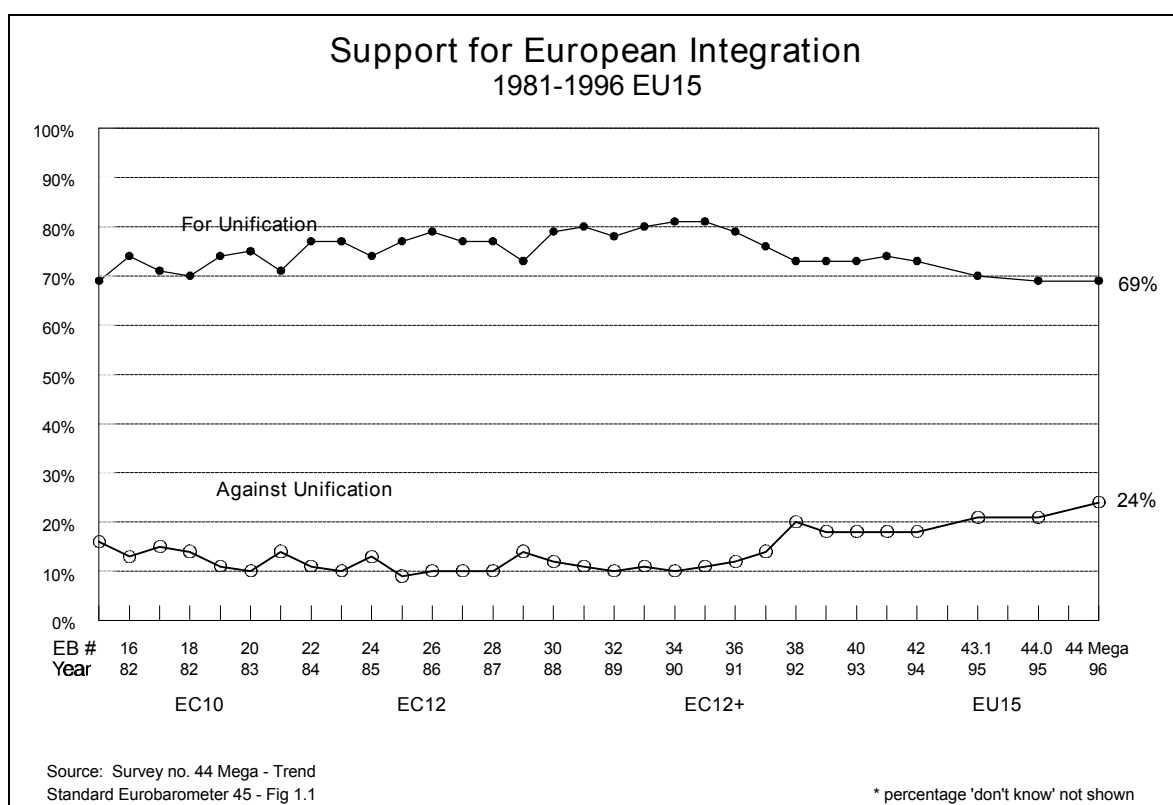


1. European Union Membership - Long term trends

The scenario concerning public opinion and membership of the European Union indicates slight shifts in public opinion in recent months. Overall changes on the efforts to unify Western Europe remain unchanged. Membership is seen as a "good" thing but has dropped to under half the EU population, its lowest level since 1981 when it was first asked. Benefit from membership has risen slightly, but remains well below the figure recorded at the turn of the decade.

1.1 Support for the Unification of Western Europe

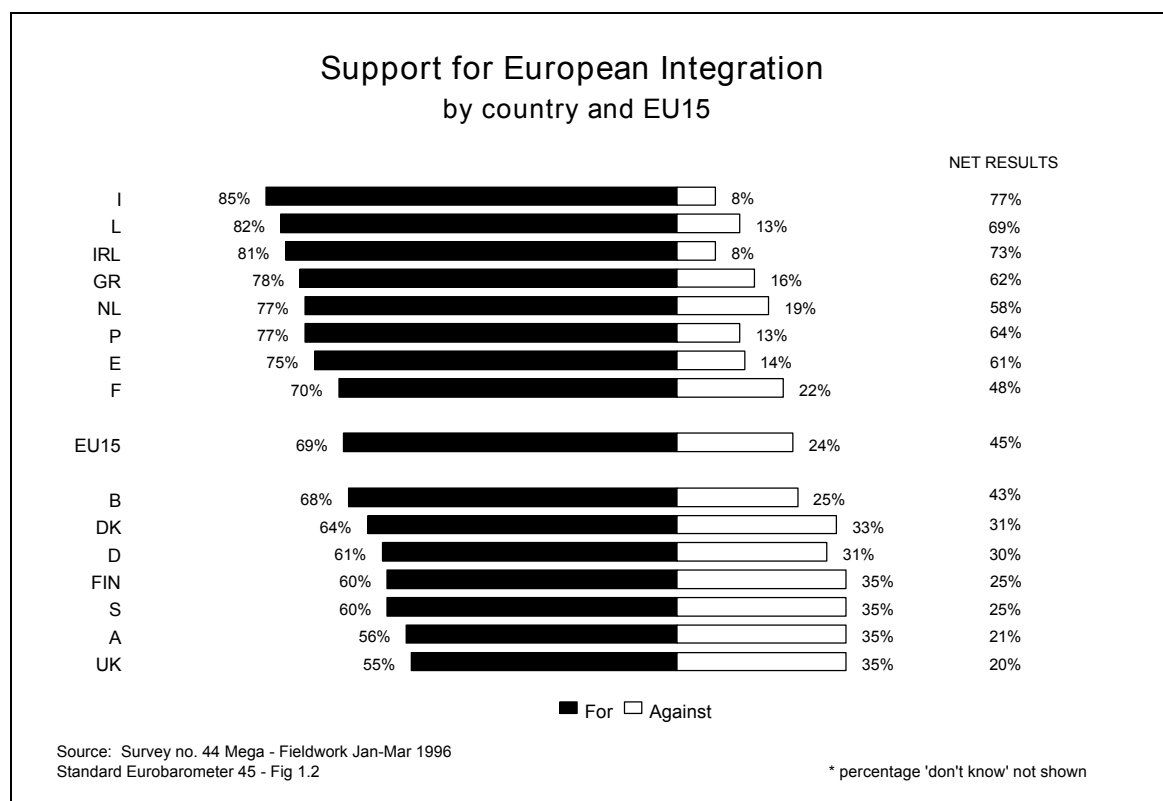
While the support for the unification of Western Europe has failed to regain the heady heights of the early years of this decade, when scores in support exceeded 80%, nevertheless support for unification remains constant at 69%, unchanged from Autumn 1995. The number of antagonists has risen slightly in the same period from 21% to 24% with a proportionate decline in the "don't knows".



At the national level we continue to see a drop in German support for the unification, 7 percentage points from Spring to Autumn 1995 and now a further 6 percentage points drop in the Spring 1996. Drops were also recorded in Finland -5%, Belgium -2% and France -2%. (Table 1.1)

Particularly noticeable gains were recorded in Portugal +10%, Spain +7% and Greece and Ireland +3%, of the new member states Austria showed an increase of support (+2%).

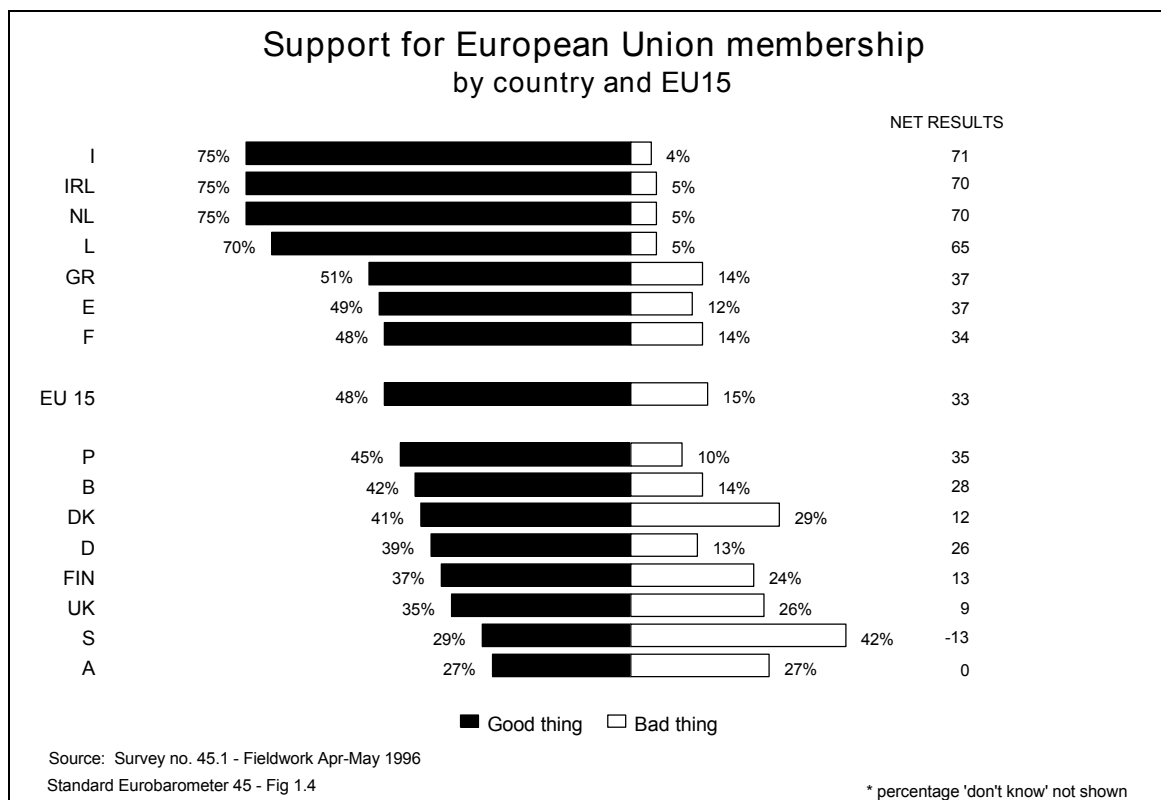
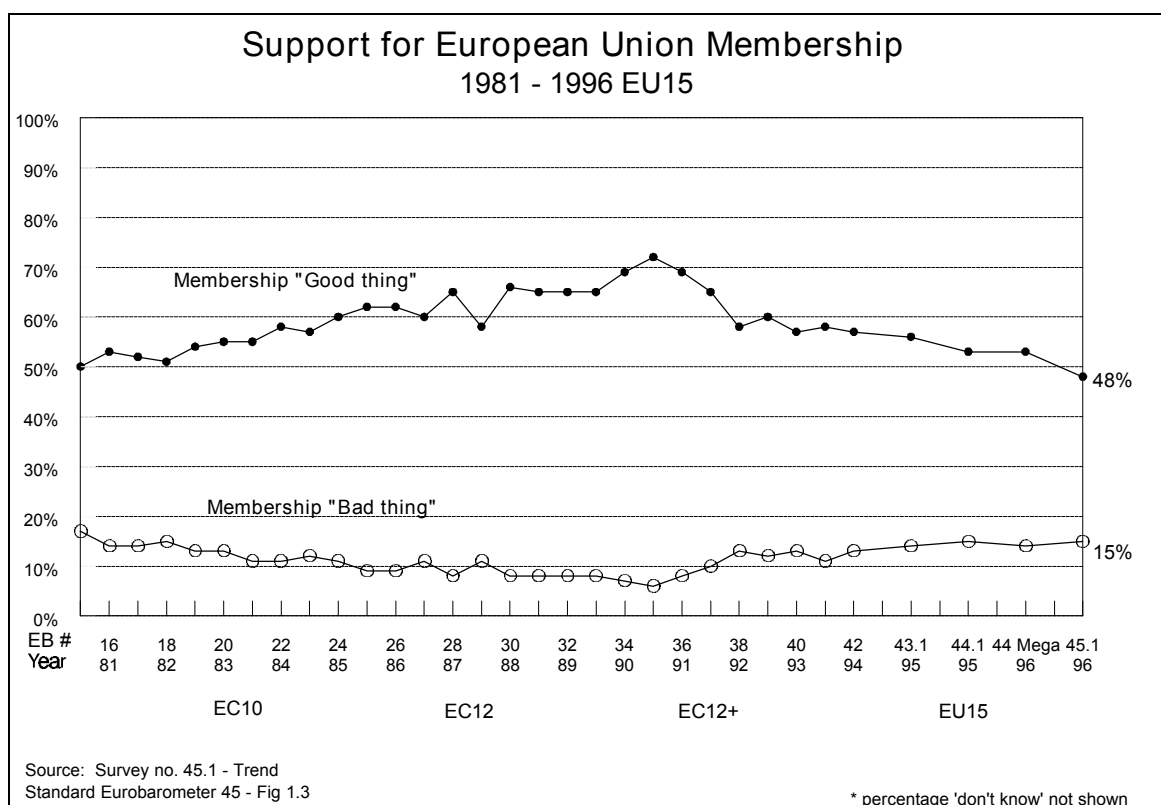
Support remains strongest amongst men and amongst the more highly educated and particularly amongst managers, where nearly eight in ten (79%) support the idea of European unification. (Table 1.5)



