

PUBLIC OPINION AND EUROPEAN DEFENSE

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the long process of development of a Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), public opinion represents a strategic variable of primary importance. Without public support, it is in fact likely that substantial progress will be difficult to accomplish. As Dalton (1988:2) notes, public perception generally defines acceptable limits within which political elites must resolve various political problems. Naturally, as political scientist V.O. Key, Jr.¹ has already emphasized, "In some instances opinion may be permissive but not directive of specific action. In others opinion may be, if not directive of specific action, virtually determinative of particular acts". While political leaders probably had more maneuvering room in the area of defense in the past,² in recent years, the media and public opinion have become actors to be taken into consideration³ in this area as well, in particular during crisis situations, as the examples of the former Yugoslavia and Kosovo in particular clearly show.

This is why it is vital to know Europeans' opinion about a common security and defense policy. To what extent do they share the objective of greater integration in this area? To answer this question, and with a view to the upcoming Belgian presidency of the European Union, Belgian Defense Minister André Flahaut decided to conduct a large comparative survey in the 15 countries of the European Union. To this end and with the consent of the European Commission, eight questions on this subject, most of them with multiple items, have been inserted into the Eurobarometer survey wave 54.1 of autumn 2000.

These questions may be grouped under three main themes:

1. A few contextual variables that, at the level of public opinion in the member states, may influence the debate in this area (fears, roles assigned to the army, confidence in institutions in general and the army in particular).
2. The way in which a common security and defense policy should be organized (support, level, and modes of decision-making).
3. The establishment of a European army (roles and form).

The purpose of this article is to present an initial, essentially descriptive analysis of the results of this survey, the first conducted on a European scale on this issue. More detailed

¹ Quoted in C. Glynn et al. (1999:306).

² See Rokkan (1960) and P. Manigart (1986).

³ See Boene and Dandeker (2000) and Shaw (1991: 184-90 and 1996).

analyses can be found in the final technical report on Europeans' Opinions on the Common Security and Defense Policy.⁴

2 THE DATA

For this study of Europeans' perceptions concerning European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), eight closed multi-items questions were inserted in wave 54.1 of the Eurobarometer, which was conducted between 14 November and 19 December 2000 by the European Opinion Research Group, a consortium of marketing and public opinion study agencies composed of INRA (Europe) and GfK Worldwide.

Eurobarometer surveys have been conducted two to five times a year since 1973 at the request of the European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture, Center for the Citizen - Public Opinion Analysis.⁵ They consist of an identical set of questions put to representative samples of the population aged 15 in over in each country of the European Union. A total of 15,900 people were questioned, or about 1,000 people per country, except in Luxembourg (600), in Germany (2,000: 1,000 in the Western part and 1,000 in the Eastern part), and in the United Kingdom (1,300: 1,000 in Great Britain and 300 in Northern Ireland).⁶

3 RESULTS

3.1 THE CONTEXT

Before looking at what Europeans think of a common security and defense policy, it seemed interesting to measure a few parameters that could influence or explain their attitudes. From among the many possible parameters, we chose four that we considered particularly relevant to the purpose of the survey. These are the dangers that Europeans fear, the roles of the army in general, and confidence in institutions in general and the army in particular.⁷

⁴ For the full report - in French (*L'opinion des Européens sur la politique de sécurité et de défense commune*. Brussels: Royal Military Academy) - contact Philippe.Manigart@ssoc.rma.ac.be

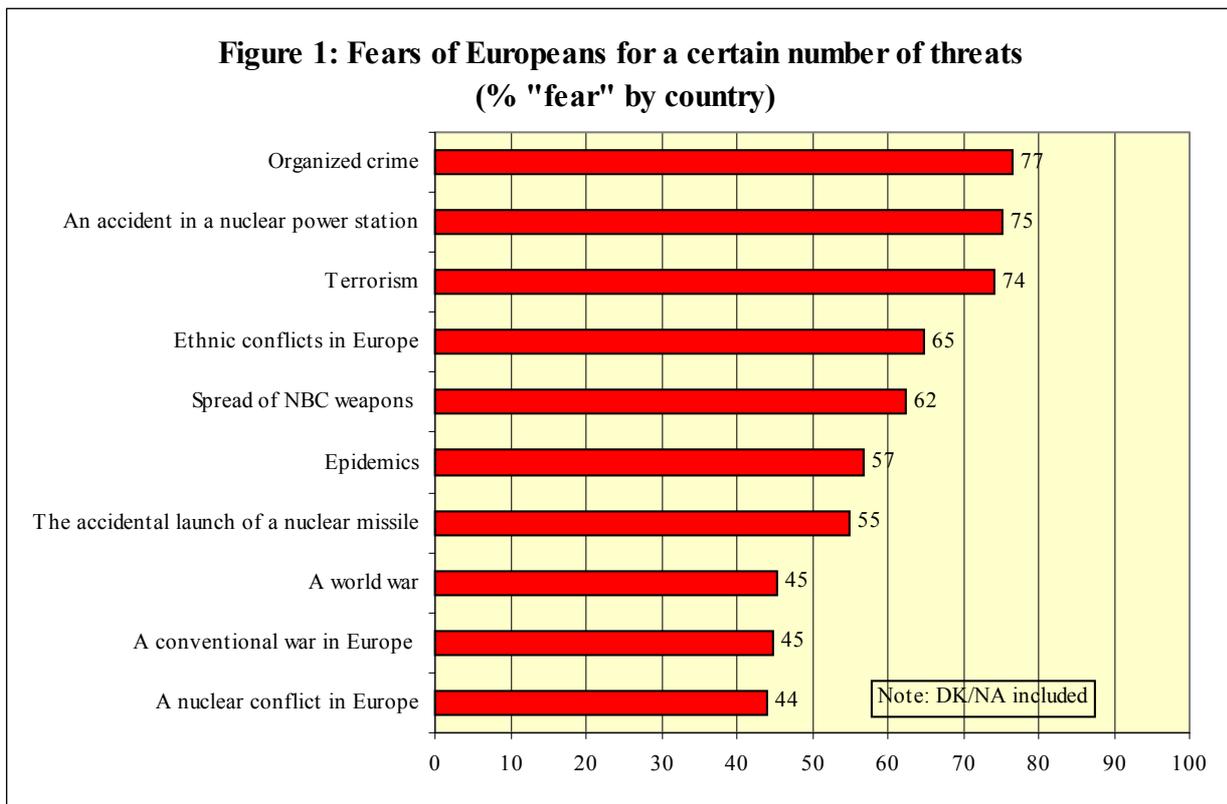
⁵ As of this year, the Public Opinion sector is part of the Directorate-General Press and Communication of the European Commission.

⁶ Figures on the Union as a whole (EU 15) appearing in this report represent a weighted average of national figures. The weighting used for each country is the proportion of the national population aged over 15 within the corresponding EU population

⁷ In this chapter, due to lack of space, we will not analyze in detail the influence of these factors on respondents' opinions concerning the common security and defense policy. These analyses can be found in the final technical report.

