



EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION

European  
Research Area

Social sciences  
& humanities

# EUROPEAN POLICY BRIEF



## LIVEWHAT

### Living with Hard Times

How Citizens React to Economic Crises and  
Their Social and Political Consequences

---

**Policy implications of LIVEWHAT, an EU-funded research project examining citizens' resilience in times of crisis across nine countries.**

**Final Policy Brief**

**November 2016**

---

## INTRODUCTION

This final policy brief presents key policy results of the LIVEWHAT project and relevant recommendations with the aim of helping policy-makers in Europe to identify a more comprehensive and concerted problem-solving approach to tackle the negative effects of the recent crisis.

LIVEWHAT research has given rise to evidence-based knowledge about citizens' resilience in times of economic crisis, allowing for more effective policy responses to the negative consequences of such crises.

Throughout its 36-month duration, LIVEWHAT researchers examined the ways in which European citizens have reacted to the recent crisis that, at different degree of intensity in different countries, struck Europe since 2008, but also how they deal with economic crises and their consequences more generally. While the focus of the research was on citizens' coping strategy responses (individual and collective), LIVEWHAT also examined policy responses, so as to have a baseline for assessing citizens' resilience.

The policy results and relevant recommendations below invite us to reflect more broadly on how to achieve their determination, not only to restore inclusive growth but to lay the foundation for a better Europe – not less Europe.

The full findings of the LIVEWHAT project are available on the project website at: [www.livewhat.unige.ch](http://www.livewhat.unige.ch)

*The views expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.*

## KEY FINDINGS

### Europe's North-South divide

LIVEWHAT data indicates that policy responses and citizens' understandings and experiences of the crisis vary by the national context in which each is situated – specifically whether the country experienced a deep or lighter economic crisis. Underpinning LIVEWHAT evidence is a deep-seated economic divide between the fiscally 'pious' nations above the Alps and the 'profligate' countries in the South. In recent years, notions of a North-South divide within the EU – and in particular within the Eurozone – have increasingly gained attention in the European discourse. The North-South divide, in LIVEWHAT research, is seen in four key areas.

First, when citizens were asked to report their satisfaction with governmental policies in four fields: poverty, unemployment, precarious employment, and immigration (Table 1). Results show that satisfaction levels in all four policy fields are particularly low in Southern European countries as opposed to satisfaction levels reported in the Continental, Scandinavian, and Anglo Saxon countries. Second, when citizens were asked to compare

their living standards to those of their parents (Table 2); most citizens in Continental, Scandinavian, and Anglo Saxon countries believe their living standards were better vis-à-vis a third of respondents in the Mediterranean and Southern countries.

Third, when citizens were asked to rate living conditions in their own country and then those in the other countries in the project (Table 3). Results show once again that a small to moderate proportion of citizens in Mediterranean and Southern countries rate living conditions in their own country as good vis-à-vis an overwhelming majority in Continental, Scandinavian, and in Anglo Saxon countries. Fourth, when the proportion of individuals in various countries having to make reductions in consumption as a result of the crisis' impact (Table 4).

Results show again that reductions were more widespread in Southern European countries as opposed to the Continental, Scandinavian and Anglo Saxon countries (see LIVEWHAT report: *Integrated report on individual responses to crises*, accessible at <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/?p=452>). The intensification of the North-South divide in terms of citizens' living standards and consumption styles during the crisis years points to a general redistributive problem in the EU that will persist in the long term if adequate social and economic responses are not provided.

Certainly, traces of a North-South divide in the Eurozone with regard to economic fundamentals such as (youth) unemployment, purchasing power, income per capita or GDP per capita have existed long before the 2008 economic crisis unfolded. However, the dividing lines always seemed bridgeable for the South as the European project promised – from the mid-1990s on – a convergence and the prospect of growth and prosperity. The

customs union, the Single Market and the Economic and Monetary Union are all major stages in this process.

The recent crisis seems to have reversed this positive development and has cast serious doubt on the European integration model of convergence. Even if there is light at the end of the tunnel of the Euro crisis, visible scars will remain as this division does not only reflect pure economic performance but the resurgence of nationalist stereotyping at the expense of European solidarity.

