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Young people's attitudes to the European Union

**A typology of public opinion among young Europeans
(Eurobarometer N°47.1)**

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It provides a source of information about the attitudes of young Europeans towards the European Union in 1997.

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Typology of young Europeans – Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. THE 3 ATTITUDINAL CLUSTERS AMONG YOUNG EUROPEANS.....	2
3. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE THREE CLUSTERS	3
3.1 COUNTRY PROFILE.....	3
3.2 GENDER	5
3.3 AGE	5
3.4 EDUCATION	5
3.5 ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.....	6
3.6 POLITICAL ORIENTATION.....	6
3.7 MEDIA USE	6
3.8 OPINION LEADERSHIP INDEX	7
3.9 SUMMARY OF THE CLUSTER PROFILES	8
4. ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN UNION	9
4.1 MEMBERSHIP TO THE EUROPEAN UNION	9
4.2 PERCEIVED BENEFITS OF EU MEMBERSHIP	10
4.3 SUPPORT FOR EU POLICY ISSUES.....	11
4.4 WHO SHOULD TAKE DECISIONS?.....	14
4.5 WHICH AREAS SHOULD BE DECIDED JOINTLY BY THE EU?	15
4.6 ATTITUDES TOWARDS ENLARGEMENT	16
4.7 UNIFICATION OF EUROPE.....	18
4.8 FEELING EUROPEAN	20
5. UNDERSTANDING OF THE EUROPEAN UNION	21
5.1 KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE EUROPEAN UNION	21
5.2 LEVELS OF FEELING INFORMED ABOUT THE EUROPEAN UNION.....	22
5.3 DESIRE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE EUROPEAN UNION	23
5.4 THE EU AS A TAUGHT SUBJECT IN SCHOOL	24
6. OTHER RELEVANT FINDINGS	25
6.1 LIFE SATISFACTION	25
6.2 SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRACY IN THEIR COUNTRY.....	28
6.3 NATIONAL IDENTITY.....	30
APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTION OF STATISTICAL ANALYSES.....	31
APPENDIX B: TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION OF EUROBAROMETER N°47.1	33
APPENDIX C: TABLES FOR COUNTRY RESULTS.....	35

1. Introduction

In the analysis of public opinion towards the European Union, comparisons are frequently made between men and women, young and old people, managers and manual workers and so on. Each of these groups is treated as a homogeneous unit and one often reads, for instance, that men hold more favourable opinions towards the European Union than women do or that young people are more favourable than older people. While this is true at the aggregate level, more in-depth analyses indicate that within each of these groups a lot of variation exists when it comes to attitudes towards the European Union.

The focus of this report is **to investigate the various levels of support or opposition to the European Union expressed by young Europeans**¹. We have done this by carrying out a statistical procedure, called cluster analysis², which identifies distinct groups within a given (people aged 15 to 29 in this case) population.

We have taken a number of questions asked on the **Eurobarometer Survey**³ which measure public opinion towards the European Union, analysed the responses of the young people and have subsequently grouped them into distinct clusters on the basis of their views.

Clearly, our questions do not cover the totality of attitudes towards the European Union. However, on the basis of what was covered on the survey, we were able to identify the **existence of three groups of young Europeans**, each holding a **distinct set of views on the European Union**.

A similar report on the typology of young people's opinions towards the European Union was produced by INRA for the Public Opinion Analysis Unit (DG X.A.2) in June 1995⁴. **Typologies on the opinion of women appeared in December 1997 and July 1994. Typologies of the general population were written in July 1994 and May 1995**⁵.

¹ Throughout this report the young population represents EU citizens aged 15 to 29, living in all the 15 Member States of the European Union.

² See Appendix A for a description of the statistical analyses carried out in this study.

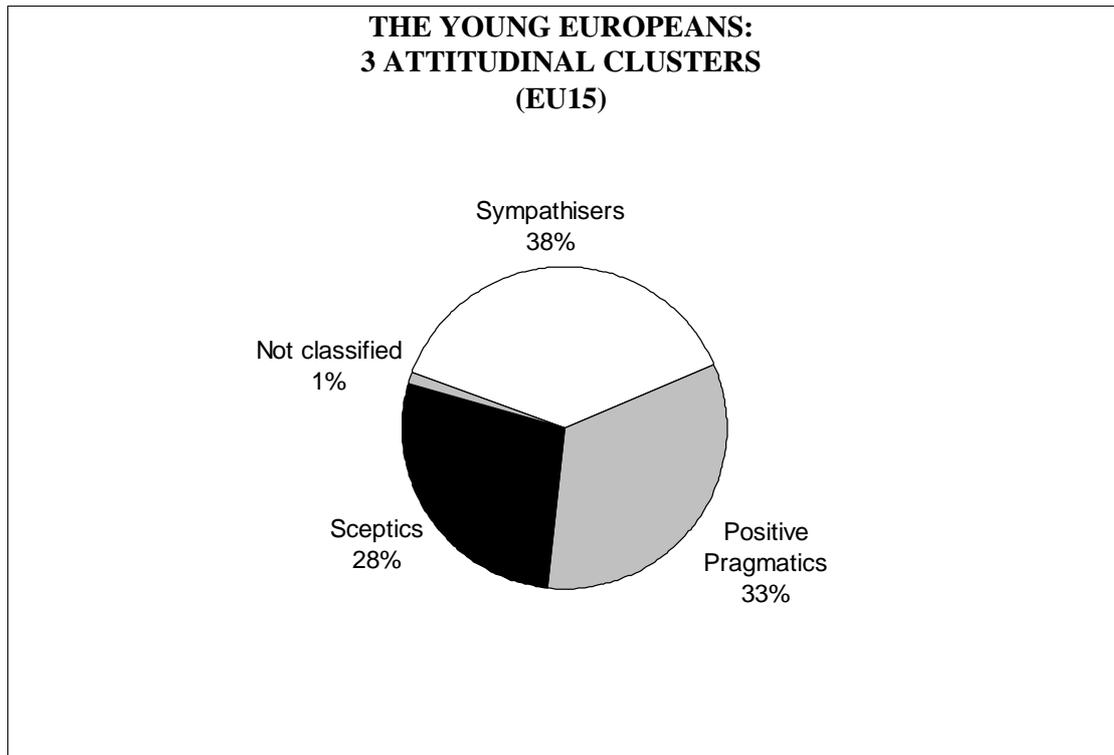
³ Eurobarometer 47.1 - see Appendix B for technical details of the survey.

⁴ Note that in this typology the young population includes EU citizens aged 15 to 24.

⁵ Copies of these reports are available upon request. Some are written in French, others in English.

2. The 3 attitudinal clusters among young Europeans

Young Europeans can be placed into three distinct attitudinal groups: **Sympathisers, Positive Pragmatics and Sceptics**. Each respondent aged 15 to 29 was placed in one of these three groups depending on how each of them feel about the European Union. The pie below shows the proportion of young Europeans belonging to each of the three attitudinal clusters.



1. **The Sympathisers:** 38% of young Europeans want a powerful Union that takes policy decisions. As dedicated supporters, they also know the most about the European Union and are most interested in learning more.
2. **The Positive Pragmatics:** 33% of young Europeans have rationally decided that the European Union represents a positive development. However, their rationality makes them less inclined than the Sympathisers to give the EU as much decision-making powers.
3. **The Sceptics:** 28% of young Europeans hold largely negative feelings about the European Union. Of the three groups, they are also the least interested in the European Union. Their scepticism isn't limited to the European Union; they are also the most pessimistic when it comes to their own country and their own personal life.

Most young Europeans hold positive views about the European Union. Only 28% oppose the Union. In the next section, we will show that these young people come from countries where Eurosceptic feelings are generally widespread.

3. Demographic profile of the three clusters

This section describes the demographics of the three clusters.

3.1 Country profile

Clearly, attitudes differ significantly depending on the country in which the young Europeans live. The following table shows how the three groups are represented within the Member States of the European Union.

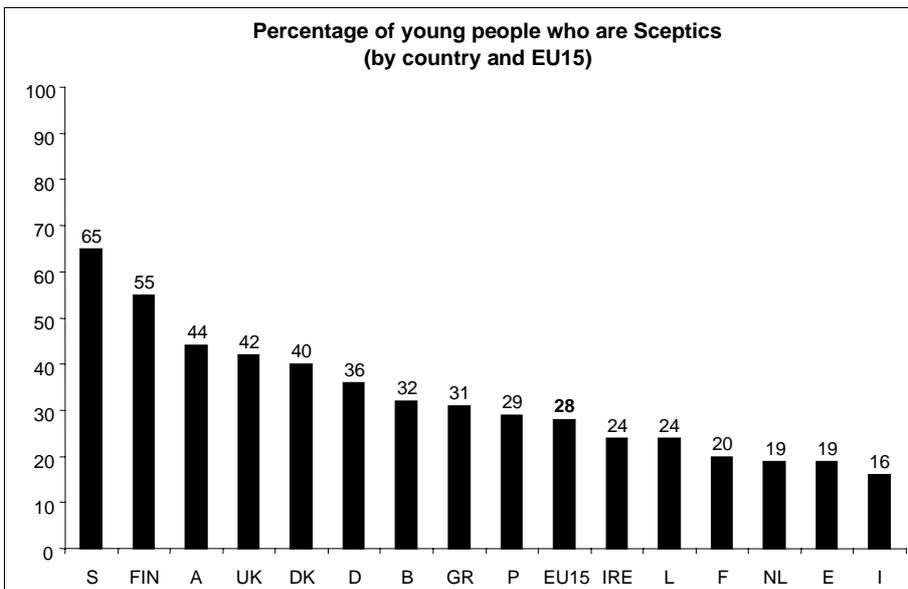
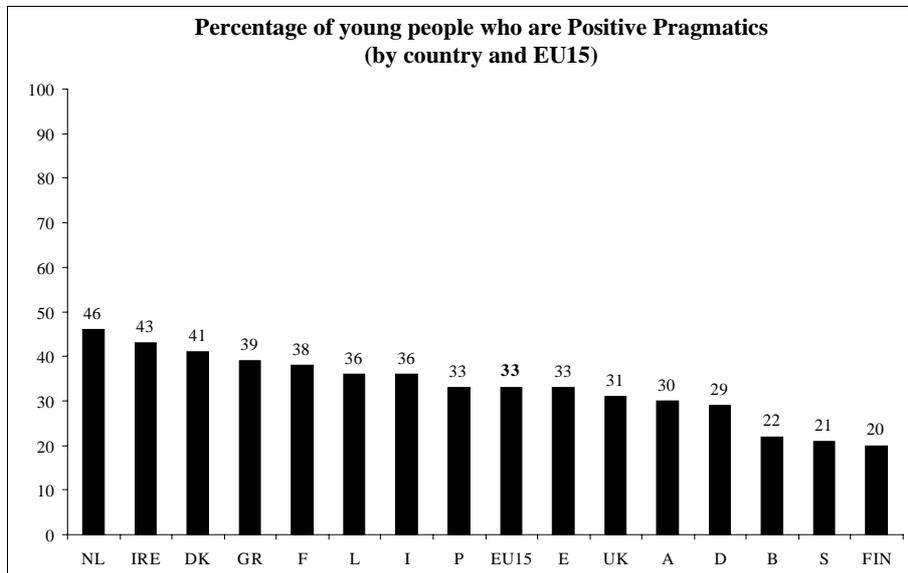
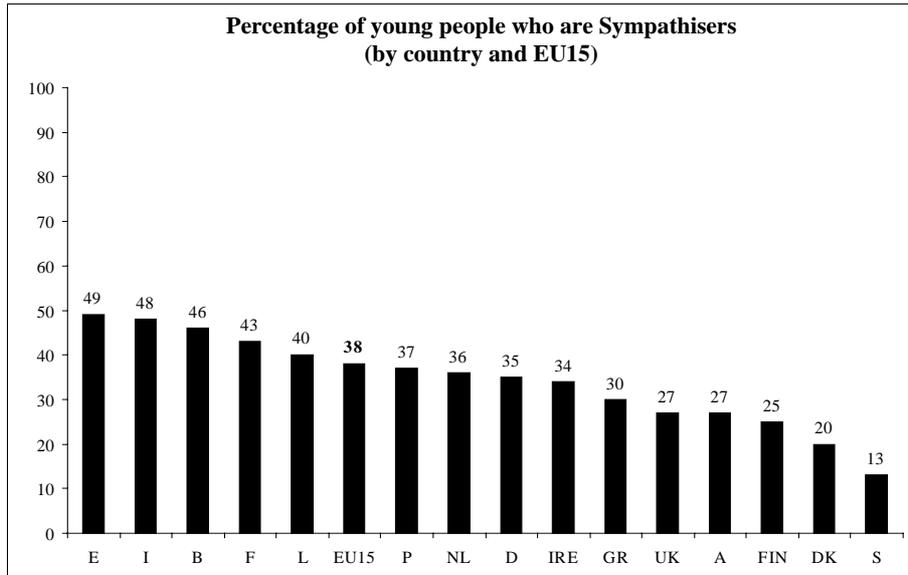
Table 3.1⁶

	% Sympathisers	% Positive Pragmatics	% Sceptics
Belgium (n=252)	46	22	32
Denmark (n=273)	20	41	40
Germany (n=487)	35	29	36
Greece (n=261)	30	39	31
Spain (n=312)	49	33	19
Finland (n=233)	25	20	55
France (n=277)	43	38	20
Ireland (n=318)	34	43	24
Italy (n=273)	48	36	16
Luxembourg (n=162)	40	36	24
Netherlands (n=253)	36	46	19
Austria (n=263)	27	30	44
Portugal (n=286)	37	33	29
Sweden (n=235)	13	21	65
United Kingdom (n=326)	27	31	42

- In 6 countries more than 75% of the young people are **Sympathisers** or **Positive Pragmatics**. These are **Italy** (84%), **Spain, the Netherlands** (both 82%), **France** (81%), **Ireland** (77%) and **Luxembourg** (76%).
- In a further 4 countries, more than 6 in 10 young people are **Sympathisers** or **Positive Pragmatics**. These are **Portugal** (70%), **Greece** (69%), **Belgium** (68%) and **Germany** (64%).
- In **Denmark, the UK, and Austria** at least half of the young people hold positive views towards the European Union. However, at least 4 in 10 young people in these countries are **Sceptics**.
- In 2 countries, the **Sceptics** represent more than half of the young people. These are **Sweden** (65%) and **Finland** (55%).

