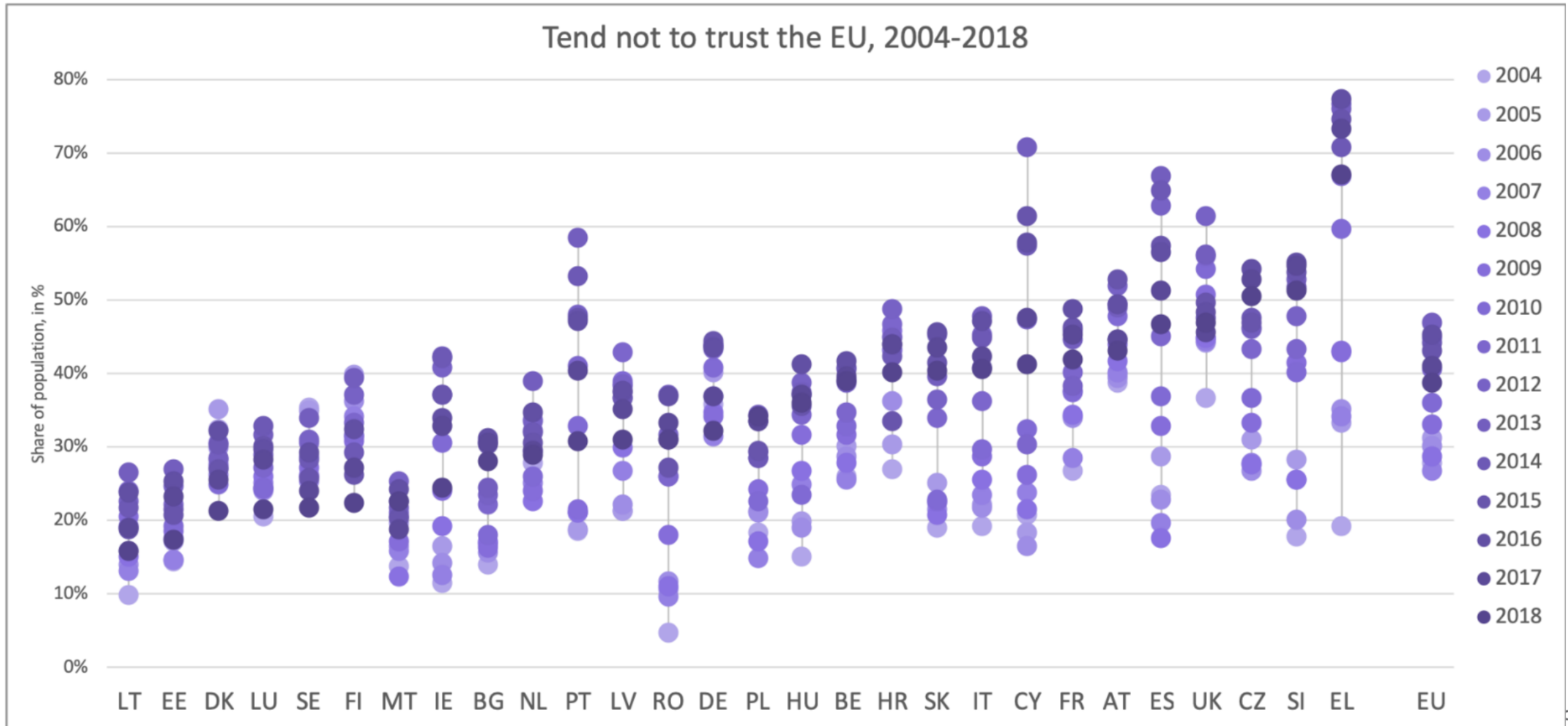




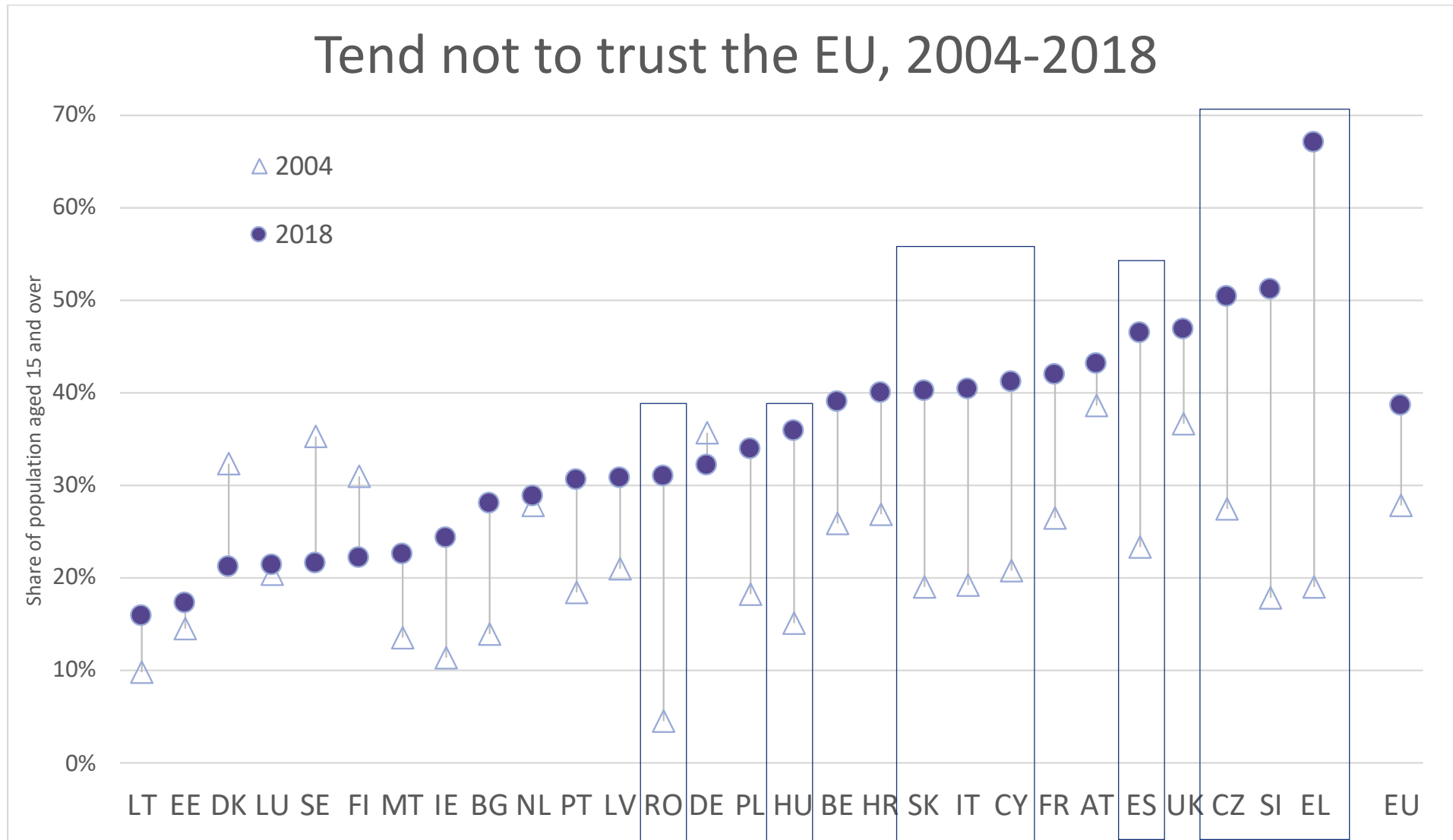
The geography of EU trust and Euroscepticism

By Lewis Dijkstra, Head of the Economic Analysis Sector,
DG for Regional and Urban Policy