In hindsight, it is obvious that the policy framework associated with European Union integration has to be reshaped to avoid a persistent divergence in the way European citizens perceive their and others' living conditions and governmental interventions amid the crisis. With exchange rate rigidity and fiscal austerity in the Eurozone, it may take considerable time for the Southern European countries hit harder by the crisis to recover. This in turn may have severe social repercussions, eroding Europe's social and political fabric.

Hence, unless it changes, the evolving policy framework within the Eurozone with its emphasis on stabilisation rather than loosening the growth constraints, is likely to cement Eurosceptic arguments and the populist fringes that oppose it as the principal source of stagnation, and to further intensify the North-South divide. If the aim of post-crisis European integration is to rekindle the bond between institutions and its citizens, starting by recognizing the need for a European-wide framework for strengthening social safety nets to fight poverty and promote more and better jobs to combat precariousness is not only clever tactics. In the long run, it may contribute to forging Europe's democratic future.

### Europe's silent publics

The analysis of collective responses in the public domain suggests that during the period 2005-2014, national public debates in almost all the nine countries examined have largely been dominated by political entrepreneurs, such as the economic organizations, at the expense of labor movements and other civil society organizations.

Such an erosion of the contribution of labor and civil society actors and of ordinary citizens to public debates seems problematic from the normative point of view of democratic inclusion, and also from the point of view of the democratic quality of public debates. Policy and media actors should give more space to these unheard publics to voice their claims and positions on various aspects of the economic crisis. By doing so, they could turn public discourse from a *de facto* exclusive practice kept only for insiders into a more democratic and less top-down process.

### Nationally confined discourses

LIVEWHAT evidence shows that the recent crisis has had no significant effect in advancing the presence of the EU and European issues in national debates. Quite importantly, the results confirm also the uncontested primacy of national communicative flows in every country, leaving limited visibility for the EU or European protagonists and subjects (Figure 1). Hence, a Europeanized political communication in which national actors make claims within a European frame of reference transcending geographical boundaries has proved rather weak during the period 2008-2014 that is, when the economic crisis reached its peak (see LIVEWHAT *Special Issue with Politics and Policy* accessible at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/polp.2016.44.issue-3/issuetoc>).

Apart from the limited presence of the EU and European actors, it also seems that issues of representation of a clear-cut European public in the politics of dealing with the crisis have largely been neglected. This is part and parcel of the broader EU democratic deficit that has become more acute during the crisis years. This is related to a lack of responsiveness of the EU and accountability in the wider context of how the EU has responded to the economic crisis. At the end of the day, a *European* response to the crisis can only be the outcome of a more or less democratic interplay between the integration of governments and actors across boundaries and the integration of peoples and public spheres.

Establishing a more visible dialogue with the citizens on the impacts of the economic crisis may have a tangible effect in the long term; this could be accomplished for instance by developing better communication on how the EU has dealt, and is still dealing, with the economic crisis by organizing public ‘deliberation’ events and by forging strong transnational partnerships for EU communication and exchanges between European citizens and policy actors and stakeholders.

### **Rising nationalisms**

LIVEWHAT data confirm expectations from group conflict theory about how nationalism increases during these economic times, particularly among those most vulnerable (see LIVEWHAT report: *Integrated report on causal relationships between crises and their consequences on citizens*, accessible at <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/?p=452>).

Economic crises depreciate the appeal of the nation because of the loss of international and internal prestige. People belonging to a high-income group or to the upper social class will become less attached to the nation because of

the nation’s loss of status, and because they become more distant to the typical member of the nation. However, people belonging to low-income groups or to the lower social class will become more attached to the nation because they turn closer to the mean citizen, an individual who has lost economic status due to the economic crisis.

Crucially, these effects are magnified when the EU is seen as responsible for this situation. The strategy of blaming the other has been usually seen as a strategy to avoid voters’ punishment in the ballot box. Yet, blame attribution can also have spill-over effects on citizens’ nationalist attitudes that governments should also consider.