3.1.1 EUROPEANS' FEARS

The new geostrategic environment that emerged at the end of the Cold War can be characterized as one of greater complexity and uncertainty compared to the certainties of the bipolar world of the previous decades (Freedman, 1991). There are no longer any clearly identifiable threats, but rather a multitude of risks and dangers.⁸ This leads some authors to say that we live in an era of "risk complexity".⁹ How do Europeans perceive this range of risks? This was the theme of the first question we asked them.¹⁰



As figure 1 shows, the three things Europeans fear the most are non-military risks, specifically organized crime (77 %), an accident at a nuclear plant (75 %), and terrorism (74 %). At the other end of the scale, the three risks cited least often (but nonetheless by more than four respondents out of ten) are a nuclear conflict in Europe (44 %), a conventional war in Europe

⁸ A distinction should be made among risks, threats, and dangers. Dandeker (2000: 108) defines risk as "capacities that have the potential to cause harm to one's security. Threats arise when such capacities become conjoined with an intention to cause harm." By dangers, he refers to "those capacities that have a high probability of causing harm but without anyone's hostile intentions through, either, the negligence of identifiable actors, or the unintended consequences of social action".

⁹ See, for example, Dandeker (1999).

¹⁰ The question was: "Here is a list of things that some people say they are afraid of. For each of these, please tell me if, personally, you are afraid of it, or not?"

(45 %), and a world war (45 %). We should note that these are the three types of military conflicts directly (explicitly or implicitly) involving European nations on their own territory.

If we now look at the differences in perceptions among different member states, we note a rather broad convergence. In 11 countries out of 15, the same three risks top the list, although sometimes in a different order (organized crime, accident in a nuclear plant, and terrorism). In Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden, ethnic conflicts in Europe are the three most frequently cited fears. Portugal is the only country in the European Union where the fear of epidemics comes in second.¹¹

Likewise, in 11 countries out of 15, the same three military risks arrive last, but once again, sometimes in a different order (nuclear conflict in Europe, conventional war in Europe, and world war). In three countries (Denmark, Austria, and Sweden), epidemics are among the three least frequently cited risks.

Finally, we note that while the order of fears is quite similar in the different countries, the average level of fear varies significantly depending on the country. On a scale from 0 (no risk cited)¹² to 10 (all 10 risks cited), national averages varied from a minimum of 4.50 in Finland to a maximum of 7.85 in Portugal.

Significantly fewer young people aged 15 to 24 (41 %) fear a conventional war in Europe than their elders. Those who most fear such a war are people 55 and over (46 %), that is, those who lived or were born during the most recent conventional war in Europe. In fact, we can observe that the fear of risks, such as they are, tends to increase with age. In other words, the older the people, the more likely they are to say that they fear one threat or another. Conversely, the more education people have, the less likely they are to fear the various risks on the list. This is especially true as concerns military risks; as concerns non-military risks, the relationship is less pronounced. Finally, European women are consistently more likely to fear the various risks, particularly military risks, cited than are men.

3.1.2 THE ROLES OF ARMED FORCES

Until recently, the threat of an enemy invasion was a real possibility against which countries had to defend themselves. The current situation is rather different. We live, according to

¹¹ It is important to point out that this survey was conducted well before the epidemic of foot-and-mouth disease that broke out in February 2001.

¹² Meaning "does not fear" or "does not know".

Dandeker (2000:108) in an "era of unstable violent peace." The post-Cold War period is in fact characterized by the fact that the military threat has become less direct and more vague. Of course, a conventional war has not become completely impossible or unimaginable; defense of the territory even remains the ultimate justification for national armed forces. Nonetheless, at least over the short and medium term, this is no longer the most probable scenario for engagement.

For one thing, inter-state wars are gradually tending to be replaced by intra-state conflicts in which national borders no longer play a central role. Ethnic conflicts and the terrorist threat, but also the threat posed by the new mafias, will probably become the typical examples of postmodern conflicts, conflicts for which traditional military organizations are rather poorly prepared.¹³ For another, the defense of basic democratic values and human rights is increasingly an aspect of "security" as we conceive of it.

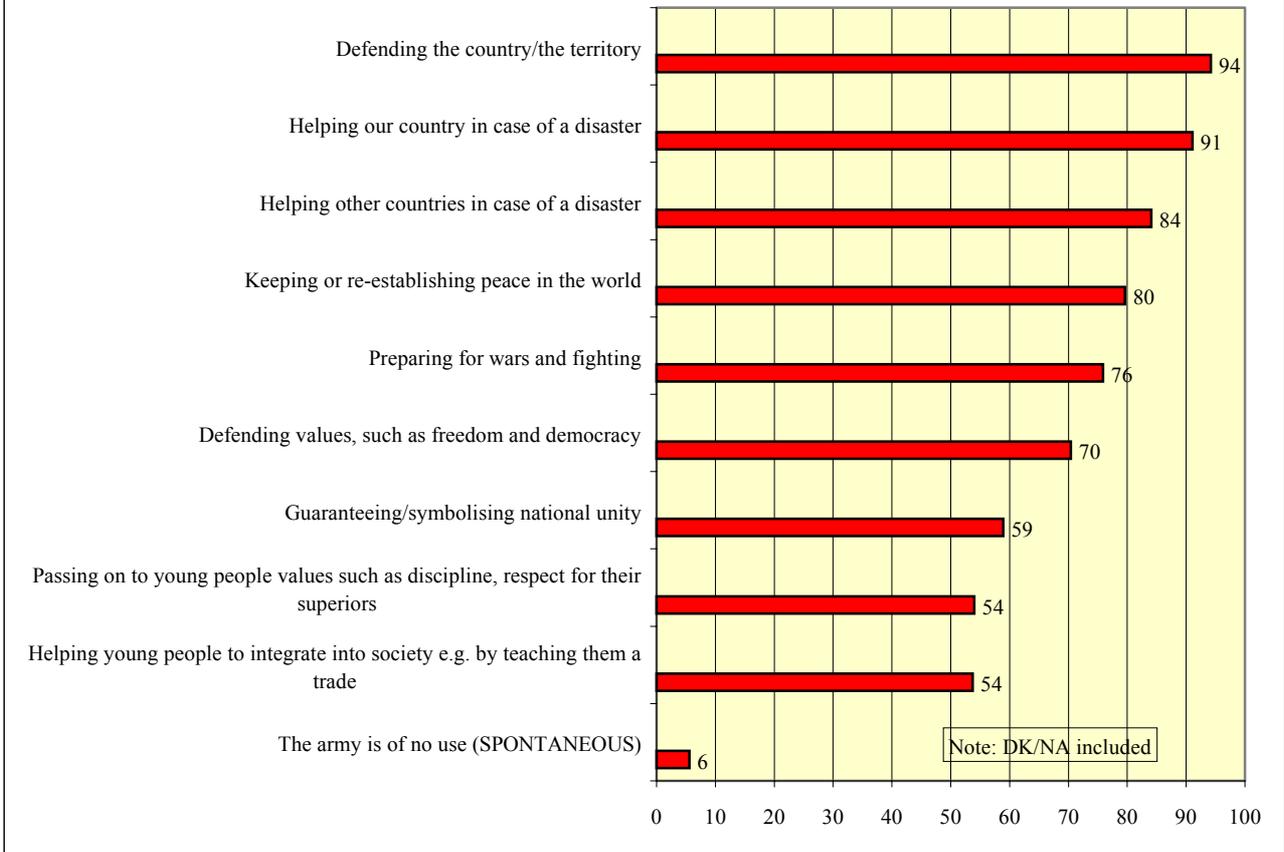
Given this multitude of risks and dangers and with a broader definition of security, but in the absence of a clearly identified threat, the question of the roles and missions of armed forces arises. What could these roles be, in Europeans' view? This was the subject of the second question we asked them.¹⁴

As figure 2 illustrates, defense of the country remains the role most frequently cited by respondents (94 %). However, immediately following, cited by 91 % of respondents, comes a non-military role, specifically help to the country in case of disaster (natural, ecological, or nuclear). Aid to other countries (in case of natural, ecological, or nuclear disaster or famine, or to remove land mines, etc.) is mentioned by more than eight respondents out of ten (84 %). The mission that in recent years has incontestably become the most significant in quantitative terms and which is also typical of postmodern armies, that is, peacekeeping or restoring peace, is meanwhile cited by eight Europeans out of ten. Seven of ten Europeans feel that the defense of values like freedom and democracy is also a role for the military. We note that more traditional, albeit non-military, roles for the armed forces, such as guaranteeing/symbolizing national unity, instilling certain values in young people, or helping them integrate into society (the army as the school of the nation) are cited much less frequently (although the percentages remain above 50 percent). Finally, we must point out that 6 % of those questioned replied spontaneously that the military serves no purpose.

