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## What a feeling?! How to promote 'European Identity'

*Sarah Ciaglia, Clemens Fuest, Friedrich Heinemann*



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# What a feeling?! How to promote ‘European Identity’

*Sarah Ciaglia<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Clemens Fuest<sup>2</sup>, Prof. Dr. Friedrich Heinemann<sup>3</sup>*  
1. 10. 2018

## Abstract

Despite the great achievements for peace and economic prosperity, the European project has recently been challenged with public support being on decline in many member states, culminating in the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the EU. Against this background, this study looks into ‘European identity’ as a concept of fundamental importance for European integration. In the economic literature, ‘identity’ has been increasingly recognized as a crucial driver of individual behavior with joint group identities as a precondition for trustful cooperation. Hence, some type of European identity (in addition to, not replacing national identities) can be regarded as one of the underlying preconditions for the European project.

Against this background, this study develops the contents and nuances of the ‘European identity’ terminology as distinct from other categories like EU support. It empirically describes ongoing trends and comprehensively summarizes the literature’s insights on the important determinants of European identity. On the basis of identified determinants and target groups a classification of measures to promote European identity is developed. This classification is based on the distinctions between a ‘civic’ and a ‘cultural’ European identity on the one hand and between the ‘input’ and ‘output legitimacy’-creating function of potential measures.

Based on this classification and survey of possible approaches for the advancement of European identity we give a broad overview on possible approaches to foster European identity. We elaborate six proposals in more detail: transnational party lists, an EU Citizens’ Assembly, EU consular offices, Pensioners’ Erasmus, a ‘European Waltz’ program, and an EU public service broadcaster.

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## Executive Summary

### Conceptualizing European identity

1. The study uses the concept put forward by Cram (2012) defining 'European identity' as 'identification as European'. Additionally, we follow Bruter (2003) who distinguishes between a civic and a cultural component of European identity. In order to be able to relate policy proposals to European identity, we further distinguish between categories of input and output legitimacy and develop a matrix that classifies possible identity-fostering approaches.
2. We further distinguish between European identity and EU support. We conclude that European identity in contrast to EU support expresses identification instead of an opinion, and this is what we devote our study to.
3. There are several ways to measure European identity, of which the most commonly used is the so called 'Moreno' question in the Standard Eurobarometer survey conducted by the European Commission on a biannual basis.
4. The general trend of Eurobarometer data on European identity shows significant variation both over time and across countries. However, the overall level was relatively stable over the last three decades. Interestingly, European identity seems on a rise in those countries where it is most controversially discussed recently, for instance in the UK and Hungary.

### Literature survey

5. Individual-level factors seem especially powerful in explaining European identity: cognitive mobilization, transnational contact, socio-economic status (resources), and age have a significant impact on European identity. Moreover, trust and satisfaction with democracy seem decisive as well as a perceived cultural closeness and common values.
6. However, there are significant country-level differences which remain unexplained.

### Empirical study: exploring determinants of European identity

7. We use the most recent Eurobarometer survey from spring 2017 and add several country-level variables and test their impact on European identity with a probit model.
8. Individual-level factors: Our findings support the literature's findings. We derive five areas of action or target groups from these results:
  - 1) Keep students and add pensioners
  - 2) Strengthen education and information ('cognitive mobilization')
  - 3) Foster travel and exchange ('transnational contacts')
  - 4) Tackle economic inequality for EU participation
  - 5) Foster reliability, citizenship, and similarity
9. Country-specific factors: The general economic situation of a country in terms of its prosperity does indeed play a role, but affects European identity ambiguously. All in all, significant differences between member states remain with regard to European identity. However, there have not yet been identified meaningful categories to further qualify these differences.

## Proposals on how to strengthen European identity

10. This study attempts to gather and evaluate proposals to raise European identity. We present and discuss a broad range of policy proposals that aim at increasing European identity. In particular, we focus on six proposals: transnational party lists, an EU Citizens' Assembly, EU consular offices, Pensioners' Erasmus, a 'European Waltz' program, and an EU public service broadcaster. These can be motivated with respect to target groups and main mechanisms in the following way:

1) Keep students and add pensioners: We propose to establish the **Pensioners' Erasmus** program.

2) Strengthen education and information ('cognitive mobilization'): We propose to establish an **EU public services broadcaster**.

3) Foster travel and exchange ('transnational contacts'): We propose to establish the **European Waltz** program.

4) Tackle economic inequality for EU participation: Building on the example from Ireland, we suggest to establish a **Citizens' Assembly** at the EU level. The Assembly would gather people from all regions and socio-economic backgrounds and might, thereby, allow for a much broader assessment of perspectives on a political issue. Moreover, we took the issue of restricted personal financial means into account when designing the **Pensioners' Erasmus** and the **European Waltz** program.

5) Foster reliability, citizenship, and similarity: In order to increase the civic aspect of European identity we present the currently highly debated proposal to establish EU-wide **transnational party lists** and the proposal to establish **EU consular offices**.

## 1. Introduction

'Identity' as a person's sense of self has increasingly been acknowledged to be of substantial importance for economic behavior and economic outcomes. The way we see ourselves co-determines the subjective payoffs we receive from certain actions. Akerlof and Kranton even regard the choice of an identity as possibly "the most important 'economic' decision people make" (Akerlof and Kranton, 2010, p. 717) since it may constrain an individual for a lifetime. Identity does not only shape individual behavior but also the potential cooperation in groups and societies. A common identity within groups fosters mutual trust and cooperation (La Barbera and Ferrara, 2012). This dimension makes it a relevant concept also for the functioning of societies, be they of a national or supranational type.

With these insights, it is not surprising that issues of 'European identity' have received large attention in the study of the European integration process as well. Similar to national identity being a crucial driving factor for the emergence of the nation state, some type of European identity is seen as a precondition for the stable existence and further evolution of the European Union. Like for any other social group, identity of a European type would foster mutual trust of Europeans and, hence, simplify cooperation, the search for compromises and, hence, further integration steps. Conversely, if European identity is increasingly crowded out by strong and exclusive national feelings this might fundamentally threaten the achievements of the European integration process.

Until well into the 2000s, there was the expectation that advancing European integration and European identity would reinforce each other in a virtuous loop: Advancing economic integration and convergence would make Europe increasingly visible and, hence, further foster European identity (Fligstein et al., 2012). This strengthened 'sense of being a European' would then promote cross-border trust between European citizens and their governments which would overcome obstacles to further integration steps.

The multi-crisis of European integration over the last decade has shattered this integration-optimism. The sequence of crises (financial crisis, euro area debt crisis with its new economic divergence, refugee crisis, terroristic and external threats) has led, at least in some EU Member States, to a disappointment and alienation from the European project. More and more, 'European identity' is discussed as the increasingly missing piece to successful European policy making. The height of the crisis so far was the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the EU. Brexit is probably the most prominent example for the potential consequences of a fundamental lack of 'feeling European'. Brexit can also be seen as an example where a specific identity of a part of the population (the 'Brexiters' with their national identity in explicit demarcation from being European as well) can lead to decisions which seem to be irrational from the perspective of citizens with a different identity (the 'Remainers'). Critics of Brexit who point to the potentially high economic costs of leaving the EU may simply miss a crucial point: For someone without any European identity, Brexit can be part of an individually optimizing strategy even if it implies a somewhat lower economic standard of living.

With this background, this study sheds light on strategies on how to advance a 'European identity'. Based on an in-depth survey of the European identity literature and some descriptive analyses the study systematizes, assesses and develops possible approaches to advance the feeling as a European. To do so, two clarifications are important from the start:

- This study is not about how to advance the reputation of EU institutions or to defend specific integration projects. It is essential to conceptually disentangle different categories: European

identity is a concept distinct from EU support or support for a particular EU institution or policy. Even citizens with an outspoken European identity may oppose a certain EU policy or be critical of a European institution. This opposition, in turn, can be an expression of a general EU objection but also simply a disagreement with the direction of the policy or an institution. For instance, it is essential to disentangle whether opposition to more fiscal insurance within the Eurozone is a matter of insufficient solidarity (referred to a lack of 'European identity') or simply a disapproval of this policy as promising problem-solving.

- As an important note, we believe it should not be the objective of European politics let alone academic research to manipulate ('nudge') citizens to become 'better Europeans'. Identity belongs to a person's most private sphere and is up to own evaluations and decisions. However, it is a legitimate objective to study which type of policy measures might have implications for European identity. Especially in light of the recently increased voices against the integration project in general, it is essential to study the impact of policy measures on e.g. satisfaction with democracy, participation in the EU project, and the socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, an important type of measures may advance European identity by overcoming biases in information and prejudices. This type of approach which is based on exchange and improved information cannot be seen as an undue manipulation of preferences. On the contrary, it advances rational decision making as an essential ingredient for a stable and fruitful democratic system and peaceful international cooperation.

The study proceeds in the following steps: in section 2, we conceptualize our understanding of 'European identity' to distinguish different dimensions and to demark it from other concepts like EU support. We also shed some descriptive light on the evolution of European identity across time and in cross-country comparison. Subsequently (section 3), we review the literature on European identity and related concepts. The literature review will disclose and also summarize which relevant drivers have been identified. The next analytical step (section 4) is an explorative data analysis that further illuminates factors which are conducive to or detrimental for building up a European identity. The objective is to identify 'target groups' which could benefit most from specific types of policy measures to participate in the EU project – and thereby encourage the development of European identity. All these steps prepare the ground for section 5 that collects, classifies and evaluates strategies to advance European identity. In particular, we will choose six measures to present in more detail with a clear policy objective: transnational party lists, an EU Citizens' Assembly, EU consular offices, Pensioners' Erasmus, a 'European Waltz' program, and an EU public service broadcaster. Section 6 sums up the findings and provides some overall conclusions.



## 2. Conceptualizing European Identity

### 2.1. Citizenship, Culture and the Individual

The term ‘European identity’ can in general be described as a feeling of being European “as an integral part of one’s own social identity” (Hooghe and Verhaegen, 2017, p. 163)<sup>4</sup>. The attempts to conceptualize European identity are vast and comprehensive (Friese and Wagner, 2002; Carey, 2002; Kaina, 2013, White, 2012; Kaina et al., 2016)<sup>5</sup> and people might attach quite different meanings to ‘being European’ (Checkel and Katzenstein, 2009; Risse, 2010; Bayley and Williams, 2012; Lichtenstein and Eilders, 2015; Banjac and Pušnik, 2015)<sup>6</sup>.

In order to properly investigate European identity we need a meaningful and precise conceptualization. Therefore, we follow Cram (2012; see also Kaina, 2013; Mitchell, 2015). Cram (2012) distinguishes between ‘identification as European’ and ‘identification with Europe’. The former refers to a more cognitive self-assessment towards specific ideas whereas the latter refers to more affective behavior that implicitly shows how honestly these ideas are ‘lived up to’. For Kaina (2013) this also refers to interactions of the individual with other group members, which creates a “sense of belonging together” (Kaina, 2013, p. 189)<sup>7</sup>. Whereas ‘identification with Europe’ is a delicate task to measure, ‘identification as European’ can be rather easily assessed using surveys (see the discussion in the next section).

In the following, we will concentrate on ‘identification as European’ for two reasons. Firstly, it describes what we seek to assess for the purpose of this approach: a general attachment towards Europe. For the sake of our contribution it is not relevant how intense this feeling is and to what extent it is reflected in everyday life behavior. It is rather relevant that there is a general positive feeling towards Europe that might provide a foundation for EU legitimacy, facilitate EU politics and integration and trigger a democratic engagement with EU issues. For this project, the more cognitive aspect in contrast to the more affective aspect as described above is essential. Secondly, ‘identification as European’ is more easily measurable and the Eurobarometer offers excellent access to respective data.

However, even ‘identification as European’ can have different dimensions, for example, because ‘European’ might not necessarily imply an attachment towards the ‘European Union’. For a finer-grained approach we suggest the following matrix, which further specifies the identity dimension and already points to identity triggers (Table 1). The matrix has a 2 x 3 structure and will guide this study in developing and classifying different identity-activating measures (section 5). The vertical matrix dimension refers to the ‘civic’/‘cultural’ distinction in the identity literature. The horizontal dimen-

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<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion of the definition of identity, social and political identity see Kaina and Karolewski (2009) and Dehdari and Gehring (2017).

<sup>5</sup> Economic accounts of ‘identity’: Akerlof and Kranton (2010) consider the effect of social rules on rational behavior and Davis (2007) claims that the individual interacts with its social environment and that this may affect social rules.

<sup>6</sup> For a collection of research on the different meanings attached to ‘European identity’ and culture see: <http://culturalbase.eu>.

<sup>7</sup> Kaina (2013) distinguishes between the individual and the collective level of identity. An individual belongs to a group in two ways: firstly as a collective entity, and, secondly, as an interaction between group members. The individual belongs together with other group members, as a more personal interaction. Hence, identity with regards to a group works in two ways.

sion takes up the distinction between ‘input legitimacy’/‘output legitimacy’ and, furthermore, the classical ‘polity’/‘politics’/‘policy’ terminology.

**Table 1: Conceptualizing matrix to classify identity-advancing measures.**

	Input legitimacy		Output legitimacy
	EU Polity (political system)	EU Politics (political discourse)	EU Policy (political measures, laws)
<b>Civic identity</b>	e.g. elect COM president	e.g. Citizens’ Assembly	
<b>Cultural identity</b>			e.g. Erasmus

Source: own set-up.

*‘Civic’ versus ‘cultural’ European identity:* Bruter (2003) distinguishes between a civic and a cultural component of European identity. A European ‘civic identity’ refers to the perception to be part of a European political system or even a ‘European state’ that defines rules, laws and rights with relevance for one’s own life. A focus on the civic dimension would largely equate ‘Europe’ with ‘European Union’. A European ‘cultural identity’ is independent from these political perceptions and labels the perception that fellow Europeans are closer than non-Europeans because of shared culture, values or history. This distinction is important for the classification of identity-activating measures since, typically, both dimensions of identity can be triggered with different types of measures. For instance, Bruter (2003) finds that civic identity responds to news, whereas cultural identity rather responds to symbols.

*‘Input legitimacy’ versus ‘output legitimacy’:* A sense of ‘legitimacy’ of the European project is considered to foster European identity. ‘Input legitimacy’ refers to the institutions and processes that lead to political decisions in Europe. Input legitimacy is advanced e.g. by a high degree of citizens’ involvement or the perception of an impartial European decision process. ‘Output legitimacy’ refers to resulting policies and measures and is supported by a good performance of European policies that deliver on the promises made to European citizens (distinction used by Hobolt, 2012a; Scharpf, 1999, also see discussion in The Oxford Handbook of the European Union<sup>8</sup>).

*‘Polity’, ‘politics’ and ‘policy’:* In order to clearly assign policy measures, we further use the classical political science distinction of the ‘political’: polity, politics, policy<sup>9</sup>. The polity describes the political system, each body’s tasks and duties and how the different bodies relate. Politics summarize all the political debates, the process, that take place before deciding a legislation (or also afterwards to evaluate it). They happen in the parliament and within parties but also in public debates. The term describes the process when politicians interact with each other and the public. Thus, the polity and politics dimensions cover two distinct determinants of input legitimacy (i.e. the institutional side and ‘government responsiveness’). Finally, the term ‘policy’ refers to the ‘content’ and describes the final

<sup>8</sup> In the Handbook, Schmidt (2012) also discusses ‘throughput legitimacy’, but for the sake of parsimony we constrain ourselves to the two mentioned forms of legitimacy.

<sup>9</sup> The distinction stems from Anglo-American political science but has also been firmly established in the context of the European Union and its member states (see The Oxford Handbook of the European Union). For an assessment of the Lisbon Treaty changes in that regard see Dosenrode (2016). For a German assessment of the distinction see von Alemann (1994).

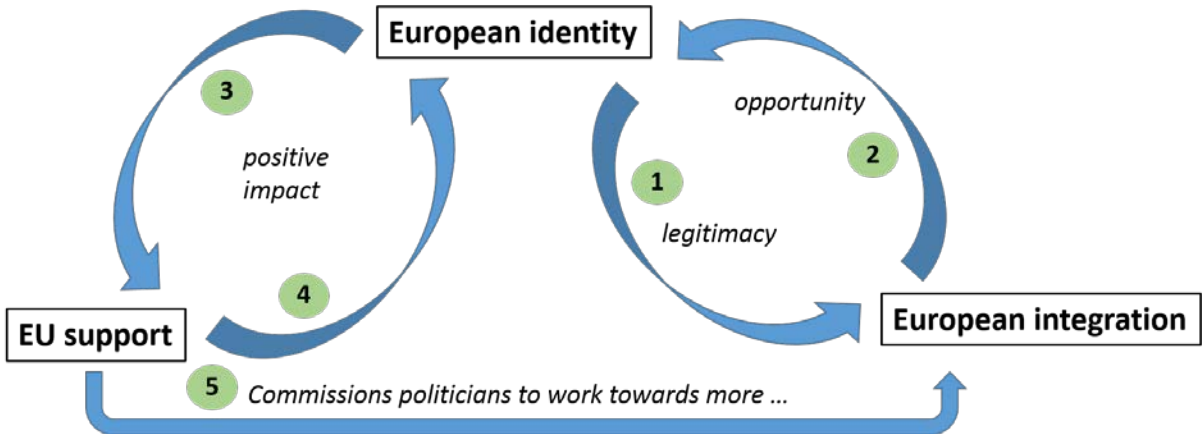
decisions that are taken. This refers to specific policy fields, such as social policy, foreign policy, or economic policy and finally determines to which extent the government provides value to its citizens and, thus, creates ‘output legitimacy’.

