

Europe's citizens speak up: new Euroconsumers survey reveals what 450 million Europeans expect from the EU role in a disruptive world

Euroconsumers' newest survey of 10,000 citizens across 10 countries uncovers suggests that Europeans want a stronger, more autonomous EU that listens to consumers and leads with confidence on the global stage.

Euroconsumers today releases the findings of its new pan-European survey, *Consumers as Geopolitical Actors: What Europeans Expect from the EU in a Disruptive World*. The survey, conducted in February 2026 with nearly 10,000 respondents across Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal, and Spain, reveals a continent at a crossroads: proud of its values, concerned about its future, and demanding a more assertive EU.

Key Findings: a Europe respected, but not feared enough

Europeans are proud of the EU's achievements: they recognize it as a global economic powerhouse and a beacon for quality of life. But only a third see the EU as a major military power, and many feel its influence on the world stage falls short of its potential. From Ukraine to Gaza, Europeans want leadership that matches the EU's economic and moral weight.

A transatlantic relationship under strain

The survey highlights a shift in how Europeans perceive their relationship with the United States. The long-standing transatlantic alliance, once seen as a cornerstone of stability, is viewed with growing scepticism: only 28% of respondents believe the US will remain a reliable partner, while around 50% think the EU should prioritise building new alliances.

This reflects years of political and economic tensions, from foreign policy disagreements to the use of tariffs and unilateral measures by Washington. For many, the relationship is no longer one of automatic alignment but increasingly shaped by pragmatism and caution.

This is not a wholesale rejection of the US. Around 44% still support continued EU-US alignment, but that support is conditional and fragile. Views vary across member states, pointing to a fragmented picture. Overall, Europeans expect the EU to act more independently, while cooperating with the US where interests align.

Trade and tariffs: pragmatism over politics

- **Asia as a priority for partnership – ahead of the US:** Europeans are increasingly looking beyond traditional alliances, with many placing greater importance on strengthening trade ties with Asia and China.
- **Tariffs as a political tool:** 74% believe the US uses tariffs to pressure the EU, and 70% want Brussels to respond with counter-tariffs, but not at all costs. Consumers are clear: they won't trade food safety or digital rights for cheaper imports.
- **Trade as diplomacy:** 80% see trade agreements as a way to build political partnerships, while expecting safeguards to ensure standards are maintained.

Europe First, but at what cost?

Europeans mostly support the idea of a stronger, more self-sufficient Europe. They want the EU to invest in technology, secure its own food and energy supplies, and complete the Single Market. Yet, while 76% say they'd prefer to buy European, only half are willing to pay more for it: reflecting today's cost-of-living pressures.

Solidarity with limits

When it comes to standing up to global pressures, Europeans show strong solidarity: 72% back Denmark and Greenland against US interests. But there's a warning: over half say their own economic stability must come first. The message is clear: the EU can't ask citizens to bear the cost of geopolitical stands without a plan to protect their livelihoods.

A fragile optimism

Even though many Europeans worry about rising costs, safety, and the world getting even more unstable, they still believe in the EU's core values. More than half are confident that human rights and democracy in Europe will stay strong, no matter what challenges come next.

Bringing the consumer voice into Europe's global debate

"This survey gives voice to Europe's 450 million consumers, too often left out of the big debates shaping their future," says Els Bruggeman, Head of Advocacy and Enforcement at Euroconsumers. "Our findings show that Europeans are pragmatic: they want open markets and global trade that would guarantee standards and Europe's ability to stand on its own. They're not asking the EU to retreat from the world; they want it to lead with confidence, protecting the values and quality of life that define it. At Euroconsumers, we believe empowering consumers isn't just about protection: it's about unlocking their power to drive better markets and a stronger Europe."

About Euroconsumers

Gathering six national consumer organisations and giving voice to a total of more than 6 million people in Italy, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Poland and Brazil, Euroconsumers is the world's leading consumer group in innovative information, personalised services and the defence of consumer rights.

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