



Eurobarometer Qualitative Study

THE PROMISE OF THE EU

Aggregate report September 2014

This study has been requested by the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Communication.

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Eurobarometer Qualitative Study – TNS Qual+

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The Promise of the EU

Aggregate report

Conducted by TNS Qual+ at the request of
the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Communication

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COUNTRY ABBREVIATIONS

1. Denmark DK
2. Finland FI
3. Germany DE
4. Italy IT
5. Poland PL
6. Portugal PT

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objectives

- "The Promise of the EU" aims to develop a vision for the EU's future based on three questions:
 - How much unity do citizens want and what are the areas where more integration should take place?
 - What would make the EU more democratic and how can EU politicians be made more accountable for the decisions they make?
 - What is the right balance between responsibility and solidarity?
- The broad objectives of this study are to understand how people perceive the EU and what the European idea means to them, especially in the wake of the economic and financial crisis.
- The study was carried out by TNS Qual+, on behalf of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, between 30 June and 11 July 2014 in six EU Member States: Italy, Germany, Denmark, Portugal, Finland and Poland. These countries were chosen to represent different stages in the development of the EU and to ensure a broad geographical balance.

Methodology

- Fieldwork consisted of a series of focus groups with the general public, supplemented by in-depth interviews with experts on European affairs from the media, business and cultural sectors in the six Member States.
- Six focus groups, lasting approximately two hours in length, were conducted in each country. These focus groups were divided according to age (up to 35 years old, and over 35) as well as attitude towards the EU, with two "pro-EU", two "neutral" and two "Eurosceptic" groups per country. It should, however, be noted that such focus groups are never statistically representative.

Key findings

The Promise of the EU

- For pro-EU or neutral respondents, **being European is much more than a matter of geography**, although many Eurosceptics described it in purely geographical terms. The most frequently mentioned characteristics that people associated with being European were:
 - Tolerance
 - Peace
 - Diversity
 - Shared history
 - Freedom of movement and the removal of borders
 - Democracy
 - A single currency
 - Shared values
 - A higher standard of living
 - Respect for human rights

- Most **people identified with their nationality before feeling European**. However, younger respondents – who are more likely to study and travel abroad, and who have only ever known the EU and the euro – are generally seen as the ones who will consider themselves **European in the future**.
- When asked about the **story of Europe**, many respondents described it in terms of history, starting with Ancient Greece and its foundation of democracy, then the Roman Empire, followed by the World Wars. There has, however, been a **recent shift in this story**, from one of peace to one of economic turmoil.
- The **next chapter in the story of Europe** was seen in terms of a continent where nations seek a peaceful community and economic cooperation without having to give up too much of their identity, diversity or national interests.
- The story of Europe was perceived as being **written by the economically strongest European countries**, especially by respondents in Poland and Portugal. The view of many in these countries is that the economic imbalance could also mean that the future of the EU is not decided by all Member States.

Unity and Integration

- Respondents saw the following as **positive aspects of EU membership**:
 - Increased economic stability, growth and benefits
 - The free market
 - Freedom of travel
 - A common currency
 - The protective effect of being part of the EU
 - Being able to compete in a globalised economy
 - More integration and cultural exchanges, such as Erasmus
 - EU funding
- **Negative aspects of EU membership** were felt to include:
 - Too many regulations, with the EU being seen as inefficient and interfering with things that should be regulated at national level.
 - The inability to restrict imports from EU countries that produce low-quality goods, resulting in more products of poor quality coming into the country.
 - Concerns, especially among Eurosceptics, that open borders will lead to citizens of other EU countries coming and taking jobs, or taking advantage of high social benefits without ever having the intention to contribute to local society.
- Most respondents were of the opinion that the **benefits of the EU outweigh the negative aspects**.
- Many respondents identified **several areas where closer cooperation would be beneficial**, although Eurosceptics typically did not want more cooperation between Member States. The most commonly mentioned areas were:
 - Dealing with international refugees and immigrants
 - Economic cooperation
 - Strengthening common EU banking and financial supervision
 - A common labour market with EU mediation
- The concept of an **EU army** was received with mixed views.
- There was no enthusiasm for common **EU taxation** in any of the countries.

- There is a general **resistance to the EU continuing to expand** in the future. While "big" is seen to be better in terms of security, further enlargement is not regarded as desirable and will make it even harder to define a European identity, according to most respondents.

Responsibility and Solidarity

- In terms of the economic and financial crisis, **opinions varied as to whether being in the EU had helped in dealing with the crisis.**
- The idea of **solidarity also provoked a mixed response**, especially in relation to financial assistance and whether the EU should help Member States that are facing financial difficulties.
- Respondents in Portugal, Poland and Italy felt that countries facing such difficulties should be helped as a **matter of principle**, since solidarity between Member States is one of the EU's core values.
- In Denmark, some pro-EU and neutral respondents agreed with this, but most Danish and Finnish respondents felt that **their country should not be responsible for others** and should therefore not be obliged to help them.
- While similar sentiments were expressed in Germany, there were respondents who were in favour of providing financial assistance. However, they always felt that such **assistance should be conditional.**

The EU and Democracy

- Most of those who took part in the study had voted in the European elections. In the majority of the countries, they chose to vote because they believed that, **in a democracy, one should participate in elections.**
- **Most did not feel sufficiently informed about the elections**, the European Parliament or the different political parties. There was thus a general feeling that more information could have been made available.
- Respondents who did feel informed about the elections had found information on the **Internet** by themselves.
- Although most had not heard of either the **"Citizens' Dialogues"** or the **"European Citizens' Initiative"**, both concepts were well received by respondents in general.
- Other **suggestions for how the EU could interact with citizens** included:
 - Creating a platform where citizens could leave their opinions on different subjects
 - Organising initiatives like referendums
 - Taking part in online surveys/online voting

Role of the Media

- **Citizens get information about the EU from a wide variety of sources**, the most common being the media, the Internet and discussions with friends.
- There are doubts in most countries about the independence and objectivity of the media when reporting on the EU, and a general perception across most groups that **the media tends to portray the EU in a negative light.**
- There was no consensus as to whether there is a difference between how **public service broadcasters** and commercial broadcasters portray Europe.

- Respondents expressed a desire to see:
 - More EU stories touching on issues that have an impact on their day-to-day lives, such as education and unemployment
 - Information about how the EU is constructed and what it has achieved
 - How citizens can get involved in the EU
 - More stories that hold the EU accountable for what it is doing
- Information needs to be provided in a way that is **accessible and easy to understand**.

National summaries

Italy

- For many Italian respondents, the **EU is about thinking beyond national borders, about financial security through unity and about protecting human values**. Eurosceptics, on the other hand, were more likely to view the EU as a fragmented collection of disparate cultures, economies and languages. In general, European identity is regarded as something that is still being developed and, while it is not yet widely-felt, it will be automatic for the next generations. Italy was the only country where people were generally in favour of an **EU army**, mainly as a way of reducing national spending on defence, although a more cooperative approach to security was broadly welcomed in all countries.
- The opportunities brought about by free movement and trade were contrasted with the more negative aspects of what is seen as an inflexible monetary policy, which is not favourable for Italy and has had a direct impact on the quality of life there. In general, Italians wanted to see a **more flexible Europe in the future**, particularly with regard to monetary policy. However, none of them wanted to leave the Euro area – for the neutrals and the pro-Europeans because remaining in Europe will be an opportunity in the future, for the Eurosceptics because they say it is now impossible to leave.
- The **economic environment** across the EU was seen to be a key challenge for the future of Europe. Despite its origins as a means of strengthening economic ties, respondents felt that the different Member States of the EU are now drifting further apart economically and that these **inequalities are preventing the EU from reaching its potential** as a true union of equals.

Germany

- The **sense of being European was viewed most positively in Germany**, and while diversity was seen as a potential barrier between countries, it was also seen as a source of enrichment. Europe was associated with **high standards and quality of living, increased security and the values of democracy, peace and social welfare**.
- The **story of Europe was regarded as one of achievement**, and respondents expressed considerable **pride** in European history – one of scientific discovery and continuous development. Younger Germans were more in favour of increased integration, although generally there was support for closer collaboration on bank supervision and socio-economic issues. A united approach to dealing with refugees was also welcomed.

- However, the economic and financial crisis has exacerbated respondents' perceptions of differences between countries in the EU. Specific to Germany was **frustration with its perceived role bankrolling Member States that are facing financial difficulties**. As with Denmark and Finland, solidarity was seen as "helping people to help themselves" rather than purely as financial assistance. While respondents in Germany felt strongly connected with the EU, there was still a **desire for much more transparency and information** in order to strengthen the democratic nature of the Union.

Denmark

- Danish respondents were more likely to link being European with values such as **freedom and democracy**, while the EU is more likely to be associated with bureaucracy and a lack of transparency. **Few Danes said they felt European** or thought this was likely to change in the future.
- Although most voted in the European elections, **many respondents expressed dissatisfaction with democracy in the EU**, considering the European Parliament to have insufficient power compared with the Commission. At the same time, many felt that the debate during these European elections reflected a more constructive and less confrontational approach in Denmark than in previous elections, and that this signalled a more mature relationship between the country and the EU in the future.
- Most felt that being part of the EU had fostered economic stability in Denmark, but economic solidarity was viewed as problematic and revealed **clear divisions for Danish respondents between Northern and Southern Europe**. There was a feeling that financial assistance to struggling Member States has to be linked to responsible behaviour, and that **such assistance was not the solution to structural problems or reckless financial behaviour** in these Member States.

Portugal

- Portuguese respondents associated being European with shared values and the concrete benefits of free movement and being able to work and travel in other Member States. However, in Portugal more than elsewhere there was a sense that the **key barrier to feeling European is the huge disparity between Member States**, something which has been emphasised further by the economic and financial crisis.
- For almost all respondents, **Portugal is better off as part of the EU**. This is seen in terms of mobility and access to funding, which has driven significant improvements to infrastructure in transport, energy and sanitation. However, the **perceived inequality between Member States** in terms of both economic strength and influence within the EU is the main disadvantage for Portuguese respondents. There was a strong sense of solidarity in Portugal as a basic principle of the EU, and it was felt that **Member States in financial difficulties should be helped** without question. At the same time, there was a feeling that financial assistance should be carefully evaluated to fit a country's specific needs and ability to repay the debt.
- In view of the European election results, some respondents were concerned that the European Parliament will face **greater difficulties in being able to make decisions** in collaboration with the Member States. They attributed this to the increase in the number of MEPs from parties who proclaim themselves to be Eurosceptic.

Finland

- **National identity was strongly felt** among Finnish respondents, and people were quite sceptical that there would ever be a shared European identity in the future. However, there were some positive feelings towards the EU and being European, something which was seen in terms of unification and cooperation for many respondents. Freedom of movement and trade, and the common currency, were all seen as making life better and more convenient.
- There was **widespread criticism of the financial assistance given to the countries worst affected by the economic and financial crisis**. It was felt to be counter-productive, making the problem worse by failing to address the underlying causes. Respondents tended to feel that other forms of help – advice or investment – would be preferable. There were divided opinions on what the crisis meant for the future of the EU and whether, in the long run, it would have an effect on the overall story of Europe.
- While the general opinion was that there was enough cooperation between Member States on most issues, it was felt that **defence and security would benefit from more cooperation** (although there was no support for a common EU army). There was also some support for more cooperation at EU level in the areas of financial regulation and taxation.

Poland

- Polish respondents, while associating the feeling of being European with shared (largely Christian) values and other concepts of freedom, justice, democracy and tolerance, were more inclined to emphasise pragmatic aspects such as freedom of movement and access to the labour market and education in other Member States. The geographical element, being part of the European continent, was also more important for Polish respondents than in other countries. People in Poland were particularly positive about the **international credibility their country gains from EU membership** and were generally in favour of continued enlargement, despite having some reservations about the financial implications and potential increases in migration.
- **For younger Poles, being European is a mind-set**, an attitude that goes beyond national borders and is about a sense of community with other European citizens. Solidarity, and helping Member States that are facing difficulties, is also regarded as one of the cornerstones of being part of the EU. However, there is a feeling that Poland does not have an equal say in the EU, with the **story of Europe being written by the largest economies** – Germany, France and the UK.
- Respondents had an **ambivalent attitude towards EU funding**, reflecting the general feeling that Poland is moving from being a beneficiary to a contributor. While the benefits of funding were clear to people – with many aware of the tangible advantages it offers farmers, entrepreneurs and the country overall – the lack of transparency in its allocation was a source of controversy.

2. THE PROMISE OF THE EU

This chapter focuses on what it means to be European and perceptions of a European narrative, and on how this has changed in light of the economic and financial crisis.

