



Technology, innovation and digitalization
EU opinion poll

Opinion in the Netherlands

Within the framework of the “Fostering Innovation. Unlocking Potential.” project, the Bertelsmann Stiftung has conducted an online survey in all EU countries with the eupinions¹ survey tool. This survey elicits information regarding citizens’ attitudes – across the EU and within individual countries – toward technological innovation. The results for the Netherlands are representative.

How the Dutch view their country

The Dutch are extremely satisfied with the innovative capacity of their country in international comparison.. However, with regard to the effects of innovations on their own lives, Dutch respondents are somewhat more critical than respondents in many other EU countries.

- A total 71% of Dutch respondents feel that their country’s **innovative capacity is good by international comparison**. Across Europe more broadly, only 54% of respondents say this about their country.
- Overall, the Dutch are very satisfied with the economic and policy conditions for fostering innovation in their country, with 63% rate them as good. On average, only 45% of EU citizens say this about their country.
- Only one in five Dutch respondents (20%) fear that technological innovations will have a **negative impact on their own lives** in the next 15 years, while some 62% expect positive effects. This means

¹ eupinions is an independent platform for European public opinion. They collect, analyse and comment on what the European public thinks about current political issues and megatrends. eupinions employs cutting-edge data collection techniques. Every quarter, they collect samples from each EU member state in 22 languages. The data meets the highest scientific standards and is representative with regard to age, gender, education and country/region. eupinions is a project of Bertelsmann Stiftung. The data is collected by Dalia Research.

that the Dutch are slightly more pessimistic than EU citizens as a whole, 69% of which anticipate improvements.

- The coronavirus crisis has prompted an increased desire to foster innovation in certain areas. These areas include **healthcare and long-term care** (54%, +13%), **job creation** (41%, +13%), **environmental protection and the fight against climate change** (35%, +1%), and education (23%, +9%).

The Netherlands and the European Union

The Dutch view the EU's competitiveness in innovation as being quite strong. At the same time, compared with other EU respondents, fewer Dutch are in favor of closer cooperation among EU countries as a means of facilitating innovation and competitiveness.

- Some 69% of Dutch respondents believe the **EU's innovative capacity is good by international comparison**. This assessment is roughly on par with that of the EU average (66%).
- With regard to the EU's **competitiveness vis á vis the United States**, the Dutch are split in their views: 18% think the EU is more innovative, 43% think the EU and the United States are on par with each other, and 39% think the United States is more innovative than the EU. Nonetheless, no other country surveyed expresses such high levels of confidence in the EU's innovative capacity as does the Netherlands. In fact, 52% of respondents across the EU believe that the **United States outpaces the EU in terms of innovation**.
- The Dutch are also more optimistic with regard to the **EU-China comparison** than are most other EU citizens. Whereas only 52% of Dutch respondents think that China is more innovative than the EU, 59% of those surveyed across Europe share this view.
- Slightly more than half (52%) of the Dutch call for **closer European cooperation** in order to promote more innovation. Some 18% consider the current level of cooperation to be sufficient and a further 18% favor focusing on national efforts. On average, 63% of European citizens are in favor of closer cooperation. Throughout the coronavirus crisis, these approval ratings have remained stable in both the Netherlands and the EU.

Differences according to specific respondent characteristics

Since only 2.3% of Dutch respondents indicated their gender, no significant differences in opinion between men and women can be deduced. However, education level clearly has an impact on opinion in the Netherlands. Dutch respondents with a higher level of formal education tend to express greater optimism regarding technological innovative capacity and its effects on their lives than do those with lower levels of education.

- The **older** the respondent, the more likely they are to expect **positive effects of innovations** in the health sector.
- Only 18% of respondents with **no to low levels of formal education** would like to see a stronger focus on national solutions in EU countries. Among the respondents with **medium to high levels of education**, this is only 12%.
- Respondents with **no to low levels of formal education** are less likely to expect technological innovations to have a positive impact on their lives in the next 15 years (52%). Among the respondents with **medium to high levels of education**, this is 66%.
- Respondents with **medium to high levels of formal education** are slightly more likely (71%) to consider the EU to be innovative and competitive in international comparison than are respondents with **no to low levels of formal education** (61%).