

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.

In this essay, the reasons for the European paradox are examined. The process of European integration in the last 50 years has brought peace, prosperity and advantage to all European citizens. But on the other hand, it loose constantly popular popularity. On one hand, Europe is stalling, is disenchanted even disillusioned. On the other hand, the need for Europe is as powerful as it is unsatisfied.[1]

The history of Europe until 1945 is a history of constant wars between imperialist rulers (monarchs) about influence, territory and markets inside Europe, but also in America, Africa and Asia[2]. Especially, the wars between Germany and France were the cause of a lot of human sufferance all around Europe. The main goal of the European integration was that "the solidarity in production thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible"[3]. The first goal, achieving peace in Europe, is certainly a fact as the European Union got the Nobelprize for its successful struggle for peace, reconciliation and for democracy and human rights[4]. The common market brought and still brings economic growth and prosperity for all Europeans. The majority of Europeans give a positive rating to their personal economic situation[5].

We also have to recognize that the role of the European member states on the global playing field would be very weak without the European Union. And the free movement for the citizens of de European Union brought also a many advantages for them in education, cultural development, etc.[6]

Notwithstanding, the necessity and the advantages of the European Union the popularity is at a nadir. The first reason for that can be found in the complexity of the problems the European institutions has to deal with and the deep misunderstanding by ordinary citizens. The best example is the crisis of the euro. In the opinion of most citizens, this crisis had it origin in the careless government of the South European countries like Greece, Spain, Portugal, etc. and the reluctant reaction of the European institutions. This is a very complex problem and the measures that had to be taken are very difficult to explain to outsiders. The cause of the crises was a global problem that stated in the United States and not in South Europe and even if the European institution wanted to act immediately, they were

blocked in their action by the national governments. By extension, this shows the second reason namely the ambivalent position of national politicians who claim the profits of European Union as their own benefit and often blame the European Union for the unpopular measures they have to take in their own country. Good examples of this are prime minister David Cameron[7] or some far right political parties like Front National in France[8] or the PVV[9] in The Netherlands which promote an opt-out policy, mostly driven by their xenophobic critics on the migration policy of the European Union. For sensationalist media it is easier to give attention to these single issue populist view, than to the rational but complex policy that the European Union has to exhibit to manage the internal and global challenges. It is not surprisingly, that for the European Union overall, citizens who think that their country's interests are looked after well in the EU are now in a minority (42%)[10].

Nevertheless, there must also be more profound reasons for this Euroscepticism. First all, at this moment there is a generation that have never experienced war and takes peace and economic welfare for granted. So the urgency for European integration is not felt in daily life. In the current period solidarity between groups, communities or countries, a counter stone of the European integration, is questioned by a more individualistic or self-centered world view that stress on self-reliance. But most important is the lack of European identity. Since modernism and the upcoming of the nation states, the identity of people is for a great deal determined by their nationality based on common history, language, faith and ethnic roots. Certainly, in a multicultural society people in which the traditional bounding factors are not so obvious anymore, people want something that determines them from other people. We see that also in the constitutional struggle of Muslim countries, in which essentialism based on religion flourish. In the European Union there is no common language, religion or ethnicity that determines the identity of the citizens. And to built up a common identity, it will take generations. The European Union needs more people who feel European in the best sense of the word. Otherwise, the animo for European cooperation will remain diminishing.[11] Citizens of the European Union needs to feel more proud to be Europeans than nationals of their country. In The United States, citizens feel more Americans than citizens of the state they live in. That is why the anti-federalist movement war never predominant in the United States. Europeans need, like the constitution of the the United States declares, the feeling: "We the people of the European Union".

References

- [1] Ulrike Guérot, The European Paradox: Widening and Deepening in the European Union, U.S.-Europe analysis series, June 2004
- [2] The European states did not only fight out there wars in Europe, but also in their colonials.
- [3] The Schuman Declaration – 9 May 1950
- [4] http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2012/eu-facts.html
- [5] TNS Opinion and Social (July 2012). *Standard Eurobarometer 77 Table of Results*. European Commission. Retrieved 13 October 2012
- [6] In the TNS Opinion and Social (July 2012). *Standard Eurobarometer 77 Table of Results* on the question: What does the European Union mean to you personally?"

most people answer: Freedom to travel, study and work anywhere in the EU

[7] Henning Meyer, David Cameron's European Paradox, in Social Europe Journal, 23/01/2013

[8] "Europe" Front National. Retrieved 12 February 2010

[9] Polarisatie over Europa helpt PVV, NRC Next, 11 January 2014

[10] TNS Opinion and Social (July 2012). *Standard Eurobarometer 77 Table of Results*. European Commission. Retrieved 13 October 2012.

[11] Rene Cuperus, The European Paradox: Brussels Must Become More 'European', in Social Europe Journal, 26/01/2012

The essays would have been graded with a 22/25
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. However it is not made explicitly nor is referenced. It is explained but it could be more explicit and include authorities.

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

The essays uses a lot more than 3 examples, each are properly quoted and explained. The sources are provided and makes it possible to access. We found that some examples were original / not banal.

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.

0

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

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...)

3. References are external as well as from lectures.

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

The essays goes straight to the point. The structure is announced and clearly shown. There is a conclusion which wraps up the idea. Examples illustrate the message clearly. It was interesting to read.

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 838 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 838 words