

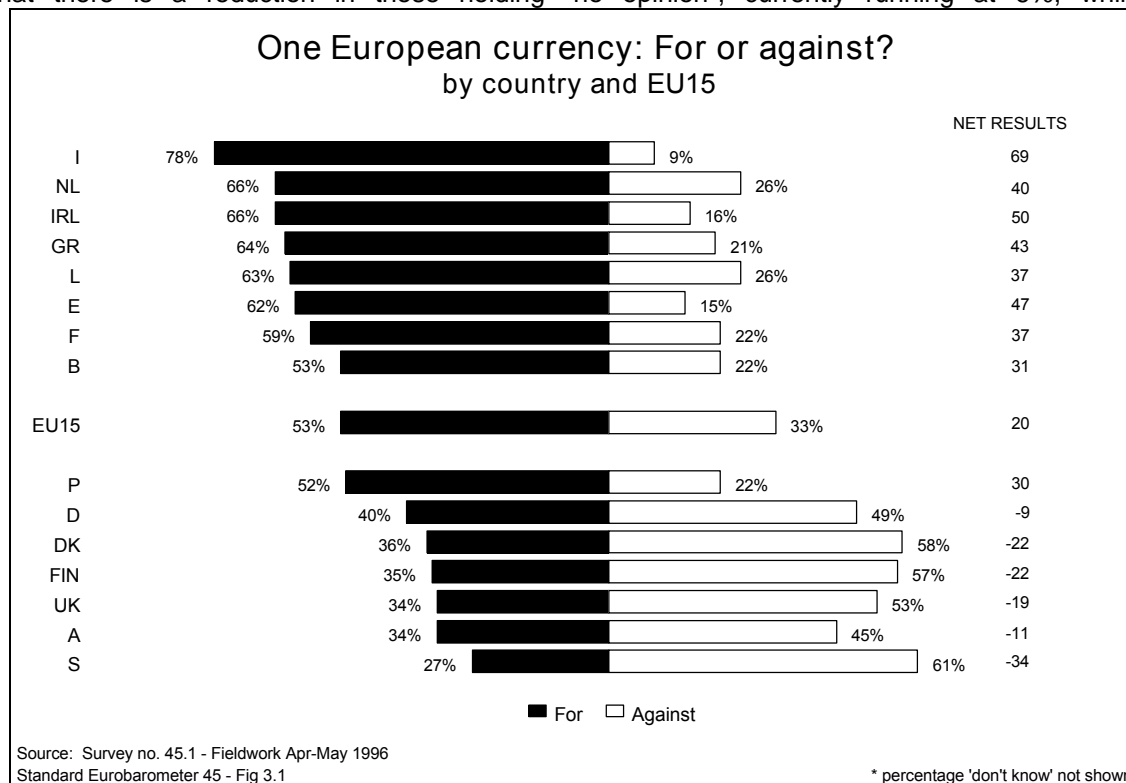
### 3. Major issues on the political agenda

In this chapter we will examine public opinion on the two key items on the 1996 political agenda. The first section will discuss public attitudes towards the single currency, the second will examine opinions towards the various issues which are being discussed in the framework of the Intergovernmental Conference, which is scheduled to conclude at the Amsterdam Council meeting in June 1997.

#### The Single Currency

##### 3.1 Support for a Single Currency

Since the announcement in December 1995 of the name of the new European currency, public debate concerning its introduction has intensified. The increased awareness has resulted in an overall increase in support for the single currency. In Eurobarometer 44 (November/December 1995) we recorded support at 47% "for" with 33% "against". The current survey, conducted six months later, shows support increased by 6% to 53%, while the "against" figure remained at 33%. This suggests that there is a reduction in those holding "no opinion", currently running at 6%, while 9%



spontaneously mentioned being "neither for, nor against". (Table 3.1)

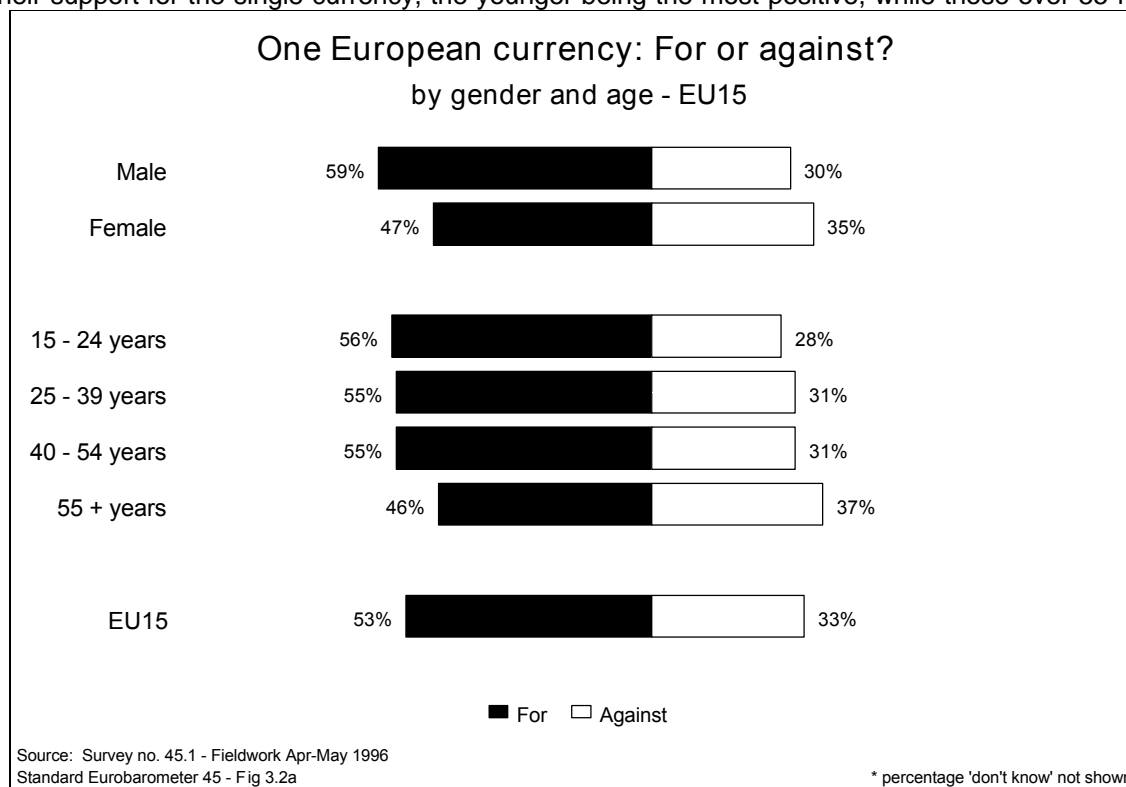
Net gains were recorded in all member states but two, Finland (-2) and Sweden (-9). As the table below shows, net gains ranged from +11 points in Greece down to no change in Luxembourg.

