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AS

Cooperation with Nordic countries

Public opinion in Estonia, Latvia and
Lithuania

May/June 2021

General information about polling

- The Nordic Council of Ministers commissioned a telephone survey in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
- In Estonia the poll was conducted from 17 to 28 May, 601 Estonian residents aged 15 and over were interviewed.
- In Latvia the poll was conducted from 12 to 24 May, 618 Latvian residents aged 15 and over were interviewed.
- In Lithuania the poll was conducted from 19 May to 31 May, 646 Lithuanian residents aged 16 and over were interviewed.

The logo for TURU-UURINGUTE AS is a dark red semi-circle on the left side of the slide. Inside the semi-circle, the text "TURU-UURINGUTE" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters, and "AS" is written in white, uppercase letters below it.

TURU-
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Summary

- 53% of the people in the Baltic states consider cooperation with the Nordic countries to be very important, and 26% find it rather important. Only a few respondents do not find cooperation important. Even though the number of people finding cooperation important has decreased slightly, the results remain high.
- When asked to choose between cooperation with the Nordic countries and cooperation with the Baltic states, people tended to choose the latter. The people of Latvia and Lithuania value cooperation with the Baltic states more (over 50%). The situation in Estonia is different – 54% of the population finds cooperation with the Nordic countries more important.
- 57% of the people in the Baltic states would like to see more cooperation with the Nordic countries, and 33% think that the current situation is good. Compared to the previous survey, more people in the Baltic states are happy with the current level of cooperation. This result shows that there has been more cooperation between the countries in the past years.
- In evaluating the most important bases for cooperation with the Nordic countries, most respondents agree that small countries need to cooperate with each other. In addition, the geographical proximity as well as similar cultures and values are considered important. The survey of 2018 produced similar results. It is positive that the younger generations in the Baltic states see similarities in the structure of Baltic and Nordic societies more often.
- Like in the previous survey, people in the Baltic states consider trade, tourism, education and research, and culture to be the most important sectors for cooperation. The younger generations of all three countries pay more attention to the education sector. In addition, young Latvians were more likely to consider innovation and new technologies important. Older generations in Estonia and Latvia were more likely to find culture important.
- The greatest benefit from cooperation with the Nordic countries continues to be learning from each other and facilitating mutual trade and competitiveness according to the respondents. A third of the respondents also agreed that our voice in the world is stronger together with the Nordic countries. No significant changes have taken place in replies to this question compared to the previous survey.

Summary

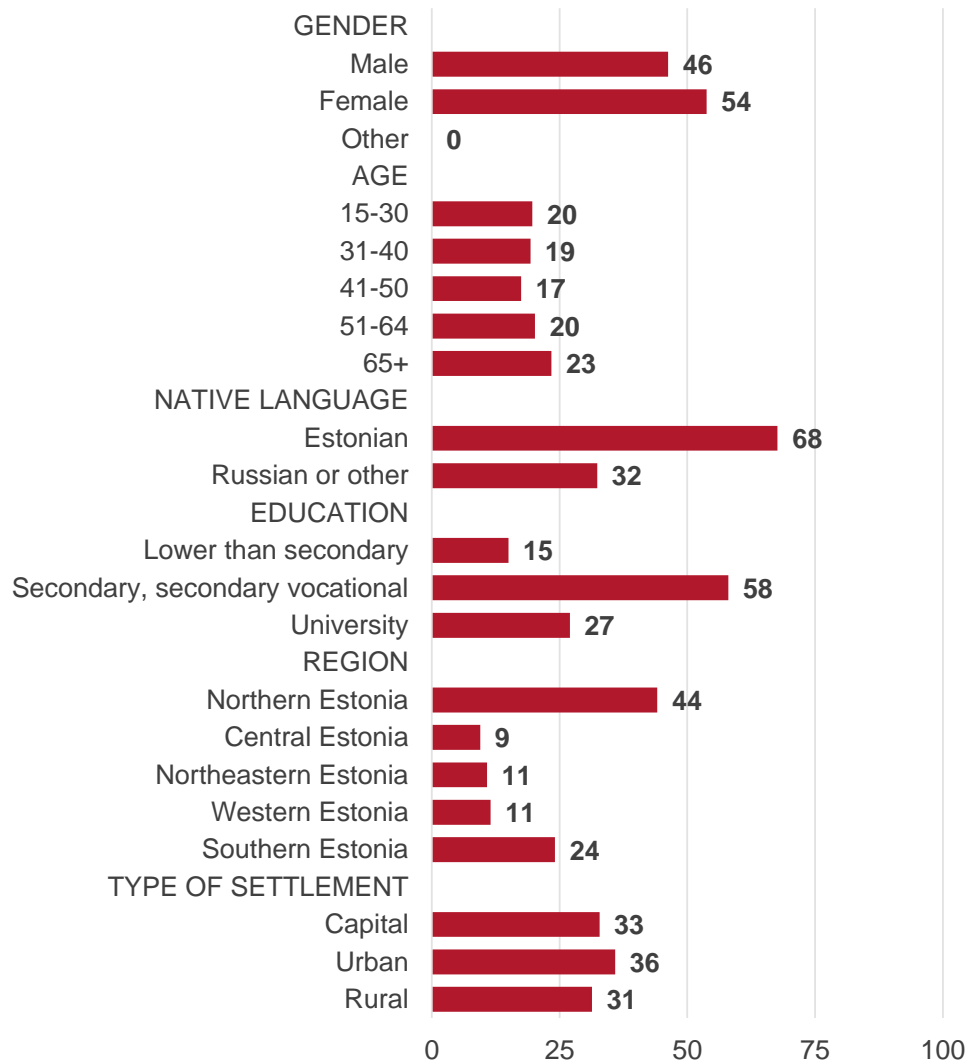
- The people of the Baltic states consider social welfare (53%), as well as transparent and democratic processes (34%) and high environmental awareness (32%) to be the most typical Nordic values. In addition, many people value equality and responsibility for the future generations.
- Most Estonian residents think that they can contribute into cooperation with the Nordic countries with the development of the IT sector and digital services. This is followed by cooperation in the fields of research and education, international tourism, technology and innovation.
- A half of the population of Latvia would like to contribute into cooperation with the Nordic countries through tourism opportunities, followed by contributing thorough labour force and cooperation in trade. An important area that Latvia can contribute with is also pure nature and nature protection, as well as culture.
- Lithuanian residents would largely wish to contribute into cooperation with the Nordic countries with their labour force, followed by tourism and trade.
- It is worth noting that the youngest age group in Estonia stressed the field of technology and innovation more than the average respondent. The younger respondents in Latvia were more likely to mention the IT and digital services sector, and those in Lithuania mentioned research and education.
- When asked to name something negative about the Nordic countries, 44% of Estonian residents think there is no such thing - they like everything about them. Other responses most often highlighted the immigration policy or excessive openness to asylum seekers (18%). This was followed by slow decision-making and bureaucracy (13%), high taxes and the high cost of living.
- Latvian residents also have a mostly positive attitude towards the Nordic countries, and 66% of the people see nothing negative about them. The arrogance of the people (7%), high cost of living (6%) and overdoing with their gender equality policy (6%) were the most common negative things listed about the Nordic countries. The people of Lithuania generally have nothing negative to say about the Nordic countries – 56% did not reply and 19% think there is nothing negative about them. In Lithuania, the most commonly listed negative aspects were the cold and humid climate (5%), too strict laws for the protection of children's rights (5%) and reserved people (4%).

Summary

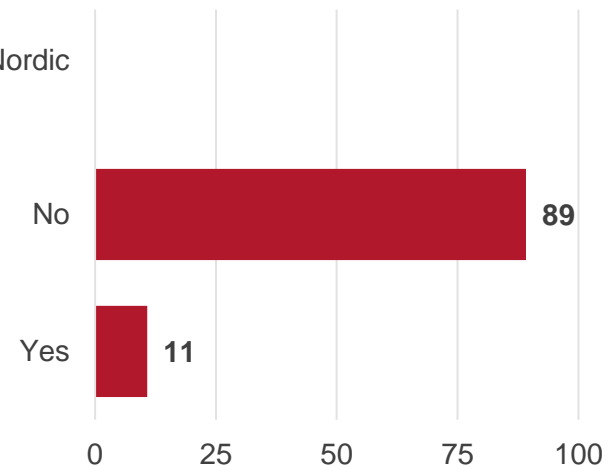
- According to the survey, the people of the Baltic states feel the most affinity with Finland (27%) and Sweden (26%). These are followed by Norway, Denmark and Iceland.
- However, the individual results of the Baltic states are markedly different. As expected, the majority of Estonian residents (57%) feel affinity with Finland. In Latvia, more people feel close to Sweden (36%), while Norway tops the charts in Lithuania (27%).
- Over a half of the Baltic population (52%) wishes to know more about the Nordic countries, with Lithuania being the most eager for information (60%).
- The population of the Baltic states is the most interested in tourism opportunities, culture and economy. These are followed by the social sector and education.
- In conclusion, cooperation with the Nordic countries continues to be very important to the Baltic states, residents certainly wish to see it continue, and cooperation offers in a variety of sectors are welcome.

Background data for respondents/ ESTONIA, %

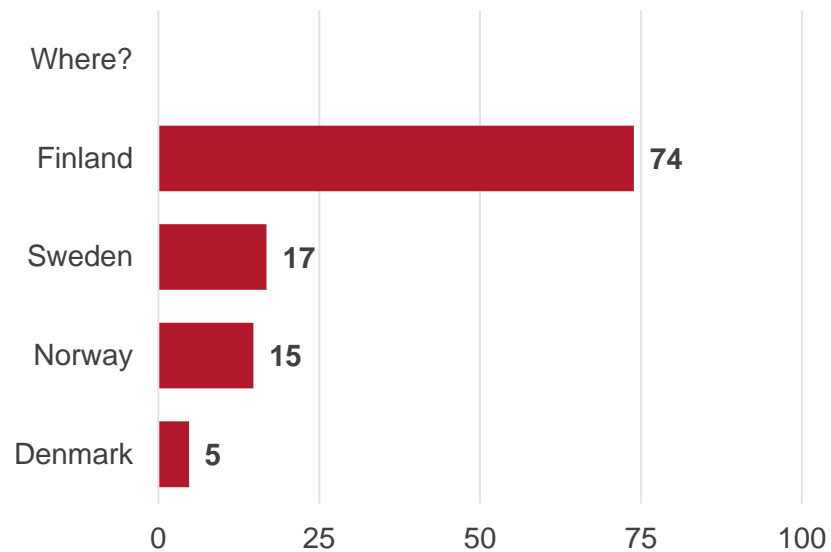
N=601



Have you lived in a Nordic country?

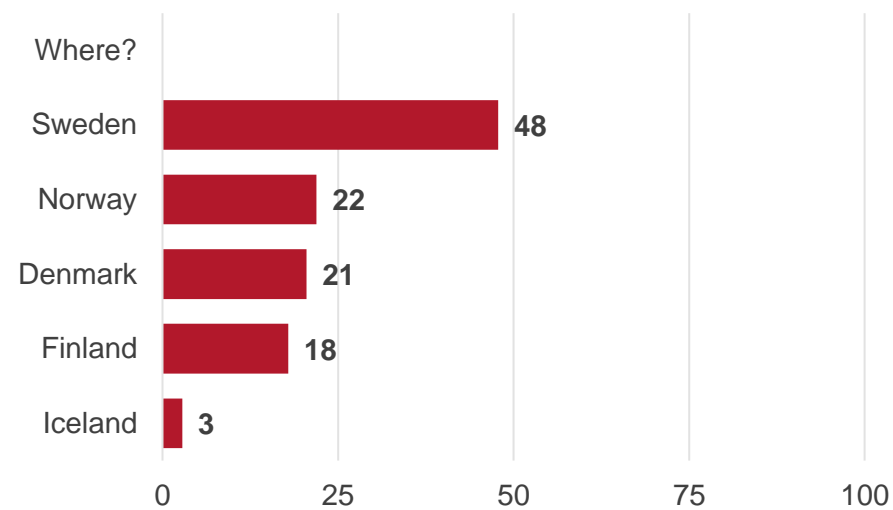
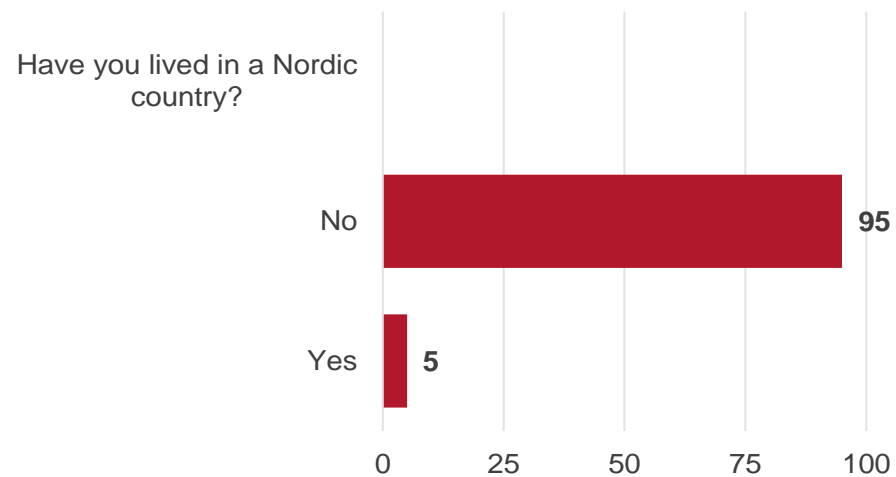
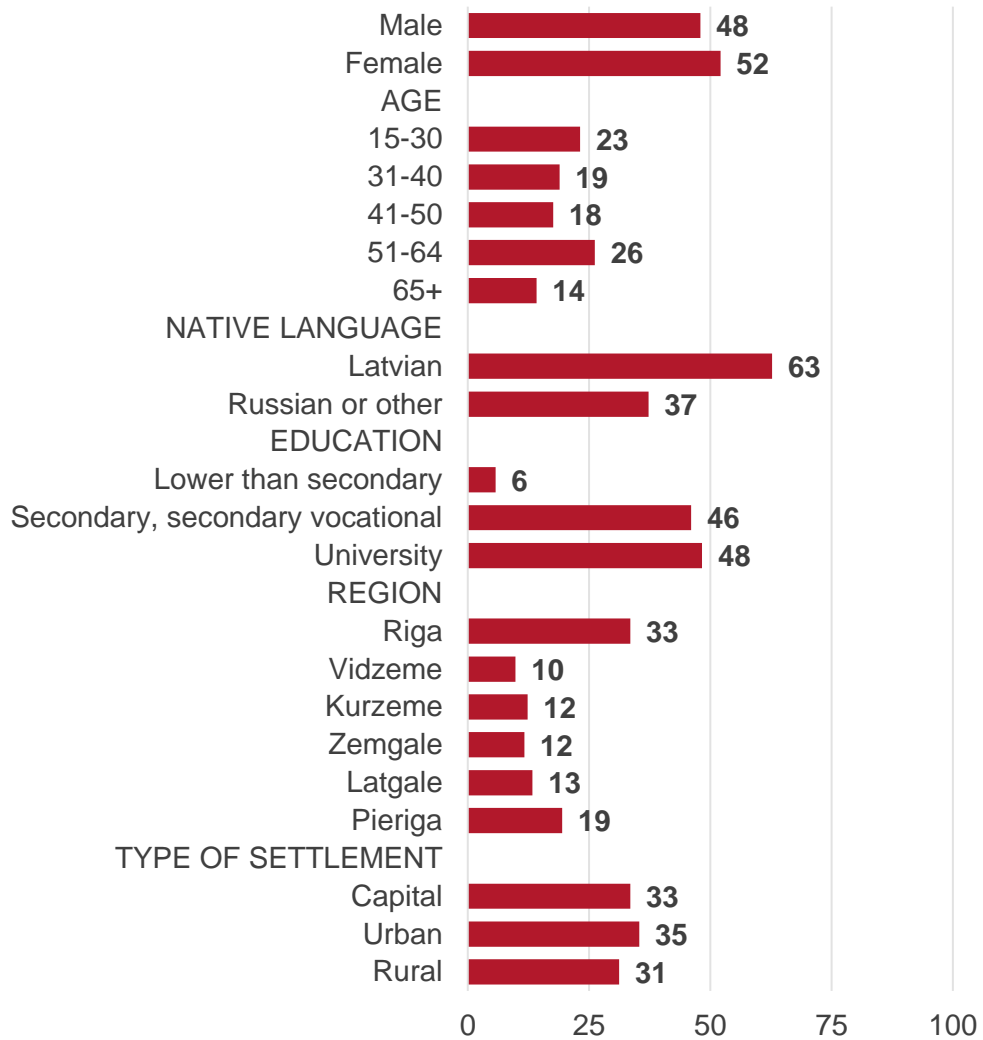


