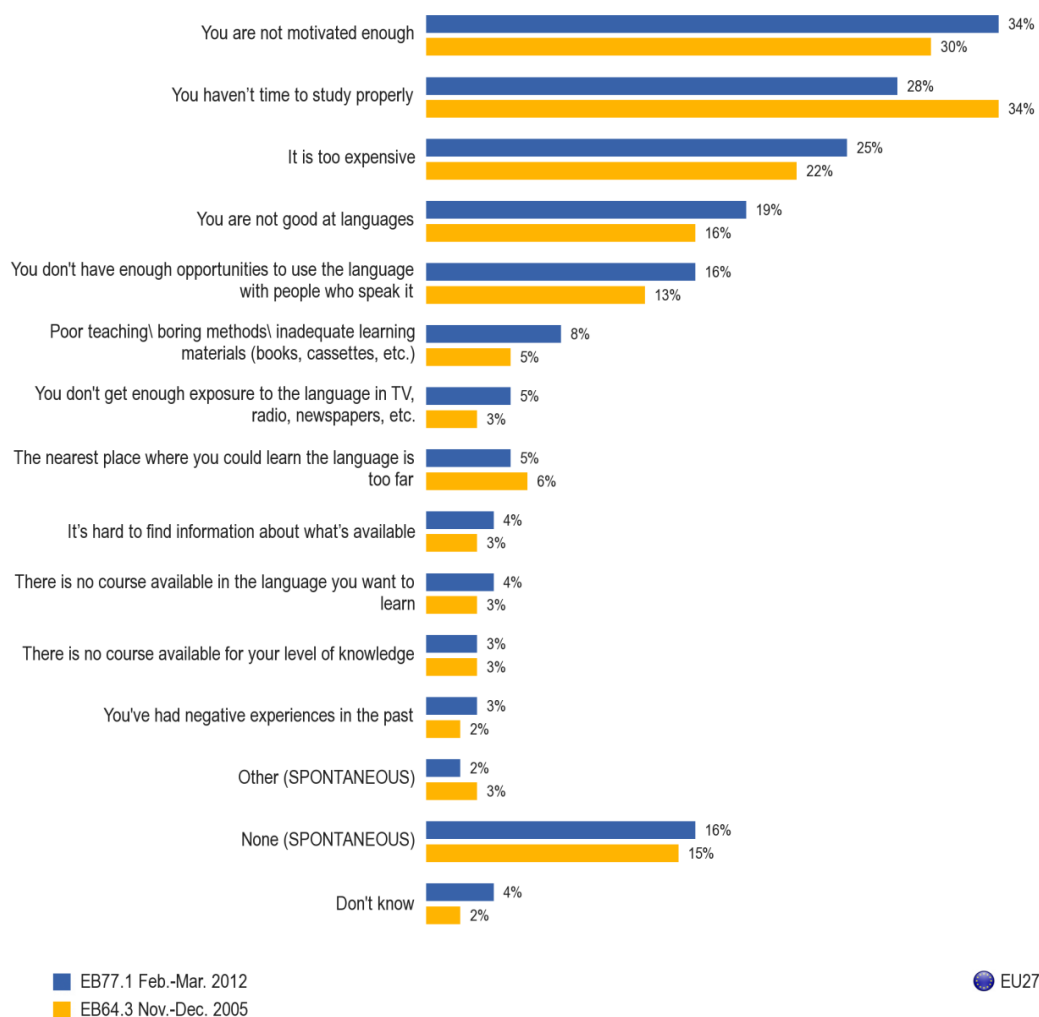
The **results** are broadly **in line with those from the 2005 survey**.

The most notable difference is a decrease in the proportion of Europeans who mention they do not have the time to study properly (-6 percentage points).

²⁴ Q5. "I am now going to read out a list of different reasons that may discourage people from learning another language. Which, if any, of these would apply to you? (SHOW CARD – READ OUT – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) It's hard to find information about what's available, The nearest place where you could learn the language is too far, It is too expensive, There is no course available in the language you want to learn, There is no course available for your level of knowledge, You haven't time to study properly, You are not good at languages, You are not motivated enough, You don't get enough exposure to the language on TV, radio, newspapers, etc, You don't have enough opportunities to use the language with people who speak it, Poor teaching/boring methods/inadequate learning materials (books, cassettes, etc.), You've had negative experiences in the past, Other (SPONTANEOUS), None (SPONTANEOUS), Don't know"

There are small increases in the proportion of Europeans mentioning lack of motivation (+4 percentage points), expense (+3 points), not being good at languages (+3 points), lack of opportunity to use the language with people who speak it (+3 points) and poor teaching/inadequate learning materials (+3 points) as reasons that discourage them from learning any language.

QE5. I am going to read out a list of different reasons that may discourage people from learning another language. Which, if any, of these would apply to you?



In some countries there has been a **notable change in opinion since 2005**, with the most striking on views relating to motivation, time, cost and language ability.

Countries where respondents are particularly **more likely to think that they are not motivated enough** to learn any language are **Latvia** (+16 percentage points), **Germany** (+15 points), **Cyprus, Slovenia** and **Sweden** (+12 points in each), **Lithuania** and **Austria** (+11 points), **Hungary** (+10 points) **Denmark** (+9 points) and **Bulgaria, the Netherlands** and **Slovakia** (+8 points).

Only one Member State shows a marked decrease in the proportion citing lack of motivation as a reason for discouraging the learning of any language and that is the UK (-11 points).

On the measure relating to **lack of time**, any national increases are small.

There are, however, some striking decreases in the proportion of respondents thinking that they are discouraged from learning a language because they have not the time to study properly.

Countries where respondents are notably less likely to think this a reason than in 2005 are Greece, Netherlands and Cyprus (-13 percentage points in each), the UK (-12 points), Belgium (-10 points), Italy (-9 points) and France and Latvia (-8 points in each).

In terms of **cost**, and the expense of learning a language dissuading people from doing so, any national decreases in the proportion of respondents citing this are small, with the most marked in Italy (-5 percentage points).

Countries where this view is particularly more widespread now than in 2005 are Greece (+18 points), Cyprus (+16 points) and Bulgaria, Spain and Hungary (+12 points in each).

The view that **not being good at languages** discourages learning another language is held by broadly the same proportion of respondents now compared with 2005 in most countries.

It is a notably more common opinion in Germany (+10 percentage points) and Bulgaria, Hungary and Austria (+7 points in each).

It is particularly less likely to be cited as a reason by respondents in the UK (-7 points).

For the other reasons that dissuade language learning the most notable shifts in national opinion are in Slovenia, where the view that **there are not enough opportunities to use it with people who speak it** is more widespread (+7 percentage points); in France and the UK, where the view that poor teaching/boring methods/inadequate learning materials is more widespread (+7 points in each); and in Sweden, where the view that **there is not enough exposure to the language in the media** is more widespread (+9 points).

Finally, respondents in the UK and Italy are particularly more likely now than they were in 2005 to spontaneously say that **none of the reasons** would discourage them from learning (+9 percentage points and +8 points respectively). In contrast, those in Bulgaria, Spain, Luxembourg and Slovenia are notably less likely to say unprompted that none of the reasons would dissuade them (-8 points, -7 points, -7 points, and -7 points respectively).

Q51 I am going to read out a list of different reasons that may discourage people from learning another language. Which, if any, of these would apply to you?

	You are not motivated enough	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	You haven't time to study properly	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	It is too expensive	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	You are not good at languages	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	You don't have enough opportunities to use the language with people who speak it	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Poor teaching/ boring methods/ inadequate learning materials (books, cassettes, etc.)	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	You don't get enough exposure to the language in TV, radio, newspapers, etc.	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	The nearest place where you could learn the language is too far	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	It's hard to find information about what's available	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	There is no course available in the language you want to learn	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	There is no course available for your level of knowledge	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	You've had negative experiences in the past	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Other (SPONTA NEOUS)	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	None (SPONTA NEOUS)	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	Don't know	Diff. EB77.1 - EB64.3	
EU27	34%	+4	28%	-6	25%	+3	19%	+3	16%	+3	8%	+3	5%	+2	5%	-1	4%	+1	4%	+1	3%	=	3%	+1	2%	-1	16%	+1	4%	+2	EU27
BE	40%	+7	31%	-10	19%	+3	26%	+2	14%	-2	10%	+2	6%	+1	8%	=	4%	=	4%	+2	3%	+1	2%	-1	3%	-2	11%	+2	1%	+1	BE
BG	31%	+8	21%	-2	46%	+12	20%	+7	13%	+2	5%	+2	2%	=	6%	=	3%	+1	3%	+1	2%	=	2%	=	1%	+1	15%	-8	5%	-2	BG
CZ	41%	+1	22%	-7	27%	+6	33%	+2	20%	-1	3%	-2	6%	+3	3%	-3	2%	+1	1%	-1	1%	-1	4%	=	2%	-2	14%	+2	2%	-1	CZ
DK	43%	+9	32%	-5	14%	+3	13%	+1	17%	+4	10%	+5	3%	=	4%	-1	3%	=	3%	-1	3%	=	3%	+1	3%	+1	17%	-2	2%	=	DK
DE	45%	+15	38%	+2	21%	+1	28%	+10	24%	+5	10%	+2	6%	+2	7%	=	4%	+1	5%	+1	3%	=	3%	+2	1%	-2	14%	-6	2%	+2	DE
EE	25%	+4	26%	-2	32%	-1	17%	+2	15%	-1	5%	+1	3%	+1	7%	-3	2%	=	4%	=	3%	=	2%	=	3%	-3	20%	+3	5%	+2	EE
IE	33%	-1	27%	-3	21%	+7	19%	-1	12%	-1	12%	+4	6%	+2	7%	=	7%	-1	6%	+1	4%	-1	6%	+4	4%	+1	13%	=	5%	-1	IE
EL	42%	+6	27%	-13	45%	+18	15%	+3	12%	-3	7%	+4	4%	+2	4%	+2	2%	+1	2%	+1	3%	+2	1%	=	3%	=	15%	-3	1%	+1	EL
ES	33%	+7	23%	-5	29%	+12	21%	+5	7%	+1	9%	+4	3%	+2	3%	-1	3%	=	3%	-2	2%	-2	1%	=	3%	-1	13%	-7	2%	-5	ES
FR	42%	+2	31%	-8	20%	+2	20%	+4	24%	+6	13%	+7	7%	+1	5%	-1	4%	+1	5%	+3	4%	+1	4%	+1	3%	+1	9%	-1	3%	+1	FR
IT	28%	+1	22%	-9	26%	-5	19%	+6	11%	+4	7%	+4	4%	+2	5%	-3	5%	=	5%	=	4%	=	1%	=	2%	=	21%	+8	4%	+2	IT
CY	31%	+12	35%	-13	35%	+16	8%	=	13%	=	12%	+4	4%	=	8%	=	2%	-1	3%	+1	2%	=	2%	=	4%	-2	19%	-1	0%	=	CY
LV	43%	+16	29%	-8	29%	=	13%	+1	13%	+2	5%	+1	4%	=	8%	+3	3%	+1	5%	+2	2%	=	3%	+2	1%	-3	11%	-1	2%	-1	LV
LT	38%	+11	23%	-7	35%	-1	18%	+4	17%	+4	9%	+5	6%	+3	9%	+1	3%	=	5%	+1	3%	=	1%	=	5%	+3	8%	-5	4%	-1	LT
LU	38%	+4	39%	+2	15%	+4	10%	-2	22%	+4	10%	+1	7%	+1	8%	+1	3%	-2	8%	+2	6%	+2	3%	=	7%	+3	11%	-7	2%	=	LU
HU	36%	+10	28%	+3	44%	+12	22%	+7	12%	+3	4%	+3	3%	=	4%	-2	3%	+2	3%	+2	2%	=	6%	+4	4%	-2	15%	-4	1%	-1	HU
MT	29%	+3	43%	-5	6%	-2	9%	-2	9%	-1	1%	-1	2%	-1	3%	+1	2%	+1	2%	=	1%	-1	1%	-1	6%	-2	18%	+3	5%	+4	MT
NL	39%	+8	27%	-13	17%	+1	16%	+2	16%	-1	5%	-1	5%	=	4%	=	2%	=	2%	+1	1%	=	1%	-1	2%	-2	20%	+3	1%	=	NL
AT	44%	+11	27%	-5	22%	-3	30%	+7	18%	+5	9%	+3	9%	+5	8%	-2	4%	-3	5%	-4	4%	-1	4%	+2	5%	+2	18%	-2	1%	-1	AT
PL	26%	+5	20%	-5	38%	-4	17%	+2	10%	-2	5%	+1	3%	-1	8%	+3	3%	+1	4%	+2	3%	+2	2%	=	1%	-2	16%	+1	10%	+7	PL
PT	24%	+3	15%	-6	29%	+5	11%	+4	4%	-2	2%	=	2%	=	5%	=	4%	=	3%	+2	2%	=	1%	=	2%	-5	33%	+4	5%	-3	PT
RO	28%	+5	23%	-5	33%	+1	12%	-1	13%	+3	5%	+3	6%	+3	8%	-1	7%	+2	4%	+2	3%	-1	1%	=	2%	-3	16%	+1	9%	-3	RO
SI	43%	+12	23%	-7	29%	-4	19%	+4	14%	+7	7%	+3	3%	+1	5%	=	2%	=	1%	=	1%	=	4%	+2	8%	+3	14%	-7	2%	=	SI
SK	31%	+8	34%	-3	36%	-2	29%	+6	19%	-5	11%	+1	4%	=	7%	-1	3%	=	4%	=	3%	-1	6%	+1	1%	-2	12%	+3	2%	-1	SK
FI	41%	+3	34%	+1	6%	-1	17%	-4	16%	-1	9%	+3	3%	=	5%	-1	4%	+1	6%	+1	6%	=	2%	-1	3%	=	12%	=	1%	=	FI
SE	52%	+12	40%	-1	10%	=	11%	+1	24%	+6	7%	+1	14%	+9	4%	+1	4%	+2	7%	+4	4%	+1	4%	+2	1%	=	11%	=	1%	=	SE
UK	21%	-11	26%	-12	19%	+5	10%	-7	17%	+5	10%	+7	8%	+4	4%	+1	3%	-1	4%	+1	2%	=	5%	+3	2%	-4	21%	+9	3%	+1	UK

The **most notable differences between EU15 and NMS12** are that respondents in **EU15** have a **greater tendency to cite poor teaching** (9% vs. 5% respectively), **not enough exposure** of the language in the media, **lack of course availability** in the chosen language (4% vs. 3%) and **lack of opportunities to use the language** with people who speak it (17% vs. 13%), and less of a tendency to mention that it is too expensive to learn another language (22% vs. 36%).

Focusing now on the **2012 results**, there is widespread national variation.

Lack of motivation is the most common reason given by respondents in fifteen Member States. It is the most widespread view in Sweden (52%), the only country where a majority say that this is a reason that dissuades them from learning another language. It is least likely to be the view of respondents in the UK (21%).

Not having enough time to study properly is the most widely given answer in four Member States. Respondents in Malta (43%) are the most likely to think this a reason that discourages them, followed by those in Sweden (40%). It is the least widely held view in Portugal (15%).

Cost, and the view that it is too expensive to learn another language, shows the greatest national variation. It is the most commonly given answer in nine countries. Respondents in Bulgaria (46%) are the most likely to say this is a reason that discourages them, followed by those in Greece (45%) and Hungary (44%).

Respondents in Finland (6%) are the least likely to cite this reason.

Lack of ability at languages is most likely to be seen as a reason for not learning another language among respondents in the Czech Republic (33%).

It is least likely to be discouraging those in Cyprus (8%).

For the **other potential barriers**, where there is less widespread national variation, the greatest national differences between views are on:

- **lack of opportunity to be able to use the language** with those who speak it, which receives the most mentions in Denmark, France and Sweden (24% in each), and the least mentions in Portugal (4%)
- poor teaching/boring **methods/inadequate learning materials** which receives the most mentions in France (13%), and the least in Malta (1%)
- **not enough exposure to the language** in the media which receives the most mentions in Sweden (14%), and the least in Bulgaria, Malta and Portugal (2% in each)

The **most notable socio-demographic and behavioural variations** on the 'key' barriers to learning a language – those that are mentioned as a reason by more than one in ten Europeans – are:

- the **young 15-24 year olds**, particularly when compared with those aged 55+, have a greater tendency to say it is too expensive (30% vs. 17% respectively)
- **25-39 year olds**, particularly when compared with those aged 55+, have a greater tendency to say they don't have enough time to study properly (38% vs. 14%)
- those **who finished their full-time education** aged **20+**, particularly when compared with those finishing aged 15, have a **greater tendency** to say they:
 - don't have enough time to study properly (34% vs. 15% respectively)
 - don't have enough opportunities to use the language with those who speak it (20% vs. 11%)
 - it is too expensive (26% vs. 19%)

and **less of a tendency** to say:

- they are not good at languages (15% vs. 22%)
- those **living in larger households of 4+ people**, particularly when compared with those in single occupancy households, have a greater tendency to say that they haven't the time to study properly (35% vs. 19% respectively)
- **managers**, more than any other occupational group, and particularly when compared with the retired, have a **greater tendency** to say they:
 - haven't the time to study properly (45% vs. 10% respectively)
 - don't have enough opportunities to use the language with those who speak it (22% vs. 13%)

and, more than any other group, and particularly when compared with housepersons and the unemployed, have **less of a tendency** to say they are not good at languages (13% vs. 23% and 22% respectively)

- the **unemployed**, more than any other occupational group, and particularly when compared with the retired, have – as would be expected- a greater tendency to say it is too expensive (39% vs. 16% respectively).

So, too, do those **who have difficulty paying bills most** of the time, particularly when compared with those who 'almost never' struggle (38% vs. 21% respectively).

