

# YOUNG PEOPLE, EU CITIZENSHIP AND ACTIVISM

Perceptions from Bulgaria, Germany, Poland and Slovakia



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# ABOUT

This publication was compiled as a part of the project “EP elections and beyond: active participation of citizens at all EU levels” (EUact) that aims to:

- 1. encourage sustained and active engagement of the citizens, especially young people, in the decision- making process of the EU.**
- 2. enhance the democratic legitimacy of the EU by offering valuable recommendations to EU policymakers.**

The report provides an insight into the perceptions of young people from four different countries related to their attitudes towards the European Union (EU), their understanding of EU citizenship and activism. As potential new leaders, it is important to “feel the pulse” of the thoughts of today’s youth on belonging (or not) to the European community. Such data is a valuable tool to help predict voting choices in the upcoming European Parliament (EP) elections as well as to provide a basis for a possible trending line of European integration developments in the future.

## Methodology

The publication encompasses qualitative data gathered using a research method with focus groups in four European countries: Bulgaria, Germany, Poland and Slovakia in November 2018. In each country, partner organisations conducted 2 focus groups in different locations with about 10 participants, on average, who are university students (predominantly 18-30 years old). The discussions lasted approximately 90 minutes and were led by an expert moderator. The conversations were based on a consistent set of questions. Sociodemographic details can be found in each country report.

Focus group data gathering is a relatively frequently used method of obtaining and recording information which was created in the 1940s and first used in communication studies in the 1950s.<sup>1</sup> The aim of this methodological approach is to gain from relatively small groups a realistic picture of human perception and feelings about specific social and existential facts. This methodological approach has a lot of positives. Among these positives, it is worth to mention mainly the interactive way of gaining the needed information for research from respondents.

The quotes in the publication are direct statements of the focus groups’ participants.



# PARTNERS



Das Progressive Zentrum, Germany



GLOBSEC, Slovakia



Slavyani Foundation, Bulgaria



Higher School of International Relations and Communication, Poland

# INTRODUCTION

We often hear that “Brussels is too far away” from the EU citizens, especially from the young people. With each EP election, on average, the turnout has been decreasing. Nationalism—driven by populism and Euroscepticism—is becoming more and more entrenched, jeopardising European citizenship and democracy, the cornerstones for the success of the European project. What to do? How to enhance citizens’ understanding of the EU, broaden ownership of the European project and build trust in the EU’s promise of a better future for all?

Through gathering information in the focus groups, we aimed to uncover the causes for low citizens’ engagement on the EU level, particularly among young people. Therefore, we see this as the first important step towards deriving practical solutions for how to motivate young people to be active EU citizens. While the upcoming EP elections are our short-term focus, we also want to use the momentum for building sustained active civic participation.

Debating the future of Europe and challenging Euroscepticism are important features for this comparative and transnational project. In our activities we inevitably focus on questions such as what kind of Europe young people want, why Euroscepticism is so deeply rooted today, which scenario for the future of Europe is good for the whole of Europe, and why the European project is the best option, et. al.

In this respect, the focus group discussions included three main topics:

1. General attitudes towards the EU.
2. Being citizens of the EU.
3. Being active citizens on national and the EU level.

While there were some commonalities among the discussions in the four countries, the country reports also reveal significant differences in perceptions. On the one hand, we can see the influence of the current domestic environments and political rhetoric shaping young people’s opinions. On the other hand, however, we are worried about the observed general indifference to the future of the European project.



# KEY FINDINGS

Based on all focus group sessions in all four countries, we were able to identify several important commonalities and differences in the perceptions of young people related to their attitudes towards the EU, their understanding of European citizenship and their participation in European activities.

Additionally, several general observations were advanced by the participants about young people themselves and recommendations towards different European, national and local actors.

## THE EU IS A GOOD THING, BUT WITH MANY CAVEATS

In general, young people have a positive attitude towards the European Union (EU). Instinctively, they see the EU as a good thing, with expressions like “community” and “unification” having been used. Yet, much more is desired from the Union. They want European institutions to be more effective and transparent. They wish differences between Member States, including between the Eastern and Western countries, and the current incompatibility of some national and European values to be resolved, among other demands.

“*The European Union is a great idea if it is managed by competent people and its actions are legitimized by its members.*”

## THE EU IS AN ECONOMIC UNION THAT PROVIDES MATERIAL BENEFITS

While the young people in Bulgaria, Germany, Poland and Slovakia have positive attitudes towards the idea of the EU, in all countries the European project is primarily identified as an economic union that provides economic benefits to the Member States. Only in Germany a broader discussion includes the EU as a union that ensures peace on the continent. Young people in Poland and Slovakia are pessimistic of the possibility for the EU to become a “political community” or a “community of shared values.”

Young people in Bulgaria, Poland and Slovakia identify the EU mainly through the receipt of material benefits. There is a high level of understanding of the EU by connecting it to economic prosperity, freedom of movement, increase of living standards, cohesion and structural funds, as all are identified repeatedly as the most positive consequences from

EU membership. These are benefits that most of them have and do enjoy. To this end, it seems that the EU has influenced these countries and their citizens.

“*The EU is firstly an economic union.*”

“*The EU is good because it contributes to the development of smaller and less developed countries, to freedom of movement and problem-free travel.*”

## EUROPEAN SHARED VALUES —THE BIG HURDLE

While young people in all four countries agree across borders that the EU as an economic union brings a positive value to their lives, divergences occur when the topic of shared European values and common cultural union (union of values) is introduced into the conversations. In both Bulgaria and Slovakia, young people tend to shy away from the issue all together. On the other hand, in Germany and Poland heated conversations lead to opposite conclusions. Young people in Germany express a real commitment to find a path for forging the EU not only as an economic union but also a union of shared values. While they realize the difficulties, they see the added value of such union, where a genuine sense of belonging is developed.

The conversations in Poland lead to the conclusion that currently there is no solution in finding a consensus between the idea of common European values and Polish values and, therefore, a European Union of shared values is not probable. The main hurdle expressed is connected to a lack of coherence of religious and moral issues, expressing that today the EU is too liberal and too tolerant. Young people add that while Europe is the “cradle of Christianity,” this notion is missing in the EU’s normative documents. They fear that this might lead to the change of traditional European values to another less desirable form.