⁶ For all country comparisons in this report, a weighting factor is applied that matches the data to the demographic profile of each Member State. See Appendix B for more information.

Typology of young Europeans



3.2 Gender

The gender split in terms of attitudes towards the European Union among young Europeans is similar to that of the European population as a whole: **Sympathisers or Positive Pragmatics are more likely to be men whereas Sceptics are more likely to be women.**

Table 3.2 ⁷	Sympathisers	Positive Pragmatics	Sceptics
<i>Gender:</i>	%	%	%
<i>Male</i>	52	51	48
<i>Female</i>	48	49	52

3.3 Age

Since this study focuses on a specific age group, the influence of age on attitudes is less pronounced. Nonetheless, the pattern that we know exists for the population as a whole also holds for people aged 15 to 29: **Sceptics are most represented in the oldest age group.**

Table 3.3	Sympathisers	Positive Pragmatics	Sceptics
<i>Age:</i>	%	%	%
<i>15 – 19</i>	27	29	26
<i>20 – 24</i>	41	37	35
<i>25 – 29</i>	32	35	39
Average	22	22	23

3.4 Education

Many of the youngest people in the sample are still in school (92% of 15 year olds, 77% of 16 year olds and 63% of 17 year olds). Despite the fact that we can not know at what age these people will leave school, the influence of education on attitudes is already evident among young Europeans: **Sceptics are more likely to leave school earlier than Sympathisers or Positive Pragmatics.**

Table 3.4	Sympathisers	Positive Pragmatics	Sceptics
<i>Left school at age:</i>	%	%	%
<i>15 or younger</i>	9	8	12
<i>16 – 19</i>	42	36	51
<i>20 or older</i>	17	18	16
<i>Still studying</i>	31	38	21

⁷ The figures in tables 3.2 to 3.8 in Section 3 are weighted to match the demographic profile of the European Union as a whole. See Appendix B for more information.

3.5 *Economic activity*

Positive Pragmatics and **Sympathisers** are **significantly more likely** to be **students**, whereas **Sceptics** are **most likely** to be **manual workers**.

Table 3.5	Sympathisers	Positive Pragmatics	Sceptics
<i>Main economic activity:</i>	%	%	%
<i>Student</i>	31	38	21
<i>Self-employed</i>	6	5	6
<i>Manager/ Professional</i>	4	7	3
<i>Employee</i>	13	9	15
<i>Manual worker</i>	27	26	36
<i>Unemployed</i>	13	11	14
<i>Other</i>	5	4	6

3.6 *Political orientation*

The **political orientation** of the **Sympathisers** is the **most left of centre**; **Positive Pragmatics** are **slightly less likely** than **Sympathisers** to be **left of centre**. **Sceptics** are **most likely to be right of centre**. They are also **most likely to lack or to refuse to state their political orientation**.

Table 3.6	Sympathisers	Positive Pragmatics	Sceptics
<i>Political orientation:</i>	%	%	%
<i>Left</i>	29	29	23
<i>Centre</i>	33	30	27
<i>Right</i>	18	21	26
<i>Refuse/DK</i>	20	20	24

3.7 *Media use*

Whilst **Sceptics** are most likely to read the **news in daily papers** everyday, on the whole they are the **least avid users** of this news medium. (Table 3.7a)

There are **no significant differences** between the three groups of young people in how often they watch the **news on television**. (Table 3.7b)

Sympathisers are **most likely to use the radio to obtain news** with nearly 6 in 10 doing this at least several times a week. (Table 3.7c)

Typology of young Europeans

Table 3.7a	Sympathisers	Positive Pragmatics	Sceptics
<i>Reads news in daily papers:</i>	%	%	%
<i>Everyday</i>	28	28	32
<i>Several times a week</i>	22	21	18
<i>Once or twice a week</i>	21	19	17
<i>Less often</i>	18	18	17
<i>Never</i>	11	13	17

Table 3.7b	Sympathisers	Positive Pragmatics	Sceptics
<i>Watches news on TV:</i>	%	%	%
<i>Everyday</i>	57	58	54
<i>Several times a week</i>	26	24	27
<i>Once or twice a week</i>	10	12	12
<i>Less often</i>	5	5	5
<i>Never</i>	2	2	3

Table 3.7c	Sympathisers	Positive Pragmatics	Sceptics
<i>Listens to news on radio:</i>	%	%	%
<i>Everyday</i>	36	35	36
<i>Several times a week</i>	20	16	17
<i>Once or twice a week</i>	10	12	10
<i>Less often</i>	16	18	16
<i>Never</i>	17	18	18

3.8 Opinion leadership index

Nearly half of the **Sympathisers** rank above average in their **opinion leadership qualities**, while more than 6 in 10 **Sceptics** rank below average.

Table 3.8	Sympathisers	Positive Pragmatics	Sceptics
<i>Opinion leadership:</i>	%	%	%
<i>Very high</i>	10	9	9
<i>Above average</i>	38	35	27
<i>Below average</i>	33	38	37
<i>Very low</i>	20	19	28

3.9 Summary of the cluster profiles

The Sympathisers (38%):

- are **more likely** to be men.
- are **most likely** to be aged 24 or younger.
- are the **most left-of-centre** group politically.
- are the **most avid users** of news media.
- **rank the highest** on the opinion leadership index.

The countries where the proportion of **Sympathisers** is significantly above average are **Spain** (49%), **Italy** (48%), **Belgium** (46%) and **France** (43%).

The Positive Pragmatics (33%):

- are **more likely** to be men.
- are the **most well educated group** and **most likely to still be in school**.
- are the **least likely** to be unemployed.
- **score lower** than **Sympathisers** and **higher** than **Sceptics** on the opinion leadership index.

The countries where the proportion of **Positive Pragmatics** is significantly above average are **the Netherlands** (46%), **Ireland** (43%), **Denmark** (40%), **Greece** (39%) and **France** (38%).

The Sceptics (28%):

- are **more likely** to be women.
- are **most likely** to be aged 25 to 29.
- are the **least well educated** group.
- are the **most likely** to be in **manual occupations**.
- are the **most right-of-centre** group politically.
- are the **least likely** to use the news media.
- **rank lowest** on the opinion leadership index.

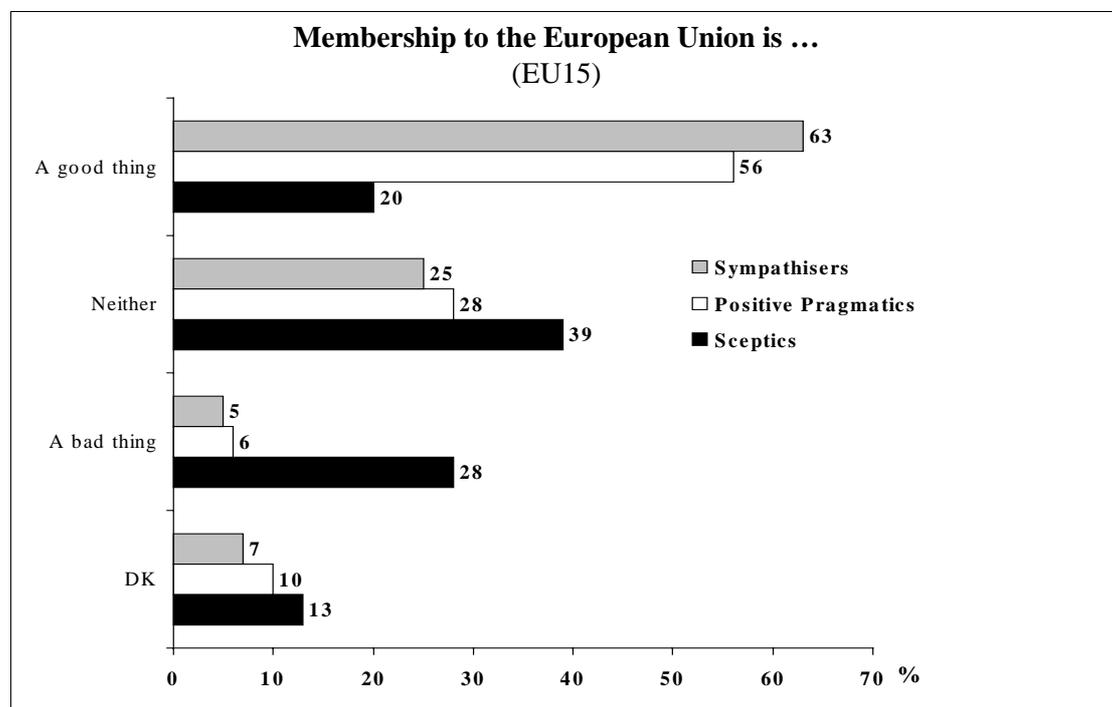
The countries where the proportion of **Sceptics** is significantly above average are **Sweden** (65%), **Finland** (55%), **Austria** (44%), **the United Kingdom** (42%) **Denmark** (40%) and **Germany** (36%).

4. Attitudes towards the European Union

In this section we describe the views held towards the European Union by the members of the three attitudinal clusters.

4.1 Membership to the European Union

Sympathisers (63%) are most likely to view their country's membership towards the European Union as a good thing, followed by the Positive Pragmatics (56%). Only 2 in 10 Sceptics regard their country's membership to the European Union as a good thing while nearly 3 in 10 view it as a bad thing.



Country analyses show that in Ireland 86% of Sympathisers believe their country's membership to the European Union is a good thing, followed by Denmark (83%), the Netherlands (79%), Luxembourg, Portugal (both 74%) and Greece (73%). Only 44% of the Sympathisers in Sweden regard their country's membership to the EU as a good thing. Austria (49%) is the only other country where less than half of the Sympathisers feel positive about EU membership. (Table 1a⁸)

The country by country pattern for the Positive Pragmatics is similar: in Ireland 82% of these young people believe that their country's membership to the European Union is a good thing, followed by Luxembourg, the Netherlands (both 81%), Denmark (78%), Portugal (77%) and Greece (76%). Sweden

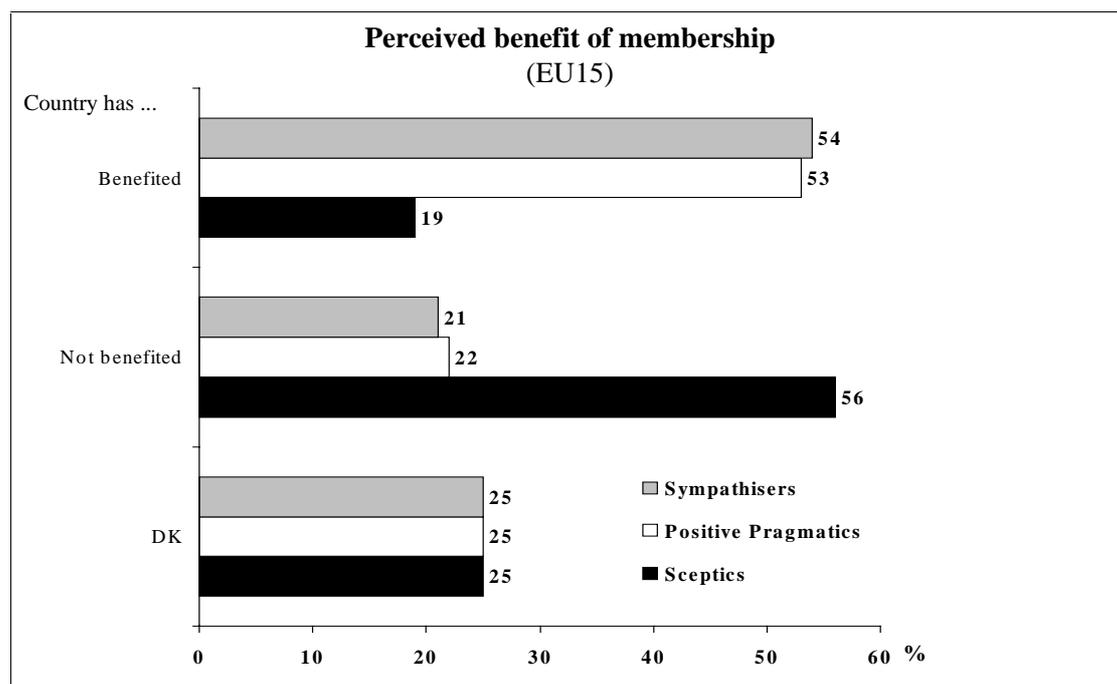
⁸ The tables with the country by country results for all the questions are in Appendix C.