CHANGES IN NET RESULTS <sup>1</sup>								
AUTUMN 1995 - SPRING 1996								
	B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I
1995	26	-28	-11	32	40	35	43	58
1996	31	-22	-9	43	47	37	50	69
% change	+5	+6	+2	+11	+7	+2	+7	+1

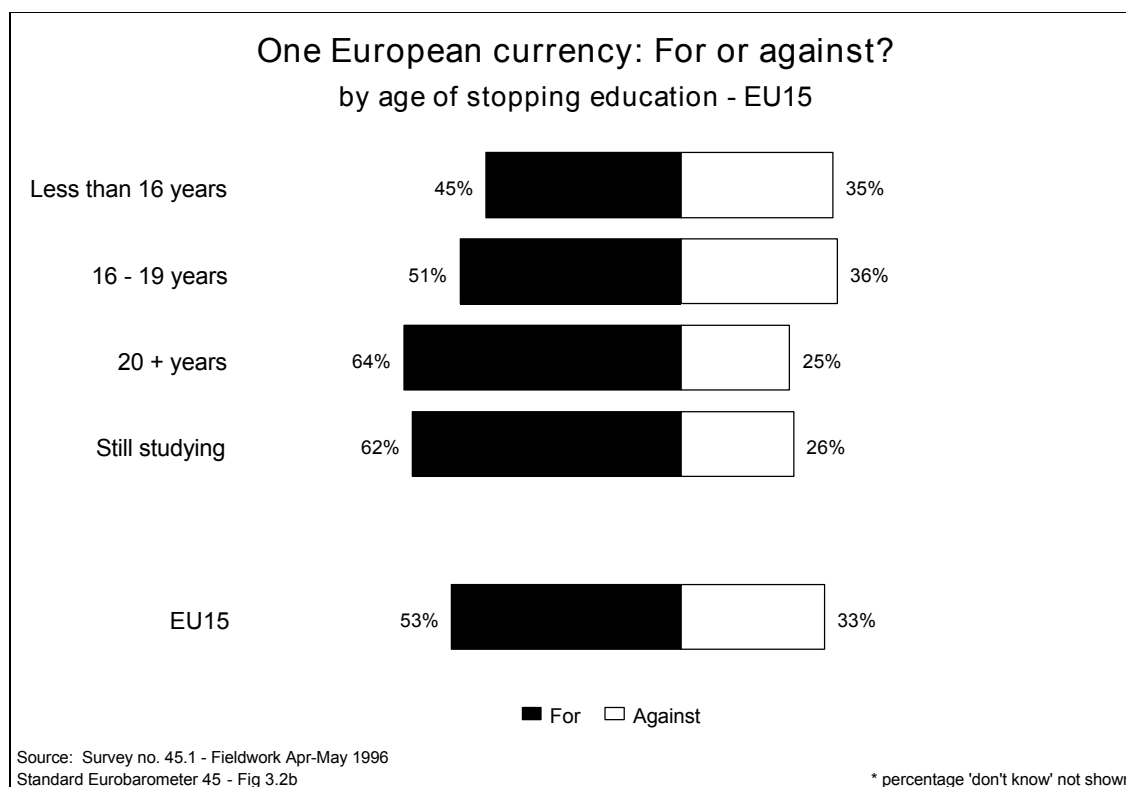
	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EU15
1995	37	36	-20	25	-20	-25	-25	14
1996	30	40	-11	30	-22	-34	-19	20
% change	0	+4	+9	+5	-2	-9	+5	+6

The socio-demographic analysis confirms previous trends, namely men are more positive than women (59% : 47%), men have also become more positive (+7% : +4%). All age groups have increased in their support for the single currency, the younger being the most positive, while those over 55 remain



more reticent. (Table 3.2)

<sup>1</sup> Net results are calculated by calculating the differences between the positive (for) results and the negative (against) results.

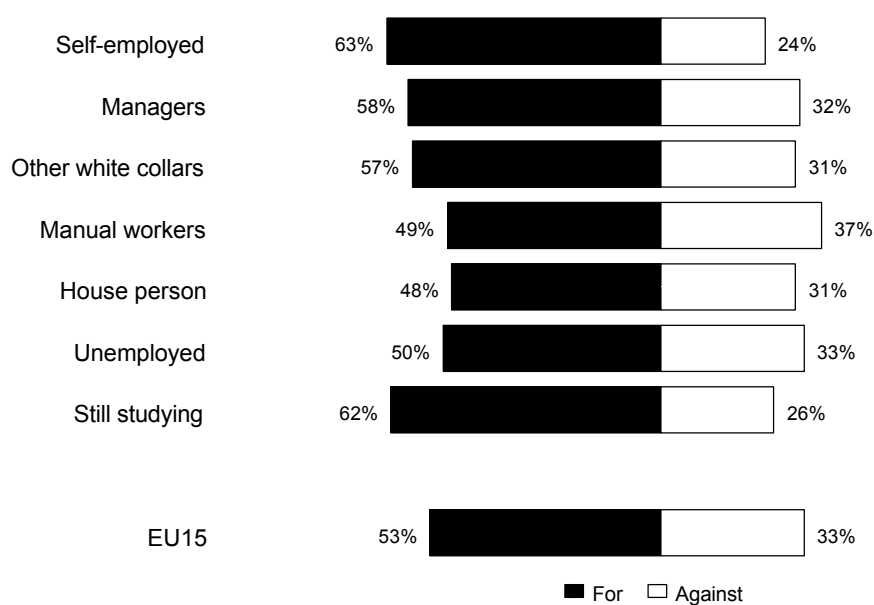


Level of education also correlates with positive attitudes; amongst those completing their education after the age of 20 or "still studying" nearly two-thirds are in favour, compared with only 45% of those leaving school before they were 16.