Where?



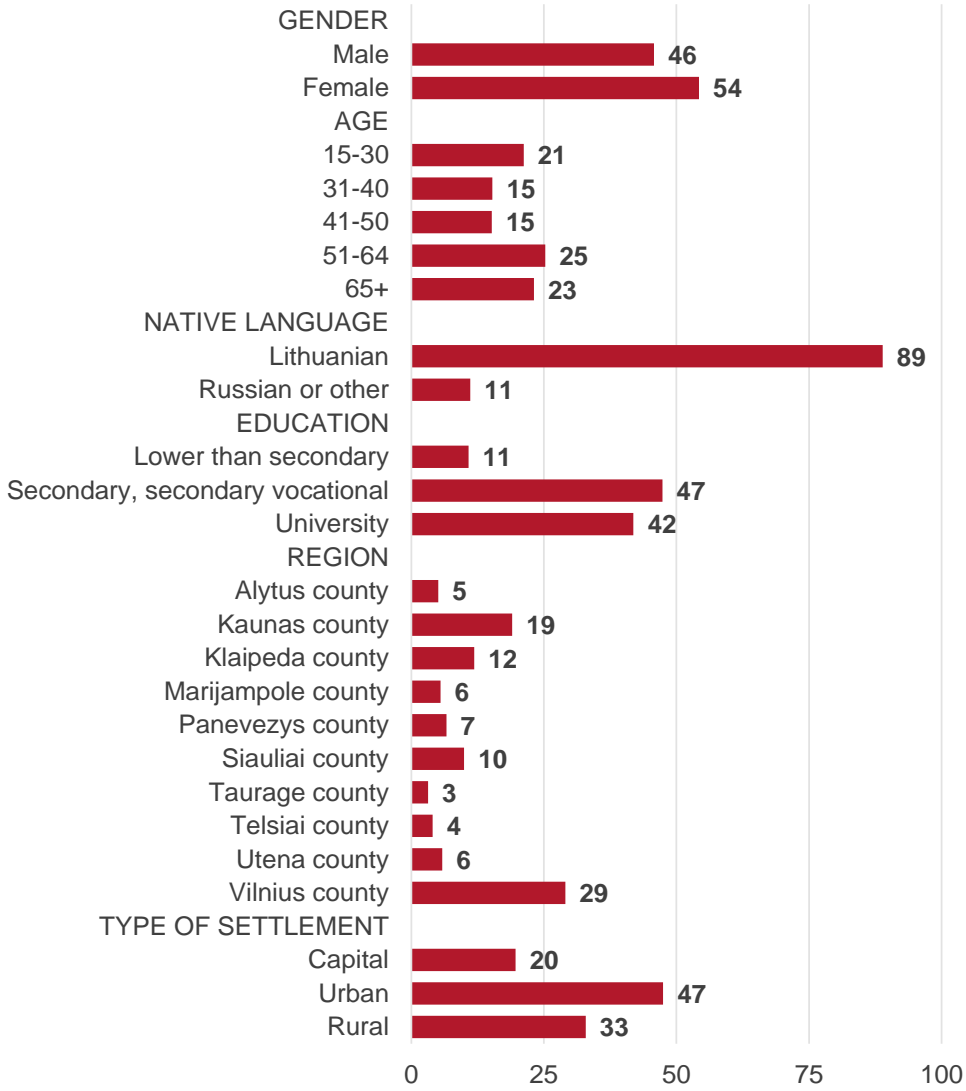
Background data for respondents/ LATVIA, %

N=618

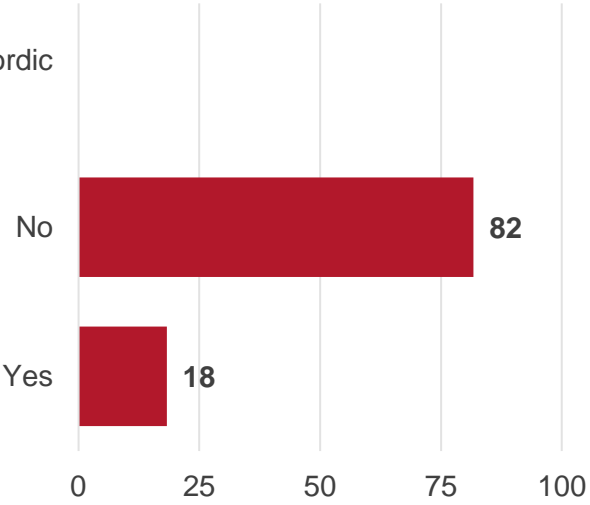


Background data for respondents/ LITHUANIA, %

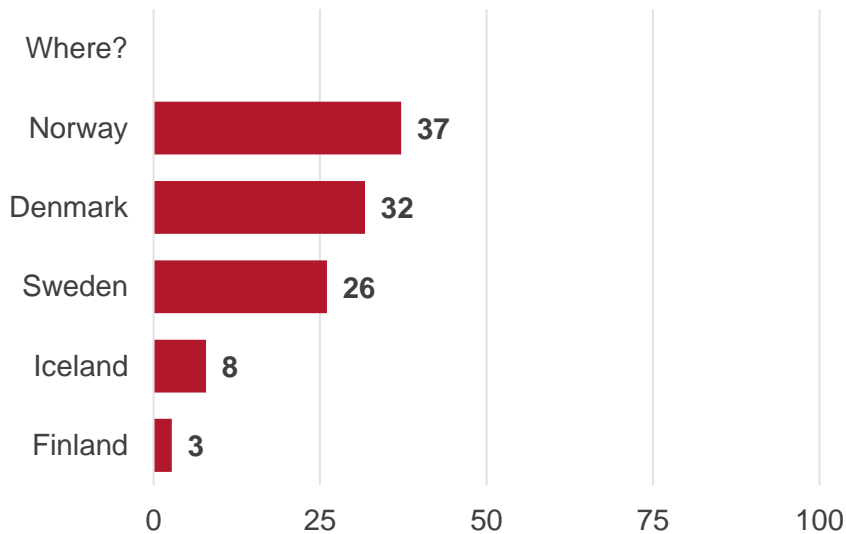
N=646



Have you lived in a Nordic country?



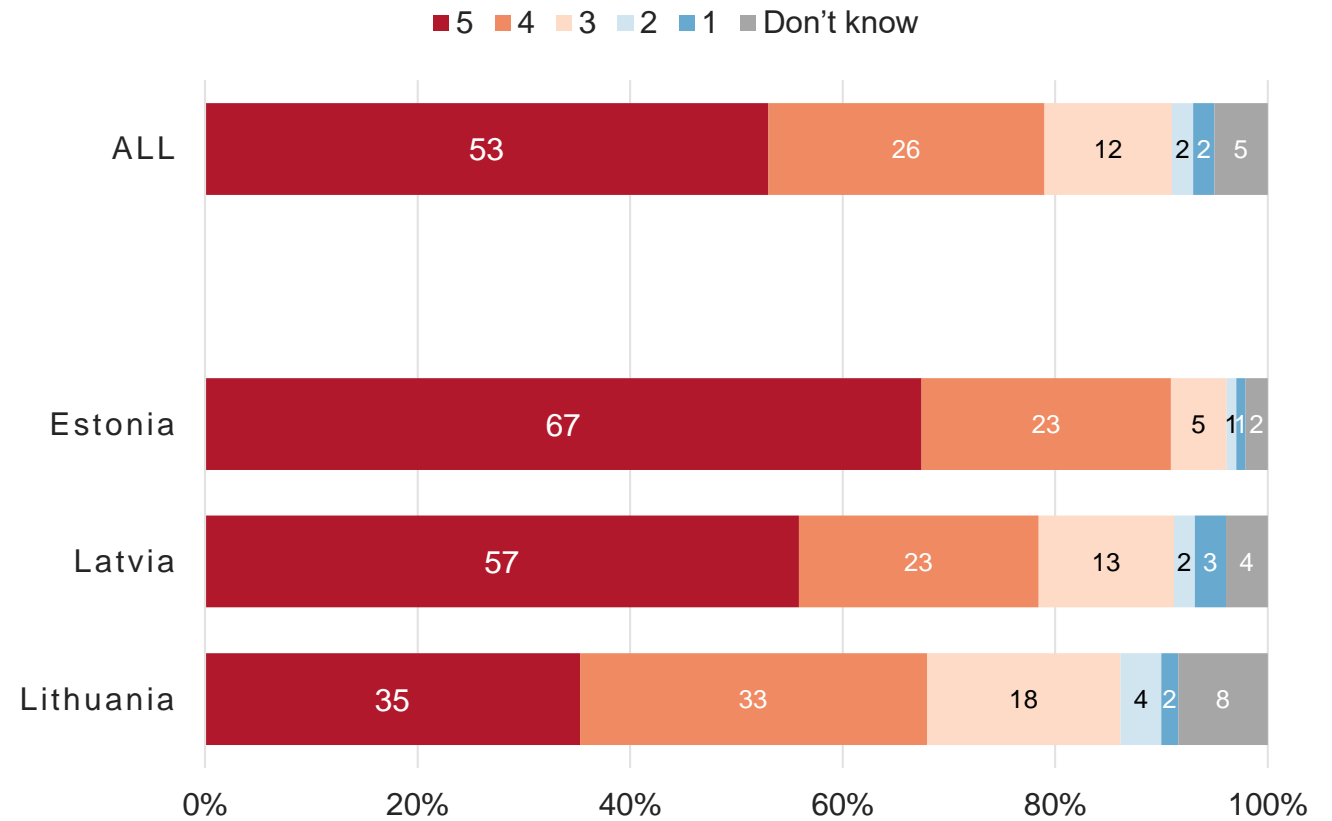
Where?



How important is good cooperation with the Nordic countries?

