

Treball de fi de Grau  
*Filosofia, Política i Economia*  
Curs acadèmic 2020-2021

## **THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY OF THE YOUNG COHORT**

*An approach to a key challenge faced by the European Union*

## **ABSTRACT**

Since the rejection of the European Constitution in 2005, the 2016 Brexit referendum and the recent re-emergence of nationalisms, the legitimacy of the European Union has become a publicly debated issue. As a result, EU leaders have promoted the conformation of an European identity, which is thought to be a necessary precondition for the stability and validity of the EU. After reviewing the theoretical foundations behind the concept of *European identity*, it has been acknowledged that the young generations hold a key role in the consolidation of the trust in the European institutions and in the continuation of the integration process in the coming decades. Therefore, the aim of this research is to examine the reality of the young European cohort in relation with their perceptions and attachment to the European Union. It also conducts a cohort comparison to test the age-European support correlation among cohorts, which is afterwards ratified. The study, based on the dataset of the 91 Eurobarometer of 2019, provides evidence on the impact of different personal and contextual factors on the European identity of youngsters. In the end, the statistical analysis reveals that young people's attachment to the EU depends on the strength of their national identity, the participation in an Erasmus exchange, the benefit of European free mobility and the own country's economic context.

## **Contents**

<b>1. Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. Theoretical framework.....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 European identity.....	6
2.2 Support for the EU and young people .....	8
<b>3. Data and Research design .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>4. Results .....</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1 Bivariate analysis.....	17
4.2 Multivariate analysis.....	23
<b>5. Conclusion and discussion.....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>6. References .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>34</b>

## **1. Introduction**

In recent years, several occurrences have fostered a debate surrounding the idea of a common Europe: the enlargement of the European Union (EU) to Eastern Europe, various terrorist attacks, the emergence of regional identities and populism, UK's Brexit, among other episodes, have questioned the viability of the supra-national project. The growing tendencies of Euroscepticism have resulted in a large endeavour faced by the EU to appeal to its citizens and recuperate the legitimacy of the European Union (Royuela and López-Bazo, 2020: 53).

To meet this challenge, one of the main objectives of the EU, at least since the 1992 signing of the Maastricht treaty, has been the conformation of a strong European identity. Such ambition, ahead of the above-mentioned circumstances, has recently returned to European political agendas, as “the identification of citizens with a political system is a necessary precondition for the system's stability and legitimacy” (Striessnig and Lutz, 2016: 306).

Furthermore, recent efforts of the Union leaders have been focused on European youngsters, an increasingly vulnerable group of European societies, as a result of crisis, austerity policies and uncertainty. The worsening of their life conditions can weaken the competitiveness of the continent and drop the confidence on common political institutions (Guidi, 2015: 241-242). For this reason, the young generation is a crucial actor in consolidating the trust in the European institutions and in continuing the integration process in the coming decades.

The present research project will examine the reality of the young European cohort in relation with their perceptions and attachment to the European Union. By trying to provide an answer to the Research Question (RQ), “Which are the EU attitudes within the young cohort and the reasons behind them?” and a sub Research Question, “Do young cohorts have different attitudes than other cohorts?”, the present study will try to ascertain whether this generation has a stronger European identity than older groups, and analyse what mechanisms operate behind youngsters' sense of belonging to the EU: the identification of hypothetical factors that influence the EU identity and a subsequent study of which of them are significant in the shaping of attitudes towards the Union.

In fact, the relevance of the subject can be assessed by examining previous literature on the topic. Several authors – Carey and Lebo (2000), Down and Wilson (2011, 2013) and Daniele and Geys (2015), between others – have theorised about an age-support correlation regarding the attitudes towards the European Union and the likelihood of cohort effects acting upon

citizens' sense of belonging to the EU. Additionally, other academics, such as Spannring, *et al.* (2008) and Mihalcea, *et al.* (2013), have analysed the factors which may lie behind the affection for the EU.

Thus, the general research objectives of the FDP are:

- to comprehend the concept of *European identity* and its current relevance;
- to study Pro-European and Eurosceptic tendencies of the young European cohort and
- to identify factors which may exert some influence on the Pro-European and Eurosceptic feelings of young Europeans.

Moreover, the specific objectives will be:

- to study possible generational differences in the attachment to the EU;
- to compare the commitment to the EU of young cohorts between member states and
- to analyse the significance of each factor identified as a reason for youngsters to support or distance from the European Union.

The research project will proceed in the following steps: in section 2, a theoretical framework will conceptualize the notion of *European identity* and its contextual relevance. It will also review previous literature on the relation between age and support for the European Union. Henceforth, various hypothesis will be established, introducing different elements which may have an impact on youngsters' EU identity. Afterwards, section 3 will introduce the methodology employed in the research. Subsequently, section 4 will develop an empirical data analysis whose objective is to test the previous hypothesis and to elucidate the factors which truly influence the construction of the European identity of the young cohort. Finally, section 5 will evaluate the main findings and provide the principal conclusions of the project.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1 European identity**

The European Union was established in 1992 as an economic and political supranational entity, which nowadays represents the union of 27 European countries and its respective citizenry.

Created on the basis of the European Economic Community (arisen in 1957), the Treaty on European Union (1992), also known as the Maastricht Treaty, established the European Union as an institution on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February of 1992. Starting from that point, the EU has democratically ratified three principal treaties (Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, Treaty of Nice in 2001 and Treaty of Lisbon in 2007), which are binding agreements that set out the objectives of the organization, the functioning of the EU institutions, its relationship with the countries, etc.

The Maastricht Treaty, apart from the goal of economic cohesion, emphasized the political dimension of the organization and its aim to get closer to the citizen, making him part of the decisions taken and establishing the *Citizenship of the Union*. In fact, the Treaty made the term *European identity* a priority (even though previous allusions to the concept had been made before the EU came into existence) and manifested the ambition of the European elites to reinforce it hereafter as a source for political legitimacy and cohesion between member states. That is why, before getting into more detail, it is necessary to define the idea.

