

The Commitment of EU Youths to the European Project



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Abstract The European Union (EU) has faced significant challenges for many years, starting with the 2008 global financial crisis that led to the recession of the Eurozone, continuing with migration issues, Brexit in 2016, and the recent rise of populist and nationalist parties across Europe. In this context, the paper advances CitEuroPass questionnaire and examines European youth's opinions and attitudes towards civic engagement and social values promoted by EU (i.e. commitment to democracy, human rights, equality, diversity, inclusion)—as increasingly important aspects of the EU's resilience. EU citizenship and European identity shape how individuals view, relate to and participate in the EU project at cultural, social and political levels. While multicultural exchange and emotional connections can strengthen active, engaged EU citizenship, strong social values provide a common foundation for member states to work together, and help to ensure that all citizens are treated fairly and equally under the law. Together, the social values and civic engagement are important aspects of the European Union (EU) as they ensure that social concerns are addressed effectively, that citizens are actively involved in decision-making processes and they participate in shaping the future of their communities.

Keywords Civic engagement · Social values · EU citizenship · EU youths · Resilience

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1 Introduction

The paper reports the preliminary findings of a study applied in the spring of 2023 with students enrolled in universities from France, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania.

The study focused on developing and testing the beta version of CitEuroPass questionnaire, an instrument measuring respondents' opinions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions related to the topics addressed by the CitEuroPass project. The study was developed within the project *Erasmus + "CitEuroPass—Learning, Experiencing and Validating European citizenship through collaborative and innovative projects"*, as a collaborative work of five universities: Université Grenoble Alpes, France; University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia; Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia; New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria; Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Romania.

Therefore, the CitEuroPass project represents the context of this study. So, the paper begins with a brief presentation of the aims of the CitEuroPass project—as the starting point for the development and the composition of the CitEuroPass questionnaire. Then the paper focuses on discussing the study's approach, the development of the CitEuroPass questionnaire and its first application: the context, the literature, data collection, the sample, the preliminary results and measurement reliability. The results are presented in the last part, followed by final discussions.

2 CitEuro Pass Project—A Brief Description of Approach and Aims

Aiming to cultivate European citizenship, the spirit of cooperation among youth, and the feeling of a European identity, the CitEuroPass project embraces the approach of Moccia (2018). According to the author, European citizenship is rooted in the concept of *civitas*, which refers to a community of people who recognize each other as fellow citizens within a shared public space. This notion of citizenship is not defined by membership in a pre-existing state, but rather emerges organically from the relationships and bonds formed between citizens. At its core, European citizenship is about people coming together voluntarily around a common purpose and shared values (Moccia 2018).

Therefore, the CitEuroPass project brings together students from 5 European universities to participate in training sessions and collaborative projects with peers from other EU countries. Through collaborative projects based on frugal innovation, it gives participants the opportunity to work and learn together, to experiment and create solutions that address environmental problems. In this way, it allows students to understand citizenship not as an abstract concept but as an enacted, cooperative practice. By working together, students participating in the project discover what unites Europeans and how collaboration can solve shared problems. This real-world training equips students with practical skills and an expanded, inclusive outlook

needed to thrive in today's Europe. Furthermore, the relationships built during this program are expected to last beyond the project itself, contributing to a long-lasting spirit of togetherness, to a more integrated European community.

3 CitEuroPass Questionnaire—Instrument Development

CitEuroPass questionnaire was developed between November 2022 and March 2023 as a pilot version of an anonymous survey, and a first data collection was organized between March and mid-June 2023 on a convenience sample of participants recruited in France, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania from students enrolled in the universities involved in the CitEuroPass project. The questionnaire was developed to measure respondents attitudes, opinions and behavioral intentions related to the topics addressed by CitEuroPass project—i.e. teamwork with fellows from other EU countries, aspects related to civic engagement, European citizenship and identity, European values, social responsibility, innovation and entrepreneurial spirit directed to bring solutions to environmental issues.

The questionnaire aimed to assess students' attitudes and behavioral intentions related to the topics of CitEuroPass project, and find out whether participants from different EU countries have rather similar or divergent opinions. The reliability of the measurement instrument was also an objective of evaluation.

The Citeuropass questionnaire comprised 65 items for the topics of interest plus socio-demographic characteristics. Most of the items (62 items) used 1 to 5 Likert scales (ratings from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much*) to collect responses to closed-ended questions allowing statistical analysis, one closed-ended item used a Yes/No scale to assess the willingness to participate in collaborative projects, while 2 items were open-ended questions meant to get deeper insights regarding perceptions of European Citizenship. These two open-ended questions asked participants to input words that they think would best describe the European spirit and to enter comments about what European citizenship means to them, respectively.

The questionnaire was developed from the literature (Spears et al. 1997; Francois-Lecompte, and Roberts 2006; Doolittle and Faul 2013; La Barbera and Capone 2016; Moccia 2018, European Commission—Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Publications Office (2019); Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2020; Becuwe and Baneth 2021; Dąbrowski et al. 2021; Bogoslov et al. 2022; Arslan and Wong 2022; European Commission 2023; Remr 2023; Hadjichoneva et al. 2024), through the inclusion and adaptation of multi-item constructs needed to measure the dimensions of interest, such as: openness towards intercultural collaboration and teamwork, collaborative work between peers from different EU countries, European citizenship and identity, European values, citizen engagement - civic attitude and civic behavior, social responsibility and environment, entrepreneurial orientation, and entrepreneurship for sustainability).