- people **who use the internet daily**, particularly when compared with those who never use it, are **more likely** to say they:
 - haven't the time to study properly (34% vs. 14% respectively)
 - don't have enough opportunities to use the language with those who speak it (19% vs. 11%), and
 - it's too expensive (27% vs. 20%)

They are **less likely** to say that they are not good at languages (17% vs. 23%)

People who are **very active in learning new languages** are, naturally, **less likely** than those who are active, and particularly those who are inactive, to say they are not motivated enough (23% vs. 37% respectively); they are not good at languages (16% vs. 21%).

They are also **more likely** to say that they don't get enough opportunities to use the language with people that speak it (25% vs. 15%).

Very active learners are the least likely to think learning a language is too expensive (22%), but on the issue of cost active learners have a stronger tendency than inactive to cite this as a reason (29% and 24% respectively).

There is also a relationship between the number of languages spoken and the likelihood of citing these potential barriers, as would be expected.

Thus, **those who speak none** have a greater tendency, compared with those who speak at least one, and particularly when compared with those who speak at least three foreign languages, to mention that they are not motivated enough (36% vs. 26% respectively); they are not good at languages (24% vs. 12%); and that they do not have the time to study properly (21% vs. 31%).

They are the least likely to think that lack of opportunity to use the language with someone who speaks it discourages them from learning (13%), with the group most likely to cite this being those who speak one foreign language (19%).

4. MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS OF LEARNING

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

The most common way foreign languages are learnt is at school. Two thirds of Europeans (68%) have learnt a language in this way. Other methods are much less widely adopted.

Respondents were presented with various different ways of learning a foreign language and asked which they had ever used. Respondents were able to mention as many ways as applied to them²⁵.

The **most widespread method** used by Europeans to learn a foreign language is through **lessons at school**.

Just over two thirds of Europeans (**68%**) mention that they have learnt a foreign language in this way.

All other ways of learning are mentioned by much smaller proportions of people.

Around one in six Europeans say they have learnt a foreign language **by talking informally to a native speaker (16%), with a teacher outside school in group language lessons (15%)** and by going on **frequent or long trips** to the country in which the language is spoken (**15%**).

Around one in eight Europeans say they have taught **themselves by reading books (12%)**, by using audio-visual materials, such as **CDs or DVDs (11%)** and by watching **films/television or listening to the radio (11%)**.

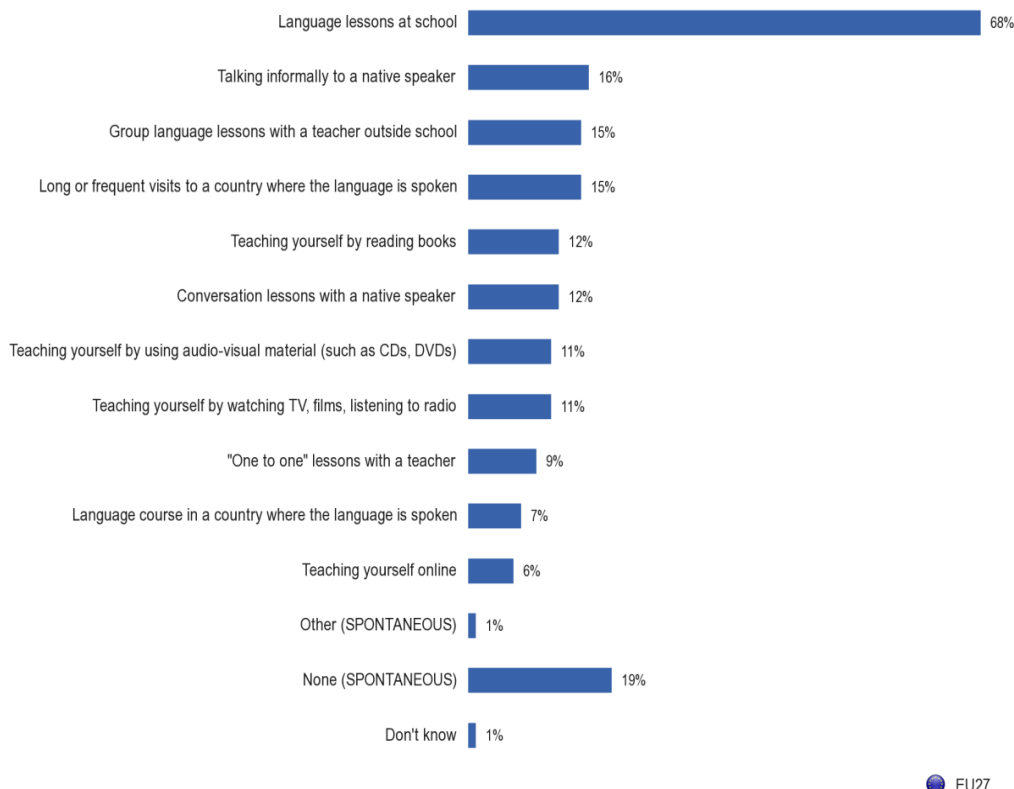
A similar proportion (**12%**) mention learning a foreign language using conversation lessons **with a native speaker**, and a slightly smaller proportion by means of **'one to one' lessons with a teacher (9%)**.

Europeans are least likely to have learnt a foreign language **by teaching themselves online (6%)** and **through a language course in the country where the language is spoken (7%)**.

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

²⁵Q4a. "I am going to read out several ways of learning a foreign language. Please tell me which of these ways you have ever used. (SHOW CARD – MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE) Language lessons at school, Group language lessons with a teacher (outside school), "One to one" lessons with a teacher, Conversation lessons with a native speaker, Talking informally to a native speaker, Long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken, Language course in a country where the language is spoken, Teaching yourself by reading books, Teaching yourself by using audio-visual material (such as CDs, DVDs), Teaching yourself by watching TV, films, listening to the radio, Teaching yourself online, Other (SPONTANEOUS), None (SPONTANEOUS), Don't know"

QE4a. I am going to read out several ways of learning a foreign language. Please tell me which of these ways you have ever used.



There are **differences between EU15 and NMS12**. The most notable are that:

- respondents in **EU15** are particularly **more likely** to have learnt by:
 - a language course in a country where the language is spoken (8% vs. 4% respectively)
 - talking informally to a native speaker (17% vs. 11%)
 - long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken (16% vs. 11%)

They also have a greater tendency to say they have not used any method to learn a foreign language (20% vs. 14%)

- respondents in **NMS12** are particularly **more likely** to have learnt using:
 - "one to one" lessons with a teacher (12% vs. 8% respectively)
 - teaching themselves online (9% vs. 6%)

There is widespread national variation.

Portugal stands out as a country with an exceptionally high proportion of respondents (55%) spontaneously saying that they have never used any of the methods to learn a foreign language (reported as 'None'). For six of the methods, respondents in Portugal are the least likely of those in any other Member State to say they have used them. Other countries with relatively high proportions of respondents spontaneously saying they have never used any of methods include Spain (35%), Italy (31%), Greece (28%), Ireland (27%) and Bulgaria (25%).

Learning a language through **school lessons** is the **most common method** that has been used by respondents **in every Member State**.

Countries where respondents are particularly likely to have used school lessons, and where nearly everyone has learnt in this manner, are Slovenia and Sweden (92%), followed by Malta and the Netherlands (91%) and Denmark (90%).

It is mentioned by only a minority in just two Member States - Portugal (33%), and Spain (48%).

Learning a language by **talking informally to a native speaker** is most commonly cited as a way that has been used by respondents in Denmark (46%), Sweden (42%) and Luxembourg (40%).

Linked to this, these three countries also have the highest proportions of respondents who say they have learnt by using long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken, with over a third adopting this method in Denmark (37%), and a little under a third in Sweden (32%) and Luxembourg (29%).

Greece and Cyprus stand out from the rest of the EU in terms of **learning through group language lessons with a teacher outside school**, with almost half of respondents in Greece (48%) and two fifths of respondents in Cyprus (40%) saying they have learnt in this way.

It is least likely to be cited by respondents in Portugal (5%).

For the **other learning methods**, which have all been used by around one in eight Europeans or fewer, **Sweden** stands out as the country with an exceptionally high proportion of respondents saying they have taught themselves by watching television/films or listening to the radio (52%) and through reading books (41%). They are also, along with respondents in France, almost three times more likely than Europeans as a whole to have used a language course in a country where the language is spoken (18% in each vs. EU average 7%).

Finally, Sweden also has a relatively high proportion of respondents saying they have used conversations with a native speaker to learn a language (28%), with only respondents in the Netherlands (33%) more likely to mention this way of learning.

Luxembourg stands out as the country where self-teaching through the use of audio-visual materials (e.g. CDs, DVDs) is particularly likely to be a method that has been used (25%).

Cyprus stands out as the country with a particularly high proportion mentioning the use of ‘one to one’ lessons (21%); and the likelihood of online self-teaching is especially strong among respondents in Denmark (20%).

QE4a I am going to read out several ways of learning a foreign language. Please tell me which of these ways you have ever used.

	Language lessons at school	Talking informally to a native speaker	Group language lessons with a teacher outside school	Long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken	Conversations on lessons with a native speaker	Teaching yourself by reading books	Teaching yourself by using audio/visual material (such as CDs, DVDs)	Teaching yourself by watching TV, films, listening to radio	“One to one” lessons with a teacher	Language course in a country where the language is spoken	Teaching yourself online	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	None (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't know
EU27	68%	16%	15%	15%	12%	12%	11%	11%	9%	7%	6%	1%	19%	1%
BE	72%	19%	12%	15%	24%	16%	11%	23%	6%	8%	11%	2%	14%	1%
BG	59%	9%	15%	8%	4%	5%	4%	5%	11%	3%	4%	0%	25%	1%
CZ	72%	8%	18%	11%	11%	12%	13%	8%	13%	5%	6%	1%	12%	1%
DK	90%	46%	17%	37%	15%	20%	16%	47%	9%	11%	20%	1%	4%	0%
DE	77%	24%	24%	26%	14%	15%	14%	10%	8%	10%	7%	1%	11%	1%
EE	86%	32%	23%	20%	16%	21%	10%	31%	12%	6%	15%	1%	1%	1%
IE	59%	12%	8%	7%	14%	7%	8%	5%	7%	3%	3%	1%	27%	2%
EL	55%	6%	48%	3%	3%	5%	1%	4%	13%	2%	1%	1%	28%	0%
ES	48%	8%	9%	9%	7%	9%	7%	6%	10%	3%	5%	2%	35%	1%
FR	78%	17%	11%	19%	11%	15%	14%	17%	7%	18%	6%	1%	14%	1%
IT	54%	8%	7%	8%	8%	5%	4%	4%	7%	4%	2%	0%	31%	1%
CY	82%	20%	40%	8%	20%	9%	5%	13%	21%	4%	7%	1%	12%	0%
LV	90%	33%	16%	10%	21%	18%	11%	33%	12%	6%	18%	1%	1%	0%
LT	86%	23%	13%	12%	16%	18%	12%	30%	11%	4%	11%	2%	3%	1%
LU	82%	40%	29%	29%	20%	33%	25%	37%	11%	13%	9%	2%	1%	1%
HU	71%	4%	14%	7%	8%	10%	7%	5%	9%	2%	4%	1%	19%	1%
MT	91%	20%	11%	10%	14%	15%	10%	47%	12%	2%	10%	0%	3%	0%
NL	91%	30%	26%	25%	33%	25%	18%	27%	10%	6%	6%	1%	2%	0%
AT	65%	21%	21%	20%	13%	12%	11%	6%	8%	11%	6%	2%	18%	0%
PL	76%	10%	13%	11%	12%	12%	11%	11%	11%	4%	10%	0%	10%	3%
PT	33%	7%	5%	5%	2%	3%	2%	5%	2%	1%	3%	2%	55%	1%
RO	58%	10%	13%	10%	10%	8%	8%	14%	13%	3%	9%	1%	19%	6%
SI	92%	34%	17%	20%	12%	19%	15%	40%	8%	4%	16%	4%	2%	0%
SK	62%	9%	17%	11%	11%	15%	13%	13%	8%	7%	5%	1%	15%	1%
FI	77%	36%	21%	23%	22%	30%	17%	33%	7%	9%	18%	3%	8%	1%
SE	92%	42%	28%	32%	28%	41%	16%	52%	11%	18%	10%	1%	2%	0%
UK	72%	17%	8%	13%	12%	11%	15%	6%	8%	4%	4%	1%	19%	0%

Highest percentage per country Lowest percentage per country
 Highest percentage per item Lowest percentage per item

There are **socio-demographic differences** in learning methods used, with the most notable being:

- **young 15-24 year olds**, unsurprisingly, having a greater tendency to have used all of the methods, particularly when compared with those aged 55+.

Relative to those aged 55+, they are much more likely to say they have learnt by: teaching themselves online (14% vs. 2%); watching TV/films or listening to the radio (19% vs. 6%); having "one to one" lessons with a teacher (13% vs. 6%); teaching themselves using audio-visual material (13% vs. 7%); and using a language course in a country where the language is spoken (9% vs. 5%)

- **those who finished their full-time education aged 20+** also have a stronger tendency to have used all of the methods, particularly when compared with those finishing at 15 or below.

They are particularly more likely to say they have learnt by: watching TV/films or listening to the radio (20% vs. 2% of those finishing their education at 15 or below); using audio-visual materials (19% vs. 2%); teaching themselves online (9% vs. 1%), and by reading books (21% vs. 3%); using a language course in a country where the language is spoken (13% vs. 2%); and using conversation lessons with a native speaker (20% vs. 4%)

- **students**, are much more likely than any other occupational group, and especially when compared to the retired, to have used language lessons at school (93% vs. 51% respectively).

They also have the greatest tendency to have taught themselves online (17% vs. 2%) and to have learnt foreign languages by watching TV/films or listening to the radio (24% vs. 6%).

Along with managers, they are the most likely to have used "one to one" lessons with a teacher (15% of each group vs. 6% respectively).

For all other ways of learning, **managers** have the strongest tendency to have used them, particularly when compared with the retired and housepersons.

The greatest relative differences are on self-teaching via audio-visual materials (20% vs. 7% and 6% respectively); long or frequent visits to the country in which the language is spoken (30% vs. 12% and 9%); self-teaching by reading books (23% vs. 9% and 7%); and talking informally to a native speaker (29% vs. 11% and 9%).

- people **who use the internet daily**, particularly when compared with those who never use it, have the greatest tendency to have used each method of learning. With the exception of self-teaching online, the most striking variations, where there are the greatest relative differences, are on: self-teaching by using audio-visual materials (16% vs. 2% respectively); watching television/films or listening to the radio (17% vs. 3%); using a language course in a country where the language is spoken (10% vs. 2%); and self-teaching by reading books (17% vs. 4%).
- those **who 'almost never' have difficulties paying bills**, particularly when compared with those who struggle most of the time, are most notably more likely to have used: self-teaching by using audio-visual materials (12% vs. 6% respectively); long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken (18% vs. 10%); self-teaching by reading books (14% vs. 8%); talking informally to a native speaker (19% vs. 11%); self-teaching by watching television/films or listening to the radio (13% vs. 8%); and a language course in the country where the language is spoken (8% vs. 5%)
- **those who place themselves high** on the social positioning staircase, particularly when compared with those who place themselves low, have a stronger tendency to have used all ways of learning, most notably: "one to one" lessons with a teacher (12% vs. 6% respectively); group language lessons with a teacher outside school (19% vs. 10%); conversation lessons with a native speaker (17% vs. 9%); and long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken (20% vs. 11%)
- **those who live in towns**, particularly large towns, compared with those who live in small/mid-size towns or rural villages have a notably stronger tendency to say they have learnt by teaching themselves online (9% vs. 5% respectively); reading books (16% vs. 10%); watching TV/films or listening to the radio (15% vs. 10%); taking "one to one" lessons with a teacher (12% vs. 8%); and having group language lessons with a teacher outside school (18% vs. 13%)

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

This tendency is most marked on: self-teaching online (29% vs. 4% respectively); self-teaching by using audio-visual materials (43% vs. 7%); self-teaching by reading books (47% vs. 8%); self-teaching by watching television/films or listening to the radio (35% vs. 8%); conversation lessons with a native speaker (29% vs. 9%); and talking informally with a native speaker (38% vs. 12%).

There is also a relationship between the number of languages spoken and the likelihood of using the different methods, as would be expected.

Thus, among **those who are unable to speak any foreign languages** well enough to hold a conversation, mentions of using any of the methods - with the exception of language lessons at school (54%) - are very low, with group language lessons with a teacher outside school receiving the most mentions (6%).

Among Europeans who can speak foreign languages the greatest relative differences in likelihood of using a method between those who speak one and those who speak at least three languages are on using: conversation lessons with a native speaker (30% vs. 19% respectively); self-teaching online (15% vs. 10%); self-teaching by watching television/films or listening to the radio (28% vs. 19%); long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken (35% vs. 24%); and self-teaching by reading books (28% vs. 20%).

Respondents were also asked to consider **which method**, from any that they had ever used for learning a foreign language, **was the most effective**²⁶.

Europeans are most likely to think that **language lessons at school** are the most effective way they have learnt a foreign language, with just under half (**46%**) saying this.

