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EUROBAROMETER

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Directorate-General X
Rue de la Loi 200 (T120 4/8)
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

Telephone: (32.2) 299.91.72
Fax: (32.2) 299.45.77
e-mail: Eurobarometer@dg10.cec.be

Internet: Europa Server <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg10/infcom/epo/eb.html>

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Introducing the Eurobarometer

Eurobarometer public opinion surveys ("standard Eurobarometer surveys") have been conducted on behalf of the Directorate-General for Information, Communication, Culture, Audiovisual of the European Commission each Spring and Autumn since Autumn 1973. They have included Greece since Autumn 1980, Portugal and Spain since Autumn 1985, the former German Democratic Republic since Autumn 1990 and Austria, Finland and Sweden from Spring 1995 onwards.

An identical set of questions was asked of representative samples of the population aged fifteen years and over in each Member State. The regular sample in standard Eurobarometer surveys is 1000 people per country except Luxembourg (500) and the United Kingdom (1000 in Great Britain and 300 in Northern Ireland). In order to monitor the integration of the five new Länder into unified Germany and the European Union, 2000 persons have been sampled in Germany since Eurobarometer 34: 1000 in East Germany and 1000 in West Germany.

The present surveys are carried out by national institutes associated with the "INRA (Europe) European Coordination Office". This network of institutes involved was selected by tender. They are all members of the "European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research" (ESOMAR) and comply with its standards.

The figures given for the European Union as a whole, which are shown in this document, are weighted on the basis of the adult population in each country. In certain cases, the total percentage in a table does not always add up exactly to 100%, but a number very close to it (e.g. 99 or 101), because of rounding. When questions allow for several responses, percentages often add up to more than 100%. Percentages shown in the graphics may display a difference of 1% compared to the tables because of the way previously-rounded percentages are added.

In accordance with normal practice for this type of survey, the European Commission disclaims all responsibility for questions, results and commentaries. This report, which was drawn up by the Surveys and Public Opinion Research Unit (X.A.2 ; Head of Unit : Anna Melich) of the Directorate-General for Information, Communication, Culture, Audiovisual, is an internal working document of the European Commission.

Types of surveys in the Eurobarometer series

The European Commission (Directorate General X) organises general public opinion, specific target group, as well as qualitative (group discussion, in-depth interview) surveys in all Member States and, occasionally, in third countries. There are four different types of polls available:

- *Traditional Standard Eurobarometer with reports published twice a year*
- *Telephone Flash EB, also used for special target group surveys (e.g. Top Decision Makers)*
- *Qualitative research ("focus groups"; in-depth interviews)*
- *Central and Eastern EB, an annual survey of general public opinion in 16 Central and Eastern European countries in cooperation with DG I and DG 1A*

The face-to-face general public standard Eurobarometer polls, the telephone Flash EB polls and qualitative research serve primarily to carry out surveys for the different Directorates General and comparable special services of the Commission on their behalf and on their account.

Highlights

- In the Spring of 1997 Europeans were satisfied with their life in general. Overall 77% were “very” or “fairly” satisfied, but there were significant national variations.
- Forty-six percent of citizens consider their country’s membership of the European Union as a “good thing”, 15% a “bad thing”, while 30% say it is neither “good nor bad”. Perceived benefit from European Union membership is registered at 40%, while 36% believe their country has not benefited.
- For the young people of the European Union *Europe* signifies above all the hope of a better future in economic and employment terms and the ability to travel within the Union without formality. The guarantee of lasting peace in Europe is also regarded as important by a significant proportion of the young.
- Of all Europeans, young and old, over one in four believe that they have 50% chance or more of losing their job in the next few years and over half want to see European Union level action to combat unemployment. Sixty-one percent want the European Parliament to place this at the top of its agenda, an increase of 8% since last asked in December 1995.
- Response to the question as to whether continuing education and training can improve one’s working life is a resounding yes, 76% believe education and training will have a positive effect, only 19% do not think so.
- Nine in ten Europeans believe the *right to education and training* should be respected under all circumstances.
- The European Parliament continues to be seen as the most credible of the European Institutions, but there has been a decline in reliability scores for all institutions, both national and European, ranging from –5 to –8 percentage points.
- Regarding the single currency, 47% support its introduction, 40% are against and 13% “don’t know”. Despite over half of those interviewed “fearing” the introduction, 75% of citizens now “expect” the introduction of the Euro; an 8% increase over the last 12 months.
- Sixty-five percent of EU citizens fear an increase in drug trafficking and organised crime and seven in ten people want the Union to act against drug trafficking. 55% call for common EU action concerning immigration policy and 54% would like to see EU rules on political asylum.
- The broadcast and print media dominate as sources of information about the European Union, but national differences are very marked. The use of the Internet and WorldWide Web are by far the highest in Scandinavia. In these countries Internet/WWW usage has increased by approximately 14% in the past twelve months. Elsewhere growth is slower, but nevertheless increasing.
- Just over half (51%) of EU citizens describe themselves as “*European*” to some extent, the “*nationality only*” figure remains constant at 45%. Luxembourg residents continue to be the most likely to consider themselves European.

Editorial

On the 25th of March this year the European Union celebrated the fortieth anniversary of the signing of the Treaties of Rome by an original ceremony in the halls of the Campodoglio in Rome. Aware that the early pioneers of the European Union as it now is, were not likely to outlive the century by much the Italian government and the European Commission together with the European Parliament, arranged as part of the celebrations, to bring as many of the surviving politicians and other leaders together, giving them a platform for their most salient memories of the period of European construction they had witnessed and participated in. Eurobarometer survey number 47 was carried out at the same time as these celebrations and reports on the state of public opinion in Europe forty years on from this historic signing.

Nineteen ninety-seven has also seen the signing of a new European Treaty, the Treaty of Amsterdam¹, which revised the Treaty of European Union (Maastricht) of 1993. The draft treaty was the conclusion of the work of an intergovernmental conference and was presented at the meeting of Heads of State and Government on the 17th and 18th June this year. On the 2nd October the treaty was signed by the Heads of State at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam and has now begun its ratification process in the Member States.

Internationally the first six months of 1997 had seen in the United States the re-election of William Clinton to a second term in the White House, the first Democrat to be re-elected since Roosevelt. The European Union and the United States continued their disagreement over the Helms-Burton law and the World Trade Organisation nominated a panel to investigate the European Union complaint.

In Africa the unrest seen in Zaire in the second half of 1996 continued in the early part of 1997, while in China the death of Deng Xiaoping heralded a change of leadership in that country and Hong Kong was preparing for its return to Chinese control.

Albania saw the failure of a pyramid finance scheme, which led to violent demonstrations. The European Union agreed an aid package and UN authorisation was given to use a multinational force to deliver humanitarian aid. Finally the on-going unrest in ex-Yugoslavia, the Middle East and Algeria continued over the early part of 1997.

In the Union itself Belgium saw demonstrations associated with plant closures in the country (Renault and Forges de Clabecq) leading to a large demonstration in Brussels for a "Social Europe". The BSE crisis continued to reverberate across the Union affecting both the meat industry and consumers alike. A European Parliament temporary committee of enquiry criticised both the United Kingdom government and the European Commission in their handling of the crisis. On 1st May the British electorate voted a Labour government under Tony Blair into power ending 18 years of Conservative rule. Finally, after elections in France at the end of May had toppled the centre right, socialist Lionel Jospin was nominated the next Prime Minister on the 2nd June, and on the 4th June the new government was formed.

It is against this background of current affairs that the surveys of Eurobarometer 47 were carried out. This report is based on three survey waves, conducted between the 29th January and 7th June 1997. A total of nearly 49 000 interviews were carried out over the three waves, but most questions were asked on one wave only and therefore represent the responses to approximately 16 000 interviews.²

¹ Details on the Amsterdam Treaty are to be found at the following Web Site address:
<http://Europa.eu.int/abc/obj/amst/en/index.htm>

² Detailed descriptions of the sampling methods and sample sizes are to be found in Annex C.

The first chapter of this report covers the results of the standard indicators used to measure public perceptions of the European Union. Several of these have been used over a long period of time and permit us to examine the evolution of public opinion over the past decade.

The second chapter entitled “Support for key policy areas – The road from Maastricht to Amsterdam”, examines a series of policy areas that are at the heart of the treaties. We discuss the issue of **employment**, which is of particular relevance, both because it features so high in the list of public concerns and because it has been accorded a separate title in the Amsterdam Treaty and will therefore be the subject of a special Employment Summit to be held in Luxembourg on the 20th and 21st November this year.³

Other issues covered in this chapter include the introduction of the **single currency, the Euro**, home affairs (drugs, crime, immigration and asylum rules), foreign and defence policy and finally the question of enlargement. **Enlargement** has been one of the current Commission’s fundamental objectives and indeed it was only shortly after the fieldwork of this survey that the Commission published its **Agenda 2000**⁴, which outlined its strategy for strengthening growth, competitiveness and employment, for modernising key policies and for extending the Union borders through enlargement. In Agenda 2000 the Commission gave its assessment of the preparedness for membership of the ten applicant countries and recommended that accession negotiations start with Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia.

The third chapter of this report deals with attitudes towards the **European Parliament**, its perceived reliability, effectiveness and finally to which areas of policy it should direct its energies.

Chapter four discusses how well people feel informed about the European Union, do they want to know more and where do they think they should be able to find out **information about the European Union** and its functioning and institutions. We also examine people’s willingness to be pro-active in their search for information, including the use of the Internet and World Wide Web.

The penultimate chapter examines people’s views on identity, national and European; it also discusses the results of a question asked of young people concerning their perception of Europe⁵. In the context of the current European Commission’s information campaign entitled “**Citizens First**” there is a section on the levels of awareness of European Union citizens’ rights, sources of information and general levels of interest in such rights. The chapter concludes with an analysis of a question on the respect of rights and freedoms used as part of a series for a survey on “The European Year against Racism”.

The concluding chapter includes two sections, one on **women’s health** and attitudes toward cancer, again part of a longer series of questions, and a final section on the **role of education and training** and the use of the new technologies in preparation for effective participation in the labour market.

The Eurobarometer Web Site address is:
<http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg10/infcom/epo/polls.html>

³ Information on policy areas in general can be found at the Web Site address:
<http://Europa.eu.int/pol/index/en.htm>

⁴ For details the reader is referred to the European Commission Web Site address:
<http://Europa.eu.int/comm/agenda2000/overview/en/agenda.htm>

⁵ “The young Europeans” Eurobarometer 47.2. Web Site address:
<http://Europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/youth/research/survey.html>

Major News around the time of the Fieldwork January to June 1997

1st January	The Netherlands assumes Presidency of the European Union
14th January	José Maria Gil-Robles elected President of the European Parliament
18th January	Austria : Franz Vranitzky resigns as Chancellor of Austria, successor Viktor Klima
18th January	USA : William Clinton inaugurated for his second term as the President of the USA

January - March	Zaire : Rebel groups lead by Laurent Kabila advance in the eastern parts of the country.
February	Zaire : Mass escapes from refugee camps continue in fear of advancing rebel troops.
2 February	Belgium : Up to 80 000 take part in demonstrations in Wallonia to protest at the closure of Forges de Clabecq steelworks.
4 February	Albania : Large pyramid finance scheme collapses resulting in violent demonstrations.
15 February	World Trade Organisation (WTO) : an agreement between 68 countries to liberalise the global telecommunications market.
16 February	Serbia : Leaders of the opposition movement Zadejno announce an end to the daily anti-government demonstrations after the Serb Parliament adopts a bill recognising the opposition victory in the local elections held in November 1996.
18-20 February	BSE : European Parliament's temporary committee of inquiry in its report accuses the United Kingdom government and the European Commission of fuelling the beef crisis.
19 February	China : Deng Xiaoping dies at the age of 92.
20 February	Helms-Burton law : WTO nominates a panel to examine the EU complaint against the USA.
23 February	Scotland : First clone (Dolly) of an adult sheep in Edinburgh.
9 March	Albania : An agreement between President Berisha and the opposition to form a government of national reconciliation and to hold legislative elections by June.
16 March	Brussels : 75 000 demonstrate for social Europe.
20-21 March	Bill Clinton and Boris Yeltsin meet in Helsinki to discuss the enlargement of NATO.
25 March	40th Anniversary of the Treaties of Rome.
26 March	Middle East : Israeli decision to start building a Jewish settlement in Har Homan results in unrests.

26 March	Albania : The European Commission approves initial humanitarian aid of ECU 2 Million.
28 March	Albania : UN authorisation for multinational force to be used in Albania for ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid.
1 April	Failure of negotiations on equivalence of veterinary standards results in European import restrictions and American counter measures.
10 April	UN : Denmark tables a resolution to the UN Commission on Human Rights condemning human rights violations in China. France among some other EU countries refuses to back the resolution.
11 April	Iran : German court accuses Iran of ordering the killing of Kurdish dissidents in Berlin. EU asks its Member States to withdraw their diplomats from Teheran.
14 April	Helms-Burton law : EU suspends WTO panel.
15 April	The second Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference in Valetta, Malta.
22 April	Peru : End of the hostage crisis at the residence of the Japanese ambassador in Lima.
24 April	South Africa becomes the 71st ACP member of the Lomé convention.
1 May	United Kingdom : Labour wins elections. Tony Blair new Prime Minister.
1 June	France : Left wins elections.
6 June	French government is formed with Lionel Jospin as Prime Minister.

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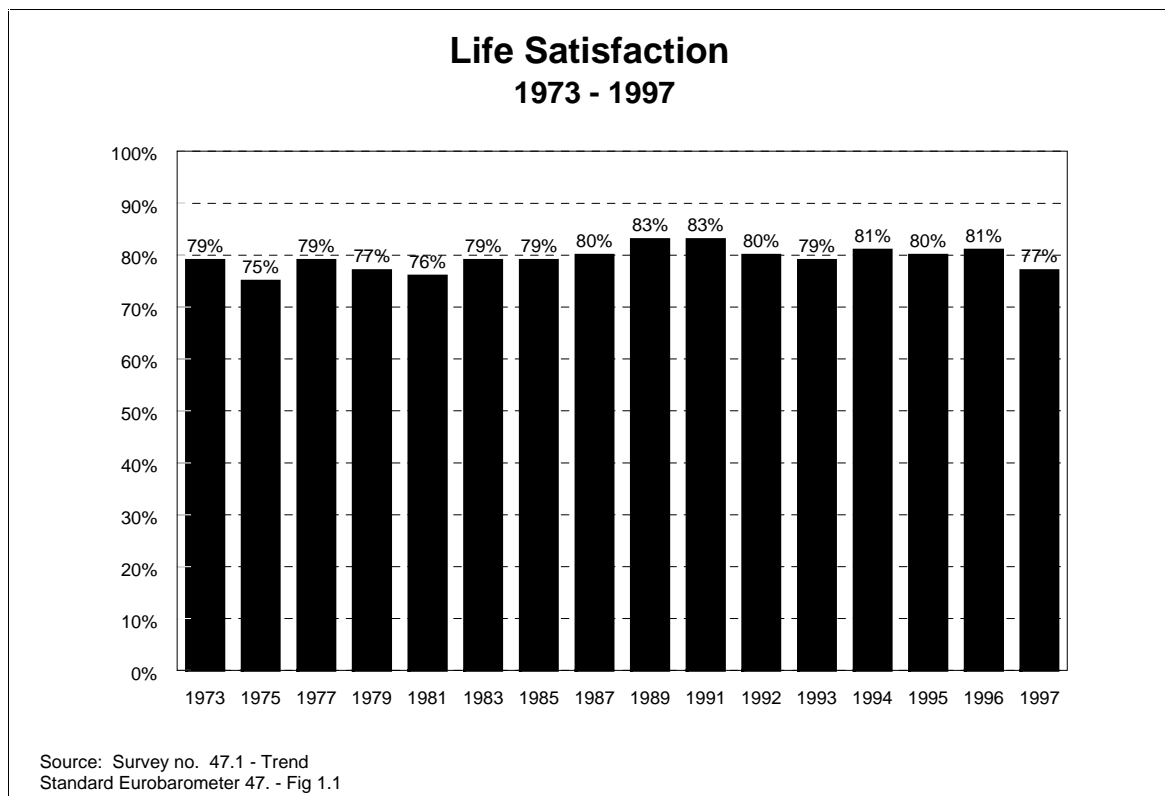
REPORT

1. Trends in Public Opinion

Public opinion in the Spring of 1997 was generally pessimistic in vein. On topics ranging from overall life satisfaction to attitudes to European Union membership, the mood was one of restraint and nowhere did we witness an increase, but rather a decrease in optimism.

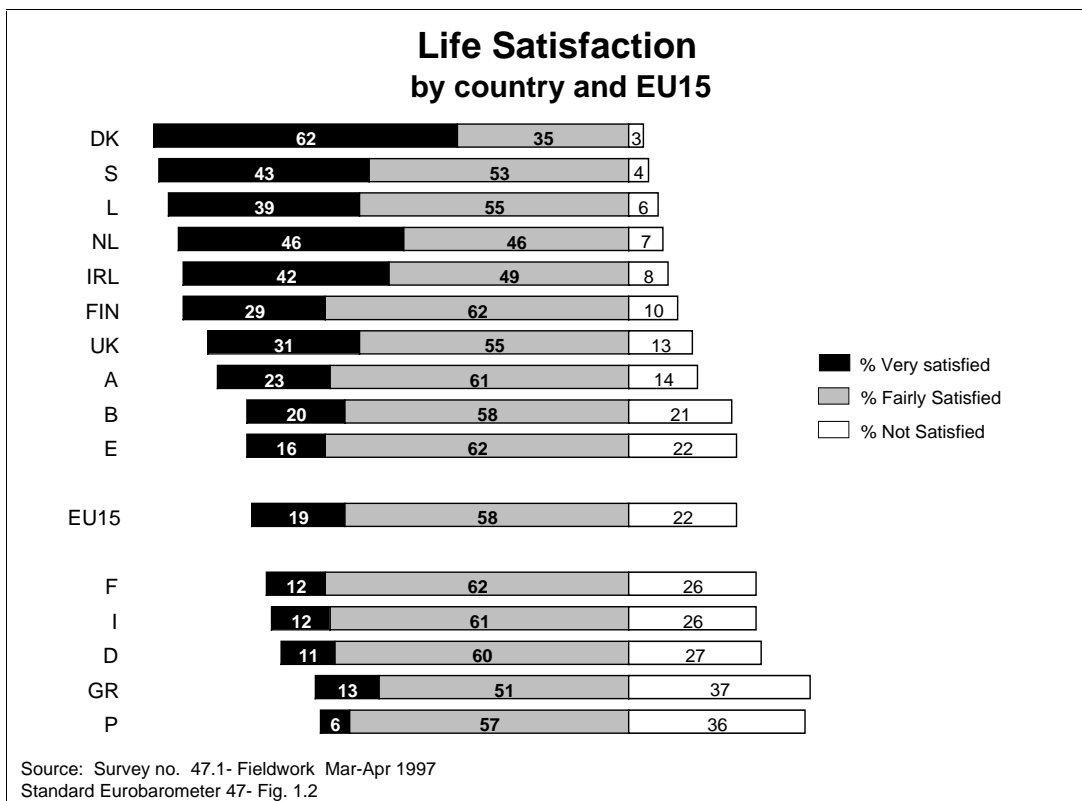
1.1. Life Satisfaction

The measurement of life satisfaction is one that the Eurobarometer has carried out for twenty-five years, and it is one of the most stable of indicators generally showing only very slight movements. At the turn of the decade it reached its highest scores, recording 83% either "very" or "fairly" satisfied, now seven years on we record one of the lowest scores ever at 77% a drop of 4% in the past twelve months.



While there is an overall downward movement in the life satisfaction scores, in the cross country analysis the patterns show some noticeable differences. Denmark has always been the most satisfied of nations, but there has been a 4% drop in the "very" satisfied score over the past year. Nevertheless the Danes remain at 62% the most satisfied.

The single greatest drop observed was for Germany, here from an already low base of 18% "very" satisfied in 1996, German public opinion drops a further seven percentage points on the "very satisfied" scale to record only 11% "very" satisfied. Austria and Belgium also show increasing pessimism with seven and five percent drops respectively.



Ireland reflected its recent economic success by recording an 8% increase in life satisfaction from a year ago; the mood was also more up-beat in Greece (+4%), Finland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom all up 2%. (Tables 1.1 & 1.3)

The demographic analysis shows very little difference between men and women in terms of life satisfaction, but interestingly in terms of age the 55+ age group were markedly more satisfied (23% “very” satisfied) compared with the 25-54’s 16%. Life satisfaction in other cases was, as would be expected, more likely to be associated with higher income levels, managerial jobs and perceived job security. (Table 1.2)

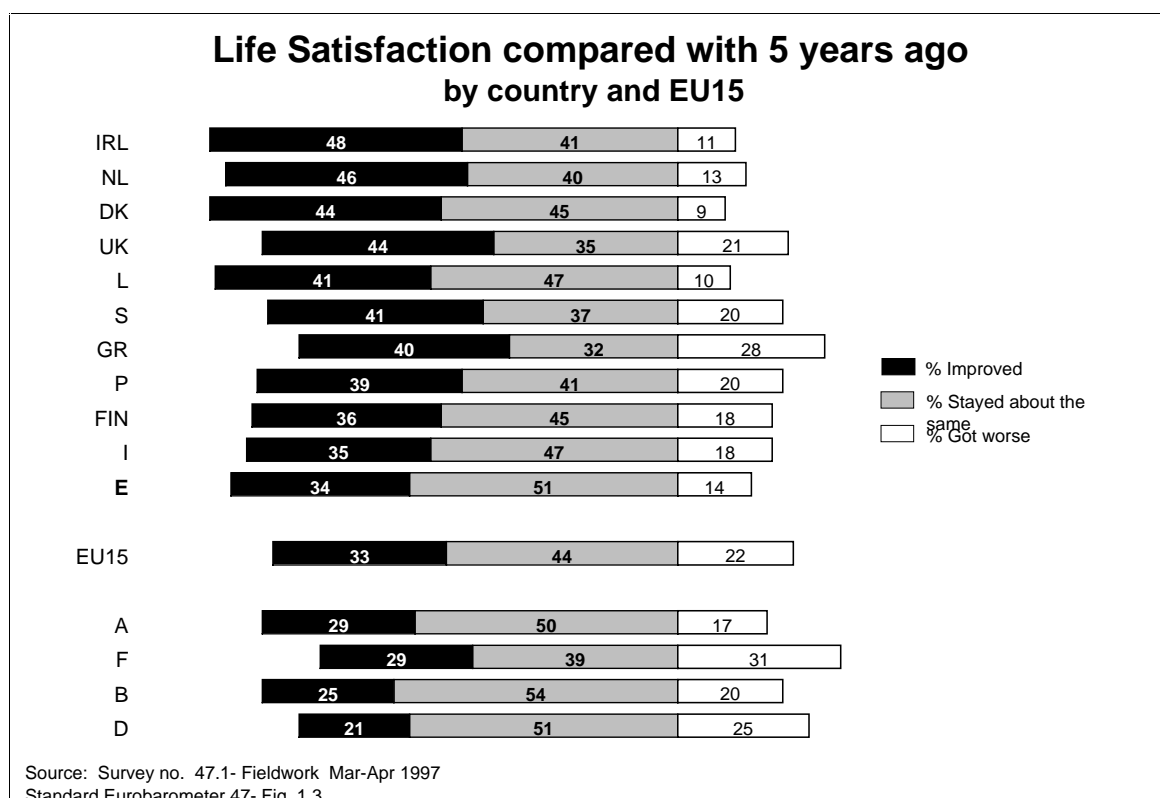
1.2. Life satisfaction compared with five years ago

This Eurobarometer asked for the first time how people felt their lives had changed over the past five years. The tendencies that we observed in overall life satisfaction are generally repeated when asking people to compare their lives with that of five years ago. Overall one in three EU citizens feel their life has improved over the past five years, a substantial 44% feel there has been little change, but an important 22% feel life has got worse.

Ireland showed the greatest perceived improvement with nearly one in two persons feeling their life had improved over the past five years. Other countries in which at least four in ten persons felt life had got better, were the Netherlands (46%), Denmark and the United Kingdom (both 44%), Luxembourg and Sweden (both 41%) and Greece 40%.

Lying at the bottom of the EU table was Germany, where only 21% felt that life had improved. In Belgium only 25% felt an improvement and two other countries, France and Austria, both fell below the EU average with 29% recording an improvement.

Examination of the results showed France to be the country where most people felt that life had deteriorated, some 31% claiming things had got worse. In Germany 25% felt things had got worse, but possibly more interesting is the fact that in some countries, while scoring relatively high "improved" scores they also had high "worse" scores, in particular Greece were 40% improved to 28% worse, the United Kingdom 44%:21%, Sweden 41%:20%, and Portugal 39%:20%. (Table 1.4)



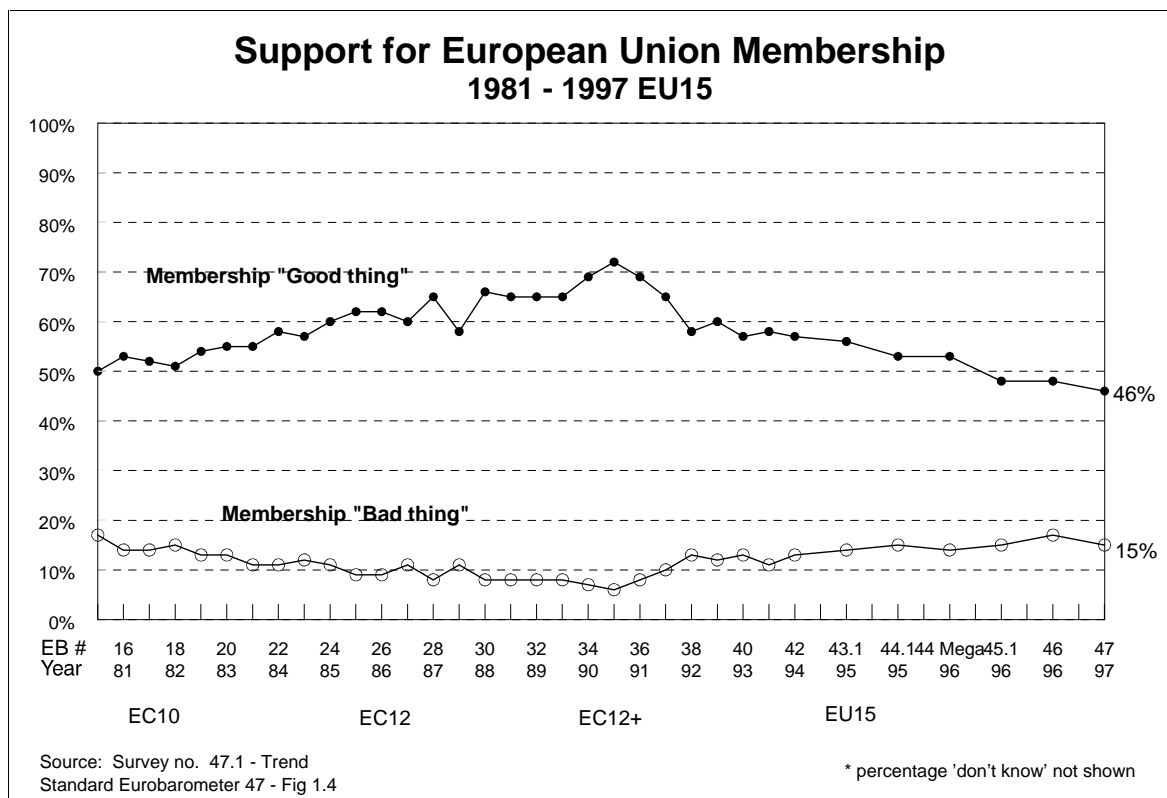
Demographic analysis of some specific variables indicates that women did not feel their situation had improved as much as men do: 31% of women felt their lives had improved in the past five years compared to 35% of men. Women were more likely to feel that there had been little changed in their situation, with 46% saying it was much the "same" compared to 42% of men.

The young were substantially more positive than their elders about their life situation, 49% of the under 25s thought life had improved, in sharp contrast with the over 55s of whom only 18% thought life to have improved.

As with life satisfaction those in well-paying, secure and managerial jobs felt life had improved, again underlining the imperative need for governments to respond to the issue of employment both in terms of job creation and to their long term viability. (Table 1.5)

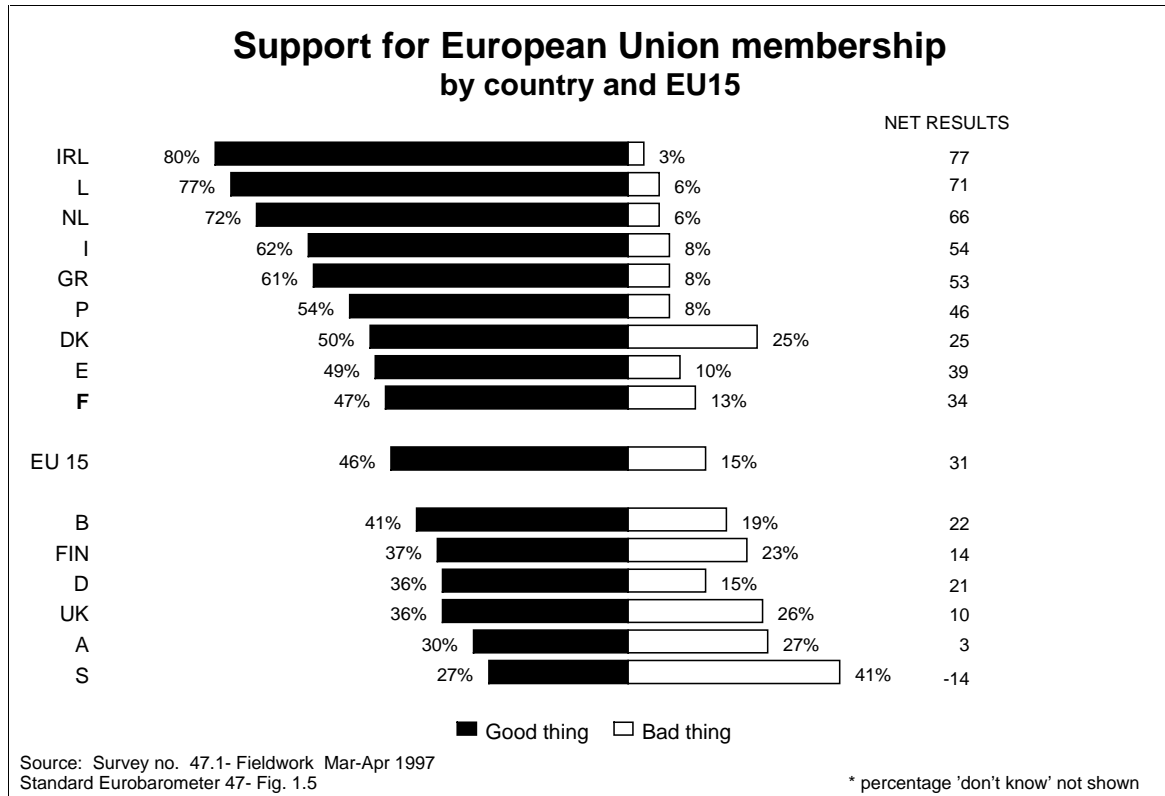
1.3. Support for European Union Membership

Registered support for European Union membership continues to outstrip negative responses by two to one. Forty-six percent of all European Union citizens believe their country's membership of the European Union to be a "good thing", while 15% consider it a "bad thing".



While the majority of EU citizens clearly support their country's membership, it is apparent that a steady decline in support has taken place. The sharp drop of 5% since the announcement by the British government in March 1996 of the possible association between the new variant of Creutzfeldt Jakob disease (CJD) and Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), while stabilising at a lower level between Spring and Autumn 1996 has dropped a further 2% points in the Spring of 1997.

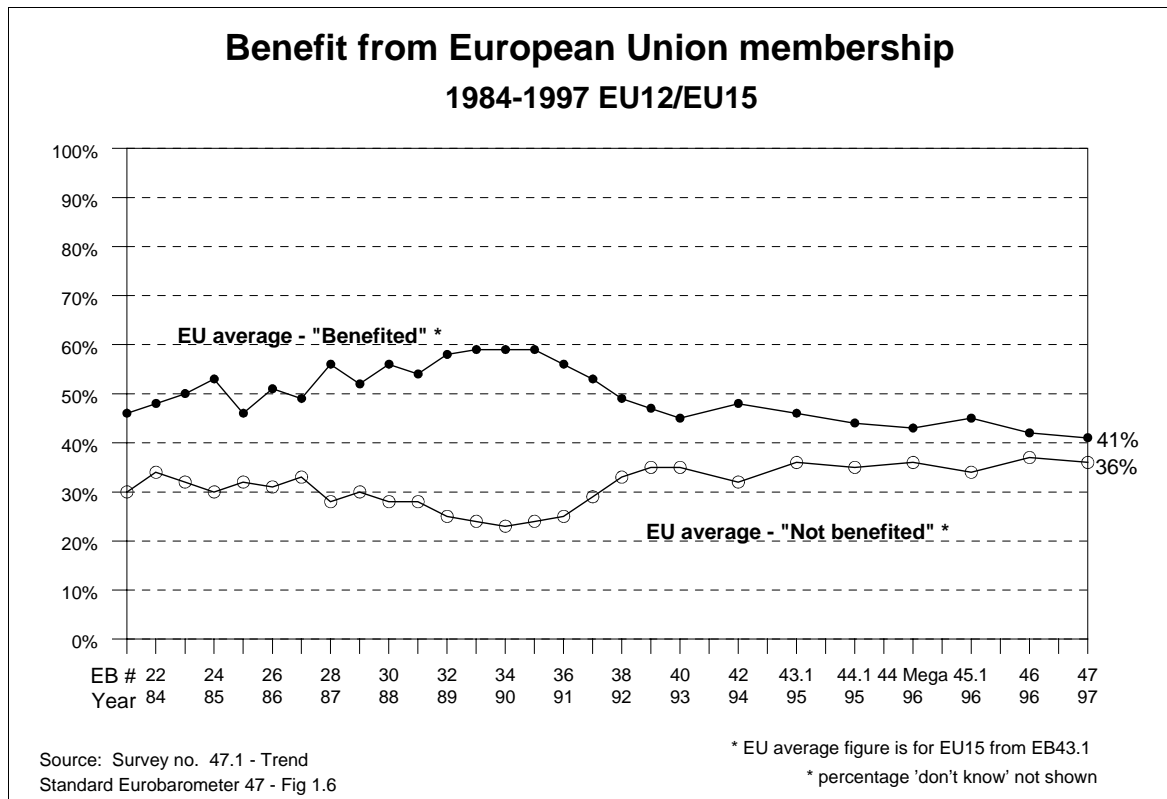
The almost universal decline in support which we witnessed in Eurobarometer 46, is more varied when we examine the country by country results. We see a strengthening of support in some of the smaller Member States, particularly Luxembourg (+5%), Ireland (+6%), Greece (+9%) and interestingly Denmark (+12%). Amongst the larger Member States, France showed the most positive gain (+7%), while opinions in Germany Spain and the United Kingdom remained relatively unchanged. There was a net drop in support in Italy (-6%). (Tables 1.6 & 1.8)



Demographic analysis confirms that women remain substantially less positive (nearly a full 10 percentage points less) than men, and this continues the trend we have witnessed over the past eighteen months with women now recording only 42% support for the Union. Other variables tend to show the now classic differences: high correlations between support for the Union and higher education levels, occupation and the top income quartile. Support is at its lowest amongst the over 55's. (Table 1.7)

1.4. Benefit from European Union Membership

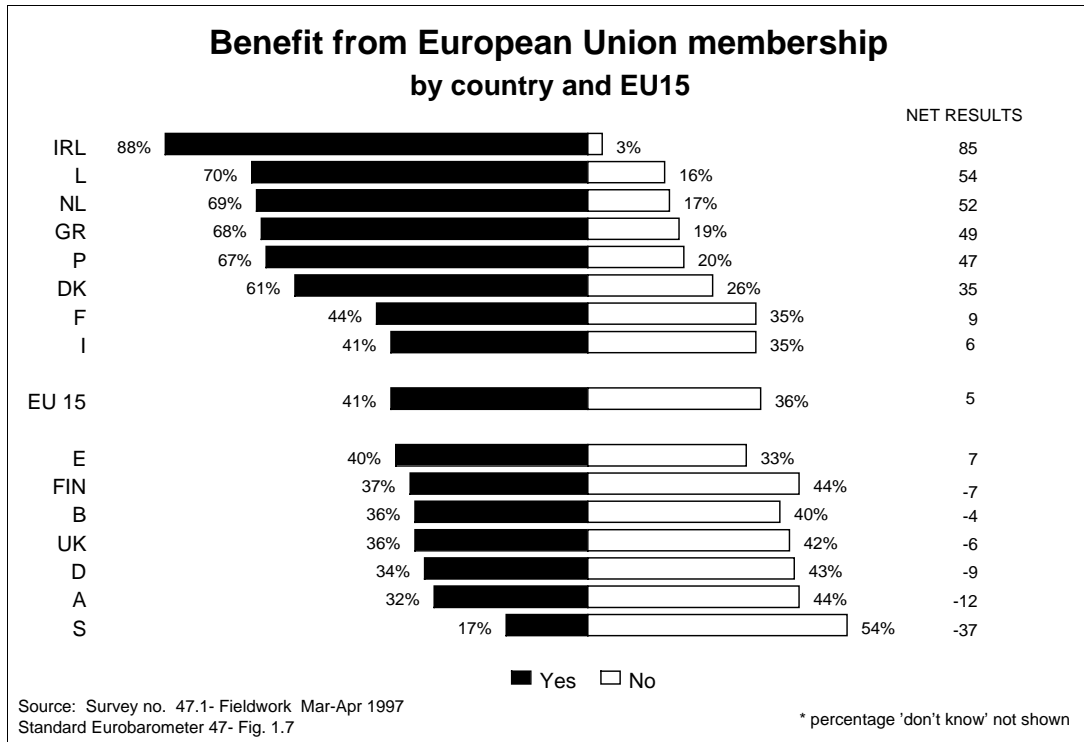
The perceived benefit for one's country has reached its lowest level since the Eurobarometer started measuring this particular indicator. Just four in ten people see their country's membership as benefiting their country, while only slightly fewer (36%) believe their country has reaped no benefit. A further one in five people were unable to say whether their country had benefited from membership. This figure has remained constant over the past two years, with most of the change in opinion being a shift from perceived benefit to no benefit.



