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1. Expectations for the year to come

1.1. Introduction

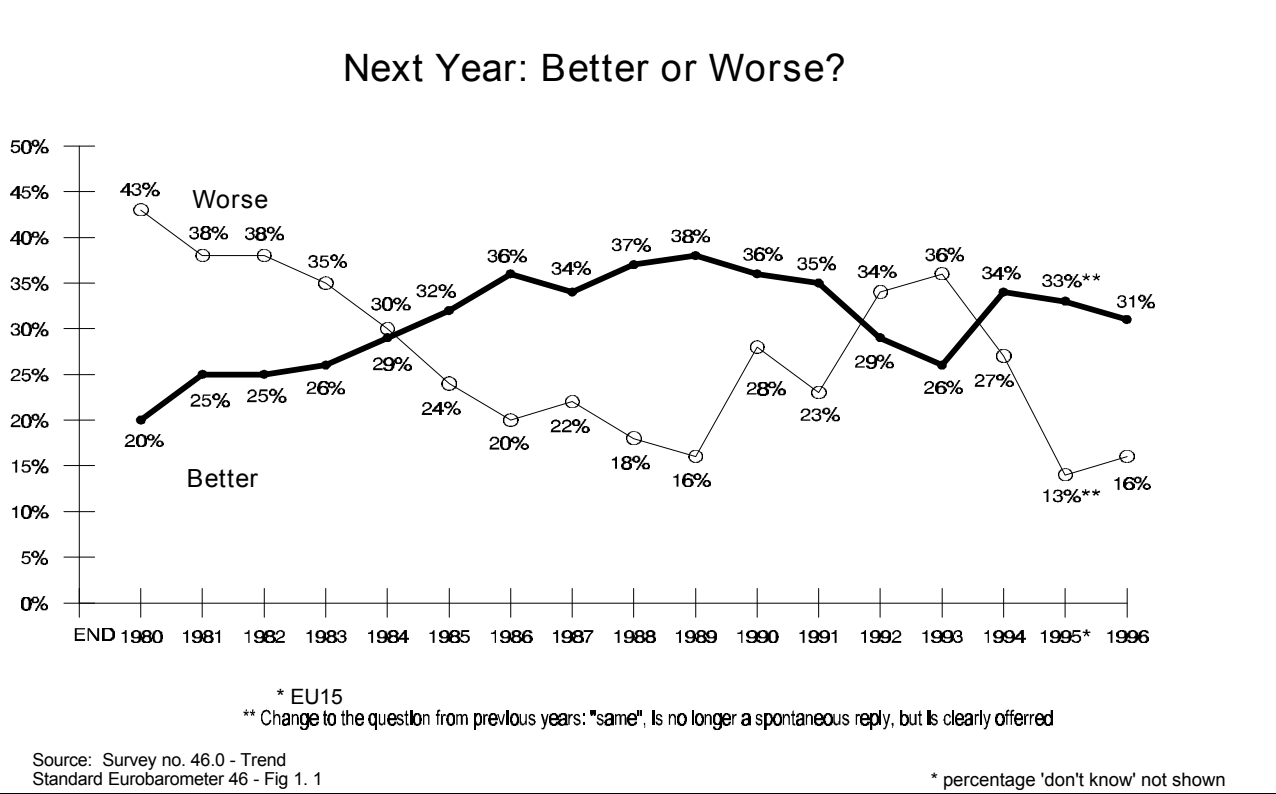
The end of 1996 had witnessed a year of when economic issues were to the forefront of public debate. The planned introduction of a single European currency had lead a number of Member States to introduce measures to enable them to fulfill the so called “Maastricht criteria” for economic convergence[1], these actions coupled with rising unemployment rates and the BSE crisis meant there was considerable public focus on matters European.

Against this background the standard Eurobarometer asked, as is the tradition, a series of “end of the year” questions in its Autumn survey. These questions are designed to measure the mood of European Union citizens as the year ends and to look at the new year and what it may bring.

Respondents are asked to assess their own situation at both private and national level, examining their present circumstances in terms of finance and employment, and their country’s economic and employment prospects for the year to come.

1.2. General Expectations for 1997

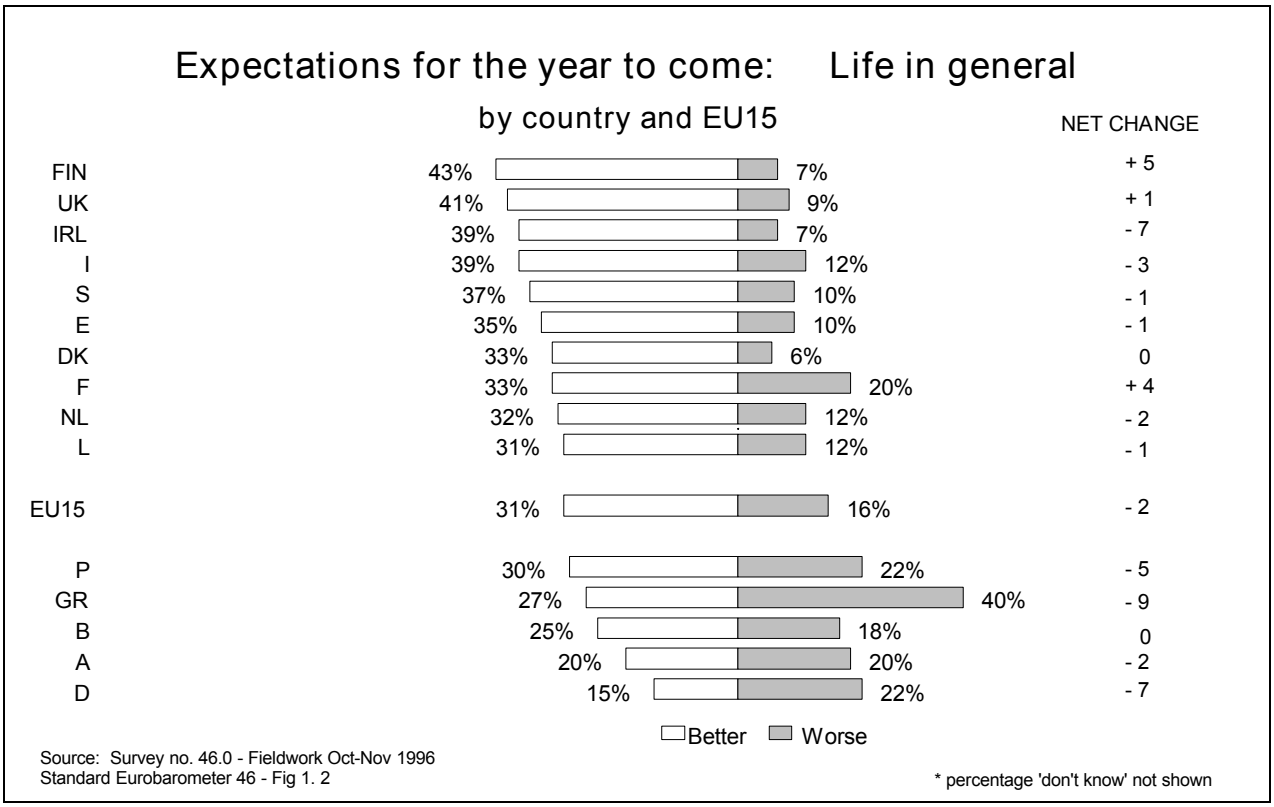
The survey carried out at the end of October to mid-November 1996 showed a rise in pessimism. While there had been only a slight fall (-1%) in the “next year better” score between 1994 and 1995, Autumn 1996 records a further 2% drop, and this is now accompanied by rise of 3% in the “next year worse” figure.



[1] Details of the performance of member states in relation to the convergence criteria (inflation, interest rates, deficit/GDP ratio and debt/GDP ratio) for the time frame of the survey can be found in “EC Economic Data Pocket Book” No 12/1996 published by EUROSTAT the Statistical Office of the European Union.

While changes between 1994 and 1995 as seen in graph 1.1. can almost certainly be attributed, in large part, to the change in question wording, with a new version allowing for the response category “the same”, which had up until that time only been recorded as a “spontaneous” answer, the changes between 1995 and 1996 can be considered as a more real change in public sentiment.

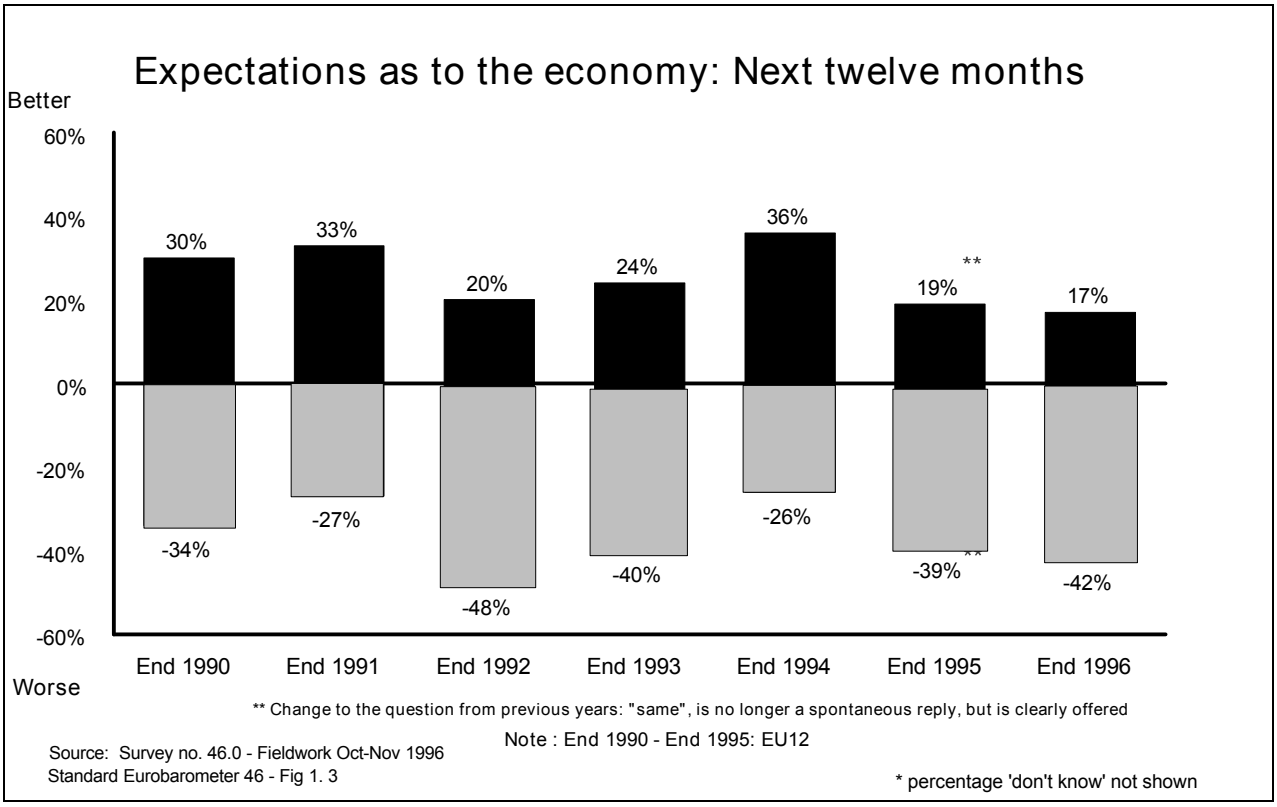
The cross country analysis indicates that a more positive spirit could be discerned in Finland and France (+5% and +4% respectively), followed by the United Kingdom with a 1% increase, elsewhere however, the mood is more somber. Pessimism runs highest in Greece with a decrease of 9 percentage points from the previous year, and a very high 40% expecting the year to come to be worse. Both in Germany and Ireland we see a decrease in optimism of some 7% points each, followed by Portugal with -5%. Negative scores were also recorded in Italy (-3%), and Austria and the Netherlands (-2% each) and Luxembourg, Spain and Sweden -1% each. (Table 1.1)



Overall we find the young and those still studying the most hopeful concerning their lives in 1997, in both cases one in two persons expect their life to improve, conversely pessimism runs highest amongst those over 55. While, interestingly, there are no differences between men and women in their overall expectations, we observe that “housepersons” are the least optimistic (only 25% expecting next year to get better), while the unemployed remain markedly more positive, with 38% expecting things to get better in 1997. (Table 1.2)

1.3. Situation of the economy in the year to come

As with the previous question concerning life in general, the question formulation concerning the economic situation in one's country was modified in 1995, thus care should be taken in the interpretation of the overall trend data. Nevertheless, we do witness a downward tendency with a two percent drop from 1995 to 1996 expecting next year to be "better". There is a corresponding increase in those expecting things to get "worse" (39% up to 42% for 1997).



Overall we witness more optimistic moods prevailing in Ireland (36% expecting 1997 to be better), Finland (35%), the Netherlands 32%, Sweden 27% and the United Kingdom 24%. Germany (10% "better"), France 11%, Belgium and Greece, both 12%, are the most pessimistic.

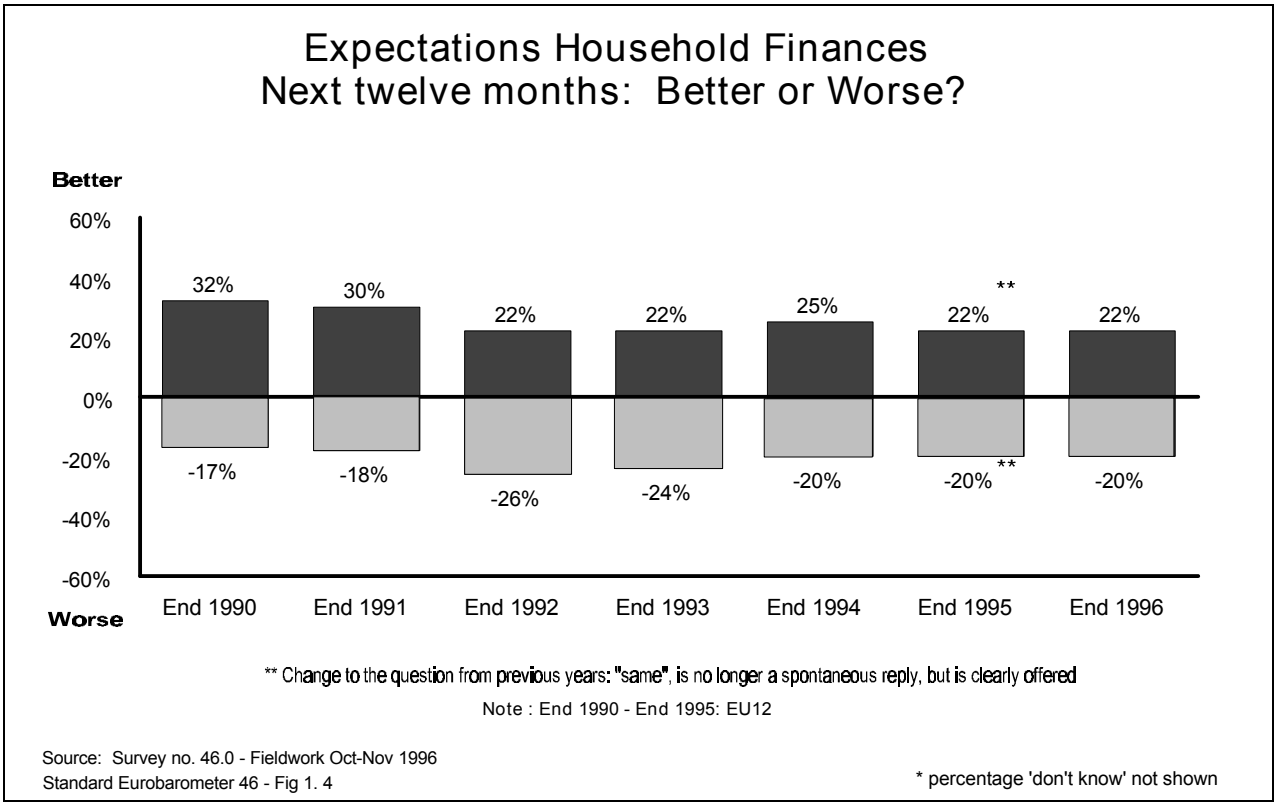
While the overall shift in the results is slight, this masks much more dramatic changes at national level as the table below indicates. The most dramatic decline in optimism is noted in East Germany where there has been a net change of -28 percentage points over the past year. Portugal is also in more pessimistic mood with a change of -23 points. Only small changes are registered in Ireland, Austria, Spain and France, while more positive reactions are found in Belgium and Finland, each +6, and the United Kingdom +9. (Tables 1.3 & 1.4)

CHANGE IN NET SCORES* FROM 1995-1996 IN EXPECTATIONS FOR THE GENERAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK									
Net scores	EU 15	B	DK	D	D West	D East	GR	E	F
1995	-20	-45	+7	-30	-32	-21	-37	-6	-46
1996	-25	-39	+2	-47	-46	-49	-51	-7	-45
% change	-5	+6	-5	-17	-14	-28	-14	-1	+1

Net scores	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK
1995	+23	-14	-8	+5	-31	+4	+11	+10	-10
1996	+21	-27	-22	+8	-33	-19	+17	-6	-1
% change	-2	-13	-14	+3	-2	-23	+6	-16	+9

1.4. Private household finances

Trends show little overall change, despite a question wording change in 1995, in respondents' expectations for individual household finances in recent years. Thus, while overall at EU level scores remains unchanged from 1995 to 1996, 22% expecting their financial situation to improve, 20% anticipating it getting worse and over half ,55%, expecting no change, again this masks some dramatic shifts at national level.



Countries recording relatively high positive scores are the United Kingdom 32% an increase of 3%, Denmark and the Netherlands stable at 30%. Increases are also recorded in France (+3%), Finland (+3%)

* Net scores are answed at by calculating the differences between the "better " & "worse" scores.

and Sweden (+2%). Elsewhere we see a slight rise in pessimism: Belgium, (-1%), Italy (-2%), Luxembourg and Portugal (-3%) and Austria (-4%).

However, those expecting a significant drop in their household situation are particularly evident in Greece -10% and Germany -6% (West Germany -5% and East Germany -7%), in all these cases the expectations of things getting worse increased proportionately.

The demographic analysis shows that women's expectations are five percentage points below men's that things will get better. The young and well educated, predictably, remain more optimistic, but amongst those over the age of 55 only 9% anticipate any improvement in their situation. (Tables 1.5 & 1.6)

1.5. Employment in one's own country

The unemployment rate for the European Union as a whole was 10.9% in November 1996 at the time of the fieldwork of the Eurobarometer survey, an increase of 0.1% over the 12 month period since we last asked the questions concerning employment in our survey. In real terms EUROSTAT notes[2] in November 1996 that there has been a real drop in unemployment in the United Kingdom (from 8.6% to 7.5%), in Denmark (from 6.6% to 5.5%), Finland(16.2% to 15.3%), Belgium (10.0% to 9.5%) and Ireland (12.4% to 11.9%).

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES, SEASONALLY ADJUSTED

	B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I
1993.10	9.4	9.7	8.4	NA	23.7	12.3	15.4	10.8
1994.10	10.1	7.6	8.2	NA	23.9	12.1	14.5	11.8
1995.11	10.0	6.6	8.5	NA	22.7	11.8	12.4	11.9
1996.10.	9.6	5.6	9.1	NA	22.3	12.4	12.1	NA

	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EU15
1993.10	2.9	6.9	NA	6.2	18.9	10.4	10.4	11.2
1994.10	3.7	7.1	NA	7.2	17.7	9.4	9.1	11.0
1995.11	2.9	7.0	4.0	7.4	16.2	9.3	8.6	10.8
1996.10	3.2	6.4	4.1	7.1	15.0	10.0	7.9	10.9

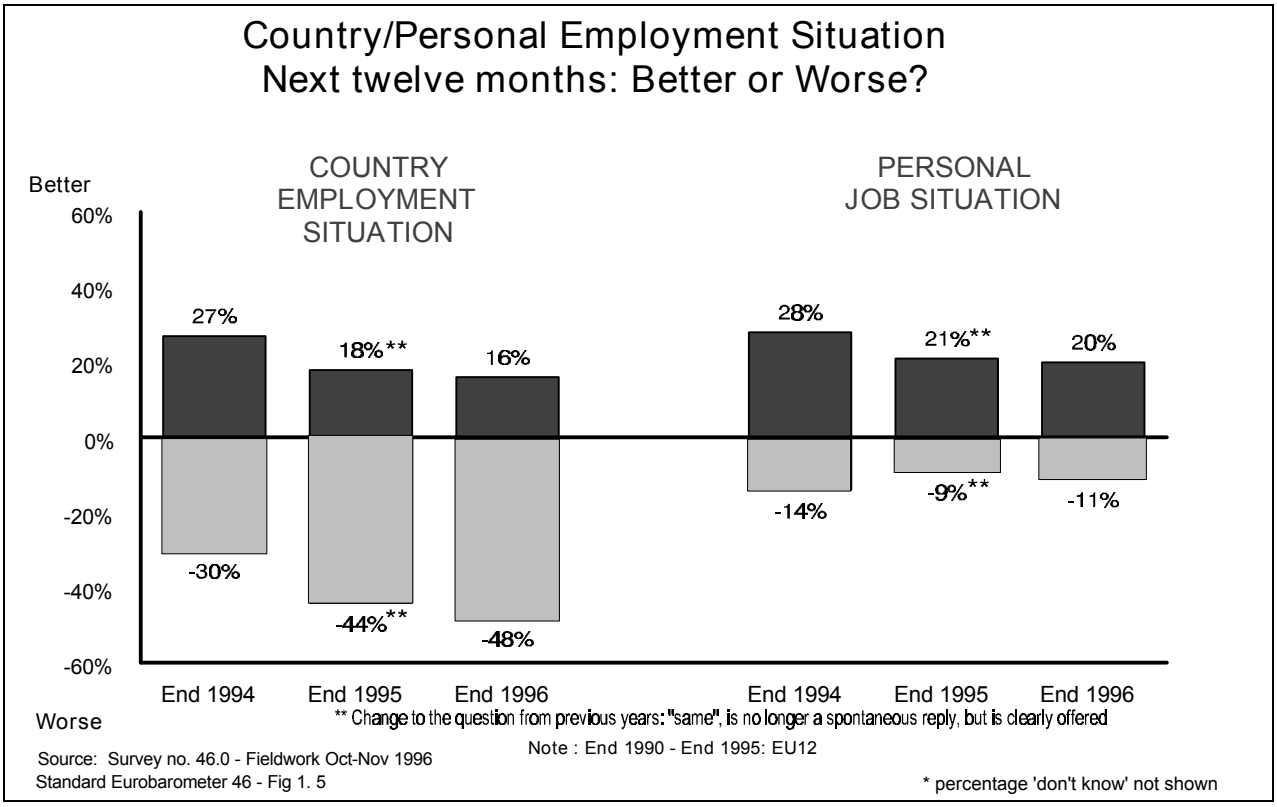
How do these objective data compare with public opinion as measured by the survey? In only three countries, namely the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Finland do we witness an improvement in respondents' perceptions of the labour market, this corresponds in part with the published data, as in all three countries unemployment rates have dropped. In a number of other countries, where the real level of unemployment has move relatively little, we find expectations (the 'better' score) slightly depressed and more importantly that in a number of countries the opportunities in the job market in 1997 are expected to get "worse". Nearly one in two persons EU wide expect a deterioration.
Country by country analysis shows the highest level of pessimism in Germany (67%), East Germany with a record high of 74%, West Germany 65% "worse". Two in three respondents in Greece and France expect labour market conditions to get worse. Everywhere else, apart from those countries expecting improvements, there is an increase in pessimism. (Table 1.7)

[2] Source EUROSTAT 1/97 (Figures for Greece not available)

Demographically it tends to be those in their middle years (40-54) who are marginally more pessimistic about the future while high earners are predictably more sanguine. (Table 1.8)

1.6. One's own job perspectives

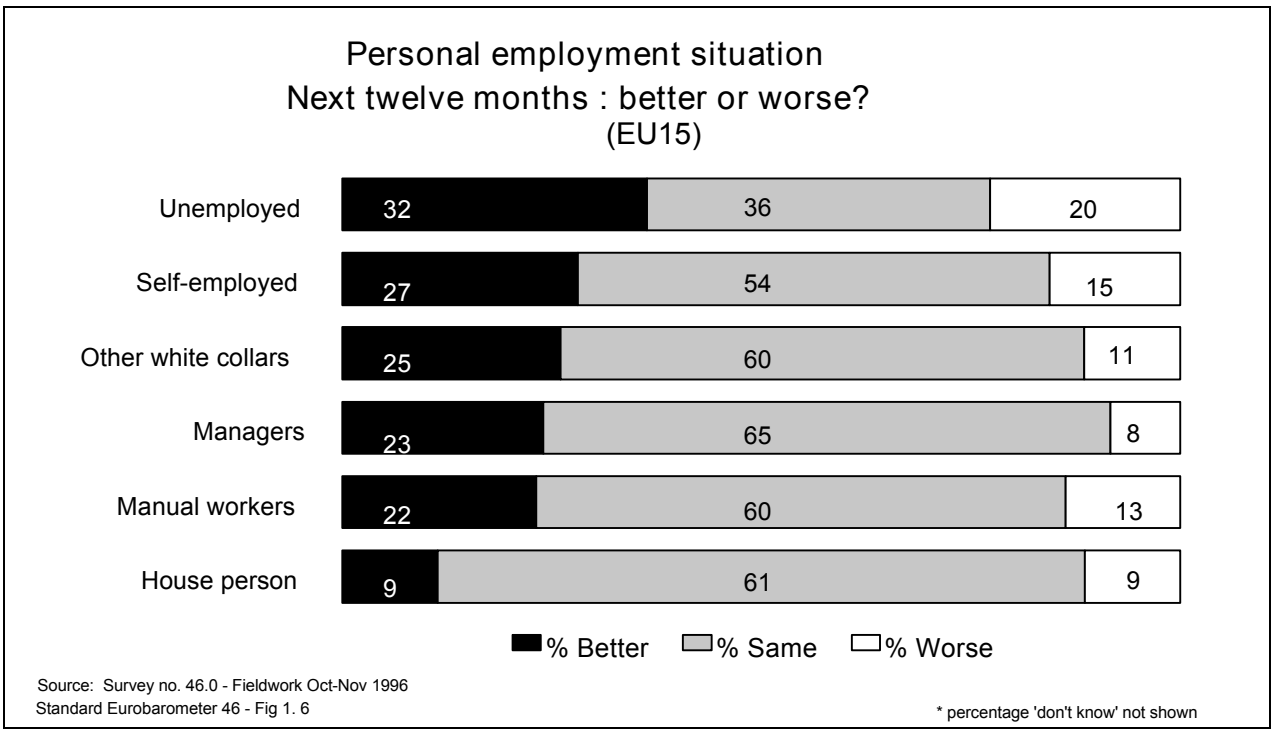
The final question in the series concerning the outlook for 1997 related the individual's views of his/her employment situation in 1997. As with previous surveys we found that EU citizens are rather more positive about their own personal job situation than about the more general picture in their own country. Twenty percent expect their personal employment situation to improve in the forthcoming year, 11% anticipate a deterioration in their circumstances, but the vast majority, 58%, expect there to be no change for them personally.



The cross-country analysis indicates greatest optimism in the United Kingdom (25% "better" : 7% "worse"), Italy (23% "better" to 7% "worse"), the Netherlands (23%:9%), Spain (23%:8%), France (22%:12%), Ireland (22%:7%) and Sweden (22%:5%). The overriding gloom in Germany that was observed in the other 1997 indicators is repeated for the personal employment situation. Only 11% of Germans feel that their job situation will improve in 1997, a four percent drop from a year ago. Fourteen percent expect their situation to deteriorate. In Greece we observe 19% expecting an improvement, but this is counter balanced by 31% who see their situation deteriorating. The highest "no change" scores are recorded in Denmark and Finland 73% and 72% "same" respectively. (Table 1.9)

Overall men are more upbeat in their expectations, with 23% anticipating an improvement in their own job situation compared with 16% for women. The young are particularly positive, with nearly four in ten expecting a better year and only 9% expecting a deterioration.

Opinions are most divided amongst the unemployed; while 32% are hoping for a better 1997, compared with the EU average of 20%, 20% are discouraged expecting a deterioration, compared with the EU average of 11%. Thirty-six percent expect much of the same compared with 58% for the EU overall. (Table 1.10)



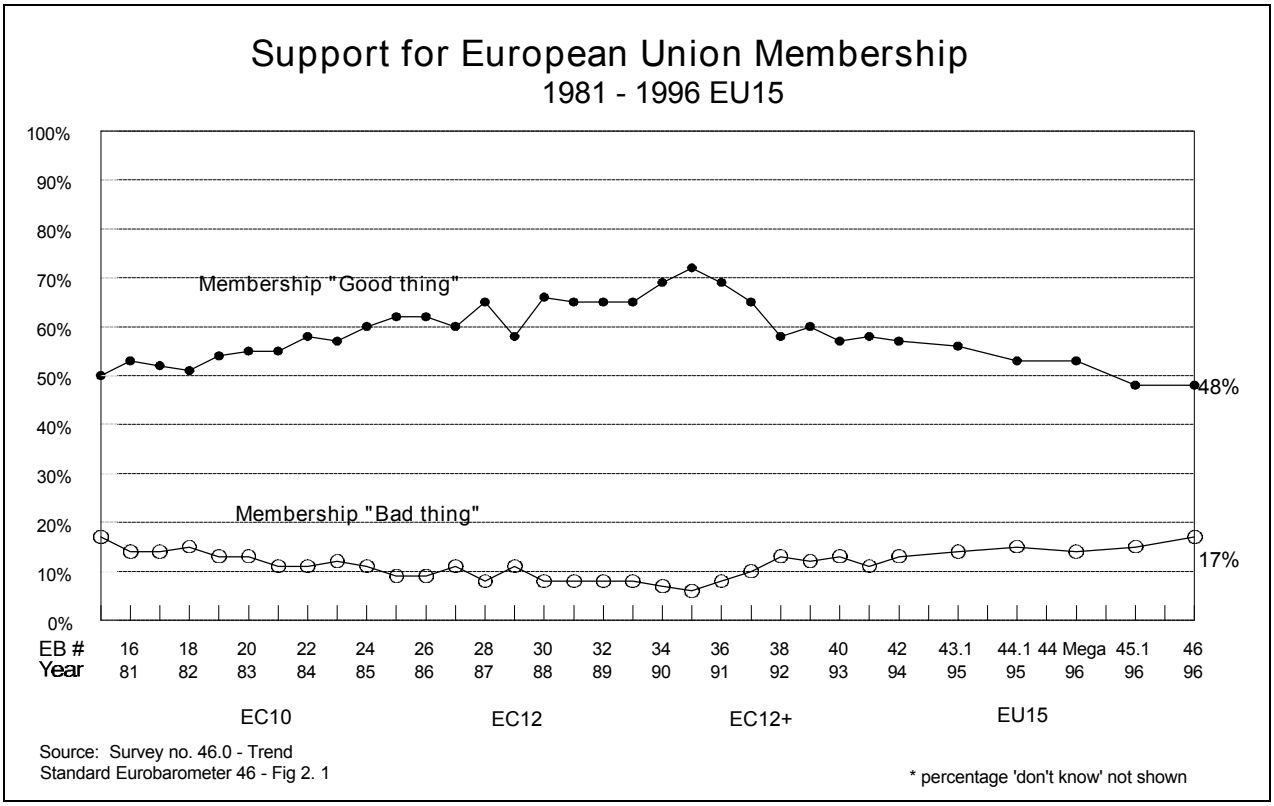
2. Public support for European integration

The Eurobarometer has for the past decade measured public support for the European Union. This support is measured by the use of a series of so called “standard indicators” including support for European Union membership, perceived benefit draw from membership, speed of integration and attitudes towards the Single European Market.

The length time over which these various measures have been collected allows one to have a clear view of the dynamics of public opinion evolving as the following sections will reveal.