A brief review of the literature and official websites of European Union on the themes covering aforementioned dimensions of interest indicates that EU is actively

working to foster an integrated European community with shared identity and values (European Union. Official Journal of the European Union 2012; European Commission 2023), where citizen engagement, rule of law, visions of unity, purposeful cooperation and innovation building offer paths forward (Sedelmeier 2017; Sedelmeier and Avery 2018; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2020; Gastil 2021). The following lines presents few words about each dimension.

European Citizenship and Identity. European citizenship grants important rights and a sense of belonging to EU residents. Most of EU citizens feel attached to Europe, indicating a nascent community identity (European Commission 2023). EU citizenship links closely to ‘European identity’ (Mäkinen 2019), whereas European identity is seen as a supranational social identity, shaping individuals’ emotional connection and self-concept tied to EU membership (Tajfel 1978). Trying to capture the nuances of identification, scholars typically examine both cognitive and affective dimensions - i.e. self-identifying as European and emotional attachment to Europe (Mitchell 2015; Prieto-Arranz et al. 2023). Education plays a key role in fostering identity rooted in shared values, though stronger emotional ties are still developing (Delanty 1997; Lehning 2001; Bruter 2003; European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Publications Office, 2019). Active citizenship is seen as attitudinal foundation for constructive engagement from local to EU levels (European Commission 2019). Work is underway to increase civic participation in EU policymaking and strengthen democratic legitimacy across member states (European Commission, 2023a, b, c, d).

Civic engagement. The literature (Jacoby 2009; Doolittle and Faul 2013; Adler and Goggin 2005; Barrett and Zani 2014; Andrei et al. 2020; Zait and Andrei 2019; Remr, 2023) indicates that civic engagement is associated with involvement in a multitude of community, environmental and cultural initiatives. Measurement scales assess civic attitudes or quantify civic behavior through specific activities, such as volunteering, voting, etc., or combine both components—attitudes and corresponding behaviors (i.e., Doolittle and Faul’s Civic Engagement Scale 2013). That is: both civic attitudes and civic behaviors are important. For example, if citizens participated more consistently through voting and civil society channels, governance accountability would improve (Heinelt 2018; Bussu 2022). As higher turnout in European Parliament elections is needed to strengthen democratic representation (European Parliament 2023), limited awareness of its relevance to everyday life undermines engagement. More outreach programs explaining the EU’s roles coupled with online tools facilitating consultation input could motivate higher turnouts (Gastil 2021).

European Values. The European Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, values which are mentioned in Article 2 TEU of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and supported by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union which puts EU core values into EU law to uphold principles such as human dignity, freedom, equality, solidarity, citizens’ rights, justice through its laws and policies (European Union. Official Journal of the European Union, 2012). While

most citizens consider the EU as important for peace, stability and the economy (Directorate General Communication 2022), an increased awareness of people about fundamental European values is very important, as civil society pressure might act as a tool of application to reinforce the core values and the shared ethical practices.

Social Responsibility. Responsible business practices that respect workers, communities and the environment are critical for sustainability (European Commission 2023; Arslan and Wong, 2022; Pérez-Barea et al. 2018; Webb et al. 2008; Wong 2008; Francois-Lecompte and Roberts 2006). The EU's strong ethics, transparency and non-financial reporting framework leads globally on spurring accountable conduct (European Commission, Directorate-General for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, Groen, Alcidi, Simonelli et al. 2021). However, cases of ethics violations, greenwashing and inequality persist, indicating a need for stricter oversight and standards (Transparency International EU et al. 2023).

Environmental Responsibility and Entrepreneurship for Sustainability. The EU spurs eco-innovation and startups through significant funding programs like Horizon Europe and the European Innovation Council (European Commission 2023). These schemes award grants for research, development and commercialization to provide solutions for pressing issues like climate challenges and pollution (European Commission 2023; European Innovation Council 2023). Still, faster scaling is required for sustainability entrepreneurship as well as building collaborative platforms to accelerate progress by connecting researchers, entrepreneurs and policymakers (Fellnhöfer 2022; Bogoslov et al. 2022; Blomsma et al. 2023).

4 Data Collection and Sample

The CitEuroPass questionnaire was applied online between the end of March and middle of June 2023 with students enrolled in one of the five universities involved in the study: Université Grenoble Alpes, France; University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovakia; Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia; New Bulgarian University, Sofia, Bulgaria; Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iasi, Romania.

Invitation to participate in the study and the link to the online questionnaire was sent to the students, resulting in a convenience sample based on student availability and willingness to spend around 10 min to fill-in the form. The anonymity of the respondents was granted. The survey was conducted anonymously, in compliance with GDPR, so participants were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity in the study reporting.

The research sample ($N = 679$) comprised European students (75.1% undergraduates and 29.9% graduate students), most of them (90.9%) aged between 18–25 years old. Only 9.1% of student participants were 25 years old or older, while 38% were aged between 18–21, and 52.9% were between 21–25 years old. Study participants

were enrolled in fields of study such as: Social Sciences, Economics and Business (75.7%), Mathematics, Informatics and Natural Sciences (13.6%), or others (10.7%), at the universities from France, Slovakia, Bulgaria or Romania involved in the project. The responses regarding the permanent residence of student participants indicated the following distribution of the country of provenience in the sample: France (22.2%), Slovakia (28.4%), Bulgaria (12.7%), Romania (32.4%), and other countries (4.3%) such as: Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Norway, Poland, Estonia, Moldavian Republic, Ukraine (between 1 to 3 students from each of the mentioned countries).