Trust in the EU declines, 2004-2018

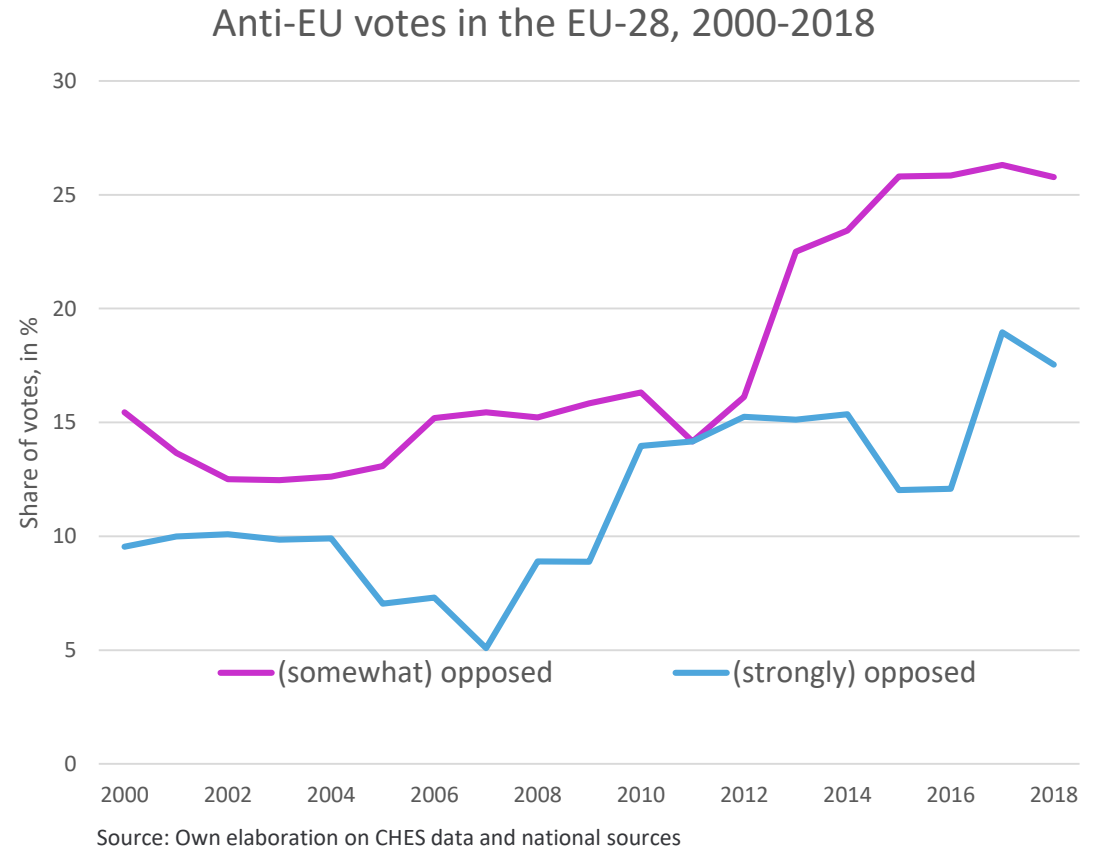


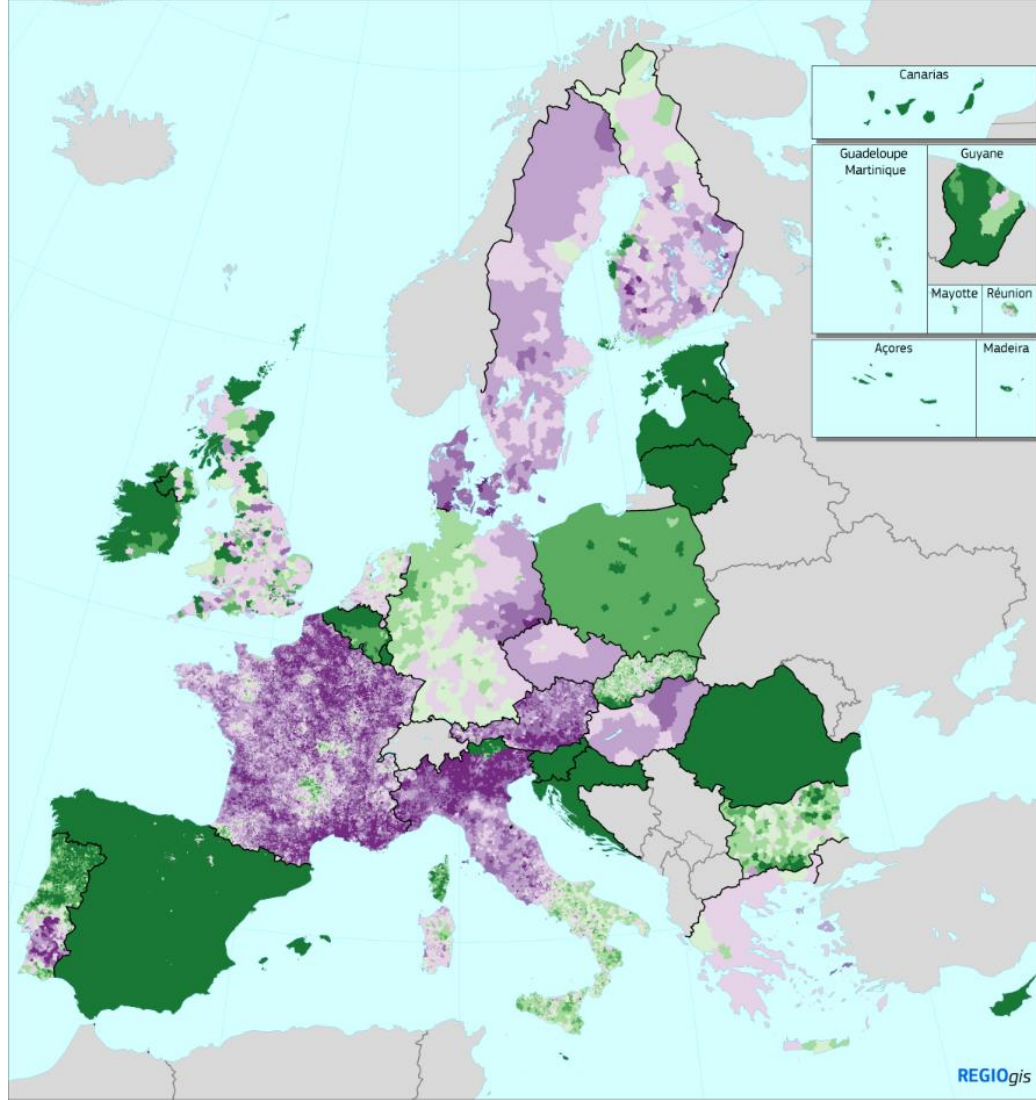
In 9 MS, distrust up by more than 20pp, In 18 MS by more than 10pp



What is Euroscepticism?

- Defined by the Chapel Hill Expert Survey as parties opposed to EU integration
- Has roughly doubled since early 2000s
- EU distrust has also grown.
- Votes in the most recent national election between 2013 and 2018 for 63,000 electoral districts



