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PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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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.

In each of the 15 Member States, the survey is carried out by national institutes associated with the "INRA (Europe) European Coordination Office". This network of institutes was selected by tender. All institutes are members of the "European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research" (ESOMAR) and comply with its standards.

The figures shown in this report for each of the Member States are weighted by sex, age, region and size of locality. The figures given for the European Union as a whole 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.

This report, which was drawn up by the Public Opinion Analysis 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 surveys 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)*
- *In the near future: Eurobarometer Applicant Countries (replacing the Central and Eastern EB)*

The face-to-face general public standard Eurobarometer surveys and the future EB Applicant Countries surveys, 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.

**The Eurobarometer Website address is :
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/epo/eb.html>**

Major News Items around the time of Fieldwork March to May 1999

1 January	Germany takes over the six-month Presidency of the European Union The euro becomes the official currency in eleven EU countries
14 January	The European Parliament rejects a censorship vote against the European Commission but calls for a committee of independent experts to be convened under the auspices of the Parliament and the Commission
27 January	The Committee of Independent Experts is set up to investigate allegations regarding fraud, mismanagement and nepotism in the European Commission

- 12 March Germany's finance minister Oskar Lafontaine resigns
- 15 March The Committee of Independent Experts publishes its first report on allegations regarding fraud, mismanagement and nepotism in the European Commission

Collective resignation of the Members of the European Commission
- 18 March End of Kosovo Summit without signing of the Rambouillet Agreement
- 24-25 March Berlin European Council
- 24 March The Heads of State and Government of the European Union nominate Romano Prodi to replace Jacques Santer as President of the European Commission
- 24 March NATO air strikes over Yugoslavia start
- 26 March European Union leaders reach agreement on Agenda 2000
- 4 April 50th anniversary of NATO
- 1 May The Treaty of Amsterdam enters into force
- 4 May Romano Prodi is elected European Commission President by the European Parliament

HIGHLIGHTS

This 51st Eurobarometer report sheds light on the state of public opinion towards the European Union in the spring of 1999. Fieldwork for the survey began just when the European Commission resigned on 15 March 1999, nine months before the end of its term. The results of this survey are affected by this event although other events, such as the war in Kosovo, no doubt will also have influenced public opinion.

Support for EU membership and benefit from EU membership

- Support for the European Union is less solid in spring 1999 than in autumn 1998, although opposition levels did not increase. 49% of EU citizens support their country's membership to the EU (-5). 44% are of the view that their country has benefited from membership (-5).

Democracy in the EU and reform of the EU's institutions

- EU citizens are now significantly more likely to express satisfaction with the way democracy works in the European Union (42%) than they were in spring 1998 (+7).
- The public has become more likely to view reform of the Union's institutions as a priority for the European Union. 52% of EU citizens now feel this way, compared to 49% in autumn 1998. Significant increases are noted in Austria (+15), Luxembourg (+13), Belgium, Ireland (both +10), Portugal (+9), Germany, France, Sweden (all +7), Denmark, Spain and Finland (all +4).

Trust in the European Union and its institutions

- Nearly 4 in 10 EU citizens tend to trust the European Union. The European Parliament is the institution that the public is most likely to trust (50%), followed by the Court of Justice (44%). The public is most likely to be wary of the European Commission and the Council of Ministers. Around 3 in 10 respondents say they tend not to trust these two institutions.

The Kosovo crisis

- People are less likely than they were in the autumn of 1998 to support a common defence and security policy and a common foreign policy or to favour EU joint decision-making on defence matters. Belgium and Portugal are the only countries where support levels increased since autumn 1998.

The single currency

- Sixty-one percent of EU citizens support the single currency while 28% oppose it. Support tends to be significantly higher in the countries that introduced the euro on 1 January 1999 (68%) than in the 4 "pre-in" countries (35%). However, support levels are much higher in Greece (65%) than they are in Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom - the 3 other "pre-in" countries.
- People throughout the EU are significantly more likely to feel well informed about the single currency in spring 1999 than they were six months earlier. On average, levels of feeling informed increased by 11 percentage points to reach an all-time high of 45%. In spring 1999 nearly 8 in 10 people say they have received information about the euro, compared to 6 in 10 people in autumn 1998.

Enlargement

- Among the 11 applicant countries, the EU public is most supportive of Hungary becoming part of the European Union (46%). However, support for other European countries, like Switzerland and Norway (both 70%) is significantly higher.
- There is widespread consensus that new countries can only join the European Union if they respect Human Rights and the principles of democracy (95%), if they fight organised crime and drug trafficking (93%) and if they protect the environment (92%).

The June 1999 European Parliament elections

- Although around than 7 in 10 respondents said they intended to vote in the June 1999 elections, actual turnout rates were far lower, ranging from 24% in the UK to 90% in Belgium where voting is compulsory.
- The proportion of people who recently heard or read something about the European Parliament increased significantly to 60% (+17) since autumn 1998. While media coverage, which explains public awareness in the context of this measurement, is always higher around election time, the high awareness levels are also linked to another topic that received widespread media attention: the role of the Parliament in the resignation of the European Commission.

Awareness of the European Union budget

- There is widespread misconception among the public when it comes to Union expenditure. Europeans are most likely (26%) to regard administrative costs as the Union's largest expenditure when in reality only 5% of the EU's 1999 budget is set aside for this purpose.

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REPORT

Introduction

This 51st Eurobarometer Report presents the views of European citizens towards the European Union in the spring of 1999.

Chapter 1 examines **how people feel about politics in general**. The chapter looks at **trust in the political system** and describes **satisfaction levels** with **democracy**, both at the **national** and the **EU** level. The last section of the chapter looks at how **attached people feel to their town or village, to their region, to their country and to Europe**.

Chapter 2 examines **self-perceived knowledge levels about the European Union** and reports on **awareness levels of 9 of the Union's institutions**. The chapter also looks at the extent to which **public perception of how the EU's budget is spent matches actual Union expenditure**. Other subjects covered in this chapter relate to **sources of information about the EU**, **levels of trust in the media** and **news media usage**. The chapter ends with an examination of the extent to which people have **access to modern information technology**.

Chapter 3 looks at attitudes to the European Union in the spring of 1999. It describes **support levels for EU membership** and **levels of perceived benefit from EU membership** and reports on the changes since the autumn of 1998. The chapter also looks at **people's fears about building Europe**, the **role played by 9 of the EU's institutions in the life of the European Union** and at **trust levels in the European Union** as a whole and in **9 of the Union's institutions** more specifically.

Chapter 4 focuses on current policy issues. Apart from looking at public **support for EU joint decision-making over national decision-making**, analysing people's **priorities for the European Union** and measuring **support for key issues**, the chapter focuses on the **single currency** and **enlargement**.

Chapter 5 looks at attitudes to the **European Parliament**. It looks at people's intention to vote and actual turnout rates at the **June 1999 elections**. The chapter also looks at **awareness levels** and the **perceived and desired importance of the European Parliament**. The chapter ends with a look at the **areas that the public feels the Parliament should treat as a priority**.

The final chapter looks at some of the other issues covered on the 51st Eurobarometer survey.

**We wish to thank all the European Union citizens who have taken part in the survey over the years.
Without their participation, this report could not have been written.**

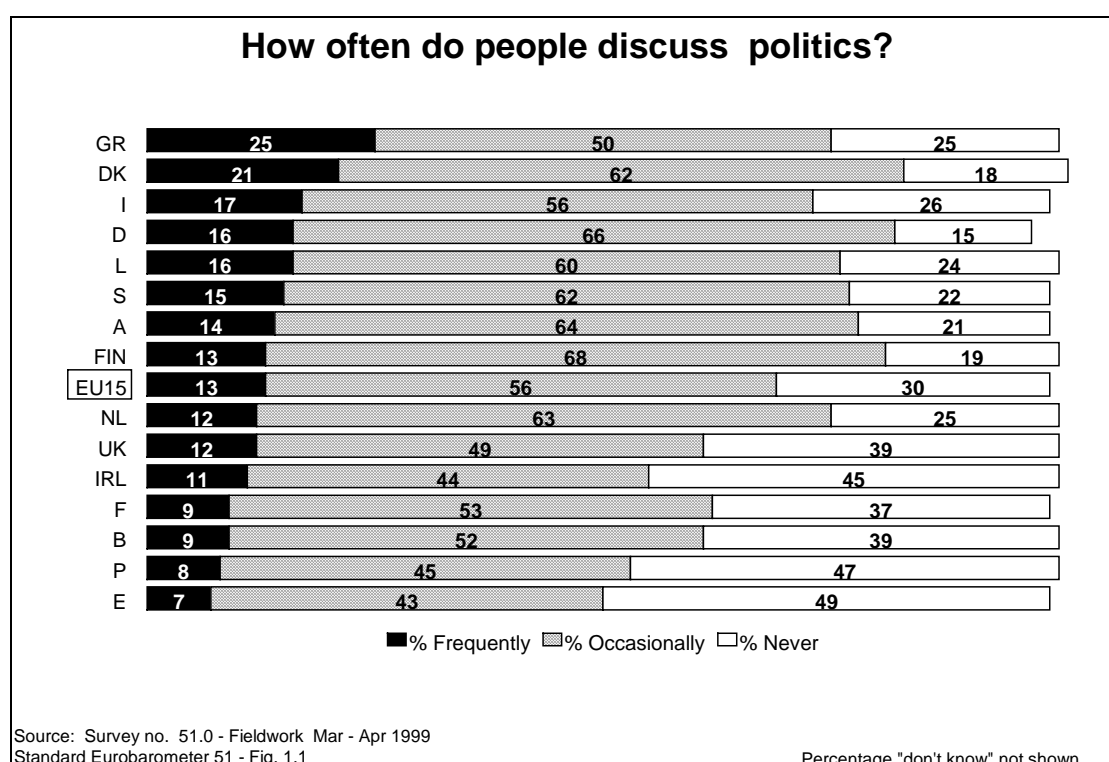
1. Citizens and the political process

In this chapter, we investigate how often EU citizens discuss politics with their friends, which is a frequently used and important measure of political interest. We also examine whether the EU public has trust in the political system and is satisfied with democracy at the national and EU level. The last section of the chapter looks at how attached citizens feel to the various politico-geographical levels of identity - that is their town or village, their region, their country and Europe.

1.1. Interest in politics

When it comes to analysing empirical data on levels of political interest, in this case by asking respondents how often they discuss political matters when they get together with friends, several issues can be explored. We shall leave the examination of the influence of people's values on levels of political interest to political scientists. In terms of trend analyses, we limit ourselves to the comment that the often-reported decline in political interest is not apparent from these Eurobarometer results. Our focus is on the latest findings, which present a snapshot of the situation at the time of fieldwork. In this context, we examine two factors in more detail. These are the influence of a) nationality and b) people's socio-demographic characteristics on levels of political interest.

On average, 13% of Europeans discuss political matters frequently, 56% do this occasionally and 30% never engage in this activity. As the graph below shows, the results vary significantly from country to country.



People in Denmark (83%) are most likely to discuss politics with their friends, followed by people in Germany (82%) and Finland (81%). At 25%, respondents from Greece were most likely to say they frequently discuss politics. In Spain (49%), Portugal (47%) and Ireland (45%), respondents were most likely to say they never discuss politics with their friends. (Table 1.1a)

For each of the various socio-demographic groups in the European Union, the following table shows the percentage that say they frequently discuss political matters with friends. As can be seen managers, the self-employed, people who stayed in full-time education the longest and the most frequent users of the media are most likely to frequently discuss political matters. At the bottom of the table we find people who score lowest on the Media Use Index¹.

% who frequently discuss political matters with friends for various groups (EU15)	
Group	%
Managers	24
Self-employed	21
Educated up to age 20+	20
Media Use Index:+++	19
Men	17
Aged 40-54	16
Aged 25-39	14
Aged 55+	14
Educated to age 16-19	13
Retired	13
Media Use Index: ++	13
Average for EU15	13
Employees	12
Students	12
Unemployed	11
Manual workers	11
Women	10
Educated to age 15 or younger	9
Aged 15-24	8
House persons	7
Media Use Index: --	7
Media Use Index: ---	3

The largest gap is found between people who feel they know a lot about the European Union and those who feel they know very little. Only 5% of the latter group say they discuss politics frequently when they get together with friends, compared to 45% of people who feel they know a lot about the European Union². (Table 1.1b)

¹ A definition of the Media Use Index is provided in Appendix C.4.

² Knowledge about the European Union is discussed in chapter 2. A definition of the self-perceived knowledge scale is provided in Appendix C.4.

1.2. Trust in the political system

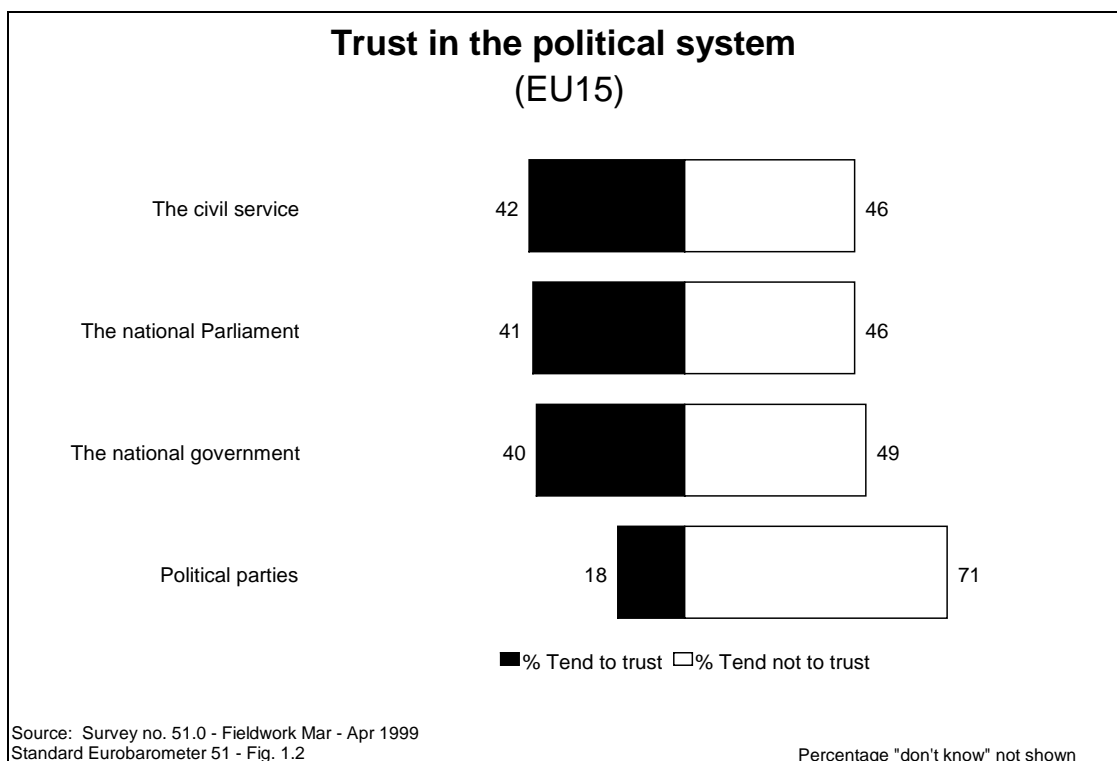
Respondents were asked to state their trust or distrust with a large number of national and international institutions. In this section, we focus specifically on trust in political institutions³.

Low levels of confidence in political institutions are an often-found phenomenon in empirical studies. This is also the case on the Eurobarometer surveys. The latest results show that on average 35% of Europeans trust the civil service, the Parliament, the government and the political parties of their country. The country results show that average trust levels range from 25% in Italy to 56% in the Netherlands.

Trust in political institutions (Average trust level of 4 institutions, in % by country)	
Country	%
The Netherlands	56
Luxembourg	51
Austria	45
Portugal	44
Finland	43
Denmark	43
Ireland	39
Greece	38
Spain	38
Germany	37
Average for EU15	35
Sweden	34
United Kingdom	34
France	32
Belgium	26
Italy	25

³ The question contains 17 items. Results for the political institutions are shown in table 1.2a. Tables 1.2b-c show the results for a number of other institutions but these are not discussed in the chapter. Results for three items on the media are discussed in chapter 2 (table 2.6). Results for the item that measures trust in the European Union is discussed in chapter 3 (table 3.5).

The graph below depicts the results for each of these 4 institutions at the EU15 level. It shows that EU citizens are most likely to trust their country's civil service (42%) and Parliament (41%), while only 18% tend to trust the political parties in their country.



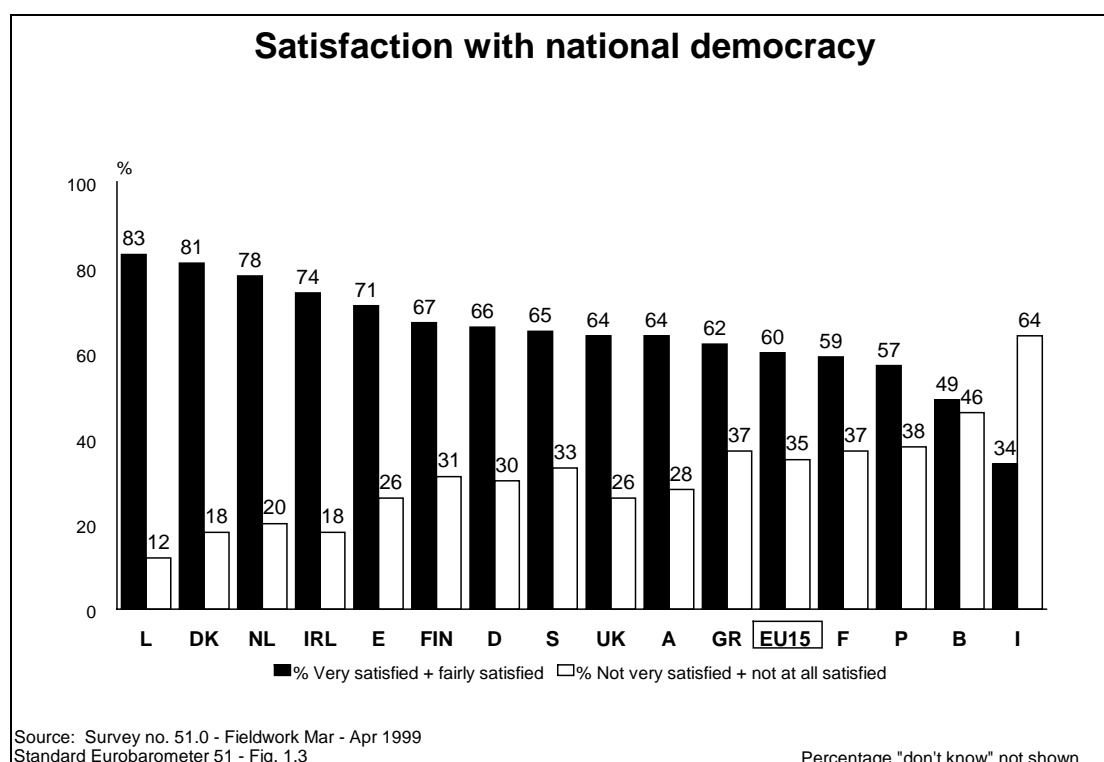
The country by country analyses show that trust in one's country's **civil service** is most widespread in Austria (65%), followed by Ireland (61%), the Netherlands (57%), Luxembourg (51%) and Denmark (50%). It is lowest in Italy (27%), followed at a distance by Belgium (37%). Trust in one's country's **Parliament** is most widespread in the Netherlands (62%) and Luxembourg (61%) and least widespread in Belgium (26%) and Italy (30%). Trust in one's country's **government** is also most widespread in Luxembourg (64%) and the Netherlands (63%) and again least widespread in Belgium (23%) and Italy (28%). Trust levels in **political parties** are low throughout the Member States and range from 11% in France to 40% in the Netherlands. (Table 1.2a)

Although trust levels are still very low in Italy and Belgium, significant improvements have been recorded since the autumn of 1997, when the Eurobarometer previously asked the trust question⁴. This is particularly evident in Belgium, where trust in the civil service increased by 8 percentage points, trust in the national government and political parties by 7 percentage points and trust in the Parliament by 6 percentage points. Furthermore, we find that Belgians have become significantly more likely to trust the police (+12), the army (+10) and the legal system (+8) in their country. (See table 1.2b for the country results)

⁴ See Eurobarometer No. 48, chapter 1.

1.3. Satisfaction with national democracy

Despite the fact that not many people feel they can trust their country's political system, many EU citizens are satisfied with the way democracy works in their country. On average, 6 in 10 people are very or fairly satisfied, 35% are not very or not at all satisfied and 4% lack an opinion. In most countries, the spring 1999 results are significantly more positive than those obtained in spring 1998⁵. Two factors which may help explain this significant improvement in satisfaction levels are a) the war in Kosovo and b) the fact that elections, the pillar of democracy, have received much media attention in the months leading up to the fieldwork period.



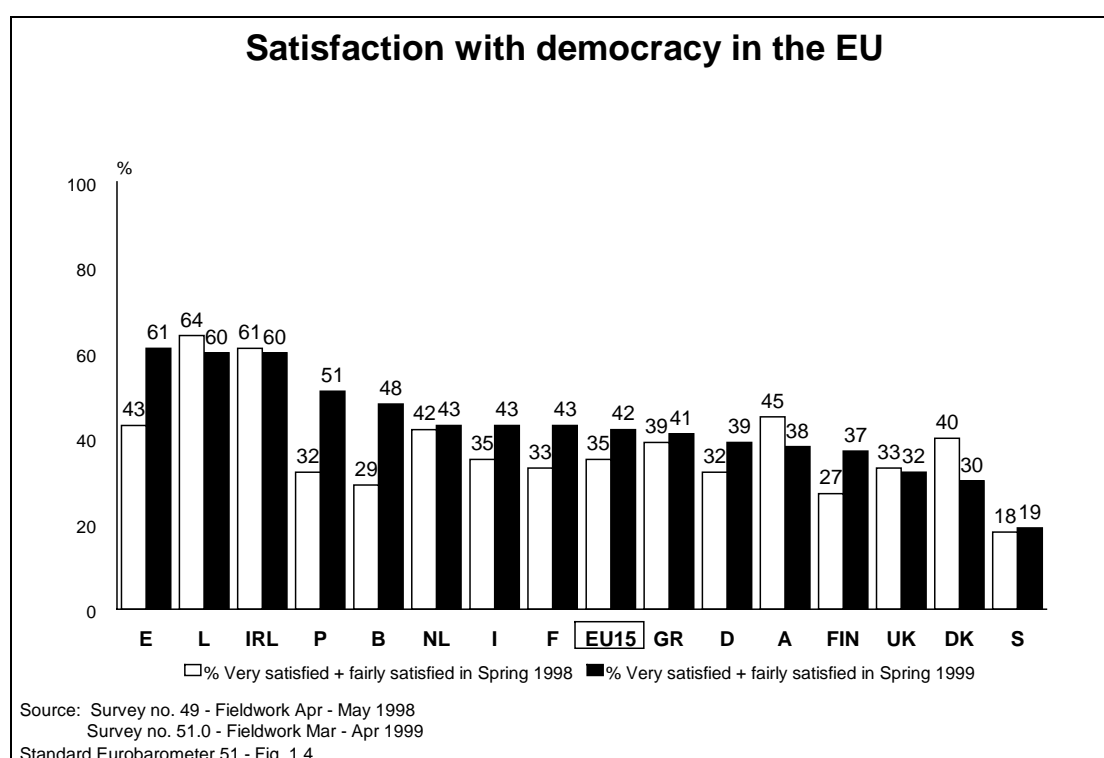
The country by country analyses show that people in Luxembourg (83%), Denmark (81%) and the Netherlands (78%) are most likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works in their country. Despite a small improvement since the spring of 1998, satisfaction with national democracy continues to be least widespread in Italy (34%). (Table 1.3)

⁵ See Eurobarometer No. 49, table 6.2a.

1.4. Satisfaction with democracy in the European Union

A significant improvement is also recorded in the extent to which Europeans are satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union. Since spring 1998, satisfaction levels increased by 7% so that in the spring of 1999, 42% of people are very or fairly satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union. In some of these countries, satisfaction levels increased by more than 15 percentage points (Portugal, Belgium and Spain).

The fact that the European Parliament, whose members are directly elected by the citizens of the 15 Member States, showed its strength by setting into motion the process which led to the resignation of the European Commission on 15 March 1999 (see chapter 3 for more information) is clearly seen by many people as evidence that there are systems in place to ensure that the European Union works in a democratic way. This explanation seems valid in most Member States. The only significant exceptions are Denmark, Austria and Luxembourg, where the proportion of people that is satisfied with democracy in the EU dropped by 10, 7 and 4 percentage points, respectively. In these countries, it may well be that the resignation of the European Commission is viewed as evidence that the European Union, at least until this event, did not work in a democratic way. Another possible explanation for the drop in satisfaction levels in Luxembourg may be found in the fact that the President of the European Commission that resigned, Jacques Santer, is a national of this country.



As the graph above shows, people in Spain (61%), Luxembourg and Ireland (both 60%) are most likely to be satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union, while people in Sweden (19%), Denmark (30%) and the United Kingdom (32%) are least likely to be satisfied. (Table 1.4a)

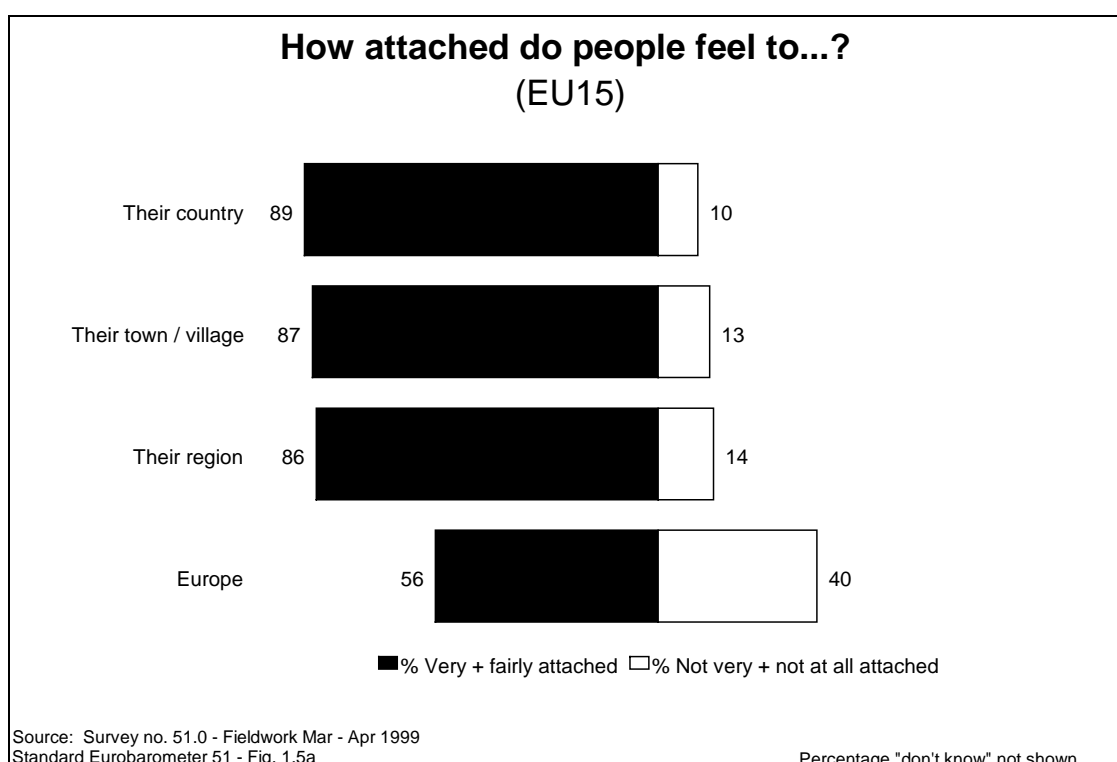
People's tendency to be satisfied with democracy in the European Union depends to a large extent on how they feel about the European Union in general. 60% of people who regard their country's membership to the EU as a good thing are satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union, compared to only 13% of people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing.

The demographic analyses show that men are both more likely than women to be satisfied and dissatisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union with women significantly more likely to lack an opinion. People aged 15 to 24 are significantly more likely than their older counterparts to be satisfied and significantly less likely to be dissatisfied. As such, people who are still in school are also the most satisfied group when looking at the breakdown by age at which people left full-time education. Among the occupational groups, managers are most likely to feel satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union while retired people are most likely to be dissatisfied. The proportion of "don't know" responses varies greatly and to a certain extent explains the differences in satisfaction levels.

(Table 1.4b)

1.5. People's attachment to their locality, their region, their country and Europe

The survey measures the degree of attachment people have to their town or village, to their region, to their country and to Europe. At the EU level, nearly 9 in 10 people feel attached to their country, their town or village and their region. More than half of EU citizens feels attached to Europe.

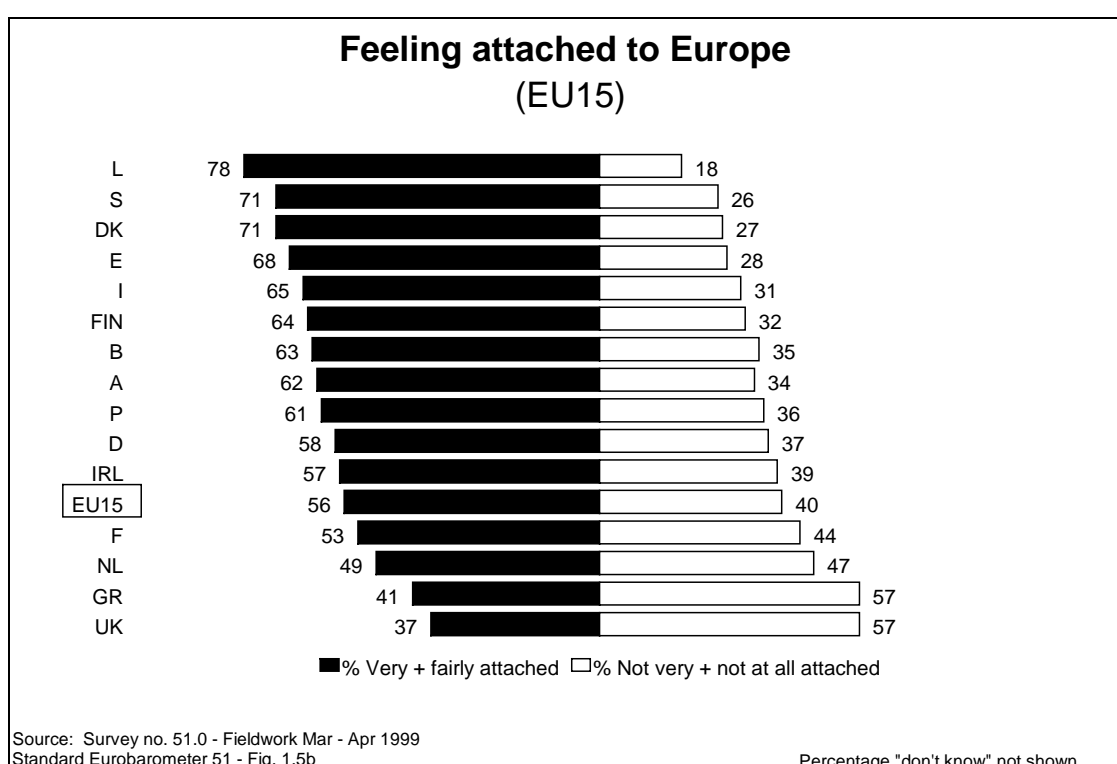


The country by country analyses show that 81% of the people in Greece feel very attached to their **town or village**, with a further 13% feeling fairly attached. Other countries where at least 9 in 10 people feel very or fairly attached are Spain (95%), Ireland, Portugal (both 93%), Austria (92%) and Italy (90%). At 71%, the Dutch are least likely to feel attached to their town or village. (Table 1.5)

In Greece, 82% of the people feel very attached to their **region** and a further 14% feel fairly attached. Other countries where more than 9 in 10 people feel very or fairly attached are Portugal, Spain (both 95%), Ireland (92%) and Austria (91%). At 72%, people in the Netherlands are least likely to feel attached to their region. (Table 1.6)

More than 8 in 10 people in Greece (85%) and Denmark (81%) feel very attached to their **country**. At 77%, Belgian respondents were least likely to say that they feel very or fairly attached to their country. (Table 1.7)

In terms of attachment levels to **Europe**, we find that people in Luxembourg (78%) are most likely to feel very or fairly attached, followed by people in Sweden and Denmark (both 71%). People in the UK are least likely to feel attached (37%), followed by people in Greece (41%) and the Netherlands (49%). More than half of the respondents living in the 9 remaining Member States say they feel very or fairly attached to Europe. (See also table 1.8)



2. Knowledge of the European Union and sources of information

In this chapter we look at the results of a number of questions on knowledge and awareness of the European Union. We also look at the sources people are most likely to use when they look for information about the European Union and which sources of information they prefer. The final part of the chapter looks at trust in the media, the extent to which people use the media to obtain news and the extent to which the public nowadays has access to modern information tools.

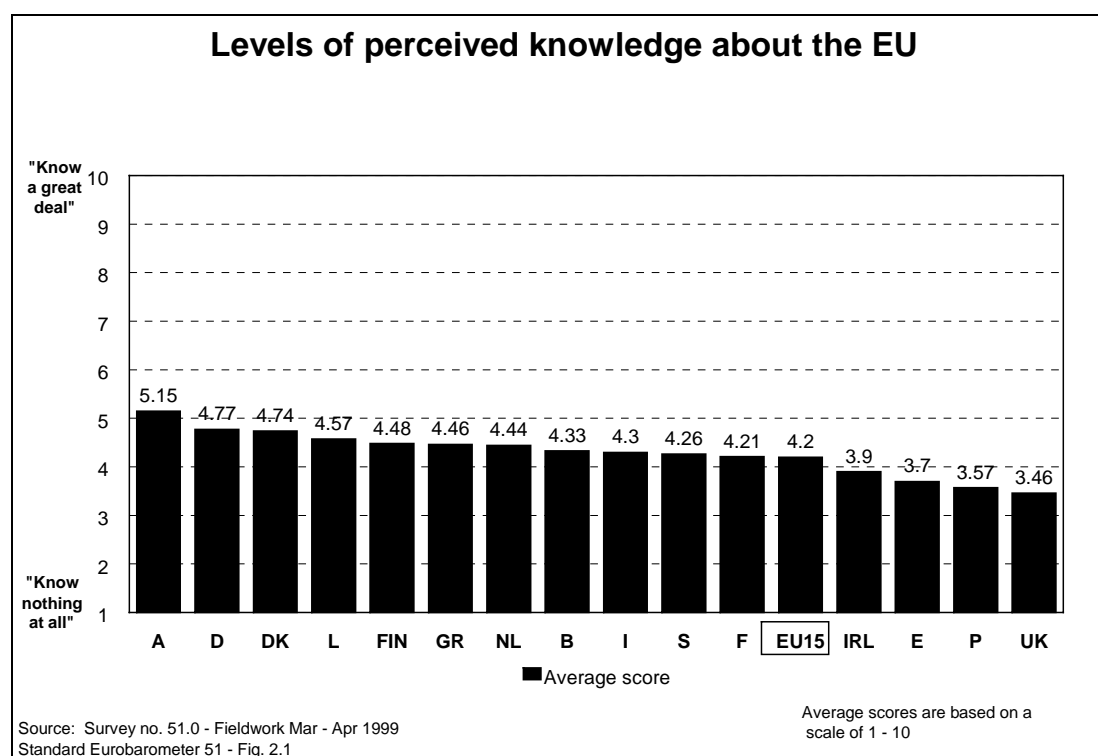
2.1. Self-perceived knowledge of the European Union

The large majority of Europeans continue to perceive their knowledge level of European Union affairs as relatively low, although there have been some small increases in several countries⁶. The EU15 results presented in the table below show that only 24% of EU citizens feel they know quite a lot to a great deal about the European Union (i.e. those choosing the numbers 6 through 10 on the scale).

Self-perceived knowledge of EU affairs Spring 1999 (in %, EU15)	
Scale	%
1 (Know nothing at all)	10
2	12
3	16
4	15
5	20
6	10
7	8
8	4
9	1
10 (Know a great deal)	1
Don't know	2
Average score	4.20

⁶ Respondents were asked: "how much do you feel you know about the European Union, its policies, its institutions" and were asked to select from a card a number - on a scale from 1 to 10 - which best represents their perceived knowledge about the European Union. The higher the number they select, the more they feel they know about the EU.

Looking at the country results shows that self-perceived knowledge levels vary significantly from one Member State to the next. The following graph depicts the average scores⁷ for each of the 15 countries.



The average scores range from a low of 3.46 in the UK to a high of 5.15 in Austria. In comparison to the autumn of 1998, average knowledge scores improved most in Sweden (+.37), Portugal (+.24), the Netherlands (+.16), Luxembourg (+.15) and Denmark (+.14). Minor drops in knowledge scores are recorded in Belgium (-.15) and Germany (-.06)⁸.

An inspection of the distribution of responses shows that 41% of Austrians feel they know quite a lot to a great deal about the European Union, followed by 32% of people in Denmark and the Netherlands, 31% of people in Finland and 30% of people in Germany and Greece. Portugal (12%), the UK and Spain (both 17%) are the only 3 countries where less than 2 in 10 people feel they know quite a lot to a great deal about the European Union. (Table 2.1⁹)

The following table shows the average scores for various socio-demographic groups in the EU. It shows that opinion leaders, managers, people who stayed in full-time education the longest and the most frequent users of the media are the groups that give themselves the highest score on the self-perceived knowledge scale. At the bottom of the table we find people who score lowest on the Media Use Index and the Opinion Leadership Index¹⁰.

⁷ The average scores, or means, show the central tendency of the responses and represent the sum of the responses for each of the ten points on the scale times the value of each point divided by the total number of responses.

⁸ See Eurobarometer No. 50, figure and table 6.6.

⁹ To make the table easier to read, a recoded version of the scale is presented consisting of four categories: 'know (almost) nothing' - points 1+2; 'know a bit' - points 3 to 5; 'know quite a lot' - points 6 to 8 and 'know a great deal' - points 9+10.

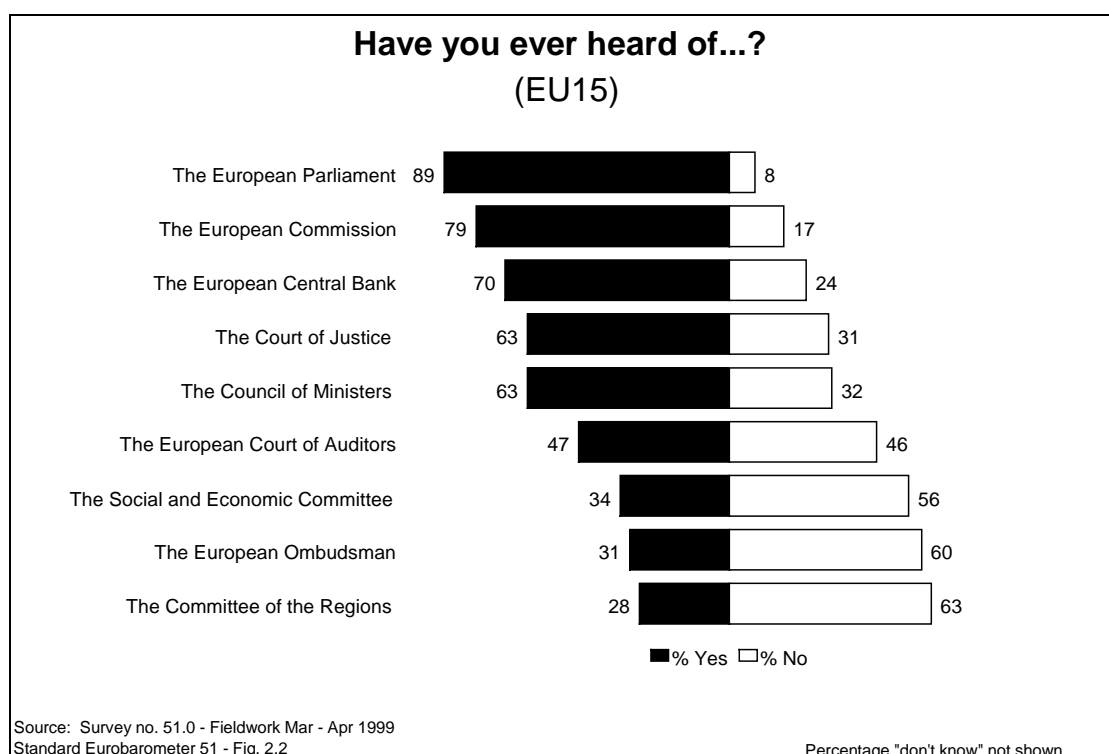
¹⁰ See Appendix C.4 for a definition of these two indices.

Average scores on perceived knowledge scale for various groups at the EU15 level	
Group	Score
Opinion Leadership Index: ++	5.88
Managers	5.36
Educated up to age 20+	5.09
Media Use Index:+++	4.89
Opinion Leadership Index: +	4.74
Self-employed	4.64
Men	4.62
Employees	4.55
Aged 40-54	4.44
Students	4.38
Aged 25-39	4.28
Educated to age 16-19	4.22
Average for EU15	4.20
Media Use Index: ++	4.14
Aged 55+	4.07
Unemployed	4.03
Retired	4.01
Aged 15-24	3.99
Opinion Leadership Index: -	3.97
Manual workers	3.92
Women	3.82
Educated to age 15 or younger	3.54
House persons	3.51
Media Use Index: --	3.49
Opinion Leadership Index: --	2.99
Media Use Index: ---	2.79

2.2. Awareness of the European Union institutions

One of the things the survey measures is awareness of 9 of the European Union's institutions¹¹. These are the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of Ministers, the Court of Justice, the European Ombudsman, the European Central Bank, the European Court of Auditors, the Committee of the Regions and the Social and Economic Committee¹².

The public is most likely to have heard of the European Parliament (89%), followed by the European Commission (79%) and the European Central Bank (70%). People are least likely to have heard of the two youngest EU institutions - the Committee of the Regions (28%) and the Social and Economic Committee (34%) - and the European Ombudsman (31%). The latter is, legally speaking, not an official EU institution.



The **European Parliament** is very well known throughout the Member States. Nearly all people in Denmark (99%), Luxembourg (98%), Sweden, Finland (both 97%) and Belgium (96%) have heard of it. At 86%, awareness levels are lowest in Germany and the UK. People in Denmark (97%), Finland and Luxembourg (both 95%) are most likely to have heard of the **European Commission**, while awareness levels are lowest in Greece, Germany (both 74%), Italy and Spain (both 75%). Awareness of the **European Central Bank** is most widespread in Finland (89%) and the Netherlands (83% - the President of the ECB, Wim Duisenberg, is Dutch) and least widespread in Greece (52%), followed at a distance by Spain (62%), Portugal (63%), Belgium and the UK (both 64%). People in Denmark (95%) are most likely to be aware of the existence of the **Court of Justice**, while people in Italy (47%) are least likely to know of its existence.

¹¹ The question asks respondents whether they have ever heard of the institution in question. In chapter 5, the results of a question measuring whether people have recently seen or heard something about the European Parliament through the media are discussed.

¹² Chapter 3 shows the extent to which people consider each of these institutions as important and the extent to which people say they tend to trust them.

Awareness of the **Council of Ministers** is most widespread in Sweden (85%) and Luxembourg (82%) and by far the least widespread in the UK (41%). People in Luxembourg (71%) are most likely to have heard of the **European Court of Auditors**, whereas people in the UK (17%) are least likely to have heard of it. In the Nordic countries - Denmark (24%) Sweden (26%) and Finland (27%), awareness levels are also below average. Familiarity with the **Social and Economic Committee** is most common in Luxembourg (58%) and least common in Sweden (21%). The **European Ombudsman** - Jacob Söderman from Finland - is most well known in his home country (71%) and least well known in Germany (19%). People in Portugal (46%) are most likely to have heard of the **Committee of the Regions**, while people in the UK (14%) are least likely to have heard of it. (Table 2.2)

The following table shows the average awareness levels for the 9 institutions in each of the 15 Member States. As can be seen, on average awareness levels are highest in Luxembourg - where many of these institutions are located - and lowest in the UK.