5 Responses Evaluation and Discussion

The Citeupass questionnaire was applied anonymously and collected data on 65 items covering the topics of interest (63 closed-ended items and 2 open-ended questions) plus socio-demographic characteristics.

Most of the items (62 items) used 1 to 5 Likert scales ratings (from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *very much*) to collect participants' responses. One item used a Yes/No closed-ended question to assess respondents' willingness to participate in collaborative projects, and 2 items used open-ended questions.

The two items that used open-ended questions were meant to get deeper insights regarding perceptions of European citizenship by asking participants to input words they think would best describe European spirit and also to add comments on what European citizenship means for themselves.

According to participants' responses to the open questions, the top 10 words that best describe European spirit are: *freedom, diversity, unity, collaboration, culture, democracy, union, equality, solidarity, friendship, exchange, sharing, community, frienship, opprotunities, happiness, innovation, and peace*—as it is shown in Table 1 and the word-cloud of the most frequent words (Fig. 1).

Moreover, we can observe a high degree of similarity between the lists of the top 10 words provided by the respondents in the four countries (see Table 1), despite the fact that the words were generated by the participants in response to the open question placed at the beginning of the questionnaire: *Please name 3 words that best describe European spirit in your opinion.*

The second word-cloud presented below resulted from the 2nd open-ended question included at the end of the questionnaire: *Please add here any comments you have on what European citizenship means to you.*

Participants' responses indicated an increased level of willingness to join collaborative projects mixing students from different EU countries (85,5% France, 77,1% Slovakia, 85% Romania, 85,1% Bulgaria) according to the YES answers to the Yes/ No closed-ended item *Are you willing to participate in collaborative projects within teams mixing students from different EU countries?* Also we can observe a high degree of similarity between the four countries' frequency of YES responses (85,5% France, 77,1% Slovakia, 85% Romania, 85,1% Bulgaria).

Table 1 Words mentioned by respondents as best descriptors of European spirit

No	All respondents	French respondents	Bulgarian respondents	Slovak respondents	Romanian respondents
1	Freedom	Culture	Freedom	Freedom	Freedom
2	Diversity	Freedom	Diversity	Unity	Diversity
3	Unity	Diversity	Culture	Collaboration	Democracy
4	Collaboration	Exchange	Unity	Democracy	Culture
5	Culture	Collaboration	Opportunities	Friendship	Union
6	Democracy	Union	Democracy	Solidarity	Equality
7	Union	Unity	Equality	Diversity	Collaboration
8	Equality	Sharing	Community	Culture	Unity
9	Solidarity	Community	Innovation	Union	Innovation
10	Friendship	Solidarity	Solidarity	Opportunities	Peace



Fig. 1 Word-cloud that best describe European spirit in respondents opinion

The results presented in detail below, indicates increased similarities between the answers of participants from the four EU countries on all the 63 closed-ended items of the questionnaire. Before presenting the assessed dimensions one by one, we have to mention that the results also indicated a very good overall reliability of the measurement instrument at the level of CitEuroPass questionnaire, with Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.95.

Commitment to EU citizenship, feeling good, and proud to be EU citizen. The results (see Table 2 and Fig. 3) also indicated that respondents feel good, and proud to be EU citizens. Mean score at sample level was 3.94. The highest scores were reported by Bulgarian students. Higher than average scores resulted in each country

Table 3 EU Identity

Country	Mean	N
Bulgaria	3.40	86
France	2.98	151
Romania	3.63	220
Slovakia	3.22	193
Total	3.33	679

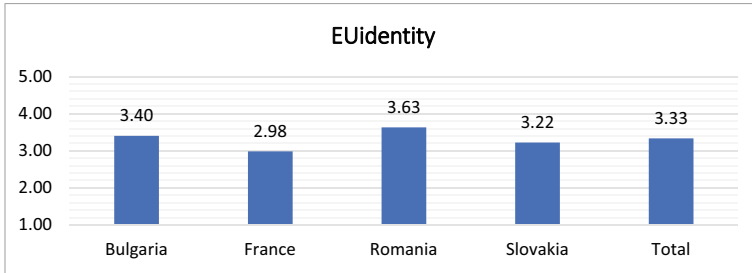


Fig. 4 EU Identity

European identity. Regarding the feeling of an EU identity (Table 3 and Fig. 4) the results indicated a mean score at sample level of 3.33 (higher than average).

“EU identity” was measured through a multi-item reflective construct (4 items adapted from the literature (Spears et al. 1997; La Barbera and Capone 2016): *q3.4. The fact that I am an EU citizen is an important part of my identity*; *q3.5. I feel I am deeply tied to other EU citizens*; *q3.6. EU citizens have a lot in common with each other*; *q3.7. I am similar to the average EU citizen*; Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.817).

As Table 3 shows, all countries scored close to the average value of 3 points, with higher ratings in eastern countries, indicating that EU citizenship starts to be seen as an important part of personal identity.

Supportive attitudes towards immediate action in the application of EU norms.

Respondents’ ratings were higher in eastern countries, but above the average value of 3 (M = 3.46 at sample level) in all countries for the single-item “*q3.9. I see positively a more immediate action in applying European norms*” (see Table 4 and Fig. 5). The item was adapted from the literature (La Barbera and Capone 2016).

