

Essay provided by one of the Student of the MOOC  
Understanding Europe: Why It Matters and What it Can Offer You

### **The EU Paradox**

*This MOOC shows you that the European integration process has been instrumental to improving European citizens' lives as well as business operators' opportunities (e.g. through cheaper products and services and the right to move/establish freely and to conduct business activities in other EU countries).*

*Given these advantages, why isn't the EU more popular amongst its citizens, and in particular its younger citizens? Please share your own unique opinion on this topic.*

**Please write an essay of between 500 and 1000 words following the instructions provided.**

The EU paradox seems incomprehensible at the first sight. Even though the EU brings a lot of advantages, the citizens usually see it in the bad light and tend to spread the skeptical thoughts about it. Why does this happen? Well, in my opinion, the roots of this problem are in the nature of the European nations and their history.

Even though Europe can be seen as one cultural or economical power now, this view, even though existing, is not widespread enough. The European nations have long history in which they had to defend their country against the other, usually European invaders, or in which they had to defend their religious, national, or cultural points of view against the influence of the more powerful or more widespread views of other European powers. There is a longstanding distrust of the people living in one state to the people from the other one, which usually comes from the long history and sometimes very cruel historic events.

I would like to illustrate this view on my country. The Czech Republic has been the member of the EU since May 2004. It is not a big state and so throughout the history it had been under the influence of the Europeans powers many times. It used to be a part of the political systems in which it created only one powerless part, with limited influence and restricted autonomy: the Habsburg monarchy before the World War I., the Third Reich, and then the Warsaw Pact behind the iron curtain. The Czechs are therefore very sensitive to any restriction of their independence and this bizarre patriotism is projected into the fear of all the orders and rules which the EU brings and imposes. Example of this point of view can be the fact that common European currency Euro has not still been accepted here and that according to the conducted surveys people want to keep the old currency and are very distrustful to Euro. People simply tend to see the EU as a restriction of their independence, national pride and cultural habits. And this can also be the reason why people tend to keep paying attention more to the possible bad points that the EU can bring than to the good points which it has already brought or which it is bringing just now.

The second problem is not the problem of the Czech Republic only, it is general. People usually do not understand the functioning of the EU and they are too willing to listen to the euroskeptical politics. The ex-president of my country, Vaclav Klaus

for example, is a renowned euroskeptic who never helped *"in forming an objective view of the union among the nascent EU citizenry in the Czech Republic"*[1]. The Czechs often tend to see the EU through his eyes, because he has been an influential and popular political personality.

The euroskepticism can be also the result of a widespread idea that all the European institutions are expensive and bureaucratic. This myth is fed by many politics (Czech ex-president Vaclav Klaus can be taken as an example again, even though he is not the only one: Czech left-winged KSCM party is completely euroskeptic too) who tend to blame the EU of their own mistakes, which is the strategy that makes them saint of course, and that shows the problems caused in fact by the home policy as problems caused by some outer reasons, impossible to be influenced by such a small nation as the Czechs are. This creates the general view of the EU as a Biblical Monster which can be easily blamed of everything.

All these reasons can lead to the common distrust and unpopularity of the EU. Great help to this general disbelief is also each euromyth of course. But in my opinion, the Euromyths are just results of the fear of something new, historically conditioned disbelief in the bigger and more powerful countries like Germany, which are in fact the economical leaders of the Union, and misunderstanding to the procedures and institutions of the EU.

## References

[1] <http://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/jan-horn%C3%A1t/reflection-on-czech-euroscepticism-b...>

**The essays would have been graded with a 20/25**  
**The following details each criterions and grade.**

### **Question is addressed, EU Paradox concept is defined (0-2)**

*The EU Paradox in short means that despite many positive aspect of EU intervention, the EU is very often seen only in light of its negative aspects.*

Does the essay define the key concept, "European Paradox"?

Does this definition match the definition provided in the lecture and/or other sources?

If the definition relies on other sources, can you easily access them to verify the definition?

0 => no

1 => yes, somewhat defined

2 => yes, very well defined; a logical, clear, referenced definition

**2**

The definition is good and parallel to that in the lectures.

### **Adequacy of evidence / references provided (0-5)**

Do the examples provided in the essay reflect the EU Paradox?

