

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

EUROBAROMETER

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Report Number 53

Release : October 2000

Fieldwork : April – May 2000

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Introducing the Eurobarometer

Eurobarometer public opinion surveys ("standard Eurobarometer surveys") have been conducted on behalf of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture 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 (600) 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 the 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. Due to the rounding of figures 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),. 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 Citizen's Centre - Analysis of Public Opinion Unit (EAC D/2; Head of Unit: Mr. Harald Hartung) of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture, is an internal working document of the European Commission.

Types of surveys in the Eurobarometer series

The European Commission (Directorate-General for Education and Culture) 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 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/>

HIGHLIGHTS

This 53rd Eurobarometer report presents an analysis of public opinion towards the European Union during the first semester of the year 2000. The key findings are:

Support for EU membership and benefit from EU membership

- Around 1 European in 2 (49%) supports his or her country's membership to the European Union. This is slightly lower than in autumn 1999 (-2). Forty-seven percent of EU citizens feel that their country has benefited from membership (+1).

Image of the European Union

- More than 4 in 10 Europeans have a positive image of the European Union (43%) with only 18% saying that it conjures up a negative image.

Trust in the Union's institutions

- The European Parliament (52%, -1) continues to be the most widely trusted of the 9 institutions included in the survey. Since autumn 1999, trust for the European Commission has become more widespread in 10 Member States. Only in 4 countries are trust levels now lower.

Support for an EU constitution

- There is widespread support for an EU constitution with 70% in favour and only 6% of Europeans objecting to this idea. Support is obtained from a majority of the public in all 15 Member States

Satisfaction with EU democracy

- In comparison to autumn 1999, more Europeans are now satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union with the largest increases noted in Greece (+18), Luxembourg (+12), Belgium and France (both +11). On average 43% of Europeans are satisfied (+3).

The single currency, the euro

- Nearly six in ten EU citizens support the single currency whilst 33% are against it. With Greece joining the Euro zone in 2001, support there tends to be similar to that of other "EURO 11" countries and far higher than in the 3 other "pre-in" countries.
- The proportion of Europeans that feels informed about the euro is on the increase. 46% now feel very well or well informed, compared to 42% in autumn 1999. When the question was first asked in autumn 1996, only 21% of EU citizens felt well informed.

Enlargement

- Reform of the EU institutions, which is the subject of the current IGC and which precedes the enlargement process, is seen as a priority by 50% of Europeans.
- Public opinion continues to be indecisive about enlargement and it is not (yet) seen as a priority (27%). Support for the 13 applicant countries wishing to join the EU ranges from 30% for Turkey to 50% for Malta.
- Once the Union has enlarged, Europeans are more likely to be of the opinion that EU decisions should be taken by majority voting (45%) rather than by unanimous voting (38%).

The European Parliament

- Over the years, EU citizens have become more inclined to feel that the European Parliament plays an important role in the life of the European Union. 62% now hold this view, compared to only 47% in autumn 1997. People have also become more likely to desire a more important role for the EP (43%, compared to 38% in autumn 1997).
- Forty-seven percent of Europeans want the European Parliament to pay particular attention to employment. 36% believe the fight against drug trafficking and crime should be a priority and 28% feel this way about protecting the environment and the consumer.

The media and EU information

- The public is most likely to obtain information about the EU through the news media with television being the preferred source of information. However, a significant proportion of the public feels that there isn't enough coverage of EU affairs on television (31%), on the radio (28%) and in the daily papers (25%). Not surprisingly, only 26% of EU citizens feel they know (quite) a lot about the European Union. Fifty percent of EU citizens share the view that news coverage of EU affairs is fair.

The desired role of the European Union in 5 years

- In five years' time, 44% of Europeans would like the European Union to play a more important role than it currently does, 27% desire the same role and only 14% desire a less important role.

General outlook on life

- In comparison to autumn 1999, people are now less likely to feel satisfied with the life that they lead (77% vs. 82%). However, people's expectations are optimistic, with 41% feeling that their personal situation will improve over the next 5 years and only 9% saying that it will get worse.

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REPORT

Introduction

This first report of the year 2000 presents the results of the Eurobarometer survey that was carried out in all Member States from 5 April to 23 May. The aim of this 53rd report is to give readers an overview of how European citizens feel about the European Union, its policies and its institutions, with a number of other related issues also presented.

The report begins with an examination of **overall satisfaction levels amongst EU citizens** at the beginning of the year 2000 whilst also looking back at how satisfaction levels have evolved since 1973. The chapter also looks at how people feel about their present **personal situation** compared to 5 years ago and how they think their situation will be in 5 years' time.

Chapter 2 looks at **long-term developments in public opinion** towards the European Union. Here the standard indicators - **support for EU membership, perceived benefit from EU membership** and the **perceived and desired speed of European integration** - are presented along with a number of new indicators of support. The chapter also looks at the **role played by 9 of the EU's institutions and bodies in the life of the European Union** and at **trust levels in 9 of the Union's institutions and bodies**. The chapter ends by presenting the results of another long-standing question that measures the public's **perceived and desired role of the EU in 5 years' time**.

The 3rd chapter focuses on support for a number of the **Union's current policy issues**. It begins by looking at the extent to which the public favours **joint EU decision-making to national decision-making**. It then examines the extent to which **the public regards the Union's current actions as priorities**, followed by an investigation into **support levels for a number of key policy issues**. Two of these, **the single currency, the euro, and enlargement** are the subject of more in-depth analyses.

Chapter 4 deals with attitudes to the **European Parliament** and measures its **perceived and desired importance**. The chapter also looks at the **European Parliament's ability to protect the public's interests** and discusses the areas in which the public feels the Parliament should focus on.

The 5th chapter presents the public's **assessment of how the media cover EU affairs**. The chapter also looks 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**. It also examines **self-perceived knowledge levels about the European Union** and **awareness levels of 9 of the Union's institutions and bodies**. The chapter ends with a brief look at awareness levels of the spring 2000 **Presidency of the Council of Ministers**.

Chapter 6, called democracy and citizenship, looks at the extent to which people are **satisfied with the way democracy works in their country and with the way it works in the European Union**. The chapter also examines the extent to which **people feel European** at the beginning of the year 2000.

The report ends by looking at a number of **other dimensions of life in the European Union**. To be more precise, the chapter examines how EU citizens use **the Internet** and how many people are in fact connected. It also presents some findings relating to **food labels** and ends by presenting the results of a set of questions related to **xenophobia**.

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.

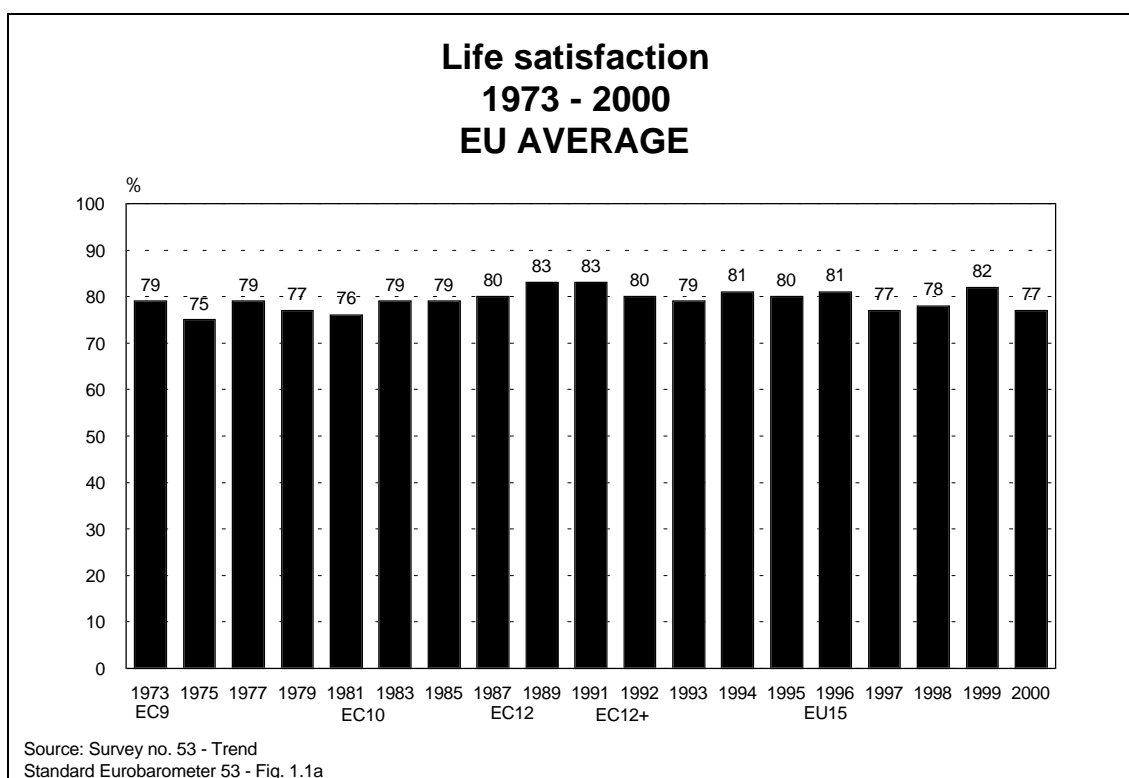
1. Life satisfaction

In this chapter, we look at life satisfaction levels amongst European Union citizens at the beginning of the year 2000. As this question has been asked regularly ever since the Eurobarometer started in 1973, it is possible to see how satisfaction levels have evolved over the past 27 years. We also look at the extent to which people feel their present situation has improved, stayed the same or got worse compared to 5 years ago and we look at their expectations for the coming 5 years.

1.1. Evolution over time and country comparisons

The life satisfaction question is a summary measure of how people feel about all things related to their lives, ranging from personal happiness, health, family, economic situation to their views about society in general.

Since the question was first asked, levels of satisfaction amongst EU citizens have been high with, on average, at least 75% of respondents giving a positive assessment of their life. However, as the graph below shows, overall satisfaction levels do fluctuate. Surprisingly, EU citizens are now less likely to feel positive (77%) than they were in the autumn of 1999 (82%).



The following graph shows significant variations in satisfaction levels amongst the individual Member States.



Denmark is the only country where more than half of the population feels very satisfied (57%) with a further 38% reporting that they feel fairly satisfied. Other countries where at least 9 in 10 people feel satisfied with the life they lead are Sweden (94%), the Netherlands (91%) and Luxembourg (90%). Satisfaction levels are lowest in Greece (59%), Portugal (63%) and Italy (69%).

As was noted earlier, the spring 2000 EU satisfaction level is five percentage points lower than the autumn 1999 level. However, with the exception of Germany (-11) and Italy (-9), satisfaction levels have not dropped sharply in any country. (Table 1.1a)

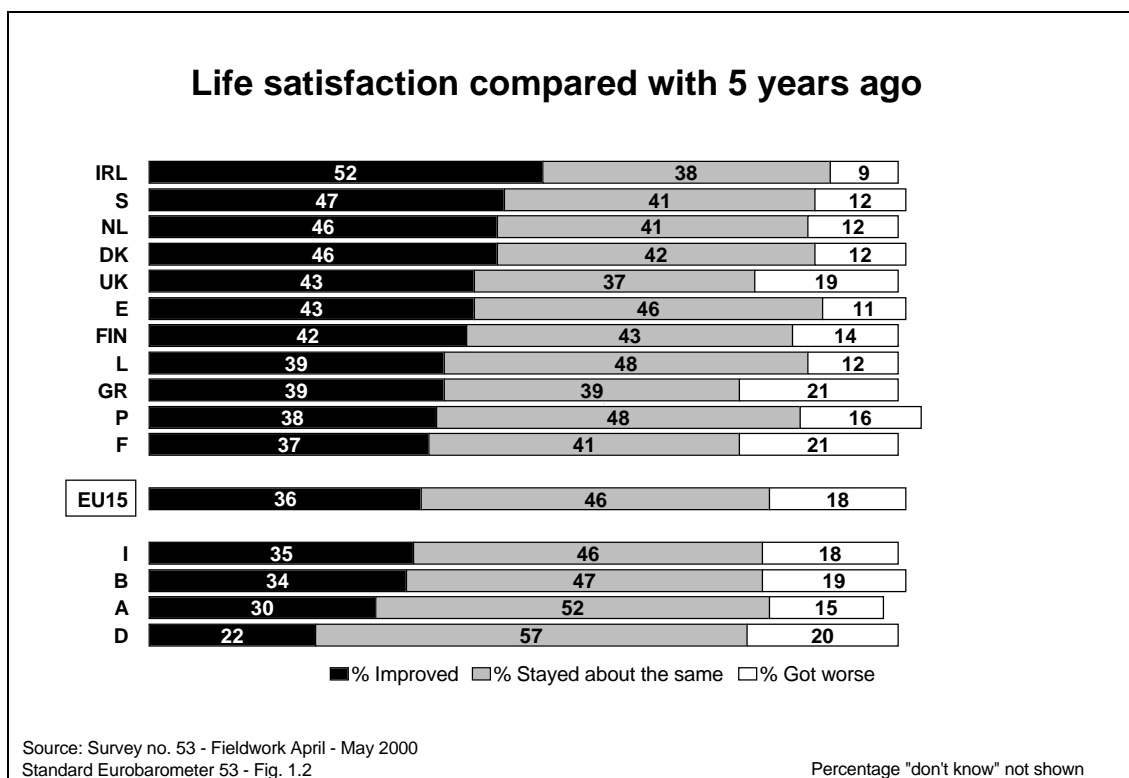
The demographic analyses show no significant differences between men and women and only small differences between the 4 age groups (those aged 15 to 24, 25 to 39, 40 to 54 and 55 and over). Large variations are found amongst the various occupational groups in the population, with satisfaction levels ranging from 56% amongst unemployed people to 84% amongst managers. Education is also a good indicator of how satisfied people are with the life they lead. People who are still studying (86%) or people who stayed in school until the age of 20 or older (83%) are significantly more likely to feel satisfied than people who left school aged 15 or younger (71%) or aged 16 to 19 (76%)¹.

Looking at attitudinal indicators shows that people who support their country's membership to the European Union are significantly more likely to feel satisfied (84%) than people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing (67%). (Table 1.1b)

¹ Appendix C.4 provides more details about the demographic variables.

1.2. People's experiences in the past 5 years

The following graph shows that 36% of EU citizens feel that their present situation has improved compared to 5 years ago, 46% feel it has stayed about the same and only 18% feel it has got worse.



As can be seen, there are large differences of opinion amongst the populations from the 15 Member States. At 52%, the Irish are most likely to feel that their personal situation has improved. In Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark nearly half of the people share this view. In Germany only 22% of people feel their situation has improved but this does not imply that their situation has got worse. Germans are most likely to feel that their situation is the same as it was 5 years ago (57%), followed by Austrians (52%). The proportion of people who feel their situation has got worse is small throughout the European Union, ranging from 9% in Ireland to 21% in Greece and France.

The Eurobarometer 47.1 (spring 1997) also measured people's views about their personal situation over the previous five years. Comparisons with this survey show that people are now more likely to view the past in a favourable light. In a number of countries, people are now considerably more likely to report that their personal situation has improved. These are Belgium, Spain (both +9), France (+8), Finland, Sweden (both +6) and Ireland (+4). Denmark is the only country where a small significant increase (+3) in the proportion of people who feel that their personal situation has got worse is recorded. (Table 1.2a)

At a demographic level, it is not surprising to find that young people are most likely to feel that their present situation has improved compared to 5 years ago (53%, compared to only 17% of retired people) and that unemployed people are most likely to feel that their present situation has got worse (32%).

The following table shows a close correlation between life satisfaction and how people feel about their present situation compared to 5 years ago.

Relationship between life satisfaction and views about one's present situation compared to 5 years ago		
Present situation compared to 5 years ago has:	Views about life in general:	
	Satisfied	Not satisfied
	%	%
Improved	42	15
Stayed the same	48	38
Got worse	9	47
(Don't know)	1	1
Total	100	101

Finally attitudinal analyses show that people who regard their country's membership to the EU as a good thing are significantly more likely to feel that their present situation compared to 5 years ago has improved (43%) than people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing (27%). Amongst the latter group, 29% feel their present situation has got worse. (Table 1.2b)

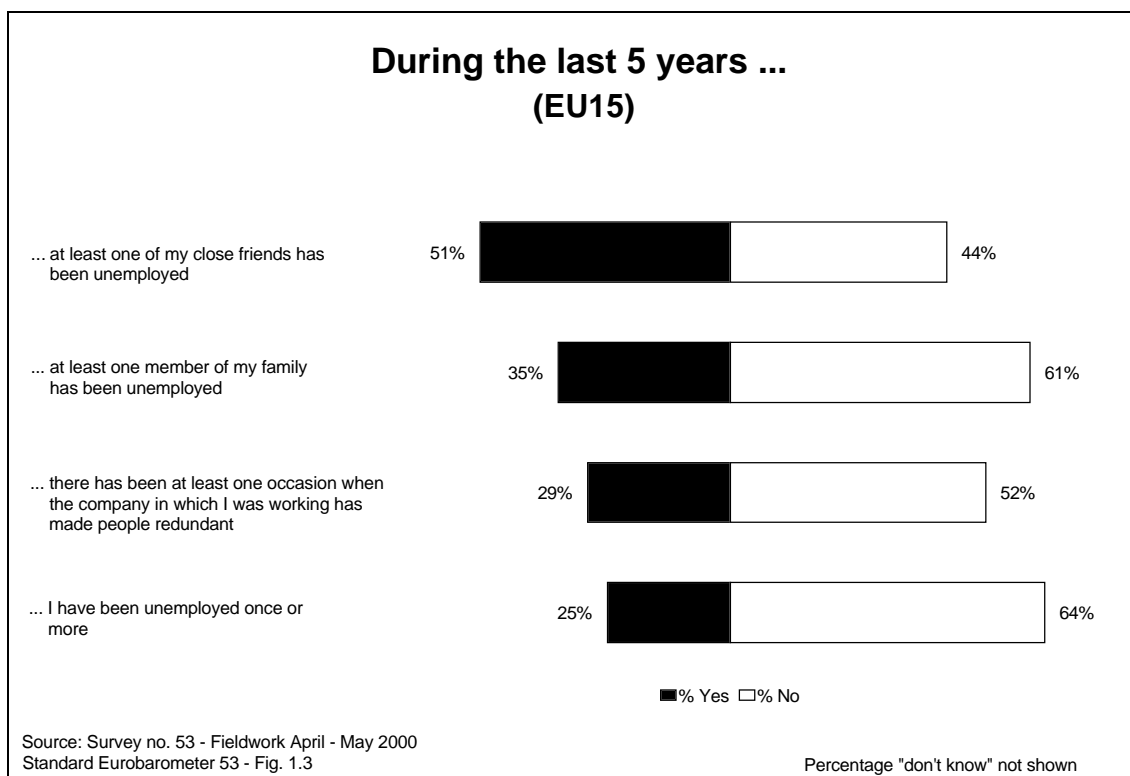
We look next at the extent to which people have experienced any of the following situations during the past 5 years:

- Been unemployed once or more
- At least one family member has been unemployed
- At least one close friend has been unemployed
- There has been at least one occasion of redundancies at their place of work

The following table shows that people who are satisfied with the life they lead are significantly less likely to have experienced any of these events than people who are not satisfied.

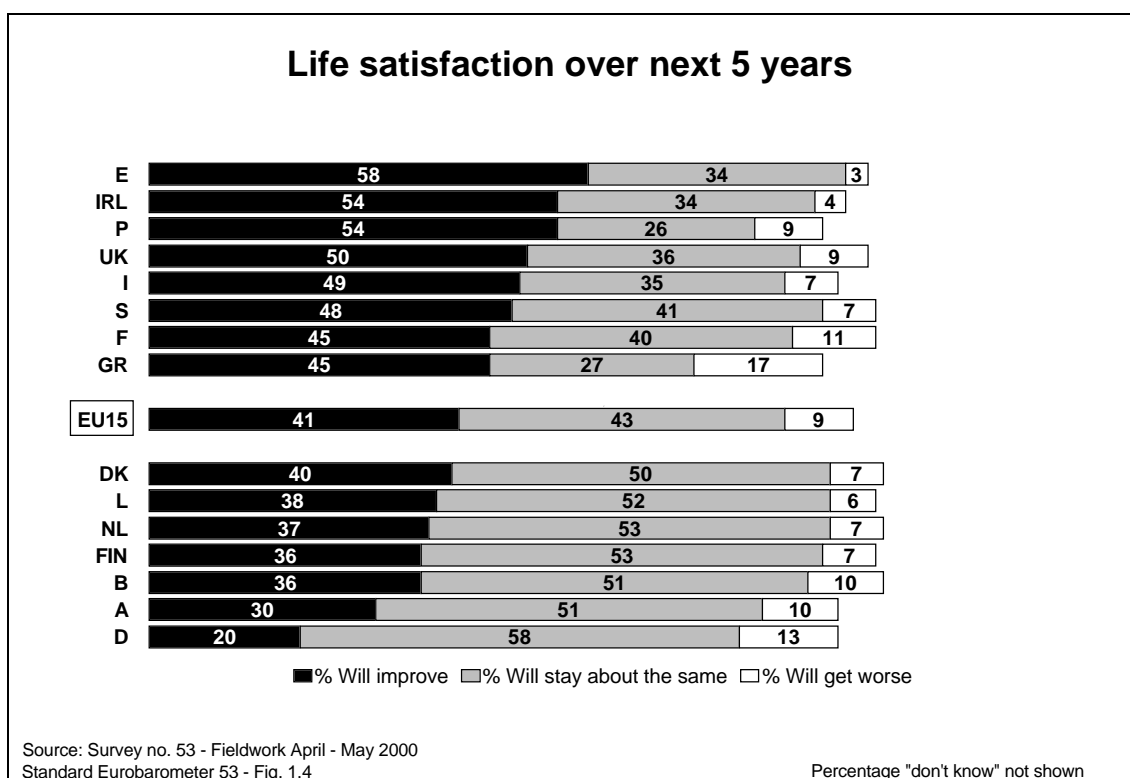
Relationship between life satisfaction and personal experiences during the past 5 years		
Experience:	Views about life in general:	
	Satisfied	Not satisfied
	%	%
Has been unemployed	22	35
Redundancies at company	27	35
Family member has been unemployed	33	44
Close friend has been unemployed	49	61

Looking at the total population results shows that 51% of EU citizens have at least one close friend who has been unemployed; 35% have at least one family member who has been unemployed; 29% have worked at a company where people were made redundant and 25% have been unemployed themselves.



1.3. People's expectations for the coming 5 years

EU citizens generally hold positive expectations about their personal situation in the course of the next 5 years. As the following graph shows, 41% believe it will improve whilst only 9% believe it will get worse. 43% of the EU population feel their personal situation will stay about the same



Looking at country by country results shows that people in Spain are most likely to expect their personal situation to improve over the next 5 years (58%), followed by people in Ireland and Portugal (both 54%). Again we find that Germans are least likely to feel their situation will improve (20%) and most likely to feel that it will stay about the same (58%). On the whole very few EU citizens feel their personal situation will get worse, with the proportion holding this view ranging from 3% in Spain to 17% in Greece.

In comparison to spring 1997, results show that people are now more likely to be optimistic about their future. The largest increase in the proportion of people who feel their personal situation will improve is recorded in Belgium (+10), followed by Greece, France (both +8), Sweden (+7), Germany and Spain (both +5). (Table 1.4a)

The demographic analyses show that age is an important determinant of how people feel about their future. Students and more generally young people (71% and 66%, respectively) are most likely to be optimistic whilst retired people are least likely to share this view (16%). Whilst the majority of retired people feel that their situation will stay about the same (59%), this group is also most likely to feel that their personal situation will get worse over the coming 5 years (17%).

The following table shows that life satisfaction and people's expectation of their personal situation in 5 years are also closely related.

Relationship between life satisfaction and expectations of one's personal situation in 5 years		
Personal situation in 5 years will:	Views about life in general:	
	Satisfied	Not satisfied
	%	%
Improve	44	34
Stay the same	45	34
Get worse	6	22
(Don't know)	5	10
Total	100	100

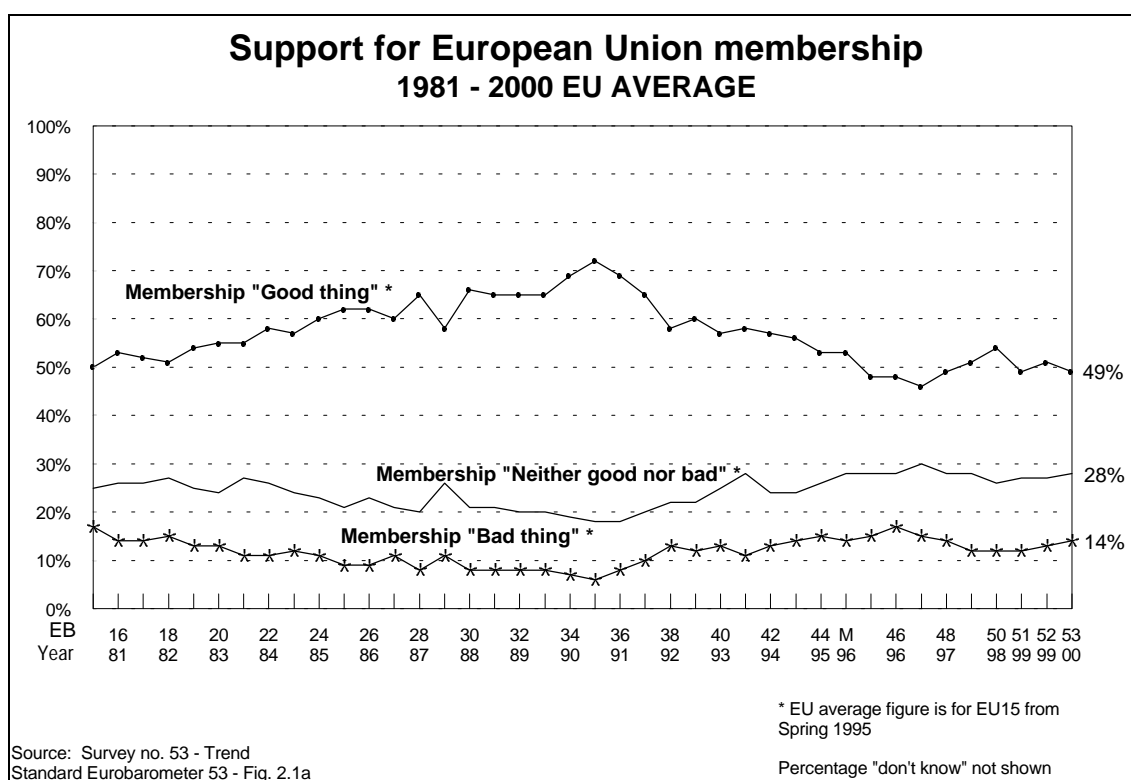
Again we find that people who regard their country's membership to the EU as a good thing are significantly more likely to feel that their situation will improve (49%) than people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing (32%) are. (Table 1.4b)

2. Attitudes to the European Union in 2000

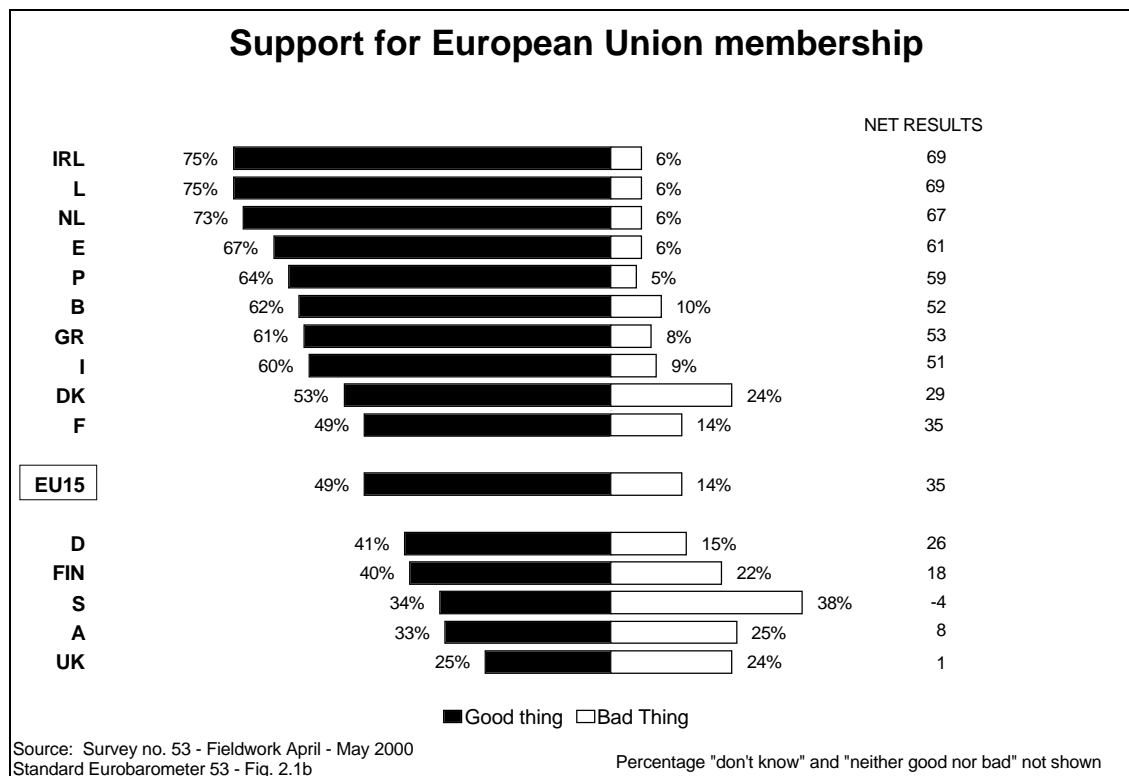
In this chapter we look at developments on some of the standard indicators of support for the European Union. We also present the results of a number of new questions that measure public opinion towards the European Union.

2.1. Support for European Union membership

In spring 2000, 49% of Europeans regard their country's membership to the European Union as a good thing. This is slightly lower than in the autumn of 1999 (51%). However, the proportion of people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing continues to be very low, with only 14% of the EU public holding this view.



Following the all-time high of 72% recorded in the spring of 1991, public support for the European Union dropped during the mid-nineties to reach a low of 46% in the spring of 1997. 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 for this low level of confidence. Until autumn 1998, support for the European Union then steadily increased. However, the resignation of the Santer Commission on March 15 1999 led to a drop in support levels from 54% in autumn 1998 to 49% in spring 1999. Since then, outright support for EU membership has hovered around the 50% mark. However, people have statistically not become more likely to view their country's membership negatively following the Commission's resignation. (See also individual country graphs, figs. 2.4a-o)



The graph above shows that 3 in 4 people in Ireland and Luxembourg support their country's membership to the European Union with nearly the same level of support recorded in the Netherlands (73%). In Spain, EU support is obtained from 2 in 3 people with Portugal (64%), Belgium (62%), Greece (61%) and Italy (60%) following closely. In Denmark, 53% of the public support their country's membership to the European Union, although opposition levels (24%) are significantly above average. As usual, support for EU membership is lowest in the UK (25%) and opposition levels are highest in Sweden (38%).

The trend analyses indicate that Belgium is the only Member State where public opinion is significantly more favourable than it was in the autumn of 1999 (+8). At the same time, the proportion of people who oppose their country's membership to the European Union has also increased in Belgium (+4). In a number of other countries, public opinion has neither improved nor has it got worse. These are Spain, the Netherlands, Greece and France. In Denmark and Italy, the proportion of people who regard their country's membership as a good thing has not changed but in both countries there are now more people who believe their country's membership is a bad thing (both +3).

EU support has dropped most significantly in Austria which is clearly in response to the sanctions imposed by the other 14 EU Member States against this country as a result of the Austrian Freedom Party being part of the Government's coalition. The proportion of Austrians that supports Austria's membership has fallen by 9 percentage points, whilst the proportion that believe Austria's membership is a bad thing has increased by 7 percentage points. Other countries where a negative shift is recorded are Sweden (+8 increase in opposition levels), Ireland, Luxembourg, Germany, Finland, the UK and Portugal where significant drops in support levels are found. However, in the latter three countries opposition levels did not change significantly. (Table 2.1a)

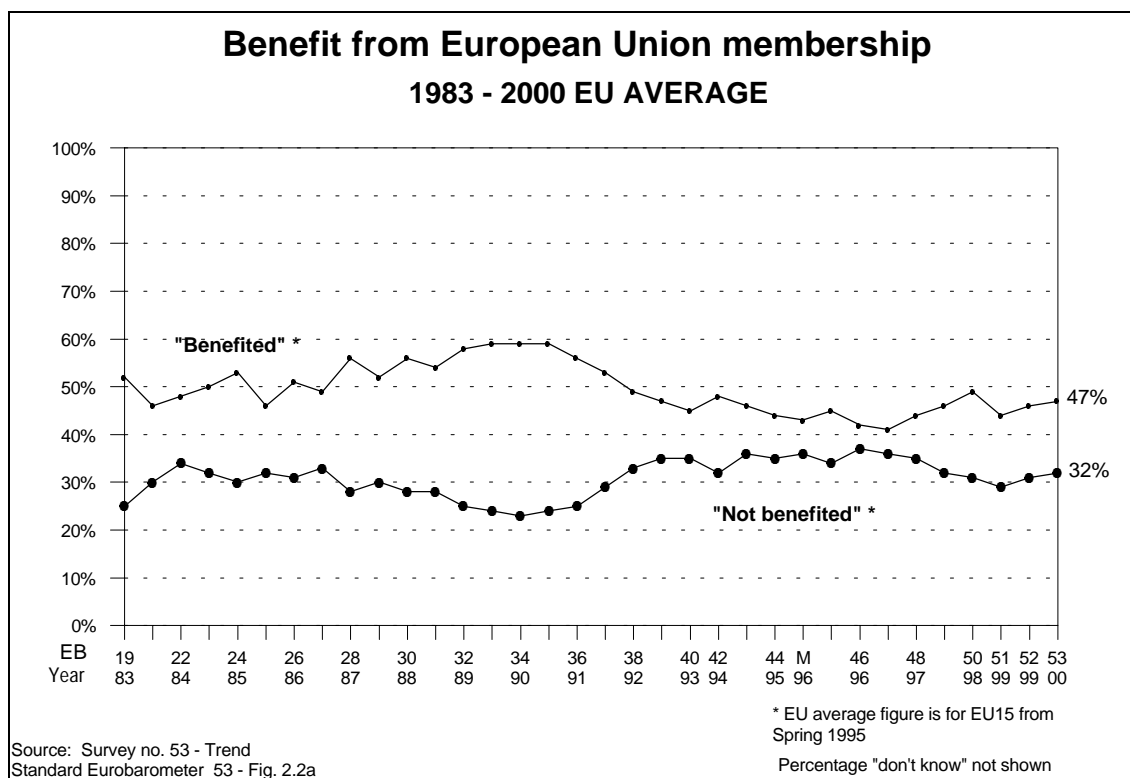
The well-established pattern for the two genders shows that men are more likely than women to regard their country's membership as a good thing (52% vs. 46%) and that women are significantly more likely to lack an opinion than men are (12% vs. 7%).

Education is one of the most important explanatory variables. Levels of support for the European Union increase with education so that the range is from 41% amongst people who left school aged 15 or younger to 65% amongst people who left full-time education aged 20 or older. Levels of support also increase by age with those aged 15 to 24 significantly more likely (55%) than those 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%) on the one hand and manual workers and unemployed people (both 41%) on the other.

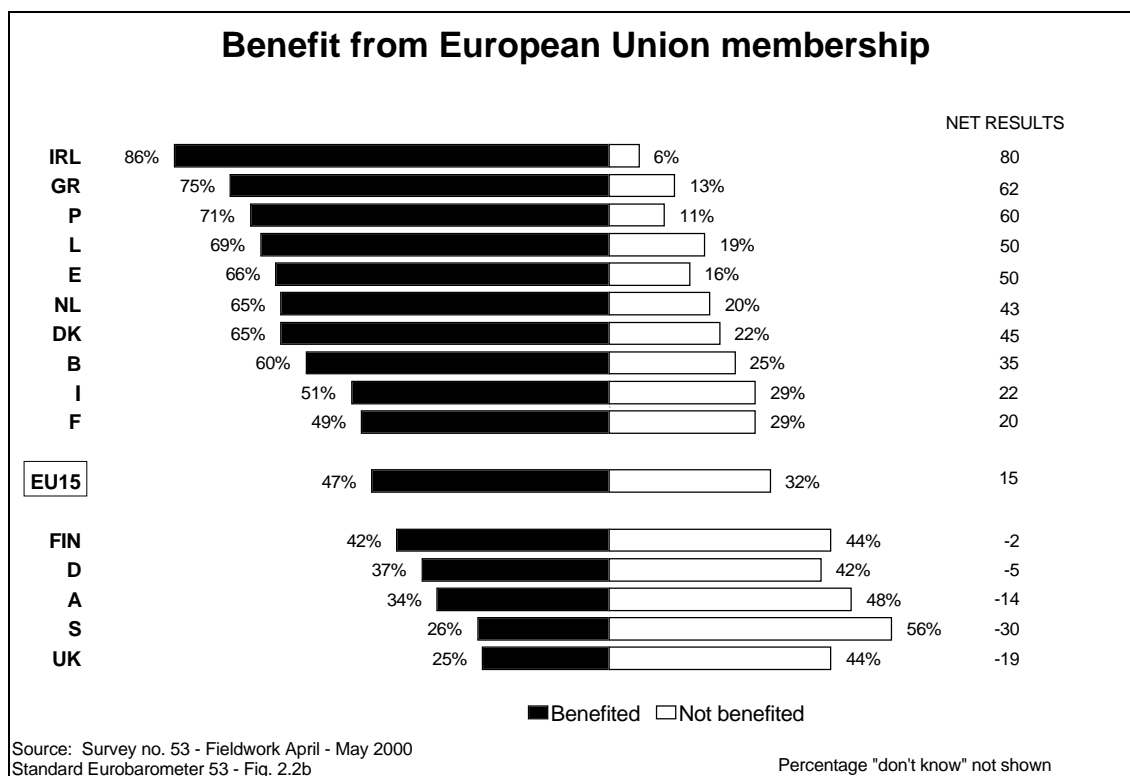
At the attitudinal level, we find a large division in opinion between people who desire a more important role for the European Union and those who desire a less important role. Amongst those who desire a more important role, 71% support their country's membership, compared to only 19% of people who want the EU to play a less important role. (Table 2.1b)

2.2. Benefit from European Union membership

Nearly half of all EU citizens feel that their country has benefited from EU membership (47%) whilst around 3 in 10 people hold the opposite view (32%). At the EU15 level, attitudes have not changed significantly since autumn 1999.



People in Ireland continue to be most likely to feel that their country has benefited from EU membership (86%), followed at a distance by people in Greece (75%). In Portugal, Luxembourg, Spain, the Netherlands and Denmark around 2 in 3 people share this view. In Italy and France half of the people feel their country has benefited from EU membership. Opinions continue to be most negative in Sweden and the UK, where only a quarter of the population feels that their country has benefited. Sweden is the only country where an absolute majority of people feels that their country has not benefited. In Austria, nearly half of the people share this view.



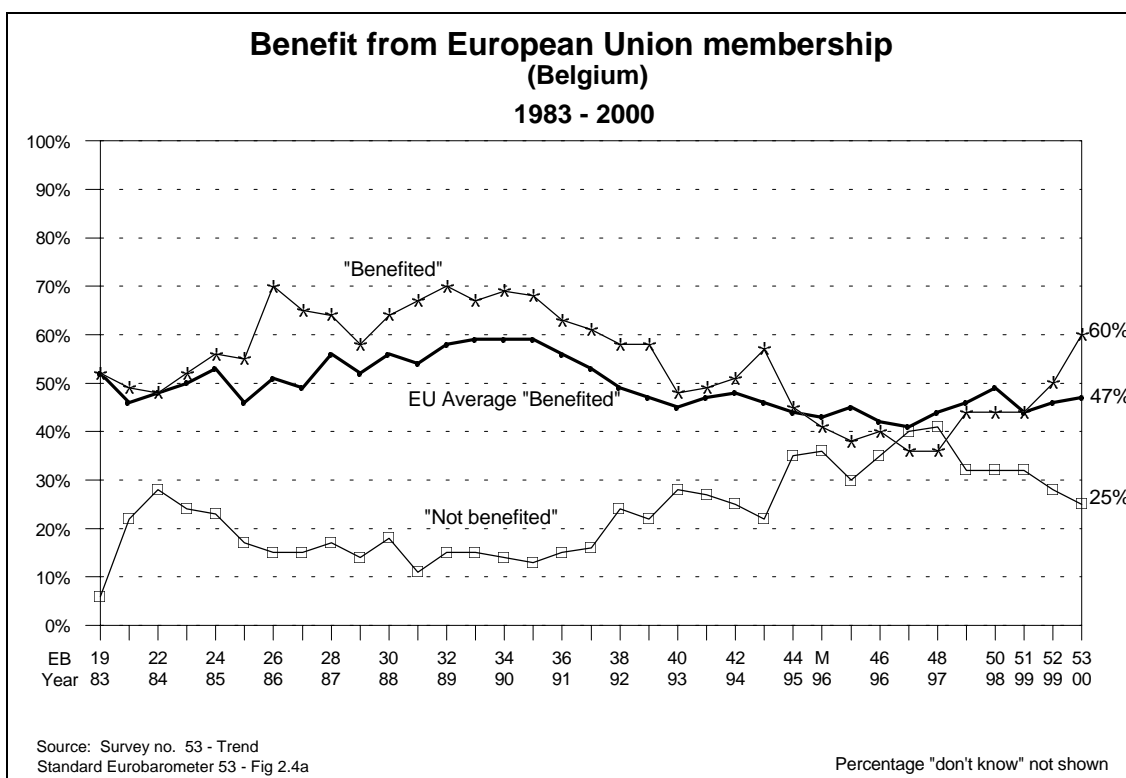
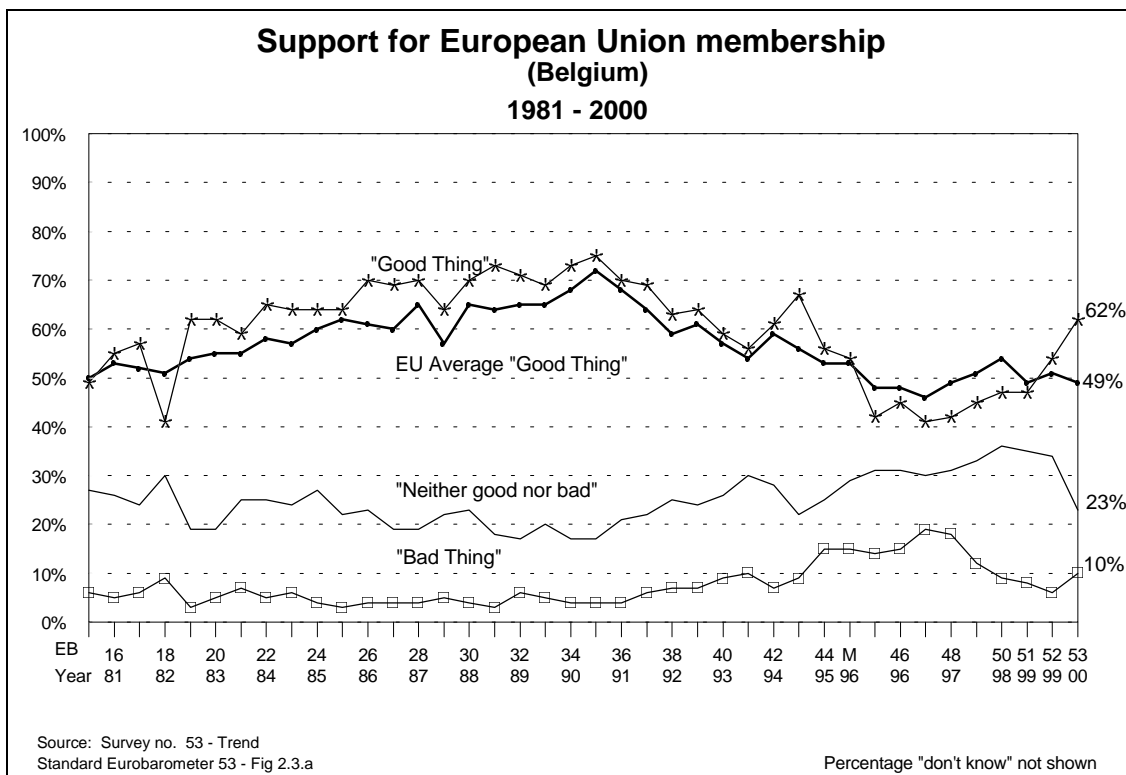
In comparison to autumn 1999, results are significantly more positive in Belgium (+10), followed by Greece and Spain (both +5). No significant change is recorded in the Netherlands, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany and Ireland.

