



GENERAȚIA MILENIULUI

Atitudinea tinerilor din România asupra politicii

Fundatia
stanga
DEMOCRATICĂ

FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES
FONDATION EUROPÉENNE
D'ÉTUDES PROGRESSISTES



THE MILLENNIAL
DIALOGUE

THE MILLENNIAL DIALOGUE



ROMANIA

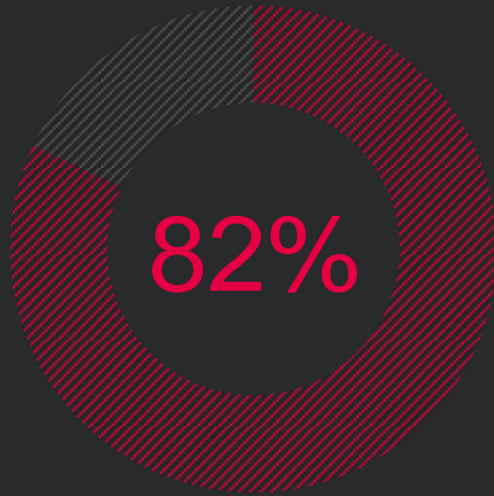
methodology

AudienceNet conducted an initial online survey amongst 1,027 (weighted total 1,001) 15-34 year old Romania residents and moderated a week-long, online dialogue with 40 Romanian Millennials, segmented as follows: those very interested in politics; those fairly interested, not that interested and not at all interested.

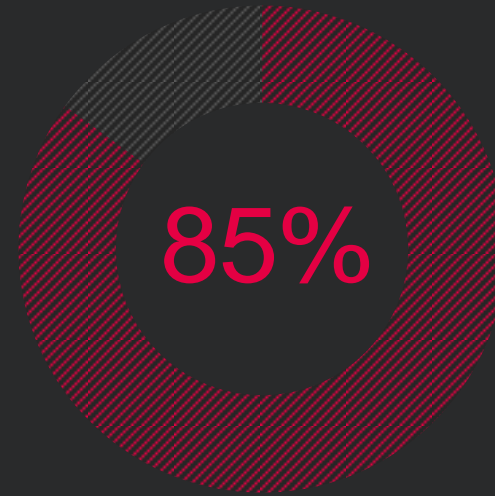
The sample was recruited to be nationally representative of all Romanian Millennials in terms of: age; geographical region; household income and educational attainment levels. The survey and online community were conducted in February 2016.

Interest & engagement with politics

Most young people in Romania are happy and optimistic...

