



# **EUROPEAN UNION LAW'S PROXIMITY TO CITIZENS THROUGH EDUCATION AND THE USE OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**

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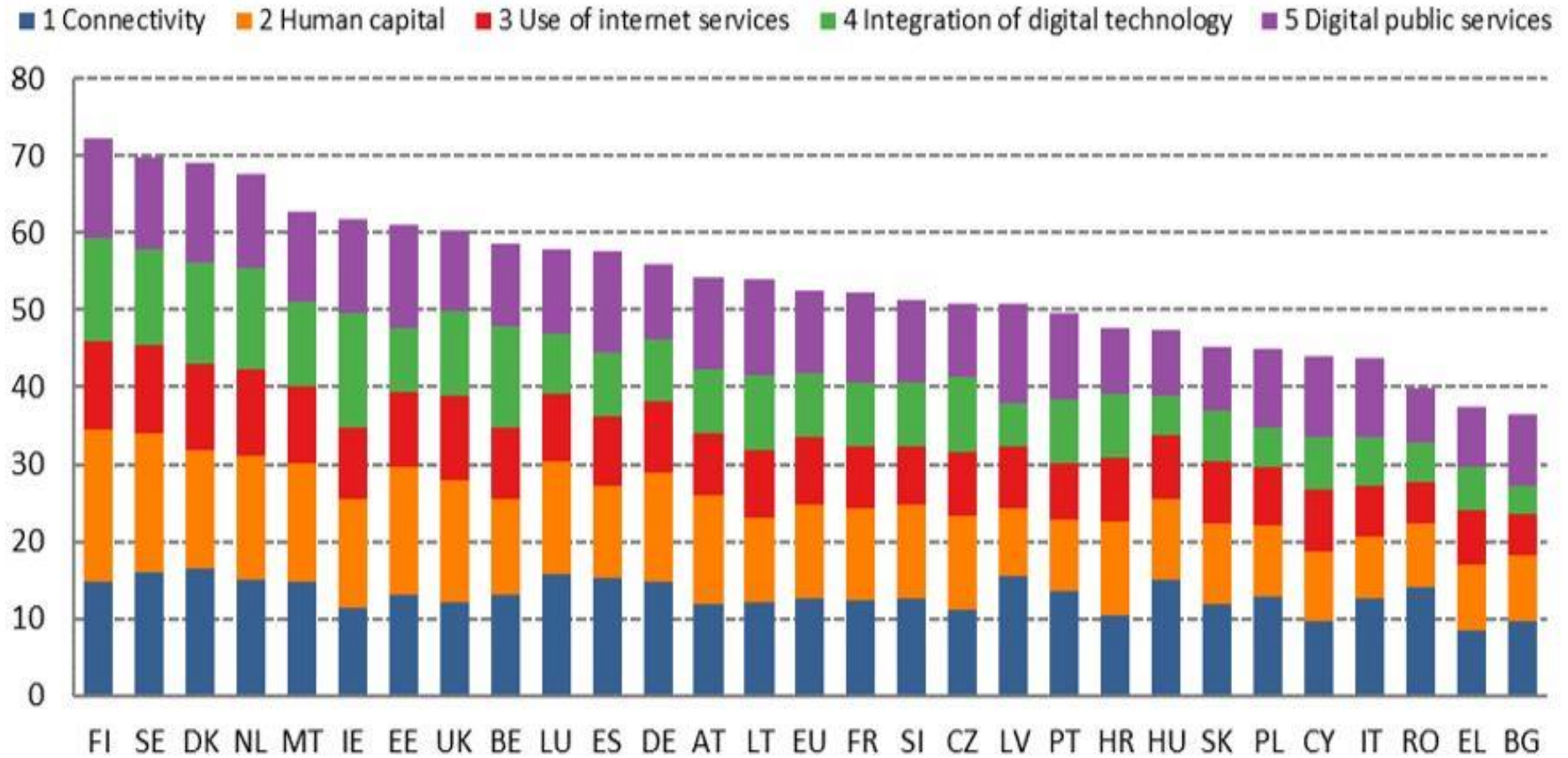


Education forms the basis for active citizenship. The integration model followed in the construction of the European Union (EU) includes the action of its institutions, which develop competencies and lines of implementation through legislative, decision-making and sanctionary paths.