Attitude towards EU enlargement. The results (Table 5 and Fig. 6) indicated significantly higher than average ratings for the EU enlargement dimension measured through a multi-item reflective construct “EU enlargement” (3 items adapted from La Barbera and Capone (2016): *q3.10. I see positively the enlargement of the EU beyond the countries that have joined from the beginning*; *q3.11. I think that EU enlargement represents an opportunity for all of us*; *Reversed item q3.12. EU enlargement scares me*; Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.608). Ratings ranged from an average of 3.74 in France

Table 4 Supportive attitudes towards immediate action in the application of EU norms

Country	Mean	N
Bulgaria	3.86	86
France	3.17	151
Romania	3.74	220
Slovakia	3.31	193
Total	3.49	679

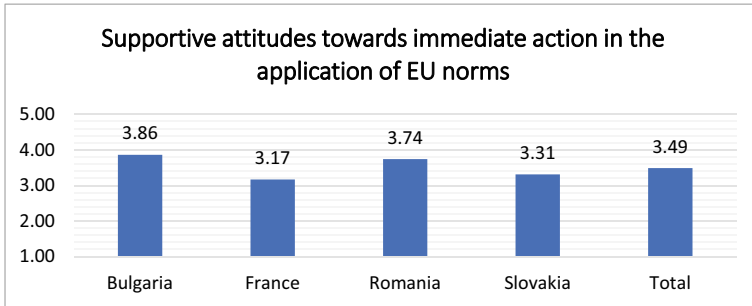


Fig. 5 Supportive attitudes towards immediate action in the application of EU norms

to 4.03 in Bulgaria. The ratings of Romania and Slovakia were closer to France, so the sample mean was $M = 3.82$.

The interest of increasing own knowledge about the 6 fundamental values of EU. The responses to the question *q4. Would you like to know more about the 6 EU*

Table 5 EU enlargement

Country	Mean	N
Bulgaria	4.03	86
France	3.74	151
Romania	3.79	220
Slovakia	3.82	193
Total	3.82	679

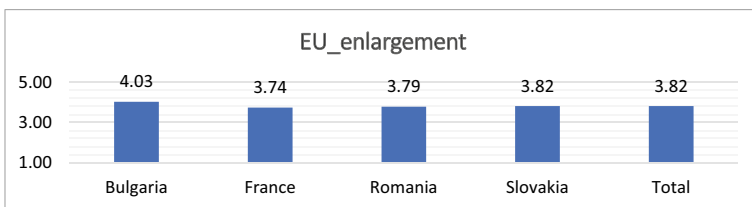


Fig. 6 EU enlargement

fundamental values?(6 items: q4.1. Human dignity; q4.2. Freedom; q4.3 Democracy; q4.4. Equality; q4.5. Rule of law; q4.6. Human rights?) a Cronbach's Alpha = 0.925 for the 6 items, and a higher-than-average interest of respondents to increase their knowledge about each of the 6 fundamental values of EU (see Table 6).

The results reported in Table 7 and Fig. 7 indicate the aggregate interest of the students of each country to increase their knowledge about the 6 fundamental values of EU. It ranged from an average of 3.33 in Slovakia to 3.86 in Romania. The overall interest for all of the 6 fundamental EU values at the level of entire sample (M = 3.56) is closed to the overall ratings of each country, and those specific: Human dignity (M = 3.54); Freedom of movement (M = 3.47); Democracy (M = 3.44); Equality (M = 3.56); Rule of law (M = 3.65); Human rights (M = 3.70).

Therefore, study participants perceive they don't know enough about the 6 fundamental values of EU and they are interested to learn about.

Table 6 Interest to know about each of the 6 fundamental values of EU

Value	N	Min	Max	Mean
q4.1. Human dignity	679	1	5	3,54
q4.2. Freedom	679	1	5	3,47
q4.3. Democracy	679	1	5	3,44
q4.4. Equality	679	1	5	3,56
q4.5. Rule of law	679	1	5	3,65
q4.6. Human rights	679	1	5	3,70

Table 7 Aggregate interest to know more about the 6 fundamental values of EU

Country	Mean	N
Bulgaria	3.69	86
France	3.39	151
Romania	3.86	220
Slovakia	3.33	193
Total	3.56	679

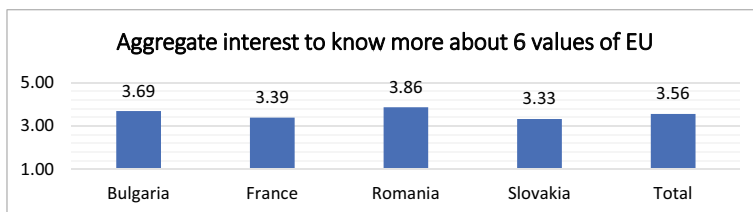


Fig. 7 Aggregate interest to know more about the 6 fundamental values of EU

Social Responsibility. The results (Table 8 and Fig. 8) indicated significantly higher than average ratings for social responsibility dimension measured through the multi-item reflective construct “social responsibility” (11 items: *q5.1. I am accountable for all my decisions and actions; q5.2. I have responsibility for my family, society, Europe, the world and planet earth to the extent of my ability and influence; 5.3. I am morally accountable for how I treat others; q5.4. I am responsible for doing my part to make the world a better place; q5.5. I try not to buy products from companies that harm the environment; q5.6. I buy fair trade products; q5.7. I try to reduce my consumption to what I really need; q5.8. I avoid doing all my shopping in big businesses /large retailers; q5.9. I go to small markets to support small producers; q5.10. I worry about environmental problems; q5.11. A better environment starts with myself; Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.862).*

The items were adapted from literature (Arslan and Wong 2022; Pérez-Barea et al. 2018; Webb et al. 2008; Wong 2008; Francois-Lecompte and Roberts 2006). Ratings ranged from an average of 3.65 to 4.02. The sample mean was $M = 3.82$.

