

Differing attitudes towards the EU

Different groups of people have varying attitudes towards the EU. Factors like gender, age, education, income, occupation and where one resides influence attitudes towards the EU. One explanation for this variance is that groups which would benefit more from EU membership, can also be expected to have a more positive attitude towards the EU. When Sweden joined the EU, the support was greater among men and older age groups, while now there is no significant difference between the sexes and it is instead the youngest group that is the most positive (Berg & Bové 2016). On the other hand, one pattern has not changed. People with a higher level of education and a higher income are more positive towards the EU, and those who live in big cities usually have a more positive attitude towards the EU than those who live in rural areas or smaller towns.

Table 1. Attitudes towards the EU (percent).

Attitudes toward the EU (percent).	Positive	Neither positive nor negative	Negative	Total
Sex				
Women	57	26	17	5058
Men	56	22	22	5005
Age				
16-29 years	69	19	12	1384
30-49 years	61	22	17	2795
50-64 years	51	26	23	2534
65-86 years	51	27	22	3339
Education				
Low	38	34	28	1411
Medium low	51	28	21	3012
Medium high	56	23	21	2333
High	70	17	13	3232
Income				
Low	44	31	25	3563
Medium	49	27	24	3699
High	69	19	12	2293
Residence				
Countryside	45	28	27	1437
Urban	50	28	27	2443
Smaller city	58	24	18	3068
Big city	66	19	15	3029
Total	5735	2461	1990	10 186

Source: SOM Institute, [Den nationella SOM-undersökningen 2018](#)

Comment: The question reads "In general, what is your attitude towards the EU?" with the answer alternatives "Very positive" and "Fairly positive" (coded as "Positive"), "Neither positive nor negative", "Fairly negative" and "Very negative" (coded as "Negative"). The variable "Education" has been recoded. "Not completed primary school (or equivalent compulsory school)" and "Primary school (or equivalent compulsory school)" have been coded as "Low", "Studies at upper secondary school, folk high school (or equivalent)" and "Degree from high school, folk high school (or equivalent)" has been coded as "Medium low", "Post-secondary education, not college/university" and "Studies at university/university" has been coded as "Medium high", "Graduate from university/college" and "Studies at/graduate from postgraduate education" has been coded as "High". The variable "Income" has been recoded. "Low" has been coded as income between "Less than 100,000" to "400,000", "Medium" as income between "401 000" to "800 000", "High" as income between "801 000" to "More than 1 100 000". The variable "Residence" has been recoded. "Greater urban area" and "Small urban area" have been coded as "Urban", "City: central" and "City: outer area" has been coded as "smaller city", "City of major: central" and "City: outer area/suburb" has been coded as "Bigger city". The percentage base consists of those who have answered the questions.

References

Berg, Linda & Bové, Klara (2016) "Identifikation med Europa och inställning till EU", i Ohlsson, J., Ekengren Oscarsson, H. och Maria Solevid (red) Ekvilibrium. Göteborgs universitet: SOM-institutet.