



LH2



Perception of European Union action and the European funds among the French population

Qualitative and quantitative survey



Premier ministre

Ministère des Outre-mer

Avec :

Délégation interministérielle
à l'Aménagement du territoire
et à l'attractivité régionale



Agence de Services
et de Paiement



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Context and objectives

■ CONTEXT

While the European Funds programming for 2007-2013 was coming to its end, and while future communication strategy 2014-2020 is being prepared, the inter-funds communication steering committee, coordinated by DATAR, wanted a better understanding of the appreciation of EU intervention by citizens. The steering committee has mandated the LH2 institute via ASP to develop a state of perception and knowledge of the Funds and identify actions to progress in communication matters.

■ OBJECTIVES

The qualitative and quantitative survey conducted by LH2 had two main objectives :

- Measure awareness and public opinion towards Europe and European Funds, particularly by comparison to previous surveys carried out in early programming (2008) ;
- Identify communication pathways and messages that would attract the interest of the general public on these subjects.

For :

- Adjusting and optimizing the communication strategies of the Funds ;
- Equipping services and regions in shaping their strategies 2014-2020.

■ QUALITATIVE STUDY

Six group meetings distributed accordingly :

- Geographical and regional criteria for the choice of towns (Lyon, Paris, Bordeaux, Angers, Montpellier, Baie-Mahault) :
 - ▣ diversity and importance of financial assistance in the region
 - ▣ importance of social issues
 - ▣ urban / rural profile
 - ▣ accessibility to attend groups
- Socio-demographic criteria to recruit participants :
 - ▣ gender
 - ▣ age
 - ▣ social category
 - ▣ Opinion about Europe (other than Europhobes, excluded).

■ QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Sample of 5200 people who are representative of the French population aged 18 year or over. The quota method has ensured the representativeness of the sample : gender, age, profession of the interviewee, region and agglomeration category (mainland France only).

The interviews were held over the phone while the interviewees were at home (October 24 to November 13 2013).

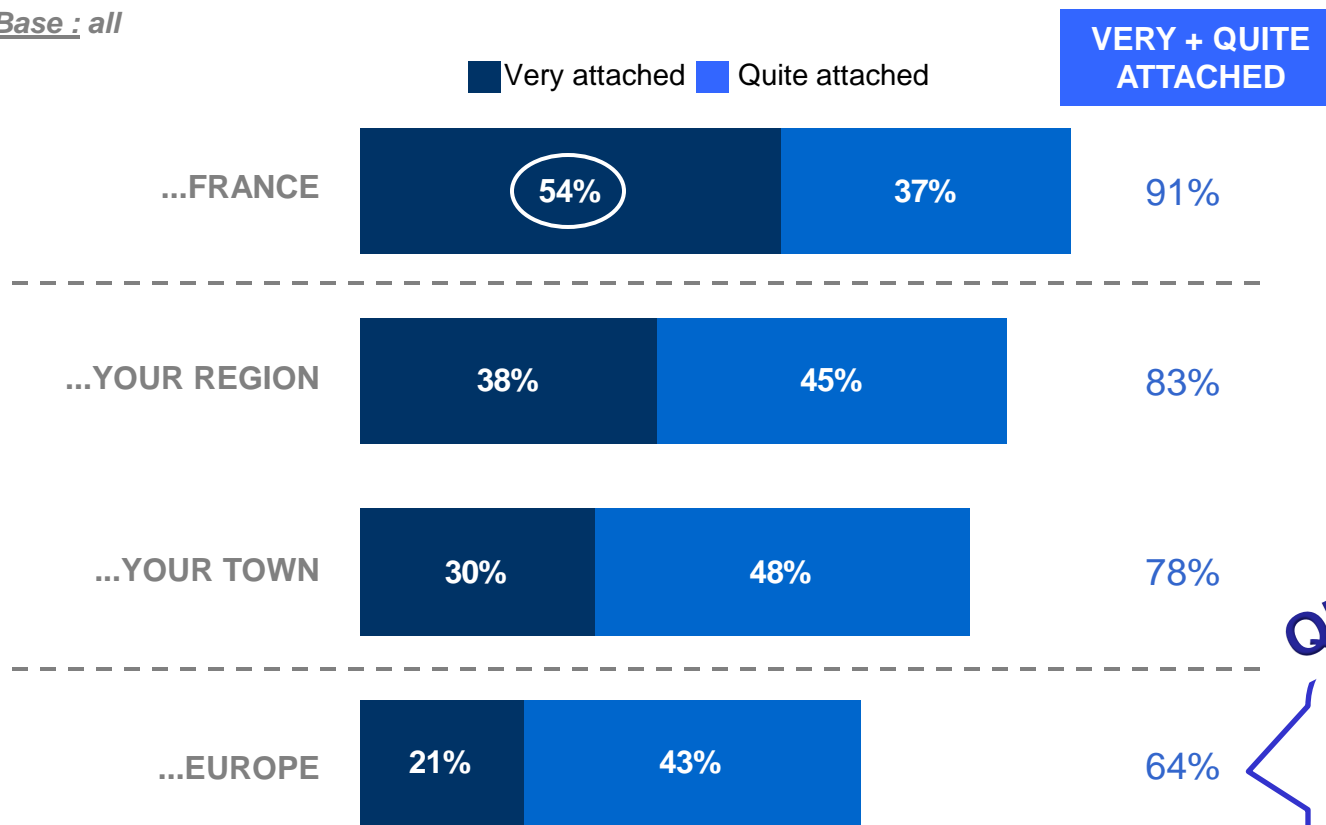
Within this sample, the weight of each region was considered to benefit from a sufficient number of interviews (200) for each geographical unit. Each region was then returned to its actual weight in the French population when the results were processed digitally .



