



## **Flash Eurobarometer 363**

# **HOW COMPANIES INFLUENCE OUR SOCIETY: CITIZENS' VIEW**

## **SUMMARY**

Fieldwork: October-November 2012

Publication: April 2013

This survey has been requested by the European Commission, Directorate-General Enterprise and Industry and co-ordinated by Directorate-General for Communication.

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

**Flash Eurobarometer 363 - TNS Political & Social**

**Flash Eurobarometer 363**

**How Companies Influence Our Society:  
Citizens' View**

Conducted by TNS Political & Social at the request of  
the European Commission,  
Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry

Survey co-ordinated by the European Commission,  
Directorate-General for Communication  
(DG COMM "Research and Speechwriting" Unit)

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## INTRODUCTION

This summary presents the results of the Flash Eurobarometer survey "How companies influence our society: citizens' view", carried out in October and November 2012. This survey was designed to investigate the views of Europeans and selected other nationalities about the influence companies have on society. In particular the survey investigated:

- Levels of interest and information about what companies do to behave responsibly towards society;
- Perceptions of the efforts companies in different sizes and different sectors make to behave in a socially responsible way;
- Perceptions of the overall influence of companies on society - is it positive or negative;
- Who should take the lead in influencing companies to behave in a more responsible way towards society.

This survey was carried out by TNS Opinion & Social network in the 27 Member States of the European Union and in Croatia, Israel, Turkey, Brazil, the United States, China and India between 22<sup>nd</sup> October and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2012. Over 32,000 respondents from different social and demographic groups were interviewed via telephone (except for India, where the interviews were conducted face-to-face) in their mother tongue on behalf of Directorate-General Enterprise and Industry. The methodology used is that of Eurobarometer surveys as carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication ("Research and Speechwriting" Unit)<sup>1</sup>. A technical note on the manner in which interviews were conducted by the Institutes within the TNS Political & Social network is appended as an annex to this report. Also included are the interview methods and confidence intervals<sup>2</sup>.

\* \* \* \* \*

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*The Eurobarometer web site can be consulted at the following address:*

*[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)*

*We would like to take the opportunity to thank all the respondents across the continent who gave their time to take part in this survey.*

*Without their active participation, this study would not have been possible.*

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> The results tables are included in the annex. It should be noted that the total of the percentages in the tables of this report may exceed 100% when the respondent has the possibility of giving several answers to the question.

Note: In this report, countries are referred to by their official abbreviation. The abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

ABBREVIATIONS			
BE	Belgium	LV	Latvia
CZ	Czech Republic	LU	Luxembourg
BG	Bulgaria	HU	Hungary
DK	Denmark	MT	Malta
DE	Germany	NL	The Netherlands
EE	Estonia	AT	Austria
EL	Greece	PL	Poland
ES	Spain	PT	Portugal
FR	France	RO	Romania
IE	Ireland	SI	Slovenia
IT	Italy	SK	Slovakia
CY	Republic of Cyprus*	FI	Finland
LT	Lithuania	SE	Sweden
		UK	The United Kingdom
HR	Croatia	EU27	European Union – 27 Member States
TR	Turkey		
IL	Israel		
BR	Brazil		
US	The United States		
IN	India		

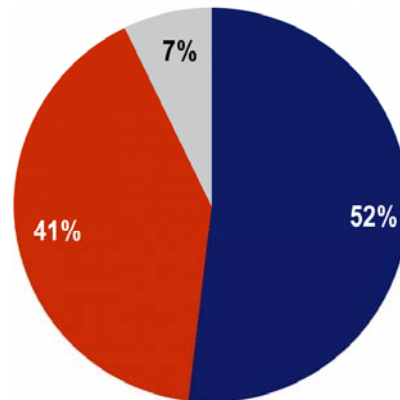
\* Cyprus as a whole is one of the 27 European Union Member States. However, the 'acquis communautaire' has been suspended in the part of the country which is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews carried out in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are included in the 'CY' category and in the EU27 average.

## 1. CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE OVERALL INFLUENCE OF COMPANIES ON SOCIETY

Just over half of European citizens believe that companies have a positive influence on society, while more than 4 out of 10 believe companies have a negative influence. Europeans are more sceptical about the influence of companies than citizens from other major economies.

Europeans are divided about whether the overall influence of companies is positive or negative - 52% think that the overall influence of companies on society is positive, while 41% think it is negative.

Q4. Do you think that the overall influence of companies on society in (OUR COUNTRY) is very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative or very negative?