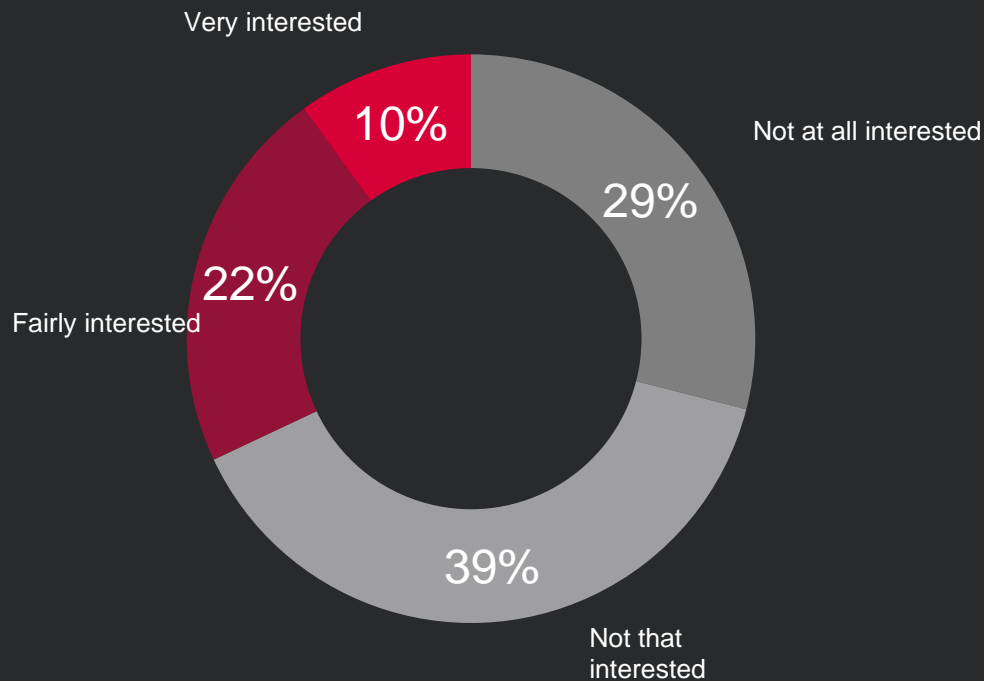


Are generally happy
with their lives



Are optimistic about
their future

...But interest in politics is low

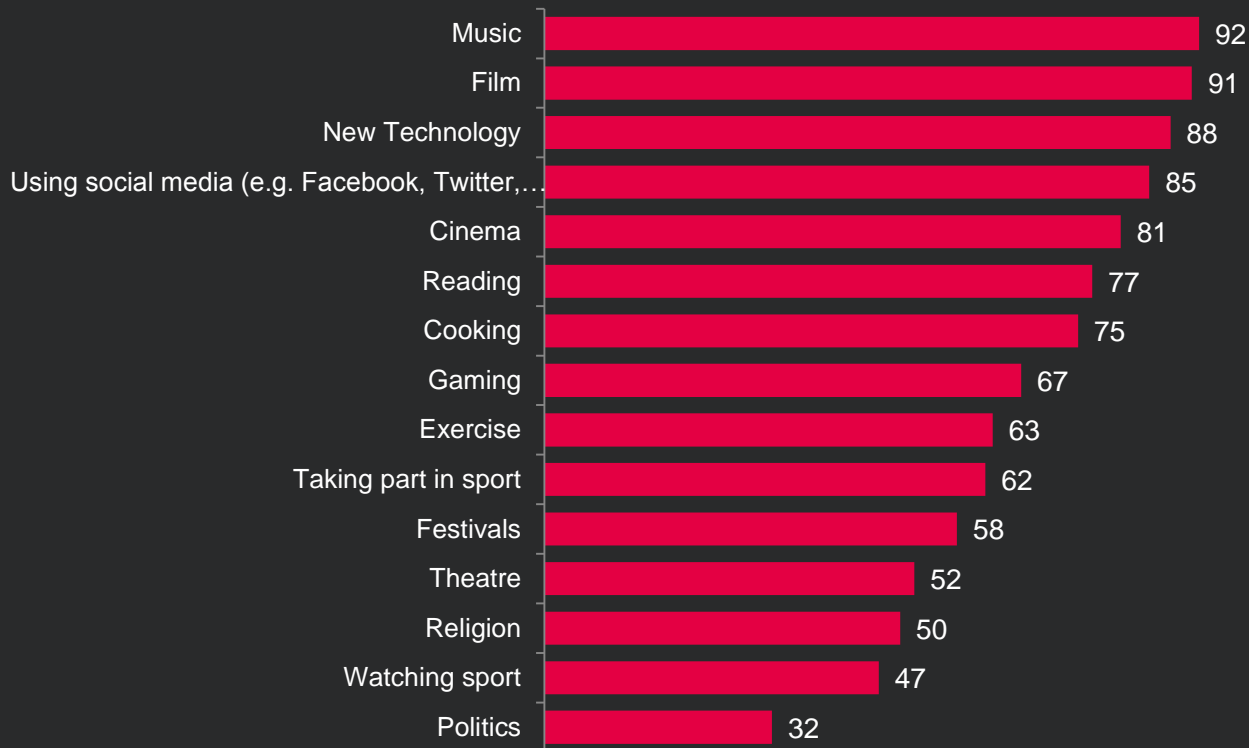


10%

said they were “very interested” in politics

Music & film top the list of interests

(Net %: very interested / fairly interested)



Taking an interest in politics is also not seen as being important

(Rank in order of importance)

1 Being happy

2 Having leisure time

3 Being free to do and say what I want

4 Being in good health

5 Spending time with family

6 Making money

7 Having my voice heard

8 Being successful

9 Helping others

10 Spending time with friends

11 Equality in society

12 The well-being of society in general

13 Contributing to society

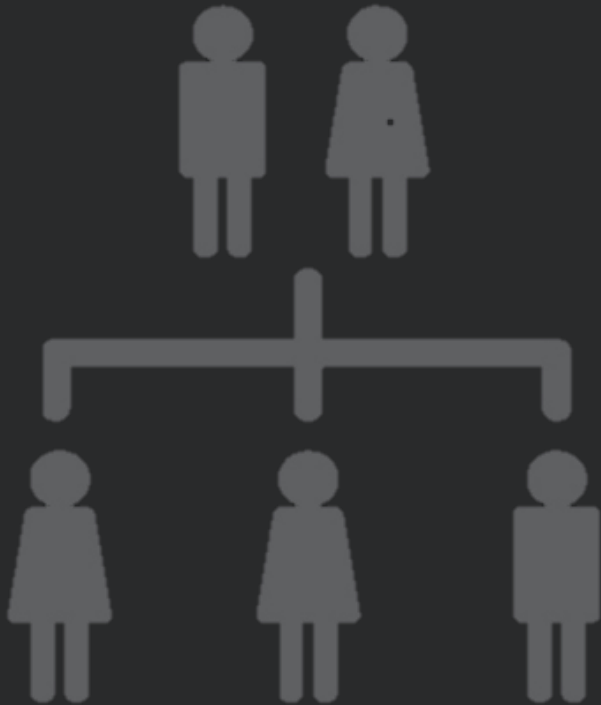
14 Taking an interest in music

15 Being connected to friends via social media

16 Being involved with my local community

17 Taking an interest in politics

Generation gap



56%

feel that their generation is less interested in politics than their parents' or grandparents' generation

25% think the reverse

Why are so few young people interested in politics?

When we asked why their generation was less interested in politics, the primary factors cited were that they felt they weren't able to make a difference and they were often disappointed by the lack of real action taken by politicians.

"I have noticed an increasing interest after the election of a new president and government. The low interest is due to people constantly being disappointed by our politicians, who are doing almost nothing to help them. They make lots of promises during their political campaigns in order to get more votes and then, once elected, they see to their own interests."

"I wasn't interested in politics until a couple of months ago and that is because I can't change anything. Even if I did get involved, even if I did protest or post comments on social media, the politicians still wouldn't care. They would still do things their way, they would keep stealing and lying."

"I have always been fascinated by politics, ever since I was a kid. Other kids would watch cartoons and I would watch politics. Politicians should set examples for us to follow, but unfortunately, our political class consists of weak, corrupt, unreliable people who lure the population into voting them with their headlines. They no longer set an example of integrity and that is sad. I believe there is nothing to follow when everything is just empty words."

"I am not highly interested in politics. My interests lie elsewhere. Today's young generation is interested in other things (computers, cars, etc.) and doesn't pay too much attention to the political area. However, they might start doing so as they advance in age. I don't usually share my political views on social media. I'd rather keep them for discussing in private instead."

Why are so few young people interested in politics? (Cont.)

Others argued that young people didn't have enough time to take an interest in politics. They said they were more interested in other things or felt their efforts could be better used elsewhere.

"The young population is highly disappointed in the lack of interest shown by our political class today as far as they are concerned. That's why they turn away to other things."

"I am not highly interested in politics. My interests lie elsewhere. Today's young generation is interested in other things (computers, cars, etc.) and doesn't pay too much attention to the political area. However, they might start doing so as they advance in age."

"I do take interest in politics, but only as a hobby. I've never been politically involved and I don't support anybody unconditionally. I started taking interest in it after the Iliescu-Nastase age (2000-2004), when everything was pink. It was after Nastase's failure during the presidential elections that things started to turn grey and corrupt, uneducated politicians and traitors started to pop up, all serving the colours of various political parties after being placed in their seats in rather dubious contexts.."

"I wanted to bring about a change for the better. I've had some experiences that have left me with a bitter taste, that have left me disappointed with the hypocrisy, fake smiles and promises of our political candidates. I have invested time and energy pro bono and what I've got in exchange for it all is experience. Once up there, the people who asked for our help and involvement forget about those who helped them get those positions. They forget about people, they change their phone numbers. Now I am focusing more on developing the civic sense of both myself and those around me. I consider to be much more useful for the society and my well-being as well as the others'."

Taking part

8% said that they have attended a political meeting compared to 19% who said that they have taken part in a protest/demonstration

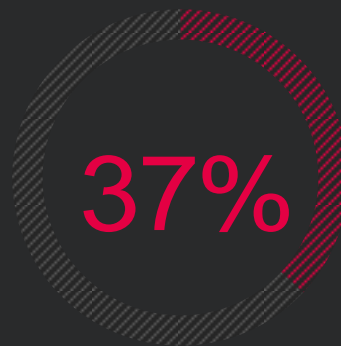
8%

Take part in
political meetings

19%

Take part in
protests/demonstrations

This compares to 24% who take part in religious meetings/events and...



who take part in team
sports

Politicians connecting with young people



“You can make a difference!”

We asked Romanian millennials to create a campaign poster. For the slogan they wanted to get across that the young generations can create positive changes for their country. They wanted the messages to be simple, with nice imagery and they would encourage participation.

