

PRESS RELEASE

The Europeanization of Everyday Life: Kick-off of the EUCROSS Survey (European Commission 7th FP - EUCROSS Research Consortium)

European integration is not only a matter of public finance and budgets. While political institutions in Brussels and the national capitals discuss loans, eurobonds and the fiscal compact, European citizens live a more mundane 'Europe' as part of their everyday life. They catch low-cost flights to Greece, chat with friends in Germany, plan language courses in Ireland and shop online on French websites. There is another Europe, that of 'banal transnationalism'. How is it shaped? Who is part of it? And do these borderless interactions, made possible by almost fifty years of European integration, create an underlying solidarity that strengthens a common identity as 'Europeans'? Answers to such questions are sought by the EUCROSS research project, promoted by the European Commission in the realm of its 7th Framework Program (www.eucross.eu).

In these days the project has just started a mass telephone survey on a random sample of more than 8,000 EU residents in six different countries (Germany, Italy, Spain, UK, Denmark and Romania).

The survey aims at mapping individual cross-border practices facilitated by both European integration and globalization – that is, experiences of foreign countries achieved through physical and virtual mobility. This will widen and update existing knowledge, among other things, on travel behaviors, which describes a divided Europe – 75% of the Dutch go abroad at least once a year, while only 28% of Italians and less of 10% of the Greeks do it (according to Eurobarometer, 2006). In a second stage, researchers will focus on the impact of cross-border practices on the image of Europe and European solidarity among respondents to the survey.

The research topic is particularly hot not only because of the economic crisis of the Eurozone, but also for the rise of radical nationalisms and the spread of Euro-skepticism in the public opinion. Which social groups are more resilient to these trends? Who is more involved in the social and cultural aspects of European integration? EUCROSS shall address these issues by studying a huge sample of EU residents through quantitative and qualitative analyses of cross-border activities and individual identities.

The EUCROSS research project (the full title is: *The Europeanisation of Everyday Life: Cross-Border Practices and Transnational Identifications Among EU and Third-Country Citizens*) 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; director, professor Michael Braun), the University of Aarhus (Denmark; director, professor Adrian Favell), IBEI-Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (Spain; director, professor Juan Diez Medrano), the University of York (UK; director, professor Mike Savage) and the University of Bucharest (Romania; director, professor Dumitru Sandu).

For more information, contact Matteo Abbate, EUCROSS project manager (matteo.abbate@unich.it).