2.1 Being European

Being European is about more than geography for most respondents and encompasses peace, tolerance, values, diversity, freedom, history and cooperation.

For neutral and pro-EU respondents, being European is more than just a matter of geography. In Italy, for example, it is seen in terms of countries working together as part of a **common plan**, with the goal of creating a single supra-national state through a common currency and shared monetary and social policies. For such citizens, it promotes not only economic development but also respect for, and protection of, inviolable **human rights**.

"It is like being part of a federation of states that have rules in common and which share something."

(Italy, up to 35, neutral)

"The fact that we are European is a historical consequence. We share a common story and we have evolved towards values and moral principles that have to be protected."

(Italy, 35+, pro-EU)

Other respondents see it in terms of **peace**.

"Peaceful. No war, nothing. You can be really glad about that."

(Germany, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

Neutral and pro-EU respondents in Italy, Denmark, Finland and Poland associate being European with **freedom of movement** and the removal of internal borders.

"Having no frontiers both mentally and work-wise, removal of border controls, free circulation."

(Italy, up to 35, pro-EU)

"For us, born like myself in at least 1955, the concept of being European is very important and it does matter. I can remember the times when we could not travel anywhere."

(Poland, 35+, neutral)

Italian respondents believe that the single currency and open borders have helped to **make Europe more "present" and "evident"** in the eyes of the public, supporting the development of a process of greater integration.

"Nowadays, Europe is a continuous subject of people's conversation. It is a topic that forms part of our life."

(Italy, up to 35, pro-EU)

Having a **single currency** is also seen as an important part of being European in most of the countries covered by the study.

In Denmark, Finland, Germany, Poland and Portugal, respondents associate being European with **shared values, sophistication, civilisation and higher standards**. In Denmark, Finland and Germany, being European is also associated with **wealth** and a good quality of life.

"To me, [being European] means Western values and civilisation, wealth, respect for freedom and the rights of the individual."

(Finland, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

"The privileged position we have in the world. You live here securely, no war, a high standard of living."

(Germany, 35+, pro-EU)

In Poland, the shared values are linked with **religion**, specifically Christianity. In Denmark, too, respondents see Christianity as part of being European.

Diversity is also considered an essential aspect of European identity. What unites us in Europe is our very difference from each other, in languages, cultures, mentalities and so on.

"In Europe there are so many different cultures and attitudes. A Dane is different to an Italian – the southern mentality is different – and it should stay like that."

(Germany, 35+, Eurosceptic)

In Italy, Denmark, Finland and Poland, being European is about **shared history**.

"Countries lived through periods such as the medieval times and the Renaissance. We all have the same experience throughout history."

(Poland, 35+, Eurosceptic)

European identity is still secondary to national identity, but is seen by many respondents as something which will characterise future generations.

The concept of being European (as opposed to being more defined by nationality) is widely seen to be in its early development stage by respondents in all the countries. This is true especially for neutral and pro-EU respondents in Italy and Portugal, where the discussion often came to the consensus that the **sense of being European will develop into something in the future**, although we are not fully European yet. However, Polish respondents do not believe that it will ever replace the national identity.

"I believe that it does not exist yet. Europe is being built in small stages. It will take time, centuries maybe."

(Italy, up to 35, pro-EU)

"We perhaps won't get there, but our children will. For them, it will be natural because they will have been born and raised with the Euro."

(Italy, 35+, neutral)

For the younger Italian, Polish and Portuguese respondents, the concept of being European is more **within their reach** than for older generations.

"For the new generations it will be different, it will be easier, they will study abroad and it will be normal to do so, in the same way that they will also travel around Europe without any problems."

(Italy, up to 35, pro-EU)

"I already feel that way. First of all I feel Portuguese, second of all European, and third of all I feel a world citizen. Because free movement is always increasing and we have access to the Internet. We're constantly communicating with other parts of the world."

(Portugal, up to 35, pro-EU)

In Denmark, the pro-EU and neutral respondents perceive **Europe as a "club"** that Denmark is part of and that has become more exclusive and judgemental over time. This has especially been the case during the economic and financial crisis, with many feeling that a mentality of "charity begins at home" has developed. However, Eurosceptic respondents in Denmark do not view Europe as an exclusive club, but as a **collection of countries that have only a few common denominators**.

For some Italian and Polish Eurosceptics, being European is seen as something that was **imposed upon them**. In Denmark and Italy, it is regarded as utopian by this group, and they struggle to see the common roots. In Italy, they also feel that it goes against tradition and their history.

"It is a choice that was made by our country's leaders, not by us. It is something that they want to inculcate in us."

(Italy, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

In Italy, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Poland and Portugal, many Eurosceptics believe that EU Member States are **too different to be unified** or that this diversity weakens the idea of identifying as European. In Finland, neutral respondents also agree with this point of view. However, there is a positive note in that this **diversity is regarded as a good thing for development**.

"At first, feeling you were European was great as an idea, but then, as frequently happens, we were left on our own."

(Italy, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

"There are more things that make us different than unify us. It's not a union, it sticks out in different directions when it comes to language and culture. Talking about Europe as one big mass really does not make any sense, but why would it? It is the diversity that has been the cradle for the many important, great changes in science and culture throughout the ages."

(Denmark, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

"It's hard to talk about differences when you treat Europe as one, because it is very diverse in fact. The same can be said about Asia: Japan is different to China, Mongolia, Kazakhstan or Tajikistan. The USA is more uniform. We can't talk about European features, because Polish people are different."

(Poland, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

In addition, some respondents were uncomfortable with the **unfair division of power** among the EU Member States, specifically with Germany, which is seen as having too much power relative to other countries.

"There are too many differences between the states, and Germany seems to acquire more and more power."

(Italy, 35+, neutral)

European identity is not something that respondents tend to feel in their everyday life, but it becomes more tangible when meeting people from, or travelling to, other continents.

For respondents in all of the six countries, being and feeling European takes on **greater significance when travelling or meeting people from outside Europe.**

"If I meet a Spanish person I say that I am Italian, but if I meet an American I say that I am European."

(Italy, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

The unity of a single currency and the open internal borders is how many respondents would describe being European to someone from outside Europe. In addition, for respondents from Italy, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Poland, being European and what distinguishes it from other parts of the world are issues related to **human rights** (e.g. the death penalty), and it is these values which lie at the heart of the principles and values of the EU and helps to create a **positive image of being European**, in comparison with the USA and Asian countries.

In Denmark, Finland and Germany, respondents feel that being European is closely related with the principles of **democracy**, especially when compared to countries outside Europe. The comparison also highlights that fact that being European means access to **social security and health insurance**.

However, almost all identify with their **nationality first** before being European.

"My identity is more Finnish than European, even if we are in Europe. Cultural differences are quite big, even if we are close."

(Finland, 35+, pro-EU)

"Polish first of all, and then European."

(Poland, 35+, neutral)

The issue of being European is further complicated by the fact that many respondents described a **divided, fragmented Europe** with divisions between individual Member States and broader regional areas.

In Denmark and Finland, respondents feel closer affiliation and greater sharing of values with Northern Europe. They talked about a **multiple level of European identification**. For Danish and Finnish Eurosceptics, identifying themselves as Scandinavian/Nordic comes before being European. The European identity does emerge, but only in the context of meeting people from outside Europe.

"You answer that you're a Dane, and only if you're asked where that is do you reply Scandinavia and then Europe."

(Denmark, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

2.2 Europe and the EU

The EU tends to be seen in more political terms than Europe, with some negative associations (e.g. bureaucracy) and limited knowledge of the EU institutions and how they work.

"Europe" is not only defined geographically by respondents, but also in terms of culture, diversity, freedom, democracy and values.

"Not all countries in Europe are in the EU, but all EU countries are in Europe."

(Germany, up to 35, pro-EU)

"Europe has a lot of diversity and the EU has the goal to make everything more aligned. Europe has so many different cultures, but the EU wants to align them more."

(Denmark, up to 35, pro-EU)

The **"EU"**, on the other hand, is often associated with **legislation and bureaucracy** by respondents in all six countries, although there is a wide range in the level of understanding of what the EU represents. In Denmark, Germany and Poland, and for neutral and pro-EU respondents in Italy, it is seen as a **political union** first and foremost. In Italy, Finland, Germany and Poland, it is largely associated with the **economy and economic regulation**.

"Europe is a group of states, whereas the EU is founded on cooperation, monetary union, free trade."

(Italy, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

"Europe is on the map, and the EU is about the economy. And, as human beings, we are on the map."

(Germany, 35+, Eurosceptic)

"Europe is culture and the EU is governance."

(Finland, up to 35, pro-EU)

In Denmark, Portugal and Poland, respondents highlighted the fact that, whereas Europe is geographical, the EU is a **choice made by the citizens** or "us".

"The European Union is an artificial body, isn't it? Europe existed before – Europe as a continent. And particular countries existed before and will continue to exist."

(Poland, 35+, pro-EU)

In Italy and Germany, respondents often described the EU as an organisation that had come together with a common, shared purpose, an **organisation seeking consensus**.

"Europe as such is a continent, whereas the EU is a group of states that stay together because they have a common project and common bases."

(Italy, up to 35, neutral)

In Denmark, there was varied **knowledge and understanding of the EU institutions**. In Germany, many respondents were able to name the institutions but could seldom describe the functions or interdependences of individual institutions. In Finland, Poland, Portugal and Italy, some respondents could name the institutions, typically the European Commission, European Parliament and European Council. However, there was very little knowledge of what these institutions do.

"I think I know how the EU is built up, but it's difficult to find out what the EU regulates and what is controlled here."

(Denmark, up to 35, neutral)

"Really tough, there is so much. Once I had a folder about it – there were six pages. You cannot understand that."

(Germany, up to 35, pro-EU)

"There's a lot I don't know about how the European Union works, and I'd like to know more about it. Which bodies are there, how they work, what's the difference between the European Council, the European Commission, the Parliament, what each one of them does..."

(Portugal, up to 35, pro-EU)

The more that people know about the EU, the closer to it they tend to feel.

Although some respondents feel connected to the EU through their passport, the Euro and certain benefits, in general there is a clear **link between the level of knowledge people have of the EU and how connected they feel**.

"It says EU on my passport, and we have a common currency."

(Finland, 35+, neutral)

Many respondents do not feel connected with the EU because they have **no knowledge about its impact on their own life**, there is never any "good news" or positive representation of the EU in the media, and there is no human dimension.

"It looks quite distant from daily life. We can't see it in everyday life."

(Poland, up to 35, pro-EU)

"I don't even feel connected to politics and to Portugal in terms of its state bodies. I don't feel in the least represented by the politicians with a seat in the Parliament. So, speaking very generally, I don't feel in the least connected to my country's governing bodies and even less to Europe's governing bodies."

(Portugal, 35+, neutral)

In Denmark, Finland and Germany, the **European elections** made some of the respondents feel more connected with the EU, especially among pro-EU and neutral citizens. The increased media coverage of the EU, a desire to find out more because of the elections and an interest in specific candidates increased the feeling of being connected to the EU.

"I was really interested in the elections. They included people."

(Germany, 35+, neutral)

In Poland and Portugal, the elections did not make respondents feel more connected with the EU, and in Poland few respondents voted. **Weak involvement** stemmed, first of all, from little faith in the power of the individual vote and low awareness of the mechanisms of the institutions. In Portugal, elections failed to make respondents feel more connected as they thought the elections revolved around Portuguese political issues rather than around European issues.

"Elections – just one day doesn't change anything."

(Poland, up to 35, neutral)

In Denmark, there was a desire to be or feel more connected with the EU. All respondents in Denmark agreed that it would be good to **hear more about the EU in the media** in everyday life, not just in the run-up to the elections.

"Most people believe that it's them down there in Brussels that make the decisions and it doesn't concern us. If it had more influence on your everyday life, you would feel more strongly about it."

(Denmark, 35+, neutral)

In other countries, there was also a desire to feel more connected to the EU. The majority of respondents agreed that providing more information on issues such as what is on the **current agenda** and what is happening in the EU would make them feel more connected. In Germany, it was suggested that **schools** don't teach enough about the EU. This would increase their knowledge of the EU, thereby increasing their feeling of connection with it.

"Perhaps if we were better informed about the topic of their discussions and about the decisions they make for us."

(Poland, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

"I had two years of political education at school. But that was mainly about Germany, nothing about Europe."

(Germany, up to 35, neutral)

2.3 The "story" of Europe

For many respondents, the story of Europe dates back to Ancient Greece and the foundation of democracy. The modern EU story is seen to be rooted in the World Wars and the desire for peace.

