

## 2. A Profile of European Union Citizens

As mentioned in the editorial, this report is based on two Eurobarometer surveys, one of which used a particularly large sample of 65,000 persons. As a result we felt it would be of interest to examine the demographic profile of this sample. In addition, in the framework of the three information campaigns currently being prepared, additional analysis was carried out in order to establish a typology, identifying according to their attitudes, four main groups of citizens. The following sections will describe the various groups identified in the survey.

### 2.1 A demographic profile

The European Union counts some 306 million persons over the age of 15<sup>1</sup>, 147 million men and 158 million women. In examining the current statistics Eurostat concludes that:

"the overall growth rate has been positive since 1960.

The two components of this growth (natural increase and migratory balance) were positive. Two-thirds of this increase was from migratory flows.

The overall population increase was positive in all 15 countries of the Union. The natural increase was negative in Germany and just negative in Italy. Everywhere else it was positive. Ireland was the only country to record a negative migratory balance."

In this context it is interesting to examine the changing opinions of European Union citizens as is done in the Eurobarometer. In this first section we present four demographic variables: age, marital status, terminal education age and occupation based on self-classification.

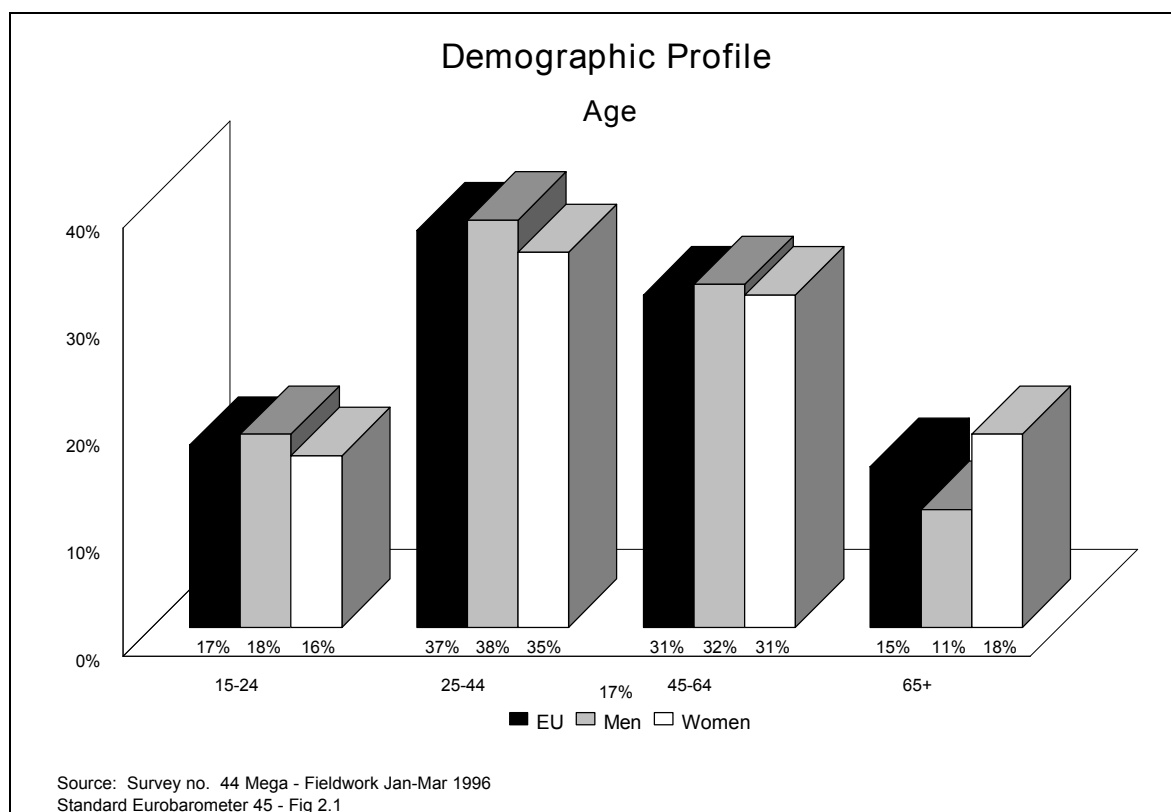
The age profile of the survey sample (the Mega survey) is confirmed by the published statistics<sup>2</sup>. In the survey women overall outnumbered men, this largely being due to longer life expectancy as is shown in the figure for the over 65's. In the country analysis Ireland, with over one in five (24% men, 25% women) in the 16-24 age group, has the youngest profile followed by Portugal and Spain (21% and 20% in the 16-24 age group respectively). Sweden had the smallest proportion (15%) in this age group, but had the largest population (21%) in the over 65 age group. (Tables 2.1a and 2.1b)

Average ages in the member states ranged from 41.5 Ireland to 46.3 in Sweden; the EU average was 43.7. Ireland's youthful profile was reflected in the fact that 23% of the sample were in the 15-24 age group.