A stable attachment to Europe

Q1. Would you say that you are very attached to, quite attached to, not very attached to or not at all attached to... ?

Base : all



* Not suggested item

QUALI

Despite national differences, a European “common core” (stories, values, common cultures) was identified.

The absence of border controls and the ease with which Europeans travel contribute to this sense of belonging.

WHEN THE REMINDERS OF THE 2008 STUDY ARE NOT SHOWN,
NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE IS TO ESTABLISH

A mixed interest in European issues

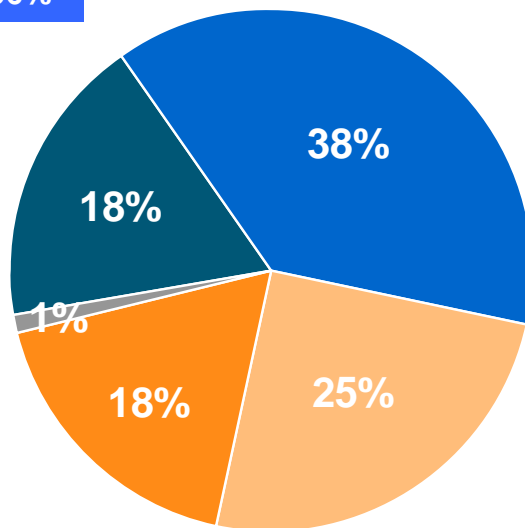
Q3. Would you say that you are very interested, quite interested, not very interested or not at all interested in European affairs?

Base : all

Very interested Quite interested Not very interested Not at all interested Don't know*

* Not suggested item

VERY + QUITE
INTERESTED : 56%



NOT VERY + NOT AT ALL
INTERESTED : 43%

QUALI

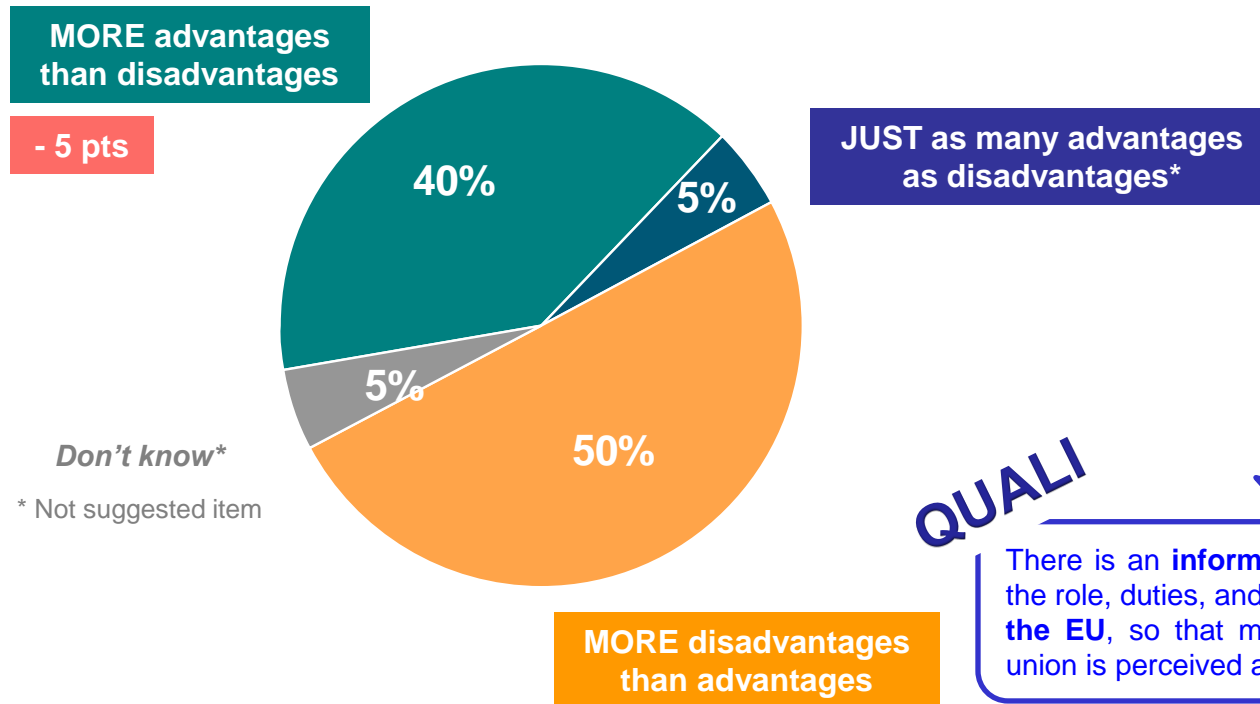
Despite an interest in European matters, **the disembodiment of Europe and its perceived remoteness are not conducive to a proactive information retrieval** : it must come directly to the citizen.



EU struggles to convince of its benefits

Q2. Do you think that belonging to the European Union has had for our country...

Base : all



QUALI

There is an **information request** on the role, duties, and **contributions of the EU**, so that membership to the union is perceived as more useful.