Analysis by occupation shows the highest support amongst the self-employed (63%), managers (58%) and white collar workers (57%). Lower scores were recorded amongst manual workers (49%), the unemployed (50%) and housepersons (48%). The rank order for those groups has not changed since the last survey Eurobarometer 44 in the Autumn of 1995. (Table 3.2)

## One European currency: For or against?

by occupation of respondent - EU15



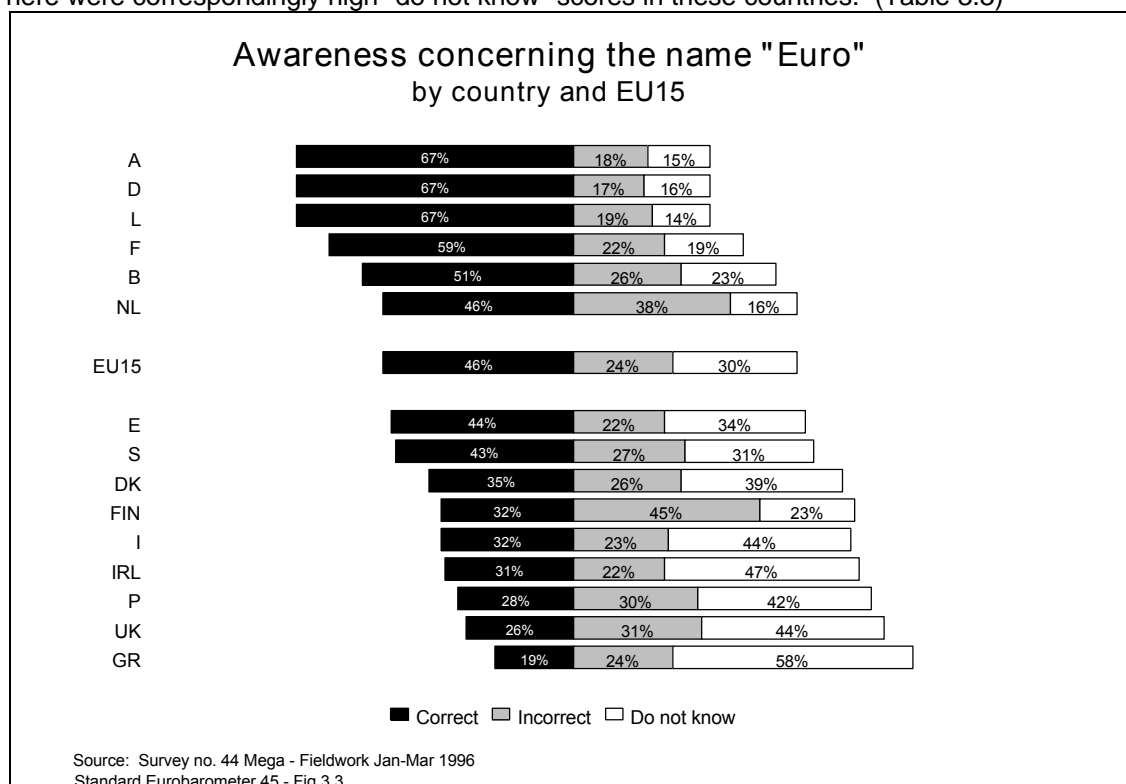
Source: Survey no. 45.1 - Fieldwork Apr-May 1996  
Standard Eurobarometer 45 - Fig 3.2c

\* percentage 'don't know' not shown

### 3.2 Awareness of the name "Euro"

Respondents were asked if they could name the new currency. Overall, 46% were able to spontaneously name the Euro, 24% gave an incorrect answer and 30% "did not know".

In Austria, Germany and Luxembourg two-thirds of all residents were able to correctly name the new currency. However, in ten member states under half the population was able to do so. Awareness was particularly low in Greece (19% correct answers), the United Kingdom (26%) and Portugal (28%). There were correspondingly high "do not know" scores in these countries. (Table 3.3)



Generally men are better informed; 52% citing the correct name compared to 40% for women. Higher education levels reflected better levels of knowledge. Fifty-eight percent correct for those completing their education after the age of 20 compared to 35% of those having left school by the age of sixteen. (Table 3.6)

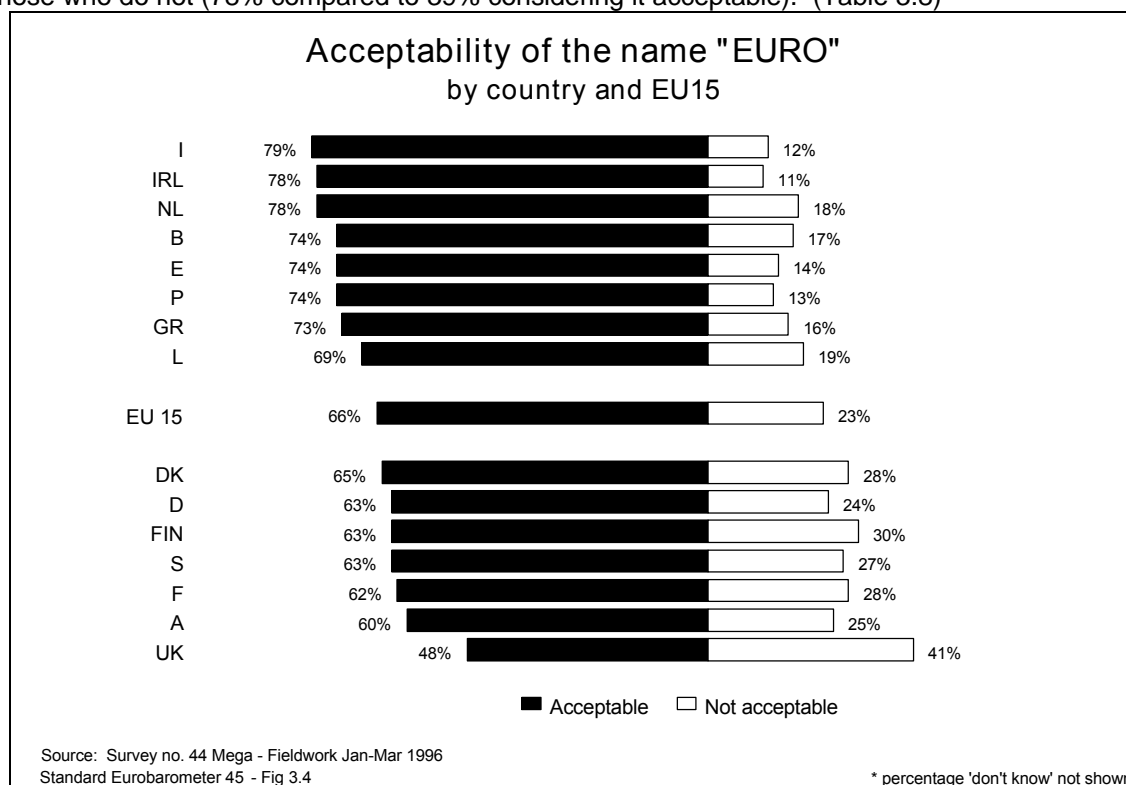
High opinion leader scores correlated with better awareness; 57% high as compared with 34% low. Finally, those with a generally favourable attitude to Europe were more likely to be aware (51% positive attitudes compared with 43% negative).

