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PUBLIC OPINION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Directorate-General Press and Communication
Rue de la Loi 200 (BREY 7/150)
B - 1049 Brussels

Telephone : (32.2) 299.30.85
Fax : (32.2) 296.17.49
E-mail : eurobarometer@cec.eu.int

Internet : http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion

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Introducing the Eurobarometer

Eurobarometer public opinion surveys ("standard Eurobarometer surveys") have been conducted each spring and autumn since autumn 1973 on behalf of the Directorate-General Press and Communication of the European Commission, Opinion Polls. 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 European Opinion Research Group, a consortium of Market and Public Opinion Research agencies, made out of INRA (EUROPE) and GfK Worldwide. 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 Directorate-General Press and Communication of the European Commission, Opinion Polls (Head of Unit: Mr. Thomas Christensen), is an internal working document of the European Commission.

Types of surveys in the Eurobarometer series

The European Commission (Directorate-General Press and Communication) 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*
- *In the near future: Applicant Countries Eurobarometer*
- *Telephone Flash EB, also used for special target group surveys (e.g. Top Decision Makers)*
- *Qualitative research ("focus groups"; in-depth interviews)*

The face-to-face general public standard Eurobarometer surveys and the Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 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/public_opinion**

HIGHLIGHTS

This 55th Eurobarometer report presents an analysis of public opinion towards the European Union in spring 2001. The key findings are:

Support for EU membership and benefit from EU membership

- Forty-eight percent of EU citizens support their country's membership to the European Union. This is slightly lower than in autumn 2000 (-2). The proportion of people that regards their country's EU membership as a bad thing continues to be very small (13%). 45% of Europeans feel their country has benefited from EU membership while 30% disagree.

People's emotive stance towards the EU

- For more than 4 in 10 Europeans, the European Union conjures up a positive image (42%). Only 18% have a negative image of the EU.
- If told that the European Union had been scrapped, 28% of respondents would feel very sorry, 45% would feel indifferent and 14% would be very relieved.

Trust in the European Union, its institutions and bodies

- Forty-one percent of Europeans tend to trust the European Union, 40% tend not to trust it and 20% lack an opinion.
- Of 9 institutions and bodies included in the survey, the European Parliament is most widely trusted (52%), followed by the Court of Justice (46%) and the European Commission (45%). People are now significantly less likely to lack trust in the European Commission (-3).

Support for the single currency, the euro

- At 59%, support for the single currency is significantly higher than it was in autumn 2000 (+4). 66% of respondents living in the "EURO 12" countries support the euro (+4). Support for the euro has also increased in the 3 "pre-in" countries, from 23% to 27%.

Support for enlargement

- Asked whether the European Union should be enlarged and include new countries, 43% of respondents are in favour and 35% are against. However, when given more answer options the survey finds that 44% believe that the European Union should be enlarged to include only some of the countries wishing to join, with a further 21% showing outright support for enlargement. With this more specific question we find that only 16% of respondents believe that the EU should not be enlarged to any additional countries.

Support for a common defence policy and a common foreign policy

- Support for a common defence and security policy continues to be widespread (73%) and two in three Europeans believe the European Union should have one common foreign policy (65%).

EU is most widely trusted to control the effects of globalisation

- From a list that includes among others national governments, citizens themselves and the United Nations, the European Union is at 36% most widely trusted by the public to control the effects of globalisation.

Self-perceived knowledge of the European Union

- Twenty-one percent of EU citizens know quite a lot to a great deal about the European Union (i.e. those choosing the numbers 6 through 10 on the scale), compared to 29% in autumn 2000.

Access to information technology

- The survey reveals a large increase in access to modern forms of information technology. Nearly half of all EU citizens now have access to a computer (45%), compared to 35% in spring 1999. Access to the Internet has doubled since spring 1999 to 30% and 25% now have access to a modem, up from 17% in spring 1999.

Knowledge of languages

- Forty-seven percent of EU citizens speak a language other than their mother tongue well enough to take part in a conversation. However, there are large variations between the Member States, with people in Luxembourg most likely to speak a 'foreign' language (97%) and people in the UK (27%) least likely to do so.

Life satisfaction

- Life satisfaction levels are currently very high with 83% of EU citizens feeling very or fairly satisfied with the life they lead.
- Thirty-eight percent of EU citizens feel their present situation has improved compared with 5 years ago and only 16% feel it has got worse. As for the future, 42% believe their personal situation will improve over the next 5 years while only 10% believe it will get worse.

Young Europeans

- An oversample of people aged 15 to 24 shows that young Europeans are most likely to view the meaning of being a citizen of the European Union as the right to work in any of the 15 Member States (57%).

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REPORT

Introduction

This first report of the 3rd Millennium presents results from the first and second wave of Eurobarometer survey No. 55. The survey was fielded in all 15 Member States during spring 2001. The aim of the report is to give readers an overview of how European citizens feel about the European Union, its policies and its institutions, although a number of other, related, issues are also presented.

The report begins with an examination of **overall satisfaction levels among EU citizens** at the beginning of the year 2001. The chapter also examines how people feel about their present personal situation compared to 5 years ago and how they think their situation will evolve over the coming 5 years.

Chapter 2 looks at **long-term developments in public opinion** towards the European Union. Here the standard indicators - **support for EU membership** and **perceived benefit from EU membership** - are presented. The chapter also reports on **people's emotive stance towards the European Union**: does it conjure up a positive image and how would people feel if they were told tomorrow that it had been scrapped? Furthermore, the chapter analyses people's **trust in the European Union and 9 of its institutions and bodies**. The chapter ends by presenting the results of a question that measures public **support for a European Union Constitution**.

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 regards the **Union's current actions as priorities**, and then presents **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 examines the extent to which people pay **attention to news about the European Union** in comparison to news about other issues. The chapter also looks at the **sources people use and prefer when they look for information about the EU**. **Self-perceived knowledge levels about the European Union** are also covered in this chapter, as are **awareness and importance levels of 9 of the Union's institutions and bodies**. The chapter ends with a brief look at awareness levels of the **Presidency of the Council of Ministers** during the first half of the year 2001.

Chapter 5 entitled "**Europeans and Languages**" reports on the languages spoken, known and considered most useful by EU citizens.

The final chapter presents some findings of a special over-sample of young people and ends with a brief presentation of how Europeans feel about a number of other dimensions of life in the European Union.

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.

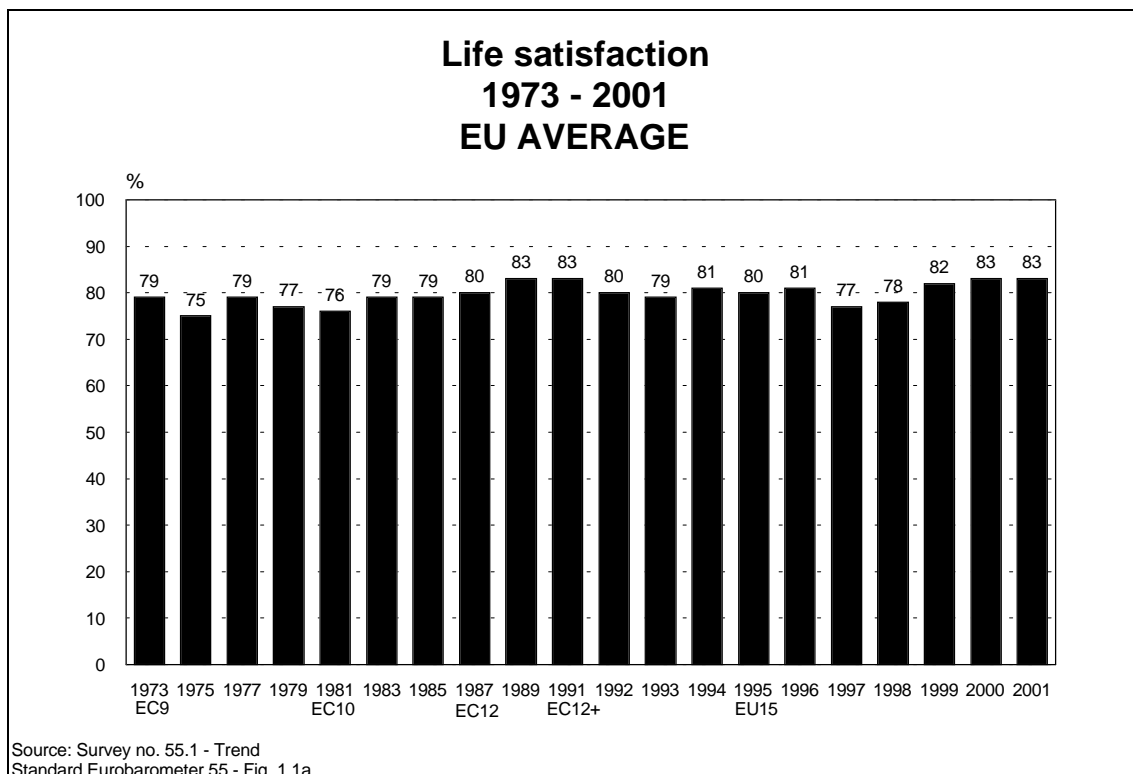
1. Life satisfaction and trust in institutions

This chapter examines life satisfaction levels among European Union citizens at the beginning of the third Millennium and looks at how satisfaction levels have evolved since the Eurobarometer first started in 1973. The chapter also looks at people's assessment of their present situation compared with 5 years ago and at their expectations for the coming 5 years. The second part of the chapter examines the extent to which EU citizens trust various institutions in their country, like the media, government, the church, and the judicial system.

1.1. Life satisfaction

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

As in autumn 2000, in the first survey of the third Millennium 83% of EU citizens say they are very or fairly satisfied with the life they lead. Life satisfaction levels in the EU are currently at a peak. Only in 1989 and 1991 did we find this same high score. However, throughout the 28 years that the Eurobarometer has been fielded the majority of Europeans have been satisfied with the life they lead. The graph below shows that at least 75% of respondents have given a positive assessment of their life, although there has been some variation over time. As one would expect, satisfaction levels are high in periods of economic well-being – which explains the current peak – and lower during more difficult times, such as in 1975 when people were feeling the economic effects of the oil crisis.



The following graph shows that satisfaction levels vary significantly among the individual Member States.



Denmark is the only country where more than half of the population feels very satisfied (62%) with a further 35% reporting that they feel fairly satisfied. In the Netherlands, 48% feel very satisfied and 47% feel fairly satisfied. Sweden (95%) and Luxembourg (92%) are the two other countries where more than 9 in 10 people feel satisfied with the life they lead. Satisfaction levels are lowest in Greece (57%), followed at a distance by Portugal (69%).

As noted earlier, at the EU15 level, no change has been recorded since autumn 2000. Although the absence of change at the EU15 level sometimes does not reflect significant increases or drops in individual countries, this is not the case here. Within the 15 Member States there has been very little movement in satisfaction levels since the previous survey. Only in Ireland, Austria (both +4) and Luxembourg (+3) do we find a significant increase whilst Greece (-4) is the only country where satisfaction levels have dropped significantly. (Table 1.1a)

The demographic analyses show no significant differences between men and women. Among the 4 age groups (those aged 15 to 24, 25 to 39, 40 to 54 and 55 and over) we find that the proportion of very satisfied people is significantly higher for the youngest segment of the population (26%) than it is for the other age groups. Large variations are found among the various occupational groups in the population, with satisfaction levels ranging from 62% among unemployed people to 90% among managers. Education is also a good indicator of how satisfied people are with the life they lead. People who are still studying (89%) or people who stayed in school until the age of 20 or older (87%) are significantly more likely to feel satisfied than people who left school aged 15 or younger (78%) or aged 16 to 19 (83%)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 (88%) than people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing (66%). (Table 1.1b)

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

1.2. Life satisfaction compared with 5 years ago

The following graph shows that 38% of EU citizens feel that their present situation has improved compared with 5 years ago, 45% feel it has stayed about the same and only 16% feel it has got worse.



The graph above shows that there are large differences of opinion among the populations from the 15 Member States. At 54%, the Irish are most likely to feel that their present situation has improved, with 50% of Dutch and Swedish respondents sharing this view. In the UK (46%), Denmark (44%), Luxembourg (41%), Spain and Italy (both 40%) at least 4 in 10 people feel their situation has improved during the past 5 years. In Germany only 26% 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 (55%), followed by Spanish (51%) and Austrian (50%) respondents. At 33%, people in Greece are most likely to say that their situation got worse during the past five years, followed at a distance by people in Portugal (20%). In all other Member States, less than 2 in 10 people feel their situation has got worse.

In comparison to the previous measurement, taken in spring 2000, we find that in Italy, the Netherlands, the UK, Germany and Belgium, people are now more likely to view their present situation favourably. In Spain, people are now more likely to feel that their situation has remained unchanged (+5). Greece (+12) and to a far lesser extent Portugal (+4) are the only countries where people are now more likely to feel their situation has got worse than they did in spring 2000. (Table 1.2a)

The demographic break-downs show that managers (55%) and young people (54%) are most likely to feel that compared with 5 years ago their present situation has improved and that unemployed people are most likely to feel that their present situation has got worse (28%).

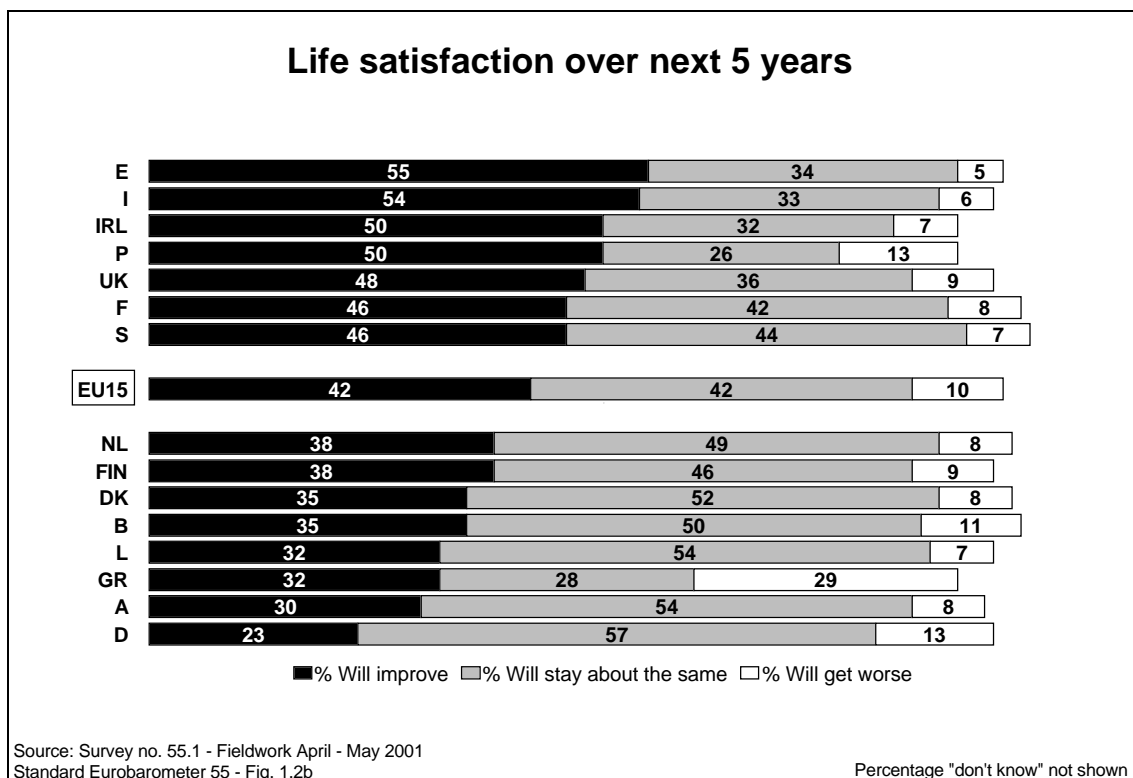
The next table shows a close correlation between life satisfaction and how people feel about their present situation compared to 5 years ago.

Relationship between life satisfaction and views about one's present situation compared with 5 years ago		
Present situation compared with 5 years ago has:	Views about life in general:	
	Satisfied	Not satisfied
	%	%
Improved	42	15
Stayed the same	47	36
Got worse	10	47
(Don't know)	1	2
<i>Total</i>	100	100

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 (45%) than are people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing (31%). Among the latter group, 28% feel their present situation has got worse, compared to only 12% of people who view their country's membership to the EU as a good thing. (Table 1.2b)

1.3. Life satisfaction over next 5 years

EU citizens generally tend to feel positive as to how their personal situation will develop in the course of the next 5 years. As the following graph shows, 42% believe it will improve while only 10% believe it will get worse. 42% of the EU population feels their personal situation will stay about the same.



Looking at the results in each Member State shows that people in Spain are most likely to expect their personal situation to improve over the next 5 years (55%), followed by people in Italy (54%), Ireland and Portugal (both 50%). Again we find that Germans are least likely to feel their situation will improve (23%) and most likely to feel that it will stay about the same (57%). People in Greece are most likely to feel that their situation will get worse (29%). In the other Member States, the proportion of people that hold this view ranges from 5% in Spain to 13% in Germany and Portugal.

Comparisons with spring 2000 results show that people in Italy, Germany and France are now somewhat more optimistic about the future whereas people in Portugal and especially in Greece are now significantly more likely to be pessimistic about the future. Though in Denmark and Luxembourg, people are now significantly less likely to be optimistic, there is no significant rise in the proportion of respondents who feel their situation will get worse. In Sweden and Austria, we find that people are now more likely to feel that their personal situation will not change within the next five years. In Finland and the Netherlands, the opposite is the case. No significant changes have been recorded in any of the other countries. (Table 1.3a)

The demographic analyses show that age is an important determinant of how people feel about their future. Students and other young people (69% and 68%, respectively) are most likely to be optimistic while retired people (15%) and those aged 55 or over (18%) are least likely to share this view. While the majority of people aged 55 and over, whether retired or not, feel that their situation will stay about the same, these people are also most likely to feel that their personal situation will get worse over the coming 5 years.

The following table shows that people who are satisfied with the life they lead are more likely than those who are not satisfied to feel that their personal situation will improve. The latter group is far more likely to feel that it will get worse.

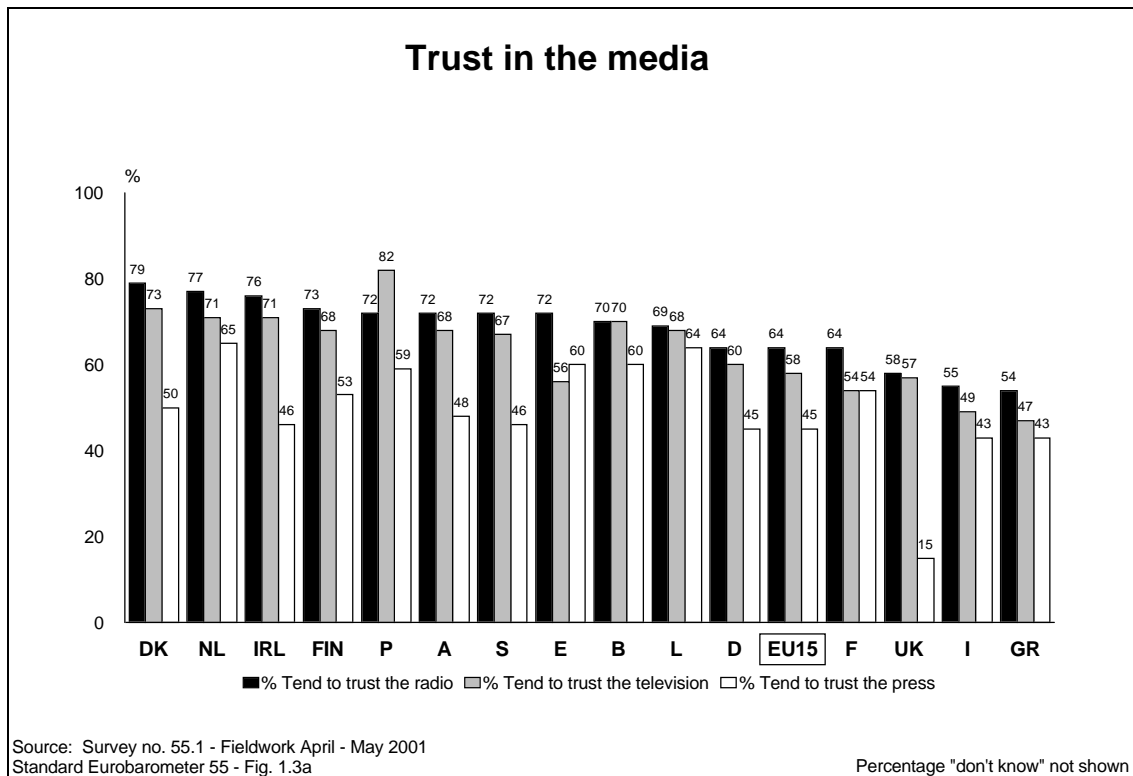
Relationship between life satisfaction and expectations of one's personal situation in 5 years		
Personal situation in 5 years will:	Views about life in general:	
	Satisfied	Not satisfied
	%	%
Improve	43	37
Stay the same	45	31
Get worse	7	23
(Don't know)	6	9
<i>Total</i>	101	100

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 (48%) than people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing (32%) are. (Table 1.3b)

1.4. Trust in the media

As in autumn 1997 and spring 1999, respondents were asked to state their trust or distrust with a large number of national and international institutions². We begin by looking at people's trust in the radio, the television and the press. 64% of respondents say they tend to trust the radio, 58% say they tend to trust the television and 45% say they tend to trust the press.

² The question contains 17 items. Results for all items but the European Union are shown in tables 1.4a to 1.4c. Results for item measuring trust in the European Union are reported separately in Chapter 2 (see also table 2.8).



The country by country results show that trust levels for the **radio** are highest in Denmark (79%), the Netherlands (77%) and Ireland (76%) and lowest in Greece (54%), Italy (55%) and the UK (58%). Trust levels for the **television** are highest in Portugal (82%), followed at a distance by Denmark (73%), Ireland and the Netherlands (both 71%) and lowest in Greece (47%) and Italy (49%). Trust levels for the **press** are highest in the Netherlands (65%), Luxembourg (64%) and Belgium (60%). At 15%, trust in the press continues to be by far the lowest in the UK, with a recorded drop of 9 percentage points since spring 1999. (Table 1.4a)

In comparison to spring 1999, people are now less likely to trust the media and the results are similar to autumn 1997³. Looking separately at each of the three media, we find that trust in the press only increased in Portugal (+10) and Luxembourg (+5) since spring 1999. Trust levels did not change significantly in Italy. In all other countries, people are now less likely to trust the press. Trust in the radio increased only in Portugal (+7), with no significant change recorded in Italy and Denmark. In all other countries, people are now less likely to trust the radio. Portugal is also the only country where people are now more likely to trust the television (+7), with no change recorded in Denmark and more negative results recorded in all other countries.

1.5. Trust in political institutions

Next we look at trust in four political institutions: the national governments, the national parliaments, the civil service and political parties. Like other surveys, the Eurobarometer shows that confidence in these institutions is low. Taken together, only 35% of Europeans trust these four institutions. The country results show that average trust levels range from 25% in Italy to 57% in Luxembourg.

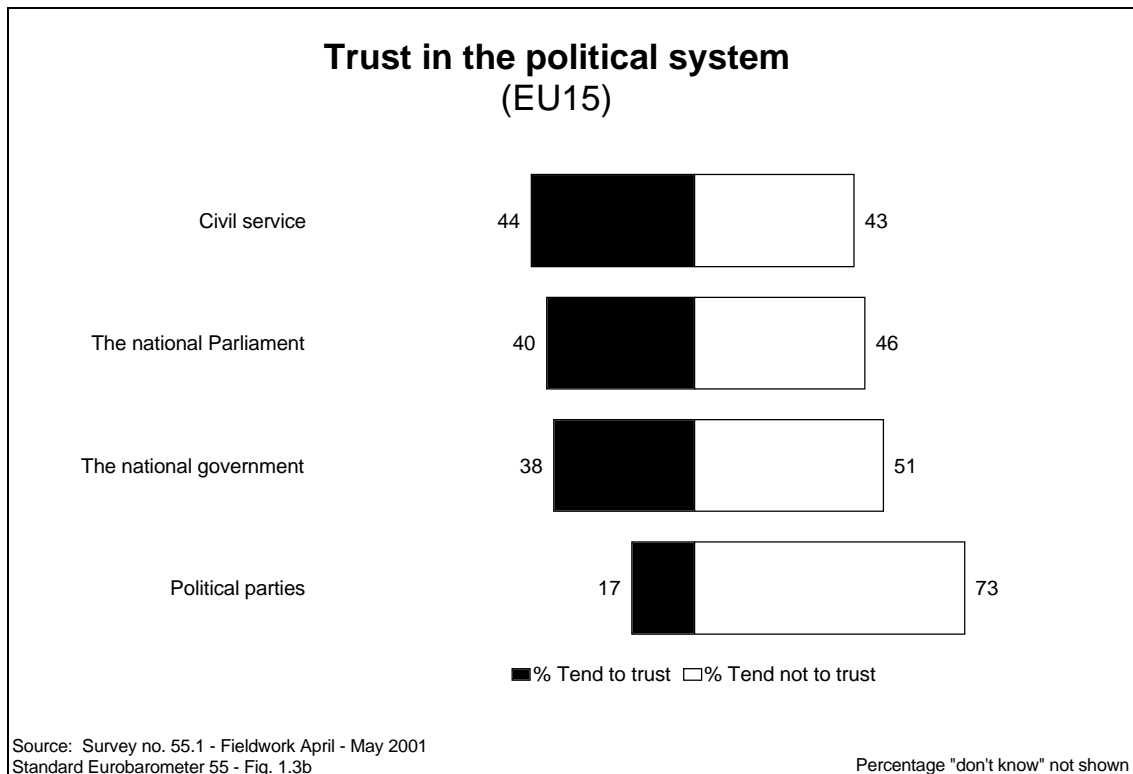
³ See Eurobarometer 51, chapter 2 and Eurobarometer 48, chapter 2.

Trust in political institutions (Average trust level of 4 institutions, in % by country)	
Country	%
Luxembourg	57
The Netherlands	52
Denmark	50
Austria	45
Finland	43
Ireland	42
Sweden	40
Spain	40
Portugal	39
Germany	36
Belgium	36
<i>Average for EU15</i>	35
Greece	34
France	32
United Kingdom	31
Italy	25

In comparison to spring 1999 we find the largest increase in average trust levels for the 4 political institutions in Belgium (+10), followed by Denmark (+7), Luxembourg, Sweden (both +6) and Ireland (+3). In Portugal (-5), the Netherlands, Greece (both -4) and the United Kingdom (-3), the average trust level is now significantly lower than it was in spring 1999⁴.

The graph next page depicts the results for each of these 4 institutions at the EU15 level. It shows that EU citizens are most likely to trust their country's civil service (44%), while only 17% tend to trust the political parties in their country.

⁴ See Eurobarometer No. 51, chapter 1.



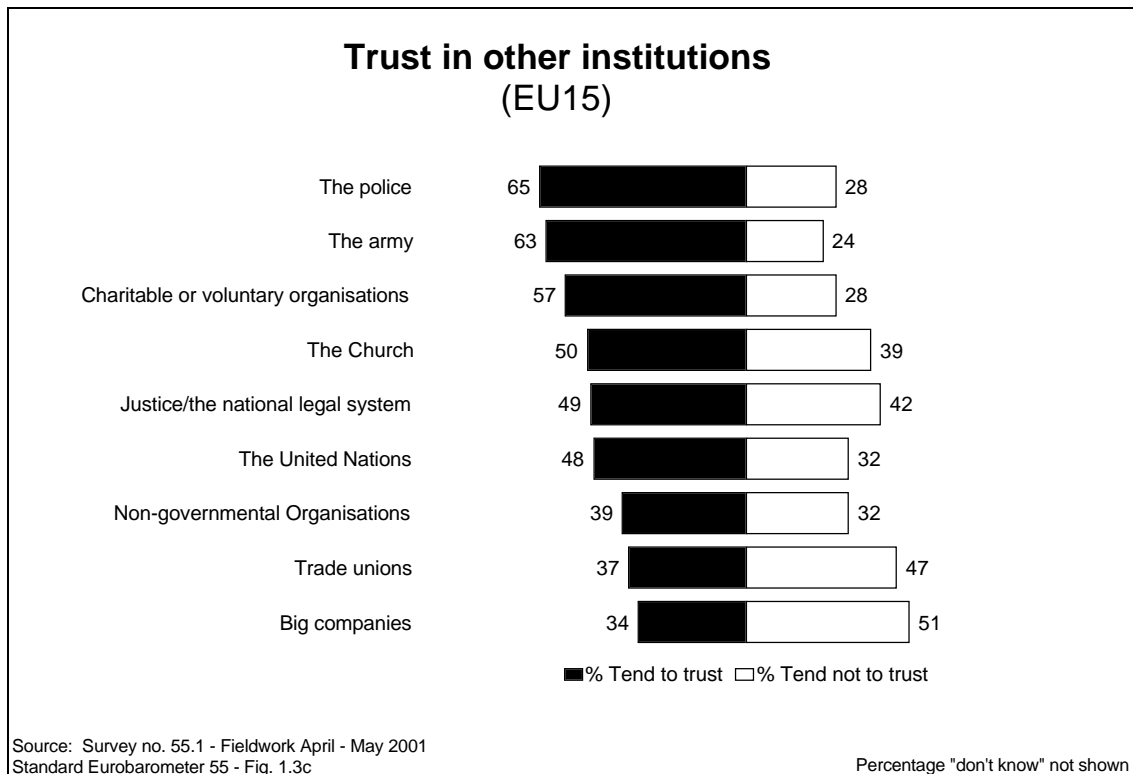
The country by country analyses show that trust in one's country's **civil service** is most widespread in Austria (69%), followed by Luxembourg (63%), Ireland (62%) and Denmark (57%). It is lowest in Italy (27%) and Greece (31%). Trust in the national **Parliament** is most widespread in Luxembourg (64%) and the Netherlands (62%) and least widespread in Italy (32%), the UK (34%) and France (35%). Trust in the national **government** is also most widespread in Luxembourg (68%) and the Netherlands (62%) and again least widespread in Italy (29%), the UK (31%) and France (33%). Trust levels in **political parties** are low throughout the Member States and range from 11% in France and Italy to 34% in Denmark. (Table 1.4b)

1.6. Trust in other institutions

Next we look at trust in the following other institutions:

- The justice / legal system in each country
- The police
- The army
- The church
- Trade unions
- Big companies
- The United Nations
- Non-Governmental organisations
- Charitable or voluntary organisations

The next graph shows that at 65%, EU citizens are most likely to trust the police, followed by the army (63%). Less than 4 in 10 people tend to trust big companies (34%), Trade unions (37%) and NGO's (39%).



The next table shows which three of these other institutions are most widely trusted in each Member State. The **Police** tops the list in 8 of the 15 Member States, comes in second place in 1 country and in third place in a further 4 countries. Greece and Portugal are the only countries where the police doesn't make the top three. The **Army** tops the list in 5 Member States, comes in second place in 6 countries and in third place in 2 countries. It doesn't make the top three in Spain and the Netherlands. **Charities** top the list in Spain and France, come in second place in Belgium and the United Kingdom and in third place in Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal. The **Justice System** comes in second place in the Netherlands and Austria and in third place in Germany. The **Church** comes in second place in Greece and Portugal and in third place in Denmark, Italy and Finland. Sweden is the only country where the **United Nations** makes the top three though trust levels are just as high in Denmark (68% and 69%, respectively). Spain is the only country where **NGO's** make the top three. At 62% trust levels for NGO's are significantly higher in Spain than they are in other Member States. None of the other institutions and bodies make the top three. (See also table 1.4c⁵)

⁵ For a comparison with spring 1999 results, see Eurobarometer 51, tables 1.2b+c.

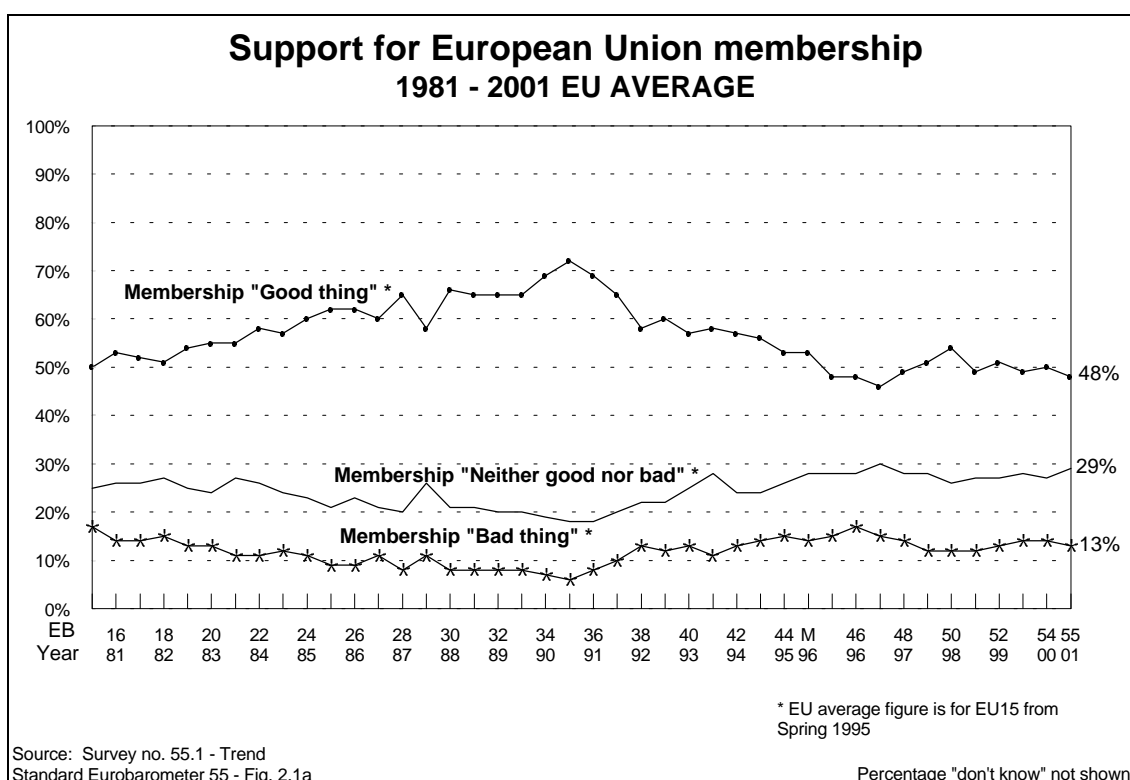
TOP THREE MOST WIDELY TRUSTED INSTITUTIONS (IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)	
Belgium	
The army	51
Charities	50
The police	49
Denmark	
The police	88
The army	75
The Church	75
Germany	
The police	72
The army	61
The justice system	58
Greece	
The army	86
The Church	78
Charities	64
Spain	
Charities	64
NGO's	62
The police	57
France	
Charities	68
The army	59
The police	55
Ireland	
The army	77
The police	72
Charities	69
Italy	
The police	66
The army	63
The Church	56
Luxembourg	
The police	73
The army	62
Charities	58
The Netherlands	
The police	70
The justice system	60
Charities	59
Austria	
The police	77
The justice system	70
The army	65
Portugal	
The army	73
The Church	73
Charities	62
Finland	
The police	88
The army	86
The Church	71
Sweden	
The police	69
The United Nations	68
The army	61
United Kingdom	
The army	72
Charities	66
The police	66

2. Attitudes to the European Union in 2001

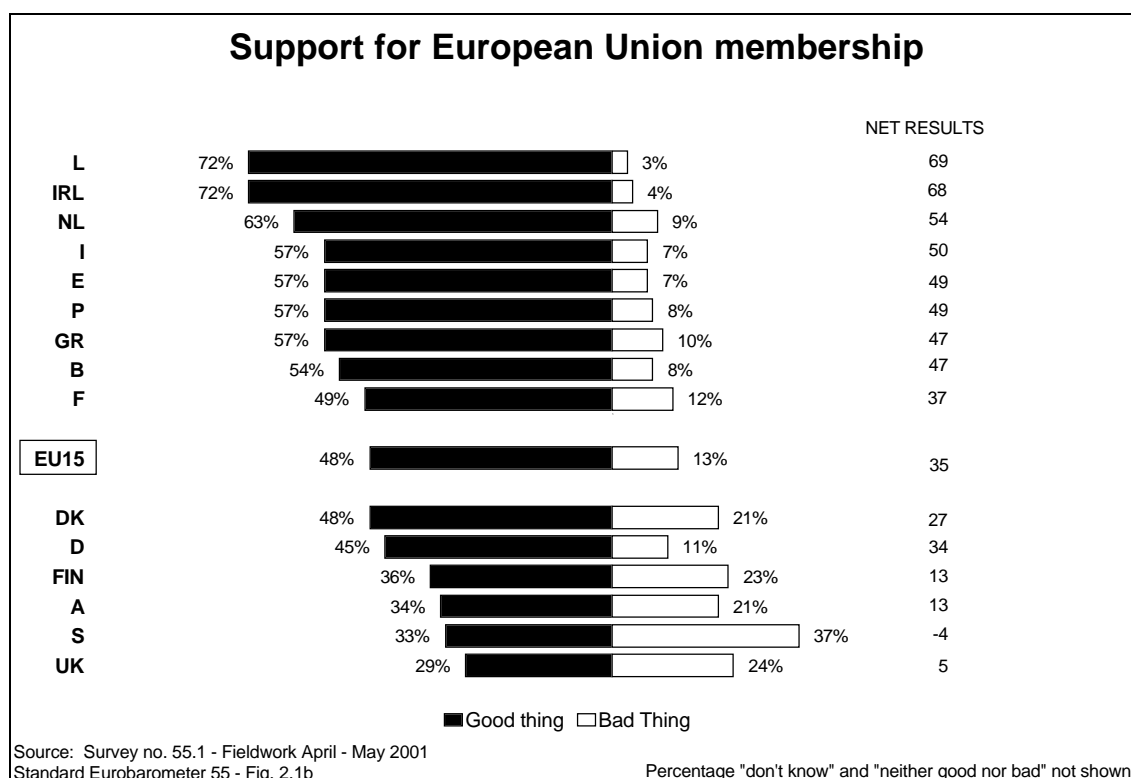
In this chapter we look at developments on some of the standard indicators of support for the European Union. We also present the results of a number of more recent questions that measure public opinion towards the European Union.

2.1. Support for European Union membership

In spring 2001, 48% of Europeans regard their country's membership to the European Union as a good thing. This is slightly lower than in autumn 2000 (-2) but does not reflect a significant shift in public opinion. In fact, the proportion of people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing has gone down from 14% to 13% and thus continues to be very low.



Looking at public support for European Union membership during the last decade of the Second Millennium shows that an all-time high of 72% was recorded in the spring of 1991. 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 all led to a drop in public support during the mid-nineties resulting in a low of 46% being recorded in the spring of 1997. Until autumn 1998, support for the European Union then steadily increased. This upward trend ended when the Santer Commission resigned on March 15 1999 with support levels dropping from 54% in autumn 1998 to 49% in spring 1999. Support hovered around the 50% mark until the end of the Second Millennium. Opposition to the EU has remained low throughout the 1990's. (See also individual country graphs, figs. 2.3 a-o)



The graph above shows that more than 7 in 10 people in Luxembourg and Ireland (both 72%) support their country's membership to the European Union. In the Netherlands (63%) more than 6 in 10 people support their country's membership and in Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece (all 57%), and Belgium (54%) support for EU membership is obtained from more than half of the population. Opposition to EU membership ranges from 3% in Luxembourg to 37% in Sweden, which is the only country where those against EU membership outnumber those in favour.

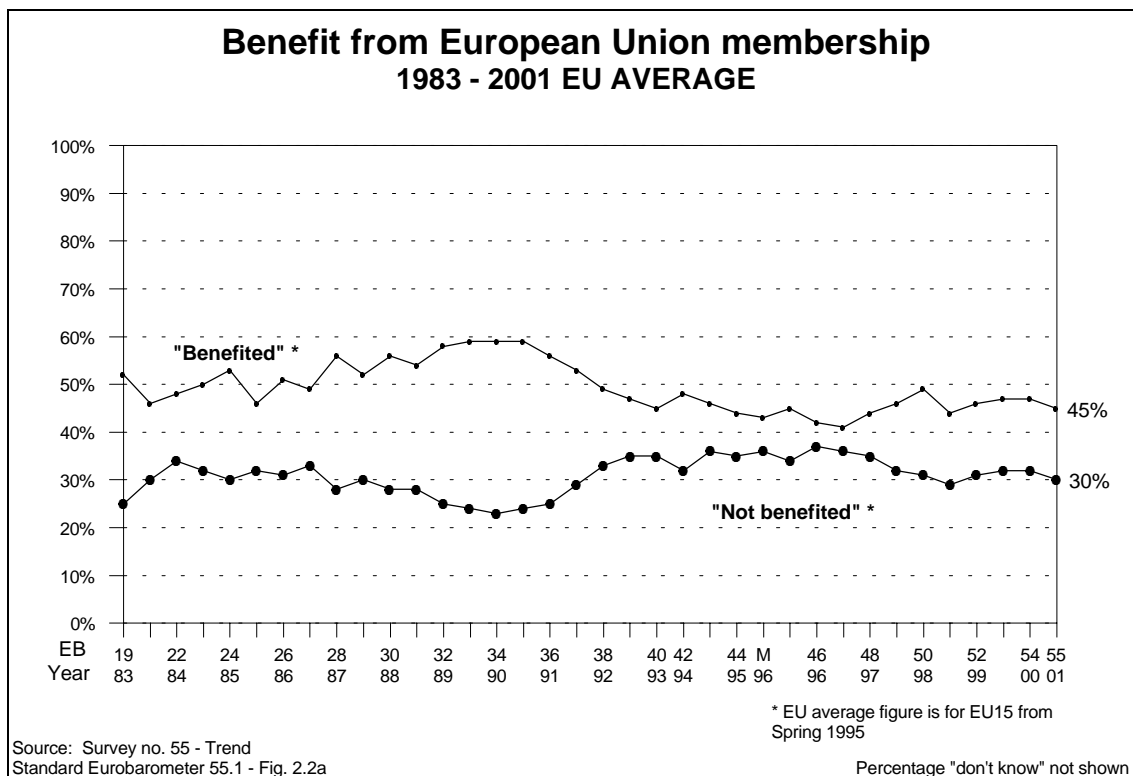
The trend analyses show that the public is now less decisive as to whether EU membership is a good thing or a bad thing for their country with people in several countries now more likely to regard their country's membership as neither good nor bad or lacking an opinion altogether. Positive developments have been recorded in France and Italy, where people are now less likely to believe that their country's membership is a bad thing (both -3). Sweden is the only country where support has fallen and where opposition has risen. (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. 43%) and that women are significantly more likely than men are to lack an opinion (14% vs. 7%). The importance of education as a powerful explanatory variable when it comes to attitudes to the European Union continues to show up in the analyses. Levels of support for the European Union vary with education with only 40% of people who left school aged 15 or younger seeing their country's membership as a good thing compared to 60% of 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 (53%) than those aged 55 and over (43%) to support their country's membership. Analyses of the economic activity scale show a gap of 19 percentage points in support levels between managers (58%) on the one hand and unemployed people (39%) on the other hand. However, the gap is smaller than it was in the previous survey (-5), due mostly to a drop in support levels (-7) among managers.