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

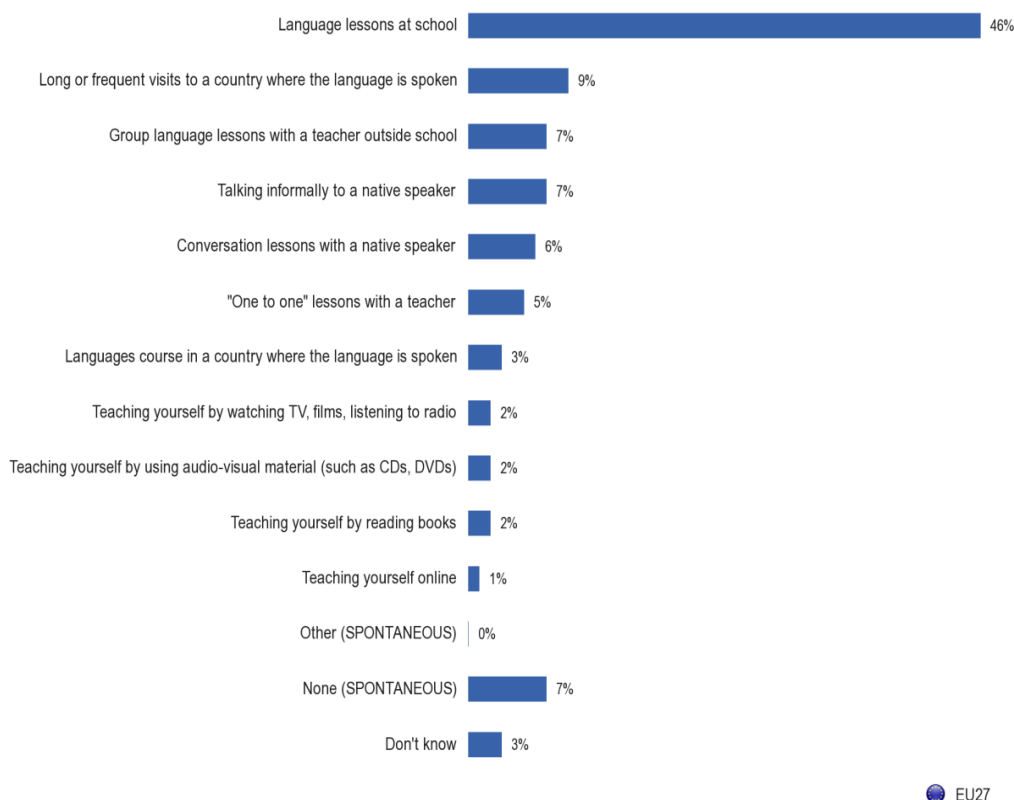
Not surprisingly, therefore, only a very small minority of Europeans think that each of the other ways of learning are the most effective of any that they have used.

Just under one in ten respondents (**9%**) cite **long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken**, and slightly less think **group language lessons** with a teacher outside school (**7%**), **talking informally to a native speaker (7%)** and **conversation lessons with a native speaker (6%)** are the most effective way in which they have learnt a language.

All other ways of learning are perceived to be the most effective method used by one in twenty Europeans or fewer with self-teaching online (1%) the least likely of all to be considered the most effective way that has been used.

²⁶Q4b. (ASK FOR EACH WAYS CHOSEN IN Q4A)"Which way did you find the most effective? (SHOW CARD – ONE ANSWER ONLY) Language lessons at school, Group language lessons with a teacher (outside school), "One to one" lessons with a teacher, Conversation lessons with a native speaker, Talking informally to a native speaker, Long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken, Language course in a country where the language is spoken, Teaching yourself by reading books, Teaching yourself by using audio-visual material (such as CDs, DVDs), Teaching yourself by watching TV, films, listening to the radio, Teaching yourself online, Other (SPONTANEOUS), None (SPONTANEOUS), Don't know"

QE4b. Which did you find the most effective?



Differences between **EU15** and **NMS12** on this measure broadly reflect the extent to which the methods are used among people in the respective areas.

The greatest national variation in opinion relates to perceptions of the effectiveness of language lessons at school and group language lessons with a teacher outside school.

In terms of school language lessons, Malta stands out as the country with particularly positive perceptions of this way of learning with a little over two thirds (69%) of respondents thinking this the most effective way they have learnt a language.

The only other countries where this is the majority view are Portugal (54%), Denmark (52%) and Germany, Poland and the UK (51% in each).

Greece stands out as the country with a particularly poor perception of the usefulness of language lessons at school with only 13% of respondents saying this is the most effective method they have used. Respondents in Greece are much more likely to cite group language lessons with a teacher outside school as the most effective way they have learnt a language (51%). Indeed, on this method of learning Greece stands out as the country that has an exceptionally strong perception of its effectiveness.

The only other country where group language lessons are seen to be the most effective way of learning by more than around one in ten respondents is Cyprus, where one in four (25%) respondents think that this is the most effective method they have used.

QE4b Which did you find the most effective?

	Language lessons at school	Long or frequent visits to a country where the language is spoken	Group language lessons with a teacher outside school	Talking informally to a native speaker	Conversations on lessons with a native speaker	“One to one” lessons with a teacher	Language course in a country where the language is spoken	Teaching yourself by reading books	Teaching yourself by using audio-visual material (such as CDs, DVDs)	Teaching yourself by watching TV, films, listening to radio	Teaching yourself online	Other (SPONTANEOUS)	None (SPONTANEOUS)	Don't know
EU27	46%	9%	7%	7%	6%	5%	3%	2%	2%	2%	1%	0%	7%	3%
BE	41%	9%	5%	6%	12%	2%	4%	3%	2%	6%	2%	1%	7%	0%
BG	44%	6%	9%	4%	2%	8%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	24%
CZ	41%	9%	8%	3%	5%	9%	2%	2%	3%	1%	1%	0%	12%	4%
DK	52%	14%	4%	11%	2%	3%	3%	1%	1%	6%	1%	0%	1%	1%
DE	51%	13%	10%	8%	5%	2%	4%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%
EE	42%	10%	7%	16%	5%	4%	2%	1%	1%	5%	2%	0%	2%	3%
IE	47%	3%	5%	6%	9%	6%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%	13%	5%
EL	13%	2%	51%	3%	2%	14%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	10%	1%
ES	45%	10%	7%	6%	4%	8%	2%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	7%	2%
FR	42%	13%	3%	6%	5%	3%	9%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	8%	3%
IT	47%	6%	5%	6%	6%	7%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	13%	3%
CY	29%	3%	25%	8%	11%	14%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	0%
LV	42%	5%	5%	15%	8%	6%	2%	2%	1%	5%	2%	0%	4%	3%
LT	44%	5%	4%	11%	7%	6%	2%	1%	2%	3%	1%	1%	6%	7%
LU	38%	10%	9%	15%	5%	3%	4%	3%	2%	4%	1%	2%	1%	3%
HU	46%	6%	9%	1%	5%	7%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	14%	4%
MT	69%	1%	2%	5%	2%	4%	0%	1%	1%	15%	0%	0%	0%	0%
NL	48%	12%	7%	7%	9%	3%	2%	3%	2%	4%	1%	0%	1%	1%
AT	43%	13%	11%	7%	4%	3%	6%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	8%	1%
PL	51%	7%	7%	3%	7%	6%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	0%	6%	5%
PT	54%	6%	8%	10%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	4%	3%	0%	6%	4%
RO	45%	6%	8%	5%	6%	11%	1%	2%	2%	4%	3%	1%	3%	3%
SI	50%	9%	4%	11%	3%	3%	1%	1%	2%	8%	1%	1%	1%	5%
SK	39%	9%	7%	5%	7%	5%	5%	3%	3%	3%	1%	0%	5%	8%
FI	39%	10%	7%	12%	7%	1%	4%	3%	2%	4%	4%	1%	2%	4%
SE	43%	14%	7%	9%	6%	2%	6%	3%	1%	5%	1%	1%	1%	1%
UK	51%	7%	3%	8%	7%	4%	1%	2%	4%	0%	1%	0%	11%	1%

Highest percentage per country Lowest percentage per country
 Highest percentage per item Lowest percentage per item

Socio-demographic and behavioural differences at this question tend to reflect the extent to which the groups have used multiple language learning methods. Hence groups such as managers, those who are highly educated and active learners – all groups that are particularly likely to have used multiple learning methods – are less likely than average to cite school lessons as the most effective method of learning foreign languages, and more likely to cite methods that they have used outside of school.

IV. EU CITIZENS' ATTITUDES TO MULTILINGUALISM

This chapter examines Europeans' attitudes in relation to a range of issues associated with the learning and usage of foreign languages. Specifically, the chapter looks at the extent to which Europeans think that people in the EU should be able to speak languages other than their mother tongue, and should be able to speak a single common language; whether people believe that the EU should adopt a single language in communicating with European citizens, or that all languages should be treated equally; whether the improvement of languages should be a policy priority; and people's preferences in relation to watching foreign language films.

1. EUROPEAN LEVEL

The first part of this chapter explores the extent to which Europeans think that people in the EU should be able to speak languages other than their mother tongue, and should be able to speak a single common language. These questions were asked for the first time in this survey. The section also examines whether people believe that the EU should adopt a single language in communicating with European citizens. These questions were asked in 2005, but using a two point answer scale (Tend to agree; Tend to disagree) rather than the four point scale adopted for the current survey.

The large majority of Europeans think that everyone in the EU should speak one language in addition to their mother tongue, and most that people should speak more than one foreign language. Europeans are also widely in favour of people in the EU being able to speak a *common* language, and a small majority agree that EU institutions should adopt a single language to communicate with European citizens.

There is a broad consensus among Europeans that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one foreign language²⁷.

More than four in five of Europeans (**84%**) agree, and more than two in five (44%) 'totally agree', that **all EU citizens should be able to speak a foreign language**.

Only 13% of Europeans disagree with this view, and just 4% 'totally' disagree.

Indeed, more than seven in ten Europeans (**72%**) agree that **people in the EU should be able to speak *more than one* language** in addition to their mother tongue, with a third (33%) saying that they 'totally agree' with this view.

²⁷ Q7. "Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (SHOW CARD WITH SCALE) Totally agree, Tend to agree, Tend to disagree, Totally disagree (READ OUT -ROTATE) The European institutions should adopt one single language to communicate with European citizens, Everyone in the EU should be able to speak a common language, Everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one language in addition to their mother tongue, Everyone in the EU should be able to speak more than one language in addition to their mother tongue, You prefer to watch foreign films and programmes with subtitles, rather than dubbed, All languages spoken within the EU should be treated equally, Improving language skills should be a policy priority"

The level of disagreement with this view (25%) is higher than in relation to the view that Europeans should speak at least one foreign language, and mainly confined to those who tend to disagree (18%) rather than 'totally' disagree (7%).

Hence Europeans, for the most part, support the EU's vision that EU citizens should be able to speak at least two foreign languages, and there is little evidence of strong disapproval of this vision.

Europeans are also widely in favour of people in the EU being able to speak a *common* language.

Around seven in ten (**69%**) think that **Europeans should be able to speak a common language**, with a three in ten (31%) saying that they 'totally agree' with this viewpoint.

Just over a quarter (27%) of respondents disagree that people in the EU should be able to speak a common language, with just over one in ten (11%) saying that they 'totally disagree'.

Although the findings here are not directly comparable with those from 2005, because of the move from a two-point to a four-point answer scale, a comparison of the results from the two surveys suggests that opinions on this issue have remained stable since the last survey, with similar proportions of respondents in 2005 agreeing (70%) and disagreeing (25%) with the view that people in the EU should be able to speak a common language.

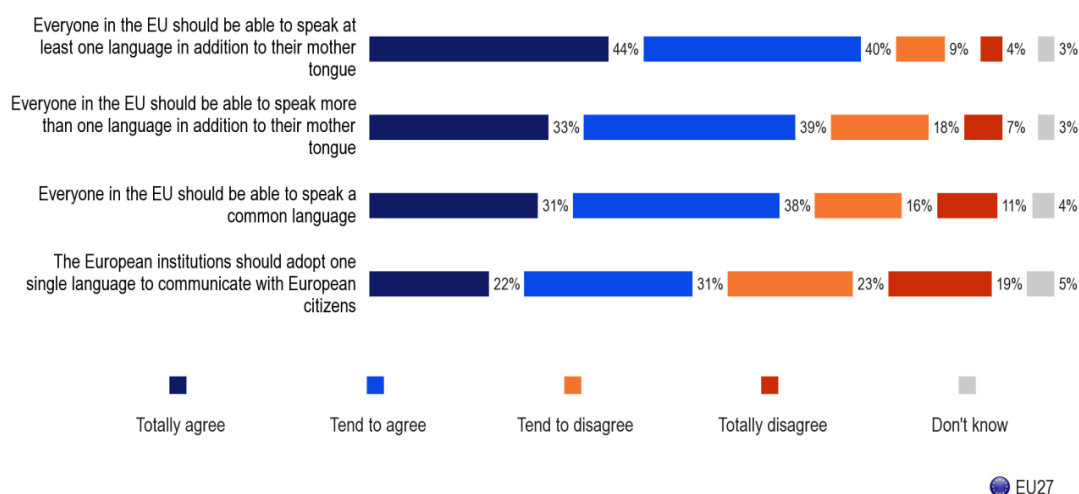
Europeans are much more evenly divided on the issue of whether EU institutions should adopt a single language to communicate with European citizens, although the balance of opinion is in favour of this approach.

Slightly more than half of respondents (**53%**) agree that **EU institutions should adopt a single language when communicating with citizens**, but firm agreement with this view is not particularly widespread, with just over one in five (22%) of respondents strongly endorsing the adoption of single language communication.

More than two in five Europeans (**42%**) **disapprove of the idea of EU institutions adopting a single language to communicate with citizens**, with the opinions of these respondents quite evenly divided between those who 'totally' disagree (19%) and those who tend to disagree (23%).

A small proportion of respondents (5%) were unable to offer a view on this issue. The balance of opinion on this issue appears unchanged from that found in 2005, when similar proportions agreed (55%) and disagreed (40%) that EU institutions should adopt a single language to communicate with European citizens.

QE7. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements.



The report looks next at how opinion on these four subjects varies between EU15 and NMS12, and by country, starting with views on whether or not the European institutions should adopt a single language to communicate with European citizens.

For each statement the report summarises the findings in terms of overall agreement and disagreement, before going on to look at the proportions of respondents who 'totally' agree. Countries are ranked in each chart based on the proportion of respondents who 'totally' agree with the statement.

Opinion on this issue is very similar among the **EU15** and **NMS12**.

Just over half of respondents in EU15 (53%) and NMS12 (54%) agree that European institutions should adopt a single language when communicating with citizens and around four in ten in both disagree (42% and 39% respectively).

Opinions vary much more by individual country.

Respondents in Cyprus are much more likely than those in any other Member State to agree 'totally' that the European institutions should adopt a single language to communicate with European citizens (44%), with Spain (33%), Slovakia (32%) and Malta (31%) the only other countries where at least three in ten respondents 'totally' agree with this view.

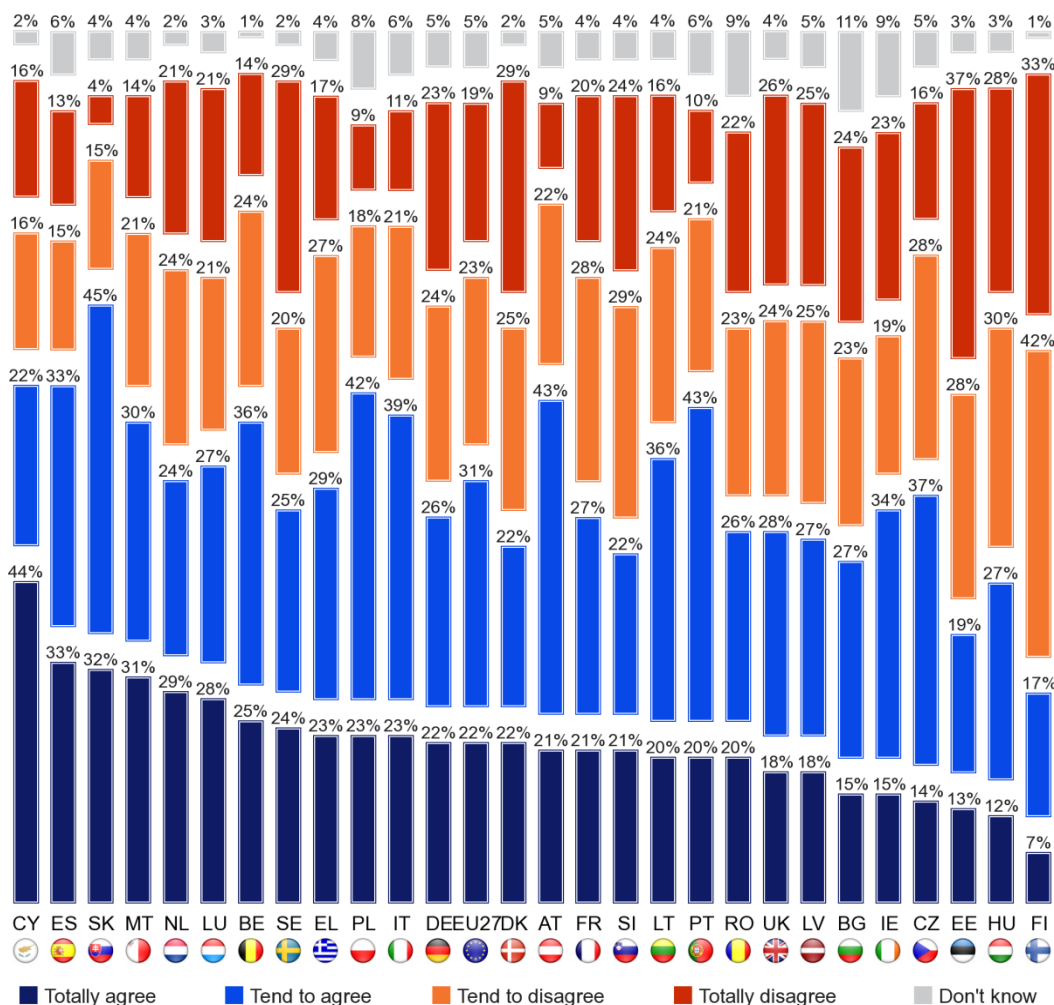
Overall agreement that the European institutions should adopt a single language to communicate with European citizens is highest in Slovakia (77%), followed by Spain and Cyprus (both 66%).

Respondents are least likely to 'totally' agree with this view in Finland (7%), followed by Hungary (12%) and Estonia (13%).

Overall agreement that European institutions should adopt a single language to communicate with citizens is particularly low in Finland (24%) and Estonia (32%).

QE7.1. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements.

The European institutions should adopt one single language to communicate with European citizens



The **broad consensus** of opinion among Europeans that **everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one foreign language** is reflected in both **EU15 (85% agree)** and **NMS12 (81% agree)**, although those living in EU15 are more likely to express strong support for this view, with 46% of respondents saying that they ‘totally’ agree, compared with 36% in NMS12.

