

# Attitude towards migration in the European Union, Evidence from the European Social Survey

- The share of natives with positive attitudes towards migration increased between 2002 and 2020 in the European Union.
- More people in the European Union are willing to accept immigrants of the same race and from within the European Union than immigrants of a different race from poorer countries outside Europe.
- In most European Union countries, the acceptance of immigrants increased during the last two decades.
- Individuals' attitudes towards migration strongly depend on their education while their gender does not play a role.
- On average, younger individuals tend to be more open towards the migration of people of different races.

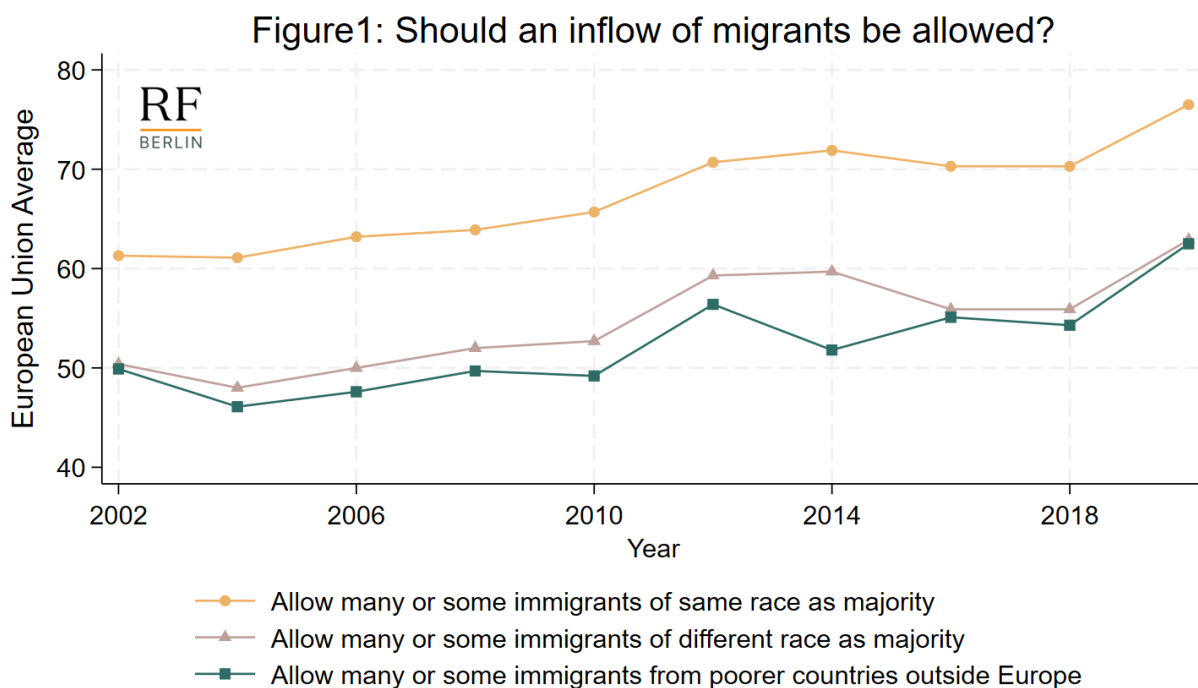


Figure 1 illustrates the evolution of attitudes within the European Union towards different immigrant groups from 2002 to 2020. Acceptance of immigrants of the same race as the majority increased significantly, peaking around 2012 and remaining relatively high thereafter. In contrast, approval of immigrants of a different race and those from poorer non-European countries remained generally lower, despite similar fluctuation patterns over time for all groups. From 2018 to 2020, acceptance of all immigrant groups strongly increased. Further waves of the European Social Survey will determine if this increase indicates a new trend or a temporary fluctuation. Figures 2, 3 and 4 concentrate on the acceptance of immigrants of a different race or ethnic group from the majority, as this specific aspect raises

important questions about societal integration and the challenges of multiculturalism within Europe.

