



Flash Eurobarometer 438

Briefing note

The use of collaborative platforms

Fieldwork
March 2016

Survey requested by the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs
and co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication

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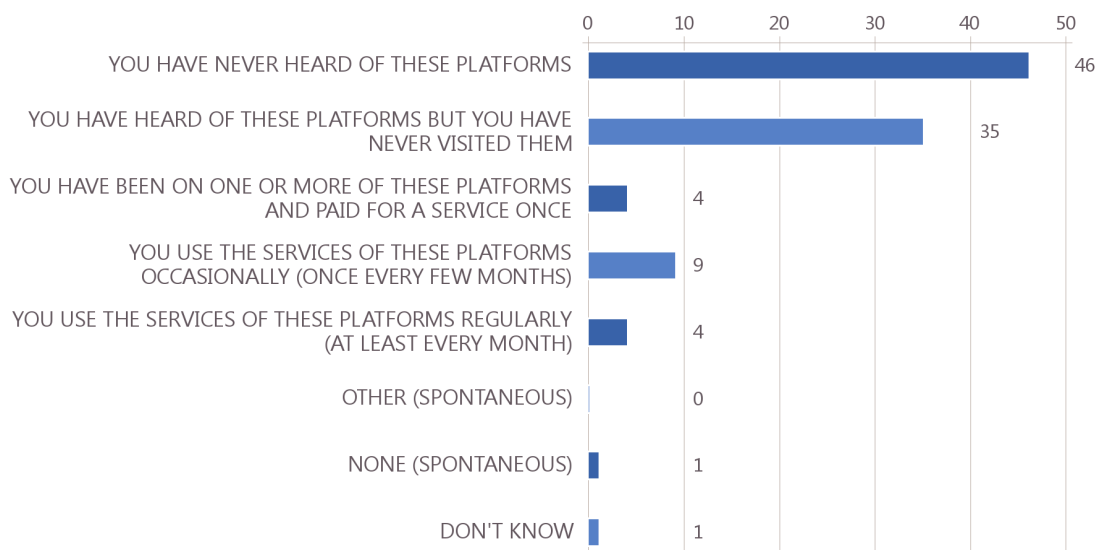
Survey co-ordinated by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication
(DG COMM "Strategy, Corporate Communication Actions and Eurobarometer" Unit)

The proportion of European citizens who choose to buy goods and services on the Internet has significantly increased in less than a decade¹. Today, collaborative platforms represent additional tools that enable transactions between people providing and using a service, and they are part of the wider phenomenon of the so-called 'collaborative economy'. In the context of the Single Market Strategy (SMS), the European Commission is currently assessing the regulatory framework in which collaborative platforms operate in order to develop a European agenda for the collaborative economy, including guidance on how existing EU law applies to collaborative economy business models and recommendations to Member States.

A majority of respondents are aware of the services of the collaborative platforms

A majority of respondents are aware of the services of the collaborative platforms (52%). Nearly one in five declare they have used the services of these platforms at least once (17%), with almost one in ten who say they do so once every few months (9%) and 4% at least every month.

Q1 Which of the following matches your experience regarding this type of platform?
(% - EU)

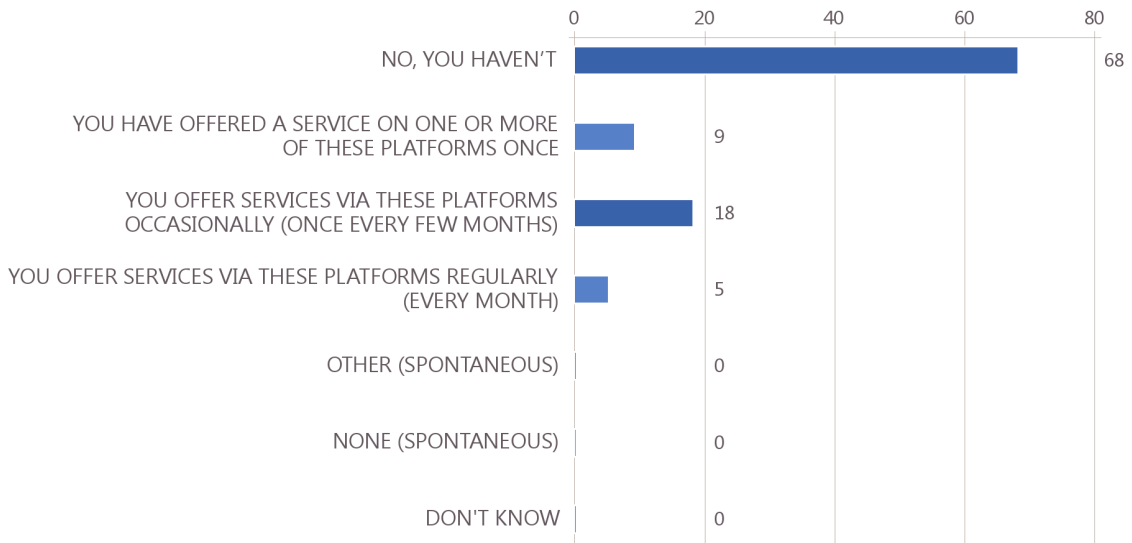


Perhaps unsurprisingly, respondents aged between 25 and 39 years (27%) and those who finished education aged 20 years or more (27%) are the most likely to use the services of collaborative platforms. Within the occupational categories, the same applies to self-employed (26%) and employees (25%).

¹ According to the annual Eurostat survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals, the proportion of Europeans who have purchased online in the last 12 months has increased from 30% in 2007 to 53% in 2015. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/information-society/data/database>.