### 2.2. EU Support versus European Identity

A further conceptual clarification is needed for the terminological couple of ‘European identity’ and ‘EU support’. Figure 1 gives a sketch about the relationship. The exact relationship between European identity and support for the EU or (further) European integration is quite complex<sup>10</sup> and not yet entirely clear as some areas remain under-researched until now.

It is generally assumed that European identity is an indispensable element for a successful EU and any further integration (see (1) in the sketch). This has also been shown by experimental studies (La Barbera and Ferrara, 2012; La Barbera et al., 2014; La Barbera, 2015; for a discussion of European identity and the EU’s legitimacy see Kaina and Karolewski (2009) and Jones (2012)). However, empirical studies in this respect are scarce. Bayram (2017) gives an intriguing account of German politicians’ European identity and shows that it positively affects compliance with EU law. In turn, European integration also seems to have a positive effect on European identity formation (Luhmann, 2017; see (2) in the sketch). Moreover, European identity seems to drive attitudes towards particular EU policies and EU membership (La Barbera, 2015; Franchino and Segatti, 2017; Verbalyte and von Scheve 2017; see (3) in the sketch) and, vice versa, EU support seems to positively affect European identity (Bruter, 2005, p. 124; Verhaegen et al., 2017; see (4) in the sketch). Verhaegen et al. (2017) show that EU support, measured as perceiving membership in the EU as good or neutral, also increases European identity significantly. Finally, EU support is considered to explicitly or implicitly ‘commission’ politicians to work towards further EU integration (Guiso et al., 2015; see (5) in the sketch). This shows that it is important to consider European identity, EU support, and actual European integration as conceptually different.

**Figure 1: Relationship between European identity, EU support and European integration.**



<sup>10</sup> To give an idea about the different meanings of these terms, the following statements are good examples:  
 “I feel European but I reject the current make-up of the EU.”  
 “I do not feel European but I consider the single market as economically useful.”  
 “I feel European and I believe that much more integration is necessary, but not in the field of agricultural subsidies.”

Source: own set-up.

Conceptually, European identity is widely described as being distinct from EU support as it expresses identification instead of an opinion. Moreover, it has an affective component and is perceived as rather durable and long-term oriented in contrast to an opinion. Furthermore, as identity is an incremental part of a self, one might not always be aware of the 'European identity component' but only when it is triggered and referred to. Finally, as will be shown in the literature review below, while identity formation can be encouraged in a general sense through experiences, opinion formation works rather through arguments and deliberation.

In contrast, EU support is conceptually less clear. The term 'EU support' gathers several terms in the literature: support for the EU in general, for specific EU policies (e.g. the euro), or for EU membership as a proxy for the current level of EU integration, or opposition in the sense of Euroscepticism.<sup>11</sup> Some scholars consider support for the EU as the same as support for European integration (Henjak et al., 2012). However, European integration itself might have very different facets, similarly, related to substance and timing. In conclusion, while European identity refers to a rather general 'entity' such as the EU as a historical project, a broad geographical constituency or a large group of citizens of different member states, EU support can also refer to very specific aspects of the EU, such as specific policies, goals or tasks of the EU. Furthermore, considering EU support as an opinion, it might be more susceptible to change in general and might vary on a rather short- to medium-term basis.

Despite the differences in concept, the below literature review will show that European identity as well as EU support are affected by similar factors. Moreover, as can be seen from the descriptive statistics, support for EU membership and European identity follow similar trends – especially recently with the crisis. We do not further investigate in the relationship between EU support and European identity. The aim of this study is to evaluate policy proposals to encourage European identity in the long-run, and not to raise a favorable opinion on what the EU is doing. Therefore, the following literature review will focus explicitly on European identity. Nevertheless, we will describe the named factors' effects also on EU support in order to provide a comprehensive picture and try to assess the empirical similarities and differences of both. This is because the policy proposals that we will investigate will certainly also affect EU support and it might be good to have an impression to what extent and in what direction this might probably be the case.

### 2.3. Measurements

The most commonly used empirical measure for European identity is the so called 'Moreno question'<sup>12</sup> in the standard Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2017):

*"In the near future, do you see yourself as*  
*(1) [nationality] only,*  
*(2) [nationality] and European,*  
*(3) European and [nationality] or*  
*(4) European only."*

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<sup>11</sup> For the sake of parsimony, we do not discuss Euroscepticism here. For a good recent overview see ifo DICE Report 04 (2017) and for a discussion of the relationship between Euroscepticism and European identity see Weßels (2007) and Fligstein et al. (2012).

<sup>12</sup> The question is named after sociologist Luis Moreno Fernández (1986), who first introduced such a question to study sub-national identity of Scots with regard to Britain.

Its strength is that it allows for a dual (national and European) identity and also for an alternative ordering of national and European identity components. However, the question is contested with regard to the above mentioned conceptual distinction between identification as European and with Europe. Mitchell (2015) argues that the Moreno question only refers to the first and not the latter. Firstly, people could have different understandings of what ‘feeling European’ means (see also Bruter, 2003, p. 1154). Secondly, people could feel European (identify as European) but not quite act upon it (identify with Europe). Therefore, both aspects of identity do not necessarily evolve together. As our paper focuses on ‘identification as European’, we feel confident to use this question.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, the subtleties of what ‘feeling European’ means for different people seem not relevant for our purpose. As we focus on a general understanding of ‘feeling European’ to back a broad perspective on EU politics, the Moreno question seems well suited in that regard.

The Eurobarometer offers a wide range of questions to measure EU support, i.a. with regard to specific policies, overall perceived benefits from EU membership, and speed of EU integration. The most commonly used question, which we will also use here, is (European Commission, 2017):

*“Generally speaking, do you think that your country’s membership of the European Union is a good thing, bad thing or neither good nor bad?”*

In the following we will look more closely at the development of the Moreno question and the EU membership question over the last decades.

## 2.4. Eurobarometer Trends

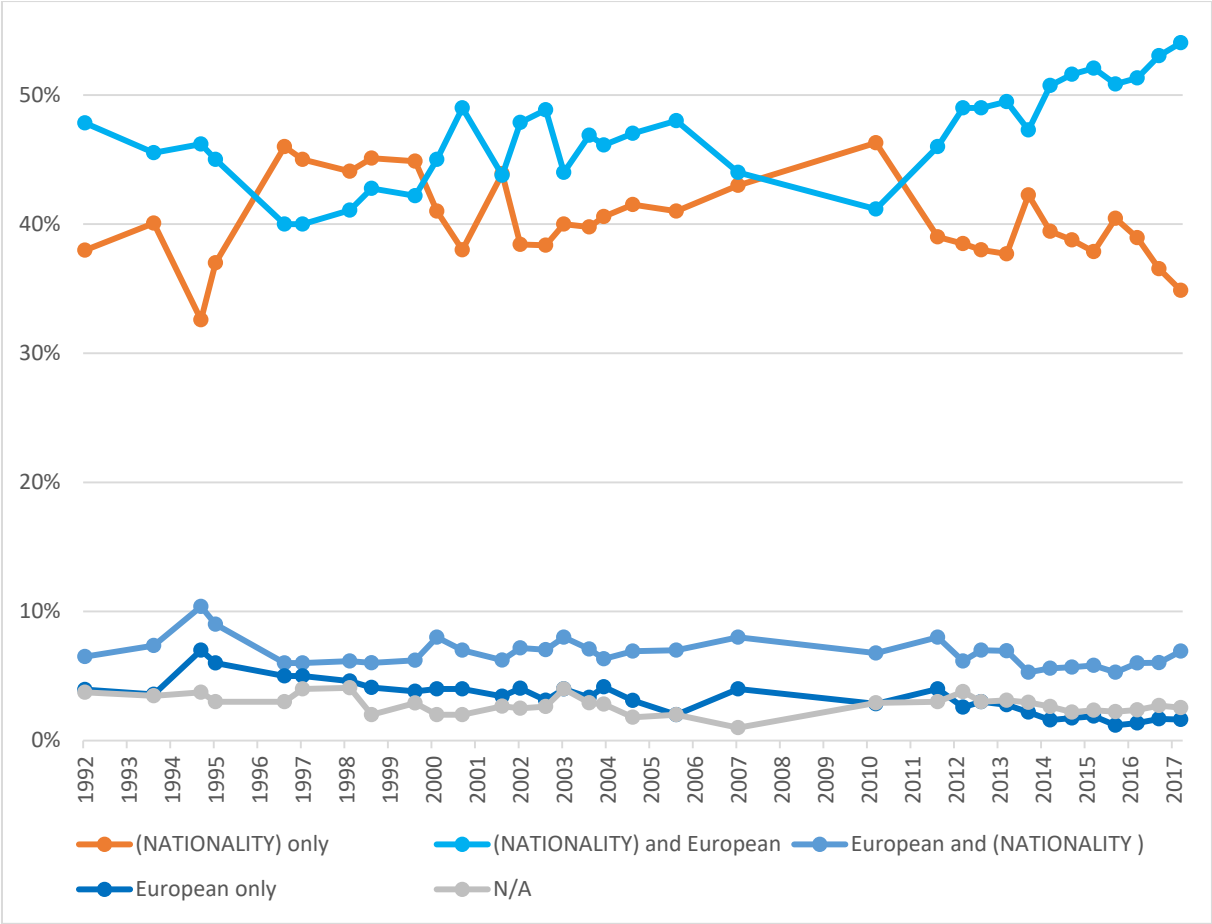
The literature is ambiguous on whether European identity increased over the last decades or not. While Bruter (2005) detects a slowly but substantive increase in European identity, Roose (2013) cannot find any particular trend. The following data presents the general trend of European identity and EU support from Eurobarometer data. A first glance shows that the overall level of European identity and EU support did not change significantly from the start until today. However, both vary significantly over time and across member states.

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<sup>13</sup> Bruter (2003) and Mitchell (2015) also argue that the question would imply “a (false) sense of hierarchy between national and European identities” (p. 332), however, we do not consider this a major problem of the question. Furthermore, Bruter (2003) considers it problematic to ask about “the near future” as this might create an “ambiguity between identity and prediction” (p. 1154). For a critical discussion of measurements see Kaina and Karolewski (2009).

Figure 2: 'Moreno' question measuring European identity, 1992-2017, EU total.

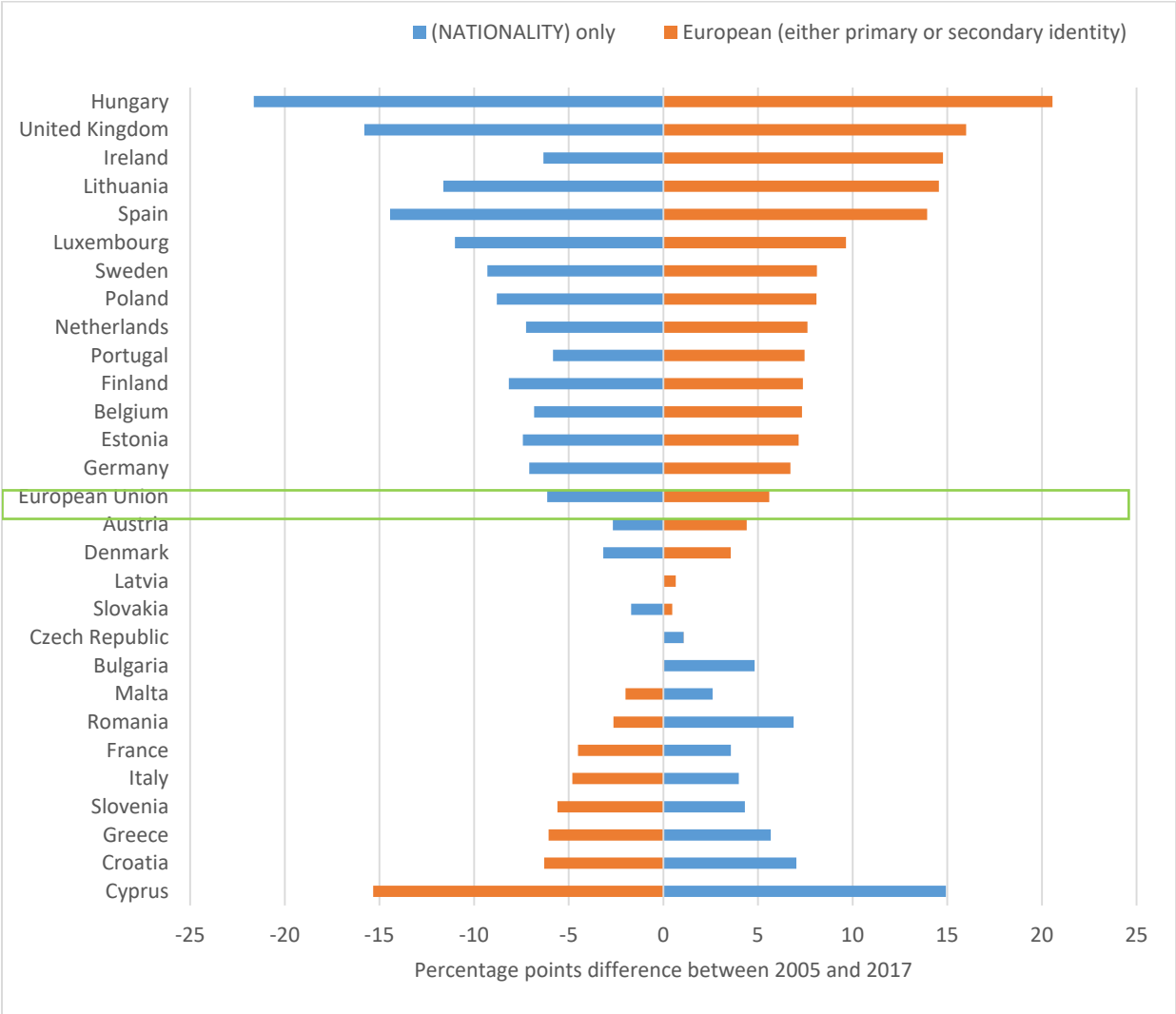
"In the near future, do you see yourself as ...?"



Source: Eurobarometer 1992-2017, Moreno question, weighted average according to Eurobarometer data for the 'European Union' total. Own illustration, combination of data from Eurobarometer interactive and Eurobarometer 40 years report<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> European Commission (2013, 2018a). Data for October 2004 was flawed due to an equally split dataset: the percentages added up only to 50%. Therefore, we multiplied the percentages by 2 to arrive at 100%. However, one has to keep in mind that the underlying dataset is only half as big as the others in the time series.

**Figure 3: ‘Moreno’ question European identity, pre-/post-crisis difference (2005/2017).**

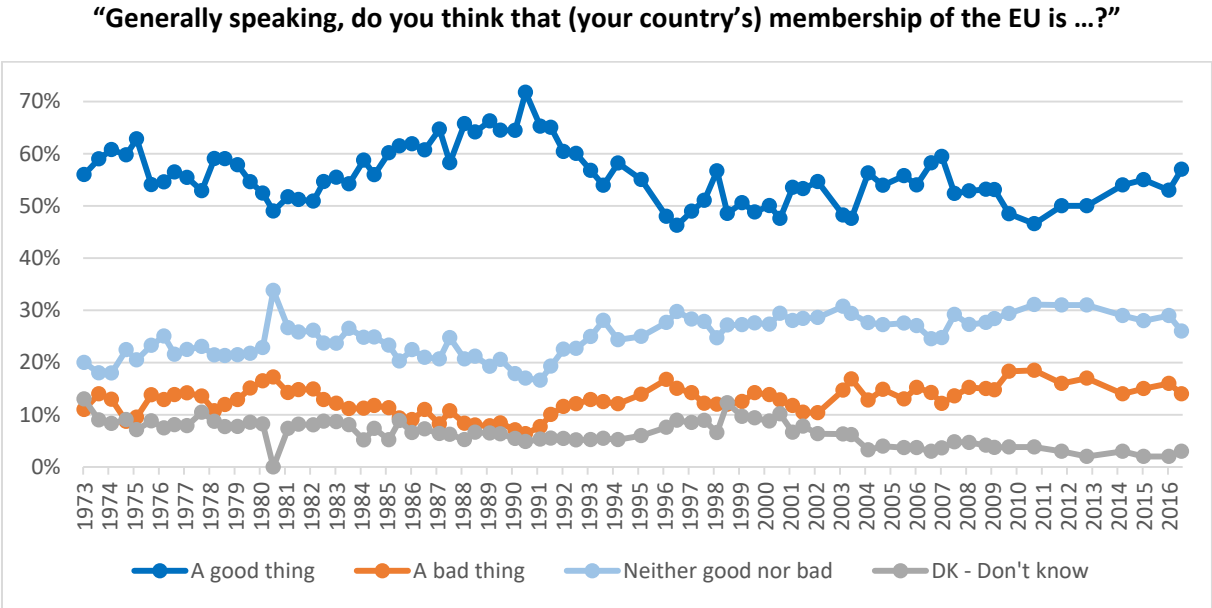


Source: Eurobarometer 2005 and 2017, Moreno question; ‘European’ as sum of all three answer options that include European identity as opposed to an exclusive national identity. Own calculation, simple delta between values for 2005 and 2017. 2005 was the last data point before the crisis.