In describing the story of Europe, respondents often mixed the concepts of Europe and the EU. In the majority of countries, respondents continued to define Europe simply in **geographical terms**, especially the Eurosceptics. Others defined it more in terms of culture.

For respondents in Italy, Denmark, Finland and Germany, the story of Europe starts with Ancient Greece and its foundation of **democracy**, then the Roman Empire. However, from the fall of the Roman Empire up to the second post-war period, the history of Europe is seen to be one of **conflicts** and wars that – for religious reasons or expansionist ambitions – tended to exacerbate the differences between Europeans rather than underlining what brings them together.

"Greece was the cradle of civilisation. It started first, although I would say that the Roman Empire also represents a fundamental root of Europe."

(Italy, 35+, neutral)

"The legal system of the Romans influences us even today."

(Germany, up to 35, neutral)

The second post-war period is seen as the **turning-point** in the history of Europe. Out of the ruins of a destroyed world, a desire for unity and cooperation developed primarily for economic purposes, setting in motion a process of unification that, with the single currency, became concrete and tangible for citizens.

"Europe came from tremendous wars and then five or six countries allied themselves. This gave rise to evolutionary processes that supported Europe on this path of unification."

(Italy, 35+, pro-EU)

"At the start of the post-war period there was a total need to get back to the concept of human dignity. The first thing was to be born again with this principle very clear in people's minds."

(Italy, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

The economic and financial crisis is perceived to have overwhelmed the European narrative and re-created divisions between different Member States, although peace, culture and diversity are still seen as key features in the story of Europe.

In more recent times, the story of Europe has focused on the economic and financial crisis. This, for many respondents, has resulted in one of the most negative chapters in the story of Europe. According to some German respondents, the crisis has meant that people have again begun to see a **separation** between different parts of Europe.

"You are afraid. You have seen that it is fragile. Again, it is between poor and rich. You see that one weaker country pulls the others down, too."

(Germany, up to 35, neutral)

"I believe that after the economic crisis the unity of Europe weakened, because each country wanted to improve its own situation, take care of its own citizens. It has always been like that."

(Poland, up to 35, neutral)

The current chapter in the story of Europe is seen in terms of a common economic area and a continent where nations seek a **peaceful community without having to give up too much of their identity** and national interests. It is defined by its culture and diversity. The idea of diversity is in unity and peace, which can also be experienced through travelling without borders.

"You can live peacefully in a state-like community and you can preserve national interests."

(Germany, up to 35, neutral)

"You can travel to all countries, and you are still in the EU. Spain or Austria – and still EU."

(Germany, up to 35, pro-EU)

Eurosceptics in Denmark, on the other hand, reject the notion of Europe as a unified entity and see it more as a collection of **very different countries and histories** – therefore, they also reject the notion of a common story of Europe.

The story of Europe is linked with power and authority, with some respondents feeling that it is "written" by the economically strongest Member States.

Respondents in Denmark and Finland feel that, in earlier times, the story of Europe was written by those who had the power of authority, such as kings and the church. Today, according to respondents in most countries, the story of Europe is perceived to be **written by large companies and heads of state**, politicians as well as the EU. EU citizens are seen by most respondents as having less of a role in writing the story of Europe.

"Europe has been controlled by a few countries, and old and strong monarchies have ruled here. Europe has been made more united to make us bigger."

(Finland, 35+, Eurosceptic)

"Citizens have some role in the story, but they are not the main authors, especially when making big decisions. Of course, at the grassroots level it is the people who make decisions."

(Finland, up to 35, neutral)

Among Polish and Portuguese respondents, the story of Europe is seen to be written by the **economically strongest European countries**: Germany, France and the UK. They are more likely to believe that the story of Europe should be written by EU citizens than respondents in other countries. However, Polish respondents in particular feel that they have less impact on writing Europe's story. They believe that Poland as a country is economically weaker and therefore doesn't have a voice that would be strong enough to shape Europe's future.

"There is still a clear division between the old EU – the countries that formed the European Union at the beginning – and the ones that joined later, including Poland. Germany clearly prevails – they have the biggest number of seats in the European Parliament. Even in situations like the one we are witnessing now – the conflict in Ukraine – you can see clearly who has the leading voice. We count for nothing there."

(Poland, 35+, pro-EU)

"The story of Europe is also the story of our country, and if the country is in the state it is in, that's because we are also part of it and are playing a role in it every day. But some people play a more prominent and decisive role."

(Portugal, 35+, pro-EU)

2.4 The EU's role in the world

Respondents generally feel safer within Europe and also that their country has more of a role to play on the global stage as a member of the EU.

Proximity to **Ukraine** affects the extent to which respondents feel safe and protected by membership of the EU. For example, in Denmark and Portugal the events in Ukraine were seen as being far away and unrelated to everyday life, whereas it was a topic very much on the minds of Polish respondents.

Most Danish respondents agree that Denmark's geographical location promotes a feeling of safety, because Denmark is situated in a very politically stable region of the world. However, they are divided on whether being part of the EU makes them feel safe. The pro-EU and neutral respondents consider the fact that there has been a prolonged peace in the EU Member States to be proof that the **EU promotes safety**.

"There is a lot of security in Europe. Outside of Europe you always feel a little unsafe, especially because the way home is longer. In Europe, you know the countries and you feel safer."

(Denmark, 35+, pro-EU)

Danish Eurosceptic respondents are more ambivalent. On the one hand, respondents feel no safer with Denmark as a member of the EU than they would otherwise. Eurosceptics also point out that **criminals can move more easily across borders** within the EU, which could make Danes feel less safe.

"The EU can be too open as well. Now it's easier for criminals, because they can transport their loot quicker."

(Denmark, 35+, Eurosceptic)

German respondents feel safer as part of Europe. They are hopeful that, in the event of aggression, **other members would help**, and that being in the EU increases the risk for the aggressor in military and economic terms.

"You are not alone. In a union, others are behind you, as one big group."

(Germany, 35+, pro-EU)

People in Finland were undecided, with some saying that being part of Europe does make them feel safe and others that it has **no effect**.

"It's safer to be part of a larger group."

(Finland, up to 35, neutral)

Finnish Eurosceptics said that being part of Europe makes them feel less secure. They also expressed the view that it is very different for Finland, having a **border with Russia**, than for a Western European country.

"That is the Finnish problem. Russia is an important trade partner, but Finland has to participate in the sanctions. We don't know what to do. Finland hasn't made clear choices."

(Finland, 35+, Eurosceptic)

Italian respondents had a lack of understanding for Ukraine's relationship with Europe, and the ongoing situation there had little impact on their perception of feeling safe or not within the EU. The **lack of an EU army** to deal with the situation had more influence on people's views, with the Italian Eurosceptics seeing this as emblematic of the degree to which the EU exists only as an abstract concept rather than having a more tangible effect on people's lives.

"Europe is not a state, we do not have a military force deployed there. It exists only on paper."

(Italy, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

Italian and Polish respondents were concerned by the **lack of a united, authoritative response** to the Ukraine situation. In Italy, this neither made citizens feel more secure nor strengthened their sense of European identity.

"I feel less safe because of this race to arm up. It is as though each state can resort to armaments when it wants and the others don't do anything."

(Italy, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

For pro-EU citizens in Poland, EU membership does make them feel safer, although Eurosceptic Polish respondents see the EU as an **economic rather than military union**, whereas NATO plays the role of a military alliance and security is assured by belonging to this particular organisation rather than the EU.

"It increases [security] for sure. We're in the middle of something and we are protected."

(Poland, 35+, pro-EU)

Most respondents felt that the larger EU is beneficial to their country and that "bigger is better" because they perceived there to be increased wealth and economic stability. The German and Polish respondents agreed that their **international position has been strengthened by EU membership**.

"They started taking our voice into account. If we were alone, who would listen to us? Nobody listened to us [in the past]."

(Poland, up to 35, neutral)

Pro-EU and neutral respondents in Denmark believe that their country has a **greater influence in the world as part of the EU**, as well as greater wealth and security due to the Internal Market.

"The EU as a whole has more power than Denmark would have, so it's beneficial for us. Denmark is economically more important as a part of the EU than if we negotiated by ourselves."

(Denmark, 35+, neutral)

Even some Eurosceptic respondents in Denmark feel that their country has a stronger role in the world, since the EU is politically strong in terms of numbers. However, other Danish Eurosceptics feel that Denmark's role in the world would be stronger outside of the EU, since Denmark would enjoy **greater autonomy**. Eurosceptics across all countries are inclined to feel **less secure as part of the EU**, compared to pro-EU and neutral respondents.

"Our location also has an impact on it. We may feel safer in the European Union, but our location makes us feel equally safer. We were not harmed by the Second World War."

(Portugal, 35+, Eurosceptic)

Further enlargement is generally not supported, with many respondents worrying about the potential economic consequences. A European identity would also become even more difficult to achieve in the view of some respondents.

Opinion was divided as to whether the EU should grow larger. There was strong agreement among respondents in Denmark and Finland that the EU should not grow any more – so, while "big" is better, **getting even bigger is no longer desirable**. In Germany, respondents were not against enlargement, but were still cautious about the topic of EU expansion.

The reasons people voiced against adding new Member States included:

- The fact that the EU is already composed of **very different countries**, making it hard to define a European identity.

"It's problematic when the EU becomes bigger, because the common denominator changes and is influenced by the new member countries. It all develops, but only at a slow pace because there are so many that have to agree on things."

(Denmark, up to 35, pro-EU)

"If the community consists of too many different cultures, there are more difficulties in finding common practices and values."

(Finland, 35+, neutral)

- Concerns that some candidate countries for EU membership are even **further from what is perceived to be a "Western European mentality"**, including the role of religion in society.
- The belief among Eurosceptics in Denmark that giving EU membership to new countries **costs too much money**.

"I am strongly against the entire idea, but if I may be so cynical, then why not? Then it may all collapse a little bit sooner and we can get out of this mess."

(Denmark, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

In Poland, pro-EU citizens were positive about EU enlargement through the accession of new Member States, as were most of the Portuguese respondents. There was a belief that a larger European community would prove **stronger against future global challenges**, both economically and politically.

"I think that it should be enlarged. First it should become totally independent of Russia and then think about expanding the borders."

(Poland, up to 35, pro-EU)

The older Eurosceptics in Portugal were concerned that the entry into the EU of new countries in a worse condition than Portugal would mean that Portugal would **no longer receive funding from the EU**, with negative consequences for its recovery and development.

2.5 Experts' perceptions of European identity

The experts did not generally differ from the general public in how they interpreted European identity. However, there were some differences.

The key themes that they raised were:

- Europe means **an enriching diversity** on various levels (DE, FI, PT)
- Europe has made it easier for Europeans to conduct **trade, travel, work and study** (DK, DE)
- Feeling European will be **easier for the next generation** (the Erasmus generation) (DK, FI, IT, PL, PT)
- The Italian cultural expert felt that the **"European" generation** would eventually evolve towards a **"global" generation**

"The young generations already feel more European, because there has been a loosening of the national borders. Thanks to social networks, they can communicate with people who are geographically distant from them, but above all the "larger scale" knowledge of the world helps people to realise the cultural and ideological differences of the continent that they belong to."

(Italy, cultural expert)

- European **peace is an important accomplishment**, although experts emphasised it less prominently than the public (DE)
- For the cultural and media experts in Italy, the expression of **being European is about geographical belonging**

"Being European means belonging to a cultural and geographical space where integration is an on-going and growing process, in the sense that "sharing" concerns many aspects, from politics to social and human values."

(Italy, cultural expert)

"It means identifying with a territory in which, aside from the individual national identities, there is a very strong common root, not only historical, but one that has in recent times been developing on the political and ideological level."

(Italy, media expert)

- Sharing **political goals** (IT)
- Sharing **economic goals** (IT)

- A common **currency** (PL)
- Shared **values** (FI, PT)
- **Democracy** (DK)
- Frequently, there is **no stringent, consistent policy**, for example on the issue of expansion
- The politicians sent from the Member States to the EU are often perceived as being less strong-willed or as being **thwarted institutionally by national interests**

In addition, the Polish business expert saw the European identity as one in which countries work together in **research, industry and knowledge** so that, together, they are better equipped to compete with other markets or countries.

For the Italian experts, the European identity is still **under construction**.

"In concrete terms today, the European identity includes a single currency, a flag and a sense of belonging that is a "work in progress", but in fact each individual nation retains its independence and autonomy. So, there is still a long way to go before the individual national identities are "crossed over"."

(Italy, business expert)

The Finnish experts believed that national identity does not compete with European identity and that they can co-exist. This was supported by the view of one of the German experts, where despite all the critical attitudes toward Europe, one also finds a **"composite identity"**.

