

# Current motors of cooperation: **European Union**

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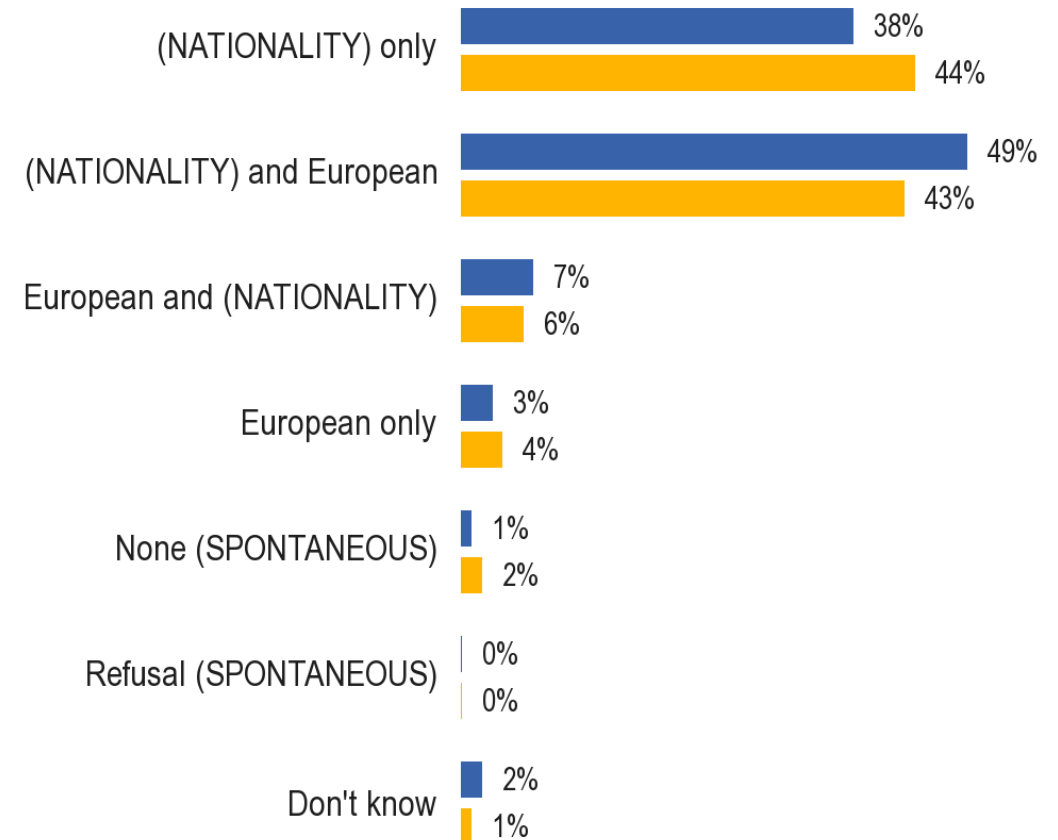
30 November 2020

BSSb1182 International nationalism

- Europe through the EU has moved towards greater supra-national integration; European identity and politics has emerged
- The EU is unique: supranational union through voluntary inclusion that maintains each member state`s sovereignty and autonomy
- The EU has state-like aspirations – it has established political institutions (parliament, presidency, judicial court); it issues currency through own central bank; it has created symbols indicative of nation states (flag, anthem); it has created new category of belonging (all citizens of member states now carry EU passports)
- *EU institutions became influential, political and economical integration is very deep, BUT it is little bit different when it comes to cultural unity and feeling of shared European identity (identitarian unity) – the identity unity is not that intense as political and economic integration; not everybody feels connected with the EU and part of the society feels euroscepticism (scepticism towards the EU)*

- These are the data from Eurobarometer survey from 2013 (blue) and 2012 (yellow) – showing the strength of affiliation with own nation and Europe
- We can see that the affiliation with nation prevails
- European identity is not very strong
- (NATIONALITY) = in every country it was replaced by the respective nationality

QD4. In the near future, do you see yourself as...?