“The language would be plain and simple so that everybody can understand it and I wouldn’t make any promises unless I was convinced I can keep them. As for the means, I would just listen to as many representatives of the young population in order to learn about their needs!”

“A campaign poster must be simple and straightforward. It should contain a limited number of photos and regular expressions that everybody can understand. A successful political campaign will spread across all social media.”

“The young are the people of tomorrow. I would use a language that is plain and simple, one that everybody can understand. I think the best way to draw the young population on your side is using the internet. I would organize all sorts of meetings to learn their opinions and views.”

“Be active! Prove that you care!”

“Your vote and opinion count!”

“The change is happening.
You matter!”

28%

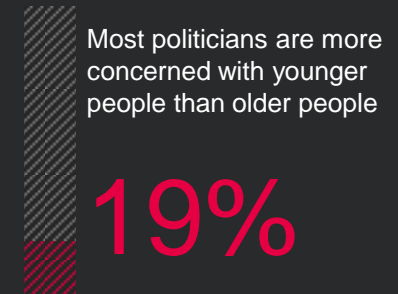
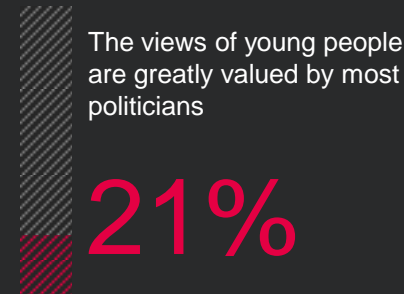
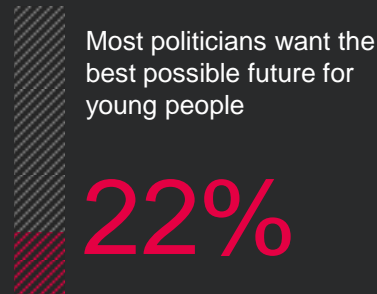
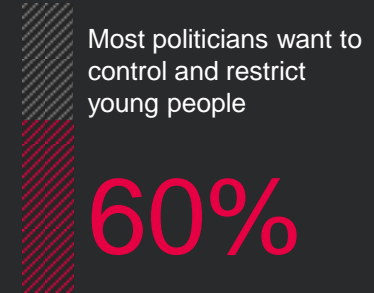
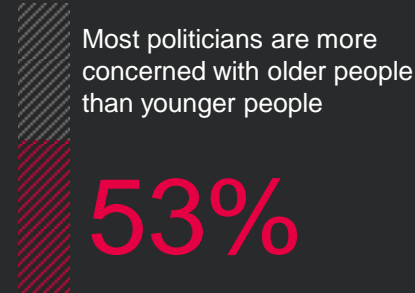
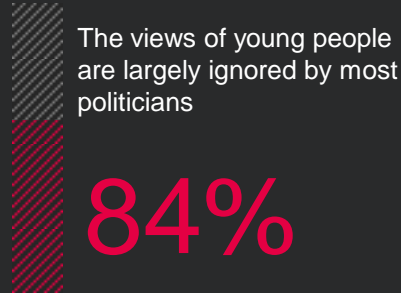
felt confident that they and their peers could make themselves heard

54%

think very few, if any, politicians encourage young people to get involved in politics

% agreeing with statements

84% of Romanian millennials think that politicians ignore the views of young people.



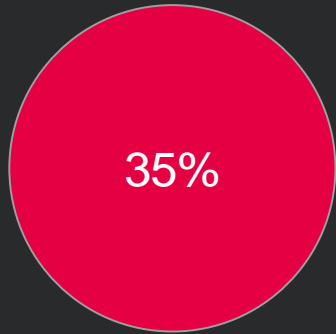
Looking to the future...

Factors affecting future quality of life ('Very big effect' or 'some effect' %)



Millennials think “the state of the environment” and “access to education” will be the top factor influencing their future quality of life.

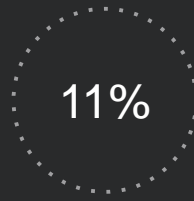
What would they rather be?



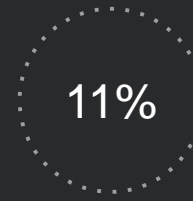
Business
Owner or
Founder



Research
Scientist



Sportsperson



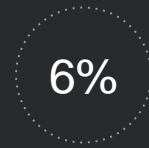
Doctor



Lawyer



Musician



Famous
Celebrity



Writer



Politician



Academic



Religious
Leader

Time Travel Activity | their own future

We asked the participants to imagine that they could travel 20-30 years in to the future and describe what they think their lives will be like, young Romanians were very career oriented and hoped to have stable jobs.

“I think I’ll be leading a normal life, doing what I like best (programming, IT, etc.).”

“I don’t think my life will be much different than it is today. I see myself married and with a kid, and keeping bees for a living.”

“In 20 years’ time, I will have become a successful lawyer who is fighting for justice! I see myself living with my husband in a small house somewhere on the outskirts, having no children, but about 3 Labradors.”

“ 20 years’ time, I would be 46 years old. I see myself working, staying active. I have discovered my passion for working with kids and I believe I would still be doing that unless life threw surprises or new challenges at me. As far as my civil status goes, I would be married and the mother of teenage kids living in a better country. I’ve also thought of leaving the country, but even if I decided to leave, it would only be a temporary solution. I couldn’t settle elsewhere for good.”

“I see myself somewhere abroad in 20-30 years’ time because Romania is no country to stay in.”

“I will be of considerable age in 20-30 years’ time. I imagine (actually, I hope) I will be working in the local public administration, I will have a family, a house and all those things one tends to get in life.”

Time Travel Activity | Romania

When we asked what the country might be like in 20-30 years time, not everyone was equally optimistic about Romania's future, but people were hopeful that Romania's tourism industry and mentality would improve.

"Romania won't be much different from what it is today, but something will have changed in that it will have turned its look towards the West and the US and away from Russia and the East even more. I think the relations with the East will have deteriorated. As for the political system, I am hoping to see new faces, young faces, people with new ideas and views on politics, people who place the citizens' interests higher than their own."

"The Romanian mentality may have changed a little, but things will pretty much be the same."

"I am quite optimistic as regards not necessarily Romania's economic future (I don't think we'll be an economic power too soon), but the mentality of the Romanian people. It will be the age of those of us who are members of this community as well as our children's. The remains of the communist age will probably have disappeared, at least to a large extent if not completely. I'd like to believe that we will have the brains to vote for simple people, like ourselves, for young open-minded people who are eager for novelty and change. The main changes will result from this particular eagerness of theirs and their being fed up with what is going on today."

