

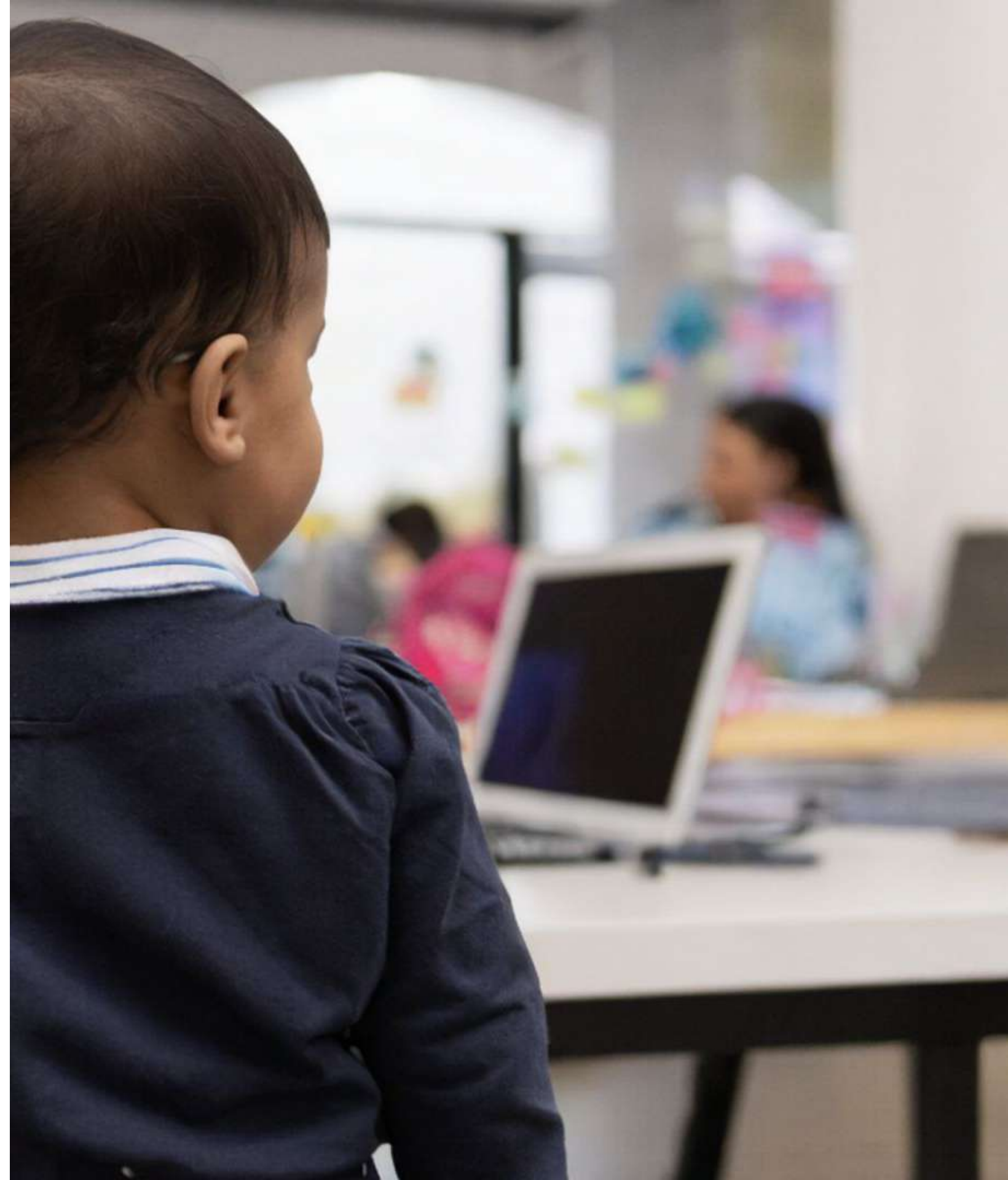


How can we reconcile parenthood and work in Belgium?

MAKE.
ORG

1st part

**Consultation
overview**



From **06.05.2024** to
30.06.2024

Citizens' consultation

How can we reconcile parenthood and work in Belgium?



11,356
participants



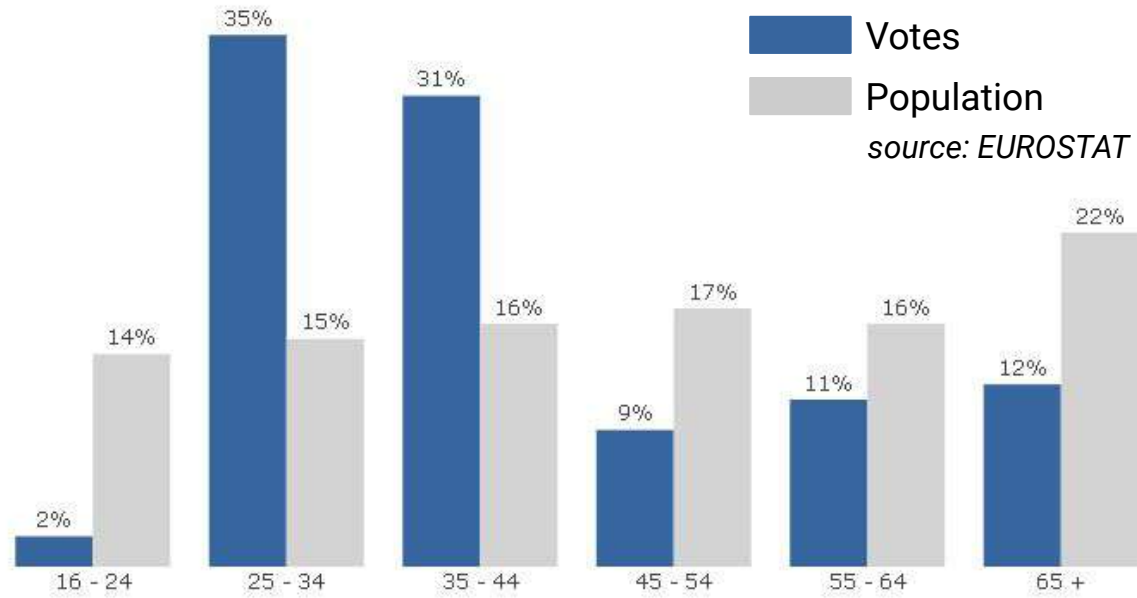
665
proposals



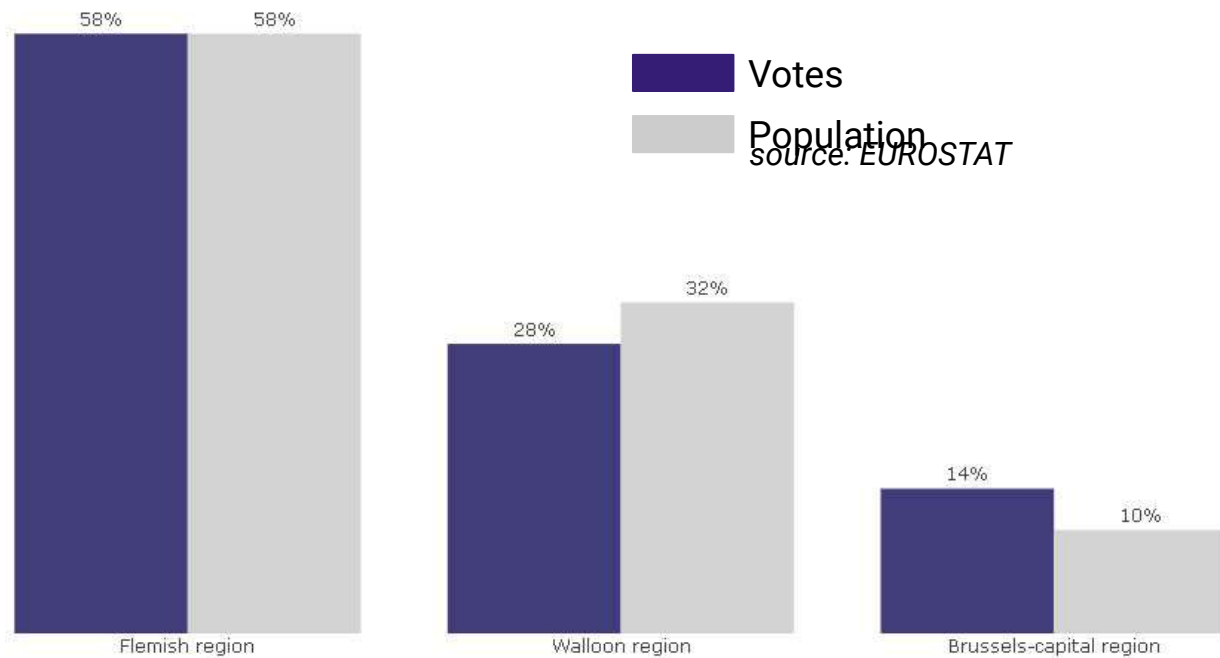
176,136
votes

Participants' profiles (1)