1.2 Support for membership of the European Union

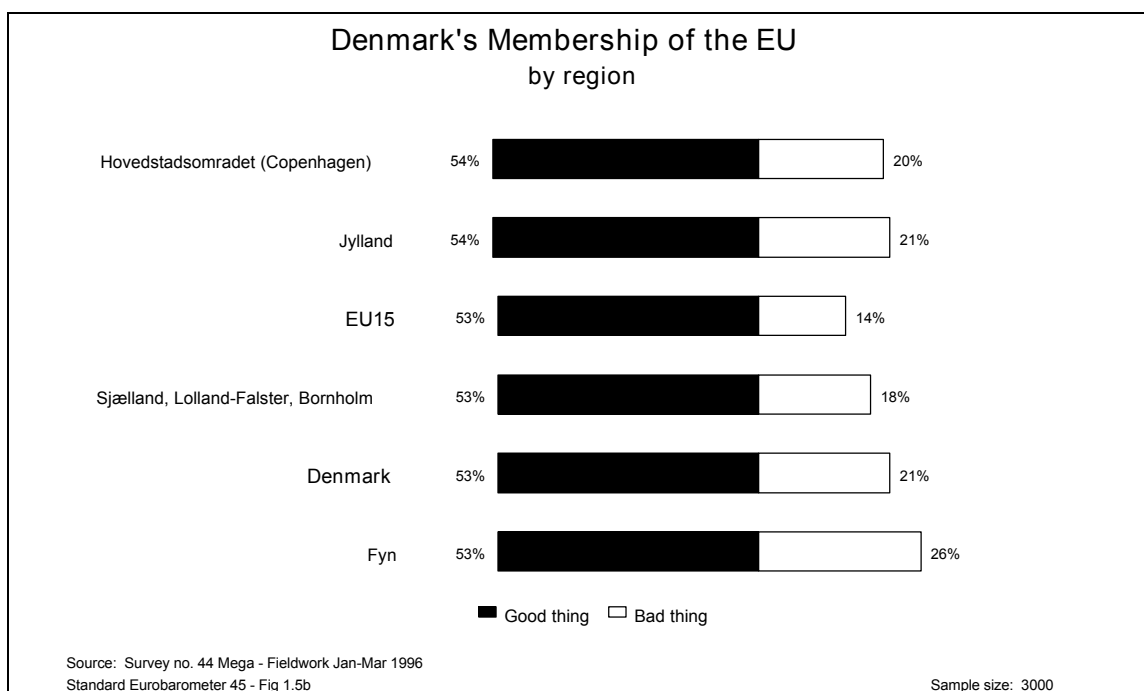
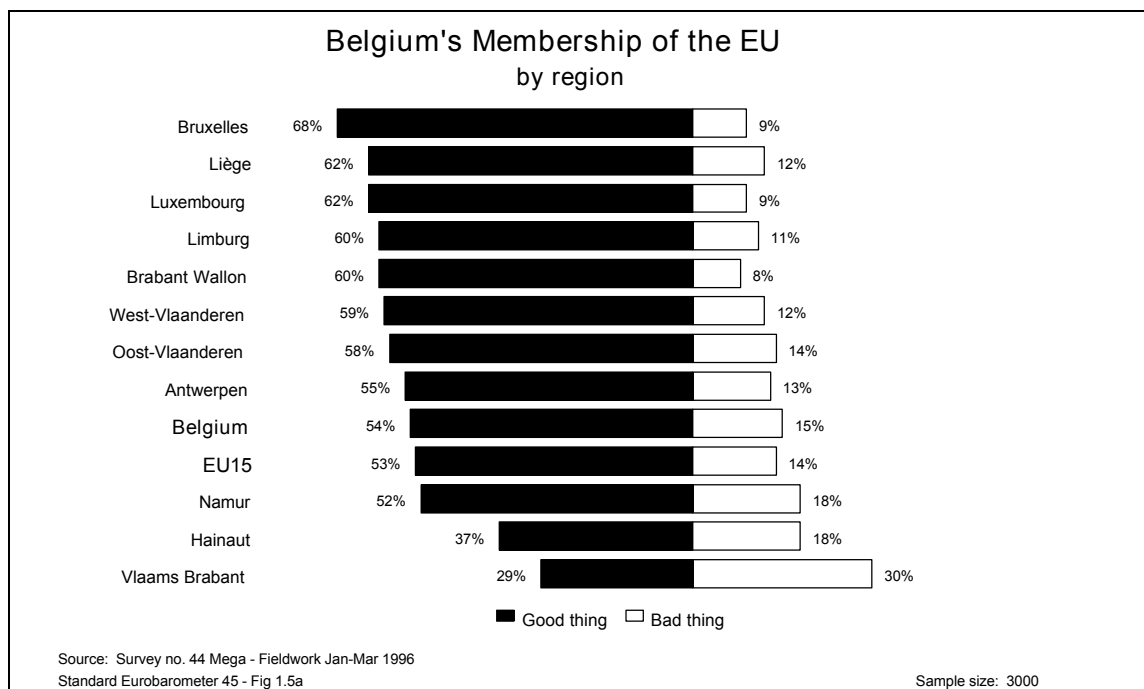
Amongst the citizens of the European Union, those considering their country's membership a "good thing" exceed those considering it a "bad thing" by more than three to one, 48% "good": 15% "bad". Nevertheless, this is the first time since 1981 that the overall figure has dropped below 50% and shows an overall downward trend since 1990. The overall net result has dropped from 38% to 33% from Autumn 1995 to Spring 1996.

Country analysis confirms previous findings that support is highest in the Netherlands, Ireland, Italy (75%) and Luxembourg (70%) and remains low in Finland (37%), the United Kingdom (35%), Sweden (29%) and Austria (27%). The largest drops in support were recorded in Belgium (-17%), Germany (-14%) and Denmark (-11%). Italy was the only country to record a gain (+6%). (Tables 1.2, 1.4, 1.6, 1.8 and 1.10)

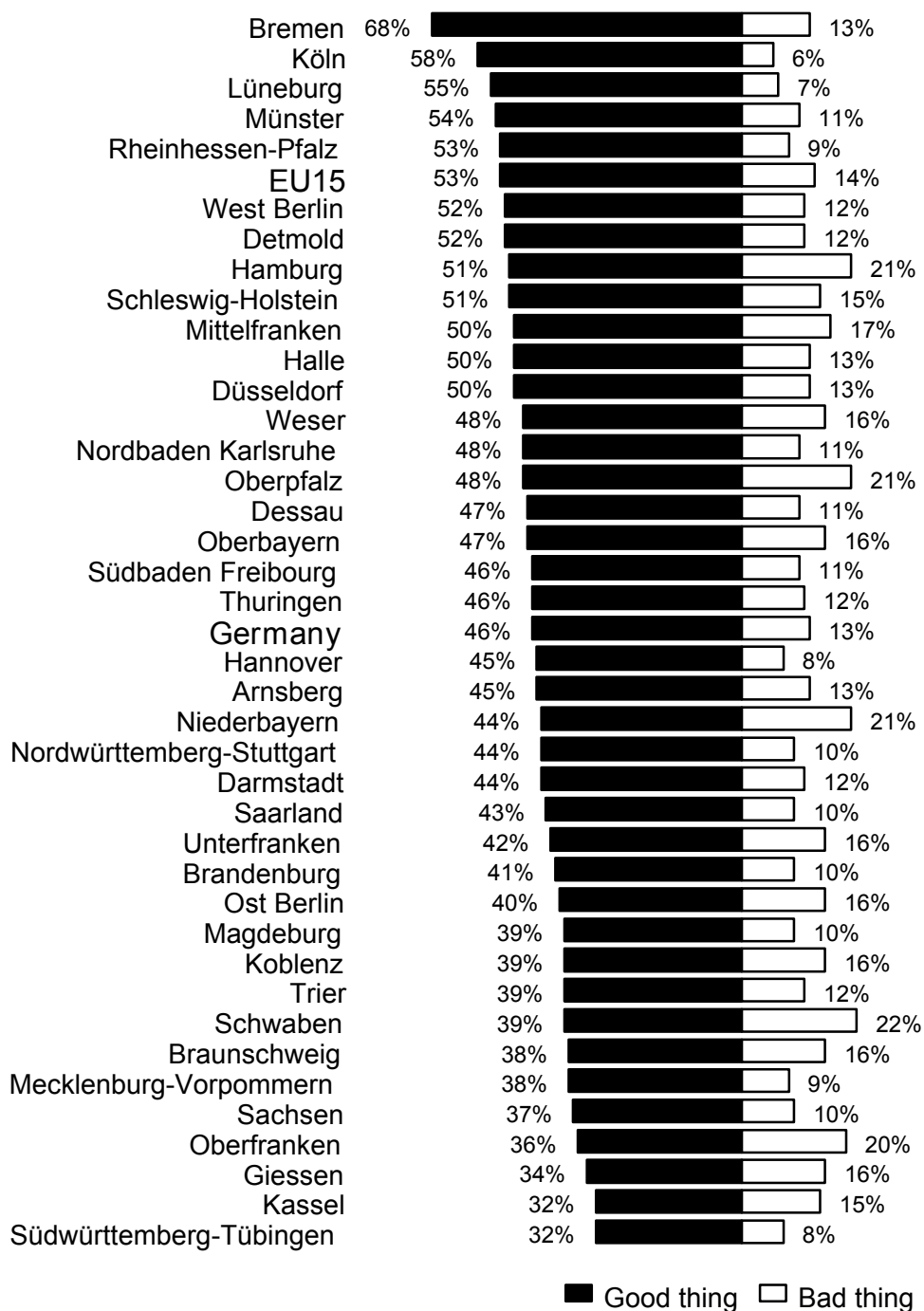


1.3 Regional variations in support

While the above results refer to the most recent Standard Eurobarometer survey (45.1), in the previous survey (44 Mega) the very large sample size allowed us to carry out a number of regional analyses, including the evaluation of membership, the following series of graphs permits the reader to examine levels of support at the regional level in each of the member states. The sample size in each country is indicated in the individual graphic.



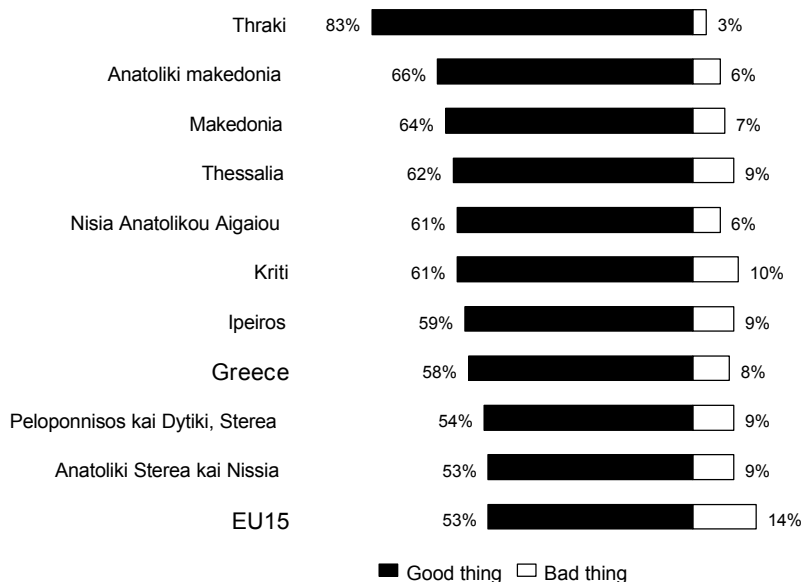
Germany's Membership of the EU by region



Source: Survey no. 44 Mega - Fieldwork Jan-Mar 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 45 - Fig 1.5c

Sample size: 10000

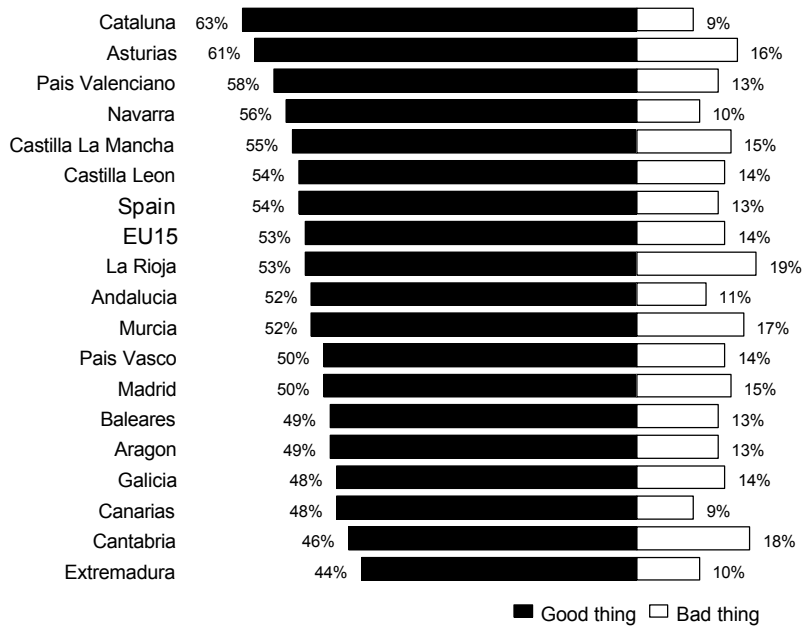
Greece's Membership of the EU by region



Source: Survey no. 44 Mega - Fieldwork Jan-Mar 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 45 - Fig 1.5d

Sample size: 3000

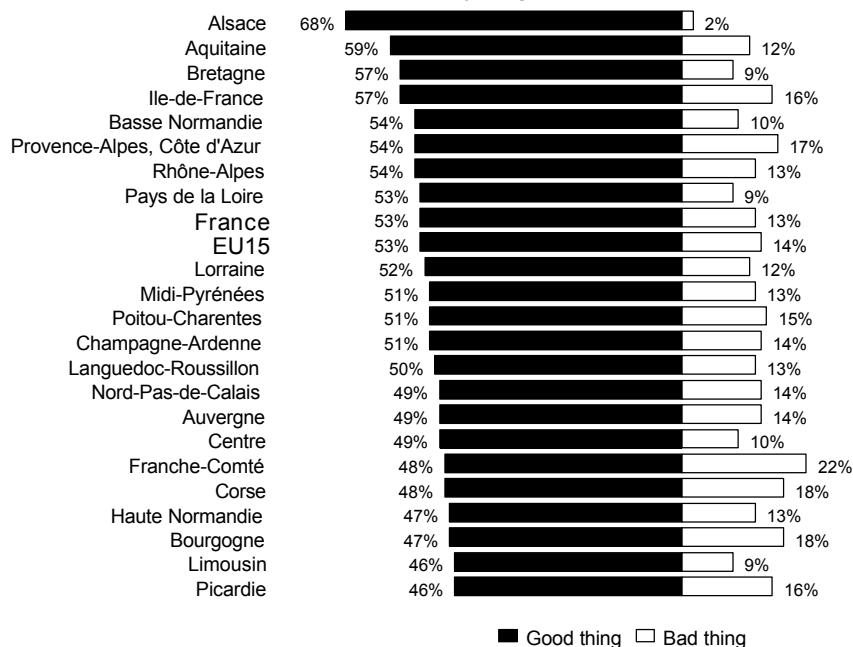
Spain's Membership of the EU by region



Source: Survey no. 44 Mega - Fieldwork Jan-Mar 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 45 - Fig 1.5e

Sample size: 6000

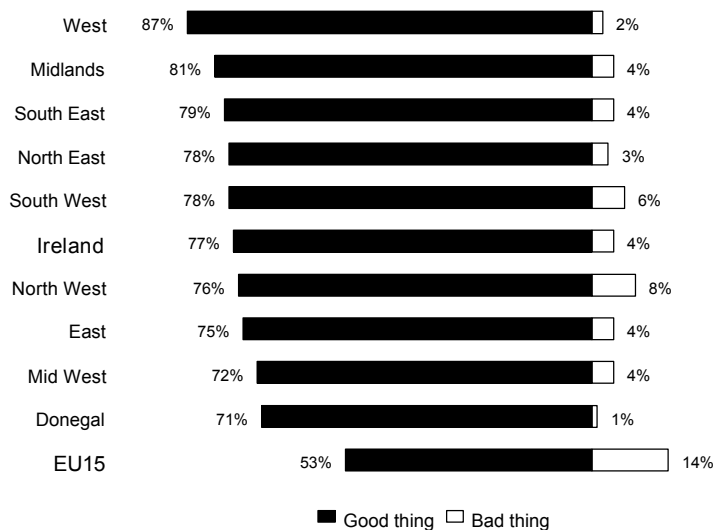
France's Membership of the EU by region



Source: Survey no. 44 Mega - Fieldwork Jan-Mar 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 45 - Fig 1.5f