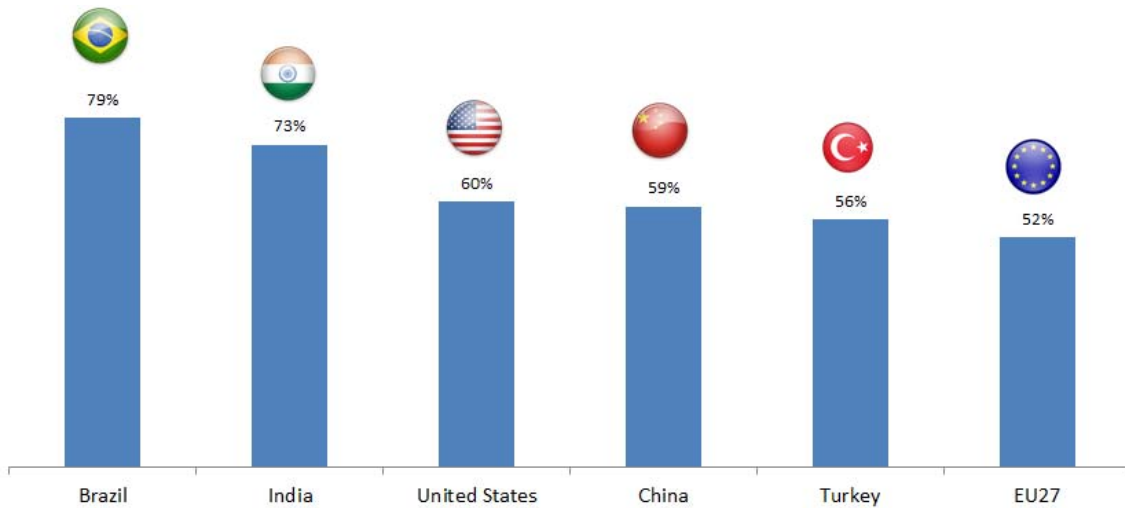


- Total 'Positive'
- Total 'Negative'
- Don't know

EU27

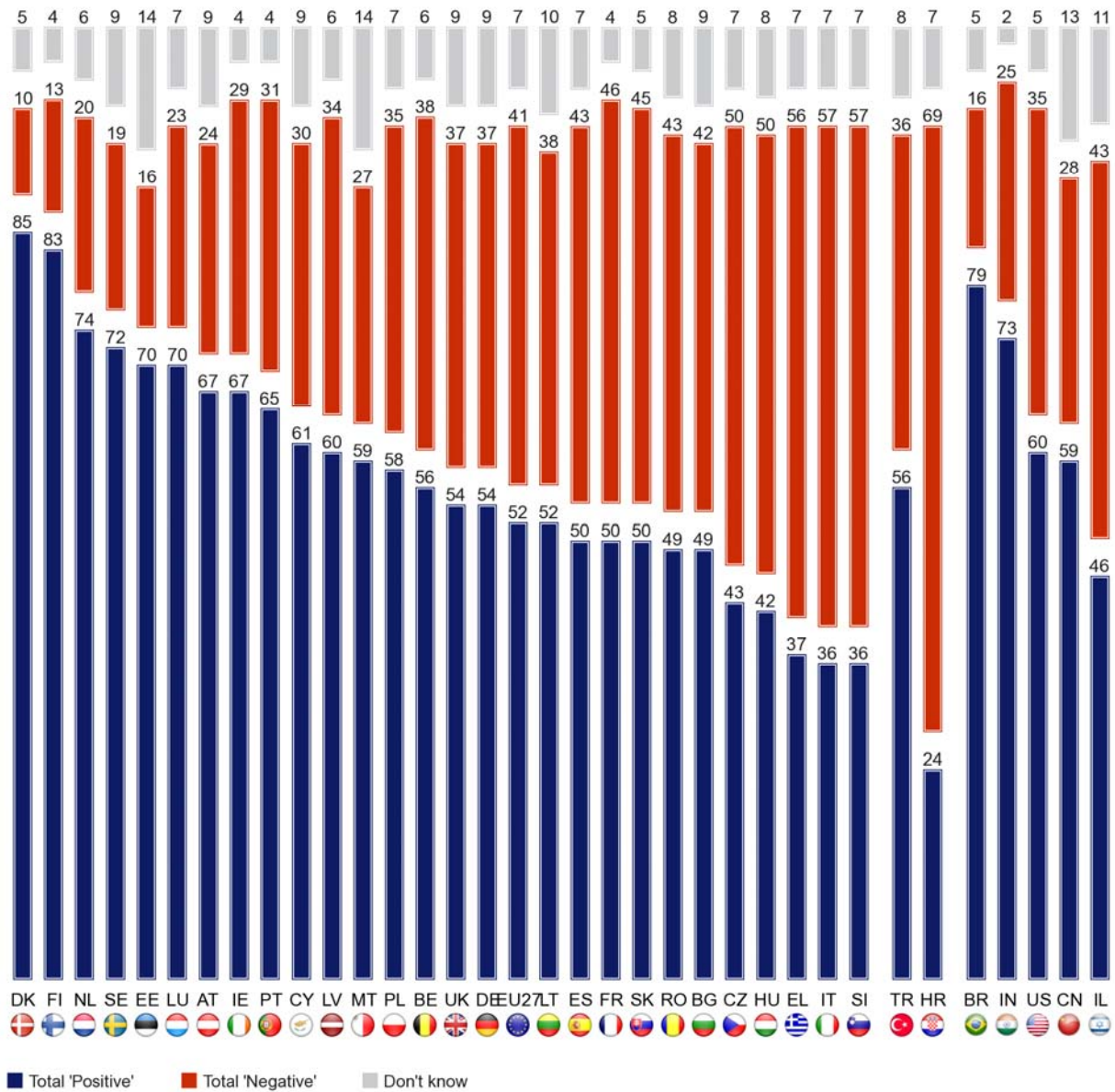
When compared with the EU, respondents living in non-European countries are much more likely to be positive about the overall influence of companies on society. 79% of Brazilian respondents think that companies have a positive influence on society, followed by just under three quarters of Indian respondents and around 60% of respondents in the US and China.

#### OVERALL INFLUENCE OF COMPANIES ON SOCIETY – TOTAL 'POSITIVE'



Within the EU, respondents in Denmark and Finland are much more positive about the overall influence of companies in society than the European average, with 85% and 83% respectively thinking this way. There is, however a wide diversity of views across countries. Fewer than four in ten Slovenian (36%), Italian (36%) and Greek respondents (37%) think the same way.

Q4. Do you think that the overall influence of companies on society in (OUR COUNTRY) is very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative or very negative?

