

# Economic, Political and Social Identity in the European Union

*Professor John Wilton*

## **Lecture 7**

**European Union identity today**

Web site for information referred to in  
this lecture is [www.ec.europa.eu](http://www.ec.europa.eu)

Eurobarometer 62 from Autumn 2004  
(fieldwork carried out in  
October/November 2004)

Eurobarometer 74 (fieldwork Oct/Nov.  
2010, published Feb. 2011)

Eurobarometer 100 (fieldwork Oct/Nov  
2023, published Feb. 2024)

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## *Eurobarometer 62 (Autumn 2004)*

EU membership good thing (56%). Plus 8 percentage points from Eurobarometer 61 (Spring 2004). Highest level of support since 1995.

- But, view that EU membership is a good thing for their country mainly found amongst the citizens of old Member States (85% Luxembourg, 77% Ireland, 75% Netherlands, 73% Belgium, 72% Spain)

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- Oct/Nov 2004 Eurobarometer poll 53% of EU citizens considered their country had benefited from belonging to the EU
- 34% thought their country hadn't benefited.
  - Positive view Plus 6 percentage points from survey Feb/Mar 2004 - reached a level not seen over previous 10 years

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## IMAGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

- 50% had a positive image of the EU in Oct/Nov 2004 survey – an increase of 6 percentage points on Spring 2004 survey
- 33% were neutral about the EU image
- 15% had a negative perception of the image of the EU

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From this the Eurobarometer 62 report suggested 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 74 (Autumn 2010): Most important *personal values* for EU citizens -

- human rights 47%
- peace 44%
- respect for human life 41%
- democracy 29%
- individual freedom 23%
- rule of law 22%
- equality 19%

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Eurobarometer 74 (Autumn 2010):

- When asked to select the values that best represent the E.U., Europeans gave priority to the values which are the most important for them personally:
  - human rights 38%
  - democracy 38%
  - peace 35%



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Eurobarometer 74 (Autumn 2010):

Perceptions of what the E.U. represents for E.U. citizens:

- freedom to travel, study and work  
anywhere in E.U. 45%
- Euro 40%
- peace 24%
- democracy 23%
- cultural diversity 23%
- stronger voice in world 23%
- BUT**, - waste of money 25%

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Eurobarometer 74 (Autumn 2010):

- 38% of Europeans surveyed had a positive image of the European Union  
( = minus/decline of 10 percentage points in comparison with Eurobarometer 72 in Autumn 2009 – effect of Euro crisis?)
- Eurobarometer 62 (Autumn 2004) 50% had positive image of E.U.

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## Eurobarometer 100 (Autumn 2023)

### *IMAGE OF THE E.U.*

44% positive image

(lower than 52% 2007 pre-Euro crisis, but higher than 38% 2010 immediately post-Euro crisis)

38% neutral image

18% negative image

- In 19 of the EU Member States a majority of respondents had a positive image of the EU

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Eurobarometer 96 (April 2022)

*E.U. Citizenship*

*This question not asked in Eurobarometer  
100 (Autumn 2023)*

- In every EU state more than half the people surveyed felt they were citizens of the E.U.
- 71% across the E.U. as a whole
- Slightly down from 72% in April 2021

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## Eurobarometer 100 (Autumn 2023)

- Most important personal values of EU citizens  
(maximum of 3 choices)

|       |     |
|-------|-----|
| Peace | 45% |
|-------|-----|

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| Human Rights | 35% |
|--------------|-----|

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| Democracy | 30% |
|-----------|-----|

- Values that best represent the EU for citizens

|       |     |
|-------|-----|
| Peace | 37% |
|-------|-----|

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| Democracy | 34% |
|-----------|-----|

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| Human Rights | 29% |
|--------------|-----|

|             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| Rule of Law | 23% |
|-------------|-----|

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## *Winter 2025 Survey*

*(Field work Oct/Nov 2024, published Feb 2025)*

74% think their country benefits from EU membership (Best result ever recorded since question first asked in 1983)

22% think their country has not benefitted

4% Don't know