

EU'S EXTERNAL DEMOCRACY ACTION IN A NEW GEOPOLITICAL REALITY

Recommendations Report

By the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

sweden
2023.eu



International IDEA

Member States



Chair
Netherlands
Joined 1995



First Vice Chair
Chile
Joined 1995



First Vice Chair
Ghana
Joined 2008



Australia
Joined 1995



Barbados
Joined 1995



Belgium
Joined 1995



Benin
Joined 2016



Botswana
Joined 1997



Brazil
Joined 2016



Canada
Joined 1997



Cape Verde
Joined 2003



Costa Rica
Joined 1995



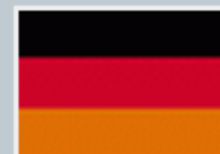
Dominican Republic
Joined 2011



Estonia
Joined 2021



Finland
Joined 1995



Germany
Joined 2002



India
Joined 1995



Indonesia
Joined 2013



Luxembourg
Joined 2018



Mauritius
Joined 1999



Mexico
Joined 2003



Mongolia
Joined 2011



Namibia
Joined 1997



Norway
Joined 1995



Panama
Joined 2018



Peru
Joined 2004



Philippines
Joined 2013



Portugal
Joined 1995



South Africa
Joined 1995



Spain
Joined 1995



Sweden
Joined 1995



Switzerland
Joined 2006



Tunisia
Joined 2019



Uruguay
Joined 2003



United States
(official observer)



Japan
(official observer)

Context

1. A new geopolitical reality since 2020

Covid 19 pandemic, Russia's war against Ukraine

2. Increasing authoritarian trends

3. New challenges to democracy

New topics (e.g. digitalization, disinformation, polarization) and increasing challenges (e.g. inequality, social justice, climate change)



4. Swedish Presidency of the Council of the EU

5. Mid-Term review of the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy

Methodology



104 Civil Society Representatives
53 Countries



15 Civil Society and Third Country Informants
26 EU and Member States Officials



Surveys

- 1-** EU Member States
- 2-** All consulted Stakeholders

Preliminary considerations

1

Democracy is **high** on the global agenda

2

EU is an **appreciated** democracy actor (can build on its achievements)

3

Given the new geopolitical reality, room exist to further **strengthen** the EU's external democracy policy

Key recommendations



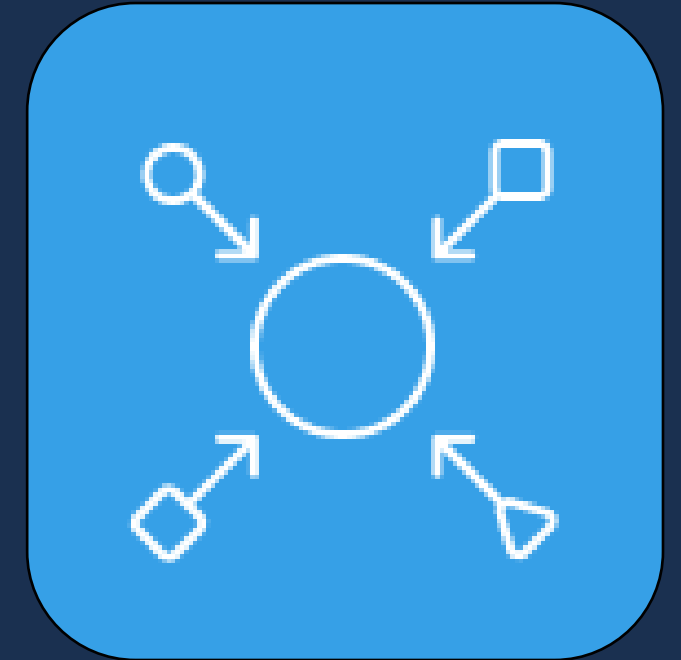
Build a **NEW NARRATIVE** on democracy



Use democracy **AS A GUIDE** in all EU external policies



Adopt an **EU INTEGRATED APPROACH** to democracy support in external relations



Make EU democracy policy more **INCLUSIVE** from design to implementation and more **GENDER** and **YOUTH RESPONSIVE**



Build a **new narrative** on democracy

- » Democracy as a **universal aspiration** and **best system to deliver**
- » Be **humble** and **transparent**
- » **Lead by example** (address the internal and external nexus)
- » **Listen to partners**
- » Defuse **us vs them** perceptions

Use democracy **as a guide** in all EU external policies

(eg. trade, security, energy...)