Again we find a large negative shift in Austria. The proportion of people who feel that Austria has benefited has dropped by 11 percentage points whilst the proportion that feels it has not benefited has increased by 16 percentage points. In all likelihood, this shift reflects the perceptions of the Austrian public in response to the sanctions imposed against their country. In reality the sanctions have been diplomatic and bilateral in nature and have not altered directly the extent to which Austrians benefit from EU membership. (See also individual country graphs, figs. 2.5a-o)

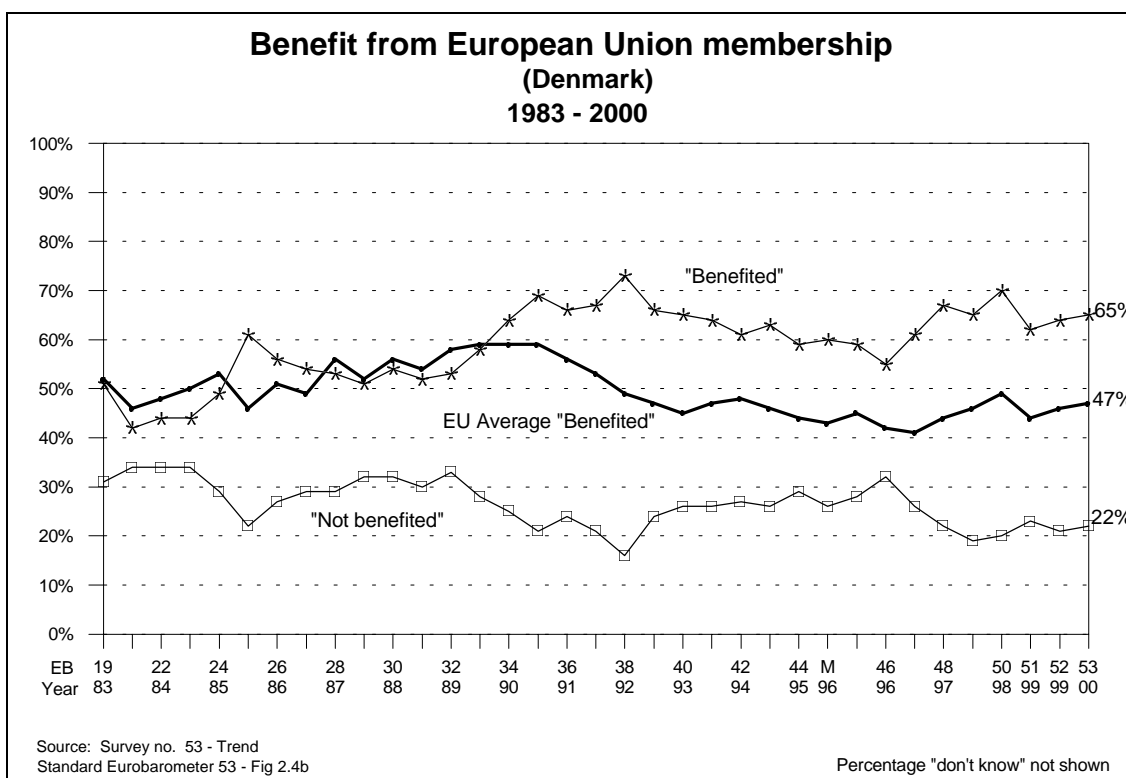
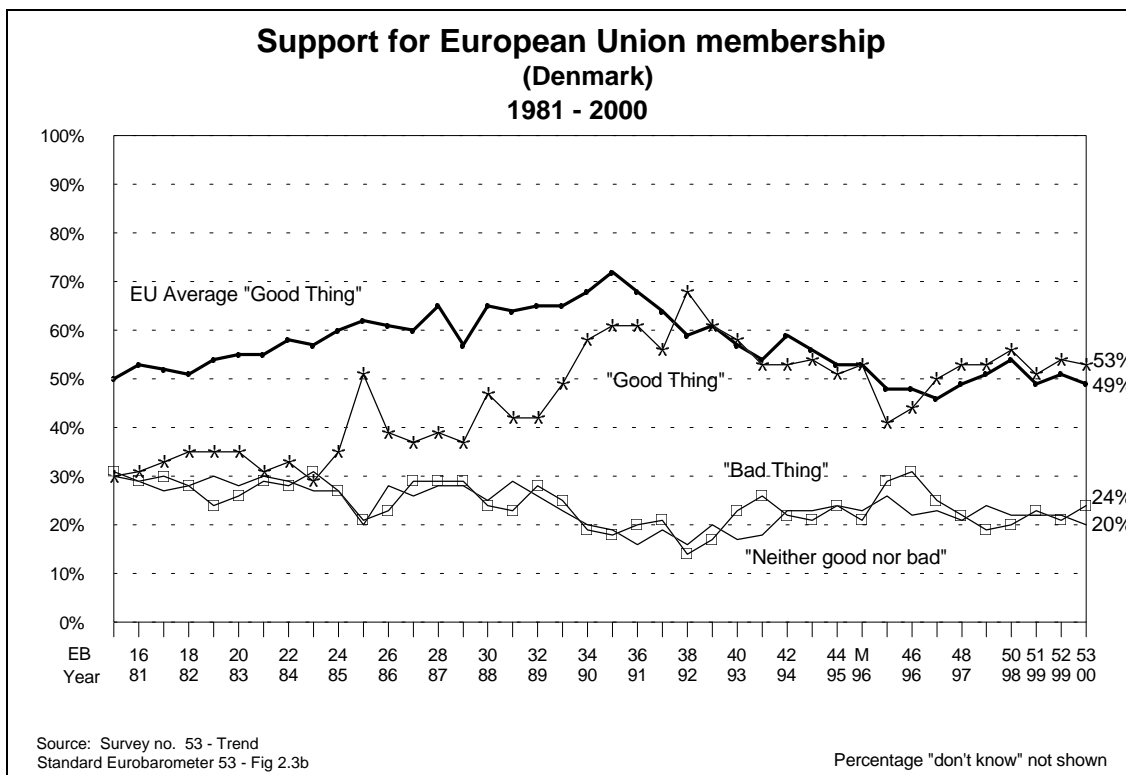
Demographic analyses show that people who stayed in full-time education until age 20 or older (62%) are most likely to feel that their country has benefited, whilst people who left school aged 15 or younger (38%) are least likely to share this view.

Views between supporters and opponents of the European Union are clearly divided on this issue: 78% of people who support their country's membership believe their country has benefited, compared to only 9% of those who oppose their country's membership. (Table 2.2b)

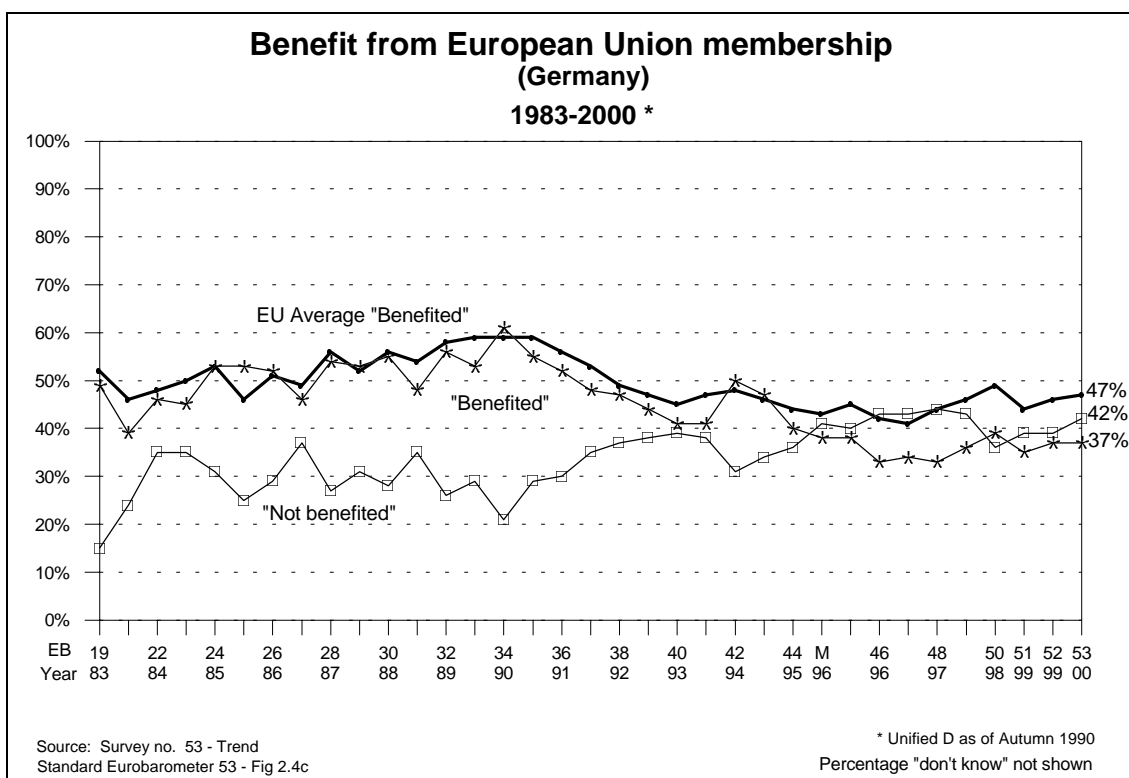
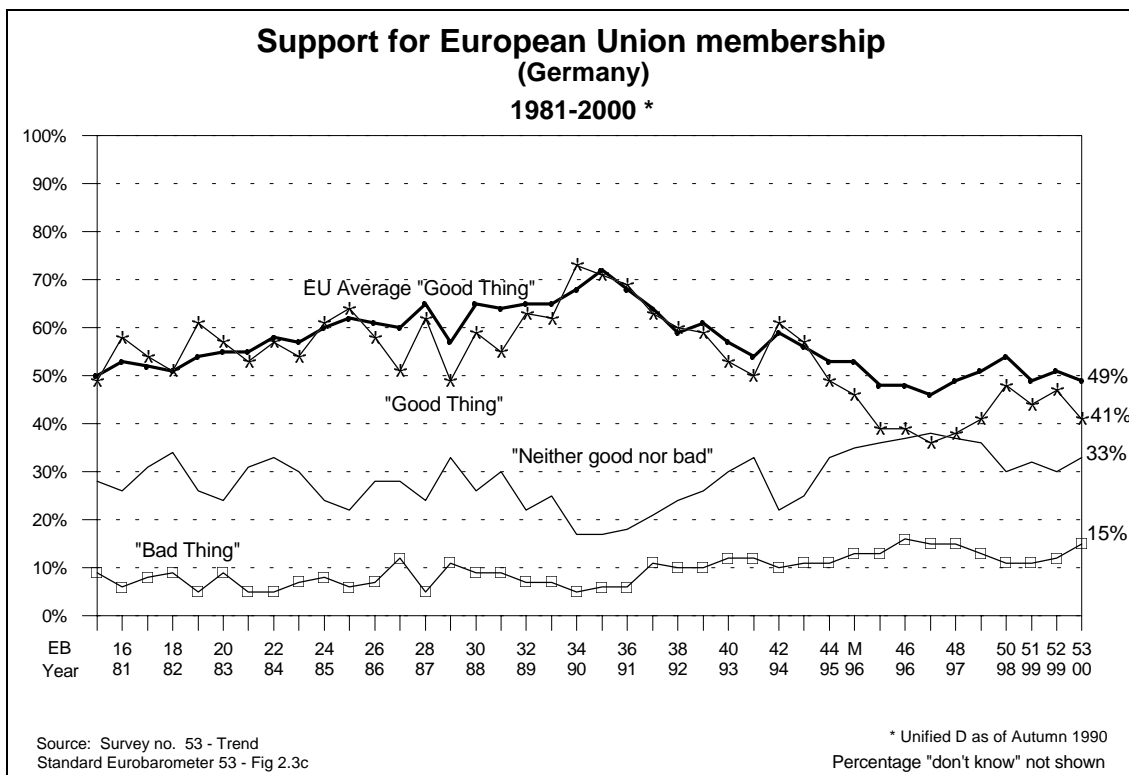
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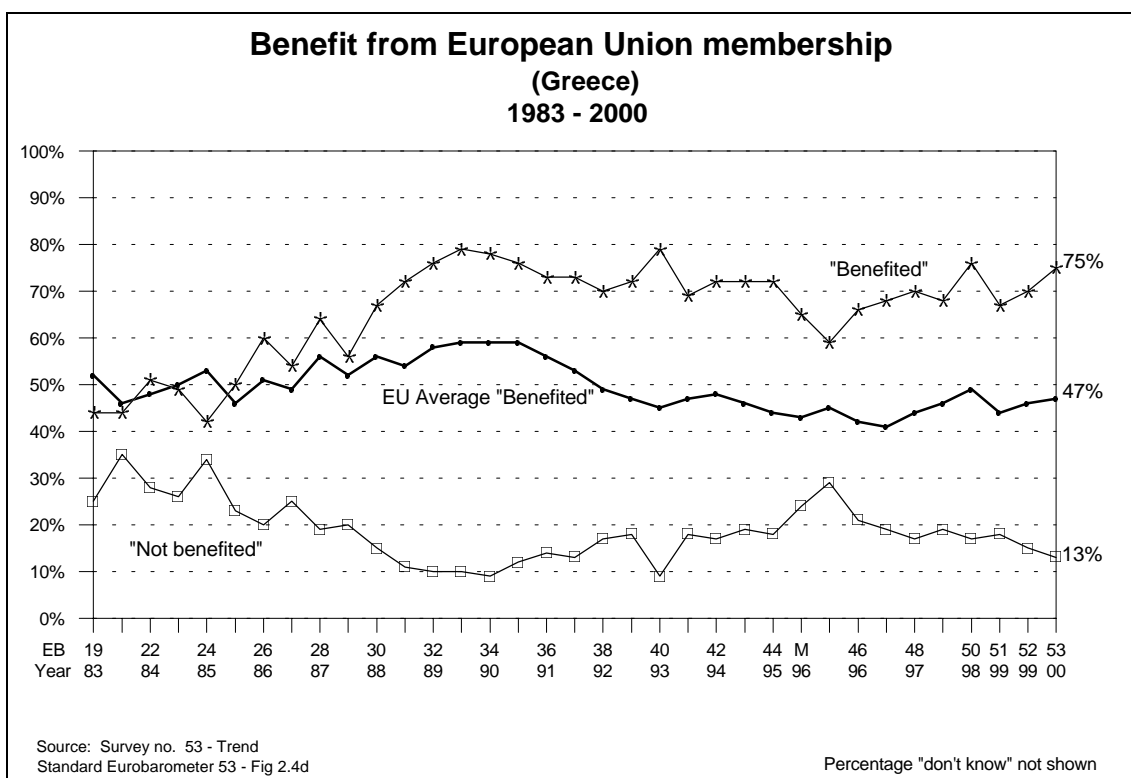
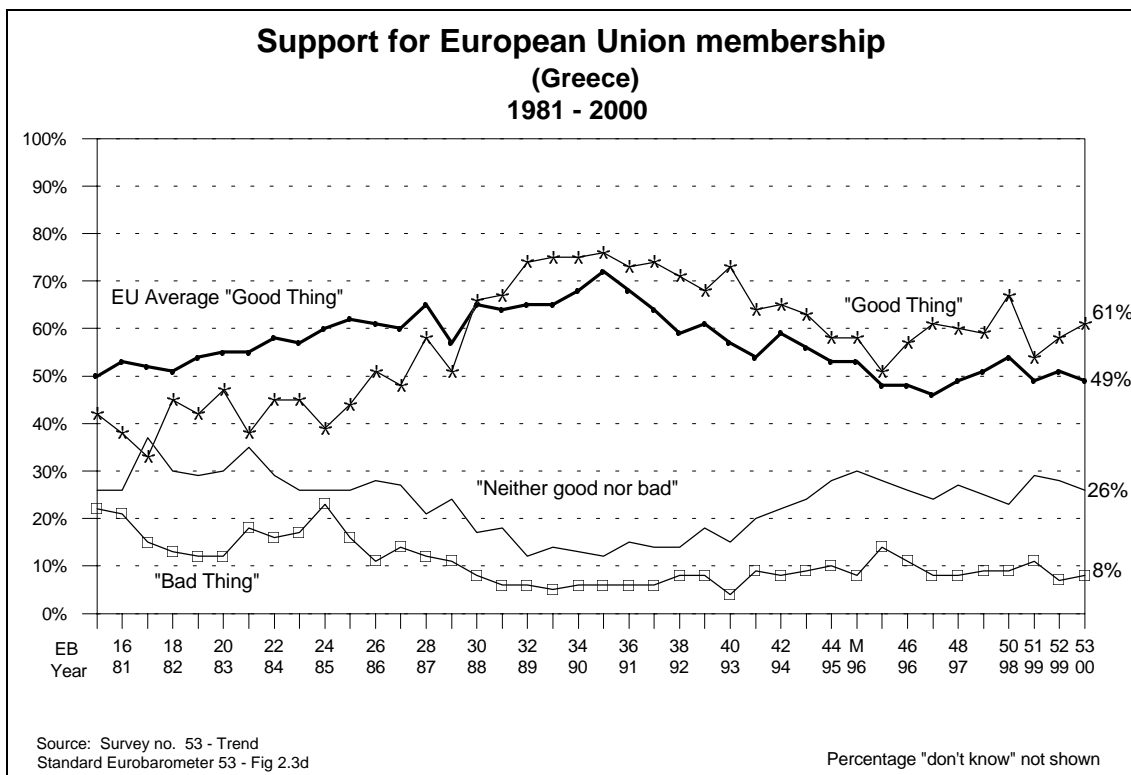
DENMARK



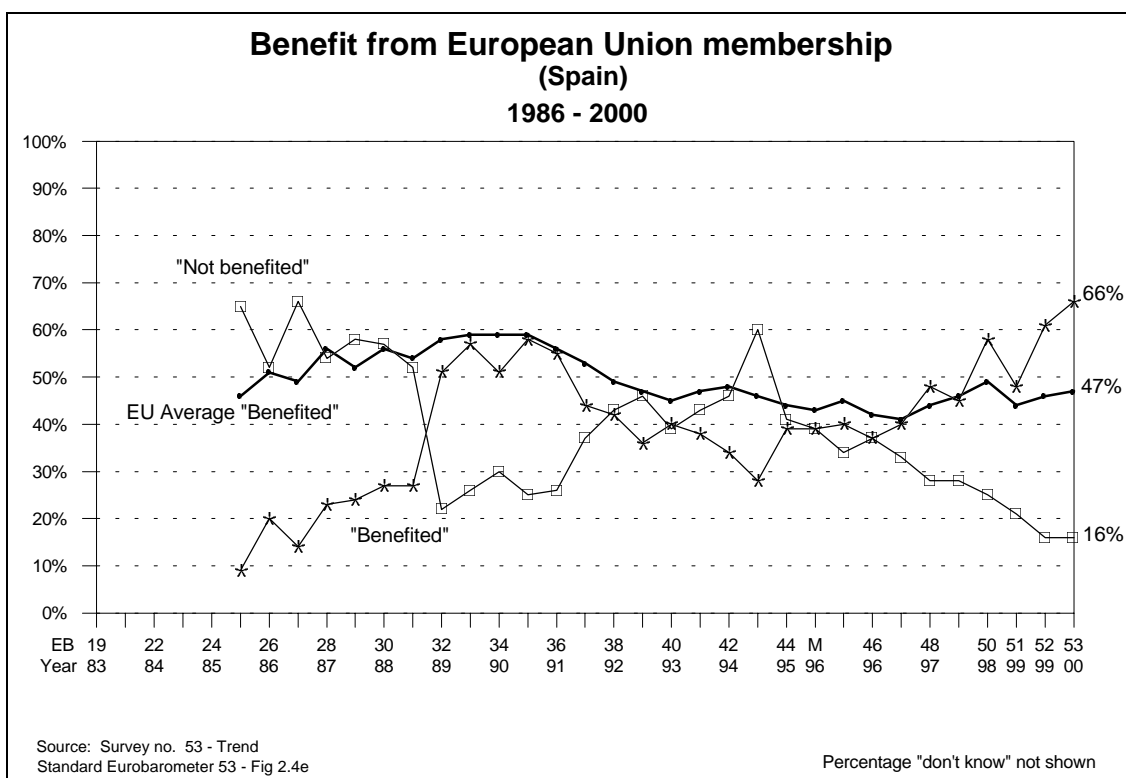
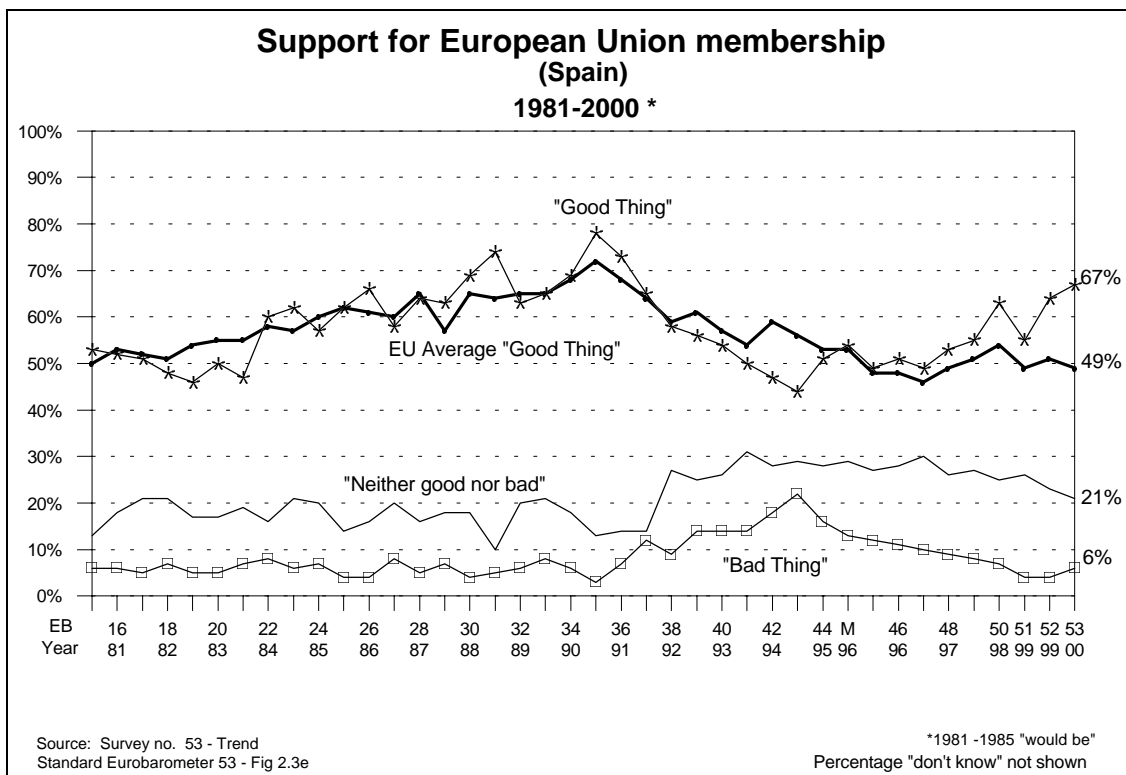
GERMANY