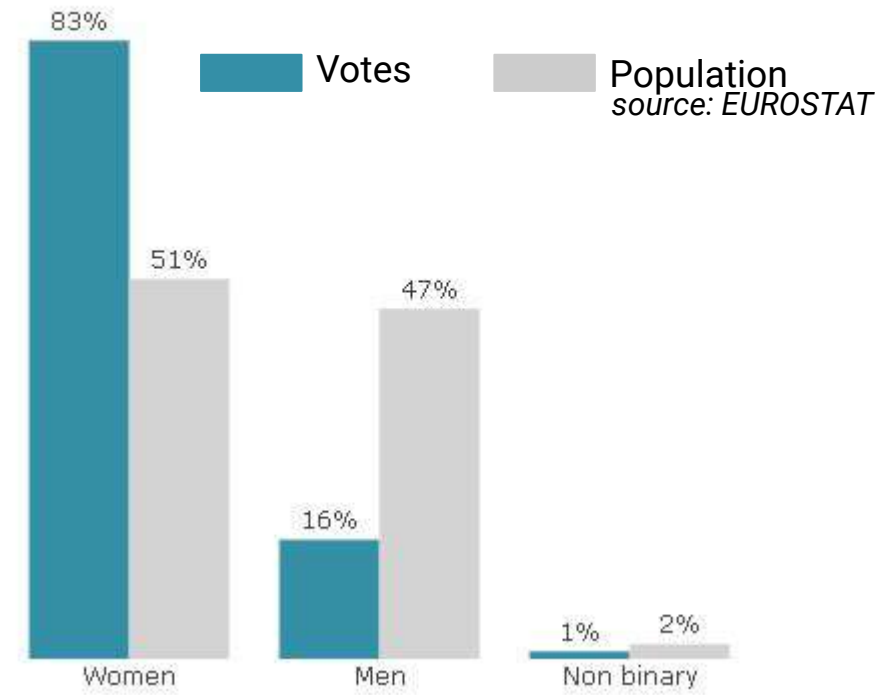
Participation by age



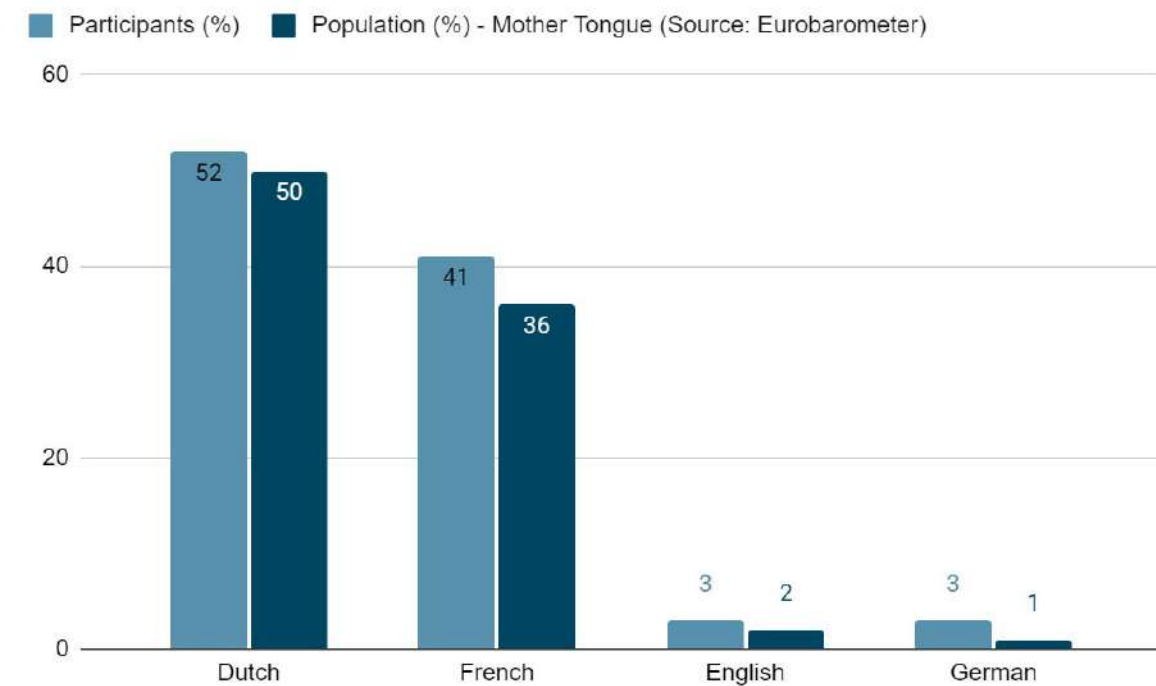
Participation by region



Participation by gender



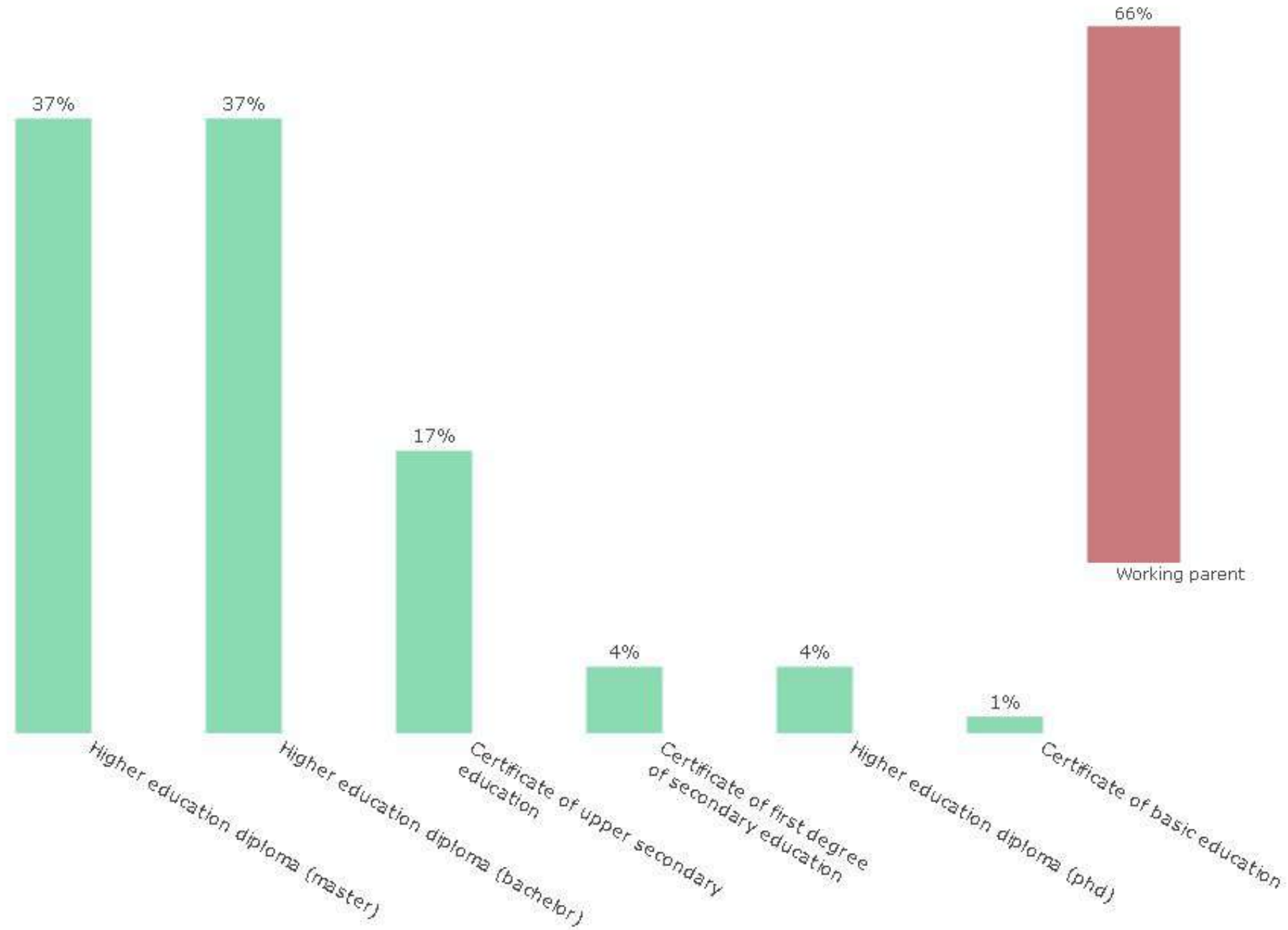
*Participation by language**



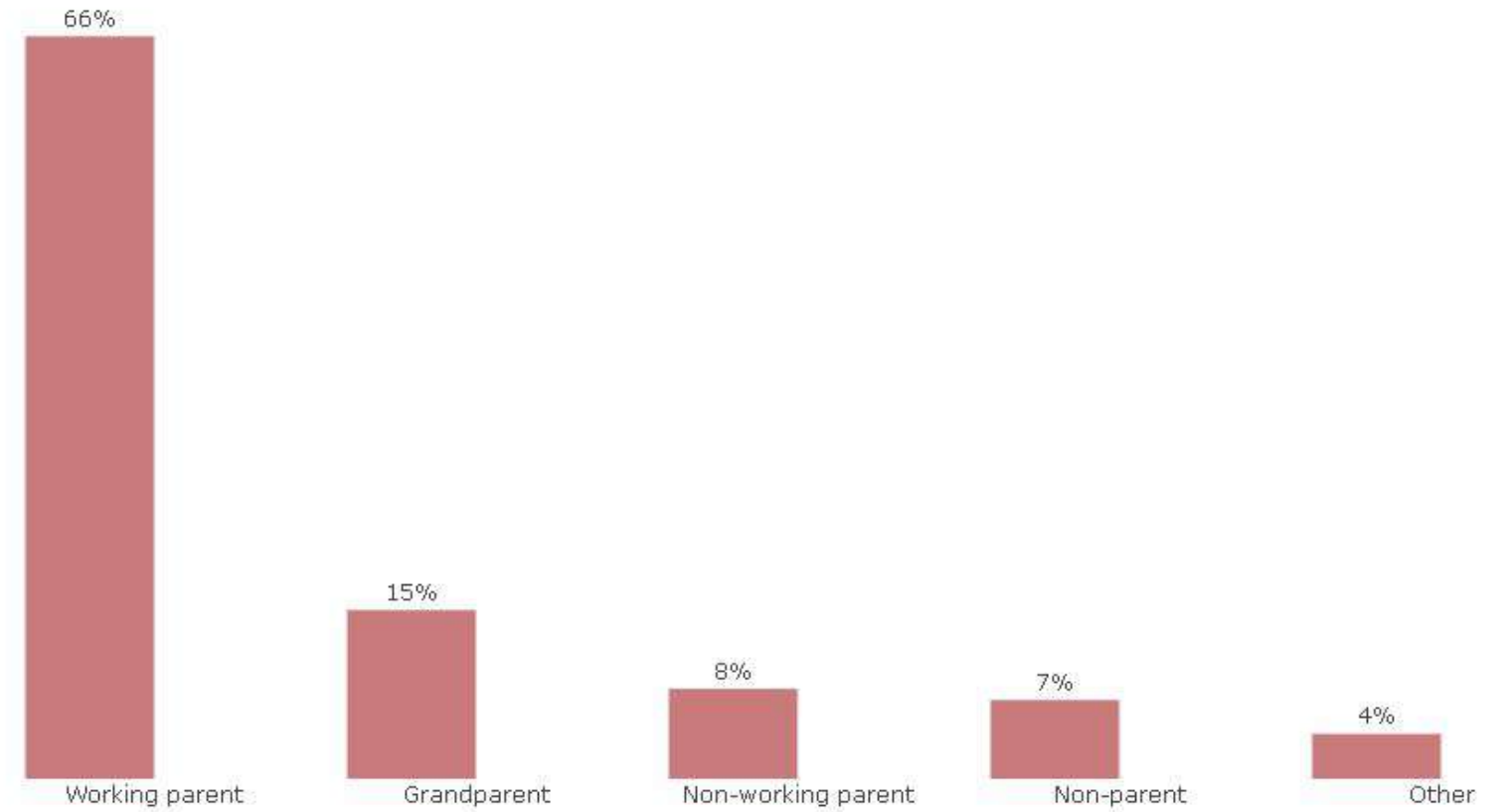
*The sum of the percentages for the "Mother Tongue" reference data is lesser than 100% because only the data for the 4 languages concerned by the consultation is shown.

Participants' profiles (2)

Participation by education



Participation by family situation

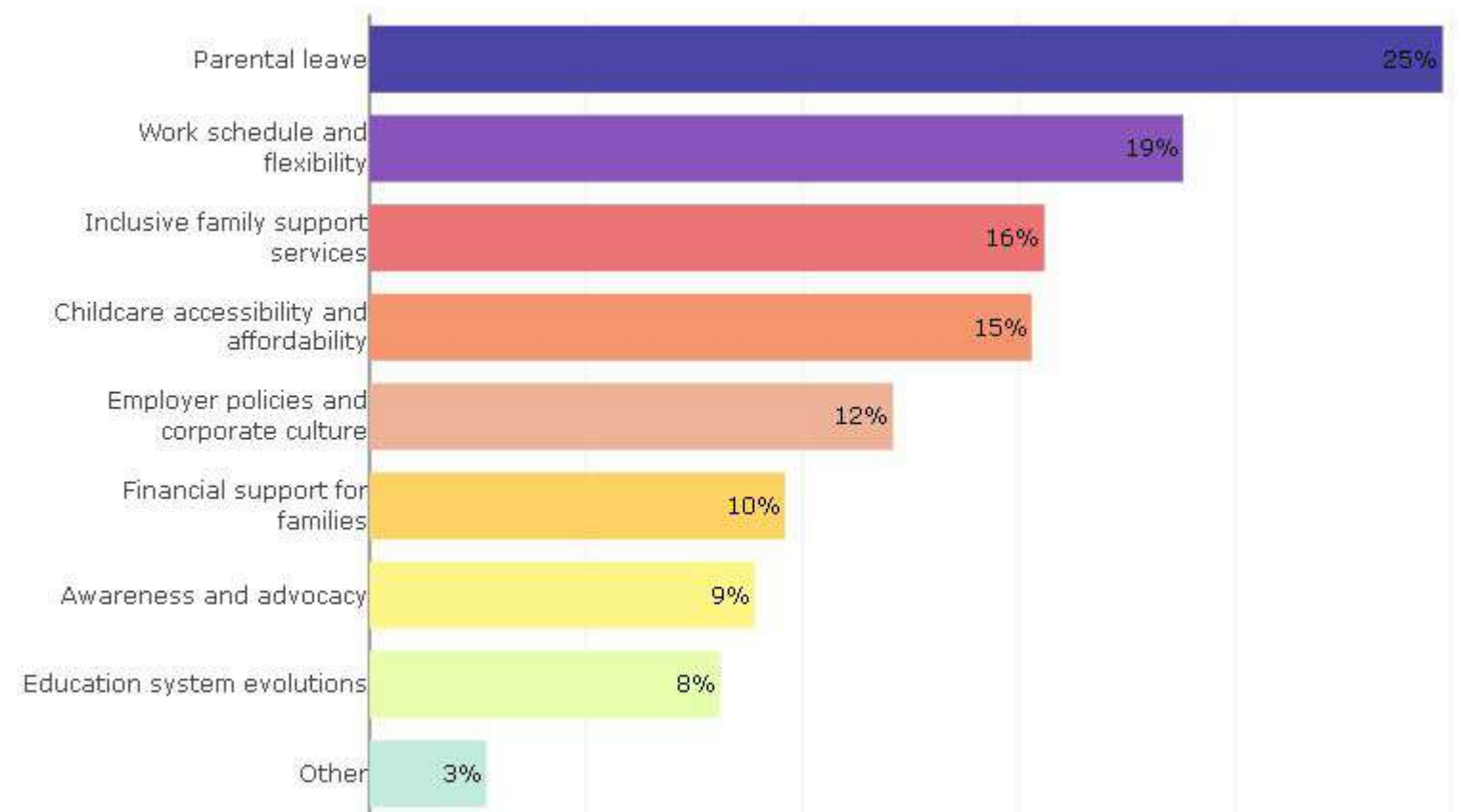


What citizens are talking about*

Out of 665 proposals submitted, 596 were validated by the Make.org moderators (see "Methodology").

1. This graph shows the percentage of proposals from the consultation that relate to one of the themes.

2. The sum of the percentages is greater than 100% because some proposals fall under more than one theme.



2nd part

**Popular ideas
and controversial
topics**



Methodology

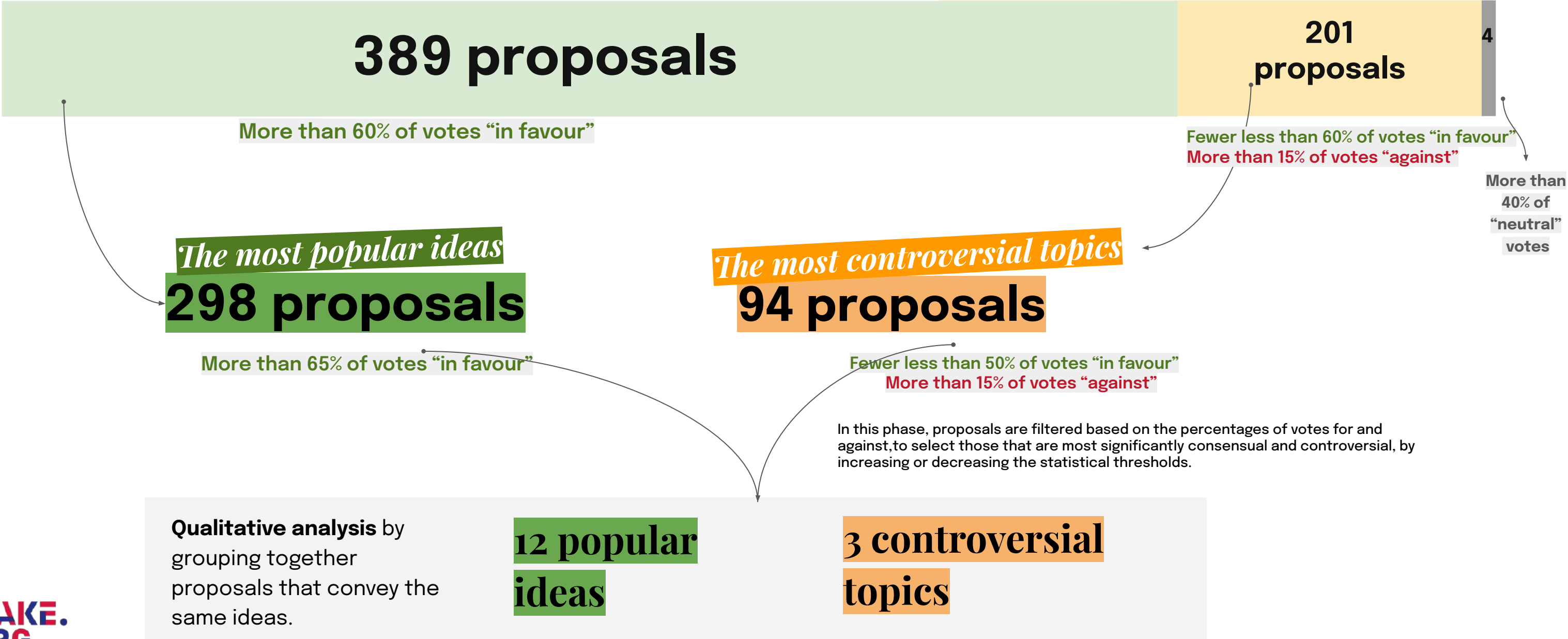
665 SUBMITTED PROPOSALS

596 VALIDATED PROPOSALS

Before being published, proposals submitted must be validated by the moderators of Make.org, in accordance with the law and our moderation guidelines.