"Romania is following an ascending trend which I think will be maintained for the next 10-15 years. That is because we have fallen behind the other EU countries despite our potential. I hope the landscapes, monasteries and tourist attractions are not destroyed. Otherwise, I think everything will have changed: the illiteracy rates will have dropped, the ecological awareness will have increased, corruption will be a lesser issue, the health services will have improved."

"I'd like to believe that Romania will be better in 20 years' time. The wages will be higher (not the joke they are today), we will have proper highways, the people will be happier and fulfilled."

Time Travel Activity | Government

When we asked what the government might be like in 20-30 years time, Romanians thought there would be changes to the way government works. They hoped the government would be more just and serve the people of Romania better. Some thought voting would be online or compulsory.

“I think in 20 or 30 years’ time, the government will consist of fewer ministries (even new ones) and they will be focusing on Romania’s development on all levels. The voting process will most probably remain unchanged. The electronic and mail votes might be implemented by that time. Basically, I am optimistic as far as Romania’s future is concerned.”

“I think the government will be more just (more and more politicians who act having the citizens’ best interests at heart are popping up and more and more corrupt ones are caught in the act). The voting process will most probably be simplified. Online voting may become an option (however, we must watch out for hackers for Romanian hackers are very skilled and I don’t think that will change).”

“I hope we will switch from a monetary economy to a resource-based one. In other words, the question to be asked whenever a project is developed to benefit the society should be “Have we got enough (material and human) resources?” rather than “Have we got enough money?” In a technology based society, the minimum education level will be higher so as to allow a smoother transition towards activity monitoring employment.”

Voting



If there was an election tomorrow...

76%

Said that they would
vote ...



Key reasons for not wanting to vote

1

Lack of trust in politicians

2

They think all parties and politicians are the same

3

They don't support the current political system

4

They do not like any of the political options available

5

There isn't a party which represents their views

Key factors that might encourage an interest in voting

#1 If politicians cared more about younger people

#2 If I thought my vote really made a difference

Why politicians aren't trusted

The main reason young Romanians gave for not trusting politicians was that they didn't feel like politicians paid attention to them, followed by corruption and broken promises.

"From my point of view, there are very few Romanian politicians who have managed to do something palpable for the young population, hence the lack of trust. Another reason lies in there being few young people involved in politics these days."

"Our political representatives only focus on the elderly. How often do they talk about pensions and just how often do they talk about the young people? We only talk about the latter when the exam period is closing in."

"The young people do not trust the political class anymore because they're fed up with their promises and the ever-changing laws. For instance, over the 12 years I spent in school, the final examination structures (National Exams, Baccalaureate Exams) changed at least 4 times. As far as I remember, every Minister of Education changed something, whether more or less drastically. I remember when I was in secondary school, the National Exam structure was modified a couple of months before the exam period. It was a minor thing in the curriculum. The point is I don't think it's fair for the rules of the game to be modified during the game."

"The low trust levels are due to the broken promises"

"The young population's low trust in our politicians is due to the unscrupulousness of their decisions and actions."

"The young population's lack of interest in politics reflects the politicians' lack of interest in the young population. Our politicians care for the retirees, because they can easily be bought for one bucket or kilogram of flour. Or maybe it reflects the corruption and lack of a coherent and transparent political system."

Building Trust in politics

If Romanian politicians are to restore trust amongst young people, communication will be key. Young Romanians want politicians to reach out to them and listen to their problems. In addition, millennials would like to see more open and honest politicians.

“The solutions include an improved communication between youth organisations, student organisations, NGOs and the application of the various solutions promoted during the political campaigns. Once they start acting on them, we will definitely start trusting them.”

“I don’t think the young population would refuse to communicate with the politicians if they reached out and were more responsive to their problems.”

“Constructive communication is essential. And of course, the young people should be able to express themselves more freely.”

“There are no means to restore this trust. It’d take many, many years and a long chain of honest politicians...”

“The political class must be replaced entirely. People are fed up with seeing the same stuffed arrogant faces all the time. They should all go. Nobody wants them anymore! The young population cannot be bought for sugar and oil.”

“I don’t think today’s politicians are trustworthy. We need young politicians to replace them, as well as more transparent decision-making process.”

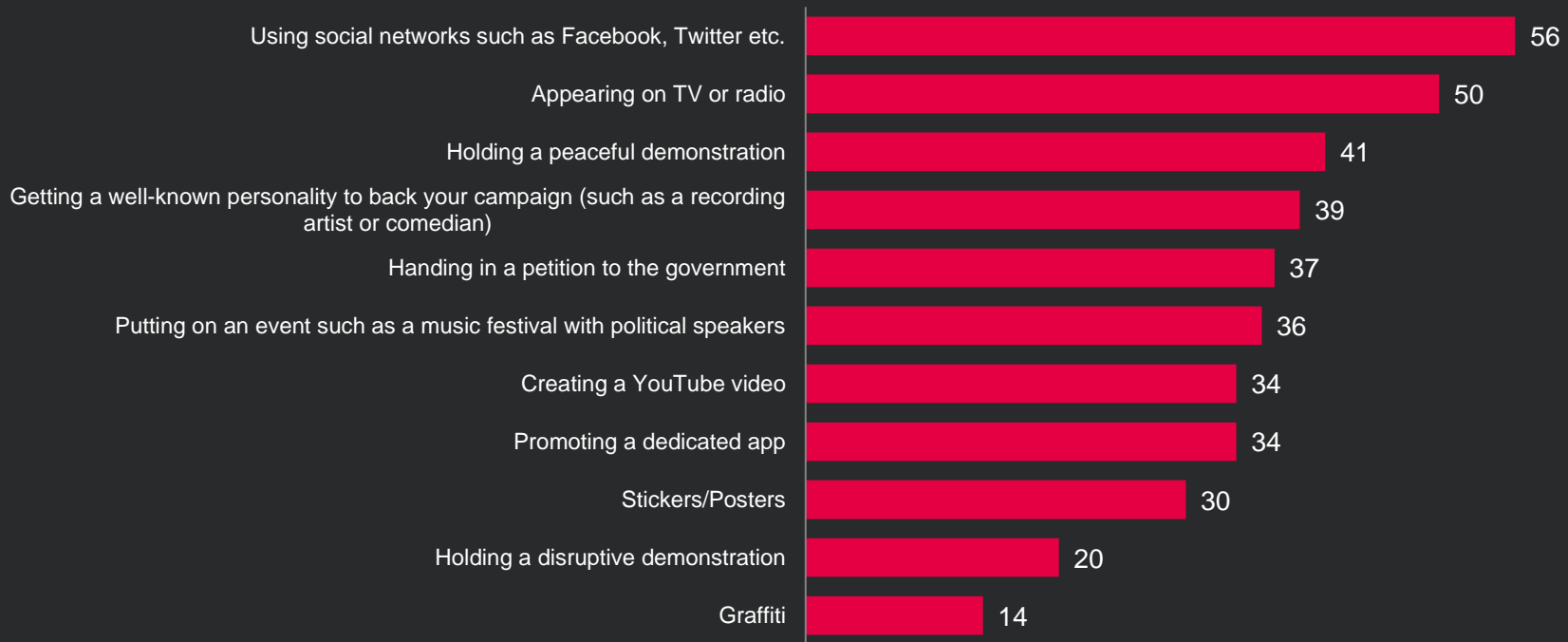
Factors contributing to voting decision (%NET 'Great Extent' or 'Some Extent')



Views about the leaders of each party was seen as the key factor. Social media and other online factors were fairly low down the list as millennials expect the main campaigns to take place using traditional media (TV and radio)

Means they would use to start a political campaign ('extremely useful' %)

If they were to start their own campaign, however, Romanian millennials would be very likely to focus their efforts on social media



WHAT WOULD THEY DO DIFFERENTLY?