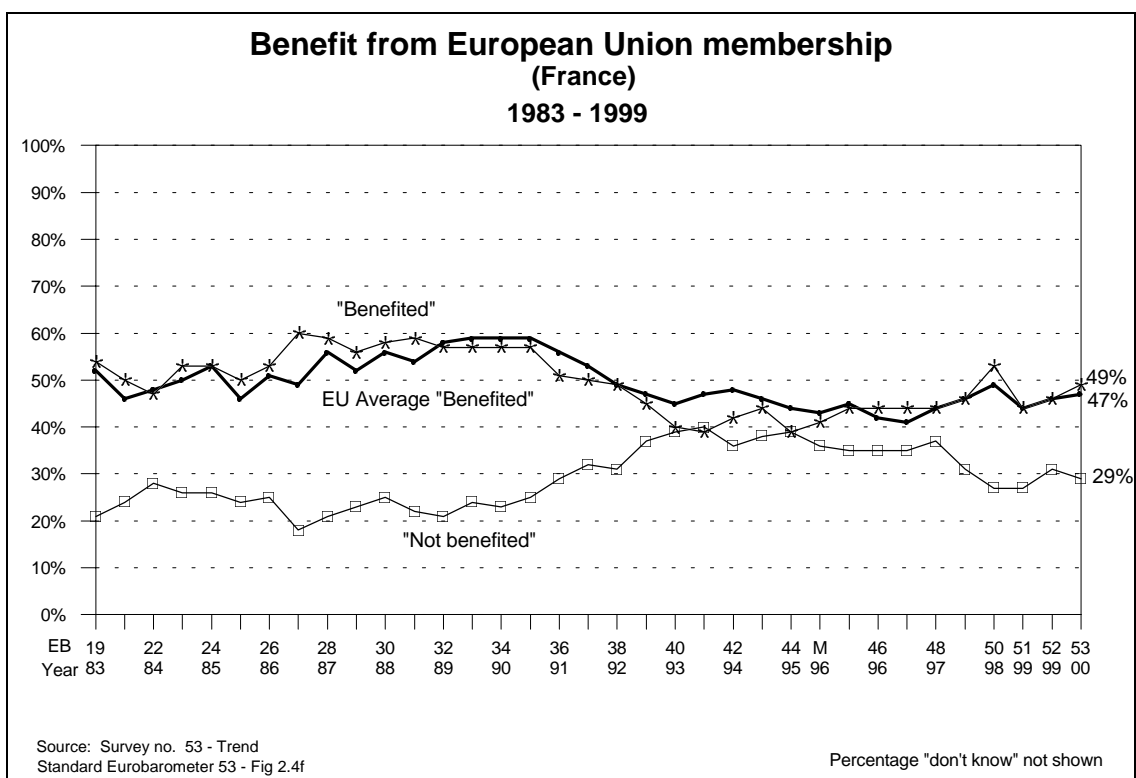
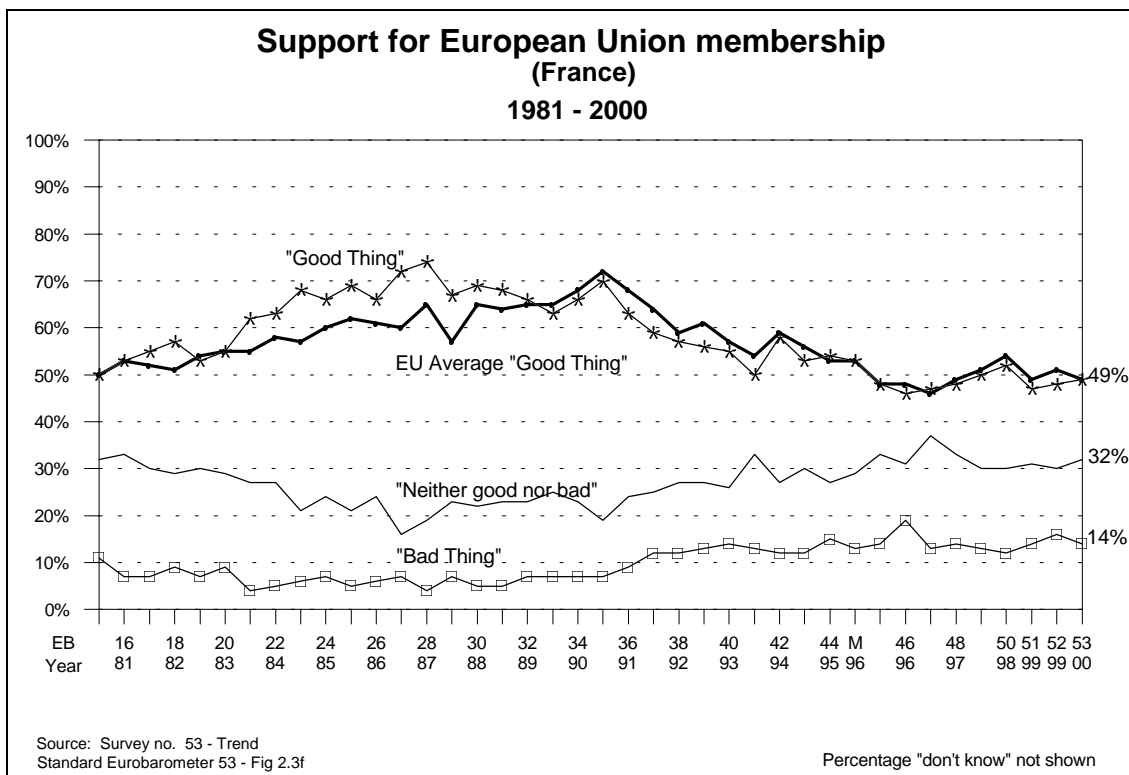
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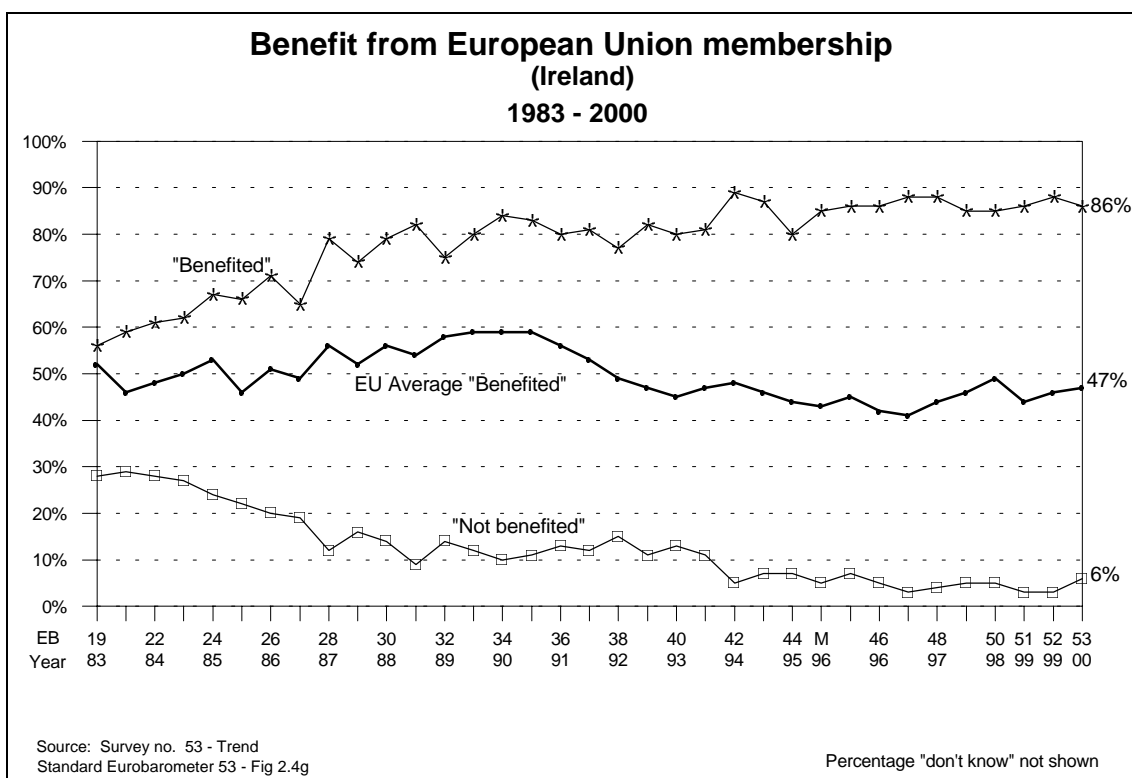
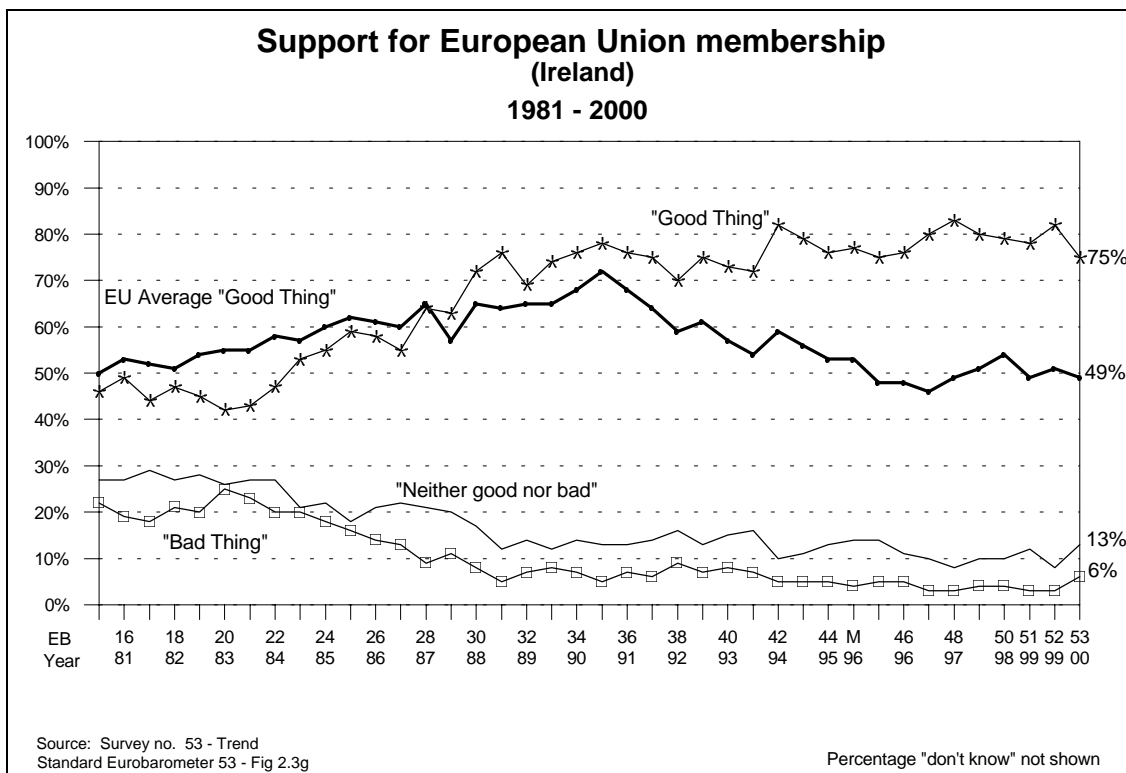
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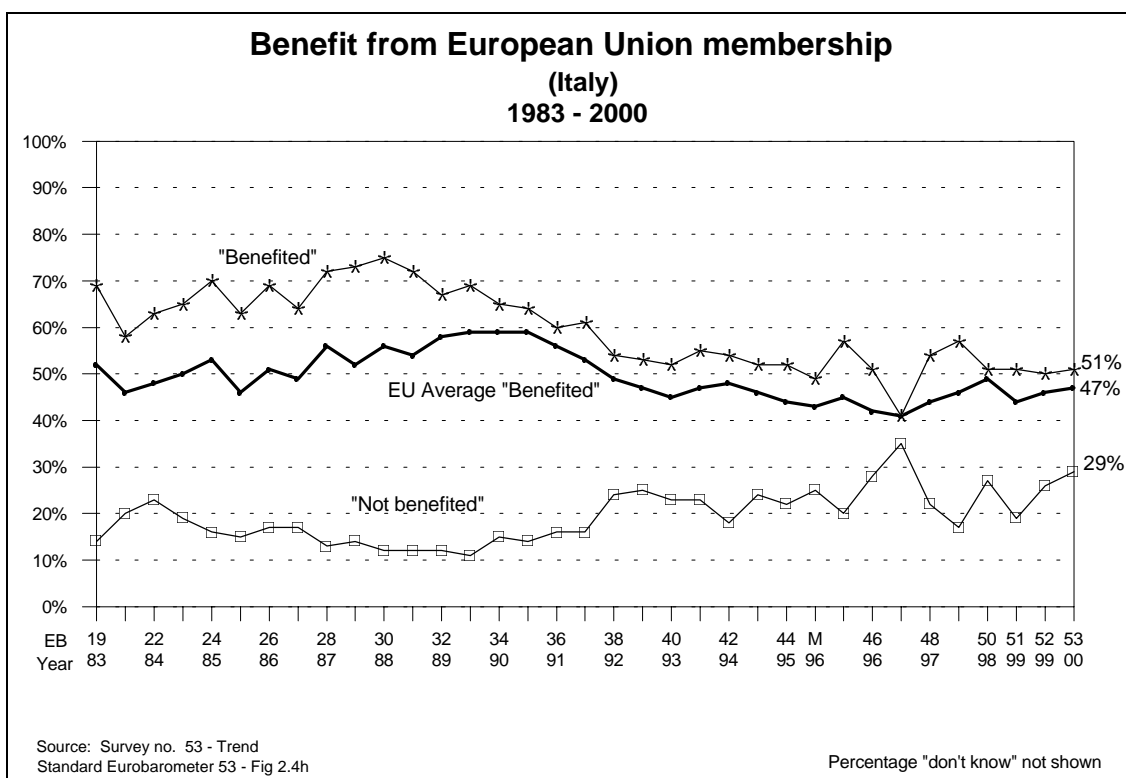
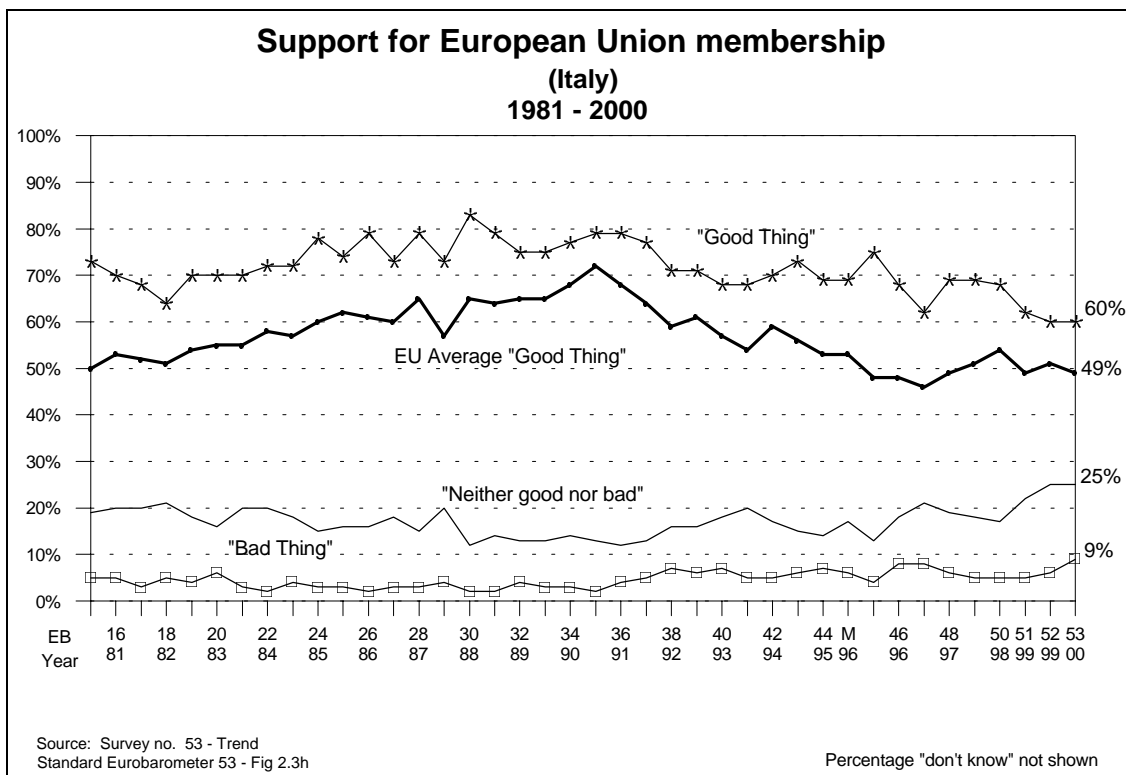
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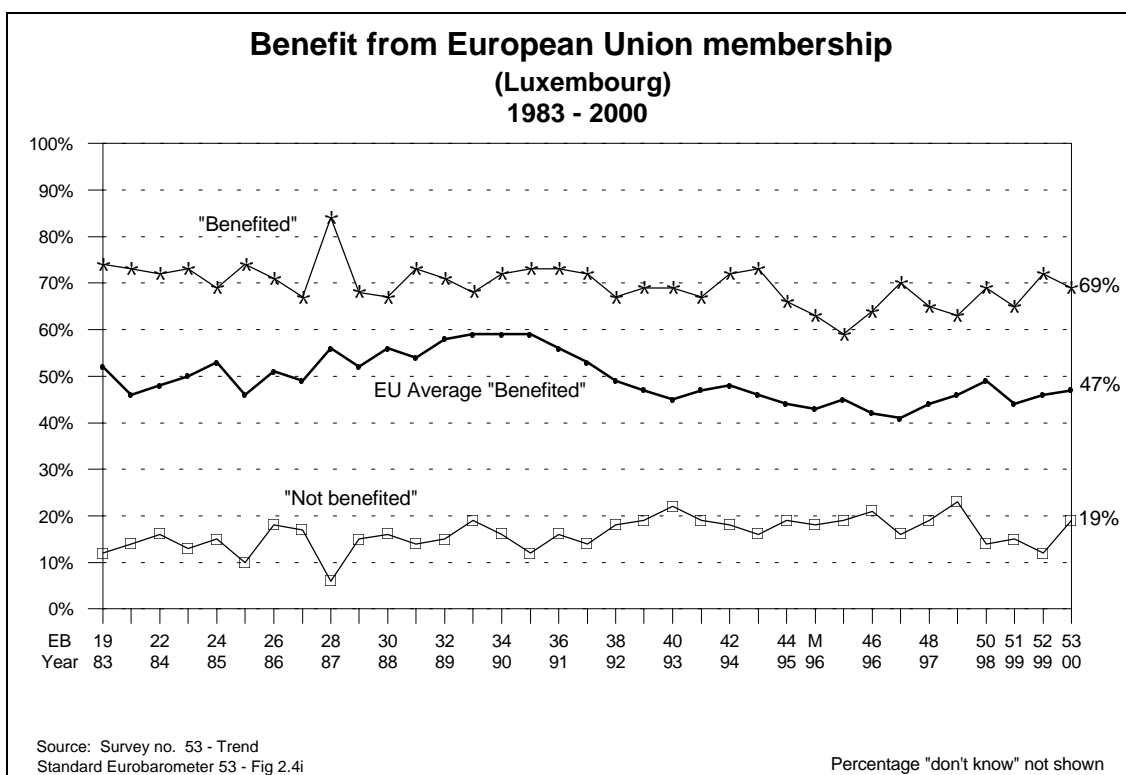
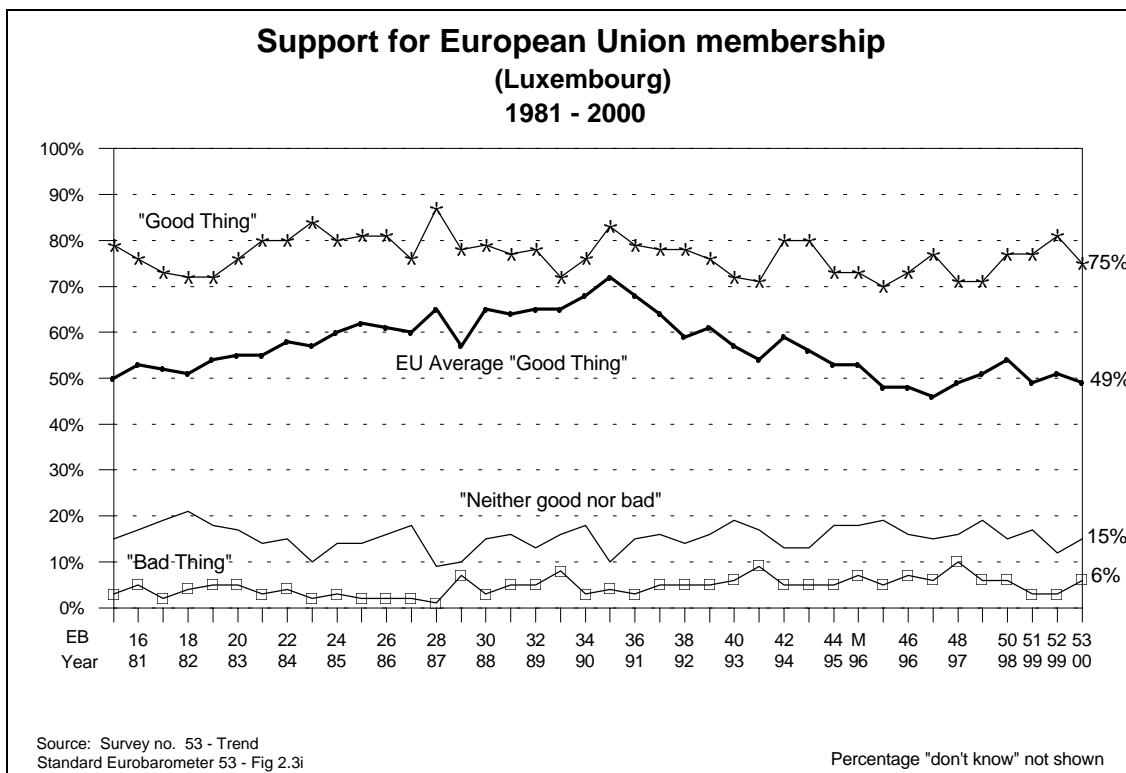
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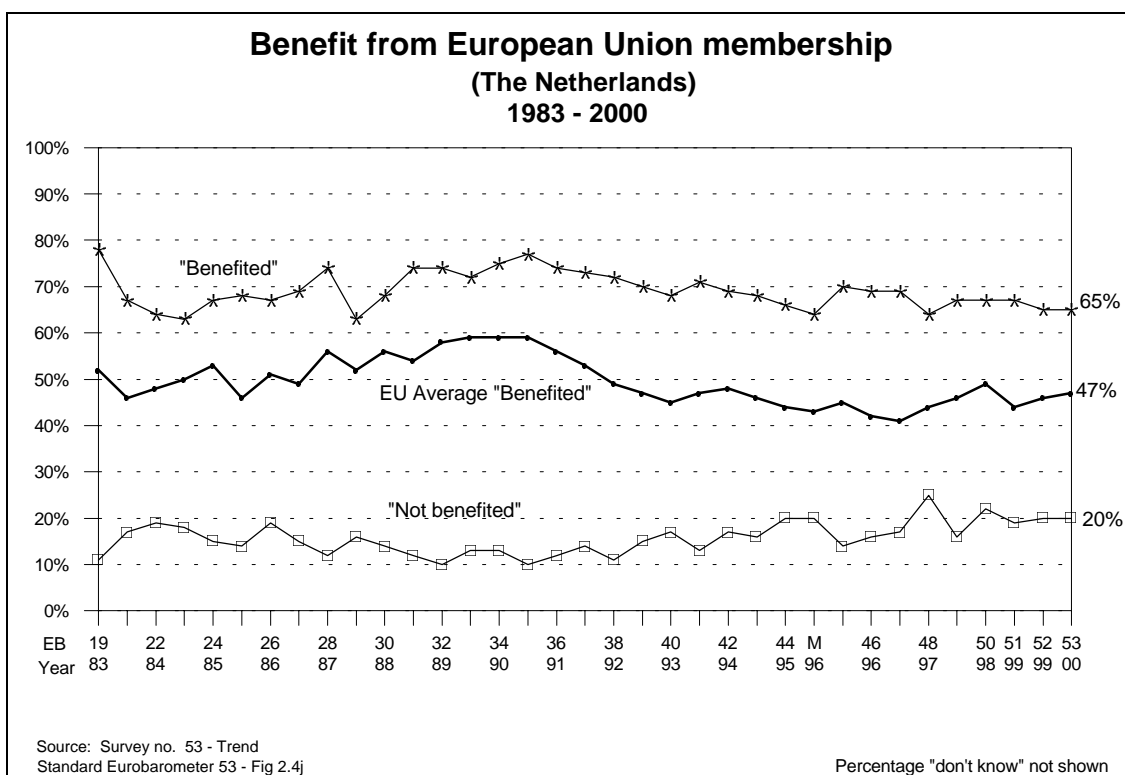
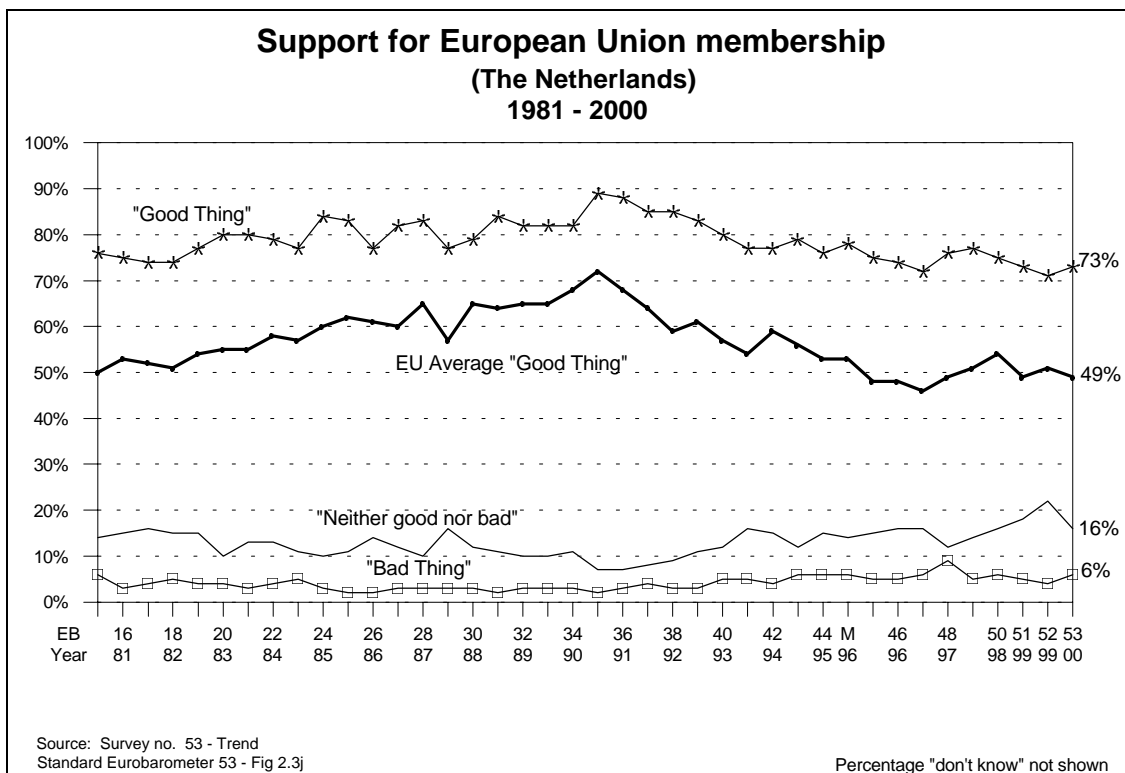
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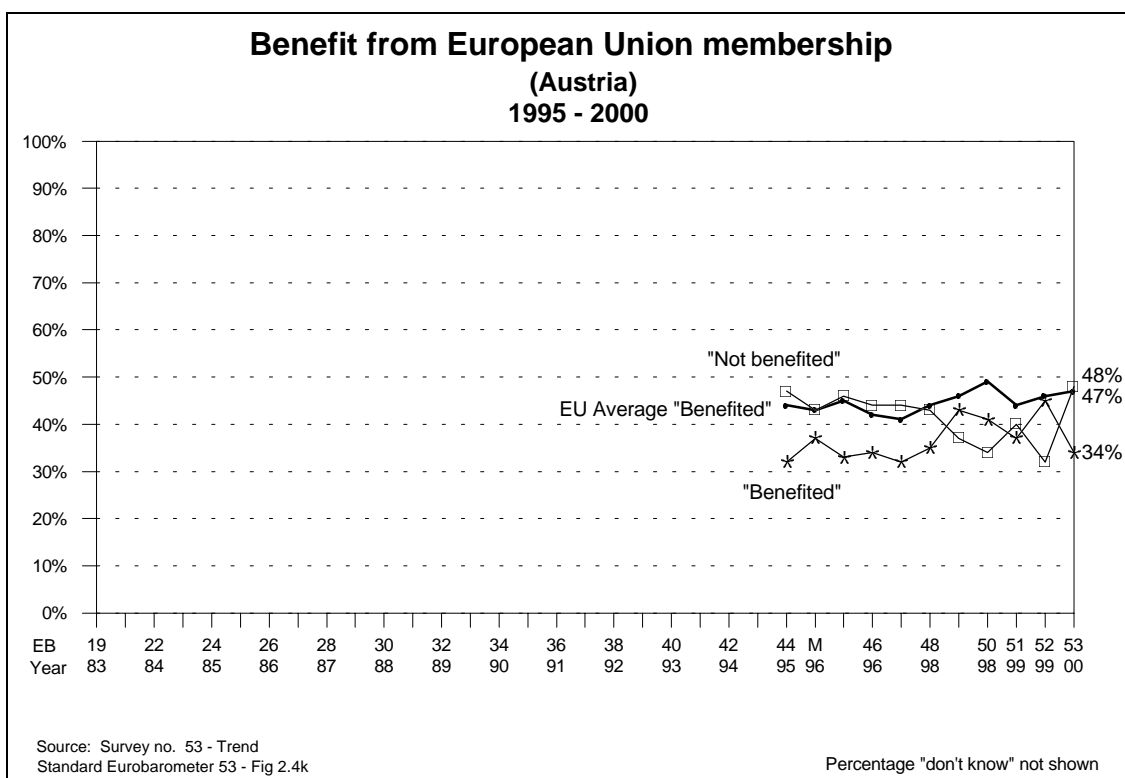
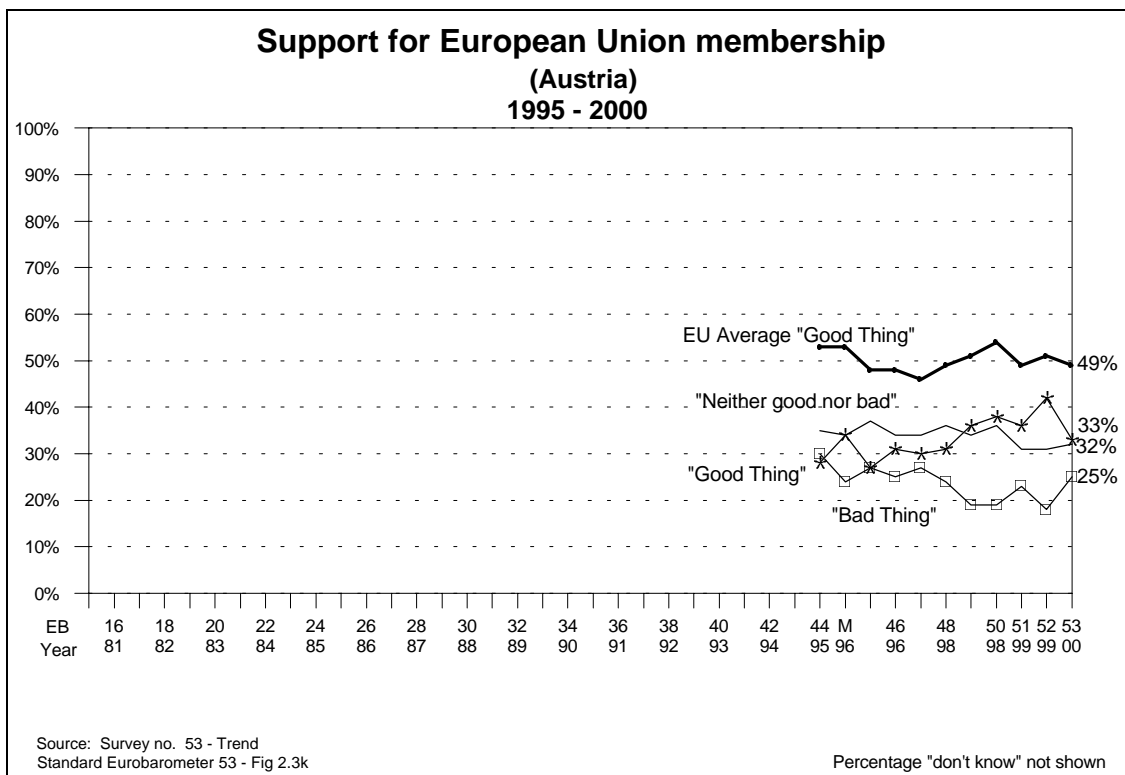
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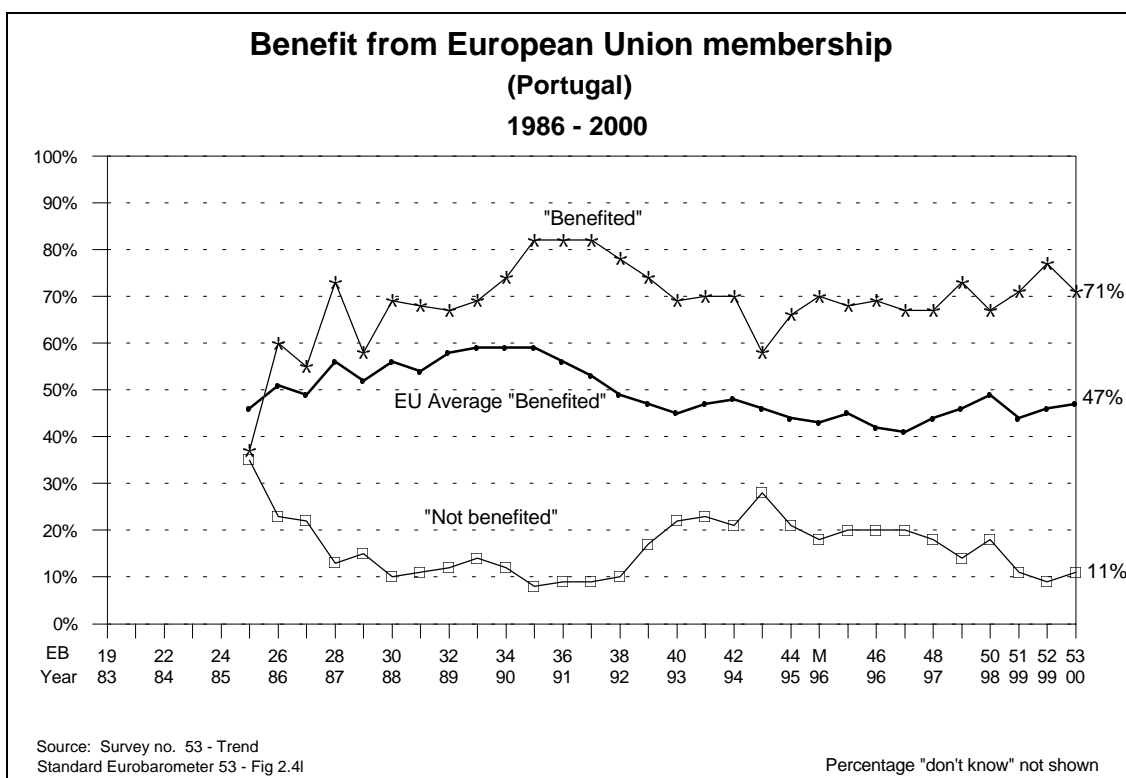
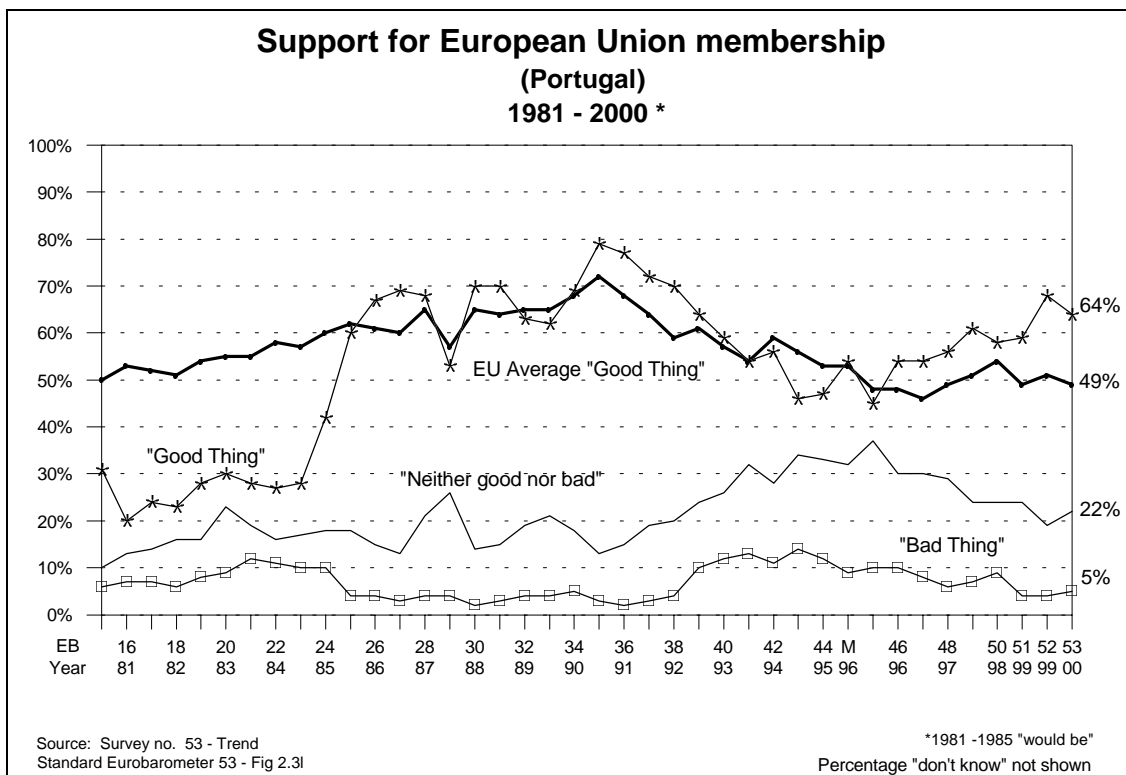
THE NETHERLANDS



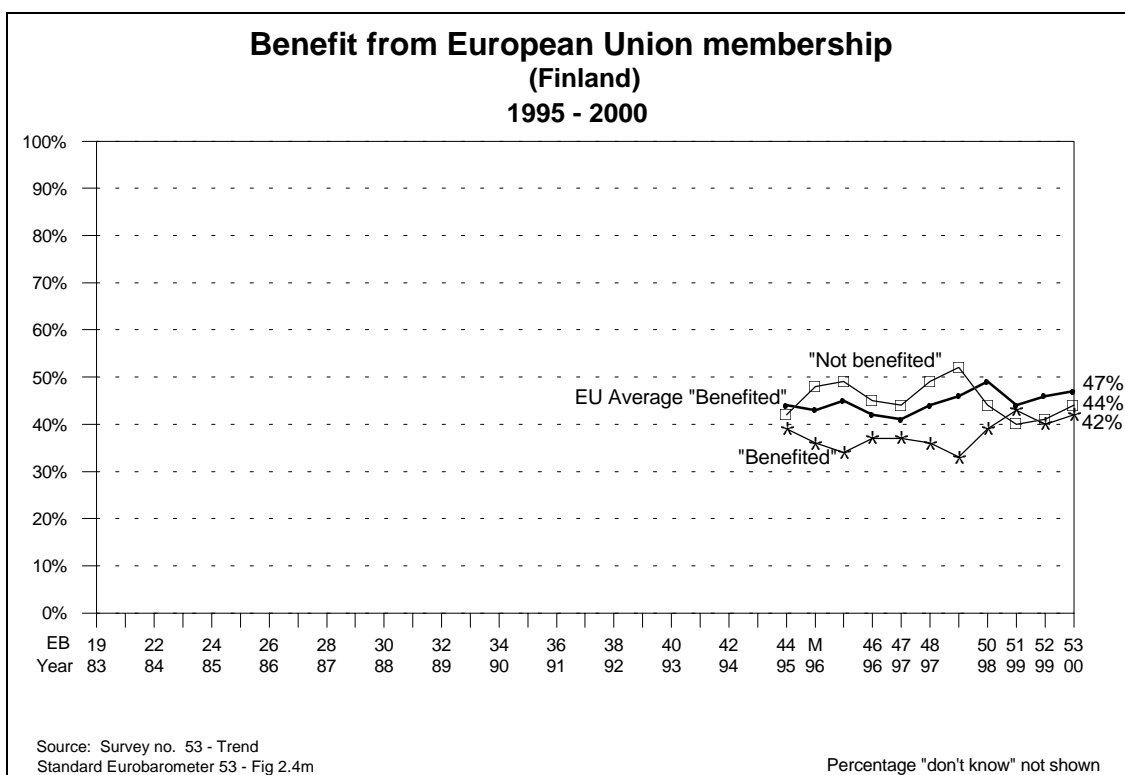
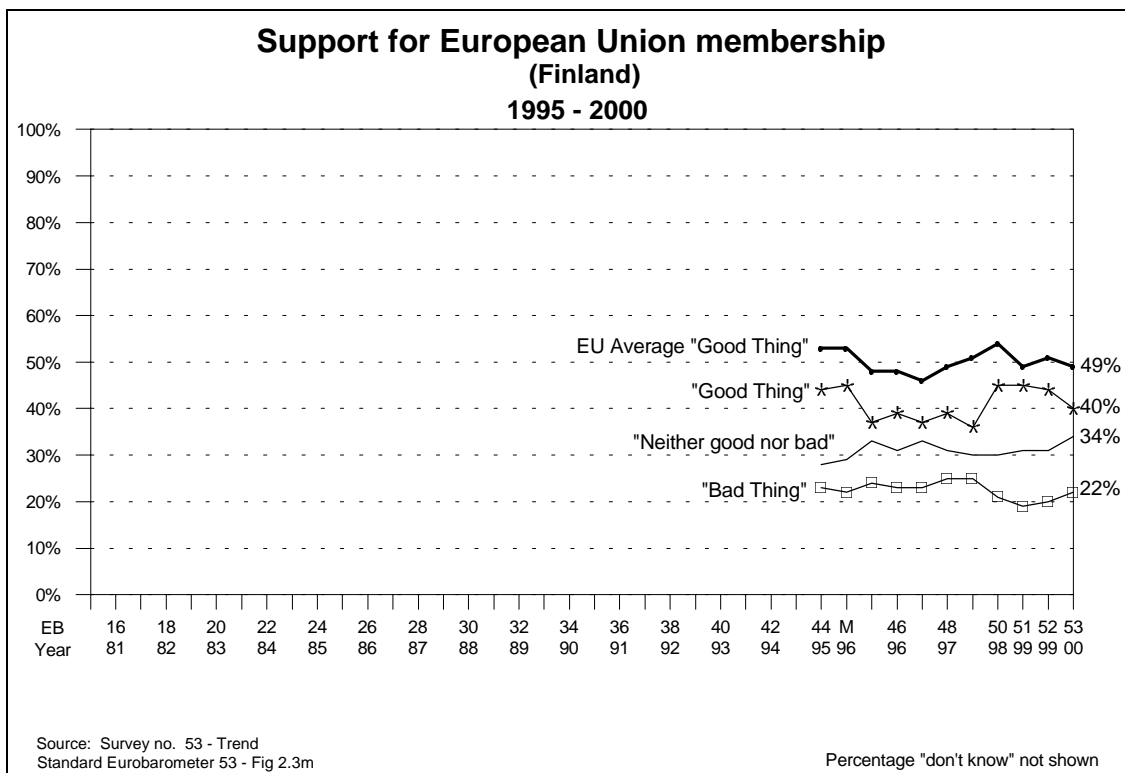
AUSTRIA



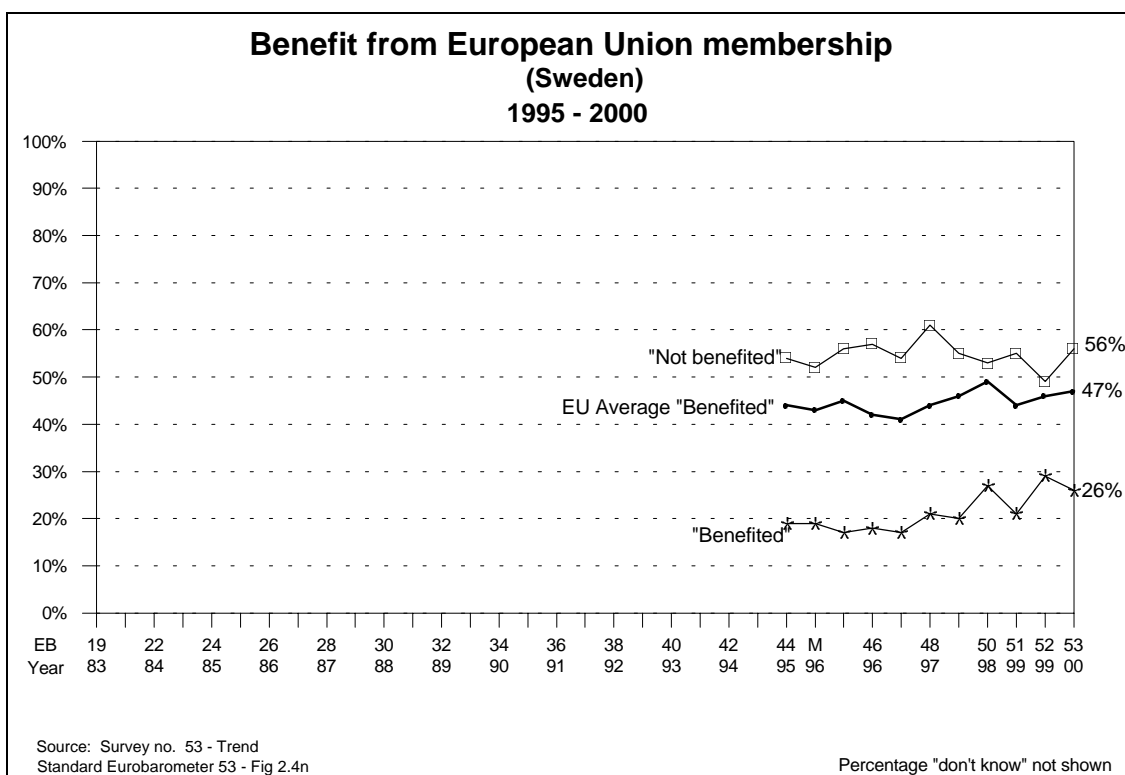
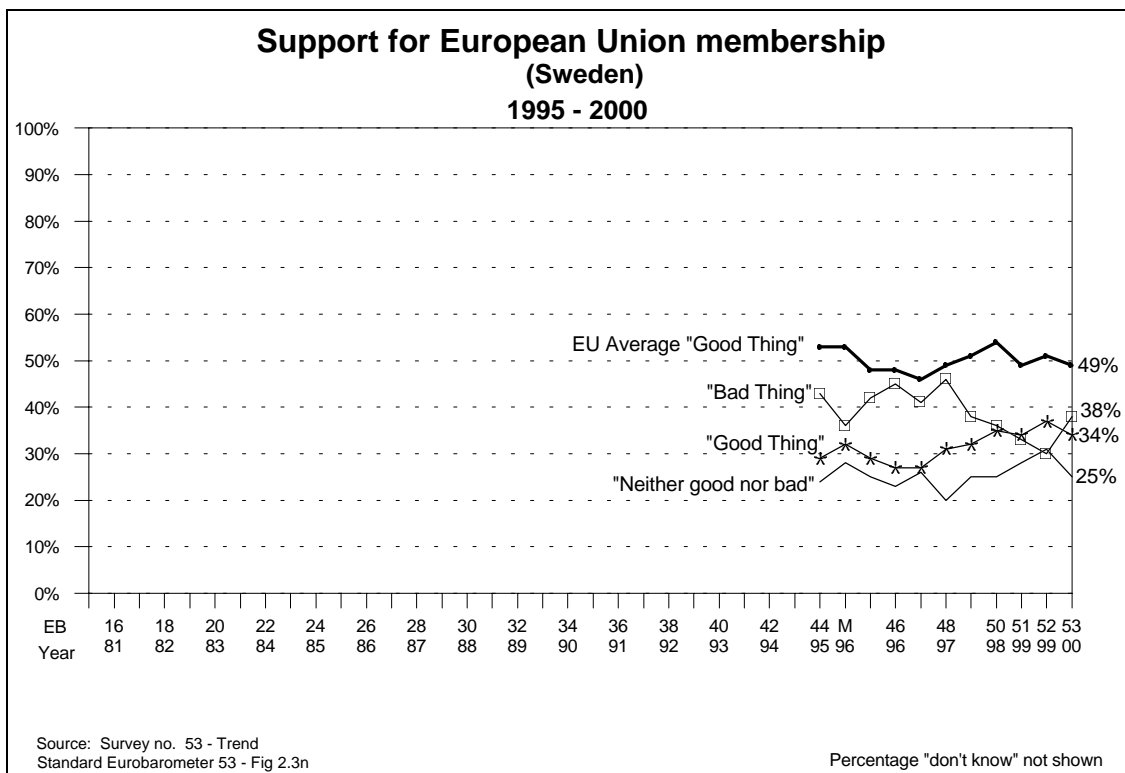
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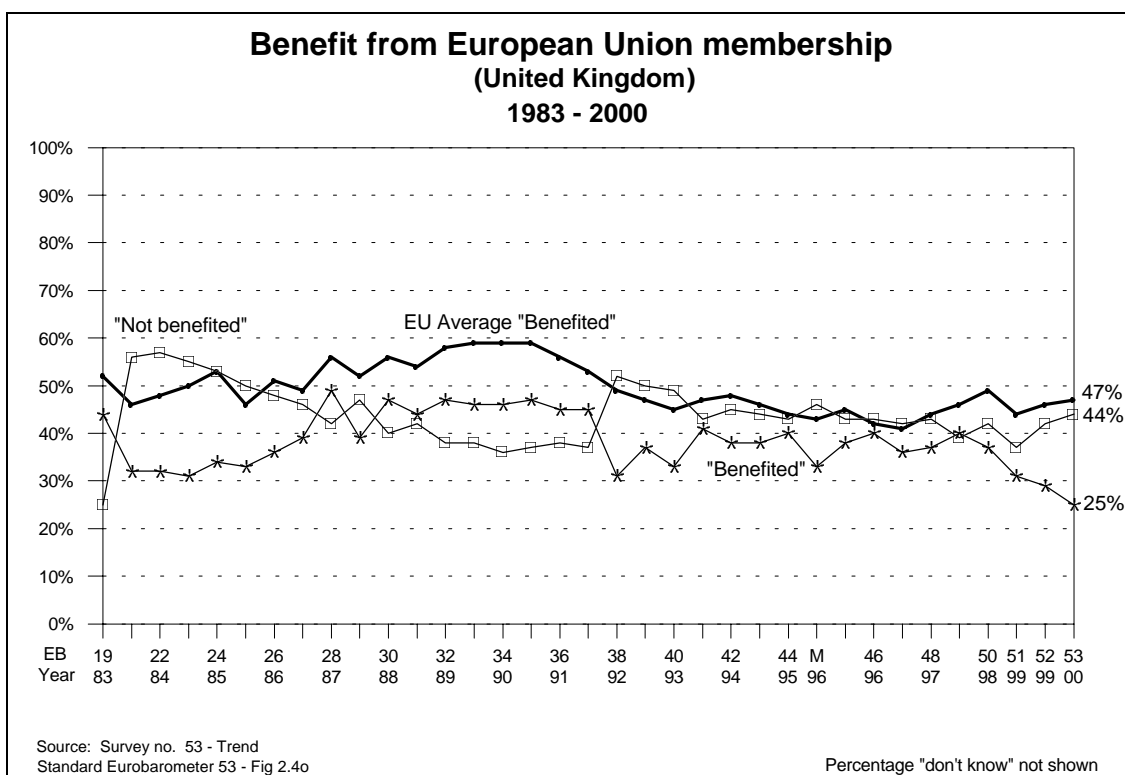
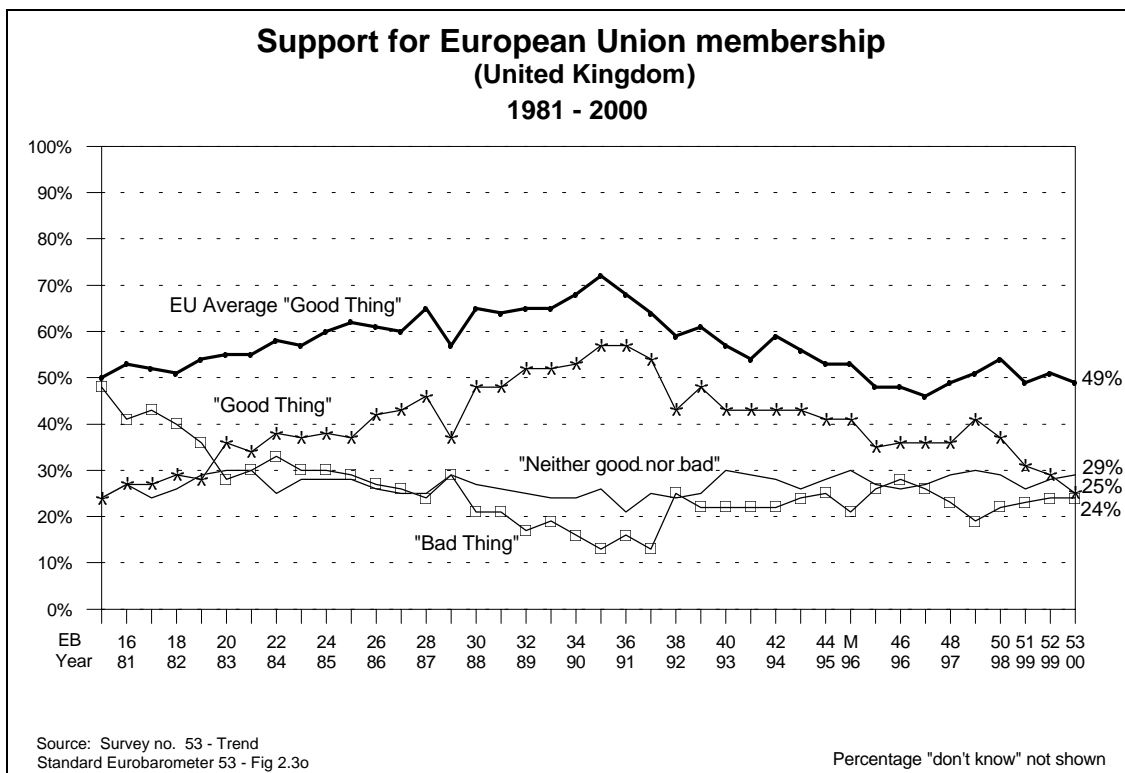
FINLAND



SWEDEN



UNITED KINGDOM

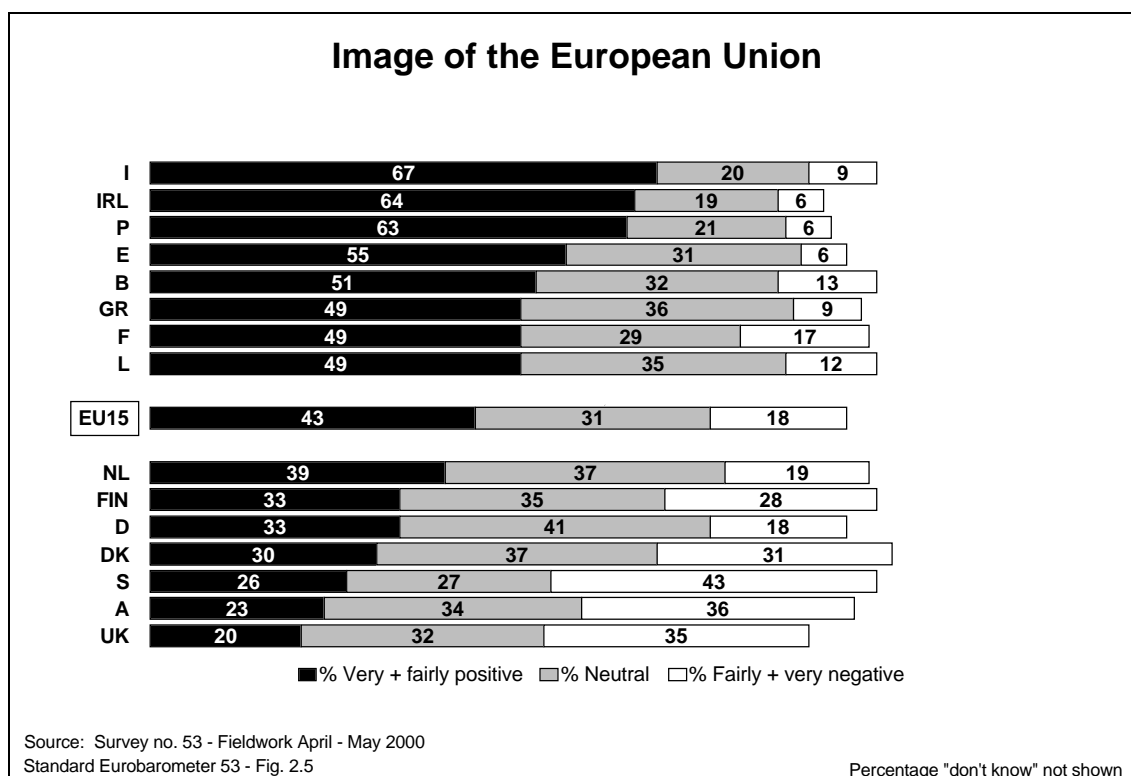


2.3. The image of the European Union

For the first time, this Eurobarometer measures people's image of the European Union with the following question:

In general, does the European Union conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?

On average, 43% of EU citizens have a positive image of the European Union of which 7% view it very positively. 31% view the EU in a neutral way. Only 18% say that the EU conjures up a negative image, of which 5% feel very negative.



As the graph above shows, people in Italy are most likely to have a positive image of the EU (67%), followed closely by people in Ireland (64%) and Portugal (63%). Around half the people in Spain (55%), Belgium (51%), Luxembourg, France and Greece (49%) share this view. At 43%, people in Sweden are most likely to say that the EU conjures up a negative image. Austria (36%) and the UK (35%) are the only two other countries where people are most likely to hold negative sentiments. However, in all Member States negative views are outnumbered by the sum of positive and neutral views. (Table 2.3a)

An analysis of the various demographic groups in the population shows that more than half the people who stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or older (58%), people who are still studying (56%), managers (54%), self-employed people (52%) and white-collar workers (51%) say that the EU conjures up a positive image. As for a negative image we find that this view is most widely shared amongst retired people (24%), people aged 55 and over (22%), people who left full-time education before the age of 20 and people who are unemployed (both 21%).

As one would expect, people who support their country's EU membership tend to have a positive image (73%) whereas people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing tend to have a negative image (68%). Analyses show that this question correlates well with the other questions which measure people's attitudes towards the European Union, providing researchers with a reliable analysis measure that taps into the emotive aspects of EU support. (Table 2.3b)

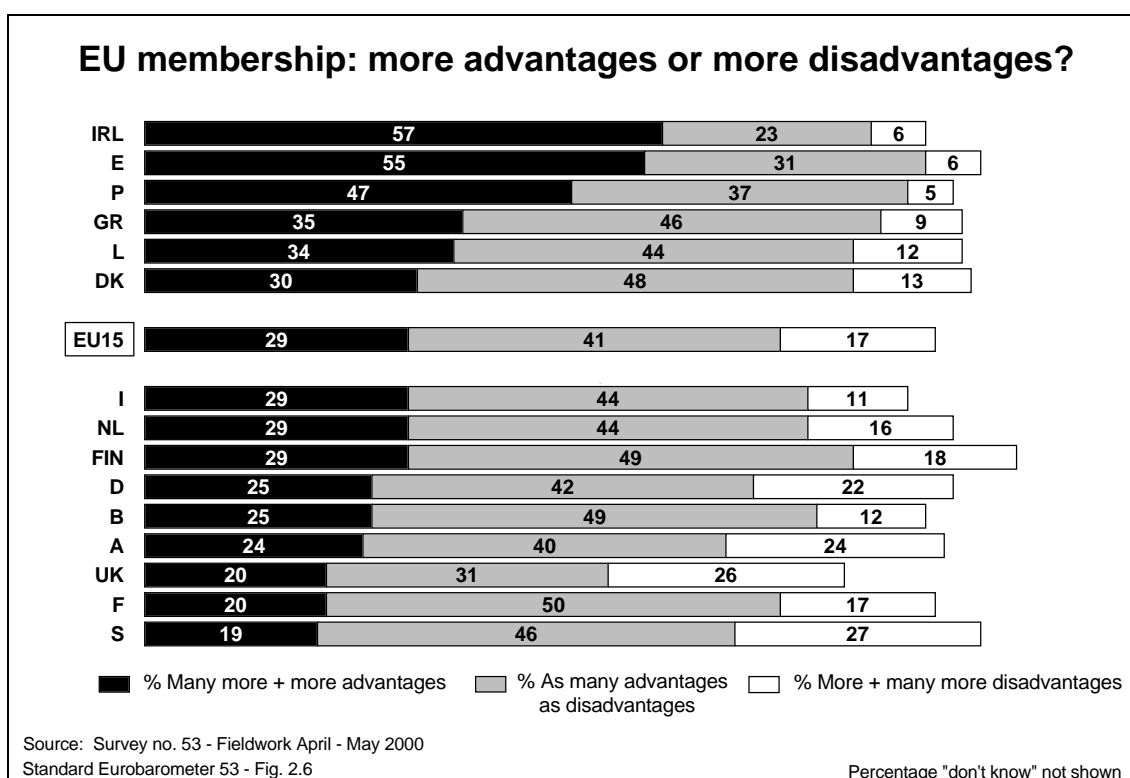
The following question, also asked for the first time, is another measure of EU support:

Do you think you, yourself, have got more advantages or more disadvantages from (OUR COUNTRY) being a member of the European Union?