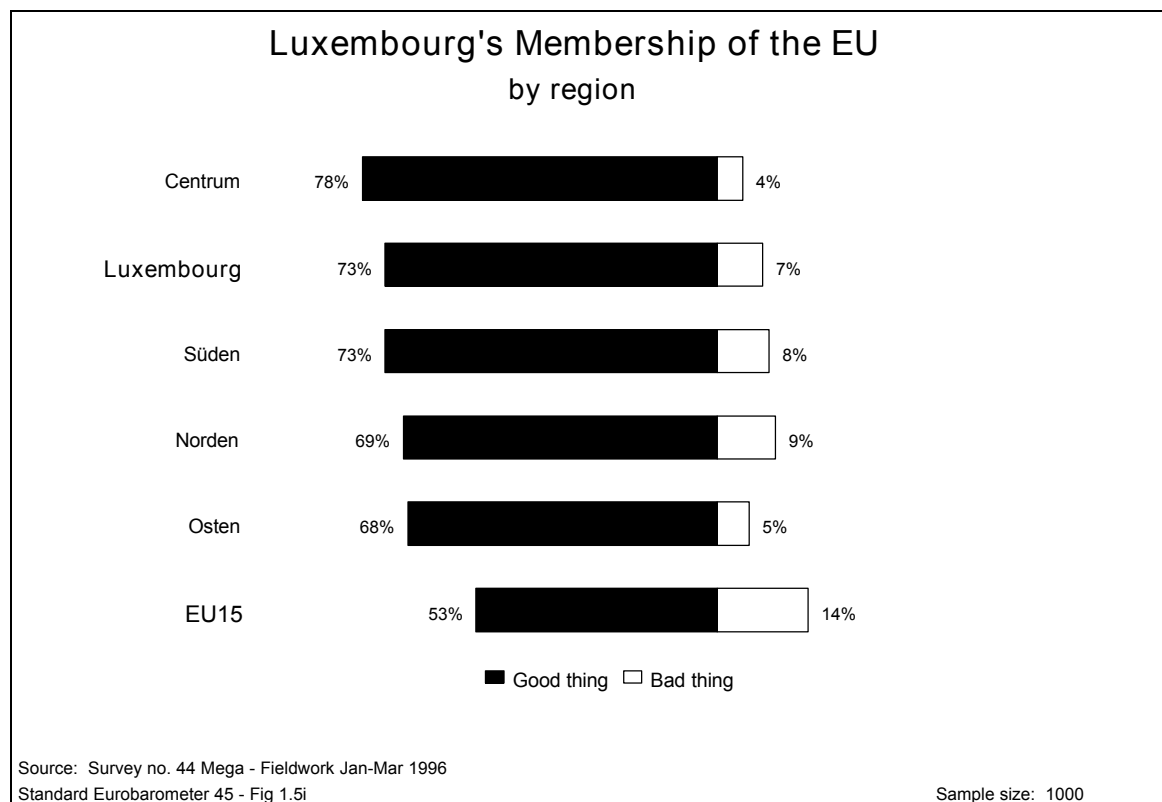
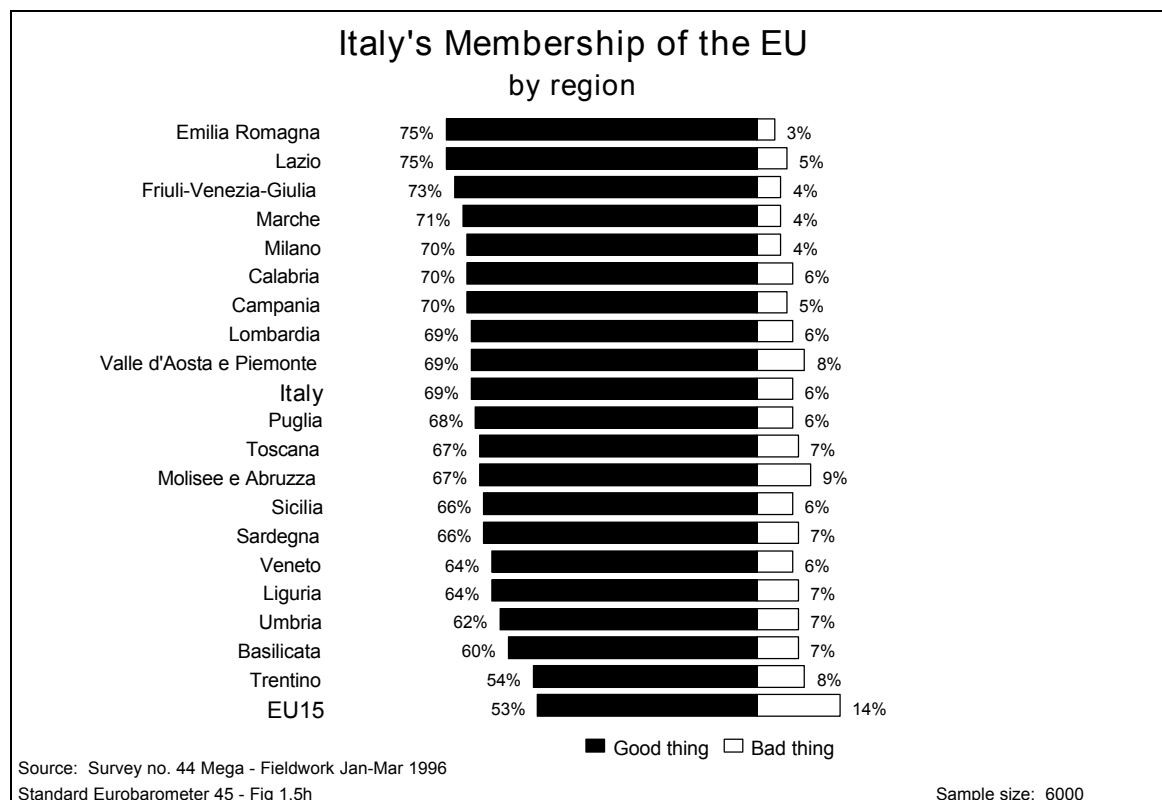
Sample size: 6000

Ireland's Membership of the EU by region

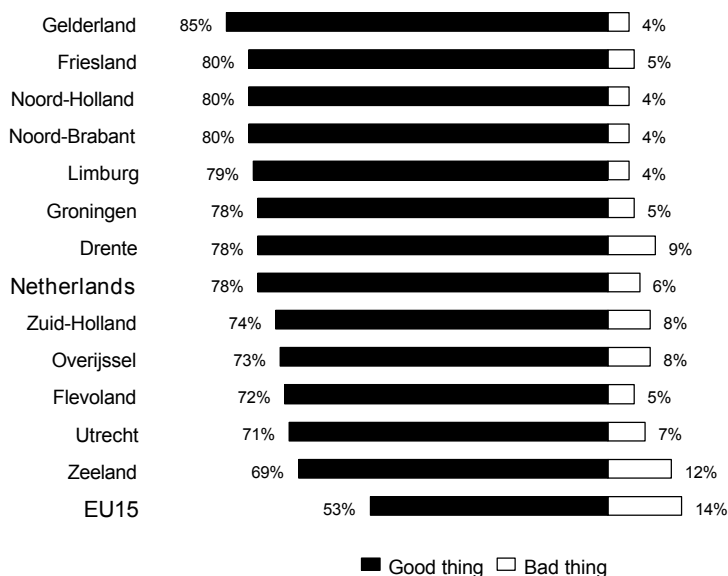


Source: Survey no. 44 Mega - Fieldwork Jan-Mar 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 45 - Fig 1.5g

Sample size: 3000



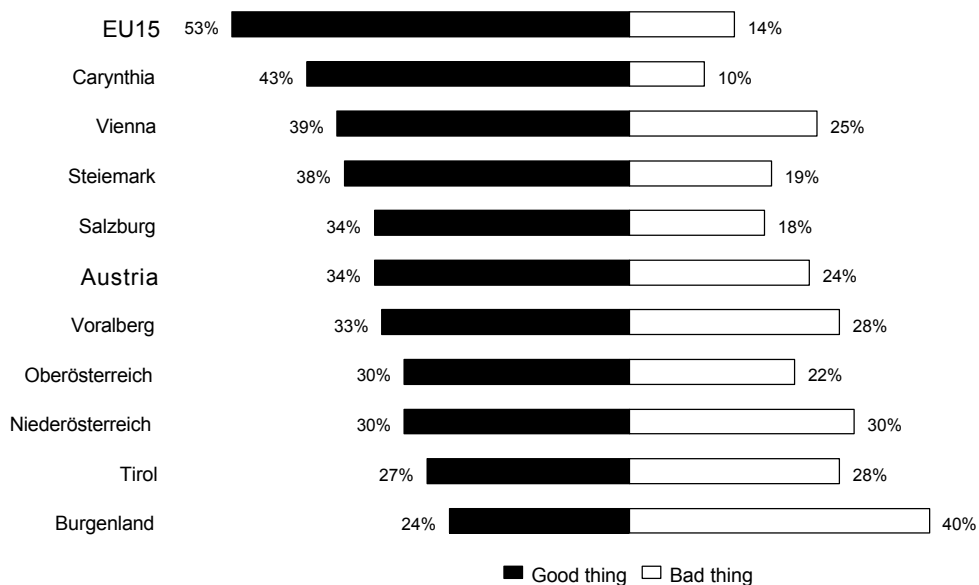
Netherlands's Membership of the EU by region



Source: Survey no. 44 Mega - Fieldwork Jan-Mar 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 45 - Fig 1.5j

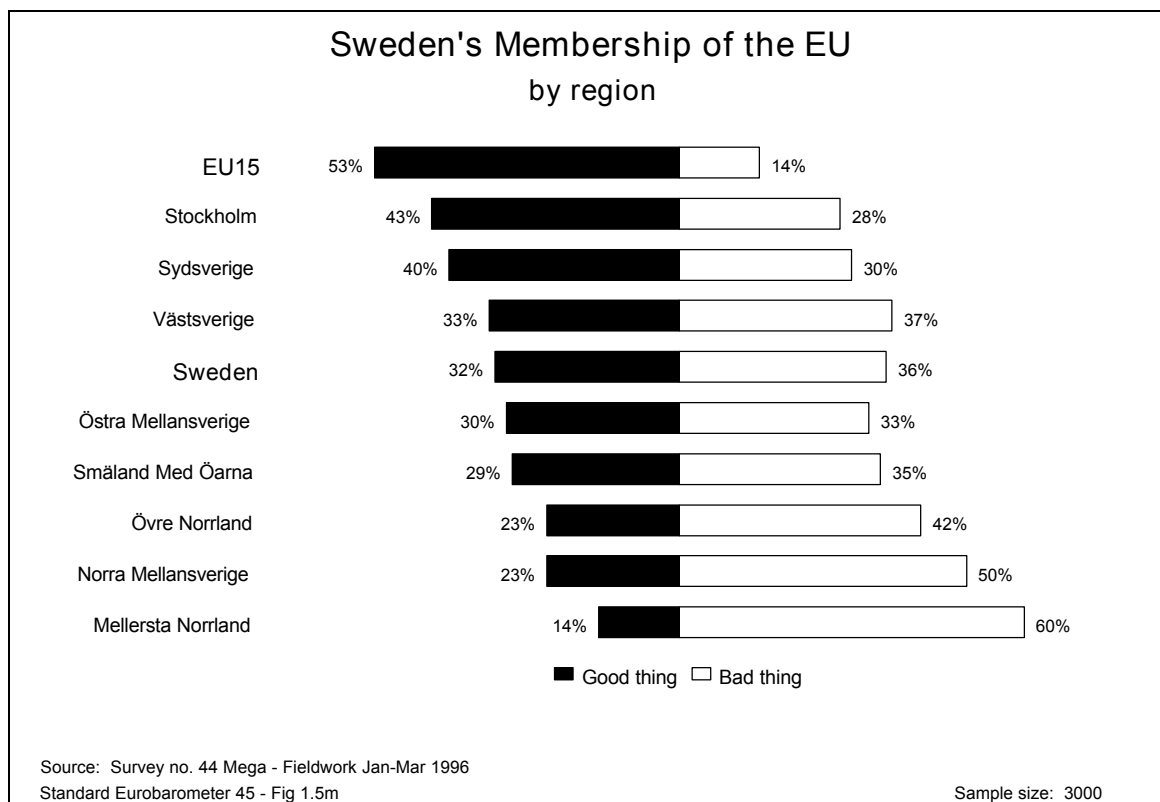
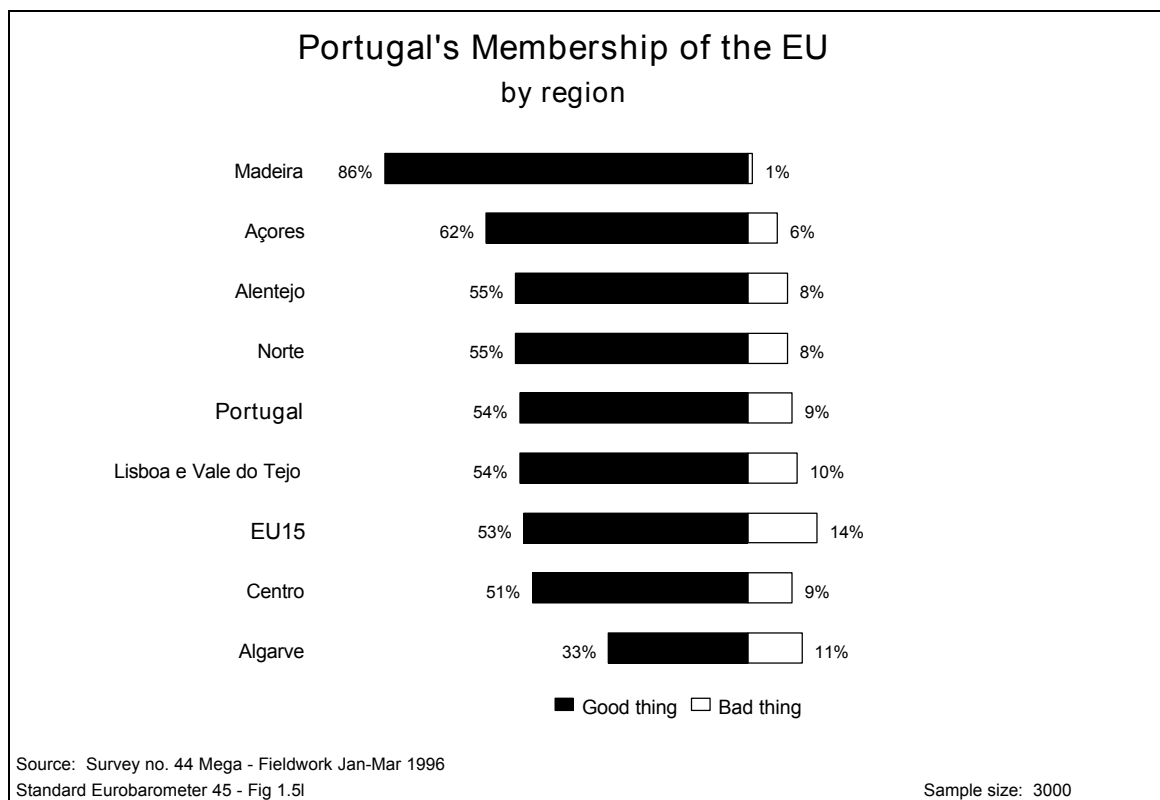
Sample size: 3000

Austria's Membership of the EU by region

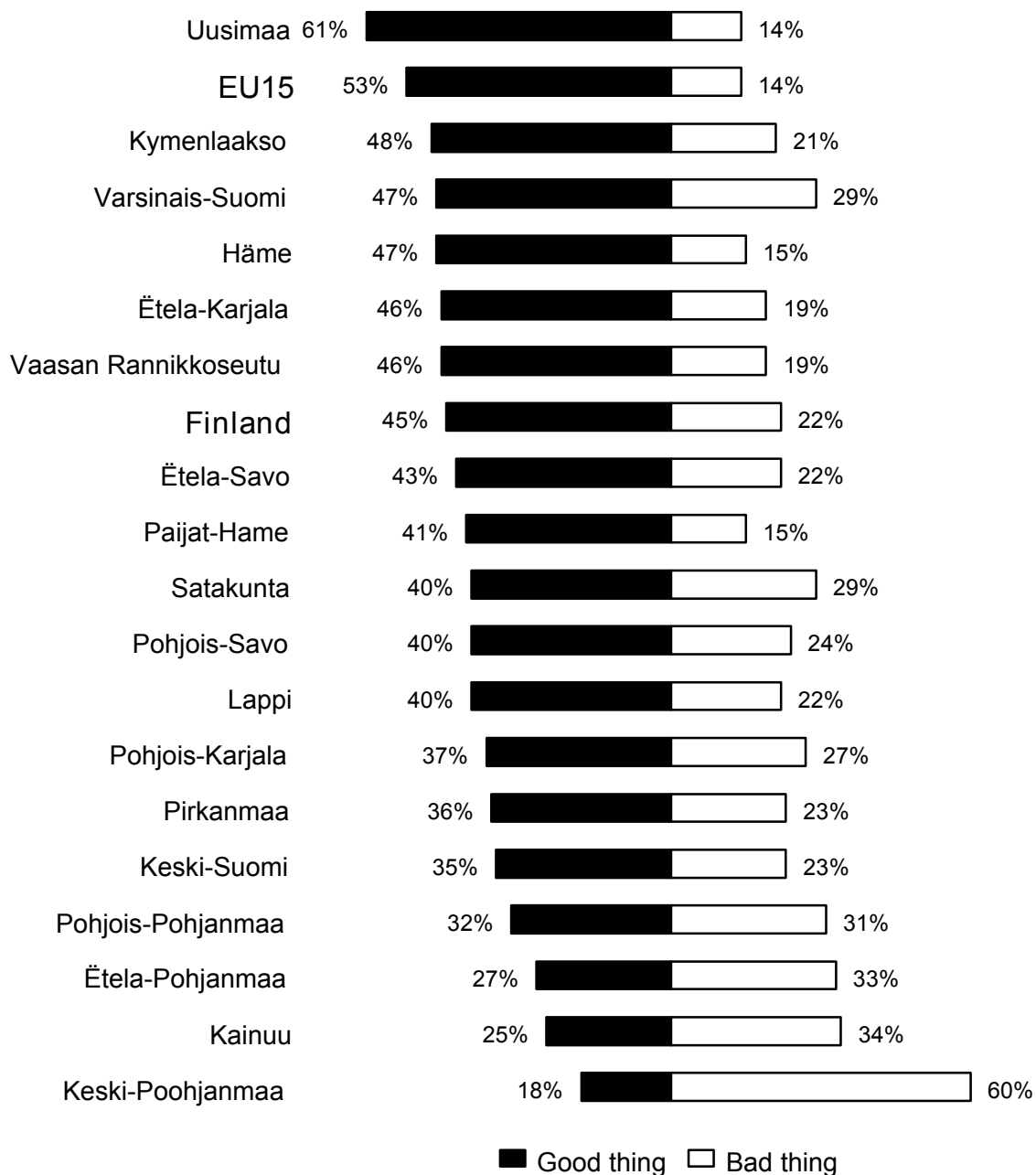


Source: Survey no. 44 Mega - Fieldwork Jan-Mar 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 45 - Fig 1.5k