The identity of Europeans – referred not to Europe as a whole, but in the context of the European Union – is a transnational and collective cultural-political identity. It calls for a minimalist definition of Europe that at the same time wants to be inclusive of national sub-identities and maintain multi-culturalism (Thiel, 2005: 4). It includes a series of rights and duties to be granted to every person holding an EU country nationality throughout all the territory of the Union, and a certain sense of belonging.

The conformation of such identity rests on three subjective dimensions (that do not necessarily have to be displayed concurrently): (1) the *cognitive* recognition of being a member of the Union; (2) the *evaluative* aspect based on the comparison of Europeans with non-Europeans and the content and values that are used to do so, and (3) the *affective* part related to the attachment and concern for other members of the group, as a result of a process of trust (Royuela and López-Bazo, 2020: 53).

Some politicians, as a mechanism to construct the European sense of belonging, have alluded to common values and historical and cultural roots, but it seems insufficient to focus on traditional models of identification faced with an enlarged and diverse list of member states. In fact, different academics identify three possible sources of EU identity: first, the just mentioned *ethno-cultural* components (although they are usually more present in the construction of national identities). Second, a *civic* axis, which considers identities being raised on duties and rights which come from laws and treaties of the Union, such as an emphasis for peaceful coexistence, human rights and the maintenance of the common good (Royuela and López-Bazo, 2020: 54). And finally, some add an *instrumental* view, which counts that identities are based on a calculus of individual self-interest (Ruiz Jiménez *et al.*, 2004).

The threefold sources explained may not be the only factors that influence the EU “we-feeling”. Royuela and López-Bazo (2020: 55) consider it raises from mechanisms of information (mainly messages coming from political elites or from other people, that may convince a citizen of its identification) and direct experiences, such as taking part in the Erasmus+ program or enjoying the free movement of goods, events that affect citizens’ perceptions of the Union.

For some authors, the shared pan-national identity alone does not guarantee citizens’ support for EU integration (Thiel, 2005: 1), while others expound it is a necessary precondition to generate a sense of solidarity and cooperation that stimulates positive integration (Lehning, 2001: 273). Following this second position and ascribed to the necessity to ensure the project of trustful cooperation between the members of the Union at present, but especially its feasibility in the future, the European political elites have been the central promoters of the EU sense of belonging. They trigger a “top-down” perspective, fostered by “the continuous exposition to EU symbols and institutionalisation of the EU system of governance” (Bruter, 2005, cited in Petithomme, 2008: 25). That is why, in most member states, the raise in European identity is connected to the date of entrance in the Union, which does not imply the dismissal of other national or regional feelings. Therefore, some authors formulate the idea of *double identities* as a common element of liberal democracies (Lehning, 2001: 250), and express that different “we-feelings” may be based on more or less intensity of the sources named before. For example, Ruiz Jiménez *et al.* (2004) state that the EU sense of belonging is mainly based on instrumental reasons, developed without a large emotional engagement, while national identities depend more on cultural factors.

The instrumentality of pro-European attitudes results in a weak identity which is close to the liberal concept of citizenship, that emphasises economic and civil rights in the public sphere, but disregards cultural and political subjective conditions. That is, when confronting nationalist culturalism (and even experiences of national populism), citizens fail to relate to the European community (Delgado-Moreira, 1997). Moreover, the top-down “we-feeling” remains an elite project, because it disregards the need of constant reformulation to face circumstances such as the Union enlargement, the 2008 financial crisis, migration waves, etc. For example, as vindicated by Krzyzanowski, migrants are usually excluded from the European project, which sees migration as a problem. Actually, the 2000s’ efforts to reform the institutions as a way to reconnect with Europeans, frequently seen as a political opportunistic path, led to a mix of sectional positions which were difficult to channel as a common perspective, as seen in the lack of agreement to validate the European Constitution<sup>1</sup> (2010: 53, 220).

In fact, citizens current questioning of the role of the Union and its democratic efficiency, evidenced by a decreasing participation in the European Parliament elections (Català and Nieto Ferràndez, 2018: 17, 31), shows a growing alienation from the common project.

## **2.2 Support for the EU and young people**

Regarding the attitudes towards the European Union, many authors have theorised an age-support correlation, explaining that life cycle<sup>2</sup> and cohort effects influence on citizens’ sense of belonging to the EU. While the presumption that young people hold more positive postures is widespread in both the popular and academic narrative (Down and Wilson, 2013: 432), others state that youngsters are more Eurosceptic (Daniele and Geys, 2015: 667), and some even defend that there is no meaningful relationship between age and support for the Union (Carey and Lebo, 2000: 12).

Indeed, when we talk about cohorts, we are referring to a group of people which comprise longer periods than single birth years, and who have socialized in a particular time. As adolescence is considered a key period during which individuals are most impressionable, the

---

<sup>1</sup> The *Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe* of 2004, was a non-ratified treaty intended to create a constitution for the EU. French and Dutch voters rejected the document in 2005, which put an end to the ratification process.

<sup>2</sup> The concept “life cycle effect”, which appeared during the 1970s in Sociology, explains that a person moves through different stages during his life-course (childhood, adolescence, adulthood, etc), which may affect his political behaviour (Pickard, 2019; 114)



context prevailing throughout that lifetime influences the attitudes of that cohort, which persist during their life-course. That is why the attitudinal positions may differ from cohort to cohort. For example, they may present different European attachments (Alwin and Krosnick, 1991: 170).

Given that the young generation is a crucial participant to consolidate the trust in the European Union in the following decades, the present study will try to ascertain whether young cohorts have a stronger European identity than older generations<sup>3</sup>, and explore the differences between young people, by analysing the components which significantly affect their EU attitudes so as to compare the members of this generation to each other. In the analysis, life-cycle effects will not be scrutinized, as the research will only focus on the attitudes of different cohorts at present (especially centred in the young cohort), and not analyse the evolution of the attitudinal traits of each generation in their life-course.

