



TONY BLAIR  
INSTITUTE  
FOR GLOBAL  
CHANGE

# The Centre in the United Kingdom, France and Germany

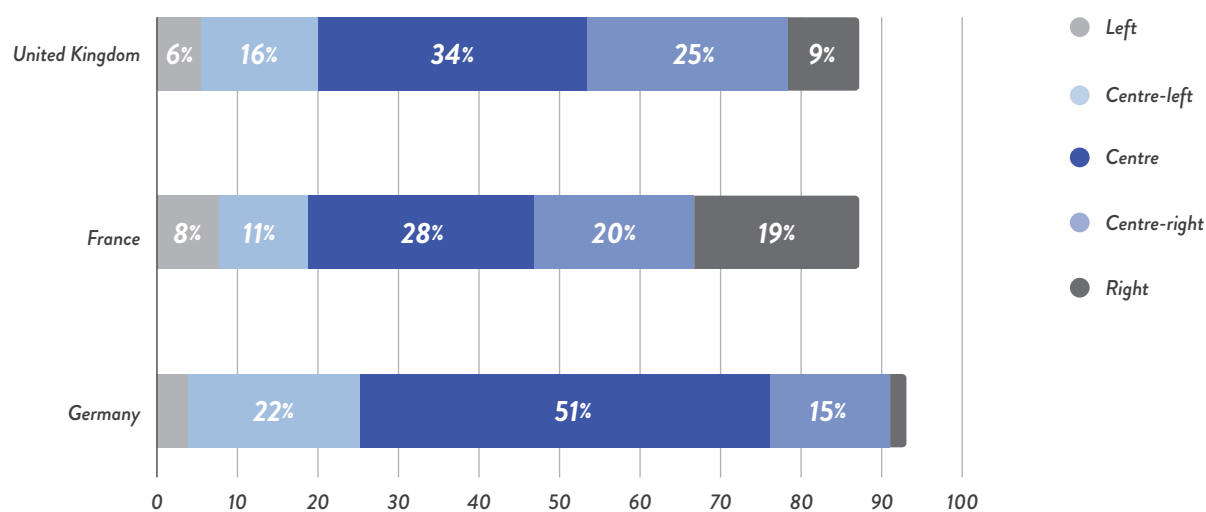
JUNE 2017

RENEWING  
THE CENTRE

## The majority of voters identify as centre, centre-left or centre-right, with most UK voters identifying as centre and centre-right.

Q: Think about your own politics now. What number between 0 to 10 best describes your personal political beliefs on a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 = extremely left wing and 10 = extremely right wing?<sup>1</sup>

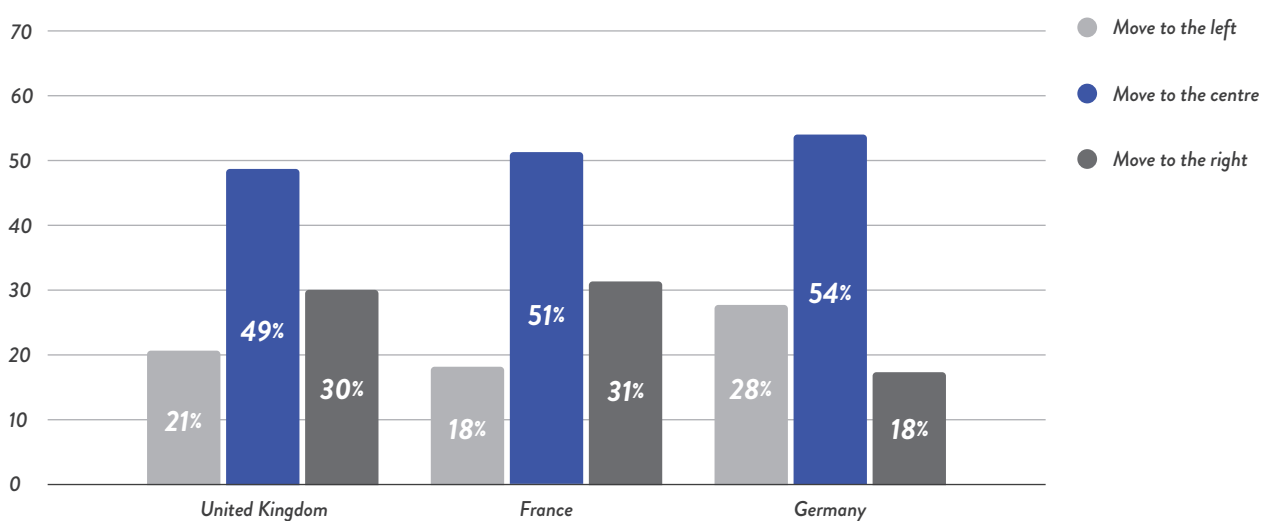
### Self-identified political orientation



<sup>1</sup> 0-1 are categorized as left, 2-3 are centre-left, 4-6 are centre, 7-8 are centre-right, 9-10 are right. Percentages don't sum to 100% because respondents could answer, 'I really don't know'.

## More voters want politicians to move to the centre than to the left or right.

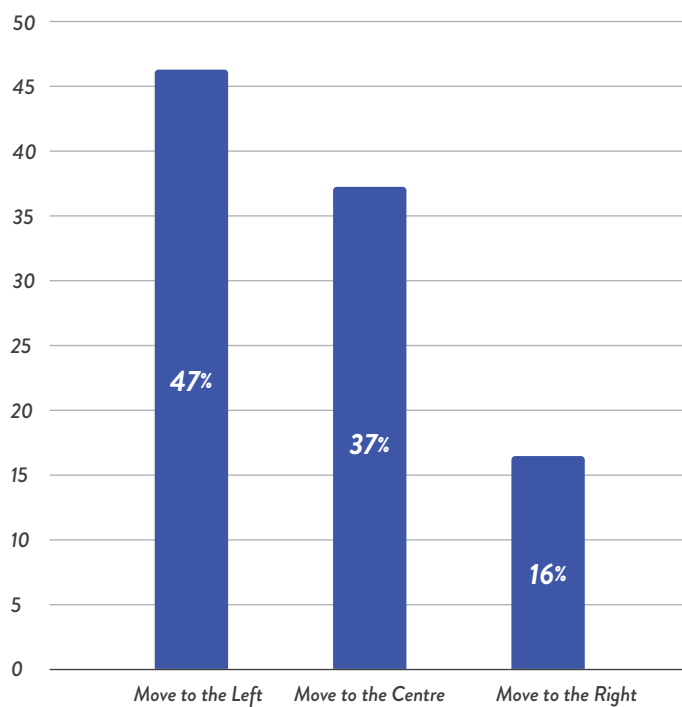
Q: Would you rather see the next government, following the forthcoming election in the UK/France/Germany move to the left, centre or right?



# More young voters in the UK want to move to the left.

Q: Would you rather see the next government, following the forthcoming election in the UK/France/Germany move to the left, centre or right?

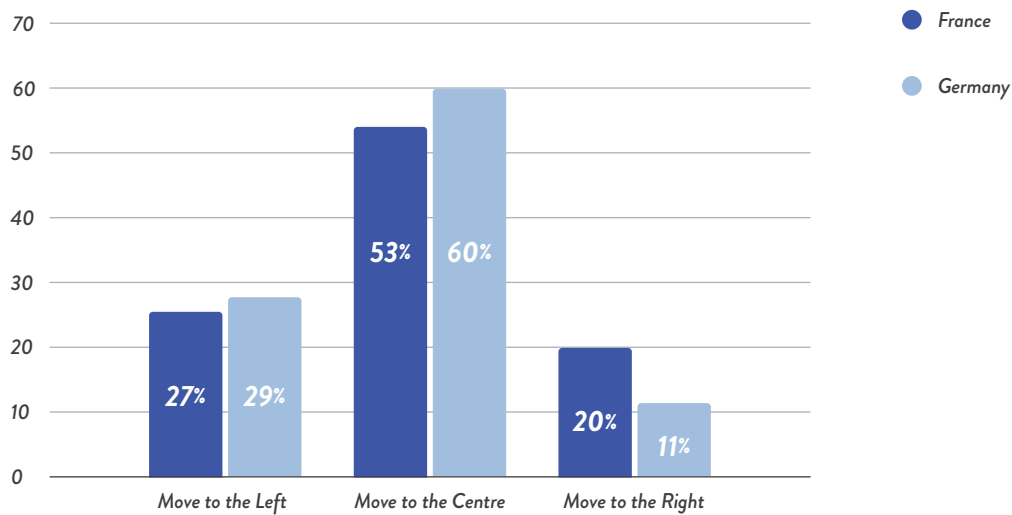
*Those aged 18-24 in the UK hope the next government will shift to the left*



## But more young voters in France and Germany identify as centrist.

Q: Would you rather see the next government, following the forthcoming election in the UK/France/Germany move to the left, centre or right?

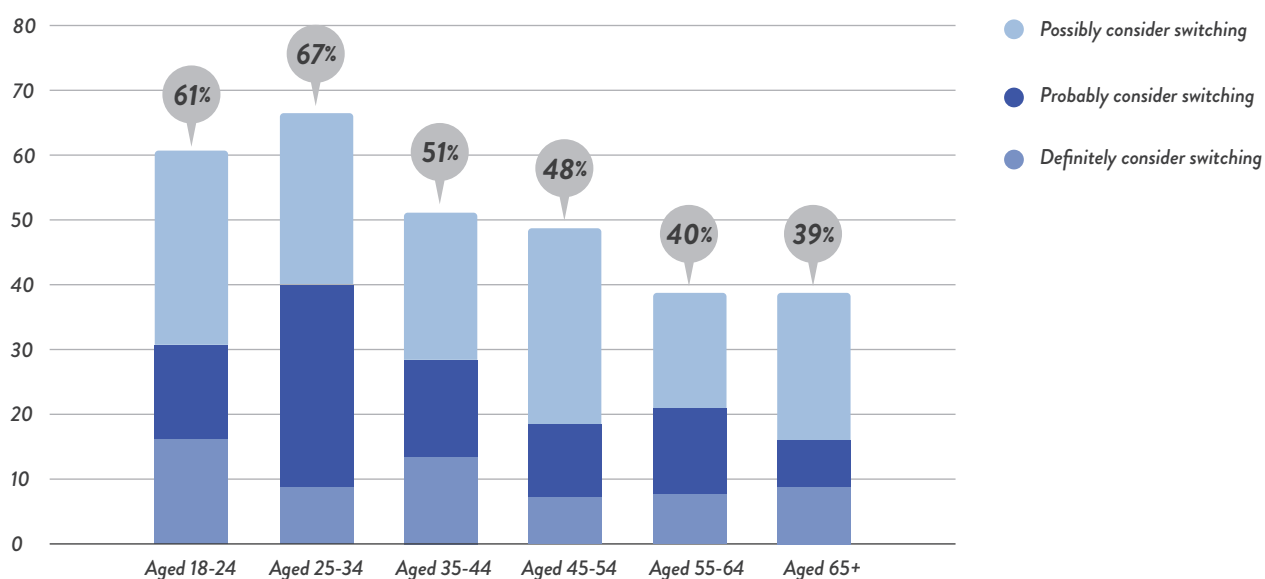
*Those aged 18-24 in France and Germany hope the next government will shift to the centre*



## Though young UK voters would have considered voting for a centrist alternative at the last election.

Q: Thinking about the choice on offer on June 8th, if there was a strong, credible, centrist/moderate alternative to Theresa May's Conservatives and Jeremy Corbyn's Labour, would you definitely consider switching, probably consider switching, possibly consider switching, probably not switch, or definitely not switch your vote to the centrist/moderate alternative?