On a five point scale, where 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important

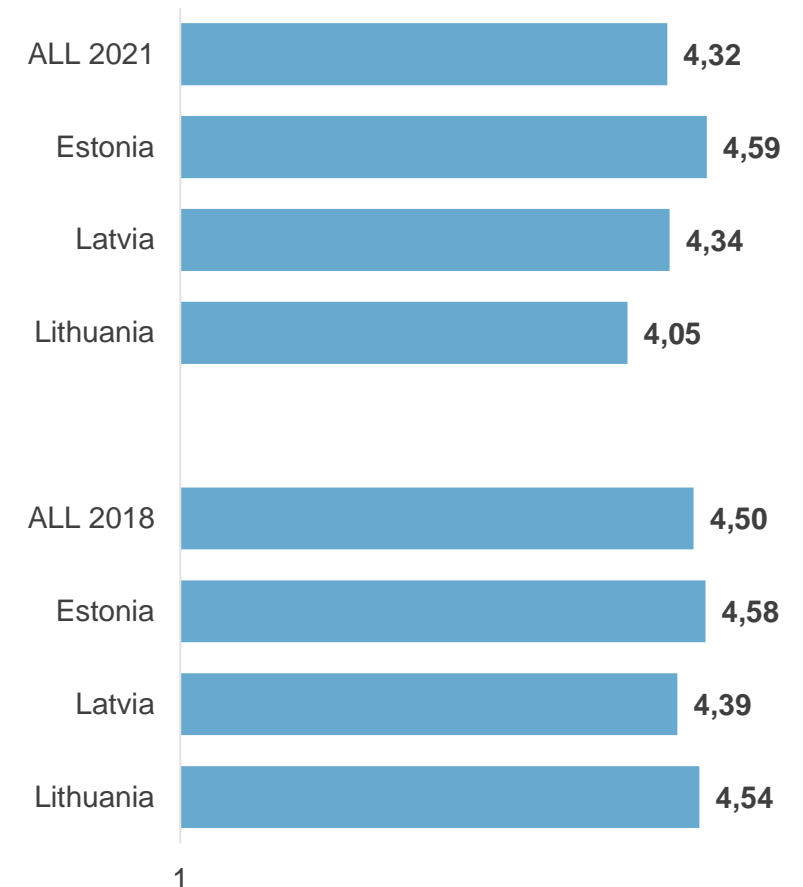
- 53% of the population of the Baltic states consider cooperation with the Nordic countries very important, and 26% find it rather important. Only a few respondents do not consider cooperation important.
- Estonia has the most positive attitude, with 67% of its population considering cooperation very important. In Latvia and Lithuania, the corresponding figures are 57% and 35%, respectively.
- It is worth noting that the younger age group in Latvia and Estonia value good cooperation with others somewhat less; while in Lithuania, the lowest results were among respondents aged 41–50.
- In all three countries, the figure for the respondents with high education was above average.
- Likewise, people who had lived in a Nordic country for over six months value cooperation more, which is especially noticeable in Estonia.



How important is good cooperation with the Nordic countries?

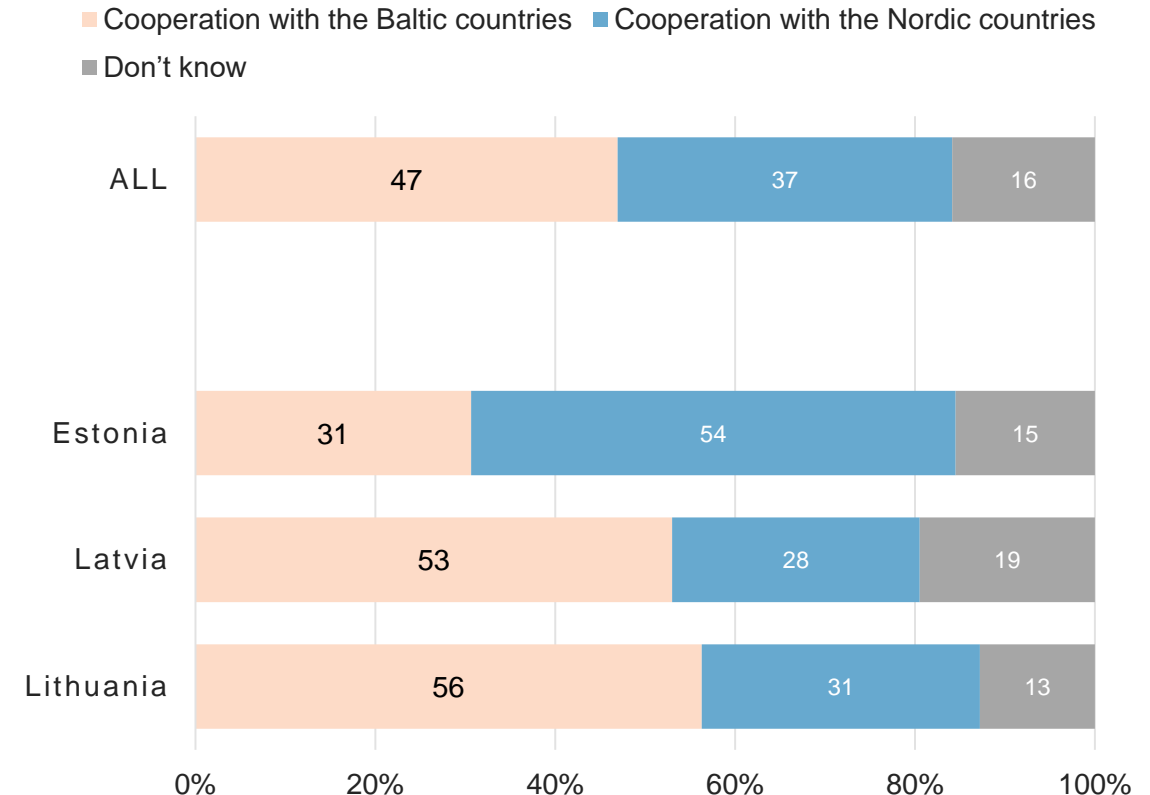
Mean value on a five point scale, where 1 = not at all important and 5 = very important

- In this slide you can see the results for this question expressed as the mean value of this scale, both for this and the previous (2018) survey.
- The results show that the average has decreased slightly compared to the previous survey – in other words, Baltic states in 2021 value good cooperation with the Nordic countries somewhat less than in 2018.
- The decrease is at the expense of Lithuania's results – there are no significant changes in Estonia and Latvia.
- In conclusion, even though a small change has taken place, the figures remain high and good cooperation with the Nordic countries is valorised.



What is more important: cooperation with the Baltic or Nordic countries?

- When respondents were asked to choose between cooperation with the Nordic countries and cooperation with the Baltic states, people in all three countries tended to choose the latter.
- The people of Latvia and Lithuania value cooperation with Baltic states more highly (over 50%). The situation in Estonia is different – 54% of the population considers cooperation with the Nordic countries more important, while 31% prefer cooperation with the Baltic states.
- The opinion of Estonian and Latvian residents who had lived in the Nordic countries coincides with the country's overall results, but the situation is the opposite in Lithuania – the people who had lived in the Nordic countries would prefer closer cooperation with the Nordic countries (whereas the state's overall opinion values Baltic cooperation more).

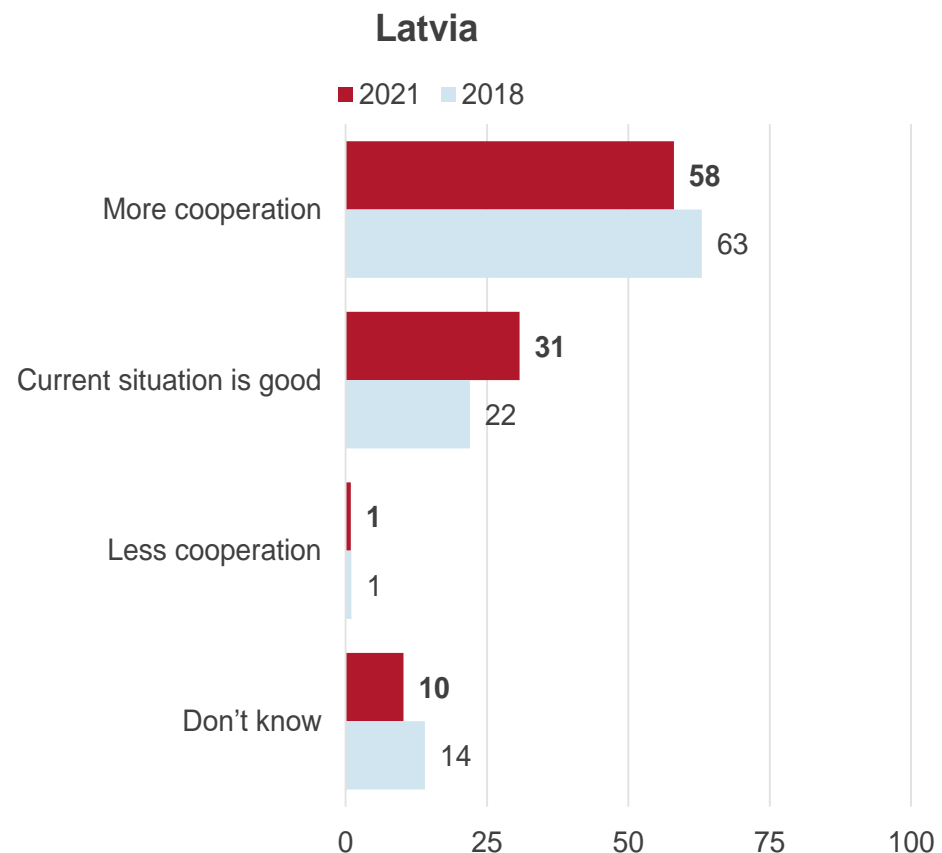
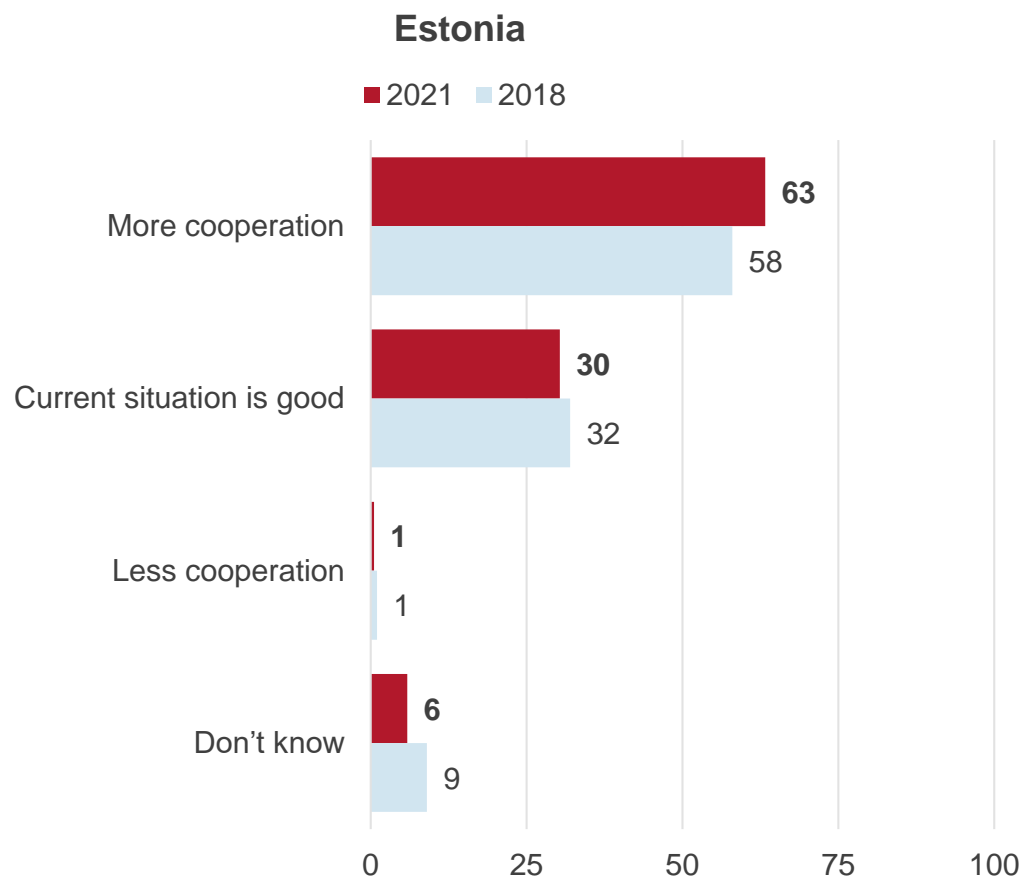


Cooperation with the Nordic countries

- 57% of the people in the Baltic states would like to see more cooperation with the Nordic countries, and 33% think that the current situation is good. 1% of respondents would prefer less cooperation and 9% did not answer (slide 13-14).
- The responses to this question are largely similar in Estonia and Latvia. Lithuanian residents, however, are more satisfied with the current situation (38%) than Estonian and Latvian residents, and a smaller number of respondents want to see an increase in cooperation with the Nordic countries. Lithuania's results also show a marked interest in more cooperation among younger respondents (aged 15–29), 60% of whom would like to see an increase in cooperation, which is also noticeable among respondents with higher education. In Estonia, the people who have lived in the Nordic countries would prefer to see more cooperation (83%).
- Compared to the previous survey, more people in the Baltic states are happy with the current level of cooperation (33% vs 25%). This result shows that there has been more cooperation between the countries in the past years.
- **In evaluating the most important bases for cooperation with the Nordic countries**, most respondents agree that small countries need to cooperate (38%) Besides that, geographical proximity (25%) is also important, as well as sharing the same values and having cultural similarities (slide 15). The 2018 survey also produced similar results.
- It is positive to see that the younger generations in the Baltic states see the similarities in the structure of the Baltic and Nordic society.