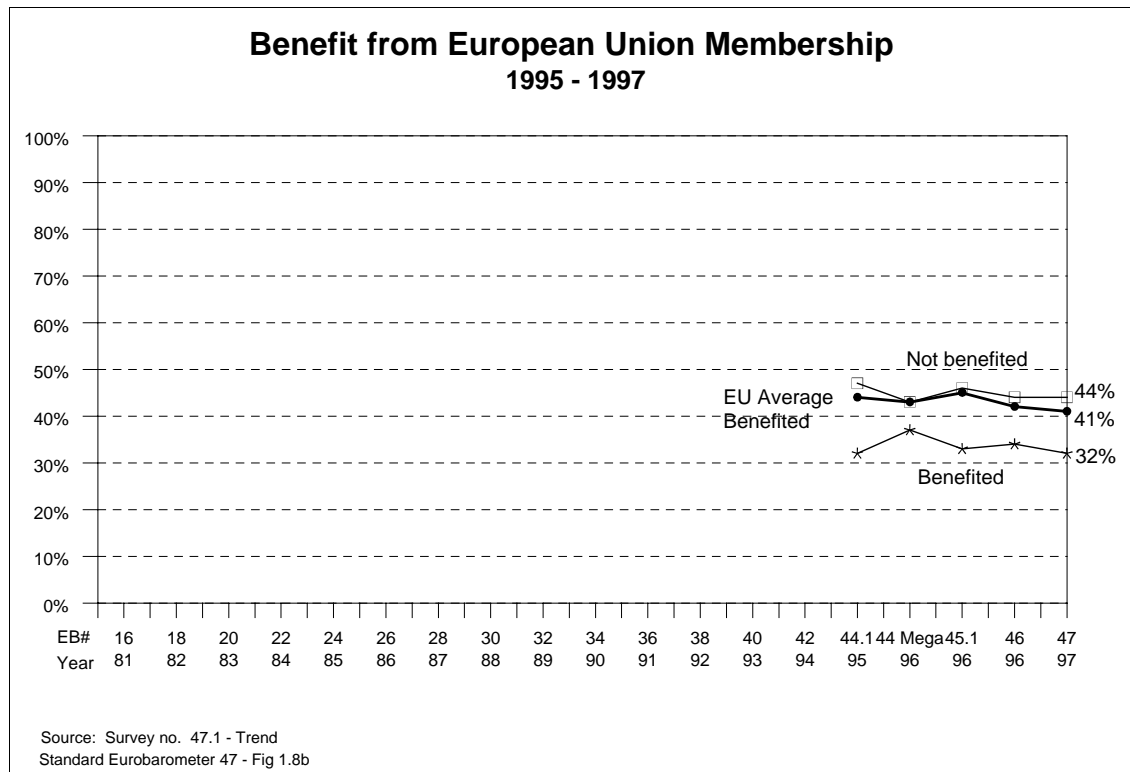
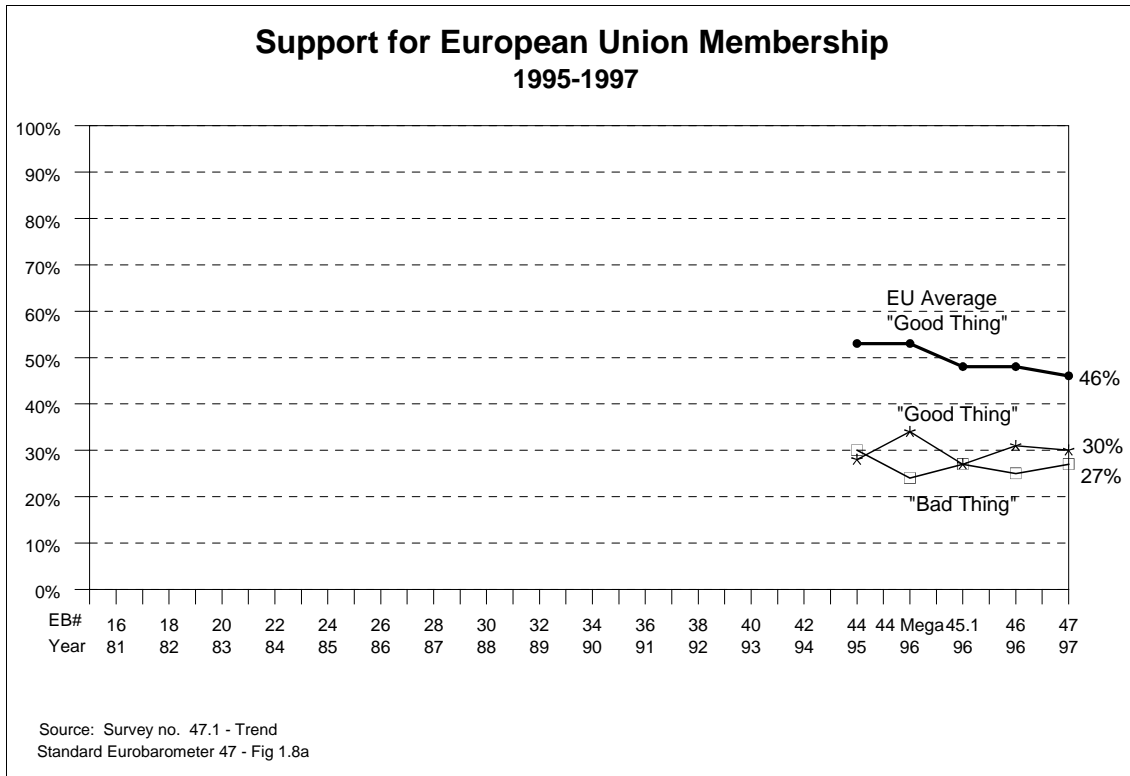
While the overall "benefit" score has been showing a steady, if gradual, decline over the past two years (a much sharper decline was observed between 1991 and 1993) it is certain that not all countries have viewed their membership in the same way. While support for the Union and perceived benefit do to some extent mirror each other, it is evident that some noticeable shifts in public opinion are occurring. Sharp gains on benefit scores have been registered in Denmark (+12% net score⁶) and Luxembourg (+11%). Spain and the United Kingdom also showed a positive movement with an increase of 7% net scores each. In contrast a very marked decline in net score was observed in Italy, where a net result of +23 in the Autumn of 1996 has dropped to +6 in the Spring of 1997, a shift of some 17 points. Belgium was the other country to experience a significant decline, dropping from a net score of +5 to a score of -4, a drop of 9 points. (Tables 1.9 & 1.11)

⁶ Net results are calculated by subtracting negative from the positive responses.

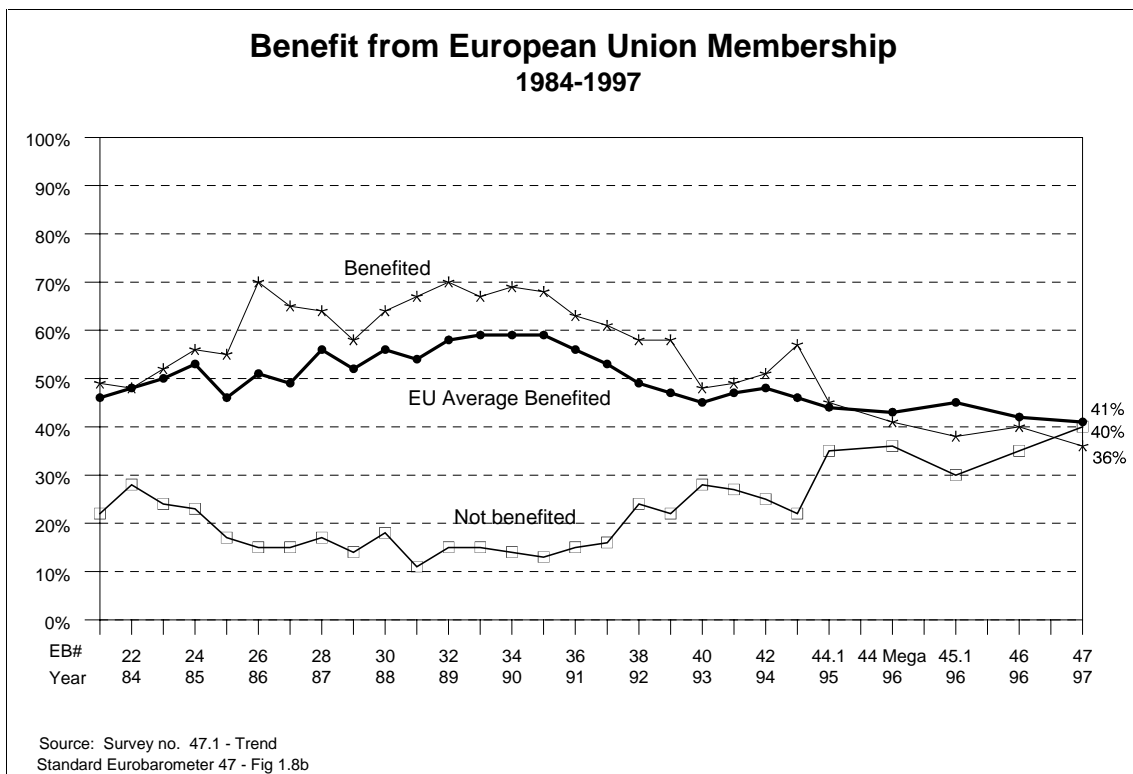
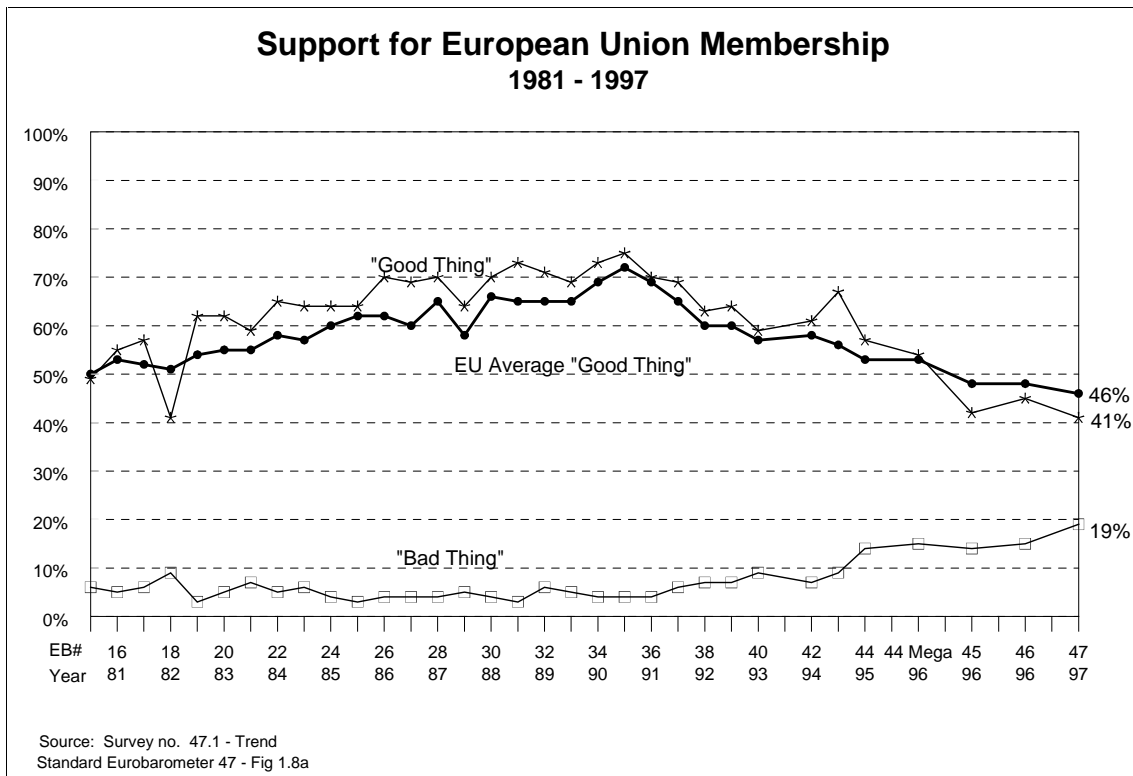
Demographic analysis shows a similar pattern to the previous indicator on support for the European Union, namely men view membership of the European Union in a very much more positive light, 47% believe their country has benefited, compared to a significantly fewer number of women (37%) who believe membership has brought advantages. The perceived advantages are also higher amongst the young and those still in education. Those who completed their education after the age of 20 are nearly 20% more likely (53%) to see benefits in membership compared to those leaving school before they were 16 (34% benefit). Managers and high-income earners are also more positive with benefit ratings of 55% and 52% respectively. (Table 1.10)



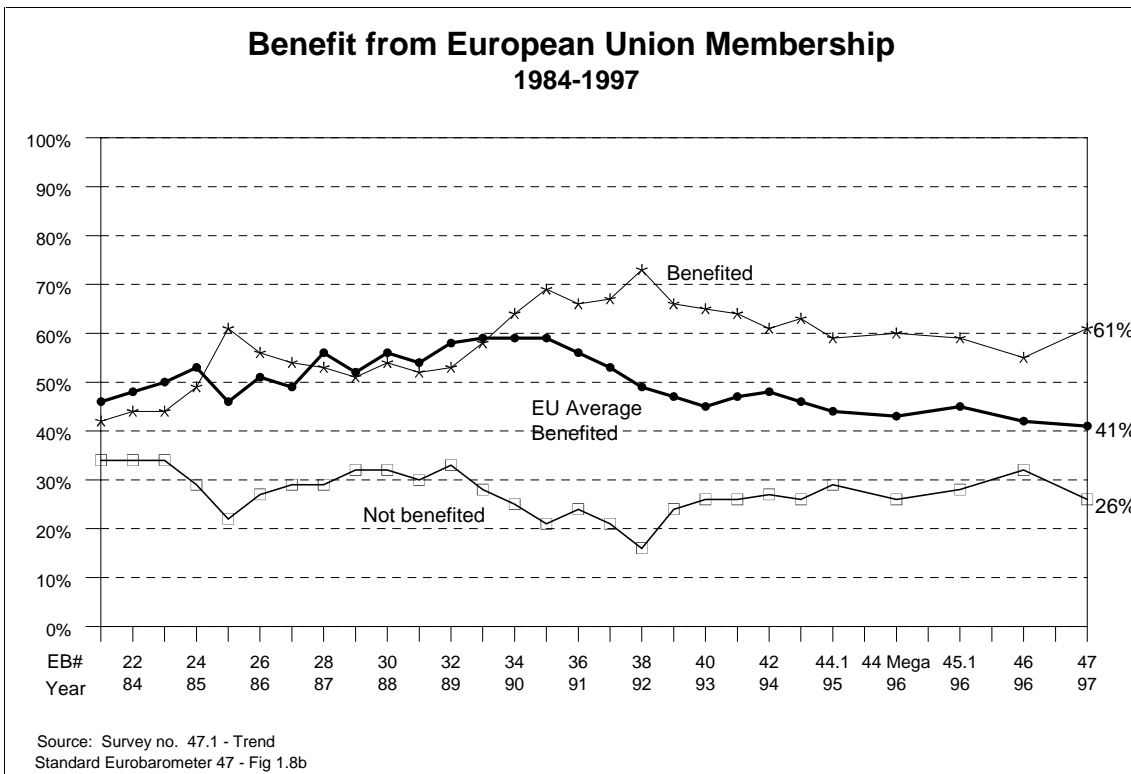
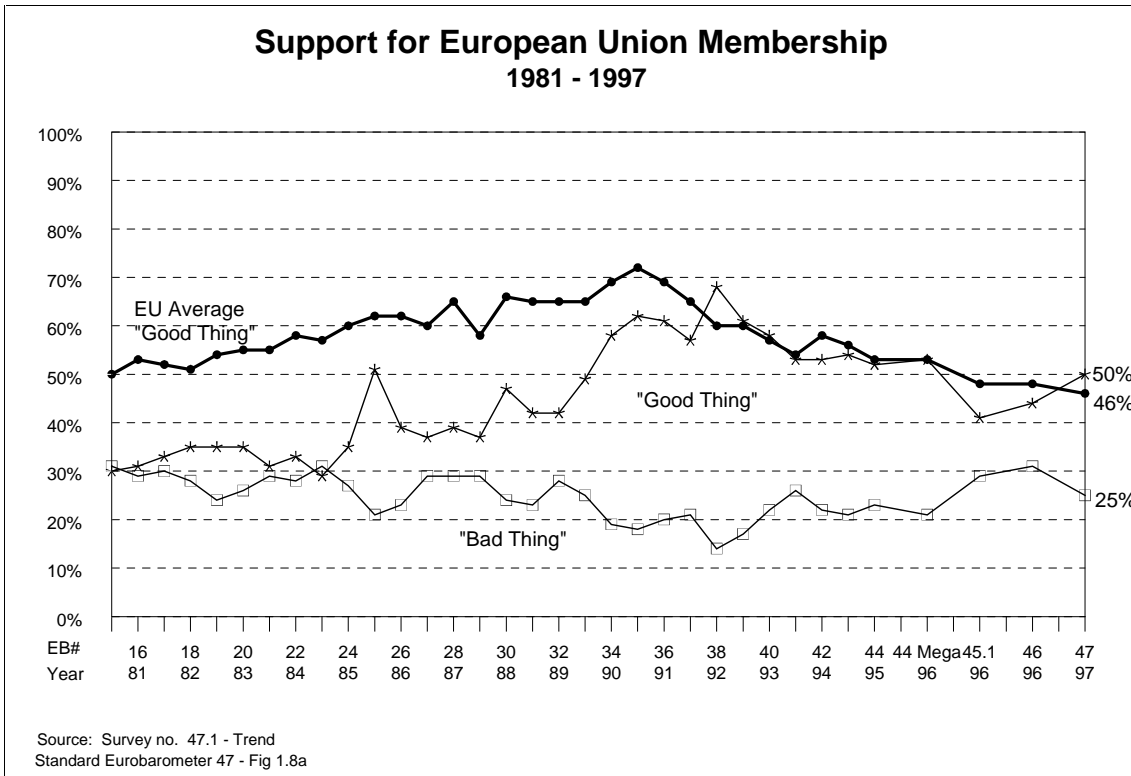
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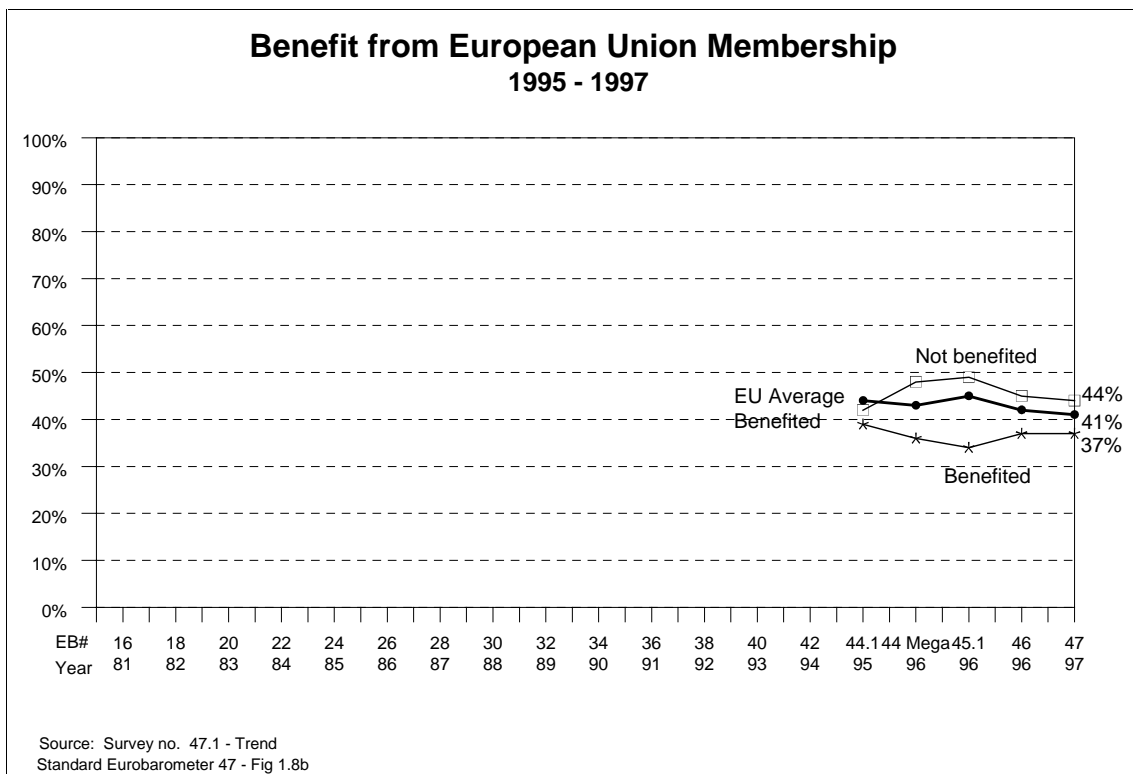
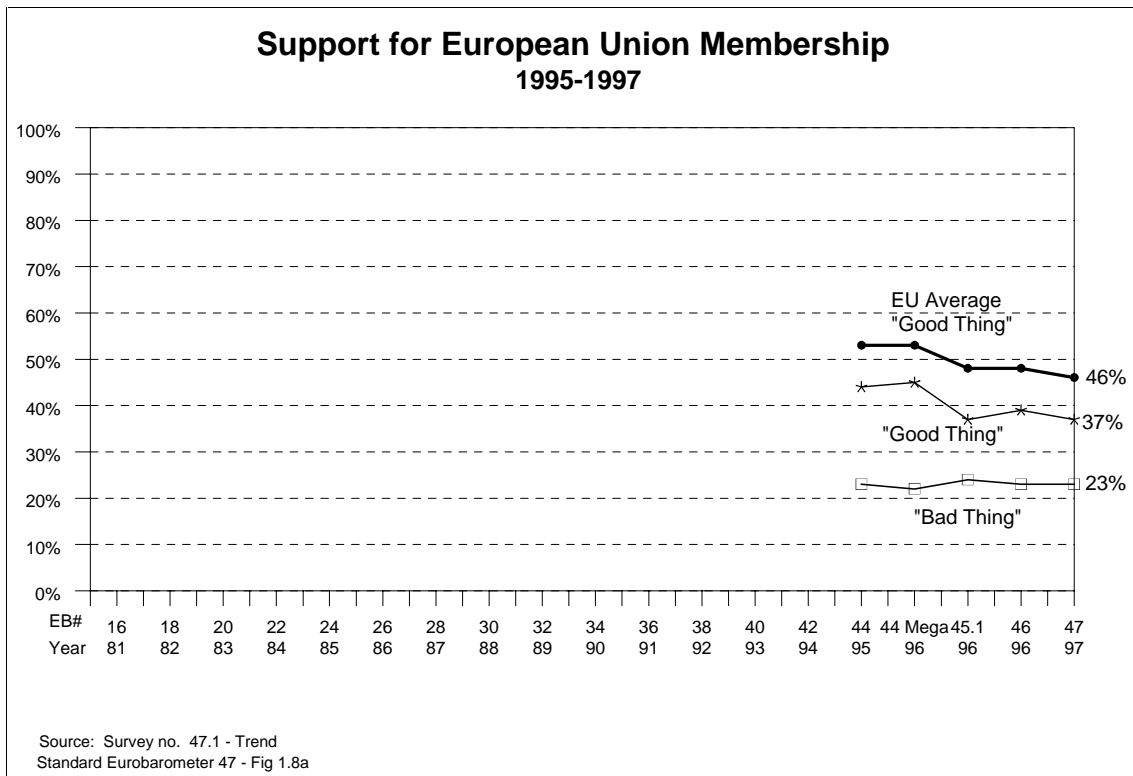
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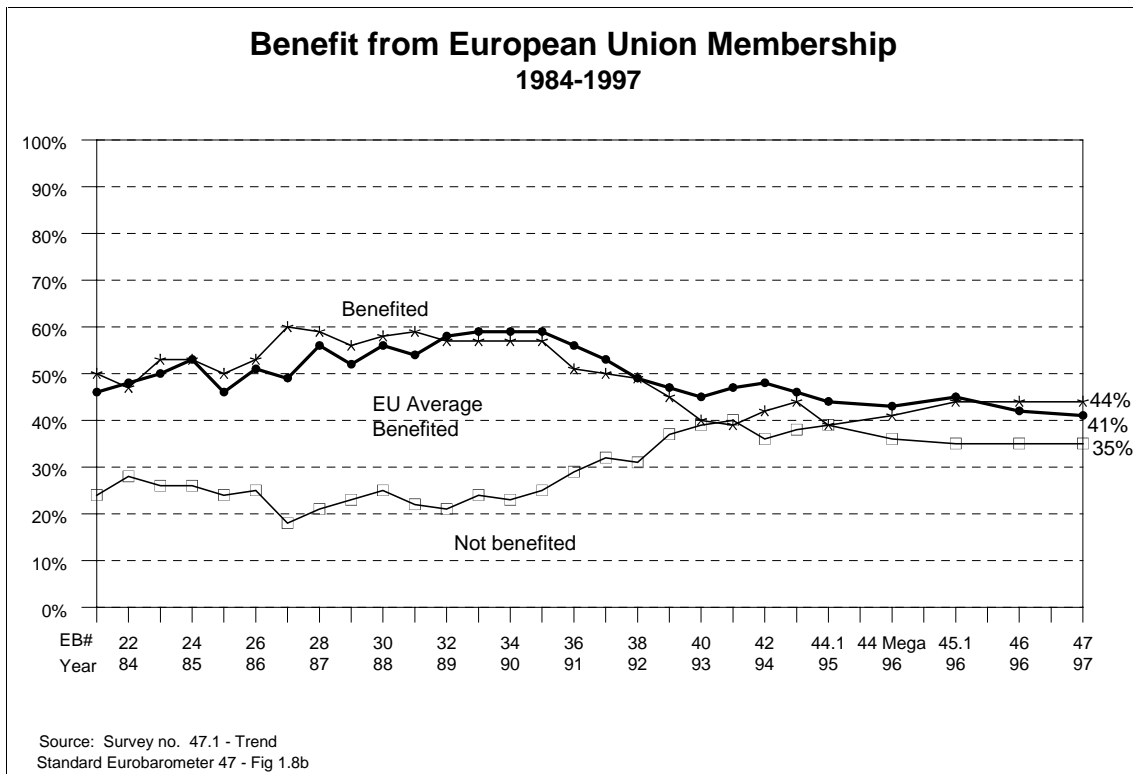
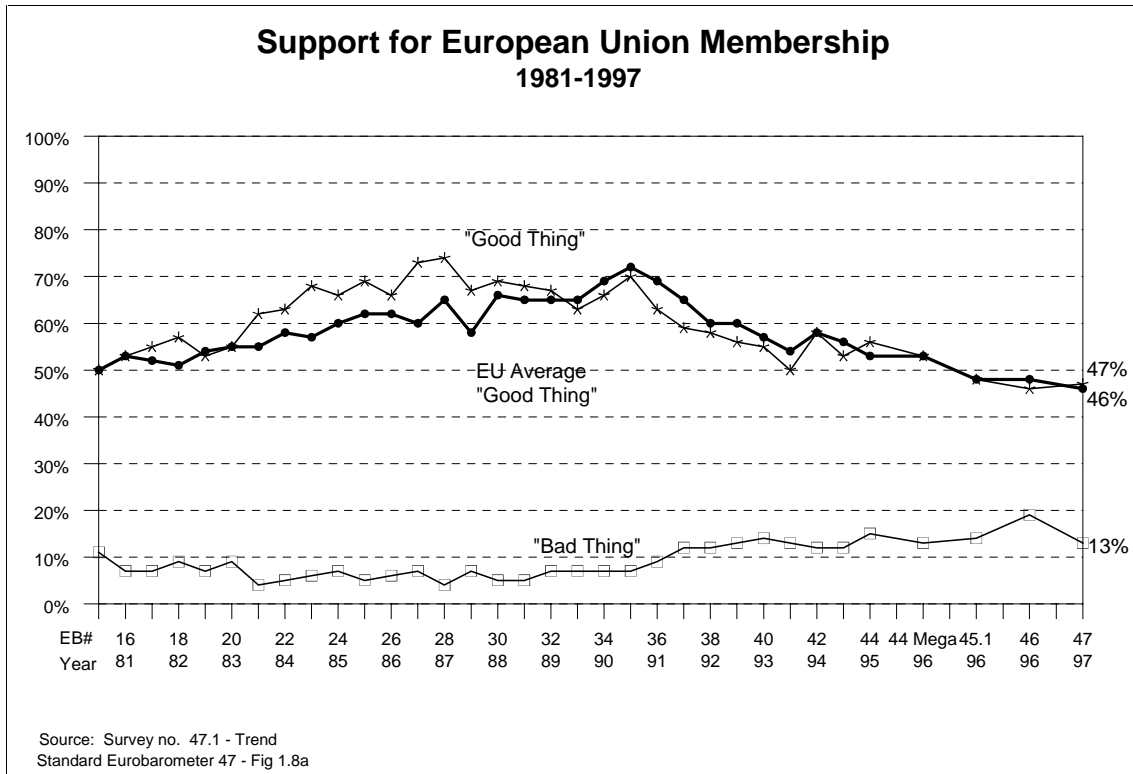
DENMARK



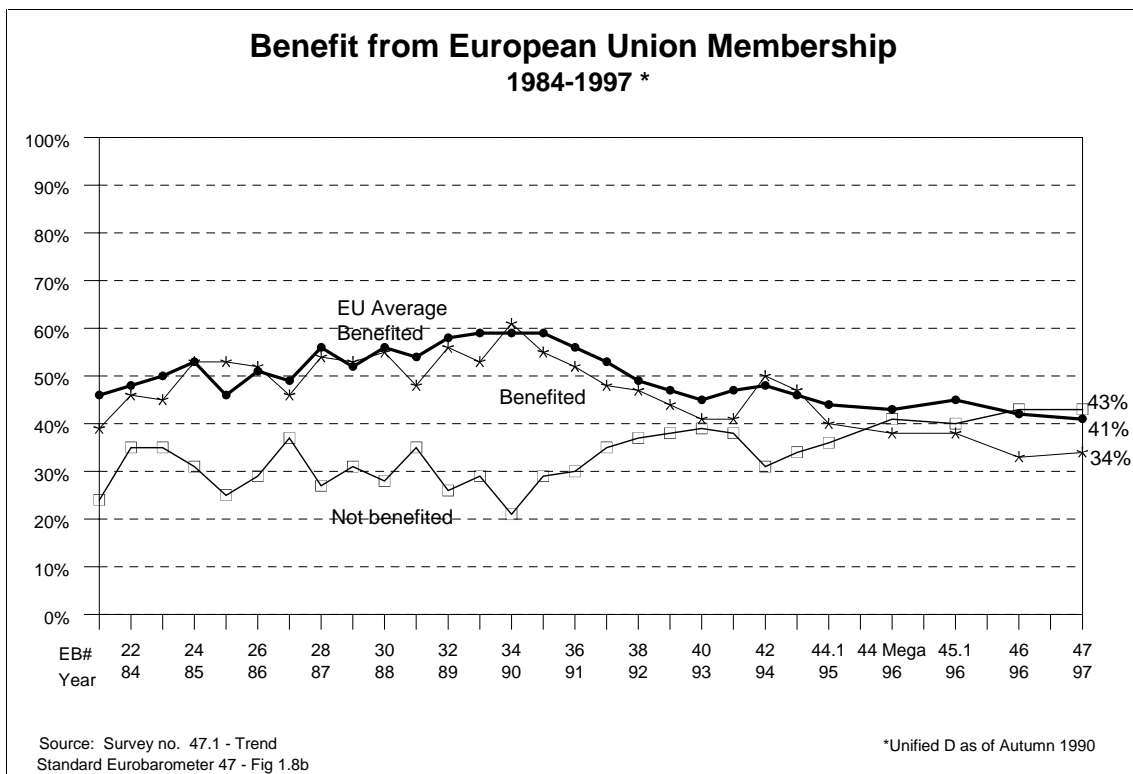
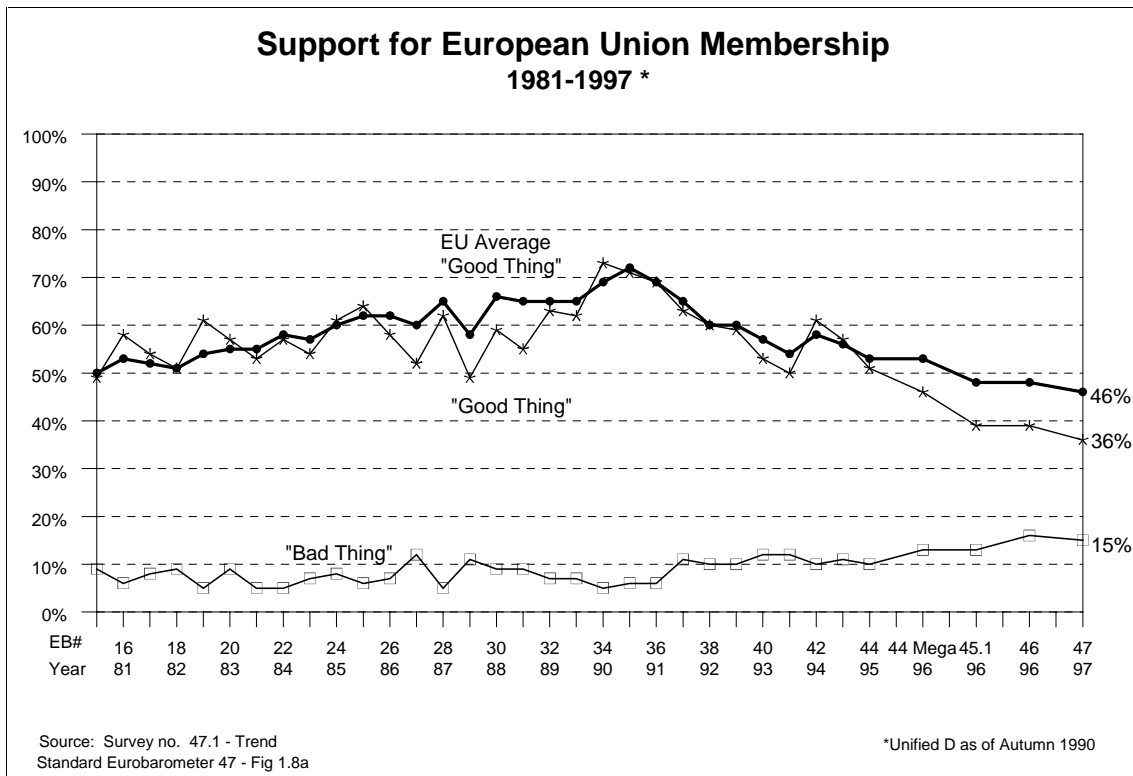
FINLAND