European identity, on an aggregate level across the EU, has fluctuated in a stable range until 2010, the recent multi-crisis increased European identity markedly. Interestingly, the rise seems to have been started after the acute phase of the sovereign debt crisis for most countries under distress. Even more surprisingly, since the UK government’s decision to conduct a referendum on Britain’s membership in the EU, European identity rose to new record highs. This even coincides with rising discussions about the rule of law, freedom of the press and citizenship rights in Poland and Hungary. This is especially reflected in the comparison between pre- and post-crisis levels of European identity in all EU countries. Figure 3 shows the development of an exclusively national identity and the combination of all three European identity related answer options of the Moreno question. In particular, in Hungary and the UK, European identity rose significantly. This indicates that the levels of European identity do not necessarily reflect the position of national governments towards specific EU issues – but instead, that an increased debate about those issues might have contributed to reflecting about one’s own identification as ‘European’. This is also supported by Ireland’s rising level of European identity. The country has high stakes in UK membership and close ties with the UK, not just economically but in particular emotionally, culturally and through history.

On the other end of the graph are Cyprus and Greece, and Italy and France. For the first two, this seems plausible with respect to the challenges that have been or still are accompanying the financial support programs. Italy and France struggle since long for kick starting economic growth, which often dominated domestic debates about the EU project. Among the countries with reduced levels of European identity are Croatia and other still quite new member states.

**Figure 4: EU membership measuring EU support, 1973-2017, EU total.**



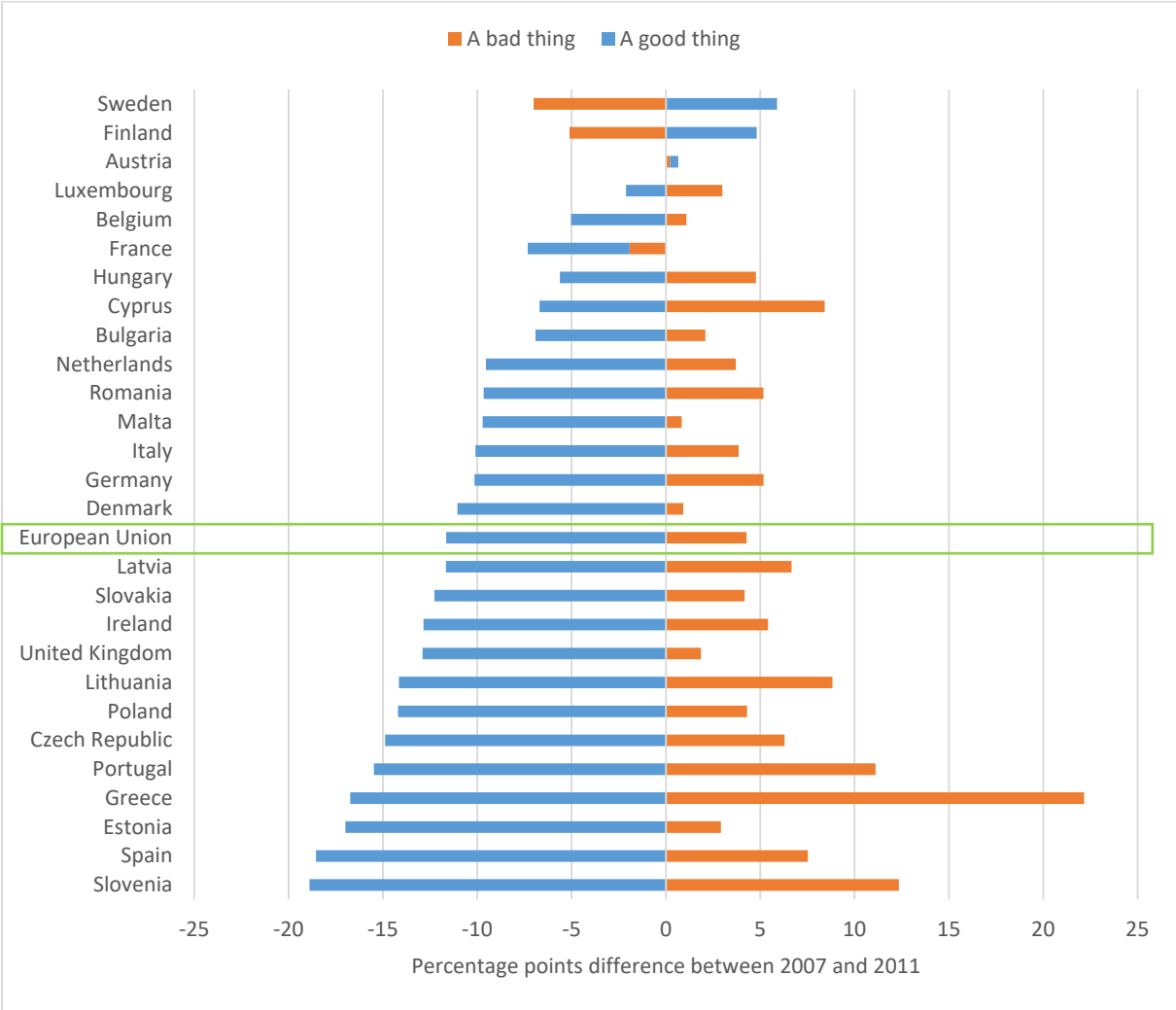
Source: Eurobarometer 1973-2017, EU membership question, weighted average according to Eurobarometer data for the ‘European Union’ total. Own illustration, combination of data from Eurobarometer interactive and special Eurobarometer reports<sup>15</sup>.

The overall level of EU support has not changed much since the mid-1990s. However, since then it trades clearly below its peak around 1990. Recently, there is a slight upward trend since 2012 for the EU aggregate. However, this only marks the starting levels from before the crisis. The crisis (2007 until 2011) has reduced EU support. At first, this seems to relate especially to economic considerations: Finland and Sweden as having been little affected by the crisis during this period are the only countries that report increases in EU support. Interestingly, the share of people who do not quite know what to think about EU membership has decreased significantly. This shows, that EU issues have risen in public attention and opinion building. All in all, the different descriptive findings indicate that EU support is distinct from European identity.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission (2018b) and European Commission and European Parliament (2013, 2015, 2017).



**Figure 5: EU membership measuring EU support, pre-/post-crisis difference (2007/2011).**



Source: Eurobarometer 2007 and 2011, EU membership question. Own calculation, simple delta between values for 2007 and 2011. The data for 2007 is from spring, hence, before the outbreak of the financial crisis in the US. 2011 is the most recent data point for individual countries.

### 3. Literature Survey: What Affects EU Support and European Identity?

Considering that EU support and European identity are distinct concepts but closely linked, we will review the most recent literature<sup>16</sup> on both. The following table summarizes the main findings. The first column names the main determinants (of European identity or EU support, respectively) that the literature identifies. These drivers may increase or decrease European identity and EU support – as reported by the following two columns. For instance, one might read it like this: “An improvement of the economic situation increases EU support”. The column ‘aspects’ names the ‘channels’ through which the determinant affects European identity and EU support. For instance, this could be the own economic situation but also the country’s one. As regards the categories of factors, we follow the distinction that Kaina and Karolewski (2009, p. 18) made but we further distinguish between country particularities and EU-wide developments. One methodological caveat is important: The existing contributions offer a wealth of insights that, however, can rarely be seen as evidence for a causal evidence. Rather than investigating in long-term developments, studies assess the current relationship between factors. Often, the findings rather relate to significant correlations that could, for example, be the result of some other unobserved individual characteristics.

**Table 2: Determinants of EU support and European identity.**

Determinants that impact on ...	... European Identity	... EU Support	Aspects
<u>Individual-level factors</u>			
<b>‘Cognitive mobilization’</b>	increase	increase	<u>Both</u> : higher education, better knowledge about the EU, information, interest, and discussing politics frequently
<b>Transnational contact</b>	increase	increase	<u>Both</u> : exchange with foreigners and living or working abroad, potential negative second-order effects of ‘social stratification’
<b>Personality traits and values</b>	increase	increase	<u>European identity</u> : optimism, extraversion, risk taking, liberal values, cosmopolitanism <u>EU support</u> : altruism, cosmopolitanism, multiculturalism, post-materialism
<b>National identity</b>	decrease	decrease	<u>European identity</u> : perceived to be competing, pride <u>EU support</u> : perceived threat
<b>Regional attachment</b>	increase (political identity), decrease (cultural identity)	increase	<u>Both</u> : cultural and political regional identity and attachment

<sup>16</sup> For an excellent collection of articles on EU support see Kentmen Çin (2016) and Hobolt (2012b) and on European identity see Kaina and Karolewski (2009).

<b>EU attitudes (support)</b>	increase	---	<u>European identity</u> : specific salient policies
<b>Political attitudes (right)</b>	decrease	---	<u>European identity</u> : positioning on the right of the left-right political spectrum
<b>Socio-economic situation</b>	increase	increase	<u>European identity</u> : wealth, occupation <u>EU support</u> : personal economic benefits or prospects
<b>Age</b>	decrease	---	
<b>Gender (male)</b>	increase	---	
<u>Regional/National particularities</u>			
<b>Economic situation</b> (‘utilitarian hypothesis’)	ambiguous	increase	<u>European identity</u> : benefits from EU, net contributors to EU budget <u>EU support</u> : own economic situation, perceived or expected benefits for own region/country
<b>Quality of national institutions</b>	ambiguous	ambiguous	<u>European identity</u> : trust in national institutions, satisfaction with democracy <u>EU support</u> : bureaucratic efficiency, satisfaction with democracy
<b>Elite in favor or in dispute</b>	Increase (in favor)	decrease (dispute)	<u>European identity</u> : elite attachment <u>EU support</u> : disputes among elites, party identification, mass media
<u>EU-wide developments</u>			
<b>Trust in EU institutions</b>	increase		<u>European identity</u> : trust, satisfaction with democracy
<b>Common values</b>	increase		<u>European identity</u> : trust in EU citizens, perceived cultural closeness
<b>EU symbols</b>	increase	---	

Firstly, there seems to be a difference between civic and cultural components of identity. This has been confirmed by a number of studies (Bruter, 2003, 2004, 2005; Harrison and Bruter, 2015; Brigevid, 2016; Verhaegen et al., 2017; Waechter, 2017). Bruter (2004) finds in focus group discussions in France, the UK and the Netherlands that there is a clear distinction between the civic and the cultural dimension of European identity and that people are susceptible rather to either one of both than to both similarly. Most of the participants expressed a more ‘civic’ than ‘cultural’ perspective. Interestingly for the purpose of our study, both expressed clear signs of each component: “The images of Europe held by ‘cultural’ identifiers had to do with peace, harmony, the fading of historical divisions and co-operation between similar people and cultures. The images of Europe held by ‘civic’ identifiers had to do with borderlessness, circulation of citizens, common civic area, new policy making, and prosperity” (p. 36). Bruter describes these images as means for citizens “to anchor their sense of belonging” (p. 36). Moreover, the participants believe that “experiencing Europe would

make citizens feel more and more European” (p. 36) and suggest this relates to “travelling, living abroad” and an impact of EU level policies on the daily life (p. 36). Finally, Bruter also finds differences between the three countries relating to borderlessness experienced through Schengen. The participants from the UK lack this experience while the other two nationalities considered this “the best expression and foundation of their modern European identity” (p. 37).

Starting with individual-level factors, undoubtedly, the four most significant sets of variables found by the literature are ‘cognitive mobilization’ (including education, knowledge, information, interest and discussing politics frequently), transnational contact as a means to broaden the personal horizon and understanding for different cultures, the socio-economic background, and, finally, age. It is generally summarized that those who are most likely to hold a European identity are young, wealthy, well-educated, and eager to travel, work or study abroad.

As regards ‘**cognitive mobilization**’, several studies found that European identity increases with higher levels of education (Medrano and Gutiérrez, 2001; Jung, 2008; Risse, 2010; Ceka and Sojka, 2016; Mitchell, 2015; Verhaegen and Hooghe, 2015; Curtis, 2016; Westle and Buchheim, 2016; Verhaegen et al., 2017). Similarly, knowledge (Ceka and Sojka, 2016; Mitchell, 2015; Verhaegen and Hooghe, 2015; Curtis, 2016) and information and news (Bruter, 2003; Waechter, 2016; Di Mauro and Fiket, 2017) about the EU and politics increases the likelihood to develop a European identity. In particular, Harrison and Bruter (2015) examine the effect of news and symbols on both the civic and the cultural component of European identity and find a clear difference between both. News affect the first, whereas symbols affect the latter. Moreover, interest in EU issues (Verhaegen and Hooghe, 2015; Westle and Buchheim, 2016) as well as discussing about politics (Mitchell, 2015; Di Mauro and Fiket, 2017; Verhaegen et al., 2017) also increases European identity. In contrast, Luhmann (2017) finds that cognitive mobilization is not a necessary condition for feeling European: those who discuss EU issues very often and not at all are equally likely to feel European, whereas those in the middle are less likely to feel European.

Although these findings are intuitive and very plausible, they offer an example for the difficulties of causal identification in that literature. There remains the question of reversed causality or self-selection: it needs some ‘pre-disposition’ to engage with EU matters and these are most likely to find with people who have a broad education and general interest in many issues. Two studies support this logic. Harrison and Bruter (2015) find that both components of identity are immediately affected by their treatments ‘news’ and ‘symbols’. However, the treatment effects unfold more in the long-run than in the short-run. Furthermore, a pre-disposition seems decisive. This shows that identity evolves over time, contingent on preceding levels and treatment. Rünz (2015) finds that the ‘Model European Union’ (a European politics simulation exercise) in Strasbourg has a positive effect on European identity and EU support. However, the effect is rather small due to the fact that the participants already had high levels of both European identity and EU support before.

‘Cognitive mobilization’ is also supposed to increase EU support due to higher education, better knowledge about the EU, and discussing politics frequently (McLaren, 2002; Henjak et al., 2012).

**Transnational contact** has been shown to be similarly influential on European identity (see the review of respective EU programs by European Commission, 2012). This ranges from exchange with other Europeans (Rünz, 2015; Di Mauro and Fiket, 2017), travelling (Ceka and Sojka, 2016; Westle and Buchheim, 2016), personal transnational relations (e.g. being an intra-EU immigrant, Verhaegen et al., 2017) and relationships (Schroedter et al., 2015; Van Mol et al., 2015). Despite the fact that travelling has a positive effect on European identity, staying home and being exposed to a high number of tourists at home, does not show any effect on European identity (Buscha et al., 2017). Stoeckel (2016) studies international social interactions of about 1,500 German students and finds that con-

tact increases European identity, particularly for those students who have had a rather weak European identity before. Most prominently in this regard is the Erasmus (plus) program. The EU's Erasmus Impact Study (European Commission, 2014, pp. 130 and 151) shows that mobile students and staff do in general feel more attached to Europe than non-mobile students and staff, even before going abroad. However, there is no 'additional' effect after having returned from the stay abroad. This leads to assume that it is less the exchange experience but the general interest in living abroad and getting to know other countries. However, this might also be a matter of opportunity and resources, as shown below under 'socio-economic situation'. Jacobone and Moro (2015) find a small positive effect of participation in the Erasmus program on European identity – directly, and indirectly through a reduction in national and regional identity and increased cultural exchange confidence, language skills and personal development. Mitchell (2015) finds that participating in the Erasmus program indeed encourages European identity significantly. Oborune (2015) surveys about 12,000 Erasmus students and finds that about a third of them feels more European after the exchange. Finally, Bruter (2004) highlights the role of a feeling of 'borderlessness', especially through Schengen, and more generally with "travelling [or] living abroad" (p. 36). Kushnir (2016) supports this view and also considers harmonizing policies such as the Bologna Process as part of a 'delineation of borders', which is perceived as contributing to forming a European identity. Summing up, Kuhn (2015) shows that transnational contacts contribute a lot to European identity formation. However, she also shows that only a small fraction of the population engages in this, namely young, well-educated and wealthy people (similarly Datler et al., 2005; Mitchell, 2015).

As regards EU support, 'transnational contact' is supposed to reduce prejudices and to build trust in people from abroad (Kuhn, 2015). However, Kuhn (2015) shows that the probability of transnational contacts heavily depends on the individual's level of education, and also the general level of wealth in their country. To sum up, it is resources, both in terms of economics and time that pave the way for visits and longer stays in other EU countries. Moreover, Kuhn emphasizes potential negative effects of 'social stratification': transnationalism which depends on the social background might even increase the distance between people who are a lot transnationally active and those who are not (or cannot) and, hence, endanger a European consensus.

Thirdly, **personality traits and values (incl. religion)** seem to affect European identity. Curtis (2016) investigates how personality traits affect European identity in the UK. The study finds that extraversion increases European identity, while agreeableness (in the sense of being gentle and polite) decreases it. Both can be seen as opposites in the sense of curiosity and openness to new things. In that sense, also risk aversion strongly decreases European identity. Luhmann (2017) finds that pessimists are a lot less likely to feel European. Postmaterialism (Jung, 2008) and cosmopolitan and liberal values (Risse, 2010) positively affect a supranational or European identity. Curtis (2016) also finds that adhering to Christian religion increases European identity. However, this could also simply be seen as a proxy for cultural closeness. Nelsen and Guth (2016) find that religion affects European identity: Catholics tend to be more European than Protestants. However, this only holds as long as the community is a majority in a country. As soon as Catholics and Protestants are minorities in their countries, the effect reverses and makes Protestants more inclined to European identity. However, this effect might actually hide a country specific effect as they do not control for country effects.