The *young cohort*, following Down & Wilson's criteria, comprises those people reaching 18 after the introduction of the European Monetary Union; in other words, those born after 1987. They are characterized by coming of age in an already developed Union, with functioning institutions and policy making and which allows freedom of movement and enhances EU identity (2013: 440).

There are multiple empirical findings which reinforce the idea that a positive image of the European Union diminishes with the augmentation of age. In fact, considering additional socio-economic variables, Mathieu Petithomme stated that the European most favourable group is constituted by young people, coming from an urban background, highly educated, with a good knowledge of the EU, enjoying a propitious socioeconomic situation and tending to identify with the left. On the contrary, the group of old low-educated people, living in the countryside, more right-sided and with a bad knowledge of the institution fear losing their socioeconomic conditions and national autonomy due to the European integration (2008: 21, 23).

Likewise, other studies conducted by the European Commission, consider that efforts to encourage the "Europeanness" should focus on the young generation, which is more sensitive to inclusive and liberal values which surpass national identity (2012: 12, 15). In fact, Mihalcea, *et al.* repeat the idea that the young cohort has been in contact with Europe since an early age,

---

<sup>3</sup> The terms *generation* and *cohort* are used indistinctively to refer to a group of people born in a bracket of years and who share certain formative background (Lauterbach and De Vries, 2020).

by learning more foreign languages, travelling abroad, enjoying student exchange programs allowed by open borders, etcetera. They have been born in a more globalised time and are more open to connections with new people (2013: 65-66).

At the same time, national identity and the legitimization of national governments impacts on youngsters' level of EU support. As stated by Lauterbach and De Vries, while a higher identification with the own nation increases the European sense of belonging, a lack of commitment to the nation is related with a dislike of further European integration. Moreover, a suboptimal economic context of a member state, also negatively impacts on the support for the European Union (2020: 173).

Further research on the topic, such as the study "Orientations of Young Men and Women to Citizenship and European Identity" (European Commission, 2005) and the report "What leads young people to identify with Europe?" (Spannring, Wallace and Datler, 2008) repeat analogous factors that are stated to influence youngsters' EU identity, which are now presented as hypothesis:

*H1: The younger the cohort, the stronger the European identity (compared to older cohorts).*

*H2: As national identity increases in the young cohort, young individual's European sense of belonging rises.*

*H3: As exposure to other European countries and their cultures increases (through European exchange programs and benefiting from free mobility), the European identity of youngsters strengthens.*

*H4: A suboptimal economic context of a member state, yields a decrease in young people's EU identification.*

Other factors included in wider generational studies, such as the influence of having lived specific European historical events (Mihalcea, *et al.*, 2013: 69); the exposure to the official European symbols; and the inclination towards the defence of common values of democracy and freedom will not be developed further, because there is no updated data available which divides the results into cohorts and member states.

The next section will thoroughly explain every one of the factors included in the hypothesis and how each will be measured.

### **3. Data and Research design**

The present section will thoroughly explain the methodology used in the research. It will go through every hypothesis to explain how each will be operationalized and incorporated in the empirical statistical analysis. Nonetheless, it should be noted that, except for the first section, which develops a comparison between cohorts, the rest of the research project only focuses on young people, in order to compare the members of this cohort to each other. The aim of the investigation is to analyse why some young people feel more European than others. Thus, the conclusions – again, except for the initial hypothesis, which will provide an answer to the sub-RQ – will only apply to the aged 15-24.

#### ***H1: The younger the cohort, the stronger the European identity (compared to older cohorts).***

Before anything else, following the notions of the previous part, the first step is to define what is considered as “young cohort” in the investigation. Although several references from previous literature consider as “young” those born after 1987 (Down and Wilson, 2013: 440), the present study will be more specific. Following the criteria presented in different Eurostat publications, the analysis will only focus on the European citizens that were between 15 and 24 years old in 2019<sup>4</sup>.

In the second place, how will the European identity be measured? There are multiple approaches to do so. One of them, present in several Standard Eurobarometer<sup>5</sup>, is a version of the “Linz-Moreno” question<sup>6</sup> - because the standard identity question asks about the present and not the future -, which queries “In the near future, do you see yourself as (1) [nationality] only, (2) [nationality] and European, (3) European and [nationality] or (4) European only?”. Nevertheless, the Linz-Moreno question has been absent in the most recent Eurostat data, as has happened with other indexes such as the question “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?”. Some of them have been left out since 2017 or the results have not been divided by age groups and countries, which are two key requisites to include a variable in the investigation,

---

<sup>4</sup> The Standard Eurobarometer 91 (European Commission), published in 2019, is the most recent report on “European Citizenship and Public Opinion”, as 2020 Eurobarometer 92 and 93 covered other topics. A new report on Public Opinion has been published on May 2021, weeks before the presentation of the Final Degree Project.

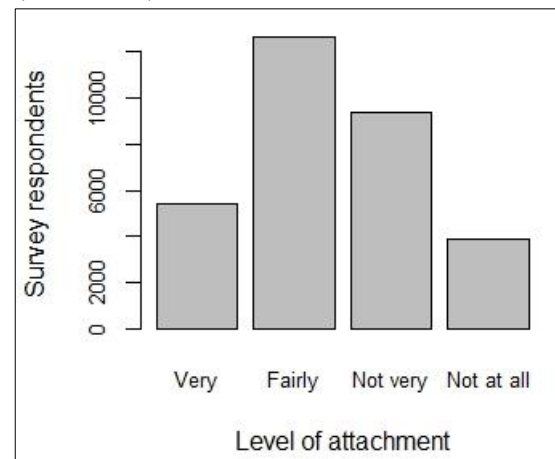
<sup>5</sup> The main advantage of Eurobarometer data is that it presents statistics across countries and over time.

<sup>6</sup> The question, introduced to study the Scottish sub-national identity relative to Britain, is named after Luis Moreno Fernández, a sociologist. Moreno himself recognized the scale was designed by Linz, but he was the one that promoted its popularization in the Anglo-Saxon world.

as the study focuses on the differences between cohorts and member states. It is difficult to follow-up the EU identity indexes, as they keep changing throughout the editions.

