

Directorate-General

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EUROPEAN YOUTH AND THE UNIFICATION OF EUROPEFirst results of an international survey

In June 1967 a group of specialists in youth problems (senior civil servants of the Member States of the European Community, educationists, teachers and research workers in the field of social psychology), who had met in Brussels in response to an invitation from Directorate-General for Information, suggested that an international survey of the attitudes of young people towards European integration¹ be carried out in the six Common Market countries.

The final results will not be available until next year when a survey will have been made with a representative sample of the population aged between 18 and 30 years. The survey of young people may perhaps even be extended to cover the adult European population with special attention being paid to industrial workers and farmers in order to provide useful comparisons based on age and socio-occupational situation. However, a pilot survey involving 486 young people in the 15-16 and 19-20 age groups, who were interviewed in the countries of the European Community in March and April 1969, has provided a few general figures which are interesting though for the time being only tentative.²

¹ A similar survey has been carried out in Great Britain at the suggestion of Professor Ronald Inglehart (Department of Political Science of the University of Michigan) and others may be undertaken in various Council of Europe countries.

² As this was a pilot survey with a small sample, the breakdown of the results according to country would not be significant. This is why, as a general rule, only aggregate results are quoted here. The final survey will, of course, not only enable the results to be broken down according to country, including Luxembourg, but will also make it possible to provide very detailed analyses (see next page for the rest of this note).

These results are of two kinds: some concern the general characteristics of the young people questioned as they have been noted and "photographed" through the analysis of the 486 replies; the others consist of the product already obtained from initial processing with a computer that had the effect of reducing the mass of information collected to a few explanatory hypotheses for the purpose of more detailed research later on.

² Note continued from the preceding page

The sample used was equally divided both between the two age-groups and between the sexes. Most of the young people questioned were unmarried (98%) and lived with their parents (95%). More than half were children of manual workers (28%), office workers or medium-grade supervisory staff (27%); 12% belonged to the families of shopkeepers or craftsmen and 15% the families of senior executives, managers, senior civil servants or professional men; finally, only 7% were farmers' children, a figure which is certainly too low. 63% of these young people are students and 80% consider they belong to families which are "quite well off" (72%) or "rich" (8%), whereas 20% come from families which are "not doing too well" or "poor".

The survey was carried out by specialized institutes belonging to the Gallup International and International Research Associates - Europa networks led by a co-ordinating committee comprising Melle Hélène Riffault (IFOP, Paris), M. Robert Gijs (INRA, Brussels), Professor Ronald Inglehart (University of Michigan) and M. J.R. Rabier (European Communities, Brussels).

I

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE YOUNG EUROPEANS QUESTIONED

Information media and youth movements

More than eight out of ^{of} ten of the young people questioned watch television news broadcasts at least once per week: 50% watch them every day and 32% once or twice per week.

Radio and daily newspapers take the second and third places as sources of information.

On the other hand, barely three young persons out of ten belong to any kind of youth movement or organization. The highest membership is to be found among movements or organizations which are concerned with sport.

OUT OF 100 YOUNG EUROPEANS (15-16 and 19-20 years)

	Watch television news broadcasts	Listen to radio news broadcasts	Read the political news in the daily newspapers
(a) every day	50 32	39	22
(b) once or twice (per week)		24	36
(c) less often	11	Figures as on original 15	
(d) never	7	21	13
		16	

Belong to a youth movement or organization	28
Do not belong to any movement or organization	72

Types of movements or organizations mentioned by the 28% who are members¹

(i) sporting	28%
(ii) religious	24%
(iii) recreational	23%
(iv) educational	12%
(v) political	8%
(vi) other	5%

Figures as on original

Satisfaction with life and optimistic outlook

Nearly nine young persons out of ten (86%) say they are very happy (32%) or fairly happy (54%). Six out of ten (61%) think that their living conditions will be better in ten years' time; 13% think that they will still be the same and only 5% think that they will be bad.

When they were asked what they would most like to know about their future the young people questioned quoted the following in order of preference:

1. Future job and success in their work.
2. Marriage and family life.
3. Living conditions (pay, welfare).

National pride without nationalism

Six Young people out of ten (63%) say they are proud of their country but one in four (26%) say they do not care. Less than 10% are not proud of their country.²

¹ Some Young people gave several replies.

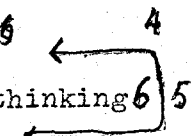
² The survey in Great Britain shows that the percentage of young people who say they are proud of Britain is much higher : 83% .

Why are they proud of their country? Simply because it is their country, because they were born there, are their usual replies; or again because it is a free country with a history and one that is good to live in.