"I am a German or a Rhinelander, but I am always also a European."

(Germany, media expert)

In Poland, the experts felt that the concept of being a European is perceived through **belonging to the European Union**. It is not superficial, as the Polish respondents believed.

The Danish experts tended to agree with the general public, in that they saw themselves as **Danish first, European second**.

A critical opinion of today's EU was apparent, most notably based on the increased economic imbalance and **lack of solidarity**. Generally, it was felt that joint progress is lacking, a view held by the Italian, Polish and German experts.

"Europe has always meant this: "To experience borders and to go beyond them". We should remember that."

(Germany, business expert)

Experts in Portugal considered there to be a **lack of involvement** on Portugal's behalf. One of the causes of this is Portugal's location on the periphery of Europe, which means that it does not have the same ease of contact with other European countries.

"In theory, everybody knows that we are part of a United Europe, with a single currency and a few common laws too. In practice, I think we still need more engagement. I feel that the countries that are in the vicinity of Belgium, in the vicinity of Brussels – like Germany and the Netherlands – have a stronger feeling about Europe than the peripheral countries like Portugal."

(Portugal, business expert)

Experts in Finland felt that the **story of Europe is significant in the world**. The EU was seen as a part of this story that stretches from antiquity to the present day. The experts' views on democracy, economy, values, culture and their part in the story were similar to those expressed in the Finnish focus groups.

The experts differed from the respondents when discussing who writes the story of Europe, with the experts believing that the average citizens play a much larger role. In Poland, the experts agreed with the majority of respondents: **European history is written primarily by the most economically developed countries**. The role of the EU institutions in writing this history was also mentioned.

3. THE CURRENT SITUATION

This chapter looks at respondents' **perceptions** of the advantages and disadvantages of being in the European Union. It also explores the level of cooperation between Member States, and whether citizens think more or less integration is preferable. Finally, it looks at whether there are differences in how people view Europe and the EU, and the level of engagement between citizens and the European project.

3.1 Benefits of EU membership

When asked what the positive aspects of being part of the EU are, the majority of respondents across all countries were able to cite many examples. The main benefits mentioned by respondents are summarised in the table below:

Benefits of membership	Predominantly mentioned in...	Examples of comments
Increased economic stability, growth and benefits Free market	DK, DE, FI, IT, PL, PT	"90% of German exports go to European countries." (Germany, 35+, pro-EU) "You see it when you look at Airbus – this is a European baby. Germany alone would not have had a chance." (Germany, 35+, pro-EU)
Freedom of travel	DE, FI, IT, PL, PT	"It is positive that I can travel far. Open borders...no need to exchange money anymore." (Germany, 35+, neutral) "The standardisation of degrees and higher education programmes." (Portugal, 35+, Eurosceptic)
Higher standards of living	DK, DE, PL, PT	"If we had not joined Europe, we would probably be as miserable as before. We would have remained uneducated and shut in our world, without opening our minds to new technology and to all the breakthroughs that are happening now. That's a consequence of the union and cooperation between everybody." (Portugal, up to 35, neutral)
A common currency	DE, FI, IT	"Now we can travel around without having to keep changing money all the time." (Italy, 35+, neutral)

The protective effect of being part of the EU, economically and militarily	DE, PL, PT	<p>"We don't have to be afraid that we'll be attacked and that we won't be able to protect ourselves." (Poland, up to 35, Eurosceptic)</p> <p>"It is also good for us that Europe acts as one union towards Brazil, the USA, China." (Germany, 35+, pro-EU)</p>
More integration and cultural exchanges	DE, IT	<p>"At our university we have many foreign students. And when we have research projects it is really fun. You are not so strictly German. You do not always plan everything exactly, but are sometimes more spontaneous. It relaxes the atmosphere." (Germany, up to 35, pro-EU)</p> <p>"Europe is positive, above all, for the young people who have more opportunities to study abroad and therefore more opportunities to find a job." (Italy, 35+, Eurosceptic)</p> <p>"Many Scandinavian influences have come here. The General Act on Equal Treatment – that is positive." (Germany, 35+, pro-EU)</p>
EU funding	IT, PL	<p>"There are projects that every country can take part in. You can win money to open a business." (Italy, up to 35, neutral)</p> <p>"A lot of towns and villages have got waste water systems thanks to the EU." (Poland, 35+, pro-EU)</p>
Consumer protection and protection of EU Member States' wine and food heritage	IT	<p>"In the food sector there are stricter controls which have been put in place to protect our heritage, the products that the world acknowledges as our specialities." (Italy, 35+, pro-EU)</p>
Access to financial assistance	PT	

3.2 Disadvantages of EU membership

Respondents also mentioned a number of what they regard to be negative aspects of EU membership. Some of the key themes included:

Disadvantages of membership	Predominantly mentioned in...	Examples of comments
The EU has too many regulations . This is not only perceived as being inefficient, but also the EU is seen to be interfering with things that should be regulated at national level.	DK, IT, PL	"Recently, because 1% of people are allergic to something, they are going to withdraw some liquids that have been produced for 150 or 200 years. Because of the 1%. That really drives you mad." (Poland, 35+, Eurosceptic)
The effect of regulations on food . In Denmark in particular, citizens attach national pride to certain foods, which are seen as an expression of their culture. Perceived attempts to "tamper" with culturally distinct culinary traditions have led to an outcry there.	DK, DE, IT, PL	"It depends on what cooperation we're talking about. There are rules that affect things that should be regulated locally, such as cinnamon rolls and liquorice pipes. We can easily regulate that nationally." (Denmark, up to 35, neutral) "Now they are even telling us how we should make spaghetti or mozzarella. Do you know how many cheese producers have had to give up their traditions in order to comply with their rules?" (Italy, up to 35, Eurosceptic)
There are concerns, especially among Eurosceptics, that open borders will lead to citizens of other EU countries coming and taking jobs, or taking advantage of high social benefits without ever having the intention to contribute to local society.	DK, DE, FI	"The entire standard in Denmark will be decreased, and a lot of strain will be put on the Danish tax system, because now there are so many people here that draw benefits but don't contribute. The problem is that other countries just don't have the same standards." (Denmark, up to 35, Eurosceptic) "Coming here and saying: "I can get this and that social benefit here". This is not okay for me." (Germany, up to 35, pro-EU)
Close cooperation between Member States may lead to a lower standard of living . In Denmark, many respondents feel the EU sets low standards when issuing regulations, thereby lowering Danish standards.	DK, FI	

The inability to restrict the import of goods from EU countries that produce low-quality goods , resulting in more products of poor quality coming into the country.	DK, IT	
Overly rigorous monetary policy. This was felt particularly strongly by Italian respondents.	IT	<p><i>"The single currency could have been a commendable thing. It was a commendable idea, but then everything changed for the worse."</i> (Italy, up to 35, Eurosceptic)</p> <p><i>"Economic policy is dictated, imposed, and the states are obliged to comply with it. If things carry on like this, there will be no more growth. We are being held back by this rigid line of thinking."</i> (Italy, up to 35, neutral)</p>
Financial assistance for countries facing difficulties.	PL	<p><i>"When it comes to Greece, it's not clear if that help was really helpful."</i> (Poland, up to 35, Eurosceptic)</p>

3.3 Unity and integration

German respondents were most likely to feel well-represented within the EU. However, the European elections increased the feeling of being represented in other countries as well.

German respondents mostly believed that their own country is well-represented in the EU, apart from some older Eurosceptics. Some felt that Germany already exerts an **over-proportional influence**. Those who disagreed put the poor representation down to the quality of German EU politicians.

*"I have the impression we are suppressing the others."
(Germany, up to 35, neutral)*

In Italy, the general perception was that the country had not been well-represented in Europe up until the last European elections. This again was down to the perceived **quality of politicians**, which was seen to have created a poor image of Italy with the rest of the EU. Respondents also felt that the presence of politically stronger and more influential states (such as Germany and France) eroded even further the already small degree of power that Italy held.

*"I am very negative with regard to the past. We have had people who came from the world of show business, from TV, people alien to our problems, or political discards."
(Italy, up to 35, pro-EU)*

However, for some pro-EU respondents, the recent elections represented an important watershed, and **expectations for the future** are high.

*"Today, [Italy] is well-represented, but it has to gain weight. It is now up to the new people to accredit us in the eyes of Europe."
(Italy, 35+, pro-EU)*

Finnish respondents were somewhat divided on the issue of how well Finland is being represented in the EU. Some felt that they have good representation in relation to their relatively small population, but thought it was still hard to have any influence. Others felt that the country needed to have more representatives, since they believed Finland to have been **giving an excessive amount of money** to the EU.

There was a mixed appetite for increased integration, although many respondents were in favour of more cooperation in the areas of financial supervision and immigration.

In Germany, younger respondents were more willing to increase the level of European integration and cooperation between the EU Member States than older respondents. However, there were great differences in Denmark and Finland on cooperating more closely with other EU countries, and Eurosceptics rejected the idea of closer cooperation in any area. Some of the neutral respondents were generally not open to closer cooperation, since they associated this with **surrendering sovereignty and losing one's own identity**.

"I think the EU tampers too much with the different countries' domains, for example in land usage. There are a lot of differences between the countries' geography and culture, but the rules always have to apply to everyone and I think that's wrong. There shouldn't be more cooperation with the EU in any areas."

(Denmark, 35+, neutral)

"It should be slower. Many things are decided over our heads, such as [rules relating to] genetically altered corn. We must have the right to say that we do not want something."

(Germany, 35+, pro-EU)

"There should be better cooperation when it comes to foreign affairs. We can't do anything by ourselves anyway, and it's ridiculous that 28 countries always have to come to an agreement first."

(Denmark, up to 35, pro-EU)

On the other hand, pro-EU and some neutral respondents mentioned several areas where they were willing to discuss the **benefits of closer cooperation** between EU Member States.

There were two main areas where it was felt that more European cooperation would be effective – **financial supervision** and tackling **immigration and refugees**.

Areas where increased cooperation would be beneficial	Predominantly mentioned in...	Examples of comments
<p>Strengthening cooperation through common EU banking and financial supervision was clearly welcomed by a majority of respondents. People hoped that mismanagement of banks could be reduced throughout Europe.</p> <p>In Italy, respondents wanted a more flexible type of cooperation when applying monetary and financial rules.</p>	DK, DE, PL, IT	<p><i>"Financial policies also have to add up. Europe is lacking a central banking authority that regulates the Euro."</i> (Denmark, 35+, Eurosceptic)</p> <p><i>"It should be connected. Ireland suffered a lot. And everybody is involved, so it should be monitored jointly."</i> (Germany, up to 35, pro-EU)</p> <p><i>"Each state has problems that cannot be ignored. If the direction is that of growth and development, you can't impose on everyone the same norms if those norms go against the development itself."</i> (Italy, 35+, pro-EU)</p> <p><i>"It cannot be a European body that decides Italy's tax burden, because only the people who run Italy know what burden it can tolerate."</i> (Italy, 35+, neutral)</p>
Assignment and integration of international refugees .	DK, DE, IT	<p><i>"There should be more cooperation on refugee policies. The EU should ideally regulate that. The agreement – that the country where the refugees land has to take care of them – is completely insane."</i> (Denmark, up to 35, pro-EU)</p> <p><i>"When you see the boats of illegal immigrants, you can't ignore it. The other states should help us. We can't pay ourselves just because of our geographical position."</i> (Italy, up to 35, Eurosceptic)</p>

With the exception of those in Italy, few respondents were in favour of an EU army. There was also little enthusiasm for common EU taxation.

When asked about the need for an EU army, the responses were varied. Very few Danish respondents, and only those among the pro-EU groups, would like to see an EU army. Finnish and Polish respondents were also less enthusiastic about a common EU army. In Germany, people were more positive but still cautious about the idea. In general, the vast majority of respondents across all groups and countries felt that it would **duplicate the functions of NATO**.

*"We already have them in the NATO army."
(Germany, 35+, Eurosceptic)*

*"What image does the rest of the world get if we have a common army? [It] could appear aggressive."
(Germany, up to 35, pro-EU)*

In Italy, people saw more potential in the idea. They felt that it would strengthen the sense of unity and identity and **cut the huge costs** that each individual state spends on national defence.

*"We don't have a common army, and so we are not even a nation. What credibility do we have?"
(Italy, up to 35, neutral)*

*"In Italy, there is a waste with all the barracks, carabinieri, etc. An army that complies with common rules would perhaps be a way of saving pointless costs."
(Italy, up to 35, pro-EU)*

There was **no enthusiasm for common EU taxation** among respondents in any of the six countries.

