

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.**

I believe there are several definitive reasons that the European Union (EU) is not more popular among its citizens and in particular its younger citizens. The foundational reason is because the people who reside within the EU do not believe their concerns are being addressed. Currently the EU population is experiencing an extremely high unemployment rate, "The euro area seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 12.0 % in December 2013, stable since October; it was 11.9 % in December 2012. The EU-28 unemployment rate was 10.7 % in December 2013, down from 10.8 % in November; it was 10.8 % in December 2012." [1] Yet in 2013 I found no evidence of laws passed by the Council focusing on unemployment or any issues that had any real bearing on the economic health of its citizenry.

Here is a small sample of laws that were passed or enforced in 2013:

- Timber Regulation [2]
- Cosmetics Regulation [3]
- EU Cookie Law (Data Protection) began enforcement in 2013 [4]
- Motorcycle Laws that make it harder to get a license [5]

Here is a small example of laws that were passed (later some were revoked)

- Dishes of olive oil were banned from restaurants [6]
- A Directive was passed to ban bananas that were too bendy [7]
- EU banned claim that water does not prevent hydration [8]

Notwithstanding some of these laws have a level of importance; some of them make no sense. Moreover, not *one* of them addresses unemployment, or anything that would motivate a young person to believe that the EU Council really had their best interest in mind. What is ironic is that the EU Council is based on a foundation of economic principles created by the founding fathers at the 1951 Treaty of Paris. The following is part of the preamble of the original founding Treaty that established The European Coal and Steel Community it reads,

**"RECOGNIZING** that Europe can be built only through practical achievements,

which will first of all create real solidarity, and through the establishment of common bases for *economic development*.

**ANXIOUS** to help, by expanding their basic production, to *raise the standard of living*, and further the works of peace.”[9]

Where do *economic development and a higher standard of living* fit into today's EU politician's vision of a better, and more robust economy for its citizenry? Isn't it the **foundational lowest common denominator** that someone who is representing the majority would use economic welfare as a platform? It leads me to believe the council is made up of a group of people who are not truly representative of the majority.

There is also the issue of the lobby system. There is a quote that was said by Lord Acton, when he expressed this opinion in a letter to Bishop Mandell Creighton in 1887: *Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men.*”[10] It is an unfortunate reality of politics. The money and power associated with high level position can seduce you into making unethical decisions. Case in point are lobbyist, and the companies they represent.. Albeit not politicians their positions involve politicking, and are hidden. Yet they carry a lot of power and money to seduce a politician into making an unethical decision, and currently there are no real laws that can circumvent this practice.

In conclusion, when any citizen takes into account all the aforementioned reasons I have presented, as to why people young and old would not support today's EU it is pretty easy to see why. The entire system needs to be overhauled and reconfigured in a way that would allow it to go back to the basic foundational economic principles that were used as the foundation for which the European Union was built upon.

## References

- [1] [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics\\_explained/index.php/Unemployment\\_statistics](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics)
- [2] [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/timber\\_regulation.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/timber_regulation.htm)
- [3] <http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/sectors/cosmetics/regulatory-framework/>
- [4] <http://econsultancy.com/blog/63118-17-useful-examples-of-eu-cookie-law-compliance>
- [5] <https://www.gov.uk/ride-motorcycle-moped>
- [6] <http://rt.com/news/eu-olive-oil-law-500/>
- [7] [http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/12/world/europe/12iht-food.4.17771299.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/12/world/europe/12iht-food.4.17771299.html?_r=0)
- [8] [http://www.science20.com/science\\_20/blog/antiscience\\_eu\\_water\\_does\\_not\\_prevent\\_dehydration-84796](http://www.science20.com/science_20/blog/antiscience_eu_water_does_not_prevent_dehydration-84796)

[9]

[http://www.proyectos.cchs.csic.es/euroconstitution/library/historic%20documents/Paris/TRAITES\\_1951\\_CECA.pdf](http://www.proyectos.cchs.csic.es/euroconstitution/library/historic%20documents/Paris/TRAITES_1951_CECA.pdf)

[10] <http://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/absolute-power-corrupts-absolutely.html>

**The essays would have been graded with a 23/25**  
**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.

5

### 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

### 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. But there are many good sources examples.

### 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.

5

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 616 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 616 words