Awareness of the EU institutions (Average awareness levels for the 9 institutions, in % by country)	
Country	%
Luxembourg	71
Finland	68
Denmark	66
Austria	63
France	60
Ireland	59
Belgium	59
Portugal	59
Germany	59
The Netherlands	58
Sweden	57
Spain	57
Greece	56
EU15	56
Italy	52
United Kingdom	47

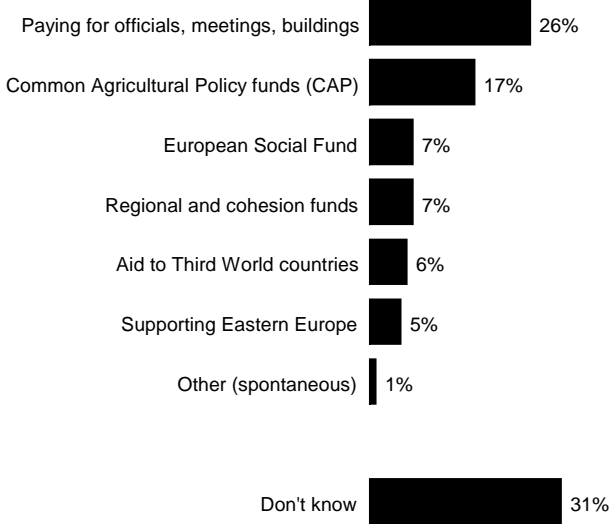
Awareness levels not only vary from country to country; they also depend largely on how much people feel they know about the European Union. The following table shows the awareness levels for each of the 9 European institutions among people with high self-perceived knowledge levels (those scoring 8-10 on the self-perceived knowledge scale), among people with average knowledge levels (those scoring 4-7) and among people with low knowledge levels (those score 1-3 on the scale).

Awareness levels of the EU institutions by self-perceived knowledge about the European Union (in %)			
Institution:	High knowledge level	Average knowledge level	Low knowledge level
European Parliament	99%	95%	81%
European Commission	96%	89%	65%
European Central Bank	91%	80%	54%
Council of Ministers	89%	74%	43%
Court of Justice	89%	73%	45%
Court of Auditors	75%	57%	29%
Social & Economic Committee	67%	41%	21%
Committee of the Regions	56%	33%	17%
European Ombudsman	50%	36%	21%

2.3. Knowledge of how the European Union budget is spent

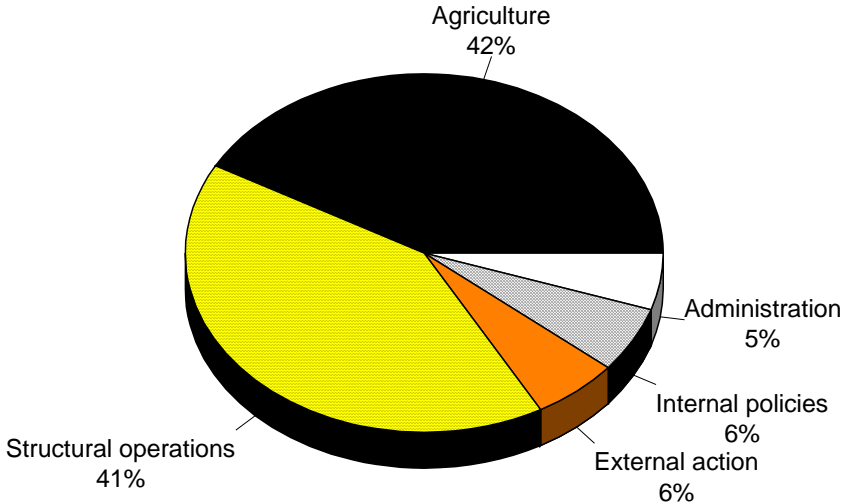
There is widespread lack of knowledge and misconception about how the European Union budget is spent. 31% of respondents do not know what most of the budget is spent on, with don't know responses ranging from 9% in Denmark to 46% in Spain. Apart from the 31% of the sample that lacks an opinion, we find that 26% of respondents wrongly think that most of the Union's budget is spent on paying for officials, meetings and buildings when in reality this accounts for only 5% of total Union expenditure in 1999. The 17% of respondents that believe most of the Union's budget is spent on the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) are more correct. In 1999, spending on CAP represents 42% of Union expenditure. The second largest amount is set aside for structural operations (41%) but respondents underestimate this expenditure. Only 7% believe that the European Social Fund or the regional and cohesion funds make up most of the Union's budget.

Public perception of the EU budget % believing most of the budget is spent on... (EU15)



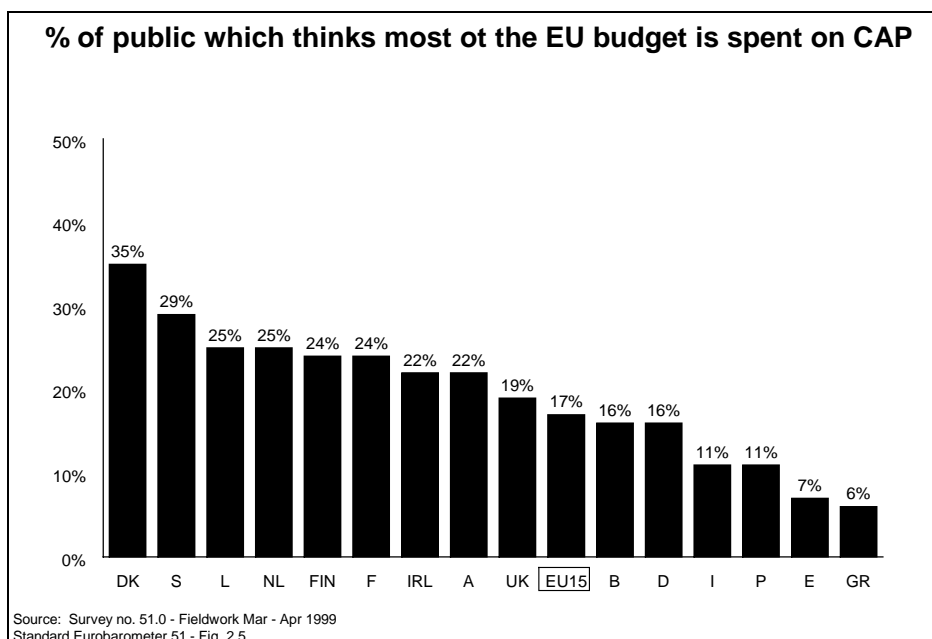
Source: Survey no. 51.0 - Fieldwork Mar - Apr 1999
Standard Eurobarometer 51 - Fig. 2.3

Breakdown of Union expenditure - 1999 - in %

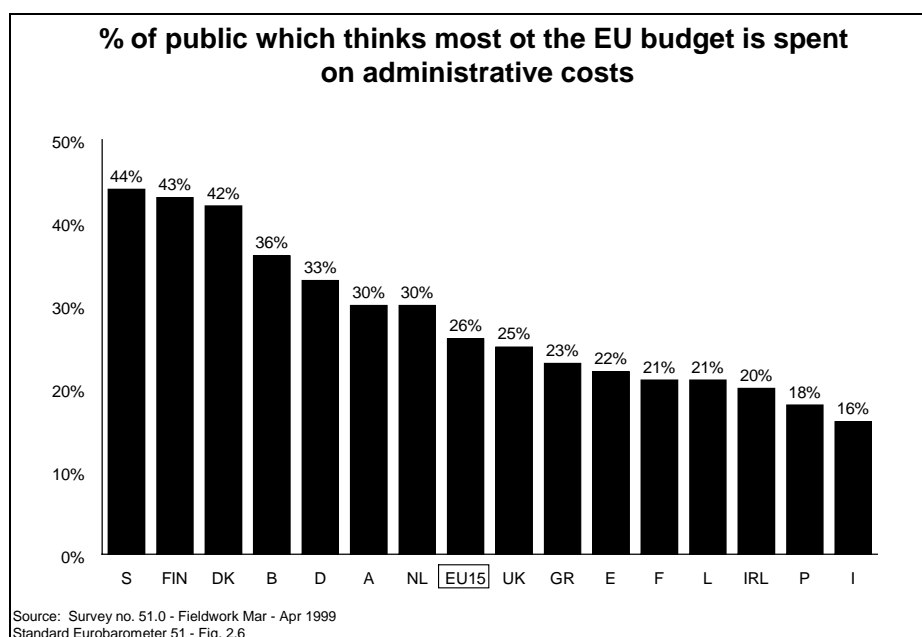


Source: General Budget of the EU for the financial year 1999, European Commission
Standard Eurobarometer 51 - Fig. 2.4

Looking next at the proportion of the population in each of the Member States that correctly believes most of the Union's budget is spent on the Common Agricultural Policy (which represents 42% of Union expenditure), shows that people in Denmark (35%) are most likely to be on the mark, followed by people in Sweden (29%). Respondents in Greece (6%) and Spain (7%) are least likely to be aware that most of the Union's money is spent on CAP. In most Member States people are now more likely to know that most of the EU's budget is spent on CAP than they were in early 1996, when the Eurobarometer last measured public awareness of how the EU's budget is spent. Italy, the UK (both -5) and Austria (-4) are the only significant exceptions.

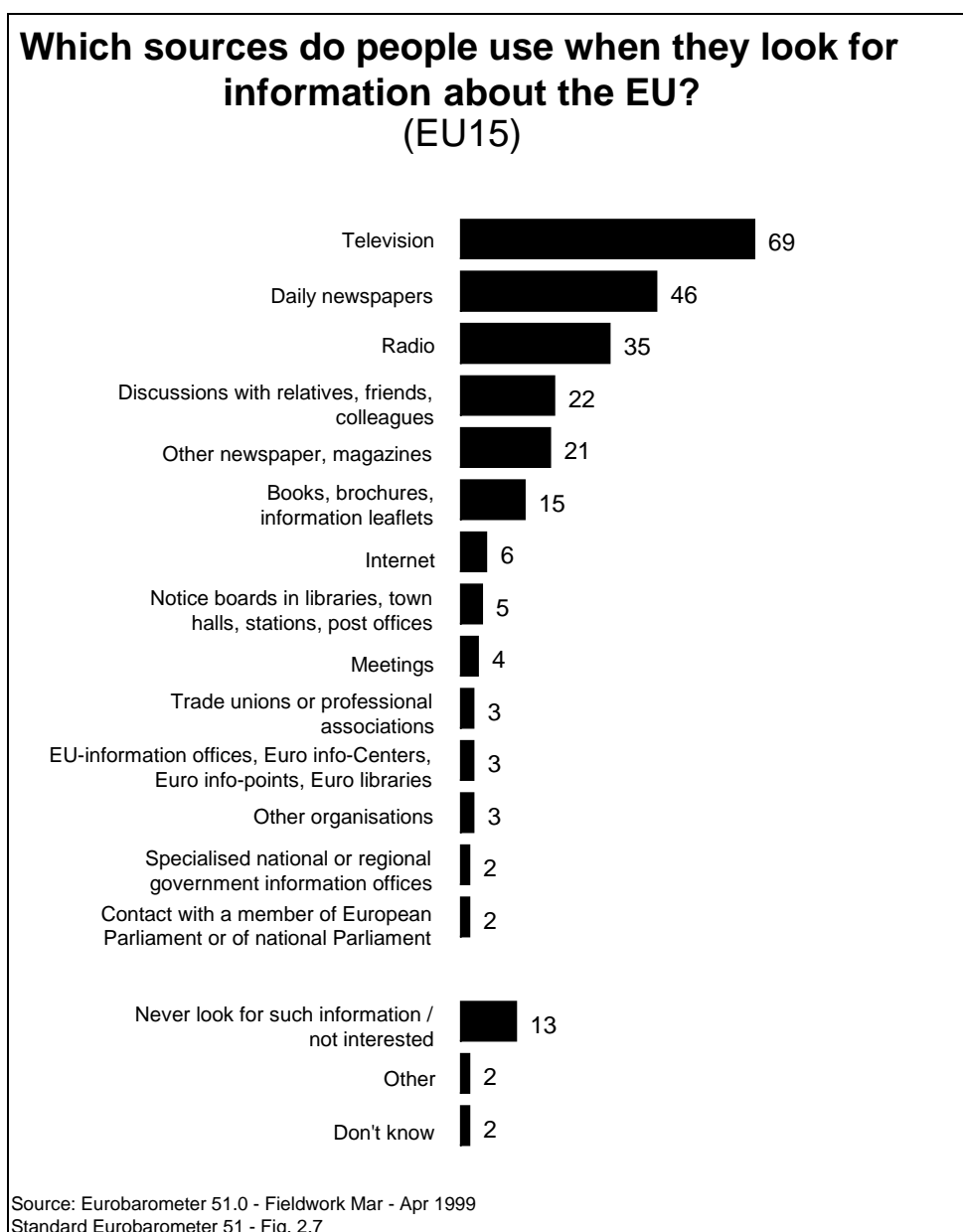


The following graph shows that the proportion that thinks most of the Union's budget is spent on administrative costs (which represents only 5% of Union expenditure) is highest in Sweden (44%), Finland (43%) and Denmark (42%) and lowest in Italy (16%) and Portugal (18%). However, it should be noted that the proportion of "don't know" responses is significantly above average in the latter two countries. In the spring of 1999, people tend to be less likely to believe administrative costs represent the largest single expenditure for the European Union than they were in early 1996. In the UK (-17), Sweden (-9), Denmark, Greece (both -8) and France (-7), the largest drops are noted. (See also table 2.3)



2.4. Sources of information about the European Union

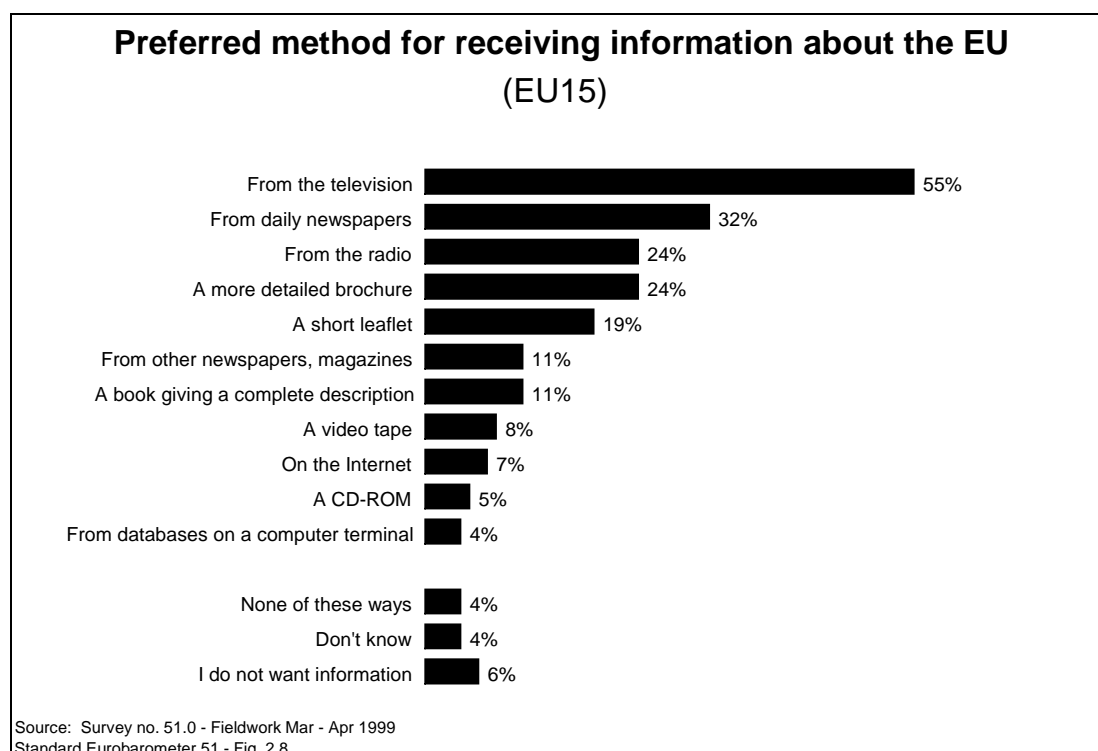
The media is clearly the most popular place where EU citizens look for information about the European Union. Nearly 7 in 10 respondents say they turn on the television when asked which sources they use when they look for information about the European Union¹³. 46% of respondents read the daily newspapers and 35% listen to the radio in order to get information about the European Union. The only other sources chosen by more than 2 in 10 respondents are discussions with relatives, friends and colleagues (22%) and other newspapers or magazines (21%). 13% of respondents never look for information about the European Union, 2% mention a source not included in the questionnaire and 2% lack an opinion¹⁴.



¹³ Respondents were shown a card listing 14 sources or type of sources and were asked to name all those they use. They could also mention other sources, say that they never look for information about the European Union (not interested) or say they don't know.

¹⁴ Table 2.4 shows the responses for each of the 15 Member States.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their preferred method(s) of receiving information about the European Union from a list of 11 pre-defined sources. The television is not only the most widely consulted medium; it is also clearly the most preferred source (55%). At 32%, daily newspapers come in second place, followed by the radio and "a detailed brochure" (both 24%). The newer non-printed information tools, such as videotapes (8%), the Internet (7%), CD-ROMs (5%) and computer databases (4%) continue to be less popular than printed sources¹⁵.



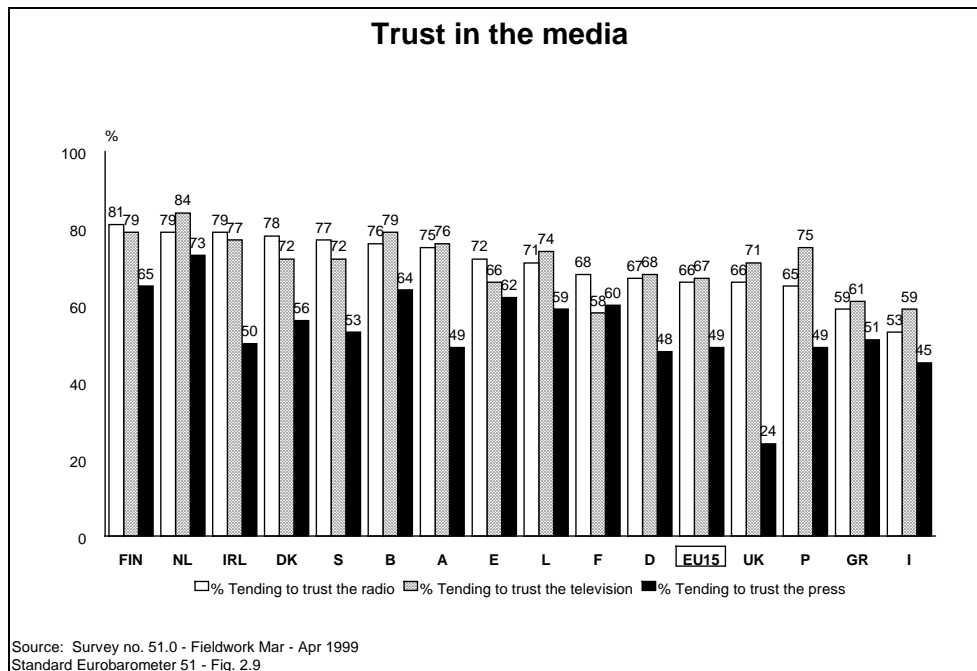
2.5. Trust in the media

The survey also measures people's trust in the radio, the television and the press. 67% of respondents say they tend to trust the television, 66% say they tend to trust the radio and 49% say they tend to trust the press. In comparison to the autumn of 1997, people in all Member States are now more likely to trust all three media¹⁶.

Trust levels for the **television** are highest in the Netherlands (84%), Finland, Belgium (both 79%), Ireland (77%), Austria (76%) and Portugal (75%) and lowest in France (58%) and Italy (59%). Trust levels for the **radio** are highest in Finland (81%), the Netherlands and Ireland (both 79%) and lowest in Italy (53%) and Greece (59%). Trust levels for the **press** are highest in the Netherlands (73%), Finland (65%) and Belgium (64%). Trust in the press continues to be by far the lowest in the UK, although a significant improvement of 9 percentage points to 24% is recorded since the autumn of 1997. (Table 2.6)

¹⁵ Table 2.5 shows the responses for each of the 15 Member States.

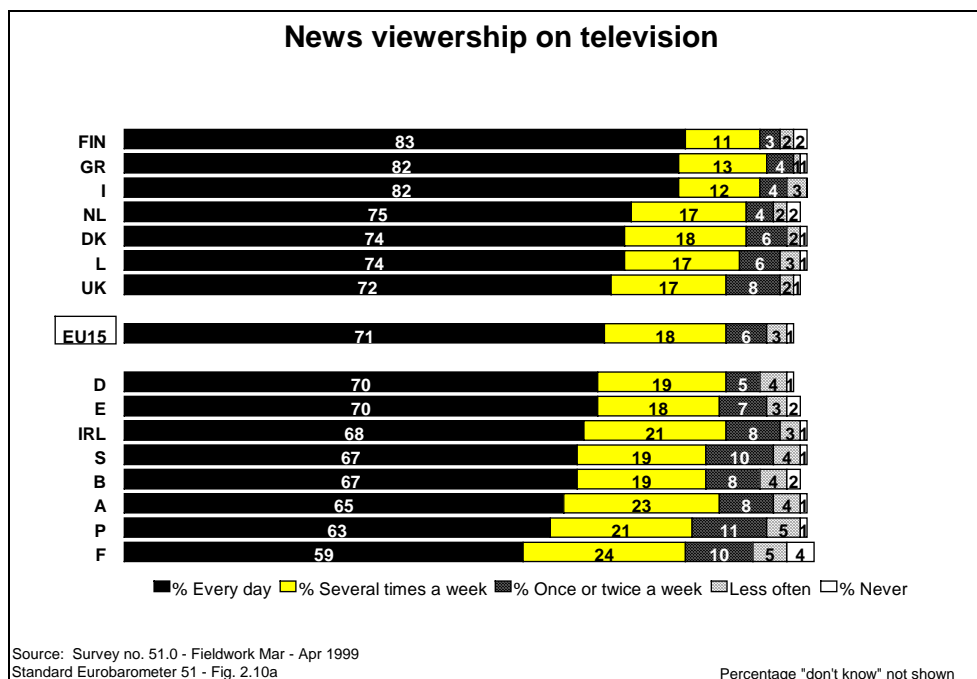
¹⁶ See Eurobarometer 48, chapter 2.



2.6. Use of the media and access to modern information tools

News viewership on television

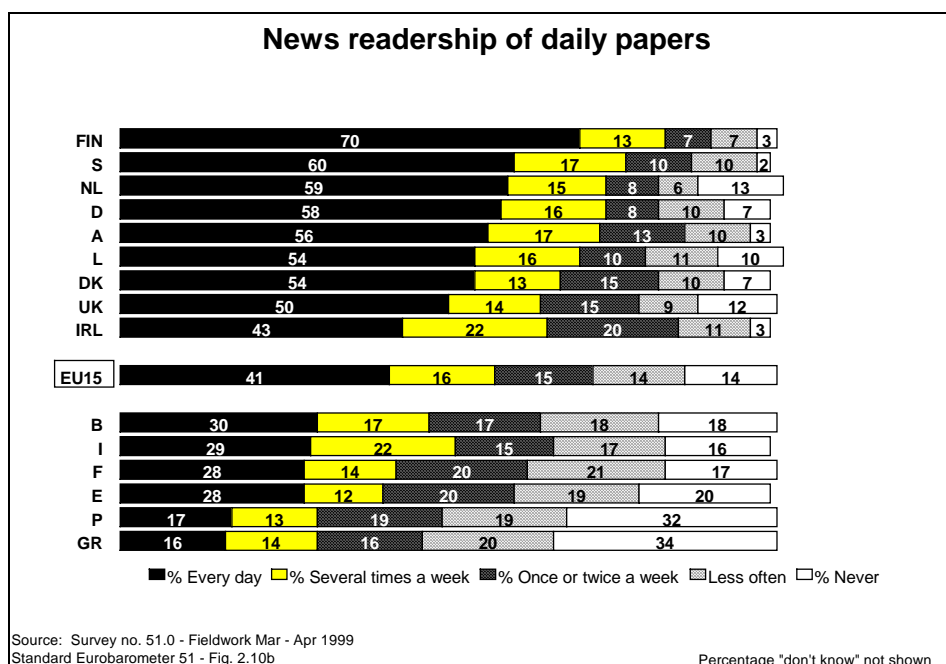
As the table below shows, 71% of respondents watch the news on television on a daily basis, with a further 18% watching it several times a week¹⁷.



¹⁷ See also table 2.7a.

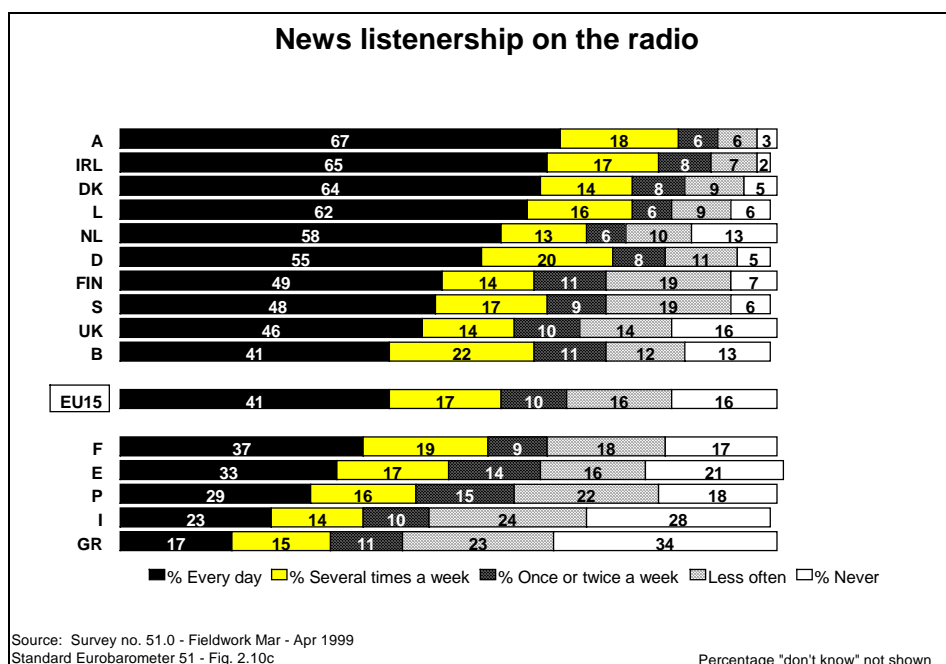
News readership of daily newspapers

Nearly 6 in 10 respondents read the news in daily newspapers every day (41%) or several times a week (16%)¹⁸.



News listenership on the radio

News listenership on the radio is also fairly common with nearly 6 in 10 respondents doing this every day (41%) or several times a week (17%)¹⁹.

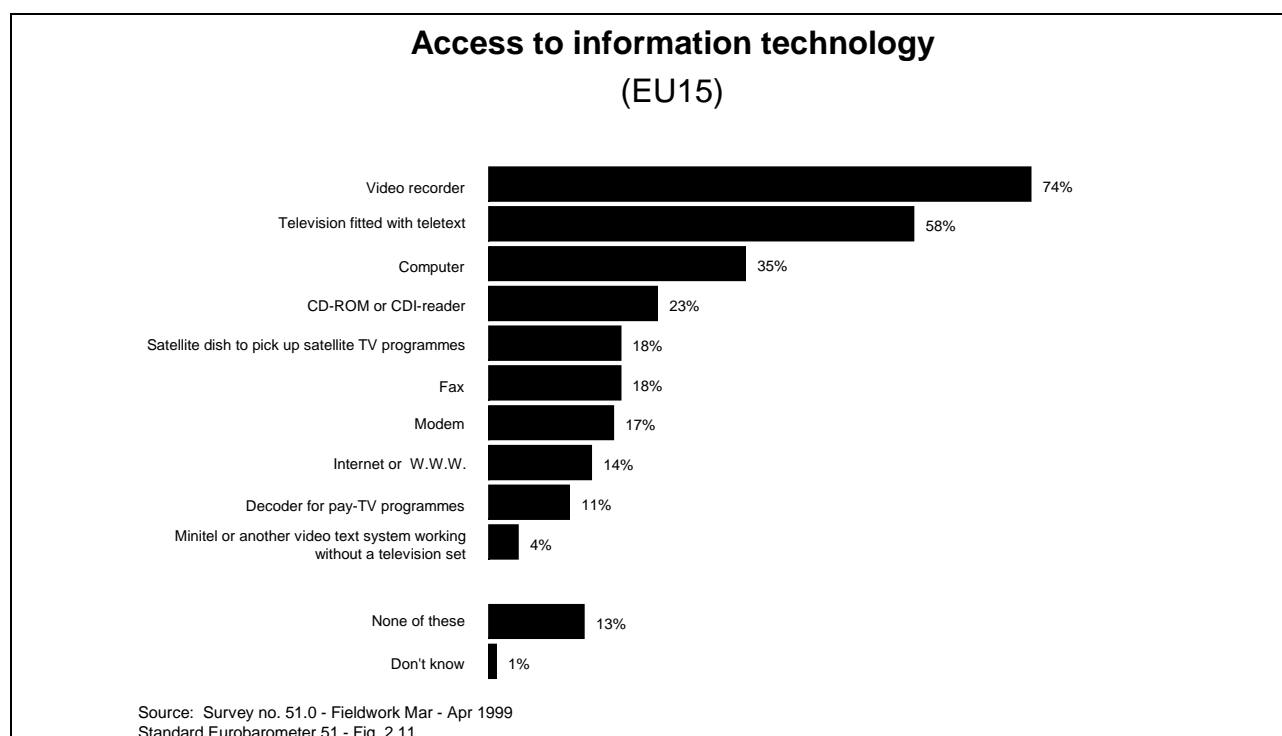


¹⁸ See also table 2.7b.

¹⁹ See also table 2.7c.

Access to information technology

The survey also measures the extent to which people have access to a number of modern information technology tools. 74% of Europeans have access to the grandfather of modern technology, the video recorder. 58% have access to a television that is fitted with teletext, 35% have access to a computer and 23% have access to a CD-ROM reader.



The graph also shows that 14% have access to the Internet, compared to 8% in the autumn of 1997 and 12% in the spring of 1998. Access levels differ significantly from country to country and continue to increase rapidly in the Nordic countries. In the spring of 1999, significant increases are also recorded in the Netherlands and Luxembourg. (See also table 2.8)

Earlier we noted that for 7% of EU citizens the Internet is the preferred way of receiving information about the EU. Again, this varies significantly from country to country. The table below shows that in most countries, increases in the proportion that prefers receiving EU information through the Internet are much more modest than the rate at which people are getting connected.

% of population with access to the Internet and % choosing the Internet as preferred information source about the European Union (by country and EU15)				
Country	% With access to the Internet Spring 1999	% Change from spring 1998	% Choosing Internet as preferred source Spring 1999	% Change from spring 1998
Sweden	55	+16	18	-4
Denmark	44	+9	21	+5
Finland	37	+6	16	-1
The Netherlands	35	+12	13	+1
Luxembourg	22	+11	11	+5
UK	22	+2	9	0
EU15	14	+2	7	+1
Italy	13	+4	8	+1
Ireland	12	+4	6	+2
Austria	11	+4	6	+2
Belgium	11	+2	6	+1
Germany	9	+1	4	0
France	8	+1	5	0
Spain	8	0	3	-2
Portugal	6	0	5	-1
Greece	5	+2	5	+1

3. Attitudes to the European Union in 1999

This chapter presents the state of public opinion as measured in the spring of 1999. It describes differences between Member States and between various socio-demographic groups in the population.

On the whole we find that public opinion towards the European Union is less positive in the spring of 1999 than it was at the time of the previous survey in the autumn of 1998²⁰. We attribute this drop in confidence to the developments in March 1999 when the Commission resigned after the Committee of Independent Experts²¹ published its first report on allegations regarding fraud, mismanagement and nepotism at the European Commission. Fieldwork for the Eurobarometer began just when the Commission resigned at a time when media coverage was most intense²². A further factor may be the war in Kosovo, which began in the midst of fieldwork.

While a single Eurobarometer measures public opinion at a particular moment in time, in their entirety, the surveys show how public opinion evolves over time. The next Eurobarometer, to be fielded in the autumn of 1999, will thus reveal whether the current drop in confidence is nothing more than a blip or whether it signifies the beginning of a longer lasting negative trend. Much will depend on how the public responds to the installation of the new Commission in September 1999 under the guidelines of the Amsterdam Treaty²³ and on the developments in Kosovo.

3.1. Support for European Union membership

In the spring of 1999, 49% of Europeans regard their country's membership to the European Union as a good thing. This is lower than in the autumn of 1998, when 54% of people supported their country's membership to the EU. However, at 12%, the proportion of people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing has not changed since the autumn of 1998. The drop in support levels is thus not offset by an increase in opposition levels but by an increase in the proportion of don't know responses (+4).

The trend graph shows that support for membership increased from 50% in 1981 to an all-time high of 72% in the spring of 1991. The economic well being of Europeans was high and unemployment levels were relatively low during this period. Furthermore, people were looking forward to the advantages they would soon receive from the forthcoming European "single market". The mid-nineties clearly represent the period when public support for the European Union was at its weakest. The Gulf War, the economic crisis and the high unemployment levels that followed, the debate on the Maastricht Treaty, the war in Yugoslavia, the inclusion of three relatively euro-sceptic nations and the BSE crisis are but some of the reasons which help explain why support dropped to reach a low of 46% in the spring of 1997. Until the recent institutional crisis and the war in Kosovo, the late-nineties were marked by a slow but consistent rise in popularity levels. (See also individual country graphs, figs. 3.5a-o)

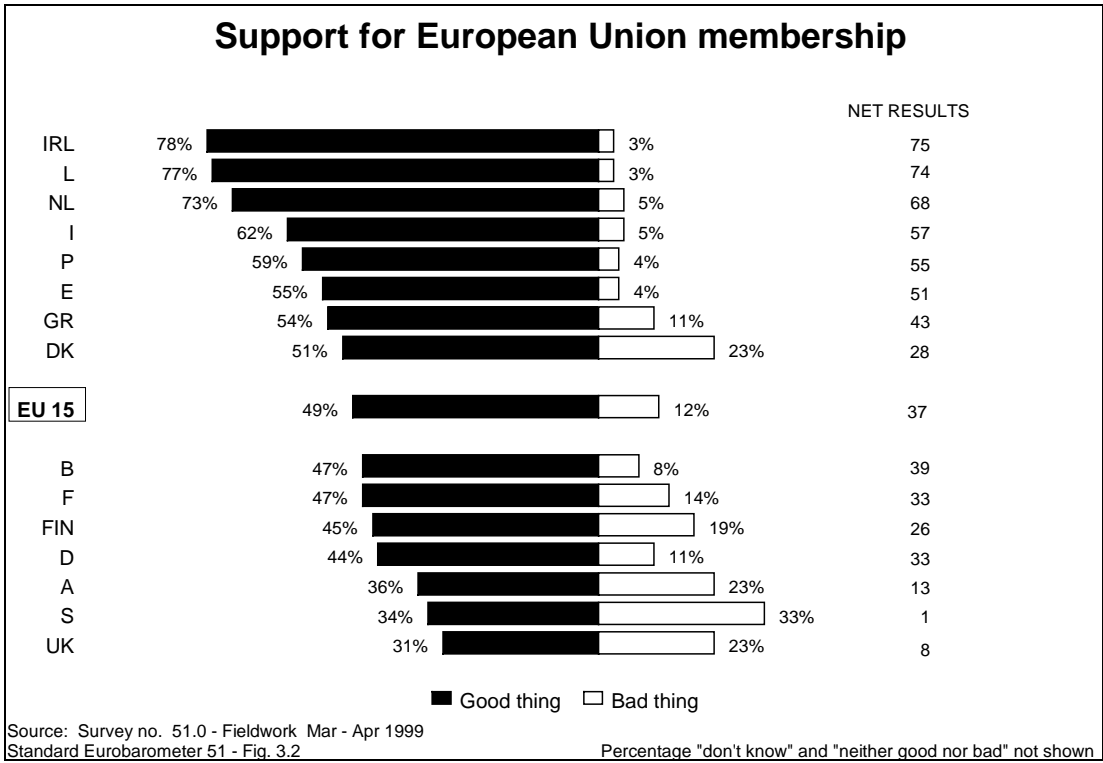
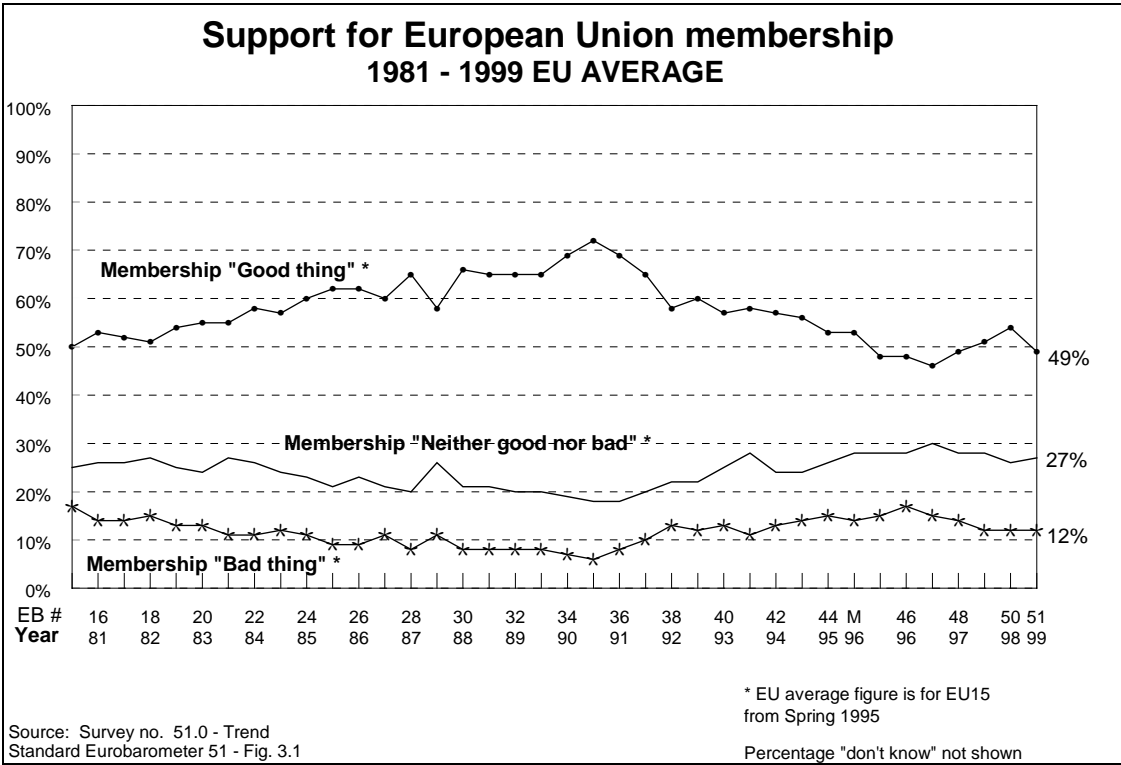
The country by country analyses show that support for European Union membership continues to be highest in Ireland (78%), Luxembourg (77%) and the Netherlands (73%). More than half of the people in Italy, Portugal, Spain, Greece and Denmark also support their country's membership to the European Union, although opposition levels in Denmark (23%) are significantly above average. As usual, support for EU membership is lowest in the UK (31%), Sweden (34%) and Austria (36%), with highest opposition levels recorded in Sweden (33%).

²⁰ Some questions were last asked in the spring of 1998.

²¹ The European Parliament decided on 14 January 1999 to establish this Committee of Independent Experts with the agreement of the European Commission.

²² The European Commission resigned on 15 March 1999. In Greece and Luxembourg, fieldwork for the survey began on 12 March 1999. In all other countries, fieldwork began either on the day of the Commission's resignation or shortly thereafter. See Appendix C.3 for details on fieldwork dates.

²³ The Amsterdam Treaty entered into force on 1 May 1999. More details can be found on the following Website: <http://europa.eu.int/abc/obj/amst/en/index.htm>.



There are three countries where the proportion of people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing has dropped significantly since the autumn of 1998. These are Portugal (-5), Luxembourg and Sweden (both -3). In Belgium, Finland, Ireland and the Netherlands no significant shifts are noted. In the 8 remaining Member States, public opinion is less positive than it was in the autumn of 1998. As stated earlier, this is no doubt related to the resignation of the Commission, an event that received widespread media coverage. The largest drop in support levels is noted in Greece (-13), followed by Spain (-8), the UK, Italy (both -6), Denmark, France (both -5) and Germany (-4). In Austria, the drop in the proportion of people who regard their country's membership as a good thing is not statistically significant but Austrians are now more likely to regard their country's membership as a bad thing (+4). Denmark is the only other country where a significant increase in the proportion of people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing (+3) is noted. In the other countries where support levels dropped, these are offset by increases in either "don't know" or "neither good nor bad" responses. (Table 3.1a)

Demographic analyses show a well-established pattern for the two genders with men both more likely to regard their country's membership as a good thing (52%) and as a bad thing (13%) than women (45% and 11%) do. Women as usual are significantly more likely to lack an opinion (15% vs. 9%).

Education is a very important factor in explaining how people feel about the European Union: 64% of people who left full-time education aged 20 or older support their country's membership, compared to only 40% of people who left school aged 15 or younger. Age is another important factor with people aged 15 to 54 significantly more likely (51%) than people aged 55 and over (44%) to support their country's membership. Analyses of the economic activity scale show a gap of 24 percentage points in support levels between managers (65%) and retired people (41%).

Another very important predictor is how much people feel they know about the European Union with 71% of those who feel they know a lot supporting their country's membership compared to only 36% of those who feel they know very little. As expected the latter group is significantly more likely to lack an opinion (21%) than people who feel they know a lot (3%) when it comes to judging whether European Membership is a good thing or a bad thing for their country. (Table 3.1b)

3.2. Benefit from European Union membership

The proportion of citizens that feels that their country has benefited from EU membership stands at 44% in the spring of 1999, which represents a drop of 5 percentage points since the autumn of 1998. However, at the EU level, the proportion of negative responses has also dropped (though not significantly) from 31% to 29%. What this indicates is that in the spring of 1999 people are more likely (+7) to lack an opinion as compared to the autumn of 1998.

