

EPSO'S 2nd DIVERSITY SURVEY

MAIN FINDINGS



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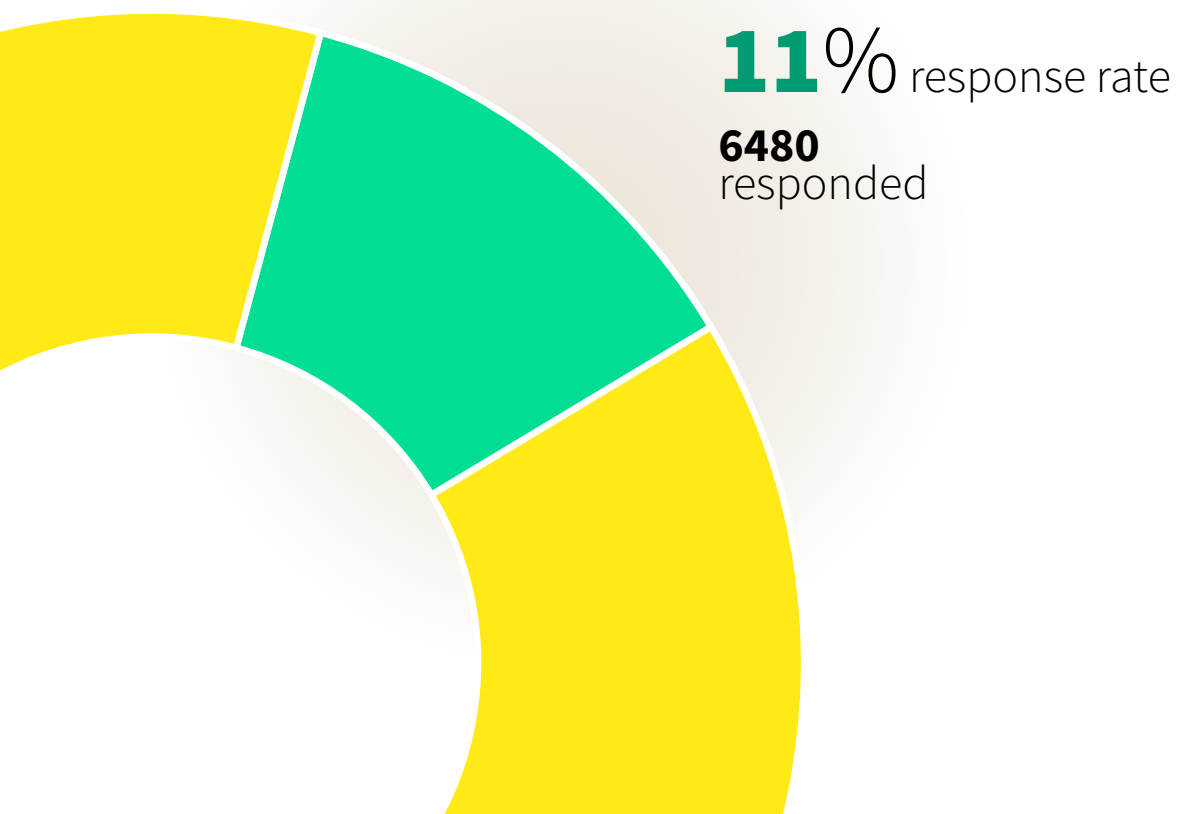
Introduction

A diversity survey was conducted for the **first** time by the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) in 2021, as a pilot survey. It was sent to 33,810 former candidates who participated in 28 EPSO competitions (since closed) between 2018 and 2020. A total of 6,221 former candidates participated in the survey (18.4% of the total pool). It allowed EPSO to better understand the composition of its candidate pool in terms of diversity. The results of the pilot survey were translated into concrete actions in EPSO's equality and diversity action plan (2022-2024) to address the under-representation of some groups and improve EPSO's outreach to a more diverse pool of talent.

You can read the full [report of the 2021 pilot survey on EPSO's dedicated webpage](#).

A **second** diversity survey was sent by EPSO in May 2024 to 58,613 former candidates who participated in 15 EPSO competitions (since closed) between 2021 and 2023 (9 AD (Administrator level) and 6 AST (Assistant level) competitions). Candidates who had applied to more than one competition received only one invitation to participate in the survey. In total 85,634 applications were received during this period from 58,613 candidates. 6,480 respondents participated in the second survey, which represents a response rate of 11%. The results of this second survey allow EPSO to evaluate the effectiveness of its equality and diversity action plan 2022-2024 in more detail and serve as a basis for a possible future action plan.

Participation in both surveys was done entirely on an anonymous and voluntary basis. The data was collected solely for statistical purposes.



Key characteristics of EPSO's applicant pool

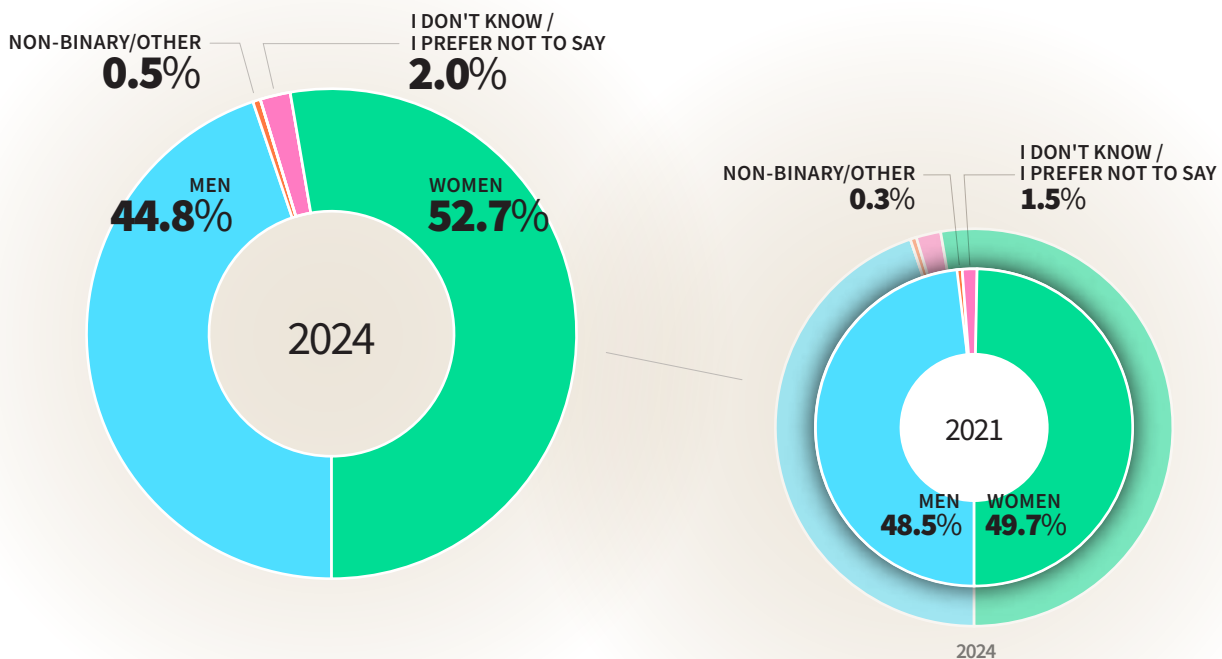
Gender

There are more women than men present in the pool of respondents (52.7% and 44.8%, respectively), while 'non-binary' and 'other' genders represent 0.5% of the sample. 2% of the respondents preferred not to say.

In 2021, the pool of respondents was more balanced in terms of gender.

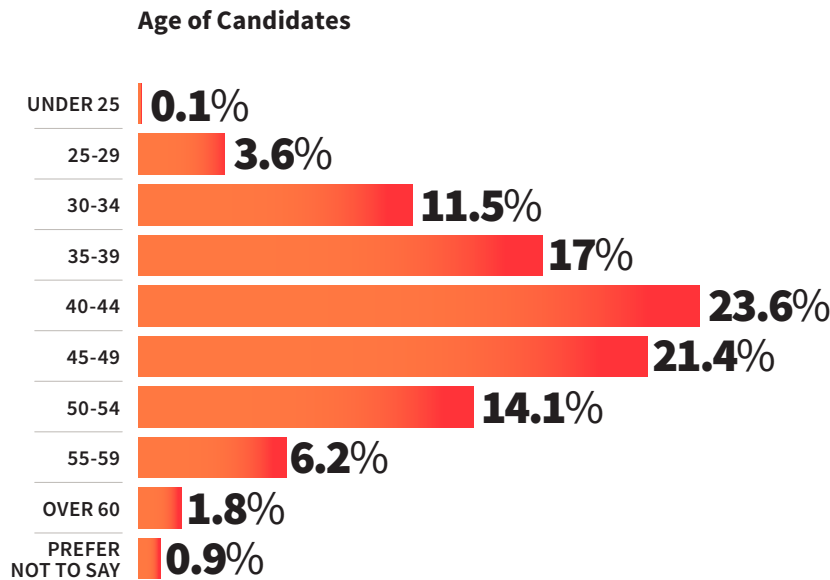
In the 2024 survey, the 'non-binary' option was introduced and combined with 'other' which didn't significantly impact the numbers (in 2021, 'other' was chosen by 0.3% of respondents vs 0.5% of 'non-binary/other' in 2024).