¹³ Mary Kaldor (1999: 1-9) calls these new types of conflicts the "new wars" as distinguished from the "old wars" (between states).

¹⁴ The question was "For each of the following, please tell me if you think it is one of the roles of the army, or not?"

**Figure 2: Opinions of Europeans about the roles of the army
(% "yes" by country)**



Except in Spain and Luxembourg, defense of the country led the list of roles mentioned, with percentages above 90. It was followed by help to the nation in case of disaster. In Spain and Luxembourg, aid to the country and to other countries ranked first and second. The United Kingdom is the only country of the 15 where the traditional function of the military, specifically preparing for and waging war, came in second with 93 %. It is moreover the only country, along with Greece, where the percentage was over 90. Preparing for and waging war was cited particularly infrequently in Sweden (38 %), Luxembourg (41 %), and Austria (52 %), where this role came in last. We would note that two of these countries (Sweden and Austria) had a policy of neutrality during the Cold War (in fact, as concerns Sweden, for much longer, nearly 200 years, that is, since the end of the Napoleonic Wars) and that the size of Luxembourg's Army prevents it from envisioning this type of role.

In all countries, the army's roles of socialization and integration are mentioned least frequently, along with the role of symbol of national unity. As concerns the postmodern role par excellence of armed forces, specifically peacekeeping and restoring peace, the percentage of respondents citing this role varied between 60 % in Austria and 89 % in Greece and in Ireland. In four countries (Luxembourg, France, Finland, and Sweden), the percentage of people spontaneously declaring that the army serves no purpose equals or exceeds 10 %.

3.1.3 TRUST IN THE MILITARY

According to Burk and Moskos (1994), in our postmodern societies, the public's attitudes towards its armed forces are characterized by skepticism and/or apathy. People in fact no longer consider defense a priority. In Eurobarometer surveys, for example, education, health, the fight against crime, efforts to reduce unemployment, etc., are all considered much more important goals.¹⁵ Once again, the reason is to be found in the fact that with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the West lost its main enemy. The risk has become diffuse, and therefore less visible. Humanitarian and peacekeeping missions, by their very nature, are also less spectacular than a conventional conflict. The consequence is that, all things being equal, the military becomes less visible (the elimination of compulsory military service further reinforces this trend) and less central in people's opinion.

Other authors,¹⁶ in contrast, are of the opinion that with the reorientation of postmodern armies' missions towards peacekeeping and humanitarian aid, their popularity tends rather to be higher than during the Cold War. Peacekeeping operations, most often implemented to guarantee stability and help populations in distress, are regarded by public opinion as noble causes, although over the long term, this type of operation may become more difficult to justify, particularly if it involves casualties and/or has a less than clearly defined mandate.

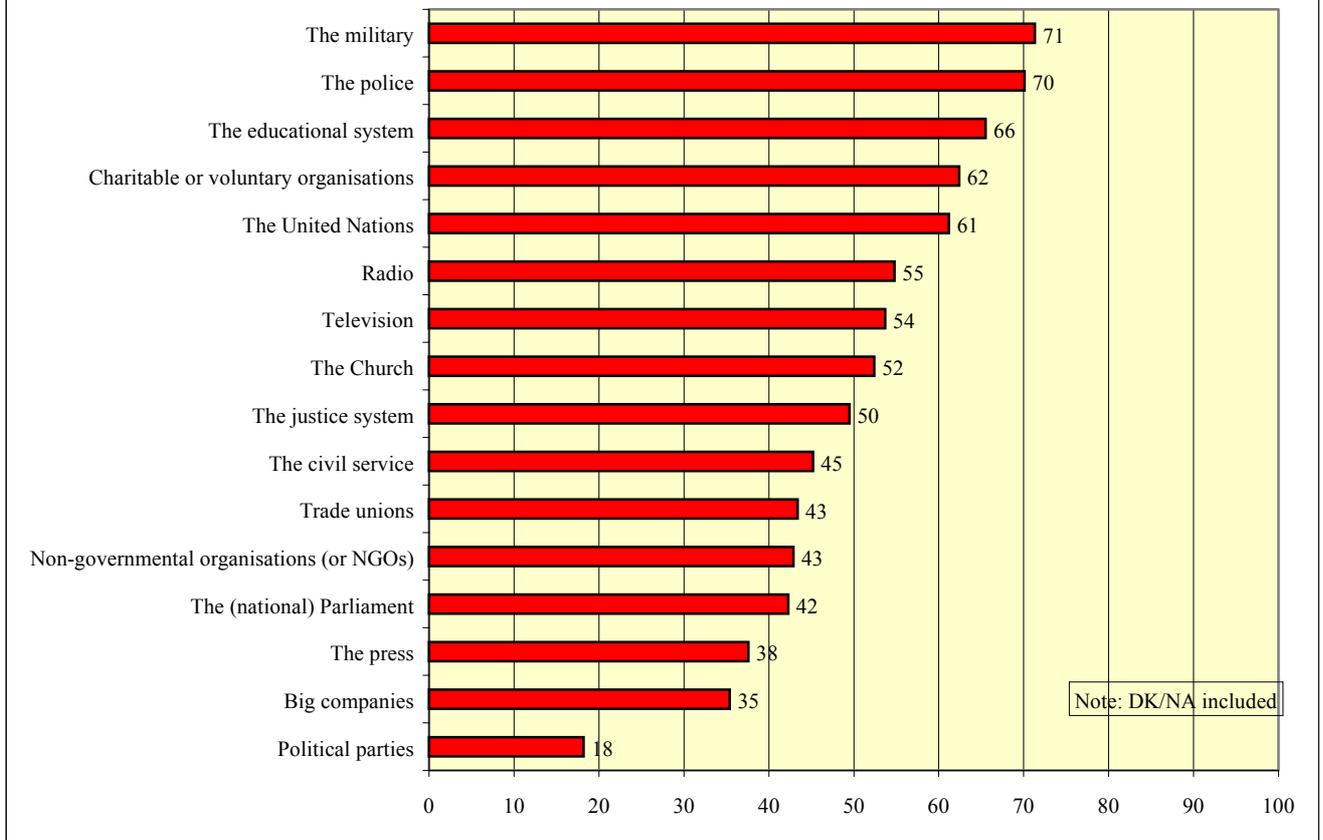
What of trust in national military institutions, particularly in relation to other institutions ? This is what we wanted to know when we once again asked a slightly modified version of a question that had already been asked twice (in 1997 and 1999).¹⁷

¹⁵ See Eurobarometer No. 44, Mega and Manigart (1998).

