

**I left #Ukraine
with my dog.**

**What are
the rules
to enter the
EU with a pet?**

Call the EU

Inside the EU

00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(toll free)

Outside the EU

0032 2 299 96 96

(international rate)

The EU answers your questions
in all EU languages,
Ukrainian and Russian!



**EUROPE DIRECT
CONTACT CENTRE**

The EU's contact centre



**EUROPE DIRECT
CONTACT CENTRE**

00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 • europedirect.europa.eu

**Annual
Activity
Report
2022**

This report was assembled, designed and published in June 2023 by the European Commission, DG Communication, unit B.2 - Interinstitutional relations, corporate contracts & Europe Direct Contact Centre

Contact for administrative matters: COMM-EDCC@ec.europa.eu

Public access to ask questions to the Europe Direct Contact Centre: europedirect.europa.eu This is in 26 language versions, and includes a [presentation](#) of the nature of the service we offer.

Video about the EDCC: you can watch it on the [Commission audio-visual portal](#)

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2023

© European Union, 2023



The reuse policy of European Commission documents is implemented by Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39). Unless otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.

PDF NA-04-23-724-EN-N ISBN 978-92-68-05536-6 doi 10.2775/321089

Content

The year in summary: The Europe Direct Contact Centre in 2022 p. 4

The EU solidarity with Ukraine helpline p. 5

Total answered questions

Questions by geographical origin

Ukraine-questions by language

Main topics

Promotion of the EU solidarity with Ukraine helpline

What did the citizens ask about? p. 12

Topics

The EU coronavirus response: vaccines, certificates and travel

Helping citizens cope with Brexit

Practical questions on EU funding

How did the contact centre operate? p. 18

A corporate communication service

Cooperation with European Parliament, Council and the European External Action Service

Proactive outreach on EU priorities

Chat with the EU

Efficient knowledge management

Number of questions

Response time

Questions per country

Questions per language

Escalations

User satisfaction

The year in summary: The Europe Direct Contact Centre in 2022

The Europe Direct Contact Centre (EDCC) is a single helpline for citizens who want to get in touch with the European Union (EU), from within the EU and from outside. It is an important channel through which the European Union interacts with citizens. As by its scope, capacity and presence on EU and Commission websites, it is *de facto* the EU's contact centre. It is managed by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Communication and is operated by an external contractor. The Commission ensures the necessary guidance and quality control and cooperates closely with institution-specific information services of the European Parliament, Council and External Action Service.

Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine since 24 February marked the operations of the Europe Direct Contact Centre throughout the year 2022.

From day one of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the EDCC functioned as **helpline for EU solidarity with Ukraine**. In line with its approach for the newly established Commission web pages on solidarity with Ukraine and the wider communication on Ukraine, the EDCC added Ukrainian and Russian to the 24 official EU languages in which it is usually operating. The aim was two-fold: to provide factual and practical information to people fleeing the war, helping them to understand their rights, obligations and opportunities, and, secondly to inform a broader public in Europe and from third countries about the EU's response to the invasion. The EDCC answered altogether **13 165 questions on EU solidarity with Ukraine** between 24 February and 31 December 2022. This was 8.3% of all replies handled in 2022 and represented 292 replies per week in average.

All subjects confounded, the EDCC replied to a **total of 159 276 questions in 2022**. They were treated via email (71.2%) or phone (28.5%). The remaining 0.3% is instant messaging, which was introduced as a third communication channel in November 2022. After its soft launch, without wider promotion, it is expected to be better known and become a significant activity in the future.

The number of questions handled by the EDCC was lower than the previous year (204 475), because the year 2021 was dominated by an exceptionally high number of questions on travel restrictions related to the coronavirus. In a longer historic perspective, the number of questions continues to have an increasing trend.

English language was used in 42.8 % of the questions. The shares of languages are relatively stable over time. The majority of citizens use one of the other of the 24 languages, or Ukrainian or Russian.

In general, the largest number of topics answered concerned individual rights and opportunities offered by the EU, such as freedom of movement, consumer rights, passengers' rights, rights of residence, jobs and social protection in other EU countries as well as grants.

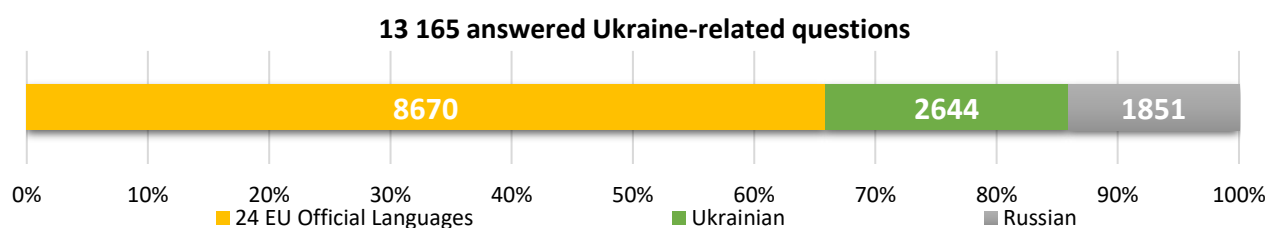
The EU solidarity with Ukraine helpline

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, the Europe Direct Contact Centre (EDCC) has become a helpline for Ukrainian refugees and for anybody who looks for information about the EU's solidarity with Ukraine, be it from Europe or from third countries. In line with the Commission web pages on solidarity with Ukraine and the wider communication on Ukraine, the EDCC added Ukrainian and Russian to the 24 official EU languages in which it is usually operating. The EDCC started to answer questions in Ukrainian and Russian, first in writing (30 March 2022), then over the phone (16 May 2022). Chat was started as a new service in all languages on 7 November 2022.

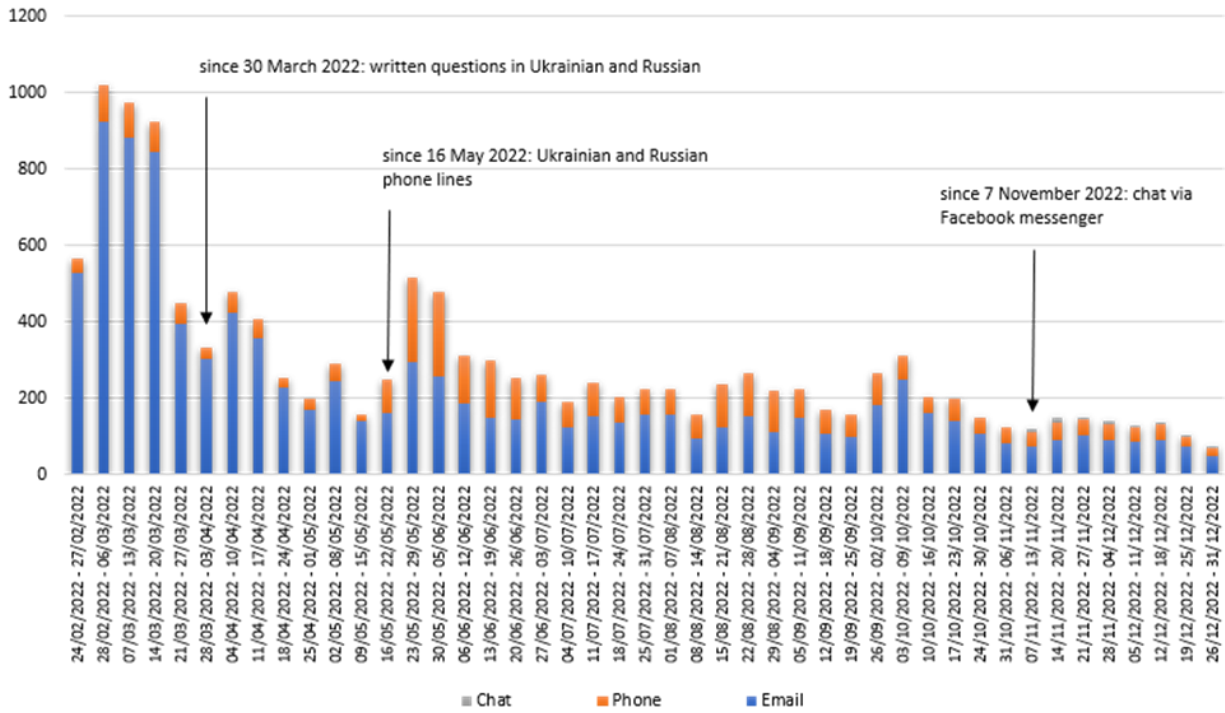
For the public holidays at the end of the year 2022 the EDCC had stand-by arrangements in order to be able to open the service with very short notice in case of any major developments.