For these reasons, the present investigation will use another variable, which can be named as *Attachment to the EU index*. It focuses on the affective component of identity (Bruter, cited in Huyst, 2009: 4) and it is the most direct index to measure the EU “we-feeling” currently included in the official statistics. The exact question asked in the “Standard Eurobarometer 91 Report on European Citizenship” (European Commission, 2019: 12) is: “Please tell me how attached you feel to the European Union”, with four different possible answers: “very attached”, “fairly attached”, “not very attached”, “not at all attached”<sup>7</sup> (figure 1). Even though there is no measure free of critique (it is not exactly the identity what is being measured, but the affection towards the EU), this index, which was updated in 2019 for the last time, appears as the only available option to address European identity.

**Figure 1:** *Attachment to the European Union* (all cohorts)



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91

Therefore, the results of the *Attachment to the European Union index*, will be examined across different age groups (15 to 24 years, 25 to 39, 40 to 54 and more than 55), so as to be able to develop a cohort comparison that indicates whether young cohorts have a stronger affection towards the EU than older generations. The comparison between cohorts will be based on contemporary data, as the option to evaluate possible cohort differences when each older cohort was 15-24 years would not be accurate: the European Union started promoting the pan-national identity when it came into existence in 1992, while its previous analogous institution (the European Economic Community) did not foster it. For this first hypothesis, all European member states will be considered<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> The level “don’t know”, which received only a small number of answers, will be excluded of the analysis for all the variables.

<sup>8</sup> The study of reference, which is the 2019 Eurobarometer 91, was developed before the United Kingdom’s Brexit, and therefore includes the country in the analysis and considers the EU with 28 members. The present study will use the same criteria.

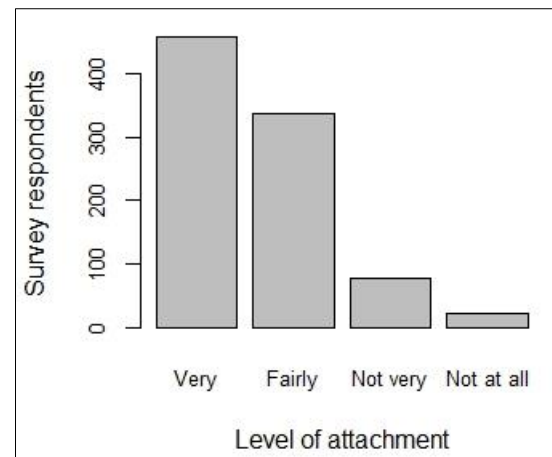
***H2: As the Young cohort's national identity increases, Young individual's European sense of belonging increases.***

A second aim of the research project is to verify whether and how national identity influences the attachment of citizens to the European Union. A reason for a connection between both variables, as stated by Silvia Merler *et al.* (2018), would be the role of national governments in any debate about European integration and governance. She considers that a lack of legitimacy of national leaders in their territory, could motivate a negative view about that country developing any further integration in the EU, and vice versa.

Secondly, Hooghe and Marks consider that European citizens tend to favour the EU project when they are more committed to national culture and identity, as long as national elites are united. But, again, when there are internal divisions, the opposition towards European integration raises. Internal regional differences (considering the defence of stateless nations, for example), could also generate a negative impact on EU attachment (2005: 426, 437). However, considering the length limitations of the present research, regional differences will be left aside.

Therefore, the operationalization of national identity – *Attachment to own country index* - will be based on another Eurobarometer question: “Please tell me how attached you feel to your country”, which again has four answers to choose from and presents the results divided by age groups (figure 2, which shows the 15-24 results). The results of this variable will be put in relation with the previous *Attachment to the European Union index*, in order to assess whether a higher national identity within the young generation has influence on a hypothetical rise of the European sense of belonging. That is why, the only cohort studied in this second hypothesis will be the 15-24-year group.

**Figure 2:** Young cohort's attachment to own country



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91

However, the statistical analysis will also introduce an alternative way of operationalizing identity, which captures the difference in identity between the EU and the nation. This is to measure potential differences in affection, as it is not the same to feel both European and national than having a stronger identity in one of them but not the other. A new variable, under

the name *Difer*, will be created by subtracting the *Attachment to the Country* data from the *Attachment to the EU* variable.

Another necessary specification is to clarify that, henceforth, the investigation will exclusively focus on 10 out of the total 28 European member states, so as to simplify the statistical analysis. The included countries are the six largest countries of the EU (Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Poland, United Kingdom) and 4 countries that benefit or have benefited from the European Union's aid to face the 2008 financial and economic crisis (Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Cyprus) (European Commission, 2019: 10). In fact, these are the same 10 countries the results of whom are systematically emphasised in the 2019 Eurobarometer.

***H3: As exposure to other European countries and their cultures increases, European identity strengthens.***

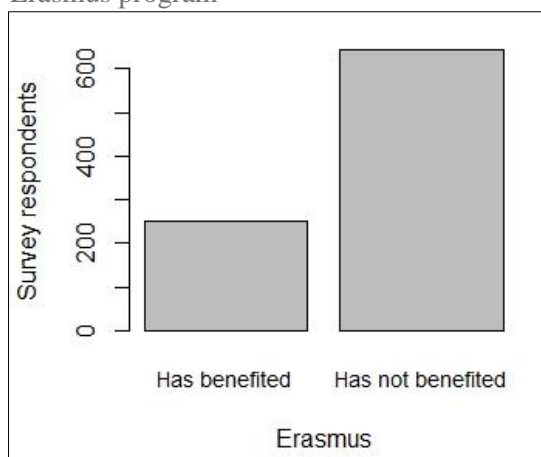
The third hypothesis of the study aims to measure whether a possible linkage between having benefited from some possibilities provided by the EU and European identity exists or not. As possibilities, the research will consider taking part in some university exchange program such as Erasmus and also enjoying the free mobility within the Schengen Area, as many authors consider that a high level of exposure of young generations to other cultures (in this case, the cultures of other European member states) influences on their level of common identity (Spannring, Wallace and Datler, 2008: 482).