¹⁶ See Boone and Dandeker (2000), Manigart and Marlier (1996) and Van der Meulen (2000).

¹⁷ The question was "Now, I would now like to ask you about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it, or tend not to trust it ?"

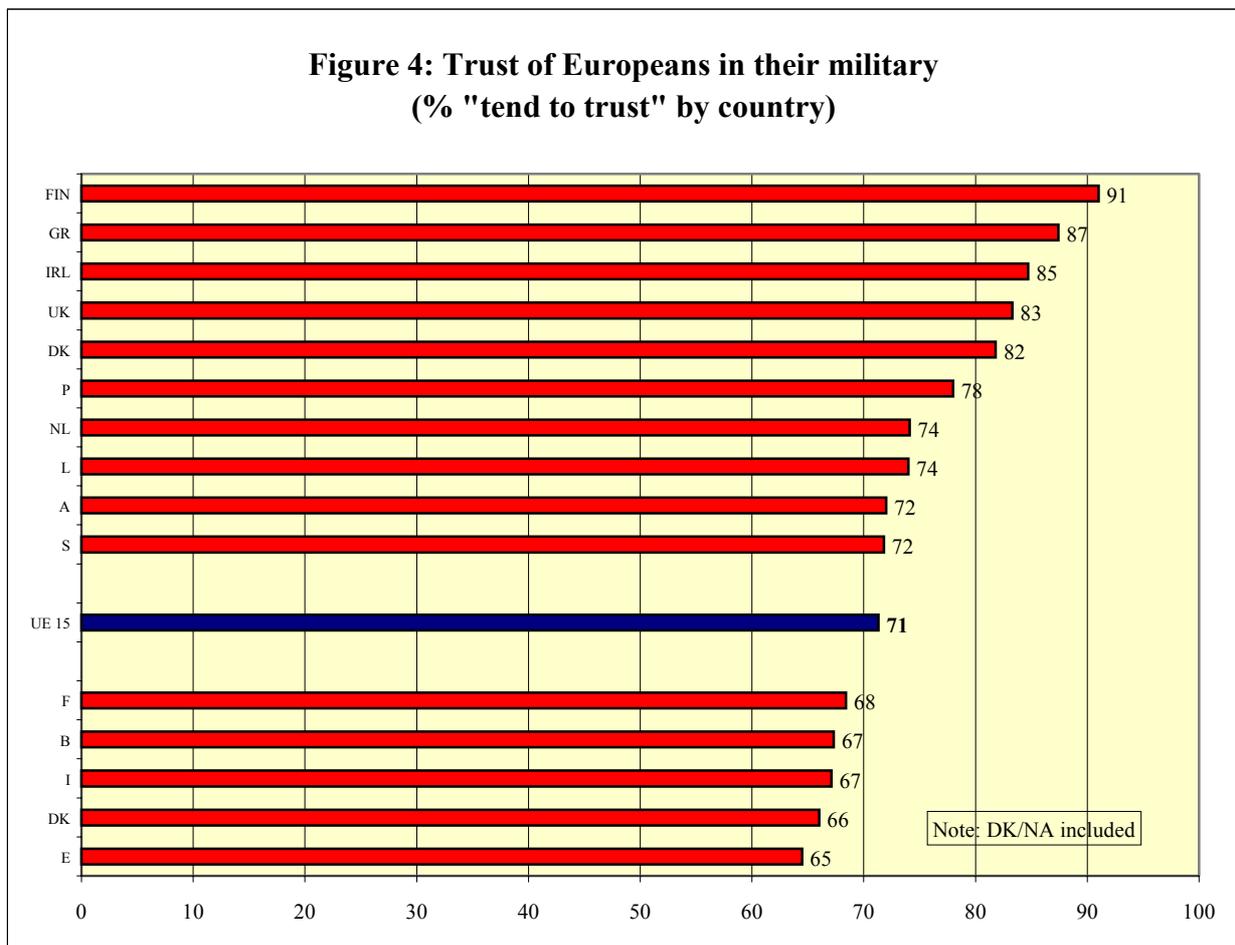
**Figure 3: Confidence of Europeans in 16 institutions
(% "tend to trust" by country)**



As figure 3 shows, the military, among 16 institutions concerning which respondents were asked to give an opinion, is the one in which they have the most confidence, which would rather tend to support the second hypothesis. More than seven Europeans out of ten (71 %) claim to tend to trust the military. Another institution, this one responsible not for external but for internal security, that is the police, came in second place with 70 % having faith in it. At the bottom of the scale, we find political parties (18 %), large companies (35 %), and the written press (38 %). We would remark in this connection that Europeans seem to have much more faith in the audiovisual media than in the written press (55 % for radio and 54 % for television).

Rather surprisingly, the rate of trust in charitable or voluntary organizations is much higher than that in non-governmental organizations, although they are actually the same type of organization. This significant difference in percentages probably has a semantic explanation. For one thing, many people apparently do not know what an NGO is (the percentage of "don't know" is higher than for other institutions, 26 % at EU level). For another, it is possible that for

some people, the very use of the adjective "governmental" evokes something they have little trust in.



If we now look at a breakdown of rates of trust in the military among the different countries of the European Union (figure 4), we first observe that in all 15 countries, the rate of trust is above 60 %. It is lowest in Spain (65 %) and highest in Finland (91 %). In addition to Spain, four other countries have a level of trust in the military that is below the European average, specifically Denmark (66 %), Italy (67 %), Belgium (67 %), and France (68 %). The military leads in four countries: Greece (87 %), the United Kingdom (83 %), Portugal (78 %), and the Netherlands (74 %).

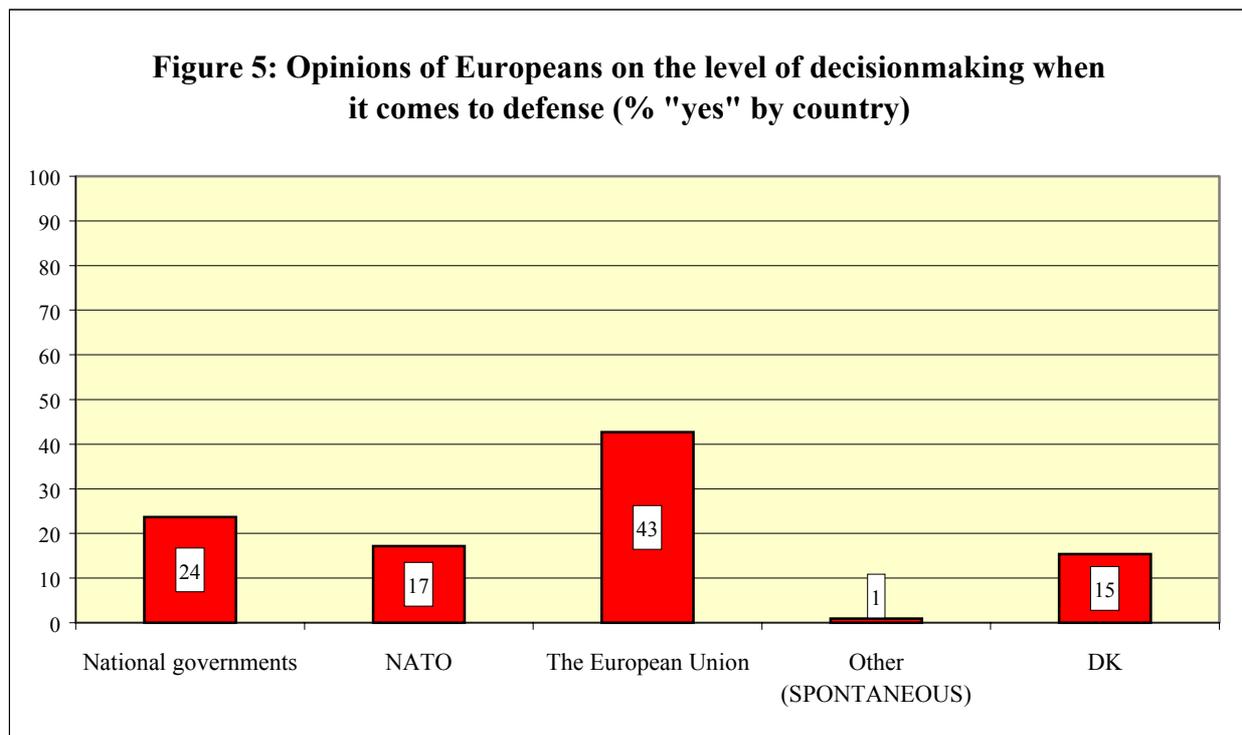
At European Union level, trust in the military tends to increase with age (as does trust in all the institutions mentioned) and is sharply higher among those 55 and over (77 %) than among people 15 to 39 (68 %) and 40 to 54 (71 %). The more education people have, the less trust they