### 3.3 Acceptability of the name "Euro"

Among the 65,000 persons interviewed in the Mega survey some two-thirds found the name acceptable, 23% did not like the name and finally some 11% held no opinion.

These figures are slightly down (-3%) since last measured in December 1995<sup>2</sup>. The name was well liked in Italy (79% acceptable), Ireland and the Netherlands (78%) and Portugal, Belgium and Spain (74%). The lowest score of 48% was recorded in the United Kingdom. (Table 3.5)

Demographic variables show few differences between men and women or between age groups. The most striking variation was observed between those holding positive attitudes to Europe generally and those who do not (78% compared to 39% considering it acceptable). (Table 3.8)



<sup>2</sup> Telephone survey number 54, fieldwork 16-20 December 1995.

### 3.4 Introduction of the Currency

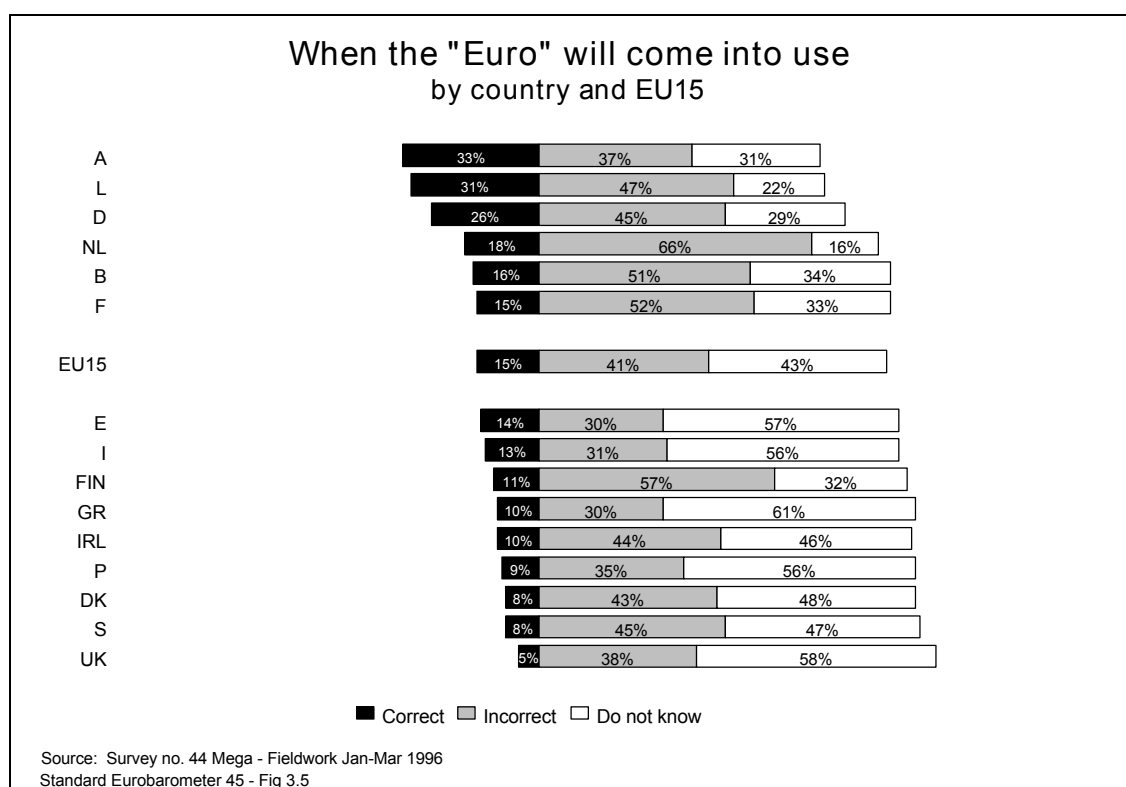
In response to the question:

*"Do you happen to know the year when notes and coins in the European currency will be introduced?"*

only 15% were able to cite the correct date of 2002; 41% gave an incorrect answer, while 43% stated they did not know.

Austrian and Luxembourg residents were the best informed, with approximately one in three being able to give the correct answer. In Portugal, Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom less than one in ten was able to answer.

Overall the level of "do not know" was exceptionally high; in some countries reaching six in ten. Ignorance was wide-spread across all socio-demographic groups, only opinion leaders and managers being marginally above average. (Tables 3.4 and 3.7)



## The 1996 Intergovernmental Conference

### 3.5 Objectives of the Intergovernmental Conference

Previous Eurobarometers and in particular Eurobarometer 44 outlined the history leading to the current Intergovernmental Conference, the sixth in the history of the Union. The conference itself opened on the 29th March in Turin. The conclusions of the Turin European Council summarised the aims of the IGC as follows:

- **bringing the Union closer to its citizens in particular by:**
  - living up to their expectations as regards the fulfilment of the objective of a high level of employment while ensuring social protection, examining how to provide the Union with the basis for a better cooperation and coordination in order to strengthen national policies; it should also be examined how the efforts of the governments as well as the social partners could be made more effective and better coordinated by the Treaty;
  - making environmental protection more effective and coherent at the level of the Union in order to secure sustainable development;
  - providing transparency and openness in the Union's work;
  - strengthening European citizenship, without replacing national citizenship and while respecting the national identity and traditions of the Member States;
  - respecting their fundamental rights;
  - meeting their need for security, which implies improving substantially the means and the instruments against terrorism, organized crime and drug trafficking, as well as the policies on all aspects of asylum, on visas and on immigration with a view to a common judicial area in this context;
  