There is, however, much more variation in attitudes by country on this measure, in particular in relation to the strength of agreement with the view that the ability to speak a foreign language should be universal among Europeans.

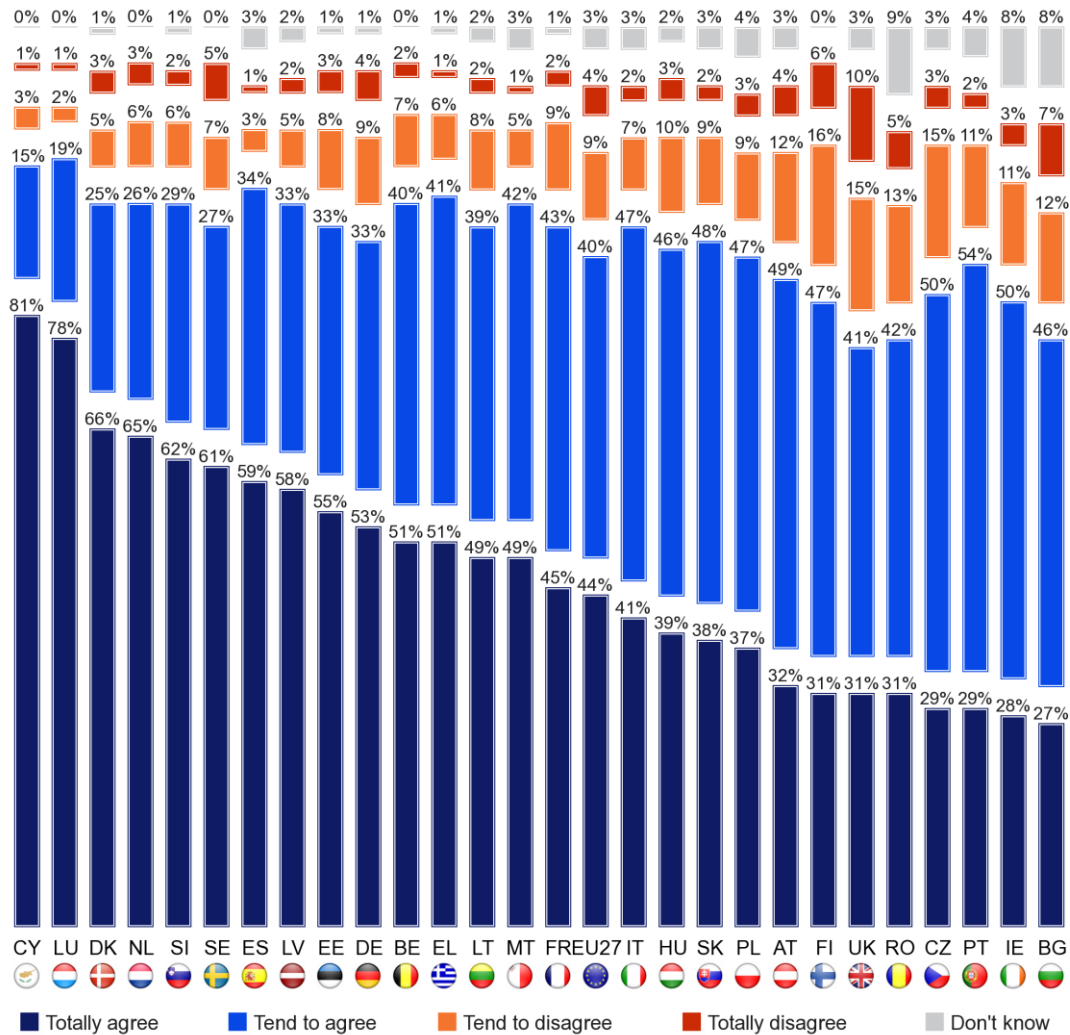
More than seven in ten respondents in every Member State agree with this view, with respondents in the UK (72%), Romania (73%) and Bulgaria (73%) least likely to do so and those in Luxembourg (97%) and Cyprus (96%) most likely to do so.

Respondents in Luxembourg and Cyprus are also much more likely than those in any other country to agree ‘totally’ that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least one foreign language, with around eight in ten respondents in Cyprus (81%) and a slightly lower proportion (78%) in Luxembourg doing so.

In contrast, less than three in ten respondents in Bulgaria (27%), Ireland (28%), Portugal (29%) and the Czech Republic (29%) ‘totally’ agree with this position.

QE7.3. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements.

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



As noted earlier, a significant majority of Europeans (72%) agree that **people in the EU should be able to speak more than one language** in addition to their mother tongue. This level of agreement is again reflected in both **EU15 (72% agree)** and **NMS12 (71%)**, although, as was found in relation to the previous question, total agreement is higher in EU15 (34%) than in NMS12 (27%).

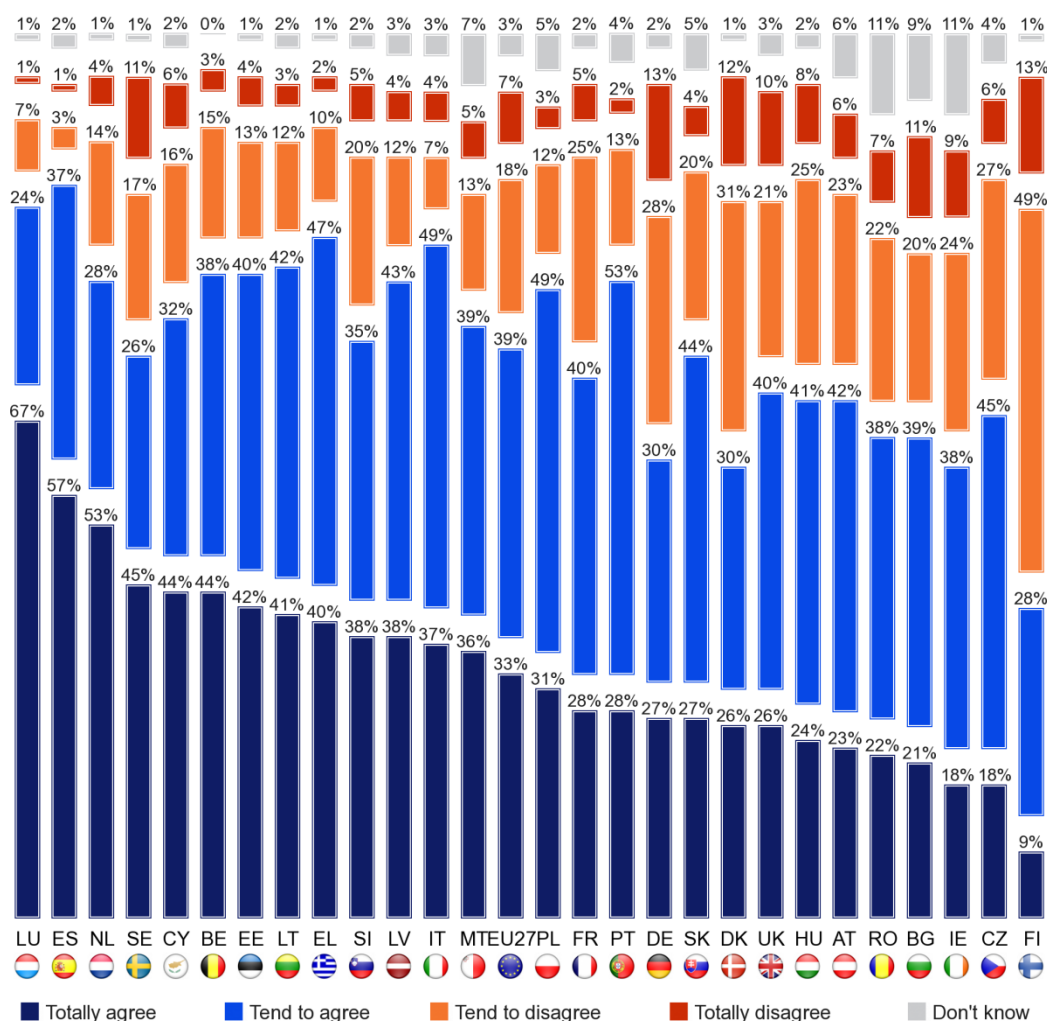
However, opinions on this issue again vary considerably by country.

In 26 of the 27 Member States a majority of respondents agree that everyone in the EU should be able to speak at least two languages in addition to their mother tongue, although there is a wide range in the levels of agreement between countries, ranging from 56% in Ireland and Denmark to 91% in Luxembourg and 94% in Spain. Respondents in Luxembourg are again the most likely to ‘totally’ agree with the proposition (67%), followed by those in Spain (57%) and the Netherlands (53%).

The only country where a majority disagree with this view is Finland, where less than four in ten (37%) agree that Europeans should be able to speak at least two foreign languages and less than one in ten (9%) totally agree.

QE7.4. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements.

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



The results reported thus far in this section have shown very similar levels of agreement among Europeans living in EU15 compared with NMS12, but with those in the EU15 more likely to express strong support for multilingualism in the EU.

This pattern does not hold as strongly on the **issue of whether everyone in the EU should be able to speak a common language**, with **EU15 (71%)** somewhat more likely than **NMS12 (61%)** both to agree with this viewpoint, and to 'totally' agree (33% in EU15, compared with 23% in NMS12).

Opinions again vary quite widely at the national level. The countries in which overall agreement that everyone in the EU should be able to speak a common language is highest, and where at least three quarters of respondents agree, are Italy (82%), Malta (79%), Portugal and Slovakia (77% in each) and Luxembourg (76%).

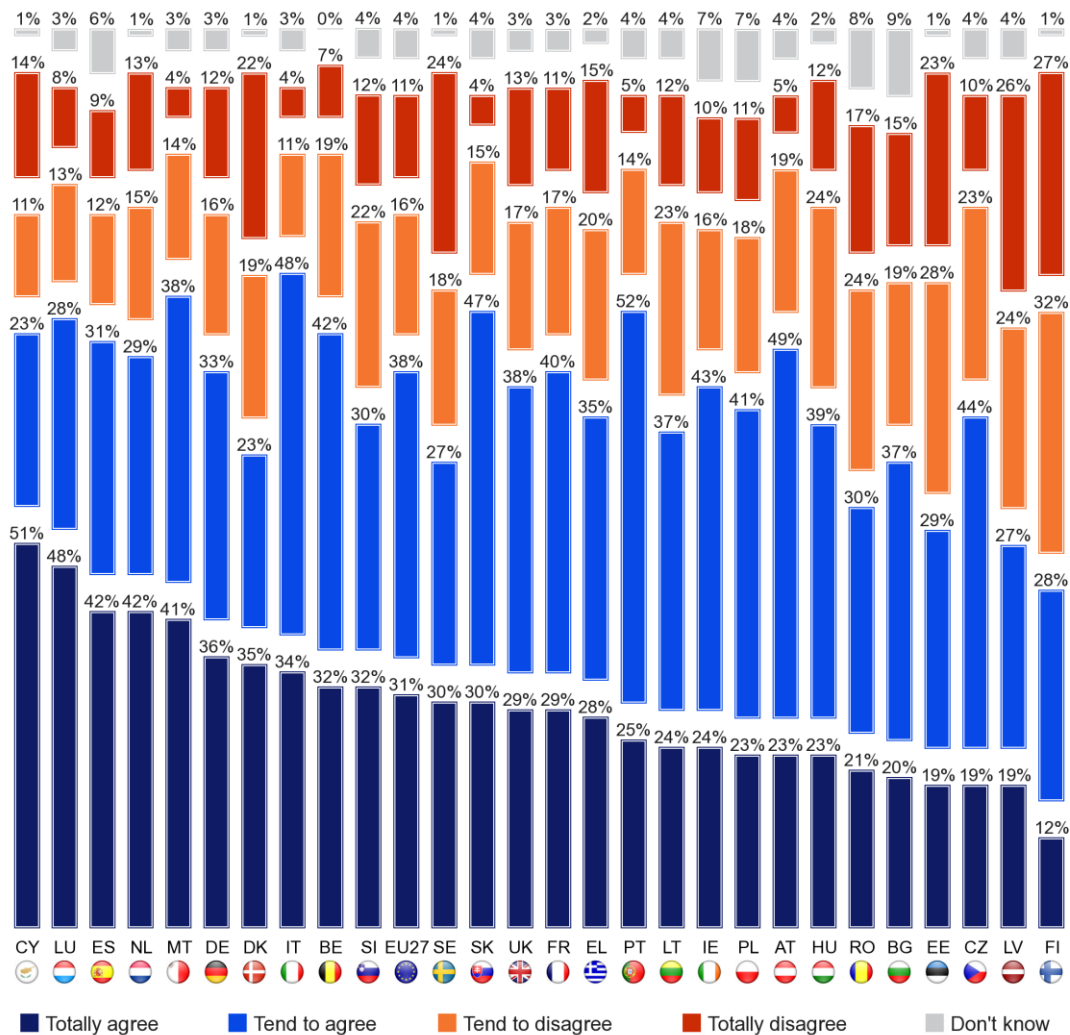
People are again least likely to agree with this view in Finland, where two in five (40%) agree and three in five (59%) disagree.

The only other Member States where the balance of opinion is towards disagreeing that everyone in the EU should be able to speak a common language, albeit marginally so, are Latvia, where 46% of respondents agree and 50% disagree, and Estonia, where 48% agree and 51% disagree.

There is also considerable variation in the proportions of respondents in each country who 'totally' agree that everyone in the EU should be able to speak a common language, ranging from around half of respondents in Cyprus (51%) and Luxembourg (48%) to around one in eight (12%) in Finland.

QE7.2. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements.

Everyone in the EU should be able to speak a common language



There are no notable variations between the different demographic and behavioural sub-groups and their opinions on whether everyone in the EU should be able to speak more languages than their mother tongue, whether everyone in the EU should be able to speak a single common language, and whether the EU should adopt a common language to communicate with European citizens. Similarly there are no striking variations in attitude between active and inactive language learners or in relation to the number of foreign languages spoken.

2. PERCEIVED SITUATION

The second part of this chapter examines Europeans' views on whether languages should be treated equally and whether the improvement of languages should be a policy priority; and explores their preferences in relation to watching foreign language films. The questions on whether languages should be treated equally and preferences for watching foreign languages broadcasts were also asked in 2005, but using a two point answer scale (*Tend to agree; Tend to disagree*) rather than the four point scale adopted for the current survey. The question on whether the improvement of languages should be a policy priority is new to the survey in 2012.

Most Europeans think that all languages spoken within the EU should be treated equally and that the improvement of language skills should be a policy priority.

In spite of their generally positive views towards multilingualism, a small majority of Europeans prefer to watch foreign films and programmes dubbed, rather than with subtitles.

Although most Europeans support the notion that everyone in the EU should be able to speak a common language, this view does not extend to believing that any one language should have priority over others.

Indeed, eight in ten Europeans (**81%**) agree that **all languages spoken within the EU should be treated equally**, with nearly half (46%) saying that they 'totally' agree that this should be the case.

Only 15% of respondents disagree that all languages should be treated equally, and as few as 4% 'totally' disagree.

While the findings here are not directly comparable with those from 2005, because of the move from a two-point to a four-point answer scale, a comparison of the results from the two surveys suggests that support for the view that all languages within the EU should be treated equally may have strengthened since the last survey, with the proportion of respondents agreeing with this view increasing from around seven in ten (72%) in 2005 to around eight in ten (81%) in 2012.

The widespread support for multilingualism that we have seen elsewhere in the report is again reflected in Europeans' opinions on whether the improvement of language skills should be a policy priority.

More than three-quarters (**77%**) of respondents think that **improving language skills should be a policy priority**, with a third (33%) saying that they totally agree.

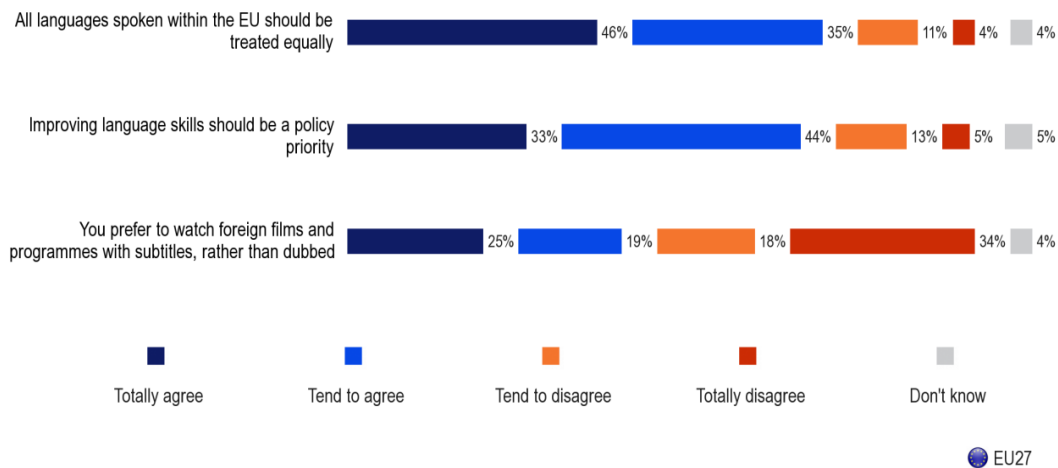
Less than one in five (18%) disagree with this position, and only one in twenty (5%) 'totally' disagree.

In spite of their generally positive views towards multilingualism, a small majority of Europeans prefer to watch foreign films and programmes dubbed, rather than with subtitles.

More than two in five respondents (**44%**) agree that that they **prefer subtitles to dubbing**, with a quarter (25%) saying that they 'totally' agree, but a slightly larger proportion (52%) disagree that they prefer subtitles, and a third (34%) 'totally' disagree.

However, the **balance of opinion appears to have shifted slightly in favour of subtitles** since 2005, when 37% of respondents agreed that that they preferred subtitles to dubbing.

QE7. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements.