“I would focus on my candidate’s and, if the case, their party’s image. I would make sure they come across as honest and insist on that aspect. I would also bank on transparency by making the costs of the campaign and the means through which that money was raised public and updating them in real time. Why not? Thus, the people would trust my candidate’s honesty. Apart from the classic approaches (TV exposure, speeches held in big cities, flyers, bribes, lighters and pens), I would also suggest meetings with the people in small towns. In other words, the candidate would walk around town and answer whatever questions they may be asked.”

First of all, I wouldn’t use stereotypes like “Only we can...” or “because we want a change...” etc. Second of all, I would definitely not use television to convey my message because most competent people are well aware of the fact that television is a mass manipulation tool that does not comply with reality, which is why they get their information online. Therefore, I’d use the internet to promote my campaign.”

“I would try to set myself apart from all the rest by coming up with an election plan containing solutions to the various issues it focuses on. I will start discussions on the less effective ones while proving that I am open to new ideas. Our candidate must show the people that they know how and where from they will get the money to cover for the investments that have been postponed for years in a row. As far as the means to promote the campaign go, we all know that television is the most impactful, so we will use it within the limitations of our budget or timeframes. I would set up a FB presentation page to be updated on a daily basis. Pop-up ads are very annoying, so we won’t be using those. I would also suggest (local and national) radio ads. They would probably be something like “The next meeting with the citizens of X will take place on 10th... at the Cultural House”. Face-to-face meetings are the most effective when it comes to drawing the citizens on your side. The candidate will present their achievements (in detail) as well as their little failures (because nobody is perfect) and ask for the voters’ support. There must also be an open discussion where the citizens can state the demands and issues they require solutions to.”

The Ideal Candidate

When asked what young people imagined the perfect candidate to be like, there were some who would prefer a male candidate, however for most gender was irrelevant. What really mattered was that the candidate was relatable and honest.

“I don’t think there is such thing as an ideal candidate and his age, gender and outfit are irrelevant. They should be honest, clean and determined. I am fond of my imaginary candidate and I will vote for them when they make their way on the political stage because they are the product of my imagination and they are ideal.”

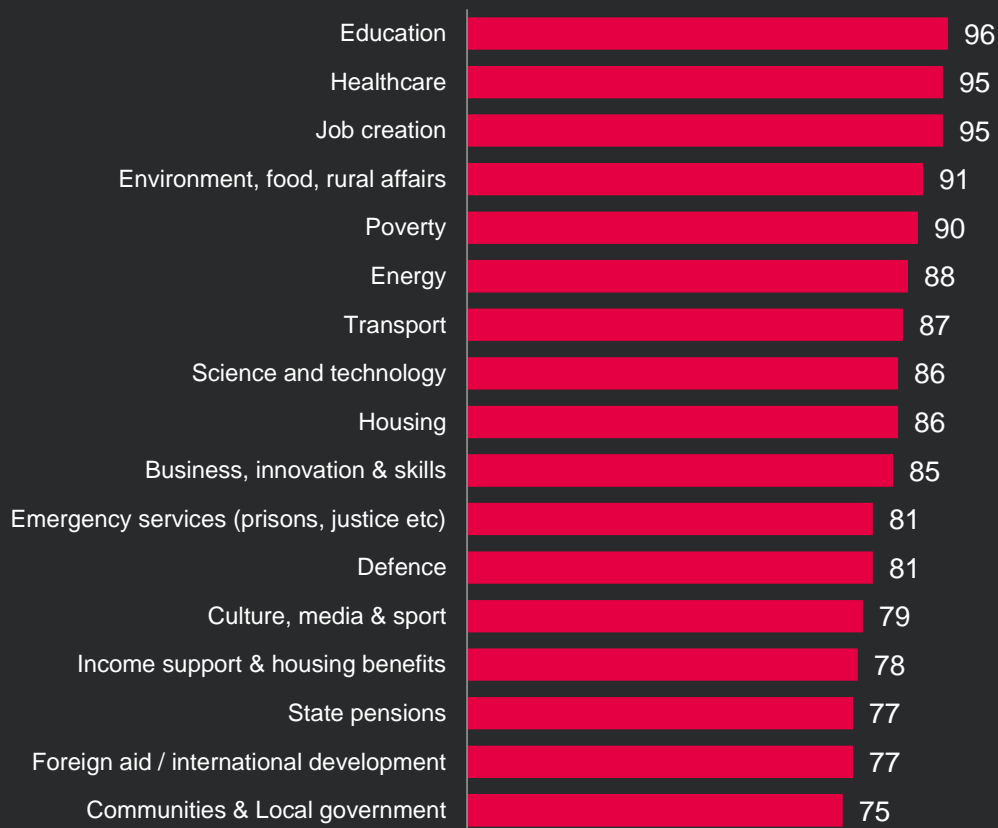
“Ideally, he would be a male candidate although we’ve got examples of women who can do the job just as well (Germany).”

“Their gender is irrelevant. Their age can vary depending on the position they are running for or the people they are representing, but generally, they should be older than 35. They can wear business or smart casual clothes, depending on the situation. They should be open-minded, have a sense of humour and be ready to answer any questions related to their past, even if incriminating. They should be able to turn any accusation against them into an advantage. They may spend their free time pursuing their hobbies in their friends’ company or in public (for better ratings).”

“As far as I’m concerned, the ideal candidate would be a male aged 25-35. He would have some experience in terms of managing an institution and come from a big city that gave him the opportunity to gain that experience. However, this is not a requirement. I would like him to be an ordinary, confident, persuasive person who acts as most common citizens do. I would like his ideas to be simple, safe, I would like him to act on his promises and take responsibility whenever he is wrong, at least by resigning.”