Total answered questions

Since 24 February 2022 until the end of the year, EDCC replied to **13,165** Ukraine-related questions, including **2,644 in Ukrainian** and **1,851 in Russian**. This represents 9.9% of all questions answered on all topics during the same period– or 8.3% of all replies in the whole year 2022.



The average number of answered questions between 24 February and 31 December 2022 related to the situation in Ukraine was 292 questions per week.



Answered questions per week since the beginning of the Russian invasion

Call the EU
Зателефонуйте до ЄС
Позвоніть в ЄС
in Ukrainian, Russian and all EU official languages

Within the EU
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11
(toll free number)
From other countries
0032 2 299 96 96
(international rate)

©Adobe Stock

Я з України і маю тимчасовий захист в Австрії.
Чи можу я поїхати у Німеччину, де мої батьки?
Подзвоніть до ЄС
Всередині ЄС
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11
(безкоштовно)
За межами ЄС
0032 2 299 96 96
(міжнародний тариф)
Ми відповімо на ваші запитання всіма мовами ЄС, українською та російською!

EUROPE DIRECT CONTACT CENTRE

EUROPE DIRECT CONTACT CENTRE

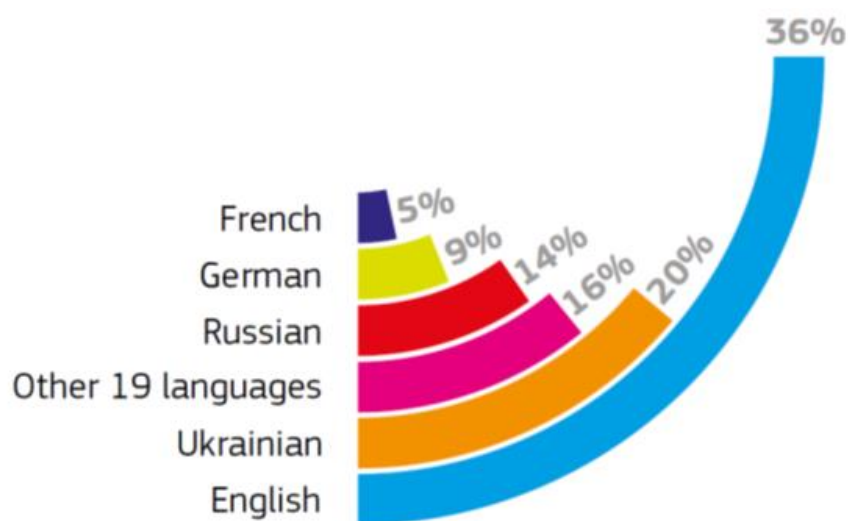
Ukraine-related questions by geographical origin

Almost 60 % of the questions came from the European Union (EU), with the highest share from Germany (12.6%) and Poland (9.2%). Looking at enquiries coming from non-EU countries, most questions came from Ukraine (11.6%).

Country	N° of questions	%
EU	7 770	59.2%
Germany	1 659	12.6%
Poland	1 209	9.2%
France	638	4.8%
Italy	564	4.3%
Spain	468	3.6%
Belgium	392	3.0%
Austria	300	2.3%
Netherlands	290	2.2%
Czechia	276	2.1%
Sweden	256	1.9%
Portugal	227	1.7%
Ireland	175	1.3%
Romania	147	1.1%
Hungary	142	1.1%
Finland	133	1.0%
Bulgaria	132	1.0%
Slovakia	118	0.9%
Greece	105	0.8%
Latvia	96	0.7%
Lithuania	85	0.6%
Denmark	76	0.6%
Cyprus	74	0.6%
Croatia	69	0.5%
Estonia	66	0.5%
Slovenia	41	0.3%
Luxembourg	24	0.2%
Malta	8	0.1%
Non-EU	5 364	40.8%
Ukraine	1 526	11.6%
Other European Countries	1 110	8.4%
Russia	799	6.1%
United Kingdom	693	5.3%
North America	657	5.0%
Asia	314	2.4%
Latin America	125	0.9%
Africa	94	0.7%
Australasia	77	0.6%
Grand Total	13 165	100%

Ukraine-related questions by language

The most frequently used languages when contacting the EDCC on Ukraine-related matters were English with a share of 35.6%, Ukrainian 20.5% and Russian 13.6%.



Languages used for questions to the EDCC about Ukraine

Main topics of Ukraine-related questions

Many people contacted the EDCC to **express their opinion** about EU's response to the Russian aggression against Ukraine, rather than asking a genuine question. It is estimated that **about half of the incoming enquires** were of this kind. The other half was **direct, specific questions**, often about very personal situations.

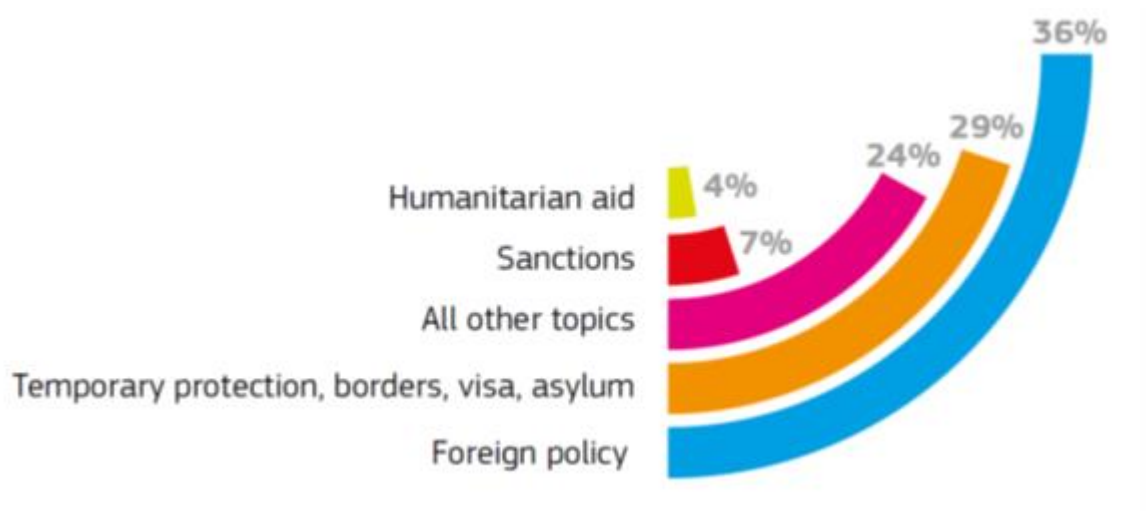
The most frequent topics were related to **foreign policy**, i.e. the political situation of the ongoing Russian aggression. Besides many expressions of opinions, people had questions about the list of sanctions, EU's military support to Ukraine, Russian war crimes and martial law for Ukrainian students.

Another popular topic was **temporary protection of Ukrainian refugees**. Ukrainians fleeing the war contacted the EDCC to ask about travel, residence rights, education opportunities and social benefits for refugees. Many complained about problems at the EU border. Others criticised the lack of help from national authorities or incoherent implementation of temporary protection.

Also on the **Russian language phone line**, the vast majority of questions came from Ukrainians and concerned the same kind of questions. Russian nationals contacted the EDCC mainly via email with opinions about sanctions and questions about entering the EU in relation to asylum, visa, employment rules and opportunities to study or volunteer in the EU.

When approaching the EDCC about **sanctions**, individuals and private companies were seeking for clarification of specific cases, about how to interpret the sanction rules and the impact they would have on their individual situation or business. Another frequent question was how to report companies and individuals violating the EU sanctions.

Finally, many people, companies, NGOs and national administrations contacted the EDCC to offer their help to people in need or to ask questions about **humanitarian aid** in Ukraine.