**a. Participation in Erasmus exchange programs**

Firstly, the research intends to prove whether a growth in European identity is produced when a citizen takes part in an Erasmus exchange. While the academic Ian Wilson explains that those who decide to take part in an Erasmus – or similar - are already more pro-European before the exchange (2011: 1114), other authors consider that the experience enhances a greater knowledge of Europe and is key in raising EU fondness, as collective identity is fostered by cross-border interactions (Mitchell, 2015: 345).

The measurement of the Erasmus effect will be carried out using the data provided by the Eurobarometer question: “Could you tell me whether you have benefited or not from studying in another country?” (figure 3). The results (“has benefited” or “has not benefited”) will be put in relation with the *Attachment to the European Union index*, to assess whether a higher relative proportion of Erasmus students in a country relates to a stronger EU identity. Again, the analysis will only focus on the 15-24-year cohort.

**Figure 3.** Young cohort's participation in the Erasmus program



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91

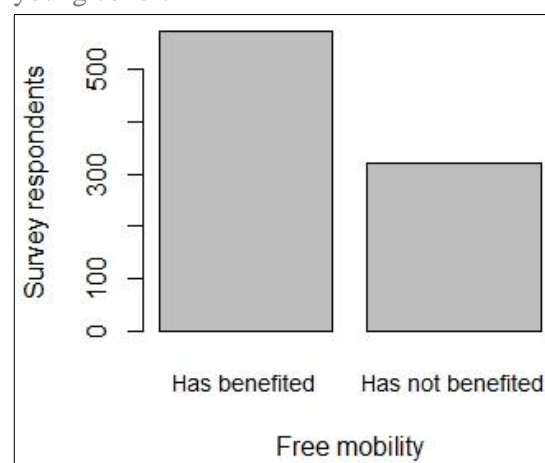
### b. Benefiting from the free EU mobility

Secondly, free mobility (no or less border controls when travelling to other member states) allowed by the Schengen Agreement<sup>9</sup> could also be related to an increased attachment to the European Union.

Spannring, *et al.*, consider that travelling to and visiting other European countries may have several benefits, such as being more familiar with perspectives from outside one's nation, raising the possibilities of job finding, enrolling in education programs abroad, etc. (2008: 485-486). The authors consider that these multiple opportunities positively affect the EU attitudes of young people and pave the way for communicating with people from other cultures.

In the research, the variable is operationalized through a question presented in the 2019 Eurobarometer: "Could you tell me whether you have benefited from no/less border controls when travelling abroad?" (figure 4). The results of the young cohort ("has benefited" or "has not benefited") will be put in relation with the European attachment of youngsters of the 10 selected countries.

**Figure 4:** Benefiting from Free Mobility in the young cohort



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91

<sup>9</sup> The Schengen Agreement was a treaty signed in 1985 that led to the abolishment of the national borders of the majority of the European countries, to create the "Schengen Area".

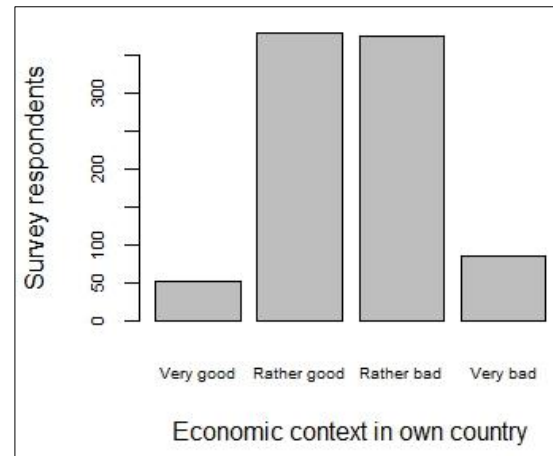
***H4: A suboptimal economic context of a member state, yields a decrease in young people's EU identification.***

The last hypothesis refers to a possible connection between the economic situation of a country and the European identity. Authors such as Ciaglia, *et al.* (2018) explain that it does play a role, for example, resulting in a decrease in EU identification in a member state undergoing an economic crisis.

Some authors mention that in Euro-debtor countries, such as Spain and Greece, young generations are negatively disposed to a process of greater European integration. In contrast, young people in Euro-creditor states are more supportive (Daniele & Geys, cited in Lauterbach and De Vries, 2020: 173).

In the analysis, this phenomenon will be operationalized using the obtained data of another Eurobarometer question: “How would you judge the current situation of the national economy?” (figure 5). For each of the 10 member states, youngsters’ answers to the question (“very good”, “rather good”, “rather bad” and “very bad”) will be used as a measure of the national economic situation. The results of the variable will be put in relation with the question of EU identification.

**Figure 5.** Young cohort's valuation of the national economy



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91

The next section will develop a quantitative statistical research to empirically test which of these hypotheses are accurate and which are not. The results will be presented following the order of the four hypotheses, in separate sections: a bivariate and a multivariate analysis.



## 4. Results

The results of the quantitative statistical analysis on European identity, between cohorts and within the young generation, are reported in this section, which separates the outcomes in two parts: a bivariate examination of each explanatory variable confronted with *Attachment to the EU*, and a multivariate analysis gathering the different factors.

