



On the right path?

The significance of the G7 in global crises and the involvement of global civil society

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On the right path?

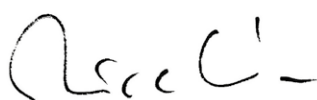
The significance of the G7 in global crises and the involvement of global civil society

From 26 to 28 June 2022, the summit meeting of the G7 heads of state and government was held at Schloss Elmau near Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. At the summit, the delegations sent by the participating countries discussed a number of global problems. The G7 governments have been seeking dialogue with non-governmental actors from the business community, civil society and research institutions. In this context, the Engagement Groups play an important role by providing a platform that will help create a more structured discourse. Civil7 (C7) is one of the official G7 Engagement Groups, alongside Women7 (W7), Science7 (S7), Business7 (B7), Labour7 (L7), Youth7 (Y7) and Think7 (T7).

The C7 process was coordinated by VENRO (Verband Entwicklungspolitik und Humanitäre Hilfe deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen) and the German NGO Forum on Environment and Development (Forum Umwelt & Entwicklung). The political

demands drawn up by the Civil7 group were summarised in a Communiqué that was officially presented to Federal Chancellor Scholz at the C7 summit in Berlin on 4 and 5 May 2022.

On behalf of Civil7, the Allensbach Institute (Institut für Demoskopie Allensbach), based in Allensbach, Lake Constance, conducted an online survey among worldwide civil society organisations. One aim of the survey was to explore the importance and role of the G7 from the perspective of global civil society. In particular, the question of its strength and effectiveness against the backdrop of current global challenges is central here, as is a comparison with other multilateral formats such as the United Nations, the European Union or the G20. A further goal was to determine how successful the C7 process had been in the view of civil society organisations and whether they consider the G7's involvement of civil society to have been successful.



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Notes on methodology and participants

Civil7 commissioned the renowned Allensbach Institute (IfD Allensbach, Germany) to carry out a survey among representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) on a global level.

DISTRIBUTION AND DURATION OF THE SURVEY

Between 24 October and 8 November 2022, interviewees were contacted online and the survey was sent to them via various CSO networks. Therefore, the results constitute a non-representative sample. At the same time, however, it should be noted that the findings are remarkably homogeneous. There are only very slight differences between the various groups of respondents – for example, respondents who work in different regions of the world or who are active in different areas. Even though the present survey is not representative, it still provides a fairly realistic picture of the general attitudes among non-governmental organisations. The results were evaluated by the Allensbach Institute.

NUMBER AND LOCATION OF PARTICIPANTS

The survey questionnaire was produced jointly by the C7 and the Institute. A total of 201 interviews were conducted, 128 of which were with CSO representatives working in Europe, including 109 working

in Germany. In sum, 42 interviews were conducted with CSO representatives working in Africa, 32 with those working in Asia and 4 in other regions.

GENDER BALANCE

In terms of gender distribution, 53 per cent of respondents were male, 46 per cent female and 1 per cent diverse.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

Seven per cent of the participants were 20–29 years old, 20 per cent were 30–39 years old, 24 per cent were 40–49 years old, 27 per cent were 50–59 years old, 12 per cent were 60–69 years old and 10 per cent were 70 or older. The average age of the participants was 50.

AREAS OF WORK

The survey participants were also asked about their areas of work, with multiple responses being possible. Around 50 per cent worked in each of the following areas: gender and equality, human rights, climate and environment, and education. In addition, a third worked in youth work and children's rights. Health and nutrition, as well as agriculture, were each identified as a professional area of 40 per cent of participants. Furthermore, 25 per cent worked in migration, with the same proportion being active in the field of peace and fragility.

Significance of the G7 in times of global crises

One aim of the investigation was to determine how much importance the civil society representatives ascribe to the G7 when it comes to solving global problems. The answers show that the G7 is considered to be of great importance in solving global problems, but that more significance is assigned to the United Nations and the European Union (Figure 1). The respondents ascribe very different levels of importance to the various international organisations, depending on the specific political problem at stake.

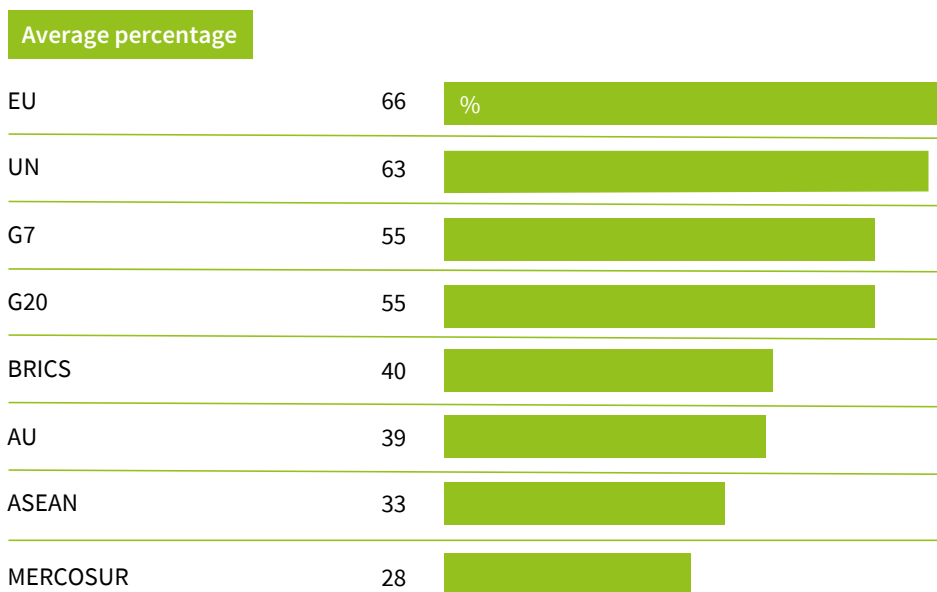
Thus, for example, 83 per cent of respondents say that the United Nations can make a major contribution to fighting hunger, while only 59 per cent see the G7 as a major

actor here (Figure 2). ‘Solving the (global) debt crisis’ is the only goal in which the G7 and G20 were tied in first place (Figure 3). For seven of the global political goals, respondents ranked the United Nations in first place, while the European Union was ranked first in connection with six areas (Figure 4).