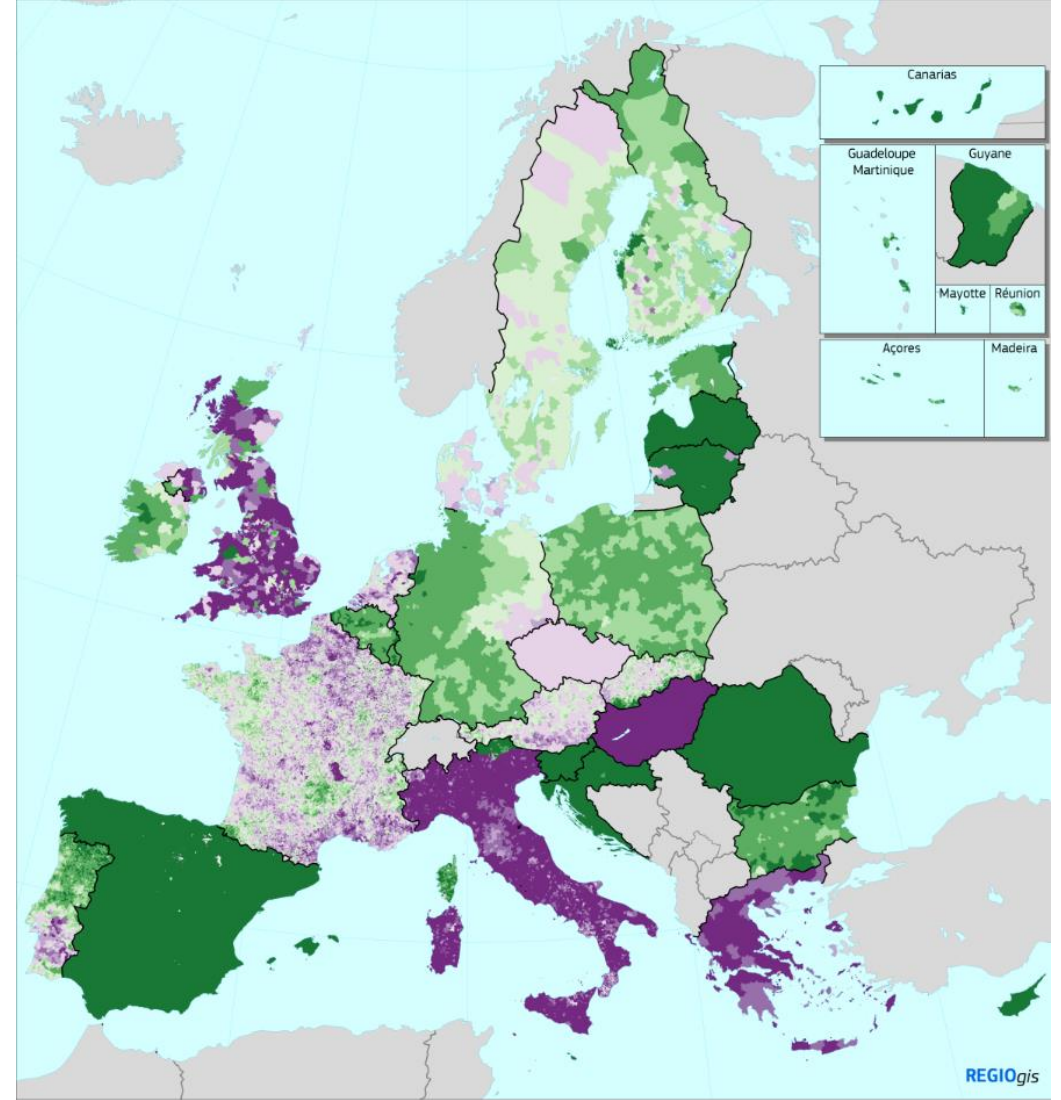


Minimum share of votes for parties (strongly) opposed to European integration, 2013-2018

% of valid votes

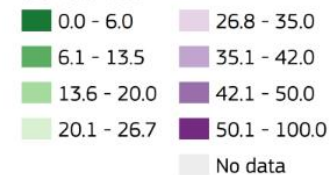


Sources: national authorities, CLEA, Chapel Hill Expert Surveys 2014 and 2017, EuroGeographics, DG REGIO
 Election years:
 2018: IT
 2017: BG, CZ, DE, FR, MT, NL, AT
 2016: IE, ES, HR, CY, LT, RO, SK
 2015: DK, EE, EL, PL, PT, FI, UK
 2014: BE, LV, HU, SI, SE
 2013: LU
 EU-28 average = 13.4%



Minimum share of votes for parties somewhat opposed, opposed or strongly opposed to European integration, 2013-2018