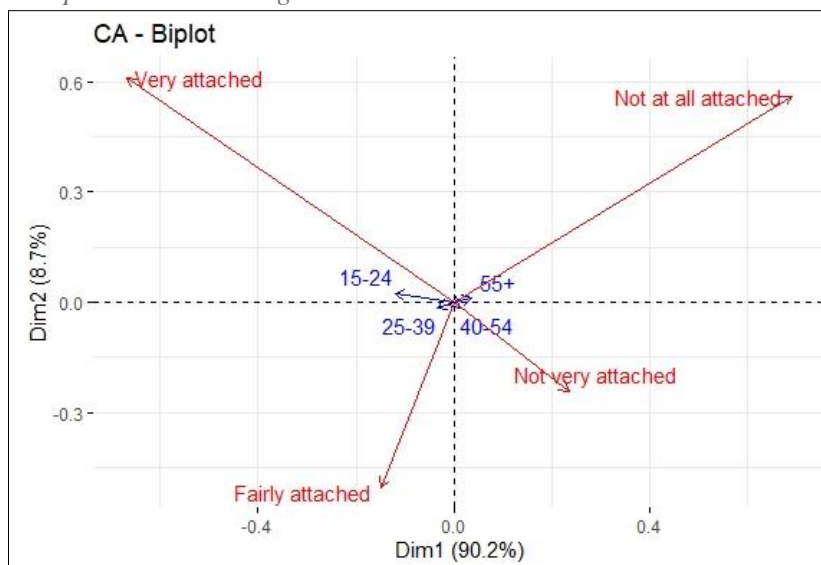
### 4.1 Bivariate analysis

#### Analysis of the influence of age cohorts on the level of attachment to the EU

Is the European identity more prominent in the youngest cohort? The results (Appendix A) show that the young generation is the group that presents the largest pro-European attitudes. In fact, the feeling of EU attachment increases every time we pass from an older to a younger cohort, which implies that Eurosceptic attitudes have more relevance in the oldest cohorts. The relation between *Attachment to the EU* and *Age* is statistically significant (Appendix B).

The evidence provided by a Correspondence Analysis (figure 6) between the two variables, indicates that there is a strong association between being “15-24 years” and feeling “very attached” to the EU, which also happens for “55+ years” and “not at all attached”. Each cohort is strongly associated with a particular level of attachment to the EU, and the affection is lower as the respondents get older. At the same time, being “25-29 years” and “not at all attached”, and the “55+” cohort and “fairly attached”, for example, are negatively associated.

**Figure 6:** Correspondence analysis between *Attachment to the European Union* and *Age*



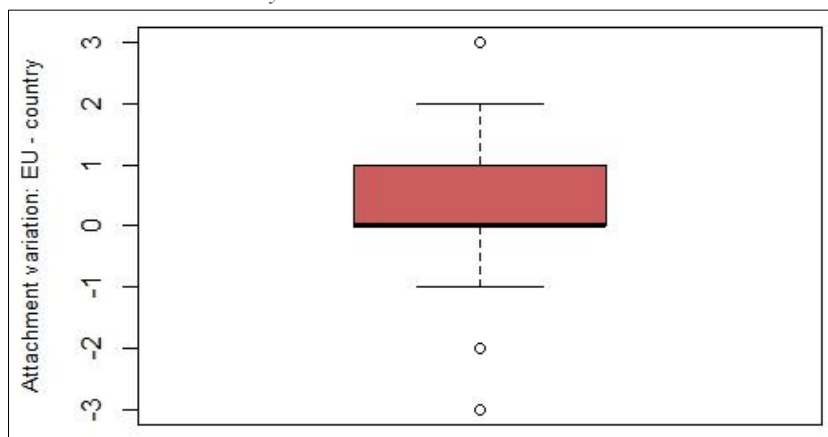
Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

### Analysis of the influence of national identity on the European identity of young cohorts

The bivariate analysis continues with the assessment of a possible relationship between the response variable - *Attachment to the EU* - and *Attachment to own country*, only focusing on the young cohort in the 10 selected member states. Both country- and EU attachment-levels are associated with a number (the same that the Eurobarometer survey provided): *1-Very Attached, 2-Fairly Attached, 3-Not very attached, 4-Not at all attached*, a notation which is key to comprehend the interpretation of the models.

The graphical representation of the variable *Difer* (figure 7) (subtracting the *Attachment to the Country* from the *Attachment to the EU*), indicates that the median variation in the attachment of youngsters to both entities is 0 (no variation). However, the first and third quartiles place the variation between 0 and 1 (higher detachment from EU than from the country), which indicates that some respondents increase their level of attachment by one (for example, from feeling “fairly attached” to “very attached”) when the identity question is focused on their country and not on the EU.

**Figure 7:** Difference between the *Attachment to the European Union* and *to the own country*



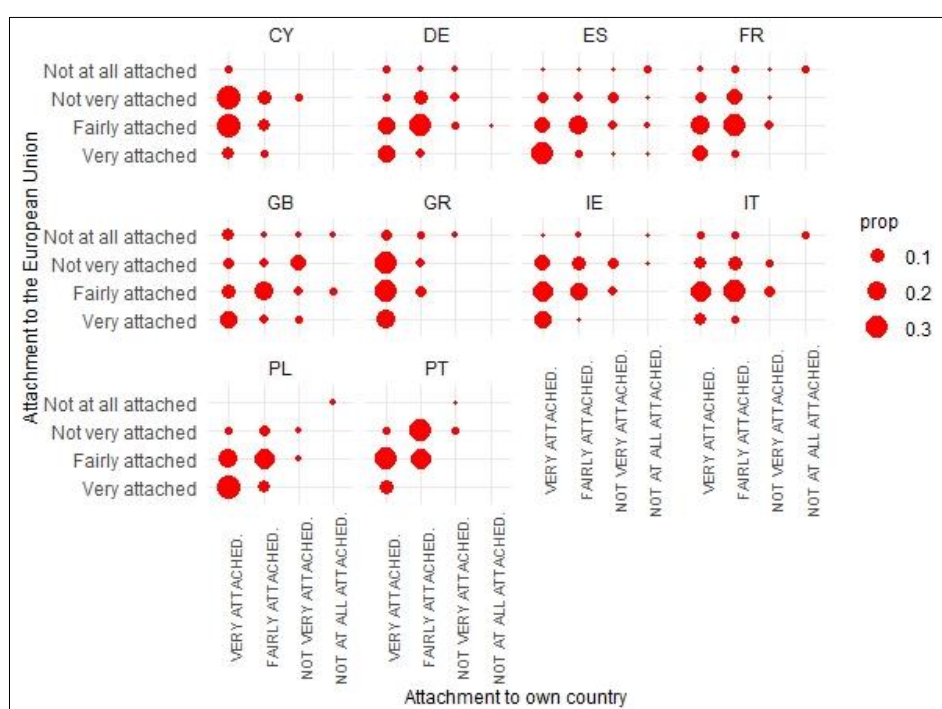
Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

Once again, the correlation between the considered variables is statistically significant (Appendix C). According to a Correspondence analysis (Appendix D), the respective levels of “very attached” are strongly associated. The same happens for the other coinciding variables. Contrarily, being “very attached” to the EU and “not very attached” to the own country present a clear negative association.