The following are the main reasons for pride in their country given by the young people of the various countries and the level of frequency of the replies:

	<u>Average</u>	<u>Germany</u>	<u>Belgium</u>	<u>France</u>	<u>Italy</u>	<u>Netherlands</u>
Because it <u>is</u> my country, because I was born there	1	2	1	2	1	2
It is a country where people are free	2	3	3	3	3	2
Because of our historic past	3	3	5	7	2	-
Because it is a beautiful and pleasant country	3	-	3	1	4	1
Because it is a country of great prosperity and socially advanced	4	4	2	9	5	2
Because of our good reputation abroad	5	6	4	4	6	3
Because of our achievements in the cultural, scientific and technical fields	6	4	6	5	7	-
Because I prefer our way of thinking	6	5	6	6	8	4
Because it is a peaceful country	7	7	4	8	8	7
Because our country plays an important role in world affairs	8	-	5	8	7	4

Figures as on original



As can be seen, the role of a country in world politics is nowhere given pride of place. But whereas young Belgians and young Italians put an obvious reason to the fore, namely: "Because it is my country", young French and Dutch people more frequently emphasize the beauty and pleasantness of their countries, the Dutch also prizing their country's peaceful nature. In the case of the young Germans, prosperity and the progress of social policy are of prime importance.¹

Interest in current affairs, politics and responsiveness to world events

Two questions, concerning how well-informed the persons questioned were related respectively to the attitude of young people towards the student demonstrations and the interest shown in events in Czechoslovakia.

Six young people out of ten are in favour of student demonstrations (17% very much in favour, 43% largely in favour). However, the reason put forward in the first place is that schools and universities must be reformed. Those who criticize these demonstrations (30%) do so mainly because they disapprove of violence.

Two thirds of the young people questioned followed the events in Czechoslovakia with interest: 28% with keen interest and 37% with moderate interest.

Half (48%) of the young people said they kept themselves informed on politics without participating in them personally, but 39% left politics to those more competent than themselves. Only 7% considered themselves to be politically committed whereas 6% were disgusted with politics.

¹ In Great Britain the flat statement "Because it is my country" far outweighs all the others.

In the opinion of these young people a good citizen is first of all someone who takes an interest in politics, votes at elections and respects the laws.

The government's priority tasks are to defend the less privileged citizens, to keep order within the country and maintain the country's interests abroad while also contributing to the building of Europe and to aid to the developing countries.

In spite of what might seem to be a certain degree of national orthodoxy, young people or at least some of them are aware that "all is not going as well as one would like in the world". The three fields in which efforts should be made that are the most often quoted are: hunger in the world, the expansion of education and the banning of atomic armament; the problems of employment and those of building a political Europe take only second place.

Nearly 70% of the young people questioned consider that their political ideas are almost, or in part, the same as those of their parents. Only 16% disagree, feeling that the generation gap is wide.

Whom can one trust?

One of the important yardsticks of the attitude of a personality towards others, both within the group to which he belongs and in international relations, is what is known as social trust: whom can one trust?

The attitudes in this respect of young Europeans aged 15-16 and 19-20 have been ascertained and quantified by means of two sets of questions. These results will be correlated, at the next stage of the analysis with the replies to the questions concerning the building of Europe.

Within their national society young people appear to place their trust, in the following order, in:

	Great trust	Some trust	Total
their parents	78%	19%	97%
people of their own age	22%	51%	73%
youth movements their teachers	22%	52%	74%
religious authorities	16%	43%	69%
industrialists	18%	40%	58%
members of parliament	8%	41%	49%
government ministers	4%	40%	44%
protest students	4%	39%	43%
leaders of student movements	8%	30%	38%
trade-union leaders	7%	30%	37%
	7%	29%	36%

Figures as on original

With regard to the few great political movements chosen in the survey because they have a fairly similar meaning in the various countries of Europe, the degrees of trust are as follows:

	Great trust	Some trust	Total
Socialist	6%	41%	47%
Communists	5%	21%	26%
Right wing	3%	20%	23%
Pro-Chinese	2%	7%	9%

Figures as on original

Lastly, in the international field, the peoples in whom the young Europeans would be prepared to place trust are, in order, as follows:¹

¹ Excluding the opinions expressed by young people of Common Market countries with regard to their own countries.

	Great trust	Some trust	Total
British	28%	53%	81%
Americans (USA)	27%	51%	78%
Belgians	24%	52%	76%
Dutch	21%	53%	74%
Scandinavians	25%	45%	70%
Germans	20%	49%	69%
French	Figures as on original.		65%
Rumanians	15%	50%	65%
Rumanians	8%	37%	45%
Spaniards	6%	39%	45%
Italians	7%	37%	44%
Africans	7%	37%	44%
Greeks	8%	32%	40%
Russians	5%	28%	33%
Turks	4%	19%	23%
Chinese	4%	13%	17%

The Common Market and United Europe

Seven to eight young people out of ten can name some Common Market countries but only 47% could name all.

Nearly five out of ten (46%) consider that the Common Market has so far had a favourable effect on their general living conditions; an almost equal percentage (45%) observed no effect or expressed no opinion; only 9% feel that the Common Market is actually harmful.

Although economic Europe, the Common Market, is a known reality, only two thirds of young people (64%) have already heard of schemes for the political unification of Europe.

With regard to the enlargement of the Common Market, seven young people out of ten (73%) would be glad to see Great Britain and Ireland become members; about five out of ten are in favour of membership for the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland and Austria.