“*The Union is too liberal, the collapse of moral values has initiated the fall of the ancient Rome.*”

“*the rise of populism and the differentiating national opinions hinder a cultural integration.*”



## SMALL COUNTRIES NEED THE EU

Discussions in Bulgaria and Slovakia pointed to the importance of the EU as a sort of protector of, and helper to, the small countries towards their development and prosperity. According to young people in these countries, the EU also amplifies the voice of smaller members when it comes to foreign policy. On the other hand, in Poland the role of the EU is challenged as possibly overarching and taking on national sovereignty issues (e.g. migration).

“*On the international scene Bulgaria, as a small country, can hardly play an independent role. So, the common foreign policy (although not always unified) of EU would weigh more.*”

## THE FUTURE OF THE EU IS UNCERTAIN

Brexit is lingering in every conversation as the biggest test to date for the existence of the EU. Comments on the vacuum left after the UK leaves the Union included the realization that there will be serious consequences. In the short-term, EU citizens would most likely experience negative situations related to trade, cohesion and R&D funds, and even security. Brexit, according to the young Bulgarians, also provides ammunition to nationalistic movements and thus could endanger the EU itself. In Slovakia, young people lean towards Eurosceptical scenarios about the future of the EU.

Still, young people in Bulgaria, Germany and Poland do not see the total breakdown of the EU in the foreseeable future. Some expect to see a new type of formation but are not able to identify it. Others feel rather optimistic and see today’s questioning and weakening of the EU as a normal occurrence in a cycle of ups and downs (the Bulgarian group).

“*The EU had a rise, then a decline, followed by a new upsurge. Brexit is an example.*”



## BRUSSELS IS TOO DISTANT AND BUREAUCRATIC

Overwhelmingly, young people perceive EU institutions as too distant and too bureaucratic. In each country, they list this perception as one of the main negative sides of the Union. Perhaps, as they are unable to identify whom to contact or how a process goes through the institutions, their assumptions lead to blaming Brussels for being too rigid and inefficient.

“*The European Union is too far away to have a real impact on its operation.*”

“*On the national level, people can talk to those who are responsible for policy making. Contrary, Brussels feels more distant.*”



## THE EU IS NOT VISIBLE NOR EXPLAINED ENOUGH

While in Poland, Bulgaria and Slovakia, there are some concerns that the EU is struggling to communicate the benefits and functioning of the Union, German young people identify this difficulty as one of the main problems leading to a lack of engagement by citizens at the European level. Especially lacking in the eyes of Germans is visibility and communicating to all audiences, independent of income and level of education. While mainstream awareness-raising campaigns are seen by young people in streets, parks, and buildings, their main channel of communication is social media. It is in this domain that young people see a great gap to be filled by the EU.

“*Social media is an informational channel that is not sufficiently used by the Union. Only representatives of the EU institutions put posts on Twitter, which is more frequently visited by politicians than by the average EU citizens.*”



## EU CITIZENSHIP: FROM NOT EXISTING TO PRIMARY IDENTIFIER

There is no clear view across the four countries as to how young people perceive EU citizenship. While in Germany some feel first European and then German, or first identify their subnational belonging and then their European, in the other three countries most participants feel the importance of their own nationality above that of being European. However, interestingly, in Poland it is noted that, once having been in a non-European country or having met non-Europeans, young Poles often present themselves as European citizens and even express a feeling of pride.

“*In conversations with Australians, I felt more European than Polish. In Australia they do not know where Poland is, but they know exactly where Europe is. I felt proud being a European, more than proud of being a Polish woman.*”



## ACTIVE EU ENGAGEMENT MEANS VOTING IN EP ELECTIONS

The most obvious mechanism to get involved in the EU, according to young people, is through voting at the European Parliamentary elections. However, peoples' levels of knowledge as to when these will be, and their willingness to vote, differ. In Germany, young people tend to express a willingness to vote in May 2019. In Poland, many do not know when the elections are happening, and in Slovakia there are young people declaring that they would simply not vote. In the latter two cases, young people expressed some concerns about the effectiveness of voting.

“It is not possible to be an active citizen because it is impossible to influence events in the EU directly.

“There are many possibilities for exchange, but the problem is that no one knows about them.

## EAST-WEST DIVISIONS STILL SHAPING SOME EU ATTITUDES

The conversations in Slovakia expose the still lingering sense of inferiority even among young Slovaks towards citizens from the West. The feeling of inequality between East and West is repeatedly connected to the inability for some young people to see themselves as EU citizens. On the other hand, young people in Poland and Bulgaria do not dwell too much on East-West divisions, as these were not mentioned in the conversations.

“Slovakia is still perceived as “Eastern Europe” which is inferior in comparison to “Western Europe.



## MEMBER STATES' AND CITIZENS' OBLIGATIONS?

Neither discussion with young people in the four countries brought up the responsibilities and obligations that come with EU citizenship and EU membership. Most often, benefits for citizens and Member States were pointed out, but then countered with what young people perceived as not working well in the EU. Only in Germany was the “duty to vote” referred to.

“Many people had to fight for their right to vote and it is a moral duty to vote.

## OBSERVATIONS, BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE

- Low levels of knowledge and understanding about the functions and activities of the EU and its institutions.
- Not much knowledge of the different channels to influence and engage in European matters.
- Difficulty of young people to see themselves as both receivers from and contributors to the EU.
- Overall lack of interest in thinking about the EU in either positive or negative terms.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FROM YOUNG PEOPLE TO YOUNG PEOPLE

### How to get young people more engaged and involved at a European level

- The EU: Increase the visibility of the EU's activities and decision processes, through the use of modern technology and techniques that will draw in the interest of young people (social media and influencers)
- The EU: Increase the feeling of belonging among European citizens by strengthening programmes and initiatives that allow for participation of broad populations, regardless of levels of education, socio-economic status or place of residence, to “experience” the EU
- The EU: Engage EU representatives and institutions with all levels of society—national governments, local representatives, business, civil communities and individual citizens—in difficult debates, including about rule of law, shared values, coherent ideas on the future of Europe, etc.
- The Member States: Increase the level of basic knowledge and beyond about the EU's history, functioning and procedures, by starting European studies as early as primary school.
- The Member States: Provide truthful and objective information that is easy to understand about the role of the EU in each country to avoid young people becoming a tool in the hands of nationalists and populists with their own agendas.