All these developments have left European citizens with a vague feeling that the EU is no longer the guarantee for prosperity it once seemed to be. In the absence of any deeper political integration that could provide greater democratic representation and control over an ever expanding supranational governance, and in the face of major divisions among EU actors over what to do and how to do it, the EU has ended up governing by an ‘one size fits one’ mode – failing thus to build greater legitimacy through more politicized public debates over the rules, processes, or other means by which to govern Europe and the Eurozone.

Present times are not dangerous times yet. But, as nationalisms rise – putting increasing pressures on member-state politics – it will become harder to resolve the crisis with innovative ideas about European unification because polarization will increase.

In this respect, the EU requires processes that work in ways that encourage inclusiveness of the victims of crisis. Here, the challenge is to find new ways of addressing a general redistributive problem in the EU. These must persist in the long term if adequate social and economic responses are not provided. A way of

governing the Eurozone that works effectively and responds to the will of citizens is crucial.

Concurrently, the European Parliament needs to get some ‘size’ in Eurozone governance, building on the fact that its elections now anoint the Commission President. It should become more of an equal partner, beyond the talking shop to which it has been relegated by its lack of formal role in Eurozone governance. It needs to do this by also bringing in national parliaments and national citizens into the deliberation process. The EU also must develop better linkages between EU and national level representative institutions, and more points of access for citizens in Brussels, to ensure greater responsiveness to citizen input, whether expressed at the national or EU levels.

### **European Social Model in retreat**

LIVEWHAT data shows that the crisis has effectively supplied an ‘opportunity’ to adopt and implement welfare retrenchment and labour market flexibilisation reforms in most countries, especially in Southern Europe (see LIVEWHAT report *Integrated report on policy responses to crises*, accessible at <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/?p=452>).

While the European Social Model is nevertheless resilient in a number of countries in Northern and Scandinavian Europe, the changes are particularly severe in those countries that implemented an austerity package under the direct influence of the Troika (the International Monetary Fund, the European Central Bank and the European Commission), such as Greece. The countries under severe market pressure, such as Italy and Spain, have also introduced radical reforms. The changes were less severe in the countries in which the debt crisis was less acute, such as Sweden and Germany. The extent of these

adjustments and reforms has induced certain setbacks to the European Social Model.

The paradox is that the European Social Model served its function in the early period of the crisis (2007-2009), when most European countries increased social expenditure to cushion the social shock of the crisis, and when institutional schemes – such as active labour market policies, training, and social dialogue – were used actively to negotiate alternatives to massive layoffs, a solution that worked well for instance in Continental European countries. The debt crisis, however, led in a different direction and generated an ‘austerity turn’ followed by a radical transformation of social policies as a way to curb the deficits (although it is recognised that social policy was not a cause of the crisis). We might thus ask whether these changes do not contradict the place that the European Social Model should have in European construction.

The 2013 Communication of the European Commission on ‘Strengthening the Social Dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union’ is an important initiative in terms of forging the European Social Model. The Communication stresses that the EU in defining and implementing its policies and activities, is obliged, under the Treaties, to take into account requirements linked to the promotion of a high level of employment, the guarantee of adequate social protection, the fight against social exclusion and a high level of education, training and protection of human health [which corresponds to Article 9 of the Treaties]. This Communication may be seen as an attempt to shift the social policy agenda away from mainly austerity exercises towards more forward-looking elements.

Nevertheless, it is difficult not to see the discrepancy between rhetoric and practice. As an example the strengthening of European

social dialogue proposed at EU level contrasts with the national policy responses to limit collective bargaining especially in the countries advised by the Troika, as LIVEWHAT data indicates (see LIVEWHAT report *Integrated report on policy responses to crises*, accessible at <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/?p=452>).

Under the pressure of the economic crisis, we witnessed most European countries changing – often hastily – several elements of what the Communication puts forward and what lies at the heart of the European Social Model: social protection, pensions, public services, workers’ rights, job quality, and social dialogue. Even though social policy has not been eroded everywhere in Europe we might question the survival of the European Social Model if its dismantling continues especially in Southern European countries.