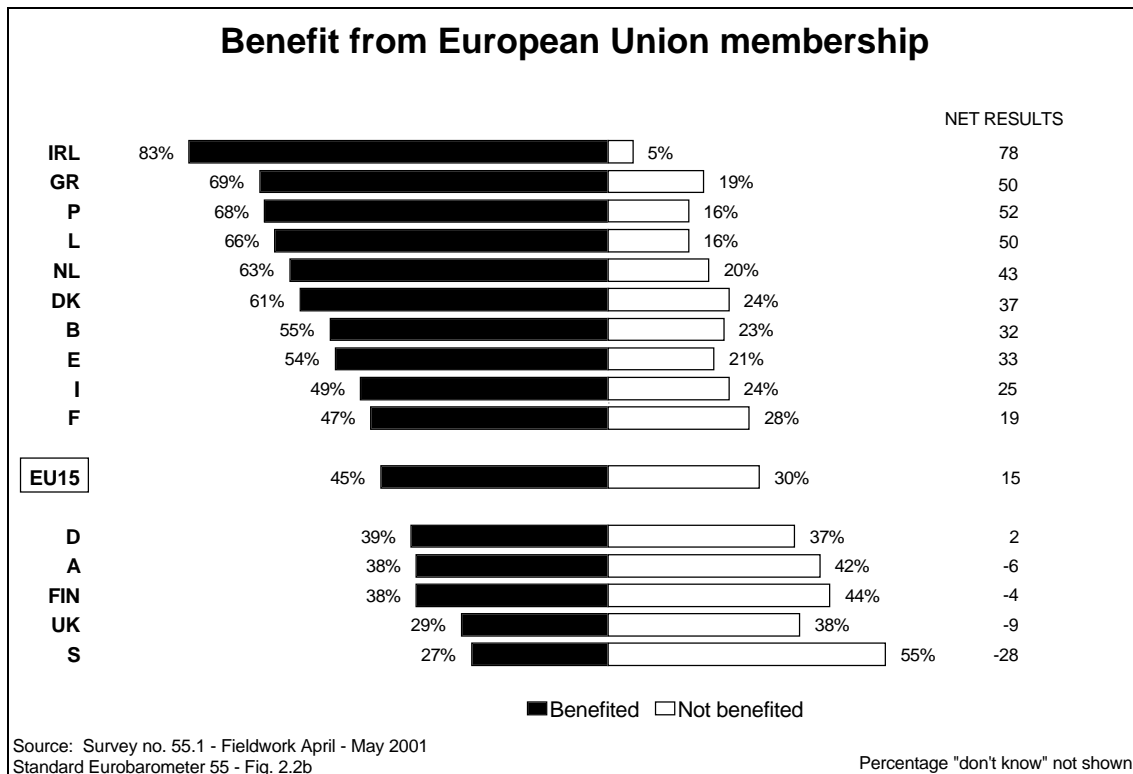
At the attitudinal level, we find that people who would feel very sorry if the European Union ceased to exist are at the opposite pole of those who would feel very relieved were this to happen. Among those who would feel very sorry, 90% support their country's membership, compared to only 7% of people who would feel very relieved. (Table 2.1b)

2.2. Benefit from European Union membership

Asked whether they feel that their country has on balance benefited from being a member of the European Union, 45% of respondents affirm this and 30% feel their country has not benefited. In comparison to autumn 2000, the proportion of people that lack an opinion has increased by 4 percentage points with a drop in two percentage points both among those who feel their country has benefited and among those who feel their country has not benefited.



Despite the outcome of the recent referendum on the Nice Treaty, people in Ireland continue to be most likely to feel that their country has benefited (83%), followed at a distance by people in Greece (69%) and Portugal (68%). More than 6 in 10 people in Luxembourg (66%), the Netherlands (63%) and Denmark (61%) also feel their country has benefited, with more than 5 in 10 people in Belgium (55%) and Spain (54%) sharing this view. Opinions continue to be most negative in Sweden and the UK, where less than 3 in 10 people feel their country has benefited. Sweden is the only country with a majority feeling that their country has not benefited. (See also individual country graphs, figs. 2.4a-o)

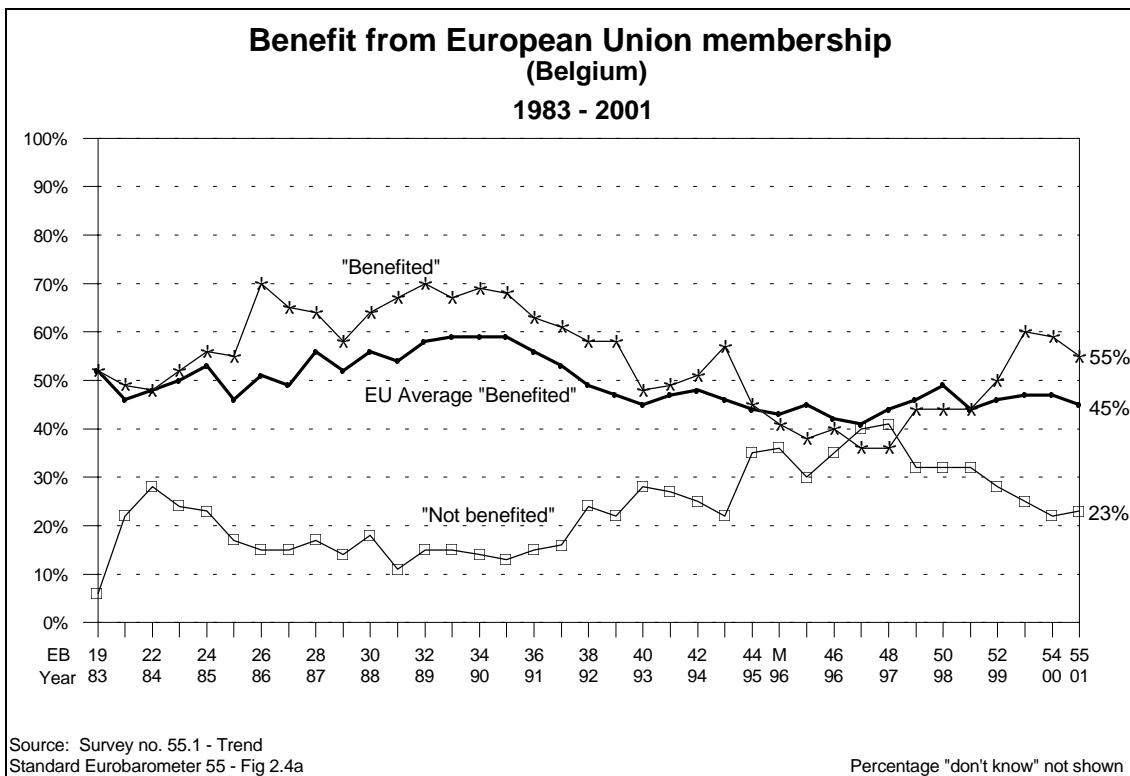
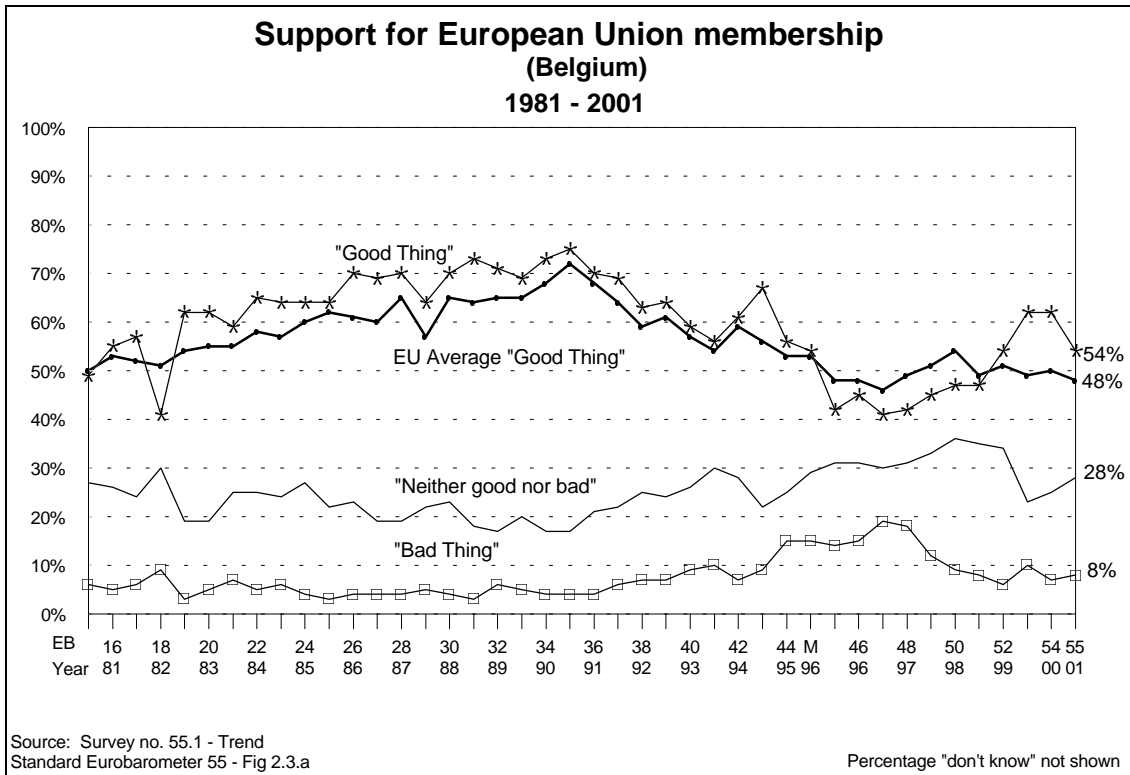


A comparison with autumn 2000 results shows that in many countries people are now less likely to hold an opinion, at the expense of both positive and negative views. In terms of significant shifts, we find a drop in negative responses of 6 percentage points, accompanied by the same increase in 'don't know' responses in Italy. In Spain, we find the opposite: a drop in favourable responses of 10 percentage points, but only a 3 percentage point increase in negative responses. Greece is the only country where a significant drop in positive responses is matched by a significant increase in negative responses. (Table 2.2a)

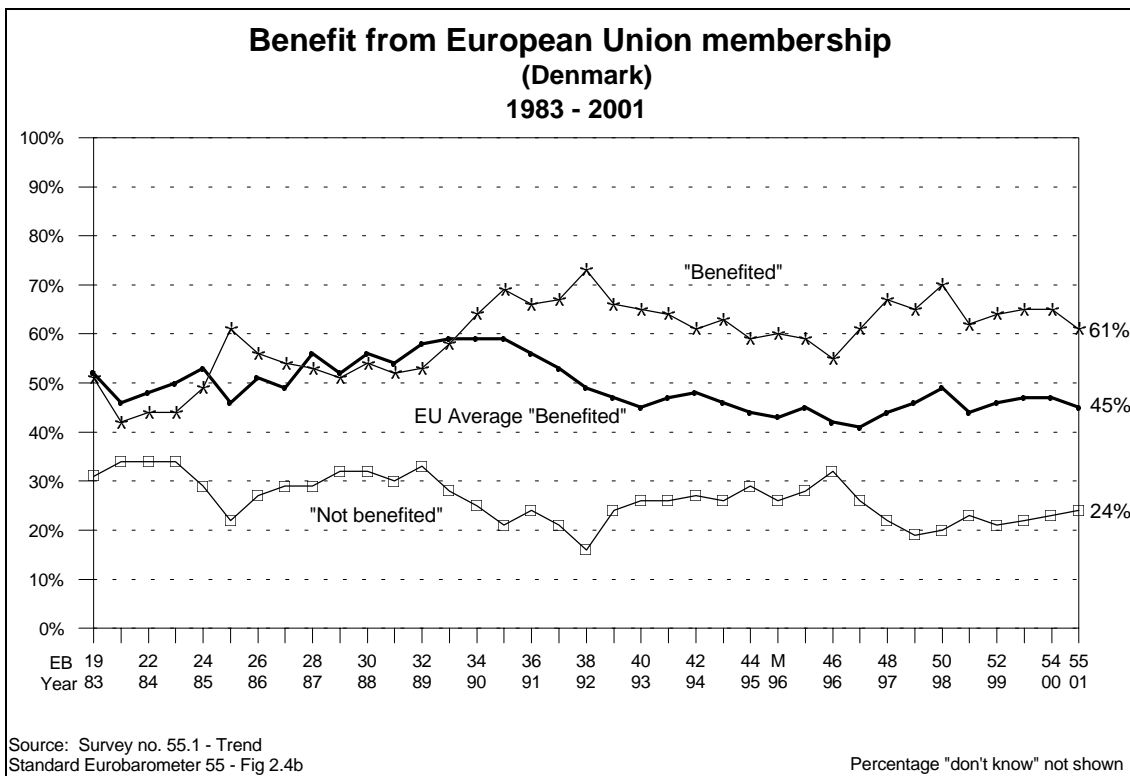
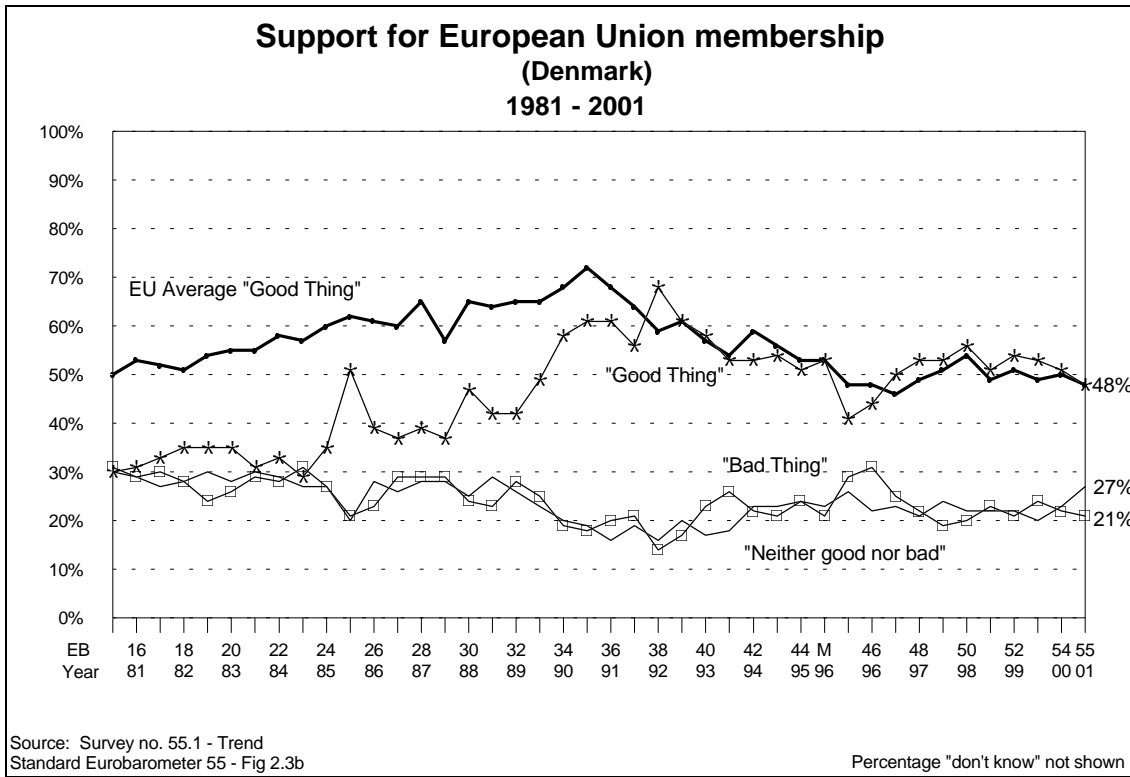
Demographic analyses show that people who stayed in full-time education until age 20 or older (56%) are most likely to feel that their country has benefited, while people who left school aged 15 or younger (38%) are least likely to share this view.

Supporters and opponents of the European Union are clearly divided on this issue: 77% of people who support their country's membership believe their country has benefited, compared to only 6% of those who oppose their country's membership. (Table 2.2b)

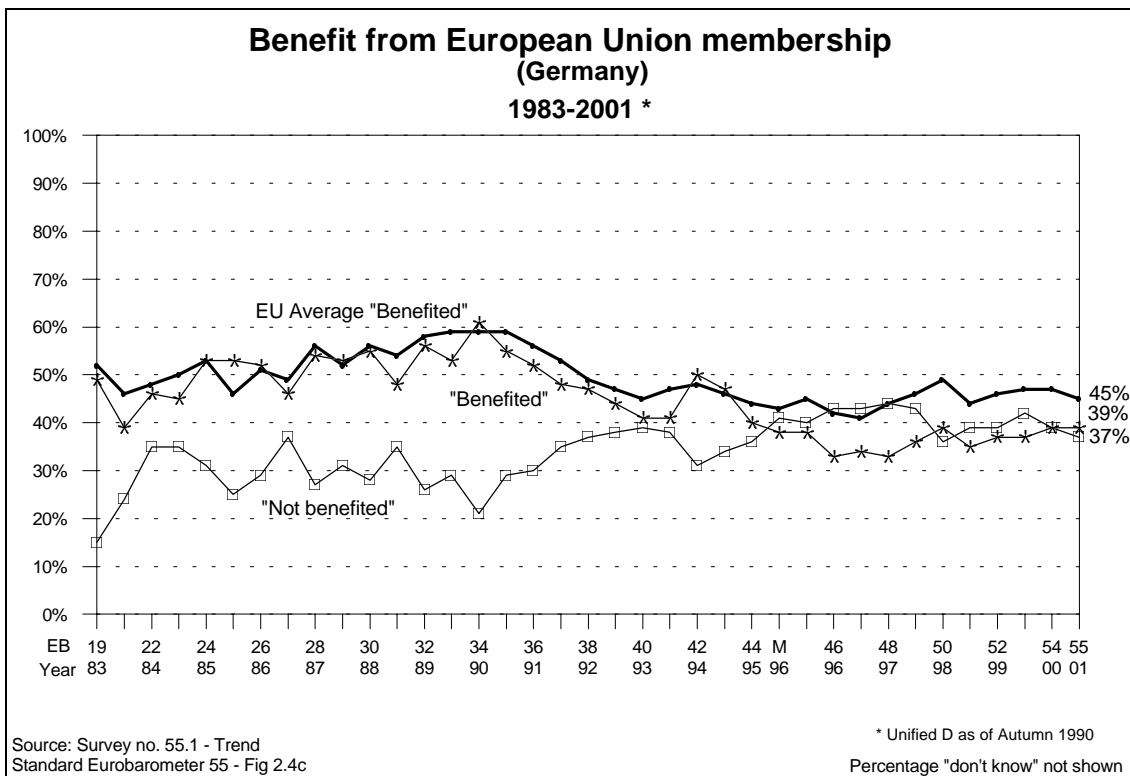
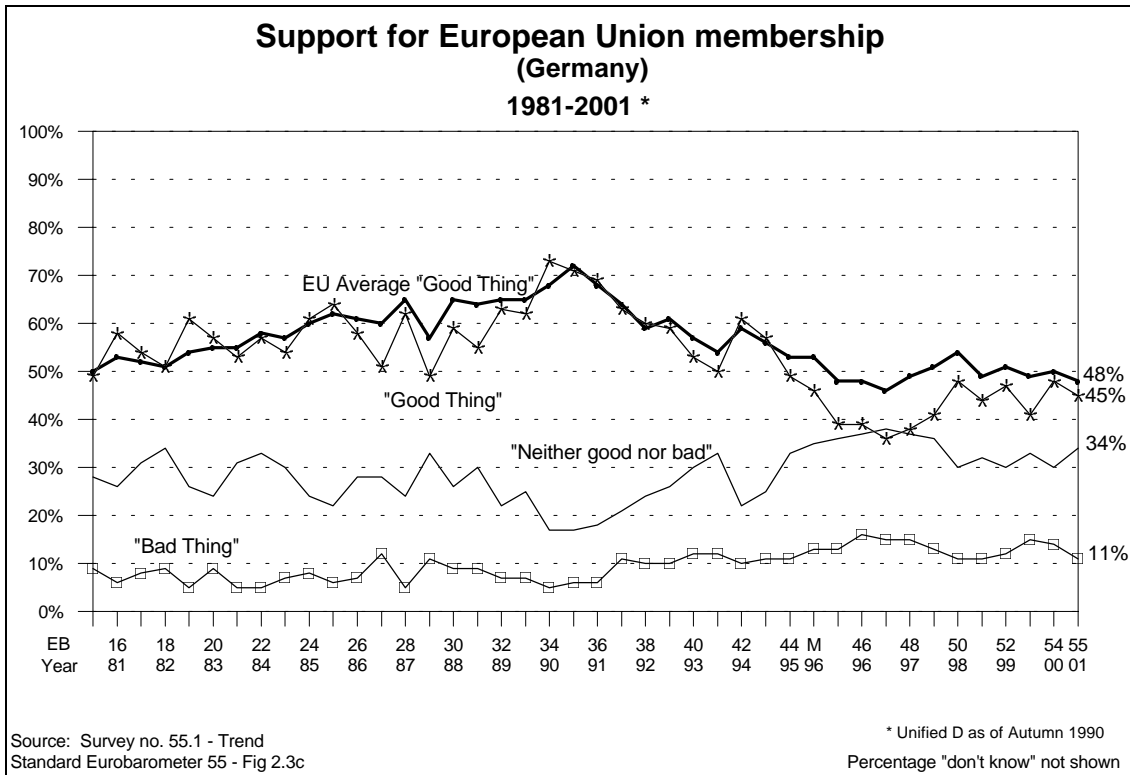
BELGIUM



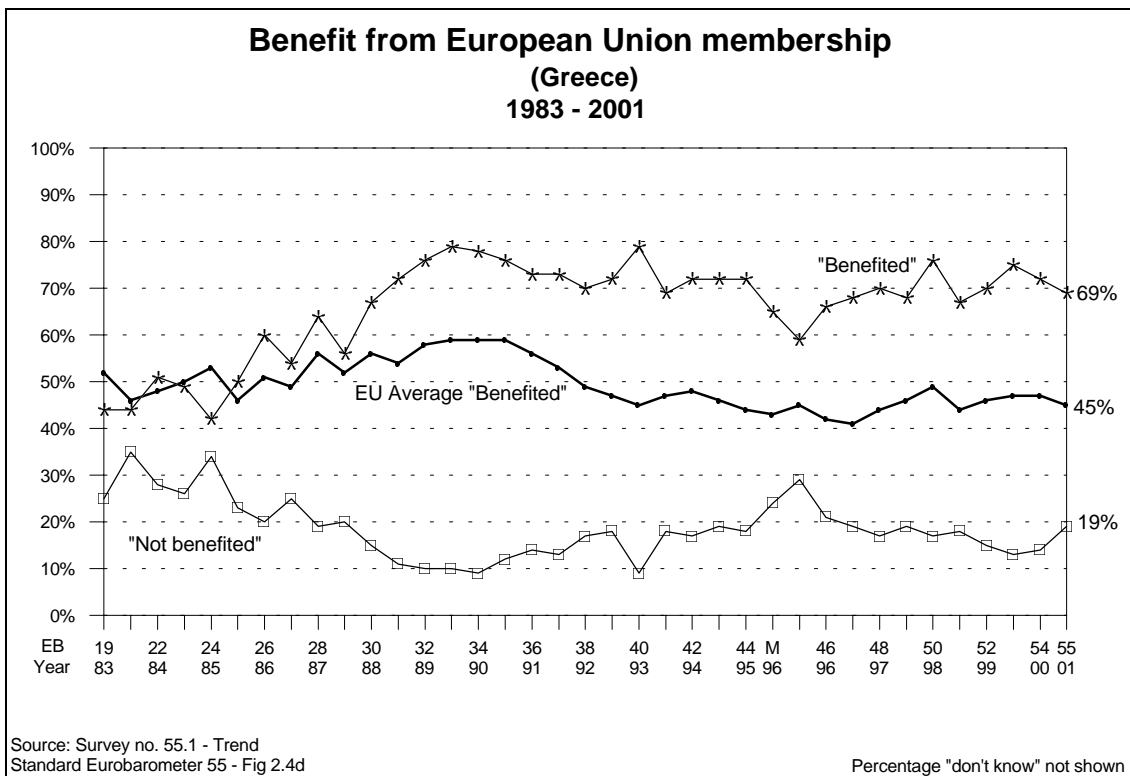
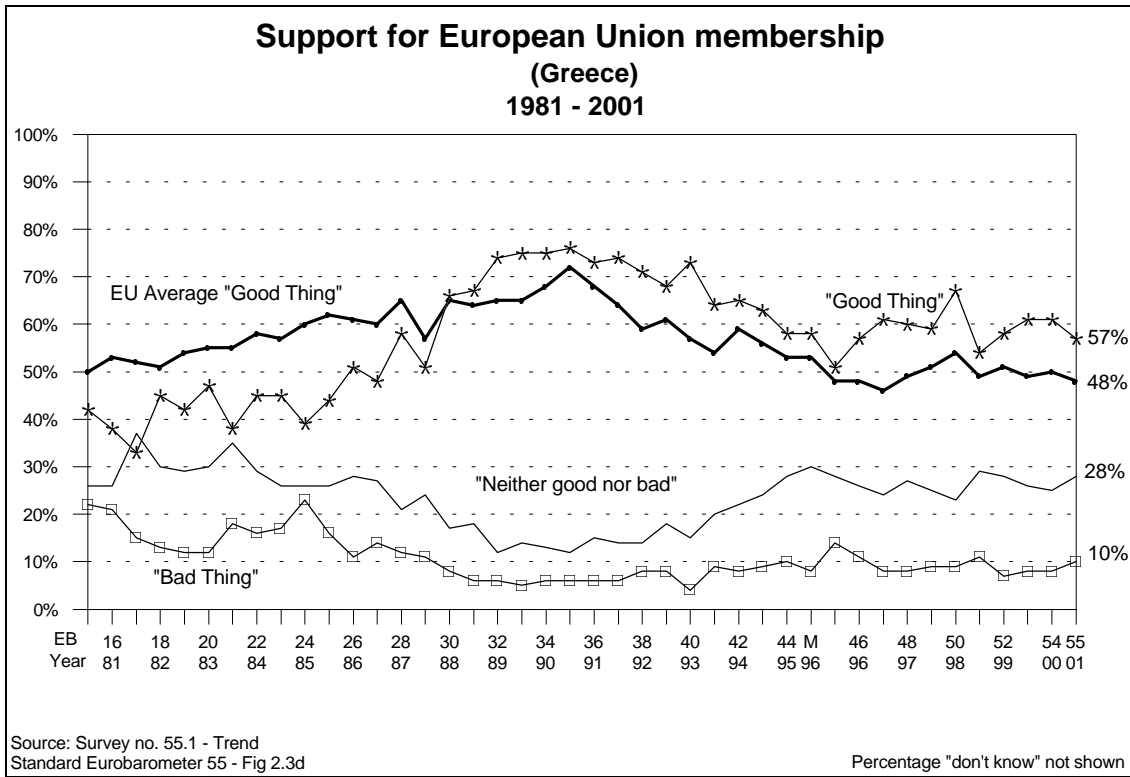
DENMARK



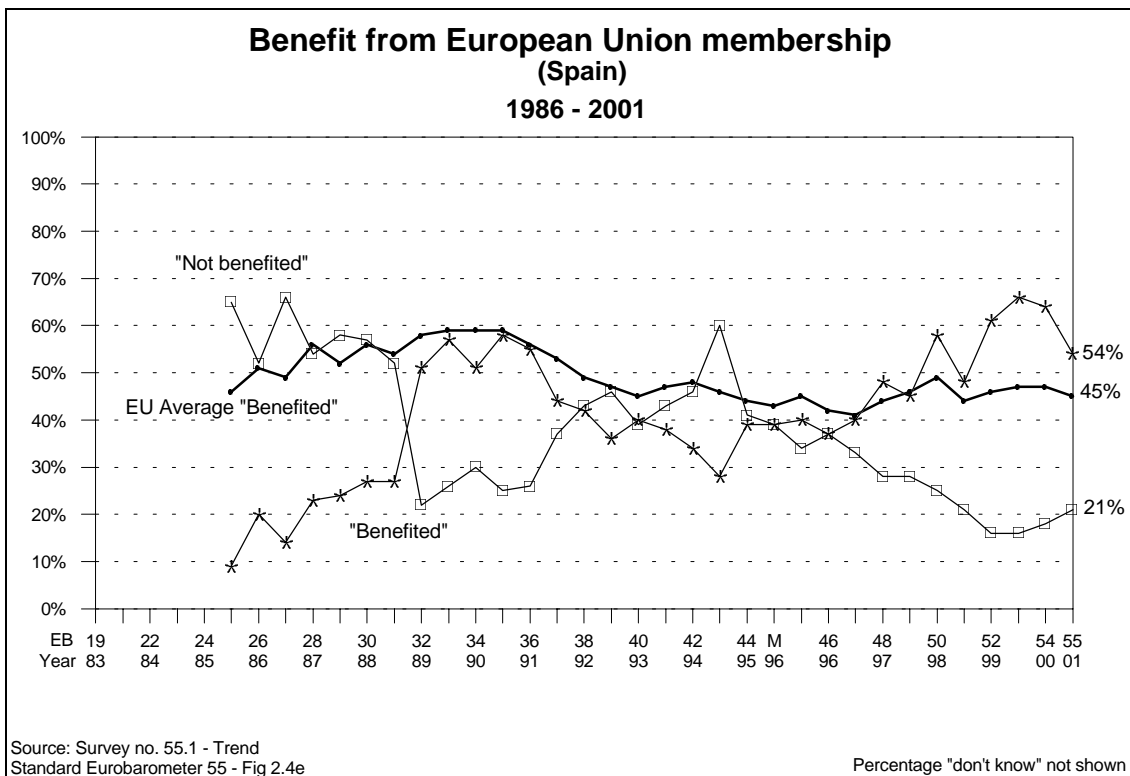
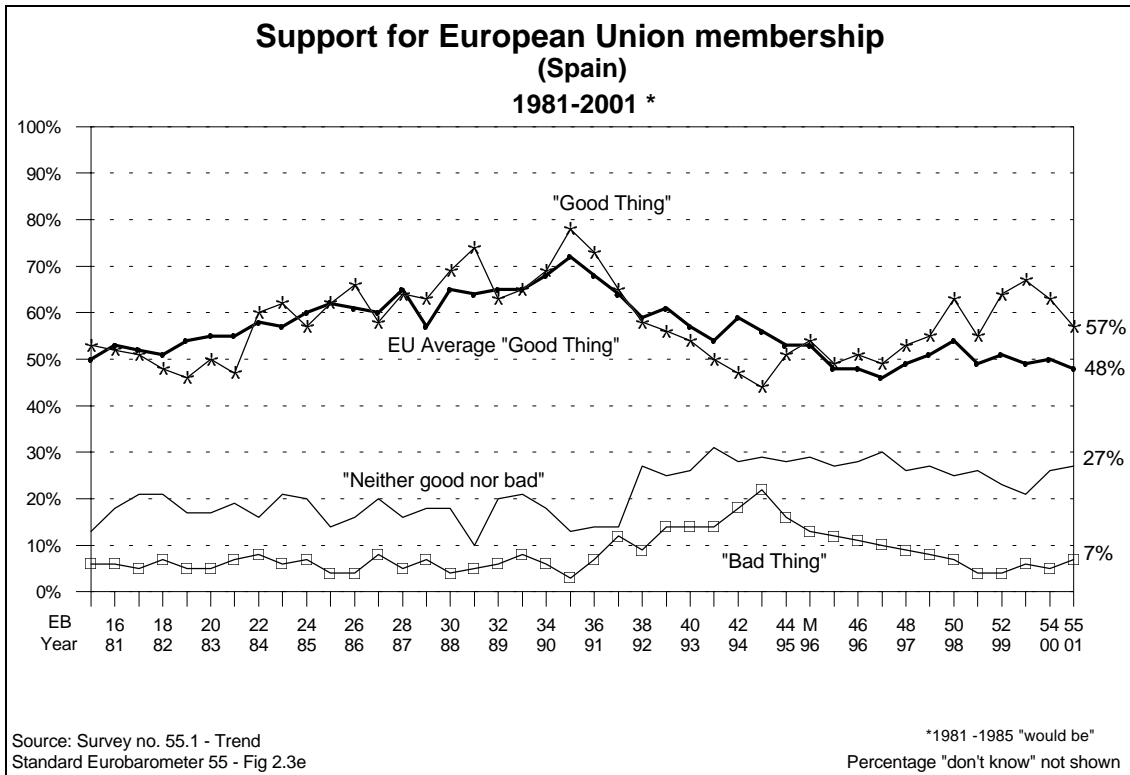
GERMANY



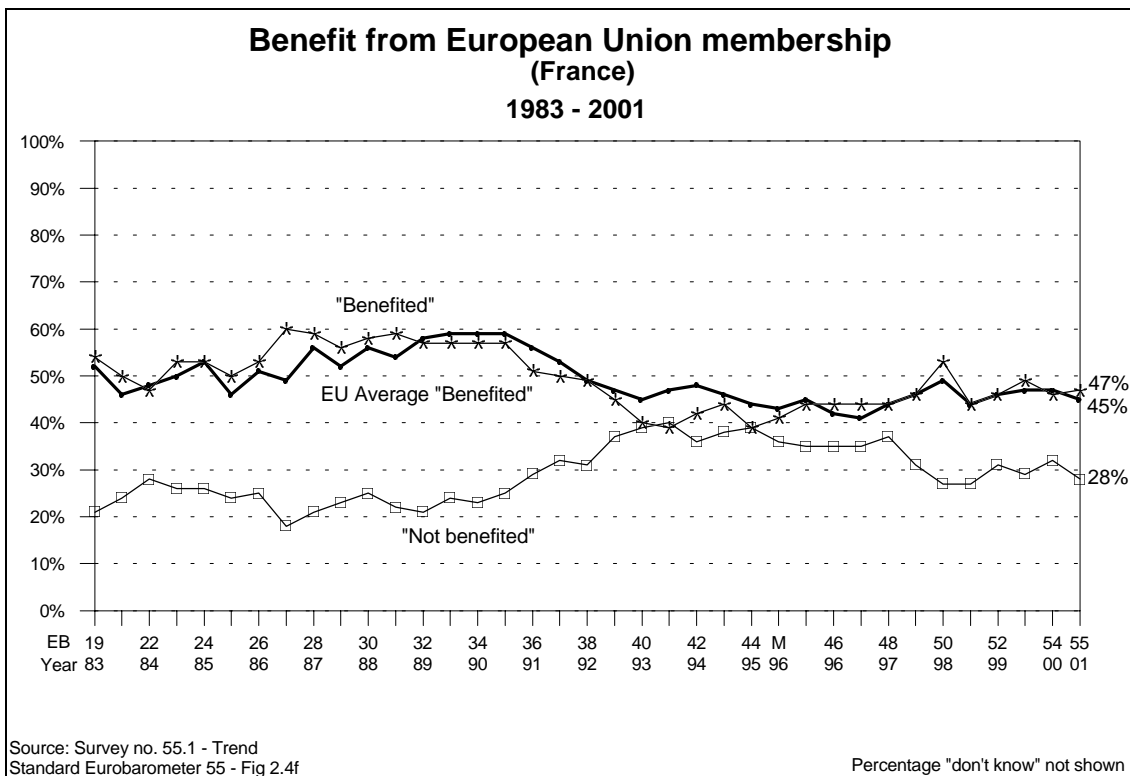
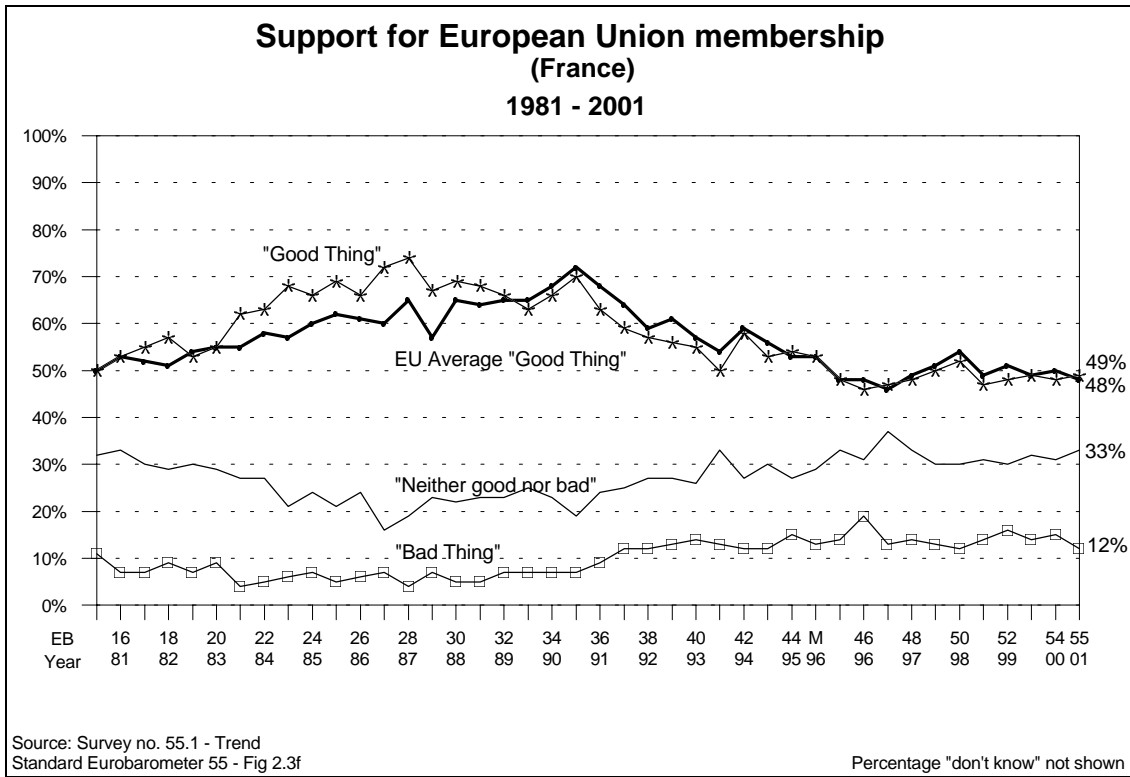
GREECE



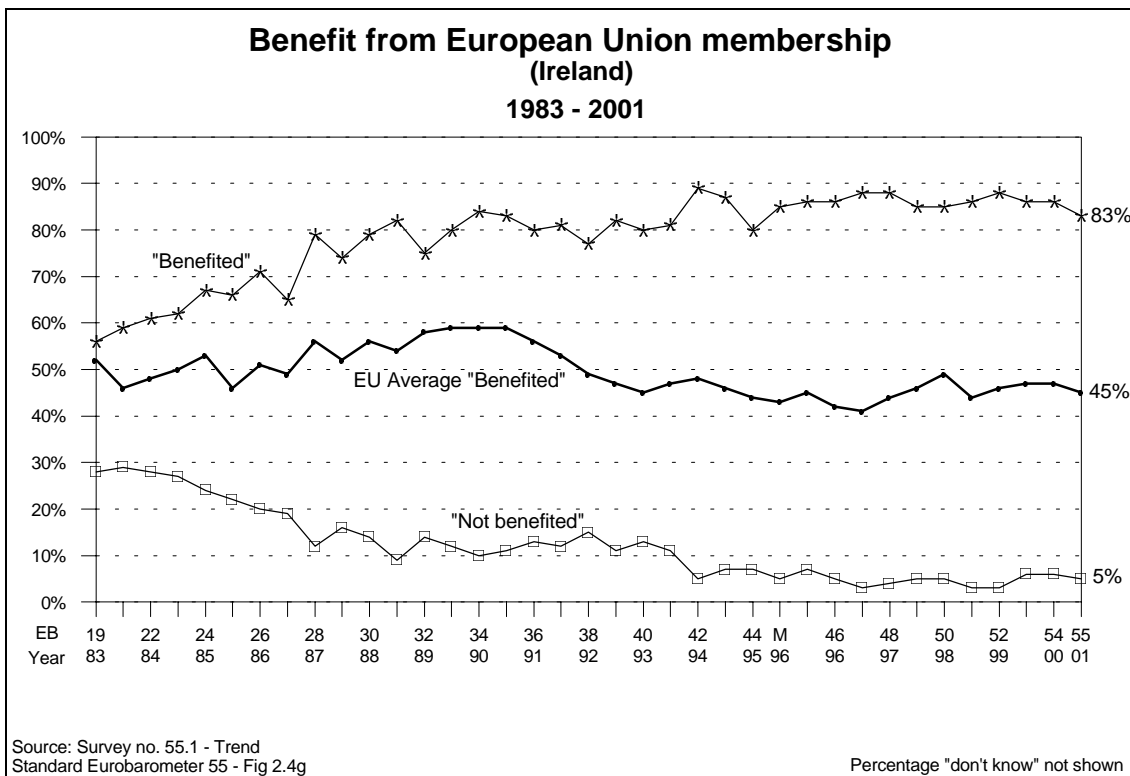
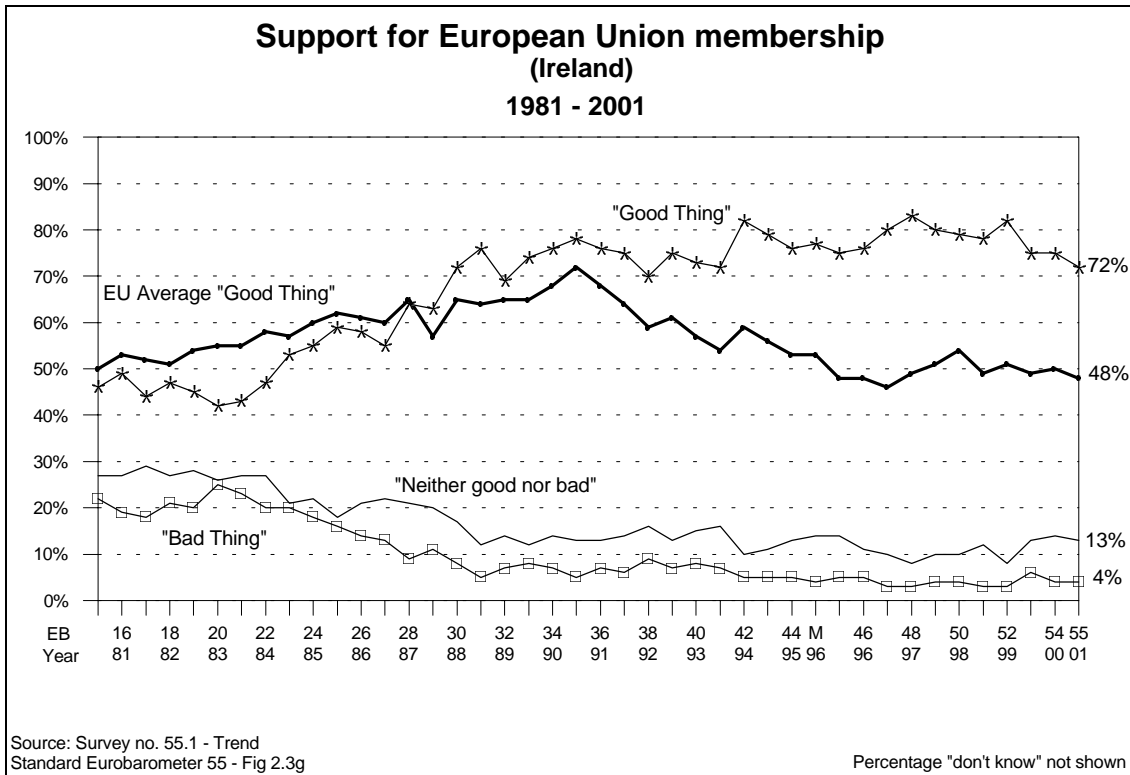
SPAIN



