

Economic, Political and Social Identity in the European Union

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European Union identity today

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- The web site of the E.U. can be found at:

<http://europa.eu.int>

Web sites for 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/eb62/eb62first_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69_values_en.pdf

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb70/eb70_en.htm

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb72/eb72_first_en.pdf

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

Eurobarometer 69 from Autumn 2008 (fieldwork carried out in Mar/May 2008, published November 2008)

Eurobarometer 70 (fieldwork Oct/Nov. 2008, published Dec.2008, first results)

Eurobarometer 72 (fieldwork Oct/Nov. 2009, published Dec.2009, first results)

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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 72 (Autumn 2009)*

Support for E.U. membership slightly lower than in EB62 (Autumn 2004)

- Autumn 2004 56%
- Autumn 2009 53%
- 57% thought their country benefited from being member of EU (Autumn 2009)
- 31% not benefited, 12% Don't know

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- 66% of people who studied beyond the age of 20 thought E.U. membership was a good thing (Autumn 2008)
- But, only 39% of those people who left school at earliest possible age thought E.U. membership a good thing.
- 70% of students thought E.U. membership a good thing

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Autumn 2008:

- 62% of people age 15 to 24 thought E.U. membership a good thing
- But, only 47% of people aged 55 and over thought E.U. membership a good thing
- 62% of people surveyed considered they know a great deal about the E.U., its policies and institutions

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Eurobarometer 70 (Autumn 2008):

Higher level of education, the more citizens believe their country has benefited from EU membership

- 70% of students thought their country benefited from membership compared to 39% of those who left school at the earliest possible time

Benefit of membership stronger support among young people

- (62% aged 15 to 24) (47% aged 55+)

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On average the percentage of E.U. citizens who viewed the EU positively in Autumn 2008 was less than in Autumn 2004

Autumn 2008 45%

Autumn 2004 50%

But, in all the EU states in Autumn 2008 citizens who saw the EU image as positive outnumbered those who saw it as negative

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Most important *Personal Values* for EU citizens (Eurobarometer 69, Autumn 2008):

- Peace 45%
- Respect for human life 41%
- Human rights 42%

Values that best represented the E.U.:

- Human rights 37%
- Democracy 34%
- Peace 35%

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In Autumn 2008 fewer people than previously felt things “going in the right direction in the EU”

- - 35% in right direction (compared to 39% Autumn 2004)
- 34% in wrong direction
- But, percentage of those citizens who felt EU going in the right direction (35%) was still on average higher than percentage who thought things were going in the right direction in their own country (28%)

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So, in socio-demographic terms, according to Eurobarometer 70 (Autumn 2008), *EU citizen who has most positive image of EU* (and will 'identify with EU more?') is more likely to be:

- *male* (50% positive) than female (42% positive)
- *young* (aged 15-24: 54% positive) compared to oldest age group (aged 55+: 42% positive)
- *have spent longer time in education* (aged 20+ when finished education: 55% positive) compared to left school earlier (aged 15-: 36%)
- *have a good knowledge of EU* (53% positive) compared to poor knowledge of it (29%)