Current level of cooperation, %

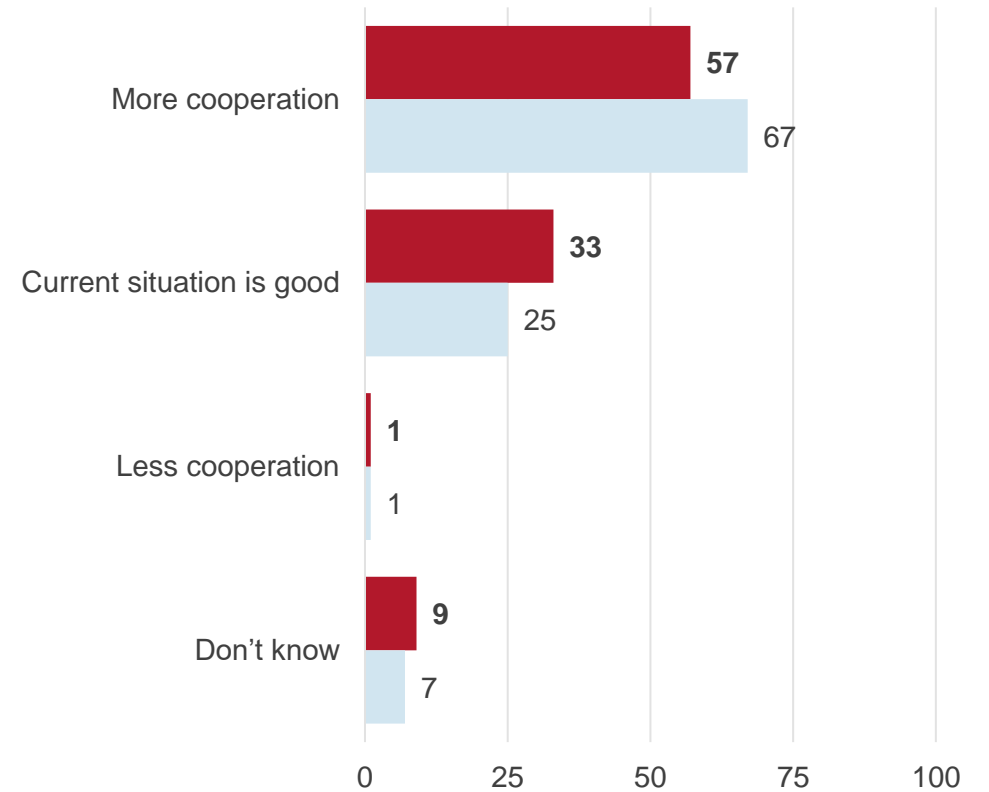
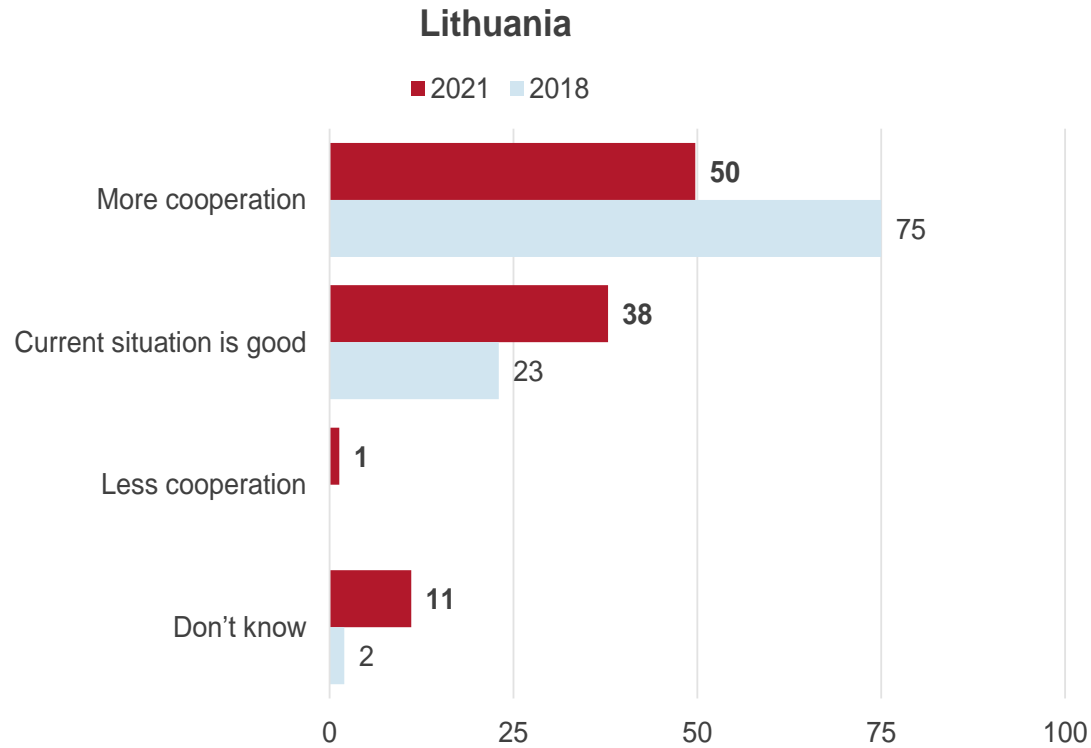
Do you want to see more or less cooperation between EST/LAT/LIT and Nordic countries?



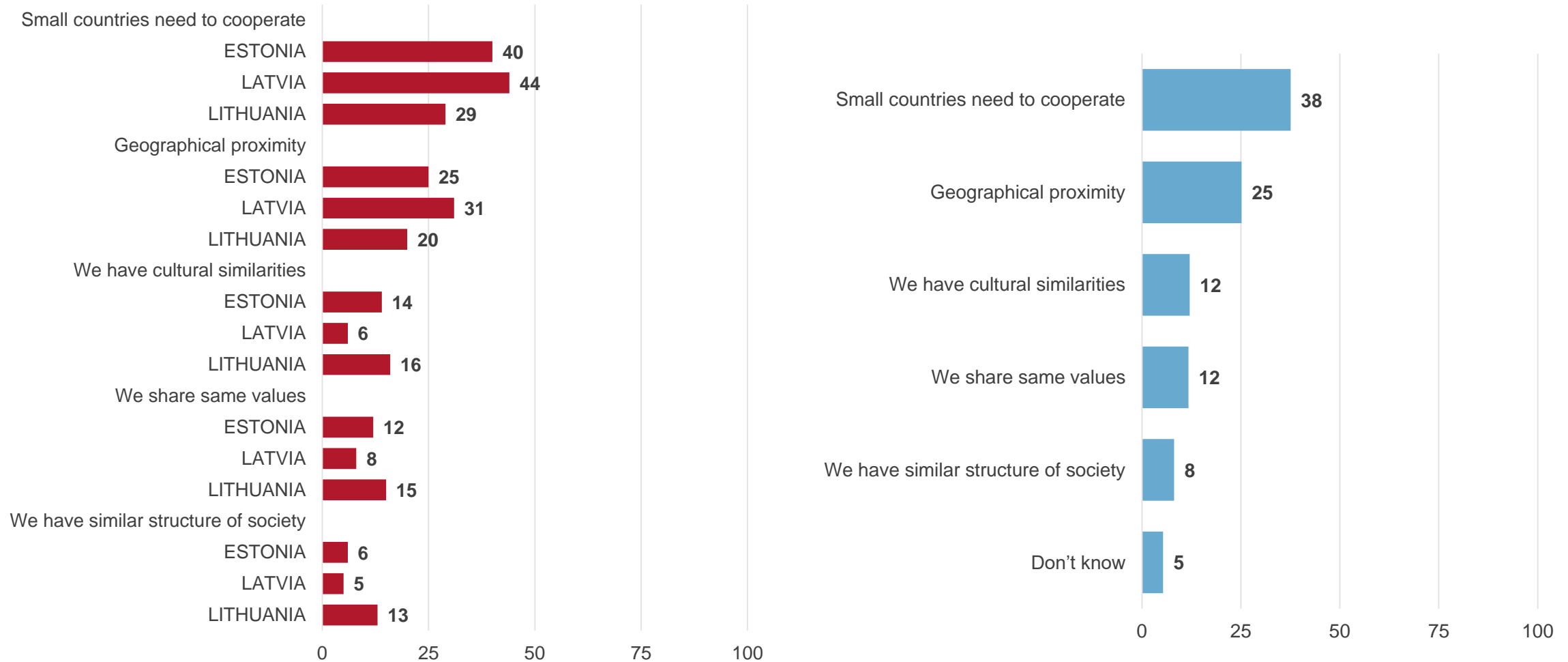
Current level of cooperation, %

Do you want to see more or less cooperation between EST/LAT/LIT and Nordic countries?

■ ALL 2021 ■ ALL 2018



Basis for cooperation with the Nordic countries, %

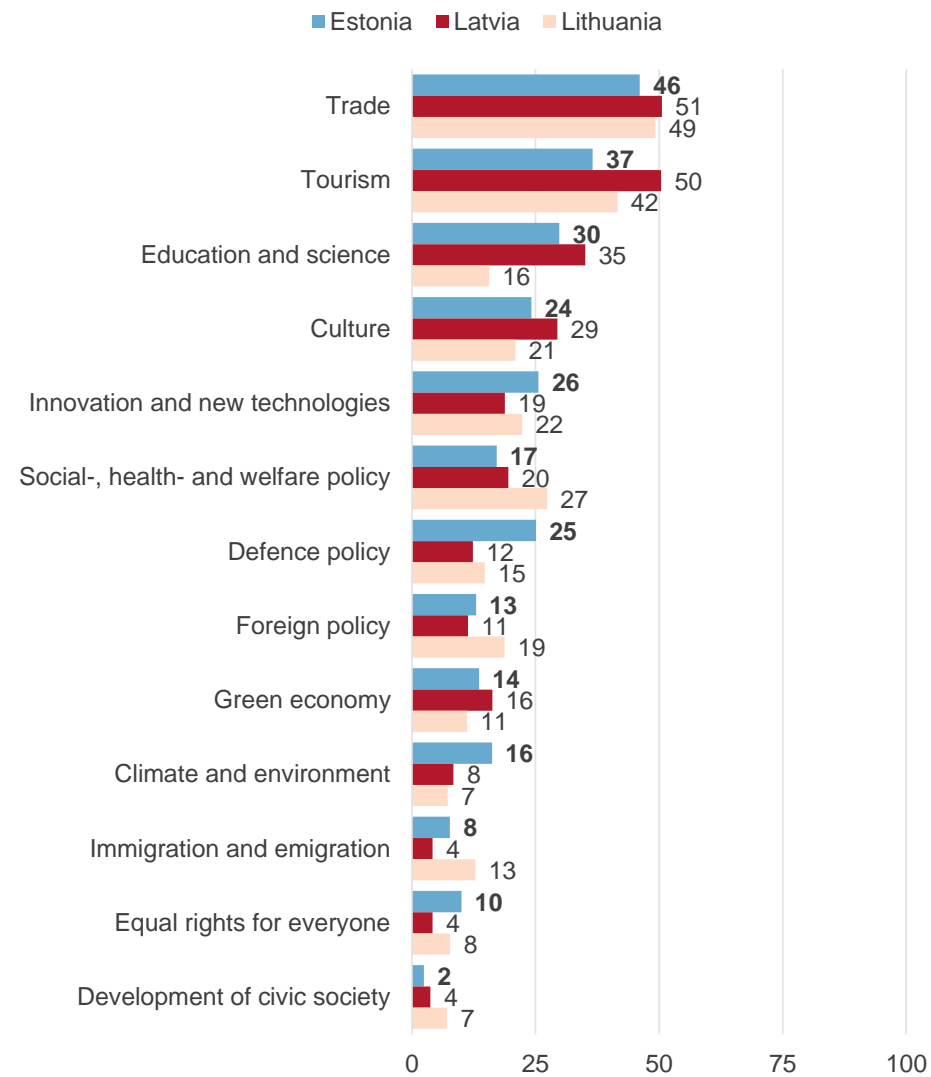
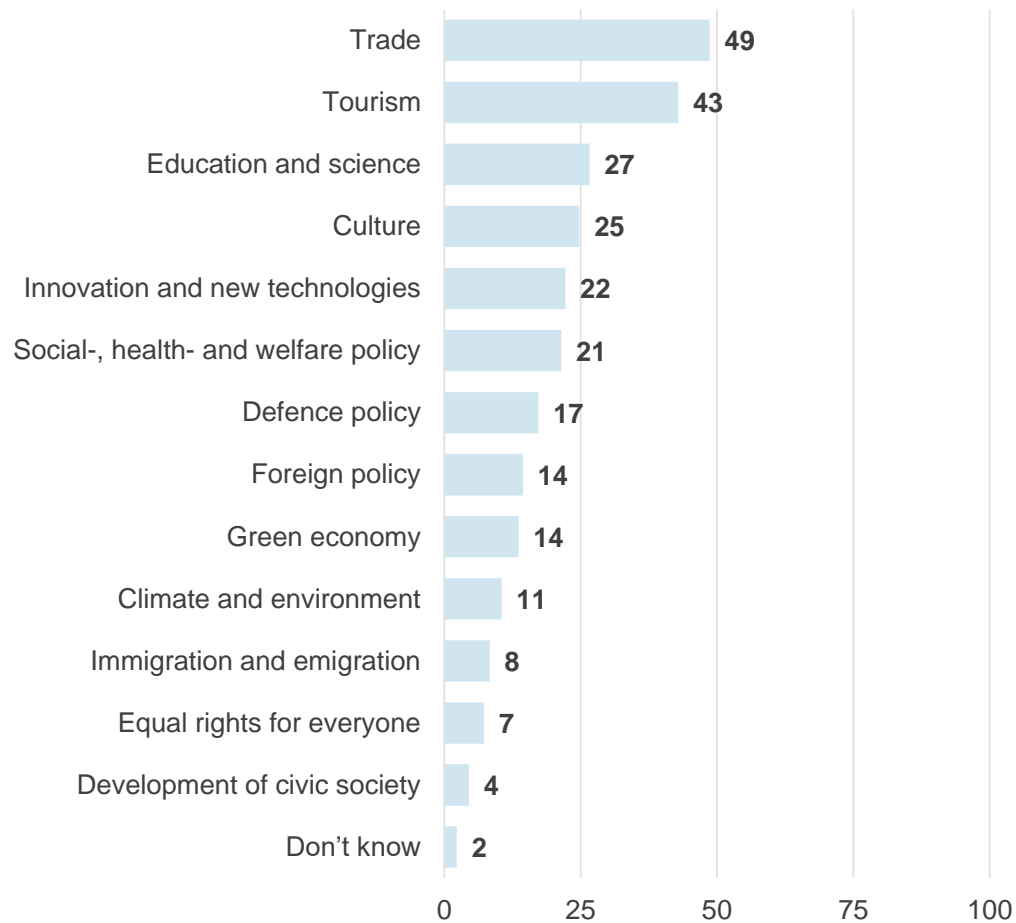