Since the autumn of 1998, significant positive developments are noted in Portugal and Finland where the proportion of people who feel their country has benefited increased significantly (both +4) and the proportion of people who feel their country has not benefited dropped significantly (-7 in Portugal and -4 in Finland). In Italy and the Netherlands, positive responses remain at the same level but negative responses are significantly less frequent (-8 in Italy and -3 in the Netherlands). In Belgium, public opinion has not changed since the autumn of 1998. In Spain, the UK, France, Greece and Sweden people are less positive but this does not translate in significant increases in negative responses. Instead people in these countries are now more likely to lack an opinion. In the first two countries, where don't know responses increased by 14 and 11 percentage points respectively, people are not only less likely to feel positive but also less likely to feel negative (-4 and -5, respectively). In the latter three countries, significant drops in positive responses are offset by significant increases in "don't know" responses (+8 in Greece, +7 in France and +4 in Sweden). The only countries where the results are significantly more negative than they were in the autumn of 1998 are Austria, Denmark and Germany. (Table 3.2a²⁴)

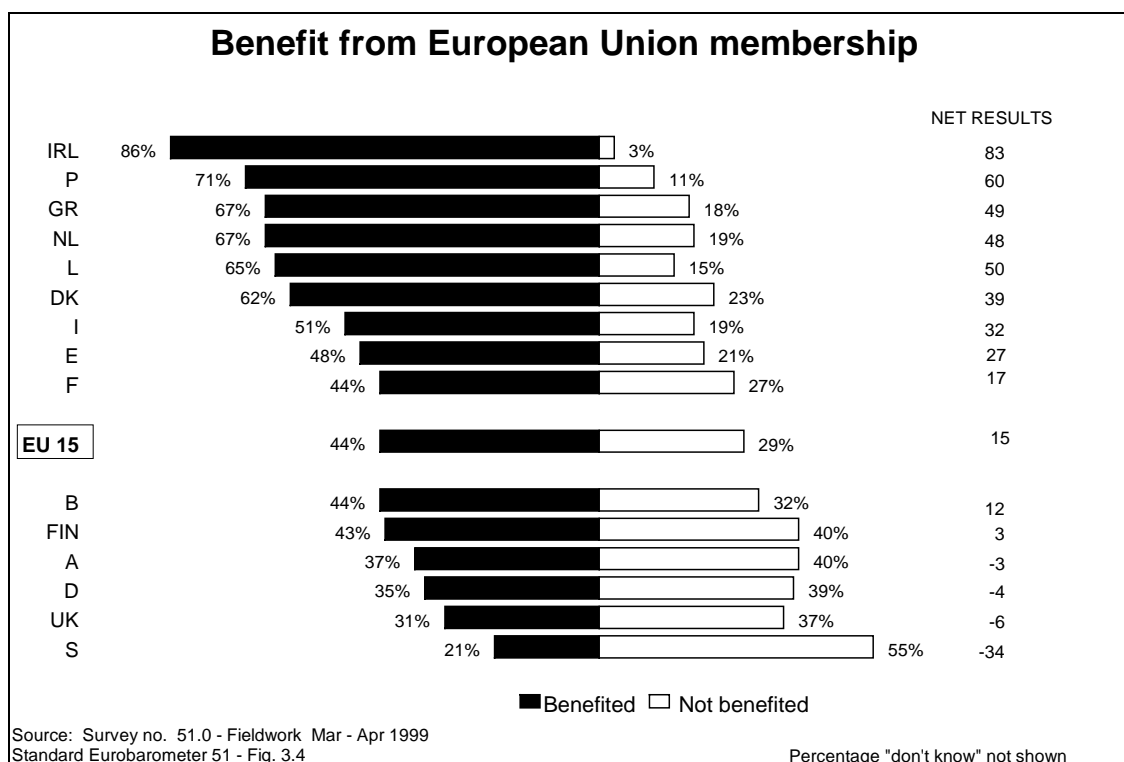
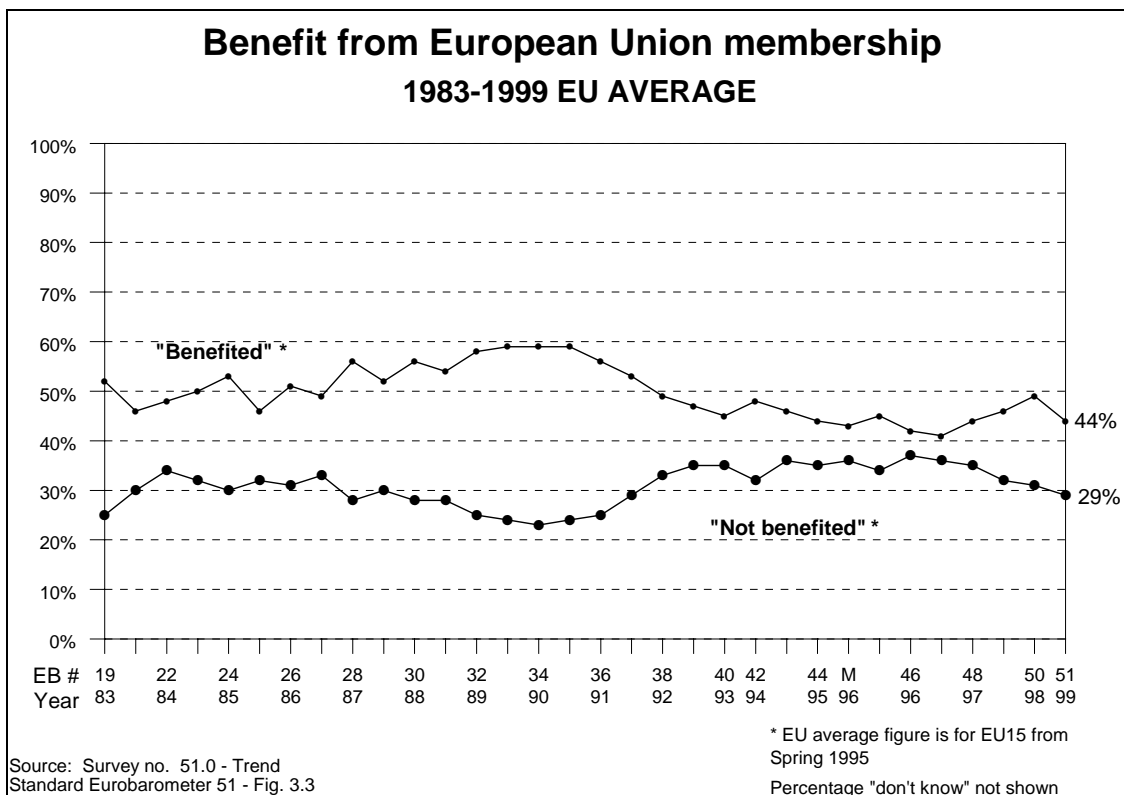
As in the autumn of 1998, people in Ireland are most positive, with 86% saying their country has benefited from EU membership and only 3% saying that their country has not benefited. At the other extreme, we find Sweden, which is the only country where more than half of the population (55%) feels their country has not benefited and only 21% of people hold positive views. The remaining 13 countries fall between these two extremes and can be grouped into three categories, as follows:

1. In Portugal, Greece, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark and Italy more than half of the public feels that their country has benefited, while less than a quarter of the population holds negative views.
2. Although less than half of the people in Spain, France, Belgium and Finland feels their country has benefited, the proportion of the population that holds favourable views outnumbers the proportion of the population that holds negative views.
3. Negative responses outnumber positive responses in Austria, Germany and the UK, although the proportion of negative responses is clearly below the 50% mark.

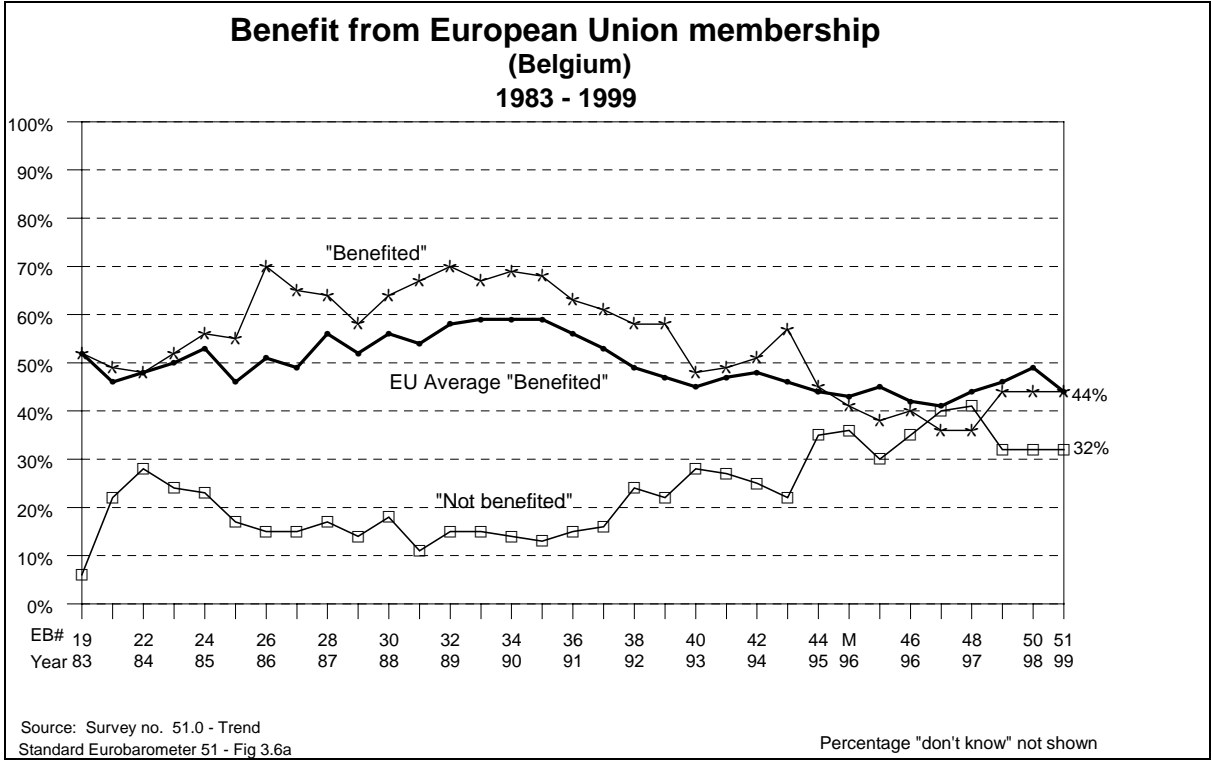
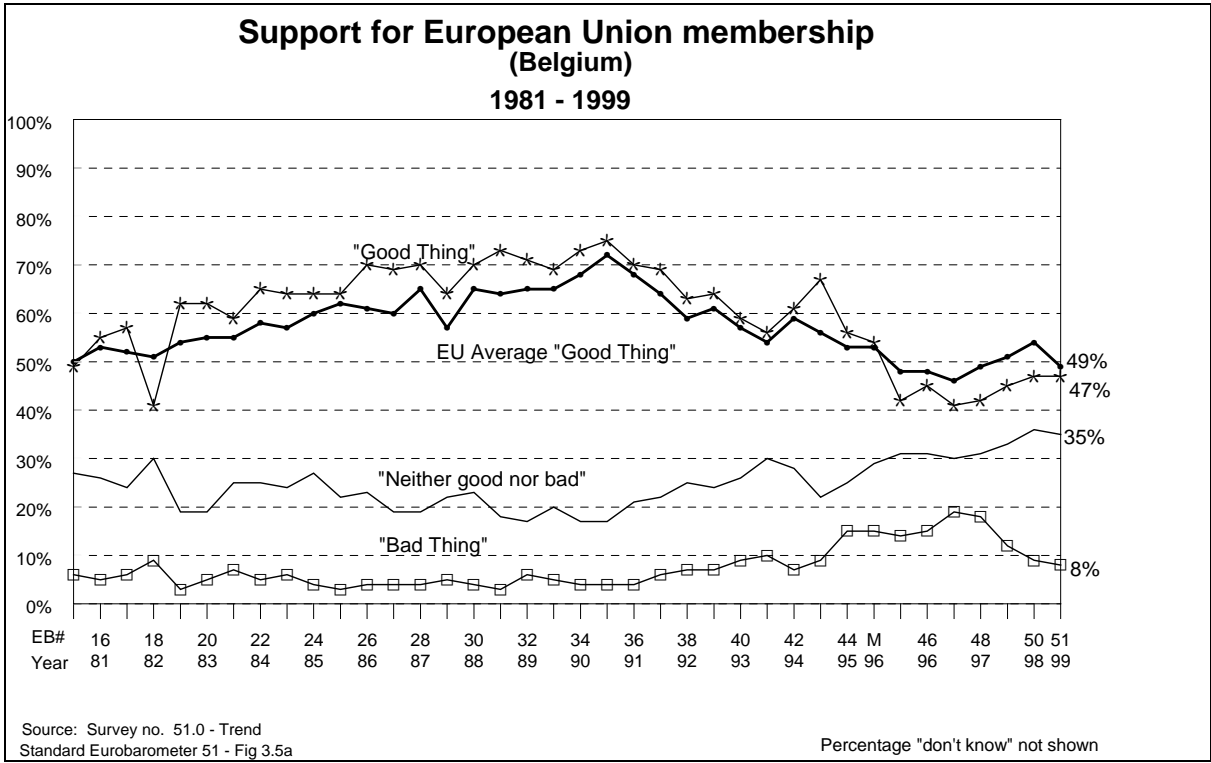
Demographic analyses show that managers (60%) and people who stayed in full-time education until age 20 or older (58%) are most likely to feel that their country has benefited, while retired people (35%) and those who left school aged 15 or younger (36%) are least likely to share this view.

The following comparison provides evidence of the large degree of polarisation among supporters and opponents of the Union: 74% of people who support their country's membership believe their country has benefited, compared to 7% of people who oppose their country's membership. (Table 3.2b)

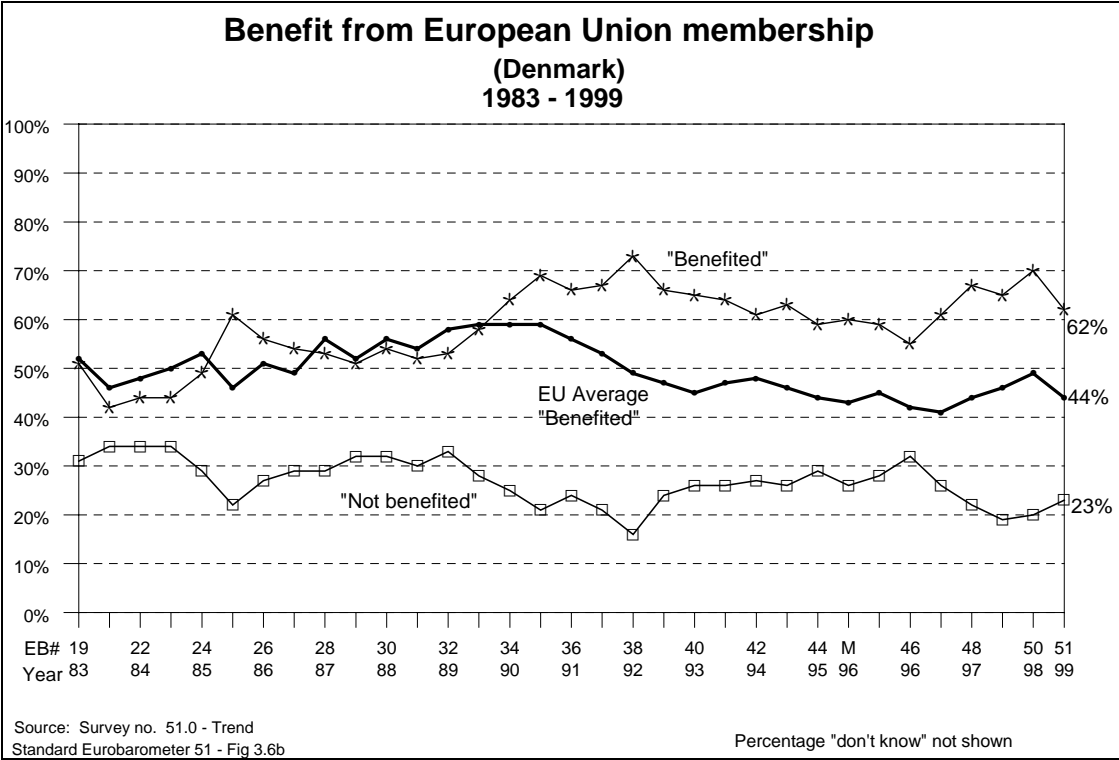
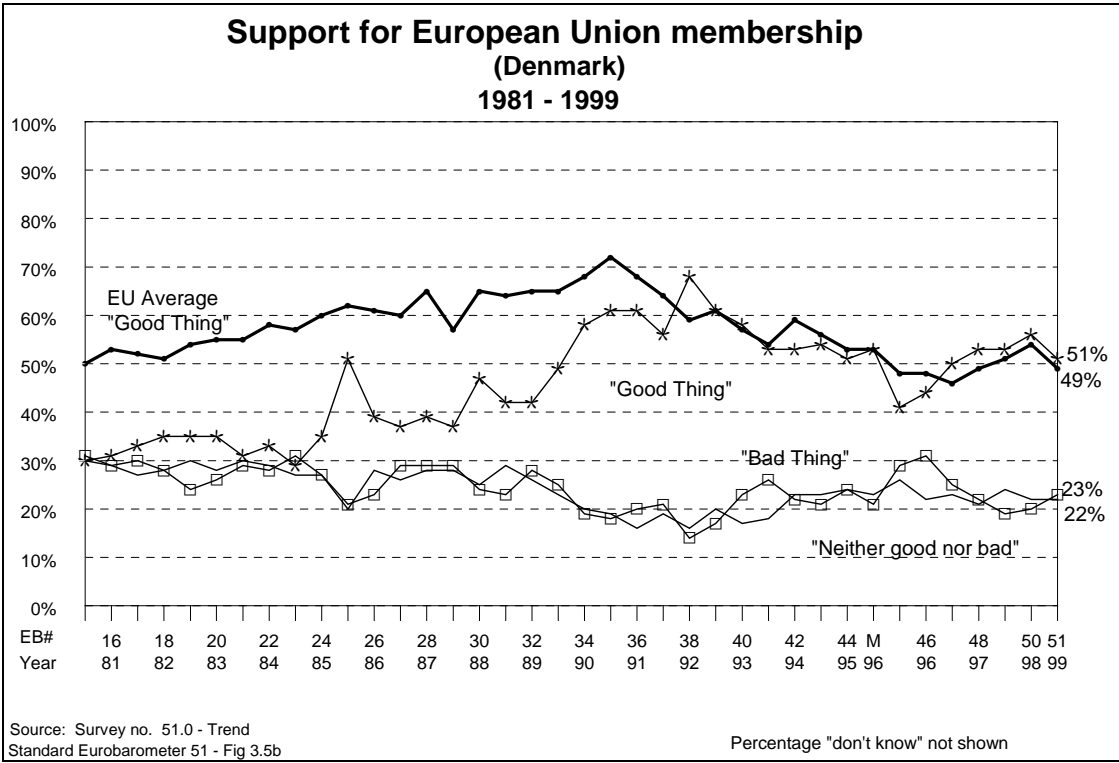
²⁴ For the long-term trend in each of the Member States see graphs 3.6a-o.



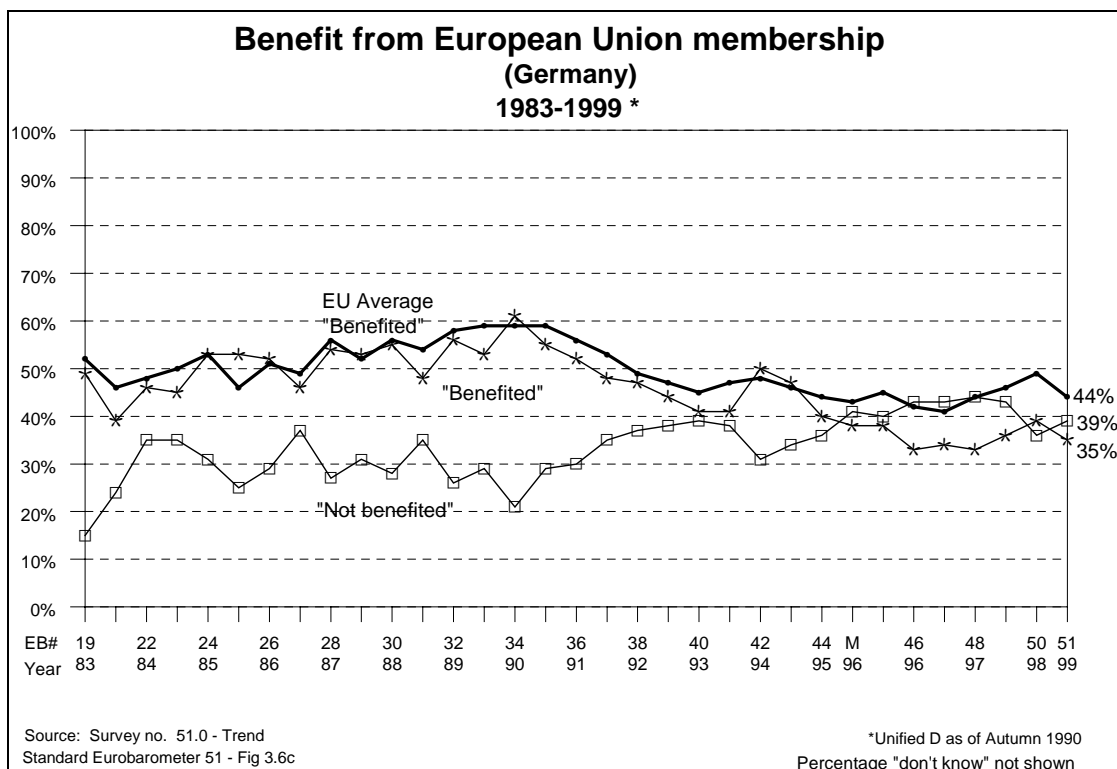
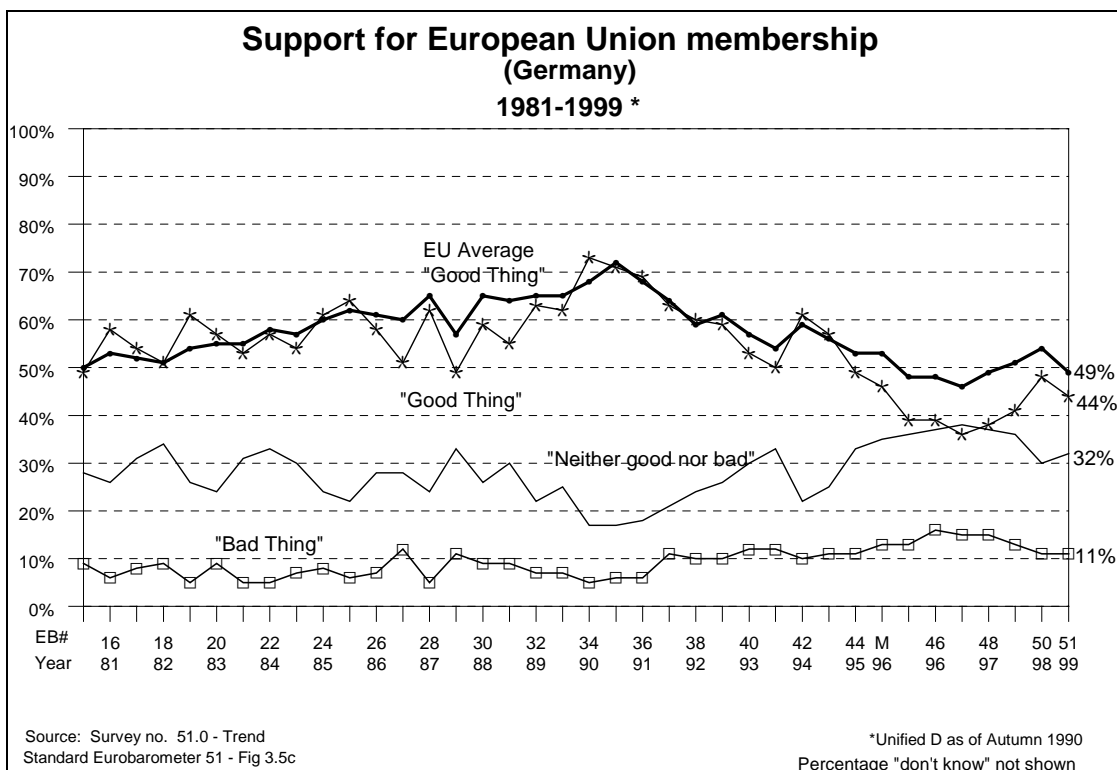
BELGIUM



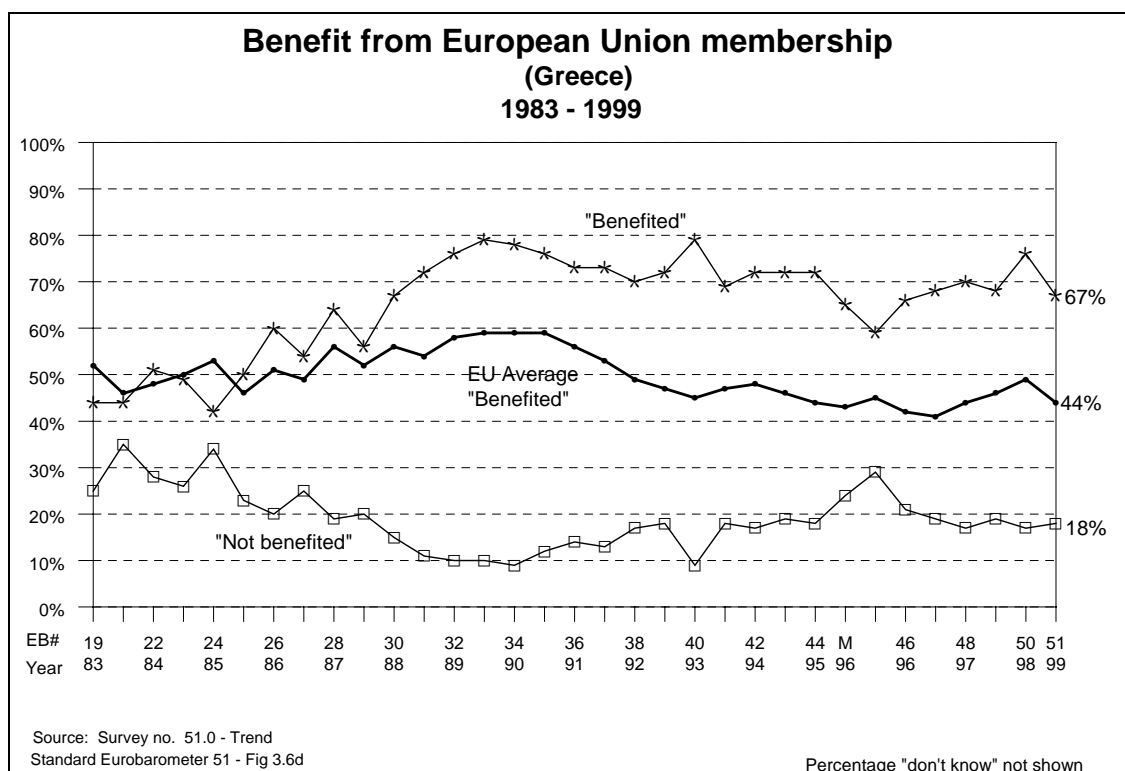
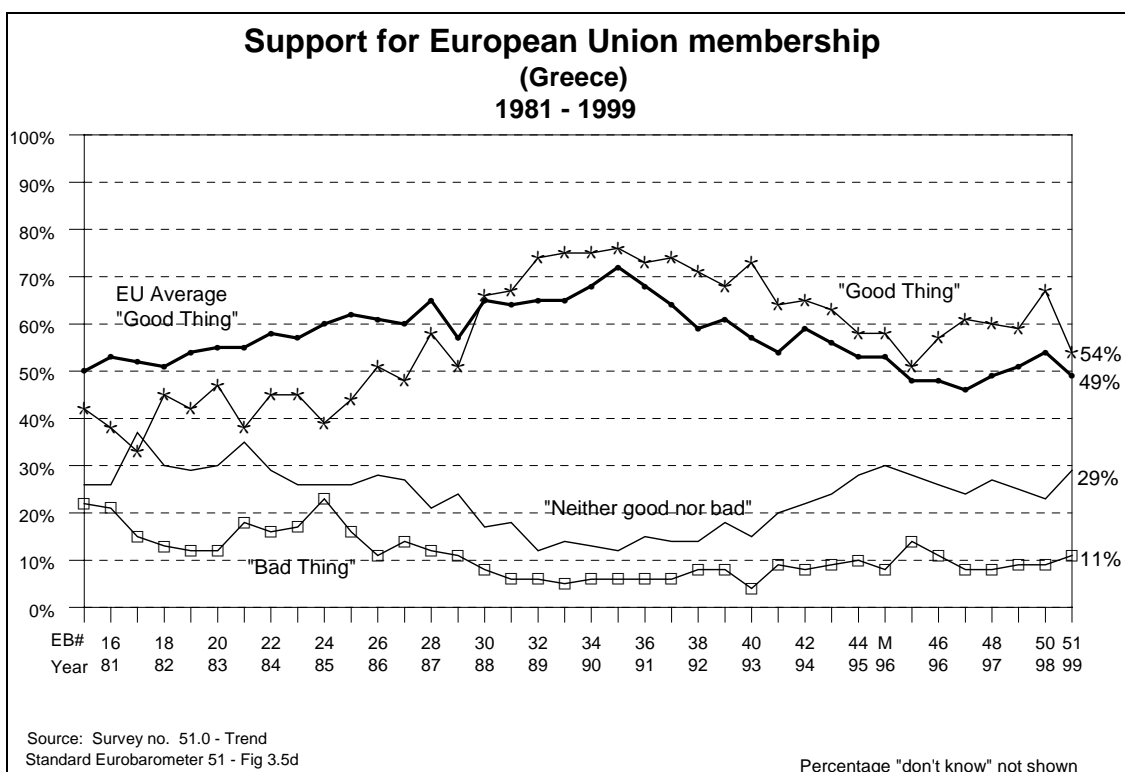
DENMARK



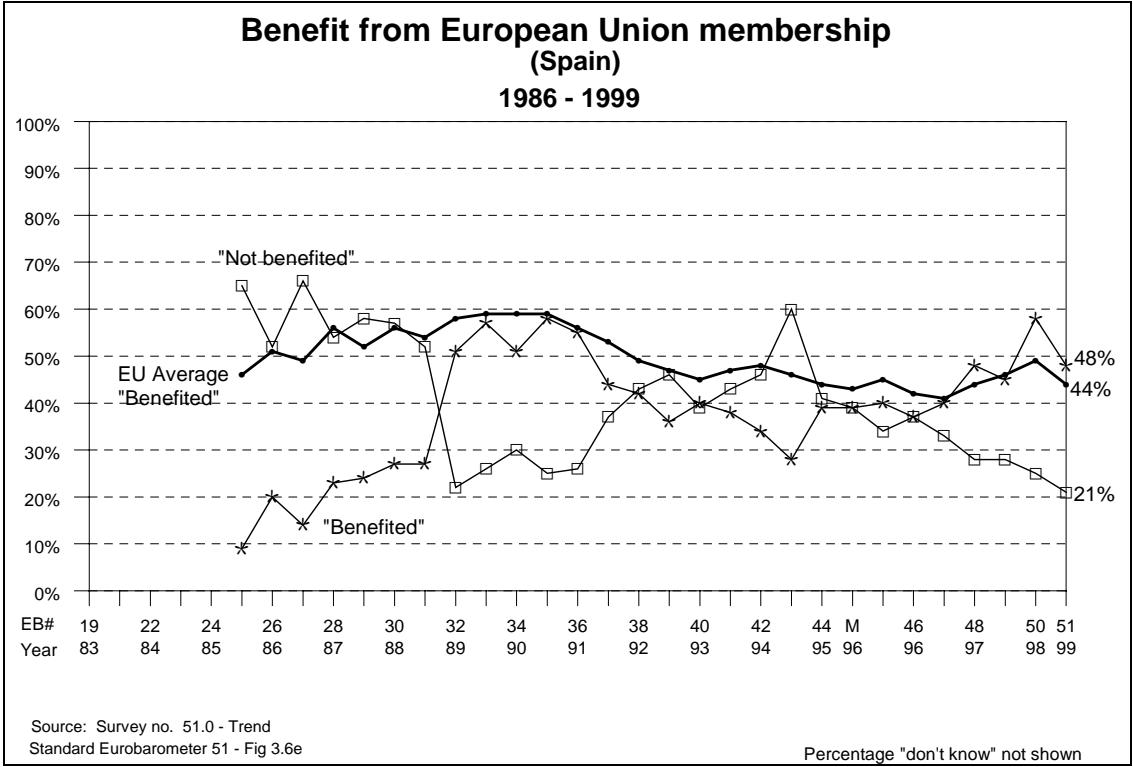
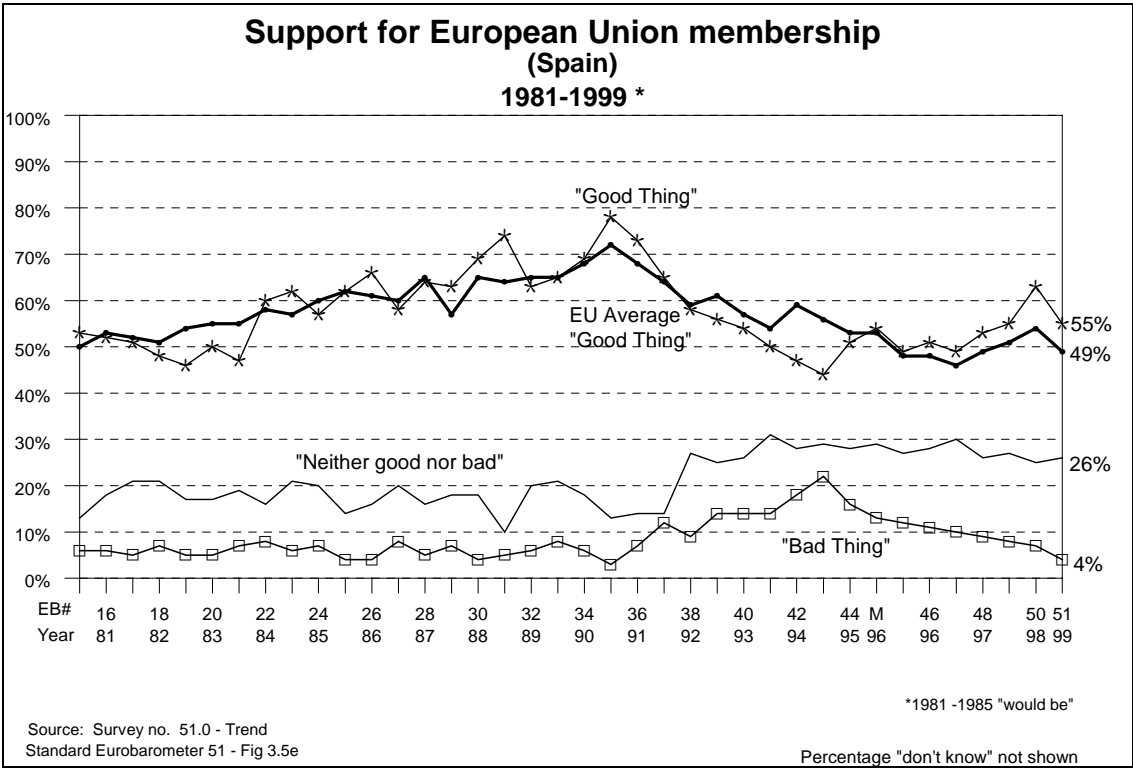
GERMANY



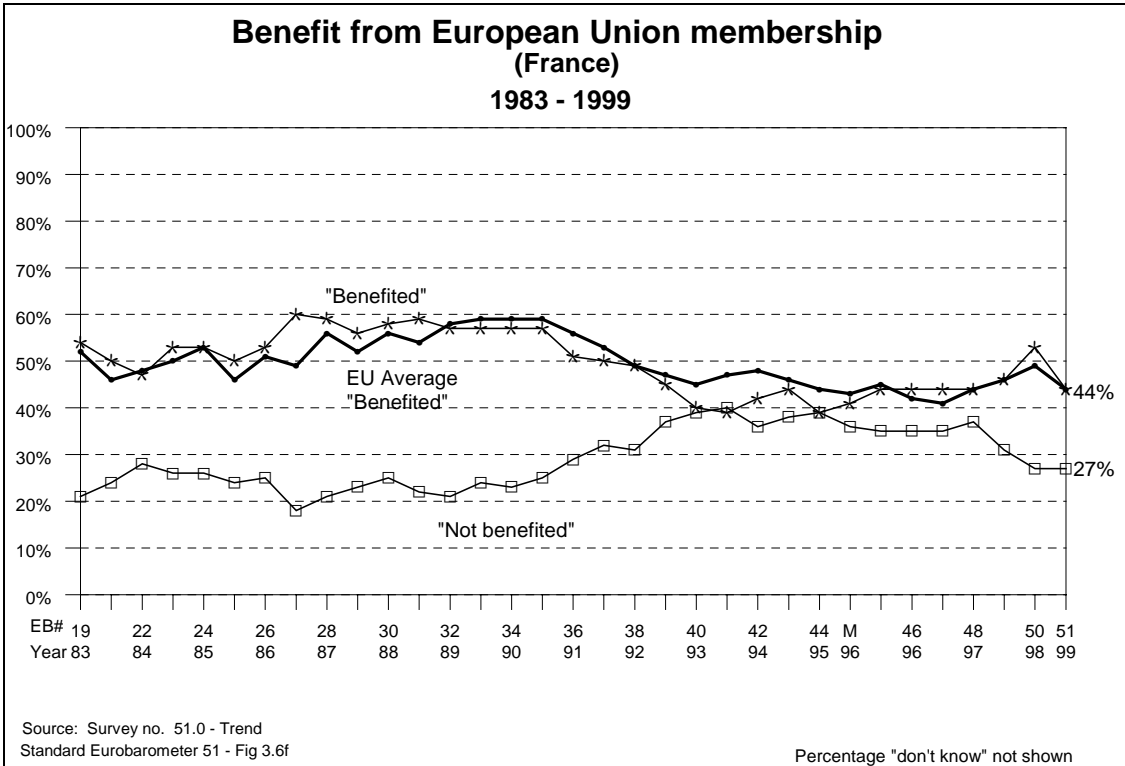
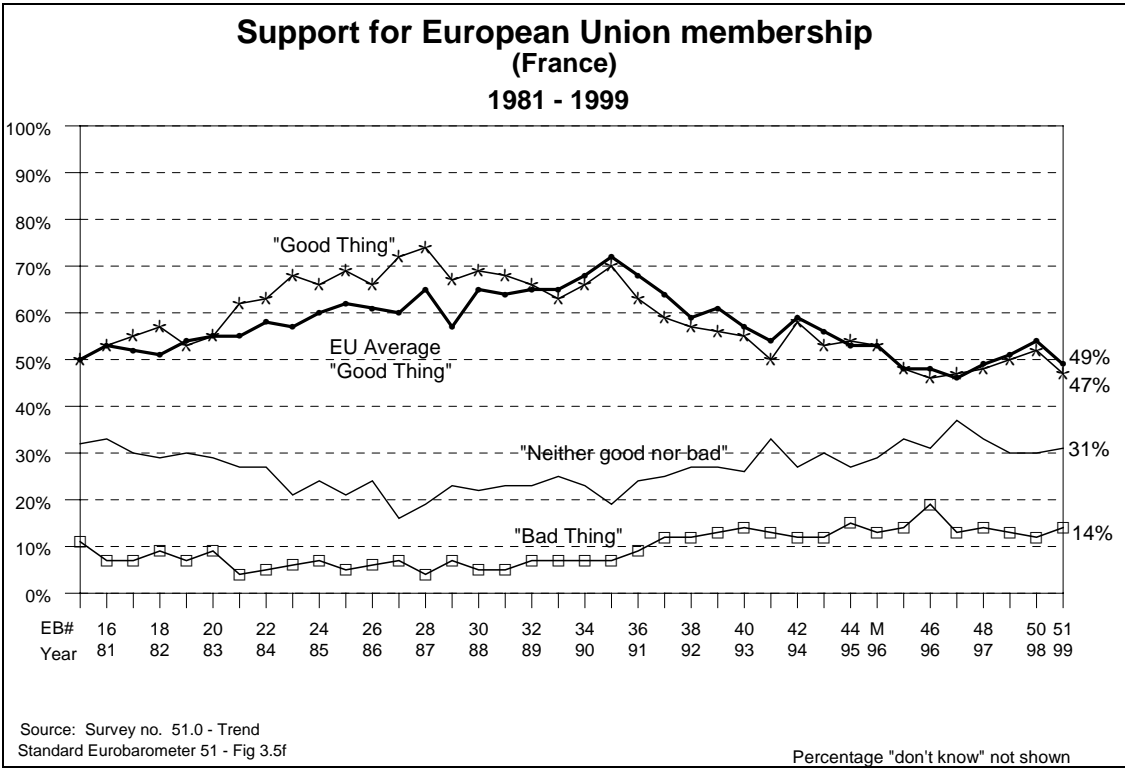
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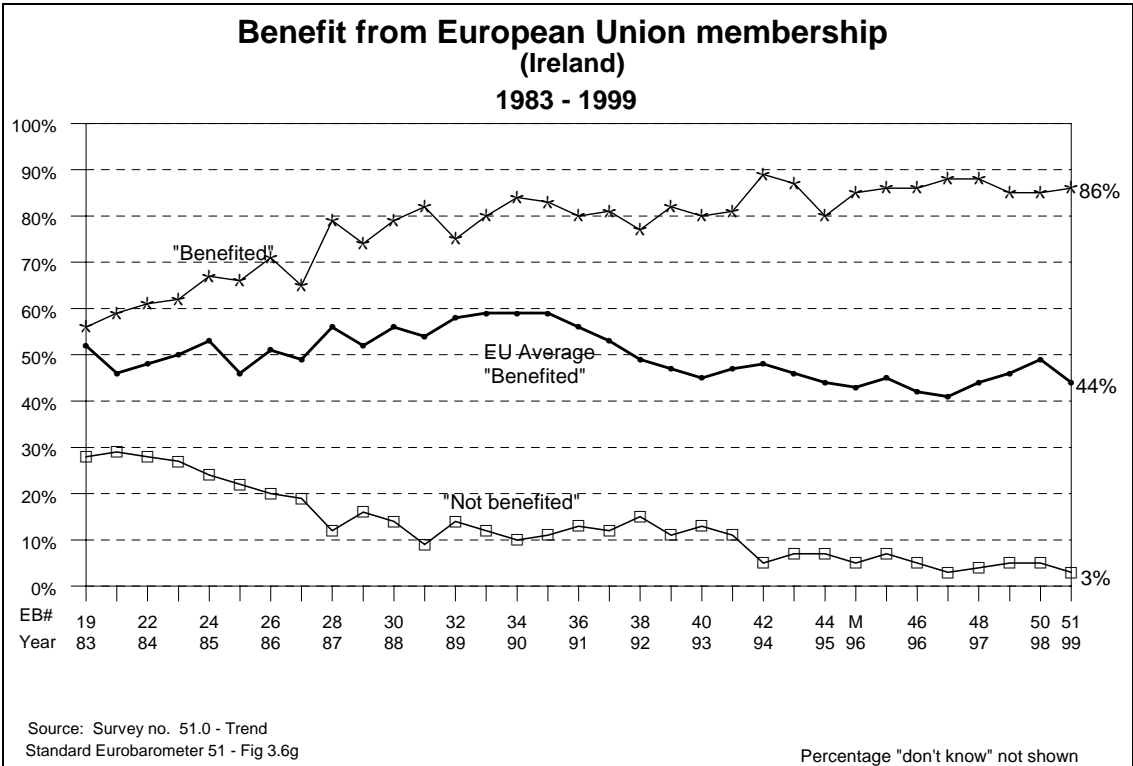
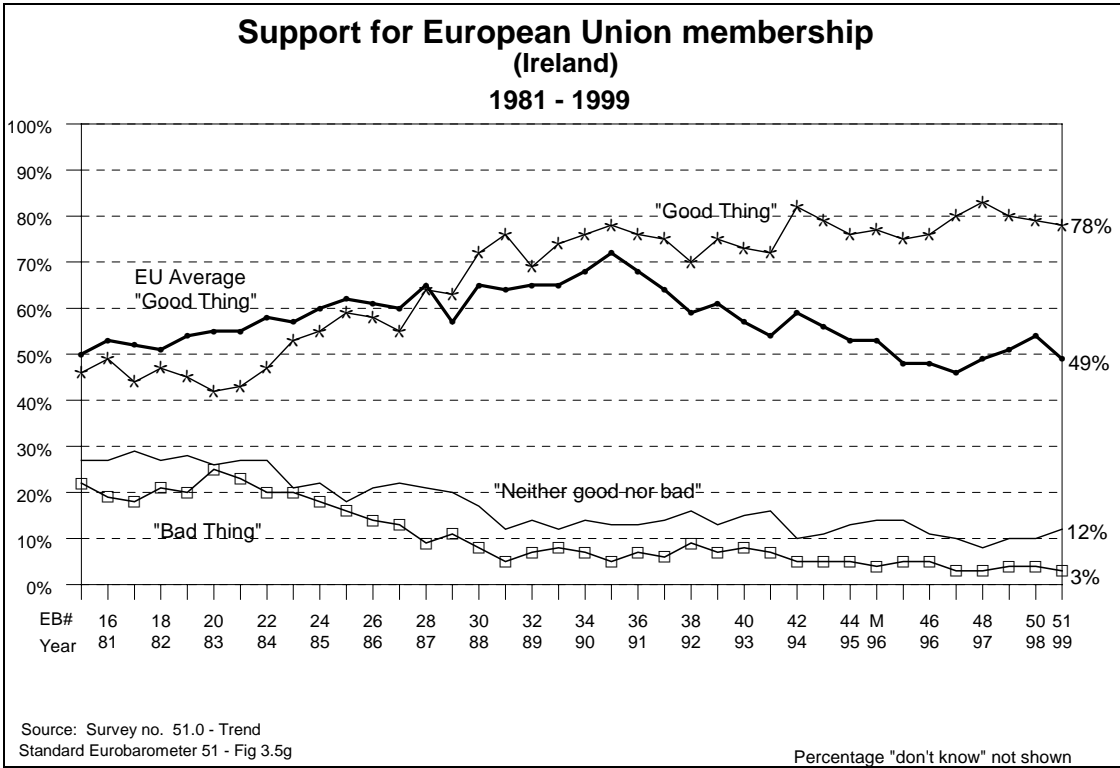
SPAIN



