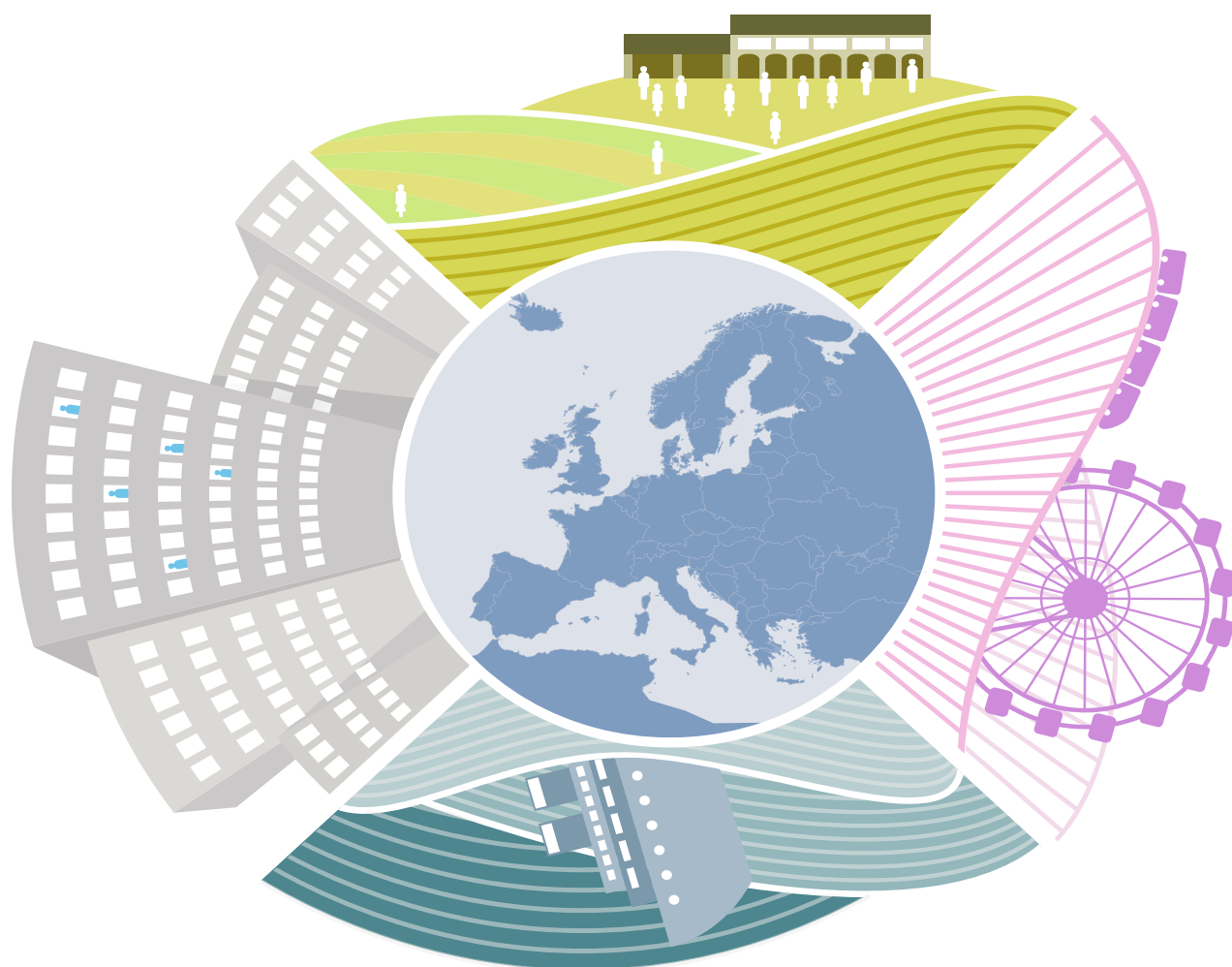


Can Economic and Social Europe Be Reconciled?

Citizen Views on Integration and Solidarity



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Reconciling Economic and Social Europe. The Role of Values, Ideas and Politics

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1

Introduction and key findings

This report presents the main findings of a public opinion survey aimed at exploring the new conflict constellation within the EU and its consequences on the overall perception of the EU in the public sphere. The survey was conducted in the context of the project titled “Reconciling Economic and Social Europe: The Role of Values, Ideas and Politics” (REScEU) during the Fall of 2016. Seven countries were covered: France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden (hereafter grouped as EU6) and the United Kingdom. Two partially different questionnaires were used in the survey. A first questionnaire was administered to a sample of respondents in the EU6 countries, aimed at tapping popular attitudes towards EU solidarity and its various dimensions, a second was administered to a sample of British respondents with the purpose of investigating their attitudes and choices on the “Brexit” referendum and post-Brexit scenarios¹.

The sections of this Report illustrate a set of coherent items of the questionnaire, broadly related to the four conflict lines and their underlying substantive questions. More specifically, the first section maps respondents attitudes toward EU solidarity in general. Section 2 assesses respondents’ opinion on a set of policies and initiatives aimed at strengthening the EU social dimension. Two “special” sections follow. The first one presents the choice of which image best captures the current condition of the EU. The second one captures the attitudes of British citizens towards “Brexit”. The findings are broken down both by country and by some key background factors, in order to capture variations. Some boxes display longitudinal comparisons of our results with data gathered from the same questions included in previous surveys, or focus on specific relevant issues. Conclusions, finally, summarize the main results – less gloomy than expected – and discuss their wider implications.

¹ More detailed information about the research project and the methodology of the survey can be found in the methodological note at the end of this report.

The REScEU survey's key findings

- **Voters believe the EU should be more social.** A majority of respondents (61%) think the top priority for the EU should be ensuring social protection, whereas 39% of voters are in favor of ensuring fiscal stability and competitiveness. (Section 1.1)

- Even though a slight plurality of voters (36,5%) supports the current “conditionality regime”, for Member States in need of financial assistance, there is a large share of respondents (35%) who would support **more cross-national solidarity**. (Section 1.2)

- The support for **open labor markets** remains high (49,2%), even if a sizeable share of voters (20,2%) would like to make mobility conditional on an employment contract. (Section 1.3)

- The vast majority of voters supports the **access of non-nationals to**

domestic welfare benefits (81,4%). Among those, a sizeable share would reserve this right only to EU nationals (38,5%). In addition, a vast majority (65,7%) is in favor of shifting decisions on immigration to the EU level. (Section 1.3)

- Substantial majorities of voters remain **worried about European integration** causing loss of jobs (64,5%), loss of national identity (52,8%) and weakening of national democracy (60,3%). (Section 1.4)

- In a referendum on EU membership the **exit option would be rejected** by the majority of voters: Germany (75%), France (57%), Italy (63%), Poland (72%), Spain (74%) and Sweden (57%). (Section 1.4)

- Vast majorities would welcome **EU funded schemes** for economic and social investments (75,9%), the fight against severe poverty (75,6%), insuring mobile workers (67,7%), helping Member States to face sudden rises of unemployment (77,7%). Finally, 71,2% of respondents are in favour

of a common EU fund compensating national governments and local communities for the costs related to extra-EU immigration. (Section 2)

- A majority of voters has a **positive image of the EU** as a “neighborhood community”, i.e. as a shared home (23,8%) or apartment building (30,1%), whereas 25,8% of voters consider the EU just as a playground for economic exchanges and a minority (20,3%) sees the EU as a sinking ship. (Section 3)

- In case of a new Brexit referendum, **the majority of UK voters would choose to remain in the EU** (56%) (November 2016). (Section 4)

- The majority of British voters (51%) would favor **a new trade agreement with the EU even if it implied accepting free movement of workers**, whereas 36,9% would welcome a new free trade agreement only without EU immigration. Only a small minority (12,1%) would be against a free trade agreement (November 2016). (Section 4)

2

Drifting apart: mapping the four lines of conflict in the EU

During the last couple of decades the EU has witnessed a growing tension between the social and the economic dimension of integration. In the wake of the financial crisis and the ensuing Great Recession such tension has broken down into four distinct lines of conflict. The first revolves around the policy priorities and overall mission of the European Monetary Union (EMU) and pits the supporters of a neo-liberal project, centered on market making and monetary/fiscal stability against a euro-social, growth/employment oriented project, supported by public investments and accompanied by a stronger social dimension. The second line of conflict has to do with the issue of fiscal stability and, ultimately, cross national transfers. The major divide here - core against peripheral Member States - is rooted in both economic interests and highly entrenched cultural worldviews and mainly runs from North to South.

The third line of conflict has to do with free movement, solidarity vis-à-vis outsiders and, more specifically, access to domestic welfare on the side of other EU nationals. On the one hand, we find the supporters of pan-European free movement and non-discrimination; on the other, supporters of social and cultural closure. This line of conflict has a recognizable geographical dimension, running from East to West. Finally, the fourth line of conflict concerns the “powers of Brussels” vis-à-vis the defence of domestic models and practices, especially in the social sphere. Eurosceptical formations have taken root almost everywhere, increasing in strength and impact. In addition to the theme of immigration and, more generally, of “opening”, Eurosceptic parties point the finger at the excessive bureaucracy and technocratic nature of the decisions of Brussels, claiming a return to “peoples’ self-determination”.

The mission of the EU: strengthening or correcting the power of markets?

The crisis has increased the visibility and salience of the traditional Left/Right cleavage as regards the mission of the EU. A ‘euro-liberal’ and a ‘euro-social’ view confront each other within the intellectual and political circles that stay true to the European cause².

To map this first line of conflict, the survey asked respondents to define the ultimate mission of the European Union. A binary option was given: either “Ensuring fiscal stability as well as the international competitiveness of the EU industry”, or “Ensuring high levels of social protection and social welfare for all EU citizens”. The former option captured a “market making” position, whereas the latter was interpreted as a “market correcting” stance.

More than 60% of respondents supported the market-correcting position, while 39% backed the market-making position (see table 1).

A country breakdown shows that the market-correcting position is stronger in all the covered countries. More specifically, Spain is the Member State in which the highest percentage of respondents (75.1%) opted for a market-correcting position. Somehow

unexpectedly, Germany (63.5%) follows suit.

This result contradicts the common understanding of Germany as the guardian of austerity, aimed at prioritizing monetary and fiscal stability, regardless of their social consequences. Even more surprisingly, France shows the smallest share of market-correcting supporters (51.7%).

Table 1.

The mission of the EU: Market-making VS market-correcting

	Market-making	Market-correcting
France	48,3	51,7
Germany	36,5	63,5
Italy	43,6	56,4
Poland	43,2	56,8
Spain	24,9	75,1
Sweden	37,9	62,1
EU6	39,1	60,9
LEFT-RIGHT SELF-PLACEMENT		
left	30,3	69,7
centre	36,4	63,6
right	49,9	50,1
OCCUPATION		
self-employers	43,8	56,2
white-collar employees	40,6	59,4
manual workers	34,3	65,7

Note: Exact question: “In your opinion, which of the following objectives should be given top priority at the EU level? (1) Ensuring fiscal stability as well as the international competitiveness of the EU industry (2) Ensuring high levels of social protection and social welfare for all EU citizens.” Entries are percentages of respondents. DK answers (0.39% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

A matter of ideology and employment status

The positioning of respondents along this conflict line was expected to match their individual socio-economic background and political leaning, with self-employed and right-wing respondents more likely to back market-making. In other terms, this line of conflict was expected to rest somehow on the traditional 'Left/Right' divide.

The survey confirmed such expectations. In the first place, a market-making positioning is more likely to be found among self-employed (43,8%), and white collars (40,6%), whereas it drops

at 34.3% among manual workers. By contrast, a reversed order was found for the market-correcting positioning: supporters are highest among manual workers (65.7%), followed by employees (59.4%) and, finally, self-employed (56.2%).