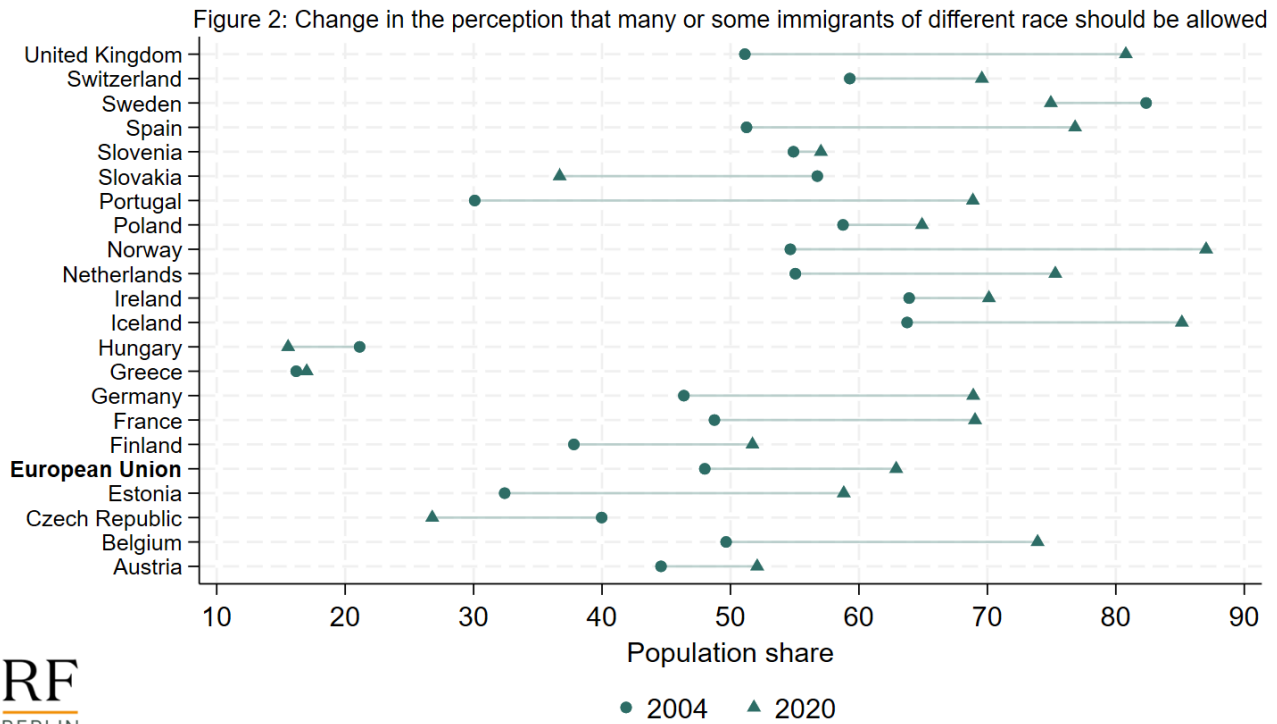
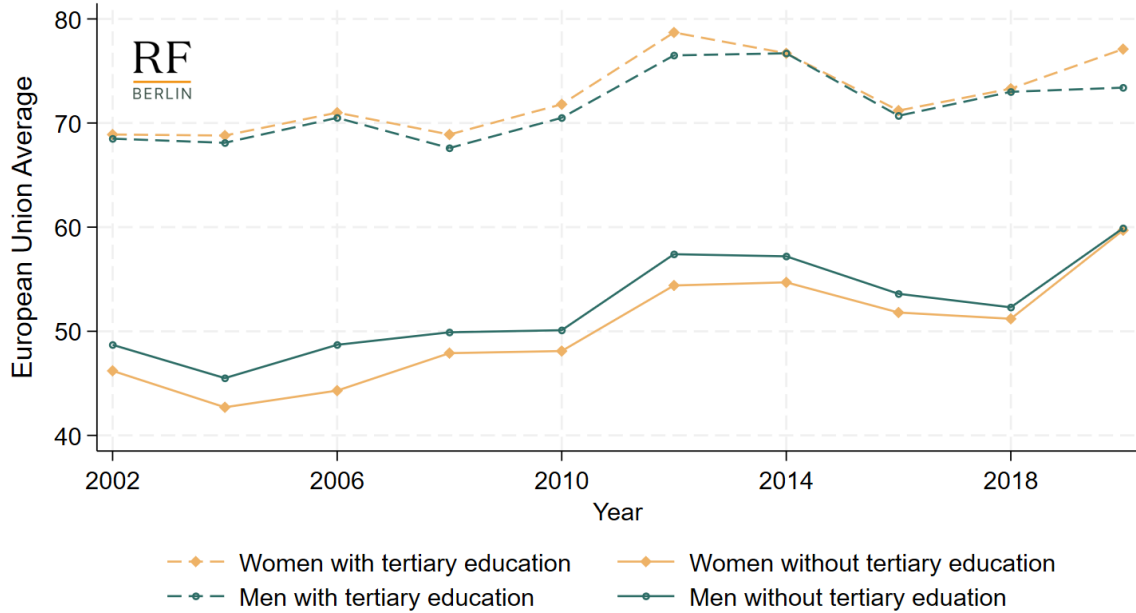