Sample size: 3000



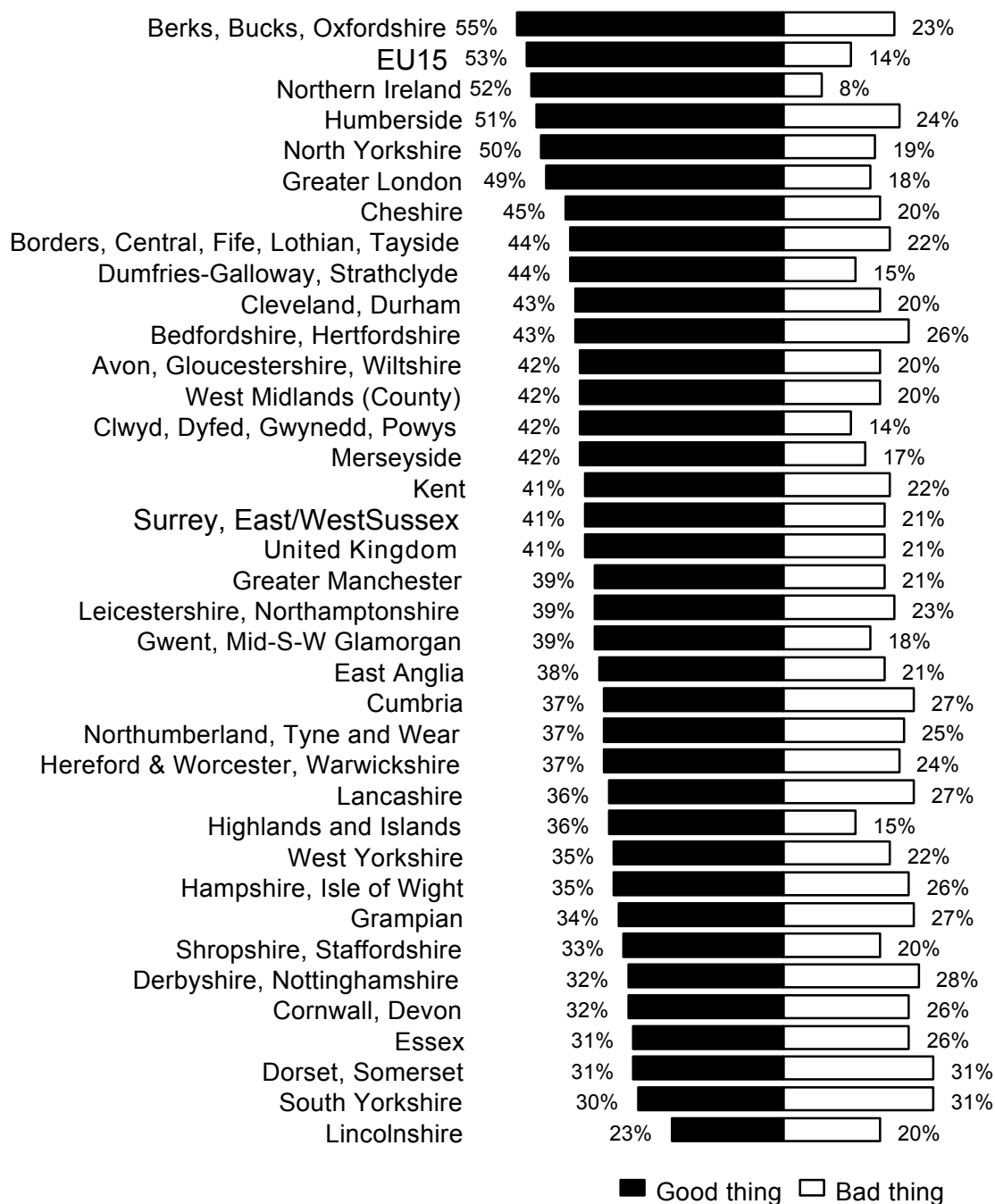
Finland's Membership of the EU by region



Source: Survey no. 44 Mega - Fieldwork Jan-Mar 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 45 - Fig 1.5n

Sample size: 3000

United Kingdom's Membership of the EU by region

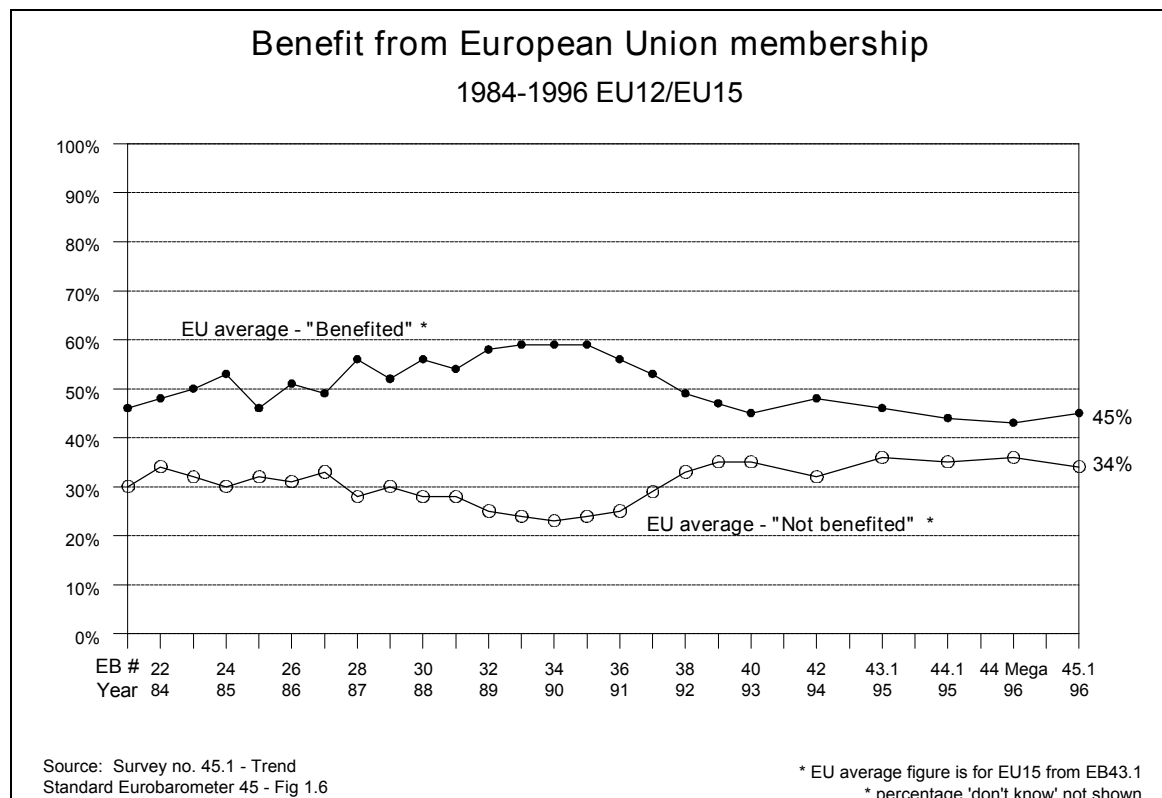


Source: Survey no. 44 Mega - Fieldwork Jan-Mar 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 45 - Fig 1.5o

Sample size: 6000

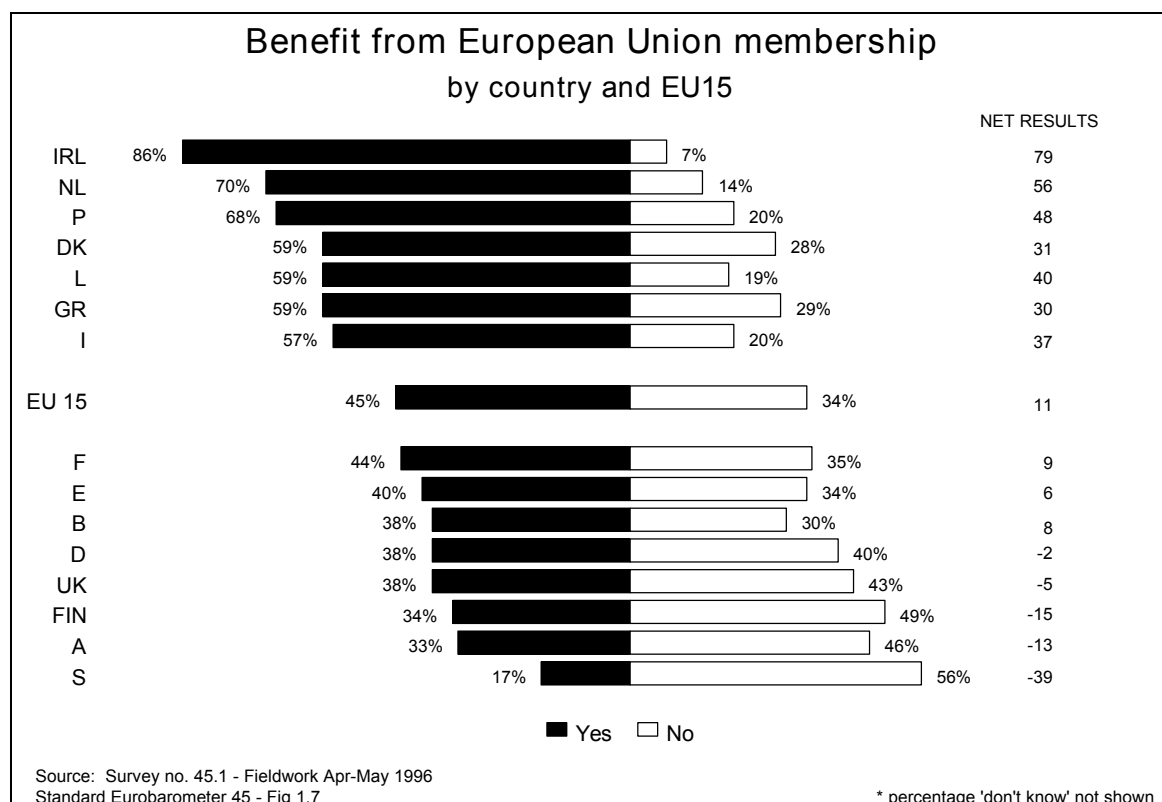
1.4 Benefit from European Union membership

Citizens perceived benefit of their country's membership of the Union, after dipping slightly at the turn of the year, has increased marginally to 45% "benefited" compared to 34% not "benefited", thus presenting a relatively stable progression since 1993, but not reaching the heights of nearly 60% benefit that we recorded in 1989-90.



Gains were recorded in Ireland (+6), Italy and France (+5) and the Netherlands (+4), conversely scores dropped in Greece (-13), Luxembourg and Belgium (-7) and Finland (-5). (Tables 1.3, 1.7, 1.9)

Demographic analysis confirms men are more positive than women (50% : 40%), the well educated (57% for those having completed their studies after the age of 20) and managers (60%) feel their country has benefited from European Union membership. These findings correlate, although at a lower level, with the findings of a recent European Commission survey amongst top decision makers where 90% considered their country had benefited from Union membership. (Table 1.11)



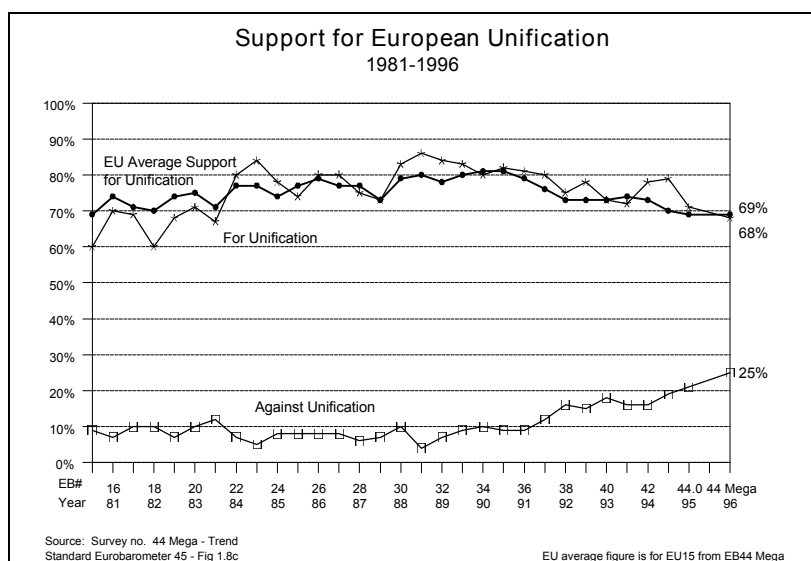
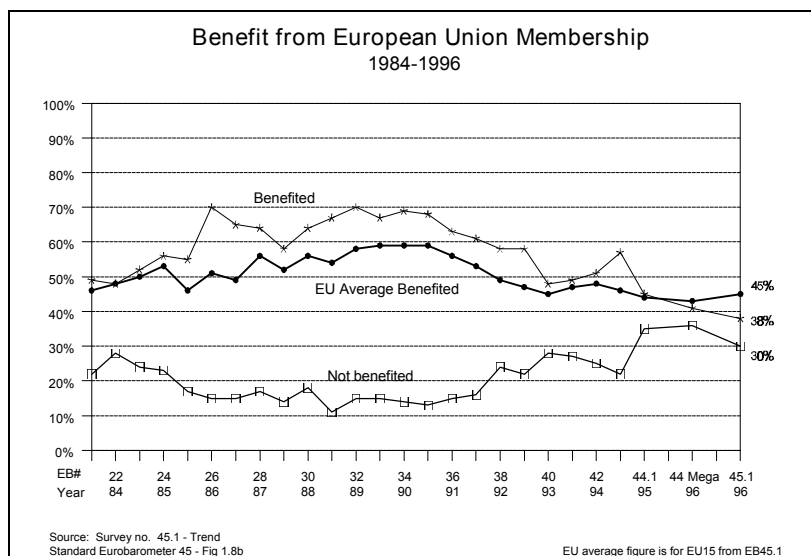
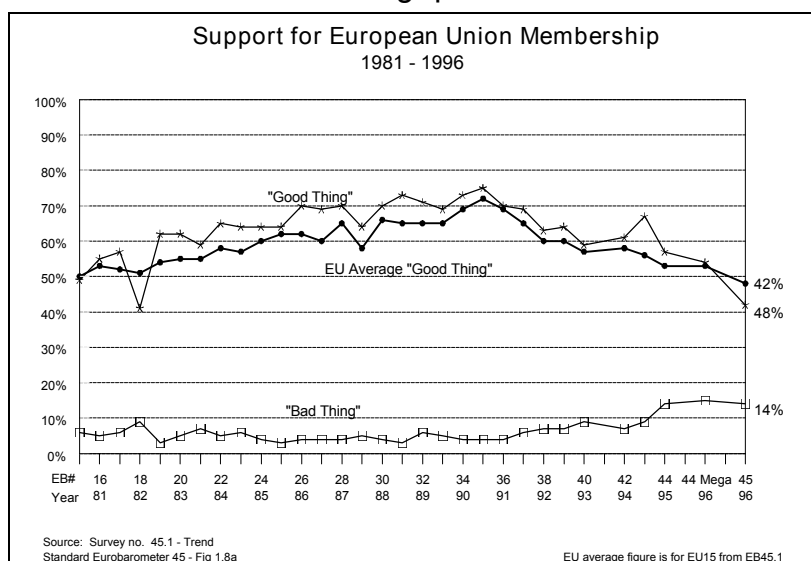
1.5 European Unification and overall support for the European Union