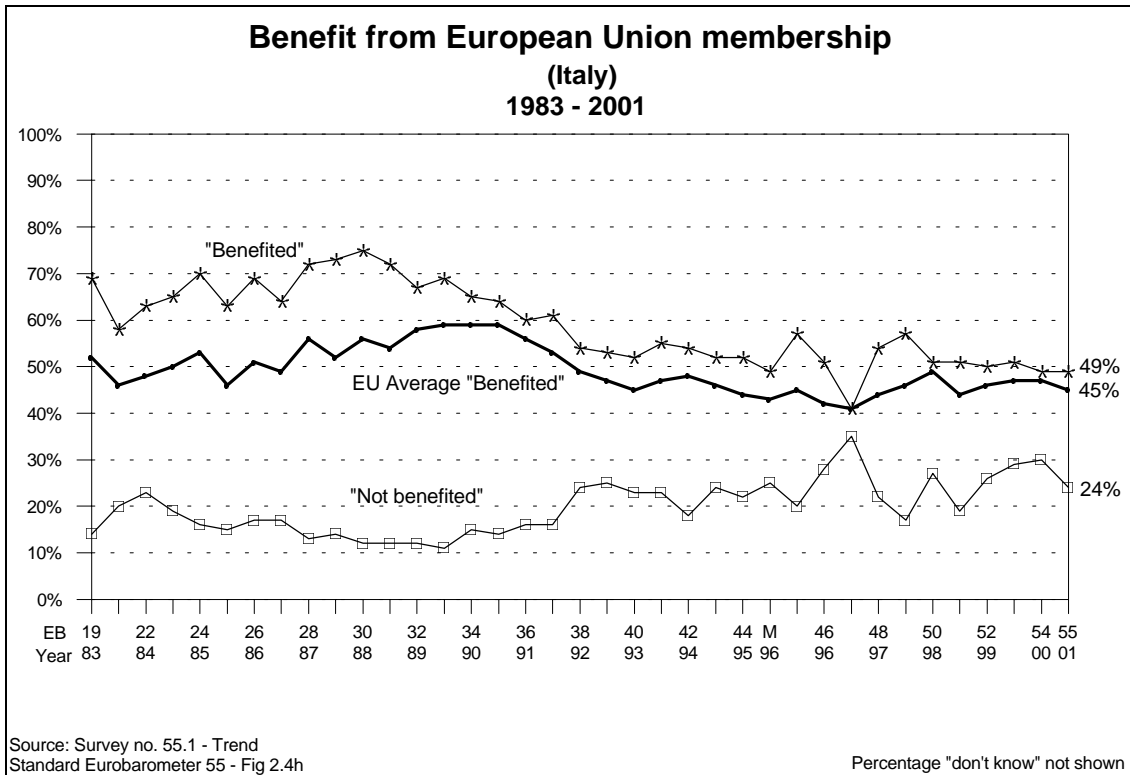
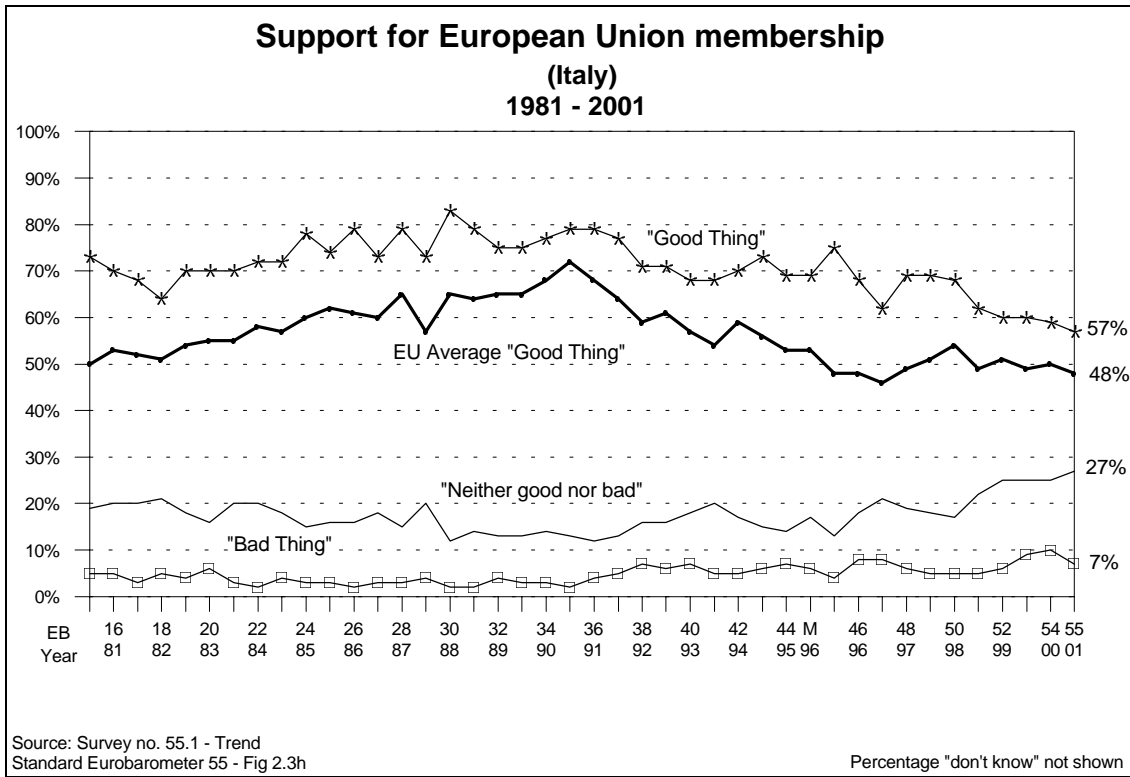
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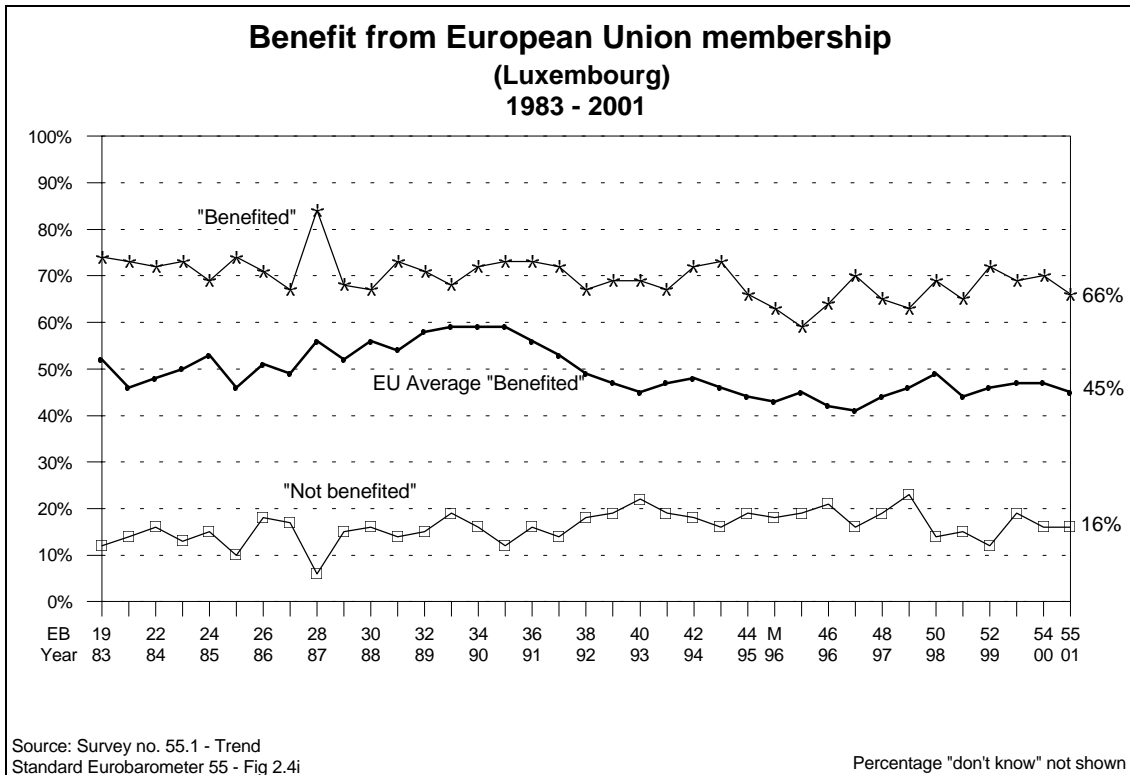
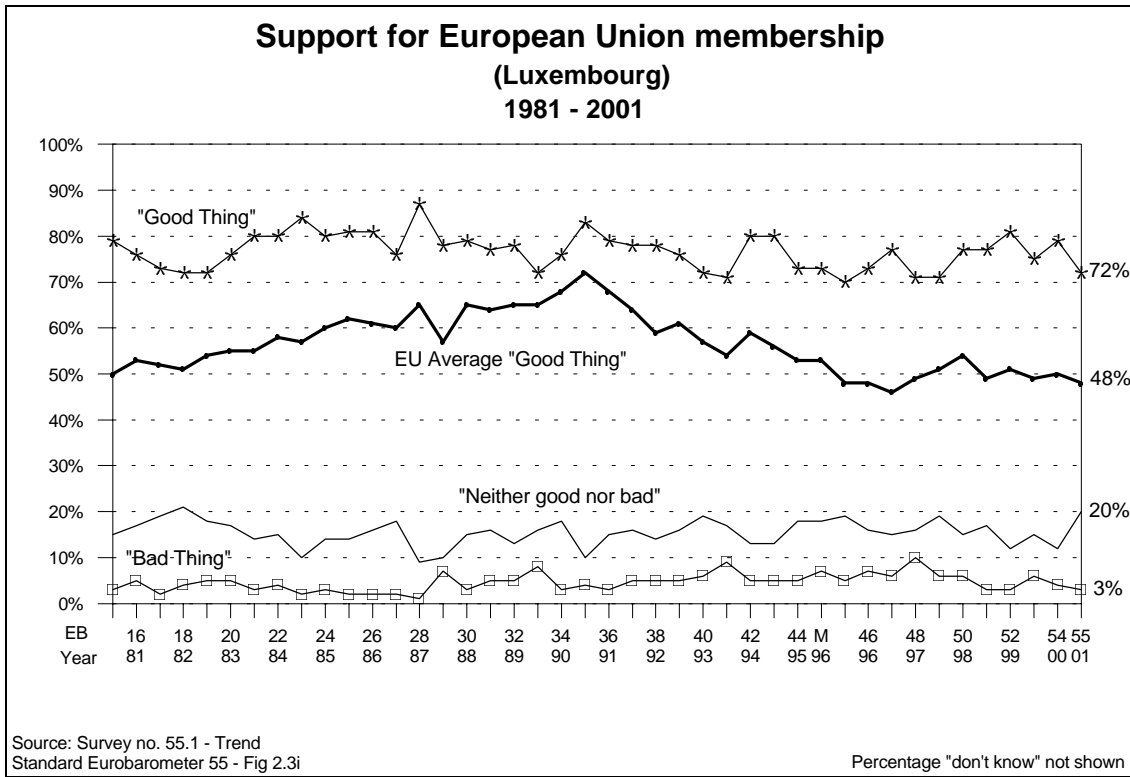
IRELAND



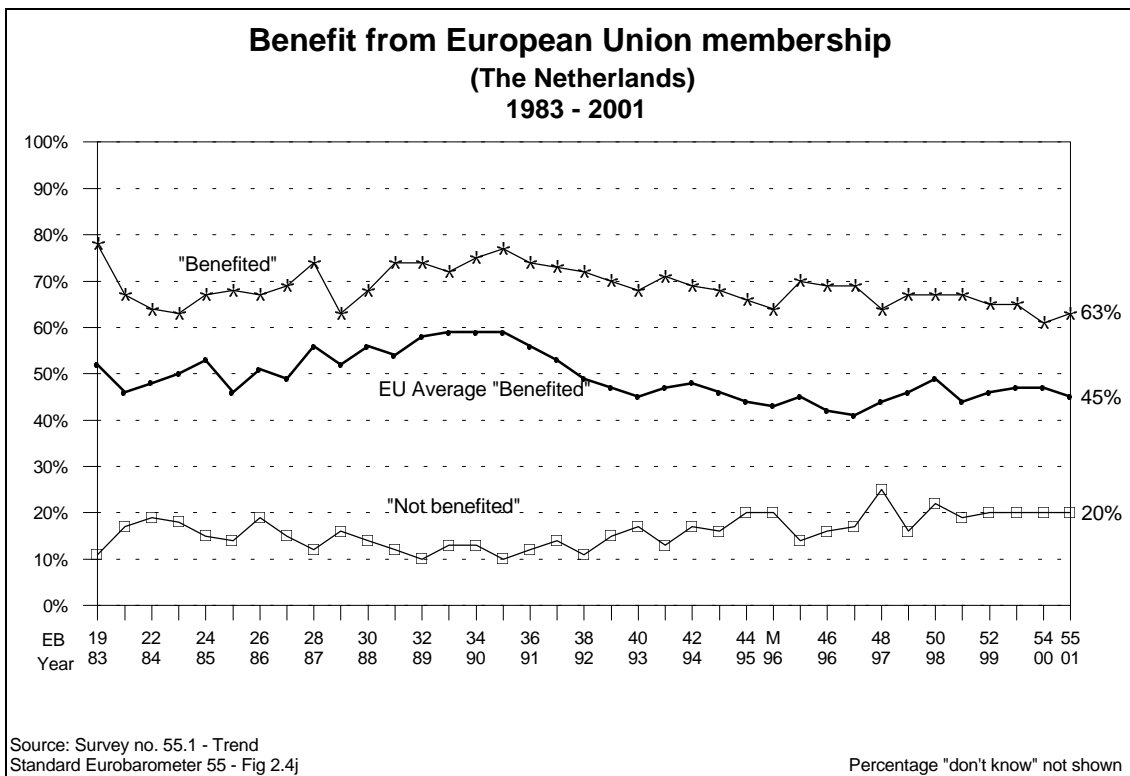
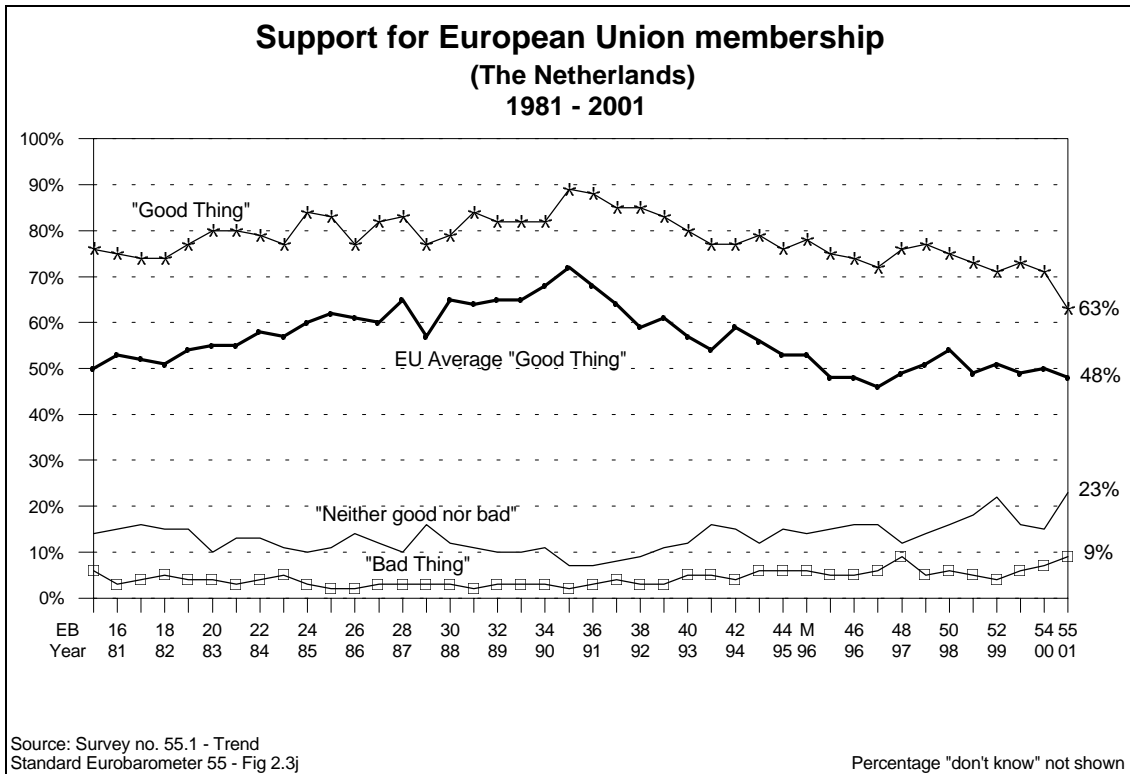
ITALY



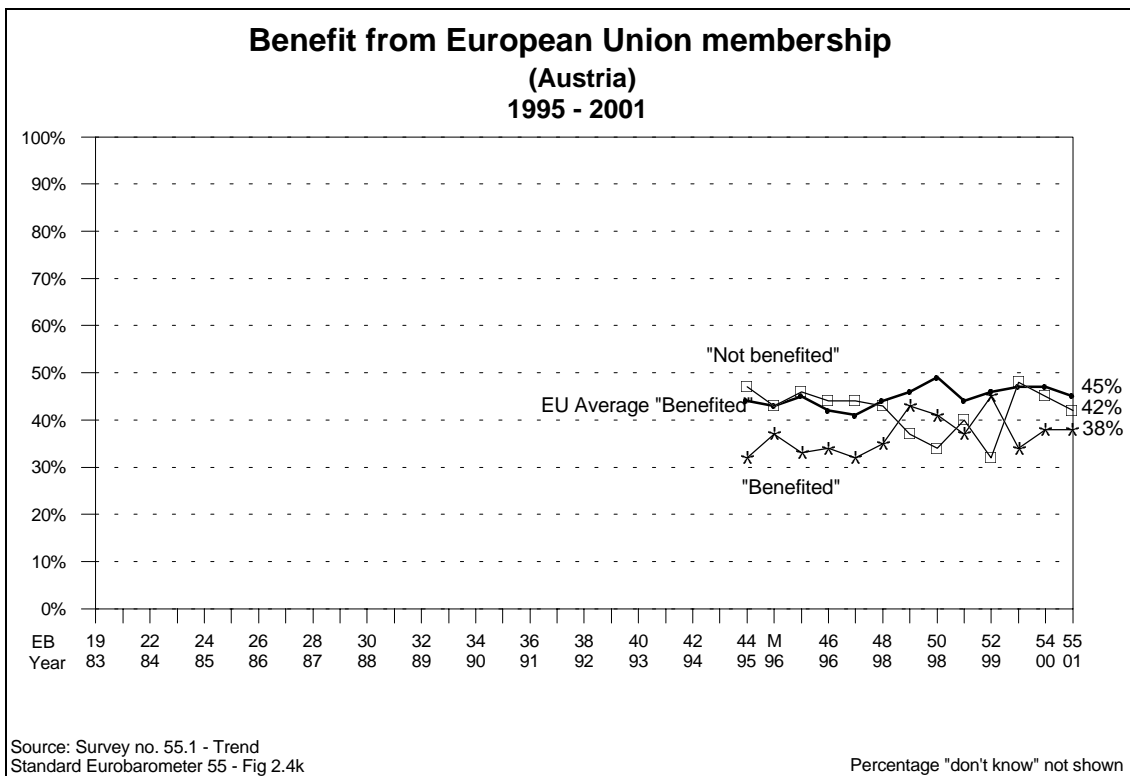
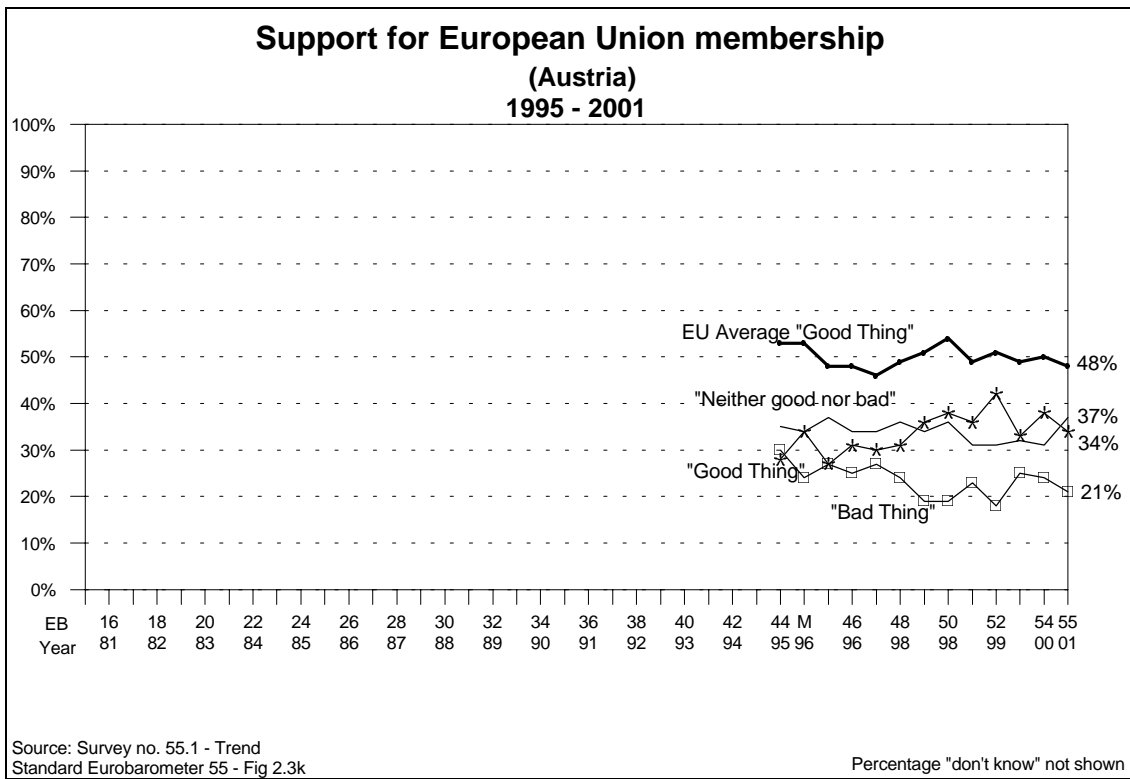
LUXEMBOURG



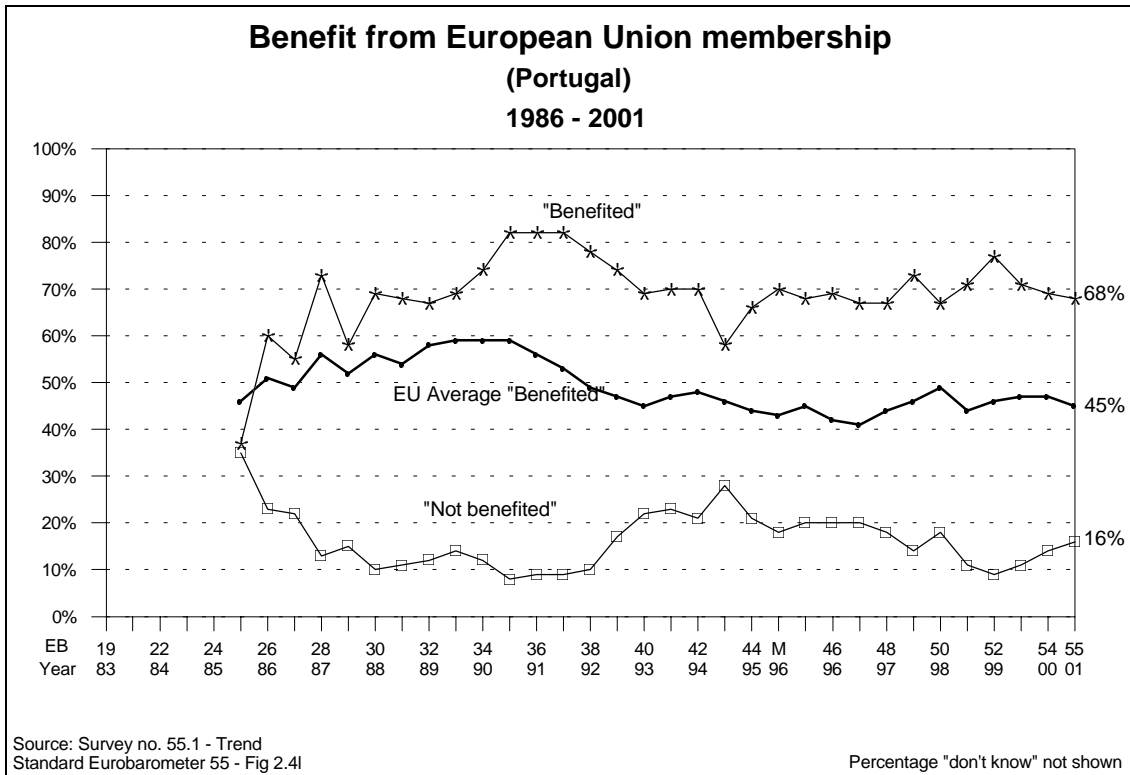
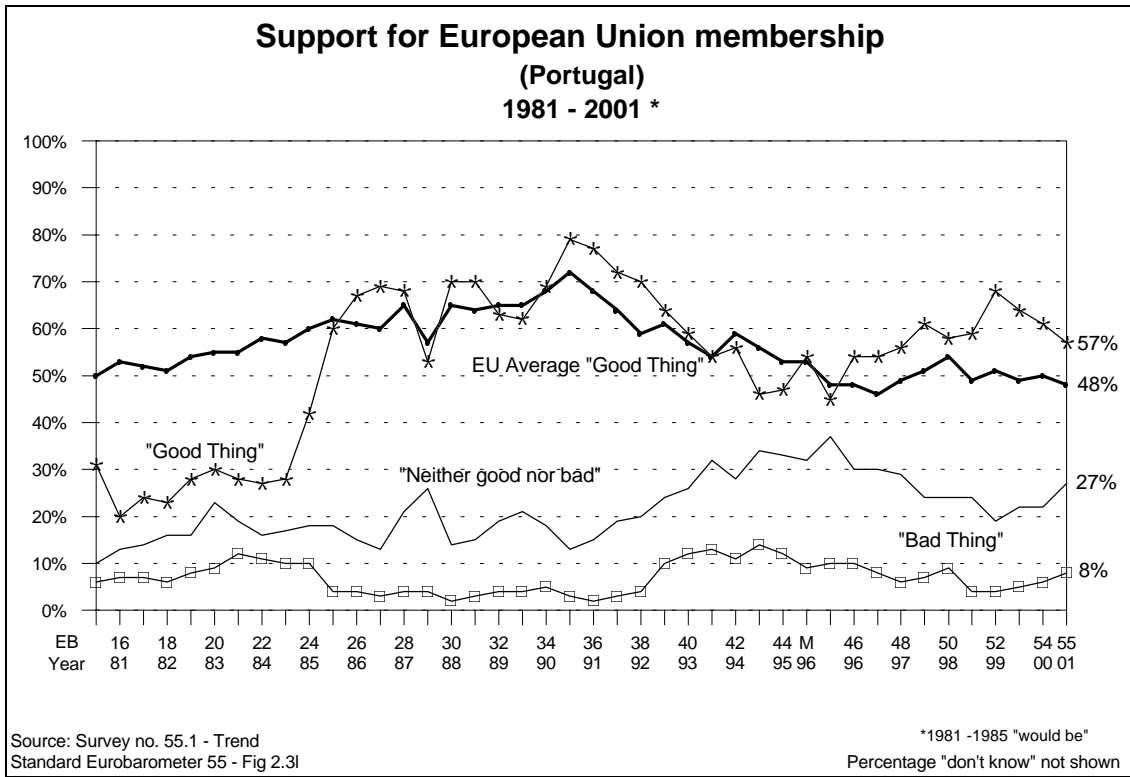
THE NETHERLANDS



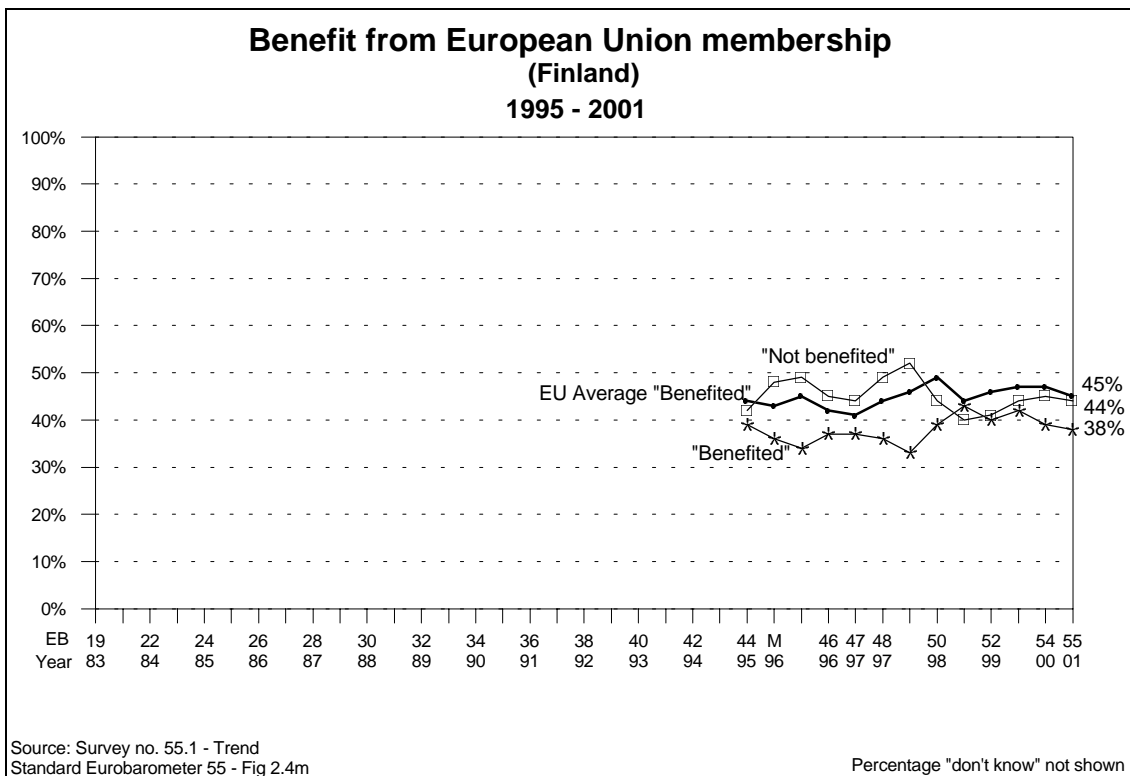
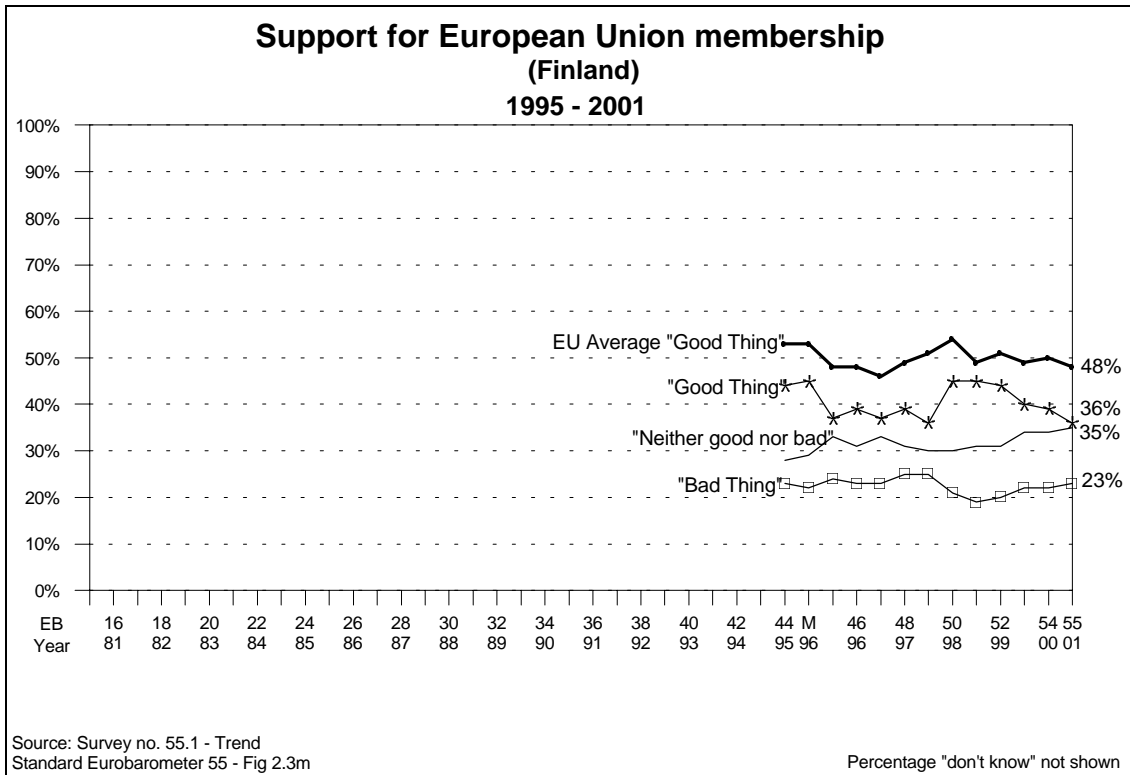
AUSTRIA



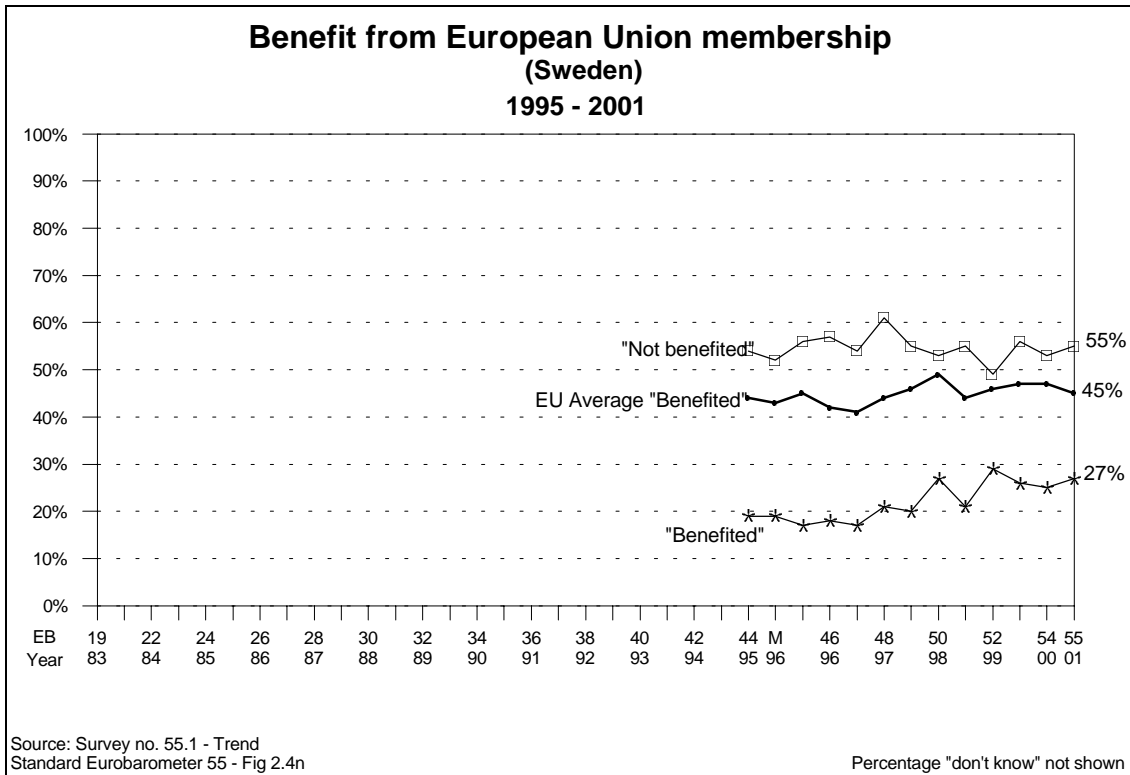
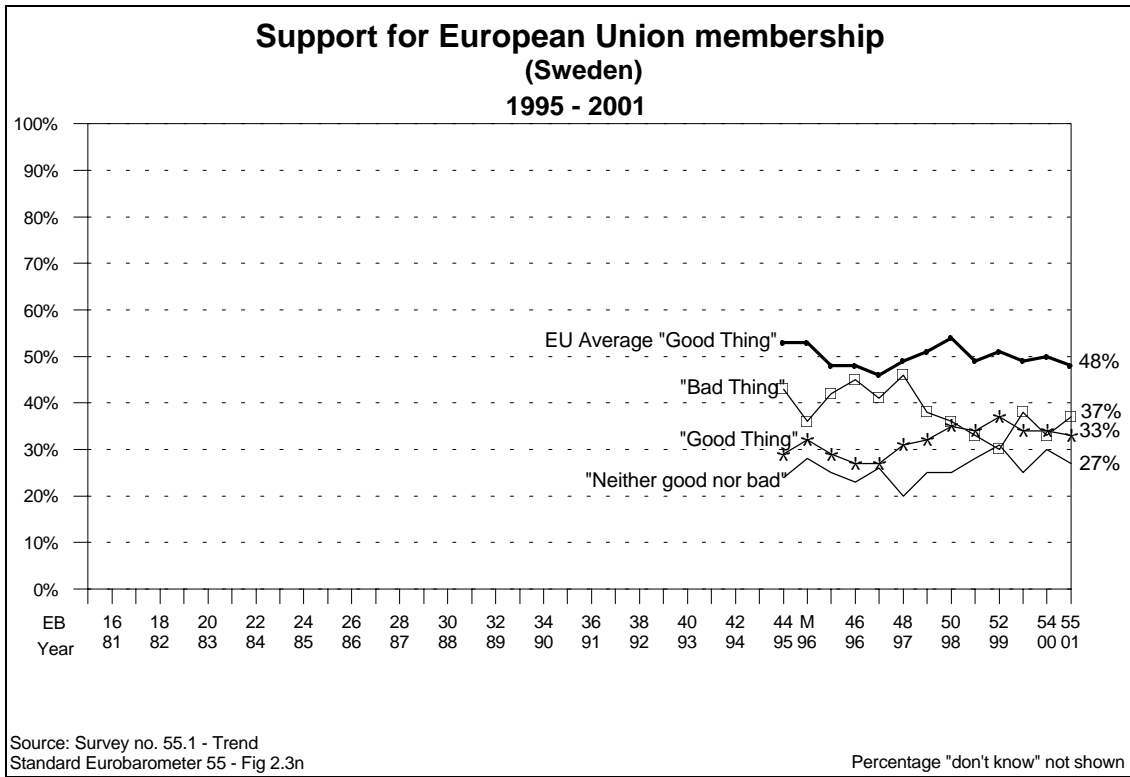
PORTUGAL