- **strengthening and enlarging the scope of the Union's common foreign and security policy, which means in particular addressing, with the purpose of a greater consistency and efficiency:**
  - the most effective interplay of the various actors, in accordance with the role assigned to them by the Treaty, in preparing and implementing the Union's external action (European Council, Council, Commission, Presidency, Member States and, if appropriate, a new function in CFSP);
  - better coherence between a reformed CFSP and a strengthened external economic action;
  - decision-making procedures and conditions, including the possibility of whether the unanimity rule can be relaxed;
  - means of ensuring swift and certain funding for the action decided on;
  - the Union's security and defence dimension, and in particular the possibility of including in the Treaty objectives corresponding to the Petersberg tasks;
  - closer links between the European Union and the WEU, also with a view to defining the question of their future relations following the results of the June NATO meeting in Berlin;
  - a possible political solidarity clause;



- **and, finally, assuring, also in view of enlargement, the good functioning of institutions while respecting their balance, and the efficiency of the decision-making process, which means in particular addressing the following points:**
- for the Council: the scope of qualified-majority voting, the weighting of votes and the threshold for qualified-majority decision-making;
  - for the Commission: the manner of appointing it and its composition;
  - for the European Parliament: the procedures under which it participates in the legislative process and its political and watchdog role;
  - for the European Court of Justice: improving its role and functioning;
  - for the Union as a whole: means of ensuring proper application of the principle of subsidiarity; the question of adequacy of resources; further consideration of the scope and conditions for strengthened cooperation; and the question of the contribution by the national parliaments, either individually or collectively, to European integration.

Lastly, the European Council calls on the IGC to seek all possible ways of simplifying the Treaties so as to make the Union's goals and operation easier for the public to understand.

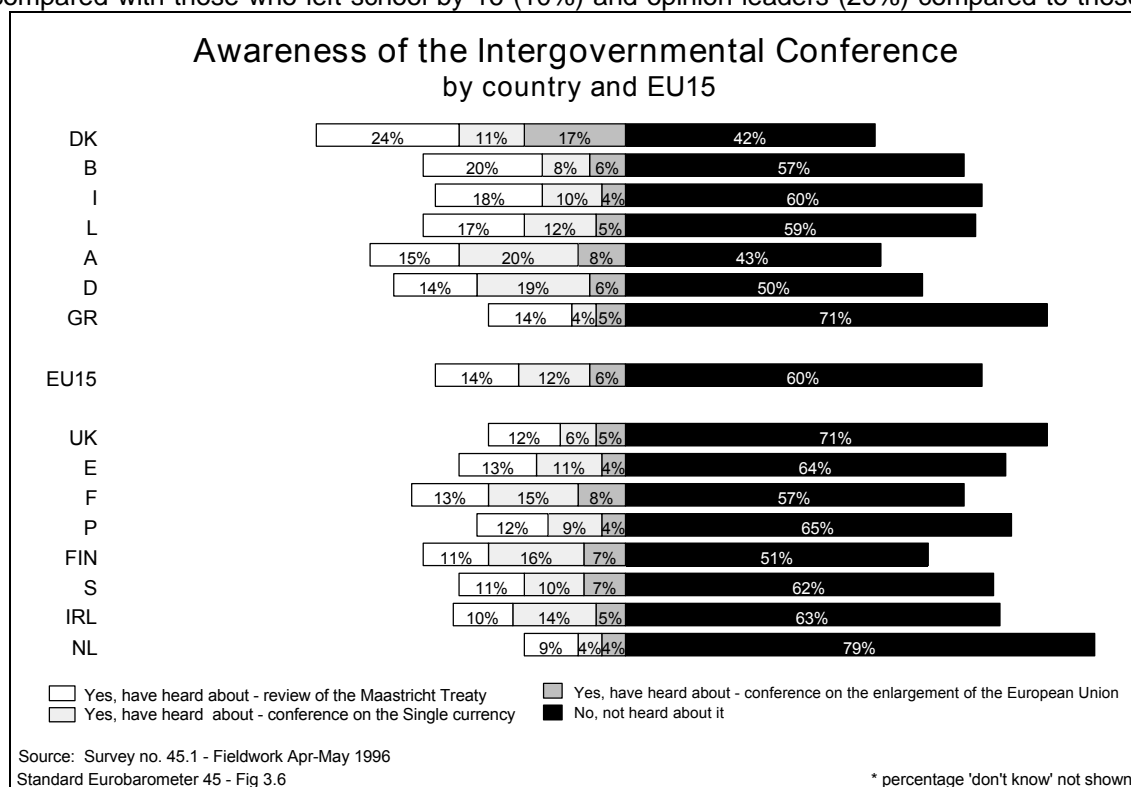
The Eurobarometer has through its surveys measured public opinion concerning these objectives. Certain general themes are dealt with in this chapter, others such as enlargement and citizenship have chapters dedicated to them specifically.

### 3.6 Public Awareness of the Intergovernmental Conference

The question concerning awareness of the IGC was first asked in the Standard Eurobarometer of November/December 1995. At that time 23% claimed to have heard of the up-coming conference, of whom 11% correctly identified its purpose, namely a review of the Maastricht Treaty. Six months later the identical question resulted in 32% claiming to have heard of the IGC and 14% correctly identifying its purpose. At the end of 1995 sixty-seven percent had not heard of the Conference; the figure has now dropped to 60%.

Awareness remains highest in Denmark at 24% but this is 4% down on the previous survey. Increases are seen in Belgium (+10), Italy (+8), the United Kingdom (+6), Spain (+4), Austria and Greece (+3) and France (+2). Elsewhere there as been a drop in awareness noticeably in Sweden (-7) and Luxembourg (-6). (Table 3.9)

Demographic and attitudinal analysis confirms other awareness measures, namely men are more aware than women (17% to 11%); the educated, those who were educated after the age of 20 (20%) compared with those who left school by 16 (10%) and opinion leaders (26%) compared to those with



low opinion leadership scores (8%).