Consensus zone







Controversy zone







The citizens' agenda

The most popular ideas  and the most controversial topics 






Childcare and education

-  Improving childcare access, quality and affordability
-  Creating on-site childcare facilities
-  Upgrading after-school care programmes
-  Elevating the status of early years educators
-  Empowering childcare entrepreneurs
-  Providing financial support when institutional childcare is unavailable

Inclusive family support systems

-  Better supporting and understanding single parents
-  Strengthening support systems for families with special needs
-  Providing mental health support for new parents
-  Offering support for grandparents, in terms of rights and benefits

Leave policies and work schedules

-  Improving parental leave policies
-  Adapting work schedules and corporate culture to family needs
-  Providing additional days off for parents to address daily family needs
-  Improving breastfeeding leave policies
-  Significantly extending parental leave rights and improving flexibility



The most popular ideas
(> 5 proposals)



The most controversial topics
(> 4 proposals)

01.

Childcare and education



Popular idea

Improving childcare access, quality and affordability

24 proposals

What citizens agree on

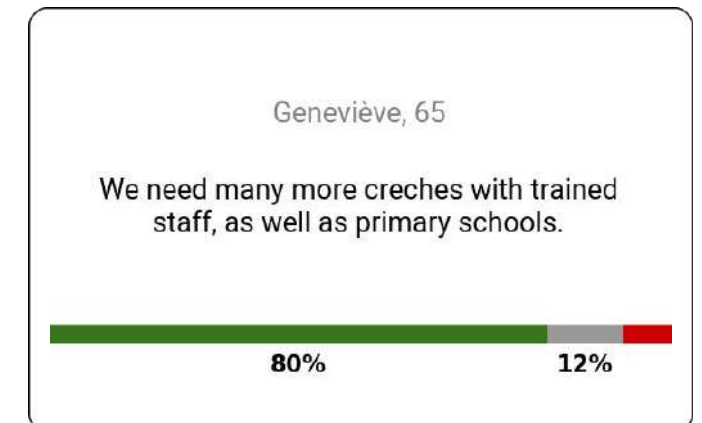
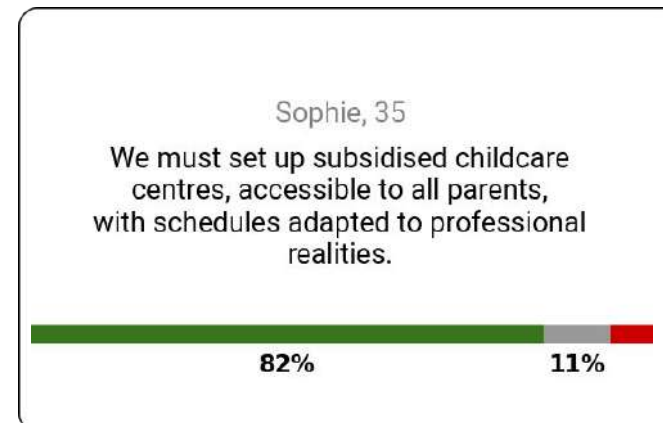
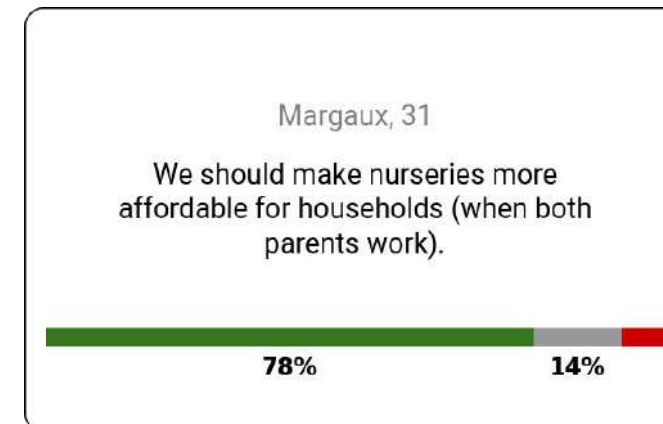
Participants focus on the need to increase the availability of childcare services. They call for more public childcare spaces to be made available to address existing shortages, which they likely see as a significant barrier for many families seeking childcare.

The participants emphasise making childcare more affordable, ensuring that lower-income families are not priced out of quality childcare options.

They also suggest creating childcare facilities near workplaces and offering flexible hours for easier coordination between work and childcare schedules

The participants emphasise improving the quality of childcare and propose investing in the education and training of childcare professionals.

♥ Popular proposal examples:



■ % votes "in favour" ■ % "neutral" votes ■ % votes "against"

Popular idea

Creating on-site childcare facilities

18 proposals

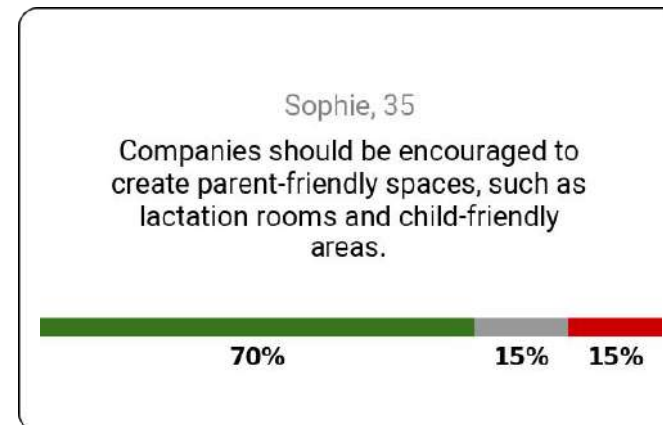
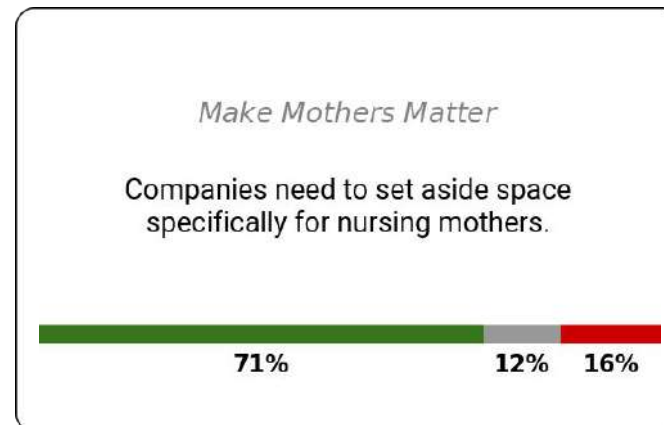
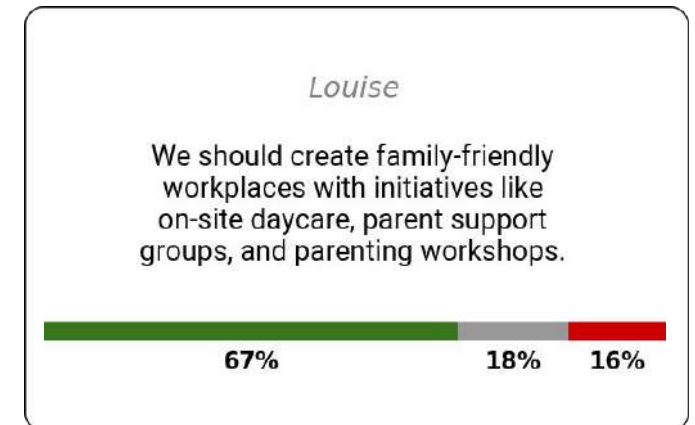
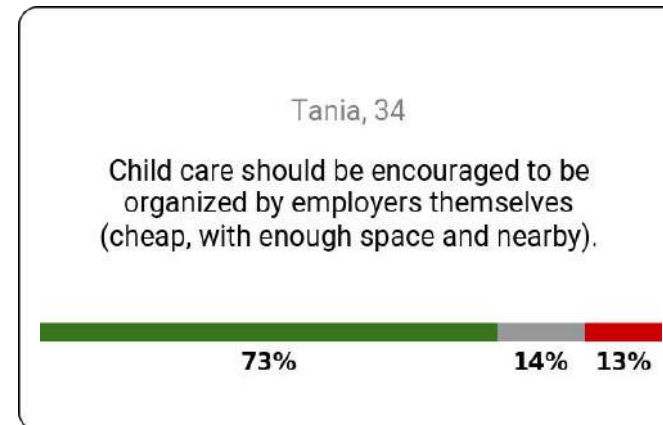
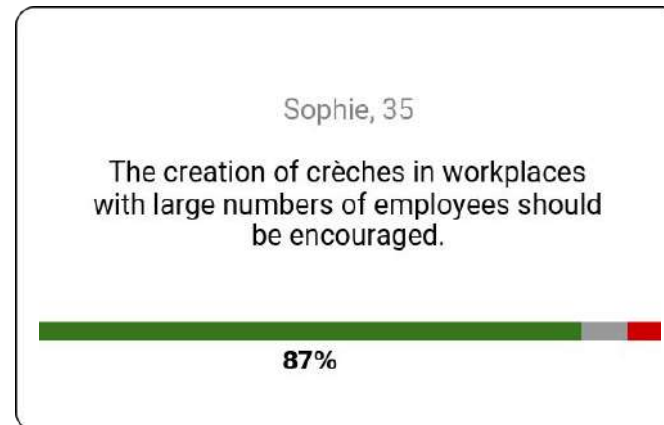
What citizens agree on

These proposals focus on integrating childcare into the workplace. Participants suggest creating on-site or nearby childcare facilities, especially in larger companies and business districts. The ideas range from full nurseries to smaller structures, aiming to align childcare with parents' work schedules.

There is also emphasis on making workplaces more family-friendly with lactation spaces and child-friendly areas.

Some suggest financial incentives for companies to implement these changes.

♥ Popular proposal examples:



Popular idea

Upgrading after-school care programmes

11 proposals

What citizens agree on

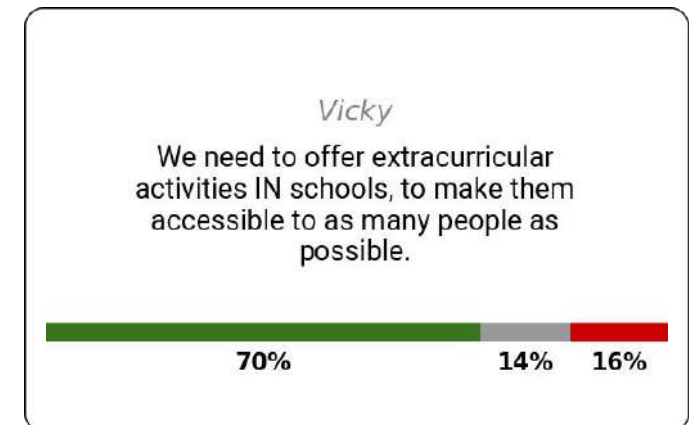
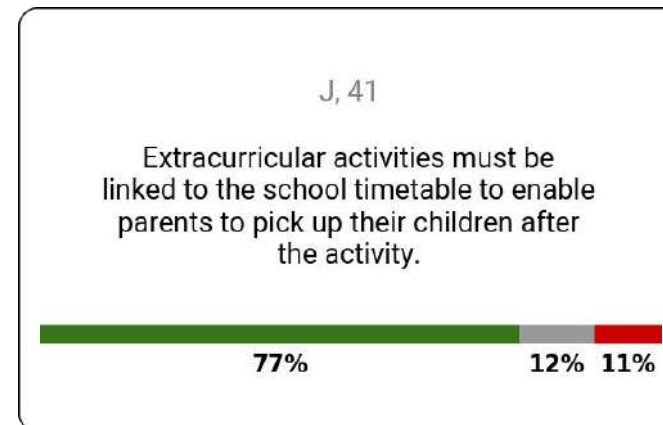
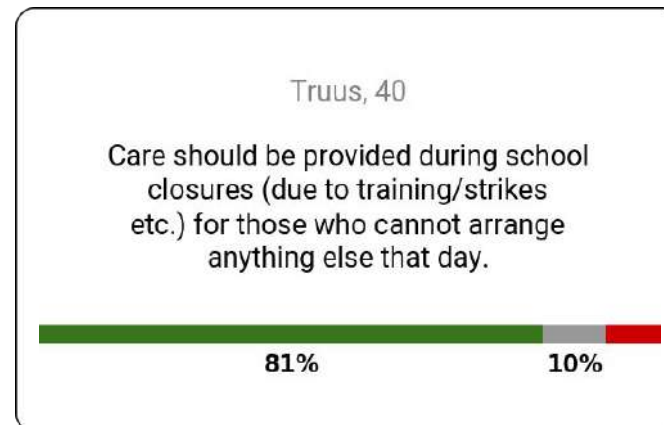
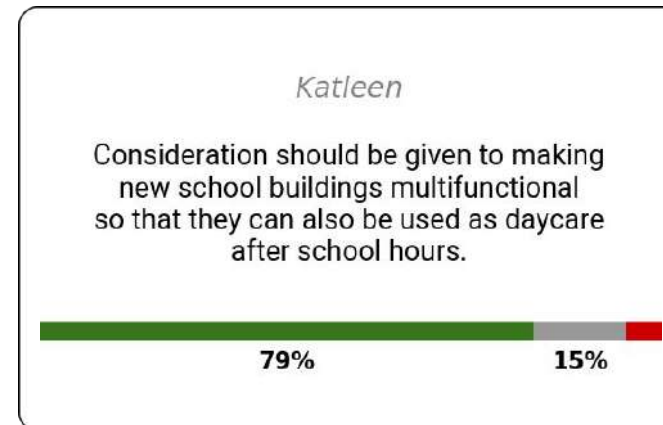
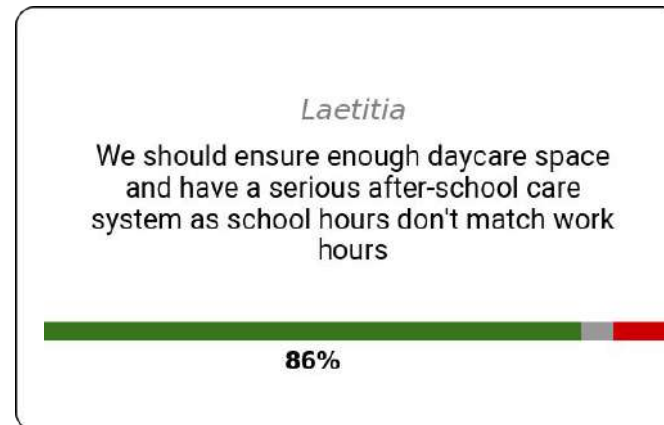
The participants highlight the need to bridge the gap between school hours and typical work hours.

