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**The Role and Impact of Migration and Euroscepticism in Promoting
“Multi-Speed” Europe**

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Abstract: The year 2017 was designed at the level of European public opinion as the crucial moment for the evolution of the European Union. Scenarios and speculation have sprouted European media channels, creating a state of tension within the Member States. Today, the European Union resembles with the “European Concert” after the 1815 peace in Vienna, which was based on the balance of power, than with the Europe of the founding fathers, based on the harmonization of interests and the joy of working together for the common good European. To open the debate about EU’s future, the European Commission turned to the scenario method. This is not the first time this is the case. In other cases, the scenarios referred to a specific type of common European policy. Looking at the figures for confidence in their own governments and in the European Union in the autumn 2016 Eurobarometer, it was clear that in the Member States, officials in leadership positions had to guide their decisions according to citizens’ attitudes if they wanted to remain in power or to win elections. At the same time, mistrust had to be transformed into trust by decisions taken to satisfy citizens. The political context in which the Member States are located must not be overlooked. In the last year, elections took place in Austria, the Netherlands, France and will take place in Germany. Therefore, the influence of the electoral factor cannot be neglected as part of building decisions on the position adopted by a state within the European Union.

Keywords: Migration; Euroscepticism; European Union

Over time, Euroscepticism was thought to be just a British trend, a British dissatisfaction with European construction. Over the years, Euroscepticism has become a true political phenomenon at European level, one embraced more and more by Member States. Since the 1990s, Euroscepticism has passed the English Channel and has grown on the continent, in the countries behind the European construction.

France, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Austria, but also in many other member states of the European Union have appeared parties that, in the idea of promoting national sovereignty, national interests to the detriment of the common European ones, have developed the eurosceptic spirit towards the European construction. The National Front in France, the 5-Star Movement in Italy, the Geert Wilders Liberation Party in the Netherlands, and other nationalist formations in the European political spectrum have promoted a Eurosceptic speech in the last few years, one in which they claim that the European Union is a failed project, whose future is uncertain, even talking about a necessity for the Union to collapse.

For many years this speech has been contradicted by pro-Europeans, by political leaders in Brussels who ignored or even defied the warnings of the Eurosceptics. Politicians who made a grim vision of the future of the European Union have always been treated as enemies of European construction. More and more frequent victories of Eurosceptic politicians should have raised questions.

The idea of Euroscepticism is not a recent one, and it emerged in the 1980s to describe the British mistrust in the European integration project. The term has become generalized over time to define all

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those who are against the enlargement of the European Union. The development of the term Euroscepticism has seen three major stages. (Vasilopoulou, 2013, pp. 153-168)

First, a structural change in Euroscepticism has emerged since the 1990s with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. (Eichenberg & Dalton, 2007) The significant increase in the European Union's competences, together with a broader consultation of citizens through the referendum, led to the end of what is called the "permissive consensus"¹ of views on European integration, meaning the end of the tacit consent of citizens regarding the European integration in the early 1950s, which underpinned the legitimacy of the "functionalist" approach of the Union.

Second, the negative response that France and the Netherlands gave the Constitutional Treaty in 2005, followed by the Irish negative response to the Treaty of Lisbon in 2008, posed challenges for the permissive consensus foundation. From this point, Hooghe and Marks have developed the theory of "constraining the disagreement," marked by an increase in the nature of dividing European questions and their use by political actors. (Hogge & Marks, 2008) This theory refers to the emergence of a political division on European issues and a politicization of public opinion on European affairs. (Belot, Cautrès, & Strudel, 2013)

Thirdly, the crises affecting the European Union have led to a decline in citizens' support and confidence in the Union and its institutions². Only a third of Europeans say they trust the community institutions, that is, the lowest level ever achieved. Most citizens believe that their voice is not heard in the European institutions. However, there is a link between trust and support for the political system that forms the basis of the legitimacy of the system in question³.

In several European countries, a recent wave has emerged regarding support for conservative populist parties, and Eurosceptic parties. Discontent with EU regulations, the large number of migrants coming from war-torn countries such as Syria, Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan to the European continent have created a whole new problem for the nations of Europe. This has overwhelmed many of the citizens of these countries to the point where they fear that there is a cultural threat to the traditions and way of life.

The reflection on the future of Europe stems from the very founding moment: the 1957 Treaty of Rome represented the victory of the federalists, or rather the functionalists, gathered around the France-Germany duo, against the intergovernmentalists gathered around the Great Britain. (Burgess, 2000) After 1957, the periods of political upheaval of the EU's political integration alternated with periods of rebound or stagnation of integration, generally synchronous with global developments.

Since the 1980s, the neoliberal ideology (the combination of liberalization / expansion of deregulated markets with the reversal of the evolving process of social emancipation) has influenced the options within the EU. The first germs of neoliberalism were introduced, paradoxically, even in the Single European Act, apparently prominently pro-integration. The moments of further integration, the most

¹ The expression "permissive consensus" was invented by V. O. Jr. Key, *Public Opinion and American Democracy*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1961 and was taken up again for the first time regarding European integration by Lindberg and Steingold in assessment of the support of public opinion to European integration in L. N. Lindberg and S. A. Scheingold, *Europe's Would Be Polity. Patterns of Change in the European Community*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1970

² B. Cautrès, "Un effondrement de la confiance dans l'UE? Les attitudes des Européens vis-à-vis de l'Europe au cours de la Grande Récession", in (Blot, Rozenberg, Saraceno, & Strehö, 2014)

³ On this point see for example, C. Belot, "Support (by the citizens of the EU) is the cornerstone to this citizenship since it represents an initial form of recognition of the legitimacy of the European political system", "Les logiques sociologiques de soutien au processus d'intégration européenne: éléments d'interprétation", *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, 9 (1), 2002, p. 12.

relevant being the founding of economic and monetary union under the Maastricht Treaty, have been increasingly influenced by neoliberal ideology.

Monnet's dream regarding the European integration as a result of a process of harmonizing the interests of the nations has ceased gradually and integration, as it has been, has been achieved through a tough negotiation of the balance of interests between states¹.

Today, the European Union resembles with the "European Concert" after the 1815 peace in Vienna, which was based on the balance of power, than with the Europe of the founding fathers, based on the harmonization of interests and the joy of working together for the common good European. (Koskenniemi & Str ath, 2014, pp. 16 - 83) These developments have changed the original DNA of the EU, in which solidarity / cohesion form the founding nucleus.

To open the debate, the European Commission turned to the scenario method. This is not the first time this is the case. In other cases, the scenarios referred to a specific type of common European policy. In the case of reflection on the future of Europe, the scenario method involves a risk, especially when presenting scenarios that propose a reversal of integration, as treaties stipulate the continuous integration as an objective. The European Commission, however, has the mitigating circumstance that the proposed scenarios have already circulated in the market for ideas.

The events that took place in the European Union during 2016, the most important for European construction being Brexit, have generated discussions on the future of the Union. This is not the first time that such a discussion is taking place, but this time the European Union is facing something new, not talking about enlargement, but about the European Union after the loss of a Member State. Brexit and political developments at European level, including the rise of populism and Euroscepticism, have prompted European officials to discuss the need for institutional reform and, on a different level, to reform the entire European structure.

The year 2017 was designed at the level of European public opinion as the crucial moment for the evolution of the European Union. Scenarios and speculation have sprouted European media channels, creating a state of tension within the Member States. In the months leading up to the Rome Summit, international publications spoke about the future of the European Union under the spectrum of „multi-speed”.

Deutsche Welle publishes on March 24 "What does the European Union mean with having more speeds for Central and Eastern Europe?"². David Martin of Deutsche Welle said that "Central and Eastern European states are worried that a so-called "multi-speed Europe" will relegate them in the second tier of the European bloc. However, a more flexible Europe can only be the momentum they have always needed.

Also in March, Wolfgang Munchau of the Financial Times writes the article "A multi-speed formula will shape Europe's future."³ It showed that "the best option is that of a structure with an integrated core and a looser outer layer ". A month earlier, in February, Tony Barber wrote in the Financial Times on "Moving to a Europe with more speeds."⁴ Barber states that "the idea threatens to lead to split, but the

¹ European Documentation, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, "Jean Monnet, a grand design for Europe", RF Germania, 1988, p. 25 - 29

² DW: What does a multi-speed EU mean for central and eastern Europe?, <http://www.dw.com/en/what-does-a-multi-speed-eu-mean-for-central-and-eastern-europe/a-38016484>

³ Financial Times: A multi-speed formula will shape Europe's future, <https://www.ft.com/content/f01f1266-058e-11e7-ace0-1ce02ef0def9>

⁴ Financial Times: Moving to a multi-speed Europe, <https://www.ft.com/content/01573ae6-f378-11e6-95ee-f14e55513608>

desire to renew the impetus towards integration is sincere.” “Some Western European politicians dream about exploiting the concept of detaching a core of Europe from the conservative nationalists in Hungary and Poland, and from the political and corrupt circles in Bulgaria and Romania.” Barber concludes that “the goal is clear. The difficult part, as always with the EU, is how to achieve it. “

“Europe’s future is multi-speed and multi-tier,”¹ The Economist said in March. In a special report on the future of the European Union, The Economist wonders whether “Europe is ready to embrace a new model built not around similar values, but around those who differentiate them?” Thus, it is stated that “although the recent committee whitepaper and some national leaders have positioned themselves for a multi-speed Europe, they are considering a way for small groups of states to move forward in areas such as defense or taxation, without the need to wait for the others, using the instruments of the treaty that allow for improved cooperation. A true Europe with multi-speeds and more levels would be much more ambitious. “

The main scenarios that have emerged in the European public space have sparked emotions and controversy. Two of these have entered a wide debate and have been seen as the solutions that European leaders will find to resolve the crisis: Europe of “concentric circles” and Europe “with multi-speeds”.

The two scenarios are not new and they were also reiterated in the past by important politicians in the European Union, from the states that formed the basis of the European community. On the one hand, we have the vision of a Europe of “concentric circles” on the part of Christian Democrats in Germany, publicly exposed in 1994, when the German state held the rotating presidency of the European Union. On the other hand, we have a vision of a “multi-speeds” European Union, as presented by former French President Jacques Chirac in June 2000 in a speech before the German Reichstag and the former Foreign Minister of Germany Joschka Fischer. Chirac spoke of a partnership between France and Germany that would allow the two states to move forward on a more political and economic level, while Fischer, in his speech at the Humboldt University in 2000, spoke of a vision of a Europe with two speeds, which should have been led by Germany and France, alongside a limited group of Member States.

What Do The Two Political Visions Mean?

1) “*Europe of the Thick Core*” in the perception of Wolfgang Schauble. Between 1989 and 1991, Schauble was Minister of the Interior in Germany, playing an important role in the negotiations for reunification of the German state. His German ministerial period overlapped with the negotiations for the Maastricht Treaty, which established the Eurozone Foundation.

At the time, a general opinion at the level of the German people was that if Germany agreed to renounce the mark and participate in a European monetary union it was a kind of quid pro quo for the British and the French for their support for the reunification of Germany - An event with monumental implications for Europe's history as we know it today. (Eichengreen, p. 166)

Given the uncertainty about a possible monetary union, the German state was reluctant to renounce its own currency at that time, the mark being a success for the German economy in order to enter into an agreement with partners that were not as rigorous. That is why, at the insistence of German officials, the Treaty of Maastricht included convergence criteria that must be met for joining the euro. The role of

¹ The Economist: Europe’s future is multi-speed and multi-tier, <https://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21719193-eu-must-embrace-greater-differentiation-or-face-potential-disintegration-europes>.

these conditions was to maintain the economically unreliable Southern European countries outside the monetary union.

At that time, Wolfgang Schäuble advocated a “variable geometry” approach within the euro area. The logic proposed by Schäuble was that monetary unification would be limited to a set of core countries as they call it, which in turn shared Germany's preference for austerity.