Finally, we found a 20% variation linked to political and ideological leanings: 49,9% of those who located themselves on the right-side of the political spectrum said that the EU should foster market dynamics, compared to 30.3% of those on the left. Conversely, 69,7% of left-wing respondents pushed for an EU that aims at correcting market dynamics, compared to 50.1% of right-wing voters³.

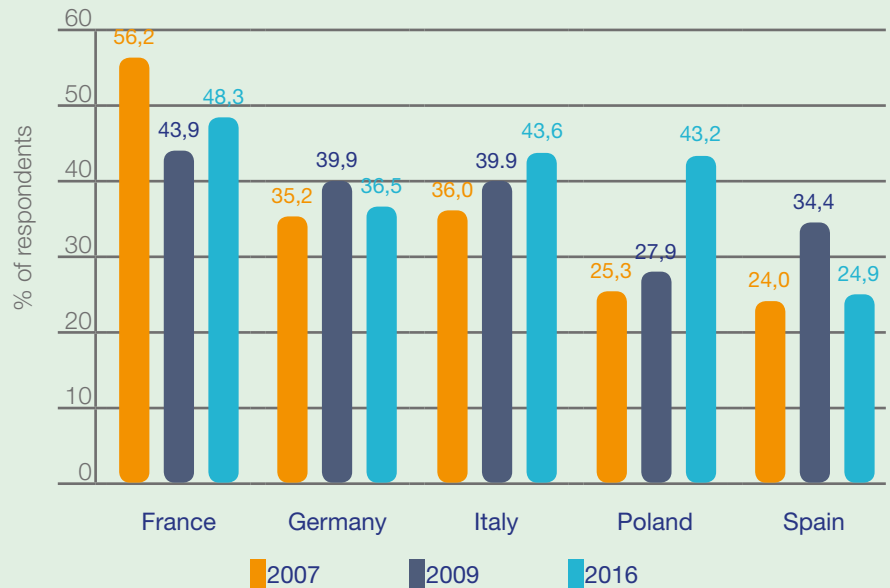
³ Respondents were asked to locate themselves on a scale ranging from 0 (Left) to 10 (Right). We recoded as left-wing respondents all those that placed themselves between 0 and 4 on the Left/Right scale and as right-wing respondents all those that rated themselves between 6 and 10. All those citizens surveyed who placed themselves at 5 on the Left/Right scale were recorded in the "Centre" position.

Changing attitudes over time, 2007-2016

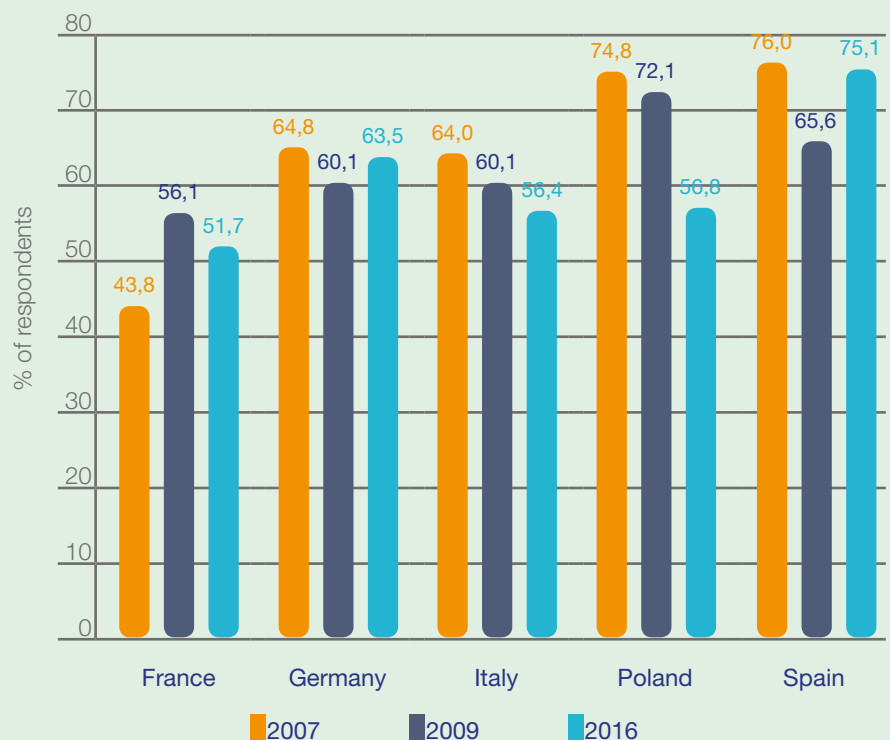
A few past surveys have covered issues related to the ultimate purpose of the EU. The IntUne public opinion survey conducted in 2007 and 2009 included a question almost identical to the one asked by the REScEU survey⁴. The IntUne question enables us to suggest a longitudinal comparison in five out of six countries (Sweden was not included in the IntUne project). As evidenced by Figure 1, in Italy, and especially in Poland, the percentage of respondents supporting the market-making position increased between 2007, just before the outbreak of the crisis, and 2016. By contrast, France in 2016 shows a slightly higher percentage of respondents choosing the market-correcting option compared to 2007. Germany and Spain, apart from an increase in the percentage of respondents who opted for a market-making position in 2009 compared to 2007, do not display interesting differences.

Figure 1.

Support for market-making



Support for market-correcting



Note: See the question wording reported in footnote below in the text.

Source: IntUne Mass Survey 2007, 2009 (Sanders et al. 2012); REScEU Mass Survey.

⁴ IntUne is an integrated project on the theme of European citizenship, which involved 29 European institutions. IntUne aimed to study changes in the scope, nature, and characteristics of citizenship resulting from the process of the deepening and enlargement of the European Union (Sanders et al. 2012). The question included in the IntUne mass survey questionnaire of 2007 and 2009 was as follows: "I'm going to read you two statements. Please tell me which of them comes closest to your view. (1) The main aim of the EU should be to make the European economy more competitive in world markets. (2) The main aim of the EU should be to provide better social security for all its citizens".

2.2

Cross-national solidarity: creditors Vs debtor countries

This line of conflict essentially refers to the clash between the logics of fiscal stability, austerity and national responsibility on the one hand, and the logic of shared responsibility and solidarity on the other one. To capture people's attitudes, respondents' were asked to define "if and how financial support should be given to indebted countries in severe financial difficulties", and to tell "who is to blame for the economic crisis".

What kind of solidarity?

Respondents were required to choose among six "types of solidarity", ranging from a virtually "unconditional availability" of transfers, to their "complete unavailability".

A relative majority of respondents, 36.5%, chose the 'conditionality' option (in essence, the current status quo), meaning that transfers should be bound to specific domestic structural reforms (see Table 2). Then, 35.3% opted for "inter-state solidarity" (where the reform condition is completely or

Table 2.

Cross-national solidarity

	Granted without Conditions	Soft-loans	Conditionality	Offered Voluntarily	Self-help	Not a EU task
France	15.6	17.1	36.6	7.9	17.1	5.7
Germany	10.9	15.6	44.5	7.4	15.4	6.2
Italy	17.0	29.6	35.5	7.8	8.3	1.8
Poland	11.2	19.6	30.8	18.6	12.5	7.4
Spain	16.5	24.7	37.8	5.9	9.4	5.6
Sweden	12.1	21.6	33.5	10.4	13.4	9.0
EU6	13.9	21.4	36.5	9.6	12.6	5.9
AGE						
18-34	14.6	14.6	36.6	12.9	12.3	8.9
35-54	13.3	21.4	35.8	8.5	14.3	6.5
55+	13.9	25.2	37.0	8.6	11.5	3.7
PARTY CHOICE						
radical left	19.9	30.2	28.0	8.5	8.3	5.0
centre left	14.3	23.5	40.0	8.2	10.1	3.9
centre	11.3	26.1	40.2	6.1	11.5	4.8
centre right	10.9	18.4	45.2	8.3	11.7	5.4
radical right	10.9	17.3	28.8	12.7	21.6	8.7

Note: Exact question: "During the recent Eurocrisis, a number of Member States in severe economic and financial conditions have asked for help from the EU. This has led to the adoption of new common rules on the provision of financial support to heavily indebted countries. Please, indicate which of these statements comes closest to your view. Financial support from the EU should... (1) ...be granted without conditions, in the name of solidarity between EU citizens and states; (2) ...take the form of soft loans, because Europeans are "all in the same boat"; (3) ...be accompanied by precise conditions for repayment and domestic policy reform, so as not to put the Monetary Union at risk; (4) ...be offered voluntarily only by those countries that consider it to be in their national interest; (5) ...not be provided because Member States should take responsibility for their own problems instead of asking money from foreign taxpayers; (6) ...not be a task for the EU to deal with". Entries are percentages of respondents. DK answers (0.66% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

partially relaxed), whereas 22.3% were in favour of voluntary forms of cross-national solidarity or full domestic liability. Finally, 5.9% of respondents thought that providing financial help to highly indebted Member States should not be a task of the EU (complete unavailability option).

As expected, looking at German respondents only, we found the 'conditionality' category (44.5%) to be the prominent one, whereas the two 'solidarity' categories (26.5%) were lower compared to the other Member States. It is important to note that, conversely, Italy and Spain display the highest percentages of respondents that opted for the 'solidaristic' options (46.6% in Italy and 41.2% in Spain) and the lowest percentage of respondents in favour of voluntary transfers and self-help (16.1% in Italy and 15.4% in Spain). Poland (18.6%) features the highest number of respondents in the 'offered voluntarily' category, while Sweden in the 'self-help' one (13.4%)⁵.

The role of Ordo-liberalism in German public opinion (2011)

German views are not surprising and largely reflect key traits of the Country's political culture, rooted in the Protestant tradition. The high proportion of German respondents that opted for the 'conditionality' option can be linked, among other factors, to the 'ordoliberal' doctrine that predominates among German political and economic elites⁶. Earlier data from the Eurobarometer 76.1 of September 2011 had already provided clear signals in this direction. A question included in EB 76.1 asked whether respondents agreed or did not agree with the following statement: "In times of crisis, it is desirable for (OUR COUNTRY) to give financial help to another EU Member State facing severe economic and financial difficulties". Only slightly more than half of the German respondents (54.9%) supported the provision of financial help to Member States in economic and financial difficulties, thus indicating the extent to

which this issue is controversial. This proportion is the second lowest (after France, 52.9%) in the EU6 sample of countries included in the RE-ScEU Mass Survey. Two additional questions included in EB 76.1 asked for the main reason why respondents agreed or disagreed with the money transfers. Only 47.4% of German respondents answered that transfers should be provided in the name of European solidarity, while the average proportion of respondents who supported this motivation in the other five countries included in our study was 61.9%. 50.4% of German respondents had a propensity for a more pragmatic option, i.e. that financial help should be provided because it is in the economic interest of Germany. Even more striking is the main motivation provided by German respondents who disagreed with transfers. 85.7% of them thought they should not pay for others' economic problems, signalling the Germans' positive bias toward the view according to which each Member State is responsible for its bad economic conditions. This proportion is significantly higher than the average of the other five countries included in the study (67.5%).

⁵ Since Poland and Sweden are not part of the European Monetary Union (EMU), these countries are not directly concerned by the transfers that EU institutions provide to states in severe financial difficulties. It is highly plausible that Polish and Swedish respondents are afraid of the potential involvement of their governments in arrangements that lead to the provision of such financial help.