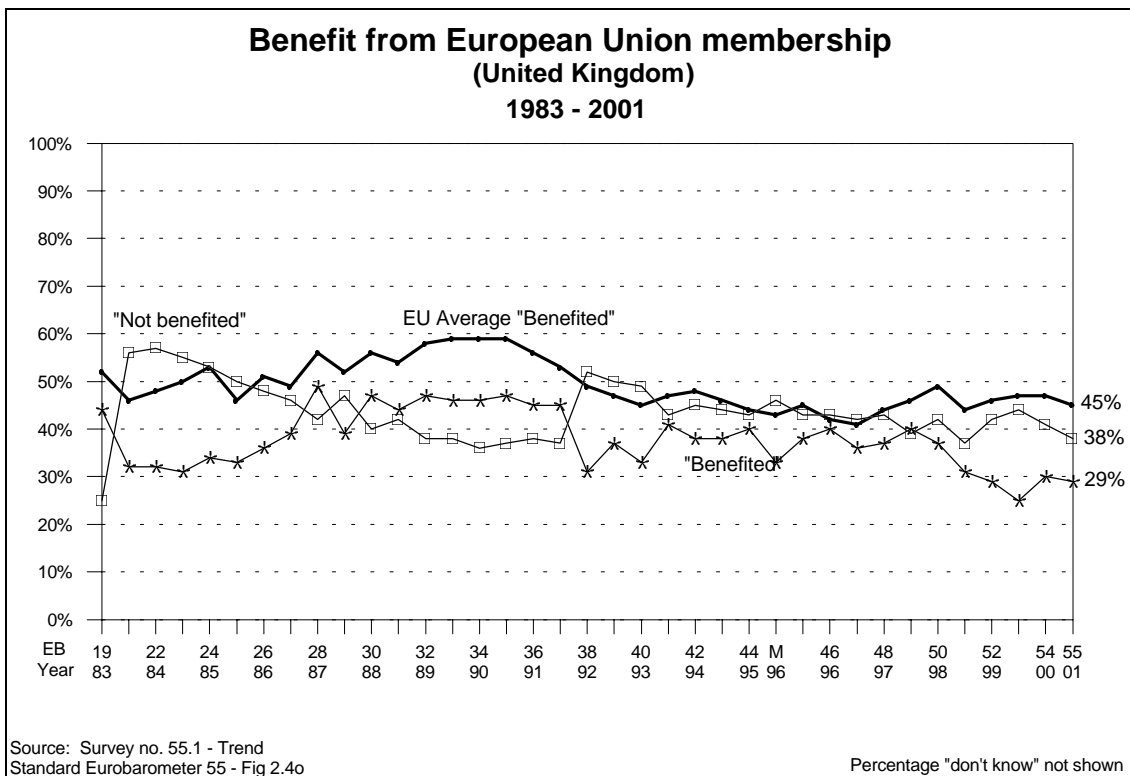
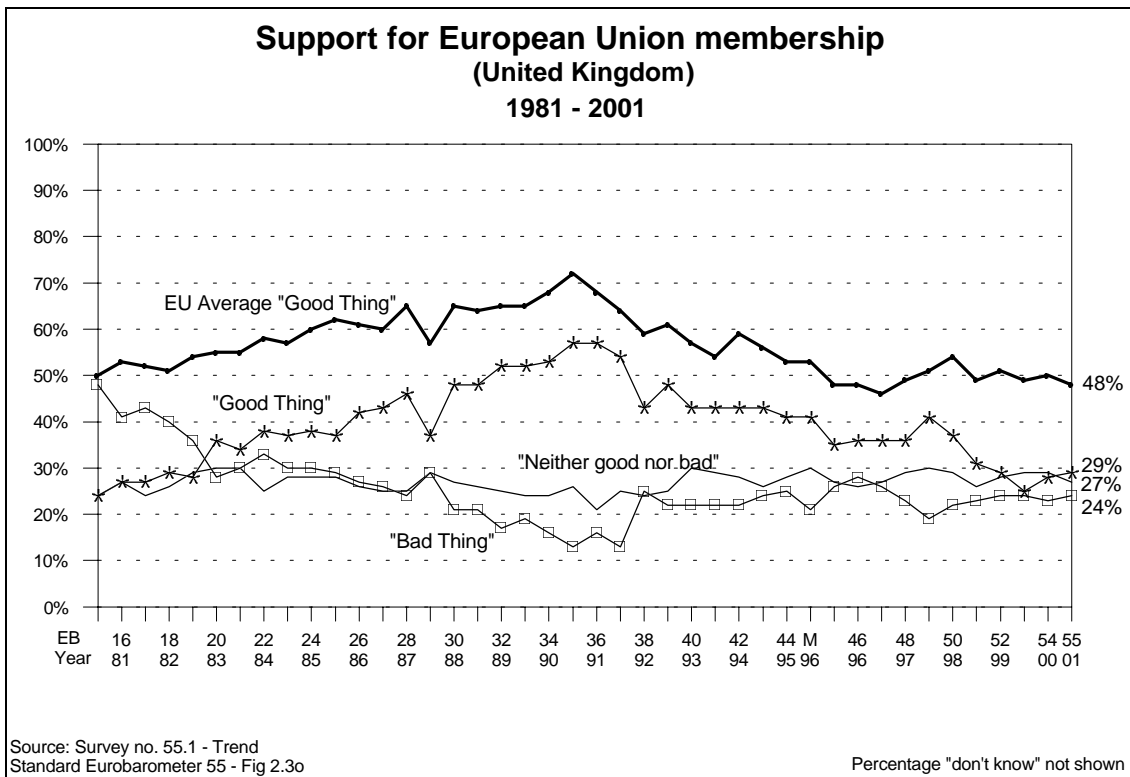
FINLAND



SWEDEN



UNITED KINGDOM



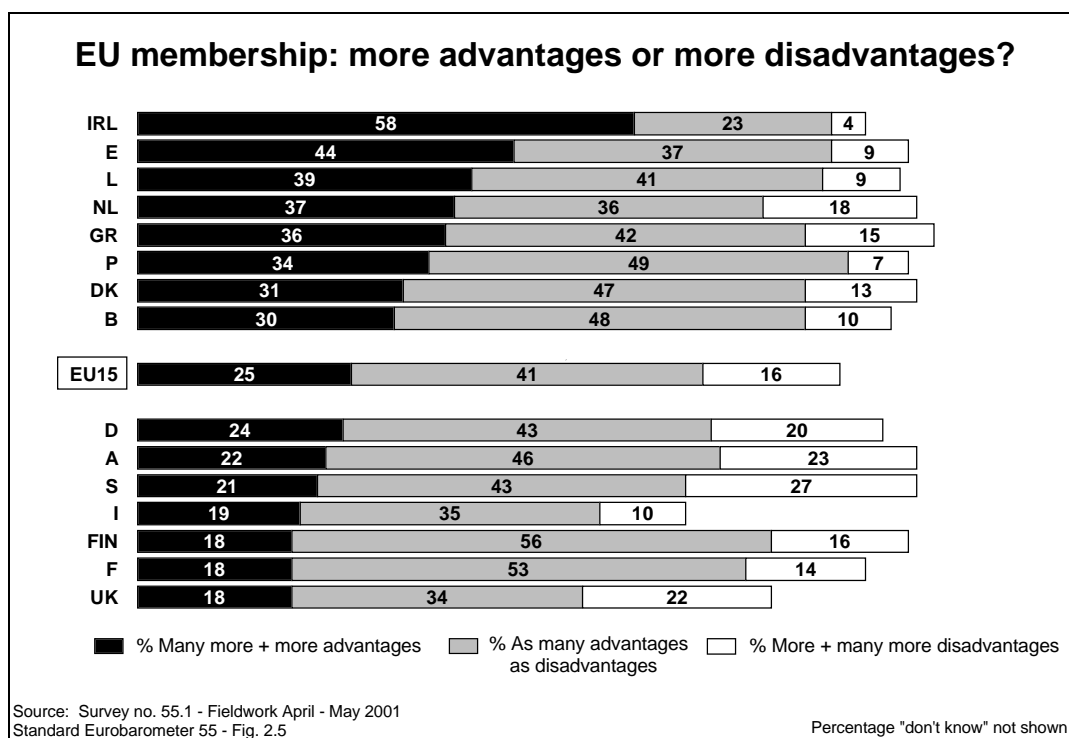
The following question, asked previously in spring 2000, links in with the discussion about whether people regard their country's membership as beneficial:

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 4%
- More advantages 22%
- As many advantages as disadvantages 41%
- More disadvantages 12%
- Many more disadvantages 4%
- (Don't know / No opinion) 18%

The country by country analyses show that Ireland is the only country where more than half of the population (58%) feel that EU membership has given them more advantages. Though less than half feel this way in Spain (44%) and the Netherlands (37%) it is still the most popular view in these two countries. In all other countries the most popular view is that EU membership has brought people as many advantages as disadvantages. However, with the exception of Sweden, the UK and Austria, the proportion of people who feel membership has brought more advantages outnumbers the proportion of people who feel membership has more disadvantages. The proportion of respondents who weren't able or who didn't want to give an opinion is higher than it was in spring 2000 and ranges from 7% in Greece to 36% in Italy.



In comparison to spring 2000, the results show positive developments in the Benelux countries. Greece is the only country where the proportion of people who feel EU membership brings more disadvantages has increased at the expense of the view that it brings more advantages. In a number of other countries we find a significant increase in the proportion of people who feel that EU membership brings as many advantages as disadvantages. In the UK and France this shift is accompanied by a significant drop in support for the view that membership brings more disadvantages. In Portugal, Finland and Spain the reverse holds. Italy stands out in showing a drop in support for any of the three substantive views, accompanied by an increase of 20 percentage points in the proportion of 'don't know' responses. (Table 2.3a)

Among the various demographic groups, managers, people who are still studying (both 35%) and people who stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or older (34%) are most likely to feel that they have received more advantages. Retired people (20%) are least likely to share this view, followed by unemployed people (21%). However, among all demographic groups, not more than 20% feel that membership has brought more disadvantages.

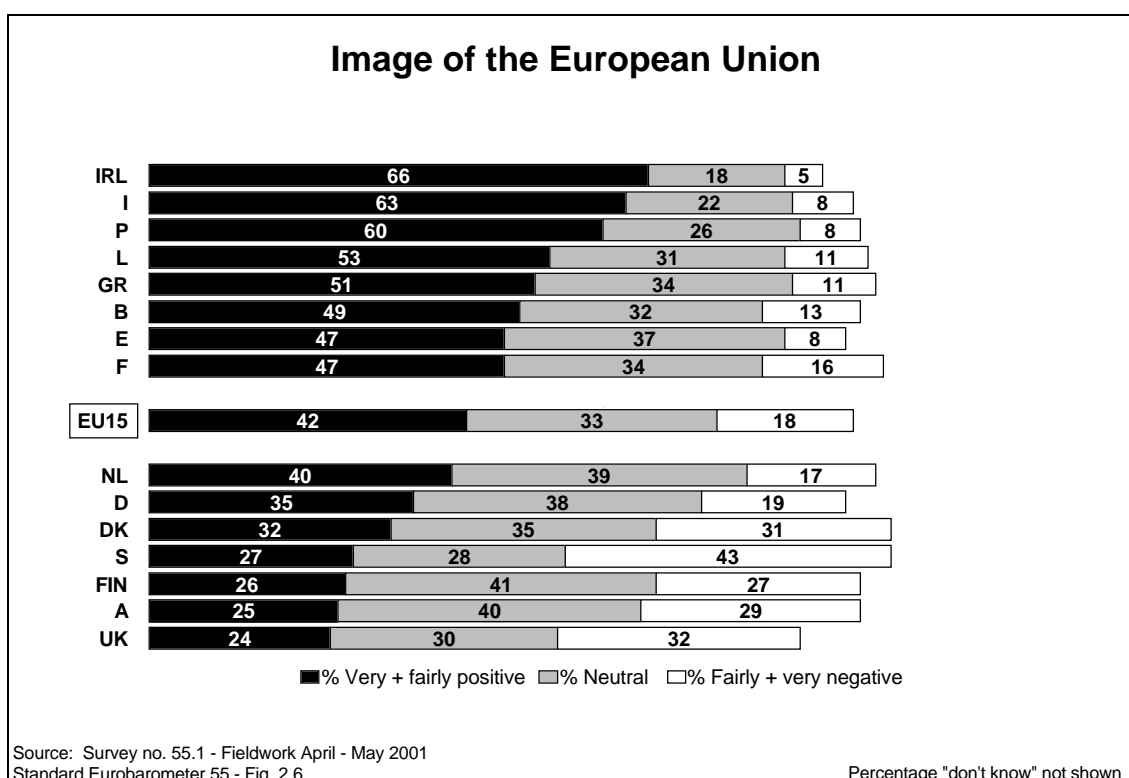
At the attitudinal level, we find that 45% of people who support their country's membership to the EU feel they have personally received more advantages. At the other extreme we find that 62% of people who do not support their country's membership to the EU feel they have personally received more disadvantages. (Table 2.3b)

2.3. People's emotive stance towards the EU in 2001

The following question, asked for the second time since it was introduced in spring 2000, provides an indication of people's emotive stance towards the European Union:

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

On average, 42% of EU citizens have a positive image of the European Union of which 7% view it very positively. 33% 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, more than half of the people in Ireland (66%), Italy (63%), Portugal (60%), Luxembourg (53%) and Greece (51%) have a positive image of the EU. In Belgium (49%), France, Spain (both 47%) and the Netherlands (40%), this view is shared by a majority of respondents. The Danish population is split three ways, with around a third feeling positive, a third feeling neutral and a third feeling negative. In Finland (41%), Austria (40%) and Germany (38%) the most popular view is that the EU conjures up a neutral image. In the UK (32%) and especially in Sweden (43%) the majority view is that the EU conjures up a negative image.

In comparison to spring 2000, we find a positive shift in Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. People in Austria are now significantly less likely to feel that the EU conjures up a negative image and more likely to feel that it conjures up a neutral image. A shift away from outright positive feelings towards more neutral feelings is recorded in Spain, Finland, France, Portugal and Italy. (Table 2.4a)

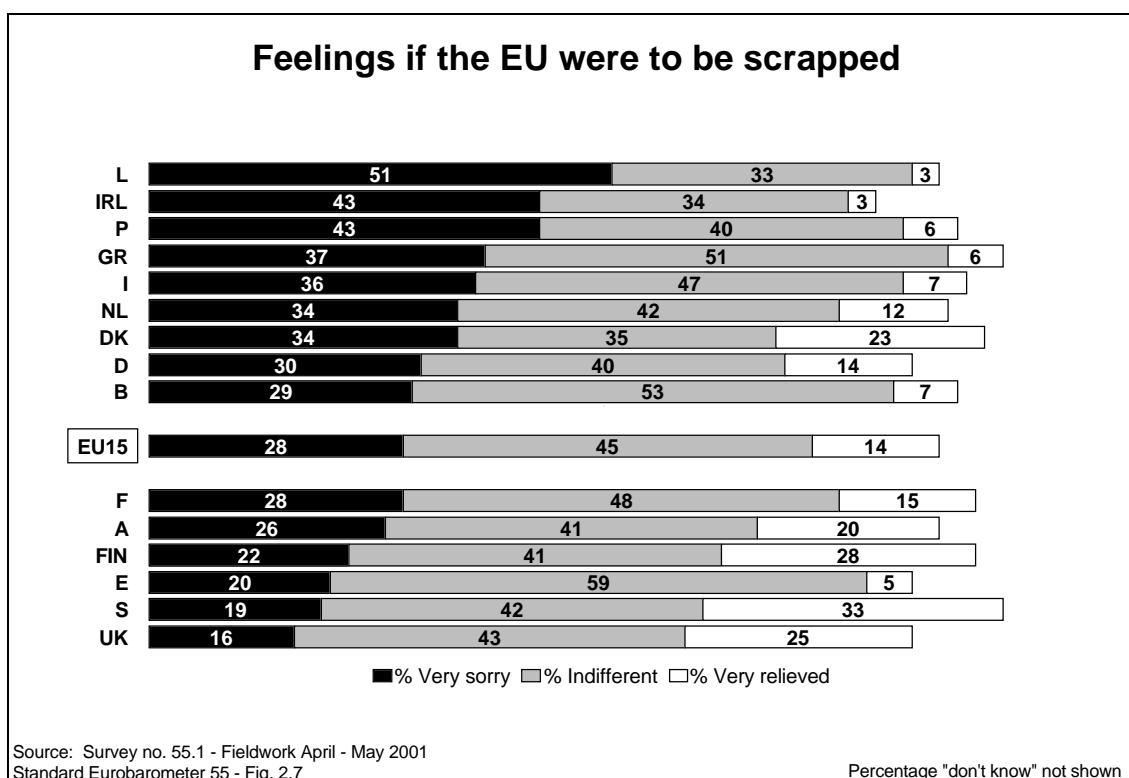
An analysis of the various demographic groups in the population shows that at least half of the people who are still studying (56%), who are self-employed, who stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or older (both 53%) and who work as managers (50%) say that the EU conjures up a positive image. At 35%, unemployed people are least likely to share this view. There is no demographic group where more than a quarter feels that the European Union conjures up a negative image.

The following table depicts the relationship between this question and another item that measures people's emotive stance towards the European Union. It shows that among people who would feel very sorry if the EU were scrapped tomorrow, 83% feel that the EU conjures up a positive image. At the other extreme, we find that 72% of people who would feel very relieved if this were to happen say that the EU conjures up a negative image.

Relationship between image of the EU and feeling if EU were scrapped		
Image of the EU:	Feelings if EU were scrapped:	
	Very sorry	Very relieved
	%	%
Positive	83	5
Neutral	13	21
Negative	3	72
(Don't know)	1	3
<i>Total</i>	100	101

Furthermore, as one would expect, most people who support their country's EU membership have a positive image (75%) of the EU. Equally, 75% of people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing have a negative image. (Table 2.4b)

Looking now at the results for the question that measures how people would feel if they were told tomorrow that the European Union had been scrapped, we find that 28% of respondents would feel very sorry. 45% would feel indifferent and 14% would feel very relieved.



The graph above shows that people in Luxembourg are most likely to feel very sorry if they were told the EU had been scrapped (51%), followed by people in Ireland and Portugal (both 43%). As was shown earlier, support for EU membership is also highest in Luxembourg and Ireland. In Sweden (33%), Finland (28%) and the UK (25%), the likelihood that people would feel relieved if the EU were scrapped is highest.

The proportion of people who say they would feel indifferent if they were told that the EU were scrapped is quite high throughout the EU, ranging from 33% in Luxembourg to 59% in Spain. In all countries except Luxembourg, Ireland and Portugal, people holding this view outnumber those who would feel very sorry. This points to a general lack of emotional involvement in politics that is affecting many Western societies. However, the proportion of people that would feel very relieved if the EU ceased to exist is very low. After Sweden, Finland and the UK, this view is only held by at least 2 in 10 people in Denmark and Austria.

The general trend in comparison to autumn 1998 is that EU citizens are now more likely to feel indifferent if the EU were to be scrapped, with the largest increases noted in Greece (+15) and Spain (+14). In most countries, this increase is at the expense of feeling very sorry. The UK and Sweden are the only two countries where the proportion of people who feel indifferent has not increased. The proportion of people who would feel very relieved if the EU were to be scrapped has increased significantly in Austria (+6), Italy (+4), the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden (all +3). (Table 2.5a)

The demographic analyses show that men are more likely than women to say that they would be very sorry (32% and 24%, respectively), although both genders are equally likely to feel very relieved (14% and 13%, respectively). Among the 4 age groups, we find that people aged 40 to 54 are most likely to feel very sorry (31%), while people aged 55 and over are most likely to feel very relieved (18%). In terms of education, we find that the level of positive responses on this measure increases in line with the number of years that people have stayed in full-time education. Only 21% of people who left school by the age of 15 or younger say they would be very sorry, compared to 40% of people who stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or older. Analysis of the economic activity scale shows that 43% of managers would feel very sorry, followed by self-employed people (38%) whereas only 17% of unemployed people share this view. Retired people (19%) are most likely to say they would feel very relieved. (Table 2.5b)

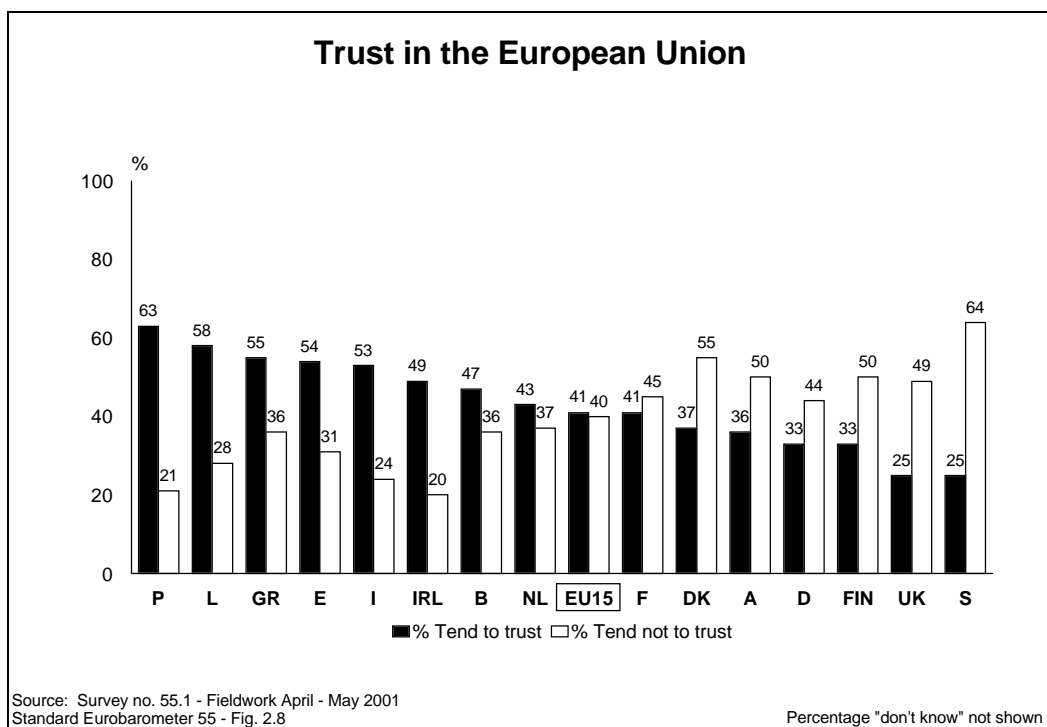
The table below shows a strong correlation between people's attitude towards their country's membership and how people feel if the EU were to be scrapped.

Relationship between feelings if EU were scrapped and support for EU membership			
Feeling if the European Union were scrapped	Membership to the European Union is:		
	a good thing	Neither good nor bad	a bad thing
	%	%	%
Very sorry	53	7	3
Indifferent	35	68	28
Very relieved	2	13	65
Don't know	10	12	4
Total	100	100	100

As can be seen, 53% of people who support their country's membership to the EU would feel very sorry if they were told that the EU had been scrapped, while 65% of people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing feel very relieved. However, in comparison to autumn 1998, we find that supporters of the Union are now less likely to feel sorry (-8) and more likely to feel indifferent (+8). Opponents of the Union are now even more likely to feel very relieved (+5). 68% of people who feel their country's membership is neither good nor bad feel indifferent, up from 62% in autumn 1998.

2.4. Trust in the European Union and its institutions and bodies

Next we look at how widespread levels of trust in the European Union and 9 of its institutions and bodies are in the 15 Member States. Looking first at levels of trust for the European Union as a whole we find that on average, 41% of Europeans say they tend to trust the European Union, 40% say they tend not to trust it and 20% lack an opinion⁶.



⁶ This question is part of a larger battery of questions. The other trust items are discussed in chapter 1 (see tables 1.4a-c).

However, as the graph above shows, there are large variations between the Member States. People in Portugal are most likely to tend to trust the European Union (63%) with more than half of the public in Luxembourg (58%), Greece (55%), Spain (54%) and Italy (53%) sharing this view. People in Sweden (64%) are by far most likely to lack trust, followed by people in Denmark (55%), Finland, Austria (both 50%) and the UK (49%).

Though no significant change has been noted at the EU15 level in comparison to spring 1999, large shifts, mostly positive, have taken place in several Member States. The largest positive shifts took place in Greece (+10), Ireland (+7), Belgium, Luxembourg, Portugal (all +6), Denmark, the UK (both +5), Austria and Sweden (both +4). However, in Sweden and Austria people are now also more likely to lack trust. Finland is the only country where a negative trend has been recorded with an increase of 5 percentage points in the proportion of people who say they tend to lack trust in the European Union. (Table 2.6a)

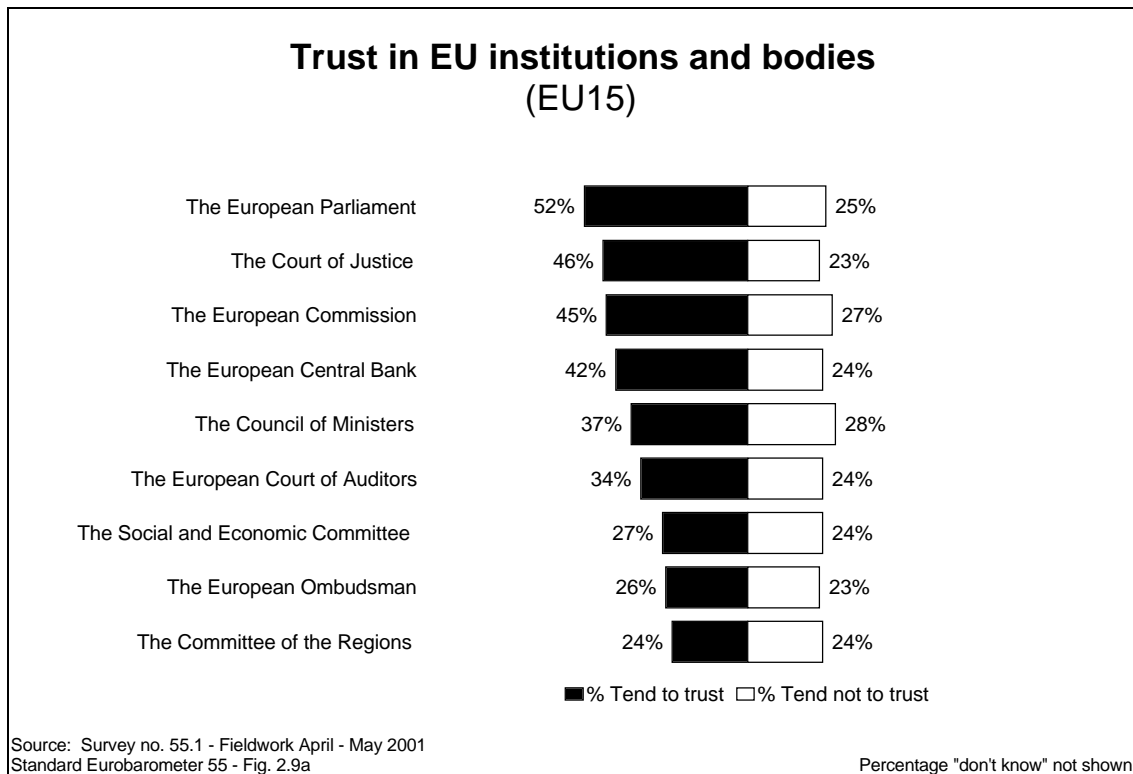
Trust levels not only vary from country to country, they also depend on how people generally feel about their country's membership to the EU. As the table below shows, 65% of people who would feel very sorry if the EU were scrapped tomorrow trust the European Union, whereas 75% of those who would feel very relieved tend not to trust it.

Trust in the EU by feelings if the EU were to be scrapped (in %)			
	Very sorry	Indifferent	Very relieved
% Tend to trust	65	37	11
% Tend not to trust	23	42	75
% Don't know	12	21	14
<i>% Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

Furthermore, the analyses show that 60% of people who regard their country's membership as a good thing trust the European Union, while 77% of those who regard it as a bad thing say they tend not to trust it.

Demographic analyses show that men are somewhat more likely than women to both trust and lack trust in the European Union with women more likely to lack an opinion. The youngest age group (47%) is significantly more likely to trust the European Union than older people are. Among the various educational groups we find that people who are still studying are most likely to trust the EU (52%) with 38% of people who left school before the age of 16 saying they trust it. At 48%, self-employed people represent the occupational group that is most likely to trust the EU whilst at 47%, unemployed people are most likely to lack trust. (Table 2.6b)

Next we look at trust levels for 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 graph next page, are so low.



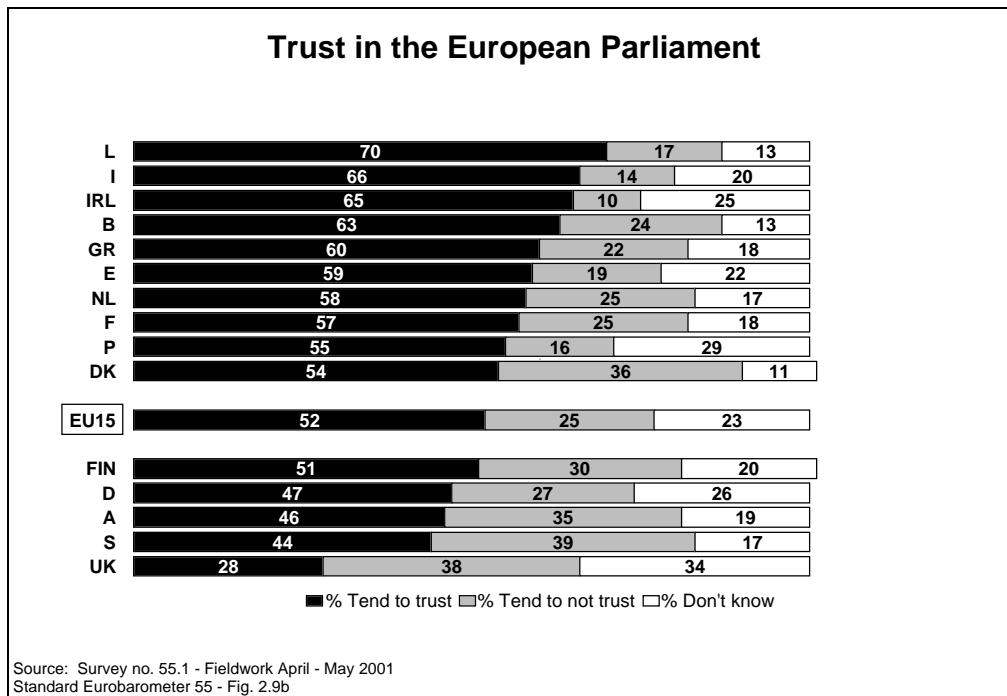
At 52%, the European Parliament receives the most widespread trust followed by the Court of Justice (46%) and the European Commission (45%). Whilst these results are the same as in autumn 2000, we find a significant decrease in the proportion of people that lacks trust in the Commission (-3)⁷.

The next table shows the three most widely trusted institutions and bodies in each Member State. The **European Parliament** makes the top three in all 15 Member States. It tops the list in 8 countries, comes in second place in three countries and in third place a further four countries. The **Court of Justice** tops the list in six countries, comes in second place in two countries and in third place in a further four countries. Italy, Spain and Portugal are the only countries where it doesn't make the top three. The **European Commission** comes in second or third place in nine countries while the **European Central Bank** comes in second or third place in seven countries. Spain is the only country where the **Council of Ministers** makes the top three. The **European Ombudsman**, who is Finnish, tops the list in his home country but does not make the top three in any of the other Member States. (See also table 2.7)

⁷ See Eurobarometer Report 54, table 4.5.

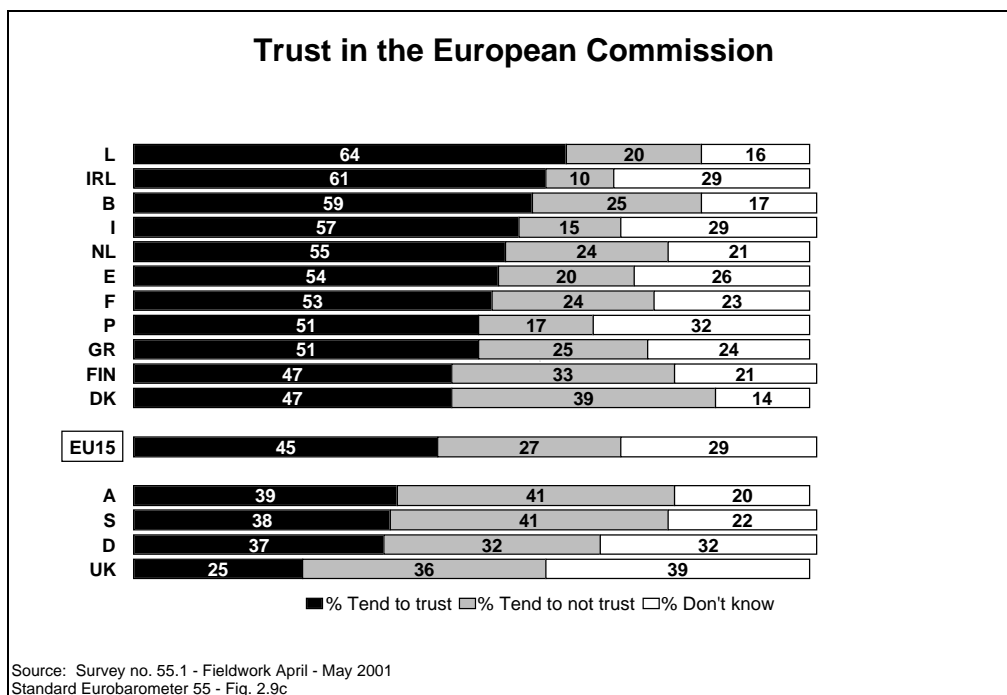
TOP THREE MOST WIDELY TRUSTED EU INSTITUTIONS AND BODIES (IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)	
Belgium	
European Parliament	63
European Commission	59
Court of Justice	51
Denmark	
Court of Justice	67
European Parliament	54
European Central Bank	51
Germany	
Court of Justice	53
European Central Bank	50
European Parliament	47
Greece	
European Parliament	60
European Commission	51
Court of Justice	51
Spain	
European Parliament	59
European Commission	54
Council of Ministers	49
France	
European Parliament	57
European Commission	53
Court of Justice	45
Ireland	
European Parliament	65
European Commission	61
Court of Justice	56
Italy	
European Parliament	66
European Commission	57
European Central Bank	43
Luxembourg	
European Parliament	70
Court of Justice	69
European Commission	64
The Netherlands	
Court of Justice	65
European Central Bank	63
European Parliament	58
Austria	
Court of Justice	51
European Parliament	46
European Central Bank	44
Portugal	
European Parliament	55
European Commission	51
European Central Bank	49
Finland	
European Ombudsman	59
Court of Justice	56
European Parliament	51
Sweden	
Court of Justice	52
European Central Bank	44
European Parliament	44
United Kingdom	
Court of Justice	28
European Parliament	28
European Commission	25

Looking next in more detail at the country results for the **European Parliament** shows that people in Luxembourg (70%), Italy (66%), Ireland (65%), Belgium (63%) and Greece (60%) are most likely to trust it. People in Sweden (39%), the UK (38%) and Denmark (36%) are most likely to lack trust in the European Parliament. The proportion of “don’t know” responses ranges from 11% in Denmark to 34% in the UK.



In comparison to autumn 2000 trust levels have increased significantly in Luxembourg, Denmark and the Netherlands (all +4). In France (-5), Germany and the UK (both -4), people are now significantly less likely to lack trust. Trust levels have dropped in Spain (-12). This is also the case in Italy (-5) but in this country we also find a drop in the proportion of people who lack trust (-3) accompanied by an increase in "don't know" responses. The proportion of people lacking an opinion has increased in all Member States, though this rise is only significant in 9 countries⁸

Looking at the country by country results for the **European Commission** shows that more than 6 in 10 people in Luxembourg (64%) and Ireland (61%) trust it. More than half of the population in seven further countries also trusts the European Commission. People in Sweden, Austria (both 41%), Denmark (39%) and the UK (36%) are most likely to lack trust in this European institution. The proportion of "don't know" responses ranges from 14% in Denmark to 39% in the UK.



⁸ See Eurobarometer Report 54, table 4.5.

The shifts that have taken since autumn 2000 are similar to those noted above for the European Parliament. People responded more positively in Denmark, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK, Germany, Portugal and Belgium either by being more likely to trust the Commission, less likely to lack trust in it or both. A negative development is noted in Spain and Italy but again in the latter country we also find a drop in the proportion of people who lack trust and an increase in “don’t know” responses. The proportion of people lacking an opinion has also increased significantly in 9 Member States⁹

Finally, we look at the median trust level for the 9 institutions and bodies in each of the Member States¹⁰. As the following table shows, the median is highest in Luxembourg (61%) 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	61
Ireland	51
The Netherlands	48
Finland	47
Denmark	46
Portugal	45
Spain	45
Belgium	43
Italy	41
Greece	41
France	40
Austria	39
Sweden	38
EU15	37
Germany	37
United Kingdom	18

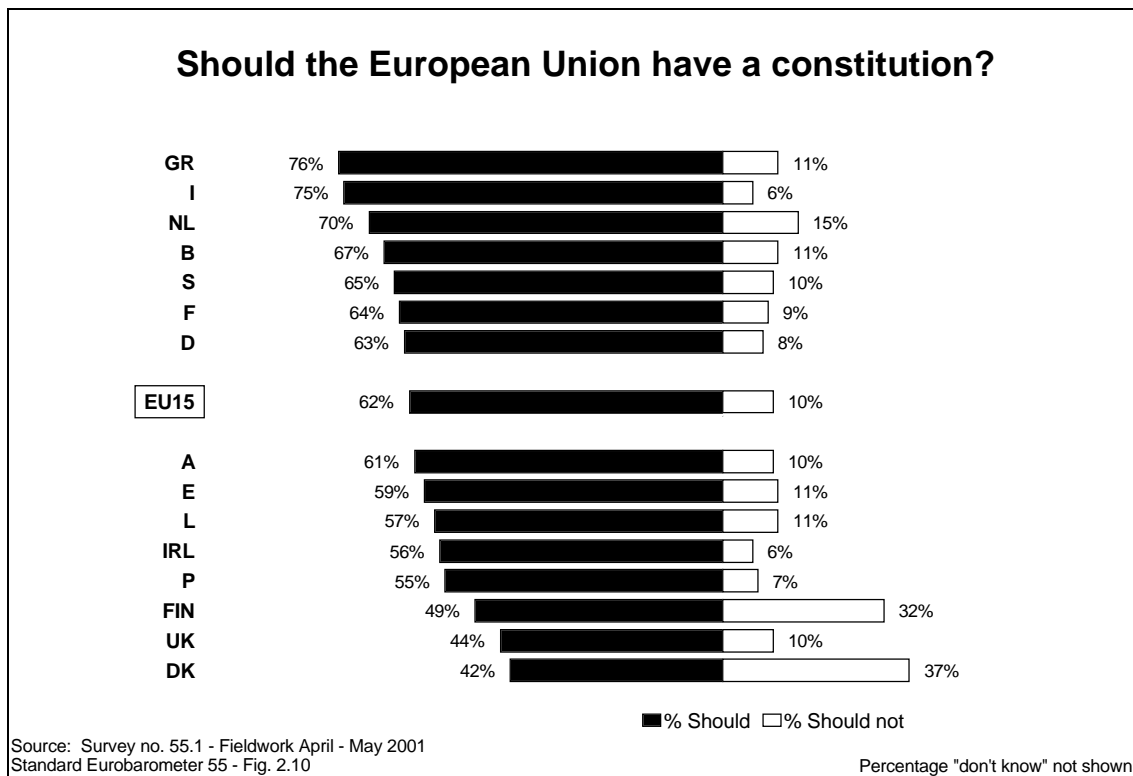
2.5. Support for a European Union constitution

In a declaration on the future of the Union annexed to the Treaty of Nice, the Intergovernmental Conference calls for a deeper and wider debate on the future of the European Union. One of the issues that may be discussed is whether the European Union should have a constitution in view of the forthcoming enlargement.

⁹ See also Eurobarometer Report 54, table 4.5.

¹⁰ We show the median ‘% trust’ score rather than the average, as the median is the appropriate measure of central tendency in distributions with extreme values. Once again readers are reminded that low levels of trust are mostly off-set by high levels of “don’t know” responses, not by high levels of distrust.

In this context, the survey has measured people's views about a European Union Constitution. The results show that 62% of EU citizens feel the EU should have a constitution while 10% are against. The remaining 29% lack an opinion.



In all 15 Member States, support is obtained from a majority of the public. Nonetheless, there is considerable variation among the countries with support levels ranging from 76% in Greece to 42% in Denmark. The level of "don't know" responses is high and ranges from 13% in Greece to 47% in the UK. Consequently, the level of outright opposition to a constitution is low. In most countries only around 1 in 10 people are against it with Denmark (37%) and Finland (32%) as the clear exceptions.

In comparison to spring 2000, when the question was asked previously, we find that in most countries people are now more likely to lack an opinion. Ireland is the only country where people have become more opinionated with an increase of 3 percentage points noted both for support and opposition to such a Constitution. Whilst opposition levels remain low an increase has been noted in most countries resulting in lower levels of outright support for a European Constitution in 14 of the 15 Member States. (Table 2.8a)

The demographic analyses show that support for a constitution is highest among managers (72%), people who stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or older (71%) and the self-employed (69%). Opposition is low and ranges from 7% among employees to 12% among people who stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or older and unemployed people. Differences in support levels are thus mostly explained by relatively large variations in the proportion of don't know responses.

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 very little to hold an opinion. The following table shows that support levels are significantly higher among the first group (79%) than they are among the second group (51%).

Support for a European Constitution by knowledge about the EU (in %)			
	High knowledge level	Average knowledge level	Low knowledge level
% In favour	79	70	51
% Against	12	10	9
% Don't know	9	20	40
<i>% Total</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>100</i>

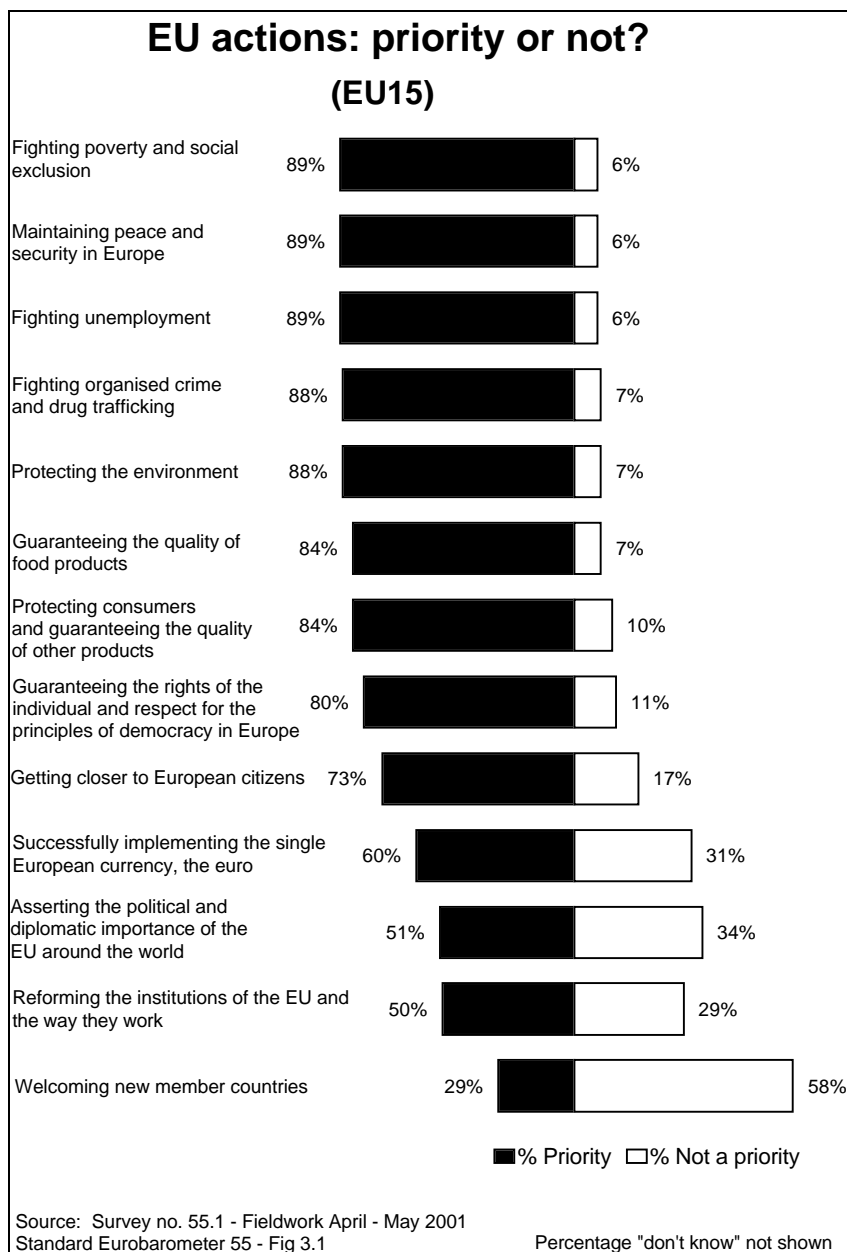
It should come as no surprise to find that supporters of the EU are more likely to favour a constitution than its opponents are (74% vs. 49%). 21% of people who consider their country's membership to the European Union as a bad thing oppose a constitution, compared to 8% of people who support their country's EU membership. (Table 2.8b)

3. Support for current policy issues

This chapter presents the findings from questions included in the survey that measure people's support for and knowledge of some of the Union's current policy issues. The chapter begins by looking at the extent to which the European public sees some of the Union's current activities as priorities. It then looks at support for key issues, like the euro, enlargement and foreign and defence policies. The last two sections of this chapter look in more detail at people's attitudes to the euro and to enlargement.

