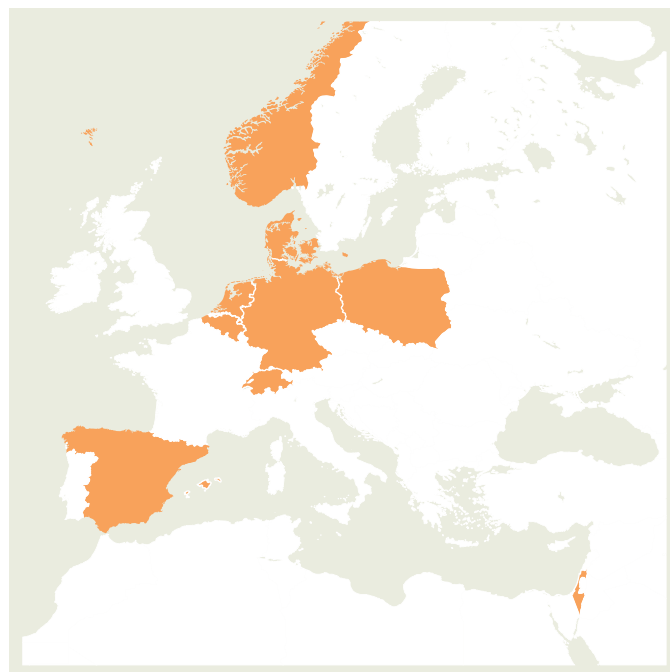


A large-scale survey on trust in regulatory regimes in Europe — overview and selected results

The TiGRE survey examines trust between actors involved in the regulatory regimes for data protection, financial services and food safety. The survey was fielded between December 2020 and January 2021 in nine different countries and at the EU level. Respondents, selected for their expertise within the abovementioned sectors, work at organisations that encompass the entire regulatory regime – from legislators to regulatory agencies to regulated organisations. The dataset, comprising of 1,484 unique observations, provides crucial cross-country, cross-sector insight into trust in European regulatory governance. This information sheet focuses on the results from survey responses in the nine countries and highlights key findings.



Trust in the Regulatory Regime

// We measure trust in the entire regulatory regime by getting at the 'heart of each sector'; a main goal of data protection regulation is to protect citizens' personal data, a main goal of financial regulation is to protect citizens' financial assets, a main goal of food regulation is to provide citizens with safe food.

Tobias Bach, Professor,
University of Oslo

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Survey respondents were asked to think about how either the protection of personal data, financial services, or food is regulated in their country, depending on which sector they work in. They were then posed the following question → **How confident can citizens be that** [their personal data is handled safely/their financial assets are handled safely/the food they eat is safe]?

Respondents answered on the following scale: (1) Completely unconfident, (2) Unconfident, (3) Rather unconfident, (4) Neither unconfident nor confident, (5) Rather confident, (6) Confident, (7) Completely confident

Respondents, on average, trust in the regulation of their sector, but... /

/ ...trust in financial services and food safety regulation is higher than in data protection regulation

This pattern holds true for all countries except for Spain, where trust is lowest in financial services regulation.

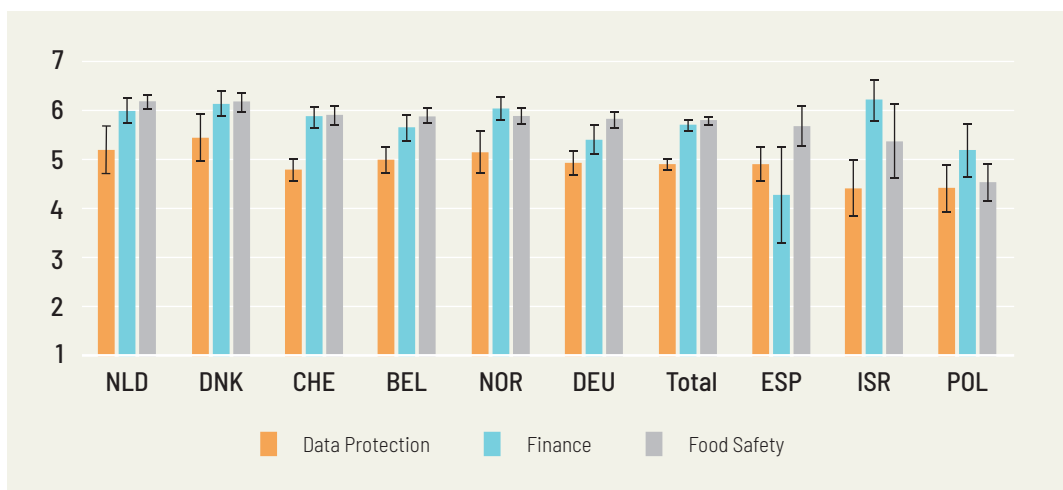
/ ...trust levels differ by country and sector