- » Be more **political** and use **conditionality** more systematically and coherently
- » Explain how it **balances its democracy goals with other interests**
- » Introduce **democracy-based approach** to development cooperation
- » Update its **democracy toolbox**



Adopt an **EU integrated approach** to democracy support in external relations

(linking democracy, human rights, rule of law, anticorruption ...)

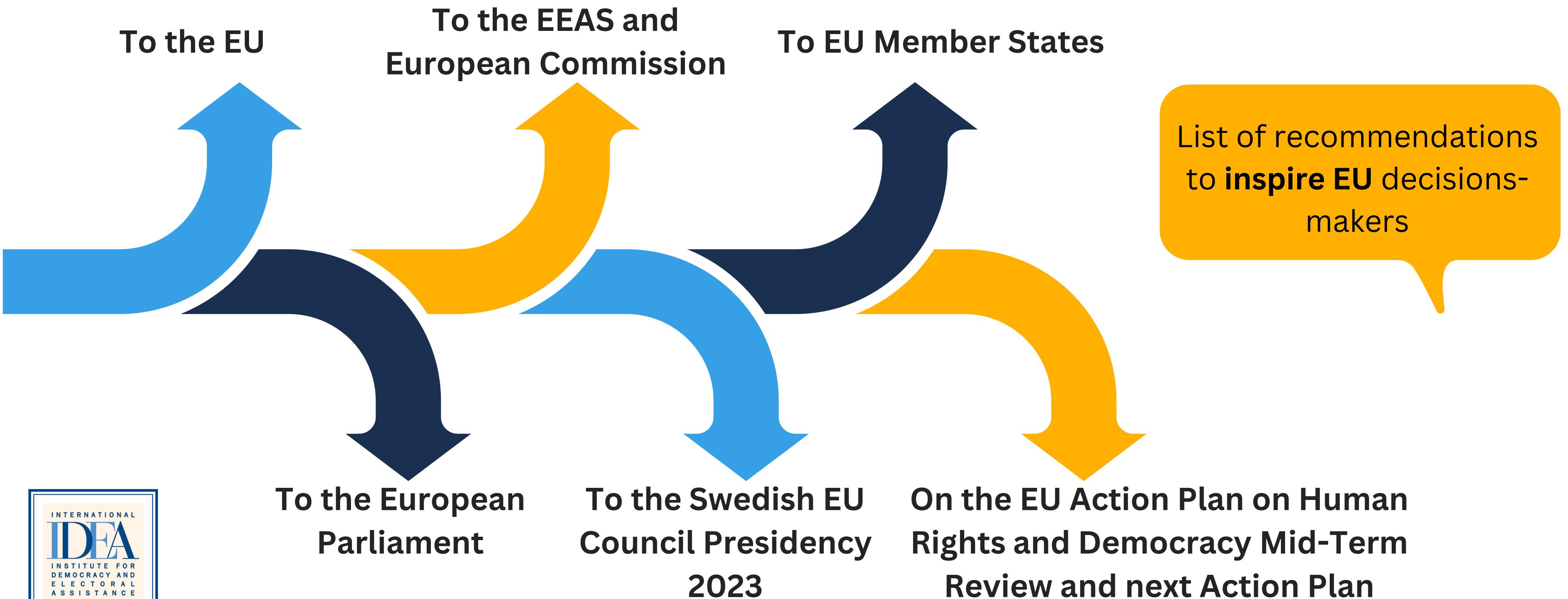
- » Develop an **Integrated Approach to Democracy Support** in the Next EU Action Plan
- » Introduce a comprehensive **democracy assessment framework** as an internal tool
- » Adopt **EU Guidelines on Democracy**

Make EU democracy policy more **inclusive** from design to implementation and **more gender and youth responsive**

- » **Involve civil society** in democracy policymaking and relevant dialogues. Revise civil society support.
- » Set up **democracy cohort(s)** to prepare for the next Action Plan



Specific recommendations for strengthening the EU democracy toolbox



Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy

Mid Term Review

Make sure the **Council Conclusions** adopting the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy Mid-Term Review are **political** in their messaging.

Identify a **restricted number of top democracy priorities** (disinformation; countering democratic backsliding and the closing of civic space; digital sphere; corruption).

Set up **democracy cohort(s)**, to bring together all interested parties and especially civil society, EU Member States and the European Parliament into the design and implementation for the next EU Action Plan.