At the EU15 level the breakdown of responses is as follows:

- Many more advantages 5%
- More advantages 24%
- As many advantages as disadvantages 41%
- More disadvantages 13%
- Many more disadvantages 3%
- (Don't know / No opinion) 14%

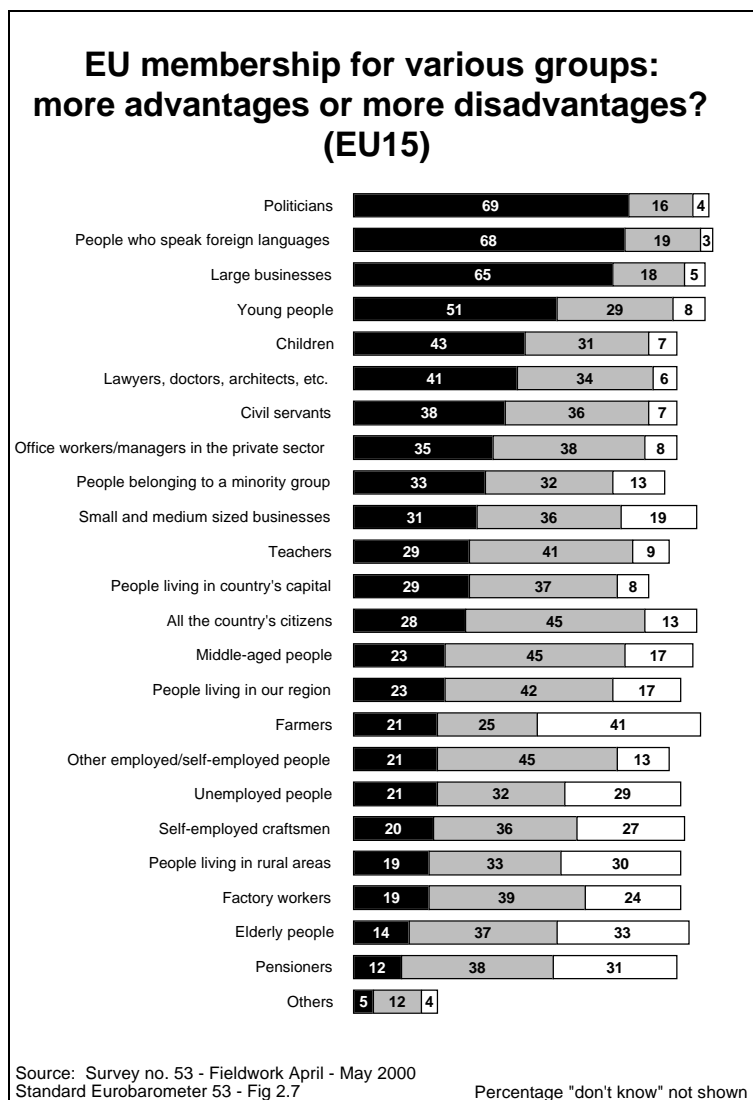
The country by country analyses show that people in Ireland are most likely to feel that EU membership has given them more advantages (57%) than disadvantages, followed closely by people in Spain (55%). Portugal (47%) is the only other country where people who feel this way are in the majority. In all other countries the most widely held view is that EU membership has given people as many advantages as disadvantages with people in France (50%), Finland and Belgium (both 49%) topping the rank order. The proportion of people who feel that EU membership has given them more disadvantages than advantages is highest in Sweden (27%), the UK (26%) and Austria (24%). The proportion of people who weren't able or who didn't want to give an opinion is relatively high ranging from 5% in Finland to 23% in the UK. (Table 2.4a)



Amongst the various demographic groups, people who are still studying (41%) are most likely to feel that they have received more advantages than disadvantages, followed by managers (38%) and people who stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or older (37%). At the other end of the spectrum we find that retired people are as likely to feel that EU membership has brought more advantages as they are to feel that it has brought more disadvantages (both 22%). Nearly the same is true for people aged 55 and over (23% vs. 21%).

At the attitudinal level there is the obvious polarisation between supporters and opponents of the European Union. Amongst the supporters, we find that 49% feel they have personally received more advantages than disadvantages from the country's EU membership. Amongst the opponents, we find that 59% feel they have personally received more disadvantages than advantages. (Table 2.4b)

The survey also asks respondents to judge whether a wide variety of different groups, ranging from politicians to the elderly have received more advantages or more disadvantages from EU membership.



As the graph shows, from the list included in the questionnaire, people are most likely to pick politicians as the group that has received more advantages than disadvantages (69%). This reinforces the widely held perception that the European Union is not there for the average citizen. 68% of the people believe that those who speak foreign languages receive more advantages than disadvantages from their country's EU membership, with large businesses coming in third place (65%). More than half of the public feels that young people receive more advantages than disadvantages (51%) and more than 4 in 10 people share this view when it comes to children and professionals. At the other end we find that people are most likely to think that farmers receive more disadvantages than advantages from their country's EU membership (41%).

Elderly people and pensioners (33% and 31%, respectively), people living in rural areas (30%), unemployed people (29%), self-employed craftsmen (27%) and factory workers (24%) are other groups which people think get more disadvantages than advantages. Table 2.5 shows the country by country results for each of the groups included in the questionnaire.

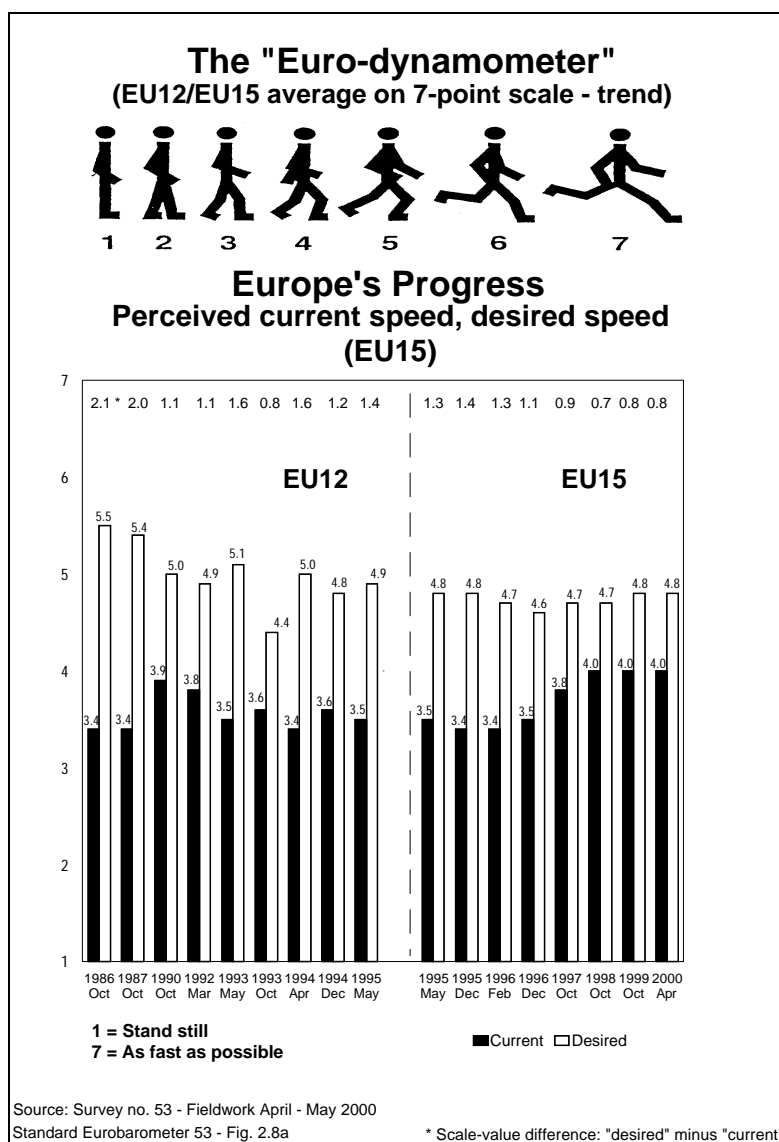
2.4. The speed of European integration

A long-standing measure looks at public opinion with regard to the speed of European integration. Since 1986, the survey has included the following question:

a. In your opinion, what is the current speed of building Europe? Please look at these people (show card). N°1 is standing still; N°7 is running as fast as possible. Choose the one which best corresponds with your opinion of the current speed of building Europe.

b. And which corresponds best with what you would like? (Show same card)

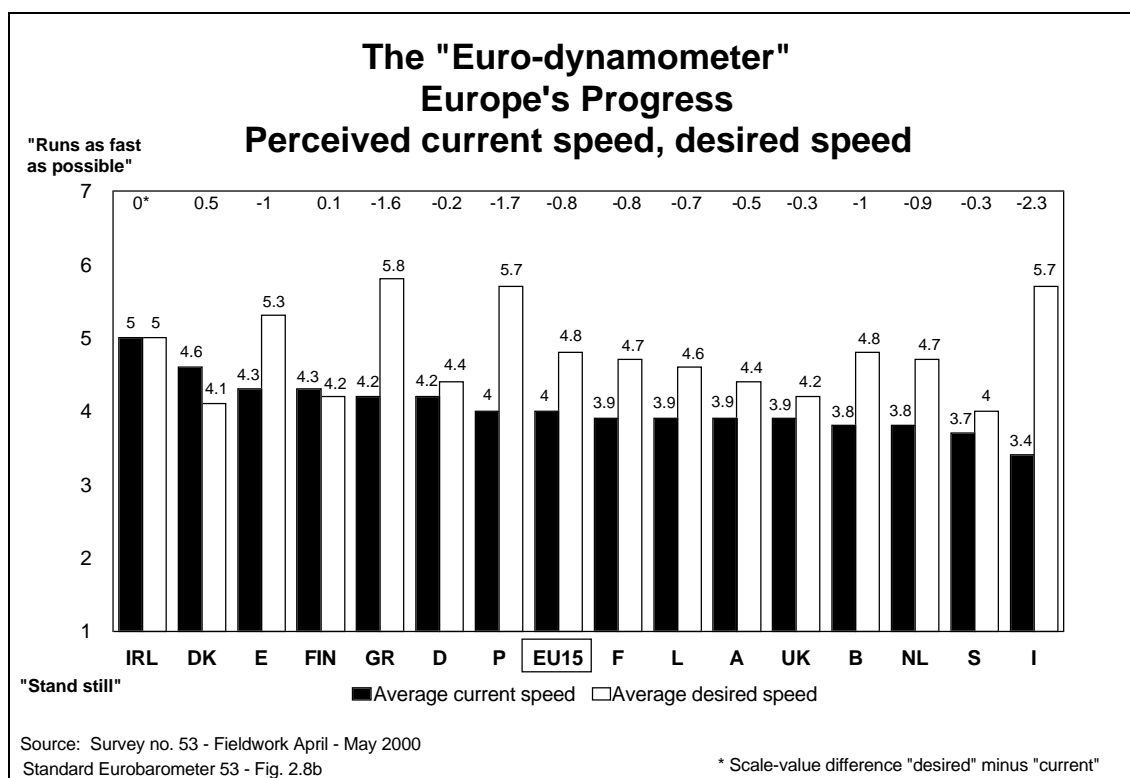
The speed at which people believe Europe is being built has increased since 1996 from an average of 3.4 (on a scale of 1 to 7) to an average speed of 4.0. The desired speed, on the other hand, has remained more or less unchanged during the last few years. Consequently, the gap between the perceived and desired speed has become considerably smaller since the question was first asked in 1986. As the figure below shows, the latest measurement shows a net score difference of 0.8 compared to a difference of 2.1 in 1986.



The perceived speed of unification varies considerably from country to country. It is highest in Ireland (5.0) and lowest in Italy (3.4). Comparing the spring 2000 results with those obtained in autumn 1999 results shows that the largest average increase in the perceived speed is recorded in Ireland (+.31), followed by Greece (+.27) whilst the largest average decrease is recorded in Austria (-.28), followed by Italy (-.26). (Table 2.6a)

People in Greece would like Europe to be built at the fastest speed (5.8), followed by people in Portugal, Italy (both 5.7) and Spain (5.3). The desired speed is lowest in Sweden (4.0), Denmark (4.1), the UK and Finland (both 4.2). Since autumn 1999, the average desired speed has increased most in Finland (+.15) and Greece (+.14). Belgium (-.31), Luxembourg and Austria (both -.27) are the countries where the largest drops have been recorded. (Table 2.6b)

As the graph below shows, the gap between the speed at which Europe is perceived to be progressing and the speed at which people desire it to progress varies significantly from country to country. In most countries people would like to see Europe built at a faster speed than what they perceive it to be with the largest positive net score found in Italy, Portugal and Greece. Denmark is the only country with a significant (albeit small) negative net score between the perceived and desired speed. Ireland stands out as being the only nation where the perceived speed is not only the highest but also perfectly matches the desired speed.



The table on the next page shows how people's views towards the European Union in general relate to their feelings about further integration. As expected, people with pro-European views would like Europe to progress faster than it currently does, whereas people with anti-European views would like it to progress slower than it currently does. This indicates that general attitudes to the European Union are good predictors of how people feel about the speed of European integration.

"The Euro-Dynamometer" Average scores among people with pro-, neutral and anti-EU attitudes (EU15)			
Pro-EU attitudes:	Average current speed	Average desired speed	Difference desired minus current
Desires more important role of EU	3.89	5.55	+1.66
Positive image of EU	4.05	5.43	+1.38
EU membership is a good thing	4.04	5.38	+1.34
Neutral EU attitudes:			
Neutral image of EU	3.91	4.61	+0.70
EU membership is neither good nor bad	3.88	4.43	+0.55
EU's role should not change	4.00	4.40	+0.40
Anti-EU attitudes:			
Negative image of EU	3.81	3.56	-0.25
EU membership is a bad thing	3.84	3.43	-0.41
Desires less important role of EU	4.14	3.31	-0.83

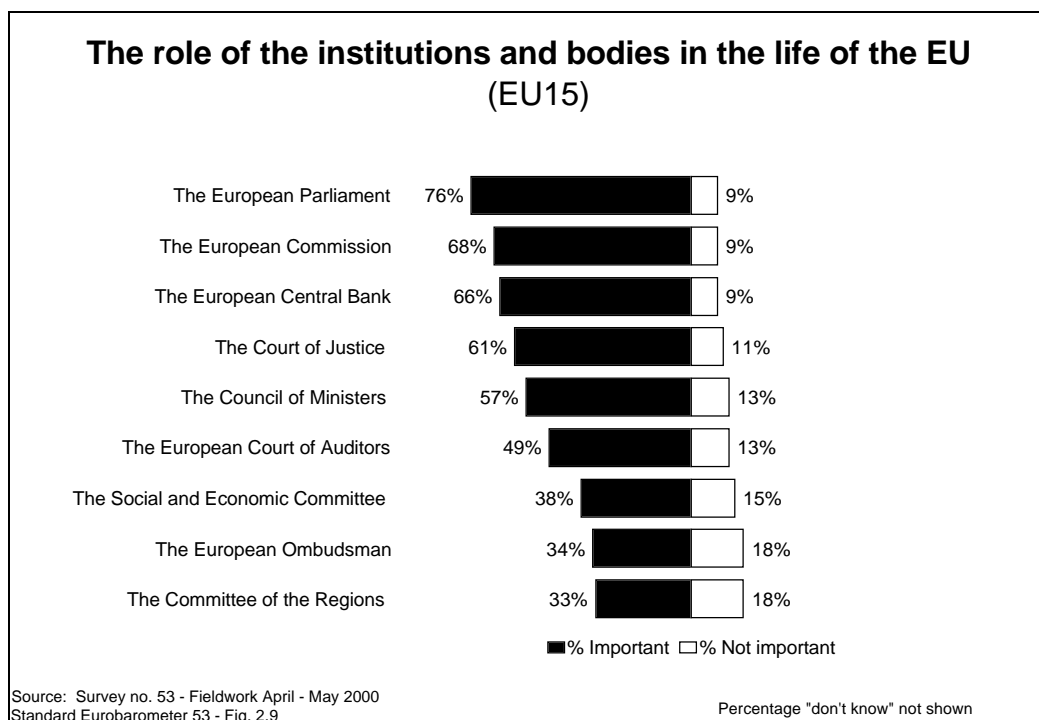
An analysis of the socio-demographic groups in the population shows that all would like Europe to progress faster than they feel it is currently progressing. This indicates that socio-demographic factors are not as powerful in explaining people's views about the speed of European integration as the country variable and the attitudinal variables are in this context.

2.5. The institutions and bodies of the European Union

For the third time in a row the Eurobarometer has examined public opinion towards a number of the Union's institutions and bodies. Respondents were first of all asked whether they think 9 of the Union's institutions and bodies play an important role or not in the life of the European Union. The institutions and bodies included in the survey 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 Committee.

As the following graph shows, people are most likely to believe that the European Parliament (76%), the European Commission (68%) and the European Central Bank (66%) play an important role in the life of the European Union. The public is least likely to believe that the Committee of the Regions (33%) and the European Ombudsman (34%) play an important role. No significant shifts are recorded since the measure was last taken in autumn 1999². 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 (88%), Ireland (86%) and Italy (85%) and lowest in the UK (64%), Germany (68%) and Austria (69%). As for the **European Commission**, Luxembourg (86%) again tops the list, followed by Ireland (82%) with the UK (56%) and Germany (60%) once again at the bottom. People in the Netherlands are most likely to feel that the **European Central Bank**, which is headed by a Dutchman, plays an important role (82%), whilst people in the UK (46%) are least likely to share this view. (Table 2.7)

² See Eurobarometer Report 52, table 3.8.

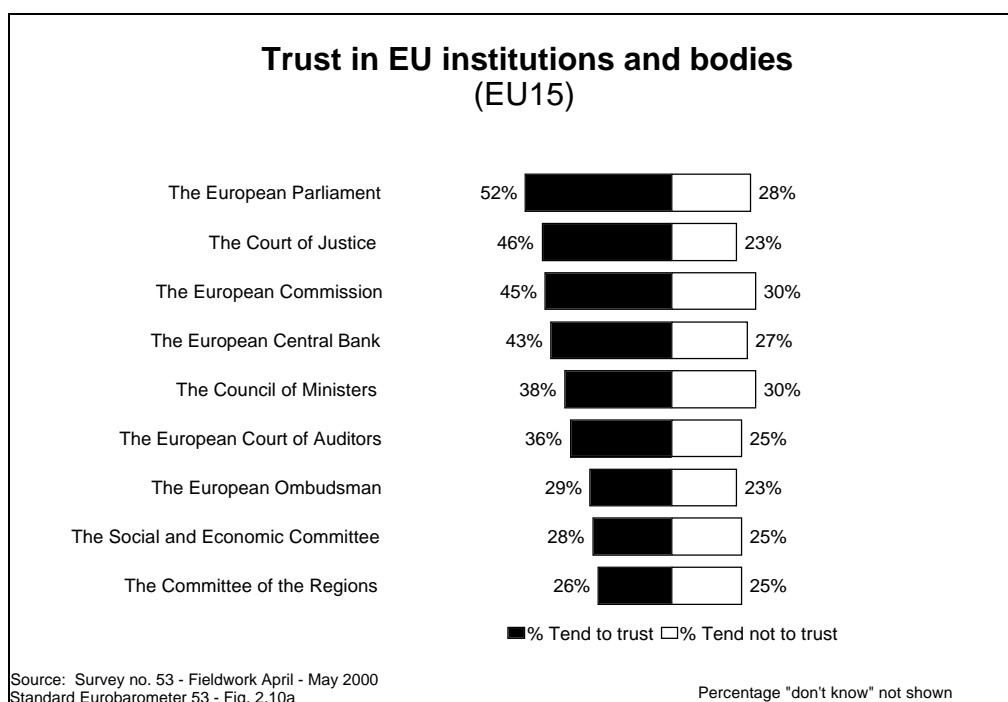


The following table lists the median score in order to show in each of the Member States people's overall view that the institutions and bodies play an important role.

Importance of the EU institutions and bodies (Median score - % saying important for the 9 institutions and bodies, by country)	
Country	Median
Luxembourg	76
Finland	72
Ireland	70
Sweden	70
The Netherlands	68
France	64
Belgium	61
Portugal	59
Denmark	58
EU15	57
Germany	56
Spain	56
Italy	56
Austria	53
Greece	49
United Kingdom	35

As the table shows, the highest median score is recorded for Luxembourg (76%) and Finland (72%) whilst the lowest score is obtained for the UK (35%). However this does not necessarily mean that the British are more likely to feel that the institutions and bodies do not play an important role. Indeed, we find that people in the UK are most likely to lack an opinion.

Respondents were also asked whether they trust the 9 institutions and bodies. Although trust levels vary significantly between the 15 Member States, the first thing to note is the high proportion of “don’t know” responses, particularly for the Committee of the Regions, the Social and Economic Committee and the European Ombudsman. These partly explain why levels of trust, as shown in the following graph, are so low.



At 52%, the European Parliament receives the most widespread trust followed by the Court of Justice (46%) and the European Commission (45%). However, the Commission, together with the Council of Ministers, also has the highest proportion of people who say they tend not to trust it (both 30%).

The following table shows the three most widely trusted institutions and bodies in each Member State. The **European Parliament** tops the list in 8 of the 15 Member States, comes in second place in three countries and in third place in a further three countries. The Netherlands is the only country where it doesn't make the top three. The **Court of Justice** tops the list in 6 Member States, comes in second place in three countries and in third place in a further three countries. It doesn't make the top three in Spain, Italy and Portugal. The **European Commission** comes in second place in Ireland (61%), Italy (58%), Belgium, Portugal (both 57%), Spain (56%) and France (54%) and in third place in Greece (50%) and the UK (24%). The **European Central Bank** comes in second place in three countries and in third place in a further four countries. Portugal (53%) and Spain (51%) are the only two countries where the **Council of Ministers** makes the top three. The **European Ombudsman**, who is Finnish, tops the list in his home country (61%) but does not make the top three in any of the other Member States. The **Court of Auditors** comes in third place in the Netherlands (55%). None of the other institutions and bodies make the top three. (See also table 2.8)

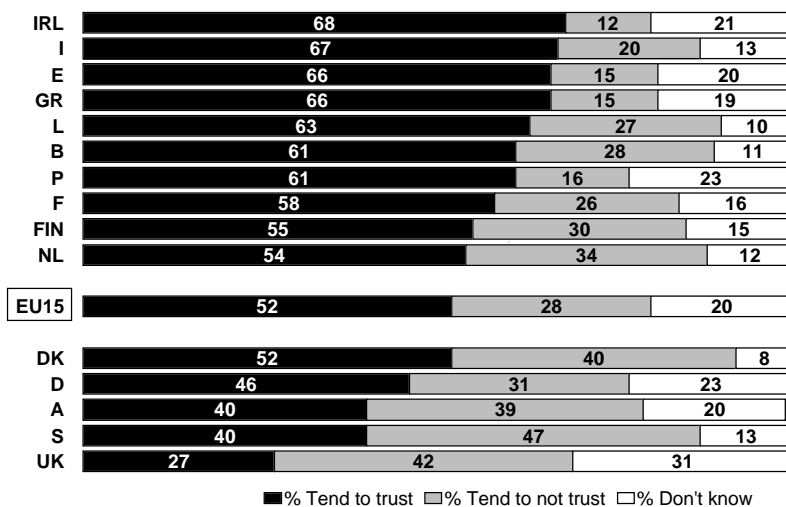
TOP THREE MOST WIDELY TRUSTED EU INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES (IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)			
Belgium		Luxembourg	
European Parliament	61	Court of Justice	66
European Commission	57	European Parliament	63
Court of Justice	55	European Central Bank	59
Denmark		The Netherlands	
Court of Justice	66	Court of Justice	72
European Parliament	52	European Central Bank	70
European Central Bank	42	Court of Auditors	55
Germany		Austria	
Court of Justice	51	Court of Justice	45
European Parliament	46	European Central Bank	42
European Central Bank	43	European Parliament	40
Greece		Portugal	
European Parliament	66	European Parliament	61
Court of Justice	50	European Commission	57
European Commission	50	Council of Ministers	53
Spain		Finland	
European Parliament	66	European Ombudsman	61
European Commission	56	Court of Justice	56
Council of Ministers	51	European Parliament	55
France		Sweden	
European Parliament	58	Court of Justice	50
European Commission	54	European Central Bank	41
Court of Justice	50	European Parliament	40
Ireland		United Kingdom	
European Parliament	68	European Parliament	27
European Commission	61	Court of Justice	27
Court of Justice	60	European Commission	24
Italy			
European Parliament	67		
European Commission	58		
European Central Bank	53		

Looking next in more detail at the country results for the **European Parliament** shows that people in Ireland (68%) and Italy (67%), Spain and Greece (both 66%) are most likely to trust it. People in Sweden (47%), the UK (42%) and Denmark (40%) are most likely to lack trust in the European Parliament. The proportion of “don’t know” responses ranges from 8% in Denmark to 31% in the UK.

In comparison to autumn 1999 trust levels have increased significantly in Greece, Luxembourg (both +5), Belgium, France (both +4) and Spain (+3). As a result of the sanctions that have been imposed against Austria, trust levels there have fallen by 12 percentage points. Other countries where significant drops are recorded are Portugal (-5), Italy (-4) and Sweden (-3)³.

³ See Eurobarometer Report 52, table 3.5.

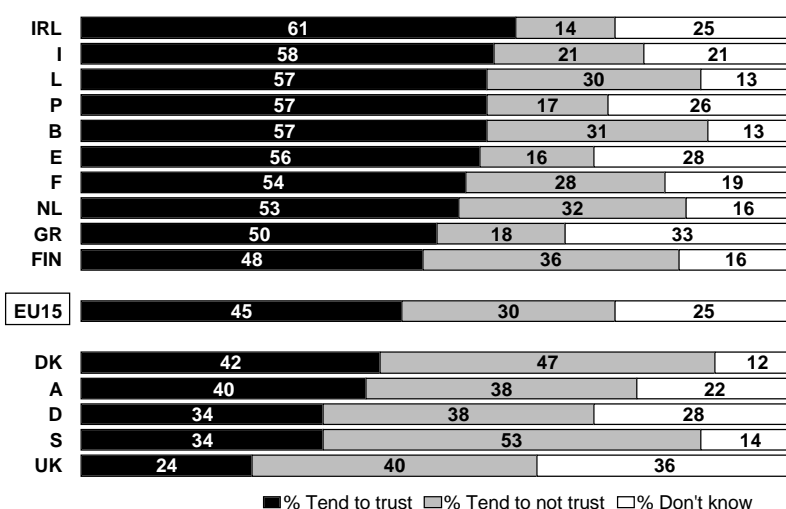
Trust in the European Parliament



Source: Survey no. 53 - Fieldwork April - May 2000
Standard Eurobarometer 53 - Fig. 2.10b

Looking at the country by country results for the **European Commission** shows that around 6 in 10 people in Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal and Belgium trust it. Sweden is the only country where more than half of the population tends not to trust it, although in Denmark, Germany and the UK people who lack trust in the Commission also outnumber those who trust it. The proportion of “don’t know” responses ranges from 12% in Denmark to 36% in the UK.

Trust in the European Commission



Source: Survey no. 53 - Fieldwork April - May 2000
Standard Eurobarometer 53 - Fig. 2.10c

In 10 of the 15 Member States levels of trust are higher than they were in autumn 1999 with the largest increases recorded in Luxembourg, the Netherlands (both +5) and France (+4). As expected, Austrians are now less likely to trust the Commission (-6). More surprising is the drop in trust levels in Italy and Portugal (both -5). Sweden (-4) is the only other country where trust levels are now lower than they were in autumn 1999.

Finally, we look at the median trust level for the 9 institutions and bodies in each of the Member States⁴. As the following table shows, the median is highest in Luxembourg (55%) and lowest in the UK (18%).

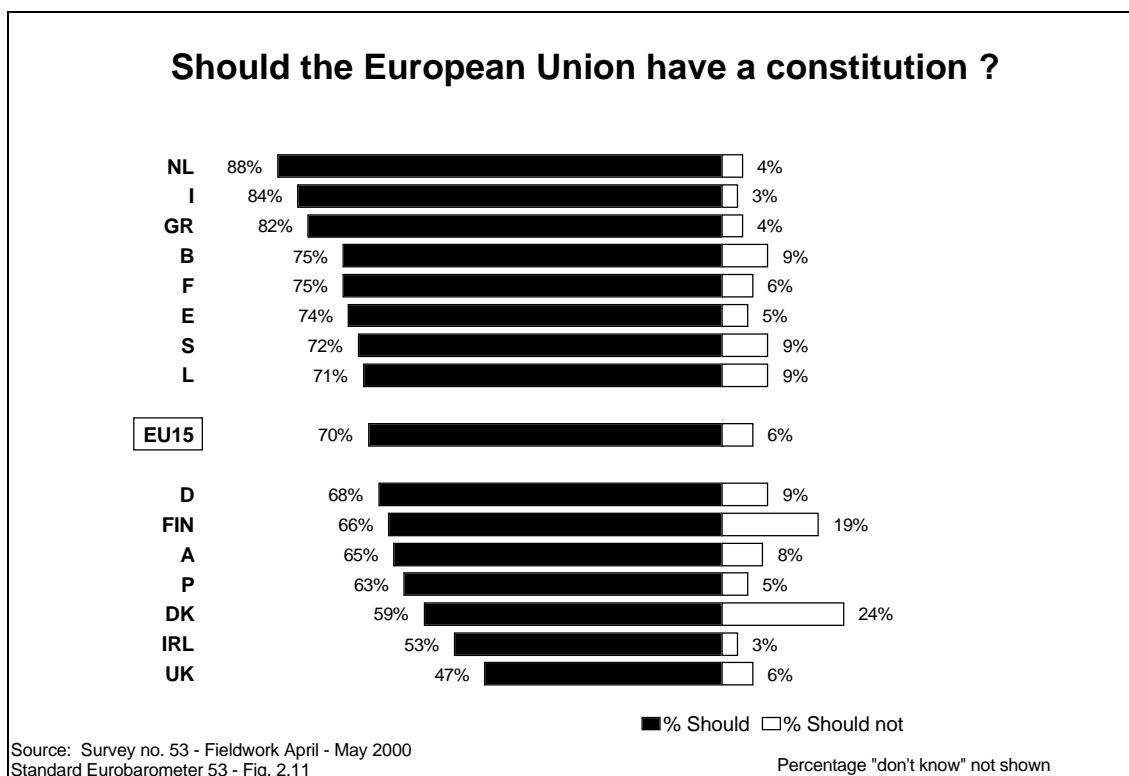
Trust in the EU institutions and bodies (Median score - % saying tend to trust for the 9 institutions and bodies, by country)	
Country	Median
Luxembourg	55
Ireland	54
The Netherlands	53
Belgium	49
Finland	48
Spain	47
France	46
Portugal	46
Italy	42
Denmark	39
Greece	39
EU15	38
Austria	38
Sweden	34
Germany	34
United Kingdom	18

2.6. Support for a European Union constitution

The European Union does not have a constitution but now that European leaders are debating how to organise the Union as it prepares to take in as many as 13 new members the possibility of having one is becoming a topic of discussion.

In this context, the survey has measured people's views about a European Union constitution, defined as a core document which brings together the various current Treaties. The results show that there is widespread support, with 70% of EU citizens in favour and only 6% against. The remaining 24% lack an opinion.

⁴ Once again readers are reminded to low levels of trust are mostly off-set by high levels of "don't know" responses, not by high levels of distrust.



In all 15 Member States, support is obtained from a majority of the public. Nonetheless, there is considerable variation amongst the countries with support levels ranging from 88% in the Netherlands to 47% in the UK where an equal proportion of people lacks an opinion. The UK has the highest level of "don't know" responses but as already noted, the level is generally high and ranges from 8% in the Netherlands to 44% in Ireland, which is slightly lower than in the UK. Consequently, the level of outright opposition to a constitution is low, with Denmark (24%) and Finland (19%) as the only countries where more than 1 person in 10 is against it. (Table 2.9a)

Amongst the various demographic groups in the population, the level of opposition is also below 10% with differences in support levels explained by relatively large variations in the proportion of "don't know" responses. We therefore find that outright support ranges from 63% amongst people who left full-time education at the age of 15 or younger to 80% amongst people who left full-time education at the age of 20 or older.

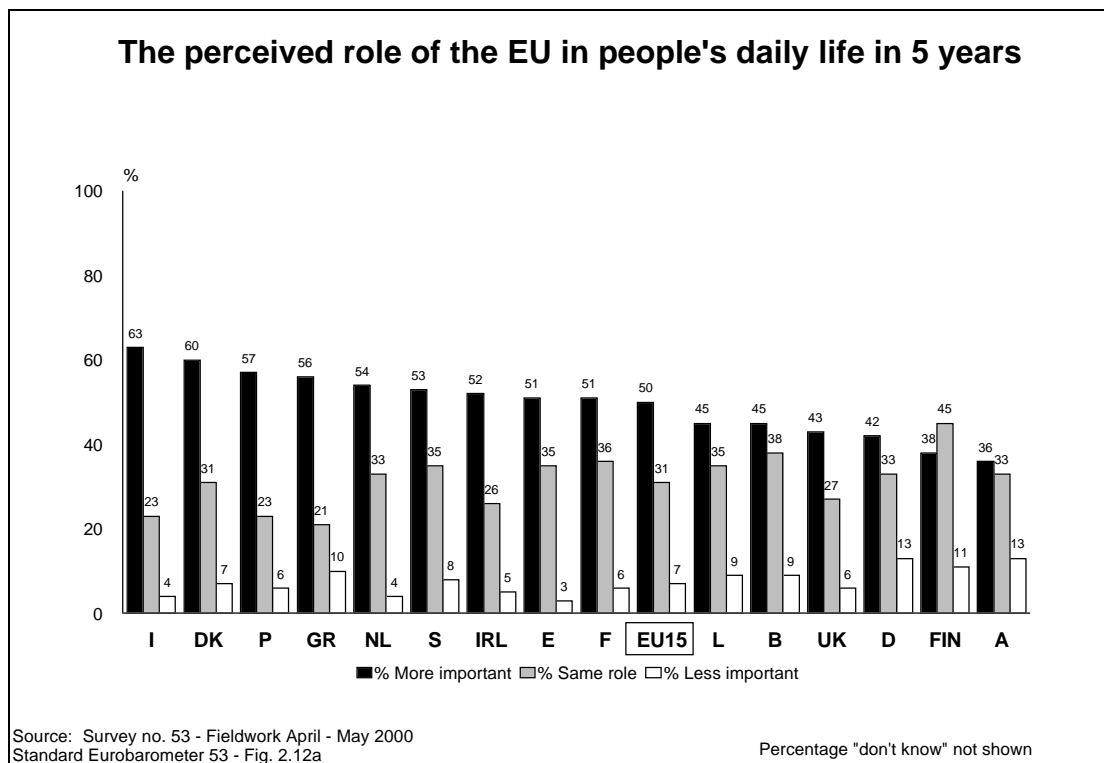
As one would expect, people who feel they know a lot about the European Union are significantly more likely than those who feel they know a little to hold an opinion so that support levels are significantly higher amongst the first group (81%) than they are amongst the second group (59%).

At an attitudinal level, it should come as no surprise to find that supporters of the EU are more likely to favour a constitution than its opponents are (83% vs. 58%). 14% of people who consider their country's membership to the European Union as a bad thing oppose a constitution. At 16%, opposition levels are highest amongst people who want the European Union to play a less important role in five years' time. (Table 2.9b)

2.7. The expected and desired role of the EU in five years' time

Having looked at the current state of public opinion about the European Union, we end this chapter by looking towards the future.

Fifty percent of Europeans believe that in five years' time the European Union *will* play a more important role in their daily life, 31% believe it *will* play the same role and only 7% believe it *will* play a less important role.



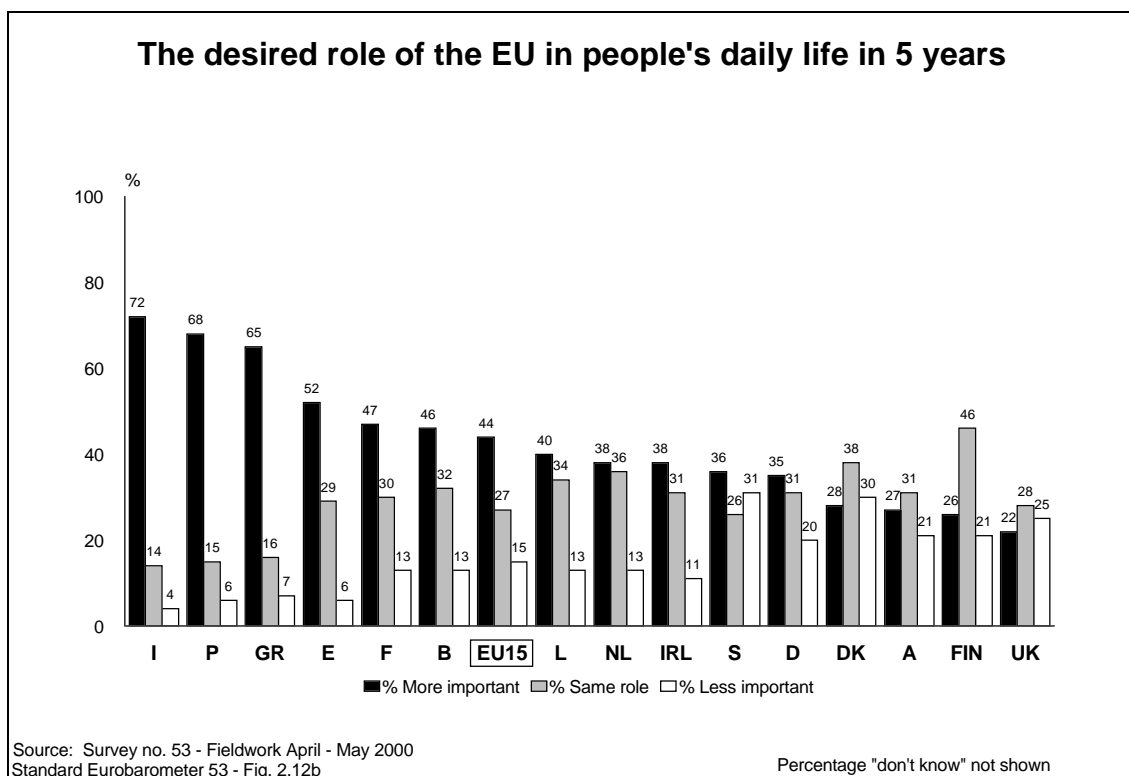
Around 6 in 10 people in Italy (63%) and Denmark (60%) feel that the European Union will play a more important role in five years' time, with more than half of the population sharing this view in a further 7 countries. In the other countries, public opinion is somewhat more divided. However, Finland is the only country where the proportion of people that feels the EU will play the same role (45%) outnumbers the proportion of people that believe the EU will play a more important role (38%). The view that the EU will play a less important role is low throughout the Member States and ranges from 3% in Spain to 13% in Germany and Austria.

The general trend in comparison to the previous survey (autumn 1999) is that people are now less likely to think that the EU will play a more important role and more likely to feel that it will play the same role. The UK is the only significant exception as there are now many more people in this country who believe the EU will play a more important role in five years' time (+9). Austria (+3) is the only country where a small significant increase in the proportion of people who believe the EU will play a less important role is recorded. (Table 2.10a)

An analysis of the demographic variables shows that the proportion of people who believe that the EU's role will be less important is below 10% amongst both sexes, all age groups, all the economic activity categories and amongst all the educational breakdowns. However, when it comes to attitudes to the EU we find a somewhat more distinct division of views. 16% of those who view their country's membership to the EU as a bad thing say that in 5 years' time the EU will play a less important role in their daily life compared to only 4% of those who regard EU membership as a good thing. (Table 2.10b)

Looking next at the role people *would like* the European Union to play in their daily life in 5 years' time shows that 44% of Europeans desire a more important role, 27% desire the same role, whilst only 15% desire a less important role.

In Italy (72%), Portugal (68%) and Greece (65%), around two in three people *want* the EU to play a more important role in their daily life with around half of the people in Spain (52%) sharing this view. This view is also the majority opinion in France, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Ireland, Sweden and Germany. In Finland, Denmark, Austria and the UK the most frequently expressed desire is for the EU to continue to play the same role. Denmark and the UK are the only two countries where the view that the EU should play a less important role EU is slightly more widespread than the view that the EU should play a more important role. However, the proportion of people that desires a less important role for the EU is highest Sweden (31%).



In most countries, no remarkable shifts are noted since autumn 1999. The only exceptions are Greece, Austria, Sweden and Ireland. In Greece people are now more positive with the proportion of people who feel that the European Union should play a less important role in five years' time dropping significantly from 13% to 7%. In Austria, people are more negative with a decrease in the proportion that desires a more important role (-9) and an increase in the proportion that desires a less important role (+6). A similar though less pronounced development is noted in Sweden (-5 and +5, respectively). In Ireland, the proportion that desires a more important role did not change significantly but the proportion that desires a less important role increased by 4 percentage points. (Table 2.11a)

The attitudinal analyses show that people who support their country's EU membership (65%) are more than three times as likely than people who regard it as a bad thing (19%) to desire a more important role for the EU. 45% of the latter group would like the EU to play a less important role in 5 years' time. At the demographic level we find that the view that the EU should play a less important role is held by less than 20% of the population, regardless of sex, age, economic activity or years of schooling. (Table 2.11b)

3. Support for current policy issues

Whereas the previous chapter has presented an overall picture of public support for the European Union by analysing the results of the survey's main indicators, this chapter focuses on support for some of the EU's current policy issues.