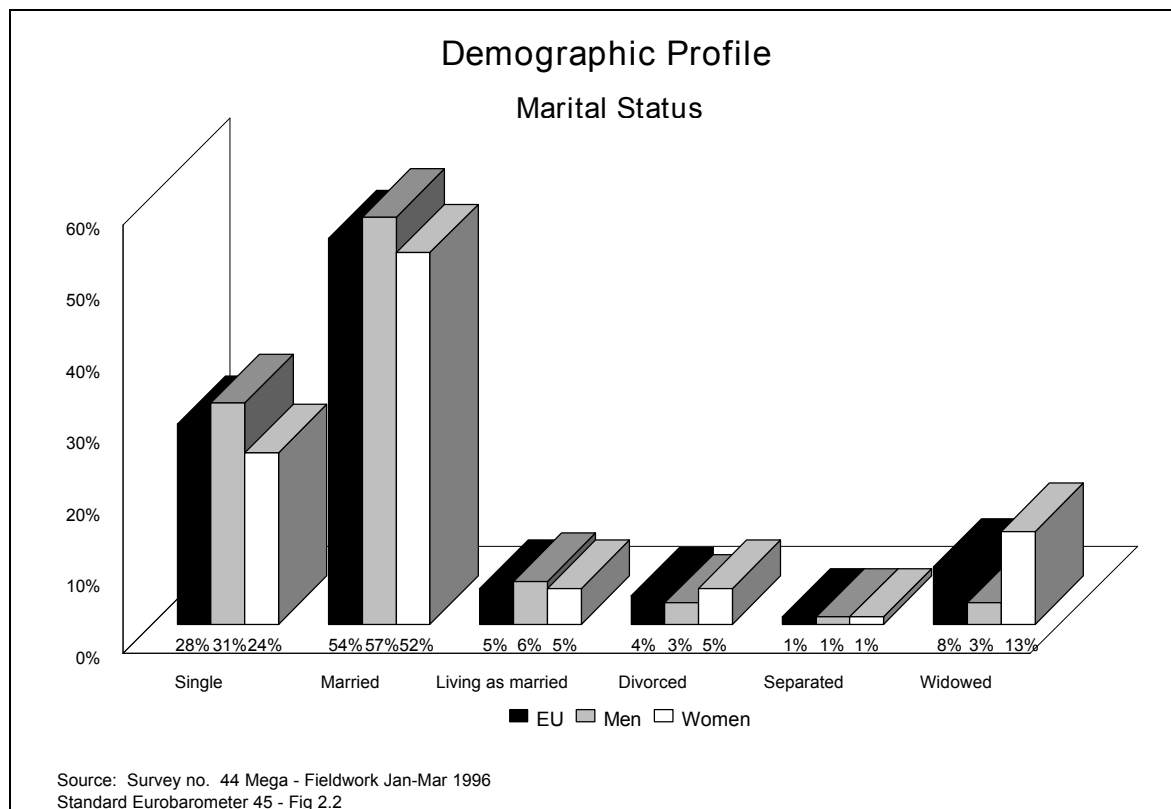
AVERAGE AGE															
B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EU15
44.4	44.0	44.3	43.8	42.9	43.0	41.5	43.7	42.9	42.6	43.4	43.0	43.8	46.3	44.0	43.7

<sup>1</sup> Source Eurostat - Demographic Statistics 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Source Eurostat - Demographic Statistics 1996.



The majority of European Union citizens (54%) over the age of 15 are married and 6% are "living as married", 31% are single, 5% are divorced or separated and 8% are widowed. Marriage is strongest in Greece (67%), Portugal (62%), Belgium (60%) and Spain and Germany (59% each).



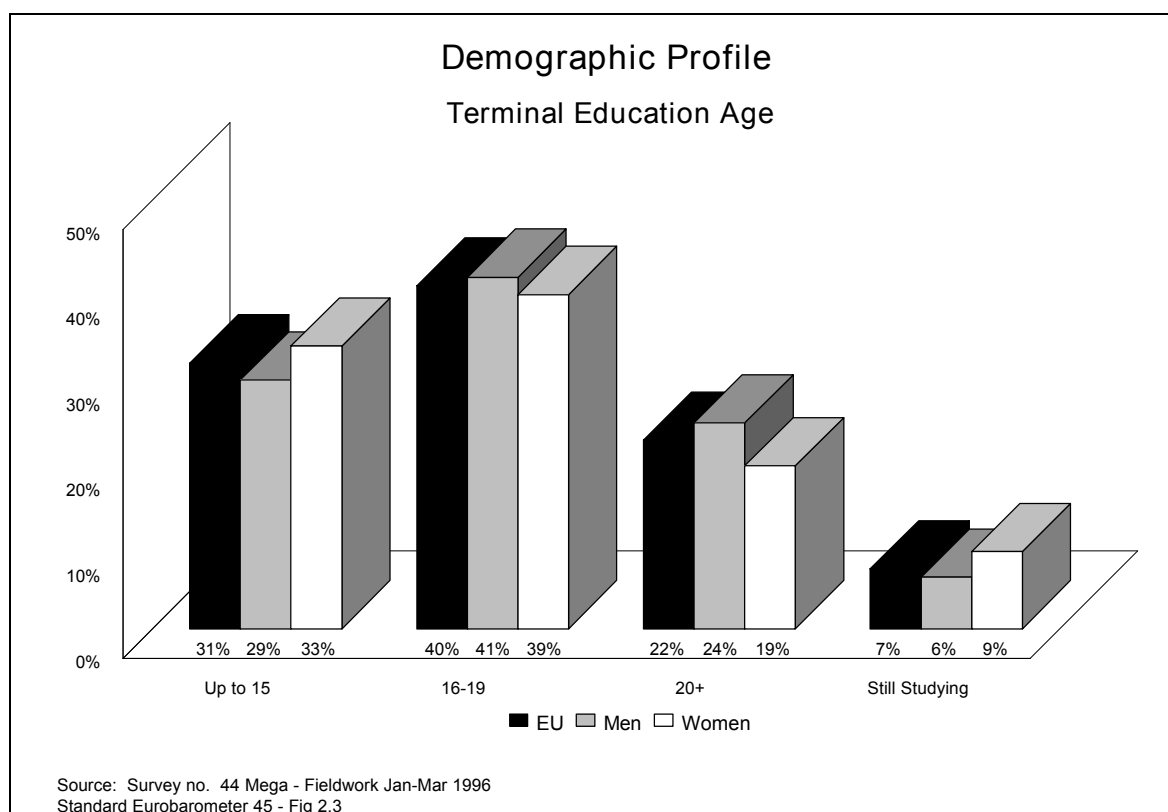
Lower rates of marriage were recorded in the three Scandinavian countries and France, where under half the adult population claims to be married. However, in the same countries the numbers stating they are "living together as married" is proportionally higher (Denmark 18%, Sweden 15%, France 12% and Finland 11%) than the EU average of five percent.