Main topics for questions on Ukraine to the EDCC in 2022.

Many questions were complex and reflecting very individual cases, for example the rules on sanctions and their impact. This made it necessary to escalate such questions to the competent Commission services through the back offices anchored in the communication units of most Directorate-Generals. This resulted in a somewhat higher level of escalations on Ukraine (8%) than the EDCC's average on all topics confounded (6.5%).

Weekly reports about Ukraine-related questions

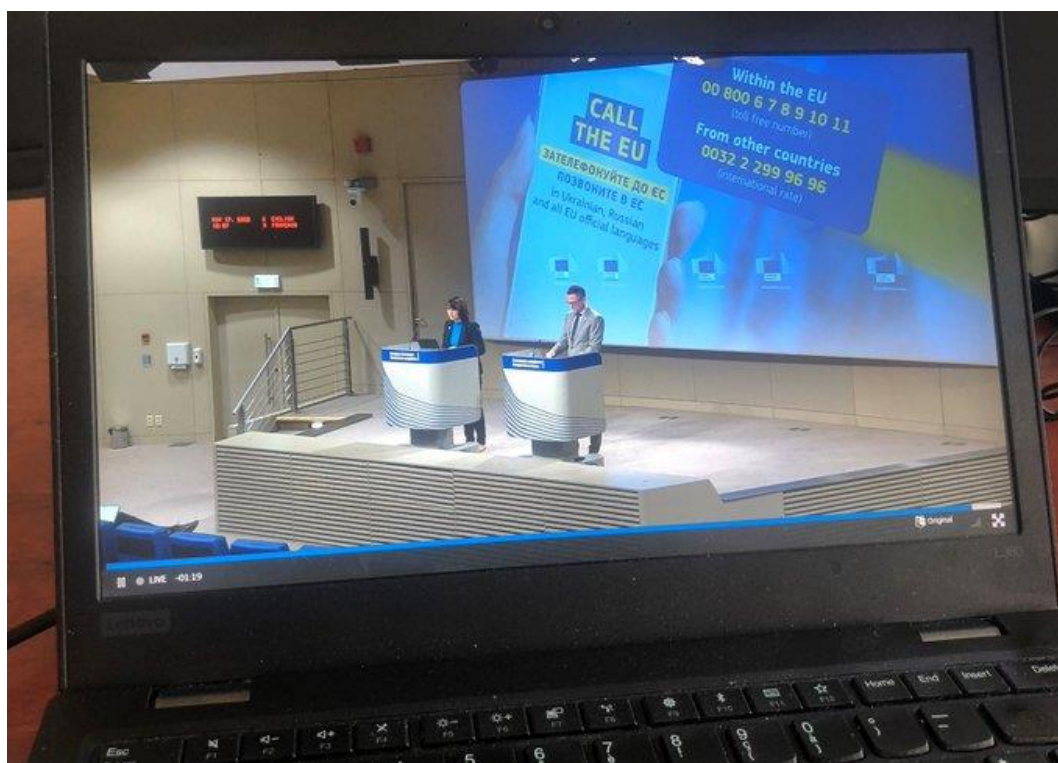
Immediately after the start of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, DG COMM started reporting on the Ukraine-related questions received. The purpose was to allow them to be considered in communication and policy-making in the overall context of the EU's solidarity with Ukraine. This **'Weekly Report on questions answered by the EDCC following the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022'** contains information about the number, nature and origin of questions. The report summarises the main trends and topics of the questions and provides numerous examples of real cases. In the year 2022, **42 weekly reports** were produced. They were circulated within the Commission and shared with Member States via the Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements (IPCR) but also circulated to other EU institutions via the interinstitutional Communicators' Portal.¹

¹ The reports are available inside the European Commission, [on this site](#).

Promotion of the ‘EU solidarity with Ukraine’ helpline

The Commission promoted the ‘EU solidarity with Ukraine’ helpline on social media and in the press room, at the time of the launch of the Ukrainian and Russian language services for written and phone questions in March and May 2022, followed by a third promotion wave in August 2022 on social media.² Dedicated visual assets were produced to this end. All in all, 13 EDCC-related posts were published this year on the Commission’s central accounts, generating 351 000 impressions and 3 700 interactions. This comes on top of additional posts which the Representations adapted to local languages and posts published by the EU Delegation in Ukraine

This promotion complemented the permanent visibility to citizens of the possibility to contact the EU via the EDCC on most Commission- and EU websites and in other communication channels.



Announcement of the Ukrainian and Russian language service by the Commission’s Spokesperson’s Service on 31 March 2022

² On 31 March, the new language service for written questions was announced in the [Midday press briefing](#), in the [Daily News](#) and on social media ([Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Telegram](#)). The social media visuals can be found at this [place](#) (internal for the Commission)

As shown in the graph “Answered questions per week since the beginning of the Russian invasion” (page 5 above), it is visible how the start of the Russian aggression and the promotion of the helpline have influenced the number of questions: During the first weeks of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, many citizens contacted the EU mainly to express their opinions and to ask how they could help. The average number of questions was as high as 924 per week during the first 4 weeks of the war. The number of questions gradually decreased until 30 March, when Ukrainian and Russian languages were added as options to communicate written questions. Another peak can be found after 16 May when the phone lines in Ukrainian and Russian languages were introduced. After this date there was a clear increase in the number of phone calls. The social media promotion in August also led to a rise in incoming questions.

Certain political developments did also influence the level of incoming questions, for example a visible increase after Putin’s announcement of a partial military mobilisation on 21 September. Towards the end of the year, the number of questions stabilised around 130 questions per week.

What did the citizens ask about?

All topics confounded, the largest number of questions concerned the broader complex of individual rights and opportunities offered by the EU across different policy areas. These questions include consumer rights, rights of residence, job opportunities, social protection and grants from the EU.

The single most important topic concerned border-crossing and immigration. Temporary protection for Ukrainian refugee was counted under this topic, but many other matters of migration policy have direct impact on many people.

The EU programmes for younger people also attracted many questions to the EDCC, even though participants are served by networks of specialised helpdesks.

The share of questions on foreign policy was higher in 2022 than in previous years, in part due to the war in Ukraine.

Other topics concern areas where the EDCC has put in place, on request of different Commission services, a specialised capacity to reply to questions. The EDCC is then also advertised to the relevant stakeholders. This concerns the participants in the Horizon Europe research programme, the WiFi4EU initiative and Europass.

Top 10 Topics	Number of questions	% of EDCC volume
Migration and home affairs	19 280	12.1%
Education and culture	13 830	8.7%
Research Horizon Europe	13 300	8.4%
Justice and consumers' rights	10 917	6.9%
Passenger rights and transport	9 457	6.0%
Employment and social affairs	8 612	5.4%
Europass	7 860	4.9%
Food safety and public health	6 760	4.2%
Foreign Policy	6 693	4.2%
Customs and taxation	5 671	3.6%
Total	101 593	

Other topics

	Cases	%
EU institutions	5 528	3.5%
Enterprise and industry	4 408	2.8%
Financial markets and capital movements	2 824	1.8%
EU general and Member States	2 723	1.7%
EU careers	2 417	1.5%
Energy	1 963	1.2%
Digital economy and society	1 813	1.2%
Environment	1 744	1.1%
External trade	1 507	0.9%
International partnerships	1 342	0.8%
Internal market and services	1 146	0.7%
Humanitarian help	1 075	0.7%
WIFI4EU	1 030	0.6%
Europe Direct	1 028	0.6%
Europa website management	965	0.6%
Climate action	883	0.6%
Enlargement and neighbourhood	829	0.5%
Agriculture and rural development	820	0.5%
Regional policy	482	0.3%
European Parliament	478	0.3%
Your Europe Advice	403	0.3%
Budget	343	0.2%
Competition	327	0.2%
Council of the European Union	273	0.2%
Maritime affairs and fisheries	247	0.2%
European Institute of Innovation and Technology	241	0.2%
European Citizens' Initiative	237	0.1%
SOLVIT	191	0.1%
Translation	184	0.1%
Economic and monetary affairs	169	0.1%
Out of scope ³	11 935	7.5%
Request for clarification ⁴	5 391	3.4%
Request for contact details: all services	1 459	0.9%
Non-EDCC language ⁵	401	0.3%
Grand Total	159 276	100%

³ Questions that do not fall under the scope of the EU. The citizen receives a reply explaining why the EDCC cannot provide an answer to the question.