- The local communities: Instead of shaming young people for their lack of interest and engagement at the European level, help them embrace their European identity through creative channels, like the “positive branding” of Europe.
- The local communities: Use more peer-to-peer educational and motivational strategies, rather than telling young people what they should do for Europe.



# FOCUS GROUPS REPORT: BULGARIA

Location of discussions	Number of participants	Age range	Gender ratio (F:M)
Sofia	17	19-40 (avg. 25.3)	7:10

(diverse group: age and field of study)

Location of discussions	Number of participants	Age range	Gender ratio (F:M)
Blagoevgrad	15	19-23 (avg. 20.9)	8:7

(uniform group: age and field of study)

### Nationality: Bulgarian

#### Fields or study:

- ▶ Business administration
- ▶ Philology
- ▶ Medicine
- ▶ Historical heritage
- ▶ Archeology
- ▶ Marketing
- ▶ Engineering
- ▶ Law
- ▶ Finances
- ▶ Public administration
- ▶ European studies
- ▶ National security

Population <sup>ii</sup>	7 050 034	EP elections 2014 turnout <sup>iii</sup>	35.84%
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## GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EU

The logical base for the discussion, having in mind the theme of the project itself, were the primary attitudes towards the EU. The discussions began with the dual query: “What do you think about the EU? What comes to your mind when you say EU?”.

The answers ranged from one and two-word definitions, such as “community”, “unification”, “one country”, “united states”, “globalization”, “borderless community”, “moving to the future” to the more detailed “a process that is not obsessed with historical roots, principles, patriotism, but is unifying in order to achieve a common good.”

A supplementary clarification: “how do you perceive the EU?” elicited answers that suggested young people in Bulgaria understand the EU primarily as an

economic entity (with access to goods and services), but also are aware that there are other elements, including shared values and goals and a political community characteristic.

“*The EU is a chance for a better tomorrow.*”

The discussion underlined that, when the EU was first created, everything looked optimistic. All prerequisites for a united Europe existed at that moment. The period was immediately after two devastating world wars, and the leaders of the Old Continent sought to bind their countries’ economies together to make another war unthinkable.

Over the past six decades the EU, with gradual expansion, reached its present state, bringing about dramatic changes to the way Europeans live and work. Young people affirmed that in their everyday

lives the “four freedoms”—the free movement of goods, services, people, and money are firmly present.

“*Firmly present in our everyday life today are the EU’s “four freedoms” — the free movement of goods, services, people, and money.*”

While the participants expressed their own attitudes and perceptions, they were also eager to speak in more general terms about Bulgaria’s attitude towards the EU. While the country joined only in 2007, through its commitments for more integration it has provided the EU institutions with some much-needed confidence, despite rising anti-European sentiment across the continent. Bulgarian governments, regardless of their ideology, have repeatedly declared that they want to move forward with deeper European integration (e.g. join the euro area as soon as possible). How do young people perceive the EU from a Bulgarian stand-point? The opinions centered around two similar in character and orientation perceptions:

- 1. An elder brother of the country, who is expected to help in unforeseen circumstances.**
- 2. On the international scene Bulgaria, as a small country, can hardly play an independent role. So, the common foreign policy (although not always unified) of EU would weigh more.**

On other issues, however, the young people were not noting “the EU around them.” For example, Bulgaria struggles with high levels of youth unemployment, reaching 21.6% in 2015 and slowly subsiding to 12.9% in 2017.<sup>iv</sup> Already in 2000, to battle problems of unemployment, the EU initiated the Lisbon Strategy.<sup>v</sup> Yet, young people in Bulgaria fail to see that tackling youth unemployment is also partly done through EU-wide mechanisms. Which means that they do not “see the EU presence” in social affairs. Instead the participants narrowed the focus of their attention to “European investments” and “European funds.”

Additionally, the attempt to steer the discussion into the topic of “shared history” simply brought up the reaction of “no comment.” The concept of “European values” itself was disputed with the argument that it is actually a question of “civilization values.”

## BEING CITIZENS OF THE EU

The definition of “EU citizen” could be inferred from the following assessments: “we have greater rights and obligations,” “free travel” and “we have a wider field for realization, it is easier to find a job.” It was these concrete positive attitudes that

were highlighted by some of the participants as the primary motivation for candidate counties and their citizens to continue to seek accession (North Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc.).

Overall, young people in Bulgaria do not seem to have any crystalized opinion about themselves being EU citizens. Rather, they recognize that they have national rights and EU rights to enjoy. But these, according to some of the participants, can be at odds.

“*I can see the EU around me in European funds and investments.*”

The discussion was even more animated after posing the following question: “How to avoid the constraints and shortcomings accompanying EU membership?” The answer came from the perspective of a nation-state with claims that the rule of unanimity in the EU decision-making process is a tool to protect national interests, while ensuring common decisions at the EU level.

But young people in Bulgaria also see the role of the EU towards Bulgarian citizens as “participating more actively in solving most of the problems of the citizens.” As polls usually suggest, Bulgarians place more trust in EU institutions to resolve their hardships than on their own national government.<sup>vi</sup> From this angle, indirectly young people do feel like citizens of the EU with rights and demands towards the European institutions.

## BEING ACTIVE CITIZENS (OF THE EU)

More uniform and undisputed is the attitude of the focus group participants towards how engagement as EU citizens is manifested. Most pointed out voting regularly as the prime tool to be used. However, some other channels were also identified, including asserting an active civic position and seeking feedback from the officials, whether or not the stated promises of representatives of European institutions are fulfilled.

Unfortunately, the young people in the discussions were more eager to speak in abstract terms of how to be active, but they were not so forthcoming about what is the reality for them, and if they are themselves engaged EU citizens.

Instead, the participants spent time in heated discussion about the future of the EU. The expressed opinions reveal that young people in Bulgaria care about the future developments of the Union, and that they have categorically different views on what will be next. Some reactions included:

“I hope there is a future”, “I cannot guarantee it has a future. I personally want it. Depends on member states”; “there is a boundary between the West and the East”; “the EU had a rise, then a decline, followed by a new upsurge. Brexit is an example” and “there is going to be an expansion and increase of globalization, because everyone benefits from this.”