Lastly, there were **no major areas where respondents felt there should be less cooperation** between EU Member States.

3.4 Experts' opinions on unity and integration

In Germany and Denmark, the experts did not agree with the idea of increased cooperation between EU Member States and wanted **less cooperation**. In Denmark, instead of deepening the level of cooperation across policy areas, the experts believed that the **existing legislation regarding the Internal Market should be enforced**. They thought that the EU's main function should be to make sure the framework for the Internal Market is working and that all countries abide by economic guidelines aimed at ensuring stability and growth.

"I have a great deal of sympathy for those Germans who have seen their standard of living drop in recent years and who, at the same time, have seen how different rules have applied to the Southern European countries. Corruption is a good example. In my view, this is a time-bomb threatening to undermine the entire system if these things are not fixed."

(Denmark, business expert)

"There should be less cooperation in terms of economic co-ordination (investment monitoring, etc.). Such measures only cause additional bureaucracy, but have no use whatsoever – as the past has shown. The individual states will ultimately do what they feel is right."

(Germany, business expert)

In Finland, the experts viewed **cooperation as a positive thing**. However, the level of cooperation that was considered desirable depended on the issue. In some areas more cooperation was welcomed, while in others it was not seen as important. This was also true for the Italian and Portuguese experts. The Italian experts in particular felt strongly, like the public focus groups, that there is a need for **more cooperation on immigration**.

"It is scandalous the way in which Europe stands by and looks on the human drama of these people."

(Italy, media expert)

"It is certainly an issue that should concern the whole of Europe, and not just Italy."

(Italy, business expert)

In Denmark, the experts also expressed concerns that a consequence of the free mobility of labour (which in itself is regarded as positive and a key ingredient in the Internal Market) is the deteriorating quality of the Danish welfare state due to **cheaper foreign labour** undercutting Danish workers. They felt that autonomy should be reclaimed by the Member States in areas such as these.

The German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Finnish experts were either open-minded or positive about a **financial supervision system** and a **common tax system**. But there were doubts about whether national interests would permit a common tax system, how it would be executed and how far it would go.

"Transparency of those initiatives would certainly help. Our clients often complain that the same product can be purchased at different prices in different countries, when it's not really about the prices but the taxes which a given country imposes."

(Poland, business expert)

"Yes, it would make sense. Why not, if we have a common currency and common support legislation, at least up to a certain extent? I know this is a very sensitive matter, but naively I might say yes."

(Portugal, business expert)

"Although desirable, it remains very difficult at least in the short term, but it should be standardised as much as possible, because an ordinary person cannot understand why he pays 52% tax compared to another European citizen who pays 15%. I myself do not understand, and in fact it is no coincidence that my company's headquarters are not in Italy."

(Italy, business expert)

The experts from Finland felt there should be less cooperation in the financial and agricultural sectors, where they perceive there to be too much regulation. On the other hand, the Polish experts believed that a **joint system of financial control** should be established in order to increase the security and stability of the Member States, and of the Euro area in particular.

"It is already being established – the Banking Union is such an organ for the Euro area. I think that it's very good because, as it turned out after the crisis of 2008, hardly any "closed" system posed such a big threat to the political involvement of the [Union] or the individual states as the financial or banking system. It has to be supervised."

(Poland, media expert)

The cultural expert from Germany, in particular, expressed concerns with the idea of an **EU army** – as a force for peace, the EU should not appear with a militant arm. The Finnish experts did feel there was a need for more EU cooperation on security, but not as far as forming an army, and the Portuguese experts said that there was no need for an EU army because NATO played a similar role. The Italian experts wanted a common army that could represent Europe in the world, while in Poland the experts were divided on this issue.

"For me, it's primarily about restructuring the defence budgets. I would prefer if we didn't need any army at all. I am of the opinion that we must invest a great deal in conflict prevention."

(Germany, cultural expert)

"It would be logical to think that, as well as a flag and a currency, there is also an army."

(Italy, business expert)

3.5 Solidarity and responsibility

Most respondents felt that being in the EU had mitigated the effects of the economic and financial crisis.

Opinions varied enormously across the six countries, and among the different groups within each country, as to whether being in the EU had helped in coping with the economic and financial crisis. On the whole, pro-EU respondents in Denmark, Poland and Italy tended to agree that their country handled the crisis better because of their membership of the EU. In Italy, the majority across all groups believed that **impartial outside control** and drastic measures had helped the country during the crisis. There was some agreement with this point of view in Germany.

"Although we were charged excessive fees and high interest rates, if the European Union didn't exist, I'm not sure whether we would have had an alternative."

(Portugal, up to 35, pro-EU)

"If the interest rates had gone shooting up we would have been done for, but – thank heavens – that did not happen."

(Italy, 35+, neutral)

Pro-EU respondents and some neutral citizens in Portugal believed that **access to financial assistance was easier** because of EU membership. However, many respondents in Portugal didn't believe that their country benefited from more favourable conditions because it was part of the EU, particularly because they felt that the interest rate was very high. In Finland, the pro-EU group felt that being bound to ECB interest rates was a positive aspect, because it helped businesses.

On the other hand, Eurosceptics in Portugal, Finland and Denmark felt that EU membership had not helped their country cope with the economic and financial crisis at all. In Finland, the inability to devalue their currency and being tied to ECB interest rates were seen as **negative aspects**.

German respondents, not necessarily Eurosceptics, also felt that the **low-interest policy had led to disadvantages**.

"I am thinking of the ECB interest rate – a disadvantage for those who save money."

(Germany, 35+, neutral)

Eurosceptics in Portugal felt that, if Portugal had not been in the EU, a **rescue plan** such as that introduced in 1983 by the IMF would have been applied just the same.

Neutral respondents were unsure whether being part of the EU had helped Denmark, Poland, Finland or Portugal. They tended to be of the opinion that **membership had not had any influence.**

*"It did not reach or affect us, so it's hard to tell."
(Poland, up to 35, neutral)*

Solidarity between Member States was mostly seen in terms of financial assistance, and was the subject which proved most divisive among respondents.

Again, there was great variation in opinion as to whether the EU should help Member States that are facing financial difficulties. The large majority of respondents in Portugal and Italy felt that, when in trouble, Member States should be helped as a **matter of principle**, since solidarity between Member States is regarded as one of the EU's core values.

*"We are in the EU. If one state goes under, it is as though the whole of the EU goes under – it has to intervene."
(Italy, up to 35, Eurosceptic)*

*"The point is that, if we are all part of a big family and I am in difficulty, you help me. It is the family that gives me a hand."
(Italy, 35+, neutral)*

In Poland, it was perceived by some respondents as an **obligation.**

*"Is this not their obligation? Is it not written down somewhere that we are helping one another, that the EU countries are obliged to help? [It is] right, totally, because it's an alliance."
(Poland, 35+, pro-EU)*

In Denmark, respondents among the pro-EU and neutral groups, who value solidarity highest, felt that it was an obligation to help other Member States, **no matter what form this help might take.**

*"It was about standing together!"
(Denmark, up to 35, pro-EU)*

Conversely, many Danish and Finnish Eurosceptic respondents did not think that their country was responsible for other countries and should therefore **not be forced to help**. Rather, they should take care of their own country. This view was also held by some of the German respondents.

"We should take care of our own first and foremost before helping others."

(Denmark, 35+, Eurosceptic)

"All have to take responsibility for the mess one country has made. I do not like that, either."

(Germany, 35+, Eurosceptic)

"I see Germany as a father who opens his wallet for his little sons."

(Germany, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

In Germany, many respondents were reluctant to say that the EU shouldn't help Member States that are facing financial difficulties. There were people in Germany in favour of help, but in general this was always connected with a "but", specifically that there **should be conditions applied**. This was a common view across all the countries, with a number of suggested conditions being mentioned:

- Assistance should not only be financial, but countries should be helped to create the appropriate conditions that will allow them to overcome the crisis and **build a healthier economy** to avoid falling into the same situation. In Denmark, this was considered preferential to sending financial assistance. In Italy, the respondents felt that there should be a **structural solution** to the problem. (DK, DE, FI, IT, PT)
- There was a widespread belief in the need for **strong supervision**, so that Member States can avoid these situations in the future. (DE, IT, PL, PT)
- Each situation must be examined individually, so that the response provided is as compatible as possible with the **specific needs of the country**. (DK, FI, PL, PT)
- Many of the respondents in Denmark felt that a **cost-benefit analysis** should always be conducted.

"One should consider every case individually and see whether it is worth it, to throw money at a country. You have to see whether you can get something out of it. The Eastern European countries can now buy Danish goods, and that is lucrative for Denmark. It's a cost-benefit principle."

(Denmark, 35+, neutral)

- Assistance should be influenced by how the country in question has behaved in the past. Member States should not get help as a matter of principle, and there should be a **review of past behaviour**. If those countries repeatedly fail their goals and do not make the most of the opportunities given to them, or if they have behaved recklessly in the past, then they should not be helped. (DK, FI, PL, PT)

"Stop pumping money in blindly and saying that they have to spend it on this and that. If their politicians cannot handle it, some solutions should be suggested to them, so that it would work out somehow, rather than teaching them to be lazy."

(Poland, up to 35, neutral)

"I find it good, but only if the country receiving support also changes itself."

(Germany, up to 35, neutral)

- In Portugal and Finland, it was felt that Member States which do not adopt the necessary measures to adjust their economy, and which need constant assistance, should be **penalised**.

"If they have the right to get help, they must have obligations too. If they don't fulfil their duties and obligations, they don't deserve to be helped."

(Portugal, up to 35, pro-EU)

"Clear rules and hard sanctions if rules are not followed."

(Finland, up to 35, neutral)

In Italy, respondents also felt that the help given to a Member State must be **in proportion to the economic strength** of the individual country providing the financial assistance.

"The limit has to be set in proportion to each country's participation in the EU."

(Italy, up to 35, pro-EU)

In Poland, there was an acknowledgement that their country would be in a position to **help out others in the future**.

"We are a country that needs developing now, and in the future we'll have to pay for those who will need to develop."

(Poland, up to 35, neutral)

3.6 Experts' opinions on solidarity and responsibility

Experts in all but one of the countries (Germany) considered that the **EU as a whole should help Member States** who are facing financial difficulties in principle, whereas German experts tended to emphasise the need for conditions.

"This is why the EU makes sense. It's an association of countries that must show solidarity to each other. Still, the countries should be governed by the same rules. I don't know how countries that don't play by the rules should be handled, but it ought to be allowed for the EU to take over if one country or another plays out of tune."

(Denmark, cultural expert)

Nevertheless, for the Portuguese, Finnish and Polish experts, **every case should be analysed** to understand what is the best way to help.

"Assistance plans must be carefully analysed – why is it that assistance is being given, why did things go wrong, what went wrong? If we do it as a matter of principle, we're talking of the principle of solidarity. We're not actually aware that we're all in the same boat. If the boat starts leaking, even though it's a small hole, sooner or later it will get to the core of the boat."

(Portugal, cultural expert)

"Universal mechanisms are a utopia which seems quite dangerous. Each case is separate, each case is unique."

(Poland, cultural expert)

The Italian experts believed that there needs to be **basic regulation** in terms of the proportion of help given and measures taken.

In addition, some of the experts felt that **financial assistance** should be:

- Based on specific **principles and obligations** (PL)

"If we help an alcoholic, we tell him that we'll help but that he needs to stop drinking. We don't help him by saying: "OK, we'll help you and you can keep drinking"."

(Poland, media expert)

- Continually **controlled/monitored** (FI, PL)
- Limited, and assigned to a specific goal (PL, FI)

One Polish expert also highlighted that the "assistance mechanism" can produce a **negative result**.

"[The assistance mechanism] makes the national governments cease to practice rigour, because they know that there is this good aunty who will always help if needed."

(Poland, cultural expert)

In Denmark, the experts believed that the economic and financial crisis had made it clear that the EU enlargement process must come to a halt now, as the **divergence between the Member States** is making it difficult to be efficient in terms of policy-making and law enforcement.

"The financial crisis has intensified the EU's need to strengthen the internal community, in order to maintain our place in the world economy."

(Denmark, cultural expert)

In Germany, not all of the experts agreed with the principle of **supporting entire states** in the framework of the economic and financial crisis, and the Italian cultural expert expressed this point of view even more forcefully.

"Yes, support should be given, but in a way that does not eliminate their own responsibility... The Commission is required to take a much closer look."

(Germany, media expert)

"It is unthinkable that all the states have to help the others. It is not a charity, it is a political system."