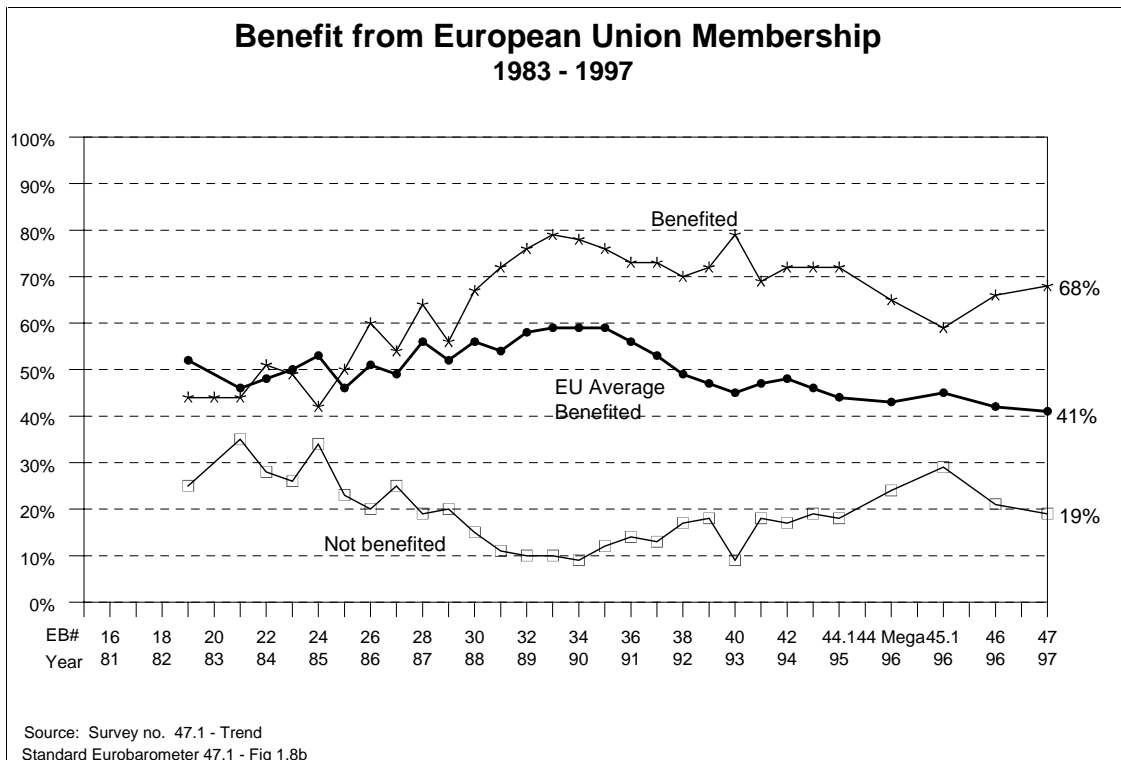
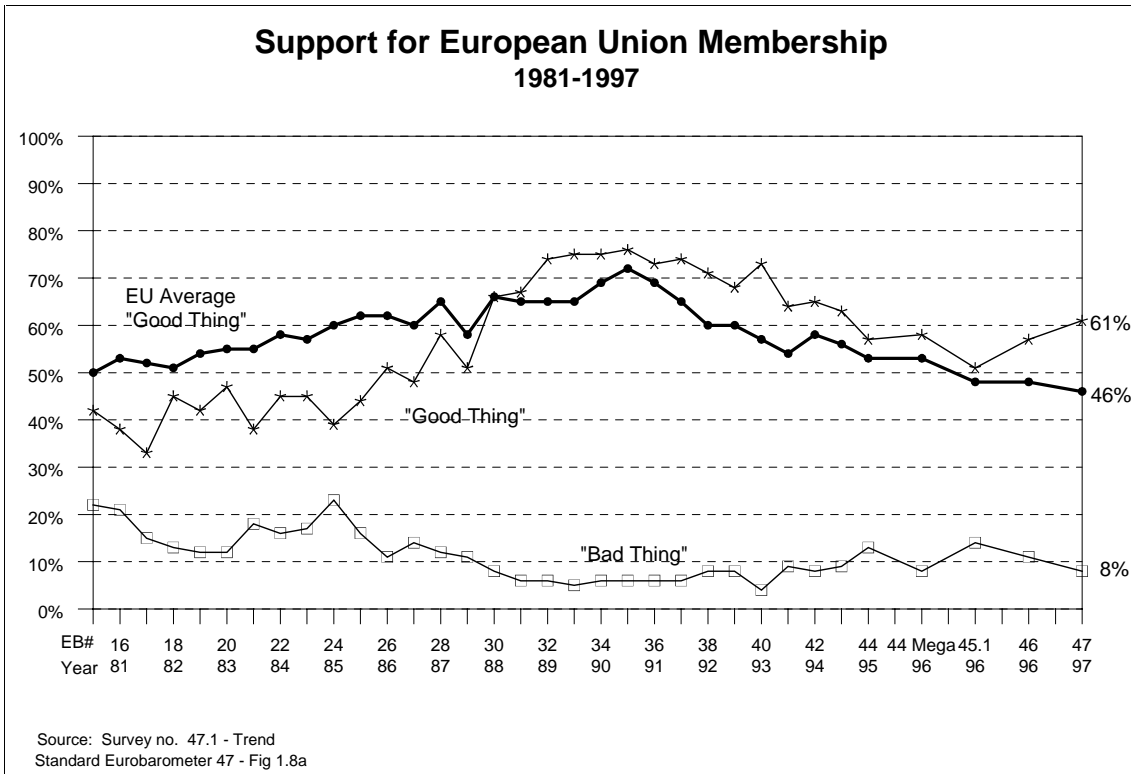
FRANCE



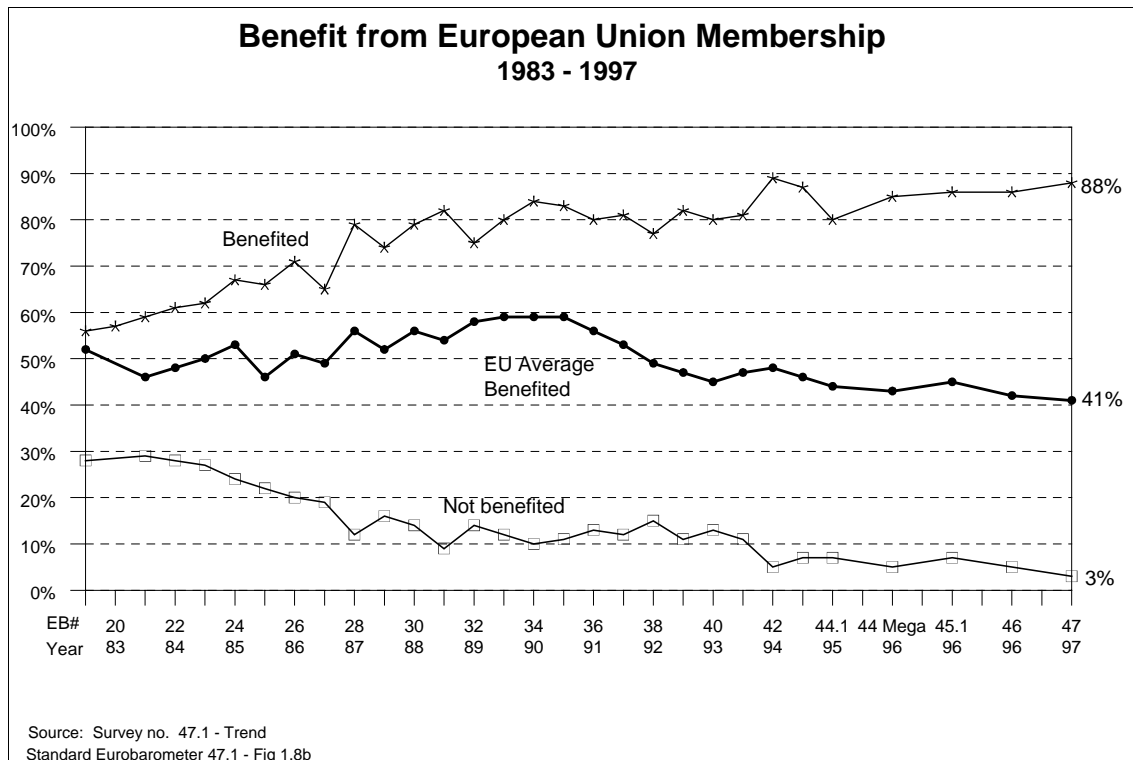
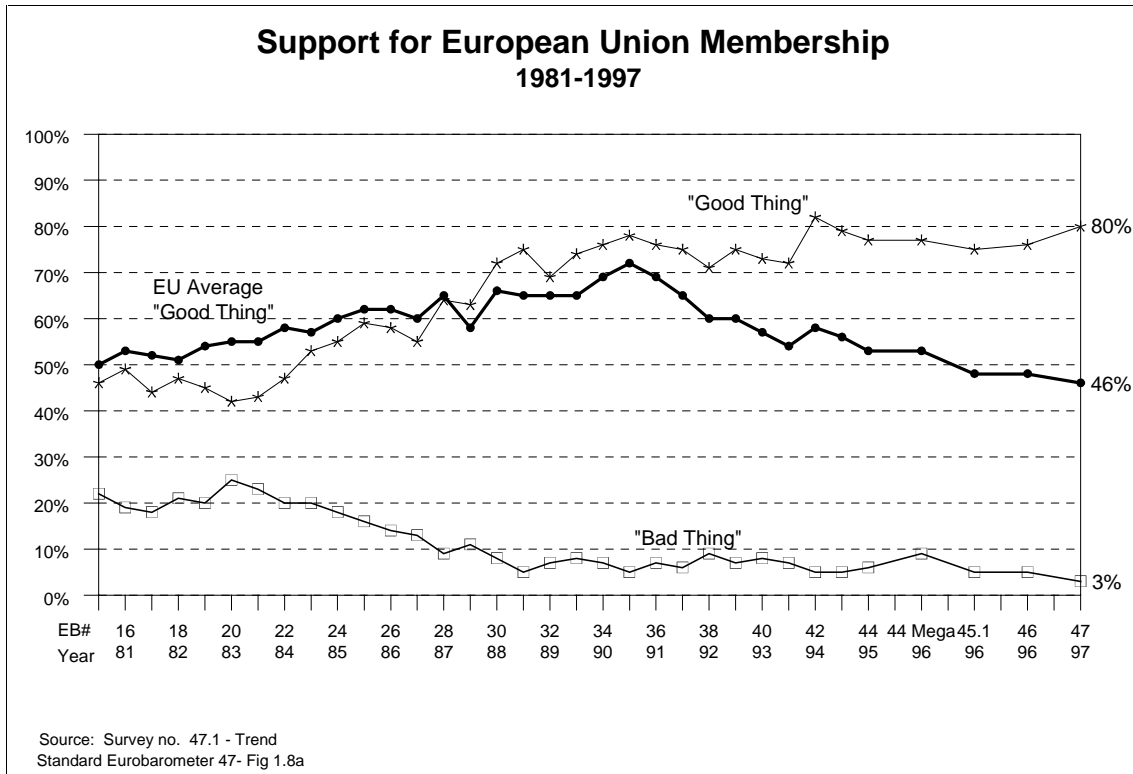
GERMANY



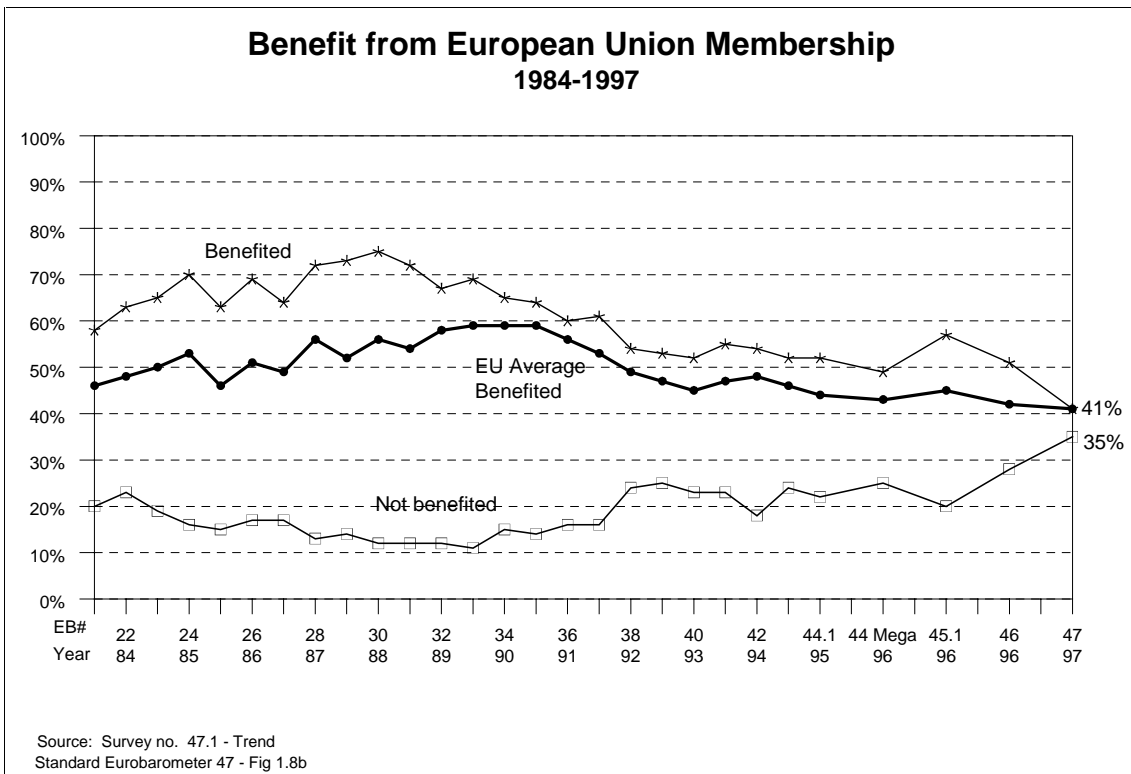
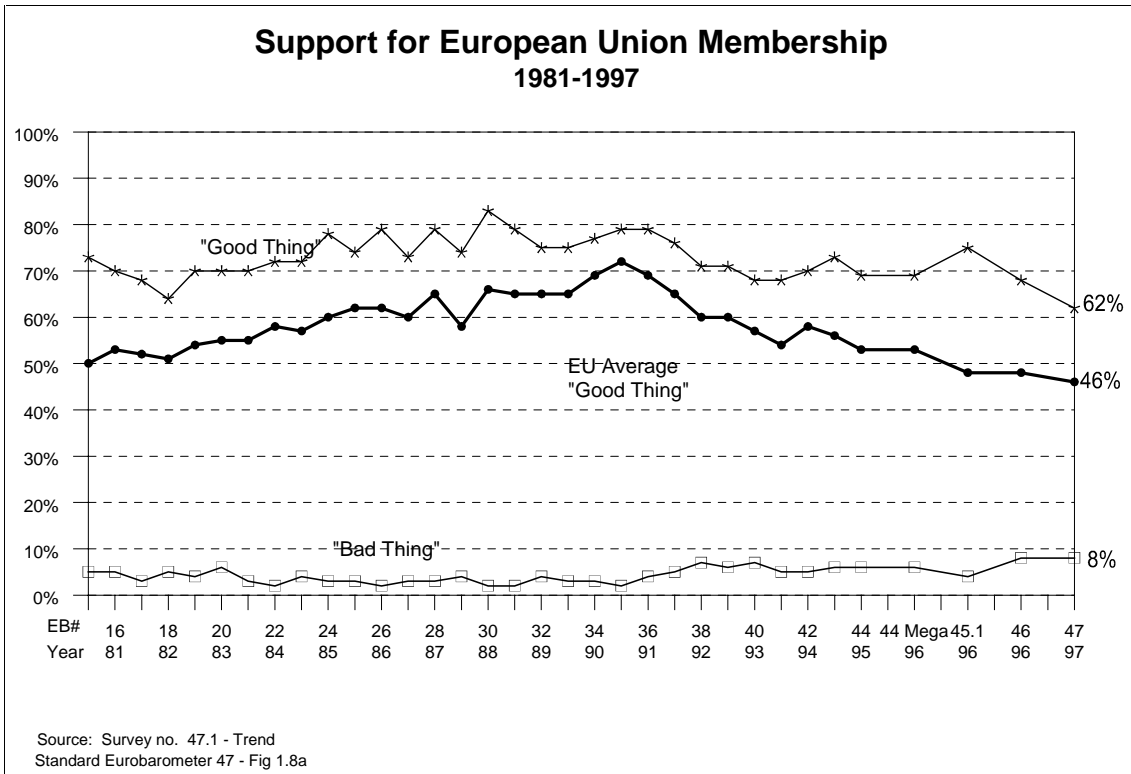
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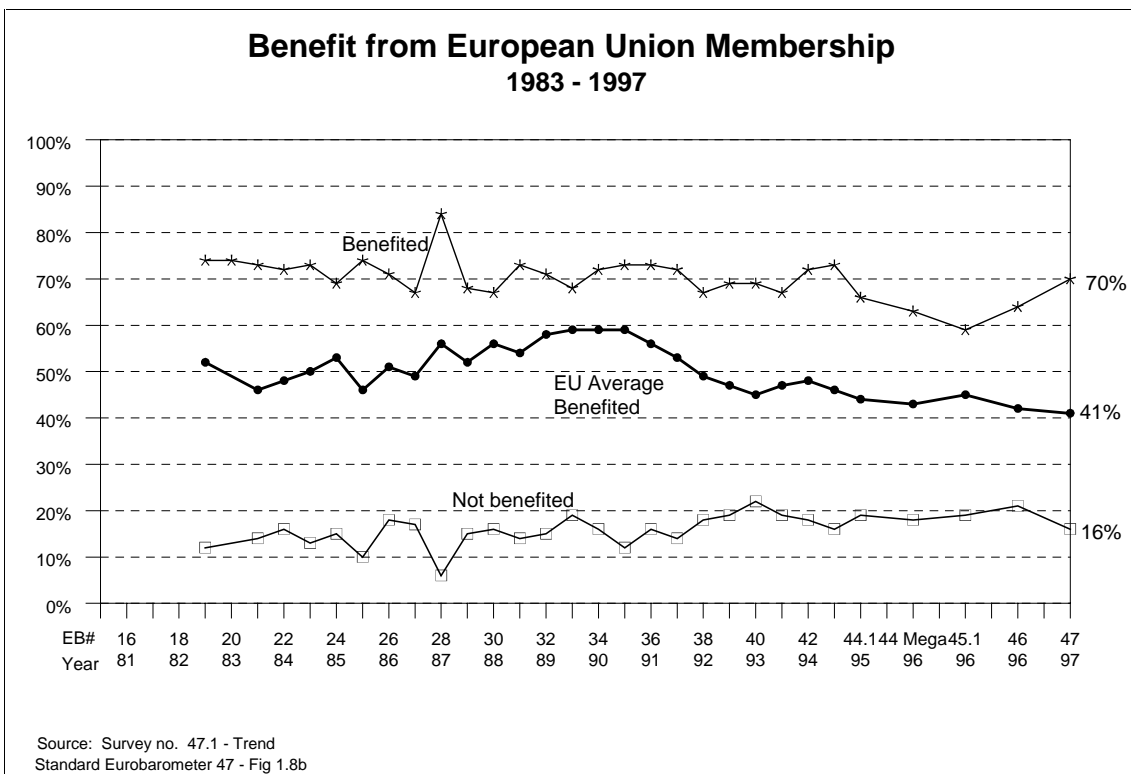
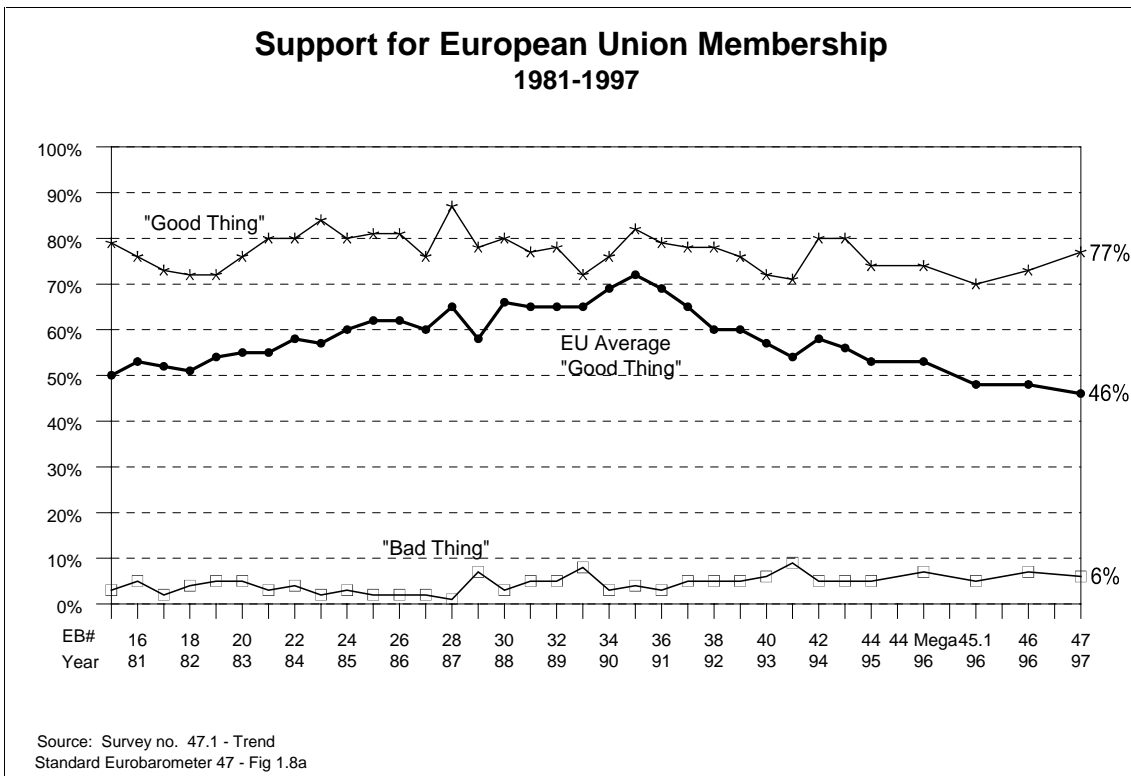
IRELAND



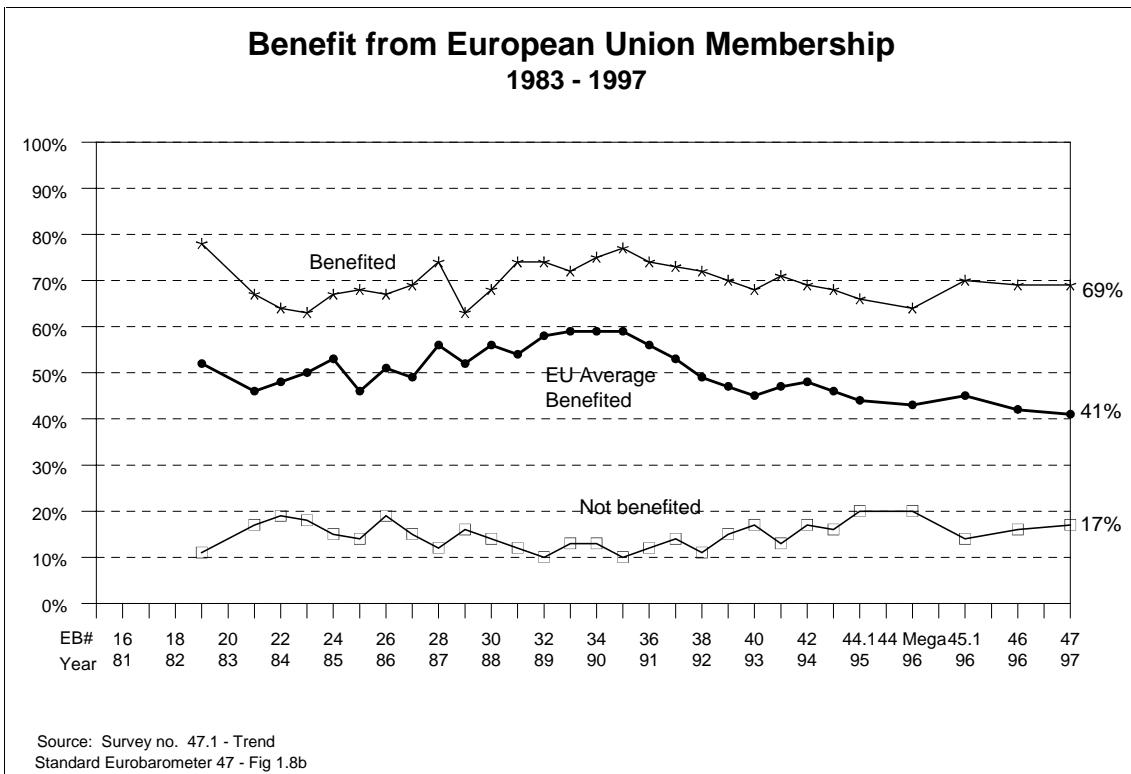
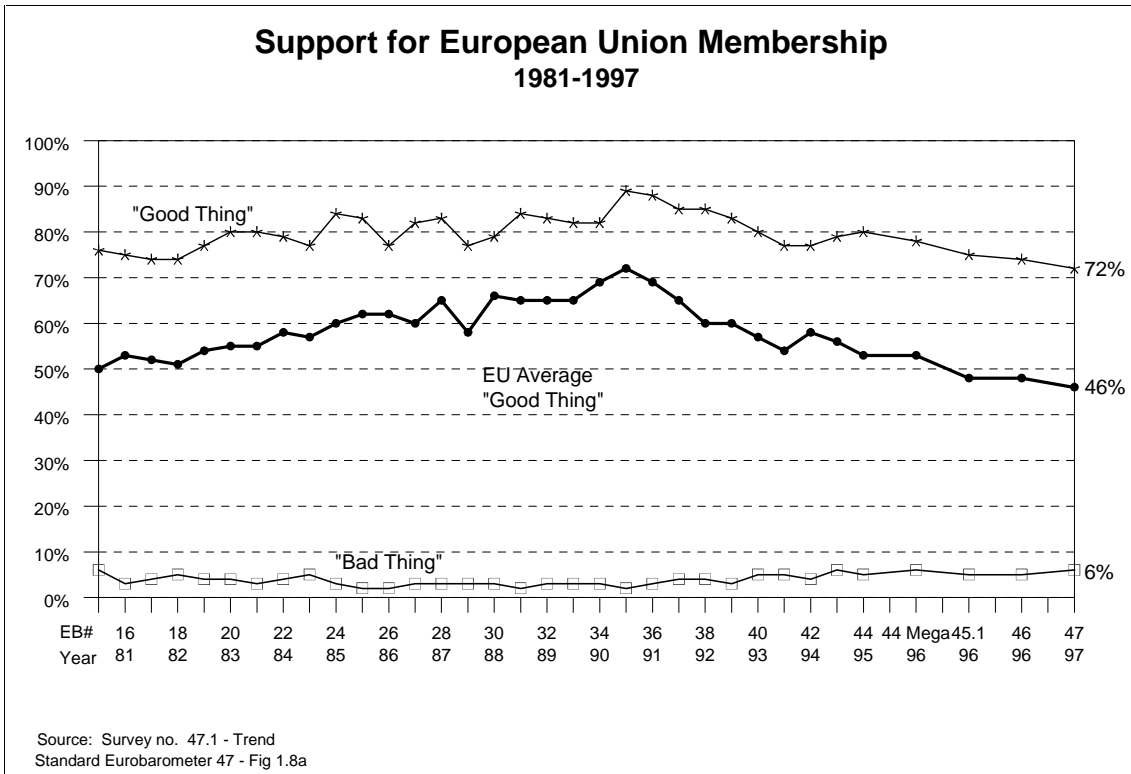
ITALY



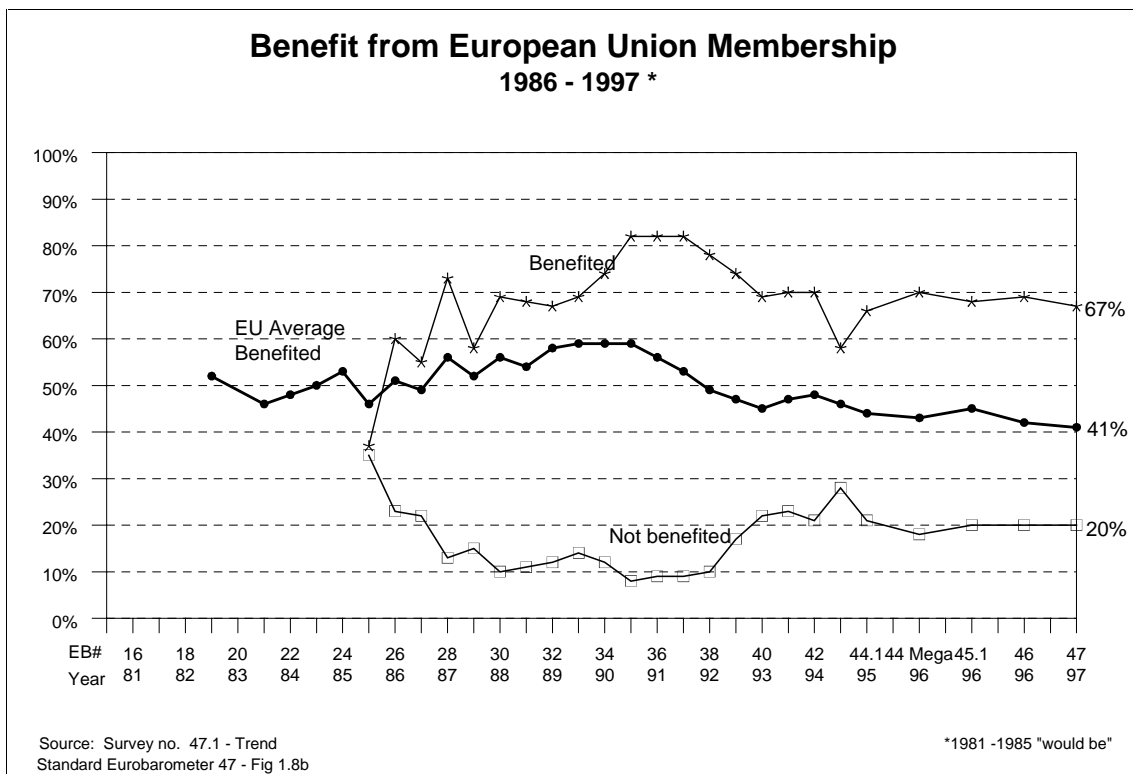
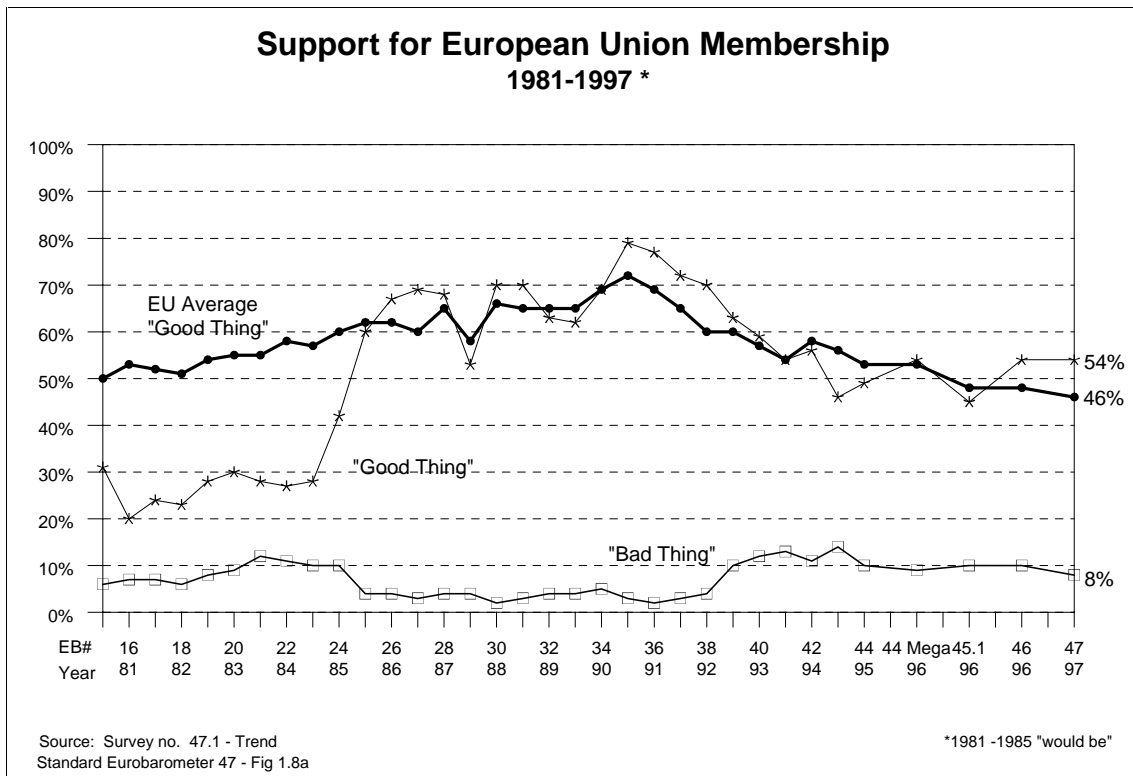
LUXEMBOURG



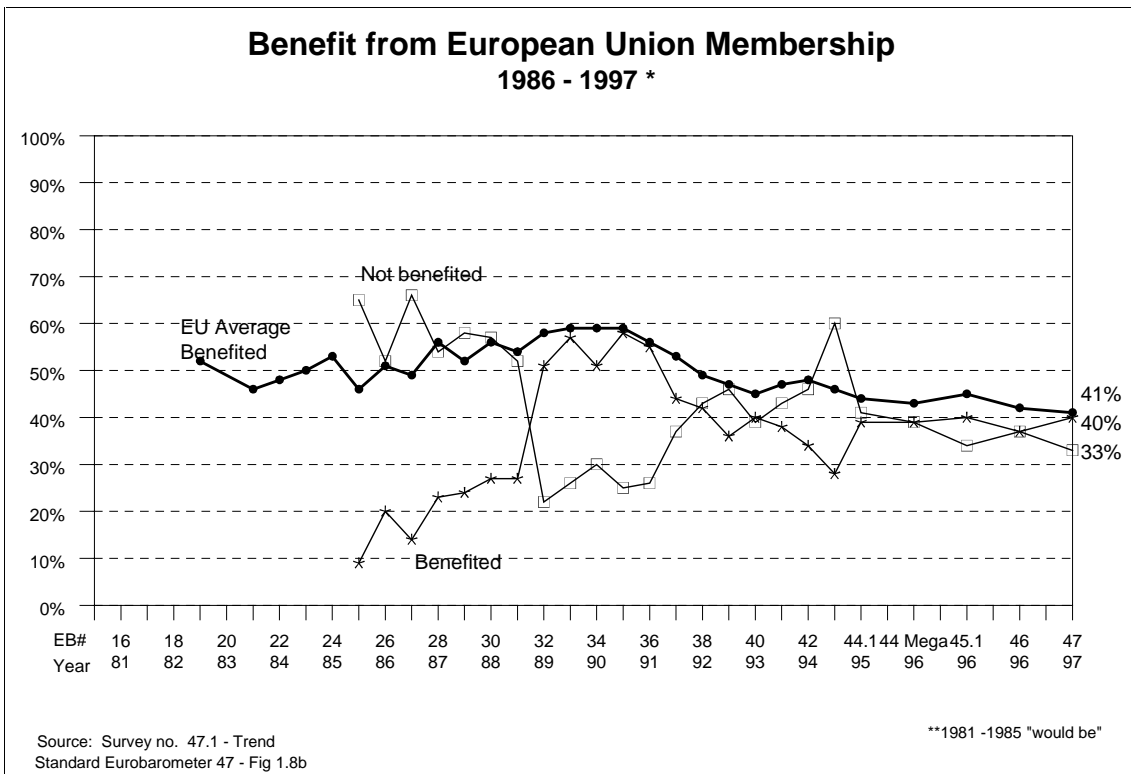
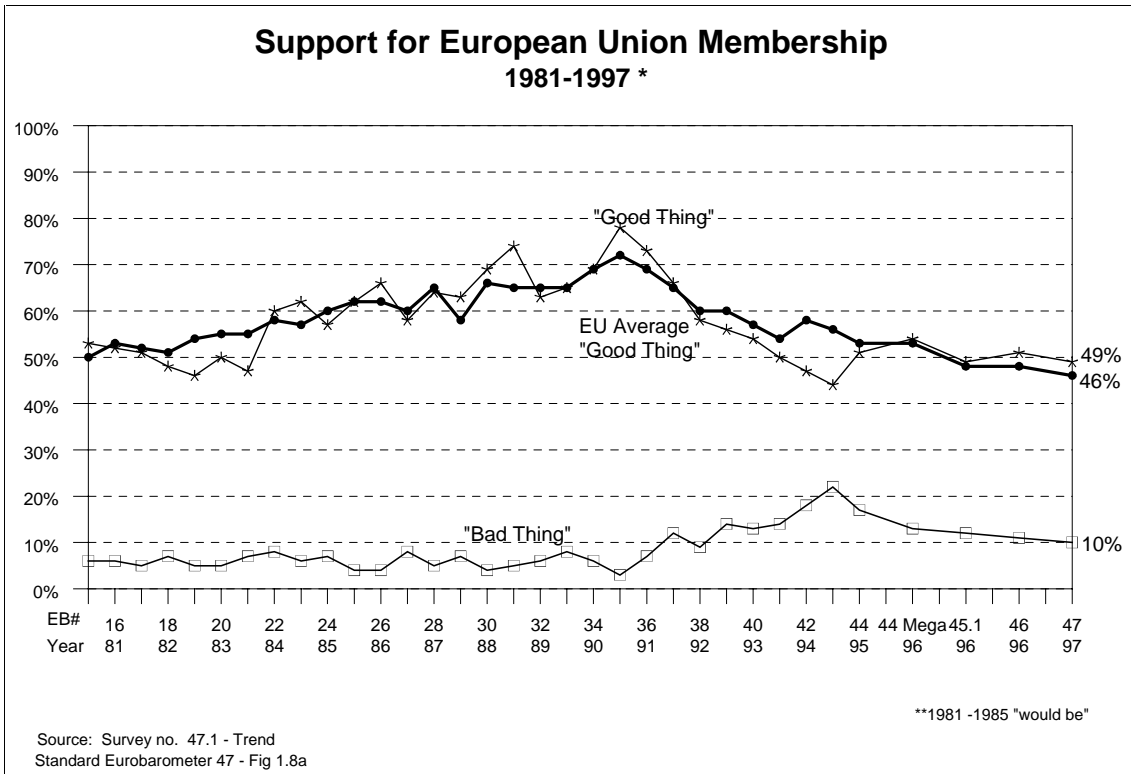
NETHERLANDS