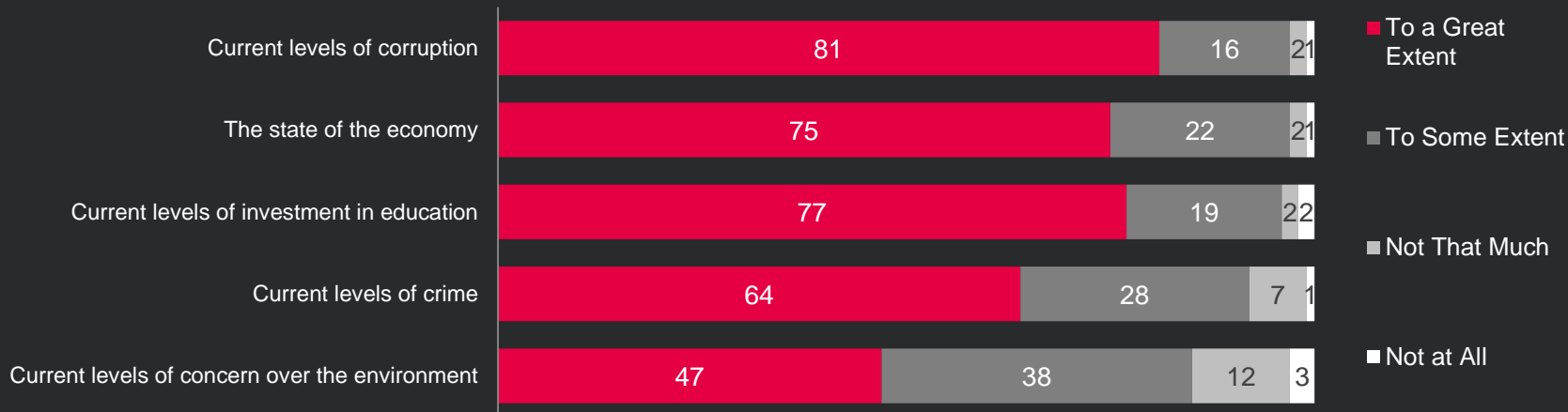
The issues that matter

High Priority for the government (%)



Healthcare, job creation and education were considered to be the top priorities for government spending.

To what extent are the following damaging to romania's future (%)





50%

believed in the importance of
equality
of sexual orientation in society



70%

believed in the importance of
equality
for all genders in society

WHAT SHOULD POLITICIANS WORK TOWARDS? (%)

To what extent do they deliver on the following? (%)



Issues that matter: Healthcare & education

Many millennials wanted to see improvements in education and healthcare provision. They want a healthcare system free from corruption, where healthcare professionals receive the necessary support to do their job properly.

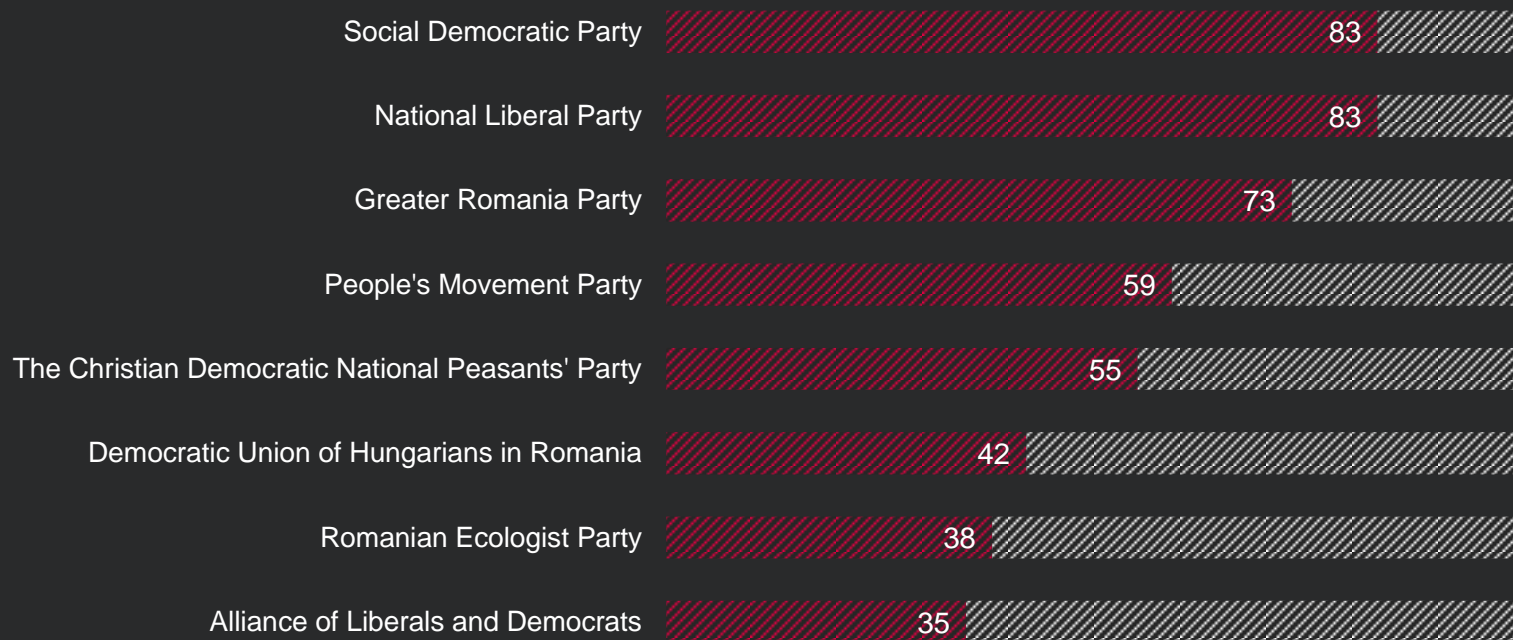
“In my opinion, Romania’s main issue lies with its education system. As a student, I have come. As for the scholarships, I’ll stick to saying they are very low! Another major issue lies with the health system. I believe we can intervene to change things – it is difficult – but we need to change our mentality first and achieve a greater level of commitment when it comes to major decisions being made.”

“Our politicians should be focusing on the education and health systems because they are both flawed. Our hospital conditions are pitiful. As far as I’m concerned, the main issue is related to the very low level of assistance the state is providing to couples fighting against infertility. I can intervene in this sense. Actually, I have started to do so by joining an association that has already received some support through the IVF program.”

“I believe Romania’s politicians should focus on improving the health system. They should invest more in providing hospital with the proper equipment and increasing the wages of health workers to prevent them from leaving the country seeking better paid jobs. I believe I can do something about it by attending meetings and protests.”