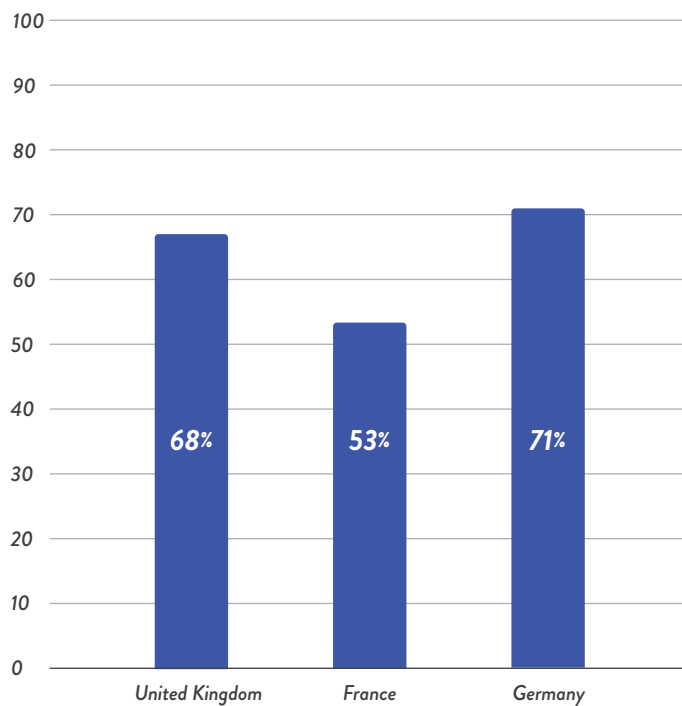
*A majority of young people would have 'definitely', 'probably', or 'possibly' considered changing their vote to a centrist alternative in the past election*



# Voters feel their own standard of living is better than their parents.

Q: Would you say that your quality of life is much better, somewhat better, a little better, the same, a little worse, somewhat worse, or much worse than your parents' quality of life was when they were your age?

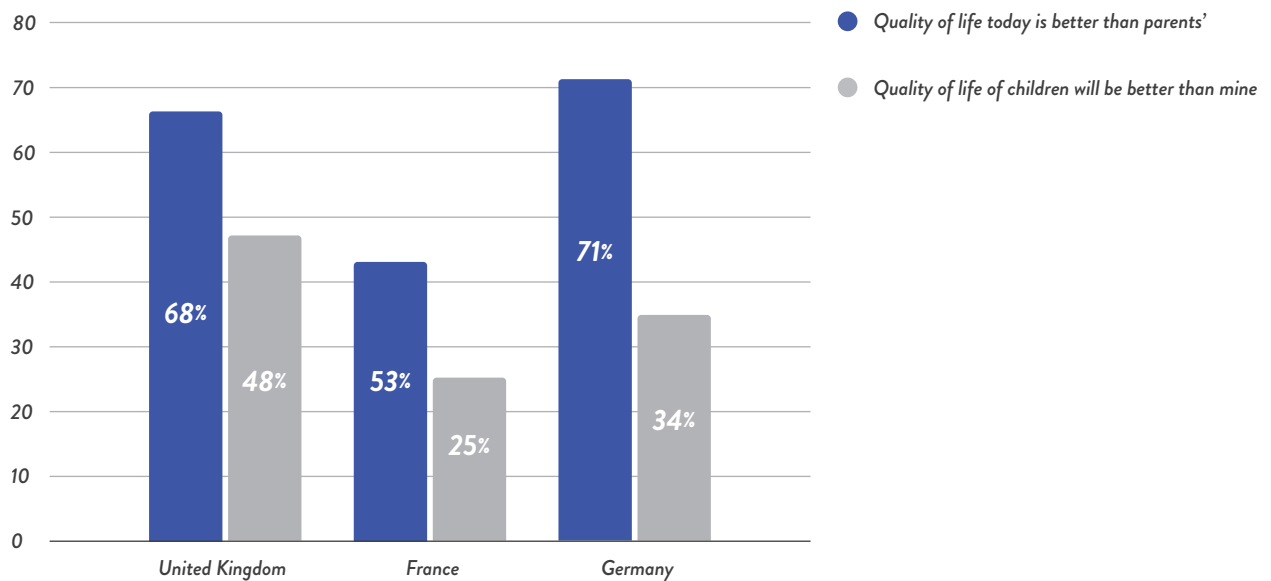
*Percent of people who think their quality of life today is much, somewhat, or a little better than parents' life was at their age*



## But they are worried about their children's future.

Q: Now imagine the quality of life children today are likely to have when they reach your age. Do you honestly believe it will be much better, somewhat better, a little better, the same, a little worse, somewhat worse, or much worse than your quality of life today – not what you want it to be but what you think it will be?

*Percent of people who think the quality of life of their children will be much, somewhat, or a little better than their parents' quality of life was at their age*

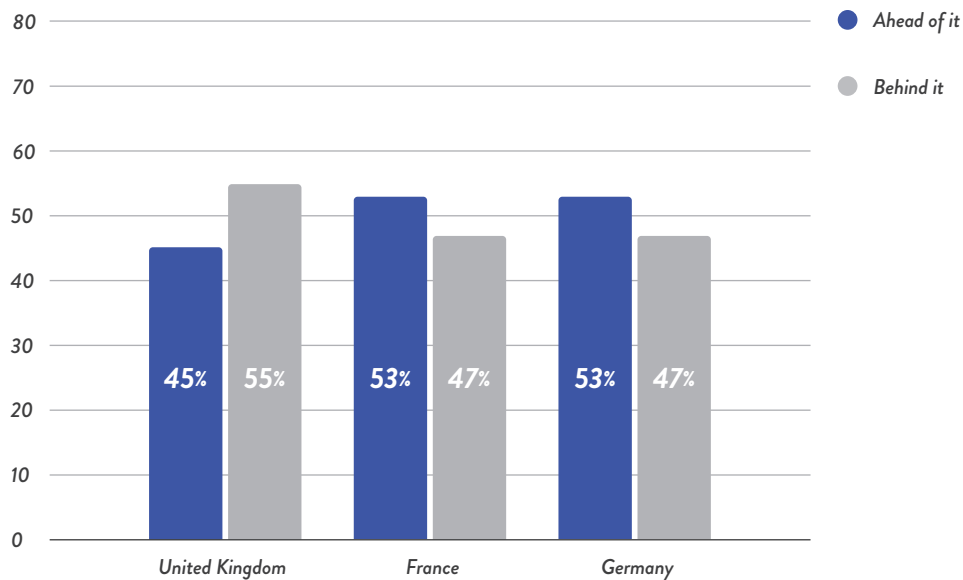




# Young people in the UK are less optimistic than those in France and Germany.

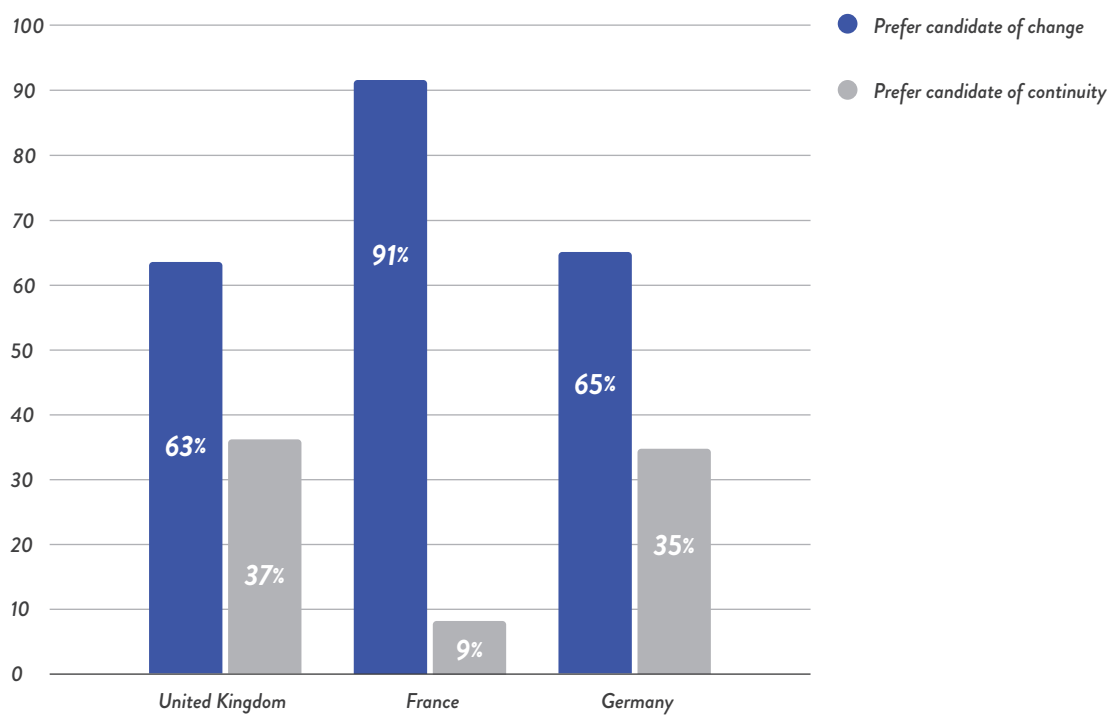
Q: Do you believe France/Britain/Germany's best days are ahead of it, or behind it?