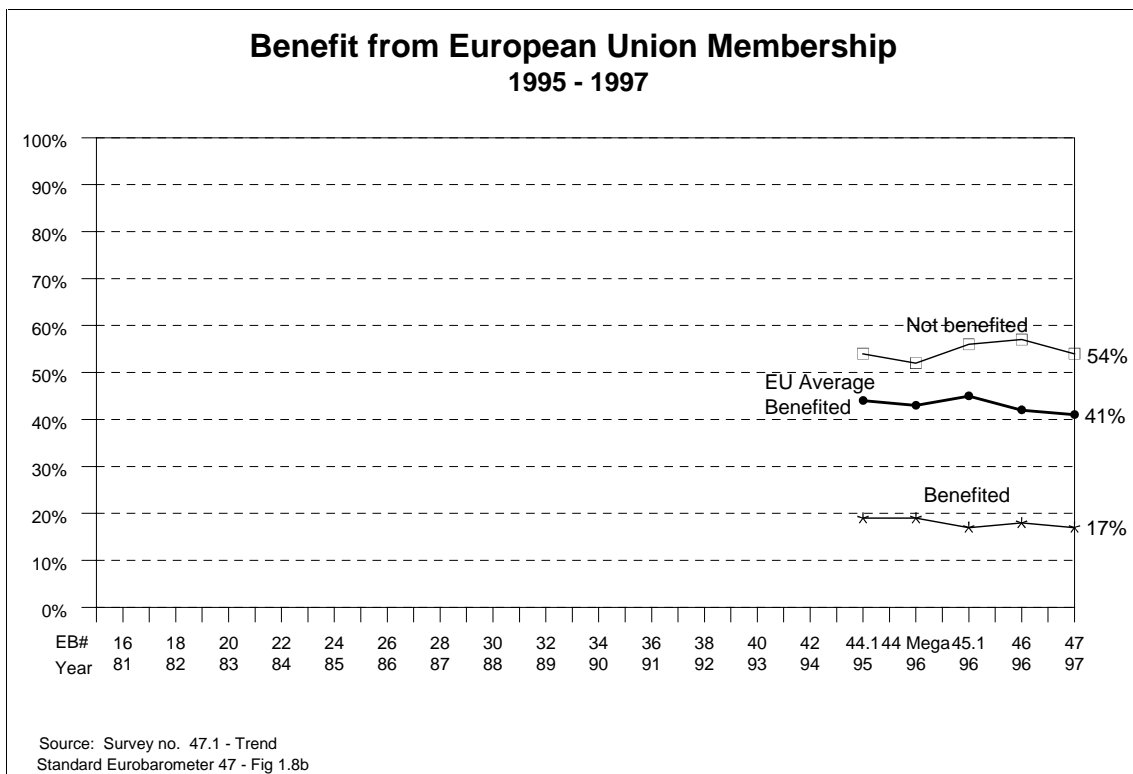
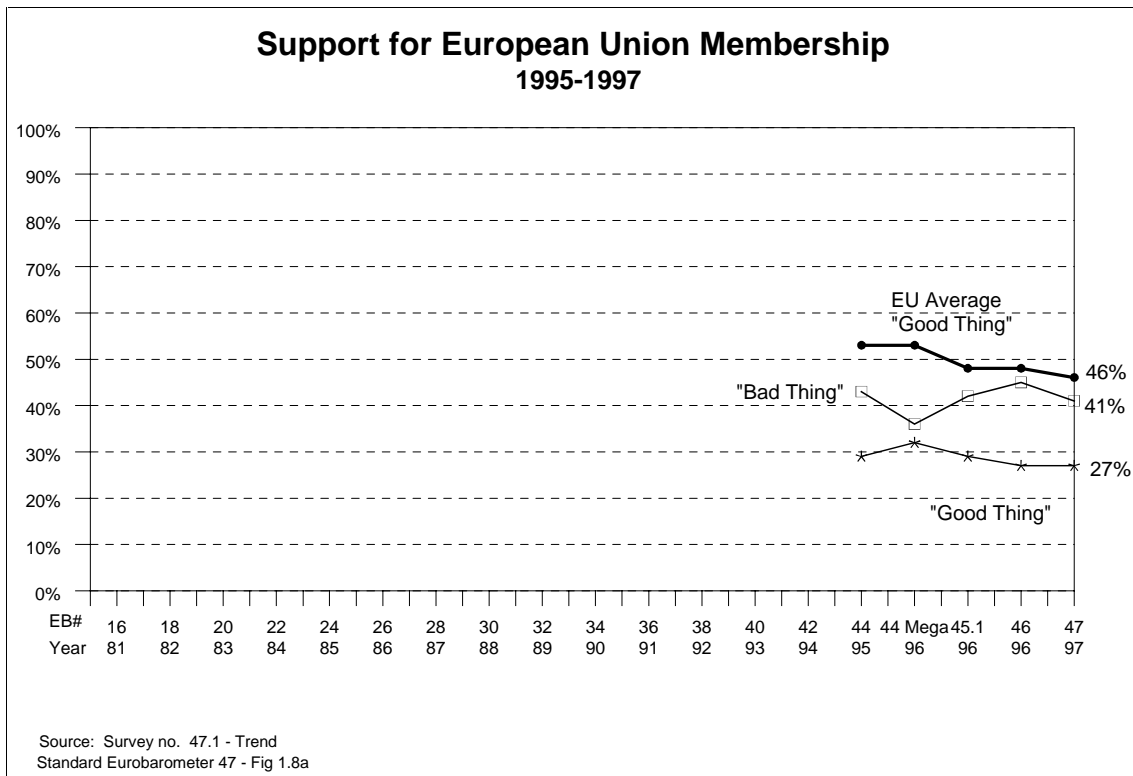
PORTUGAL



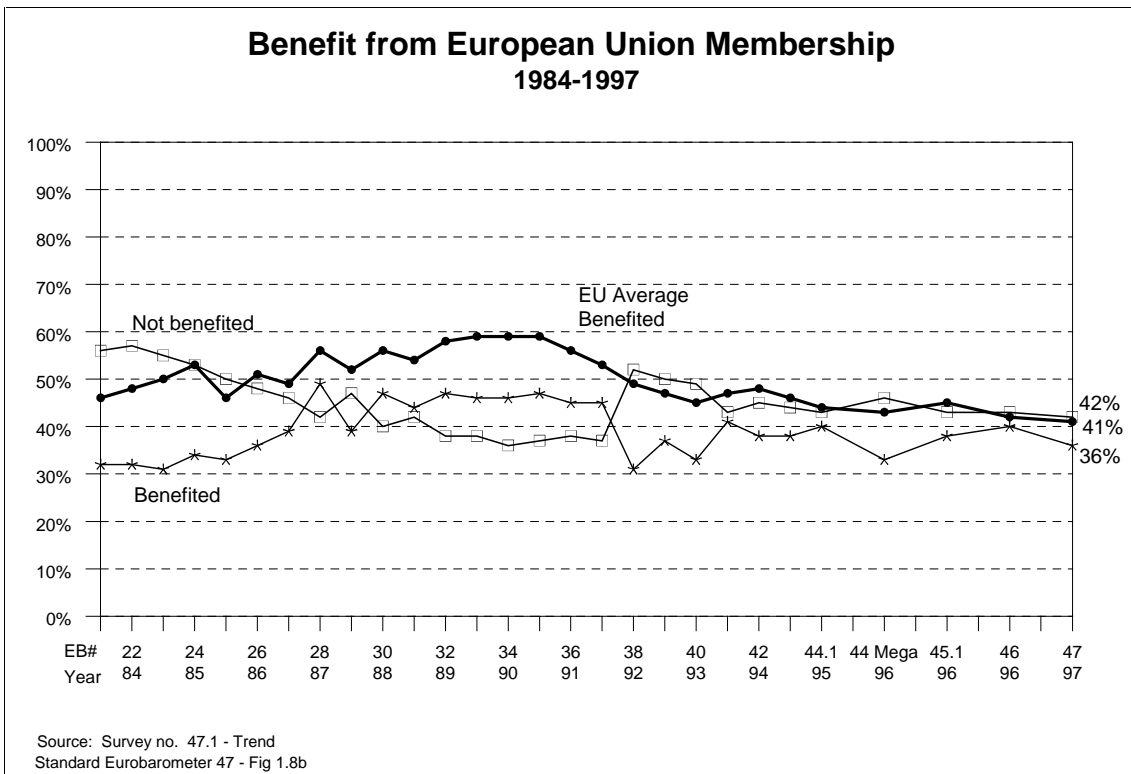
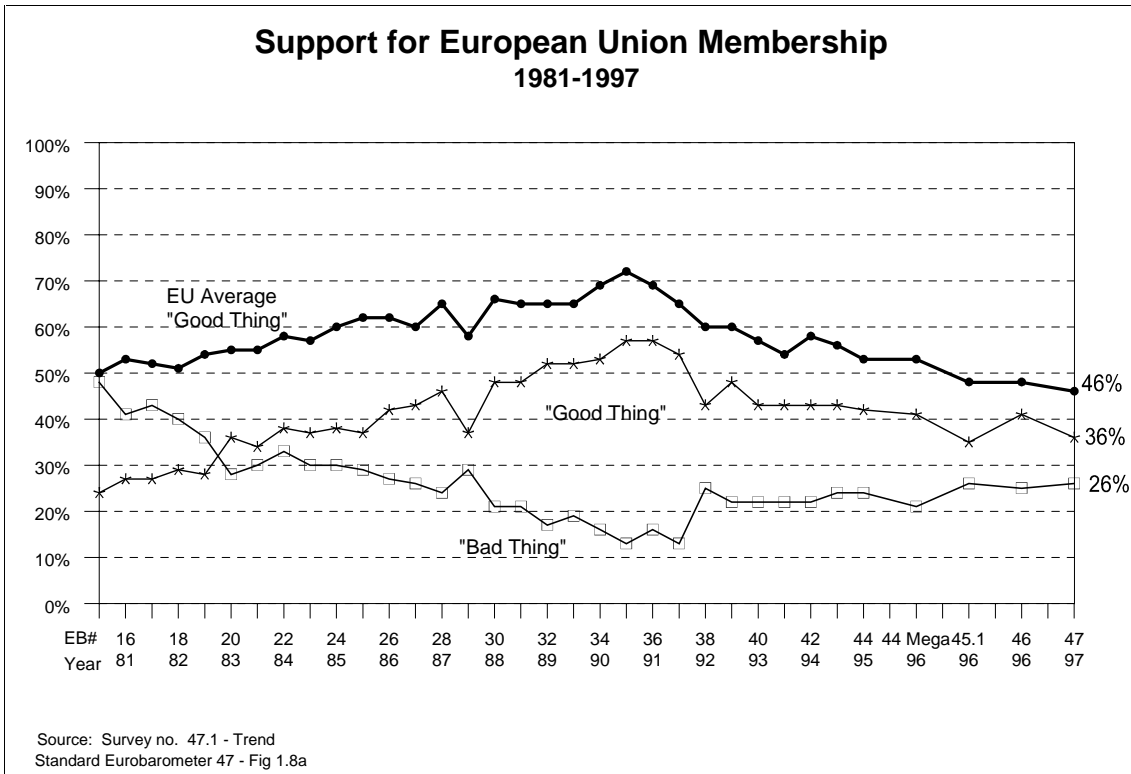
SPAIN



SWEDEN



UNITED KINGDOM

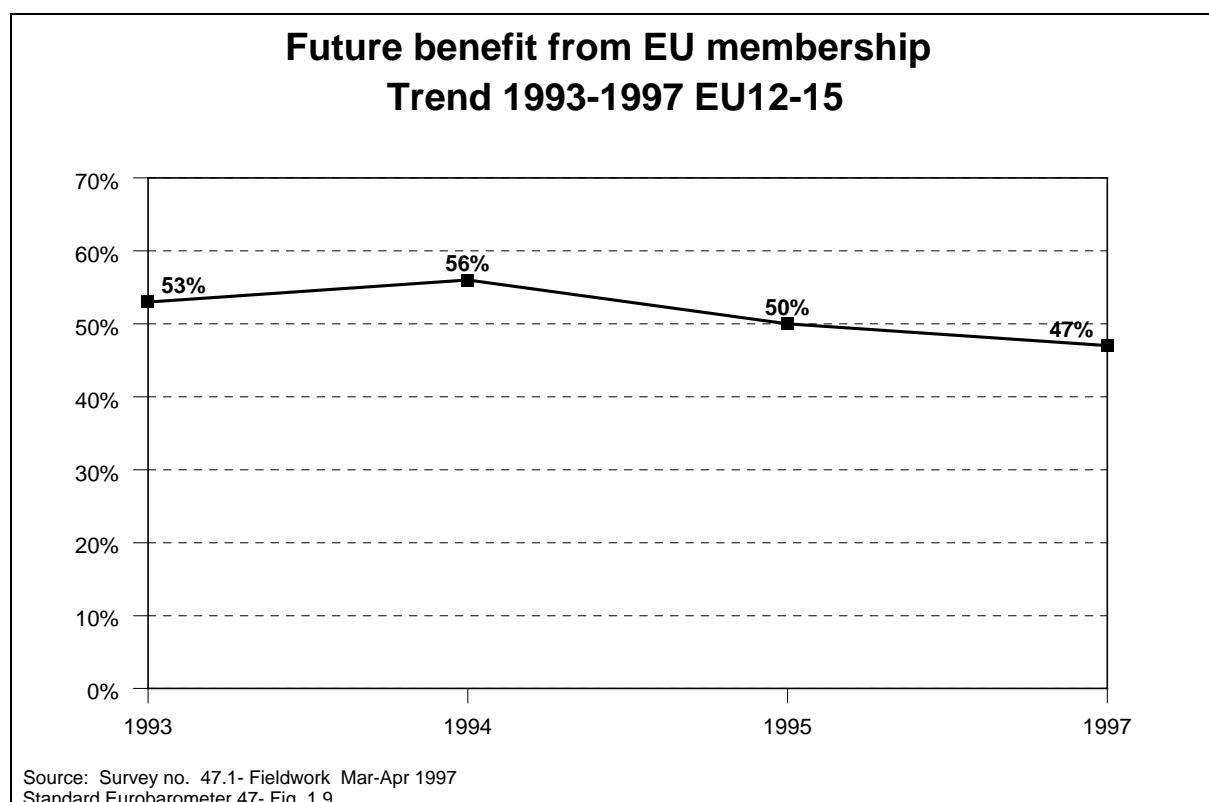


1.5. Benefit from European Union membership in 2002

Forty-seven percent of EU citizens expect their country to have benefited from membership, by the year 2002, thus representing an overall increase of 6% since the question was last asked in 1995. Twenty-seven percent however, believe their country will not have benefited, an increase of 2%. In addition an important 25% state that they are unable to say whether their country will benefit or not.

A cross analysis of the current and future benefit scores indicates, that in general, people hope that their country will reap greater benefits after the turn of the century than now. Particularly hopeful were the citizens of the three newest Member States where up to now people did not think their country had received great benefit from membership (only one in three feeling their country had benefited). The future benefit figure increased to 51% in Finland (+14%), 49% in Sweden (+22%) and 42% in Austria (+10%).

Elsewhere benefit was expected to increase in Italy (+19%), Belgium (+18%) and Spain (+13%). Countries whose expectations were much more negative included Ireland (-25%), Portugal (-12%) and Greece (-8%). (Table 1.12)



Demographic analysis suggests that perceived future benefit mirrors the perceived benefit scores, but at a higher level. Thus we see those still studying and those with higher education levels anticipating even greater benefits with scores of 58 % and 62% respectively. Managers also rate higher at 58% compared to manual workers and the unemployed (45% each) and housepersons the lowest at 41%. (Table 1.13)

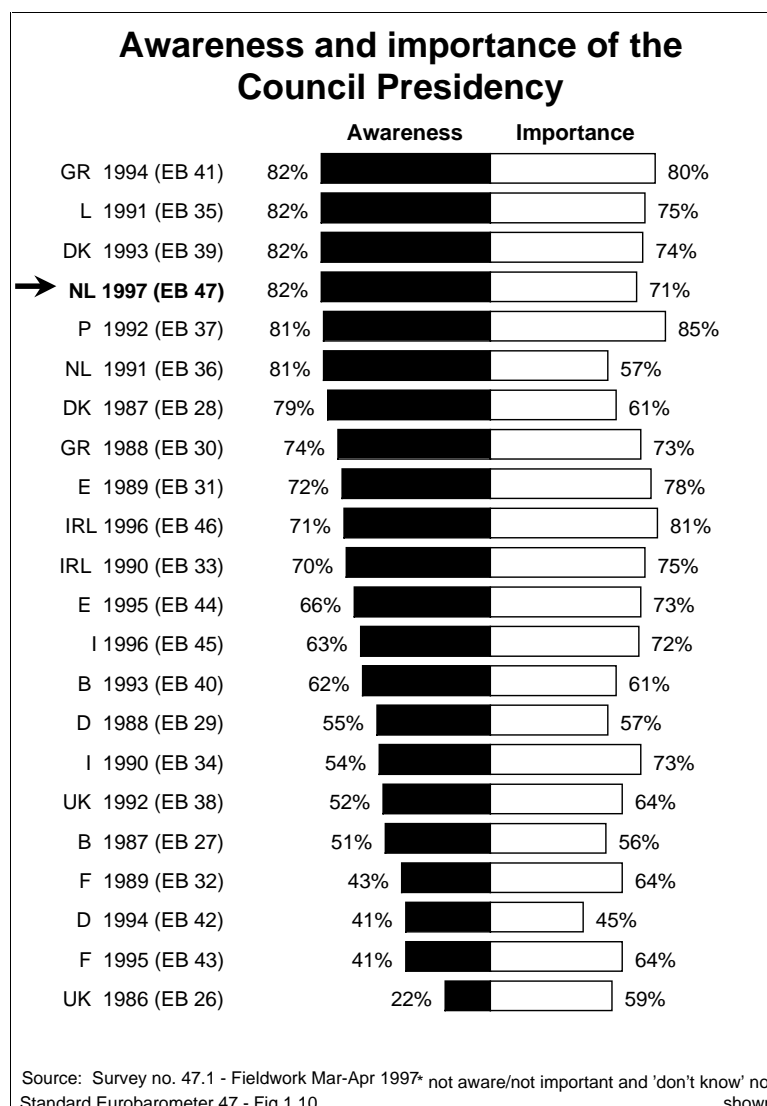
1.6. The Dutch Presidency

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 both the awareness and perceived importance of the presidency amongst the citizens of the country that holds the presidency at the time of the survey.

In the first half of 1997 the presidency was held by the Netherlands following on from the Irish presidency of the second half of 1996. Eight in ten Dutch respondents recalled having heard or read about their country's presidency, a very slight increase (1%) from the previous occasion in 1991.

The second question in the series is designed to measure the importance people attach to their country assuming the presidency. For the Netherlands we observe that seven in ten people rate the presidency as important, which while not one of the highest scores still indicates that the people of the Netherlands attach considerable importance to this role.

Generally speaking, one tends to observe higher awareness scores in the smaller Member States and substantially lower scores in the bigger countries. Levels of importance, however, do not necessarily correlate as closely as the following graph indicates.



2. Support for key policy areas - The road from Maastricht to Amsterdam

At the time of fieldwork the European Union was in a state of negotiation concerning the preparation of the Treaty of Amsterdam, the draft of which was presented at the European Council meeting of the 17th and 18th June 1997. The draft Treaty was the final outcome of the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference, which had been held over the preceding eighteen months. A conference already foreseen in the Treaty of European Union, better known as the Maastricht Treaty of 1993, was to address various issues that are covered by the three pillars of the Treaty on European Union namely:

- **economic and monetary union**
- **political union, which amongst other things provides for increased intergovernmental co-operation on foreign and defence policies**
- **co-operation in the fields of justice and home affairs.**

On the 2nd October 1997 the treaty was signed by European leaders and has begun its ratification process in the Member States. It therefore seems timely to focus on citizens' views on a number of the key policy issues which have been discussed and in some cases adopted in the text of the draft Treaty.

2.1. Support for current policy issues

Since 1993 the Eurobarometer has asked a question relating to people's perception of a number of issues which are contained within the framework of the Treaty of European Union (Maastricht). Since this time we have asked respondents to express their support or not for these policies, but without mention of the treaty itself.

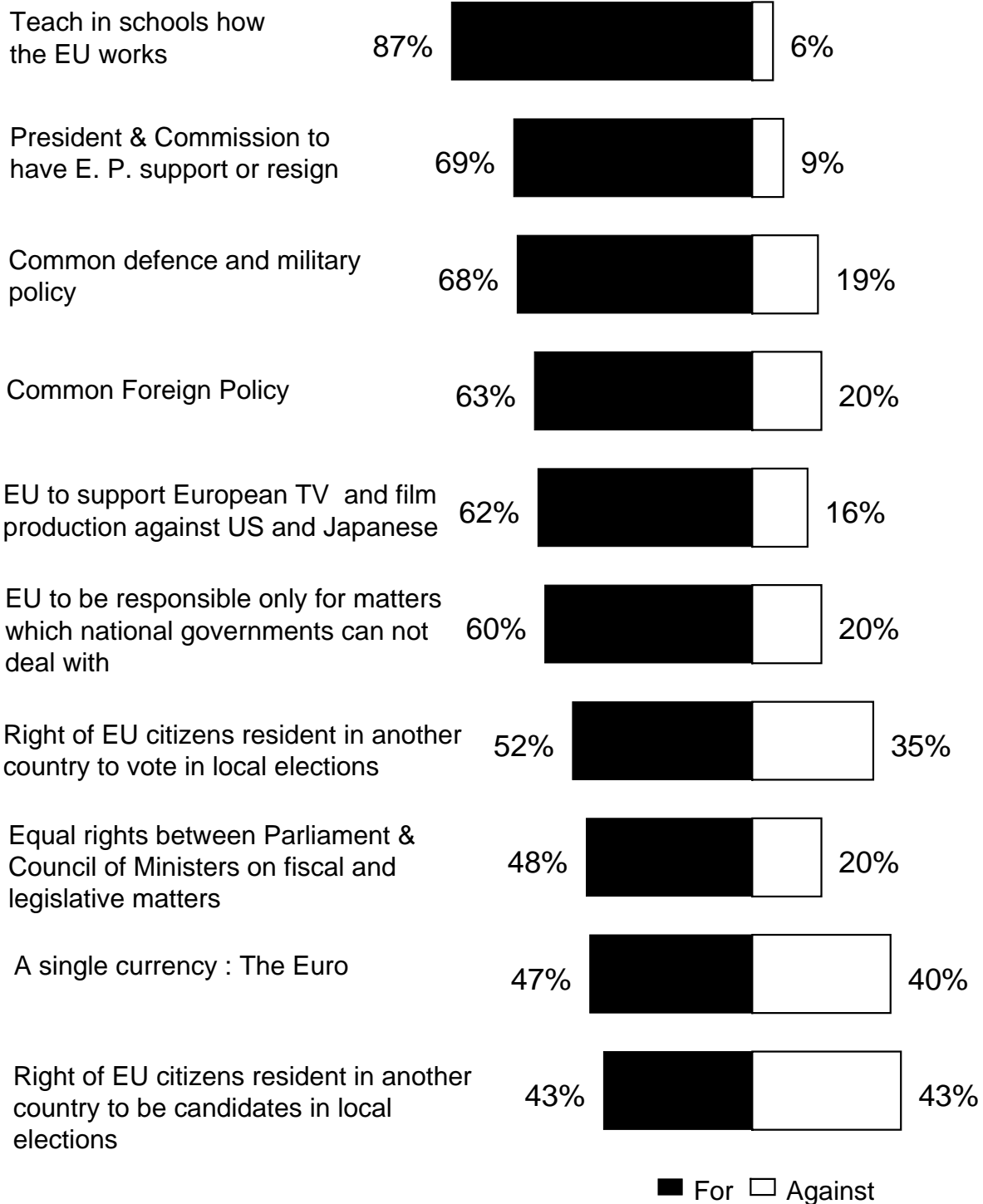
Overall we witness very little change over the past year, clearly those issues which could correctly be called policies under pillar two, relating to foreign and defence policies together with institutional issues, which are listed under the title democratic processes in the table below, are considered as particularly relevant for the European Union.

Two items under pillar three that have been included in the survey related to education and the support for European culture through the media. We witness strong and increasing support for the inclusion of the functioning of the European institutions in the school curriculum. The second cultural issue relating to the need to give EU support to the European film and television industry was supported, but was certainly not perceived as a top priority.

The economic and monetary union with a single currency shows a decline in support and will be discussed in detail in section 2.2 below. (Table 2.1)

Support for current policy issues

EU15

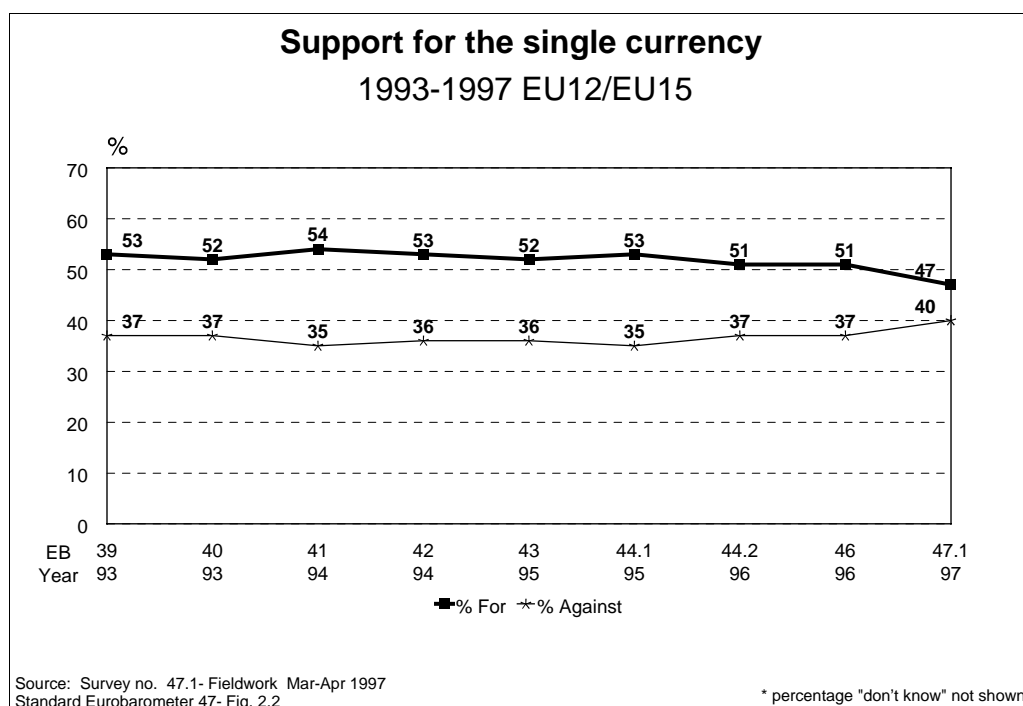


Source: Survey no. 47.1 - Fieldwork Mar-Apr 1997
Standard Eurobarometer 47 - Fig 2.1

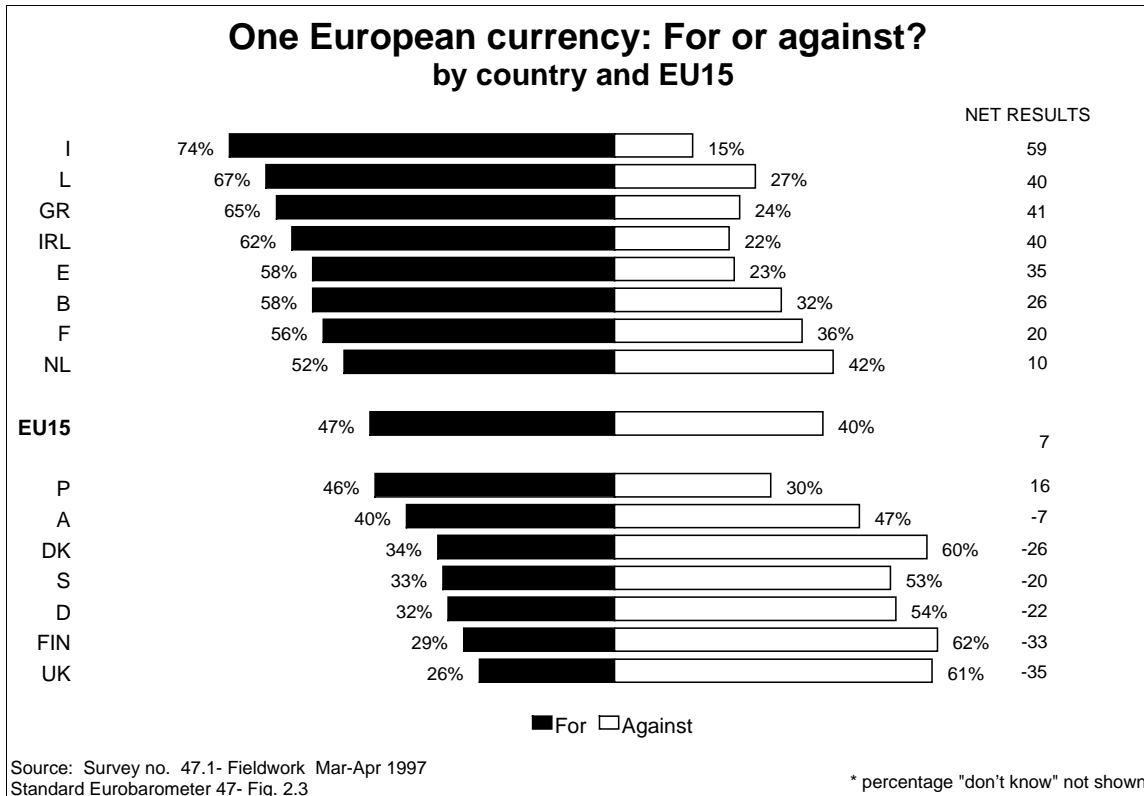
Support for KEY ISSUES						
Theme	Spring 1993 EB 39	Spring 1995 EB 43	Autumn 1995 EB 44	Spring 1996 EB 45	Autumn 1996 EB 46	Spring 1997 EB 47
Economic and Monetary union	52	52	53	51	51	47
Foreign policy and defence						
Common defence policy	77	75	73	60	68	68
Foreign policy	66	67	69	66	64	63
Democratic processes						
EP support for Commission members	66	70	72	71	70	69
Subsidiarity	57	55	63	64	61	60
EP-Council equal rights	46	51	52	58	47	48
Vote local EU elections	48	54	54	53	54	52
Candidate EU elections	38	45	45	43	46	43
Education and Culture						
Teaching about EU in schools	na	84	86	84	84	87
Support for EU TV & Film production	na	64	66	59	64	62

2.2. Support for the Single Currency

Of all the issues discussed, support for the single currency is the one which has occupied the public debate over recent months. Support had remained almost unchanged, at about 52% for a single currency, up until 1996. Over the past twelve months then there has been a slight decline (-4%) of those in favour and a proportionate increase in the "against" score, while those holding "no opinion" is registered at 13%. Probably the realisation that the date for introduction is close and the extensive media coverage have contributed to this firming of public opinion.

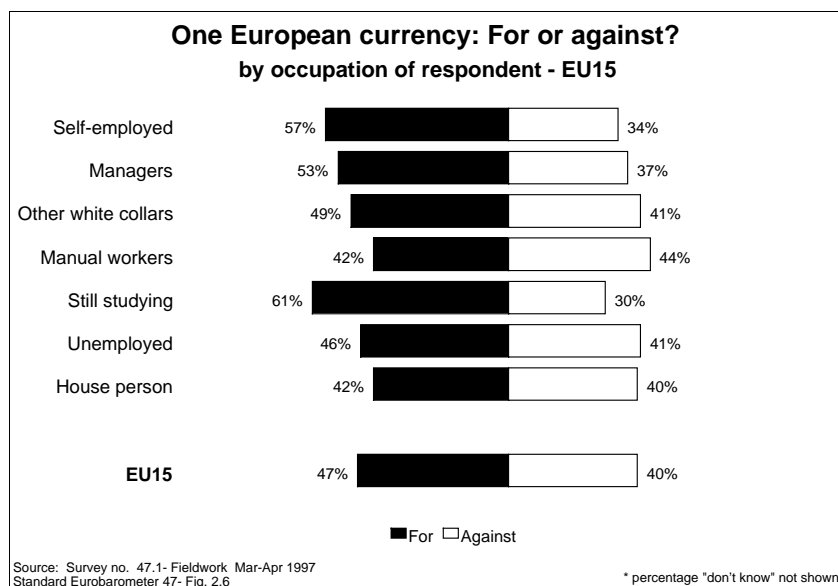
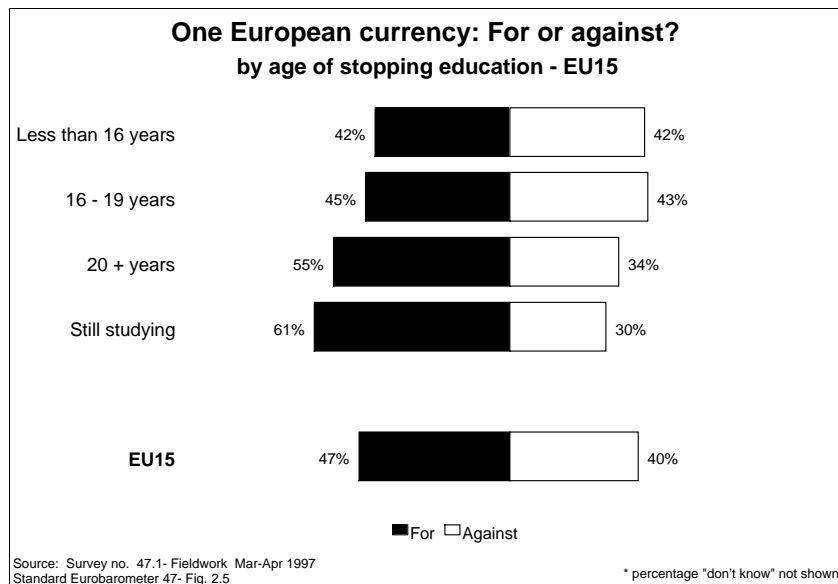
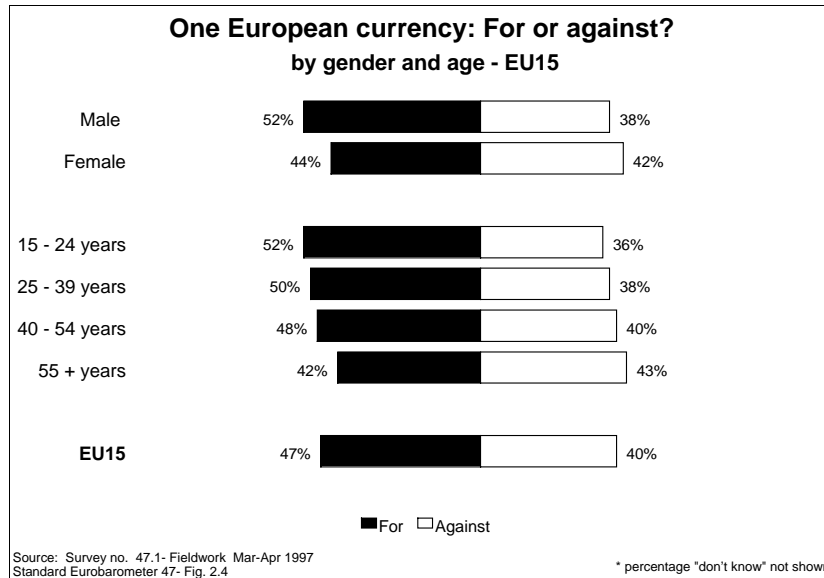


The cross country analysis indicates drops in support in all countries except Sweden and Denmark, where there has been a slight increase in support, but in which countries there has never been a strong base level of support. The sharpest drops were noted in the Netherlands (-33 points in the net scores), Germany (-19) and Portugal (-18). In the case of Portugal we witness a significant number of people holding “no opinion”, while in the Netherlands and to a lesser extent in Germany there has been a real shift from the in “favour” to “against” category. (Table 2.1)



The analysis by the standard demographic variables continues to suggest greater support amongst men, the young, those still studying or having completed their education after the age of 20. Of the occupation categories the self-employed followed by managers appear to be most in favour. Examining the shift in support amongst these different groups we observe smaller shifts to the “against” category amongst women, the self-employed and students (-3% in each group), while greater shifts were seen amongst men (-4%), managers and white collar workers (-6%) and the higher educated (-6%). (Table 2.2)

Probably the most revealing responses in the survey however were the answers given to the question concerning citizens’ fears and expectations. Respondents were asked from a given list which they were afraid of and which were likely to happen. The **end of the national currency** is feared by just over half (52%) of those interviewed. This represents an increase of eight percentage points since the question was last asked in the Spring of 1996. But while this fear has significantly increased the expectation that it will happen has also increased by some nine percentage points, the lessons are clear. (Table 2.7)



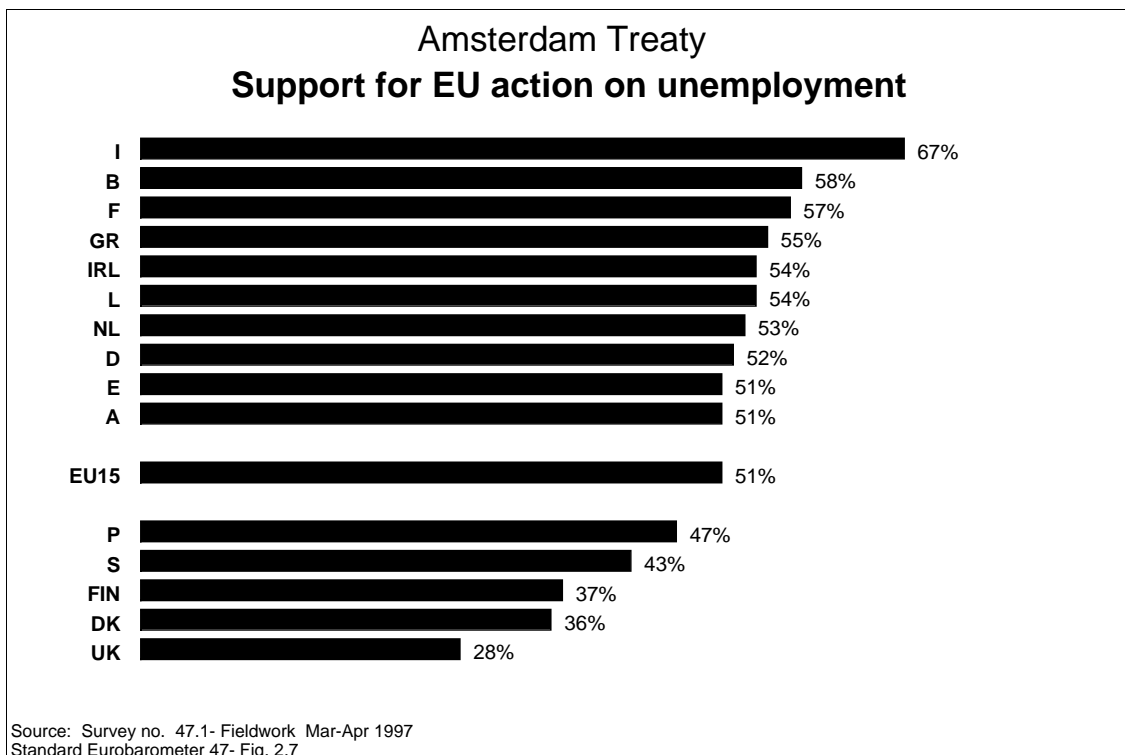
2.3. Support for EU action in policy areas relating to the Amsterdam Treaty

While the introduction of a single currency was already foreseen under the Maastricht Treaty other issues were to be addressed by the Intergovernmental Conference in preparation for the new Treaty of Amsterdam. In the following sections we will highlight some of the key elements and how the general public rate their importance for action at European level.