2.1. Support for membership of the European Union

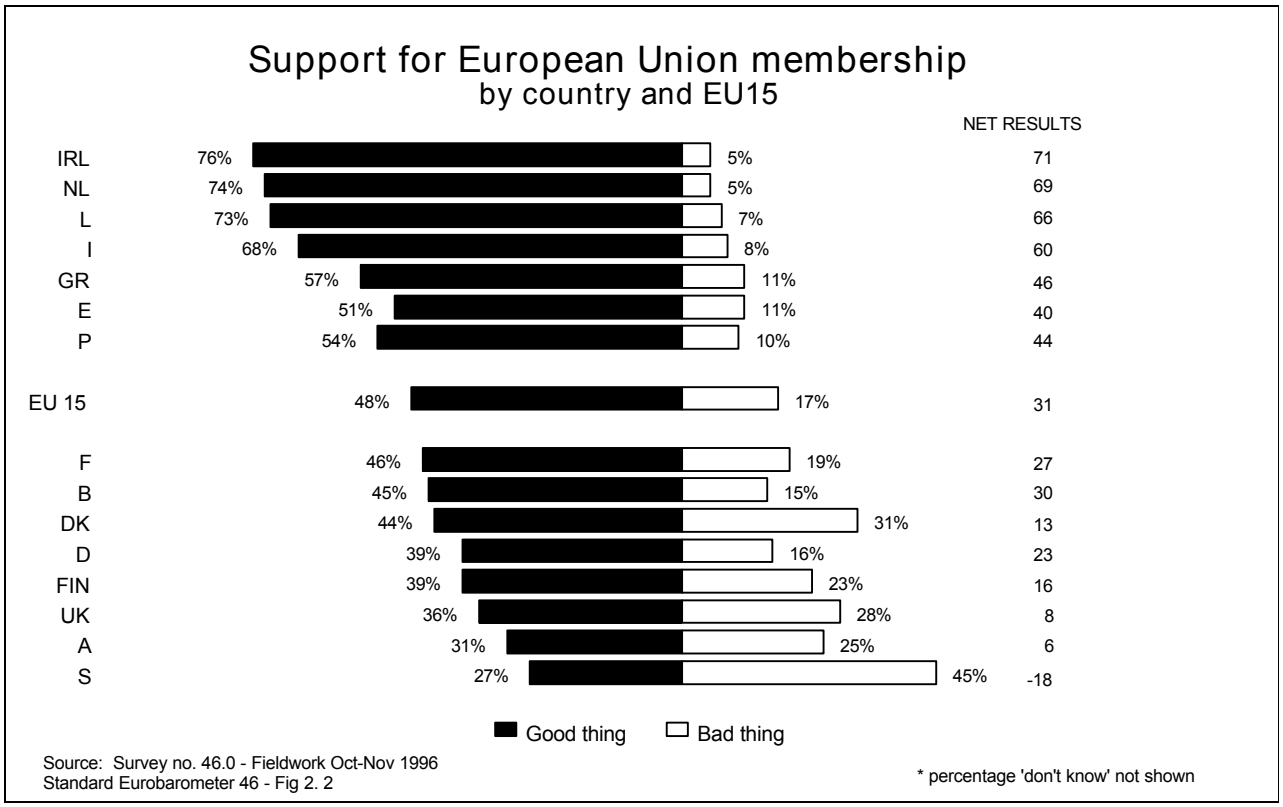
Earlier Eurobarometers have at length discussed the erosion of the “permissive consensus” towards Europe which we saw from the beginning of the decade. Prior to 1990 all indicators recorded a steady rise with support for membership reaching an all time high of 72% in 1990. Perceived benefit also touched nearly 60% at the same time in 1990. Six years on by the end of 1996 we see support dip below the halfway mark at 48% and perceived benefit drop to 42%.



Amongst the citizens in the fifteen Member States support for membership has dropped by 5% points in the past twelve months, with a particularly marked drop between the survey conducted in January/March[3] 1996 and that conducted in the late Spring[4] of the same year. Since then public support appears to have stabilised at the lower level.
The reasons for this drop can only be guessed at, but certainly the major news item at that time was the announcement by the British government of the possible association between the new variant of Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease (CJD) and Bovine Spongiform Encephalopthy (BSE), which clearly put the relationships between the members of the Union to the forefront of the headlines.

In no country was there a positive increase in support over the period, Luxembourg and Portugal remained unchanged, but everywhere else support declined. Overall support remains high in Ireland (76%), the Netherlands (74%) and Luxembourg (73%) and lowest Sweden (27% “good thing” 45% “bad thing”), Austria (31%:25%), United Kingdom (36%:28%), Finland (39%: 23%) and Germany (39%:16%). (Tables 2.1 to 2.3)

3 Eurobarometer 44.2bis (mega) fieldwork dates 28-1-1997 to 10-3-1997
4 Eurobarometer 45.1 fieldwork dates 15-4-1996 to 18-5-1996

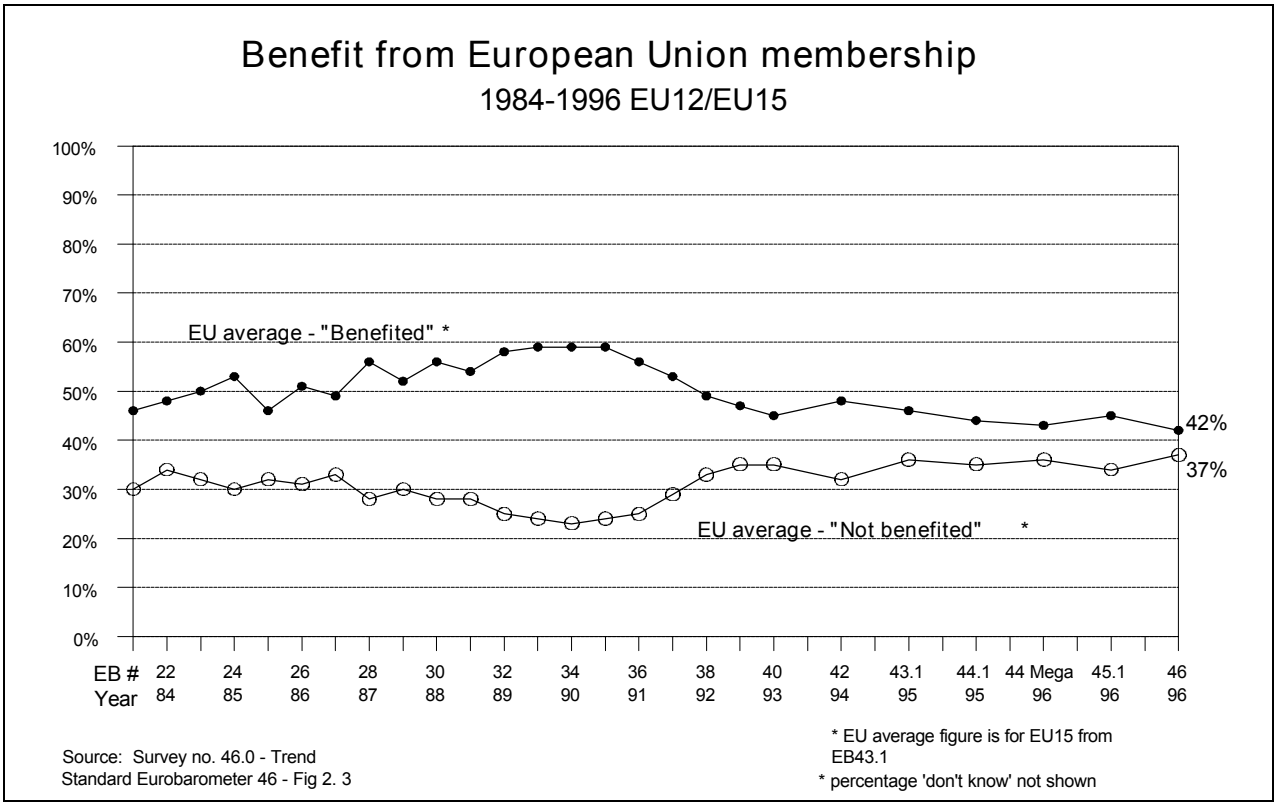


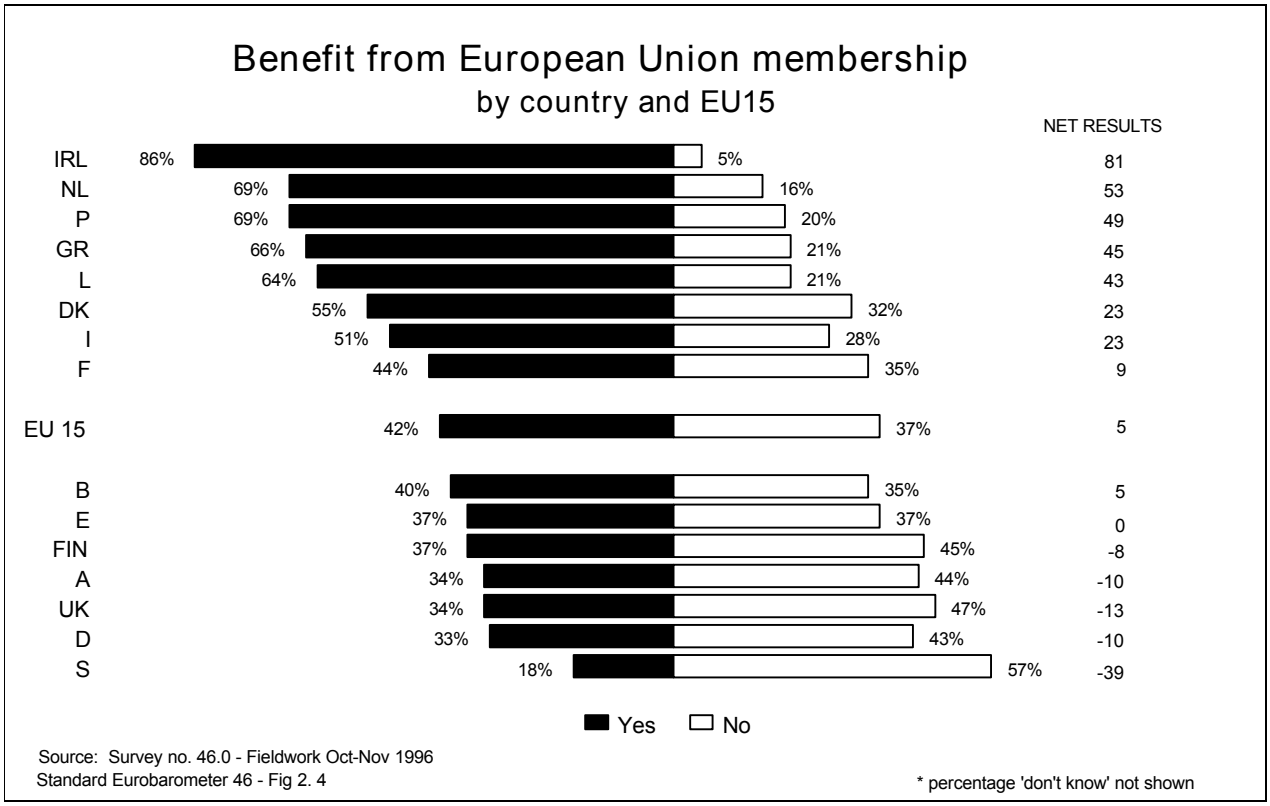
2.2. Benefit from EU membership

The slight improvement in perceived benefit from EU membership that was witnessed earlier in the year (EB 44 mega) has fallen back, dropping three percentage points since Spring. Forty-two percent of EU citizens believe that their country has benefited from membership, as to 37% who do not.

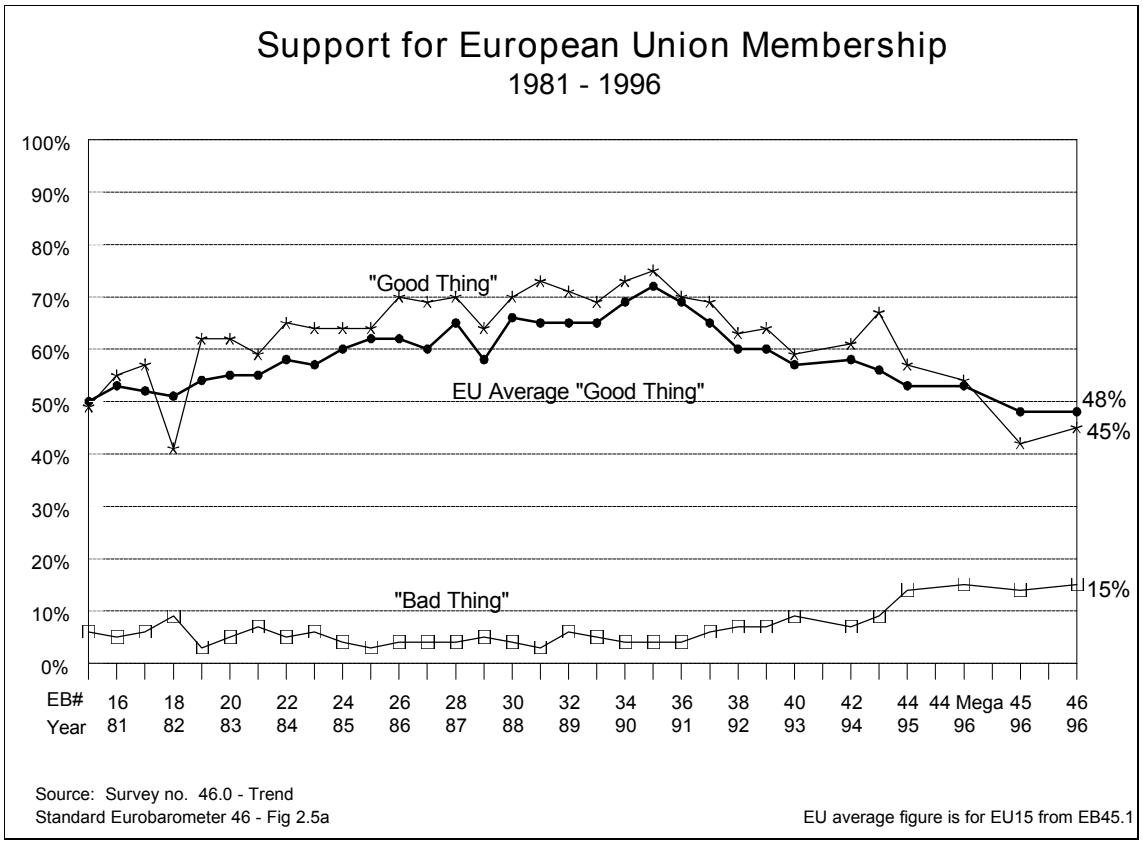
Cross country analysis, comparing the EB 44 Mega survey, shows Denmark and Germany both recording a five percent drop in “benefit “ scores, Austria -3%, while increases in “benefit “ were recorded in the Netherlands +5% and France +3%, elsewhere scores remained little changed from earlier in the year.

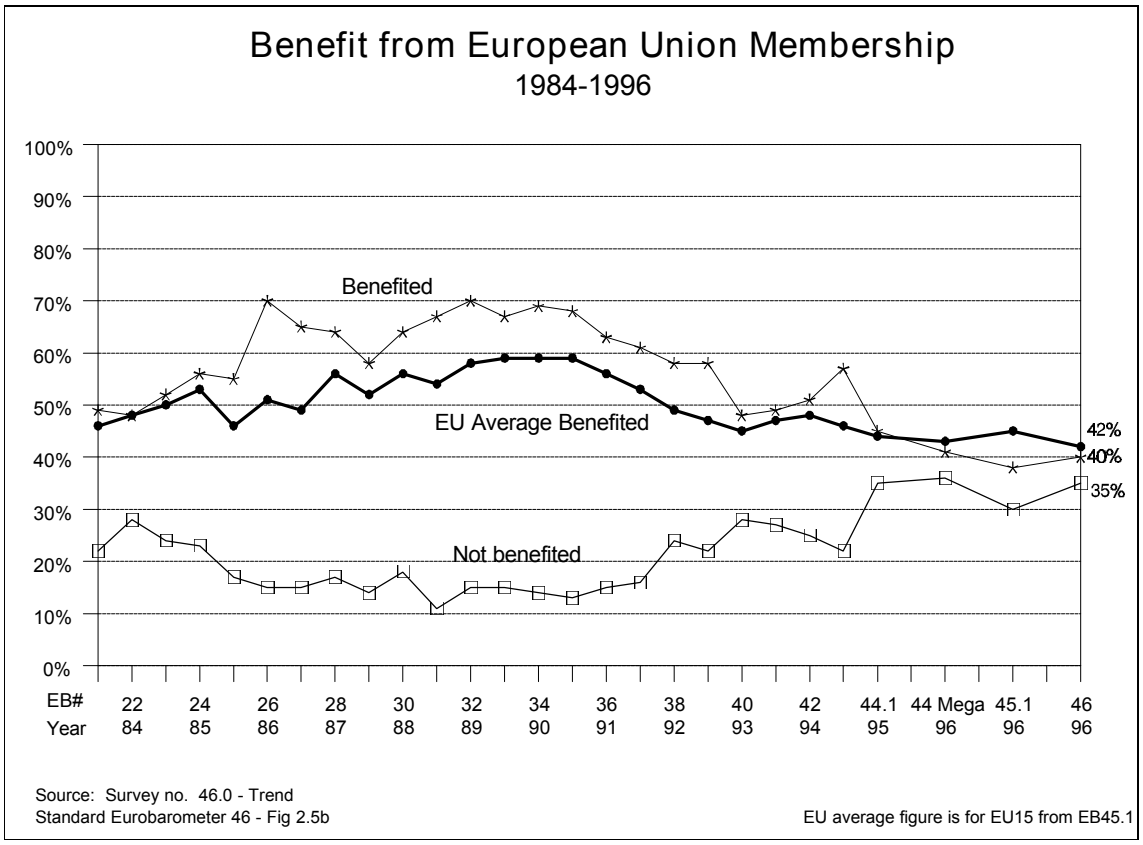
Demographic analysis, reveals the oft seen pattern, that is those of a more pro-European outlook perceiving greater benefit than those holding less positive views generally. The protagonists are the well educated, aged 20 or more on completing full-time education (54%) and those in managerial positions or who are self-employed (54% and 49% respectively). Finally those who feel poorly informed about the European Union were less positive than those who feel well informed, 37% compared to 55%, this difference is even more important if one considers that only 30% of the total sample considers itself to be “well informed” in the first place. (Tables 2.4 to 2.6)


Benefit from European Union membership
1984-1996 EU12/EU15
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
EU average - "Benefited" *
EU average - "Not benefited" *
42%
37%
EB # 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 43.1 44.1 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 3
* EU average figure is for EU15 from EB43.1
* percentage 'don't know' not shown

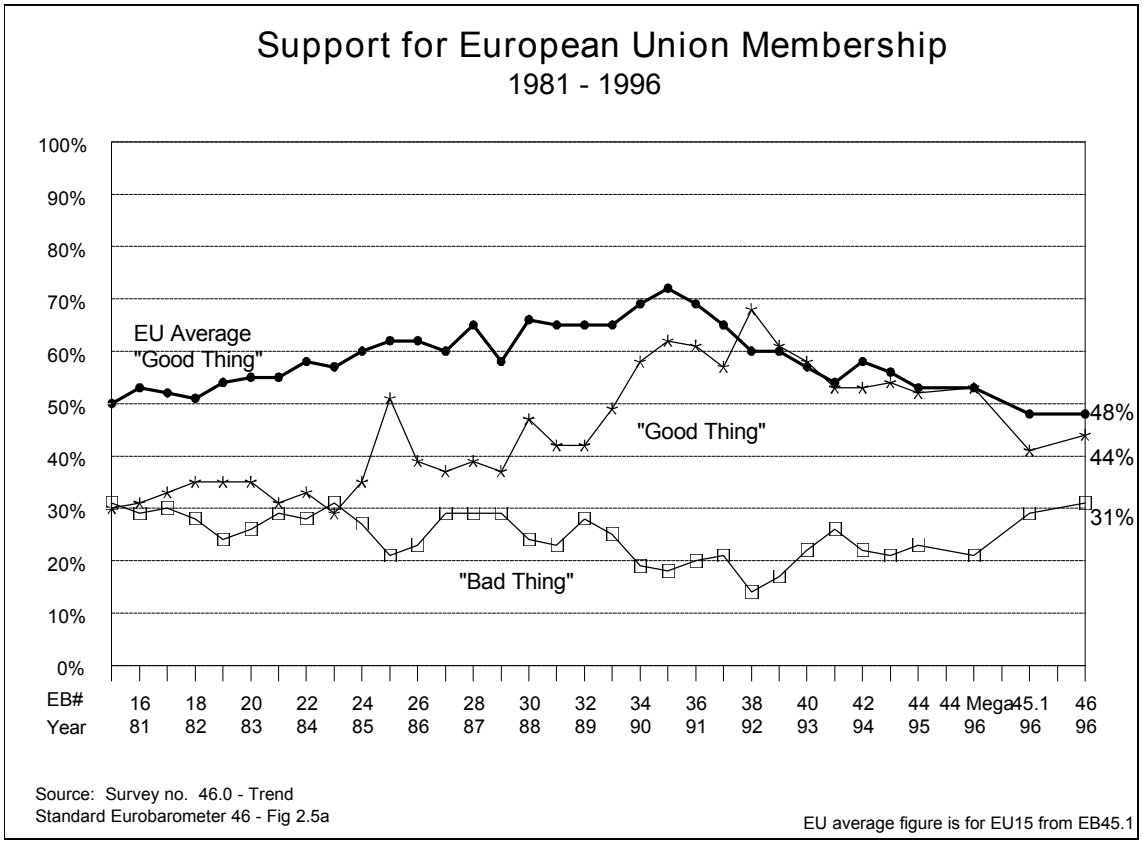

Benefit from European Union membership
by country and EU15
NET RESULTS
IRL 86% 5% 81
NL 69% 16% 53
P 69% 20% 49
GR 66% 21% 45
L 64% 21% 43
DK 55% 32% 23
I 51% 28% 23
F 44% 35% 9
EU 15 42% 37% 5
B 40% 35% 5
E 37% 37% 0
FIN 37% 45% -8
A 34% 44% -10
UK 34% 47% -13
D 33% 43% -10
S 18% 57% -39
Yes
No
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Fieldwork Oct-Nov 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 4
* percentage 'don't know' not shown

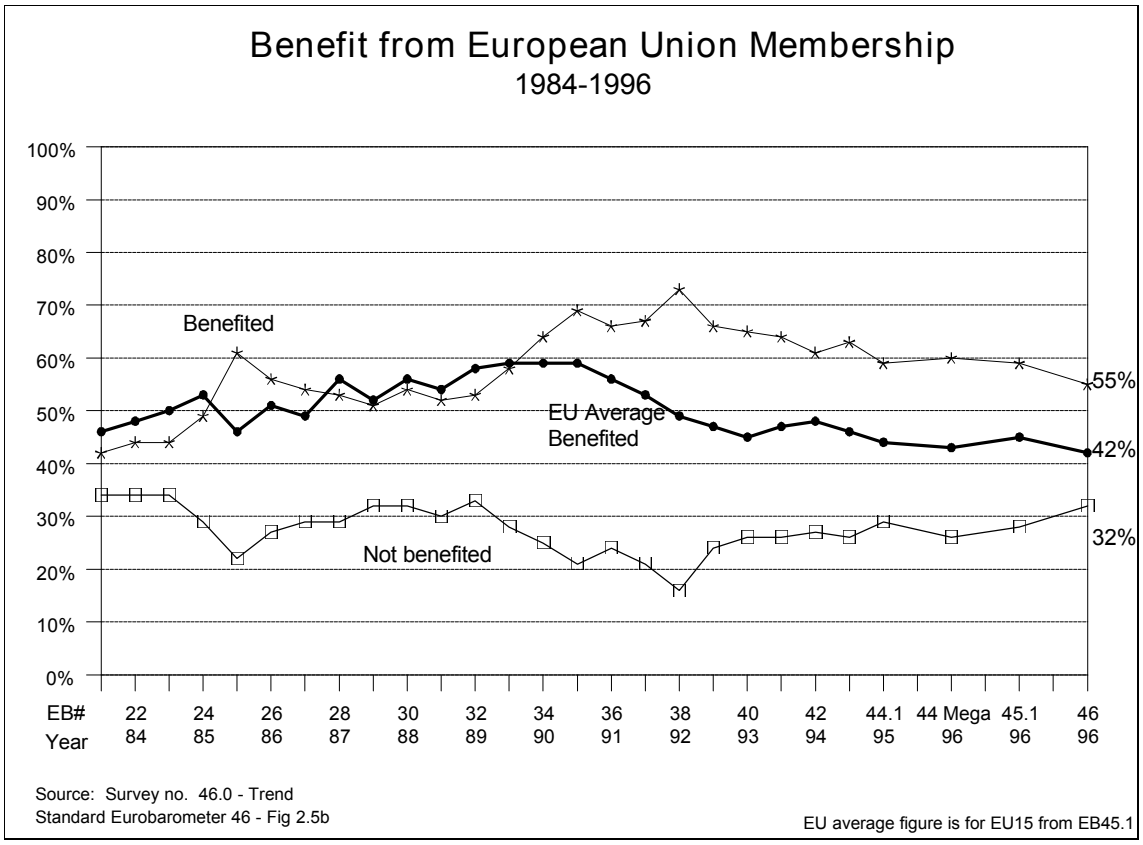
Belgique


Support for European Union Membership
1981 - 1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
"Good Thing"
EU Average "Good Thing"
"Bad Thing"
48%
45%
15%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 44 Mega 45 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2.5a
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

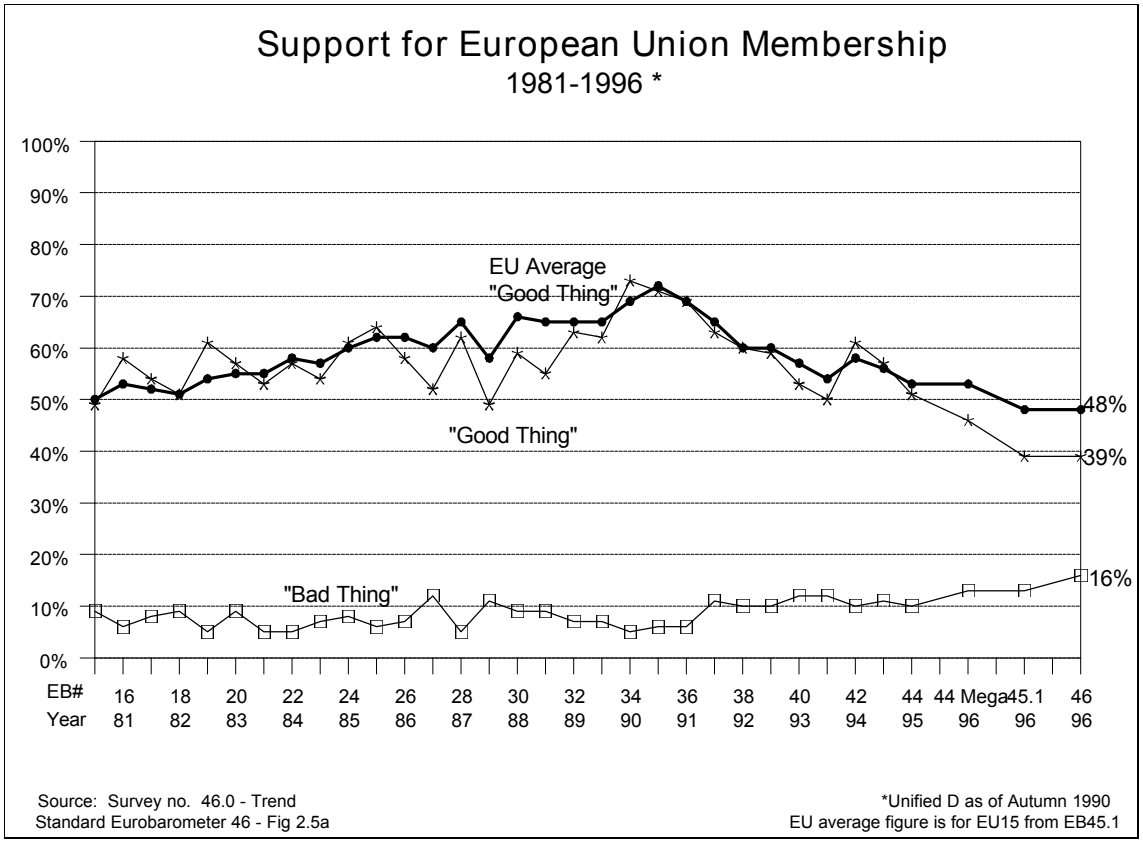

Benefit from European Union Membership
1984-1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Benefited
EU Average Benefited
Not benefited
42%
40%
35%
EB# 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44.1 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2.5b
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

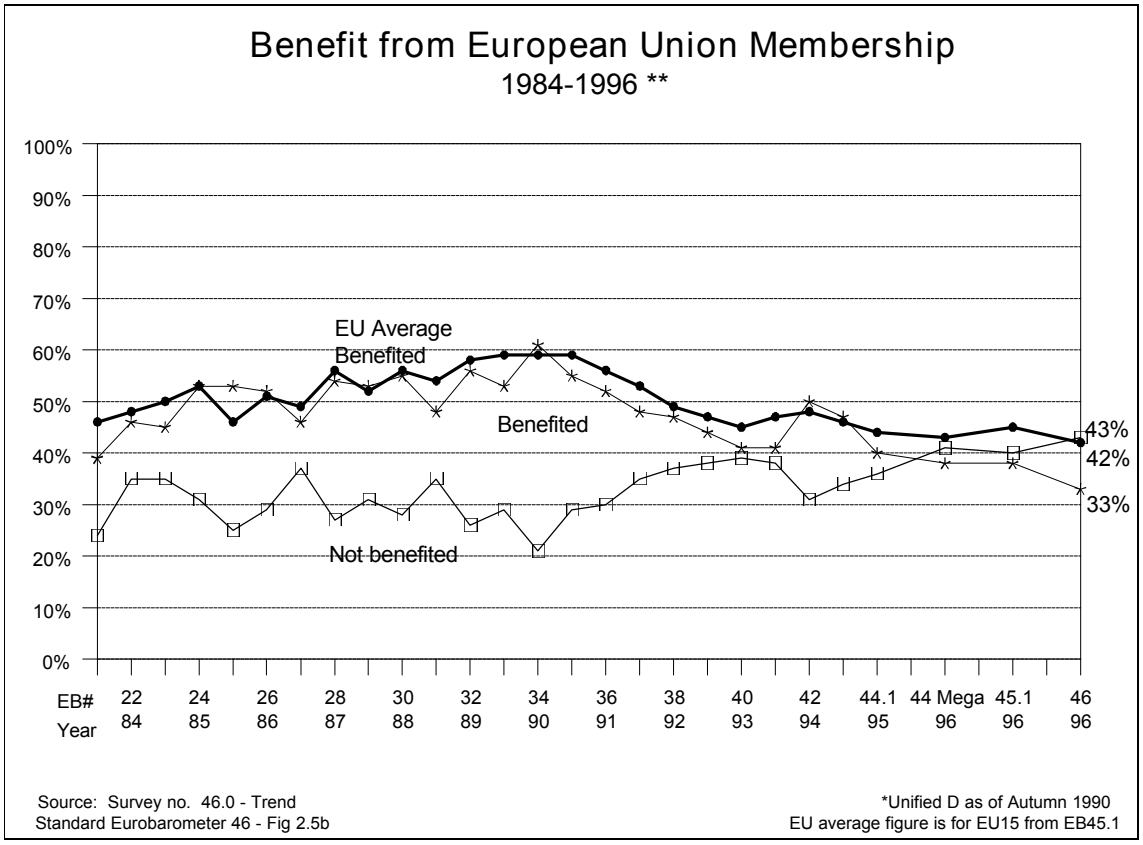
Danmark


Support for European Union Membership
1981 - 1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
EU Average
"Good Thing"
"Good Thing"
"Bad Thing"
48%
44%
31%
EB#
Year
16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 44 Mega 45.1 46
81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2.5a
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