*People aged 18-24 in France and Germany think that the best days of their nations are ahead of them, but in the UK they are pessimistic*



# Voters of all ages and in all countries want candidates of change.

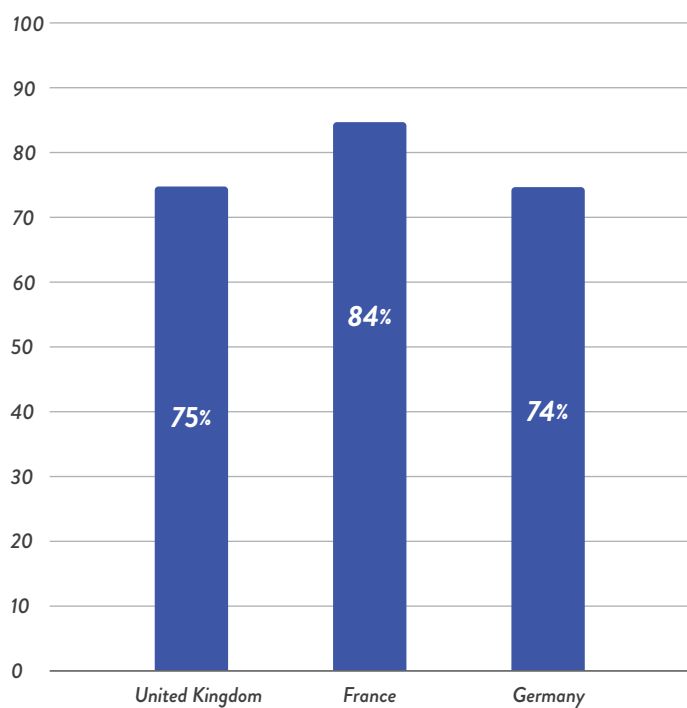
Q: In the upcoming parliamentary elections – regardless of whom you support – would you prefer to vote for a candidate of change or a candidate of continuity?



## The desire for change is especially strong among the young.

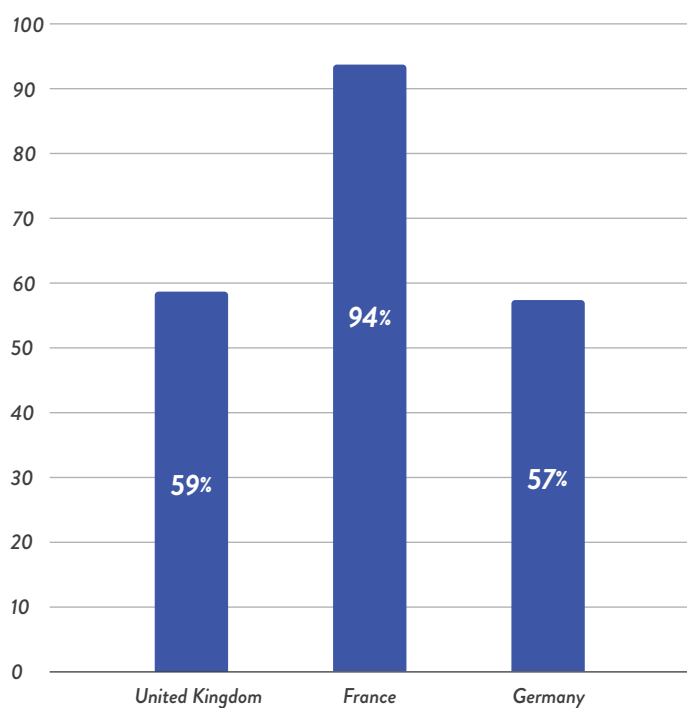
Q: In the upcoming parliamentary elections – regardless of whom you support – would you prefer to vote for a candidate of change or a candidate of continuity?

*A large majority of those aged 18-24 in the UK would prefer a candidate of change over a candidate of continuity*



## But it is also very strong among centrist voters, particularly in France.

*Of the people who want the next government to shift to the centre, a majority are looking for a candidate of change*

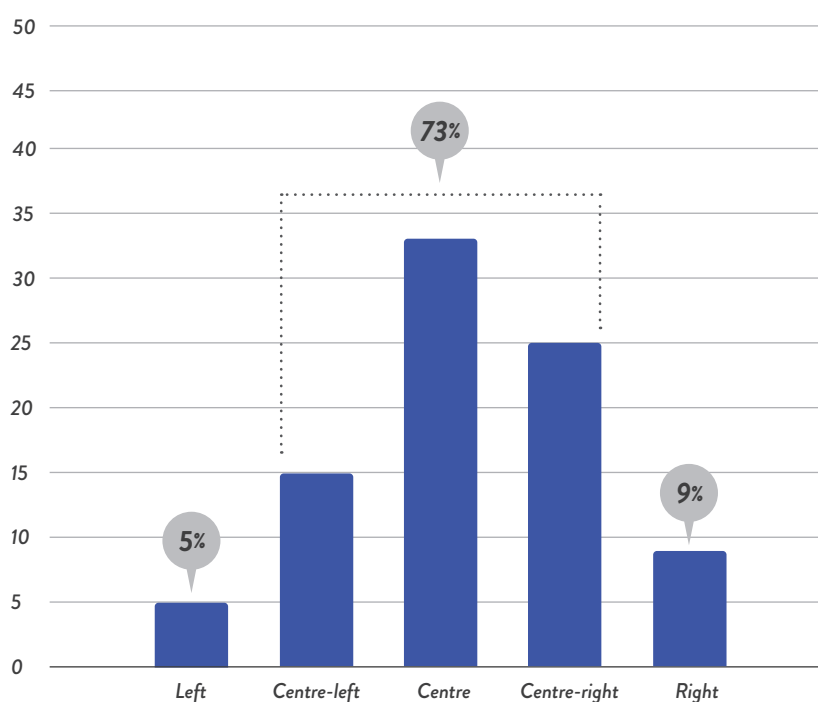


# The United Kingdom

## Most UK voters identify as centre, centre-right or centre-left.

Q: Think about your own politics now. What number between 0 to 10 best describes your personal political beliefs on a 0 to 10 scale where 0 = extremely left and 10 = extremely right?<sup>1</sup>

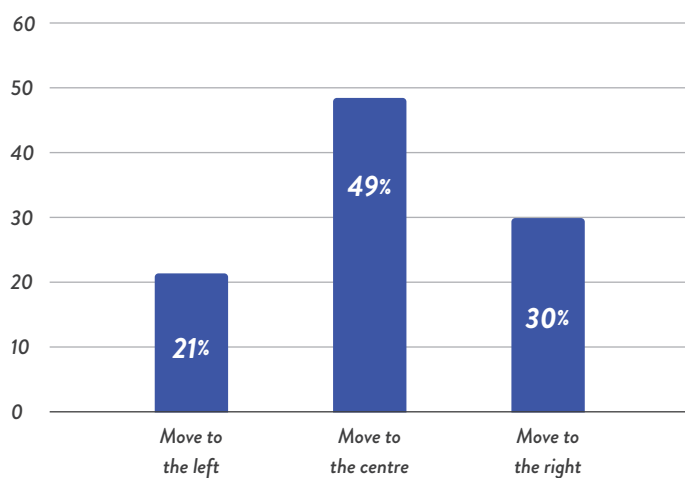
### Self-reported political orientation in the UK



<sup>1</sup> 0-1 are categorized as left, 2-3 are centre-left, 4-6 are as centre, 7-8 are centre-right, 9-10 are right. The numbers do not add to 100 because respondents could select 'I really don't know'.

# Most British people want their government to move to the centre.

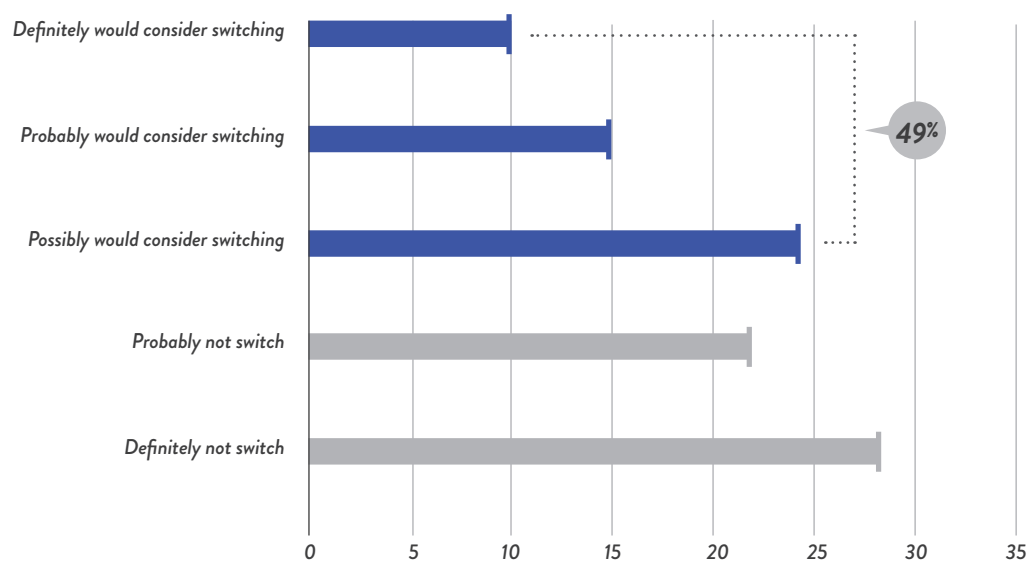
Q: Would you rather see the next government, following the forthcoming election in the UK move to the left, centre or right?



## Almost half of UK voters would consider voting for a centre-ground alternative.

Q: Thinking about the choice on offer on June 8th, if there was a strong, credible, centrist/moderate alternative to Theresa May's Conservatives and Jeremy Corbyn's Labour, would you definitely consider switching, probably consider switching, possibly consider switching, probably not switch, or definitely not switch your vote to the centrist/moderate alternative?