tend to have in the military (and the other institutions): The level drops from 76 % among those who left school before 15 to 68 % among those who completed their studies after age 20.

3.2 THE COMMON SECURITY AND DEFENSE POLICY

What do Europeans think of the Common Security and Defense policy ? To what extent do they share the objective of greater integration in this area ? Two questions on this topic were asked within the framework of this special Eurobarometer on European defense in an effort to find some answers on these issues. The first concerned the level where decisions should be taken concerning European defense policy; the second, the way in which these decisions should be taken in case of military intervention.

3.2.1 LEVEL OF DECISION-MAKING ON EUROPEAN DEFENSE POLICY



More than four Europeans in ten (43 %) are of the opinion that decisions concerning European defense policy should be taken by the European Union (figure 5).¹⁸ Only 17 % thought it should be NATO and 24 % the national governments.

¹⁸ The question was "In your opinion, should decisions concerning European defense policy be taken by national governments, by NATO, or by the European Union ?" (Only one response was allowed).

It is the Italians who believe in the greatest number, and by far (63 %), that decisions concerning European defense policy should be taken by the EU. They are followed by the French (56 %) and the Luxembourgers (53 %). Belgium - another of the EC's six founder countries - is also above the European average in this sphere (49 %). On the other hand, the two other founder countries - the Netherlands and Germany - are more divided: 40 % and 38 %, respectively, of their citizens choose the EU. The three least pro-European countries (with percentages below 30 %) are the UK (22 %), Denmark (27 %), and Ireland (29 %).

Ireland and the UK - two islands - are the only countries where a plurality of respondents clearly place their own national government first, with 36 % and 31 % of responses, respectively. As for the Finns and the Austrians (two "nonaligned" countries during the Cold War), they hesitate between their own government (42 % and 36 %, respectively) and the EU (41 % and 36 %). In all the other countries, except Denmark, the EU comes first. Denmark is the only country where NATO clearly comes first (40 % against 27 % for the EU and 27 % for their national government). The percentages of people with no opinion range between a minimum of 7 % in Denmark and a maximum of 22 % in Portugal.

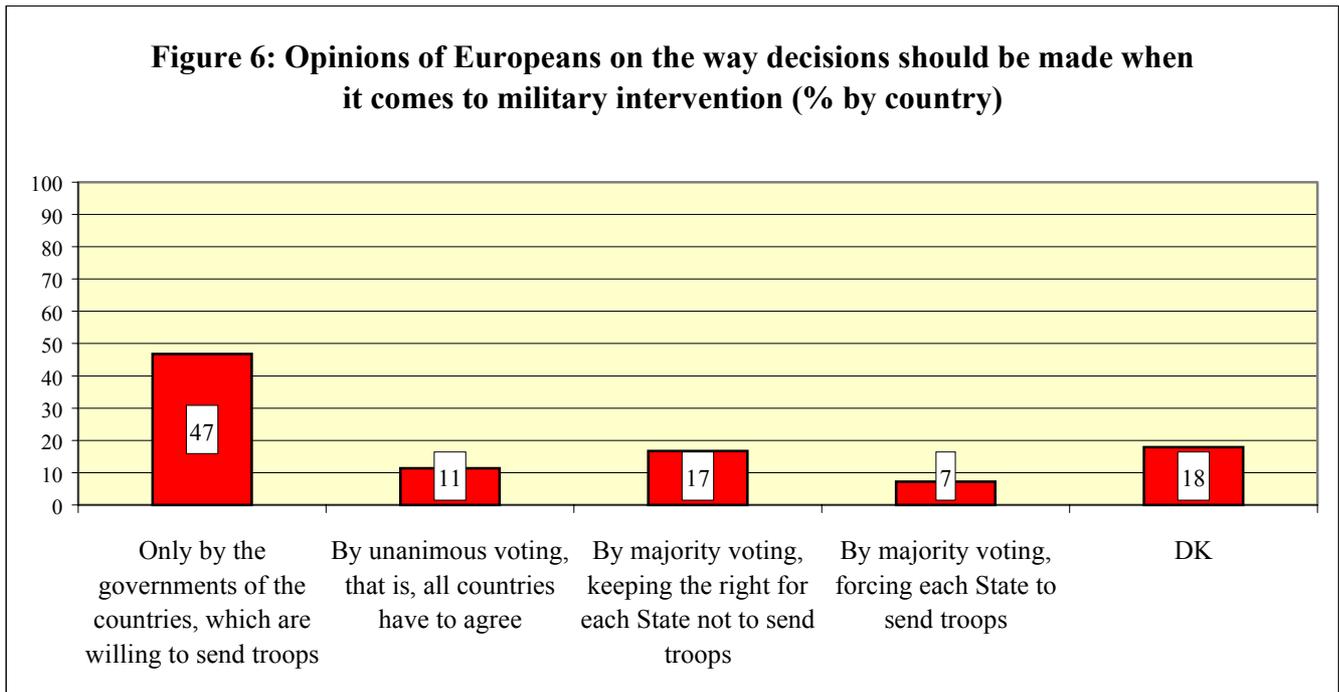
Quite logically, twice as many of the respondents who believe that being a member of the Union is a good thing for their country as those who believe that it is a bad thing are of the opinion that decisions on European defense should be taken at the level of the EU (54 % against 25 % for the EU as a whole). The same is also true for those who believe that the Union's member countries should have a common security and defense policy (52 % against 21 % among those who are opposed).¹⁹

At the level of the EU, it is to be noted that the percentage of respondents who believe that decisions on defense should be taken by the EU increases with the level of education: In fact, it rises from 35 % among those who ended their education before the age of 15 to 49 % among those who studied up to the age of 20 or more. Conversely, the less educated people are, the more they choose the national government (from 19 % among those who studied up to the age of 20 or more to 27 % among those who left school before the age of 15). The people regarded as opinion leaders are clearly greater in number than the others in believing that the appropriate level of decisionmaking should be the EU.