Schäuble explicitly presented his argument in a sketch for the euro area, co-authored by Karl Lamers and launched by the Christian Democratic Union of Germany in the late summer of 1994. His vision, adopted afterwards by his party, generated an important amount of criticism towards Schäuble. He said at that time that “we cannot determine the pace of European integration according to the slowest vessel in the convoy.”¹ Speed has been clearly defined in relation to the German standard, as enshrined in the Maastricht Convergence Criteria. Chancellor Kohl kept silent on the document of the two political leaders of the CDU, Schäuble-Lamers, describing their proposal as a “discussion paper”. However, he did not explicitly distance himself from the project proposed by Schäuble and defended the plan of a “basic” Europe².

20 years after the proposal was made, in August 2014 Schäuble and Lamers have brought back the debate on a multi-core Europe. The two reiterated the reason for the “variable geometry” proposed in 1994 in an article in the Financial Times. They conclude: “In order to make progress [...], we should continue to use the approach that has proved its momentum in 1994: to establish cores of cooperation within the European Union that allow smaller and more desirable groups of Member States to move forward”³. It should be noted that the article recognizes the crucial role of Germany and France in restoring the credibility of fiscal policy of the rules of the Stability Pact from 2003.

It should be noted that, despite its proposals on the structure of the European community, Schäuble's commitment to European integration and to the future of the European project cannot be questioned. A very good description of Wolfgang Schäuble was made by IMF General Manager Christine Lagarde when Schäuble was awarded the 2012 Charlemagne Prize⁴. Schäuble's political history shows that his commitment to “variable geometry” remained as strong, even when his statements on support for Grexit created a rupture within the German government with Chancellor Angela Merkel⁵.

2) Multi- speeds Europe from the early 2000s.

“So if the European Union's alternative to the undeniable challenge of Eastern enlargement is indeed erosion or integration, and if joining a federation of states would mean stagnation with all its negative repercussions, then under the pressure of conditions and The European Union will face this alternative at some point in the next ten years: will a majority of Member States make the leap in full integration and agree on a European constitution? Or, if this is not the case, a smaller group of Member States will

¹ (Loedel, 1999, p. 189),

https://books.google.ro/books?id=AYX8FIU8e_oC&pg=PA205&lpg=PA205&dq=Core+Euro+Proposal+Draws+Fire+From+EU+Members,+Opposition+Parties+1994&source=bl&ots=gOKSRAKTTM&sig=YI_z_McZko6XJ0qPqv19bmPUyLM&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjm7abDpfnUAhVCYZoKHYpEBpcQ6AEIMDAC#v=onepage&q&f=false.

² (Loedel, 1999, p. 190).

³ (Lamers & Schäuble, 2014)

<https://www.ft.com/content/5565f134-2d48-11e4-8105-00144feabdc0?mhq5j=e2>.

⁴ Lagarde (2012): „Today, no one has done more than my dear friend, Wolfgang Schäuble, to support the cause of European integration and the destiny of unified Germany in a united Europe. No one is more worthy of Charlemagne's charisma or the most meritorious of the Charlemagne Prize” - Lagarde, C. (2012), “The Legacy of Charlemagne -- Wolfgang Schäuble and European Integration,” IMF, May 16. <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2015/09/28/04/53/sp051612>

⁵ “There are many people, too, in the German federal government who are quite convinced that (Grexit) would be a much better solution for Greece and the Greek people”, said Schäuble in Brussels, (Turner, 2015), July 15 <http://www.politico.eu/article/german-finance-minister-schauble-undermines-greek-deal-grexit-merkel/>

take this route as an *avant-garde*, meaning there will be a center of gravity involving a few Member States who are firmly committed to the European ideal and are in a position to continue Political integration? The question then would simply be: when will it be the right time? Who will be involved? And will this center of gravity appear within or outside the framework provided by the treaties? One thing is at least certain: no European project will succeed in the future without the closest French-German cooperation, ¹says Joschka Fischer in May 2000 in his speech at Humboldt University.

His speech, though considered controversial at the time, was welcomed, in the French and German circles, in a positive way. Former French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine said the debate on the European vision of his German counterpart was a good idea, saying to *Le Monde* that “no solution should be neglected.” Commentators in the German press had a generally positive view of Fischer's remarks, although they also highlighted what they saw as some of the shortcomings of the speech. “With a remarkable speech, in some sensational passages about the future of Europe, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer has catapulted himself to the top of European creators,” wrote Martin Winter in *Frankfurter Rundschau*.

At the same time, Martin Winter highlighted that “Fischer has combined ideas already on the table in a way that will give them a new quality and make them a compelling plan for Europe for the future.”

In *Die Welt*, Michael Inacker said that Fischer “was very successful,” stressing that “he avoided the question of whether there might be different types of EU membership in the future and he remained vague in other controversial areas such as the subject of a European army “.

Quo vadis Europa? This question has been frequently asked in the European Union over time. The crucial moments for the future of the Union have emerged steadily. The route and goal of European integration has been a topic that has always generated interest. The speech of the former German Foreign Minister on May 12, 2000, at Humboldt University in Berlin, and the debate he launched, clearly demonstrated that the European Union was then in the face of a crucial decision for the future of the Union. Will the way be a construction based on international treaties of *sui generis* law, to be a constituted state? What role will the Member States play in the future? What will be the division of tasks into a future EU? These were questions that were raised in the European Union in 2000.

However, Fischer's approach to a nation-state federation was partly criticized as a possible renationalisation of Europe. Johannes Voggenhuber, a member of the parliamentary group of the Greens in the European Parliament, in a speech at the Forum Constitutionis Europae of the Walter Hallstein Institute for Europe Constitutional Law on June 22, 2000, considers Fischer Europe as a step back towards a more relaxed confederation, a Europe of nation states in the sense that de Gaulle used the concept².

However, Fischer has benefited from a support of his ideas from the French. Jacques Chirac, by rejecting the idea of a “super-state of Europe” instead of the nation states, precisely supports the model that Fischer proposes. However, Chirac avoids the concept of federation, as is clear from his speech before the German Bundestag on June 27, 2000³. At the same time, as far as Chirac is concerned, the difference between the nation and the national states is not quite clear, leaving the impression that he uses the concepts in a synonymous way.

¹ (Fischer, 2000) <http://ec.europa.eu/dorie/fileDownload.do?docId=192161&cardId=192161>.

² Juristische Fakultät Walter Hallstein-Institut <https://plone.rewi.hu-berlin.de/de/lf/oe/whi/FCE/2000>.

³ Address given by Jacques Chirac to the Bundestag entitled *Our Europe* (Berlin, 27 June 2000) https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/2005/1/20/6a747c46-88db-47ec-bc8c-55c8b161f4dc/publishable_en.pdf.

In his speech, Chirac confirms and supports the idea of a two-speed Union. The French president urged the German government to join Paris to assume the role of a “core group” of the European Union countries that would move faster than others in economic and political cooperation. Chirac had this speech a few days before the French assumed the presidency of the European Union in 2000.

The discussion in the year 2000 was synthesized by David Schneider-Addae-Mensah, adding that “on the road to federalization, it would be possible to form a” center of gravity “as the core of a constitution of the federation. A group of states would go further here by signing a basic European treaty as an avant-garde of political integration but would be open at any time to each of the other EU members.”¹

As can be seen, in crucial times for the European Union, there is a discussion of the need for more speeds or concentric centers. Both Schauble and Lamers and Fischer's speech, along with Chirac's speech in 2000, come in political contexts that can redefine the future of the European Union. In 1994, the euro area was the main subject, talking about the conditions underlying the monetary union, while at the beginning of the 2000s the main issue was regarding a constitution of the European Union to replace all existing treaties.

All these reconfiguration scenarios of the European Union have sparked emotions, but, in particular, political controversy. However, by analyzing the structure already existing within the European Union, we can see that the scenario of the concentric circles already exists. Their recognition at the official level only creates a form of discrimination between states in the center of the Union and the periphery, between those who consider themselves the Union's elite and those who are seen as marginal. This structure of the European Union on the basis of concentric circles of power is, however, nothing but an adequacy of the situation of the Member States to the obvious reality. Some EU state leaders do not accept this, and an explanation for this attitude may be the danger of populists and nationalists who would use such a state confirmation within the European Union as part of political propaganda.

If we look at existing policies and treaties, we will notice that this differentiation between Member States is a reality. There is, for example, the European Economic Area, of which Switzerland and Norway are full members, which gives them full access to the single market without their participation in other policies that could harm their economies. Such situations include those concerning the United Kingdom and Ireland that are not in the Schengen area, Denmark and Sweden that are not part of the euro area. But in the case of Denmark, it chose to fix its currency to the euro through the European currency exchange mechanism, while Sweden did not.

The Euro Zone, the Schengen-free travel area, internal affairs issues, patent and tax rules, all these policies already accommodate the flexible coalitions of countries that try to integrate at different stages or, in some cases, give up.

The 4 “concentric circles” relevant in European structures are:

1. Members of the European Union, 27, if we already exclude the United Kingdom;
2. Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), with 26 EU members, Denmark being an opt-out member;
3. Schengen Area - 22 EU members; Are not part of Schengen at this time: Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland;

¹ David Schneider-Addae-Mensah, *The Current European Constitutional Debate in the Wake of the Fischer Speech*, <http://www.simons-law.com/library/pdf/e/27.pdf>.

4. Euro Area - 19 EU members; Are not part of the Eurozone at this moment: Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Sweden, Denmark.

However, the idea of multi-speeds remains controversial because it could involve different classes of members in what should be a partnership between equal members. Indeed, it is the main starting point in the discussions around a European Union declaration on its future.

The alarm signal regarding the possibility of a multi-speed Europe has spread to several Eastern and Baltic European capitals, especially since Angela Merkel has begun to contemplate a Europe with “variable speeds”.

The events in Europe over the last two years (immigration crisis, Brexit, scenarios on the future of the European Union), together with Donald Trump's election as president of the United States of America, are the main signs that we are entering a new era characterized by instability, uncertainty, frustration, deepening of the paradigm system vs. anti-system, the intensification of disputed movements, increased violence, very rapid changes in the political and economic context, disintegration tendencies at European and national level, as well as a recurrence of nationalist currents and identity flaws.

Faced with new challenges, both external and internal, the European order seeks to defend itself, find the most appropriate responses and (re) adjustments to new realities. These efforts sometimes succeed, sometimes not. Following the shock of migration, Brexit, and Donald Trump's election, the European agenda is full and send to the public both contradictory, positive and negative messages.

To open the debate, the European Commission turned to the scenario method. As a matter of fact, we are witnessing an enactment of the political context of the years 1994 and 2000, when Europe was at crossroads. This time, the immigration crisis and Brexit have backed the two scenarios, the concentric circles and Europe with multi-speeds.

The crisis that the European Union is going through in 2017 makes the two scenarios benefit from support from more and more states. Not just France and Germany.

In this respect, there is a parallel between the immigration crisis and the positioning of the states towards the policy of Europe with more speeds or that of the concentric circles.

Europe responded to the crisis of immigrants with simple decisions. A simple decision was made on the part of the European Union when quotas were set. These quotas were not established through a direct negotiation with states that were not very prepared, culturally, mentally, and at the societal level, to suddenly accept a wave of thousands of people from another culture. And then, especially in this eastern area of the European Union, fear arose.

The scenario solution, proposed by the European Commission, together with the theme of Europe with concentric circles, has made the fear of exclusion in the area of the states on the periphery of the European Union. The way in which decisions have been taken since the immigration crisis began, have shown a violation of the principles underlying the adoption of decisions in the European Union. Enforcing decisions has replaced debate and consensus.

This way of making decisions within the Union has led to an increase in the level of mistrust in European institutions by citizens. The fragility of trust and the threat of migration have made Euroscepticism in the European Union to increase. This phenomenon occurred predominantly in the European states with a high economic level, which were affected by the immigration wave and the phenomenon of Euroscepticism, corroborated with the advance of the nationalists.

After European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker presented a report on March 1st, presenting the possibilities for the future of the European bloc after Brexit, there was a growing debate about the fact that a multi-speed Europe could be the solution chosen by European leaders to solve all the problems. But, in fact, this variation would only represent a violation of the principles underpinning the functioning of the European Union.