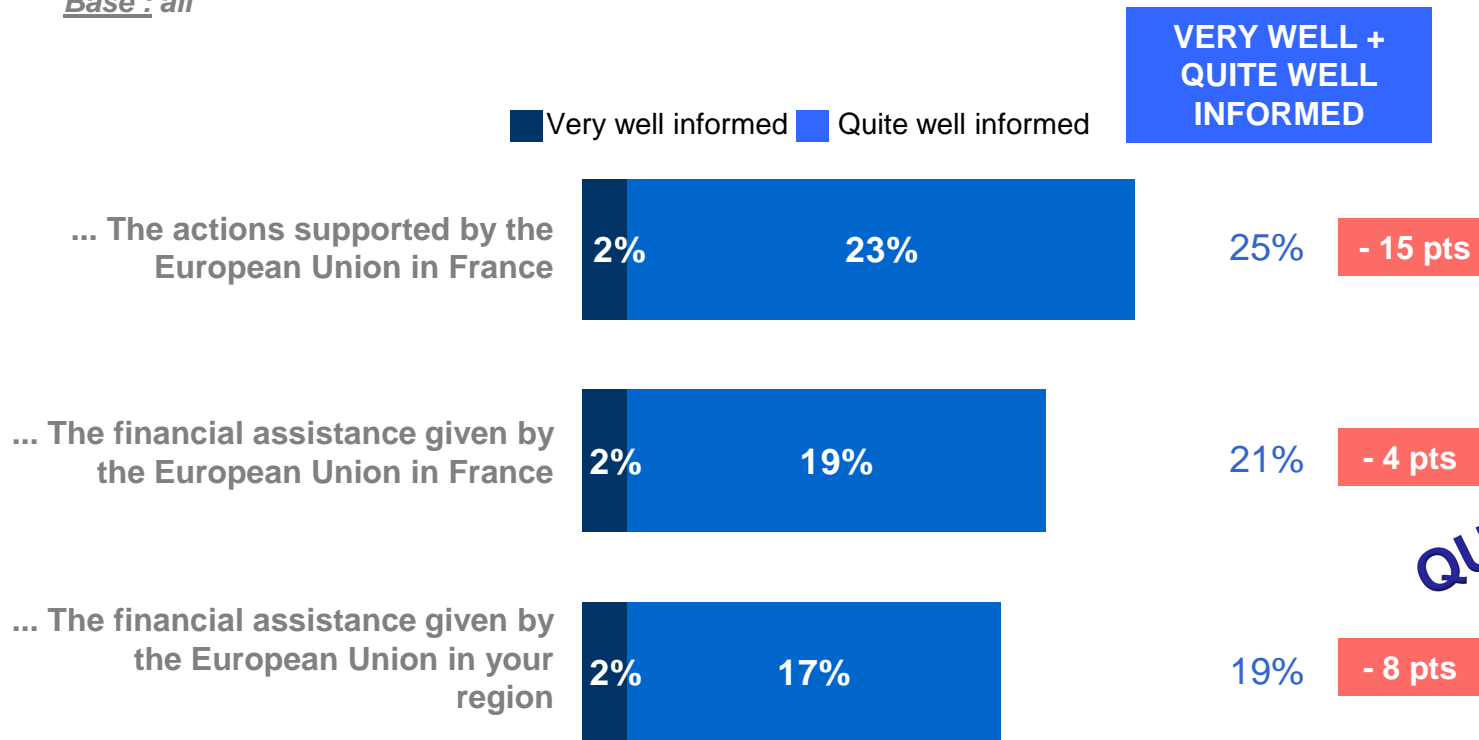
« We don't really understand what we gain by being European compared to be "only" French. It has been well explained at the beginning but forgotten afterwards. » (Montpellier).



A general decline on the feeling of information about the EU action

Q4. Would you say that you personally are very well informed, quite well informed, rather badly informed or very badly informed about...

Base : all



* Not suggested item

QUALI

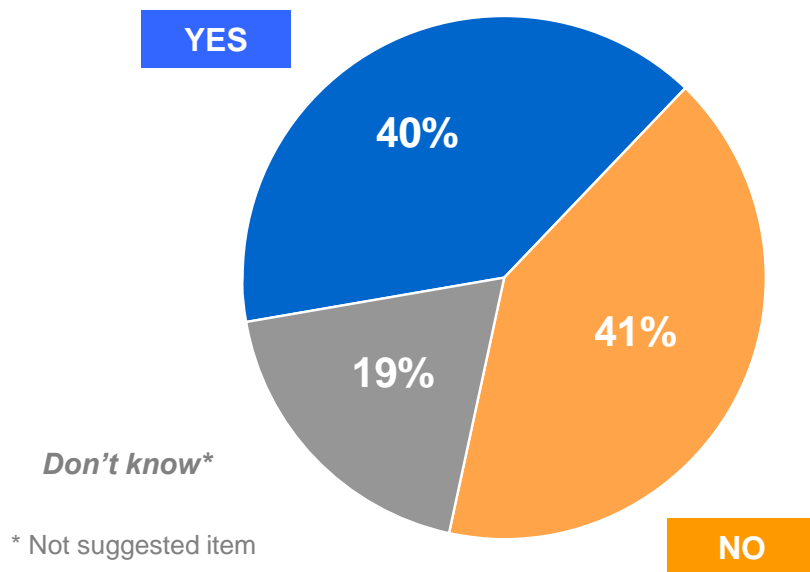
The principle of EU subsidies is well known.
But there is a **very limited knowledge of the types of aid and the financed projects** (exception: the Guadeloupe group)



Knowledge of regional projects funded by the EU is not widespread

Q9. Based on what you know, had some projects benefited from these European funds in your region ?