Next Action Plan

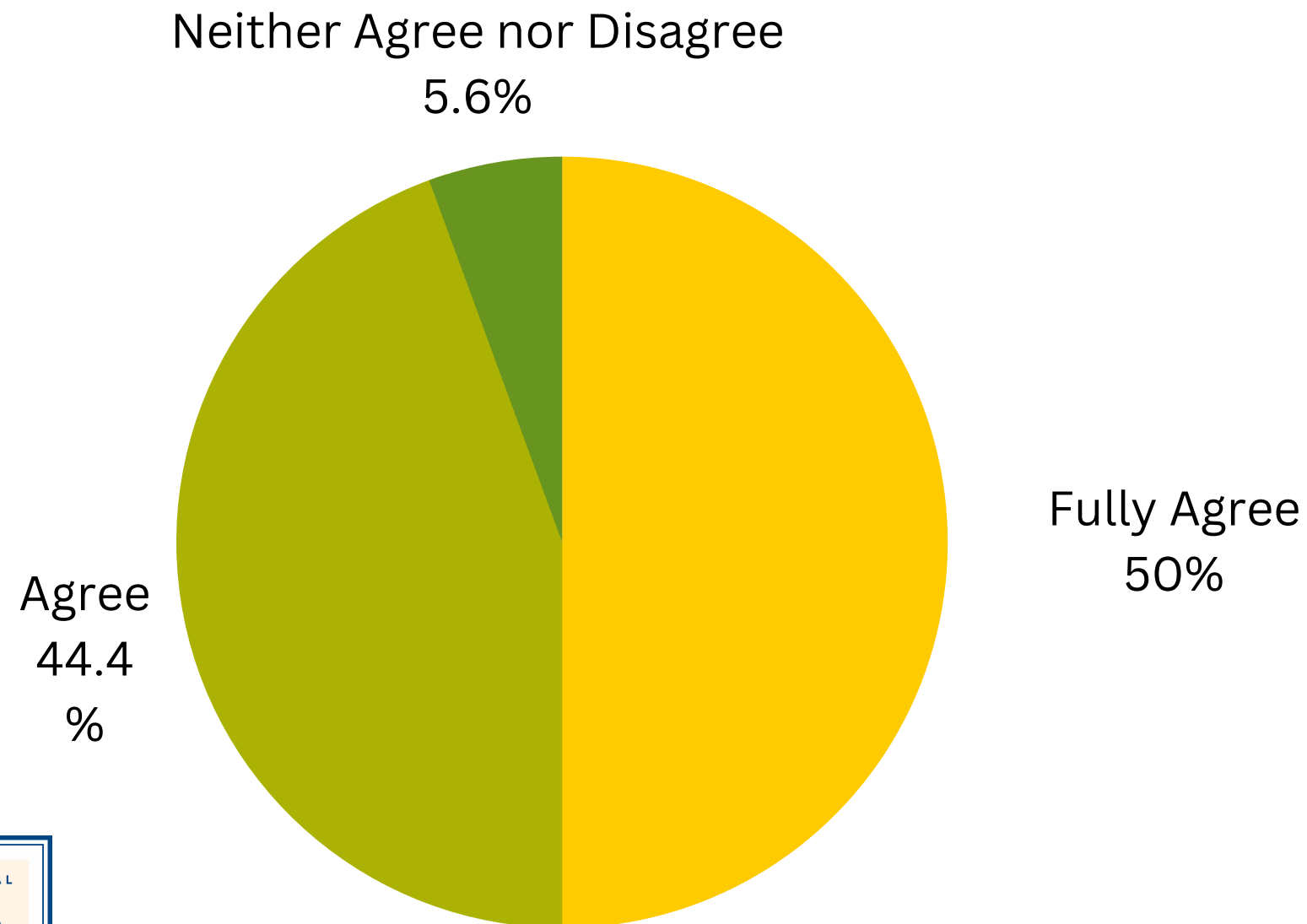
Democracy should be the red thread of the new EU Action Plan, as a system of governance ensuring that all key topics (democracy, human rights, the rule of law, corruption) are intertwined and interconnected

Synchronize the timeframe of the next Action Plan with the Multiannual Financial Framework, to ensure that democracy priorities are properly reflected in EU funding instruments.