Yet, is Europe ready to lose its European Social Model that is the envy of other countries and regions in the world? The crisis has prompted major policy rethinking across Europe. This is welcome, necessary and overdue. It is our collective responsibility to take a hard look at the failings of the recent past in order to build a resilient future for European citizens.

### **Social and solidarity economy on the rise**

LIVEWHAT evidence about the growing presence of the social and solidarity economy in countries hardest hit by the crisis points to the real possibility of social changes that are conducive to more human-oriented growth models (see LIVEWHAT report: *Integrated report on alternative forms of resilience in times of crisis*, accessible at <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/?p=452>).

In the face of public cuts and austerity measures, the State has proved rather vulnerable to provide for strong social safety

nets especially for those groups that have been particularly affected by the crisis. These and other concerns relating to market and state failures have opened up the space for rethinking resilience and ‘social assistance’. The social economy and solidarity actions are fundamentally about citizens bouncing back from hard times, reasserting social control over the economy by rethinking economic practice in terms of democratic self-management and active citizenship.

Analysing social and solidarity economy and its alternative potential, examining its regional manifestations and variations, and identify public policies and legal arrangements that can enable social and solidarity economy may provide a way forward for inclusive growth.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Recommendations for **EU institutions and EU Commission:**

### **► Work for better, not less Europe**

It is not ‘too much Europe’ that has alienated people, leaving them feeling disempowered and left behind, but current economic policies of reducing deficits and boosting ‘competitiveness’ that have eroded the European Social Model and promoted too narrow an interpretation of growth. A ‘better Europe’ is where a relaunch of the European Social Model creates tangible benefits for all countries of Europe and not just for the affluent ones.

### **► Strengthen the European Social Model**

Europe’s North-South divide is socially, economically and politically unsustainable and existing policy frameworks are insufficient to reverse the breakdown of the European Social Model. We need ambitious rules and guidelines set at EU level to foster upward social and

economic convergence and a stronger Social Europe. It is high time to find more fruitful ways to combine and revamp existing governance tools in order to reach balanced socioeconomic outcomes. In this spirit, a comprehensive approach is proposed that includes:

- *Making full use of existing policy frameworks.*

The EU is far from powerless; it has at its disposal social instruments such as the Social Investment Package (SIP) and the Recommendations on Active Inclusion and on Investing in Children, the proposed European Pillar of Social Rights that need to be fully operationalised to support people and families.

- *Revitalising the architecture of EU processes,* in particular the European Semester, to ensure policies in the economic field and those in the social field are consistent. Very often they contradict each other, with economic priorities taking precedence over social priorities. Instead of having a trade-off between economic and social priorities, governments should take a comprehensive approach.

- *Adding policy coherence,* by defining more clearly the different objectives of, and linkages between different relevant tools to achieve consistency. These tools include the Social Investment Package (SIP), the European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion (EPAP), the social Open Method of Coordination, the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), the European Semester, the Scoreboard of Social and Employment Indicators as well as the social indicators in the scoreboard of the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure.

- *Assessing the impact of projects funded by the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) on the Union's employment and social objectives.* This should involve performing an extensive and comprehensive ex-ante and ex-post social impact assessment of the different policies and recommendations put forward

throughout the European Semester, and in particular in Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) and the Annual Growth Survey (AGS). The social impact of recommendations should be considered when drafting Country Specific Recommendations (CRS), especially those requiring fiscal consolidation measures. Country Specific Recommendations should aim to achieve: (1) improved labour market activation measures that are capable of leading to quality jobs rather than low-paid, or insecure jobs, and (2) should aim to avoid weakening of the universal availability of basic services, as this reduces rights and results in an increase of poverty and inequality. There also needs to be a requirement on governments to monitor and report on how their policy choices are moving their countries towards targets set for employment (that is, secure, quality jobs), poverty reduction, and education.