⁶ The influence of Protestant values and of Ordoliberal views on Germany's EU policy and cross-national solidarity is one of the main themes explored by the REScEU project. See Hien, J., Joerges, C., 2017

Millennials not so solidaristic

Unexpectedly, the so-called ‘millennials’, namely younger respondents aged between 18 and 34, display a lower propensity for inter-state solidarity⁷. Only 29.3% of them supported the solidaristic options, compared to 34.8% of the respondents between 35 and 54 years, and 39.2% of older respondents (55 years old or more). Moreover, the 18-34 cohort is leaning more ‘toward self-help’ (25.2%) and ‘not a EU task’ (8.9%), if compared to respondents aged 35 years old or more. Finally, the results show that support for unconditional inter-state transfers, tends to be higher among the more informed and more sophisticated voters.

A matter of party affiliation

The ‘conditionality’ option is the favourite among mainstream party voters (defined here as either centre, centre-left or centre-right). Voters of radical-left or radical-right parties⁸ opted instead for inter-state solidarity and the partial ‘mutualisation’ of debt, with a 50.2% of support among parties such as, for instance, Syriza in Greece and Podemos in Spain. By contrast, the proportion of opponents to inter-state solidarity (‘toward self-help’) is highest among voters of radical-right wing parties (34.3%), such as Alternative für Deutschland in Germany, Front National in France and Sweden’s Democrats.

⁷ Millennials are generally considered as the most favoured by the Europeanization process, and were thus expected to be the most solidaristic cohort.

⁸ To place political parties in the five party families identified (radical-left, centre-left, centre, centre-right and radical right) we relied on several sources, such as the Chapel Hill experts’ survey (www.chesdata.eu), the Comparative Manifesto Project (<https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/>). We also took into consideration the application of national parties to the various political groups in the European Parliament.

Who is to blame for the crisis?

By means of the second question, respondents were asked “who should be held responsible for the current economic problems of the EU”: EU institutions, the wealthiest Member States, the most indebted Member States, or banks and financial institutions? In a residual category respondents could indicate any “other actor”. Table 3 shows the main results. More than 40% of citizens considered banks and international financial institutions as the main culprit, followed by 19.9% blaming indebted EU Member States. 18.7% pointed their finger at the EU institutions, while another 18.3% blamed the wealthiest EU Member States (2.2% chose the residual option).

Although “banks and financial institutions” were blamed more or less everywhere, Spain features a staggering 59.6% peak. Stark differences appeared between Germany and Italy. While 32.9% of German respondents blamed the most indebted countries of the

EU, only 6.9% of Italians did the same. On the other hand, the latter largely criticised the wealthiest countries (29.1%), an option that was hardly picked by Germans (8.5%). Moreover, Italy and Spain are the countries in which the lowest proportion of respondents blamed EU institutions. The United Kingdom (26.8%) and France (22.1%) are instead the ones most critical towards Brussels⁹.

Table 3.

Responsible for the current economic crisis in the EU

	Institutions of the EU	Wealthiest EU Member States	Most indebted EU Member States	Banks and financial Institutions
France	22.1	15.6	17.3	43.1
Germany	15.2	8.5	32.9	41.7
Italy	13.8	29.1	6.9	47.4
Poland	17.9	20.7	25.5	33.1
Spain	9.3	17.8	10.8	59.6
Sweden	25.5	17.8	28.6	26.5
United Kingdom	26.8	18.6	17.6	34.9
EU6 + UK	18.7	18.3	19.9	40.9

Note: Exact question: “Different actors may be considered responsible for the current economic problems of the EU. Who do you hold as the most responsible? (1) The institutions of the EU; (2) The wealthiest EU Member States; (3) The most indebted EU Member States; (4) Banks and financial institutions; (5) Other (SPECIFY)”. Entries are percentages of respondents. The residual category “Other” (2.2% of the total) and DK answers (0.36% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

⁹ It is interesting to note that, despite representing just 2.2% of the total answers, 8% of respondents who chose the “other” option, attributed to Germany and/or the German Chancellor Angela Merkel individually the responsibility of the crisis. Another 17% blamed politicians in general, 8% the government of their country and 7% extra-EU immigration.

2.3

Opening VS closure: Workers mobility and access to welfare

Public attitudes on the free movement of workers within Europe were tapped through two different questions. The first one analysed to what extent EU citizens should be allowed to enter the labour market of another Member State. The second one focused on the rights of access to social security on the side of foreigners.

Who should access the national labour market?

Respondents were asked to choose between three options: (1) citizens from other EU countries can access the labour market freely and individually, (2) they can enter only as guest workers and only as long as they keep a job, (3) native workers should have priority access to jobs and employment services. Almost half of respondents (49.2%) argued that the domestic labour market should admit every legally resident foreign citizen, whereas 30.5% favoured giving priority to natives, and 20.2% chose the intermediate option (see Table 4).

Poland (59.0%), Spain (49.6%) and Germany (51.0%) featured a support for openness above the EU6 average. A different pattern is

detected in France, where public opinion seems to be polarized: a relative majority (45.6%) of respondents claimed “French wor-

kers first”, whereas 40.0% would grant access to all foreign citizens legally resident in the country.

Table 4.

Workers mobility within the EU: should there be national filters?

	Freely and individually	Only as guest workers	Priority to nationals
France	40.0	14.4	45.6
Germany	51.0	27.4	21.7
Italy	46.9	20.9	32.2
Poland	59.0	17.7	23.3
Spain	49.6	19.3	31.1
Sweden	49.1	21.5	29.4
EU6	49.2	20.2	30.5
EMPLOYMENT STATUS			
With an occupation	50.3	20.2	29.5
Unemployed	44.7	15.8	39.5
INTERNATIONALIZATION			
Never Visited other EU countries	39.8	22.2	38.0
Visited other EU countries	53.4	19.3	27.2
LEFT-RIGHT SELF-PLACEMENT			
left	58.9	19.4	21.7
centre	44.5	20.4	35.1
right	44.2	21.0	34.8

Note: Exact question: “According to EU law, EU citizens are allowed to work in every Member State. How do you think EU citizens of other nationalities that come to work in your country should access the labour market? (1) Freely and individually, just like me and my national fellows; (2) As guest workers and only as long as they keep the job that let them in (OUR COUNTRY); (3) (NATIONALITY) workers should have priority access to jobs and employment services.” Entries are percentages of respondents. DK answers (0.36% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

Who should access the national welfare state?

Respondents were asked whether access to social benefits should be granted to all legally resident foreigners, only to nationals of other EU Member States, or only to natives. Response items ranged thus from a position of complete openness to full closure. Given the salience of the topic within the United Kingdom, both before and after the EU-referendum of June 2016, this question was also administered in Britain. 42.9% of respondents opted for full openness, closely followed by those who thought that only EU citizens should be entitled to the same rights as natives (38.5%). The remaining 18.6% opted for the more chauvinist position (see Table 5).

In Italy (55.8%), Spain (53.5%), Sweden (48.9%) and the United Kingdom (40.7%), the majority of respondents were in favour of granting unconditional access to welfare rights to foreigners, with the first three countries showing above average rates. By contrast, in Poland (50.8%), France (47.3%) and Germany (46.2%) the highest proportion of respondents opted for the intermediate position. The “closure” option is minoritarian in all countries. Nevertheless, in France the latter is shared by slightly more than 20% of respondents, and in the United Kingdom it reaches 32.4%. Indeed, table 4 and 5 show that French public

opinion is the most “welfare chauvinist” in the EU6 sample. The findings for UK are not surprising, given the frequent recourse to the so-called ‘benefit tourism’ narrative made by British politicians and the outcome of the ‘Brexit’ referendum.

Table 5.

Domestic social protection: who should have access to it?

	All foreigners	Only EU citizens	No foreigners
France	32.0	47.3	20.7
Germany	37.8	46.2	16.0
Italy	55.8	33.2	11.0
Poland	31.1	50.8	18.1
Spain	53.5	32.8	13.7
Sweden	48.9	32.9	18.2
United Kingdom	40.7	26.9	32.4
EU6	43.3	40.5	16.2
EU6 + UK	42.9	38.5	18.6
POCKETBOOK EVALUATION			
Household financial situation got worse	41.6	37.5	21.0
Household financial situation stayed about the same	42.0	39.9	18.2
Household financial situation improved	46.0	38.1	15.9
EDUCATION			
Up to lower secondary qualification	42.4	36.6	20.9
Upper-secondary qualification	41.9	40.1	17.9
University degree	45.1	38.6	16.4
LEFT-RIGHT SELF-PLACEMENT			
left	54.9	33.6	11.5
centre	39.9	39.6	20.5
right	34.7	42.2	23.1

Note: Exact question: “Which of these three statements on the access to social security benefits by citizens of other nationalities comes closest to your own point of view? (1) All foreigners legally resident in (OUR COUNTRY) should have the same social security benefits as the (NATIONALITY); (2) Only nationals of other EU Member States, legally resident in (OUR COUNTRY) should have the same social security benefits as the (NATIONALITY); (3) A foreigner, even if legally resident in (OUR COUNTRY), should not have the same social security benefits as the (NATIONALITY).” Entries are percentages of respondents. DK answers (0.66% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

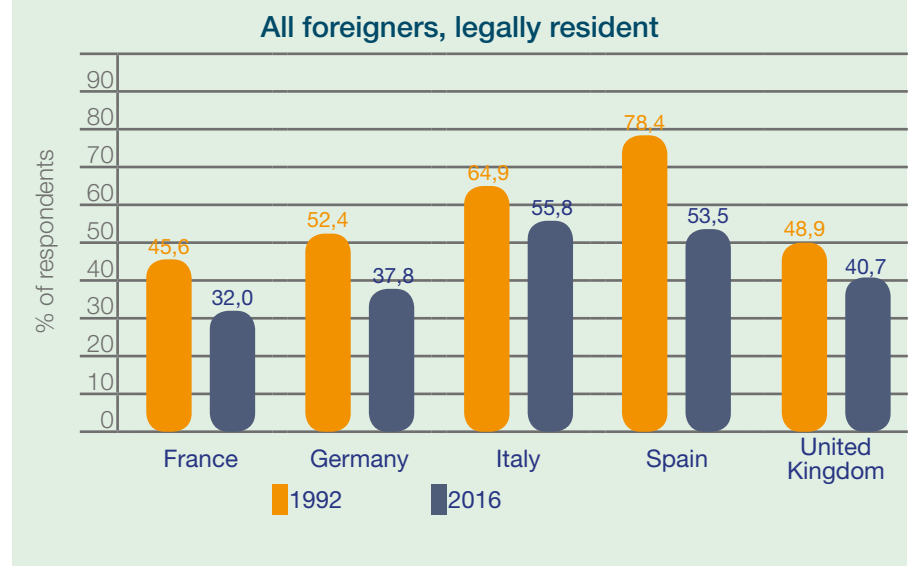
Changing attitudes over time, 1992-2016

Eurobarometer 37.1 conducted in April-May 1992 included exactly the same question as the REScEU mass survey¹⁰. This allows for a longitudinal comparison – although only in two points in time and in five out of seven countries – between citizens opinions; in 2016, after the outbreak of the Eurocrisis and the outcome of the Brexit referendum, and in 1992, just before the Maastricht Treaty came into force.