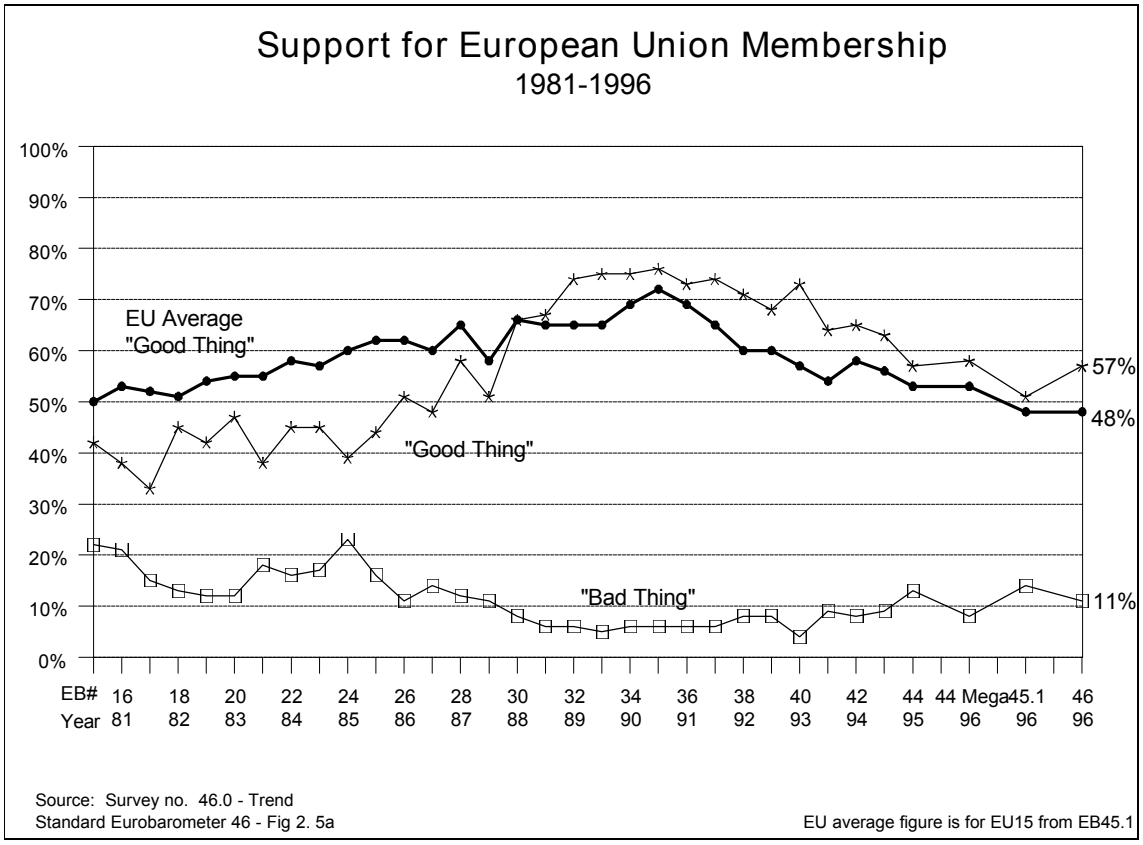

Benefit from European Union Membership
1984-1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Benefited
EU Average
Benefited
Not benefited
55%
42%
32%
EB#
Year
22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44.1 44 Mega 45.1 46
84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2.5b
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

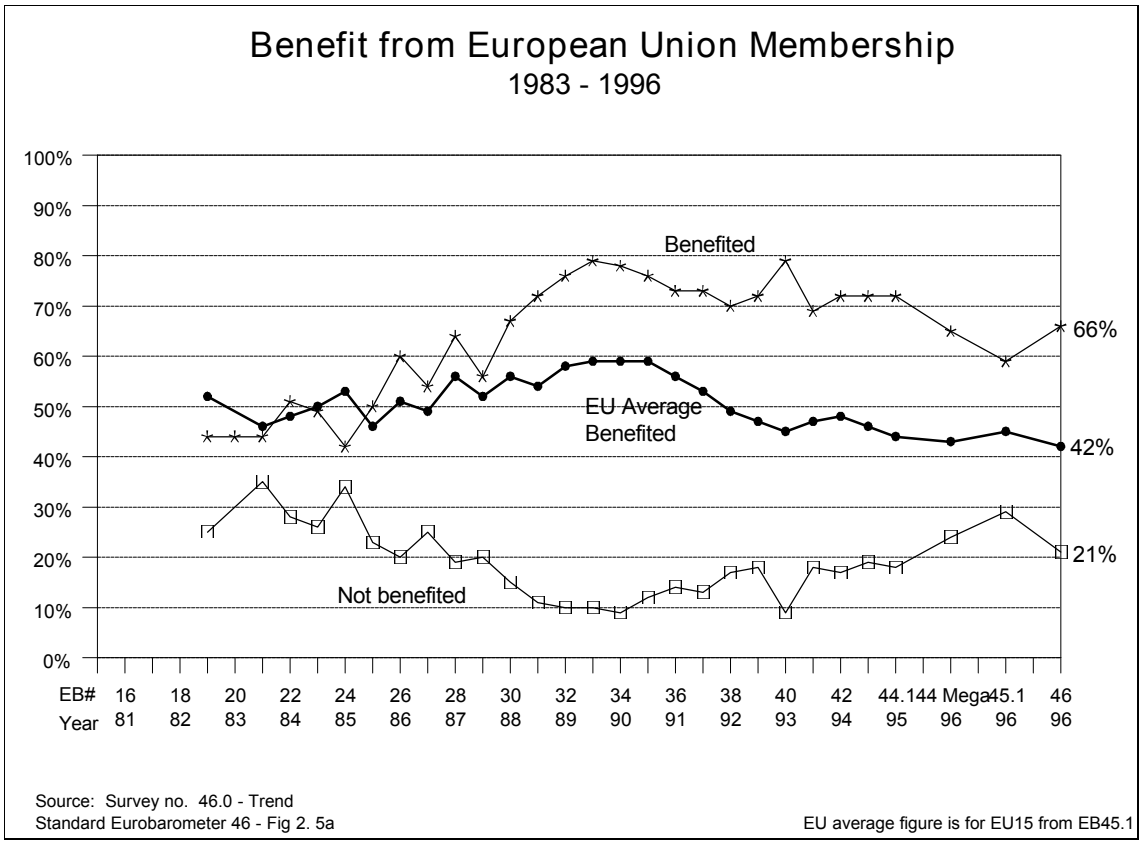
Deutschland



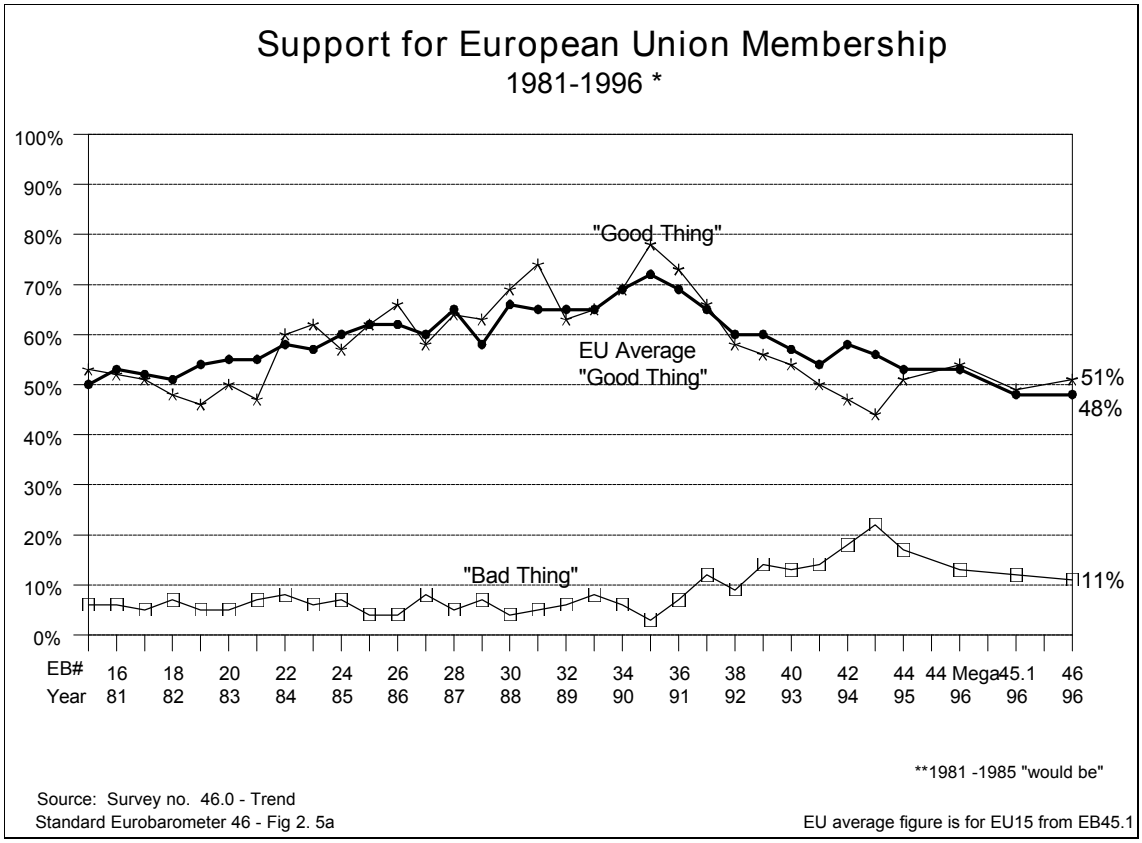


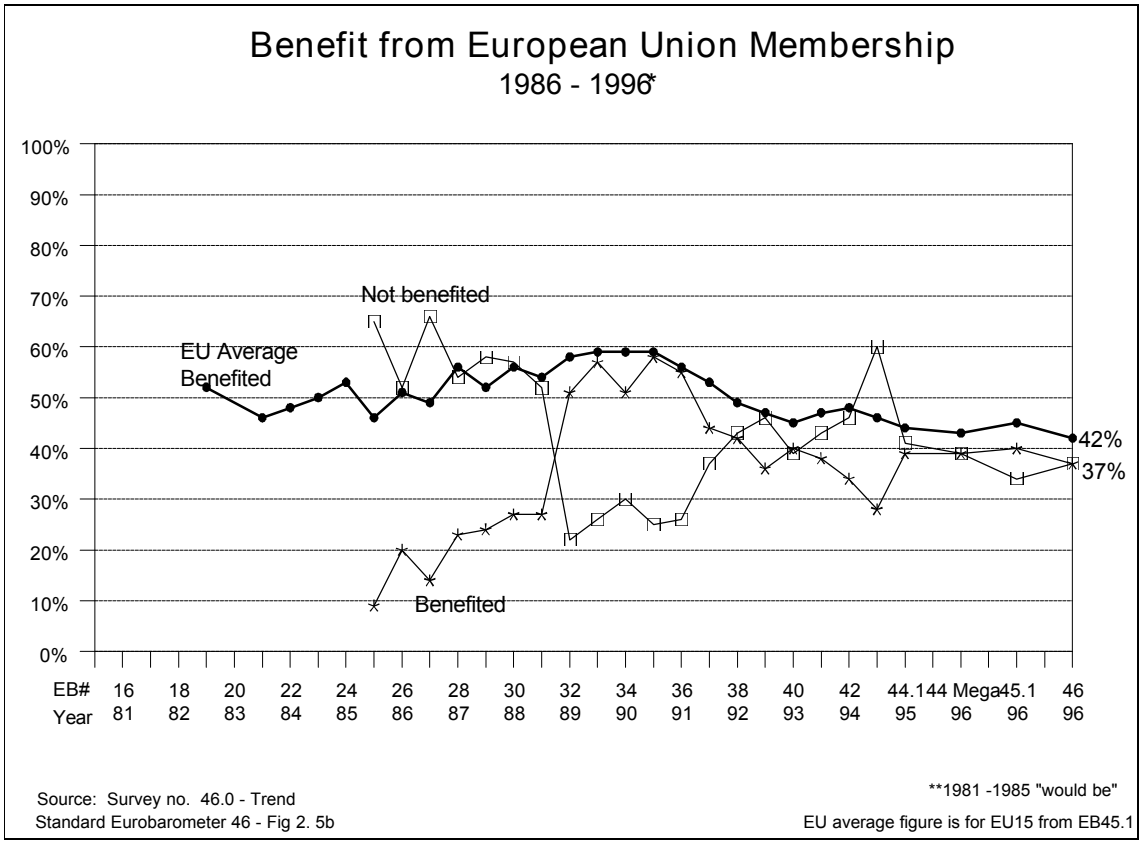
Greece


Support for European Union Membership
1981-1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
EU Average
"Good Thing"
"Good Thing"
"Bad Thing"
57%
48%
11%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 5a
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

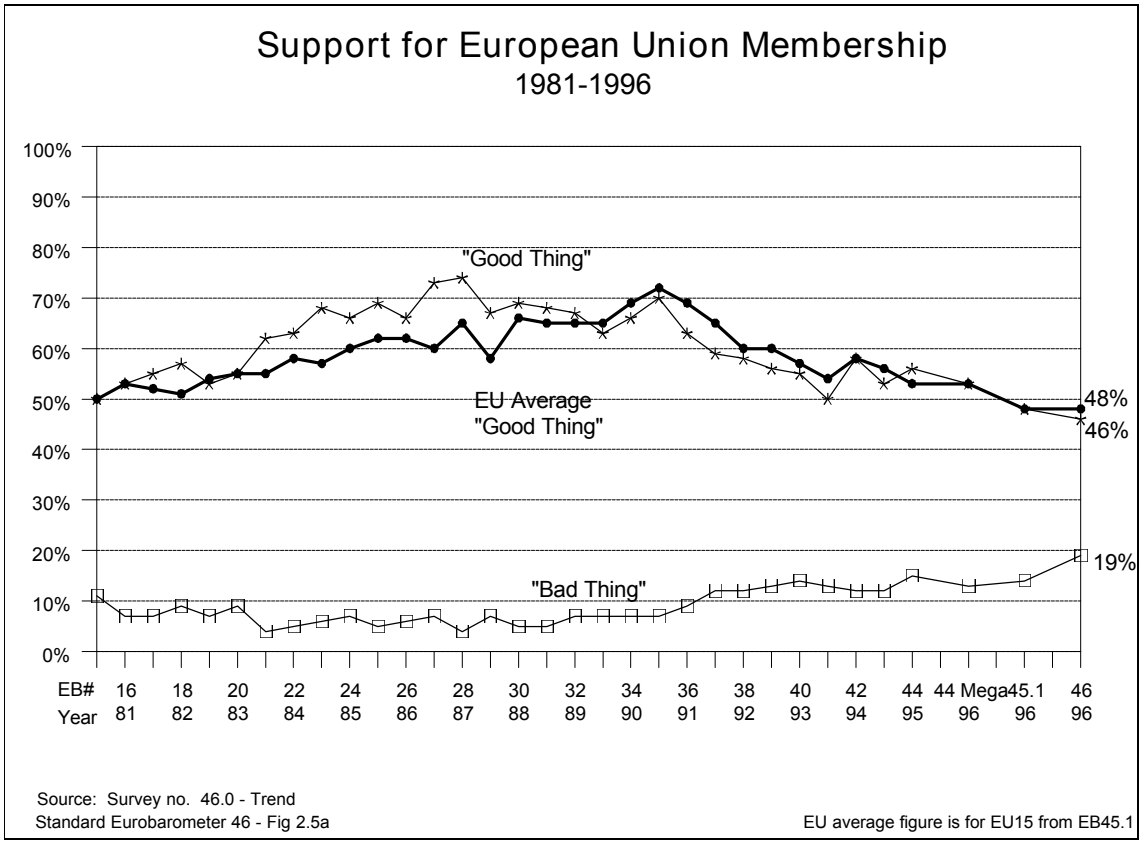

Benefit from European Union Membership
1983 - 1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Benefited
EU Average
Benefited
Not benefited
66%
42%
21%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44.1 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 5a
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

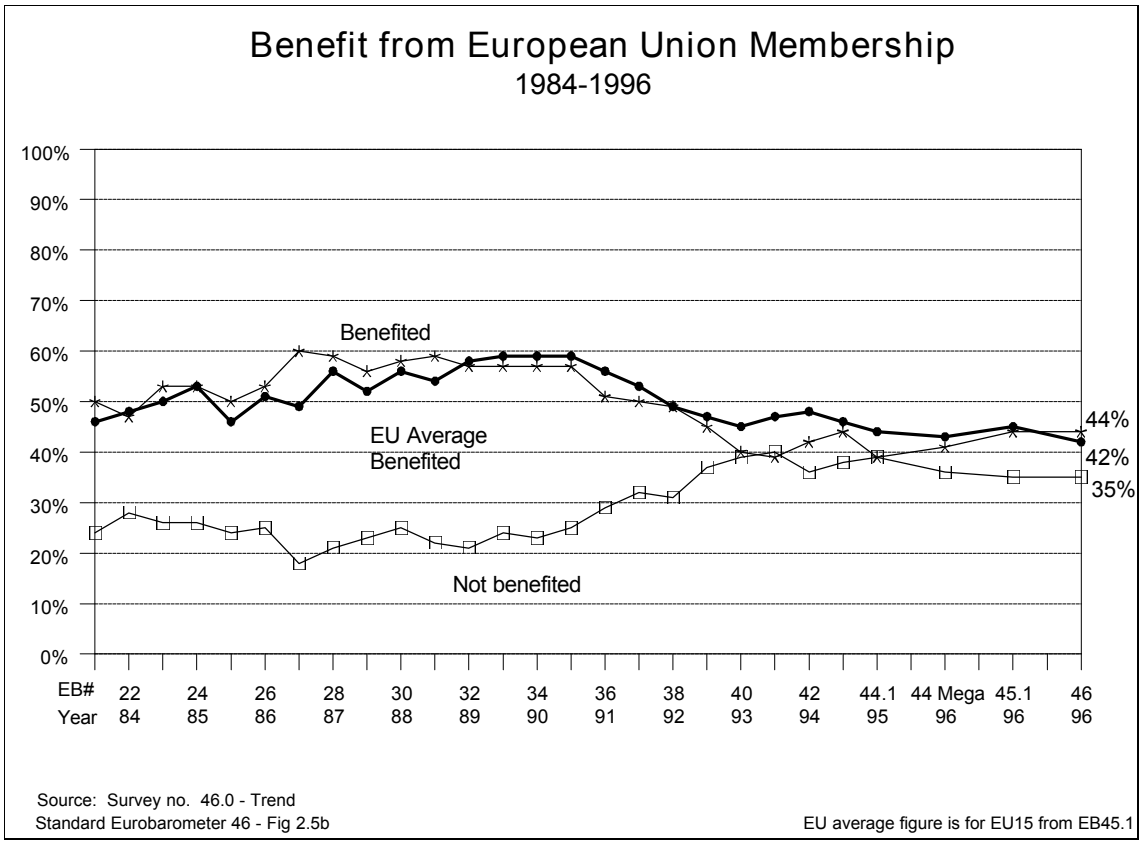
Espana


Support for European Union Membership
1981-1996 *
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
"Good Thing"
EU Average
"Good Thing"
51%
48%
"Bad Thing"
11%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
**1981 -1985 "would be"
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 5a
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

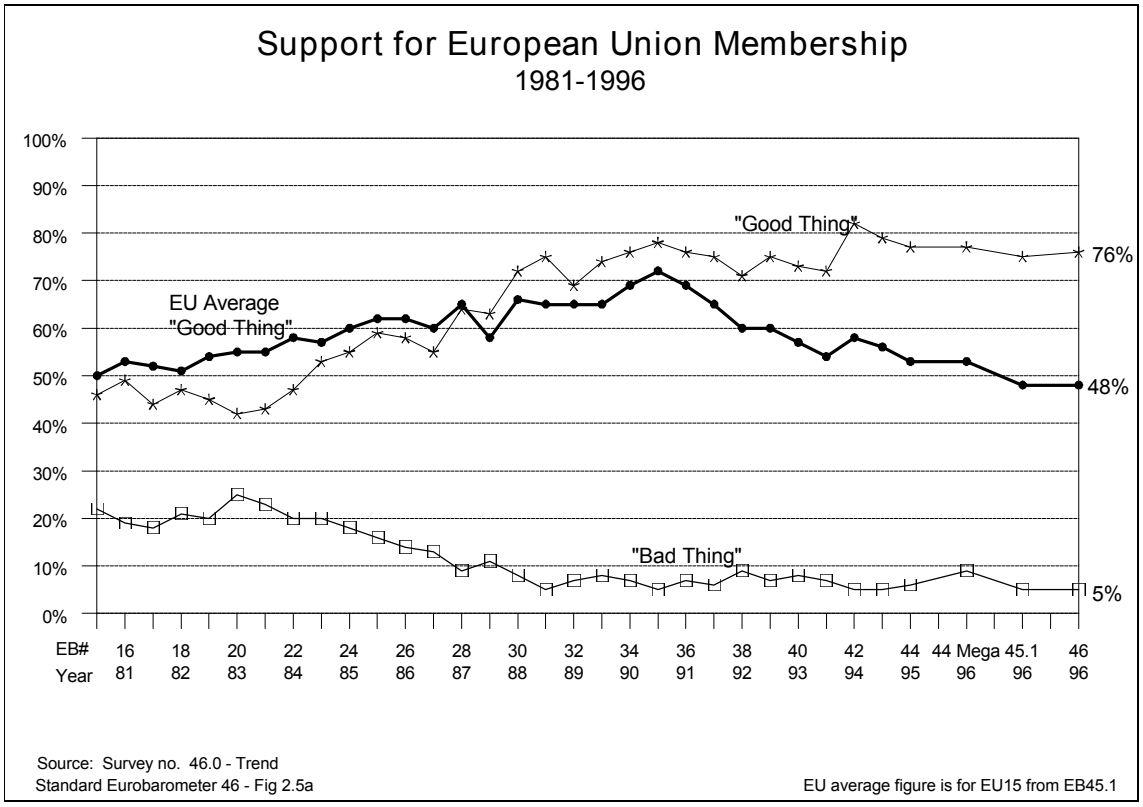

Benefit from European Union Membership
1986 - 1996*
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Not benefited
EU Average
Benefited
42%
37%
Benefited
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44.1 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
**1981 -1985 "would be"
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 5b
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

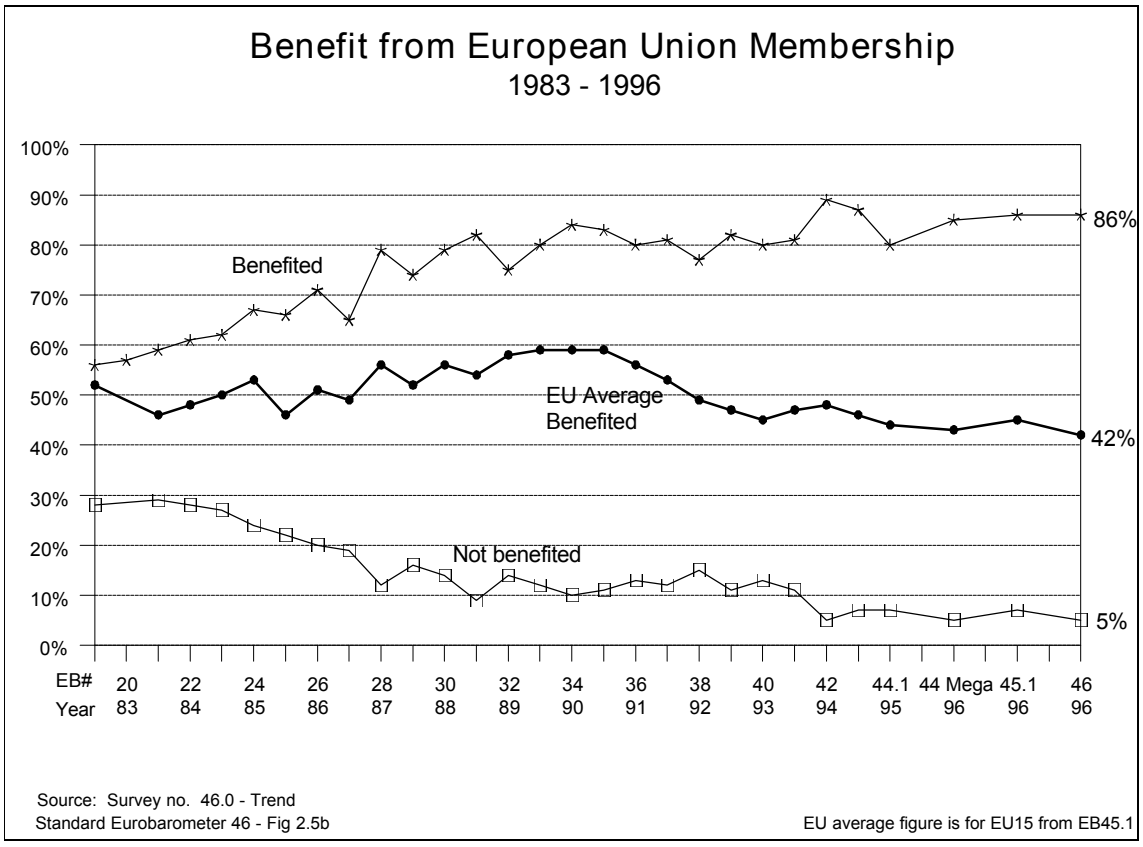
France


Support for European Union Membership
1981-1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
"Good Thing"
EU Average
"Good Thing"
"Bad Thing"
48%
46%
19%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2.5a
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

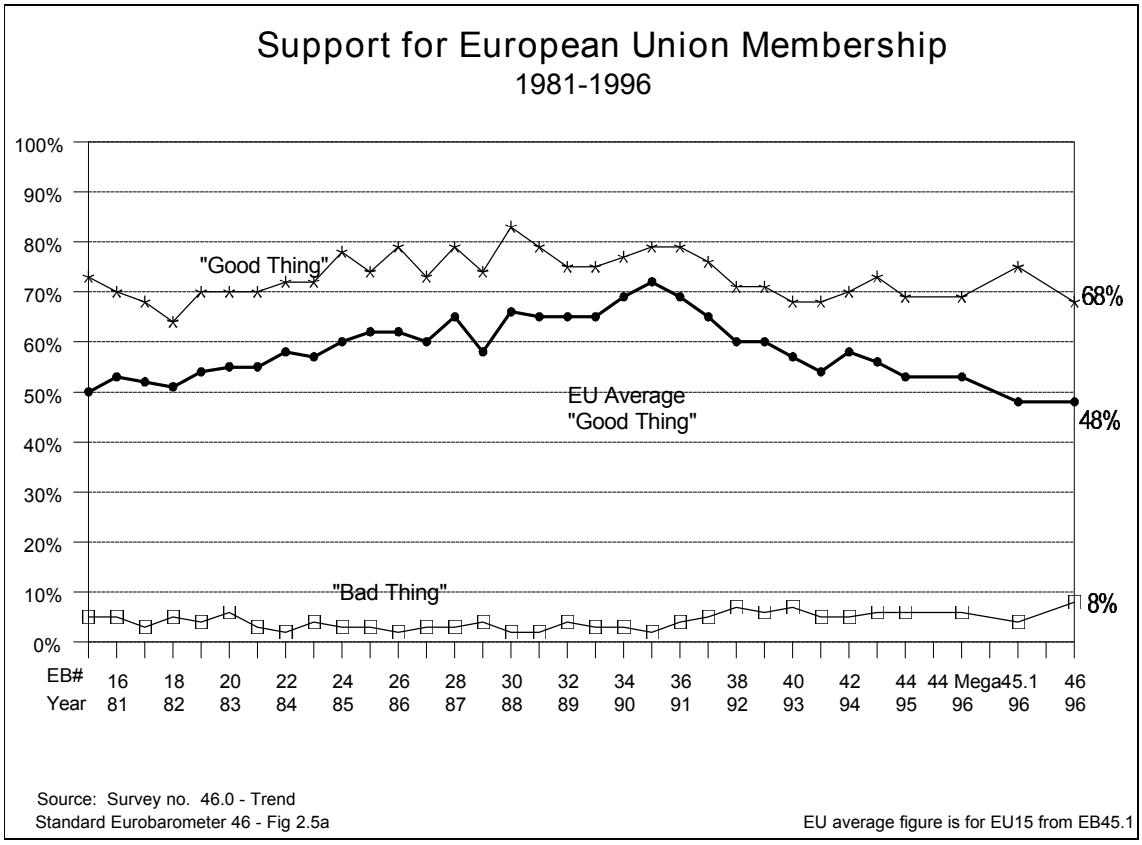

Benefit from European Union Membership
1984-1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Benefited
EU Average
Benefited
Not benefited
44%
42%
35%
EB# 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44.1 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2.5b
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

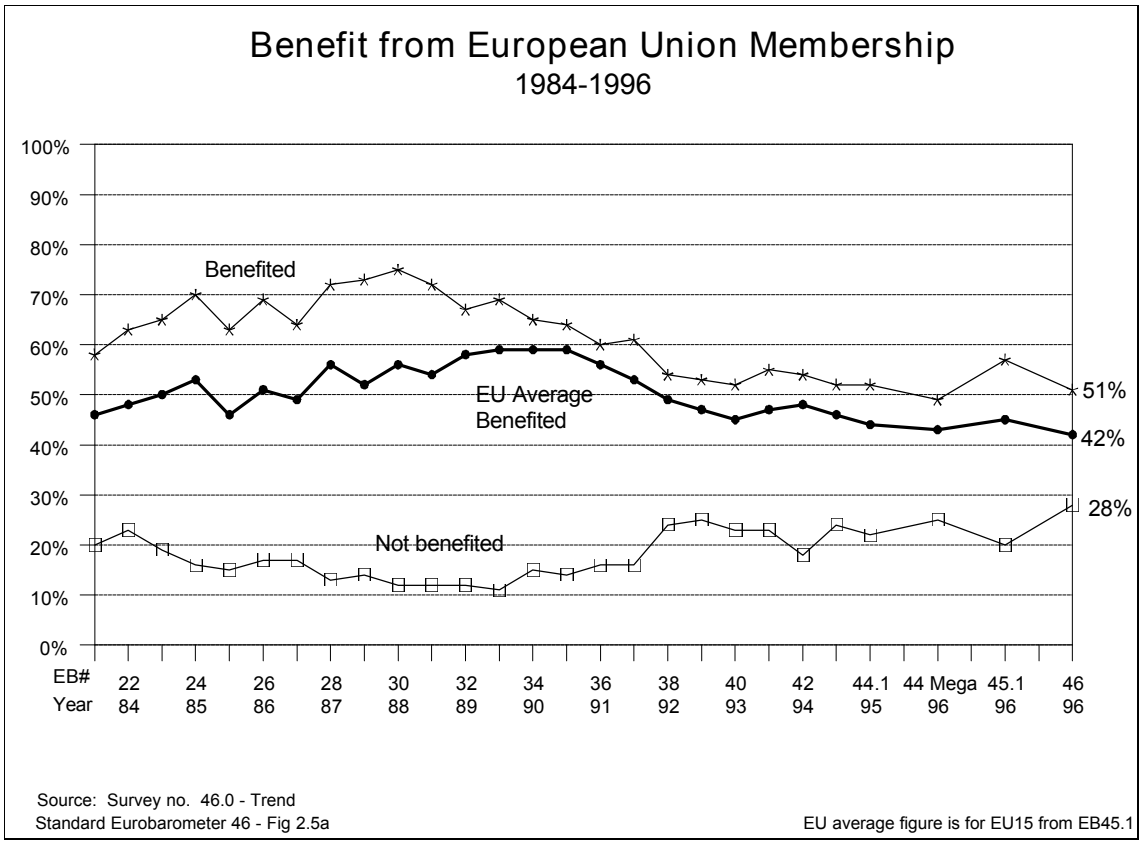
Ireland


Support for European Union Membership
1981-1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
"Good Thing"
76%
EU Average
"Good Thing"
48%
"Bad Thing"
5%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2.5a
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

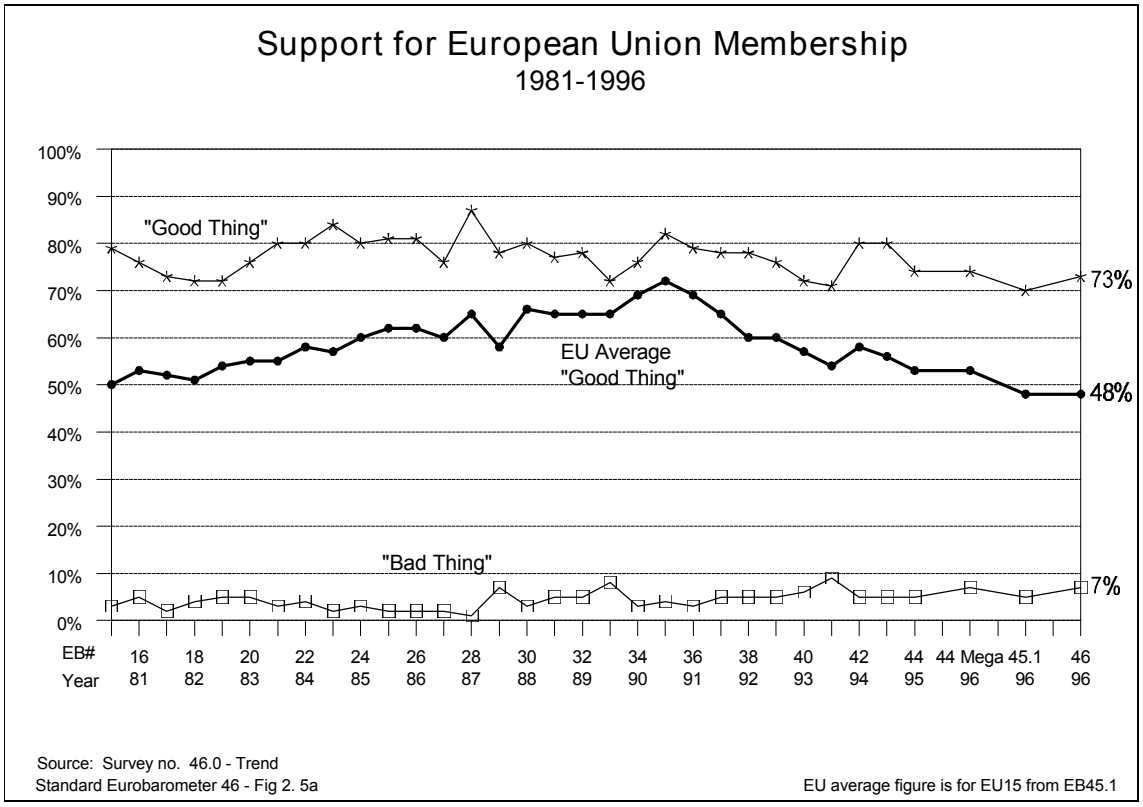

Benefit from European Union Membership
1983 - 1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Benefited
86%
EU Average
Benefited
42%
Not benefited
5%
EB# 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44.1 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2.5b
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