3.1. Support for joint EU decision-making

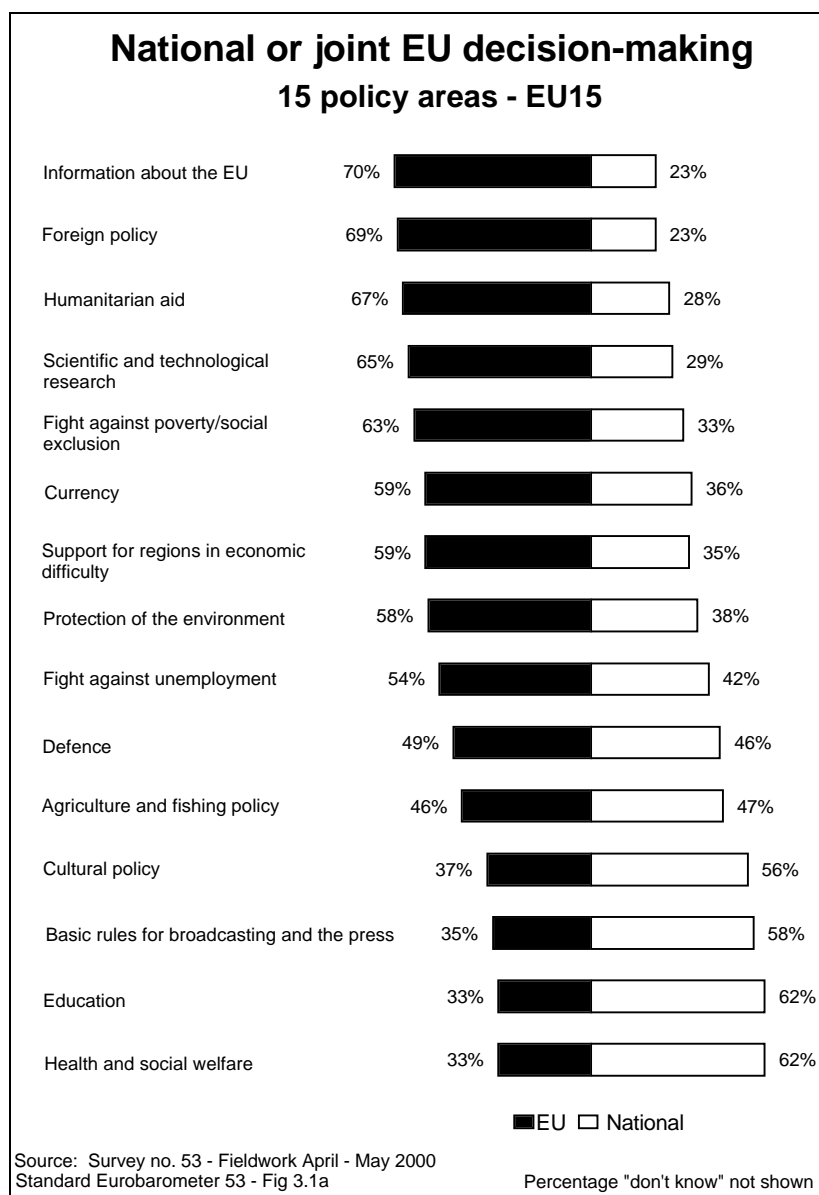
We begin by looking at the results of a question that asks whether decisions should be taken at national or at EU level. It lists 25 policy areas over which the Union has, to varying degrees, decision-making competencies. On average, half of the public supports joint EU decision-making in these areas and it is favoured over national decision-making in 14 of the 25 areas. In comparison to the previous survey (autumn 1999) support for EU decision-making is now slightly less widespread⁵.

SUPPORT FOR JOINT EU DECISION-MAKING BY COUNTRY		
Country	Average level of support for EU decision-making (for 25 areas, in %)	Number of areas where EU decision-making is more popular than national decision-making (25 areas maximum)
Italy	63%	20
The Netherlands	61%	18
Belgium	58%	17
Spain	57%	17
France	57%	16
Germany	55%	16
Luxembourg	52%	14
EU15	52%	14
Ireland	46%	13
Austria	43%	12
Portugal	43%	12
Greece	43%	11
Denmark	40%	11
Finland	40%	10
Sweden	37%	8
UK	32%	5

Support for EU decision-making continues to be highest in Italy where it is favoured over national decision-making in 20 of the 25 policy areas. The Netherlands is the only other country where more than 6 in 10 people on average prefer joint EU decision-making to national decision-making. Support is lowest in the UK and Sweden where less than 4 in 10 people favour joint EU over national decision-making. In these two countries, the public prefers EU decision-making in less than 10 of the 25 areas listed in the questionnaire.

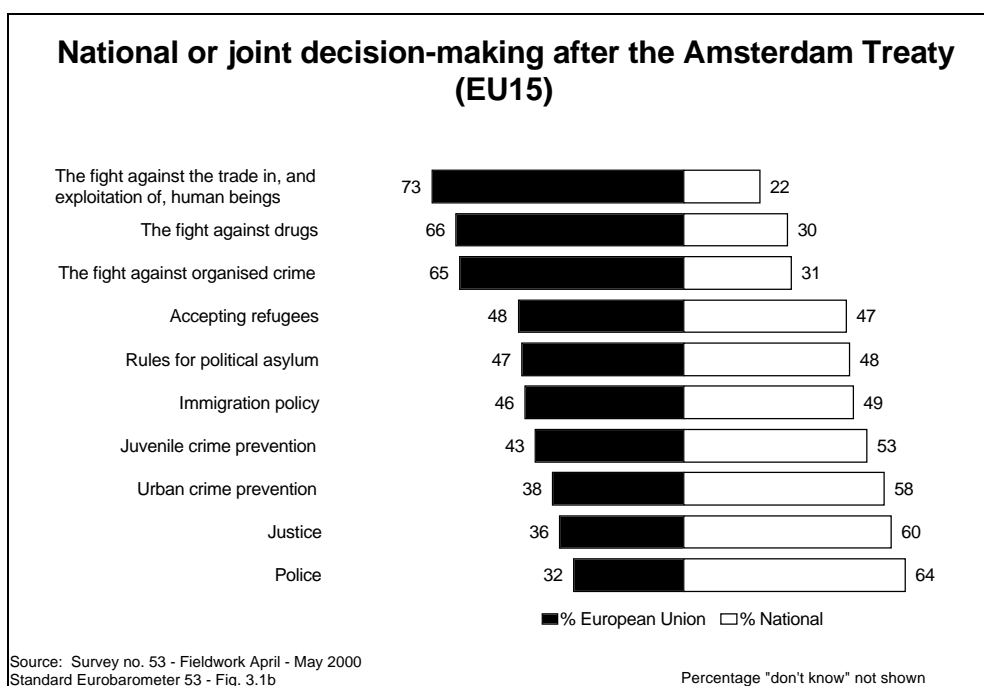
⁵ In autumn 1999, EU decision-making was favoured over national decision-making in 17 of the 25 areas and on average 53% of people supported joint it.

In the survey the question is divided into policy areas covered by the 3 pillars of the Maastricht Treaty and the new policy areas covered by the Amsterdam Treaty. We first look at people's views concerning the Maastricht Treaty policy areas.



Support for joint EU decision-making continues to be most widespread when it comes to information about the EU, its policies and institutions. The next four areas in which the public is most likely to support joint EU decision-making are foreign policy, humanitarian aid, science and technological research and the fight against poverty and social exclusion. People are least likely to want EU decision-making for education, health and social policy and broadcasting rules for the media.

When it comes to the Amsterdam Treaty policy areas, we find that support for EU joint decision-making is most widespread for the fight against human trade and exploitation whilst people are most likely to support national decision-making in the areas of policing and justice.



One can conclude from these results that people support joint EU decision-making in areas that either transcend national borders or have a limited impact on their day-to-day life are more inclined to prefer a national level in areas that concern them, their families or their country more directly. This is in line with the Union's subsidiarity principle. (Table 3.1)

3.2. Support for the Union's priorities

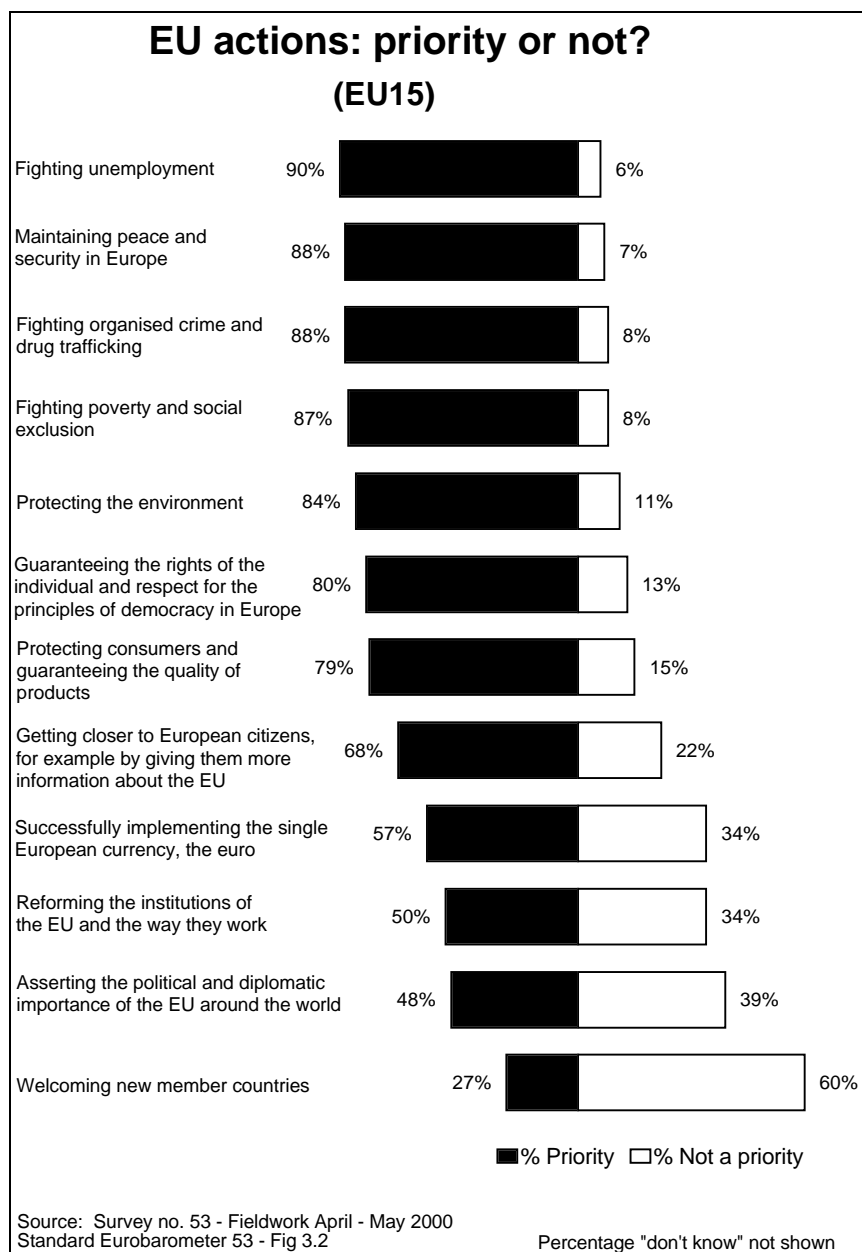
The Eurobarometer also measures the extent to which the public regards some of the Union's current actions as priorities.

At the March 2000 special European Council in Lisbon, the European Union set itself the goal of becoming the most competitive and knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The so-called 'Lisbon Strategy' is designed to enable the Union to regain the conditions for full employment and shows the Union's commitment to fight unemployment. On average, 9 in 10 EU citizens feel that the fight against unemployment should be a priority for the EU, with country results ranging from 83% in the UK to 96% in Greece. Close to 9 in 10 Europeans also believe that maintaining peace and security in Europe, fighting organised crime and drug trafficking and fighting poverty and social exclusion should be priority actions for the European Union. The graph shows that EU citizens are less likely to consider issues that imply a change to the current situation as priorities. Hence we find that the public is least likely to regard enlargement as a priority⁶.

The Member States are currently engaged in an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) with a view to reforming the institutions of the European Union in preparation for enlargement⁷. Amongst the public there are large differences in opinion from country to country on the topic of reform with people in Denmark (74%) most likely to consider it a priority for the EU and people in Finland (38%) least likely to share this view. (Table 3.2)

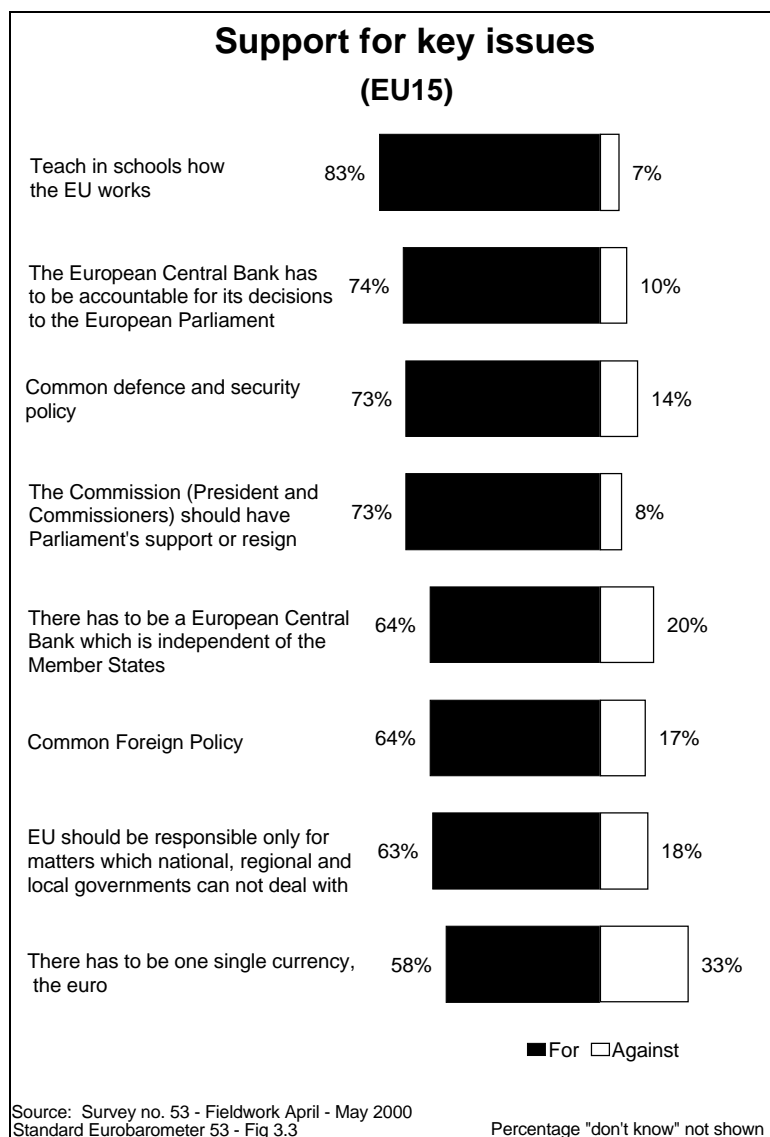
⁶ See section 3.6 for a more detailed look at public support for enlargement.

⁷ For more details please see http://www.europa.eu.int/igc2000/index_en.htm.



3.3. Support for key issues

Since 1993 the Eurobarometer has gauged public opinion towards a number of key issues of the European Union. Some of the issues are clear cut policy matters whilst 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 about the way European Union institutions work in school, with support levels ranging from 69% in the UK to 91% in France, Italy and Sweden.

Support for the other policy issues depends to a large extent on how people generally feel about the European Union. Support levels tend to be higher in the pro EU-countries than in countries that are more sceptical about the EU. In these countries, we find that support for the democratic processes listed in the questionnaire is equally, if not more, widespread. For instance, we find high levels of support in Sweden, Finland and Denmark for the notion that the European Central Bank should be accountable for its decisions to the European Parliament, despite the fact that a significant proportion of people in these countries is against the euro. It is not surprising to find high support for democratic processes in the Nordic countries where many people feel that the European Union has too much power and that there are insufficient measures to control this power. (Table 3.3)

The following table shows the average support level for the survey's 8 key issues in each Member State⁸. As can be seen, support for these key issues is highest in the Netherlands, Italy and Belgium and lowest in the UK, Sweden and Denmark. Comparing the latest results with those obtained in autumn 1999 shows that average support levels have increased by 3 percentage points in France and Spain. Significant decreases in support are found in Austria (-5), Germany and the UK (both -3).

⁸ Readers should note that in some countries low support levels are matched by a high level of 'don't know' responses and not by high opposition levels.

AVERAGE % SUPPORT FOR KEY ISSUES IN AUTUMN 1999 AND SPRING 2000 BY COUNTRY		
Country	Autumn 1999 EB52	Spring 2000 EB53
The Netherlands	80	79
Italy	78	79
Belgium	78	79
Luxembourg	76	76
France	73	76
Spain	71	74
Greece	75	73
Germany	72	69
EU15	69	69
Ireland	73	68
Finland	67	66
Portugal	66	66
Austria	69	64
Denmark	65	63
Sweden	65	63
United Kingdom	50	47

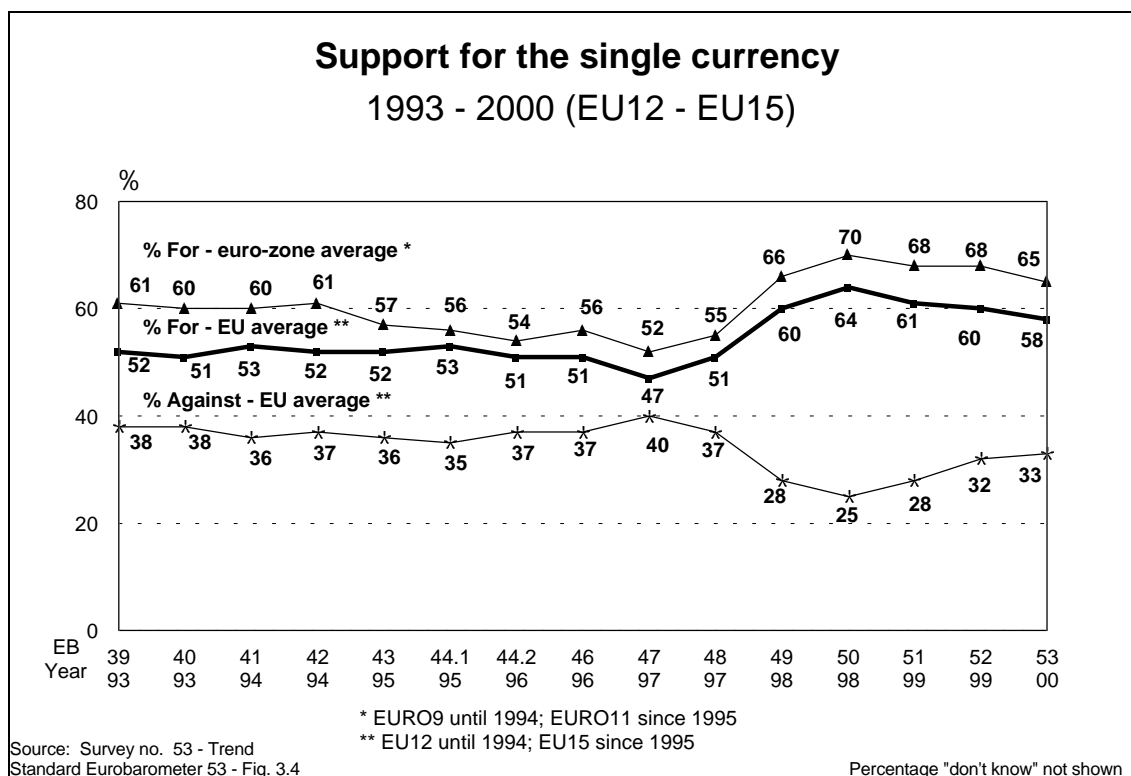
3.4. Support for the single currency

At the time of writing this report, 11 of the 15 Member States⁹ have introduced the European single currency, the euro. However, this number is soon to increase. Greece will join the euro area in January 2001, having now met the economic conditions required for joining the single currency.

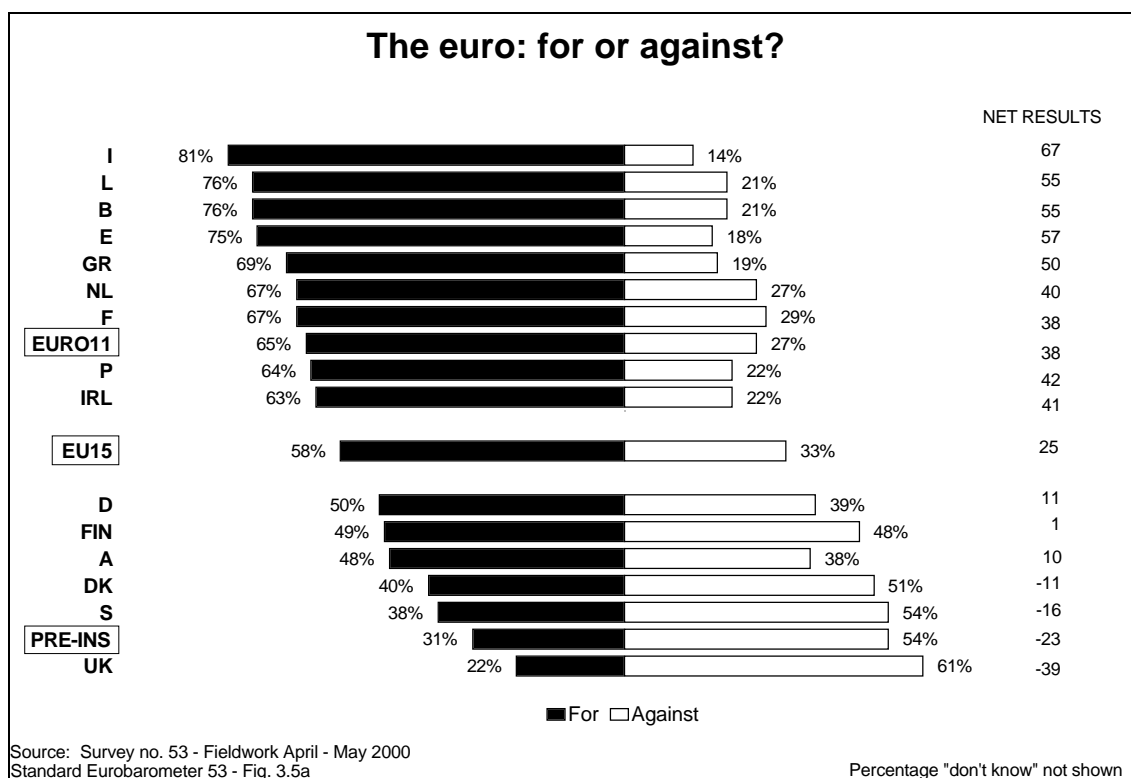
The spring 2000 Eurobarometer results show that 58% of EU citizens are of the opinion that there has to be one single currency, the euro, which replaces the national currencies of the Member States of the European Union whilst 33% are against this. The remaining 9% lack an opinion. Support for the euro is significantly higher in the "EURO 11" countries than it is in the "pre-in" countries (65% vs. 31%). However, public opinion in Greece (69% favour the euro) is much more on par with the "EURO 11" countries than it is with the 3 other "pre-in" countries, where the decision not to take part in the euro is political rather than economic. Having noted that Greece will shortly introduce the euro this should come as no surprise.

The following graph shows how public support for the euro has evolved since the Eurobarometer first measured it in 1993.

⁹ These 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 Greece, Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom. They will be referred to as the "pre-in" countries.



As can be seen, public support rose sharply in the period just prior to the 1 January 1999 introduction of the euro, reaching a high of 64% in autumn 1998. Whilst the euro is delivering the expected benefits for the European economy, its value vis-à-vis the major foreign currencies like the US Dollar has been falling. The perceived weakness of the euro may help to explain why public support has been slipping ever since its introduction. However, people are still much more likely to be in favour of the euro than they were when it was first decided to have a single currency, back in 1993.

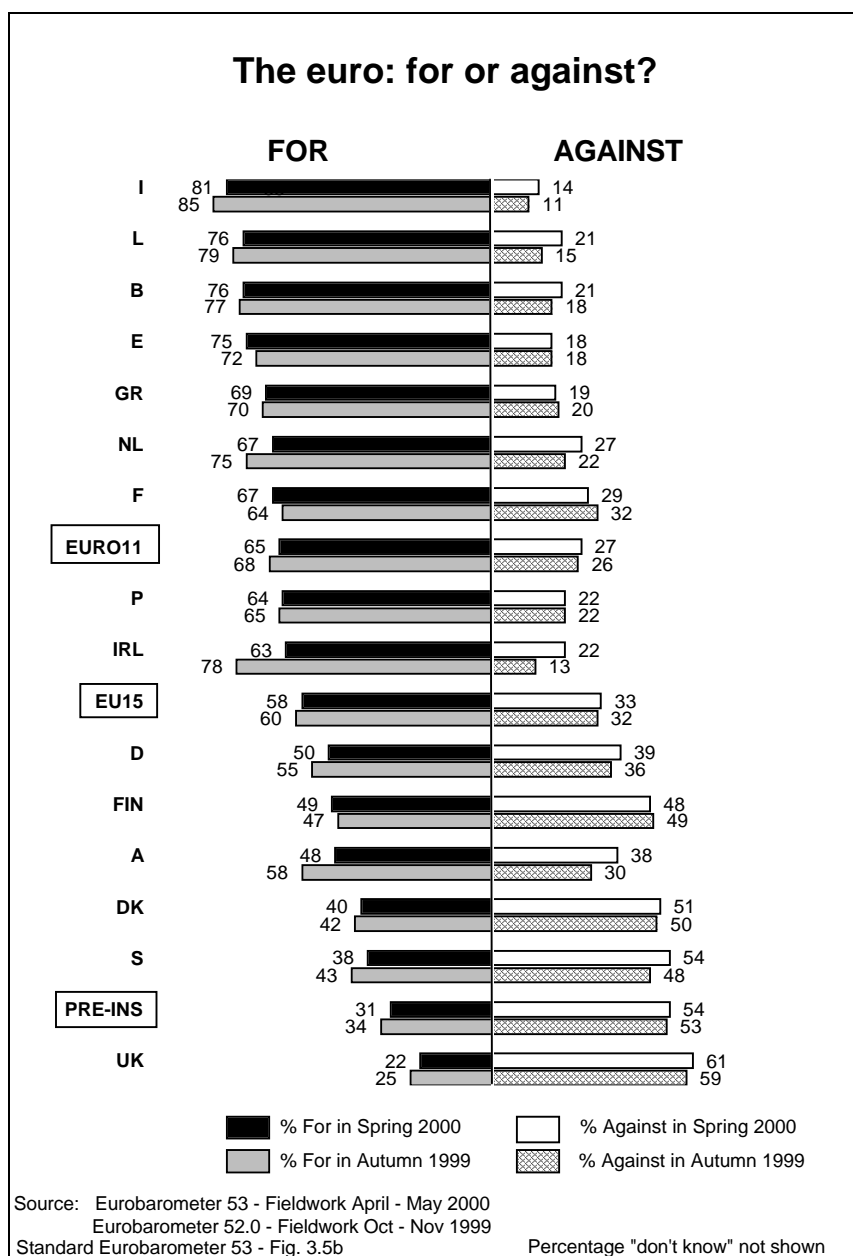


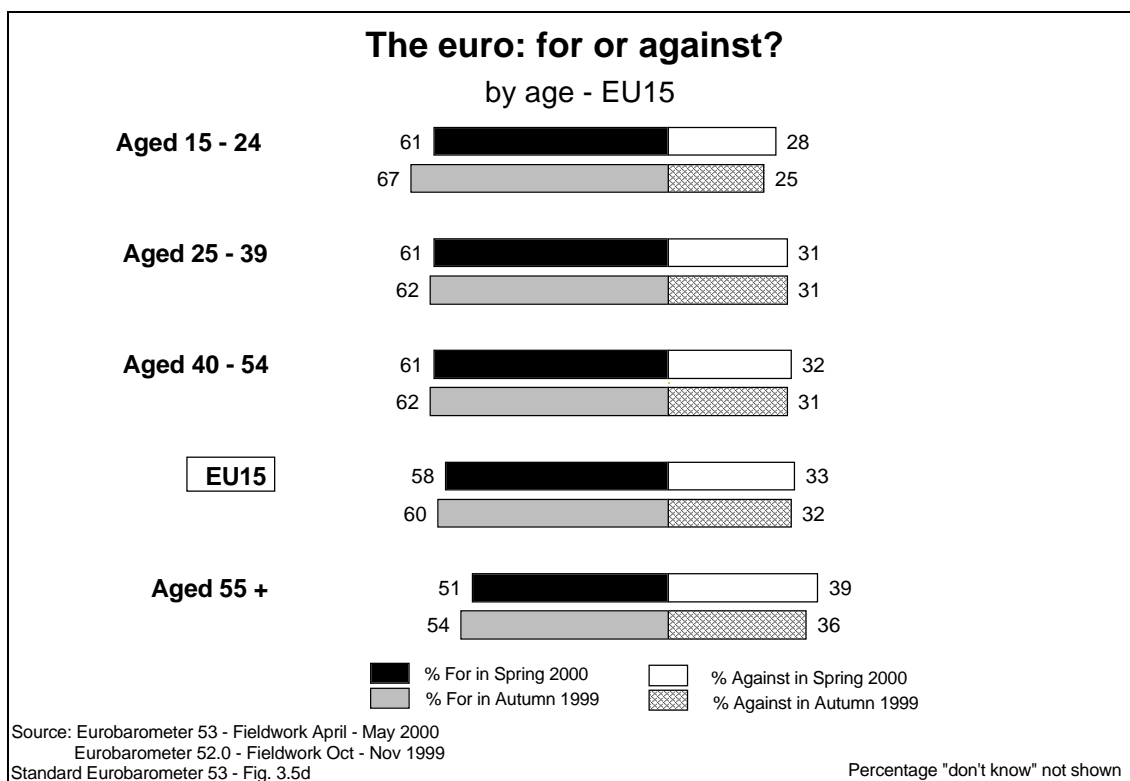
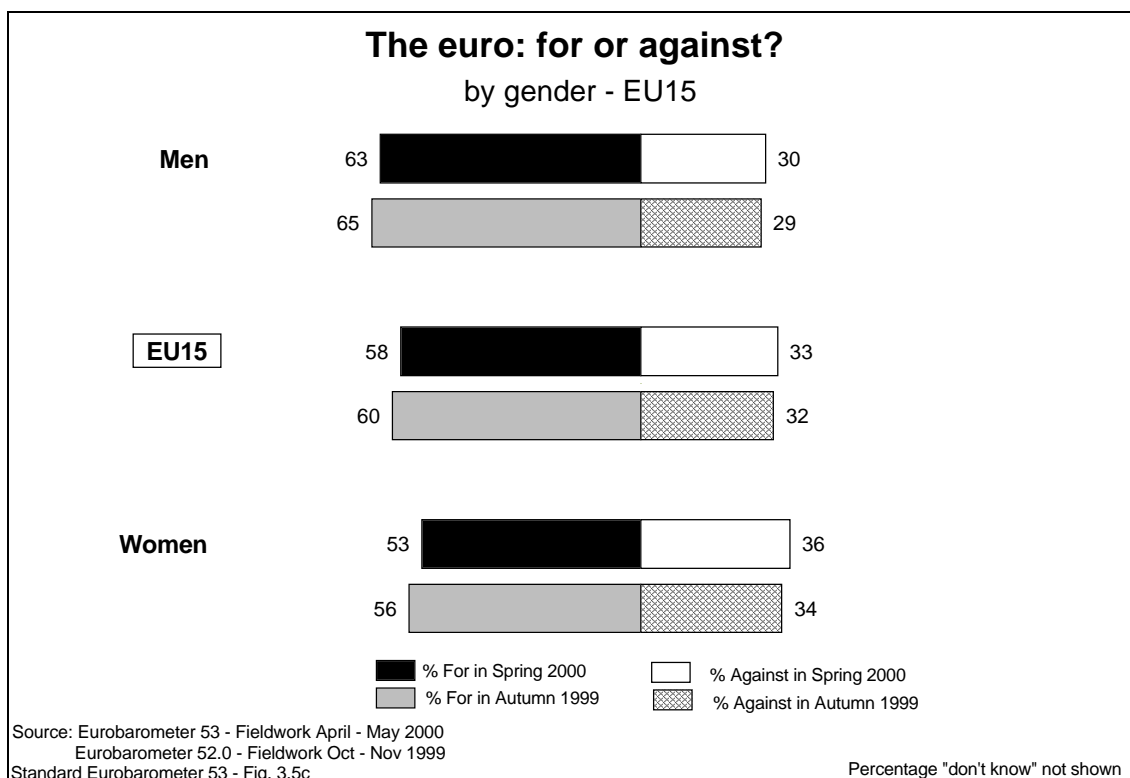
As the previous graph shows, support for the euro amongst the "EURO 11" countries is highest in Italy (81%), with 3 in 4 people in Luxembourg, Belgium and Spain in favour of the euro. In the Netherlands, France, Portugal and Ireland more than 6 in 10 people support the euro whilst this is the case for around half of the people in Germany, Finland and Austria.

Amongst the "pre-in" countries support for the euro is highest in Greece, which, as we already noted, will soon join the euro area. Support is then highest in Denmark (40%), followed by Sweden (38%) with the UK (22%) coming last. In these three countries, more than 50% of the people oppose the introduction of the single currency.

An analysis of shifts in support levels since autumn 1999 in the "EURO 11" countries shows that support for the euro only increased in Spain and France (both +3) with no significant changes recorded in Portugal and Finland. Opposition levels increased most significantly in Ireland (+9), Austria (+8), Luxembourg (+6), the Netherlands (+5), Italy, Belgium and Germany (all +3).

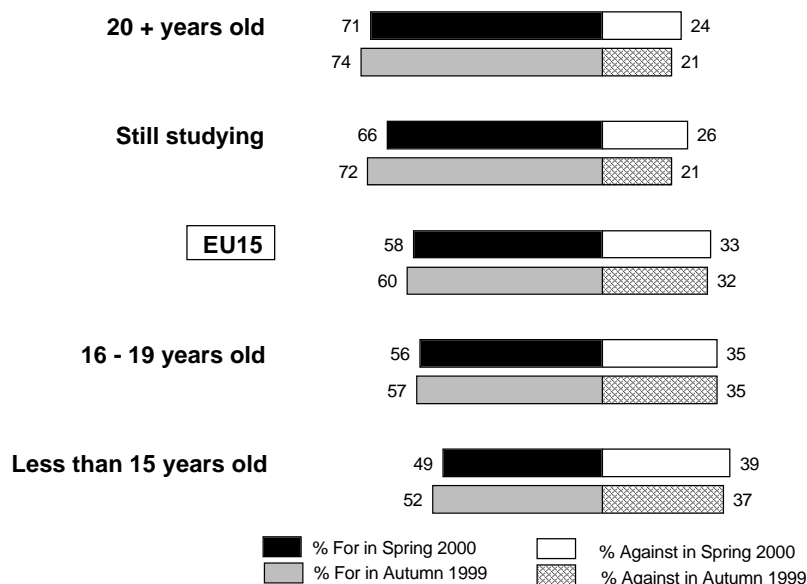
Looking at the "pre-in" countries shows that support levels have remained stable in Greece, whilst the proportion of people in favour of the euro dropped in Sweden (-5), the UK (-3) and Denmark (-2). Sweden (+6) is the only "pre-in" country where opposition levels increased significantly. (Table 3.4a)





The euro: for or against?

by age of stopping education - EU15

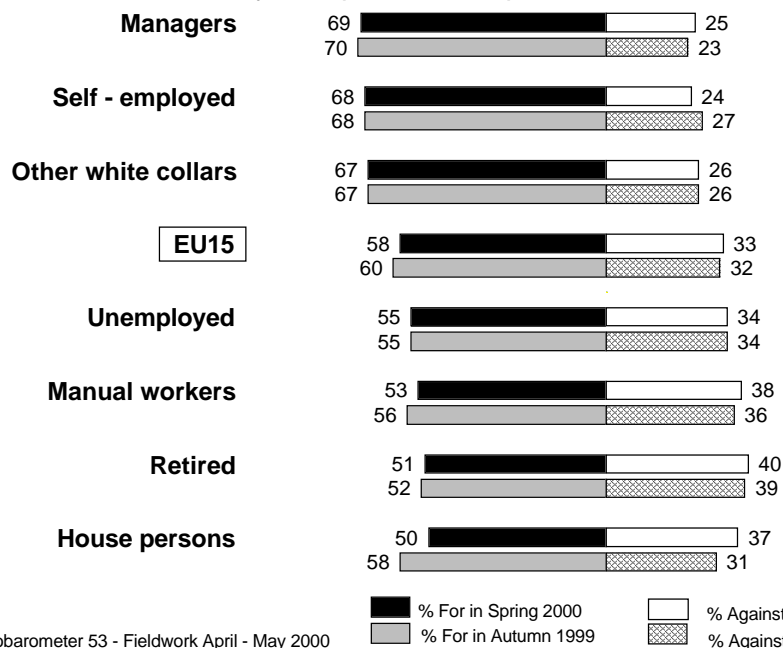


Source: Eurobarometer 53 - Fieldwork April - May 2000
 Eurobarometer 52.0 - Fieldwork Oct - Nov 1999
 Standard Eurobarometer 53 - Fig. 3.5e

Percentage "don't know" not shown

The euro: for or against?

by occupation of respondent - EU15



Source: Eurobarometer 53 - Fieldwork April - May 2000
 Eurobarometer 52.0 - Fieldwork Oct - Nov 1999
 Standard Eurobarometer 53 - Fig. 3.5f

Percentage "don't know" not shown

Amongst the various demographic groups in the population support for the euro is highest for people who stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or older (71%), followed by managers (69%) and self-employed people (68%). People who left full-time education before reaching 16 (49%) are least likely to support the euro, followed closely by people who look after the home (50%) and retired people (51%).

Although no change is recorded amongst self-employed people, employees and unemployed people, a negative trend is noted amongst all other groups since autumn 1999 with the largest drops in support recorded amongst people who look after the home (-8), students and those aged 15 to 24 (both -6).

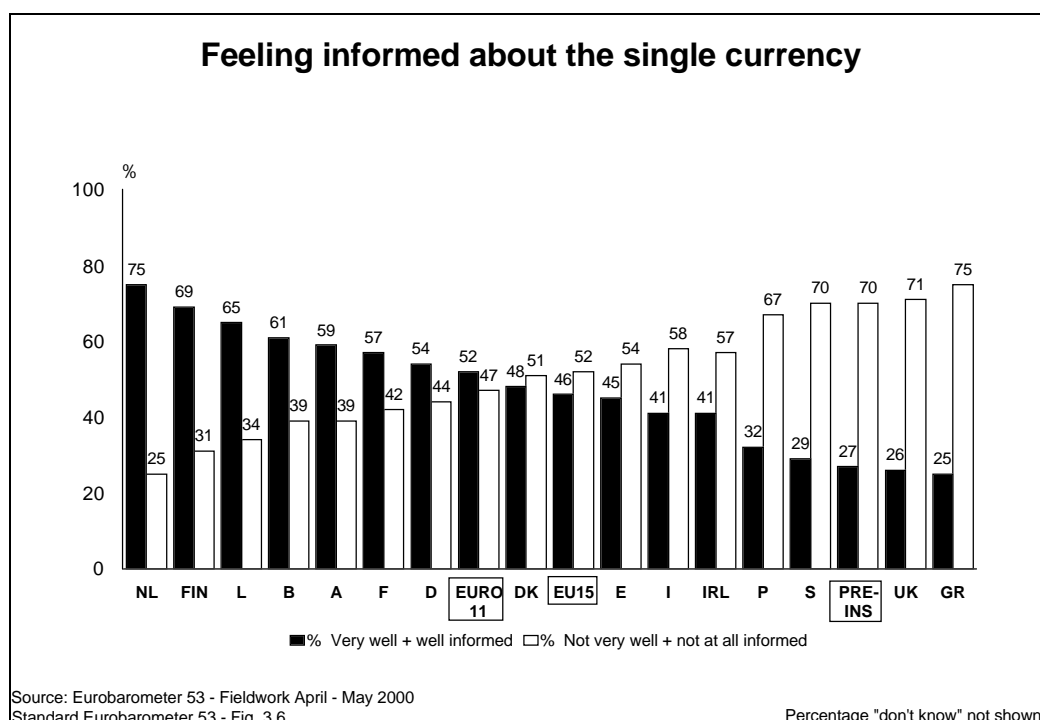
At the attitudinal level we find that the gap between those who regard their country's membership as a good thing (81%) and those who regard their country's membership as a bad thing (23%) remains very large. (Table 3.4b)

As the following table shows, support for the single currency also depends on how well informed people feel about the euro.

Support for the single currency			
	% in favour of the euro	% against the euro	% don't know
Feels very well / well informed about the euro	71%	25%	5%
EU15 Average	58%	33%	9%
Feels not very / not at all well informed about the euro	47%	41%	12%

3.5. Information about the single currency

In the spring of 2000, 46% of EU citizens feel well informed about the single currency. This is significantly higher than in the autumn of 1999 when 42% felt this way. However, at 53%, the majority of people continue to feel not well informed.



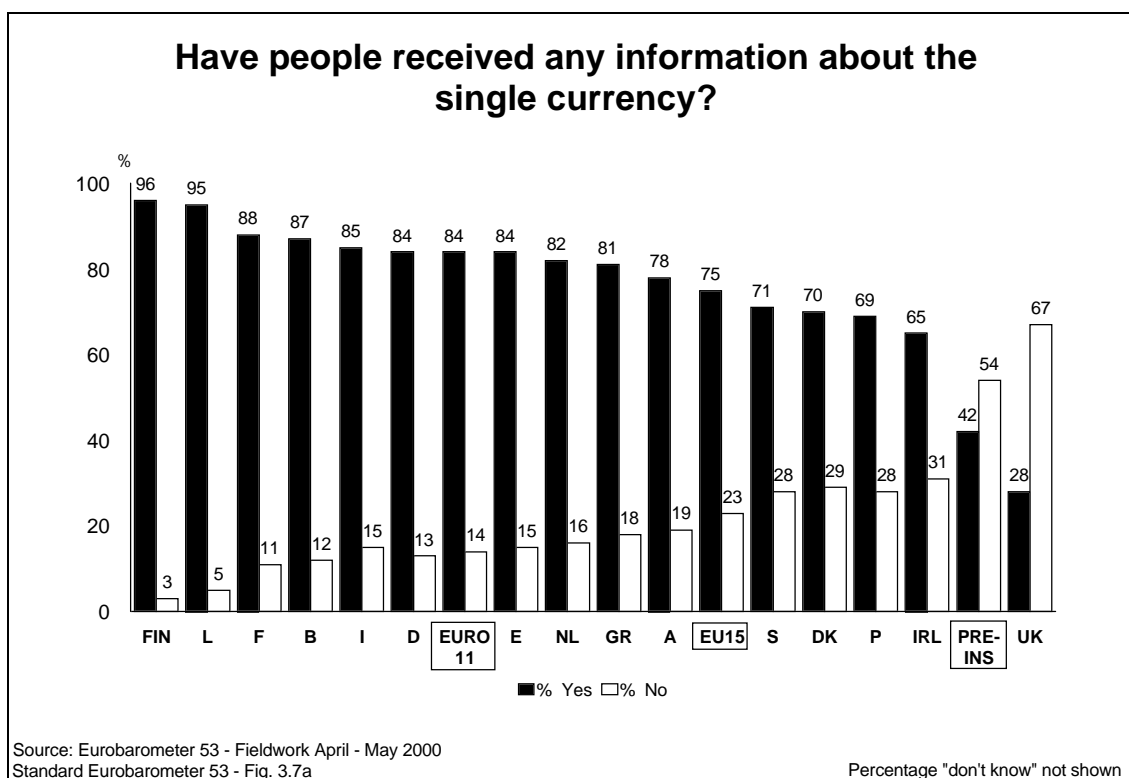
The country analyses show that levels of feeling informed continue to be higher in the "EURO 11" countries (52%) than they are in the "pre-in" countries (27%). Looking first at the "EURO 11" countries shows that people in the Netherlands (75%) are most likely to feel well informed, followed by people in Finland (69%) and Luxembourg (65%). People in Portugal (32%) continue to be least likely to feel well informed, it being the only "EURO 11" country where less than 4 in 10 people feel well informed.

Looking next at the "pre-in" countries shows that levels of feeling informed continue to be highest in Denmark (48%). Only around a quarter of people in Sweden, the UK and Greece feel well informed.