(43%) is the only country where less than half of the Positive Pragmatics share this view. (Table 1b)

The country by country analysis for the Sceptics shows that Greece (69%) Luxembourg (61%) and Ireland (57%) are the only countries where more than half of these young people regard their country's membership to the European Union as a good thing. The lowest level of support among Sceptics is found in Germany where only 6% regard membership as a good thing. In Sweden (13%) and Austria (14%) very low levels of support among this group are also noted. (Table 1c)

4.2 Perceived benefits of EU membership

More than half of the young people who are Sympathisers or Positive Pragmatics believe that their country has on balance benefited from membership to the European Union. Less than 2 in 10 Sceptics share this view. Among all three attitudinal groups we find that 1 in 4 young people feel unable to judge whether their country has benefited from membership or not.



Among the Sympathisers, the Irish are most inclined to feel that their country has benefited from membership (87%), followed by the Danes (85%) and the Portuguese (81%). Only 29% of the Sympathisers in Sweden share this view, along with 42% of Italian and 49% of British and Austrian Sympathisers. (Table 2a)

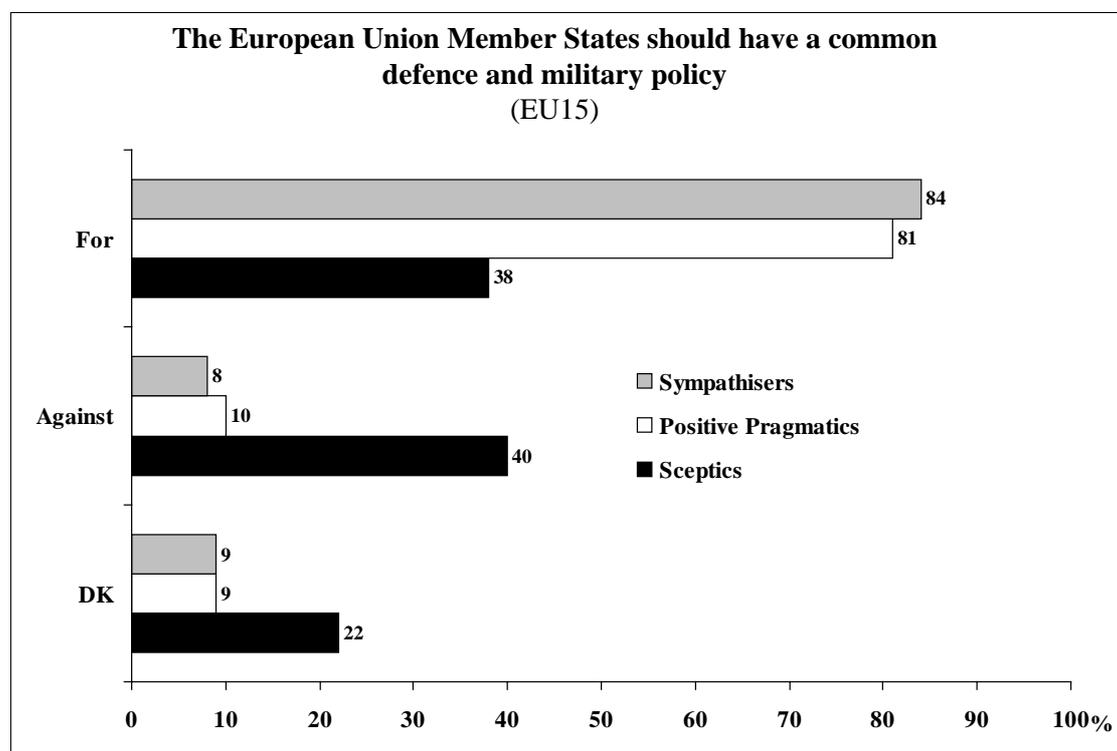
Among the Positive Pragmatics, the Irish (90%) and the Danes (86%) are also the most favourable. Widespread concurrence with this view is furthermore

found in Greece (85%), Portugal (84%) and the Netherlands (82%). In Italy (40%), Spain (42%), Germany (46%) and Austria (47%), on the other hand, less than half of the Positive Pragmatics feel that their country has benefited from EU membership. The lowest level of support among this group, however, is once again noted in Sweden where only 31% perceive membership as beneficial. (Table 2b)

In a number of countries the perception that EU membership is beneficial is so widespread among young people that high levels of agreement are noted even among the Sceptics. These countries are Ireland (69%), Greece (65%) and Portugal (58%). At the other extreme, we find that in Germany (8%), Spain, Sweden (both 9%), Italy and Austria (both 12%) only a very small minority of Sceptics feel their country has benefited from EU membership. (Table 2c)

4.3 Support for EU policy issues

More than 8 in 10 of Sympathisers and Positive Pragmatics believe that the Member States of the European Union should have a common defence and military policy, compared to only 38% of the Sceptics. Sceptics are not only significantly more likely to oppose a common defence and military policy, they are also more likely to lack an opinion on this issue.



Levels of support for a common EU defence and military policy among Sympathisers are generally very high in all the Member States but particularly so in the Netherlands (95%) and Germany (93%). Finland (48%) is the only

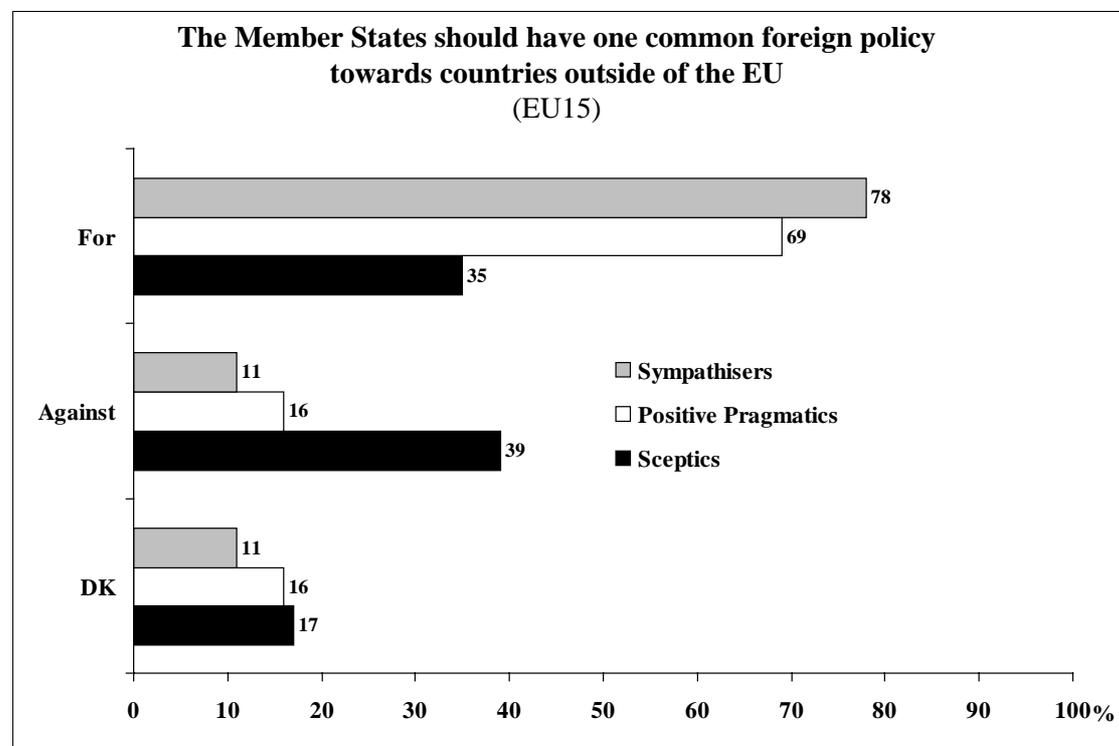
Typology of young Europeans

country where less than half of the Sympathisers favour a common defence and military policy. (Table 3a)

Among the Positive Pragmatics, the Italians (91%) and Greeks (89%) are most in favour of this policy. At 58%, Finnish and Swedish young people in this group are least supportive. (Table 3b)

In most countries, less than half of the Sceptics want a common defence and military policy. The only exceptions are the Netherlands (57%) and Italy (54%). At 15%, support is lowest in Ireland. (Table 3c)

Nearly 8 in 10 Sympathisers favour a common foreign policy towards countries outside the EU as do nearly 7 in 10 Positive Pragmatics. Less than 4 in 10 Sceptics feel this way.



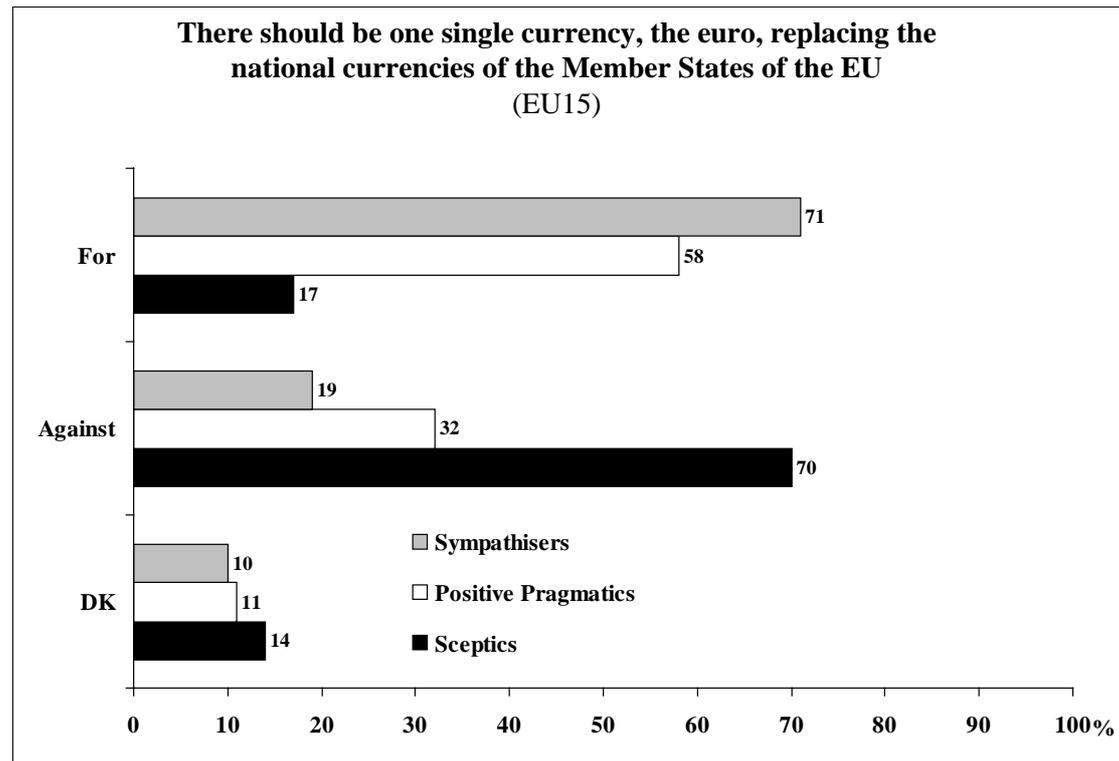
Among the Sympathisers, we find that the Danes are most in favour of a common foreign policy (89%), followed by the Greek (87%), the Germans, the Dutch (both 85%), the Austrians (84%), the Portuguese (83%) and the Italians (82%). At 51%, levels of support among Sympathisers are lowest in the UK. (Table 4a)

More than 8 in 10 Austrian (85%), Greek (84%) and Italian (82%) Positive Pragmatics favour this policy. At 50%, young British people in this group are also the least supportive. (Table 4b)

Typology of young Europeans

Luxembourg (61%), Greece and Italy (both 55%) are the only three countries where more than half of the Sceptics want a common foreign policy. Only 18% of British Sceptics favour this policy. (Table 4c)

Sympathisers stand out as being significantly more supportive of the single currency, the euro than the two other groups. More than 7 in 10 young people in this group are for the euro, compared to 58% of Positive Pragmatics and only 17% of Sceptics.



