

PAPER

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DANISH ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EU ARE DIVERSE¹

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SUMMARY: The "EU" is not one unique entity to the Danes, as individual citizens vary significantly in their opinions towards different aspects of the EU, such as membership, opt-outs and sovereignty. Age, gender and openness to other cultures or expert opinions can have significant implications for some, but not all, attitudes towards the EU, as shown in the results of a recent survey conducted by Think Tank EUROPA.

Danes are on the one hand very satisfied with EU membership and on the other very sceptical of sovereignty transfer. This approach to the EU is remarkably stringent, meaning that the Danes view the EU as an excellent cooperation as long as it does not interfere too much with the Danish way of doing things. It is the large segment of the population that favours membership but opposes sovereignty transfers that will determine the outcome of future Danish referendums on EU opt-outs, as most Danes see a close link between having opt-outs and safeguarding sovereignty.

The survey indicates that opt-outs have a special status among Danes. It is far more difficult to create a profile of a "typical" citizen based on attitudes towards the opt-outs than on the basis of attitudes towards membership and sovereignty. The resistance against abolishing opt-outs cuts across traditional divisions.

¹ This paper is an in-house translation done by Louise Pierrel Mikkelsen of the Danish original article: <http://thinkeuropa.dk/vaerdier/store-forskelle-i-danskernes-eu-holdninger>. Thanks to Rachel Payne for proof reading.

The survey also shows that the Danes perceive immigration and Islamic terrorism as far greater threats to sovereignty than the EU. However, the EU is not necessarily perceived as a helping hand in dealing with immigration. The majority of respondents nevertheless believes in European solutions, rather than national solutions, when it comes to immigration and terrorism.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS:

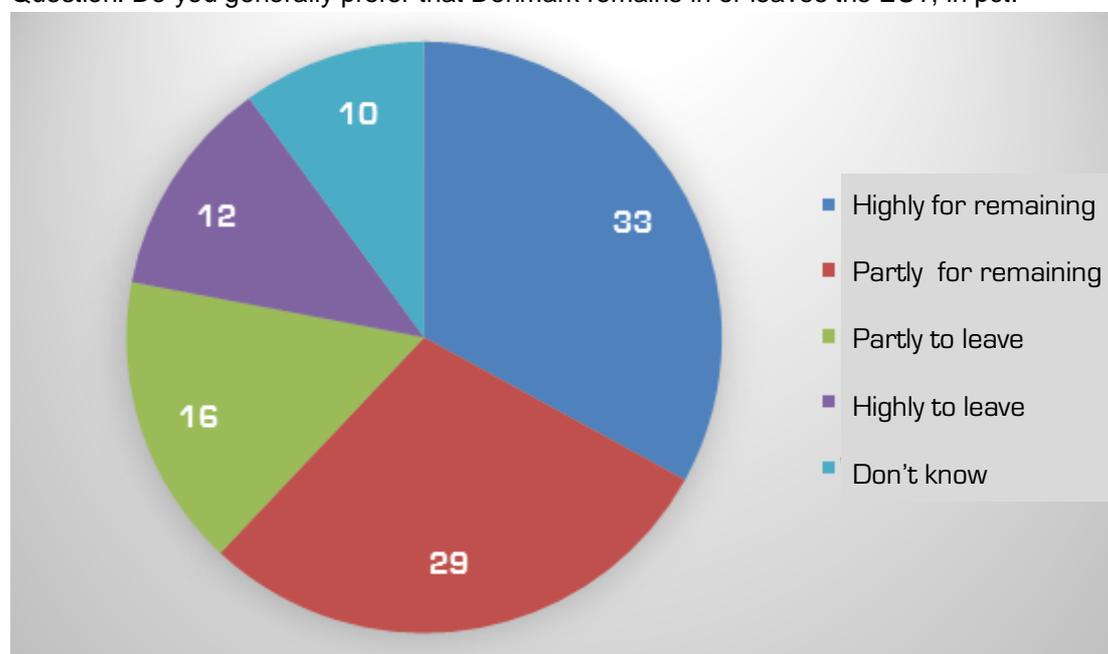
- A new survey on Danes' opinions towards the EU paints a current and detailed picture of “who believes what” – about EU membership, EU opt-outs and sovereignty in today's Denmark.
- The survey confirms, at an aggregated level, the well-known perception of a strong and stable backing for EU membership combined with high and stable scepticism of transfer sovereignty and abolishing the Danish EU opt-outs.
- Women and men are equally optimistic about EU membership, but women are significantly more conflicted when it comes to the opt-outs. This is evident in the finding that fewer women want to abolish the opt-outs – rather than that there are fewer women who want to keep them.
- Young people are also much more in doubt about the EU than other age groups. Among the young people who have an opinion, there is a clear overproportion of EU supporters, a representative distribution in terms of reservations over the EU, and less reluctance towards sovereignty transfer.
- Highly educated people are backing the EU. Education is consistently the most significant factor linked with positive perceptions of the EU. Income, on the other hand, does not seem to be as important in relation to EU attitudes.
- Voters who support the Liberals, the Socialist People's Party, the Social Liberals, the Liberal Alliance and the Alternative party are the biggest advocates of Danish EU membership. The Danish People's Party is the only party in the parliament with a majority of voters who want to leave the EU.
- Those who are dissatisfied with their own living standards are more likely to be strong opponents of the EU and sovereignty transfer than those who are satisfied. And those who state that they “do not like to interact with a variety of other cultures” have more critical attitudes towards the EU than others.
- In addition, there is an interesting link between attitudes to expert statements and EU positions; those who do not listen to expert statements differ significantly from the rest of the respondents in being critical of EU membership.
- A multivariate analysis shows that the EU opt-outs are the main concern that unites Danes across communities and social groupings. It is far more difficult to create a profile of a citizen based on attitudes towards the opt-outs than on the basis of attitudes towards membership and sovereignty.
- Overall, the survey shows that Danish EU opinions are far from black and white, as many Danes take individual positions on membership, opt-outs and sovereignty.