In most countries there is a significant improvement in levels of feeling informed since autumn 1999. The largest increase is recorded in Spain (+10), followed by Portugal (+9), Denmark (+8), Italy, Greece (both +7), Ireland (+6), Finland, Sweden and the UK (all +5), Austria (+4) and Belgium (+3). No significant changes are noted in the Netherlands and Germany. Luxembourg (-4) and France (-3) are the only 2 countries where levels of feeling informed are significantly lower than they were in autumn 1999. (Table 3.5a)

Whilst feeling informed about the euro clearly depends on whether a person lives in a "EURO 11" country or in a "pre-in" country, feeling informed about the European Union in general is another important determinant. 83% 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. 56% of respondents who say they have already received information about the euro feel well informed about it, compared to only 16% of those who say they have not received any information about the euro. Levels of feeling well informed also differ significantly between supporters (59%) and opponents (39%) of the European Union¹⁰.

The following graph shows that 3 in 4 EU citizens say they have received information about the euro.



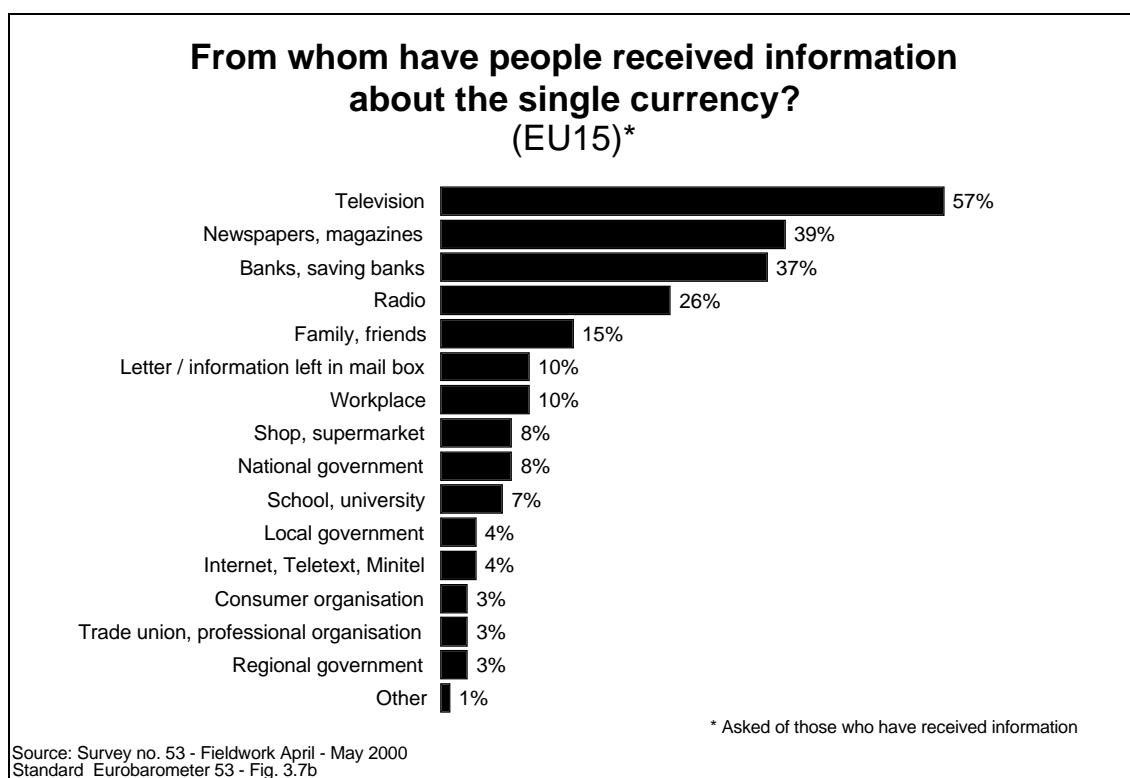
¹⁰ See table 3.5b for analyses by gender, age, economic activity and terminal education age.

Amongst the "EURO 11" countries, the proportion of people that has received information about the euro is highest in Finland (96%) and Luxembourg (95%). In France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands at least 8 in 10 people say they have received information. People in Ireland (65%) and Portugal (69%) are least likely to have received information about the single currency. In a number of countries, the proportion of people that claims to have received information about the euro has increased significantly. These are the Netherlands (+8), Portugal (+7) and Spain (+5). Ireland (-5), Germany and France (both -3) are the only countries where a significant drop is recorded.

With Greece joining the single currency in January 2001, the proportion of Greek respondents who say they have received information about the euro has increased from 68% in autumn 1999 to 81% in spring 2000.

Amongst the three other "pre-in" countries there is a considerable gap between the proportion of people in Sweden (71%) and Denmark (70%) that claim to have received information and the proportion of people in the UK who say this is the case (28%). The number of people that say they have received information has increased by 6 percentage points in Denmark since the autumn 1999 survey. In Sweden and the UK, no significant change has been recorded.

As the following graph shows, people are most likely to say that they have received information about the euro on television (57%). Close to 4 in 10 respondents say they have received information through the written press (39%) or from financial institutions (37%) and around a quarter of respondents say they have received information from the radio (26%). All other sources included in the questionnaire are listed by less than 2 in 10 respondents¹¹.



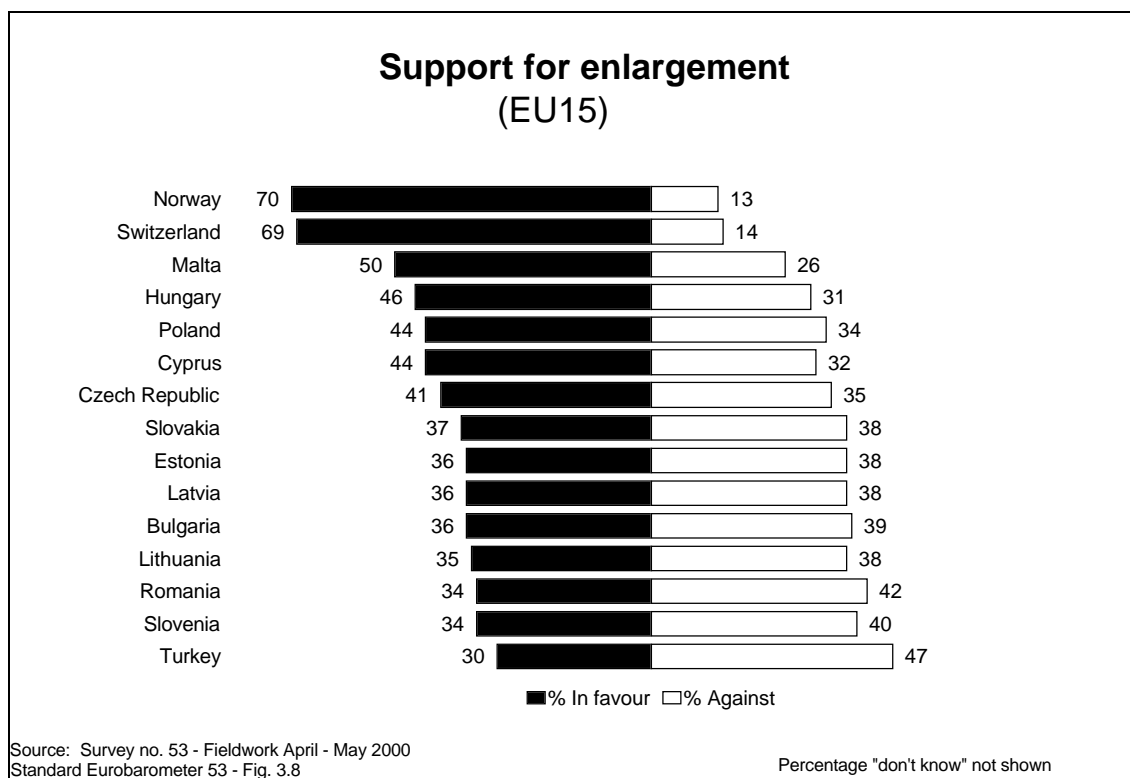
The next table shows that television, newspapers and magazines and financial institutions are the three most frequently mentioned sources in all "EURO11" countries, except Spain and Portugal. In these countries, the radio instead of financial institutions is one of the three most frequently mentioned sources. Logically, financial institutions also do not make the top three in countries that have not yet introduced the euro. In Denmark, Sweden and the UK the radio comes in third place and in Greece family and friends are ranked third. There is, however, great variation in the number of people that say they have received information from each of the sources. (See also table 3.6)

¹¹ 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 spring 1999 results, see table 4.3 in Eurobarometer Report No. 52.

TOP THREE MOST MENTIONED SOURCES FROM WHICH PEOPLE HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT THE EURO (IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)			
Belgium		Luxembourg	
Television	63	Television	71
Financial institutions	52	Financial institutions	64
Newspapers, magazines	41	Newspapers, magazines	58
Denmark		The Netherlands	
Television	64	Television	62
Newspapers, magazines	43	Newspapers, magazines	58
Radio	35	Financial institutions	56
Germany		Austria	
Television	65	Television	48
Newspapers, magazines	53	Financial institutions	46
Financial institutions	51	Newspapers, magazines	39
Greece		Portugal	
Television	72	Television	56
Newspapers, magazines	31	Newspapers, magazines	24
Family & friends	31	Radio	20
Spain		Finland	
Television	70	Television	75
Radio	32	Newspapers, magazines	66
Newspapers, magazines	30	Financial institutions	47
France		Sweden	
Financial institutions	62	Television	61
Television	62	Newspapers, magazines	51
Newspapers, magazines	39	Radio	32
Ireland		United Kingdom	
Financial institutions	29	Television	18
Television	25	Newspapers, magazines	14
Newspapers, magazines	21	Radio	8
Italy			
Television	65		
Newspapers, magazines	41		
Financial institutions	36		

3.6. Support for enlargement

The European Union is planning to enlarge to the South and the East and new countries should be in a position to join the Union in a few years' time. There are currently 13 applicant countries that are taking part in the accession process¹². In this section we look at how the public feels about the membership of the applicant countries. We also look at what people think of Norway and Switzerland joining the European Union.



People's support for enlargement varies greatly depending on a) which country you ask them should join and b) which country they themselves come from. Looking at the 13 applicant countries shows that support is highest for Malta to join the EU (50%) but the graph does not show the large differences in opinion between the people from the 15 Member States with support ranging from 32% in France to 68% in Greece. Hungary comes in second place with support ranging from 32% in France to 66% in Denmark and Sweden; for Poland, support ranges from 23% in Austria to 69% in Sweden and for Cyprus, it ranges from 29% in France to 87% in Greece. At 30%, support for Turkey is least widespread and ranges from 19% in Luxembourg and Austria to 44% in Spain. At the EU level, opposition levels range from 26% for Malta to 47% for Turkey. At this stage, public opinion on enlargement has still not crystallised with many people continuing to opt for the "don't know" response when asked about their support for countries to become part of the European Union.

The following table shows how support for enlargement varies between the Member States by showing the average percentage of the population that is in favour of each of the 13 applicant countries joining the European Union.

¹² The 13 applicant countries are Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. More information about enlargement can be found at: <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/index.htm>.

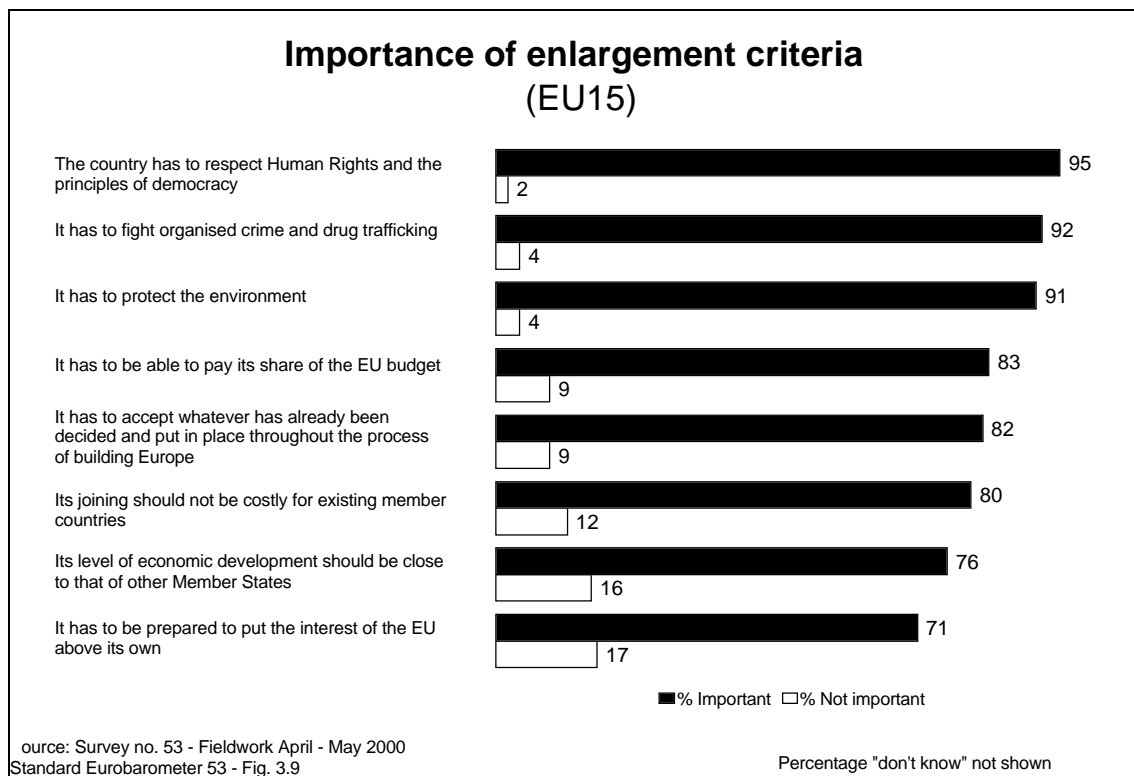
SUPPORT FOR ENLARGEMENT AVERAGE % IN FAVOUR OF THE 13 APPLICANT COUNTRIES JOINING THE EU (BY COUNTRY)	
Country	Average %
Sweden	61
Denmark	58
Greece	55
The Netherlands	49
Spain	49
Finland	48
Italy	43
Ireland	41
Portugal	41
EU15	38
Belgium	38
United Kingdom	35
Luxembourg	34
Germany	34
Austria	30
France	26

On average, people in Sweden (61%) are most likely to support enlargement whilst people in France (26%) are the least supportive.

Looking next at support for Norway (70%) and Switzerland (69%) shows that they are the public's favourites despite the fact that these two Western European nations are, for the moment, not planning to join the Union. Support for Norway ranges from 55% in Portugal to 89% in the Netherlands; for Switzerland it ranges from 59% in Portugal to 84% in the Netherlands. (Table 3.7)

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 meet¹³. 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.

¹³ On 13 October 1999, the European Commission published a report detailing the applicant countries' progress in meeting these criteria. More information can be found at: <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/intro/criteria.htm>

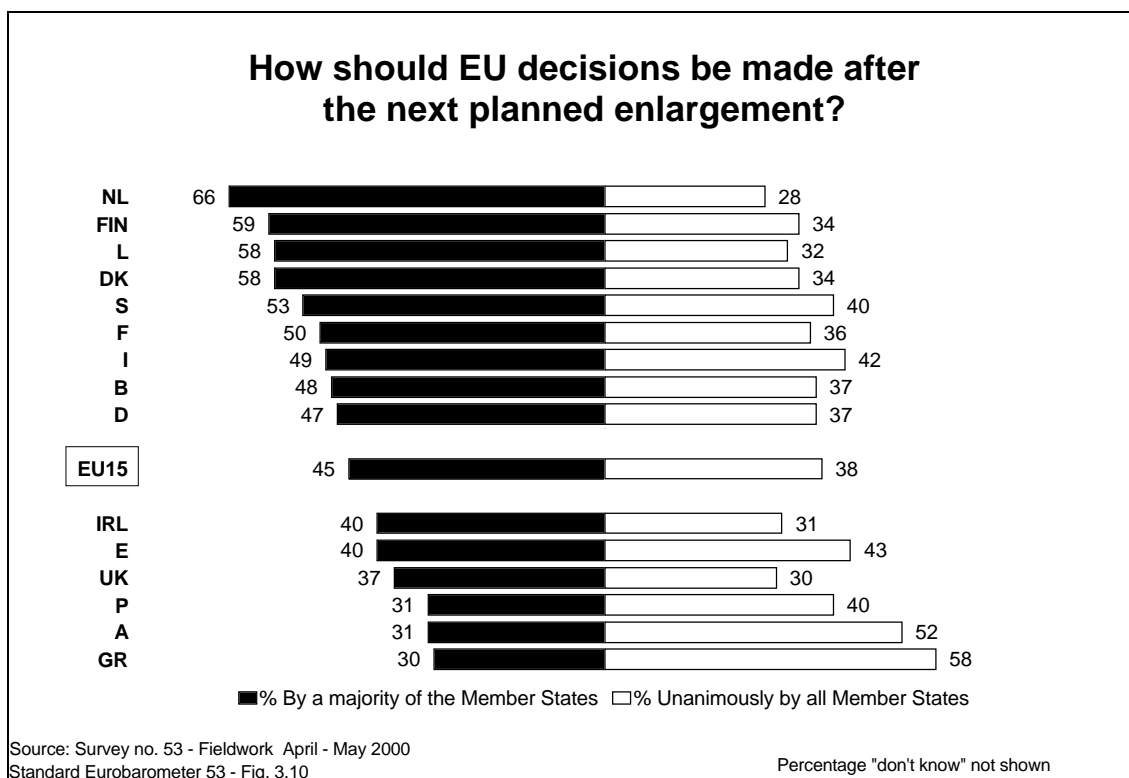


More than 9 in 10 people feel that countries wishing to join the EU should a) respect Human Rights and the principles of democracy, b) fight organised crime and drug trafficking and c) protect the environment if they wish to join the European Union. The large majority also feels that applicant countries 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 criterion 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. People are somewhat less concerned about the economic development of the applicant countries. At 71%, 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. However, public opinion on this criterion varies considerably from country to country with 82% of people in Belgium believing it is important, compared to only 35% of people in Denmark. (Table 3.8)

As mentioned earlier, the European Union needs to change the way it works in a number of different areas before new countries can join. A Union of 28 member countries can not have the same decision-making system that is currently in place (which requires many decisions to be taken unanimously) as it would be very difficult to ever reach agreement. This is one of the issues that the current IGC is trying to tackle. The Eurobarometer has measured public opinion on this issue with the following question:

After the planned enlargement of the European Union, the number of Member States will increase from 15 to more than 25. In your opinion, should European Union decisions then be made unanimously by all Member States or by a majority of the Member States?

The results show that the public tends to support majority voting in an enlarged Union with 45% of respondents opting for this choice over 38% who prefer unanimity. However, with 17% of people who have not yet made up their mind, public opinion can still move in either direction.



Looking at the country results shows that people in the Netherlands (66%) are by far most likely to favour majority voting, followed by people in Finland (59%), Denmark and Luxembourg (both 58%). Greece and Austria are the only 2 countries where more than 50% of the public want EU decisions to be taken unanimously. (Table 3.9a)

The demographic analyses indicate that managers (55%) are most likely to favour majority voting, followed by people who left full-time education aged 20 or older (54%), employees (51%) and students (50%). People who look after the home (38%) are least likely to favour majority voting. As there is little variation in the proportion that supports unanimous voting the noted differences in support for majority voting are explained by large fluctuations in the level of don't know responses.

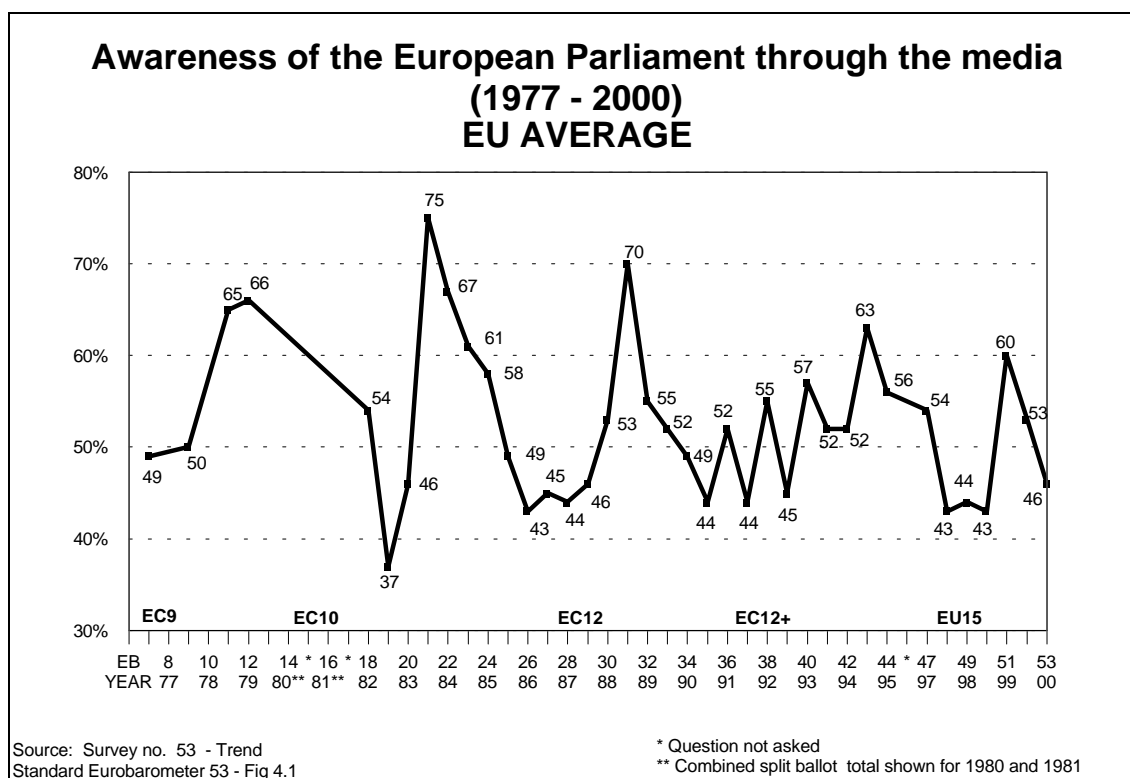
At the attitudinal level we find that people who support the EU are much less likely to lack an opinion on this issue than people who are against the EU. Nonetheless, there is a clear tendency for those who favour the Union to prefer majority voting (53%) and for those who oppose the Union to prefer unanimous voting (44%). (Table 3.9b)

4. The European Parliament

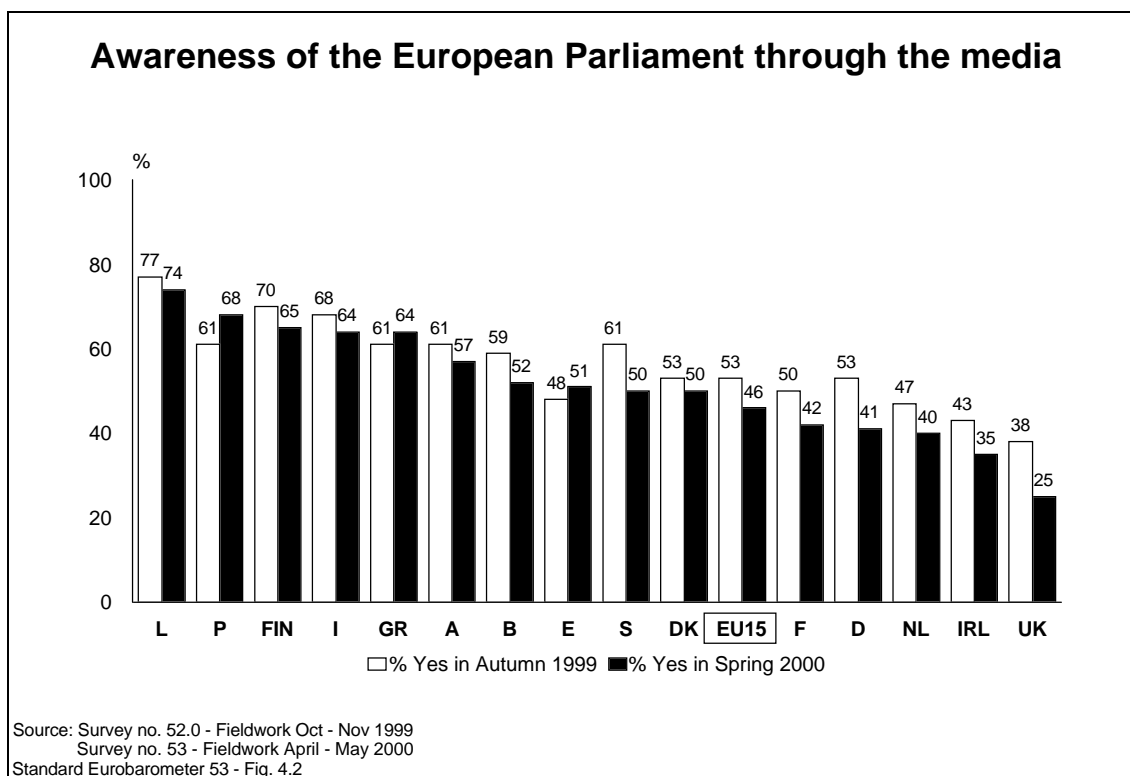
In this chapter we look at the perceived importance played by the European Parliament and the role the public would like it to play. We also look at people's assessment of the European Parliament's ability to protect their interests and we examine which areas people think it should treat as priorities. The chapter begins by looking at awareness levels for this European institution.

4.1. 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 46% of EU citizens have received information about the European Parliament through these three media. This is lower than in the autumn of 1999 (53%) and even lower than in the spring of 1999 (60%), when the European Parliament had received widespread media attention because of the June 1999 European Parliament elections. As the following graph shows, awareness levels are always highest around the time of elections.



People in Luxembourg (74%) are most likely to have recently seen or heard something about the European Parliament through the media, followed by people in Portugal (68%), Finland (65%), Italy and Greece (both 64%). In the UK (25%) and Ireland (35%) fewer than 4 out of 10 people have recently seen or heard anything about the European Parliament in the papers, on the radio or on television.



As the graph above shows, Portugal (+7), Greece (+3) and Spain (+3) are the only Member States where awareness of the European Parliament has become more widespread since autumn 1999. The largest drop in awareness levels is recorded in the UK (-13), followed closely by Germany (-12) and Sweden (-9). (Table 4.1a)

At a demographic level, we find that awareness of the European Parliament is highest amongst managers (59%), people who stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or older (58%) and self-employed people (55%). They are lowest amongst people who left school at the age of 15 or younger, manual workers (both 39%) and people who look after the home (40%).

The following table shows that there is a large gap in awareness levels between people who feel they know a lot about the European Union and people who feel they know very little.

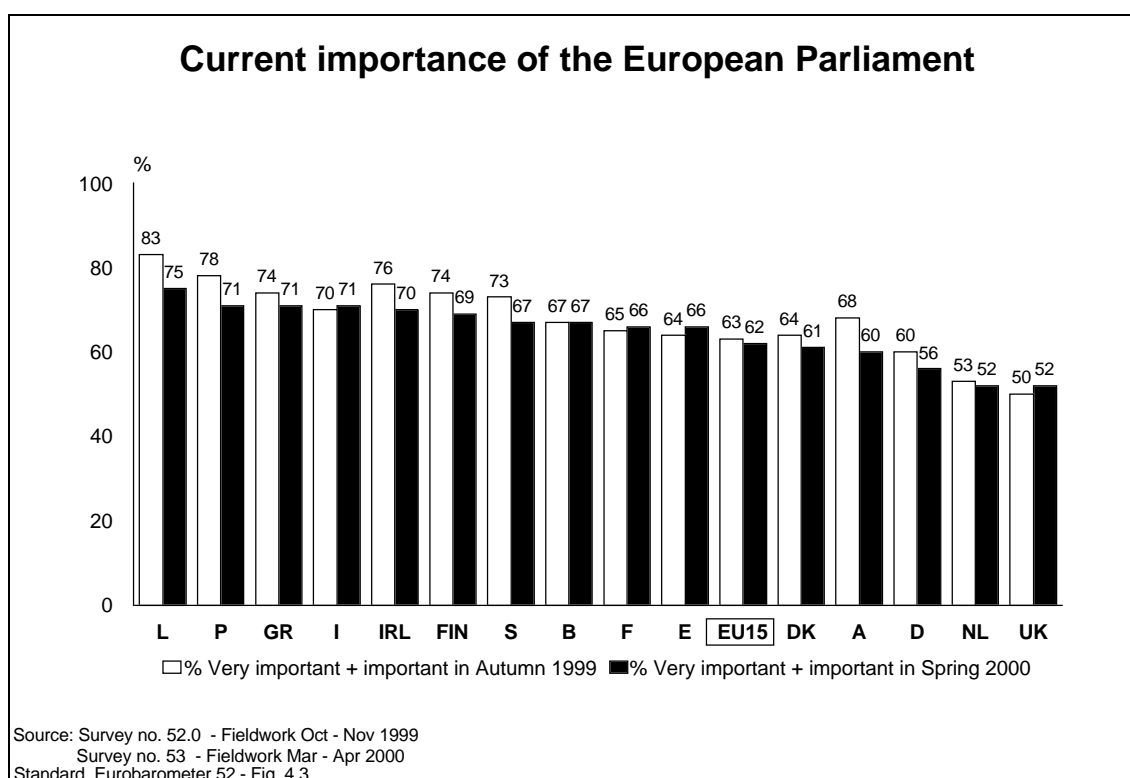
Awareness of the European Parliament through the media by self-perceived knowledge levels			
<i>Have you recently heard or read anything about the EP?</i>	High knowledge level	Average knowledge level	Low Knowledge level
% Yes	74	54	31
% No	20	39	59
% Don't know	6	7	9
% Total	100	100	99

Furthermore, the analyses point to a 19 percentage point gap in awareness levels between people who regard their country's membership to the EU as a good thing and those who see it as a bad thing. (Table 4.1b)

4.2. The European Parliament's perceived and desired importance

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 1993 Maastricht Treaty gave the Parliament the co-decision right together with the Council of Ministers in a number of areas. The Amsterdam Treaty has given the European Parliament co-decision-making powers in most of the Union's policies.

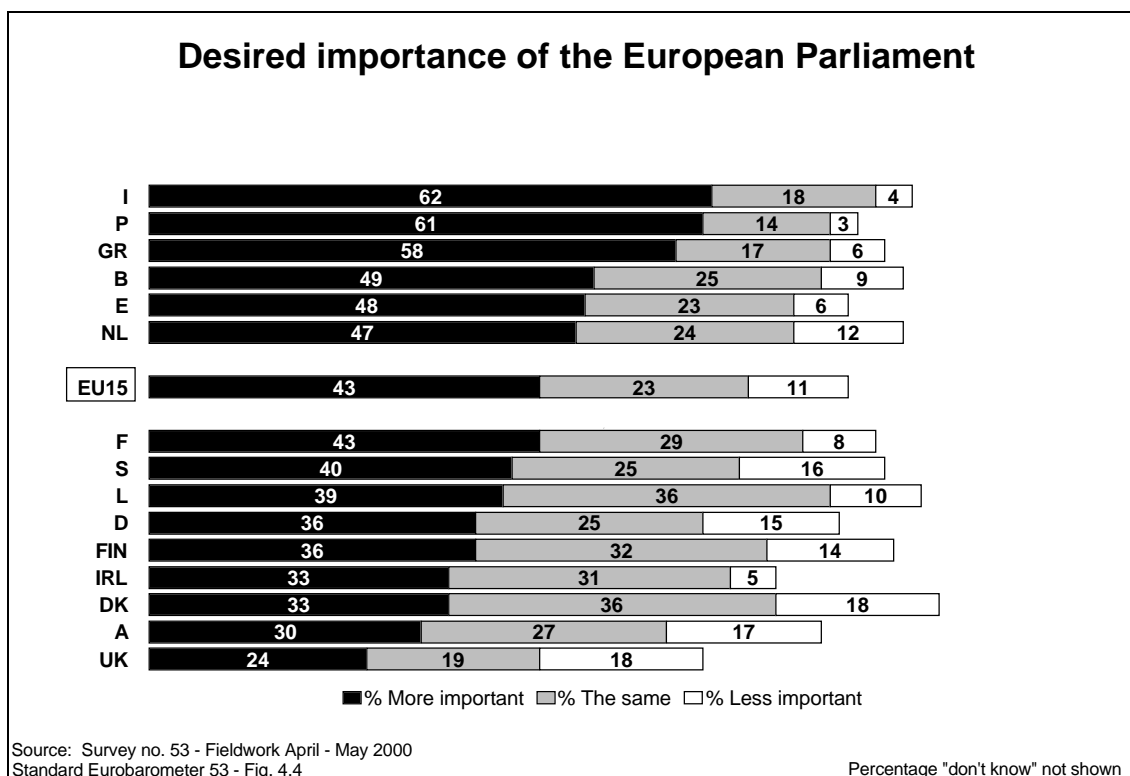
Like in autumn 1999, more than 6 in 10 EU citizens believe the Parliament plays an important role in the life of the European Union¹⁴. As the following graph shows, people in Luxembourg are most likely to consider the current role of the European Parliament as important (75%), followed by people in Portugal and Greece (both 71%). At 52%, people in the UK and the Netherlands are least likely to see its role as important. The level of "don't know" responses varies significantly and ranges from 9% in Luxembourg to 34% in the UK.



In comparison to autumn 1999, we find that in many Member States people are now less likely to feel that the European Parliament plays an important role in the life of the European Union. The only exceptions are Spain, the UK (both +2), France (+1), Italy and Belgium (both no change). The largest drop is recorded in Luxembourg (-8), followed by Portugal and Austria (both -7). One reason why people are now less likely to consider the role of the Parliament as important is that it has received less media coverage in the period preceding this survey than it did before the previous two surveys. (Table 4.2)

Looking next at the role the public desires the European Parliament to play shows that 43% of EU citizens want it to play a more important role whilst 23% are content with its role and only 11% desire a less important role.

¹⁴ In chapter 3, we already noted that EU citizens are most likely to be of the opinion that amongst a list of 9 EU institutions and bodies, 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.

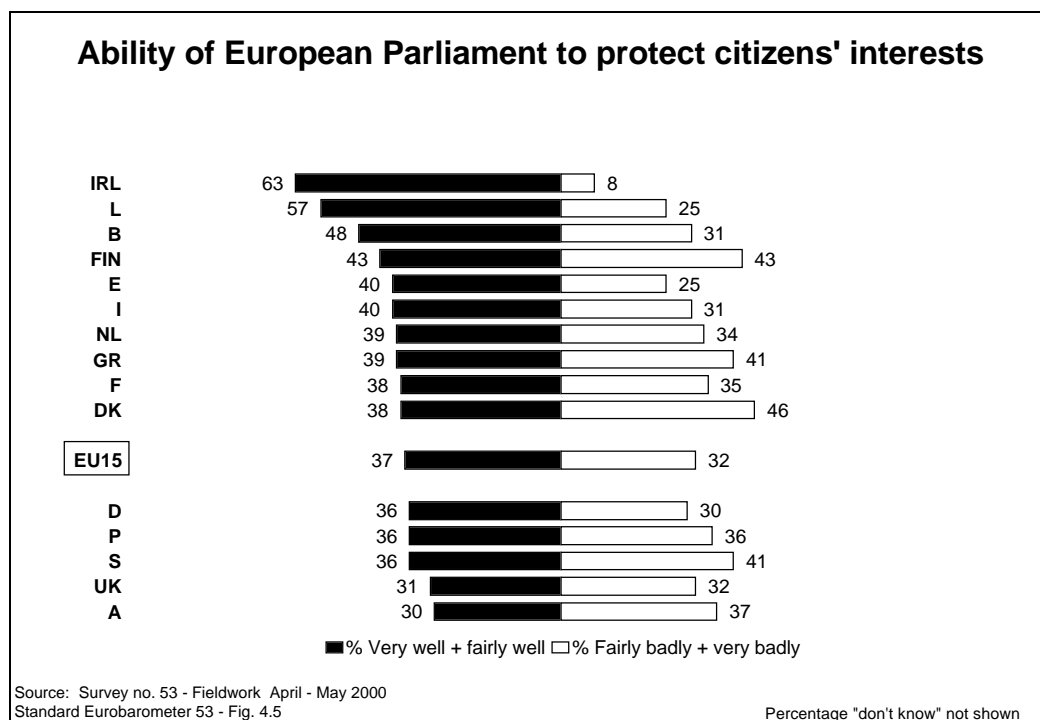


People in Italy (62%) are most likely to desire a more important role for the European Parliament, followed by people in Portugal (61%) and Greece (58%). Other countries where this is the most widespread view are Belgium (49%), Spain (48%), the Netherlands (47%), France (43%), Sweden (40%), Luxembourg (39%), Germany, Finland (both 36%) and Austria (30%). Denmark is the only country where people who want the EP to play the same role as it currently does (36%) are in the majority. In the UK, 4 in 10 people lack an opinion, contributing to the finding that the British are least likely to want the EP to play a more important role (24%). The proportion of people that wants the European Parliament to play a less important role in the life of the European Union is very small and ranges from 3% in Portugal to 18% in Denmark and the UK.

Compared to autumn 1999, people in Spain (+6) and France (+4) are now significantly more likely to desire a more important role for the Parliament. Positive developments are also noted in Denmark and the UK where people are now significantly less likely to desire a less important role for the Parliament (both -5). A general negative trend is noted in Austria where the proportion that desires a more important role has dropped by 8 percentage points and the proportion that desires a less important role has risen by 5 percentage points. (Table 4.3)

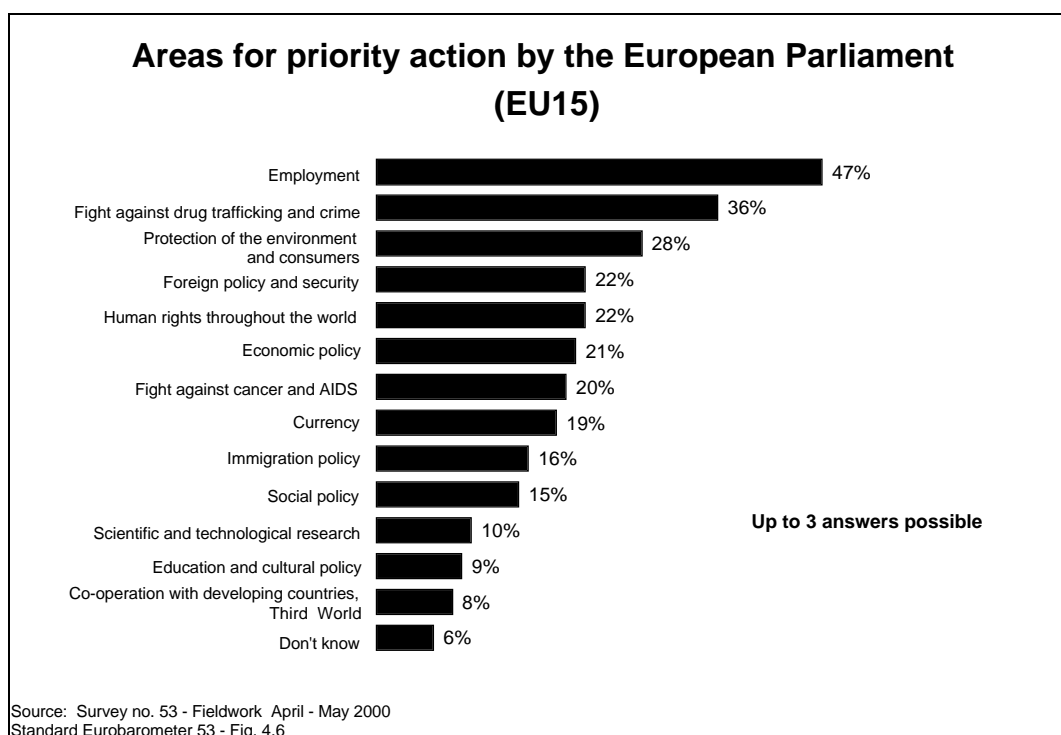
4.3. Citizens' interests

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 32% feel their interests are fairly or very badly protected. Three in 10 people can't say whether their interests are well or badly protected by the European Parliament.



Country analyses show that people in Ireland are most likely to feel that the European Parliament does a good job in protecting the interests of citizens (63%), followed by people in Luxembourg (57%). Satisfied respondents also outnumber dissatisfied respondents in Belgium, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, France and Germany. Denmark (46%), Finland (43%), Sweden and Greece (both 41%) are the only countries where more than 4 in 10 people hold the view that the European Parliament does not protect citizens' interests. The percentage of "don't know" responses is high and ranges from 14% in Finland to 37% in the UK. (Table 4.4)

The survey also measures which area(s) EU citizens want the European Parliament to focus on in order to defend their interests¹⁵.



¹⁵ Respondents were shown a card listing 13 policy areas and were able to choose a maximum of 3 of these areas.

According to 47% 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** (28%). In Chapter 3 we already noted that the large majority of EU citizens regards these 3 areas as priorities for the European Union as a whole. Areas that do not affect people directly, like the Third World (8%) and education (9%) are less popular as is research (10%) which many people believe should be the responsibility of national governments.

The next table shows that **employment** tops the list in 9 of the 15 Member States, comes second in Ireland, Luxembourg and the UK, third in the Netherlands and fourth in Sweden and Denmark. People in Spain (65%), 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 whilst people in Denmark (22%) are least likely to share this view.

The fight against drug trafficking and organised crime tops the list in Sweden (52%), Ireland (51%), the Netherlands (43%), the UK (42%) and Luxembourg (36%), comes second in Finland (47%), Portugal (44%), Denmark (39%), Belgium and Austria (both 36%) Italy (35%), France (34%) and Greece (33%), third in Germany (32%) and fourth in Spain (24%).

Protection of the environment and of the consumer tops the list in Denmark (53%) and makes the top four in Sweden (47%), the Netherlands (36%), Luxembourg, Finland (both 33%), France (31%), Spain (29%), Italy (28%), Belgium, Portugal, Austria (all 27%) and Ireland (24%). Greece (23%) and Germany (27%) are the only countries where it doesn't make the top four.

Human rights throughout the world makes the top four in Sweden (45%), Denmark (35%), Spain (34%), the Netherlands (28%), the UK and Ireland (both 24%). People in Germany (16%), Portugal, Italy, Belgium (all 17%) and Austria (19%) are least likely to consider it a priority for the European Parliament.

Foreign policy and security makes the top four in Germany, Austria, Finland (all 34%), Greece (30%), Luxembourg (28%) and Italy (22%). At 6%, people in Portugal are least likely to consider it a priority for the European Parliament.

The fight against cancer and AIDS makes the top four in Ireland (29%), the UK (28%), Portugal (26%) and France (24%). People in Germany (13%) and Finland (14%) are least likely to consider it a priority for the European Parliament.

Economic policy makes the top four in Germany and Greece (both 29%). At 13%, people in Denmark are least likely to consider it a priority for the European Parliament.