⁴ Enquiries with no clear question or important details missing. The citizen receives an invitation to submit this additional information.

⁵ Questions in other languages than the 24 EU official languages, Ukrainian and Russian. The citizen receives an invitation to write back in one of those languages.

Details of the most popular topics

This table provides more detailed information about the exact issues citizens were interested in under the previously mentioned top 10 topics.

Migration and home affairs	19 280
Information Systems for Borders, migration and security	12 684
EU migration policy	6 246
Specific documents, reports and legislation	144
Counter-terrorism	63
Funding	57
Law Enforcement and Security	50
Agencies (EASO, Europol, FRONTEX, eu-LISA)	36
Education and culture	13 830
Discover EU	4 285
Erasmus+	2 952
European Solidarity Corps	2 341
Education policy	2 102
Traineeships	743
Culture	497
Languages	368
Youth policy	295
European Year of Youth	133
Sports policy	114
Research Horizon Europe	13 300
Participant registration, legal and financial validation, LEAR	4 979
Information on Horizon Europe (NCPs legal docs guides forms)	2 379
Request for clarification	1 947
Proposal submission and evaluation	1 215
Obtaining funding under Horizon Europe	742
Previous framework programmes	443
Legal and financial issues	388
Expert evaluators	244
Communication	223
Horizon Europe policy issues	203
Grant Agreement preparation and signature	138
Info about on-going Horizon Europe projects	129
Certification and audit matters	88
Gender equality	57
Other topics	125

Justice and consumers' rights	10 917
Free movement of EU nationals (residence, travel)	3 803
Consumers (rights and safety)	3 036
Civil Justice	1 192
Family members of EU nationals (residence, travel)	972
Data protection	405
Rule of law	267
Fundamental rights	261
Specific document / report / legislation	237
EU Citizenship	226
Anti-discrimination	126
Funding	114
Criminal law	76
Gender equality	72
Company law, corporate governance, including in banks and investment firms	50
Contracts and liability	45
Corporate social responsibility, responsible business conduct	35
Mobility and transport	8 670
Air passenger rights	6 816
Road safety	1 472
Other mobility and transport policies	877
Road passenger Rights	201
Rail passenger Rights	119
Ship passenger Rights	61
Employment and social affairs	8 612
Moving and working in Europe	6 177
Social protection and social inclusion	1 180
Rights at work	460
Funding	316
Employment support	275
Specific document / report / legislation	161
European Skills Agenda	21
Agencies and partners	15
Analysis, evaluation, impact assessment	5
Europass	7 860
User support and technical issues	7 454
Europass documents	168
Suggestions, user feedback	87
Cooperation and development	47
Sensitive	43
Content and content issues	34
National Europass Centres and partnerships	27

Food safety and public health	6 760
Public health	2 454
Animals	1 688
Food	1 558
Medical devices	438
Specific documents, reports, legislation	322
Plants	222
Funding	63
Scientific committees	15
Foreign policy	6 693
Thematic issues	4 953
Human rights and democratisation	780
EEAS	475
Bilateral Relations	170
CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy)	124
Specific document / report / legislation	77
CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy)	40
International cooperation / organisations (UN...)	24
Agreements with third countries	22
Multilateral relations	18
Sectoral development policies	10
Customs and taxation	5 671
Customs	2 454
VAT business	1 553
VAT individuals	527
Direct taxation	512
Excise duties	250
Indirect taxation	116
Requests for documents	90
Tax Co-operation and control	76
Website or documents corrections	61
Fighting tax fraud and tax evasion	21
Requests for interview	11

The EU coronavirus response: vaccines, certificates and travel

The coronavirus crisis continued well into the beginning of 2022. The EDCC replied to 9 480 questions under the heading of the EU coronavirus response. This number is significantly lower than the extraordinary high figures of 55 725 question in 2021 and 22 259 in 2020.

Many questions concerned the rules for travelling between and into the EU countries in relation to vaccination, testing and registration. Other topics were the EU effort to ensure vaccines and the EU Digital COVID certificate.

Helping citizens cope with Brexit

The United Kingdom left the EU on 1 February 2020. The practical consequences continued to cause some uncertainty during 2022.

The contact centre replied to 1482 questions related to Brexit in 2022. This compares to 2776 in 2021 and 3 809 in 2020 and. Topics most asked about were customs rules, residence and travel rights. 50 % of the questions came from people residing in the UK - either EU or British citizens.

Practical questions on EU funding

The EDCC continued to reply to enquiries related to EU funding opportunities. The most prominent example is the EU research programme Horizon Europe. Thanks to the dedicated service, established on request of Directorate-General for Research and Innovation already in 2006, the EDCC was able to answer to 13 300 questions from applicants and participants under this programme. This number of questions was an increase by 38% compared to 2021 (9 635). 2022 was the year where many of the activities under the 95 billion euro programme running 2021-2027 started.

For the average citizen, the most popular grant programmes are in the youth field – Erasmus+, Discover EU (free rail travel pass) and the EU Solidarity Corps. A network of dedicated helpdesks exists to assist young people with these opportunities, in particular the Eurodesk, but there were nevertheless 5 639 questions directed to the EDCC.

Europass is the scheme that helps promote learning and working in other EU countries, best known for helping job-seekers to create Europe-wide CVs. The EDCC, thanks to its dedicated service established on request of DG Employment, helped 7 860 citizens use the portal.

How did the contact centre operate?

A corporate communication service

The Europe Direct Contact Centre serves citizens on any EU-related matter, acting on behalf of the whole Commission and its various departments. The EDCC Charter, endorsed by the Commission's Corporate Communication Steering Committee in 2020 established clear rights and responsibilities for the cooperation of the different actors.

The EDCC cooperates daily with so-called 'back offices' in most directorate-generals of the Commission, and other entities and institutions. To help keep a common understanding of the work, an annual meeting as well as other working meetings were set-up, and M365 / Teams was used as a collaborative tool to inform and involve everybody. The EDCC's Customer Relationship Management system is used for the processing of questions and documenting the answers.

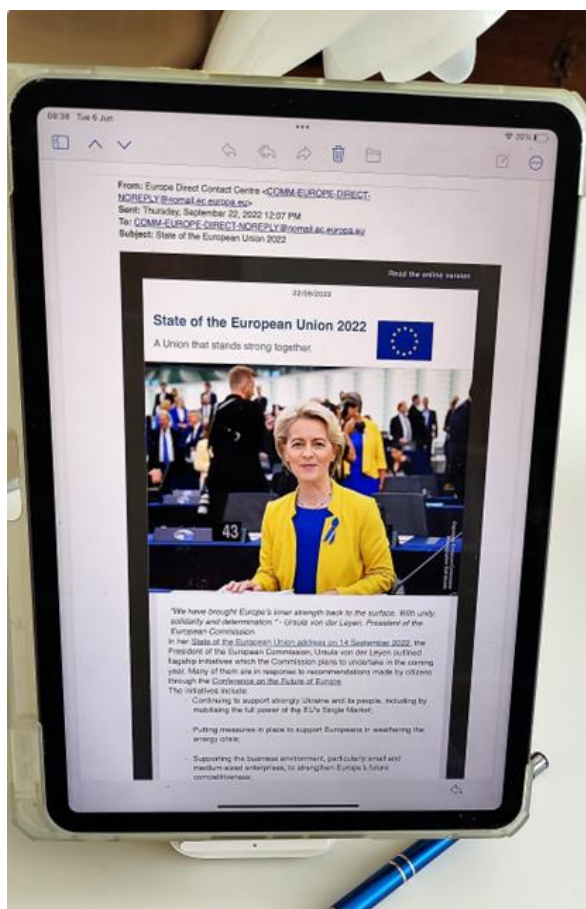
The 'back offices' provide guidance and training on the replies within their area of competence. They also reply to questions which are more complex or sensitive. The share of questions which had to be escalated to a 'back office' was 6.5 % in 2022.