Among the respondents who have visited collaborative platforms, almost one third say they have provided a service on this kind of platforms at least once (32%), which signals that a consistent proportion of users are also likely to act as service providers. Slightly less than one in ten say they have offered services via collaborative platforms only once (9%), while almost two in ten say they do so occasionally (18%) and 5% say they act as service providers regularly.

Q2 Have you ever provided services on these platforms?
(% - EU)

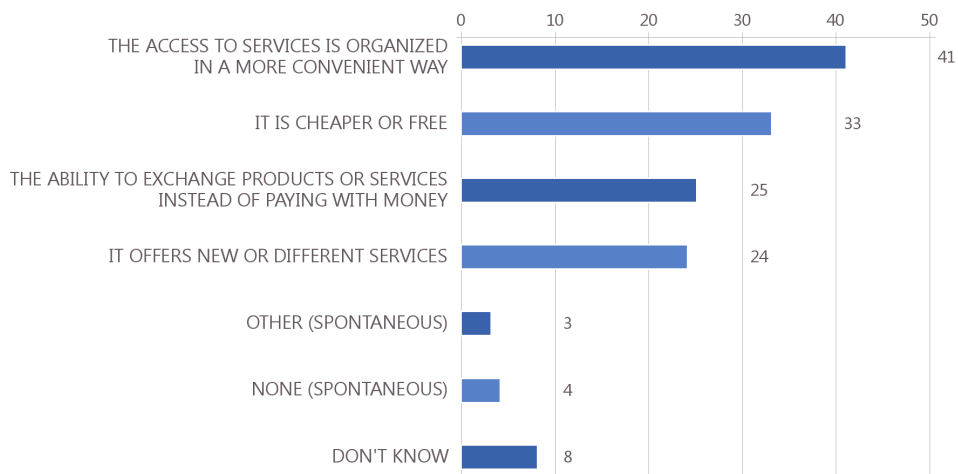


Base: respondents who have visited collaborative platforms (N=2,484)

A majority of the respondents who have heard of or have visited collaborative platforms say that access to services is more conveniently organized on these platforms

Slightly more than four in ten respondents who are aware of collaborative platforms (41%) consider the fact that the **access to services is more conveniently organized** as one of the main benefits of this type of platforms compared to traditional commerce of goods and services. Around a third mention the fact that it **is cheaper or free** (33%), while around a quarter identify **the ability to exchange products or services instead of paying with money** (25%) and **these platforms offer new or different services** (24%) as the main benefits of collaborative platforms.

Q3 Compared to the traditional commerce of goods and services, what do you think are the main benefits of this type of platform for its users? (MAX. 2 ANSWERS)
(% - EU)



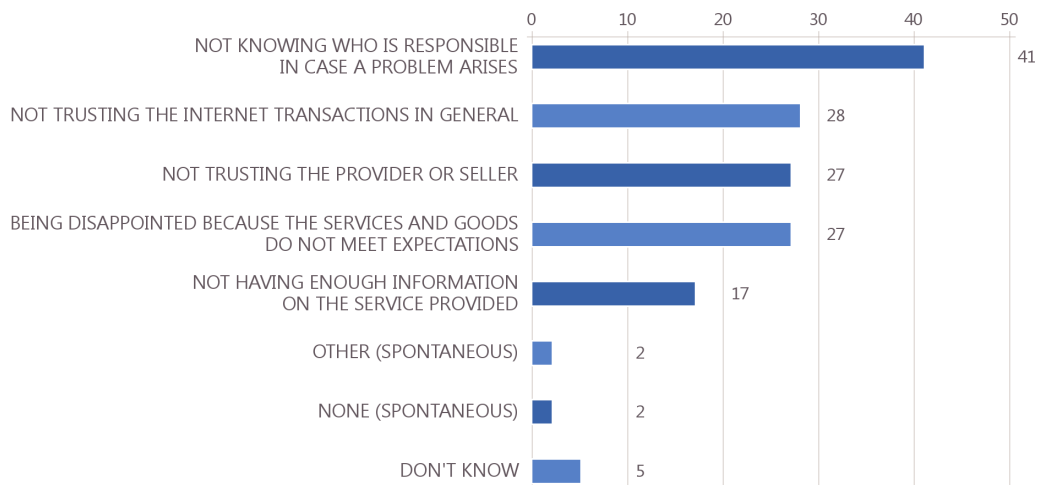
Base: respondents who have heard of or have visited collaborative platforms (N=7,409)

Not knowing who is responsible if a problem arises is perceived as one of the main problems of collaborative platforms by those who are aware of this type of platforms.

Around four in ten respondents who have heard of or visited collaborative platforms say that **not knowing who is responsible in the event of a problem** is one of the main drawbacks of this type of platforms (41%). Over a quarter mention **not trusting Internet transactions in general** (28%) and **not trusting the provider or seller** (27%). These trust issues could be due to concerns about payment security and return and redress policies. According to a survey conducted by Eurostat in 2015, 27% of individuals who did not order goods or services on the Internet over the last 12 months or never did so mentioned payment security concerns among the main reasons not to do so, while 19% cited trust concerns about receiving or returning goods and complaint or redress concerns².

More than a quarter of respondents who are aware of collaborative platforms also mention **being disappointed because the services and goods do not meet expectations** (27%) among the main problems for users of these platforms. **Not having enough information on the service provided** is perceived by less than one in five respondents (17%) as a major problem.

Q4 Compared to the traditional commerce of goods and services, what do you think are the main problems for the people using the services offered on these platforms? (MAX. 2 ANSWERS)
(% - EU)



Base: respondents who have heard of or have visited collaborative platforms (N=7,409)

² <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/information-society/data/database>.