% of valid votes

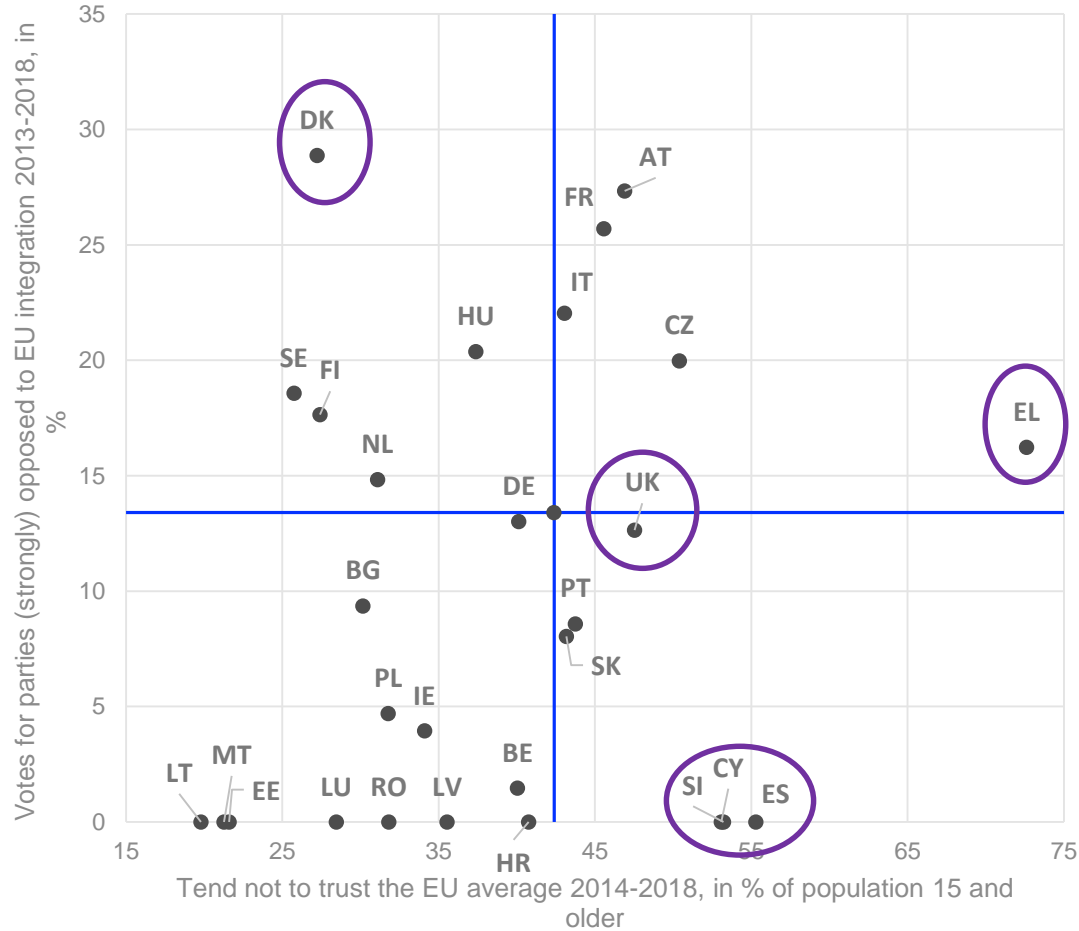


Sources: national authorities, CLEA, Chapel Hill Expert Surveys 2014 and 2017, EuroGeographics, DG REGIO
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 2018: IT
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 2016: IE, ES, HR, CY, LT, RO, SK
 2015: DK, EE, EL, PL, PT, FI, UK
 2014: BE, LV, HU, SI, SE
 2013: LU
 EU-28 average = 26.7%