The second largest group, "single", which accounts for just under one in three (28%) of EU residents is highest in Italy (40%) and Ireland (35%).

One in ten persons (men and women) are widowed in Austria, Luxembourg and Germany. Elsewhere the figures approach the EU average of 8%. Lower figures are recorded in Italy and Belgium (6% each). The differences between men and women, however, are marked. Two point five per cent of men are widowed compared with 12.7% of women. We find the highest levels of widowed women in West Germany (17%), Luxembourg and Austria (16% each). The lowest scores recorded are in Belgium (9%), Italy and Sweden (both 10%). (Tables 2.1a and 2.1b)

Overall three in ten EU citizens stopped full-time education by the time they were 15, four in ten stopped by the age of 19, 22% completed their education after the age of 20, and 7% of the sample were still studying.

Portugal and Spain had the largest numbers leaving education by the age of 15 (58% and 49%). The countries where the greatest proportions reported having continued their education after the age of 20 included Denmark (51%), Finland (37%), Sweden (31%) and Belgium (29%).

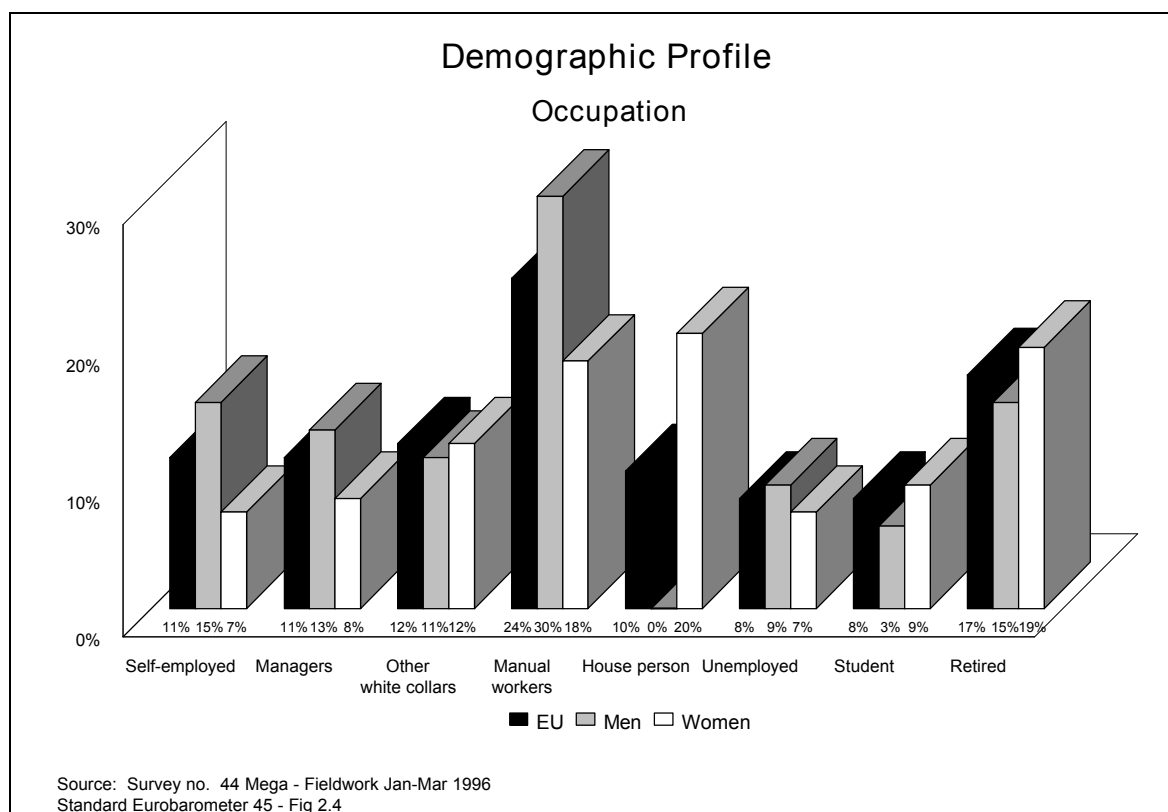


An analysis by age groups shows the trend to improved education levels for the young, while 57% of those over 55 years of age had completed their education by the age of 15, of today's young people only 9% had left education, while 38% were still studying<sup>3</sup>.