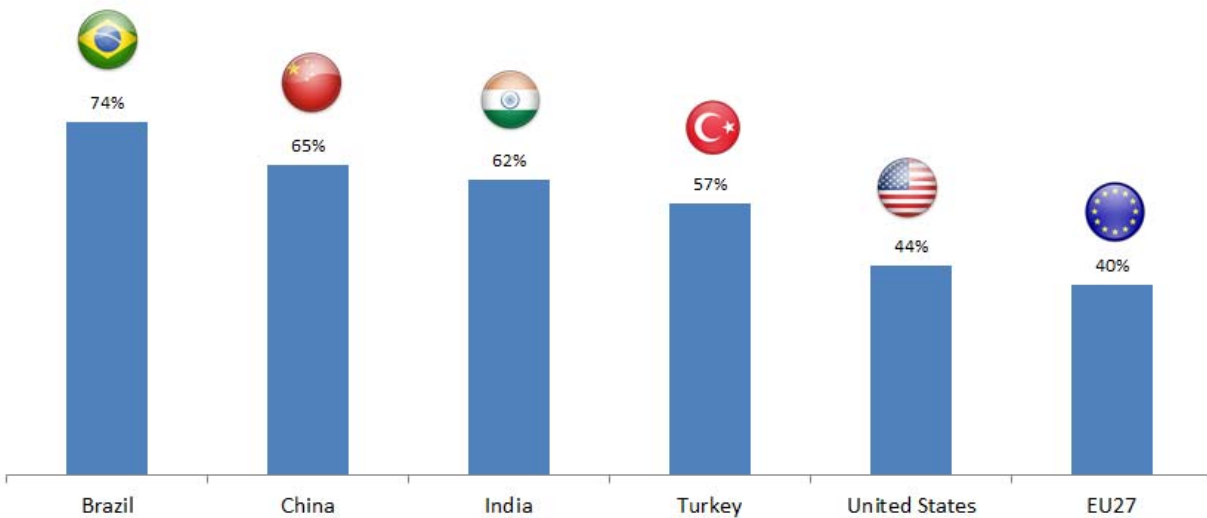




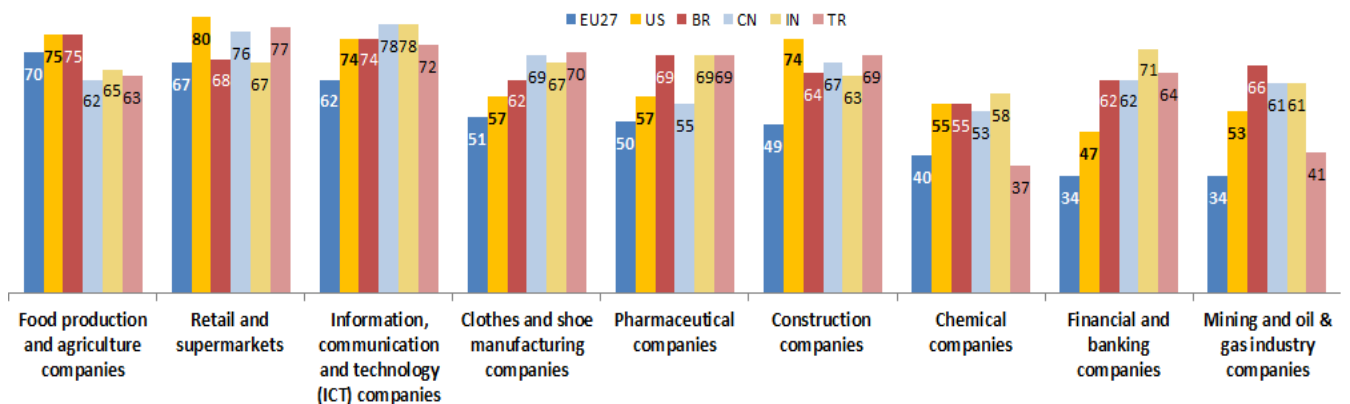
In the European Union, **opinion is divided as to whether companies pay more or less attention to their influence on society than they did 10 years ago**: 40% of Europeans say they pay more attention, while 39% say they pay less attention.

Respondents in non-European countries are generally more optimistic about how much attention companies pay to their influence on society, with more than half in Brazil (74%), China (65%), India (62%) and Turkey (57%) saying companies pay more attention than 10 years ago.

CHANGE OF THE COMPANIES’ ATTENTION TO THEIR INFLUENCE OVER SOCIETY IN 10 YEARS – TOTAL ‘MORE’



Food production and agriculture companies (70%), and retail companies and supermarkets (67%), are the most likely to be seen as making efforts to behave in a responsible way towards society by Europeans. Finance and banking, and mining, oil and gas companies are the least likely to be seen as making these efforts (both 34%).