The mentioning of Brexit stimulated a deeper conversation on the future of the EU. All agree that the United Kingdom’s vote to leave the European Union has triggered the worst political crisis the EU has ever faced. Not only that but the once dominant idea has crumbled that European integration is an irreversible process, according to the participants. The young people seemed to be informed about the consequences from UK’s departure, including the loss of a military power/ nuclear state, the loss of a large economy and, especially, the loss of confidence in the stability of the EU in the eyes of other world powers, the loss of confidence within the EU and the favorable path drawn for nationalist and anti-globalization movements. These developments, according to these young people, do and will inevitably impact their everyday lives. Thus, some asked the question “Quo Vadis, Europa?” (Where is Europe headed to?).

## MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ advanced by young Bulgarians
  - ▶ towards improving the future of the EU
1. **The place and role of the small EU countries should not be ignored. Better coordination between smaller countries to increase their influence within the EU could be formed.**
  2. **National and EU citizenship can and should co-exist, but careful attention should be paid to giving up too much sovereignty, as it can be problematic.**
  3. **Continue the enlargement process in the Balkans. The citizens of the Western Balkans express more positive sentiments for the EU than the EU citizens themselves. Inclusion in the resolution of current disputes now will prevent yet another lost generation.**
  4. **Pay more attention to the Asian countries, especially in terms of economic cooperation.**

Although it may seem tempting to complain of Brussels’ bureaucracy and the frequently hopeless rigidity of the political leaders of Europe, it is not the right thing to do, according to the majority of young people in Bulgaria. The EU’s failure to resolve the refugee crisis with a common mechanism, and the difficult situation Bulgaria found itself in, as an external border of the EU, should not mean that Bulgarians should leave behind the European project of an inclusive, democratic society, where solidarity, diversity, freedom and equality are cherished and safeguarded.

The prevailing opinion of young people in Bulgaria can be summed up in a sentence:

“An integrated Europe, with its single market, common rules and a shared framework of human rights and justice, is a legacy worth improving, not abandoning.”





# FOCUS GROUPS REPORT: GERMANY

Location of discussions	Number of participants	Age range	Gender ratio (F:M)
Berlin	6	22-28 (avg. 25.2)	1:5

(In English)

Location of discussions	Number of participants	Age range	Gender ratio (F:M)
Berlin	4	22-28 (avg. 25.2)	1:3

(in German)

**Nationality: German, Greek, U.S.**

**Fields or study:**

- ▶ International Affairs
- ▶ Public Policy
- ▶ Modern History
- ▶ Public History
- ▶ Sociology
- ▶ Computer Engineering
- ▶ Computer Science

Population <sup>vii</sup>	83 million	EP elections 2014 turnout <sup>viii</sup>	48.1%
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## GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EU

The first association when thinking about the EU varied between the participants, although the words “peace” and, respectively, “freedom” were named three times. The other named associations were bureaucracy, integration, economic integration, supranational entity, possibilities, compromise, democratic deficit. Interestingly, when asked which kind of a union the EU is perceived to be, most referred to the economic aspect. However, it was stressed that economic integration is not without problems. One group went on by discussing a cultural union, the other one concentrated on the perception of a union of values. Both concepts were regarded as much more complicated to achieve than the economic union. One student said that for a cultural union many social aspects are still missing. It was added that

“ the rise of populism and the differentiating national opinions hinder a cultural integration.

The EU should overcome the strong national identities by building up a narrative which can be applied to everyone.

Regarding a union of values, the participants again saw the differentiating national positions and the principle of the unanimous vote as one major obstacle. One participant even said that a union of values is not something possible to achieve. Even on the national level, there would not be a homogeneity of values. Instead, equal rights for everyone should be discussed. For instance, a common election law across the EU, could ensure equal rights for all voters every time. Others replied that there are already common values and that the creation of the economic union was based on some shared interests and values. It was said that not a total homogeneity of values would be needed but, in line with the other group, that there has to be a specific narrative embracing everyone. It was added that Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty defines some common values and that such narrative should be based on those.

The discussion led to the presence of the EU in Germany. First, the difference between cities and rural areas was mentioned. One student said that people in the urban areas are often pro-EU and interested in cross-border issues while people in the rural areas do rather focus on local topics. This does not mean that these areas do not benefit from EU projects but that the EU lacks visibility. As an example, they claimed that EU funded projects are not marked visibly enough by signs or posters which promote the EU. The EU is present and visible, for instance when it comes to border controls or data security - especially for the older generation. However, one student claimed that the infrastructure investments suit the people but that it is not much known that the EU financed them.

The effects of social background differences were also in focus. Socially deprived people more often do not use their right to vote. It was stated that the EU is a topic for university graduates. Citizen dialogues that are organized only reach the people who are already interested. As an additional problem, both groups mentioned that mostly negatively connoted EU occurrences reach the public. They elaborated that the rights connected to EU citizenship are often not known and more education is needed. Although Europe is of the utmost importance, especially for young people, the turnout statistics for the EP elections show a low participation rate. Both groups criticised that young people take the positive effects of the EU for granted. It is necessary that people realise the privileges they have through the EU. The EU is active and affects everyone, but many people are either not interested or uninformed. Additionally, it was said that the older generations are skeptical of the EU.

“ The EU has a transparency problem.

In consequence, a student summarised “(...) the EU has a problem of explaining itself”. The students pointed out that it is necessary that benefits are experienced more. When students, for instance, make use of the Erasmus exchange program, they directly notice the benefits of being an EU citizen. However, this benefit concerns only a small group of people. Although an exchange program for people who make an apprenticeship exists it is mainly unknown.

## BEING CITIZENS OF THE EU

The question of identity formation brought out very different notions. One of them said that she/he feels European and that the passport with the EU stars always reminds her/him of that. Another student said that she/he likes to be European but that she/he rather feels German because she/he grew up

with the laws and values of Germany and her/his connection to German politics is more prominent than to EU politics. One had the perspective that EU citizenship does not differ that much from the German citizenship but remarked that this is not the case for all EU countries; the majority in the other EU member states has a national identity instead of a European one. Two students said that instead of defining themselves as German they identify themselves with their regional backgrounds.

“ I feel European and my passport with the EU stars always reminds me of that.

Some students argued that the feeling of identity differed when you grew up in a multicultural or, instead, in a culturally homogenous environment.

“ Identity is not necessarily where you come from but who shaped you.