The bar charts reported in Figure 2 compare the percentages of respondents who in 1992 and in 2016 chose

each of the three options. As shown, in the five countries in which the comparison is possible, the percentage of respondents who thought that all foreigners, irrespective of their country of origin, should have the same access to social benefits as nationals strongly decreased in 2016 compared to 1992. Conversely, the proportion of respondents who opted for the intermediate position, according to which only EU citizens should be entitled to the same social benefits as fellow nationals, significantly increased in four out of five countries. France and Germany, in particular, show a 20-points increase between 1992 and 2016. This result highlights how, in recent years, extra-EU immigration

Figure 2. Comparison between the percentages of respondents for each of the response items in 1992 and in 2016

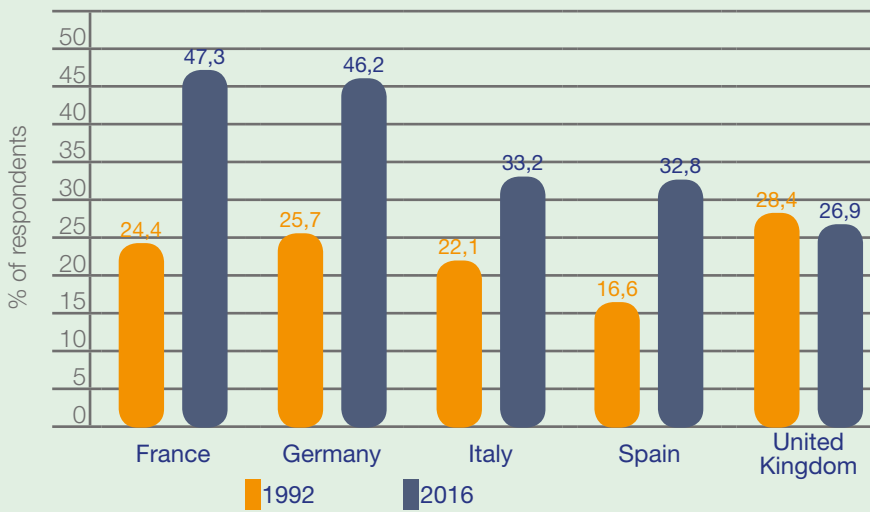


¹⁰ Ferrera 1993. The question included in the Eurobarometer 37.1 has exactly the same wording as the question included in the REScEU Mass survey, except for the term ‘European Commission (EC)’, which in 2016 was replaced with: ‘European Union (EU)’.

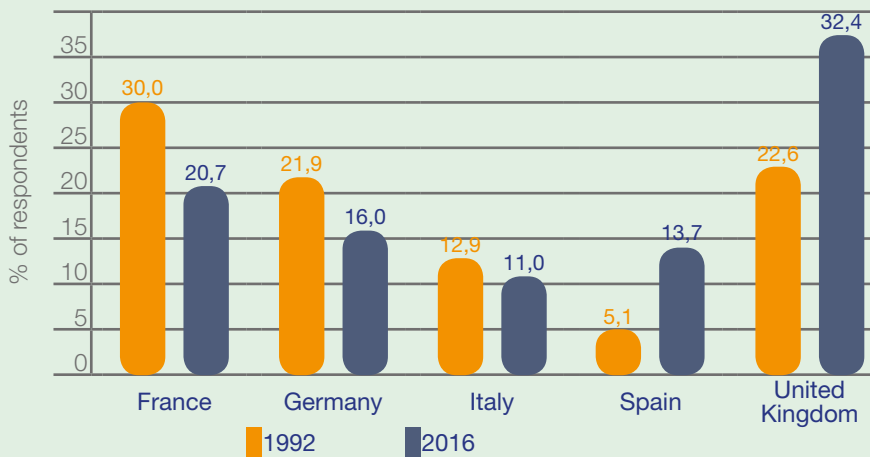
has become a much more salient and threatening issue that worries European voters. The United Kingdom represents the exception; but, as shown by the graph at the bottom of Figure 2, in this country the proportion of respon-

dents who chose a position of closure increased between 1992 and 2016. This result is not surprising given the extreme salience of immigration, even intra-EU, in the politics which led to the 'Brexit' referendum.

Only EU citizens



No Foreigners, even if legally resident



Note: See the question wording reported in the note to Table 5.

Source: Eurobarometer 37.1 (April-May 1992); REScEU Mass Survey.

A matter of economic status and education

The academy debate uses two main arguments to explain citizens' attitudes towards the openness/closure of domestic labour markets and social protection systems¹¹: the economic competition argument, and the cultural identity argument. According to the former, natives have an interest in limiting immigrants' access to scarce resources and perceive openness as an economic threat. The cultural identity argument implies instead that natives consider the welfare state as a 'national institution that mirrors cultural and historical commonality; in this case immigrants are perceived as 'intruders'.

Generally speaking, individuals with higher education and professional skills, or employed in sectors where migrants can't compete, share cosmopolitan values and are thus more likely to accept openness. Lower education levels and a strong attachment to the nation state correlate instead

with an individual anxiety towards socio-cultural diversity and, thus, foster closure.

Our survey suggests that both dynamics are at play. As far as economic competition is concerned, the unemployed are less keen (44,7%) to grant free and unconditional access to the labour market than the employed (50,3%). Likewise, 39.5% of the unemployed would give priority to nationals, a share that is ten points higher than among the employed (29.5%).

Moreover, with respect to the issue of "welfare access", we investigated the 'economic threat' issue by asking respondents if their household financial situation had improved, stayed about the same, or worsened over the past 5 years. Results show that support for a full access to social benefits for immigrants increased from 41.6% among households with a negative financial outlook, to 46.0% among those who experienced a positive evolution. By contrast, immigrants should not have the same social security benefits as nationals according to 15.9% of

¹¹ Two main streams of literature propose explanations of which factors affect the opinion of the general public on this specific line of tension. The first one analyses public attitudes towards immigration (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2014); and the second one focuses on citizens' preferences regarding the welfare state (Svallfors 2012) and, in particular, cross-border welfare rights (van der Waal 2010; Mewes and Mau 2012; Reeskens and van Oorschot 2012; Hjorth 2016).

households with a positive financial evolution, compared to 21.0% of their counterparts.

In addition to the economic competition argument, also the cultural identity arguments holds some traction. Openness was supported by 53.4% of those who had visited another EU country for study, work or leisure, compared to only 39.8% of those who had not. Conversely, closure of the labour market was backed by 27.2% of the former and 38% among the latter¹².

Moreover, we selected the level of education of respondents to conduct a very preliminary test of the “cultural threat” perspective. As expected, positive attitudes towards access of foreigners to social security benefits were higher among university graduates (45.1%) than among those who had reached a secondary level degree (42.4%). Conversely, negative attitudes were shared by 16.4% of university graduates, and 20.9% of lower-educated respondents.

A matter of ideology

Traditional ideologies and party affiliation also play a role in explaining attitudes towards the access to the labour market and the welfare state. Positive attitudes towards free labour market access decreased along the ideological spectrum - according to self-partisan positioning - from the left (58.9%), to the centre (44.5%), and finally to the right (44.2%). On the other hand, closure is supported by 34.8% of respondents who located themselves on the right, versus 21.7% of those on the left.

Likewise, when it comes to support for free access to social benefits, there is a 20-point distance between individuals on the left (54.9%) and those on the right (34.7%). Conversely, the proportion of respondents who opted for a partial or a total closure of the welfare state was higher among right-wing respondents (42.2% for ‘Only EU citizens’ and 23.1% for ‘No foreigner’), than among left-wing respondents (33.6% for ‘Only EU citizens’ and 11.5% for ‘No foreigners’).

¹² The survey question on internationalisation asked as follows: “Have you ever visited another EU country for work, study or leisure? (1) Yes; (2) No”.

2.4

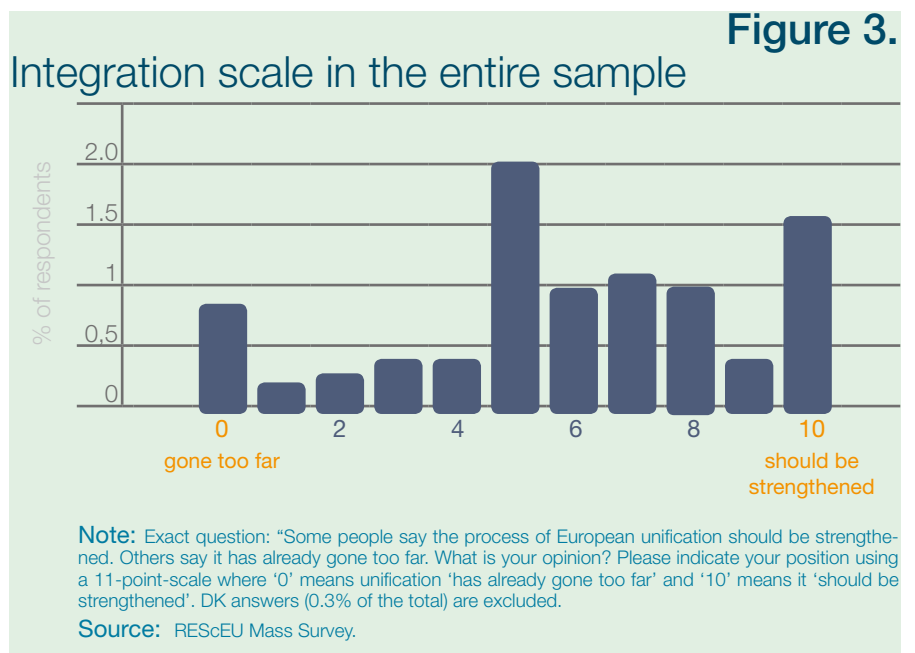
The powers of Brussels: Supranational integration VS national sovereignty

Compared to the other three lines of conflict, the vertical tension between ‘Brussels’ and national governments is more difficult to capture in a ‘pure’ form (see box in this section). Indeed, it is generally linked to some specific policies, or to cross-cutting issues: austerity, the Euro, the cost of membership, migration, losses due to foreign competition, the democratic deficit¹³.

This section of the survey was centered around three questions. First, we asked respondents whether they would like to see more or less European integration in general. Second, we included a four-item question to investigate whether respondents were afraid of some more specific hypothetical consequences of the EU integration process. Last but not least, we asked them bluntly if they would support an exit from the Union.

More or less Europe?

Respondents were invited to locate themselves on a scale that goes from ‘0’, implying that European integration ‘has already gone too far’, to ‘10’, meaning that ‘it should be strengthened’. Figure 3 shows that most respondents (21%) chose an intermediate value (‘5’). However, the distribution is skewed towards a “positive attitude” towards further integration. While 55% located themselves between ‘6’ and ‘10’, only 24% identified with values between ‘0’ and ‘4’. Extreme positions, cap-



¹³ Ferrera 2017

tured by values '0' and '10', were chosen by 8.7% and 15.3% of the sample, respectively showing nevertheless a certain polarization.

In Poland, Italy and Spain the skewedness of the preferences distribution seems to be even stronger. In particular, in Italy (24%) and Spain (25%), a relative majority of respondents located themselves at the positive end of the scale. As reported in Table 6, in Italy, Poland and Spain the average value ranged between 6.1 and 6.9: a score that is significantly higher than in the other countries. In France and in Sweden the average is 5.8 and

5.1 respectively, but one respondent out of ten said that "the integration process has already gone too far". Germany shows the most balanced distribution.

Finally, in the United Kingdom the share of respondents who think that the unification process has already gone too far (categories 0 to 4) is higher than the share of those who think that it should be strengthened (see Figure 4). This distribution is also reflected by the British average value on the integration scale (4.9) that is the lowest of the country sample.

Table 6.

Country average values and standard deviations on the integration scale

	Mean	St. Dev.
France	5.8	3.1
Germany	5.5	2.8
Italy	6.5	3.0
Poland	6.1	2.7
Spain	6.9	2.6
Sweden	5.1	2.7
United Kingdom	4.9	3.0
EU6	6.0	2.9
EU6 + UK	5.8	2.9

Note: For the question wording see note of Figure 3.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

Figure 4.

Integration scale in the seven countries



Note: For the question wording see note of Figure 3.
Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

What scares people about European integration?