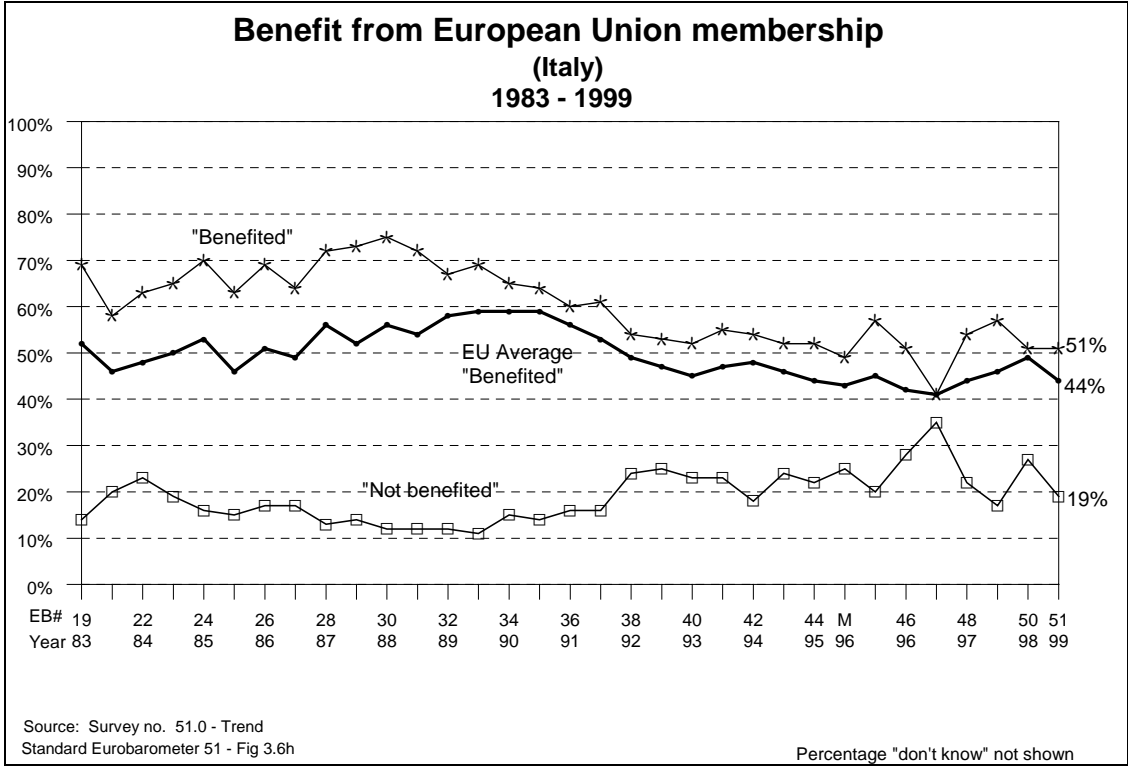
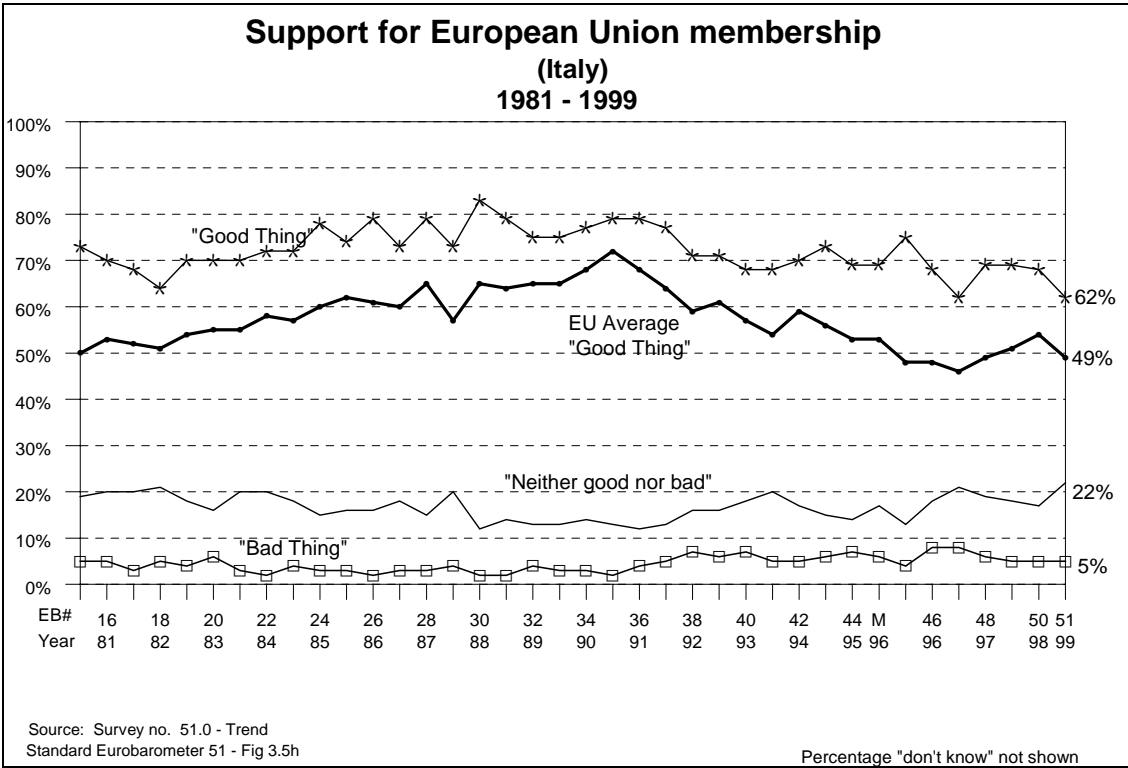
FRANCE



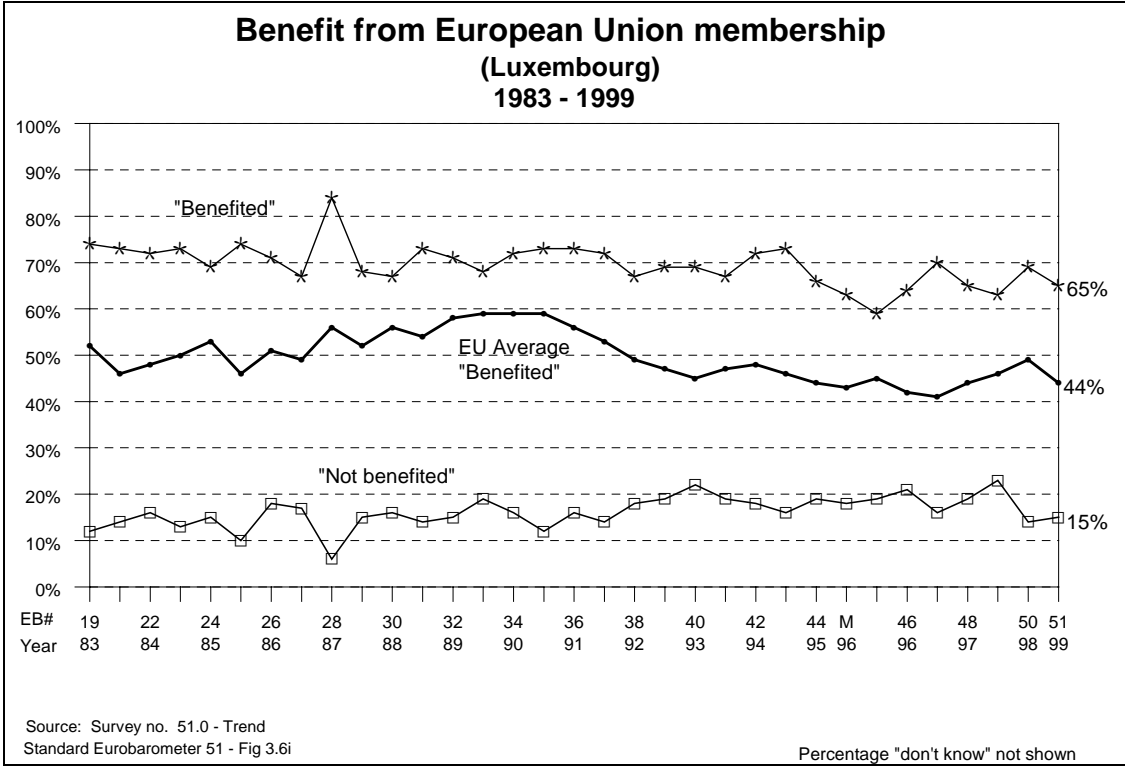
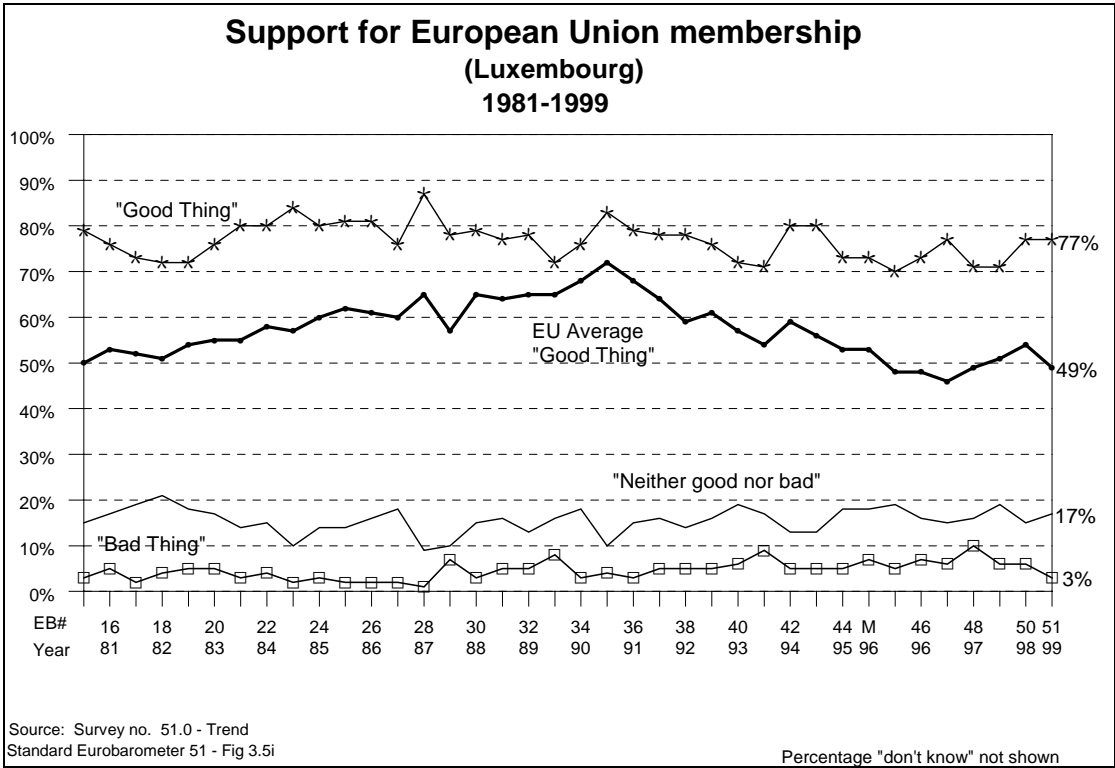
IRELAND



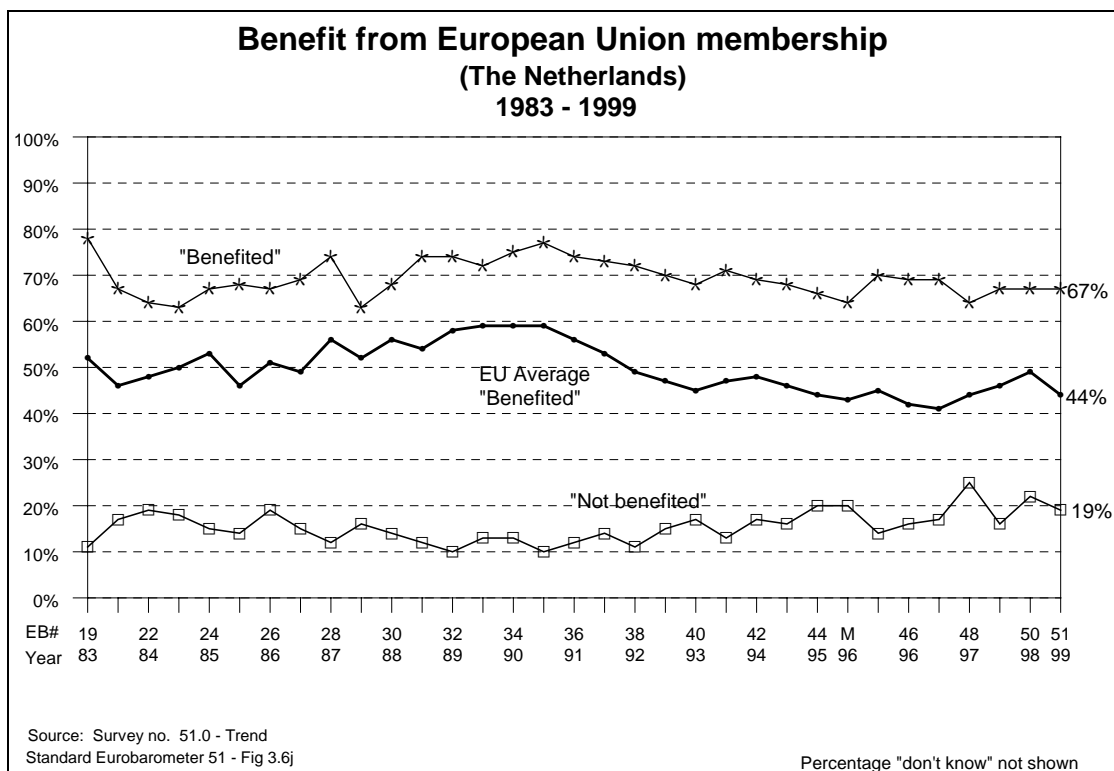
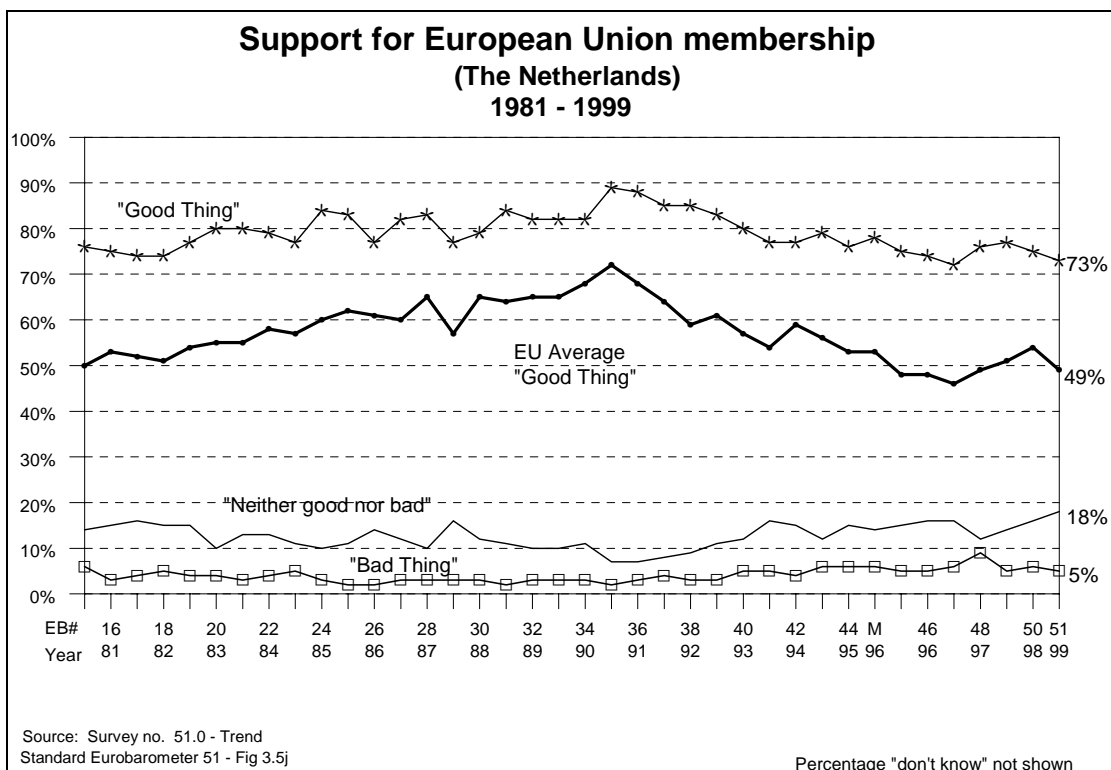
ITALY



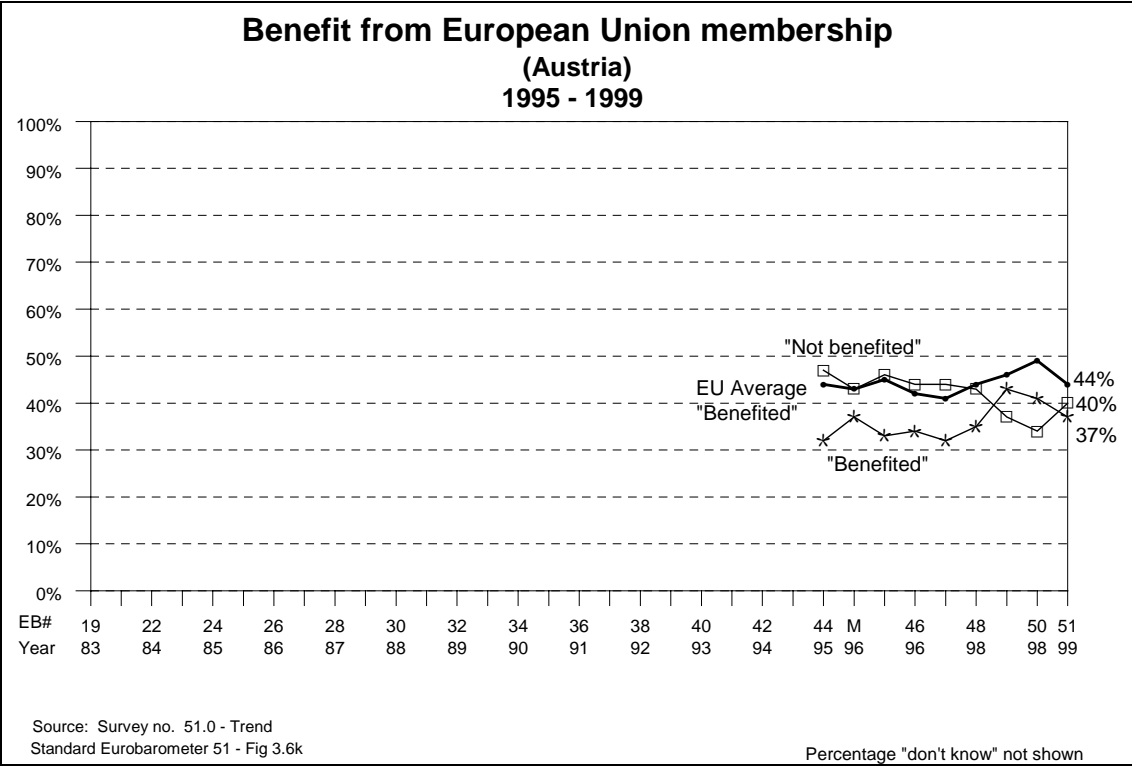
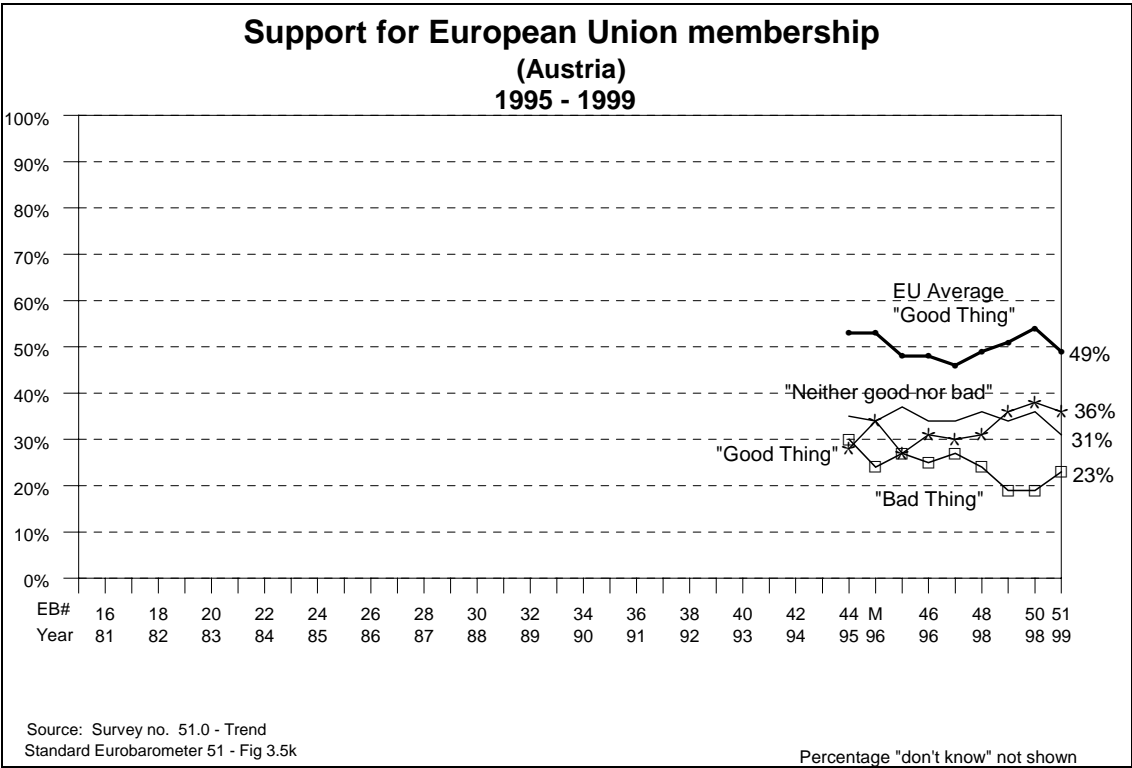
LUXEMBOURG



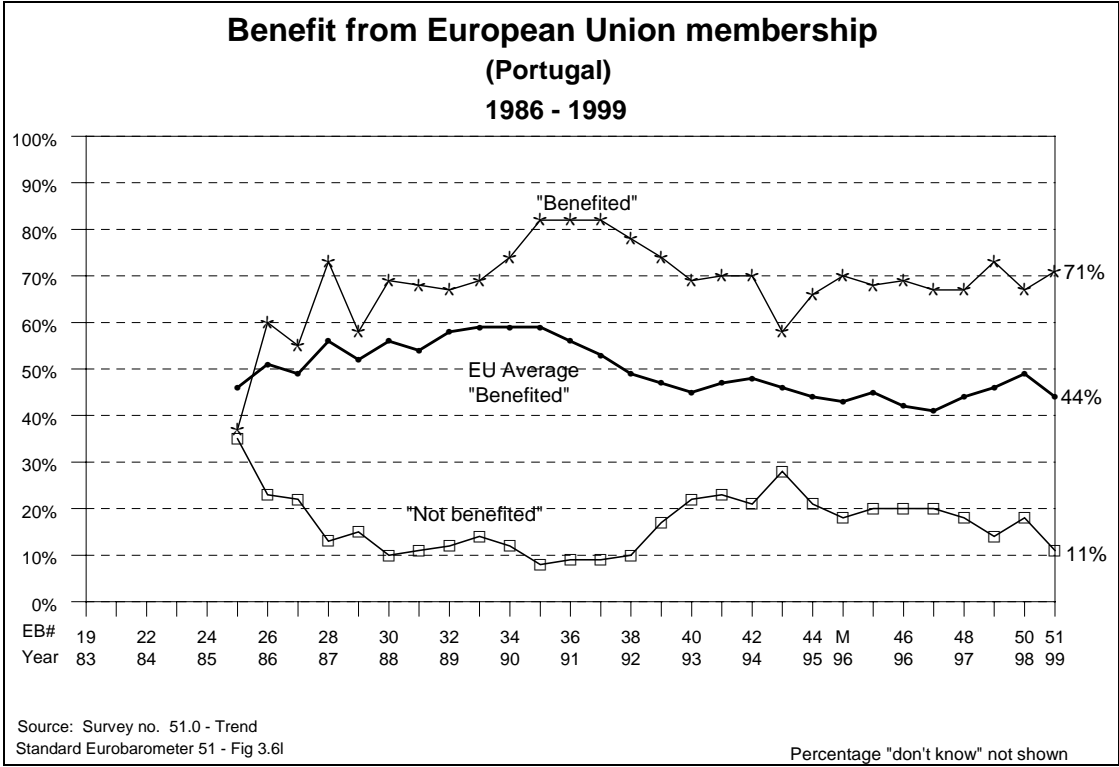
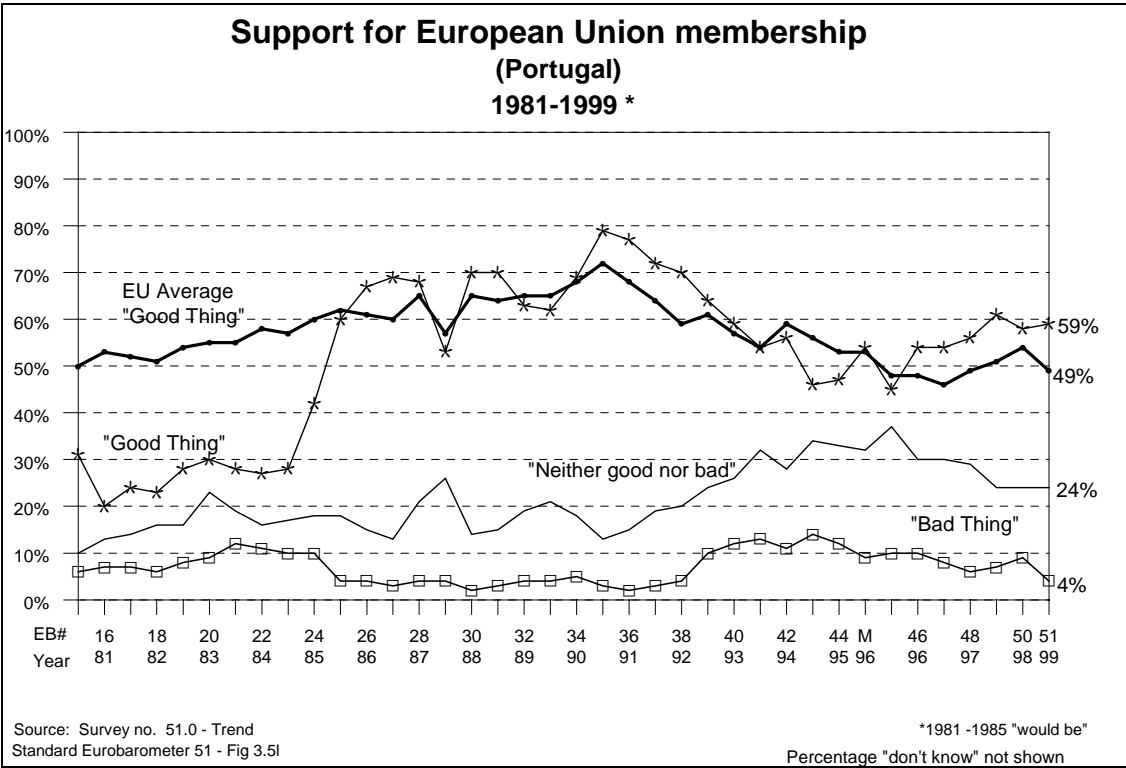
THE NETHERLANDS



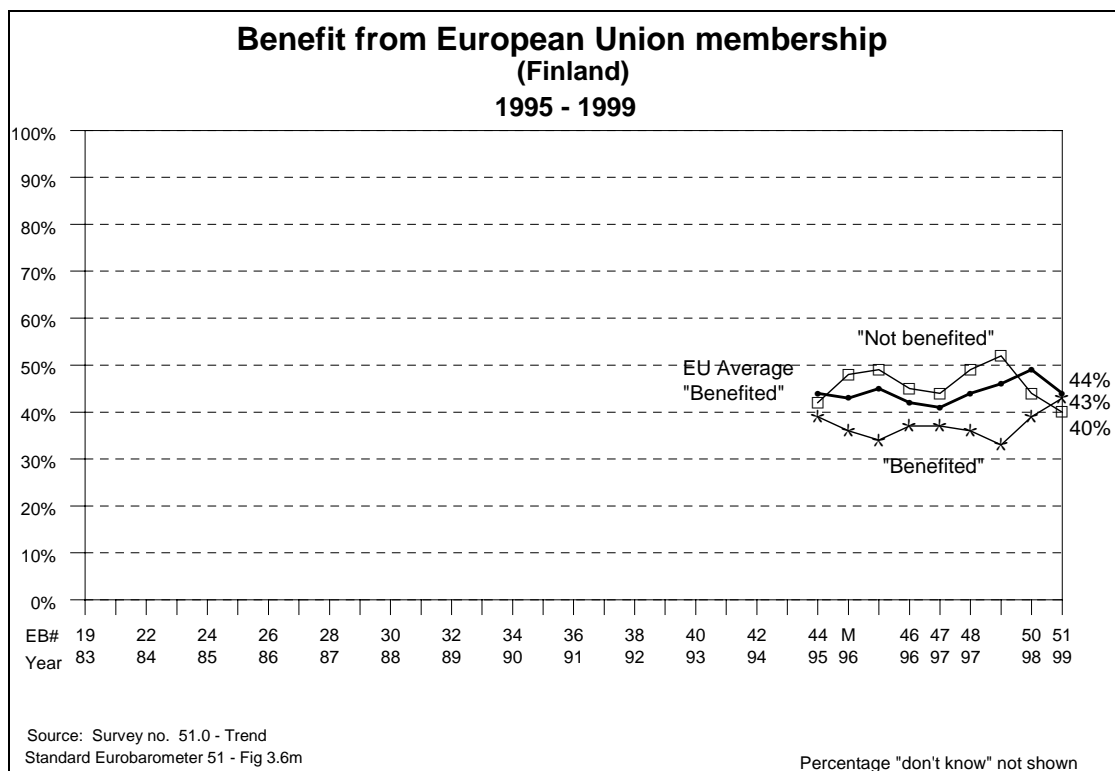
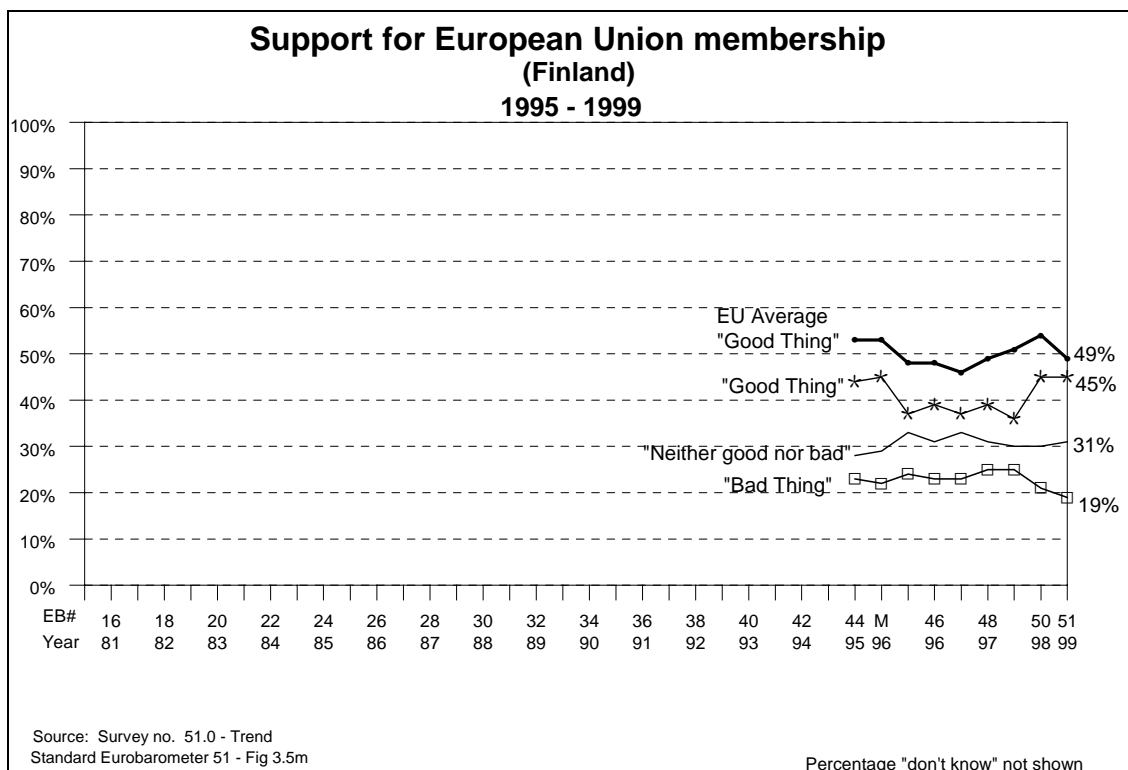
AUSTRIA



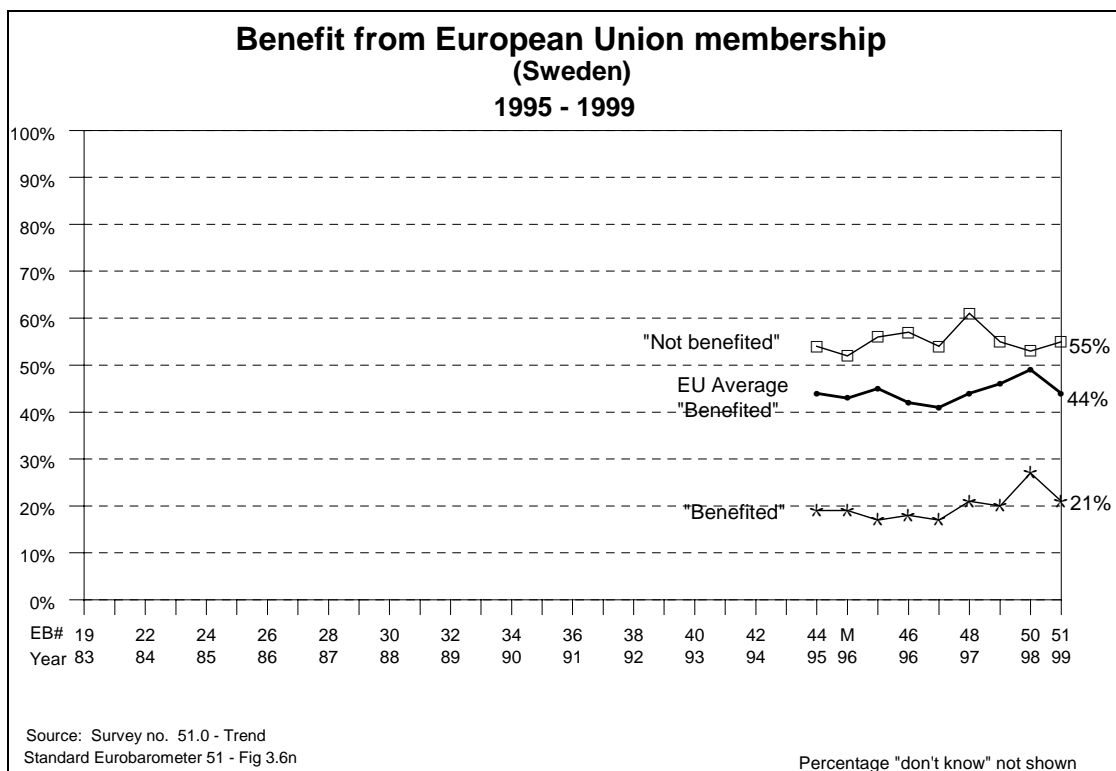
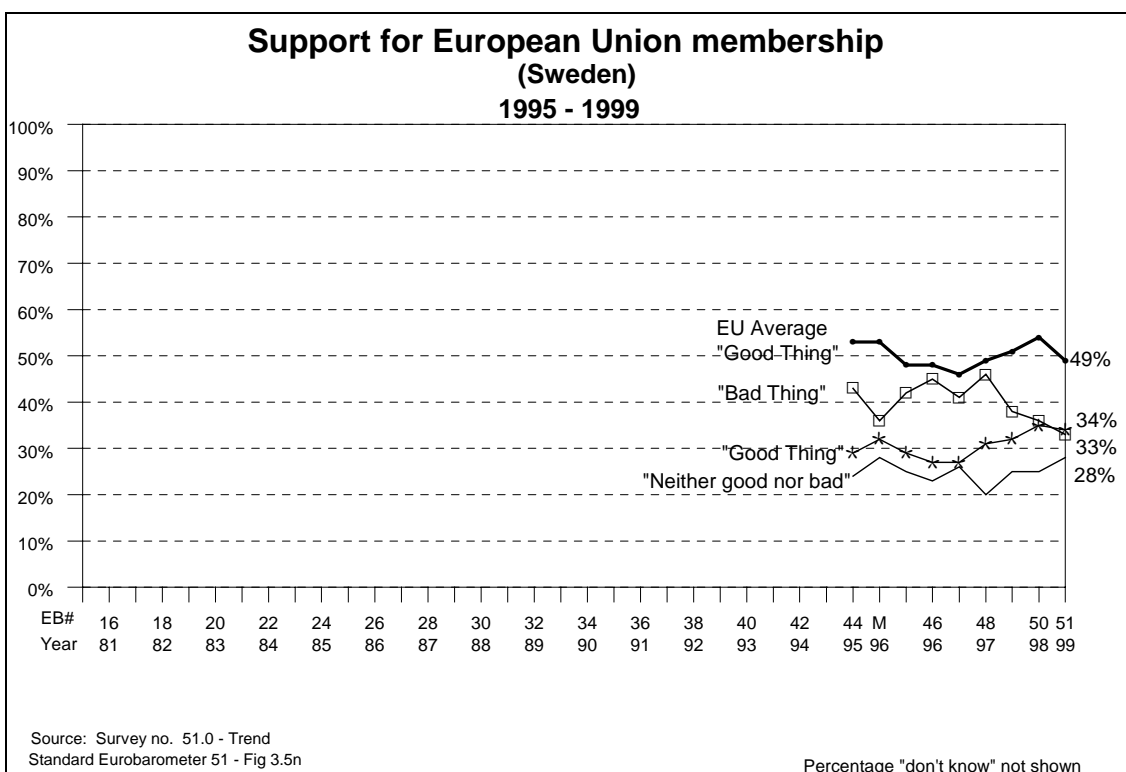
PORTUGAL



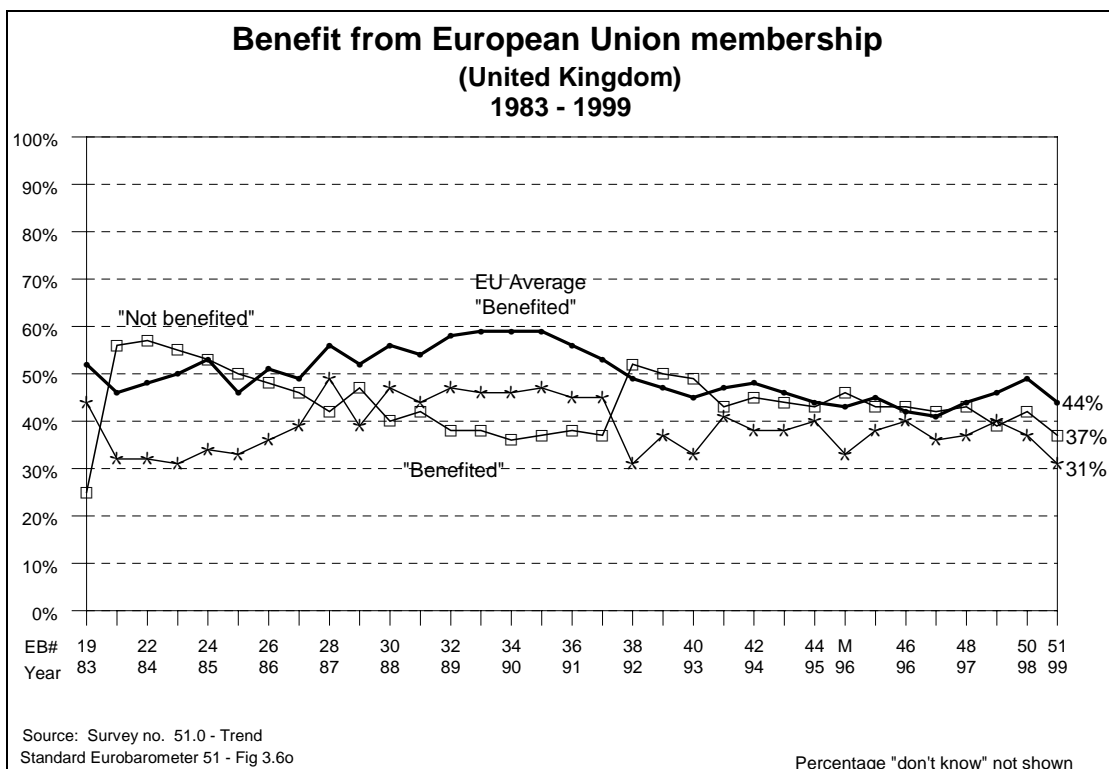
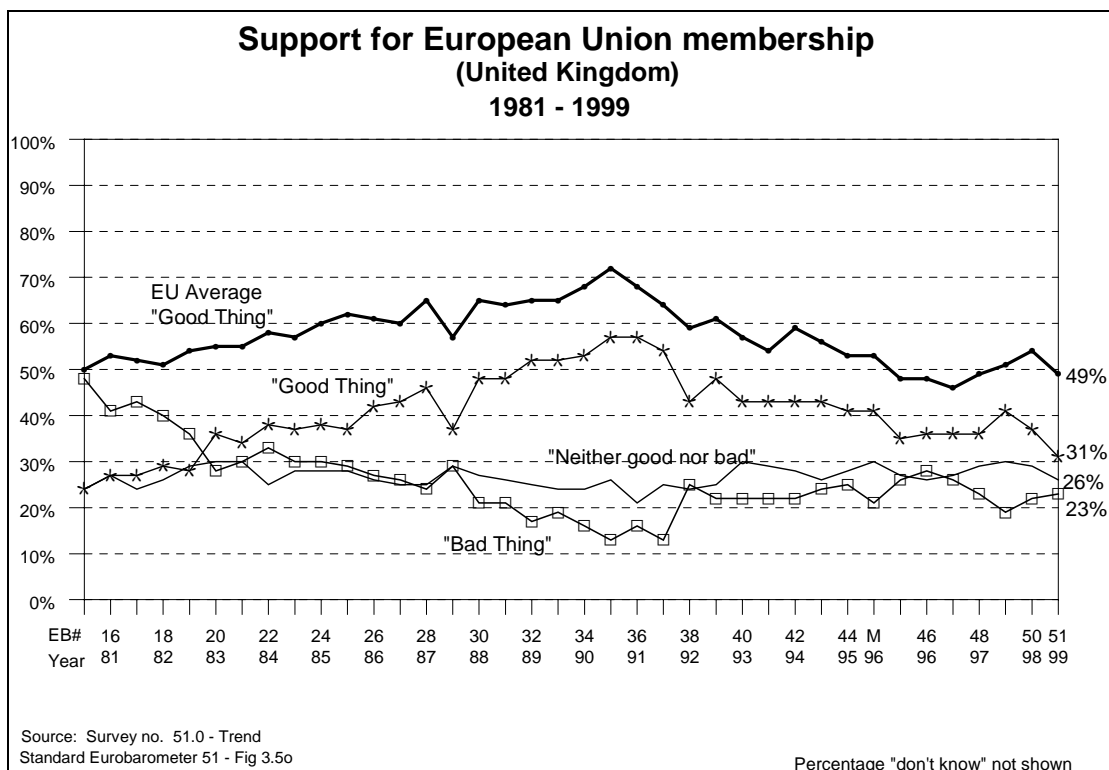
FINLAND



SWEDEN



UNITED KINGDOM

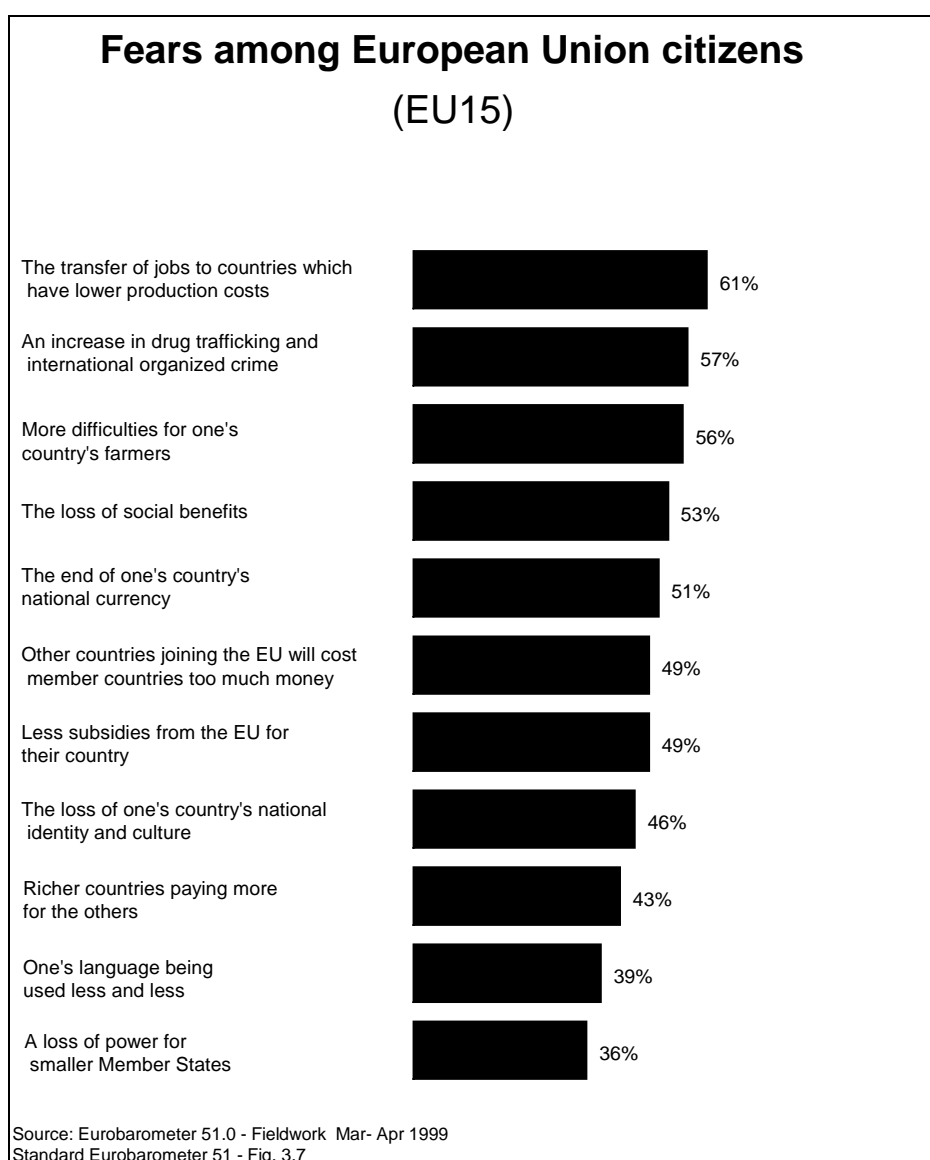


3.3. Fears among European Union citizens

In order to measure the extent to which the public fears the ongoing process of European integration, respondents were asked the following question:

Some people may have fears about the building of Europe, the European Union. 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?²⁵

The idea of jobs transferring to countries which have lower production costs is most likely to scare people in the context of closer unification (61%), followed by an increase in drug trafficking and international organised crime (57%). More than half of the public is also afraid that the farmers in their country will have more difficulties (56%), that they will lose social benefits (53%) and that they will lose their national currency (51%).