2024 vs. 2021		
GENDER		
↑	Women	52.7% vs. 49.7%
↓	Men	44.8% vs. 48.5%
≈	Non-binary/ Other	0.5% vs. 0.3%
≈	I don't know/say	2.0% vs. 1.5%



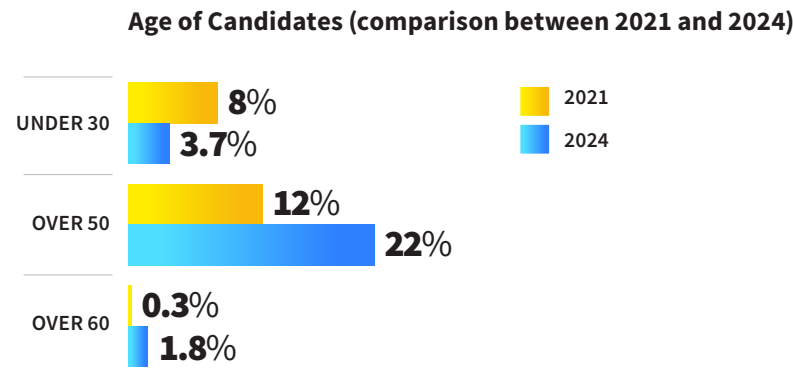
Age

The majority of respondents (45%) are between 40 and 49 years old. The most represented age categories are 40-44 years (24%) and 45-49 years (21%). Only 3.7% of respondents are under 30, and 1.8% are 60 years or older. 0.9% preferred not to disclose their age.



In 2021, most respondents were in the 35–44 age category (46%).

8% were under 30 (in comparison with only 3.7 % in 2024), and only 0.3% were over 60 years (1.8% in 2024). Respondents over 50 represented 12% of the pool in 2021 and 22% in 2024, which is a significant increase. This increase in older respondents could be potentially explained by the number of AD specialist competitions covered by this survey and the number of years of experience requested for those profiles.



Gender and age

When compared within the same age category, women were especially prevalent in the younger age categories (especially 30-34, 35-39 and 40-44 years), while the highest prevalence of male candidates was in the 40-49 age category. Generally, the highest proportion of both women and men among the respondents was between 40-49 years.

Gender and Age

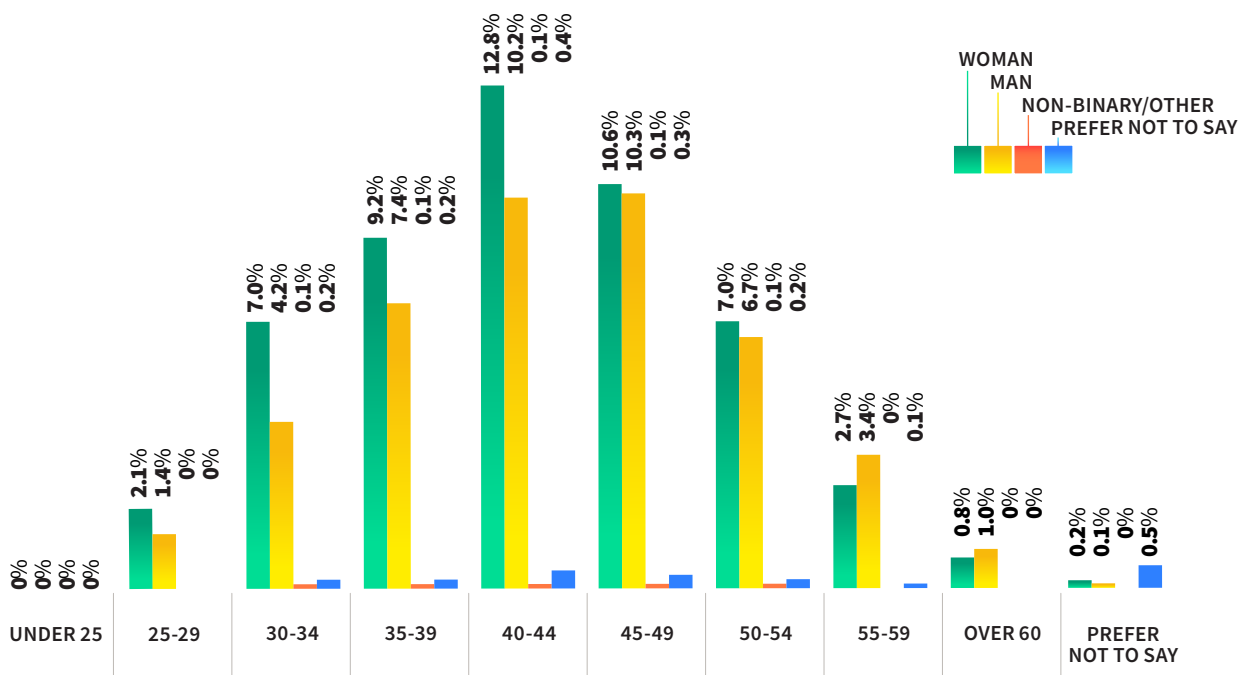
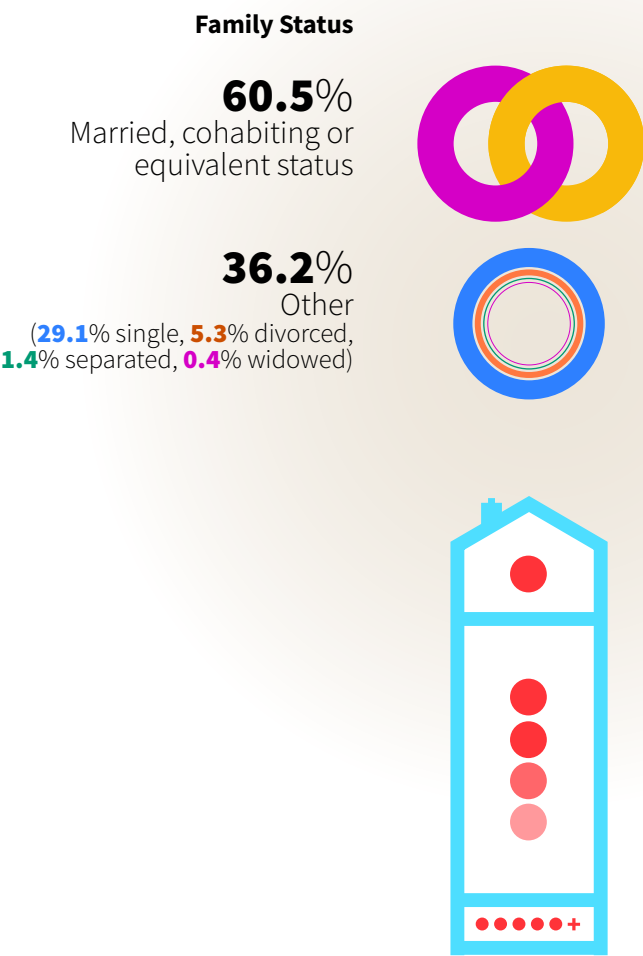


Table 1: Percentages for each age/gender category. The most prevalent category for both women and men are highlighted in colour.

AGE	Gender			
	WOMEN	MEN	NON-BINARY/OTHER	I PREFER NOT TO SAY
less than 24	0.03%	0.03%	0%	0%
25-29	2.11%	1.4%	0.02%	0.03%
30-34	7.04%	4.22%	0.06%	0.24%
35-39	9.24%	7.42%	0.13%	0.16%
40-44	12.84%	10.23%	0.13%	0.42%
45-49	10.63%	10.31%	0.08%	0.32%
50-54	7.04%	6.75%	0.08%	0.19%
55-59	2.69%	3.37%	0.02%	0.06%
60 or over	0.84%	1%	0%	0%
I prefer not to say	0.18%	0.13%	0.02%	0.55%

Family status and composition



When looking at the family status and its composition together, the vast majority of the respondents have a married or equivalent status, and live in a household of 2 to 4 members. The next most common categories are single (the most prevalent), then far behind come divorced, separated and widowed respondents.

2024 vs. 2021		
FAMILY STATUS		
↑	Married/equivalent	60.5% vs. 50.9%
↑	Unmarried, single	36.2% vs. 31.2%

2024 vs. 2021		
FAMILY COMPOSITION		
≈	Alone	20.8% vs. 21.7%
↓	2-4 members	67.6% vs. 87.3%
≈	5 members or more	8.9% vs. 7.9%

Citizenship and country of birth

The vast majority (98.5%) of respondents are EU citizens born in an EU Member State (91.0%). 5.3% of respondents were born outside of Europe and 2.5% of respondents were born in a European country that is not part of the EU. They mostly hold EU citizenship, with only 0.4% and 0.2% of respondents possessing citizenship originating from outside of Europe or within Europe but not in the EU, respectively (Table 2).

