

Eurobarometer "15 to 24-year olds": young people want Europe to be tangible

Before the Youth Convention on the future of the Union opens, the European Commission wanted to obtain the views of 15 to 24-year olds on the functioning of the European Union as well as their vision of Europe. Today, the results of the Eurobarometer Flash survey carried out between 27 May and 16 June 2002 on a representative sample of 7 558 young people are being presented by Michel Barnier in the press room. The survey examined two main questions: what practical measures can be taken to make young people identify with Europe and what are the key issues that the Convention should address? This Eurobarometer Flash reveals that 15 to 24-year olds feel that employment, solidarity, mobility and respect for democratic values are crucial for the European project.

Practical measures to make young people identify with Europe¹

- **Employment is one of young Europeans' main concerns.** 15 to 24-year olds think that promoting cooperation between national employment agencies is the most effective measure which could be taken. 52% say that this would be "very effective" (74 % in Portugal, but only 34% in Belgium). Women are slightly more inclined than men to hold this view but the results are similar irrespective of whether the interviewees are in employment or not.

One in every two young Europeans thinks that completing part of their school, university or vocational education in another European country is a "very effective" measure, with the greatest support for this idea coming from Italy (68%), Portugal (55%) and Germany and Ireland (53%).

Many young people are in favour of learning another foreign language, although they are reluctant to see any change in their school syllabuses. Girls appear to be more likely to see this as an advantage.

Finally, young people are still very attached to the idea of the national holiday. 62% were against replacing a national holiday by a European holiday.

¹ See the results of the Eurobarometer "15 to 24-year olds" survey in the annex for the questions and the replies on the proposed measures.

Key issues that the European Convention should address²

- **Solidarity should be a key issue with regard to the future of Europe** as far as 15 to 24-year olds are concerned. 79% of young people interviewed think it is vital for the Convention to look at how the problems of unemployment, exclusion and poverty can be tackled. The highest percentages were recorded in Germany (84%) and in Italy (83%) compared with 57% in Denmark. Women (82%) appear to be more inclined than men (77%) to see these problems as meriting discussion in the Convention.
- **Support for democratic values and human rights** also appears to be a key issue. 74% of young people think that it is "very important" for the Convention to discuss these. The highest rates of support are in the Netherlands (85%), in Austria (83%) and in Italy (81%) and the lowest in Belgium (53%). More women than men (77% compared with 70%) regard these as "very important" matters.
- By contrast, **enlargement of the European Union and the effectiveness of the European institutions seem to be of less interest to 15 to 24-year olds.** Only 29% of the persons interviewed thought that enlargement was "very important". Greece (42%), Ireland, Italy and Portugal (37%) are the countries where most importance is attached to this issue. In Sweden and Finland (17% and 16% respectively), however, young people do not regard this as a "very important" matter for the Convention.
- By the same token, an average of only 33% of the persons interviewed thought that the question of **the effectiveness of the European Union** was "very important". The greatest interest in this subject is in Italy (52%) and Greece (50%) and the least in Finland (16%). 36% of the 20-24 age group thought that this was important (compared 29% for the 15-19 age group).

The full results of this study are available at the Europa website:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index.htm

To find out more about young people and Europe

European Commission's White Paper on "A new impetus for Europe's youth":

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/youth/ywp/whitepaper_en.pdf

Eurobarometer survey 55.1 "Young Europeans in 2001"

http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/eb/ebs_151_summary_en.pdf

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http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/mag/15/en/sommaire.htm

² See the results of the Eurobarometer "15 to 24-year olds" survey in the annex for the questions and the replies on the proposed measures.