The hypothesis behind this research is that at the level of the Member States of the European Union with a high economic level there is nonetheless a non-unitary approach to the subject of Europe with more concentric circles or more speeds. The Member States of the European Union affected by the wave of immigrants support the idea of Europe with concentric circles or multi-speeds, having in mind to create a buffer zone around the states in the European Union's tough nucleus, while economically developed countries with increased living standards, but not affected by the immigration wave, have a different approach, supporting the idea of a united Europe, a development of all European states. At the same time, it should be noted that in countries with a strong economy and affected by the immigration wave, they have also witnessed an increase in the degree of Euroscepticism and nationalist discourse.

The analysis envisages a different perspective of the European states, similar from the point of view of the economic indicator, but affected in a proportionally different way from the immigration wave in 2015-2016. In this respect, the indicators related to the level of migration, economic level, corroborating the public discourse of the officials of the European states are the basis of the research.

The Economic Analysis of the European Union

The European economy is working well, despite a series of challenges it has encountered over the last 10 years, as is shown by Eurostat's statistical data. The economic growth within the Union continued until 2017, which led to the marking of four years of moderate and uninterrupted economic growth. Concerns about high uncertainty provide a way to improve the economic sphere, although this has not yet been reflected in important economic indicators. Recent data show steady economic growth at a steady pace, supported by macroeconomic policies, job creation, strong confidence, gradual improvement in world trade and the relatively low exchange rate of the euro.

The last decade has made economic developments in the eurozone affected by large shocks that have been accompanied by economic and political uncertainty. These include the global economic and financial crisis, the sovereign debt crisis, the slowdown in world trade and the tensions in the banking sector. In recent years, a number of other events have also led to uncertainty: geopolitical tensions, Brexit's vote, potential changes in the major policy areas of the new US administration, and political uncertainty in some Member States. Investments in the euro area have been discretionary for a long period of time, and increased uncertainty has often been cited as a determining factor alongside weak fundamentals (current and potential weak demand, declining bank lending, households and companies).

In its spring forecast, the European Commission forecasts GDP growth in the euro area of 1.7% in 2017 and 1.8% in 2018 (1.6% and 1.8% in winter forecasts). Overall, GDP growth in the EU is expected to remain constant at 1.9% in both years (1.8% in both years in the winter forecast).

According to data from the European Commission's spring forecasts, euro area economic growth will advance by 1.7% in 2017, while an increase of 1.8% is projected for 2018. For the Member States of the Union, the projected average growth for 2017 amounts to 1.9%, similar to 2018.

Table 1:

Overview - the spring 2017 forecast

	Real GDP			Inflation			Unemployment rate			Current account			Budget balance		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Belgium	1.2	1.5	1.7	1.8	2.3	1.5	7.8	7.6	7.4	1.2	1.5	1.7	-2.6	-1.9	-2.0
Germany	1.9	1.6	1.9	0.4	1.7	1.4	4.1	4.0	3.9	8.5	8.0	7.6	0.8	0.5	0.3
Estonia	1.6	2.3	2.8	0.8	3.3	2.9	6.8	7.7	8.6	2.0	1.1	1.2	0.3	-0.3	-0.5
Ireland	5.2	4.0	3.6	-0.2	0.6	1.2	7.9	6.4	5.9	4.7	4.8	5.0	-0.6	-0.5	-0.3
Greece	0.0	2.1	2.5	0.0	1.2	1.1	23.6	22.8	21.6	-0.5	-0.5	-0.3	0.7	-1.2	0.6
Spain	3.2	2.8	2.4	-0.3	2.0	1.4	19.6	17.6	15.9	1.9	1.6	1.6	-4.5	-3.2	-2.6
France	1.2	1.4	1.7	0.3	1.4	1.3	10.1	9.9	9.6	-2.3	-2.4	-2.5	-3.4	-3.0	-3.2
Italy	0.9	0.9	1.1	-0.1	1.5	1.3	11.7	11.5	11.3	2.6	1.9	1.7	-2.4	-2.2	-2.3
Cyprus	2.8	2.5	2.3	-1.2	1.2	1.1	13.1	11.7	10.6	-5.7	-5.9	-6.3	0.4	0.2	0.7
Latvia	2.0	3.2	3.5	0.1	2.2	2.0	9.6	9.2	8.7	1.9	-0.9	-2.6	0.0	-0.8	-1.8
Lithuania	2.3	2.9	3.1	0.7	2.8	2.0	7.9	7.6	7.2	-1.1	-2.0	-1.9	0.3	-0.4	-0.2
Luxembourg	4.2	4.3	4.4	0.0	2.4	1.8	6.3	6.1	6.0	4.7	4.5	5.0	1.6	0.2	0.3
Malta	5.0	4.6	4.4	0.9	1.6	1.8	4.7	4.9	4.9	7.9	6.5	9.0	1.0	0.5	0.8
Netherlands	2.2	2.1	1.8	0.1	1.6	1.3	6.0	4.9	4.4	7.9	7.4	7.1	0.4	0.5	0.8
Austria	1.5	1.7	1.7	1.0	1.8	1.6	6.0	5.9	5.9	2.1	2.0	2.2	-1.6	-1.3	-1.0
Portugal	1.4	1.8	1.6	0.6	1.4	1.5	11.2	9.9	9.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	-2.0	-1.8	-1.9
Slovenia	2.5	3.3	3.1	-0.2	1.5	1.8	8.0	7.2	6.3	7.0	6.2	5.8	-1.8	-1.4	-1.2
Slovakia	3.3	3.0	3.6	-0.5	1.4	1.6	9.7	8.6	7.6	0.2	0.1	0.4	-1.7	-1.3	-0.6
Finland	1.4	1.3	1.7	0.4	1.0	1.2	8.8	8.6	8.2	-1.3	-1.8	-1.6	-1.9	-2.2	-1.8
Euro area	1.8	1.7	1.8	0.2	1.6	1.3	10.0	9.4	8.9	3.4	3.0	2.9	-1.5	-1.4	-1.3
Bulgaria	3.4	2.9	2.8	-1.3	1.3	1.5	7.6	7.0	6.4	4.2	2.4	1.8	0.0	-0.4	-0.3
Czech Republic	2.4	2.6	2.7	0.6	2.5	2.0	4.0	3.5	3.5	0.3	0.0	-0.2	0.6	0.3	0.1
Denmark	1.3	1.7	1.8	0.0	1.4	1.7	6.2	5.8	5.7	8.1	7.8	7.7	-0.9	-1.3	-0.9
Croatia	2.9	2.9	2.6	-0.6	1.6	1.5	13.3	11.6	9.7	2.6	2.9	1.3	-0.8	-1.1	-0.9
Hungary	2.0	3.6	3.5	0.4	2.9	3.2	5.1	4.1	3.9	5.0	3.5	2.8	-1.8	-2.3	-2.4
Poland	2.7	3.5	3.2	-0.2	1.8	2.1	6.2	5.2	4.4	0.2	-0.6	-1.2	-2.4	-2.9	-2.9
Romania	4.8	4.3	3.7	-1.1	1.1	3.0	5.9	5.4	5.3	-2.4	-2.8	-2.9	-3.0	-3.5	-3.7
Sweden	3.3	2.6	2.2	1.1	1.4	1.4	6.9	6.6	6.6	4.9	5.2	5.4	0.9	0.4	0.7
United Kingdom	1.8	1.8	1.3	0.7	2.6	2.6	4.8	5.0	5.4	-4.4	-3.9	-3.2	-3.0	-3.0	-2.3
EU	1.9	1.9	1.9	0.3	1.8	1.7	8.5	8.0	7.7	2.1	1.9	1.9	-1.7	-1.6	-1.5
USA	1.6	2.2	2.3	1.3	2.2	2.3	4.9	4.6	4.5	-2.5	-2.8	-3.3	-4.8	-4.7	-5.2
Japan	1.0	1.2	0.6	-0.1	0.4	1.0	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.9	4.1	4.2	-3.7	-4.2	-3.6
China	6.7	6.6	6.3	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
World	3.0	3.4	3.6	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

Figure 1. Overview spring 2017 forecast – economic

Source: Standard Eurobarometer 87 survey (EB87)

With regard to the economic developments in the European Union, there is an increase of more than 1% in most countries, with the exception of Italy, which for the year 2017 has a growth forecast of 0.9% and for 2018 1.1%. With regard to the euro area countries, Malta will register the largest increase (4.6% in 2017), followed by Luxembourg (4.3% in 2017) and Ireland (4.0% in 2017). The other euro area countries have values below 4% growth for 2017: Belgium (1.5%), Germany (1.6%), Estonia (2.3%), Greece (2.1%), Spain (2.8%), France (1.4%), Cyprus (2.5%), Latvia (3.2%), Lithuania (2.9%), 7), Portugal (1.8%), Slovenia (3.3%), Slovakia (3.0%), Finland (1.3%).

Concerning the Member States of the European Union, but not part of the euro area, the largest economic growth is registered by Romania (4.3% in 2017), followed by Hungary (3.6%) and Poland (3.5%). The other Member States are under a 3% increase: Bulgaria (2.9%), Czech Republic (2.6%), Denmark (1.7%), Croatia (2.9%), The United Kingdom (1.8%).

Economic growth, however, offers the tendency that the Member States of the Union make in economic terms. This is a positive one, which comes after long periods of crisis.

With regard to the nominal GDP of the European Union Member States in 2016, it is noted that the most powerful countries in the Union remain Germany (EUR 3,132.670 billion), the United Kingdom (EUR 2,367,596 billion), France (EUR 2,225,260 billion), Italy (EURO 1,672,438 billion), Spain (EURO 1,113.851 billion).

This country's top five countries are mainly from Western Europe: the Netherlands (696.871), Sweden (462.417), Poland (424.581), Belgium (421.974), Austria (349.493), Denmark (277.336), Ireland (265.835) Finland (214.062), Portugal (185.035), Greece (175.888), Czech Republic (174.452), Romania (168.078), Hungary (112.399), Slovakia (80.958), Luxembourg (54.195) Slovenia (39,769), Lithuania (38,631), Latvia (25,018), Estonia (20,916), Cyprus (17,901), Malta (9,898).

The Reality of Migration in Europe

Migration is influenced by a combination of economic, environmental, political and social factors: either in the country of origin of the migrants (rejection factors) or in the country of destination (attraction factors). Historically, it seems that the relative economic prosperity and political stability of the EU have had a considerable effect on immigrants.

Almost two-thirds of all international migrants live in Europe (76 million) or Asia (75 million). North America hosted the third largest number of international migrants (54 million), followed by Africa (21 million), Latin America and the Caribbean (9 million) and Oceania (8 million), according to a report Of the UN.

Number of international migrants by major area of destination, 2000 and 2015

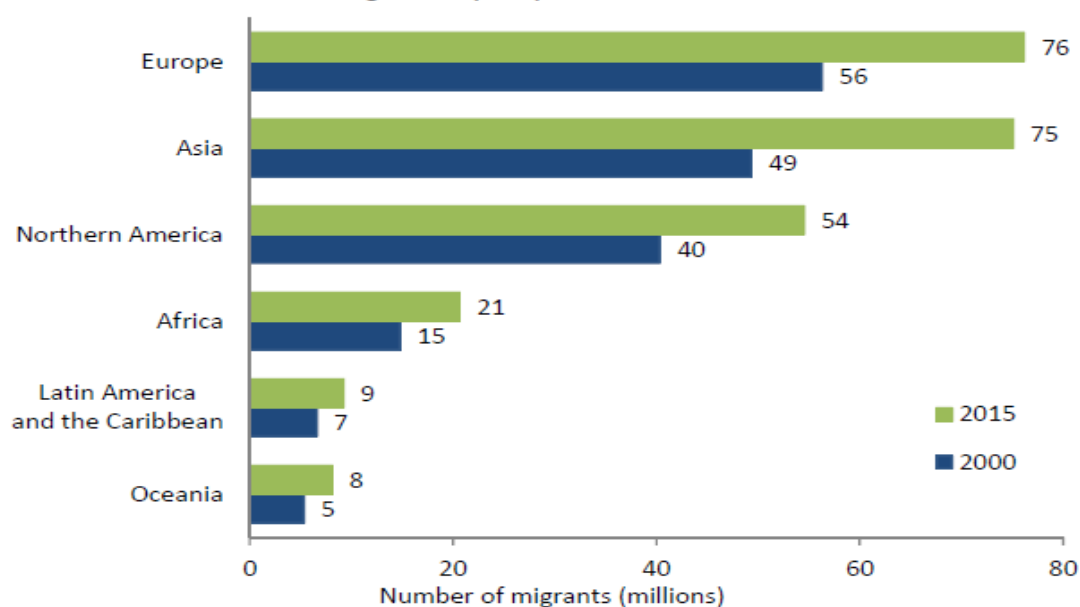


Figure 2. Number of migrants;

Source: UN International Migration Report 2015

Taking into account these figures, migration is one of the political priorities of the Juncker Commission, as the European institution says. The main purpose is to address the issue in a comprehensive way. The Commission's migration agenda sets out the immediate measures needed to prevent human tragedies and to strengthen emergency responses.