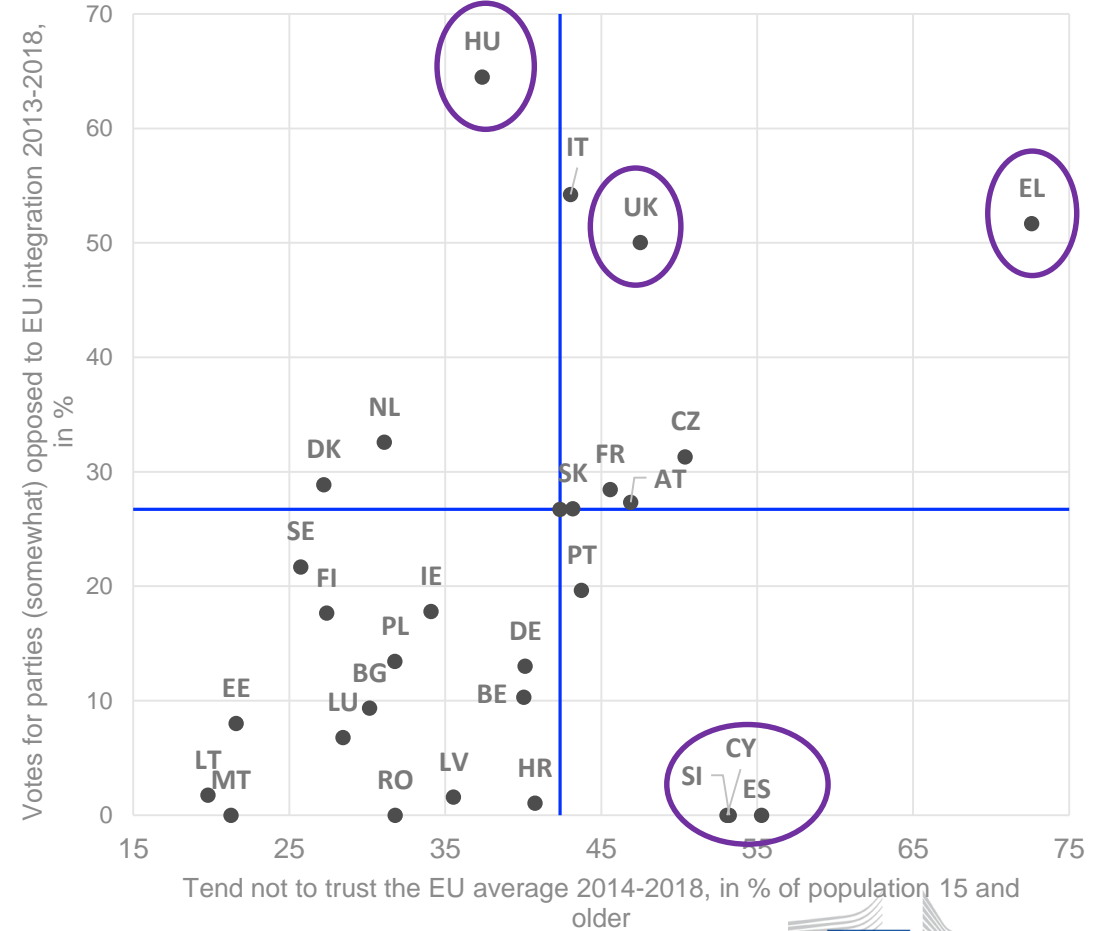


Tend not to trust & anti-EU votes

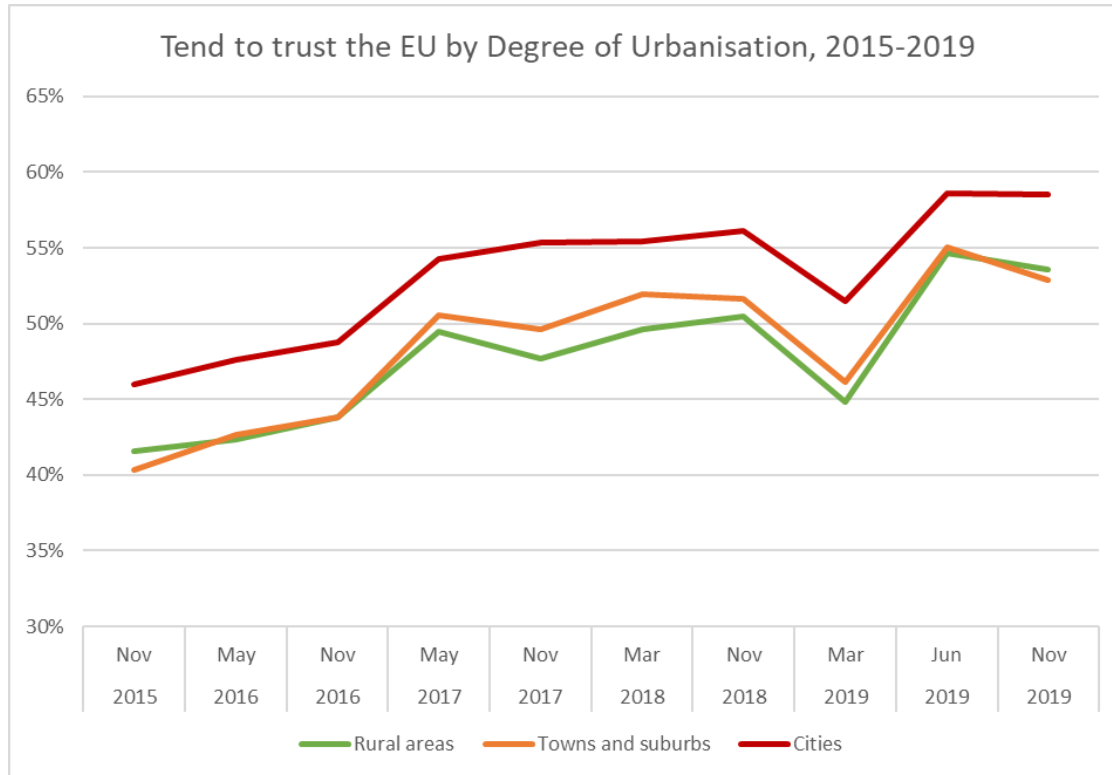
(Strongly) against EU integration



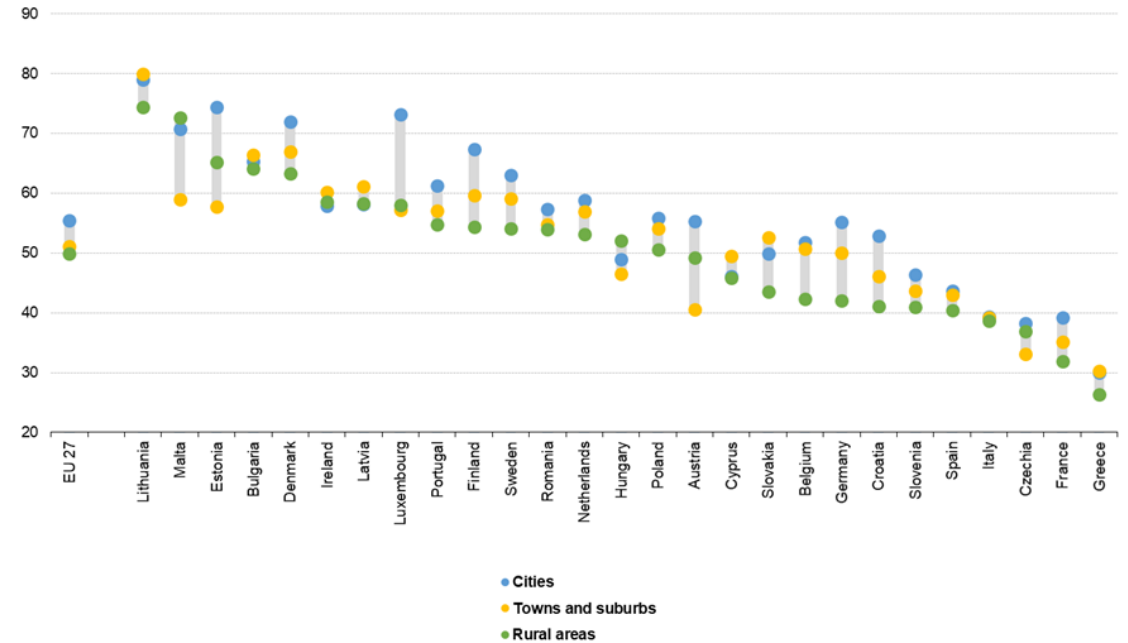
(Somewhat) against EU integration