All procedures involved result in the preparation of documents. The use of technology has extended access, giving these digital media a legal category as a source of law; today available on the e-mail address or in the EU's own publications; of access to interested specialists or to the general public, being in the interest of citizens, academics or institutions. Differentiated levels of access are created, which is not unrelated to the degree of digital literacy, **when 44% of the EU population is recognized as low digital skills.**

The European Union is a union of common values and is based on the values of democracy, defense of human rights and the rule of law and, as such, with a strong component of creation and respect for legal standards. Concerns about the transparency of procedures and accessibility are real, but not always completely effective.

Education is one of the keys to the future and can and must be part of the solution to solving problems such as, in this case, accessibility to information on European Union law.



Digital Economy and Society Index, 2020. Source:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda\\_20\\_1022](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_20_1022)

The chosen theme concerns the effective application of EU rules as an important aspect for European citizens that affects their daily lives and how citizens feel the closeness to EU law. As the problem is not always the absence of EU legislation, but rather the fact that such legislation can be known and applied effectively.

The implementation of EU law is a challenge that requires a greater emphasis on enforcement to serve the general interest. And what role does education and the use of digital technologies play in this context? How can investment in education considering new technologies bring citizens closer to the functioning of the EU? Will this lead to a strengthening of democracy?

The aim of this analysis is to demonstrate that, as the Member States are primarily responsible for the application of EU law, there is still a way to achieve more efficiency in the application of European legislation, which implies, on the part of States, public policies aimed at education and training on new technologies that may be an instrument to motivate and increase knowledge of said legislation, which in turn will allow a more effective exercise of active citizenship.

Considering the embryonic nature of this study, a methodology was designed that focuses on the use of European Union law sources, through systematic and methodologically selected normative interpretation. It focuses on specialized publications and above all official documents (legislative or preparatory) that enshrine the issue. The theoretical-academic focus is consolidated through systematic normative interpretation and aims to expand knowledge, in a qualitative and exploratory approach. Without presenting quantitative data, the purpose is to bring to discussion and debate the role, value, education capacity and ability of using new technologies for the dissemination and application of European Community law.

# 1. EUROPEAN UNION AND LAW

Both the EU and the Member States should continue to promote in all actions, partnerships or instruments, the value of the rule of law. However, much will be the policy of education and training that the common values and general principles of law will be upheld. The education system, from early childhood to higher education, is responsible for maintaining the skills (knowledge, skills and attitudes) essential to the exercise of democratic ideals, contributing to the creation of the awareness of a European citizenship.



## 2. EUROPEAN UNION LAW

For citizens and businesses to enjoy the benefits of EU law, it is essential that Member States comply with the legislation. It is valid for national legislation, of course, but here we underline European Union law in particular that they transpose the European Directives into their national legal order within the agreed time limits as is apparent from a whole Union program to achieve better legislation, i.e. to make the law applicable and to monitor the outcome.

### 3. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN EUROPEAN UNION LAW

The EU's institutional architecture is not easy to understand at first reading.

The decision-making process takes place mainly between the institutions – Commission, Council and European Parliament – with the rules and exceptions of any decision-making procedure, however, with a legitimacy put into doubt in the media, taking into mind the two levels between which it takes place: the European and the Member States.

There is a growing concern of the European Union with the idea of better lawmaking.

## 4. PUBLICIZING EUROPEAN UNION LAW

However, legislative procedures are not easy for ordinary citizens to follow which in itself would justify greater investment by Member States in education about the European Union. The possibility of accessing the knowledge of the law, national or of the European Union is crucial, in order to guarantee the easiest and possible access nowadays both to the European legislation and to the legislation of the Member States that gives application to European instruments.

## 5. ENFORCEMENT OF EUROPEAN UNION LAW

Effective enforcement will result in improved safeguarding of the rights of citizens, who are increasingly aware of their rights. As is apparent from a survey on Citizenship of the Union, the vast majority of Europeans (91%) is well informed about the rights of citizenship of the European Union.