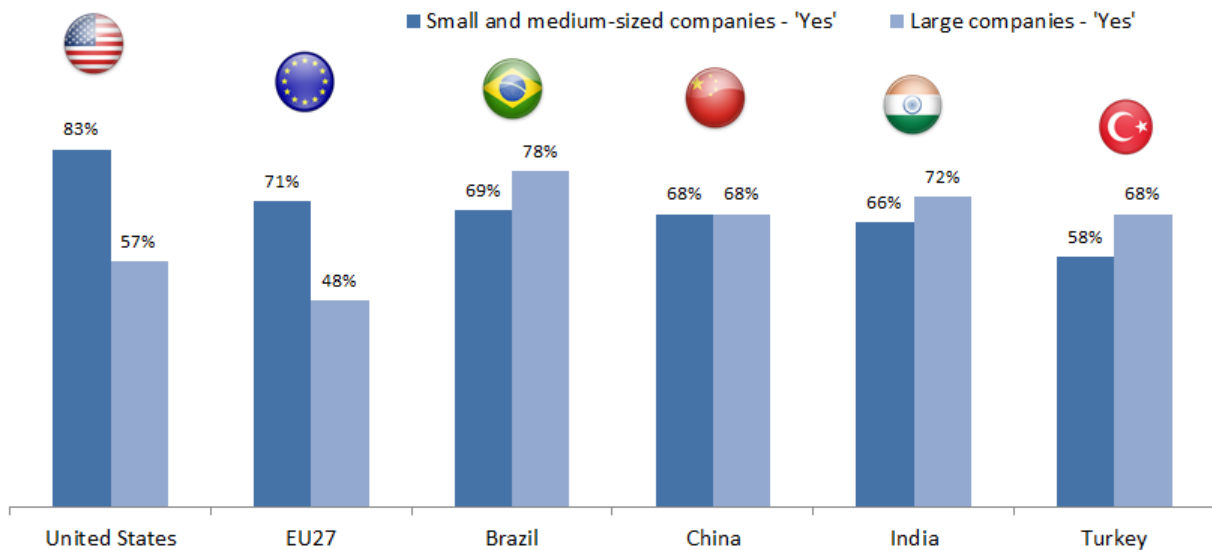
## 2. SMALL AND MEDIUM SIZED COMPANIES VS. LARGE COMPANIES

**Europeans are more likely to think small and medium sized companies make efforts to behave responsibly compared to large companies.**

European respondents are much more likely to say that small and medium sized companies (71%), rather than large companies (48%), make efforts to behave in socially responsible ways.

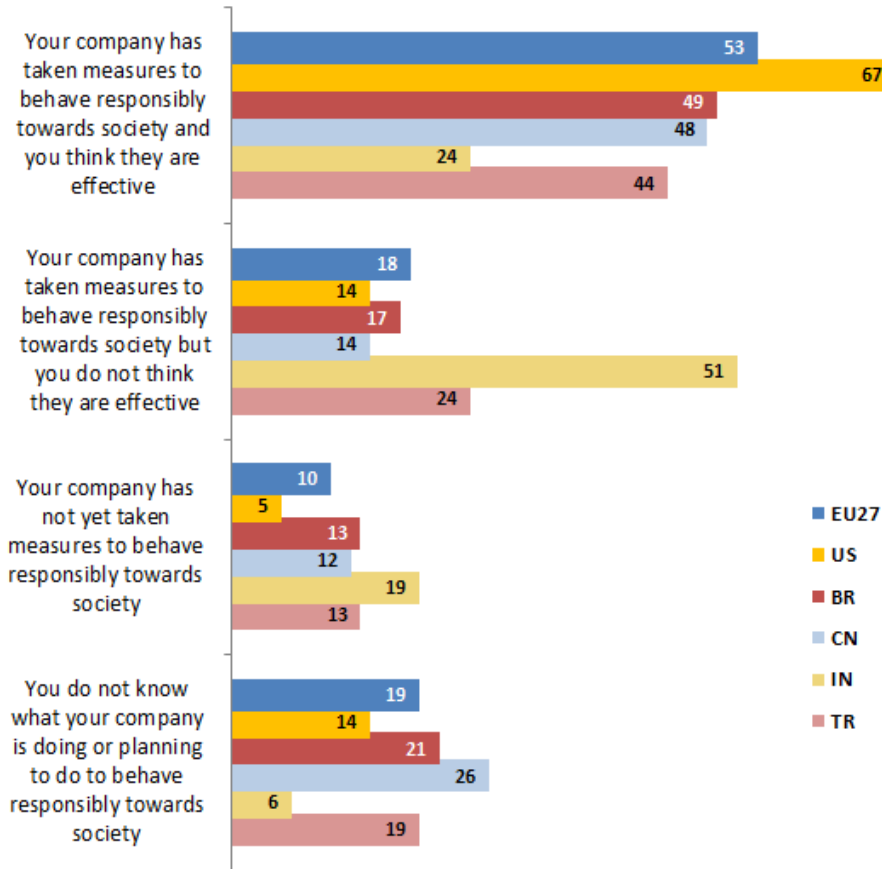
Respondents living in the EU and the US are the only ones who are more likely to think that small and medium companies are making efforts to behave responsibly towards society compared to large companies. In Brazil, India and Turkey the situation is reversed, with respondents more likely to say that large companies are making these efforts. In China the proportions for both large and small/medium companies are the same (68%).

### THE SIZE OF THE COMPANY AND THE EFFORTS MADE TO BEHAVE RESPONSIBLY TOWARDS SOCIETY



More than half of Europeans who work at a company say their company has taken measures they consider effective to behave in a socially responsible way (53%), although respondents in the US are the most likely to say this (67%).

**Q9. Which of the following statements best apply to the company you are working for?**  
-in %



Base: 37% from the total number of respondents  
(Those who work for a company)

### 3. HOW INFORMED DO CITIZENS FEEL ABOUT WHAT COMPANIES DO TO BEHAVE RESPONSIBLY? AND ARE THEY INTERESTED?

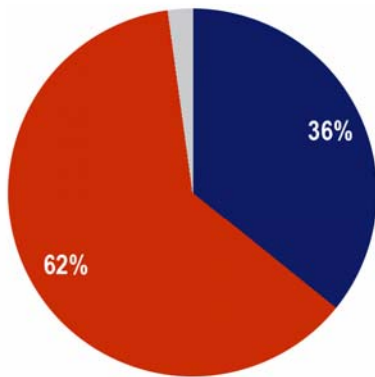
**There is an information gap in Europe: Although 79% say they are interested in what companies do to behave in a responsible way, only 36% say they feel informed in this area.**

Just over one third of Europeans (36%) say they feel informed about what companies do with regard to socially responsible behaviour whereas 62% say that they do not feel informed.

However, this does not mean Europeans are not interested - 79% say they are interested in what companies do to behave in a responsible way towards society. Respondents in the US are even more likely to be interested (87%).

