

#### Public Opinion on an Ever More Differentiated EU

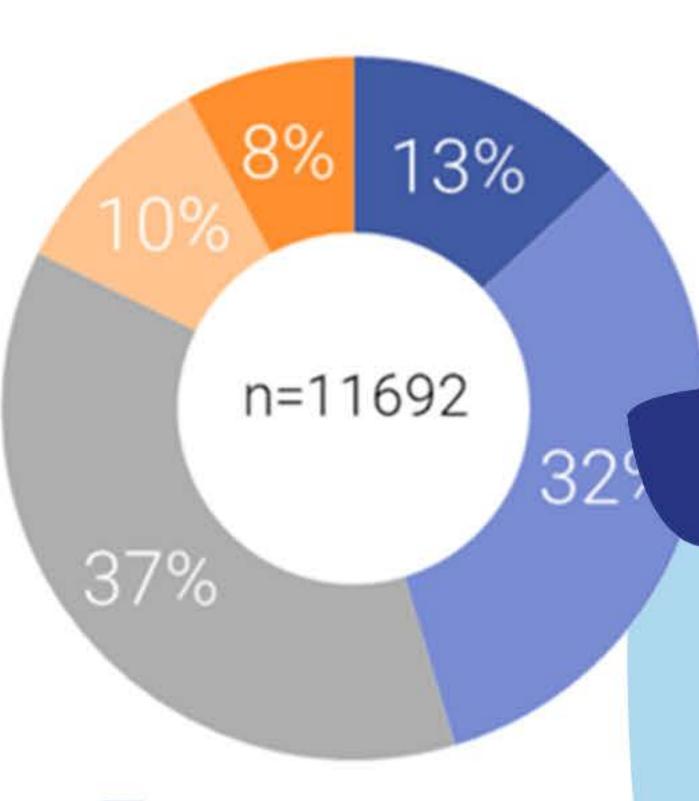
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Based on the Policy Paper by Anna Stahl, Jacques Delors Institute

# Discussion on differentiated integration of the EU

- To deal with the EU's unprecedented internal and external challenges, as well as the complex EU machinery, differentiation is needed
- Differentiation = "coalition of the willing" through which certain
   European member states work closely together on specific policy areas
- Current political and academic debate on differentiated integration addresses two forms:
  - internal differentiation: the differentiation among EU member states
  - external differentiation: the selective policy integration of non-EU states



Strongly support
Somewhat support
Neither support nor oppose
Somewhat oppose
Strongly oppose

## Finding 1: Deficient public understanding of differentiation

#### Question:

To what extend do you support, or oppose, the following statement: "Instead of a European Union where all 27 member states decide on policies together, there should be the option to form " coalistions of the willing", through which certain member states would choose to work closely together on specific policy areas."

Figure 1 - Public support of differentiated integration

### Public opinion and differentiation

Little attention to public opinion in the debate on a differentiated EU: We carried out an Opinion poll, here our Main findings:

- 1. Deficient public understanding of differentiation
- European integration and differentiation do not necessarily contrast
- 3. Public opinion of differentiation is not independent from governmental choices
- 4. North-South divide regarding the support for deeper economic integration and the eurozone
- 5. Lack of public support for Schengen
- 6. EU citizens are sceptical of differentiation as a response to major challenges (e.g. economic crises, international conflicts, migration)
- 7. Citizens from non-EU states diverge regarding their preferences on the scope and content of cooperation with the EU
- 8. Regarding the content, trade is generally considered to be the most beneficial area of cooperation

#### Policy recommendations

- 1. Foster knowledge of differentiated integration among European citizens
- 2. Promote and reform the Schengen area
- 3. Adopt a tailor-made approach to external differentiation

- Opinion poll conducted in 27 EU Member States & 4 non-EU states (UK, Ukraine, Turkey, Norway)
- Time frame: August and September 2020 (during the Covid-19 pandemic)