

LECTURE 7

EUROPEAN UNION IDENTITY TODAY

- In this lecture going to look at some recent and current opinions and views of the citizens of the European Union, specifically in terms of their possible European Union identity and issues related to the shaping of that.
- In order to do that going to be using recent Eurobarometer polls
- The standard Eurobarometer was established in 1973. Reports are published twice a year
- The web site of the European Union can be found at:

<http://europa.eu.int>

- The addresses of the web sites that you can find the information referred to in this lecture are:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index_en.htm

http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb61/eb61_en.pdf

http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb62/eb62first_en.pdf

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The two polls/surveys going to look at are:

Eurobarometer 61 from Spring 2004 (fieldwork carried out in February/March 2004, published July 2004)

And

Eurobarometer 62 from Autumn 2004 (fieldwork carried out in October/November 2004, published December 2004 – first results)

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- In terms of the IMAGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION as far as its citizens are concerned:
 - one citizen in two (50%) had a positive image of the EU in the Oct/Nov 2004 survey – that was an increase of 6 percentage points compared with the Spring 2004 survey
 - one citizen in three (33%) was neutral about the EU image
 - and less than one citizen in six (15%) had a negative perception of the image of the EU

 - After a couple of years when the image of the EU was in decline, according to the Eurobarometer surveys, in Oct/Nov 2004 survey it was the highest it has been since Autumn 2002 (also 50%)

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- From this the Eurobarometer 62 report suggests that:
“This constant trend reflects once again the gap which exists between the wishes of citizens for more Europe and their perception of the current situation.” (p.29)
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EUROBAROMETER 61 (Spring 2004)

- people were asked if they considered themselves as:
 - (NATIONALITY) only
 - (NATIONALITY) and European
 - European and (NATIONALITY)
 - European only
- Compared to the results of the Eurobarometer 60 poll in Autumn 2003, in 8 out of the 10 new EU member states the proportion of those people who only identified themselves with their national identity increased by at least 4 percentage points.
- In the 10 newly joined EU member countries the increase in national identity amounted to an average of 11 percentage points.
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- it was still the case in the Spring 2004 poll that slightly more citizens in the new EU member states (51%) saw themselves as in some way European in the near future than only their nationality (47%)
- In the Eurobarometer 61 poll of Spring 2004 in the 15 ‘old’ EU member states 56% of citizens saw themselves in the near future as European to some extent, while 41% saw themselves as their nationality only
- Across the EU25 States ***the freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU*** was the most significant characteristic of the EU and was cited by 53% of those in the Eurobarometer 61 Spring 2004 poll
- Only 14% of EU25 citizens in the poll saw ***the loss of their cultural identity*** as a characteristic of the EU

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- When asked about the characteristics of the EU flag, 87% of citizens in 10 new Member states correctly confirmed that it is blue with yellow stars on it - only 81% of citizens in the 15 old EU Member states confirmed that.
- 47% of respondents in the 10 new Member States confirmed that the EU has its own anthem, against 25% in the 25 old EU Member States