3.1. Support for the Union's priorities

For many years, the Eurobarometer has included a question, which measures the extent to which the public views the Union's current actions as priorities¹¹.



¹¹ For a description of the Commission's Work Programme for the year 2001, please see http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/off/work_programme/index_en.htm.

The Special European Council in Stockholm, held on 23-24 March 2001, was the first in a series of summits to work on making the European Union 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.

The survey results show that, on average, 89% of EU citizens feel that the fight against unemployment should be a priority for the EU, with country results ranging from 77% in the UK to 96% in Greece and Portugal. On a related issue, we find that 89% of EU citizens also feel that fighting poverty and social exclusion should be a priority, with country results ranging from 82% in the UK to 97% in Portugal.

More than 8 in 10 Europeans also believe that maintaining peace and security in Europe, fighting organised crime and drug trafficking, protecting the environment and protecting consumers and guaranteeing the quality of products should be priority actions for the European Union.

The aim of the European Union to get closer to its citizens is welcomed by the public. On average, 73% of EU citizens believe that this should be a priority. At the country level we find that support for this priority ranges from 54% in the UK to 87% in the Netherlands.

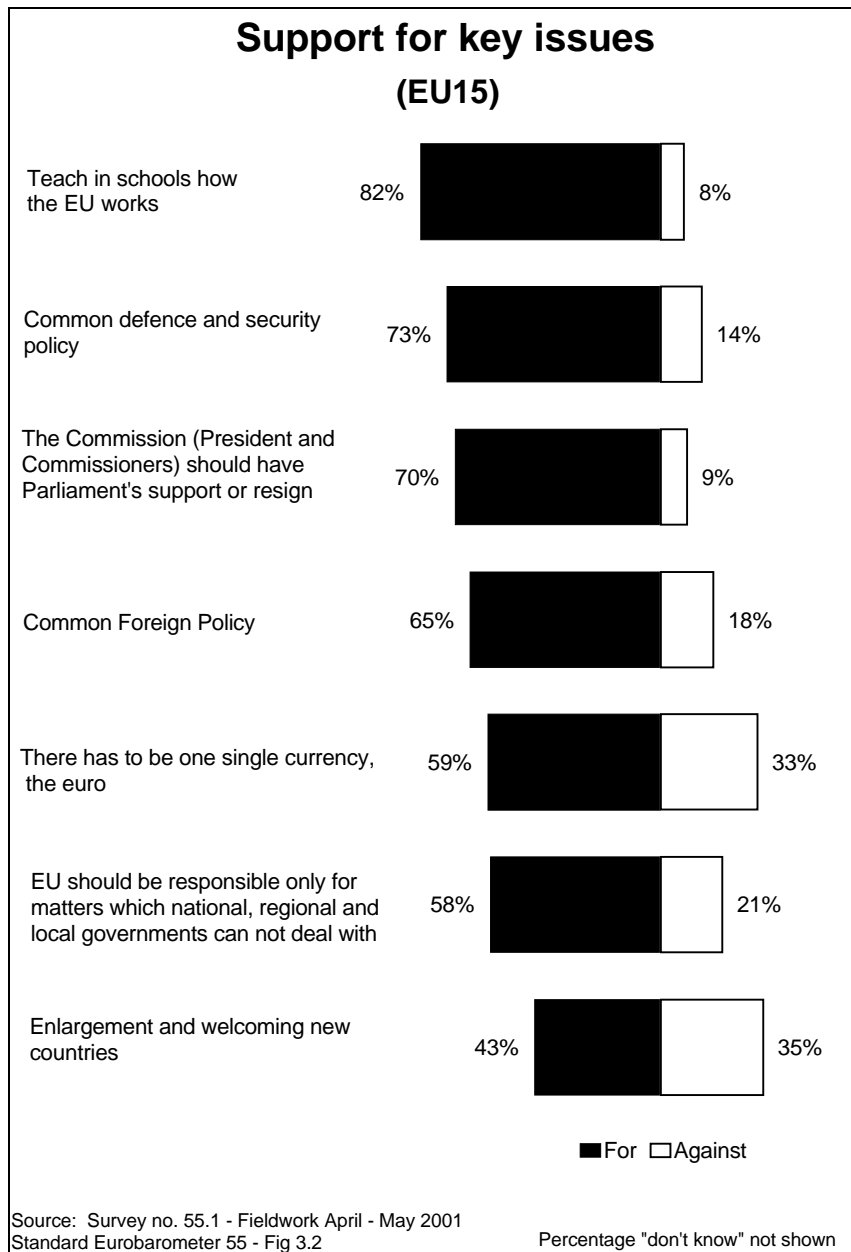
The Nice Treaty, signed on 26 February 2001, takes on many of the issues discussed during the 2000 Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) with a view to reforming the institutions of the European Union in preparation for enlargement¹². There are large differences in opinion from country to country with regards to the need for reform with people in Denmark (73%) most likely to consider it a priority for the EU and people in the UK and Belgium (both 44%) least likely to share this view.

The graph on previous page shows that 60% of EU citizens believe that implementing the euro should be a priority. This view is held by 68% of people living in the twelve euro-zone countries. Not surprisingly, only 26% of people living in the three countries outside the euro-zone (Denmark, Sweden and the UK) believe that implementing the euro should be a priority for the European Union. Though the view that enlargement should be a priority is still held by only a minority of the public, the public mood is now more supportive than it was in autumn 2000. 29% now regard it a priority (+3). (See also table 3.1)

3.2. 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 while others relate to democratic processes which govern the way the European Union functions.

¹² For more details about reform please visit the Commission's IGC website at: http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/archives/igc2000/index_en.htm.



In all 15 Member States, there is widespread agreement that children should be taught in school about the way European Union institutions work, with support levels ranging from 65% in the UK to 90% in Luxembourg and Sweden.

The Nice Treaty also speaks of a progressive framing of a common defence policy. On average 73% of EU citizens are in favour of a common defence policy, with people in Greece most likely to support it (87%) and people in Finland (40%) and Sweden (38%) most likely to oppose it. Support for a common foreign policy is obtained from 65% of EU citizens, with highest support levels recorded in France (75%) and highest opposition levels again recorded in Finland (39%).

In Denmark (86%) and Sweden (81%), where many people feel that the EU has too much power and that there are insufficient measures to control this power, we find widespread support for the notion that the President of the European Commission and the European Commissioners should have the support of the majority in the European Parliament. However, in the Netherlands, Finland and Greece, where the public is generally quite positive about the European Union, 8 in 10 people also agree with this notion.

Support for the principle of subsidiarity, the notion that the European Union should only be responsible for matters that can not be effectively handled by national, regional and local governments, stands at 58%. People in Greece (67%), Ireland and Italy (both 66%) are most likely to favour this principle while support is lowest in the UK (41%). However, the proportion of people that lacks an opinion on this issue is high and ranges from 11% in Greece to 30% in the UK.

Support for the single currency stands at 59%, up from 55% in autumn 2000. Public opinion about the single currency is discussed in more detail in sections 3.3 and 3.4 below. 43% of EU citizens agree with the statement that the European Union should be enlarged and include new countries. Enlargement is discussed in detail in sections 3.5 to 3.8. (Table 3.2)

The following table shows the average support level for the survey's 7 key issues in each Member State¹³. As can be seen, support for these key issues tends to be highest in Greece and lowest in the UK.

AVERAGE % SUPPORT FOR 7 KEY ISSUES BY COUNTRY	
Country	Average % Support
Greece	78
Luxembourg	73
Italy	71
Belgium	70
The Netherlands	69
Spain	68
France	68
Ireland	67
Germany	66
EU15	64
Portugal	63
Finland	61
Denmark	60
Austria	58
Sweden	58
United Kingdom	44

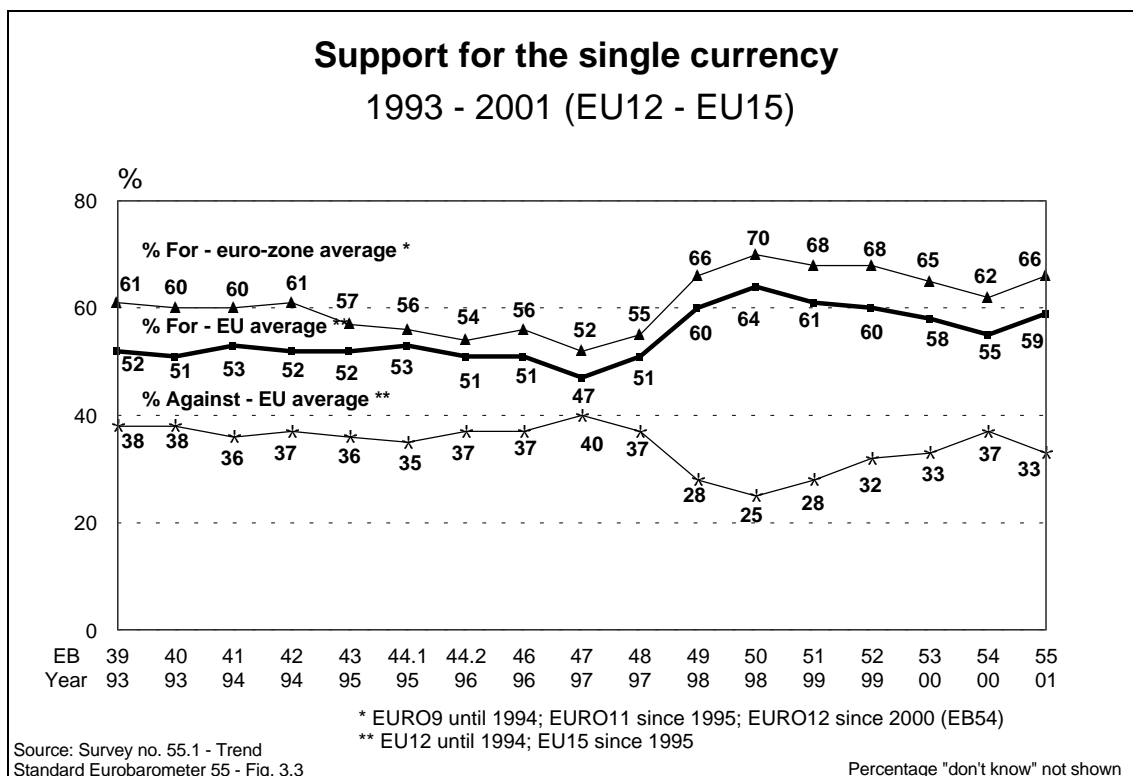
¹³ Readers should note that in some countries low support levels are matched by a high level of 'don't know' responses and not by high opposition levels.

3.3. Support for the single currency

Twelve of the fifteen Member States¹⁴ have introduced the European single currency, the euro, and in a few months these 12 nations will switch to using euro notes and coins. Greece joined the euro-zone in January 2001, having met the economic conditions required for joining the single currency.

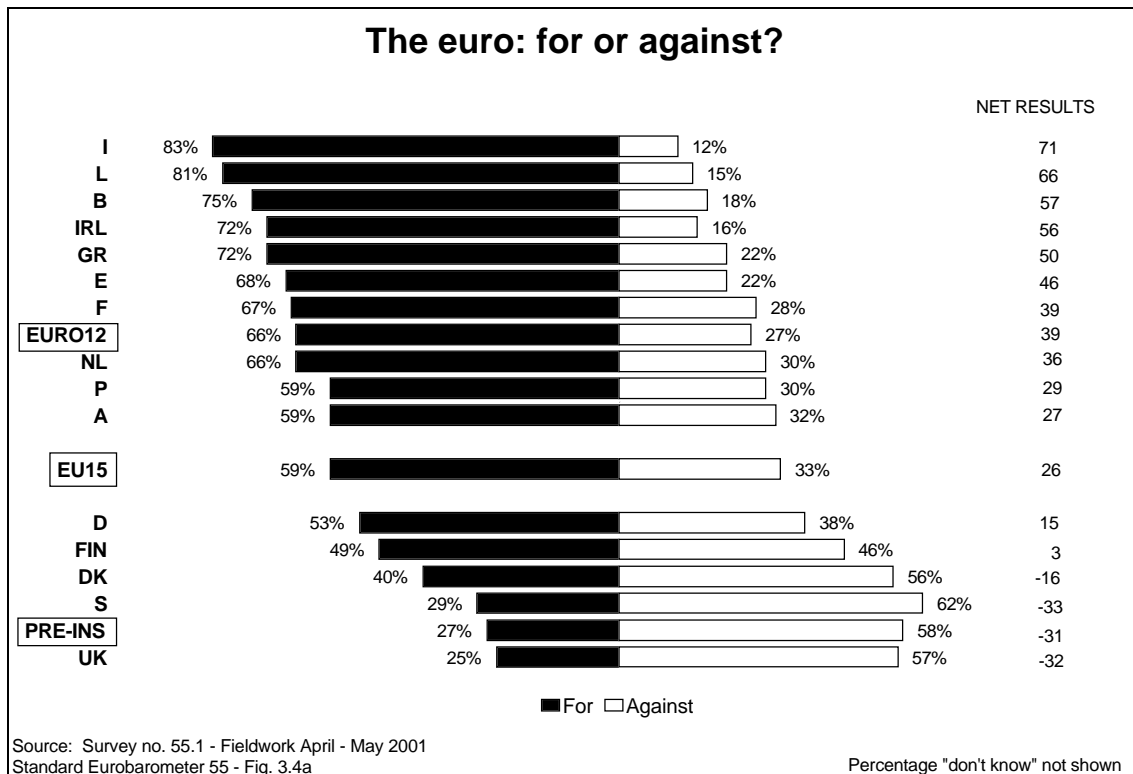
The spring 2001 Eurobarometer results show that 59% of EU citizens agree that there has to be one single currency, the euro, which replaces the national currencies of the Member States of the European Union whilst 33% are against this. The remaining 9% lack an opinion. Support for the euro is significantly higher in the "EURO 12" countries than it is in the 3 other countries (66% vs. 27).

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



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. Support then dropped to a low of 55% in autumn 2000. Whilst the euro is delivering the expected benefits for the European economy, its value vis-à-vis major foreign currencies like the US Dollar and UK Sterling has fallen significantly since its introduction, although it has regained some of its value in the past few months. The perceived weakness of the euro might help explain that part of the public (33%) are reluctant to give up their own currencies. However, the latest survey shows that support for the euro has improved by 4 percentage points since autumn 2000, matched by an equally large drop in opposition levels.

¹⁴ These are Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. Throughout the remainder of this report we will refer to this group as the "EURO 12" countries. The 3 countries outside the euro-zone are Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom. They will be referred to as the "pre-in" countries.

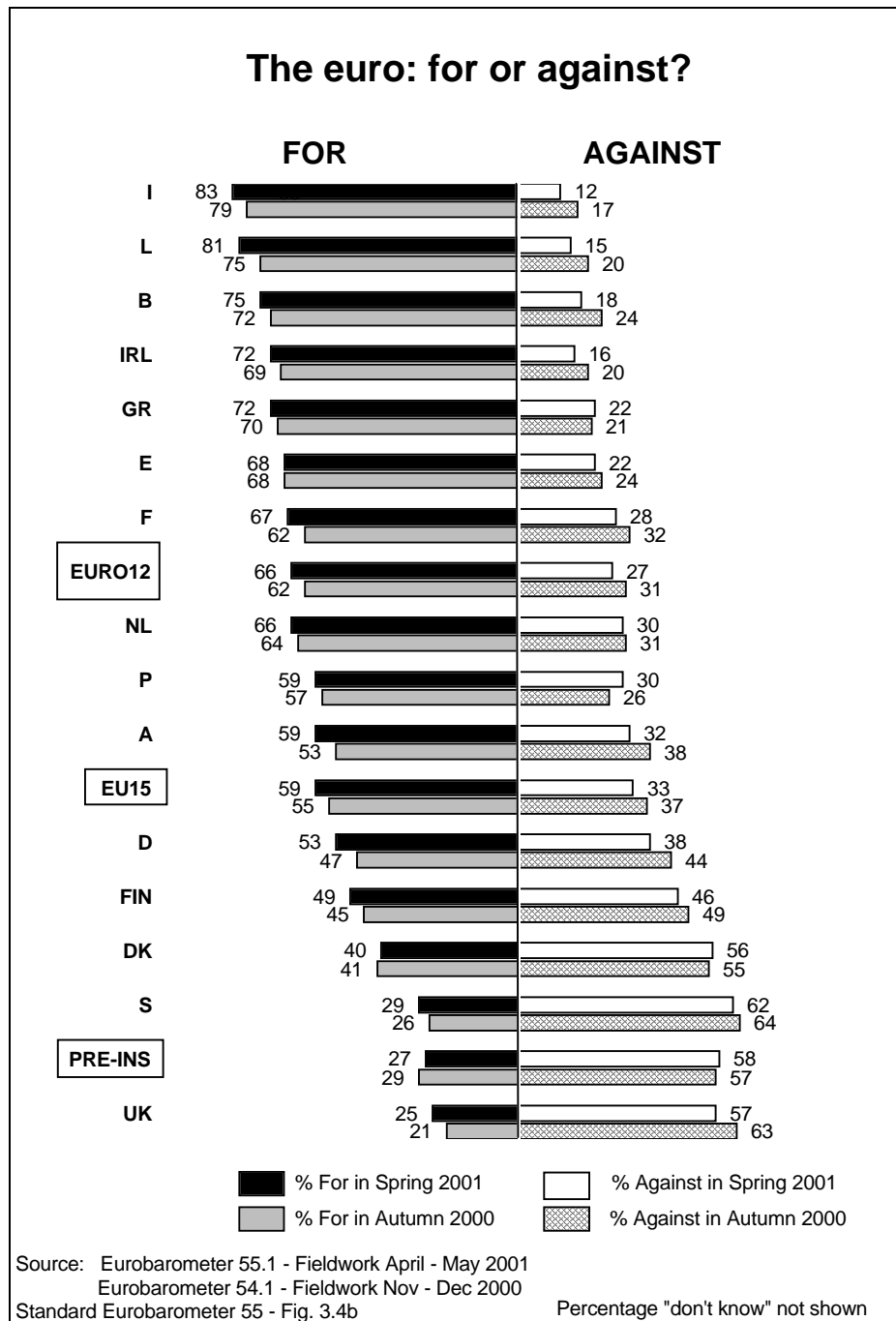


The graph above shows that support for the euro among the “EURO 12” countries is highest in Italy (83%) and Luxembourg (81%), with at least 7 in 10 people in Belgium, Ireland and Greece in favour. In Spain, France and the Netherlands more than 6 in 10 people support the euro while this is the case for more than 5 in 10 people in Portugal, Austria and Germany. Finland is the only “EURO 12” country where support for the euro is just below 50%, though like all these other countries, supporters outnumber opponents of the euro.

Among the “pre-in” countries, support is highest in Denmark (40%) while in the UK and Sweden less than 3 in 10 people are in favour of the euro. In all three countries opposition to the euro is obtained from more than half of the population.

An analysis of shifts in support levels since autumn 2000 in the “EURO 12” countries shows that support for the euro has increased in many countries. The highest increase is noted in Germany, Austria and Luxembourg (all +6), followed by France (+5), Italy, Finland (both +4), Belgium and Ireland (both +3). No significant changes have been recorded in the Netherlands, Greece and Spain. Portugal is the only country where we find an increase in opposition levels (+4), although support levels are also up (+2), resulting in a reduced number of “don’t know” responses.

Looking at the "pre-in" countries shows that people in the UK are now significantly more likely to support the euro (+4) whilst opposition levels have fallen by 6 percentage points. Support has also increased in Sweden (+3). No significant change has been recorded in Denmark. (Table 3.3a)

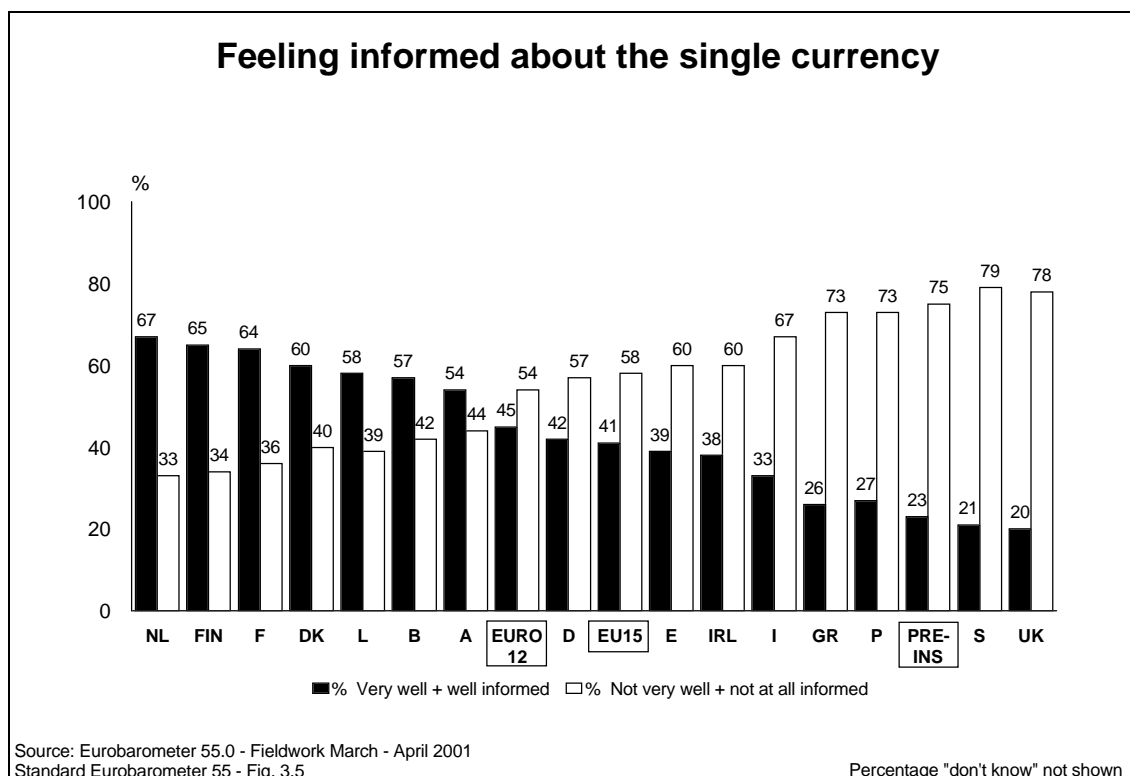


Among the various demographic groups in the population support for the euro is highest among self-employed people (70%), people that stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or older (69%) and students (67%). Opposition levels are highest among manual workers and retired people (both 39%).

At the attitudinal level we find that the gap in support levels 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 (20%) remains very large. (Table 3.3b)

3.4. Information about the single currency¹⁵

In spring 2001, 41% of EU citizens feel very well or well informed about the single currency. 58% of respondents say they do not feel well informed. The remaining 1% lack an opinion. Levels of feeling informed are lower than they were in autumn 2000, when 45% of EU citizens felt well informed.



The country analyses show that levels of feeling informed continue to be higher in the "EURO 12" countries (45%) than they are in the "pre-in" countries (23%). Looking first at the "EURO 12" countries shows that people in the Netherlands (67%) are most likely to feel well informed, followed by people in Finland (65%), France (64%), Luxembourg (58%) and Belgium (57%). People in Portugal (27%) and Greece (26%) continue to be least likely to feel well informed. In all other "EURO 12" countries at least one third of the population feels well informed.

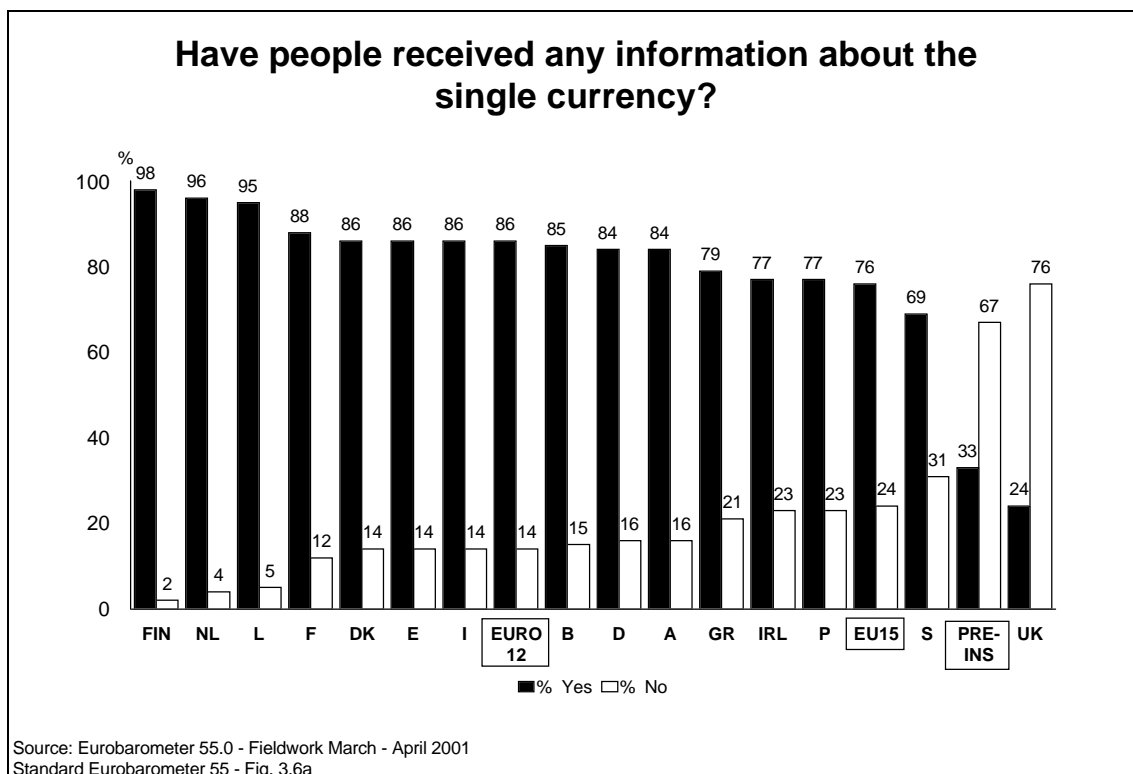
In comparison to autumn 2000, we find that France (+8) and Finland (+3) are the only 2 "EURO 12" countries where levels of feeling informed have improved significantly. The largest decrease has been recorded in Germany (-12) and Luxembourg (-9) followed by Austria, Spain, Ireland (all -6), Belgium (-5) and Italy (-4). No significant changes are noted in the remaining 3 "EURO 12" countries. If we look at the shifts that took place between spring and autumn 2000 and compare these to the latest shifts, it becomes evident that levels of feeling informed in the "EURO 12" countries fluctuate strongly from one period to the next and that there appears to be no clear trend in either direction in most of these countries.

Looking next at the "pre-in" countries shows that 60% of people in Denmark feel very well or well informed. This is significantly lower than in autumn 2000 (-7), when levels of feeling informed were clearly influenced by the amount of information the Danish public had received about the euro in the run up to the September 2000 euro referendum. In the UK and Sweden, only around 2 in 10 people feel well informed about the euro. In both countries, levels of feeling informed are now significantly lower than they were in autumn 2000. (Table 3.4a)

¹⁵ The questions discussed in this section were asked on the first wave of the Eurobarometer 55, fielded between March 5 and April 24, 2001.

The demographic analyses show that men are significantly more likely than women to feel well informed about the euro (48% vs. 34%). Among the various age groups, people aged 40 to 54 are most likely to feel well informed (45%) whilst people aged 55 and over are least likely to feel well informed (36%). Levels of feeling informed strongly depend on the age at which people left full-time education. Only 26% of those who left it before the age of 15 feel well informed, compared to 59% of people who left it aged 20 or older. Among the various occupational group, we find that managers are most likely to feel well informed (59%) whilst only 29% of people looking after the home feel well informed.

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

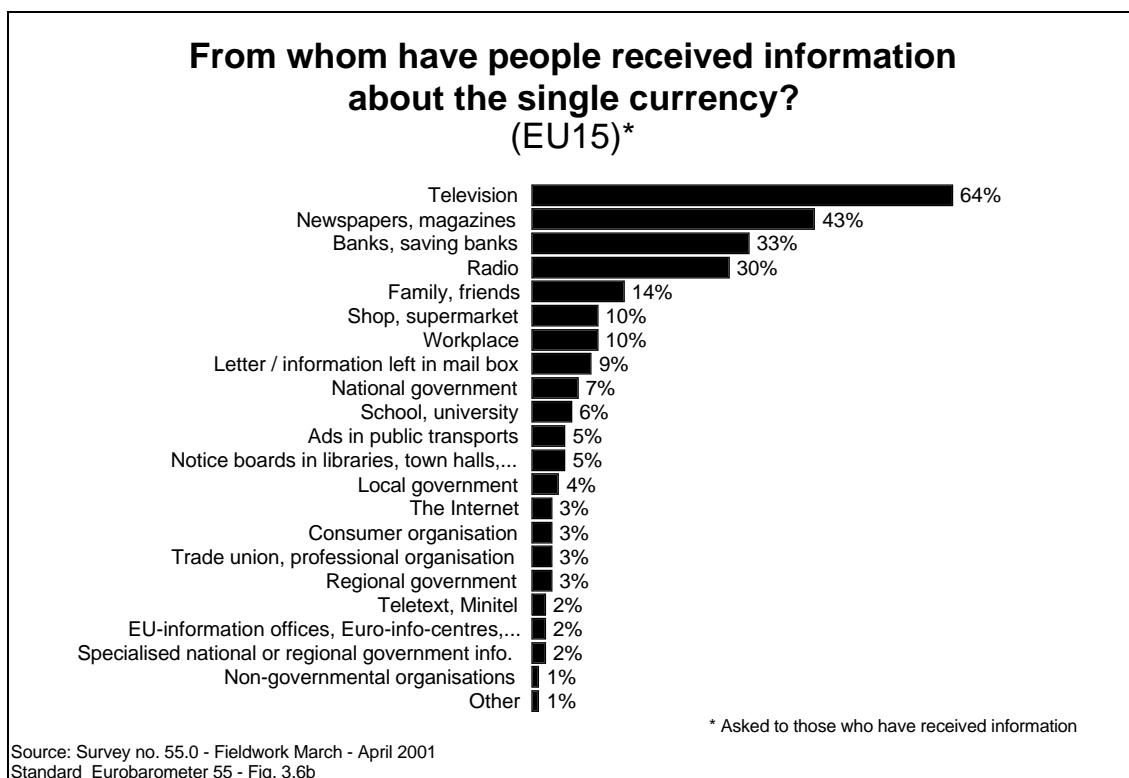


In all "EURO 12" countries at least 3 in 4 people say they have received information about the euro with proportions ranging from 77% in Portugal and Ireland to 98% in Finland.

In most "EURO 12" countries, the proportion that has received information about the euro has not changed. However, in Portugal we find that people are now significantly more likely to say they have received information (+16). Whilst this could help explain why the Portuguese are now slightly more likely to feel well informed about the euro, this hypothesis is not backed by developments in other countries. There are several countries where levels of feeling informed have dropped despite the fact that the level of information received has remained the same or has even increased.

Among the three "pre-in" countries, we find that 86% of Danish respondents have received information about the single currency, in comparison to 100% in autumn 2000. Prior to the September 2000 euro referendum all Danish people received information from their local government. The latest results indicate that only 3% of Danes have received information about the euro from their local government. In Sweden 69% say they have received information about the euro, compared to 73% in autumn 2000. Only 24% of people in the UK have received information about the single currency. This is 3 percentage points lower than in autumn 2000.

As the following graph shows, people are most likely to say that they have received information about the euro on television (64%), up five percentage points since autumn 2000. 43% of respondents say they have received information through the written press (+4) and 33% say they have received information from financial institutions (-2). Three in ten respondents say they have received information from the radio (+4). All other sources included in the questionnaire are listed by less than 2 in 10 respondents¹⁶.



The next table shows that the television, newspapers and magazines and financial institutions are the three most frequently mentioned sources in all "EURO12" countries, except Greece, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg and Portugal. In these countries, the radio instead of financial institutions is one of the three most frequently mentioned sources except for Portugal where friends and family come in third place. Logically, financial institutions also do not make the top three in the "Pre-in" countries. In these countries, radio comes in third place. Whilst there is thus little variation between the nations in the sources that make the top three, there is great variation in the number of people that say they have received information from each of the sources. (See also table 3.5)

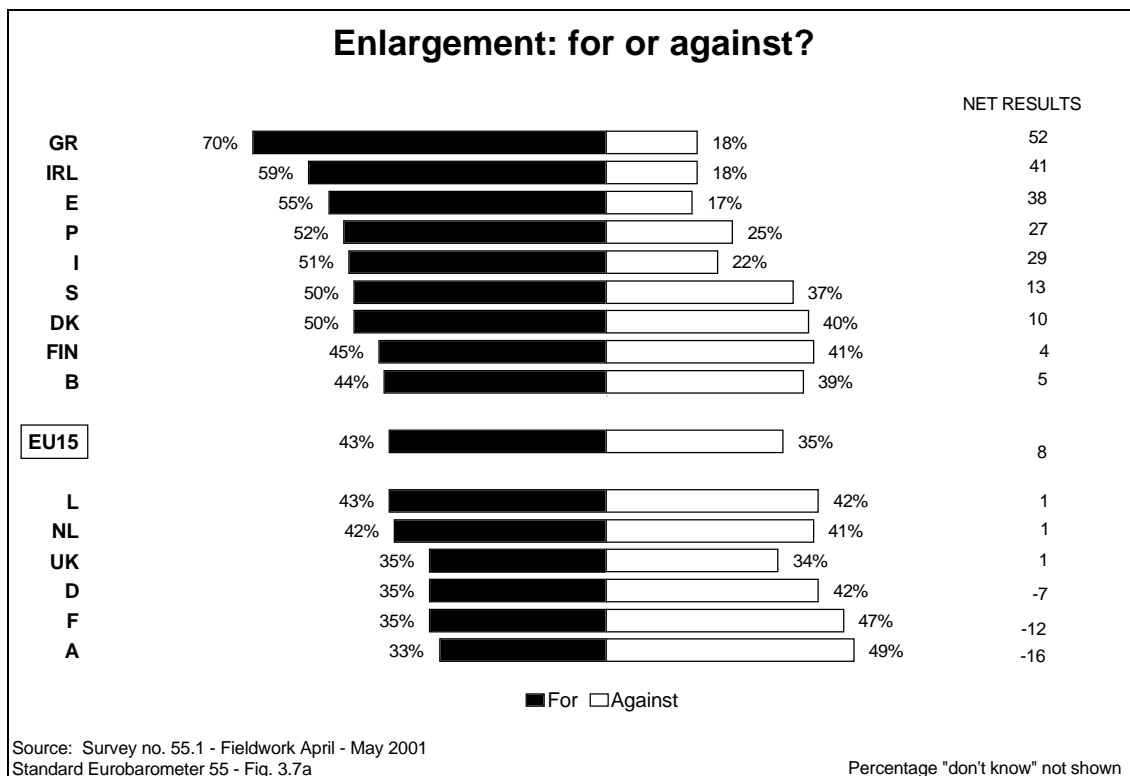
¹⁶ The combined total of the responses is greater than the percentage of people who have received information because respondents could list any of the sources presented to them from whom they had received information. For autumn 2000 results, see table 5.6 in Eurobarometer Report No. 54.

TOP THREE MOST MENTIONED SOURCES FROM WHICH PEOPLE HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT THE EURO (IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)	
Belgium	
Television	65
Financial institutions	54
Newspapers, magazines	46
Denmark	
Television	79
Newspapers, magazines	61
Radio	47
Germany	
Television	68
Newspapers, magazines	56
Financial institutions	41
Greece	
Television	68
Newspapers, magazines	35
Radio	24
Spain	
Television	77
Newspapers, magazines	34
Radio	34
France	
Television	73
Financial institutions	63
Newspapers, magazines	44
Ireland	
Television	42
Financial institutions	39
Newspapers, magazines	30
Italy	
Television	74
Newspapers, magazines	48
Radio	24
Luxembourg	
Television	79
Newspapers, magazines	62
Radio	62
The Netherlands	
Television	86
Financial institutions	66
Newspapers, magazines	64
Austria	
Television	59
Newspapers, magazines	52
Financial institutions	50
Portugal	
Television	69
Newspapers, magazines	27
Friends and family	21
Finland	
Television	80
Newspapers, magazines	75
Financial institutions	47
Sweden	
Television	62
Newspapers, magazines	50
Radio	35
United Kingdom	
Television	18
Newspapers, magazines	13
Radio	6

3.5. 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. Thirteen applicant countries are presently taking part in the accession process¹⁷.

Section 3.2 above already mentions that 43% of respondents agree with the statement that the European Union should be enlarged and include new countries. 35% disagree and 23% lack an opinion.

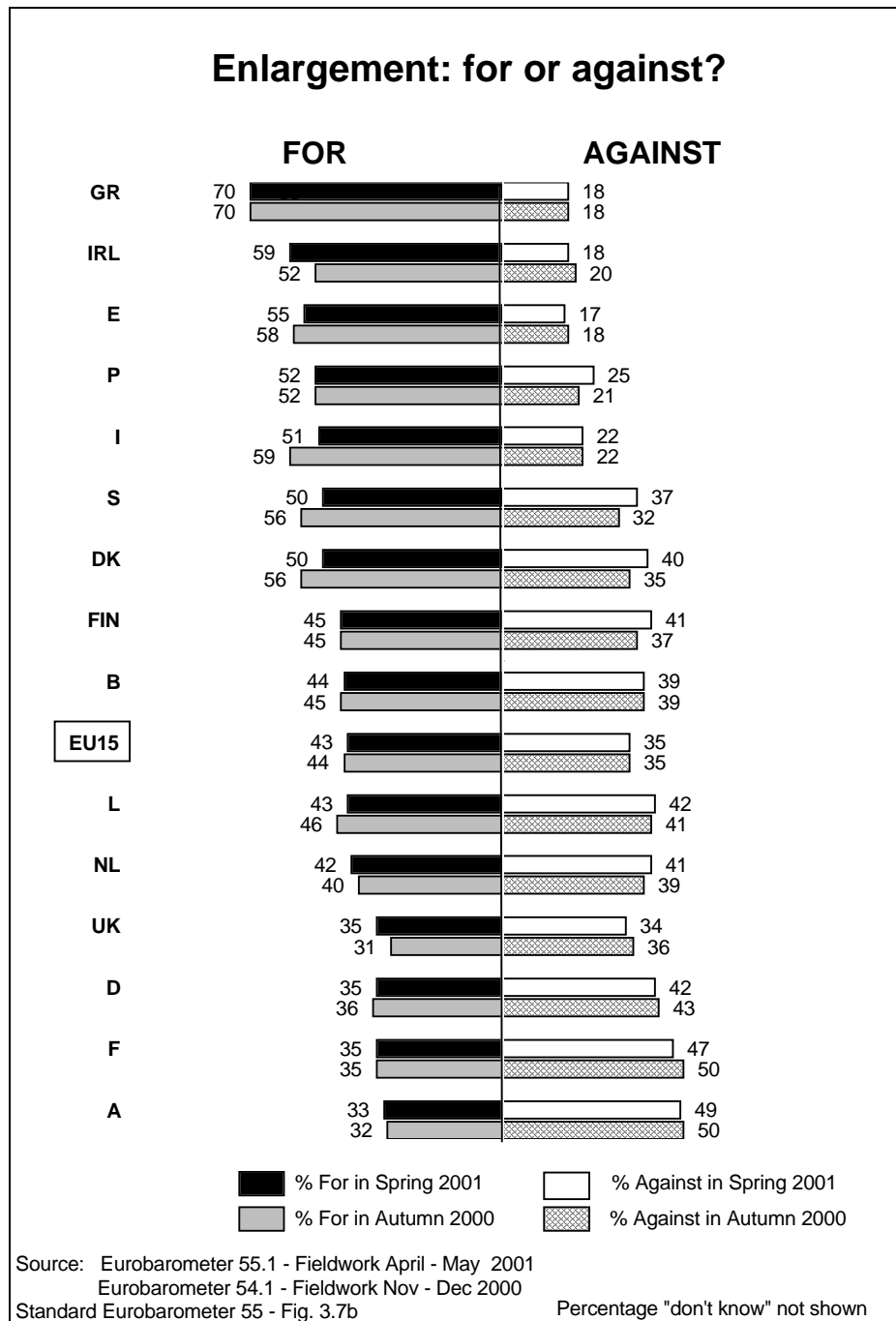


The country by country results show that support for enlargement is most widespread in Greece (70%), followed at a distance by Ireland (59%)¹⁸, Spain (55%), Portugal (52%), Italy (51%), Sweden and Denmark (both 50%). People in Austria (49%) and France (47%) are most likely to oppose enlargement.

Since autumn 2000, support for enlargement has increased significantly in Ireland (+7) and the UK (+4), and opposition levels dropped significantly in France (-3). People in Denmark and Sweden are now less likely to be in favour of enlargement (-6). A drop in support levels has also been recorded in Italy (-8), Spain and Luxembourg (both -3), but unlike Denmark and Sweden, we do not find a significant increase in opposition levels in these countries. Portugal and Finland (both +4) are the only other countries apart from Denmark and Sweden where opposition levels did increase. (Table 3.6a)

¹⁷ The 13 applicant countries are Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey. Negotiations for membership are under way with the first 12 countries mentioned.

¹⁸ More information about enlargement can be found at: <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/index.htm>.
The Irish public rejected the Nice Treaty in their June 7 2001 referendum, although turnout was, at 34%, very low. The fieldwork for the EB55.1 was carried out in Ireland from 16 April to 11 May 2001.



Differences in support levels between men and women are largely explained by the fact that women are more likely than men to lack an opinion. There are, however, real differences in opinion between the age groups, with the youngest age group, i.e. those aged 15 to 24, significantly more likely to support enlargement than people aged 55 and over (49% vs. 38%). Support levels are highest among people who are still studying (53%) and lowest among retired people (36%).