To dig into the fears of respondents related to the integration process, we employed a four item question. People could link their worries to: the loss of jobs and social security, the growing share of national income being paid into the EU budget, the loss of national identity and culture, or the weakening of national democracy. As Table 7 shows, on average, about 60% of citizens were generally afraid of these potential effects of the integration process. The most pressing issue was the potential loss of jobs and social

security (see panel A), a topic closely intertwined with more than one of the four lines of conflict. However, the prominence of this item (64.5%) was driven by some outliers, such as Spain, where this specific issue concerns 87.9% of respondents. Spain was followed by Italy and France, where 70.0% and 69.6% of respondents expressed the same fear. Polish respondents, instead, were the least worried about the loss of jobs and social security (51.5%).

The remaining three items show a similar pattern, with Spanish and French respondents being the most afraid about increased contribution to the EU budget (panel B), the weakening of national democracy (panel D), and the loss of national identity and culture (panel C). However, contrary to the general Eurosceptic claim, the undermining of domestic traditions and practices by the EU was the least of concerns. On average, it scored “only” 52.8% among respondents in the sample. Moreover, in Poland (43.2%) and Sweden (47.5%), the share is below 50%, while the German sample is almost split in half (48.9%). French respondents turned out to be the most chauvinist (62.6%).

Table 7.
Fears about the process of EU integration

	A) Loss of job and social security		B) A growing share of national income being paid into the EU budget	
	Not afraid	Afraid	Not afraid	Afraid
France	30.4	69.6	32.5	67.5
Germany	47.4	52.6	37.1	62.9
Italy	30.0	70.0	49.6	50.4
Poland	48.5	51.5	39.2	60.8
Spain	12.1	87.9	29.6	70.4
Sweden	44.7	55.4	43.6	56.4
EU6	35.5	64.5	38.6	61.4

	C) Loss of national identity and culture		D) A weakening of national democracy	
	Not afraid	Afraid	Not afraid	Afraid
France	37.8	62.6	33.0	67.0
Germany	51.1	48.9	44.0	56.1
Italy	48.5	51.5	38.7	61.3
Poland	56.8	43.2	48.2	51.8
Spain	36.4	63.6	31.2	68.8
Sweden	52.6	47.5	43.4	56.6
EU6	47.2	52.8	39.7	60.3

Note: Exact question: “Some people have fears about the process of European unification. How much are you currently afraid of? a) The loss of jobs and social security in (OUR COUNTRY); b) A growing share of national income being paid into the EU budget; c) The loss of national identity and culture; d) A weakening of national democracy.” Entries are percentages of respondents. Response categories “Very much afraid” and “somewhat afraid” have been recoded in the category “Afraid”, while categories “Not much afraid” and “Not afraid at all” have been recoded in the category “Not Afraid”. DK answers (a. 0.18% of the total; b. 0.96% of the total; c. 0.21% of the total; d. 0.41% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

Would you “exit” the Union?

For the ‘integration vs autonomy’ line of tension, the ultimate litmus test is the extent of support for the exit option. Overall, such option was rejected by the majority of voters in our sample. Two out of three respondents said that they would vote for their country remaining in the EU (66.2%), while 24.7% of them would vote for leaving; the remaining 9.1% declared that they would not vote (see Table 8).

‘Remainers’ were highest in Germany (75.1%), followed by Spain (73.8%). ‘Exiters’ were highest in France and Sweden, where more than 34%¹⁴ of respondents would ‘leave’ the Union.

The remain option is especially backed by the group aged 55 years or more (76.5%), those with a university degree (74.8%), and leftist respondents (75.5%). “Leavers” were over-represented within those aged between 35 and 54 (32.1%), those with an upper-secondary qualification (26.9%), and right-wing voters (31.1%). The youngest respondents (18-34 years old) were the most inclined to abstain (12.5%).

Table 8.

Vote choice in a potential referendum on exit from the EU

	Remain	Leave	Not vote
France	56.5	34.1	9.4
Germany	75.1	16.5	8.4
Italy	63.1	28.6	8.3
Poland	71.8	17.3	11.0
Spain	73.8	16.4	9.8
Sweden	57.4	34.7	7.9
EU6	66.2	24.7	9.1
AGE			
18-34	62.2	25.3	12.5
35-54	56.5	32.1	11.4
55+	76.5	18.3	5.3
EDUCATION			
Up to lower secondary qualification	63.1	25.8	11.1
Upper-secondary qualification	63.7	26.9	9.4
University degree	74.8	19.5	5.8
LEFT-RIGHT SELF-PLACEMENT			
left	75.5	18.6	6.0
centre	60.5	24.1	15.4
right	62.5	31.1	6.3

Note: Exact question: “If (COUNTRY) should call for a referendum on its membership in the European Union, how would you vote? 1) To make (COUNTRY) remain a member of the EU; 2) To make (COUNTRY) leave the EU; 3) I would not vote.” DK answers (0.75% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

¹⁴ The voting behaviour in this hypothetical referendum expressed by one third of French respondents seems to be in line with the attitudes that they express on the closure of the labour market and social security on the side of foreign workers and their general opinion on the integration process.

The intersection between lines of conflict

As already noted, the vertical divide is difficult to capture in a pure form because it overlaps with and cross-cuts the issues captured by the other three lines of tension. Thus, we analyzed whether and how respondents' attitudes toward integration varies

according to the preferences expressed for the questions emblematically linked to the four lines of conflicts. Table 9 shows the average values on the 0-10 integration scale for the entire sample, broken down by the opposite poles of the variables that measure the other three conflicts. We ran a t-test to understand whether the differences between different categories of respondents were statistically significant.

There is only a slight difference in the mean value on the integration scale between 'market-making' and 'market-correcting' positions. This difference is only weakly significant in statistical terms. This result is not surprising, considering that the left/right divide at the supranational level does not question integration as such, but it contrast two opposite views on the ultimate mission of the EU. If we look at positions on the 'core VS periphery conflict' and the 'free movement' conflict, we discover more statistically and substantially significant differences in the mean values on the integration scale. We detect more favourable attitudes towards integration among respondents who are inclined to support cross-national solidarity and the opening of social protection systems to foreign citizens, compared to those who opt for self-help and for closure. Finally, we analyzed how opinions on EU unification differ between those who had voted for a Eurosceptic party and supporters of traditional political forces. As expected, the average value on the integration scale among supporters of a pro-EU party is statistically higher than the value of those who voted for a Eurosceptic party.

Factors affecting opinions on integration process

Table 9.

	0-10 integration scale (average value)	T Test (p value)
EU MISSION		2.395*
Market-making	6.1	
Market-correcting	5.9	
CROSS NATIONAL SOLIDARITY		14.400***
Solidarity	6.4	
Self-help	5.1	
ACCESS TO WELFARE BY FOREIGNERS		21.903***
Opening to all foreigners	6.3	
Closure toward foreigners	4.5	
VOTE FOR EUROSCEPTIC PARTIES		11.761***
No	6.2	
Yes	5.2	

Note: For the question wording see note of Figure 4. Entries are mean values on the 0-10 scale. Significance level ***p<0.01 **p<0.05 *p<0.1.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

3

Reconciliation: policies for a more social Europe

The REScEU Mass Survey included a number of questions aimed at capturing potential support for strengthening the EU social dimension, through specific measures dealing with the fight against poverty and unemployment, economic and social investments, and migration.

Pan-European solidarity I: A EU wide poverty and unemployment scheme?

For what concerns the issues of poverty and unemployment, a first question asked respondents if, in case of a very severe financial crisis in a given Member State, they thought that the EU should make sure that no citizen of said state remained without means of subsistence (food, shelter, essential medicines etc.). Here the implicit suggestion is that EU financial assistance programs should see to it that national governments provide a minimum safety net. The second question asked citizens whether they would support the introduction of a EU-funded benefit scheme for people in severe poverty. The third one asked respondents whether they would approve a EU budget large enough to support a scheme against unemployment.

Almost all respondents (89.1%) agreed that the EU should ensure that no citizen remained without means of subsistence. In the EU6 sample this proportion was higher

Table 10.

Pan-European solidarity: EU measures against poverty

	A) Financial help to make anyone without basic means of subsistence		B) A EU funded benefit scheme for people in severe poverty	
	Disagree	Agree	Not in favour	In favour
France	15.4	84.6	34.7	65.3
Germany	12.7	87.3	30.3	69.7
Italy	4.7	95.3	13.5	86.5
Poland	11.6	88.4	24.7	75.3
Spain	6.7	93.3	9.5	90.5
Sweden	14.4	85.6	33.6	66.5
EU6	10.9	89.1	24.4	75.6

Note: Exact questions: a) "EU Member States have decided that their social and economic policies should be brought closer together. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. (1) In case of a very severe financial crisis in a given Member State, the EU should make sure that no citizen of that state remains without means of subsistence (food, shelter, essential medicines etc...)". Response categories "Strongly agree" and "Somewhat agree" have been recoded in the category "Agree", while the categories "Somewhat disagree" and "Strongly disagree" have been recoded in the category "Disagree". Entries are percentages of respondents. DK answers (0.40% of the total) are excluded. b) "Thinking about the European Union over the next 10 years, can you indicate whether you are in favour or against the following? (1) The introduction of a EU funded benefit scheme for people in severe poverty all over the EU" Response categories "Strongly in favour" and "Somewhat in favour" have been recoded in the category "In favour", while categories "Somewhat against" and "Strongly against" have been recoded in the category "Against". DK answers (0.68% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

than 84%. In addition, more than three respondents out of four were in favour of a specific EU funded scheme to fight poverty. In Italy (86.5%) and Spain (90.5%), respondents backed these policies vigorously, whereas in France, Germany and Sweden approval rates were 20 points lower. (see Table 10).

For what concerns the issue of unemployment, more than 77% of respondents were in favour of an increase of the EU budget. to support jobless people during a crisis. However, while in Spain and in Italy approval rates reached respectively 91.2% and 91.0%, in Germany they only reached 64.9%. The fact that more than two thirds of Germans are ready to support a partial mutualisation of the risk of unemployment is nevertheless remarkable, considering the reluctance of the German government when it comes to mutualisation policies (see Table 11).

Table 11.

Pan-European solidarity: EU measures against poverty

	Financial help to states that face a rise in unemployment	
	Disagree	Agree
France	32,1	67.9
Germany	35,1	64.9
Italy	8.8	91.2
Poland	18.1	82.0
Spain	9.0	91.0
Sweden	30.5	69.5
EU6	22.3	77.7

Note: Exact question: "EU Member States have decided that their social and economic policies should be brought closer together. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. The EU should equip itself with a budget large enough to provide substantial financial help to Member States facing a sudden rise in unemployment rates" Response categories "Strongly agree" and "Somewhat agree" have been recoded in the category "Agree", while the categories "Somewhat disagree" and "Strongly disagree" have been recoded in the category "Disagree". Entries are percentages of respondents. DK answers (0.47% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

Pan-European solidarity II: Fostering investments and the mutualisation of risks?

A set of questions asked respondents to indicate whether they were in favour or against an increase in the EU budget for economic and social investments, and the introduction of Eurobonds.

As shown by Table 12, more than three out of four respondents in the six countries were in favour of increasing the EU budget to foster social investment policies (75.9%). By contrast, 'only' 56% were in favour of the introduction of European bonds aimed at partly mutualising public debt among EU Member States. Country differences are quite sharp, reflecting the controversial nature of this issue in the context of the North-South line of conflict (see section 1.2). While in Spain and Italy, respectively 78.5% and 72.3% of respondents backed Eurobonds, only 37.3% of Germans did so. In France the approval rate reached 48.3%.

Table 12.