Employment

As the European Union has seen unemployment rise over recent years so we have witnessed in our surveys the issue featuring higher on the list of public concerns. Expectations that there will be an improvement in the labour market are limited. In the end-of-year question asked by the Eurobarometer about expectations for the following year (1997)⁷, 48% of our sample expected the employment situation in their country to get worse. It is against this background of public opinion that a separate chapter on employment was introduced into the draft of the Amsterdam Treaty.

It is not surprising that when asked whether this was a policy area which should be dealt with at national or EU level, 51% of those interviewed want to see Europe-wide action to combat unemployment. National differences were marked, with the United Kingdom wanting least EU involvement (28%), followed by Denmark and Finland (36% and 37% respectively). Sweden and Portugal also fall below the EU average of 51%. (Table 2.4i)



⁷ For details see Eurobarometer N°46 – Fieldwork October-November 1996

The detailed analysis shows that there is, as with so many other European issues, a very strong relationship between general attitudes towards the Union and the level of intervention people desire or expect. Thus we observe that those with generally favourable attitudes, as registered by the “membership good: thing bad thing” indicator and perceived “benefit” from membership, were considerably more supportive of Union-level action than those less favourably disposed. Sixty-three percent of those rating membership as “good” thing supported action, in comparison with a mere 31% who did not. Perceived benefit scores likewise showed substantial differences; 61% compared to 42%.

Other demographic and attitudinal analyses do indicate a level of correlation between particular sub-groups, for example men are more in favour of EU-wide action than women (53%:48%), the under 55's 53% in favour, while amongst the over 55's only 45% are in favour. (Table 2.5i)

Analysis of occupational categories also indicates that support for action on unemployment runs across all groups and does not reside with the unemployed alone, indeed the group seeking greatest action are the self-employed, of whom 57% are in favour compared with the unemployed 50%. We also witness strong support interestingly from those who believe they are at **no risk of losing their job** (54%) in contrast those who define themselves at **high risk** (with a 75% or higher risk of losing their job) 48% support EU action.

Of the **current active population one in three people feel there is no risk in losing their job** in the next few years, 30% describe themselves as “low risk”, 20% as having a “fifty-fifty chance” of losing their job, 6% estimate their risk as “high” and 2% claim to be “certain” that they will lose their job. Countries in which people feel most secure in their jobs are Denmark (80% low or no risk of job loss), Sweden (76%) and Luxembourg (74%). In sharp contrast are France and Spain where only just half of people feel secure, and where over one in ten people (16% and 12% respectively) considered their jobs to be at high or definite risk. The following table shows how strong national variations are on this issue.

Feelings of job security across the 15 Member States								
Risk of losing job	B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I
0 % - No risk	35	47	32	47	25	24	31	36
25 % - Low	33	33	30	20	28	26	31	30
50 % - Fifty/fifty	18	7	17	19	22	28	12	17
75 % - High	5	2	4	6	10	12	4	6
100 % - Definitely	2	5	1	2	2	4	3	0

Risk of losing job	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EU15
0 % - No risk	42	29	35	43	34	41	30	32
25 % - Low	32	41	29	20	37	35	32	30
50 % - Fifty/fifty	13	20	16	18	15	15	21	20
75 % - High	3	4	5	6	4	3	6	6
100 % - Definitely	1	4	1	2	6	3	2	2

Justice and home affairs

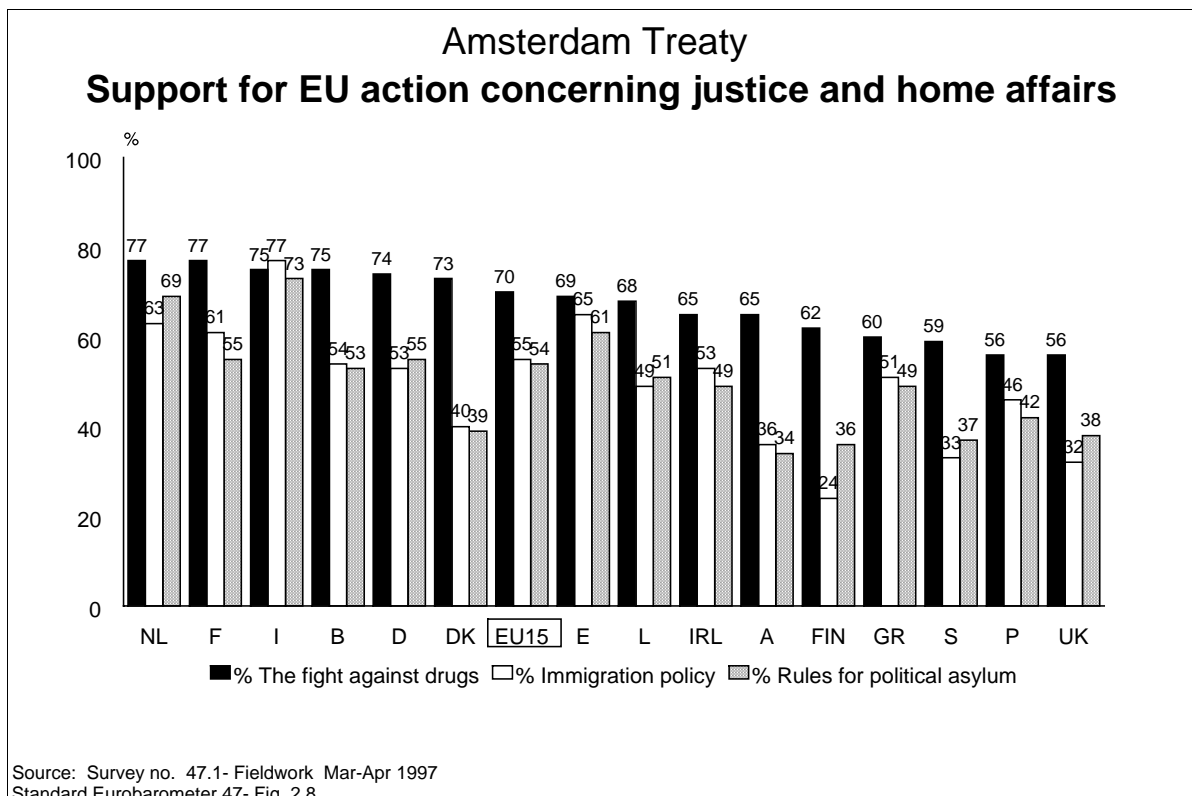
When asked about the appropriate level of European Union intervention concerning justice and home affairs, issues of pillar three of the treaty, three specific areas were examined, these were:

- *The fight against drugs*
- *Immigration policy*
- *Rules for political asylum*

Of the three issues presented to respondents the issue which demanded greatest European wide attention was concerning the **fight against drugs**. Seven in ten people EU-wide supported joint EU action to combat drugs trafficking. Even in some countries such as the Netherlands where legislation is more lenient for certain categories of drugs, support for EU intervention is very high at 77%. Lesser, but nevertheless high, support is recorded in Portugal and the United Kingdom (both 56%).(Table 2.4r)

Calls for a European Union **immigration policy** is supported by 55% of all respondents with support by far the strongest in Italy (77%), followed by Spain (65%), the Netherlands (63%) and France 61%. The Finns were the least concerned with only 24% wanting to see EU intervention. (Table 2.4h)

The final item under the home affairs rubric was related to the need of Union-wide **rules for political asylum**. Fifty-four percent of EU citizens would like to see the Union take action on this issue, with strongest support coming again from Italy (73%), followed closely by the Netherlands at 69%. In all other Member States at least a third of people wanted to see a more coherent policy.(Table 2.4q)



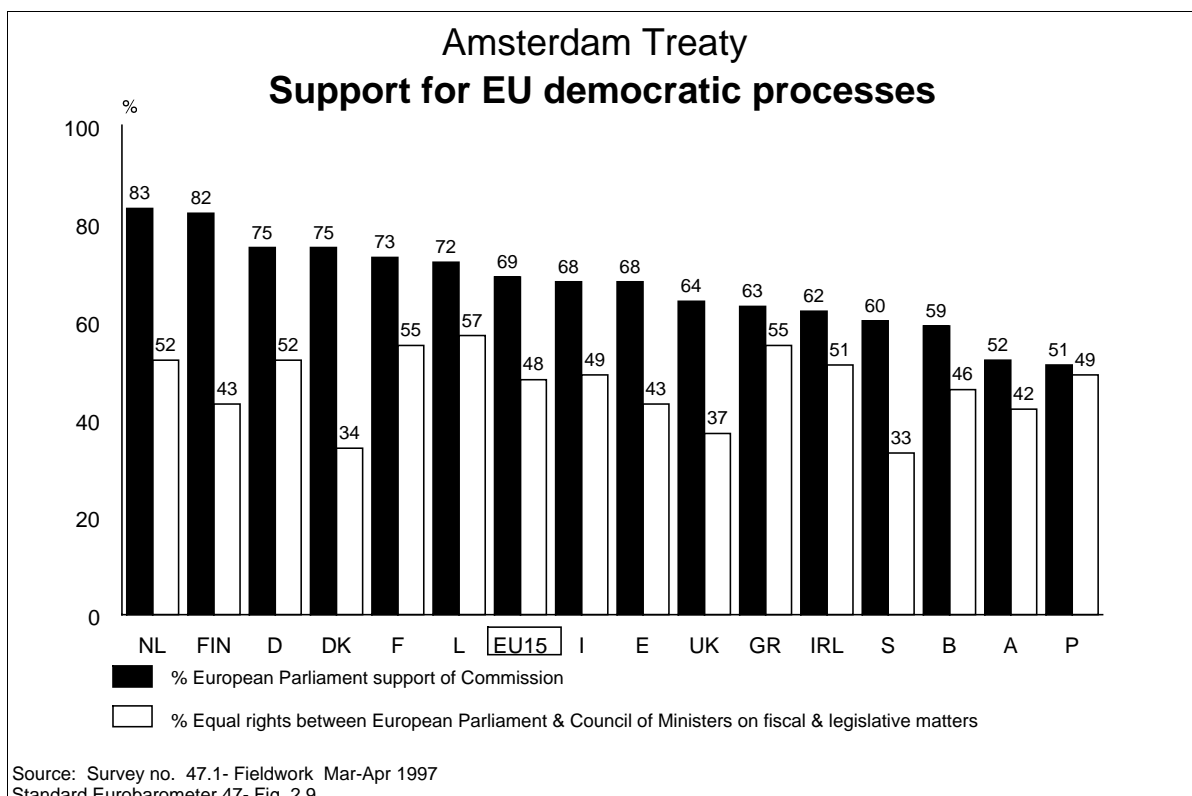
Democratic processes

Under the title democratic processes two items were presented to respondents and they were asked to state whether they were for or against each proposition:

- *The President and the members of the European Commission should have the support of a majority in the European Parliament, otherwise they should resign.*
- *In matters of European Union legislation, taxation and expenditure, the European Parliament should have equal rights with the Council of Ministers, which represents the national governments.*

As can be seen from the graph below **support by the European Parliament for the Commission** is favoured by nearly seven in ten persons, and nowhere does it fall below the halfway mark. Highest support was to be found in the Netherlands and Finland, in addition support was high in all the large Member States. Least enthusiasm was found in Austria and Portugal, 52% and 51% respectively. (Table 2.1e)

The second option of according **equal rights to the Parliament and Council of Ministers** was less well supported. Only 48% of EU citizens supported the proposal that the European Parliament should have equal rights with the Council of Ministers on issues of legislation, taxation and expenditure. The highest scores were noted in Luxembourg (57%) followed by France and Greece (55% each) and very low scores in Sweden (33%), Denmark (34%) and the United Kingdom (37%). (Table 2.1f)



World affairs

In an attempt to measure citizens' views on world issues three items were presented and respondents were asked:

Which of the following areas of policy do you think should be decided by the (National) government, and which should be decided jointly within the European Union ?

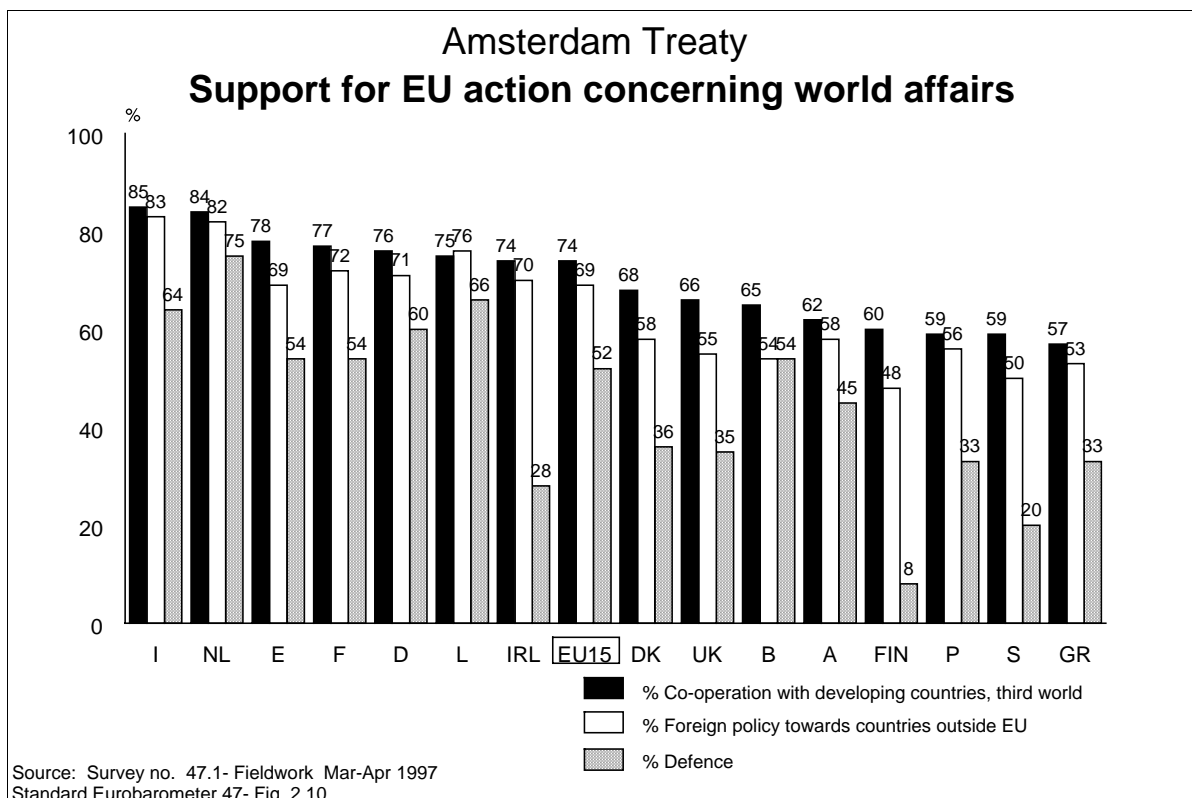
The items were:

- *Co-operation with developing countries, the Third World*
- *Foreign policy towards countries outside the European Union*
- *Defence*

Predictably, **co-operation with developing countries** was supported by the majority of EU citizens, with three in four thinking this an appropriate area for joint EU action. Italy being most in favour at 85%, followed closely by the Netherlands with 84%. Lower, but still strong, support was noted in Greece 57%, Sweden and Portugal both 59%. (Table 2.4d)

Support for a common EU **foreign policy** towards countries outside the Union remains strong at 69%, showing no change from the last time it was measured in 1996. Again particularly high scores were recorded in Italy and the Netherlands and low scores in Finland, Sweden and Greece. (Table 2.4o)

It was however on the last of the three items relating to a **common defence policy** where enthusiasm is more muted and differences most sharp. Just half (52%) supported joint EU action and this masks some dramatic national differences. The Netherlands stands out as the strongest proponent of a common defence policy with 75% support, other countries supporting an EU policy included Luxembourg at 66%, Italy 64% in favour, and Germany 60%. In sharp contrast the idea was resoundingly rejected in Finland, 8% in favour. Other low scores were recorded in Sweden 20%, Ireland 28% and Portugal and Greece each 33%. (Table 2.4a)

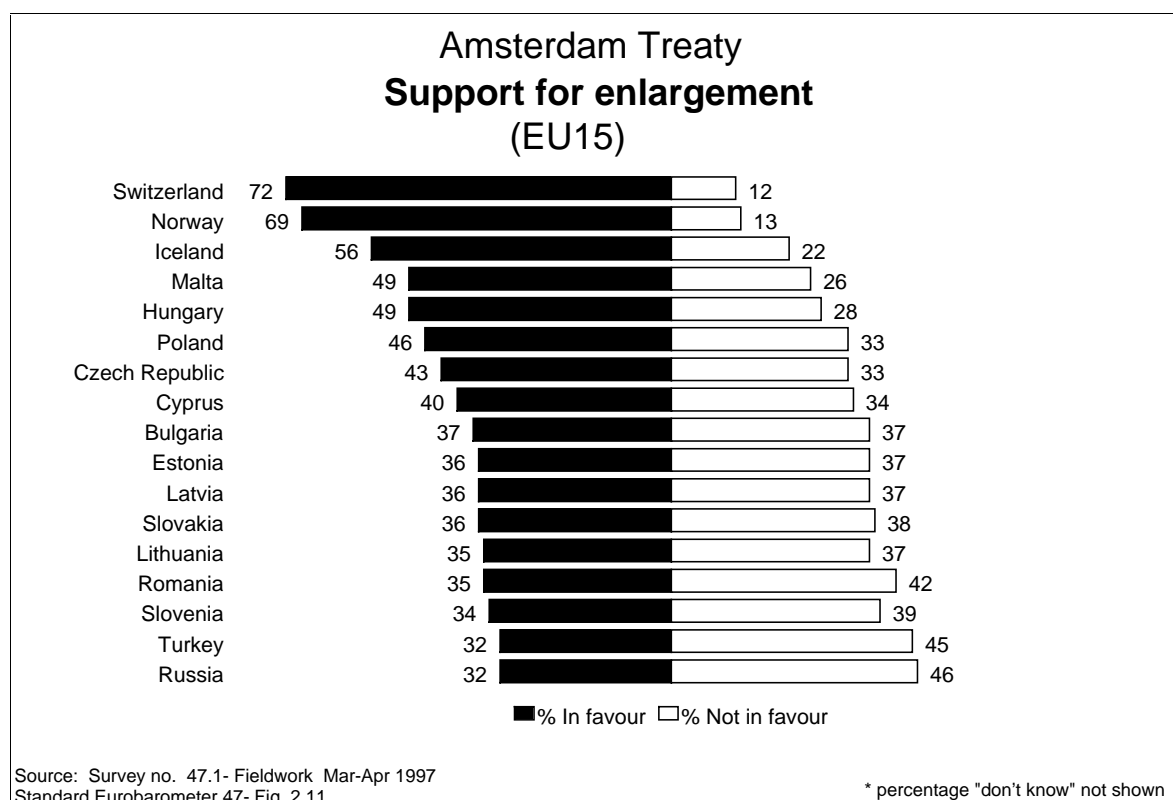


Enlargement

The Eurobarometer has for some time monitored public opinion on enlargement, and with the publication of Agenda 2000 and negotiations for enlargement well underway this issue, together with the Commission's announcement of its proposed list of first candidates in July, it seems timely to see how public opinion is reacting. Respondents were asked for a predefined list of countries whether they were in favour of them becoming part of the Union or not.

The two most acceptable countries were Switzerland (72%) and Norway (69%), this despite the rejection by the Norwegian people in a referendum in 1994 for joining the Union. Following, but at a substantially lower level, we find another group of countries thought to be suitable candidates : first is Iceland with 56% support, followed by Malta and Hungary (each 49%), and Poland 46%. Just over four in ten respondents support membership for the Czech Republic and Cyprus.

For the remaining nine countries listed, support lies between 30% and 40% with lowest support being for Russia and Turkey at 32% each. Overall these figures have remained very constant since the question was last asked in the Spring of 1996, although slight drops have been noted for Cyprus (-3%), Romania (-3%) and Turkey (-4%). (Table 2.3)



2.4. Citizens' Fears

In the preceding sections we have focused on a number of policy areas in which the European Union is and has been active, but to conclude the chapter we will discuss the results of two questions which were designed to measure people's fears and expectations of things to come in the process of European construction. Respondents were asked the following question:

Regarding the building of Europe, the European Union, some people may have fears. Here is a list of things which some people say they are afraid of. For each one, please tell me if you personally are currently afraid of it or not?

Respondents were presented with a list of thirteen items and asked for each if they were afraid or not and a follow up question as to whether they felt it was likely to happen.

As we discussed in section 2.2 issues relating to the introduction of the single currency and the inter-related economic factors are high on people's list of anxieties. The fear of "**more taxation**" is now top of the list displacing the fear of "**an increase in drugs and organised crime**". Associated issues such as **loss of social benefits** and having to pay for the less wealthy Member States are all cited, together with the more specific concern over the introduction of the **single currency** itself. Both the introduction of the single currency and increased taxation are anticipated by EU citizens : 68% expect more taxation and 75% expect the new currency to happen.

About half the people interviewed rate **job loss** as a concern and slightly more expected it to happen.

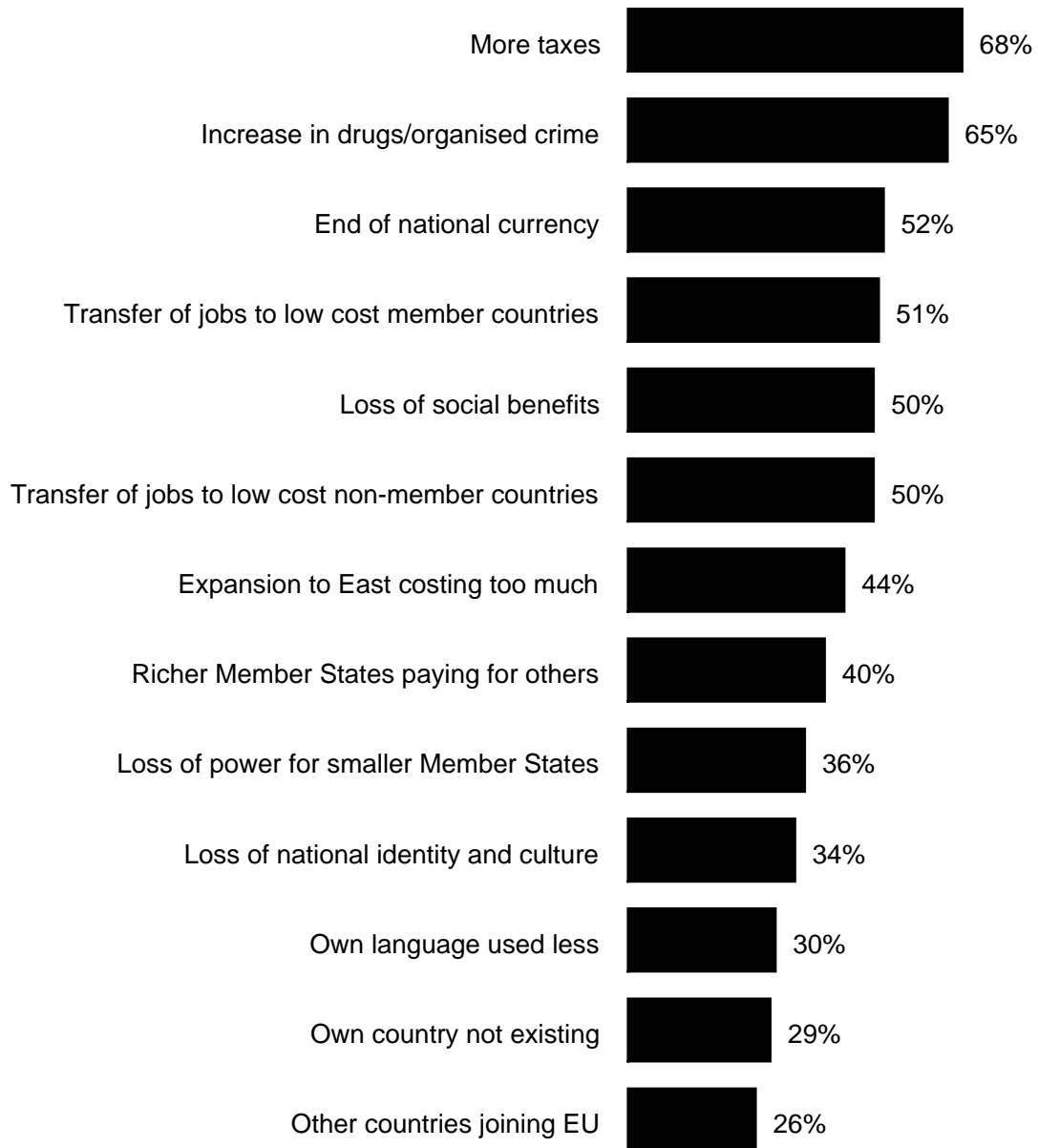
The **cost of enlargement** is cited by some as a concern (44%) and 52% expect it to happen. Fear of enlargement in a more general sense is cited by just a quarter of those interviewed, but nearly two thirds expect it to happen. The "concern" figures for both these items on enlargement have declined slightly since it was last measured in the Spring of 1996.

Items relating to **national identity** remain constant, with approximately one in three persons fearing a loss and much the same number expecting it to happen. (Tables 2.6 & 2.7)

Citizens' Fears and Expectations		
	Percentage Fearing	Percentage Expecting
Drugs and Crime	65	63
Financial		
More taxation	68	68
Loss of social benefits	50	48
Richer Member States paying for others	40	55
Job related issues		
Transfer of jobs to low cost member states	51	59
Transfer of jobs to low cost non-member states	50	54
Decision making		
Loss of power for smaller Member States	36	47
Single currency		
End of own currency	52	75
Enlargement		
Expansion to East costing too much	44	52
Other countries joining EU	26	62
National identity		
Loss of national identity and culture	34	31
Own language used less	30	32
Own country not really existing anymore	29	25

Fears among European Union citizens

EU15

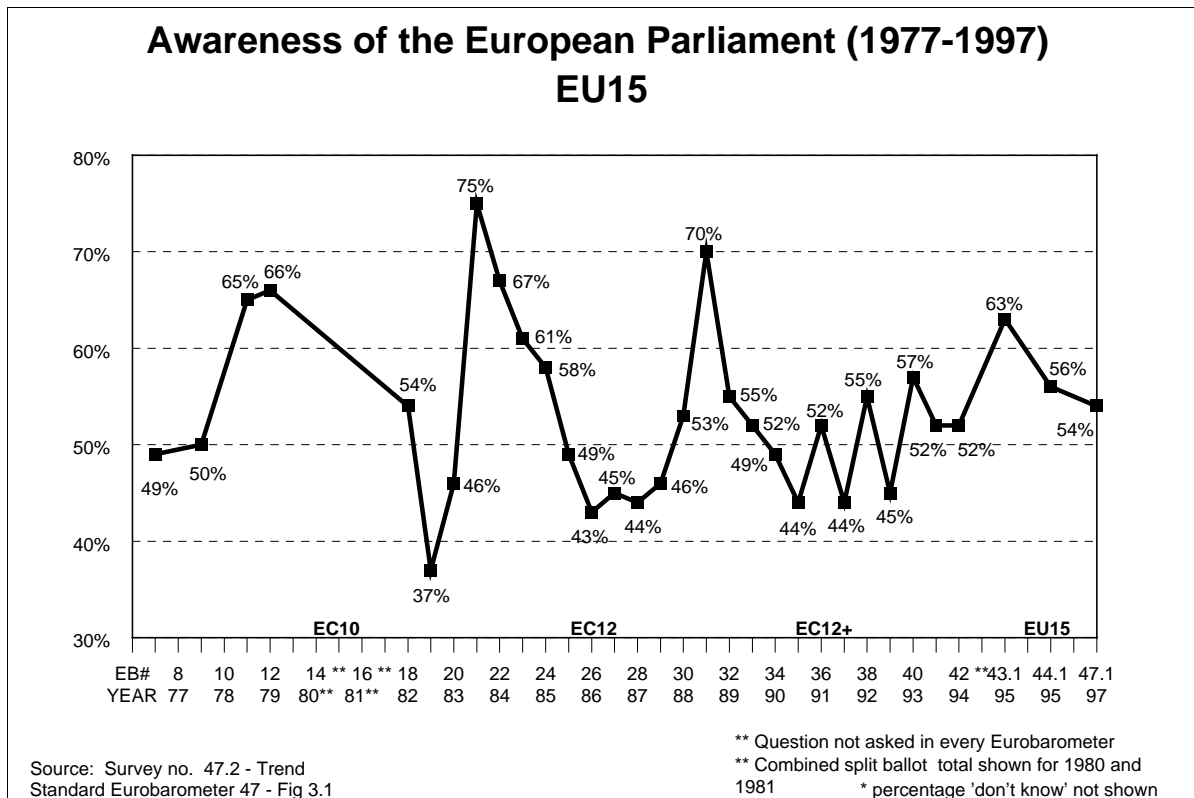


Source: Survey no. 47 - Fieldwork Jan-Mar1997
Standard Eurobarometer 47 - Fig 2.12

3. The European Parliament

3.1. Awareness of the European Parliament in the Media

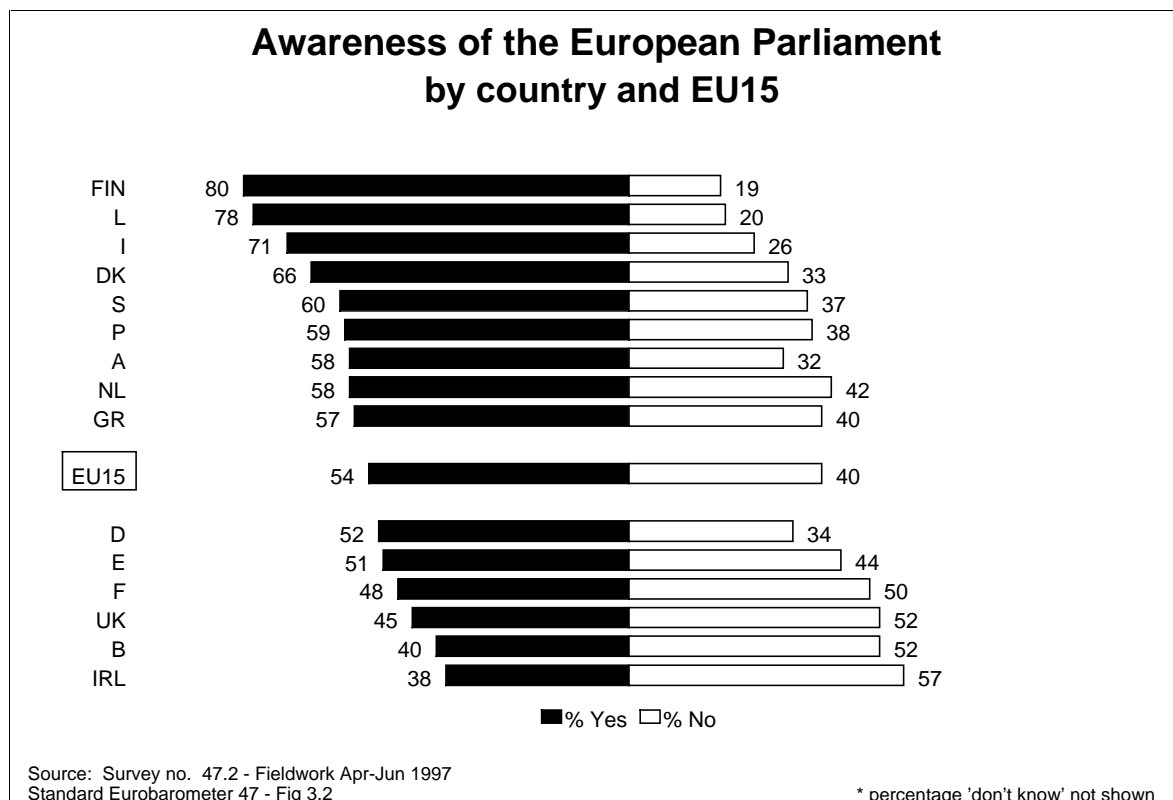
Awareness of the European Parliament remains high with fifty-four percent of those interviewed claiming to have read or heard about the European Parliament recently. This represents a drop 2% from the last time the question was asked in the Spring of 1996. The most likely explanation being that there was indeed less media coverage in the period preceding the fieldwork for this survey.



Despite this very slight movement overall we do witness some substantial changes in some member countries. The largest drops were in Sweden (-33), Denmark and the United Kingdom (-14 each) and Belgium (-13). In the latter two countries there was significant national activity at the political level⁸. Sharp gains for coverage of the European Parliament were noted in Italy (+17) and Luxembourg (+10) and Greece recorded an increase of +7% .(Table 3.1)

Demographic analysis confirms that it remains men who are more aware : 60% have heard of the European Parliament recently, compared with 49% of women. The most educated (those having completed their education after the age of 20) are also more aware (65%) compared to those leaving school before the age of 16 (49%). However it is amongst managers that the European parliament has the highest visibility with 67% saying they have seen or heard about the Parliament in the media recently. (Table 3.2)

⁸ See list of events in introduction page vi & vii



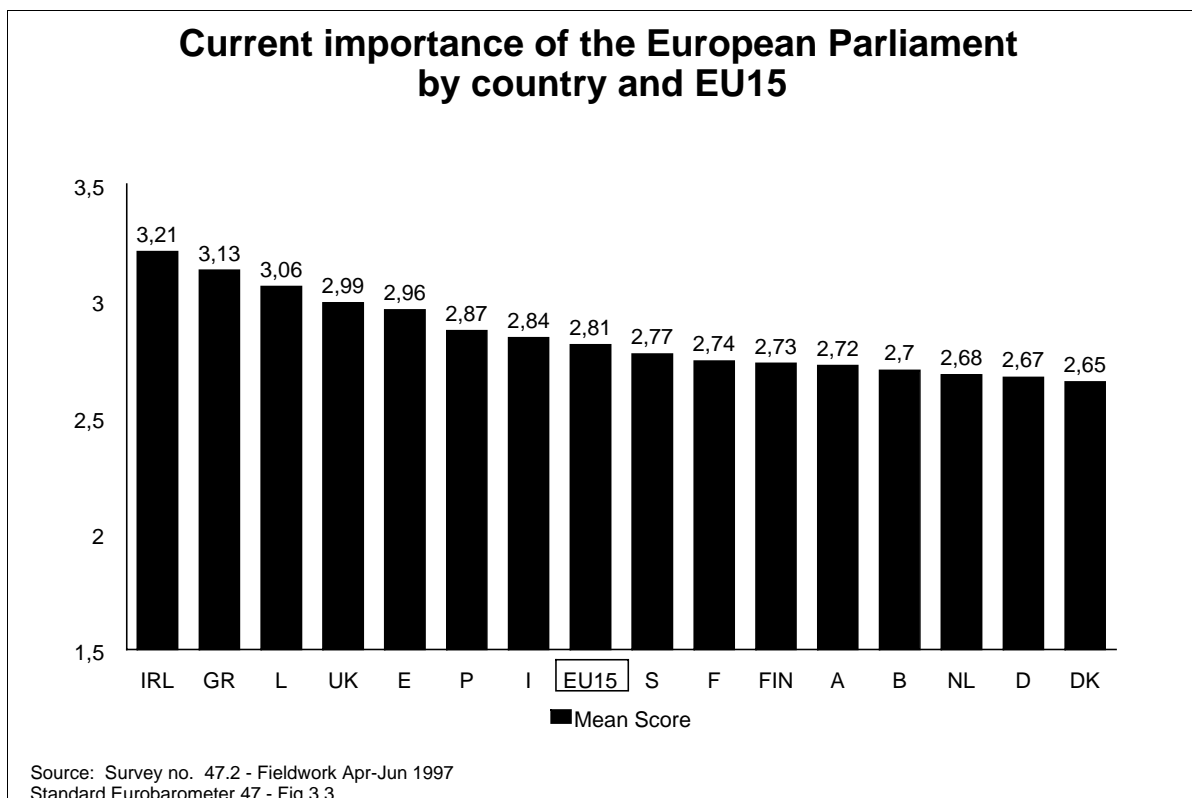
Awareness of European Parliament in the media								
	A	B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL
EB 44 Autumn 95	53	53	80	52	50	60	46	43
EB 47 Spring 97	58	40	66	52	57	51	48	38

	I	L	NL	P	S	FIN	UK	EU 15
EB 44 Autumn 95	54	68	58	64	93	75	59	56
EB 47 Spring 97	71	78	58	59	60	80	45	54

3.2. The current and desired role of the European Parliament

Overall views of EU citizens have changed little in recent months concerning the role of the European Parliament; a majority of citizens (58%) think that it plays a "very important" or an "important" part in the life of the European Union nowadays. Twenty percent consider it "not very important", while only 5% think that it is "not at all important".