Base : all



QUALI

EU intervention, as it appeared in the examples of regional projects submitted to the participants, **was pleasantly surprising.**

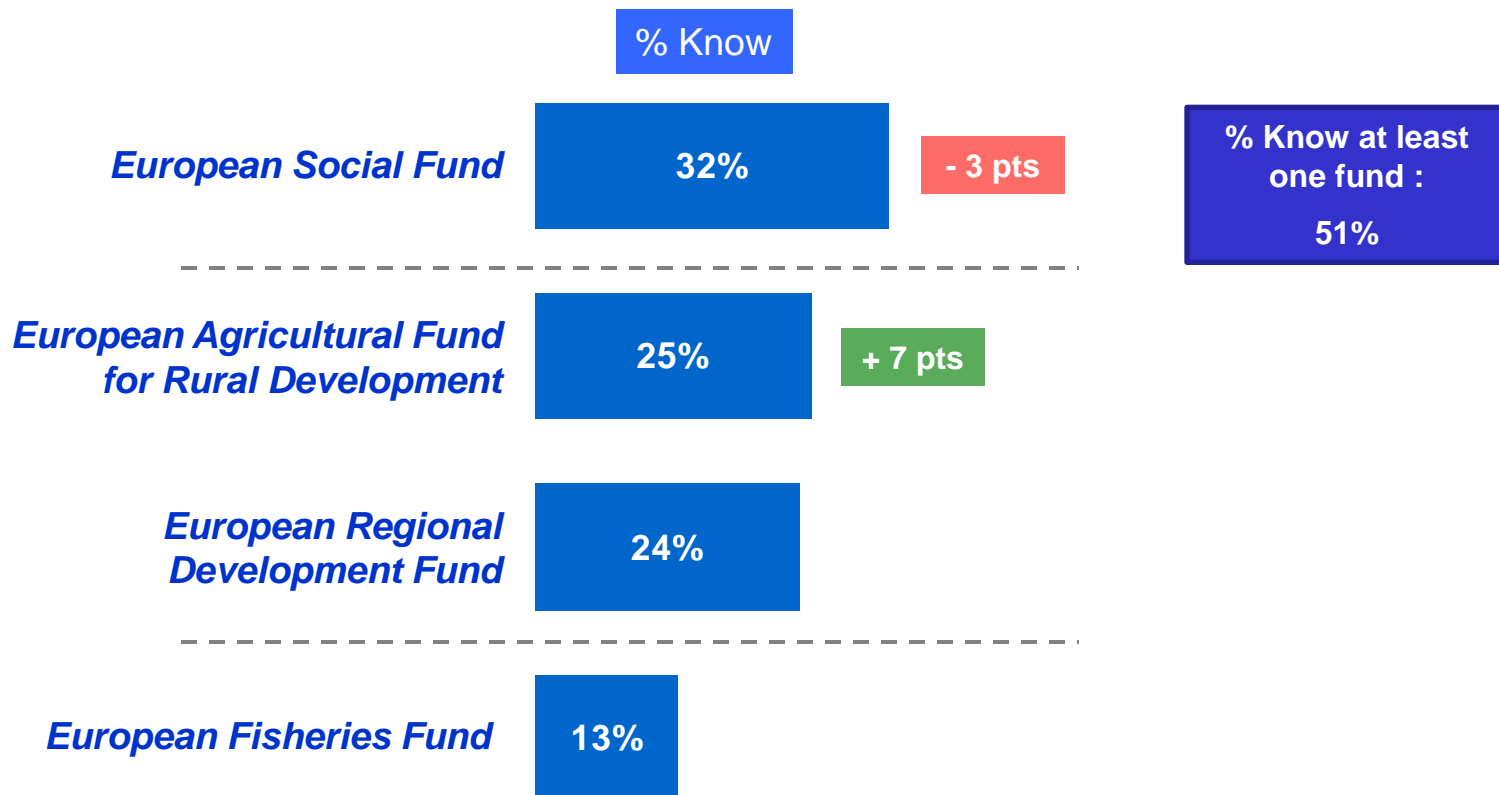
Participants did not suspect such variety in the fields of action of the EU.

« Today we can notice the EU intervention in the organic food labels, for example, or in the imports without additional taxes, but we didn't imagine EU intervention in things like that. »
(Montpellier)

Decline of the general knowledge of the EU funds, excepting the EAFRD, which progresses

Q5. Do you personally know, even just by name... ?