Cooperation with European Parliament, Council and European External Action Service

The Europe Direct Contact Centre, as the EU's contact centre, not only cooperates with all concerned Commission services, but also with the European Parliament, the Council and the European External Action Service. Thanks to this cooperation, citizens can receive replies directly on any EU matter or be guided to institution-specific information services when questions only concern one specific institution. The EDCC exchanges questions which concern the respective other party with the [Parliament's "Ask EP"](#) service and the [Council's "Public Info"](#) service for citizens. The EDCC is the general contact point for citizens addressing their questions to the European External Action Service.

Cross-promotion of the various services also takes place. The EDCC's contact details are mentioned on relevant interinstitutional web pages on the Europa website.

Proactive outreach on EU priorities and policies



EDCC letter to citizens in September 2022

The EDCC helped communicate EU priorities and policies, not only by replying to questions received but also through proactive and targeted information newsletters to about 200 000 citizens who had earlier been in contact with the EDCC and who explicitly had agreed to be contacted again. Three such newsletters were sent out in 2022. In May the newsletter focused on EU solidarity with Ukraine, in September the State of the Union speech by Commission President von der Leyen and in December the “You are EU” communication campaign on the topic of protecting European values through energy independence.

The written replies from EDCC to any question contains a footer, which draws attention to overall EU priorities. In 2022, the footers were mainly on Ukraine, but for several weeks in September, the footer concerned the State of the European Union speech.

The contact centre was also promoted in the context of the Europe Day celebrations around 9 May and during the Commission’s Open Day. EDCC featured on a big map displaying the Europe Direct network at the entrance of the Berlaymont headquarter building of the Commission. The contact centre was in this context extraordinarily open during the first weekend of May 2022.

Chat with the EU

In November 2022, the Commission introduced a third communication channel of the EDCC, in line with its strategic planning and the continued modernisation of the EDCC: the contact centre started to reply to questions from citizens through the Messenger app linked to the Commission's corporate Facebook account. The mix of three communication channels matches evolving communication habits of citizens. The possibility for quick text exchanges allows a two-way communication to be sure that the two parties understand well the question and the reply.

Citizens can use the 24 official EU languages, Ukrainian and Russian also when contacting the EU via the chat. Internally in the contact centre, the chats are handled in the same way as phone calls and e-mails – it is the same staff using the same knowledge and abiding to the same quality rules.



Efficient knowledge management

Each and every answer which EDCC gives as and every instruction and information used to ensure high-quality replies is fed into a dedicated knowledge base (KB). The frequent use of the KB allows EDCC staff to give speedy and correct replies and to serve citizens optimally.

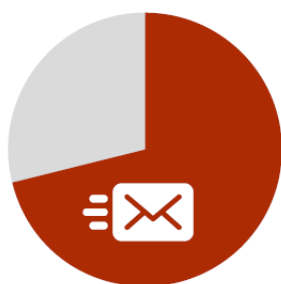
The Commission's DG Communication is undertaking a major effort to organise and process this knowledge in a forward-looking way in line with the institution's strategic data policy.

This knowledge work advanced significantly during 2022. All knowledge is now stored by means of so-called "RDF" technology, which is suitable for machine learning and use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) functions. The EDCC has a few basic AI-functions in place already to help daily operations, for example, to detect spam messages. It is planned to expand the use of AI significantly with systems to search the relevant knowledge for replies and also to help draft replies. Other users, outside the EDCC, will potentially be able to tap into this vast knowledge generated by the EDCC and its cooperating partners in the institutions.

Number of questions

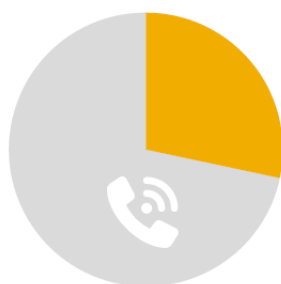
In 2022, the Europe Direct Contact Centre replied to:

159.276
QUESTIONS



71,2%

E-MAIL



28,5%

TELEPHONE



0,3%

CHAT

In 2022, the Europe Direct Contact Centre replied to 159 276 questions.

28.5% of the questions received were answered by phone. This share very similar to the share in 2021 and has remained largely stable over the years. Instant messaging started with a soft launch in November – hence the very low share so far - but is expected to grow substantially in the coming years.

Email questions were sent by citizens through web-forms on Europa. However, 1 734 of the e-mails reached the EDCC through an internal transfer, after the citizens had sent the questions directly to a staff member or individual services in the EU institutions.

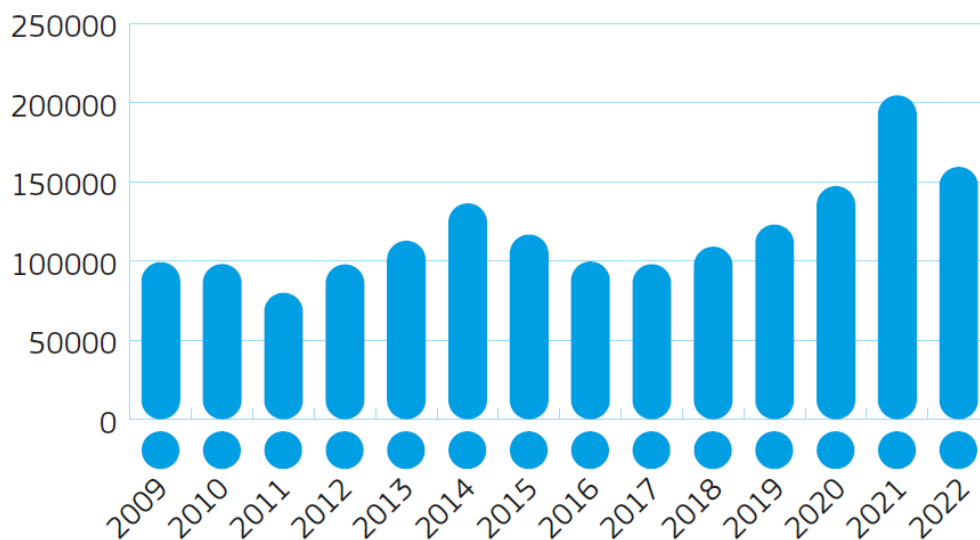
Trend in number of questions over years

The number of questions answered by the EDCC in 2022 is the second highest in the history of the EDCC since the year 2000.

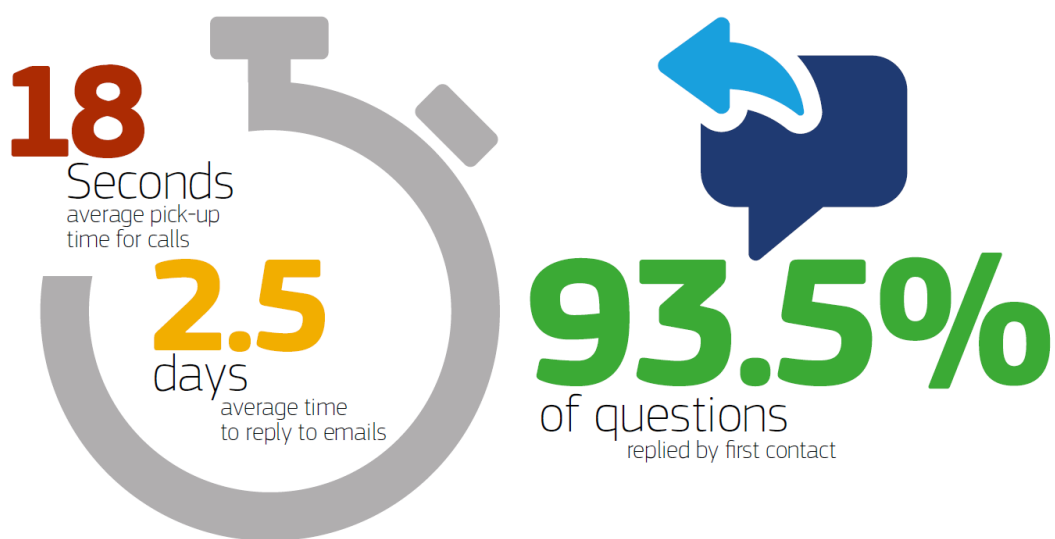
Yet, it was slightly lower than the record number of answers given in 2021. This can be explained by the fact that the year 2021 was dominated by an exceptionally high number of questions on coronavirus-related travel restrictions. The 2021 number also included about 25 000 chain letters related to coronavirus. Chain letters are sent from different citizens who in a coordinated action send the same or very similar questions, often linked to particular national controversies. Chain letters, different from spam, also receive replies from the EDCC. In 2022, there were very few chain letters compared to 2021: only 784 replies were related to chain letters

In a longer historic perspective, the number of questions the EDCC receives increased.