The European Union is viewed by respondents as being of greatest importance (66 per cent), followed by the UN (63 per cent). The G7 and G20 are rated equally (55 per cent). BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (40 per cent), the African Union (39 per cent), ASEAN (33 per cent) and MERCOSUR (28 per cent) are considered to be of less relevance (Figure 1).

Importance of international organisations I

Question: ‘The world is currently facing a number of major challenges and problems. For each of the challenges or problems listed below, please check the applicable boxes to indicate which actors you think can make a major contribution towards solving them.’

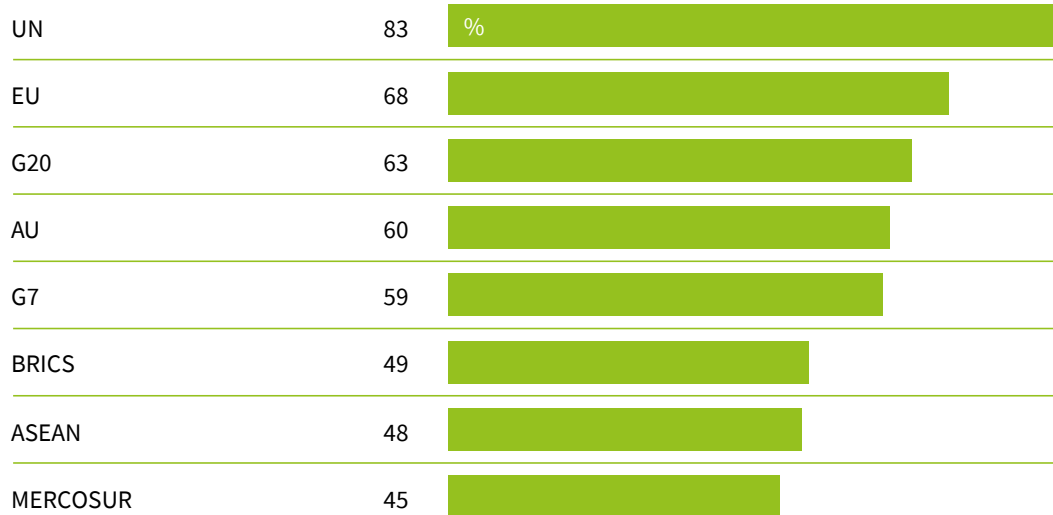


Source: Allensbach Archives, IfD Survey 9223

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Fighting hunger

Question: 'The world is currently facing a number of major challenges and problems. For each of the challenges or problems listed below, please check the applicable boxes to indicate which actors you think can make a major contribution towards solving them.'



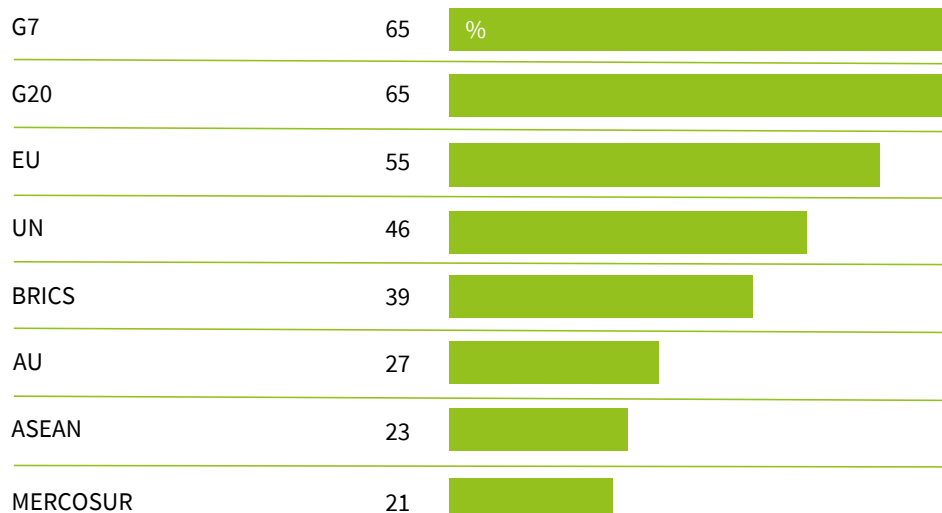
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Figure 2

Solving the (global) debt crisis

Question: 'The world is currently facing a number of major challenges and problems. For each of the challenges or problems listed below, please check the applicable boxes to indicate which actors you think can make a major contribution towards solving them.'



Source: Allensbach Archives, IfD Survey 9223

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Figure 3

Importance of international organisations II

Question: 'The world is currently facing a number of major challenges and problems. For each of the challenges or problems listed below, please check the applicable boxes to indicate which actors you think can make a major contribution towards solving them.'