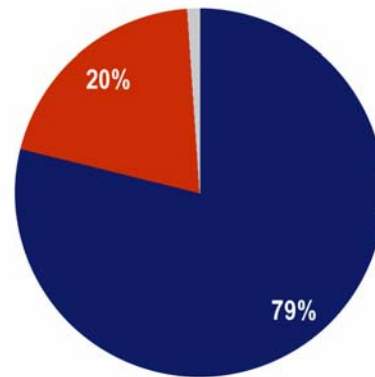
Q2. Do you feel very well informed, fairly well informed, not very well informed or not at all informed about what companies do to behave responsibly towards society in (OUR COUNTRY)?

Q3. Are you very interested, fairly interested, not very interested or not interested at all in what companies do to behave responsibly towards society in (OUR COUNTRY)?



● Total 'Informed'  
● Total 'Not informed'  
● Don't know

EU27









● Total 'Interested'  
● Total 'Not interested'  
● Don't know

EU27

When we combine information and interest, we see that almost one half (47%) say they do not feel informed about what companies do to behave in a socially responsible way, but that they are interested in this information. This compares to China and Turkey where respectively only 10% and 6% say that they do not feel informed about what companies do in this area but that they are interested in this information.

Information and interest about what what companies do to behave responsibly towards society in (OUR COUNTRY)

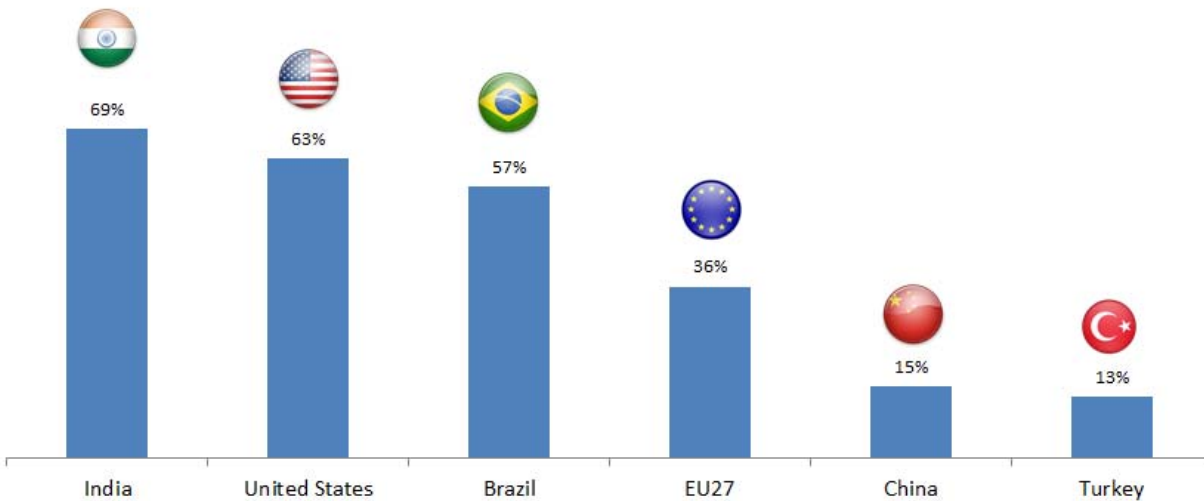
	Interested and informed	Interested but not informed	Not interested but informed	Not interested and not informed
 EU27	31%	47%	4%	15%
 TR	6%	26%	7%	57%
 US	58%	28%	5%	7%
 CN	10%	21%	5%	58%
 IN	63%	13%	5%	17%
 BR	50%	23%	7%	19%

<b>Highest percentage per country</b>	<i>Lowest percentage per country</i>
Highest percentage per item	Lowest percentage per item

Respondents in India (69%), the US (63%) and Brazil (57%) are more likely to feel informed about what companies do to behave in a socially responsible way than those in the EU (36%).

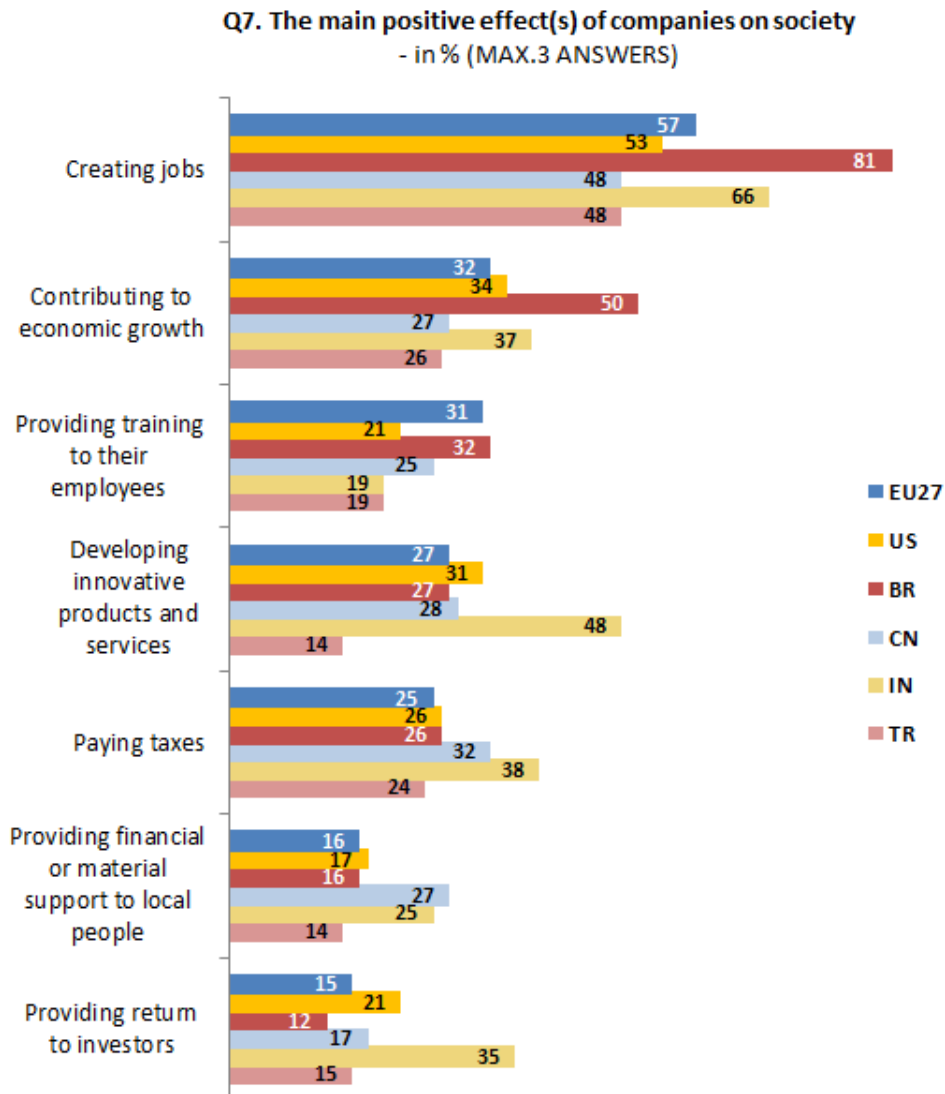
LEVEL OF INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT COMPANIES DO TO BEHAVE RESPONSIBLY TOWARDS SOCIETY