(Italy, cultural expert)

The German business and media experts, however, saw assistance as dependent on conditions that would lead to a **structural strengthening** of the affected party. This lies closer to the mainstream opinion among the respondents.

"For reasons of acceptance among citizens, but also from a regulatory standpoint, the EU should generally not make assistance payments to individual states. Orderly insolvency would help affected countries to make a promising new start and to reform the governmental structures from the bottom up."

(Germany, business expert)

In Finland, experts felt that Europe has to be **stronger than its weakest link** and overcome these kinds of problems.

"No more assistance than already given. Problems need to be solved at their roots, in the Member States."

(Finland, business expert)

"Europe is not as strong as its weakest link, otherwise it would always be weak."

(Finland, media expert)

3.7 The EU and democracy

Voting in elections is seen by respondents as a duty, but not necessarily effective.

In Denmark, Italy and Finland, nearly all respondents had voted in the **European elections**. In Germany and Portugal, the pro-EU citizens and the older respondents were more likely to have voted. In Poland, most respondents showed neither much interest nor involvement in the European elections, expressing a general disaffection towards democracy and a lack of faith in the effectiveness of voting.

In the majority of countries, people chose to vote because they believed that, in a democracy, one should participate in elections – i.e. there is a **sense of obligation**. The hope that you may be able to change politics by voting was also expressed by respondents in all countries, although there was a general belief in Denmark that one's vote probably didn't make a difference anyway.

"It is a privilege to vote. Many do not have that right. For that reason it is a duty."

(Germany, 35+, pro-EU)

"You have to vote. You may not like it very much, but you have no right to complain about it if you don't participate."

(Denmark, 35+, Eurosceptic)

"Voting is a privilege. Everyone who wants to live in a democracy should vote."

(Finland, 35+, pro-EU)

"I voted without actually knowing what impact my vote would have. But I went to the ballot box all the same, so I wouldn't feel guilty about staying at home."

(Portugal, 35+, neutral)

In Italy, the reasons for voting were slightly different among some of the groups. For the Eurosceptics, it was a way to express an opposite opinion to that held by the majority, to **"go against the tide"**, and to show their disagreement with the political dominance of Germany. For neutral citizens, and above all for the pro-Europeans, it was a way to send out a **signal of renewal** in their attempt to bring "the right people" into Europe.

In Finland and Poland, respondents who did vote felt that voting was one way to **have an influence**. They also wanted to choose a representative who shared their values and ideas or, in the case of Poland, one who was considered the "lesser evil". For some respondents in Finland, the right to vote gives one a right to **complain about politicians** if they make bad choices.

Non-voters chose not to vote because of a **lack of interest** or the perception that their vote would **not make any difference**. In Germany, a few respondents claimed not to have voted because they didn't know who to vote for.

"But I would not have known what to vote for. I would have preferred something social. And if it said "SPD", it would not mean anything to the French."

(Germany, up to 35, neutral)

"I voted for the German Bundestag. But I did not vote in the European election, because I had no information about what I could vote for."

(Germany, up to 35, pro-EU)

In Poland, too, respondents who did not vote said that there was nobody worth voting for, and expressed a general **distrust** of politics and politicians. Distrust of politicians was also a factor among the Portuguese respondents who decided not to vote.

"My contribution wasn't going to make a difference, because we also vote in national elections and things don't get better."

(Portugal, 35+, Eurosceptic)

Respondents generally felt that they lacked information about the European elections and the political parties involved.

Very few respondents in any of the groups felt sufficiently informed about the elections. In Finland, the respondents felt somewhat informed about the elections, although less so compared with the national elections, and they didn't know much about the European parties. There was a general feeling that **more information** could be made available about the elections in all countries.

"There was an electoral campaign that talked about domestic politics and not about European politics. I did not feel informed about anything, not even about their future plans, for example."

(Italy, 35+, Eurosceptic)

In Germany, respondents felt that the EU had the **duty to provide information**, and they expected the EU to provide it.

"We were poorly informed about what groups the parties were in. It did not come across well enough. Only Juncker and [Schulz] made it clear that different parties come together in a parliamentary group."

(Germany, 35+, Eurosceptic)

Respondents in most countries also mentioned that the **media coverage** of the European elections was insufficient and should be improved. In Portugal, respondents felt that the way the information about the European elections was broadcast by the media was boring and not very appealing.

"Each political party is entitled to three minutes before the news and they spend two weeks going over the same stuff, but it means nothing..."

(Portugal, up to 35, pro-EU)

Respondents who felt sufficiently informed had found the information **on the Internet by themselves**.

"I googled it. You have to get active. Otherwise you don't get anything."

(Germany, 35+, neutral)

"In principle, there is enough information out there, you can find everything online. There should just be someone who communicates it in a good way. Conveying it is the problem, not transparency."

(Denmark, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

"I actively looked for a lot of information by myself and I also changed my mind when I had done some research, but I just don't think the media did a good job this time. The EU had to compete with bombs in the Middle East and so on, and you don't hear that much about the EU in your everyday life."

(Denmark, up to 35, neutral)

"I used the Wahlomat [online tool to find out about preferences for political parties] – it kind of voted for me."

(Germany, 35+, pro-EU)

In Italy, the pro-EU and neutral respondents were more likely to make an effort to seek information. They would search online and would also **consult their friends** about the elections.

Respondents across most of the countries did not feel that they had sufficient knowledge of the political parties in the European Parliament, with only a few **knowing what political parties existed**.

"There are really eight different parties in the EU, but if you don't know what they stand for, it becomes difficult to know what everything is about, also in regard to obtaining a majority. All of EU politics is more right-leaning than here in Denmark, and when you vote here you don't always know where they are going to sit in the EU parliament or how big the parties are."

(Denmark, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

"The paradox is that you vote [for a party] which here says that it wants to lower taxes, reduce the tax burden, etc. – and then you find out that it belongs to the formation [in the European Parliament] that instead wants to raise taxes."

(Italy, up to 35, neutral)

Neutral respondents in Denmark felt that finding out the different parties' stances on EU issues was a difficult task, and ended up voting as they would have done in a national election. The pro-EU and Eurosceptic respondents, on the other hand, made an effort to learn more about the **parties' opinions on the EU**, which often led them to vote for a different party than they vote for at national elections.

"You are more loyal towards a political party at the national elections. In the EU elections, you first had to find out whether the parties even advocate what I want them to."

(Denmark, up to 35, neutral)

Most respondents in Denmark were unsure of **whether their vote actually made a difference**. In Portugal, most respondents felt they lacked an active voice in the EU, since they perceive Portugal itself as having little power in the EU, while others did not feel represented by the Portuguese MEPs. In Germany and Poland, there was the feeling that one's personal vote is significantly weaker than in the national elections.

Danish respondents felt that the European Parliament does not have enough authority, since other EU institutions can object to what it does. They agreed that it would make the EU more democratic if they were informed about **how the EU is constructed and what it achieves** through coverage in the national media.

3.8 Citizens' participation

Lack of engagement with the EU is largely blamed by respondents on a lack of information.

The majority of respondents, across all six countries, were not aware of citizens' consultations or "**Citizens' Dialogues**", although most felt that these initiatives were a step in the right direction in terms of engaging with the citizen.

Portuguese respondents believed such measures will encourage the **exchange of opinions** and foster a closer proximity with the EU. In Poland, they were received positively as a concept, but there was **scepticism about their effectiveness** in action. Similarly, in Finland they were received positively, but respondents were sceptical about whether these discussions would have any real influence. Finnish respondents also felt they might not be representative of the majority opinion.

"Thinking about these Citizens' Dialogues, in Finland there are similar ones at the municipal level, but the end result is always the same. Officials just sit there nodding and agreeing, but everything said will be forgotten."

(Finland, up to 35, neutral)

"If there would be more possibilities to influence it, [the EU] would feel closer."

(Finland, 35+, neutral)

In Italy, respondents liked the idea, although the younger age groups expressed a preference for the Citizens' Dialogues to **take place on the Internet** rather than through face-to-face meetings.

"I don't know if I would take part, my time has a certain value as well. I think that the web is the right medium - fast, direct, you don't waste time."

(Italy, up to 35, neutral)

It was felt that these dialogues would give the European Commission a **closer view of the real problems faced by citizens**, while at the same time giving citizens an opportunity to learn about what MEPs actually do. Initiatives such as these also show that the Commission is interested in knowing what citizens think. However, there was some scepticism among older respondents in Portugal that only **members of the elite** are invited to participate in Citizens' Dialogues.

"It's true that people are not really very interested, but the way things are publicised often leaves people with the impression that the message is directed at certain elites."

(Portugal, 35+, neutral)

Only a small number of respondents across all groups were familiar with the **"European Citizens' Initiative"**, although around half of the German respondents claimed to have heard of it.

"It was about the privatisation of drinking water. There were those lists of signatures in public agencies. I found it important because you can communicate what you want."

(Germany, 35+, Eurosceptic)

Some Portuguese respondents said that they were aware of the "European Citizens' Initiative", particularly because it was made known by a few left-wing MEPs and **petitions that were circulated on the Internet**.

This initiative was generally **very well received** across all the countries.

"This is something where you can do something directly. And you also have contact persons."

(Germany, 35+, neutral)

Some concerns were raised, however, including concerns about the **majority of initiatives being rejected**.

"It's just that we don't know how many of the initiatives submitted to the Commission will be approved. It's important too, because if they reject 100% it's pointless."

(Poland, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

Some respondents were concerned that this tool would be **used by political parties for their own purposes**.

"It has to be neutral. I imagine a web portal where these proposals are posted and I have the possibility of joining."

(Italy, up to 35, pro-EU)

Others warned that the initiative should not be obstructed by **too much bureaucracy**.

"They would have to simplify things, otherwise nothing will get through."

(Italy, 35+, pro-EU)

Respondents' suggestions for citizens' consultations included digital forums and online polls and surveys.

When asked **how else the EU could consult with its citizens**, the ideas suggested across the various countries included:

- Creating a **platform** where citizens can leave their opinions on different subjects.
- Organising initiatives like **referendums**. However, attention was drawn to the high costs involved in the preparation of these referendums, which sometimes have no practical outcomes.
- Taking part in **online surveys/online voting**.

In Germany, Denmark and Portugal, respondents felt that **MEPs have the responsibility to interact more with the population** and listen to what their citizens have to say. In Finland, the pro-EU and neutral respondents hoped for more discussions between officials and citizens. In Portugal, there was the perception that, if MEPs were not aware of citizens' opinions, they would not be able to represent them correctly. Therefore, interacting with citizens is important for MEPs.

"I believe that, if we elect MEPs, they have the responsibility of listening to the people who elected them. So, they should interact more with the population in order to best represent us."

(Portugal, up to 35, pro-EU)

"Getting close to the people, this is what the Americans are great at. There should be more communication in meetings which are public, where EU politicians speak."

(Germany, 35+, Eurosceptic)

"It is important that MEPs keep contact with the voters. In the latest elections, some people didn't get re-elected because they had lost the connection with their voters."

(Finland, 35+, pro-EU)

3.9 Experts' opinions on democracy in the EU

Experts in Finland saw voting as an essential part of democracy in the EU. Like the Finnish public, they agreed that the **EU is quite distant and faceless**, and the lack of familiarity with EU politics was seen as one contributing factor to the low voter turnout in the European elections. This was also true in Poland, according to the experts who were interviewed. There are not necessarily any large flaws in the system, but people just don't know the different institutions and their functions that well. Finnish experts pointed out that this makes the system look undemocratic, since people don't know how decisions are made. This in turn leads to low voter turnout, because **voting is not seen to make any difference**.

The Italian experts also highlighted the need to increase the knowledge of EU institutions and mechanisms in order to **transmit a real democratic message**. Germany experienced a poor turnout at the EU elections, and the German experts felt that this was a reflection of the poor image that the EU has. To improve this situation, the experts suggested **more effective public work**, such as projects with regional connections that can be experienced locally, or simply through more charismatic politicians and better publicity.

"In my opinion, turnout is a result of the level of knowledge about institutions, their usefulness, the need for them. If the level of knowledge and the perceived usefulness of such institutions are low, the turnout is low too."

(Poland, media expert)

The European elections provided, according to the Danish experts, a clear illustration of how unimportant the European Parliament is perceived to be in Denmark. The politicians who run for the European Parliament are seen as second class, a point also mentioned by the Italian and Portuguese experts. Election campaigns are generally concerned with issues from the domestic political agenda, and politicians don't have the courage to raise **real issues about European cooperation**. All of these factors are seen to deter people from further participation.