The continued development and integration of European migration policy remains a key priority to meet the challenges and to capitalize on the opportunities that migration represents globally. The integration of third-country workers legally resident in EU Member States has gained increasing importance on the European agenda in recent years.

A total of 4.7 million people emigrated to one of the EU-28 member states in 2015, while at least 2.8 million emigrants have left a EU Member State. These figures do not represent migration flows to / from the EU as a whole, as they also include flows between different EU Member States.

Of these 4.7 million immigrants in 2015, there were about 2.4 million third-country nationals, 1.4 million citizens of a Member State other than the one they emigrated, about 860 thousand people migrated to a Member State where they were citizens (for example, nationals or foreign-born nationals) and about 19 thousand stateless persons.

Germany reported the highest total number of immigrants (1,543.8 thousand) in 2015, followed by the United Kingdom (631.5 thousand), France (363.9 thousand), Spain (342.1 thousand) and Italy (280.1 thousand). Germany reported the largest number of emigrants in 2015 (347.2 thousand), followed by Spain (343.9 thousand), the United Kingdom (299.2 thousand), France (298 thousand) and Poland (258.8 thousand). A total of 17 EU Member States reported more immigration than emigration in 2015, but in Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Croatia, Cyprus, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Latvia and Lithuania, the number of migrants exceeded the number of immigrants.

	Total immigrants		Nationals		Total		Non-nationals				Stateless	
	(thousands)	(thousands)	(%)	(thousands)	(%)	Citizens of other EU Member States		Citizens of non-member countries		(thousands)	(%)	
						(thousands)	(%)	(thousands)	(%)			
Belgium	146.6	17.9	12.2	127.7	87.1	61.8	42.2	65.8	44.9	0.0	0.0	
Bulgaria	25.2	10.7	42.5	14.4	57.1	1.4	5.7	12.9	50.9	0.1	0.4	
Czech Republic	29.6	4.5	15.1	25.1	84.9	14.5	49.0	10.6	35.9	0.0	0.0	
Denmark	78.5	19.8	25.2	58.7	74.8	24.9	31.8	32.3	41.1	1.5	1.9	
Germany	1 543.8	87.4	5.7	1 433.0	92.8	460.1	29.8	967.5	62.7	5.3	0.3	
Estonia	15.4	8.0	52.2	7.4	47.8	3.2	20.7	3.7	23.7	0.5	3.4	
Ireland	76.9	18.8	24.4	58.1	75.6	26.4	34.3	31.7	41.3	0.0	0.0	
Greece	64.4	30.5	47.3	34.0	52.7	16.5	25.6	17.5	27.1	0.0	0.0	
Spain	342.1	52.1	15.2	290.0	84.8	106.2	31.0	183.7	53.7	0.2	0.0	
France	363.9	131.2	36.0	232.7	64.0	84.2	23.1	148.5	40.8	0.0	0.0	
Croatia	11.7	6.5	55.4	5.2	44.6	2.2	18.7	3.0	25.8	0.0	0.0	
Italy	280.1	30.1	10.7	250.0	89.3	63.5	22.7	186.5	66.6	0.0	0.0	
Cyprus	15.2	3.2	20.8	12.0	79.2	6.1	40.2	5.9	39.0	0.0	0.0	
Latvia	9.5	5.0	52.5	4.5	47.1	0.7	7.0	3.8	40.0	0.0	0.1	
Lithuania	22.1	18.4	83.1	3.7	16.9	0.8	3.7	2.9	13.2	0.0	0.1	
Luxembourg	23.8	1.2	5.0	22.6	94.8	16.4	69.0	6.1	25.8	0.0	0.0	
Hungary	58.3	32.6	55.8	25.8	44.2	10.5	18.1	15.2	26.1	0.0	0.0	
Malta	12.8	1.6	12.8	11.2	87.2	5.6	43.3	5.6	44.0	0.0	0.0	
Netherlands	166.9	39.2	23.5	126.0	75.5	60.1	36.0	61.4	36.8	4.6	2.7	
Austria	166.3	9.4	5.7	156.5	94.1	68.8	41.4	86.5	52.0	1.3	0.8	
Poland	218.1	84.8	38.9	133.3	61.1	29.4	13.5	103.9	47.6	0.0	0.0	
Portugal	29.9	14.9	50.0	14.9	50.0	6.4	21.2	6.6	28.7	0.0	0.0	
Romania	132.8	115.5	87.0	17.2	13.0	8.2	6.2	9.0	6.8	0.0	0.0	
Slovenia	15.4	2.8	17.9	12.7	82.1	2.8	17.9	9.9	64.2	0.0	0.0	
Slovakia	7.0	3.2	46.1	3.8	53.9	3.1	44.4	0.7	9.5	0.0	0.0	
Finland	28.7	7.3	25.5	20.8	72.3	7.6	26.5	13.1	45.6	0.1	0.2	
Sweden	134.2	20.4	15.2	113.4	84.4	29.8	22.2	78.2	58.2	5.4	4.1	
United Kingdom	631.5	83.6	13.2	547.8	86.8	269.2	42.6	278.6	44.1	0.0	0.0	
Iceland	5.6	1.8	31.6	3.9	68.4	3.1	55.0	0.7	13.2	0.0	0.3	
Liechtenstein	0.7	0.2	24.8	0.5	75.2	0.3	41.2	0.2	33.9	0.0	0.0	
Norway	60.8	6.9	11.3	53.9	88.7	27.1	44.6	26.0	42.8	0.8	1.4	
Switzerland	153.6	26.0	16.9	127.6	83.1	90.2	58.7	37.4	24.3	0.0	0.0	

Note: the individual values do not add up to the total due to rounding and the exclusion of the 'unknown' citizenship group from the table.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: migr_imm1ctz)

Figure 3. Immigration by citizenship

Source: Eurostat

In absolute terms, the largest number of non-resident citizens living in EU Member States on 1 January 2016 were found in Germany (8.7 million people), United Kingdom (5.6 million), Italy (5.0 million), Spain (4.4 million) and France (4.4 million). Foreign citizens in these five Member States collectively accounted for 76% of the total number of foreign citizens living in all EU Member States, while the same five Member States had a share of 63% of the EU-28 population.

The number of first asylum seekers in Germany has increased from 442,000 in 2015 to 722,000 in 2016. Greece and Italy have also reported large increases between 2015 and 2016. In relative terms, the largest increase in the number of applicants for the first time was recorded in Croatia (over 15 times), Slovenia (almost five times higher) and Greece (more than four times higher). Instead, Austria, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Hungary and Sweden reported less than half of the first asylum seekers in 2016, as in 2015.

Germany's share of the EU-28 total rose from 35% in 2015 to 60% in 2016, while other EU Member States that saw a notable increase in their share in the EU-28 included Italy (3.4 % to 10.1%) in Greece (3.2% to 4.1%). On the contrary, the share of Hungary and Sweden in the EU-28 total fell by more than 10 % between 2015 and 2016, registering a decrease of 1% or higher in Austria, Finland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark.

Analysis of Economic and Migration Indicators

It is noted that the top states from the economic point of view (as a nominal level of GDP) are the ones that attract the largest number of immigrants. Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Spain and Italy are the countries with the largest GDP in Europe, and together they reported the largest number of immigrants in 2015, the five countries accounting for a total of 3,161.4 thousand immigrants.

The countries most affected by the immigration wave that came over Europe in the years 2015-2016 are, to a large extent, those countries with a high GDP and a level of wage above the European average.

After analyzing the economic figures and those referring to the number of immigrants and asylum seekers coming from non-EU countries, it is noted that they mainly chose EU Member States which, from the point of view of GDP, are ranked in the top 11 positions. But there are exceptions of countries that either do not belong to this category or are found, but they did not represent a destination for immigrants.

The European countries most affected by the immigration wave were Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Austria and Denmark. These countries are in the top 11 positions as nominal GDP. Spain and Poland, respectively countries ranked 5th and 8th as nominal GDP, are less affected. On the other hand, it can be seen that countries with a lower economic level than those that rank among the top 11 positions in the GDP of the EU Member States are affected

by the immigration wave. Thus, Finland, Greece, Hungary or Bulgaria, although not at an economic level similar to the first 11, were destination countries for a significant number of immigrants.

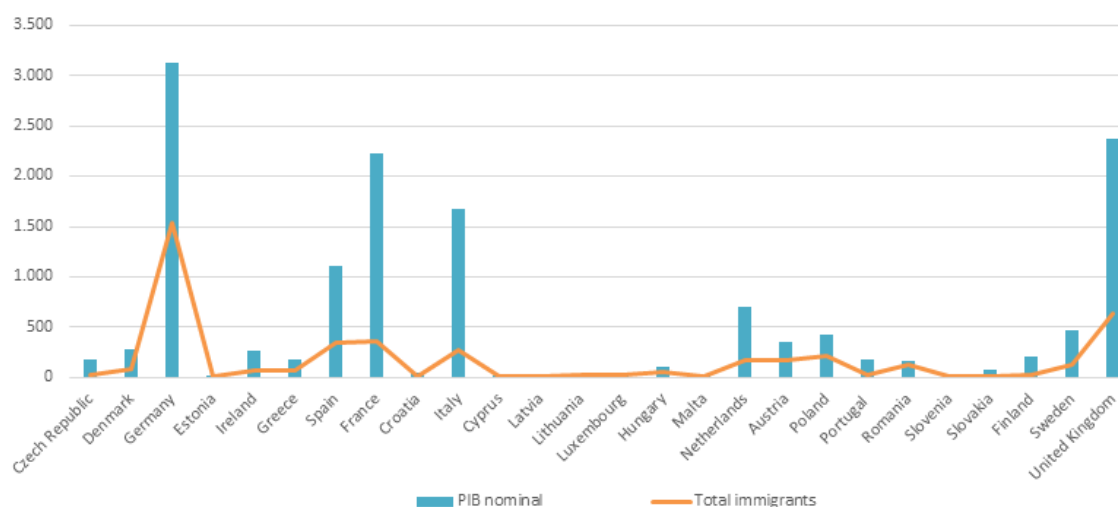


Figure 4. Nominal GDP vs Total immigrants.

Source: Eurostat

The rest of the EU Member States have been less affected by the immigration wave in 2015 and 2016. At the same time, it should be noted that in 2016, as a result of the decisions taken at a political level by a number of Member States of the European Union, such as Hungary, Austria or Slovenia, to close borders or raise fences against immigrants, the number of asylum applications from non-EU countries have declined considerably in some countries, but have grown to other countries that could no longer be transited. For example, the largest decrease in the number of asylum seekers was registered in Hungary in 2016, from 177.4 thousand to 28.2 thousand, following the decision taken by the Budapest government to raise metal fences at the border Hungary. Stopping immigrants at the border of the European Union and the Schengen area has led to a decrease in the number of asylum applications in other countries in 2016, such as Denmark, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK. In contrast, the number of asylum applications increased significantly in Germany in 2016, from 441.8 thousand in 2015 to 722.3 thousand in 2016. Also, as a result of the blocking of immigrants at the EU border, the number of requests for asylum also grew in Greece from 11.4 thousand to 49.9 thousand in 2016.

A high level of asylum requests has also been maintained in France, Italy or Spain, but in these cases we also talk about migration from North Africa to Europe.