Organisation that is considered to be most important in each particular area

Combating the climate crisis	EU
The war in Ukraine	EU
Combating rising prices, growing inflation	EU
Securing the energy supply	EU
Moving away from fossil fuels	EU
Financing development projects	EU
Solving the (global) debt crisis	G20/G7
Flight and population displacement	UN
Battling the Covid-19 pandemic	UN
Fighting hunger	UN
Ensuring global peace	UN
Gender equality	UN
Protecting minorities	UN
Protecting animal species, maintaining biodiversity	UN

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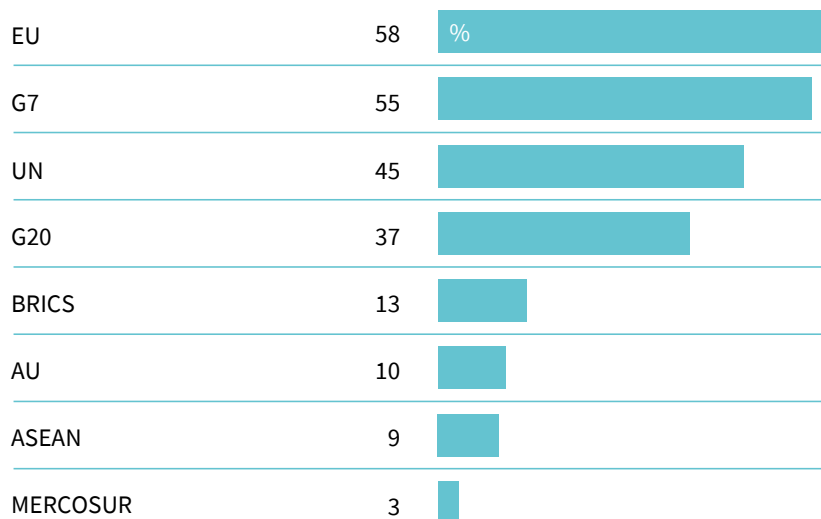
Strength and effectiveness of multilateral formats

The ranking is different when respondents are asked which international organisations are actually capable of taking action to solve global challenges. Here, the European Union is in first place with 58 per cent, followed by the G7 with 55 per cent. The United Nations (42 per cent) and

G20 (37 per cent) are clearly behind on this question (Figure 5). Representatives of non-governmental organisations consider the G7 to be one of the most important and powerful groups of states in addressing global problems.

Which international organisations are really able to take action?

Question: 'What is your impression: which of the following actors are particularly forceful? Which ones are really able to take action when it comes to solving global problems and challenges?'



Source: Allensbach Archives, IfD Survey 9223

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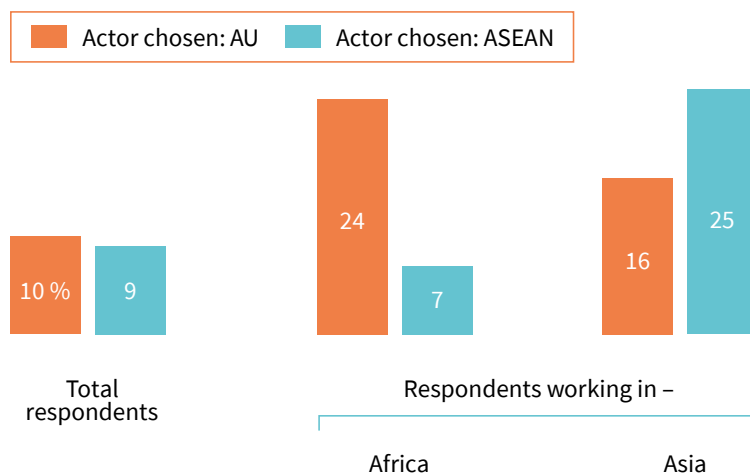
Figure 5

It should be noted that the sample used in this survey is dominated by persons who work in G7 countries, and the relevance ascribed to the various multinational groups clearly depends on the respondents' regional closeness to each respective region. Hence, respondents who work in Africa ascribe significantly more importance to the African Union than those from other

regions, while an above-average share of respondents working in Asia ascribe major importance to ASEAN (Figure 6). At the same time, however, respondents in Asia and Africa rated the importance of the European Union higher than that of the AU or ASEAN for most of the global challenges listed.

Which international organisations are really able to take action? – A regional perspective

Question: ‘What is your impression: which of the following actors are particularly forceful? Which ones are really able to take action when it comes to solving global problems and challenges?’



Source: Allensbach Archives, IfD Survey 9223

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Figure 6

The regional proximity of respondents also plays a role in the question of which of the eight groups of states they believe have become stronger and more influential in recent years and which have become weaker and less influential.

The EU is the only multinational group that almost half of all respondents consider to have become stronger and more influential in recent years. This is followed in second place by the G7 (Figure 7).