- *Introducing social impact assessment and monitoring for countries in receipt of assistance packages.* Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) should specify the actions needed to achieve all the Europe 2020 targets, including in relation to employment, education and poverty reduction and not be limited to implementing the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding entered into with the EC/ECB/IMF. In addition, social impact assessment and monitoring must become integral to the assessment process for programme countries, so that if reform is needed, it is tailored to individual circumstances, capable of taking account of different impacts on different socioeconomic groups, and of cumulative effects on certain categories of disadvantaged populations.

- *Allowing budgetary flexibility for investment in relevant social policies and services.* After years of cuts and austerity measures, welfare systems have come under strain in many countries; this trend must be reversed to ensure the quality and adequacy of social welfare

systems and services. In its Communication of January 2015 ‘Making the Best Use of the Flexibility within the Existing Rules of the Stability and Growth Pact,’ the Commission displayed its willingness to allow budgetary flexibility to encourage the effective implementation of structural reforms, promote investment and take better account of economic cycles in individual Member States.

In this spirit, the EU should allow the necessary budgetary flexibility for this type of public expenditure, providing countries the much needed fiscal leeway to invest in adequate social protection and in social, health and education services. To this end, further flexibility and exclusions from the deficit targets are necessary. In this respect, it may also be useful to organise joint meetings of EPSCO and ECOFIN to discuss political and practical strategies and follow up on concerted actions. The inclusion of more social indicators, with the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP) Scoreboard can further reinforce this direction. Moreover, the overall objectives would have to be re-balanced: putting social and macroeconomic economic imbalances on a par.

- *Setting up a framework for mainstreaming social and fundamental rights objectives throughout the European Semester and within all policy areas, to ensure a rights-based approach.* Mainstreaming social and fundamental rights is needed to ensure a life in dignity and full participation in society for all. There is furthermore a need to provide access to all social and fundamental rights included in the EU treaties, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, EU secondary law and case law, as well as in all relevant regional and international provisions, such as the European Social Charter, the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the ILO Recommendation no. 202.

- *Supporting the involvement of rights-holders and organised civil society.* Rights-holders and civil society are on the frontline in the development of responses to social needs and reinforcement of human rights. They have an understanding of solutions that work or do not work, or of what needs to be improved. Therefore, their participation is vital not only in the design of social policies, but also in their implementation and monitoring. When adopting and implementing social objectives, a framework for structured, meaningful and sustainable involvement of these parties should be established.

#### ► Ensure Inclusive Governance

The EU Commission should require evidence of meaningful stakeholder involvement in deliberative processes leading to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies, using the monitoring systems in place under the Europe 2020 Strategy, as well as for countries in receipt of financial assistance programmes. This is of particular importance given the evident level of distrust of national and European institutions.

It would be consistent with the Charter on Shared Social Responsibilities, which envisages well-defined deliberative processes to ensure that individual preferences are reconciled with widespread priorities in the field of social, environmental and inter-generational justice, and to reduce imbalances of power between stakeholders. Concurrently, the EU Commission should provide guidance on civil dialogue to Member States in particular by putting forward specific guidelines on stakeholder involvement for the development of EU-related policies.

Recommendations for **national governments** and **relevant regional and local institutions**:

### ► Strengthen social safety nets

As a result of austerity measures, social protection systems and services have suffered drastic cuts at a time when they are needed the most. This is particularly true for local levels of government, which are often charged with providing social assistance and services. Therefore, it is essential that national and local government bodies responsible for the implementation of employment and social policies and services are able to identify new ways of delivering social value for society.

This, for example, may include initiating local social economy and solidarity projects that form collaborations between different types of partners that have different expertise and resources. These partnerships can enable the sharing of expertise, resources and responsibilities and provide disadvantaged people and families with innovative opportunities for real and significant participation in their local communities, as LIVEWHAT evidence on alternative forms of resilience illustrate (see LIVEWHAT report: *Integrated report on alternative forms of resilience in times of crisis*, accessible at <http://www.livewhat.unige.ch/?p=452>).