## 4. CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE MAIN POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF COMPANIES ON SOCIETY

**In the EU and other major economies job creation is considered to be the most positive impact of companies on society.**

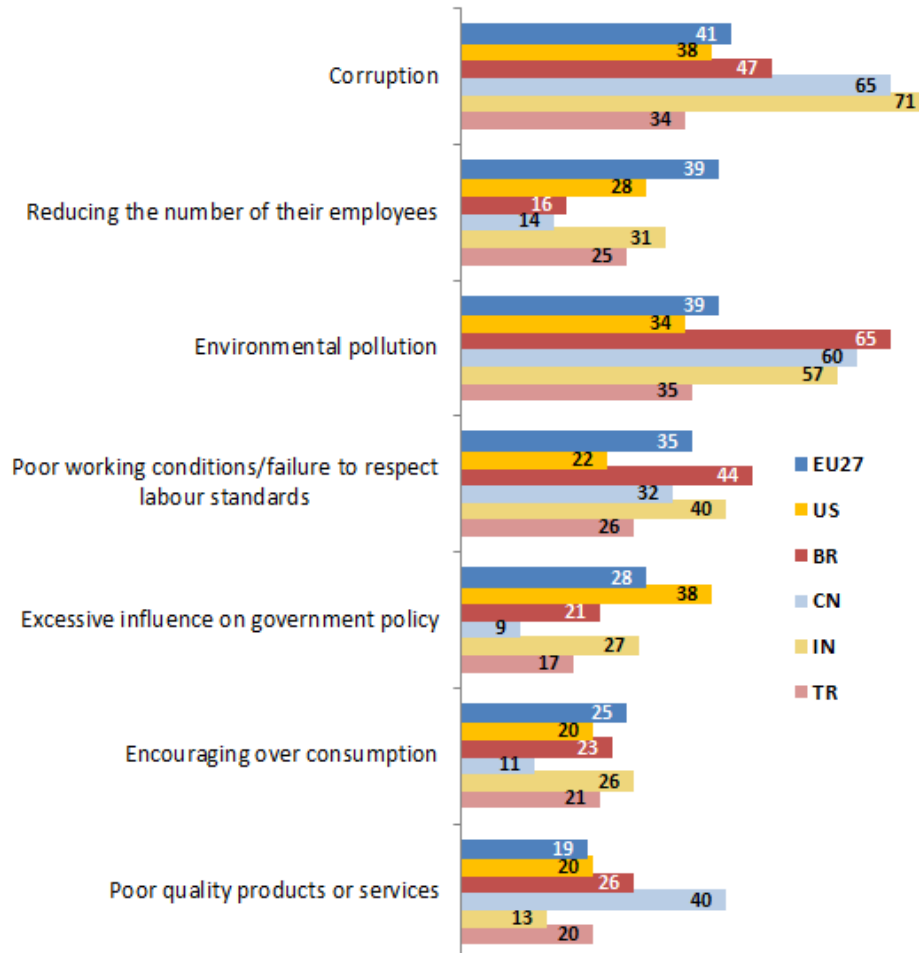
Europeans consider job creation (57%) to be the most positive influence companies have on society, followed at some distance by contributing to economic growth (32%) and providing training to employees (31%). In all 27 EU countries job creation is the most mentioned positive effect of companies on society, as it is for all the non-European countries.



Europeans consider corruption (41%), reducing staff (39%) and environmental pollution (also 39%) as the main negative effects of companies on society. However corruption is much more widely mentioned in India (71%) and China (65%) compared to the EU.

**Q8. The main negative effect(s) of companies on society**

-in % (MAX.3 ANSWERS)