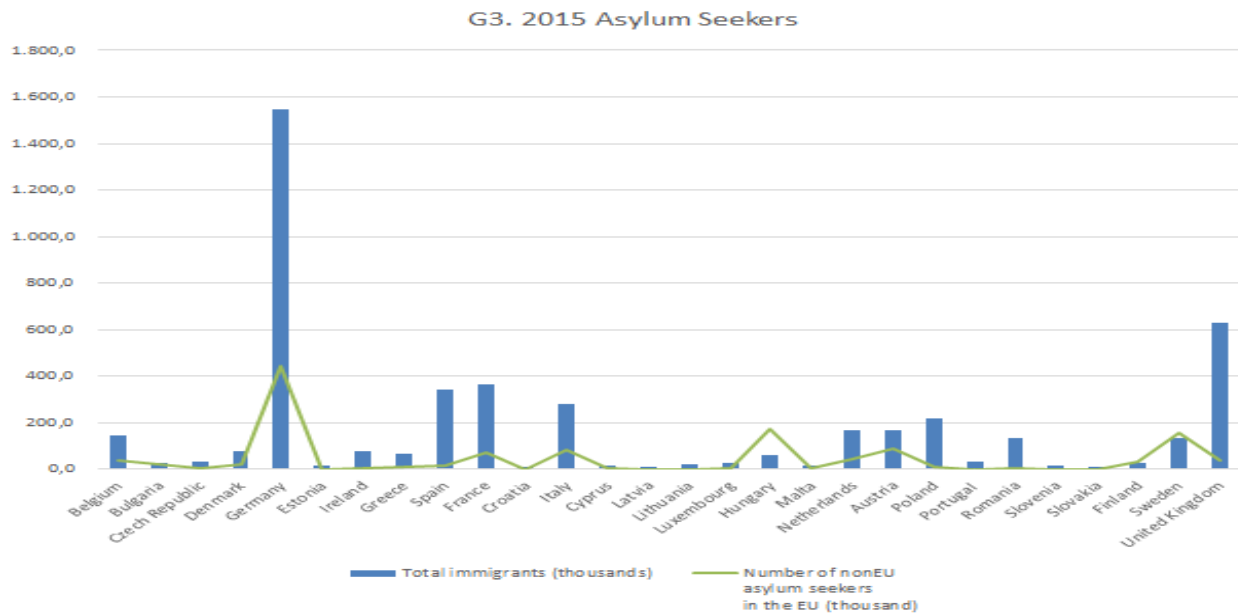


Figure 5. Total immigrants (thousands) vs Number of non-EU asylum seekers in the EU (thousands) 2015
 Source: Eurostat

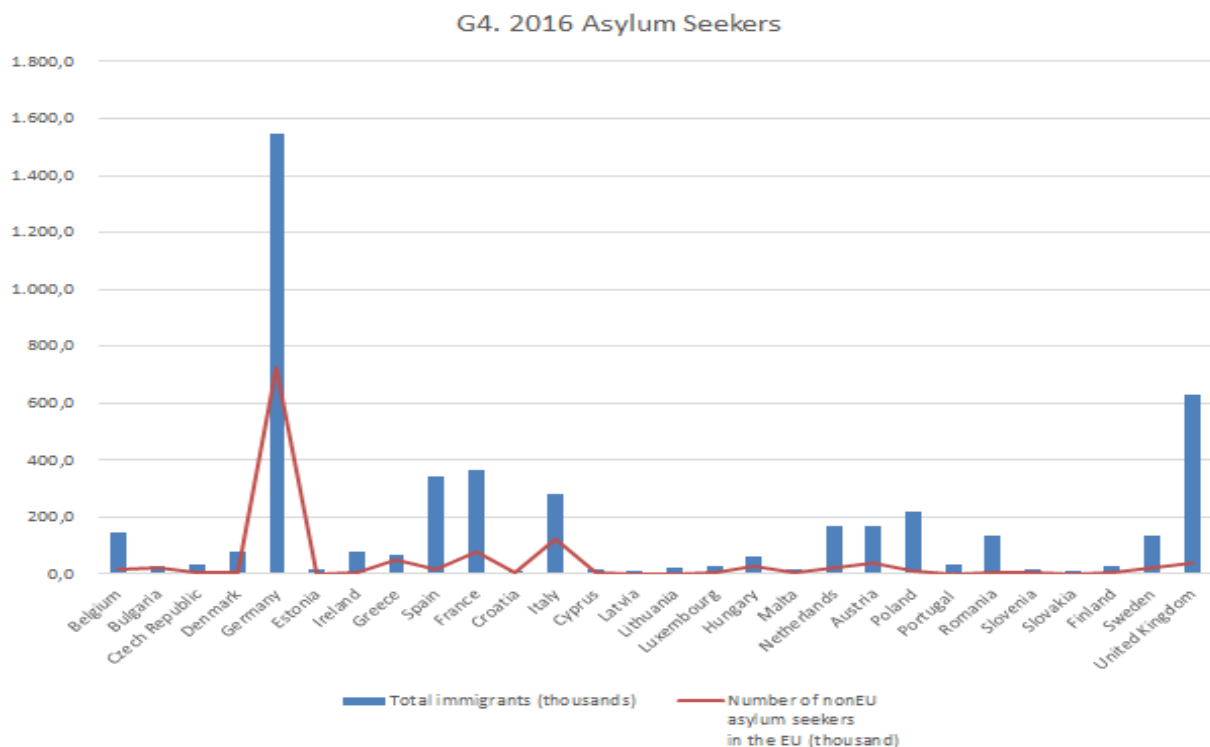


Figure 6. Total immigrants (thousands) vs Number of non-EU asylum seekers in the EU (thousands) 2016
 Source: Eurostat

Analyzing the destination of the immigrants as well as the map of the route they have chosen on their way to Europe, it is noted that the countries on their way are the most affected. The final destinations of

immigrants were, as can be seen from Eurostat figures, Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain and Sweden, countries with high GDP and wages. The large number of immigrants and asylum seekers in countries such as Greece, Bulgaria, Hungary or Austria is explained by the fact that they represented the fastest way for immigrants to the states in the central and northern Europe.

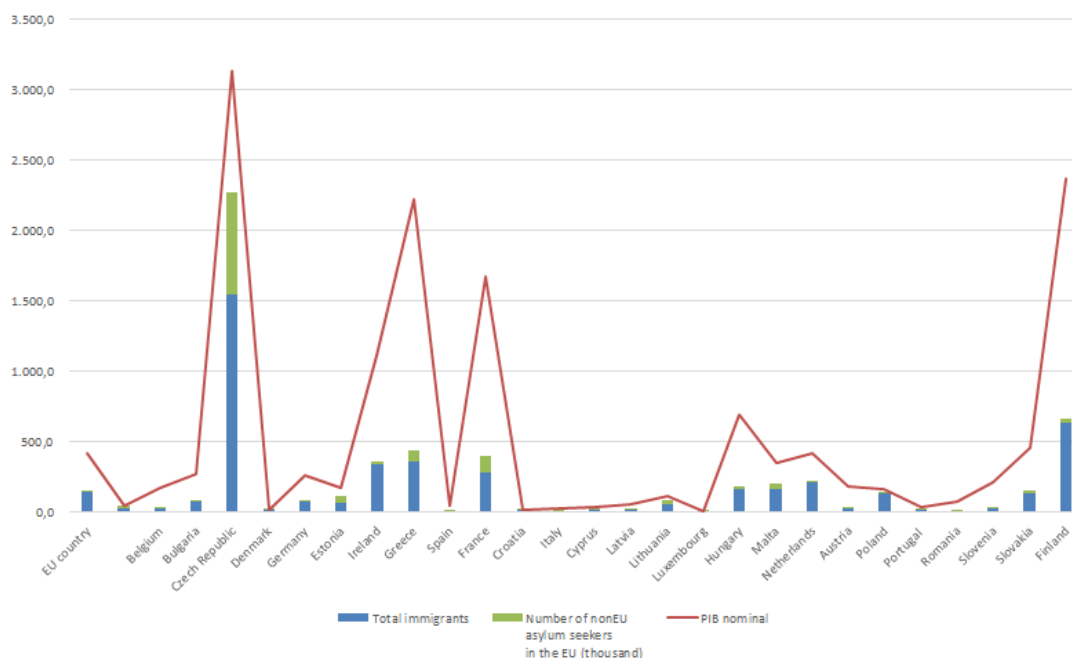


Figure 7. Total immigrants vs Number of non-EU asylum seekers in the EU vs nominal GDP.

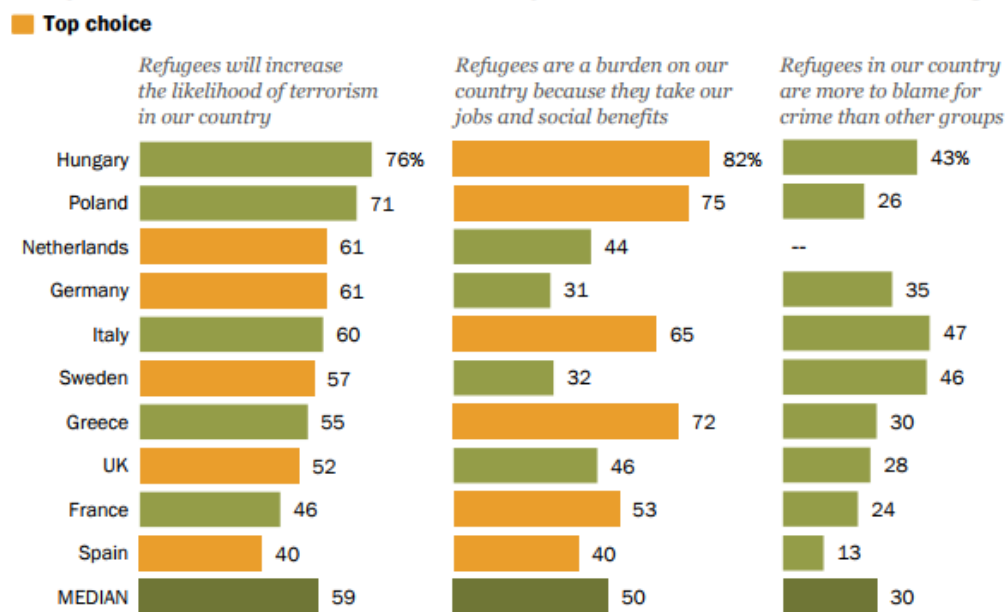
Source: Eurostat

At the same time, the large number of asylum applications in Hungary and Austria can be explained by the provisions of the Dublin Regulation, that determines which Member State is responsible for processing asylum seekers from outside the European Union. In general, the country where an asylum seeker enters the Union for the first time is responsible for registering the asylum application and fingerprinting. But there are exceptions, including some to unite or reunite families. As a result, asylum seekers moving to other countries after they have been registered can be sent back to the country responsible for processing their claims, dubbed “Dublin transfers.” Many immigrants are trying to circumvent the system by refusing to be imprinted and thus avoid being registered in the first country where they arrive, most of the time Italy or Greece.

European Opinion on Refugees

Europeans fear the wave of refugees believing they will mean more terrorism, fewer jobs, according to a study published by the Pew Research Center in July 2016.

Many Europeans concerned with security, economic repercussions of refugee crisis



Note: Netherlands excluded on question about crime (Q51b) due to administrative error.

Source: Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey, Q51a-c.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 8. Europeans Fear Wave of Refugees Will Mean More Terrorism, Fewer Jobs.

Source: Pew Research Center 2016

The recent rise of refugees in Europe has prominently emerged in the anti-immigration rhetoric of mainland parties and in the heated debate over the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union. At the same time, attacks in European capitals fueled public fears about terrorism. As a study by the Pew Research Center shows, the refugee crisis and the threat of terrorism are largely linked to each other in the minds of many Europeans. In eight out of ten European nations questioned, half or more believe that receiving refugees increases the likelihood of terrorism in their country.

According to Pew Research, refugees are considered a burden on European citizens for their country because they take their jobs and social benefits.

