



PRESS RELEASE

The Europeanisation of Everyday Life *First results of the EUCROSS survey*

Leaving aside the world of Brussels-based politics, Europe is becoming united through the daily activities and social relations of Europeans. In spite of the Euro-crisis and the growing resonance of Euroscepticism, the continent is now the life horizon of a considerable part of the people who live in the EU. Via low-cost flights, borderless online shopping, virtual friendships abroad, cross-national commuting and retiring, foreign investments and savings, and a plethora of other transnational behaviours, Europeans are experiencing EU-wide practices ever more frequently as a mundane part of their everyday life.

The EUCROSS research project, promoted by the European Commission in the realm of its 7th Framework Program (www.eucross.eu) has carried out a telephone survey on a random sample of 6,000 residents in six EU member states (Germany, Italy, Spain, UK, Denmark and Romania), to map the spread and scope of such cross-border individual activities.

Against conventional wisdom which suggests that Europeans are rather immobile, EUCROSS finds that one in six respondents have spent at least three months in another EU country in their lifetime. Furthermore, 51% have visited a foreign EU member state, even if for a short vacation, in the last two years. Europeans cross borders in a non-physical sense as well when they connect on the internet or over the phone with friends and kin abroad (which is done by almost three quarters of the EUCROSS sample). Finally, EU citizens increasingly engage in international economic transactions (almost one third of the EUCROSS sample), shopping online but also transferring money to other EU member states – something which the Euro-crisis may have boosted to support family and friends or protect savings.

National differences remain huge, though. 73% Danes and 60% of Germans have visited another EU country in the last two years – approximately, twice as much as Spaniards (42%), Italians (41%) and Romanians (35%). In fact, spending considerable time abroad (i.e., for more than three months) is more common among Danes and Romanians than among citizens of all other countries. In terms of virtual border-crossings, Italians are least connected internationally via telephone, email, Skype and Facebook-like networks: 32% have not communicated with somebody who lives in another country in the year preceding the interview. This is the case for only 17% of Romanians, also due to the high number of migrant friends and family members, and 20% of Britons. Online shopping within the EU is used by one in three Danes, and almost two in five Germans, but the practice is less widespread in Italy, Romania, Spain and the UK. Danes are also most likely (51% of the sample, twice as much as Italians) to have work interactions with people located in other EU countries than the rest of respondents.

These borderless relations are made especially possible by European citizenship, which is the key legal infrastructure for transnational individual activities in the EU. But do such activities, when performed, create an underlying solidarity that strengthens a common identity as ‘Europeans’?

Preliminary analyses indicate that specific intra-European cross-border practices (in particular, purchasing in the EU, eating other European cuisines, being familiar with other European countries) are associated with a stronger support for the EU.

A thorough and more detailed analysis of the linkage between cross-border experiences and collective identities shall be carried out in the next steps of the project, which will also benefit from analysis of a separate sample of 2,500 Romanian and Turkish migrants and from a round of in-depth interviews with a sub-sample of EUCROSS survey respondents.

These early findings already show, however, the extent to which European societies are integrating ‘from below’ on the basis of the border-crossing effect of EU integration. Everyday benefits of mobility and international connections clearly affect a large part of EU citizens, not just elites. EU citizenship and single market policies have enabled the free movement of goods, services and persons to a larger extent than it is usually argued. Interestingly, these market-related benefits have been appropriated by populations – like the Danes and the Britons – that are less keen on the overt political goals of European integration. The ‘Europeanisation of Europeans’ is taking place through practices more than Europeans themselves are ready to admit when interrogated with politically-loaded questions. Possibly, Euroscepticism reflects more a widespread and generic anti-politics feeling than a return of nationalism and rejection of European integration altogether – which is in fact a premise of a wide palette of everyday routines for many Europeans.

Table 1: The internationalisation of Europeans by nationality (% yes-answers)

	Denmark	Germany	Italy	Romania	Spain	UK	N
<i>Lived abroad for more than three months (since turning 18)?</i>	23.3	15.4	11.8	17.0	13.7	24.3	6013
<i>Familiarity with one or more countries?</i>	59.6	66.2	41.5	48.0	48.6	63.8	6004
<i>Know anyone else living in another country?</i>	49.1	48.8	57.8	78.7	65.7	64.5	6005

Source: EUCROSS Survey 2012



Who are we?

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; 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.

For additional information on the project, contact Matteo Abbate, EUCROSS project manager (m.abbate@unich.it).