To foster local partnerships, local and regional authorities should take full advantage of the social investment aspects of the programming of EU funds, 2014-2020, including the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund), the ESF (European Social Fund) and the FEAD (Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived) and others, to fund projects that will foster solidarity, innovation, and ultimately social inclusion.

In addition, to strengthen social safety nets it is important to:

- *Invest in ambitious integrated employment and social policies, in line with the 2013 Social Investment Package (SIP)*. This includes maintaining and improving investments in

adequate social protection systems, in the creation of, and equal access to, quality employment, as well as in social, care, health and education services beyond infrastructure.

- *Target strategies at those groups and individuals who engage the least and who are most at risk of unemployment and social exclusion*. There needs to be a targeting of strategies on assisting hard-to-reach and disadvantaged groups, including young people, who are most at risk from unemployment and exclusion. It is crucial for a healthy democracy that all groups engage and it may well improve social cohesion in times of economic difficulties if disadvantaged groups are also involved in political decisions and economic governance issues that affect their lives.

- *Invest in good quality social services*. The provision of good quality services (such as affordable childcare, education, health, disability and other social services) reduce exclusion and are crucial to the employability prospects and social mobility of different income groups. They are an essential part of a country's social infrastructure and should be prioritised. National policy-makers should act proactively and exploit the new knowledge generated through EU peer learning, and the use of existing EU governance frameworks that promote the exchange of best practices and provide guidance to Member States – particularly the social Open Method of Coordination – these are vital tools for implementing effective social services as well as adequate, accessible and financially sustainable social protection systems and social inclusion policies.

- *Mainstream social and fundamental rights objectives throughout all policies at EU and national level*, to ensure equality for all and to make sure that people live a life in dignity and fully participate in society.

► **Ensure recognition of the role of civil society actors at all stages of policy-making**

The role of civil society actors as partners in policy-making needs to be formally recognized, protected and supported, through a variety of tools such as funding schemes, statutes or laws. Civil society is an important player in implementing policy measures and monitoring its effectiveness for two particular reasons:

First, civil society organizations and social economy and solidarity actors are often on the frontline of identifying social needs - new or unmet or inadequately met - because they are in direct contact with users on the ground, and they have a strong understanding of users' needs and rights. Furthermore, they are often able to collect data that is often not available to public authorities (e.g. data about undocumented migrants or about which groups of the population have been mostly affected by the economic crisis).

Second, civil society organizations and social economy and solidarity actors are also on the frontline in the development of responses to urgent and pressing social needs. They have an understanding of solutions that work or do not work, or what needs to be improved. They need to be responsive and work 'out of the box' by developing new and creative solutions at bottom level. Thus, they often become innovators and change-makers. For these reasons, it is important that public authorities and policy-makers ensure meaningful and structured civil society involvement at all stages and levels of policy processes: agenda setting, policy definition, decision-making, implementation, evaluation, and reformulation. More specifically, this requires:

- *Setting up a framework for the structural involvement of civil society actors at all government levels* and interacting with them on a regular basis and in time, so as to allow them

to provide meaningful and well-developed input throughout the policy-making process. Also, providing detailed information in the National Reform Programmes on the extent to which stakeholders have been actively involved in the process and how their input was taken into account.

- *Adopting clear and transparent procedures for civil dialogue* and developing guidelines for substantial engagement in the design, delivery and evaluation of policies.

- *Developing new indicators* to ensure the quality of engagement by drawing on civil society organizations' participative methodologies.

- *Actively seeking to expand their sources of information and taking into account the alternative proposals advanced by civil society actors.* Also, asking the EU Commission to actively seek to take into account the alternative proposals produced by social non-governmental organizations, i.e. when developing the Annual Growth Survey and the Country Specific Recommendations.

- *Engaging social non-governmental organizations as reliable partners to meet the obligation to implement the 'partnership principle' of the European Structural Investment Funds.* This should encompass their involvement in the preparation of partnership agreements and progress reports throughout the development and implementation of programmes, as well as in monitoring committees.