Analysis of Citizens' Confidence in National Governments and in the European Union

The crises that affected the European Union in terms of migration and its threats, as well as terrorist attacks, created a sense of instability and insecurity, which is reinforced by geopolitical uncertainties, especially by Brexit. On March 1st, 2017, the European Commission presented a White Paper on the future of Europe, which presents challenges and opportunities for Europe in the next decade. This Chart also proposes five scenarios, one of which refers to Europe with more speeds.

Analyzing citizens' confidence in national and European institutions is a way to explain some of the decisions taken by the EU Member States in the context of discussing the future of the European bloc.

What can be seen from the Eurobarometer data released in April 2017 is that almost half of respondents tend to trust the European Union (47%), 11 percentage points more than in autumn 2016. Also, four out of ten respondents (40%) tend to trust their national government, and this time it recorded an increase of nine points compared to autumn 2016.

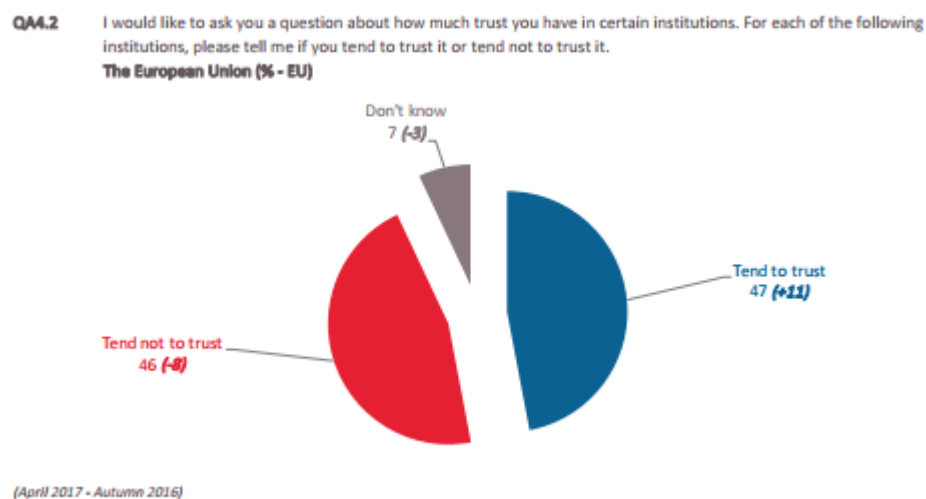


Figure 9. Trust in the European Union.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future, April 2017

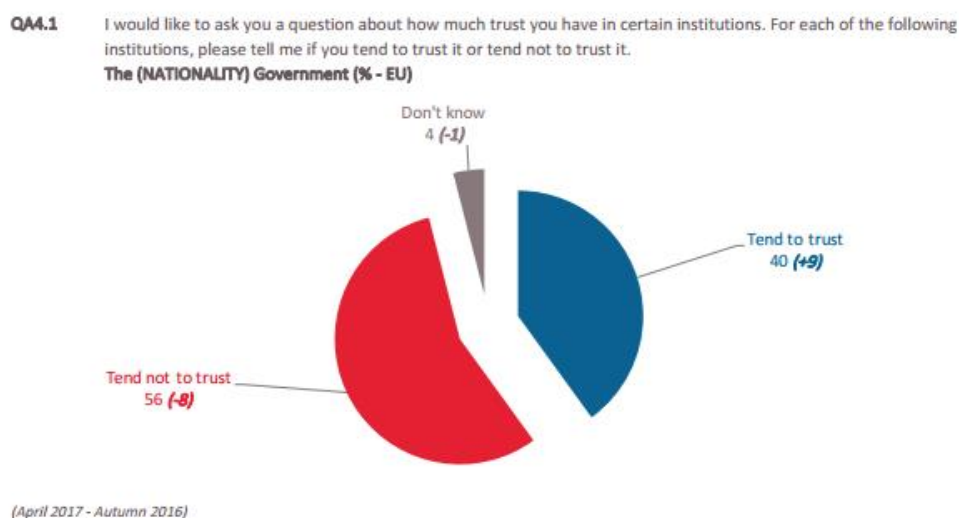


Figure 10. Trust in the national Government.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future, April 2017

Regarding the confidence in national governments, according to the Eurobarometer, in ten countries most respondents tend to trust their national government: the Netherlands, Sweden, Luxembourg, Finland, Germany, Denmark, Austria, Estonia, Portugal, Malta. Also in 18 countries, only a minority of respondents tend to trust their national government: Hungary, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Ireland, Romania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania, Cyprus, Greece.

Almost eight out of ten respondents in the Netherlands (78%) trust the national government, followed by 72% in Sweden and 70% in Luxembourg. In contrast, less than one in five respondents in Greece (13%), Slovenia (17%) and Spain (18%) trust their national government.

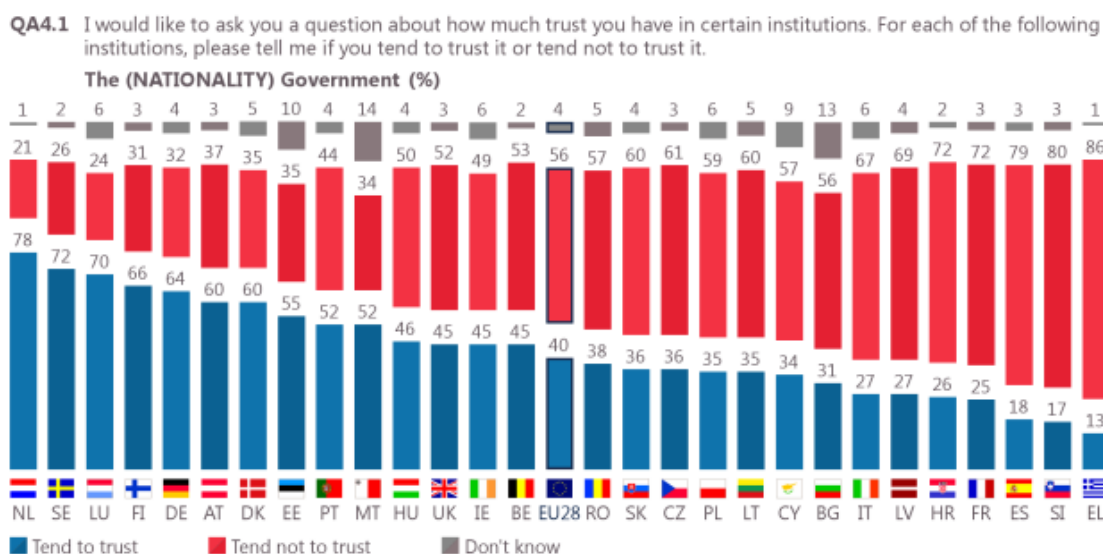


Figure 11. Trust in the national Government.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future, April 2017

The percentage of respondents who tended to trust their national government increased in 23 Member States, especially in Austria (60%, +20 percentage points compared to autumn 2016), the Netherlands (78%, +19%), Estonia (55%, +18%), Sweden (72%, +16), Denmark (60%, +14%), Portugal (52%, +13%), Germany (64%, +13%), Italy (27%, +12 pp), Hungary (46%, +11%) and the United Kingdom (45%, +10%).

In terms of confidence in the European Union, almost half of respondents tend to trust (47%), while almost 46% of them tend to not trust the European institutions.

Q44.1 I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.

The (NATIONALITY) Government (%)






























		Tend to trust	Apr. 2017 - Aut. 2016	Tend not to trust	Apr. 2017 - Aut. 2016	Don't know
EU28		40	▲ 9	56	▼ 8	4
EURO AREA		40	▲ 9	56	▼ 9	4
NON-EURO AREA		42	▲ 9	54	▼ 7	4
AT		60	▲ 20	37	▼ 17	3
NL		78	▲ 19	21	▼ 17	1
EE		55	▲ 18	35	▼ 17	10
SE		72	▲ 16	26	▼ 15	2
DK		60	▲ 14	35	▼ 15	5
DE		64	▲ 13	32	▼ 11	4
PT		52	▲ 13	44	▼ 13	4
IT		27	▲ 12	67	▼ 14	6
HU		46	▲ 11	50	▼ 11	4
UK		45	▲ 10	52	▼ 4	3
BG		31	▲ 9	56	▼ 14	13
PL		35	▲ 9	59	▼ 8	6
RO		38	▲ 9	57	▼ 9	5
CZ		36	▲ 8	61	▼ 9	3
FR		25	▲ 8	72	▼ 7	3
FI		66	▲ 8	31	▼ 9	3
LT		35	▲ 6	60	▼ 1	5
IE		45	▲ 5	49	▼ 7	6
BE		45	▲ 4	53	▼ 3	2
EL		13	▲ 4	86	▼ 4	1
LU		70	▲ 4	24	▼ 1	6
SK		36	▲ 4	60	▼ 2	4
CY		34	▲ 2	57	▼ 3	9
HR		26	=	72	▲ 1	2
MT		52	=	34	▼ 2	14
SI		17	=	80	=	3
ES		18	▼ 2	79	▲ 2	3
LV		27	▼ 5	69	▲ 7	4

Figure 12. Trust in the national Government 2017 vs 2016.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future, April 2017

It can be noticed that confidence in the EU has gradually increased since autumn 2015. However, the autumn trend of 2016 is somewhat spectacular: an increase of 11 percentage points in the proportion of those who trust the European Union and a fall of eight points of the share of respondents who do not trust.

An explanation is provided in the Eurobarometer, according to which some of these large changes can be explained by a difference in the April 2017 survey question set compared to the previous standard Eurobarometer autumn 2016. The new questions could have put the respondents in a more positive framework when answering this question.

Given the April 2017 Eurobarometer, in 18 countries most of the respondents tend to trust the EU, with the largest proportion being in Malta (66%), Lithuania and the Netherlands (both 64%). Most respondents also trust the European Union in Luxembourg (60%), Finland (60%), Bulgaria (59%),

Romania (59%), Poland (57%), Germany (57%), Denmark (56%), Sweden (56%), Estonia (54%), Hungary (52%), Belgium (52%), Portugal (51%), Slovakia (51%) and Latvia (47%).

In contrast, respondents in Greece (27%), Slovenia (32%), the Czech Republic and Spain (both 35%) are the least likely to say they tend to trust the EU. Minorities trust the EU in Cyprus (36%), Italy (39%), the United Kingdom (40%), France (40%), Croatia (43%) and Austria (44%).

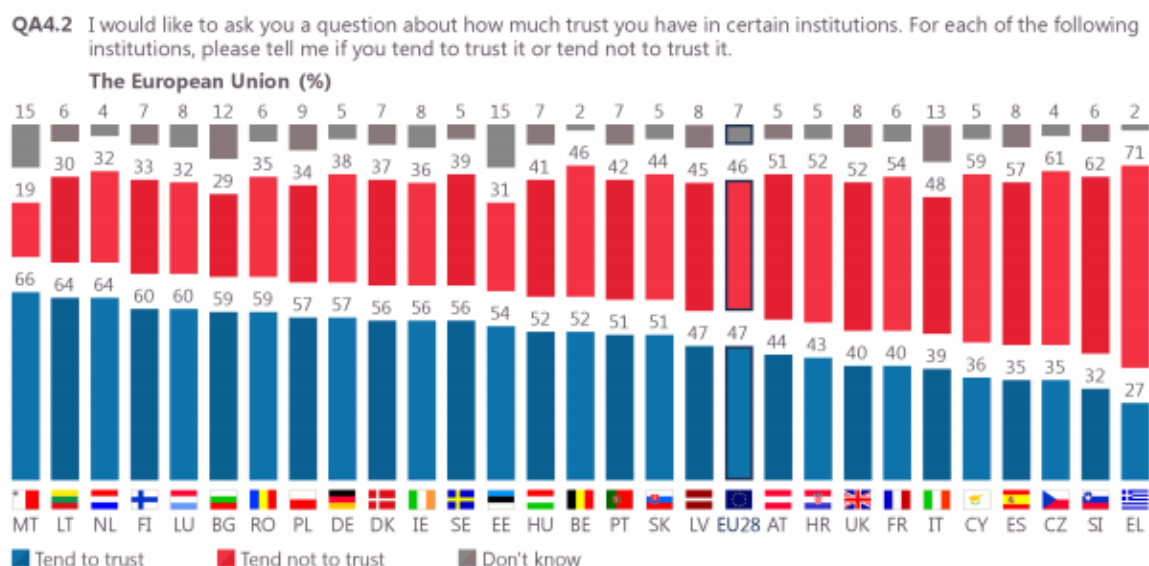


Figure 13. Trust in the European Union

Source: Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future, April 2017

Respondents from 26 countries show that they are inclined to trust the EU towards the autumn of 2016. The highest increases are in the Netherlands (64%, +22 percentage points), Germany (57%, +20 pp), Malta (66%, +14 pp), France (40%, +14 pp), Sweden (56%, +13 pp), Estonia (54%, +10 pp), Hungary (52%, +10 pp) and Bulgaria (59%, +10 pp). Trust has fallen in Slovenia and has remained stable in Croatia.