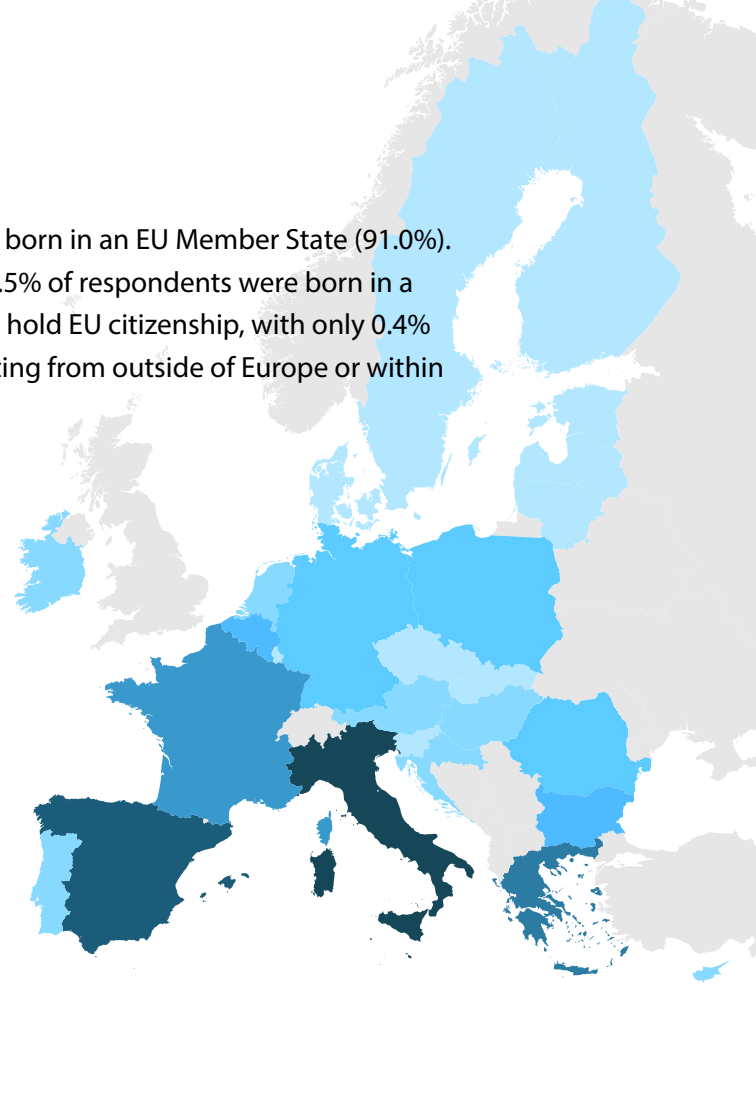
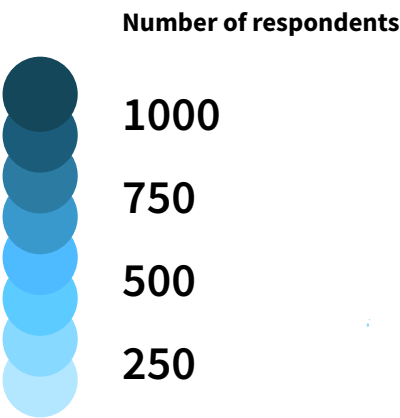


Table 2: Birth country and citizenship of survey respondents ('EU': EU Member State, 'Europe but not EU': European country that is not a Member State, 'Out of Europe': outside of the European continent).

	COUNTRY OF BIRTH %	CITIZENSHIP %
EU	91%	98.5%
Europe but not EU	2.5%	0.2%
Other	0.2%	0.0%
Outside Europe	5.3%	0.4%
I don't know / I prefer not to say	1%	0.9%

2024 vs. 2021		
CITIZENSHIP & BIRTH		
≈	EU citizens	98.5% vs. 97.3%
≈	Born in EU	91% vs. 91.9%
≈	Non EU citizen	0.5% vs. 0.4%

The situation in terms of the country of birth and citizenship remains stable from 2021 to 2024 (most of respondents were born in the EU and hold EU citizenship).

The largest number of respondents come from (in descending order) Italy, Spain, Greece, Belgium, France and Romania. This is comparable to the 2021 pilot, where the largest number of respondents came from (in descending order) Italy, Spain, Greece, Romania, Belgium and France.

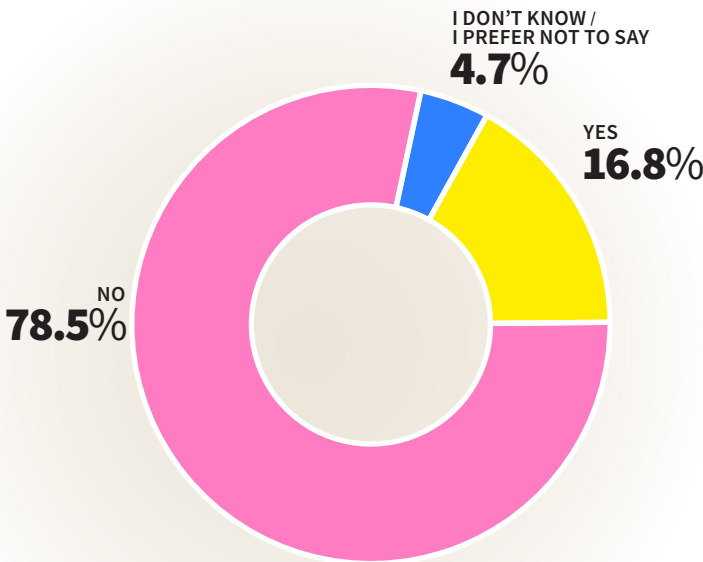
There is significant gender disparity between respondents from certain countries (see Table 3 below). More female than male respondents come from Estonia, Lithuania, Finland (over 70% female respondents), Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Poland (over 60% female respondents). The largest proportion of male respondents come from Denmark, Portugal and Slovenia (all 55%).

Table 3: Birth country and gender of survey respondents. The numbers in brackets for each country denote percentages of the candidates of a given gender per Member State. Highlighted cells denote a higher proportion of women (green) and men (orange) from a certain Member State. Overall 95% of respondents answered the question on their birth country.

COUNTRY	WOMEN	MEN	NON-BINARY/ OTHER	I PREFER NOT TO SAY
Austria	39 (48%)	40 (49%)	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
Belgium	202 (50.6%)	188 (47%)	1 (0.3%)	8 (2%)
Bulgaria	115 (64%)	65 (36%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Croatia	63 (56%)	47 (42%)	0 (0%)	2 (2%)
Cyprus	15 (48%)	14 (45%)	1 (3%)	1 (3%)
Czechia	39 (58%)	28 (42%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Denmark	17 (45%)	21 (55%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Estonia	23 (82%)	5 (18%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Finland	41 (71%)	17 (29%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
France	240 (53.5%)	202 (45%)	1 (0.2%)	6 (1.3%)
Germany	129 (48%)	136 (50%)	2 (1%)	3 (1%)
Greece	338 (52%)	302 (46%)	4 (1%)	12 (2%)
Hungary	59 (63%)	32 (34%)	0 (0%)	3 (3%)
Ireland	18 (50%)	17 (47%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
Italy	557 (51%)	516 (47%)	7 (1%)	18 (2%)
Latvia	29 (63%)	17 (37%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Lithuania	36 (72%)	13 (26%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Luxembourg	10 (53%)	8 (42%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
Malta	10 (56%)	8 (44%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Netherlands	34 (48%)	35 (49%)	0 (0%)	2 (3%)
Europe (not in EU)	85 (55%)	67 (43%)	1 (1%)	2 (1%)
Other	8 (73%)	1 (9%)	1 (9%)	1 (9%)
Outside Europe	174 (54%)	141 (44%)	4 (1%)	4 (1%)
Poland	132 (69%)	54 (28%)	3 (2%)	2 (1%)
Portugal	112 (44%)	140 (55%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Romania	215 (51%)	200 (48%)	0 (0%)	5 (1%)
Slovakia	28 (60%)	18 (38%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
Slovenia	14 (45%)	17 (55%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Spain	422 (51.5%)	379 (46%)	4 (0.5%)	14 (2%)
Sweden	28 (64%)	15 (34%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
I don't know / I prefer not to say	13 (21%)	20 (33%)	1 (2%)	27 (44%)

Ethnic background

78.5 % of respondents do not perceive themselves as being part of a specific ethnic group. More interestingly, however, is the increase (compared to the pilot survey in 2021) of people who perceive themselves as belonging to a specific ethnic group. While in 2021 they were 8.8%, in 2024 they are 16.8%.



It is important to highlight that in the 2024 survey, the percentage of respondents who consider themselves as belonging to a specific ethnic group almost doubled in comparison to the 2021 pilot survey. At the same time, the percentage of people declaring themselves as belonging to the white ethnic group decreased. A smaller decrease is also observed for people declaring to belong to the black ethnic group.

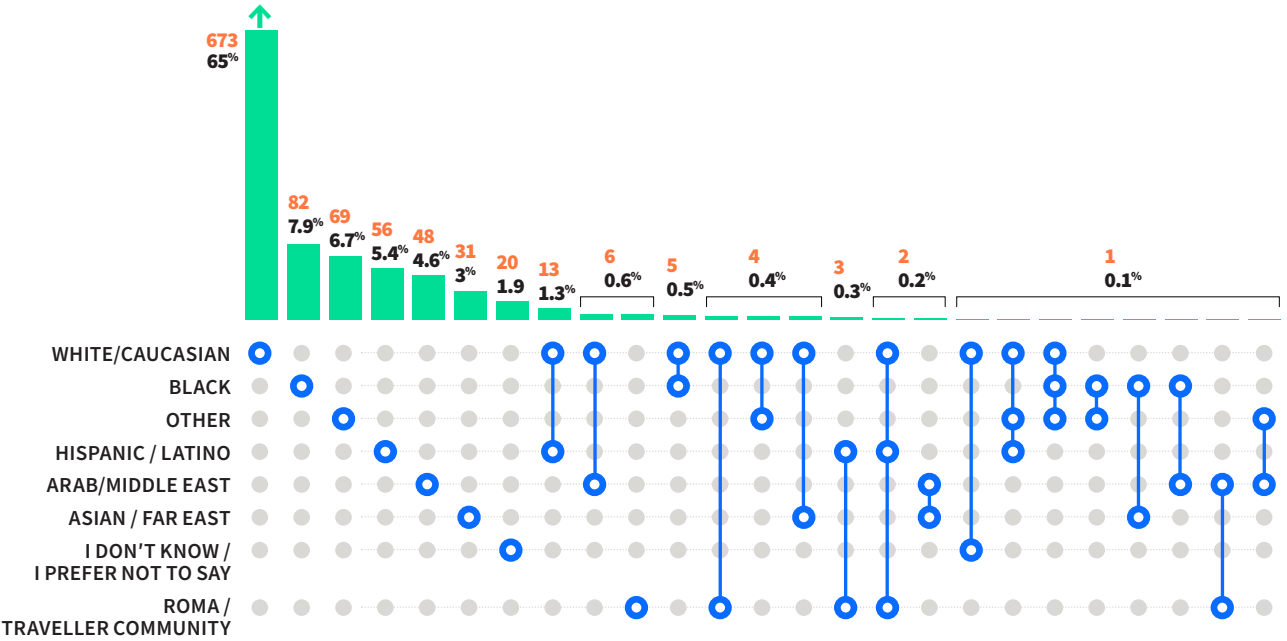
Of those who identify with a specific ethnic group, the analysis shows that the majority identify as 'White' (64.8%), 'Black' (7.9%), 'Hispanic/Latino' (5.4%), 'Arab/Middle East' (4.6%), 'Asian/Far East' (3.0%), 'Roma/traveller community' (0.6%) and their combinations (18%). 'I don't know/Prefer not to say' was selected by 1.9% of respondents, while 'Other' was selected in 6.7% of cases (mostly Jewish, Basque, Mediterranean, mixed race, Slavic, indigenous).