The most important sectors for cooperation with the Nordic countries

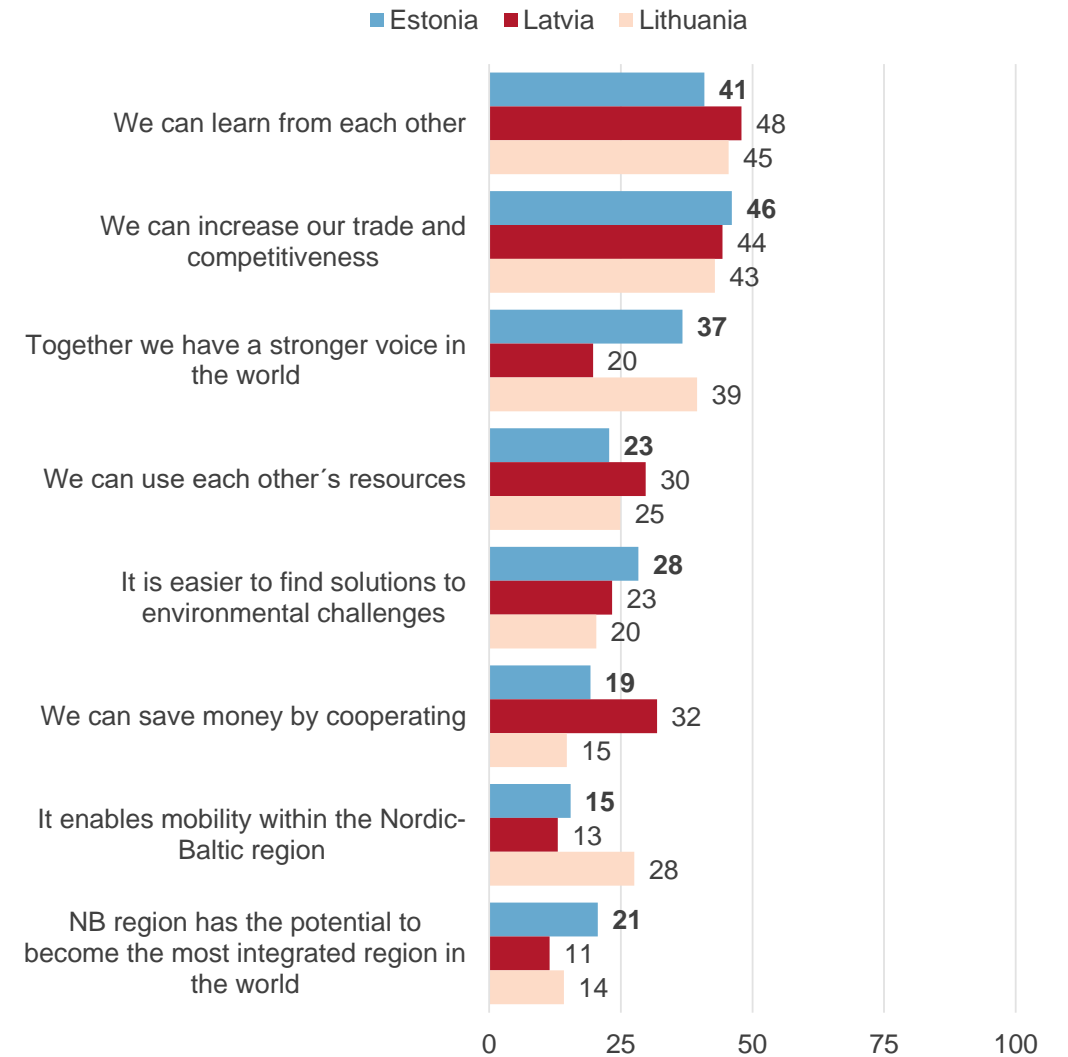
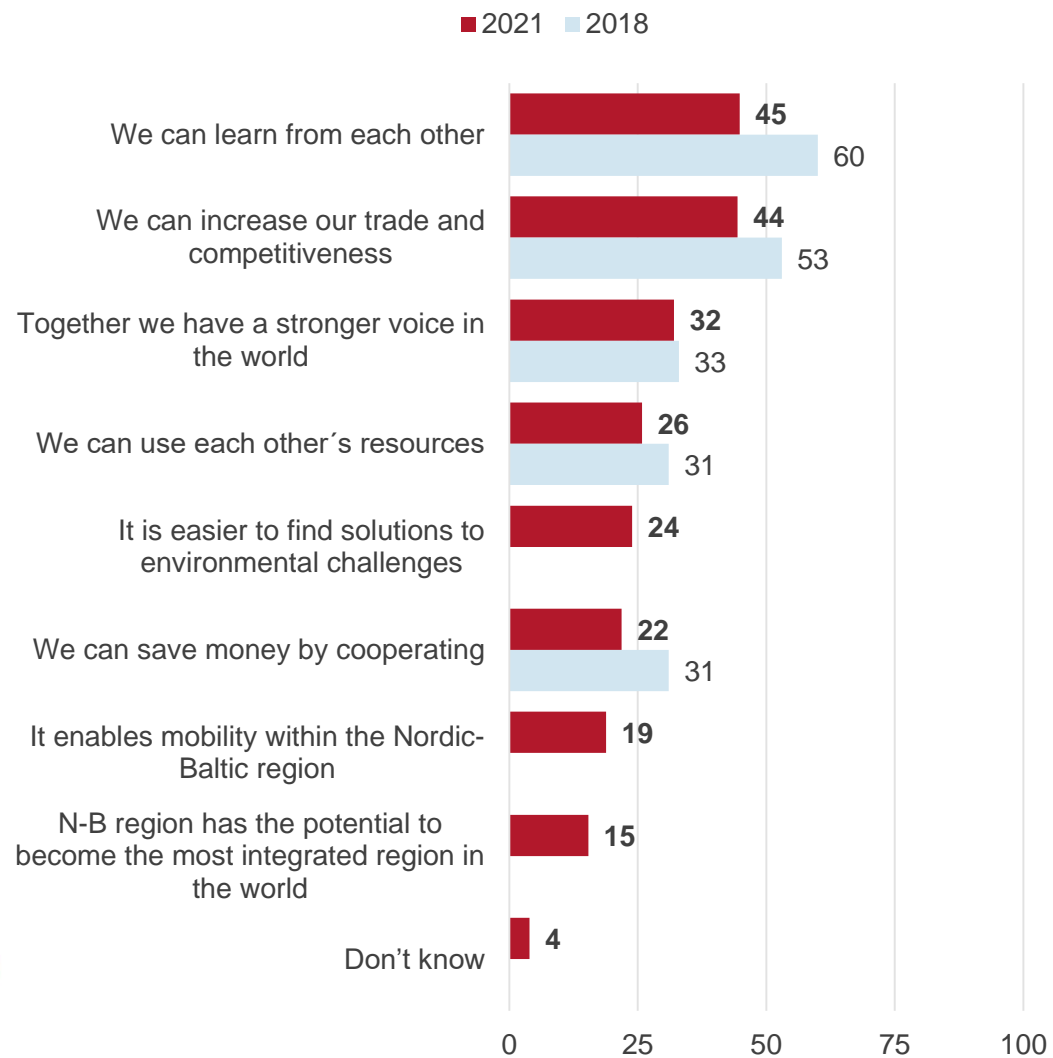
- Similar to the previous survey, people in the Baltic states consider trade, tourism, education and research, and culture to be the most important sectors for cooperation. In addition, innovation and new technologies, and social, health, and welfare policy rank high in the results. The development of civic society was mentioned the least often (slide 17). Defence policy and green economy were also rarely mentioned among the options.
- The survey shows that Latvian residents are more likely to name the sectors of tourism and education, whereas Estonians listed defence policy and the climate and environment sector more than others. In Lithuania, greater attention to the social and health sector can be observed, as it ranks third.
- The respondents' age also has an impact on the sectors they value. The youth of all three countries pay more attention to the education sector. In addition, young Latvian residents were more likely to consider innovation and new technologies important. The older age groups in both Estonia and Latvia, however, were more likely to value culture, and (in Estonia's case) the social and health sector.
- **The greatest benefit from cooperation with the Nordic countries** continues to be learning from each other (45%) and the ability to facilitate trade and competitiveness (44%). A third of the respondents also agreed that our voice is stronger together with the Nordic countries (slide 18).
- Compared to other countries, Latvian residents are more interested in saving money, Estonian residents believe in becoming the most integrated region in the world, and Lithuanian residents stress the sense of belonging and better mobility in the region.
- No significant changes have taken place in replies to this question compared to the previous survey.

The most important sectors for cooperation with the Nordic countries, %

Respondents had to pick 3



The greatest benefits of the cooperation, %

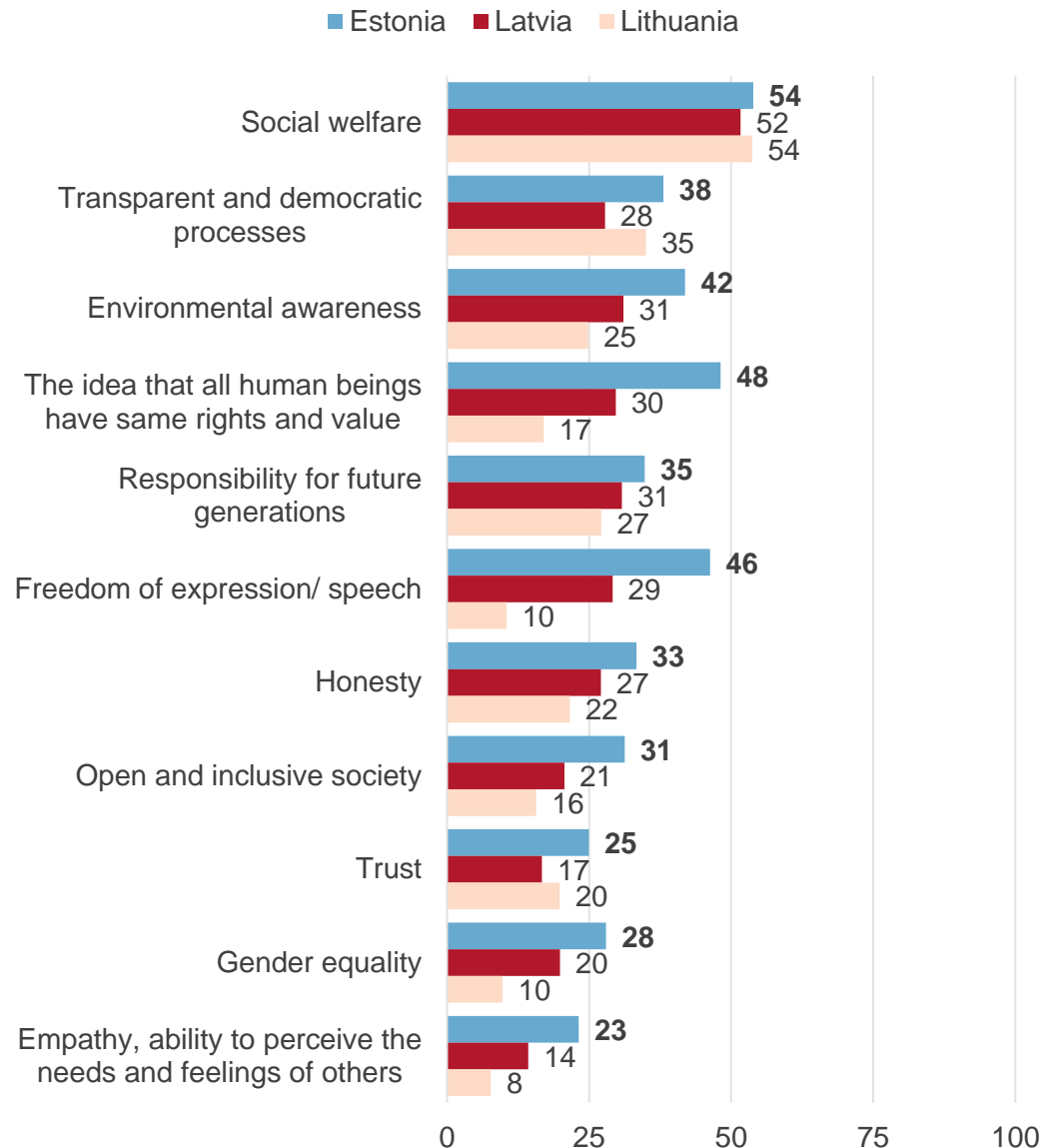
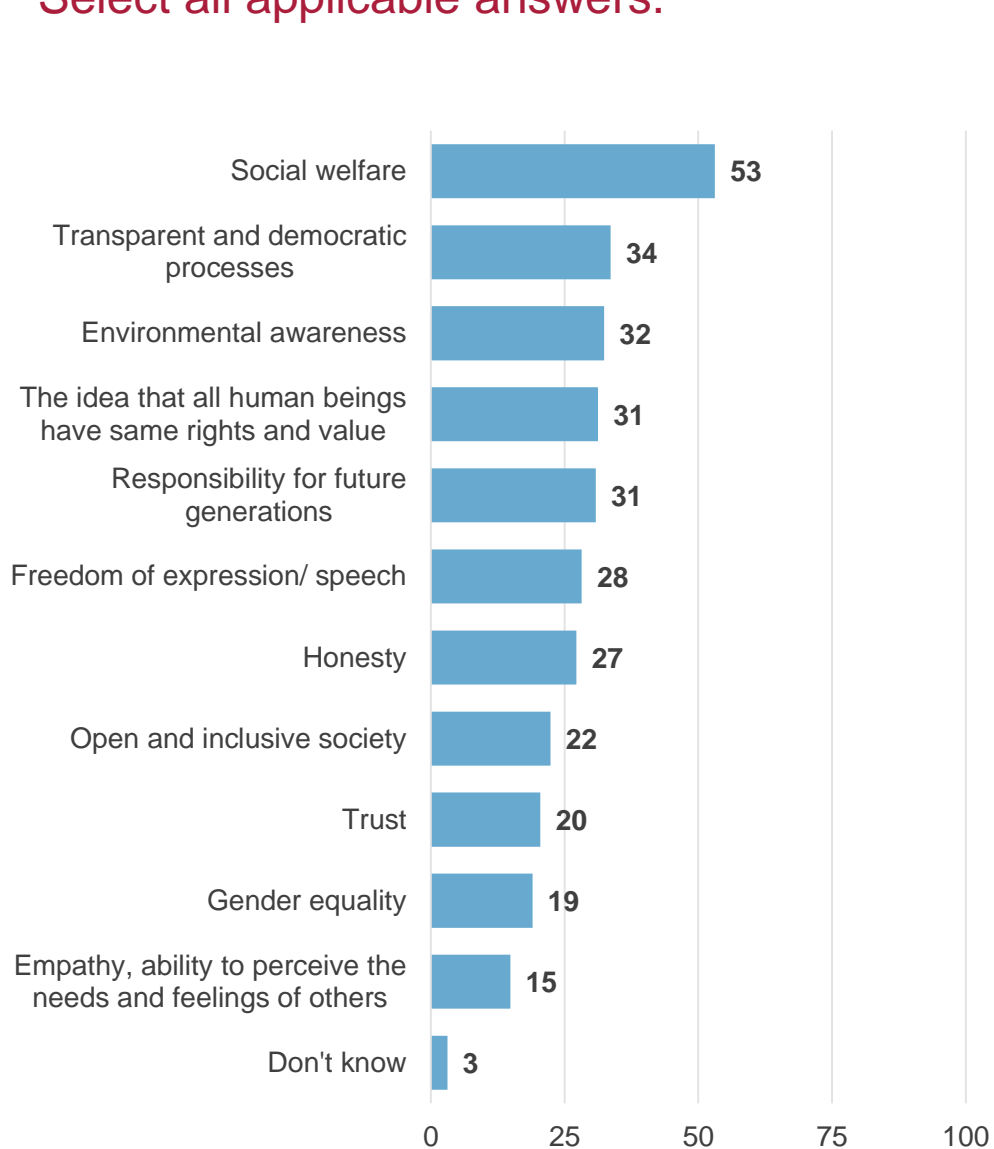