Europeans' preferences for how they watch foreign films and TV programmes do not vary to any great extent between the EU15 and NMS12, although **EU15** is slightly **more likely to express a preference for subtitles (44%, compared with 41% in NMS12)**.

There is however a huge **variation at the individual country level**.

In six of the 27 Member States more than four in five respondents say that they prefer to watch foreign films and programmes with subtitles.

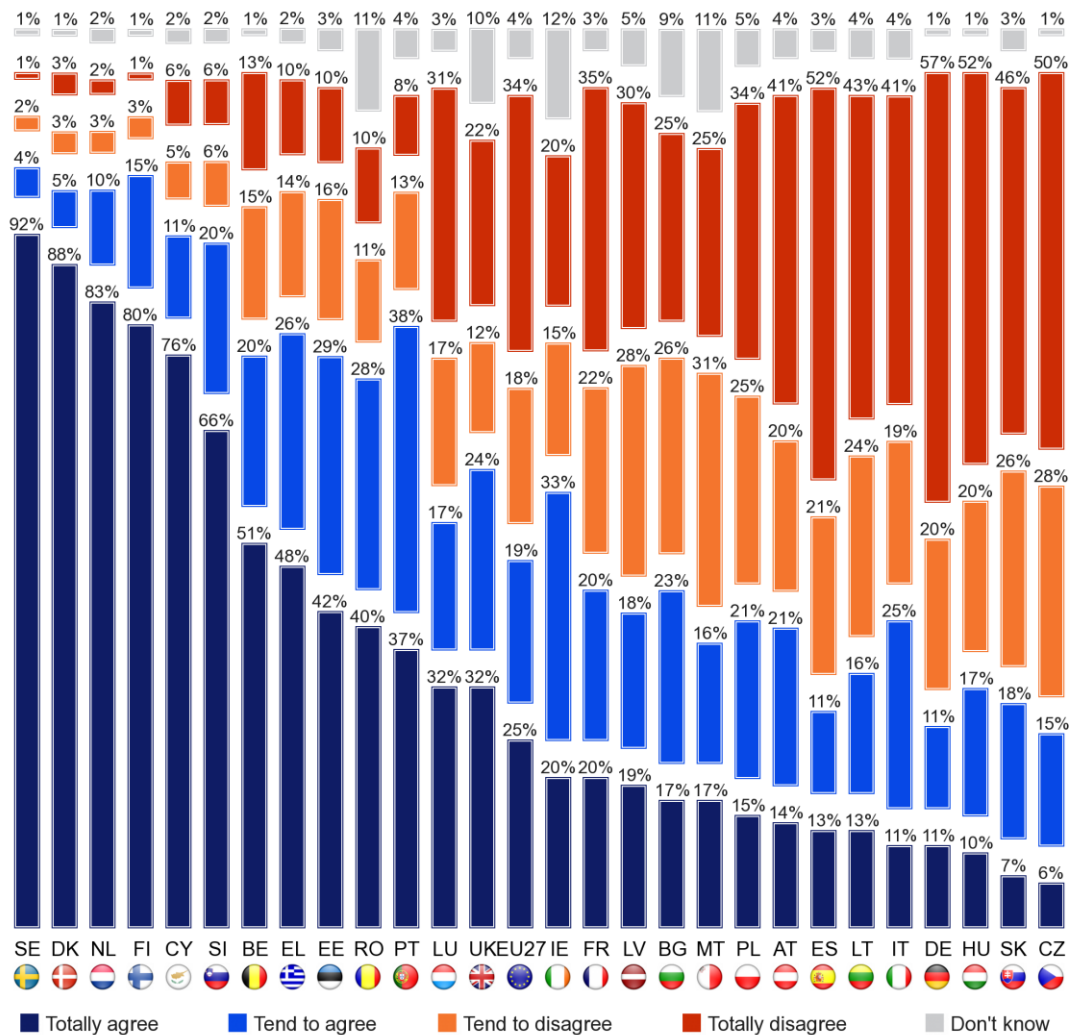
Respondents in Sweden (96%), Finland (95%), Denmark and the Netherlands (93% in each) are particularly likely to express a preference for subtitles, with a substantial majority of those in Cyprus (87%) and Slovenia (86%) also doing so.

In contrast, a quarter of respondents or fewer in the Czech Republic (21%), Germany (22%), Spain (24%) and Slovakia (25%) say that they prefer subtitles.

The ranking based on respondents who 'totally' agree that they prefer subtitles shows a similar pattern, with a particularly strong preference for subtitles in Sweden (92% 'totally' agree) and Denmark (88%), and, in contrast, less than one in ten respondents 'totally' agreeing in the Czech Republic (6%) and Slovakia (7%).

QE7.5. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements.

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



Support for the **view that all languages spoken within the EU should be treated equally is widespread** in both EU15 and NMS12, but more so in **NMS12**, where nine in ten respondents (**89%**) agree that this should be the case, compared with eight in ten (**79%**) in **EU15**.

At a national level, there is more consensus on this issue than seen on other measures, with a majority of respondents agreeing that all languages spoken within the EU should be treated equally in all 27 Member States, and at least eight in ten respondents agreeing with this view in 20.

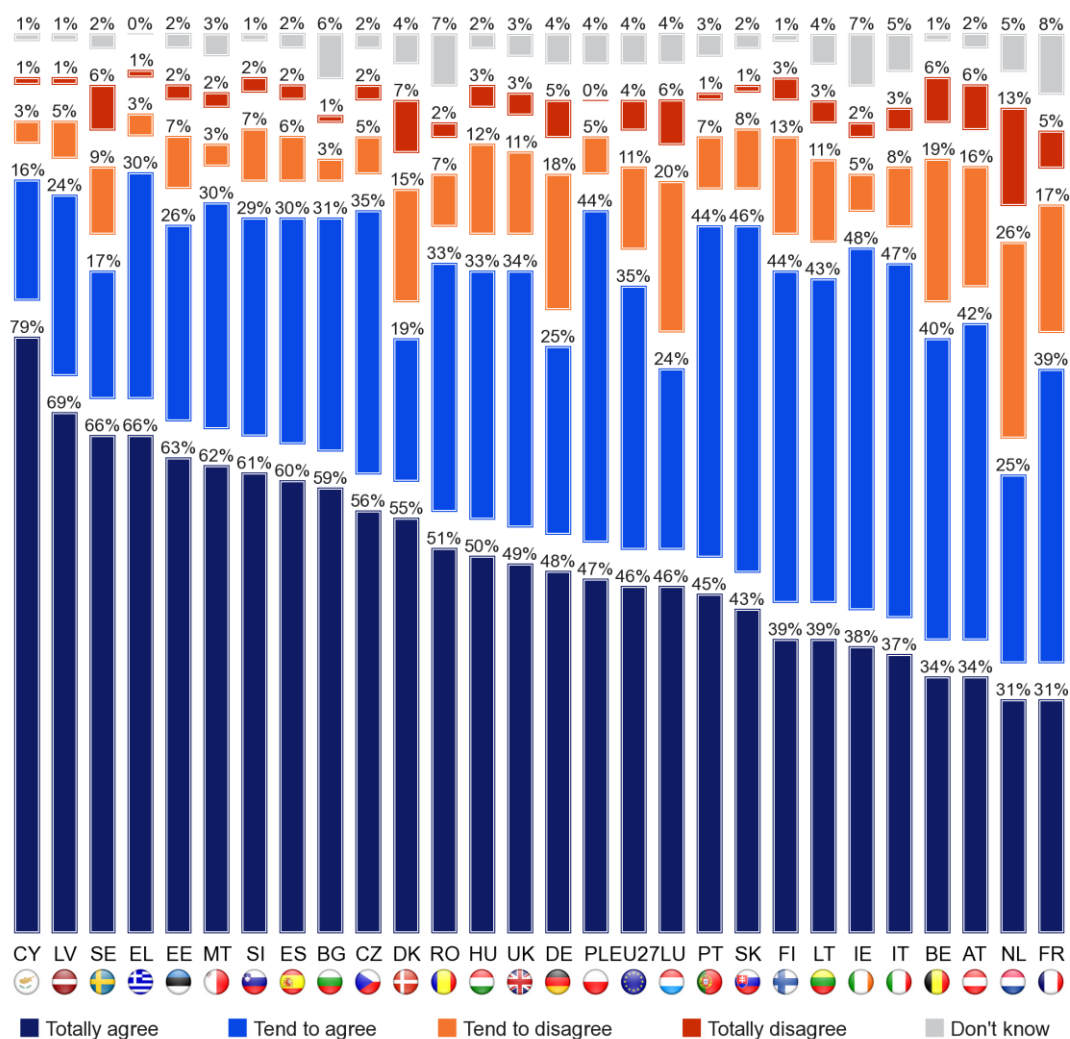
More than nine in ten respondents in Greece (96%), Cyprus (95%), Latvia (93%), Malta (92%), the Czech Republic and Poland (91% in each) agree that all languages spoken within the EU should be treated equally, with those in Cyprus (79%) particularly likely to say that they 'totally' agree.

Among the seven countries where the level of agreement is below the EU average, at least seven in ten still agree that all languages spoken within the EU should be treated equally in six: Luxembourg and France (70% in each), Germany (73%), Denmark and Belgium (74% in each) and Austria (76%).

It is only in the Netherlands where the proportion of respondents who agree that all languages spoken within the EU should be treated equally falls substantially below the EU average, with 56% agreeing with the statement, compared with 39% who disagree. Respondents in the Netherlands, together with those in France, are also least likely to say that they ‘totally’ agree with the statement (31% in each country).

QE7.6. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements.

All languages spoken within the EU should be treated equally



Opinion on the matter of whether improving language skills should be a policy priority is similar in EU15 and NMS12, with nearly four in five respondents in **EU15 (78%)** and slightly fewer in **NMS12 (74%)** agreeing that this should be the case.

Reflecting the findings reported earlier in this chapter, EU15 (35%) are slightly more likely than NMS12 (29%) to 'totally' agree that the improvement of language skills should be a policy priority.

Although a majority of respondents in all 27 Member States agree that improving language skills should be a policy priority for the EU, the extent of agreement by country varies.

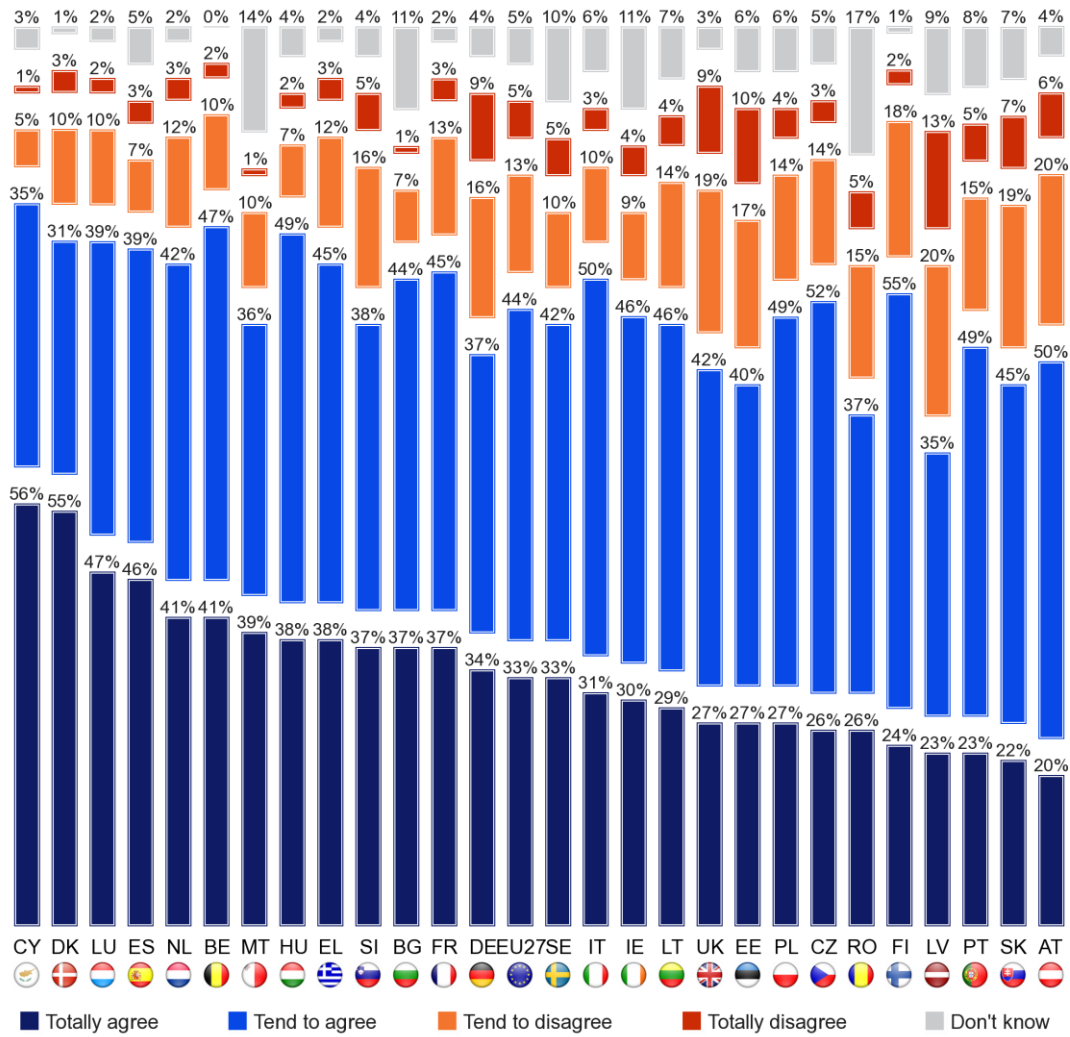
In terms of overall agreement, the most widespread support for the view that the improvement of languages should be a policy priority is found in Cyprus (91% agree), Belgium (88%), Hungary (87%), Denmark and Luxembourg (86% in each) and Spain (85%). Respondents in Cyprus (56%) and Denmark (55%) are particularly likely to say that they 'totally' agree with this viewpoint.

The least widespread overall support for prioritising language skills is found in Latvia, where 58% of respondents agree that the improvement of languages should be a policy priority, followed by Romania (63%), Slovakia and Estonia (67% in each), the UK (69%) and Austria (70%).

Respondents in Austria are the least likely to say that they 'totally' agree that language improvement should be a policy priority (20%).

QE7.7. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each the following statements.

Improving language skills should be a policy priority



The only attitude that shows notable differences in opinion among the socio-demographic and behavioural sub-groups is that relating to **preference for watching foreign films and programmes with subtitles**, rather than watching dubbed versions.

Here those **groups with a greater tendency to agree** are:

- **15-24 year olds**, particularly when compared with those aged 55+ (55% vs. 35%)
- those **who finished their full-time education** aged **20+**, particularly when compared with those finishing at 15 or below (56% vs. 27%)
- **managers**, particularly when compared with housepersons and the retired (55% vs. 35% in both cases)
- **people who use the internet daily**, particularly compared with those who never use the internet (52% vs. 27%), and
- **those who position themselves high** on the social positioning staircase, particularly when compared with those who place themselves low (53% vs. 37%)

In line with expectation, **active language learners**, and particularly very active language learners, are much more likely to say that they prefer to watch foreign films and programmes with subtitles rather than dubbed (72% among very active learners vs. 39% among the inactive), as are those who can speak more than one foreign language, and particularly those who speak at least three, compared with those who can't speak any (63% among those speaking 3+ foreign languages vs. 31% among those speaking none).

V. ATTITUDES TO TRANSLATION

The final chapter of the report examines Europeans' attitudes towards the importance of the role that translation from and into foreign languages plays in different scenarios.

Europeans recognise that translation has a role to play in a wide range of areas across society, although many tend not to see it playing a significant role in their everyday lives

Respondents were asked to say how important a role they felt that translation from and into foreign languages played in eight different scenarios, answering on a four-point scale ranging from '*Plays a very important role*' to '*Does not play a role*'²⁸. This question was asked for the first time in 2012. For each area the report summarises the findings in terms of the proportion who think translation is important (very or fairly), before going on to look at the proportions of respondents who consider it very important.

In seven of the eight areas that respondents were asked to think about, a **majority think that translation has an important (very or fairly) role to play**.

The exception is in people's everyday lives where just over two in five Europeans (43%) say that translation has an important role to play, and just under one in six (16%) consider this role to be very important.

Three in ten Europeans (30%) say that translation plays no role at all in their everyday lives.

Europeans are most likely to perceive translation as playing an important role in health and safety and in education and learning.

In relation to education and skills three quarters of respondents (**76%**) see translation as important, with two fifths (40%) regarding its role as very important.

In relation to **health and safety**, where respondents were given the examples of medicines and safety instructions, seven in ten respondents (**71%**) say that they consider translation to have an important role to play, with a similar proportion four in ten (41%) perceiving this role as very important.

Around two thirds of respondents (**68%**) think that translation plays an important role in **job seeking**, with a third (34%) perceiving its role in this respect as very important.

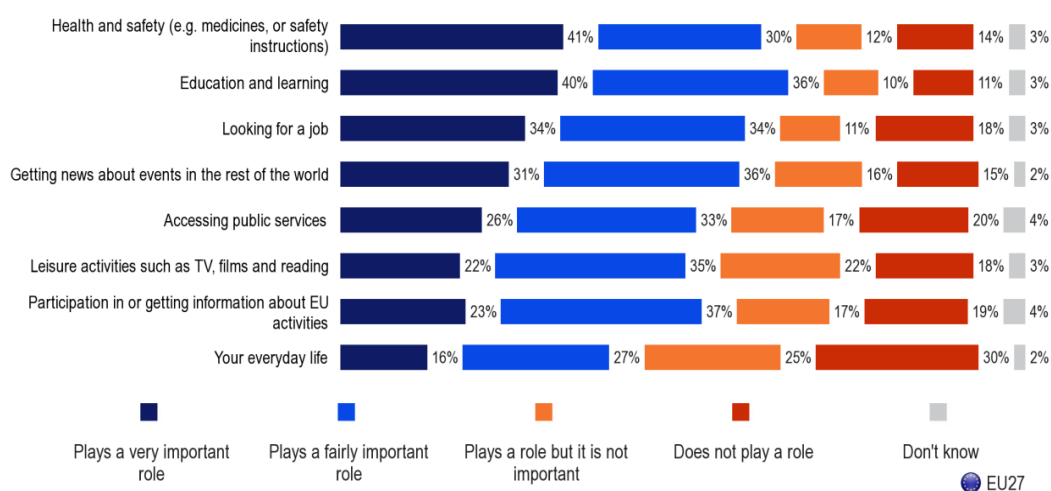
Perceptions are similar in relation to **getting news about events in the rest of the world**, with a similar proportion (**67%**) regarding the role of translation as important, and a slightly lower proportion (31%) seeing it as very important.