A new representative survey conducted by YouGov for Think Tank EUROPA confirms a well-known impression of Danish perceptions the EU: There is stable support for membership overall.

The survey asked the respondents whether they would like Denmark to remain in or leave the EU.² 62 per cent answered "remain" and 28 per cent answered "leave". In the additional categories, 33 per cent said want to remain "to a great extent", as opposed to just 12 per cent who want to leave the EU "to a great extent".

Figure 1: A large majority want to remain in the EU

Question: Do you generally prefer that Denmark remains in or leaves the EU?, in pct.



Note: N=1.003. Source: YouGov for Think Tank EUROPA, May 2018.

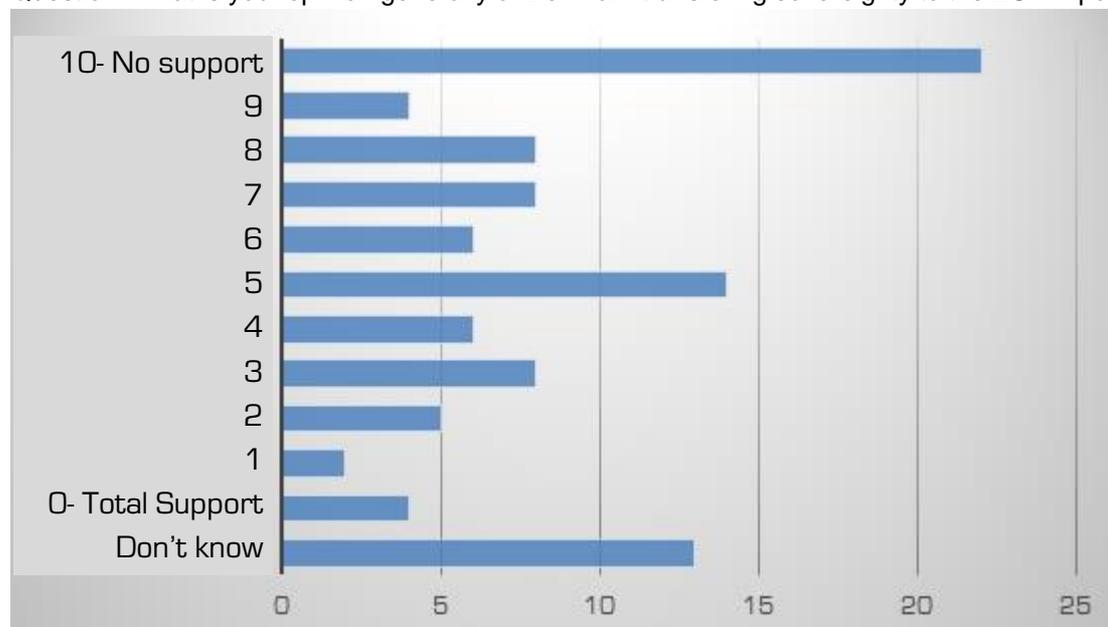
There is still a stable and significantly high sovereignty-based euroscepticism: 48 per cent of respondents placed themselves in the most sceptical half of a scale of 0-10 in relation to their perceptions sovereignty (i.e. a position between 6 and 10), whereas 25 per cent placed themselves in the least sceptical half (between 0 and 4)³. When looking at the most extreme ends of the scale (0-2 and 8-10), 34 per cent of the respondents are at the most sceptical end of the scale and 11 percent are at the least sceptical end.

² Question: "Do you generally prefer that Denmark remains in or leaves the EU?" Answer options: "Prefer to a great extent that Denmark remains in the EU"; "Prefer to some extent that Denmark stays in the EU"; "Prefer to some extent that Denmark leaves the EU"; "Prefer to a great extent that Denmark leaves the EU"; "Do not know".

³ Question: "What is your opinion generally about Denmark transferring its sovereignty to the EU?" Answer options: Scale where 0: "I fully support it" and 10: "I do not support it at all"; as well as "Do not know".

Figure 2: Scepticism on sovereignty despite support for membership

Question: What is your opinion generally of Denmark transferring sovereignty to the EU? in pct.



Note: N=1.003. Source: YouGov for Think Tank EUROPA, May 2018.

The two questions about membership and on sovereignty are closely linked: Those who are most opposed to sovereignty transfer are typically also more sceptical of actual membership. But a large group of Danes favour membership whilst feeling a strong reluctance towards sovereignty transfer. The most significant gap exists between those who "greatly" support the EU (33 per cent) and the remainder of the respondents. Thus, 29 per cent of those who are very satisfied with membership are in the group that are at the least sceptical end of the sovereignty scale, while the same applies to just three per cent of those who prefer to remain in the EU only to some extent. This group of citizens who want to remain in the EU without supporting sovereignty transfer can be crucial to the outcome of any future referendum.