Looking at the country results shows that among the Sympathisers support is highest in Italy (82%), Luxembourg and Austria (both 81%). At 51%, support for the euro among this group is lowest in the UK. (Table 5a)

High levels of support are found among Positive Pragmatics from a number of countries, particularly Greece and Italy (both 85%). The lowest levels are recorded in the UK (35%), Germany (37%), Denmark and Finland (both 38%). (Table 5b)

There is no country where more than half of the Sceptics are in favour of the euro. Highest levels of support among this group are noted in Ireland (45%), Belgium (43%) and Greece (41%). In Germany (7%), the UK (9%), Denmark (10%) and Sweden (13%) support for the euro is the lowest. (Table 5c)

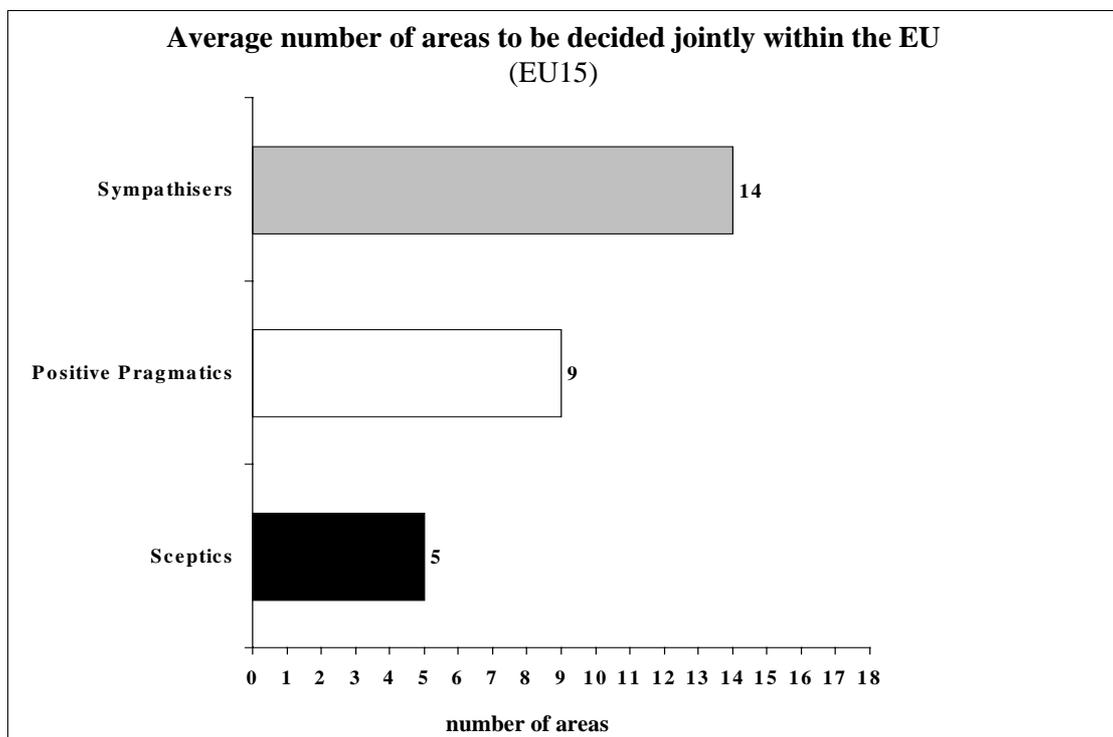
4.4 Who should take decisions?

The Eurobarometer survey presented respondents with a list of 18 policy areas and asked them whether they thought each area should be decided by their respective national government or jointly within the EU.

The Sympathisers differ significantly from the two other groups in their response to this question. On average, they want decision-making responsibilities to lie with the EU for 14 of the 18 policy areas listed. **The large majority of Sympathisers want political responsibility to lie with the European Union rather than with their respective national governments.**

It is also in this area that we note a distinct feature of the **Positive Pragmatics**: while they generally hold favourable views about the European Union, **they are more restrained than the Sympathisers when it comes to giving the EU the power to take decisions.** The Positive Pragmatics on average only want 9 of the 18 areas to be decided jointly within the EU.

The **Sceptics** want to **protect their country's sovereignty** and **want political responsibility to lie with their respective national governments.** On average, they want the EU to take the decisions in only 5 of the 18 areas listed.



There are clear country variations within the three clusters.

Among the Sympathisers, the country analyses show that the Portuguese (average number of areas = 16) want the highest number of policy areas to be

Typology of young Europeans

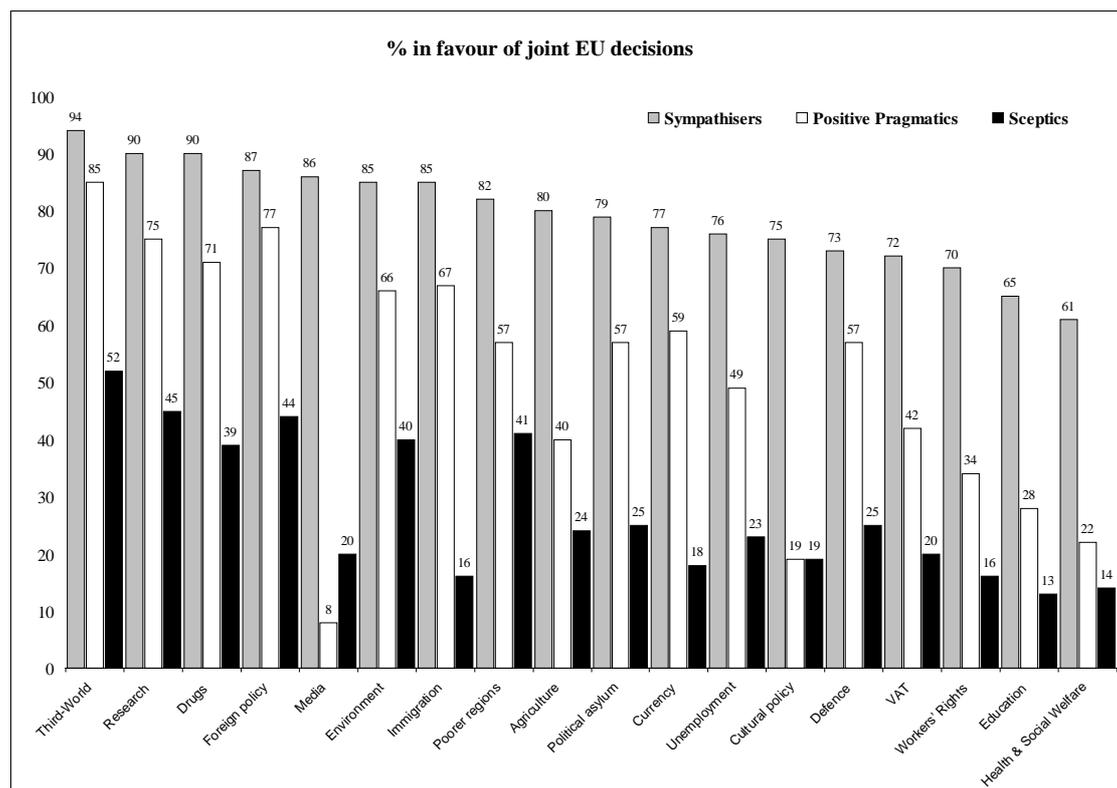
decided jointly within the EU, followed by those from Belgium Germany and Greece (all 15). Sympathisers from Finland (11), Denmark and Sweden (both 12) are the most restrictive. (Table 6a)

Among the Positive Pragmatics, the variance is less pronounced ranging from a high of 10 policy areas in the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium and France to a low of 8 policy areas in Finland, the UK and Portugal. (Table 6b)

Sceptics from the Netherlands, Italy and Luxembourg (all 7) want the highest number of areas to be decided jointly within the EU while Sceptics from Greece and Portugal (both 3) want the EU to have decision-making powers in the fewest number of areas. (Table 6c)

4.5 Which areas should be decided jointly by the EU?

Levels of support for EU decision-making vary not only between the 3 clusters and between the Member States. They also vary depending on the area in question.



For all three clusters, **support is highest in areas where the problems transcend national borders**, such as the Third World, scientific and technological research, the fight against drugs and foreign policy towards non-EU countries. For all three clusters, **support is lowest for areas that have a more national character**, such as education and health & social welfare. **What stands out most in the graph above, however, is the difference in**

the levels of support for joint EU decision making obtained from the three clusters.

We have already seen that Sympathisers on average want the EU to decide 14 of the 18 policy areas. When this result is reflected in percentages, **we find that more than 6 in 10 Sympathisers want the EU to have the decision-making power in each of the 18 areas with nearly all favouring the EU over their national governments in areas that transcend national borders.** The most marked differences between the Sympathisers and the other two groups are found in the areas of **media** (i.e. basic rules for broadcasting and press) and **cultural policy** where support among the Sympathisers is more than three times that of the other two groups.

Positive Pragmatics believe in the concept of subsidiarity. In their view, issues which can be tackled better through joint rather than individual action should be dealt with by the EU while decisions that can be taken close to the citizen at the national level do not need to go through the EU. As such, the large majority believe that it is better to have joint action on issues that transcend national borders. At the other extreme we find that only 8% of Positive Pragmatics want the EU to decide over issues relating to the media. Here their level of support is even lower than that of the Sceptics and in the area of cultural policy (19%) it is as low as that of the Sceptics.

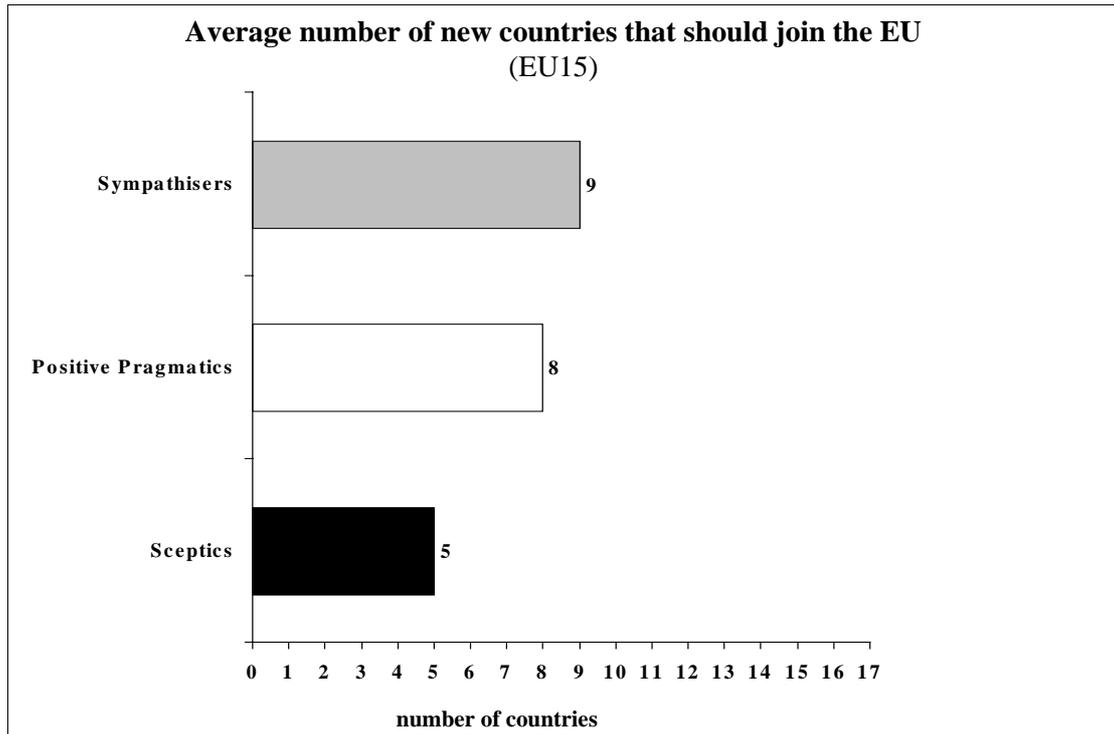
The Sceptics are clearly the most opposed to EU decision-making. The only areas for which they voice some support are those where their country's sovereignty is not at risk, namely the Third World (52%), research (45%), poorer regions (41%) and drugs (41%), areas where their country could benefit from a united Europe, namely foreign policy (44%) and defence (25%) or the area which tackles further pollution of their home soil, namely the environment (40%). All other areas receive support from a maximum of 2 in 10 Sceptics.

4.6 Attitudes towards enlargement

The Eurobarometer presented respondents with a list of 17 countries and asked them for each country whether they were in favour or not of it becoming part of the European Union in the future.

There are clear differences in how the three clusters feel about enlargement. Support is highest among the Sympathisers although the Positive Pragmatics are not far behind. As we have seen before, the real difference lies with the Sceptics. They are significantly less favourable of enlargement than the other two groups. **Despite the differences between the clusters, it should be noted that enlargement is not a topic that generally obtains widespread support from young Europeans.**

If we count the average number of countries each cluster favours, we find that the Sympathisers support 9 new countries becoming members of the European Union in the future, the Positive Pragmatics 8 and the Sceptics 5.