Regardless of the sector in question, respondents in Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway consistently have comparatively high (means \geq total mean) trust in regulation, while respondents in Poland consistently have comparatively low (means $<$ total mean) trust in regulation. But, interestingly, trust in regulation differs among respondents in Belgium, Germany, Spain, Switzerland and Israel based on the sector in question. Belgium, Germany and Spain are among the countries with higher levels of trust in data protection regulation whereas Switzerland and Israel are among the countries with lower levels of trust. The opposite pattern emerges for trust in financial regulation. Finally, with regards to food safety regulation, Switzerland, Belgium and Germany are among the countries with higher levels of trust and Spain and Israel among the countries with lower levels of trust. However, it is important to emphasize that respondents, on average, have trust in the regulation of their sector.

/ ...some respondents are more likely to trust the regulatory regime than others

When analysing the results according to respondents' individual characteristics, only some significant findings emerge. Respondents who hold leadership roles, who have more generalised trust in people, and who work in the financial and food sectors are more likely to trust in the regulation of their sector. Interestingly, the organisation at which respondents work, such as whether they work in public bodies or regulated organisations, does not impact their trust in regulation.

Trust in regulatory regimes across countries and sectors (means, N=323-627), ordered by highest to lowest mean by the variable 'food safety'



Change in Trust in the Regulatory Regime

After asking about their current trust in the regulatory regime, respondents were asked to reflect on the past. Then, they received a sector-specific version of the question → **Compared to the situation approximately five years ago, can citizens now be more or less confident that** [their data is handled safely/their financial assets are handled safely/the food they eat is safe]?

Respondents answered on the following scale: (1) Much less confident, (2) Less confident, (3) Slightly less confident, (4) Neither less nor more confident, (5) Slightly more confident, (6) More confident, (7) Much more confident

Respondents, on average, have more trust in the regulation of their sector now than they did five years ago. Interestingly...

...some countries with high trust also report high increase in trust

In Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain respondents, on average, report both comparatively high (means \geq total mean) trust and high (means \geq total mean) increase in trust in data protection regulation. The same holds true for respondents in Israel, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland with respect to financial sector regulation and for respondents in Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Switzerland with respect to food safety regulation.

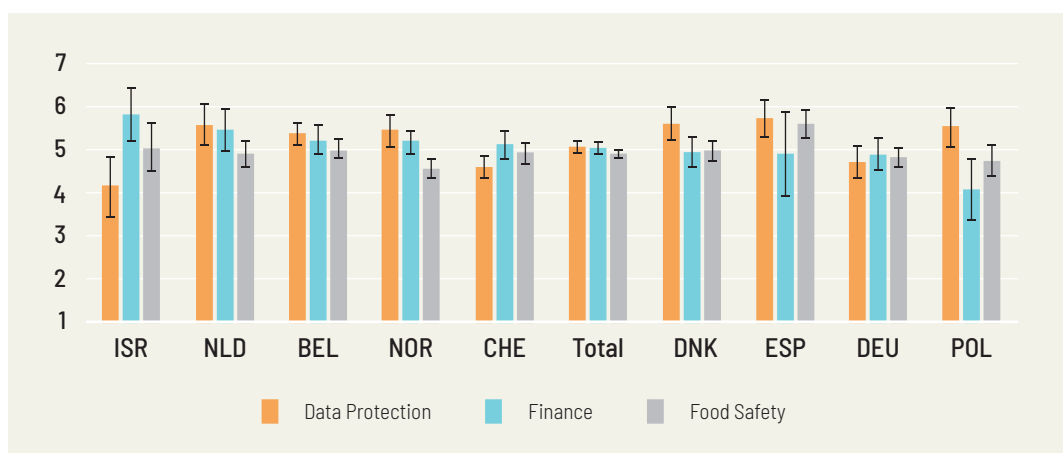
...some countries that report low trust report high increase in trust

On average, respondents in Poland report comparatively lower (means $<$ total mean) trust, but comparatively higher (means \geq total mean) increase in trust in data protection regulation. The same holds true for respondents from Belgium with respect to financial sector regulation and for respondents from Israel and Spain with respect to food safety regulation.