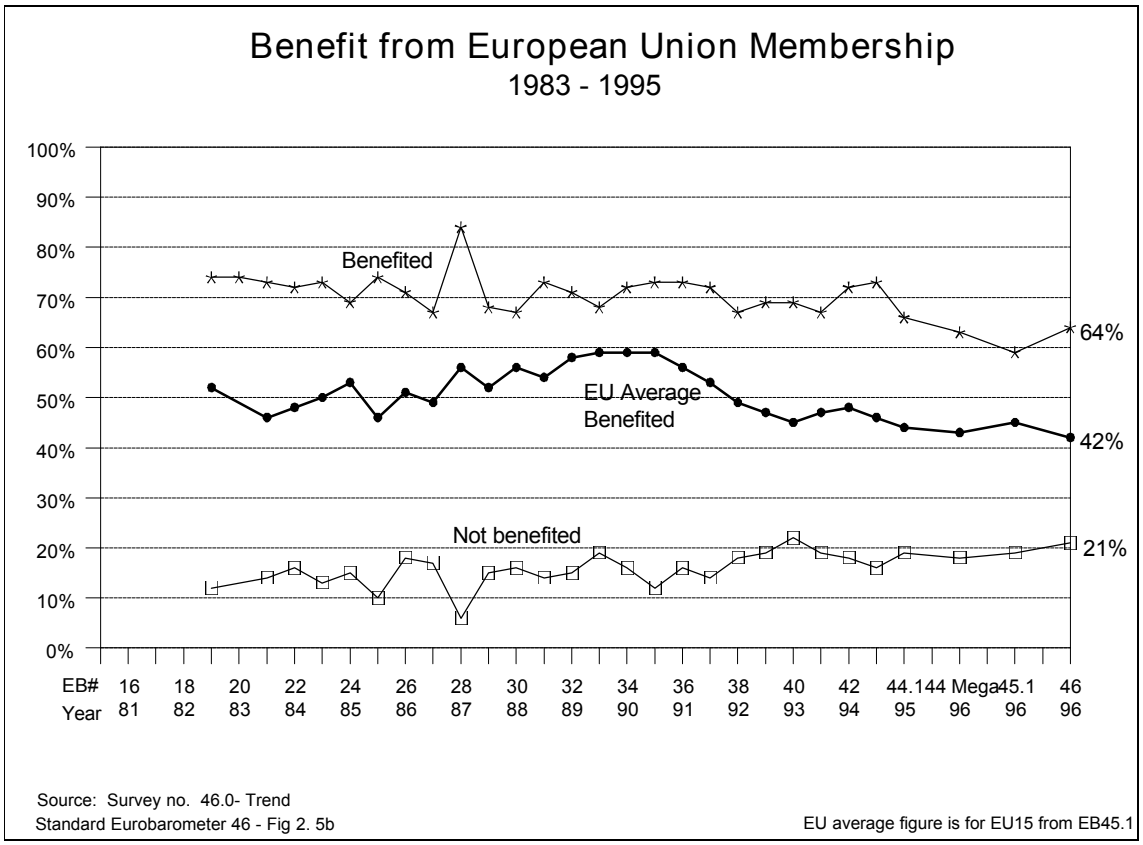
Italia


Support for European Union Membership
1981-1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
"Good Thing"
68%
EU Average
"Good Thing"
48%
"Bad Thing"
8%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2.5a
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

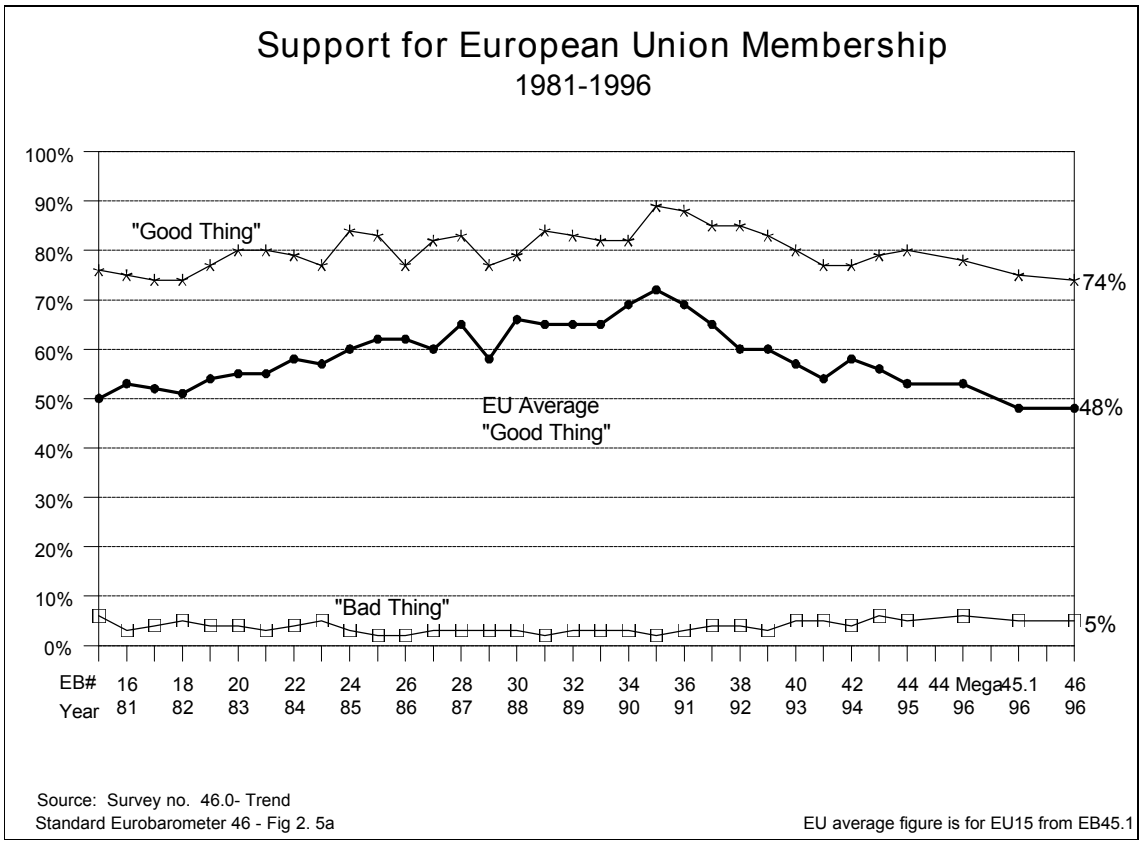

Benefit from European Union Membership
1984-1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Benefited
51%
EU Average
Benefited
42%
28%
Not benefited
EB# 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44.1 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2.5a
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

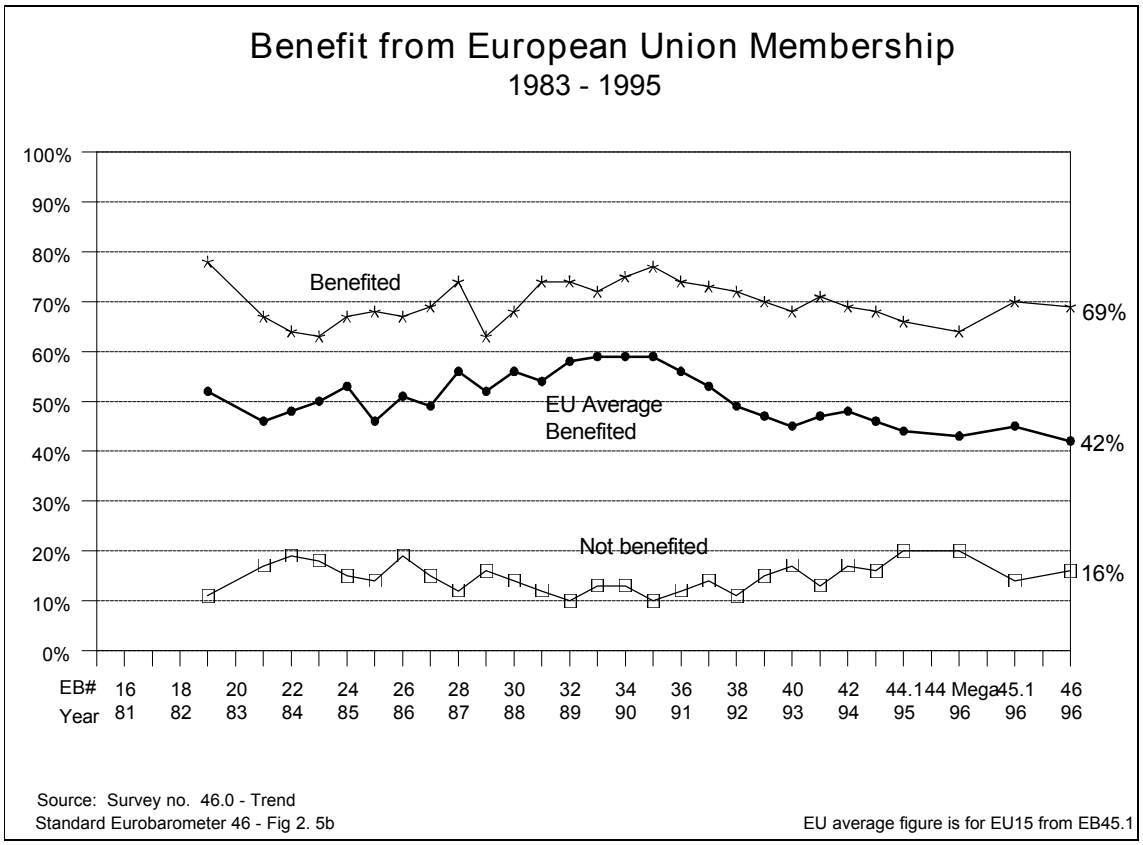
Luxembourg


Support for European Union Membership
1981-1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
"Good Thing"
EU Average
"Good Thing"
"Bad Thing"
73%
48%
7%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 5a
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

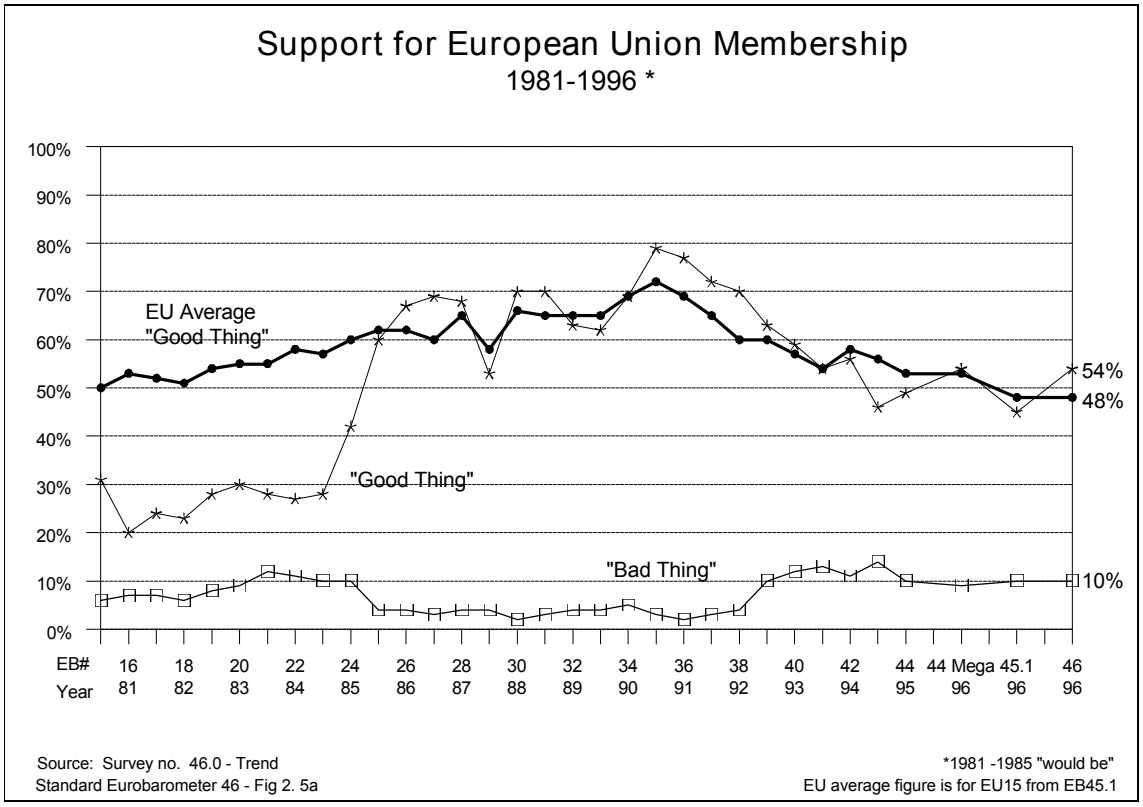

Benefit from European Union Membership
1983 - 1995
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Benefited
EU Average
Benefited
Not benefited
64%
42%
21%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44.1 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0- Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 5b
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

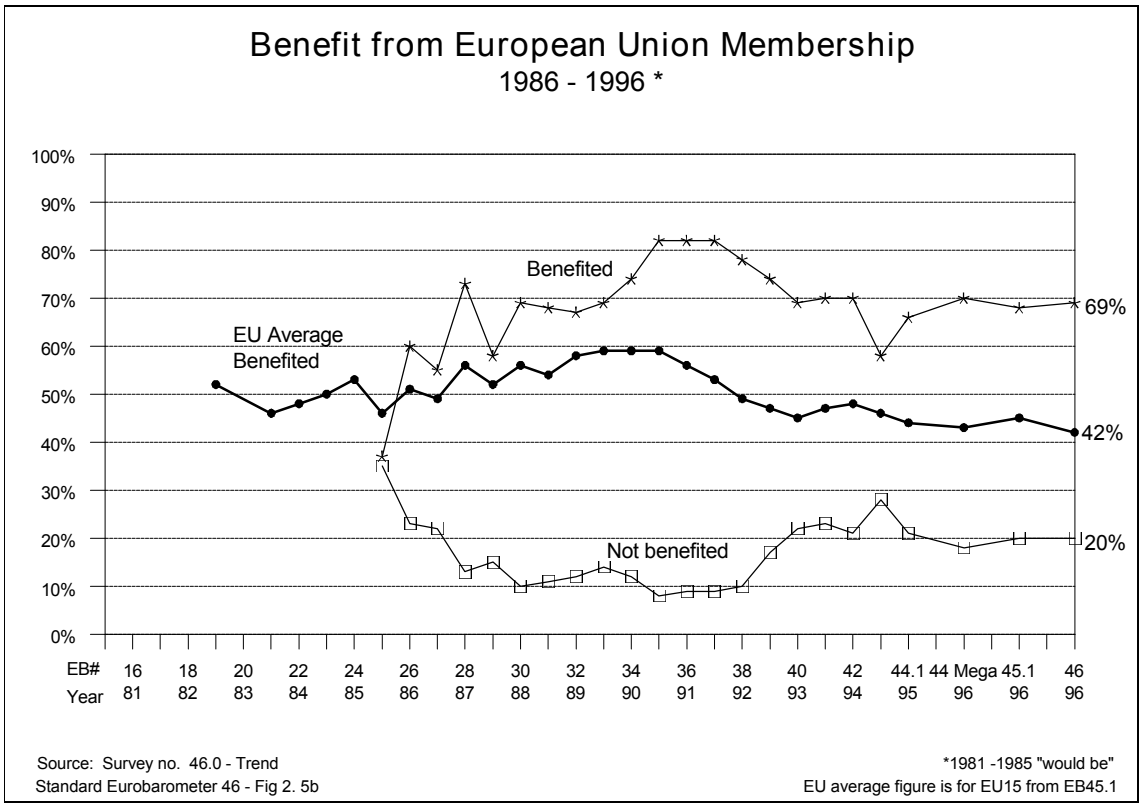
Nederland


Support for European Union Membership
1981-1996
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
"Good Thing"
74%
EU Average
"Good Thing"
48%
"Bad Thing"
5%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0- Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 5a
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

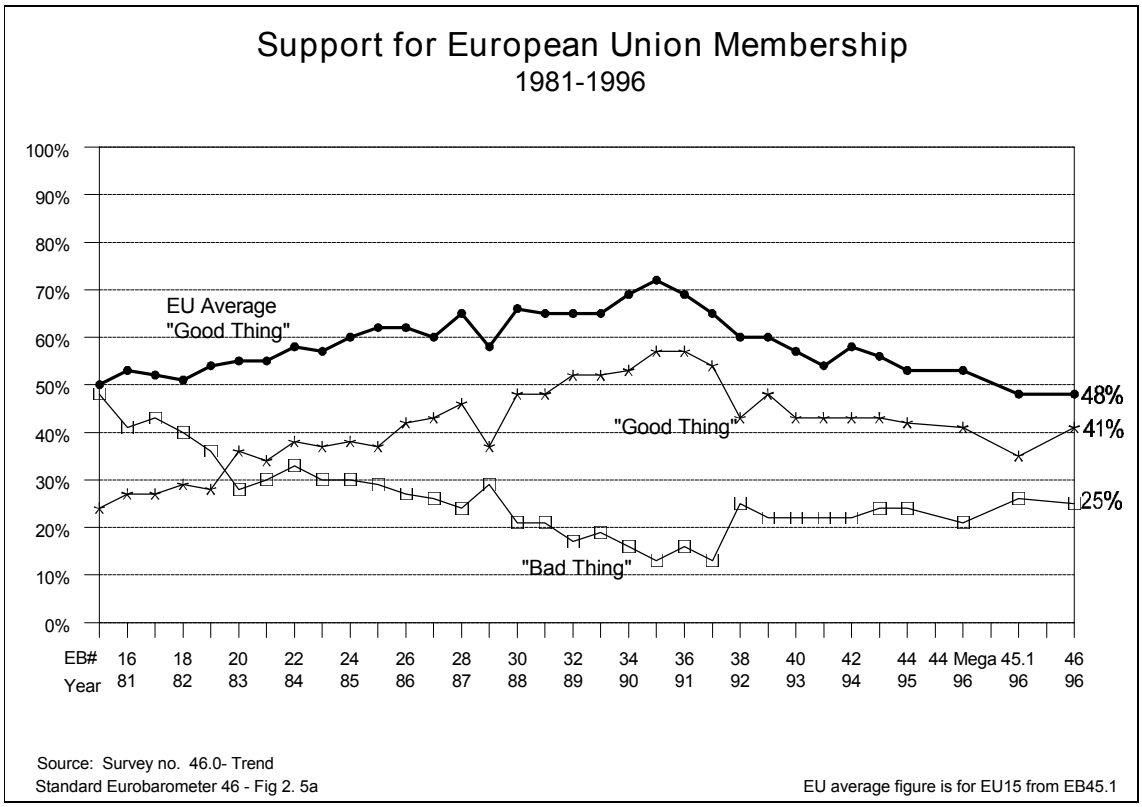

Benefit from European Union Membership
1983 - 1995
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Benefited
69%
EU Average
Benefited
42%
Not benefited
16%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44.1 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 5b
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

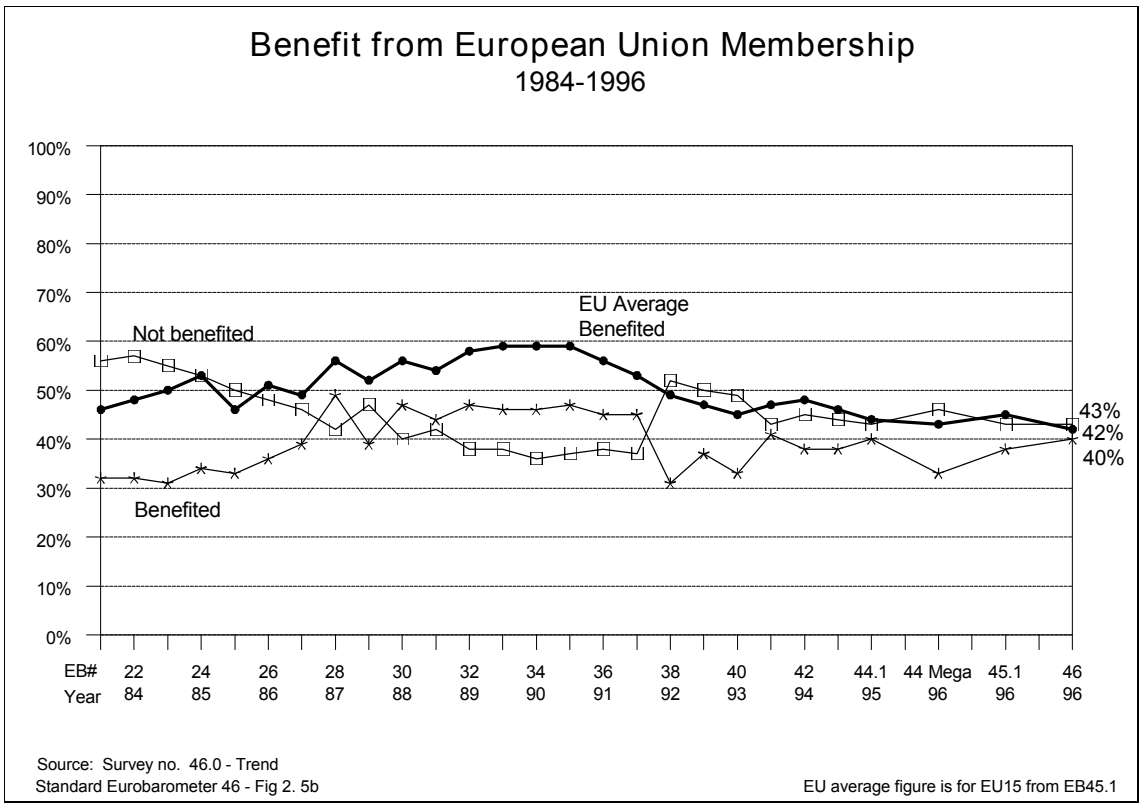
Portugal


Support for European Union Membership
1981-1996 *
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
EU Average
"Good Thing"
"Good Thing"
"Bad Thing"
54%
48%
10%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 5a
*1981 -1985 "would be"
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1


Benefit from European Union Membership
1986 - 1996 *
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Benefited
EU Average
Benefited
Not benefited
69%
42%
20%
EB# 16 18 20 22 24 26 28 30 32 34 36 38 40 42 44.1 44 Mega 45.1 46
Year 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 96 96
Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 5b
*1981 -1985 "would be"
EU average figure is for EU15 from EB45.1

United Kingdom



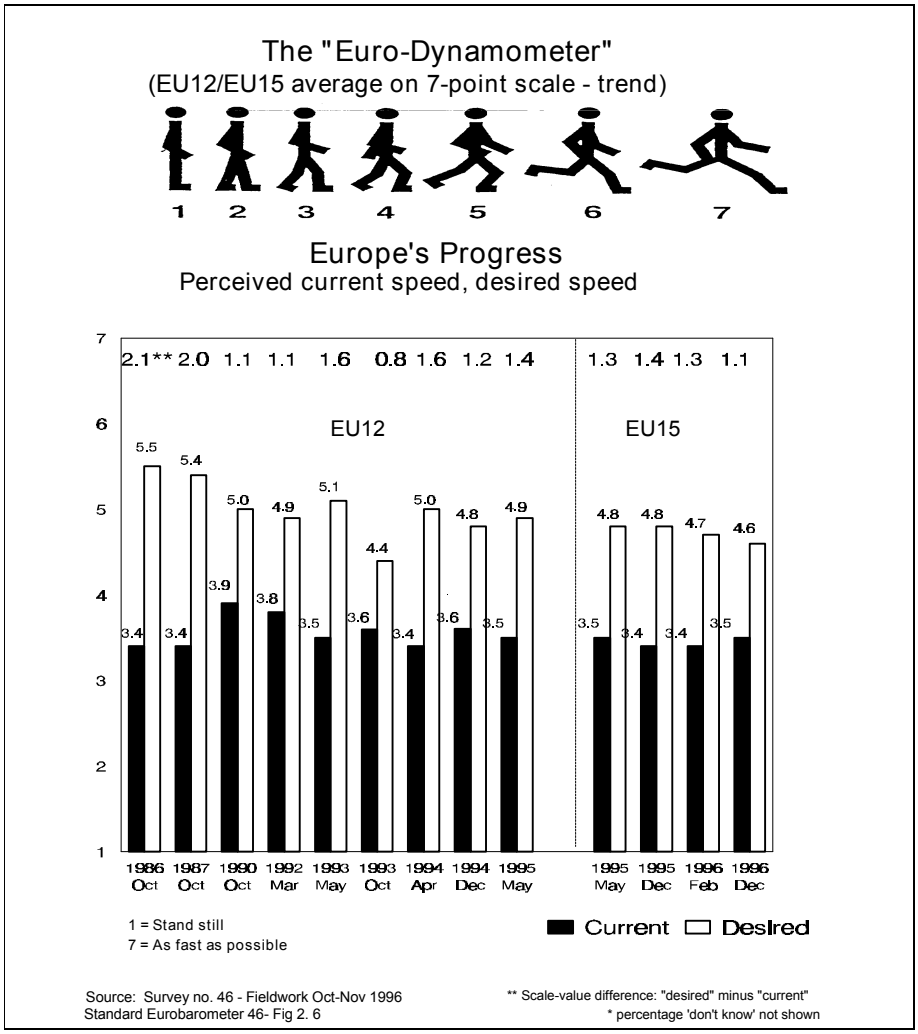


2.3. The Speed of European Integration

The Eurobarometer has over the past ten years measured public opinion with regard to the speed of European integration; is it progressing too fast or not fast enough in the eyes of its citizens? This measurement has been has been established by the use of the following question:

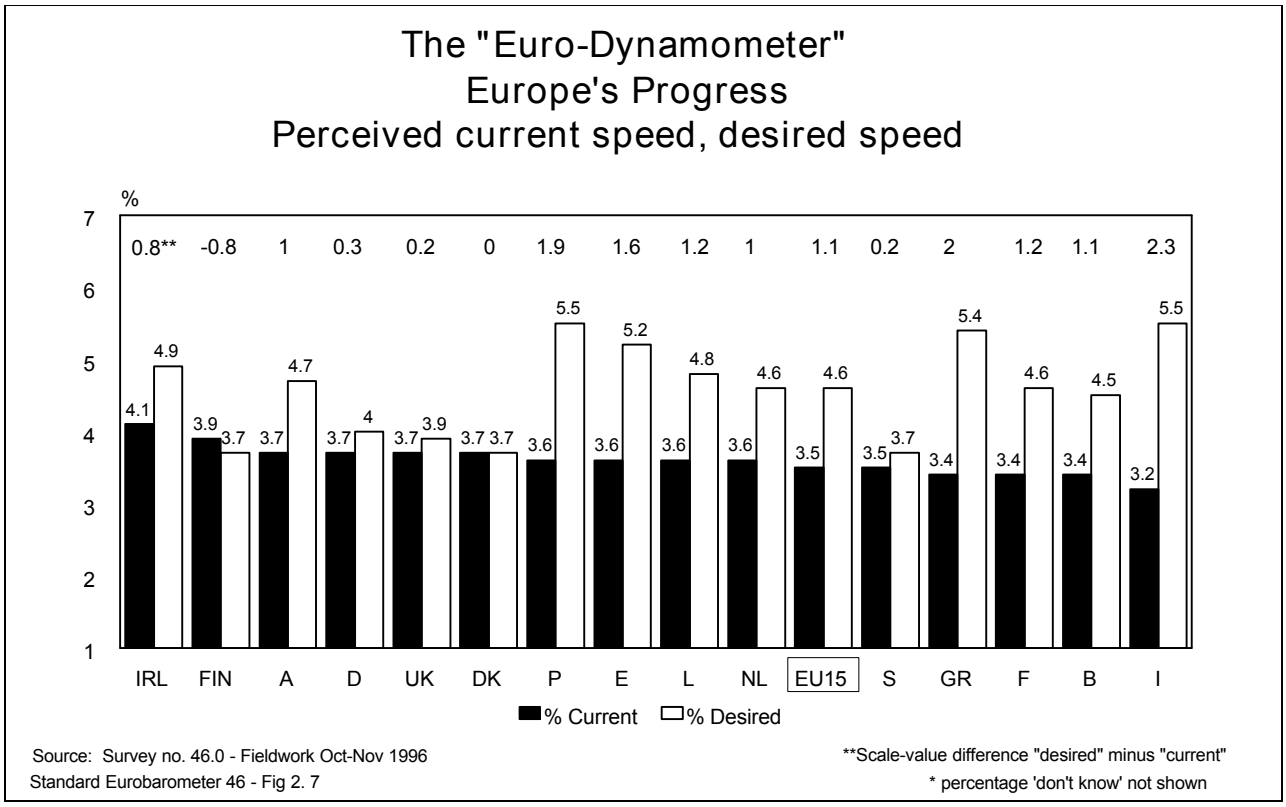
> a. In your opinion, how is the European Union, the European unification advancing nowadays ? Please look at these people (show card). number 1 is standing still, number 7 is running as fast as possible. Choose the one which best corresponds with your opinion of the European Union, European unification.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

Over a decade we witness almost a halving of the desired speed minus the current speed of integration. While in 1986, when first measured the general public felt the process was significantly slower than they hoped for, a net score difference of 2.1 was registered, ten years on in 1996 the figure has dropped to 1.1. Current speed scores have remained largely steady, in the range of 3.4 to 3.6 (with only two higher scores in 1990 and 1992 (3.9 and 3.8 respectively), the drop has been largely attributable to the decline in the "desired" speed scores, where the overall figure has dropped from 5.5 to 4.6.



The country by country analysis shows that the Mediterranean countries continue to support faster integration in comparison with other Member States, this is particularly true in Italy, Greece and Portugal and to a lesser extent in Spain.