²⁵ Respondents were presented with a list of eleven items. The full item text is shown in table 3.3.

The following table shows the three most widespread fears in each country.

TOP THREE MOST WIDESPREAD FEARS (IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)	
Belgium	
Transfer of jobs	71
More drugs and crime	57
Difficulties for farmers	56
Denmark	
More drugs and crime	68
Transfer of jobs	66
Small countries less power	60
Germany	
Transfer of jobs	68
More drugs and crime	64
Loss of social benefits	64
Greece	
Difficulties for farmers	69
End of national currency	67
Less EU subsidies	63
Spain	
Difficulties for farmers	62
Less EU subsidies	59
Loss of social benefits	51
France	
Transfer of jobs	76
Difficulties for farmers	72
Loss of social benefits	67
Ireland	
More drugs and crime	64
Transfer of jobs	64
Loss of national identity	63
Italy	
More drugs and crime	46
Transfer of jobs	44
End of national currency	44
Luxembourg	
More drugs and crime	72
Transfer of jobs	66
Cost of enlargement	61
The Netherlands	
Transfer of jobs	63
More drugs and crime	58
Difficulties for farmers	57
Austria	
Transfer of jobs	63
More drugs and crime	57
Difficulties for farmers	57
Portugal	
Difficulties for farmers	69
More drugs and crime	67
Less EU subsidies	56
Finland	
More drugs and crime	79
Transfer of jobs	70
Difficulties for farmers	69
Sweden	
Transfer of jobs	78
More drugs and crime	77
Difficulties for farmers	59
United Kingdom	
Loss of national identity	68
Transfer of jobs	66
More drugs and crime	66

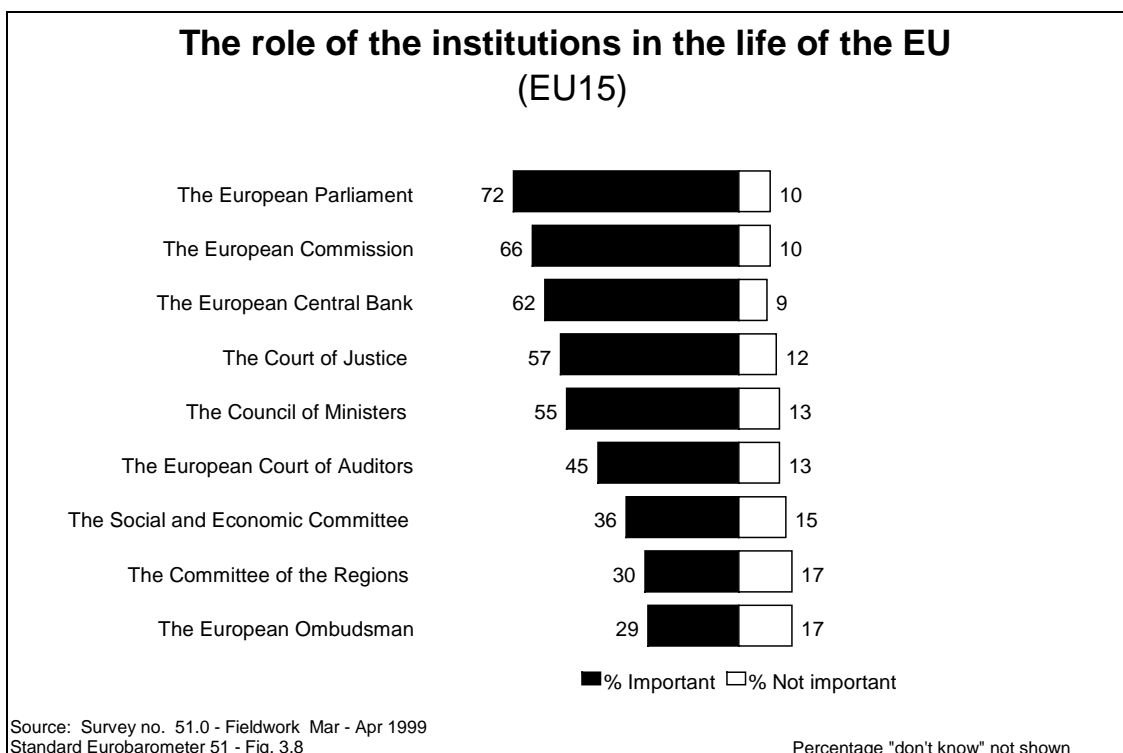
The **transfer of jobs to countries which have lower production costs** is the most widespread fear in 6 Member States, namely Sweden (78%), France (76%), Belgium (71%), Germany (68%), the Netherlands and Austria (both 63%). In 6 further countries it is the second most widespread fear. These are Finland (70%), the UK, Luxembourg, Denmark (all 66%), Ireland (64%) and Italy (44%). An **increase in drug trafficking and international organised crime** is the most widespread fear in the following 5 Member States: Finland (79%), Luxembourg (72%), Denmark (68%), Ireland (64%) and Italy (46%). It comes in second place in Sweden (77%), Portugal (67%), Germany (64%), the Netherlands (58%), Belgium and Austria (both 57%). It comes third in the UK (66%). The fear that **farmers will have more difficulties** is the most widespread fear in Greece, Portugal (both 69%) and Spain (62%). It makes second place in France (72%) and comes third in Finland (69%), Sweden (59%), the Netherlands, Austria (both 57%) and Belgium (56%). The UK is the only country where the fear that European unification will lead to a **loss of identity and culture** tops the list (68%), although it also makes the list - in third place - in Ireland (63%). The fear that one's country will receive **less subsidies from the European Union** makes the top three in Greece (63% - third place), Spain (59% - second place) and Portugal (56% - third place). In Greece (67%) and Italy (44%), fear for the **end of the national currency** makes the top three. More than half of the people in the UK (65%), France (61%), Finland (55%) and Denmark (51%) are also afraid of this. The fear that people will **lose social benefits** comes in third place in France (67%), Germany (64%) and Spain (51%). In Finland (62%), Sweden (58%), the Netherlands (57%), Belgium, Luxembourg (both 55%), Denmark (54%), Greece, the UK (both 53%), Austria (52%) and Ireland (51%) more than half of the public also worries about this. Denmark is the only country where the fear that **smaller Member States will lose power** makes the top three (60%), although an equal proportion of the Greek and the Finnish share this view. Luxembourg (61%) is the only country where the **cost of enlargement** makes the top three (61%), although at least half of the people in France (60%), Germany (57%), Belgium, the Netherlands (both 55%), the UK (51%) and Austria (50%) also worry about this. (See also table 3.3).

3.4. The institutions of the European Union

The survey also measures the public's views of the institutions of the European Union. The first question to be discussed in this context asks respondents whether they think 9 of the Union's institutions play an important role or not in the life of the European Union²⁶.

As the following graph shows, people are most likely to believe that the European Parliament (72%), the European Commission (66%) and the European Central Bank (62%) play an important role in the life of the European Union. People are least likely to believe that the European Ombudsman (29%), the Committee of the Regions (30%) and the Social and Economic Committee (36%) play an important role. However, as we saw in chapter 2 (see figure 2.2), people's awareness levels of these three institutions is low so that many people feel unable to say whether they play an important role or not.

²⁶ Public awareness of these institutions is discussed in chapter 2.



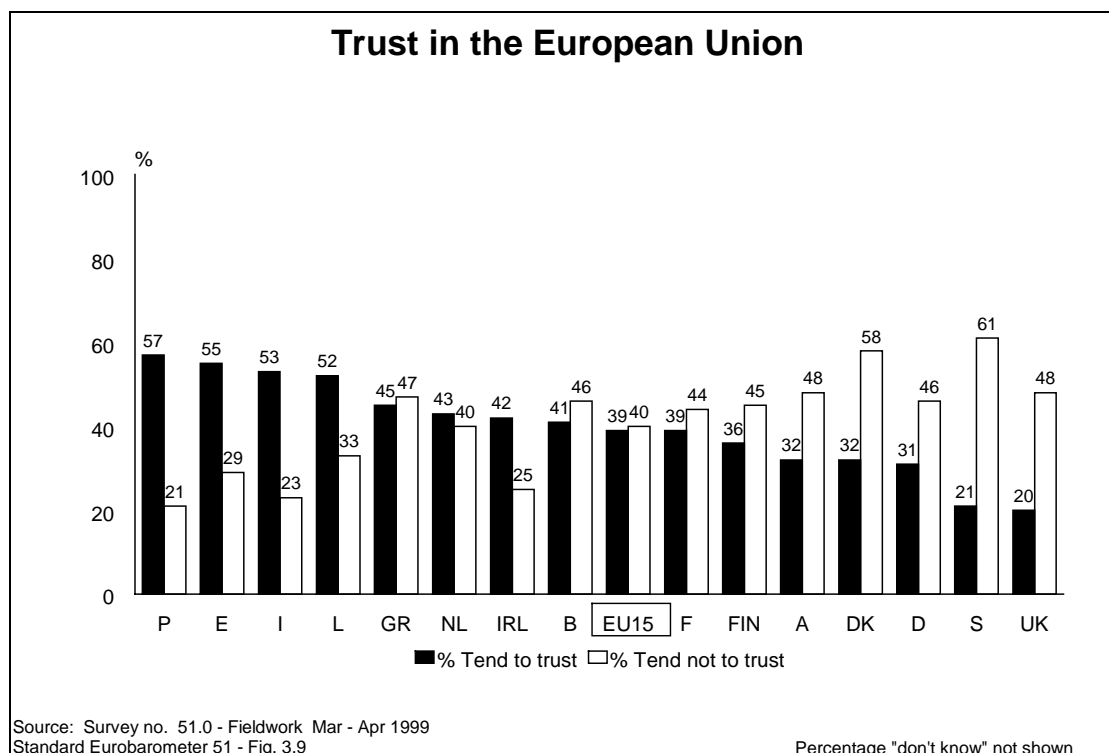
The country by country analyses show that the proportion of people that feels that the **European Parliament** plays an important role in the life of the European Union is highest in Luxembourg (89%), followed by Finland (84%) and Sweden (81%) and lowest in the UK (64%) and Germany (65%). The proportion of people that feels that the **European Commission** plays an important role is highest in Luxembourg (85%), followed by Finland (79%), Ireland and the Netherlands (both 77%) and lowest in the UK (56%) and Germany (59%). The **European Central Bank**, which is headed by a Dutchman, is most likely to be seen as playing an important role by the Dutch (79%), followed by people in Luxembourg and Finland (both 75%) and least likely to be seen as playing an important role in the UK (46%), Denmark (53%) and Greece (54%), three of the four countries that are not participating in the third phase of economic and monetary union. People from the fourth "pre-in" country - Sweden - are significantly more likely to feel that the European Central Bank plays an important role in the life of the European Union (70%). The **Council of Ministers**, where most of the decision-making power of the European Union lies, is less well known to the public and thus not seen to play an important role by as many people as is the case for some of the other institutions. People in Luxembourg (75%) are most likely to feel that it plays an important role, followed by people in Sweden (70%) and the Netherlands (69%). People in the UK are by far the least likely to feel that it plays an important role (31% with 57% lacking an opinion), followed by people in Germany (52%) and Austria (53%). (See also table 3.4)

Before discussing levels of trust in each of these 9 institutions, we first look at levels of trust for the European Union as a whole²⁷. On average, 39% of Europeans say they tend to trust the European Union, 40% say they tend not to trust it and 21% lack an opinion.

However, as the next graph shows, there are large variations between the Member States. More than half of the public in Portugal (57%), Spain (55%), Italy (53%) and Luxembourg (52%) trusts the European Union compared to less than a third of the public in the UK (20%), Sweden (21%), Germany (31%), Denmark and Austria (both 32%)²⁸. (Table 3.5)

²⁷ This question is part of a larger battery of questions. The other trust items are discussed in chapter 1 (political institutions - see tables 1.2a-c) and chapter 2 (media - see table 2.6).

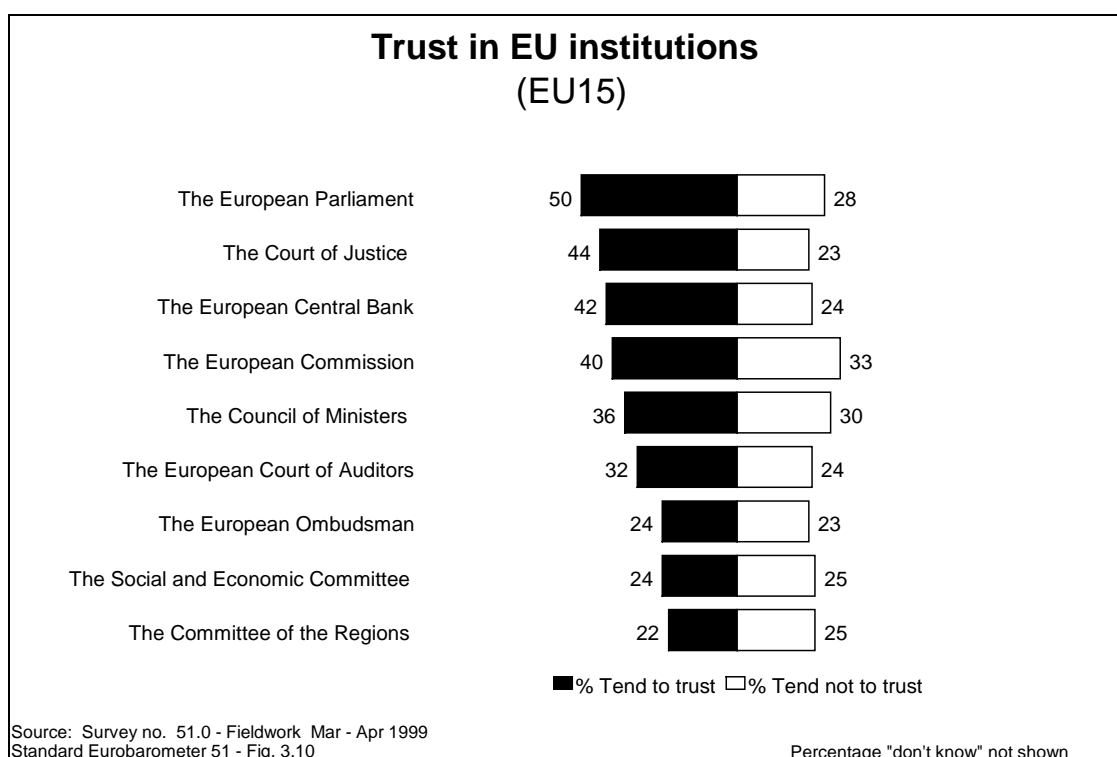
²⁸ The proportion of people who tend not to trust the European Union is highest in Sweden (61%) and Denmark (58%). The proportion of don't know responses is highest in the UK and Ireland (both 32%).



Whether people trust the European Union or not also depends on how they generally feel about their country's membership to the EU. As the table below shows, those who regard their country's membership as a good thing are significantly more likely to say they tend to trust the European Union than those who regard their country's membership as a bad thing.

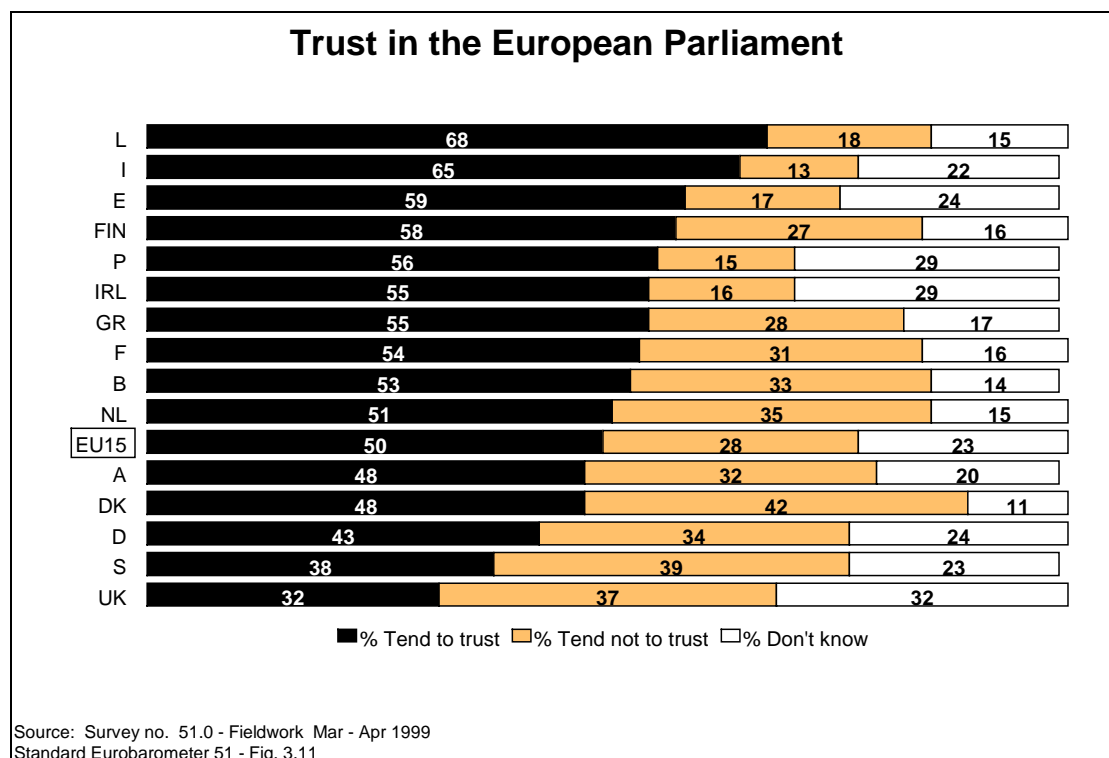
Trust in the European Union by support levels (in %)			
	EU membership is a good thing	EU membership is neither good nor bad	EU membership is a bad thing
% Tend to trust	57	26	11
% Tend not to trust	27	50	74
% Don't know	16	24	15
<i>% Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

The following graph shows the extent to which Europeans tend to trust and tend not to trust 9 of the Union's institutions.

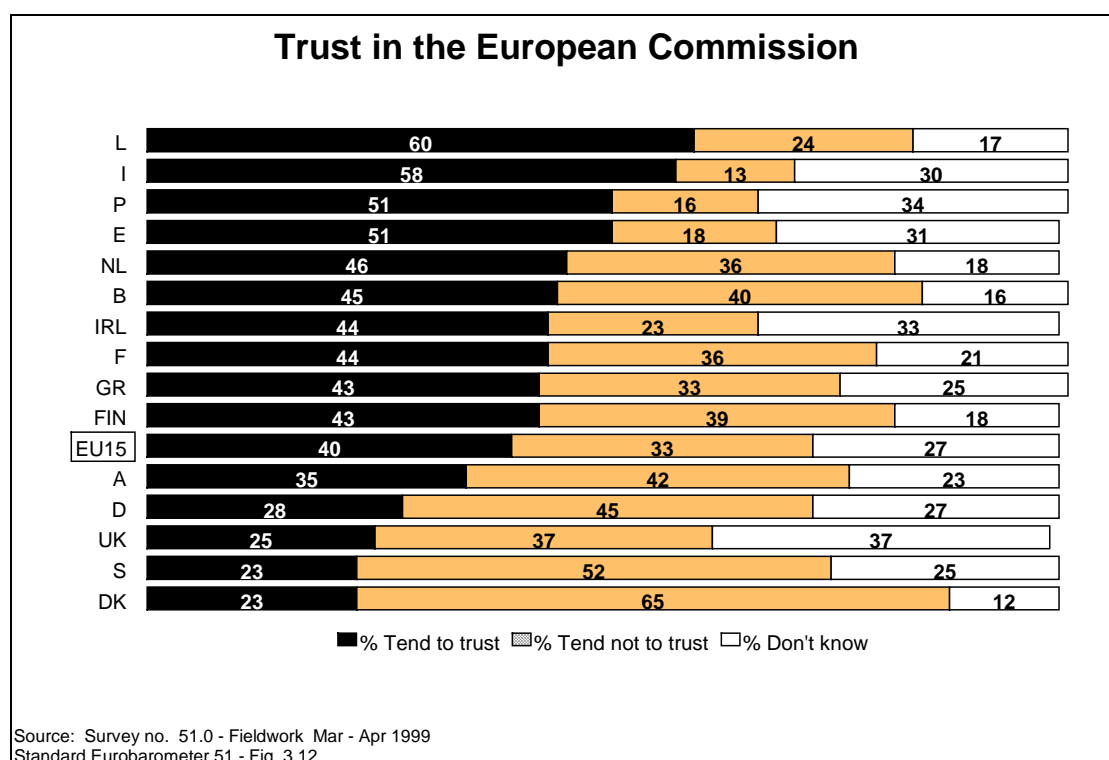


We find varying degrees of trust in the individual institutions of the European Union. The first thing to note is that many people can't say whether they trust the institutions because they lack an opinion. This applies particularly to the Committee of the Regions, the Social and Economic Committee and the European Ombudsman. The high proportion of "don't know" responses should thus be taken into consideration when interpreting the low trust levels shown in the graph. Europeans are most likely to trust the European Parliament (50%), with the Court of Justice (44%) in second place. Since the survey was carried out after the crisis at the European Commission, it is not surprising to find that the proportion of people who say they tend not to trust it is, at 33%, the highest. 30% of the public also say they tend not to trust the Council of Ministers. As was shown in chapter 1, trust in the national governments, whose ministers make up the European Union's Council of Ministers, is also quite low.

People in Luxembourg (68%) and Italy (65%) are most likely to trust the **European Parliament** while it is most likely not to be trusted by people in Denmark (42%) and Sweden (39%). The proportion of "don't know" responses ranges from 11% in Denmark to 32% in the UK.



Trust levels for the **European Commission** are highest in Luxembourg (60%), which is current acting President Jacques Santer's home country, and Italy (58%), which is the newly appointed President Romano Prodi's home country. People in Denmark are the most likely to not trust the European Commission (65%), followed by people in Sweden (52%). The proportion of "don't know" responses ranges from 12% in Denmark to 37% in the UK.



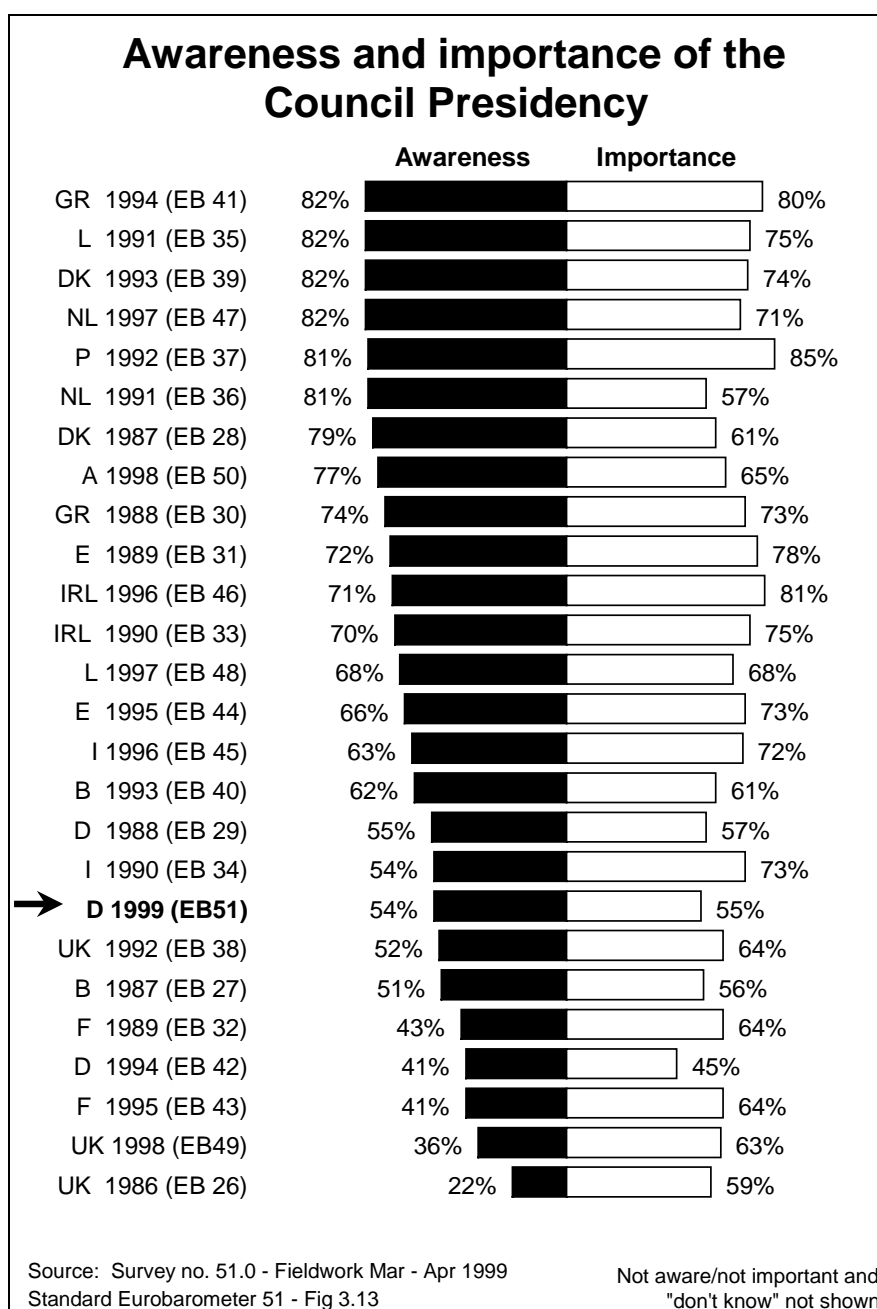
The next table shows the three most widely trusted institutions in each Member State. The **European Parliament** tops the list in 10 of the 15 Member States, comes in second place in three further countries, comes in third place in Germany and shares third place with the Court of Auditors in the Netherlands. The **Court of Justice** tops the list in Denmark (64%), Finland (59%), Germany (50%) and Sweden (45%). It comes in second place in Luxembourg (63%), the Netherlands (62%), Ireland (51%), Austria, Greece, Belgium (all 45%) and the UK (30%). The **European Central Bank** tops the list in the Netherlands (68%), comes second in Germany (50%) and third in Luxembourg (61%), Italy (49%), Ireland (48%), Austria (44%), Denmark (43%), France (41%) and Sweden (37%). The **European Commission** comes in second place in Italy (58%), Portugal, Spain (both 51%), France (44%) and third in Belgium (45%), Greece (43%) and the UK (25%). The **Council of Ministers** comes in third place in Portugal and Spain (45%). The **European Ombudsman**, who is Finnish, makes the top three in his home country (57%). None of the other institutions make the top three. (See also table 3.6)

TOP THREE MOST WIDELY TRUSTED EU INSTITUTIONS (IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)	
Belgium	
European Parliament	53
Court of Justice	45
European Commission	45
Denmark	
Court of Justice	64
European Parliament	48
European Central Bank	43
Germany	
Court of Justice	50
European Central Bank	50
European Parliament	43
Greece	
European Parliament	55
Court of Justice	45
European Commission	43
Spain	
European Parliament	59
European Commission	51
Council of Ministers	45
France	
European Parliament	54
European Commission	44
European Central Bank	41
Ireland	
European Parliament	55
Court of Justice	51
European Central Bank	48
Italy	
European Parliament	65
European Commission	58
European Central Bank	49
Luxembourg	
European Parliament	68
Court of Justice	63
European Central Bank	61
The Netherlands	
European Central Bank	68
Court of Justice	62
Court of Auditors	51
Austria	
European Parliament	48
Court of Justice	45
European Central Bank	44
Portugal	
European Parliament	56
European Commission	51
Council of Ministers	45
Finland	
Court of Justice	59
European Parliament	58
European Ombudsman	57
Sweden	
Court of Justice	45
European Parliament	38
European Central Bank	37
United Kingdom	
European Parliament	32
Court of Justice	30
European Commission	25

3.5. Awareness and importance of the Council Presidency

In the last section of this chapter, we look at both the awareness and the perceived importance of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, which at the time of the survey was held by Germany²⁹.

As the following graph shows, 54% of Germans were aware that their country held the Presidency. This is 1 percentage point lower than when Germany held the Presidency in 1988 but significantly higher than when it held the Presidency in 1994 (41%). In the spring of 1999, 55% of Germans believed it was important that their country held the Presidency.



²⁹ Each Member State of the European Union holds, in turn, the Presidency for a period of six months. Since 1986, the EB has fielded the question in the respective country.

4. Support for current policy issues

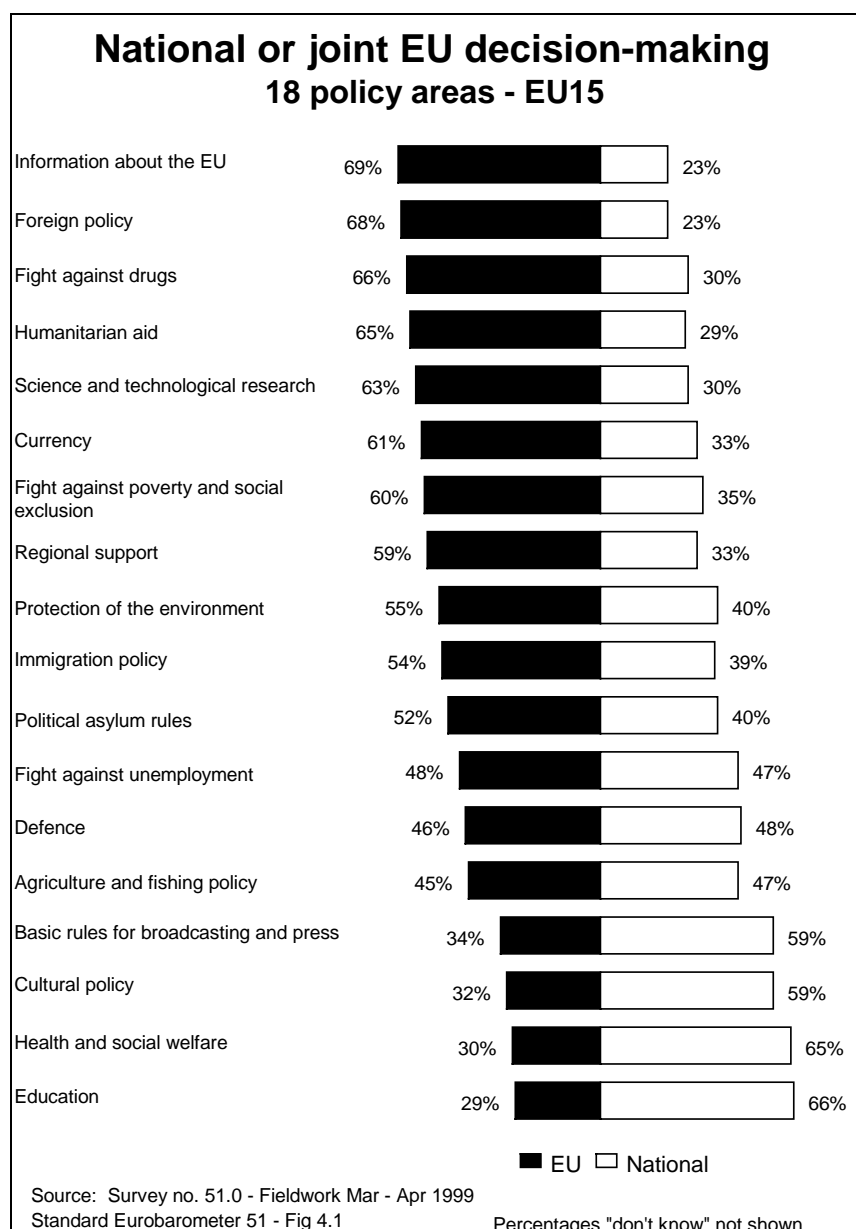
While the previous chapter describes the current state of public opinion towards the European Union in general, this chapter looks at support for the various priorities and policies of the European Union. In particular, the chapter looks at attitudes towards the single currency and towards enlargement. We begin with an examination of the extent to which the public prefers joint EU decision-making over national decision-making in a number of policy areas.

4.1. Support for joint EU decision-making

The survey includes a question that asks whether decisions should be taken at the national or EU level. It lists 18 policy areas over which the Union has, to varying degrees, decision-making competencies. On average, 52% of people support joint EU decision-making in these areas and EU decision-making is favoured over national decision-making in 12 of the 18 areas. In comparison to the autumn of 1998, we note a small drop in support for joint EU decision-making, when the average support level was 57% and EU decision-making was favoured in 14 of the 18 areas.

SUPPORT FOR JOINT EU DECISION-MAKING BY COUNTRY		
Country	Average level of support for EU decision-making (for 18 areas, in %)	Number of areas where EU decision-making is more popular than national decision-making (18 areas maximum)
Italy	66%	18
Belgium	61%	14
The Netherlands	61%	13
France	54%	13
Spain	53%	12
EU15	52%	12
Germany	51%	13
Luxembourg	51%	12
Portugal	49%	11
Greece	47%	10
Austria	47%	10
Ireland	47%	8
United Kingdom	39%	7
Denmark	39%	6
Finland	35%	5
Sweden	34%	4

Once again, support for EU decision-making is highest in Italy, which is the only country where joint EU decision-making is favoured over national decision-making in all 18 policy areas. In Belgium and the Netherlands, more than 6 in 10 people on average also prefer joint EU decision-making. Support for EU decision-making is lowest in Sweden, Finland, Denmark and the United Kingdom. In these countries, the public attaches more value to national sovereignty and prefers a more restricted role for the EU in the decision-making process.



As in the autumn of 1998, people are most likely to be of the opinion that decisions concerning information about the EU, its policies and institutions should be taken jointly by the European Union. The next four areas where support for joint EU decision-making is most widespread - foreign policy, the fight against drugs, humanitarian aid and science and technological research - all either transcend national borders or have a limited impact on people in day to day life. Along the Union's subsidiarity principle, people distinguish between these areas and those that are more likely to affect them directly. Thus, we find that the majority of Europeans want the national governments to decide in areas that concern them, their families or their country more directly such as education, health and social policy, cultural policy and broadcasting rules for the media. (For individual country results, see table 4.1)

With the war in Kosovo, the issue of a European army has once again become more topical. Yet, the results show that in most countries people are now less likely to favour EU joint-decision-making on defence matters than they were in the autumn of 1998. Drops in support for EU joint decision-making are noted in Greece (17%; -16), Luxembourg (51%; -13), Spain (45%; -12), Austria (38%; -9), Germany (52%; -7), Sweden (18%; -7), Denmark (30%; -6), France (49%; -5), Ireland (20%; -4), Finland (7%, -4), the UK (27%; -3) and the Netherlands (72%; -2). The only countries where support did not drop are Belgium (62%; +1), Italy (60%; +2) and Portugal (35%; +2)³⁰.

4.2. Public support for the Union's priorities in 1999

The five political priorities of the European Commission in 1999, as stated in its Work Programme, are broadly speaking as follows³¹:

- Implementing the **Treaty of Amsterdam**³².
- Promoting the Union's capacity to act as a **more visible, unified, coherent and strong entity** on the international scene.
- **Reforming the institutions** in order to increase efficiency and transparency.
- Ensuring that **EMU** is a success - consolidating **the euro** to give Europe a new place in international relations.
- Putting **Agenda 2000** into effect³³.

In this section, we look at the extent to which the public considers these issues to be priorities for the European Union³⁴.

The Amsterdam Treaty, which was implemented on 1 May 1999, presents a new integrated strategy for employment. 90% of Europeans believe the **fight against unemployment** should be a priority for the European Union. The Treaty also enables the Commission to develop policies designed to modernise and improve social protection, promote social inclusion and combat discrimination and inequality. 88% of EU citizens want the EU to **fight poverty and social exclusion**. Furthermore, the Treaty improves the mechanisms and instruments needed for Member States to co-operate in the **fight against organised crime and drug trafficking**, which 88% of EU citizens believe should be a priority for the European Union. 81% of EU citizens believe **guaranteeing the rights of the individual and respect for the principles of democracy in Europe** should be a priority for the European Union. It is the first time that these fundamental rights are explicitly provided for in a Treaty. There is also a clause on sustainable development, which provides a framework for tackling environmental challenges more effectively and improving the quality of life. The **protection of the environment** should be an EU priority according to 83% of people; 79% feel this way about **consumer protection**. Last but not least, the Treaty has a clause giving citizens the right to information about the European Union, the overriding aim being to **get closer to European citizens**. 72% of people consider this a priority for the European Union.

The war in Kosovo tests the Union's capacity to act as a more visible, unified, coherent and strong entity on the international scene. 90% of Europeans regard **maintaining peace and security in Europe** as a priority for the European Union. 51% of EU citizens feel that the **European Union should assert its political and diplomatic importance around the world**.

When it comes to the Union's priority to successfully implement the **single currency**, we find that 66% of EU citizens agree with this, against 25% who don't³⁵.

As part of Agenda 2000, which was approved by the European Parliament on 6 May 1999, the Commission in 1999 will continue the preparations for enlargement. Although only 27% of Europeans regard **welcoming**

³⁰ See also Eurobarometer Report No. 50, table 3.9.

³¹ Further information can be found on the following Web-site: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/off/work/1999/en/com604.htm>.

³² More information about the Amsterdam Treaty can be found at: <http://europa.eu.int/abc/obj/amst/en/index.htm>.