Less rural residents trust the EU

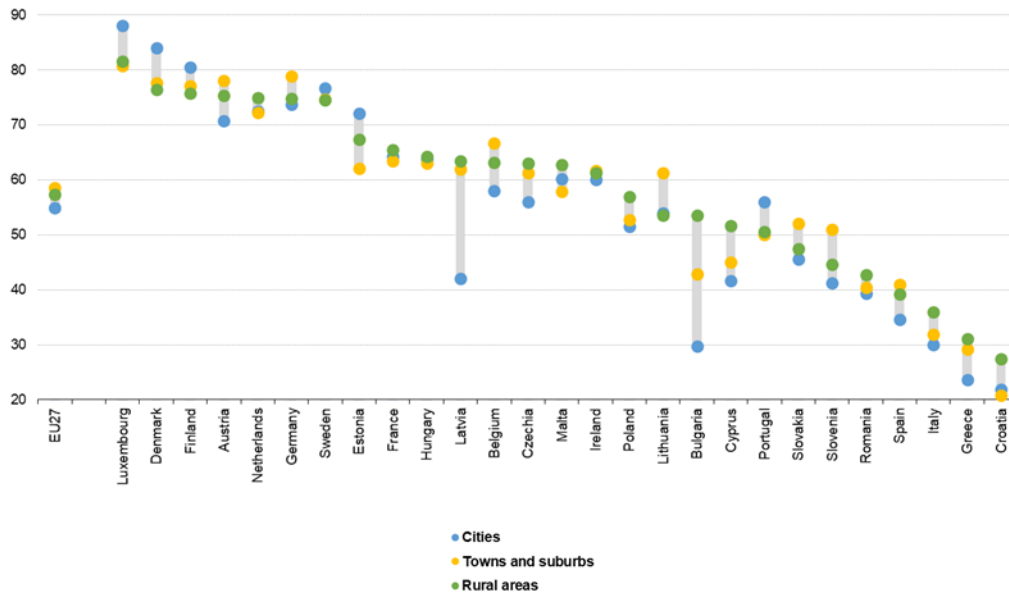


Proportion of population who tends to trust the EU, 2018-2019
(%, share of population aged 15 years or over, by degree of urbanisation)

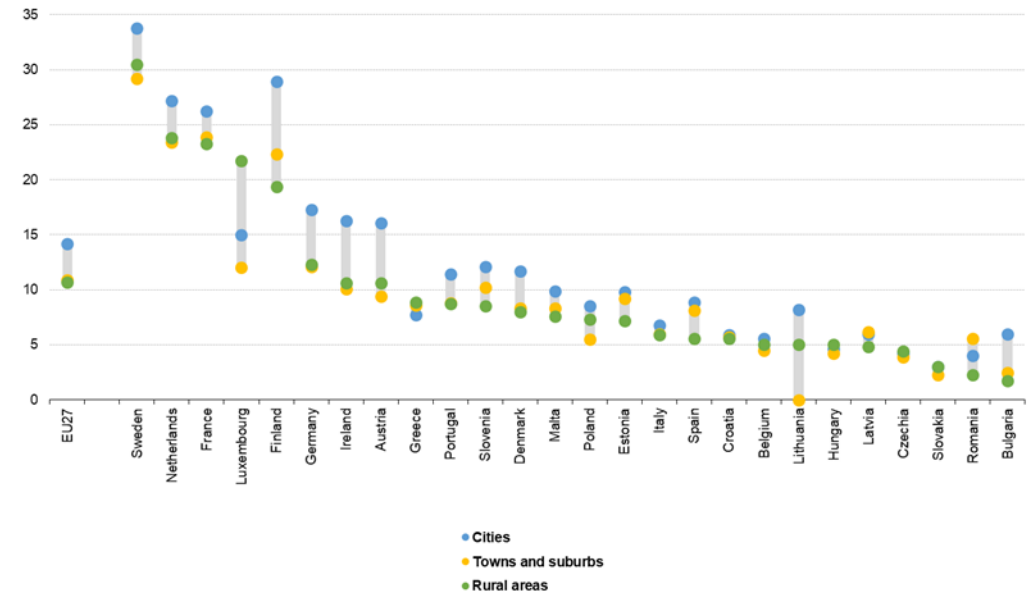


Rural more likely to trust local governments, but less likely to be an active citizen

Proportion of population who tends to trust regional or local authorities, 2018-2019
(% share of population aged 15 years or over, by degree of urbanisation)