### Percentage of voters who would consider switching to a centrist alternative

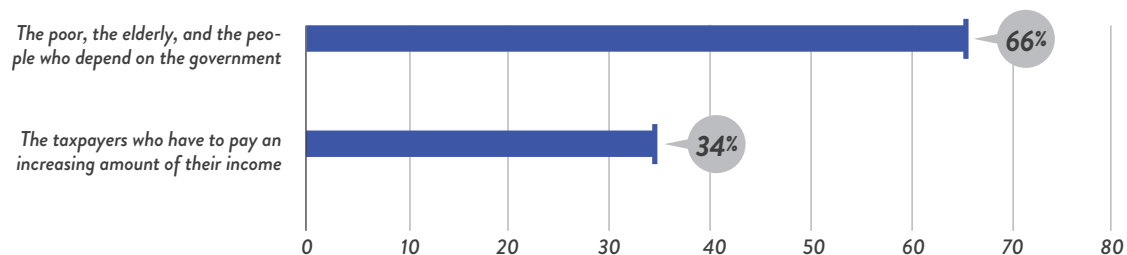




## Voters are more concerned for the needy than for taxpayers.

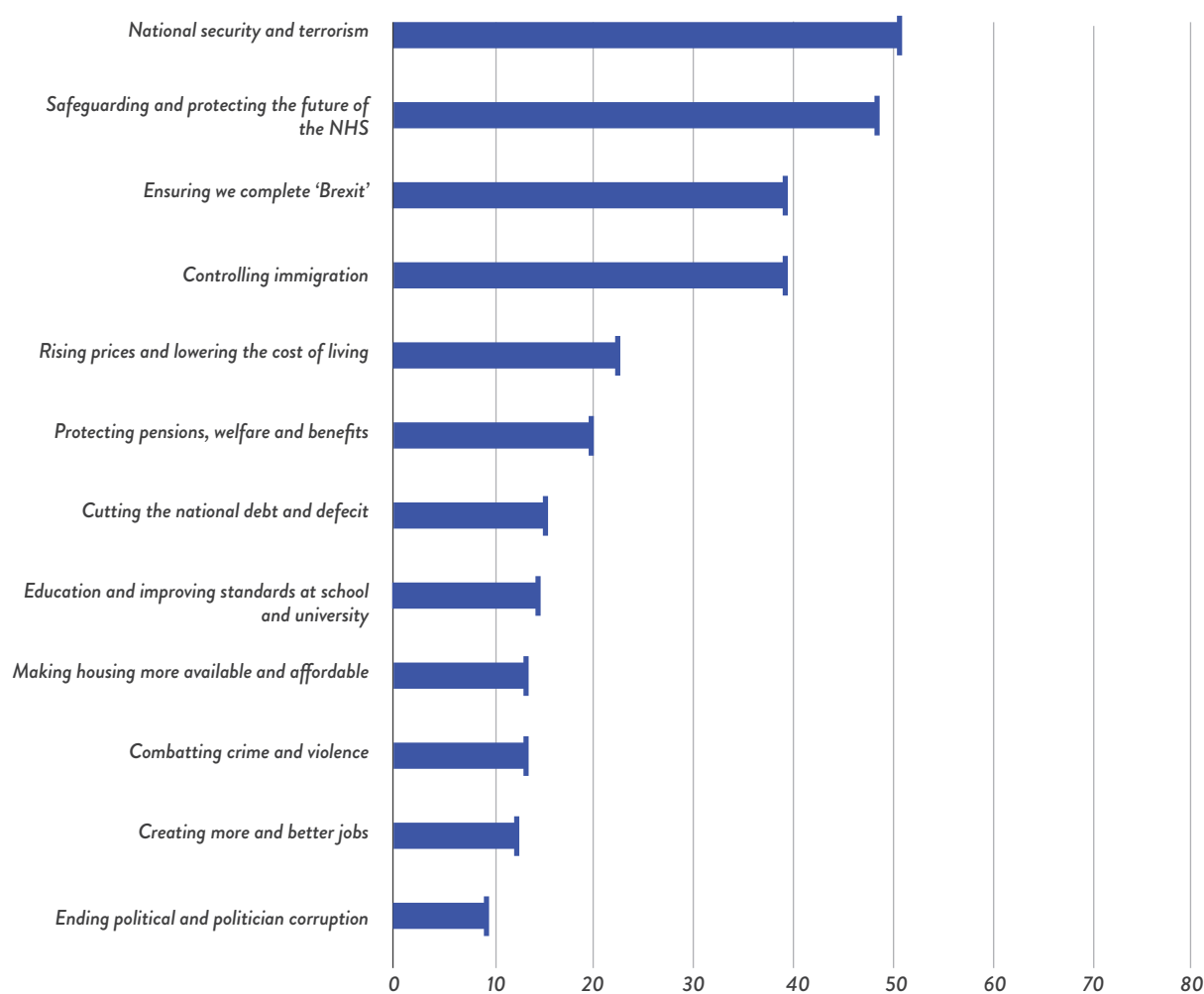
Q: In general, whom do you have more sympathy for? The poor, the elderly, and the people who are dependent on government support to survive because of their financial situation or the taxpayers who have to pay an increasing amount of their income and savings to fund pensions, benefits and health services.

*People have more sympathy for the poor and elderly than the taxpayer*



# Security, NHS, Brexit and immigration are top priorities.

Q: What in your opinion, should be the most important priority of the next British government – of whatever party – after the election on 8th June? Second most important? Third most important?



# Voters want a tough line on the terror threat.

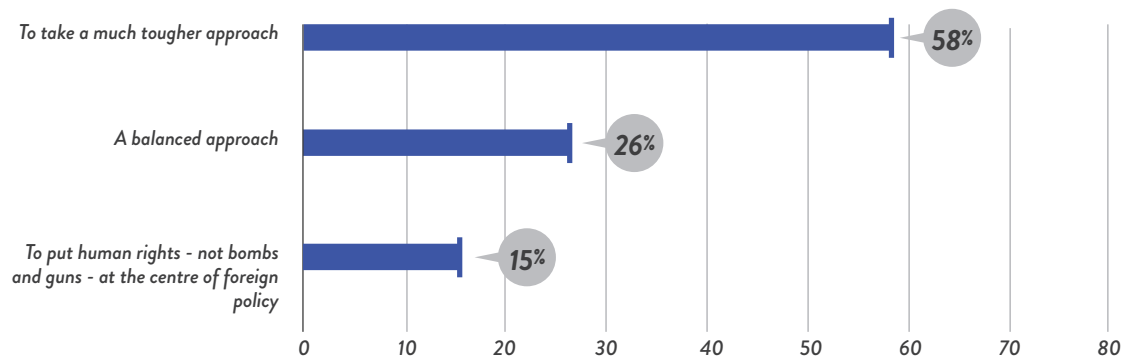
Q: Overall, what do you believe is the most effective overall approach to tackling extremist, violent ideologies?

1. To take a much tougher approach. To increase national security spending dramatically in order to root out and destroy ISIS and similar groups, wherever they exist.

2. A balanced approach, that marries strong military defence and deterrence with an effort to reach out and partner with moderate Islamic voices – domestically as well as in the Middle East.

3. To put human rights – not bombs and guns – at the centre of foreign policy, and to prioritise community-led approaches to stop youths from being radicalized.

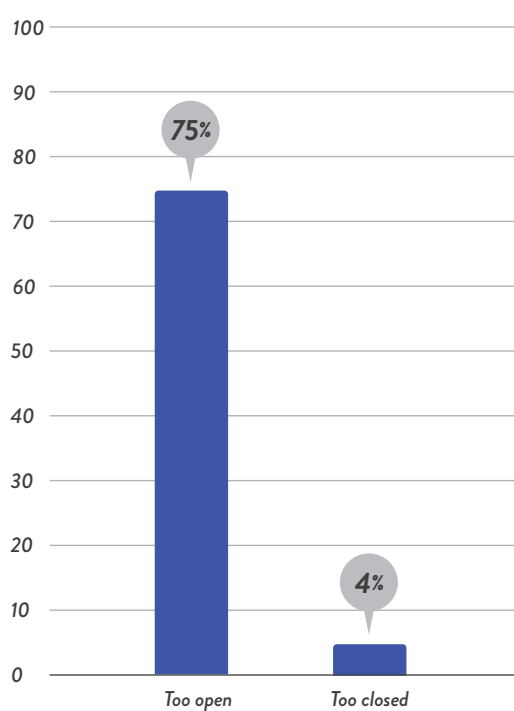
## Best approach to tackling extremist ideologies



# A big majority thinks that migration policy is too open.

Q: Overall, do you think that Britain's immigration policy today is far too open, somewhat too open, just about right, somewhat too closed, far too closed?

*People in the UK think immigration policy is too open*

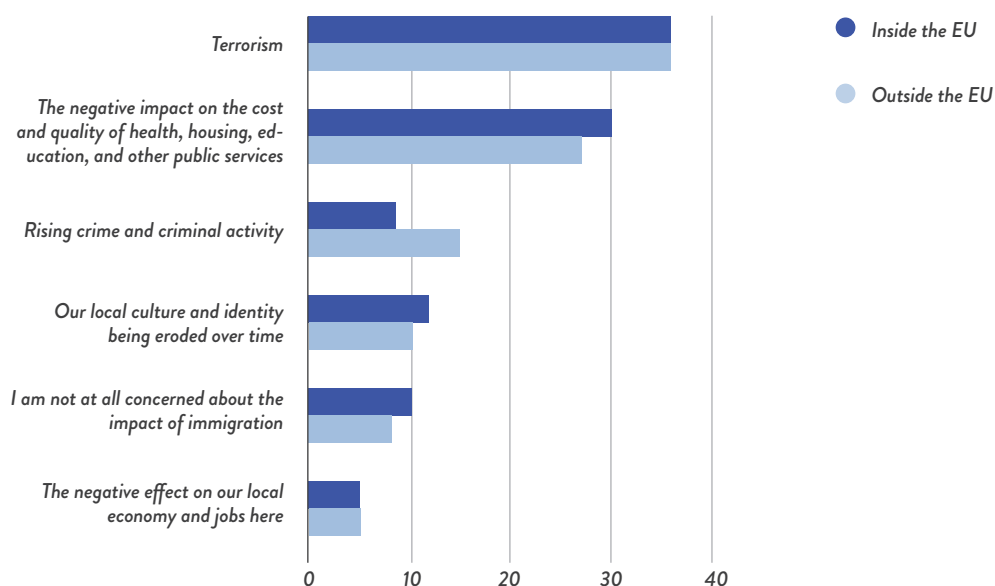


## But one of their main concerns about migration is economic.

Q: What is the biggest concern you have about immigration from outside the EU on your country?

What is the biggest concern you have about immigration from inside the EU on your country?

*Biggest concern people have in the UK with immigration from outside and inside the EU*

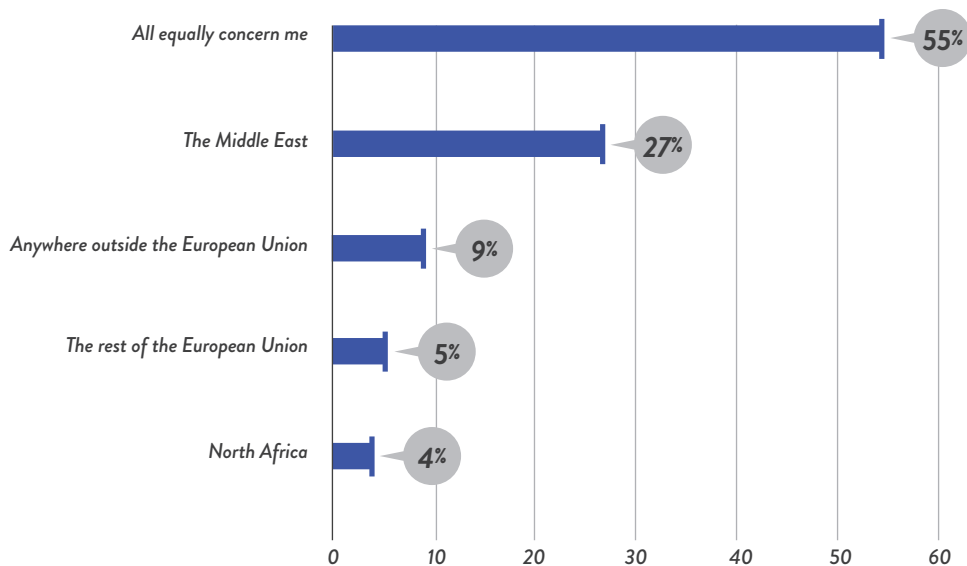


**And this concern is roughly the same for immigration inside and outside the EU.**

**But if you specify the Middle East as an option, there is a notable percentage who are more concerned about immigration from this area than from the EU.**

Q: If you had to choose, which of the following concern you more: immigration from the Middle East, anywhere outside the EU, the rest of the EU, or North Africa? Or do they all concern you the same?