Environmental preoccupation and responsibility. The results (Table 9 and Fig. 9) indicated significantly higher than average ratings for Environmental preoccupation and responsibility dimension measured through a multi-item reflective construct with 4 items: *q5.5. I try not to buy products from companies that harm the environment; q5.7. I try to reduce my consumption to what I really need; q5.10. I worry about environmental problems; q5.11. A better environment starts with myself; Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.738).* The four items were selected from the eleven items comprised in the Social Responsibility construct, which was adapted from literature (Arslan and

Table 8 Social responsibility

Country	Mean	N
Bulgaria	4.02	86
France	3.92	151
Romania	3.82	220
Slovakia	3.65	193
Total	3.82	679

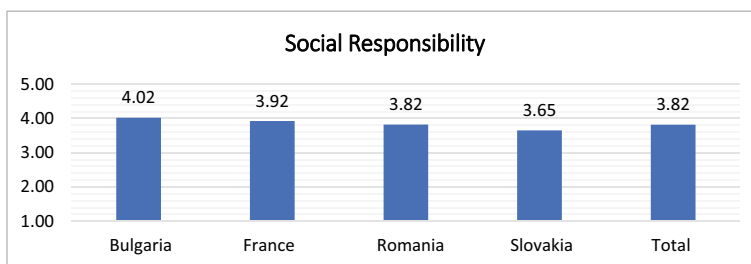
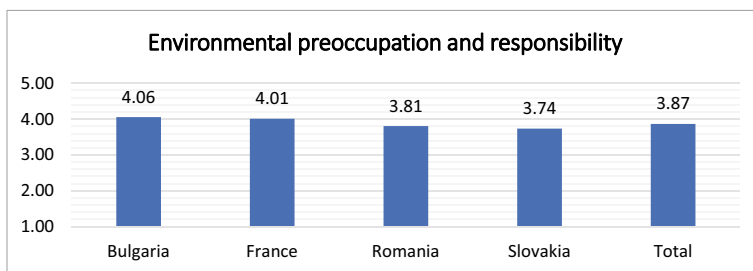


Fig. 8 Social responsibility

Table 9 Environmental preoccupation and responsibility

Country	Mean	N
Bulgaria	4.06	86
France	4.01	151
Romania	3.81	220
Slovakia	3.74	193
Total	3.87	679

**Fig. 9** Environmental preoccupation and responsibility

Wong, 2022; Pérez-Barea et al. 2018; Webb et al. 2008; Francois-Lecompte and Roberts 2006).

Ratings ranged from an average of 3.74 to 4.06. The sample mean was $M = 3.82$.

Citizen involvement at national and European level. The results (Table 10 and Fig. 10) indicated higher than average ratings for the dimension measured through a multi-item reflective construct „EU citizen involvement at national and EU level” (6 items: *q6.1. I pay close attention to the local news and events; q6.2. I pay a lot of attention to international events and news; q6.3. I am interested in reading the news related to the EU and European countries as much as I am interested in those related to my own country; q6.4. I always vote in local elections; q6.5. I always vote in national elections; q6.6. I always vote in the elections of our national representatives in the EU bodies*; Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.821). The items were adapted from literature (Becuwe and Baneth 2021; Dąbrowski et al. 2021) to comprise both national and European level of involvement. Ratings ranged from an average of 3.34 to 3.73. The sample mean was $M = 3.57$, with a slightly higher involvement at national level ($M = 3.72$) compared to international level ($M = 3.42$)—see Fig. 11.

Civic engagement. Civic engagement was measured through its 2 components - civic attitude and civic behavior - indicated in the literature (Jacoby 2009; Doolittle and Faul 2013; Adler and Goggin 2005; Barrett and Zani 2014; Andrei et al. 2020; Zait and Andrei 2019) portraying it in relation with involvement in environmental, cultural and community initiatives, and assessing it through specific attitudes and behaviors (i.e. Civic Engagement Scale of Doolittle and Faul 2013).

Table 10 EU citizen involvement at national and EU level

Country	Mean	N
Bulgaria	3.73	86
France	3.60	151
Romania	3.72	220
Slovakia	3.34	193
Total	3.57	679

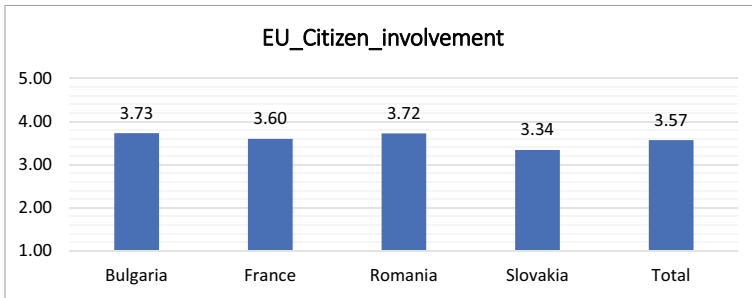


Fig. 10 EU citizen involvement at national and EU level

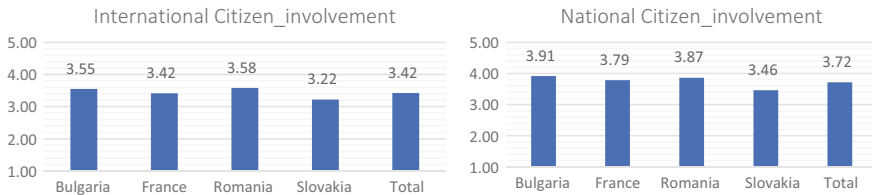


Fig. 11 Comparison between citizen involvement at European level and national level