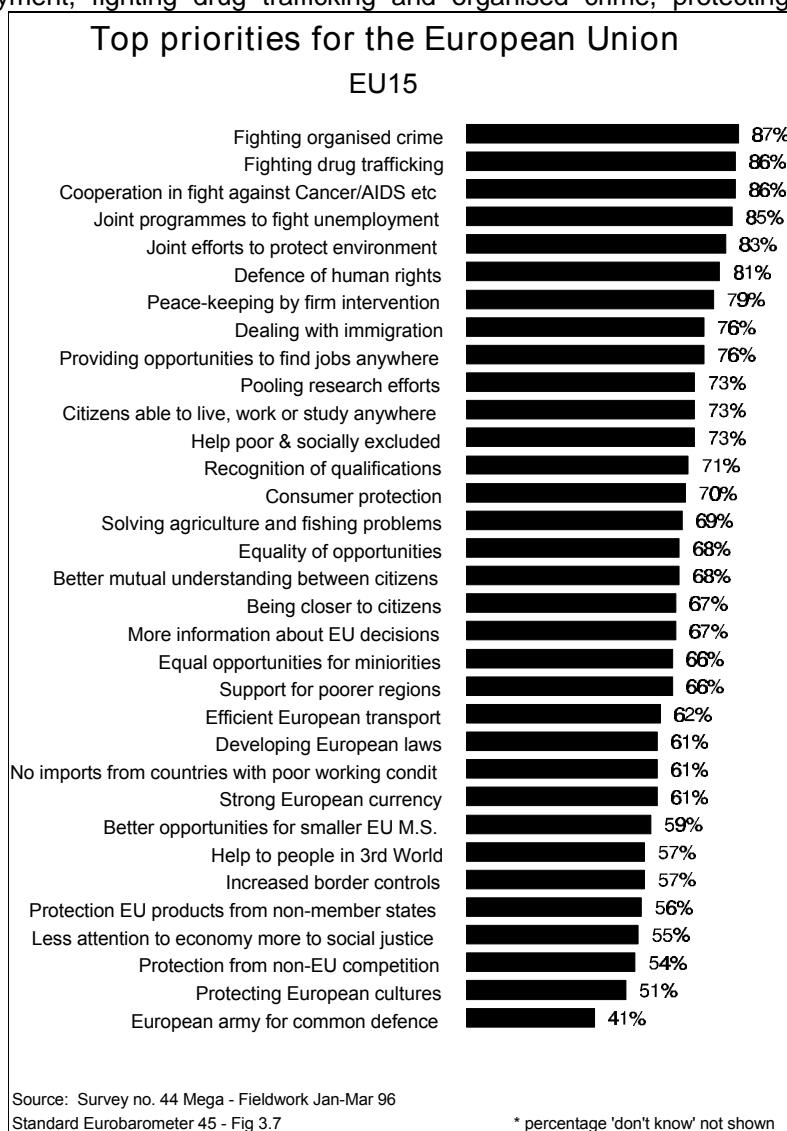
### 3.7 Priority objectives for the European Union as seen by its citizens

Two questions were used to establish citizens' priorities for the Union in the future. The first as asked in the survey EB45 listed eleven aims and asked:

*"I am going to read out some aims which should be given priority in the European Union over the next ten years. Please could you tell me whether you view the respective points as having a high priority, a low priority or neither a high or low priority"*

The second question, more extensive in form and used in the Mega survey, presented a list of 33 items examining similar areas. For each respondents were asked if it was considered a key priority or not.

Overall the responses to both questions reflect the same areas for priority action; tackling the problem of unemployment, fighting drug trafficking and organised crime, protecting the environment and



maintaining peace in Europe. The lowest priority was awarded to the setting up a European army for common defence. (Tables 3.10 and 3.11)

In the country analysis, while in broad terms, the same concerns are expressed by many citizens, these are some national variations as the summary table opposite shows. Readers are referred to the detailed tables for a more in-depth view. (Table 3.12)

Belgium	
High	Fight unemployment
	Fight drugs and crime
Low	European army
	Support European culture
	Help Third World
Denmark	
High	Protect environment
	Fight drugs and crime
Low	European army
	Developing European laws
Germany	
High	Fight drugs and crime
	Fight unemployment
Low	European army
	Support European culture
Greece	
High	Fight unemployment
	Fight cancer/AIDS etc
Low	Support European culture
	Setting up European transport networks
Spain	
High	Fight unemployment
	Solve problems in agriculture and fisheries
Low	European army
	Increasing controls at external borders
France	
High	Fight cancer/AIDS, etc
	Fight unemployment
	Fight drugs and crime
Low	European army
	Help Third World
Ireland	
High	Fight drugs and crime
	Fight cancer/AIDS, etc
Low	European army
	Paying less attention to economy and to social justice
Italy	
High	Fight unemployment
	Fight drugs and crime
	Fight cancer/AIDS, etc
Low	European army
	Prevent import of goods from countries with poor working conditions
Luxembourg	
High	Fight drugs and crime
	Fight cancer/AIDS, etc
	Protect the environment
Low	European army
	Support European culture
	Protect Europe from competition - US/Japan
Netherlands	
High	Fight drugs and crime
	Protect the environment
	Defence of human rights
Low	Support European culture
	European army
Austria	
High	Fight drugs and crime
	Fight unemployment
Low	Support European culture
	European army
Portugal	
High	Fight drugs and crime
	Fight cancer/AIDS, etc
	Fight unemployment
Low	European army
	Developing European laws
Finland	
High	Fight drugs and crime
	Protect the environment
	Fight unemployment
Low	European army
	Have a strong European currency
Sweden	
High	Protect the environment
	Fight drugs and crime
Low	European army
	Protect Europe from competition - US/Japan
United Kingdom	
High	Fight drugs and crime
	Fight cancer/AIDS, etc
Low	European army
	Protect EU products from non-member states countries
EU 15	
High	Fight drugs and crime
	Fight cancer/AIDS, etc
Low	European army
	Support European cultures