The following series of graphics present the trends over the past 15 years, on three standard indicators used by the Eurobarometer to measure support for the European Union, by country and in each case indicating the EU average for the indicator in question:

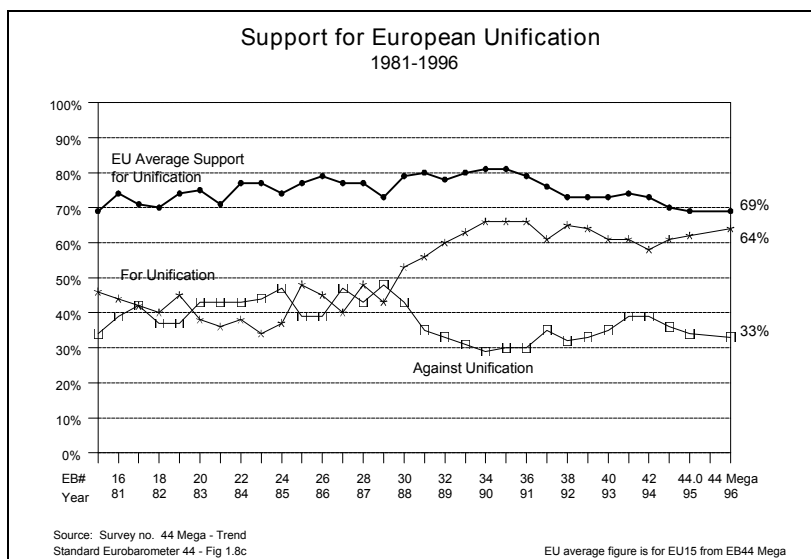
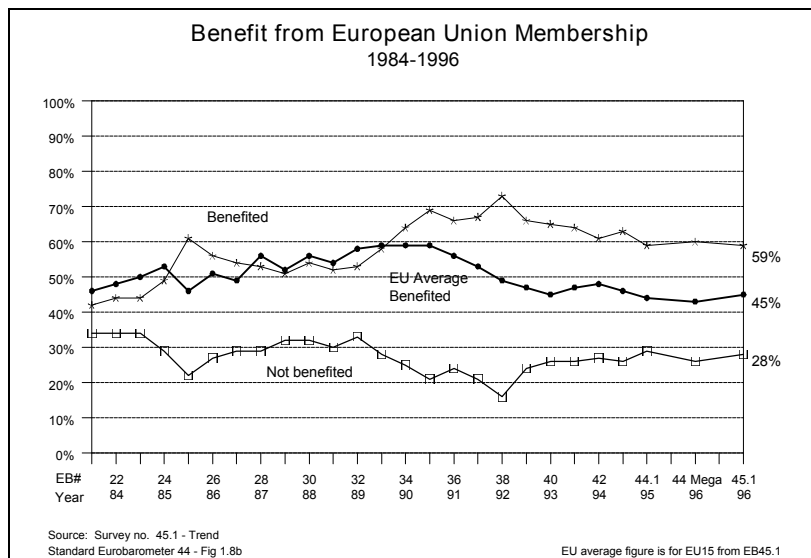
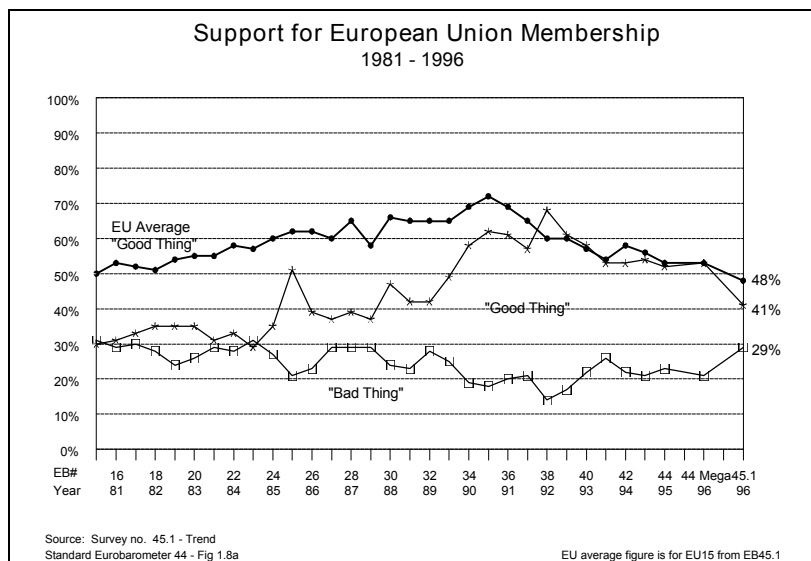
- ☐ support for European unification¹
- ☐ support for Union membership
- ☐ perceived benefit

¹ Latest results for support for European Unification are based on Eurobarometer Mega. Latest results for membership and perceived benefit are based on Eurobarometer 45.1.

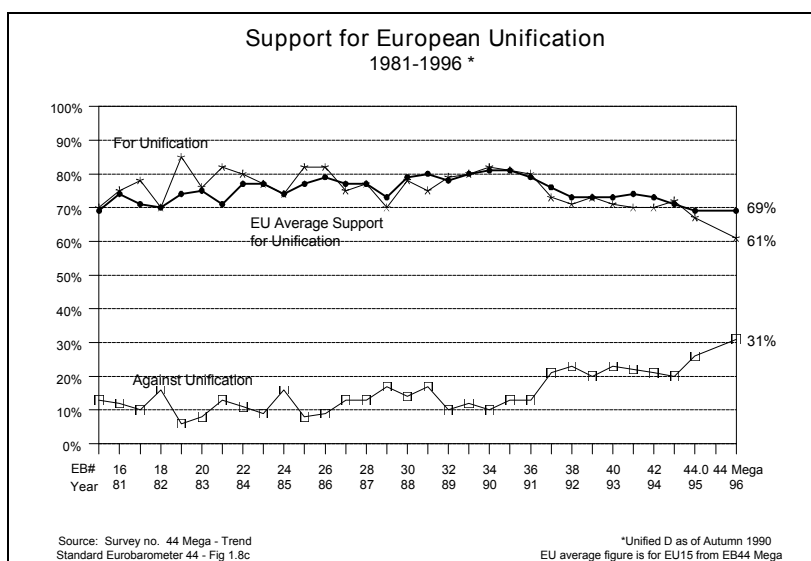
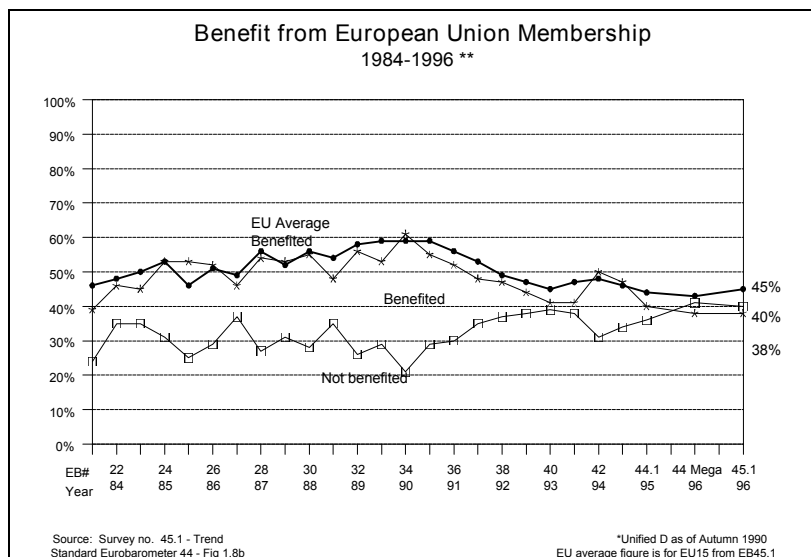
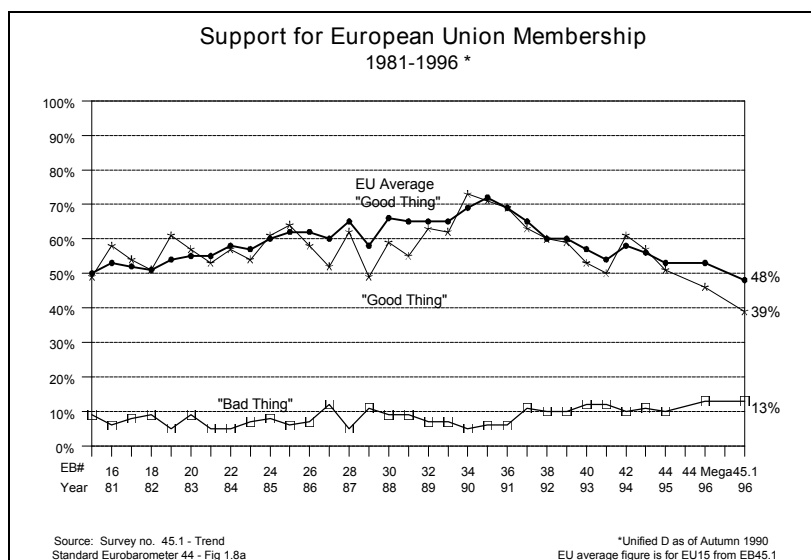
Belgique



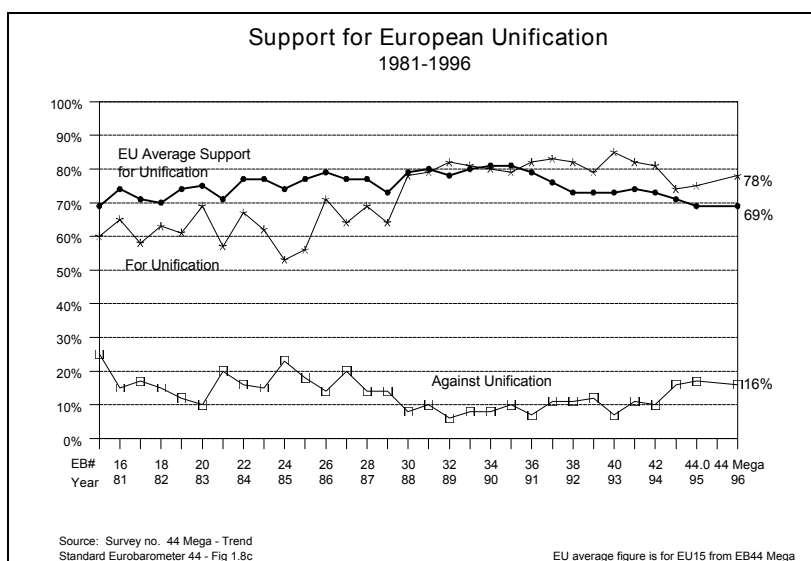
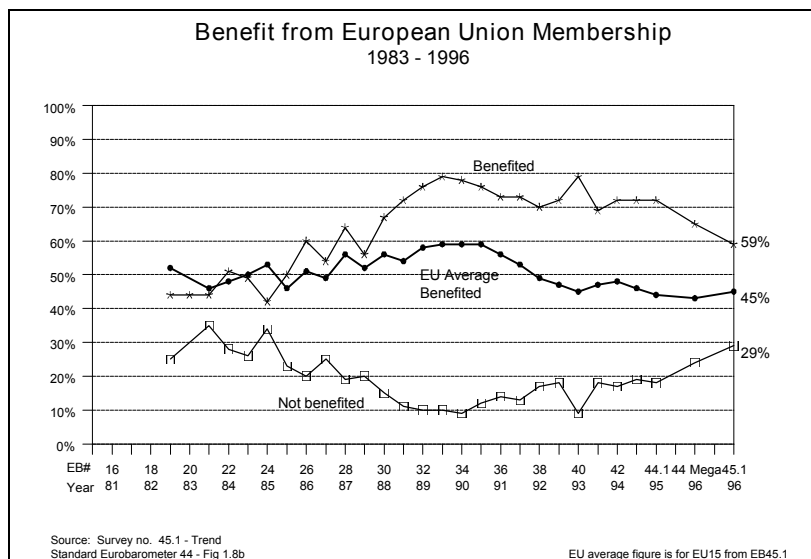
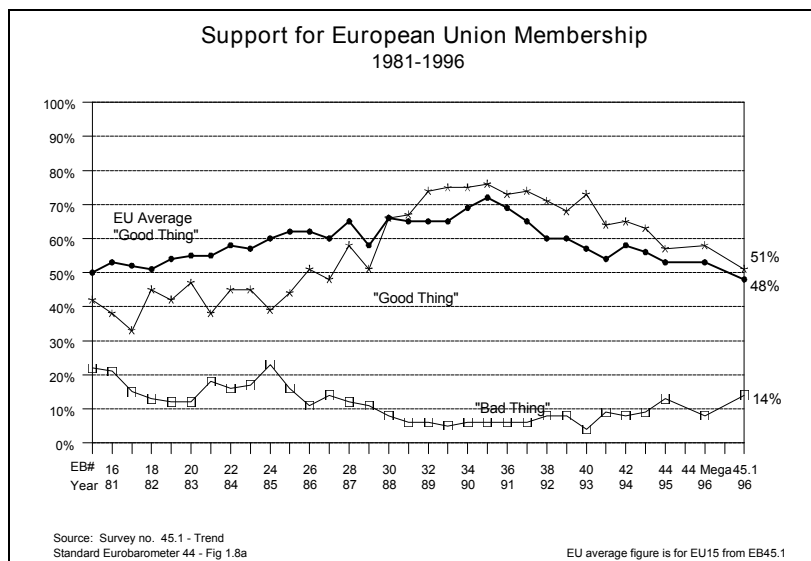
Danmark