2009	99 154
2010	97 990
2011	79 797
2012	97 742
2013	112 671
2014	136 296
2015	116 571
2016	99 554
2017	97 841
2018	108 929
2019	122 896
2020	147 199
2021	204 475
2022	159 276



Response time



The EDCC was able to reply to a very high share of questions by first contact, namely 93.5% of all cases, taking into account all communication channels. EDCC only escalated 6.5% of all cases to other services due to a technical or sensitive character of the question.

The EDCC was also very quick in replying to questions: the Communication Officers picked up the phone after 18 seconds on average.

EDCC gave a reply to a written question after 2.5 working days in average when it replied directly on the basis of their knowledge, without escalating the case.

This very fast response time for written question is well below the 15 working days foreseen in the Commission's [Code of Good Administrative Behaviour](#) for answers to e-mails corresponding to a letter. The response time was, in fact, faster than the EDCC's own promise to reply within 3 working days.

Questions per country

Questions came from all EU countries. In absolute numbers, the highest share of questions came from Germany, Spain and Italy.

Compared to the size of the population, medium-sized or smaller Member States were over-represented. The following countries were below the average of the share of questions compared to population size: Czechia, Denmark, France, Italy, Poland and Romania. France and Poland are the countries with fewest questions compared to the population with 16.4 and 17.2 questions per 100 000 inhabitants.

At least 20.4% of the questions came from outside of the EU. This share increased from 17.6% in 2021 and it was 24% in 2020. However, the situation related to the start of the invasion of Ukraine has led to some uncertainty on the absolute accuracy of this non-EU statistics.

Questions came from all over the world. Ukraine represented a large share of questions in 2022. Also people based in the United Kingdom continued to introduce a significant number of questions. In fact, EDCC receives questions about the EU from citizens from all other continents of the world.

Country of residence	Number of questions	% of EDCC volume	Per 100 000 inhabitants
Germany	18 169	11.4%	21.8
Spain	12 596	7.9%	26.6
Italy	12 553	7.9%	21.3
France	11 115	7.0%	16.4
Belgium	7 812	4.9%	67.2
Poland	6 494	4.1%	17.2
Netherlands	5 180	3.3%	29.4
Romania	4 814	3.0%	25.3
Portugal	4 743	3.0%	45.8
Greece	4 076	2.6%	38.4
Sweden	3 602	2.3%	34.5
Hungary	2 776	1.7%	28.7
Austria	2 755	1.7%	30.7
Bulgaria	2 501	1.6%	36.6
Ireland	2 318	1.5%	45.8
Czechia	2 100	1.3%	20.0
Croatia	2 073	1.3%	53.4
Denmark	1 625	1.0%	27.7
Finland	1 619	1.0%	29.2
Slovakia	1 464	0.9%	26.9

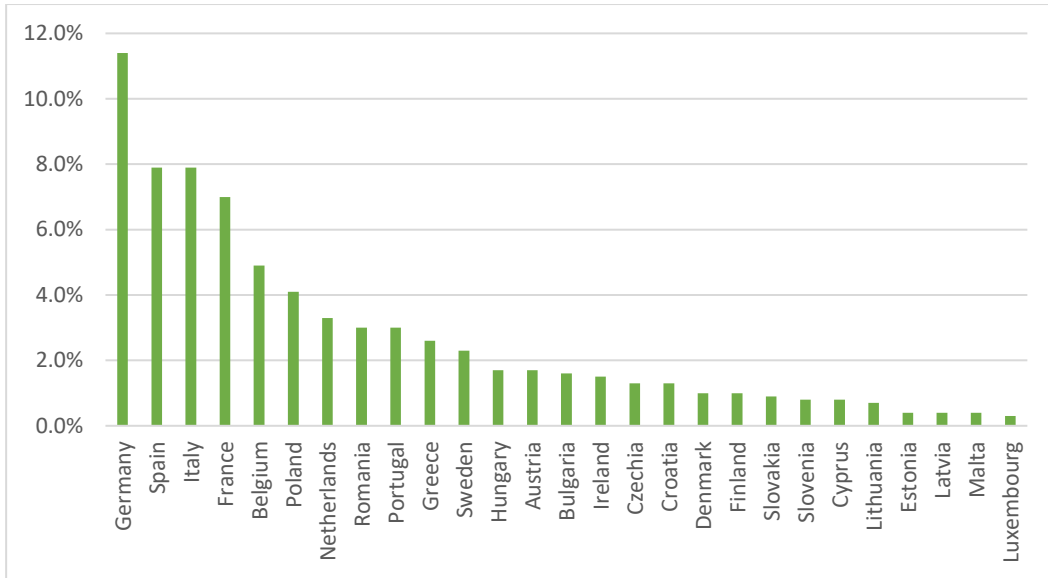
Slovenia	1 247	0.8%	59.2
Cyprus	1 196	0.8%	132.2
Lithuania	1 093	0.7%	39.0
Estonia	715	0.4%	53.7
Latvia	708	0.4%	37.7
Malta	703	0.4%	134.9
Luxembourg	552	0.3%	85.5
Total EU	116 599	73.2%	26.1

Other European countries ⁶	1 774	20.4%
United Kingdom	7 221	
Asia	7 134	
North America	4 973	
Africa	4 739	
Latin America	3 056	
Ukraine ⁷	1 757	
Russia ⁶	1 083	
Australasia	641	
Unspecified ⁸	10 299	
Grand Total	159 276	100.0%

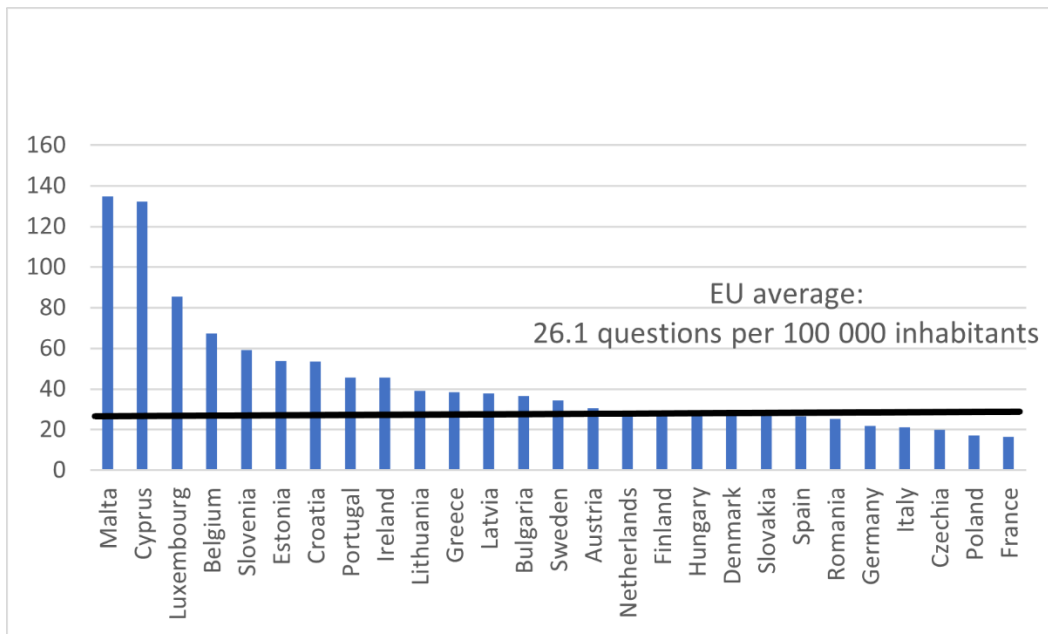
⁶ : Other European countries are countries in Europe other than the EU member states, United Kingdom, Ukraine and Russia.