²⁸ Q8 "Translations between different languages are used for many reasons. Please tell me to what extent you believe the translation from and into foreign languages plays an important role in each of the following areas...." (SHOW CARD WITH SCALE – ONE ANSWER PER LINE) Plays a very important role, Plays a fairly important role, Plays a role but it is not important, Does not play a role (READ OUT) "Your everyday life; Getting news about events in the rest of the world; Leisure activities such as TV, films, and reading; Health and safety (e.g. medicines, or safety instructions); Accessing public services; Education and learning; Looking for a job; Participation in or getting information about EU activities"

A somewhat lower proportion of respondents - around six in ten - view the role of translation as important in relation to **getting information about or participation in EU activities (60%), accessing public services (59%),** and leisure activities such as **TV, films and reading (57%).**

Of these three areas, accessing public services is most likely to be seen as one where translation has a very important role to play (26% of respondents), with slightly lower proportions of respondents seeing its role as very important in relation to EU activities (23%) and leisure activities (22%).

QE8. Translations between different languages are used for many reasons. Please tell me to what extent you believe the translation from and into foreign languages plays an important role in each of the following areas.



The report looks next at how opinion on the importance of translation in each of the eight contexts varies between EU15 and NMS12, and by country, starting with views on the role that translation plays in people's everyday lives. Countries are ranked in each chart based on the proportion of respondents who consider translation to play a very important role.

Respondents in **EU15** and **NMS12** have very **similar perceptions in terms of how important they think the role of translation plays in their daily lives.**

The findings by individual country, however, show a very different picture, with perceptions varying considerably between countries.

Respondents in Cyprus (85%) are much more likely than those in any other EU country to perceive translation has an important role in their everyday lives, and to regard the role that it plays in this context as very important in (66%).

There are only three other Member States where at least two thirds of respondents see translation as playing an important role in their daily lives: Luxembourg (72%), Denmark and Finland (67% in each).

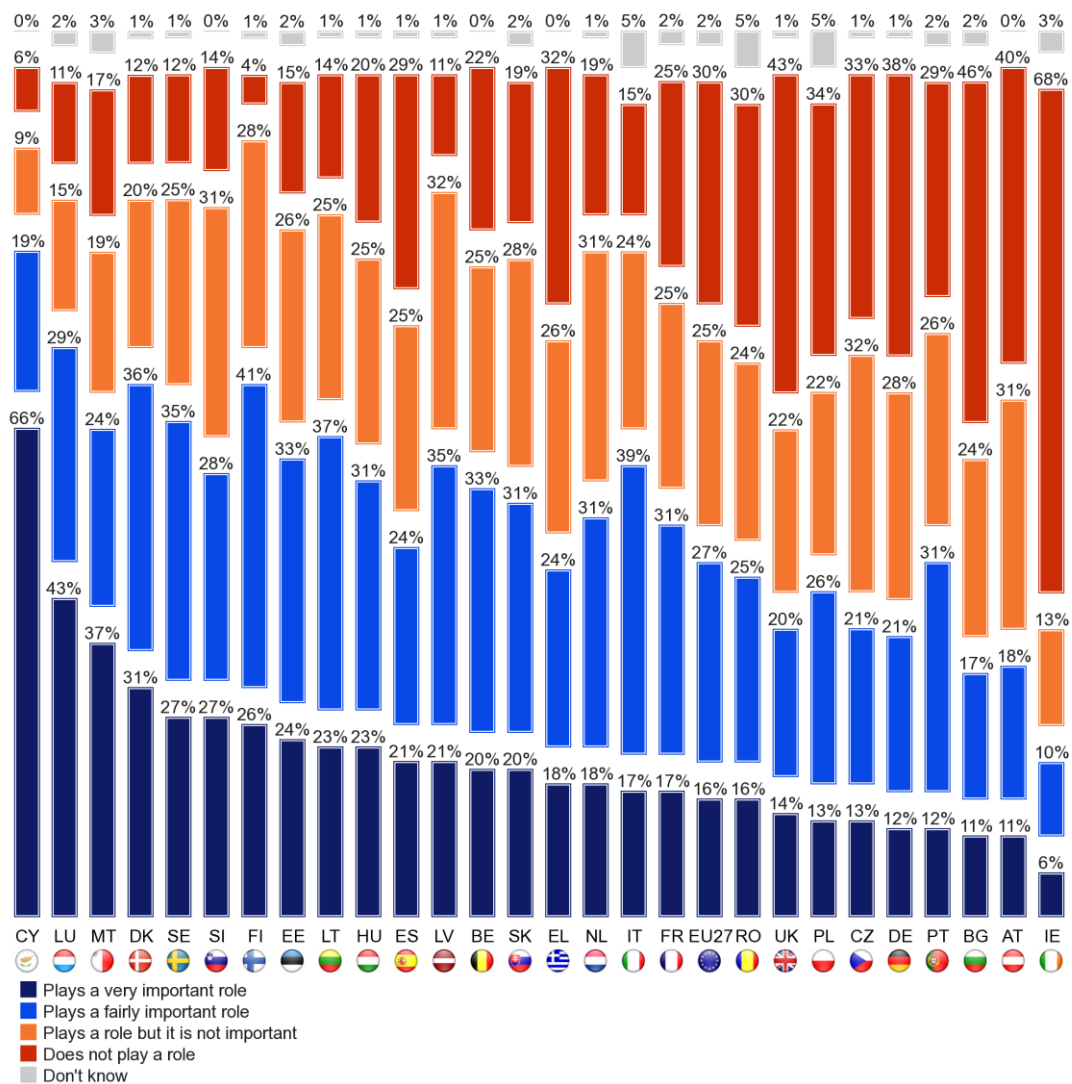
Among these three countries, those in Luxembourg (43%) are most likely to consider the role of translation in their daily lives as very important.

Ireland stands out as the country in which translation is least likely to be seen as playing an important role in everyday life, with just under one in six respondents (16%) thinking it plays such a role and only a small minority (6%) saying it plays a very important role. Respondents in Bulgaria (28%) and Austria (29%) are, after Ireland, those least likely to regard translation as having an important role in their daily lives, but are still nearly twice as likely to do so as those in Ireland.

In each of these countries, however, only around one in nine respondents (11% in each) perceive translation to play a very important role in their everyday lives.

QE8.1. Translations between different languages are used for many reasons. Please tell me to what extent you believe the translation from and into foreign languages plays an important role in each of the following areas.

Your everyday life



Respondents in EU15 are slightly more likely than those in NMS12 to think that translation plays an important role in relation to getting news about events in the rest of the world (68% vs. 62% respectively).

EU15 is also more likely than NMS12 to consider translation plays a very important role in this context (33% vs. 26%).

There are again substantial **differences by country**.

Respondents in Cyprus again have a particularly positive perception of the role that translation plays in relation to getting news from other parts of the world, with nearly nine in ten respondents (87%) regarding the role of translation as important in this respect.

The only Member State where this view is more widespread is Sweden (89%).

Luxembourg (86%), the Netherlands (84%), Denmark (83%), Lithuania (82%), and Finland (81%) also have particularly widespread beliefs that translation plays an important role in terms of accessing news about world events.

Among these countries Cyprus has the greatest proportion thinking translation plays a very important role (66%), with slightly smaller proportions thinking this in Luxembourg (62%), and Sweden (61%).

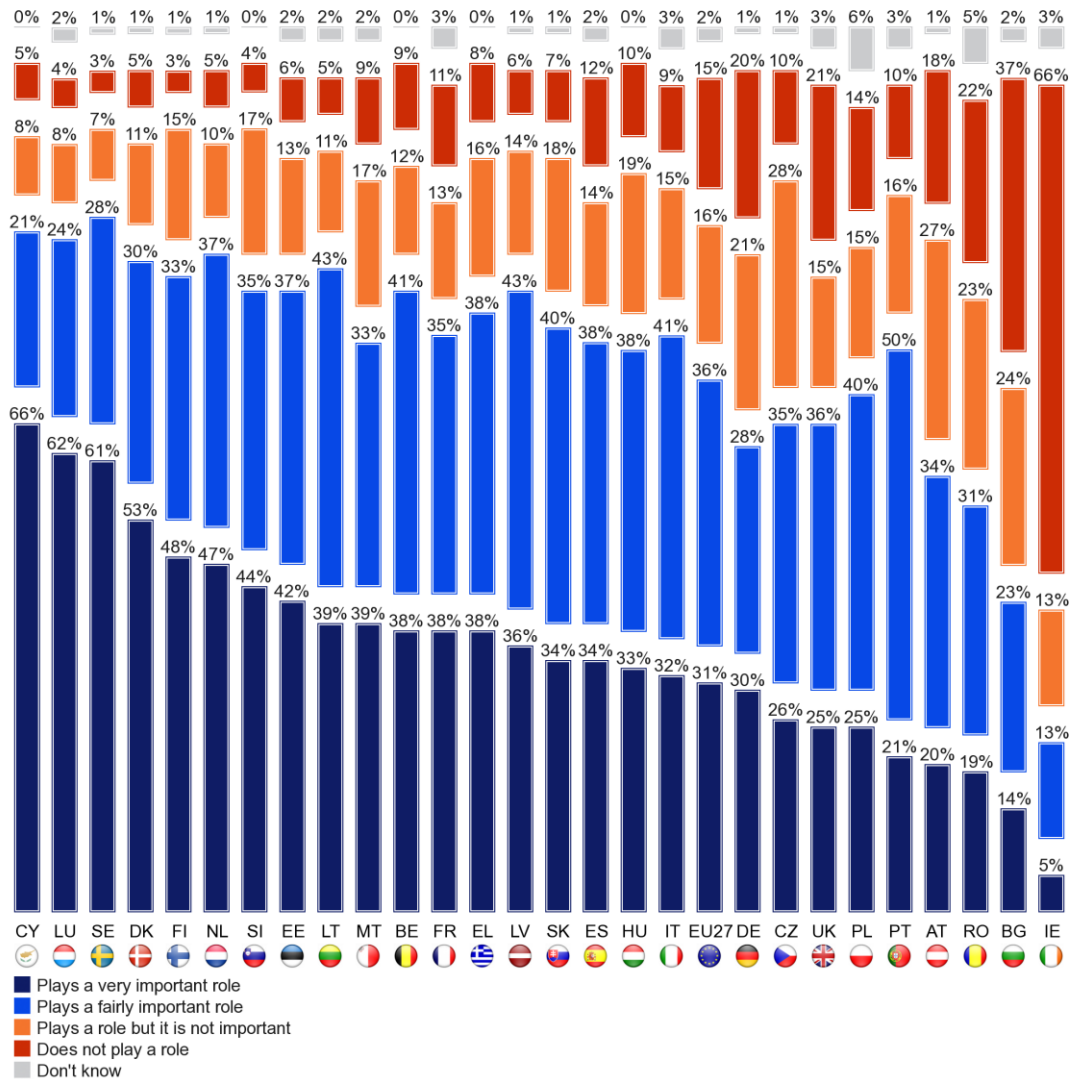
The only other country with a majority saying translation plays a very important role in health and safety is Denmark (53%).

Ireland again stands out from the remainder of the EU in its view of the importance of translation, with less than one in five respondents (18%) regarding translation as important in relation to getting world news, and just one in twenty (5%) saying that they think the role of translation is very important in this regard.

Alongside Ireland, respondents in Bulgaria are again among the least likely to perceive translation as having an important role, although nearly four in ten (37%) consider the role of translation in obtaining news from around the world important, twice as many as in Ireland, and 14% of respondents in Bulgaria think that translation has a very important role in this respect, nearly three times the proportion in Ireland.

QE8.2. Translations between different languages are used for many reasons. Please tell me to what extent you believe the translation from and into foreign languages plays an important role in each of the following areas.

Getting news about events in the rest of the world



On the **importance of the role that translation plays in leisure activities**, such as **television, films, reading**, the **views expressed by** respondents in **EU15** are broadly **similar to** those of respondents in **NMS12**.

However, in this area EU15 has slightly less of a tendency than NMS12 to think translation plays an important role (56% vs. 59% respectively), and to think it plays a very important role in relation to leisure activities (22% vs. 23%).

Again there are large **differences nationally**.

Respondents in Cyprus are more likely than those in any other Member State to believe translation plays an important role in leisure activities (86%). Around eight in ten respondents hold a similar view in Lithuania (81%), Finland (79%), and Denmark (78%), with slightly smaller proportions in Sweden (76%) and Luxembourg (75%).

With the exception of Lithuania, respondents in these countries are particularly likely to also think translation plays an important role in the areas of everyday life, and obtaining news on world events.

Again respondents in Cyprus are much more likely than those in any other Member State to think translation plays a very important role in relation to leisure activities, with six in ten (60%) believing this to be the case. It is the only Member State where the majority of respondents hold such a view.

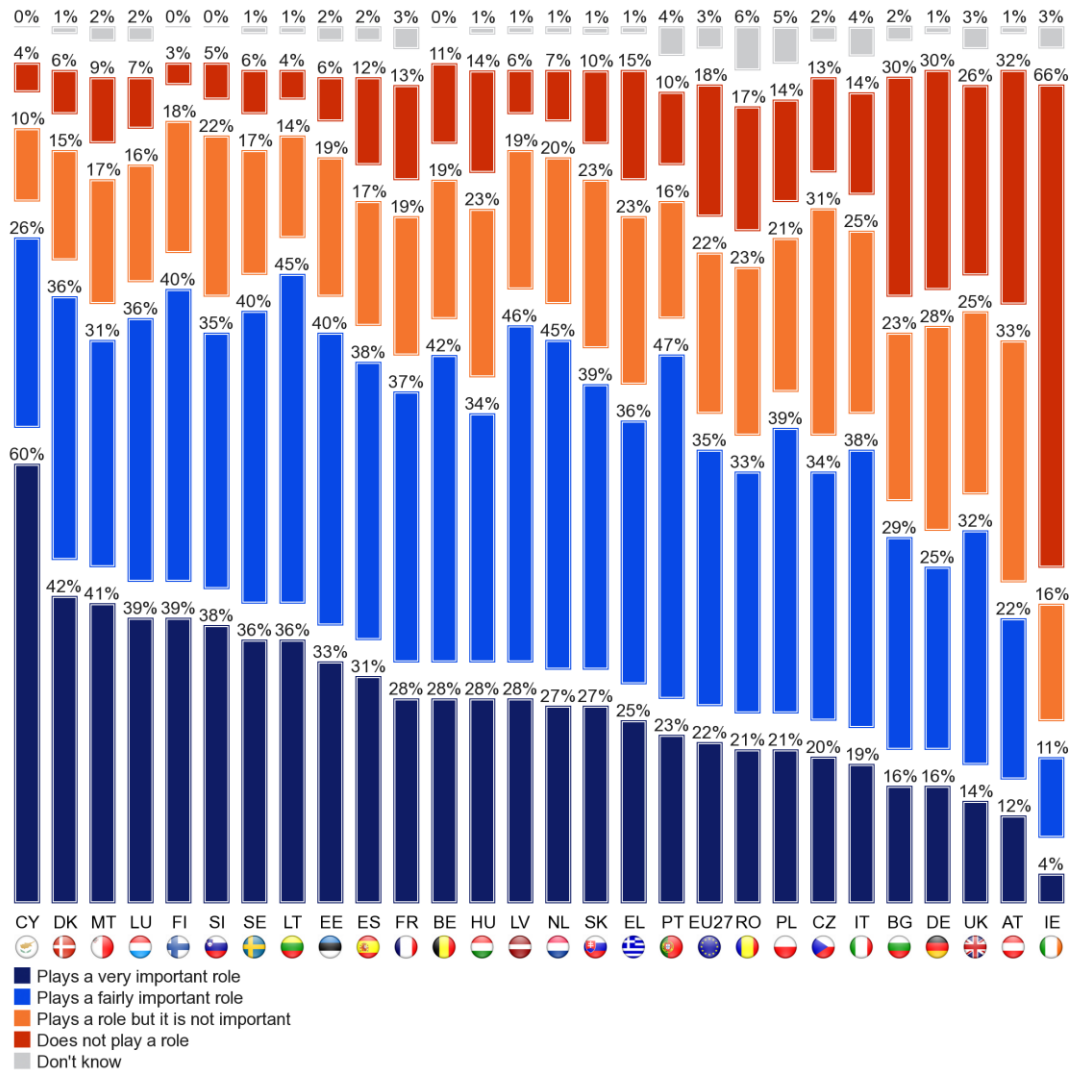
Proportions in the other countries are much smaller, highest in Denmark (42%), Malta (41%) followed by Luxembourg and Finland (39% in each), and Slovenia (38%) and then Sweden and Lithuania (36% in each).

Ireland again stands out as the country where respondents are least likely to think translation plays an important role in leisure activities, with less than one in seven (15%) thinking it does and only a very small minority (4%) holding the view that translation has a very important role in this area.

Respondents in Austria are also particularly unlikely to think translation has an important role to play in relation to leisure activities, although they are more than twice as likely as respondents in Ireland to think it does have an important role (34%), and three times more likely to think it has a very important role to play (12%).

QE8.3. Translations between different languages are used for many reasons. Please tell me to what extent you believe the translation from and into foreign languages plays an important role in each of the following areas.