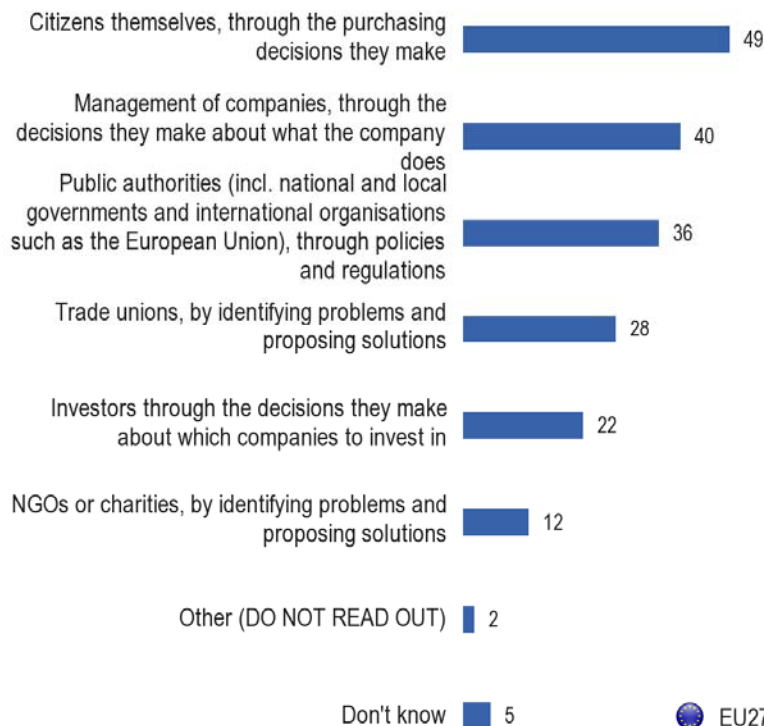


## 5. WHO SHOULD TAKE THE LEADING ROLE IN INFLUENCING COMPANIES' ACTIONS?

European citizens think that citizens themselves should take the lead role in influencing the actions of companies, through the purchasing decisions they make.

Europeans think that citizens themselves should take the lead role in influencing the actions of companies through their decisions about what they buy (49%), followed by company management (40%) and public authorities (36%).

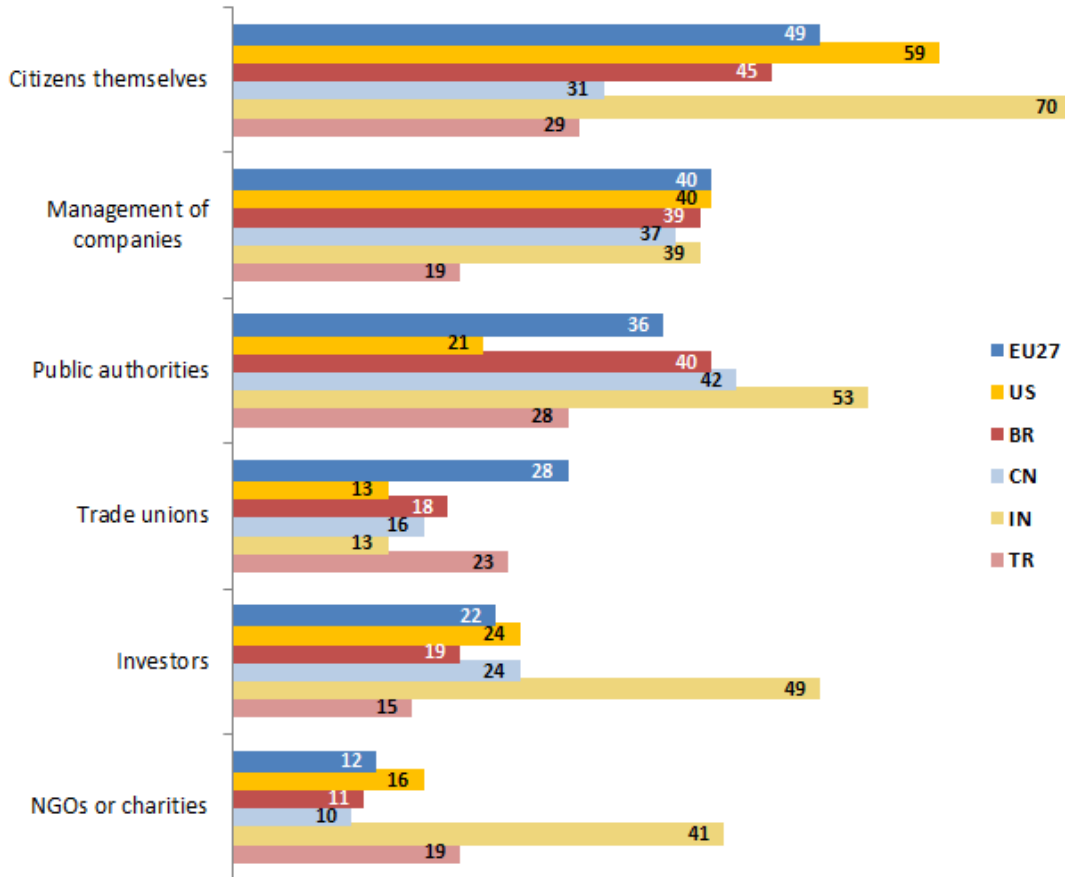
Q1. Many actors influence what companies do. Who do you think should take the leading role in influencing companies' actions in (OUR COUNTRY)?





Respondents in India (70%), the US (59%), Brazil (45%) and Turkey (29%) are also most likely to think that citizens themselves should take the lead in influencing companies' actions. Respondents in China, on the other hand, are most likely to mention public authorities (42%).

**Q1. Actors who should take the leading role in influencing companies' actions**  
 - in % (MAX.3 ANSWERS)



## **ANNEXES**

## **TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

**FLASH EUROBAROMETER 363**  
**"How Companies Influence Our Society: Citizens' View"**  
**TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS**

Between the 22<sup>nd</sup> of October and the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November 2012, TNS Political & Social, a consortium created between TNS political & social, TNS UK and TNS opinion, carried out the survey FLASH EUROBAROMETER 363 about "How Companies Influence Our Society: Citizens' View".

This survey has been requested by the EUROPEAN COMMISSION, Directorate-General Enterprise and Industry. It is a general public survey co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication ("Research and Speechwriting" Unit). The FLASH EUROBAROMETER 363 covers the population of the respective nationalities of the European Union Member States, resident in each of the 27 Member States and aged 15 years and over. It was also conducted in Croatia, Turkey, Israel, China, India, Brazil and the United States. In all European Union Member States, the United States and Turkey, all interviews were carried out using the TNS e-Call center (our centralized CATI system). In every country (except in India and Israel) respondents were called both on fixed lines and mobile phones. Respondents in Israel were contacted on fixed lines only, while in India, the interviews were conducted face-to-face. The basic sample design applied in all states is multi-stage random (probability). In each household, the respondent was drawn at random following the "last birthday rule".