Most Danes associate the three Danish EU opt-outs, on the euro, justice and home affairs and defence, with safeguarding sovereignty.⁴ The new survey shows that Danes are just as sceptical today about abolishing the opt-outs as they were before.⁵ An absolute majority of 52 percent want to keep the euro opt-out, 47

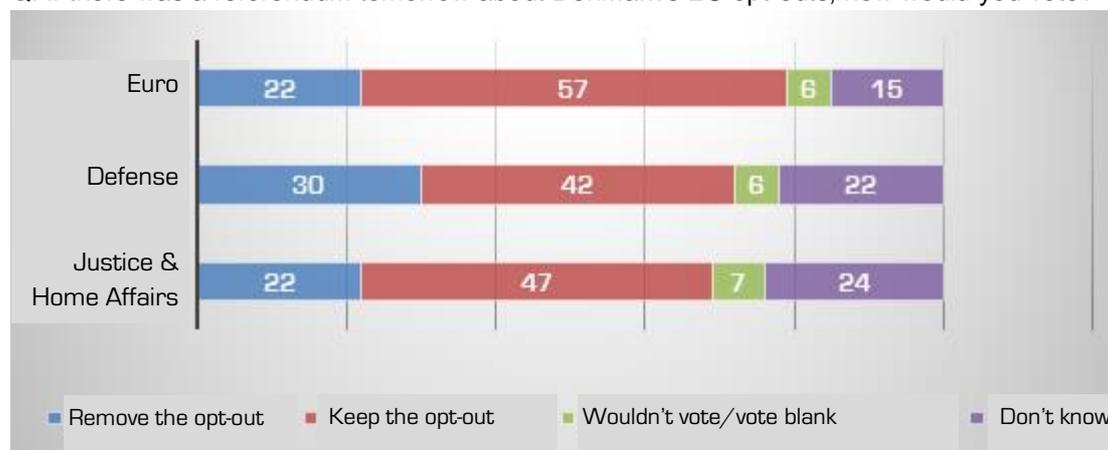
⁴ "Suveræne Danmark", report, Think Tank EUROPA, 2017, <http://thinkeuropa.dk/vaerdier/suveraene-danmark>.

⁵ Question: "If there was a referendum tomorrow about Denmark's EU opt-outs, how would you vote?" (Denmark's EU opt-out on justice and home affairs, defence cooperation and common currency, the euro). Possible answers: "I would vote to abolish the opt-outs"; "I would vote to keep the opt-outs"; "I would not vote/I would vote blank"; "Do not know"

percent want to keep the justice and home affairs opt-out and 42 percent want to keep the defence opt-out. Just as with the sovereignty issue, the support for the opt-outs is strong among all others than those who prefer “to a great extent” to keep Denmark in the EU. This is the only group in which the majority would support the abolition of the justice and defence opt-outs, while an equal proportion of these respondents would like to abolish or keep the euro opt-out.

Figure 3: We would prefer to keep the opt-outs

Q: If there was a referendum tomorrow about Denmark's EU opt-outs, how would you vote?



Note: N=1.003. Source: YouGov for Think Tank EUROPA, May 2018.

The Danes are equally highly satisfied with EU membership and highly sceptical of sovereignty transfer. Overall their attitudes are consistent, in that the EU is seen as an excellent cooperation, as long as it does not interfere too much with the Danish way of doing things.

Links between discontentment with immigration and EU resistance

Danes' attitudes towards the EU are generally very stable, and this distinctive “Danish approach” to the EU has existed since the early 1990s, when the Maastricht Treaty accelerated European cooperation.⁶ However, Think Tank EUROPA's sovereignty survey from 2017 (Sovereign Denmark) shows that recent European and global crises – the financial crisis, migrant crisis, an aggressive Russia, an unpredictable American President and terrorist attacks on European soil – may affect the Danes' attitudes towards European cooperation.⁷ If these

⁶ For an introduction to Danish Euroscepticism, see Catharina Sørensen, Euroscepticism. PhD thesis, University of Copenhagen, 2007.

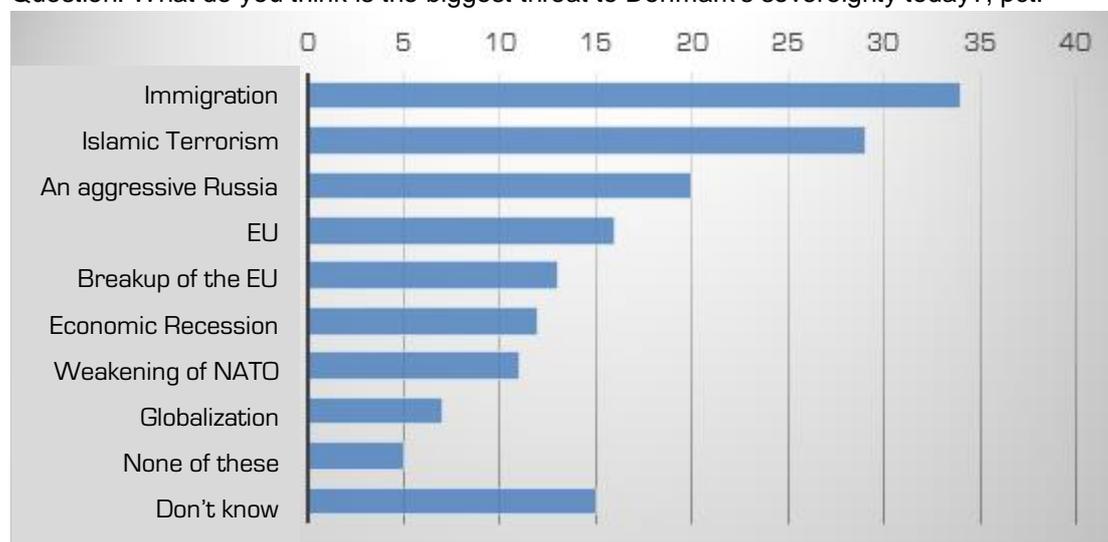
⁷ Trump, Putin and terror make the Danes want more EU, paper, Think Tank EUROPA, 2017, <http://thinkeuropa.dk/vaerdier/trump-putin-og-terror-faar-danskerne-til-oenske-mere-eu>.

external threats worsen and feel even more serious, the Danes want a stronger connection with the EU.