The country analyses for the Sympathisers reveal that among this group the Swedes (13) favour the largest number of new member countries, followed by the Dutch (11). The Belgians and Austrians on average only want 7 new countries to join. (Table 7a)

Among the Positive Pragmatics, the Greeks and the Swedes on average favour 12 new countries, followed by the Danes and the Dutch (both 11). Support is lowest among the Germans (6), the Belgians and the French (both 7). (Table 7b)

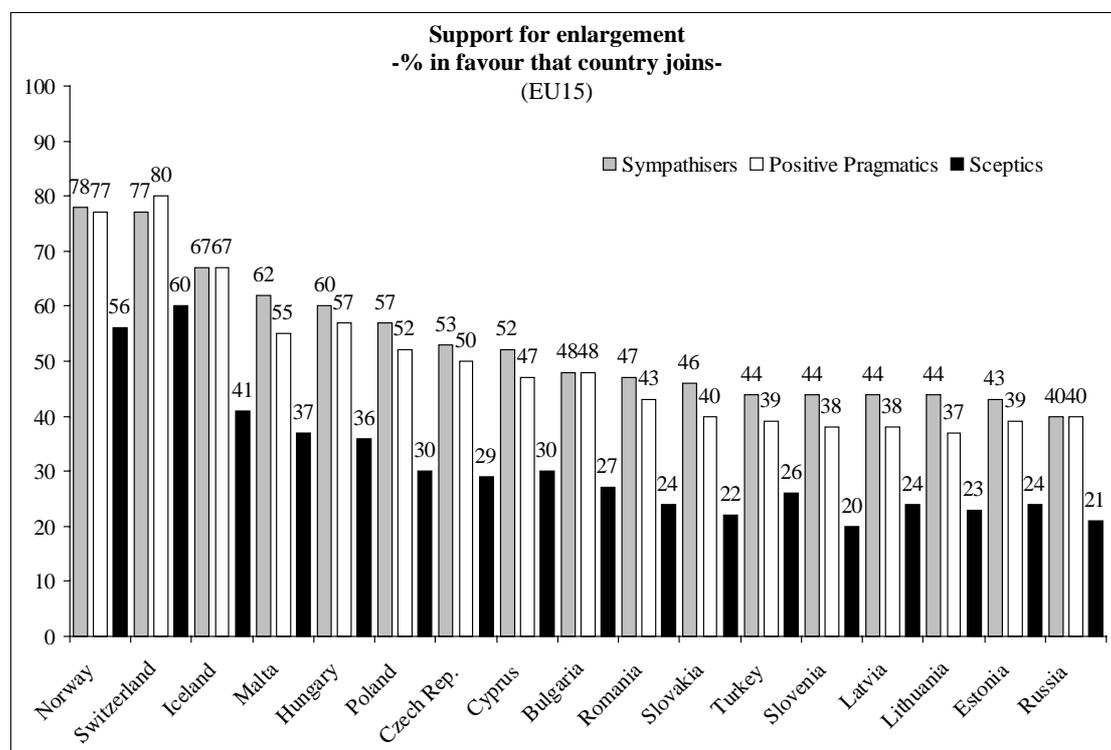
The country analyses for the Sceptics shows that in Greece this group favours 10 new countries, followed by Denmark and Sweden (both 9). Sceptics from Germany (3), Belgium, France and Austria (all 4) are least supportive. (Table 7c)

In addition to showing the by now familiar pattern among the clusters, **these analyses also bring to light the fact that a person's country of origin is an important factor in determining attitudes towards enlargement.** There are some countries where all three clusters are above average in their support of enlargement and other countries where support levels for all three clusters are below average. Young people in Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark are generally quite supportive while young people in Belgium, Austria and Germany are generally far less supportive. Our data show that the same pattern holds for the population as a whole.

If we look at which countries receive most support, we find that some of the non-members in Western Europe are the most popular among all three

Typology of young Europeans

clusters. A number of the Eastern European nations and Cyprus, all countries that have been admitted for accession talks, receive the next highest levels of support. After these countries, the levels of support are below 50% for all three clusters. This highlights what we reported at the beginning of this discussion, namely that support for enlargement is generally quite low. However, once again we witness the differences in attitudes between the Sympathisers and Positive Pragmatics on the one hand and the Sceptics on the other hand. Among the two pro-European clusters we find that support levels are above 50% for 7 countries and that 37% is the lowest level obtained (Positive Pragmatics – Lithuania). Among the Sceptics, levels of support are only above 50% for Switzerland and Norway while quite a number of other countries receive support from only around 2 in 10 people from this cluster.



4.7 Unification of Europe

Respondents to the survey were asked to choose three aims from a list which they feel their national governments should address as priorities.

Looking at the priorities, we find that unemployment is mentioned by three quarters of young people from all three clusters. The Sceptics stand out in being significantly more likely than young people from the other two clusters to choose the fight against crime (54%) and national defence (20%) as priorities.

The aim of the question is to see for how many people the unification of Europe ranks among the top three priorities. Obviously, when forced to

Typology of young Europeans

choose a maximum of three priorities from a list that contains many important issues, the chances that people choose Europe are low. **Nonetheless, 14% of the young Sympathisers select the unification of Europe as one of the top three aims, compared to 9% of Positive Pragmatics and only 3% of Sceptics.**

Table 4.1	Sympathisers	Positive Pragmatics	Sceptics
<i>Priorities:</i>	%	%	%
<i>Equality of men and women</i>	20	19	20
<i>Protection of the environment</i>	37	38	37
<i>Defence of our country</i>	13	14	20
<i>Unification of Europe</i>	14	9	3
<i>Fight against racism</i>	25	26	20
<i>Protection of human rights</i>	33	36	31
<i>Fight against hunger in the world</i>	24	23	23
<i>Fight against unemployment</i>	76	75	76
<i>Fight against crime</i>	43	46	54

Among the Sympathisers, 37% of young Danes choose the unification of Europe as one the top three priorities for their government. In Sweden (23%), Italy (21%) and Germany (20%), Sympathisers are also more likely than average to share this view. In the UK (2%), Ireland (5%) and the Netherlands (6%), on the other hand, very few Sympathisers regard the unification of Europe as a priority for their governments. (Table 8a)

Among the Positive Pragmatics, the Austrians are most likely to choose the unification of Europe (20%). Other countries where the proportion of Positive Pragmatics selecting this aim as a priority is significantly above average are Italy, Sweden (both 18%) and Luxembourg (17%). The lowest proportions are found in Greece (1%), the UK (3%) and the Netherlands (4%). (Table 8b)

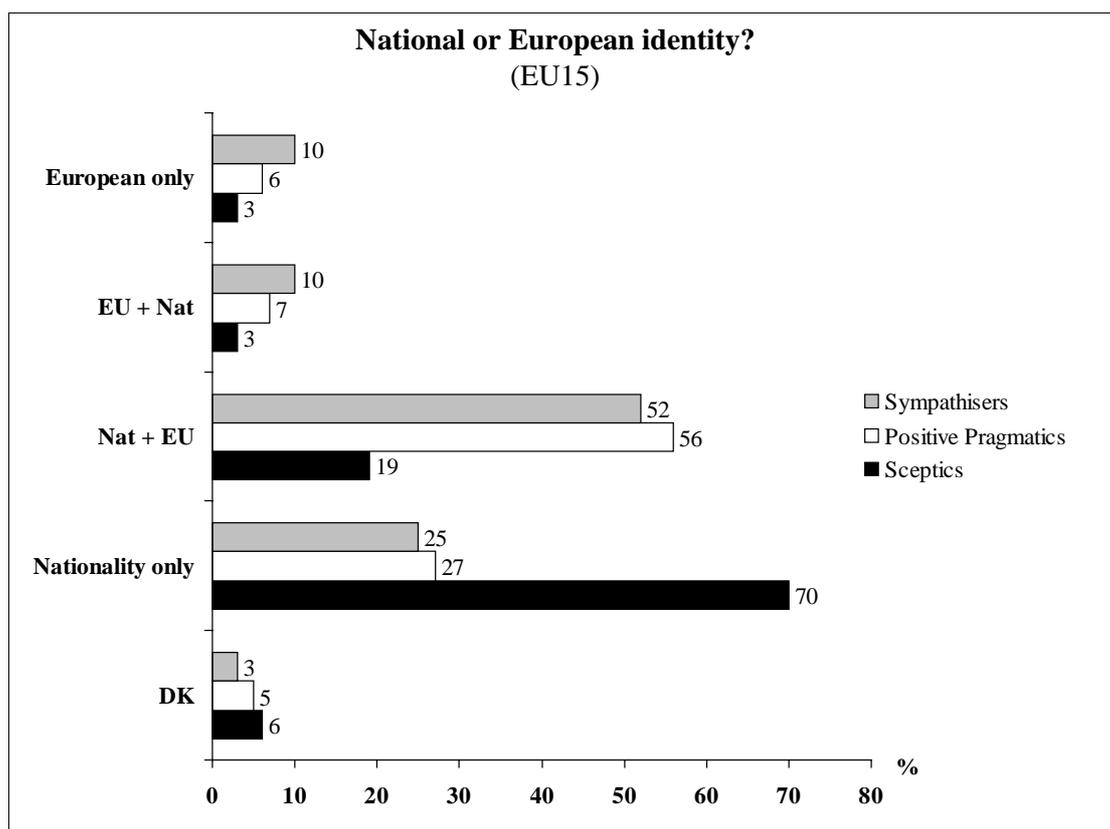
In none of the Member States do more than 10% of the Sceptics regard the unification of Europe as a top three priority for their respective governments. At 7%, Spanish Sceptics are most favourable, followed by those from Luxembourg (5%). In Portugal, there are no Sceptics who consider the unification of Europe a priority for their government and in Greece and the UK only 1% feel this way. (Table 8c)

4.8 Feeling European

Not surprisingly, **the Sympathisers are more likely than the other two groups to feel European.** In response to a question which allowed respondents to choose out of four options ranging from seeing themselves as 'nationality only' to 'European only' in the near future, 10% of Sympathisers choose the last option, compared to 6% of Positive Pragmatics and only 3% of Sceptics.

At the other end of the scale, we find that **only around a quarter of the Sympathisers and Positive Pragmatics don't feel European at all, compared to 70% of Sceptics.**

The rationality of the Positive Pragmatics once again comes to light in their response to this question. They feel European but they can't deny the fact that they are citizens of their own country. The same finding was found among the female Pragmatics in the latest typology of women which is based on the same data⁹.



The country results for the Sympathisers show that in Luxembourg 27% of the members of this group feel European only, followed by Germany and the UK (both 16%). In Finland, Ireland (both 2%), Greece (3%) and the Netherlands

⁹ Women's attitudes to the European Union, European Commission, December 1997.

(4%), the proportion of Sympathisers who feel European only is the lowest. (Table 9a)

In Luxembourg, 17% of the Positive Pragmatics feel European only. The next highest proportions among this group are Finland and the UK (both 11%). In Denmark and Sweden, on the other hand, there are no Positive Pragmatics who feel European only and in Ireland and the Netherlands only 2% feel this way. (Table 9b)

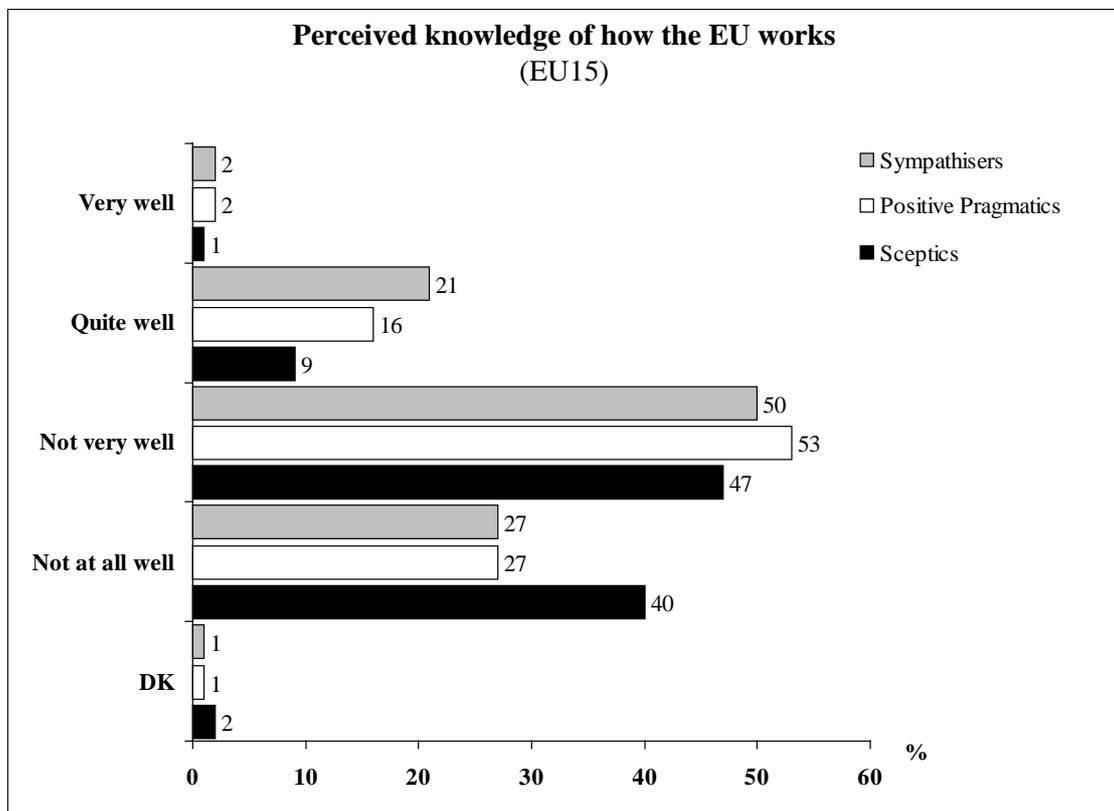
Among the Sceptics, Spain (9%) stands out as being the only country where more than 5% say they feel European only. (Table 9c)

5. Understanding of the European Union

In this section we investigate the levels of understanding of the European Union found among the three attitudinal clusters.