2024 vs. 2021		
ETHNIC ORIGIN?		
↑	Yes	16.8% vs. 8.8%
↓	No	78.5% vs. 85.2%
≈	I don't know/say	4.7% vs. 5.1%

2024 vs. 2021		
ETHNICITY		
↓	White	64.8% vs. 74.0%
↓	Black	7.9% vs. 12.4%
↑	Hispanic/Latino	5.4% vs. 3.8%
≈	Arab/Middle East	4.6% vs. 5.6%
≈	Asian/Far East	3.0% vs. 4.0%

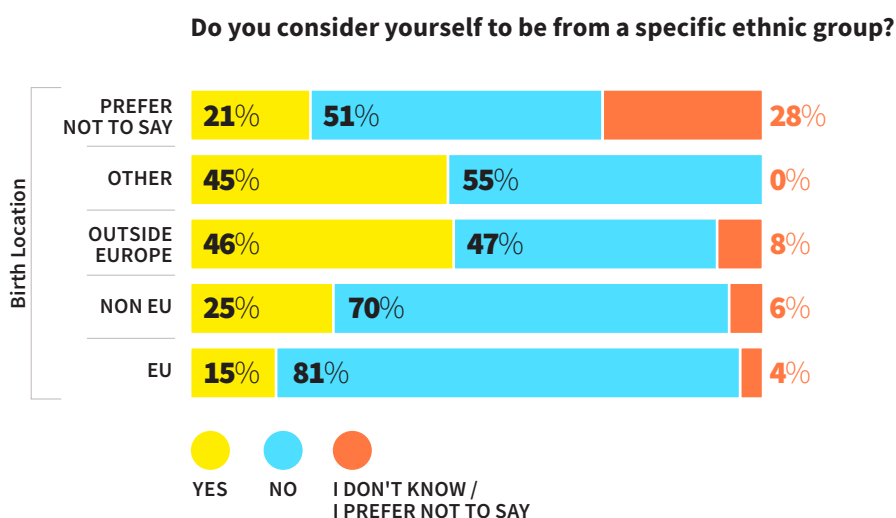
This is shown in the UpSet graph¹ below. The graph below depicts the number of people who identify with a specific ethnic group (left side of bottom part of the graph, denoted by the coloured dots) or a combination of ethnic groups (right side of the bottom part of the graph, denoted by the coloured dots). The actual numbers and percentages of people from an ethnic group or their combination is then shown in the top part of the plot (numbers are represented in orange and percentages in black). For example, 673 respondents (65%) selected 'White/Caucasian', while 'White/Caucasian' and 'Hispanic/Latino' combination was selected in 13 cases (1.3%). To see which ethnic groups (or their combinations) are shown on the barplot, the reader is instructed to see the coloured dots (one or more, depending on the combination of answers).

Ethnic Background

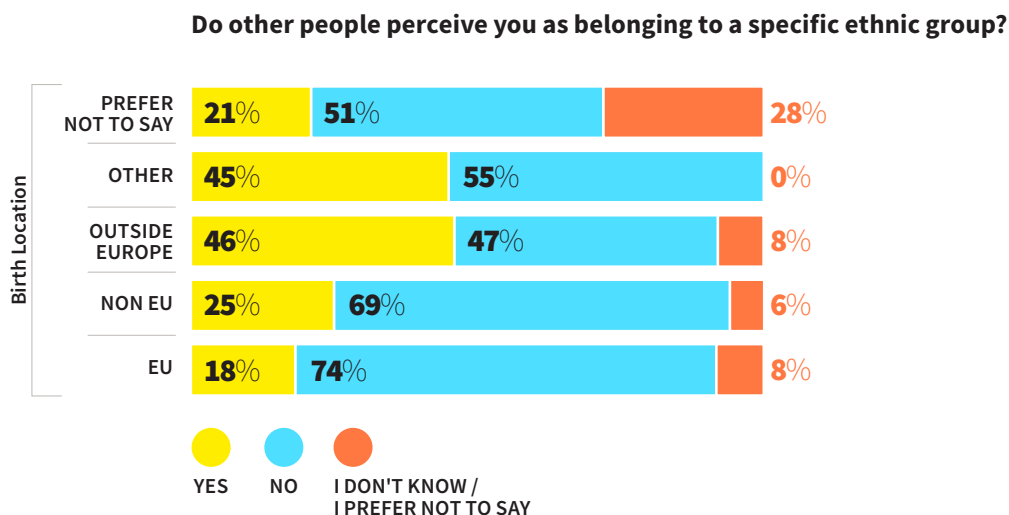


1 Lex A, Gehlenborg N, Strobelt H, Vuillemot R, Pfister H. UpSet: Visualization of Intersecting Sets. IEEE Trans Vis Comput Graph. 2014 Dec;20(12):1983-92. doi: 10.1109/TVCG.2014.2346248. UpSet graphs are an innovative visualization technique for data sets and their intersections that effectively replace Venn diagrams of larger sizes.

Considering the country of birth and ethnicity, EU-born respondents are least likely to claim belonging to any specific ethnic groups (15% on the graph below in yellow colour). Around a quarter (25% on the graph below in yellow colour) of respondents who were born in Europe but not in an EU Member State (*'Non EU'* on the graph below) claim to belong to specific ethnic groups. Respondents who were born outside of Europe (*'Out Europe'* in the graph below) report that they belong to a specific ethnic group in 46% of the cases (yellow colour on the graph below). Very few (0.18% overall) respondents selected *'Other'* (e.g., Martinique, ex-Yugoslavia, Basque country or Taiwan) as their birth location and they are balanced in terms of their perception of belonging to a specific ethnic group or not (46% claim to belong to a specific ethnic group and 47% do not).



Similar results are seen when respondents were asked about whether others perceive them as belonging to a specific ethnic group. The only exception was observed within the group of respondents who were born in the EU. Unlike above, where 15% consider themselves as belonging to a specific ethnic group, 18% of them feel as actually perceived to belonging to a specific ethnic group. This increase in 3% represents 182 people which may be worthnoty.



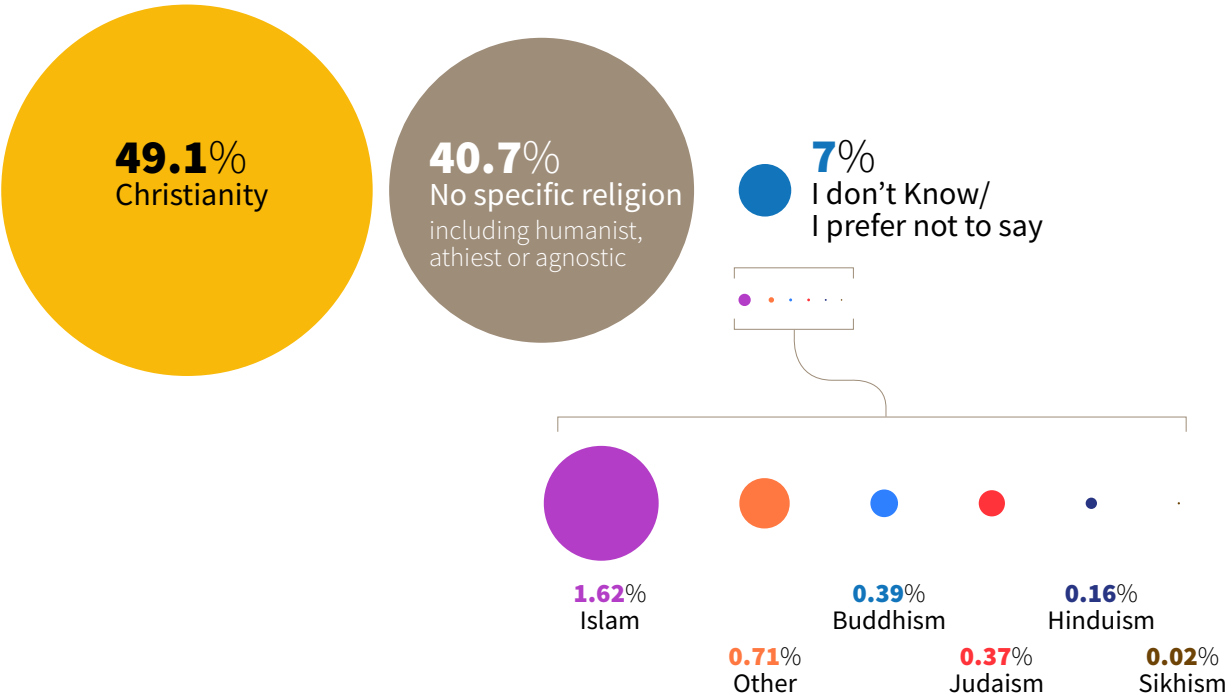
Religion or belief

The vast majority of respondents consider themselves as either Christian (49.1%) or non-denominational (40.7%, compared to 57.4% in the last diversity survey).