In the survey, we also asked Danes to indicate the two greatest threats to Denmark's sovereignty.⁸ The EU was one of eight responses. The results suggest that when sovereignty is seen in the broader context, many Danes view several other issues as presenting a far greater threat to Denmark than the EU. As such, immigration (34 pct.) and Islamic terrorism (29 pct.) are perceived as the greatest threats to sovereignty, and rank much higher than the EU (16 pct.).

Figure 4: Immigration and terror are seen as the greatest threats to sovereignty

Question: What do you think is the biggest threat to Denmark's sovereignty today?, pct.



Note: N=1.003. Respondents could give two answers. Source: YouGov for Think Tank EUROPA, May 2018.

A closer look at the relationship between the identification of threats and attitudes toward EU membership reveals a striking finding that among those who see immigration as a threat, there is a marked proportion of respondents who want to leave the EU. An absolute majority of 54 percent of those who want to leave the EU "to a great extent" identify immigration as one of the two biggest threats, and the figure is 43 percent among those who "somewhat" want to leave the EU. By comparison, the share is 34 percent of those who "somewhat" prefer that Denmark remains in the EU and 25 percent of those who want to remain in the EU

⁸ Question: "What do you think is the biggest threat to Denmark's sovereignty today?" The respondents could choose two options from the following list: "Immigration"; "Islamic terrorism"; "An aggressive Russia"; "the EU"; "the collapse of the EU"; "Economic Decline"; "A weakening of NATO"; "Globalisation"; "None of these"; "Do not know".

“to a great extent”. This indicates that there is a connection between discontent about immigration and resistance towards EU membership.

The survey asks broadly about "immigration", so it is therefore impossible to determine whether it is immigration from third countries or immigration from other EU countries that the respondents – especially the EU sceptics – see as a threat to Danish sovereignty. In another question in the survey, we presented the respondents with the statement “that many Danes see immigration and terror as two of the world’s greatest challenges”. We then asked if these were challenges that Denmark would best be able to solve by acting alone or acting together with the rest of the EU. Almost two thirds of respondents (62 per cent) responded that the challenges would be best overcome by acting together with the rest of the EU. 23 percent answered that it would be best for Denmark to “act alone”. There is therefore strong support for common solutions in the area of migration.

Who believes what?

The survey allows us, through a variety of background questions, to determine a current, detailed and new image, at the individual level, of who believes what about EU membership, EU reservations and sovereignty in Denmark. Several of our background questions have not previously been compared with EU attitudes in Denmark.

Method: How we did it

The survey is based on an opinion poll conducted by the research institute YouGov. A total of 1,003 CAWI interviews were conducted with Danes aged 18-74 years from 18-24 May 2018. The data is weighted on the demographics of gender, age, geography and political position according to an ideal from Statistics Denmark, meaning that the results should be representative of the population.

To determine who believes what about the EU, we examined four dimensions that are typically used in political science research to determine attitudes towards the EU:

- (i) Socio-demographics (gender, age, region, education and income)
- ii) Left-Right political spectrum (voting preferences in parliamentary elections)
- iii) Globalisation (living standards and attitudes towards other cultures and ideas)
- iv) Facts vs. emotions (including attitudes towards expert opinions).

The YouGov background variables that are relevant to illustrate these dimensions are indicated in parentheses. Although there are not enough variables to draw an adequate image of all dimensions, the analysis will give a sense of their significance in the Danish EU debate.

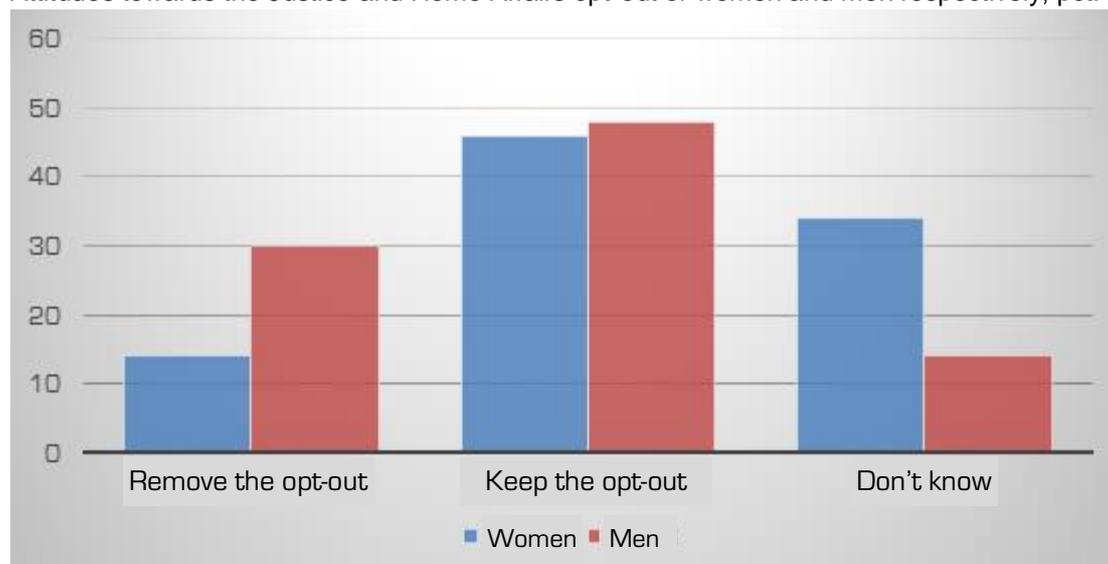
For some of the variables, the response categories gave relatively small sample sizes and hence greater statistical uncertainty. Where relevant, we have therefore placed adjacent answer categories together to maximise the sample size (e.g. answers like "completely disagree" and "partially disagree"). In order to strengthen the analysis, we have tested the explanatory power of the variables through a regression analysis (see Appendix 1).