*Immigration which is most concerning to people in the UK*

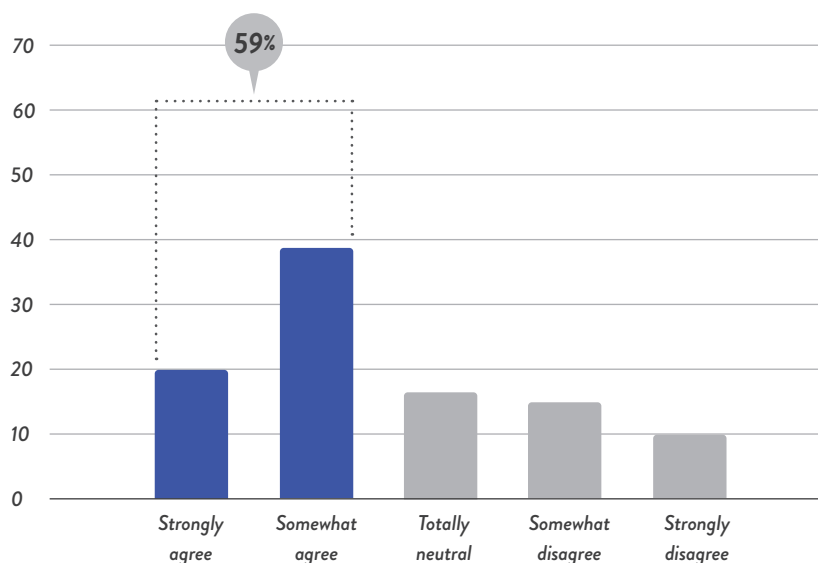


## Though most do still recognise the benefits of immigration.

Q: And overall, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, are totally neutral, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement:

“On the whole, immigration – as long as it has strict rules and controls is good for our country. It brings fresh energy. It lowers the age of the work force. All the evidence is that migrants – particular from the rest of Europe – contribute far more than they receive.” - Blair

*A majority of people in the UK agree that “on the whole, immigration - as long as it has strict rules and controls - is good for our country”*



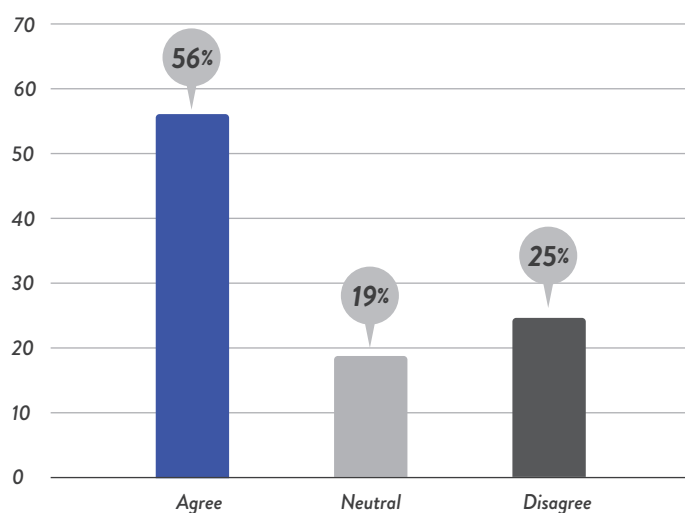
# Europe and Brexit



## People agree that 'Brexit must mean Brexit'.

Q: Regardless of how you voted in the referendum, some people have argued that 'Brexit must mean Brexit' and that Britain should leave the European Union, even if no deal or trade agreement has been struck with the EU. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this?

### Agreement with 'Brexit must mean Brexit'

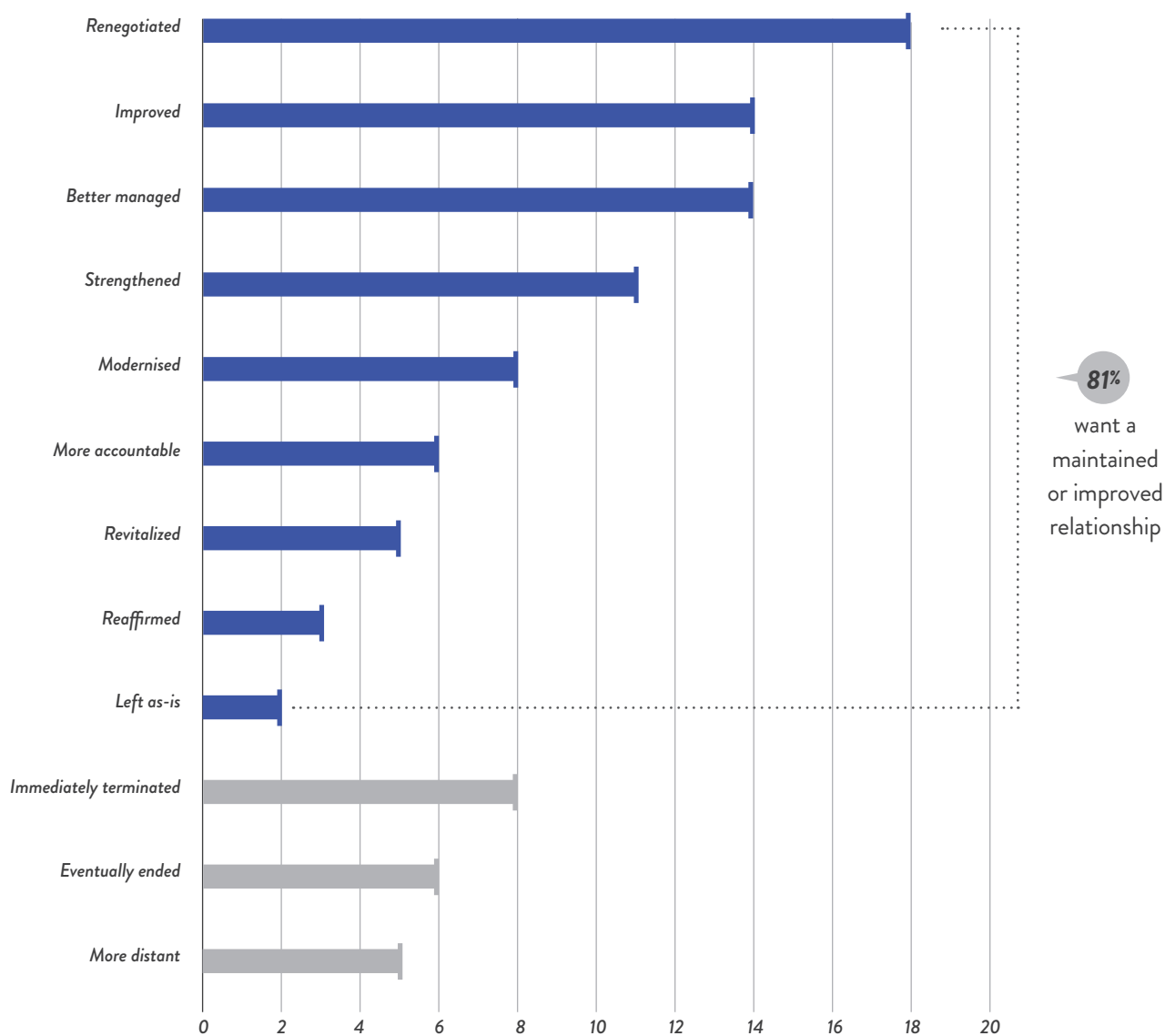


**...but their actual  
preferences are much  
more nuanced.**

# Most British people want a strong relationship with Europe.

Q: Which word or phrase best describes the relationship you feel Britain should have with Europe in the future?

*How British people want the relationship between the EU and the UK to proceed*



## There are mixed views on the course of Brexit.

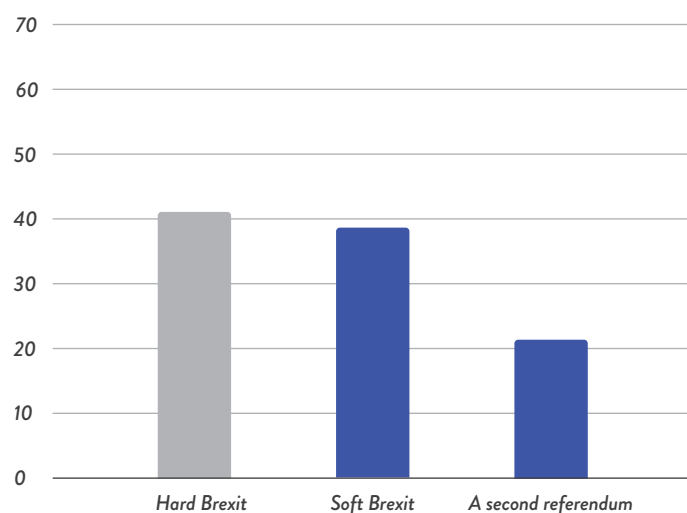
Q: There has been a lot of discussion and speculation about how the Brexit negotiations might turn out. Which of the following is closest to the result you would most like to see?

A 'hard' Brexit, whereby we leave the EU in its entirety. We can attempt to negotiate a favourable trade deal, but if that's not possible we revert to normal WTO tariffs.

A 'middle way' that sees us remain in the Free Trade Area in return for some compromises on immigration and access to benefits, etc.