TOP FOUR PRIORITY AREAS FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN THE MEMBER STATES (IN %)			
Belgium		Luxembourg	
Employment	57	Drugs & crime	36
Drugs & crime	36	Employment	35
Environment/Consumers	27	Environment/Consumers	33
Cancer/AIDS	23	Foreign policy & security	28
Denmark		The Netherlands	
Environment/Consumers	53	Drugs & crime	43
Drugs & crime	39	Environment/Consumers	36
Human rights	35	Employment	28
Employment	22	Human rights	28
Germany		Austria	
Employment	39	Employment	42
Foreign policy & security	34	Drugs & crime	36
Drugs & crime	32	Foreign policy & security	34
Economic policy	29	Environment/Consumers	27
Greece		Portugal	
Employment	38	Employment	54
Drugs & crime	33	Drugs & crime	44
Foreign policy & security	30	Environment/Consumers	27
Economic policy	29	Cancer/AIDS	26
Spain		Finland	
Employment	65	Employment	52
Human rights	34	Drugs & crime	47
Environment/Consumers	29	Foreign policy & security	34
Drugs & crime	24	Environment/Consumers	33
France		Sweden	
Employment	61	Drugs & crime	52
Drugs & crime	34	Environment/Consumers	47
Environment/Consumers	31	Human rights	45
Cancer/AIDS	24	Employment	29
Ireland		United Kingdom	
Drugs & crime	51	Drugs & crime	42
Employment	42	Employment	35
Cancer/AIDS	29	Cancer/AIDS	28
Environment/Consumers	24	Human rights	24
Italy			
Employment	56		
Drugs & crime	35		
Environment/Consumers	28		
Foreign policy & security	22		

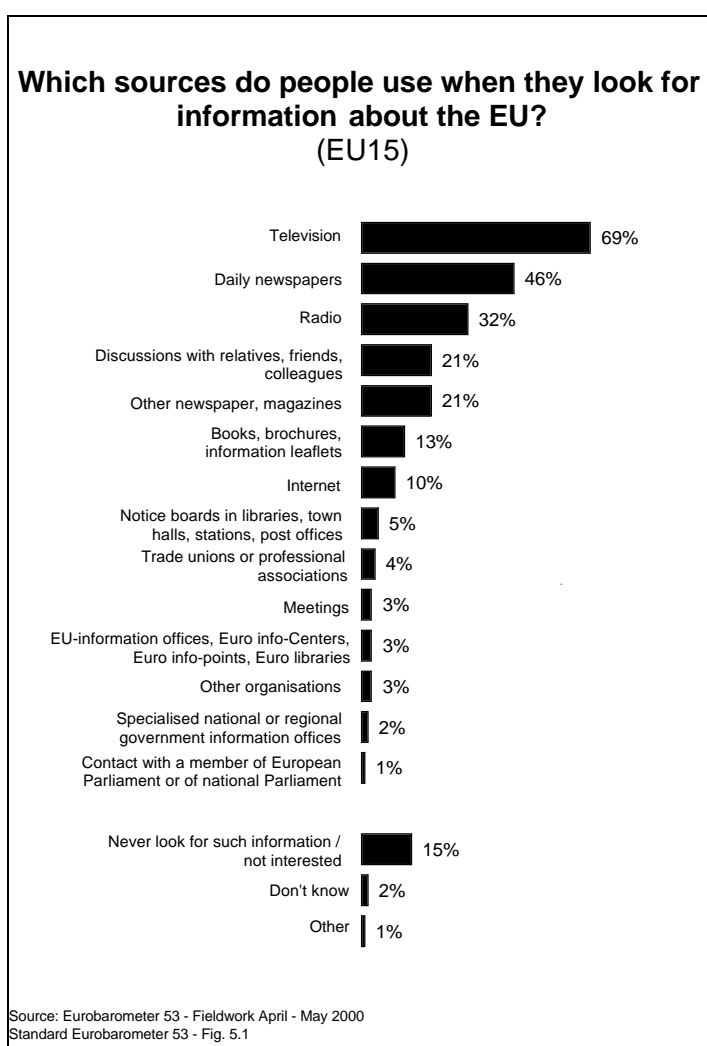
The remaining areas do not make the top four in any of the Member States. **Currency** receives most widespread mention in Luxembourg (27%) and least widespread mention in Sweden (7%) and Denmark (8%). Germany (22%) and the UK (20%) are the only countries where at least 2 in 10 people choose **Immigration policy** whilst less than 10% choose it in Portugal (3%), Spain, Sweden (both 6%), Ireland and Finland (both 9%). **Social policy** is most widely viewed as a priority in Greece (27%), Belgium (22%) and Germany (20%). People in Ireland (8%), Denmark, Sweden and the UK (all 9%) are least likely to feel this way. The view that **Education and cultural policy** should be a priority ranges from 5% in France to 18% in the Netherlands. The view that **scientific and technological research** should be a priority ranges from 5% in Portugal to 14% in Denmark. For the **Third World** the range extends from 5% in Germany, Greece and Finland to 14% in Denmark. (See also table 4.5)

5. Sources of information and knowledge levels amongst EU citizens

In this chapter we look at where people look for information about the European Union, the media's coverage of EU affairs, people's perceived knowledge of the European Union and their awareness of a number of EU institutions.

5.1. Sources of information about the European Union

For many years the Eurobarometer has been questioning EU citizens about the sources they use when they look for information about the European Union and as usual we find that the media is the most popular source. Close to 7 in 10 respondents say they use television when they look for information, 46% of respondents read daily newspapers and 32% listen to the radio¹⁶. Around 2 in 10 respondents turn to other newspapers and magazines or hold discussions with relatives, friends and colleagues when they look for information. 13% choose to use books, brochures and information leaflets. 10% of respondents say they surf the World Wide Web to obtain information, up from 6% in the autumn of 1999¹⁷. The other 7 sources listed in the questionnaire are selected by less than 1 in 10 respondents. 15% of respondents never look for information about the European Union, 1 in 100 mentions a source not included in the questionnaire and 2% lack an opinion.

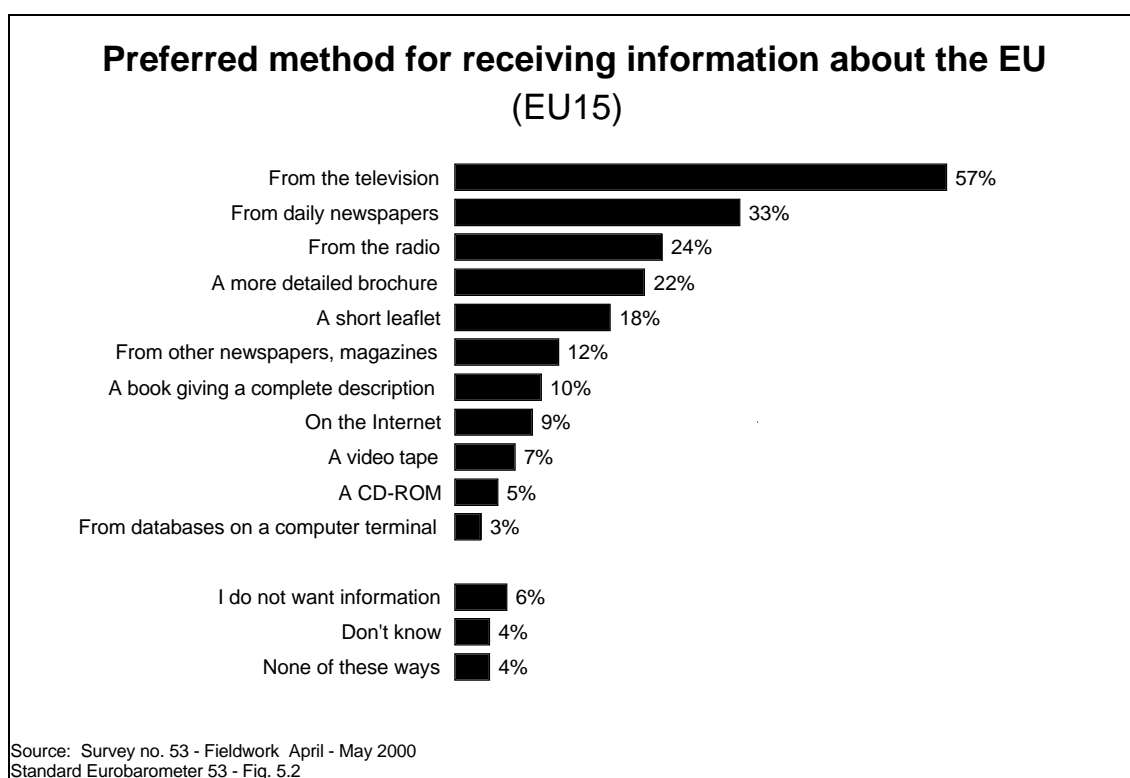


¹⁶ Respondents were shown a card listing 14 sources or type of sources and were asked to name all those they use when they look for information about the European Union. They could also mention other sources, say that they never look for information about the EU (not interested) or say they don't know.

¹⁷ Eighteen percent of respondents have an Internet connection at home. 84% of these respondents say they use it themselves at home. See chapter 7 for more information.

The country analyses show that **television** is the most popular source in all 15 Member States with the proportion of respondents selecting this source ranging from 49% in Ireland to 80% in Greece, Denmark and Luxembourg. The range for **daily newspapers** extends from 21% in Portugal to 64% in the Netherlands. For the **radio** it goes from 18% in the UK to 57% in Luxembourg. The proportion of people who surf the **World Wide Web** ranges from 5% in Portugal to 26% in the Netherlands.

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. Not surprisingly, people's preference goes to the three media sources they are most likely to use. Nearly 6 in 10 respondents say they prefer television, more than 3 in 10 say they prefer daily newspapers and more than 2 in 10 respondents list the radio as a preferred source. The Internet is selected by 9% of respondents, up from 7% in the autumn of 1999. The other non-printed information tools, such as videotapes (7%), CD-ROMs (5%) and computer databases (3%) continue to be less popular than printed sources. (Table 5.1)



The country analyses show that **television** is the preferred source in all 15 Member States with people in Denmark (73%) most likely to select it and people in Ireland (39%) least likely to do so. The proportion of people that select **daily newspapers** as one of their preferred sources ranges from 18% in Portugal to 46% in Finland and Sweden. The preference for the **radio** ranges from 17% in the UK to 42% in Denmark. For **the Internet** preference levels range from 5% in Portugal and Spain to 22% in Denmark and the Netherlands. (Table 5.2)

5.2. The news media and its coverage of EU affairs

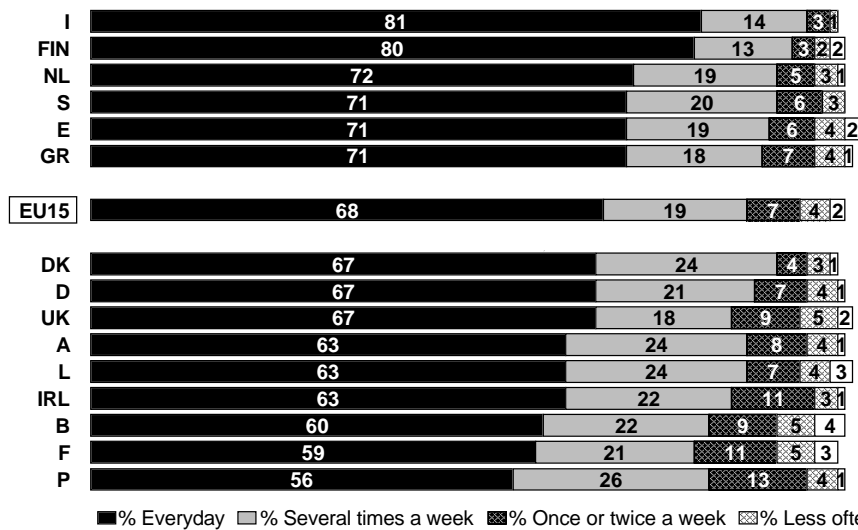
Having noted that the media is both a widely consulted and a widely preferred source of EU information, we next look at the frequency at which EU citizens watch the news on television, read the news in daily newspapers and listen to the news on the radio.

News viewership on television

As the following graph shows, 68% of respondents watch the news on television on a daily basis, with a further 19% watching it several times a week¹⁸.

¹⁸ See table 5.3a for country results.

News viewership on television



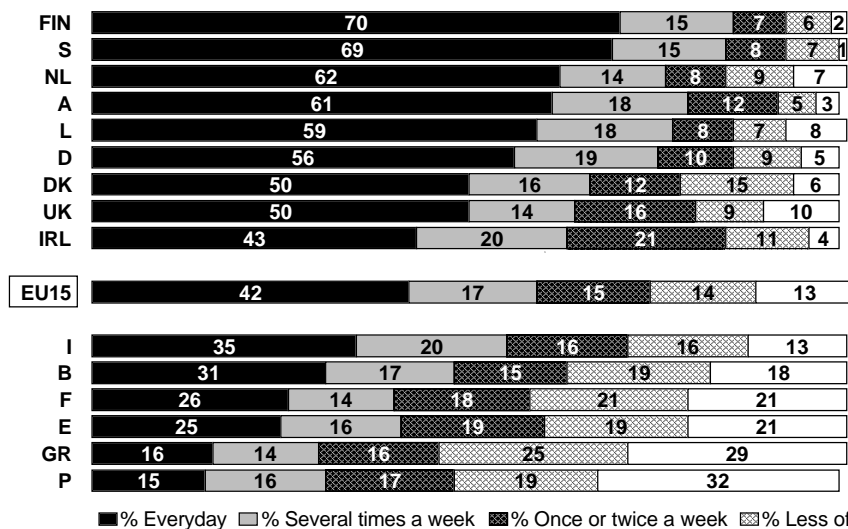
Source: Survey no. 53 - Fieldwork April - May 2000
Standard Eurobarometer 53 - Fig. 5.3a

Percentage "don't know" not shown

News readership of daily newspapers

Around 6 in 10 respondents read the news in daily newspapers every day (42%) or several times a week (17%)¹⁹.

News readership of daily papers



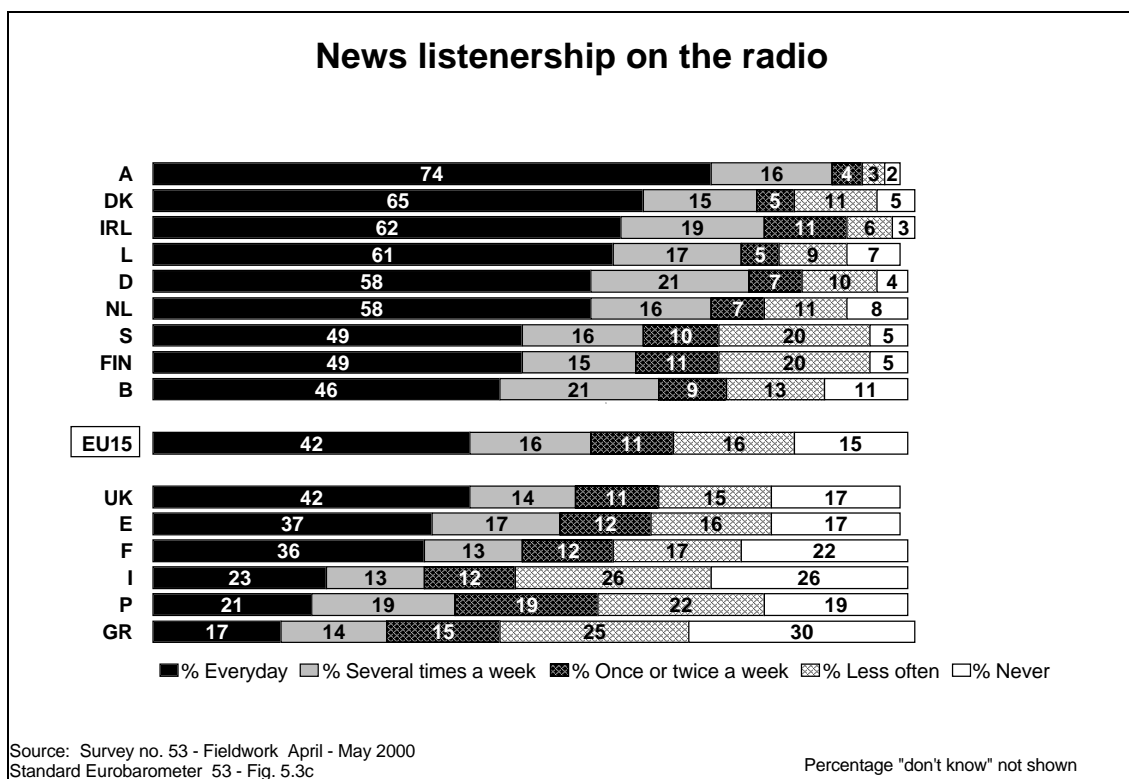
Source: Survey no. 53 - Fieldwork April - May 2000
Standard Eurobarometer 53 - Fig. 5.3b

Percentage "don't know" not shown

¹⁹ See table 5.3b for country results.

News listenership on the radio

News listenership on the radio is also fairly common with around 6 in 10 respondents doing this every day (42%) or several times a week (16%)²⁰.



News coverage of EU affairs in the media

Next, we examine what Europeans think about the amount of coverage dedicated by the media to European Union affairs. Respondents were asked the following question:

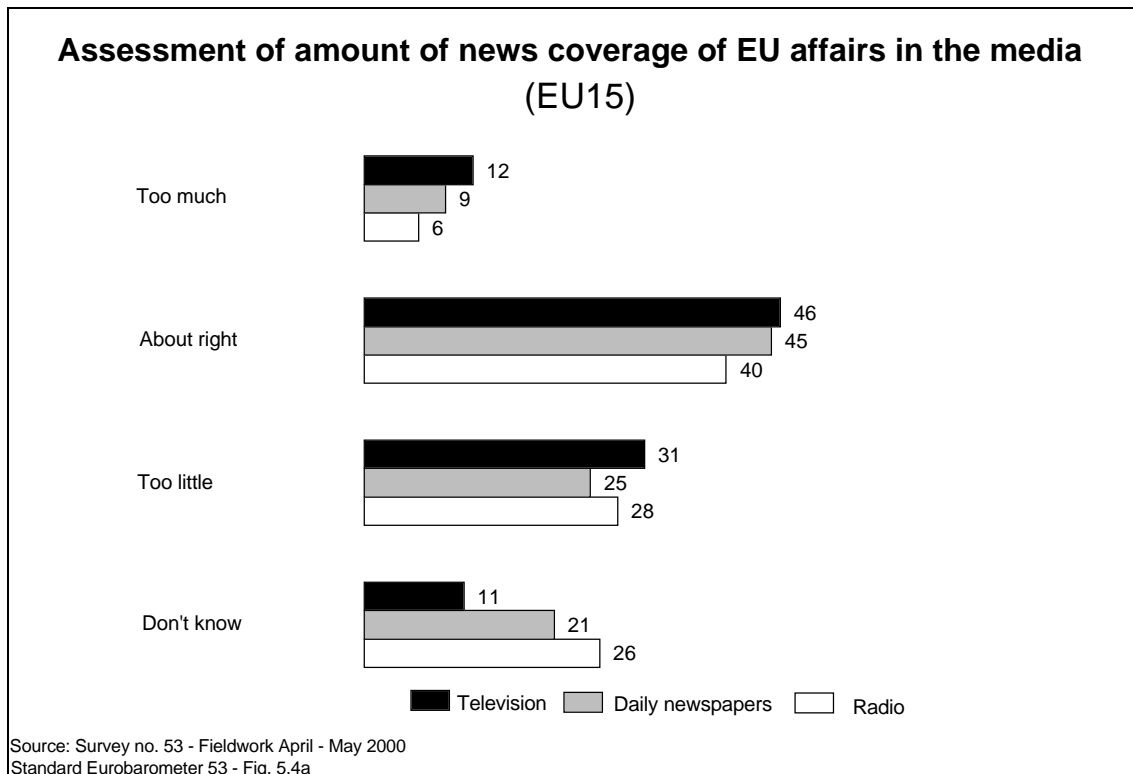
"Do you think that the amount of coverage given to European Union affairs is far too much, too much, about right, too little or far too little in..."

- the news on (NATIONALITY) television?*
- the news in (NATIONALITY) daily papers?*
- the news on (NATIONALITY) radio stations?"*

As the following graph shows, there are very few people who feel that the three media provide too much news coverage of EU affairs whilst a significant proportion of EU citizens feels that the media don't provide enough coverage. 31% feel television shows too little coverage, 28% feel this way about the radio and 25% feel this way about daily newspapers²¹.

²⁰ See table 5.3c for country results.

²¹ At 26% for the radio and 21% for the daily newspapers, the proportion of "don't know" responses is higher than what we typically find on the Eurobarometer. The proportion of "don't know" responses for the question about the television is much lower (11%).



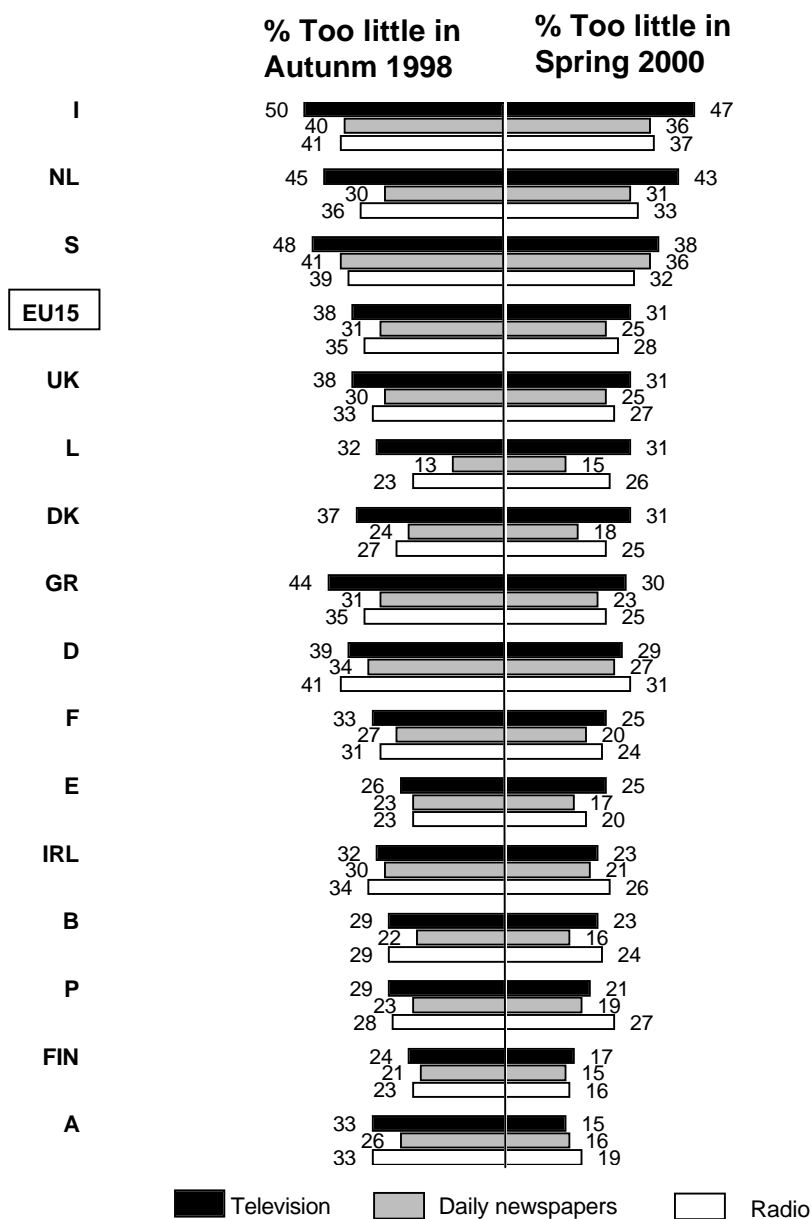
Country by country results show that people in Italy (47%) are by far most likely to feel that the amount of coverage given to European affairs in the news on **television** is too little, followed by people in the Netherlands (43%) and Sweden (38%). The proportion of people that feels that the amount of news coverage is too much is highest in Austria (24%), followed at a distance by Portugal (17%), Spain (16%), France and Greece (both 15%). In Finland (68%), Belgium (60%), Ireland, Denmark (both 55%), Austria (54%) and France (51%) more than half of the public feels that the amount of coverage given to European affairs in the news on television is about right.

The Finns are also most likely to feel that the amount of coverage given to European affairs in the news in **daily papers** is about right (65%), followed by people in Luxembourg, Denmark (both 59%) and Belgium (58%). Other countries where more than half of the population shares this view are Ireland (55%), Austria (52%) and Sweden (51%). People in Italy, Sweden (both 36%) and the Netherlands (31%) are most likely to feel that the amount of coverage given to European affairs in daily papers is too little. Austria is the only country where at least 2 in 10 people feel that there is too much coverage of EU affairs.

When it comes to the **radio**, we find that Italy (37%) has the highest proportion of people that feels that coverage of EU affairs is too little. Other countries where more than 3 in 10 people share this view are the Netherlands (33%), Sweden (32%) and Germany (31%). Austrians are again most likely to feel that there is too much coverage (17%). Spain is the only country where the figure exceeds 10%. Like the other two media, the Finns are most likely to feel that the amount of coverage is about right (58%). The other countries with scores above 50% are, in descending order, Belgium, Denmark, Austria and Ireland.

In many countries, people are now significantly more likely than they were when the previous measurement was taken in the autumn of 1998 to feel that the amount of media coverage is about right. Whilst we have noted that a significant minority feels that there isn't enough media coverage of EU affairs, the situation is now much better than it was in autumn 1998. This is highlighted by the following graph. (See also tables 5.4a-c)

Assessment of amount of news coverage of EU affairs in the media



Source: Eurobarometer 50.0 - Fieldwork Oct - Nov 1998

Eurobarometer 53 - Fieldwork April - May 2000

Standard Eurobarometer 53 - Fig. 5.4b

Percentage "don't know" not shown

Perceived fairness of the media's coverage of EU affairs

Like in the autumn of 1998, 1 EU citizen in 2 on average feels that the media in their respective country cover EU affairs in a fair way. Analyses show that frequent users of the news media are more likely to feel positive about the way the media cover EU affairs than people who use the news media less frequently²². However, around a third of the population holds the view that the media's coverage is not fair regardless of how often people use the news media. As the following table shows, the less often people use the news media, the more likely it is that they don't feel able to judge whether its coverage of EU affairs is fair or not.

²² See Appendix C for a definition of the Media Use Index.

Perceived fairness of the media's coverage of EU affairs by scores on the Media Use Index			
Media Use Index:	% saying media coverage is very + quite fair	% saying media coverage is not very + not at all fair	% Don't know
+++	54%	30%	17%
++	51%	31%	18%
--	46%	32%	22%
---	28%	28%	45%

People's views also vary depending on how much they feel they know about the European Union²³. 63% of people who feel they know a great deal (i.e. those who put themselves on points 8 to 10 on the scale) believe the media's coverage of EU affairs in their country is fair, compared to only 37% of people who feel they know very little about the European Union. However, people who feel they know a great deal are also most likely to feel that the coverage of EU affairs is not fair, whilst people who feel they know very little are most likely to lack an opinion on the issue. The proportion of "don't know" responses goes up as self-perceived knowledge levels go down.

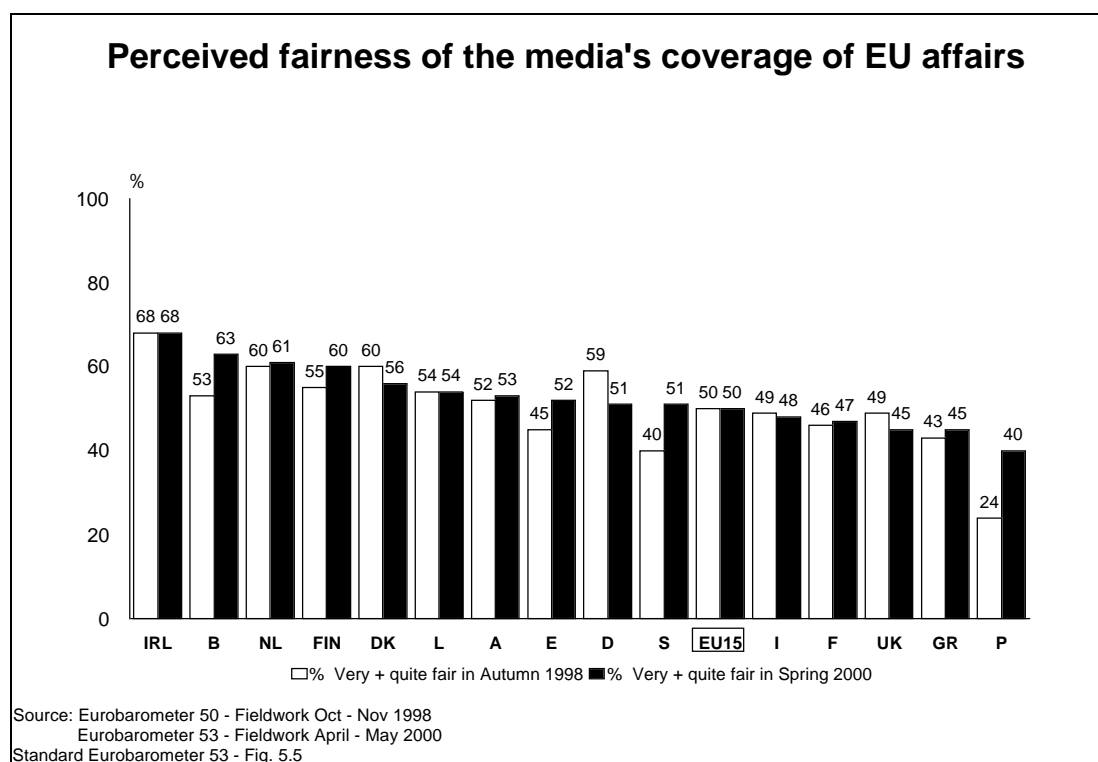
Perceived fairness of the media's coverage of EU affairs by self-perceived knowledge of the European Union			
Self perceived knowledge of EU affairs (score on scale From 1-10):	% saying media coverage is very + quite fair	% saying media coverage is not very + not at all fair	% Don't know
Knows a great deal about the EU (score 8-10)	63%	33%	4%
Knows a bit about the EU (score 4-7)	58%	31%	11%
Knows very little about the EU (score 1-3)	37%	29%	34%

People's assessment of whether the media cover EU affairs in a fair way also depends on how they feel about the European Union in general. Those who hold favourable attitudes are far more likely to feel that the media's coverage in their country is fair than those who hold negative attitudes towards the EU are. The view that the media's coverage of EU affairs is not fair also varies significantly depending on how people feel about the European Union in general.

²³ See Appendix C for a definition of the self-perceived knowledge scale. The next section of this chapter reports on the levels of self-perceived knowledge amongst the EU population.

Perceived fairness of the media's coverage of EU affairs by people's attitudes towards the European Union			
Attitude:	% saying media coverage is very + quite fair	% saying media coverage is not very + not at all fair	% Don't know
Image of EU is positive	62%	27%	11%
EU membership is a good thing	61%	27%	13%
EU membership is a bad thing	39%	44%	18%
Image of EU is negative	36%	46%	19%

Looking next at how the perceived fairness of the media's coverage varies from country to country shows that, as in 1997 and 1998, people in Ireland are most likely to believe it is very or quite fair (68%). Around 6 in 10 people in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Finland give their country's media a positive mark, with results significantly more positive in Belgium (+10) and Finland (+5) than they were in the autumn of 1998. At 55%, Denmark comes in 5th place, although people are now less positive (-5). In 5 other countries, more than half the population believes the media cover European Union affairs in a fair manner. At 40%, people in Portugal continue to be least likely to share this view, although a great improvement is recorded since autumn 1998. Nonetheless, after Greece (41%) the Portuguese are still most likely to feel that the media's coverage is not fair (40%). In France (39%), Italy (37%) and Denmark (35%) more than a third of the people also feel this way. (Table 5.5a)



The socio-demographic analyses show that managers are most likely to hold the view that the media coverage of EU affairs in their respective country is fair (58%), followed by people who stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or older (56%) and students (55%). People who stayed in full-time education until the age of 15 or younger (43%), unemployed people (45%) and people who look after the home (47%) are least likely to share this view. However, as can be seen there is relatively little spread between the highest and the lowest reported percentage. This also applies to the view that the media do not cover EU affairs in a fair way, with a spread of only 8 percentage points from 26% amongst young people and students to 34% amongst self-employed people. Generally, we find that the lower the proportion of "don't know" responses is, the more likely it is that a group is of the view that the media covers EU affairs in a fair way. (Table 5.5b)

5.3. Self-perceived knowledge of the European Union

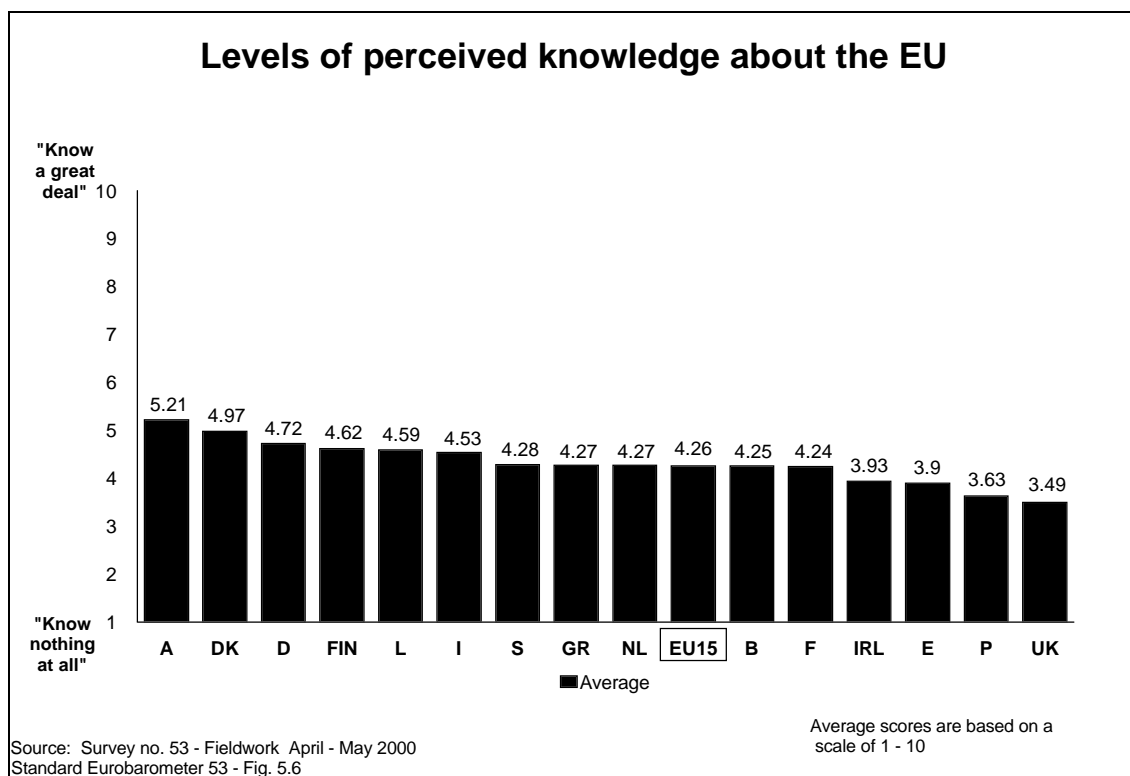
For several years the Eurobarometer has asked respondents how much they feel they know about the European Union and to date self-perceived knowledge levels have been relatively low²⁴. The EU15 results presented in the table below show that only 26% of EU citizens feel they know quite a lot to a great deal about the European Union (i.e. those choosing the numbers 6 through 10 on the scale).

Self-perceived knowledge of EU affairs Spring 2000 (in %, EU15)	
Scale	%
1 (Know nothing at all)	11
2	11
3	16
4	15
5	18
6	11
7	8
8	5
9	1
10 (Know a great deal)	1
Don't know	2
Average score	4.26

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 scores²⁵ for each of the 15 countries.

²⁴ The question is: "how much do you feel you know about the European Union, its policies, its institutions". Respondents 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.

²⁵ 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.



As in the autumn of 1999, knowledge levels are highest in Austria, where the average score is 5.21, and lowest in the UK, where the average score is 3.5. In comparison to autumn 1999, average knowledge levels have remained relatively stable with the highest positive shift noted in Denmark (+.26) and the highest negative shift noted in Belgium (-.12)²⁶.

An inspection of the distribution of responses shows that 39% of Austrians feel they know quite a lot to a great deal (i.e. score 6 and higher on the scale) about the European Union. At 35%, the Danes come in second place followed by the Italians (33%), the Germans (32%), the Finns and the Dutch (both 30%). Portugal (15%) and Spain (19%) are the only two countries where less than 2 in 10 people feel they know quite a lot to a great deal about the European Union. (Table 5.6²⁷)

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 Index²⁸.

²⁶ See Eurobarometer No. 52, figure 2.5.

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ 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: ++	5.91
Managers	5.41
Educated up to age 20+	5.21
Media Use Index:+++	4.85
Opinion Leadership Index: +	4.79
Self-employed	4.76
Men	4.69
Employees	4.58
Students	4.51
Aged 40-54	4.49
Aged 25-39	4.32
Average for EU15	4.26
Media Use Index: ++	4.25
Educated to age 16-19	4.21
Aged 55+	4.14
Retired	4.14
Opinion Leadership Index: -	4.10
Aged 15-24	4.04
Manual workers	3.93
Unemployed	3.89
Women	3.84
Media Use Index: --	3.65
Educated to age 15 or younger	3.58
House persons	3.53
Opinion Leadership Index: --	3.08
Media Use Index: ---	2.82

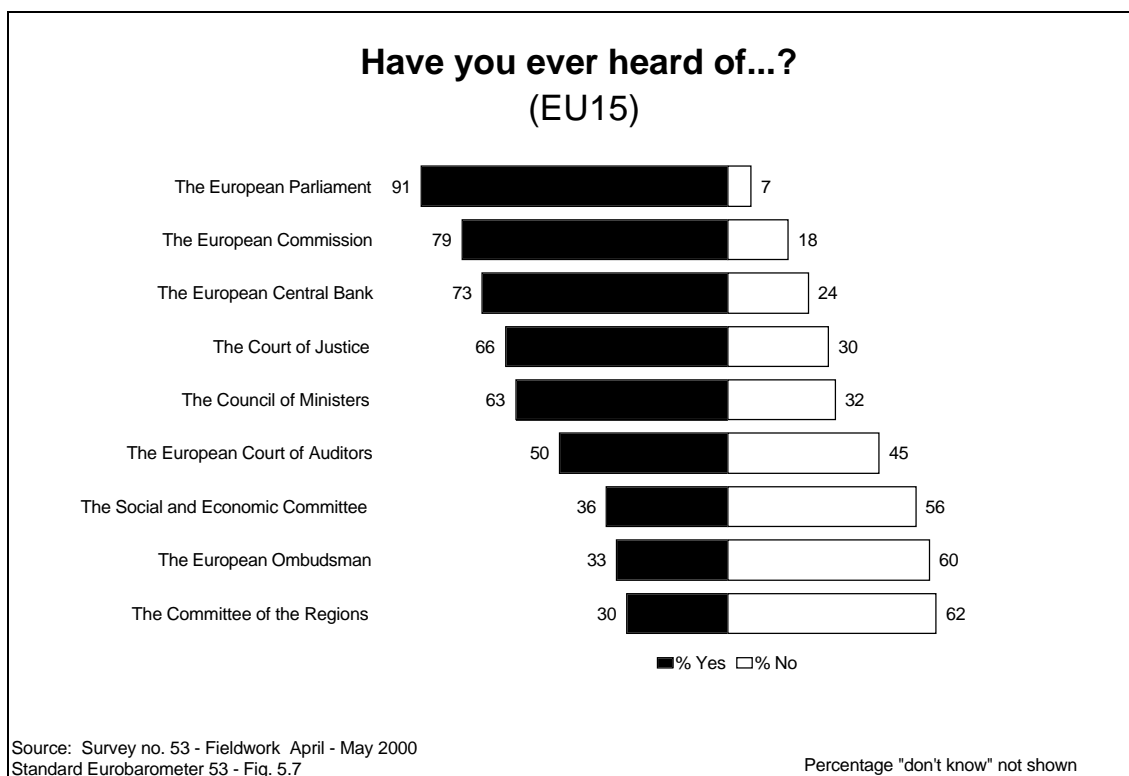
Comparing these results with those obtained in the autumn of 1999 shows that the gap between those who feel most knowledgeable and those who feel least knowledgeable has increased from 2.82 to 3.08. The rank order remains more or less unchanged.

5.4. Awareness of the European Union institutions and bodies

For the third time in a row, the survey has measured public awareness of 9 of the European Union's institutions and bodies²⁹.

²⁹ The question asks respondents whether they have ever heard of the institution/body in question. The results of a similar question measuring whether people have recently seen or heard something about the European Parliament through the media are presented in chapter 4. Chapter 3 reports on the extent to which people regard these institutions as important and on the extent to which they trust them.

The public is most likely to have heard of the European Parliament (91%), followed by the European Commission (79%) and the European Central Bank (73%). People are least likely to have heard of the two youngest EU institutions - the Committee of the Regions (30%) and the Social and Economic Committee (36%) - and the European Ombudsman (33%).



In comparison to autumn 1999, awareness levels for a number of the institutions have increased (+4 for the ECB, the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors; +3 for the Council of Ministers) but the rank order remains the same³⁰.

The country results indicate that awareness levels for the **European Parliament** are above 90% in all countries except Greece (85%), Germany (87%) and the UK (88%). At least 9 in 10 people in Finland (95%), Denmark, Luxembourg (both 94%), Sweden (92%) and Belgium (90%) have heard of the **European Commission**. Greece (69%), Germany (72%) and the UK (74%) are the only countries where less than three-quarters of the people have heard of it. Awareness of the **European Central Bank** is most widespread in Finland (89%) and the Netherlands (85%) and least widespread in Greece (55%) and the UK (57%). People in Denmark (92%) are most likely to have heard of the **Court of Justice**, whilst people in Italy (52%) are least likely to know of its existence. People in Luxembourg (86%) are most likely to have heard of the **Council of Ministers**, whilst awareness levels are lowest in the UK (37%). Awareness of the **European Court of Auditors** is most widespread in Luxembourg (74%) and least widespread in the UK (15%). In the Nordic countries - Denmark (25%) Finland (32%) and Sweden (39%), awareness levels are also below average. People in Luxembourg (58%) are most likely to have heard of the **Social and Economic Committee**, whilst people in the Netherlands (21%) are least likely to have heard of it. As in the autumn of 1999, the **European Ombudsman** - Jacob Söderman from Finland - is by far most recognised in his home country (81%). He is least known in Germany (22%). Awareness of the **Committee of the Regions** is most common in Austria (53%) and Portugal (49%), whilst people in the Netherlands (12%) are least likely to be aware of the existence of this institution. (Table 5.7)

³⁰ See Eurobarometer No. 52, figure and table 2.6.