Women are more ambivalent

Whether you are male or female has no significant implication in terms of the most basic questions about EU membership. Men and women's answers reflect both the overall average of 62 percent of respondents who prefer to remain in the EU and 28 percent who would prefer to leave the EU. But when the questions are about EU opt-outs, there is an obvious and large difference between the genders in which many more women than men are in doubt. There is a striking difference of about 20 percentage points between the genders' "do not know" share. Part of the explanation may be that the opt-out debate is typically more political than the basic membership debate, as the survey also shows that women, to a significantly lower degree than men, "have an interest politics and social conditions" (to this different question in the survey, 33 percent of the female respondents answered that they are interested in politics "most of the time", whereas the same applies to 47 percent of the male respondents).

Figure 5: Women are more ambivalent about the opt-outs

Attitudes towards the Justice and Home Affairs opt-out of women and men respectively, pct.



Note: N = 1,003. 5 pct. of women and 8 pct. of men replied that they would not vote or vote blank.
Source: YouGov for Think Tank EUROPA, May 2018

What is interesting regarding EU attitudes is that women's ambivalence apparently only detracts from their support for **abolishing** the opt-outs; support for **keeping** the opt-outs is comparable across genders. Thus, just 14 percent of women would abolish the justice opt-out, as opposed to 30 percent of men. 46 percent of women and 48 percent of men want to keep it. Similar differences apply to the defence and euro opt-outs.

Regarding the issue of sovereignty transfer, there are also major differences between the genders' absolute answers. However, the men give significantly stronger answers when it comes to both their support and their opposition to sovereignty transfer (41 percent of men and 27 percent of women choose the three most sceptical answers on the scale from 0-10, whereas 14 percent of men and 9 percent of women choose one of the three least sceptical answers). The consistently higher share of "do not know" answers among women can be found equally at both ends of the scale, and there is no statistically significant difference between men's and women's scepticism towards sovereignty transfers.

Nevertheless, there are major substantive differences between what Danish men and women perceive as the greatest threats to the sovereignty of Denmark. Although women, here too, are a significant majority amongst the ambivalent (20 percent answer "do not know" as opposed to 9 percent of the men), there are significant differences between the genders on three of the possible answers, namely immigration, Islamist terrorism and the EU. Women occupy significantly more space in the group who see terror as a threat (25 percent of men as opposed to 32 percent of women), while the greatest proportion of men is found among those who answer "immigration" (40 percent of men as opposed to 28 percent of women) and the EU (21 percent of men versus 11 percent of women).

Young people are less worried about sovereignty

Age is often seen as one of the most significant variables when attitudes towards the EU are analysed from a socio-demographic perspective. But the results are often ambiguous. At the Brexit referendum in the UK in 2016, the 18-24 year old age group was the least inclined to support leaving the EU. At the 2015 referendum on the JHA opt-out in Denmark, on the other hand, the youngest voters voted no, much more than voters over 60 (57% vs. 40%) according to an exit poll made by Gallup for Berlingske.⁹

⁹ Gallup poll: The reasons we voted no, Berlingske, 5 December 2015, <https://www.b.dk/politiko/gallupmaaling-derfor-stemte-vi-nej>.

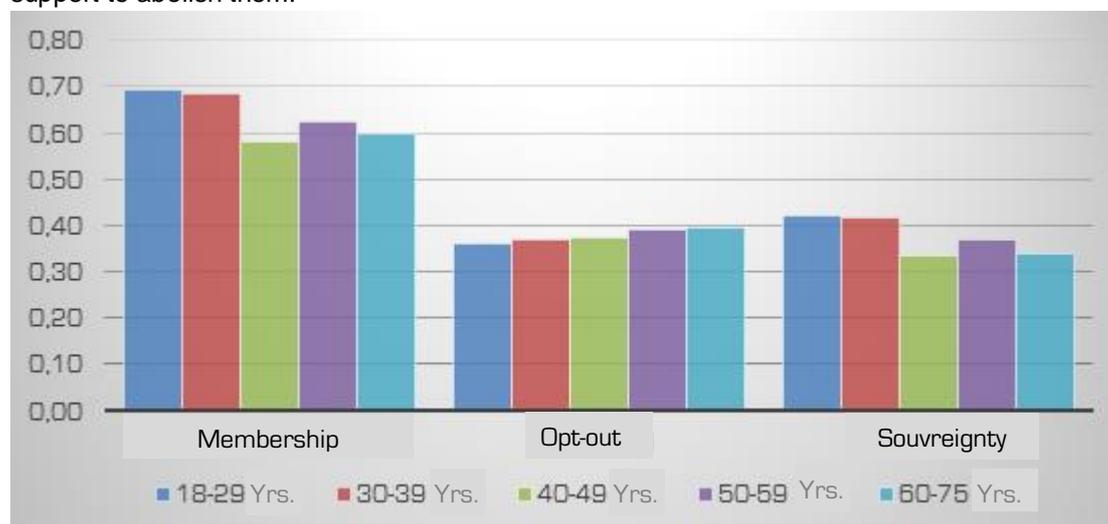
The younger respondents answered "do not know" in the survey much more than older citizens, which contributes to the overall picture of younger Danes' attitudes towards the EU. The "do not know" proportion decreases in particular from the age group starting with the 40-year-olds. Thus, more than twice as many respondents aged between 18 and 39 years answered "do not know" about the EU membership (15%) than the 40+ year-olds (7%). For the three opt-outs, there is an average of 32 percent of uncertain respondents among the youngest group, as opposed to 12 percent of the 40+ year-olds. In comparison with the two sovereignty questions, their answers of "do not know" are 26 percent versus 7 percent when it comes to sovereignty transfer and 26 percent versus 9 percent when identifying the greatest threats to Denmark's sovereignty. Young people are therefore, in general, more ambivalent about their political positions than older Danes. Like the women, part of the explanation may be that the 18 to 39-year-olds also express significantly less interest in politics and social topics than older citizens. Just 23 percent of young voters indicate they are "interested most of the time", compared with 52 percent of citizens over 40 years.