The criticism was raised that the EU institutions, such as the EP during the discussion of transnational lists (consisting of MEPs representing pan-European constituencies) to the European Parliament, torpedo themselves:

“ Transnational lists would have been a milestone to get closer to the people, but the EP mainly consists of conservative members.

Concerning the proposal of transnational lists, another student countered that most MEPs would be unknown on the national level. Transnational lists scare some national parties. They fear that parties in bigger and more prosperous countries could have a greater ability to invest in election campaigns and thereby get an advantage.

In a search for a stronger and closer EU, the young people from Germany sought to identify a possible new model of the Union, where supranationalism is strengthened. For instance, a chamber in the EP with representatives of citizens and another with representatives of the states should be created.

One group also discussed whether branding could help make the EU more visible and build an identity. Some said that cultural icons, such as a common holiday or an increased use of the EU flag, could have a supporting effect. Also, strong personal leadership was mentioned.

However, one student believed that values were more important than common items, for building an identity. According to her/him, one does not need to create something which does not exist artificially. EU identity does not need to be the same as national

identity. The participant proposed that the EU should instead be more pro-active in strengthening common values. Another student answered that maybe a combination of both aspects would be good. He/she said that people would only care about what they see. So, people's internalisation of common values can only work when the EU is visible to its citizens.

“ *The EU lacks visibility.*

Thus, when asked what the EU could do to get closer to its citizens, more effective promotion of the EU was mentioned again. Communication through educated people who teach about the EU needs to be improved. A student gave the example of Poland where most people think that money is given to the EU but that they do not get anything back. Another raised the point that,

“ *the EU should promote the political participation of young people because they have the responsibility to obtain the EU. Europe is as a matter of course for them. They do not know how much work it is needed to preserve the EU.*

The students argued that the young people should be taught how Europe developed and that a democratic education should be part of the school curriculum. Furthermore, initiatives like free interrail tickets and other investments are essential to enabling citizens to feel the benefits of the EU and thus enhance their European identity.

One student said that the mobilisation of citizens is a challenging goal because people are already not active on the national level. Therefore, another student replied that the EU should try to tackle everyday problems. When the EU would secure economic prosperity for everyone then other things, such as increasing citizens' interest, would be much easier to achieve. In addition, some topics should get greater attention on the EU level, such as social or environmental politics, and a solidarity policy should be developed.

At a deeper level, one group elaborated on the benefits and drawbacks of being an EU citizen. One participant drew attention to the loss of decision-making in national monetary policies (if part of the euro area). Another mentioned as a disadvantage the gap between political decision processes and citizens. On the national level, people can talk to those who are responsible for policy making. But Brussels feels even more distant. One student objected that on a technical level contacting EU policy-makers is possible, and that one can also call the Commission. According to her/him “there are many possibilities for exchange, but the problem

is that no one knows about them”. Further, the EU has a transparency problem. If decision-making had been more transparent, people would not always blame the EU but the real trouble makers.

The advantages of EU citizenship identified by participants include the protection of fundamental human rights and the harmonisation of goods and services. Furthermore, some students saw the freedom of movement for people, goods, and capital, as well as the freedom of speech, as advantages. One student elaborated that many people from different EU states live in Berlin and that the advantage of being able to work in a different country is evident in this city.

Another point of dispute was the advantage of peace in Europe through the creation of the EU. The concern was raised, however, that conflicts would just be outsourced. A student stated that EU citizens do not care about the problems next door.

### BEING ACTIVE CITIZENS (OF THE EU)

Except for one student, all participants assured that they would go vote during the EP election in 2019. They named a variety of reasons for this. One was the conviction that the European project is in excellent condition. Others said that it would be essential to vote to co-decide in which direction the EU moves and to prevent that Eurosceptic parties get too powerful. Although elections are not enough to change things, not going to vote means missing the opportunity to participate in decision-making. It was also mentioned that many people had to fight for their right to vote and that is a moral duty to vote. Furthermore, some said that they would go vote to support their national parties during the election and that they would also campaign. The one participant who was not sure if she/he would vote said that some other activities can have more impact than voting, such as consumer choices. S/he elaborated that s/he always showed up at the election offices but only to block national movements.

Some of the students are active on the EU level while others are more active on the national level. A student who is active on the municipal political level noted that through this work she/he could also support EU politics. Some students stated that just speaking about Europe makes someone to be an active citizen. However, one said that moving to a country where your wishes are already implemented is easier than becoming active to change something.

“ *It is our duty to make people go to vote. In the weeks towards the election everyone should become a bit political and for instance, use their social media accounts.*

Young people also attempted to provide ways to motivate people to vote. They pointed out that one has to make people appreciate that they can vote by giving them reasons, such as specific topics which are vital to them. The last regional elections had shown that young people want to vote. In addition, more technology should be used, for instance, promoting the EP election more in social networks or by hiring buses that bring citizens to voting places.

### MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ advanced by young Germans
  - ▶ towards improving the future of the EU
1. **The EU is not visible enough. The benefits of EU citizenship need to be more pronounced through communicating to all audiences (independent of income and level of education) and organizing more awareness-raising campaigns on the functioning of the EU;**
  2. **The EU lacks legitimacy among groups of European citizens. Tackle the democratic deficit**

**through the introduction of in-between models like EP chambers for citizens or smaller states and explain/create venues where citizens are more integrated with the political process/empowered to contact EU institutions;**

3. **Clashing of national identities leads to problematic further integration and of developing a genuine EU identity. There is an asymmetric interest in identity issues, discussed predominantly by right-wing political movements. The conversation should be also initiated and not ignored by all other political forces for better balance;**
4. **Voting allows people to participate (be active) in decision-making processes and it is also a duty. Young people will be more encouraged to vote and be more active if modern technology, such as social media, is used more intelligently and they are given more reasons to vote at the European level.**



# FOCUS GROUPS REPORT: POLAND

Location of discussions	Number of participants	Age range	Gender ratio (F:M)
Chelm	8	19-33	4:4

(Higher School of International Relations and Social Communication)

Location of discussions	Number of participants	Age range	Gender ratio (F:M)
Lublin	8	19-27	4:4

(University College of Enterprise and Administration)

## Nationality: Polish (Chelm, Włodawa, Hrubieszów, Wierzbica, Wojśławice, Lublin)

### Fields of study:

- ▶ National security
- ▶ Pedagogy
- ▶ Informatics
- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Management and Marketing

Population <sup>ix</sup>	38 412 000	EP elections 2014 turnout*	23.83%
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## GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EU

Participants of the focus groups showed a positive general attitude towards the EU. They perceived the EU as a community of cooperating Member States (MS) aimed at improving the continent of Europe and strengthening Europe's position worldwide. They perceived the EU, firstly, as an economic community, secondly, as a political community, thirdly, as a historical community, and, finally, as a community of shared values.