Leisure activities such as TV, films and reading



Perceptions on the role that translation plays in relation to health and safety are broadly **similar** in **EU15** and **NMS12**.

EU15 is only slightly more likely to think it plays an important role (72% vs. 67% respectively), with a more notable difference on tendency to think this role is very important (43% vs. 35% respectively).

Once again there is widespread **national variation**.

The majority of respondents in 24 Member States think translation plays an important role in health and safety.

Countries where this view is most widespread, and where at least nine in ten respondents hold such opinion, are the Nordic countries of Sweden (94%), Denmark (92%) and Finland (91%), along with Luxembourg (93%) and Cyprus (90%).

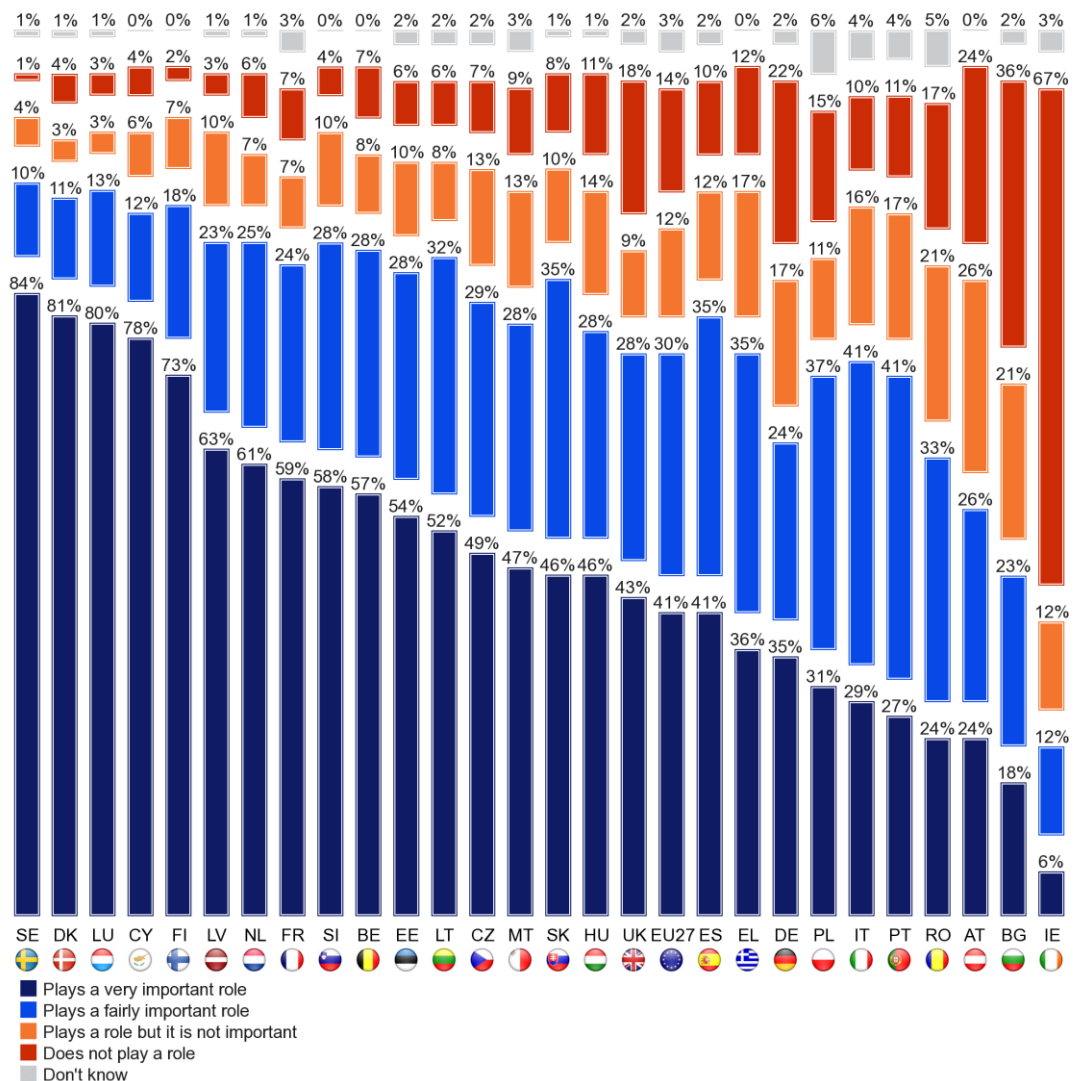
There are a further 11 Member States where at least three quarters of respondents hold the view that translation plays an important role in this field.

The three countries where it is not a view held by the majority of respondents are Austria (50%), Bulgaria (41%) and Ireland (18%). All three countries have particularly poor, and, in all but one instance²⁹, the poorest perceptions of any other Member State on the role translation has in the area of everyday life and getting news about events in the rest of the world.

Among the three, respondents in Austria (24%) are the most likely to consider the role of translation in the field of health and safety as very important and, as seen on the scenarios already reported on, those in Ireland are the least likely to think this to be the case (6%).

QE8.4. Translations between different languages are used for many reasons. Please tell me to what extent you believe the translation from and into foreign languages plays an important role in each of the following areas.

Health and safety (e.g. medicines, or safety instructions)



²⁹ Austria has the fourth worst perception on getting news about events in the world, just ahead of Romania (Bulgaria & Ireland)

The **small variations between EU15 and NMS12 on perceptions of the role translation plays in accessing public services** are in line with those seen on scenarios already discussed.

Thus, EU15 has a slightly greater tendency than NMS12 to think that translation plays an important role (62% vs. 55% respectively), with a more striking difference on the proportions holding the view that it plays a very important role in the area of accessing public services (28% vs. 22%).

There is widespread **national variation**.

Respondents in Luxembourg (89%), Sweden (85%), Denmark (83%) and Cyprus (81%) are the most likely to perceive translation has an important role in accessing public services. These are countries in which respondents have already shown they hold particularly positive views on the importance of the role translation plays in their everyday lives, in accessing information about world events, and in the area of health and safety.

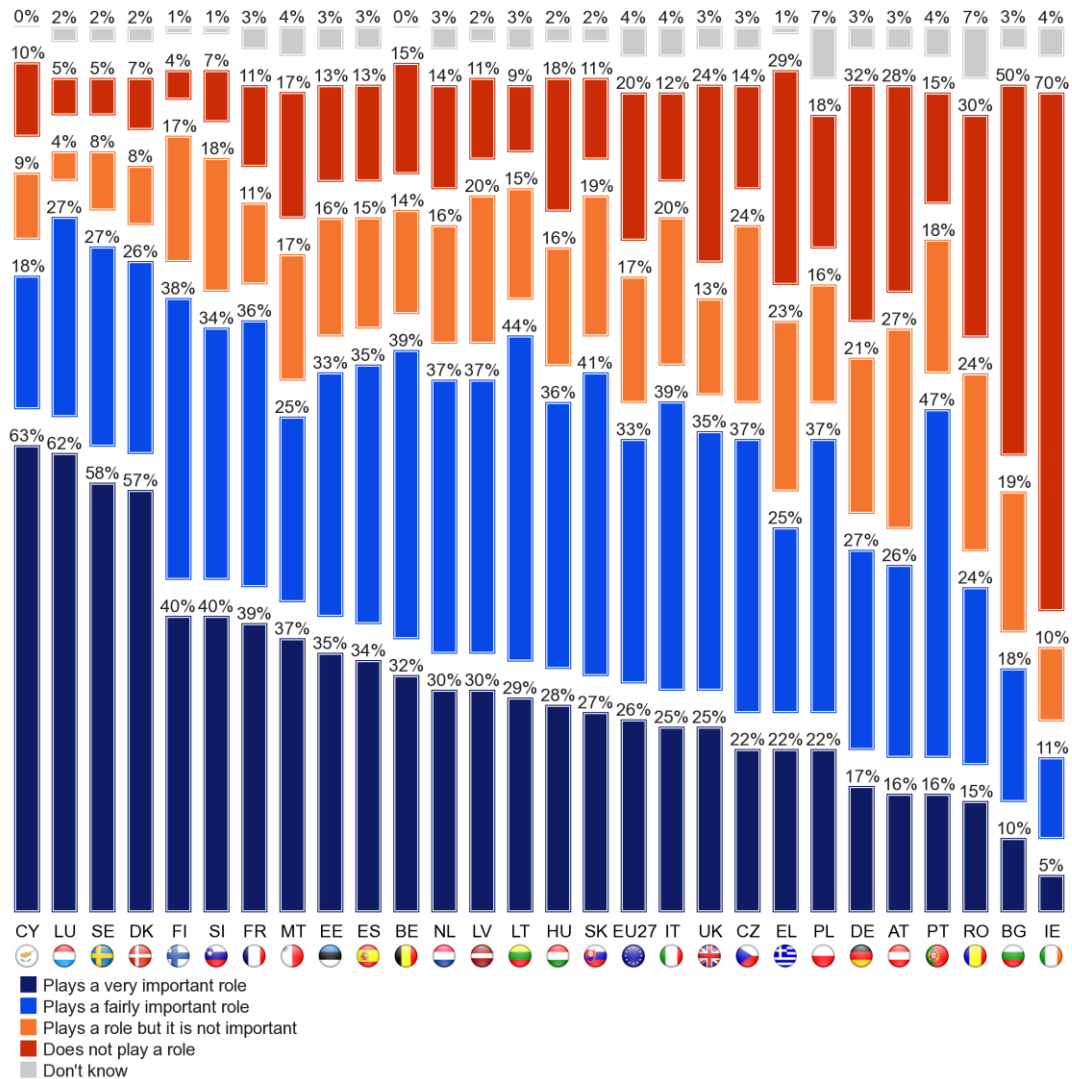
Just over three fifths of respondents in Cyprus (63%) and Luxembourg (62%) think the role translation has in accessing public information is very important, with slightly smaller proportions holding a similar view in Sweden (58%) and Denmark (57%).

Ireland again stands out as the country in which translation is least likely to be seen as playing an important role in accessing public services, with just under one in six (16%) thinking it plays such a role, and only a small minority thinking it plays a very important role (5%).

Bulgaria again follows Ireland as the second least likely of all Member States to think translation has an important role in terms of accessing public services. They are almost twice as likely as those in Ireland to regard this role as important (28%), and twice as likely to think the role translation plays in this area is very important (10%).

QE8.5. Translations between different languages are used for many reasons. Please tell me to what extent you believe the translation from and into foreign languages plays an important role in each of the following areas.

Accessing public services



In terms of the role translation plays in education and learning, the differences between EU15 and NMS12 are again that respondents in EU15 have a slight tendency to think the role translation plays in this area important (78% vs. 69% respectively), with a stronger tendency to think this role very important (42% vs. 34%).

Nationally, countries with the most widespread view that translation plays an important role in education and learning are again Luxembourg (90%), Sweden (88%), Denmark (87%) Finland (86%) and Cyprus (85%).

A similar proportion of respondents in France, Slovenia and Greece (85% in each) believes translation has an important role in this area. Respondents in Cyprus are once again the most likely to think the role translation plays is very important (71%).

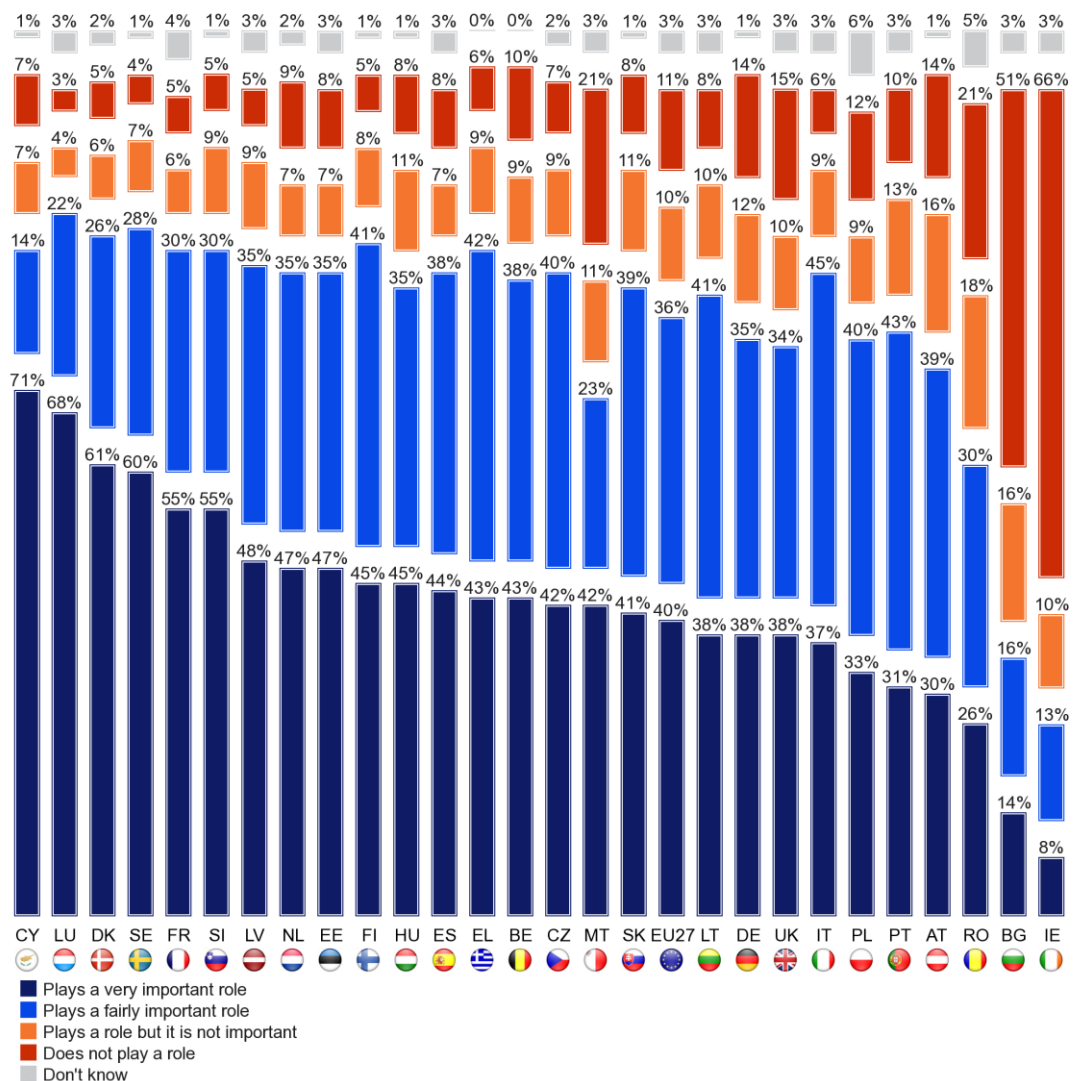
Two thirds of respondents in Luxembourg (68%) hold this view, with slightly lower proportions in Denmark (61%), Sweden (60%), France and Slovenia (55% in each), and much lower proportions, less than half in Finland (45%) and Greece (43%).

Again, Ireland and Bulgaria are the two least likely Member States to hold the view that translation plays an important role in education and learning.

Only a fifth (21%) of respondents in Ireland think its role important, with less than one in twelve (8%) believing it has a very important role to play, whilst in Bulgaria three in ten respondents (30%) think the role translation plays in education and learning is important, with just under one in seven (14%) thinking its role is very important in this area.

QE8.6. Translations between different languages are used for many reasons. Please tell me to what extent you believe the translation from and into foreign languages plays an important role in each of the following areas.

Education and learning



The pattern of differences between the EU15 and NMS12 is again similar on opinion of the role translation plays in terms of looking for a job.

Thus EU15 is slightly more likely than NMS12 to think translation plays an important role (69% vs. 63% respectively), with a stronger tendency to perceive the role it plays is very important (35% vs. 30%).

There is again enormous **national variation**, with the most widespread view that translation plays an important role in looking for a job held by respondents in Greece and Italy (83% in each), followed by those in France (82%) and Cyprus (81%).

Respondents in Cyprus (69%) are much more likely than those in any other Member State to regard the role that translation plays in this context as very important (69%).

There is only one other country where a majority see translation as playing an important role in looking for a job: Luxembourg (58%).

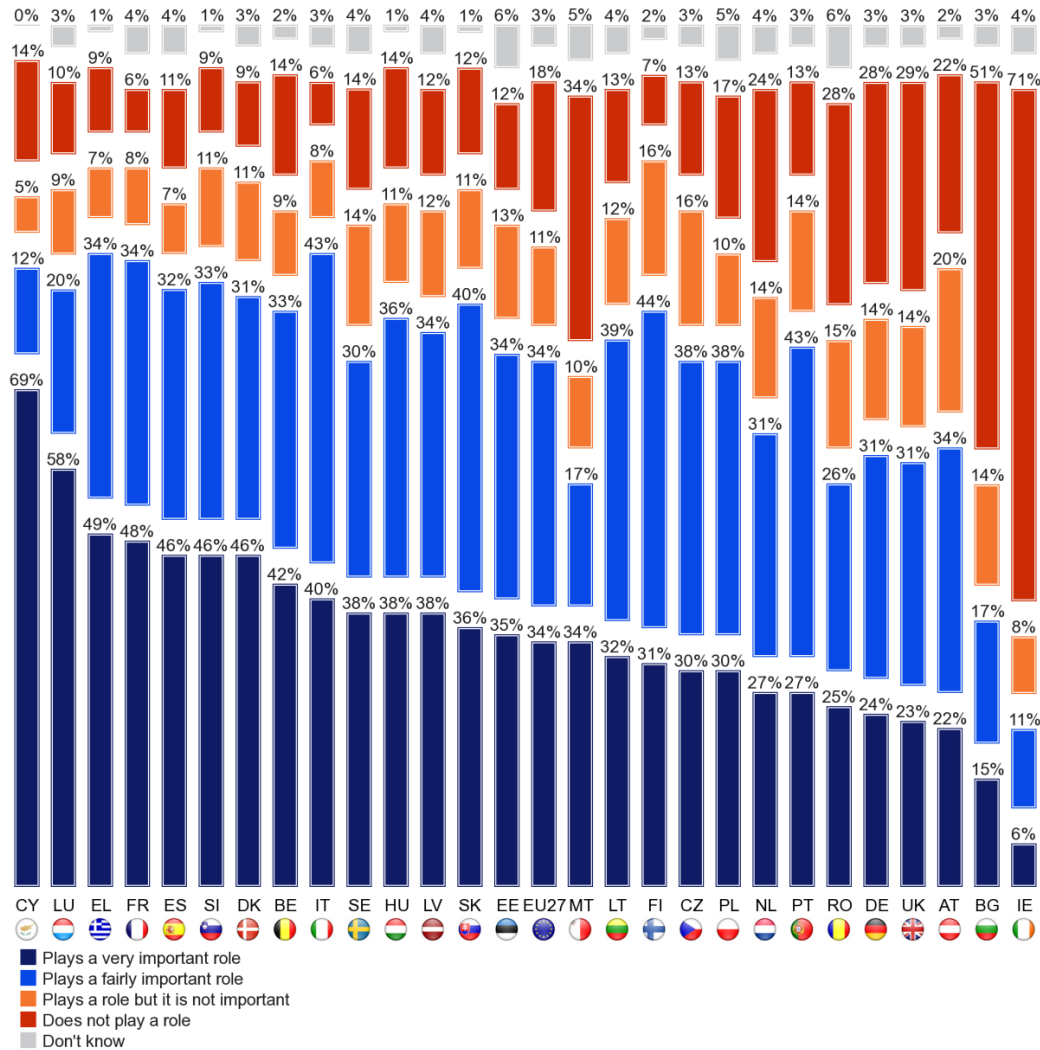
Consistent with findings reported on the other scenarios, Ireland and Bulgaria again stand out as the two countries in which translation is least likely to be seen as playing an important role in looking for a job.