Extending the opening hours of nurseries and after-school care services is a key point raised by the participants. They discuss the limited childcare options currently available and emphasize the need for more daycare spaces. This suggestion aims to provide parents with reliable childcare options that extend beyond regular school hours.

The participants also talk about improving the quality and accessibility of after-school care programmes.

Aligning extracurricular activities with parents' schedules is another idea the participants bring up.

♥ Popular proposal examples:



Popular idea

Elevating the status of early years educators

6 proposals

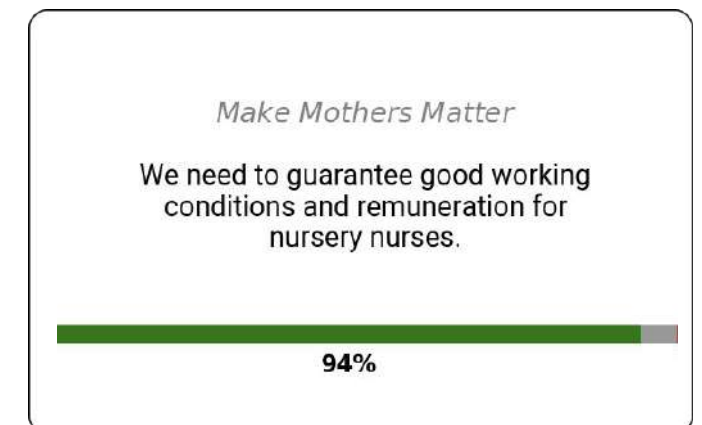
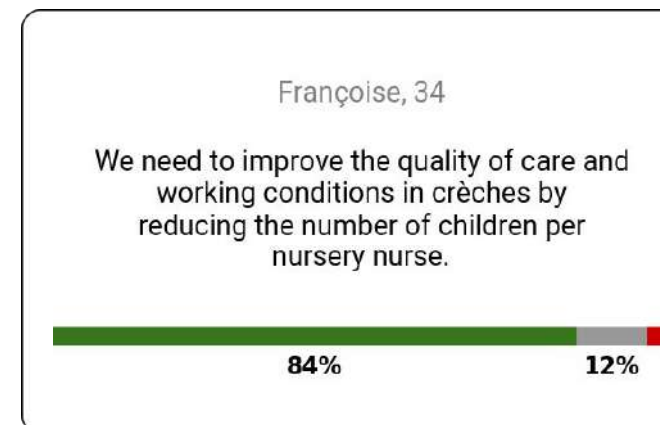
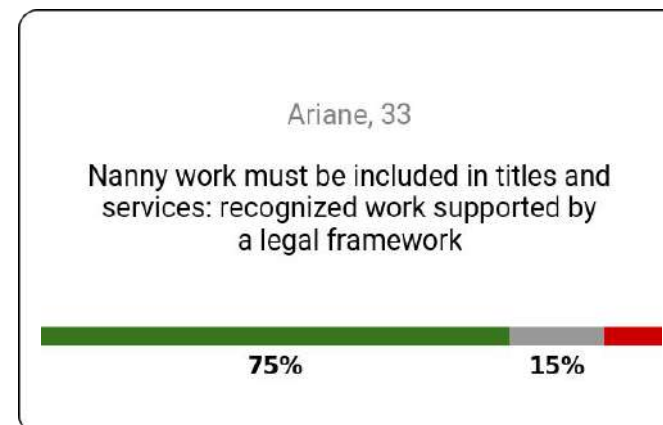
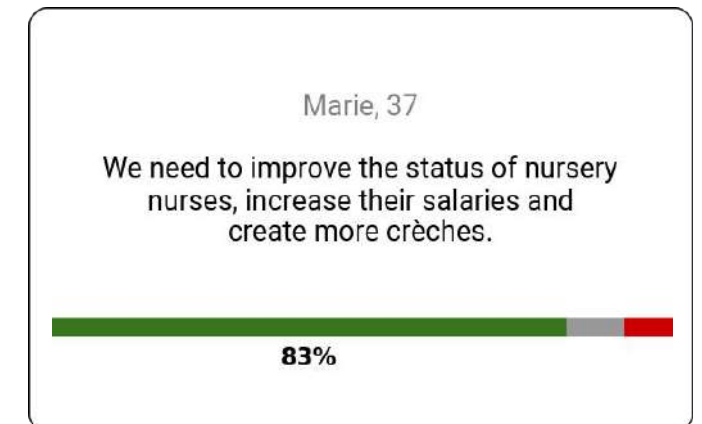
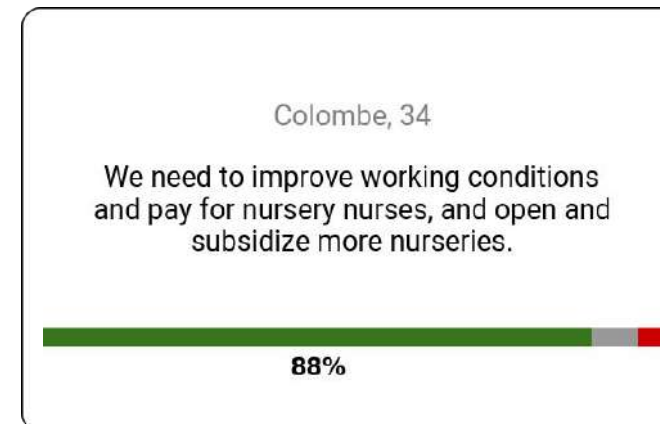
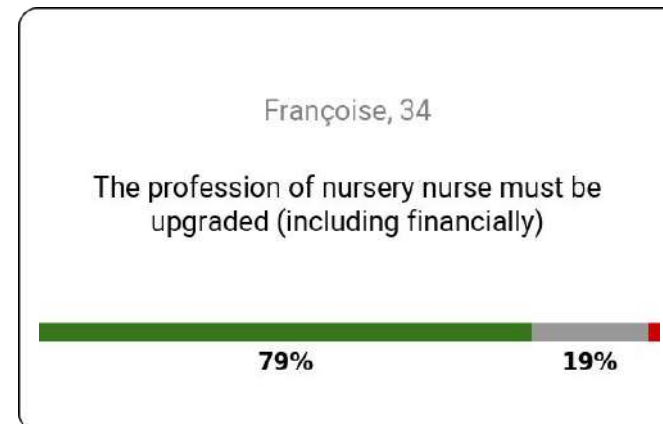
What citizens agree on

The participants talk about the role of nursery nurses and after-school care providers. They recognise the importance of these professions and suggest elevating their status, both financially and in terms of professional recognition.

Improving the skills and qualifications of childcare providers is viewed by the participants as essential for delivering higher quality care. They suggest improving training and qualifications in the sector, which could lead to more professional and effective childcare services.

Lastly, the participants mention providing a legal framework for childminders.

♥ Popular proposal examples:



■ % votes "in favour" ■ % "neutral" votes ■ % votes "against"

Popular idea

Empowering childcare entrepreneurs

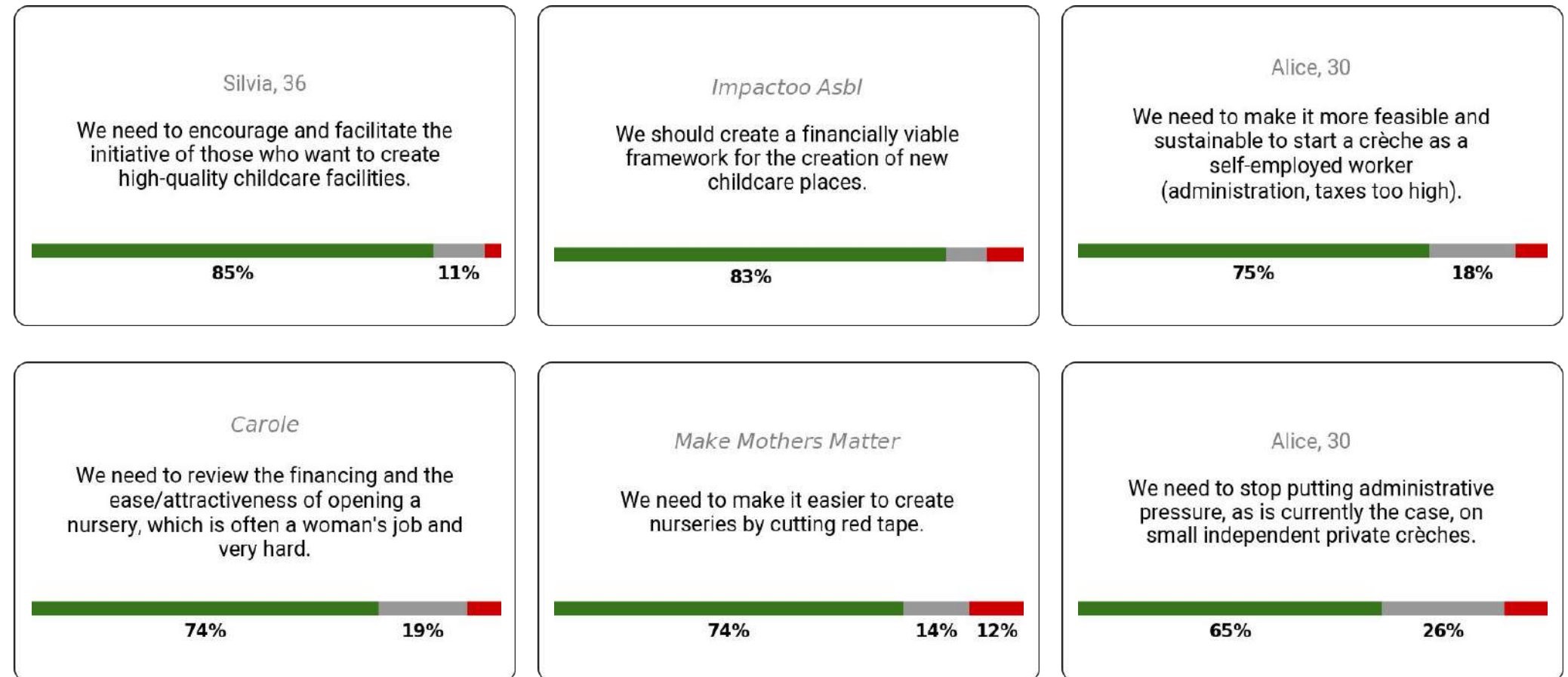
6 proposals

What citizens agree on

These proposals explore the idea of facilitating the creation of high-quality childcare facilities through different approaches:

- supporting initiatives aimed at creating new childcare facilities;
- establishing a financially viable framework for new childcare spaces (tax incentives, subsidies);
- reducing administrative burdens to make it easier for providers to establish and operate childcare facilities.

♥ Popular proposal examples:



■ % votes "in favour" ■ % "neutral" votes ■ % votes "against"

Controversial
topic

Providing financial support when institutional childcare is unavailable

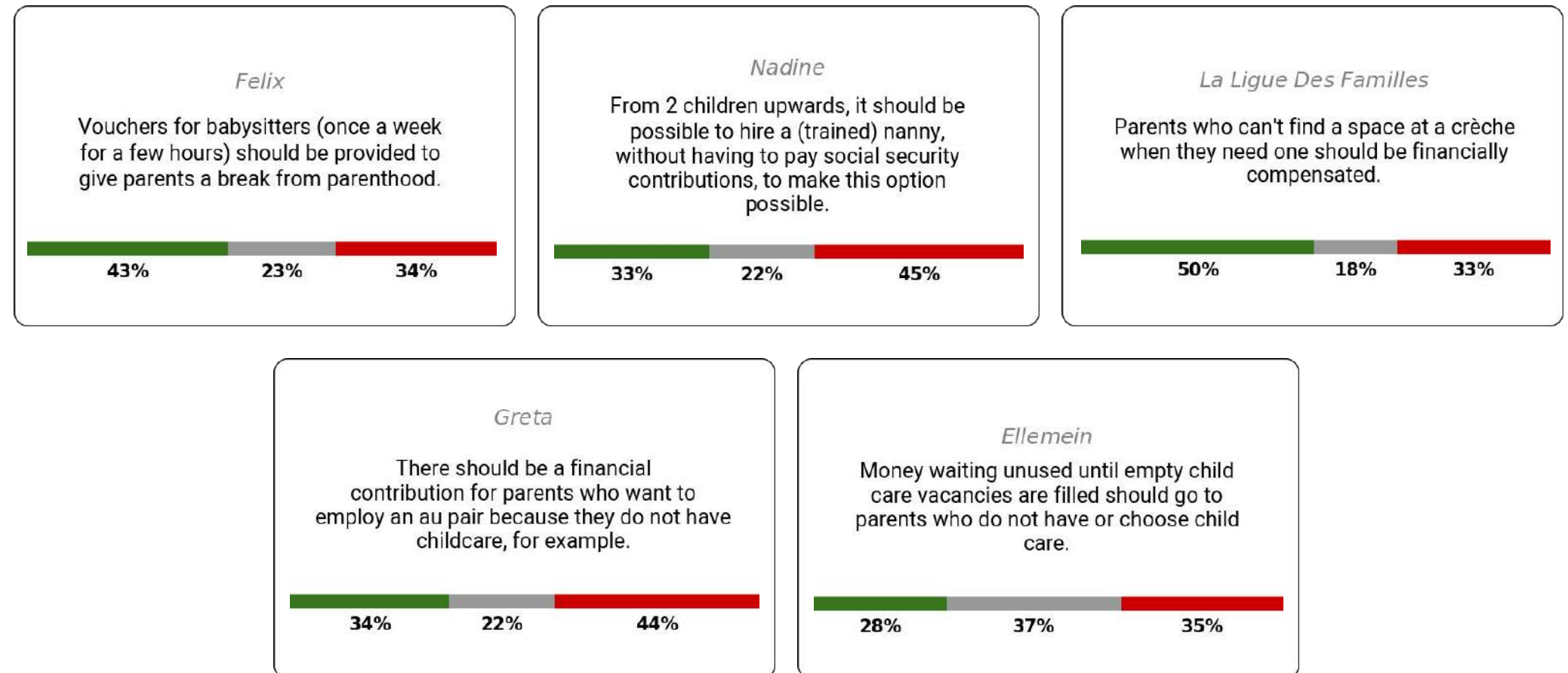
5 proposals

What citizens are divided on

Participants are divided regarding additional financial support for childcare, particularly when traditional options are unavailable.