¹⁹ These are two trend questions put in the standard Eurobarometers and which were also put in EB 54.1.

3.2.2 DECISIONMAKING MECHANISM IN THE EVENT OF MILITARY INTERVENTION

The previous question concerned the desired level for decisions on European defense policy. The next question starts from the hypothesis that a Common European Security and Defense Policy has been instituted. Let us suppose that a decision in principle is being taken to send troops within the framework of a crisis outside the EU. In that case, who should take the decision ?²⁰



Nearly one European in two (47%) (figure 6) believes that it is up to the governments prepared to send troops to decide. The option which, in the question, represents the most "federalist" solution - namely, a binding majority vote - comes last, with just 7 %. In other words, there is still a not inconsiderable gap between the vague desire for a European defense and making such a policy operational.

Except Italy, where opinions are fairly evenly divided between the national option and a nonbinding majority vote, the national option wins by a wide margin in all the EU countries. This is particularly the case in the UK and in Portugal (58 %), in Austria (56 %), and in Spain (53 %), where the percentages in favor of a purely national decision exceed 50 %. Conversely,

²⁰ For ease of understanding, the question was subdivided into two subquestions: (a) "In the context of a Common European Security and Defense Policy, who, do you think, should take decisions in case of military intervention: only the governments of the countries that are willing to send troops or all member countries of the European Union, including those who are not willing to send troops?" (b) "(If EU in Question 5.a) How should these decisions be made within the European Union?"

the most radical option exceeds 10 % in just three countries, all of them members of the Union's founding core -- namely, Italy (13 %), Belgium, and France (12 % each).

The number of don't knows is also relatively to very considerable, since it ranges between a minimum of 4 % in Greece (the only country where it is below 10 %) and a maximum of 23 % in Italy. This undoubtedly reflects the European decisionmaking mechanisms' complexity and opacity for many citizens.

3.3 A EUROPEAN ARMY

The aim of the survey's last three questions was to analyze, not the Europeans' opinions on a Common Security and Defense Policy in general but, more specifically, their opinions on the establishment of a European army and, in particular, on the form which it should take and the roles which it should have.

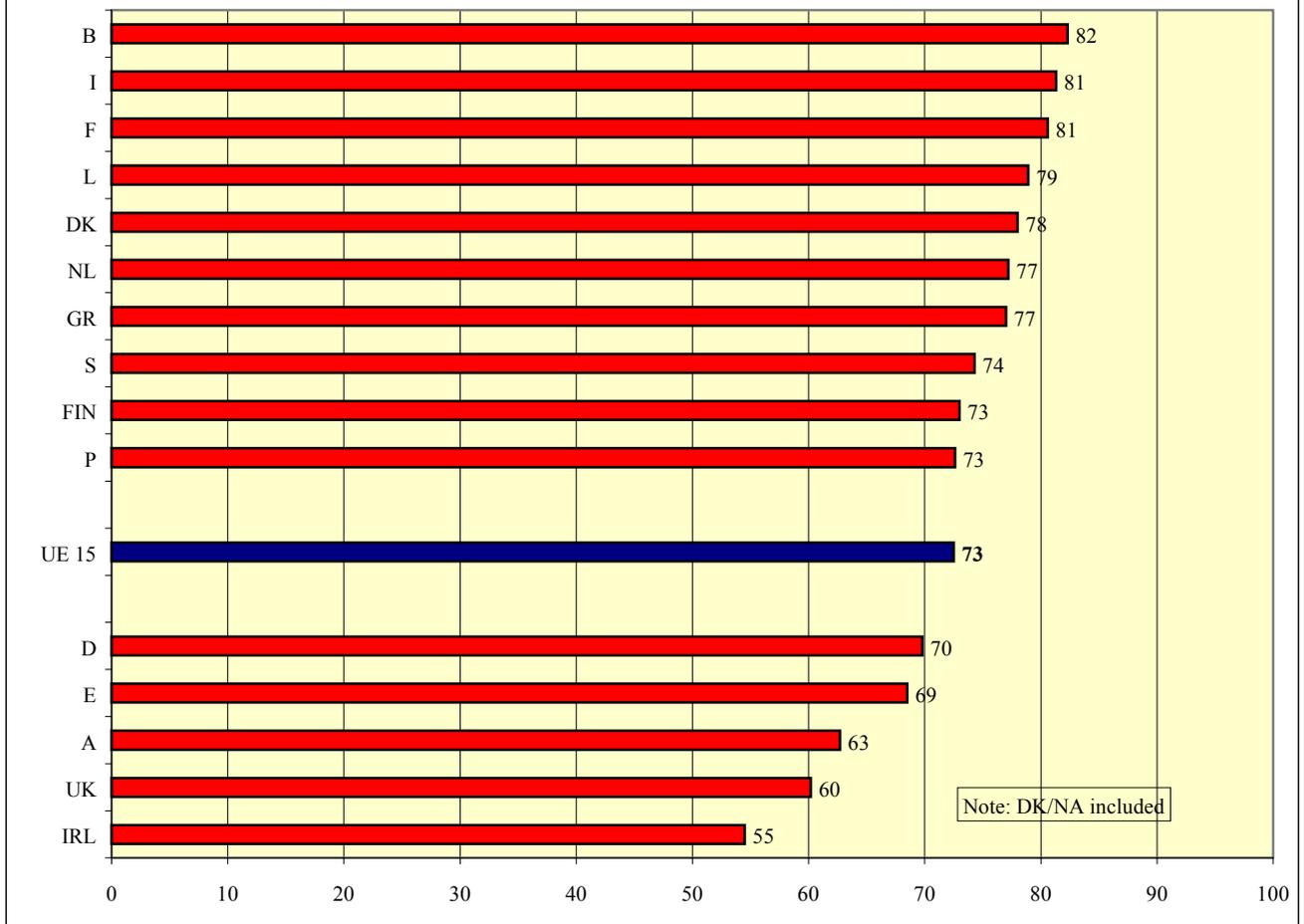
3.3.1 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RAPID REACTION FORCE

On 3-4 June 1999, the Helsinki European Council, confirming its Cologne positions, decided on the establishment of a rapid reaction force of 50-60,000 men by 2003, capable of being deployed within 60 days and for a period of at least a year. That force should be able to cover the whole spectrum of the so-called Petersberg missions (humanitarian and evacuation missions, peacekeeping, and restoring peace). What do the Europeans think of that decision ? This is what they were asked.²¹

As figure 7 shows, over seven Europeans out of 10 (73 %) believe that the establishment of a rapid reaction force of 60,000 men is a very good (23 %) or rather good (50 %) thing. Some 16 % express no opinion. In other words, only a very small minority of respondents (14 %) disagree with that initiative.

²¹ The question was: "Recently, the EU has decided to set up a rapid reaction force of 60,000 men. Personally, do you believe it is a very good thing, a rather good thing, a rather bad thing, or a very bad thing ?"

Figure 7: Opinions of the Europeans on the creation of a RRF of 60,000 men (% "very good" or "rather good thing" by country)



In all the Union's countries, over half the respondents believe that the establishment of that rapid reaction force is a very good or rather good thing. In three countries, founder members of Six - namely, Belgium, Italy, and France - the percentages approving even exceed 80 %. In two of the other six founder countries - Luxembourg and the Netherlands - the percentages of respondents deeming this initiative a very or rather good thing are 79 % and 77 %, respectively. Among the Six, it is only in Germany that the approval rate (70 %) is below the European average (73 %). The three countries which are, relatively speaking, the least enthusiastic about this initiative are Ireland (55 %), the UK (60 %), and Austria (63 %).