■ EB79 Sp. 2013

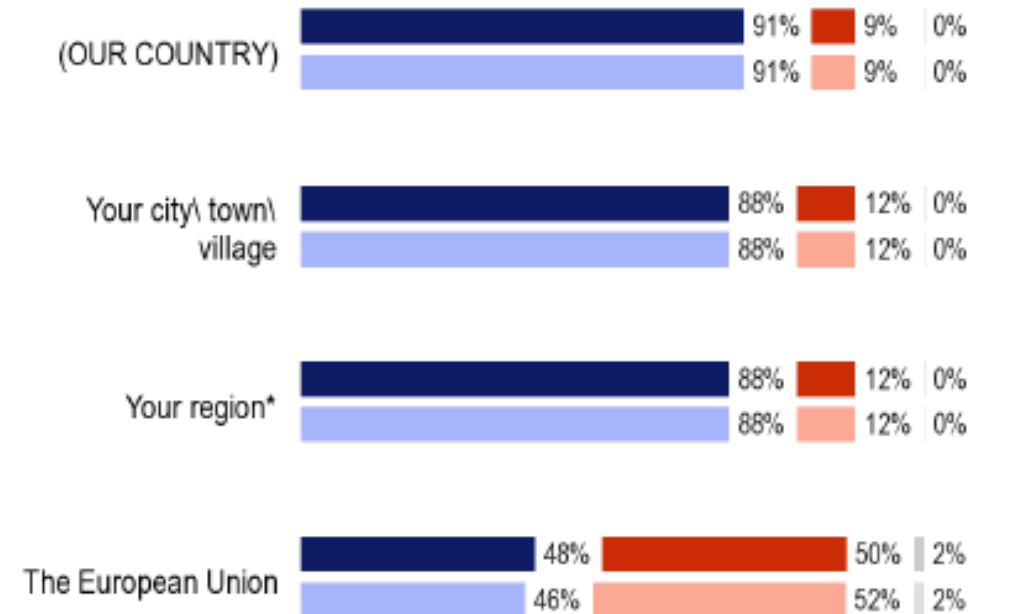
■ EB77.4 June 2012



# Sense of belonging to the EU

- The same survey, another question on sense of belonging
- Again, attachment to own country is much stronger than with the EU
- Some citizens do not feel any relation toward the EU – their relation might be neutral; in some cases it is negative attitude (sceptical = **eurosceptical**)

Q21. Please tell me how attached you feel to...



EB79.5 June 2013

EB77 Sp. 2012



# Euroscepticism

- Euroscepticism is typical for far right and far left (but we focus on far right)
- In case of the far right it is very strong euroscepticism (eurorejectionism)
- The EU is understood as neo-liberal project of cross-national integration driven by political and economical elites
- The far right talks about destructive consequences of market liberalization and deregulation and the EU is part of the problem
- It is also about the permanent issue of national sovereignty, which is (according to the far right) under the process of destruction from the EU
- Nevertheless, even more important than economical and political issues are cultural ones – far right stresses loss of language, national heritage, and cultural practices due to the EU
- **the EU has become threat to national sovereignty**
- Cultural issues rather than economic demands have become the key catapulting far right into the political limelight
- Based on the research, to some extent there is relation between euroscepticism and support of the far right – Euroscepticism is believed to be one of the variables explaining support for the far right (one from many)
- According to some scholars Euroscepticism is a better predictor for whether an individual is likely to vote far right party than anti-immigration and xenophobic attitudes – these studies implies that disillusionment with the EU means support for the far right parties and increased expression of nationalism
- (NOTE: there are also political parties being eurosceptic, but not far right)

# Main criticism of the EU

EU is (according to the far right):

- Bureaucratic and elitist project
- International institution and an actor in economic globalisation
- Superstate restricting national sovereignty, destroying national state and national affiliation
- The EU liberalism and social-democratic values are criticised
- Arena where left-wing and „pseudo-humanistic forces“ allow uncontrolled immigration and proliferation of destructive post-modern values
- Comparing the EU to the Soviet Bloc in the sense that both impose limitations on state sovereignty
- Engine of multi-culturalism and immigration
- Offshoot of globalisation

# Is it really so black&white? Example of BNP (British National Party)

- For the far right is typical controversial attitude towards the EU – on one side, these parties stand against the EU and they want its destruction. On the other hand, they seek for votes and mandates in the European elections since 1979.
- Really nice example of how the relation between far right and the EU might be in practice very complicated is the case of BNP.
- 2009 BNP campaign to the European Parliament was built on three key elements:
  - 1) Distance the BNP from the other „europhile“ parties – the only British force that truly recognized the threat of Europe and determined to resist all moves towards a „fascist European superstate“
  - 2) Showing how British political elite had spent last 50 years handing power to unelected bureaucrats
  - 3) Identification of the EP as a new opportunity structure as a mean of establishing closer links with like-minded anti-EU parties
- During 2009-2014 the BNP was represented by 2 MEPs (Nick Griffin, Andrew Brons) = BNP engaged with the EU machinery (both were regularly attending plenaries in Strasbourg and mini-plenaries and committee meetings in Brussels; they held regular speeches at meetings; Brons had one of the best attendance records from all (over 90 %); both active in committees)
- BNP representatives were voting for creation of new laws, welcoming amendments that were improving existing legislation = BNP was furthering the European law
- Brons admitted that he became „a little Europeanized in his way of thinking and operating“
- They got 250 000 eur annually on top on their salaries for European related expenses and these money helped a lot to run two more offices of the BNP (these two offices facilitated development of more EU aware staff)
- Brons mentioned that he made close relationships with some other Members of Parliament, especially with German Christian Democrats

- BNP really recognized the potential and advantages that come from the presence in the EP

#### WHY IS GOOD TO BE IN THE EP?

- Chance to get more visibility, stronger position than on national level (usually when not being successful on national level they try it on international one)
- Getting more political relevance when cooperating – louder voice
- Another way how to enter political arena and policy making process
- Small far right parties search for larger ones – joining networks brings them strong partners
- Finances (national budget when winning seats in the EP, EU budget on political factions and political parties; sharing costs on campaigns)



- Nick Griffin was very much into creation of some pan-European nationalistic movement/network and he believed that he could make it
- He started communication with Jobbik in 2008 about possible cooperation
- In 2009 they established „Alliance of European National Movements“ - led by BNP, Jobbik and FN
- AENM was basically serving as platform for those 3 leading parties