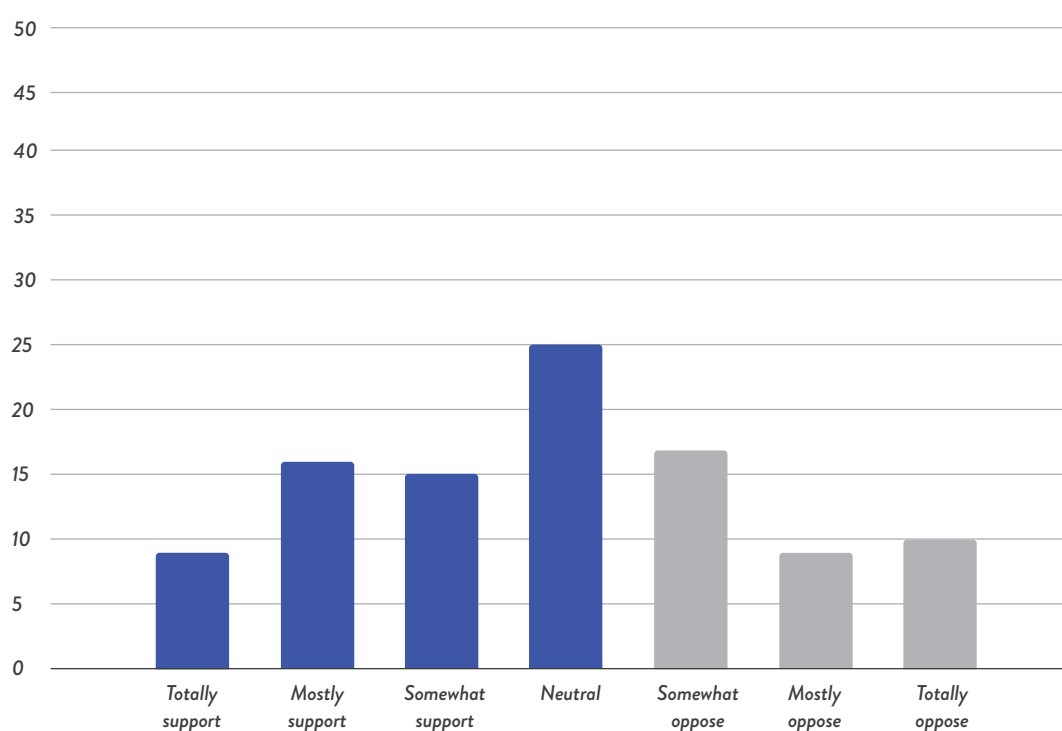
A minimal Brexit – We should commit to a second referendum on any deal and seek as close cooperation with the EU as possible

### *How people would like Brexit negotiations to turn out*



## ...and mixed views on free movement of people, trade and services.

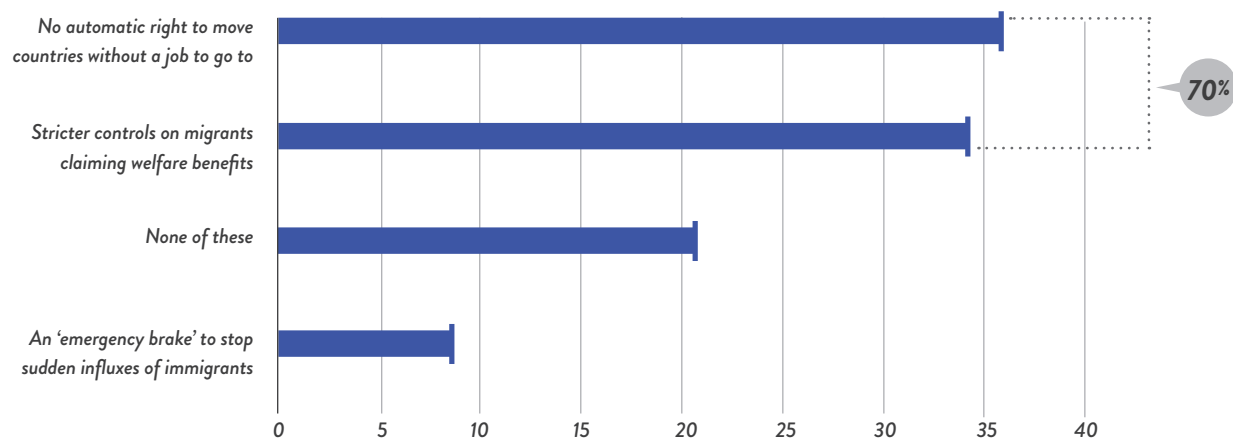
Q: Overall, do you support the central principle of 'free movement' of people, trade and services across the European Union, or do you oppose it?



## ...but the main drivers of unhappiness with free movement could be addressed.

Q: And which – if any – of the following rules would make you more likely to support the free movement of people within the EU?

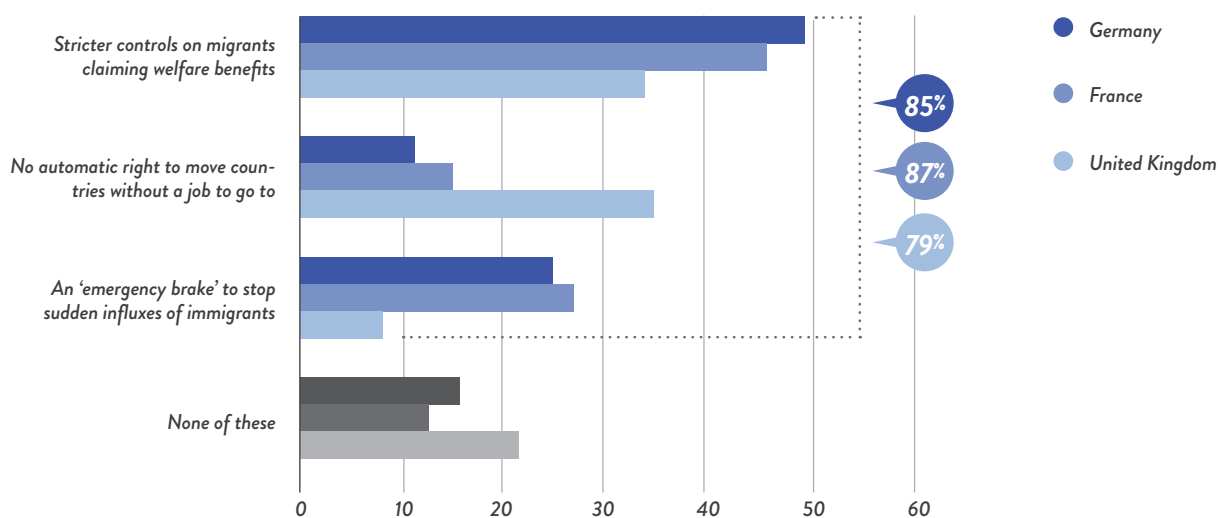
*Reform which would make people likely to support the free movement of people within the EU*



# German and French voters actually seek the same changes as British people do.

Q: And which – if any – of the following rules would make you more likely to support the free movement of people within the EU?

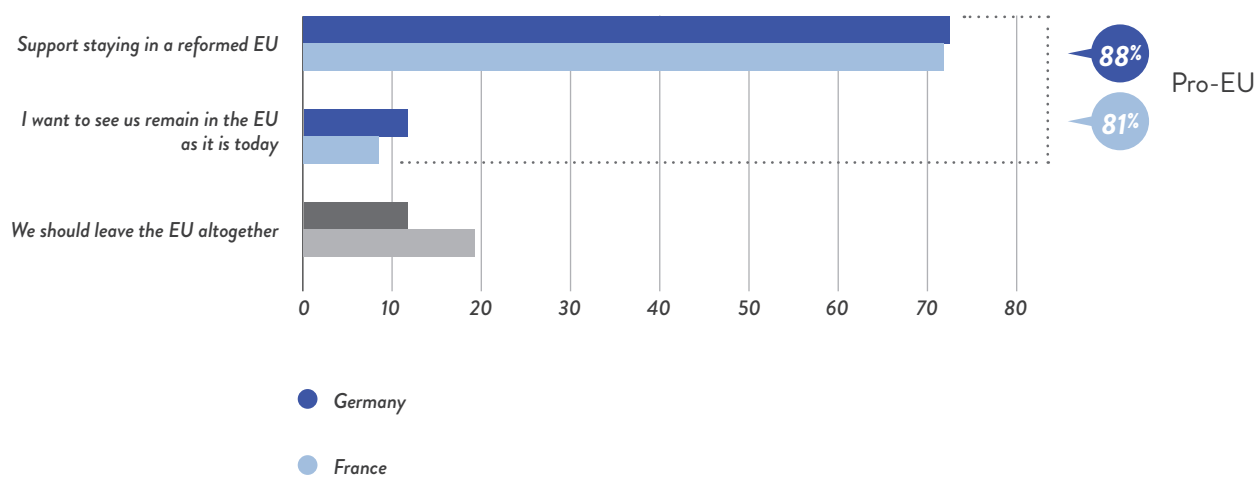
*Reform which would make people more likely to support the free movement of people*



## In fact, French and German voters are both pro-EU...

Q: Which of the following is closest to your own, personal position on France's membership of the EU?

- I support staying in a reformed EU
- I want to see us remain in the EU as it is today
- We should leave the EU altogether



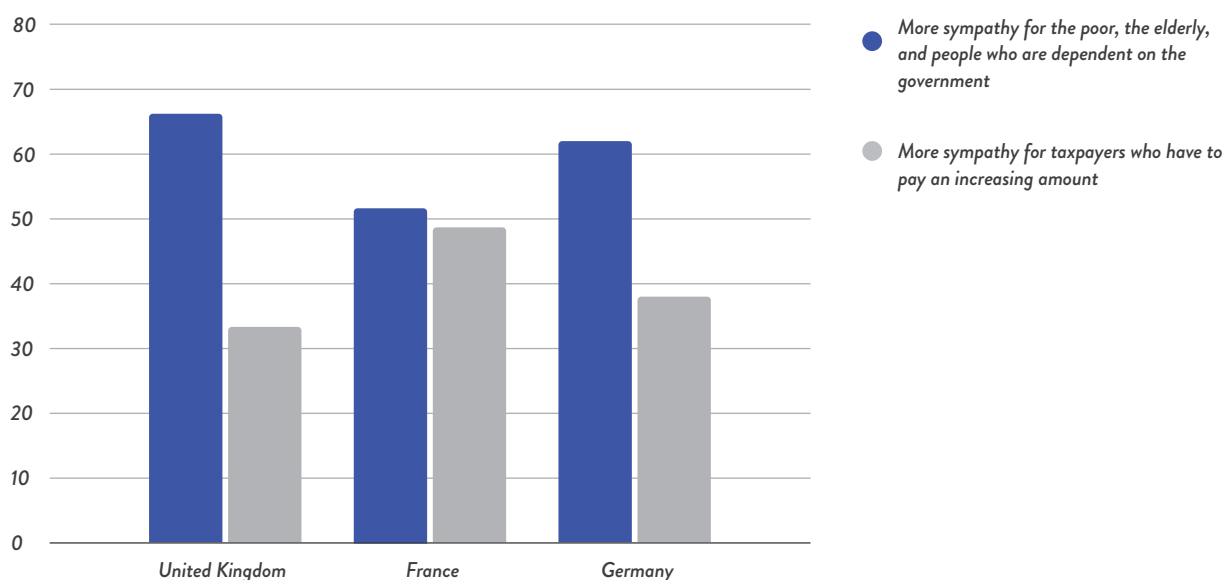
...and strongly in favour of EU reform.