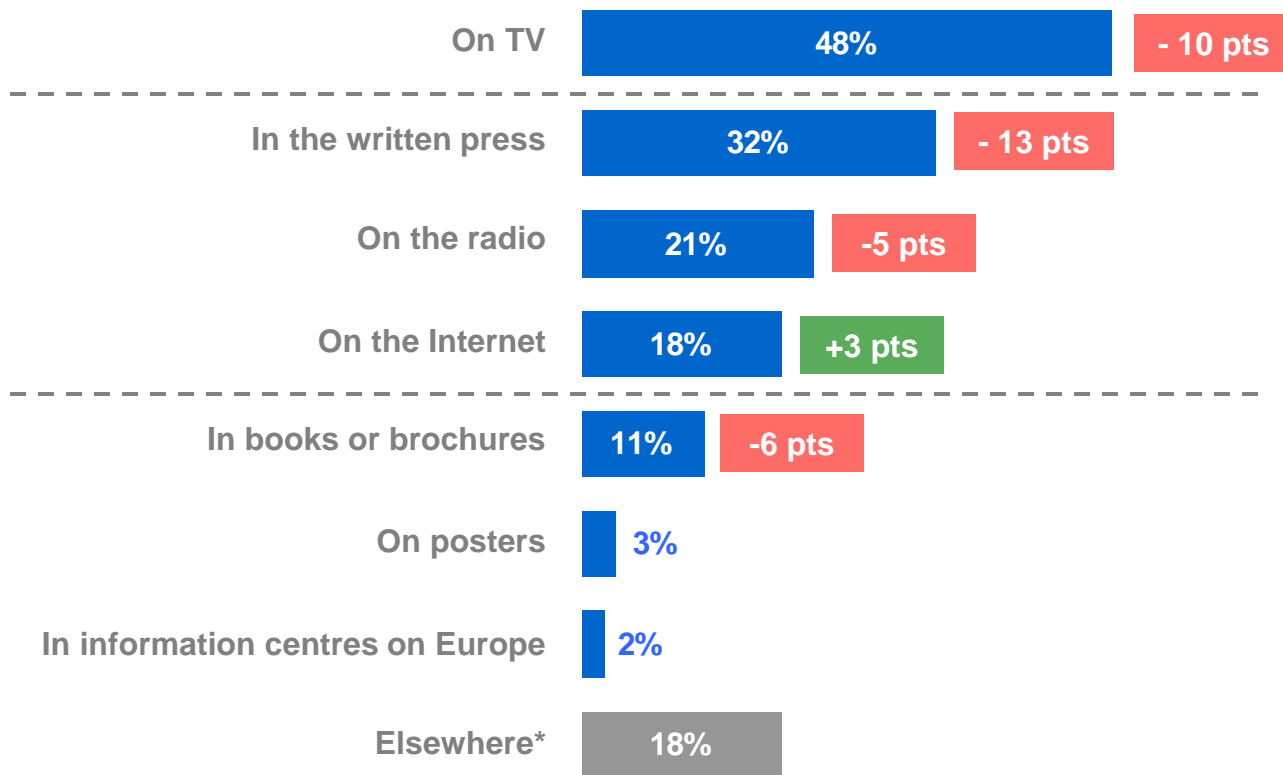
Base : all



Knowledge of the EU Funds further driven by Internet. Traditional media declined in relation to 2008.

Q6. You have said that you know, albeit only by name, one or more of the European funds mentioned earlier. Where did you hear about the funds ? *Two choices*

Base : people who know at least one fund

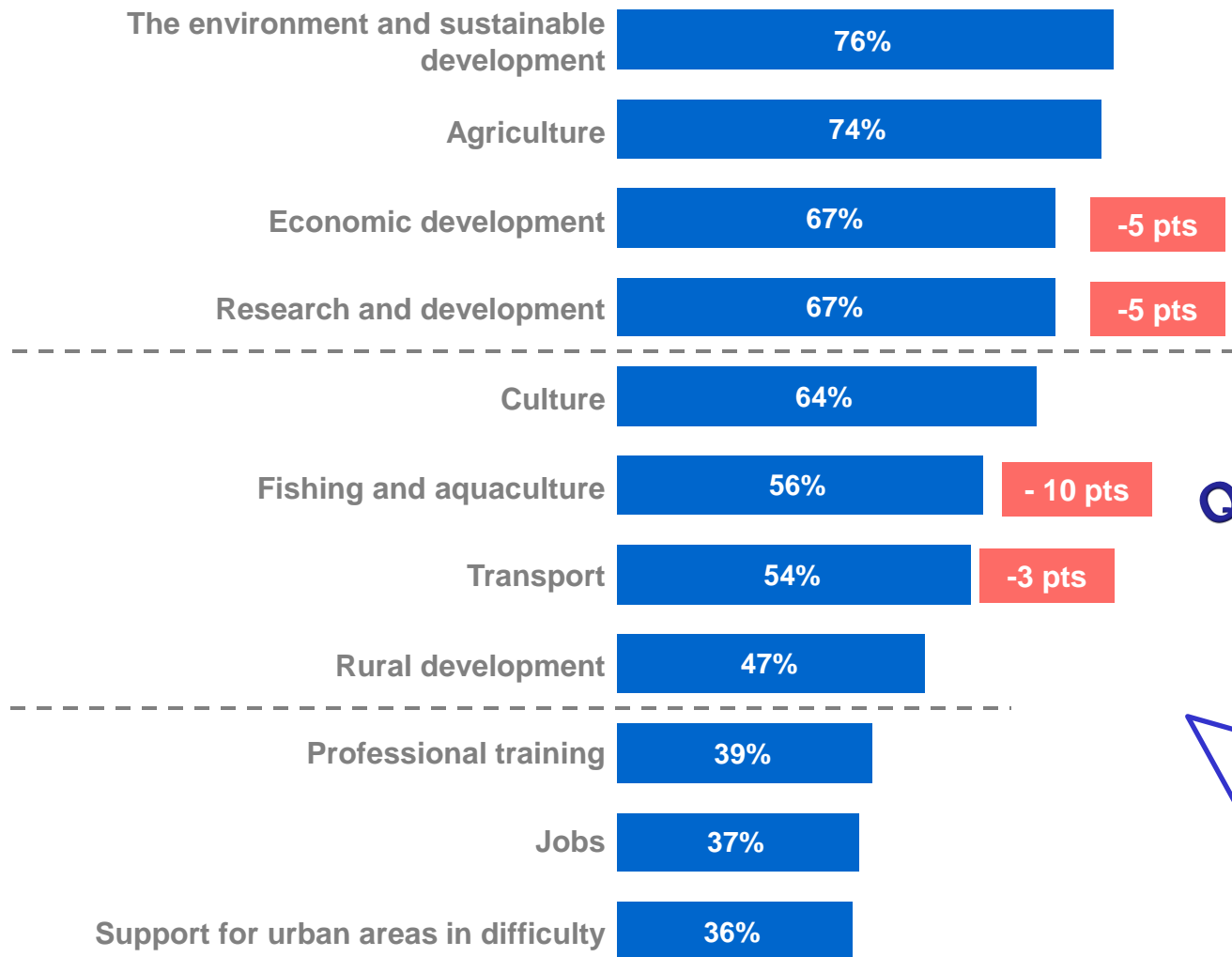


* Not suggested item

LH2 A very fragmented knowledge of sectors of intervention

Q7. Do you think that the European Union financially intervenes in the following areas in France ?