As regards EU support, Pepermans and Verleye (1998) build on several social-psychological studies (especially Hewstone, 1986; Müller-Peters et al., 1998; Müller-Peters, 1998) and find that psychological concepts allow to explain differences across countries on support for the euro. They conceptualize the cultural differences along three dimensions ('national economic pride and satisfaction', 'Self-confident open-mindedness', 'Progressive non-nationalistic'). The attitudes towards the euro are shaped by these dimensions and by the potential threat that the euro could pose in that dimension

(or not). Moreover, altruism and cosmopolitanism (Bechtel et al., 2014), multiculturalism (Hooghe and Marks, 2005), and post-materialism (Gabel, 1998; McLaren, 2002) show to increase EU support.

On **national identity and regional attachment**, Medrano and Gutiérrez (2001) find that both are compatible with European identity. However, Jung (2008) points out that national pride decreases a supranational identity. There seem to be different effects at work here. Ceka and Sojka (2016) for instance uncover that having a strong national identity decreases the cognitive component of European identity, but does not affect the affective component of European identity. Moreover, Westle and Buchheim (2016) discover that those who hold an exclusive European identity are mainly driven by rejecting their national identity. Capello (2018) emphasizes the proper targeting of EU cohesion policy in terms of matching local interests and, thereby, being able to promote European identity. Holding dear to a 'national identity' or perceiving others as a threat is commonly seen as restraining EU support (Carey, 2002; McLaren 2002, 2004; Hooghe and Marks, 2005; Luedtke, 2005; Garry and Tilley, 2009). Meier-Pesti and Kirchler (2003) find that people who perceive their country as worse-off than other countries in the EMU and who have high national pride, indeed think less of the euro than those who see their country at least equally or better-off.

Dehdari and Gehring (2017) find that in Alsace and Lorraine a strong regional identity also relates to a high European identity. This holds especially for the first two generations after World War II. More importantly though, the authors find that "in line with the rejection-identification hypothesis, people in the treated area which experienced a change in nation-status and were exposed to repressive homogenization policies express a stronger regional identity and support more regional autonomy today" (p. 0). Even though this "threat to group identity" (p. 2) refers to national politics, this leads to assume that the EU is well advised to avoid similarly 'repressive homogenization policies' and giving the impression of a de facto 'change in nation-status' due to a supremacy of EU interests. Brigevich (2016) sheds further light on the relationship between regional and European identity in French regions. In fact, she finds that cultural regional identity reduces support for EU institutions, whereas political regional identity increases support. This supports Dehdari's and Gehring's (2017) conclusion that people might seek to 'up-level' (national) political power to the EU so as to increase regional relevance.

This also relates to the impact of attitudes, namely **support, for the EU** in general or for specific policies, on European identity. As sketched above, this is supposed to increase European identity. Verhaegen et al. (2017) show that EU support measured as perceiving membership in the EU as good or neutral also increases European identity significantly. Waechter (2016) supports the idea of perceived political benefits, as they show that minority groups seem to especially appreciate the EU's efforts for minority rights, which increases European identity – as the EU level responsibly and effectively takes care of the political issues they perceive important.

Moreover, **political attitudes** seem to affect European identity. Positioning oneself on the right of the left-right political spectrum is associated with low European identity (Jung, 2008; Curtis, 2016). However, this might actually show extreme right-wing attitudes that correspond to nationalistic attitudes than with moderate left and right-wing political attitudes.

The individual **socio-economic background** and situation seem especially decisive for European identity (Risse, 2010). In fact, this might correlate with education and reflect a missing access to EU-wide exchange and knowledge. Verhaegen and Hooghe (2015) find that perceived personal economic benefits ('utilitarian hypothesis') increases European identity. Waechter (2016) shows that also for minority groups in the EU, the socio-economic situation and perceived or expected benefits from the EU drive European identity formation.

As regards EU support, personal economic benefits or prospects positively affect EU support (Gabel, 1998; Meier-Pesti and Kirchler, 2003; McLaren, 2004; Hooghe and Marks, 2005; Maier and Rittberger, 2008; Chacha, 2012; Henjak et al., 2012; Guerra, 2013). For the crisis, Braun and Tausendpfund (2014) show that support for the EU declined since 2007 in all member states and find that a particularly negative personal perception of the crisis decreased EU support. Fligstein (2009) argues that trade integration has specifically benefited the well-educated, high-skill, transnationally working population. This reflects the standard picture of the globalization's winners and losers. He adds a third group, the middle-class, who seems mainly positive towards the EU but might swing in critical moments.

In terms of resources, the literature also names **foreign language proficiency** as an important asset to engage in transnational contact for instance, or in knowledge or debating politics, and in turn, European identity (Fuss et al., 2004). Stoicheva (2015) stresses the role of multilingualism for European identity, both as a means to communicate and enter into exchange with people from other EU countries.

As said above, **age** has been confirmed in the literature as a major determinant of European identity (Risse, 2010). However, this seems to relate to a cohort rather than an age effect on the one hand and is also linked to expectations and individual economic prospects as well as past experiences. As regards the first aspect, Jung (2008) finds that across the world, young people tend to have higher levels of supranational identity than people at older ages. The study shows that this is less a generational but rather a life-cycle effect leading the author to conclude that the openness during the young age is especially susceptible towards developing traits or attitudes that are positively associated with supranational identity. Secondly, Ceka and Sojka (2015) differentiate between cognitive and affective European identity. They observe that the effect of age has opposing effects in old and new member states. While in old member states, cognitive European identity increases with age, the opposite shows for new member states. As concerns affective European identity, young people from new member states are even more affective than their peers from old member states. Waechter (2017) links the generational effect to the numerous opportunities that the EU provides for young people regarding travelling, studying and working abroad.

There are some studies on European identity formation among children, which support many of the above mentioned findings. Agirdag et al. (2012, 2016) investigate European identity formation among Belgian pupils and find that the socio-economic status, both of the child's family as well as the overall school's average, strongly affect European identity: children from working class families are less likely to identify as European. Moreover, boys identify more as European than girls. In contrast, neither age nor religion affect European identity during childhood. Savvides and Faas (2016) compare a state and a European school in the UK and find that personal and family links to European countries are particularly important for developing a European identity.

Finally, for the individual-level factors, **gender** seems to have a small but significant effect on European identity, which remains unexplained in the literature. Male persons are more likely to have a European identity than female persons (Jung, 2008; Verhaegen and Hooghe, 2015) and also higher levels of EU support (Henjak et al., 2012).

With regard to the national-level factors the role of a good economic situation and the quality of national institutions are rather ambiguous. Instead, a positive impact on European identity seems to stem from a general perceived benefit from the EU and satisfaction (=good experiences) with democracy.

A favorable **economic situation** as such does not affect European identity. Instead, on the one hand, it is the country's perceived benefit from the EU (Ceka and Sojka, 2016). On the other hand, a country's good economic situation could also refer to decreased European identity if that means that it has to share some of its benefits. Westle and Buchheim (2016) find a slightly negative effect of net contributors to the EU budget to European identity. Isernia et al. (2012) test a series of factors to explain variation in European identity across time and member states. Interestingly, they find that higher national governance quality (measured by The World Bank's (2018) indicator) reduces European identity. This might hint to the hope for the EU to have a positive impact on democratic values and the rule of law.

However, the relationship between trust in **national institutions** and European identity is not that straightforward. In contrast to Isernia et al. (2012), Verhaegen and Hooghe (2015) find that trust in national institutions increases European identity. Moreover, a high satisfaction with democracy at the national and at the EU level also increases European identity (Verhaegen et al., 2017).

As regards EU support, the effect of the quality of national institutions is ambiguous. On the one hand, people living in countries with little corruption and efficient bureaucracies transmit this experience into respective expectations towards the EU, thereby, increasing EU support (Hobolt, 2012a, who studies satisfaction with EU democracy). On the other hand, people living in countries with more corruption and less efficient bureaucracies hope for a positive effect of the EU on domestic rule of law and democratic development (Guiso et al., 2015; similar conclusion by Schukink and Niemann, 2012). In general, satisfaction with democracy increases EU support (Henjak et al., 2012; Maier and Rittberger, 2008).

Finally, a country's **elite attachment** towards the EU seems to positively affect European identity (Ceka and Sojka, 2016). As regards EU support, elites being a source of information for people, disputes among elites reduce EU support (especially for those who feel exclusively national) (Hooghe and Marks, 2005). Similarly, political parties provide orientation through party identification (Stoekel and Kuhn, 2017). Maier and Rittberger (2008) conduct an experimental survey and find that exposure to **mass media** significantly drives support of EU enlargement.

With regard to the EU-level factors, trust in EU institutions, democracy and other Europeans as well as EU symbols (Bruter, 2003; Harrison and Bruter, 2015) seem to increase European identity. This relates to both, civic and cultural identity and has a strong unifying impact.

Overall, trust in **EU institutions and EU democracy** has a positive impact on European identity (Ceka and Sojka, 2016; Verhaegen et al., 2017). Verhaegen et al. (2017) find that both trust in EU institutions as well as trust in other European citizens positively affects European identity. Westle and Buchheim (2016) study the changes from exclusive national to dual European and from dual European to exclusive European identity. They show that both changes depend especially on factors related to the civic component of European identity: satisfaction with EU democracy, trust in EU institutions, EU citizens, and EU politics. Moreover, the 'opposite', having trust only in national institutions and citizens, reduces European identity significantly.

As said above, **trust in other EU citizens** as well as **common values** positively affect European identity. Waechter (2017) shows that perceiving one's own culture as similar to European also increases European identity for minority groups in Lithuania. Alesina et al. (2017) imagine the EU in terms of an "optimal political area" (p. 2) "in which diversity is sufficiently small" (p. 3). They study cultural values between 1980 and 2008 (religiosity, sexual morality, gender equality, role of the state and cultural capital). They find that views held among people across the EU area as diverse as in the US and that GDP growth (that might be associated with EU membership success) did not translate into conver-



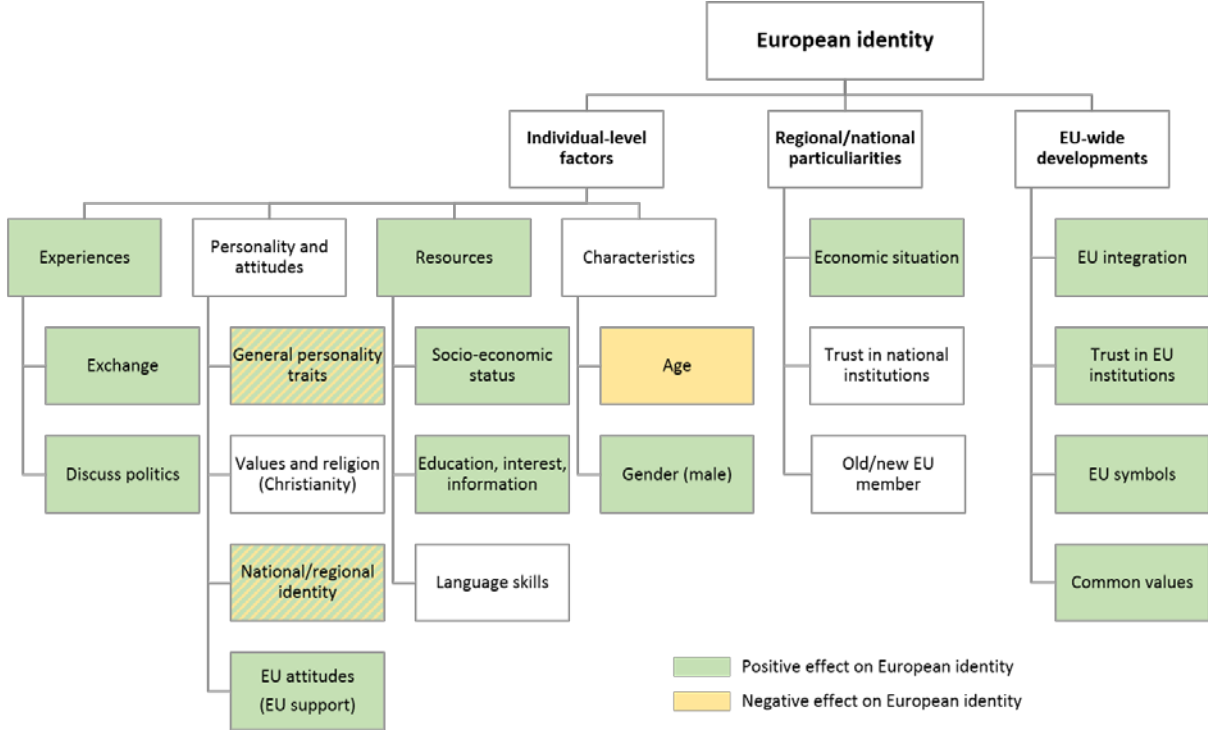
gence of views on basic values and attitudes. Perceiving cultures being similar also increases EU support (Maier and Rittberger, 2008).

In conclusion, differences in European identity across countries remain large, ranging from Latvia (low) to Italy (high level of European identity) (Verhaegen and Hooghe, 2015; also Bruter, 2004). Research finds differences especially among old and new member states (Ceka and Sojka, 2016). Scheuer and Schmitt (2009) relate this divide to lower levels of mutual trust. In contrast, Verhaegen et al. (2017) find that in general the number of years of EU membership does not affect European identity. Despite the fact that Buscha et al. (2017) did not find any effect of the introduction of the euro on European identity, they show that euro member states have higher levels of European identity than non-euro-member states – even before the introduction of the euro.

As regards EU support, Pepermans and Verleye (1998) detect ‘cultural differences’ between southern, central, northern and Scandinavian countries. Guiso et al. (2015) see a clear distinction between northern and southern countries for EU support, that partly relates to the level of unemployment and interest rate spreads of sovereign bonds (with respect to the German Bund). Chiciudean and Corbu (2015) show that Romanian people are among those in the EU with the most positive attitudes towards the EU. They conclude that this is because of high deception towards their own country and government, leading them to turn their hopes towards the EU.

Summing up, individual-level factors seem especially powerful in explaining European identity: cognitive mobilization, transnational contact, socio-economic status (resources), and age have a significant impact on European identity. Moreover, trust and satisfaction with democracy seem decisive as well as a perceived cultural closeness and common values. However, there still remain significant country-level differences unexplained. Figure 6 seeks to illustrate the effect of the different factors on European identity.

**Figure 6: Determinants of European identity.**



With the purpose of this study lying on gathering and evaluating policy proposals to enhance European identity, the literature review helps to identify recommendations for promising 'target groups':

- Cognitive mobilization: Target those who are less educated and have less general knowledge of the EU and politics; increase the level of quality information and news on EU issues; encourage debates about EU issues (in relation to individual's politically salient issues).
- Transnational contact: Target those who have not yet sufficient resources and opportunities to engage in transnational contact both at home and abroad (especially regarding financial resources, language skills, and time); learn from positive experiences with the Erasmus program.
- Socio-economic situation: Target those who have not yet sufficient resources especially to encourage ways to engage in transnational contact and cognitive mobilization.
- Age: Targeting elderly people seems especially urgent, as well as adults that do not yet benefit from Erasmus+ programs.
- Trust in EU institutions, satisfaction with democracy: Increase knowledge and information, and offer opportunities for substantial and fruitful citizen engagement; enforcement of the EU's rule of law mandate.
- Cultural closeness and common values: Increase knowledge and exchange, encourage resources for communication (especially language skills).

Before developing and evaluating proposals on how to target the above mentioned aspects and encourage European identity, we test empirically whether these aspects hold for the current European 'state of mind'. The data base is the most recent Eurobarometer from March 2017.

## 4. Exploring European Identity: Individual and Country-Specific Determinants

With the following empirical study we aim to verify some of the literature's main correlations for European identity for the most recent data in the European Union. The goal is to confirm target groups that currently have little European identity. Additionally, we try to shed more light on the two components of identity, namely the civic and the cultural component. This shall help to tailor the proposals in section 5 to encourage European identity especially for those target groups. The same caveat applies that is relevant for much of the literature: our regressions can detect the existence of multivariate statistical correlations but these results do not prove causality over time. In order to get insights on the actual process of developing a European identity from no or lower levels to higher levels of European identity, one would need to study changes in identity. This could only be done using actual or experimental panel data (see for one of the rare examples Westle and Buchheim, 2016) and must be left to future research.

### 4.1. Data and Methodology

We use the most recent Eurobarometer data, the survey from Spring 2017 (European Commission, 2017). Following the literature, we use the 'Moreno' question on European identity as presented in section 2.2. We code the answer as a dummy, where '1' indicates all the answer options that name European as either first or secondary identity. Building on the extensive literature presented above, we use three categories of independent variables and amend them by some further variables that we consider promising: (1) individual-level characteristics, (2) personality and attitudes and (3) country-specific factors. Appendix A lists each variable with summary statistics and the coding scheme.

Regarding the first set of variables, we include age, gender, whether a person has more than one nationality ('multiple nationalities'), whether a person currently lives in another EU country than their nationality ('intra-EU migrant'), whether the own economic situation is perceived as good (= '1'), education<sup>17</sup>, and occupation<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, we include whether a person lives in a large city as this could generally increase openness towards other cultures and world views. Secondly, we include a variable that measures whether a person currently lives with children in a household<sup>19</sup>. We expect that these people might be in general more forward looking and might tend to care a bit more about politics. Retired people are overly represented in the dataset, which is why we later include a dummy specifically for them. Similarly, students turned out to be very significantly related to European identity, which is why we also include a separate dummy for them. Both correlate highly with the variables 'age' and 'occupation', which is why we exclude these variables in the following analysis.