Women also appear to be closing the gap in educational terms, while of those who had completed their full-time education by the age of 15, 56% were women compared with 45% of men, in the category "still studying" we observe 41% men compared with 59% women. (Tables 2.1a and 2.1b)

The final standard demographic variable to be described, relates to the occupation of the respondents (this is a self classification scale). Overall in the sample 78% of the men interviewed and 52% of the women were defined as "active", that is having a job in the reference period or claiming to be unemployed. These figures correspond closely with Labour Force statistics when most recent figures were 79% and 53% for men and women respectively<sup>4</sup>.

As the graphic below indicates the largest proportion of the sample (24%) described themselves as manual workers (30% men, 18% women). In other categories such as "self-employed", men exceed women two to one and they also outnumber women in managerial jobs (13% to 8%). White collar jobs were fairly evenly shared between men and women (11% men, 12% women).



The majority of women were to be found in the categories "manual worker" or "houseperson"; these two groups accounted for nearly half of all those women interviewed. National differences showed that the "self-employed" figures were highest in Greece, Italy and Portugal.

<sup>3</sup> Care should be taken in interpreting the results as the age at which compulsory education ends varies between member states.

<sup>4</sup> Employment and Unemployment - Aggregates 1980-1994 - Eurostat.

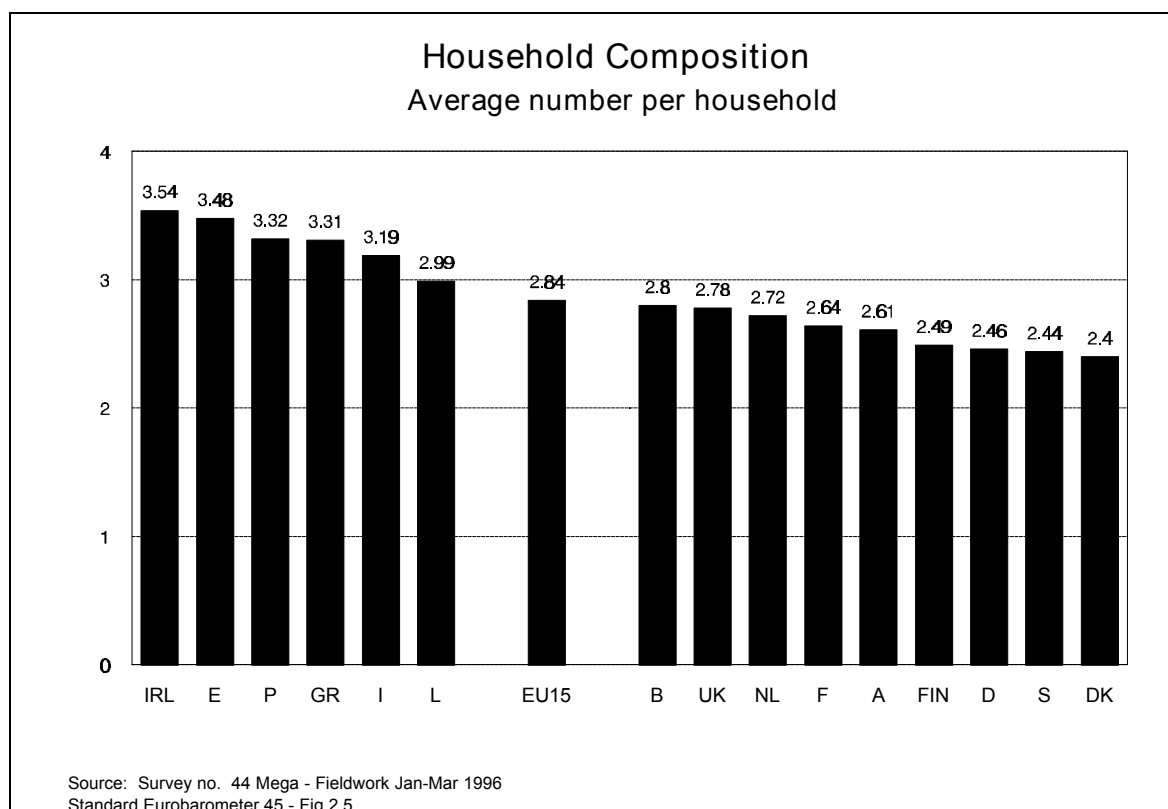
In the non-active categories (houseperson, student and retired groups) women outnumbered men in all categories.

What was particularly striking when comparing unemployment figures was the fact that, while the Eurobarometer sample recorded relatively similar male unemployment figures at both EU and national levels as the Labour Force Survey, reported female unemployment was frequently much lower, but with a proportionate rise in those referring to themselves as housepersons. Although, as we have stated, the question in the Eurobarometer survey is a self-assessment question and is less sophisticated than those questions used on the Labour Force Survey, it is interesting to observe this category "unemployed" is only 7% compared with a LFS figure of nearly double 12.5%. A question of perception amongst women? (Tables 2.1a and 2.1b)

## 2.2 Household Composition

The average household size EU wide in the survey was 2.84 persons. This included all persons, adults and children, living in the same household. One in five women live on their own, but only 15% of men find themselves alone. Likewise those over 55 are doubly likely to be living alone: 27% compared with a 13% average for all other age groups. Three in ten persons live with one other person, while 40% live with 2 or 3 other persons. Larger households (5 or more persons) accounted for 12% of the sample.