Figure 2 provides a more nuanced view of the attitudes towards migration across Europe, showing changes over time for each country that participated in the ESS in the years 2004 and 2020. The horizontal axis displays the population share in favour of allowing some or many immigrants from a different race than the native population. Most countries exhibit positive changes over the last two decades while others stay nearly unchanged or exhibit negative changes. Portugal, the United Kingdom, and Norway show the largest positive changes, with the 2020 triangles far to the right of the 2004 circles. Some countries, like Slovenia and Greece, show minimal changes, indicating stable perceptions over the years. Sweden, Slovakia, Hungary, and the Czech Republic show decreased acceptance of immigrants, with 2020 triangles on the left of the 2004 circles. Most countries exhibit increasingly positive attitudes towards migration over the last two decades. The European Union average also trends upward, from around 48% in 2004 to around 63% in 2020.

Figure 3: Allow many or some immigrants of different race as majority



Acceptance of immigrants of different races as the majority is heterogeneous across distinct groups. In Figure 3 we analyse women with tertiary education, women without tertiary education, men with tertiary education, and men without tertiary education. Notably, the acceptance levels between men and women are relatively similar over time. However, there is a significant difference when it comes to education: individuals with tertiary education, both men and women, consistently show higher acceptance rates compared to those without completed tertiary education. This highlights that education is a crucial factor influencing attitudes towards migration.

Figure 4: Allow many or some immigrants of different race as majority

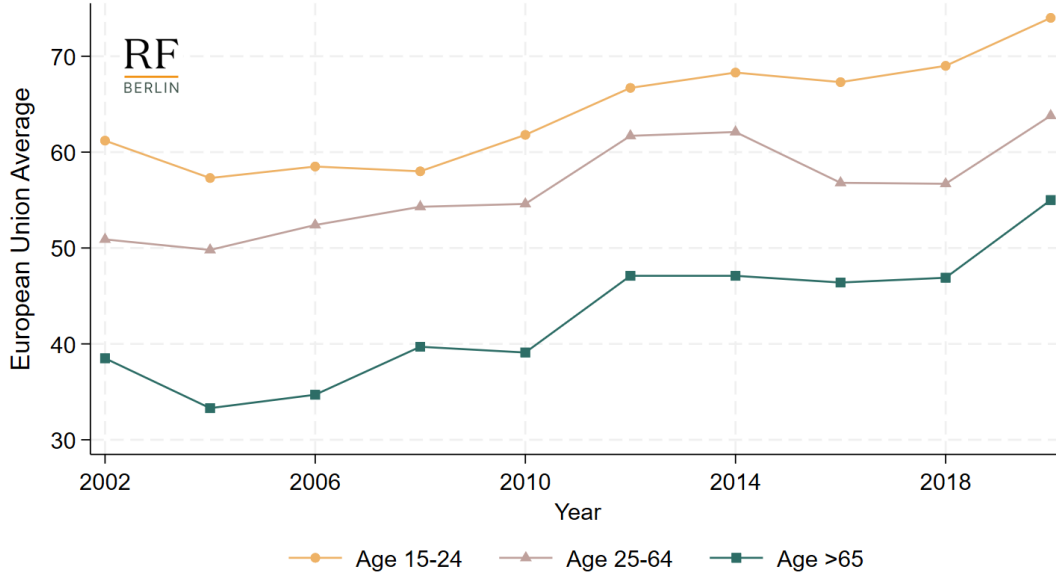


Figure 4 examines the attitudes towards immigration of different age groups: 15-24 (typically in education), 25-64 (working age), and 65+ (usually retired). The younger groups (15-24 and 25-64) consistently favour accepting immigrants more than the older group. All age groups, however, show a noticeable increase in acceptance, particularly after 2010.