The financial compensation for lack of childcare options, including babysitter vouchers or support for hiring a nanny or au pair is a controversial issue - representing a significant expansion of typical childcare support programmes.

⚡ Controversial proposal examples:



■ % votes "in favour" ■ % "neutral" votes ■ % votes "against"

02.

Leave policies and work schedules



Popular idea

Improving parental leave policies

68 proposals

What citizens agree on

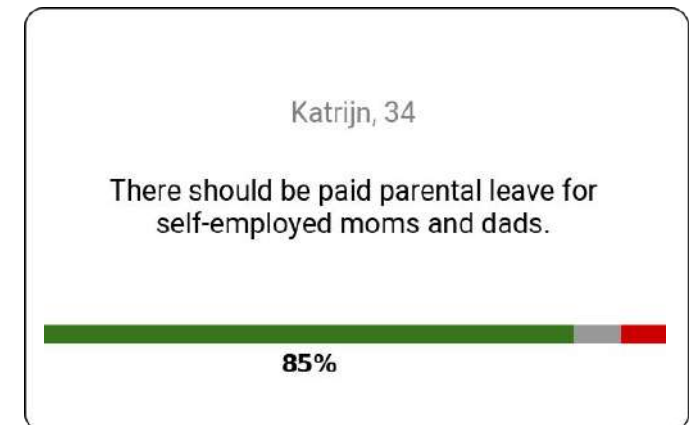
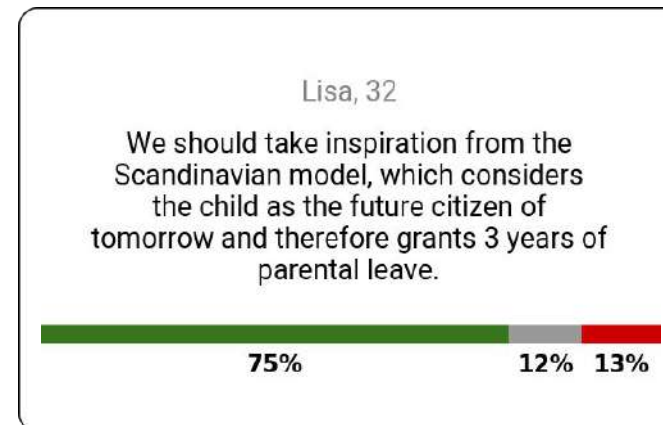
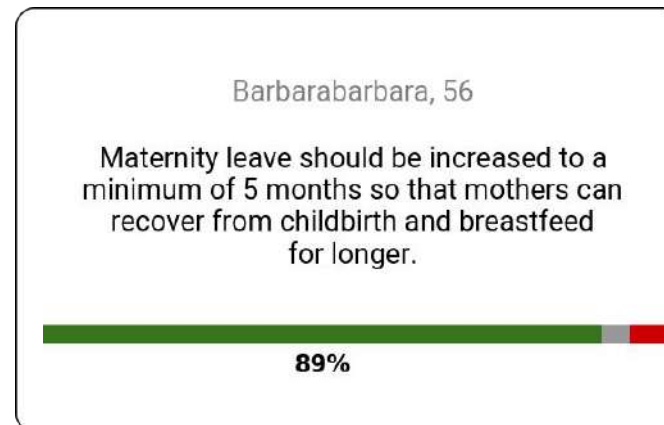
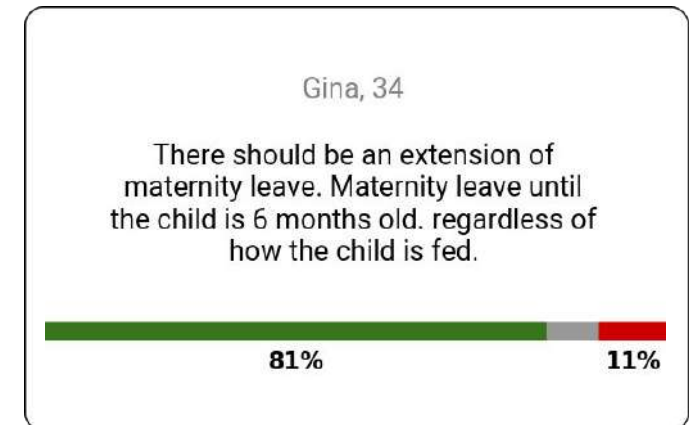
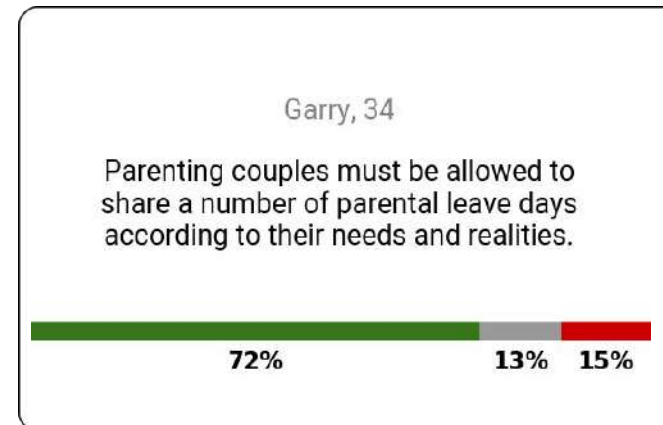
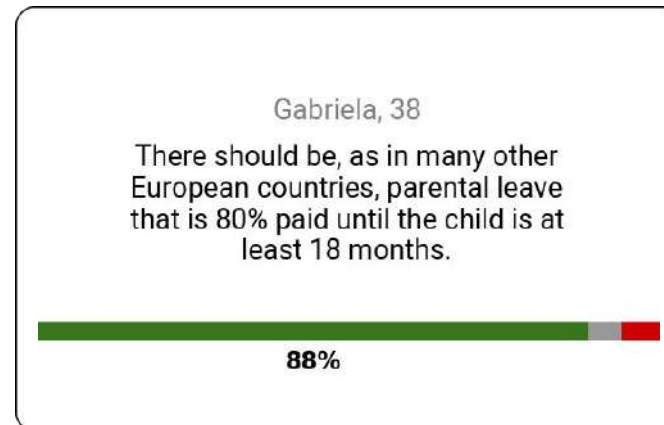
The participants agree on extending parental leave periods. For instance, they suggest increasing maternity leave from 5 months to 1 year post-partum and extending paternity/co-parent leave, with some advocating for equal leave periods for fathers/co-parents. They also call for longer overall parental leave periods, ranging from 6 months to as long as 3 years.

Flexibility is a key theme in the participants' proposals. They suggest the option of shared leave between parents and the option to take leave in various formats, such as daily or weekly.

The proposals also emphasise the importance of financial support with better-paid leave, with some advocating for up to 80% of salary compensation.

Lastly, there's a strong call for self-employed parents to have the same rights as employed parents, in terms of leave policy.

♥ Popular proposal examples:



Popular idea

Adapting work schedules and corporate culture to family needs

52 proposals

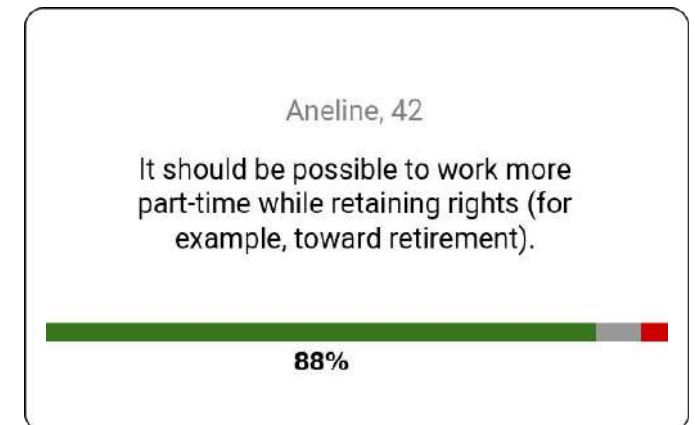
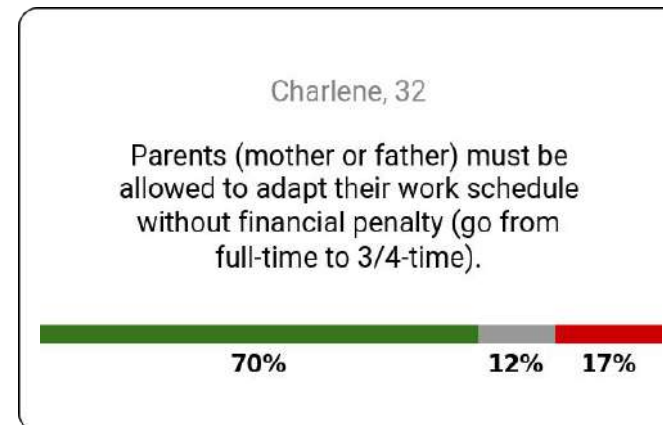
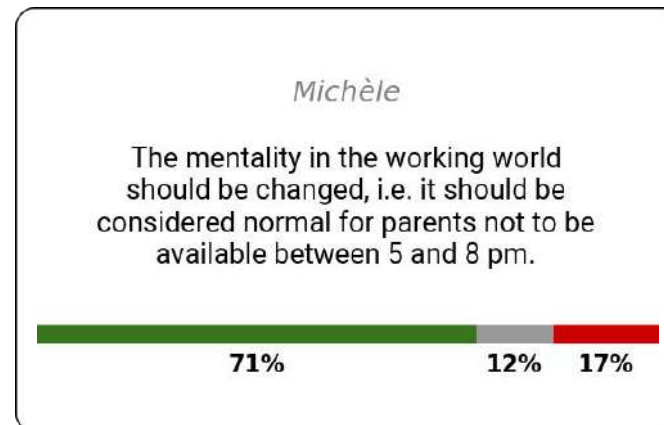
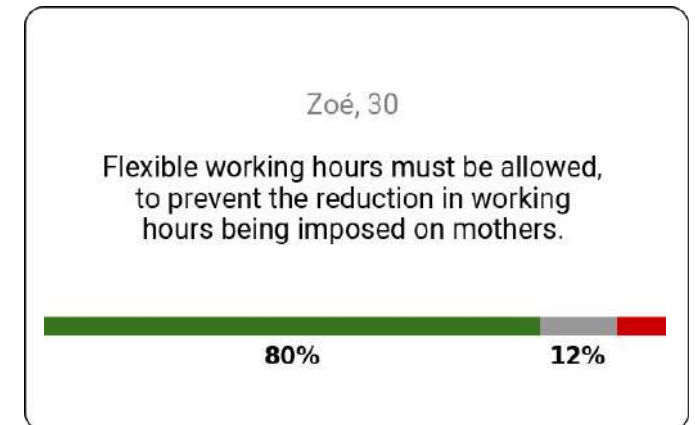
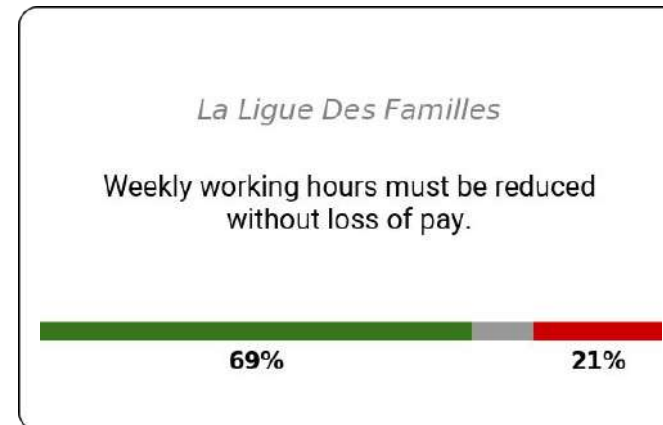
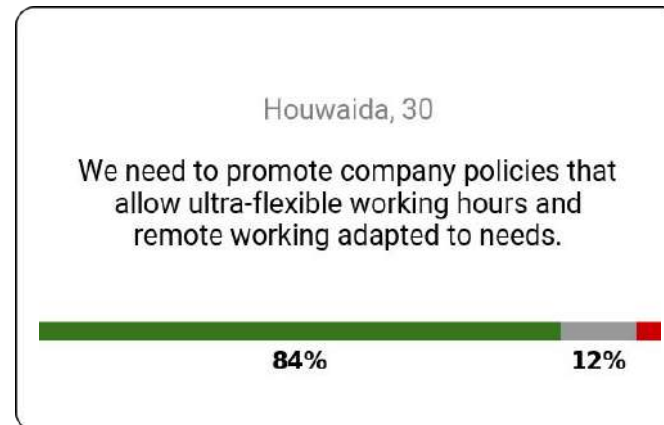
What citizens agree on

Participants talk about the need for significant changes in workplace attitudes and practices. By normalising parental responsibilities within the workplace, participants believe companies can reduce the stigma and stress associated with balancing work and family life.

The participants emphasise the importance of family-friendly policies and work flexibility. They suggest flexible working hours (adjusted schedules for school drop-offs and pick-ups), more remote work options, condensed work weeks and more autonomy in how and when work is completed.

Participants also focus on increasing part-time work opportunities and reducing stigma associated with part-time work.