Therefore, we adopted the civic engagement scale of Doolittle and Faul (2013) and used two multi-item reflective constructs: the construct Civic Attitude (7 items from Doolittle and Faul 2013: q8.1. *I feel responsible for my community*; q8.2. *I believe that I have a responsibility to help the poor and the needy*; q8.3. *I am committed to serve in my community*; q8.4. *I believe that all EU citizens have a responsibility to our enlarged community*; q8.5. *I believe that it is important to be informed of community issues*; q8.6. *I believe that it is important to volunteer*; q8.7. *I believe that it is important to financially support non-profit organizations*; Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.876) and the construct Civic Behavior (6 items from Doolittle and Faul (2013): q8.8. *I am involved in structured volunteer position(s) in the community*; q8.9. *When working with others, I make positive changes in the community*; q8.10. *I help members of*

Table 11 Civic engagement: attitude

Country	N	Civic attitude	Civic behavior
Bulgaria	86	4.63	3.50
France	151	4.14	3.03
Romania	220	4.36	3.54
Slovakia	193	4.03	2.98
Total	679	4.25	3.26

my community; q8.11. I stay informed of events in my community; q8.12. I participate in discussions that raise issues of social responsibility; q8.13. I contribute to humanitarian organizations within the community; Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.872).

The results (Table 11 and Fig. 11) indicated very high ratings for the construct Civic Attitude (M = 4.25), but significantly lower ratings (closed to neutral level of 3) for the construct Civic Behavior (ratings ranged from 2.98 to 3.50, with M = 3.26 at sample level).

Entrepreneurial spirit towards sustainability. The results (Table 12 and Fig. 12) indicated higher than neutral ratings for the dimension measured through a multi-item reflective construct “Entrepreneurial spirit” (6 items adapted from Covin et al. (2020): *q7.1. I have very little problems with renewal and change; q7.2. I quickly master new routines, procedures, and new ways of working; q7.3. I always search for creative solutions instead of familiar ones; q7.4. I am constantly looking for new ways to improve my performance at work; q7.5. I value new plans and ideas, even if I feel that they could fail in practice; q7.6. In order to be more productive, I sometimes act without the permission of my supervisor /boss; Cronbach’s Alpha = 0.785).* Ratings ranged from an average of 3.34 to 3.85. The sample mean was M = 3.56.

Preference for cultural diversity (versus homogeneity) at work. The results (Table 13 and Fig. 13) indicated respondents’ preference for cultural diversity (versus homogeneity) at work /in teamwork. A single-item question was used in this case: *Do you feel more comfortable to work within teams which are rather homogeneous, or do you prefer an increased variety of cultures among team members?* Ratings ranged from an average of 7.07 to 7.56. The sample mean was M = 7.38 on the 1 to 10 scale (*from 1 = I like cultural homogeneity to 10 = I like cultural variety*)

Table 12 Entrepreneurial spirit

Country	Mean	N
Bulgaria	3.85	86
France	3.34	151
Romania	3.70	220
Slovakia	3.46	193
Total	3.56	679

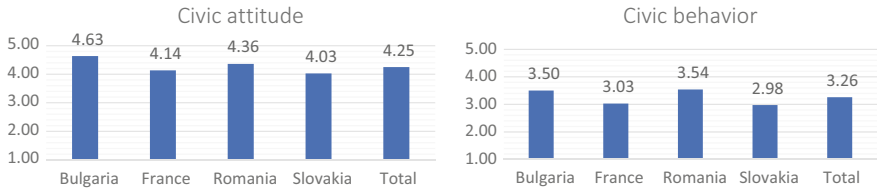


Fig. 12 Civic engagement: civic attitude and civic behavior

which indicates that participants from each country prefer diversity at work, but the preference for diversity over homogeneity is not very high.

What European citizenship means for EU citizens. The meaning of EU citizenship was addressed at the end of the survey through a question requesting respondents to rate 7 closed-ended items: “q 10. We would like to know what European citizenship means to you. Please rate the following propositions according to your beliefs, from 1 = not important to 5 = very important”.

The following set of 7 items adapted from the literature (Hadjitchoneva et al. 2024; Pellat et al. 2024), were listed to be rated: q10.1. Free movement within the EU; q10.2. The right to vote democratically; q10.3. Democracy; q10.4. The greener and more sustainable European future; q10.5. The common values of the European Union, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law; q10.6. Possibilities of entrepreneurial initiative at European level; q10.7. Access to the European market.