Nevertheless, there are a number of interesting differences between young peoples' and older peoples' EU attitudes, which cannot be explained by the significant "do not know" discrepancy. Support for EU membership is highest among the youngest respondents: 65 percent would prefer Denmark to remain in the EU, and the national average is 62 percent. Among the young people who do have an articulated opinion about membership, there is thus a very clear predominance of EU supporters.

As is the case with gender, there is no correlation between having strong support for EU membership and EU attitudes in other areas. The survey shows – in line with the referendum result in 2015 – that the youngest respondents are at least as reluctant to abolish EU opt-outs as the rest of the population. On the other hand, they are not equally opposed to sovereignty transfer.

Figure 6: Lower scepticism to sovereignty transfers among younger voters

The answers to the three questions discussed above are converted to an index from 0 to 1, where 1 indicates full EU support. Regarding the opt-outs the graph shows the total index of support to abolish them.



Note: N = 1,003. "non-response" is taken out. **Source:** YouGov for Think Tank EUROPA, May 2018.

With regards to the EU opt-outs, the younger respondents' higher share of "do not know" answers is roughly even on both the "yes side" and "no side". They are, in summary, less likely than other citizens to want to abolish the opt-outs and less likely to want to retain them. In connection with the referendum on the JHA opt-out, the high proportion of "no" responses among young people could therefore be due to the fact that the no campaign was best at persuading the ones in doubt.

Regarding the survey's two questions about sovereignty, the younger respondents are, however, much less likely than the older respondents to place themselves in the extreme category of "strong oppositon against sovereignty transfer" – that is, position "10" on the scale. It is the most popular category overall, with 22 percent choosing it. The proportion is 34 percent among the 60 to 74-year-olds but is down to 13 percent among the 18 to 29-year-olds. In addition, the youngest respondents indicate to a significantly lower degree than the oldest respondents that immigration, Islamic terrorism, the EU and a weakening of NATO are the biggest threats to Denmark's sovereignty.

Residents of Copenhagen and central Jutland are less sceptical

Where the respondents live in Denmark does not appear to have a great effect on their EU attitudes. The most significant fluctuation is regarding membership, where residents in the region of southern Denmark (35 percent) and northern Jutland (33 percent) are more critical of the EU than residents of Copenhagen (25

percent). Residents of central Jutland are, by comparison, in absolute terms, even less critical than those of Copenhagen when it comes to the membership (21 percent). The survey includes no data specific to Aarhus and Copenhagen, but the result could indicate an urban phenomenon in which there is most support for EU membership in the largest cities. The residents of central Jutland, however, like the rest of the country, oppose abolishing the Danish EU opt-outs and transferring sovereignty.

The highly educated are the most positive

Highly educated voters are consistently stronger EU advocates than other education categories.¹⁰ This applies to membership, opt-outs and sovereignty. Education is the only of the nine background variables we investigate in this report that gives a significant explanation to all three issues. Regarding attitudes towards membership, 77 percent of the highly educated are for remaining in the EU, compared to 62 percent of the national average. Regarding the defence opt-out, this is the only education category where the majority is in favour of abolition (45 percent want to do away with it, while 33 percent want to keep the opt-out). In regards to the justice and home affairs opt-out, the margin between yes and no is far closer among the highly educated (6 percentage points) than for the rest of the population (25 percentage points), although there is also a majority against abolition. The euro opt-out is where the attitudes of the highest educated are closest to the national average, with 27 percent in favour of abolishing this opt-out and 51 percent against (the national average is 22 percent and 57 percent respectively).

The most significant difference in terms of education and its affect on attitudes towards sovereignty transfer is that the most educated were significantly less likely to select the three most sceptical positions, with 22 percent answering at this end of the scale, as opposed to the national average of 34 percent and the 45 percent representing the less educated.