A middle group of countries is desirous of further advancement, these include the Benelux states together with France and Austria. The final group includes those countries where there is either only very slight support for faster integration or even as in the case in Finland a wish to see integration slow down. In this third group we include Finland (-0.8 net speed score), the United Kingdom and Sweden (0.2 each) and Denmark (0.3). (Tables 2.7 to 2.10)



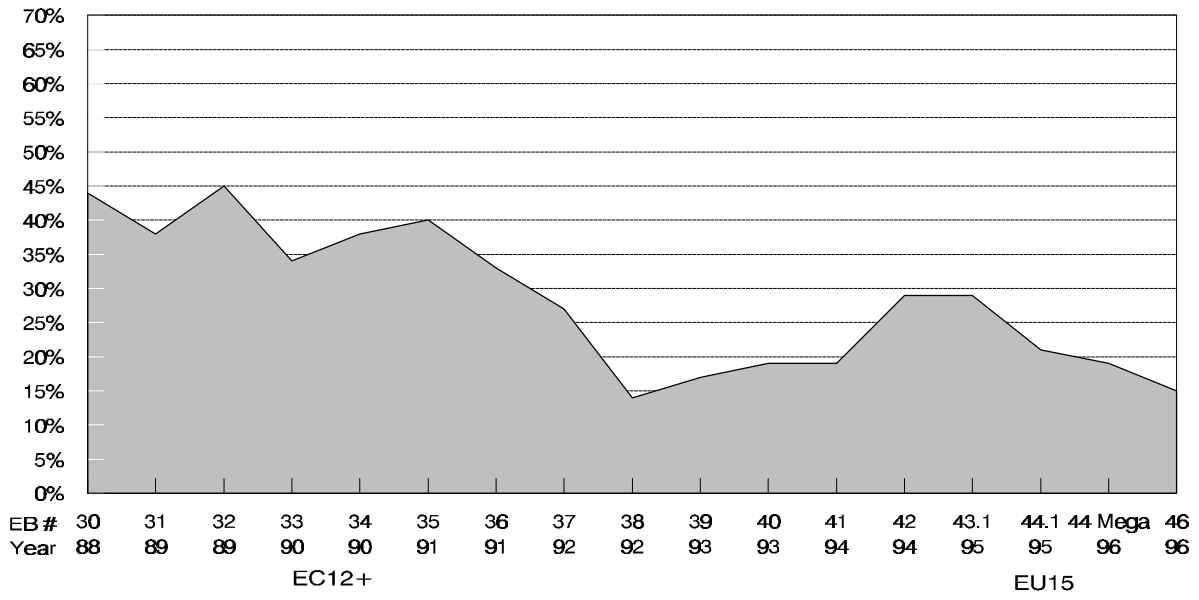
2.4. Hope or fear of the Single Market

The final question in the series measuring general attitudes toward the European Union relates to public sentiments towards the Single European Market. Since 1988 we have asked the following question:

> "Personally, would you say that the single European market which will come about by 1992 makes you feel very hopeful, rather hopeful, rather fearful or very fearful".[5]

The downward trend that we witnessed at the end of 1995 has continued into 1996. Net hope figures have declined from 28% in Spring 1995 to 15% in the current survey. The following graph and table show how public perception has changed over time.

[5] This question wording was modified in 1993 to read as follows : "Personally, would you say that the single European market that came about at the beginning of 1993 makes you feel very hopeful, rather hopeful, rather fearful or very fearful"?[5]

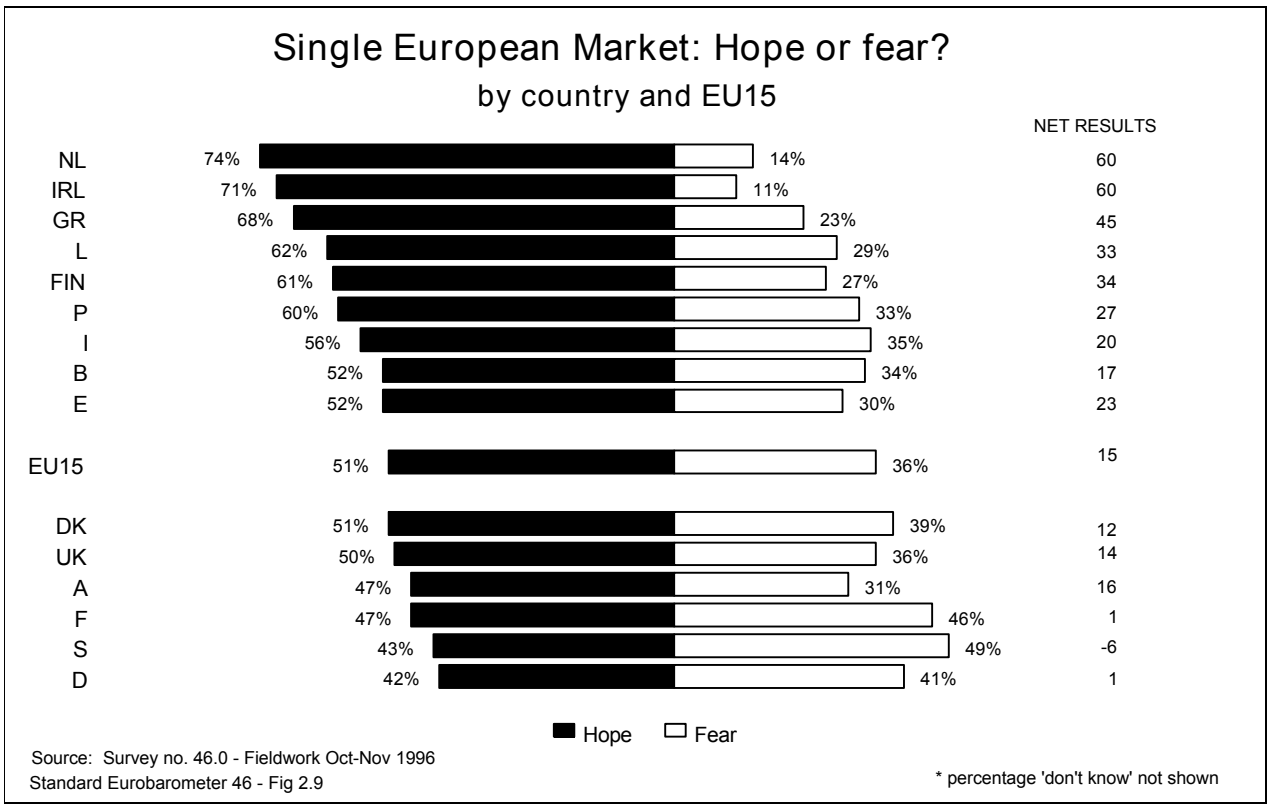


Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Trend
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 2. 8

* percentage 'don't know' not shown

Percentage “hopeful” Net Scores				
	Spring 95’ EB 43	Winter 95’ EB 44	Spring 96’ EB 45	Winter 96’ EB 46
Belgium	50	24	23	17
Denmark	24	22	29	12
Germany	23	11	9	1
Greece	55	55	50	45
Spain	23	21	30	23
France	15	15	9	1
Ireland	69	59	65	60
Italy	42	25	27	20
Luxembourg	46	43	51	33
Netherlands	58	53	50	60
Austria	26	21	24	16
Portugal	35	34	28	27
Finland	43	34	33	34
Sweden	5	0	-5	-6
United Kingdom	26	20	10	14
EU15	28	21	19	15

Analysis by country indicates the Netherlands (74% hope), Ireland (71%) and Greece (68%) are the most hopeful. Sweden shows itself to be the most fearful, with fear exceeding hope by 6%, in France and Germany the hopeful exceed the fearful by a scant 1%, elsewhere hope exceeds fear by at least 10% or more as the following graph shows. (Tables 2.11 & 2.12)



3. Current Policy issues

In this chapter we will examine support for a range of policy issues which form, in part, the debate centered on the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), which will conclude at the Amsterdam Council meeting in June 1997, and in part the discussion concerning the introduction the Single currency, the Euro.

3.1. Support for current policy issues

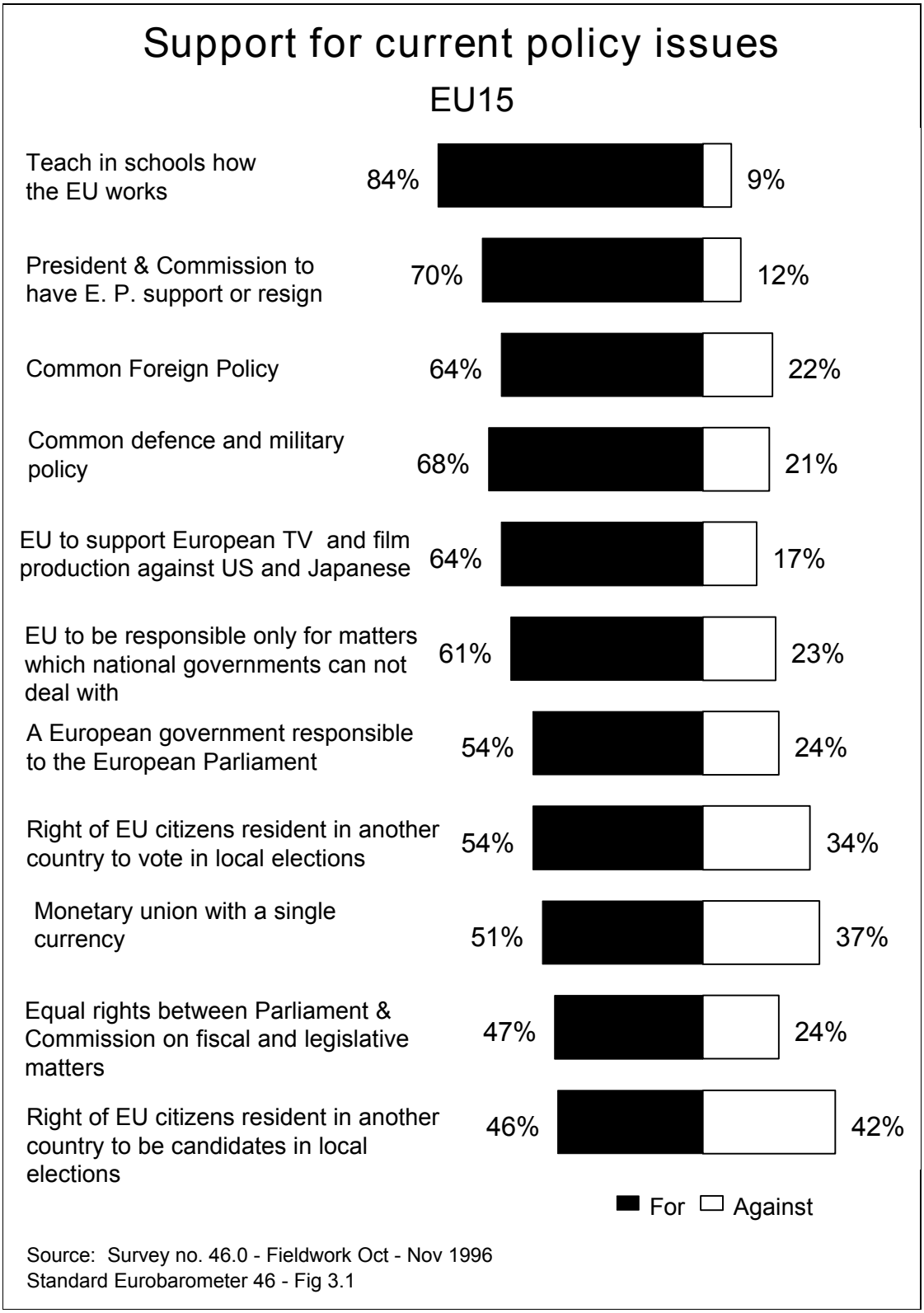
Together with the questions concerning areas considered for priority action by the European Union, the Eurobarometer has established a list of key elements which are contained within the framework of the Treaty on European Union (Maastricht). Over a number of surveys, respondents have been asked to express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

Of all the issues support runs highest (84%) for the teaching about the European Union in schools. Less, but increasing, importance is given to the statement " The European Union should support film and television production in Europe in order to achieve a better balance between American, Japanese and European productions". Sixty-four percent (+5%) of EU citizens feel the industry should receive EU level support.

Support for monetary union with a single currency remains constant at 51%. Support is also relatively unchanged for a common foreign policy (64% support). However, after a noticeable drop in early 1996, we observe an eight percentage point increase to 68% support in the Autumn for a common defence and military policy.

The topics covered under the title "Democratic Process" have remained relatively stable over the past year, although they have increased since 1993. Strongest in this group of issues is the need of the European Parliament's support of the President and college of Commissioners, 70% of respondents rate this as a key issue. (Tables 3.1 and 3.2)

Key Maastricht Issues					
Theme	Spring 1993 EB 39	Spring 1995 EB 43	Autumn 1995 EB 44	Spring 1996 EB 45	Autumn 1996 EB 46
Economic and Monetary union	52	52	53	51	51
Foreign policy and defence					
Common defence policy	77	75	73	60	68
Common Foreign policy	66	67	69	66	64
Democratic processes					
EP support for Commission members	66	70	72	71	70
Subsidiarity	57	55	63	64	61
European Government	54	57	60	58	54
Vote local EU elections	48	54	54	53	54
Candidate EU elections	38	45	45	43	46
Education and Culture					
Teaching about EU in schools	na	84	86	84	84
Support for EU TV & Film production	na	64	66	59	64

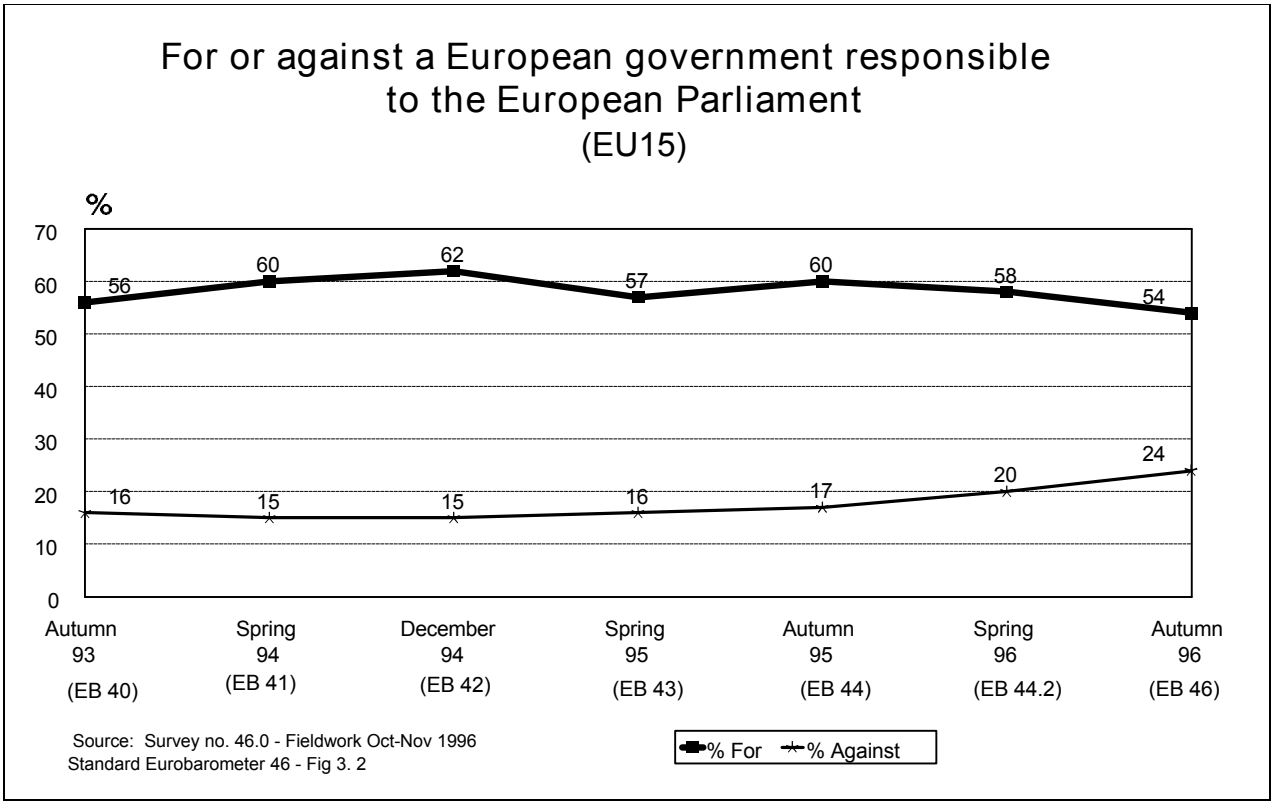


3.2. A European Government

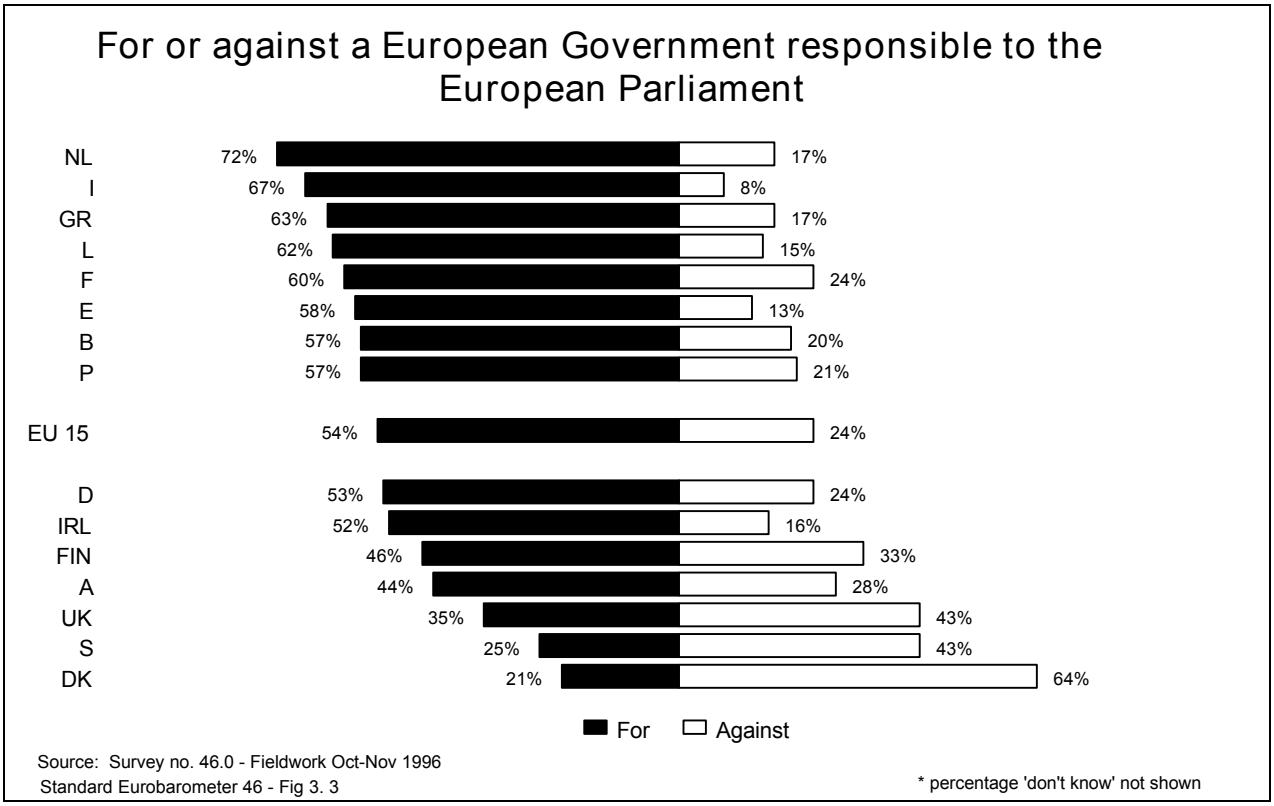
Does Europe need a European government to further European integration, and do people support the idea of a European Government responsible to the European Parliament?

Over the past three years that the Eurobarometer has monitored public opinion on this issue there has been a steady increase in support, this has now fallen back by 4 percentage points overall and is at its lowest level recorded.

Just over half (54%) of those interviewed favoured the idea of "The formation, for the European Union, of a European government responsible to the European Parliament", 24% were against, while 22% held no opinion.



Support was highest in the Netherlands where 72% supported the concept. Other countries to exceed the EU average were Italy (67%), Greece (63%), Luxembourg (62%), and France (60%). Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom remain the most eurosceptic with between one fifth and one third of their residents supporting the idea. (Table 3.3)

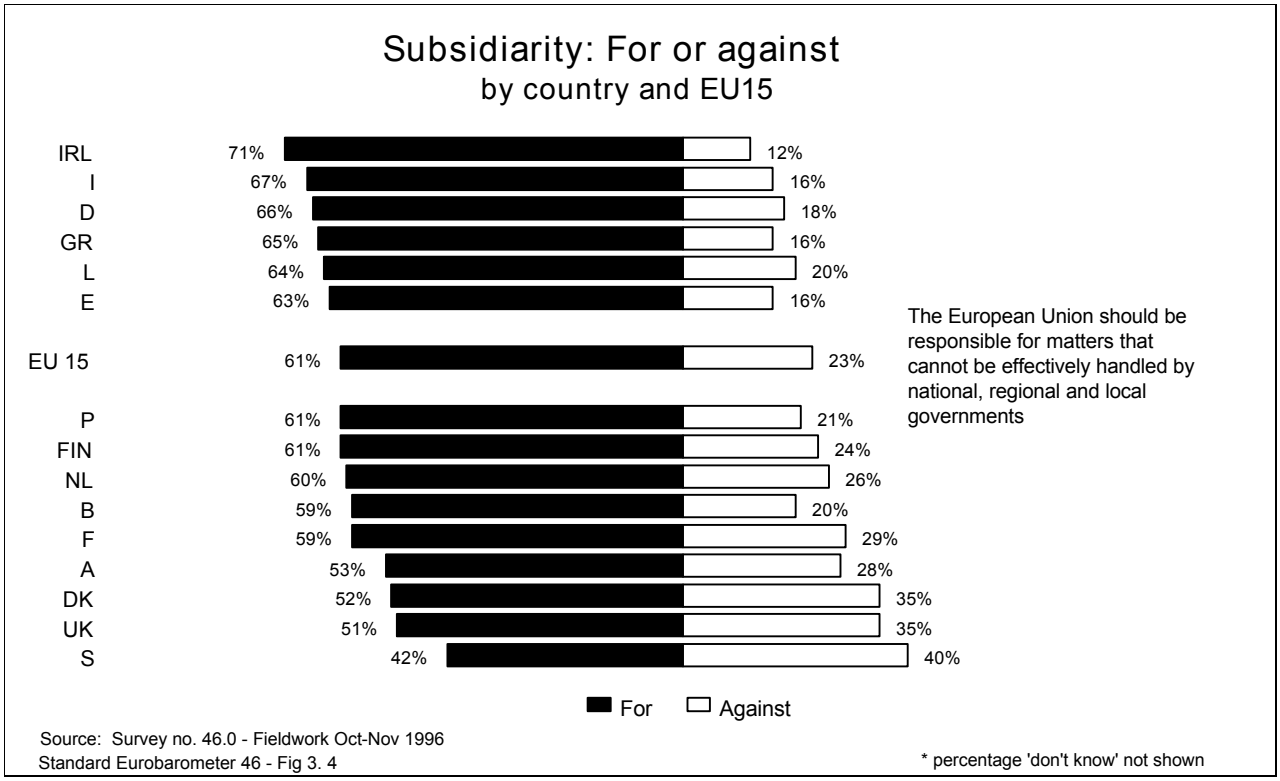


Demographic analysis shows the classic pattern of stronger support amongst men (57%) versus: women (51%), the younger (55% in the 16-24 age group to 49% in the 55+ age group), the better educated (63% of those completing their education after the age of 20 or still studying versus 46% of those who left school by the age of 16). Seventy-three percent of those finding their country's membership a "good thing" were in favour, while of those with strongly negative views only 39% were in favour. (Table 3.4)

3.3. Subsidiarity - national or joint-decision taking ?

As we saw in the first 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 23% are against the principle and a remaining 16% hold "no opinion".

The concept is strongly supported in Ireland (71%), Italy (67%), Germany (66%), Greece (65%) and Luxembourg (64%). Lower scores are recorded in Sweden (42%), the United Kingdom (51%), Denmark (52%) and Austria (53%). (Table 3.5)



In the demographic analysis the concept of subsidiarity is support by the well-educated, managers, people with a positive attitude to Europe and the opinion leaders. (Table 3.6)

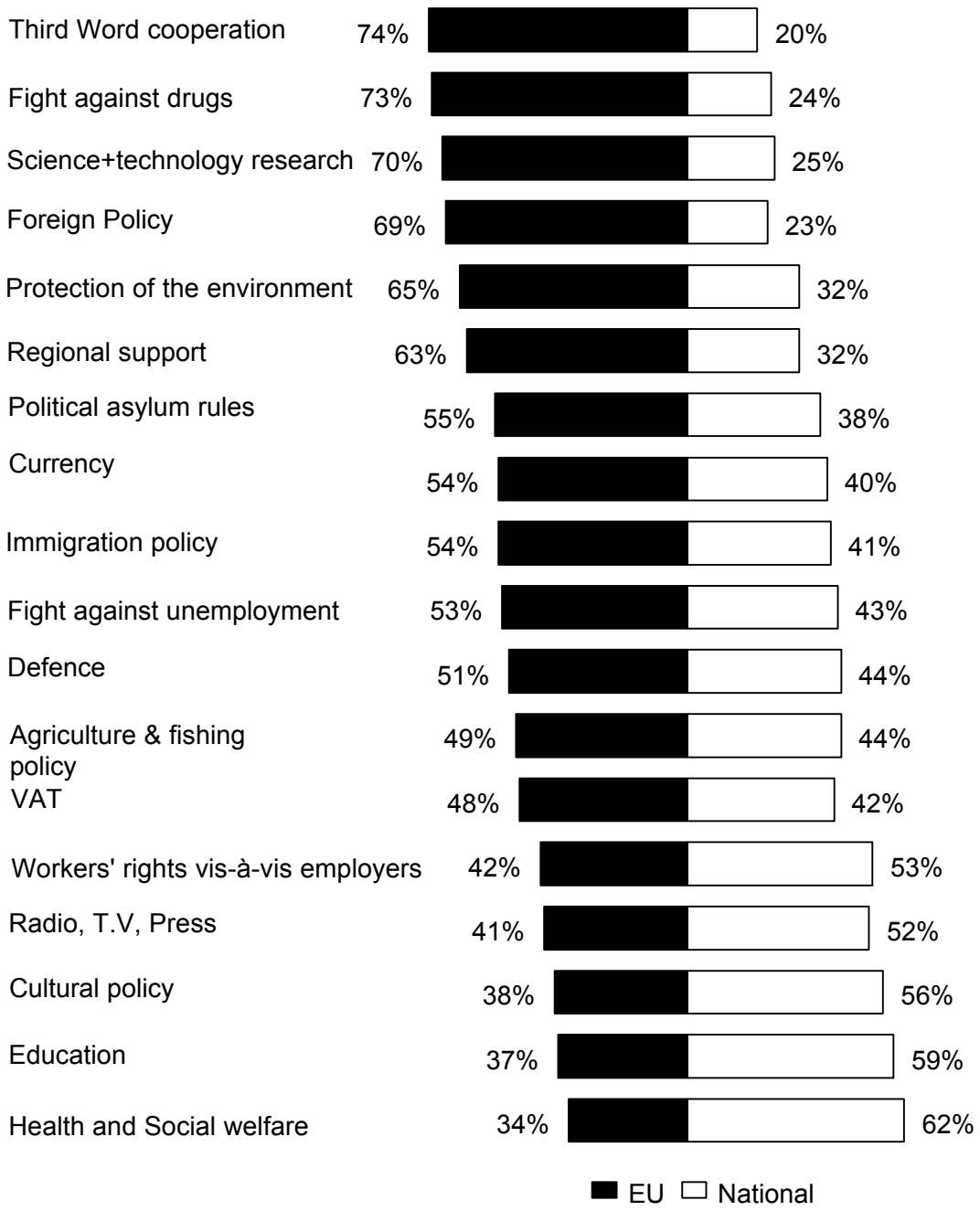
If subsidiarity is supported by the majority, which are the areas to which they fell it is most appropriate? The Eurobarometer asked respondents to rate 18 policy areas, asking for each which should be decided at EU level and which should be decided nationally.

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. (Tables 3.7 to 3.12)

National or joint EU Decision Making

18 Policy areas - EU15

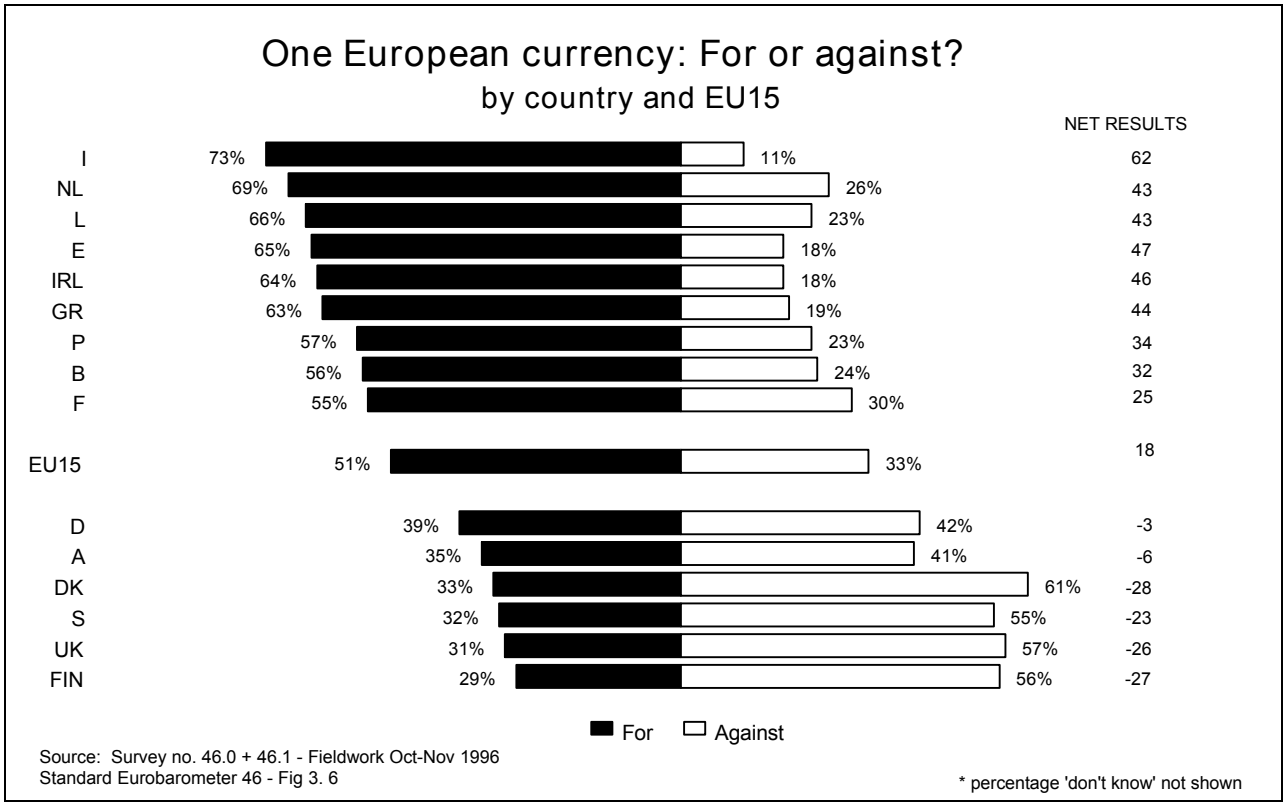


Source: Survey no. 46.0 - Fieldwork Oct - Nov 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 3.5

3.4. Support for a Single Currency

In the following sections we will examine the level of support for the single currency, how informed people feel and their perceived need for information. Due to the importance of the planned introduction of a single currency the survey was conducted through two sucessive waves of the Eurobarometer, namely Eurobarometer 46.0 and 46.1[6] giving rise to a total sample size of 31 800 interviews.

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 twelve months later, shows support at 51%, while the "against" figure remained at 33%. These figures are similar to the 1996 Spring survey[7]. This suggests that there is a reduction in those holding "no opinion", currently running at 7%, while 10% spontaneously mentioned being "neither for, nor against".