Pan-European solidarity: Social investments and mutualisation of risks

	A) An increase in the EU budget for economic and social investment		B) The introduction of Eurobonds	
	Not in favour	In favour	Not in favour	In favour
France	33.0	67.0	51.7	48.3
Germany	33.3	66.7	62.7	37.3
Italy	14.0	86.0	27.7	72.3
Poland	16.2	83.9	43.6	56.4
Spain	11.7	88.3	21.5	78.5
Sweden	36.3	63.7	57.9	42.1
EU6	24.1	75.9	44.1	55.9

Note: Exact question: "Thinking about the European Union over the next 10 years, can you indicate whether you are in favour or against the following? a) An increase in the EU budget for economic and social investments; b) The introduction of common European bonds (a.k.a. Eurobonds)." Response categories "Strongly in favour" and "Somewhat in favour" have been recoded in the category "In favour", while categories "Somewhat against" and "Strongly against" have been recoded in the category "Against". DK answers (a. 0.61% of the total; b. 2.13% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

3.3

Pan-European solidarity III: A EU wide insurance to support mobility and immigration?

Two questions asked respondents to indicate whether they were in favour or against the introduction of common EU social insurance schemes (such as healthcare, unemployment or pensions) covering intra-EU mobile workers. The second question referred to the introduction of a common EU fund compensating national governments and local communities for the costs related to immigration from other EU Member States. Finally, the third question asked respondents whether they agreed that deci-

sions on EU external borders control and on the status of extra-EU immigrants and refugees should be taken in Brussels.

67.7% of respondents were in favour of common EU social insurance schemes. It is remarkable that the support for tackling mobility issues is weaker if compared to the one directed at fighting poverty and unemployment. Moreover, the issue divides North and South. Whereas support is high in Spain (88.8%) and Italy (78.0%), Germany (60.8%), Sweden (59.0%) and France (49.3%), showed lower -even if still majoritarian- approval rates (see Table 13).

Table 13.

Pan-European solidarity: Supporting mobility and immigration

A) Common EU social insurance schemes for intra-EU migrant workers		
	Not in favour	In favour
France	50.7	49.3
Germany	39.2	60.8
Italy	22.0	78.0
Poland	29.8	70.2
Spain	11.2	88.8
Sweden	41.0	59.0
EU6	32.23	67.67

B) A common EU fund compensating national governments and local communities for the costs related to extra-EU immigration		
	Not in favour	In favour
France	45.0	55.0
Germany	31.0	69.1
Italy	14.7	85.4
Poland	35.5	64.5
Spain	15.7	84.3
Sweden	31.6	68.4
EU6	28.8	71.2

C) Decisions on control of the EU external borders and on immigrants taken in Brussels		
	Not in favour	In favour
France	33.7	66.3
Germany	34.7	65.3
Italy	21.0	79.0
Poland	45.0	55.0
Spain	29.8	70.2
Sweden	42.2	57.9
EU6	34.3	65.7

Note: Exact question: "Thinking about the European Union over the next 10 years, can you indicate whether you are in favour or against the following? a) The introduction of common EU social insurance schemes (such as healthcare, unemployment or pensions) that cover intra-EU migrant workers; b) The introduction of a common EU fund compensating national governments and national communities for the costs related to immigration from other EU Member States" Response categories "Strongly in favour" and "Somewhat in favour" have been recoded in the category "In favour", while categories "Somewhat against" and "Strongly against" have been recoded in the category "Against". DK answers (a. 0.65% of the total; b. 0.76% of the total) are excluded. c) "EU Member States have decided that their social and economic policies should be brought closer together. Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. Decisions on EU external borders control and the status of extra-EU immigrants and refugees should be made in Brussels." Response categories "Strongly agree" and "Somewhat agree" have been recoded in the category "Agree", while the categories "Somewhat disagree" and "Strongly disagree" have been recoded in the category "Disagree". Entries are percentages of respondents. DK answers (0.86% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

When it comes to extra-EU migration in the entire sample, 65.7% of respondents supported the centralisation in Brussels of decisions on the external borders of the EU and the status of extra-EU immigrants and refugees. 71.2% were in favour of the introduction of a common EU fund compensating national governments and local communities for the costs related to immigration. However, country differences persist also here. In Italy – a country facing in the first place the influx of migrants from Africa to Europe – 79.0% of respondents agreed to entrust the EU with management of the issue. More than 85% of them were in favour of compensation funds from the EU. By contrast, only 55% of Polish respondents agreed that the management of extra-EU immigration should be decided at the EU level.

4

Images of the EU: a house to share, a marketplace or a sinking ship?

Given the multifaceted crisis that the EU is suffering and the novel conflict constellation, the REScEU survey tried to capture what kind of summary image citizen have about the EU. We proposed four different images that media and commentators often adopt to describe the Union. More precisely, the EU was described as the 'common house' of all European citizens, as an 'apartment building' in which national peoples live next to each other like good neighbours, a 'playground' that facilitates (mutually beneficial) economic exchanges among Member States and citizens and, finally, as a 'sinking ship' from which Member States should escape as fast as they can. The first image

Table 14.

Image of the EU	Common House	Apartment Building	Playground	Sinking Ship
France	22.1	22.4	22.3	33.2
Germany	6.9	54.6	26.6	11.9
Italy	38.1	26.4	15.1	20.4
Poland	31.9	31.4	23.5	13.2
Spain	31.0	22.6	33.8	12.6
Sweden	18.7	28.3	34.5	18.5
United Kingdom	17.9	25.1	24.8	32.3
EU6	24.8	31.0	26.0	18.3
EU6 + UK	23.8	30.1	25.8	20.3

Note: Exact question: "In talking about the European Union, media and people sometimes use the following images. Could you please indicate which one comes closest to your view? 1) The EU is the common house of all European citizens; 2) The EU is like an apartment building: national peoples live next to each other like good neighbours; 3) The EU is a playing ground that facilitates (mutually advantageous) economic exchanges among Member States and citizens; 4) The EU is a sinking ship: Member States should escape it as fast as they can". DK answers (0.37% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

undoubtedly represents the most solidaristic and communitarian view, while the second one refers to an idea of Europe in which different Member States retain nation-based diversities, but have decided to pool sovereignty and to empower EU institutions in a number of key policy areas. The third image - the EU as a playground - suggests that the Union basically helps different Member States to trade with each other by establishing and regulating a common economic space, while the image of the EU as a sinking ship describes the view of Eurosceptic

A European kaleidoscope

political forces supporting the 'exit option'.

Considering the entire sample, which included the EU6 countries and the United Kingdom, the most appealing image turned out to be the apartment building (30.1%), followed by the playground (26.0%), the common house (23.8%) and, finally, the sinking ship (20.3%). In Germany, more than 54% of respondents declared themselves closest to the image of the apartment building, while only 6.9% of them opted for the common house. By contrast, in Italy (38.1%) and Poland (31.9%) people opted for the image of the common house. In Spain (33.8%) and Sweden (34.5%), instead, a relative majority identified themselves with the 'playground' option. Finally, 33.2% of French¹⁵ and 32.3% of British¹⁶ respondents saw the EU as a sinking ship that should be abandoned as soon as possible (see Table 14).

¹⁵ The French data reflect in their turn the increasing popularity (and sheer presence in public debates) of the Front National, which proposes a referendum on France's exit from the EU.

¹⁶ This percentage is not surprising, for the United Kingdom, where the outcome of the 'Brexit' referendum essentially ratified this position.

5

An insight into ‘Brexit’

The outcome of the referendum held on 23 June 2016 on the exit of the United Kingdom (‘Brexit’) from the EU represents, undoubtedly, the most dramatic moment in the process of European integration so far. Contrary to all the electoral forecasts, British voters decided that their country should leave the EU. This result forced the Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative party David Cameron - who had campaigned for remaining in the Union - to resign. The new Prime Minister, Theresa May, has triggered art. 50 of the Lisbon Treaty in March 2017, opening up a period of uncertainty about the future relationship between the UK and the EU. Considering this unexpected outcome, the RE-ScEU Mass Survey elaborated a largely different questionnaire for the UK, aimed at exploring public opinions on ‘Brexit’ and future

The ‘Brexit’ referendum with hindsight: good or bad choice?

scenarios.

The survey opened with a question aimed at capturing the attitudes towards the very decision of calling such a referendum, made by David Cameron back in 2015. The first two options suggested, with different nuances, that it was the “right” decision, whereas the remaining two options backed the idea that it was a “mistake”. For the sake of comparison, this question was also administered to respondents in the other six countries.

As Table 15 shows, respondents were almost evenly distributed around the four options, with negative attitudes (definitely, a “mistake”) only slightly higher (29.4%) than the percentage of those who took a positive (definitely, the “right decision”) stance (27.2%). Even considering the more nuanced intermediate options, our total sample was split down the middle, with 49% of positive attitudes and 51% with negative attitudes. The most polarized country was the United Kingdom, with 35.5%

Table 15.

Assessment of referendum on “Brexit”

	Right decision	Right but risky	Mistake but respect for the outcome	Mistake and need to minimize the damage
France	29.0	21.6	27.5	22.0
Germany	18.5	31.9	15.3	34.3
Italy	35.5	21.2	17.8	24.7
Poland	24.2	15.2	26.2	34.4
Spain	20.2	19.7	25.7	34.4
Sweden	27.1	23.9	20.3	28.8
United Kingdom	35.5	19.3	18.2	27.1
EU6	25.8	22.4	22.1	29.7
EU6 + UK	27.2	22.0	21.5	29.4

Note: Exact question: “On the last 23rd of June, through a referendum, British citizens voted that the United Kingdom should leave the European Union. Please indicate which of these statements on the opportuneness to call such a referendum comes closest to your view. 1) It was a right decision because any peaceful expression of the popular will should be welcomed; 2) It was a right decision, even though it can be risky to hold a referendum on such a complex issue; 3) It was a mistake to hold a referendum on such a complex issue but the British government has to respect its outcome; 4) It was a mistake to hold a referendum on such a complex issue and now British institutions must find a way to minimise damage from its outcome.” DK answers (0.50% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

on the positive side, and 27.1% at the opposite end. Nevertheless, the gap widens if we look just at the opinion expressed by those who had voted in the referendum¹⁷ : 38.0% of British actual voters thought that calling a referendum on ‘Brexit’ was a correct decision, while 25.2% of them thought it was a mistake.

With regard to the other six countries covered by the survey, Italy shows the highest number of respondents who backed the decision to hold a referendum (35.5%), followed by France (29.0%) and Sweden (27.1%). The critical front is led instead by German (18.5%) and Spanish (20.2%) citizens. However, in Germany, 31.9% of respondents still thought that it was a right decision. By contrast, Poland (34.4%) and Spain (34.4%) were the countries in which the highest proportion of respondents thought that the referendum was a mistake and the British institutions must find a way to minimise the damage caused by it.

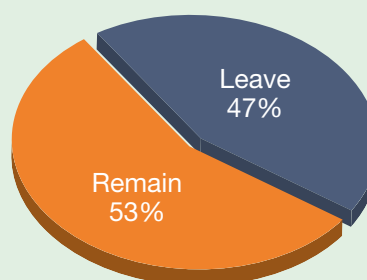
¹⁷ 83.2% of the 1,320 respondents included in the British sample

Did you vote to “remain” or to “leave”?

The questionnaire continued with a battery of questions aimed at investigating the voting choice of British respondents and the factors that are likely to have affected it. As shown by the pie chart reported in Figure 5, in our sample 52.8% of British respondents declared that they had voted to ‘remain’, whereas 48.1% of them declared that they had voted to ‘leave’¹⁸.

Vote choice in the “Brexit” referendum in our UK sample

Figure 5.



Note: Exact question: “Did you vote in the “Brexit” referendum held on June 23rd? 1) Yes, I voted; 2) No, I didn’t vote.” The question was administered only to respondents who had previously declared that they voted in the “Brexit” referendum. DK answers (0.75% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

¹⁸ Compared to the actual results of the referendum, our sample shows 4.7% more preferences for ‘Remain’ (and 4.7% fewer for ‘Leave’). This is not surprising, considering that the survey was conducted more than three months after the actual event and, of course, it did not have a forecasting purpose.