*Please note that provided examples can address positive aspects of the EU, negative aspects of the EU, or both.*

0 => no reference / example are provided.

1 => example(s) are not particularly relevant, or are not well explained, or do not seem factual or accurate, or cannot be sourced.

2 => 1 or more examples provided with at least 1 with a clear explanation and linking to the point made. Or all examples present the same idea.

3 => 2 to 3 relevant and explained examples link to the point made. They are complementary / present different ideas.

4 => at least 3 relevant and explained examples, fit the argumentation and support the claims of the essay; all are verifiable or properly cited.

5 => same as above with some new/original ideas or examples.

**5**

### **Depth of analysis/critical thinking attitude (0-6)**

You are NOT supposed to grade against your point of view, but rather to specify if the points are addressed and demonstrated using illustrated arguments.

0 => does not address or barely addresses the question / it deals with irrelevant, off topic elements (even if they are overall correct).

1 => the points don't advance the argument/is self-evident. The questions in only partly addressed. It deals with the topic but not the question.

2 => the argument is convincing but banal, doesn't demonstrate adequate comprehension of the course nor critical analysis of the question.

3 => the student adequately addresses the key components of the question and the external references made are pertinent.

4 => fully addresses key elements of the question, adds personal touch by taking position, drawing attention to something original.

5 => same as above. In addition, the argument is convincing and nuanced, the points made are clear.

6 => same as above. In addition, student addresses also criticisms anticipating them. The overall essay is well structured and persuasive.

**4.**

It would be a 5 but it does not address the question of how to engage the younger generation.

### Reference to personal experience(s) (0-1)

Has the student shared personal positions, experiences, and thoughts?

Please note that the student does NOT have to be an EU citizen, so his/her position can differ substantially.

No matter the student's position, you are supposed to take a position on the facts that he/she uses a personal opinion or experience.

0 => no reference to personal experience or personal thought, it is impossible to distinguish the author's viewpoint from other people's position.

1 => use of factual elements / events impacting student's life or providing a personal view / touch.

**1**

Very detailed personal experience and point of view.

### Reference to course material

The instructions asked the student to provide illustrations, providing citation of course material and/or extra sources.

Quotation can be provided with footnotes, these footnotes do NOT count towards the final word count. The footnotes could have been provided in a separate box (please check below) or in the main box.

Any organization is fine as long as references are clear enough to allow you to find the source.

0 => no reference to course material nor external references.

1 => reference to some course material but without providing the exact context (e.g. "as said in the video, ...").

2 => refer to the course material in detail, providing context and quote (e.g. "in video 2-2, it is said that ...").

3 => reference to course material (video) but also to external material (forum, Clinic projects, references mentioned in the video, other...)

**2.** Reference is ONLY to external material without reference to the lectures. There is only one reference.

### Clarity, Organization and style (0-5)

Is the essay clear? Does it read easily? Is it well structured?

0 => I do not understand a word of the essay as if it were not in English.

1 => difficult to understand, long piece of text with no example/reference and with no structure, or is inappropriate to academic writing.

2 => the essay has different parts but they are not easy to detect / the style is overall understandable but not easy to read.

3 => the essay is understandable and referenced, provides examples to better convey the message. It presents different parts but not always easy to detect.

4 => the essay goes straight to the point. Structure announced and clearly shown. Clear conclusion wraps up the points. Examples convey the message.

5 => same as above. In addition, I enjoyed reading as it made me think about new ideas. I feel I have learned a lot and want to know more.

**3**

It is structured but does not provide an outline of the structure. The conclusion does not offer solutions or new ideas.

### **Length limits (0-1)**

Is the essay in the length limit as required?

When quotation are provided with footnotes, these footnotes do NOT count towards the final word count.

If the essay is provided in one single box, please exclude the words from the references using an external tool, if the essay is provided with two boxes, one for the essay itself and another one with the references in footnotes, please only check the length of the essay.

0 => the essays is less than 100 words or more than 1300 worlds

1 => the essays is between 100 and 1300 words

**1**

The essay counts 676 words

### **Length limit in details (0-2)**

This criterion makes a deeper analysis of the length limit. Please rate using the same criterions (only count the words from the essay, excluding the references).

0=> the essays is less than 100 words or more than 1300 worlds

1=> the essays is between 100 and 1300 words

**2**

The essay counts 676 words