



Technology, innovation and digitalization
EU opinion poll

Opinion in Spain

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 Spain are representative.

How the Spanish view their country

Opinions are divided in Spain when it comes to assessing the country’s innovative capacity. With regard to the economic environment and policy framework in their country, most Spaniards agree that it is not sufficiently able to facilitate the country's innovative capacity. Compared to respondents elsewhere in the EU, Spanish respondents expect future innovations to have a positive impact on their lives.

- With regard to **the technological innovative capacity of their country in international comparison, the Spanish are divided**: Almost half of the respondents (49%) give it a poor rating, while 47% consider it good.
- More than one-half (56%) of Spanish respondents believe that their country’s **economic environment and policy framework** are not conducive to fostering innovation. Across the EU, less than one-half (42%) of respondents say this about their own country.

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.

- Almost three-fourths of Spanish respondents (76%) generally expect **technological innovation and digitalization to have a positive impact** on their lives over the next 15 years. They are thus slightly more positive about the impact of innovation than are most EU citizens (69%).
- However, there are also areas in which Spanish respondents expect innovations to have a negative impact. First and foremost, Spaniards cite a **fear of job losses** (41%).
- Correspondingly, 66% of Spaniards would like to see innovations fostered that target job creation. Compared with the pre-coronavirus era, this share has risen by 17%. However, the survey shows an increase in the desire for more support in other areas as well: healthcare and long-term care 63% (+18%), environmental protection and efforts to battle climate change, 42% (+7%), and education 31% (+10%).

Spain and the European Union

Most Spaniards have a very positive view of the EU's innovative capacity. When it comes to global competition regarding innovation, Spanish respondents believe China is ahead of everyone else. They see the competition from the United States as less strong. Spanish respondents are overwhelmingly in favor of closer cooperation between EU countries in order to boost innovation (72%).

- Almost three-fourths (71%) consider the EU's technological **innovative capacity to be good or very good by international comparison**. Spaniards therefore rate the EU more positively in this regard than do Europeans as a whole (66%).
- Compared with other EU citizens, Spanish respondents see **China as a more relevant competitor to the EU**. For example, 65% of Spanish respondents think that China is more innovative than the EU. Only 59% of all EU citizens agree with this statement. Almost one-half of Spanish respondents (48%) think that the **United States outperforms the EU economically**.
- In order to build a more innovative and competitive economy, 72% of Spanish respondents consider it imperative to deepen **cooperation between EU countries**. Only 8% favor emphasizing more national efforts.

Differences according to specific respondent characteristics

- Spanish respondents with a lower level of formal education and those from more rural areas tend to be more critical of technological innovations than those with higher education levels and from urban areas. **Spanish respondents with no to low levels of formal education** are **less open** to the EU than are those with **medium to high levels of education**. Of those respondents with higher levels of education, 78% think that EU countries should work more closely together. Only 65% of those with a lower level of education believe this to be a good idea.
- With regard to potential innovations in the next 15 years, 80% of **Spanish respondents with a medium to high level of education** expect positive impacts. Of the **those with a lower educational level**, only 69% expect positive effects on their lives.
- **Among the baby boomers** (born 1955-1973), 75% support closer cooperation between EU countries in order to facilitate a competitive and innovative economy. Less than half (55%) of those **under 23** are in favor of this.
- While more than half of all **respondents over 23** favor doing more to foster innovations targeting job creation, only 41% of those **under 23** agree.