The attitudinal analyses show that 59% of people who support their country's membership to the European Union are in favour of enlargement, compared to only 20% of those who regard their country's membership as a bad thing.

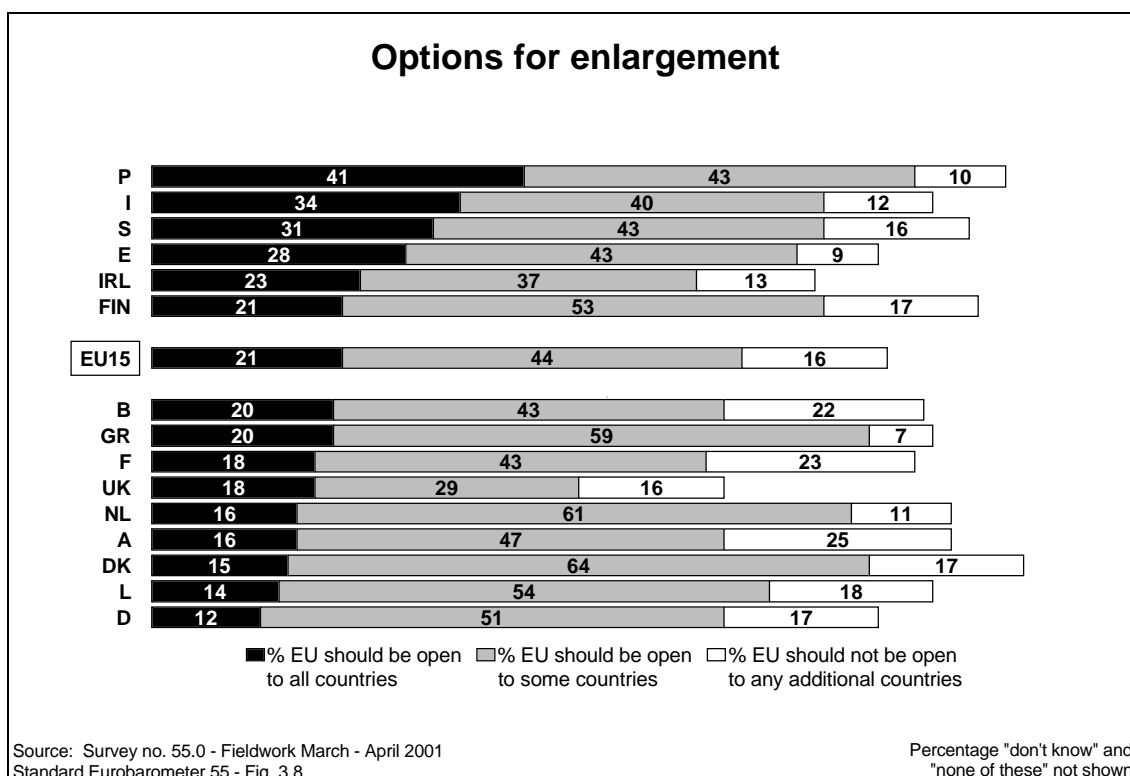
The next table shows that views about enlargement are even more polarised between people who would feel very sorry if they were told tomorrow that the European Union had been scrapped and those who would feel very relieved. (See also table 3.6b)

Relationship between support for enlargement and feelings if EU were scrapped			
	Feeling if the EU were to be scrapped		
	Very sorry	Indifferent	Very relieved
	%	%	%
For enlargement	63	40	19
Against enlargement	21	36	67
Don't know	16	24	15
<i>Total</i>	100	100	101

The basic question "Enlargement: for or against" does not take account of the fact that the 13 applicant countries will not join the Union simultaneously. Therefore, another question that measures support for enlargement was included on the first fieldwork wave of the Eurobarometer 55. Respondents were asked:

- "Which of these three options do you prefer for the immediate future of Europe?*
- a) The European Union should be enlarged to include all the countries wishing to join*
 - b) The European Union should be enlarged to include only some of the countries wishing to join*
 - c) The European Union should not be enlarged to any additional countries*
 - None of these (spontaneous)*
 - Don't Know"*

The most favoured option among EU citizens appears to be that the European Union should be enlarged to include only some of the countries wishing to join. 44% of EU citizens hold this view, with 21% showing unlimited support for enlargement. With only 16% choosing the third option, the results indicate that when respondents are given the chance to be more specific in their response, opposition to enlargement is not nearly as widespread as when respondents can only indicate whether they are for or against it.



The country results show that support for an unrestricted enlargement is most widespread in Portugal, where 41% of respondents choose this option. In Italy (34%) and Sweden (31%), around one respondent in three favours this option for the immediate future of Europe and more than a quarter of respondents in Spain (28%) shares this view.

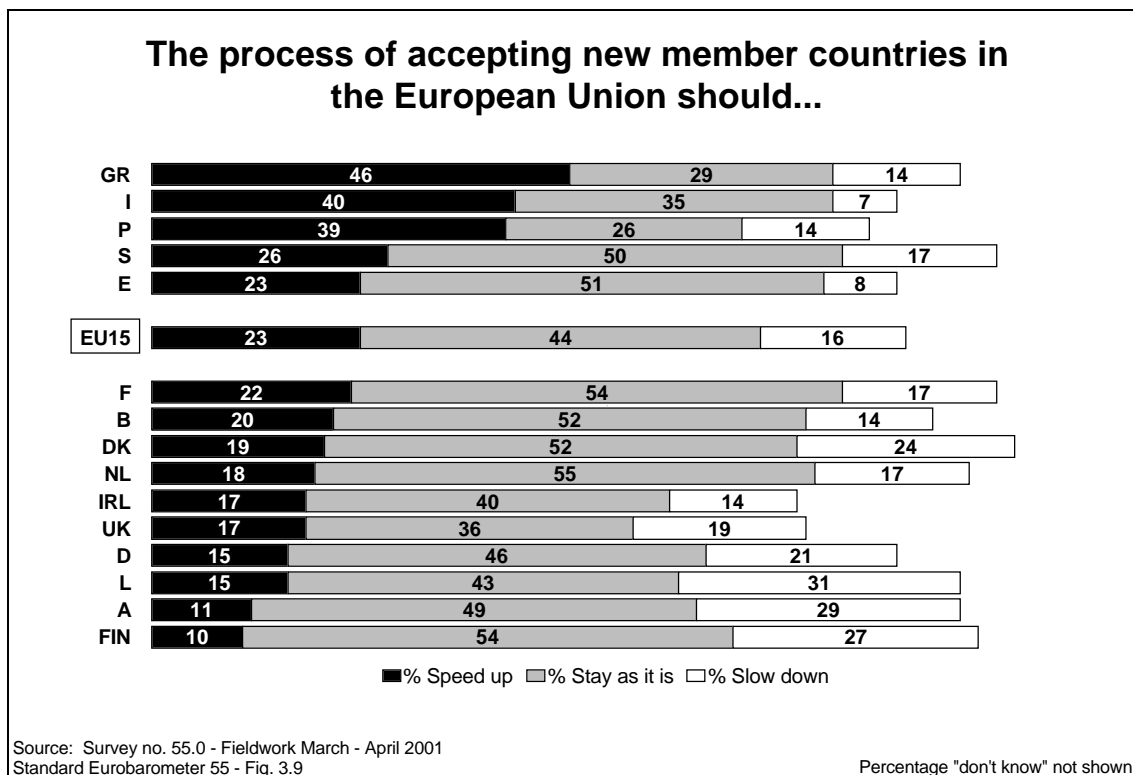
Limited enlargement is the most popular solution for the immediate future of Europe in all Member States. It receives most widespread support in Denmark (64%), the Netherlands (61%) and Greece (59%). In Luxembourg (54%), Finland (53%) and Germany (51%) more than half of respondents favour this option.

Austria (25%), France (23%) and Belgium (22%) are the only 3 Member States where more than 2 in 10 people believe the European Union should not be enlarged to any additional countries. The proportion of "don't know" responses ranges from 3% in Denmark to 31% in the United Kingdom. (Table 3.7a)

The demographic analyses show that support for unrestricted enlargement ranges from 18% among people aged 55 and over (including those who are retired) to 26% among students. Support for restricted enlargement is most widespread among managers (57%) and least widespread among people who look after the home (35%). Outright opposition to enlargement ranges from 9% among to students to 20% among retired people. The proportion of people who disagree with any of these three options is low for all demographic groups. The level of "don't know" responses ranges from 6% among self-employed people to 24% among people who look after the home.

When we cross these results with those of a question which asks respondents to indicate whether the process of new countries joining the European Union should be sped up, slowed down or stay as it is, we find that restricted enlargement is the favoured option for all three groups. However, as one would expect, those who want the process to be sped up are much more likely to favour an unrestricted enlargement (37%) than are those who want the process to be slowed down (11%). (Table 3.7b)

Looking next at the breakdown of results for the question about the speed of enlargement, we find that 44% of respondents feel that it should stay as it is, 23% want it sped up and 16% want it slowed down. The remaining 17% lack an opinion.



The country results show that respondents who want the process of enlargement to speed up are in the majority in Greece (46%), Italy (40%) and Portugal (39%). In all other countries, the most favoured option is for the speed of the process to stay as it is. In the Netherlands (55%), France, Finland (both 54%), Belgium, Denmark (both 52%), Spain (51%) and Sweden (50%) at least half of all respondents feel this way. The view that the enlargement process should slow down is most widespread in Luxembourg (31%), Austria (29%), Finland (27%), Denmark (24%) and Germany (21%). In all other countries, less than 2 in 10 respondents want the process to be slowed down. (Table 3.8a)

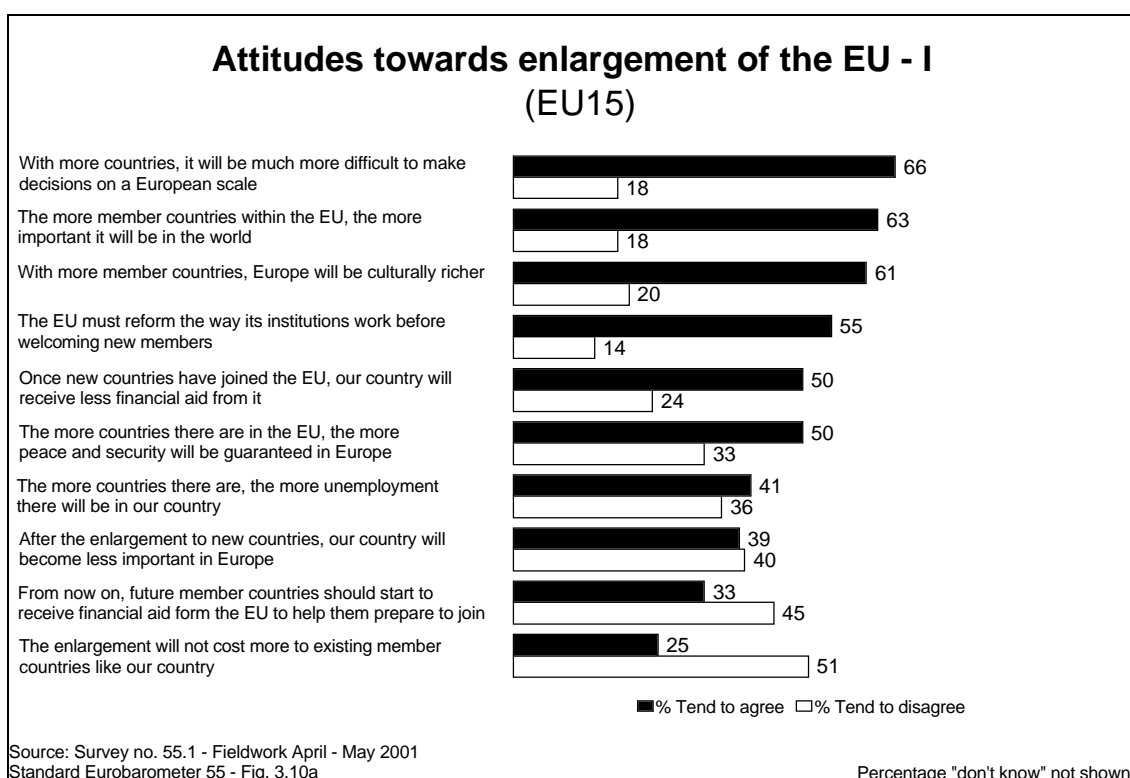
The demographic analyses show that the proportion of people that wants the process of enlargement to speed up ranges from 19% among people aged 55 and over to 30% among students. Less than 20% wants the process to slow down, regardless of demographic characteristics.

Again we find that the most favoured option is for the speed of enlargement to stay as it is, regardless of whether people believe enlargement should be unrestricted or should not happen at all. However, among those who favour unrestricted enlargement, we find that 40% want the process to speed up, while 33% of those who are against enlargement believe the process should slow down. (Table 3.8b)

3.6. Attitudes to enlargement

Despite a certain degree of hesitancy among the public, there are many people who view some aspects of enlargement in quite a positive light.

The majority of EU citizens feels that the Union will be more important in the world if it includes more countries (63%) while only 39% believe that their own country will become less important as a result of enlargement. 61% of EU citizens regard a Union that consists of more member countries as a cultural enrichment and 50% believe that a larger Union will guarantee more peace and security.



Many Europeans also share the official view that the Union's institutions must be reformed (55%) as there is widespread concern that with more countries it will be much more difficult to make decisions on a European scale (66%).

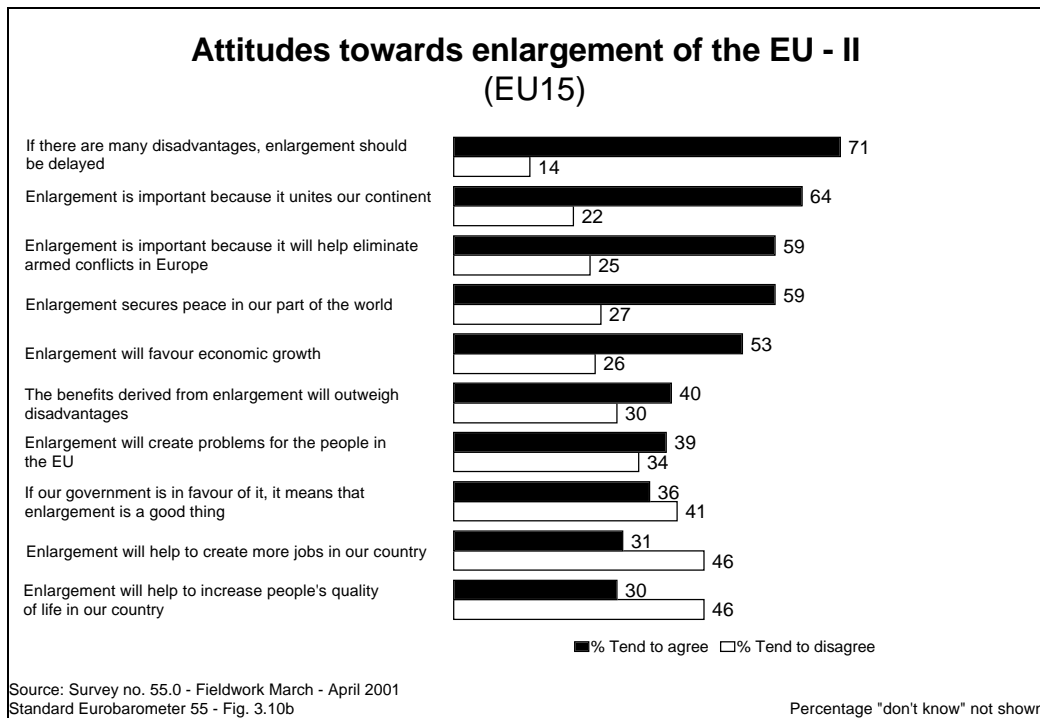
However, it becomes easier to understand why enlargement is a concern for many Europeans when we look at the perceived economic implications. 51% of EU citizens believe that enlargement will cost their own country more money. Many people also suspect that the budget will be shared differently with 50% feeling that once new countries have joined, their country will receive less financial aid. Furthermore, we find that quite a few EU citizens do not want future member countries to receive financial aid from the European Union to help them prepare to join (only 33% agree that this should happen). The results also show that 41% of Europeans agree with the statement “the more countries there are, the more unemployment there will be in our country”, which in effect indicates that some people fear that enlargement will lead to higher unemployment levels.

The following table shows the differences in opinion between people who support enlargement and those who oppose it for each of these ten attitudinal items.

Relationship between attitudes to enlargement and support for enlargement		
Attitudes to enlargement:	Support for enlargement	
	For	Against
	%	%
Positive attitudes:		
EU more important	83	49
EU culturally richer	80	47
More peace and security	71	32
Financial aid to new members	50	21
Not cost more	35	19
Neutral attitude:		
Reform institutions	62	58
Negative attitudes:		
More unemployment	31	58
Country less important	34	54
Less aid to country	48	63
More difficult to make decisions	63	78

Another battery of questions that measures people's underlying attitudes towards enlargement was included on the first fieldwork wave of the survey¹⁹. Again we find that people see that enlargement has political advantages. 64% of EU citizens agree that it is important because it unites our continent and a majority of people supports it because of peace and security issues. However, many of the items included in this second battery reveal that people's views about enlargement are often quite contradictory. When it comes to people's economic well-being, we find that whilst a majority of respondents (53%) agrees with the statement that enlargement will favour economic growth, only 31% believe that it will help create more jobs in their country and only 30% believe that it will help increase the quality of life of EU citizens. A second contradiction is that 40% believe that the benefits from enlargement will outweigh disadvantages, yet 39% believe that enlargement will create problems for the people in the European Union. People's uncertainty about the consequences of enlargement is evident from the large number of respondents (71%) that feels that enlargement should be delayed if there are many disadvantages.

¹⁹ The first wave of the survey was fielded from March 5 until April 24, 2001. The full report for this first wave can be found on the Internet at: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg10/epo/eb/ebrep1/ebrep1.html>



The proportion of 'don't know' responses for all the statements about enlargement continues to be substantially higher than what we usually find in this survey, suggesting that there is room for public opinion to improve. (Tables 3.9a+b)

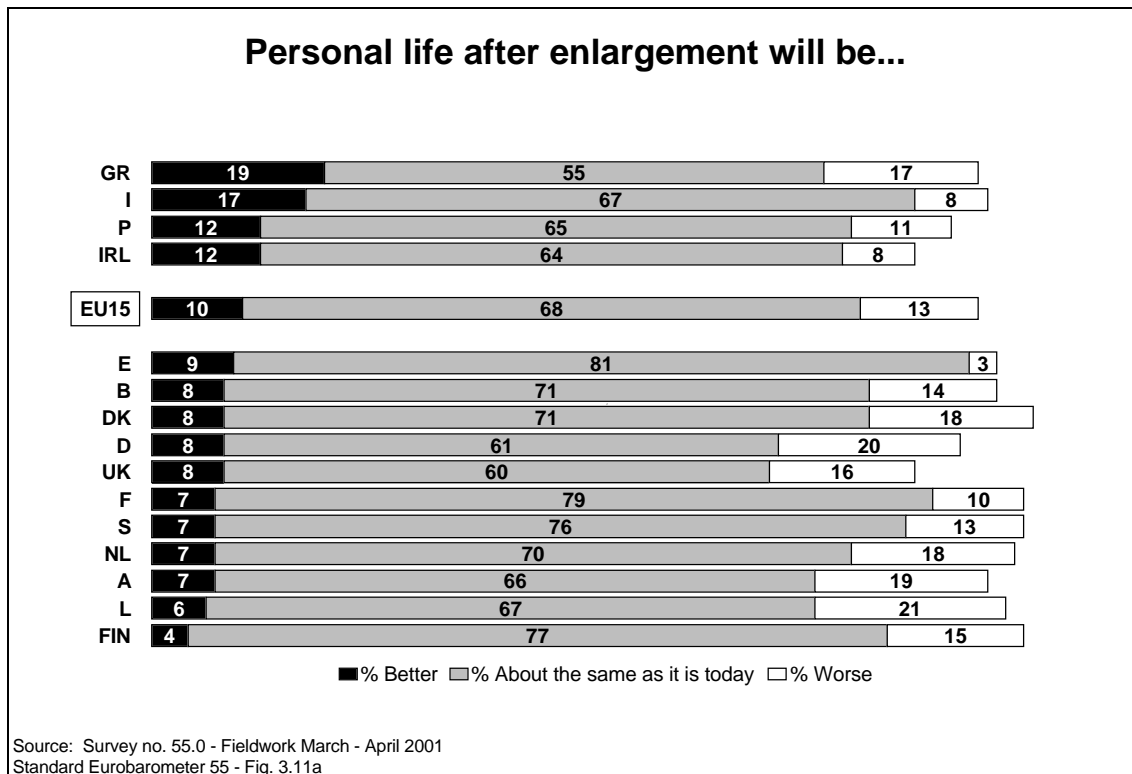
The following table shows the average percentage of positive attitudes towards enlargement for the 20 items discussed above²⁰. As can be seen, this average score is highest in Greece and lowest in the UK.

AVERAGE % OF POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENLARGEMENT (20 ITEMS, BY COUNTRY)	
Country	Average % Positive Attitudes
Greece	56
Spain	48
Italy	47
Sweden	44
Portugal	43
Denmark	42
France	42
Luxembourg	41
EU15	41
The Netherlands	41
Belgium	41
Ireland	40
Finland	40
Germany	37
Austria	34
United Kingdom	33

²⁰ This average is a summary score for the ten items asked on the EB55.0 and the ten items asked on the EB55.1. It is obtained by calculating the average score for the first ten items and the average score for the second ten items, summed up and divided by 2.

3.7. Personal life after enlargement

As already shown, when asked whether enlargement will help increase people's quality of life in their country 30% agree and 46% disagree. When asked whether people's personal life after enlargement will be better, worse or about the same as it is today, we find that most respondents – 68% - feel their personal life will be about the same as it is today²¹. The importance of this finding is that it shows that despite all the misgivings people have about the economic implications of enlargement, most people don't feel it will affect them personally. People in Greece (19%) and Italy (17%) are most likely to feel that life after enlargement will be better. The feeling that enlargement will affect people negatively is highest in Luxembourg (21%) and Germany (20%) – in all other countries less than 2 in 10 people share this view. (Table 3.10a)

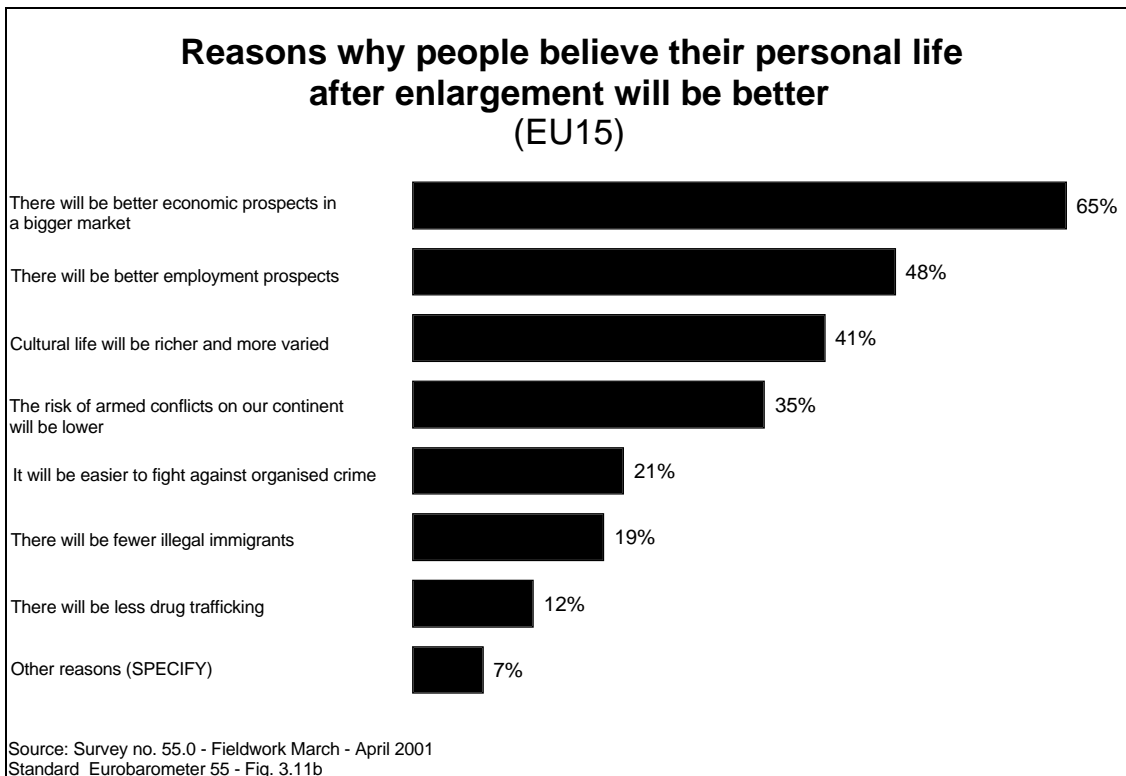


The demographic analyses show that the proportion of people that feels life will be better after enlargement ranges from 7% among people who left full-time education before the age of 16 and people who look after the house to 16% among students. Equally, there is relatively little variation in the proportion of people who think life will be worse. This ranges from 6% among students to 16% among people aged 40 to 54, unemployed people, manual workers and retired people.

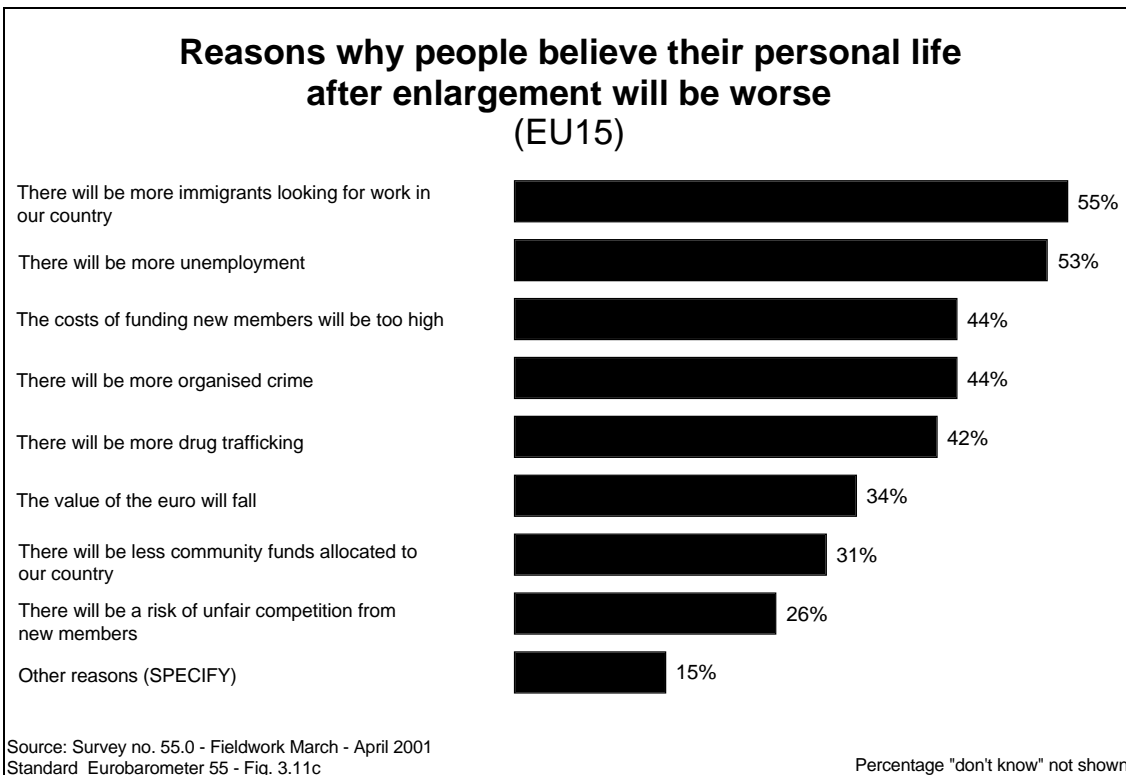
Again we find that people who favour unrestricted enlargement hold more positive attitudes than those who oppose enlargement. Among the first group, 18% believes life after enlargement will be better; among the second group, 30% believes that life after enlargement will be worse. (Table 3.10b)

If we look at why people believe their personal life will be better after enlargement, we find that the main reason for the 10% who hold this view is that they feel that there will be better economic prospects in a bigger market (65%). 48% believe there will be better employment prospects, 41% feel that cultural life will be richer and more varied and 35% feel the risk of armed conflicts on our continent will be lower.

²¹ This question was asked on the first wave of the Eurobarometer 55.



Looking at the reasons of the 13% who feel their personal life will be worse after enlargement discloses that 55% of this group think their personal life will be worse because they feel that there will be more immigrants looking for work in their country. Linked to this, we find that 53% believe there will be more unemployment. Furthermore, the results show that 44% believe the costs of funding new member countries will be too high and that there will be more organised crime.



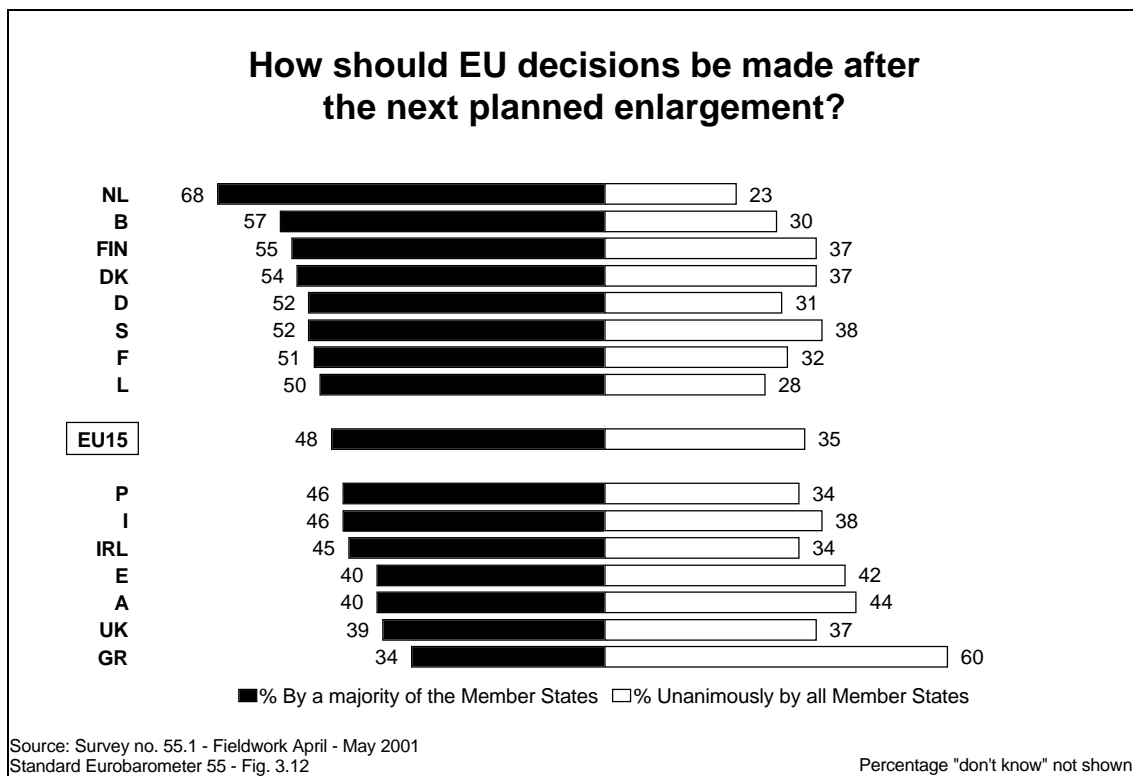
3.8. Decision-making in an enlarged Union

The European Union will need to change the way it works in a number of different areas before new countries can join. A much larger Union cannot have the same decision-making system since it would be very difficult to reach the unanimous agreement of so many countries. At the European Council in Nice, held on 20-21 December 2000²², the Heads of State and Government reduced the number of areas where unanimous decision-making is required and agreed to change the number of votes required to reach agreement by majority vote.

The Eurobarometer has measured how the public feels about majority voting 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 48% of respondents opting for this choice over 35% who prefer unanimity.



Looking at the country results shows that people in the Netherlands (68%) are by far most likely to favour majority voting followed by people in Belgium (57%), Finland (55%), Denmark (54%), Germany, Sweden (both 52%), France (51%) and Luxembourg (50%). Greece remains the only country where more than 50% of the public wants EU decisions to be taken unanimously.

In comparison to autumn 2000, majority voting has significantly increased in popularity in Belgium, the Netherlands (both +4) and Finland (+3). In Portugal (-8), Germany (-5) and Ireland (-3), support for unanimous voting has dropped but support for majority voting did not increase. Italy (+10) and Greece (+9) are the only two countries where support for unanimous voting has increased significantly. (Table 3.11a)

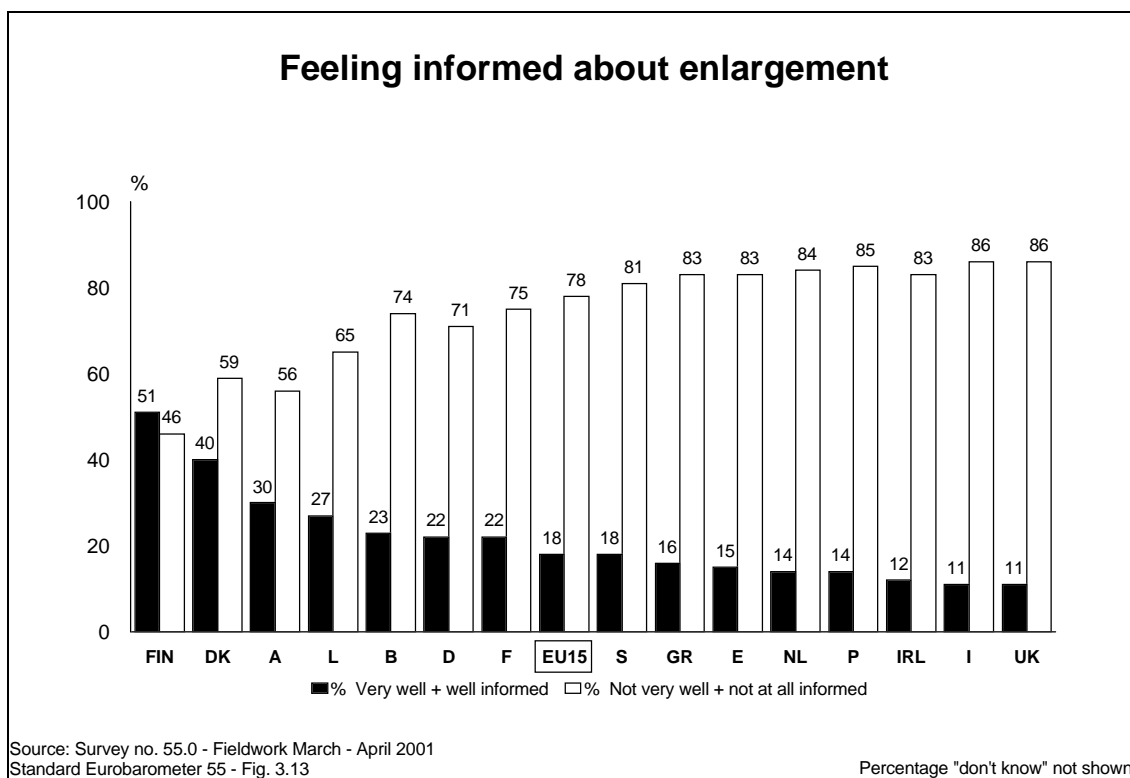
²² For more information about the Nice Treaty, see <http://ue.eu.int/presid/conclusions.htm>.

The demographic analyses indicate that people who left full-time education aged 20 or older (59%) are most likely to favour majority voting, followed by managers (57%) and other employees (52%). People who left full-time education before the age of 16 and unemployed people (both 41%) are least likely to favour it. However, majority voting is the favoured decision-making method among all demographic groups.

At the attitudinal level we find that 57% of people who support the EU prefer majority voting, compared to 38% of those who regard their country's EU membership as a bad thing. Among the latter group, unanimous voting is favoured by a majority (42%). (Table 3.11b)

3.9. Feeling informed about enlargement

The first wave of this survey for the first time includes a question that measures the extent to which the public feels well informed about enlargement. The results show that only 18% of EU citizens feel very well or well informed about enlargement, with 78% feeling not very well or not at all well informed. This means that levels of feeling informed about enlargement are substantially lower than levels of feeling informed about the euro (see section 3.4). However, the results are not surprising considering the fact that questions about enlargement so far always have had a far higher proportion of "don't know" responses than what is generally found on Eurobarometer questions.



The country results indicate that Finland is the only country where more than half of the population feels well informed about enlargement (51%), followed by Denmark (40%) and Austria (30%). In all other countries, less than 30% feels well informed, with levels ranging from 11% in Italy and the UK to 27% in Luxembourg. (Table 3.12a)

The demographic analyses show that the proportion of people that feels well informed about enlargement ranges from 11% among people who look after the home to 30% among managers. Levels of feeling informed are somewhat higher among people who support (unrestricted or restricted) enlargement than they are among people who believe the European Union should not be enlarged. (Table 3.12b)

4. Sources of information and knowledge levels among EU citizens

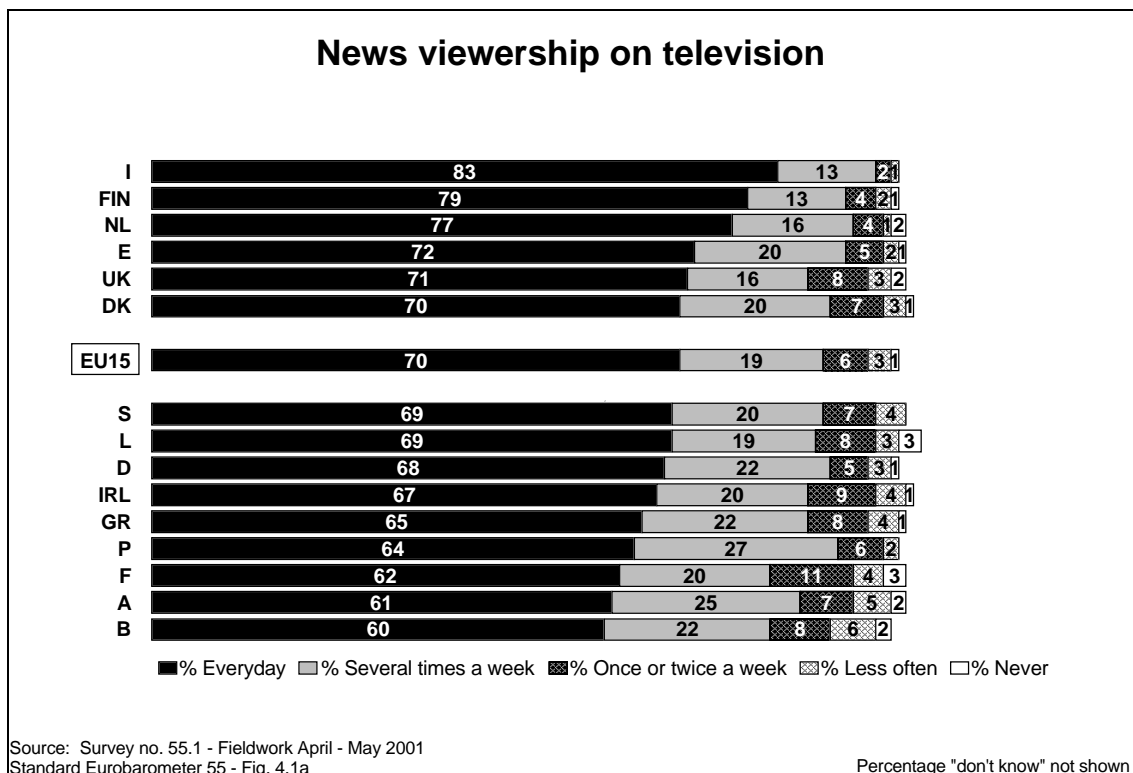
This chapter looks at the sources people use when they look for information about the European Union. It also reports on people's perceived knowledge of the European Union and their awareness of a number of EU institutions. The chapter also looks at how EU citizens feel about taking part in public discussions about the European Union and reports on reasons why people are or are not interested.

4.1. Use of news media and access to modern information tools

The first section of this chapter reports on how frequently EU citizens watch the news on television, read the news in daily newspapers and listen to the news on the radio. It also shows to what extent Europeans have access to information technology.

News viewership on television

As the graph below shows, 70% of respondents watch the news on television on a daily basis, with a further 19% watching it several times a week²³.



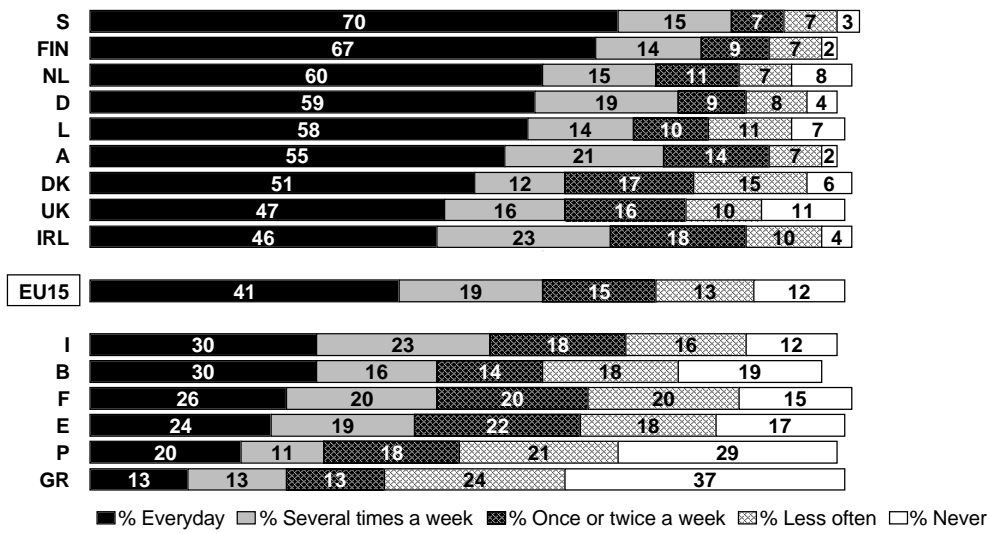
News readership of daily newspapers

Six in ten respondents read the news in daily newspapers every day (41%) or several times a week (19%)²⁴.

²³ See table 4.1a for country results.

²⁴ See table 4.1b for country results.