⁷ : The registration of Ukraine and Russia as country of residence only started in April 2022 as part of the start-up of “the EU solidarity with Ukraine helpline”. Before April 2022, questions from Ukraine and Russia were in principle registered under “Other European countries”.

⁸ “Unspecified” country comes from phone calls or chats where the country was not clear from the content of the conversation, and where it was not appropriate or possible to ask explicitly. For e-mail, it is compulsory for citizens to state their country of residence themselves in the web-form. Due to uncertainties in relation to the war in Ukraine, some other situations are exceptionally included in the category “unspecified”.



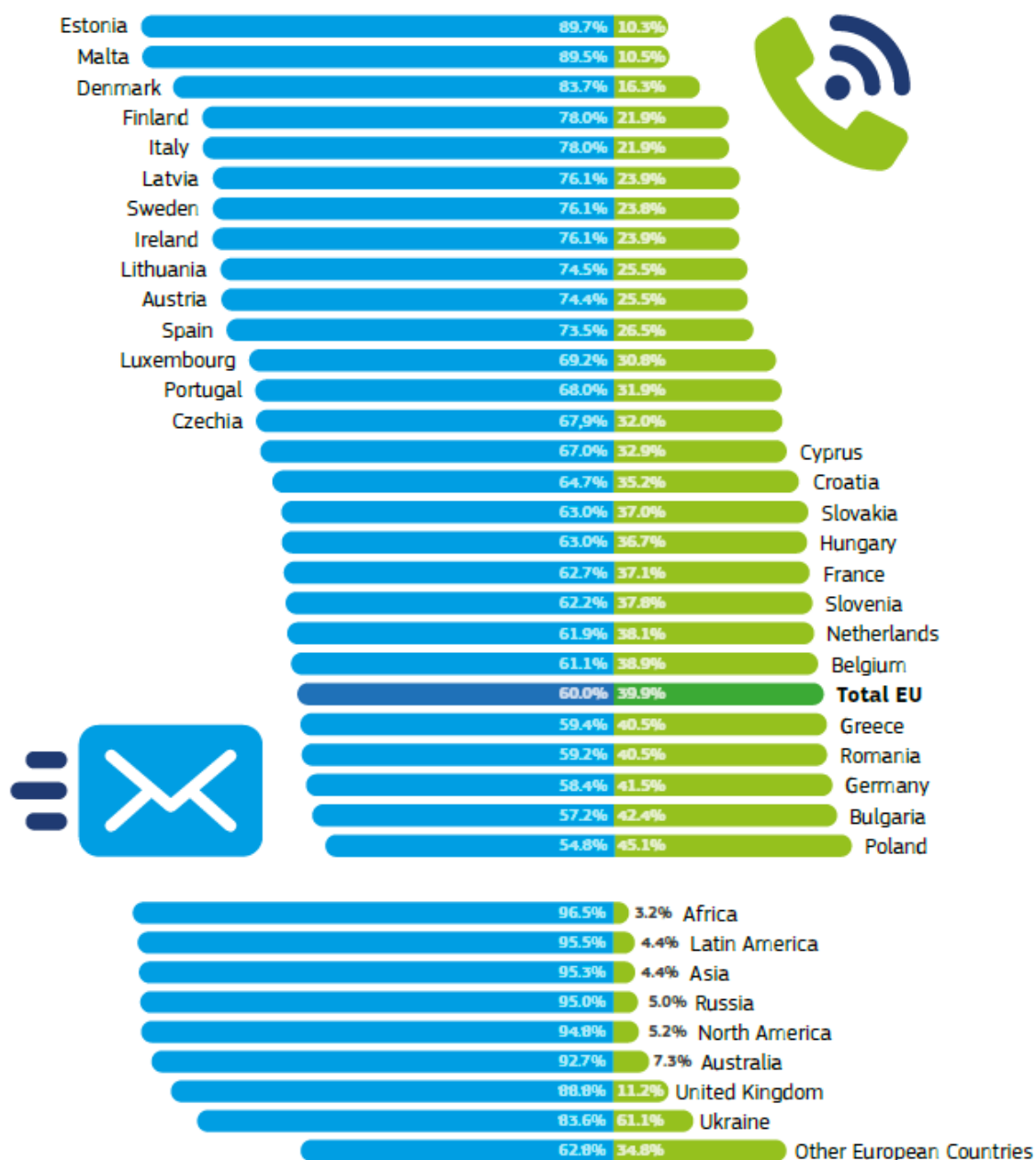
Questions per EU country as a percentage of the total number of EDCC questions.



Questions by EU country per 100 000 inhabitants of the country's population

Questions by country and channel

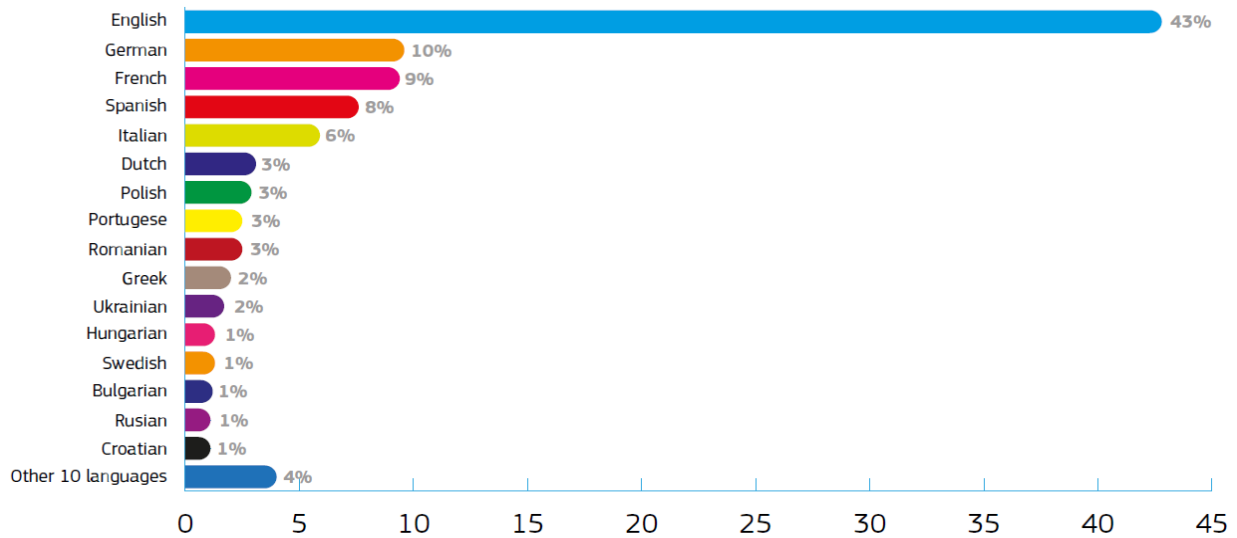
About 29% of all questions were phone conversations. The countries where people used the phone the most were Poland, Bulgaria and Germany with 40-45% of the total enquiries. Least likely to use the phone were citizens situated in Estonia and Malta. Citizens contacting the EDCC from outside the EU were mostly using e-mail.



Share of e-mail (blue) and phone (green) for all questions per country of residence. Chat is not shown due to the small number since its soft launch in November 2022.

Questions per language

The EDCC replied in the 24 official EU languages as well as Ukrainian and Russian. A relatively high share of almost 43% of the enquiries was in English. Some citizens asking questions from non-English speaking countries still prefer to use English, in particular for written questions. English questions have a rather low share for phone calls compared to the share for email and chat. This indicates that people feel more comfortable on the phone when they use their native language.