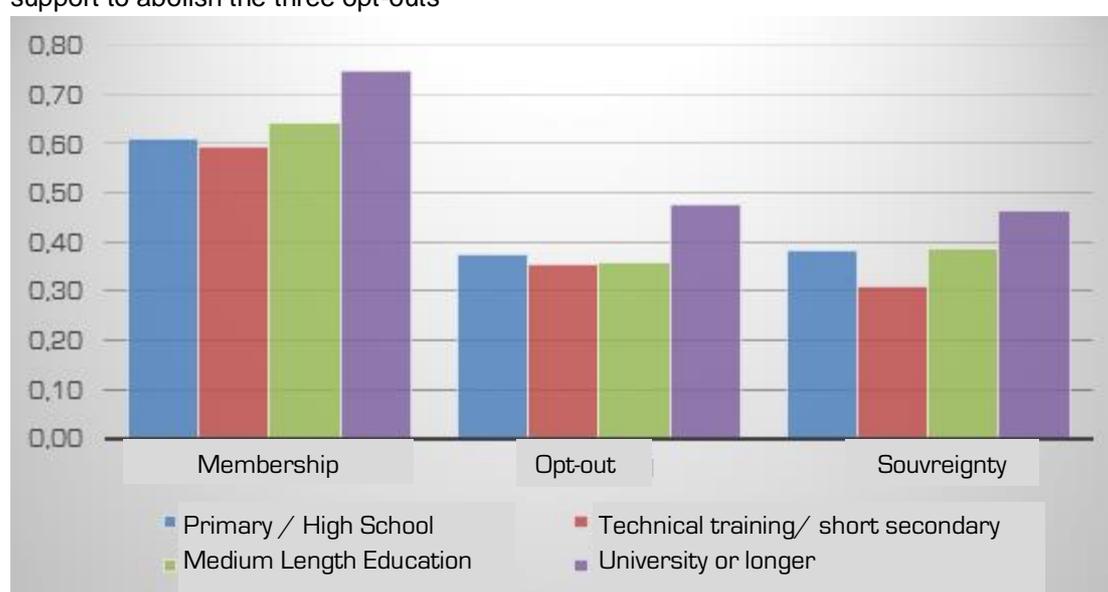
The greater proportion of EU-positive attitudes among highly educated people also applies to the question about sovereignty threats, where the only answer that significantly separates the highly educated from the national average is "EU

¹⁰ A distinction is made in the YouGov education variable between basic education, secondary education, technical education, short education, mid education, long education and research. In this analysis, we have added the 12 individuals with "research" together with the 158 individuals with "long education".

dissolution". It is indicated as one of the two greatest threats by 20 percent of the highly skilled against 13 percent overall. Those with shorter educations were significantly less likely to choose this category than the national average (but, in turn, significantly overrepresented among those who are concerned about immigration: 45 percent versus 34 percent on average).

Figure 7: Greater EU support among highly educated people

EU-attitudes by level of education. The answers are converted to an index from 0 to 1, where 1 represents full EU support. Regarding the opt-outs the graph shows an overall index for the support to abolish the three opt-outs



Note: N = 1,003. "Do not know" responses are taken out. **Source:** YouGov for Think Tank EUROPA, May 2018.

Income not decisive

According to the survey, income¹¹ cannot explain EU attitudes in Denmark. There is nothing that indicates that support for the EU is particularly strong among financially prosperous Danes. There is a tendency that support for abolishing the justice and defence opt-outs is greater among high wage-earners in the population, but only until the household income reaches DKK 900,000 or above. In absolute terms, those who earn the most are the strongest advocates of retaining the justice opt-out (63 percent; the national average is 47 percent).

¹¹ YouGov's background variable "Household Income" is divided into 11 categories that range from a household income of less than DKK 100,000 to over DKK 1 million (plus those who do not want to provide income (18 per cent) and those who do not know (14 per cent)). With a total sample size of 1,003 respondents, this means that the individual response categories contain relatively few people, which increases uncertainty.

There are also no clear connections between income and attitudes to the two sovereignty questions, apart from a tendency among those with a household income of DKK 800,000 and above to be slightly more likely to identify the EU as a threat to the sovereignty of Denmark than the other income categories.

Only a majority of “exit” preferences amongst DPP voters

The relationship between the political right-left axis and EU attitudes has been studied for years¹². Our current measurement confirms that there are strong links between party choice and Danish attitudes towards EU issues. Across the red and blue blocs, the Liberals, the Socialist People’s Party, the Social Liberals, the Liberal Alliance and the Alternative party attract the respondents, who are the biggest advocates of Danish EU membership: More than 75 percent of those who say they would vote for one of these parties if there were parliamentary elections today, also want to remain in the EU. Among the Social Democrats’ and the Conservatives’ supporters, the share of respondents who want to remain in the EU is also higher than the national average. Supporters of the far left Unity List are just below the average, but still with an absolute majority of 58 percent in favour of remaining in the EU. 40 percent of DPP voters want to remain in the EU.

If one maintains that “bloc politics” offer a meaningful division of the Danish political landscape, and accordingly compares the answers given by red and blue bloc voters respectively, EU support is significantly greater on the left. 40 percent of voters in the red bloc state that is highly desirable for Denmark to remain in the EU, while the number in blue bloc is 32 percent. This is due to the large proportion of Danish People's Party voters who want Denmark to leave the EU, whereas the voters of the Unity List are far less EU-critical despite the party’s official EU-rejectionist stance.

Dissatisfaction with living standards causes euroscepticism

The survey includes a number of questions that can help identify the respondents’ broader societal attitudes. We have in the following analysis drawn on two variables to determine how prepared Danes are for globalisation. Social scientists claim that globalisation in recent decades has created a new attitude dimension that differs from the classic understanding of a political right- and left-wing.¹³

¹² For a more recent review of the importance of the right-wing axis on Danish EU attitudes, see: The Danes’ EU resistance falls, note, Think Tank EUROPA, 2017, <http://thinkeuropa.dk/vaerdier/danskernes-eu-modstand-falder>

¹³ Globalization and the Transformation of the National Political Space: Six European Countries Compared, Kriesi, Hanspeter et al., European Journal of Political Research 45 (6): 921–56, 2006.