A matter of age, education and ideology

What factors played a role in shaping voting choices? Table 16 provides a first answer. The percentage of British respondents who voted ‘remain’ decreases from those aged between 18 and 34 years (66.6%), to those aged 55 years or more (48.8%), and, eventually, those aged between 35 and 54 years (47.3%).

However, it is important to highlight that abstention was highest among the youngest respondents (28.5%) compared to the rest (19% among 35-54 year olds, and 6.2% among 55+ year olds). At the same time, ‘leavers’ were more present among least educated respondents (54.2%) and those with an upper-secondary qualification (50.5%), rather than among university graduates (36.0%). In addition, the same voting behaviour was more frequent among right-wing respondents (60.3%), followed by centrist ones (52.7%) and, far distanced, those located on the left side (20.5%)¹⁹.

Table 16.

Respondents characteristics and vote choice

	Remain	Leave
AGE		
18-34	66.6	33.4
35-54	47.3	52.7
55+	48.8	51.2
EDUCATION		
Up to lower secondary qualification	45.8	54.2
Upper-secondary qualification	49.5	50.5
University degree	64.0	36.0
LEFT-RIGHT SELF-PLACEMENT		
left	79.5	20.5
centre	47.3	52.7
right	36.7	60.3

Note: See note to Figure 3.

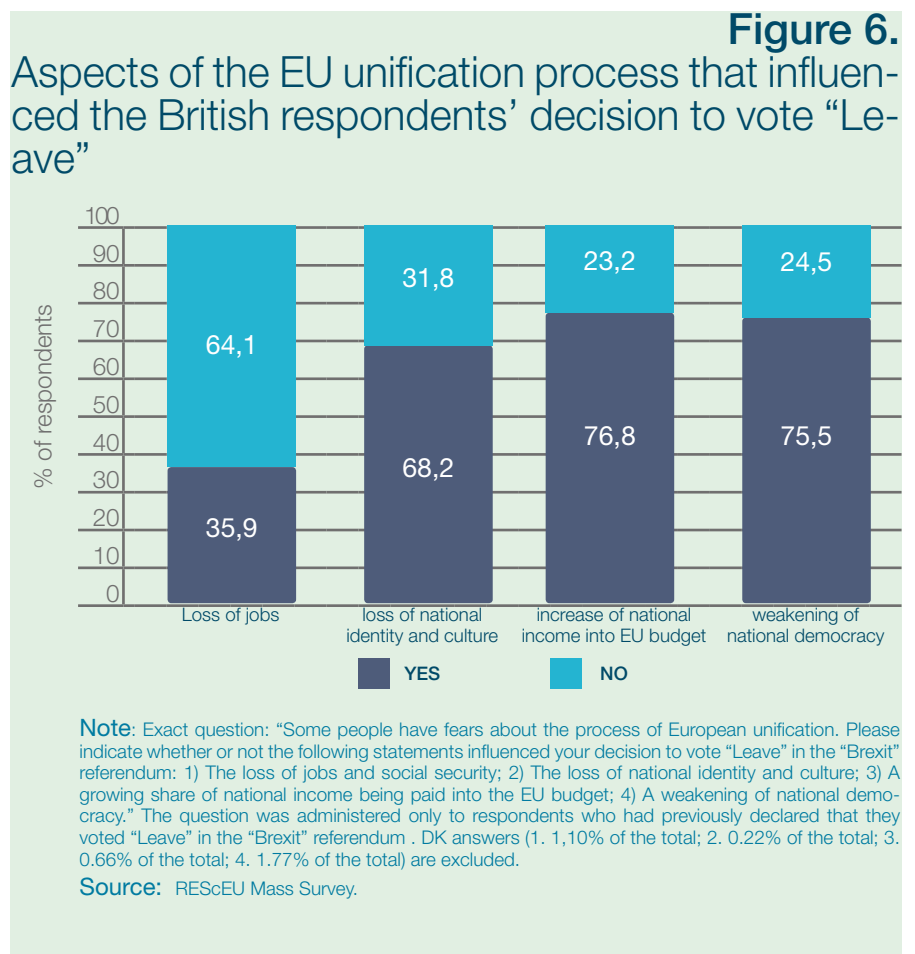
Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

¹⁹ In general, these descriptive results are in line with the analyses of the ‘Brexit’ vote made in the aftermath of the referendum. More sophisticated analyses, however, will be necessary in order to better understand which voters’ characteristics drove their electoral choices. Other survey questions cast more light on the motivations behind voters’ choice, especially for those who voted ‘Leave’.

Why did you vote to leave the Union?

Finally, in Figure 6 we show which fears about the EU integration process affected the 'Brexit' vote²⁰. 35.9% of British respondents pointed at the fear of losing jobs and social security, 68.2% at the fear of a loss of national identity and culture, and 75.5% at the risk of a weakening of national democracy. Finally, 76.8% of respondents declared that the fear of an increase of national income being paid into the EU budget was a key driver of their vote. In other terms, the perceived political impact of the EU integration process seem to have affected 'leavers' more than the economic impact²¹.

In a question administered only to respondents who voted 'leave', we asked whether they would have voted to remain, if the EU had made major conces-

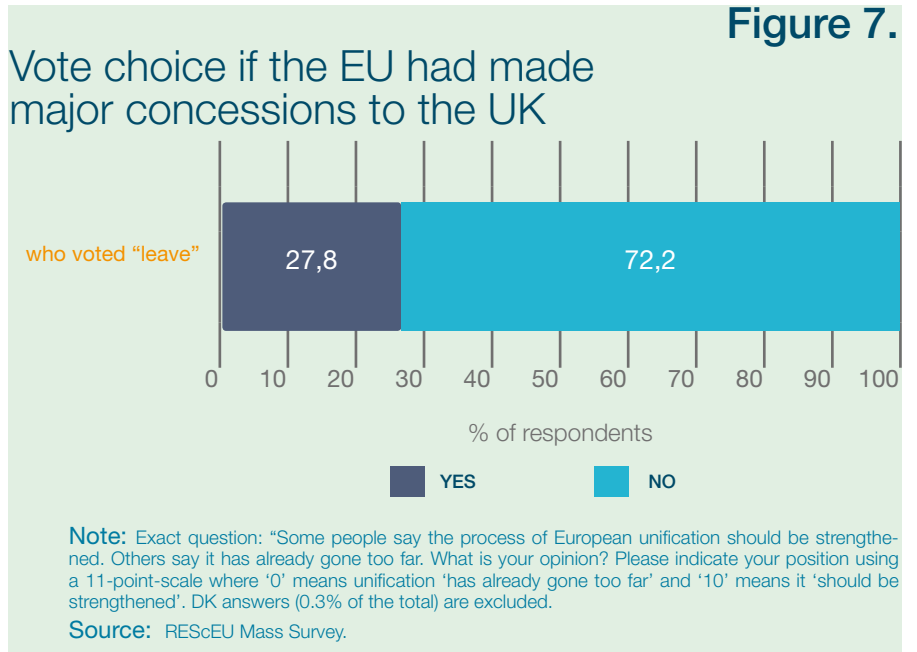


²⁰ A similar analysis has already been presented for the other six countries (see Table 6). Each of the bars plotted in the graph of Figure 10 indicates the percentage of respondents who answered 'Yes' or 'No' to the four item proposed to them, regarding the impact of European integration. These items were: (1) the loss of jobs and social security; (2) the loss of national identity and culture; (3) a growing share of national income being paid into the EU budget; (4) a weakening of national democracy.

²¹ Although the EU budget motivation can be considered an economic aspect, the development of the national budget and the decision on how to allocate financial resources is essentially a political decision. A larger proportion of national income paid into the EU budget, means indeed a loss in decision-making power for the British government.

Have you changed your mind?

sions to the UK in order to keep it as a Member State.



Almost one respondent out of three among those who voted 'leave' would have changed their choice if the EU had made major concessions (see Figure 7). If we put this result in relation to the voting choice declared by our respondents, the percentage for the 'remain' option would have been significantly higher. Table 17 displays instead how British respondents would vote if the referendum were to be called a second time.

Table 17.

Vote choice of British respondents if the referendum was called another time

	Remain	Leave	Would not vote
Those who voted "Remain"	96.5	2.2	1.3
Those who voted "Leave"	7.7	89.7	2.6

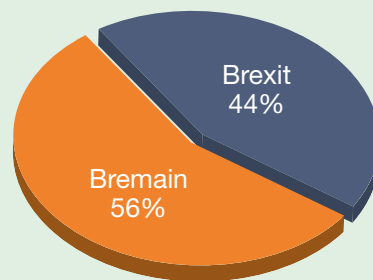
Note: Exact question: "Suppose the referendum was called another time. How would you vote? 1) I would vote for the UK to remain in the EU; 2) I would vote for the UK to leave the EU; 3) I would not vote." DK answers (0.31% of the total) are excluded.

Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

Most respondents would make the same choice: 95.6% of those who voted 'remain' and 89.7% of those who voted 'leave'. It is remarkable to note, however, that the slight change in preference would lead to a reversal of the outcome in case of a second referendum, with a 56% for 'remain' and 44% for 'leave' (see Figure 8).

Simulation of the outcome of a second referendum on "Brexit"

Figure 8.



Note: See note to Table 15.

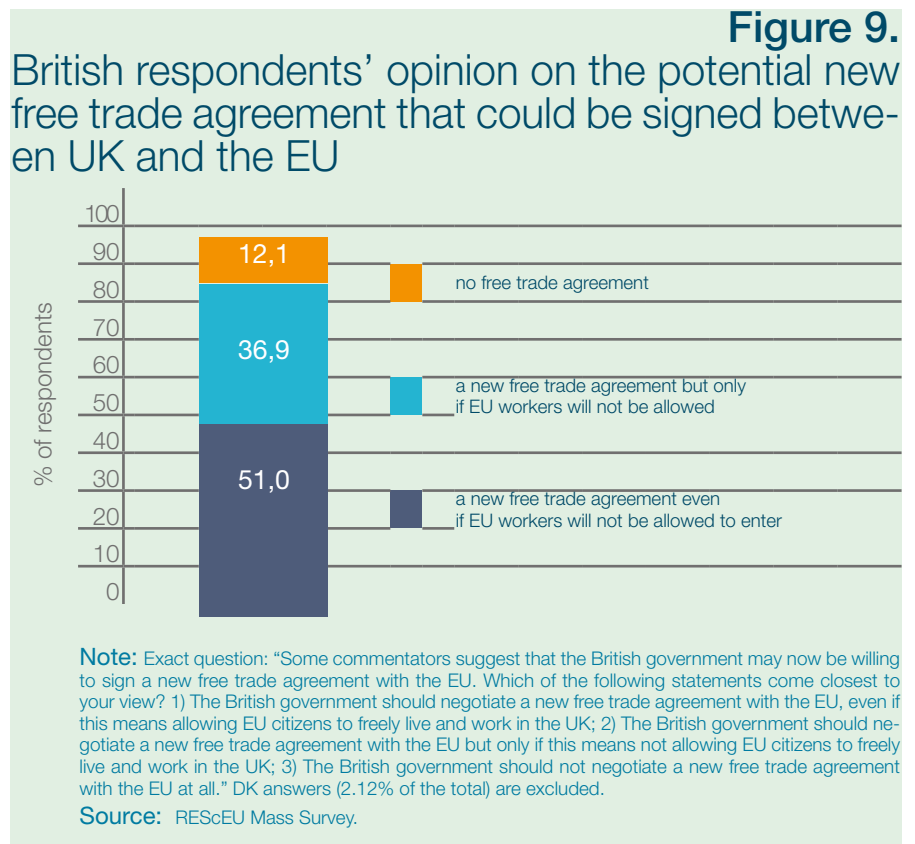
Source: REScEU Mass Survey.