It is important to note that when asked whether they consider to be perceived by others as belonging to a particular religion, belief or faith group, out of 19.8% of those who answered 'yes' to this question (only 12.3% in 2021), 58.5% declare themselves as Christian.

The graph below shows the percentage of respondents/religion.

2024 vs. 2021		
RELIGION		
↓	No	40.7% vs. 57.4%
↓	Christianity	49.1% vs. 61%
↑	Perceived as religious	19.8% vs. 12.3%



The table below shows a comparison between the religious identity of respondents and their belief to be perceived as belonging to a specific religion by others (last column). Upwards of 30% of respondents, who are perceived by others to be of specific religions, are in fact not. 58.52% of people that feel perceived as religious are Christian.

There is a significant difference between respondents who declare themselves as being Muslims (1.62%) and those who feel perceived by others as being Muslims (5.03%).

Table 4: Percentage of people who feel perceived as belonging to a specific religion and their actual religious identity. The highlighted fields are explained in the text above.

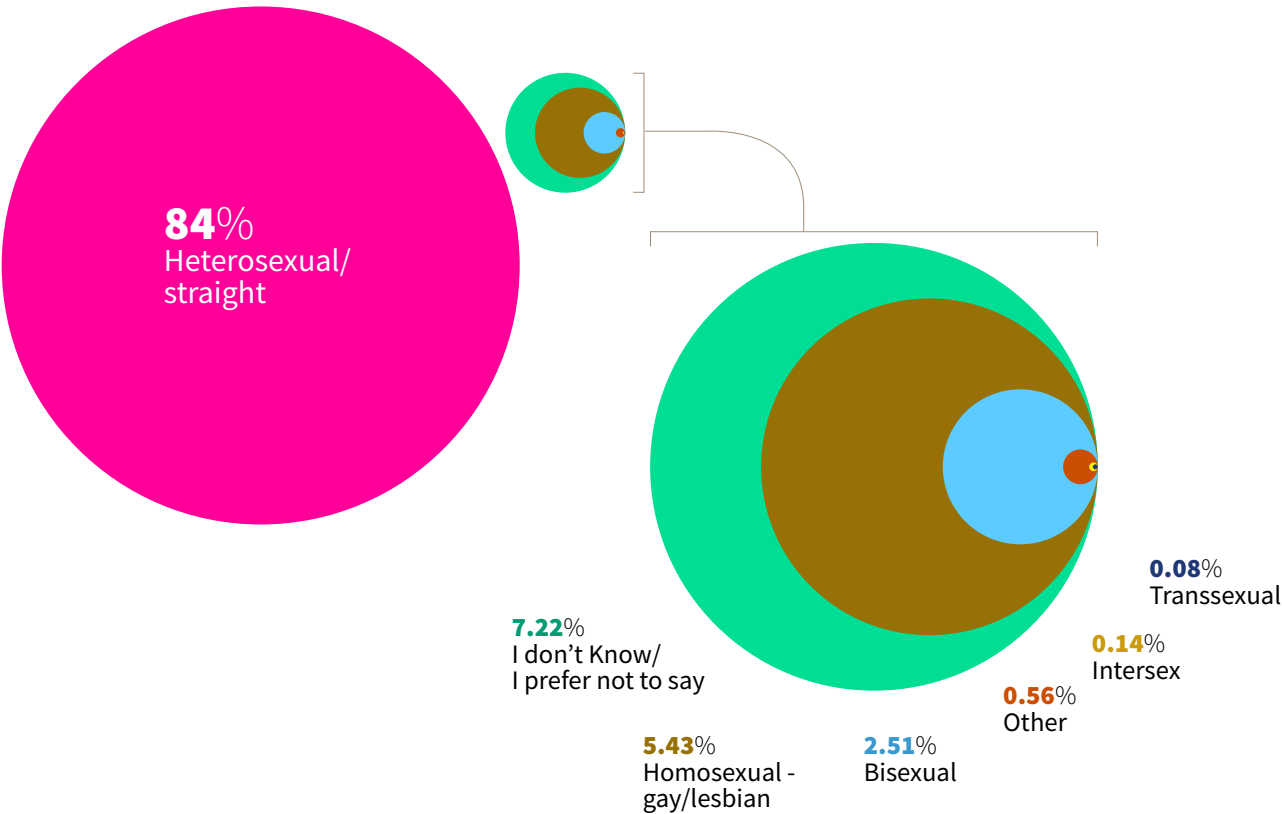
	RESPONDENTS WHO IDENTIFY AS BELONGING TO A SPECIFIC RELIGION	RESPONDENTS WHO FEEL PERCEIVED AS BELONGING TO A SPECIFIC RELIGION BY OTHERS
No specific religion (including humanist, atheist or agnostic)	40.68%	30.44%
Buddhism	0.39%	0.08%
Christianity	49.12%	58.52%
Hinduism	0.16%	0.49%
Islam	1.62%	5.03%
Judaism	0.37%	0.65%
Sikhism	0.02%	0.08%
Other	0.71%	0.97%
I don't know / I prefer not to say	6.95%	3.73%

Sexual orientation and gender identity

The vast majority (84%, similar to the last diversity survey) of respondents identify as heterosexual, as shown in the figure below. Due to differences in categorisation between the 2021 and 2024 surveys, specifically the 2024 survey offering a wider range of options, direct comparisons between the two may be limited.

We observe a slight increase in the percentage of repondents who decided not to disclose their sexual orientation.

2024 vs. 2021		
SEXUAL ORIENTATION		
≈	Heterosexual	84.05% vs. 85.3%
≈	Homosexual	5.43% vs. 5.0%
≈	Bisexual	2.51% vs. 2.8%
↑	I don't know/say	7.22% vs. 5.7%



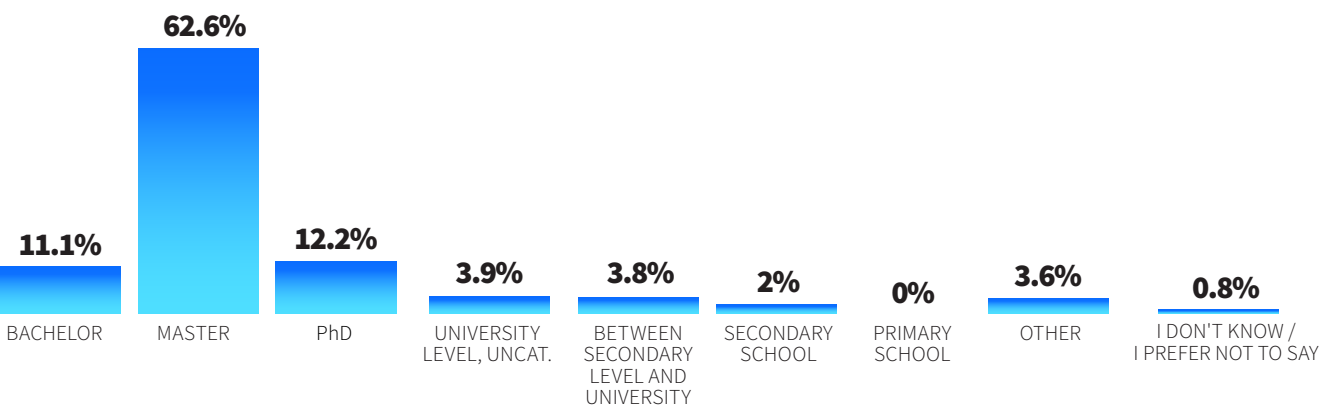
Education

Most respondents (89.8%, in comparison to 92.3% in the 2021 survey) hold a university degree or equivalent. Out of these, 12.2% have a PhD (in comparison to 15.4% in 2021).

The majority (62.6%) of respondents have a master's degree. Most commonly, these people come from families where at least one parent also obtained a master's degree (17.8% of all combinations between parents and respondents).

2024 vs. 2021		
EDUCATION		
↓	University degree	89.8% vs. 92.3%
↓	PhD	12.2% vs. 15.4%
≈	Secondary school	2.0% vs. 2.2%

Education Level



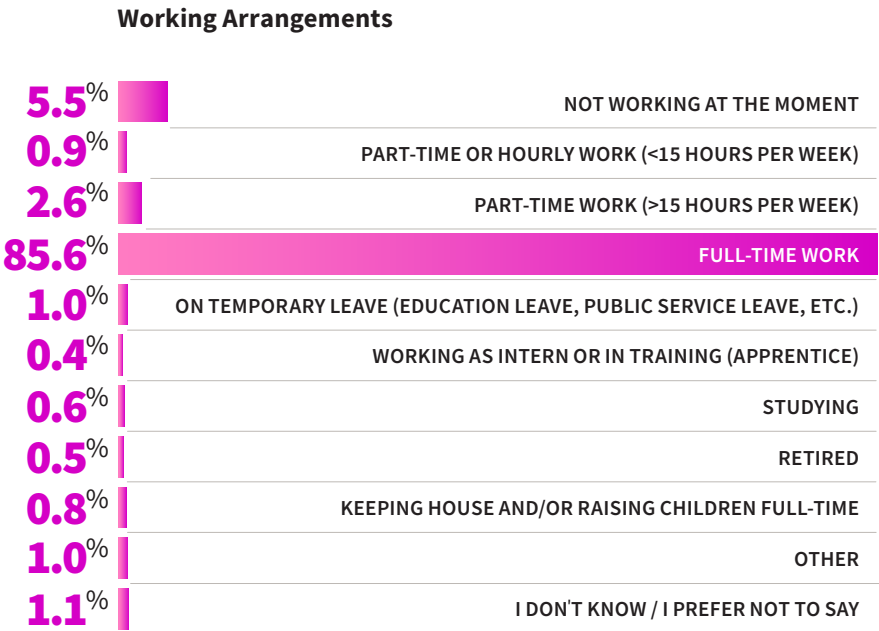
Overall, parents or guardians are also highly educated (49.4% hold a university degree, and 6.4% hold a PhD). We can observe a 50% decrease between the two surveys in terms of the percentage of parents or guardians holding a PhD. It is interesting to note that 10.1% of parents or guardians have primary school as their highest level of education, which was already the case in the 2021 survey.