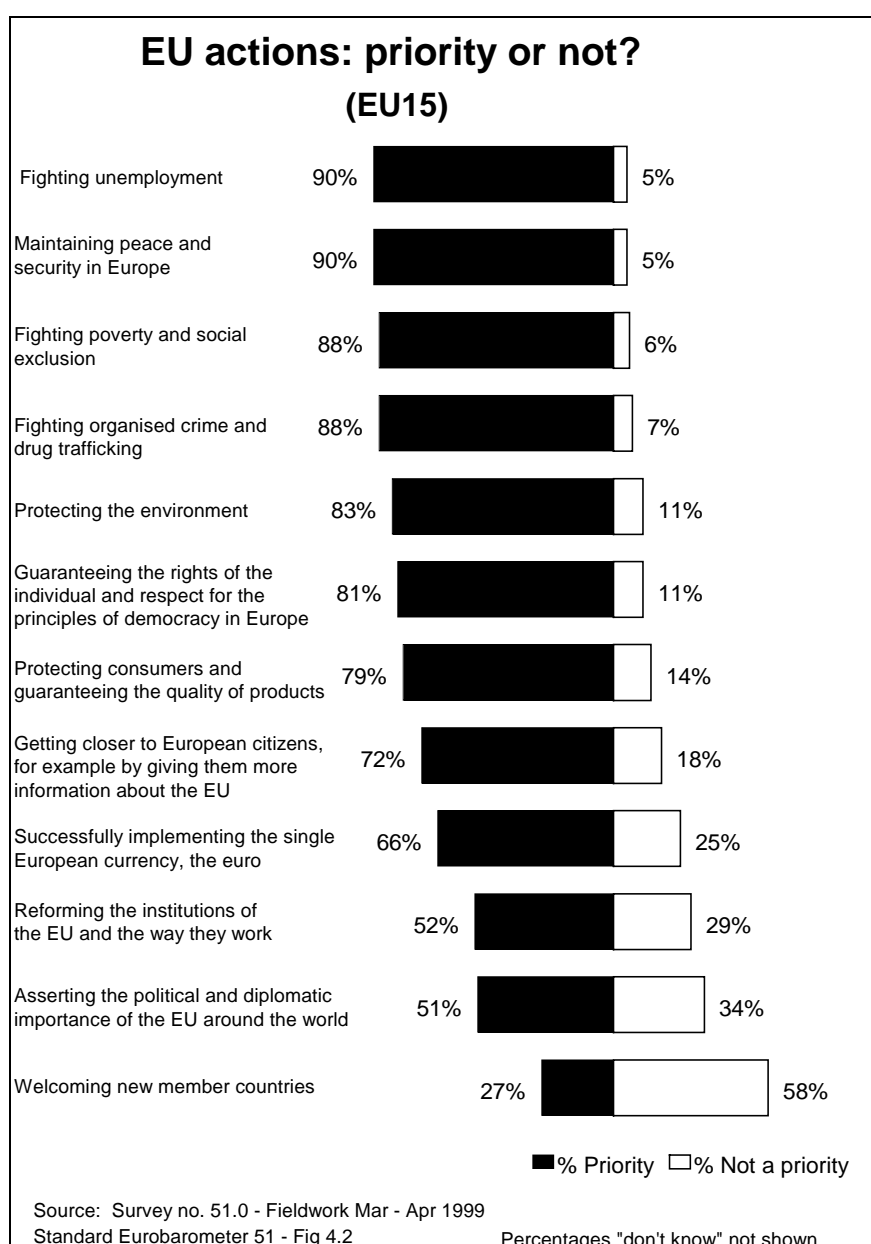
³³ More information about Agenda 2000 can be found at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/agenda2000/index_en.htm.

³⁴ Individual country results are shown in table 4.2 in the Appendix.

³⁵ Attitudes to the single currency are discussed in more detail in section 4.4 of this chapter.

new members³⁶ as a priority, there is much broader support for the need to **reform the Union's institutions**. 52% of EU citizens regard this action, which is not only part of Agenda 2000 but also a specific aim of the Amsterdam Treaty, as a priority for the European Union.

The resignation of the European Commission in March 1999 following allegations of fraud no doubt explains why, in many Member States, citizens are now significantly more likely to regard reform of the Union's institutions as a priority than they were in the autumn of 1998. The countries where significant increases are recorded are Austria (61%; +15), Luxembourg (55%; +13), Ireland (64%; +10), Belgium (52%; +10), Portugal (53%; +9), Sweden (66%; +7), Germany (52%; +7), France (49%; +7), Denmark (77%; +4), Spain (52%; +4) and Finland (42%; +4). No significant shifts are noted in the UK (50%; +1), the Netherlands (64%; 0) and Italy (51%; -2). Greece is the only country (62%; -6) where people are now less likely than they were in the autumn of 1998 to view reform as a priority for the European Union³⁷.

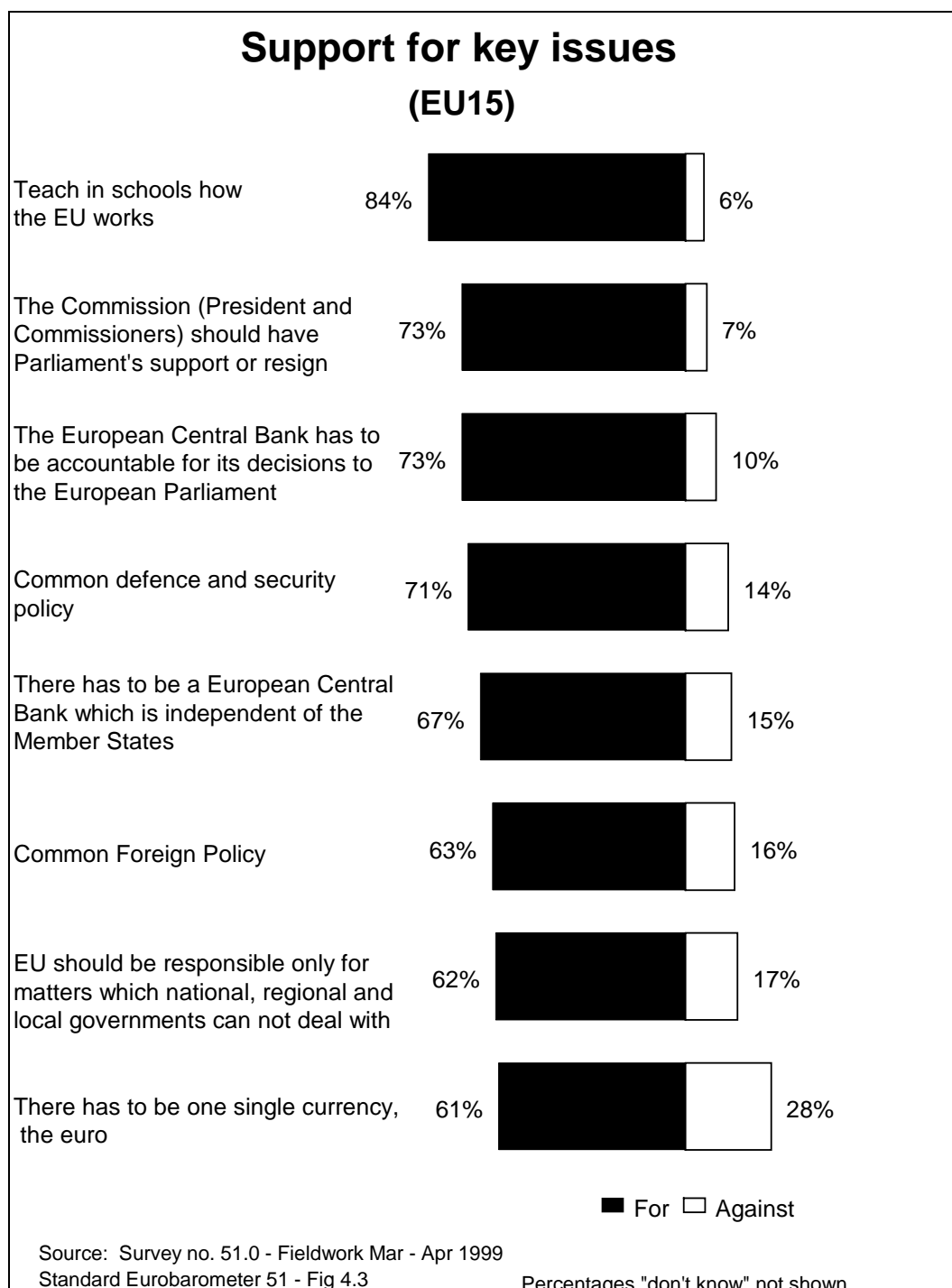


³⁶ Support for enlargement is discussed in more detail in section 4.5 of this chapter.

³⁷ See Eurobarometer Report No. 50, table 3.8 for autumn 1998 results.

4.3. Support for key issues

The Eurobarometer is used to gauge public opinion towards a number of key issues of the European Union. Some of the issues are clear cut policy matters while others relate to democratic processes which govern the way the European Union functions.



In all 15 Member States, there is widespread agreement that children should be taught in school about the way European Union institutions work, with support levels ranging from 76% in Austria to 92% in Portugal and the Netherlands.

In most countries, in spite of the Kosovo war, support for a common defence policy and support for a common foreign policy is lower than it was in the autumn of 1998. The table below shows that Belgium and Portugal are the only two countries where significant increases are noted. In Belgium, support for a common defence and security policy increased by 7 percentage points and support for a common foreign policy increased by 9 percentage points. In Portugal, support for a common defence and security policy increased by 6 percentage points and support for a common foreign policy increased by 5 percentage points. The most significant drop in support levels, both for a common defence and security policy (-13) and for a common foreign policy (-11), is recorded in Greece.

SUPPORT FOR A COMMON DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICY AND A COMMON FOREIGN POLICY BY COUNTRY				
Country	Defence and Security	Shift since Autumn 1998	Foreign Policy	Shift since Autumn 1998
Italy	81%	-4	70%	-2
The Netherlands	81%	-1	75%	-4
Belgium	80%	+7	68%	+9
Luxembourg	79%	-4	74%	+2
France	77%	-4	67%	-4
Germany	74%	-5	68%	-3
Greece	71%	-13	70%	-11
EU15	71%	-4	63%	-3
Spain	67%	-8	62%	-5
Portugal	64%	+6	54%	+5
Austria	62%	-1	62%	-3
United Kingdom	58%	-6	43%	-9
Denmark	53%	-5	56%	-3
Ireland	50%	-4	59%	-1
Sweden	45%	-6	46%	-1
Finland	44%	-8	49%	-6

The items relating to the accountability of the European Central Bank (ECB) and to the need for Parliament's support of the Commission measure support for democratic processes. It is not surprising to find that support for democratic processes is equally, if not more, widespread in the Nordic countries, where many people feel that the European Union has too much power and where the view that there are insufficient measures to control this power is widespread.

Support for the principle of subsidiarity is obtained from 62% of Europeans. Support is most widespread in Italy (70%) and is obtained from 2 in 3 people in Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Finland. Opposition to the principle of subsidiarity is highest in Sweden (35%), Denmark (30%), the UK (24%) and France (23%).

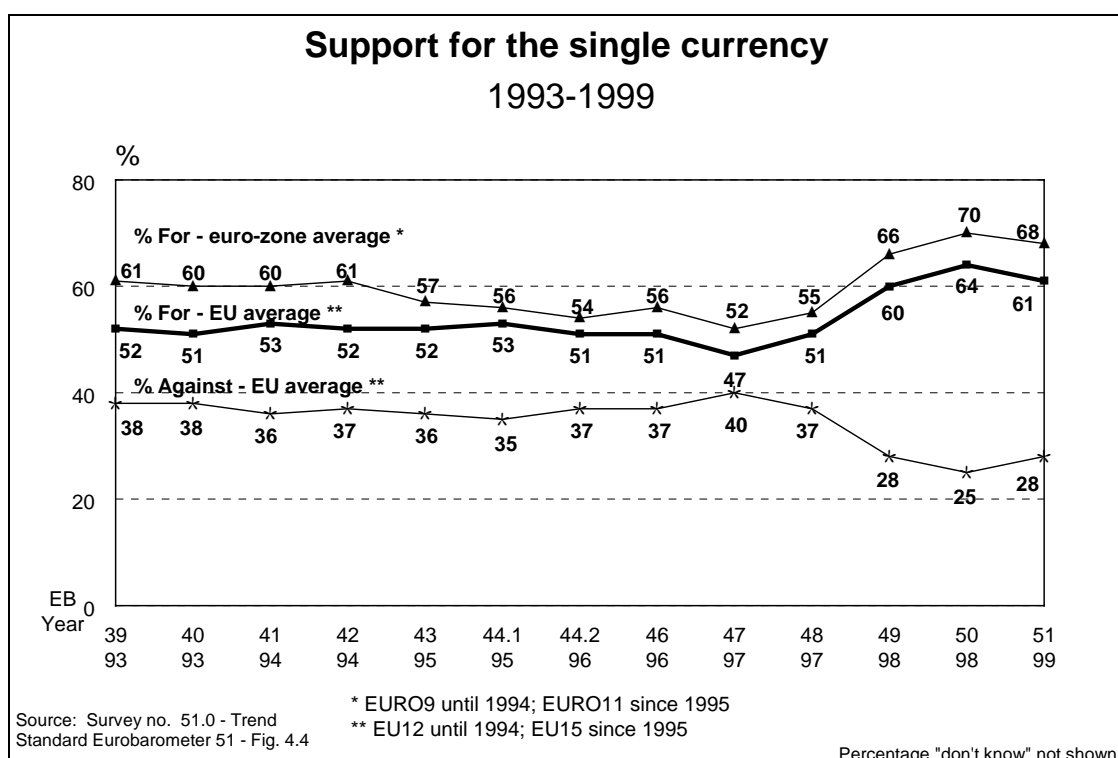
Support for the single currency, which stands at 61% in the spring of 1999, will be discussed in more detail in the next section of this chapter. 67% of EU citizens support the ECB, with highest support levels recorded in Luxembourg (84%) and the Netherlands (83%). Support for the ECB is lowest in the UK (51%) where it doesn't decide monetary policy, as the country is not participating in the euro. However, support levels are significantly higher in the three other countries outside of the euro-zone. (See also table 4.3)

In order to provide a general impression of support levels for these key issues in each of the countries, we have calculated an average by summing up the percentage of favourable responses for each policy issue and dividing this by the total number of issues (8). As can be seen the average level of support is highest in Luxembourg and the Netherlands (both 80%) and lowest in the United Kingdom (54%), followed by Sweden (62%). One should bear in mind that low support levels may be a direct result of high levels of 'don't know' responses and thus do not necessarily convey high opposition levels. This is particularly the case in Portugal. Because average results always conceal some information, we also show the difference between the issue that receives the highest percentage support and the issue that receives the lowest percentage support. A high amount of spread indicates that support for some of the items is far more widespread than for some of the others. The largest spread is found in Sweden (52 percentage points), followed by the UK (50), Denmark (47) and Finland (45).

SUPPORT FOR KEY ISSUES BY COUNTRY		
Country	Average level of support	Spread between highest and lowest level of % support
Luxembourg	80%	23
The Netherlands	80%	24
Belgium	76%	22
Italy	75%	17
France	73%	29
Greece	72%	21
Germany	71%	25
Spain	69%	21
EU15	69%	23
Ireland	69%	39
Finland	69%	45
Denmark	66%	47
Austria	65%	23
Portugal	65%	38
Sweden	62%	52
United Kingdom	54%	50

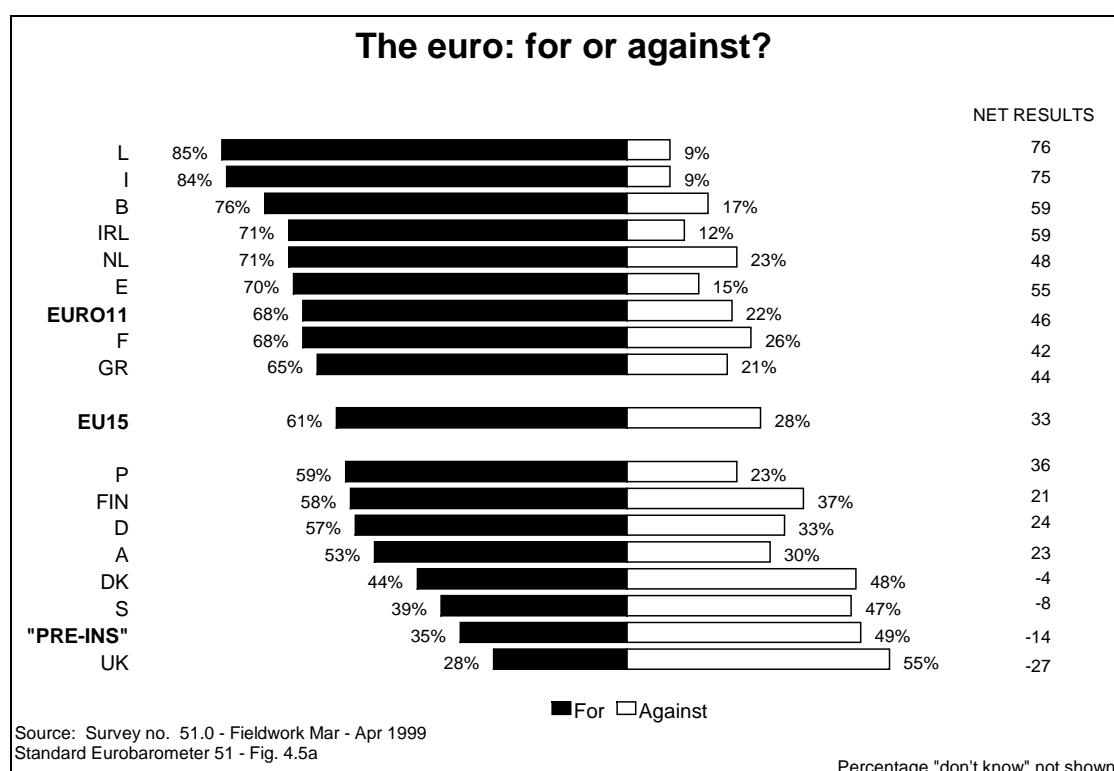
4.4. The single currency, the euro

The Eurobarometer has measured public support for the single currency since 1993, when the Maastricht Treaty established that the euro would be introduced by 1 January 1999. At the time of the survey, the euro having been in operation for 3 months, 61% of the public is in favour of the single currency and 28% is against it³⁸. This is slightly lower than in the autumn of 1998, when support stood at 64% and opposition at 25%. After the initial enthusiasm for the euro, a drop was to be expected. Furthermore, public opinion is likely to have been affected by the fact that the euro has not been perceived as performing as well as expected against the foreign currencies. At a more general level, the public mood is less optimistic because of the war in Kosovo and the institutional crisis that led to the resignation of the European Commission.



The eleven countries that introduced the euro on 1 January 1999 are Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. Throughout the remainder of this report we will refer to this group as the "EURO 11" countries. The 4 countries outside the euro-zone are Denmark, Greece, Sweden and the United Kingdom. They will be referred to as the "pre-in" countries. The results show that people in the "EURO 11" countries (68%) tend to be more supportive of the single currency than people in the "pre-in" countries (35%) are.

³⁸ More information about the euro can be found at: <http://europa.eu.int/euro/html/entry.html>.



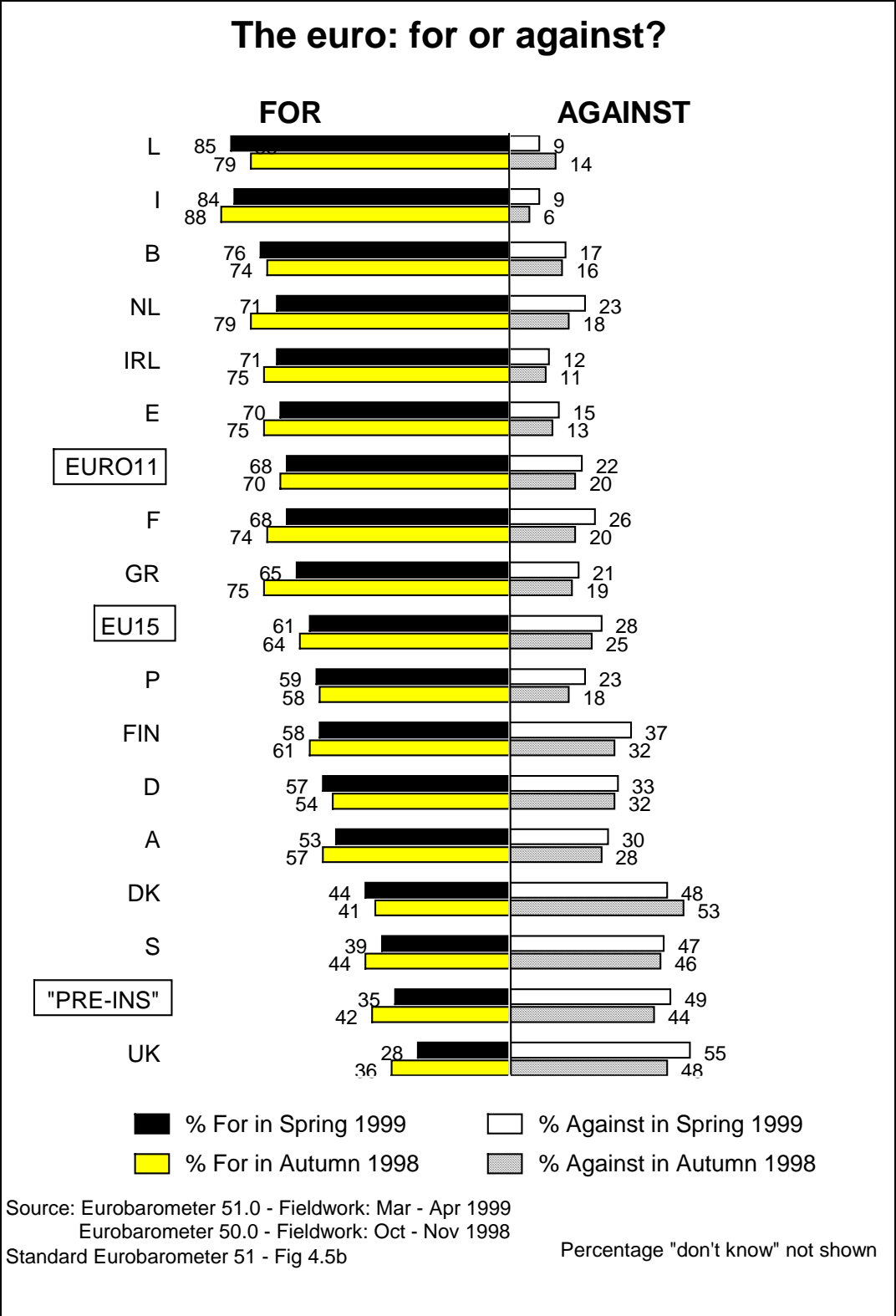
In the "EURO 11" countries support levels are highest in Luxembourg (85%), Italy (84%) and Belgium (76%). In Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and France, support for the single currency is obtained from around 7 in 10 people and more than half of the people in the four remaining "EURO 11" countries support it. Opposition levels are highest in Finland (37%), Germany (33%) and Austria (30%).

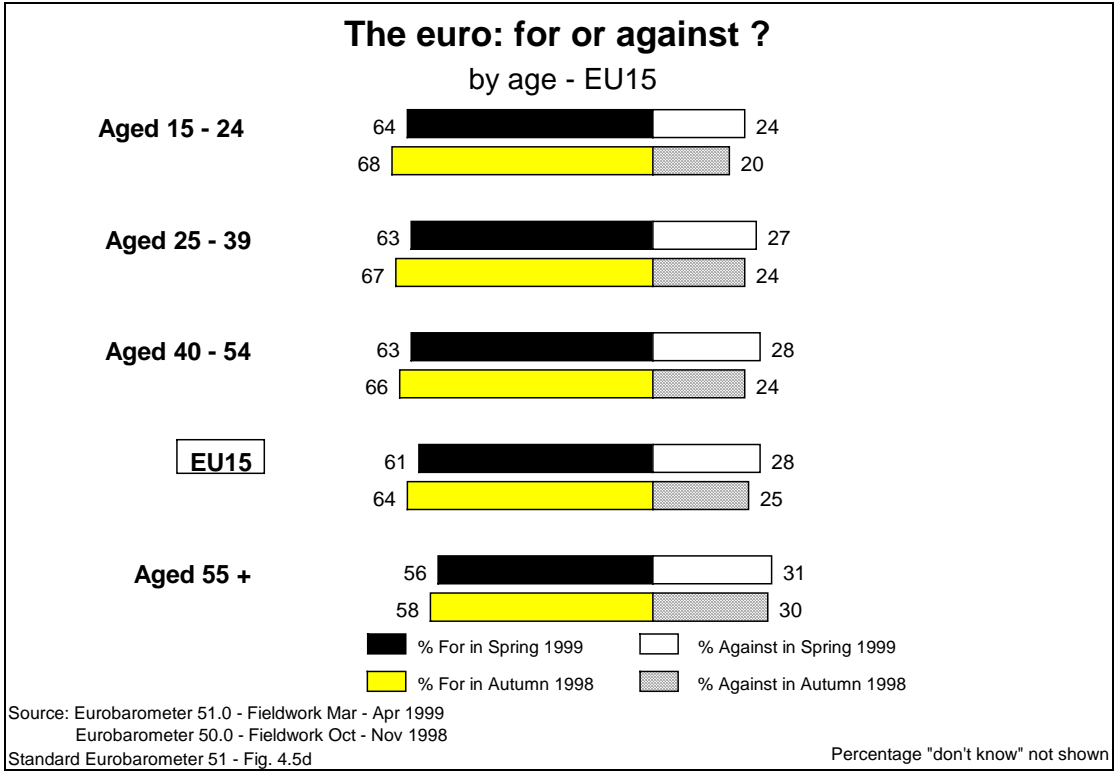
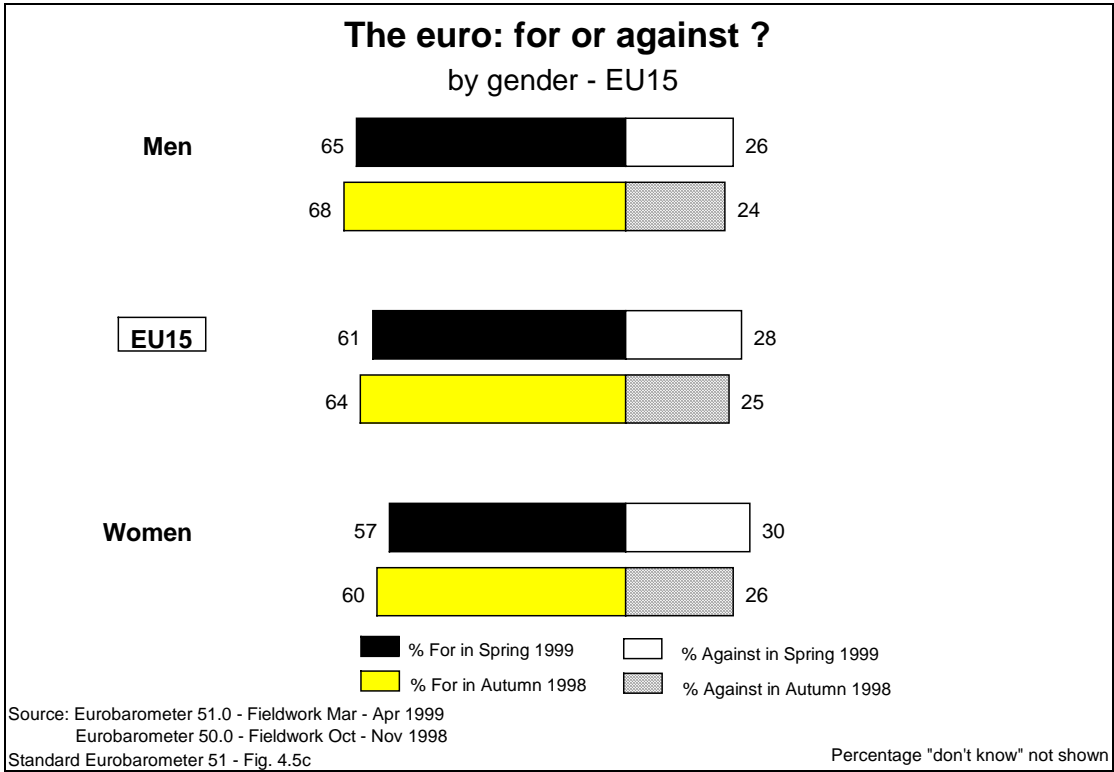
Looking next at the "pre-in" countries shows that people in Greece (65%) continue to be more likely to support the euro than people in the UK, Denmark and Sweden are. In these three countries there are more people who oppose the euro than there are people who support it. However, in Sweden and Denmark, opposition levels do not quite reach the 50% mark. Only in the UK (-27) is the gap between supporters and opponents very marked with 55% of the public against the single currency.

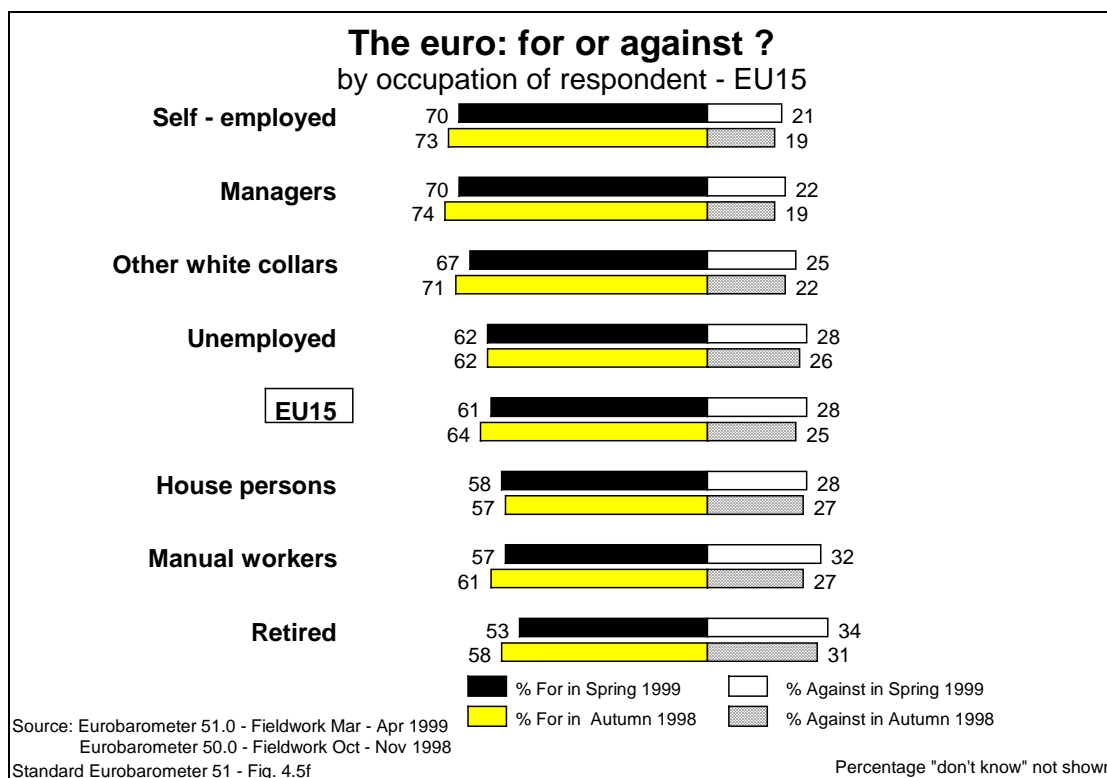
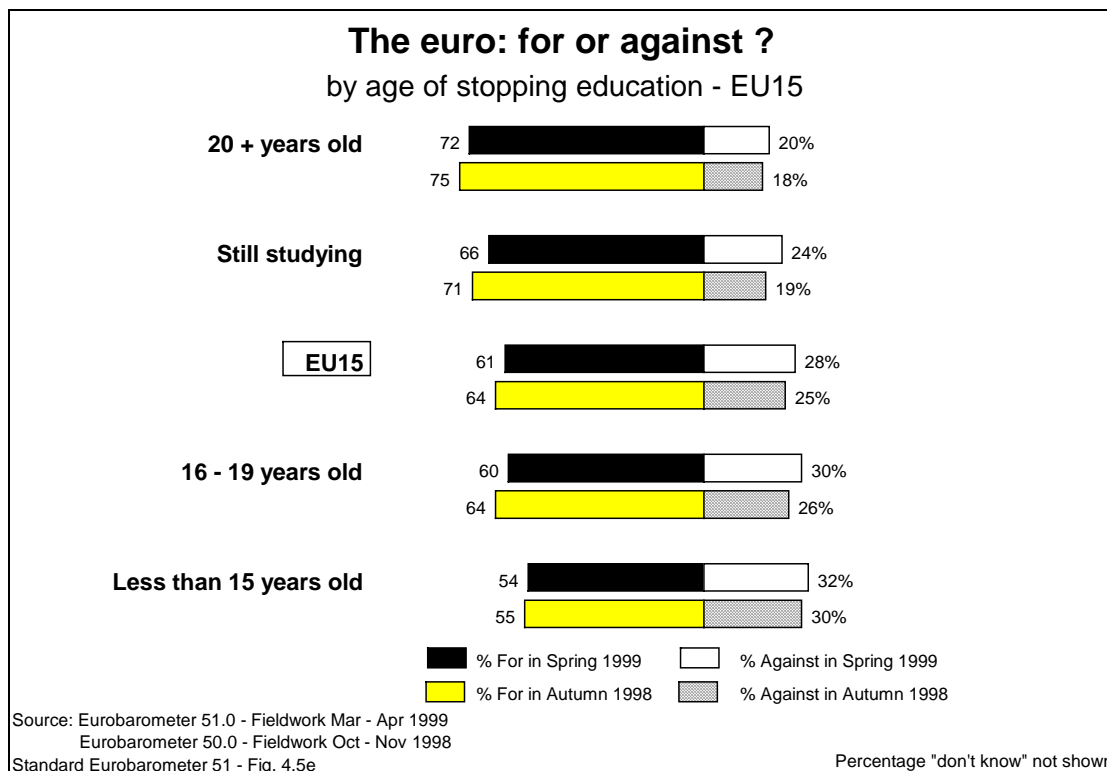
An analysis of shifts in support levels since the autumn of 1998 shows that Luxembourg is the only "EURO 11" country where a significant increase in support levels (+6) is matched by a significant decrease in opposition levels (-5). In Germany, support levels increased significantly (+3), but opposition levels stayed more or less the same (+1). Equally, in Belgium a small increase in support levels (+2) is offset by a decrease in "don't know" responses (-3). In Portugal, support levels stayed more or less the same (+1) but opposition levels increased significantly (+5). In three further countries, support levels dropped significantly, but opposition levels did not increase significantly. These are Ireland (-4; +1), Austria (-4; +2) and Spain (-5; +2). In the Netherlands (-8; +5), France (-6; +6), Italy (-4; +3) and Finland (-3; +5) a significant drop in support levels is matched by a significant increase in opposition levels.

Looking at the "pre-in" countries shows that Denmark is the only country where an increase in support levels (+3) is matched by a decrease in opposition levels (-5). In Greece and Sweden, people are now more likely to lack an opinion. Although support levels dropped significantly in both countries (-10 in Greece and -5 in Sweden), opposition levels did not increase significantly in either of the two countries (+1 in Sweden and +2 in Greece). The UK is the only country where a significant drop in support levels (-8) is matched by a significant increase in opposition levels (+7). (Table 4.4a)

The euro: for or against?







The analysis by standard demographic variables shows that 65% of men and 57% of women support the single currency. With women more likely to lack an opinion than men, the gap between the genders in opposition levels is less marked (men: 26%; women: 30%). In terms of age, we continue to see a clear split between people aged 54 or younger and their older counterparts, the first group being significantly more likely to support the euro than the second. Education is still a very important determinant of how people feel about the euro. 72% of those who stayed in full-time education until age 20 or older support it compared to 54% of people who left school by the age of 15 or younger. Of all the socio-demographic groups described in this report, opposition levels are lowest among the most well educated group (20%). Analyses of the respondent occupation scale show that the self-employed and managers are most supportive (both 70%) while retired people (who in most instances are aged 55 or over) tend to be least supportive (53%).

The gap between those who regard their country's membership as a good thing (82%) and those who regard their country's membership as a bad thing (22%) remains very large. (Table 4.4b)

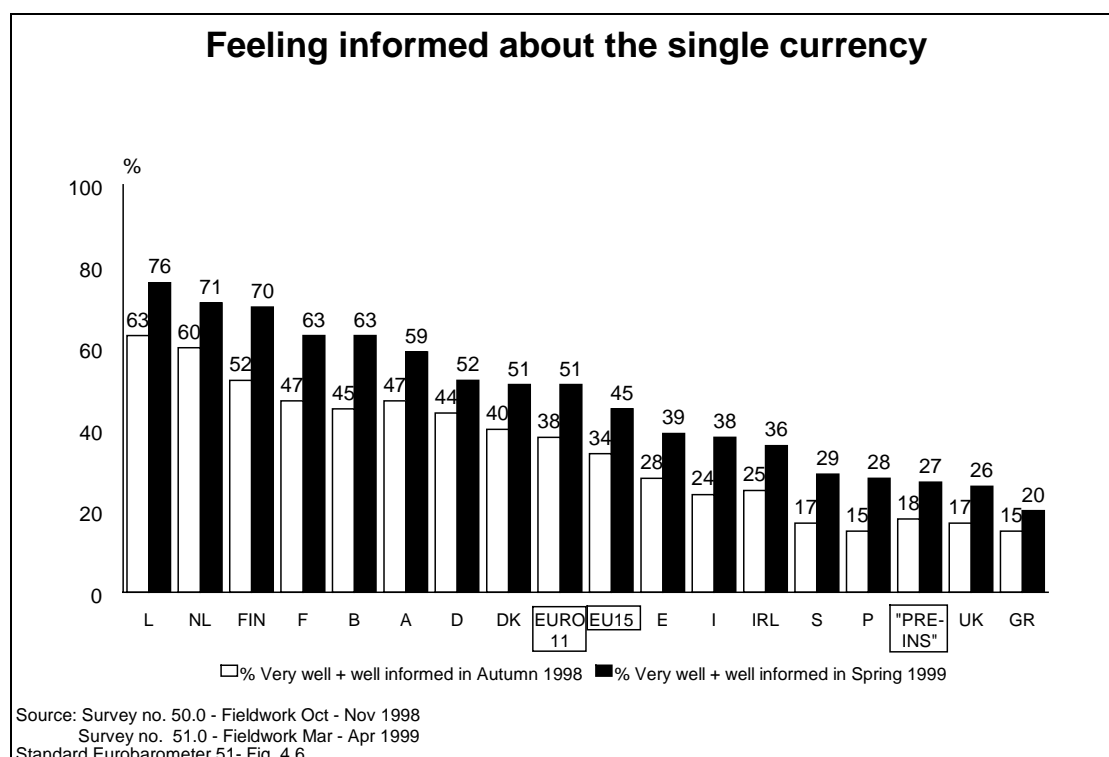
As the following table shows, support for the single currency also depends on how well informed people feel about the euro and on whether people have received information about it.

Support for the single currency			
	% in favour of the euro	% against the euro	% don't know
Feels very well / well informed about the euro	73%	21%	6%
Has received information about the euro	68%	24%	9%
EU15 Average	61%	28%	11%
Feels not very / not at all well informed about the euro	51%	35%	15%
Has not received any information about the euro	37%	44%	19%

Next we look at the extent to which EU citizens feel well informed about the single currency. People in all 15 Member States are significantly more likely to feel well informed about the single currency in the spring of 1999 than they were six months earlier. On average, levels of feeling well informed increased by 11 percentage points to reach an all-time high of 45%.

As expected, levels of feeling well informed continue to be higher in the "EURO 11" countries than in the "pre-in" countries. Looking first at the "EURO 11" countries shows that people in Luxembourg (76%) are most likely to feel well informed, followed by people in the Netherlands (71%) and Finland (70%). In Portugal, people continue to be least likely to feel well informed, it being the only "EURO 11" country where less than 3 in 10 people feel well informed (28%). However, levels of feeling well informed are now significantly higher in Portugal than they were in the autumn of 1998 (+13). Among the "EURO11" countries, the most significant increases are recorded in Finland, Belgium (both +18), France (+16) and Italy (+14). The lowest increase is recorded in Germany, but at 8 percentage points this is still very impressive.

Looking next at the "pre-in" countries shows that levels of feeling informed are significantly higher in Denmark (51%) than they are in the other three countries, where levels range from 20% in Greece to 29% in Sweden. The most significant increase is recorded in Sweden (+12), followed by Denmark and the UK (both +9). In Greece, levels of feeling informed increased by 5 percentage points. (Table 4.5a).



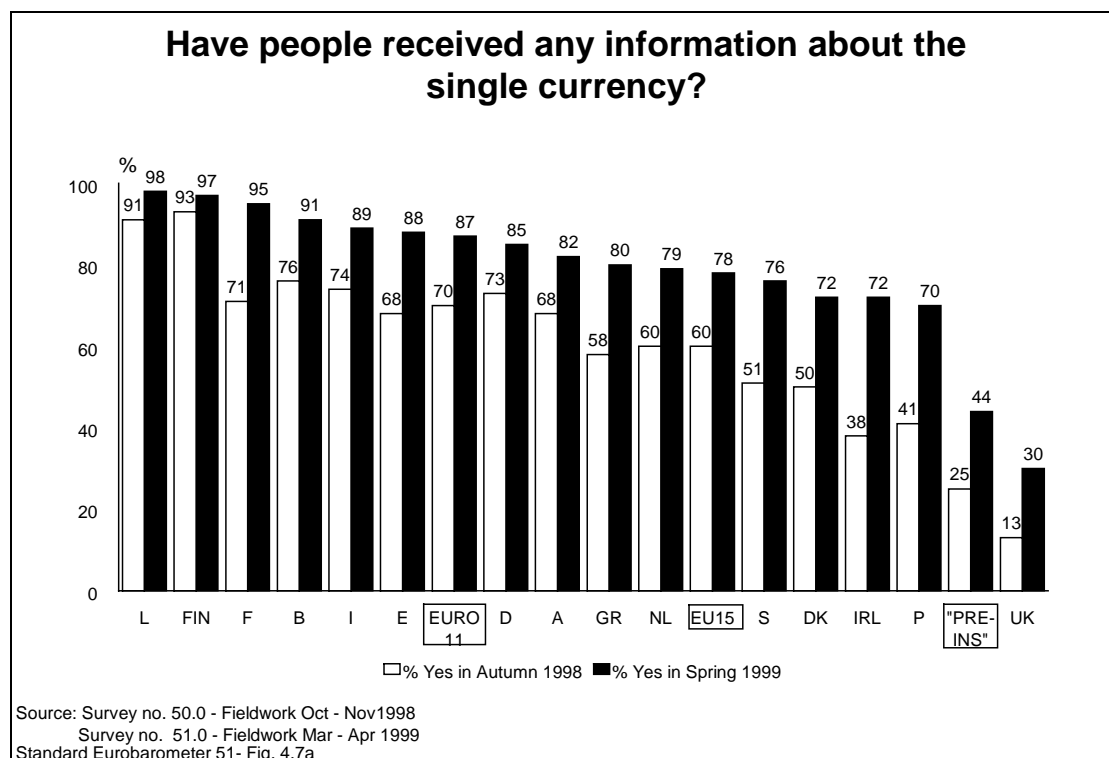
Whether people feel informed about the euro also depends on how they generally feel about the European Union and the euro. The results show that 58% of people who feel their country's membership to the European Union is a good thing and 55% of people who support the euro feel well informed, compared to only 38% of those who consider their country's membership as neither good nor bad or as a bad thing and 33% of people who oppose the euro.

As expected, there is also a strong relationship between feeling informed about the euro and feeling informed about the European Union in general. 84% of people who feel they know a great deal about the European Union feel well informed about the euro, compared to only 25% of people who feel they know very little about the European Union. Levels of feeling informed also depend on whether people (say they) have already received information about the euro. The following table shows that 54% of respondents who say they have already received information about the euro feel well informed about it, compared to only 14% of those who say they have not received any information about the euro³⁹.

Relationship between receiving information about the euro and feeling well informed about it			
	Received information	Has not received information	EU 15 average
% Very well + well informed	54	14	45
% Not very well + not at all informed	45	84	53
% Don't know	1	1	1
<i>% Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>99</i>

³⁹ See table 4.5b for analyses by gender, age, economic activity and terminal education age.