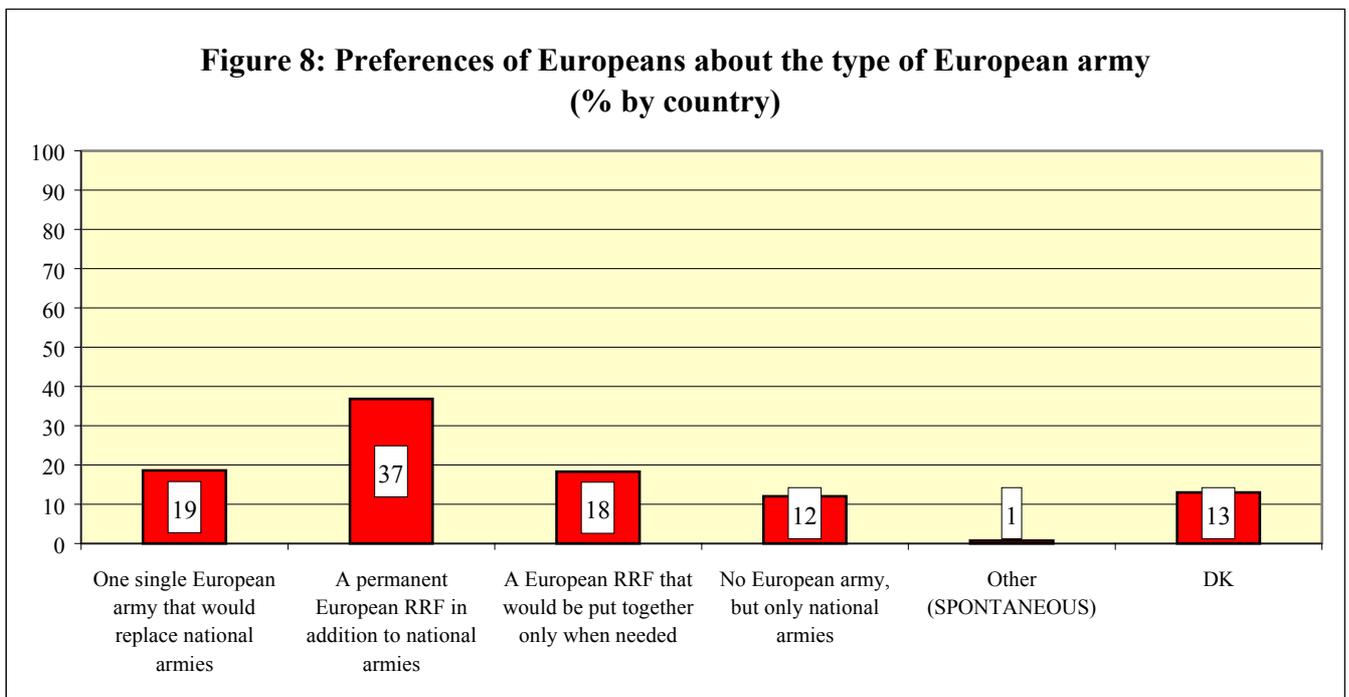
Nevertheless, it should be noted that, not only is the percentage of people who have no opinion on this matter quite high on average (16 % at the level of the EU as a whole), but also

that it varies quite considerably from one country to another: In fact, it rises from a minimum of 6 % in Denmark to a maximum of 34 % in Ireland.

As could be expected, a clearly greater number (nearly two times more) of those who are in favor of the EU's having a Common Security and Defense Policy believe that the establishment of a rapid reaction force is a good thing (82 % against 49 %). The same is true for those who believe that being a member of the Union is a good thing for their country, compared with those who believe the contrary (83 % against 53 %).

3.3.2 THE TYPE OF EUROPEAN ARMY

The Europeans were also asked what type of European army it would be desirable to have.²²



As figure 8 shows, the solution preferred by Europeans is that of a permanent European rapid reaction force in addition to national armies (37 %). The proposal corresponding most closely to the solution accepted at the Helsinki European Council - namely, "a European rapid reaction force, which would be put together only when needed" - is chosen by 18 % of the respondents. Nearly two respondents out of 10 (19 %) would be in favor of the establishment of a real integrated European army, which would replace the national armies. At the other end of

the scale, only 12 % of Europeans want no European army at all, in whatever form. In other words, more than seven Europeans out of 10 (73 %) are aware that the time of purely national armies in Europe is over, and that such a solution no longer meets the challenges with which the EU is and will be increasingly faced in the future. Hence they want the setting-up, in one form or another, of a supranational European force.

It is remarkable to note that, in the EU's 15 countries, admittedly by a narrow margin in some cases, the option of a permanent European rapid reaction force, in addition to the national armies - which is also the next stage for which several governments are hoping for instituting a credible common security and defense policy - is the option which wins the greatest approval. In Luxembourg, it is even by one in two. In Greece (48 %), in France (44 %), in Italy (41 %), and in Belgium (40 %), the percentages reach or exceed 40 %.

Nevertheless, to qualify that, it must be noted that, in the three Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, and Sweden), as well as in Ireland and the UK, the maximalist option - namely, a single European army which would replace the national armies - is the one which wins the least approval.

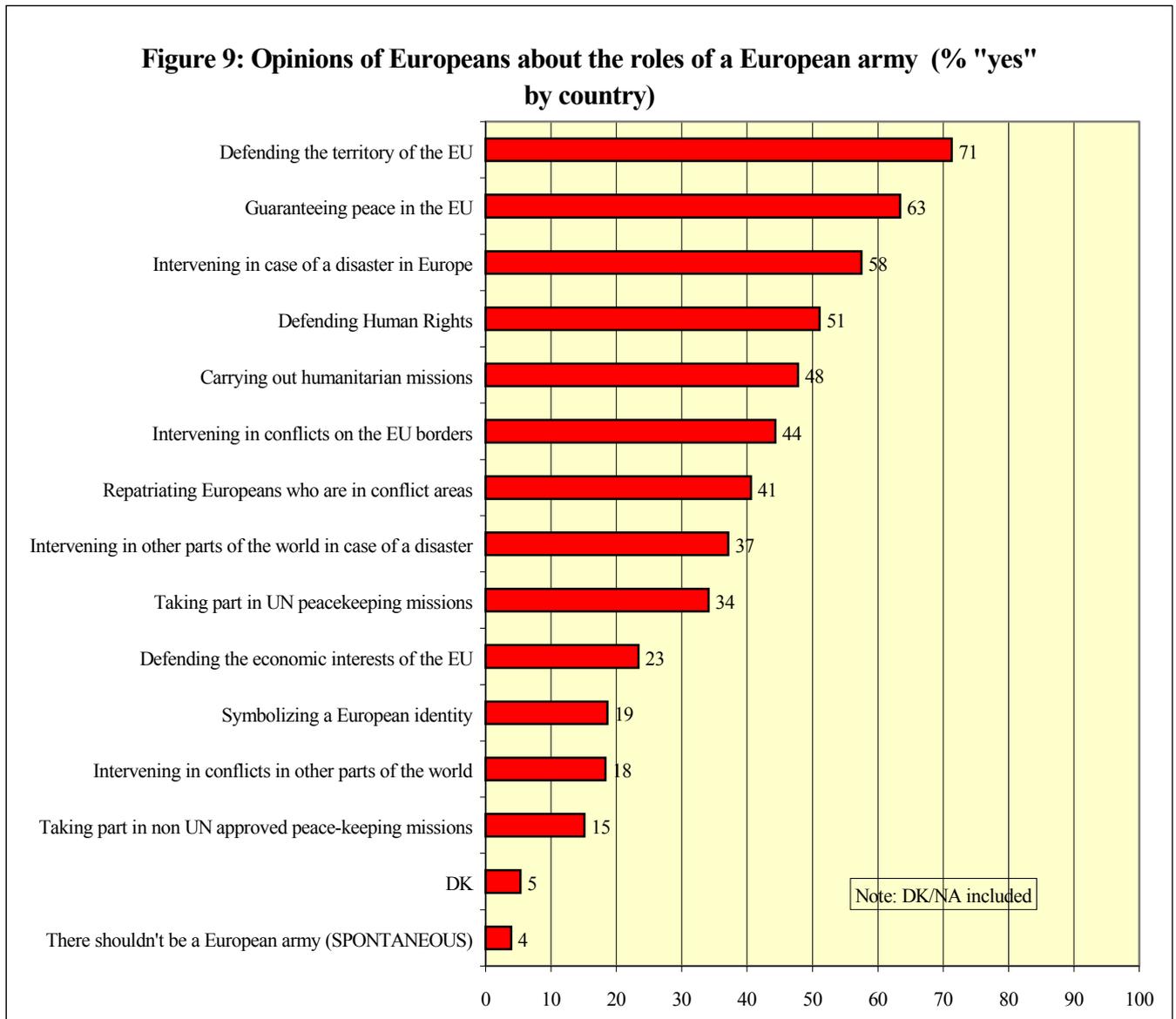
Among those most favorable to the establishment of a European army, in one form or another, we again find five of the Union's six founder countries. In fact, more than eight Belgians, Italians, and Dutch out of 10 (81 % in the three cases) and 80 % of French, as well as 79 % of Luxembourgers, would prefer to see such a solution effected.