Values typical for the Nordic countries

- The people of the Baltic states consider social welfare (53%), as well as transparent and democratic processes (34%) and high environmental awareness (32%) to be typical Nordic values. In addition, many people value equality (31%) and responsibility for the future generations (31%) – slide 20. In 2018, the order of the responses was: social welfare, environmental awareness and freedom of speech.
- The sample groups named the following values with a higher than average frequency:
 - Estonia:**
 - Younger people – freedom of speech
 - Respondents with higher education – transparent and democratic processes; environmental awareness, and open and inclusive society
 - Respondents who have lived in the Nordic countries – gender equality
 - Latvia:**
 - Younger people – gender equality
 - Respondents aged 51–64 – responsibility for the future generations
 - Respondents with higher education – social welfare
 - Lithuania:**
 - Younger people – responsibility for the future generations
 - Respondents aged 51–64 – transparent and democratic processes

Values typical for the Nordic countries, %

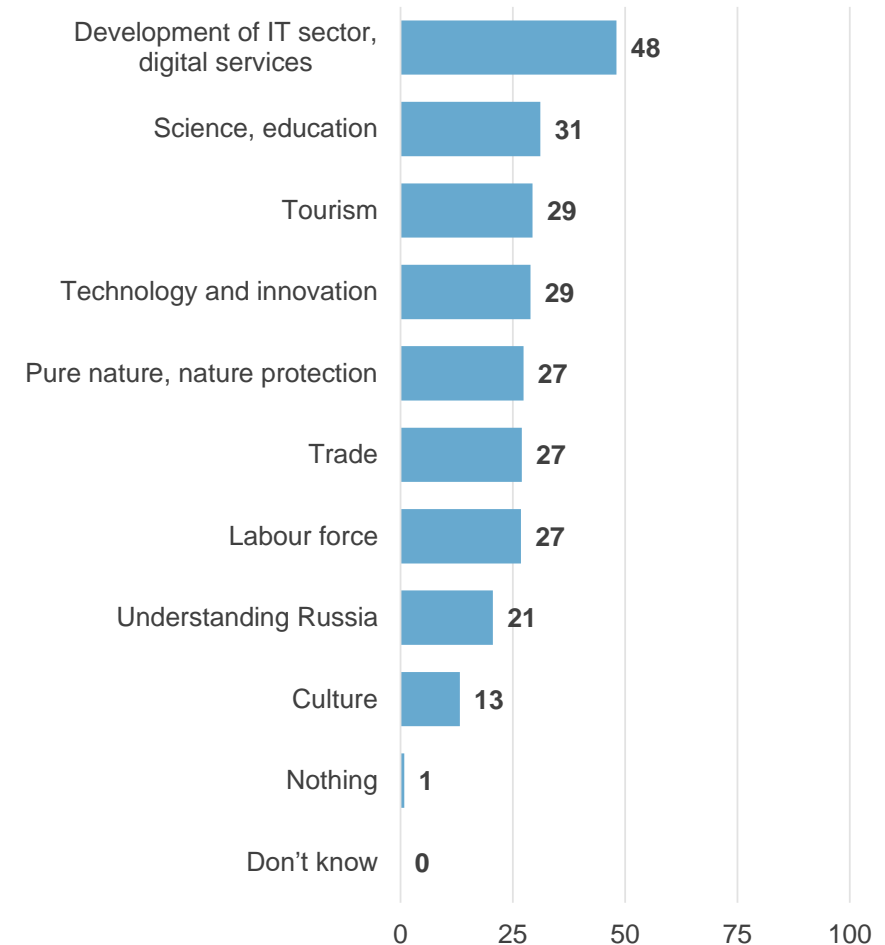
Select all applicable answers.



What can Estonia contribute to the Nordic countries?

People could choose up to 3 of the listed options.

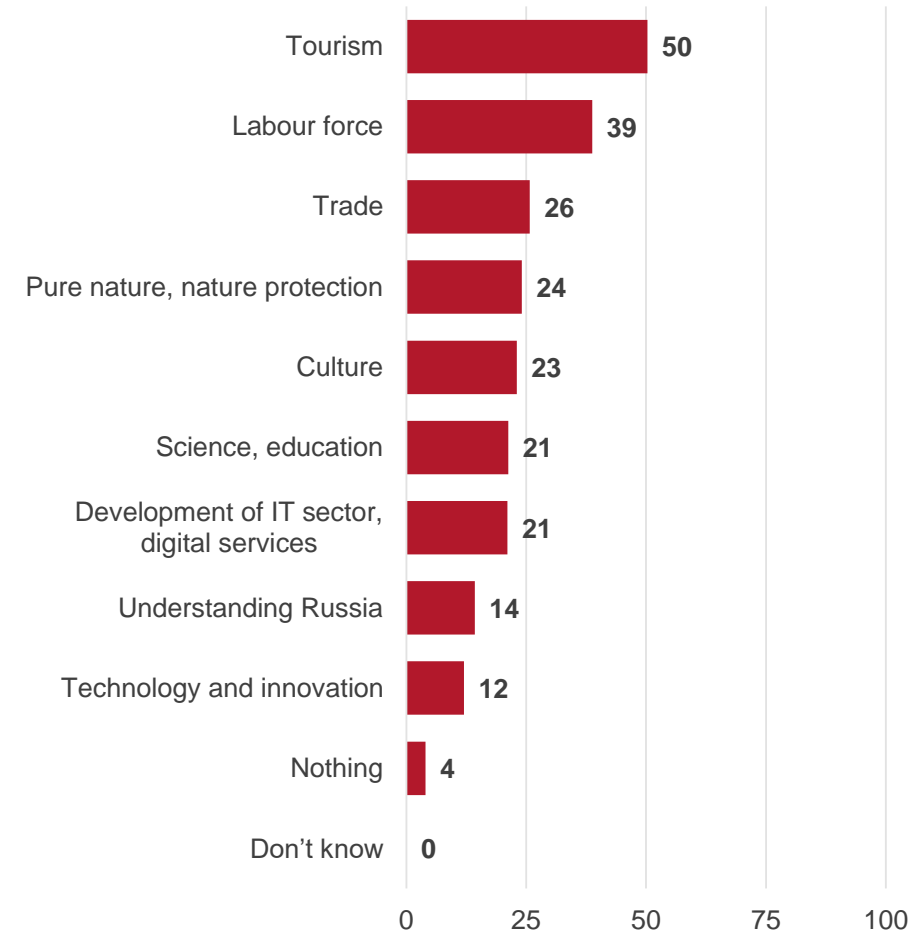
- Most often, Estonians consider that they can contribute into the cooperation with the Nordic countries with the development of the IT sector and digital services (48%).
- This is followed by input into research and education (31%), international tourism (29%), and technology and innovation (29%). Culture ranked last (13%) among the given options.
- The youngest age group stressed the importance of the field of technology and innovation more than the average respondent (41%).
- In addition, people of Estonian ethnicity were more likely to stress the importance of the IT sector and digital services, while those of Russian or other ethnicity stressed the field of tourism and provision of labour force.



What can Latvia contribute to the Nordic countries?

People could choose up to 3 of the listed options.

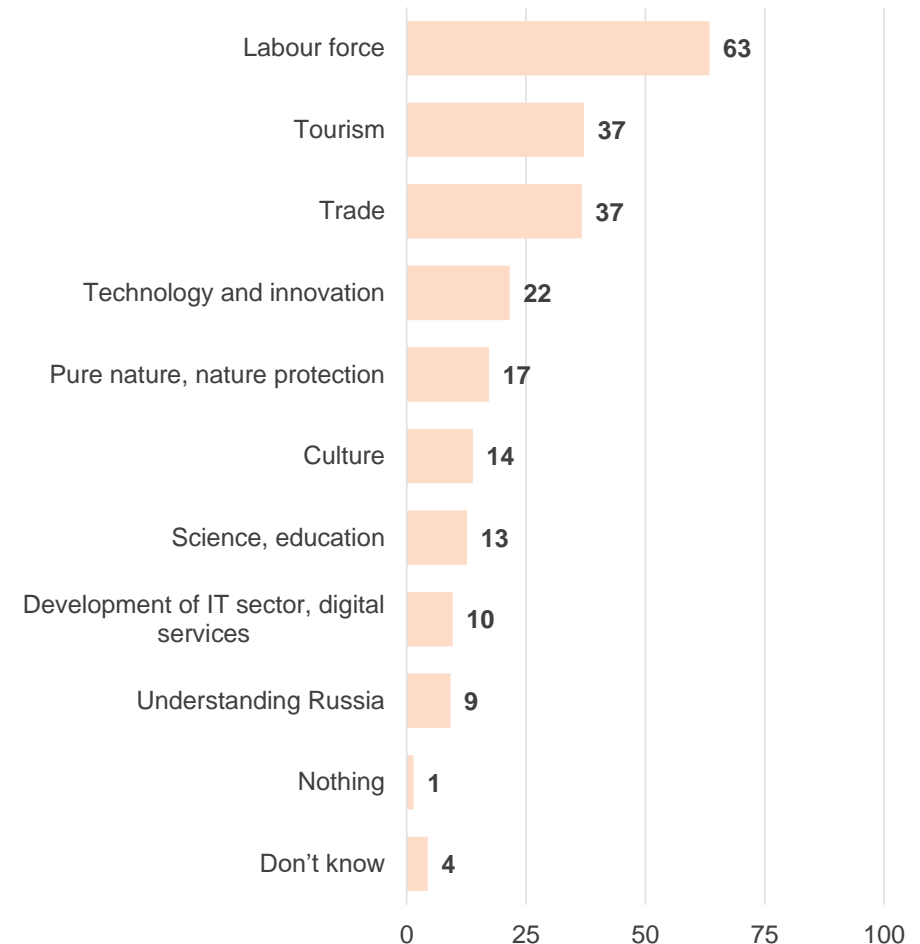
- A half of the population of Latvia would like to contribute into the cooperation with the Nordic countries through tourism (50%), followed by labour force (39%) and trade (26%).
- It is worth mentioning that important areas that Latvia can contribute with also include pure nature and nature protection, as well as culture.
- Technology and innovation ranked last on the list.
- Compared to other respondents, the youngest age group would like to contribute into IT development and digital services (31%). Respondents aged 51–64 stressed the field of culture more than the average respondent (30%).
- People of Latvian ethnicity were more likely to name IT development and digital services (27%). People of Russian and other ethnicities, however, named providing labour force to the Nordic countries (46%).



What can Lithuania contribute to the Nordic countries?

People could choose up to 3 of the listed options.