## THE PROJECT

### Objectives

LIVEWHAT is an EU-funded research project on policy responses and citizens' resilience in times of crisis. The project has four main objectives:

- a) To advance knowledge regarding the ways in which citizens respond to economic crises and their social and political consequences;
- b) To contribute to placing citizens' responses to economic crises and their negative consequences on the political agenda by raising awareness about the situation of groups particularly at risk in situations of economic crisis;
- c) To improve the problem-solving capacity of policy-makers and practitioners by providing policy recommendations and a catalogue of good practices;
- d) To help develop a more comprehensive and concerted problem-solving approach within Member States and the European Union by promoting knowledge-transfer and policy-learning.

### Scientific approach and methodology

LIVEWHAT's theoretical approach allows for studying resilience along the analytical continuum between the individual level of single citizens who learn how to 'bounce back' and downplay the costs of crises, and the far-reaching forms of collective resilience aimed at entering the public domain so as to challenge inequities and foster common empowerment.

The project conceives of resilience as the capacity of European citizens to stand against economic hardship through an active process of contestation and empowerment. Going beyond previous studies that have studied the impact of economic crises on specific groups such as children, youth, and families treated as passive categories, LIVEWHAT puts citizens engaged in alternative forms of resilience at center stage. Alternative forms of resilience include the strengthening of social and family networks and community practices to foster solidarity in the face of crises, change of lifestyles toward more sustainable forms of consumption and production, developing new artistic expressions.

Although these transformations in citizen practices (from adapted to alternative) are decisive for citizens' resilience in times of austerity, they have not yet been thoroughly studied.

### Project coordinator

Marco Giugni, [Marco.Giugni@unige.ch](mailto:Marco.Giugni@unige.ch)

Université de Genève

### Consortium

- Lorenzo Bosi  
European University Institute
- Manlio Cinalli  
Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques
- Maria Kousis  
University of Crete
- Eva Anduiza  
Autonomous University of Barcelona
- Maria Grasso  
University of Sheffield
- Christian Lahusen  
University of Siegen
- Maria Theiss  
University of Warsaw
- Katrin Uba  
Uppsala University

**Duration:** December 2013 to November 2016.

**Funding scheme:** LIVEWHAT has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement n° 613237.

**Budget:** EC contribution: 2,499.366EUR.

**Project website:** [www.livewhat.unige.ch](http://www.livewhat.unige.ch)

ANNEX

**Table 1 - Satisfaction with government in different policy areas (% satisfied)**

	<i>Fra</i>	<i>Ger</i>	<i>Gre</i>	<i>Ita</i>	<i>Pol</i>	<i>Spa</i>	<i>Swe</i>	<i>Swi</i>	<i>UK</i>
The economy	15.0	48.6	9.8	14.5	23.1	17.7	28.4	59.2	49.2
Poverty	13.0	20.5	8.8	12.2	9.2	9.2	19.2	32.3	21.2
Education	25.9	32.2	10.8	21.0	26.8	16.8	31.3	64.2	33.4
Unemployment	10.6	29.9	6.9	11.8	11.6	11.6	16.1	42.1	32.6
Healthcare	34.8	37.2	11.7	26.7	10.5	23.6	26.0	54.9	30.7
Precarious employment	14.8	20.7	8.4	14.8	9.5	10.7	22.4	36.3	21.5
Immigration	13.4	22.8	9.7	14.2	14.7	13.6	16.3	26.0	11.8
Childcare	32.5	30.8	11.2	22.2	19.6	18.4	32.6	40.3	28.0

Notes: % based on respondents selecting points 6 through to 10 on the 0-10 scale.

Q: How satisfied are you with the way in which your country's government is dealing with the following on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means "extremely dissatisfied" and 10 means "extremely satisfied"?