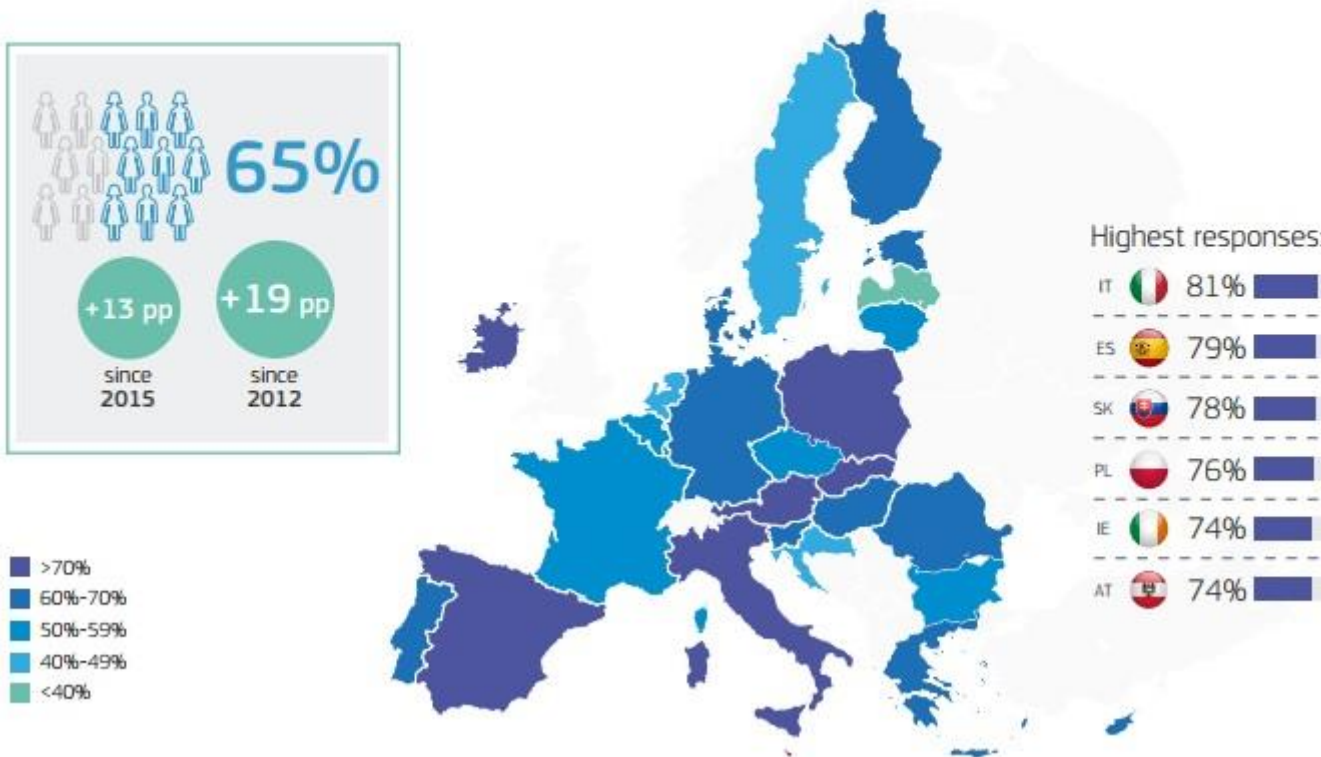
European Commission, “European Commission - Public Opinion.”

[Online]. Available:

<https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/flash/surveyky/2260>

## Citizenship of the European Union

More than six in ten Europeans are aware of the term “Citizen of the European Union”, and know what it means



Eurobarometer survey on EU Citizenship and Democracy, February 2020. Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/flash/surveyky/2260>

# CONCLUSION

Democratic values and the rule of law remain essential, from the first draft of a union in Europe to the European Union today. Its dissemination is not yet enough. The proper application of EU law is essential to maintain and defend these values, for the very success of the EU and this involves the contribution of every informed and attentive citizen. And the protection of the rule of law is not a given, it is something that needs permanent construction and civic participation.

Education, from early childhood to university studies, should guide learners to the highest quality civic training to ensure a path of freedom and promotion of a culture of global peace. In a building of citizenship. And today, in digital access it has become a new area of literacy that still raises concerns.

The union of Europe was made by people and by the people who live in it and with it they have ties. European citizenship resulted from a construction of more than 70 years. It is in the confidence of the citizens of the Union that the rule of law must be founded, a confidence which, in order to be achieved and maintained, requires the correct application of EU law, created by its institutions and on the basis of the original law of the Treaties.

Not so long ago in 2017, the European Union celebrated the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome. This anniversary provided an opportunity to celebrate the EU's achievements, but also to address Europe's main political, economic and social challenges. Citizens' confidence in the European Union has declined in many Member States. Then, for the first time in its history, the Union saw the departure of a Member State, the United Kingdom, through what became known as "Brexit". It turns out that, even after the process initiated, it is not yet entirely clear to the average European citizen, not even to be enlightened, to monitor that process and, as well, how to know European Union law. There is still a way forward

And this is our university, in the city of Oporto, Portugal

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GPS

•41° 10' 49.16\" N

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Thank you so much for reading us.

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