News readership of daily papers



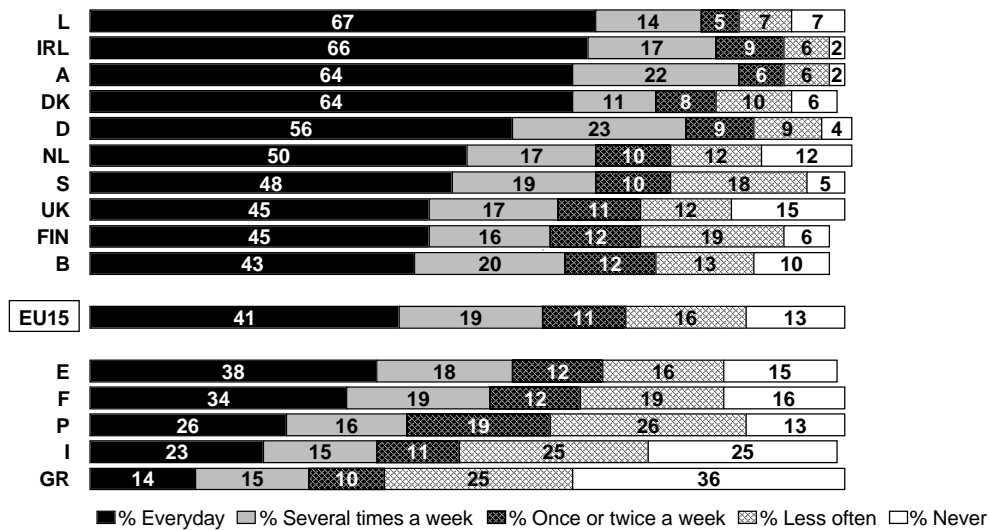
Source: Survey no. 55.1 - Fieldwork April - May 2001
Standard Eurobarometer 55 - Fig. 4.1b

Percentage "don't know" not shown

News listenership on the radio

Equally, six in ten respondents listen to the radio every day (41%) or several times a week (19%)²⁵.

News listenership on the radio



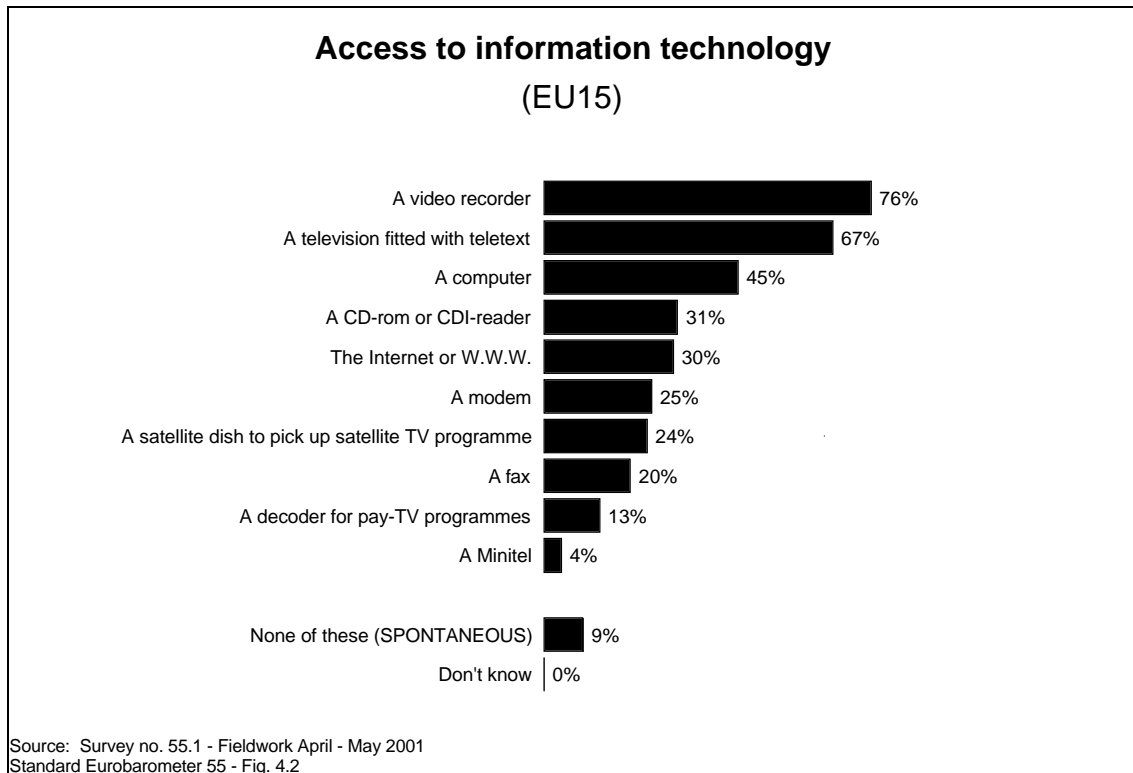
Source: Survey no. 55.1 - Fieldwork April - May 2001
Standard Eurobarometer 55 - Fig. 4.1c

Percentage "don't know" not shown

²⁵ See table 4.1c for country results.

Access to information technology

The survey also measures the extent to which people have access to information technology. Whilst access is still most widespread for traditional means such as a video recorder (76%) and a television that is fitted with teletext (67%), the survey shows a tremendous increase in access to more modern forms of information technology. Nearly half of all EU citizens now have access to a computer (45%), compared to only 35% in spring 1999. The proportion of people with access to the Internet has doubled since spring 1999 to 30% and 25% now have access to a modem (17% in spring 1999). Equally we find that 31% have access to a CD-Rom or CDI-Reader, up from 23% in spring 1999. The proportion of people that doesn't have access to any of the information means listed in the survey has fallen by 4 percentage points to 9%.



Access to the Internet still varies greatly from country to country and is highest in Sweden (63% -up from 55% in spring 1999), followed by Denmark (62%; +18) and the Netherlands (59%;+24). However, access has also increased in all other countries so that in spring 2001 there are no longer any countries where rates are below 10%. In fact, there are now only two countries where less than 2 in 10 people have access to the Internet: Portugal (15%; +9) and Greece (16%; +11). (Table 4.2²⁶)

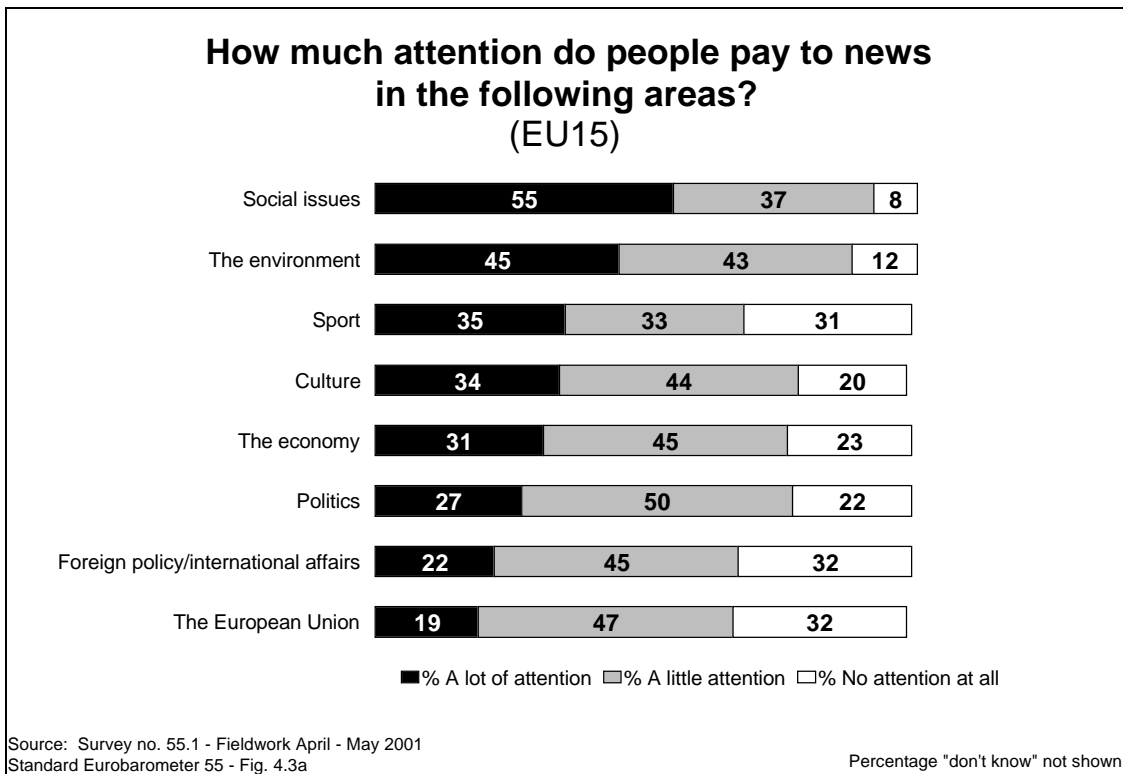
4.2. Interest in European Union news

Next we look at the results of a question which provides information about how interested Europeans are in news about the European Union in comparison to other news topics. The question, first asked in autumn 1999, asks respondents whether they pay a lot of attention, a little attention or no attention at all to news in 8 areas, one of them being the European Union.

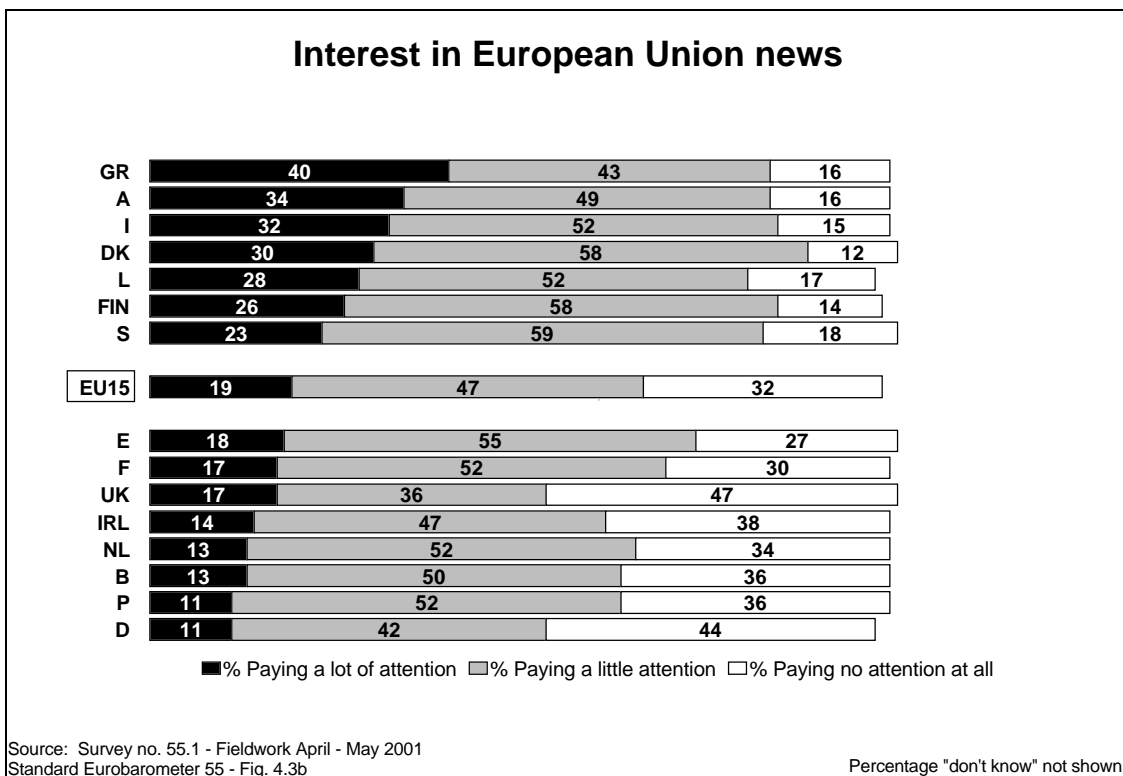
As the next graph shows, two-thirds of the people surveyed say they pay attention to news about the European Union. However, interest in news is most widespread when it comes to social issues with 55% paying a lot of attention and a further 37% paying a little attention. There is also widespread interest in news about the environment, with 45% paying a lot of attention and 43% paying a little attention. More than 3 in 4 EU citizens also pay attention to news about culture (78%), politics (77%) and the economy (76%)²⁷.

²⁶ For spring 1999 results see Eurobarometer Report 51, table 2.8.

²⁷ See also table 4.3.



Looking at the extent to which interest in news about the European Union varies from country to country shows that at least 8 in 10 people in Denmark (88%), Italy, Finland, (both 84%), Greece, Austria (both 83%), Sweden (82%) and Luxembourg (80%) pay attention, with Austrians by far most likely to pay a lot of attention (34%). People in the UK (47%) and Germany (44%) are most likely to pay no attention at all.



In comparison to autumn 1999, we find that people in Greece, Luxembourg, Denmark and Portugal are now significantly more likely to pay attention to news about the European Union and significantly less likely to pay no attention at all. People in Italy, Finland, the Netherlands, Spain, France and Sweden are more likely to pay a lot of attention but less likely to pay a little attention and therefore there are no significant decreases in the proportion of people that don't pay any attention. In Austria people are now less likely to pay a lot of attention and in Belgium people are now more likely to pay no attention at all. (Table 4.4a)

The demographic analyses show that men are more likely than women are to pay attention to news about the European Union (71% v. 61%). The youngest age group is less likely to pay attention than people aged 25 and over are. 78% of people who stayed in full-time education until age 20 or older pay attention, compared to 61% of those who left full-time education before age 16. Analyses of the respondent occupation scale show that managers are most likely to pay attention to news about the European Union (76%) compared to only 59% of people who look after the house.

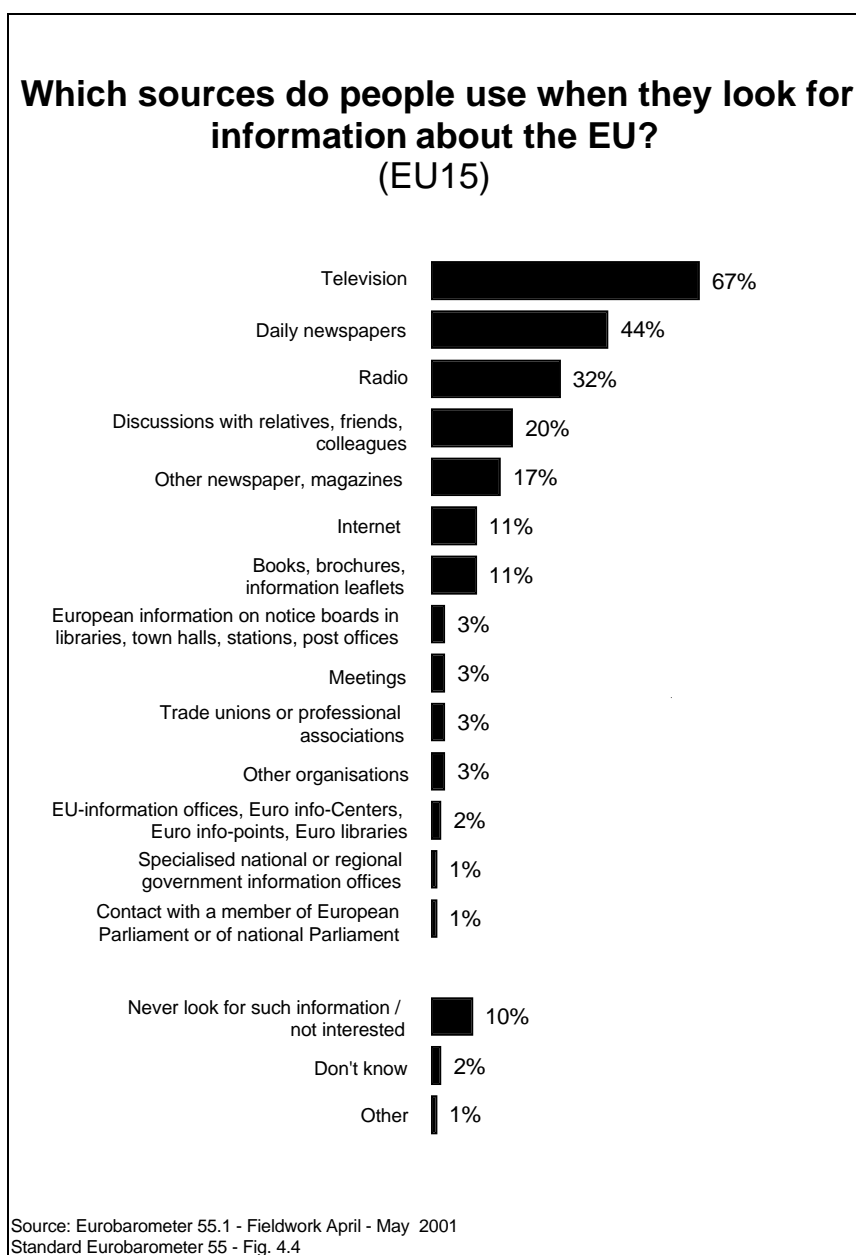
At the attitudinal level, we find that the gap between those who regard their country's membership as a good thing and those who see it as a bad thing is not as large as it is for many of the questions that measure people's views about the European Union. Although supporters of the EU are still significantly more likely to pay attention (80%) than opponents (58%) are, this finding shows that interest in news about the EU is not only determined by how people feel about the European Union. (Table 4.4b)

People's self-perceived knowledge levels about the European Union is a stronger explanatory variable in terms of understanding what type of people are interested in news about the EU. As the following table shows, only 47% of those who feel they know very little about the EU pay attention to this type of news, compared to 90% of those who feel they know a lot about the European Union.

Relationship between interest in EU news and self-perceived knowledge about the EU			
Amount of attention to EU news:	Self-perceived EU knowledge		
	Low (score 1-3)	Average (score 4-7)	High (score 8-10)
	%	%	%
A lot	7	26	55
A little	40	56	35
None	51	18	9
Don't know	2	1	2
<i>Total</i>	100	101	101

4.3. Sources of information about the European Union

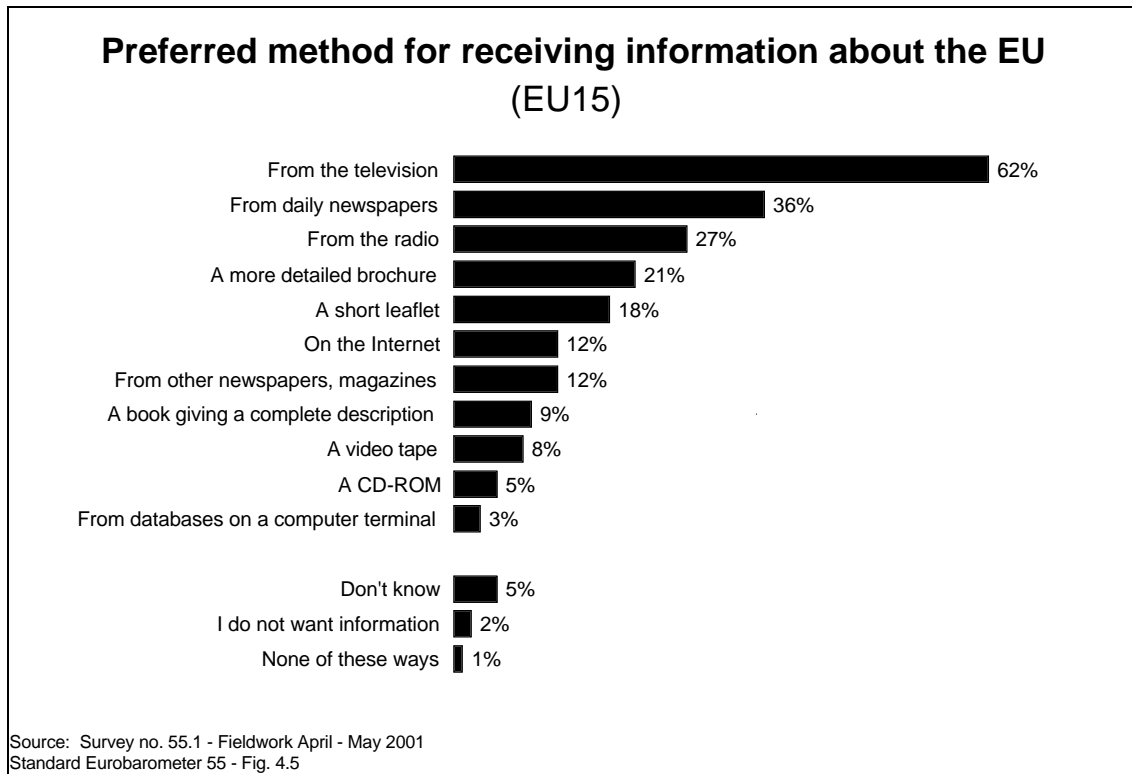
A regular feature of the Eurobarometer is to question EU citizens about the sources they use when they look for information about the European Union. As usual, the results indicate that the public is most likely to use the media. 67% of respondents say they turn on the television when they look for information, 44% of respondents read the daily newspapers and 32% listen to the radio²⁸. Around two in ten respondents hold discussions with relatives, friends and colleagues or turn to other newspapers and magazines when they look for information. 11% of respondents read books, brochures or information leaflets or surf the World Wide Web to obtain information. The other 7 sources listed in the questionnaire are selected by less than 1 in 10 respondents. 10% of respondents never look for information about the European Union, 1% mentions another source and 2% lack an opinion²⁹.



²⁸ 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.

²⁹ See table 4.5 for country results.

The survey also regularly asks respondents 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. 62% of respondents say they prefer the television, 36% say they prefer daily newspapers and 27% list the radio as a preferred source. The Internet is selected by 12% of respondents. The other non-printed information tools, such as videotapes (8%), CD-ROMs (5%) and computer databases (3%) continue to be less popular than printed sources³⁰.



4.4. Self-perceived knowledge of the European Union

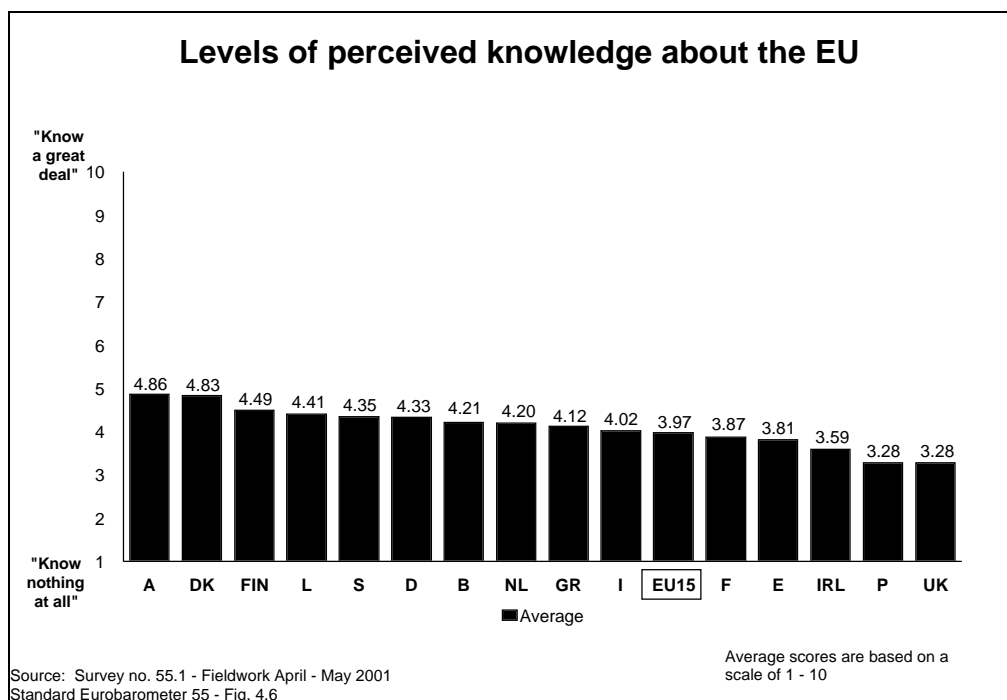
Another standard feature of the Eurobarometer is to ask respondents how much they feel they know about the European Union³¹. The EU15 results presented in the table next page show that 21% of EU citizens feel they know quite a lot to a great deal about the European Union (i.e. those choosing the numbers 6 through 10 on the scale). This is significantly lower than in autumn 2000, when the result was 29%.

³⁰ See table 4.6 for country results.

³¹ 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.

Self-perceived knowledge of EU affairs Spring 2001 (in %, EU15)	
Scale	%
1 (Know nothing at all)	12
2	14
3	18
4	16
5	18
6	9
7	6
8	4
9	1
10 (Know a great deal)	1
Don't know	3
Average score	3.97

The following graph depicts the average scores³² for each of the 15 countries. It shows that self-perceived knowledge levels vary significantly from one Member State to the next.



As in autumn 2000, knowledge levels are highest in Austria, where the average score is 4.86, and lowest in the UK and Portugal, where the average score is 3.28. An inspection of the distribution of responses shows that 35% of people in Denmark feel they know quite a lot to a great deal (i.e. score 6 and higher on the scale) about the European Union. At 34%, people in Austria come in second place followed by people in Finland (29%), the Netherlands (28%), Germany and Luxembourg (both 25%). Only 1 person in 10 in Portugal feels this way and in the UK, France (both 14%), Spain and Ireland (both 17%), this is the case for less than 2 in 10 people. (Table 4.7a³³)

³² The average scores 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.

³³ 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.

In all countries, self-perceived knowledge levels are now lower than they were in autumn 2000, with recorded drops ranging from 0.09 in Sweden to 0.83 in Germany. The drop in knowledge levels is also evident from the finding that the latest result show no countries with a score of point 5 or higher on the scale of 1 to 10, compared to 4 countries in autumn 2000. Equally, in autumn 2000 there were only 2 countries with a score below 4 while this is now the case in 5 countries³⁴.

The following table shows the average scores for various socio-demographic groups in the EU. It shows that 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 Index³⁵.

Average scores on perceived knowledge scale for various groups at the EU15 level	
Group	Score
Managers	4.92
Educated up to age 20+	4.70
Media Use Index:+++	4.50
Self-employed	4.60
Men	4.38
Students	4.25
Employees	4.18
Aged 40-54	4.18
Opinion Leadership Index: ++	4.17
Aged 25-39	4.01
Opinion Leadership Index: +	3.93
Educated to age 16-19	3.93
Average for EU15	3.97
Media Use Index: ++	3.91
Aged 55+	3.81
Aged 15-24	3.87
Manual workers	3.79
Opinion Leadership Index: -	3.78
Retired	3.77
Unemployed	3.63
Women	3.58
Opinion Leadership Index : --	3.56
Educated to age 15 or younger	3.39
House persons	3.23
Media Use Index: --	3.29
Media Use Index: ---	2.93

³⁴ For autumn 2000 average scores, see Eurobarometer Report 54, figure 3.6.

³⁵ See Appendix C.4 for a definition the indices shown in the table.

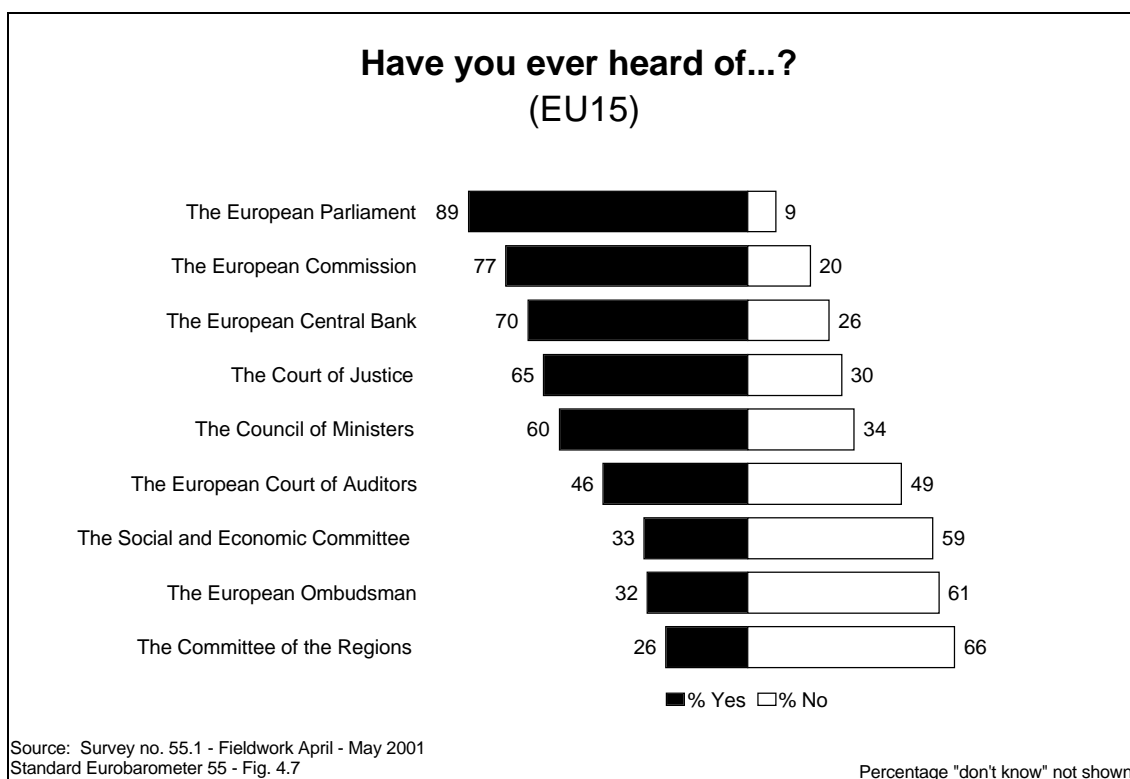
Not only are the results for all of the groups shown in the table lower than they were in autumn 2000, the order is also quite different. In the past, people who scored highest on the Opinion Leadership Scale always had the highest self-perceived knowledge while those who scored lowest on the Opinion Leadership Scale always had the lowest. Now the gap between these two groups of people is significantly smaller (0.61 compared to 2.64 in autumn 2000). We also find that the gap between those who now score highest (managers) and lowest (Media Use Index: ---) on the self-perceived knowledge scale is much smaller (1.99).

The attitudinal analyses indicate that the average score for people who support their country's membership to the EU is 4.52, compared to 3.8 for people who regard their country's membership as a bad thing. (See also table 4.7b)

4.5. Awareness and importance of the European Union institutions and bodies

For the fifth time in a row, the survey has measured public awareness of 9 of the European Union's institutions and bodies³⁶.

The public is most likely to have heard of the European Parliament (89%), followed by the European Commission (77%) and the European Central Bank (70%). People are least likely to have heard of the two youngest EU institutions - the Committee of the Regions (26%) and the Social and Economic Committee (33%) - and the European Ombudsman (32%). Although rank order remains the same as in autumn 2000, awareness levels are now slightly lower for all 9 institutions and bodies³⁷.



³⁶ The question asks respondents whether they have ever heard of the institution in question. Chapter 2 reports on the extent to which people trust these institutions.

³⁷ See Eurobarometer No. 54, figure and table 3.7.

The country results indicate that awareness levels for the **European Parliament** are above 90% in all countries except Greece (83%), Germany (84%), the UK (85%), and Spain (89%). At least 9 in 10 people in Luxembourg (94%), Finland and Denmark (both 93%) have heard of the **European Commission**. Germany (70%), Greece (71%), the UK, Italy (both 75%) and Spain (78%) are the only countries where less than 8 in 10 the people have heard of it. Awareness of the **European Central Bank** is most widespread in Finland (89%) and Luxembourg (87%) and least widespread in Greece (55%) and the UK (58%). People in Denmark (94%) are most likely to have heard of the **Court of Justice**, while people in Italy (44%) are least likely to know of its existence. People in Sweden (91%), which held the European Presidency at the time of the survey, are most likely to have heard of the **Council of Ministers**, while awareness levels are lowest in the UK (37%). Awareness of the **European Court of Auditors** is most widespread in Luxembourg (76%) and least widespread in the UK (15%). People in Luxembourg (56%) are also most likely to have heard of the **Social and Economic Committee**, while people in the Netherlands (20%) are least likely to have heard of it. The **European Ombudsman** - Jacob Söderman from Finland – continues to be by far most recognised in his home country (80%). He is least known in Germany (20%). Awareness of the **Committee of the Regions** is most widespread in Portugal (50%), while people in the Netherlands (10%) continue to be least likely to be aware of the existence of this institution. (Table 4.8)

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 institutions (9) included 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.

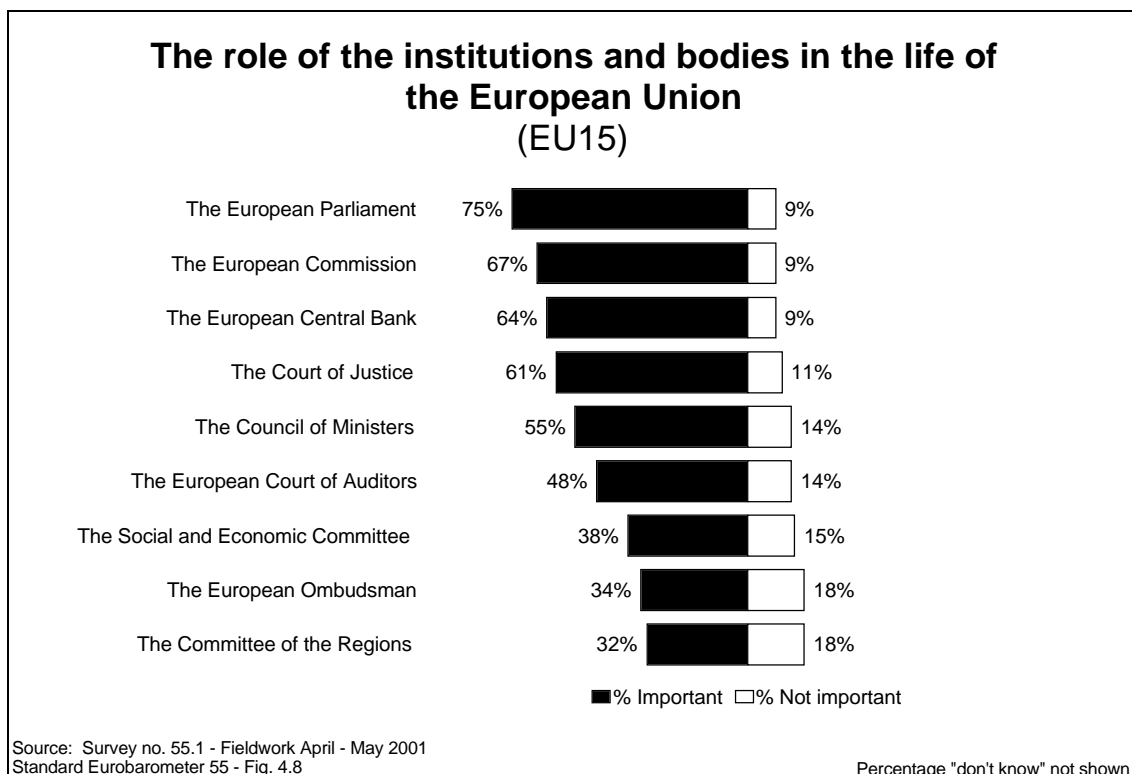
Awareness of the EU institutions and bodies	
(Average awareness levels for the 9 institutions/bodies, in % by country)	
Country	%
Luxembourg	75
Finland	69
Denmark	67
Austria	67
Ireland	61
Portugal	64
Spain	60
Sweden	60
Germany	59
France	57
The Netherlands	57
Belgium	56
EU15	55
Greece	54
Italy	49
United 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 table next page 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/bodies by self-perceived knowledge about the European Union (in %)			
Institution:	High knowledge level	Average knowledge level	Low knowledge level
European Parliament	98%	96%	82%
European Central Bank	93%	80%	56%
European Commission	92%	87%	65%
Court of Justice	89%	76%	51%
Council of Ministers	85%	72%	44%
Court of Auditors	74%	56%	31%
Social & Economic Committee	69%	42%	19%
Committee of the Regions	58%	33%	14%
European Ombudsman	55%	38%	22%

Respondents were also asked whether they think these institutions and bodies play an important role or not in the life of the European Union.

As the graph below shows, people are most likely to believe that the European Parliament (75%), the European Commission (67%) and the European Central Bank (64%) play an important role in the life of the European Union. The public is least likely to believe that the Committee of the Regions (32%) plays an important role.



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%) with more than 8 in 10 people in Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Ireland and Belgium sharing this view. People in the UK (59%) are least likely to feel that the European Parliament plays an important role in the life of the European Union. Luxembourg (85%) also has the highest percentage of people that feel the **European Commission** plays an important role. The UK (50%), Germany (61%) and Spain (69%) are the only countries where less than 7 in 10 people share this view. People in Luxembourg (80%) are most likely to feel that the **European Central Bank** plays an important role. Only 41% of people in the UK share this view. In all other countries, with the exception of Greece (59%), more than 6 in 10 people feel the ECB plays an important role in the life of the European Union. (Table 4.9)

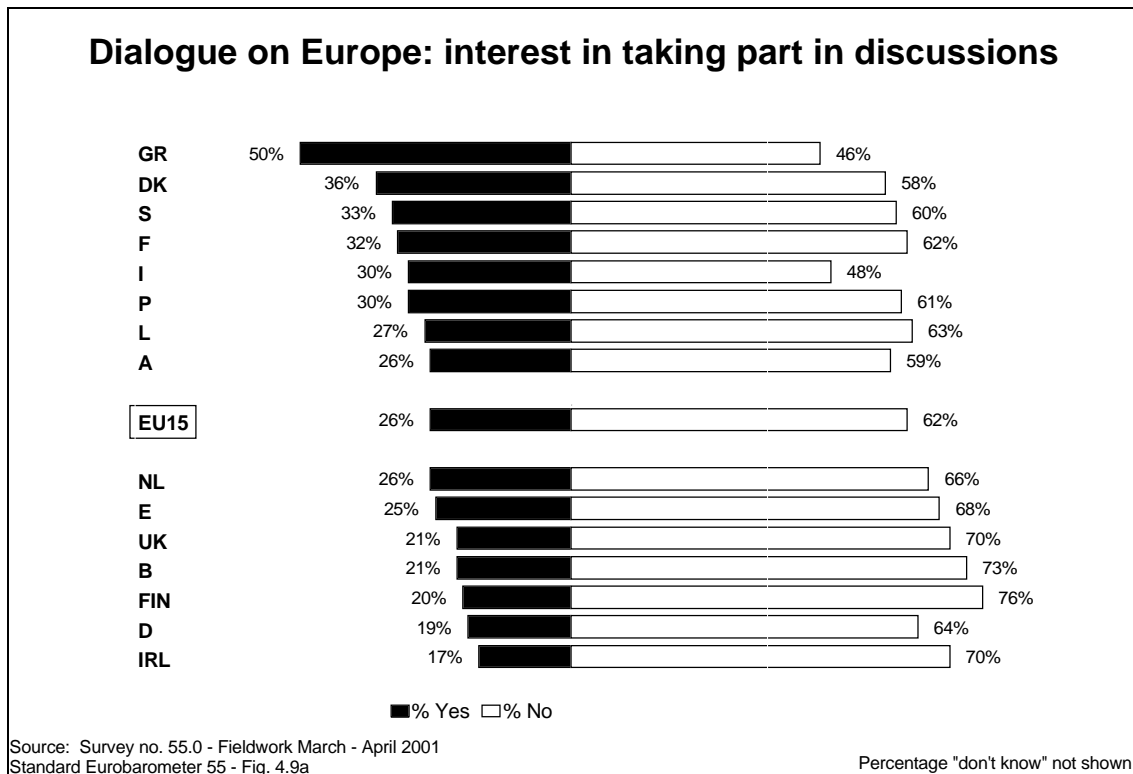
To provide an overall view of the extent, to which people feel that the EU institutions and bodies play an important role in the life of the European Union, the following table lists the average score for each Member State. Luxembourg has the highest score (72%), while the UK (35%) has the lowest score.

Importance of the EU institutions and bodies	
(Average importance level for the 9 institutions/bodies, in % by country)	
Country	%
Luxembourg	72
Portugal	62
Ireland	61
Finland	61
Spain	60
The Netherlands	59
Greece	59
France	57
Belgium	57
Sweden	56
Austria	56
Denmark	55
Italy	54
EU15	53
Germany	52
United Kingdom	35

4.6. Dialogue on Europe

The first wave of this Eurobarometer survey includes a set of questions about people's interest in participating in a dialogue on Europe³⁸. The results show that 26% of EU citizens would be interested in taking part in discussions about Europe, while 62% say they are not interested.

³⁸ These questions were asked on behalf of the European Union's Representation Offices. More detailed results can be found on the Web-site of the Public Opinion Unit. A full report of the findings will be published separately.



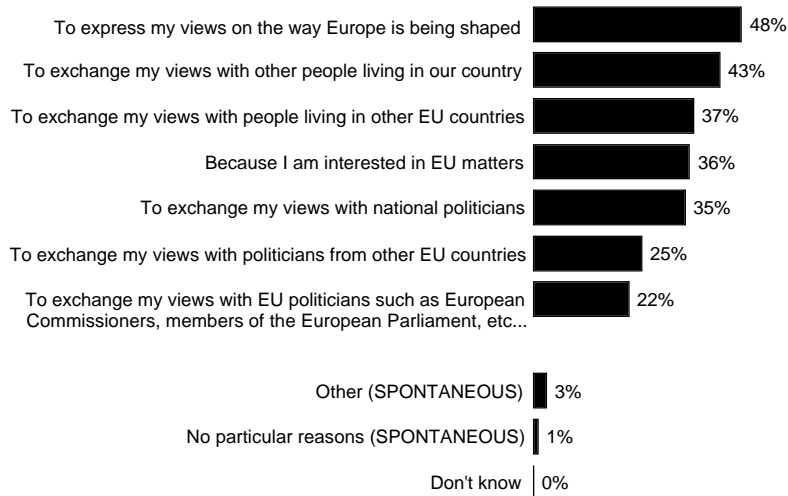
The country results show that levels of interest vary substantially between the 15 Member States. At 50%, people in Greece are most likely to be interested in taking part in these discussions, followed by people in Denmark (36%), Sweden (33%), France (32%), Portugal and Italy (both 30%). People in Finland (76%) and Belgium (73%) are most likely to indicate that they are not interested in taking part. (Table 4.10a)

The demographic analyses show that people who stayed in full-time education until the age of 20 or older (37%) are most likely to be interested in taking part in a dialogue on Europe, followed by managers (36%) and students (34%). People who left full-time education before reaching age 16 (18%), people who look after the house (19%) and people aged 55 and over, including retired people, (20%) are least likely to share this view. (Table 4.10b)

Respondents who indicated that they were interested in taking part in discussions were then shown a list of 7 possible explanations for their interest³⁹. This shows that the most likely reason why people like to take part in discussions is to express their views on the way that Europe is being shaped (48%). The second most popular reason is to exchange their views with fellow citizens (43%). 37% said they were interested because they liked to exchange their views with people living in other European Union countries and 36% said they were liked to take part because they are interested in European Union matters. 35% wanted to use the opportunity to exchange their views with politicians from their country. (Table 4.11a)

³⁹ They could also spontaneously give other reasons or say they were interested for no particular reason.