2024 vs. 2021		
PARENTS' EDUCATION		
≈	University degree	49.4% vs. 49.6%
↓	PhD	6.4% vs. 12.4%
≈	Primary school	10.1% vs. 10%

Working arrangements

The vast majority (85.6%) of the candidates were employed on a full-time basis. This is similar to the situation in the 2021 diversity survey. 5.5% of respondents were not working at the time of the survey (see figure below), while other working arrangements were selected in fewer cases (typically 1% or less).

2024 VS. 2021		
EMPLOYMENT		
≈	Full-time work	85.6% VS. 84.6%
≈	Not employed	5.5% VS. 5.7%



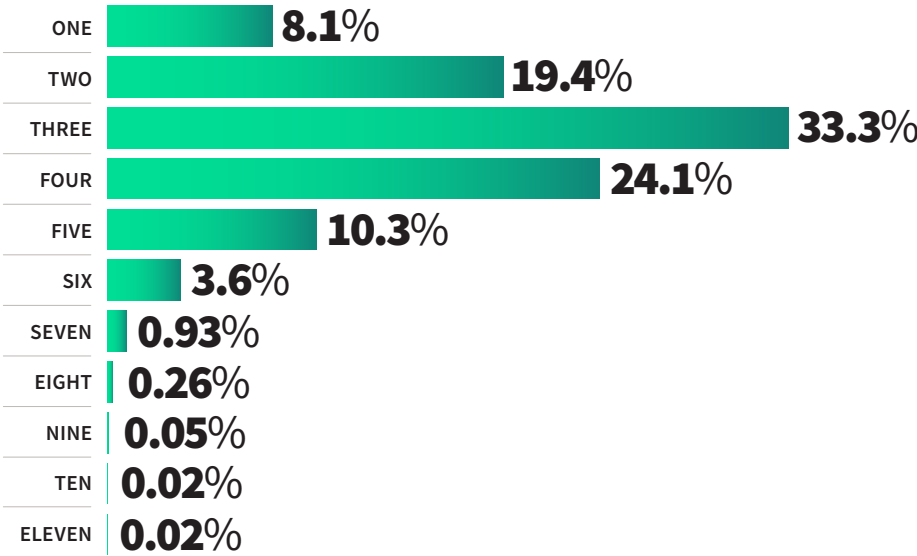
For those respondents who were studying at the time of the survey, 88.3% of their parents or guardians were working full-time (87% in 2021).

Languages

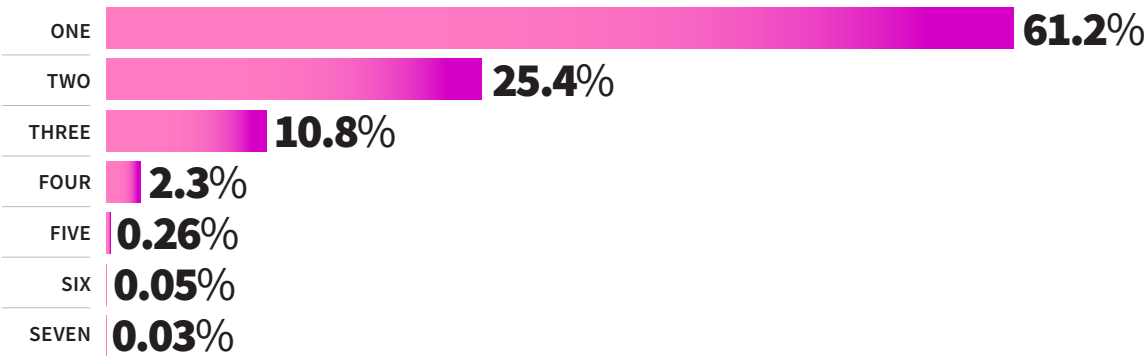
Most respondents speak three languages on average, which was also the case in the 2021 survey. 10.3% speak five languages. The five most spoken languages are English, French, Spanish, Italian and German in order of importance, as in 2021. The majority of respondents (61.2%) come from a monolingual family, while a quarter (25.4%) of the respondents come from a bilingual family. The results are shown in the two figures below.

2024 vs. 2021		
LANGUAGES		
≈	Languages spoken on average	3 vs. 3
↓	Monolingual family	61% vs. 63%
≈	Bilingual family	25% vs. 25%

Number of Languages Mastered



Number of languages spoken at home



Socio-economic status

We observe an increase in respondents who consider themselves as coming from an underprivileged socio-economic background in comparison with 2021 (23.2% and 19.5%, respectively).

However, the majority of respondents do not consider themselves as coming from a lower socio-economic background (70%).

2024 vs. 2021		
LOWER SOC-ECON STATUS		
↑	Yes	23.2% vs. 19.5%
↓	No	70% vs. 74.5%
≈	I don't know/ I prefer not to say	6.8% vs. 6%

Disability and medical condition

7% (433 individuals) of the respondents declare having a disability or a medical condition.

Out of these, 88.2% (381 individuals) have a permanent disability or a medical condition which in 58% of cases are not officially recognised as a disability by their national authority.

2024 vs 2021	HAVE A DISABILITY		→	PERMANENT		→	OFFICIALLY RECOGNISED	
	↑			↑			↑	
	2024	7%		2024	88.2%		2024	42%
	2021	5.1%		2021	81.8%		2021	30%

The disabilities or medical conditions most commonly reported are '*chronic illnesses*' (35.6%; 154 cases), '*mental health conditions*' (9.2%, 40 cases), '*physical/motor impairment*' (8.8%, 38 cases), '*visual impairment*' (4.4%, 19 cases), '*hearing impairment*' (4.4%, 19 cases) and '*learning difficulty/speech disorder*' (4.2%, 18 cases). 'Other' was selected by 11.3% of the respondents (49 cases). Among them, Attention and Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum/neurodivergency and dyslexia were most commonly indicated. Some other conditions mentioned less, concern epilepsy, post cancer complications/requirements, migraine, psoriasis, Parkinson's disease, menopause, HIV, etc.

The disability / specific needs status based on gender, in general, mirrors the overall gender composition, however, the percentage of women reporting a disability (55.9%, see Table 5 below) is slightly higher than all women responding to the survey (52.7%). An even more pronounced difference is among the non-binary/other category. While only 0.5% of respondents belong to this group, 2.6% declare having a disability or a medical condition. On the other hand, while men represent 44.8% the respondents, only 39.0% of respondents with a disability / specific medical condition are men.

2024 vs. 2021		
DISABILITY		
≈	Chronic illness	35.6% vs. 34.5%
≈	Mental health	9.2% vs. 8.8%
≈	Physical/motor	8.8% vs. 9.4%
↓	Visual	4.4% vs. 8.8%
↓	Hearing	4.4% vs. 6.3%
↓	Learning	4.2% vs. 7.5%

Table 5: The status of disability or medical condition (by percentage) stratified by gender.

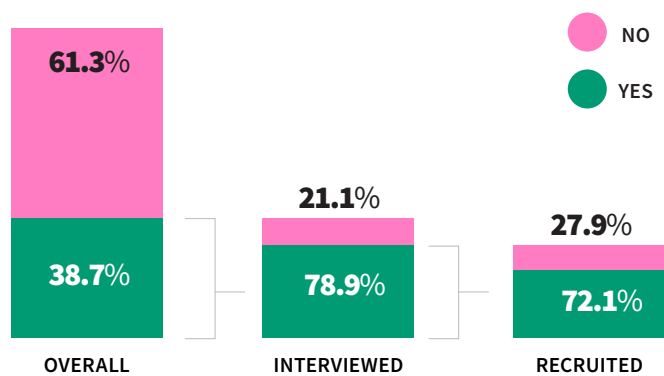
DISABILITY / MEDICAL CONDITION	WOMEN	MEN	NON-BINARY/ OTHER	I DON'T KNOW / I PREFER NOT TO SAY
Yes	55.9%	39%	2.6%	2.6%
No	52.6%	45.7%	0.3%	1.4%
I don't know / I prefer not to say	46.6%	32.0%	1.7%	19.7%

Competitions

There are three levels of competition success reported by respondents in the context of this survey: overall success (respondents declared being retained on the reserve list of successful candidates), interview stage (respondents declared being invited to the recruitment interview and being successful at it), and final recruitment (respondents reported being recruited by an EU Institution). It is important to note that these figures are also based on self-declaration and that respondents indicated whether they were successful or not. As the survey is anonymous, we do not monitor respondents’ actual results in a competition.

Around 22% of respondents (1,334 out of the 6,193 respondents who provided this information) are or have been in the process of being recruited by an EU institution. The height of the bar is relative to the number of respondents.

Competition Success



The overall success is similar to the one in 2021, while the success rate at the interview stage and the percentage of respondents who have been recruited or are in the process of being recruited is lower in 2024, compared to 2021.

2024 vs 2021	OVERALL SUCCESS			INTERVIEW SUCCESS			RECRUITED		
	≈	2024	38.7%	↓	2024	78.9%	↓	2024	72.1%
		2021	38.6%		2021	85%		2021	77%

The respondents that came to the end of the competition were generally speaking from Member States usually well-represented in EPSO’s applicant pools, with the highest numbers of respondents in this situation coming from Italy, Spain, Greece, France and Belgium, in order of importance.

Table 6: Number of recruited individuals per Member State (based on self-declaration).