Table 13 Preference to cultural variety (vs. homogeneity) in teamwork

Country	Mean	N
Bulgaria	7.45	86
France	7.56	151
Romania	7.47	220
Slovakia	7.07	193
Total	7.38	679

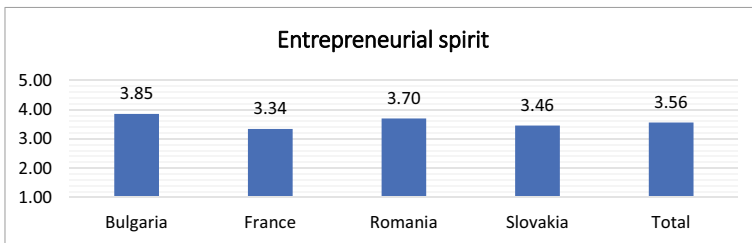


Fig. 13 Entrepreneurial spirit

Scale reliability computed on these 7 items indicated a Cronbach's Alpha = 0.901. The 7 items representing 7 meanings associated with EU citizenship received high ratings from our participants (see Table 14). Students' ratings indicated a high level of importance of these 7 meanings associated with EU citizenship.

A high degree of similarity between the ratings provided by the participants of the 4 countries was found for the first 5 meanings associated with EU citizenship (*q10.1*; *q10.2*; *q10.3*; *q10.4*; *q10.5*) but a significant difference between France and the rest of the countries was also found for the last 2 meanings associated with EU citizenship (*q10.6*; *q10.7*) - see detailed results in Table 14 and Fig. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

Table 14 What European citizenship means to EU citizens

EU citizenship means:*	Sample (N = 679)	Bulgaria (N = 86)	France (N = 151)	Romania (N = 220)	Slovakia (N = 193)
q10.1. Free movement within the EU	4,46	4.65	4.56	4.24	4.55
q10.2. The right to vote democratically	4,35	4.62	4.28	4.27	4.45
q10.3. Democracy	4,33	4.49	4.19	4.27	4.46
q10.4. A greener and more sustainable European future	4,14	4.30	4.08	4.15	4.09
q10.5. The common values of the European Union, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law	4,30	4.52	4.24	4.20	4.38
q10.6. The possibilities of entrepreneurial initiative at European level	3,93	4.33	3.13	4.13	4.15
q10.7. Access to the European market	4,09	4.50	3.42	4.20	4.34

* 10. We would like to know what European citizenship means to you. Please rate the following propositions according to your beliefs (from 1 = not important to 5 = very important)