♥ Popular proposal examples:



Popular idea

Providing additional days off for parents to address daily family needs

21 proposals

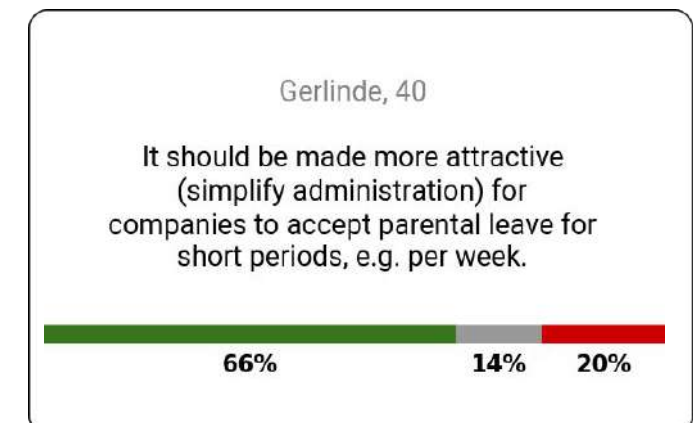
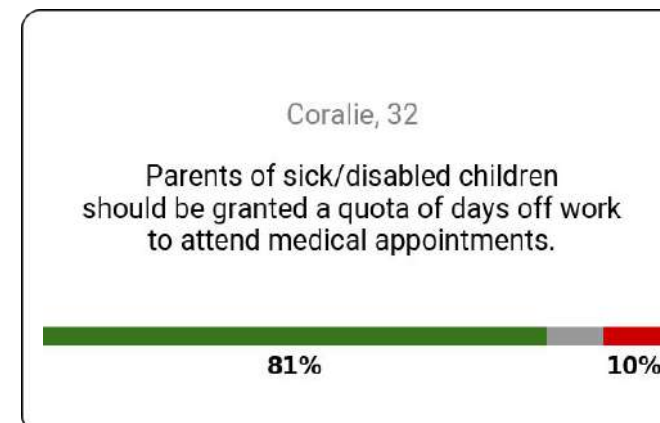
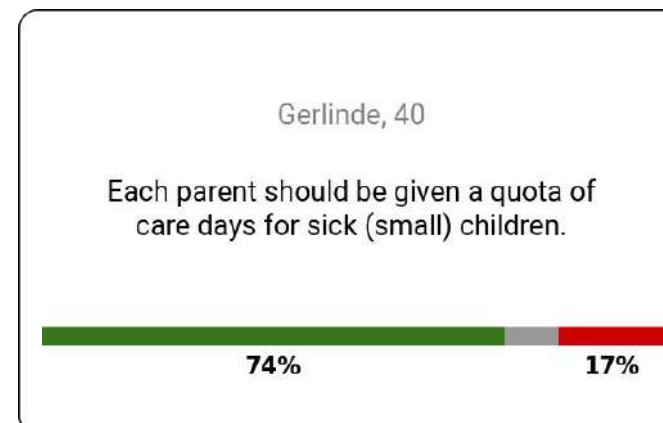
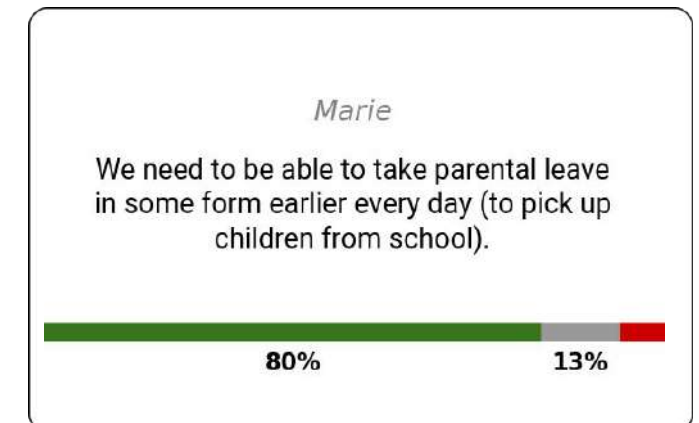
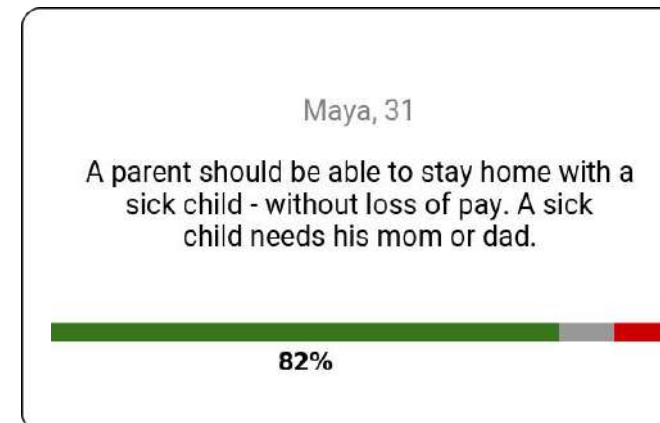
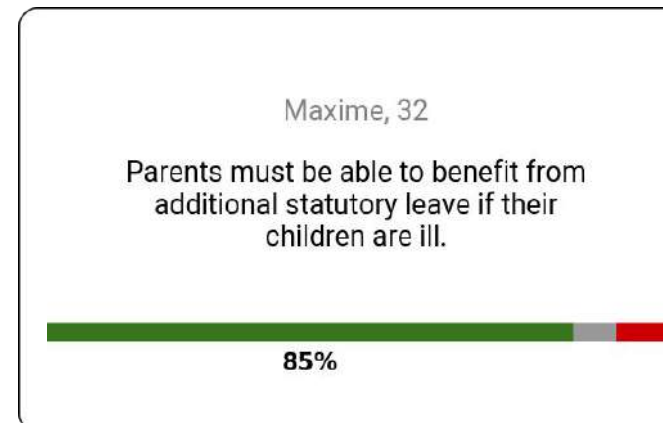
What citizens agree on

The participants talk about various ways to improve parental leave policies, particularly focusing on situations involving child illness and unexpected events. Their suggestions aim to provide more support and flexibility for working parents dealing with child health issues and other family-related circumstances.

They also propose additional statutory leave for parents of sick or disabled children, acknowledging the unique and often more demanding caregiving responsibilities of parents with children who have ongoing health issues or disabilities.

The participants talk about simplifying the process of taking parental leave, particularly for short-term needs, suggesting simplified administration.

♥ Popular proposal examples:



■ % votes "in favour" ■ % "neutral" votes ■ % votes "against"

Popular idea

Improving breastfeeding leave policies

8 proposals

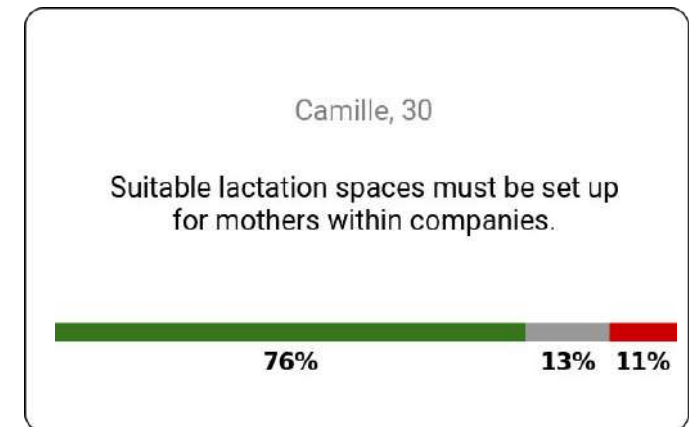
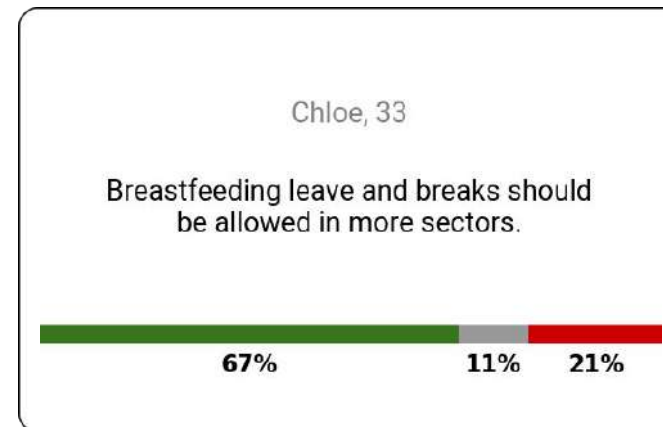
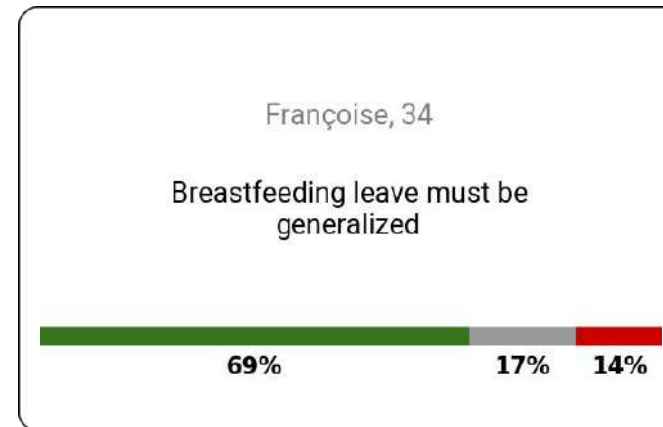
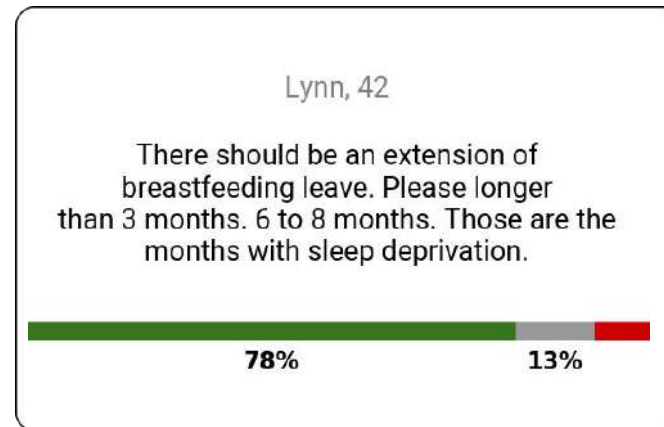
What citizens agree on

The participants agree on extending breastfeeding leave from the current standard to 6-8 months.

The participants also emphasise the need for universal application of breastfeeding leave. They call for this leave to be available in all sectors.

Workplace accommodations are another key point raised by the participants. They suggest that companies should provide suitable lactation spaces for mothers who return to work.

♥ Popular proposal examples:



Controversial
topic

Significantly extending parental leave rights and improving flexibility

5 proposals

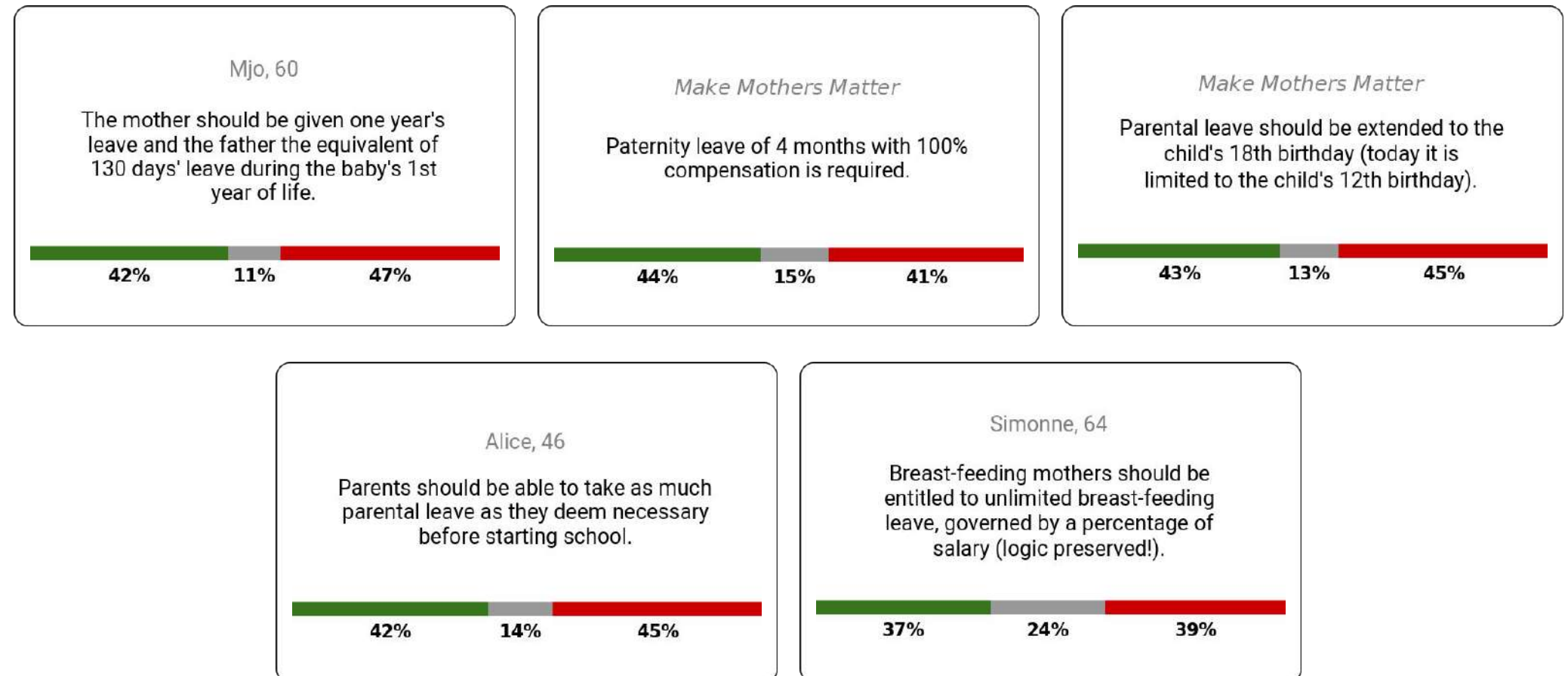
What citizens are divided on

Participants disagree with ambitious extensions of current parental leave policies that could face significant opposition from various stakeholders due to concerns about feasibility, costs, and potential impact on businesses.

Another debated idea is letting parents choose how much time off to take until their child begins school.

The participants also propose unlimited breastfeeding leave for nursing mothers.

⚡ Controversial proposal examples :



■ % votes "in favour" ■ % "neutral" votes ■ % votes "against"

03.

Inclusive family support systems



Popular idea

Better supporting and understanding single parents

9 proposals

What citizens agree on

The participants mention the need for greater support and understanding for single parents, particularly single mothers.