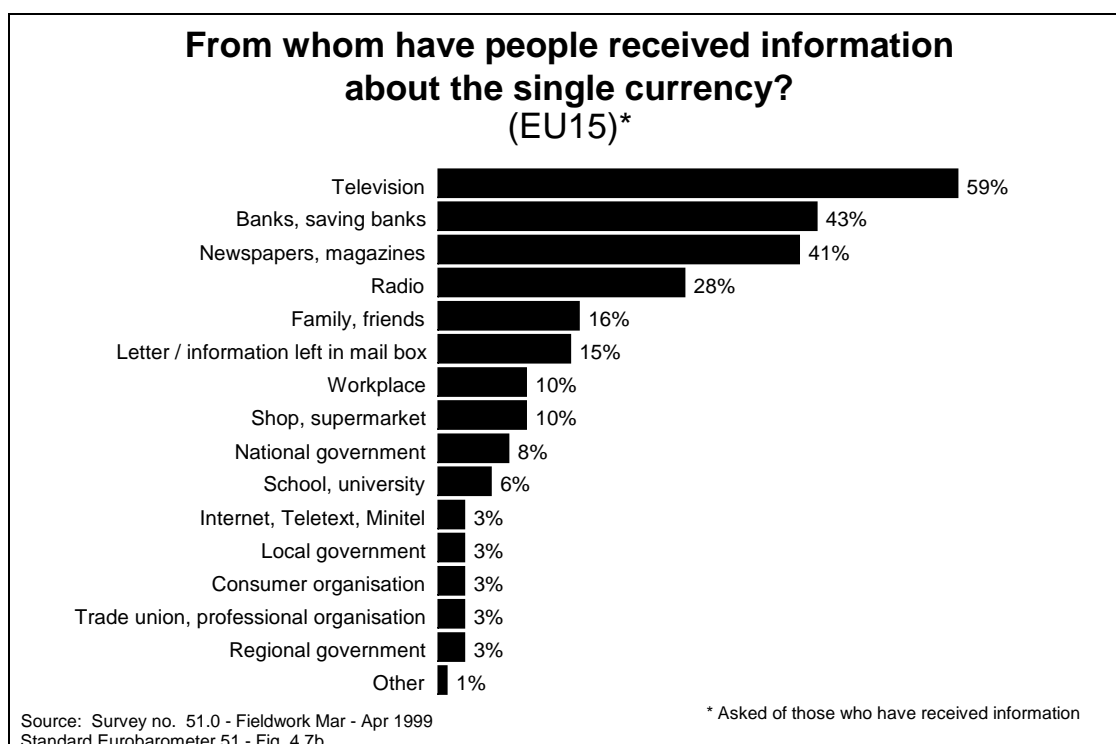
Next we look at the extent to which people living in the 15 Member States say they have received information about the euro. Now that the euro has been introduced people are far more likely to have received information about it than they were in the months just before its introduction. This is not only the case in the "EURO 11" countries but equally true in the "pre-in" countries. On average, nearly 8 in 10 people say they have received information in the spring of 1999, compared to 6 in 10 people in the autumn of 1998.



Looking first at the "EURO 11" countries shows that people in Luxembourg are most likely to say that they have received information about the euro (98%), followed by people in Finland (97%), France (95%) and Belgium (91%). In Italy, Spain, Germany and Austria more than 8 in 10 people say they have received information, while in the Netherlands this is the case for 79% of the people. Ireland (72%) and Portugal (70%) are the "EURO 11" countries where people are least likely to have received information about the single currency. However, these are also the two countries where the most significant increases are recorded since the autumn of 1998 (+34 in Ireland and +29 in Portugal). The next highest increases are noted in France (+24) and Spain (+20) while the lowest increase is recorded in Finland (+4) where levels were already so high that there was little room for improvement.

Looking next at the "pre-in" countries shows that people in Greece are most likely to say that they have received information (80%), followed by people in Sweden (76%) and in Denmark (72%). People in the UK continue to be least likely to say that they have received information (30%) although a very significant improvement since the autumn of 1998 is noted (+17). The highest increase is noted in Sweden (+25), followed by Greece and Denmark (both +22).

People continue to be most likely to say that they have received information about the euro on television. At 59%, this represents an increase of 20 percentage points since the autumn of 1998. More than 4 in 10 respondents say they have received information from a financial institution (+16) or through the written press (+15). More than a quarter of respondents has received information from the radio (+12). Family and friends have provided information to 16% of the respondents (+9) and 15% has received information through the mail (+6). The workplace and shops and supermarkets are also more frequently chosen than in the autumn of 1998 (both +6). The increase in the rate at which any of the other sources are chosen is smaller, ranging from 4 percentage points for the national governments to no increase for the "other" option⁴⁰.

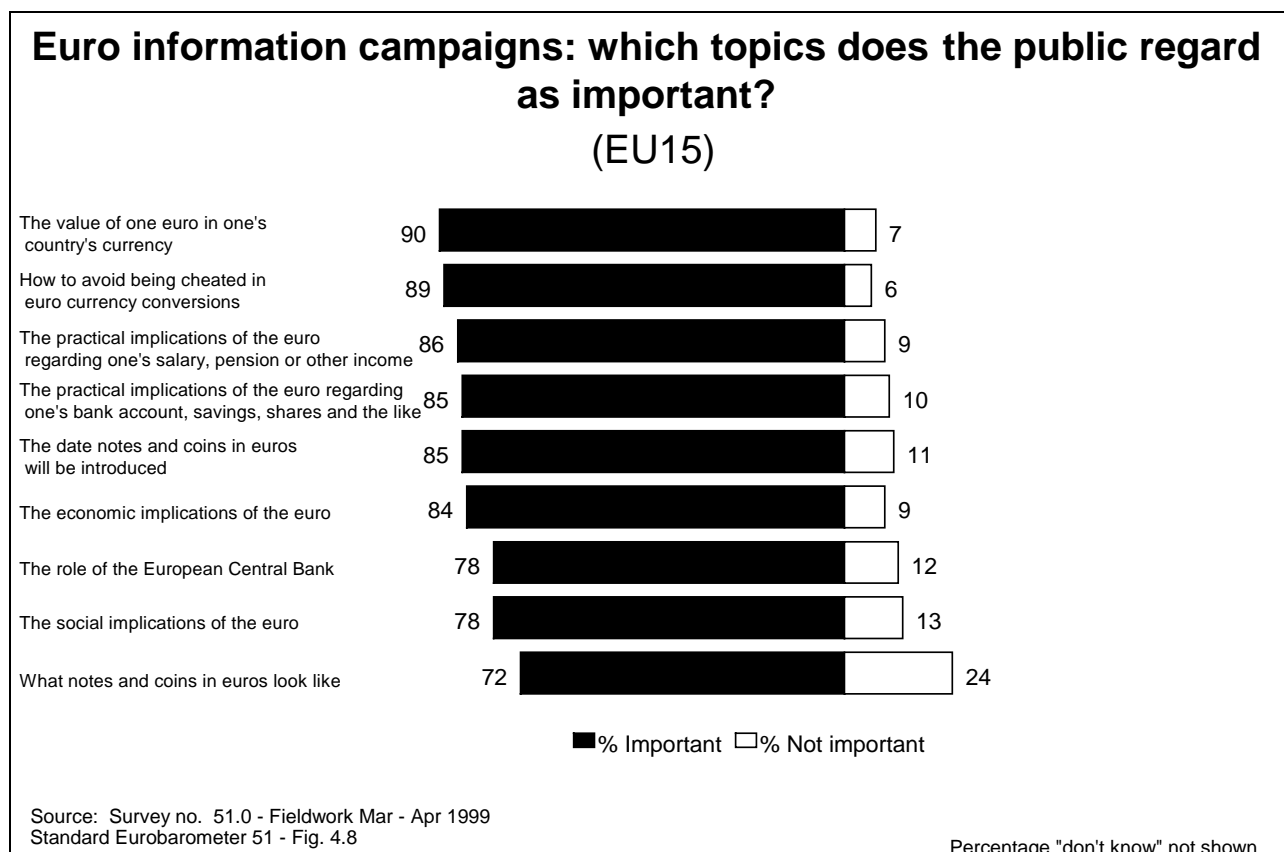


The next table shows that the **television** is the most mentioned source in 12 of the 15 Member States. In France and the Netherlands it comes in second place while in Ireland it comes in third place. In these three countries, all "EURO 11" nations, "**financial institutions**" takes the top place. In 6 further "EURO 11" countries - Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Spain and Portugal - "financial institutions" comes in second place, while it comes in third place in Finland and Italy. In the "pre-in" countries, "financial institutions" either takes fourth place (Denmark and the UK) or doesn't make the top four (Greece and Sweden). In these countries, "**newspapers and magazines**" comes second after the television, the same being the case in Italy and Finland. In Luxembourg, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, France, Spain and Portugal "newspapers and magazines" comes in third place, Ireland being the only country where this source does not make the top four. The **radio** makes third or fourth place in 13 of the 15 Member States, Ireland and Italy being the only exceptions. Instead, **mailed information** makes the top four in these two countries. Ireland is the only country where "**shops and supermarkets**" makes the top four, although there are many other countries where more people say they have received information about the euro this way. Greece and Sweden are the only two countries where "**family and friends**" appears in the top four. (See also table 4.6)

⁴⁰ The combined total of the responses is greater than the percentage of people who have received information because respondents could list any of the sources presented to them from whom they had received information. For autumn 1998 results, see table 4.8 in the Eurobarometer Report No. 50.

TOP FOUR MOST MENTIONED SOURCES FROM WHICH PEOPLE HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT THE EURO (IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)	
Belgium	
Television	71
Financial institutions	62
Newspapers, magazines	49
Radio	41
Denmark	
Television	62
Newspapers, magazines	45
Radio	41
Financial institutions	11
Germany	
Television	66
Financial institutions	58
Newspapers, magazines	54
Radio	34
Greece	
Television	73
Newspapers, magazines	30
Family & friends	23
Radio	19
Spain	
Television	71
Financial institutions	47
Newspapers, magazines	39
Radio	35
France	
Financial institutions	71
Television	62
Newspapers, magazines	41
Radio	35
Ireland	
Financial institutions	35
Mailed letter/information	27
Television	25
Shop, supermarket	22
Italy	
Television	71
Newspapers, magazines	43
Financial institutions	36
Mailed letter/information	22
Luxembourg	
Television	77
Financial institutions	67
Newspapers, magazines	62
Radio	60
The Netherlands	
Financial institutions	62
Television	62
Newspapers, magazines	53
Radio	40
Austria	
Television	59
Financial institutions	51
Newspapers, magazines	46
Radio	41
Portugal	
Television	58
Financial institutions	23
Newspapers, magazines	20
Radio	17
Finland	
Television	81
Newspapers, magazines	73
Financial institutions	58
Radio	50
Sweden	
Television	69
Newspapers, magazines	58
Radio	38
Family, friends	16
United Kingdom	
Television	20
Newspapers, magazines	17
Radio	11
Financial institutions	5

The survey also asks respondents whether they consider the coverage of 9 topics as important or not in euro information campaigns. As can be seen, people are most likely to consider the value of one euro in their country's currency as an important topic (90%). Very few people feel any of the 9 topics are not important: at 72%, the public is least likely to consider the look of euro notes and coins as an important topic in euro information campaigns.



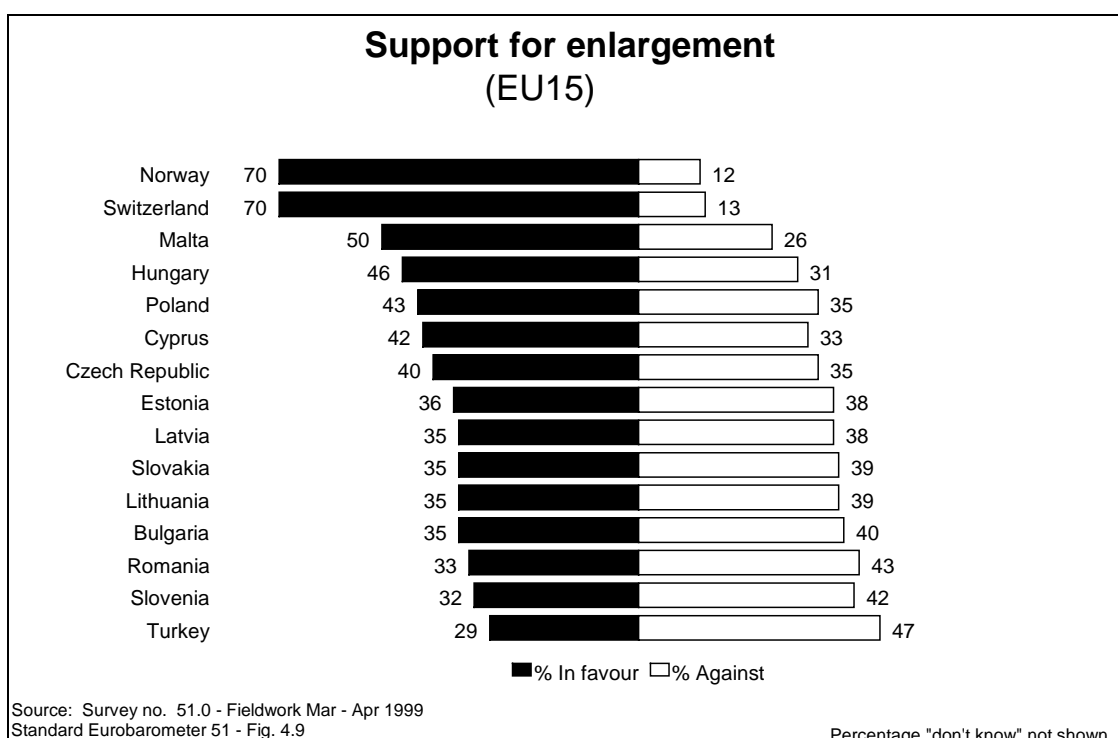
The country by country analyses show relatively little variation. More than 9 in 10 people in Finland (95%), Ireland, the Netherlands (both 94%), Spain, Italy, Portugal (all 93%), Belgium, Denmark, Greece (all 92%), Luxembourg and Austria (both 91%) consider the **value of one euro in their country's currency** an important topic. At 86%, people in Germany are the least likely to share this view. The proportion of people that considers **"how to avoid being cheated in euro currency conversions"** an important topic ranges from 85% in Germany and Finland to 95% in Portugal. The view that the **practical implications of the euro regarding people's salary, pension or other income** is important ranges from 81% in Luxembourg to 92% in Greece and Portugal. When it comes to the **practical implications of the euro regarding people's bank account, savings, shares and the like**, people in Greece (91%), Sweden and Belgium (90%) are most likely to believe this is important while people in Germany (81%), Luxembourg and Finland (both 82%) are least likely to share this view. The proportion of people that considers the **date notes and coins in euros will be introduced** as important ranges from 78% in Germany to 93% in the Netherlands and Finland. People in Greece (92%) are most likely to consider the **economic implications of the euro** as important while this is least likely in Finland (80%). The proportion of people that considers the **role of the European Central Bank** as important ranges from 72% in Finland to 84% in Ireland, Greece, Portugal and the Netherlands. People in Greece (89%) are most likely to consider the **social implications of the euro** as important while this is least likely in Sweden (67%). The proportion of people that considers the **look of euro notes and coins** as important ranges from 61% in Luxembourg to 86% in Portugal. (Table 4.7)

The following table shows the three topics that are most widely viewed as important in each of the 15 Member States.

TOPICS MOST WIDELY VIEWED AS IMPORTANT FOR EURO INFORMATION CAMPAIGNS (TOP THREE, IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)			
Belgium			
Value of euro	92		
How to avoid fraud	92		
Banking implications	90		
Denmark			
Value of euro	92		
Economic implications	87		
Financial implications	87		
Germany			
Value of euro	86		
How to avoid fraud	85		
Financial implications	83		
Greece			
How to avoid fraud	92		
Economic implications	92		
Financial implications	92		
Spain			
How to avoid fraud	93		
Value of euro	93		
Financial implications	91		
France			
How to avoid fraud	89		
Value of euro	88		
When notes and coins	86		
Ireland			
Value of euro	94		
How to avoid fraud	94		
Financial implications	91		
Italy			
Value of euro	93		
How to avoid fraud	91		
When notes and coins	88		
Luxembourg			
Value of euro	91		
How to avoid fraud	87		
When notes and coins	86		
The Netherlands			
Value of euro	94		
When notes and coins	93		
How to avoid fraud	91		
Austria			
Value of euro	91		
How to avoid fraud	86		
Financial implications	85		
Portugal			
How to avoid fraud	95		
Value of euro	93		
Financial implications	92		
Finland			
Value of euro	95		
When notes and coins	93		
How to avoid fraud	85		
Sweden			
Financial implications	90		
Value of euro	90		
Banking implications	89		
United Kingdom			
How to avoid fraud	90		
Value of euro	88		
Bank & fin. implications	87		

4.5. Enlargement

As noted earlier, the European Union is preparing to enlarge to the east and the south. In this section we look at people's attitudes towards enlargement. We begin by assessing whether EU citizens are for or against the 11 applicant countries⁴¹, Malta, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey becoming part of the European Union.



In all Member States except Greece people are most likely to favour the European Union membership of Norway and Switzerland (both 70%). Support for Norway ranges from 90% in Denmark to 54% in Portugal; for Switzerland it ranges from 84% in the Netherlands and Denmark to 59% in Portugal.

The fact that support levels are lowest in Portugal does not imply that the Portuguese are more likely to oppose the membership of these countries. Rather, it indicates that many people in Portugal lack an opinion when it comes to these two countries as well as all the other countries included in the questionnaire. The proportion of "don't know" responses is also significantly above average in Spain, Ireland and the UK, although the results show that throughout Europe many people continue to lack an opinion when asked about their support for countries to become part of the European Union.

Support levels are next highest for Malta and range from 68% in Greece to 36% in France. Support for Hungary ranges from 68% in Denmark to 33% in France; for Poland, it ranges from 71% in Denmark to 17% in Austria and for Cyprus, it ranges from 82% in Greece to 27% in Austria. At 29%, support for Turkey is least widespread and ranges from 45% in Spain to 13% in Greece. At the EU level, opposition levels range from 12% for Norway to 47% for Turkey. (Table 4.8)

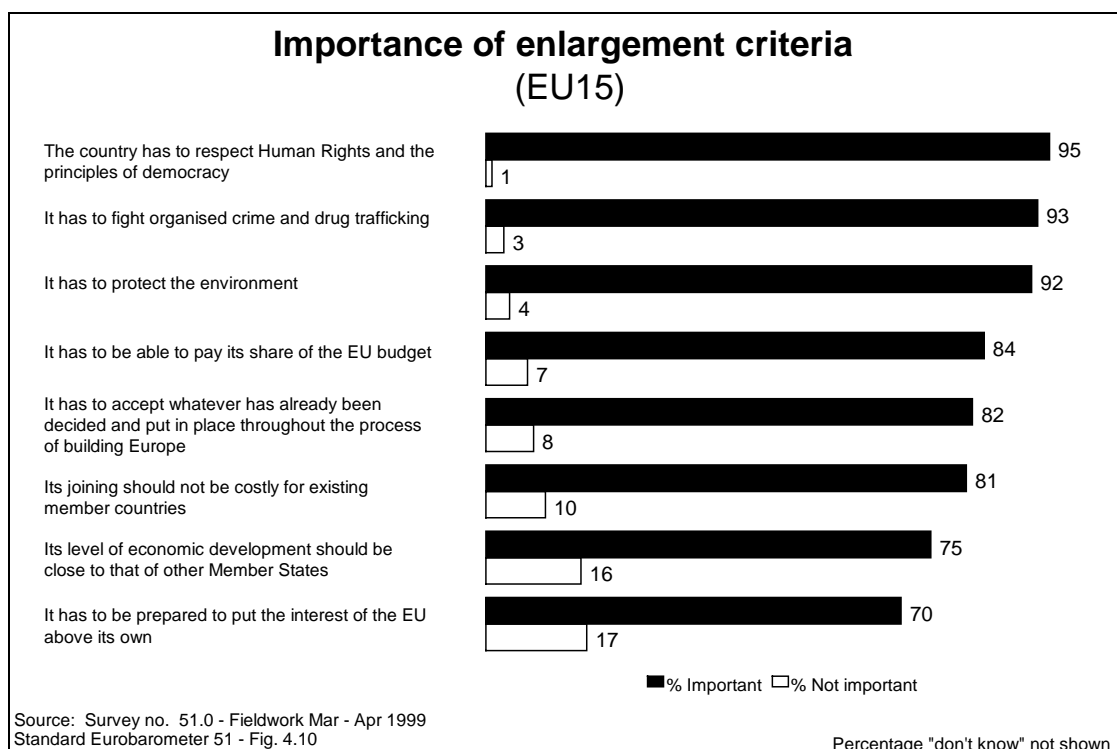
⁴¹ The 11 applicant countries are Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Accession negotiations are in progress with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia. Partnerships have been set up with the other 5 countries to help speed up their preparations for membership. More information about enlargement can be found at: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg1a/enlarge/index.htm>.

The next table shows the average support level for the 15 countries as a total⁴². On average, people in Denmark (62%) tend to be most supportive while people in Austria (29%) tend to be least supportive. The table also shows the spread of support levels in each of the Member States. In Member States where a large difference between the highest and lowest level of support is noted, people's views vary significantly depending on the country. This is particularly the case in Greece, followed by Denmark, Austria, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

% OF POPULATION IN EACH OF THE MEMBER STATES IN FAVOUR OF NEW COUNTRIES JOINING THE EU (AVERAGE % SUPPORT FOR THE 15 COUNTRIES AND SPREAD FROM LOWEST TO HIGHEST % SUPPORT)		
Country	Average % Support	Spread
Denmark	62	59
Greece	58	69
Sweden	56	48
The Netherlands	55	52
Spain	51	18
Finland	51	58
Ireland	45	29
Italy	45	42
Luxembourg	45	51
EU15	42	41
United Kingdom	40	38
Belgium	39	46
Portugal	38	26
Germany	38	54
France	33	47
Austria	29	58

⁴² These average scores should not be compared with previously published average scores because Switzerland, Norway and Turkey were in the past not included in the calculations.

During the 1993 Copenhagen European Council, the Heads of State and Government agreed on a number of criteria which countries wishing to join the European Union had to meet⁴³. Eurobarometer results show that there is widespread public support for these criteria, with a large majority of EU citizens saying that each of them is important.



The public is more or less unanimous in its view that applicant countries should a) respect Human Rights and the principles of democracy, b) fight organised crime and drug trafficking and c) protect the environment if they wish to join the European Union. The large majority also feels that applicant countries have to accept whatever has already been decided and put in place throughout the process of building Europe. The public's concern about the financial implications of enlargement is evident from the widespread importance placed on the criteria that applicant countries have to be able to pay their share of the EU budget and that their joining should not be costly for existing member countries. However, people are somewhat less likely to feel that an applicant country's economic development should be close to that of other Member States. At 70%, people are least likely to feel that the requirement for countries to put the interests of the EU above their own is an important criterion, but as we shall see public opinion on this criterion varies considerably within the Member States.

The next table shows that the average level of support for the 8 criteria ranges from 77% in Denmark to 90% in France. One of the reasons why support levels are below average in Denmark, Sweden and Finland is that people in these 3 Member States are significantly less likely to consider the criterion that a country has to be prepared to put the interests of the European Union above its own as important than other EU citizens. This also explains why the spread between the least and most widely considered important criterion is so large in these countries. (See also table 4.9)

⁴³ On 4 November 1998, the Commission published a report, detailing the applicant countries' progress in meeting these criteria. It can be found on the Internet: http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg1a/enlarge/report_11_98_en/index.htm.

% OF POPULATION IN EACH OF THE MEMBER STATES THAT REGARDS THE ENLARGEMENT CRITERIA AS IMPORTANT (AVERAGE % OF 8 CRITERIA AND SPREAD FROM LOWEST % IMPORTANT TO HIGHEST % IMPORTANT)		
Country	Average %	Spread
France	90	22
Belgium	89	18
Germany	87	18
The Netherlands	87	28
Italy	85	21
Greece	85	24
Luxembourg	85	24
EU15	85	25
Spain	84	20
Ireland	84	24
Austria	82	28
Portugal	81	30
Finland	80	51
Sweden	80	55
United Kingdom	79	33
Denmark	77	64

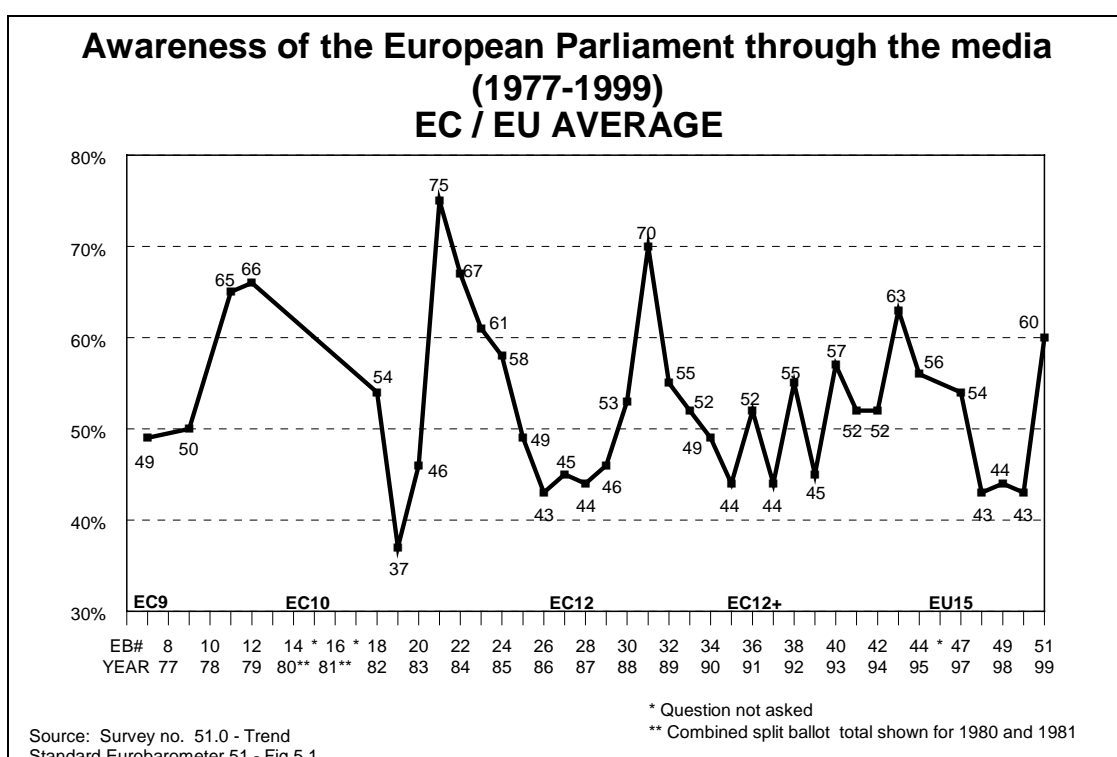
5. The European Parliament

From June 10 to 13, 1999, the fifth direct elections to the European Parliament took place in the 15 Member States of the European Union. Over the years, the powers of the European Parliament have increased significantly. When the Assembly was elected directly by the people for the first time in 1979, it mainly played a consultative role in the decision-making process. The Maastricht Treaty, which entered into force in January 1993, gave Parliament the co-decision right together with the Council of Ministers in a number of areas. With the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty on 1 May 1999, the European Parliament now has co-decision-making powers in most of the Union's policies.

In this chapter we examine public awareness of the European Parliament. Next we look at the extent to which respondents indicated that they would cast a vote in the June 1999 elections and link this to the actual turnout rates. The role people think the Parliament plays and should play within the European Union is also a subject of investigation as is people's assessment of the European Parliament's ability to protect their interest. We end the chapter by examining which policy areas people think the Parliament should treat as priorities.

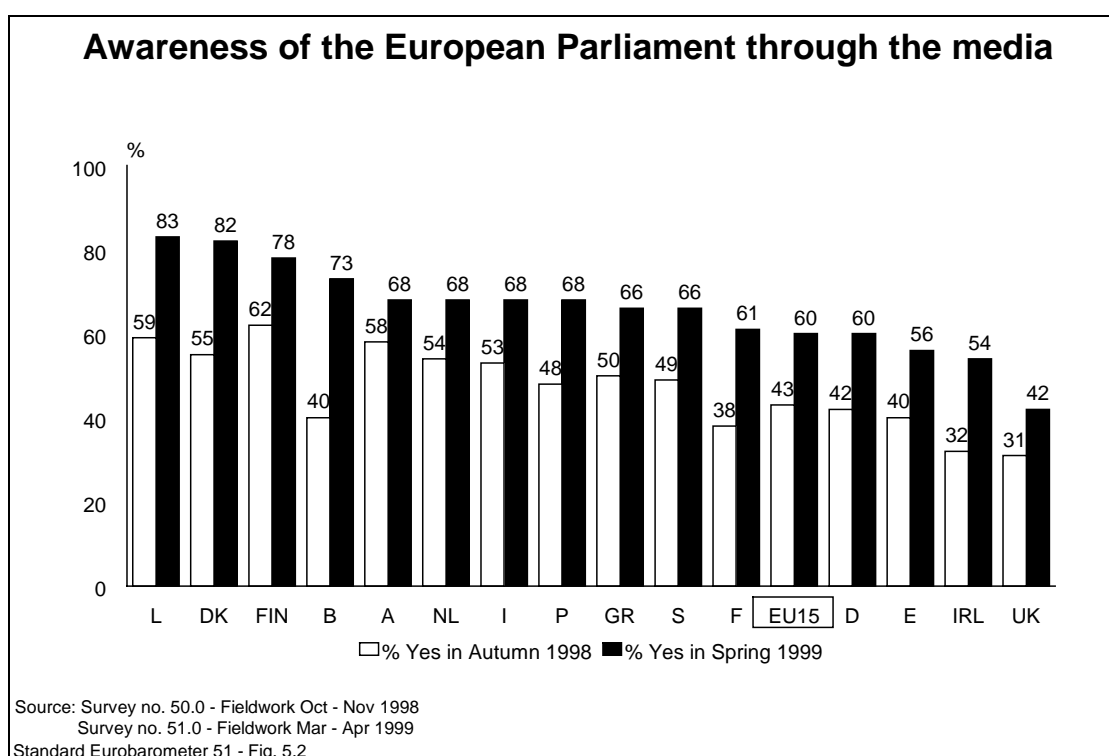
5.1. Awareness of the European Parliament through the media

Since 1977, the Eurobarometer has measured the extent to which the public has recently seen or heard anything about the European Parliament in the papers, on the radio or on television. The latest measurement shows that 60% of EU citizens have received information about the European Parliament through these three media. This is significantly higher than in the autumn of 1998, when only 43% of EU citizens had recently seen or heard something about the European Parliament.



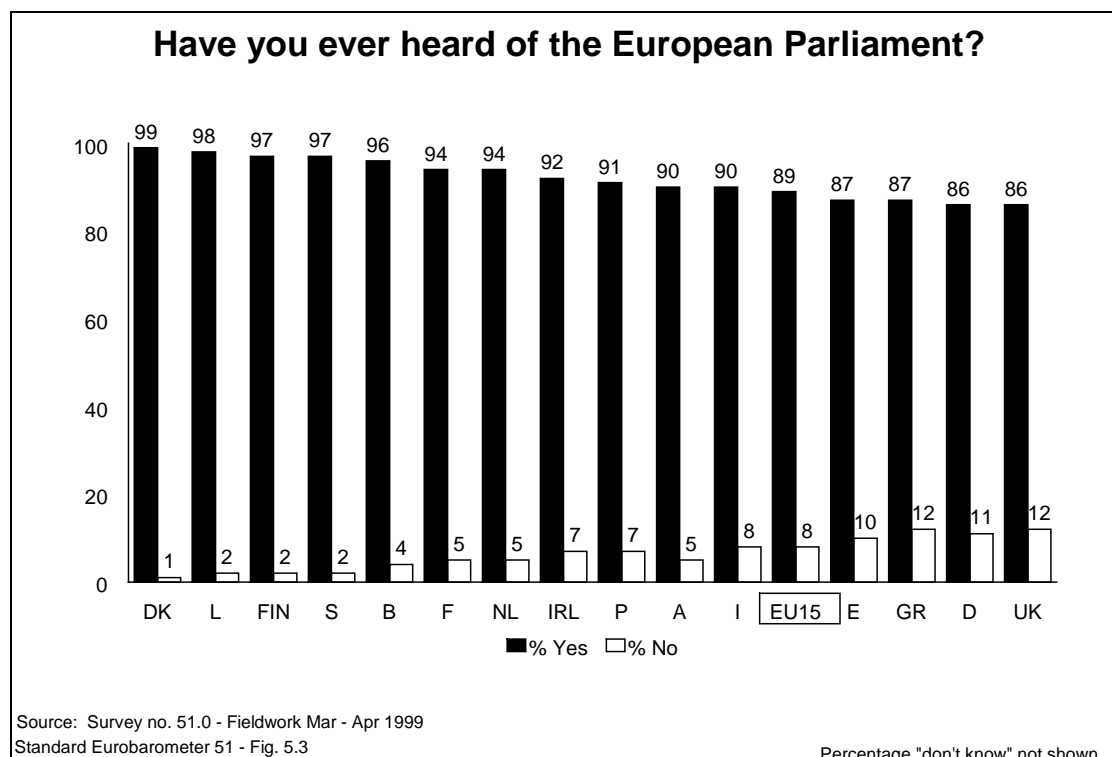
Whether people have seen or heard something about the European Parliament through the media depends first and foremost on the extent to which the Parliament has received media coverage in the period just prior to when the measurement was taken. The latest round of fieldwork was carried out in the months leading up to the 1999 European Parliament elections, a period when media coverage is as a rule very extensive. Indeed, as the previous graph shows, awareness levels have always been higher around the time of elections. They were highest just before the 1984 elections (75%) and the 1989 elections (70%). They were slightly lower, but still much higher than during non-election periods, in the run-up to the 1979 elections (65%) and the 1994 elections (63%). Apart from the traditional pre-election media coverage, in the spring of 1999 the media also widely covered the events that led to the resignation of the European Commission in which the Parliament was a frequently mentioned actor.

Looking at the country results shows that people in Luxembourg (83%) are most likely to have recently seen or heard something about the European Parliament through the media, followed by people in Denmark (82%) and Finland (78%). The UK (42%) is the only country where less than half of the population has recently seen or heard anything about the European Parliament in the papers, on the radio or on television.



The graph also shows that the proportion of people who have recently seen or heard something about the European Parliament through the media has increased significantly in all the Member States since the measurement was last taken in the autumn of 1998. The increase ranges from 10 percentage points in Austria to 33 percentage points in Belgium. (Table 5.1)

Looking next at the results of a question which asks respondents whether they have *ever* heard of the European Parliament shows a very different picture⁴⁴. The difference lies in the wording. Whereas the earlier question refers to a specific time frame, i.e. recently, and to a specific medium, i.e. the media, this question is much more general.



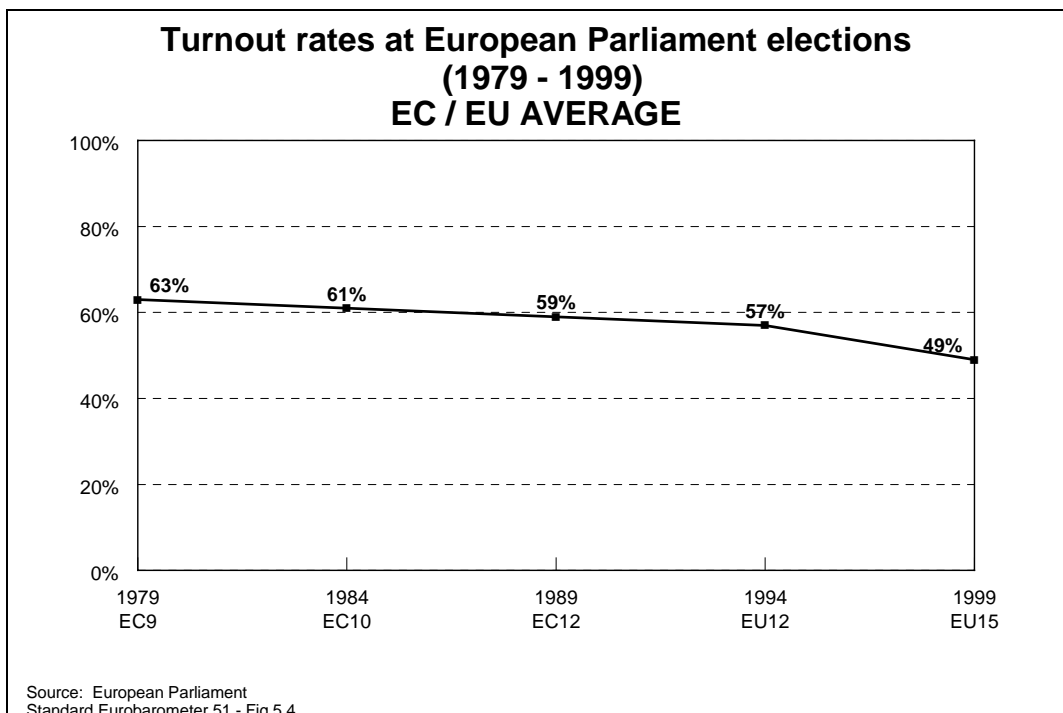
As can be seen, nearly 9 in 10 EU citizens have heard of the European Parliament when the question is asked more generally. Awareness levels range from 99% in Denmark to 86% in Germany and the UK⁴⁵.

5.2. Participation in the June 1999 European Parliament elections

Western industrialised democracies, including the European Union countries, are faced with what some people refer to as a crisis in democracy because of a decline in participation levels at local, national and European elections. Although European elections have traditionally attracted fewer voters than national elections, the drop in turnout rates from 63% when the first direct elections were held in 1979 to 49% twenty years later is particularly disturbing when one considers that the European Parliament's ability to represent Europe's citizens has improved significantly over the years.

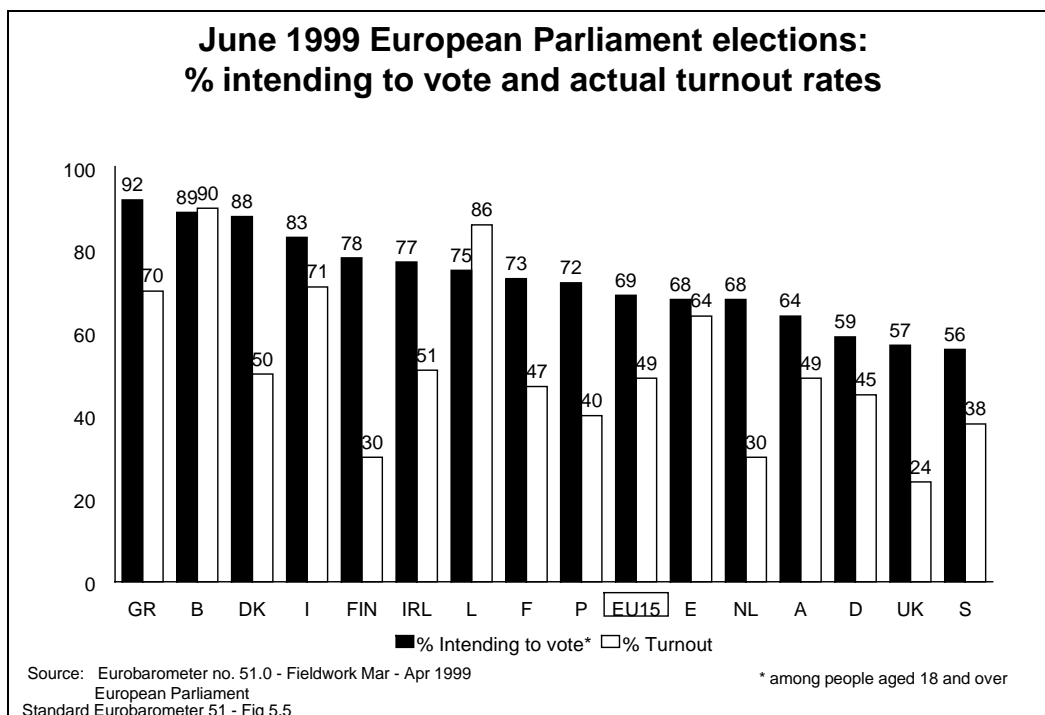
⁴⁴ This question is part of the battery of items that measures awareness of 9 of the EU's institutions that is discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

⁴⁵ See also table 2.2.



The spring 1999 Eurobarometer asked respondents whether they intended to vote in the June 1999 European Parliament elections. 67% of respondents indicated they would, 16% said they would not, 14% had not made up their minds yet and 4% said that they could or would not be able to vote⁴⁶.

The graph below depicts for each country the percentage of respondents aged 18 and over who said they would vote and the percentage of people who actually cast a vote⁴⁷.



⁴⁶ Individual country results are shown in table 5.2a in the annexes.

⁴⁷ The percentage turnout reflects the situation on 23 June 1999.

As can be seen, in most countries the actual turnout rate is significantly lower than the proportion of respondents aged 18 and over that said they would vote. The only exceptions are Luxembourg and Belgium where voting is compulsory. However, in Greece where voting is also compulsory and in Italy where it is considered a civic duty, the turnout rate is significantly lower than the proportion of respondents that said they would vote. The gap between voting intention and actual turnout is smallest in Spain (-4) and largest in Finland (-48).

Looking at the population of eligible voters, that is respondents who were aged 18 or over at the time of the survey, shows a clear relationship between how people feel about the European Union and their intention to participate in European elections. 81% of respondents who regard their country's membership as a good thing said they would vote, compared to 55% of those who regard their country's membership as a bad thing⁴⁸. Respondents who tend to trust the EU were also more likely to say that they would vote (80%) than those who tend not to trust it (63%). Those who desire a more important role for the European Parliament were significantly more likely to say that they would vote (83%) than those who desire a less important role for the European Parliament (57%). The following table shows the influence that self-perceived knowledge levels about the European Union have on whether people intend to vote or not.

Stated intention to vote in the 1999 EP elections among respondents aged 18 and over by self-perceived knowledge about the European Union (in %)			
Intention to vote:	High knowledge level	Average knowledge level	Low knowledge level
% Yes	82	76	57
% No	12	12	23
% Not applicable	1	1	1
% Don't know	6	11	19
<i>% Total</i>	<i>101</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

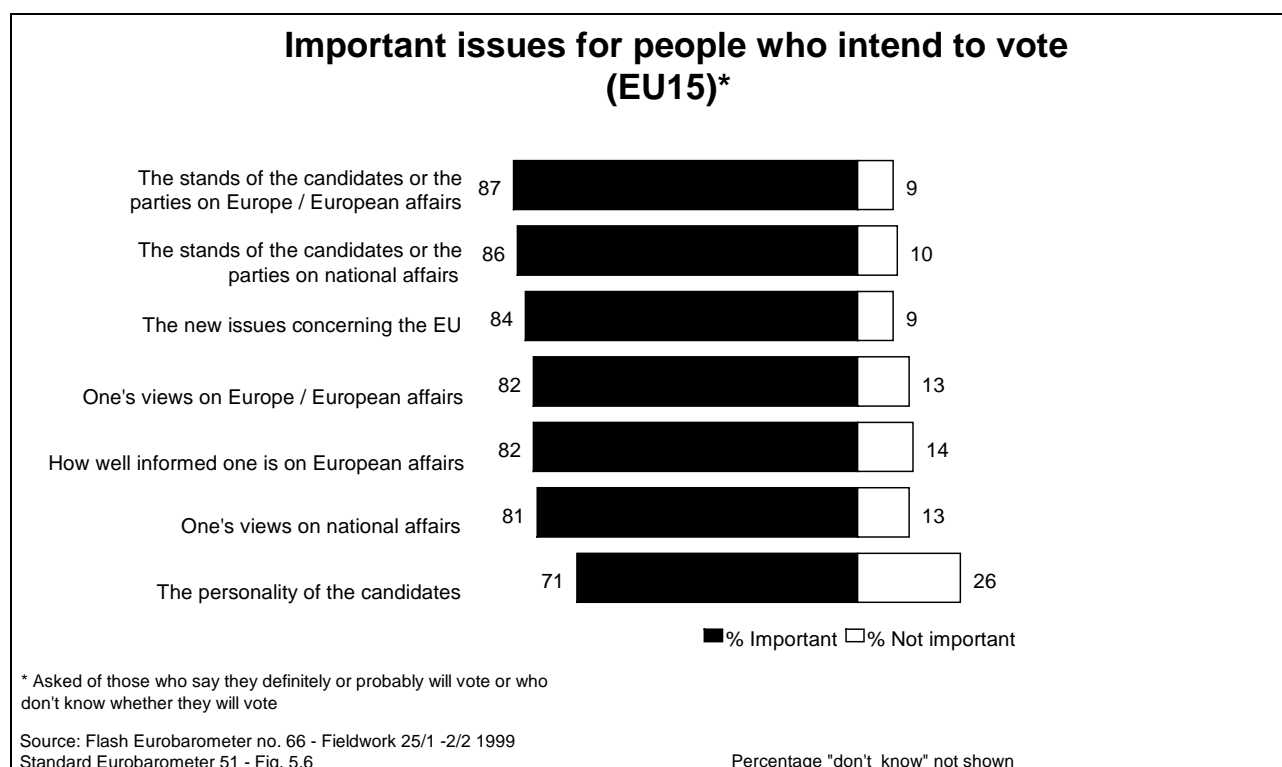
Demographic analyses⁴⁹ show that 68% of male respondents said they would vote, compared to 65% of female respondents. Those who stayed in school until the age of 20 and over were significantly more likely to say that they would vote (79%) than those who stayed in school until age 15 or younger (64%). Among the various age groups, 72% of respondents aged 40 to 54 said they would vote, compared to only 51% of those aged 15 to 24. Excluding those below age 18, shows that 65% of respondents aged 18 to 24 said they would vote. This is still slightly lower than it is among older respondents. 74% of respondents classified as students aged 18 and over said they would vote, compared to 49% of the total student population aged 15 to 24 of whom 31% are not eligible to vote. Analyses of the economic activity scale shows that managers (78%) and the self-employed (76%) were most likely to say that they would vote while unemployed respondents (62%) and respondents working in manual jobs (63%) were least likely to say that they would vote. (Table 5.2b)

⁴⁸ Results for this question for the total sample are shown in table 5.2b in the annexes.