5.1 Knowledge about the European Union

Only a small minority of young Europeans say they know how the European Union is organised and works. **The Sympathisers report the highest levels of perceived knowledge, with 23% saying very well or quite well. These responses were given by 18% of the Positive Pragmatics and only 10% of the Sceptics. 40% of the latter group say they know not at all well how the European Union is organised and works.**



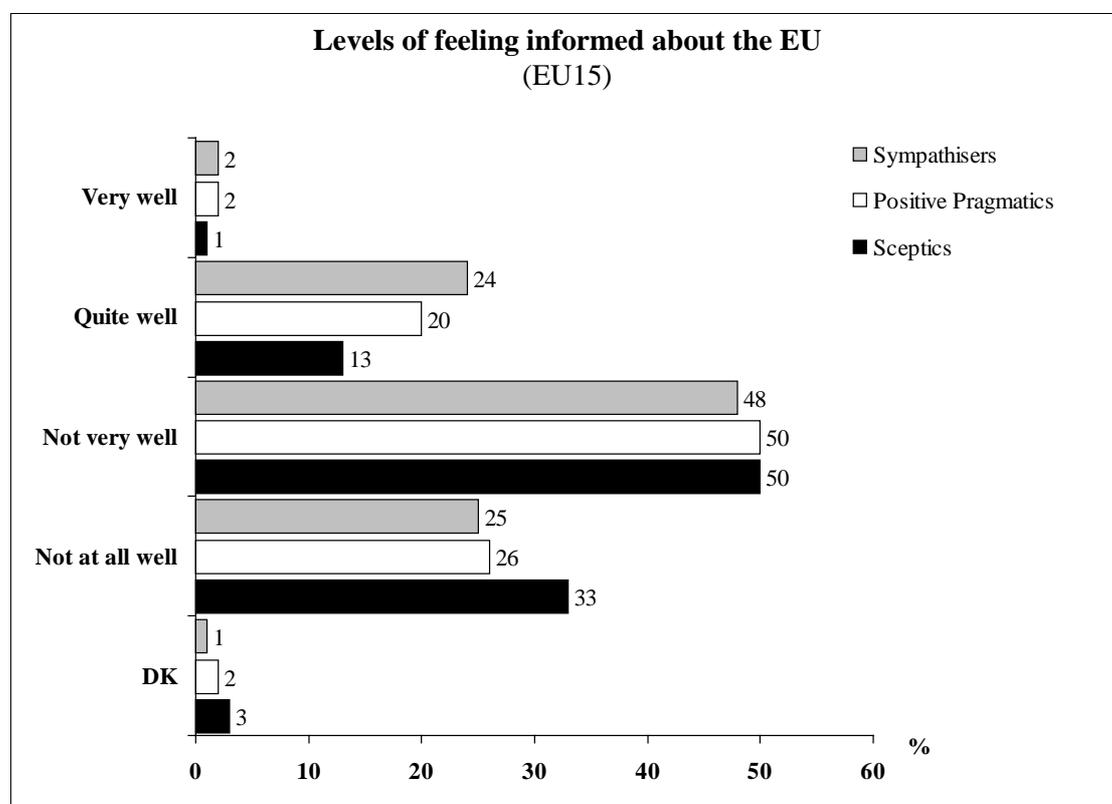
The country analyses for the Sympathisers show that knowledge of the EU is most widespread among the Danes with 59% saying they know very or fairly well how the EU works. Luxembourg (44%), Finland (36%) and Austria (32%) follow and are still significantly above average. Knowledge about the EU is least widespread among Sympathisers in the UK (13%), Spain (17%) and Italy (18%). (Table 10a)

Among the Positive Pragmatics, we find that knowledge is the most widespread in Luxembourg (46%), followed closely by Denmark (45%). Next come Austria (30%) and Belgium (29%). Knowledge is again the least widespread in the UK and Spain (both 14%) but also lies below 20% in a number of other countries. (Table 10b)

Among the Sceptics knowledge of the EU is also most widespread in Luxembourg (32%), followed by Austria (24%). It is again lowest in the UK (5%), followed by France (7%), Spain and Italy (both 9%). (Table 10c)

5.2 Levels of feeling informed about the European Union

Twenty-six percent of Sympathisers say they feel very or quite well informed about the European Union, compared to 22% of Positive Pragmatics and 14% of Sceptics. On average, more than 3 in 10 Sceptics feel not at all well informed.



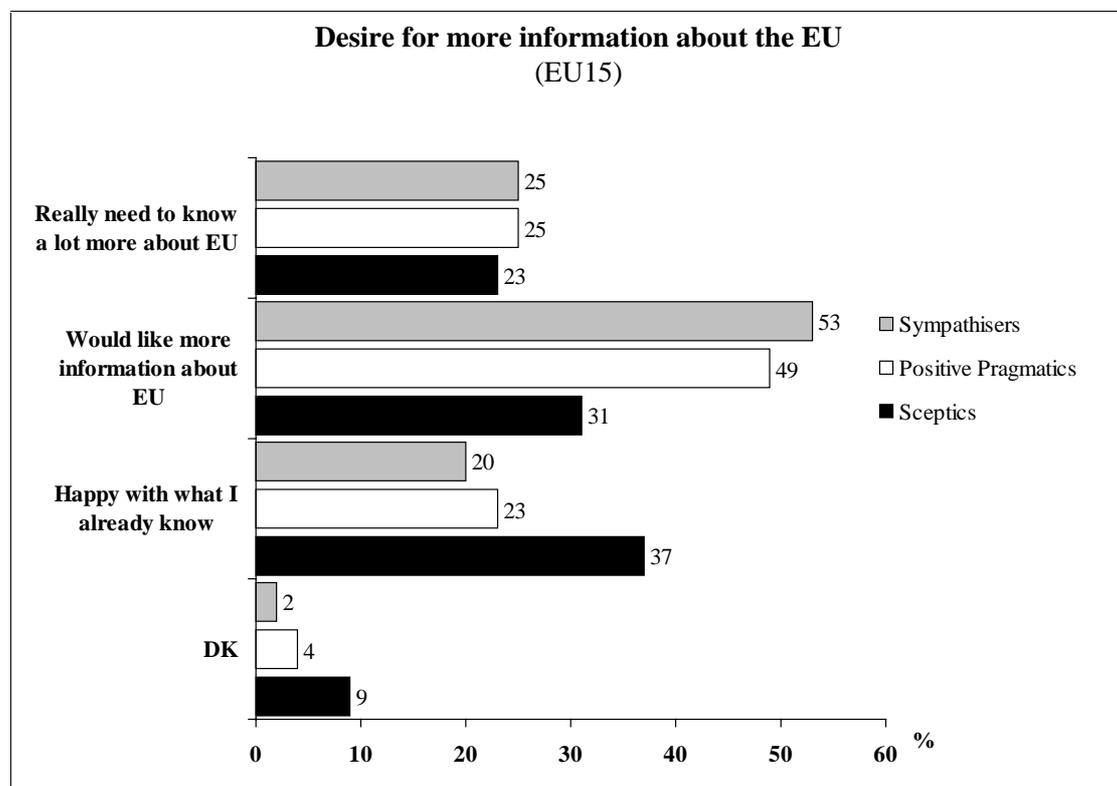
In Finland (48%), Luxembourg (40%) and Denmark (37%), the proportion of Sympathisers who feel well informed about the EU is highest. In these three countries the proportion of Sympathisers who feel they know very or fairly well how the EU works is also the highest. In the two countries where the proportion of Sympathisers who feel they know very or fairly well how the EU works is the lowest, the proportion who feel well informed about the EU is also the lowest. These are the UK (18%) and Spain (22%). It is also low in Greece, Sweden (both 23%) and Italy (24%). (Table 11a)

As for the Sympathisers, Finland (49%) and Luxembourg (44%) are also the two countries where the proportion of Positive Pragmatics who feel well informed about the EU is the highest. In Greece (13%), the UK (17%) and France (18%) the lowest proportions are noted among Positive Pragmatics. (Table 11b)

Among the Sceptics, the highest proportion of those feeling well informed is recorded in the Netherlands (34%), followed by Finland (30%). Greece (10%), Spain and France (both 11%) are the countries with the lowest proportions of Sceptics who feel well informed. (Table 11c)

5.3 Desire for more information about the European Union

Seventy-eight percent of Sympathisers feel they really need to learn a lot more or would like more information about the about the European Union, compared to 74% of Positive Pragmatics and only 54% of Sceptics.



At the EU level we thus find that **the group of young people that reports the broadest levels of perceived knowledge and feeling informed – the Sympathisers – is also the most interested in learning more about the European Union. Conversely, the group that reports the lowest levels of perceived knowledge and feeling informed – the Sceptics - is most likely to feel happy with what they already know.**

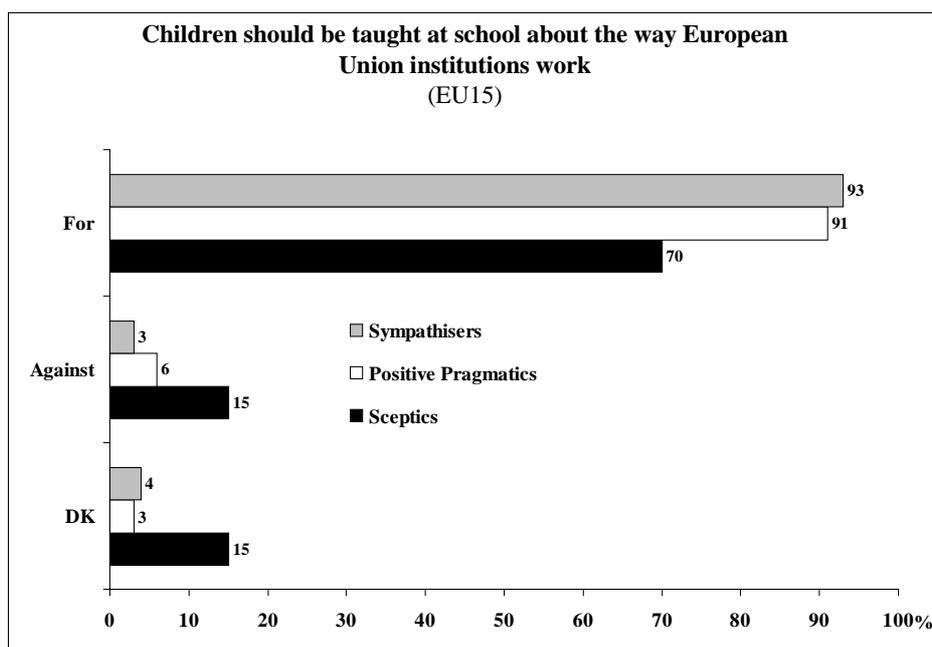
Looking at the country by country pattern for the Sympathisers shows that in Portugal 94% of the members of this cluster feel they really need to know a lot more about the European Union or would like to have some more information about the Union. This view is shared by 93% of the Italians, 87% of the Swedes, 84% of the Danes and 82% of the Greeks. There are only two countries where less than 60% of Sympathisers think this way, namely Belgium (54%) and Ireland (57%). (Table 12a)

Among the Positive Pragmatics, the highest proportions of young people who like to learn more about the EU are found in Greece (93%), Italy (84%), Portugal (83%) and Sweden (81%). In Belgium (53%), Germany (56%) and Ireland (61%), the proportion that shares this view is the lowest. (Table 12b)

In Portugal (78%), Sweden (74%) and Italy (72%) more than 7 in 10 Sceptics would like to learn more about the European Union. The Sceptics in Belgium (68%) are most likely to say that as far as they are concerned they are happy with what they already know, followed at a distance by those in Germany (47%), Luxembourg (42%), France and Ireland (both 41%). (Table 12c)

5.4 The EU as a taught subject in school

One of the questions in the survey asks respondents whether they believe children should be taught at school about the way the European Union institutions work.



As the graph above shows, **nearly all young Europeans who are either Sympathisers or Positive Pragmatics are in favour of teaching children about the EU while support among the Sceptics is less widespread.** The latter group is also significantly more likely to lack an opinion on this issue.

The country by country results reveal that in some countries the majority of young Europeans believe children should be taught about the EU regardless of their own convictions. Thus, in these countries young people take the attitude that children can only develop an opinion about an issue by learning about it. In other countries, we find that young people's own attitudes about the EU are more likely to influence their position on the issue of teaching the subject to children.

Among the Sympathisers support lies above 90 percent in nearly all countries. In fact, in Greece and Portugal all Sympathisers believe children should be taught about the EU in school. Luxembourg (79%), the UK (84%) and Austria (86%) are the three countries where support lies below 90 percent. (Table 13a)

The Netherlands (84%), Spain, the UK (both 87%) and Portugal (88%) are the only 4 countries where less than 9 in 10 Positive Pragmatics support this issue. (Table 13b)

Among the Sceptics, we find more variation between the countries. In Denmark (92%) and Sweden (91%) nearly all Sceptics support the idea of teaching children about the EU. In Germany, Austria (both 63%), the UK (66%), Spain (67%) and Luxembourg (68%), on the other hand, only around two-thirds of the Sceptics agree.