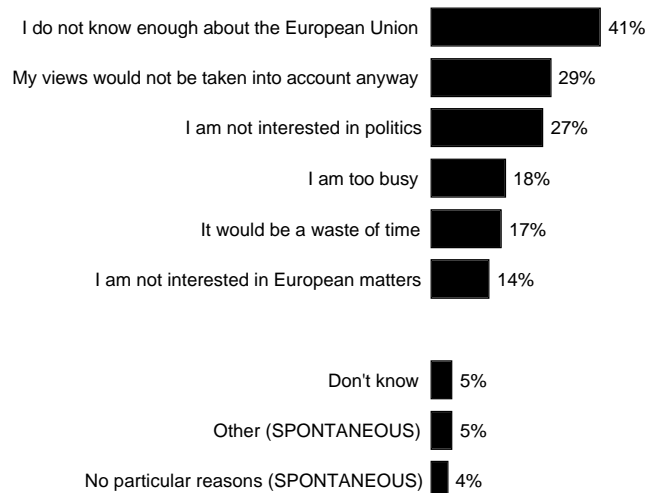
Reasons why people would like to participate in a dialogue on Europe (EU15)



Source: Survey no. 55.0 - Fieldwork March - April 2001
Standard Eurobarometer 55 - Fig. 4.9b

Respondents who did not wish to take part in discussions were shown a different list of 6 possible explanations for their lack of interest⁴⁰. This reveals that the most important reason why people do not wish to take part is that they feel they do not know enough about the European Union (41%). Close to 3 in 10 of these respondents feel that their views would not be taken into account anyway (29%) and 27% said they are not interested in politics. Only 14% do not wish to take part because they are not interested in European matters. (Table 4.11b)

Reasons why people would not like to participate in a dialogue on Europe (EU15)



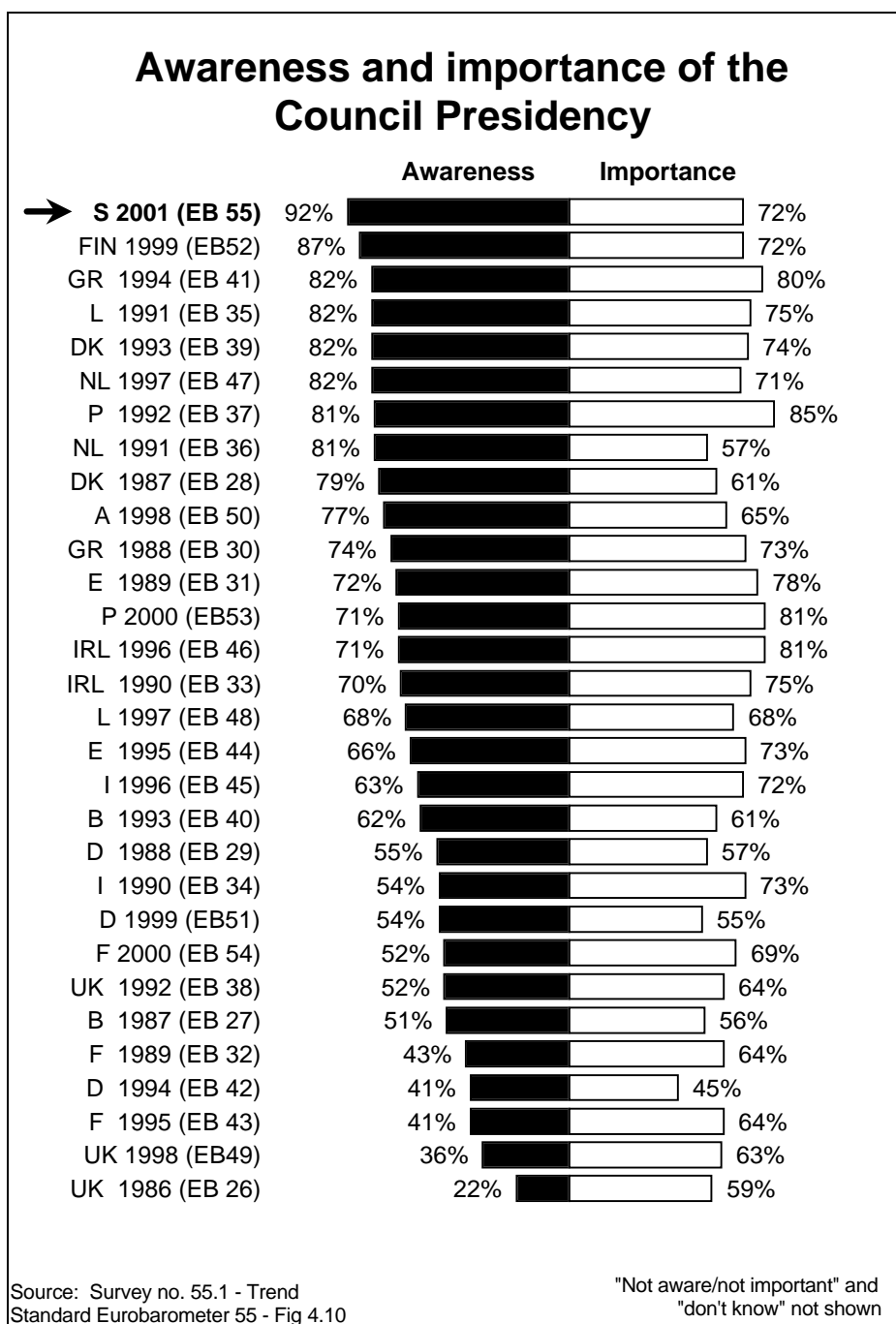
Source: Survey no. 55.0 - Fieldwork March - April 2001
Standard Eurobarometer 55 - Fig. 4.9c

⁴⁰ Again they could spontaneously give other reasons or say they were interested for no particular reason.

4.7. 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 survey⁴¹. Sweden held the Presidency for the first time during the first six months of the year 2001.

As the following graph shows, 92% of the Swedish were aware that their country held the Presidency. This is the highest awareness level obtained since the question was first asked in 1987. 72% of people in Sweden consider the Presidency an important event, which is the same as in Finland when it held the Presidency for the first time during the last 6 months of 1999.



⁴¹ Each Member State of the European Union holds in turn the Presidency for a period of six months.

5. Europeans and languages

In the last chapter of this report, we look at the results of some Eurobarometer questions about the languages spoken, known and considered most useful by EU citizens.

5.1. The mother tongue

The mother tongue of the majority of respondents is the national language spoken in their country. Clearly, there are several EU Member States with more than one official language, Belgium being the notable example. There are also several countries where people consider a regional language to be their mother tongue. The freedom to work and study in another Member State means that in most countries there are "foreign" EU nationals whose mother tongue is another EU language. Finally, for some EU citizens, their mother tongue is a non-EU language spoken in their country of origin.

The following table shows the percentage of EU citizens in each country whose mother tongue is the official EU language⁴² of the country in which they live (see column 1). It also shows the proportion of people whose mother tongue is an official EU language that is not the national language of the country in which they live (column 2). The third column speaks for itself. The fourth column shows the percentage of people whose mother tongue is a language not listed in the questionnaire. It is in this column that we find the presence of regional languages. In Spain, the dominant 'other' language is Catalan, in Ireland it is Irish (Gaelic) and in the UK it is Irish and Welsh. In Luxembourg, the majority of respondents are found in the 'other' category, Luxembourgish being their mother tongue. We also find the highest proportion of other EU languages in Luxembourg due to the large number of foreign EU nationals resident there.

The mother tongue – in % by country				
Country:	National EU language(s)	Other EU language(s)	Arabic or Chinese	Other
Belgium	95 ⁴³	4	0	2
Denmark	98	1	0	1
Germany	97	3	0	0
Greece	99	0	0	0
Spain	91	1	0	8
France	95	4	1	1
Ireland	93	1	0	7
Italy	99	1	0	0
Luxembourg	11 ⁴⁴	18	0	70
The Netherlands	97	1	0	2
Austria	96	1	0	2
Portugal	100	0	0	0
Finland	99 ⁴⁵	0	0	0
Sweden	94	2 ⁴⁶	1	3
United Kingdom	95	1	0	4

⁴² There are 11 official EU languages. These are Danish, Dutch, English, German, Finnish, French, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish.

⁴³ The proportion of people that speaks one of the three national languages is as follows: Dutch - 57%, French - 37% and German - 1%.

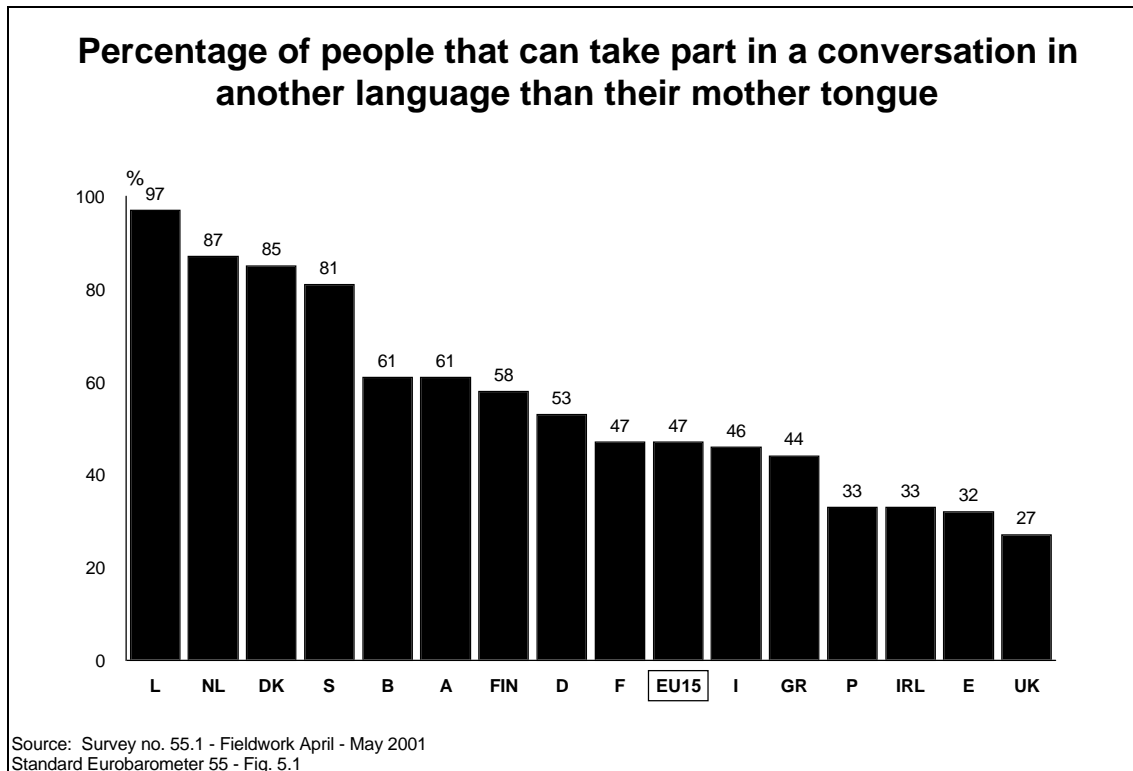
⁴⁴ French (8%) and German (3%).

⁴⁵ Finnish (92%) and Swedish (7%).

⁴⁶ Finnish (1%) and other EU languages (1%).

5.2. Knowledge of other languages

A considerable number of EU citizens can take part in a conversation in another language than their mother tongue⁴⁷. However, as the following graph shows, there are wide variations between the Member States. 97% of respondents in Luxembourg speak another language well enough for conversation. Knowledge of other languages is also widespread in the Netherlands (87%), Denmark (85%) and Sweden (81%). People in the UK (27%), Spain (32%), Ireland and Portugal (both 33%) are least likely to speak another language.

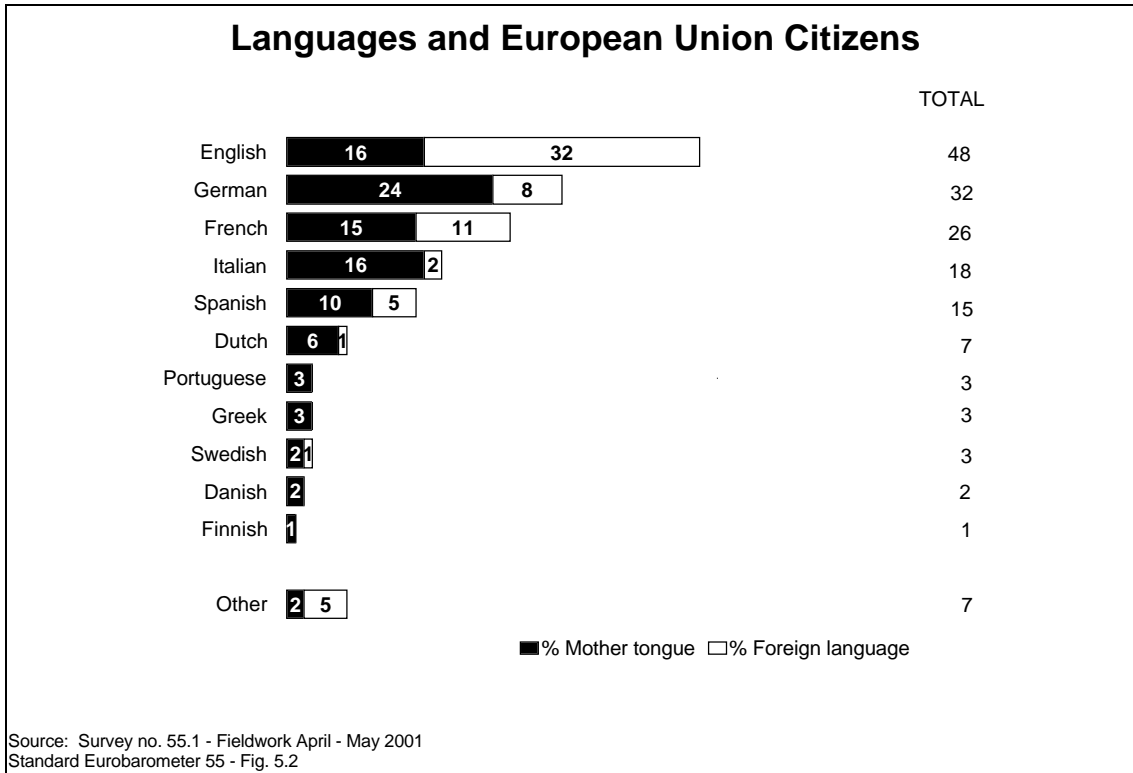


The table next page shows how knowledge of other languages varies between the various socio-demographic groups analysed in the study. As can be seen, students (76%) are most likely to be able to take part in a conversation in another language than their mother tongue compared to only 21% of people who left school by the age of 15 or younger.

⁴⁷ Respondents were asked: "Which languages can you speak well enough to take part in a conversation, apart from your mother tongue?" The percentage in each country that speaks another language is calculated by subtracting the percentage of "don't know" responses from the total.

Percentage speaking another languages besides the mother tongue well enough to take part in a conversation (EU15)	
Socio-demographic group	%
Students	76
Managers	72
Educated up to age 20+	71
Aged 15-24	68
Employees	58
Aged 25-39	57
Self-employed	52
Men	49
Average for EU15	47
Educated to age 16-19	46
Women	45
Aged 40-54	45
Unemployed	45
Manual workers	42
House persons	34
Aged 55+	30
Retired	28
Educated to age 15 or younger	21

The analyses also indicate which of the 11 EU languages are most widely known. As the following graph shows, 48% of EU citizens know English. It is the mother tongue for 16% of the EU population and a further 32% speak it well enough to hold a conversation. Apart from English, the rank order of languages more or less follows the rank order of inhabitants. Thus we find that German is the mother tongue for 24% of EU citizens and spoken well enough as a "second" language by 8% of EU citizens. French is spoken by 26% of the EU population, of which 15% are native speakers. Italian is the fourth most widely known language – it is the mother tongue for 16% of EU citizens and a further 2% speak it well enough as a foreign language. 15% of the EU population speaks Spanish (10% as mother tongue and 5% as other language).



The table on the page lists the 3 most widely spoken languages besides one's mother tongue in each Member State. It highlights that:

- In all non-English-speaking nations except Luxembourg, English is the most widely known foreign language.
- In the English-speaking nations, French is the most widely known foreign language.
- In countries where regional languages are spoken, we find the national EU language(s) listed as 'foreign' languages (i.e. Luxembourg, Spain, Ireland and the UK).

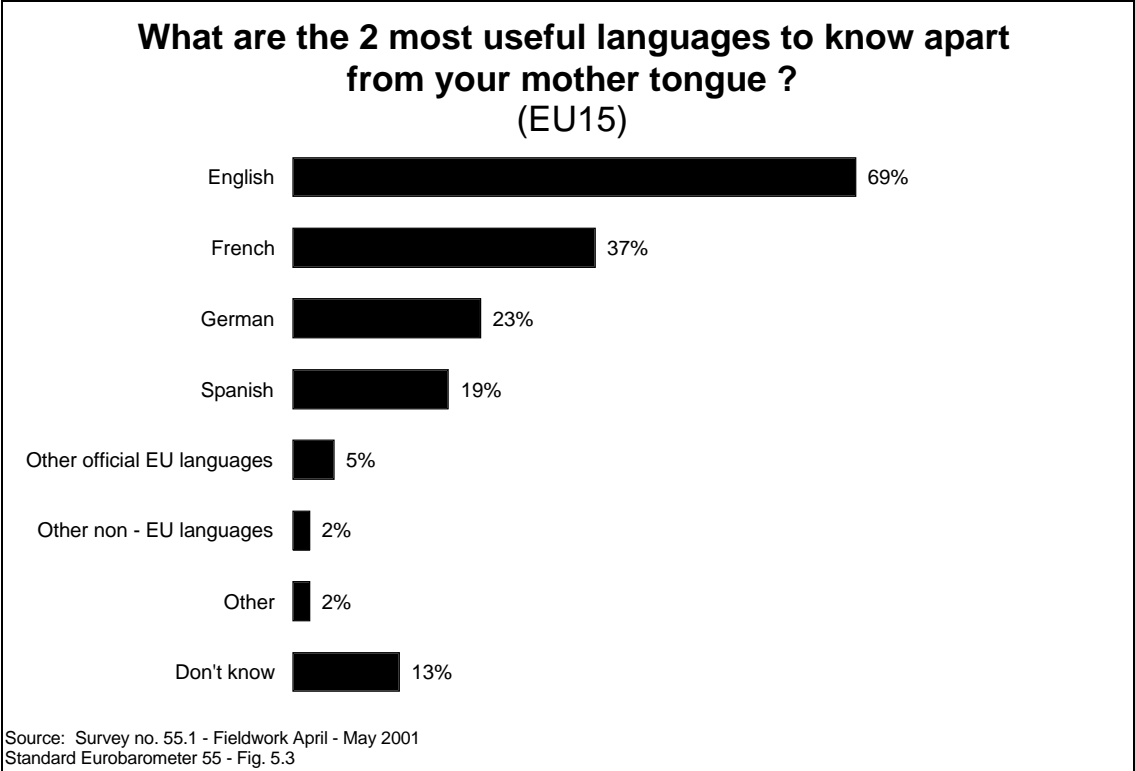
THREE MOST WIDELY SPOKEN LANGUAGES APART FROM THE MOTHER TONGUE (IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)	
Belgium	
English	37
French	32
German	16
Denmark	
English	79
German	48
French / Swedish	8
Germany	
English	44
French	12
Other ⁴⁸	7
Greece	
English	36
German	5
French / Other	4
Spain	
English	18
Other	9
Spanish	9
France	
English	32
Spanish	10
German	7
Ireland	
French	15
Other	11
English / German	4
Italy	
English	28
French	18
Spanish / German / Other	3
Luxembourg	
French	85
German	81
English	46
The Netherlands	
English	75
German	57
French	12
Austria	
English	55
French	9
Italian	7
Portugal	
English	22
French	16
Spanish	5
Finland	
English	50
Swedish	31
German	12
Sweden	
English	76
German	22
French / Danish	7
United Kingdom	
French	11
Other / German	6
Spanish / English	3

5.3. Which “foreign” languages are the most useful to know

Having already noted that English is the most widely known foreign language, it is not surprising to find that it is also most widely considered as the language that is most useful to know apart from the mother tongue. 69% of respondents chose English, 37% selected French, 23% favoured German and 19% said Spanish is the most useful language to know⁴⁹. Added together, the 7 other official EU languages are seen as most useful by only 5% of the EU population.

⁴⁸ Other = not one of the 11 languages of the European Union, Russian or Arabic.

⁴⁹ People were asked to name two languages in order to increase the selection of other languages besides English.



The table next page lists the 2 languages that are considered most useful in each of the 15 Member States.

Two Most Useful Languages Apart From The Mother Tongue (IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)	
Belgium	
English	80
French	40
Denmark	
English	93
German	53
Germany	
English	72
French	38
Greece	
English	88
German	48
Spain	
English	90
French	51
France	
English	84
Spanish	39
Ireland	
French	62
German	47
Italy	
English	88
French	36
Luxembourg	
French	71
English	51
The Netherlands	
English	90
German	36
Austria	
English	86
French	46
Portugal	
English	77
French	56
Finland	
English	76
German	29
Sweden	
English	85
German	40
United Kingdom	
French	64
German	40

As can be seen, the most popular languages are:

- English, followed by German, in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands.
- English, followed by French in the German-speaking nations, Belgium and the Mediterranean countries, (except for Greece, where German is more popular than French).
- English, followed by Spanish, in France.
- French, followed by English, in Luxembourg.
- French, followed by German, in the two English-speaking nations.

More detailed results on the knowledge and usefulness of 'foreign' languages in each of the Member States can be found in tables 5.1 and 5.2.

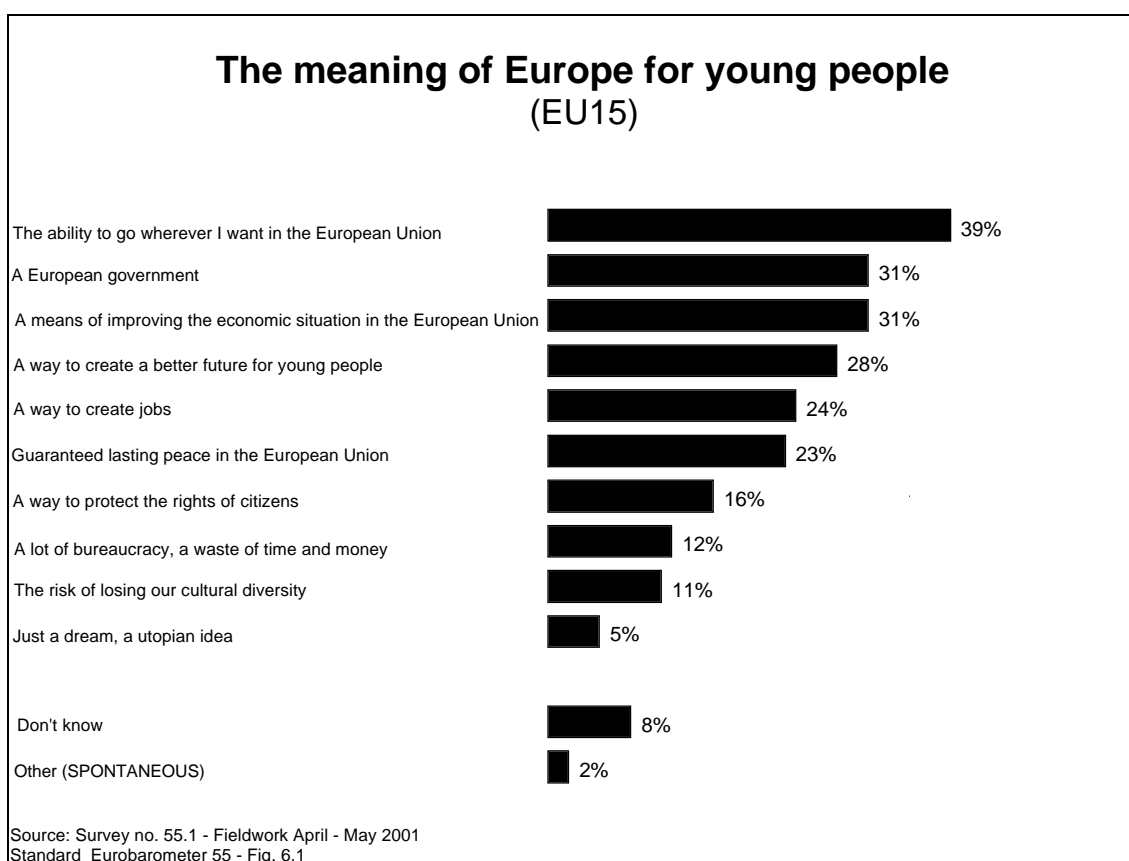
6. Other dimensions of the European Union

In this chapter we present the findings of some of the special questions asked of respondents aged 15 to 24. Wave 55.1 of the Eurobarometer survey was complemented with an oversample of people in this age group. On top of the normal sample, around 600 people aged 15 to 24 were interviewed in all Member States⁵⁰

The chapter also briefly looks at a number of other issues that were covered on the spring 2001 Eurobarometer surveys. The results for many of these questions will be analysed in more detail in special Eurobarometer reports⁵¹.

6.1. Young Europeans

The young Europeans that were oversampled were shown a card with 10 different statements about the European Union and were asked which one of these statements best describes what the Union means to them personally⁵². 39% of the young respondents say that the EU gives them the ability to go wherever they want to within it. 31% chose the statements describing the EU a) as a European government and b) as a means of improving the economic situation in the Union. Nearly 3 in 10 young citizens feel that the EU represents a way of creating a better future for young people and around a quarter see it as a way to create jobs.



⁵⁰ In Germany, 644 interviews were carried out in Bundesländer that formerly were part of East Germany and 621 interviews were carried out in Bundesländer in West Germany. In Luxembourg the oversample includes 202 people aged 15 to 24 and in Northern Ireland it includes 196 respondents.

⁵¹ See Appendix D for more information on special Eurobarometer surveys and reports.

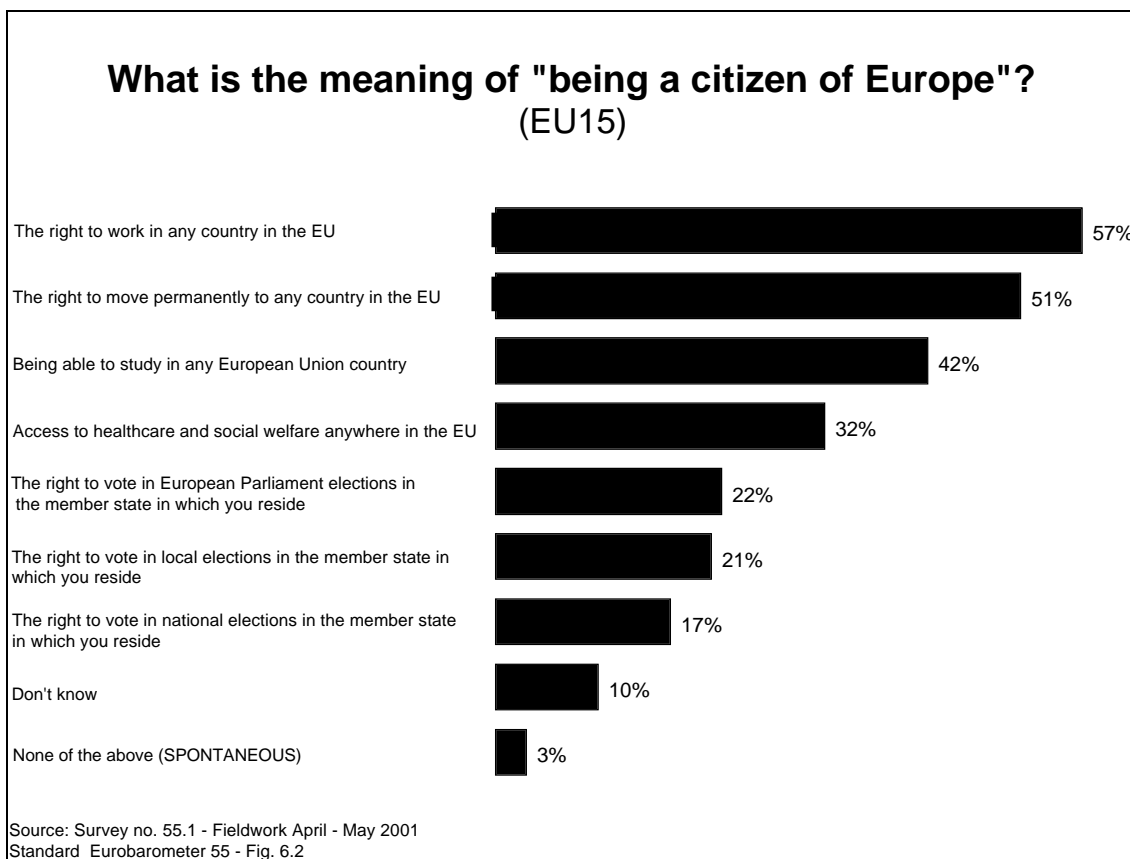
⁵² Respondents could also spontaneously give another answer; the response codes also included a "don't know" option.

The following table shows that freedom of movement is the most widely chosen description of the European Union in 7 Member States. It comes in second place in 3 countries and in third place in 2 further countries but doesn't make the top three in Denmark, Italy and the UK. In the Netherlands, Spain and Belgium a European government is the most popular description of the European Union. This description also makes the top three in 7 other countries. In Denmark, young people are most likely to interpret the meaning of Europe as a means of improving the economic situation in the EU. This interpretation also makes the top three in 9 other countries. In Greece, Italy and Portugal young people are most likely to see the EU as a way of creating a better future for young people which also makes the top three in 3 other countries. In Finland and the UK, the view that the EU is a way to create jobs makes the top three. In Denmark, France and Luxembourg, the view that the EU means guaranteed lasting peace makes the top three. The view that the EU represents a lot of bureaucracy and a waste of time and money only makes the top three in Sweden. In the UK, the proportion of young people that lacks an opinion is higher than the most widely chosen meaning of the EU. (See also table 6.1).

THE MEANING OF EUROPE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (THREE MOST WIDELY SELECTED DESCRIPTIONS, IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)	
Belgium	
European government	38
Freedom of movement	38
Better economic situation	37
Denmark	
Better economic situation	38
Peace	36
European government	31
Germany	
Freedom of movement	52
Better economic situation	31
Better future	30
Greece	
Better future	37
Freedom of movement	29
Better economic situation	29
Spain	
European government	41
Freedom of movement	39
Better economic situation	31
France	
Freedom of movement	54
Peace	35
European government	33
Ireland	
Freedom of movement	38
Better future	34
European government	27
Italy	
Better future	45
Better economic situation	38
European government	27
Luxembourg	
Freedom of movement	41
Better economic situation	40
Peace	35
The Netherlands	
European government	50
Better economic situation	50
Freedom of movement	46
Austria	
Freedom of movement	50
Better future	39
Better economic situation	30
Portugal	
Better future	35
Better economic situation	34
Freedom of movement	32
Finland	
Freedom of movement	49
European government	33
Creation of jobs	27
Sweden	
Freedom of movement	45
Too much bureaucracy	34
European government	30
United Kingdom	
Don't know	30
European government	26
Creation of jobs	20

The young respondents were also questioned about the meaning of being a European Union citizen. Again they were shown a card but this time they were able to select more than one of the seven descriptions included.

As the following graph shows, 57% of young Europeans feel that being a citizen of the European Union means the right to work in any EU country. 51% believe it gives them the right to move permanently to any EU country and 42% say that as EU citizens they are able to study in any of the 15 Member States.



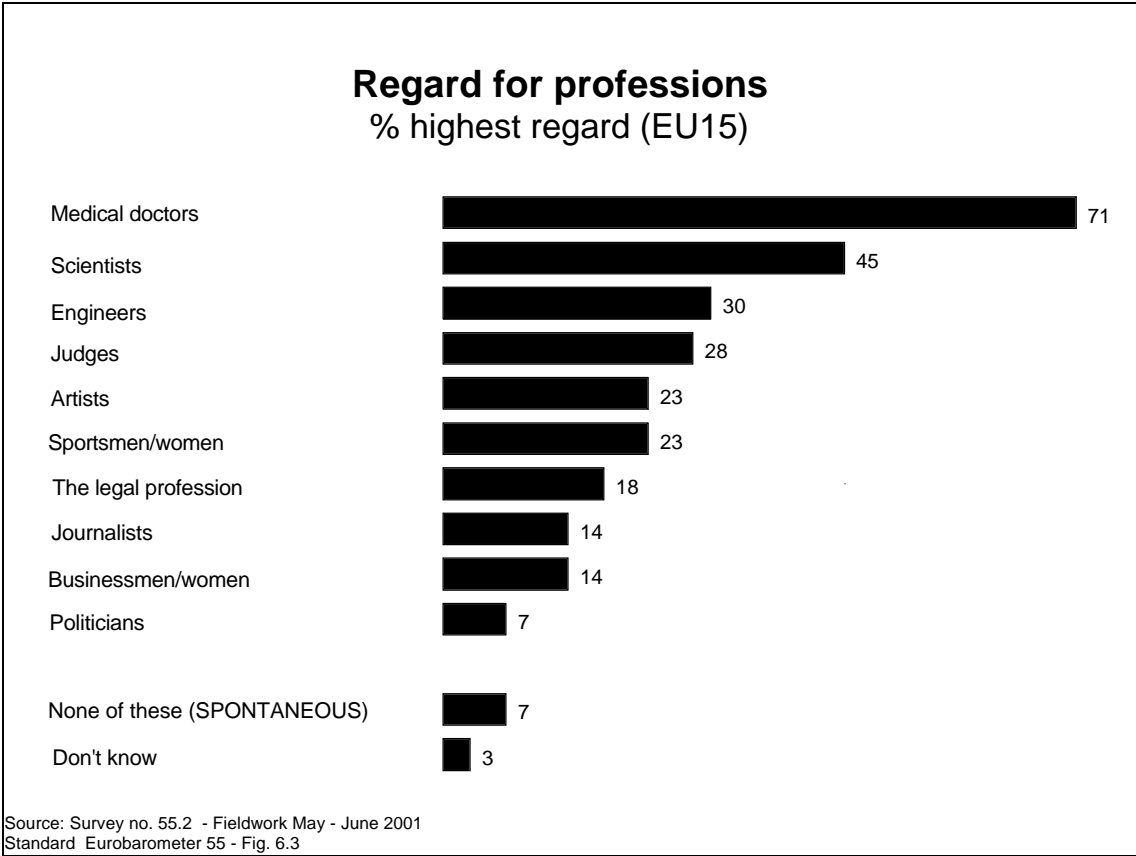
The table next page table shows that in all countries except the UK the right to work, the right to move and the ability to study in any EU country make the top three. In the UK, the third most chosen answer is access to healthcare and social welfare anywhere in the EU.

The country by country analyses show that young Finnish respondents are most likely to associate the right to work in any EU country with being an EU citizen (75%). In the UK (45%) and Belgium (49%), young respondents were least likely to feel that being an EU citizen means the right to work in any EU country. The view that being an EU citizen means the right to move permanently to any EU state ranges from 33% in the UK to 60% in France. The view that it means being able to study anywhere in the EU ranges from 24% in the UK to 65% in Sweden. (Table 6.2)

THE MEANING OF BEING A CITIZEN OF THE EU FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (THREE MOST WIDELY SELECTED DESCRIPTIONS, IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)		
Belgium		
Right to move		49
Right to work		49
Being able to study		41
Denmark		
Right to work		62
Being able to study		58
Right to move		45
Germany		
Right to work		61
Right to move		58
Being able to study		45
Greece		
Right to work		51
Being able to study		44
Right to move		41
Spain		
Right to work		57
Right to move		55
Being able to study		37
France		
Right to work		64
Right to move		60
Being able to study		50
Ireland		
Right to work		63
Right to move		58
Being able to study		39
Italy		
Right to work		57
Right to move		45
Being able to study		41
Luxembourg		
Right to move		57
Right to work		54
Being able to study		47
The Netherlands		
Being able to study		59
Right to work		58
Right to move		57
Austria		
Right to work		64
Right to move		55
Being able to study		45
Portugal		
Right to work		54
Right to move		46
Being able to study		35
Finland		
Right to work		75
Being able to study		62
Right to move		53
Sweden		
Right to work		70
Being able to study		65
Right to move		53
United Kingdom		
Right to work		45
Right to move		33
Access		26

6.2. Regard for professions

Returning to the main sample, the third wave of the Eurobarometer 55 asked respondents to choose from a list of ten professions and to indicate for which one of these ten they have the highest regard. The results show that 71% of respondents chose medical doctors, making it the profession for which people have the highest regard. Scientists come in second place at 45%, followed by engineers (30%) and judges (28%).



The table next page shows that medical doctors top the list in every Member State as having the most highly regarded profession. Scientists come in second place in all countries except Ireland, where sportsmen/women are more highly regarded. Judges come in third place in 7 countries; in France, Ireland, Finland and the UK, engineers take up 3rd place whilst in Greece and Spain it is taken by sportsmen/women and in Belgium and Italy it is taken by artists. (See also table 6.3).

TOP THREE MOST HIGHLY REGARDED PROFESSIONS (IN %, BY MEMBER STATE)	
Belgium	
Medical doctors	74
Scientists	49
Artists	32
Denmark	
Medical doctors	59
Scientists	50
Judges	42
Germany	
Medical doctors	64
Scientists	43
Judges	36
Greece	
Medical doctors	68
Scientists	53
Sportsmen/women	49
Spain	
Medical doctors	68
Scientists	47
Sportsmen/women	33
France	
Medical doctors	80
Scientists	48
Engineers	34
Ireland	
Medical doctors	70
Sportsmen/women	35
Engineers	24
Italy	
Medical doctors	67
Scientists	46
Artists	30
Luxembourg	
Medical doctors	79
Scientists	50
Judges	33
The Netherlands	
Medical doctors	72
Scientists	50
Judges	39
Austria	
Medical doctors	65
Scientists	36
Judges	29
Portugal	
Medical doctors	77
Scientists	35
Judges	30
Finland	
Medical doctors	76
Scientists	44
Engineers	28
Sweden	
Medical doctors	74
Scientists	55
Judges	37
United Kingdom	
Medical doctors	78
Scientists	41
Engineers	36

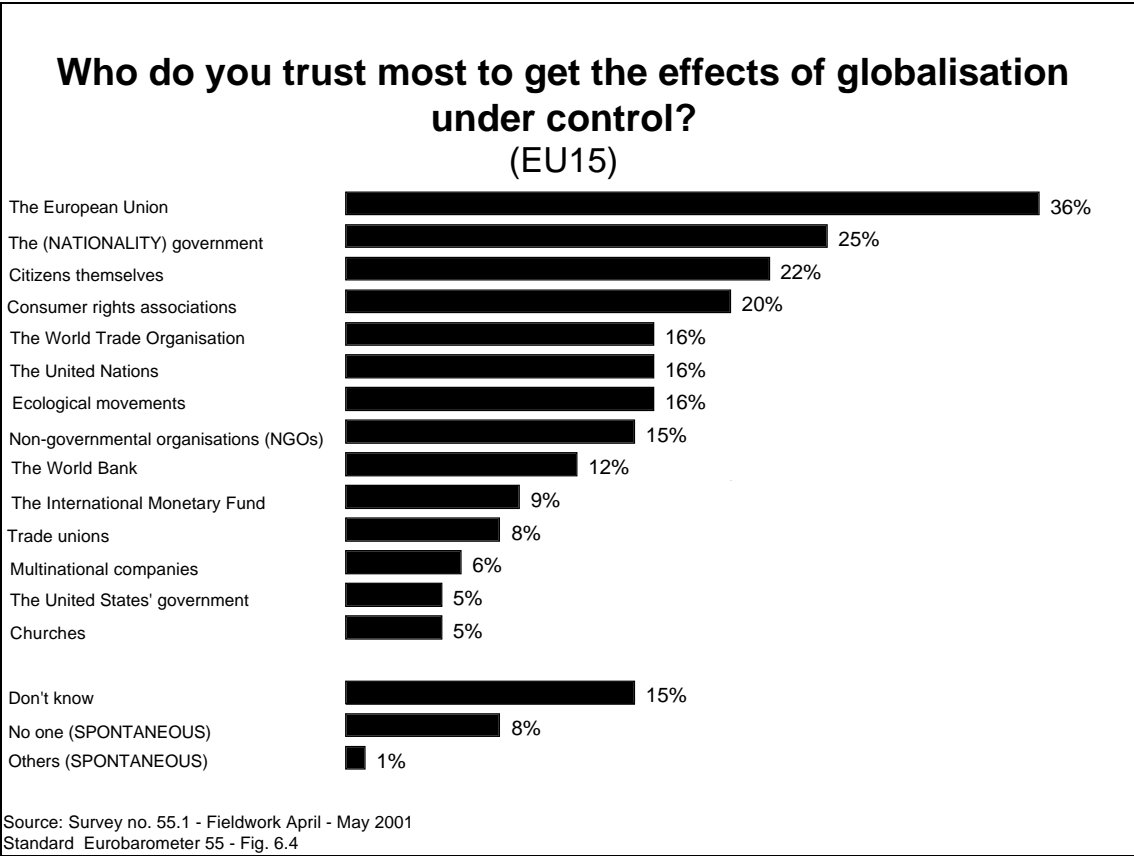
6.3. Globalisation

The second fieldwork wave of the Eurobarometer 55 asked respondents the following question:

“From the following list, who do you trust most to get the effects of globalisation under control?”⁵³

⁵³ The list includes 17 answer options, including “others”, “no one” (both spontaneous) and “don’t know”. Respondents were able to give multiple responses.

The results show that respondents are by far most likely to have most trust in the European Union (36%), followed by their own government (25%) and citizens themselves (22%). 15% of respondents didn't know who to trust most.



The European Union is the most widely trusted institution to get the effects of globalisation under control in all Member States except France and the UK. In France citizens themselves are more widely trusted while in the UK people are more likely to trust their national government for this task. The proportion of respondents that selected the EU ranges from 18% in the UK to 50% in the Netherlands. The proportion of respondents that selected their national government ranges from 14% in Italy and Sweden to 37% in Luxembourg. The proportion of respondents that selected citizens themselves ranges from 13% in Ireland to 35% in France. (Table 6.4).