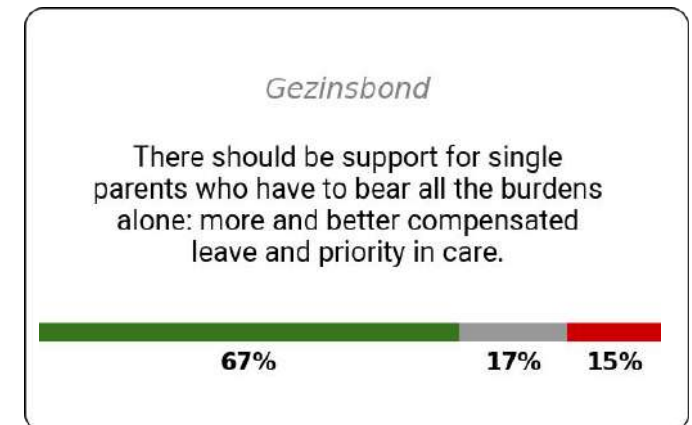
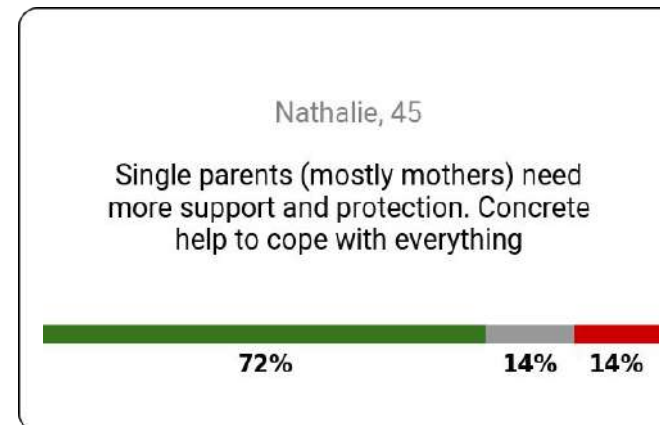
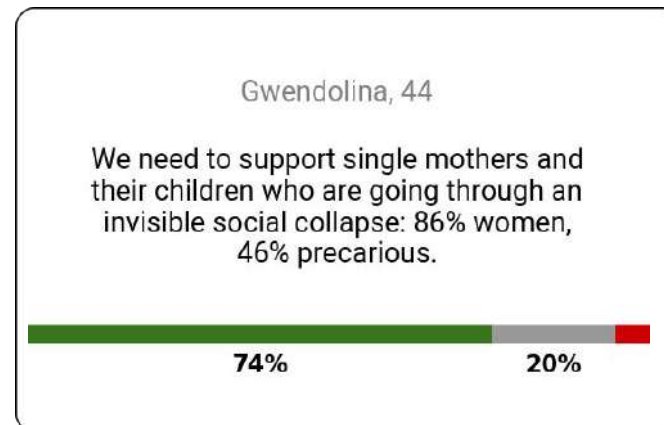
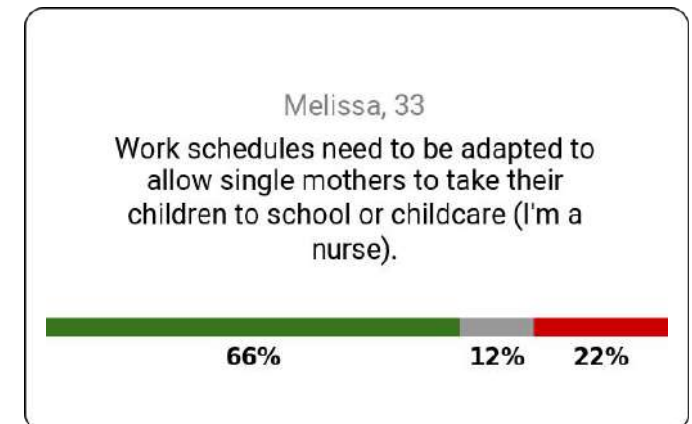
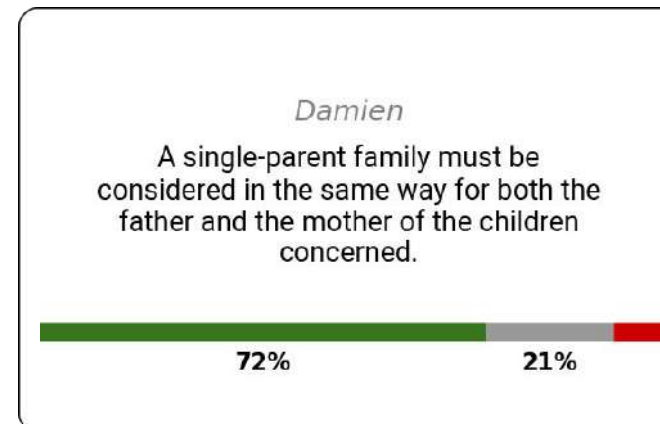
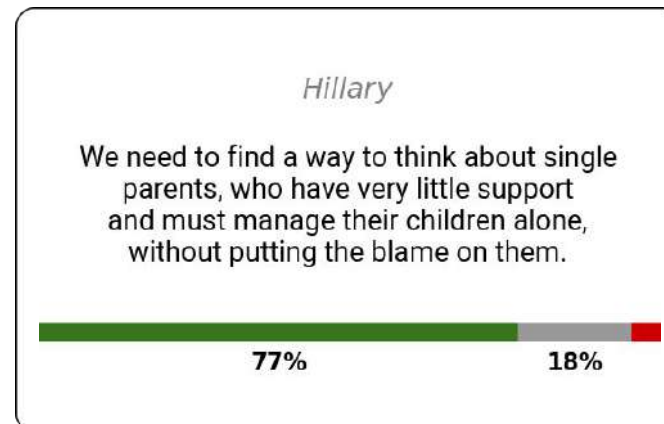
Changing perceptions is a key point raised by the participants. They call for a shift in societal attitudes towards single parents, moving away from blame and stigma towards understanding and support.

Work-life balance is a significant concern raised by the participants. They suggest adapting work schedules and providing more flexible childcare options to help single parents manage their responsibilities.

They also talk about prioritising care for single parents. They propose giving priority to single parents in childcare facilities, especially for those who are working.

Lastly, the participants discuss financial assistance. They suggest increased support for single parents, including better-compensated leave and help with home care.

♥ Popular proposal examples:



Popular idea

Strengthening support systems for families with special needs

9 proposals

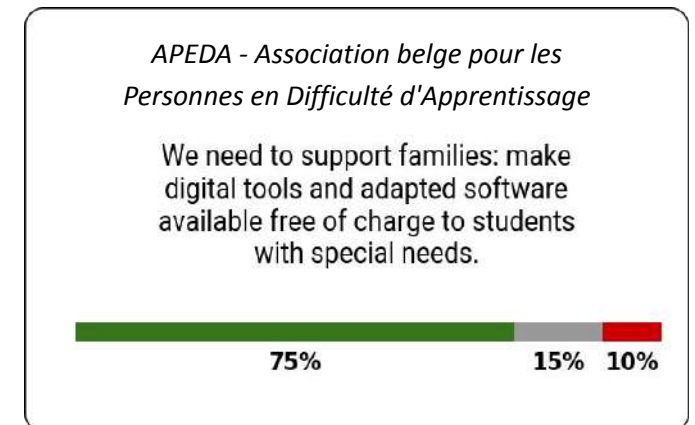
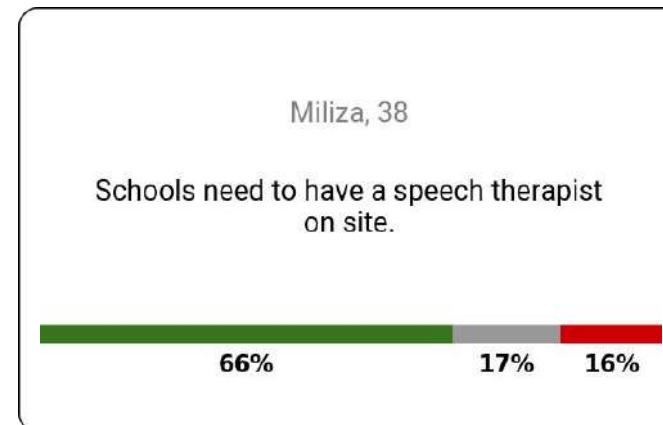
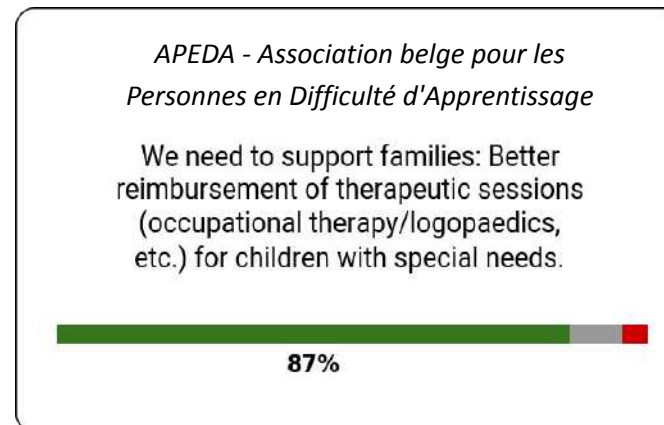
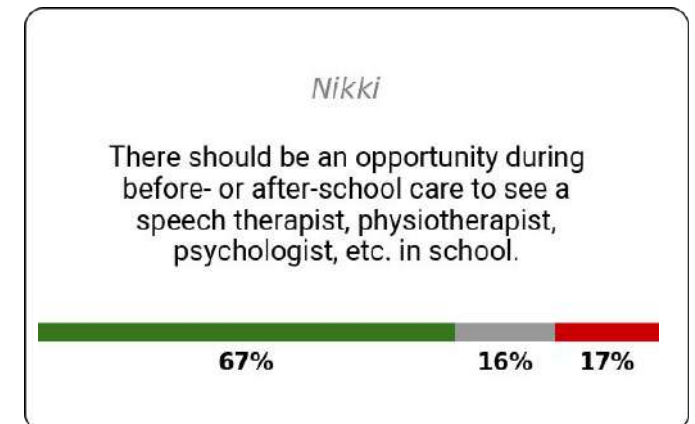
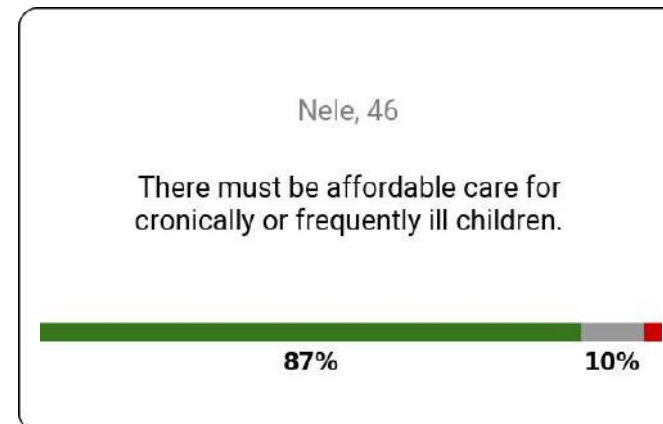
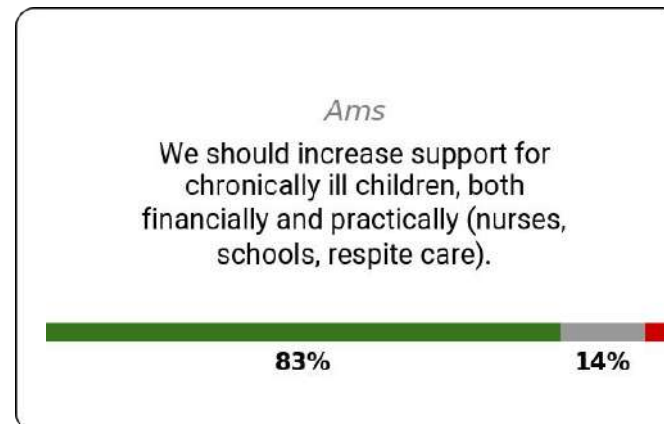
What citizens agree on

The participants talk about providing financial support for parents who need to care for seriously ill children. They suggest guaranteeing a minimum wage for these parents, recognising the financial strain that can come with long-term caregiving. Additionally, they emphasise the importance of job security for parents when they return to work after a period of caregiving.

The participants also talk about improving strengthening childcare facilities specifically designed for chronically ill children. These proposals acknowledge the unique needs of these children and the importance of specialised care environments.

The participants discuss the need for integrated services at school, including speech therapy, physiotherapy, and psychological support, free digital tools and adapted software.

♥ Popular proposal examples:



Popular idea

Providing mental health support for new parents

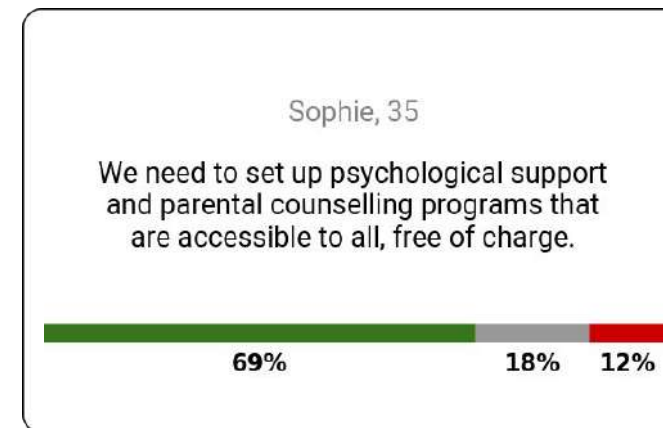
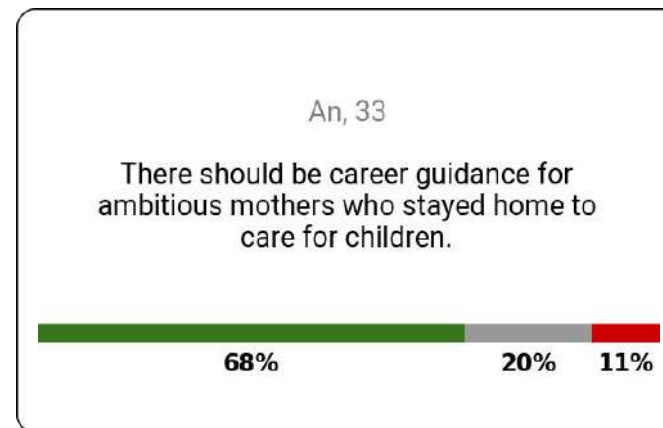
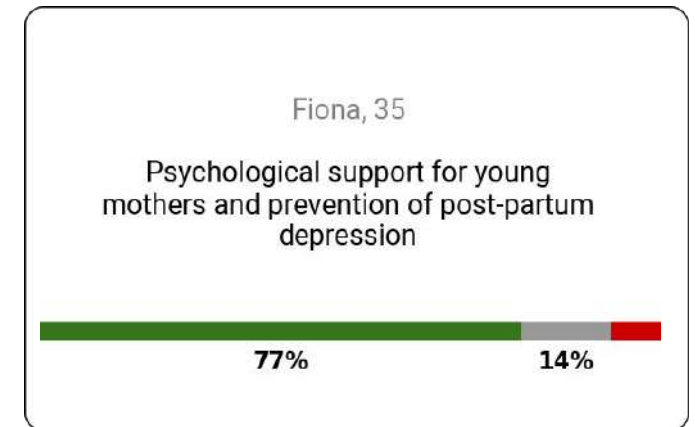
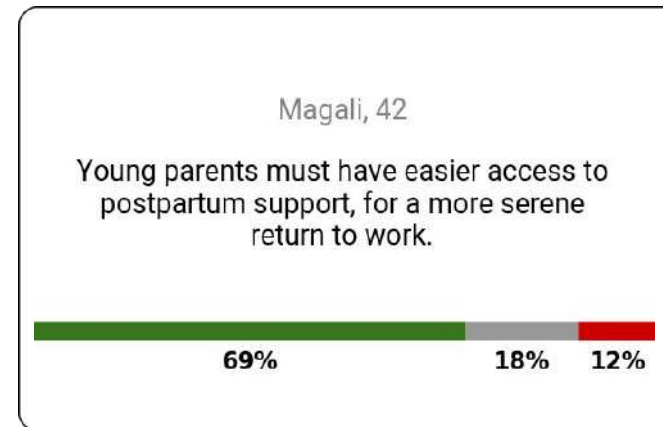
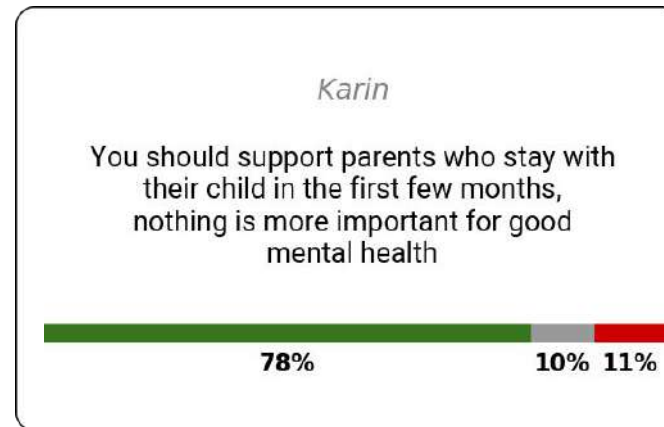
5 proposals

What citizens agree on

The participants emphasise the need for mental health services, specifically mentioning post-partum depression, including parental counseling programmes.