Ideas concerning which countries would possibly constitute a political Europe are much more vague:

Firstly, the restriction of political Europe to the six Common Market countries is approved by only a small minority (6% of the young people questioned).

In the opinion of 33% of the poll, a United States of Europe should comprise all the countries of geographical Europe, including the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

22% would accept the countries of Eastern Europe but not the Soviet Union and 17% all countries of Europe except those of the Eastern bloc.

Lastly, 21% would restrict political Europe to the six Common Market countries plus Great Britain.

In short, two thirds of those in favour of enlarging Europe would exclude the Soviet Union.

Concerning this united Europe, whose geographical outlines are still uncertain, one young person in two thinks he will see it achieved within his lifetime; nearly nine out of ten are in favour of it and six out of ten feel that it is a very important political objective. How is it conceived from a political point of view?

Replies to a series of questions show that the political make-up of a united Europe is much clearer than its geographical outlines:

- (a) If a United States of Europe were established now, nearly nine out of ten (89%) young persons questioned would be in favour of their country becoming a member (very much in favour: 59%, in favour: 30%);
- (b) Two thirds of young people (65%) would be in favour of a European army which would combine the armies of the various countries of Western Europe (very much in favour: 33%, in favour: 32%);

- (c) Half of them (50%) think that the government of a united Europe should, with regard to certain important problems, have the right to take decisions which would override those of the Governments of their own countries;
- (d) More specially, two thirds of the young Europeans (64%) are in favour of a European government which would deal with the most important questions, whereas each country would keep a national government which would deal with local problems.

Out of 100 young Europeans (15-16 years and 19-20 years) the proposition in favour of each of the following schemes was:

There is no European government, but the national governments meet regularly to try to adopt a common policy	19%
There is a European government which deals with the most important questions, but each country keeps a national government to deal with its own particular problems	64%
A European government deals with all questions and the member countries no longer have any national government	9%
In favour of none of these schemes	2%
Did not know or did not reply	6%

The matters which should be dealt with by the European government or remain the responsibility of the national government are indicated below:

Out of 100 young Europeans (15-16 years and 19-20 years)

the following felt that _____ decisions in the following fields should be taken:

	By the European government	By the national government	Did not know
Foreign policy	78%	13%	9%
Highway code	72%	23%	5%
Maintenance of order and civil liberties	61%	30%	9%
Length of military service	55%	37%	8%
Level of taxation	45%	Figures, etc. 43%	12%
Level of wages	44%	48%	8%
Date of school holidays	40%	53%	7%
Educational reform	35%	60%	5%

This gives a clear picture of the structure of a federal Europe within which the central government would assume certain common responsibilities (foreign policy, defence, maintenance of order and safeguard of civil liberties), whereas the national governments would retain broad powers in fields such as the economy, taxation, wages and education.

Another question concerning the principal symbols of sovereignty provides us with similar results: 53% of the young people questioned are in favour of a European currency but practically as many are in favour of retaining the national flags for major ceremonies (51%) and against merging national sports teams into a European team at the next Olympic Games (47%).

Europe. to what purpose?

This question is often asked. It is an important one, as a society can cohere and maintain itself only if its members have a certain historic plan in common. How did our young people react to this?

First of all a very large proportion of them (88%) agreed with the proposal that "each people must be allowed to retain its own identity". In correlation with this idea, 78% reject the suggestion that "the unification of Europe is impossible since we speak different languages".¹

The main justifications for building Europe are the following:

the brotherhood of Man: "to unify Europe is to teach men to be more brotherly" (88%);

political effectiveness: "our States are no longer of suitable size; nowadays, thinking on a larger scale is required" (79%);

economic rationality: "a unified European economy would mean more channels for trade and therefore more jobs" (77%); in a united Europe goods will be purchased at lower prices" (69%);

peace in the world: "a united Europe is a first step towards world peace" (77%).

The comparison of the "disunited States of Europe" with America or the Soviet Union underlies these justifications: three quarters of the young people questioned considered that "a united Europe would be a third force equal to those of the United States and the USSR" (76%) or that "joint scientific research on a European scale would enable us to catch up with the Americans" (74%).

¹ It may be noted that whereas 36% of the young people speak no language other than their mother tongue, 36% speak one other language and 28% more than one other language. The foreign languages most commonly spoken in Europe are English (72% of those who speak one or more other languages), French (45%) and German (24%).

These results concerning the attitudes of young people are very interesting. Comparison of the replies of young people of 15-16 and 19-20 years of age (April 1969) with those made by their own parents to the same questions in July 1968 would appear to confirm the view that young people born since 1945 are more "European" than the adults.¹

¹Out of 100 persons questioned:

Germany		France		
Young people	Parents	Young people	Parents	
92	91	83	65	are in favour of a united states of Europe
72	54	57	49	are in favour of a European army
50	37	48	46	favour certain decisions being taken by a European government
	Figures, etc.			
58	31	35	21	consider that the Common Market has hitherto exerted a favourable influence

Source: Document communicated by Professor Inglehart; the July 1968 results come from sample surveys comprising approximately 2 000 persons in each country, made by the Institute für Demoskopie and the Institute français d'opinion publique.