### 3.8 Support for current policy issues

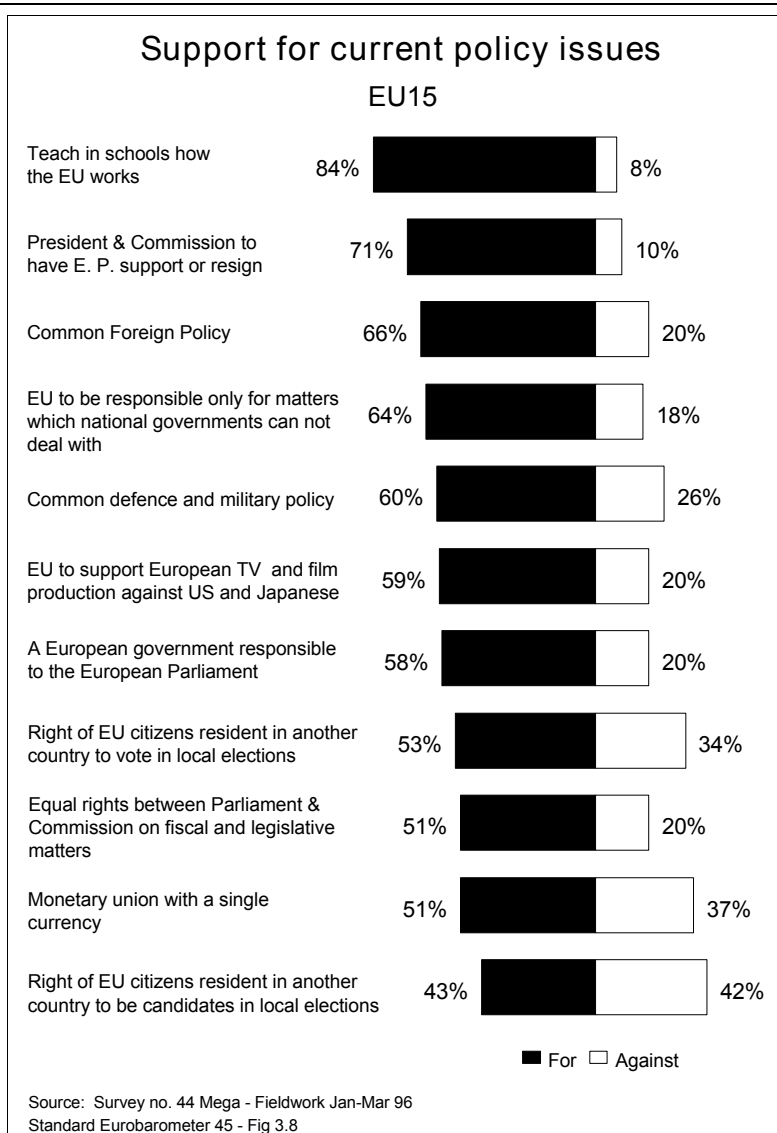
Together with the questions concerning areas considered for priority action by the Union, the Eurobarometer has established a list of key elements which are contained within the framework of the Treaty on European Union (Maastricht). Over a number of surveys, respondents have been asked to express their support or not for these policies, but without mention of the treaty itself.

Analysis of the trends indicates steady support for monetary union with a single currency. Support is also unchanging for a common foreign policy. However, there is a steady decline (-17 points) in the past three years for a common defence and military policy, which is confirmed in the previous section on key priorities.

The topics covered under the title "Democratic Process" have remained relatively stable over the past year, although they have increased since 1993. The one exception concerns the issue of subsidiarity - the European Union to be responsible only for matters with which national governments cannot deal - here we see a steady increase in support over the three year period.

Under the title "Education and Culture" support runs high for the teaching about the European Union in schools. Less importance is given to EU support for the television and film industry. (Tables 3.13 and 3.14)

KEY MAASTRICHT ISSUES				
Theme	Spring 1993 EB 39	Spring 1995 EB 43	Autumn 95 EB 44	Spring 96 EB 45
<b>Economic and Monetary union</b>	52	52	53	51
<b>Foreign policy and defence</b>				
Common defence policy	77	75	73	60
Foreign policy	66	67	69	66
<b>Democratic processes</b>				
EP support for Commission members	66	70	72	71
Subsidiarity	57	55	63	64
European Government	54	57	60	58
Vote local EU elections	48	54	54	53
Candidate EU elections	38	45	45	43
<b>Education and Culture</b>				
Teaching about EU in schools	na	84	86	84
Support for EU TV & Film production	na	64	66	59

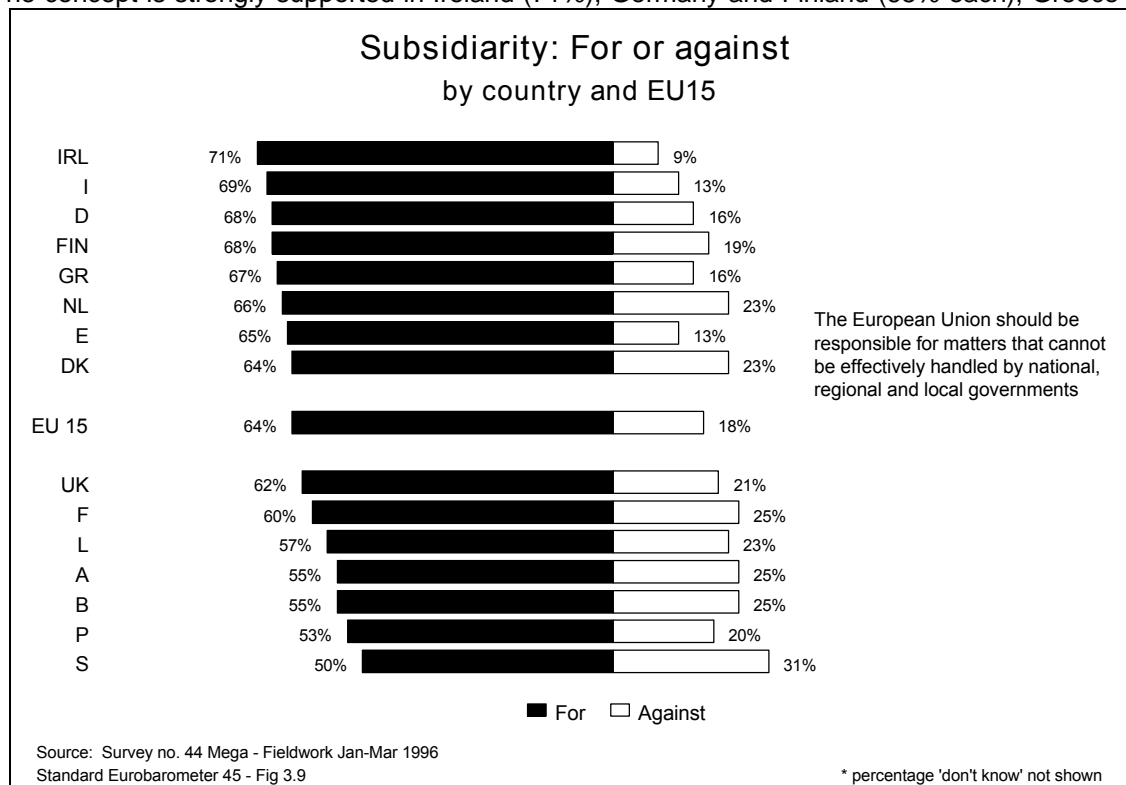




### 3.9 Subsidiarity - national or joint-decision taking

As we saw in the previous section, support for subsidiarity has steadily increased over the past three years. A principle that was written into the Maastricht Treaty is supported by nearly two-thirds of all EU citizens, only 18% are against the principle and a remaining 18% hold "no opinion"

The concept is strongly supported in Ireland (71%), Germany and Finland (68% each), Greece (67%)



and the Netherlands (66%). Lower scores are recorded in Sweden (50%), Portugal (53%) and Belgium and Austria (55% each). (Table 3.13)

In the demographic analysis the concept of subsidiarity is supported by the well-educated, managers, people with a positive attitude to Europe and the opinion leaders. (Table 3.14)

If subsidiarity is supported by the majority, which are the areas to which they feel it is most appropriate? The Eurobarometer asked respondents to rate 24 policy areas, asking for each which should be decided at EU level and which should be decided nationally.