Q4.2 I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.

The European Union (%)






























		Tend to trust	Apr. 2017 - Aut. 2016	Tend not to trust	Apr. 2017 - Aut. 2016	Don't know
EU28		47	▲ 11	46	▼ 8	7
EURO AREA		46	▲ 12	47	▼ 9	7
NON-EURO AREA		49	▲ 10	44	▼ 6	7
NL		64	▲ 22	32	▼ 19	4
DE		57	▲ 20	38	▼ 15	5
FR		40	▲ 14	54	▼ 11	6
MT		66	▲ 14	19	▼ 9	15
SE		56	▲ 13	39	▼ 9	5
PL		57	▲ 12	34	▼ 8	9
DK		56	▲ 11	37	▼ 9	7
BG		59	▲ 10	29	▼ 5	12
EE		54	▲ 10	31	▼ 5	15
HU		52	▲ 10	41	▼ 9	7
IT		39	▲ 9	48	▼ 10	13
LT		64	▲ 9	30	▲ 1	6
LU		60	▲ 9	32	▼ 9	8
AT		44	▲ 9	51	▼ 7	5
SK		51	▲ 9	44	▼ 3	5
FI		60	▲ 9	33	▼ 10	7
UK		40	▲ 9	52	▼ 4	8
CY		36	▲ 8	59	▼ 4	5
IE		56	▲ 7	36	▼ 6	8
EL		27	▲ 7	71	▼ 7	2
RO		59	▲ 7	35	▼ 6	6
CZ		35	▲ 6	61	▼ 5	4
BE		52	▲ 4	46	▼ 3	2
PT		51	▲ 3	42	=	7
LV		47	▲ 2	45	▲ 5	8
ES		35	▲ 1	57	▲ 3	8
HR		43	=	52	▲ 2	5
SI		32	▼ 5	62	▲ 5	6

Figure 14. Trust in the European Union 2017 vs 2016.

Source: Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future, April 2017

Conclusions on Trust in National Governments and the European Union

Eurobarometer data is collected in a context where the future of the European Union is being discussed, about crucial decisions that could reconfigure the whole of the Union. Analyzing the speech of the leaders of the Member States, they are more inclined to promote national interest, given the 2016 statistical data, when confidence in national governments and the European Union was about ten percentage points lower than in April 2017.

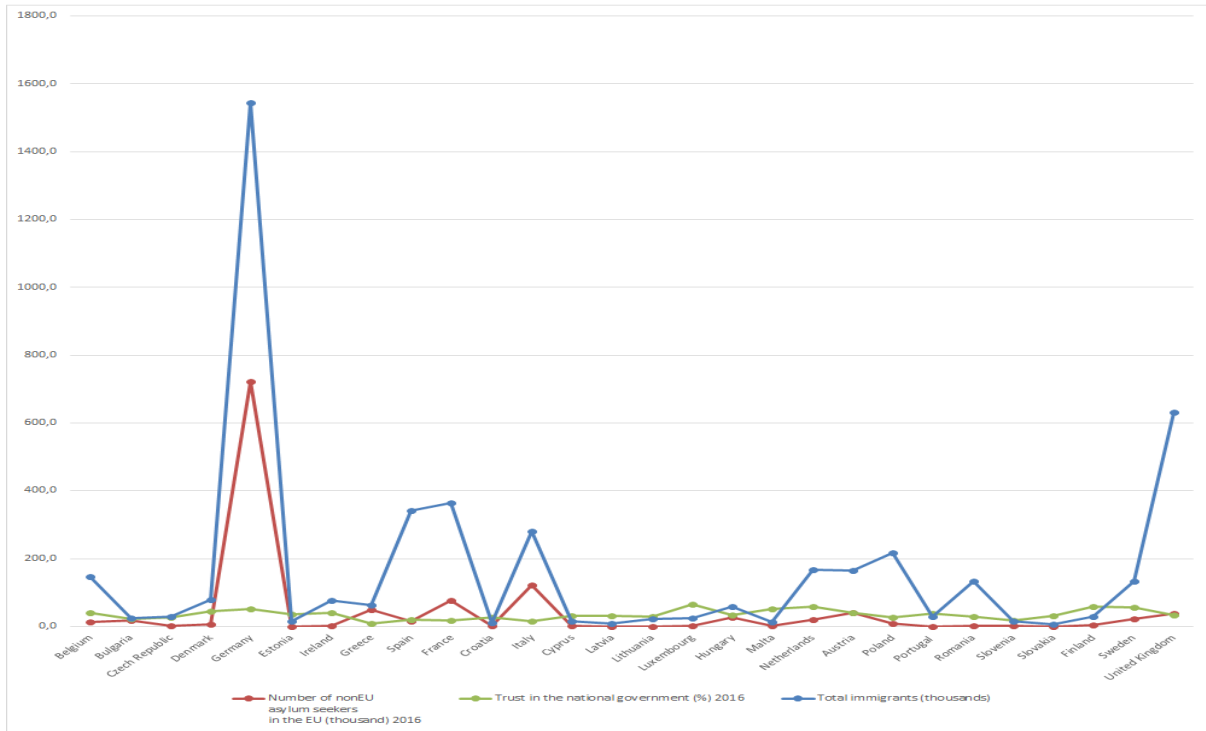


Figure 15. Number of non-EU asylum seekers in the EU 2016 vs Trust in national government vs Total immigrants.

Source: Eurostat and Eurobarometer

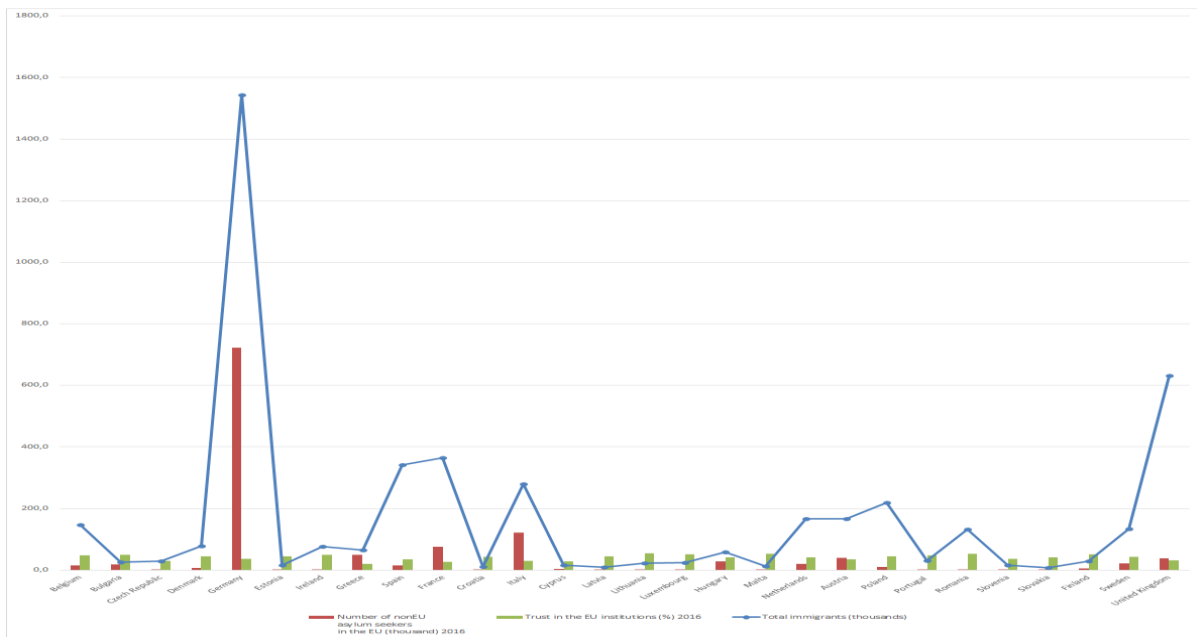


Figure 16. Number of non-EU asylum seekers in the EU 2016 vs Trust in EU vs Total immigrants.

Source: Eurostat and Eurobarometer

At the same time, data on confidence in national institutions and in the European Union has been gathered after terrorist attacks that have taken place in member states, as well as geopolitical uncertainties, especially regarding the terrorist threat, relations with Turkey and Russia.

Looking at the figures for confidence in their own governments and in the European Union in the autumn 2016 Eurobarometer, it was clear that in the Member States, officials in leadership positions had to guide their decisions according to citizens' attitudes if they wanted to remain in place or to win elections. At the same time, mistrust had to be transformed into trust by decisions taken to satisfy citizens.

The political context in which the Member States are located must not be overlooked. In the last year, elections took place in Austria, the Netherlands, France and will take place in Germany. Therefore, the influence of the electoral factor can not be neglected as part of building decisions on the position adopted by a state within the European Union.

Analyzing the Positions of the European Union Member States with a view to Determining the Future of the European construction

The position of each individual state in the European Union in the context of discussions on the future of the Union has been clearly established since the beginning of 2017. In the first months of the year, the EU Member States made public their position on how European construction should look like in the future.

The research analyses the position of the Member States by grouping them according to the way they conducted the negotiations and the common interests they expressed in the first part of 2017. At the same time, the analysis also included the states that had a public point of view.

A) The group of four founders - Germany, France, Italy and Spain

In March 2017, there was a meeting of the leaders of the four states, Germany, France, Italy and Spain, which did not include anything special or surprising on the agenda. Leaders in the four states seemed to focus more on communicating a common answer to the White Paper issued by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, which presents five potential scenarios for the future of the EU¹.

The common response of these states was a clear preference for the third scenario, the so-called Europe with more speeds. This option calls for better cooperation and integration to the extent that each country is prepared for it in areas such as defense, security, taxation and social policies.

The meeting was, in essence, a show of unity before the upcoming summits.

B) Benelux Group - Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg

Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, a group of founding members of the EU, issued a statement in support of a two-speed European Union. The Benelux vision on the future of Europe was expressed in a document that the three states made public in March 2017. According to the Benelux states, "different approaches to enhanced integration and cooperation could provide effective responses to the challenges that affect Member States in different ways. These agreements should be integrated and transparent, with the greatest possible involvement of the other Member States and the institutions of the European Union."²

The Benelux countries suggest a two-speed Europe, allowing countries seeking further integration to continue, and the most reluctant to be left behind.

¹ Politico.eu: In Versailles, EU's big 4 back multispeed Europe, March 6th 2017 <http://www.politico.eu/article/in-versailles-eu-big-4-back-multi-speed-europe-italy-france-germany-spain/>

² Michel, Charles, 'Benelux vision on the future of Europe', February 3rd, 2017, <http://premier.fgov.be/en/benelux-vision-future-europe>

C) Visegrad Group - Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia

Visegrad group countries have refused to take asylum seekers and migrants despite EU solidarity demands.

Jarosław Kaczyński, on February 8, warned that any move to a two-speed European Union would break the Union. Jarosław Kaczyński told the Polish media that a so-called two-speed Europe would lead to the “breakdown and, in fact, the liquidation of the European Union in its current sense.”¹

In turn, Slovak President Andrej Kiska said that it is first necessary to clarify and define exactly what the hard nucleus in the European Union is and what Europe with more speed means².