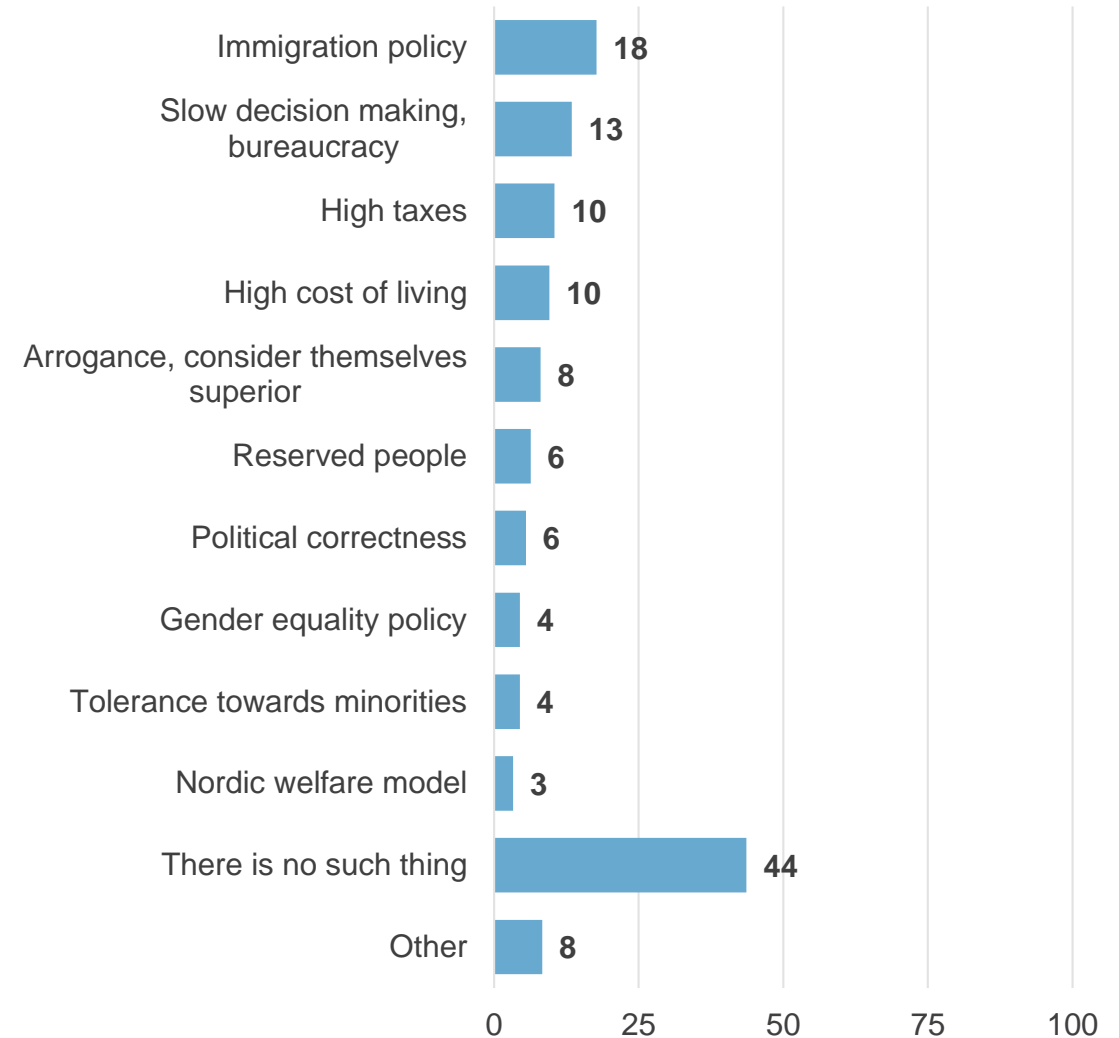
- Lithuania would largely wish to contribute into the cooperation with the Nordic countries with its labour force (63%), followed by tourism (37%) and trade (37%). 22% of the respondents listed the field of technology and innovation.
- Providing Russian-language related skills (9%) was the last on the list.
- Compared to others, the youth of Lithuania were more likely to name the fields of research and education (22%), and culture (23%).
- Compared to other areas, the residents of the Vilnius area were more likely to name trade (45%).



Is there something you don't like about the Nordic countries? ESTONIA

Spontaneous question

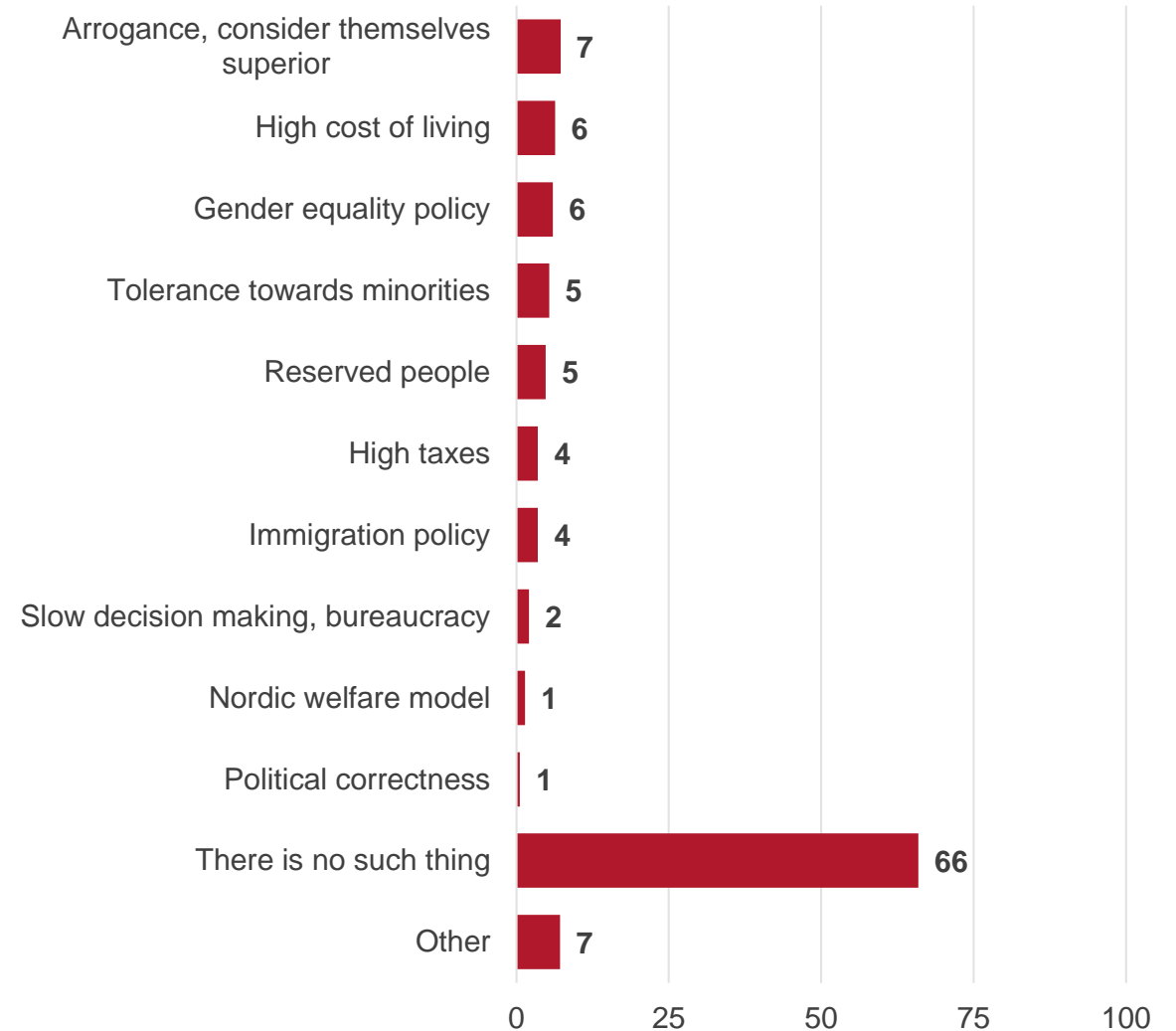
- When asked to name something negative about the Nordic countries, 44% of Estonian residents think there is no such thing – they like everything about them. Other responses most often mentioned the immigration policy or excessive openness to asylum seekers (18%). This is followed by slow decision-making and bureaucracy (13%), high taxes (10%) and the high cost of living (10%). In addition, respondents disliked the arrogance and reserved nature of the people, and excessive political correctness.
- Other replies included the following: *Bad attitude towards Estonians, Envy, Nationalism, The security policy might be stricter, more unity, Estonia is not taken seriously, Naivete, Too strict laws for the protection of children's rights, High alcohol consumption, Excessive tolerance, Cold climate.*
- The same aspects were also named in the previous survey (2018), even though gender equality policy was named more often then (it came second after immigration policy).



Is there something you don't like about the Nordic countries? LATVIA

Spontaneous question

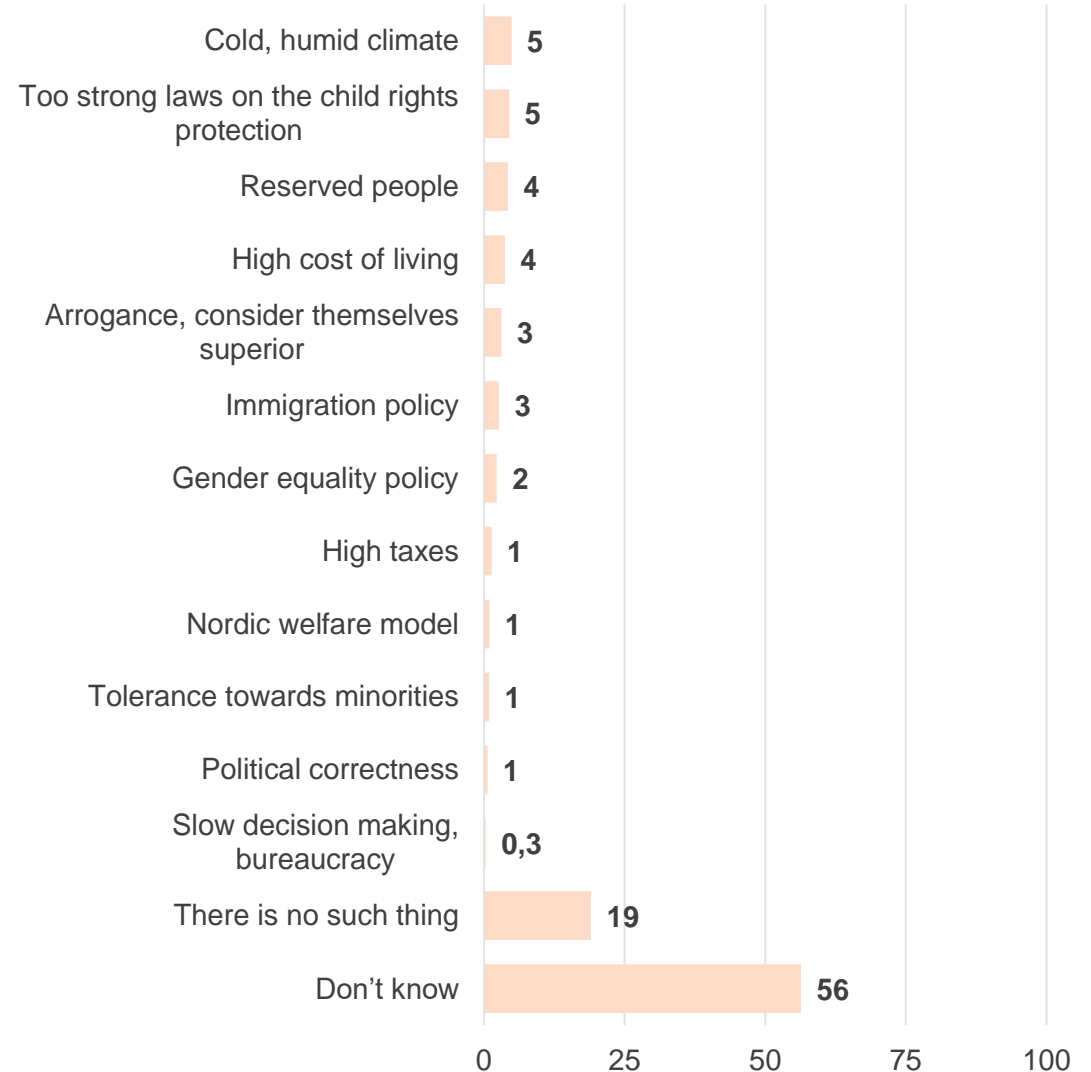
- Similarly to Estonia, Latvia is mostly positive towards the Nordic countries, and 66% of the people see nothing negative about them.
- The people of Latvia list the arrogance of the residents (7%), the high cost of living (6%) and excessive gender equality policy (6%) as the most common negative things about the Nordic countries.
- In addition, people named excessive tolerance towards minorities, reserved people, high taxes and immigration policy.
- Among other replies were: *Cold and humid climate, too strict laws for the protection of children's rights, excessive liberalism and education system.*
- In 2018, the most common reply in Latvia was excessive tolerance towards minorities, followed by immigration policy and strict child protection policy, so the results have changed slightly.