“*The European Union is a great idea if it is managed by competent people and its actions are legitimized by its members.*”

The young Polish participants paid a lot of attention to the discussion about the values promoted by the European Union, and the values and national legacy of individual countries. They tried to find a consensus and “work out” common values for the European Union and for Poland, which unfortunately was not achieved. Most of their attention focused on the lack of coherence between religious and moral

issues. The European Union was perceived by the participants as an institution with very liberal views and too much tolerance.

On the other hand, Polish society is divided between dynamically developing liberals and conservatives. The first group is formed by great proponents of the values promoted by the EU, among others, tolerance for otherness faces. Second part of Polish society consisting of conservatives who are against some of the rights and values supposedly imposed by the EU, such as: abortion, euthanasia, gender/sexual freedom and acceptance of homosexuality. As a negative aspect, the participants indicated the lack of references in the normative acts of the MS to the Bible, God and Christian values. In the discussion, it was argued that Europe is the cradle of Christianity and that Christian values should be mainly promoted by the EU all over the world. The EU's weakness in the fight for its own values and even the fall of moral values of European society was pointed out. It was noted that, without common values, the EU will be unable to survive. They indicated the great influence of Islam on Europe and the possible changes that

this could bring to the EU countries and the entire Union.

A lot of attention has been paid to migration issues. It was observed that the decision regarding the admission of migrants to Europe should have been preceded by a European referendum and should have been implemented only when approved by a majority. It was also noted that the EU should not punish the countries that refused to accept immigrants because it was motivated by attempts to guarantee citizens' safety. Participants jointly recognized that when it comes to resolving issues of migration, the EU turned out to be weak. The ideal solution would be to help immigrants in the reconstruction of their country, and above all, political activities aimed at ending conflict and political persecution in Syria.

In economic matters, the EU's power as an important player in the international arena was underlined. The cohesion of Europe in economic matters was also emphasized. There were voices in the discussion, coming from participants with extremely conservative views, accusing the EU of exploiting Poland economically (e.g. taking over Polish enterprises in the 1990s, privatization and buy-outs of Polish enterprises by foreign capital, introduction of foreign capital, i.e. corporations, networks, stores) which contributed to the collapse of numerous Polish family businesses, small shops and local commerce in Poland. Most students, however, agreed that the EU made major contributions to Poland's economic development. The participants were very optimistic about the EU as an economic community.

When asked about where they see the EU in their city and the country in which they live, participants mainly pointed to the improvement of living standards of residents after Poland's accession to the EU, the development of entrepreneurship in Poland, the subsidies and EU funds for development of entrepreneurship, the improvement of the quality of roads, buildings, city squares, and playgrounds for children. The young people indicated that many buildings and monuments were renovated with EU funds, all very visible on the numerous billboards.

Participants also pointed to greater opportunities to change their place of residence, legal stay and employment in other European countries. They also pointed to greater opportunities for students, mainly those participating in the Erasmus program, and projects and grants for researchers and the development of science. Greater openness of Polish society to otherness, changes resulting from joining the EU, as well as greater adaptation of Poles to EU requirements, were also noted. This also involved greater openness to other nations, greater

friendliness to foreigners, and a greater sense of community with citizens of other EU countries. Participants noted that changes from the very large impact of the EU on local communities and the whole country, as well as the positive effects of Poland's accession to the EU, are visible at many levels of Poles' lives.

## BEING CITIZENS OF THE EU

For young people in Poland, being an EU citizen means rights for citizens of the Member States. The main privileges include freedom to relocate in other MS, voting rights in elections to the European Parliament, the possibility of submitting complaints and petitions to the European Parliament, and generally understood diplomatic protection of the EU.

Some participants in Lublin very much identify with the EU. They define EU citizenship as the knowledge of English or other European languages, the possibility of settling down freely, and the general feeling of being an EU citizen and being European more than Polish. Most participants, however, perceive themselves as Poles first, and then as Europeans.

Most participants noted the difference between being a Pole and being a European. For them, it is expressed in cultural and historical identity, in greater bonds between the members of the Polish state than with members of other EU Member States, and in declaring the priority of MS' interests over the interests of the EU community.

As citizens of a given country, they declare their willingness to strive for the development of intergovernmentalism in the EU, and not the primacy of the EU over its Member States. Thus, EU institutions should support the development of strong nation states, preserving their cultural identity and strengthening the common EU economy.

Interestingly, many of the young people declared that they have a greater sense of belonging to the EU and of being an EU citizen when in contact with citizens of non-European countries and during travel to other continents. In such circumstances, their sense of being an EU citizen increases significantly. They also more willingly declared that they were Europeans than Poles in South America or Australia. Some participants stated that in the situation of traveling to other continents, they felt more affiliated with Europe than to their own country of origin. They also felt a sense of pride in being European.

In identifying what the EU can do to make the citizens in Poland feel that the Union is close to them and listens to their concerns, young participants pinpointed the following:

- ▶ greater need to provide information on the activities of EU institutions;
- ▶ larger numbers of initiatives in which citizens of individual EU countries are able to comment on issues related to EU decisions, and thus have an indirect opportunity to decide on the future of Europe;
- ▶ greater decision-making of EP representatives;
- ▶ more elaborate electoral campaigns of candidates for the European Parliament. Participants noticed that before the EP elections there is too little information dedicated to citizens - billboards, media, etc. It was noticed that lots of people in Poland before the elections are not aware of the fact that the elections actually take place;
- ▶ more referendums in the Member States on important EU issues.

### BEING ACTIVE CITIZENS (OF THE EU)

Being an active citizen of the EU for the young participants meant the same as participating in the EP elections. Yet, only 2 people out of 16 participants were able to indicate the date of the elections for the EP (May 23-26, 2019). The young people were more eager to speak about what it means, and how to be, an active citizen of their country than to reflect on their own actions. They noticed the difficulty in being an active citizen of the EU due to limited channels for participation. Representatives are elected to the EP who, according to the participants, do not necessarily listen to the “voice of the people” after being elected, but instead pursue more private goals and interests, or party interests. According to the students, it is difficult to be an active EU citizen, because the EU itself does not provide such opportunities. One of the opportunities that the EU can provide for young citizens of the Member States is to organize debates in the Member States that are open to young and interested persons. In this way, the EU institutions would have better access to bottom-up information about a given problem.