It is striking that the European Union is more often perceived as an organisation with growing influence by respondents working outside Europe than by respondents working within Europe. A similar pattern is found in relation to the ASEAN group, which an above-average proportion of those working in Asia believe is losing influence. Similarly, respondents working in Africa are more likely to say the African

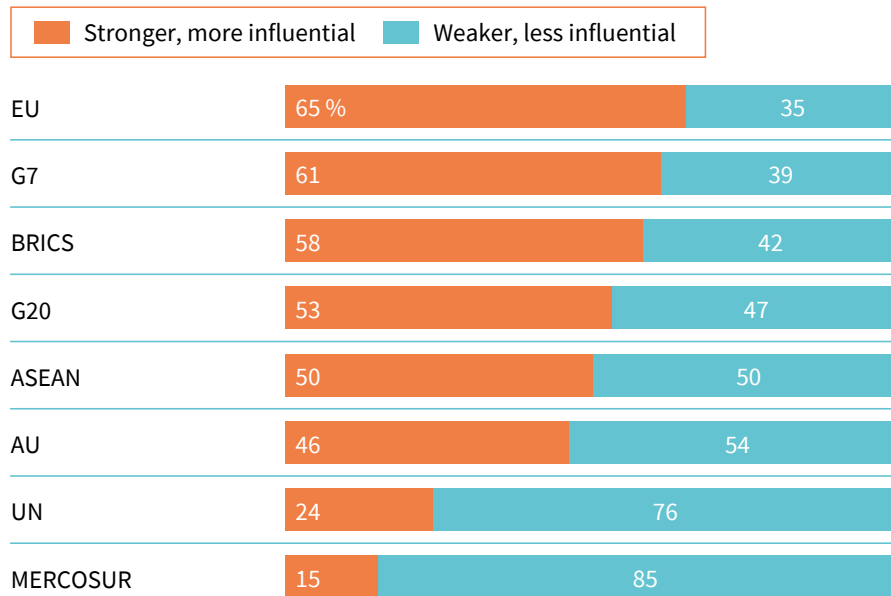
Union is weakening, while Europeans are more likely to attribute growing influence to the AU (Figure 8). Regional proximity might give people better insight into the weaknesses and problems of a particular organisation, making its stability and future prospects seem less positive than when the same organisation is viewed from a greater distance.

The assessments of the United Nations are remarkably clear in this regard, with more than three-quarters saying that the UN has become weaker and less influential in recent years (Figure 7). The United Nations is seen by NGO representatives as a whole as being very important in principle and potentially of great significance, but unable to act in practice. In contrast, the G7, ranking second after the EU, is seen as more effective in this regard.

Which international organisations are becoming stronger? I

Question: 'How would you rate the strength or, respectively, the influence of the various actors? In your opinion, which ones have become stronger and more influential over the past few years and which ones have become weaker and less influential?'

Base: Respondents who believe the influence of the institution in question has changed



Source: Allensbach Archives, IfD Survey 9223

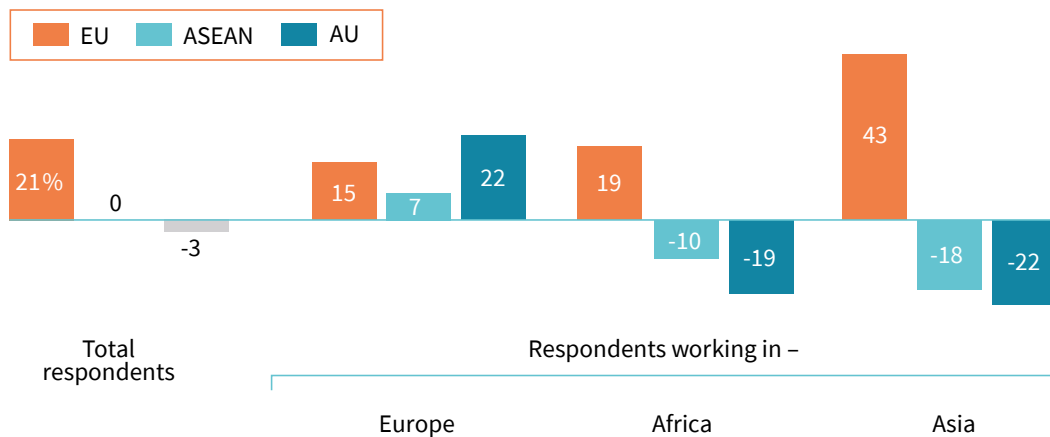
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Figure 7

Which international organisations are becoming stronger? II

Question: 'How would you rate the strength or, respectively, the influence of the various actors? In your opinion, which ones have become stronger and more influential over the past few years and which ones have become weaker and less influential?'

Balance: 'Has become stronger' minus 'Has become weaker'