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<sup>17</sup> The Eurobarometer does neither capture the level of education nor the number of years in education. We approximate the latter by using the question "How old were you when you stopped education" and subtracting by 5 (hypothetical schooling age).

<sup>18</sup> We group the many answer options of the latter in five categories: employed, self-employed, unemployed, student, and retired.

<sup>19</sup> The Eurobarometer does not assess whether a person has children. Therefore, we approximate this by using the question whether a person currently lives with children in a household. Even though this ignores other people who have children (with whom they do not live together anymore), for instance pensioners, the effect turns out to be small but very robust.

The second set of variables focuses on personal characteristics, general and EU attitudes in particular. Following the literature, we include variables on knowledge about the EU, discuss EU politics frequently, having travelled in another EU country in the past 12 months, having socialized with people from other EU countries ('exchange'), altruism, and optimism. Moreover, we include attachment to one's region and the personal evaluation whether the current economic situation of one's country is good (= '1'). The literature was not yet entirely clear about the effect of positioning oneself on the left-right political spectrum. We follow Verbalyte and von Scheve (2017) and Henjak et al. (2012) and we do not include the entire scale but only the extremes. Whereas there is no reasonable hypothesis upon being rather left or right oriented, there is popular conviction that being on the extreme right relates to a rejection of the EU and European identity. However, we do not yet know how the extreme left feels about European identity. As regards EU attitudes, we first include a variable that measures the person's perceived purpose of the EU. Here, we use the question 'What creates a feeling of community among EU citizens?'. We code the three most relevant aspects for our context, which are 'culture', 'economics', and 'the rule of law'. This shall help to shed light on the different components of European identity and whether it is rather a cultural or a civic perspective, or, again different a rational economics perspective. Additionally, we include two variables that aim to measure the cultural component: whether a person thinks that people from different EU member states share values, and whether the EU poses a threat to one's own culture. As regards the civic component, we include two variables measuring the relative levels of trust in the EU and satisfaction with the EU in comparison to one's country<sup>20</sup>. Finally, we include two variables measuring EU support today ('the EU is going in the right direction') and in the future ('More EU integration is needed').

With regard to the third set of variables, we first include country dummies and then try to specify country-level characteristics using the unemployment rate as a proxy for the current economic situation (Eurostat, 2018), the KOF globalization index (Gygli et al., 2018) as a proxy for EU economic integration<sup>21</sup> and a variable indicating the amount of net contributions to the EU budget (European Commission, 2018d). The latter has been used in the literature already showing a negative effect on European identity. We include the variable both as a dummy and measuring broad levels so as to allow more variation. Finally, we include established groups of countries according to the literature: whether a member state is a new member to the EU, the size according to the vote shares in the Council of ministers<sup>22</sup>, and the geographical location. Even though the latter has not a proper 'quality' but is just a geographical location, it helps us to group countries and, thereby, to allow for variation while avoiding multi-collinearity with country dummies.

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<sup>20</sup> Here, we computed a variable that subtracts the national evaluation from the EU evaluation. The aim is to shed light on the literature's accounts and whether people do indeed 'up-level' hopes for the rule of law and democracy.

<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, the most recent available data for the EU economic integration index by König and Ohr (2013) is from 2012.

<sup>22</sup> We defined three groups: large, medium, and small. We classified countries according to the vote shares distribution in the Council (Protocol 36 to TFEU, Art. 3, amended by Croatia's accession Treaty, Art. 20): 27 and 29 votes as large, 10-14 votes as medium, and 3-7 votes as small.

## 4.2. Empirical Exploration

Table 3 shows the first two models that include the first and second set of individual variables as described above. Additionally, both include country fixed effects<sup>23</sup>. The estimation coefficients reported here are marginal effects and can be interpreted as change in the probability that the respondent reveals a European identity. We discuss both the magnitude of the effect and the statistical significance as illustrated by the asterisks.

**Table 3: Probit model on European identity (with country fixed effects).**

	Model (1) (Baseline)	Model (2) (... Attitudes)
<b>Age</b> (in years)	-0.00369*** (0.000705)	
<b>Student</b>		0.226*** (0.0383)
<b>Retired</b>		-0.0378* (0.0203)
<b>Female</b>	-0.112*** (0.0160)	-0.0586*** (0.0171)
<b>Children</b>	0.0617*** (0.0180)	0.0520*** (0.0189)
<b>Multiple nationalities</b>	0.108 (0.0706)	0.0248 (0.0742)
<b>Intra-EU migrant</b>	0.641*** (0.0647)	0.500*** (0.0689)
<b>Living in a large town</b>	0.111*** (0.0184)	0.0353* (0.0195)
<b>Own financial situation</b> (good=1)	0.325*** (0.0181)	0.0489** (0.0202)
<b>Education</b> (in years)	0.0741*** (0.00253)	0.0471*** (0.00271)
<b>Occupation</b> (baseline: employed) – <b>retired</b>	-0.0446* (0.0254)	
Occupation – <b>self-employed</b>	0.0739** (0.0324)	
Occupation – <b>student</b>	0.293*** (0.0405)	
Occupation – <b>unemployed</b>	0.107 (0.120)	
<b>Knowledge</b> (highest=3)		0.121*** (0.00985)
<b>Discuss</b> (often=2)		0.187*** (0.0135)
<b>Travelling</b> (often=2)		0.134*** (0.0134)
<b>Exchange</b> (often=2)		0.195***

<sup>23</sup> The model correctly predicts 72.48% of all cases. While the positive rate for European identity=1 is very high (82.48%), the rate of false positives for actually negative cases (European identity=0) is quite high (42.44%).

		(0.0119)
<b>Altruism</b>		0.0569***
		(0.0170)
<b>Optimism</b> (-2 to 2, highest =2)		0.105***
		(0.00772)
<b>Regional Attachment</b> (-2 to 2, highest =2)		-0.0429***
		(0.00924)
<b>Country's economic situation</b> (good=1)		0.0892***
		(0.0213)
<b>Extreme Left</b>		-0.103***
		(0.0312)
<b>Extreme Right</b>		-0.131***
		(0.0342)
<b>EU purpose</b> (baseline: other) – <b>culture</b>		0.311***
		(0.0242)
EU purpose – <b>economics</b>		0.363***
		(0.0240)
EU purpose – <b>rule of law</b>		0.487***
		(0.0364)
<b>Relative trust in EU</b> (-2 to 2, EU more than nat. government=2)		0.0566***
		(0.00867)
<b>Relative satisfaction with EU democracy</b> (-4 to 4, EU more than nat.=4)		0.0163**
		(0.00809)
<b>EU threat to own culture</b>		-0.219***
		(0.0251)
<b>EU people share values</b> (-2 to 2, agree=2)		0.152***
		(0.00812)
<b>More EU integration</b> (-2 to 2, agree=2)		0.0960***
		(0.00705)
<b>EU support</b> (-1 to 1, agree=1)		0.0741***
		(0.0108)
<b>Constant</b>	-0.905***	-1.434***
	(0.0661)	(0.0654)
<i>Includes country fixed effects</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>yes</i>
Observations	28,007	28,007

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

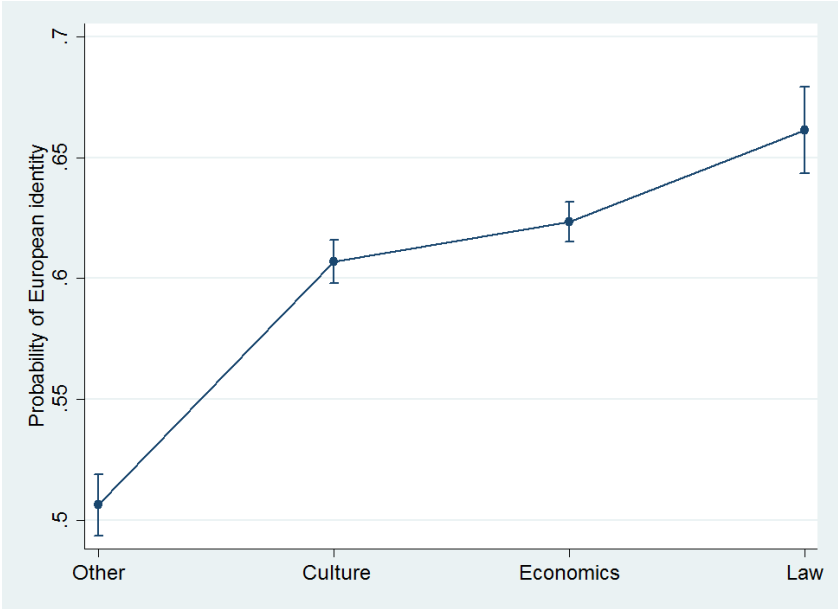
All variables that are not further specified are dummies or start ranging from 0.

Our analysis confirms many of the literature's findings. We discuss all findings with a special focus on target groups. Firstly, it becomes obvious, that students are overwhelmingly more likely to have a European identity than other people. In contrast, retired and older people are less likely to have a European identity. In terms of occupation, self-employed people are more European than employed people. Interestingly, the coefficient for unemployed people is insignificant. This seems to contradict a 'blame shifting' mechanism and considering European identity as a result of one's own economic situation. In contrast, however, perceiving one's own economic situation as well as one's country's one as good indeed increases the likelihood of European identity. However, the magnitude of the effect is reduced considerably after including variables on personality and attitudes. Being female, for some reason, has a smaller but negative and robust effect. This indicates that there is a particular gender effect which is not taken up by the broad set of other control variables. As expected, 'having children' has a positive, yet smaller, effect.

Having more than one nationality as such does not increase the likelihood to have a European identity. The usually assumed effects surrounding this characteristic are probably taken up by some other variables. For instance, being an intra-EU migrant increases the likelihood significantly. This supports the transnational contact hypothesis. Similarly, ‘travelling’ and ‘exchange’ have significant positive effects. Our results also support the ‘cognitive mobilization’ hypothesis: education, knowledge and discuss all have positive effects. Furthermore, our results support Luhmann (2017) who showed that personality also affects the likelihood to have a European identity: altruism and optimism have a positive effect. Moreover, regional attachment has a negative effect similar to what Brigevich (2016) showed. Unfortunately, the Eurobarometer does not distinguish between a cultural and a civic attachment. Positioning oneself at either of the extreme ends of the political spectrum decreases the likelihood to have a European identity with no substantial difference between far left and far right.

One of the most interesting findings is that the variable ‘EU purpose’ has positive effects for all of the three aspects that are interesting for our approach (see Figure 7). Moreover, ‘rule of law’ seems to have the most pronounced effect, much more than ‘culture’ and ‘economics’. This leads us to assume that the rule of law plays an important role for European identity. Similarly, relative trust in the EU and relative satisfaction with EU democracy have a positive effect. Furthermore, culture plays an important role as well. While perceiving the EU as a threat to one’s own culture significantly reduces the likelihood to have a European identity, the likelihood increases when perceiving EU people to share values. Finally, also the support of the general political direction of the EU (‘EU support’) and advocating for more EU integration has a positive effect on European identity.

**Figure 7: Predicted probabilities of European identity for stated ‘EU purpose’ (with 95% confidence intervals).**



In order to investigate a bit more into country-level factors, we ran model (2) with different sets of variables. For reasons of visibility, we do not report the individual-level factors in the following table but they remain part of the regression. Table 4 presents the results<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> The final model (9) correctly predicts 72.00% of all cases. This is slightly less than model (2). While the positive rate for European identity=1 is very high (82.13%), the rate of false positives for actually negative cases (European identity=0) is quite high (43.14%).



**Table 4: Probit model on European identity (with country-specific variables).**

	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
<b>Unemployment rate</b> (grouped, 0 to 3)	0.00732 (0.00758)						-0.00398 (0.0111)
<b>EU Budget net contribution</b> (grouped, -2 to 2)	-0.0543*** (0.00639)						
<b>KOF Globalization index</b> (grouped, 0 to 3)	0.0909*** (0.00983)						0.144*** (0.0129)
<b>Country group size</b> (baseline: large) – <b>medium</b>		-0.103*** (0.0218)				-0.157*** (0.0233)	-0.258*** (0.0253)
Country group size (baseline: large) – <b>small</b>		-0.297*** (0.0219)				-0.288*** (0.0278)	-0.329*** (0.0332)
<b>New member state</b>			-0.0199 (0.0179)			-0.0750 (0.0538)	0.0698 (0.0617)
<b>EU Budget net payer</b>				-0.0665*** (0.0188)		-0.179*** (0.0347)	-0.257*** (0.0362)
<b>Country group geo</b> (baseline: core) – <b>east</b>					-0.118*** (0.0247)	-0.0837 (0.0639)	-0.0335 (0.0696)
Country group geo (baseline: core) – <b>Scandinavia &amp; north</b>					-0.434*** (0.0268)	-0.363*** (0.0287)	-0.323*** (0.0295)
Country group geo (baseline: core) – <b>south</b>					0.0881*** (0.0289)	0.0156 (0.0392)	0.139*** (0.0482)
<b>Constant</b>	-1.265*** (0.0491)	-1.040*** (0.0467)	-1.103*** (0.0461)	-1.097*** (0.0457)	-1.135*** (0.0500)	-0.945*** (0.0604)	-1.166*** (0.0635)
<i>Includes individual-level variables</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>yes</i>	<i>yes</i>
Observations	28,007	28,007	28,007	28,007	28,007	28,007	28,007

Standard errors in parentheses.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

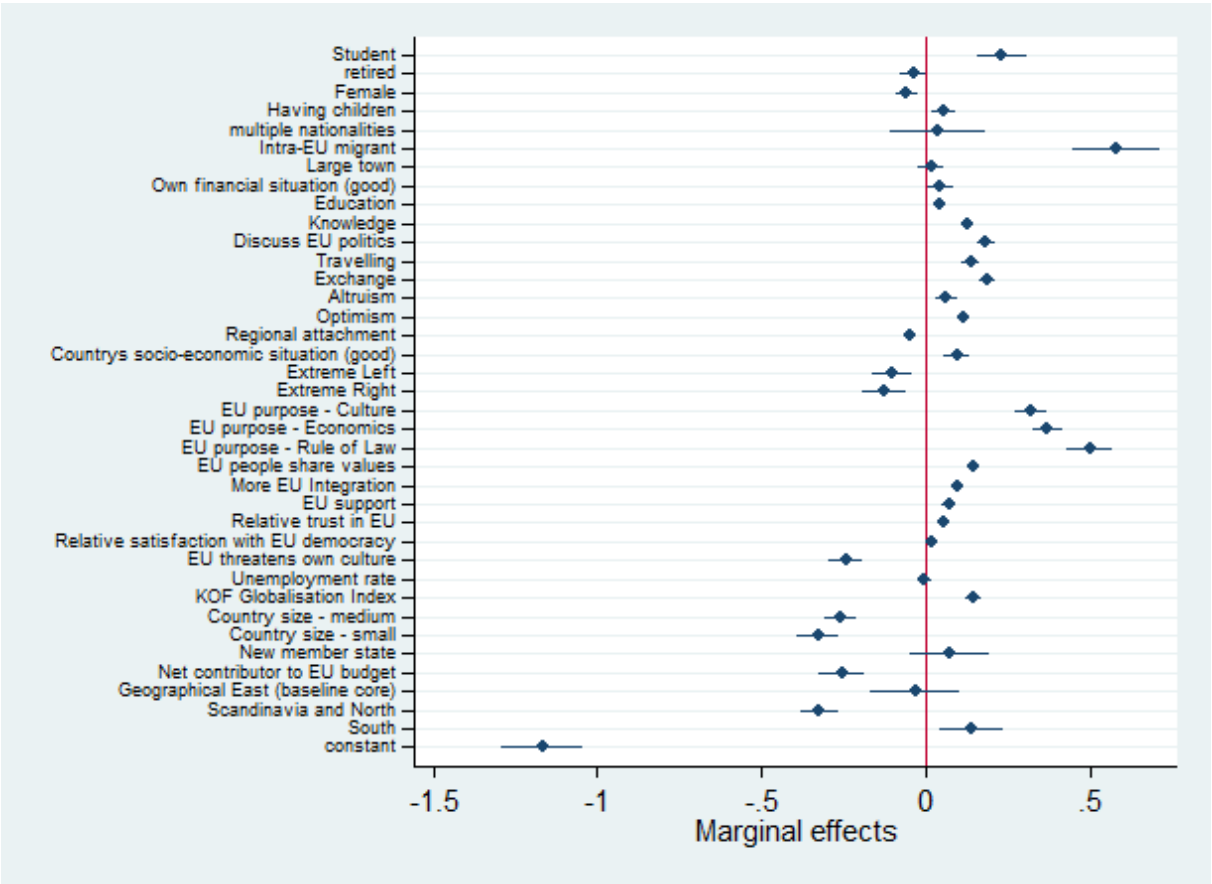
All variables that are not further specified are dummies or start ranging from 0.

The table shows that, interestingly, the actual economic situation ('unemployment rate') does not play a role on top of the perceived economic situation discussed above. However, the general economic situation of a country in terms of its prosperity does indeed play a role. Framing it as net contributions to the EU budget shows a significant negative effect across all the models. Similarly, the more economically integrated in the world ('KOF globalization index'), the higher the likelihood to have a European identity. This supports the findings by Luhmann (2017). While the dummy for new member states has no effect on European identity, interestingly, the size of countries does. This effect comes on top of economic integration and prosperity. Therefore it is difficult to meaningfully interpret this result. Being from a medium sized or small member state reduces the likelihood to have a European identity significantly in comparison to being from a large member state. Finally, the geographical country groups show a significant north-south divide: While people from northern countries (Scandinavia, the UK, and Ireland) are significantly more reluctant towards a European identity than people from the core countries, people from southern countries are significantly more likely to have a European identity. Interestingly, people from Eastern countries are on average undecided: the significance of the effect is not robust across specifications.