Naturally, at the level of the EU as a whole, a clearly greater number of those who are rather pro-European in general and who are favorable to a Common European Security Policy in particular wish to see a European army set up, in one form or another. In fact, the percentages are 83 % among those who believe that being a member of the EU is a good thing for their country against 58 % among those who believe that it is a bad thing and 83 % among those who believe that the Union's member countries should have a common security and defense policy against 53 % among those who are opposed.

²² The question was: "Which of these would you prefer in the context of a common European security and defense policy?"

3.3.3 THE ROLES OF A EUROPEAN ARMY

We saw in Section 3.1.2 which roles the Europeans believe that armed forces in general (that is, national armies) should play. But what about a future European army's roles ? Are they the same or is there a kind of division of labor ? Hence, they were asked the question.²³



Over seven Europeans out of 10 (71 %) are of the opinion that a European army should be used to defend the EU's territory, including their own country (figure 9). In other words, the role which wins the greatest approval is an extension to the level of the Union of the armed forces'

²³ The question was: "The European Union has decided to institute a common security and defense policy. Among the following possible functions of a European army, for what, in your opinion, should it be used?"

traditional role - namely, the defense of the nation. It will be recalled that that was already the role most often cited by the respondents as regards the military's role in general (94 %).

In second position, cited by 63 %, comes "guaranteeing peace in the EU." Next comes assistance in the event of a natural, ecological, or nuclear catastrophe in Europe (58 %). This type of mission came second (91 %) as regards an army's role in general. Over five Europeans out of 10 (51 %) cite the defense of human rights among the functions which a European army should have.

The so-called Petersberg missions (humanitarian and evacuation missions, peacekeeping and restoring peace) are far from winning European citizens' enthusiastic support. In fact, they are all cited by less than one European in two. In other words, the EU governments still have a long way to go in order to convince their citizens of those new missions' importance for the Union, and thus to increase their legitimacy. Nevertheless, three of them win the approval of just over four Europeans out of 10. Those are, in decreasing order, humanitarian missions (48 %), interventions during conflicts on the Union's borders (44 %), and the repatriation of Europeans who find themselves in areas of conflict (41 %).

The respondents make quite a clear distinction (twice the percentage) between taking part in peacekeeping missions outside the Union, without needing UN agreement (for instance, Kosovo) (15 %), on the one hand, and those decided by the United Nations (blue helmets), on the other (34 %). Similarly, just a little less than two Europeans out of 10 (18 %) believe that it should be a European army's role to intervene during conflicts in regions of the world other than the EU.

In all the Union's countries except Ireland and the UK, we find the same two missions in the first two places, but sometimes in a different order - namely, defending the EU's territory and guaranteeing peace in the EU. In Ireland and in the UK, the second role cited is the defense of human rights, with approval rates of 59 % and 49 %, respectively. Nevertheless, it will be noted that, in those two countries, the difference in percentages with the third mission - namely, guaranteeing peace in the EU - is very slight (2%).

In the three Nordic countries, as well as in Greece, guaranteeing peace in the EU wins either the greatest approval rate or a figure almost equal to that for defending the Union's territory.

If we now look at the three so-called Petersberg missions most often cited as having to be one of a European army's roles - namely, carrying out humanitarian missions, intervening during conflicts on the EU's borders, and repatriating Europeans who find themselves in areas of conflict - we find quite considerable differences of opinion between countries. For instance, those missions' legitimacy is clearly greater in the six founder countries: In fact, the percentages of citings are systematically above the European average, except Germany, as regards interventions during conflicts on the Union's borders - a still highly sensitive subject in that country.

4 CONCLUSION

From this first survey on the topic of a common European security and defense policy ever conducted among representative samples of the EU's 15 countries as a whole it emerges that while the support which could be described as affective²⁴ for the idea of a European defense is quite considerable in most of the countries, that support is also rather vague and shallow. In fact, on the one hand, the number of European citizens who have no opinion on this matter - admittedly quite complex and remote from their everyday concerns - is often quite high. On the other hand, while the majority of Europeans are in favor of instituting a European defense, in one form or another - namely, a policy and an organization which would no longer be strictly national - they are, on the other hand, far from being favorable to a really integrated defense policy. In fact, only 7 % are of the opinion that the decision to send troops within the framework of a crisis outside the EU should be taken by a majority vote forcing each state to send troops, and only 12% want a single European army, which would replace the national armies.

Quite systematically, public opinion in the EC's six founder countries (and, even more particularly, the Belgians, the Italians, the Luxembourgers, and the French), except, perhaps, Germany on certain points, is most favorable to a common security and defense policy and to the idea of a European army. At the other end of the scale, we most often find the UK. Moreover, this pattern is far from being peculiar to this political area.²⁵

In other words, while we cannot really speak of a convergence of European public opinion as regards a common security and defense policy, that opinion is often, but not always, in close

²⁴ Handley (1975), following in that Easton (1965), defines affective support as a vague positive emotional orientation toward an institution. This type of support is linked to the idea of legitimacy and loyalty toward that institution. He contrasts it with utilitarian support, which involves a cost-benefit analysis on the basis of concrete interests.

²⁵ This is, for instance, also the case as regards support for the Euro. See standard Eurobarometer 54.1.

correlation with those of the respective governments. As regards the question of the direction in which the relationship goes - namely, is it public opinion which influences the national governments' positions or the other way round - this question can't be answered by this cross-sectional survey.

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