Base : all



QUALI

A fairly limited knowledge of the extent of Europe's intervention areas.

Agriculture, research and infrastructure, mostly quoted intervention areas.

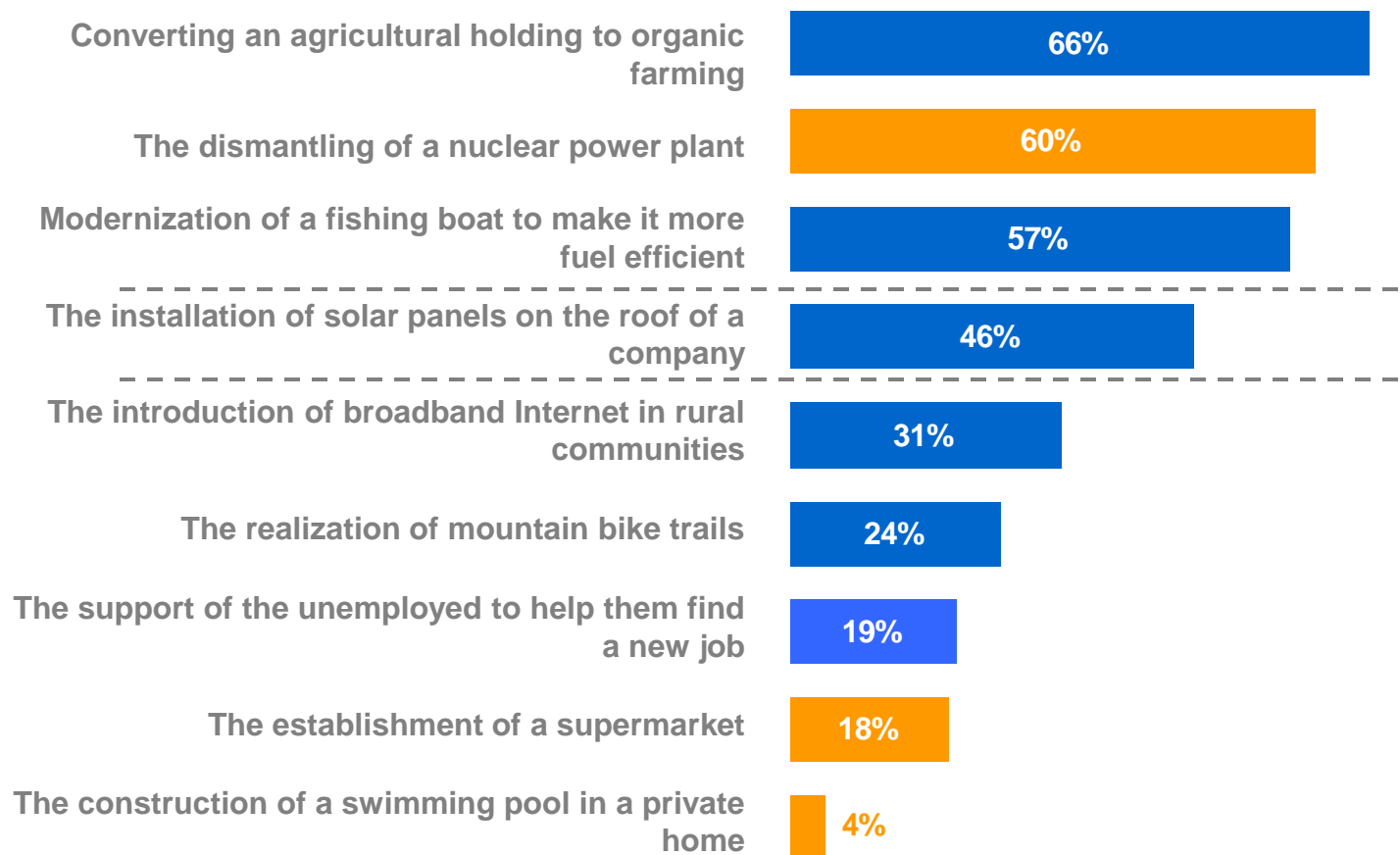
Employment and training, less spontaneously mentioned areas.



Some projects are poorly identified as eligible for EU aid

Q11. We will now give examples of projects. For each, tell if you think the European Union funds them.