Country profiles show a range in household size from 3.54 persons in Ireland to 2.4 persons in Denmark. Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Italy and Luxembourg all lie above the EU average, while lowest scores are recorded in Germany and the Scandinavian countries. (Table 2.4)

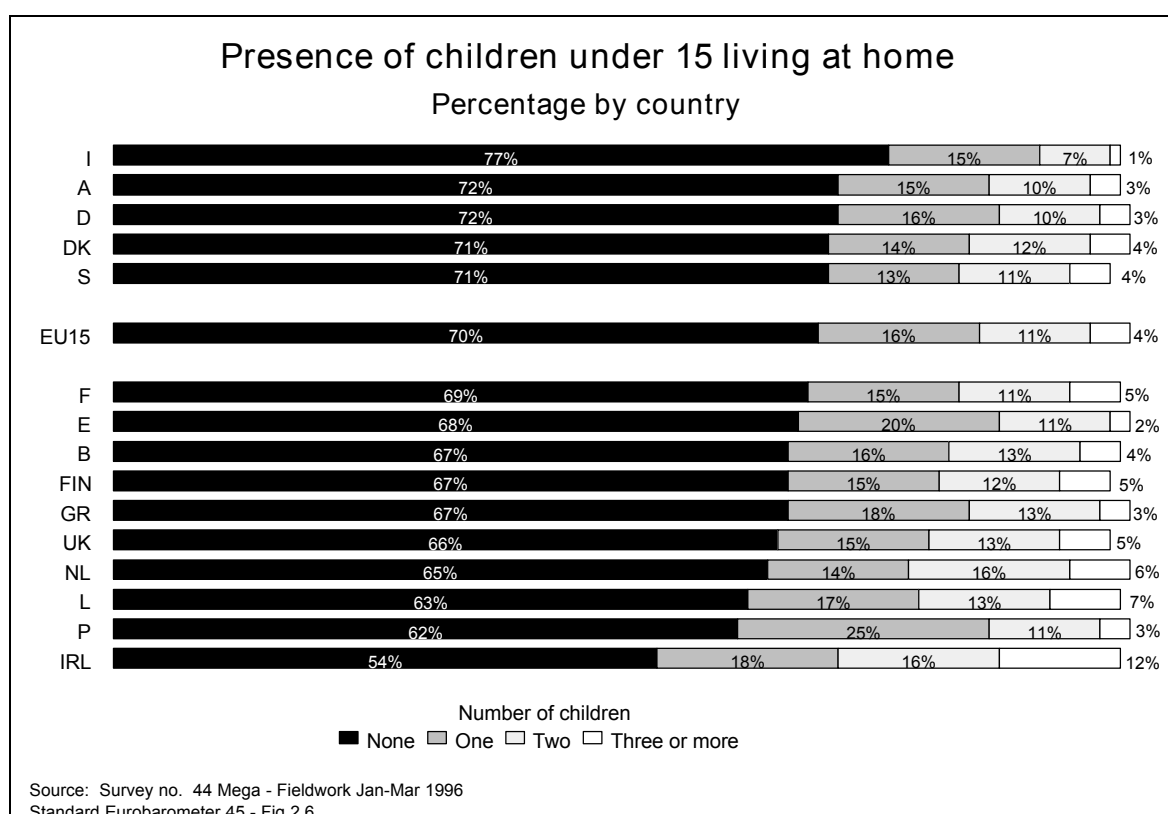


## The presence of children under 15

Only one in three households have children under fifteen in their midst. Seventy percent of all households have no children present. Large families with 3 or more children only accounted for 4% of the households surveyed.

Ireland was the country with the greatest number of children in its households, 46% of all households has children, and 12% had 3 or more. Portugal and Luxembourg both have approximately four in ten households with children.

At the other end of the scale in Italy 77% of households have no children. Austria, Germany, Denmark and Sweden also tend to have fewer children than the EU average. (Table 2.4)