Source: Allensbach Archives, IfD Survey 9223

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Figure 8

Evaluation of the German G7 presidency and C7 process

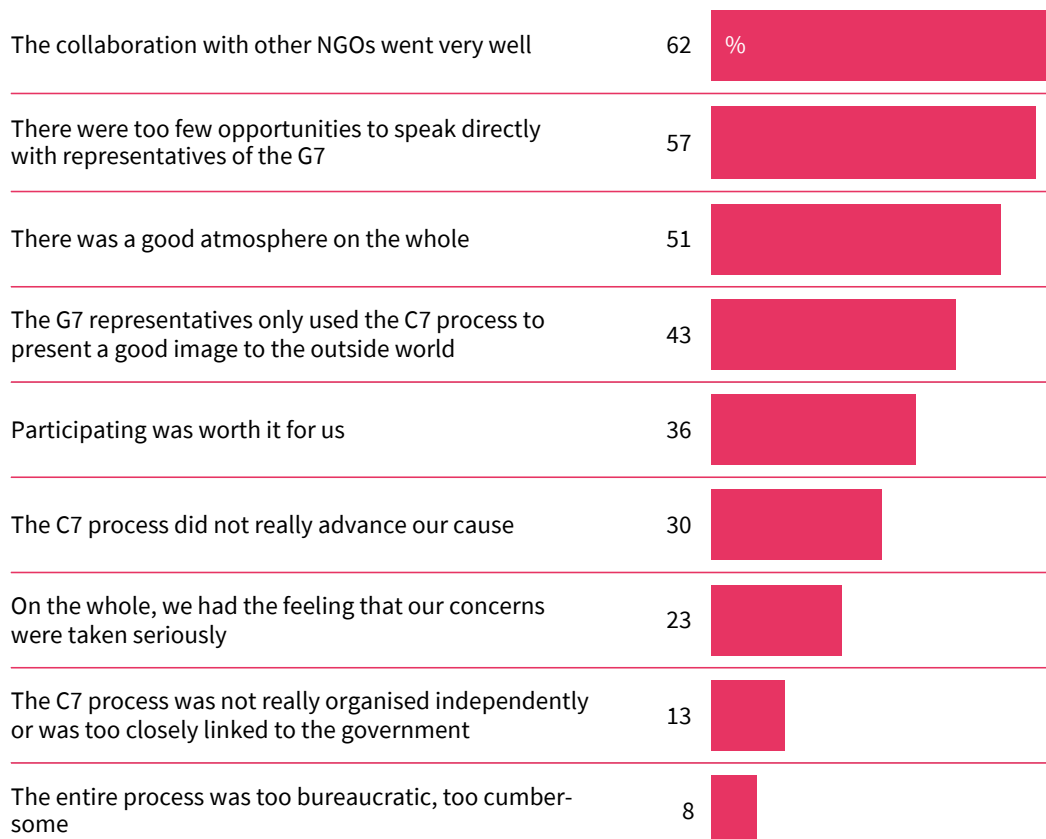
Thirty-one per cent of all respondents said that their organisation was involved in the C7 process. The majority were very positive about the cooperation with other NGOs and appreciated the good working atmosphere.

However, the C7's cooperation with the G7 was predominantly seen in a negative light. The majority made the criticism that there were too few opportunities for direct dialogue with G7 representatives. A total

of 43 per cent felt that the C7 process served solely to improve the image of the G7, and only 23 per cent of respondents believed that their concerns were taken seriously by the G7 (Figure 9). More than two-thirds of the respondents said that the G7 countries are primarily pursuing their own interests instead of aiming to solve global problems (Figure 10).

Evaluation of the C7 process

Question to all respondents whose organisation was involved in the C7 process:
 'Regarding the C7 process that took place within the framework of this year's G7 summit, which of the following statements would you agree with?'

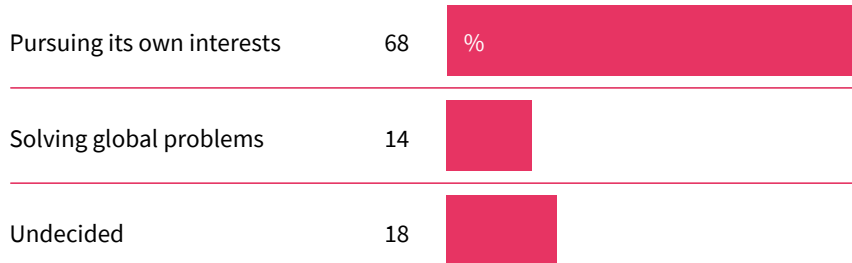


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Is the G7 concerned with solving global problems?

Question: 'When it comes to the resolutions passed and actions taken by the G7, do you think that the G7 is primarily pursuing its own interests, or is the G7 mainly concerned with solving global problems? What do you think takes precedence for the G7?'



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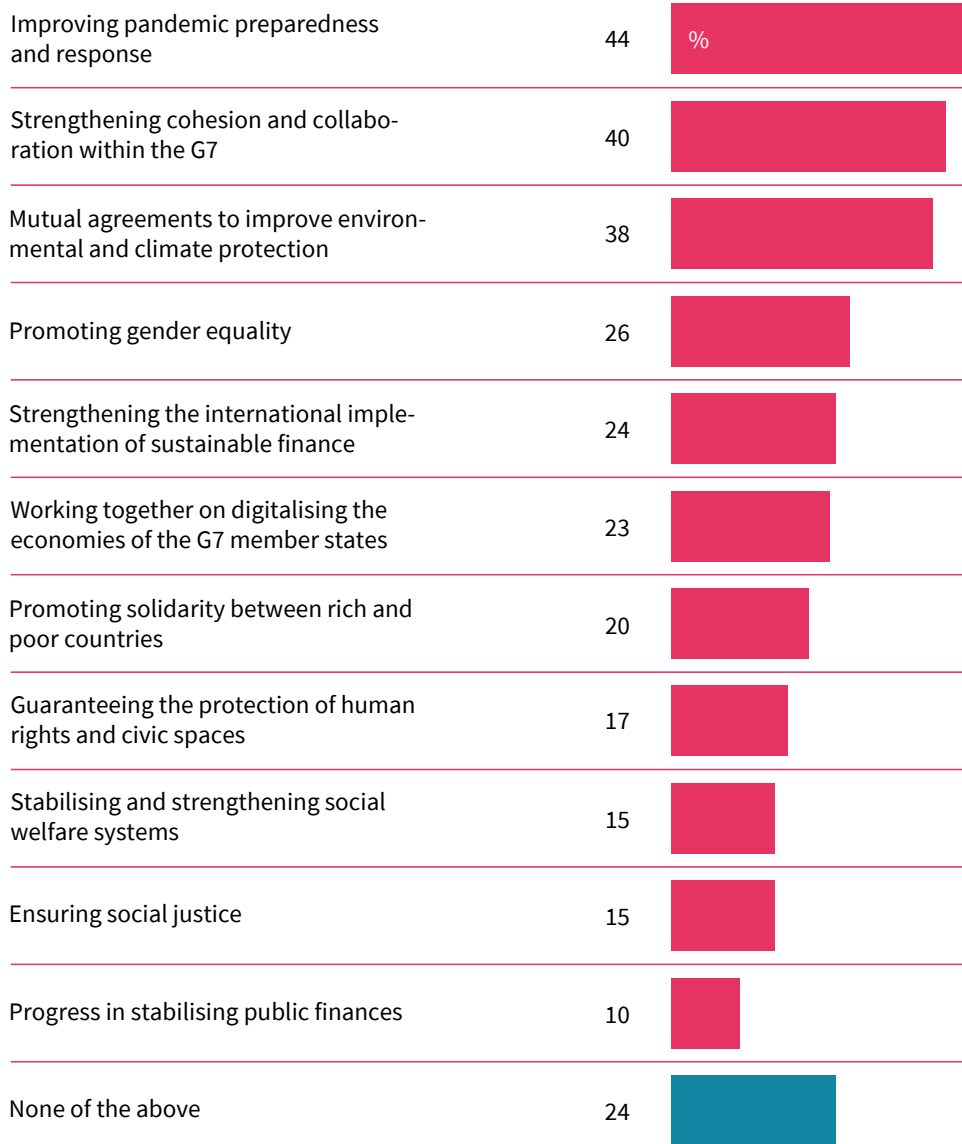
Figure 10