The results compared with the previous survey remain remarkably constant. As we have stated in previous surveys the more international issues receive greater support for EU action. Issues which are perceived as domestic issues, but people recognise as having an intra-state dimension also receive support for EU action. These include the fight against drugs, scientific research and environmental issues.

Issues which can be defined as cultural or social tend to be seen as domestic issues best left to the individual governments in the member states.



### National or joint EU Decision Making 24 Policy areas - EU15



Source: Survey no. 44 Mega - Fieldwork Jan-Mar 96  
Standard Eurobarometer 45 - Fig 3.10



### 3.10 A European Government

In this final section, the survey measured attitudes towards a European government. Does Europe need a European government to further European integration, and do people support the idea of a European Government responsible to the European Parliament?

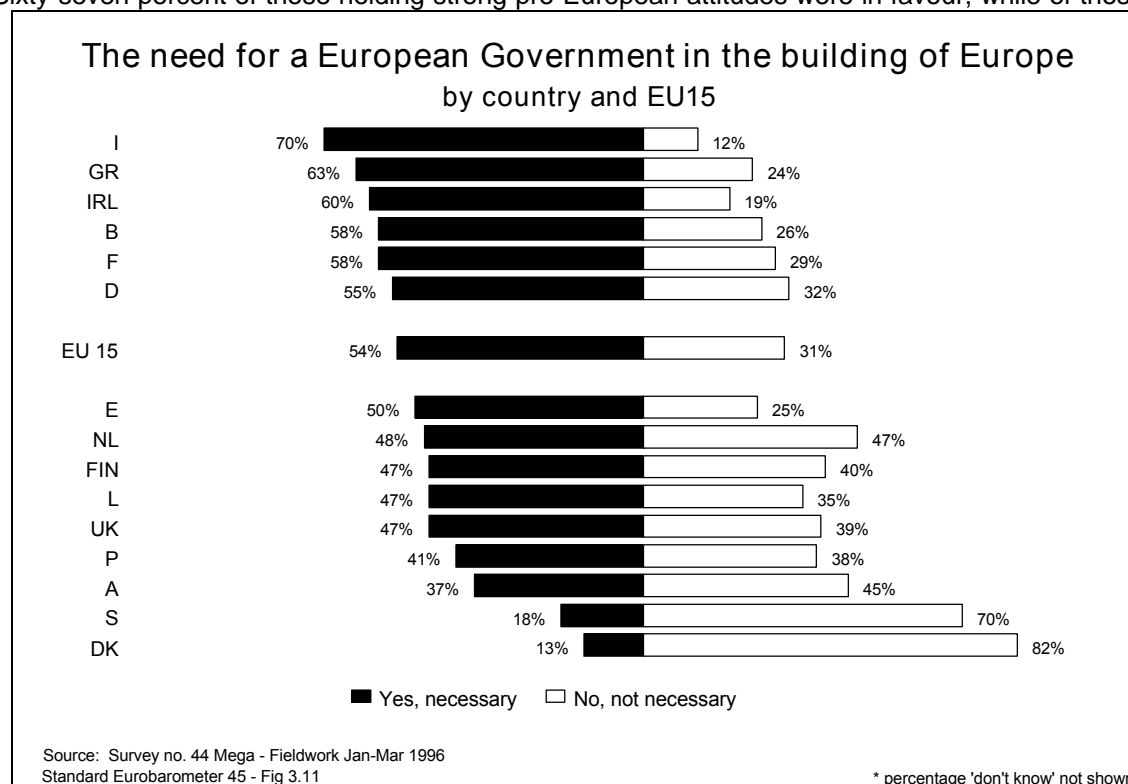
In the first instance, respondents were asked:

*"Do you think that, to make further progress in building Europe, it is necessary or not to have an elected European government?"*

Just over half (54%) of those interviewed favoured the idea of a European government, 31% found it unnecessary while 15% held no opinion.

Support was highest in Italy where seven in ten supported the concept. Other countries to exceed the EU average were Greece (63%), Ireland (60%), Belgium and France (58%) and Germany (55%). Denmark and Sweden were the most negative with 13% and 18% only, supporting the idea. (Table 3.17)

Demographic analysis shows the classic pattern of stronger support amongst men (56%) versus: women (51%), the younger (56% to 50%), the better educated (58% of those completing their education after the age of 20 or still studying versus 48% of those who left school by the age of 16). Sixty-seven percent of those holding strong pro-European attitudes were in favour, while of those with



strongly negative views only 27% were in favour. (Table 3.18)

The second question relating to the concept of a European government asked:

*"Are you for or against the following proposal: The formation, for the European Union, of a European government responsible to the European Parliament"*

Over the past three years that the Eurobarometer has monitored public opinion on this issue there has been a steady increase in support, although with some national fluctuations as the following table indicates. Overall support at EU15 level was 58% with 20% "against" and 22% holding "no opinion". (Tables 3.19 and 3.20)

FOR A EUROPEAN GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT						
	Autumn 93 EB 40	Spring 94 EB 41	December 94 EB 42	Spring 95 EB 43	Autumn 95 EB 44	Spring 96 <sup>3</sup> EB 45
EU12	47	50	55	56	60	59
EU15	-	-	-	54	59	58
Belgique	54	59	63	69	64	60
Danmark	19	21	24	26	29	24
Deutschland	42	45	49	51	63	57
Greece	58	58	65	70	62	67
Espana	57	55	58	57	64	64
France	50	53	58	59	61	64
Ireland	42	45	48	57	50	56
Italy	66	68	72	72	68	70
Luxembourg	49	56	65	70	65	58
Netherlands	49	57	66	64	79	76
Portugal	53	51	52	46	50	48
United Kingdom	23	31	38	38	44	42
Austria <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	42	46	43
Sweden <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	23	37	31
Finland <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	38	44	45

<sup>3</sup> Source: Eurobarometer 44 Mega.

<sup>4</sup> Question asked for the first time in Spring 1995 in Austria, Sweden and Finland