There are increases in the importance mean scores⁹ in nearly all Member States. Overall, Ireland (mean score 3.21), Greece (3.13) and Luxembourg (3.06) were the countries to attach greatest importance to the current role of the European Parliament (the same rank order as in Winter 1995 and Winter 1996). Only Austria and Germany record a decline in how they see the role of the Parliament at the current time. (Tables 3.3 & 3.4)

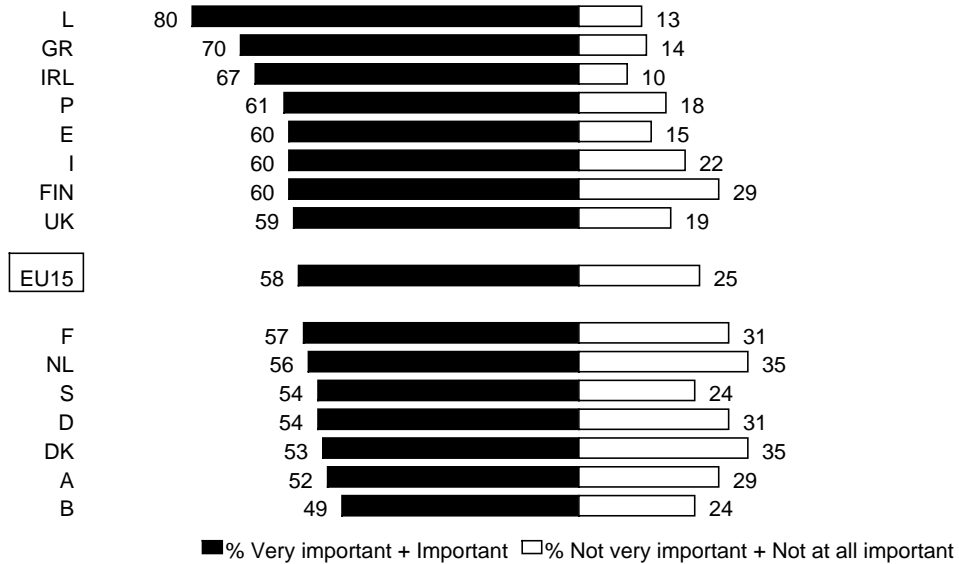


Nearly half (46%) of those surveyed would like the role of the Parliament to increase in importance, 18% would like it to remain at its current level, 15% would like it to play a lesser role, while 21% did not hold an opinion. Again the figures remain relatively stable with the Greeks (67%) wanting more importance attached to the Parliament, followed by Italy (66%) Portugal (61%), Spain and France (53%) and the Netherlands (50%). In Austria, Denmark and the United Kingdom however, approximately one in three respondents would like to see the Parliament play a lesser role. In Sweden this figure drops to only one in four wishing to see the Parliament play a more important role.

Socio-demographic variables indicate a high correlation between the importance scores (both current and desired) with positive attitudes to membership of the European Union in general. Men, the well educated, high-income earners, managers and the self-employed all want to see the Parliament play a more important role than it currently does. (Tables 3.6 and 3.7)

⁹The mean scores were calculated by attributing the following values: "very important" 4, "important" 3, "not very important" 2 and "not at all important" 1. "Don't know" and no answers were excluded.

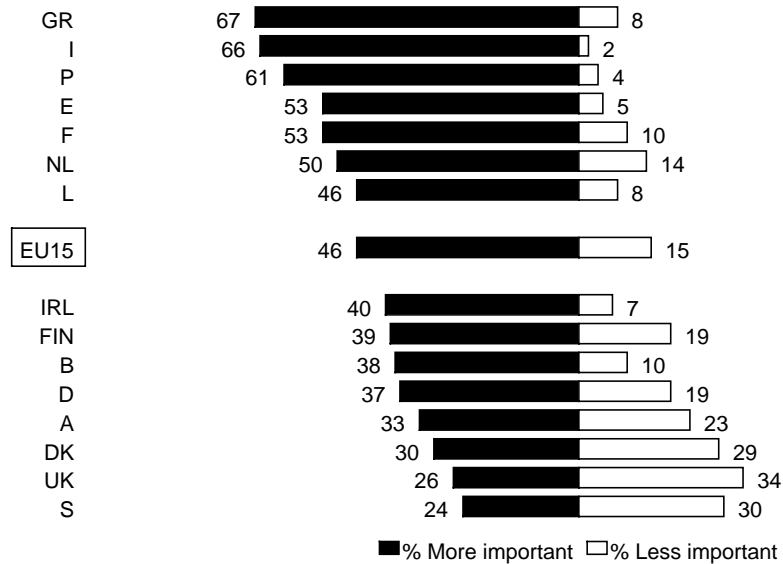
Current importance of the European Parliament by country and EU15



Source: Survey no. 47.2 - Fieldwork Apr-Jun 1997
Standard Eurobarometer 47 - Fig 3.4

* percentage 'don't know' not shown

Desired importance of the European Parliament by country and EU15



Source: Survey no. 47.2 - Fieldwork Apr-Jun 1997
Standard Eurobarometer 47 - Fig 3.5

* percentages 'don't know' and "about the same" not shown

3.3. The effectiveness of the European Parliament

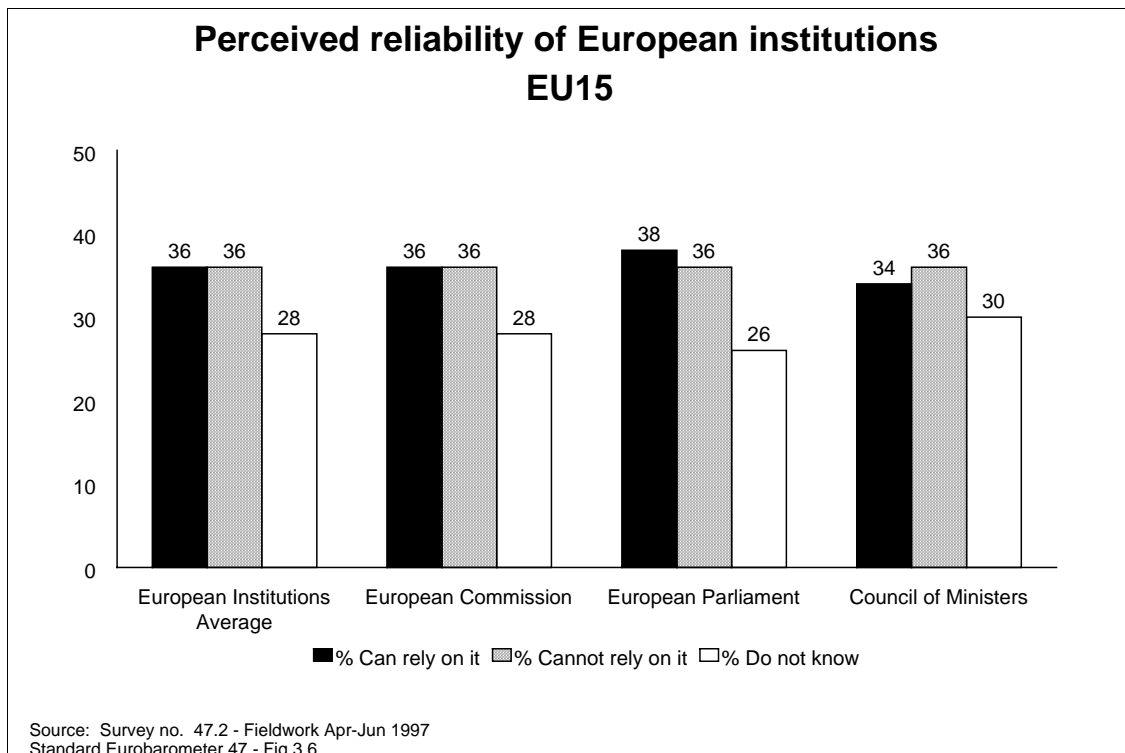
In this section of the survey the Eurobarometer not only wanted to measure public perception concerning the role of the Parliament, but also how people judge its effectiveness. Two questions were used in this assessment, the first measuring the perceived **reliability** of national and EU institutions, the second a measure of how well the European Parliament **defends the interests** of its electorate.

Reliability of governmental institutions was measured using the following question:

"Many important decisions are made by the European Union. They might be in the interest of people like yourself, or they might not. To what extent do you feel you can rely on each of the following institutions to make sure that the decisions taken by this institution are in the interest of people like yourself?"

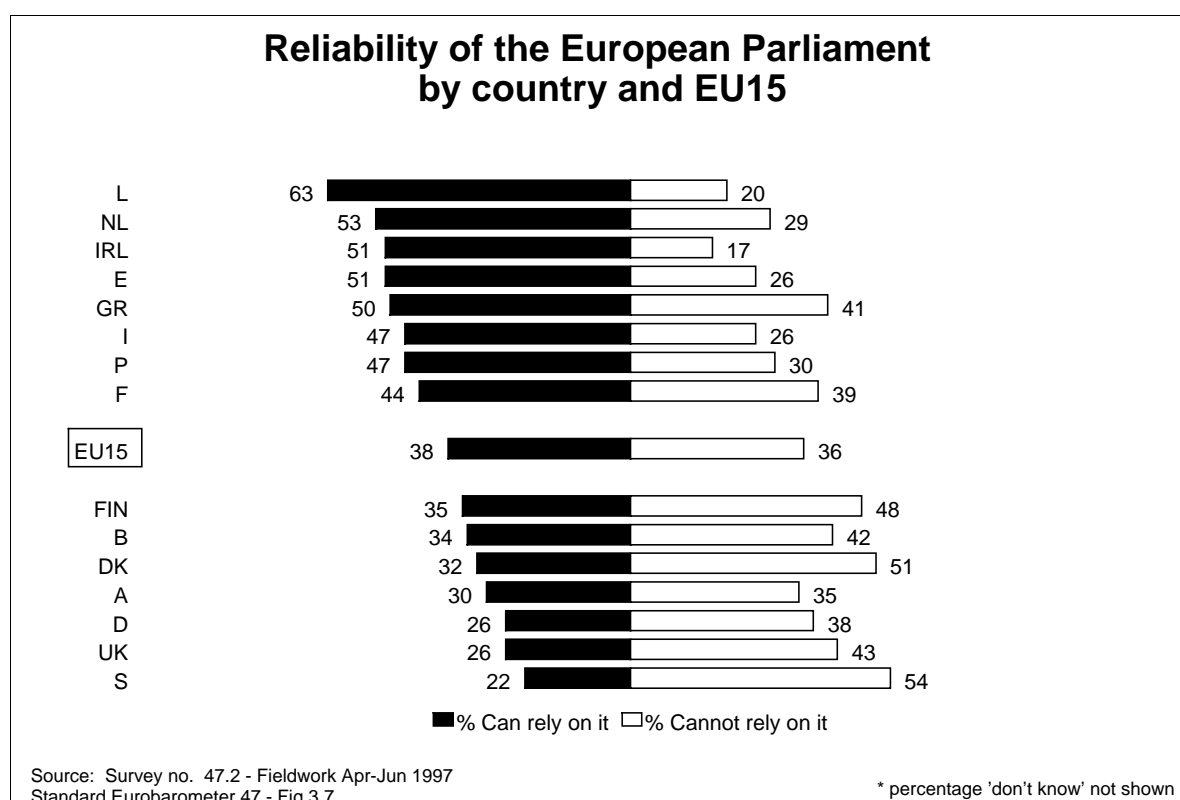
The **European Parliament** continues to be the most credible of the European institutions amongst EU citizens, ranking second (38% can rely on) compared to the scores for **national governments and national parliaments** each with scores of 40%. The fourth and fifth rankings are accorded to the European Commission (36%) and the European Council (34%). Overall we have witnessed a net drop in the reliability scores for both the national and European institutions in the past year, ranging for -5 to -8 percentage points.

While approximately two in three people hold an opinion, either positive or negative, on the reliability of the European institutions, a significant number, between 26% and 30%, depending on the individual institution, "do not know" if they can rely on the European Union institutions to protect their interests. (Table 3.9)



Reliability of national and European institutions						
	Can rely		Can not rely		Don't know	
	Autumn 95	Spring 97	Autumn 95	Spring 97	Autumn 95	Spring 97
European institutions average	42	36	33	36	25	28
European Commission	41	36	34	36	25	28
European Parliament	45	38	32	36	23	26
Council of Ministers	40	34	32	36	28	30
National Parliament	48	40	38	41	11	19
National government	45	40	43	45	12	15

Residents of countries where confidence in the European Parliament is high include Luxembourg (63% can rely on), the Netherlands (53%), Ireland and Spain (51%) and Greece (50%). Nowhere else did the support exceed 50%. Conversely particularly high levels of non-reliance are recorded in Sweden (54% cannot rely on), Denmark (51%), and Finland (48%). Very high "no opinion" scores were recorded in Germany (37%) and an extremely high proportion (45%) of East Germans did not know if they could rely on the European Parliament, compared with a still high 35% for West Germany¹⁰. Also recording high "no opinion" scores were Ireland (33%), the United Kingdom (33%) and Austria (31%).

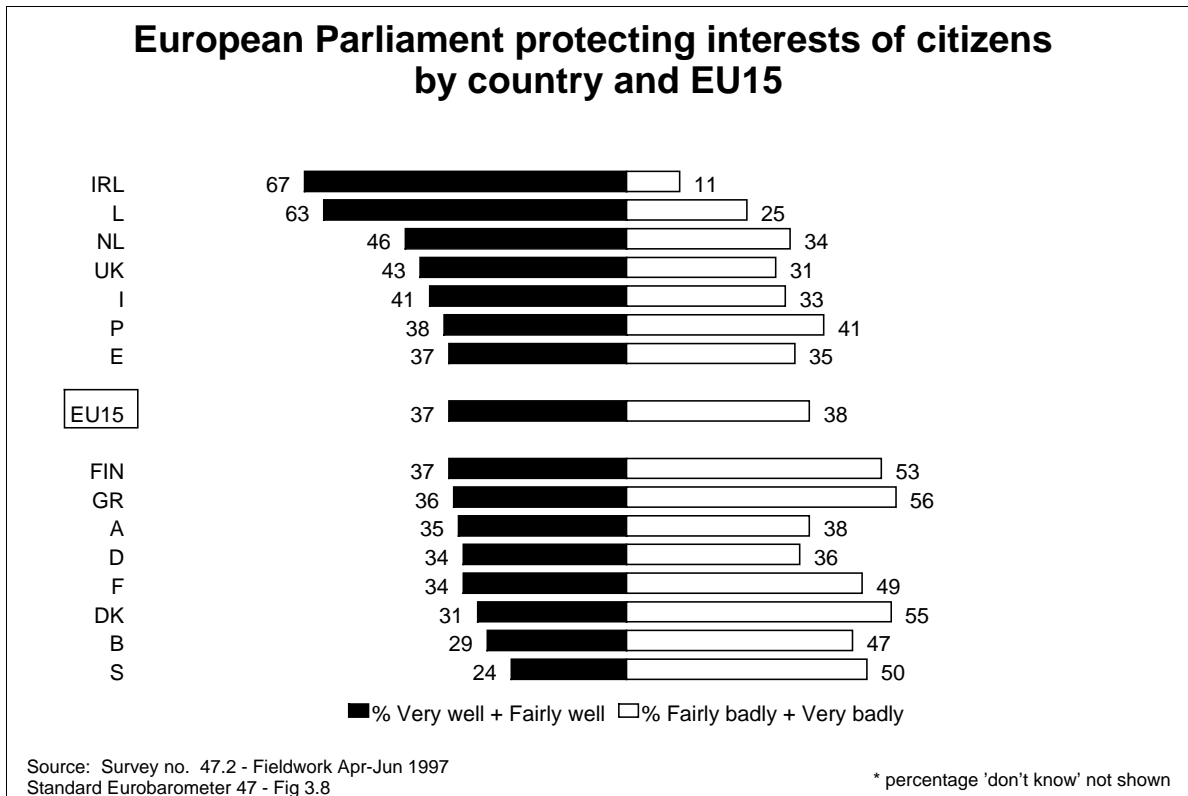


¹⁰ Eurobarometer N°44 – Fieldwork November-December 1995

The second question used to determine the effectiveness of the Parliament read as follows:

"As a European citizen, do you think the European Parliament protects your interests - very well, fairly well, not very well or not at all well?"

The country by country analysis shows that Ireland and Luxembourg are by far the countries who feel their interests best protected by the European Parliament, over two thirds of people from these two countries consider the Parliament protects their interests. Nowhere else in the Union do more than half the population feel protected, and indeed in eight Member States only between 24% and 37% say they feel protected. Particularly low scores are recorded in Sweden (24%), Belgium (29%) and Denmark (31%). (Table 3.11)



If we analyse those who feel best represented and those who feel less well represented, we see some similar patterns to those more general indicators for European Union membership: men continue to feel their interests better represented than women, as do those who are still studying. On the political left-right scale we find that both the extreme left and the extreme right feel less well represented than those who define themselves nearer to the centre of the political spectrum. Occupational status shows, as would be expected, that managers feel well represented and the unemployed poorly represented, interestingly however the self-employed also feel less well represented than all other active persons. (Table 3.12)

3.4. Key policy areas for the European Parliament

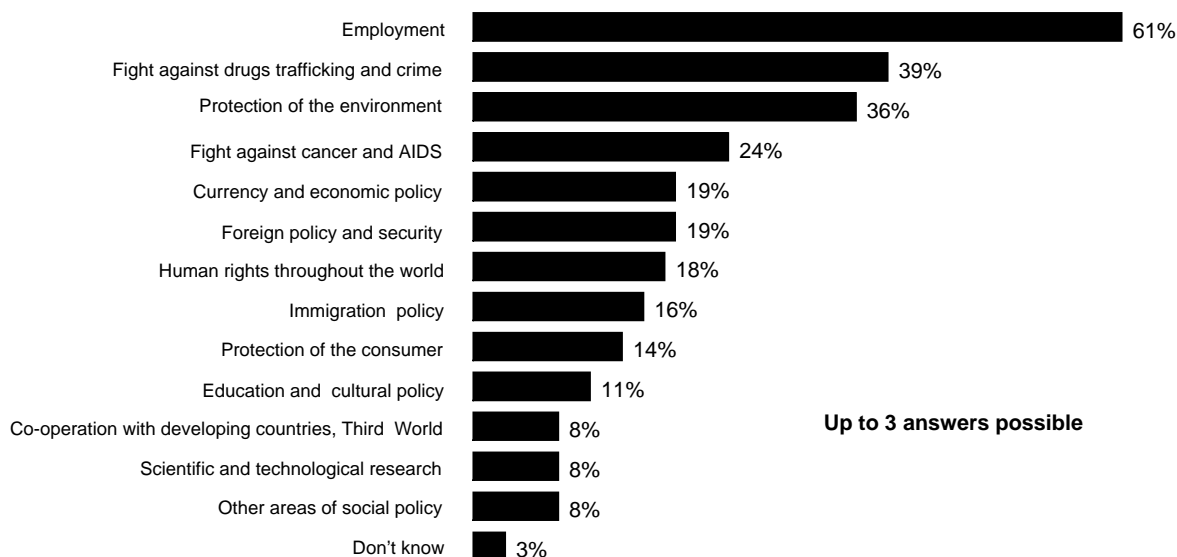
Finally Eurobarometer 47, as in previous surveys, asked respondents to indicate to which policy areas the European Parliament should direct its efforts. In this survey the list was modified to include some additional items: these included **“the fight against drugs trafficking and crime”** and **“the fight against cancer and AIDS”**. In addition the previous items concerning foreign policy and defence have been combined into one entitled **“foreign policy and security”**

However, it was to the issue of **“employment”** that the majority of respondents want the Parliament to address its energies. It was ranked first of all the potential policy areas listed, with a 61% mention rate, this is an 8% increase since the question was last asked in December 1995, showing again the importance of this issue on the public agenda.

The revision of the list makes direct comparisons with the previous survey impossible, but in general terms the rank order of policy areas asked about on the previous survey remains the same, with the exception of **“Human rights throughout the world”** which has lost some public interest over the period.

In the country analysis **“employment”** tops the list in all but four Member States, namely Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden, where people place the **“environment”** at the top of the list of areas for priority action. The introduction of the item **“the fight against drug trafficking and crime”** has placed it on the agenda in all countries : other issues however are more country specific as the following table indicates. (Tables 3.13 & 3.14)

Areas for priority action by the European Parliament EU15



Source: Survey no. 47.2 - Fieldwork Apr-Jun 1997
Standard Eurobarometer 47 - Fig 3.9

TOP FOUR PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN MEMBER STATES	
Denmark	
Environment	66
Drugs & crime	41
Human rights	27
Immigration	25
Belgium	
Employment	73
Drugs & crime	44
AIDS/Cancer	31
Consumer protection	18
Germany	
Employment	48
Environment	46
Drugs/crime	43
Foreign & security policy	27
Greece	
Employment	46
Foreign & security policy	43
Drugs/crime	45
Environment	36
Spain	
Employment	79
Environment	35
Drugs/crime	29
AIDS/Cancer	27
France	
Employment	76
Drugs/crime	32
Environment	30
AIDS/Cancer	29
Ireland	
Employment	63
Drugs/crime	59
Environment	30
AIDS/Cancer	28
Italy	
Employment	70
Drugs/crime	36
AIDS/Cancer	25
Environment	25
Luxembourg	
Environment	46
Employment	42
Drugs & crime	42
AIDS/Cancer	31
Netherlands	
Environment	49
Employment	47
Drugs & crime	43
Human rights	29
Austria	
Employment	37
Environment	37
Drugs/crime	38
Foreign & security policy	25
Portugal	
Employment	77
Drugs/crime	57
AIDS/Cancer	38
Environment	22
Finland	
Employment	69
Drugs/crime	44
Environment	39
Foreign & security policy	32
Sweden	
Environment	57
Drugs/crime	53
Employment	47
Human rights	33
United Kingdom	
Employment	49
Drugs/crime	41
Environment	36
Human rights	24

4. Information and new means of communication

The media, both print and broadcast, play an essential role in the dissemination of information about current affairs, both at national and European level. In this chapter we examine how well people feel informed about the European Union and how this compares with the same feelings about their national government. We will then examine the various sources of information and new methods of communication that are becoming available to the European citizen.

4.1. Feeling informed and the need for information

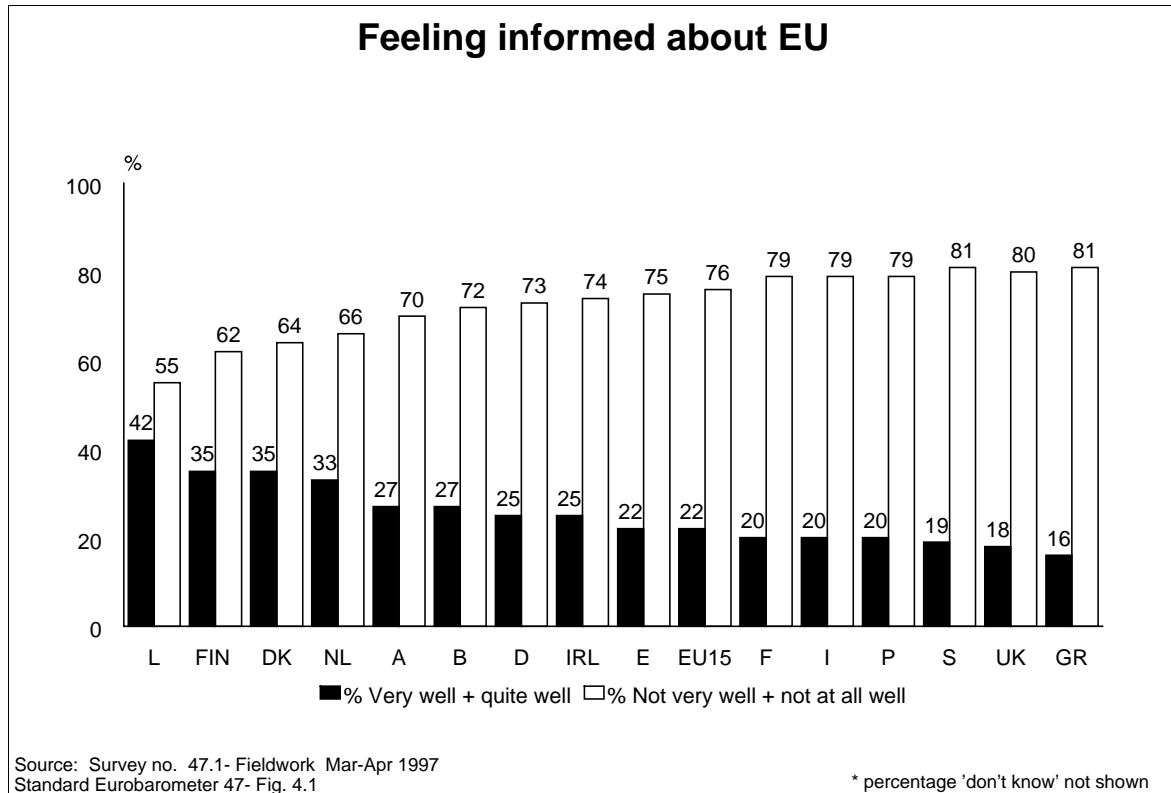
Generally people feel less well informed about the workings of the European Union than they do about their own national government. When asked the identical question referring first to, the (National) government and then to the European Union we observe the following results.

Feeling informed about national government and European Union institutions		
	Percentage knowing national government	Percentage knowing European Union
Very well	5	2
Quite well	40	18
Not very well	39	49
Not at all well	14	29
Average score ¹¹	2.37	1.92

Thus while few people claim to know either their own government or the European Union “very well”, it is clear that nearly half of all respondents feel they have a reasonable knowledge of their own country’s government, its organisation and functioning. In sharp contrast only one in five persons have the same confidence about understanding the European Union.

The country analysis confirms that nowhere in the European Union do people feel really well informed. Even in Luxembourg, traditionally one of the best informed countries, we only see 42% considering themselves “very” or “quite” well informed. Greece records the lowest level, with only 16% “very” or “quite” well informed, followed by the United Kingdom, Sweden, Portugal, Italy and France who all fall below the EU average figure of 22% informed. (Tables 4.1 & 4.4)

¹¹Average scores are calculated by attributing the following values “very well” 4, “quite well” 3, “not very well” 2, and “not at all well” 1.



If only one in five feel informed, is this through indifference or through lack of information?
A second question asked:

Which of the following statements comes closest to your opinion?

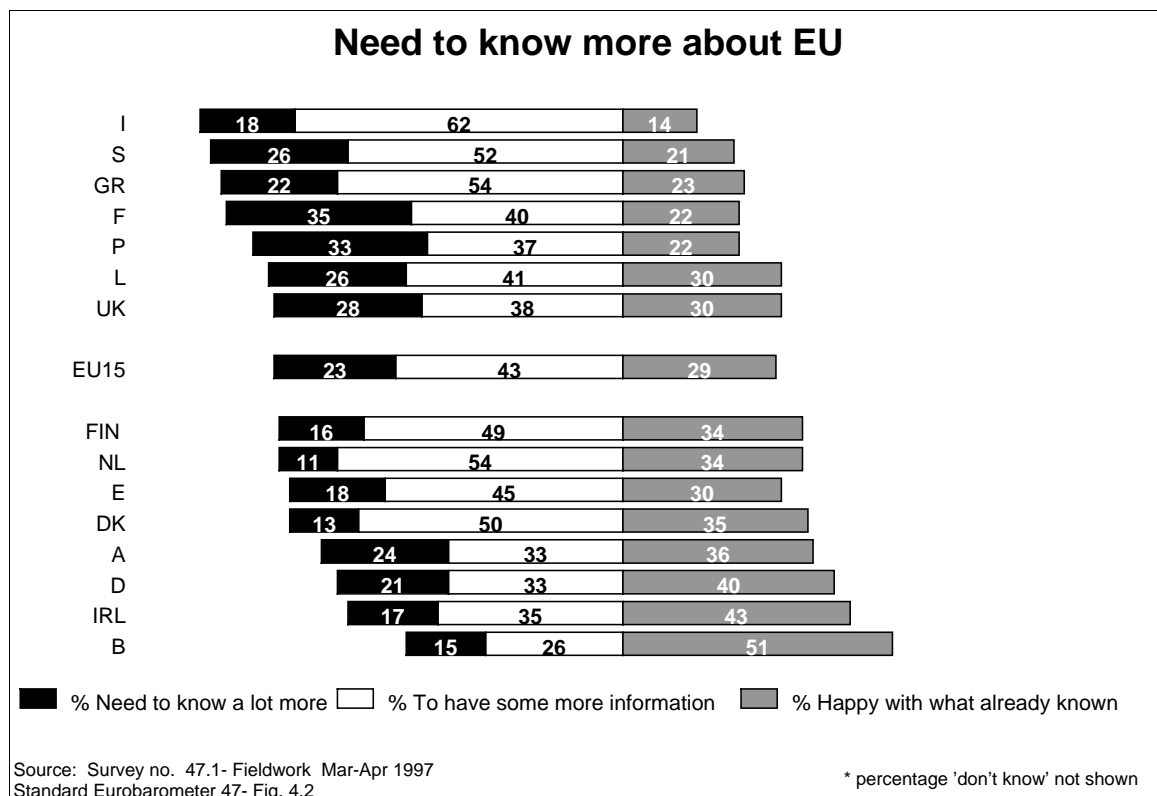
- *I really need to know a lot more about the European Union*
- *I would like to have some more information about the European Union*
- *As far as I am concerned I am happy with what I already know*

The need to know more was strongest in France (35% wanting to know a lot more), Portugal (33%) and the United Kingdom (28%). Italy overall was the most likely to want more information with only 14% happy with what they already know. Countries, which stated they were happy with what they already knew, were, notably Belgium, where 51% were happy with what they knew, Ireland 43% and Germany 40%. (Table 4.5)

One might expect that those claiming to be ill-informed would be more eager to learn more about the Union, but in the analysis we observe that the “*need to know more*” group is spread amongst both the informed and the ill-informed, and even more striking is the fact that in the group claiming to “**feel informed**” there is an even stronger demand to “*have some more information about the EU*”, 48% for the **informed** compared to 39% for the **not informed**. We also observe a greater desire to learn more amongst those with a positive attitude to their country’s membership. One can conclude that those with an already positive view will be receptive to more information about the Union, while those with a generally more negative view will be less interested.

An analysis of the demographic groups also indicates that the desire to obtain more information about the Union is closely associated with those persons whom we have come to see as being more pro-European: the better educated, managers, those to the left of the political spectrum and opinion leaders. However one intriguing finding was that low media users¹² do not feel they need any more information, they are happy with the level of information they already have. (Table 4.6)

¹² See technical specification page C.10 for details.



4.2. How do people find out about the European Union?

If nearly two in three people would like to find out more about the European Union, its policies and institutions, how would they set about it? In an open question we found the majority of people said they would turn to the mass media, print or broadcast, to find the answer. Television was cited by just over four in ten, newspapers by one in three, the mass media in general terms by 13% and radio by 9%. The remaining responses given were very much more fragmented, as the graph below shows, ranging from discussions with friends to using the Internet, but they are identified by one characteristic, they require the seeker to be pro-active, this is in sharp contrast with the majority of answers which could largely be called passive in type.

Looking at national differences we see that certain sources are preferred in particular Member States. Reliance on the **television** is highest in Italy (59%), East Germany (48%), Finland (44%), Sweden and West Germany (both 43%). In contrast, in Denmark only 19% of those interviewed mentioned television.

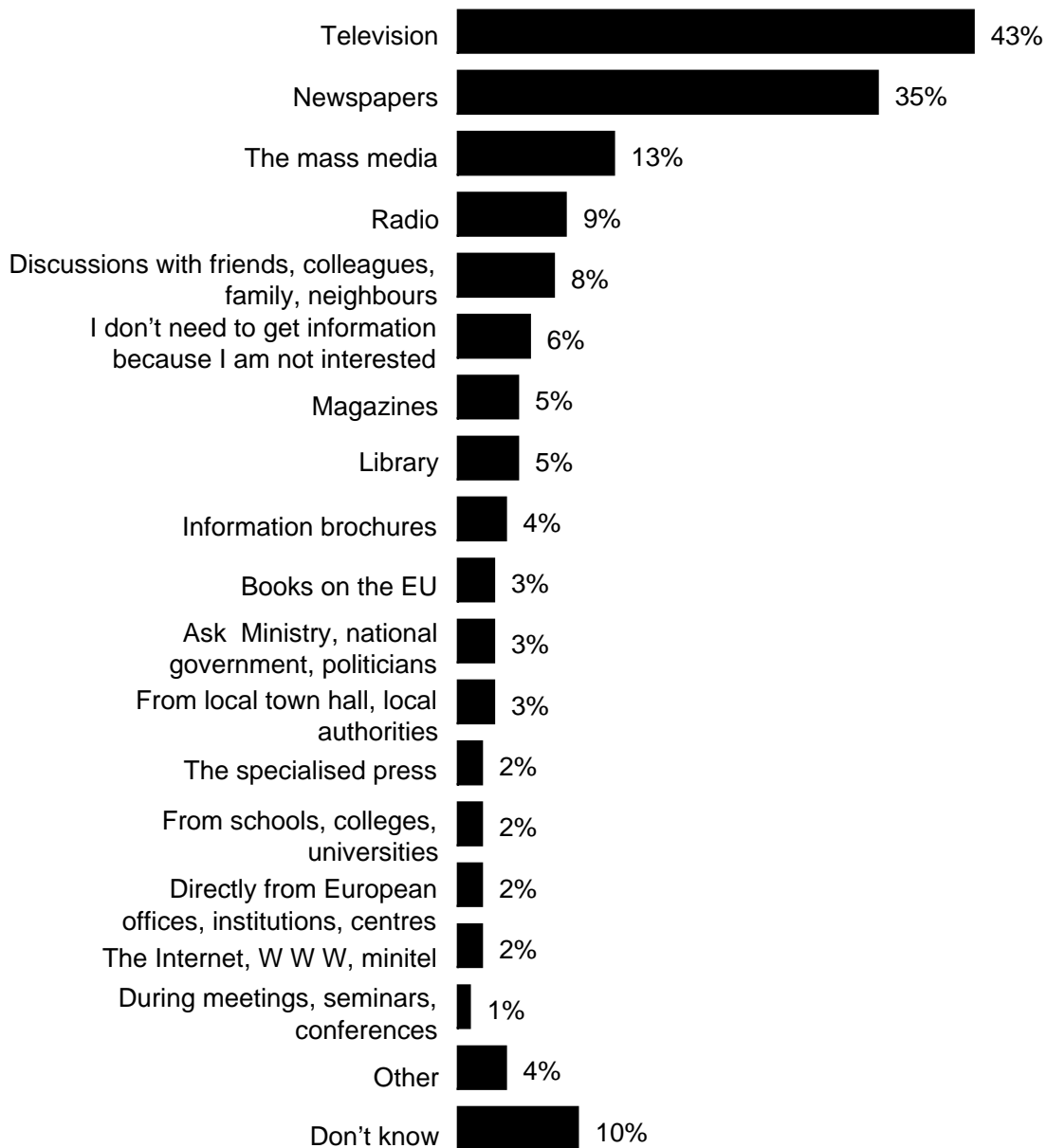
Information leaflets were more popular in the Netherlands and Luxembourg, while one in three Danes would consult their **library** (compared to the EU average of 5%). **Family and friends** counted for more in Italy, France, Austria and Sweden but for little in Ireland and the Netherlands. **Offices of European institutions** were cited most frequently in Luxembourg (the home to a number of EU institutions) and also in Denmark and Finland. Finally the **Internet and World Wide Web** were most frequently mentioned in Scandinavia (Denmark 7%, Finland and Sweden 5% while the EU average is as yet only 1%). (Table 4.7)

In terms of various socio-economic groups we note the following differences:

Gender differences

Women are more likely to rely on television for information, while men rate the radio and newspapers more highly. Men make greater use of the other print media, they are more likely to consult books, pamphlets and magazines, in addition they are more willing to use the Internet and other electronic sources. In contrast women are more likely to ask friends, family and colleagues for information.

Sources of information about EU policies and institutions (EU15)



Source: Survey no. 47.1 - Fieldwork Mar-Apr 1997
 Standard Eurobarometer 47 - Fig 4.3

Age differences

While the older respondents place considerable emphasis on television and radio as sources of information, the young, while considering them useful, are also more likely to turn to reference material such as books and magazines. The young will, as women, turn more to their friends and colleagues for information than older people. Finally using the new technology such as the Internet, while not wide spread, is still a source mentioned by more young than older people.