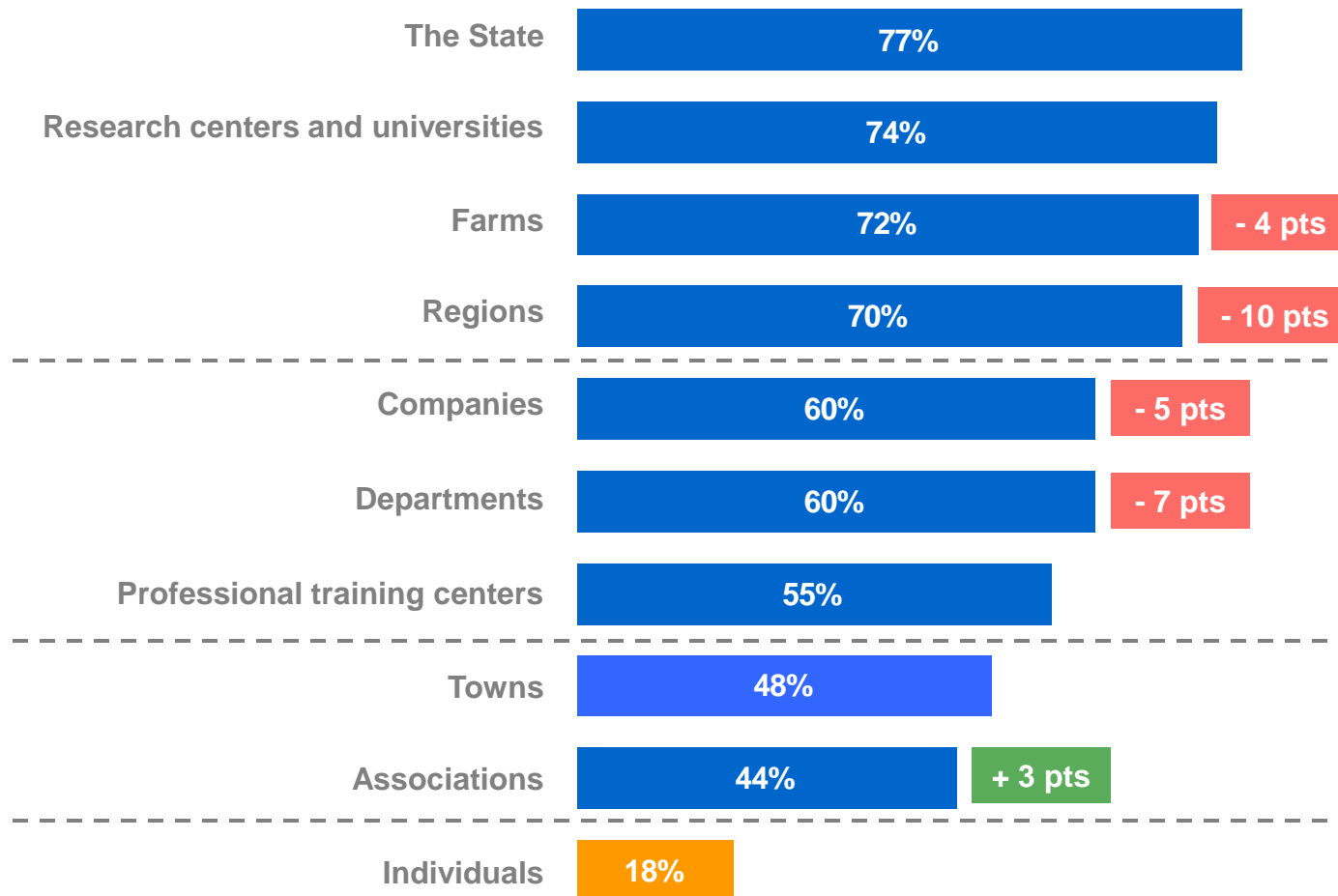
Base : all



A minor legibility of the beneficiaries of EU funding

Q8. In your opinion, do the following structures benefit from or could they benefit from these European funds ?

Base : all

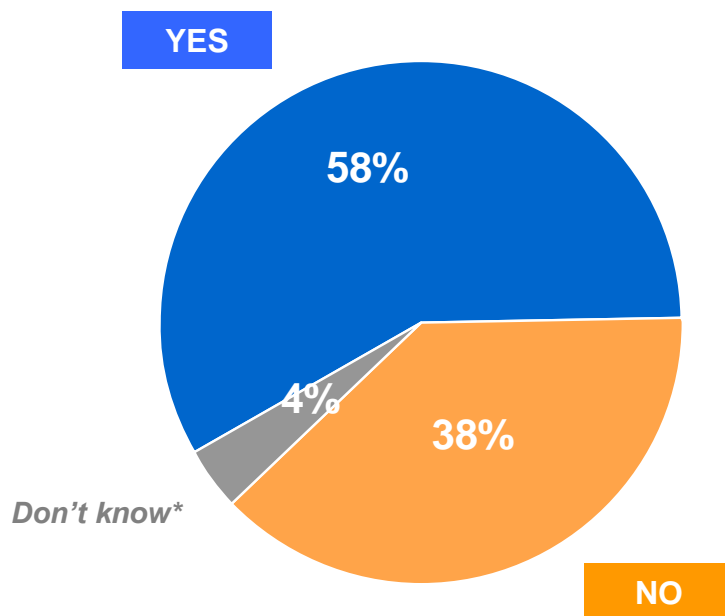




Mixed feelings regarding the impact of EU funds on daily life

Q10. Do you think that European Funds finance operations and projects that may have an impact on your daily life?

Base : all



QUALI

For Guadeloupians, there is a need of a clearer understanding of the functioning of European intervention and a stronger perception of the EU Funding impact in their everyday life.