According to the Danish business expert, this lack of public interest in EU politics could be countered if it was possible to **measure the work of individual MEPs**. In addition, the media tends to focus on small stories. The Danish expert believes that, if the discussions were about the main topics, people would feel more inclined to vote.

In Germany, the experts felt that the performance in various Member States of **extreme nationalist parties** in the European elections was worrying.

"I do find it problematic that nationalistic tendencies arise again and again. We can see it in France, we have it in Germany too, and in Austria. Populist tendencies that attempt to talk the European project to death."

(Germany, cultural expert)

Low turnout in Italy was attributed by the experts to both anti-European feeling and a general **lack of interest** in Italian politics.

*"The turnout was poor because of the citizens' growing uneasiness and lack of interest towards Italian politics."
(Italy, cultural expert)*

Experts in Finland felt that the EU should **converse with its citizens**, a point of view that was also expressed in the Finnish focus groups. It was seen as important for politicians to stay in touch with their voters, so that the connection between them wouldn't be lost. However, it was also pointed out that some MEPs try to do this and people don't listen to them.

*"Many politicians try very hard to make the EU more significant, but people are not listening."
(Finland, media expert)*

In Italy, the experts highlighted the need for **referendums so that voters felt more involved**.

*"They want to make the EU more democratic? Have referendums for everything, and each person will be free to express their own opinion on any issue."
(Italy, business expert)*

Some experts also felt that democratisation of the EU could be achieved through **education and raising general awareness** about EU institutions.

*"The fact that we teach kids first aid is great... But [we should also] raise awareness about living in a democracy, about the fact that a single vote does matter."
(Poland, business expert)*

4. THE EU AND THE MEDIA

Finally, the study explored the influence of the media in shaping people's views of the EU and how the EU should communicate in order to reach its citizens effectively.

4.1 Role of the media

There is generally perceived to be little information in the media on EU issues, except in the run-up to the European elections.

Across the different countries, very few respondents felt well-informed about European political affairs or the EU. This was generally put down to the fact that the level of **information provided about EU matters is low** and tends to be concentrated on the run-up to the European elections. Most respondents felt they were better informed about national politics than about European political affairs. In Poland, they mentioned that **information on domestic politics is easier to acquire** online and via TV. In Portugal, respondents felt that the most relevant, interesting and valid reports on the EU are not broadcast on the leading TV channels at prime time.

"German politics is made public. And EU politics does not feature in the press so easily."

(Germany, 35+, Eurosceptic)

"It's hard to keep track of EU issues. The news is prejudiced and also rare in relation to how much happens daily in Brussels. And the EU is such a large and abstract organisation that it is hard to see what is happening there in general."

(Finland, up to 35, neutral)

"No mention is made of the activity of the EU, other than with regard to the negative repercussions that it can have on Italy."

(Italy, 35+, Eurosceptic)

"If a Bill is submitted to the [Polish] Parliament, we know that a given party will vote for this and another for that, but we do not really know to which party each of the Poles in the European Parliament belongs."

(Poland, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

In Poland, respondents believed that there is information available about EU matters, but it is **not easily accessible** or it is presented in an incomprehensible form.

"[Information about the EU] appears and accumulates during various elections or accessions, or when somebody is about to take over the leadership. And that's what happens for the ordinary mortal such as me, while it doesn't tell me much about the entire parliamentary structure, or the commissions and sub-commissions."

(Poland, 35+, neutral)

In Denmark, respondents defended this lack of media coverage about EU matters, since the stories are **not perceived to be "interesting" enough**. The media often depends on ratings and sales figures, thus only "breaking news" and the "next big thing" get their attention.

"The media thinks it's too boring to communicate and people don't think it's interesting. It's enormously hard to pinpoint, who should start and make the media think that it's interesting. Where does interest start?"

(Denmark, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

Most respondents get their views about the EU from a wide variety of sources, but mainly from **the media, the Internet and friends and family**.

Most respondents have little trust in the media's objectivity when it comes to reporting on the EU, and think that it tends to focus on "bad news" (not only in relation to the EU). People are more confident in public broadcasting and the Internet.

There are **doubts about the independence and objectivity of the media concerning the EU** in most of the countries, except Denmark.

There was a feeling that there is a **trend towards bad news about the EU** among German, Danish and Italian respondents.

In Finland and Poland, some respondents felt that the media presents the EU in a **more positive light than reality**, while others thought it has **too much of a negative bias**.

In general, most respondents in all countries were aware of this **lack of objectivity and independence** in the media and did not feel that they are influenced by it.

"The news you get is mainly bad. And when you feel bad you blame Europe, because you are afraid. Then you say: "Europe does not concern me – it is too far away"."

(Germany, 35+, pro-EU)

"Deep down, the media today is not unbiased. Those journalists who asked whatever they wished to ask and who looked for information don't exist anymore."

(Portugal, 35+, pro-EU)

"There are just so many personal stories and stories about bent cucumbers."

(Denmark, up to 35, Eurosceptic)

"It is normal for them not to be objective. The important thing is to understand the different points of view."

(Italy, 35+, pro-EU)

Among German respondents, a clear **majority trusted public sector media** concerning the EU rather than the commercial media.

"If in doubt, always choose public sector broadcasters."

(Germany, 35+, pro-EU)

In contrast, Polish respondents tended to think the **public sector media is less independent** in their country, providing only positive information. They felt that the commercial media in Poland is more open to inviting speakers who hold Eurosceptic views.

"[The public sector media], which is what the [state] budget finances, obviously has to speak about what the sponsoring state and government dictates. And if the government supports the EU, then [the public sector media] will simply be pro-EU."

(Poland, up to 35, neutral)

Respondents in Denmark felt that there is a **difference between public and commercial radio and TV** when it comes to reporting on the EU. The commercial broadcasters are seen as rarely broaching EU issues, unless there is a story where the EU can be made to look ludicrous. Respondents believe this is due to these stories selling better than objective stories about the EU, since commercial TV and radio stations have to consider their target audiences. Public broadcasters, on the other hand, are perceived to have an obligation to report a lot more about the EU.

*"The state has a duty to inform its citizens about the EU."
(Denmark, up to 35, Eurosceptic)*

"The EU isn't very sexy. DR [Danish Broadcasting Corporation] has to broadcast something about the EU, but all the other media only do that rarely, because they have to think about their turnover figures and think about what would be a good story."

(Denmark, 35+, neutral)

Among Portuguese respondents, **opinion about public and private broadcasters varied**. Some respondents felt that there were no differences between the ways these broadcasters communicate about the EU. Others felt that public broadcasters tend to give more emphasis to the positive aspects of EU activities and to give more airtime to news about the EU.

*"Perhaps public channels can provide you with a few more minutes than the private channels can."
(Portugal, 35+, Eurosceptic)*

In Finland, respondents did not see any significant differences in how public service broadcasters and commercial broadcasters portray Europe. Commercial broadcasters were seen as being a little more dependent when selling stories, but in general **people trust Finnish media and see it as mostly neutral**.

The **Internet** was singled out by the Italian and Danish respondents as being a **more objective information channel** than the traditional media.

*"The Internet is the most impartial medium, whereas TV is the most biased."
(Italy, up to 35, Eurosceptic)*

4.2 How should the EU communicate?

There is a general desire among respondents for more information about the EU that is more objective and accessible than what is currently available.

There was general agreement among the majority of the respondents across all countries that they would like to know more about the EU and see **more regular coverage of the EU** in all media.

"It's one thing to find a story about the EU regulating something or another, but it should be made more explicit and told more often, what the EU does. Maybe regular small stories in the media could be a way."

(Denmark, up to 35, pro-EU)

"I would like to find information that is really objective, because at the moment, in the traditional media, it is always distorted by some political and ideological bias and you risk not getting any useful information."

(Italy, 35+, Eurosceptic)

Views on exactly what sort of coverage of the EU they would like to see varied across the groups and countries. Respondents came up with suggestions that covered three key areas: **content, style and format**.

The content of such information needs to be more positive and concrete, with implications for citizens' lives.

- More **positive stories** about the EU (pro-EU and neutral, DK)
- More stories about European issues and EU decisions that have an **impact on the lives of citizens** (DE, IT, PT)
- Programmes on **youth unemployment and equality of opportunities** (DE)
- More specific aspects like the **selection process for the President** of the European Commission
- EU **structure and performance** (DE, PL)
- The **current issues being debated in the European Parliament** and other EU institutions (PL)
- How citizens can **get involved in EU affairs** and benefit from it (DE, PL)

"More information for us, to know what we can get, what we can do in the Union. Are there any subsidies or other international means of exchange? Everything in that direction. Well, the information is supposedly there, but you have to look for it, investigate, ask questions. Whatever relates to us should be directly available and clarified better."

(Poland, up to 35, pro-EU)

Respondents expressed a desire for trustworthy, accessible and easily understandable information, communicated in a manner that is more personal and less institutional.

- Communication should come across in a less institutional way, using **uncomplicated, everyday language** (FI, PL, PT)
- It should be conveyed in a **concise and attractive** style (PT)

"I trust the EU officials as sources of information. However, the issues are presented in such official jargon that you cannot understand them unless you know something about them already."

(Finland, 35+, pro-EU)

- TV programmes could feature a dynamic **host who can engage viewers** (PT)
- Information should be **honest and accurate** (FI, IT)

"Honest information about where we are heading and what are the consequences, plans and visions for the future."

(Finland, 35+, Eurosceptic)

Suggestions for formats ranged from dedicated communication channels to information embedded within mainstream media. Younger respondents were in favour of an increased social media presence.

- There could be small, **positive EU stories at the end of news programmes**, as well as "infotainment" involving EU personalities (pro-EU and neutral, DK)

"Infotainment about the EU would create more openness towards the EU. There should be a focus on policy-making and so on. The EU is too shut-off and it lacks transparency. The parliamentarians should be held to account for the money they use, what they're doing with their time and more. We have to have openness, otherwise it just won't work."

(Denmark, 35+, pro-EU)

- Some of the **debates held in the European Parliament could be shown on TV**, so that citizens can have a clearer and more transparent view of what happens in the European Parliament (PT)
- Similarly, there could be televised debates with individuals who are recognised for their credibility and competence to **discuss events** in the European Parliament (PT)
- Another option would be to have a TV channel, like the one that exists for the Portuguese Parliament, where European citizens could have access to what happens in the European Parliament - a **"Diary of the European Parliament"** (IT, PT)

"We have the national team's diary for the World Cup now. Why not have a Euro diary instead of the national team's diary? So that we could check what was discussed in the Parliament, what measures were implemented today."

(Portugal, up to 35, pro-EU)

"I would like to hear the same things that the politician hears in his headphones."

(Italy, up to 35, pro-EU)

- There could also be **in-depth news reports on different EU issues** at the end of the regular news service - a "European Corner" - as a way of reaching more people (IT, PL, PT)

"A news programme that is half-way between the TV news and a debate, where you invite politicians, you show excerpts of the week and you comment on events, not at two o'clock at night or at seven o'clock in the morning."

(Italy, up to 35, neutral)

- **Social networks, online portals, forums or blogs** could be used to communicate key decisions and to post videos of the most relevant moments in Parliamentary debates (DE, IT, PL, PT)
- An **EU magazine** could be introduced (IT, PL)

"It would be a single magazine for the whole of Europe that you know is not manipulated by anyone."

(Italy, 35+, pro-EU)

- Use could be made of mainstream press or **free newspapers** that reach the population more easily (PT)

"I read those free newspapers that they hand out every morning... I usually go through them while I'm on the metro. The news must come to us, we can't go looking for it, and no one will search. Whether it is in the newspapers – if they're free everyone will read them – or on the TV news programmes."

(Portugal, up to 35, neutral)

- Schools could be approached, with a view to making EU affairs a **part of their curriculum** (DE, PT)

4.3 Experts' opinions on the role of the media

In comparison to the general public, on the whole the experts were more likely to see the **media as objective and fair**, especially the media experts.

"I think that serious media looks at the mistakes made by each country and identifies them clearly – each country, each government. I don't think they blame the European Union."

(Portugal, media expert)

In Denmark and Finland, the experts said that they believed the media was fair in reporting about the EU, despite **different political leanings**.

"Basically, TV2 is a commercial channel and they are characterised by their need to come up with exciting news quickly, but regarding the political coverage I actually believe that the Danish TV stations [DR and TV2] are doing well."

(Denmark, business expert)

In Portugal, the business and cultural experts believed that the media nowadays is **not independent or objective**, not specifically regarding the EU, but overall. The cultural expert felt that the media tends not to show the whole story and to convey only what generates higher sales. On the other hand, the media expert felt that problems arise with media coverage because the media **lacks the necessary information or knowledge**.