⁴⁹ The results presented in this paragraph are for the sample as a whole, i.e. people aged 15 and over, unless otherwise stated. The results shown in table 5.2b are also based on the total sample.

Several months before the 1999 European elections, 16142 randomly selected people living in the 15 Member States of the European Union were surveyed by telephone⁵⁰.

Those who intended to vote⁵¹ were asked whether they considered a number of elements (7 in total) important or not when voting in European elections. Respondents were most likely to consider the candidates' or the parties' stance on European affairs (87%) and on national affairs (86%) as important. Except for the notion that the personality of the candidates is important (71%), all the other elements were also considered important by more than 8 in 10 respondents. (For individual country results see table 5.3 in the annexes)

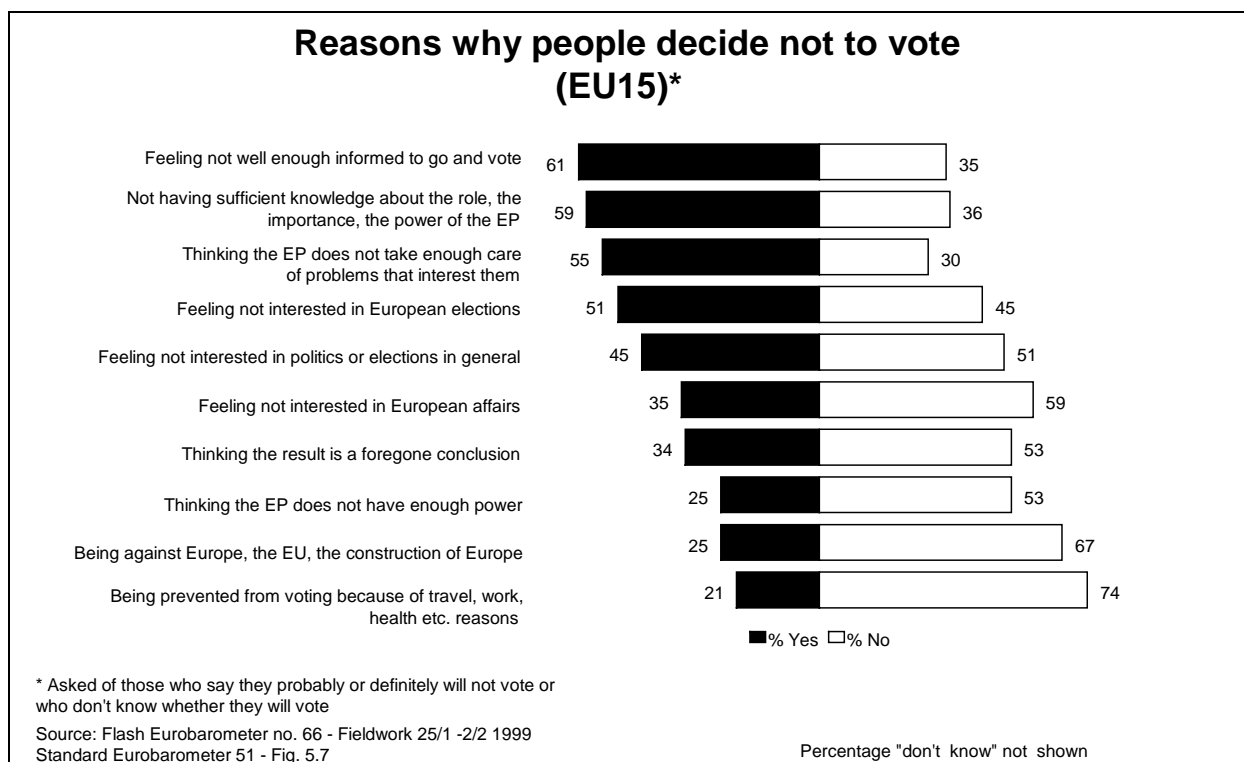


The same Flash Eurobarometer survey also looked at reasons why people decide not to vote. The small minority of people who indicated that they would not vote or who had not yet made up their mind (i.e. 17% of all respondents) were read out ten reasons why people abstain and for each were asked if it applied to them.

The most widely affirmed reason is not feeling well enough informed to go and vote (61%), followed by not having sufficient knowledge about the role, the importance and the power of the European Parliament (59%). More than half of the respondents see the feeling that the European Parliament does not take enough care of problems that interest people (55%) and a lack of interest in European elections (51%) as reasons for their intended abstention. Being prevented from voting because of travel, work, health, etc. is the reason that receives the lowest proportion of affirmative responses (21%), followed by being against Europe and feeling that the Parliament doesn't have enough power (both 25%). (For individual country results see table 5.4 in the annexes)

⁵⁰ This Flash Eurobarometer Survey (No. 66) was carried out by EOS Gallup Europe from 25 January until 2 February 1999 at the request of DG X - European Commission. Similar results for the two questions discussed in this report were obtained when the survey was repeated in late March (Flash Eurobarometer Survey No. 67).

⁵¹ The question was also asked of people who hadn't yet made up their mind - as such it was asked of 82% of respondents.



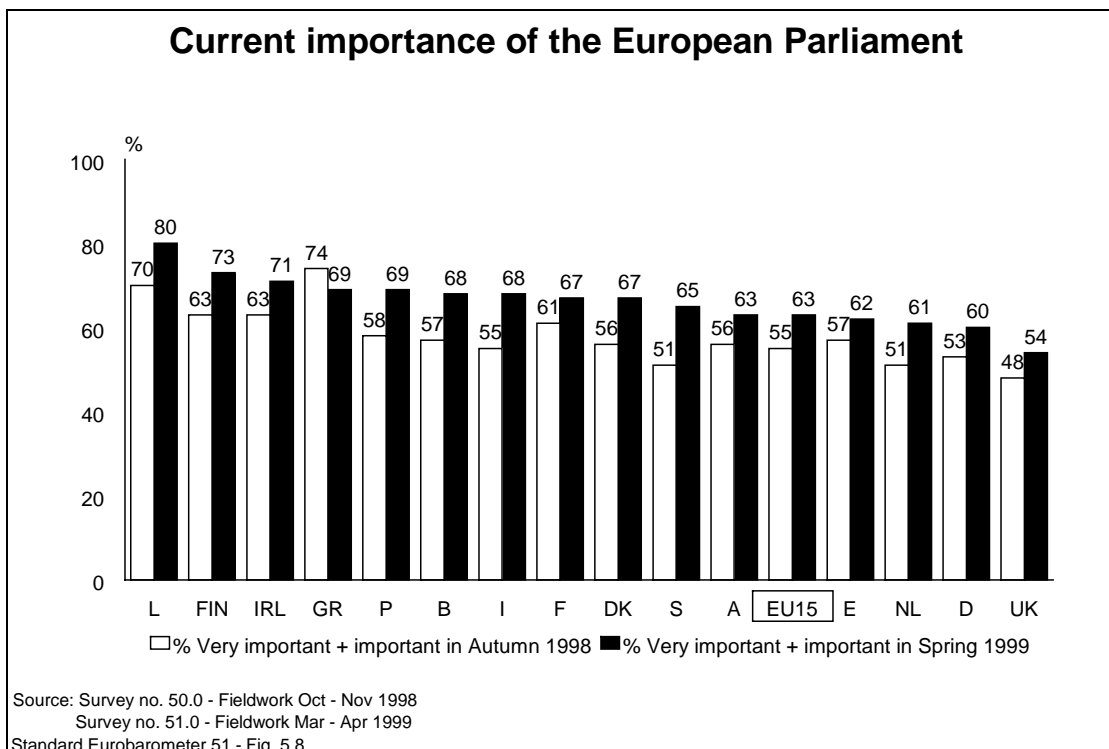
5.3. The European Parliament's perceived and desired importance

As mentioned earlier, with the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty the role played by the European Parliament in the life of the European Union has become more important. In the spring of 1999, 63% of EU citizens viewed the Parliament's role as important, compared to only 55% in the autumn of 1998. The most likely explanation for this increase is that many EU citizens appear to be aware of the role Parliament played in the proceedings that led to the resignation of the European Commission, a role which they rate as important⁵². EU citizens may also have taken the increased powers that the Amsterdam Treaty gives the European Parliament into consideration in their spring 1999 assessment of the role it plays in the life of the European Union.

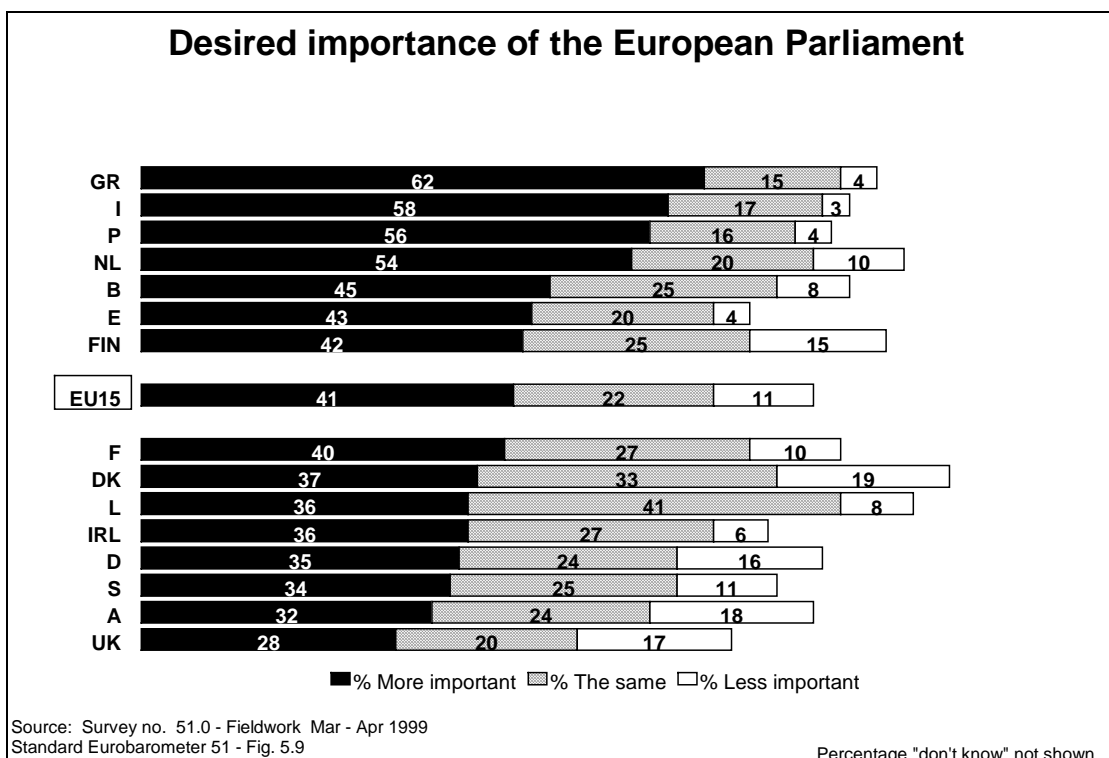
In the spring of 1999, people in Luxembourg are most likely to consider Parliament's current role in the life of the European Union as important (80%), followed by people in Finland (73%) and Ireland (71%). At 54%, people in the UK are least likely to say that Parliament plays an important role in the life of the European Union and most likely to lack an opinion (32%) on this issue.

The proportion of people who regard Parliament's role as important has increased in every single Member State since the autumn of 1998. The most significant increases are recorded in Belgium (+17), Sweden (+15), Portugal, Denmark (both +13), Finland and France (both +11). (See also table 5.5)

⁵² In chapter 3, we already noted that EU citizens are most likely to be of the opinion that among a list of 9 EU institutions the European Parliament plays an important role in the life of the European Union. We also noted that it is the institution the public is most likely to trust.



Looking next at the role the public desires the European Parliament to play shows that 41% of respondents *personally* wanted it to play a more important role than it did at the time of fieldwork while 22% were happy with its role. Only 11% wanted a less important role for the European Parliament.

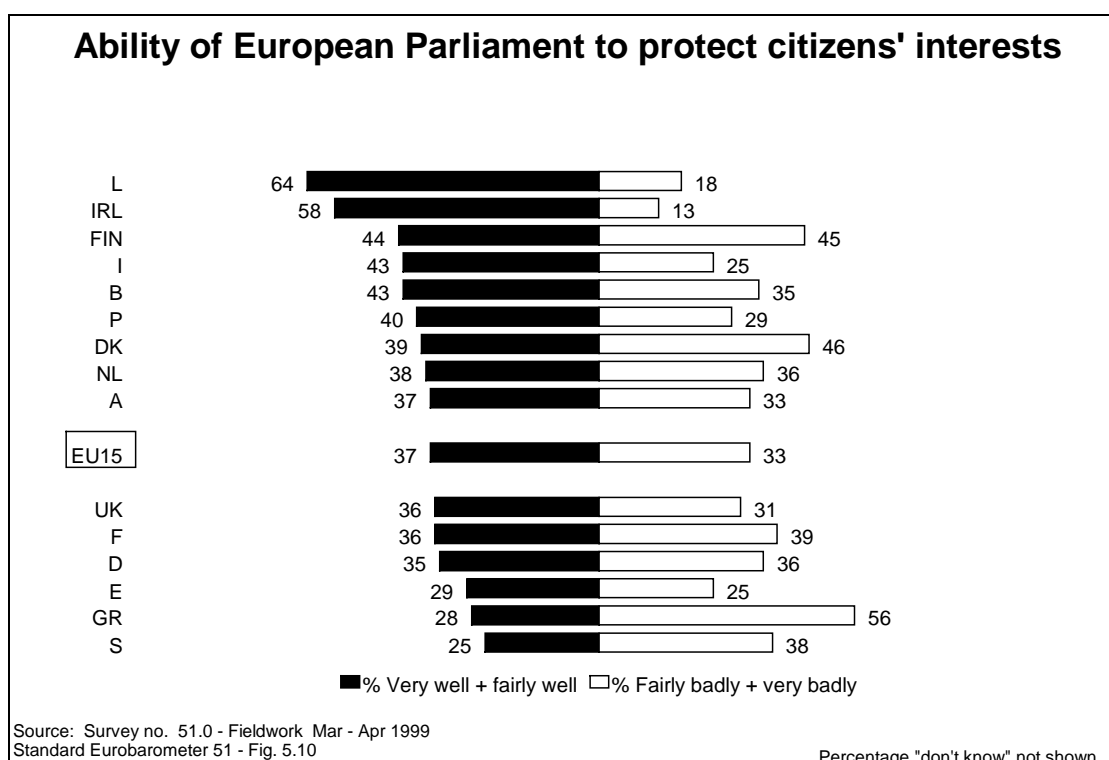


People in Greece are most likely to desire a more important role for the European Parliament (62%), followed by people in Italy (58%) and Portugal (56%). At 28%, people in the UK are least likely to share this view. However, only a small minority of UK respondents (17%) said they wanted the Parliament to play a less important role⁵³. In fact, most people seem happy with the (perceived) more important role of the European Parliament in the spring of 1999 and very few people respond by now desiring a reduced role.

However, when comparing the spring 1999 results to those obtained in the autumn of 1998 - data that reflects the situation before the events of March 1999 and before the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty - we find that in a few Member States, the public is now significantly less likely to desire a more important role for the European Parliament. These are Greece (-10), France (-7), Luxembourg (-5), Spain, Germany, Austria (all -4) and Italy (-3), although Germany is the only country where a statistically significant increase in the proportion of people who want a less important role for the European Parliament (+3) is noted. On the other hand, we find that people in Belgium (+9) and, to a lesser extent, people in the Netherlands (+3) have become significantly more likely to desire a more important role for the European Parliament. (Table 5.6)

5.4. Citizens' interests

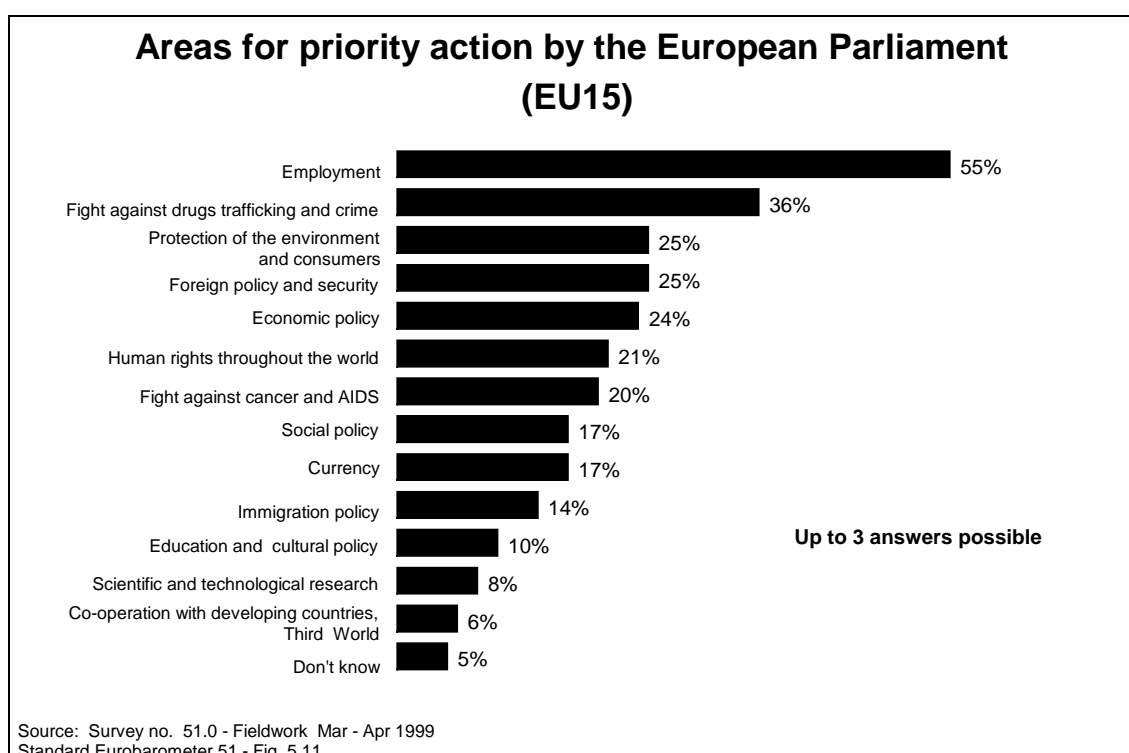
The survey also measures the extent to which EU citizens feel the European Parliament protects their interests. 37% of EU citizens feel their interests are very or fairly well protected by the European Parliament and 33% feel their interests are fairly or very badly protected. 3 in 10 people can't say whether their interests are well or badly protected by the European Parliament.



⁵³ The proportion of "don't know" responses is highest in the UK (36%). It is lowest in Denmark (12%).

Country analyses show that people in Luxembourg are most likely to feel that the European Parliament does a good job in protecting the interests of citizens (64%), followed by people in Ireland (58%). In Italy, Belgium, Portugal, the Netherlands, Austria, the UK and Spain, satisfied respondents outnumber dissatisfied respondents. Greece is the only country where more than half of the public feels the European Parliament does not do a good job in this respect (56%). Other countries where dissatisfied respondents outnumber satisfied respondents are Sweden, Germany, France, Denmark and Finland. The percentage of "don't know" responses is high and ranges from 11% in Finland to 46% in Spain. (Table 5.7)

The survey also measures which area(s) EU citizens want the European Parliament to focus on in order to defend their interests⁵⁴.



According to 55% of EU citizens, the European Parliament should pay particular attention to **employment**. The next most popular area is **the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime**, mentioned by 36% of EU citizens, followed by **environmental and consumer protection** and **foreign policy and security** (both 25%). In Chapter 4 we already noted that the large majority of EU citizens regards these 4 areas as priorities for the European Union as a whole (see Section 2). Considering that 11 Member States have recently entered into phase III of EMU and considering the developments in Kosovo, it is not surprising to find that more than 2 in 10 people also regard **economic policy** (24%) and **human rights** (21%) as priority areas for the European Parliament. Very few people are of the opinion that the European Parliament should pay particular attention to areas that do not affect them directly, like the Third World (6%) and research (8%) or areas which are seen as the responsibility of national governments, like education and cultural policy (10%).

⁵⁴ Respondents were shown a card listing 13 policy areas and were able to choose a maximum of 3 of these areas.

The next table shows that **employment** tops the list in 11 of the 15 Member States and comes second in Greece, Sweden and the Netherlands. People in Spain (73%), where unemployment levels continue to be the highest in Europe, are most likely to want the European Parliament to pay particular attention to this area while people in Denmark (20%) - the only country where employment does not make the top four - are least likely to share this view.

The fight against drug trafficking and organised crime tops the list in Sweden (45%) and the Netherlands (40%), comes second in Ireland (48%), Denmark (46%), Portugal (45%), Finland (44%), Luxembourg, the United Kingdom (both 41%), Belgium (38%), Italy (36%) and France (35%), third in Germany (37%), Austria (34%) and Spain (23%) and fourth in Greece (27%).

Protection of the environment and of the consumer tops the list in Denmark (55%) and makes the top four in Sweden (39%), the Netherlands (34%), Finland (30%), France (29%), Luxembourg, Portugal (both 27%), the United Kingdom (26%), Spain (25%) and Ireland (24%). Greece (14%), Germany (21%), Belgium, Italy (both 22%) and Austria (26%) are the only countries where it doesn't make the top four.

Foreign policy and security tops the list in Greece (70%) and makes the top four in Germany (39%), Austria (38%), Finland (36%) and Italy (27%). At 9%, people in Portugal are least likely to consider it a priority for the European Parliament.

Economic policy makes the top four in Greece (40%), Germany, the Netherlands (both 30%), Austria (28%), Belgium and Italy (both 25%). At 15%, people in Denmark are least likely to consider it a priority for the European Parliament.

Human rights throughout the world makes the top four in Denmark (42%), Sweden (40%), Luxembourg (29%), Ireland (27%), the United Kingdom (25%), France (24%) and Spain (22%). People in Austria (14%), Portugal and Italy (both 15%) are least likely to consider it a priority for the European Parliament.

The fight against cancer and AIDS makes the top four in Portugal (28%) and Denmark (23%). People in Finland (13%), Germany (14%) and Sweden (15%) are least likely to consider it a priority for the European Parliament.

Social policy makes the top four in Belgium (27%). More than 2 in 10 people in the Netherlands (26%), France, Germany (both 23%), Finland and Austria (22%) also consider this a priority. People in the UK (8%), Ireland and Italy (both 10%) are least likely to feel this way.

The remaining areas do not make the top four in any of the Member States. **Currency** receives most widespread mention in Germany (21%) and least widespread mention in Denmark (5%), Sweden (7%) and Finland (8%). **Immigration policy** is chosen by more than 2 in 10 people in Germany and Austria (both 22%) and by 5% or less of the public in Portugal (3%), Spain and Greece (both 5%). **Education and cultural policy** is chosen by 22% of the people in the UK despite the fact that very few people in this country (18% for education and 31% for cultural policy) want the EU to decide in this area (see chapter 4). In Germany, France (both 5%), Italy (6%), Austria (8%) and Spain (9%) less than 1 person in 10 believes the European Parliament should pay particular attention to this area. The view that **scientific and technological research** should be a priority for the European Parliament ranges from 3% in Ireland to 12% in Sweden and Denmark. For the **Third World** the range extends from 3% in France to 11% in Denmark. (See also table 5.8)

TOP FOUR PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN THE MEMBER STATES (IN %)	
Belgium	
Employment	69
Drugs & crime	38
Social policy	27
Economic policy	25
Denmark	
Environment/Consumers	55
Drugs & crime	46
Human rights	42
Cancer/Aids	23
Germany	
Employment	46
Foreign policy & security	39
Drugs & crime	37
Economic policy	30
Greece	
Foreign policy & security	70
Employment	47
Economic policy	40
Drugs & crime	27
Spain	
Employment	73
Environment/Consumers	25
Drugs & crime	23
Human rights	22
France	
Employment	69
Drugs & crime	35
Environment/Consumers	29
Human rights	24
Ireland	
Employment	55
Drugs & crime	48
Human rights	27
Environment/Consumers	24
Italy	
Employment	62
Drugs & crime	36
Foreign policy	27
Economic policy	25
Luxembourg	
Employment	41
Drugs & crime	41
Human rights	29
Environment/Consumers	27
The Netherlands	
Drugs & crime	40
Employment	35
Environment/Consumers	34
Economic policy	30
Austria	
Employment	48
Foreign policy	38
Drugs & crime	34
Economic policy	28
Portugal	
Employment	57
Drugs & crime	45
Cancer/Aids	28
Environment/Consumers	27
Finland	
Employment	61
Drugs & crime	44
Foreign policy & security	36
Environment/Consumers	30
Sweden	
Drugs & crime	45
Employment	42
Human rights	40
Environment/Consumers	39
United Kingdom	
Employment	43
Drugs & crime	41
Environment/Consumers	26
Human rights	25

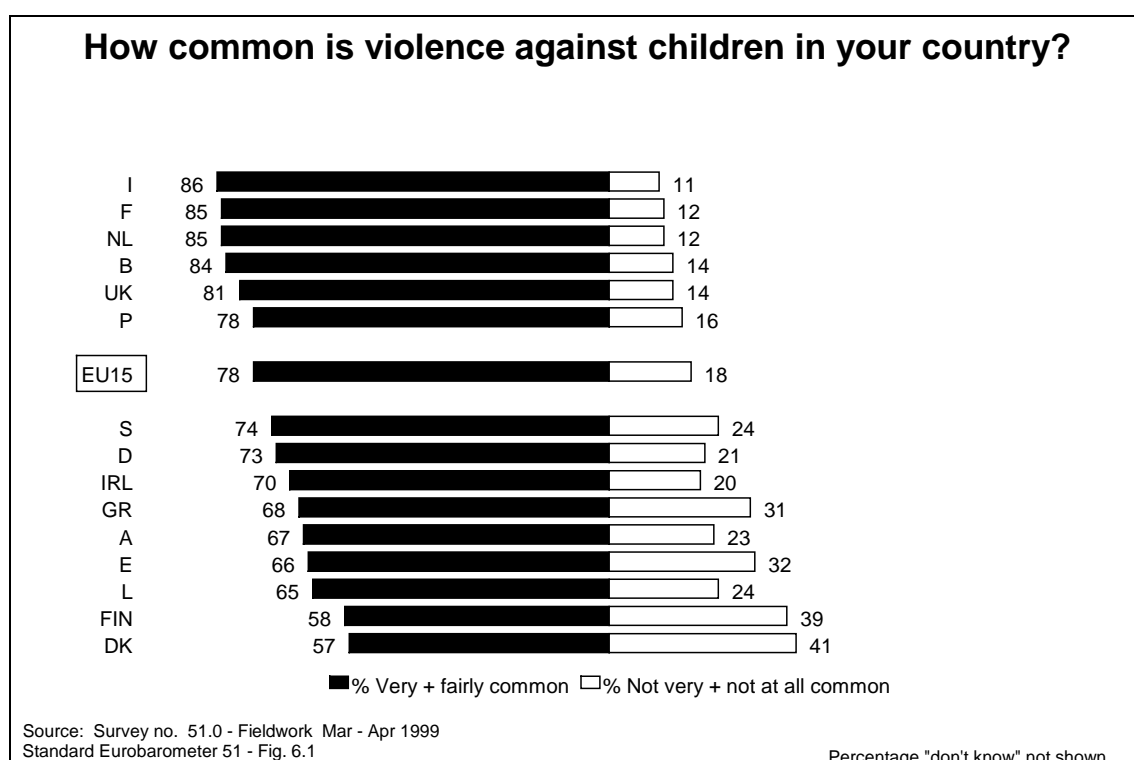
6. Other dimensions of the European Union

In this chapter, we briefly look at a number of issues that were covered on the spring 1999 Eurobarometer survey at the request of other services or Directorates General of the European Commission. The results for many of these questions will be analysed in far greater detail in special Eurobarometer reports⁵⁵.

6.1. Combating violence against children

In 1999, the European Commission will conduct an awareness campaign on violence against children. Whilst it is recognised that violence against children is a widespread problem in all strata of society, the Eurobarometer was used to gauge public opinion in preparation of the campaign.

Nearly 8 in 10 EU citizens believe that violence against children is either very common or fairly common in their country and only 18% regard it as not very or not at all common.

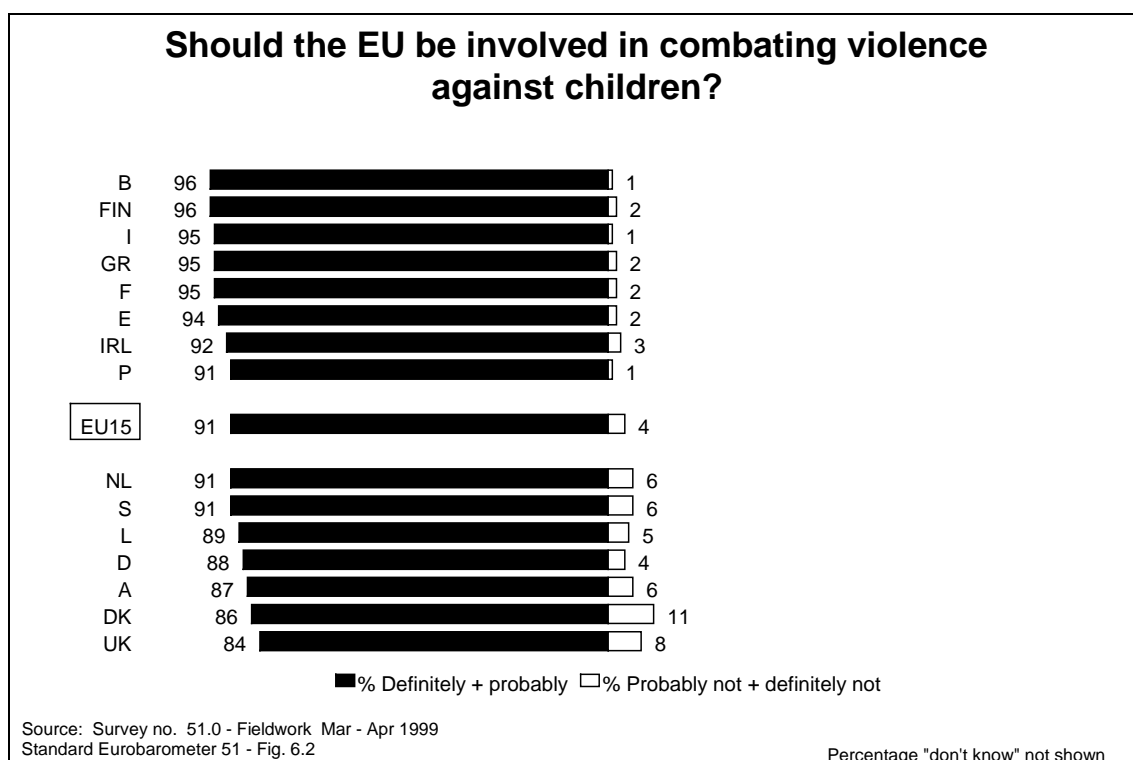


As the graph above shows, people in Italy (86%), France and the Netherlands (both 85%) are most likely to perceive it as a very or fairly common phenomenon in their country. At 57% and 58%, respectively, people in Denmark and Finland are least likely to share this view. Nonetheless, the majority of Danes and Finns believe that violence against children is common in their country. (Table 6.1)

⁵⁵ See Appendix D for more information on special Eurobarometer surveys and reports.

At 11%, awareness of policies or measures put forward by the European Union to combat violence against children is low. Yet, 72% believe the European Union should definitely get involved, with a further 19% feeling that it should probably get involved. Only 4% of EU citizens feel that the European Union should not get involved in combating violence against children.

The graph below shows a large degree of consensus between EU citizens from all 15 Member States about this issue. In 10 of the 15 Member States more than 9 in 10 people hold this view; in Luxembourg (89%), Germany (88%), Austria (87%), Denmark (86%) and the UK (84%) close to 9 in 10 people believe the European Union should be involved in combating violence against children. (Table 6.2)

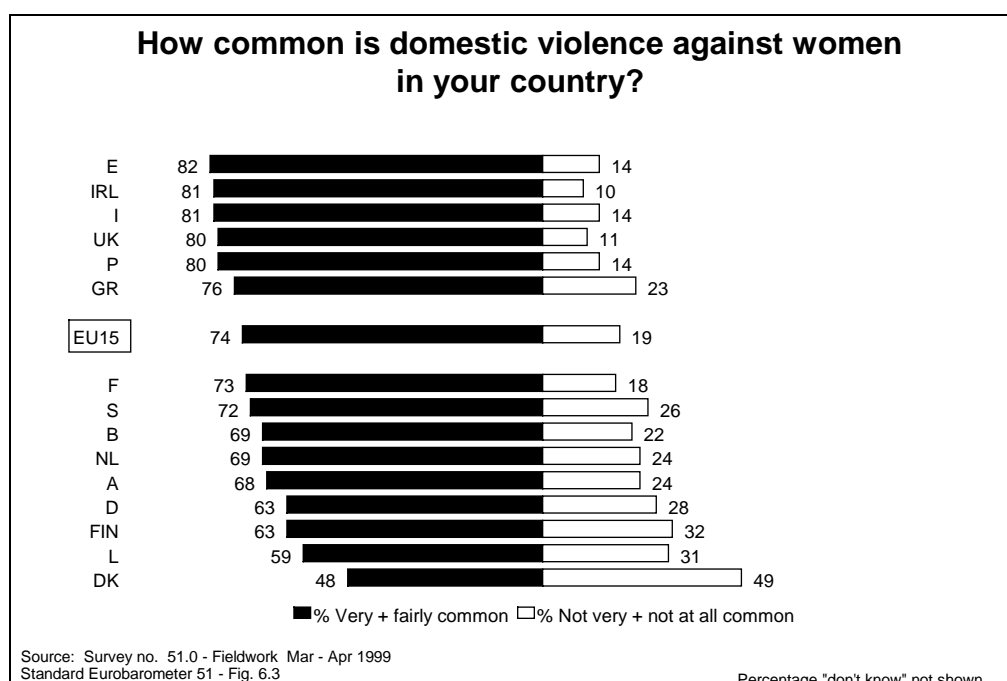


6.2. Combating domestic violence against women

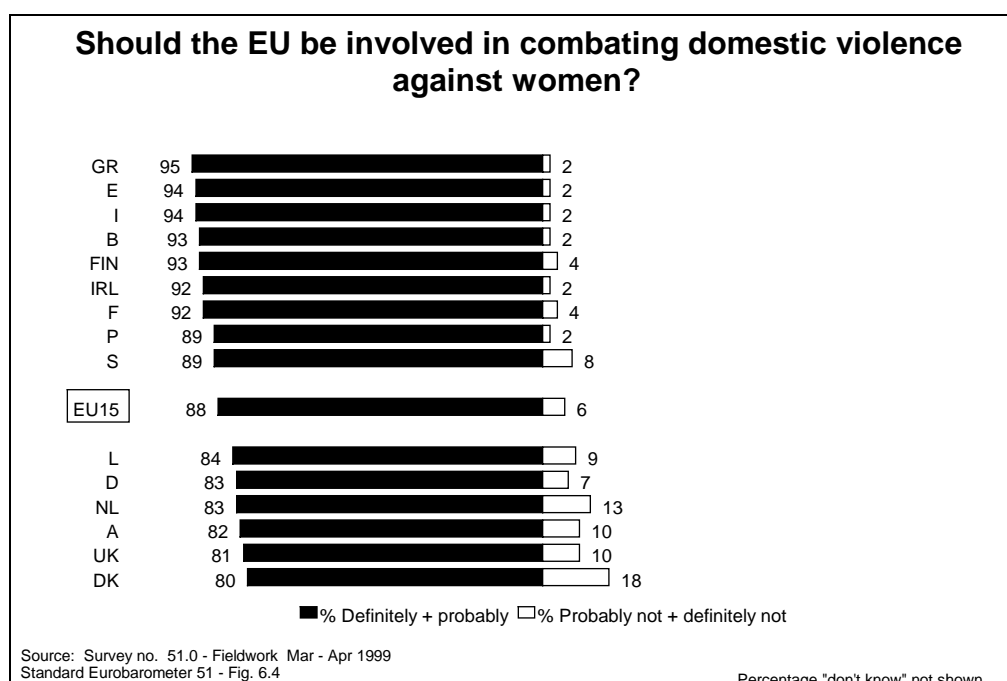
In 1999, the European Union will also be conducting a European campaign to raise awareness on violence against women. The aim of this campaign is to promote increased awareness among European citizens of violence against women, with particular emphasis on domestic violence. As with the survey on violence against children, the spring 1999 Eurobarometer served as the vehicle to gauge public opinion in preparation of the campaign.

Nearly 3 in 4 EU citizens believe that domestic violence against women is very or fairly common in their country and only 19% regard it as not very or not at all common.

However, as the next graph shows, opinions vary significantly from country to country. Around 8 in 10 people in Spain (82%), Ireland, Italy (both 81%) the UK and Portugal (both 80%) believe that domestic violence against women is very or fairly common in their country. People in Ireland are most likely to say that it is very common (37%) while people in Finland are least likely to consider it very common (8%). Denmark is the only country where the proportion of people that thinks domestic violence against women is not very or not at all common (49%) is as large as the proportion of people that thinks it is very or fairly common (48%). The view that domestic violence against women is not at all common is held by less than 5% of the people in each of the 15 Member States. (Table 6.3)



While only 1 European in 10 is aware of any policies or measures put forward by the European Union to combat domestic violence against women, two in three are of the view that the European Union should definitely get involved in the fight against domestic violence. A further 21% feel that the EU should probably get involved with only 6% who feel it should not get involved.



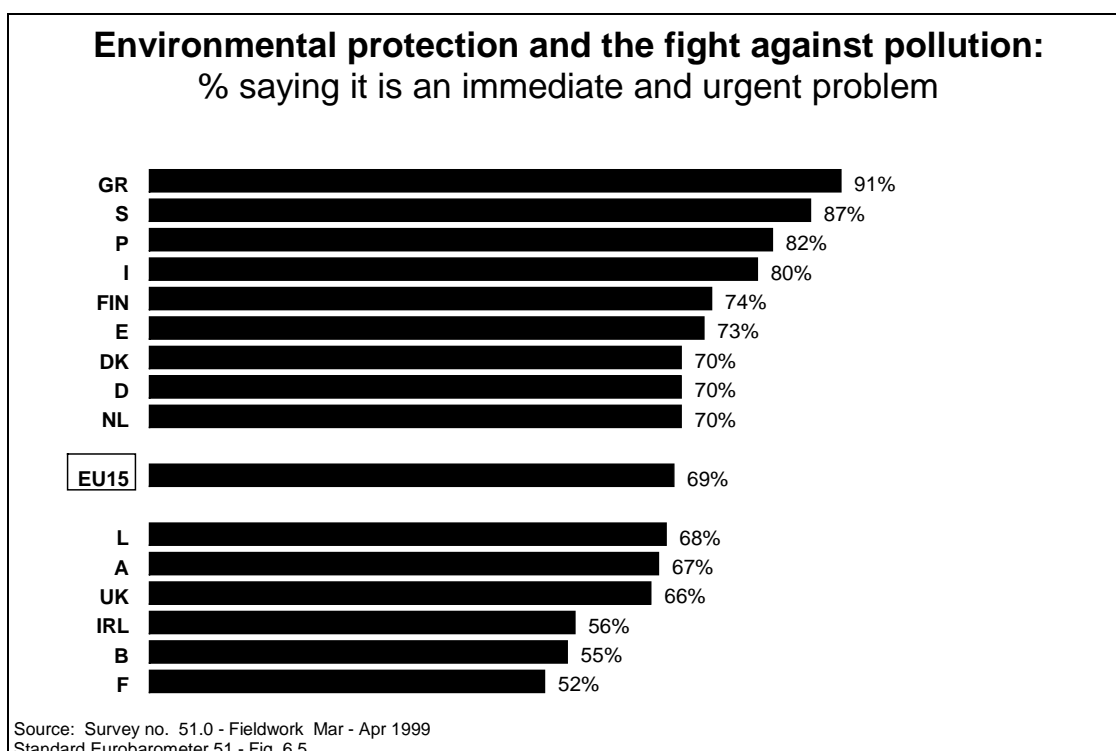
The country analyses show a large degree of agreement among the European public. More than 90% of the people in Greece, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Finland, Ireland and France hold the view that the European Union should get involved in combating domestic violence against women with at least 80% of the people in the remaining 8 Member States sharing this view. (Table 6.4)

6.3. Environmental protection and the fight against pollution

In chapter 4, we already noted that 83% of Europeans consider the protection of the environment as a priority for the European Union and that 55% are of the opinion that decisions relating to the protection of the environment should be made at the EU level. These results point to the existence of a strong public opinion among EU citizens when it comes to environmental issues which is not surprising when we look at the extent to which Europeans are concerned about environmental protection and the fight against pollution. In a module on the environment, fielded on the second wave of the 51st Eurobarometer survey⁵⁶, respondents were asked the following question:

"Some people are concerned about environmental protection and the fight against pollution. In your opinion, is it an immediate and urgent problem, more of a problem for the future or not really a problem?"

According to 69% of EU citizens, environmental protection and the fight against pollution is an immediate and urgent problem compared to only 4% who think it is not really a problem. 23% see it as more of a problem for the future and 3% lack an opinion.



The graph above shows that in all Member States more than half of the people regard environmental protection and the fight against pollution as an immediate and urgent problem. Nonetheless, public concern is clearly more widespread in some countries than it is in others. People in Greece (91%) are most likely to voice strong concern, followed by people in Sweden (87%) and Portugal (82%). At 52%, people in France are least likely to consider environmental protection and the fight against pollution an immediate and urgent problem. Belgium (55%) and Ireland (56%) are the only two other countries where less than 6 in 10 people voice strong concern. Table 6.5 in the annexes shows that the proportion of people that doesn't consider environmental protection and the fight against pollution as a problem is below 10% throughout the European Union. At 12%, people in Ireland are most likely to lack an opinion.

⁵⁶ The second wave of the Eurobarometer No. 51 (EB51.1) was carried out between 12 April and 18 May, 1999. In total, 16144 respondents from the 15 Member States were interviewed.