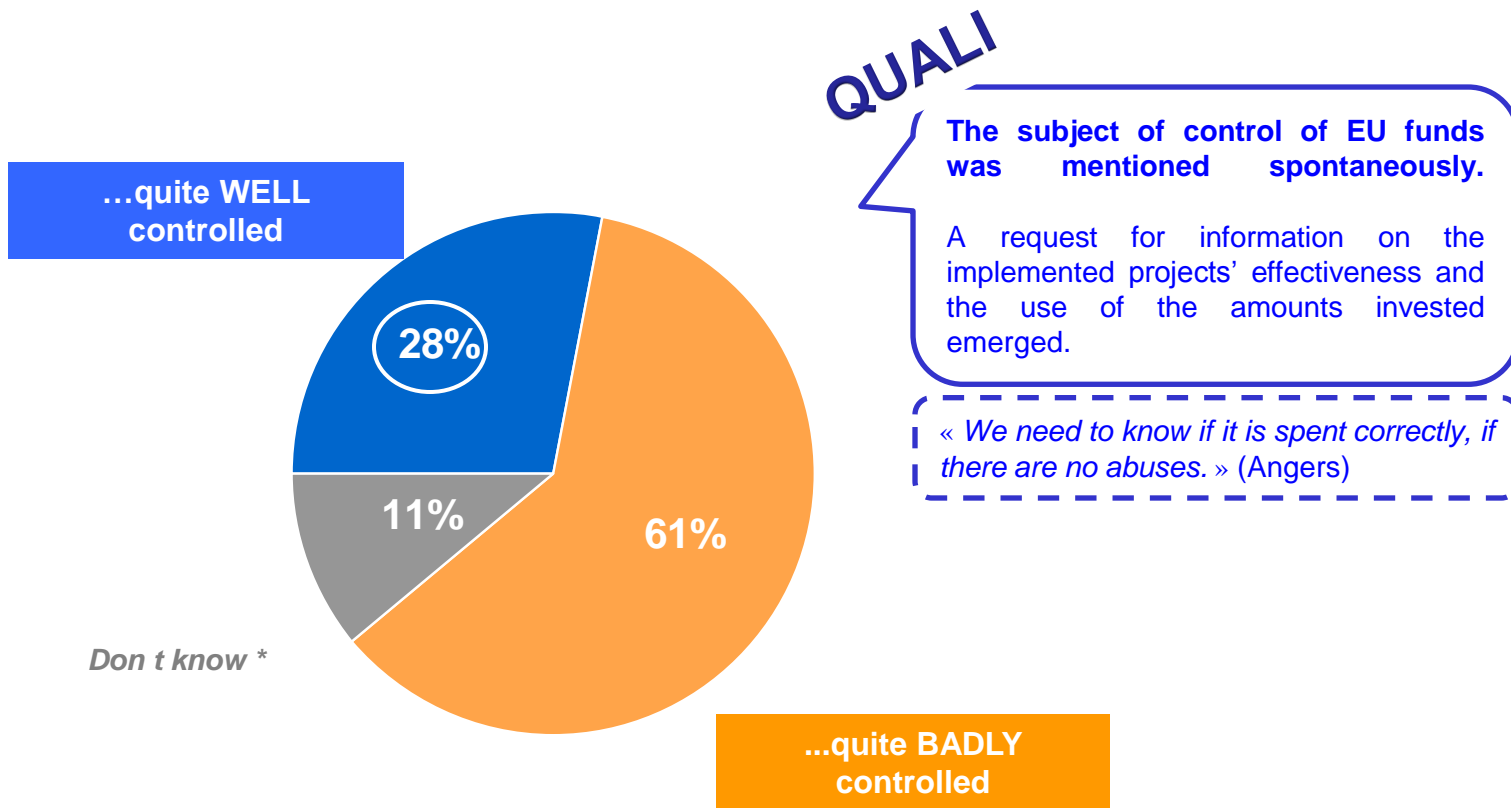
« Europe intervenes a lot in our everyday life. There is a financial contribution from Europe that contributes to boost certain things in Guadeloupe. » (Guadeloupe).

* Item was not suggested.

A lack of credibility of the EU capacity to control these funds

Q12. Do you think the European funding is ... ?

Base : all



* Not suggested item

	National results	Evolution 2008-2013	Mainland France results	Overseas regions results
<i>Respondents number</i>	5202		4402	800
Attachment to Europe (% Very attached + Quite attached)	64%	- 1 point	64%	52%
Opinion regarding EU membership (% More advantages than disadvantages)	40%	- 5 points	40%	43%
Interest for European issues (% Very interested + Quite interested)	56%	-	56%	55%
Sense of information on regional level projects supported by the EU (% Very well informed + Quite well informed)	19%	- 8 points	19%	39%
Knowledge of Europeans funds (% Know at least one fund)	51%	- 4 points	51%	64%
Knowledge of projects financed by European funds in region (% Yes)	40%	-	39%	60%
Impact of actions supported by the Fund on everyday life (% Yes)	58%	-	57%	65%

→ AN AMBIVALENT PUBLIC OPINION TOWARDS EUROPE:

- **The European construction is accepted**, even desired...
- ... but in France **there is a certain defiance towards the EU as an institution.**

→ THEREBY, THE MAIN INDICATORS OF THE SURVEY ARE DROPPING COMPARED TO 2008 :

- **benefits of joining the EU are less perceived ;**
- **a withdrawal in the sense of information regarding the EU action ;**
- **the acquaintance of European funds and the terms of their deployment is stagnating or deteriorating.**

→ COMMUNICATION APPROACH IDENTIFIED IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF THE EU

- **emphasize the potential impact of the EU action, through concrete achievements** especially at the local level, in everyday life of the French ;
- **communicate about projects related to major concerns** of French people, focusing primarily on employment ;
- secondly, reassure about the control and efficient use of the EU funding.