

## PRESS RELEASE

### ***The EU Is Part Of Most Europeans' Everyday Life: Findings from the EUCROSS research project***

In the aftermath of the European Parliament election, one argument has resonated strongly in the public debates everywhere: 'Europe' is something which benefits the upper classes, while the bulk of citizens consider it remote and alien. Some scholars, such as Neil Fligstein in his book *Euroclash* (2008), uphold that EU population is split between a minority of Europeanised individuals and a majority of non-Europeanised ones, with national middle classes wavering in between. But is this really the case?

A recently concluded academic research project, EUCROSS, tested this argument by exploring the degree of 'horizontal Europeanisation' of EU citizens, as well as an indicative sample of third-country nationals, the Turkish. The project assumes that cross-border practices of all kinds, both physical and virtual, from work abroad and travel to communications, shopping and friendship networks, are the crucial feature of the Europe in the making. Their spread or not across social categories – classes, cohorts, gender and nationalities – defines the sociological foundations of European integration.

Between 2011 and 2014, the project carried out an extensive collection of sociological data in six EU member states: Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain, and the UK. These data have two main sources. First, a large-scale, systematic and independent phone survey (the EUCROSS survey) of 8500 interviews to nationals of these six countries and immigrants from Romania and Turkey. Second, a set of follow-up in-depth face-to-face interviews with 160 respondents (the EUMEAN survey). These datasets advance existing studies on Europeanisation by going beyond conventional data such as Eurobarometer.

EUCROSS' findings include:

- In the six countries of the study, more than 50% of EU citizens overall 'communicate regularly by phone, internet, mail or email with family and/or friends abroad', 'have visited at least another EU member state in the last two years', are used to 'watch TV in a non-native language', and feel 'familiar with at least another EU country'.
- While it is true that the more educated and the more affluent tend to engage in a wider palette of cross-border practices, less educated and less privileged individuals

also engage in specific combinations of transnational activities as part of their everyday lives.

- In fact, travelling, having acquaintances, communicating and shopping across EU borders has especially market effects in fostering cosmopolitanism among people with lower-level educational qualifications.
- National differences are dramatically important across the board. A stronger and more 'comprehensive' transnationalism can be found in Northern Europe (especially Denmark), while a 'consumption-oriented' form is typical of Central Europe, 'project' transnationalism is more common in Eastern Europe, and localism in Southern Europe (especially Italy, whose citizens are the least transnational).
- Europeans are open to foreign everyday and cultural products, especially foreign cuisine: no more than 12% sticks to national dishes only. But again, strong national differences exist: 'cuisine nationalists' are less than 2% of the Germans sample and up to 30% of the Italians.
- Knowledge of foreign languages affects significantly the likelihood of 'feeling European' in all samples, whereas more ephemeral forms of cross-border practices tend to have a feebler impact.
- Having friends in two or more different EU member states enhances the propensity to support EU-wide redistributive policies.
- While it may be expected that travelling and migration may hamper political participation (and especially voting), this is found not to be the case.
- The experience of migration within the EU is associated strongly with European identification among Romanians, but this association weakens for those Romanian migrants who report having suffered discrimination in the host country.
- Turkish migrants with larger mobility experiences and transnational background tend to 'feel European' more than their settled peers.

The EUCROSS final report presents the findings of a three-year research project titled *The Europeanisation of Everyday Life: Cross-Border Practices and Transnational Identities among EU and Third-Country Citizens* (EUCROSS) funded by the European Commission as part of the 7th Framework Programme. The report can be downloaded freely: [www.eucross.eu](http://www.eucross.eu).

### **Who are we?**

The EUCROSS project is coordinated by an Italian university (University of Chieti-Pescara) and directed by professor Ettore Recchi. The consortium is formed also by GESIS-Leibniz Institut für Sozialwissenschaften (Mannheim, Germany; project director: professor Michael Braun), the University of Aarhus (Denmark; project director: professor Adrian Favell), IBEI-Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (Spain; project director: professor Juan Díez Medrano), the University of York (UK; project directors: professors Mike Savage and Laurie Hanquinet) and the University of Bucharest (Romania; project director: professor Dumitru Sandu).

*For more data and analysis, visit the deliverables section of [www.eucross.eu](http://www.eucross.eu). For additional information on the project, contact Matteo Abbate, EUCROSS project manager ([m.abbate@unich.it](mailto:m.abbate@unich.it)).*