Net gains were recorded in all Member States but three, France (-10), Finland (-7) and a very slight drop in the United Kingdom (-1) . As the table below shows elsewhere, net gains ranged from +14 in Austria and +12 points in Greece, down to no change in Denmark. (Table 3.13)

[6] The technical details of the two surveys are to be found in the annexes of this report.
[7] Standard Eurobarometer 45

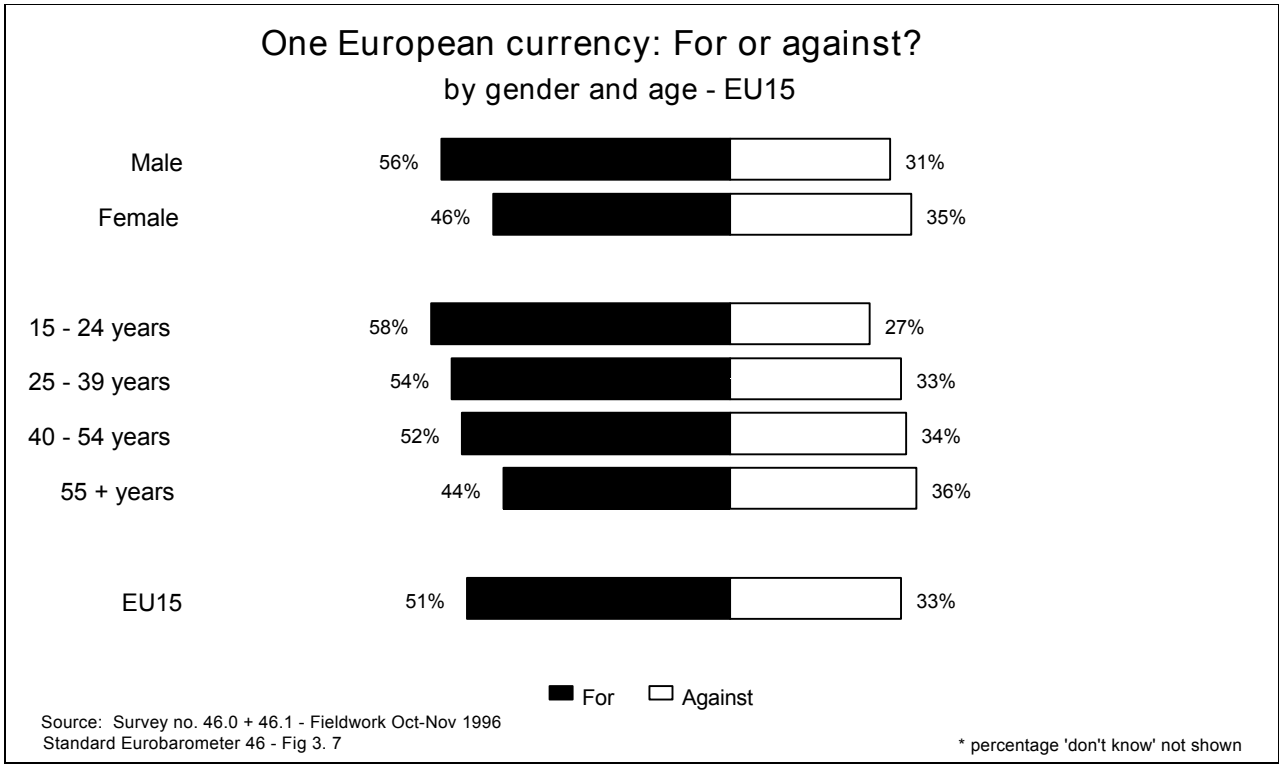
CHANGES IN NET RESULTS[8] AUTUMN 1995 - AUTUMN 1996								
	B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I
1995	26	-28	-11	32	40	35	43	58
1996	32	-28	-3	44	47	25	46	62
% change	+6	0	+8	+12	+7	-10	+3	+4

	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EU15
1995	37	36	-20	25	-20	-25	-25	14
1996	43	43	-6	34	-27	-23	-26	18
% change	+6	+7	+14	+9	-7	+2	-1	+4

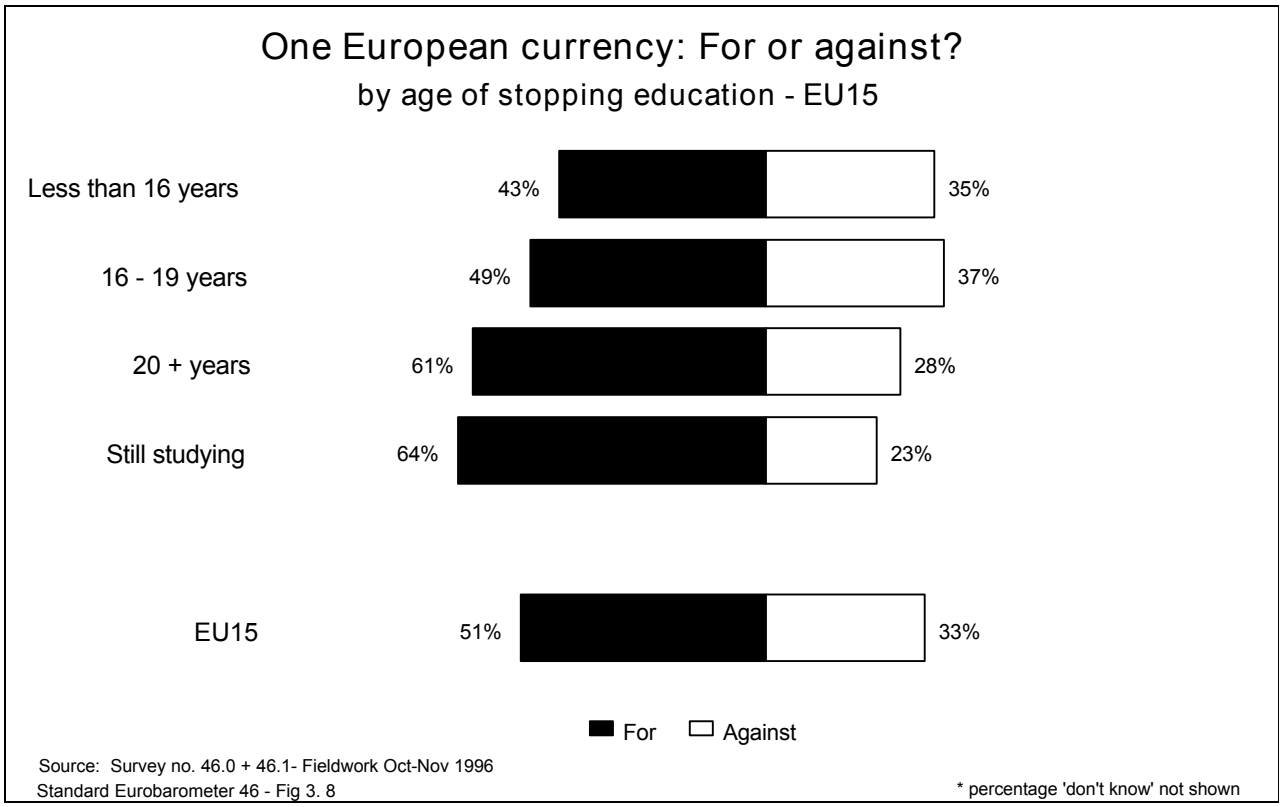
The socio-demographic analysis confirms previous trends, namely men are more positive than women (56%: 46%). All age groups have increased their support for the single currency in the past twelve months, the younger being the most positive, while those over 55 remain more reticent.

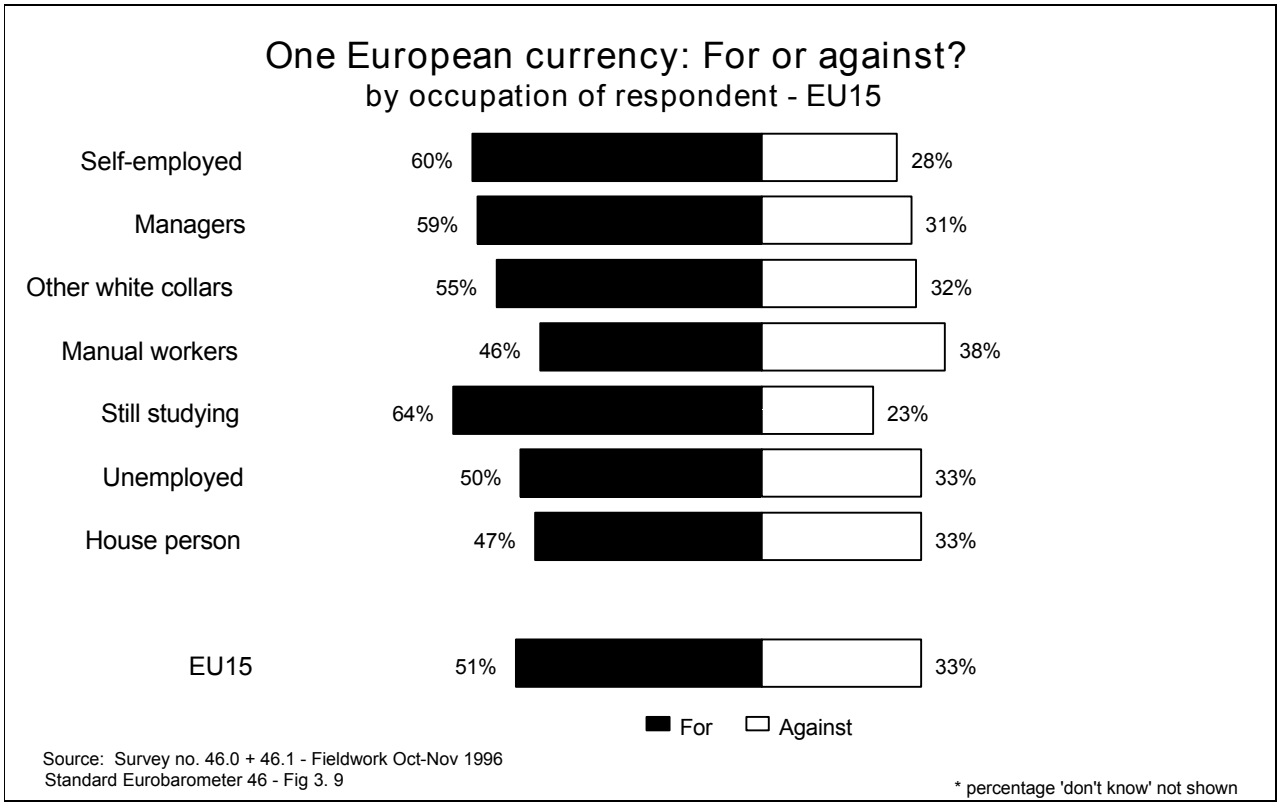
Level of education also correlates with positive attitudes; amongst those completing their education after the age of 20 or "still studying" two-thirds are in favour, compared with only 43% of those leaving school before they were 16.

Analysis by occupation shows the highest support amongst the self-employed (60%), managers (59%) and white collar workers (55%). Lower scores were recorded amongst manual workers (46%), the unemployed (50%) and housepersons (47%). The rank order for these groups has not changed since the survey in the Spring of 1996 (Eurobarometer 44.2 mega). (Table 3.14)



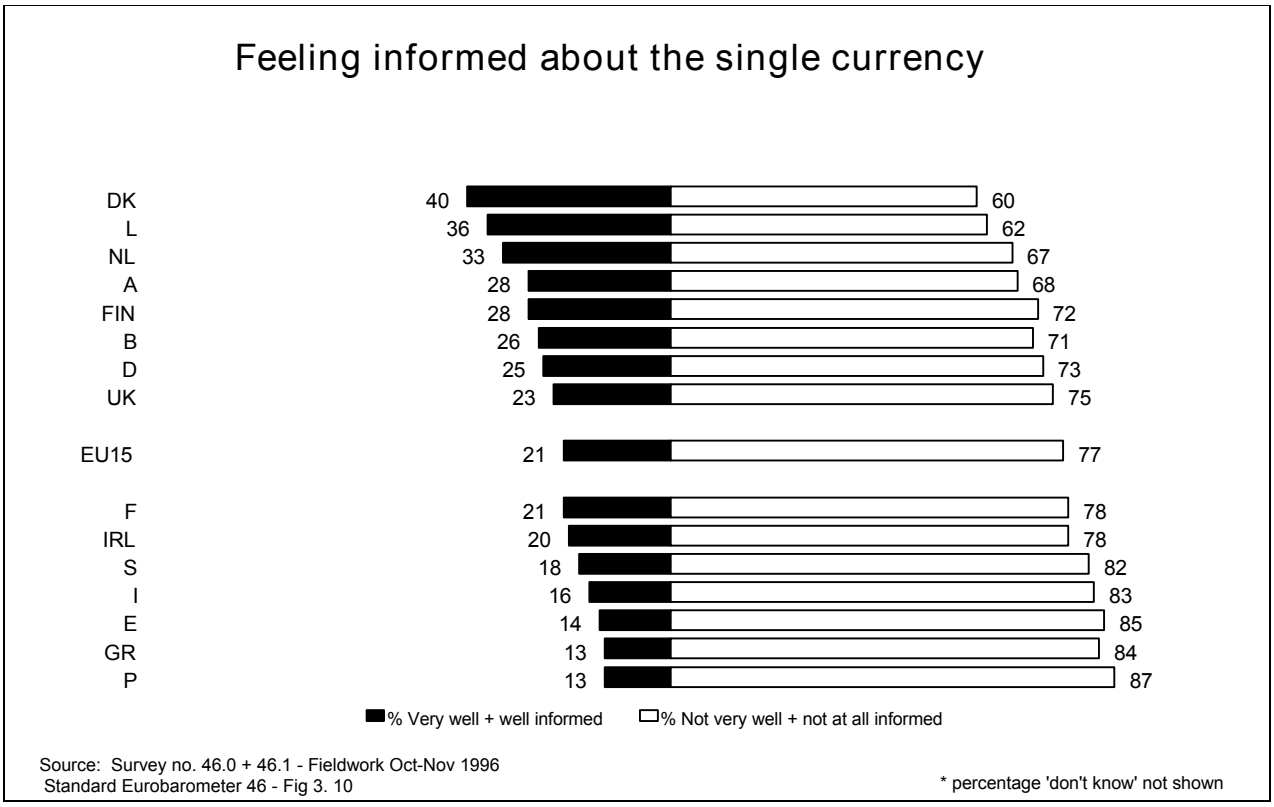
[8] Net results are calculated by calculating the differences between the positive (for) results and the negative (against) results.





3.5. Do European Citizens feel informed about the single currency ?

Despite the increase in public debate in the media the average EU citizen feels no better informed than a year ago. Only 2% feel “very well” informed, 19% “well informed”, while 77% feel they are not well informed (55% “not very well informed” and 22% “not at all informed”). Those feeling well informed continued to be the Danish (40% feeling “very” or “well” informed), the Luxembourg residents (36%, an increase of 6%), the Dutch (33%), and the Austrians and Finns 28% each. Those feeling least informed came from Portugal, Greece (13% each), Spain 14% and Italy was only slightly more at 16%. (Table 3.15)



Demographic analysis shows that above all men feel better informed than women (28%:16%), and those with higher education levels (a +20 terminal education age). Managers were, of all the occupational groups, the best informed and those with a favourable attitude to the European Union were likewise most likely to feel informed. (Table 3.16)

Accepting that currently citizens feel poorly informed about the new currency, the survey went on to ask where people thought information should be made available. Respondents were asked to indicated their preferred sources for obtaining information about the new currency. It was evident that the media in its various forms, together with the financial institutions such as banks and savings banks are considered the prime providers, nevertheless a number of organisations and institutions were cited as additional sources.

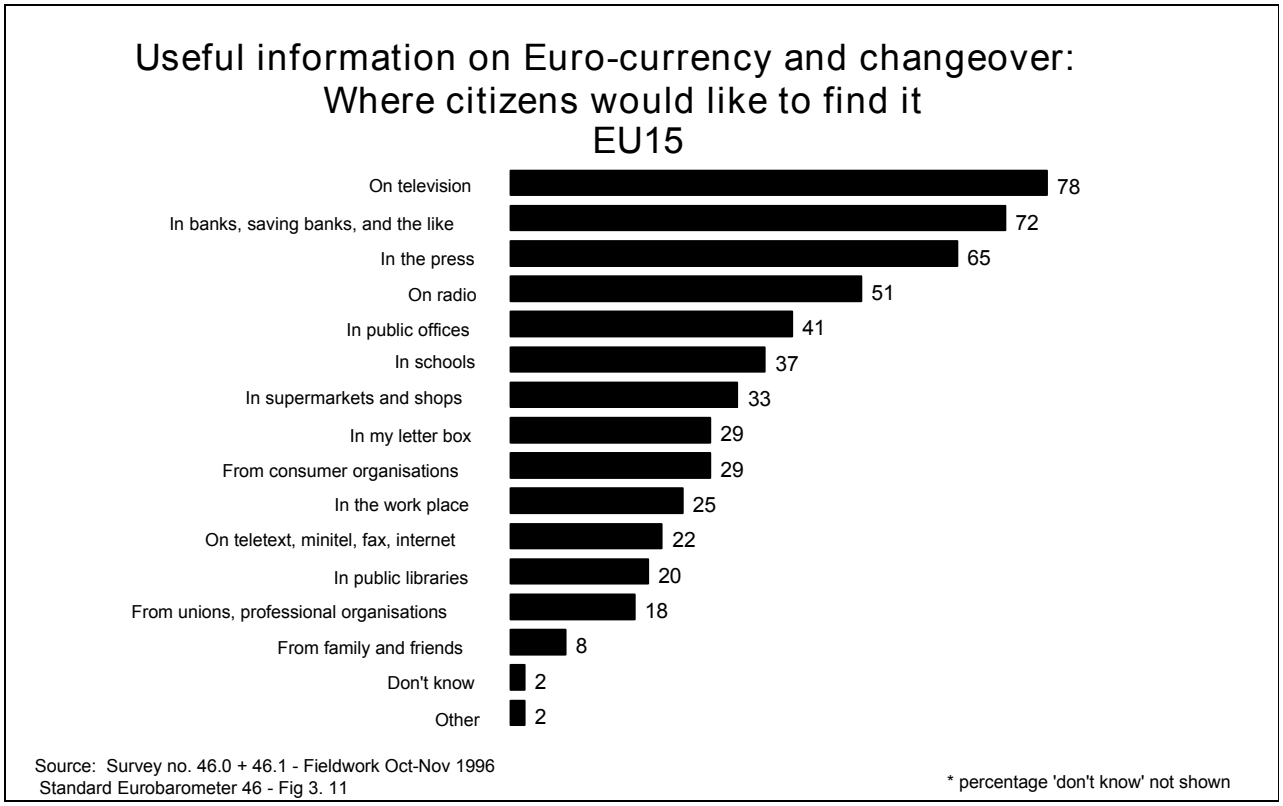
Of the media was the single most highly rated source was television, being selected by 78% as a useful source of information, the print media were mentioned by two in three persons and radio by one in two. Minitel, Teletext, fax and the Internet were thought useful by one in five of those interviewed.

As on the previous survey[9] at the end of 1995, when the same question was last asked, we find people expecting the financial institutions, such as banks, to play a central role in providing the oridinary citizen with information: 72% of those interviewed cited banks as a useful primary source.

While the media and banks are seen as central to any information strategy it was clear that other organisations could, for a number of people, provide additional help. Public offices were cited by 41% of people, schools and other places of education and training were mentioned by 37%, while trade unions / professional bodies and the workplace were suggested by 18% and 25% respectively. Shops and consumer organisations were expected to play a role by approximately one in three of those interviewed.

The cross-country analysis indicated that, while the media and financial institutions are considered prime sources of information in all countries, other sources find a particular and different national appeal.

It was evident that the roles people expected different public and private bodies to play varied according to national structures and traditions. Information sources such as Minitel, teletext, fax and the Internet, while only receiving a 22% mention at the EU 15 level, were considerably better viewed as a source of information in Sweden (49% mention), Denmark (42%), the Netherlands (37%) and the United Kingdom (34%). In the same countries public libraries were mentioned as a source of information by nearly half of those interviewed, while the EU average was only 20%. Of the other general access sources retailers, both shops and supermarkets, are rated by one in three people as a potential source of information. This overall EU15 figure masks some striking national differences: in the United Kingdom some 61% expect their shops and supermarkets to provide information, in Ireland 53% and in France 44%, elsewhere the scores range between one third and one fifth and particulary low scores were recorded in Denmark and Finland (14% each) and Germany 16%. (Table 3.17)



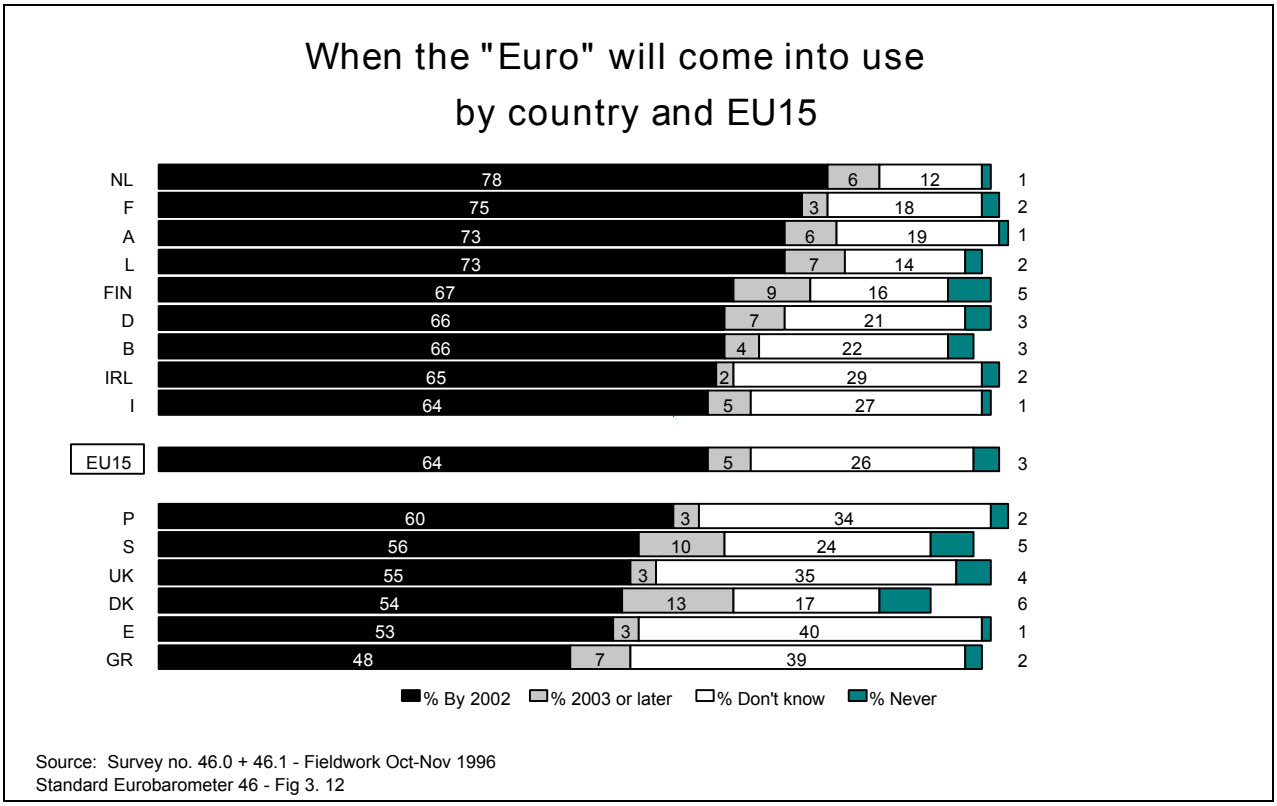
3.6. Introduction of the Currency

[9] Eurobarometer 44 fieldwork December 1995

In response to the question:

> "Notes and coins in the European currency, that is the Euro, may be introduced some time after exchange rates are locked. In December this year designs for the European currency's banknotes will be chosen. When do you think these notes and coins will be introduce?"

Sixty-three percent of respondents expected the notes and coins for the new single currency to be introduced by the year 2002, but the answers were spread over the period prior to 2002, 10% expected a speedy introduction with notes and coins being introduced befor 1999, 18% in 1990, 21% in the year 2000 and 14% in 2001 or 2002. Eight percent suggested later, while 3% thought it would never happen.



Expectations for the introduction of the single currency are highest in the Netherlands where 78% expected the notes and coins to be introduced by 2002, they are followed by France where 75% anticipated the introduction by 2002. In both Luxembourg and Austria, 73% of respondents cited 2002 or earlier. Lower scores were recorded in Greece (48%) and Spain (53%), but in both countries this was counterbalanced by high "don't know" scores of about 40%. In those countries where more eurosceptic views are noted generally, we find slighty higher but nevertheless low scores believing the currency will never come into use. Denmark 6% Finland and Sweden 5% and the United Kingdom 4%. (Table 3.18)

3.7. Which countries will initially participate in the single currency ?

As well as asking respondents when the Euro will be introduced we also asked if their own country was likely to participate. Respondents were asked the following question:

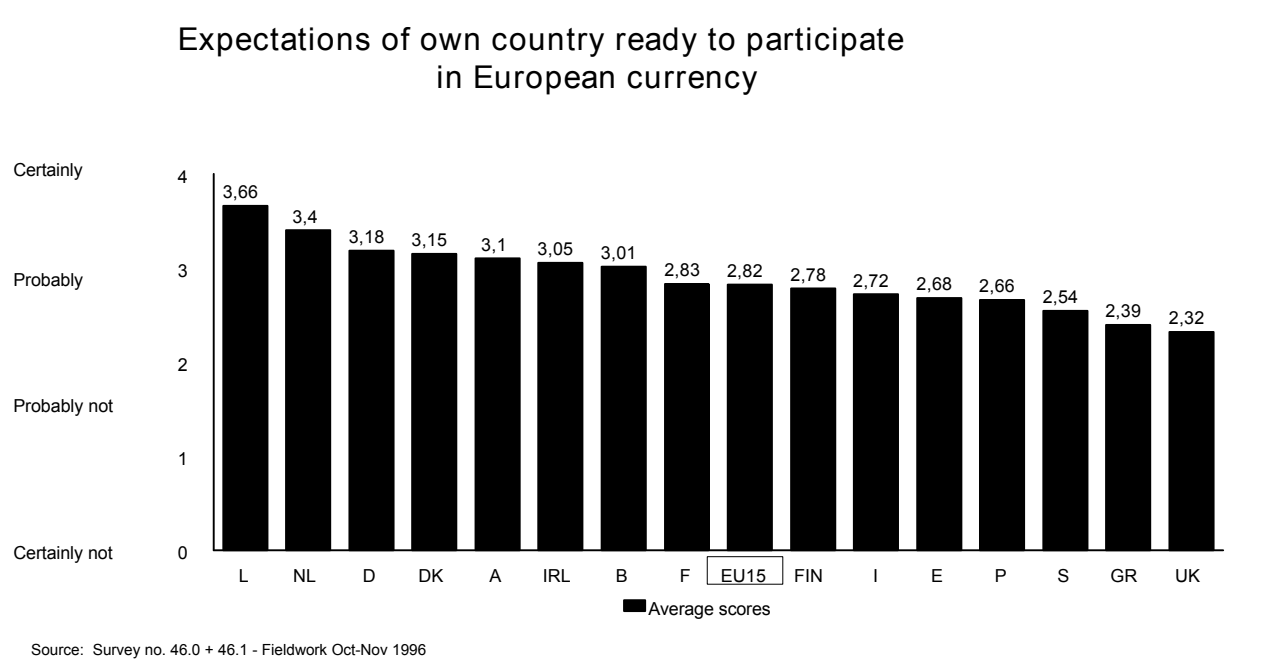
> "1999 will be the year when Member States participating in the European Single Currency will be selected and 2002, the year when the Euro will actually be introduced. Selection of the participating Member States will be made on a number of criteria such as low inflation rate, limited interest rates, limited budget deficit, etc. Do you think that (OUR COUNTRY) will certainly, probably, probably not or certainly not be ready to take part in the Single European Currency in 1999 ?" [10]

After having calculated the mean scores for each country by attributing a value of 4 to "will certainly", 3 to "probably", 2 to "probably not" and 1 to "certainly not". We found expectations to be highest in Luxembourg, where the mean score was calculated at 3.66, followed by the Netherlands with 3.40. The EU 15 mean score was 2.82, while the lowest score was noted in the United Kingdom at 2.32. Other lower than average scores were recorded in Greece (2.39), and Sweden (2.54).

In addition to the considerable variations in country mean scores, we also observed some relatively high "don't know" scores in some Member States, these included in particular Ireland and Spain both recording 23% and Austria 20%, the EU 15 average was 14% overall.

Attitudinal analysis suggests that as with many European issues those more in favour of Europe generally express more hopeful opinions than those who do not. Those who consider European Union membership a good thing are more likely to expect the introduction of the single currency in their country than those who do not (mean score 2.99 compared with 2.45).

In terms of the demographic profile again expectations are higher in certain sub-groups: men score higher than women (mean scores 2.86 to 2.77), the educated (2.90 for those having completed their education over the age of 20) compared with 2.73 for those having left school by the age of 16. Equally, higher scores were recorded by managers(2.89) and high income earners (2.84). (Table 3.19)



Source: Survey no. 46.0 + 46.1 - Fieldwork Oct-Nov 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 3. 13

4. European identity and National Trust

[10] In order to simplify the question the date of 2002 was cited although in reality the precise date for the introduction of the Euro is still to be finalised.

In this chapter we examine peoples' sense of European identity and the trust they feel towards other European Union nationals, and more generally towards those from other non-EU countries and in particular towards citizens of two of the European Union's trading partners, namely the United States and Japan.

4.1. National and European identity

The standard Eurobarometer has since 1992 asked the following question:

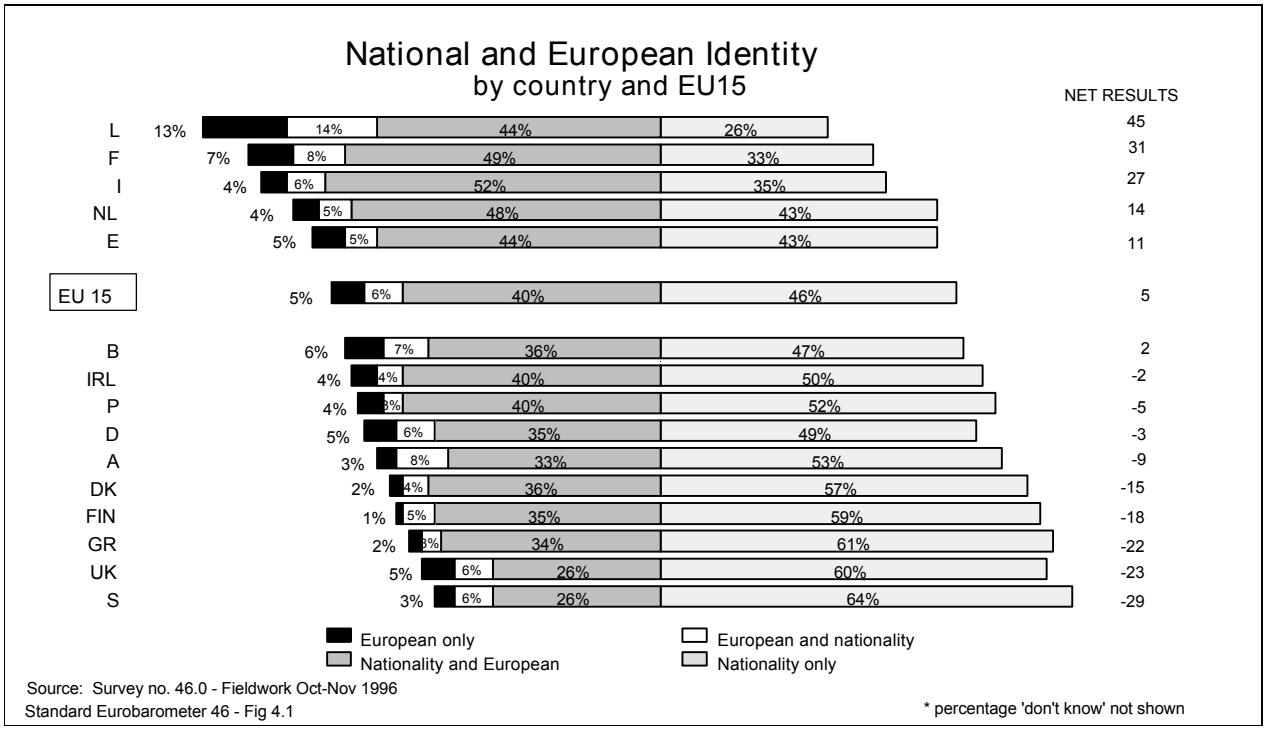
In the near future do you see yourself as:

- (nationality) only
- (nationality) and European
- European and (nationality)
- European only

Analysis shows that 51% of those interviewed feel to some extent "European", an identical figure to that of two years ago. However, amongst the remainder we find a net drop in those expressing feeling "European" to some degree, this is matched by a rise (6%) in the "nationality" only score over the past year.

National trends remain constant, although at a lower level. Luxembourg continues to record the highest level of Europeaness, with seven in ten residents feeling to some degree European and only 26% feeling their nationality only. This higher than usual European score is in part attributable to the very sizeable foreign population resident within the Grand Duchy, some 34%. The French, Italians, Spanish and Dutch all feel more European that overall EU average scores.

Those countries where feelings tend to be more "national" have not changed over the past year. In Sweden 64% feel only their nationality, in Greece 61%, the United Kingdom 60%, Finland 59%, Denmark 57%, Austria 53% and Portugal 52%. (Tables 4.1 & 4.2)



In the demographic and attitudinal analysis we witness a similar trend to that which was seen on the standard indicators discussed in Chapter 2, namely there is a strong correlation between considering one's country's membership of the European Union a "good" thing and "feeling European". Other variables that consistently indicate pro-European sentiments also apply to feeling European: men are more in favour than women (54% to 48%), the young, 15-24 year olds 58% while the older (55+) age group record 40%. Level of

education achieved likewise is a clear indicator: amongst those completing their education after the age of 20, 66% feel European compared with 36% for those having completed their education by the age of 16.