Questions by language, 2022

Language	Number of questions	% of EDCC volume	Phone share
English	68 157	42.8%	15.5%
German	15 269	9.6%	45.5%
French	14 903	9.4%	41.1%
Spanish	12 151	7.6%	24.7%
Italian	9 430	5.9%	25.9%
Dutch	4 887	3.1%	49.5%
Polish	4 614	2.9%	45.7%
Portuguese	4 018	2.5%	32.5%
Romanian	4 017	2.5%	40.4%
Greek	3 215	2.0%	52.8%
Ukrainian	2 687	1.7%	55.9%
Hungarian	2 131	1.3%	42.5%
Swedish	2 025	1.3%	30.1%
Bulgarian	1 973	1.2%	45.8%
Russian	1 781	1.1%	24.4%
Croatian	1 696	1.1%	39.9%
Czech	1 281	0.8%	41.8%
Slovakian	1 077	0.7%	44.3%
Finnish	819	0.5%	28.4%
Danish	768	0.5%	13.9%
Slovenian	766	0.5%	55.5%
Lithuanian	662	0.4%	30.1%
Estonian	486	0.3%	9.9%
Latvian	343	0.2%	26.5%
Maltese	82	0.1%	43.9%
Irish	38	0.0%	13.2%
Total	159 276	100.0%	28.5%

Questions by language, 2022

Language trend over the years

English remains by far the most used language by citizens contacting the EDCC, representing 42.8% in 2022. However, the share of English language questions does not increase over time. On the contrary: In 2021 the share of cases in English fell significantly, from 47.8% to 38.7%. The drop in English cases seemed to be related to the surge in 2021 of questions about travelling rules related to coronavirus, which were often expressed in another language than English. The share of English language questions increased again in 2022, but has not reached the high levels of almost 50% for 2017 and 2018. For the first time ever, in 2022, German was used slightly more than French and ranks the second language of contact in 2022. Both French and German were, however, used at very similar levels over the years.

	English	German	French	Spanish	Italian
2016	44.2%	9.3%	10.9%	5.6%	5.2%
2017	49.4%	9.4%	11.5%	7.5%	5.2%
2018	48.2%	10.8%	10.9%	8.0%	5.2%
2019	45.0%	10.6%	10.5%	7.7%	6.0%
2020	47.8%	9.0%	9.0%	8.6%	6.4%
2021	38.7%	9.9%	10.1%	8.8%	8.5%
2022	42.8%	9.6%	9.4%	7.6%	5.9%

Percentage (%) of all questions per year for the five most used languages.

Escalations and transfers

By far the largest number of questions were replied directly by the EDCC based on general guidelines, briefings and published information. However, 6.5% of the questions were so technical or sensitive that the EDCC had to ask experts within the European Commission or other EU entities – through so-called ‘escalations’. This compares with escalation rates of 4.5% in 2021 and 7.4% in 2020.

The aim of the Commission’s Directorate-General for Communication is to keep this rate at 5%, since fewer escalations mean faster replies to citizens and less work in the various EU departments.

The Research Executive Agency, responsible for the implementation of the Horizon Europe programme, requires the EDCC to escalate more questions than in other areas. When the research area is included, the escalation share is 10.6 %. This share was 12.4% in 2020.

The table shows the Commission services and other entities and institutions which function as a formal ‘back office’.

The Directorate-General for Communication’s ‘back office’ handles escalations falling in its remit as a Presidential service and domain leader for external communication. It also handles escalations to all other EU entities and institutions.

The EDCC also have some cooperation agreements where questions are **transferred** to other partners for a reply – as opposed to escalations where the reply to the citizen comes back via the EDCC.

The EDCC transferred 403 questions to ‘Your Europe Advice’ and 191 to ‘SOLVIT’. These services are operated by DG GROW and reply to citizens within their particular fields, namely legal advice related to the single market and issues with public authorities in other EU countries. However, ‘EC SOLVIT’ in the list below is a back office for general questions and complaints about SOLVIT.

Concerning the European Parliament (Ask EP), 210 questions were transferred from the EDCC to Ask EP, while 542 questions were transferred in the other direction.

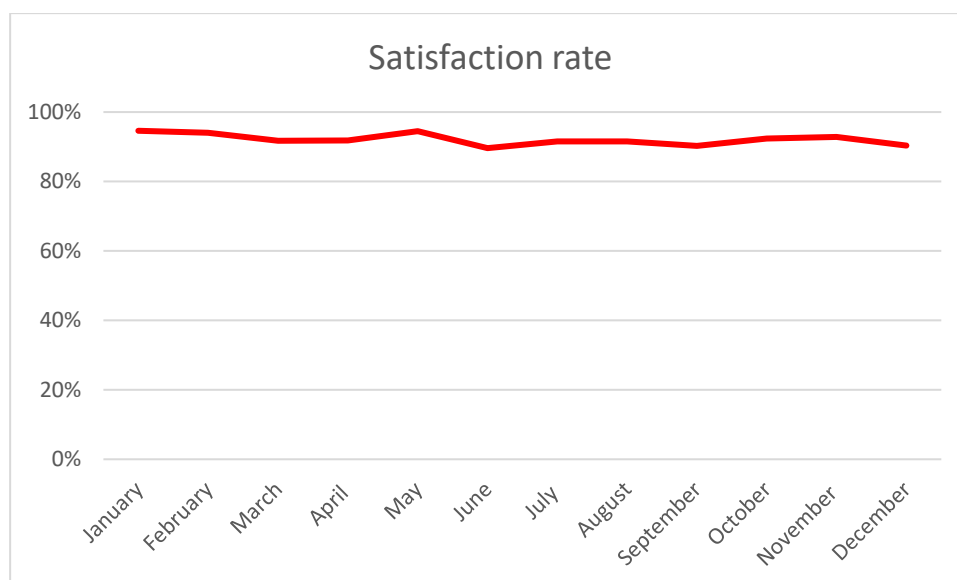
Concerning the Council, 120 questions were transferred from the EDCC to the Council’s “Public info” service while 725 questions were transferred in the other direction.

Back office	Escalations	%
<i>Research Horizon Europe</i>	6 443	39.6%
<i>SANTE</i>	1 126	7.5%
<i>Europass</i>	1 075	6.6%
<i>FISMA</i>	1 074	6.6%
<i>GROW</i>	948	5.8%
<i>COMM</i>	711	4.4%
<i>CNECT</i>	486	3.0%
<i>TAXUD</i>	401	2.5%
<i>ENV</i>	289	1.8%
<i>Web Europa</i>	285	1.8%
<i>JUST</i>	279	1.7%
<i>EEAS</i>	264	1.6%
<i>TRADE</i>	219	1.3%
<i>EMPL</i>	215	1.3%
<i>European Parliament</i>	210	1.3%
<i>EAC</i>	202	1.2%
<i>AGRI</i>	169	1.0%
<i>ENER</i>	168	1.0%
<i>MOVE other than passenger rights</i>	156	1.0%
<i>WIFI4EU</i>	154	0.9%
<i>SG</i>	141	0.9%
<i>CLIMA</i>	131	0.8%
<i>HOME</i>	120	0.7%
<i>Council</i>	120	0.7%
<i>ECHO</i>	113	0.7%
<i>ECFIN</i>	96	0.6%
<i>DGT</i>	86	0.5%
<i>REGIO</i>	86	0.5%
<i>MARE</i>	74	0.5%
<i>BUDG</i>	67	0.4%
<i>INTPA</i>	63	0.4%
<i>NEAR</i>	62	0.4%
<i>Passenger rights</i>	53	0.3%
<i>EPSO</i>	28	0.2%
<i>European Institute of Technology</i>	26	0.2%
<i>EC SOLVIT</i>	22	0.1%
<i>European Citizens' Initiative</i>	6	0.0%
Grand Total	16 268	100%

User satisfaction

Citizens have the option to give feedback to the EDCC service when they receive a reply, whether the reply is given via phone, e-mail or chat. In 2022, 5.8% of the citizens made use of this opportunity. The overall satisfaction rate in 2022 reached a very high level of 92.3%. This compares to 90.9 5% in 2021 and 85.5% in 2020.

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfaction rate
January	948	54	94.6%
February	865	55	94.0%
March	847	76	91.8%
April	731	65	91.8%
May	854	50	94.5%
June	733	85	89.6%
July	657	61	91.5%
August	680	63	91.5%
September	602	65	90.3%
October	680	56	92.4%
November	518	40	92.8%
December	457	49	90.3%
Total	8 572	719	92.3%





Publications Office
of the European Union

NA-04-23-724-EN-N
ISBN 978-92-68-05536-6
doi 10.2775/321089