### 4.3. Results and Discussion

Figure 8 summarizes the effects of all variables based on model (9). The individual-level variables' estimates remained the same for models (3) to (9), except 'living in a large city' lost significance.

**Figure 8: Marginal effects of each independent variable (model (9)).**



All in all, our findings support the literature's findings. We can draw from this to specify the above described target groups:

1. Keep students and add pensioners: Students show to be the frontrunners of European identity, in contrast to retired people. This speaks for continued support for the frontrunners and new support for encouraging pensioners to explore the EU. Even though women showed to be significantly less likely to have a European identity than men, women overwhelmingly participated in Erasmus programs for instance, hence, before trying to target women, the reasons for the effect have to be understood and studied in much greater depth.
2. Focus on education and information ('cognitive mobilization'): Even though the effect for knowledge and education is small, it is positive and significant. The effect of education might have also been taken up by the variable 'students'. Moreover, the effect for discussing is positive and rather large. This supports the overwhelmingly positive evaluations of these factors in the literature and speaks for focusing on them in particular for encouraging European identity.
3. Travel and exchange ('transnational contacts'): Both variables as well as 'intra-EU migrant' shows to be significantly positively related to European identity. This supports the literature's findings and speaks for enhancing this as a means to encourage interest, understanding, and 'friendship between nations'. This could also help to reduce the negative effect of regional attachment.
4. Economics all over or not?: The impact of prosperity on European identity is not clear. While perceiving one's own and one's country's economic situation as good increases the likelihood to have a European identity, being from a country that is a net contributor to the EU budget reduces this significantly. In contrast, being from a country that is economically integrated with the world, again has a positive effect. Finally, considering economic issues as contributing to an 'EU community feeling' again has a positive effect. All in all, this does not call for more EU-level economic policies, but it sends a note of caution about the asymmetric impact of redistribution among donors and recipients.
5. Reliability and similarity: The results for civic and cultural aspects of European identity seem to call for a serious implementation of the rule of law on the one hand, and safeguarding cultural traditions on the other. Additionally, travel and exchange might help to broaden understanding for other cultures and exploring similarities and fruitful dissimilarities.

In the following, we will present policy proposals that we seek to relate to these five target groups. This study attempts to gather and evaluate proposals to raise European identity while explicitly valuing diversity.

# 5. Proposals on how to Activate an ‘EU Feeling’

## 5.1. Existing Policies

The following illustration maps existing policies supposed to promote a feeling of EU belonging. We include this to give an idea about what there already is and to what the proposals, which we will present in the next section, will add and complement. We do not attempt to give an exhaustive list of measures, instead we seek to give a broad picture about the most prominently known measures and the general types of measures that are considered to affect European identity. As our matrix that we developed above (Table 1 in section 2.1), the tables below distinguish between a civic and a cultural component of European identity on the one hand, and aspects of input and output legitimacy on the other. With regard to the cultural component and some related aspects of the civic component of identity, we expand the matrix using the literature’s main factors in Table 6: exchange, information and education, common heritage and other commonalities. In both subsequent tables, the measures are sorted so that they refer to either one or two columns.

**Table 5: Existing political measures – civic identity.**

		<i>Input legitimacy</i>		<i>Output legitimacy</i>
		<b>Polity</b>	<b>Politics</b>	<b>Policy</b>
<b>Civic identity</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voting in local elections</li> <li>• Voting in EU Parliament elections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens’ initiative</li> <li>• Citizen’s dialogues</li> <li>• Structured dialogue (youth)</li> <li>• Petitions, complaints, consultations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passport</li> <li>• License plates</li> <li>• Free mobility, Schengen</li> <li>• Roaming</li> <li>• EU-wide job agency (EURES)</li> <li>• Regional/cohesion policy, EFSI</li> </ul>

**Table 6: Existing political measures – cultural identity.**

		<b>Exchange</b>	<b>Information/ education</b>	<b>Common heritage/ commonalities</b>
<b>Cultural identity</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU Volunteering (EU Solidarity Corps)</li> <li>• Erasmus+</li> <li>• School exchanges</li> <li>• Free Interrail ticket</li> <li>• Town twinning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU year themes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Capital of Culture</li> <li>• European Year of Cultural Heritage</li> </ul>
<b>Civic identity</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EU Simulations</li> </ul>		

Starting with Table 5, the EU allows citizens to move across EU countries and become a citizen of the country abroad at least to some extent, and from the EU directly. Living in another EU country, EU citizens are allowed to vote in local elections, and thereby, to take part in their most closely related political sphere. This is legally anchored as a systemic aspect ('polity') that empowers citizens to take part in local politics directly. At the EU level, citizens elect the members of the European Parliament directly, which gives them the opportunity to vote for representatives that they believe are competent to working towards EU legislation in their interest.

Moreover, at the EU level, citizens' have the right to engage in EU politics via a number of means. In contrast to voting, which is part of the polity and where a citizen's vote has an immediate impact (election), the means to engage in politics allow at best an indirect impact on legislation. In that regard, the European citizens' initiative and petitions to the European Parliament give the most far-reaching competencies. Whereas the latter works similar as for other parliaments, the citizens' initiative has, since its introduction with the Treaty of Lisbon, been successful only for four initiatives. The requirements are considered relatively high to collect one million signatories<sup>25</sup>. On successful completion, the Commission and the European Parliament are requested to discuss the issue and the Commission has to voice an opinion.

Furthermore, citizens can engage in EU consultations, formal complaints<sup>26</sup> and other informal ways to give their view and perspective on a topic<sup>27</sup>. Young people's advice is sought for instance in the format of the Structured Dialogue<sup>28</sup> and school dialogues ('Your Europe Your Say')<sup>29</sup>. The most popular example among EU Commissioners is the Citizens' Dialogue<sup>30</sup>, where Commissioners take Q&A in front of a large audience. Recently, the French President Macron in his speech about the EU's future (European Political Strategy Centre, 2017) as well as the new German government support the idea to continue this sort of citizens' involvement.

Finally, the EU passed a number of legislations ('policy') that seek to facilitate travelling or living abroad for EU citizens and to provide a state-like sense of the EU. The most prominent examples are certainly the European flag, the European anthem, the common passport and license plates. Moreover, the majority of EU people certainly have seen at least once a European flag around their local area indicating financial support in the framework of regional development or cohesion policy. Adding to the general principles of free mobility to travel and work, and Schengen (for the majority of EU states), there is now free-of-charge roaming for mobile phone calls. To facilitate working abroad, the EU Commission runs an EU-wide job agency online platform (EURES)<sup>31</sup> for both private and public job openings all across the EU. Moreover, it offers practical help regarding living and working abroad.

With regards to fostering exchanges to promoting the cultural component of European identity (Table 6), the EU offers a number of programs to support this. The most prominent program is cer-

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<sup>25</sup> Organizers have to collect at least one million signatories from at least 7 member states. On top, there are country-specific minimum numbers of signatories required. EU Commission website: <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/how-it-works/collection>.

<sup>26</sup> EU Commission website: [https://europa.eu/european-union/law/have-your-say\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/law/have-your-say_en); [https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/consultations_en).

<sup>27</sup> General EU Commission website on citizens' involvement: [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.htm).

<sup>28</sup> The Youth Forum 2017 website: <http://youthconf.eu/>; [https://europa.eu/newsroom/events/european-youth-conference-0\\_en](https://europa.eu/newsroom/events/european-youth-conference-0_en).

<sup>29</sup> Your Europe Your Say website: <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/agenda/our-events/events/your-europe-your-say-2018/about-yeys>.

<sup>30</sup> EU Commission website: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/citizens-dialogues\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/events/citizens-dialogues_en).

<sup>31</sup> EURES website: <https://ec.europa.eu/eures>.

tainly Erasmus, which has recently been broadened to cover not only students but also pupils, school classes, social workers from all fields, sport clubs and youth organizations. The newly named Erasmus+ program facilitates and financially supports stays abroad for educational purposes. Furthermore, there are programs to facilitate exchanges between schools (eTwinning)<sup>32</sup> and towns<sup>33</sup>. Recently, the EU Commission also included in their budget proposal provisions for funds for free Inter-rail travel tickets for EU citizens turning 18 years old<sup>34</sup>. Giving also the voluntary services a European perspective, the European Solidarity Corps<sup>35</sup> offers an online platform and support to serve voluntarily in projects all across the EU.

Education and exchange also matter for the civic component of identity. The Model European Union<sup>36</sup> allows young people to engage in EU politics in a role game and to discuss actual EU legislation. The Model takes place in Strasbourg at the premises of the European Parliament. A number of other similar models are organized by youth organizations across the EU, one prominent example being the Simulation European Parliament (SIMEP)<sup>37</sup> in Berlin, organized by the Junge Europäische Bewegung (JEB). Furthermore, since 1983, the EU defines 'year themes'<sup>38</sup> to make aware of a particular policy area or social problem under whose heading a number of projects are run. In 2018, it is the year of cultural heritage<sup>39</sup> in the EU promoting a number of projects on the topic on the local, national, and EU level. The aim is to bring EU people closer together and raise awareness for both the common heritage and common future. In that sense, each year, the EU awards two or three cities in the EU to be 'European Capitals of Culture' (European Commission, 2018c)<sup>40</sup> for that year.

## 5.2. Proposals to Encourage European Identity

In the following, we specify new projects that, according to categories drawn from the literature and our empirical findings, seem promising to have a positive impact on European identity. We will especially focus on aspects and target groups that we have identified in the empirical section of this study: education and information, exchange, adults and elderly people as well as people from a weak economic background. We will include publically discussed proposals, proposals found in the empirical literature discussed above and some own proposals. Again, we do not seek to give an exhaustive list but to discuss some of the most promising or prominent proposals. With this, we aim to stimulate and feed into the current debate at the EU level. As in the previous section, each proposal will be sorted in one of the two following tables. We further elaborate six proposals that seem especially promising (see boxes below).

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<sup>32</sup> ETwinning website: <https://www.etwinning.net/en/pub/index.htm>.

<sup>33</sup> EU Commission website for funding: [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens/funding/town-twinning-2018-round-1\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens/funding/town-twinning-2018-round-1_en).

<sup>34</sup> EU Commission press release: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEX-18-1443\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEX-18-1443_en.htm).

<sup>35</sup> European Solidarity Corps website: [https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity\\_en](https://europa.eu/youth/solidarity_en).

<sup>36</sup> Model European Union website: <http://www.meu-strasbourg.org/>.

<sup>37</sup> SIMEP website: <http://www.simep.eu/>.

<sup>38</sup> EU Commission website: [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/european-years\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/european-years_en).

<sup>39</sup> EU Commission website: <https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/>.

<sup>40</sup> EU Commission website: [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en).

**Table 7: Proposals – civic identity.**

		<i>Input legitimacy</i>		<i>Output legitimacy</i>
		<b>Polity</b>	<b>Politics</b>	<b>Policy</b>
<b>Civic identity</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit office terms</li> <li>• Elect COM president</li> <li>• Constitutional convention</li> <li>• Transnational party lists</li> <li>• EP two chambers</li> <li>• Right of initiative: EP and Council</li> <li>• National parliaments ‘green card’ procedure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens’ assembly</li> <li>• Citizens’ survey</li> <li>• Community counsels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common visionary project (e.g. research or infrastructure)</li> <li>• Energy independence</li> <li>• Revise Art. 7 procedure</li> <li>• Competency redistribution</li> <li>• EU consular offices</li> <li>• Common road signs</li> <li>• EU activities report</li> </ul>

**Table 8: Proposals – cultural identity.**

		<b>Exchange</b>	<b>Information/ education</b>	<b>Common heritage/ commonalities</b>
<b>Civic identity</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European parliamentary scholarships</li> <li>• EU Agency for Civic Education</li> <li>• EU public service broadcaster</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9 May bank holiday</li> <li>• Anthem at sports events</li> <li>• History Erasmus</li> <li>• School history competition</li> <li>• European sports teams</li> </ul>
	<b>Cultural identity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School twinning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘European Waltz’</li> <li>• Vocational Erasmus</li> <li>• Pensioners’ Erasmus</li> <li>• Learn two EU foreign languages</li> </ul>	

Table 7 maps policy proposals that target fostering the civic component of European identity. The basic ideas behind the majority of proposals targeting input legitimacy are to increase transparency, the competition of political ideas and solutions, and to make institutions more efficient to foster their core mandate in the political system. This is assumed to foster trust, satisfaction with democracy and citizen participation in the democratic system.

Firstly, as regards the political system (*‘polity’*), proposals focus on the role of the European Parliament in EU legislative decision-making, and, thereby, more direct involvement of citizens. At the core is the **right of initiative** (see recent discussion in Hübner et al., 2017, p. 37), which is currently exclusively held by the European Commission. Extending it to the European Parliament – as is usual for advanced democracies – would increase the debate about policy solutions and lead to more political competition. Proposals to make the European Parliament fully participating in all EU legislations point to a similar end (European Parliament’s Committee on Constitutional Affairs, 2016). Some go as

far as to propose to transform the Parliament and the Council of Ministers into a **two-chamber parliamentary system** (Young European Federalists, 2016). However, this would constitute a major change of the EU polity and delicate Treaty revisions. Being equipped with more competencies might also increase turnout in European Parliament elections. In that regard, there are proposals to establish **transnational party lists** for the election in order to increase awareness of the ‘European’ quality of these elections (see Box 1). This would build on the 2014 informal practice to nominate lead candidates for EU-wide party families, which has been widely acknowledged and seems again set for the next election in 2019. **Limiting terms in office** for elected politicians (United Europe, 2017) would also increase competition and transparency. Finally, increased involvement of national parliaments is considered to raise debates and awareness of European politics, as genuinely European as well as in relation to national interests. Therefore, a group of parliamentarians and researchers (Hübner et al., 2017) suggest to introduce a **‘green card’ procedure** for involving national Parliaments in EU decision-making. In contrast to voice objections as in the Lisbon Treaty’s yellow and orange card procedure or as in the red card procedure proposed for Cameron’s UK remain deal, the green card procedure would request explicit consent of the majority of national parliaments.

With regards to the European Commission, proposals seek to strengthen the executive mandate of the Commission as **‘Guardian of the Treaties’**. This would also increase transparency as to what the mandate of the Commission currently is and shall be: political or executive. At the core are ideas to increase transparency and strengthening the Commission’s competencies to enforce EU rule of law. Especially in light of the developments in Poland and Hungary towards reducing the division of powers, high levels of corruption in some new EU member states, and freedom of the press in Malta and Slovakia, defending EU democratic values is at stake. Hübner et al. (2017) suggest to **revise the Article 7 procedure** to make it more applicable to that end. Currently, the European Council has a major role in the process and has to decide with unanimity – which proves inapplicable if more than one country is in question of a breach. In order to increase transparency and to provide detailed objective information to the public, we suggest to make the Commission’s annual **General Report on the activities of the EU**<sup>41</sup> compulsory to be presented to the European Parliament. The report’s objective is to summarize all activities by all EU institutions. Therefore, there shall be a set of rigorous rules on the content and level of detail of the presented facts. Before 2015, the report had around 200-300 pages with detailed information on finalized, current and in-the-making legislation; now it has about 120 pages with a lot less information. On the composition of the Commission, the European Parliament’s Committee on Constitutional Affairs (2016) suggests to reduce the number of vice-presidents and make the Commission in general more efficient. In contrast, Commission President Juncker (2017) suggested to merge the positions of the Commission president and the president of the European Council. This would certainly politicize the executive mandate of the Commission even further. Similarly, proposals to have the **Commission president directly elected** might enhance the political role of the position.

#### **Box 1: Transnational party lists**

Most recently proposed by French President Macron (2017) in his speech about the future of the EU, transnational party lists would accompany national party lists in European Parliament (EP) elections. The idea is to endow members of the EP with a genuine ‘European interest’ – and a ‘European’ con-

<sup>41</sup> Access to the current report: [https://europa.eu/european-union/documents-publications/reports-booklets/general-report\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/documents-publications/reports-booklets/general-report_en).



stituency to be accountable to. This shall also raise participation in European Parliament elections and increase the 'European' notion of day-to-day politics.

Details: Macron suggests to have half of the EP elected on transnational party lists. The constituency would, hence, not relate to the usual local or national constituencies to which an elected member of the EP is accountable to, but it would relate to the entirety of the EU. European party families would each set up a list with the lead candidate at the very top. People from the list would then need to campaign in several member states, and, therefore, seek to find policy issues that are of interest for many of them, hence, of 'true' European nature.

History: The idea is not new but has been voiced with similar goals before. The most recent prominent example was the report by the European Parliament's Committee on Constitutional Affairs (2011). Alongside a number of other measures to reform the EP election procedure, the report suggested to assign 25 additional seats to a transnational voting procedure. Most recently again, in February 2018<sup>42</sup>, the European Parliament rejected a proposal to re-allocate the current British seats after Brexit<sup>43</sup> to a transnational constituency. The topic is very much up to date and has, despite the EP's rejection, not yet lost attraction.