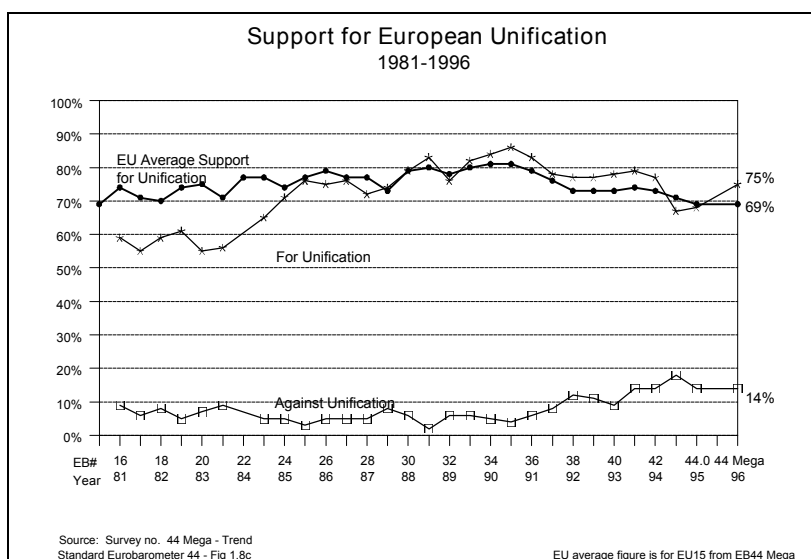
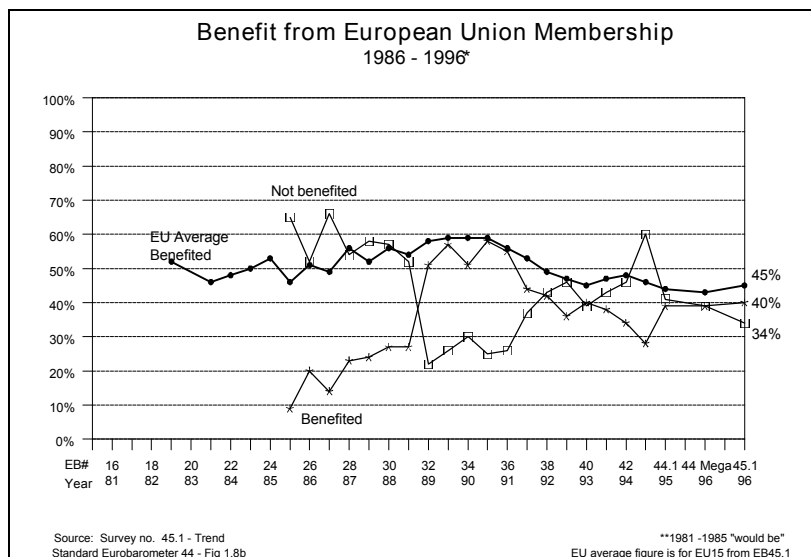
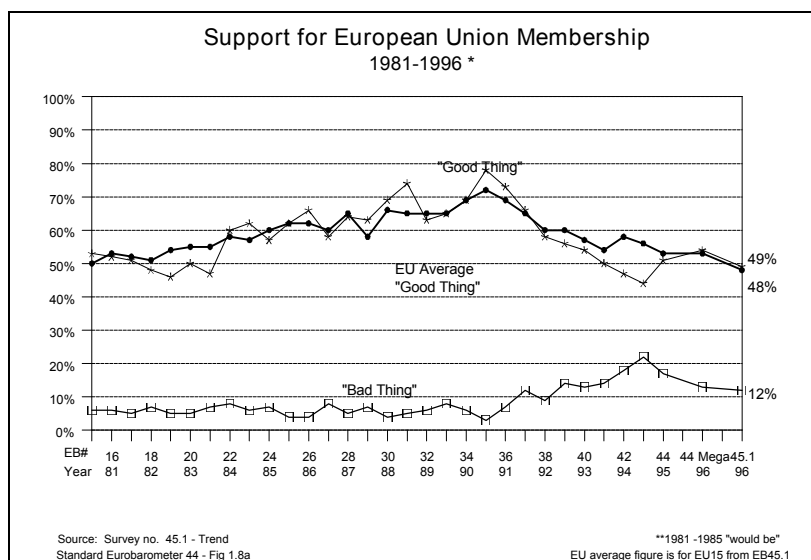
Deutschland



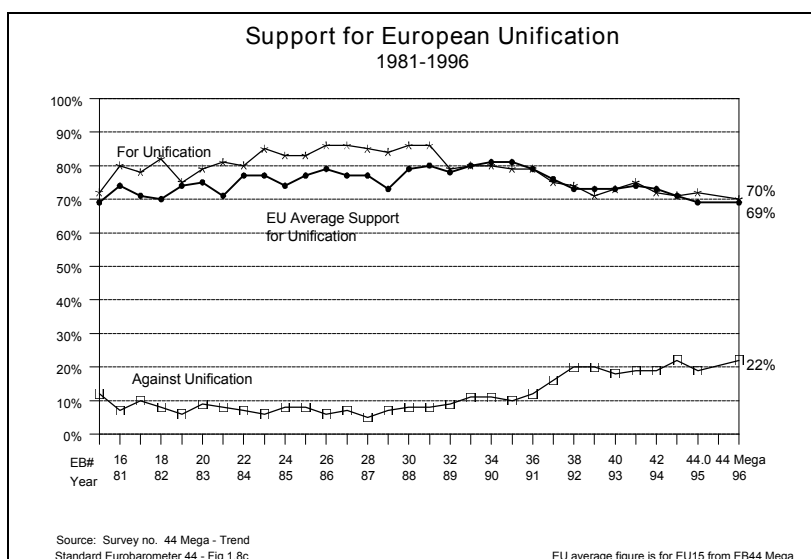
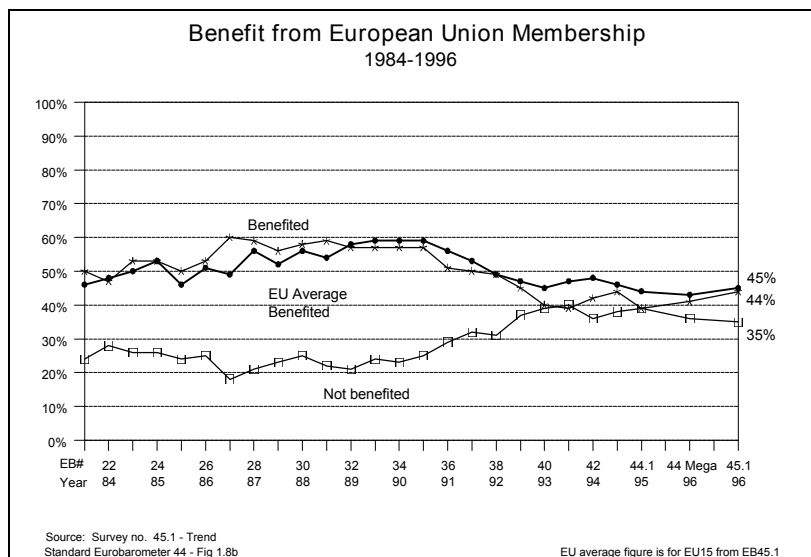
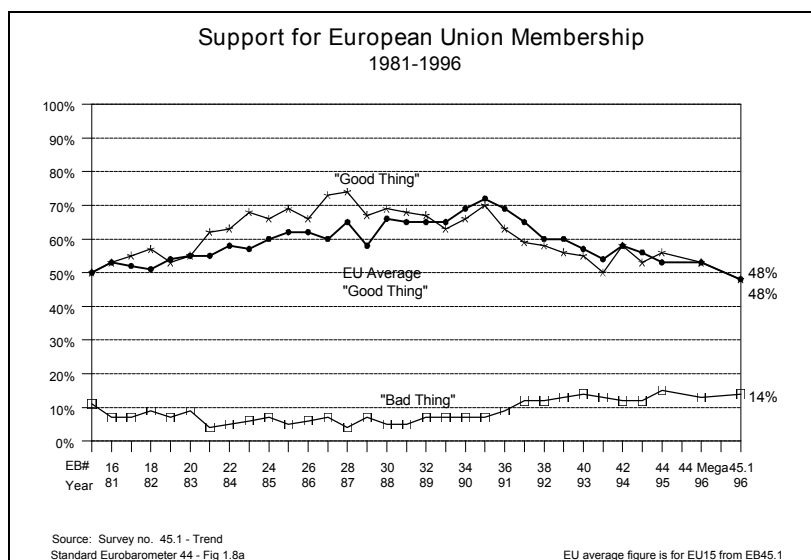
Greece



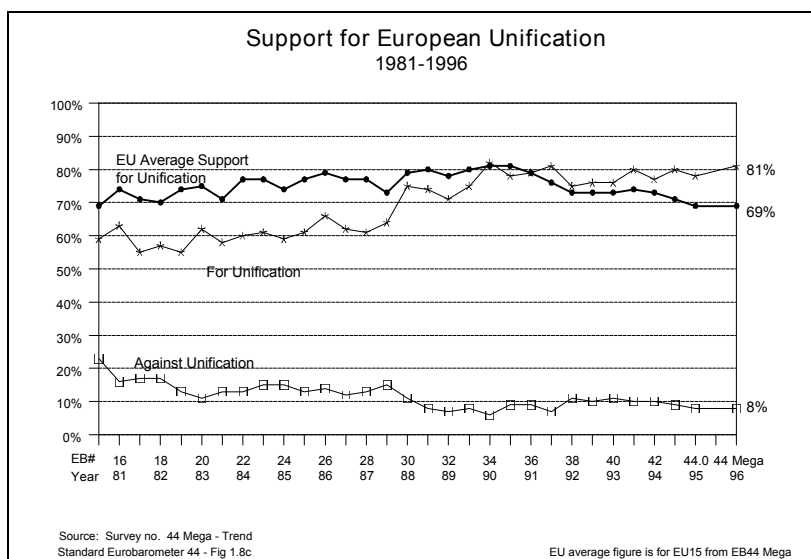
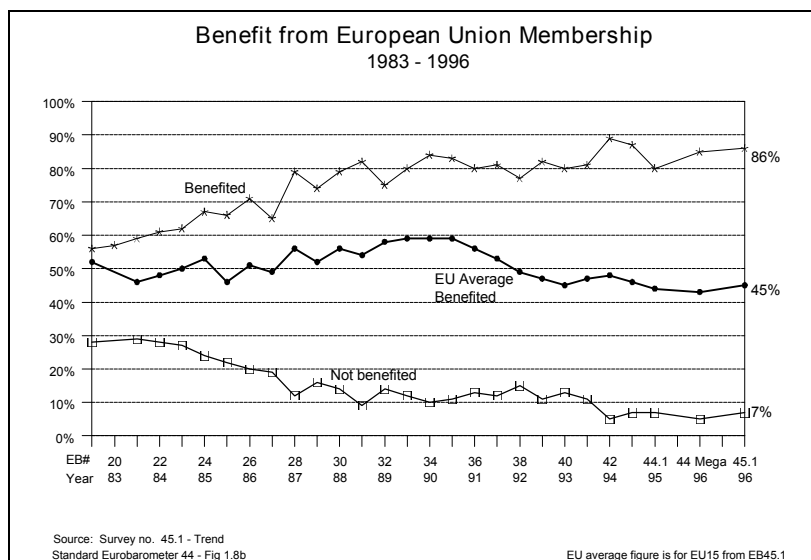
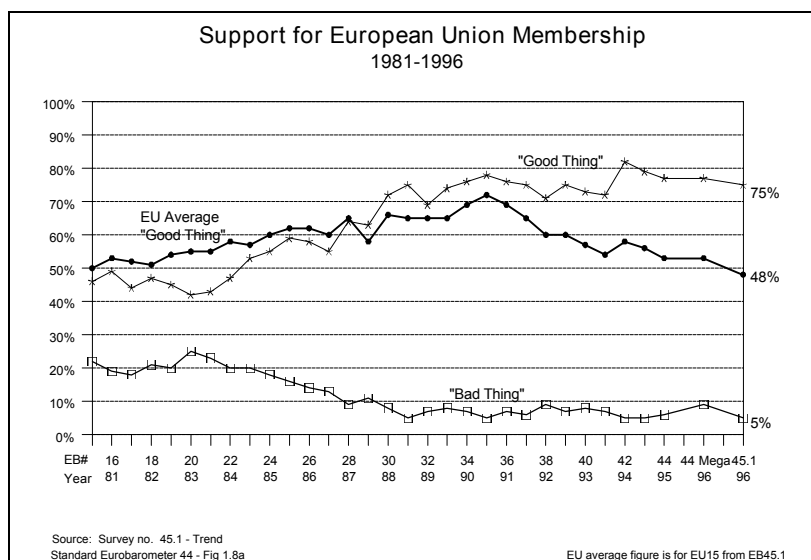
Espana



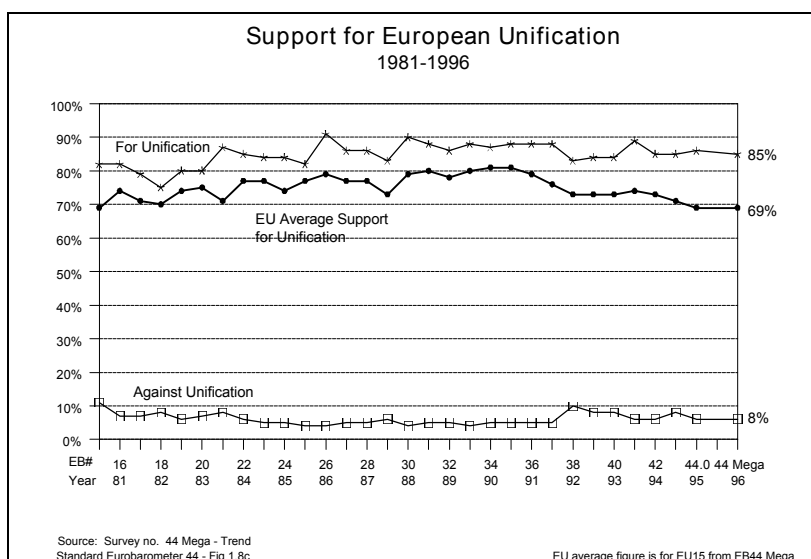
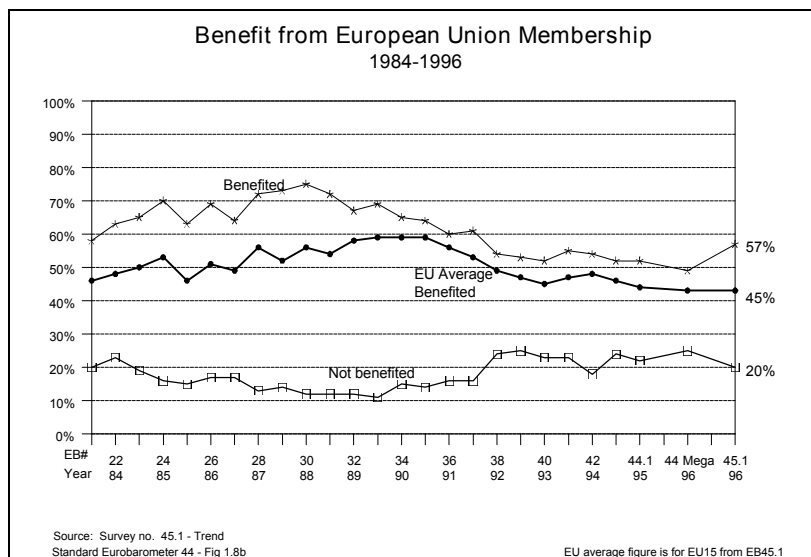
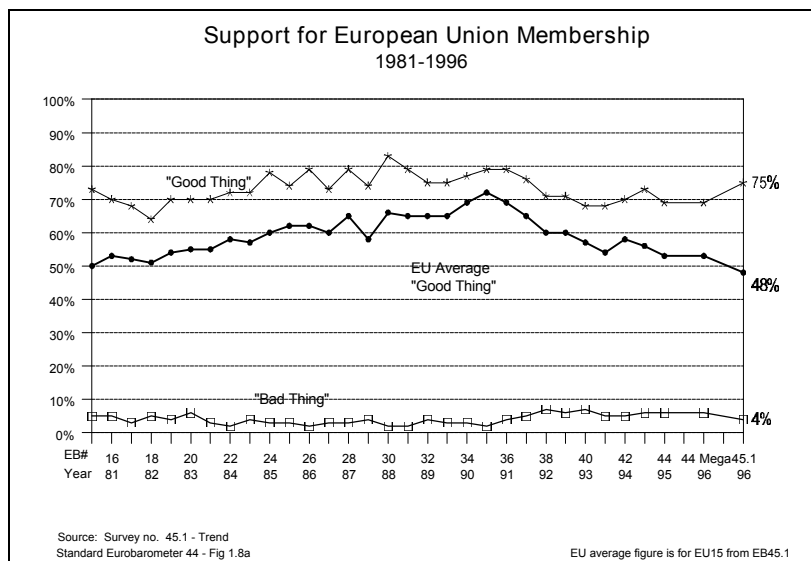
France