	NO	YES
Austria	5	15
Belgium	43	101
Bulgaria	15	43
Croatia	9	23
Cyprus	6	5
Czechia	11	9
Denmark	7	9
Estonia	3	8
Finland	5	8
France	31	117
Germany	20	59
Greece	63	129
Hungary	3	31
Ireland	5	11
Italy	110	276
Latvia	4	12
Lithuania	4	14
Luxembourg	0	4
Malta	2	4
Netherlands	6	20
Non EU	0	3
Other	0	0
Outside Europe	1	5
Poland	18	40
Portugal	28	53
Romania	33	94
Slovakia	3	10
Slovenia	2	7
Spain	61	175
Sweden	6	10
I don't know / I prefer not to say	3	20

Impact of respondents' characteristics on some key variables

Sexual orientation, declared religion, religion as perceived by others, education, parents' education, and disability seemingly do not affect the success rates, as the distribution ratios were similar among these variables.

Age seems to impact the recruitment success; among the respondents, those who reported being recruited were more present in the age range 40-44 than among all respondents (28.43% vs. 23.56%, respectively).

The same was observed for gender; there were more women in the recruited group than among all respondents (58.54% vs. 52.69%, respectively), with an opposite trend for men (38.68% among recruited and 44.8% among all respondents).

While there is gender balance in each age category among the recruited respondents, this balance is not represented by the whole pool of candidates; men from every age category are more likely to be recruited than their female peers.

Gender and disability do not seem to have an impact on success; all categories are equally represented when comparing all vs. recruited categories.

People with disabilities or a medical condition and from an underprivileged socio-economic background are more often recruited (13.5%) than would be expected from the whole respondents' pool (9.85%).

The self-reported lower socio-economic background is the same among all, recruited and not recruited respondents.

Table 7: Declared underprivileged (lower socio-economic) background within different respondents' groups; all, only recruited, not successful in any competition, not recruited after the interview stage. Rows add to 100%.

	Underprivileged		
	YES	NO	I DON'T KNOW / I PREFER NOT TO SAY
All respondents	23%	70%	7%
Recruited	21%	72%	6%
Not successful	23%	70%	7%
Not recruited	23%	71%	6%

Men who do not consider themselves as coming from an underprivileged socio-economic background are more often represented among the recruited (75.8%) than among all respondents (70.4%). The difference among women in these categories was not relevant.

Table 8: Percentage of all and recruited men depending on their perceived socio-economic background.

UNDERPRIVILEGED	ALL MEN	RECRUITED MEN
Yes	23.8%	20.7%
No	70.4%	75.8%
I don't know / I prefer not to say	5.8%	3.5%

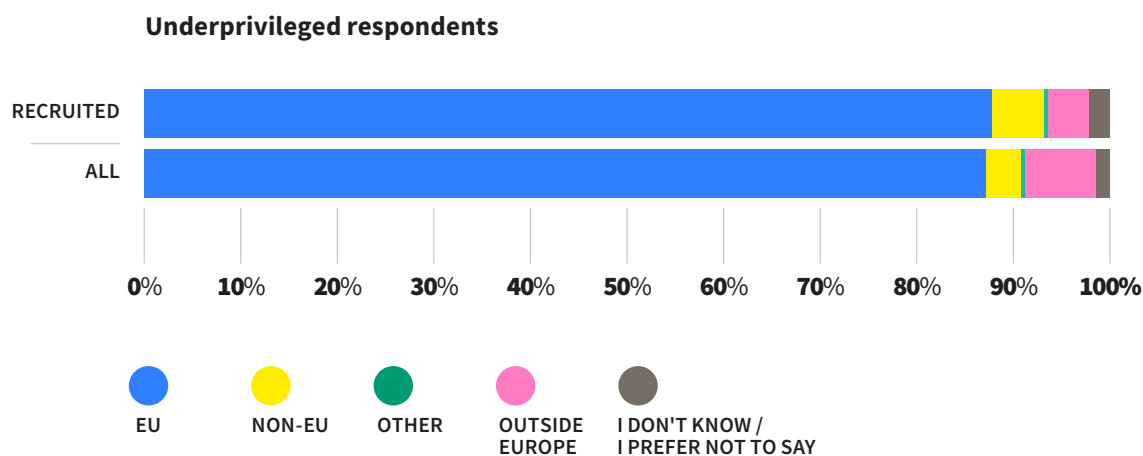
Underprivileged respondents in terms of socio-economic background (see Table 9 below in bold) with no specific religion, and of a specific ethnic background (both self-declared and perceived by others) are less commonly represented among the recruited candidates (**17.5%**, **26.5%** and **26.4%**, respectively) than among all respondents (**21.7%**, **32.1%** and **31.4%**, respectively).

Table 9: Declared underprivileged socio-economic background and the effect on recruitment based on religion, self-perceived ethnic background and ethnic background as perceived by others. Columns add to 100%. The bold part highlights respondents from underprivileged self-perceived socio-economic background and their differences in religion, ethnic background (self-proclaimed and as perceived by others) among all respondents and recruited ones.

UNDERPRIVILEGED	NO SPECIFIC RELIGION (INCLUDING HUMANIST, ATHEIST OR AGNOSTIC)		SELF-PERCEIVED ETHNIC BACKGROUND: YES		PERCEIVED AS ETHNIC BY OTHERS: YES	
	ALL RESPONDENTS	RECRUITED	ALL RESPONDENTS	RECRUITED	ALL RESPONDENTS	RECRUITED
Yes	21.7%	17.5%	32.1%	26.5%	31.4%	26.4%
No	72.7%	77.5%	60.5%	67.7%	61.0%	65.7%
I don't know / I prefer not to say	5.5%	5%	7.5%	5.8%	7.5%	7.9%

When the country of birth is considered, the results are similar, as shown in the figure below. One notable difference regards respondents from Europe but not from an EU Member State ('Non EU'), where a higher percentage reports as being from an underprivileged background among recruited respondents (5.4%) than among all respondents (3.6%). An opposite trend is seen for respondents born outside of Europe, where a lower percentage (4.3%) of those from lower socio-economic background is seen among the recruited group, compared to all respondents (7.4%).

The highlighted fields are explained in the text above.

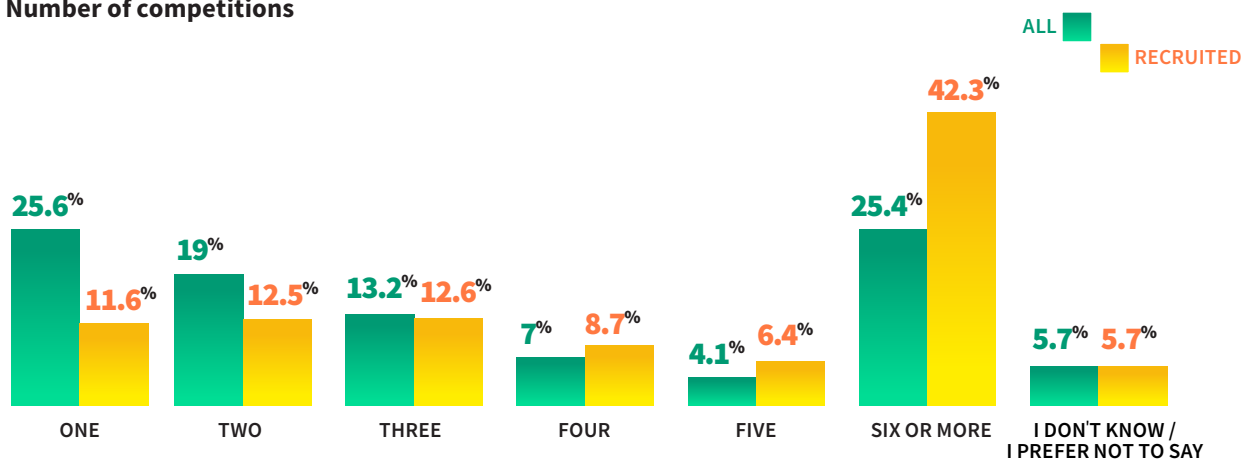


	ALL	RECRUITED
EU	87.3%	87.9%
Non EU	3.6%	5.4%
Other	0.4%	0.4%
Outside Europe	7.4%	4.3%
I don't know/I prefer not to say	1.4%	2.1%

Number of competitions

A very interesting dynamic is observed when we consider the number of competitions. Here, among all respondents, around a quarter was involved in one competition and around a quarter in more than five. Around 20% of respondents were involved in 2 competitions and around 15% in three. These percentages did not differ significantly when gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation were considered. However, among the successful respondents, over 40% were involved in over 5 competitions, and only 11.6% were successful in their first attempt. A similar pattern is observed for people who participated in 2 competitions representing almost 20% of all respondents, but only 12.5% were successful.

Number of competitions



Perception of enjoying equal opportunities

2024 vs. 2021

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

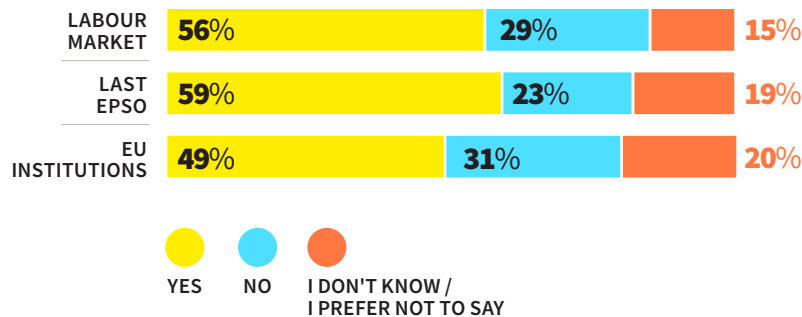
↓	Labour market	55.8% vs. 61.1%
↓	EPSO competitions	58.6% vs. 67.4%
↓	EU institutions	49.3% vs. 55.7%

Respondents provided feedback on their perception of equal opportunities on three levels: on the labour market in general, in their last EPSO competition and in the EU institutions. Based on their feedback, the EPSO competitions are reported to enjoy the highest perception of equal opportunities. This is similar to 2021.