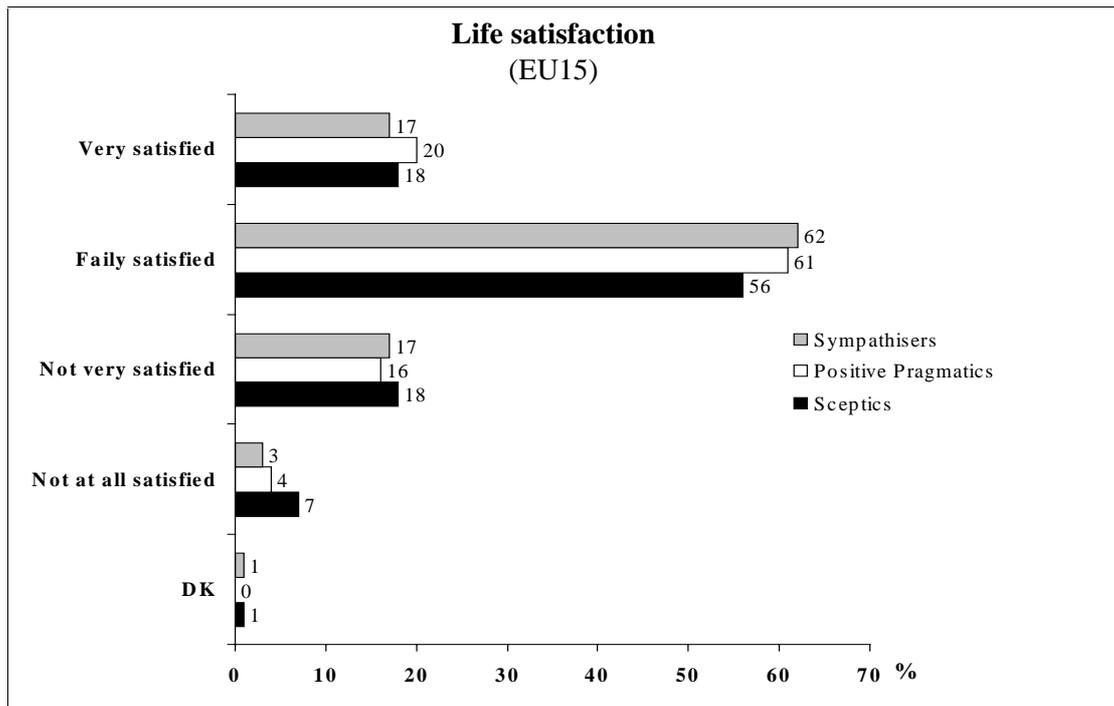
6. Other relevant findings

In the final section of this report we present a number of other findings which provide further information as to how the three clusters of young Europeans differ.

6.1 Life satisfaction

The present survey contains a long standing question which asks respondents about their life satisfaction. Although the large majority of all young Europeans are generally satisfied with the life they lead, **we find that the proportion of young people saying they are very or fairly satisfied is slightly more widespread among Sympathisers and Positive Pragmatics than among Sceptics.** Within the latter group, 25% say they are not very or not at all satisfied while only 20% of Sympathisers and Positive Pragmatics report negative feelings about the life they lead.

Typology of young Europeans



The country analyses indicate that the differences between the Member States are more telling than the differences found between the clusters. There are some countries where all or nearly all young people are satisfied with the life they lead, regardless of which cluster they belong to.

The analyses for the Sympathisers indicate that in Denmark and Sweden all the members of this cluster are either very or fairly satisfied with the life they lead. The same applies to nearly all Sympathisers in Finland (93%), Luxembourg (90%) and Ireland (89%). The only countries where less than 8 in 10 Sympathisers feel satisfied are Italy, Spain (both 74%), Germany (76%) and Greece (78%). (Table 14a)

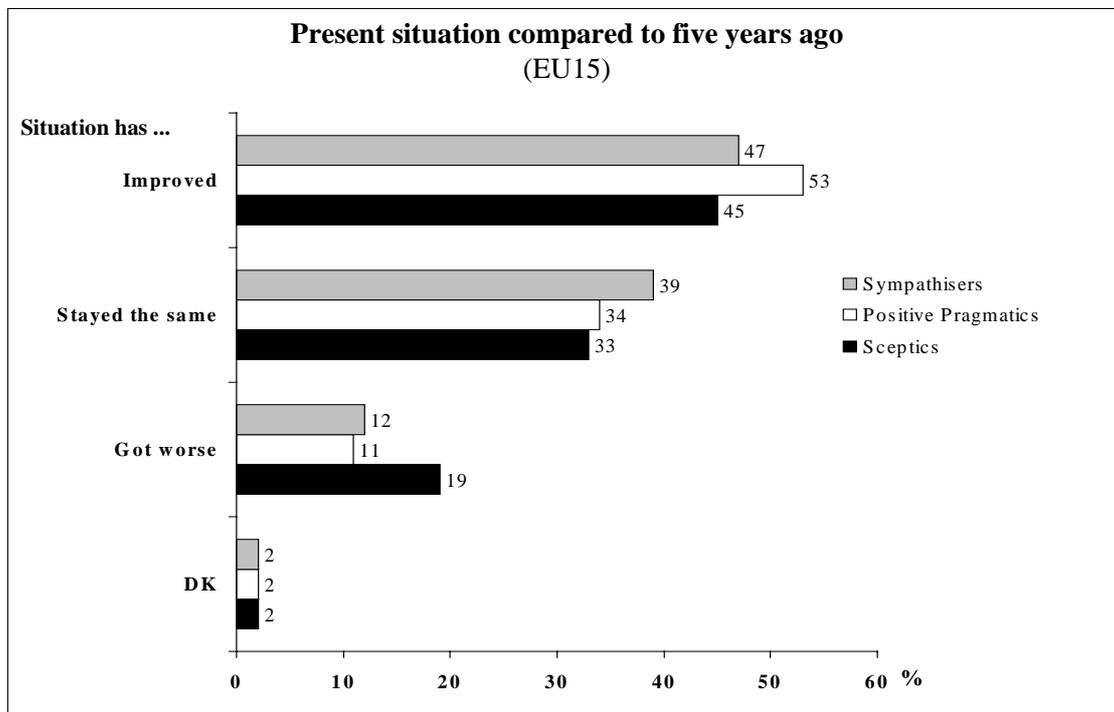
In Denmark, all Positive Pragmatics also feel satisfied with the life they lead. In Finland (97%), Sweden, (96%), the Netherlands (95%), Luxembourg, Austria (both 92%) Belgium and Ireland (both 91%), more than 9 in 10 Positive Pragmatics report that they are satisfied. The lowest satisfaction levels among this cluster are recorded in Italy (70%), Germany (72%) and Portugal (75%). (Table 14b)

Among the Sceptics we find the highest levels of satisfaction in Denmark (97%), the Netherlands (94%), Sweden (93%), Finland (92%) and Luxembourg (89%). The lowest levels are recorded in Germany (55%) followed by Portugal (66%). Sceptics from Spain (85%) and Italy (78%) are significantly more satisfied with the life they lead than their fellow citizens who are Sympathisers or Positive Pragmatics. (Table 14c)

Of the three clusters, the Positive Pragmatics are most likely to feel that their present situation has improved compared to five years ago. 53% report this, compared to 47% of Sympathisers and 45% of Sceptics. Compared to the other two clusters, the Sympathisers are most likely to report

Typology of young Europeans

that their present situation has stayed the same (39%). Nearly 2 in 10 Sceptics feel their situation has got worse compared to five years ago (19%).

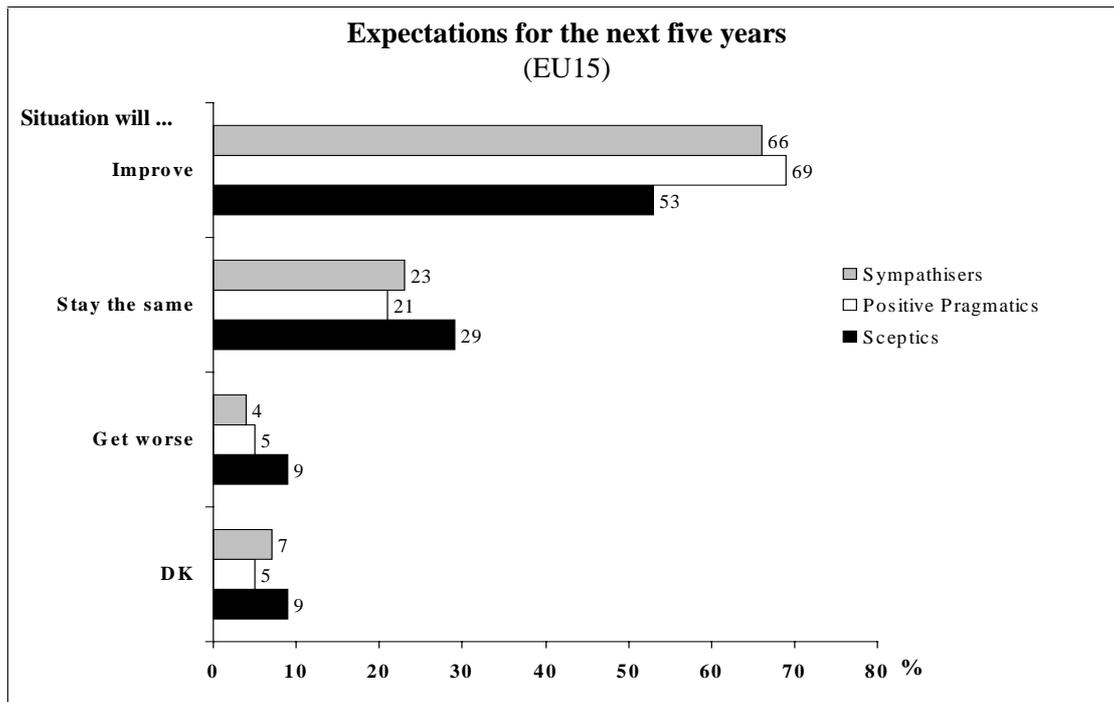


Among the Sympathisers, the Danes (70%), Greeks (67%), Portuguese (64%), Dutch (62%), Finns and Swedes (both 61%) are most likely to feel that their present situation has improved. Sympathisers from the UK (16%), Germany (15%) and France (14%) are most likely to feel that their present situation has got worse. (Table 15a)

Among the Positive Pragmatics, the Portuguese (67%), Irish (66%), Greeks (64%), Danish and British (both 63%) are most likely to feel that their present situation has improved. Positive Pragmatics from Germany (20%) are by far the most likely to feel that their present situation has got worse. Greece and the UK (both 11%) are the only two other countries where more than 10% of Positive Pragmatics report a deterioration in their situation compared to 5 years ago. (Table 15b)

The highest levels reporting that their situation has improved among the Sceptics are found in Ireland (64%), Denmark (61%) and Finland (59%). Sceptics from Germany (30%), Italy (28%), Greece (23%) and France (22%) are most likely to feel that their present situation has got worse. (Table 15c)

The majority of young Europeans are generally optimistic about the future. The Positive Pragmatics are the most optimistic with 69% saying that their situation will improve in the course of the next five years compared to 66% of Sympathisers and 53% of Sceptics.



More than 8 in 10 Sympathisers living in the UK (84%), Italy (82%) and Portugal (81%) expect that their personal situation will improve over the course of the next five years. Optimism is also high among this cluster in Denmark (76%), Ireland (74%) Spain and the Netherlands (both 73%). In Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Sweden and the UK there are no Sympathisers who feel their situation will get worse while in Germany 12% feel this way. In Greece (18%) and Austria (15%), the proportion of Sympathisers who don't know how their personal situation will develop is significantly above average. (Table 16a)

Among the Positive Pragmatics, optimism is highest in Spain, Italy (both 83%), Ireland and Portugal (both 82%) and lowest in Germany where 13% of the members of this cluster feel that their situation will get worse. (Table 16b)

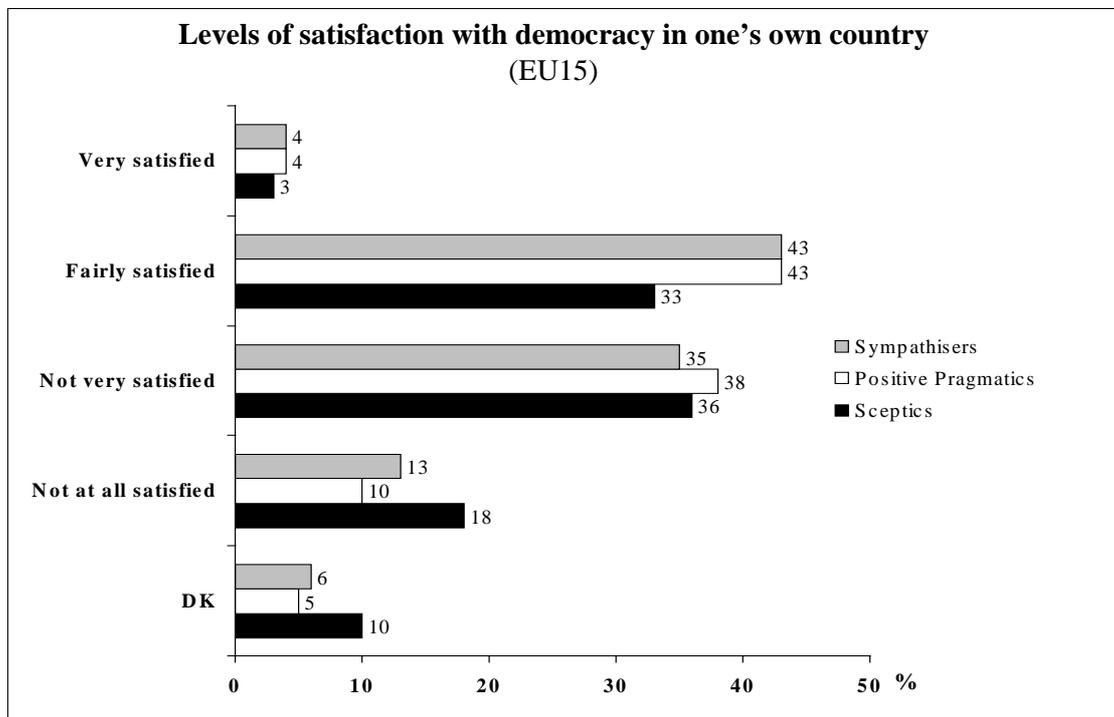
Among the Sceptics, optimism is highest in Ireland (79%), Portugal (75%) and Spain (74%) and lowest in Greece and Germany where 17% and 16%, respectively, feel their situation will get worse during the course of the next 5 years. (Table 16c)

6.2 Satisfaction with democracy in their country

It appears that pessimistic feelings among Sceptics are more widespread not just in terms of how they feel towards the EU or how they feel about their own personal life but also in terms of how they feel about their own country.