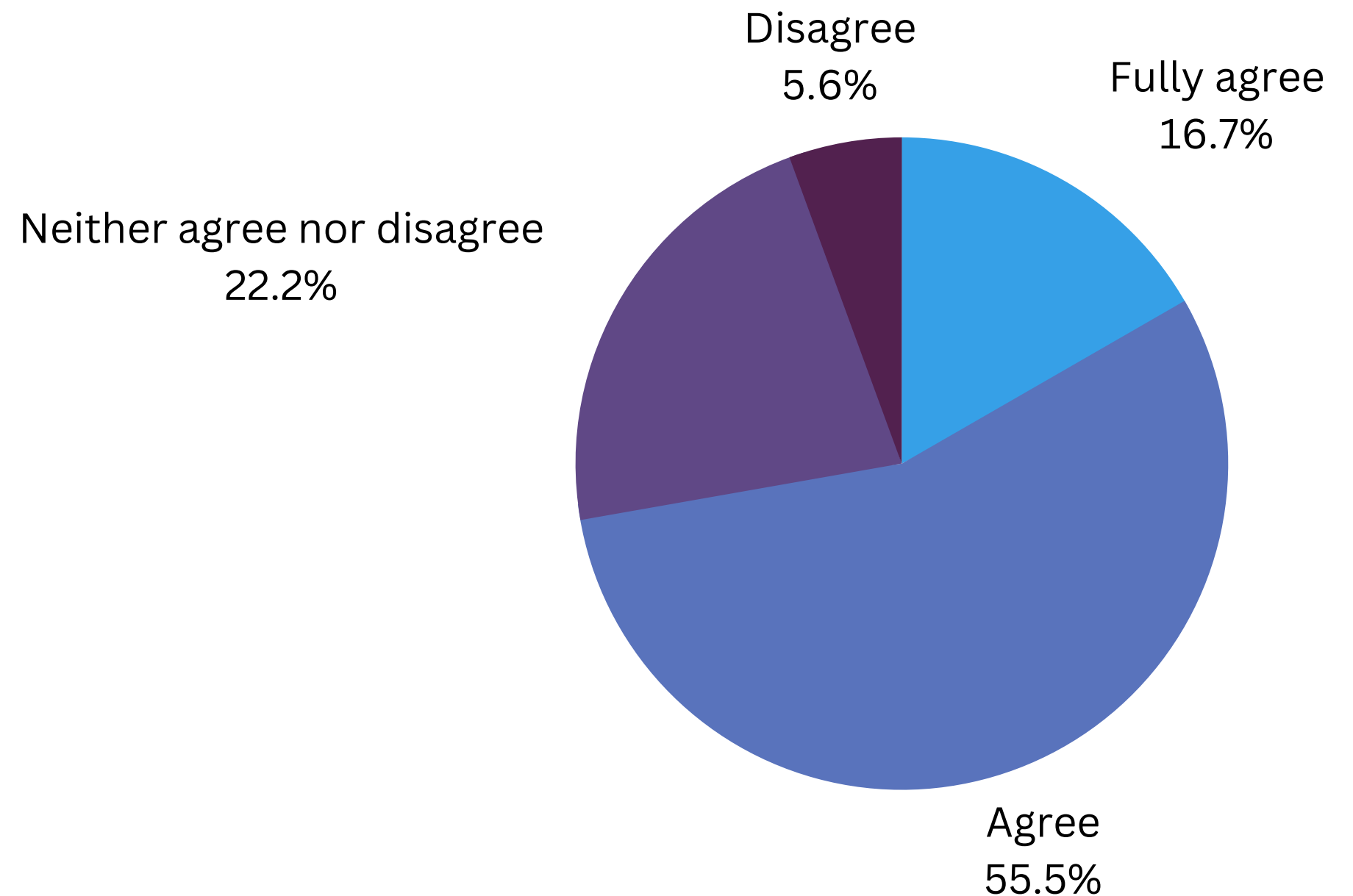
Regularly take stock of the Action Plan implementation at political level (Council Conclusions, FAC discussions) to ensure that topical issues are taken on board.

Member States survey on the Action Plan and its Mid-Term Review

The EU Action Plan as a working document is being jointly implemented by EU institutions and EU Member States.



The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024 serves as a guiding document for the formulation and implementation of Member States' external democracy policy



Attention points

To EPIWG

1

Consider **integrating democracy** more prominently **in the rights-based approach** including through **Democracy Assessment Frameworks** at country level

2

Consider **broadening the scope of the TED**, including at country level

3

Consider **deepening the dialogue with civil society** on democracy issues and **revising CSOs support modalities** based on the experience gathered in the EaP

4

Consider enhancing the **link between policy making and implementation**

THANK YOU

<https://idea.int/sweden-eu-democracy/>

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