Nevertheless, the overall perception of those respondents who felt that they enjoyed equal opportunities decreased in 2024 compared to 2021 for all three levels (labour market, EPSO competitions and EU Institutions).

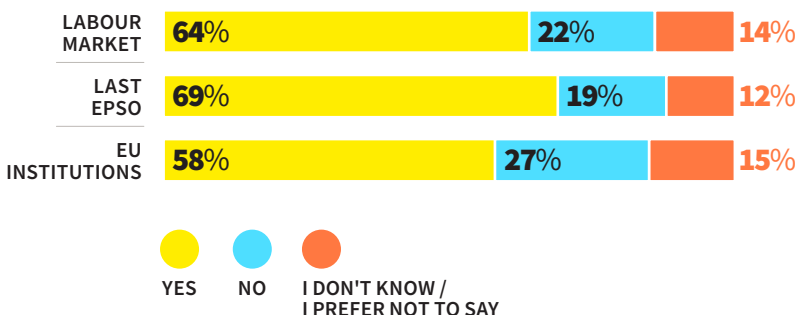
When looking only at the respondents who were recruited, their overall feedback is more positive and they felt to have benefitted from equal opportunities. Like in the previous case,

Do you benefit from equal opportunities? (All)



the recruited respondents of EPSO competitions report to benefit from equal opportunities at the highest rate.

Do you benefit from equal opportunities? (Recruited respondents)



Labour market

Recruited respondents believe overall that they benefit from equal opportunities in the labour market (64%), while this percentage is apparently much lower among all respondents (56%).

An interesting divergence of opinion is seen when assessing a combination of factors: 50% of recruited respondents who come from an underprivileged background state that they benefit from equal opportunities on the labour market, while only 41% of all respondents from an unprivileged background are of the same opinion. Similar trends were observed for all age categories, genders, ethnicities and sexual orientations. Such pattern was not observed for respondents with disabilities, where no difference was observed between their evaluation of enjoying equal opportunities when recruited respondents were compared to the whole respondents' pool.

Last EPSO competition

The pattern here is similar to the ones above. In terms of their last EPSO competition, recruited respondents overall believe that they have enjoyed equal opportunities (69%), while this percentage is much lower among all respondents (59%).

EU institutions

The pattern is similar to the ones above. Recruited respondents overall believe that there are equal opportunities in the EU institutions (58%), while this percentage is much lower among all respondents (50%). Nevertheless, the overall evaluation is that respondents feel that when working in EU institutions, people enjoy equal opportunities less, in comparison with the labour market in general or in comparison with the EPSO selection process.

Possible grounds for discrimination

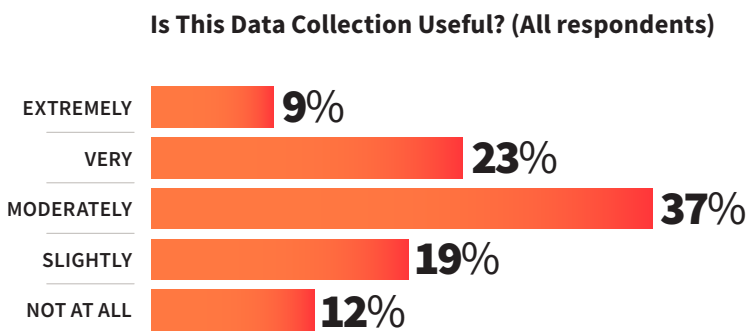
A more detailed qualitative analysis gave an interesting insight in the perceived grounds for discrimination suggested by the respondents who did not feel they had benefitted from equal opportunities. These were observed across all three levels in a very similar way (in the labour market, in EPSO's competitions and in the EU Institutions).

- Gender (discrimination against women, especially in terms of differences in salaries and having fewer opportunities to advance to top management positions due to pregnancy and caregiving responsibilities);
- Location and ethnicity (the major issue mentioned concerned individuals coming from Eastern Europe, Southern and non-European countries, having immigrant/non-native status);
- Ageism;
- Lack of personal networks and influence due to a lower socio-economic status.

Other commonly identified sources of discrimination reported by some of the respondents when it comes to EPSO’s competitions and the EU Institutions were unclear or demanding selection criteria including languages; selection tests; lack of professional experience in the EU Institutions; psycho-social bias; lack of meritocracy and health conditions.

Feedback about the survey

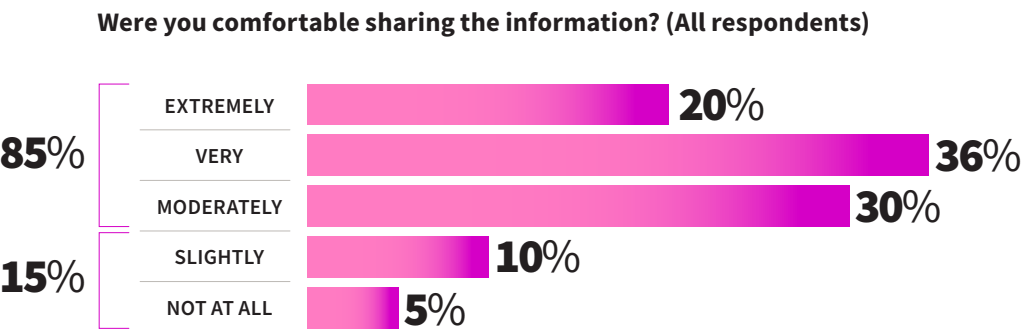
The majority of respondents (69%) found the survey to be useful (from moderately to extremely). When checking the subset of respondents who were positive about the survey, they did not differ in their characteristics (age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion) in comparison with all respondents.



When compared to 2021, respondents had a slightly lower perception of the usefulness of data collection and sharing this type of information.

2024 vs 2021	SURVEY IN USEFUL			COMFORTABLE SHARING INFORMATION			EXTREMELY COMFORTABLE		
	↓	2024	69%	↓	2024	85%	≈	2024	56%
		2021	75%		2021	87%		2021	57%

Nevertheless, respondents were overall comfortable sharing the information about themselves in the context of this survey, as depicted below.



Main conclusions, limitations and next steps

EPSO's 2nd diversity survey contributes, together with the 2021 pilot survey results, to a better understanding of the typology of candidates EPSO's selection procedures seem to attract.

It also allows to compare the representation of the main diversity categories between the 2021 pilot survey and the 2024 survey.

Finally, it allows EPSO to monitor progress in terms of diversity of the candidate pool and to have an indication of the effectiveness of its targeted outreach and communication actions.

Despite its limitations (e.g. self-declaration and voluntary participation) this 2nd survey confirmed many previously observed tendencies.

EPSO's typical candidate from the 2024 diversity survey resembles the one suggested by the 2021 pilot survey with some encouraging evolution in terms of ethnicity, socio-economic background and disability.

Based on this specific survey and respondents' self-declarations, the results suggest that a typical EPSO candidate could more often be:

- A woman (53%) than a man (45%);
- In the 40 to 49 age range;
- Married or equivalent;
- An EU citizen born in the EU;
- Mostly coming from Italy, Spain, Greece, Belgium, France and Romania;
- Highly educated (including with highly educated parents or guardians);
- Multilingual (speaks 3 languages on average);
- Mainly 'straight';
- Either without a religion, or if so, predominantly Christian;
- From a privileged socio-economic background;
- Mostly without a disability;
- Fervent candidate to EPSO's competitions;
- Likely to perceive EPSO's competitions as offering equal opportunities.

As a matter of fact, we observe a certain evolution in terms of diversity in this new pool of candidates surveyed between 2021 and 2024; while this trend is noteworthy, further analysis would be necessary to better understand its underlying drivers and to determine to what extent it reflects broader dynamics beyond this specific sample:

- The percentage of respondents who declared a specific ethnic background increased from 8.8% to 16.8%;
- The percentage of respondents declaring coming from an underprivileged socio-economic background also increased from 19.5% to 23.2%;
- The respondents with a disability or a medical condition increased from 5.1% to 7% between 2021 and 2024, with a higher rate of permanent conditions (81.8% vs 88.2%) being recognised as a disability by a national authority (30% vs 36%).

We also observe some changes in terms of age (respondents being older in competitions surveyed in 2024 compared to the competitions of the diversity pilot survey of 2021), and in family composition (more of them reported to be married or equivalent – 50.9% vs 60.5%). However, these observations could be the result of the type of competitions considered in this study. In fact, an important number of specialist competitions in the period concerned, where professional experience was required, may be one of the possible causes behind these differences.

It is important to take into consideration that the data and observations in the context of this survey are based on anonymous and voluntary self-declaration and should be considered indicative only. Results may be influenced by the nature of the sample and the type of competitions held during the reference period among other factors. The 2nd survey does not account for the fact that it was carried out under a new competition model (adopted in 2023) and in a fully-fledged 24-language regime compared to the first one.

While the large-scale, quantitative surveys conducted in 2021 and 2024 have certain limitations, they nonetheless provide a meaningful contribution to understanding the diversity within EPSO's candidate pool.

The findings from this latest survey, combined with the main conclusions of [the 2024 focus group project](#), will help shape EPSO's future actions in the fields of equality and diversity.

In the absence of a more formal and structured diversity monitoring system, EPSO will continue to rely on diversity surveys as a key source of valuable insights.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Learn more about EPSO's ongoing activities on Equality and Diversity on its dedicated page:

[Equal opportunities, Diversity and Inclusion | EU Careers](#)

<https://eu-careers.europa.eu/en/selection-procedure/equal-opportunities-diversity-inclusion>



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