Political persuasion is also a strong indicator, those defining themselves to the left of the political spectrum are more European than those who consider themselves to the right: 58% compared to 38%. Other indicators such as media usage and "feeling informed" reveal lower levels of usage and feeling "ill-informed" correlate with greater feelings of "nationality only" scores. (Table 4.3)

4.2. Trust between peoples

To trust according to the dictionary definition is to have "faith or confidence" in another. The Eurobarometer first asked a question about the trust Europeans felt for people from other countries both within the European Union and from without. In 1970, and again in 1976, 1980 and 1982[11]. In the Spring of 1986 it was asked for the first time in all twelve of then Member States and again in 1990. In 1996 it was the first time the question was asked in all fifteen Member States of the Union. Respondents were asked the following question for twenty five different nationalities.

> "Now, I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in people from different countries. For each, please tell me whether you have a lot of trust, some trust, not very much trust or not at all (ASK FOR EACH) ?[12] "

We will examine in turn how trusting people are of their own nationality, of people from other countries in the European Union and finally how trusting they are of peoples from outside the European Union.

4.3. How trusting are people of their own nationality ?

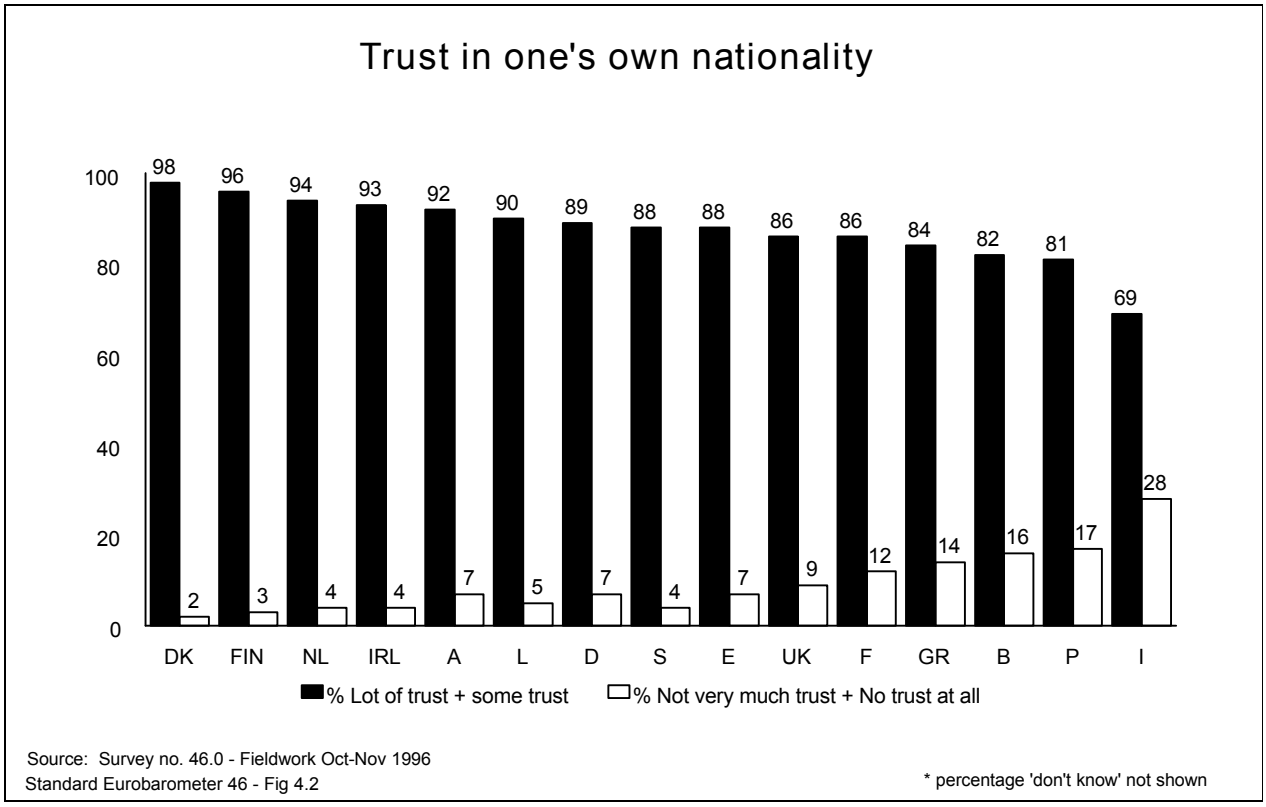
Trust in one's own countrymen and women is not universal, expectations that people would trust their fellow citizens are generally borne out, but in the analysis we observe that there is an element of reserve, thus as will be seen in the tables where we have calculated the mean scores of "trust", with a maximum score of 4 on this scale. The Finns appear to be most at ease with their compatriots with a score of 3.7, followed closely by the Danes at 3.6. The lowest score was recorded in Italy at 2.87, this being consistent with previous surveys and despite the slight modification in question wording.

Generally trust appears to be stronger in the smaller countries and in northern Europe. Germans are the most trusted people from the larger Member States, again consistent with previous surveys. (Table 4.4)

One interesting result was the very high level of "don't know" scores registered in some countries. In Spain and Ireland nearly one in three persons do not know if they can trust each other, in Portugal the figure is one in four, while in Italy, the United Kingdom and Belgium the score is just under one in five.

[11] The actual question was the same in each survey, but the number of countries in which the question was asked or to which they referred was different in each case.

[12] The question wording has been modified in this latest version, the original question read as follows "for each country please say whether, in your opinion, they are in general very trustworthy, fairly trustworthy, not particularly trustworthy, or not at all trustworthy"



4.4. Trust in citizens from European Union Member States

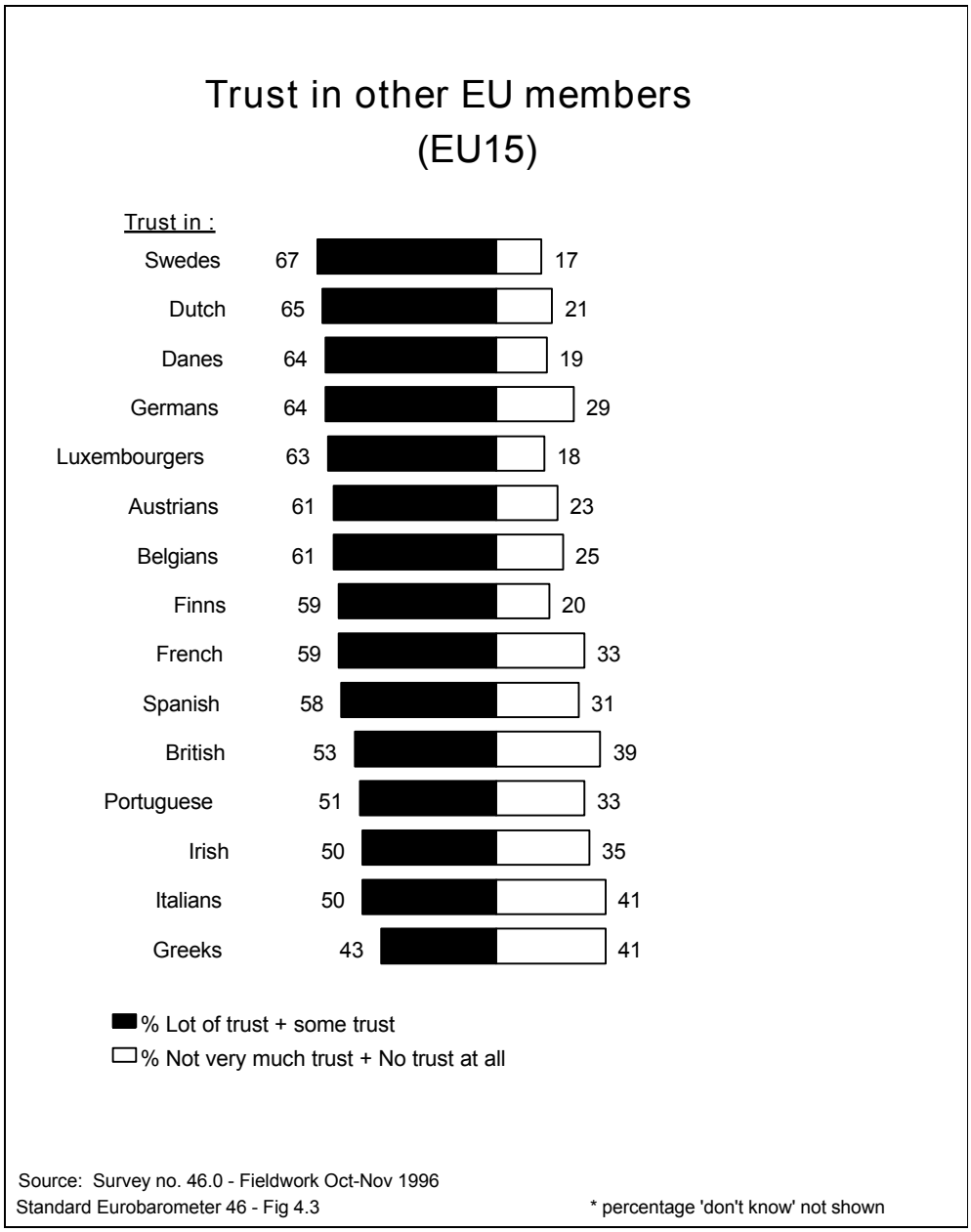
If we do not express undivided trust in our own nationality, how do we perceive other European Union citizens?

In the analysis calculating combined scores[13] we find the Swedes to be the most trusted, as they are on the mean trust score, 67% of all EU citizens state that they have a “lot or some” trust in the Swedes, they are followed by the Dutch (65%), the Danes and the Germans (64% each), and the Luxemburgers (63%). In the case of the Germans we observe that they score highest (27%) on the “lot of trust”, but this is counterbalanced by a relatively high distrust score of 29%, thus there is some polarisation of public opinion on this criteria.

Distrust was not only highest amongst the Italians themselves, but it also runs highest amongst Europeans generally: 41% have “not very much” or “no trust at all” in the Italians. Again this finding is consistent with the findings of earlier surveys. Distrust of the British runs at 39%, second only to the Italians and Greeks, which represents a noticeable decline in their rank position over the past ten years.

Overall, as in 1986, we see a general structure marked by a high level of trust in peoples from the smaller countries of northern Europe and a lower level for southern Europe. This pattern has not changed with the adhesion of the three most recent countries, indeed as has been noted, Sweden has become the most trusted, and both Finland and Austria are in the upper group of trusted peoples. (Table 4.3)

[13] Combined trust scores are the sum of: “a lot of trust” plus “some trust”.



An analysis of the demographic and attitudinal data suggests that, contrary to the old adage “Familiarity breeds contempt”, in fact those who feel well informed tend to trust their fellow EU citizens more. Trust is highest amongst the well educated, those who are in managerial positions, high income earners, regular media users and finally those who are urban dwellers.

In terms of attitudes towards the European Union we see those expressing trust in other nationalities also holding more favourable attitudes according to our standard indicators towards the Union in general.

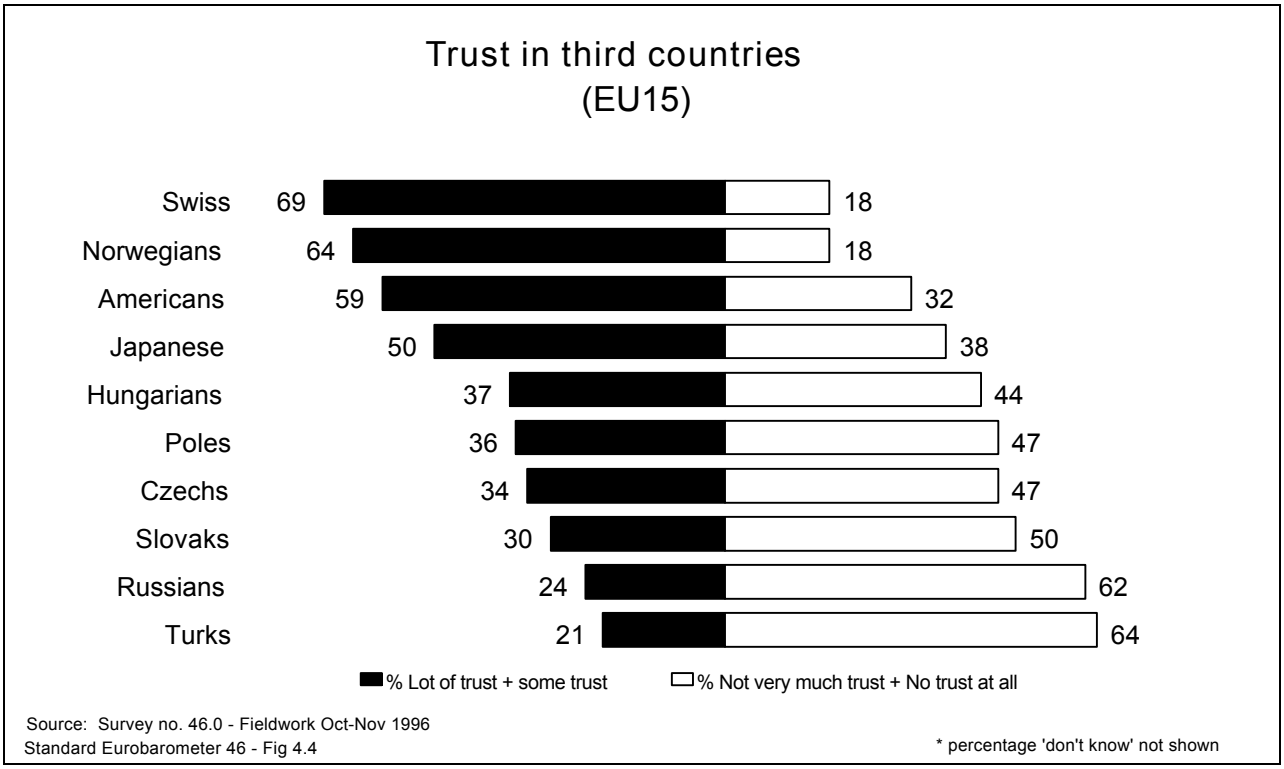
4.5. Trust in people from third countries

Apart from measuring trust amongst peoples of the Union, included in the list of nationalities were 10 others, ranging from the European Union's major trading partners of America and Japan to other European countries not currently members of the Union.

The Swiss enjoy the greatest degree of trust amongst all the nationalities listed. Sixty-nine percent of all those interviewed stated they trusted the Swiss. The observation made ten years ago[14] and again in 1990 still appears to hold true: "Switzerland could probably be said to be the archetypal "trustworthy" country. Geographically small and militarily neutral, it poses no threat; its international image is probably one of peacefulness, sheltered from the dangers which threaten the rest of the world." Interestingly, the second and third positions overall are also occupied by countries to which one could apply similar descriptions, namely Sweden and Norway.

Some way behind the Swiss are the Americans with 59% trust, placing them in the middle of the European Union countries in trustworthiness. The Japanese fall a little behind the Americans and in comparison with EU countries lie between the British and the Italians in their trustworthy score.

Trailing far behind this first group of four we find the countries of eastern Europe, where mistrust consistently out strips trust. Hungarians scored the highest level with 37% according them some degree of trust, the Poles 36%, but particularly low scores were recorded for the Russians 24% and the Turks 21%.



The demographic analysis is marked by the high level of "don't know" scores recorded for certain sub-groups. Women are generally less certain and in particular housepersons, (who are generally women[15]), the unemployed likewise register high scores. Those feeling poorly informed are also less likely to trust people from other countries. Thus trust is higher amongst the same demographic groups as for the EU member countries, but lies at a lower level and is marked by a much higher level of ignorance. (Table 4.3)

5. Media usage and the rights of citizenship

[14] Standard Eurobarometers 25 and 33
[15] See standard Eurobarometer n°45

In this chapter we will, as a background, examine the use made of the media and how this relates to people's feeling informed about the European Union. The second section goes on to examine respondents awareness of their rights as European Union citizens and how best to obtain such information.

5.1. General media use

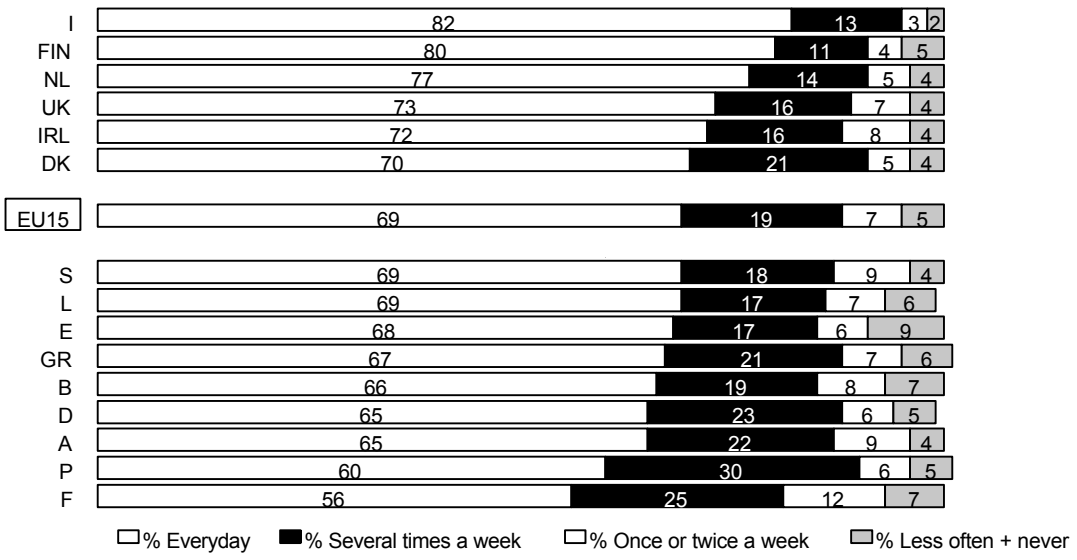
Respondents in Eurobarometer surveys are regularly asked about their use of the various news media, namely television, radio and daily newspapers.

Television:

Television is the most frequently cited source for general news, nearly seven in ten of our respondents claim to watch television daily, 19% at least several times a week, only 5% state they watch "less often" or "never". Viewing of the news is highest in Italy (82% everyday), followed by Finland (80%) and the Netherlands (77%). Lower scores were recorded in France (56% everyday) and Portugal (60%), but overall the combined scores of everyday and several times a week indicate that a very high proportion of people rely on the television as their primary news source. (Table 5.1)

Demographic analysis shows age to be the best indicator of frequency of viewing, while eight in ten of people over 55 watch television everyday this viewing frequency decreases the younger a person becomes, thus in the 16-24 age group only one in two claim to view everyday. Those still studying also view less.There is little difference in viewing habits between men and women, nor between those who view European Union membership as a good or bad thing. (Table 5.2)

General media use of television news



Source: Survey no. 46 - Fieldwork Oct-Nov 1996
Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 5.1

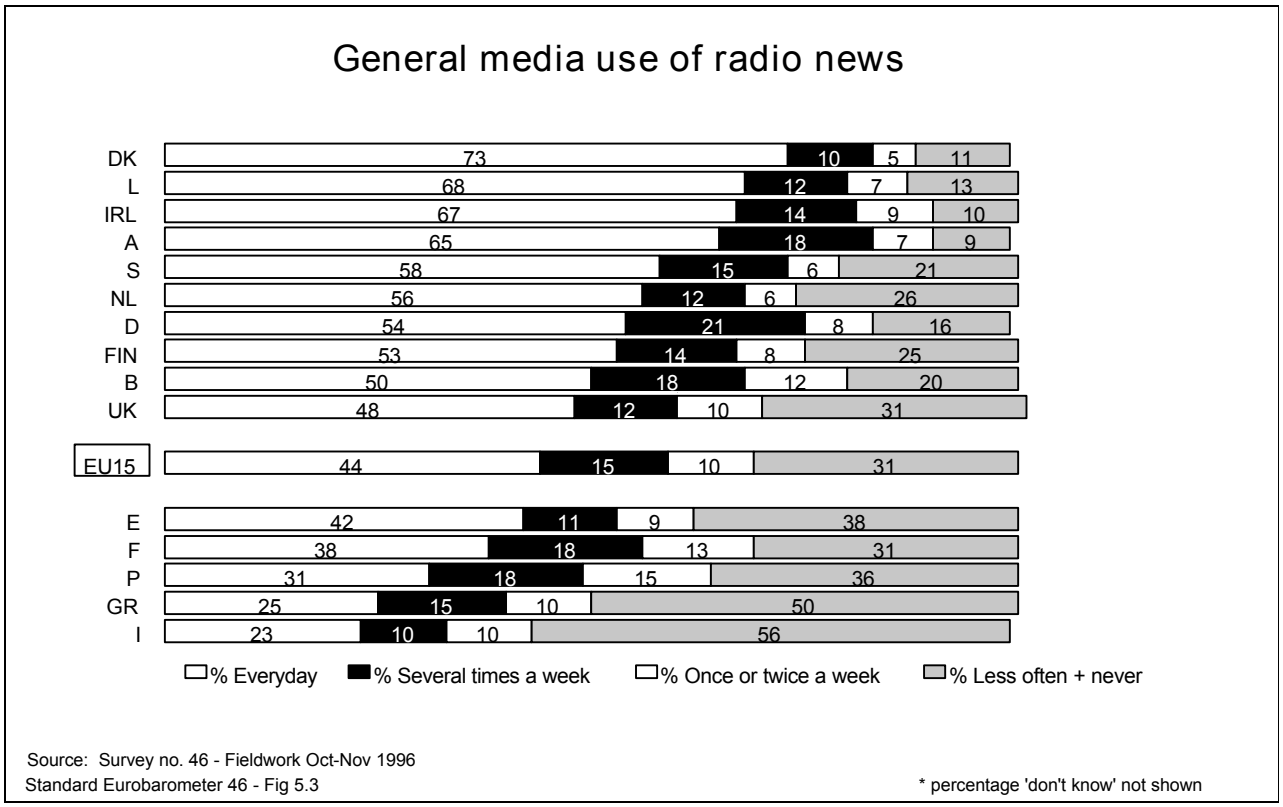
* percentage 'don't know' not shown

Radio:

Radio, the second of the broadcast media, shows much more varied usage. At the overall EU level just over four in ten claim to listen everyday, but a significant 31% state they listen rarely or never. High scores are

recorded in Denmark (73% everyday), Luxembourg (68%) Ireland (67%) and Austria (65%). While in the Mediterranean group of countries the highest (everyday)score is recorded in Spain at 42% and the lowest in Italy at 23%. Conversely in these same countries we witness very high scores for rarely or never listen to news broadcasts. (Table 5.5)

Radio listening is more likely to be the prerogative of managers (54% everyday score) and white collar workers (47%), less with the unemployed and housepersons (39% and 41% respectively). Higher listenership is also associated with those over 25 (all age groups), the young listen significantly less. In attitudinal terms we observe those feeling informed about Europe generally more frequent listeners, but there is little difference between the habits of those viewing the Union membership as a “good” or “bad” thing. (Table 5.6)



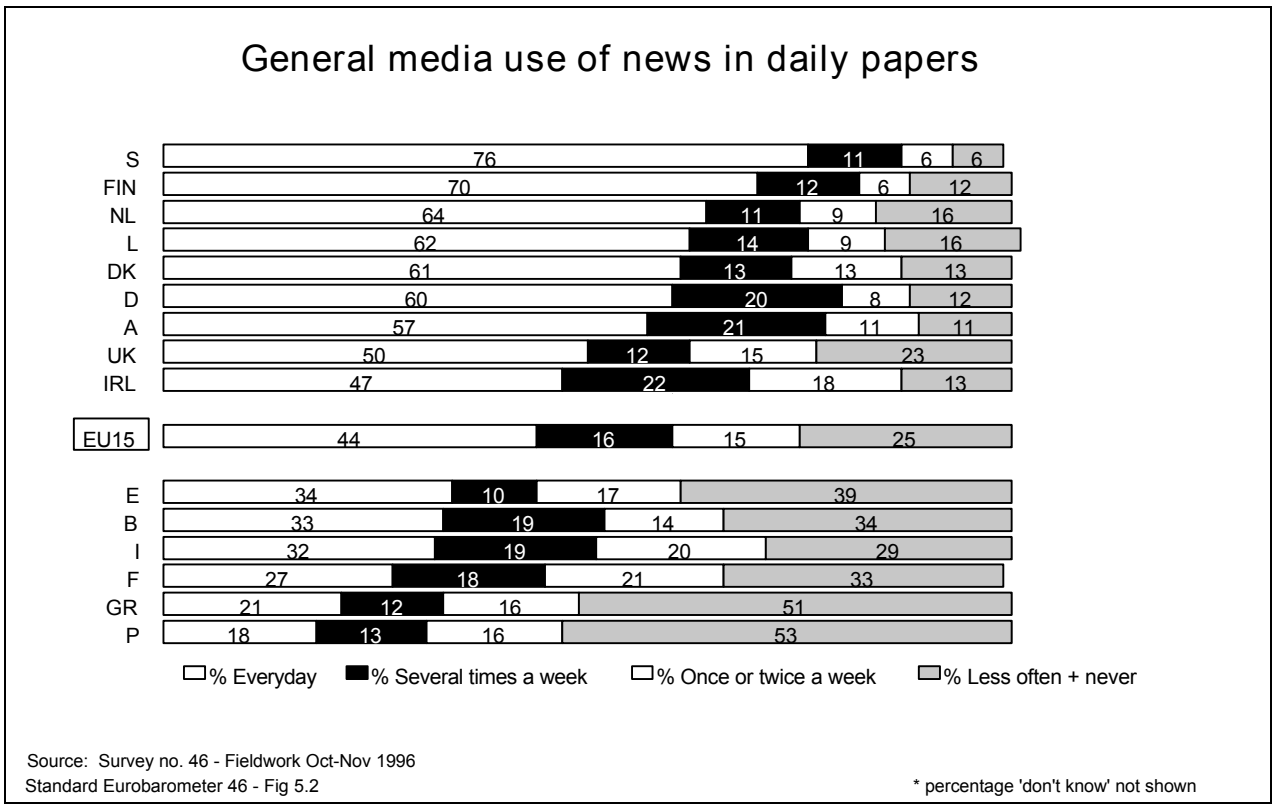
Daily newspapers:

Daily newspapers represented the third of the media options presented. Again low usage tends to be the norm in the southern states, where in Portugal as few as just under one in five read a paper daily and 53%

read one rarely or never. Readership is however high in Sweden (76%), Finland (70%) and the Netherlands (64%). (Table 5.3)

While in demographic terms we saw little difference between television and radio, the profile of newspaper readership is different. Men outnumber women by 10% for daily readership (49%:39%). Readership tends to increase with age, thus contrasting the under 25 with the over 55's, we see scores of 27% compared to 53%. Managers and those on a high income likewise read more (57% and 53% everyday).

The attitudinal groups show opinion leaders to score higher (61% high index score to 33% low index score). But perhaps the most intriguing finding is that in the case of the daily print media higher scores tend to be associated more with negative attitudes to membership of the European Union. Of those considering membership of the European Union a "bad" thing, 50% read a paper everyday, while of those considering it a "good" thing 44% read a paper daily. (Table 5.4)

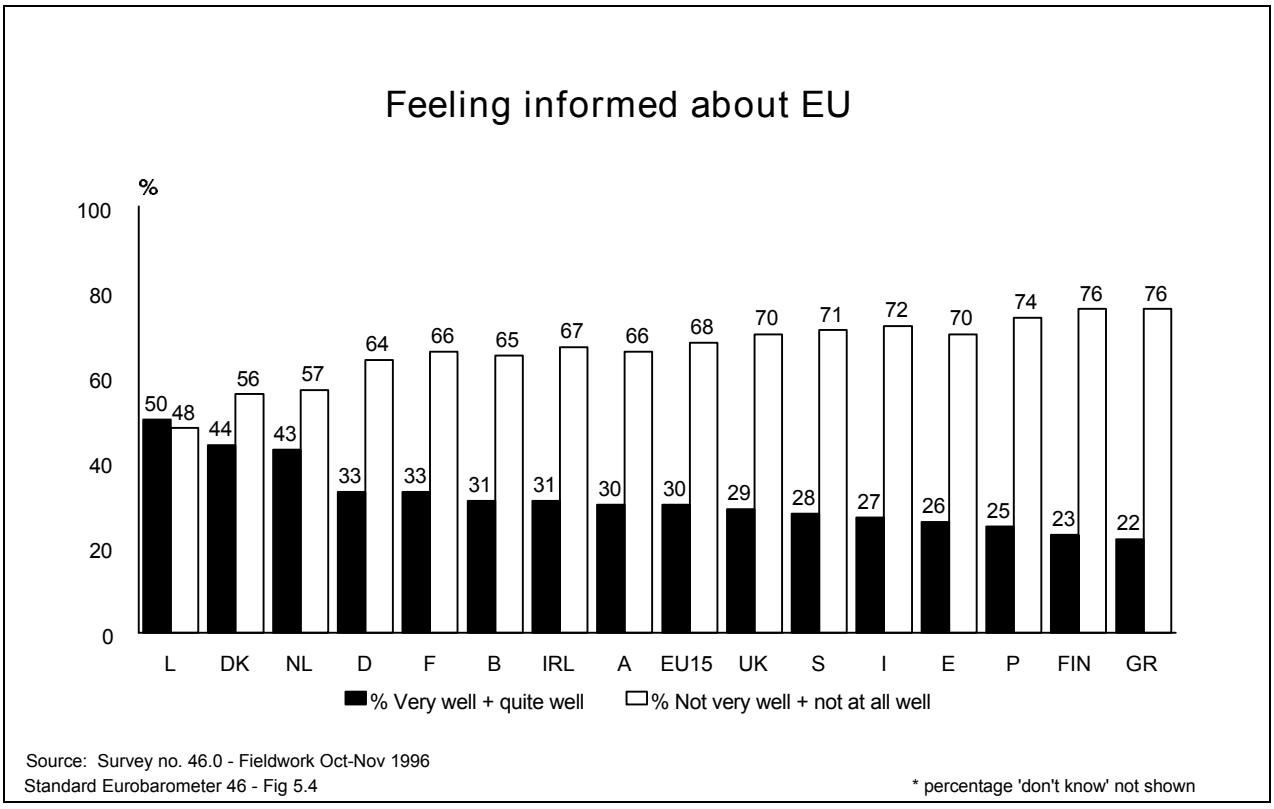


5.2. Feeling informed and the need for information

As well examining media usage, the survey also examined the issue of how well informed citizens feel about the European Union and their desire to learn more. Only 30% claim to feel "very" or "quite" well informed about the European Union, and those feeling "very well" informed counted for only 2% of the total,

this represents a overall drop of 3% of feeling informed since Spring 1995. The vast majority of European citizens remain ill informed about the European Union, its policies and institutions.