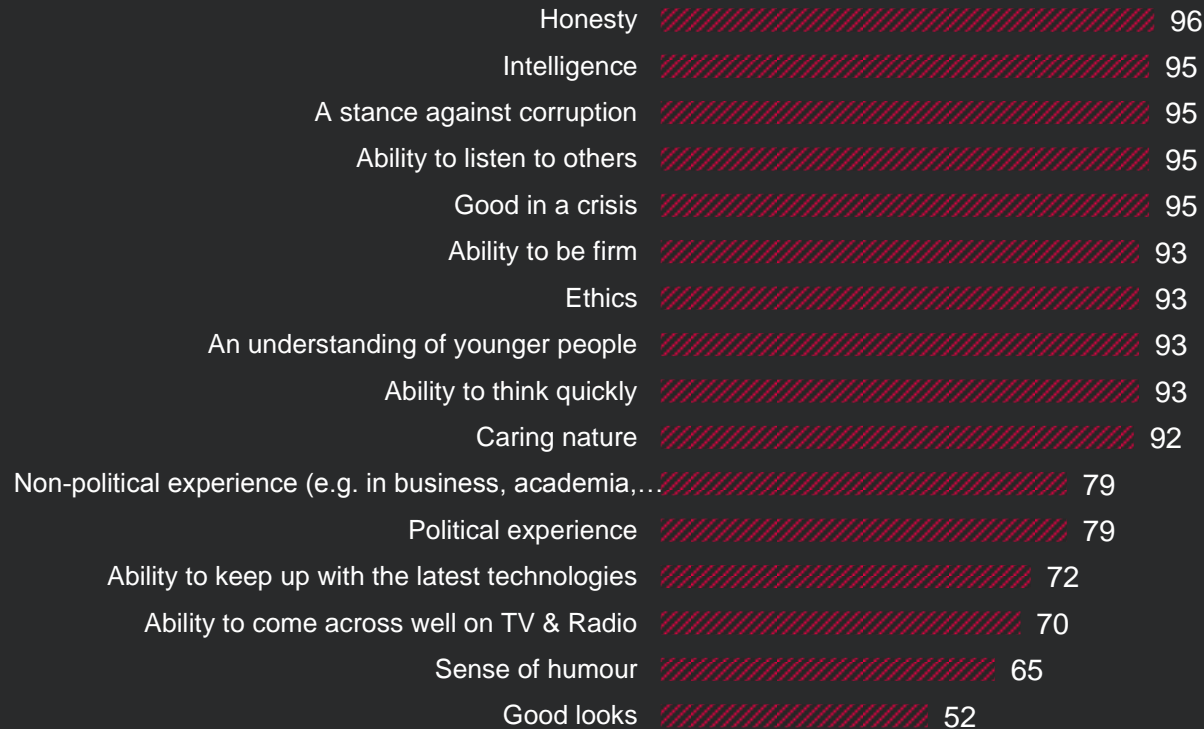
Politicians / Political parties

Awareness of political parties



Awareness was relatively high for all the larger parties

Important qualities for an elected politician (%)



Electoral reform



What would encourage more people to vote?

(% 'Very significantly encourage...' or 'Would go some way to encouraging...')

Romanian millennials SHOW GREAT CONFIDENCE IN THE POWER OF CONNECTED TECHNOLOGY AND ONLINE VOTING TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION. THERE IS ALSO fairly strong SUPPORT FOR EXTENDING THE LOCATIONS WHERE ONE CAN VOTE AND FOR PROLONGING ELECTIONS.

If it were possible to vote online via a secure app and/or website



85%

If it were possible to vote at a lot more places such as in shopping malls, libraries, voting stations on the street, on trains, at the airport etc.



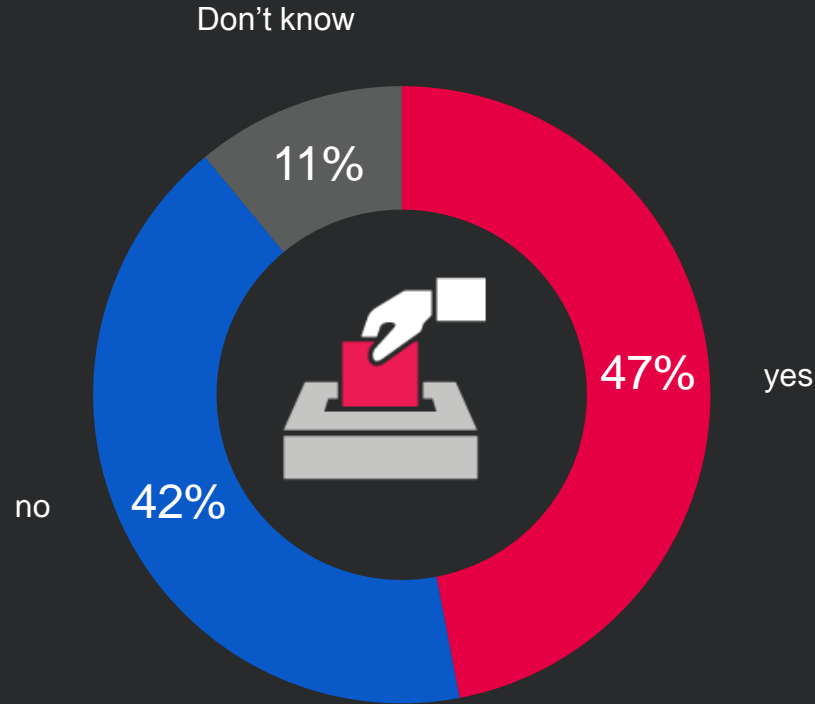
75%

If it were possible to vote for a longer period of time i.e. several weeks or months in advance



54%

Should it be made compulsory to vote?