Pros & cons: Federalists endorse the idea hoping for it to be a real game changer and encourage politicians to advocate for truly European interests. Economists as well see the proposal in a positive light as from a public finance perspective it might help to reduce pork-barrel politics. Political scientists would note that, usually voting based on lists instead of smaller constituencies results in politicians being more loyal towards their party than towards the people in a constituency. On a more negative note, the historian Winkler (2017) urges that the current heterogeneity of the member states' party systems in terms of experience, endurance, and ethics of politicians risks to run counter these ideals. From a constitutional justice perspective, a transnational list would contribute to reducing the current misrepresentation of voters from different member states due to the allocation of seats to member states. In contrast, the European Parliament's DG for Internal Policies (2015) fears that in fact the lists would lead to an overrepresentation of large member states as there politicians have a greater audience, and, therefore more potential voters. However, the lists would allow people who are engaged in parties to remain engaged even when working or living in another EU country. Finally, Hübner et al. (2017) suggest that transnational party lists would also require a "uniform, EU-wide electoral procedure" (p. 40). This could also be a starting point for striving towards more 'Europeanized' EP elections without transnational party lists. For instance, as Jouvenat (2016) notes: "should European transnational political parties exist, there would be no need for transnational lists". He suggests that one could just stick to the current process but have people voting for European parties instead for national parties – keeping the usual local constituencies.

All in all, the proposal seeks to raise European identity from a civic perspective and tries to build an awareness for a European constituency in that regard. Target groups are voters of all kind as well as increasing information and discussions ('cognitive mobilization') about elections.

With regard to strengthening the civic component of European identity through participation in politics, we recommend to pay attention to the Dutch and Irish examples of citizen's assemblies and

<sup>42</sup> European Parliament's interactive website on the legislative procedure: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/theme-union-of-democratic-change/file-reform-of-the-electoral-law-of-the-eu>.

<sup>43</sup> European Parliament's interactive website on seat redistribution: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/eu-affairs/20180126STO94114/eu-elections-how-many-meps-will-each-country-get-in-2019>.

evaluate a **citizens' assembly** at the EU level (see Box 2). This could complement the Commission's current Citizens' Dialogues and advance them further both in terms of citizen engagement intensity and breadth of debates and resulting insights for the policy process. This could also take up the idea that Macron voiced with the 'democratic convention' or '**citizens' survey**'. At the beginning of his movement 'En marche', volunteers cast an extensive door-to-door survey with about 80.000 French people to hear about what they perceive as most pressing political issues. The still very young Anti-Brexit movement 'Renew' in the UK tries to do the same<sup>44</sup>. Another idea in that regard comes from Austria where '**community counsels**' ('Gemeinderäte'), local politicians, explain EU policies to local citizens (Wurm, *no date*). The EU-wide 'Ladder' project works similarly and focuses on development issues<sup>45</sup>. As discussed in Box 2, the Citizens' Assembly would allow a much more targeted and intense engagement of citizens with a more practical use of insights from citizens to feed into EU politics.

### **Box 2: Citizens' Assembly**

Based on Ireland's<sup>46</sup> recent experience<sup>47</sup> we propose to establish a European Citizens' Assembly. The Citizens' Assembly would gather a representative sample of the EU population for discussing a relevant and timely political issue. The Assembly would meet in Strasbourg when the European Parliament is not convening. The final outcome would be a decision (if it's an issue with clear options, e.g. yes/no) or report (if it's more complex, e.g. guidelines). The file would be sent to all EU and national institutions and be presented to the European Council, the European Parliament, and the Commission College. The report would not have any formal impact, instead it would enrich the political debate and stimulate politics on an issue. Moreover, it could develop into a citizens' initiative or could find support with EU or national institutions. The main purpose is to get people involved in issues discussed at the EU level, to inform them and to learn about their perspectives. Moreover, they would feed their experiences back to their close environment and, thereby, serve as invaluable multipliers. They would also bring in their environment's arguments and questions to enrich the Assembly's discussion. Thereby, the Assembly would contribute to forming a 'European demos' on the one hand, and efficiently facilitating insights from the people to the policy-making process.

Details: For a start, participants could discuss policy issues with little potential to increase conflict between member states. Secondly, they could discuss the EU's currently most complex and difficult issues such as finding a solution on the very difficult balance between allowing migration and securing borders or a reform of the European Monetary Union's institutional set-up. Because both are very complex and controversially debated issues, the Assembly could draft guidelines on how they want an EU policy to look like.

Participants would be selected based on an EU-wide lottery among all EU citizens who are eligible to vote in general elections. The selection could be organized by the Eurobarometer as they have the necessary administrative experience. In Ireland, selection was organized by an opinion poll agency, too, and was based on a few criteria to ensure a representative sample: gender, age, region, and social class. For a start, one could think of about 100 to 200 participants in order to ensure practicality. Each participant would have a deputy. In Ireland, selected people could withdraw before the assembly started. Then, their deputy would take over. Deputies could not take over once the Assem-

<sup>44</sup> Renew website: <https://renewbritain.org/our-story/>.

<sup>45</sup> EU Commission website: <http://www.ladder-project.eu/>.

<sup>46</sup> Ireland's Citizens Assembly website: <https://www.citizensassembly.ie/en/Home/>.

<sup>47</sup> With the 'Bürgerwerkstatt Außenpolitik' (citizens' workshop on foreign policy'), the German Federal Foreign Office attempted something similar but far less formal; website: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/aamt/aussenpolitiklive/buergerwerkstatt-node>.

bly had started discussing a specific topic. They could only take over once the Assembly moved on to discuss a new topic. As language might certainly be a barrier, EU institutions could provide for translation services.

The Assembly would have a small secretariat that organizes the formal proceedings of the meetings. They would gather and provide all relevant materials, legislative proposals, studies, statements, etc.<sup>48</sup>. The head of the Assembly would chair the secretariat and the general meetings. This person would not have a formal vote but only serve as facilitator to the discussions. Moreover, the secretariat would help in drafting the final report together with members of the Assembly. The Assembly would consist of an introductory meeting, several meetings in smaller groups, and two concluding sessions with voting on the final report. The Assembly can also invite experts or representatives from institutions to present their research or statements in public hearings. The smaller groups would allow to discuss an issue in detail<sup>49</sup>. Representatives of the groups would work on drafting the final report. Meetings could take place once per month on a weekend. Like in Ireland, expenses would be reimbursed, however, participation would be honorary. The EU public services broadcaster could air all meetings and, therewith, provide for an even broader inclusion of people across the EU.

Pros & cons: It is to note that the Assembly would not have any formal role in the EU's political system. It is not considered a new Parliament or the like. Rather, the aim is to bring the current citizens' dialogues to a truly insightful and efficient new level. This is exactly what Juncker (2017) and Macron (2017) appealed to in their speeches in September 2017. The Assembly would build on this administrative infrastructure and use readily available hosting and technical services at the European Parliament. The assembly would bring together diverse views from all across the EU, involve both EU enthusiasts and those with little education or interest in EU politics, yet. Moreover, they would feed back to and bring in their close environment's questions, perspectives, and arguments and, thereby, reflect a large proportion of the EU's population. The Assembly would encourage an extraordinary level of civic European identity, just by facilitating a serious democratic debate. Moreover, it would enhance exchange, knowledge, and language skills, and, thereby, contribute for EU citizens to finding shared policy perspectives and commonalities.

Proposals on specific policies that are supposed to increase the civic component of European identity, are wide-spread. Here, we only look at a condensation of them along with one original proposal. First of all, big **common visionary projects** in sciences have shown to raise a particular European awareness. The most recent examples are certainly the navigation system Galileo and the Philae space lander. Besides space and science, large projects in for instance transports could facilitate citizens' mobility and also raise a feeling of true European aspect and benefit to daily-life politics. The idea is to achieve a goal that a member state could not have achieved alone. The Connecting Europe Facility supports different kinds of transport means and seeks to advance transport networks<sup>50</sup>. For instance, a European High Speed train network could especially connect the new member states. This

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<sup>48</sup> One could think of European Council conclusions and other formal decisions taken so far, Commission papers, information documents for members of the European Parliament, advice from the legal services of the different EU institutions (e.g. Council, European Parliament), the Commission (or the European Parliament) could provide a brief evaluation (e.g. 20 pages) of the competing arguments presented by lobbying groups (or national parliaments and governments), summary of citizens' petitions etc., scientific briefings and studies, and a brief description of the political system of the EU.

<sup>49</sup> Meetings could take place as many times as deemed necessary for a specific topic. One could start off with four or six meetings, these could be extended by a further one or two meetings several times. In Ireland, the discussion of a specific topic shall have been concluded within a year.

<sup>50</sup> EU Commission website: [https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/infrastructure_en).

would directly speak to the target groups that we have identified in the literature and the empirical section. In that regard, the idea of introducing **common road signs** could also contribute to common identification and facilitate traveling. However, this might also be interpreted as a means to deconstruct national traditions with regard to the make-up of signs and their function to provide orientation. An idea similar to a common visionary project is to seek **Energy independence** and thereby promote a European feeling (United Europe, 2017). The reason lies not with protectionism but instead with security policy considerations that have been repeatedly named in Eurobarometer surveys as a current or future challenge to the EU and its member states. In that regard, there are also several proposals that advocate for **redistributing competencies** between the national and the European level so as to achieve higher efficiency for tackling policy problems such as in the area of defense or migration policy (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2017; Blesse et al., 2016). This is especially relevant for discussing the further institutional development of the European Monetary Union and calls for an appropriate mix between EU-wide solidarity schemes and effective incentives for responsible fiscal policies (Bénassy-Quéré et al., 2018). An original idea in terms of EU ‘added value’ and efficiency is certainly the establishment of **EU consular offices** (Bertelsmann-Stiftung, 2013), which we present in more detail in Box 3.

### **Box 3: EU consular offices**

In a joint study by Bertelsmann Stiftung and the Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW) (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2013, pp. 56.), experts suggest to establish an ‘EU embassy with 28 flags’. The embassies could provide consular services for all EU citizens, while foreign policy would remain national competency. EU embassies all around the world would not only increase efficiency and outreach for EU citizens, the 29 flags (28 plus the EU flag) would also signal to EU citizens in need that the EU and all member states are there to help. The EU is their home. This might have a positive impact on citizens’ European identification.

Details: The Lisbon Treaty already laid the ground by prescribing that every EU member state’s embassy shall provide for consular support for all EU citizens (Art. 20 TFEU). Adding to other cooperation in the field (see ‘history’), one could indeed think of a genuine EU embassy building that comprises national representations. The embassy could provide consular services for all EU citizens alike, while foreign policy, more complicated diplomatic issues and preparation of national politicians’ visits (adding to the usual embassy’s tasks such as political and economic relations, trade and development aid policy, support of military missions, cultural relations and security services) could remain with the national delegations in the same ‘house’. This idea builds on the conservative scenario of the Bertelsmann Stiftung report that identifies European added value with regard to consular services and general administration in particular. For practical reasons, it might be helpful to also establish the possibility for the EU embassy to hand out short-notice ‘laissez-passez’ travel documents for all EU citizens, for instance in case they lost their passport. They would be valid only for a couple of days until the person is back in their home country. General ‘laissez-passez’ travel documents exist already for EU civil servants. Brexit brought the idea of a genuine ‘EU citizenship’ back on the agenda. A citizens’ initiative<sup>51</sup> seeks to introduce a ‘union citizenship’ for all EU citizens. This would allow British people to keep their ‘EU citizenship’ additional to their British one, even after Brexit.

<sup>51</sup> Citizens’ initiative ‘Retaining European Citizenship’ website: <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/open/details/2017/000005?lg=en>.

History: It is already common place for small countries to buy-in representations of larger countries for consular services. Countries co-operate already with regard to Schengen provisions or visa application centers in third countries. Moreover, the European External Action Service already has the relevant network across the world with regard to foreign policy issues and diplomatic assistance for the High representative of the EU. The ‘EU consular offices’ could build on this experience and infrastructure.

Pros & cons: EU consular offices are considered to bring significant financial and administrative savings. The Bertelsmann Stiftung report calculates a total saving of at least € 420 mio. per year. Standardization of procedures would increase the overall quality of consular services. Furthermore, the offices would substitute redundant national representations, provide for economies of scale and offer an optimized spatial distribution instead of the currently highly clustered structure. In contrast, the report acknowledges an “undeniable existence of national interests in foreign affairs” (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2013, p. 11). Therefore, those policy areas shall remain with the national representations, in order to allow a truly fruitful EU co-operation.

Following Table 8, we now turn to proposals that focus on increasing exchange, education and information, and an awareness of general commonalities, in particular the common heritage. Measures here relate to both the cultural and the civic component.

Starting with fostering exchanges, a **school twinning program** similar to the town twinning program would be an interesting option. Building on the already existing dense networks of some schools, we suggest that each school all across the EU shall have at least one twinning school in another EU member state. The schools should be given some time to seek for a suitable school and be supported with technical and administrative assistance by the eTwinning website named above. This also supports Macron’s claim to enable “half of school population under the age of 25 to spend at least 6 months in another EU Member State” (European Political Strategy Centre, 2017, p. 11). Secondly, in order to facilitate communication and exchanges between people from different EU countries, language proficiency is essential. Therefore, we suggest to establish an **EU-wide language curriculum** as a minimum standard: for example, each pupil should have the opportunity to learn at least two foreign languages for at least two years each. Additionally, one could think of expanding this to universities and after work classes. Moreover, in an interconnected world, language proficiency is not just a means for communicating during holidays and building a European identity, moreover, it is essential for labor market success.

As regards strengthening exchanges with respect to the civic component of identity, we suggest to establish ‘**European parliamentary scholarships**’. Similar to the German Bundestag’s ‘international parliamentary scholarships’<sup>52</sup>, the program would allow young people from any EU member state to apply for an internship in another EU member state’s parliament. Accordingly, this would require establishing a network between national parliaments, including the European Parliament, which allows to facilitate the exchanges. The network could even expand to regional parliaments. With this, young people could experience how democracy works in another country and could expand their knowledge, skills, language proficiency, and personal contacts.

In order to foster exchange and education at the same time, we advocate for expanding the idea of the Erasmus program to three more target groups: pensioners, vocational education, and all em-

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<sup>52</sup> The Bundestag’s website on the international parliamentary scholarship program:  
<https://www.bundestag.de/ips?url=L2Rva3VtZW50ZS90ZXh0YXJjaGl2LzlwMTgva3cwMi1pcHMvNTM2NjQ2&mod=mod486734>.

ployed people. Starting with the latter, we strongly recommend to establish a scheme that allows all employed people to spend some time in another EU country and work and live there. In the style of journeymen's journeys, we propose to found the **European Waltz** program (see Box 4). This would allow a large group of people to effectively engage in exploring European countries. Moreover, similar to the classic Erasmus program for students, we propose to establish a similar program for students in vocational education: **Vocational Erasmus**. A significant challenge is posed by the very different structures of vocational education and apprenticeships in EU member states. Besides this being a major potential future benefit of EU-harmonization, a simple short cut could be to establish an 'EU course' in all curricula. For instance, there could be the opportunity to make an internship of about one or two months right after the final exams. Finally, we propose to establish an Erasmus scheme especially for pensioners: **Pensioners' Erasmus** (see Box 5).

#### **Box 4: European Waltz**

We propose to newly establish the program 'European Waltz'. It would allow all employed adults to work and live some time in another EU country. According to their current job, they would work in a similar job in a country of their choice for a couple of weeks or months. The idea builds on the journeymen in craftsmanship who travel around to learn from other habits and skills and, thereby, to improve and broaden their knowledge. The same fruitful logic can indeed be found in a number of business sectors and one wonders why this has not yet been encouraged, especially in the EU that seeks to wipe away any kind of border that stands in the way of European unification. Taking part in such an exchange would not only improve working skills, but also foster exchange ('transnational contact'), and getting to know other ways of life ('cognitive mobilization'). Moreover, people would feel a direct benefit from the EU's attempts to facilitate working abroad.

Details: The aim is to expand the scope of people who can participate in on-the-job experiences abroad and exchanges. Teachers and social workers can already go abroad with Erasmus+, and for architects, journalists, academics, and artists it is a genuine part of their work to go abroad. However, the program seems especially plausible for a number of business areas in so called sheltered sectors:

- Nurses, doctors, people from the health sector in general
- Civil service officials working in the areas of taxes, customs, municipal administration, land registration office, social security schemes, job agencies, ministries, specialized authorities (e.g. environmental authority)
- Judges, lawyers, lawyer assistants, judiciary employees
- Transport area, train drivers, stewards
- Craftsmanship: bakers, butchers, farmers, employees in food production, car mechanics

For people working in the industry, in engineering or software engineering this is more difficult as confidentiality issues might be especially prominent. The exchange and placement could be organized via a European chamber of commerce, such as Eurochambres<sup>53</sup> or the European Commission's Enterprise Europe Network<sup>54</sup>, collaboration of civil services, and professional associations. Regarding the latter, one could even think of fostering the establishment of EU-wide professional associations. First-hand administrative and technical assistance could be given by the Commission's Erasmus program.

<sup>53</sup> Eurochambres' website: <http://www.eurochambres.eu/Content/Default.asp?>.

<sup>54</sup> Enterprise Europe Network's website: <https://een.ec.europa.eu/>.