The participants also suggest providing career support for parents who have been out of the workforce with careers guidance for stay-at-home parents.

♥ Popular proposal examples:



Controversial topic

Offering support for grandparents, in terms of rights and benefits

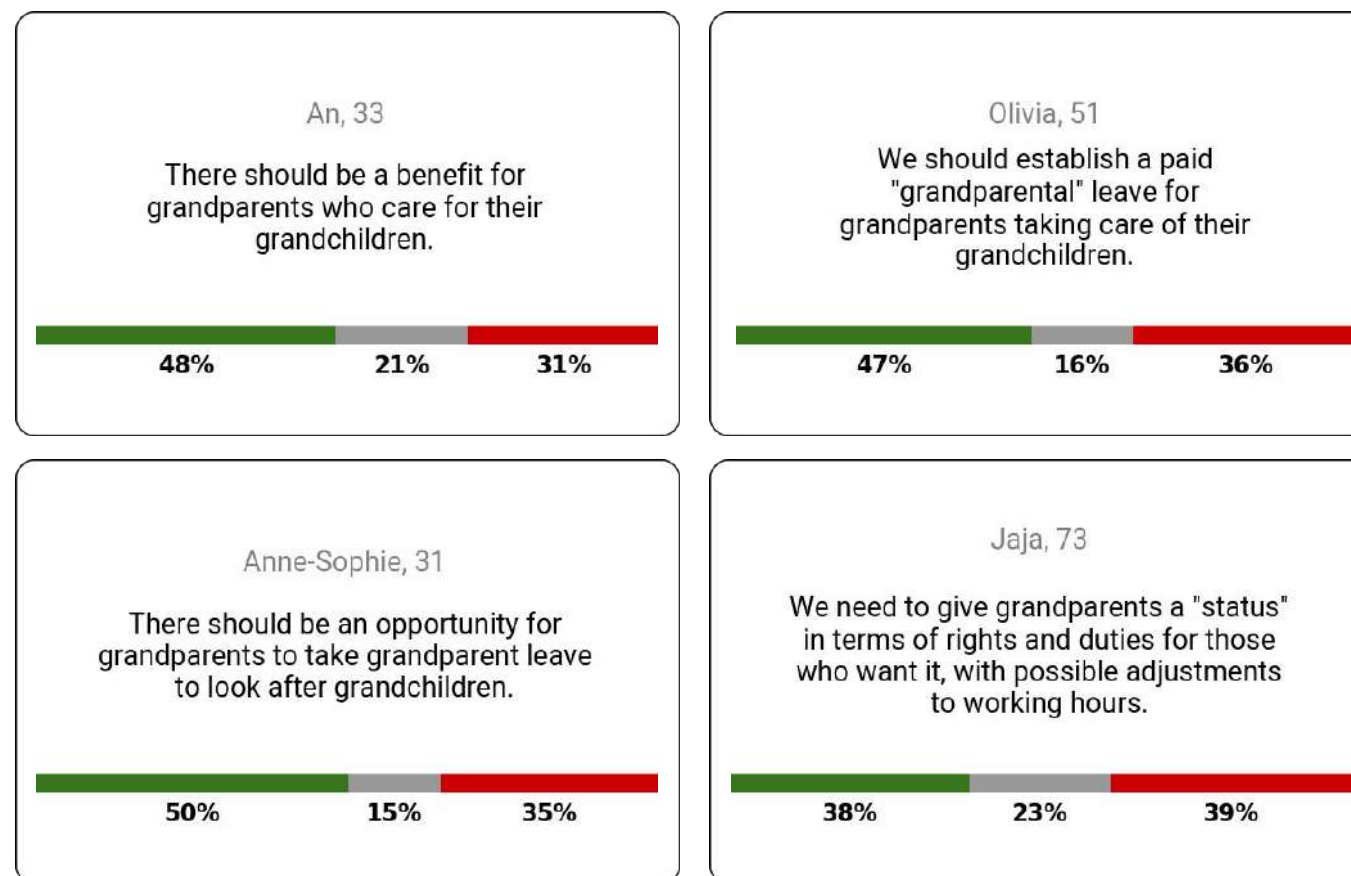
4 proposals

What citizens are divided on

Participants are divided regarding recognising grandparents' role in childcare, by extending the concept of parental leave to include them or by establishing a legal framework exclusively for them.

This idea involves providing financial support to grandparents who are actively involved in caring for their grandchildren (tax deductions etc.).

⚡ Controversial proposal examples :



Low-frequency ideas



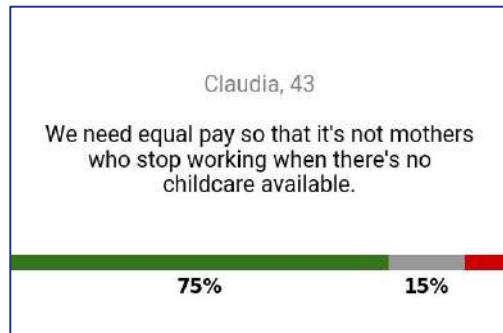
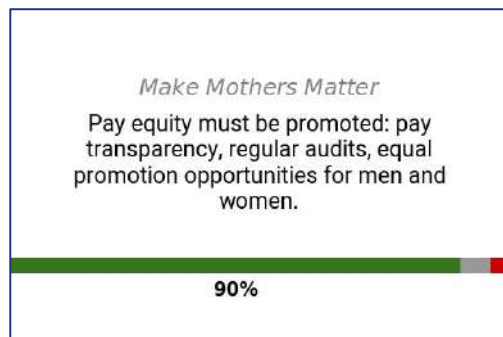
A low frequency idea is composed of fewer than 4 proposals which have nonetheless aggregated a certain number of votes.

While these themes were mentioned infrequently in the consultation, they are considered important ideas that warrant attention in our analysis.

Popular idea

3 proposals

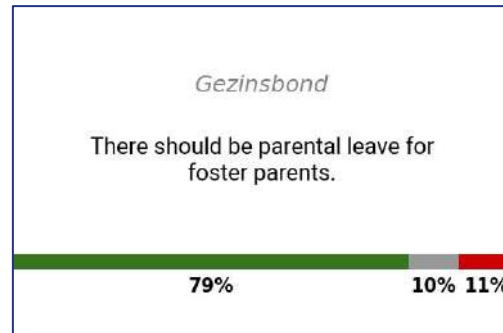
Reducing the wage gap



Popular idea

3 proposals

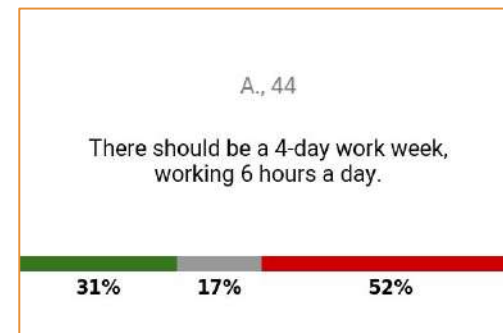
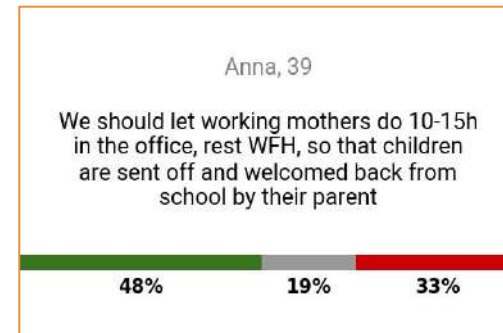
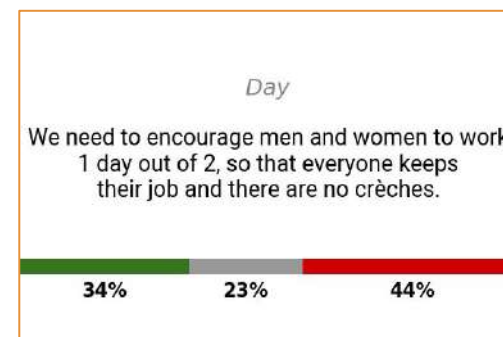
Improving the foster care system



Controversial topic

3 proposals

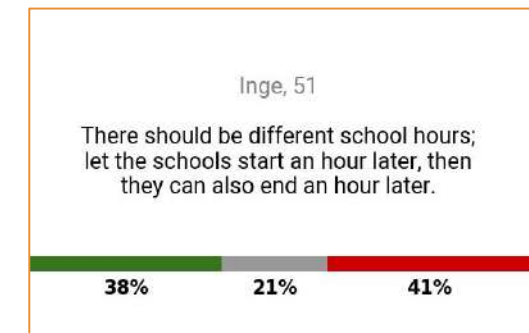
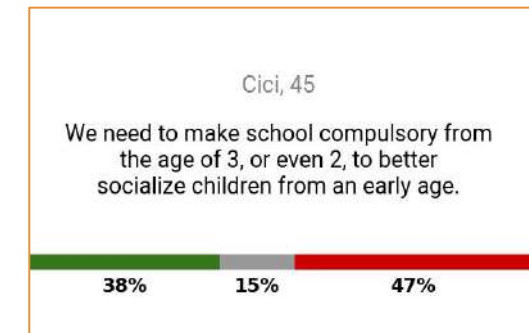
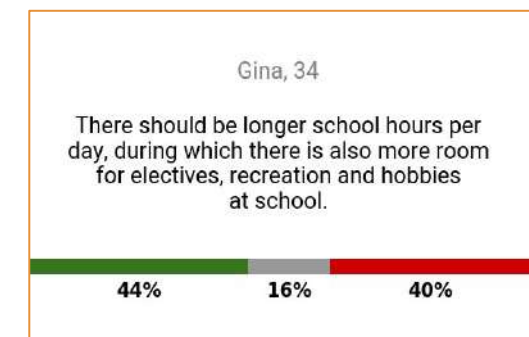
Halving work hours



Controversial topic

3 proposals

Significantly extending school hour

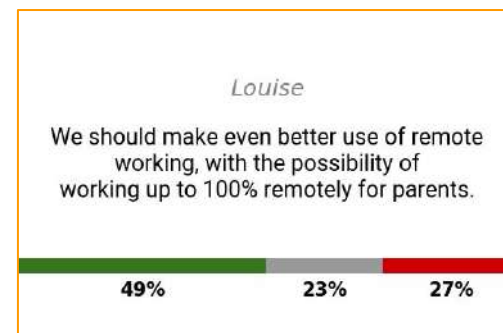
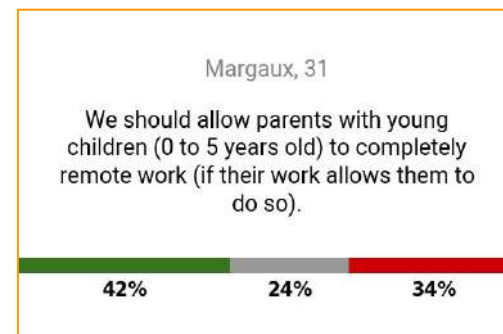


A low frequency idea is composed of fewer than 4 proposals which have nonetheless aggregated a certain number of votes.

While these themes were mentioned infrequently in the consultation, they are considered important ideas that warrant attention in our analysis.

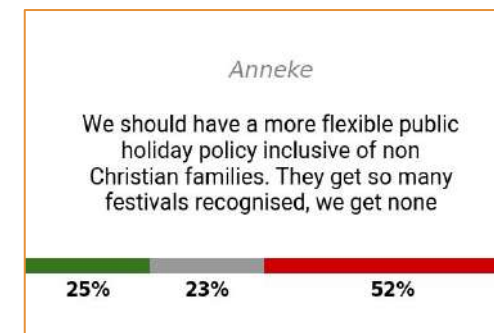
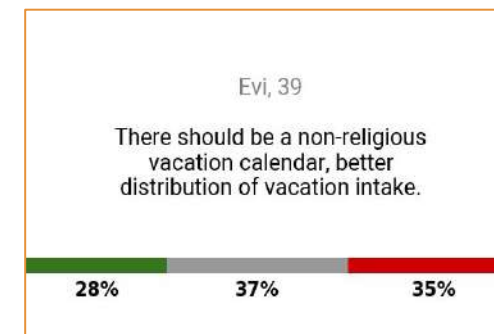
Controversial topic
2 proposals

Offering up to 100% remote work for parents



Controversial topic
2 proposals

Providing more equitable distribution of public holidays for all religious groups



MAKE.
ORG