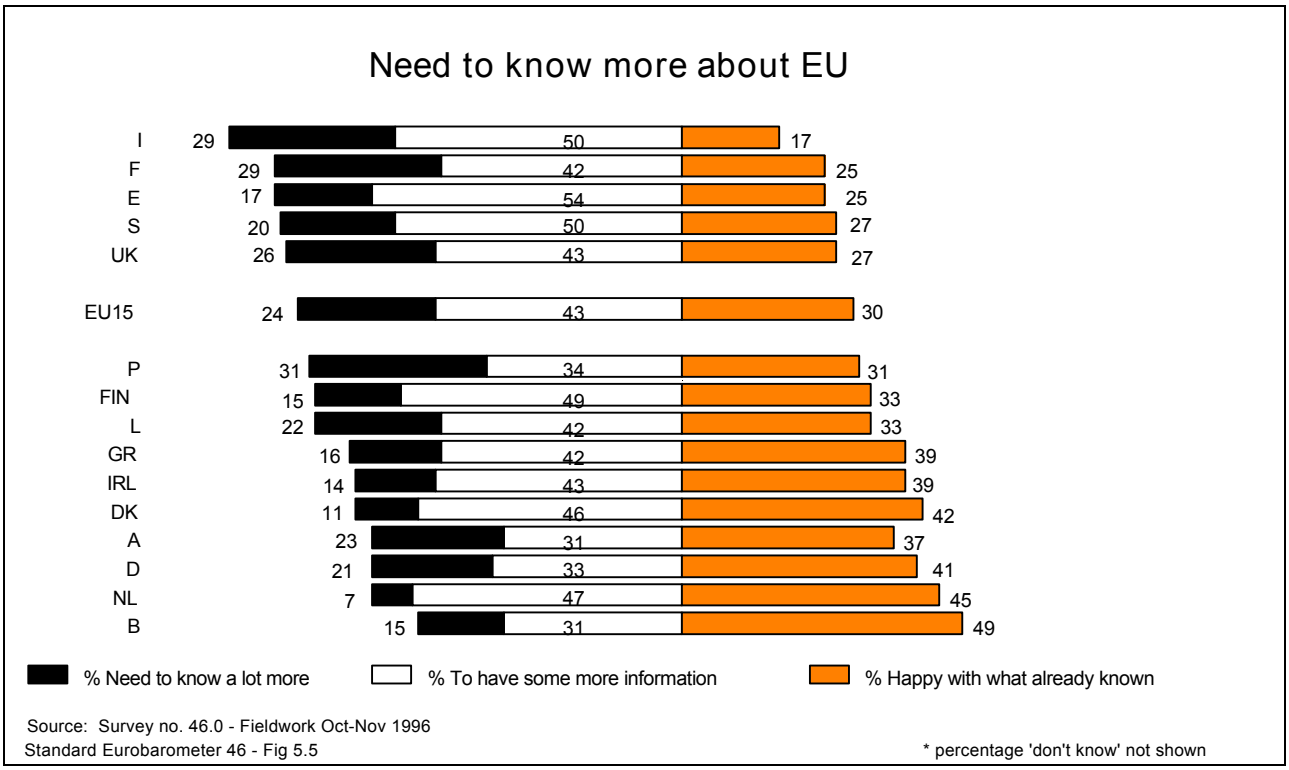
The national tendencies observed two years ago, namely Luxembourg and Denmark remain the best informed, but nevertheless, we see a downward trend: Luxembourg down 11% and Denmark 13%. Particularly low scores were recorded Greece (22% informed), Finland (23%) and Portugal (25%).
(Tables 5.7 & 5.8)



Bearing in mind that nearly seven in ten EU citizens feel ill informed about EU affairs, it is not surprising that they wish to learn more about the Union. A follow up question was used to measure how much people felt they actually needed to know about the European Union. Overall one in four persons would like to learn a “lot more” about the Union, 43% felt they needed some more information, while 30% were happy with their current level of knowledge.

The greatest demand for more information was noted in Portugal where 31% felt they need to know “a lot” more and in Italy and France (29% each). Other countries where the need to know more was over 20% included the United Kingdom (26%), Austria (23%), Luxembourg (22%) and Germany (21%). The highest number of persons feeling “happy” with what they already know came from Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark.

Demographically the need to know more is felt particularly by the 25-54 age group (26%), and by those considered opinion leaders (30%), few other differences were striking. (Tables 5.9 & 5.10)



5.3. Knowledge of citizens rights

While the previous section discussed general feelings concerning the policies and institutions of the European Union, the survey went on to examine peoples' perceptions concerning a number of issues related European Union citizenship. Respondents were asked:

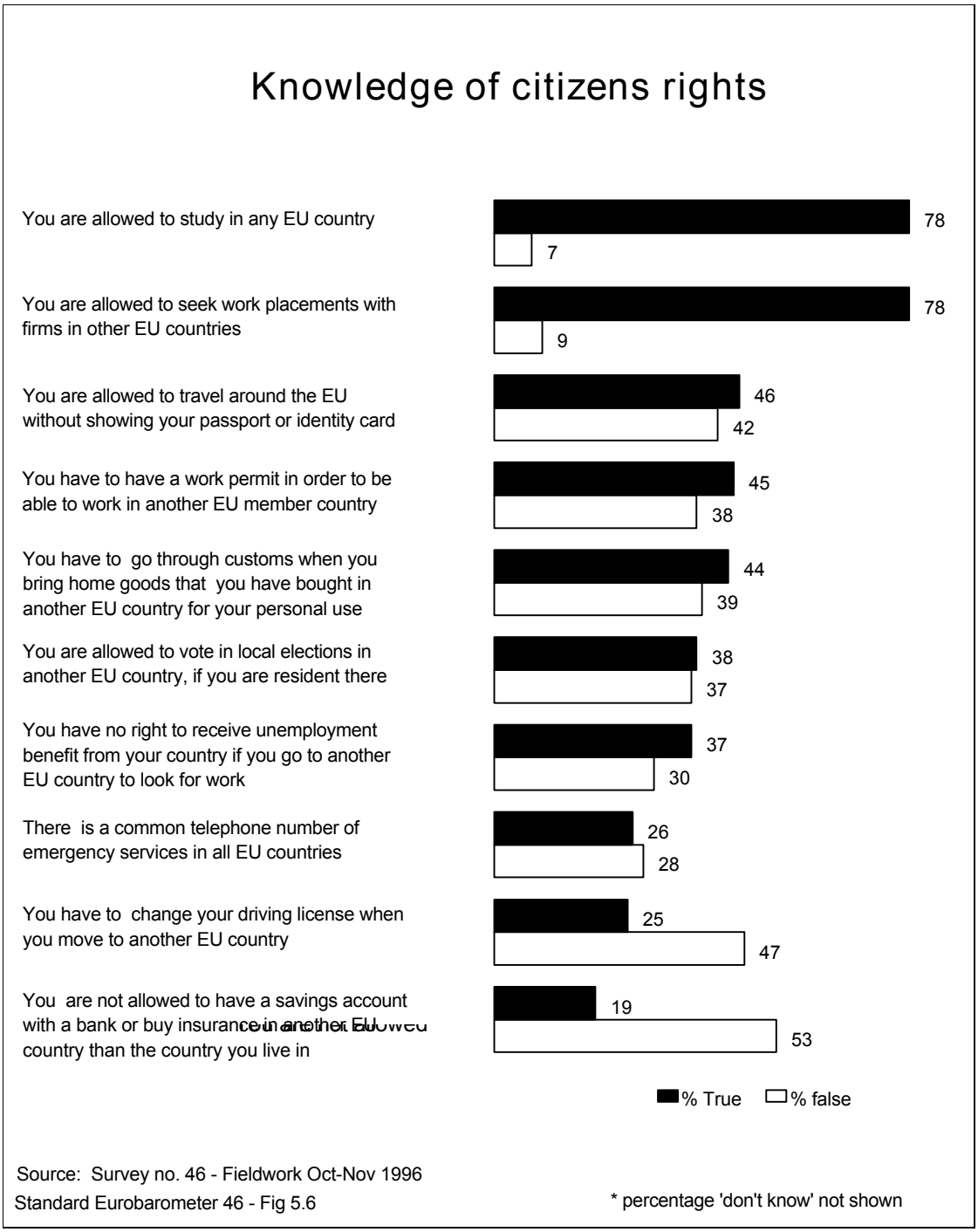
For each of the following statements please tell me whether you think they are true or false.....

- You have to have a work permit in order to be able to work in another European Union member country
- You are allowed to vote in local elections in another European Union country if you are resident there
- You are allowed to seek work placements with firms in other European Union countries
- You have no right to receive unemployment benefit from (our country) if you go to another European Union country to look for work
- There is a common telephone number for emergency services in all European countries
- You are not allowed to have a savings account with a bank or buy insurance in another European Union country than the country you live in
- You are allowed to travel around the European Union without showing your passport or identity card
- You are allowed to study in any European Union country
- You have to go through customs when you bring home goods that you have bought in another European Union country for your own personal use
- You have to change your driving license when you move to another country

It was clear that the two basic freedoms to study and seek work placements in other EU Member States were understood by the large majority of people. Nearly eight in ten recognises these rights, with conversely only a few think the ideas false.

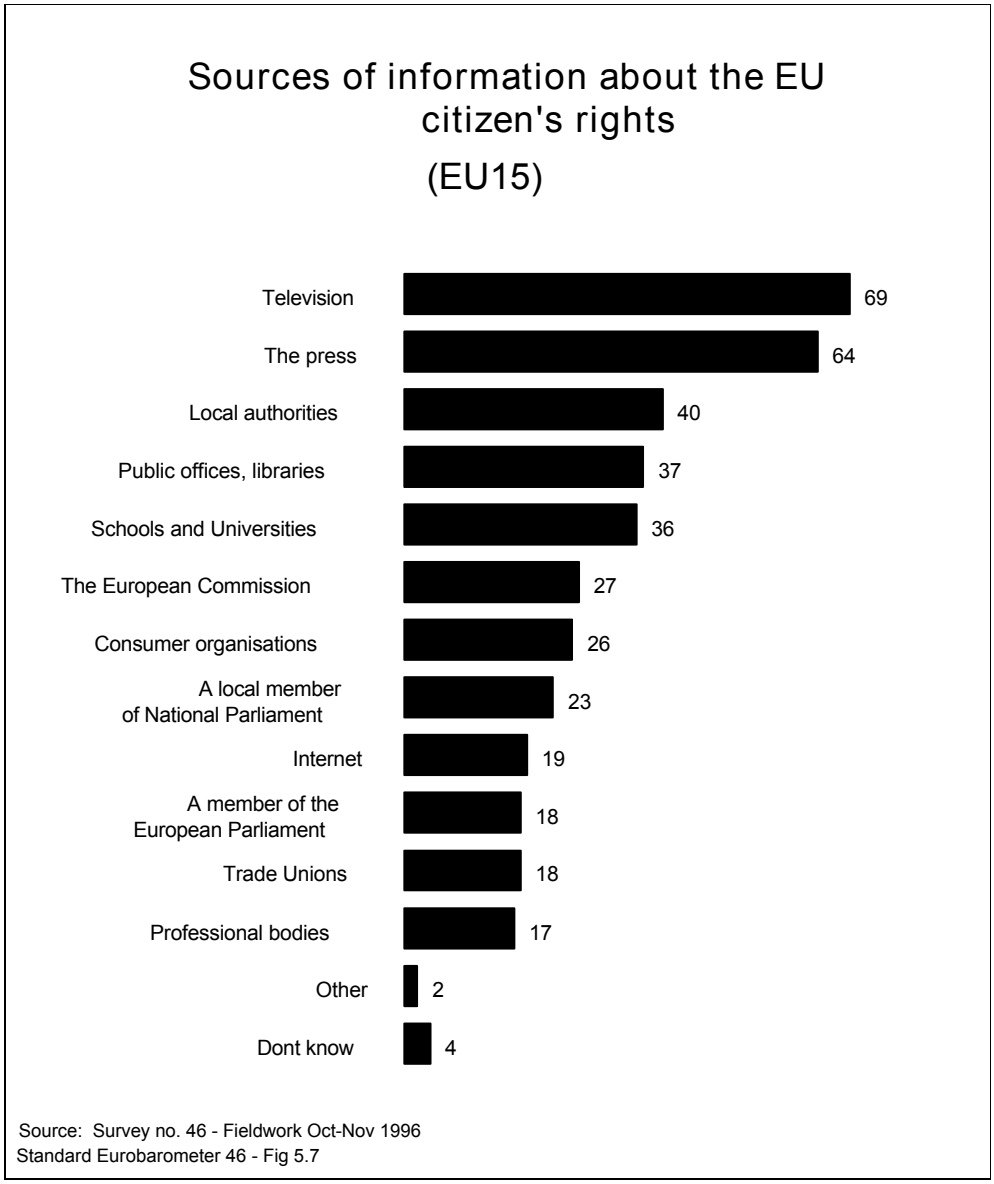
People also believed that they did not have to change their driving licenses when they moved to another country or that they could open a savings account or buy insurance in another Member State.

In all the other areas asked about it was clear that people were uncertain about the current situation, with equal numbers believing the statements to be true and false. (Tables 5.11 & 5.12)



5.4. Sources of information about citizens rights

If respondents were uncertain about their rights as citizens of the Union it was appropriate to ask where they think they should be able to obtain information. As in previous surveys[16], television and the press are the most frequently mentioned, 69% citing television and 64% the press. Far behind these two principle sources we note local authorities, public offices and libraries and educational establishments such as schools and universities.



In the cross country analysis we find some striking variations in how people use the information sources available. Local authorities, the third most used source of information are considered particularly important in the Netherlands, where 65% cited it as a source, in Sweden it was mentioned by 58%, in the United Kingdom by 49% and in Denmark by 48%. Public libraries were particularly useful in the eyes of the British (69%), the Danes (68%), the Dutch (67%) and the Danes (58%). Schools and universities were, uniquely in Sweden, considered as a potential source by 61% of those interviewed, figures elsewhere were much lower. Of the other sources the one showing most variation was the Internet with scores ranging from 11% in Spain to 42% in Sweden. (Tables 5.13 & 5.14)

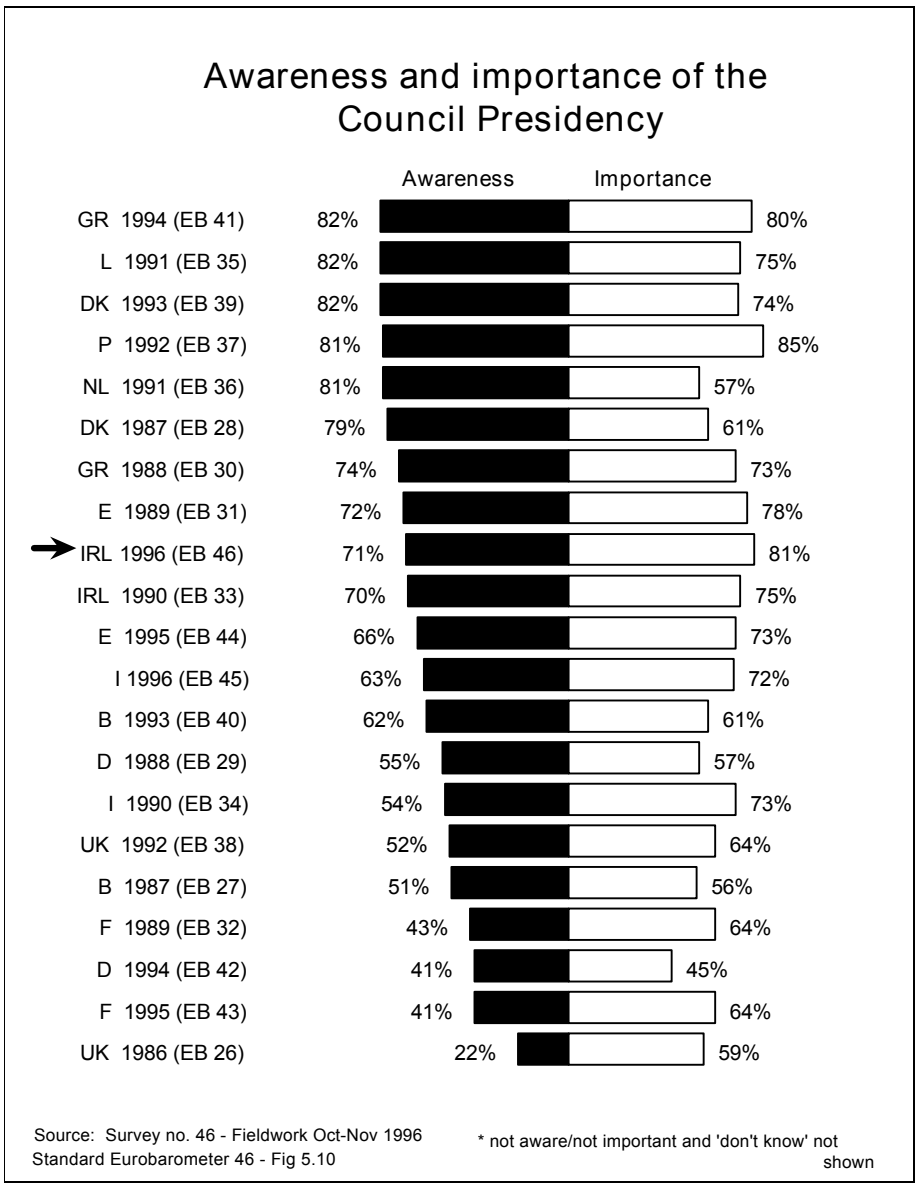
5.5. The Irish Presidency

[16] Standard Eurobarometer 43

Each Member State in the European Union holds in turn the presidency of the Council of Ministers for a six month period. Since the Autumn of 1986 the Eurobarometer has measured the awareness and the importance placed on the presidency amongst the citizens whose country is holding the presidency at the time of the survey.

In the second half of 1996 the presidency was held by Ireland succeeding from Italy which had held the office for the first part of the year. Seventy-one percent of Irish respondents recalled having read or heard something about their country's role, this was a one percent increase since the last time that Ireland held the presidency in 1990.

The second question was designed to measure the level of importance people attach to their country's role as President of the Council. Overall 81% of Irish respondents rated their country's role as important, this is the second highest score recorded since the question was introduced, only being surpassed by Portugal in 1992 with an 85% importance score.



6. Other dimensions of the European Union

As mentioned in the introduction the Eurobarometer covers not only a series of standard questions, but also sets of questions of different directorates general in the Commission. In this last chapter we give some results from two such sets, one concerning the environment and the other concerning the importance of aid given to the "poor countries of Africa, South America and Asia". The questions discussed here are only a small part of larger studies but, nevertheless, give an indication of public opinion in these two important areas.

6.1. The importance of environmental issues

In this question, which formed part of a longer series, respondents were asked to rate the importance of a number of environmental issues which related to energy consumption. For each of fifteen items people were asked if they felt for each they were "really important" or "not really important" objectives to aim for.

Of the fifteen items presented the need to achieve "cleaner air in towns and cities" was rate as important by more than nine in ten persons interviewed, only 4% rated it as not important. The results were relatively similar across the Union, a particularly high score (98%) being recorded in Sweden.

The two interrelated issues of "cutting pollution by investing in better traffic management" and "improving public transport" are both supported by 87% of respondents. This latter measure finds support with over nine in ten persons in seven member states.

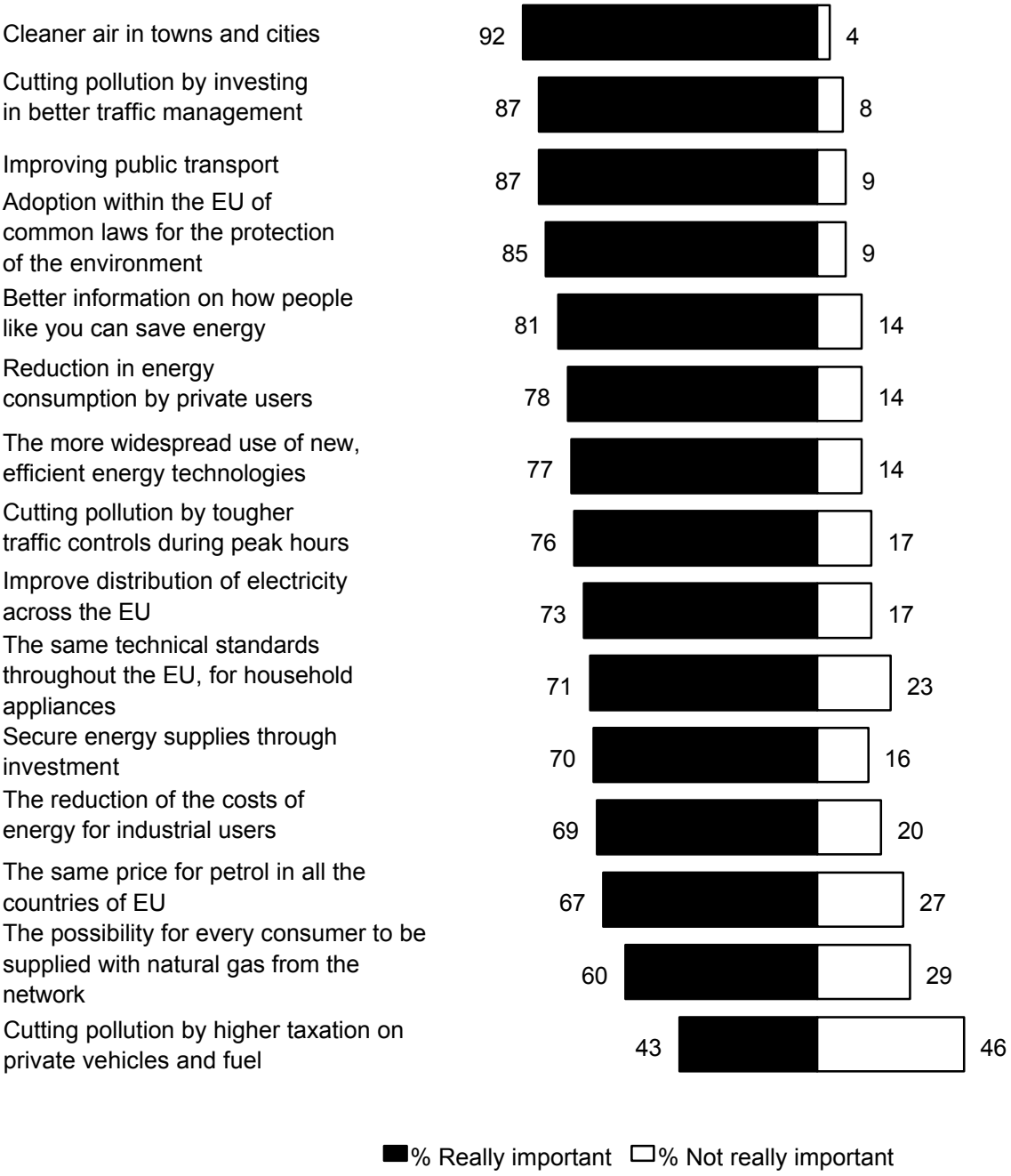
As with more general questions concerning EU-wide legislation we find strong support for "common laws for protecting the environment", 85% considered this as an important issue and interestingly, the Netherlands apart (where support was exceptionally high at 96%), there was very little difference between countries, suggesting this is one issue upon which there is a consensus of opinion Union-wide.

The willingness of the individual to take responsibility for energy saving is reflected in the answers to the statements "better information on how people like you can save energy" and "reduction in energy consumption by private users". Both these statements solicited support from 81% and 78% of those interviewed respectively. Country variations show that there is greatest support for more information in Spain and Portugal (90% each),while least was recorded in Germany (71%).

In a series of statements referring to the technological aspects of energy use support was, although not as high as the above mentioned measures, still in a strong majority position with at least two in three supporting the measures. Less important however in the public's view was the availability of natural gas for every consumer: this was supported as an issue by 60% of those interviewed. The national differences were pronounced: only 27% of Swedes and 34% of Danes rate this as an important issue, while in Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal and Italy nearly three in four rated this as an important objective.

The only proposition not to receive at least a majority support was the suggestion to cut "pollution by higher taxation on private vehicles and fuel", 43% felt this to be important but 46% did not. From this we may conclude that, while overall support for measures which will result in energy saving and also cut pollution are well supported, but not at the cost of the private motorist, better traffic management, tough controls during peak hours, better public transport are all welcomed but, nevertheless, the cost of private motoring should not be increased. (Tables 6.1 & 6.2)

Importance of environmental issues (EU15)



Source: Survey no. 46 - Fieldwork Oct-Nov 1996

Standard Eurobarometer 46 - Fig 6.1

* percentage 'don't know' not shown

6.2. The importance of aid to third countries from the European Union

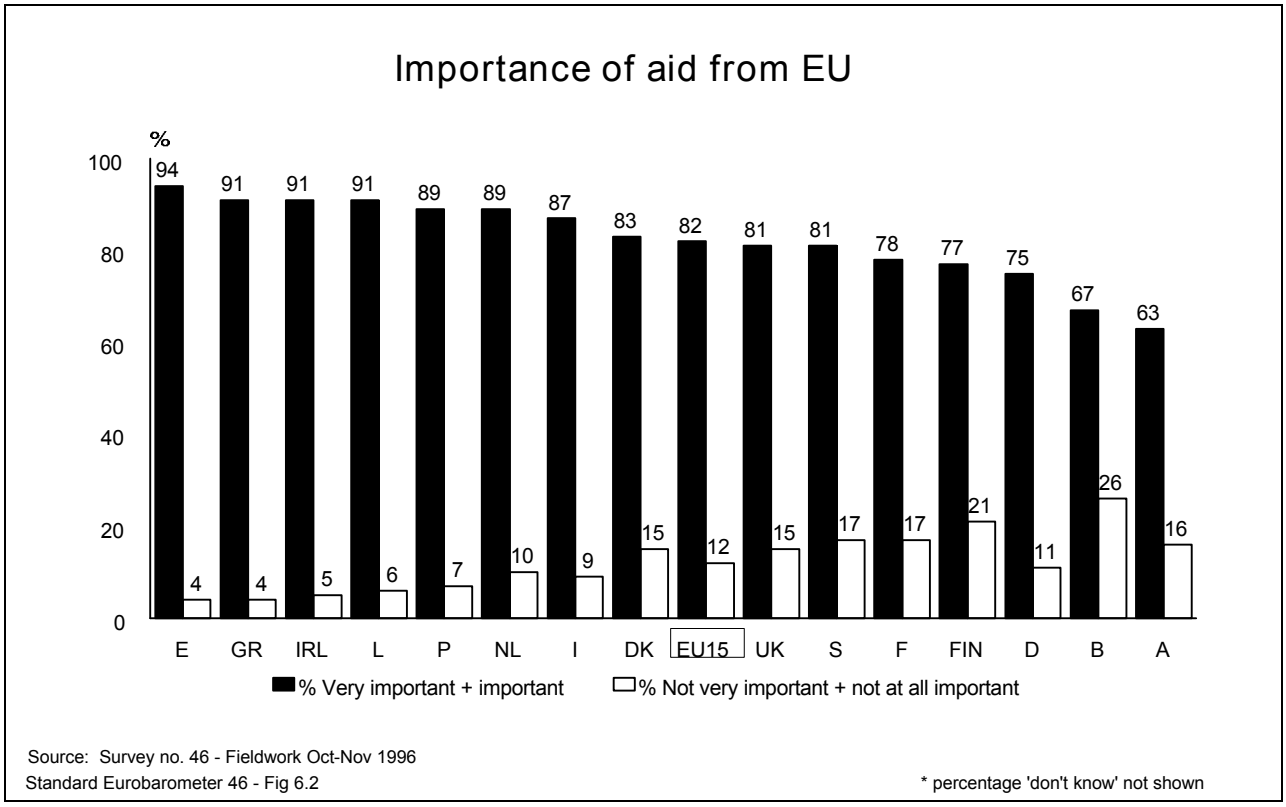
A second issue covered in the present survey relate to aid attributed to developing countries. We examine a series of questions related to the importance of aid given to developing countries and the level of contributions that people consider their own government and the European Commission should make.

In response to the question:

> "In your opinion is it very important, not very important or not at all important to help the people in poor countries in Africa, South America, Asia, etc. to develop?"

we find that one in three persons rate helping poor countries as "very important", while a further 48% consider it "important", only 12% consider help "not very important" or "not at all important". Aid was rated particularly important in Spain, where 54% said it is "very important" and a further 40% as "important" (a combined score of 94%). Support was also very high in Greece, Ireland and Luxembourg each having a combined score of 91%.

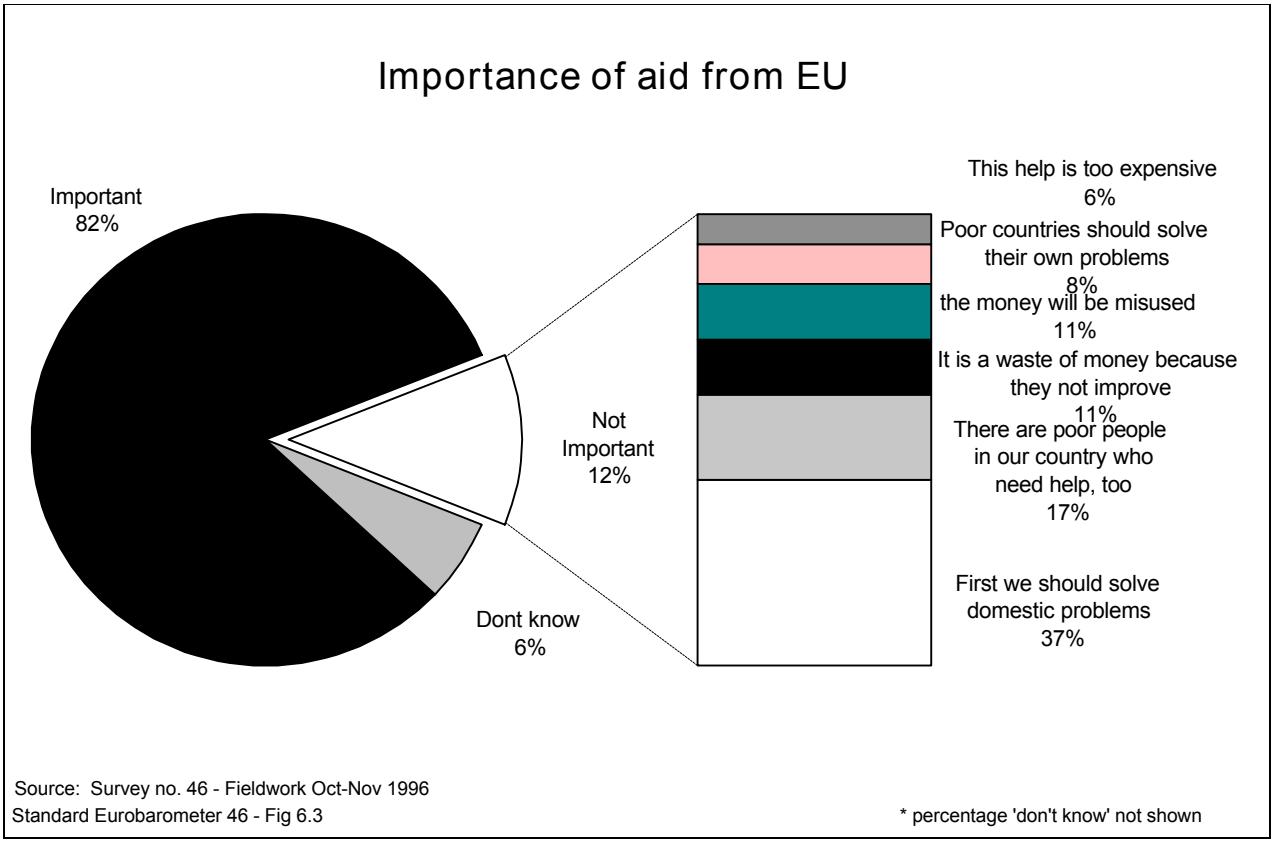
Belgium and Finland stand out as the two Member States where public opinion is less in favour of helping poorer countries. In both these countries fewer people rate aid as very important (Belgium 19% "very important" and Finland 21%). Austria as the graph below shows recorded the lowest importance rating, but it also had a significantly higher level of "no opinion" (21%). (Tables 6.3 & 6.4)



6.3. Reasons for not giving aid

For those believing that the provision of aid was not an important issue the reasons were varied, but the central theme was “charity begins at home”. Thirty-seven percent believe that EU countries should solve their own domestic problems first, and a further 17% stated that “there are poor people in our country who need help too”.

In addition to this sentiment concerning the home country there was also some doubt expressed concerning the effectiveness of aid, 11% felt the money would be misused and a further 11% thought that aid money brought about little real improvement. Finally there was a group of people who believed these countries should solve their own problems or that simply the cost of such help was too high.



6.4. The level of aid given by national governments and the European Commission

In response to the question concerning the level of aid provided by the national governments we find that at EU 15 level, 15% of respondents want current aid levels to be increased by “a lot”, 40% want it increased “a little”, 19% want a slight decrease and only 8% would like to see a substantial decrease, interestingly nearly one in five persons “did not know” if aid should be increased or decreased.

National differences are marked. Strongest support is again found in Spain, 31% wanting an significant increase followed by Greece 22%, Luxembourg 21% and the United Kingdom 20%. Sweden, Austria, Denmark and Finland are the least likely to support large increases (5% -6% only).

In comparison 24% of respondents thought aid given by the European Commission should be increased “a lot”, some 9% higher than for national governments. Again the strongest proponents of increased aid were found in Greece and Spain, 48% and 42% supporting a substantial increase in aid by the European Commission. Portugal was also a strong supporter with 38% support for an increase.

Austria, Finland, Belgium and Denmark were the countries least willing to see aid increased. Finally even more interesting however, were the very high numbers of respondents who were uncertain about aid levels: 22% of all EU citizens were unable to give an opinion, and the figures were particularly high in Austria and Sweden, both 35%.

In demographic terms we observe that, for both national and EU level aid, those more in favour of increased aid included women, the young, the better educated and at national level, those tending to support the political left, this later finding is less pronounced for the European Commission, but it should be remembered that these scores included a significant number of “don’t knows” responses. (Tables 6.5 & 6.6)