As the graph below shows, 47% of Sympathisers and Positive Pragmatics are very or fairly satisfied with democracy in their country while for the Sceptics this is 11% lower. In fact, 18% of Sceptics report that they are not at all

satisfied with democracy in their country, compared to 13% of Sympathisers and 10% of Positive Pragmatics.



While we have seen that feelings about one's country's democracy do differ among the three clusters, far larger differences are found between the various countries. This indicates that the country variable is a more important predictor of how young people feel about democracy than cluster membership.

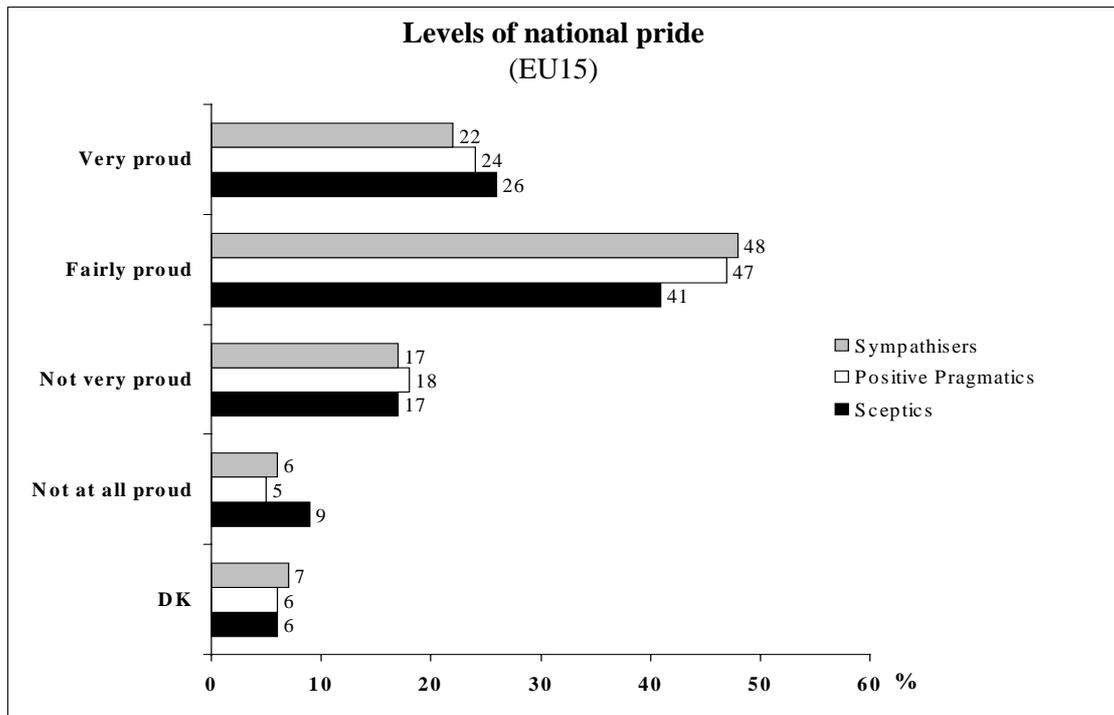
The country analyses for the Sympathisers indicate that satisfaction with their country's democracy among this group is most widespread in Denmark (91%), followed by the Netherlands (84%) and Luxembourg (77%). Satisfaction levels are lowest in Belgium (24%), Italy (29%) and Greece (37%). (Table 17a)

Among the Positive Pragmatics, satisfaction levels are again highest in Denmark (87%) and the Netherlands (86%). They are also significantly above average in Ireland (80%), Finland (67%), Sweden (65%) and Austria (64%). Satisfaction levels are again lowest in Belgium and Italy (both 22%). (Table 17b)

Denmark (82%) is the only nation where more than 8 in 10 Sceptics are satisfied with democracy in their country. The next highest levels are found in Luxembourg (72%), Finland (66%), Ireland, the Netherlands (both 59%) and Sweden (55%). In Belgium (9%) and Italy (14%) less than 2 in 10 Sceptics are satisfied with their country's democracy. (Table 17c)

6.3 National identity

Levels of national pride are high among all three clusters of young Europeans with around 6 in 10 saying that they feel very or fairly proud of their nationality. The Sceptics stand out in being more extreme: compared to the other two groups, higher proportions of Sceptics feel very proud and not at all proud.



Country analyses for the Sympathisers reveal that 98% of the Irish belonging to this cluster are very or fairly proud of their nationality, followed by 96% of the Portuguese, 90% of the Finns, 89% of the Danes, 87% of the Dutch, 86% of the Greeks and 80% of the Spanish. Germany (39%) and Belgium (46%) are the only two countries where less than 6 in 10 Sympathisers feel very or fairly proud of their nationality. (Table 18a)

Among the Positive Pragmatics, more than 9 in 10 young people from Greece (95%), Ireland (94%), Denmark (93%), Finland (92%) and Portugal (91%) are very or fairly proud of their nationality. Germany (42%) and Belgium (51%) are also the only two countries where less than 6 in 10 Positive Pragmatics feel proud of their nationality. (Table 18b)

Among the Sceptics, national pride is most widespread in Ireland (99%), Finland (92%), Denmark, Greece (both 89%) and Sweden (85%) and least widespread in Belgium (35%) and Germany (45%). (Table 18c)

Appendix A: Description of statistical analyses¹⁰

The first step of the analyses consisted of creating a separate data-file with the responses from 4282¹¹ people aged 15 to 29 who took part in the Eurobarometer 47.1 survey. From this survey, 52 questions (or variables) measuring attitudes to the European Union were selected. These variables were then subjected to a **Principal Component Analysis** in order to establish which underlying concepts best define attitudes to the European Union. The analysis showed that attitudes to the European Union are best represented by 18 concepts, which together explain 72% of the total variance.

From each of these 18 concepts, the highest loading variables were then selected for use in subsequent analyses. These are:

	% variance explained	Highest loading item	Q. N°
1.	(23.3%)	<i>Attitudes towards enlargement of the EU</i>	(Q.20)
2.	(5.5%)	<i>Level of political responsibility for basic rules for broadcasting and press</i>	(Q.23f)
3.	(4.1%)	<i>Level of political responsibility for matters relating to co-operation with developing countries, Third World</i>	(Q.23d)
4.	(3.5%)	<i>Levels of political responsibility for matters relating to the fight against drugs</i>	(Q.23t)
5.	(3.4%)	<i>EC should have support from EP</i>	(Q.22/5)
6.	(3.4%)	<i>Levels of feeling informed about EU</i>	(Q.9)
7.	(3.2%)	<i>Citizen of other member country has right to stand in local elections</i>	(Q.22/8)
8.	(3.1%)	<i>EU should have a common defence and military policy</i>	(Q.22/3)
9.	(3.0%)	<i>Level of political responsibility for matters relating to immigration policy</i>	(Q.23h)
10.	(2.9%)	<i>Country has benefited from EU membership</i>	(Q.16)
11.	(2.8%)	<i>Level of political responsibility for matters relating to agriculture and fishing policy</i>	(Q.23j)
12.	(2.1%)	<i>Level of political responsibility for matters relating to cultural policy</i>	(Q.23q)
13.	(2.1%)	<i>Support for single European currency</i>	(Q.22/1)
14.	(2.0%)	<i>Pride in nationality</i>	(Q.40)
15.	(2.0%)	<i>Unification of Europe is important priority</i>	(Q.441c4)
16.	(1.9%)	<i>European identity</i>	(Q.19)
17.	(1.9%)	<i>Committed to unification of Europe</i>	(Q.442c4)
18.	(1.9%)	<i>Teaching children in school about EU</i>	(Q.22/9)

¹⁰ For all the statistical analyses carried out in this study, version 7.5 of the software package '**Statistical Program for the Social Sciences**' (SPSS) was used.

¹¹ This is the unweighted number. See tables in Appendix B for more information.

The 18 variables were then recoded so that they each consisted of a mid-point of 0, a low score of -1 and a high score of +1. This is a necessary requirement for ***K-Means Clustering***, the next step in the analyses. This groups people together by the similarity of their response profiles in surveys. In the case of this study, it was used to split the young Europeans into sub-groups (or clusters) depending on their responses to the 18 variables mentioned above. The outcome of the ***K-Means Clustering*** procedure is that there are 3 distinct attitudinal groups among the people aged 15 to 29, which form the basis of discussion throughout the report.

In order to describe the views of the 3 attitudinal groups, ***frequencies, comparisons of means, correlation analyses*** and ***cross-tabulations*** were run. The various variables measuring attitudes to the European Union were used as dependent variables, whereas cluster membership, country and other demographic variables were used as independent variables. For the ***descriptive analyses***, a wider range of attitudinal variables were used than the 18 selected to define the clusters. We returned to their original coding structure instead of the recoded cluster versions¹².

¹² Missing cases were excluded listwise from the Principal Component and Cluster Analyses and completely excluded from the descriptive analyses.

Appendix B: Technical description of Eurobarometer N°47.1

This standard Eurobarometer public opinion survey was conducted on behalf of the **Directorate-General for Information, Communication, Culture, Audiovisual of the European Commission**.

Fieldwork took place between **26/3/1997 and 29/4/1997** and was done by INRA (EUROPE), a European Network of Market and Public Opinion Research agencies. Each respondent was asked an identical set of questions, using face-to-face interviewing at his or her home in the appropriate national language.

The Eurobarometer 47.1 covers the population of the 15 Member States of the European Union aged 15 years and over. The regular sample in standard Eurobarometer surveys is 1000 people per country except Luxembourg (500) and the United Kingdom (1000 in Great Britain and 300 in Northern Ireland). In order to monitor the integration of the five new Länder into unified Germany and the European Union, 2000 people are sampled in Germany since Eurobarometer 34: 1000 in East Germany and 1000 in West Germany.

In all 15 Member States, **respondents were selected using a multi-stage, random (probability) sample design.** Sampling points were drawn systematically from all “administrative regional units”, after stratification by individual unit and type of area. In each of the selected sampling points, a starting address was drawn at random. Further addresses were selected as every Nth address from the initial address by standard random route procedures. In each household, the respondent was drawn at random using the first birthday rule.

The figures given for each of the Member States are weighted to match the sample to the demographic profile of the countries. The figures given for the European Union as a whole are weighted by the proportion of the population each country represents within the EU¹³.

For more information about the technical aspects of this survey, please see Eurobarometer Report N°47, European Commission, Spring 1997.

¹³ See tables on next page.

Typology of young Europeans

Unweighted sample	Number of young people in survey	% of young people survey	% of total EB47.1 survey
Belgium	267	6.2	1.7
Denmark	226	5.3	1.4
Germany	419	9.8	2.6
Greece	277	6.5	1.7
Spain	320	7.5	2.0
Finland	274	6.4	1.7
France	292	6.8	1.8
Ireland	319	7.4	2.0
Italy	278	6.5	1.7
Luxembourg	178	4.2	1.1
Netherlands	225	5.3	1.4
Austria	289	6.7	1.8
Portugal	286	6.7	1.8
Sweden	248	5.8	1.5
UK	384	9.0	2.4
Total	4282	100	26.5

Weighted sample	Number / % of sample size weighted by country	Number / % of sample size weighted by EU15
Belgium	N=252 – 6.0%	N=109 - 2.6%
Denmark	N=273 – 6.5%	N=62 - 1.5%
Germany	N=487 – 11.6%	N=867 - 20.1%
Greece	N=261 – 6.2%	N=116 - 2.8%
Spain	N=312 – 7.4%	N=525 - 12.4%
Finland	N=233 – 5.5%	N=50 – 1.2%
France	N=277 – 6.6%	N=665 – 15.8%
Ireland	N=318 – 7.6%	N=56 – 1.3%
Italy	N=273 – 6.5%	N=688 – 16.3%
Luxembourg	N=162 – 3.8%	N=5 – 0.1%
Netherlands	N=253 – 6.0%	N=165 – 3.9%
Austria	N=263 – 6.2%	N=91 – 2.1%
Portugal	N=286 – 6.8%	N=120 – 2.9%
Sweden	N=235 – 5.6%	N=88 – 2.1%
UK	N=326 – 7.7%	N=611 – 14.5%
Total	N=4211 – 100%	N=4216 – 100%

Appendix C: Tables for country results

The tables on the following pages show the results of the questions discussed in this report for each of the 15 Member States broken by the three clusters.

Table No.	Title	Page
Table 1:	Support for European Union membership	36
Table 2:	Perceived benefit of European Union membership	37
Table 3:	Support for a common military and defence policy	38
Table 4:	Support for a common foreign policy	39
Table 5:	Support for the single currency, the euro	40
Table 6:	Average number of areas to be decided jointly within the EU	41
Table 7:	Average number of new countries that should join the EU	41
Table 8:	Priorities for national governments: the unification of Europe	42
Table 9:	National vs. European identity	43
Table 10:	Perceived knowledge of the European Union	44
Table 11:	Feeling informed about the European Union	45
Table 12:	Need for information about the European Union	46
Table 13:	Support for teaching children about the EU in school	47
Table 14:	Life satisfaction	48
Table 15:	Perception of present situation compared to 5 years ago	49
Table 16:	Future expectations of personal situation	50
Table 17:	Satisfaction with democracy in country	51
Table 18:	Levels of national pride	52