...some countries that report low trust also report low increase in trust

Respondents from Israel and Switzerland report, on average, both comparatively lower (means $<$ total mean) trust and lower (means $<$ total mean) increase in trust in data protection regulation. With regards to financial sector regulation, respondents from Germany, Poland and Spain also report comparatively lower trust and lower increase in trust, as do respondents from Poland with respect to food safety regulation.

Change in trust in regulatory regimes across sectors and countries (means, N=314-619), ordered by highest to lowest mean by the variable 'finance'



Trust in Actors in the Regulatory Regime

// This question measures respondents' trust in actors that play an important role in regulatory regimes when it comes to preparing, deciding, implementing, mediating, and supervising regulations, or dealing with litigations about these regulations. Tobias Bach, Professor, University of Oslo //

Respondents were asked to think of their experience in their organisation and posed the question:

➔ **How much trust do you have in each of the following institutions?** [Scale: 0-10, (0) No trust at all, (10) Complete trust]

- / National agency(ies) regulating [the sector]
- / European Union level body(ies) regulating [the sector]
- / Ministry(ies) involved in developing and implementing [sector-specific legislation]
- / Politicians in national parliament deciding upon [sector-specific legislation]
- / Certification and accreditation bodies [working with the sector]
- / Courts

Respondents, on average, have the highest trust in regulatory agencies and courts and the lowest levels of trust in parliaments, but...

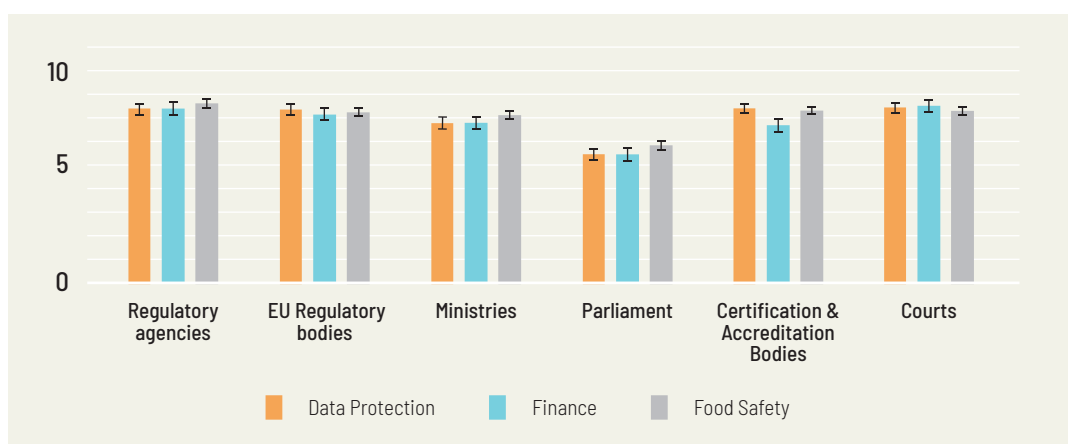
...trust levels, while similar across sectors, differ by country

While there are few sectoral differences, trust for all national actors is highest (means \geq total mean) in Norway and Denmark, compared with other countries, and is lowest (means $<$ total mean) in Israel and Poland, compared with other countries. For trust in EU regulatory bodies, the pattern differs slightly. Respondents in Denmark, Spain, Norway, the Netherlands, Israel and Belgium have slightly higher trust in EU regulatory bodies than respondents in Poland, Switzerland and Germany. However, trust in EU regulatory bodies is quite high across all countries (means > 6.5).

...some respondents are more likely to trust actors involved in the regulatory regime

Respondents' backgrounds influence their trust in different actors. Overall, when respondents have more generalised trust in people, they are more likely to trust in the abovementioned actors. Moreover, respondents who have a more positive attitude towards stricter government regulation of the economy are more likely to trust regulatory agencies, EU regulatory bodies, ministries and parliament. Age, gender and education level also influence respondents' propensity to trust in some actors; respondents who have higher levels of education are more likely to trust EU regulatory bodies, respondents who are female (as opposed to male) are more likely to trust parliament, and respondents who are younger are more likely to trust certification and accreditation bodies. The organisation at which respondents work also influences their propensity to trust some actors. Respondents working at interest groups are less likely to trust regulatory agencies, EU regulatory bodies and ministries; respondents working at regulated organisations are less likely to trust regulatory agencies and ministries; and respondents working at certification and accreditation bodies are less likely to trust ministries.

Trust in actors (Means, N=239-566), ordered as they appeared in the survey question



Further research

This information sheet only presents selected results from the TiGRE survey. The TiGRE project will build off the findings of the survey, conducting interviews and case studies to qualitatively investigate the dynamics of trust and distrust between stakeholders at different levels.