TNS has developed its own RDD sample generation capabilities based on using contact telephone numbers from responders to random probability or random location face to face surveys, such as Eurobarometer, as seed numbers. The approach works because the seed number identifies a working block of telephone numbers and reduces the volume of numbers generated that will be ineffective. The seed numbers are stratified by NUTS2 region and urbanisation to approximate a geographically representative sample. From each seed number the required sample of numbers are generated by randomly replacing the last two digits. The sample is then screened against business databases in order to exclude as many of these numbers as possible before going into field. This approach is consistent across all countries.

Readers are reminded that survey results are estimations, the accuracy of which, everything being equal, rests upon the sample size and upon the observed percentage. With samples of about 1,000 interviews, the real percentages vary within the following confidence limits:

**Statistical Margins due to the sampling process  
(at the 95% level of confidence)**

*various sample sizes are in rows*

*various observed results are in columns*

	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	
N=50	6,0	8,3	9,9	11,1	12,0	12,7	13,2	13,6	13,8	13,9	N=50
N=500	1,9	2,6	3,1	3,5	3,8	4,0	4,2	4,3	4,4	4,4	N=500
N=1000	1,4	1,9	2,2	2,5	2,7	2,8	3,0	3,0	3,1	3,1	N=1000
N=1500	1,1	1,5	1,8	2,0	2,2	2,3	2,4	2,5	2,5	2,5	N=1500
N=2000	1,0	1,3	1,6	1,8	1,9	2,0	2,1	2,1	2,2	2,2	N=2000
N=3000	0,8	1,1	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,6	1,7	1,8	1,8	1,8	N=3000
N=4000	0,7	0,9	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,4	1,5	1,5	1,5	1,5	N=4000
N=5000	0,6	0,8	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,3	1,4	1,4	1,4	N=5000
N=6000	0,6	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,2	1,2	1,2	1,3	1,3	N=6000
N=7000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,2	1,2	N=7000
N=7500	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=7500
N=8000	0,5	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,1	1,1	1,1	N=8000
N=9000	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=9000
N=10000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,0	N=10000
N=11000	0,4	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=11000
N=12000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	0,9	0,9	N=12000
N=13000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,9	0,9	N=13000
N=14000	0,4	0,5	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=14000
N=15000	0,3	0,5	0,6	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	N=15000
	5%	10%	15%	20%	25%	30%	35%	40%	45%	50%	
	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%	70%	65%	60%	55%	50%	

ABBR.	COUNTRIES	INSTITUTES	N° INTERVIEWS	FIELDWORK DATES		POPULATION 15+
BE	Belgium	TNS Dimarso	1.002	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	8.939.546
BG	Bulgaria	TNS BBSS	1.016	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	6.537.510
CZ	Czech Rep.	TNS Aisa s.r.o	1.000	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	9.012.443
DK	Denmark	TNS Gallup A/S	1.004	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	4.561.264
DE	Germany	TNS Infratest	1.000	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	64.336.389
EE	Estonia	TNS Emor	1.000	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	945.733
EL	Greece	TNS ICAP	1.000	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	8.693.566
ES	Spain	TNS Demoscopia S.A	1.000	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	39.127.930
FR	France	TNS Sofres	1.006	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	47.756.439
IE	Ireland	IMS Millward Brown	1.000	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	3.522.000
IT	Italy	TNS Italia	1.001	29/10/2012	30/10/2012	51.862.391
CY	Rep. of Cyprus	CYMAR	500	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	660.400
LV	Latvia	TNS Latvia	1.001	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	1.447.866
LT	Lithuania	TNS LT	1.000	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	2.829.740
LU	Luxembourg	TNS Dimarso	505	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	404.907
HU	Hungary	TNS Hoffmann Kft	1.006	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	8.320.614
MT	Malta	MISCO International Ltd	502	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	335.476
NL	Netherlands	TNS NIPO	1.007	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	13.371.980
AT	Austria	TNS Austria	1.001	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	7.009.827
PL	Poland	TNS OBOP	1.000	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	32.413.735
PT	Portugal	TNS EUROTESTE	1.001	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	8.080.915
RO	Romania	TNS CSOP	1.004	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	18.246.731
SI	Slovenia	RM PLUS	1.003	29/10/2012	30/10/2012	1.759.701
SK	Slovakia	TNS AISA Slovakia	1.000	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	4.549.956
FI	Finland	TNS Gallup Oy	1.005	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	4.440.004
SE	Sweden	TNS SIFO	1.000	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	7.791.240
UK	United Kingdom	TNS UK	1.003	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	51.848.010
<b>TOTAL EU27</b>			<b>25.567</b>	<b>22/10/2012</b>	<b>23/11/2012</b>	<b>408.806.313</b>
HR	Croatia	HENDAL	1.004	29/10/2012	31/10/2012	3.749.400
TR	Turkey	TNS PIAR	1.000	30/10/2012	03/11/2012	54.844.406
IL	Israel	TNS Teleseker	1.001	29/10/2012	02/11/2012	4.257.500
US	United States	TNS Custom Research	1.009	29/10/2012	03/11/2012	247.518.325
BR	Brazil	RSM	1.001	27/10/2012	30/11/2012	144.799.269
CN	China	TNS China	1.000	24/10/2012	15/11/2012	70.904.579
IN	India	TNS India	1.000	30/10/2012	28/11/2012	52.512.000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>32.582</b>	<b>22/10/2012</b>	<b>23/11/2012</b>	<b>578.585.479</b>