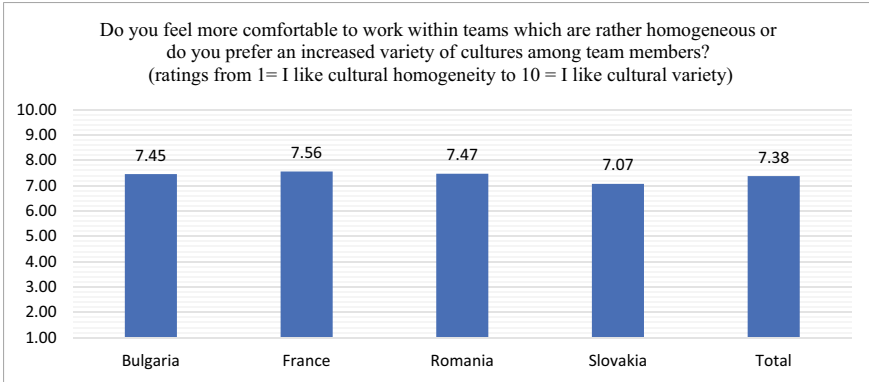


Fig. 14 Preference to cultural variety (vs. homogeneity) in teamwork

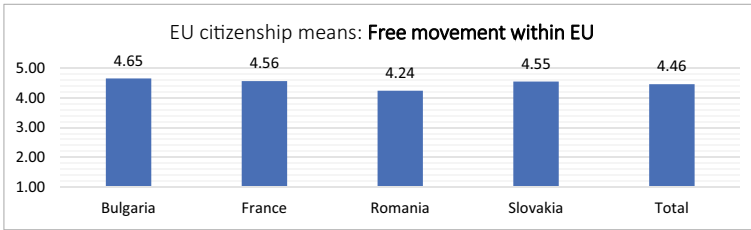


Fig. 15 EU citizenship means: Free movement within EU

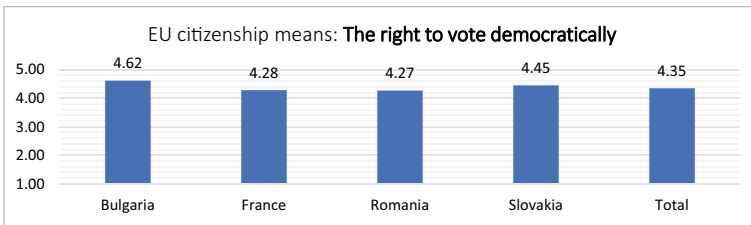


Fig. 16 EU citizenship means: The right to vote democratically

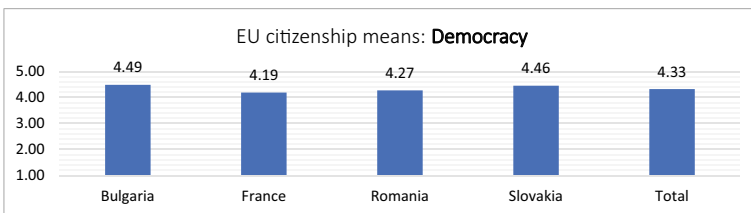


Fig. 17 EU citizenship means: Democracy

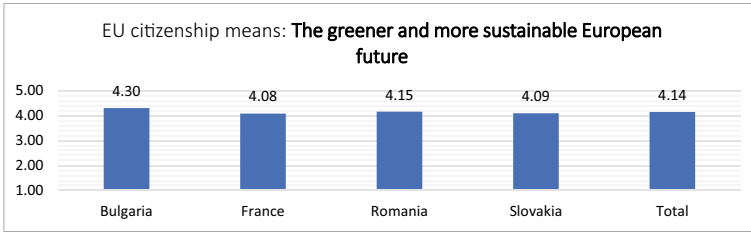


Fig. 18 EU citizenship means: The greener and more sustainable European future

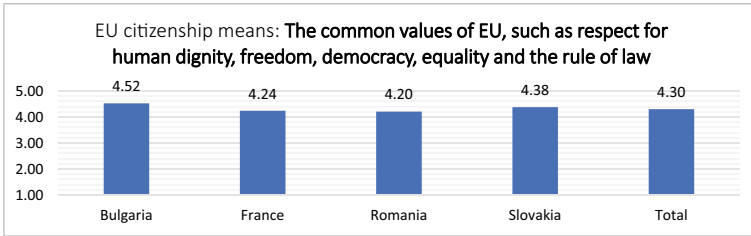


Fig. 19 EU citizenship the common values of the European union, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law

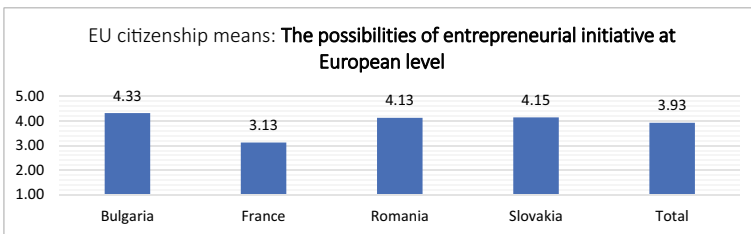


Fig. 20 EU citizenship means: Possibilities of entrepreneurial initiative at European level

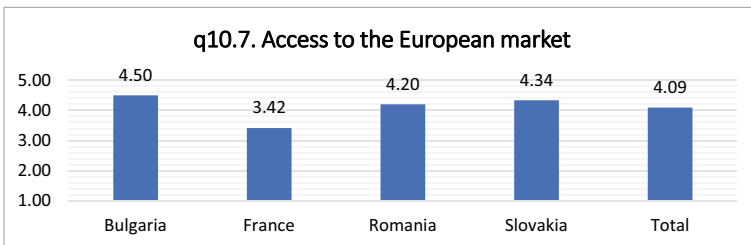


Fig. 21 EU citizenship means: Access to the European market

6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the CitEuro Pass questionnaire appears to be a reliable instrument according to the results of its first application detailed above.

Cronbach's Alpha was 0.95 at the overall level of CitEuroPass questionnaire, and high reliability coefficients were found for the sub-scales adapted from the literature and used to measure multi-item dimensions included in the questionnaire as follows:

- Commitment to EU citizenship, feeling good, and proud to be EU citizen: 4 items adapted from La Barbera and Capone 2016; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.883
- EU identity: 4 items adapted from Spears et al. 1997; La Barbera and Capone 2016; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.817.
- Supportive attitudes towards immediate action in the application of EU norms: single-item construct adapted from La Barbera and Capone (2016).
- Attitude towards EU enlargement: 3 items adapted from La Barbera and Capone 2016: Cronbach's Alpha = 0.608. Further improvement of the items is needed here to increase the reliability (Cronbach's Alpha should be higher than 0.7).
- The interest of increasing own knowledge about the core values of EU: 6 items listing the 6 fundamental values of EU; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.925.
- Social responsibility: 11 items adapted from literature (Arslan and Wong 2022; Pérez-Barea et al. 2018; Webb et al. 2008; Wong 2008; Francois-Lecompte and Roberts 2006); Cronbach's Alpha = 0.862.
- Environmental responsibility (4 items extracted from the 11 items of the more comprehensive construct Social responsibility presented above; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.738).
- EU citizen involvement at national and EU level: 6 items adapted from literature (Becuwe and Baneth 2021; Dąbrowski et al. 2021); Cronbach's Alpha = 0.821).
- Civic engagement (Attitude): 7 items from Doolittle and Faul 2013; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.876)
- Civic engagement (Behavior): 6 items from Doolittle and Faul 2013; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.872)
- Entrepreneurial spirit: 6 items adapted from Covin et al. (2020); Cronbach's Alpha = 0.785.
- Preference for cultural diversity (vs. homogeneity) at work /in teamwork: a single-item construct
- What European citizenship means for EU citizens (7 items derived from Hadjitchoneva et al. 2024; Pellat et al. 2024); Cronbach's Alpha = 0.901.

The CitEuroPass questionnaire comprised 65 items for the topics of interest plus socio-demographic characteristics. Most of the items (62 items) used 1 to 5 Likert scales (ratings from 1 = not at all to 5 = very much) to collect responses to closed-ended questions allowing statistical analysis, one closed-ended item used a Yes/No scale to assess the willingness to participate in collaborative projects, while 2 items were open-ended questions meant to get deeper insights regarding perceptions of European Citizenship and European spirit, respectively.

Results indicated an increased similarity between the ratings of participants from the four EU countries on the items of the questionnaire and a high level of willingness to join collaborative projects mixing students from different EU countries.

Acknowledgements This work was supported by the Citeuropass project 2022-1-FR01-KA220-HED-000088786, financed by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union.

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