When asked questions like: Do participants perceive themselves as actively involved citizens? At the national or EU level? What is the difference? Participants responded that they felt more committed as citizens of Poland than at the European level. They are engaged citizens of Poland due to the proximity of institutions in the country, knowledge of

the mother tongue, and a good understanding of the political situation in the country.

The students pointed out that there is no clear message on the part of EU institutions that the strong involvement of citizens would matter. The EU itself does not encourage one to be an active EU citizen, as there is a “glass ceiling”, the space above which no ordinary citizen has the chance to access.

Attention was paid to social media, which is not fully used by the EU. In the era of influencers, there is a shortage of young people as representatives of EU institutions and to inform young Europeans about EU activities. Social media as an information channel is not sufficiently used by the EU institutions. Only official representatives post relatively rigid messages, which does not predispose young people and other citizens to follow and engage.

At the end of the discussions, the young people in Poland focused on what will be next for Poland and the EU. All participants declared their desire for Poland to remain in the EU structures and their desire to be active citizens of the EU. However, they noted concerns about the polarization of the political scene within the EU, the weakening of the EU due to Brexit and the weakening of the EU due to the uncompromising policy of conservative parties in individual European countries. The young people did not dare to predict what direction the EU will take next but acknowledged that the times are crucial and the upcoming EP elections will be important indicator.

### MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ advanced by young Poles
  - ▶ towards improving the future of the EU
1. **Better use of social media. For example, organizing a group of young Europeans (influencers) who will present EU news in an encouraging and interesting way for young people. An interactive portal, endorsed by the EU, should give the opportunity to vote on important EU matters as an opinion poll. These voices should be noticed in EU policy-makers.**
  2. **The European Union in member states should hold a referendum on matters of particular importance, such as migration. Citizens of the member states should be able to decide on key EU issues.**

3. **Public media should provide more information about EU activities. Every day in the main news should be permanent thematic blocks concerning only the EU.**

4. **The campaign for the EU parliamentary elections should be better prepared. There is not enough public information about candidates. The campaign should include more public meetings with candidates to the Parliament of Europe.**

5. **There should be organized groups of young people (volunteers) who, before the elections to the European Parliament, will support the election campaign among other young people.**

6. **MEPs, should have permanent meetings with voters in order to present the activities and implementation of the electoral plan.**

7. **Debates on EU issues should be organized in member countries for young people. The people who were the best in the debates should be invited to visit the EU institutions in Brussels. This would be a good advertisement for the EU institutions and would contribute to a greater EU citizenship of young people and would make the EU closer.**



# FOCUS GROUPS REPORT: SLOVAKIA

Location of discussions	Number of participants	Age range	Gender ratio (F:M)
Banska Bystrica	15	18-48	7:8

(Higher School of International Relations and Social Communication)

Location of discussions	Number of participants	Age range	Gender ratio (F:M)
Sladkovicovo	24	18-28	12:12

(University College of Enterprise and Administration)

**Nationality: Slovak, Czech, Ukrainian (Bratislava, Skalica, Trnava, Topolcany, Trencin, Ilava, Zilina, Trstena, Nove Zamky, Sala, Dunajska Streda, Levice, Velky Krtis, Zvolen, Banska Bystrica, Levoca, Kezmarok, Stara Lubovna, Kosice, Trebisov, Humenne, Zlin)**

#### Fields of study:

- ▶ International relations
- ▶ Political science
- ▶ Law

Population <sup>xi</sup>	5 437 754	EP elections 2014 turnout <sup>xii</sup>	13.05%
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## GENERAL ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EU

The participants from Matej Bel University located in Central Slovakia, expressed rather positive attitudes towards the EU. They perceived the EU as a community based on economic and business cooperation which is currently facing a challenge on the issue of its future existence, mainly regarding its form. They immediately defined the future of the EU as questionable, in connection to Brexit, with the UK being one of the biggest contributors into the European budget together with Germany and France.

The young people also positively perceived cooperation among countries that contributes to the development of smaller, less-developed Member States, the freedom of movement, common values, the single currency, and possibilities of visa-free and problem-free travel, as well as study. The EU is positively perceived through the prism of projects in the Member States which are financed or co-

financed from EU sources and, thus, also contribute to the increase of living standards and other aspects of human existence.

Negative sentiments were expressed in relation to the low-familiarity of citizens with activities of European institutions, excessive bureaucratization, and weak awareness of citizens about what the existence of the EU means for their daily lives. It was pointed out that some citizens, and even young people, in Slovakia are starting to question the added value of membership in the EU. They see the rise in prices and low wages in comparison with the states of Western Europe. Some of the students' expressions were filtered through negative populist simplifications about the EU related to regulations in the food and agriculture industries, for example. According to some respondents the EU should stay an economic, not a political, union.

“ There are limitations in the form of specific standards and regulations.

In the discussion at Danubius University located in Western Slovakia, some of the young people presented only general knowledge about the EU as a community of states, mainly at an economic level. Some extended the definition to open borders, free trade, single currency, problem-free travel, even a space of sharing common values and history.

Generally, the participants expressed a positive attitude towards the EU. However, some young people did not express their attitude at all, or they were not interested in this topic.

One participant expressed her positive opinion related to the EU and highlighted the gradual equalization in different areas of life among the Member States (e.g. in the area of judiciary). Some respondents view positively the EU through the access to European funds, through which the individual Member States can develop.

The students from Ukraine saw EU membership very positively since, for them, it has many further advantages. These include the protection of fundamental human rights, the freedom of travel, better possibilities in the job market, higher wages for work, better quality study opportunities, etc.

Some participants perceived the EU only through their difficulties in agreeing on a common migration solution and as a place of high politics, where, in reality, citizens cannot have an impact. Negatively perceived also were the “limitations” in the form of specific standards and regulations. One participant considered the EU as the source of problems in Slovakia which had not existed before, mainly economic ones, connected to Slovakia's participation in the euro area. Another young person described negatively the growing food dependence of Slovakia as, according to the participant, Slovakia was agriculturally independent before joining the EU.