# France



## French voters want to preserve the welfare state but are more worried about taxation levels.

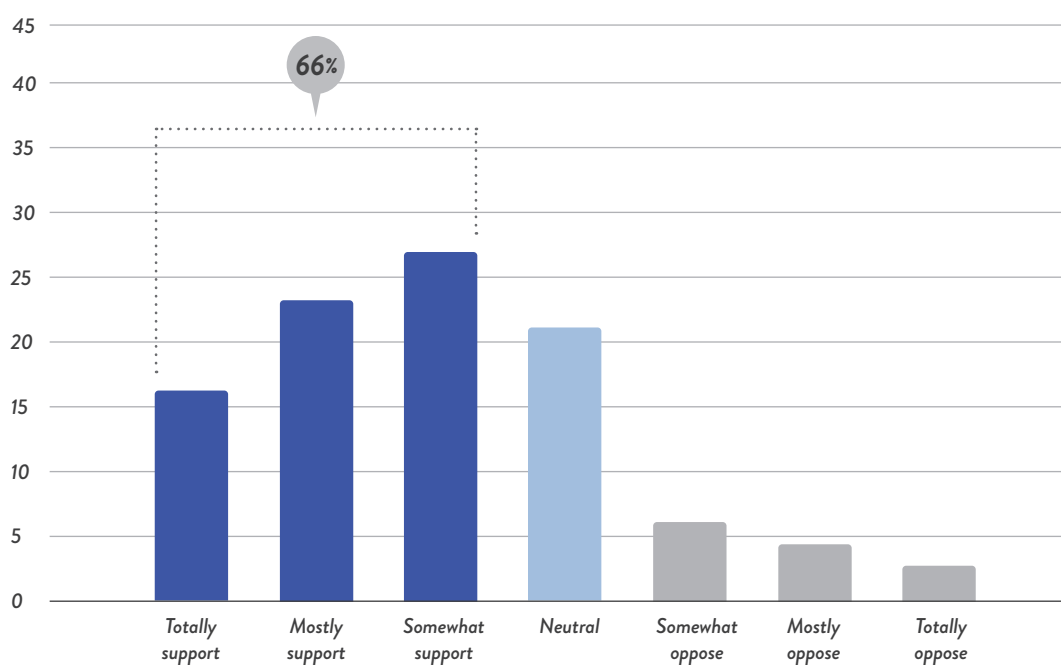
Q: In general, whom do you have more sympathy for? The poor, the elderly, and the people who are dependent on government support to survive because of their financial situation or the taxpayers who have to pay an increasing amount of their income and savings to fund pensions, benefits and health services.



## And there is support for corporate tax cuts.

Q: Do you totally support, mostly support, somewhat support, neither support or oppose, somewhat oppose, or totally oppose cutting the corporate tax from 33% to the European average of 25%?

*French support for Macron's policy of cutting the corporate tax from 33% to the European average of 25%*

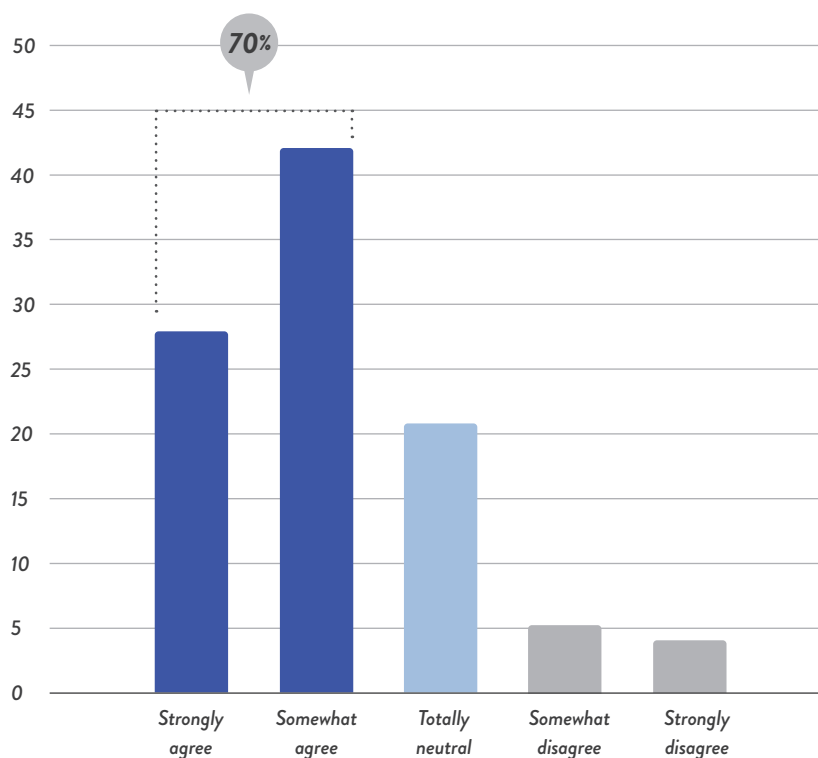


## French voters are strongly in favour of more EU solidarity.

Q: Overall, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement:

“Our duty is to rebuild the European dream. We need to restore the credibility of France in the eyes of Germany, to convince Berlin to adopt an active investment policy and move towards greater solidarity in Europe.”

*Agreement of French voters to Macron’s statement that it is “our duty to rebuild the European dream”*

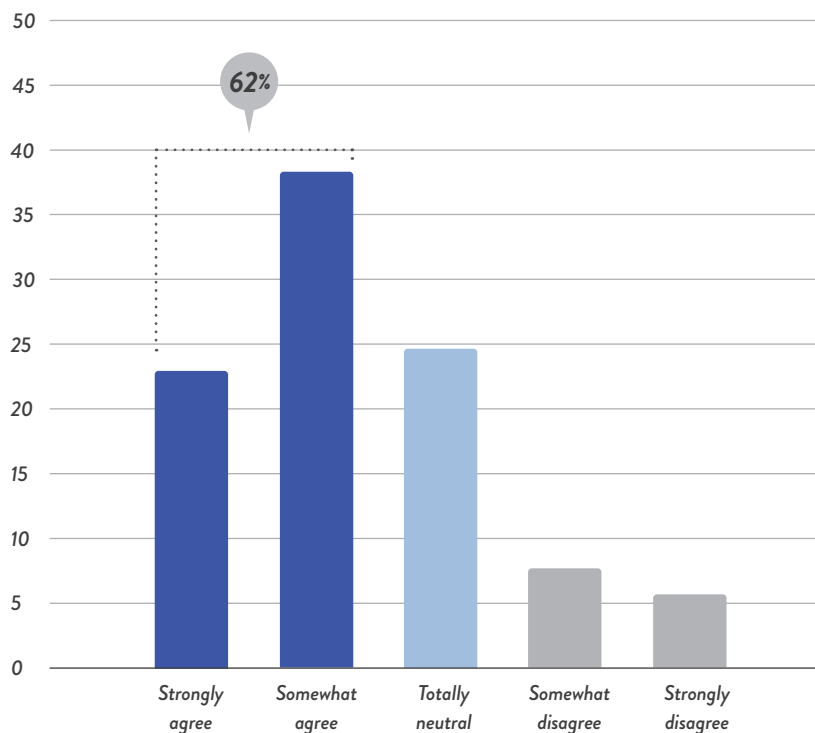


## But French voters also have strong anti-elitist sentiment...

Q: Overall, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement?

“The French people now have a very simple choice: Either we continue on the path to complete deregulation, or we choose France. It is time to liberate the French nation from arrogant elites who want to dictate how it must behave.”

*A majority of the French agree with Le Pen that “it is time to liberate the French nation from arrogant elites”*

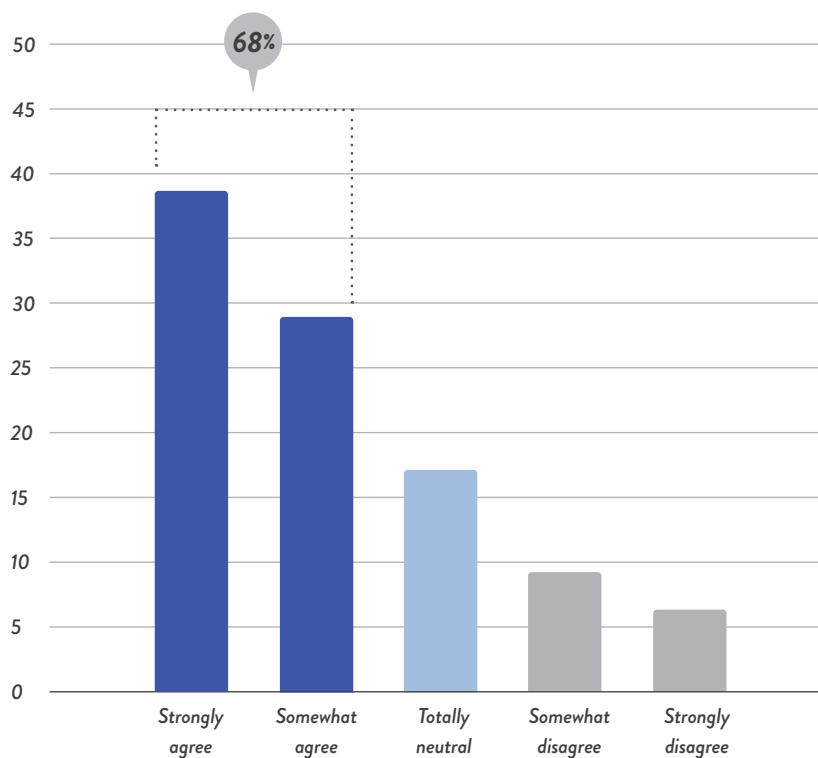


## ...and are open to radical rhetoric on Islam.

Q: Overall, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement?

“Muslim prayers in the streets are an occupation of French territory. There are, of course, no tanks, there are no soldiers, but it is nevertheless an occupation, and it weighs heavily on local residents. Our integrity is bound to one national community, one language, one culture.”