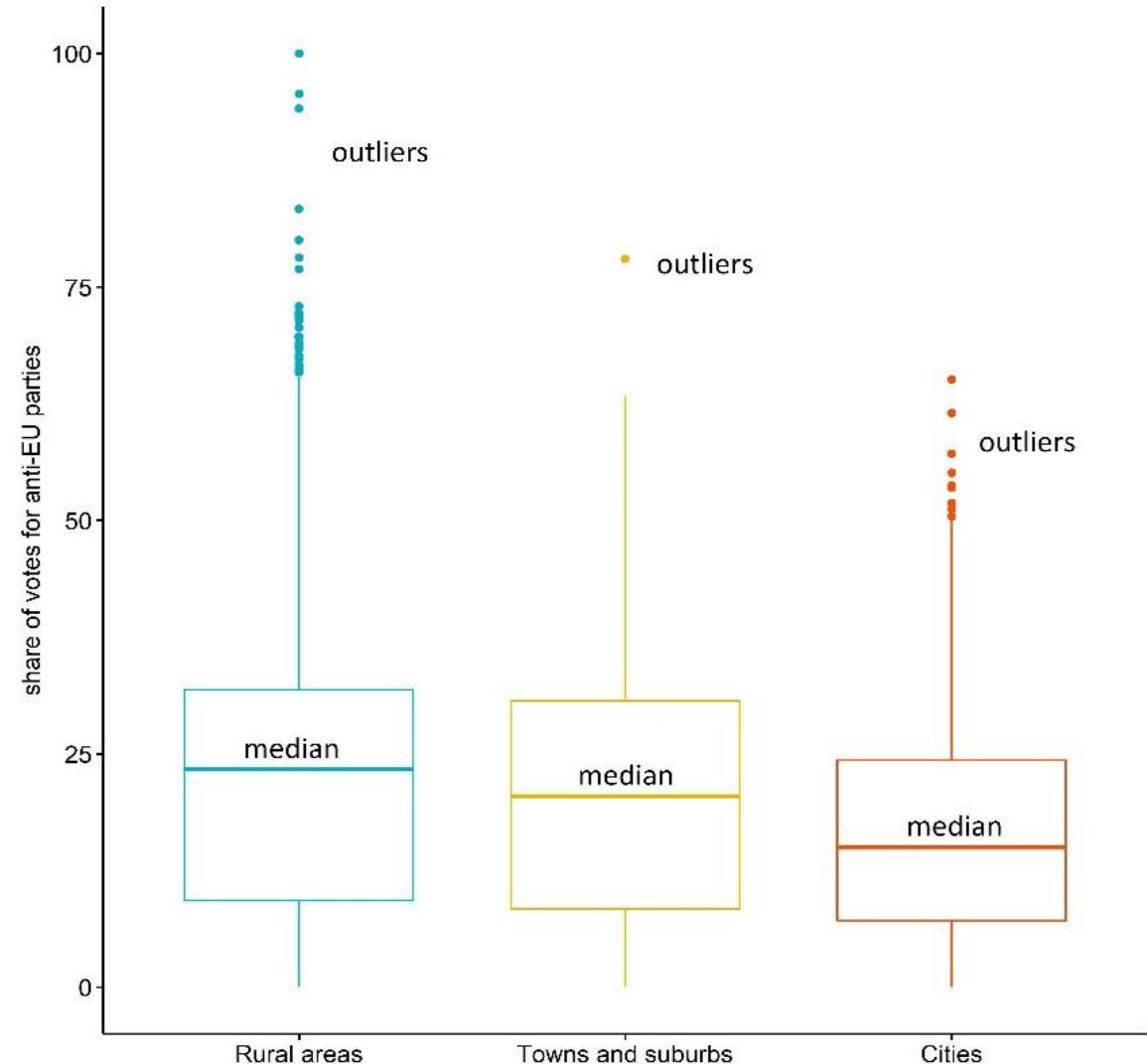


Proportion of population that were active citizens, 2015
(% share of population, by degree of urbanisation)



Rural Euroscepticism is higher...

- The share of votes for anti-EU parties is significantly higher in rural areas than in cities, towns and suburbs
- The rural median vote share is 8 pp higher than in cities (23.4% vs 15.0%)
- The rural median vote share is 3 pp higher than in towns and suburbs (23.4% vs 20.5%)



What drives Euroscepticism in cities, towns and suburbs and rural areas?

	Declining GDP	Increasing unemployment	High share migrants from EU	High share non-EU migrants	High share tertiary educated	High share of people aged			Higher Turnout	Neighbourhood density
						20-39	40-64	65+		
Cities		↑		↑				↑	↓	↓
Towns and suburbs		↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑		↓	↓
Rural areas	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑		↓	↓

 Increases
 Decreases
 } Anti-EU votes

Conclusions

- Trust in the EU dropped after the crisis, but has started to recover
- Low trust is linked to anti-EU voting
- Rural residents are less likely to trust the EU and more likely to vote anti-EU compared to city dwellers
- But rural residents are more likely to trust their local and regional governments than city dwellers
- Eurosceptic voting is highest in rural areas that have low economic growth, increasing unemployment, a higher share of non-EU migrants and middle-aged residents, lower turnout and low neighbourhood density

More information

- https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/working-papers/2018/the-geography-of-eu-discontent
- https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/working-papers/2020/does-cohesion-policy-reduce-eu-discontent-and-euroscepticism
- https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/information/publications/working-papers/2020/the-urban-rural-divide-in-anti-eu-vote-social-demographic-and-economic-factors-affecting-the-vote-for-parties-opposed-to-european-integration
- https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/long-term-vision-rural-areas_en