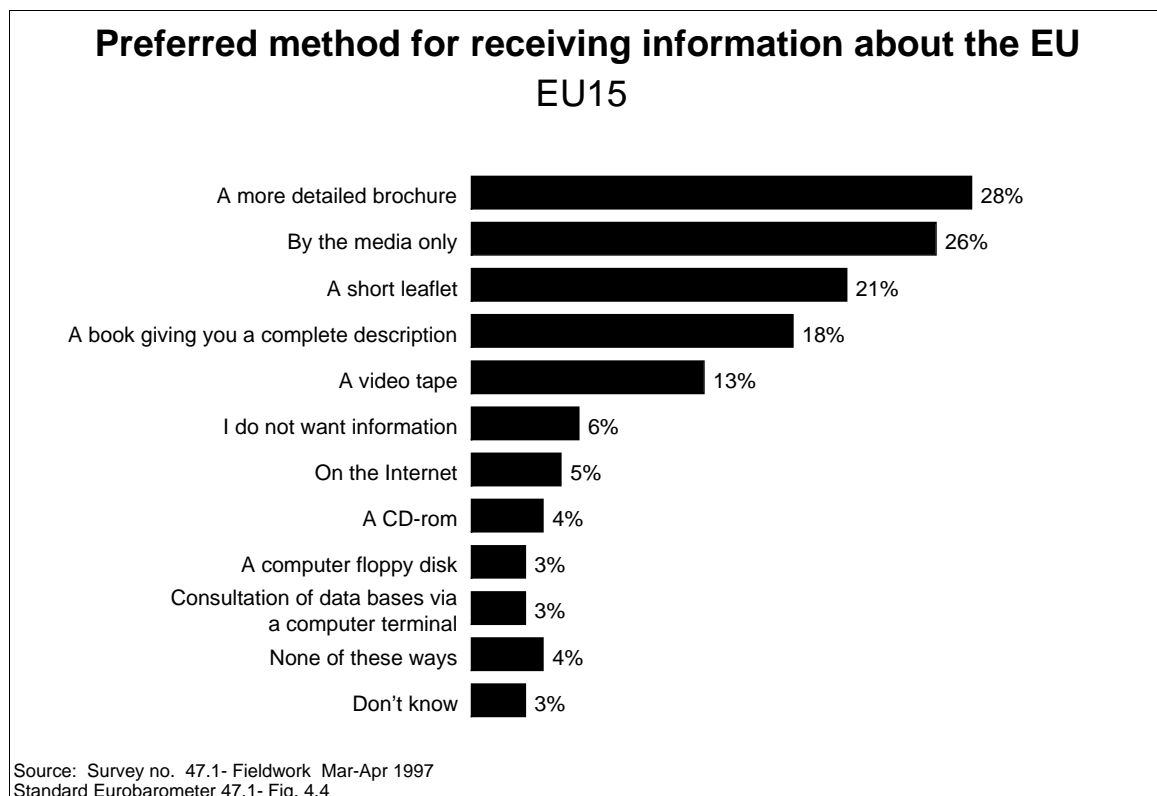
Occupational differences

Housepersons followed by the unemployed are most likely to cite television as a primary source of information. Manual workers also mention the radio, while managers will tend to use the widest variety of sources ranging from newspapers, the specialist press, Internet and contacts with various organisations such as the EU offices, national ministries and politicians. (Table 4.8)

4.3. Preferred sources of information

Apart from the spontaneous question asking about sources of information the interview went on to ask respondents to select their preferred choice from a pre-defined list. Again we witness a strong preference for the "traditional" forms: twenty-eight percent chose "a more detailed brochure", 21% "a short leaflet that just gives an overview". Eighteen percent favoured a book giving a complete description, while a video tape was chosen by 13%. Other choices were less frequent as the graph below indicates. Comparison with the results of the same question asked in the Spring of 1996 shows very little change in the stated preferences.

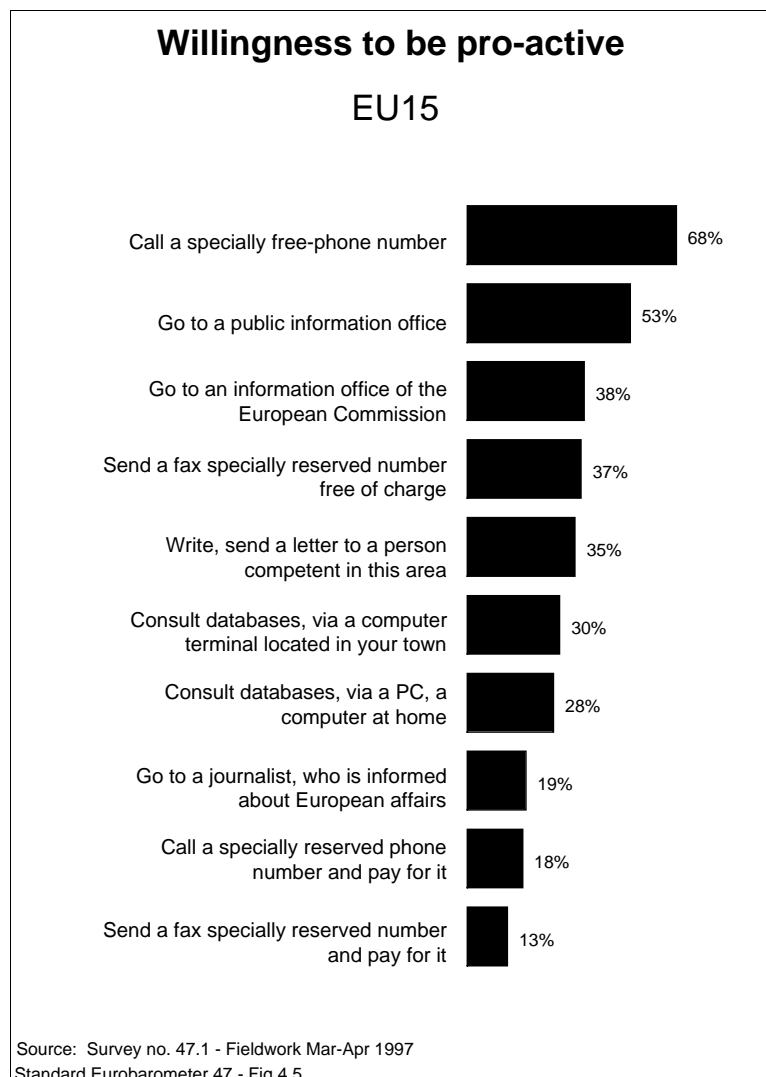
In terms of national differences we see the Scandinavian countries expressing stronger preferences for the newer information sources, while the printed word is more likely to be chosen elsewhere. Videotapes are selected more often in Sweden, Italy, France and the United Kingdom. (Tables 4.9 & 4.10)



4.4. Willingness to be pro-active in the search for information

When asked which of a series of initiatives they personally would undertake in order to obtain information about the European Union respondents were **overwhelmingly in favour of a free phone service** : nearly seven in ten would be prepared to use such a service and in no Member State, apart from East Germany, did the figure fall below 60%. In the latter this could be attributable to the lower level of telephone penetration in that part of the Union. The importance of the free phone is underscored when we see that only 18% would be prepared to actually pay for such a call. The same phenomenon is seen with the proposal of a free fax service, where 37% would use it, but only 13% if they had to pay.

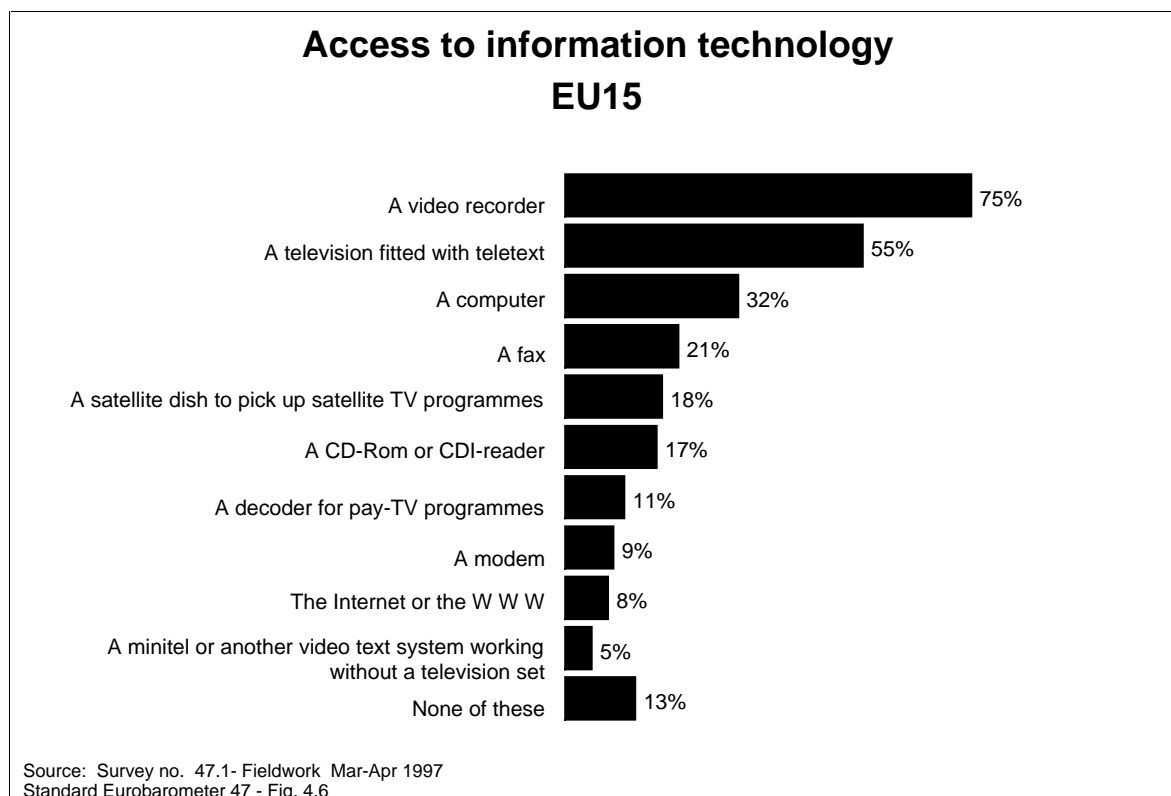
Public information offices are seen as an important source of information, 53% of those interviewed would go to such an office and 38% would go to an information office of the European Commission. Consulting databases either from a local terminal or from one's own PC were mentioned by 30% and 28% respectively. One in five persons would consider consulting a journalist specialising in European affairs. (Tables 4.11 & 4.12)



4.5. Access to information technology

To complete the section on information sources respondents were asked to indicate their access to both hardware and software, which would permit them to use some of the proposed services.

Three in four people have access to a video recorder and over half have a television fitted with teletext; one in three people have use of a computer and one in five access to a fax machine. Other services are less wide spread as the graph below indicates.



Overall access to all the services listed has increased since the question was last asked in the early Spring 1996¹³. Increases for items such as video recorders, computers, fax machines has been only slight overall, but probably the most interesting development is the increase in access to the Internet and World Wide Web which has almost doubled in the 15 months since the last survey.

While these overall trends are generally gradual, we do observe some striking national variations: in the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Finland and Sweden in particular there have been some very significant increases. Internet and World Wide Web use in these three countries has more than doubled over the past year. Coupled with this has been the increased use of modems. In other Member States the growth of Internet\WWW use has grown, but starting from a much lower base. (Table 4.13)

Analysis of the socio-demographic variables shows, as would be expected, that most of the modes of access listed are income dependent: access or use is highest amongst high-income earners, managers, opinion leaders and the well educated.

¹³ Reference Eurobarometer 44.2 bis - fieldwork 28th January – 12th March 1996.

Use of the advanced **information technologies**, in addition to showing the national variations observed above, is **strongly gender and age specific**. Men are almost twice as likely as women to have access to and use of a modem and the Internet/WWW. Men are also more likely to have access to a computer, 37% of men compared to 27% of women. Age is the second determining variable, 45% of young people claim to have access to a computer compared to a mere 12% of over 55's. Internet /WWW access shows about 12% of the under 40's having access compared with only 2% of over 55's. Finally, as would be expected, those in higher education have greater access on average 16% compared to 2% of those leaving school by the age of 15. (Table 4.14)

Increases in access to the new technologies Spring 1996 to Spring 1997						
	COMPUTER		MODEM		WWW- INTERNET	
	% having	% change	% having	% change	% having	% change
EU15	32	0	9	+2	8	+3
B	33	+4	7	+1	4	+1
DK	56	+7	26	+10	23	+13
D	28	+3	8	+1	6	+2
GR	13	0	2	0	2	+1
E	28	+2	5	+1	5	+3
F	27	+3	7	+3	5	+3
IRL	22	+1	6	+2	7	+3
I	33	+1	7	+1	7	+3
L	39	+1	12	+5	11	+6
NL	56	0	19	0	14	+4
A	26	+3	5	0	5	+1
P	17	+5	4	+1	3	+1
FIN	44	+7	22	+6	25	+14
S	53	+10	29	+13	26	+14
UK	38	+3	13	+2	11	+2

5. European Citizenship – rights and freedoms

In the preceding chapter we examined European Union citizens' level of knowledge of the Union and their willingness to seek out information concerning it. This chapter will focus on the question of European citizenship, whether people see themselves as citizens of Europe, their knowledge and awareness of citizens' rights, their interest in these rights and how they can find out about their rights as a citizen of the European Union. We will finally examine people's attitudes to personal freedoms, which was part of a survey carried out in the context of the **European Year against Racism**.

5.1. Feeling European – National and European identity

The Standard Eurobarometer has since 1992 regularly asked respondents to describe their own feelings of European and national identity :

"In the near future, do you see yourself as?"

Nationality only
Nationality and European
European and nationality
European only

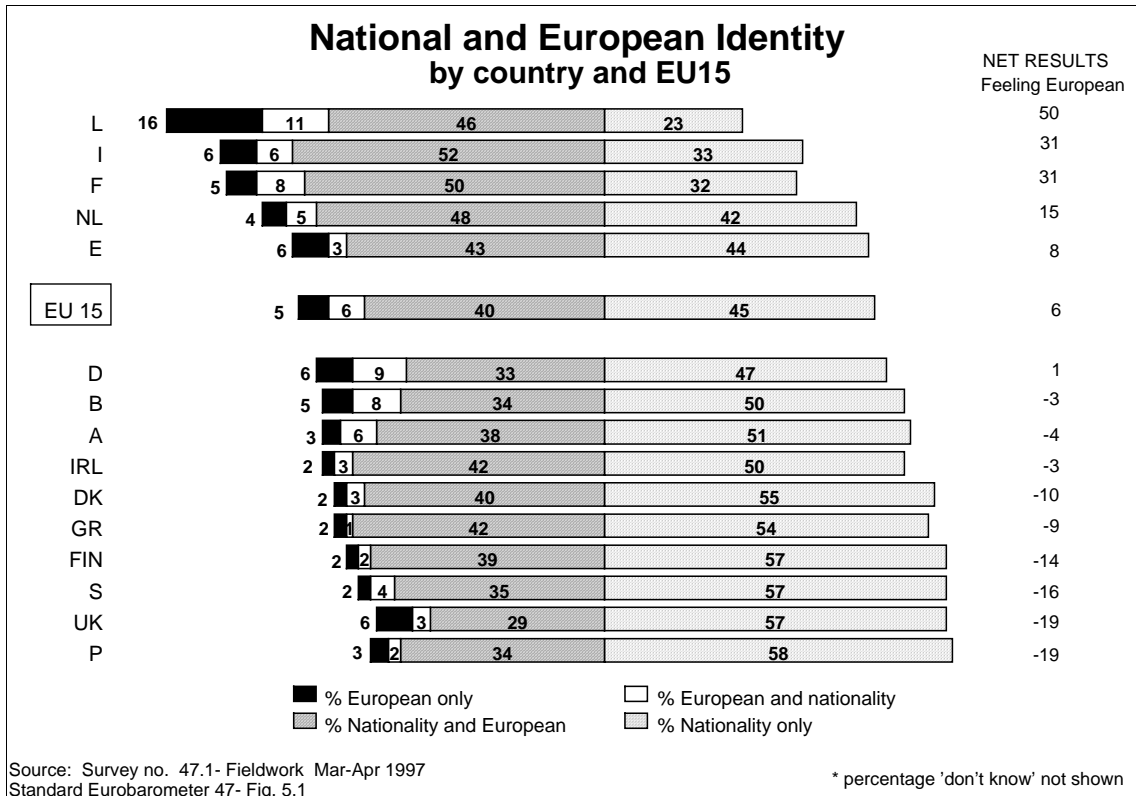
Overall we find that 45% of those interviewed described themselves as *"nationality only"*, 40% as their own *"nationality and European"*, 6% as *"European and nationality"* and a further 5% as *"European only"*. These figures have shown a steady downward trend in feeling European since the Autumn of 1995, but have stabilised over the past six months at a lower level.¹⁴ Thus a feeling of *Europeaness* is felt to some degree by just over half of the EU population.

Feeling European – Trends from 1994 to 1997				
	EB 42 Autumn 1994	EB 44 Autumn 1995	EB 46 Spring 1996	EB 47 Spring 1997
Nationality only	33	40	46	45
Nationality & European	46	46	40	40
European & nationality	10	6	6	6
European only	7	5	5	5

The rank order amongst countries that has been established in previous surveys is largely the same, namely Luxembourg residents continue to be the most European of all. As we have observed in previous editions, the significant presence of non-Luxembourgers resident in the Grand Duchy undoubtedly contributes to this finding.

¹⁴ For details of trends see Eurobarometer no 42 (fieldwork December 1994), Eurobarometer no 44 (fieldwork October –November 1995) and Eurobarometer no 46 (fieldwork October-November 1996).

Italy, France, the Netherlands and Spain all lie above the EU average in feeling European, while “nationality only” scores remain high in Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom, each with 57% “nationality only” scores. The one significant change is observed in Portugal where the “nationality only” figure has increased by 16 points in the last eighteen months, from 42% nationality only in Autumn 1995¹⁵ to 58% nationality only in the Spring of 1997. (Tables 5.1 & 5.2)



5.2. What Europe means to our young people ?

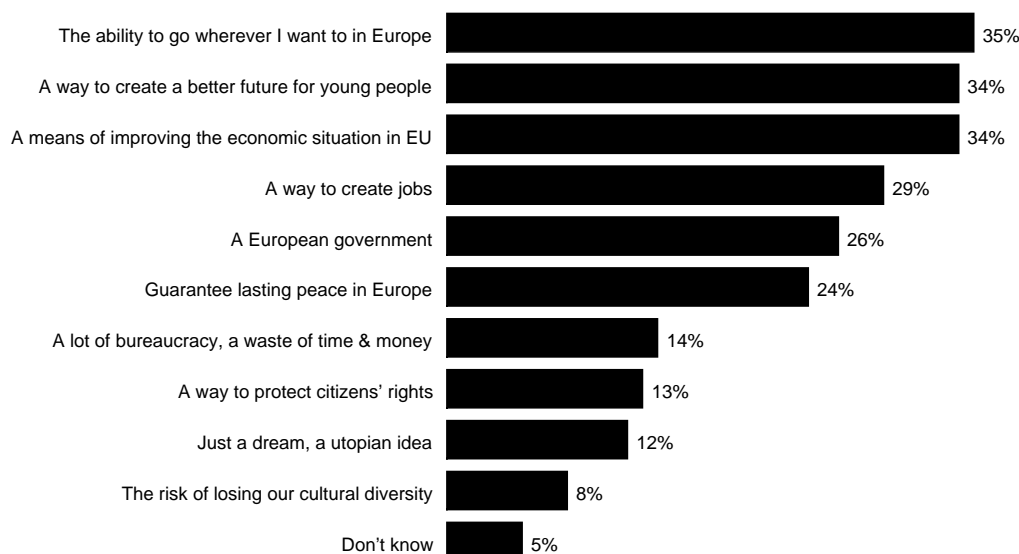
The Eurobarometer 47 survey included, exceptionally, a special section for young people. An additional sample of 9 400 persons aged 15 to 24, that is 600 in each Member State and 1200 in Germany (600 in the West and 600 in the East) were interviewed. In a series of questions concerning views of young people we asked them what the European Union meant to them personally. **Overall the impression which emerges is a positive one.** We know from the standard surveys that young people tend to feel more European than the older age groups, but this question shed some light on the reasons why.

Top of the list, just, was the freedom of movement that membership of the European Union implied, 35% selected the item “*The ability to go wherever I want to in Europe*”. The next three items chosen related to the fact that Europe would provide a better future, both in a general sense and in terms of the economy and job creation. One in four identified the Union with a European government. The guarantee of lasting peace was mentioned by 24%, while the protection of citizens’ rights was mentioned by 13%.

Of the more negative items 14% felt the Union involved a lot of bureaucracy and was a waste of time and money, and 12% feared the loss of Europe’s cultural diversity. Just 8% thought the idea of Europe was a *Utopian dream*.

¹⁵ See Eurobarometer no 44 for full details.

The meaning of Europe for young people



Source: Survey no. 47.1- Fieldwork Mar-Apr 1997
Standard Eurobarometer 47- Fig. 5.2

Analysis of the national differences shows that the overall preferences are similar, namely many young people value the freedom of movement that membership of the Union brings. Hope for the future, both in general and in specific terms (economy and jobs), is also a strong theme in all countries, but probably the more interesting results are some of the national differences observed in the data. “*A way to create a better future*” scores particularly highly amongst young people in Italy (51%) and Ireland (49%), the EU average being 34%. “*Freedom of movement*”, while generally rated high (EU 35%), is more highly rated in Germany, France (both 49%) and Luxembourg 48%, however lowest in the United Kingdom (22%), Greece and Spain (both 24%).

Europe as a means of *improving the economic situation* is very strongly supported in the Netherlands (55%), but in the United Kingdom only 21% see Europe in this context. Hope that Europe would *create jobs* was high in Italy, Ireland and Finland (40% each), but half of this in Spain. While one in four young people see Europe as a way of *preserving peace*, young people in Luxembourg were very much more positive with 42% believing the European Union would guarantee lasting peace. In contrast very low scores were recorded in Ireland (10%), the United Kingdom (12%) and Spain (15%). The *protection of the citizen* was higher than elsewhere in the Netherlands 23% and Portugal 20%.

On the negative side, the feeling that Europe represented a “*lot of bureaucracy*” was particularly high (38%) amongst Swedish young people, but low in Ireland and Italy (5% and 7% respectively).

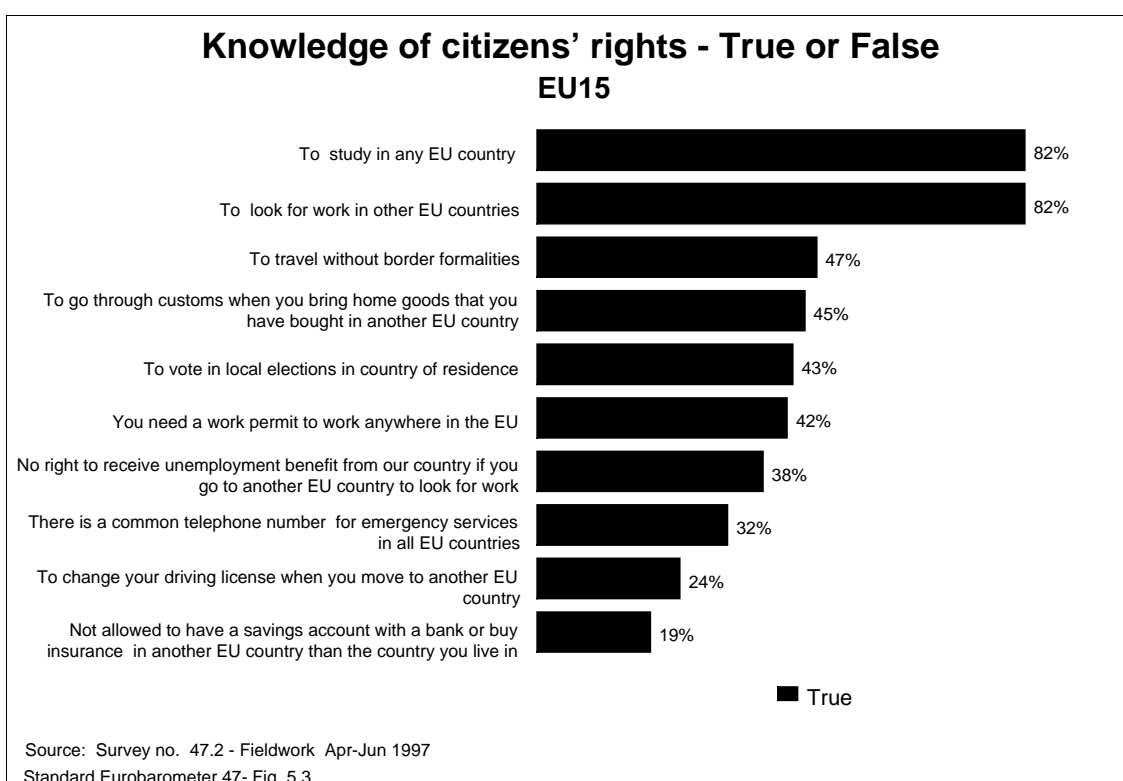
Finally is Europe just a *Utopian dream*? Well you are more likely to think so if you are a young person from Austria, Belgium or Sweden, but interestingly less so if you are Irish or British. (Table 5.3)

5.3. Knowledge of citizens' rights

In the context of the European Commission's "Citizens First" information campaign, interest has focussed on people's knowledge and awareness of their rights as European citizens. The standard Eurobarometer 47 asked a series of questions relating to people's understanding of these rights.

In the first instance how well do people know about rights already accorded to them by the various treaties and agreements? The survey asked respondents whether certain concepts were true or false.

The items that could be described as concerning freedom of movement, such as the right to study in any European Union country and the right to look for work in another country, are recognised by over eight in ten respondents. For all other items we find lower levels of agreement as the following graph indicates.



Examination of the changes which have occurred since the question was last asked in the Winter of 1996¹⁶ shows an increased awareness of the right to study (+4%), the right to vote in local elections (+5%) and the existence of a common emergency telephone number in all EU Member States (+6%). We also note a change in the number of people believing that you need a work permit to work, down 3%. Thus in a number of areas there is a growing awareness of some of the common aspects of European Union citizenship.

The items scoring lower on the true /false scale tend to be very different across countries, suggesting that either respondents have not had direct experience and therefore do not know, or as in the case of the Schengen agreement on freedom of movement the rules are not the same in all Member States. (Tables 5.4 & 5.5)

¹⁶ See Eurobarometer no 46 for full details.

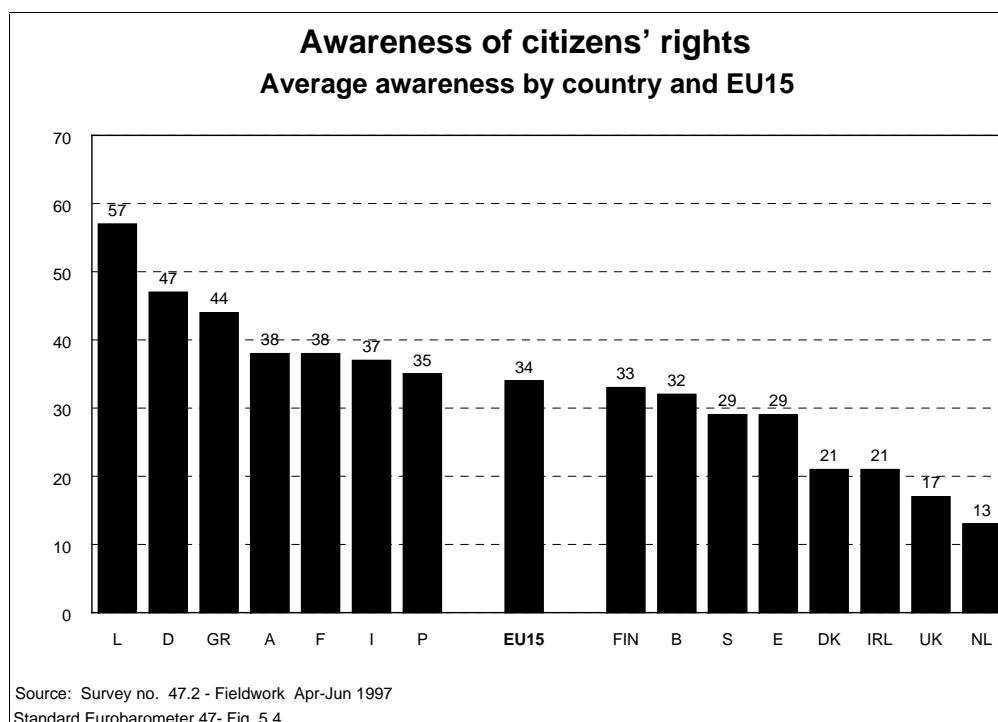
5.4. Awareness of citizens' rights "in recent weeks"

In order to measure people's awareness of their rights as a European Union citizen the following question was asked:

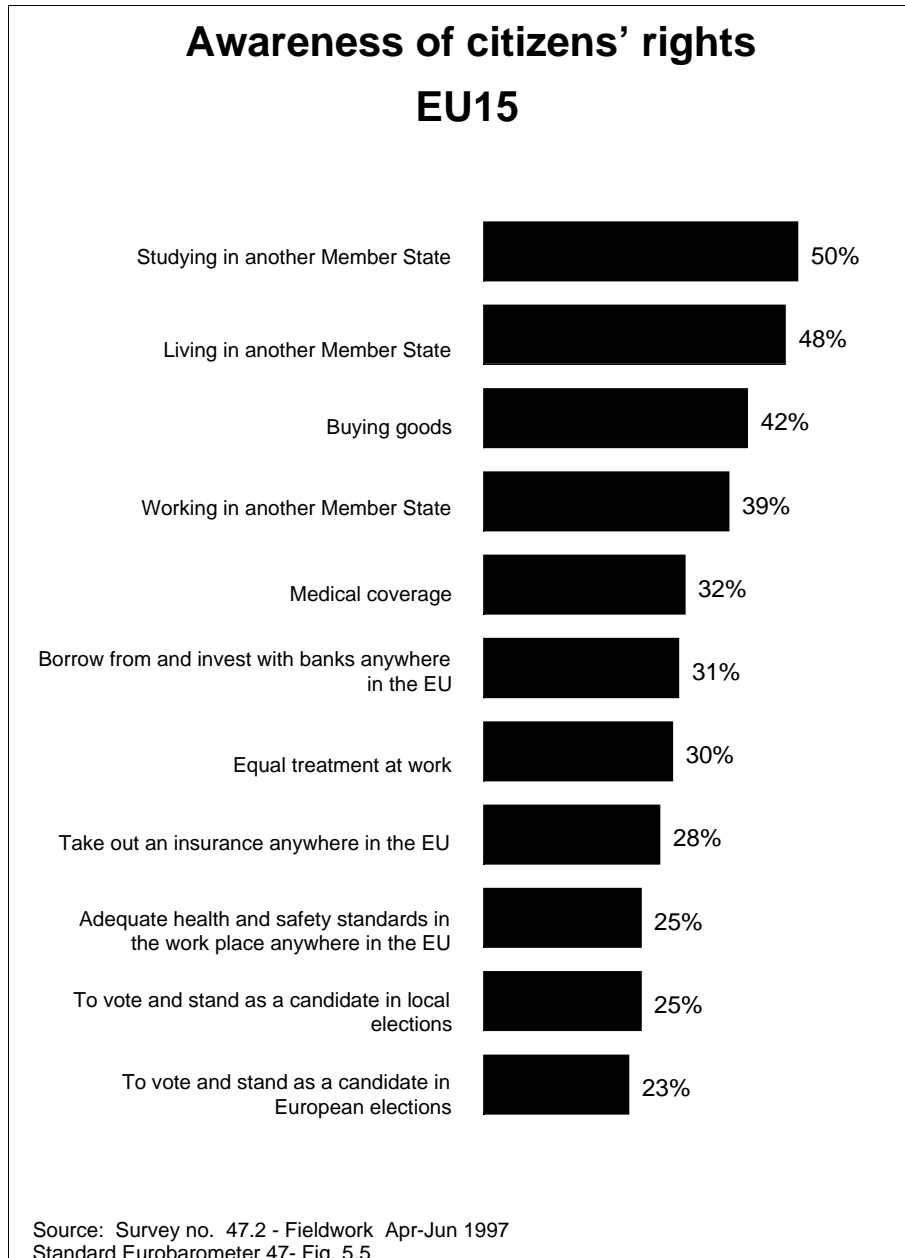
Have you heard, over the last few weeks, about the rights and opportunities you have as a citizen of the European Union to.....?

- Go and live in any European Union country*
- Go and work and start up a business in any other European Union country, under the same conditions as the citizens of that country*
- Go and study in any European Union country*
- Buy goods for your personal use in any other European Union country and bring them back home, without going through customs*
- Be reimbursed for any urgent medical attention you may need in another European Union country*
- Be guaranteed adequate health and safety standards in the workplace anywhere in the European Union*
- Be guaranteed equal treatment at work, without discrimination based on sex, anywhere in the European Union*
- Borrow from and invest with banks anywhere in the European Union*
- Take out an insurance policy anywhere in the European Union*
- If you live in another European Union country, to vote and stand as a candidate in local elections*
- If you live in another European Union country, to vote and stand as a candidate in European elections there.*

We find that approximately half of those interviewed recalled having heard in recent weeks about the possibility of studying or living in another Member State. Likewise approximately four in ten had heard mention of the possibility of buying goods without going through customs and of working in another country. Areas related to social protection were less well known, as were those dealing with financial transactions like bank loans and insurance. However the lowest measures came for the two electoral items, namely the right to vote and stand in both local and European elections, only one in four persons could recall having heard about these recently. (Tables 5.6 & 5.7)



Cross-country analysis shows awareness of the eleven topics to be very variable both across countries and between themes. If we calculate the average number of mentions for all eleven themes for the European Union we arrive at an average score of 34, the highest score being in Luxembourg with 57, followed by Germany at 47 and Greece at 44. Particularly low scores are recorded in the Netherlands 13 and the United Kingdom 17, suggesting that there has been little media coverage of the themes in these last two countries in recent times.



5.5. Feeling informed about citizens' rights

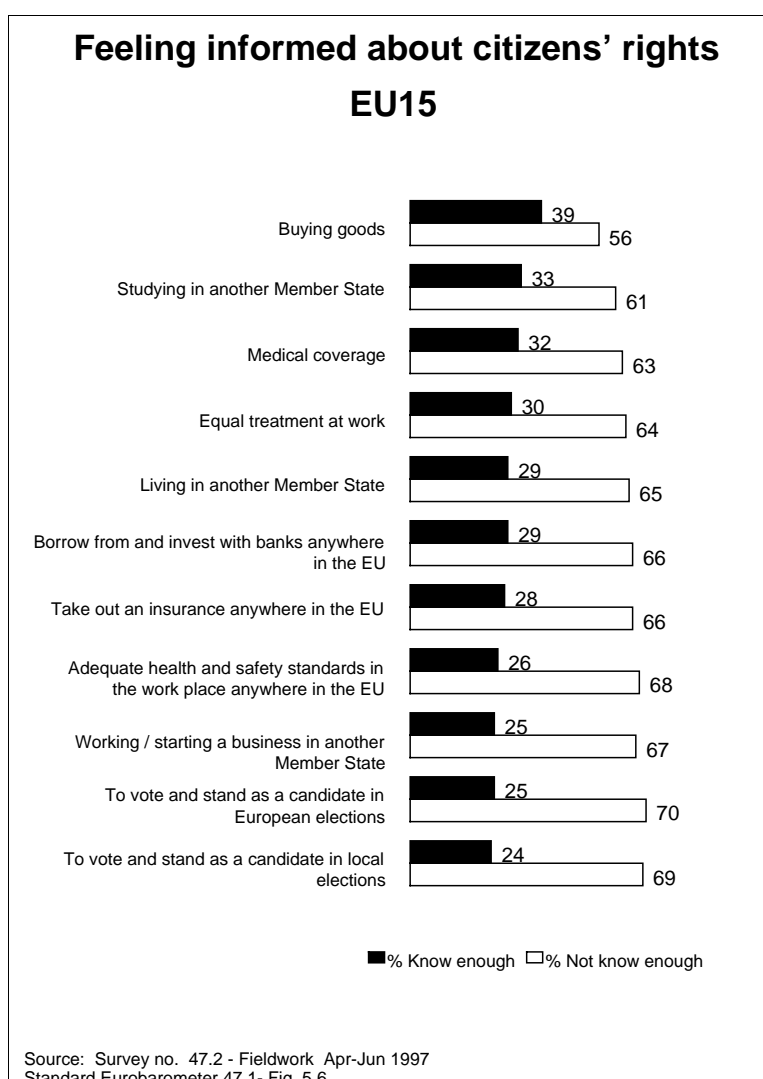
Following on from the question concerning whether people had heard of various rights a second question asked for each of the rights heard of:

"Do you think you know enough about this right, or not?"

As the following graph indicates the majority of people would like to know more about their rights as European Union citizens. On average two in three of those having heard about the various rights say they would like to know more. Interest was highest for information about *"buying goods for one's own personal use in any other European Union country and bringing them back home without going through customs"*. Nearly four in ten respondents felt they knew enough about the procedures, but 56% stated they would like more information.

Six in ten of those interviewed feel they do not know enough about studying in another country, and very similar figures are recorded for items such as medical cover in the case of an emergency, equal treatment at work, living in another Member State and financial transactions such as bank loans and taking out insurance.