Pros & cons: Even though there is a great need of further harmonizing vocational degrees and certificates, the program could be successful when building on work experience explicitly. In a first instance, the job exchanges could legally be framed as internships of a maximum length of six weeks to avoid tax related or social security related difficulties. The Council would need to decide on the legal fundamentals of such a leave of work. Firstly, the Council could agree on implementing into national law the provision of an unpaid leave of absence for up to six weeks for the purpose of taking part in the ‘European Waltz’. The leave could be paid in case of a proper exchange, meaning that exactly two participants switch their jobs. In a second step, one could think of establishing the scheme as a legally official ‘EU leave’ that would allow to take time off work in the home country in order to engage in an exchange abroad. This could be similar to the Nordic example of a ‘parental leave’. All in all, this would significantly improve exchanges between people in the EU. Moreover, this could also be a means to especially encourage exchange in neighboring regions of two or more different countries. This might be especially fruitful in regions where trans-border contacts are not especially prominent such as for instance between Germany and Poland.

#### **Box 5: Pensioners’ Erasmus**

We propose to establish an Erasmus program for pensioners. The empirical results have shown that pensioners are less likely to have a European identity. Even though this is also the group of people that has most time to travel and engage with other Europeans, they also often have the least ‘resources’ to effectively engage in such activities. Therefore, it needs financial support, some basic language proficiency, and sufficient infrastructure safeguards to ensure mobility. Before departure, pensioners choose a topic that they would like to explore and hand in a short report on their return.

Details: The aim is to support pensioners who are eager to learn and to get to know European countries. They might return as natural advocates of the program and spread the word and, thereby, encourage also other pensioners to engage in a short trip. Pensioners would start with reading and investigating in a specific region or topic of their choice, which they would like to explore during the trip. Upon applying to the program, they are requested to provide a short description of their ‘travel project’. On their return, they would formulate a short report on what they discovered – one could also imagine putting this in a respective internet blog. Precautions would be required that exclude the use of resources for normal tourist trips. These conditions could include the participation in certain certified cultural, historical, language or social seminars or projects. In addition, the support could be conditional on a means-test in order to concentrate the budget on the pensioners with binding resource constraints.

The program would have a financial and a language skills part, possibly accompanied by an administrative and an infrastructure related part. Firstly, similar to Erasmus, the program would provide financial support for short-term journeys up to a couple of weeks. The payments would be made in two instalments: one before the journey and one after the report is received. Secondly, financial support could also include partial funding for basic language courses before departure. Finally, ideally, trips would be self-organized but respect the requirements on the above mentioned qualified activities. Moreover, the program could provide informational support for the formation of a number of EU-wide networks for this purpose, for instance between tourist information offices, through town twinning, or pensioners’ residences. In addition, pensioners who would like to engage with European pensioners at home, could be supported with information on funding a ‘buddy program’ to invite and accompany pensioners from abroad. A mobile app could supply users with travel advice and the most important basic language phrases, in particular for medical emergencies, in any of the official

EU languages. The European Commission could work on the legal framework for establishing an EU-wide pay-as-you-go toll card in order to facilitate travelling across borders in the EU.

Pros & Cons: Much of the proposed measures could also benefit travelers in general and, without adequate rules, there is the risk that normal tourists try to free-ride on the program. The suggested rules will produce some bureaucracy that, however, seems unavoidable. The big advantage is that the program could reach a target group that so far has been rather neglected at a crucial and mentally still relatively open stage in life (pension entry).

With regard to education and information fostering the civic component of European identity, we would like to put forward two ideas. Firstly, in order to promote civic education, the Europa Union Deutschland (2017) proposes to found a **European Agency for Civic Education**. Similar to the German 'Federal Agency for Civic Education'<sup>55</sup>, the agency would provide objective information on EU institutions and issues in all official languages. Additionally, the agency would provide learning material and online information. The agency would be fully politically independent and work only towards educating the EU's citizens about the EU. Besides being a major source of information, the agency would foster debate and tolerance, and would encourage reflecting upon one's own positions. This might prove especially relevant for citizens in countries with little objective information about the EU. In order to foster EU-wide objective information, we suggest to establish a **European public service broadcaster** (see Box 6).

#### **Box 6: EU public service broadcaster**

We propose to consider the establishment of an EU public service broadcaster. It would air a daily news show on European issues and all public meetings and hearings of European Institutions. Importantly, the broadcaster shall be entirely public, provide objective information with a high degree of independence from politics, and air on normal TV in all official languages. This way, it would complement national public service broadcasters and present a genuine European perspective. This would encourage knowledge, information, and discussions about EU politics ('cognitive mobilization') and speak to all EU citizens who have a TV or internet access in their own language.

Details: The aim is to provide an easily accessible, independent, and genuinely European source of information. The main task would be to air all public meetings, hearings, and press conferences of EU institutions, in particular from the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission, and the new Citizens' Assembly (or Citizens' Dialogues)<sup>56</sup>. The aim is to allow a broadcaster that meaningfully complements national public service broadcasters and does not position in competition to them. Therefore, it shall be founded by all national public service broadcasters and the governing body shall also be composed of them only. Accordingly, it would be financed and supported technically by all national public service broadcasters together. Therefore, the program could remain as slim, targeted, and cost efficient as possible. Recording and airing the public meetings, hearings, press conferences etc. could be provided by national broadcasters in rotating responsibility. They have the technical equipment and are most likely on site anyway. Furthermore, language translations would already be available from the respective EU institution. The core of the new broadcaster would be two independently produced news shows: one 15 minute show around mid-day and one

<sup>55</sup> The agency's website: <https://www.bpb.de/die-bpb/138852/federal-agency-for-civic-education>.

<sup>56</sup> Good examples of such broadcasters are the German public channel 'Phoenix' that airs for instance meetings of the Bundestag, and the Franco-German public channel 'Arte'.



30 minute show in the evening. The show would report about current EU issues, politics, challenges and any other news with an impact on the EU. The editorial team would be employed with the European broadcaster directly and not be liable to anyone except journalistic standards and this broadcaster. The broadcaster shall be fully politically independent and public. In that respect, it could be fruitful to learn from the different approaches in the member states to find the most suitable set-up. Additionally, the broadcaster could air a special TV show on 9 May with an 'EU sofa', where people discuss the role of Europe for national history and the common future. The broadcaster shall air in all official languages and in normal TV as well as on the internet.

History: The only EU-wide broadcaster at the moment is Euronews. However, it does not air on TV and is, therefore, not easily accessible for a large audience. Even though, several national public service broadcasters take part in Euronews (i.a. via the European Broadcasting Union), the majority of shares is held privately. This does not meet the requirements on independence that we have outlined above. ARTE is a German-French cooperation and, hence, not pan-European. Additionally, there exist a couple of privately owned EU-wide (online) newspapers: Euractiv, EUobserver, New Europe, and Politico Europe.

Pros & cons: Public service broadcasters are currently discussed controversially, not least with the recent referendum in Switzerland about abolishing the national public service broadcaster. The main argument is that people would be forced to pay for a broadcaster that does not bring much 'added value'. Instead, supporters emphasize the financial and political independence of national public service broadcasters and their mission to provide information most accurately and objectively. With this, they often stand in contrast to private news shows that rather have to focus on what 'sells best'. Additionally, a European public service broadcaster could allow for preserving a free press even in member states where this was recently challenged.

Finally, there are several proposals that seek to increase awareness and exploration of commonalities across member states and people. With regards to the civic aspect of European identity, there is the wide spread idea to make **Europe day on 9 May a bank holiday** for all member states and EU institutions (Europa Union Deutschland, 2012). Additional to a member state's national holidays, Europe day would symbolize a proper official holiday that unites EU people and allows to take off from work and celebrate European integration and peace. In that regard, an early yet withdrawn citizens' initiative called for the creation of a 'Moveurope Card' that would allow reduced travel and accommodation costs on 9 May to facilitate exploring Europe<sup>57</sup>.

Similarly, using symbols for creating a common civic understanding, the **European anthem** could be used a lot more often. In particular, it could be played at **sports events** (as recently suggested by Europa Union Deutschland, 2016). In that regard, we also suggest to consider establishing **European sports teams**. Similar to national 'all stars' sports teams who recruit from regional teams, European teams could recruit from national teams all across the EU. They could play against similar teams from other continents, such as the Latin American team, a West African team, an Oceania team, and so on, and could send an additional EU team to the Olympic Games for instance. Competition to get into the European team would certainly raise awareness for the European dimension of sports and commonalities. Many kinds of sports have already European championships, and football has additionally the Champions League, where teams enter into competition against each other at a European level. The idea to establish genuine European sports teams, would complement this by a common European perspective.

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<sup>57</sup> Citizens' initiative website: <http://ec.europa.eu/citizens-initiative/public/initiatives/obsolete/details/2014/000003?lg=en>.

Finally, considering the common historical heritage as a fundament for future engagement with European integration, we suggest to expand the Erasmus idea also in this area and to focus especially on two groups: pupils and adults. We make this distinction since adults can more easily travel around than students, but students shall be in the position to take part with little costs. Thereby, we add to the numerous already existing programs for bringing history closer to people<sup>58</sup> with two targeted programs. Firstly, we propose to found a **School History Prize**. Individual pupils or small groups of pupils would be asked to explore their local community and find out about the European dimension of local historical events. For instance, this could either be an event that took place in that area and is part of European history or a local historical event that might have affected the history of a neighboring member state or transnational minority groups. The prize could be drawn at different levels, for each school, region, member state and at the EU level and could be under the patronage of a prominent EU position, for instance the President of the European Council as the head of all member states.

Secondly, we suggest to establish a **History Erasmus** scheme that is open for all adults. This could be a targeted fund under the general Erasmus+ program that hands out small travel grants. For instance, a German would like to travel to Verdun to get to know more about the common history. He or she could apply for funding and would in exchange write a brief report (half a page) about their experience, the questions with which they arrived and those with which they returned. The report could be published on an online platform. This would enhance individual engagement with history and, on top, facilitating transnational contacts and cognitive mobilization. Personal experiences most often have a high multiplication effect and people might encourage others to doing this as well. There could be a special scheme targeted on exploring the new member states.

The proposals gathered here cover all main determinants on European identity identified in the literature. By gathering existing proposals and suggesting new proposals, we seek to build on these determinants and respond to the different categories of our matrix. In particular, the proposals presented in detail in the boxes respond to the target groups derived from our empirical analysis:

1. Keep students and add pensioners: We propose to establish the **Pensioners' Erasmus** program.
2. Strengthen education and information ('cognitive mobilization'): We propose to establish an **EU public services broadcaster**.
3. Foster travel and exchange ('transnational contacts'): We propose to establish the **European Waltz** program.
4. Tackle economic inequality for EU participation: Building on the example from Ireland, we suggest to establish a **Citizens' Assembly** at the EU level. Moreover, we took the issue of restricted personal financial means into account when designing the **Pensioners' Erasmus** and the **European Waltz** programs.
5. Foster reliability, citizenship, and similarity: In order to increase the civic aspect of European identity we present the currently highly debated proposal to establish EU-wide **transnational party lists** and the proposal to establish **EU consular offices**.

The broad selection of proposals together with the six proposals that we have elaborated in more detail gives both policy makers as well as interested and engaged citizens and organizations intriguing ideas and arguments at hand. During our search for proposals, we found a large range of al-

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<sup>58</sup> European Commission websites on history funding programs: [http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/europe-for-citizens-programme/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/europe-for-citizens-programme/index_en.htm); [https://ec.europa.eu/culture/calls/european-remembrance-%E2%80%93-2018\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/culture/calls/european-remembrance-%E2%80%93-2018_en).

ready existing schemes and committed organizations that all seek to bring EU citizens closer together and strive for European exchange in many respects. As the literature and our empirical study let assume, all these attempts seem promising to encourage European identity. However, a large part of the population is not yet actively involved with the offers and in this section we put forward ideas on how to encourage them.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to identify target groups and proposals to strengthen European identity. Starting from a detailed discussion about conceptualizing European identity, we opted for a practical approach and describe European identity as having both a cultural and civic component of identity. In order to locate policy proposals most meaningfully, we set up a matrix between cultural and civic components of European identity on the one hand, and categories of political legitimacy (polity, politics, policy) on the other. We further distinguish European identity from EU support theoretically. Subsequently, we discussed both with respect to descriptive statistics and show that they evolved differently, and responded differently to the crisis, though, with similar long-term trends. In section 3 we reviewed the current literature on determinants influencing European identity and EU support. We found that both are shaped by very similar factors. In section 4, we tested those factors for the current state of European identity in the EU with the most recent Eurobarometer data. Essentially, we could confirm the literature's findings and identified five themes and related target groups:

- 1) Keep students and add pensioners: We propose to establish the **Pensioners' Erasmus** program.
- 2) Strengthen education and information ('cognitive mobilization'): We propose to establish an **EU public services broadcaster**.
- 3) Foster travel and exchange ('transnational contacts'): We propose to establish the **European Waltz** program for employees.
- 4) Tackle economic inequality for EU participation: We suggest to establish a **Citizens' Assembly** at the EU level. The Assembly would gather people from all regions and socio-economic backgrounds and might, thereby, allow for a much broader assessment of perspectives on a political issue. Moreover, we took constrained personal financial means into account for the **Pensioners' Erasmus** and the **European Waltz** program.
- 5) Foster reliability, citizenship, and similarity: In order to increase the civic aspect of European identity we present the currently highly debated proposal to establish EU-wide **transnational party lists** and a proposal to establish **EU consular offices**.

Finally, we gathered existing and suggested own proposals in order to respond to the above-mentioned areas of action. In specific, we discussed the proposal to establish transnational party lists, an EU Citizens' Assembly, and EU consular offices, and proposed to establish an EU public service broadcaster, a Pensioners' Erasmus scheme, and a 'European Waltz' program. In our view, all these intriguing proposals could each help to increase either the civic or cultural component of European identity and, thereby, provide for a smooth European integration.

As said at the very beginning, we do not intend to 'nudge' people towards emotional EU appraisal, instead our proposals seek to stimulate democratic debate and fruitful exchange between EU citizens. The multi-crisis of European integration over the last decade has called politicians to care about European identity. In contrast, though, to what has been engaged in, our analysis shows that it is less 'cosmetics' in terms of the EU's image or citizens' participation that seems promising, but instead fostering proper controversial democratic debates and bringing people into exchange with each other, into traveling and learning. 'European identity' is popularly discussed as the missing piece to European unification. However, 'European identity' cannot be prescribed, but, as our research shows, has to be experienced. The proposals that we presented above could be a first step into discussing and implementing this in a more comprehensive way.

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## Appendix

### Appendix A – Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Frequency	Percentage
<b>European Identity</b>	0.599	0.490	0	1		
<b>Age</b>	51.31	18.24	15	99		
<b>Occupation – employed</b>					15,249	54.45
Occupation – <b>retired</b>					9,024	32.22
Occupation – <b>self-employed</b>					1,942	6.93
Occupation – <b>student</b>					1,674	5.98
Occupation – <b>unemployed</b>					118	0.42
<b>Student</b>	0.060	0.237	0	1		
<b>Retired</b>	0.322	0.467	0	1		
<b>Female</b>	0.555	0.497	0	1		
<b>Own socio-economic situation (=good)</b>	0.690	0.463	0	1		
<b>Education</b>	13.94	3.62	0	25		
<b>Children</b>	0.369	0.482	0	1		
<b>Multiple nationalities</b>	0.013	0.114	0	1		
<b>Intra-EU migrant</b>	0.024	0.152	0	1		
<b>Knowledge</b>	1.688	0.888	0	3		
<b>Discuss</b>	0.843	0.664	0	2		
<b>Travelling</b>	0.689	0.796	0	2		
<b>Exchange</b>	0.841	0.877	0	2		
<b>Altruism</b>	0.469	0.499	0	1		
<b>Optimism</b>	0.502	1.278	-2	2		
<b>Regional Attachment</b>	1.360	0.939	-2	2		
<b>Country's economic situation (=good)</b>	0.472	0.499	0	1		
<b>Political Spectrum – middle</b>					24,020	85.76
Political Spectrum – <b>extreme Left</b>					2,210	7.89
Political Spectrum – <b>extreme Right</b>					1,777	6.34
<b>EU purpose – other</b>					5,355	19.12
EU purpose – <b>culture</b>					9,570	34.17
EU purpose – <b>economics</b>					10,773	38.47
EU purpose – <b>rule of Law</b>					2,309	8.24
<b>EU people share values</b>	0.132	1.124	-2	2		
<b>More EU integration</b>	0.102	1.304	-2	2		
<b>EU support</b>	-0.124	0.866	-1	1		
<b>Relative trust in EU (vs. nat. government)</b>	0.190	1.052	-2	2		
<b>Relative satisfaction with EU (vs. nat.) democracy</b>	-0.020	1.194	-4	4		
<b>EU threat to own culture</b>	0.129	0.335	0	1		

<b>Unemployment rate</b>	1.424	1.157	0	3		
<b>EU Budget net contribution</b>	-0.288	1.700	-2	2		
<b>KOF Globalization index</b>	1.404	1.105	0	3		
<b>Country group size – small</b>					10,627	37.94
Country group size – <b>medium</b>					10,282	36.71
Country group size – <b>large</b>					7,098	25.34
<b>New member state</b>	0.438	0.496	0	1		
<b>EU Budget net payer</b>	0.396	0.489	0	1		
<b>Country group geo – core</b>					6,183	22.08
Country group geo – <b>east</b>					11,256	40.19
Country group geo – <b>Scandinavia &amp; north</b>					5,416	19.34
Country group geo – <b>south</b>					5,152	18.40
<b>Observations</b>	28,007					

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EconPol Europe - The European Network for Economic and Fiscal Policy Research is a unique collaboration of policy-oriented university and non-university research institutes that will contribute their scientific expertise to the discussion of the future design of the European Union. In spring 2017, the network was founded by the ifo Institute together with eight other renowned European research institutes as a new voice for research in Europe.

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