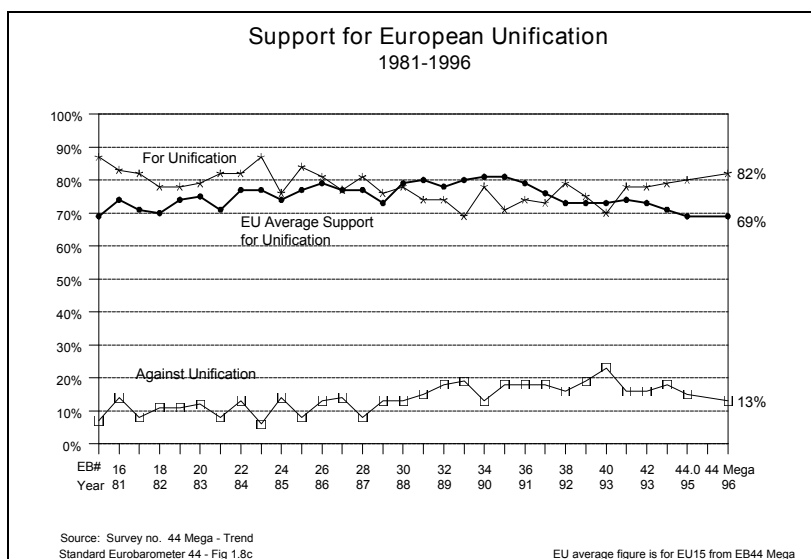
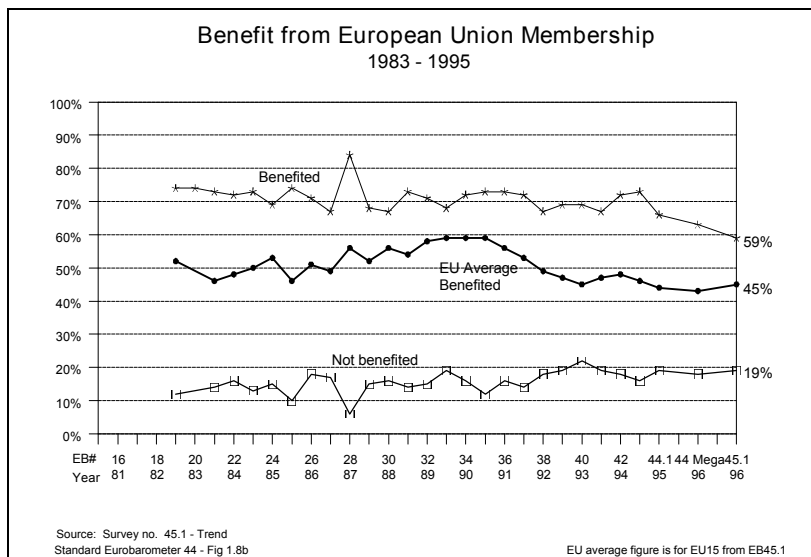
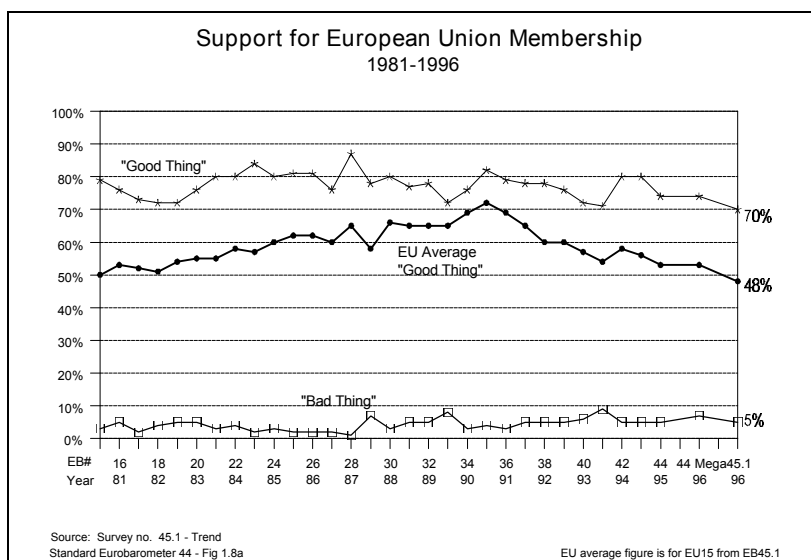
Ireland



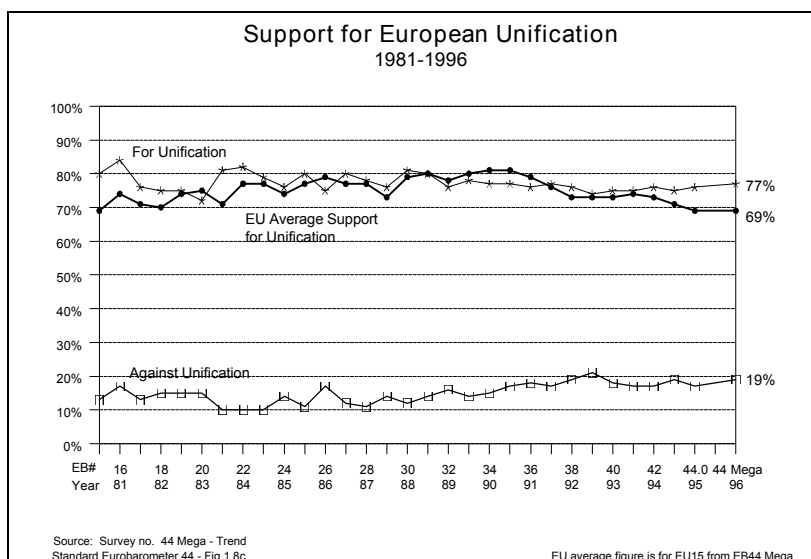
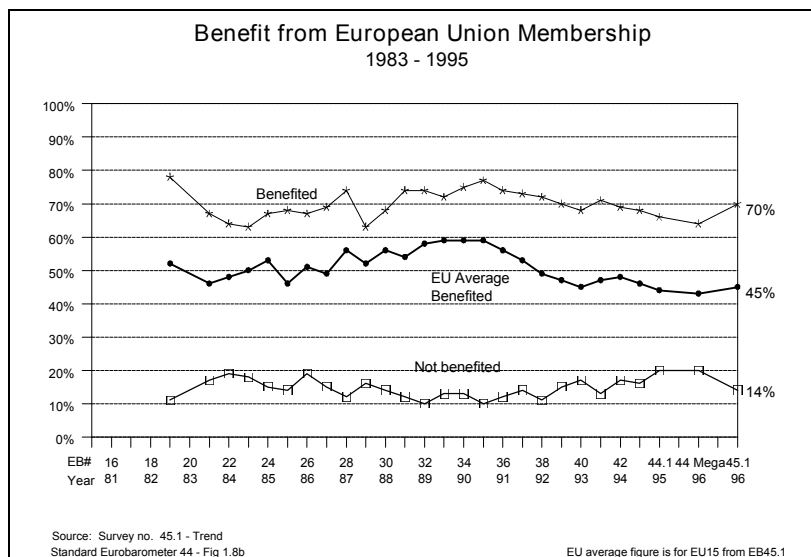
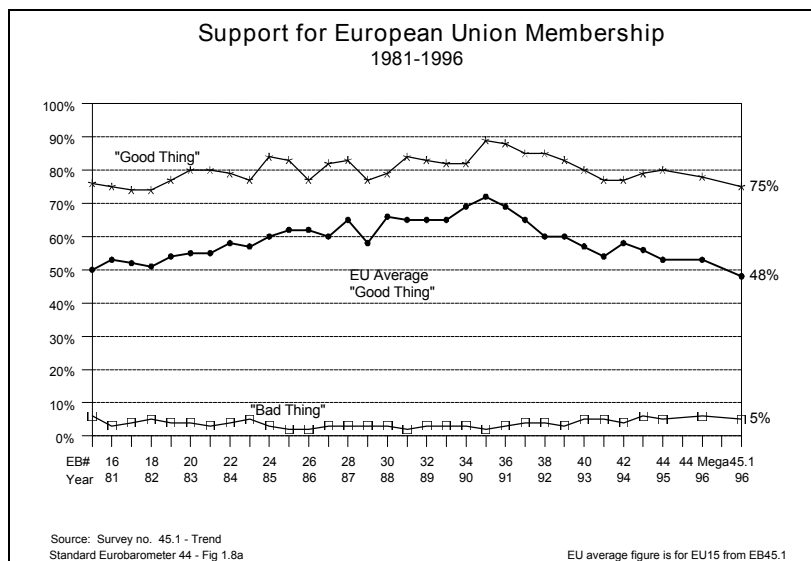
Italia



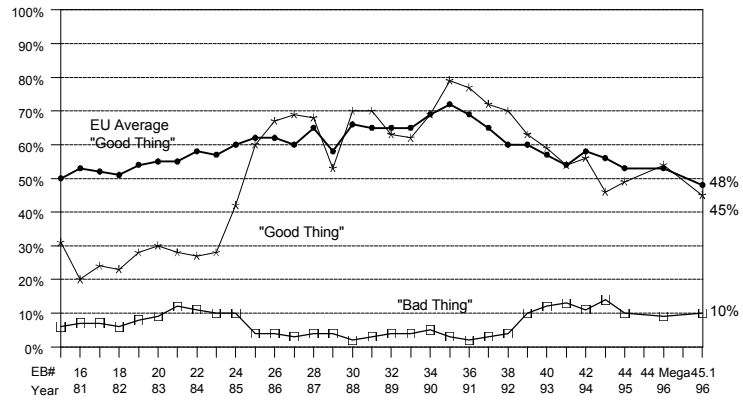
Luxembourg



Nederland

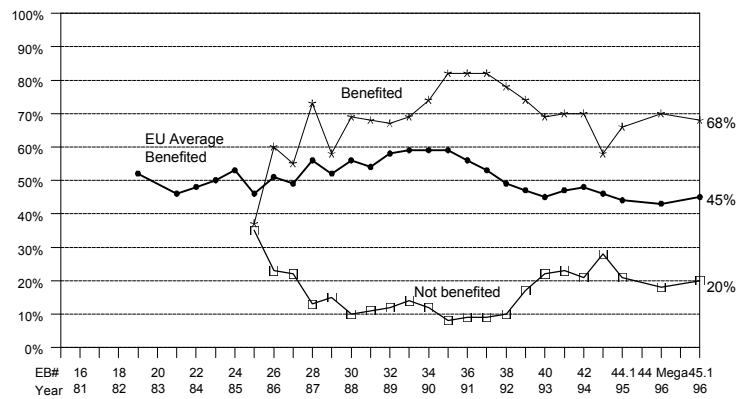


Portugal

Support for European Union Membership
1981-1996 *

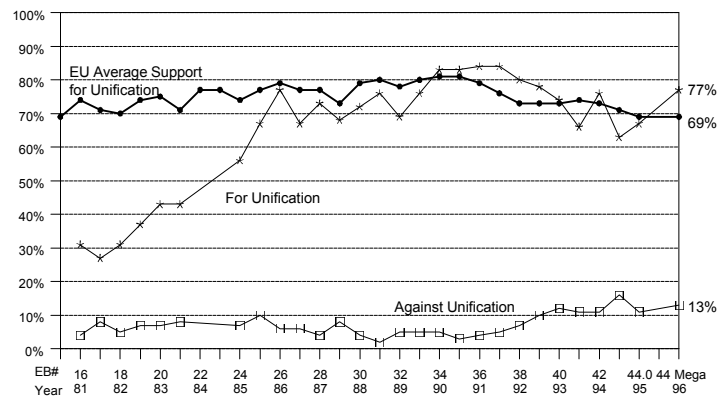
Source: Survey no. 45.1 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 44 - Fig 1.8a

*1981 - 1985 "would be"
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

Benefit from European Union Membership
1986 - 1996 *

Source: Survey no. 45.1 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 44 - Fig 1.8b

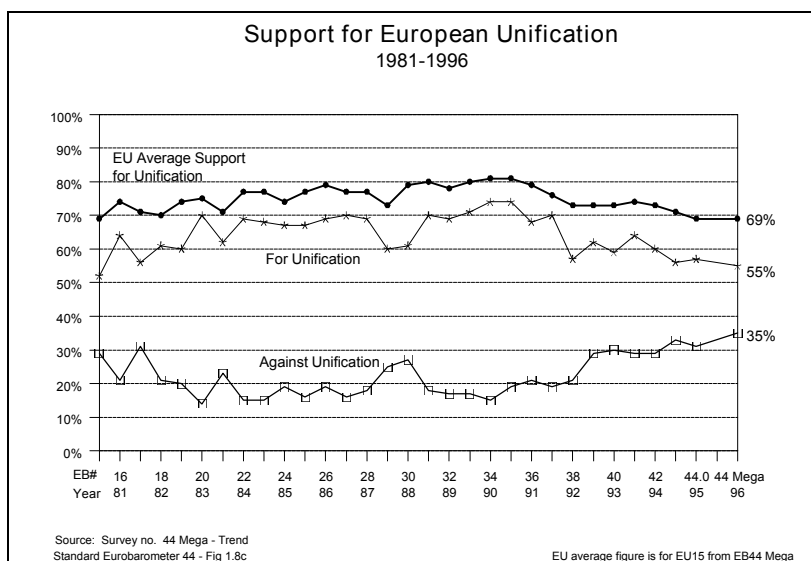
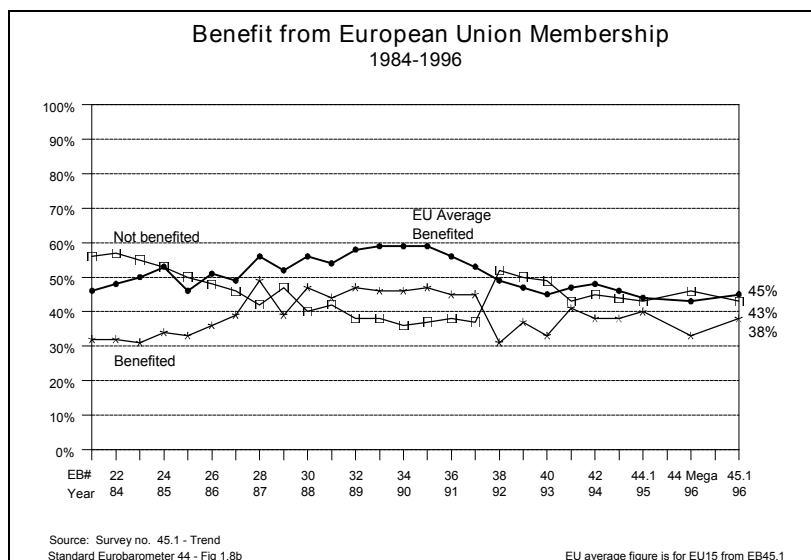
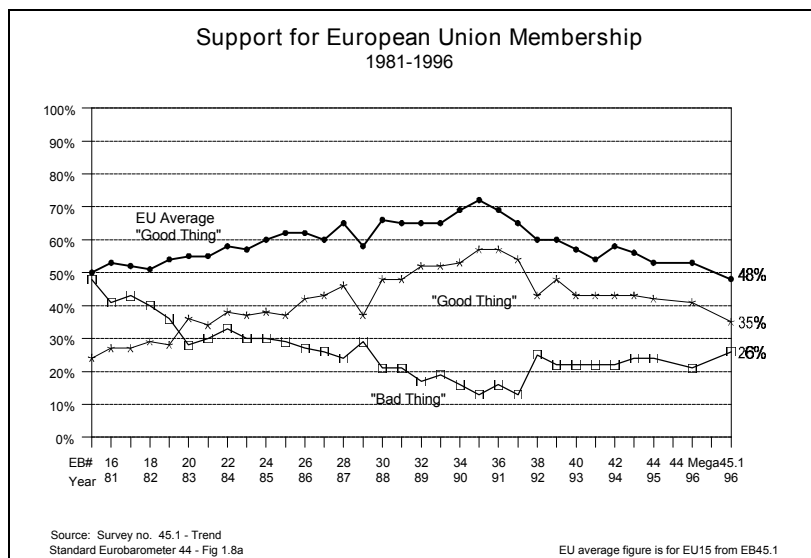
*1981 - 1985 "would be"
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