Just under one in six (17%) of respondents in Ireland think translation plays an important role in this area, with only a small minority (6%) saying it plays a very important role.

Respondents in Bulgaria are almost twice as likely to think translation plays an important role (32%), with around half (15%) perceiving it to play a very important role.

QE8.7. Translations between different languages are used for many reasons. Please tell me to what extent you believe the translation from and into foreign languages plays an important role in each of the following areas.

Looking for a job



Differences in opinion between respondents in **EU15** and those in **NMS12 on the importance of the role translation has in relation to obtaining information about or participation in EU activities** are consistent with those seen on all other scenarios asked about, with the exception of the role translation has in leisure activities.

Thus EU15 has a slightly greater tendency than NMS12 to think that translation plays an important role in terms of obtaining information about or participation in EU activities (61% vs. 55% respectively), with a more marked likelihood of thinking it plays a very important role (24% vs. 20%).

Again there is enormous **national variation**. As seen on the other areas where translation has a role to play respondents in Denmark (82%), followed by those in Cyprus and Luxembourg (76% in each) and Sweden (75%) have an exceptionally strong tendency to perceive translation plays an important role in relation to participating in or finding information about EU activities.

Respondents in Cyprus are again the most likely to think the role translation plays is very important (58%), followed by those in Denmark and Luxembourg (51%), with a much smaller proportion and a minority thinking this to be so in Sweden (38%).

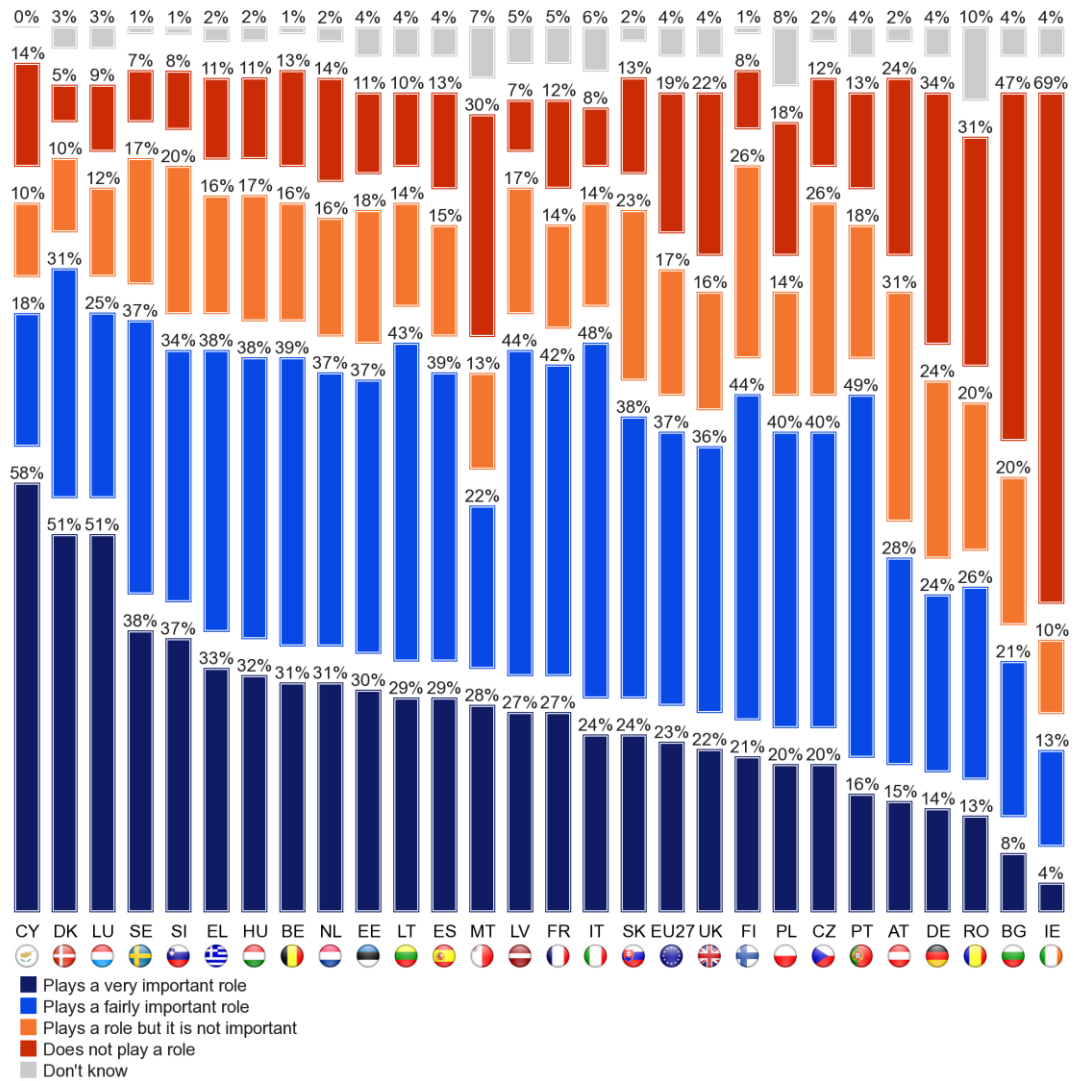
Similarly, and consistent with the results on all the other situations asked about, Ireland and Bulgaria stand out again as the two countries least likely to believe translation plays an important role in relation to participating in or getting information about EU activities.

Just under one in six (17%) respondents in Ireland hold the view that translation plays an important role, with only a very small minority (4%) holding the opinion that it plays a very important role.

In Bulgaria around three in ten respondents (29%) think translation plays an important role, and they are twice as likely as those in Ireland to think it plays a very important role (8%).

QE8.8. Translations between different languages are used for many reasons. Please tell me to what extent you believe the translation from and into foreign languages plays an important role in each of the following areas.

Participation in or getting information about EU activities



There is **socio-demographic variation** in the opinions held. The most notable, and where relative differences are greatest, are:

- **15-24 year olds**, particularly when compared with those aged 55+, thinking translation plays an important role in their everyday life (54% vs. 35% respectively)
- **those who finished their full-time education aged 20+**, particularly when compared with those finishing aged 15, thinking translation plays an important role in:
 - their everyday life (50% vs. 32% respectively)
 - leisure activities (65% vs. 46%)
 - getting news about events in the rest of the world (76% vs. 55%)
 - participation in or getting information about EU activities (66% vs. 50%)
 - accessing public services (67% vs. 50%)
- occupationally, **students**, particularly when compared with the retired, thinking translation plays an important role in:
 - their everyday life (58% vs. 32% respectively)
 - leisure activities (68% vs. 50%)
 - participation in or getting information about EU activities (69% vs. 51%)
 - getting news about events in the rest of the world (76% vs. 59%)
- **people who use the internet daily**, particularly when compared with those who never use it, thinking translation plays an important role in their everyday life (49% vs. 33% respectively)

Very active learners are more likely than others, and particularly when compared with those who are inactive, to think translation plays an important part in their daily lives (70% vs. 39% respectively) and that it plays an important role in leisure activities (73% vs. 54%).

Those who speak foreign languages, in particular those who can speak at least three foreign languages, attach more importance to the role translation plays than those who don't, particularly in relation to:

- their everyday life, where 65% of those who speak at least three languages think translation plays an important role, compared with 33% of those who don't understand any foreign languages well enough to hold a conversation.
- getting news about events in the world (82% vs. 58% respectively)
- leisure activities (71% vs. 49%)
- getting information about or participating in EU activities (70% vs. 53%)

CONCLUSION

This survey sets out to explore European attitudes and behaviour in relation to multilingualism, a key policy area for which the Directorate General for Education and Culture is responsible. It provides an update on results in 2005 and a picture of whether attitudes and behaviour are aligned with policy, and where they may be in conflict. This concluding section draws together the findings of the research and considers some of the implications for all European Commission services involved.

1. Europeans have very positive attitudes towards multilingualism

Europeans have very positive attitudes towards multilingualism. 88% of them think that knowing languages other than their mother tongue is very useful and almost every European (98%) considers mastering foreign languages useful for the future of their children.

Two thirds of Europeans (67%) consider English as one of the two most useful languages for themselves. The next most frequently mentioned languages include: German (17%), French (16%), Spanish (14%) and Chinese (6%). There has been a decrease in the proportion thinking that French is important (-9 percentage points), and in those considering German as an important language for personal development (-5 points). Europeans are more likely now than they were in 2005 to think that Chinese is an important language (+ 4 points).

Among languages perceived as useful for the future of their children are: English (79%), French and German (20%), Spanish (16%) and Chinese (14%). There has been a decrease since 2005 in the proportion of Europeans who think that French (-13 points) and German (-8 points) are important for children to learn for their future. The perception that Chinese is a useful language for children to learn is significantly more widespread than in 2005 (+12 points).

Three quarters of Europeans believe that improvement in language skills should be a policy priority, as expressed by 77% of respondents.

84% of Europeans think that everyone in the EU should speak one language in addition to their mother tongue and 72% think that EU people should speak more than one foreign language. Hence, most European citizens share the Barcelona objective that all EU citizens should be able to speak at least two foreign languages in addition to their mother tongue.

Europeans are widely in favour of people in the EU being able to speak a common language (69%), and a small majority agree that EU institutions should adopt a single language to communicate with European citizens (53%); while at the same time believing that all languages within the EU should be treated equally, a view that has strengthened since 2005 and has been reported by 81% of Europeans.

2. Competences still need to be improved

Just over half of Europeans (54%) are able to hold a conversation in at least one additional language, a quarter (25%) is able to speak at least two additional languages and one in ten (10%) are conversant in at least three. Whilst just over half of all Europeans are able to speak at least one other language, **there are no signs that multilingualism is on the increase**. There has been a small increase (2 points) in the proportion of Europeans saying they cannot speak any languages in addition to their mother tongue. In part at least, this can be explained by a decline in the number of people speaking languages like Russian and German, typically in the Central and Eastern European countries, where these languages used to be part of the school curriculum in post-1945 Europe.

English dominates as the language that Europeans are most likely to be able to speak. At a national level, English and Spanish are the only two of the main five languages that show notable increases since 2005 in the proportion of respondents saying that they know them well enough to be able to hold a conversation. The majority of Europeans who are able to speak English, German, Spanish, Russian or French as foreign languages believe they have relatively good skills.

3. Passive skills increasing

Europeans say they regularly use foreign languages when watching films/television or listening to the radio (37%), using the internet (36%) and communicating with friends (35%). 27% of respondents report using foreign languages regularly for conversations at work and 50% during holidays abroad.

Europeans are just as likely to be able to read a newspaper or magazine article in a foreign language as they are to follow the news on the radio or television, with just over two fifths (44%) of them saying they can do so. Again, English is the most widespread foreign language, with a similar proportion of Europeans (25%).

Europeans are slightly less likely to say that they understand any foreign language well enough to be able to use it to communicate online (e.g. using email, Twitter, Facebook etc.), with two fifths (39%) saying that they can use at least one foreign language in this way.

In terms of the total number of languages Europeans are able to use for these passive activities (i.e. including any foreign language mentioned, not just English, French, German, Spanish and Russian), around three in ten respondents say that they know one language well enough to follow the news (29%) a similar proportion that they know one language well enough to read newspapers or magazines (29%), and a slightly smaller proportion that they understand one foreign language well enough to be able to communicate online (27%).

Less than one in ten respondents understand two languages well enough to follow broadcast news (9%), read press articles (9%) and communicate online (7%). Only a small minority (3% or less) say they understand at least three languages.

The most notable changes since 2005 are an increase in the proportion of Europeans who regularly use foreign languages on the internet (+10 percentage points) and when watching films/television or listening to the radio (+8 points). The proportion of Europeans who do not use a foreign language regularly in any situation has fallen from 13% in 2005 to 9% in 2012. Foreign languages are, therefore, reported as a useful tool to access internet and other media.

4. Language learning: Advantages and Barriers to overcome

Europeans recognise the benefits of being able to speak other languages in terms of being able to work or study in another country, meet people from other countries and understand people from other cultures. They are most likely to identify working in another country as a key advantage of learning a new language, with three fifths of Europeans (61%) holding this view. Just over half of Europeans (53%) perceive an advantage to be using the language at work (including travelling abroad). A slightly smaller proportion (46%) mention the ability to study abroad and the possibility of using it on holidays abroad (47%). A little over two fifths of respondents think that learning a new language would help them to get a better job in their own country (45%) and study in another country (43%). Just under two fifths (38%) believe learning a new language would help with understanding people from other cultures.

Only a minority of Europeans are actively engaged in learning new languages, with the most commonly cited barrier to learning simply being that people are not motivated to do so, with time, cost and a lack of ability also regularly given as reasons. The results are broadly in line with those from the 2005 survey. The most common way in which foreign languages are learnt is at school (68%).

There is a clear relationship between the order in which a language is mentioned (i.e. perceived fluency) and the frequency with which that language is used.

A quarter (24%) of respondents use their first foreign language every day or almost every day, a similar proportion (23%) use it often and the remainder (50%) use it on an occasional basis.

Around one in ten respondents use their second language every day or nearly every day (8%), with respondents much more likely to use it on an occasional basis only (65%).

Similarly, only 6% of respondents who speak a third foreign language use it on an 'everyday' basis, around one in eight (13%) use it often but not daily, and around seven in ten (69%) use it occasionally.

5. The importance of translation

The majority of Europeans think translation plays an important part in a wide range of areas across society, in their everyday life and an important role in looking for a job, in getting news about events in the rest of the world, participating in or getting news about EU activities and in their leisure activities.

Europeans perceive translation as playing an important role in health and safety (71%) and in education and learning (76%). Around 68% think that translation plays an important role in job seeking, with a third (34%) perceiving its role in this respect as very important. Perceptions are similar in relation to getting news about events in the rest of the world, with two thirds (67%) regarding the role of translation as important, and almost a third (31%) seeing it as very important. 59% view the role of translation as important in relation to getting information about or participation in EU activities accessing public services and leisure activities such as TV, films and reading (57%). However only 43% say that translation has an important role to play in their everyday lives, and just under one in six (16%) consider this role to be very important.

44% agree that that they prefer subtitles to dubbing when watching foreign films or TV programmes.

6. Young people are the future

The decline in the use of languages associated with the post-war era may continue to challenge growth in language learning in the EU overall. However, cultural, societal, economic and technological change all present opportunities for growth, particularly among young Europeans, who are more engaged in learning new languages and using them in a wider context. They are much more likely to be using languages more frequently than others. The majority can use their languages in passive activities, with just as many able to communicate online as can read the press or watch TV. They also recognise the benefits of being able to speak other languages in terms of being able to work or study in another country, meet people from other countries and understand people from other cultures. The majority think translation plays an important part in their everyday life and an important role in looking for a job, in getting news about events in the rest of the world, participating in or getting news about EU activities and in their leisure activities. However, cost, time, quality of teaching, availability of learning resources and motivation remain significant barriers to learning foreign languages.

When polling attitudes towards languages of younger people, particularly those aged **15-24 when compared with those aged 55+**, the differences are: On **communicating online** (44% vs. 13% respectively); on **reading magazine and newspaper articles** (41% vs. 20%) and on **following news on television or radio** (41% vs. 20%); on using foreign languages on the **internet** (50% vs. 19% respectively); on **studying languages** (41% vs. 4%); on **continuing to learn a new language** in the last 2 years (45% vs. 5% respectively) and **starting to learn a new language** in the last 2 years (18% vs. 3%); on preferring watching foreign films and programmes **with subtitles**, rather than watching dubbed versions (55% vs. 35%); on thinking **translation** plays an important role in their everyday life (54% vs. 35% respectively); on the main **advantages** to learning a new language as the ability to study in another country (54% vs. 39% respectively) or having better prospects of working abroad at a later stage (29% vs. 6% respectively) and better career prospects/promotion (29% vs. 6%); on **barriers** to learn, they think it is too expensive (30% vs. 17% respectively).

Concerning languages perceived as useful for personal development, 15-24 year olds are more likely to mention English (79% vs. 56% respectively), German (20% vs. 14%), Spanish (18% vs. 11%) and Chinese (8% vs. 4%) as the most useful ones.

Although the language skills of Europeans still need to be improved, their favourable attitude towards multilingualism will most probably be reflected in the competences of the young generations.