In order to provide a general impression of awareness levels in each of the Member States, we have calculated an average by summing up the percentage of “aware” responses for each institution/body and dividing this by the total number of items (9) proposed in the survey. As the following table shows 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/bodies, in % by country)	
Country	%
Luxembourg	74
Finland	70
Austria	70
Denmark	66
Ireland	67
Portugal	62
France	62
Sweden	62
Belgium	61
Spain	61
Germany	60
The Netherlands	58
EU15	58
Italy	57
Greece	56
United Kingdom	45

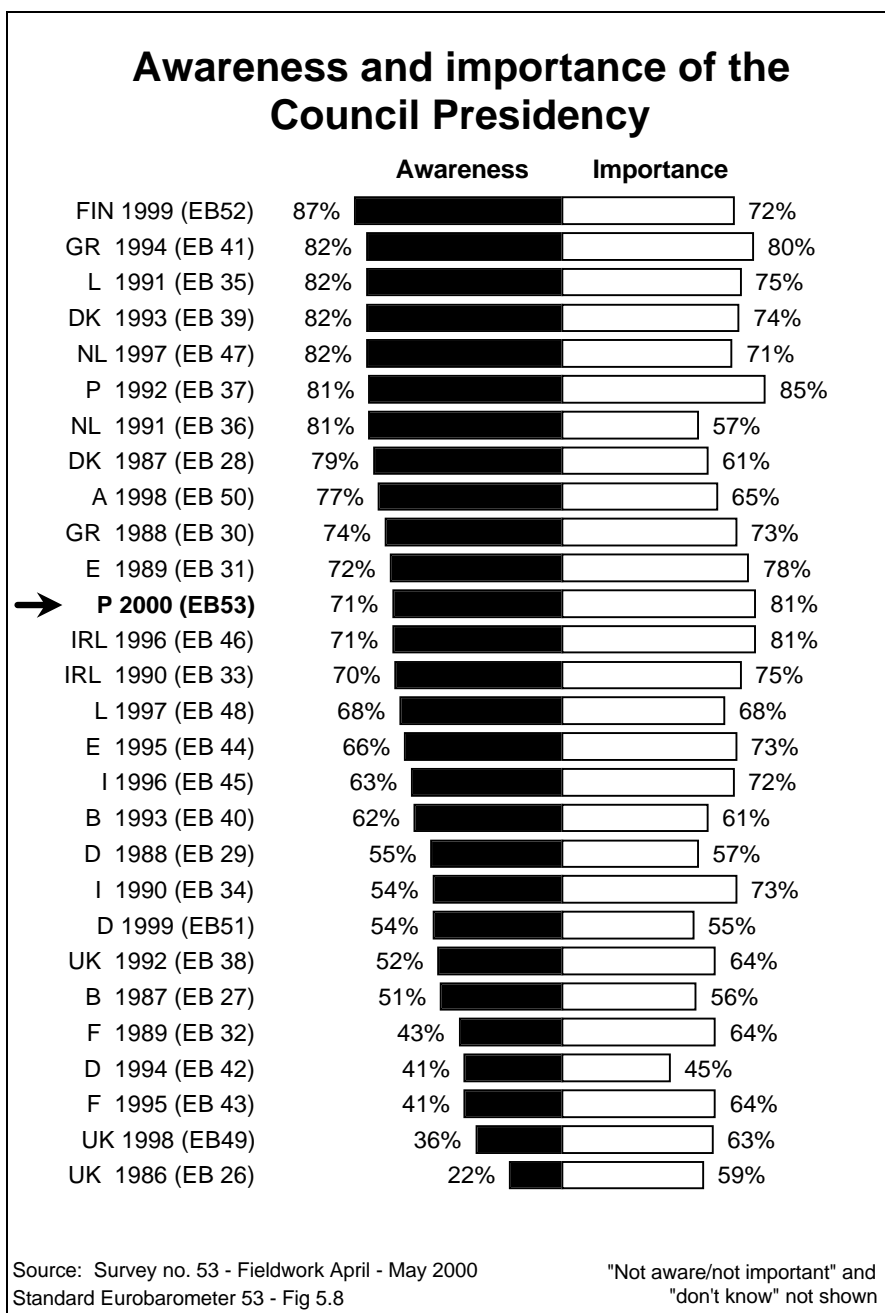
Awareness levels not only vary from country to country but also depend on how knowledgeable people feel they are about the European Union. The following table shows that the more people feel they know about the EU, the more likely it is that they have heard of the EU institutions.

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	98%	95%	84%
European Commission	96%	88%	65%
European Central Bank	93%	83%	56%
Court of Justice	92%	75%	50%
Council of Ministers	88%	73%	45%
Court of Auditors	79%	59%	33%
Social & Economic Committee	69%	44%	20%
Committee of the Regions	63%	37%	16%
European Ombudsman	58%	39%	22%

5.5. Awareness and importance of the Council Presidency

Since 1986, the Eurobarometer has looked at the awareness and the perceived importance of the Council of Ministers Presidency in the country that presides at the time of the survey³¹. During the first six months of the year 2000, the Presidency was held by Portugal.

As the following graph shows, 71% of the Portuguese were aware that their country held the Presidency. This is considerably lower than when Portugal held the Presidency for the first time in 1992 (-10). 81% of people in Portugal considered the Presidency an important event, which is also slightly lower than in 1992 when 85% of the Portuguese felt this way.



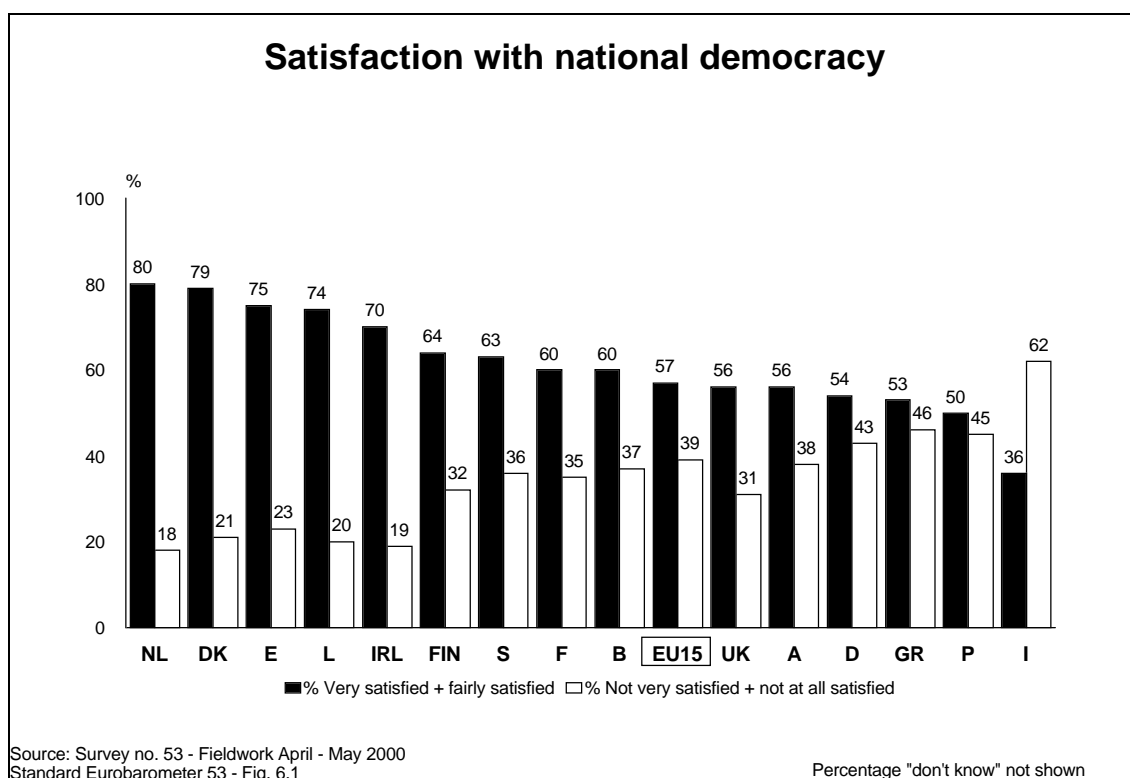
³¹ Each Member State of the European Union holds in turn the Presidency for a period of six months.

6. Democracy and citizenship

In this chapter we examine public satisfaction levels with the way democracy works in each of the Member States and with the way it works in the European Union. We also look at the extent to which EU citizens feel European. The chapter ends with an overview of national pride in the European Union countries.

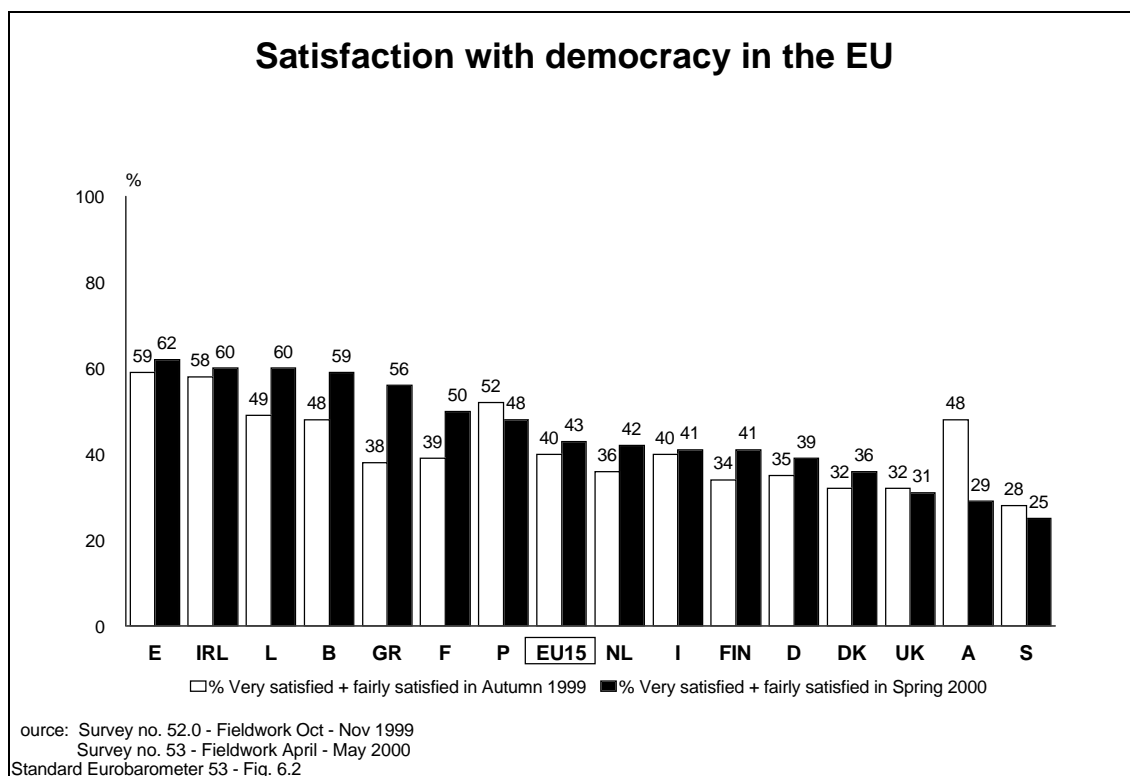
6.1. Satisfaction with democracy

When we look at the way democracy works in the Member States we find that at least three quarters of the people in the Netherlands, Denmark and Spain are satisfied. In Luxembourg and Ireland, 7 in 10 people give their country's democracy a positive assessment. The same is true for 6 in 10 people living in Finland, Sweden, France, Belgium, the UK and Austria and for 5 in 10 people living in Germany, Greece and Portugal. Italy is the only country where a majority of people is not satisfied with the way democracy works (62%). However, this negative assessment is less widespread than it was in autumn 1999 when 70% of Italians were not satisfied. (Table 6.1a)



Demographic analyses show that managers (64%) are most likely to feel satisfied with the way democracy works in their country whilst unemployed people (47%) are the only group with a satisfaction level below 50%. Attitudinal analyses show a 31 per cent gap in satisfaction levels between people who see their country's membership to the European Union as a good thing and those who regard it as a bad thing. (Table 6.1b)

Looking at satisfaction with the way democracy works in the European Union shows significantly more positive scores in many of the Member States in comparison to the previous survey.



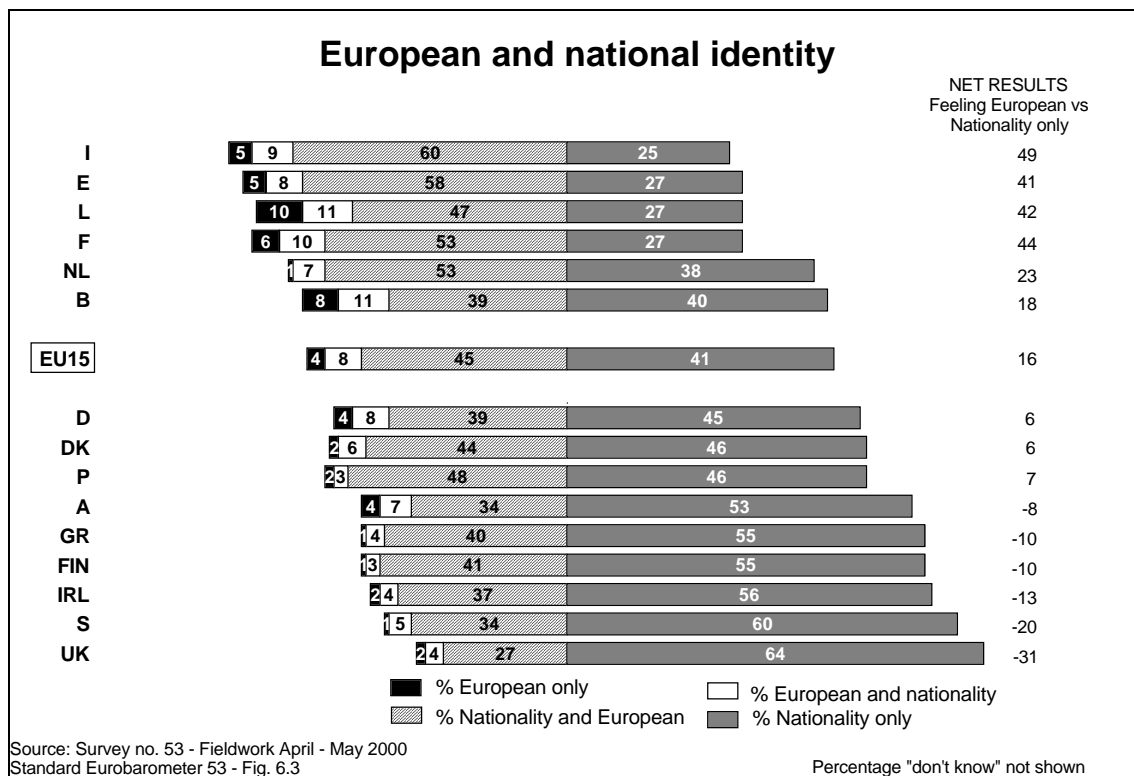
Whilst satisfaction levels are highest in Spain (62%), the largest improvements are noted in Greece (+18), Luxembourg, Belgium, France (all +11), Finland (+7) and the Netherlands (+6). In all but one of the other countries shifts of ± 4 percentage points or less are noted. Austria is the only country where a real drop in satisfaction levels (-19) has been recorded. As we have already seen throughout this report, Austrian public opinion towards the European Union is significantly less popular in spring 2000 following the sanctions which the other Member States have imposed against this country. (Table 6.2a)

The demographic analyses show that students (52%) and young people in general (51%) are most likely to feel satisfied with the way democracy works in the European Union whilst people who left school before the age of 15 and unemployed people (both 37%) are least likely to share this view. The proportion of "don't know" responses varies greatly and to a certain extent explains the differences in satisfaction levels.

Attitudinal analyses show an even larger gap between supporters and opponents of the European Union than the one obtained for satisfaction with national democracy with 61% of supporters feeling satisfied compared to only 18% of opponents. (Table 6.2b)

6.2. European and national identity

In 9 of the 15 Member States, the majority of people say they feel European when asked how they see themselves in the near future, though most people do not regard themselves as exclusively European.



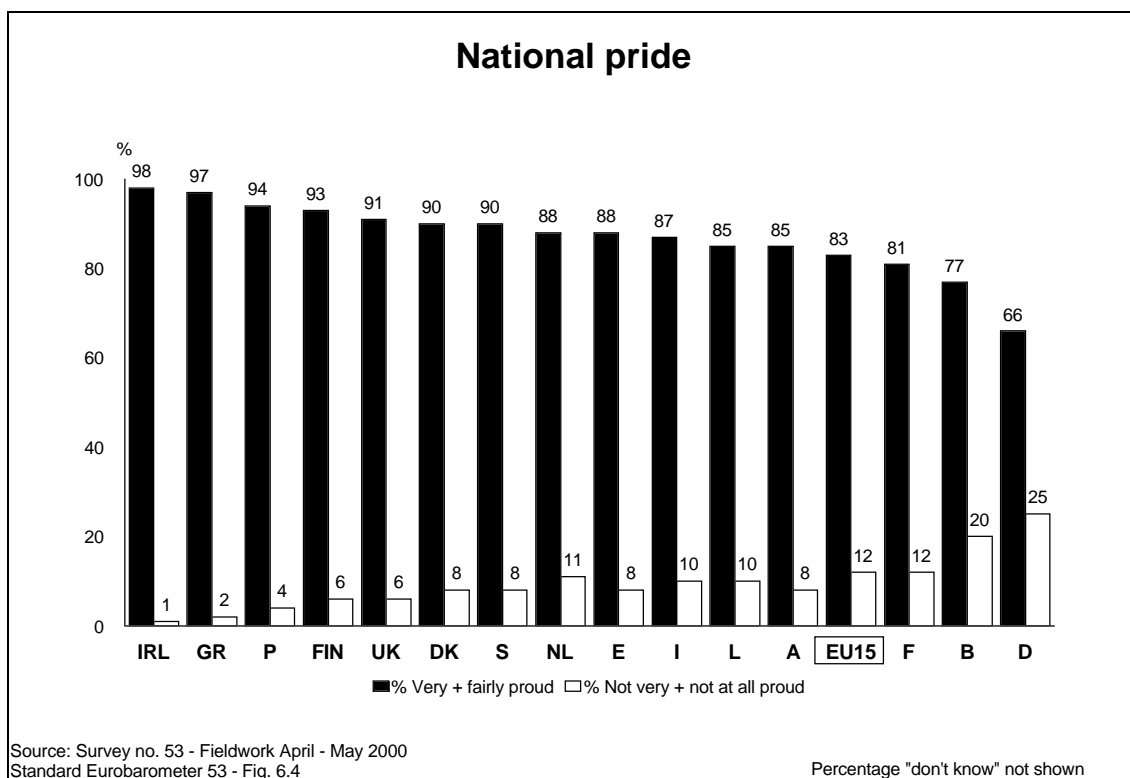
Because Luxembourg contains a high proportion of citizens from other EU countries, we once again find that people in this country are most likely to feel European only. In all other countries, less than 10% of the population share this feeling. When we include people who feel somewhat European, Italians top the list at 74%, followed by Spain (71%), France (69%) and Luxembourg (68%). The 5 other countries where people who feel (to some extent) European are in the majority are the Netherlands (61%), Belgium (58%), Portugal (53%), Denmark (52%) and Germany (51%). In the other 6 countries, people who identify only with their own nationality are in the majority, although in some of these countries this majority is very small. National identity is clearly the prevalent sentiment in the UK (64%) and Sweden (60%).

We know from time trend analyses that the development of feeling European is very static so that there is usually very little movement from one measurement to the next. Exceptionally, this time we do find quite significant shifts. In France and Denmark, for instance, the proportion of people that only identifies with the nationality has dropped by 12 and 10 percentage points, respectively, whilst in Luxembourg there is a shift towards increased national identity. However, as usual, there is very little movement in the proportion of people that feels European only except in Luxembourg (-10). (Table 6.3a)

The demographic analyses show that managers and people who left full-time education by the age of 20 or older are most likely to feel to some extent European (both 75%). Retired people (54%) and people who left school before the age of 15 (53%) are most likely to identify with their own nationality.

The attitudinal analyses shows that 76% of people who regard their country's membership to the European Union as a good thing feel to some extent European. At the other extreme we find that 69% of people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing identify with their own nationality. (Table 6.3b)

On a related issue, national pride ranges from 66% in Germany to 98% in Ireland. (Table 6.4)



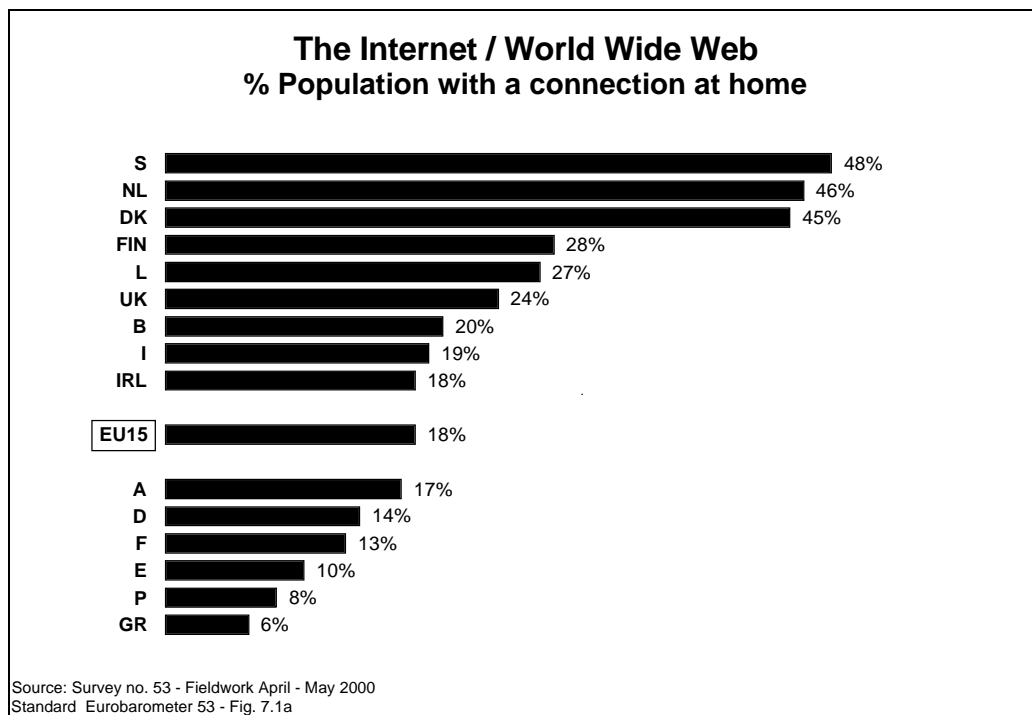
7. Other dimensions of the European Union

In this chapter we briefly look at a number of issues that were covered on the spring 2000 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 much greater detail in special Eurobarometer reports³².

7.1. The Internet

Over the last few years, the Internet has become a household phenomenon world wide. Whilst not too long ago, access to the Internet was limited to academic establishments, it is now widely used by the public and it is now possible to buy almost anything through the Internet. E-commerce is one of the fastest growing business developments of the moment. Because of the increasing importance and prominence of the Internet, the Eurobarometer has measured the extent to which EU households are connected³³.

As the following graph shows, connection rates are much higher in the Nordic countries than they are in Southern Europe. They range from 6% in Greece to 48% in Sweden. Denmark and the Netherlands are the only two other countries where more than 4 in 10 households are connected³⁴.

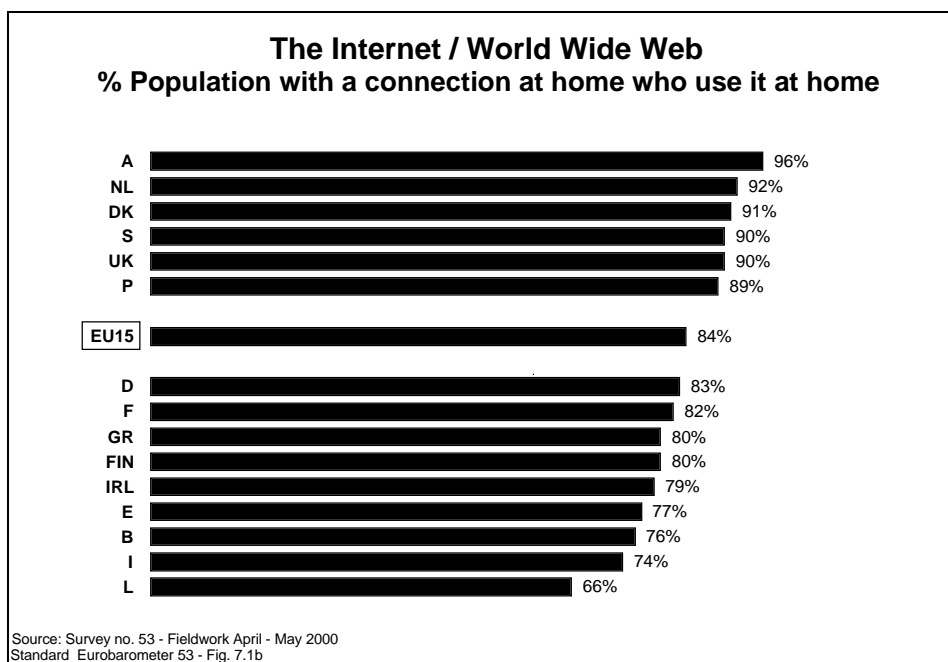


The survey also measures the extent to which the people who have a connection at home also make use of it. The results are astounding. Home use ranges from 66% in Luxembourg to 96% in Austria. There are 4 other countries where at least 9 in 10 people who have a connection use the Internet and in 13 of the 15 Member States, this applies to at least 3 in 4 respondents. (Table 7.1)

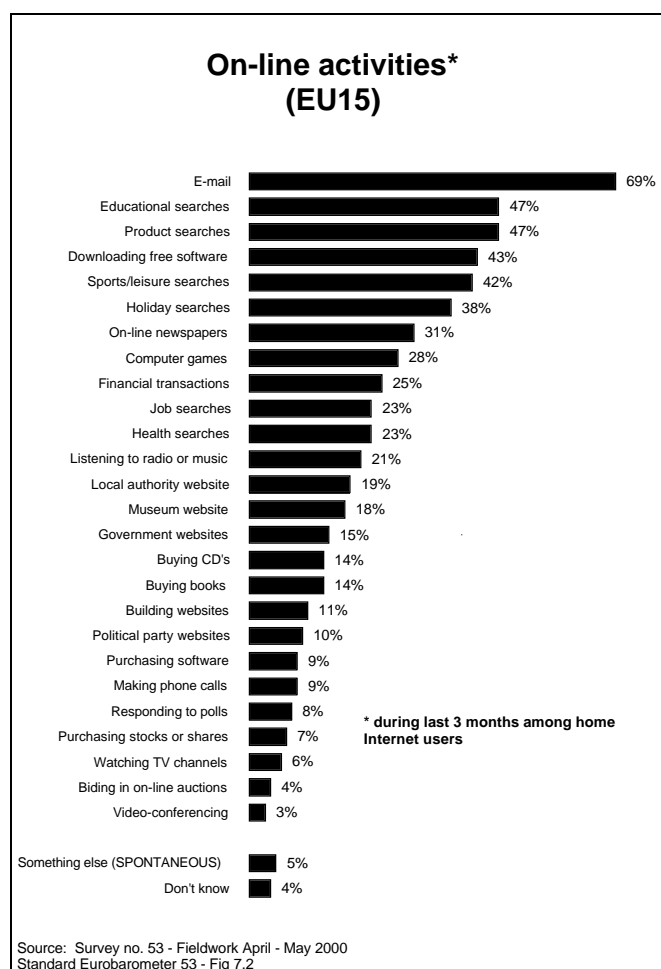
³² See Appendix D for more information on special Eurobarometer surveys and reports.

³³ Specifically, the question measures the extent to which people have an Internet connection at home.

³⁴ Whilst home access rates are still relatively low, many people have access through the Internet at work. There are also many public establishments, like street telephones and cafes where people can access the Internet.



Looking at how people use their on-line connection shows that 69% of respondents³⁵ have e-mailed family, friends or colleagues in the last three months. The next most popular activities are to search for educational materials and documents and to search for information about a specific product (both 47%).



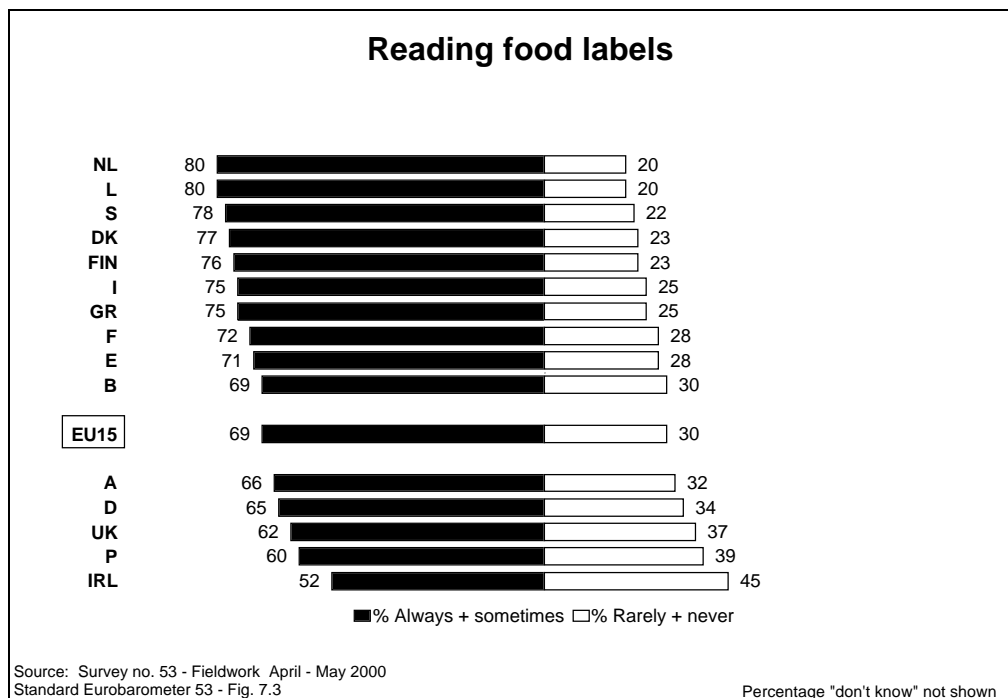
³⁵ The question was asked to respondents who have an Internet connection at home and who say they use it.

The following table lists the three most popular on-line activities amongst home Internet users in each of the Member States. As can be seen **e-mail** is the most popular activity in all countries except Greece where searches for information on sport and leisure activities are the most popular and where e-mail comes in shared third place with **playing computer games**. The proportion of respondents that has searched for **educational materials and documents** in the last three months ranges from 33% in Italy to 58% in Spain. It makes the top three in 12 of the 15 Member States. The proportion of respondents that has **searched for information about a specific product** ranges from 38% in Spain to 58% in Finland. It makes the top three in 10 countries. Apart from Greece, **searches for information on sport and leisure activities** also make the top three in 4 other countries. **Downloading free software** is one of the three most popular on-line activities in The Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg and Austria. Respondents in Finland are most likely to go on-line to **carry out operations on their bank account** (64%) and it is the only country where this makes the top three. (See also table 7.2)

Top Three On-Line Activities IN THE MEMBER STATES (IN %)			
Belgium		Luxembourg	
E-mail	58	E-mail	70
Educational search	54	Education/product search	43
Leisure search	46	Downloading free software	41
Denmark		The Netherlands	
E-mail	86	E-mail	63
Product search	54	Downloading free software	57
Educational search	47	Product search	46
Germany		Austria	
E-mail	73	E-mail	56
Product search	53	Downloading free software	41
Educational search / Downloading free software	51	Education/product search	39
Greece		Portugal	
Leisure search	63	E-mail	49
Educational search	55	Educational search	45
E-mail / computer games	54	Product search / read news	39
Spain		Finland	
E-mail	71	E-mail	80
Educational search	58	Financial transactions	64
Leisure search	50	Product search	58
France		Sweden	
E-mail	59	E-mail	79
Educational search	43	Product search	49
Leisure search	42	Educational search	44
Ireland		United Kingdom	
E-mail	71	E-mail	75
Educational search	56	Educational search	56
Product search	45	Product search	52
Italy			
E-mail	63		
Leisure search	48		
Product search	40		

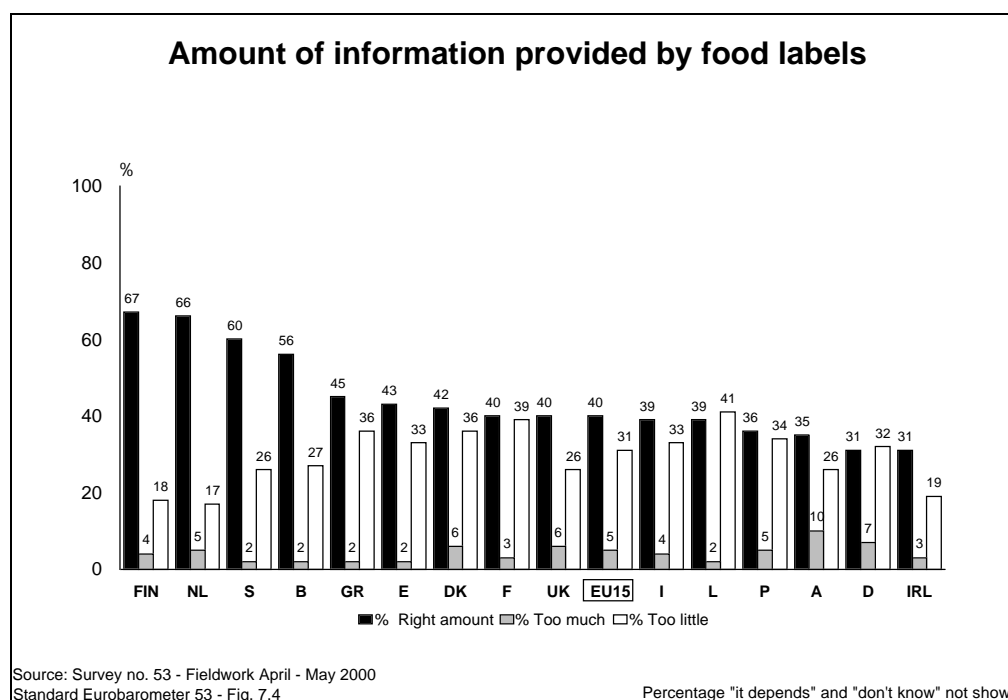
7.2. Food product labels

Moving on to a very different but equally important subject, the survey asked respondents a number of questions about labels on food products. The following graph shows that 7 in 10 EU citizens on average say they read the labels always or sometimes.



The country by country analyses show that people in the Netherlands and Luxembourg are most likely to read the labels (80%) with three quarters of respondents in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Italy and Greece saying they do this. At 45%, people in Ireland are most likely to say that they rarely or never read labels on food products. (Table 7.3)

The survey also asks respondents how much information they feel these food labels provide. 4 in 10 said that they provide the right amount of information with 31% feeling they provide too little information. Only 5 respondents in 100 said the food labels provide too much information.

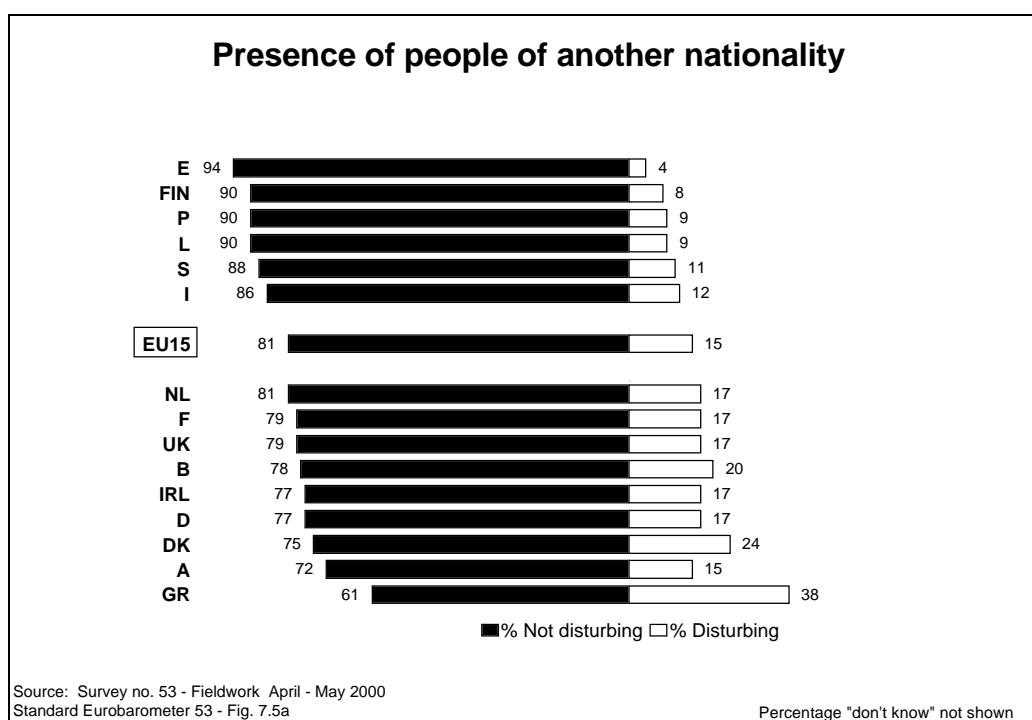


Looking at the country results shows that more than half of the public in Finland (67%), the Netherlands (66%), Sweden (60%) and Belgium (56%) feels that food labels provide the right amount of information and in most other countries this is also the most common opinion. The exceptions are Luxembourg (41%) and Germany (32%) where people who feel food labels provide too little information are in a slight majority. France (39%), Greece, Denmark (both 36%), Portugal (34%), Spain and Italy (both 33%) are other countries where at least a third of the public feels that food labels provide too little information. (Table 7.4)

7.3. Attitudes to people of a different nationality, race or religion

We end this chapter by presenting the results of a set of questions which in essence are a measure of xenophobia and racism. Respondents were asked whether they personally find the presence of people of another nationality, race and religion disturbing.

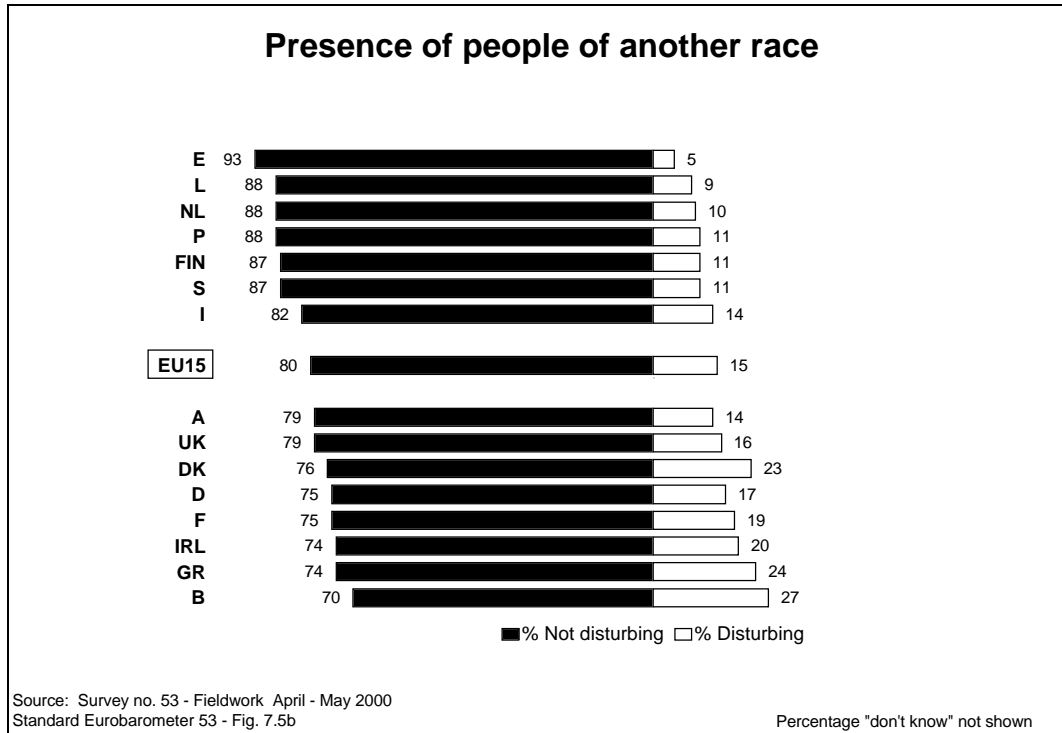
Looking first at how the public feels about people of another nationality, we find that 8 in 10 EU citizens do not find this disturbing. However, 15% admit to having a problem when they are in the presence of people of another nationality.



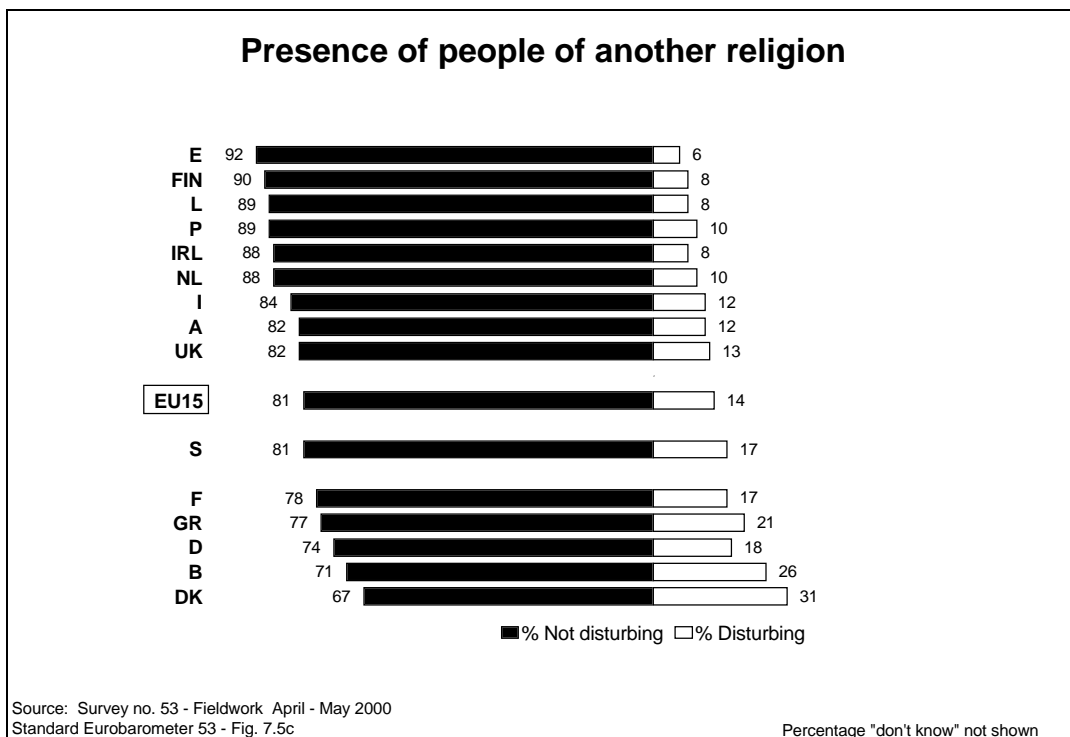
People in Spain (94%) are least likely to have a problem with foreigners, with 9 in 10 people in Finland, Luxembourg and Portugal sharing the view that the presence of people of another nationality is not disturbing. People in Greece are least likely to agree and 38% admit that they don't like being in the presence of foreigners. Denmark (24%) and Belgium (20%) are the only 2 other countries where at least 2 in 10 respondents say that they find the presence of people of another nationality disturbing. (Table 7.5a)

Looking next at how the public feels about people of another race, we find very similar results with 8 in 10 EU citizens not finding this disturbing and 15% admitting to having a problem when they are in the presence of people of another race.

Again we find that people in Spain (93%) are least likely to have a problem, with more than 8 in 10 people in Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Finland and Italy sharing the view that the presence of people of another race is not disturbing. People in Belgium are most likely to feel that the presence of people of another race is disturbing (27%), followed by people in Greece (24%), Denmark (23%) and Ireland (20%). In the other countries less than 2 in 10 respondents feel that the presence of people of another race is disturbing. (Table 7.5b)



When it comes to being in the presence of people of another religion, the results are again nearly identical with 8 in 10 people having no problem and 14% of respondents saying that they find this disturbing.



The country by country results show that around 9 in 10 respondents in Spain, Finland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Ireland and the Netherlands do not find the presence of people of another religion disturbing. People in Denmark are most likely to disagree with 31% of respondents saying they find this disturbing. Belgium and Greece are the only two other countries where more than 2 in 10 people have a problem when they are in the presence of people of another religion. (Table 7.5c)