Support for European Unification
1981-1996

Source: Survey no. 44 Mega - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 44 - Fig 1.8c

EU average figure is for EU15 from EB454 Mega

United Kingdom



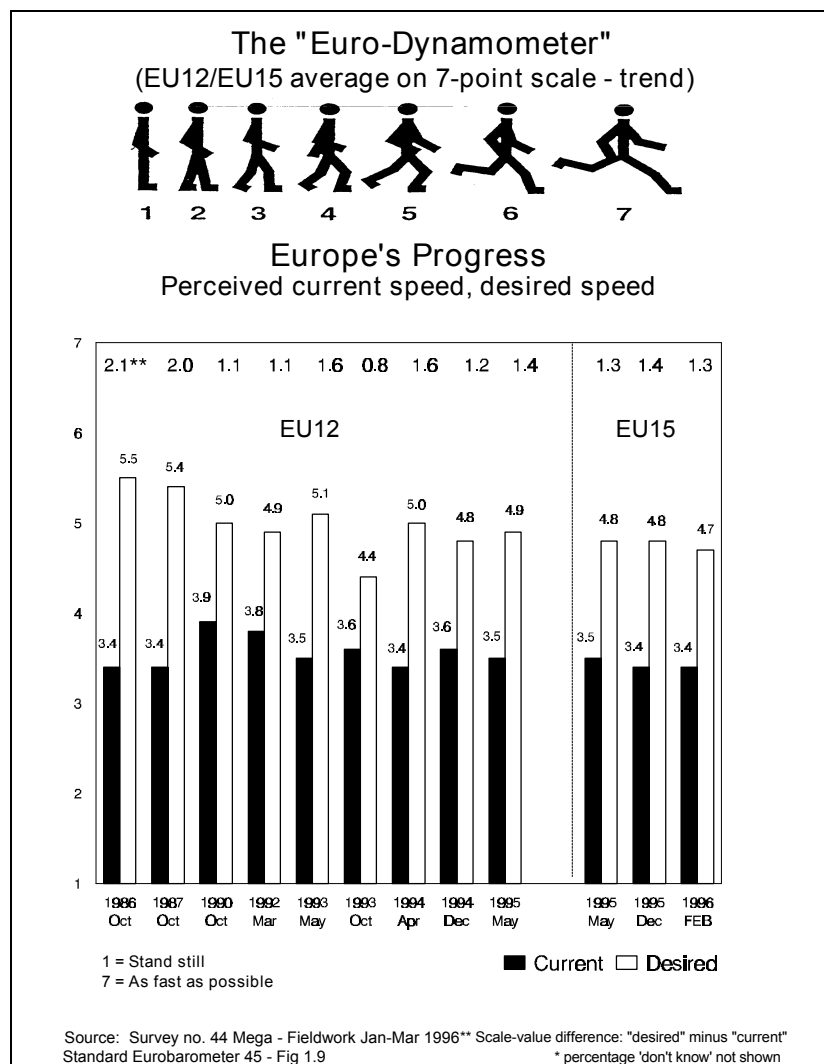
1.6 The Speed of European Integration

Over the past ten years the Eurobarometer has measured public opinion towards the speed of European integration with the aid of the following question:

- a. In your opinion, how is the European Union, the European Unification advancing nowadays? Please look at these people (show card). Number 1 is standing still, number 7 is running as fast as possible. Choose the one which best corresponds with your opinion of the European Union, European Unification.
- b. And which corresponds best to what you would like? (show same card)

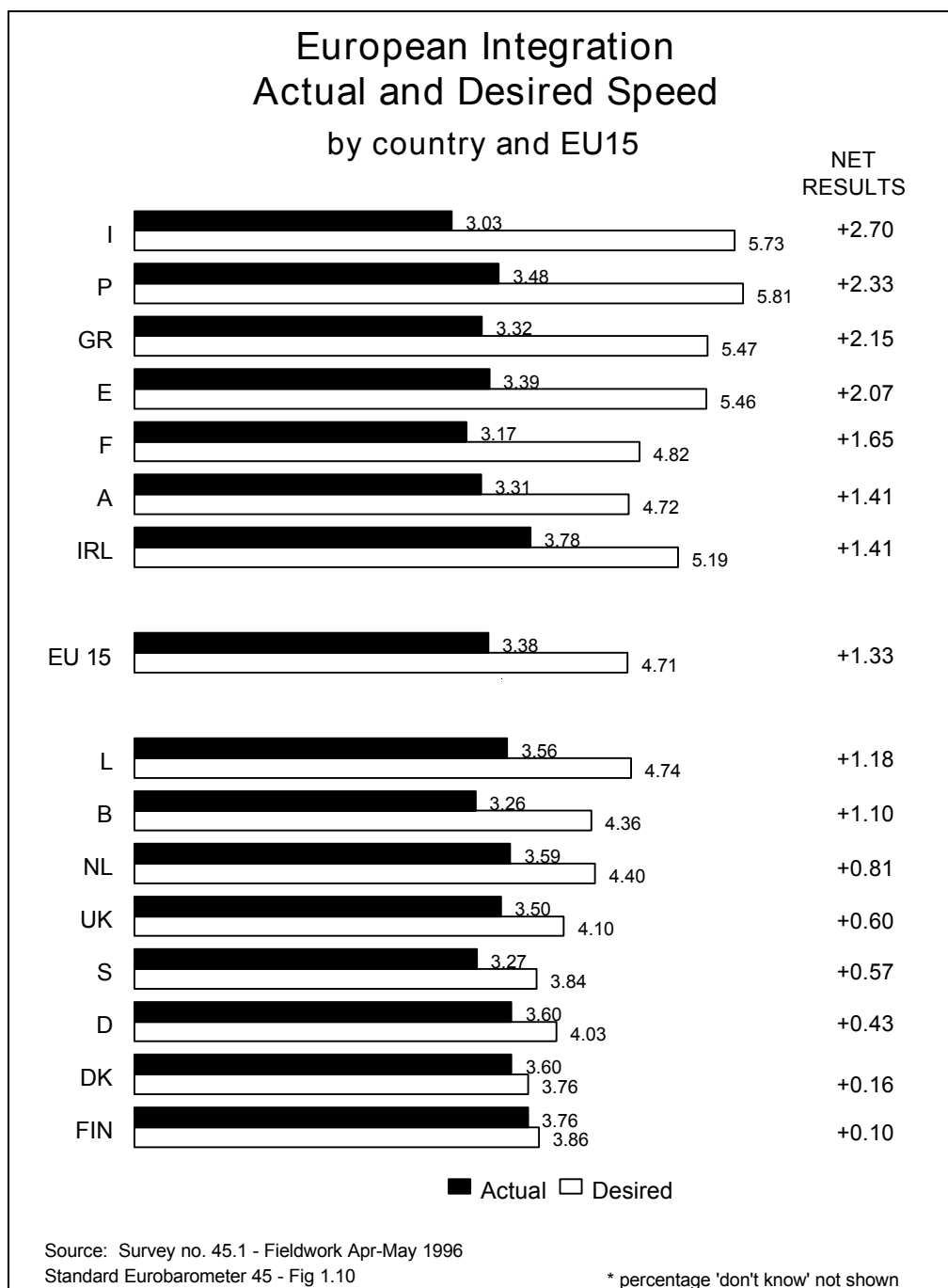
Figures over the past two years have remained comparatively stable with the gap between the perceived and desired speeding ranging from 1.2 in December 1994 to 1.4 in December 1995 and 1.3 in early 1996.

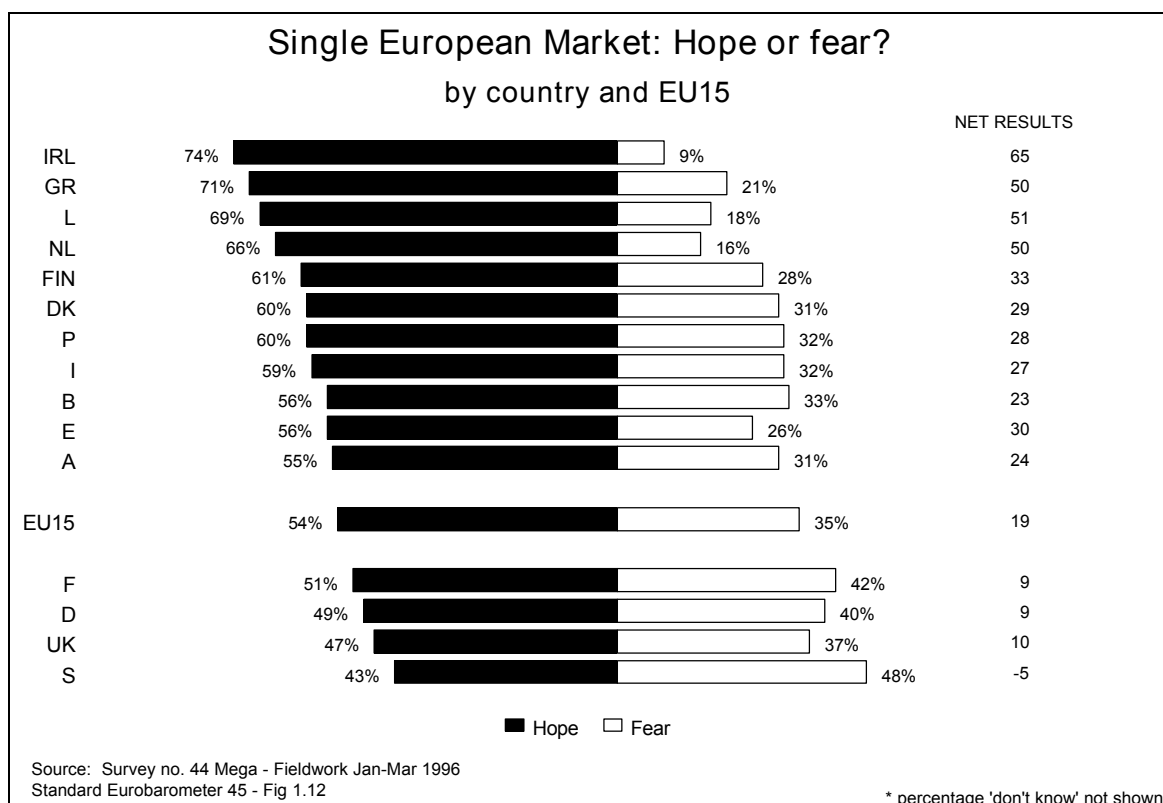
Overall the general public would like to see European unification move faster than they currently perceive to be the case.



The country analysis shows that in no member state do citizens want the process to slow down. We see, as in previous surveys, that the Mediterranean countries, including France, all wanting to see the process of integration speeded up. A middle group would like a slightly more dynamic process, while a third group including the Scandinavian countries, Germany and the United Kingdom do not want to see a significant acceleration, but, nevertheless, are more positive than negative. (Tables 1.12 and 1.15)

The socio-demographic analysis indicates that it is the young who most want the Union to accelerate its efforts to unify.

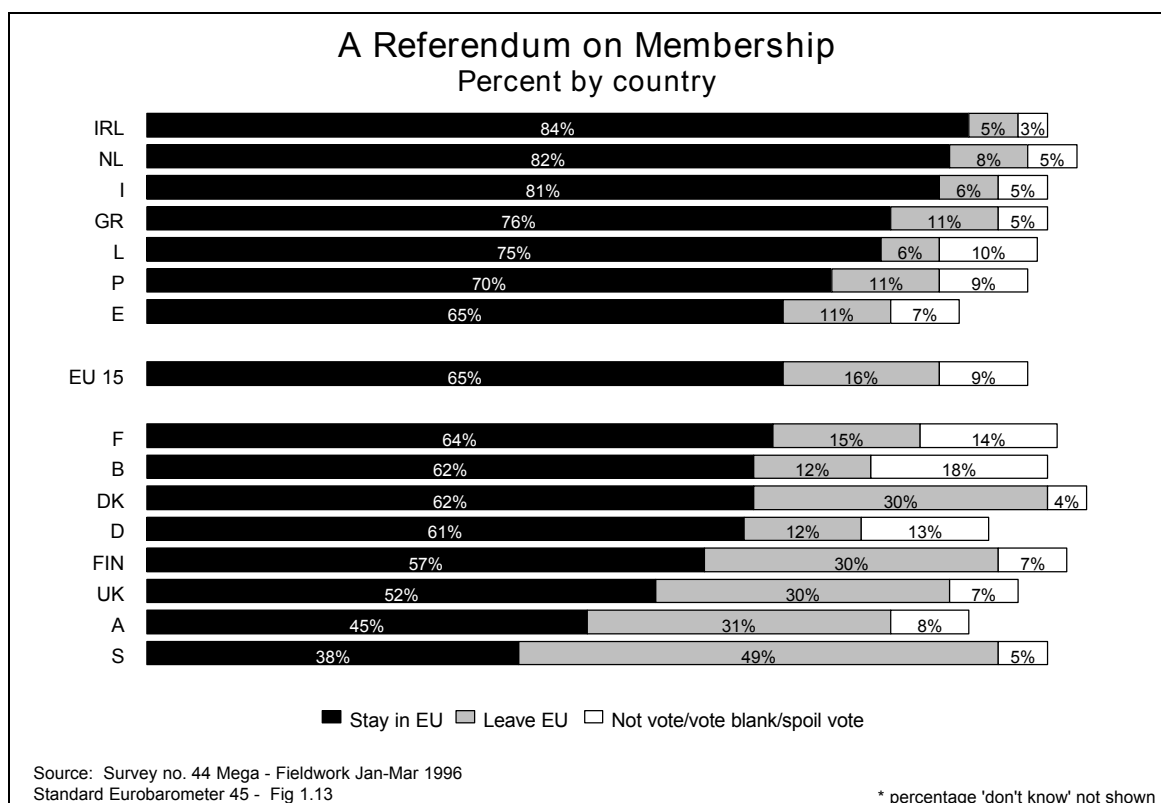




PERCENTAGE "HOPEFUL" NET SCORES				
	Spring 95 EB 43	Winter 96 EB 44	Spring 96 EB 45	% change from Spring 1995
Belgium	50	24	23	-27
Denmark	24	22	29	+5
Germany	23	11	9	-14
Greece	55	55	50	-5
Spain	23	21	30	+7
France	15	15	9	-6
Ireland	69	59	65	-4
Italy	42	25	27	-15
Luxembourg	46	43	51	-5
Netherlands	58	53	50	-8
Austria	26	21	24	-2
Portugal	35	34	28	-7
Finland	43	34	33	-10
Sweden	5	0	-5	-10
United Kingdom	26	20	10	-16
EU15	28	21	19	-9

1.8 A Referendum on Membership

The final question asked concerning attitudes to Union membership related to the holding of a referendum. If a referendum was held "tomorrow" two-thirds of all EU citizens would vote to remain in the Union, 16% would vote to leave and 9% "did not know". Only in Austria and Sweden did the figure for support for membership fall below 50% (45% and 38% respectively). Elsewhere support remains strong. (Table 1.17)



Support for membership, as shown by some of the other indicators, shows men more likely to vote "for" Union membership (68% compared to 62% for women). Sixty-eight percent of the young (15-24's) would vote "for" compared to 61% of the over 55's. Occupational status is likewise a factor where management is much more positive (76%) than other groups. High levels of education and opinion leadership also correlate with positive attitudes. (Table 1.19).