*A majority of French people agree with Le Pen’s statement that “Muslim prayers in the streets are an occupation of French territory...and it weighs heavily on local residents.”*

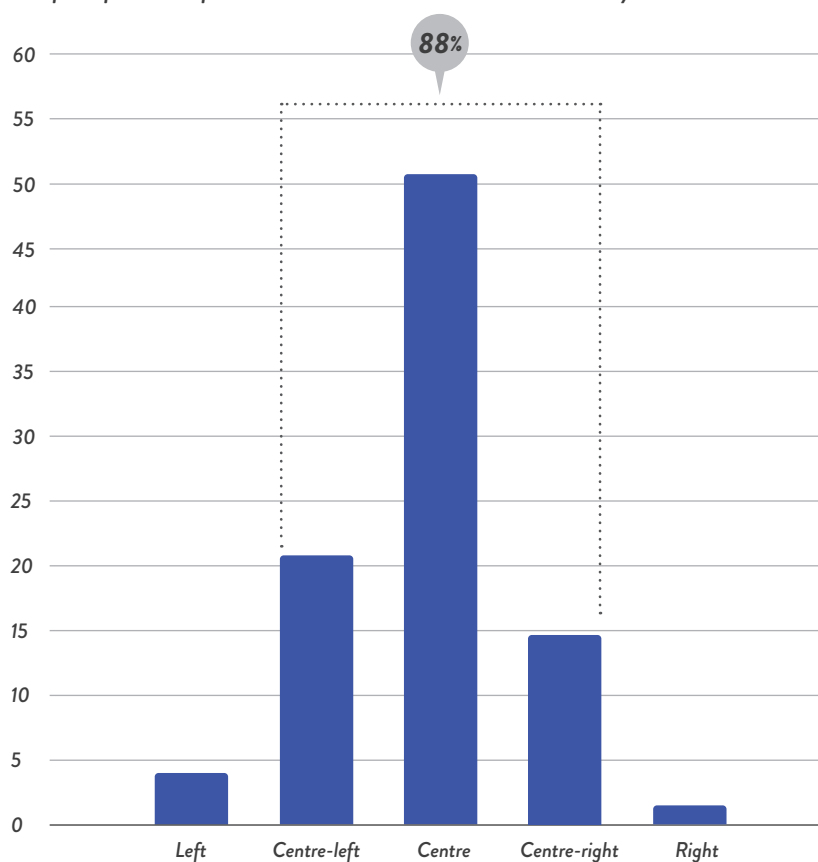


# Germany

## Support for the centre is especially strong in Germany.

Q: Think about your own politics now. What number between 0 to 10 best describes your personal political beliefs on a 0 to 10 scale where 0 = extremely left and 10 = extremely right?<sup>1</sup>

### Self-reported political orientation in Germany



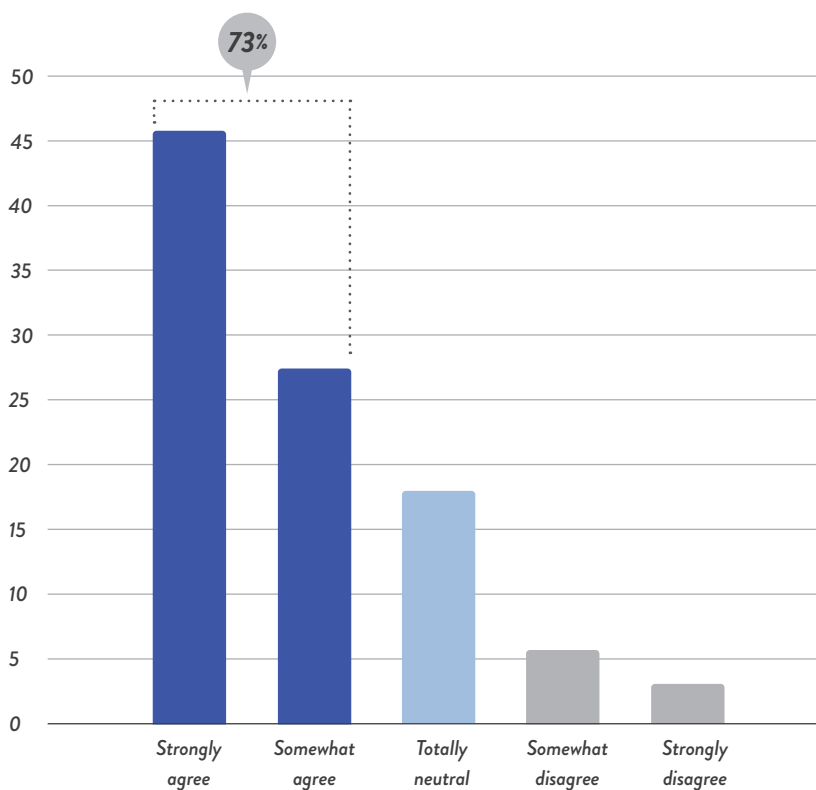
<sup>1</sup> 0-1 are categorized as left, 2-3 are centre-left, 4-6 are as centre, 7-8 are centre-right, 9-10 are right.

## Germans are drawn to positive rhetoric about the key tenets of liberal democracy.

Q: Overall, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement?

“To exclude groups of people because of their faith isn’t worthy of the free state in which we live. It isn’t compatible with our essential values. And its humanly reprehensible: Xenophobia, racism, extremism have no place here. We are fighting to ensure that they don’t have a place anywhere else, either.”

*A majority of Germans agree with Merkel that “to exclude groups of people because of their faith isn’t worthy of the free state in which we live”*

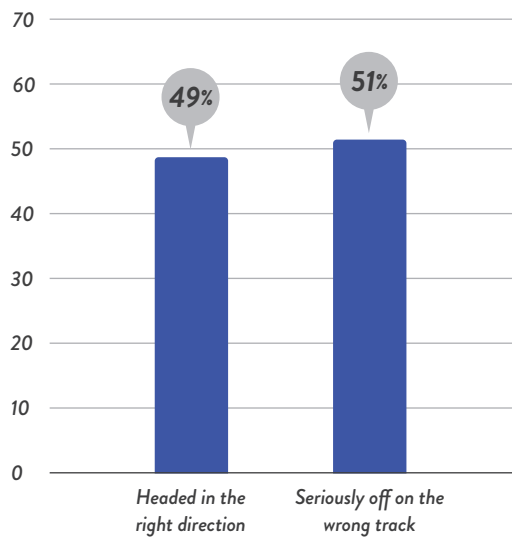




## But they are sceptical when it comes to specifics such as refugee policy.

Q: When it comes to refugee policy, do you think that Germany is seriously off on the wrong track or headed in the right direction?

### *Opinion on refugee policy*

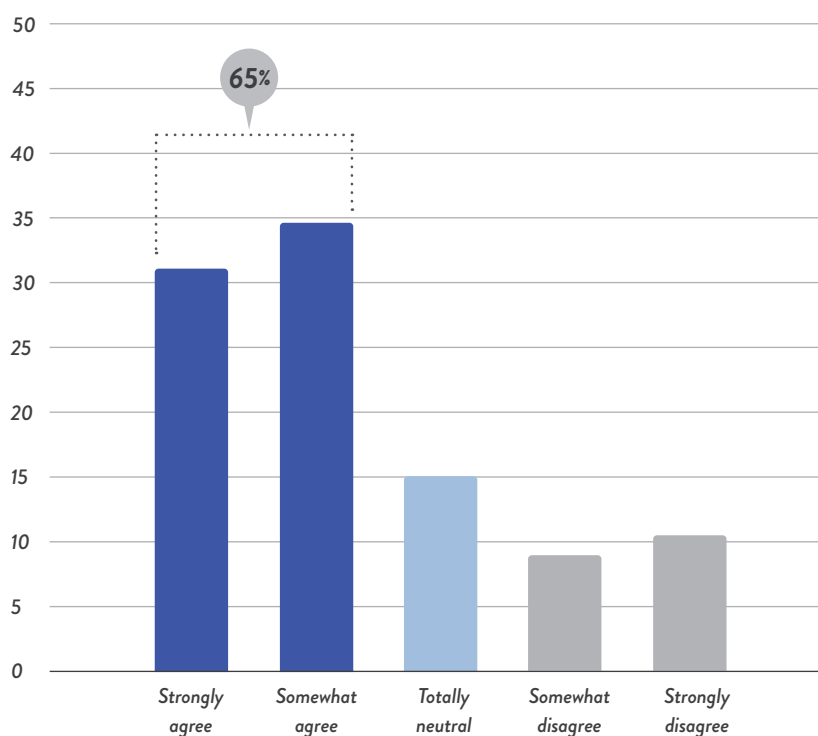


## Voters are very worried about Islamist extremism.

Q: Overall, do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree or disagree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statement?

“This bloodbath of innocent people proves wrong those who laughed at, or ignored the fears of so many people about a looming danger of Islamism. It has to be stopped.”

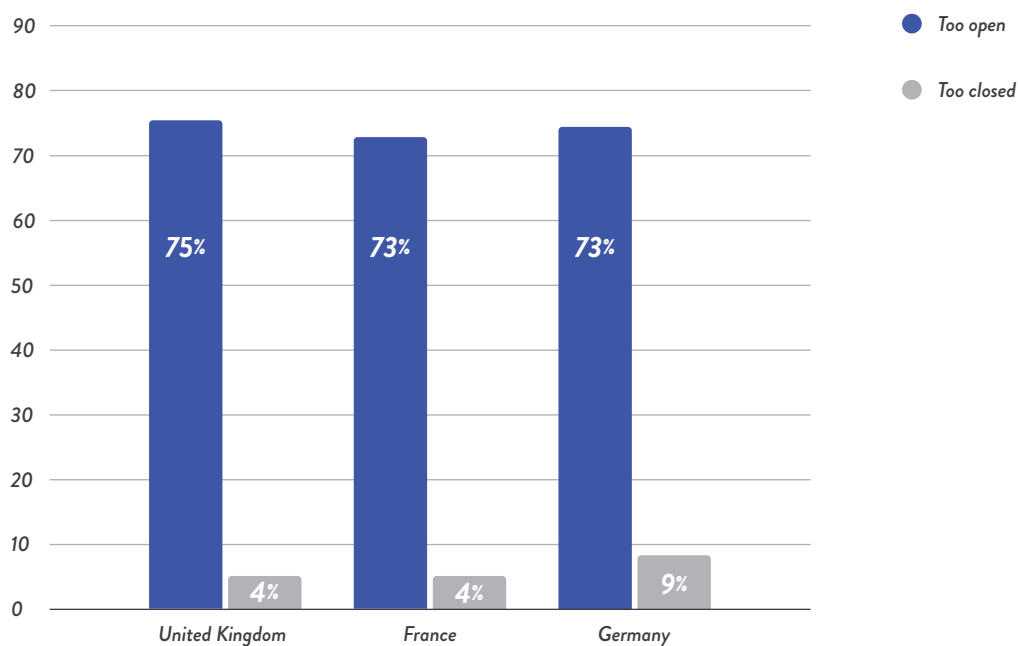
*A majority of Germans also agree though with the AfD platform that “the looming danger of Islam has to be stopped”*



## ...and share the French and British preference for a less open immigration system.

Q: Overall, do you think that Germany/France/Britain's immigration policy today is far too open, somewhat too open, just about right, somewhat too closed, or far too closed?

*People in the France, UK, and Germany think immigration policy today is too open*



## FOLLOW US

facebook.com/instituteglobal  
twitter.com/instituteGC

## GENERAL ENQUIRIES

info@institute.global

Analysis by: Monica Hersher and Yascha Mounk

### Methodology

Respondent type: 18 years of age and older, representative of the national UK/French/German population in terms of age and gender

Fieldwork dates: May-June 2017

Sample size: 3026

Poll conducted by Luntz Global Partners

Weighting: Weighted to represent a population of N = 1000 from each country and to be representative of age, gender, education, and party affiliation by country and of the Le Pen/Macron voting outcome in France and Brexit vote, 2015 election results, and 2017 exit polls in the UK

Copyright © July 2017 by the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change

All rights reserved. Citation, reproduction and or translation of this publication, in whole or in part, for educational or other non-commercial purposes is authorised provided the source is fully acknowledged. Tony Blair Institute, trading as Tony Blair Institute for Global Change, is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (registered company number: 10505963) whose registered office is 50 Broadway, London, SW1H 0BL.

FIND OUT MORE  
**INSTITUTE.GLOBAL**