In the run-up to the G7 summit, various goals were formulated by the participant governments. When asked which of these goals had been achieved by the G7, respondents were very restrained in their responses. It is noticeable that dealing

with the Covid-19 pandemic is rated highest, while the fight against inequality and the protection of human rights are only considered to have been successful by a small minority of respondents (Figure 11).

Which goals were successfully adopted?

Question: 'In the run-up to the G7 summit in Germany, various goals were formulated by the governments. In your opinion, which of them were successfully adopted at the summit?'



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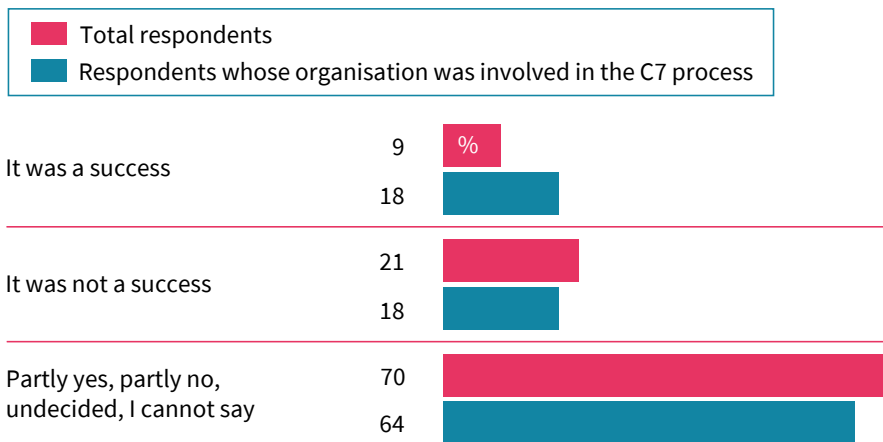
Figure 11

This is even more evident when it comes to the question of whether the G7 summit was successful overall. A vast majority of 70 per cent was undecided on this (Figure 12). When asked whether more attention was paid to their organisation's concerns in this G7 process than in previous ones, a quarter answered positively, while the

majority did not see a difference. The responses of those whose organisations were involved in the C7 process differed remarkably little from those of the respondents as a whole (Figure 13).

Was the G7 summit a success?

Question: 'How would you rate the G7 summit overall? Would you say that the G7 summit was a success on the whole, or was it not a success in your opinion?'



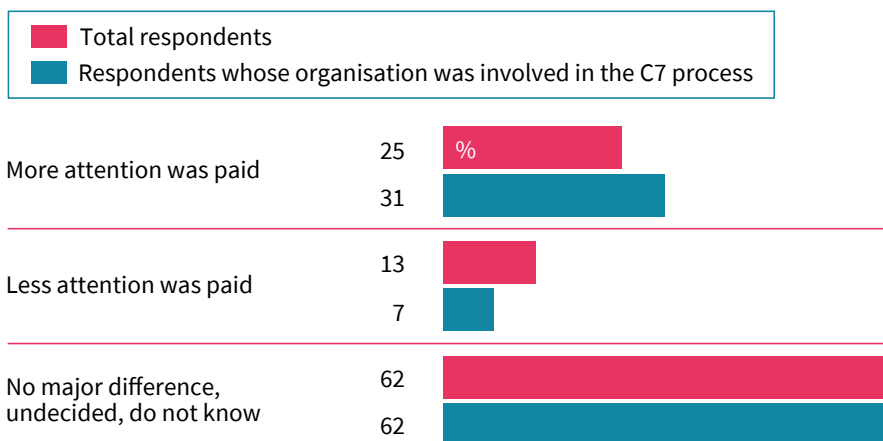
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Figure 12

Attention paid to organisations' concerns

Question: 'If you compare the G7 summit in Germany with previous summits, do you have the overall impression that more attention was paid to your organisation's concerns this time, or was less attention paid to your concerns, or was there no major difference in that regard?'