"Every time things turn bad, Europe is to blame. Europe is the bad guy. Now it's Europe's fault... And sometimes it's not even because of Europe."

(Portugal, cultural expert)

The Portuguese business expert, the German media expert and the Italian experts thought that the media coverage was **too negative**. The Portuguese cultural expert felt that journalists, although they have the obligation to be better informed, may also **feel separate from the EU in their daily life** and, in this sense, might reflect the way they communicate regarding the EU.

The Italian experts agreed with the Italian focus groups that there is a **lack of real, concrete information about Europe** and its institutions.

"If they do something interesting, you can watch it at one o'clock in the morning when everyone is in bed. Otherwise, there is general ignorance supported by a lack of political education."

(Italy, business expert)

In Germany, the cultural expert emphasised that it was in the media's own interests to exercise **responsibility and sound judgement** when reporting on the EU.

"The media has great responsibility for the European project. The media must recognise that their future depends on it as well if Europe really fails."

(Germany, cultural expert)

The experts agreed that the EU should **communicate more through the following channels**:

- Social networks (PT)
- TV (PL, PT)
- Radio (PL, PT)
- Newspapers (PL, PT)
- The Internet (IT)

The Italian experts believed that the **Internet is the optimal channel** for communicating, but that you need to know how to navigate your way around it. They feel that foreign websites are richer in content than the Italian ones.

In Poland, the experts believed that the EU should **communicate through mainstream media**, but that it has to be of interest to a general audience.

"If it's to be mass communication, it has to be sexy. I'm sure that in the EU things can be sold in a sexy way, you just have to know how to present it. What serve as communication channels are not the websites of the EU institutions, nor internal/local TV, but cooperation with the mainstream media in the Member States. This is a strategy which would allow the "smuggling" of some European themes – in small portions – [on to programmes that are] talking about seemingly domestic affairs."

(Poland, media expert)

5. ANNEX - METHODOLOGY

This Qualitative Eurobarometer survey on "The Promise of the EU" was conducted by TNS Qual+ at the request of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication.

"The Promise of the EU" aims to develop a vision for the EU's future based on three questions: How much unity do citizens want and what are the areas where integration should take place? What would make the EU more democratic and how can EU politicians be made accountable for the decisions they make? What is the right balance between responsibility and solidarity? The broad objectives of this study are to understand how people perceive the EU and what the European idea means to them, especially in the wake of the economic and financial crisis.

The survey was conducted as a pilot in six EU Member States: Italy, Germany, Denmark, Portugal, Finland and Poland. These countries were chosen to represent different stages in the development of the EU and to ensure a broad geographical balance.

Fieldwork in each country consisted of six focus groups, supplemented by in-depth interviews with experts on European affairs from the media, business and cultural sectors in the six Member States. It should be noted that such focus groups are never statistically representative.

Fieldwork for the focus groups took place between 30 June and 11 July 2014 in all the countries surveyed (Italy, Milan; Germany, Hamburg; Denmark, Copenhagen; Portugal, Lisbon; Finland, Espoo; Poland, Warsaw). The interviews with the experts were also mostly held during this period, although some took place up to two weeks later. One pilot focus group took place in Belgium on 19 June.

Research Design

Six focus groups, each approximately two hours in length, were conducted in each country. The groups were divided according to age and attitude towards the EU, as follows:

- **2 groups = "Eurosceptic"**
 - **1 group = aged 34 and under**
 - **1 group = aged 35 and over**
- **2 groups = "Neutral"**
 - **1 group = aged 34 and under**
 - **1 group = aged 35 and over**
- **2 groups = "Pro-EU"**
 - **1 group = aged 34 and under**
 - **1 group = aged 35 and over**

"THE PROMISE OF THE EU"
QUALITATIVE EUROBAROMETER
DISCUSSION GUIDE
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION - 120 MINUTES

As with all qualitative discussion guides, this document is not intended to be an exhaustive questionnaire but, rather, an indication to the moderator of the group of the topics to be covered, the approximate time to be apportioned to each area of discussion and to provide some suggestions around possible areas of investigation.

KEY QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS:

- 1) *How much unity do citizens want and what are the areas where integration should take place?*
- 2) *What would make the EU more democratic and how can EU politicians be made accountable for the decisions they make?*
- 3) *What is the right balance between responsibility and solidarity?*

INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

In this section the moderator establishes the group rules of the discussion, facilitates introductions among the participants and begins to develop the essential rapport with respondents, putting them at their ease and beginning to get to know them.

Moderator

- Introduce self
- TNS Qual+ / local institute
- Independent

Process

- Audio recording
- Open discussion
- No right / wrong answers
- All views equally valid / important
- Confidentiality

Subject

- Europe – what it means, what it might mean in the future

Respondents

- Introduction and names
- Whether voted in the European elections or not

1 BEING EUROPEAN (30 MINUTES)

1.1 European identity (15 MINUTES)

I'd like to start by talking about what it means being European.

- ✓ What does being European mean? Is there a European identity? Do you think there will ever be a time when we see ourselves as European instead of [COUNTRY] nationality?
- ✓ If you had to describe what it means to be European to someone from outside Europe – what words would you use? What makes us European compared to say Americans, or Asian people?
- ✓ Would you describe yourself as European? Why/why not?
- ✓ Do you think this sense of being European has changed? When/why?
- ✓ What brings us together as Europeans?

1.2 The "story" of Europe (15 MINUTES)

Moving on from this, let's talk about Europe as a whole.

- ✓ We have talked about European identity, but what does Europe itself mean?
- ✓ What SHOULD it mean?
- ✓ Do you think there is a "story" of Europe? What is that story about?
- ✓ How does the story of Europe begin for you, what are the origins, what was the original purpose? How has the story changed? Has it changed since the financial crisis?
- ✓ Who do you think "writes" the story of Europe – the EU, citizens, who?

2 EUROPE AND THE CITIZEN (60 MINUTES)

2.1 Unity and integration (15 MINUTES)

I'd like us to now discuss the position of [COUNTRY] in Europe, and how unified and integrated Europe is. By "integrated", I mean the ability for countries in the European Union to take joint decisions on political matters and to achieve closer cooperation more generally.

- ✓ What are the positive aspects of [COUNTRY] being part of Europe?
- ✓ What are the negative aspects?
- ✓ Overall, is [COUNTRY] better off being part of Europe? What advantages does Europe offer? What disadvantages?
- ✓ Do you think your [COUNTRY] is represented in the EU?
- ✓ Do you think the current level of cooperation between Member States is close enough?
- ✓ Do you think there are any areas where Europe should cooperate more closely? Which ones?
- ✓ Or what about where there should be LESS close cooperation?

2.2 Europe and the EU (10 MINUTES)

We have spent time discussing Europe as a whole – I'd now like us to move on to discuss the EU specifically.

- ✓ How would you describe the difference between "Europe" and the EU?
- ✓ The things we have been discussing in relation to being European, being part of Europe – do they also apply to being part of the EU? Why?
- ✓ Do you know what the EU is? How familiar are you with it?
- ✓ Do you feel connected with the EU? Why? Did the European elections make you feel any closer to the EU?
- ✓ What would make you feel more connected?

- PAUSE (5 MINUTES) -

2.3 European elections and democracy (15 MINUTES)

Let's move on to the recent European elections and democracy in Europe.

- ✓ Why did you vote/not vote in the European elections?
- ✓ What is the point of voting in the European elections? What are the main reasons for taking part?
- ✓ How well-informed did you feel about the elections? Do you know which European party you were voting for/how your national party fits into the European Parliament?
- ✓ What does the election say to you about democracy at a European level?
- ✓ Is it enough to be able to vote? Why/why not? Do you feel that "your voice counts" in the EU? What else would make the EU more democratic?
- ✓ Apart from the elections, how else could the EU engage with people like you? What could politicians do to make the EU more relevant to you?
- ✓ Recently the Commission did a series of citizen consultations called "Citizens' Dialogues" in different countries, talking and listening to people directly in "town hall" style meetings – were you aware of this? Is this a good idea?
- ✓ Another recent thing is the European Citizens' Initiative, where citizens can submit a petition to bring something to the attention of the European Parliament – were you aware of this? What do you think of this?
- ✓ Would you consider being involved in similar things to this – why/why not? What else could the EU do to consult with people like you?

2.4 Solidarity and responsibility (10 MINUTES)

Let's talk about Europe in the context of the economic and financial crisis and what it means for our relationship with other Member States.

- ✓ Do you think being in Europe has helped [COUNTRY] in dealing with the economic and financial crisis? Why/why not? Should the EU as a whole help Member States who are facing financial difficulties? Why/why not? Is it a question of principle or should it be case by case?
- ✓ One person said at a Citizen's Dialogue that "Europe is Greece and Greece is Europe". What do you think of that statement? Do you agree with it?
- ✓ Are there limits to how much we should help other Member States?

2.5 Role for the EU in the world (5 MINUTES)

I'd like now for us to talk about being part of Europe, as being part of something bigger than [COUNTRY] and what that means.

- ✓ Do you think, given the recent events in Ukraine, that being part of Europe makes you feel safer or less safe? What difference does being part of Europe make?
- ✓ Do you feel a larger Europe is a good thing or a bad thing? Why? Do you think "bigger is better"?
- ✓ Do you think your [COUNTRY] has a stronger role in the world as a part of the European Union or outside of the European Union?

3 FINDING OUT ABOUT THE EU – THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA (15 MINUTES)

Finally, just a few questions about how informed you feel about the EU and the role of the media.

- ✓ Would you say you are well-informed about national political affairs? And European political affairs?
- ✓ And about the EU in particular?
- ✓ People have very different views about the EU – some are in favour, some are not in favour. Where do you think people get their views? What do you think they are generally based on?
- ✓ Do you think the media is independent/objective when it comes to stories about Europe? Do you always believe what you read, or what you see and hear on television or the radio? Do you think that they "blame" Europe fairly or unfairly?
- ✓ Is there a difference between how public service broadcasters and commercial broadcasters portray Europe?
- ✓ Would you like to know more about the EU? What in particular would you like to know more about?
- ✓ Should the EU communicate with you differently?
- ✓ How should the EU communicate with people like you? Who do you trust most for information about the EU?

4 CONCLUSION & ROUND UP (5 MINUTES)

**"THE PROMISE OF THE EU"
QUALITATIVE EUROBAROMETER
IN-DEPTH EXPERT INTERVIEW - 60 MINUTES**

INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

Moderator

- Introduce self
- TNS Qual+ / local institute
- Independent

Process

- Audio recording
- Open discussion
- No right / wrong answers
- All views equally valid / important
- Confidentiality

1 BEING EUROPEAN (20 MINUTES)**1.1 European identity (10 MINUTES)**

- ✓ What does being European mean? Is there a European identity? Do you think there will ever be a time when we see ourselves as European instead of [COUNTRY] nationality?
- ✓ Do you think this sense of being European has changed? When/why?

1.2 The "story" of Europe (10 MINUTES)

- ✓ We have talked about European identity, but what does Europe itself mean?
- ✓ What SHOULD it mean?
- ✓ Do you think there is a "story" of Europe? What is that story about? How does the story of Europe begin for you, what are the origins, what was the original purpose? How has the story changed? Has it changed since the financial crisis?
- ✓ Who do you think "writes" the story of Europe – the EU, citizens, who?

2 EUROPE AND THE CITIZEN (20 MINUTES)**2.1 Unity and integration (10 MINUTES)**

- ✓ Do you think the current level of cooperation between Member States is close enough?
- ✓ Do you think there are any areas where Europe should cooperate more closely? Which ones? Or what about where there should be LESS close cooperation?

2.2 European elections and democracy (5 MINUTES)

- ✓ What are your views on the recent European elections? What else would make the EU more democratic?
- ✓ Apart from the elections, how else could the EU engage with people? What could politicians do to make the EU more relevant?

2.3 Solidarity and responsibility (5 MINUTES)

- ✓ Should the EU as a whole help Member States who are facing financial difficulties? Why/why not? Is it a question of principle or should it be case by case?
- ✓ One person said at a Citizen's Dialogue that "Europe is Greece and Greece is Europe". What do you think of that statement? Do you agree with it?
- ✓ Are there limits to how much we should help other Member States?

3 FINDING OUT ABOUT THE EU – THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA (10 MINUTES)

- ✓ Do you think the media is independent/objective when it comes to stories about Europe? Do you always believe what you read, or what you see and hear on television or the radio? Do you think that they "blame" Europe fairly or unfairly?
- ✓ Is there a difference between how public service broadcasters and commercial broadcasters portray Europe?

4 CONCLUSION & ROUND UP (5 MINUTES)