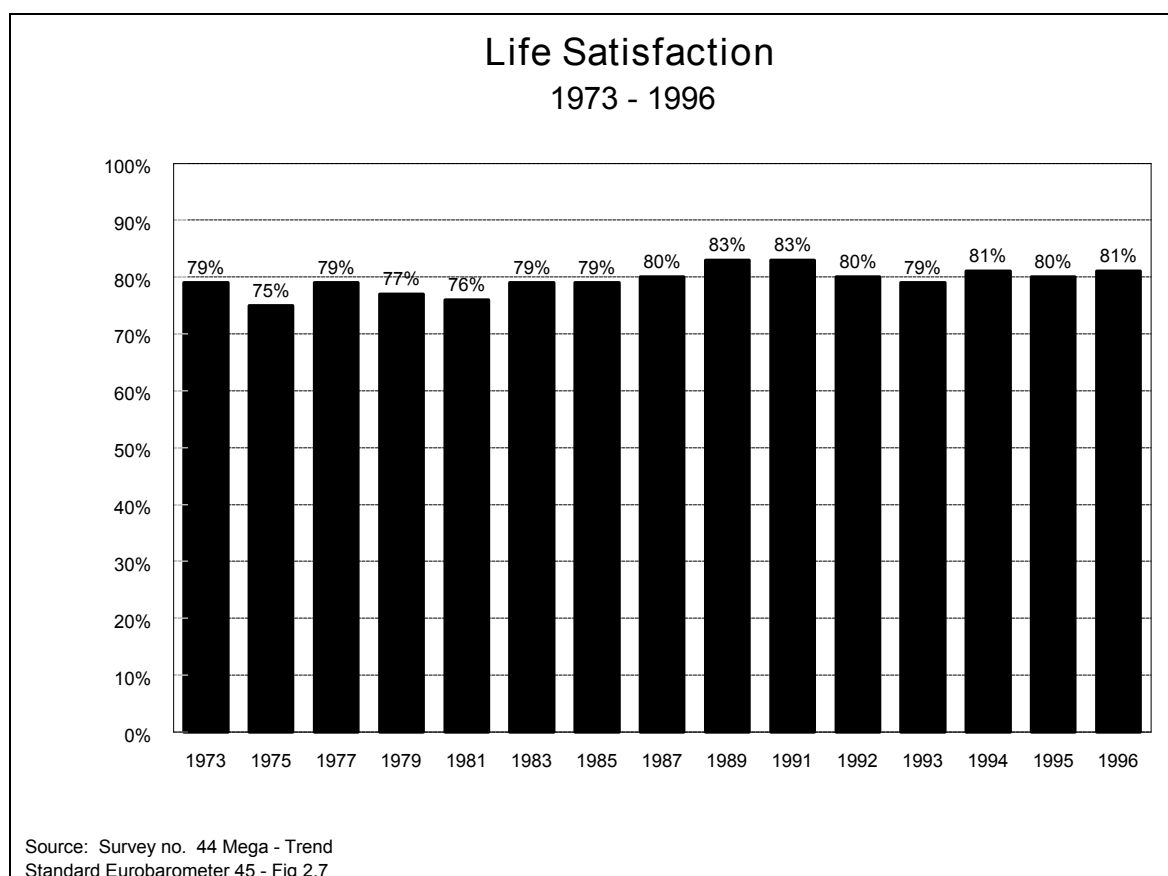
## 2.3 Life satisfaction

The Eurobarometer has for nearly a quarter of a century measured life satisfaction amongst EU citizens. The question reads:

"On the whole are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied with the life you lead?"

As the graph below shows this has proved to be a remarkably stable indicator, whether including the six original member states or the now fifteen.

Results based on the Mega Eurobarometer survey show the overall EU15 results do not vary much from EU12 results obtained before the admission of Austria, Finland and Sweden.

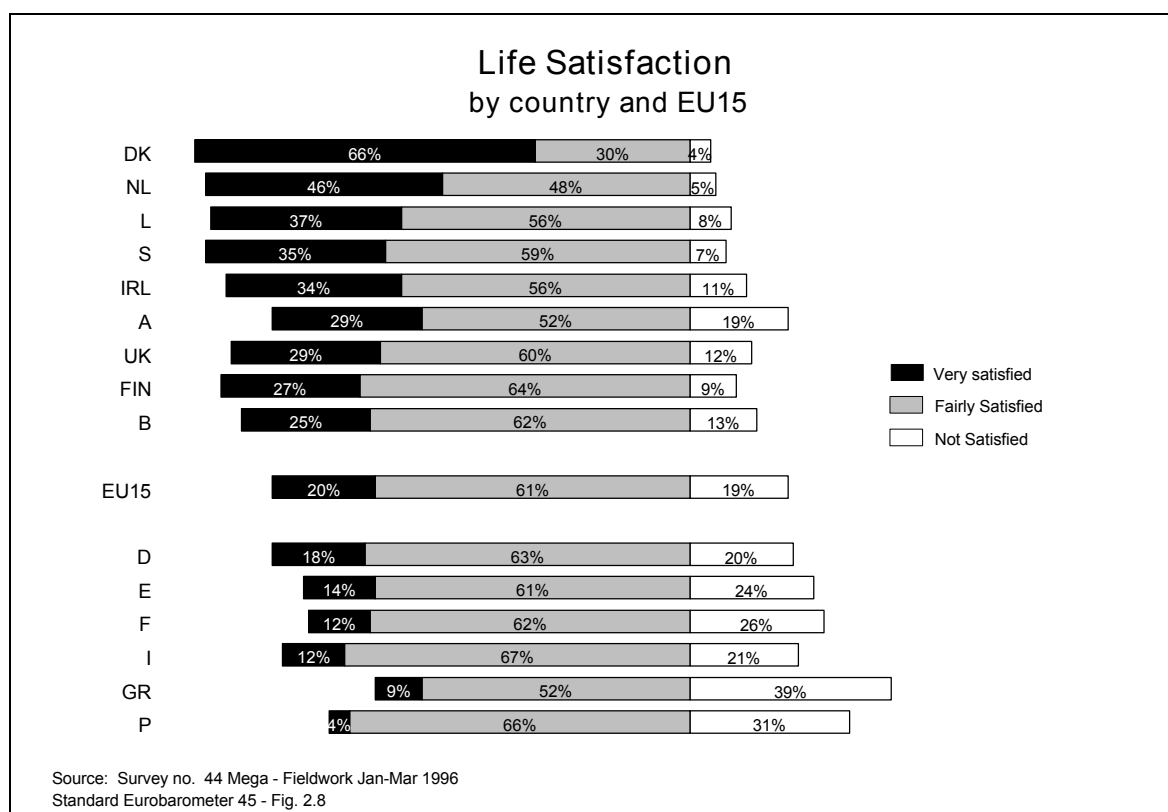


While these life satisfaction scores have remained remarkably constant over the past twenty-five years, the country by country analysis reveals some dramatic differences between member states. The number of "very satisfied" range from 66% "very satisfied" in Denmark to a mere 4% in Portugal (EU average 20%). The United Kingdom results show 29% "very satisfied", which is substantially higher than the other large member states: Germany 18%, Spain 14%, Italy 12% and France 12%. Generally speaking, Greece and Portugal apart, citizens of the smaller member states are more satisfied than their counterparts from the larger countries. (Table 2.2)