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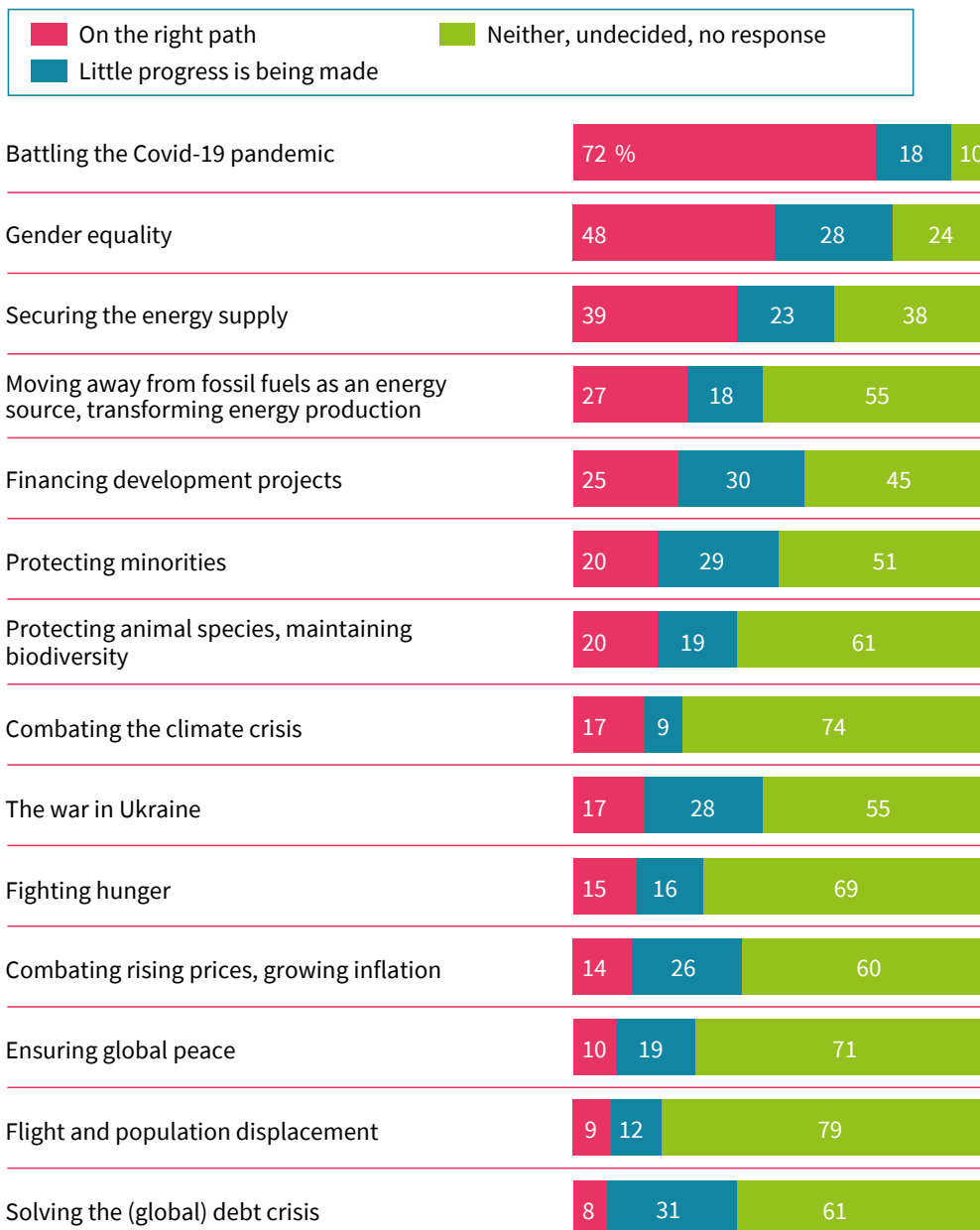
Figure 13

When it comes to the question of which of the global challenges we are on the right track with, it is striking that – similar to the previous question – it is only in the fight

against the Covid-19 pandemic that the majority feel progress is being made (Figure 14).

On the right path?

Question: ‘For which of the following challenges are you optimistic that we are on the right path and for which ones are you more pessimistic and feel that little progress is being made?’



Source: Allensbach Archives, IfD Survey 9223

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Figure 14

Respondents do not rate the situation in their own field of activity more positively than respondents working in other fields, and in many cases they even see it as being slightly worse. For example, 16 per cent

of those working in food and agriculture believe that we are on the right track when it comes to fighting hunger, while this view is shared by slightly more respondents working in other areas (Figure 15).

On the right path in the fight against hunger?

Question: 'For which of the following challenges are you optimistic that we are on the right path and for which ones are you more pessimistic and feel that little progress is being made?'
 Response: 'I am optimistic that we are on the right path.'