This new dimension is about reactions to globalisation, for example of perceptions of whether one wins or loses with globalisation as well as attitudes towards the new and unknown. Background variables on people's perceptions of their own standards of living can say something about their satisfaction with the current conditions, while the question of attitudes towards other cultures and ideas can say something about people's openness to others' identities. The survey confirms that Danes in 2018 were very satisfied with their standard of living. Presented with the statement "I'm happy with my standard of living", 33 percent said that they "totally agree" and 36 percent said that they "somewhat agree", as opposed to just 10 percent who responded "somewhat disagree" and 4 percent who responded "totally disagree" (15 percent responded "neither agree nor disagree" whereas 2 percent responded "do not know"). The question here is whether there is the correlation between perceptions of living standards and attitudes towards the EU.

The survey shows that there is a significant linear correlation between satisfaction with the standard of living and attitudes towards EU membership. If you are unhappy with your standard of living, you are likely to be more inclined to be against the EU. If you look at the difference between "disagree" and "agree", 38 percent of the "disagree" group want to leave the EU, compared to 26 percent of the "agree" group.

Perceptions of living standards has no significant impact on attitudes towards EU opt-outs, which is again the category that unites the Danes across communities.

With regard to sovereignty transfer, those who are dissatisfied with their own living standards tend to be stronger opponents than those who are satisfied (45 percent versus 32 percent). With regard to the perception of threats to Denmark's sovereignty, this group differs only by being a little more likely to see the EU as a threat (26 percent) than the "satisfied" group (15 percent).

Cultural openness means less euroscepticism

54 percent of Danes agree that they like to "surround themselves with a wide range of other cultures and ideas", whereas 16 percent disagree and 27 percent neither agree nor disagree. A data analysis shows a correlation between this response and EU attitudes. Among those who respond that they "do not like to surround themselves with a wide range of other cultures", attitudes towards EU

membership are significantly more critical than among those who agree: 35 percent versus 24 percent want to leave the EU, and 52 percent versus 69 percent want to remain.

Those who conversely declare themselves most in agreement that they like to associate with other cultures and ideas, want significantly more than others to abolish the justice opt-out (31 percent), and these respondents also express the least scepticism towards sovereignty transfer (19 percent place their answers amongst the three responses indicating the least scepticism). They are also overrepresented among those who see the EU's dissolution as one of the biggest threats to Denmark's sovereignty (21 per cent).

Facts and feelings in the EU debate

In the Danish EU debate, the “yes side” is frequently caricatured as appealing only to facts and figures and the “no side” as expressing themselves mainly through feelings.¹⁴ In this light, it is interesting to look in more detail at the respondents' opinions on “expert statements”. This background question in the survey concerns consumer behaviour – but there are significant implications for EU attitudes too.¹⁵

The Danes are generally divided on the question of how much weight should be given to expert opinions. 31 percent disagree with the statement “I value expert opinions” while 30 percent agree. Most – 35 percent – “Neither agree nor disagree”, and only 4 percent “Do not know”. The outermost categories attracted the fewest respondents: Only 4 percent of respondents chose “Completely agree”, and 12 percent chose “Completely disagree”. Overall, this indicates that the Danes tend to be critical of expert opinions.

With regards to EU attitudes it is interesting that the “Completely disagree” group differs notably from the rest of the respondents in criticising EU membership. Among those who do not listen to experts, there is almost dead heat between supporters and opponents of staying in the EU (45 percent versus 48 percent)

With regards to the opt-outs there is no significant correlation between attitudes to expert statements and attitudes to the defence and euro opt-outs. However,

¹⁴ This issue is described in more detail in the Think Tank EUROPA's report, Sovereign Denmark, from 2017, see: <http://thinkeuropa.dk/vaerdier/suveraene-danmark>.

¹⁵ The wording of the variable is: “I consider expert opinions when I have to choose products.” Source: YouGov.

with regards to the justice opt-out, which was the subject of the recent referendum, there is an interesting variation. Among those who do not appreciate expert opinions, 17 percent want to abolish the opt-out and 55 percent wish to keep it. The number for those who “appreciate expert opinions”, is 30 percent for abolishing the opt-out and 44 percent for keeping it. Therefore, many of those who want to keep the opt-out may not be open to expert input during referendum- or information campaigns.

Issues of sovereignty transfer also divide the two groups: 39 percent of those who do not appreciate expert opinions are strong opponents, while the number is 29 percent among those who appreciate the statements. There are no significant differences regarding perception of threats to Danish sovereignty.

Opt-outs have special status

This study has been aimed at contributing to the understanding of “who believes what about the EU” in Denmark. The results point to a number of challenges in relation to the new debate on the Danish EU opt-outs that Prime Minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen alluded to in his Europe Day speech at Think Tank EUROPA on 9 May.

The survey confirms that a large majority of the population is against abolishing the opt-outs, and this is strikingly representative across community groups. It is much more difficult to profile a citizen based on attitudes towards the opt-outs than on the basis of attitudes towards membership and sovereignty. This could indicate that the opt-outs have a special status among the Danes that cuts across traditional boundaries.

The analysis emphasises that the "EU" is far from being considered a unique entity among the Danes. Membership, opt-outs and sovereignty issues are separate matters that many people assess individually. Overall, a large group of Danes is in favour of EU membership, but they also share a strong aversion to sovereignty transfers. It is likely that this group will be a crucial factor in any future referendums on the EU opt-outs, as the latter are seen to protect sovereignty.

An additional challenge for the debate on the opt-outs is that questions on immigration, which concern many Danes, have an impact on the Danes' EU attitudes and currently seem to contribute to greater scepticism. But although many Danes apparently do not perceive the EU as a helping hand in the area of

immigration, there is at the same time a widespread desire for common EU solutions in this area.

Therefore, the immigration debate is not necessarily the “home-turf” of eurosceptics. There is plenty of scope for common European solutions to gain support by the population, but it requires that they provide utility for Denmark and are not seen as going against the Danish way of life .