Inglehart<sup>5</sup> undertook extensive analysis of life satisfaction over the period 1977-1985 and concluded that the intranational differences were remarkably small between categories. He noted that subjective satisfaction reflects the difference between one's aspiration level and one's perceived situation, with the former gradually adjusting to the circumstances. At the same time cross-national comparisons within categories (high income, for instance) showed remarkable differences, which could be traced to long-term differences in economic levels to only a limited extent. This evidence indicates that the nation and its culture remains a vital indicator of European public opinion.

As we would expect, the various socio-demographic analyses show life satisfaction correlates strongly with socio-economic grade, be it the self-classification scale or the ESOMAR social grade, or other criteria of affluence. Education level is a further indicator of satisfaction; 26% of those "still studying" and 23% of those who completed their studies after the age of 20 claimed to be "very satisfied" with their lives. Satisfaction also runs higher amongst managers (26% very satisfied); in sharp contrast to the "unemployed" where the figure drops to 11%. (Table 2.3)



<sup>5</sup> R. Inglehart Analyzing trends in Western European opinion: the role of the Euro-barometer surveys. Paper given at the ESOMAR-WAPOR seminar on opinion polls, Strasbourg, France, 26-28 November 1986.

## 2.4 European Typology

In the framework of preparation of the three information campaigns planned by the Commission additional analysis was carried out on the Mega survey to establish a typology of attitudes held by Union citizens. What type of Europe do its citizens want?

One hundred and sixty-one variables from the survey reflecting various aspects of life in the Union including concepts such as:

- what is most missing in Europe?
- preferences for the future enlargement, status quo or a halt to integration
- what is necessary for future development?
- the priority actions necessary
- the fears of citizens
- areas of policy which should be decided in common
- the most important citizens' rights
- hopes and fears concerning the single market
- the perceived use of the Union budget
- policies towards the less developed regions
- the increased powers of the Union
- the question of enlargement

These 161 variables were submitted to a factorial analysis and 20 factors resulted which lead to the development of the resulting typology. Readers will find many of these issues treated separately in subsequent chapters, but what follows in this chapter will be a description of the results of this additional analysis. The following table illustrates the importance of each of the 20 factors in the composition of the four groups of the typology.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FOUR TYPOLOGICAL GROUPS					
		Groups			
		1	2	3	4
% Population EU 15:		32.6%	24.5%	25.5%	17.4%
1	Richness of aspirations	-		++	
2	Fear of low cost imports		--	-	+++
3	All decisions to be taken at national level			---	++
4	Rejection of common policies		-	-	+
5	Preoccupation with national identity and culture	++	--	-	
6	Disregard for the SMEs	-	+		-
7	Optimistic		+	++	
8	No escalation of the economic crisis	+	-		--
9	The expenditure on the CAP does not constitute the main element in the budget	-		++	-
10	The bureaucracy costs too much				+++
11	No to payments to less developed regions and for enlargement			+	---
12	Do not fear sharp changes, increases in tax, excessive centralised control	-	+		--
13	Support political integration	++	-		
14	No to concerns about delocalisation, the transfer of jobs		-	++	-
15	Priority - fight against drugs and crime which constitute read danger for the Union		--	++	+
16	No common decisions in foreign affairs		-		+++
17	New countries must join the Union		+		--
18	Priority for defence, maintenance./peace	++	-	+	--
19	The right to appeal to a European Ombudsman				+++
20	Fear that large member states impose views, loss of sovereignty		--	+	+

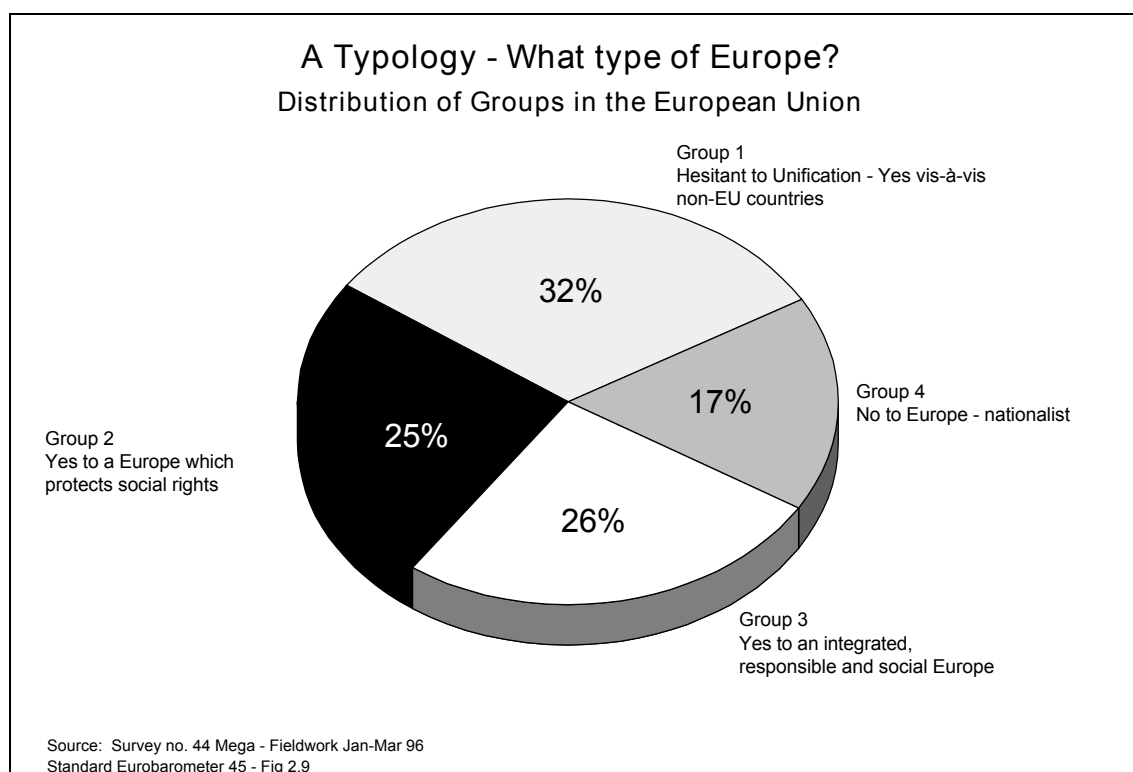
The signs "+" and "-" in the cells above indicate their level of significance:

+++ significance at the 99% level  
 ++ significance at the 95% level  
 + significance at the 90% level

The negative signs represent the same levels but on the negative side.

The resultant analyses yield four groups which were labelled as follows:

GROUP 1:	HESITANT TO UNIFICATION? - YES VIS-A-VIS NON-EU COUNTRIES
GROUP 2:	YES TO A EUROPE WHICH PROTECTS SOCIAL RIGHTS
GROUP 3:	YES TO AN INTEGRATED, RESPONSIBLE AND SOCIAL EUROPE
GROUP 4:	NO TO EUROPE - NATIONALIST



Group 1: Hesitant to Unification - Yes vis-à-vis non-EU countries
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This group accounted for 32.6% of the citizens of the Union. The group is generally defined as one which is less involved and less concerned by European integration. Their aspirations are not well defined and they have few clear priorities.

- ☐ Why do we need collective decisions, common policies? Perhaps?
- ☐ Very much in favour of political integration
- ☐ Sensitive to the idea of the right to vote where one lives
- ☐ People in the group give priority to a common defence policy and a European army capable of peace-keeping.

Nevertheless, this group is very attached to their language, their culture and issues of identity.

This group is relatively conservative where it concerns the disappearance of the small and medium enterprise (farming and fishing and others). They are struck by the proportion of the budget spent on the Common Agricultural Policy.

### Group 2: Yes to a Europe which protects social rights

This group comprises 24.5% of all European Union citizens. Citizens in this group are above average in optimism concerning the development of Europe. These citizens do not reject the development of common policies even if they are uncertain.

What are the reasons for this reluctance? Certainly:

- ☐ the fear of a more serious economic crisis
- ☐ the risk of seeing the rich pay for the poor
- ☐ the movement of companies to areas with cheaper production costs

On the other hand they are less concerned by:

- ☐ cheaper imports coming from other member states
- ☐ the loss of identity or national culture
- ☐ the disappearance of SME's
- ☐ the priority accorded to combatting drug trafficking and organised crime
- ☐ the need to establish a common defence policy
- ☐ the possible abuse of power by the large member states.

This group does not fear rapid change and they are for an acceleration in the process of enlargement.

### Group 3: Yes to an integrate, responsible social Europe

This group comprises 25.5% of the EU population. Fundamentally the members of this group are characterised by hopes and expectations for European integration. They are by far the best prepared to accept common decisions made at European Union level in many areas. They are also supporters of common policies.

They are very optimistic concerning unification and see very few negative effects and do not anticipate great difficulties.

Their priorities include:

- ☐ the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime
- ☐ the formation of a European army in order to have a common defence policy

Even if they are a little concerned by the power of the large member states, they do not expect the rich to pay for the poorer regions.

They are not very concerned by low cost imports and do not anticipate the transfer of jobs from one area to another.

Concerns about the loss of identity and/or national culture do not worry them particularly. Neither does the proportion of the budget given to the Common Agricultural Policy.

#### Group 4: No to Europe - nationalist

Group four accounts for 17.4% of all EU citizens. Fundamentally this group of citizens are preoccupied by protecting/retaining national sovereignty. For example:

- ☐ they want national decision taking in nearly all areas
- ☐ they frequently reject any suggestions of common EU policy
- ☐ more specifically they do not want to see a common foreign policy or a common policy concerning trade with third countries.

Their principal concerns about Europe included:

- ☐ the fear of a greater economic crisis
- ☐ the increase of uncontrolled imports coming from the other EU member states or from non-EU countries (particularly cheaper and poor quality products) and in some cases implying the movement of jobs
- ☐ the disappearance of the SMEs and the relocation of production units to cheaper sites.

This group also believes that a centralised bureaucracy is excessively expensive and they fear that the richer countries/regions will end up paying for the poorer. They also fear that decisions will protect the interests of the large countries to the detriment of the smaller. Finally they consider the cost of the Common Agricultural Policy excessive.

The following graph shows the distribution of the four groups by country together with the EU average. (Table 2.6)