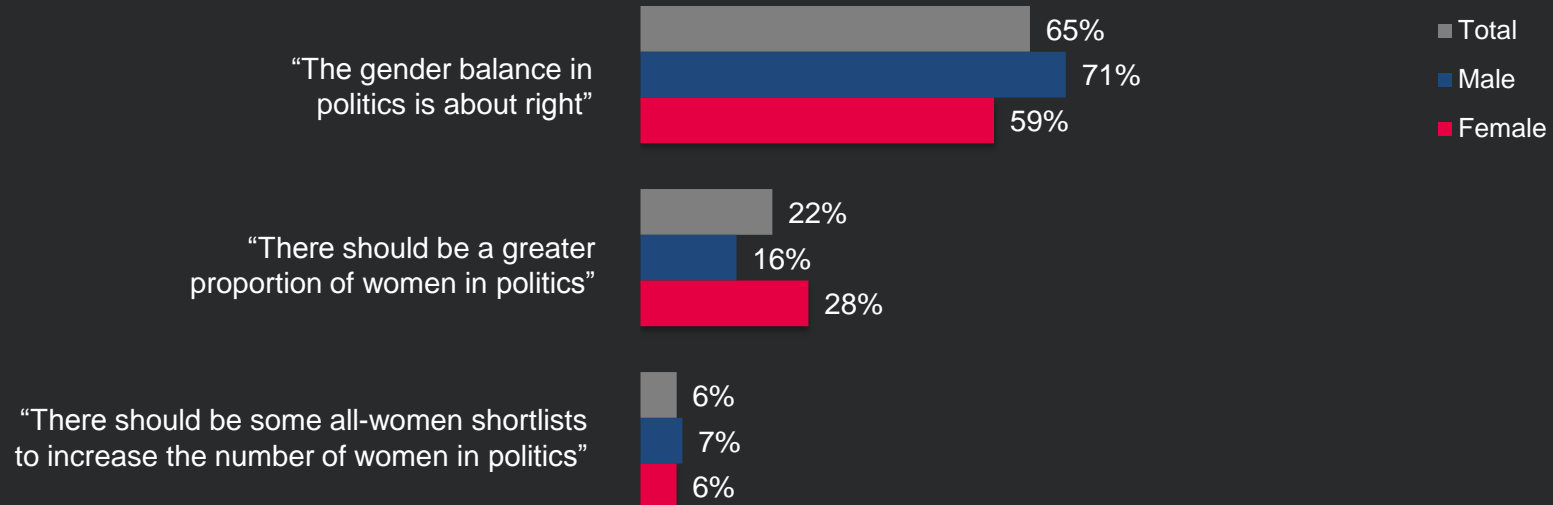
51%

Of females said 'yes' -
voting should be
made compulsory

Women in politics

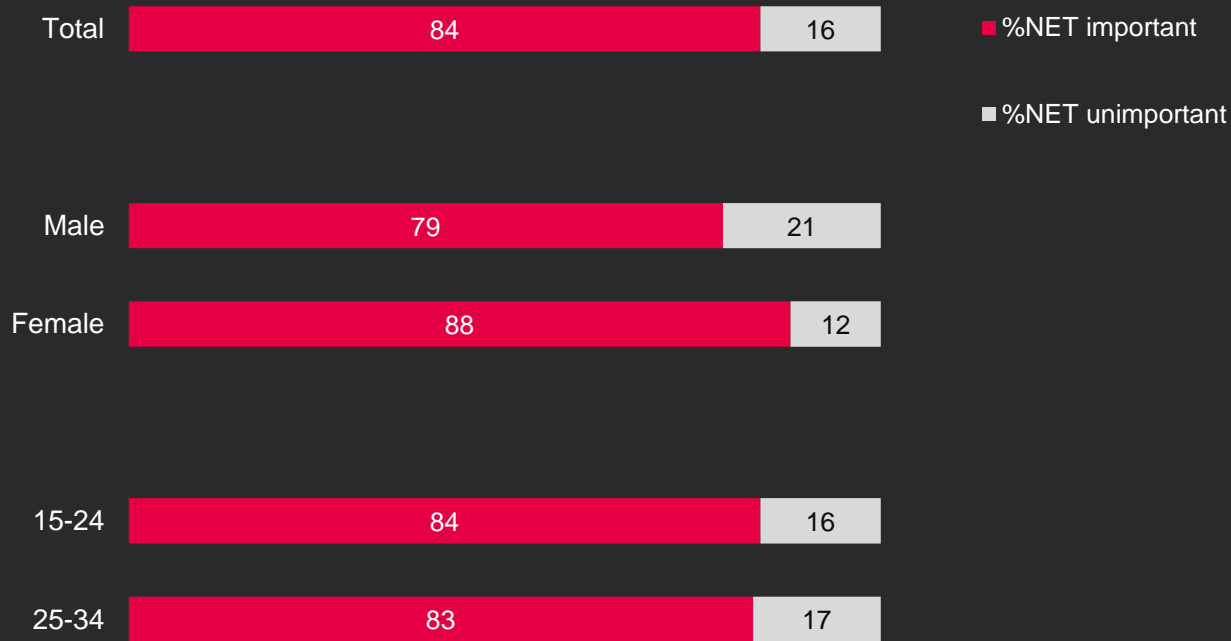
(% who agree with each statement)

71% of Romanian men feel that the gender balance in politics is 'about right', compared to 59% of Romanian women. there is generally very little support among millennials for all-women electoral lists.



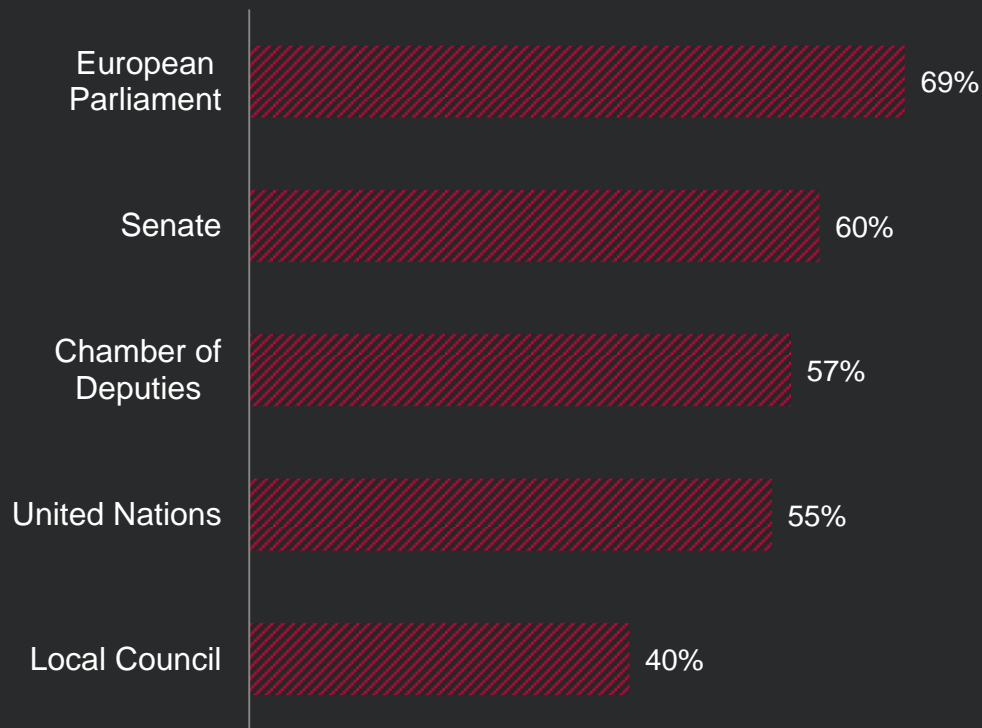
Descriptive Demographic representation

How important is it to you that elected representatives reflect the population in terms of age, gender, class, religion, race etc.?



Which institutions do millennials think play a valuable role?

(% 'To a great extent')



Compared to other countries....

(% who agree with each statement)