This pattern could be further explained by considering the variable *Country*, to display how the feelings of identity towards the own country and the EU are distributed in the ten selected European member states. Figure 8 shows, with small variations, that youngsters who feel “very

attached” to their country, especially in Portugal, Italy and France, tend to consider themselves, in a highest proportion, “fairly attached” to the EU, while in countries such as Spain and Poland, they would most frequently answer “very attached”. Contrarily, in Cyprus, the proportion of “not very” and “fairly” attached represents similar percentages. In the second place, youngsters who feel “fairly attached” to their country, most regularly reply the same when asked about the EU, except for Portugal and Cyprus, where “not very attached” slightly surpasses the other level. The number of youngsters who feel “not very” and “not at all attached” to their country is small in the ten states.

**Figure 8:** Distribution of the *Attachment to own country* and to the *EU* among member states



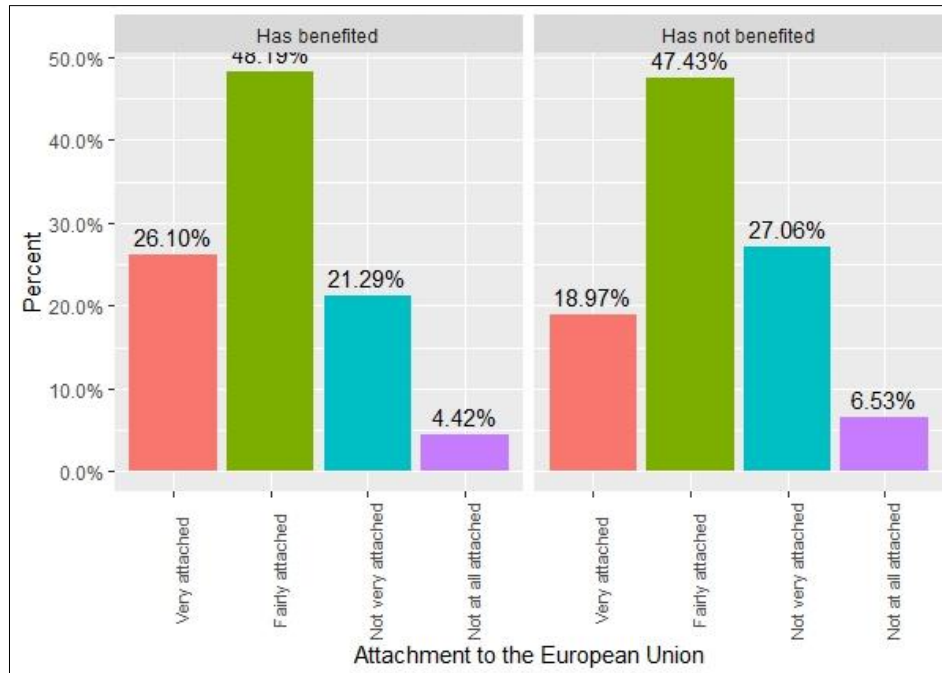
Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

## Analysis of the influence of the exposure to other European countries and their cultures on the European identity of young cohorts

### a. Erasmus & Attachment to the European Union.

Figure 9 draws the distribution of each level of European attachment according to the answer to having benefited or not from studying abroad. Erasmus participation has a positive and significant effect on EU attachment (Appendix E). That is, when young people have participated in an exchange program, the EU identity is stronger. The percentage of “very attached” and “fairly attached” to the EU is higher for exchange beneficiaries, while “not very” and “not at all attached” are levels of larger importance for non-Erasmus beneficiaries.

**Figure 9:** Distribution of the *Attachment to the EU* depending on having studied abroad



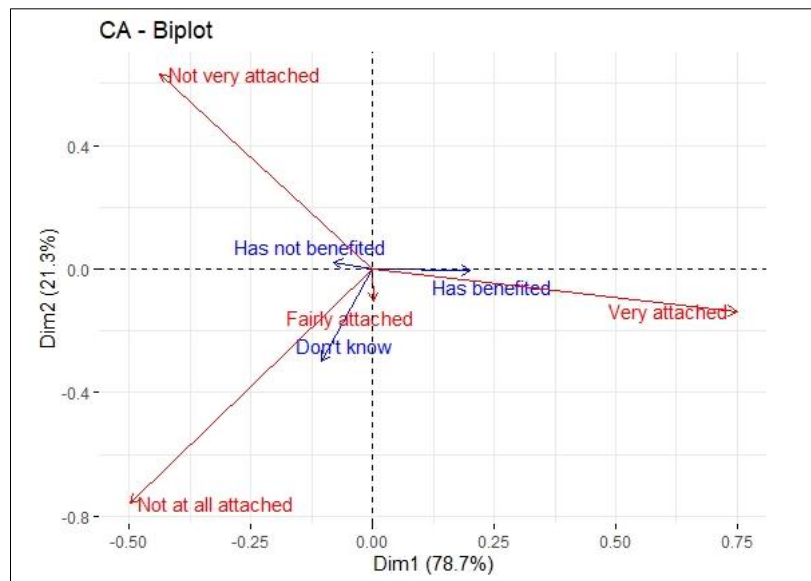
Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

This pattern could also be shown by a Correspondence analysis between the two variables. Figure 10<sup>10</sup> displays that having participated in an Erasmus is strongly associated with pro-European attitudes, whereas having not benefited from this experience is closely related to Eurosceptic feelings. In fact, Erasmus participation is negatively correlated with feeling “not very attached” to the EU, and viceversa.