D) Group of Nordic States - Sweden and Denmark

According to a study by VoteWatch.eu, Nordic members of the European Union, including Sweden, Denmark and Finland, would like to maintain the current status quo of the European bloc. “Finally, the Nordic countries, like Sweden and Denmark, are attentive to both perspectives (Europe with more speeds and a security-oriented Europe) and seem more willing to remain in the status quo.”³

At the same time, as stated in a Swedish Government document, their perspective on the future of the European Union is as follows: they want to be an active member of the EU, even if they are outside the euro area; Internal market regulations are a priority for Sweden; Common concerns should be discussed and taken into account by all 28 Member States; New initiatives should be open to all 28 Member States as much as possible⁴. Thus Sweden's position is extremely clear, namely against a Europe with more speeds.

E) Baltic States - Finland, Estonia

The European Union should not be divided into groups of states that step up their cooperation at different speeds, is the position of Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä. He believes that “the formation of different political levels” would not be in Finland's interest⁵.

Also, Estonian President Kersti Kaljulaid and Finland's President Sauli Niinistö said after a joint meeting that the EU already has multiple speeds because not all countries are participating in all forms of cooperation. What they have pointed out is that the various forms of cooperation should remain open to all Member States⁶.

F) Group of Balkan states - Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece

¹ Euractiv: Poland's Kaczynski warns two-speed Europe leads to 'breakdown', February 9th, 2017 <https://www.euractiv.com/section/future-eu/news/polands-kaczynski-warns-two-speed-europe-leads-to-breakdown/>

² The Slovak Spectator: President: Slovakia wants to stay at the core of the EU, April 27, 2017, <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20518757/president-slovakia-wants-to-stay-at-the-core-of-the-eu.html>

³ Express UK: EUROPE DIVIDED: The damning maps which show how EU nations can't agree on euro and defence, March 8, 2017 <http://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/776509/European-Union-EU-divided-key-issues-eurozone-defence>

⁴ Ministry of Finance Sweden, Two-Speed Europe?, 12 November 2015 http://www.regeringen.se/globalassets/regeringen/dokument/finansdepartementet/pdf/1_magdalena_andersson.pdf

⁵ Reuters: Finnish PM warns against multi-speed EU, March 3rd, 2017 <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-eu-future-finland-idUSKBN16A1QA>

⁶ The Baltic Course: Estonian and Finnish presidents: EU can be multi-speed, March 7, 2017 http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/baltic_states/?doc=128105

After France and Germany voiced their support for a two-speed European Union, officials in Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia said they wanted more integration and common policies, feared they could be marginalized¹.

G) *Austria*. Austrian President Alexander van der Bellen said he is against setting up a multi-speed EU because “the one in front does not hear the one behind him, but if we go alongside each other, we can communicate and do an exchange of views “².

H) *Portugal*. Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa had a very vague position on the position of the country he is leading, but he lets the public think that he is in favor of the decision that the euro area countries will make. The Portuguese official believes that in any scenario, Portugal will be in the rough core³.

(I) *Cyprus*. Cypriot European deputies have shown caution in establishing a position for their country⁴.

Interpretation of the Positions Expressed by the Member States of the European Union in the Context of Europe's “Multi-Speed” Scenario

Crisis changes priorities and increases feelings of fear and pessimism. In other words, during a crisis, an increase in the importance of a problem is expected. In this case, we are talking about an increasing level of migration, which has led to an increase in a strong anti-European sentiment.

To identify this feeling we used the term concern, defining it as a feeling of concern over a political issue. Concern can be interpreted as a personal feeling of fear in a more contingent scenario.

Concern is the feeling that affects more deeply the support/opposition for the institutions. Foreign shocks bring a political issue to public attention, increasing the level of outreach. Both media and political actors have an influence on it, by increasing the level of attention and supporting various solutions for this issue. When the effects of shock begin to affect citizens' lives, a sense of anxiety grows with him. People not only find that the problem is important, but they also perceive it as a threat.

First of all, relevance and concern about the economic situation are positive. People begin to perceive the importance of the crisis and, after looking at its effects, to be concerned about the situation. Secondly, the concern for the economic situation is negative in relation to the specific support given to Europe. Thirdly, we can assume that the concern for the economy also affects diffuse support for Europe.

All kinds of support for the EU also come from attitudes towards the national government. This makes the European system more fragile than the national one, because the performance of national governments affects the legitimacy of the EU.

The European Union is not capable of creating a direct relationship with its citizens. Between the European citizens and the EU institutions is a huge gap, the citizens perceiving the leaders from Brussels as “far-fetched” (at least different from national models) and technocratic. They are not able to create an affiliation either with the government (not identifiable) or with the political parties in the European Parliament (elected on a national basis).

¹ Balkan Insight: Balkan EU States Reject a ‘Multi-Speed’ Union, march 2nd, 2017 <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/balkan-member-states-reject-a-multi-speed-eu-03-02-2017>

² The Slovak Spectator: President: Slovakia wants to stay at the core of the EU, April 27, 2017, <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20518757/president-slovakia-wants-to-stay-at-the-core-of-the-eu.html>

³ The Portugal News: Idea of multi-speed EU 'not new'; Portugal in front line – President, March 10, 2017 <http://theportugalnews.com/news/idea-of-multi-speed-eu-not-new-portugal-in-front-line-president/41327>

⁴ Cyprus Mail: Cypriot MEPs cautious about a ‘multi-speed Europe’, April 9, 2017 <http://cyprus-mail.com/2017/04/09/cypriot-meeps-cautious-multi-speed-europe/>

Discussions that took place in the European space from the beginning of 2017 to the signing of the Rome Declaration have highlighted a scenario considered to be possible for the future of the European Union, that of Europe “with more speeds”. The analysis of the public discourse of the EU Member States leaders highlights three approaches to the future of the European bloc in the context of the “multi - speeds” scenario.

The three approaches that are highlighted are:

- A) States supporting Europe “with more speeds”;
- B) States that do not support Europe “with more speeds”;
- C) States still awaiting a decision on the future of the European Union.

From the media analysis of Europe's “multi-speed” scenario, it is noticed that since the beginning of 2017 a power pole has been created within the European Union concentrated around Germany and France, which has captured the interest of all public opinion and which decisions were also reported by the other Member States. The two founding states of the European community are also the main supporters of the idea of Europe “with more speeds”. A group of states that want a differentiated development within the European Union were built around the two countries. This group includes: Italy, Spain, Benelux. Practically, apart from Spain, the founding countries of the European Union promote the idea of a differentiated development and evolution.

On the other hand, countries such as Sweden, Austria, Poland, Greece, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Cyprus or Croatia are not in favor of such a vision regarding the future of the European Union. They want to continue to have the European Union as it exists today. Concerning the Visegrad and Balkan states, the motivation is clear, namely that they will remain on the periphery of the Union, making them the second-tier states. At the same time, the Visegrad group's speech is extremely sloppy about the future of the Union if the “multi-speed” scenario is applied, the leaders of these states claiming that a European disintegration and even collapse of the Union will occur.

Countries like Finland, Denmark, Portugal or Estonia are still waiting to shape a clear official position. These Member States want to see first what will be the final decision of the majority in the European Union. However, in the case of Finland and Estonia, the two countries tend to disagree with Europe “with more speeds”, while Portugal shows security in the public space regarding the membership to a future core of the European Union.

The Rome Declaration of EU-27 leaders is a first victory for states that support the idea of a “multi-speed Europe”. In fact, analyzing the speech and political positioning of the leaders of the group of those in favor of this scenario, we conclude that Europe “with more speed” is rather a consolidation of the core of the European Union. The reason for such a scenario is given by issues related to border security, economic security and the possibility of creating a buffer zone between the core and possible threats coming from outside.

Concluding, we note that the states that are more affected by the 2015-2016 migration try to promote the idea of a Union with more speeds to prevent such situations. On the other hand, European states with a high economic level and with a significant contribution to the Union budget but not affected by a large number of immigrants such as Germany, Italy, France or Benelux, call for a more pragmatic approach to the future of the Union European. This is particularly the case of Sweden, Finland, Denmark.

At the same time, the fact that countries that have suffered significantly as a result of the 2015-2016 migration are against a vision of Europe's divide can be explained by the benefits currently flowing from the membership to the European Union. In this case we are talking about Austria and Hungary.

Favorable positioning for a scenario in which the European Union has more speeds should also be interpreted in the light of the pressure exerted over the past two years by eurosceptics and nationalists in the Member States of the European Union, such as France, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy or Spain. It is not to be neglected that the eurosceptic and nationalist parties recorded an increase between 2015 and 2017. Thus, the French elections could have been won by a Eurosceptic presidentialist in the person of Marine Le Pen, while in the Netherlands the parliamentary elections could have brought to power PVV led by Geert Wilders. The two defeats of Eurosceptics can be interpreted as consequences of national and European decisions taken by the states concerned.

Which are the preferences behind decisions on the European Union - those of voters or those of political parties?

Political parties respond to the state of the public about European integration and this makes the decision in some areas have a number of constraints on the part of the citizens.

Political parties have a broad audience. Stefano Bartolini argued and showed empirically that the structure of party competition is both strong and strong in shaping party positioning.

In the first decades of European integration, Euroscepticism had its roots in opposition to market integration. Since the Treaty of the Masstricht, he has taken an extra dimension: the defense of the national community. Changing the character of European integration can also affect the different national context.

Analysis of party/voter engagement and party positioning are interdependent.

Simon Hix argues that euroscepticism is best designed as a rational answer by citizens (and parties) for whom centralized EU power is a threat to their interests - not as a profound dissident in the political system.

The level of mistrust in the European Union and in national governments shows that in the Member States of the European Union, the immigration crisis, along with its consequences, including the Brexit, has created a high degree of mistrust and insecurity among citizens. The functioning of European bodies and their ability to make the right decisions on the future of the European Union.

We can therefore assume that the low level of trust along with the political and electoral context in some states, including the Netherlands, France, Germany, has led national governments to make decisions that satisfy the national interest, leaving behind the general interest of the European Union.

The Eurobarometer data released in April 2017 is presented to the public in a political context in which waters have been separated on the future of European construction. Thus, we see spectacular increases in confidence in the European Union and in national governments in states that have firmly positioned themselves in line with public opinion sentiment.

The confidence is building in the European Union in 2017 as compared to 2016 in Germany and France, the two countries that have intensively promoted the idea of a Europe with more speeds and the creation of a core around them. In countries such as Belgium, Luxembourg, the level of confidence in the European Union has exceeded 50%, and in Italy, which suffered from migration and went through a referendum proposed by Matteo Renzi to amend the Constitution, has increased by 9%. All three states have declared themselves in favor of the idea of Europe with more speeds.

On the other hand, we see how, in states that have declared themselves favorable to the European Union with more speeds, confidence in national governments has increased significantly. In the Netherlands, the government has reached a confidence level of 78%, 19% more than in 2016, being an obvious sign that the citizens responded to the actions and decisions taken by the government. Also, the confidence in the national government grew in Germany to 64%, and in France, a state where the socialist government had to suffer tough criticism over the last few years, confidence in the national Executive began to recover, in April 2017 to 25%, but it should be made clear that the measures took place before Emmanuel Macron was elected president. In Luxembourg, confidence in the national government stood at 70%, while in Belgium this confidence stood at 45%. Italy, a state misted by the political turmoil and affected by the waves of immigrants, has seen an increase in confidence in the national government of 12%.

At the same time, states that have not favored the idea of Europe with more speeds and have positioned for the continuation of the European Union as it is today have also undergone significant changes in confidence in the European Union and in governments national. The European Union has been seen, by many of the states outside the core of the founding states, as the only solution for development and cooperation, their positioning being easy to understand in the continuation of European construction as it is today. The decision of the officials from the Center, but also the Eastern and Southern Europe, to resist the will of the Western European states was an agreed one by the citizens, also based on the values of the Eurobarometer. Increased favorability towards national governments was registered in Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria and Poland. Also, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Austria are among the countries where confidence in European institutions has increased significantly.

Concluding, the declaration signed by European leaders in Rome is nothing more than an imposition of power by the clustered countries around Germany and France against those states who wanted the continuation of the Union as it is today. The pressure from citizens' interests, the possibility of a wave of euroscepticism and nationalist discourse, led the leaders of the Western European states to take the decision made in the Rome declaration.

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