Is there something you don't like about the Nordic countries? LITHUANIA

Spontaneous question

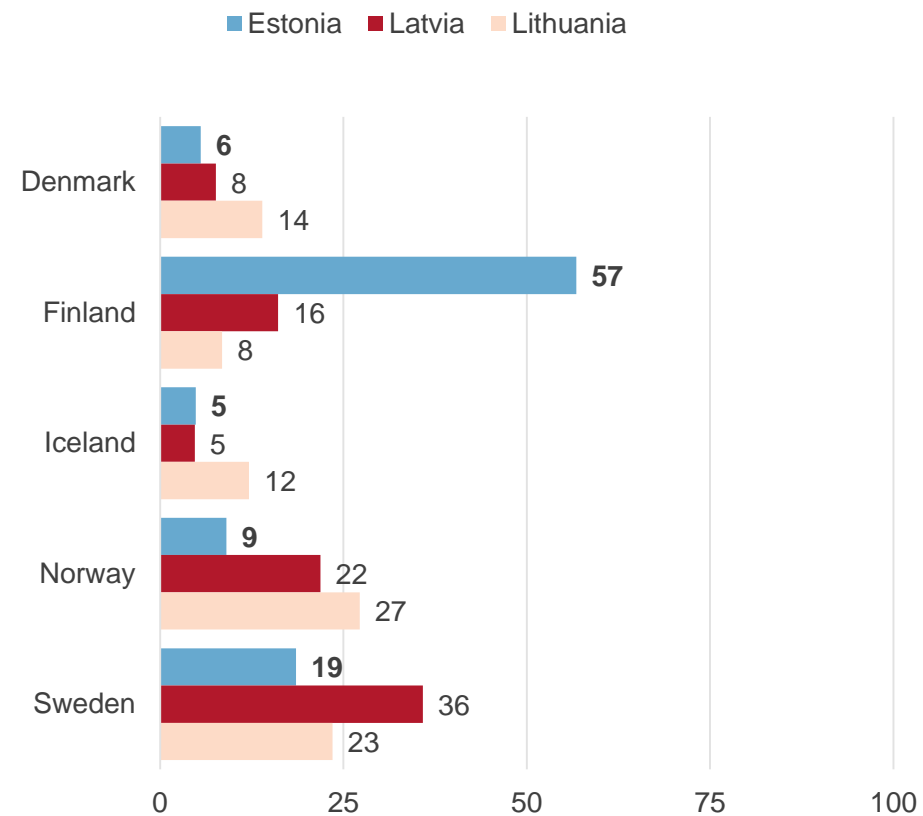
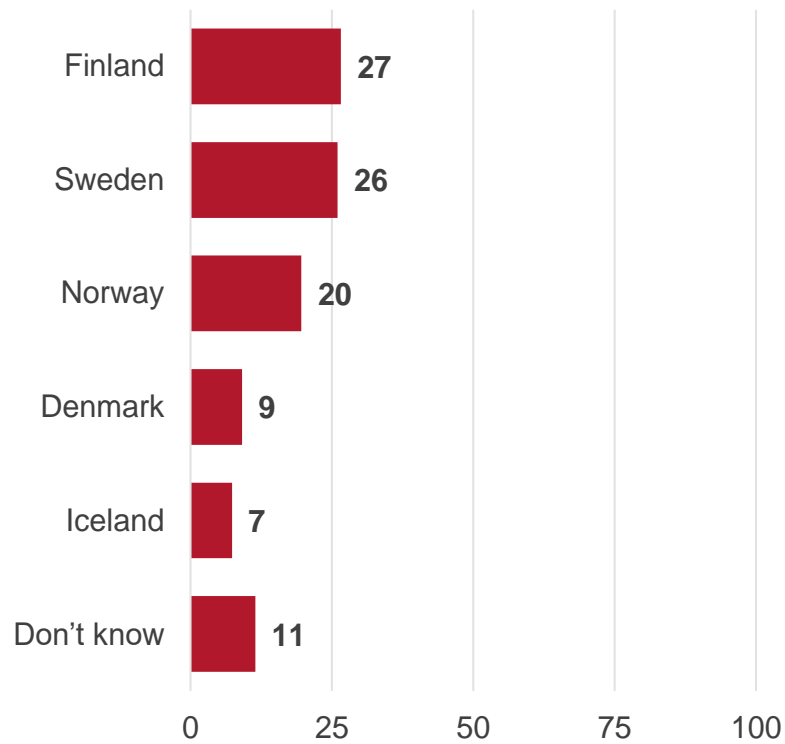
- The people of Lithuania generally have nothing negative to say about the Nordic countries – 56% did not reply and 19% think there is nothing negative about them.
- The most commonly listed negative aspects were the cold and humid climate (5%), too strict laws for the protection of children's rights (5%) and reserved people (4%).
- To a lesser extent, people listed the arrogance of the residents, high cost of living and immigration policy.
- At the time of the previous survey, the most common replies in Lithuania were too strict laws for the protections of children's rights, followed by discrimination towards immigrants (racism) and excessive tolerance towards minorities. We can see that there have been some changes of opinion in Lithuania as well in this matter.



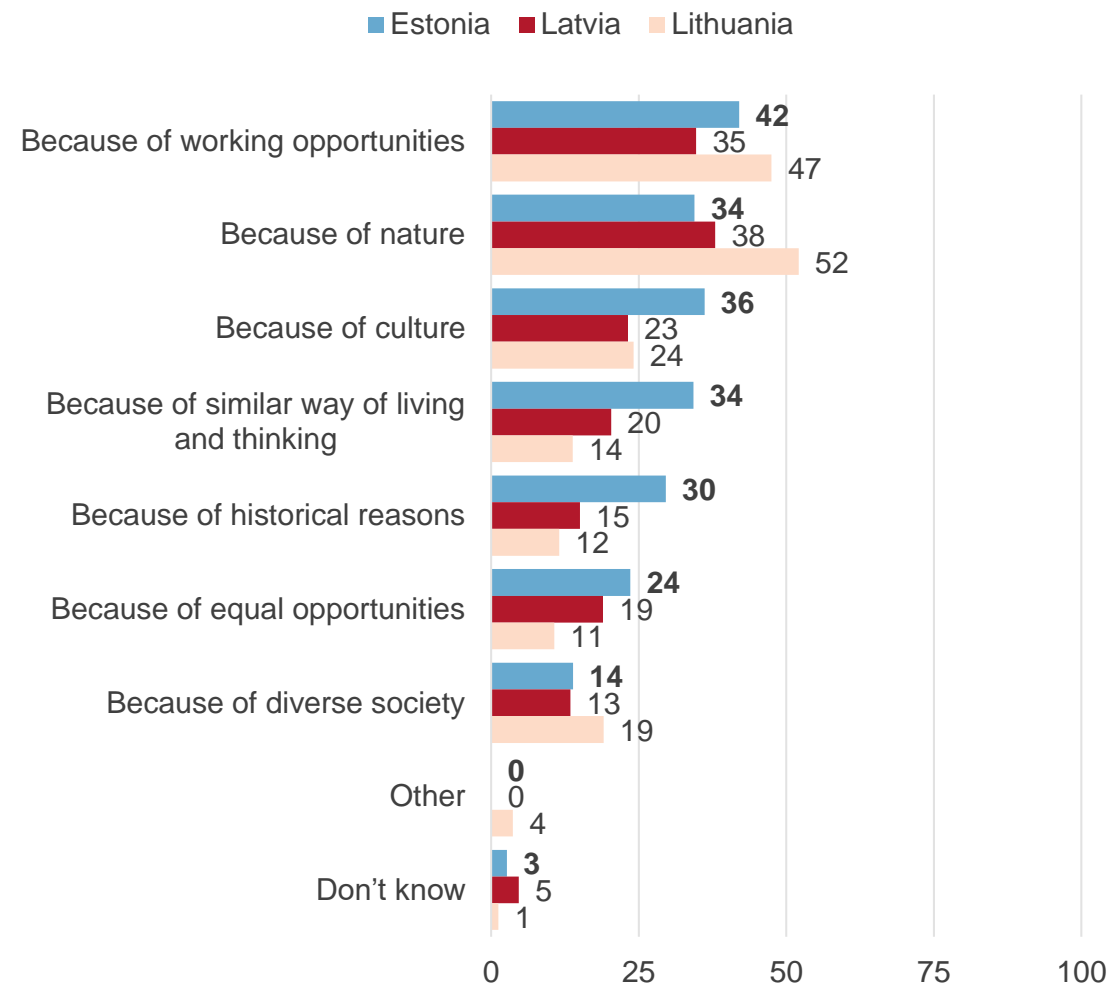
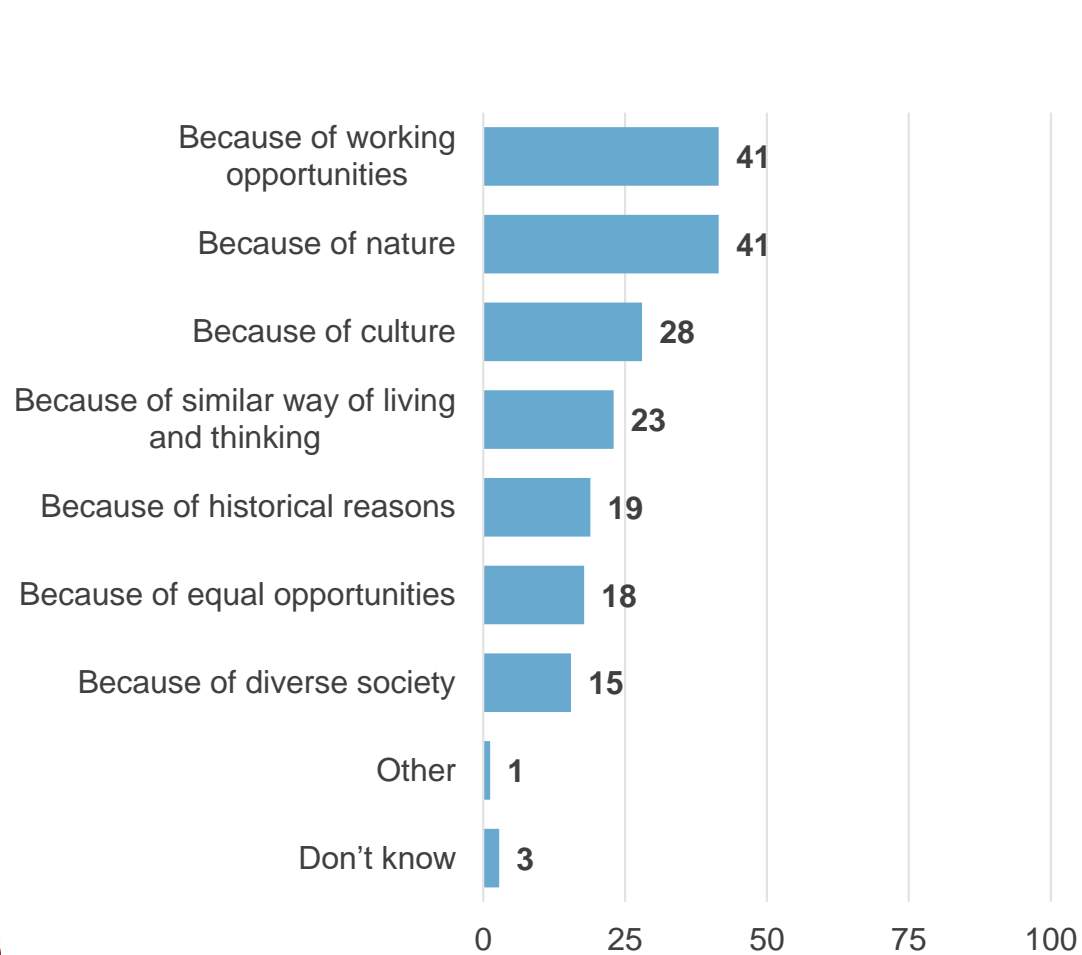
Affinity with the Nordic countries

- This year's survey included a new question: Name the Nordic country you feel the closest affinity to.
- The results show that people named Finland (27%) and Sweden (26%) in equal measure. These are followed by Norway, Denmark and Iceland (slide 28).
- However, the individual results of the Baltic states are markedly different: As expected, the majority of Estonians (57%) feels the closest to Finland. It is followed by Sweden and Norway. In Latvia, more people feel affinity with Sweden (36%), followed by Norway and Finland. Norway holds the top position in Lithuania (27%), followed by Sweden and Denmark.
- The responses also correspond to the countries where the Baltic respondents have lived the most often.
- The reasons for feeling affinity with a country most often include job opportunities (41%) and similar nature (41%). These are followed by similarities in culture (28%) and ways of living and thinking (26%). Many people also named historical reasons and equal opportunities in the society (slide 29).

Name a Nordic country you feel the most affinity with, %

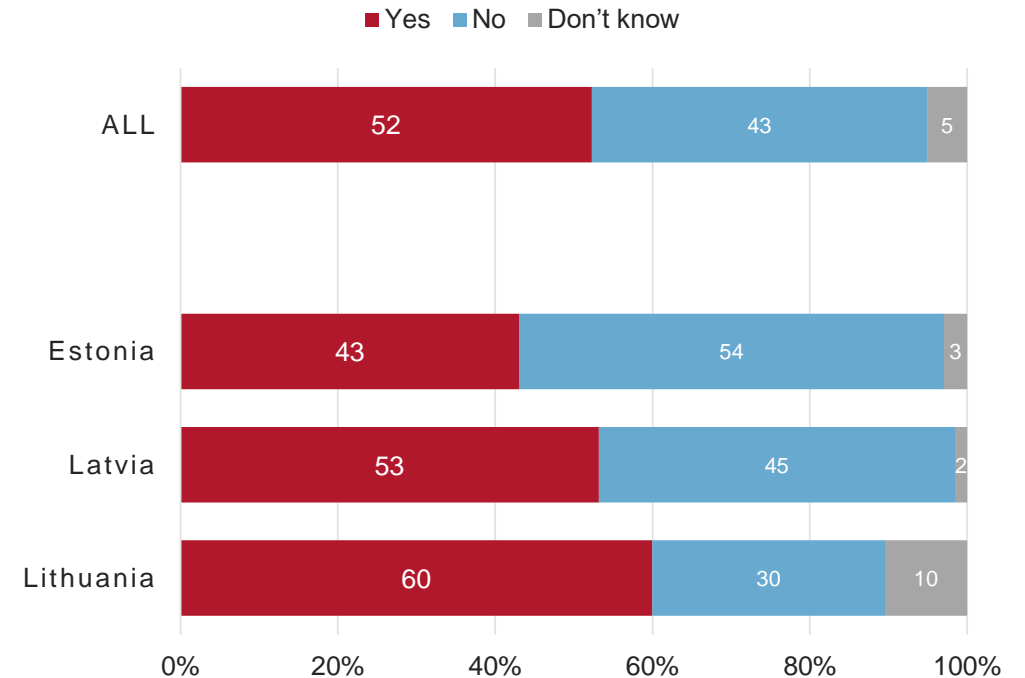


Why do you feel affinity with the said country? %



Would you like to know more about the Nordic countries?

- Over a half of the Baltic states' population (52%) wishes to know more about the Nordic countries, 43% do not want to more, and 5% said they didn't know how to respond.
- Lithuania is the most interested in information (60%), followed by Latvia (53%) and Estonia (43%).
- It turns out that in Lithuania, out of all age groups, the youth are the most interested in information about the Nordic countries (70%), as well as people with higher education and those interested in better international cooperation.
- In Latvia, the respondents interested in better international cooperation were also overall more interested in information.
- Estonia's results show that people of non-Estonian ethnicity, as well as those with higher education are more interested in information than the average respondent.
- The areas in which the residents of the Baltic states are the most interested in can be seen in the next slide. People are the most interested in tourism opportunities, culture and economy. These are followed by the social sector and education.
- Some differences between countries can be observed here. Estonia and Latvia are more interested in the Nordic culture and tourism opportunities, whereas Lithuania prioritises the economic and social sector.



Which areas interest you the most?

Respondents who wish to know more about the Nordic countries.