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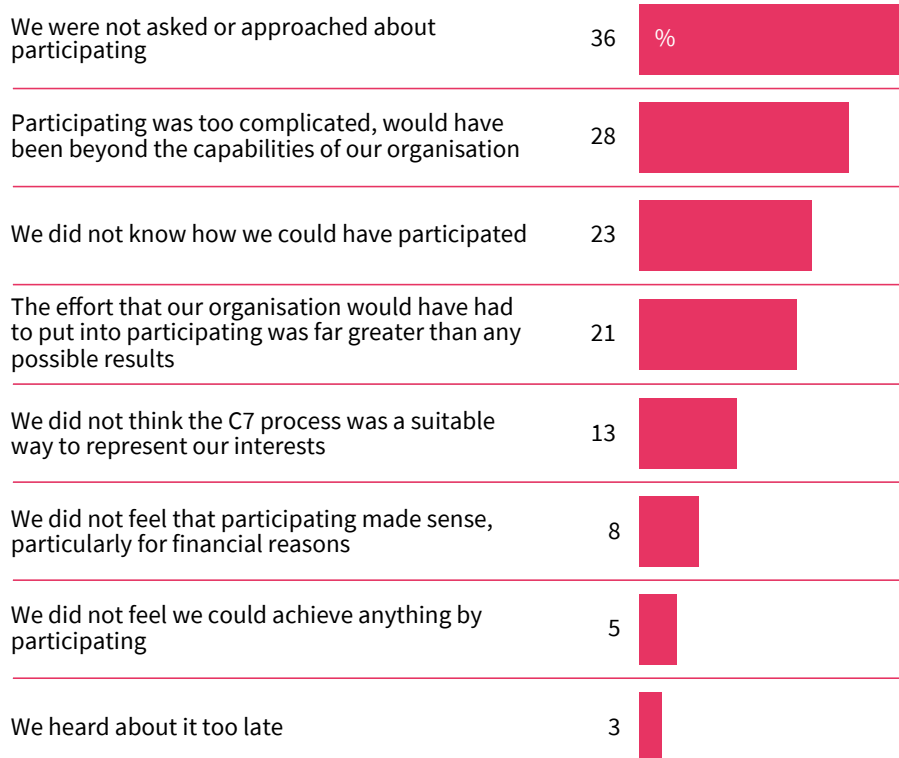
Figure 15

The participants who were not involved in the C7 process, despite being aware of it, explained this primarily as being due to a lack of information about opportunities for engagement. The broader dissemination

of information on concrete ways to participate within international civil society should therefore be further improved in the future (Figure 16).

Reasons for not participating in the C7 process

Question to all respondents whose organisation was not involved in the C7 process:
 'And why was your organisation not involved in the C7 process? Please select all applicable reasons.'



Source: Allensbach Archives, IfD Survey 9223

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Figure 16

Conclusion and outlook

In general, the responses are very homogeneous, regardless of characteristics such as respondents' region or area of work. It can be concluded that the assessment and view of civil society is relatively unanimous and uncontroversial. However, it should be kept in mind that the majority of the participants work in G7 countries.

Even though the G7 has made efforts through its Engagement Groups to become more inclusive, the format of the G7 remains difficult to grasp. This is not only the case for the broader public but also for civil society actors who are active in the thematic areas being addressed by the G7 and working directly on its processes and outcomes. The Engagement Groups and Civil7 in particular aim to counterbalance this, but the task of ensuring transparency cannot be the task of the Engagement Groups alone. The G7 itself has to put more effort into making this powerful format more transparent. As an alliance of democratic governments, the issue of transparency is fundamental and a basis for future legitimacy.

Furthermore, the G7 must address the question of how its structures and decision-making processes can become more international and inclusive. Civil7 2022 has put an emphasis on the inclusion of civil society representatives beyond the G7 states, especially from the Global South. Structures for participation and outreach

have been successfully adapted and will be continued during the next presidency. However, the G7 must also make greater efforts to involve and integrate societies from the Global South when making decisions on global issues that affect the lives of people beyond the G7 states.

The G7's attempts to address global challenges are considered to be deficient by civil society, especially by experts in the respective fields. Although the G7 is seen as an important multilateral format alongside the EU and the United Nations, it does not fulfil its responsibility to provide solutions to today's urgent global problems. This is particularly striking in light of the fact that the G7 is seen as having a greater capacity to take action than other formats such as the UN.

With regard to the C7 process, only one in four respondents saw their concerns as being addressed by the G7 process. Half of the respondents perceived the process as improving the image of the G7, while the majority of respondents did not have the impression that more attention was paid to the civil society concerns by the G7 this year.

This points to a fundamental issue with the Engagement Group format: the question of accountability. For civil society representatives, it remains unclear to what extent their perspectives and recommendations

have been considered during the G7's internal processes and negotiations. In light of this, the G7 should further develop the Engagement Group format and work to create a consultation with global civil society that is effective, inclusive and transparent.

In the face of increasing inequality, which perpetuates global crises of all kinds, the G7 must also further develop its structures and alignment in order to ensure its legitimacy and effectiveness. This relates to aspects such as the committed and sustainable participation of Engagement Groups in G7 processes, greater transparency on the G7's work and decisions for the public and the G7's civil partners, and a purposeful consultation of the societies in states affected by but excluded from their decisions.

About Civil7

The Civil7 group (C7) is the official G7 Engagement Group for civil society actors and aims to ensure that civil society voices and priorities are heard by the G7 leaders. The Engagement Groups contribute their positions on current G7 issues to the process through a direct dialogue with G7 representatives. VENRO (The Association of German Development and Humanitarian Aid NGOs) and the German NGO Forum on Environment and Development were mandated by the German Chancellery to coordinate C7 2022.

During a process that took place over several months at the beginning of 2022, the C7 Working Groups formulated their key demands on topics around open societies, humanitarian assistance and conflict, economic justice and transformation, climate and environmental justice, and global health. The C7 Communiqué, the official document containing the policy positions and priorities of international civil society, was handed over to the German Chancellor

Olaf Scholz on 5 May. The final Communiqué not only comprises voices from G7 countries but also includes positions and recommendations from civil society actors worldwide.

For the first time, the C7 process represented points of view from countries that are not officially represented in the G7. These countries are often particularly affected by global crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic or climate change, but have fewer opportunities to exert influence internationally – at either the political or civil society level. The C7 process under the German G7 presidency was accompanied by an international Steering Committee. Around 500 representatives from over 40 countries actively participated in 5 Working Groups to formulate their recommendations to this year's German G7 presidency.



Imprint

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