In connection to the attitudes of young people in Slovakia towards the EU, discussions were open on the future of the Union. The overall sentiment was rather Eurosceptical. The future is seen as questionable and rather uncertain. According to the students, the EU will have to face changes internally and externally. According to some respondents, it could become a reality that other Member States will follow the example of Great Britain.

Nevertheless, for a small country like Slovakia the best alternative is to remain a part of the EU, according to the majority of young people. One participant brought up the problem of an ageing population. It is seen as a threat to the future of the EU because, with the continued demographic crisis,

the “strong” countries will, in the future, not be able to pull and support economically and financially the countries that are less-developed.

“ For a small country like Slovakia the best alternative is to remain a part of the EU.

## BEING CITIZENS OF THE EU

Some respondents cannot see any difference between their Slovak citizenship and EU citizenship, mainly due to the fact that they have lived a major part of their lives in Slovakia, already a member of the EU, and therefore EU citizenship, in their minds, does not provide any additional value.

Other students felt that they are themselves an integral part of the EU. EU citizenship was linked to equality before the law. According to them, there are better possibilities for claiming rights and achieving justice, as the citizens can resort to court action at the European level.

“ There is a boundary between the West and the East.

For some young people, Slovak citizenship is superior. They highlighted their national pride towards Slovakia as a unique sovereign state. Interestingly, some participants stated that they feel inferior in comparison to other European Member States. Based on their personal experiences, feeling foreign in other European countries, Slovakia is still perceived as “Eastern Europe” which is inferior in comparison with “Western Europe”.

EU citizens, thanks to freedom of movement, can get to know different cultures of other European countries, and at the same time they should perceive themselves equally, regardless of the state they come from. As an EU citizen, each should be provided with equal opportunities and rights. But some young people today still feel that there is no equality and there is a sense of superiority of some citizens of particular states over others. Thus, for some young people in Slovakia, EU citizenship does not yet represent added value.

“ European citizenship literally means nothing.

For some students, European citizenship literally means “nothing” and they do not perceive that something like this exists. Some of the respondents cannot see any differences “before” and “after” the entry of the Slovakia into the EU, and they do not perceive how it influences their lives. And, if there

are some differences, they are rather negative, e.g. regulations “from above” that “has to be accepted”.

### BEING ACTIVE CITIZENS (OF THE EU)

The main mechanism through which young people in Slovakia perceive engagement at the European level is through voting (using their right) in the European Parliament elections. According to some of them, citizens could participate also in EU projects in various areas (e.g. social, environmental). An active citizen is considered to be a person who: is interested in events in the EU, actively participates in discussions on European issues, helps to look for solutions by expressing one’s own opinions, knows all the EU Member States, works on being informed (including about the EP elections), and participates in surveys and opinion polls which are published by the EU on current topics. There were students who also were not able to define what it means to be an active citizen of the EU.

“*It is not possible to be an active citizen because it is impossible to influence events in the EU directly.*”

As a result, very few students considered themselves to be active citizens (3 out of 15 in Banska Bystrica). According to one participant, it is not possible to be an active citizen because “it is impossible to directly influence the events in the EU”. Another student expressed that she does not consider herself to be an active citizen, does not participate in the elections, is not interested in the topic of EU, and this topic is not close to her in anything related to her life. She ended by expressing her overall distrust towards the EU. Two other students also expressed that they are not planning to participate in the next elections since they cannot see why they should vote.

### MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ advanced by young Slovaks
  - ▶ towards improving the future of the EU
1. **Increase the rate of political participation and interest in the functioning and activities of the EU through the use of modern technology channels.**
  2. **Focus on increasing the knowledge about the EU and its affairs, especially with education on the subject starting as early as elementary school. The discussions revealed that young Slovaks lack awareness of the work of the EU institutions and their role in different areas.**
  3. **Make an attempt at referendum democracy to link how specifically the EU policies relate to its inhabitants.**
  4. **Since the EU, in the minds of young Slovaks, is explained through personal experiences related mainly to economic benefits, strengthen EU-wide programmes that allow students to “see and touch” the EU might increase their sense of belonging to the Union.**



<sup>i</sup> Kitzinger, Jenny (1995), “Introducing focus groups,” BMJ, Volume 331, pp. 299-302

<sup>ii</sup> National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria, 2019, Population, Available Online: <http://www.nsi.bg/en>

<sup>iii</sup> European Parliament, 2014, Election Results by Country: Bulgaria, Available Online: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/country-results-bg-2014.html#table04>

<sup>iv</sup> Eurostat, 2019, Unemployment Statistics: Statistics Explains, Available Online: [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statistics#Youth\\_unemployment](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics#Youth_unemployment)

<sup>v</sup> European Council, 2000, Lisbon Strategy, Available Online: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm)

<sup>vi</sup> European Commission, 2018, Standard Eurobarometer 90, Available Online: <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/surveyKy/2215>

<sup>vii</sup> Federal Statistical Office of Germany, 2019, Population, Available Online: <https://www.destatis.de/EN/FactsFigures/SocietyState/Population/Population.html#sessionid=3816619E76237DBD96ED9240E10C3912.InternetLive2>

<sup>viii</sup> European Parliament, 2014, Election Results by Country: Germany, Available Online: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/country-results-de-2014.html>

<sup>ix</sup> Statistics Poland, 2019, Population, Available Online:

<sup>x</sup> European Parliament, 2014, Election Results by Country: Poland, Available Online: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/country-results-pl-2014.html>

<sup>xi</sup> Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, 2019, Population, Available Online: [https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/home/!ut/p/z/04\\_Sj9CPyKssyOxPLMnMzOvMAfjjo8ziA809LZycDB0NLPyCXA08QxwD3IO8TAwNTEz1g1Pz9AuyHRUBtph-Sw!!](https://slovak.statistics.sk/wps/portal/ext/home/!ut/p/z/04_Sj9CPyKssyOxPLMnMzOvMAfjjo8ziA809LZycDB0NLPyCXA08QxwD3IO8TAwNTEz1g1Pz9AuyHRUBtph-Sw!!)

<sup>xii</sup> European Parliament, 2014, Election Results by Country: Slovakia, Available Online: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2014-results/en/country-results-sk-2014.html>



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