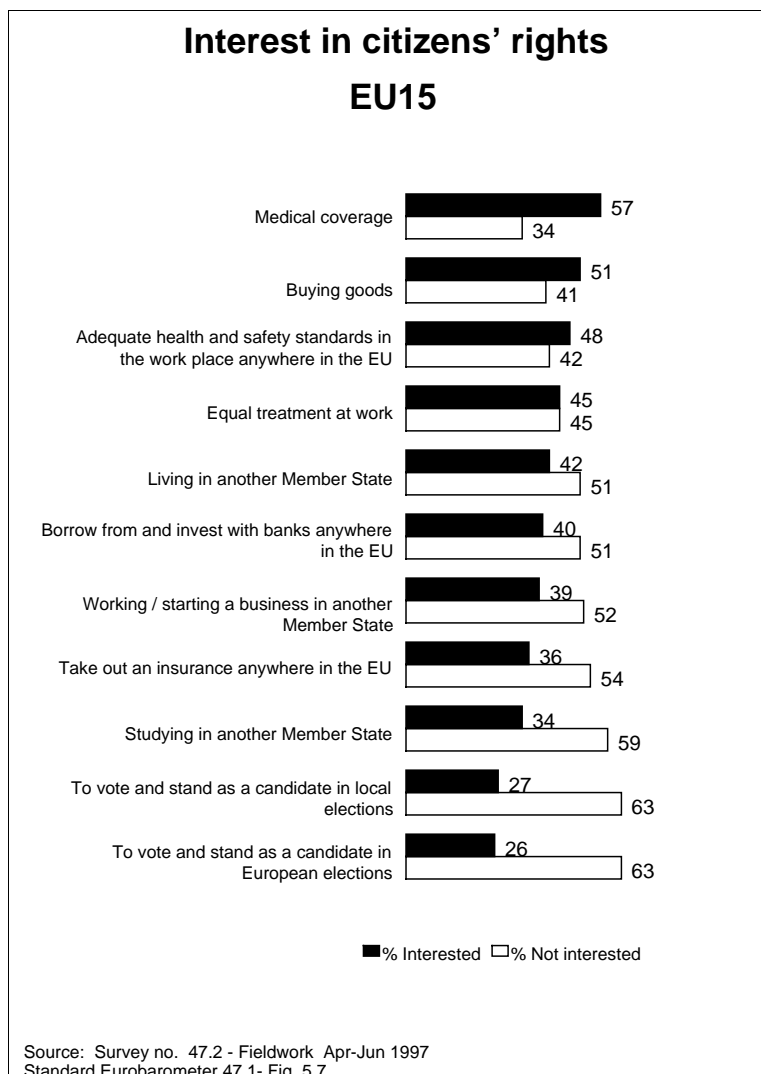
The two areas where people felt the least informed related to setting up a business in another country and the regulations concerning the right to vote and stand as candidate in both local and European elections, only one in four people felt they knew enough about these issues. (Tables 5.8 & 5.9)



5.6. Interest in citizens' rights

In overall terms interest in one's individual rights as an European Union citizen tend to focus on the practical, nearly two in three people would like to find out more about reimbursement for urgent medical care in another Member State. Information about buying goods without formalities is the second most popular field, with 51% seeking further information. Work related issues such as equal treatment and adequate health and safety standards are mentioned by nearly half of all respondents.

Interest in information concerning voting rights and the possibility of standing as a candidate in local and European elections was significantly less, with 27% and 26% interested respectively. (Table 5.10)



The interest accorded to each of these themes is frequently related to demographic characteristics. In the category described as **equal opportunities** we find strongest interest amongst women, the young and the well educated.

The series that describes what might be loosely called **freedom of movement**: freedom to live and work in another Member State, interest is slightly higher amongst men than women. This group also tends to be younger, well educated and holding down managerial jobs, whereas the unemployed show less interest.

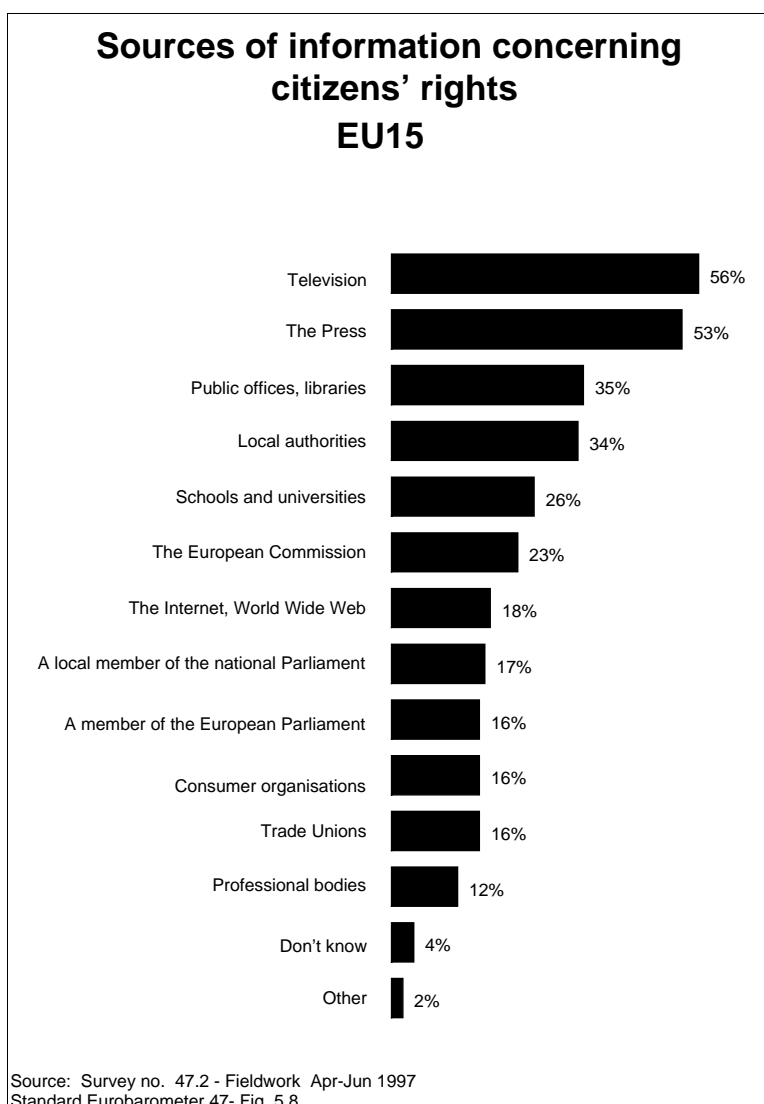
Interest in information concerning the **opportunities to study** in another country is predictably higher amongst the young and in this area women are as interested as their male counterparts.

In the category entitled “**financial**” relating to bank loans and investments we find most interest expressed by men, usually in the middle age group 25-54 and most frequently self-employed.

Finally in the category described as **voting rights**, both at local and European level, we again see men tending to be more interested as are the better educated and opinion leaders. However, political persuasion does not appear to have an influence on interest, people to both the left and right of the political spectrum have the same interest in political participation. (Table 5.11)

5.7. Sources of information on citizens’ rights

As we discussed in the preceding chapter the sources that people will consult are varied, but nevertheless we see that there is predominance by the mass media, both print and broadcast. When asked about where they should be able to find out about the rights they have as citizens over half (56%) mention the television and a further 53% the press.



National differences and preferences

While the mass media are seen as a prime source of information on citizen's rights in all Member States, examination of the other possible sources of information indicated that national differences are noticeable. Below we highlight some of the individual country variations.

Belgium

Belgians were some of the most likely to contact the European Commission directly (36%), as were they more likely to contact a member of the European Parliament (24%).

Denmark

In Denmark we observe the important role played by the public offices and library system. Sixty percent of Danes would expect to find this type of information in their public offices/library. They were also more likely to turn to their local authority (40%) and one in three of them would resort to the Internet/WWW for information.

Germany

In Germany local authorities are considered an important source by 44% of people, while schools and universities are cited by 29% and 21% respectively.

Greece

In Greece, apart from the media in general, the most cited sources were local authorities (36%) and libraries (26%), but most scores were the same or below the EU average in mention.

Spain

The Spanish most frequently cited local authorities (26%) together with public offices and libraries (22%) as the most probable sources of information.

France

Over four in ten people in France would resort to their public offices and library for information concerning citizen's rights, while one in three would contact the European Commission direct. Consumer associations are mentioned by 21% of those interviewed.

Ireland

The Irish like many others look to their public library system to provide information (34%), but they also cited their national member of Parliament (26%), schools and universities (21%) and the local authority (21%).

Luxembourg

In Luxembourg again libraries and public offices are valued as sources of information (37%), and one in three persons would make a direct inquiry to the European Commission.

The Netherlands

Public offices and libraries rate particularly high in the Netherlands with 61% of respondents citing them as a source of information. Both the Internet/WWW and the European Commission are mentioned by 38% of those interviewed, and both these scores are above the EU averages of 18% and 23% respectively.

Austria

Austrians place greatest importance on local authorities (39%) for information : other sources exceeding the EU average are consumers associations (22%) and professional bodies (20%).

Portugal

Apart from the mass media and in particular television, in Portugal the highest mentions are for local authorities (39%) and schools and universities (27%).

Finland

Four in ten Finnish respondents would consult public offices and libraries, 28% their Member of the European Parliament, 27% the local authority, 25% at school or university and 23% the Internet or WWW.

Sweden

In Sweden the public offices and libraries play an extremely important role and seven in ten Swedes say they would try to find out information from these sources. Schools and Universities together with local authorities are cited by over four in ten respondents. The Internet/WWW would be used by 23%.

The United Kingdom

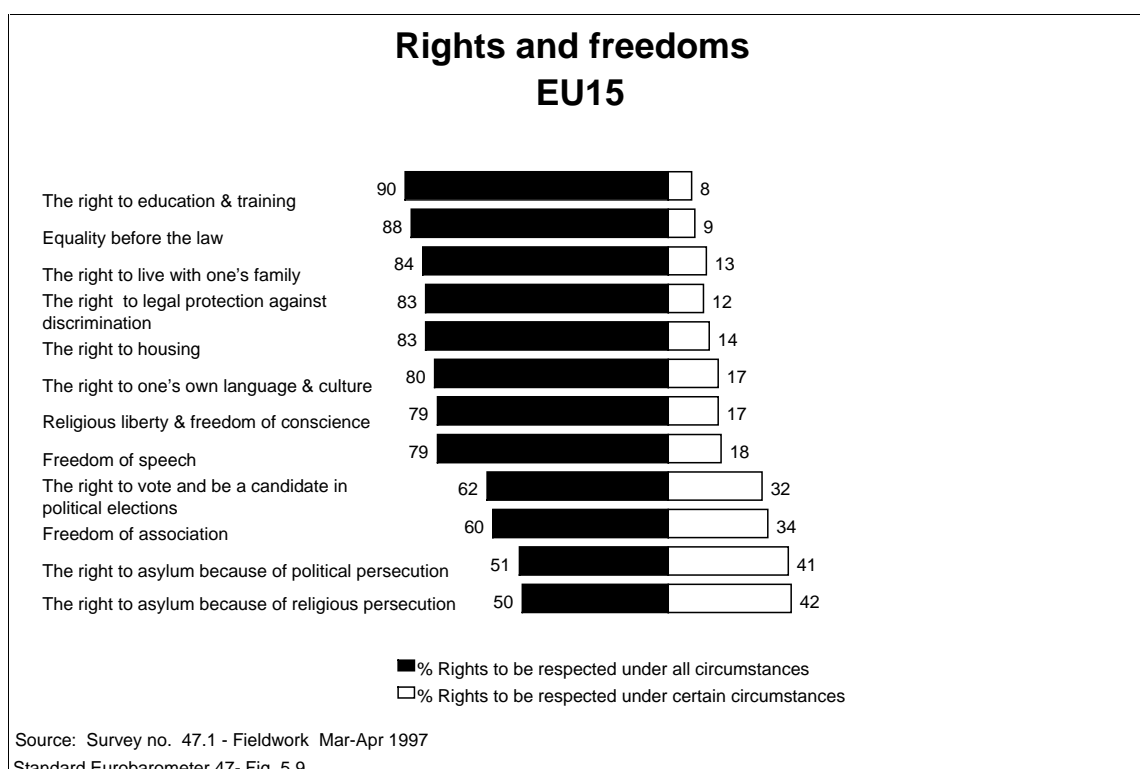
Again in the United Kingdom the role of public offices and libraries as an information source is emphasised with nearly six in ten citing them as sources of information. Approximately one in three respondents cite their Members of Parliament both national and European as a source of information, the EU average for each being 16%. In terms of the mass media it was worth noting that only 31% thought they would get information from the television, a significantly lower figure than elsewhere. (Table 5.12)

5.8. Respect for rights and freedoms

As we indicated at the beginning of this chapter we have included in this section the analysis of a question used as part of a survey on the **European Year against Racism**. The question attempted to examine the importance people place on certain individual rights and freedoms; the question read as follows:

For each of the following rights and freedoms, could you tell me whether you think they should be respected under all circumstances, or whether this depends on the circumstances?

- The freedom of speech*
- The freedom of association*
- The right to use one's own language and culture*
- Religious liberty and freedom of conscience*
- Equality before the law*
- The right to asylum because of political persecution*
- The right to asylum because of religious persecution*
- The right to vote and be a candidate in political elections*
- The right to education and training*
- The right to legal protection against discrimination*
- The right to live with one's family*
- The right to housing*



Overall European citizens cherish the **right to education and training** above all else, nine in ten persons Union-wide rate this as a right which should be respected under all circumstances and only 8% considered it depended on the circumstances. Strongest attachment to this right was seen in Spain where 94% of those interviewed felt it should be respected at all times. The lowest, but nevertheless very high scores, were recorded in Belgium and Denmark with 84% each.

Equality before the law came a close second in importance with 88% considering it should be respected at all times. Highest scores were recorded in Italy, Finland and Sweden all with 94%, while registering lower, but again high levels included the United Kingdom (75%) and Belgium and Ireland both 77%.

At a more personal level people rated the **ability to live with one's family** (84%) and to be **housed** (83%) as rights to be respected at all times. For these two items national differences tend to be more pronounced : in Greece, Spain and Italy over nine in ten persons considered the ability to live with one's family an absolute right, while in Denmark only 66% consider this an inalienable right and in the Netherlands and Belgium the figures are 69%, and 71% respectively. The right to be housed showed a lesser range, with the highest scores in Greece and Portugal, 93% each, and the lowest in the United Kingdom 70%.

The right to **legal protection against discrimination** is valued by 83% of EU citizens, high scores of 88% and 89% being recorded in Spain, the Netherlands and Ireland while again the lowest scored being recorded in Belgium at 69%.

The right to one's **own language and culture** is most strongly held in Italy where over nine in ten persons (92%) considered this as a right that should be respected at all times. Other countries where this feeling is particularly high include Greece, Portugal and Ireland (all 89%), Spain 88% and Finland 86%. In Belgium only 63% consider this right as one to be applied in all circumstances.

The freedom of speech is cherished in nearly all Member States, and is again particularly high in Italy at 88%. The lowest score is recorded in East Germany at 64% compared with West Germany at 82% giving an average of 78% for Germany overall. Lower scores were noted in Sweden 67% and the United Kingdom 71%.

Religious liberty and freedom of conscience is the last in the high scoring group, again with nearly eight in ten persons feeling it should be respected at all times. Again we see particularly high scores in Italy 90% and also in the Netherlands (87%), Greece and Spain (85% each). Belgium continues together with Sweden to score lower, with 64% rating this freedom as essential.

In a second group we find a series of freedoms and rights which, while having a majority support, are not as strongly supported overall as the ones discussed above. First in this group is the **right to vote and be a candidate in political elections**. Approximately two in three think this should be a right at all times. The national differences are striking; the range is wide with 77% in Spain rating this an essential right compared to only 32% in Belgium. Other countries above the average include Ireland 73%, Portugal and Greece 69% and the United Kingdom 68%.

Freedom of association while overall supported by six in ten persons in the Union again shows some wide divergence in the national scores : high scores are recorded in Greece (86%), Portugal (73%) and Spain (70%), but conversely much lower scores are found in Sweden (46%), Denmark (51%), the Netherlands (52%), East Germany (53%) and Finland (54%).

The right to **asylum be it for political or religious reasons** is rated last on the list of freedoms and rights and we find that just one in two people consider these rights in all circumstances. People from Greece, Spain and Portugal are generally most favourable to asylum seekers, both political and religious, while countries more questioning of these rights are to be found in Belgium (38% political and 34% religious), the United Kingdom (40% political and 42% religious) and Germany (44% political and 37% religious). (Tables 5.14 & 5.15)

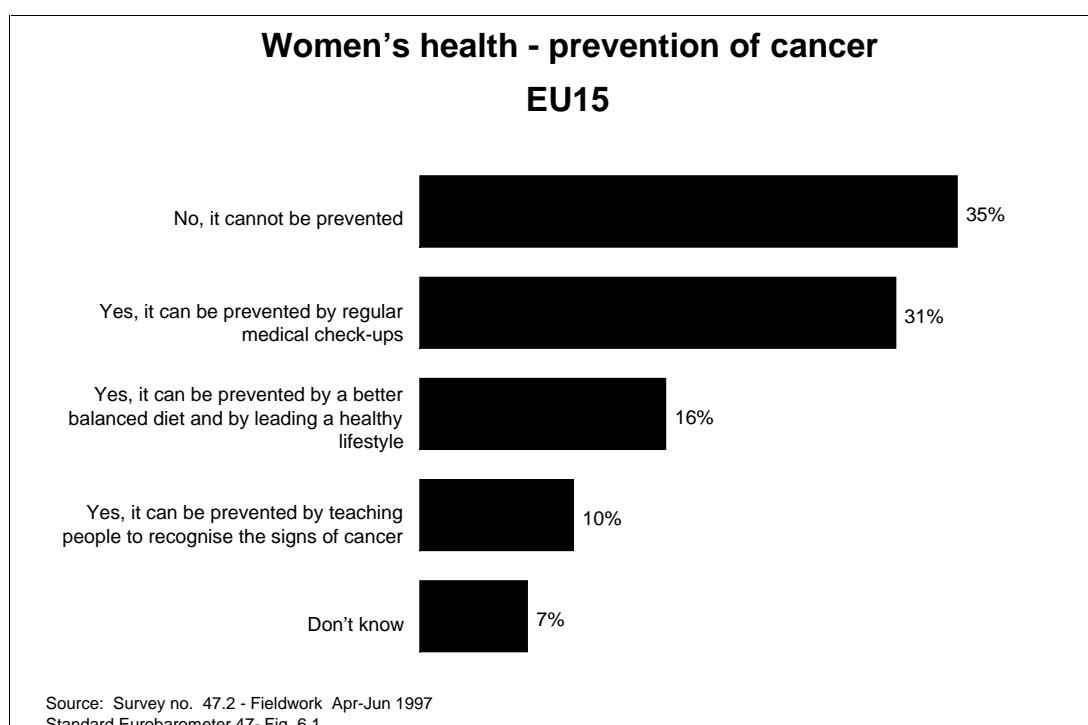
6. Health and Training

In this final chapter we will discuss briefly the results from two special question series on the survey, the first relating to women's attitudes to the prevention of cancer and the effectiveness of preventive screening, the second discussing several questions taken from a longer series concerning education and training and attitudes towards the information society.

6.1. Women and Cancer

In a series of questions concerning cancer and its prevention the Eurobarometer asked women if they personally thought the disease could be prevented or not. Overall 58% of women feel that cancer is preventable, 35% however do not believe so and a further 7% say they don't know.

Thirty-one percent of women believe that the best means of prevention is by regular medical check-ups, 16% believe that a balanced diet and a healthy life style will help, while 10% think that by teaching people to recognise the early signs of the disease will contribute to its prevention.



In the country analysis we note that women from the Mediterranean countries are far more positive about prevention than elsewhere, 20% or less of these women feel cancer can not be prevented, which is in contrast to the Netherlands where 66% believe it can not be prevented, and likewise in Germany 54% and the United Kingdom 44%.

Regular check-ups are seen as a particularly useful measure in Greece (53%), France (51%) and Italy (49%). Conversely women in the Netherlands (10%), Denmark (12%) and Germany (13%) are the least likely to rate check-ups as useful in the fight against cancer. Prevention by improving **one's diet and life style** is though to be particularly valuable in Denmark where 45% believe it will help in prevention. Higher than average scores on this point were also recorded in Sweden (27%), Luxembourg (27%) and Austria 25%. On the other hand low scores for diet and life style changes were recorded in France (9%), East Germany (10%) and Greece (11%).

As we mentioned 10% believe that prevention can be helped by learning to **recognise the signs of cancer** and this is particularly the case in Portugal (16%) and Ireland (15%). However it seen of little value by German (7%) and Dutch (4%) women. (Table 6.1)

In demographic terms we see that younger women are more positive about the prevention of cancer as are the well educated – 62% of 15-24 year olds believe cancer can be prevented compared to 54% of over 55's. Younger women also set greater store by the various preventive measures, in particular the teaching of people to recognise the early warning signs, 14% compared to 9% for those over 40.

6.2. Effectiveness of preventive screening

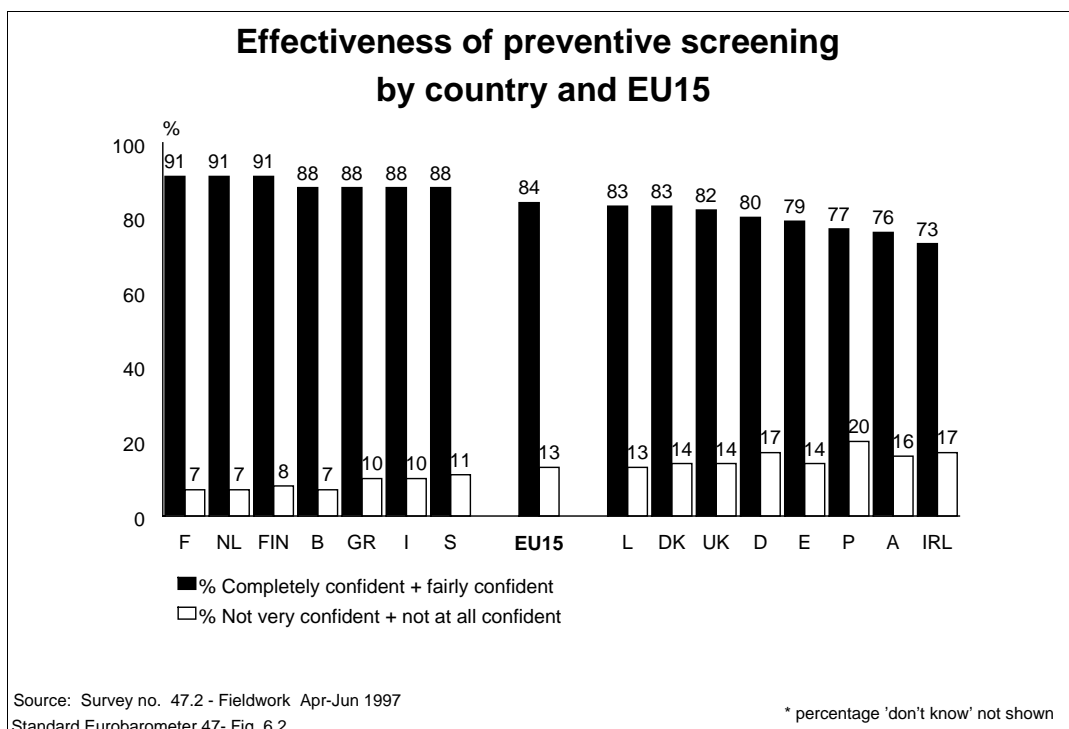
A second question which was fielded to evaluate how effective women feel preventive medical examinations are, asked respondents to say whether they were:

- Completely confident*
- Fairly confident*
- Not very confident*
- Not at all confident*

In preventive medical examinations.

Overall 31% of all women interviewed state they were “*completely confident*” in screening tests, just over half (54%) rated themselves as “*fairly confident*”, 11% “*not very confident*” and 2% as “*not at all confident*”.

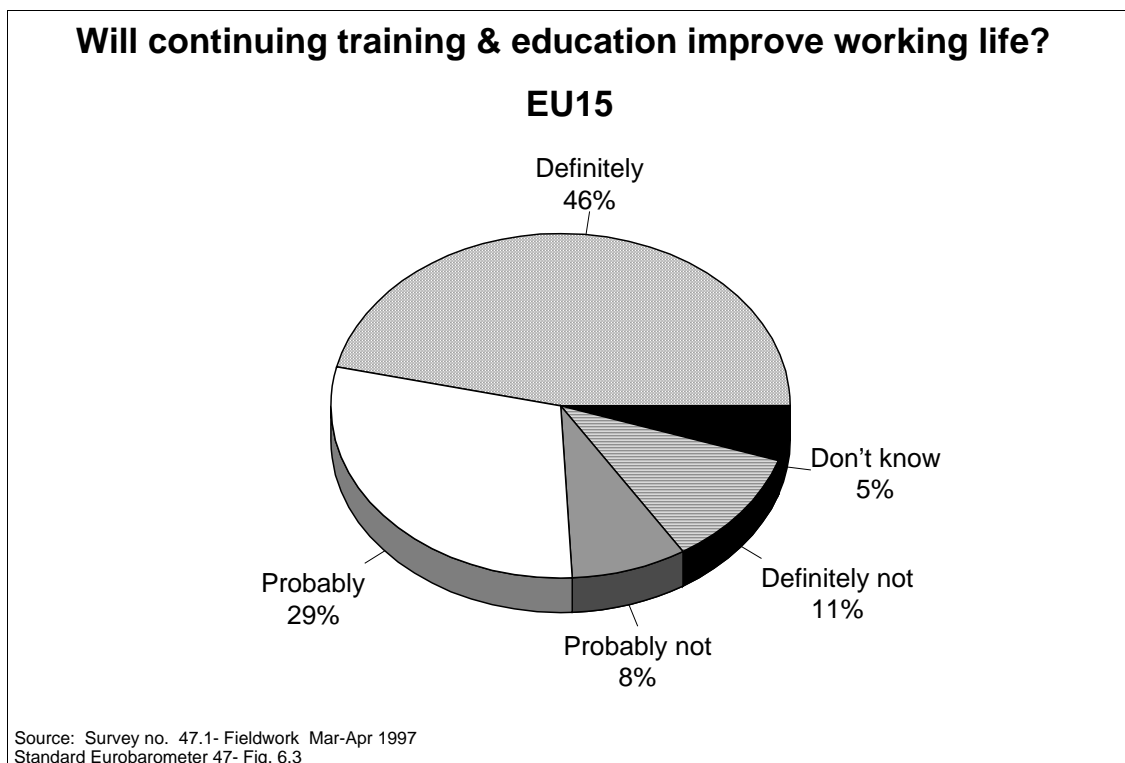
We find that confidence in preventive medical tests is particularly high in France where 53% of women say they are “*completely confident*” and a further 38% say they are “*fairly confident*”. Confidence levels are also above average in the Netherlands, where 44% “*completely confident*” and Greece 43% “*completely confident*”. Overall we observe lower scores in Portugal (20%), Germany and Ireland (17%) “*not very*” or “*not at all*” confident. (Table 6.2)



6.3. The value of continuing training and education

In this final section we examine responses to a selection of questions associated with the value of continuing training and education throughout life, the perceived role of the European Union in training and finally people's perceptions of the information society and its role in education and training.

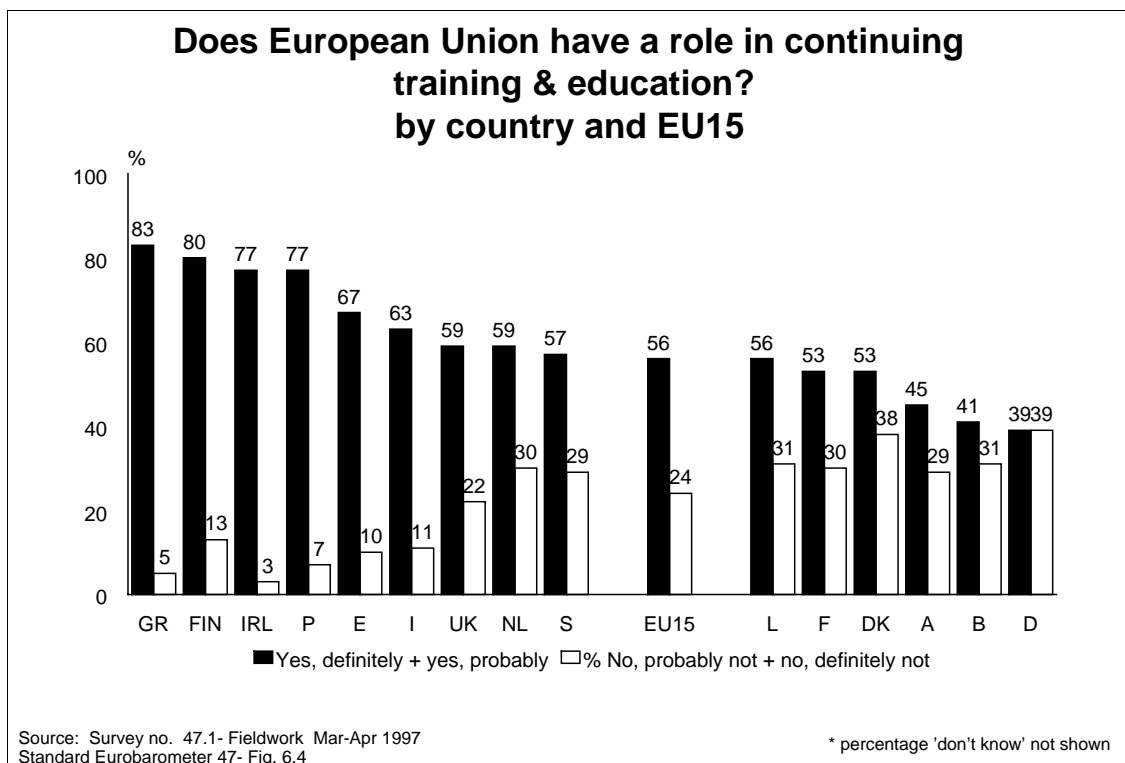
The response to the question as to whether continuing training and education can improve one's working life is a resounding yes. Forty-six percent of those interviewed felt it would definitely improve their working life, 29% probably, 8% probably not and 11% definitely not, while 5% held no opinion. **Thus overall 75% of those interviewed see training and education as a positive thing.**



We find greatest support for continuing education and training in the United Kingdom and Ireland, where 65% and 64% respectively, believe that continuing education and training will definitely improve their working life. In striking contrast only 26% of Germans felt it would definitely improve their working life. Elsewhere the differences were less marked. In the demographic analysis it is predictably the young, well educated and managers who are most supportive of continuing education and training. (Tables 6.3 & 6.4)

6.4. Does the European Union have a role to play in continuing training and education?

A majority of people (56%) believe the European Union does have a role to play in continuing training and education, these sentiments are particularly high in Portugal, 53% “definitely have a role”, Greece 48%, Ireland 47% and Finland 40%. In contrast almost equal numbers of Germans are in favour as are against European Union involvement – 39% definitely/probably yes and 39%, probably/definitely not. Overall we also witness a relatively high “don’t know” score of 20% on this question, with some higher than average scores in Italy and Austria each with 26% “don’t know” scores and Spain and West Germany both 23%. (Table 6.5)



Looking at the socio-demographic variables we observe that there exists a very high correlation between those holding a positive view of the European Union as measured by the “membership good thing-bad thing” indicator and those believing the Union has a role in the field of continuing training and education. Nearly 70% of those favourable to membership support Union-level action, compared to 37% of those with unfavourable attitudes.

Other socio-demographic groups which are traditionally associated with favourable attitudes to the European Union are also likely to support Union-level action for training and education. These include men more than women (59% to 53%), the young 62% compared with 49% for the over 55’s, the well educated 65% compared 50% of those leaving school by the age of 16.

Of particular interest however, was the analysis by occupational group. Again as would be expected the managers are more in favour than average (66% compared to the EU average of 56%), but of all the other groups we see the unemployed strongly supporting European action, 27% “definitely” and 34% “probably”. An additional analysis of people’s feelings concerning their job security also indicates that those feeling most vulnerable to job loss in the forthcoming months support Union action, with 28% saying “definitely” yes to EU action. (Table 6.6)

6.5. The information society and training

In the final question on education and training we attempted to measure people's attitudes to the new technologies and the information society by using a series of attitude statements and asking respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with each. The question read as follows:

"Information and communication technologies are increasingly prominent in our private and working lives: today you can link computers, televisions, videos and communication satellites. I am going to read out a number of statements regarding the relationship between this so-called "information society" and continuing training and education. For each please tell me whether you tend to agree or disagree."

Schools should prepare children well to use the new technologies and tools of the information society.

Throughout your working life it is essential to follow training courses so as to adapt to rapid technological changes.

I personally feel the need to follow such courses.

Nowadays to avoid becoming or staying unemployed, it is essential to know how to use these new technologies and tools.

New technologies and tools of the information society make training easier.

I am personally afraid that training courses are becoming too complicated, as it is difficult to fully understand these new technologies and tools.

The Internet and new technologies will divide society rather than bring it together.

I don't trust the Internet and new technologies, because they contain violence, pornography, and so on.

When there is too much information, the quality of education falls.

The Internet and new technologies are too expensive for me.

In reality people do not use computers for learning.

The results show that the **overwhelming number of people believe that future employment is closely linked with the ability to use the new technologies**. Eight in ten people agree with the two statements that it is necessary to know how to use the new technologies and that the continuing updating of skills is necessary.

We also find a large consensus on the value of training for the new technologies. Seventy-four percent agree with the statement "*new technologies and tools of the information society make training easier*" and nearly half of those interviewed felt that they personally needed to follow such training courses. But an important 40% feared such training programmes, saying they were too complicated and difficult to understand.

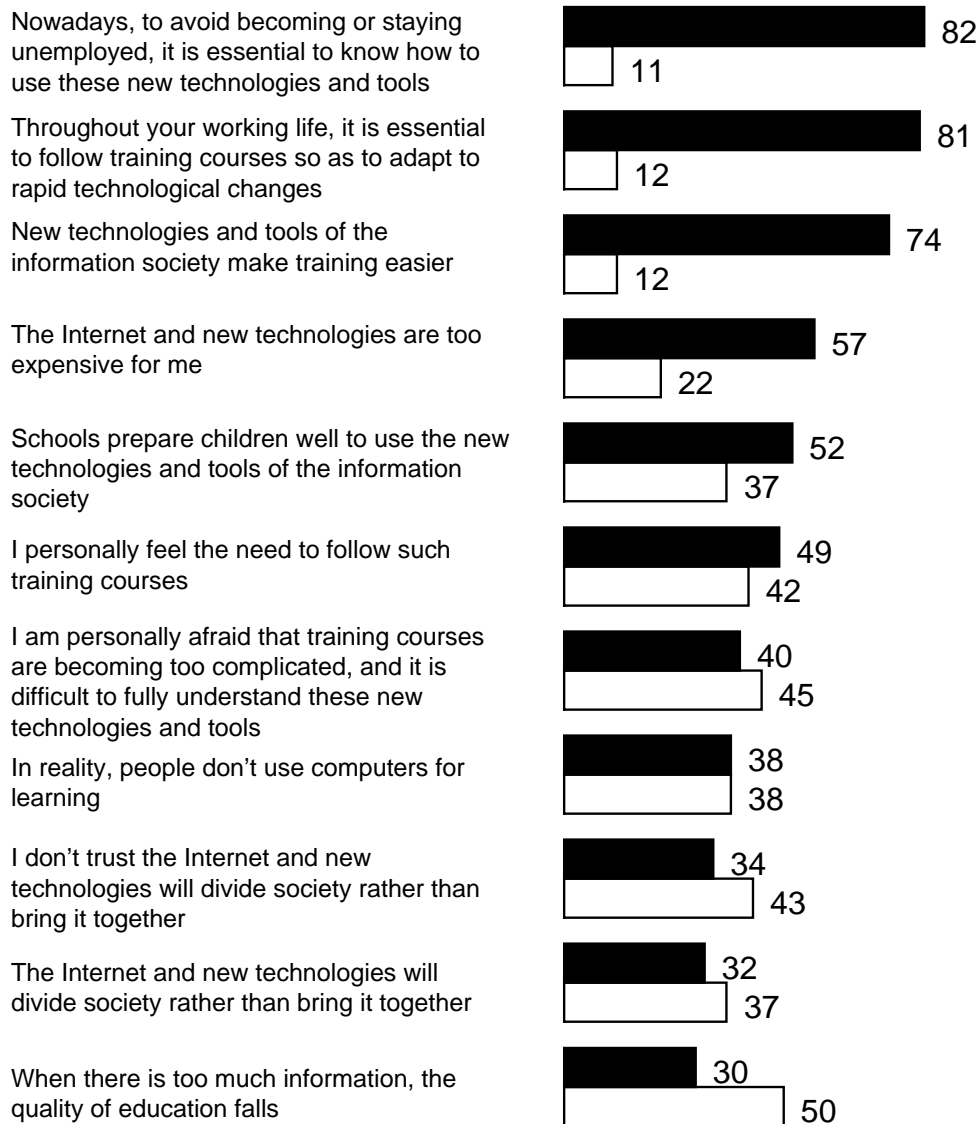
Fifty-seven percent say the Internet and new technologies are too expensive for them and 34% feared the growth of violence and pornography over the Net.

Only just over half of those interviewed believed that schools did a good job in preparing children in the use of the new technologies.

Attitudes to the remaining statements were mixed: 38% believe that computers did not contribute to learning, but 38% did, that the Internet would divide society was felt by 32%, but 37% disagreed and finally the statement that too much information reduces the quality of education was rejected by half the respondents.

The information society & training

EU15



■ % Tend to agree □ % Tend to disagree

Source: Survey no. 47.1- Fieldwork Mar-Apr 1997
 Standard Eurobarometer 47- Fig. 6.5

* percentage 'don't know' not shown

National differences do to a certain extent reflect the extent to which people have access to and make use of the new technologies. As we observed in Chapter Four the use of the Internet and World Wide Web is very variable between countries. Nevertheless, there seems little disagreement over the importance of the use of new technologies for training throughout the Union.

However, there are some noticeable national variations; for example, how effectively schools are preparing children to use the new technologies. The highest level of satisfaction is seen in Finland, where 82% believe the schools are doing an adequate job; this is followed by the United Kingdom where 72% think schools are doing an adequate job. In Austria the figure is 67%, Ireland 65% and Sweden 64%. Particularly low scores were recorded in Greece 27%, Italy 30% and Portugal 39%.

The impact of the technologies and the Internet as reflected in the statements such as "*I don't trust the Internet/new technologies*" (violence, pornography) and "*the Internet will divide society*", show that a sizeable proportion of people "do not know" if there will be any impact. We observe high negative scores in particular in France 52% and Belgium 51% for the access to violence and pornography, while much lower scores are noted in Portugal, Ireland, Spain and Greece, all of which also record high "don't know" scores.

We may conclude that there is widespread understanding of the need for skills in the new technologies and support for training actions, be they at national or Union level. However the current differences in availability and use of these new technologies, and particular the Internet/WWW, in the individual Member States means that a differentiated approach to training in the European Union context will be needed for the foreseeable future.