**Table 2 - Relative economic evaluations (% better)**

	<i>Fra</i>	<i>Ger</i>	<i>Gre</i>	<i>Ita</i>	<i>Pol</i>	<i>Spa</i>	<i>Swe</i>	<i>Swi</i>	<i>UK</i>
Living standard compared to parents	37.7	56.9	32.3	39.0	51.4	49.5	64.8	61.5	59.8
Household compared to 5 years ago	23.8	45.2	6.8	23.4	37.7	24.0	56.5	40.7	40.7
Country economy compared to a year ago	11.8	38.4	3.7	17.2	26.6	31.5	34	21.7	49.7
Country economy in the future	15.0	31.6	18.1	25.6	25.5	41.7	32.4	26.2	47.0

Notes: % based on respondents selecting points 6 through to 10 on the 0-10 scale.

Q: On a scale from 0 to 10 where 0 means 'Much worse' and 10 means 'Much better' ....

**Table 3 - Perceptions of country living conditions relative to other countries (% good)**

	<i>Fra</i>	<i>Ger</i>	<i>Gre</i>	<i>Ita</i>	<i>Pol</i>	<i>Spa</i>	<i>Swe</i>	<i>Swi</i>	<i>UK</i>
Conditions own country	42.9	70.0	9.7	19.8	24.7	33.3	75.4	75.6	70.8
France		62.2	71.6	70.2	74.9	79.3	62.9	48.9	73.7
Germany	71.6		84.7	88.4	87.7	85.2	77.5	70.6	83.8
Greece	6.7	6.9		8.4	21.2	5.6	9.4	5.9	14.8
Italy	24.9	37.5	39.1		65.7	29.4	38.1	25.6	44.4
Poland	19.5	25.6	20.2	26.2		21.2	23.1	16.4	24.6
Spain	27.2	31.6	35.5	48.8	48.1		38.9	23.2	43.3
Sweden	76.1	81.6	86.7	85.7	84.4	84.4		83.2	84.6
Switzerland	82.8	84.6	88.7	90.5	85.1	86.9	78.8		86.9
UK	64.9	63.1	81.9	83.5	85.9	80.2	64.5	57.5	

Notes: % based on respondents selecting points 6 through to 10 on the 0-10 scale.

In each country, this question will be slightly different: it first asks respondents to rate the country of survey, and afterwards, the other eight countries in the project, in alphabetical order.

Q: The living conditions among European countries differ quite a lot today, and we would like to get your personal evaluation. Please use the scale below, where 0 means 'Very bad living conditions' and 10 means 'Very good living conditions'.

Table 4 - Reductions in consumption (% yes)										
	<i>Fra</i>	<i>Ger</i>	<i>Gre</i>	<i>Ita</i>	<i>Pol</i>	<i>Spa</i>	<i>Swe</i>	<i>Swi</i>	<i>UK</i>	
Reduced consumption of staple foods	36.2	18.8	65.0	42.0	34.7	27.1	16.8	24.4	20.2	
Reduced recreational activities (going out, movies, theatre, etc.)	62.3	39.1	90.2	69.4	56.8	68.5	31.2	48.9	46.4	
Reduced use of own car	47.0	22.3	75.5	56.4	40.6	45.6	19.6	26.7	27.6	
Delayed payments on utilities (gas, water, electric)	25.4	14.0	73.9	31.5	40.0	21.9	10.1	22.4	16.0	
Moved home	13.7	6.7	27.3	18.3	9.0	16.2	4.8	8.6	14.6	
Delayed or defaulted on a loan instalment	17.0	13.3	61.0	22.2	31.2	20.9	9.6	21.2	13.3	
Sell an asset (e.g. land, apt, house)	11.3	5.1	17.4	14.1	12.5	12.3	5.8	6.7	7.7	
Cut TV / phone / internet service	17.6	6.9	36.7	24.4	17.5	24.0	17.0	12.2	21.0	
Did not go on holiday	51.4	36.5	74.1	61.7	59.1	53.7	27.4	38.4	37.3	
Reduced or postponed buying medicines/ visiting the doctor	31.1	16.6	62.5	40.4	40.0	21.0	15.0	25.2	10.9	

Notes: % based on respondents selecting specific answer options.  
 Q: In the past 5 years, have you or anyone else in your household had to take any of the following measures for financial/ economic reasons?

Figure 1. European Visibility in the Debates of the National Public Spheres by Country, 2008-2014