Post 'Brexit' scenarios

As we carried out the survey, the post-referendum were still uncertain. Nevertheless, the REScEU Mass Survey included a series of questions aimed at identifying opinions on some potential implications of 'Brexit'.

First, we asked British citizens which potential new UK-EU trade agreement was closest to their preference. We connected the question with the issue of the free movement of persons and workers within the EU. The following options were given: a new free trade agreement implying free movement of EU citizens to live and work in the UK; a new free trade agreement, but only if this means not allowing EU citizens to live and work freely in the UK; no new free trade agreement at all. Once again, the sample was split down the middle.

51% were in favour of a new free trade agreement implying complete free movement, whereas the rest was split: 36.9% opted for an agreement conditional upon entry, while 12.1% refused any deal (see Figure 9).

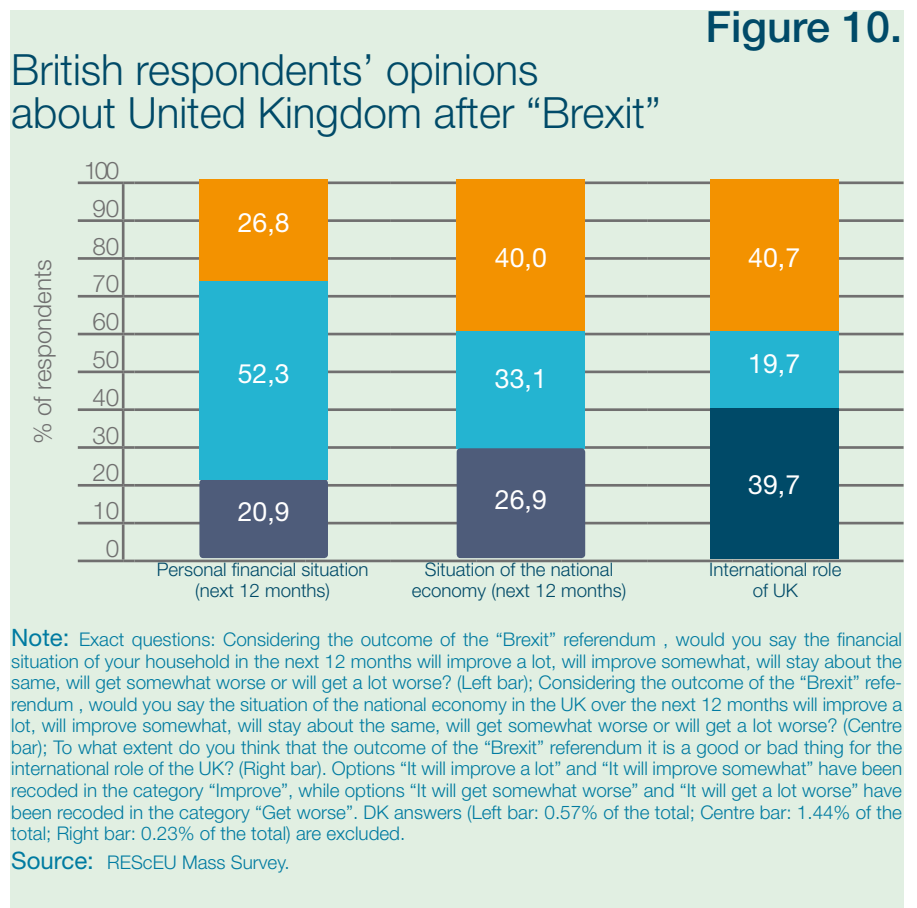


Finally, we asked respondents to share their feelings and expectations about the future. First, does the outcome of the referendum reserve good or bad consequences for the UK's role on the international stage? And, second, how will Brexit affect the development of households' finances and the national economy, over the next twelve months?

Figure 10 shows that 40.7% had bad feelings about the international role of the UK after Brexit, whereas 39.7% had more positive attitudes. Only 19.7% of respondents thought that it made no difference.

More than half of respondents (52.3%) thought that the outcome of the 'Brexit' referendum would not affect their financial situation, followed by 26.8% that expect a worsening, and 20.9% that have positive expectations. Respondents were far more pessimistic about the outlook of the national economy, with 40% expecting a downturn.

Nevertheless, if we add up those who expected no change (33.1%) and optimists (26.9%) we end up



with a majority that does not feel particular anxieties. All in all, we can say that the outcome of the referendum was driven more by political motivations linked to the issue of national sovereignty and international prestige, rather than to pocketbook calculations.

6

Conclusions

The main messages stemming from the Resceu mass survey have already been summarized on page 6. We know that public opinion polls need to be taken with a grain of salt. Yet, the general indication is clear: a majority of citizens living in largest EU member states (UK excluded) still believe in the EU and is ready to support a number of policy reforms aimed at constructively responding to the four lines of conflict now characterizing EU politics. If this is the case, how is it possible then that Eurosceptic minorities make the headlines all over the Continent in public debates? Why have the solidaristic attitudes revealed by the survey been ignored over the past years of crisis management? To make the point clear: data show that even a majority of German citizens back EU wide solidarity mechanisms.

European leaders should care about these results. If there is anything missing in European politics, it is not a pro-European electoral and social bedrock, but political leaders that are able to give a voice to this silent majority. The political groups that have driven the process of European integration until now (liberals, Christian democrats and social democrats) are in front of a historical failure. If the EU is on the brink of collapse, it is simply because its élites are unable to suggest an alternative to “souverainisme”, on one hand, and fiscal austerity, on the other. An alternative capable of reassuring worried voters that the EU does have a “caring” face and that it is not a threat for jobs, democracy and national cultures. The hardest challenge is to reflect on possible standards of pan-European solidarity: among EU citizens (in particular, mobile citizens) and

among Member States, particularly within the euro-zone. The results of this survey indicate that EU citizens are already capable to distinguish between domestic and cross-national solidarity and are ready to support steps towards enhancing the latter.

Recent elections in the Netherlands, Austria and especially France have shown that the pro-EU silent majority can be mobilized. As aptly noted by Mario Draghi, the “silent majority has regained its voice, its pride, and its self-confidence” (Draghi, 2017)

If there is any deficit in this Union, it comes in the form of a lack of ideas, initiatives, and assumption of historic responsibility by the political elite. If things do not rapidly change, we all shall pay dear for it, condemning our sons and daughters to live in a divided and impoverished Europe, with little or no influence at all on the global stage.

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Methodological note

RESceU “Reconciling Economic and Social Europe: Values, Ideas and Politics” (<http://resceu.eu/>) is a research project funded by the European Research Council (ERC Advanced Grant: 340534) involving the University of Milan and the Research Centre “Luigi Einaudi” based in Turin. The project is directed by prof. Maurizio Ferrara (University of Milan) and aims to study the complex interplay between the European Union and national welfare states and to analyse how the recent crisis has exacerbated the tensions between these two dimensions.

Data presented in this study are the results of a public opinion survey conducted in seven countries: France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The fieldwork has been conducted between 8 September

2016 and 24 November 2016 on a sample of about 1320 respondents aged 18 or older in each country, for a total of 9326 respondents. The sample has been built through a quota sampling around gender, age (six categories: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+), educational level (three categories: up to lower secondary degree, upper secondary degree, university degree) and NUTS1 macro-area of residence. A mixed method adopting CAWI and CATI has been applied. The CAWI survey, conducted by Toluna, interviewed about 1000 respondents voluntarily registered to the company online panel. In the CATI survey, conducted by UBM Consulting, exactly the same questionnaire has been administered to a sample of 320 respondents per country aged 55 or older, who represent a segment of the population with a lower access to inter-

net compared to younger citizens. Respondents have been contacted via landline or cell phones selected through random-digit dialing (RDD). While the landline sample was randomly drawn from the countries telephone registry, a pure RDD system was used for mobile interviewing. In this case, random prefixes, indicating the service/network provider, were associated with a predefined set of random numbers assigned to the user.

To correct the coverage of the socio-demographic characteristics of the population (adult citizens resident in the seven countries included in the research determined by the Eurostat Census 2011) post-stratification weights (genderXage groupsXmacro-areaXeducation) have been applied to our sample data.

The REScEU project

With the establishment of EMU and, in particular, during the euro-crisis, a visible friction has emerged between “Economic” and “Social” Europe. The EU’s “social deficit” has triggered an increasing politicization of redistributive issues within supranational, transnational and national arenas. Various lines of conflict have taken shape, revolving around who questions (who are “we”, i.e. issues of identity and inclusion/exclusion); what questions (how much redistribution within and across the “we” collectivities) and who decides questions (the locus of authority that can produce and guarantee organised solidarity). The key challenge facing today political leaders is how to “glue” the Union together as a recognizable, functioning and legitimate polity. This requires a double rebalancing: 1) between the logic of supranational and transnational “opening” and the logic of national “closure”; 2) between the logic of “economic stability” and that of “social solidarity”, on the other.

How can we document empirically the clash between “Economic” and “Social” Europe? What are its causes? Is “reconciliation” possible, and how? These are the fundamental research questions of REScEU. The empirical documentation/analysis focuses on four clearly observable lines of conflicts, centered on the following issues: 1) the overall mission of the EU -market-making vs market-correcting; 2) the issue of cross-national transfers and solidarity; 3) the issue of free movement and access to domestic welfare; 4) and the issue of competences, i.e. supranational integration vs domestic autonomy. For each line of conflict, the following data are being collected: political and institutional event data; attitudinal data (through two original surveys - one mass and one elite - covering 7 countries); social media data (twitter analysis); text analysis data. A number of qualitative case studies are also being conducted on specific conflict cases.

Causal analysis builds on the

so-called “state-building” tradition in political science. Building on the neo-Weberian and neo-Rokkian literature, the project has elaborated an original theoretical framework, centered on the interaction between the political sphere (where choices are made by elected leaders and state officials) and the intellectual sphere (where ideas and broad normative visions are generated). Though specifically linked to the project, this framework has a wide and general scope and has the potential of turning into a novel approach for macro-political analysis as such. In the light of our framework, the “deconciliation” between Economic and Social Europe can be linked to two perverse dynamics. The first dynamic is political and institutional and has increasingly constricted the European political sphere through an excess of formalization (rigid rules and fixed targets), largely self-defeating in terms of polity maintenance. The second dynamic is intellectual and has promoted and entrenched – especially in supranational institu-

tions, under German influence- an econocratic paradigm exclusively centred on instrumental objectives, which has dried up alternative symbolic resources and obstructed the elaboration of forward looking visions, more attentive to the “caring” side of the integration project. Both dynamics are the object of intensive empirical and explanatory exploration, including through specific case studies.

The project rests on the assumption that “reconciliation” is not only normatively desirable but also functionally necessary in order to rescue the European project. Based on the mid-term results of the project, we do believe that reconciliation is possible, but only if carefully crafted through an extraordinary mobilization of political and intellectual resources. Through a fruitful dialogue between different disciplinary perspectives (political science, law, philosophy, economics) the REScEU team is engaged in a forward-looking exercise for identifying adequate symbolic frames and policy solutions (such

as the establishment of a fully-fledged European Social Union) as well as the potential actors who might bring about transformative change.

The findings of the mass survey show a surprising and unexpected attitudinal potential for reconciliation. A vast majority of voters is silently hiding under the Eurosceptic blankets, While this silent majority shows notable fears about the social and political implications of integration, it also favors continuing EU membership, provided that the EU become more socially oriented. Voters seem ready to support a much higher degree of pan-European solidarity than currently available, including a favorable attitude vis-à-vis some of the policy solutions imagined by the REScEU team.