Finally, the analysis of the situation of each country (Appendix F) indicates that youngsters who have benefited from the experience of studying abroad - which are a little proportion of the total – tend to present pro-European feelings, except for Greece, Italy and Cyprus, where the proportion of respondents who feel “not very attached” is quite large. Moving towards non-beneficiaries, Eurosceptic feelings are generally more relevant than before, as shown in countries such as Portugal, Ireland, and Germany.

<sup>10</sup> Note that the category “don’t know” of the variable *Erasmus* has been included to be able to develop the Correspondence Analysis, which requires more than 2 categories for each variable, but will not be taken any further attention.

**Figure 10:** Correspondence analysis between *Attachment to the EU* and *Erasmus*



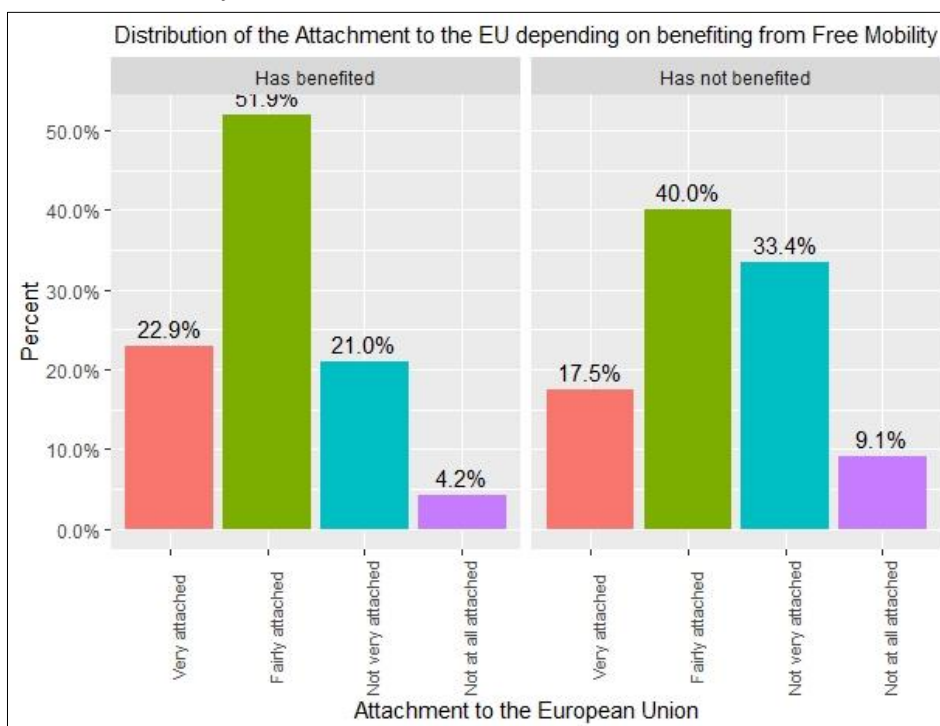
Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

#### b. Free mobility & Attachment to the European Union

Free mobility within the European Union, on the other hand, also has a significant effect on the strength of the common identity (Appendix G). Compared to the “not benefited” category, the fact of having benefited from less border controls allowed by the EU is likely to raise the European attachment. Figure 11 indicates that youngsters who have benefited from free mobility show more intense EU feelings, while “not very” and “not at all attached” answers most frequently appear for non-free mobility beneficiaries.

Graphically, a Correspondence analysis (Appendix H) provides fine points about their relation: “has benefited” is strongly associated with “very attached” and “fairly attached”, while “has not benefited” is closer to “not very attached” or “not at all attached”. Moreover, having benefited from free mobility is greatly negatively correlated with feeling “not very” and “not at all attached” to the EU, and viceversa. The results are quite similar if we consider the case of each member state. However, it is worth noting that lower levels of EU identity are found in Ireland, United Kingdom, Cyprus, and Portugal, in comparison with the other considered countries (Appendix I).

**Figure 11:** Distribution of the *Attachment to the EU* depending on benefiting from *Free Mobility*



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

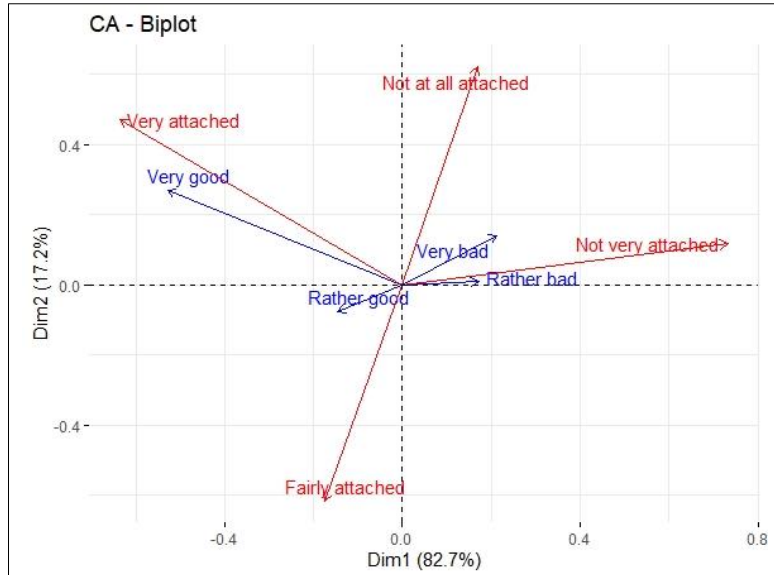
### Analysis of the influence of the economic context of a member State on the European identity of young cohorts

Finally, we should address the effect of the economic situation of each of the ten member states on the EU-support of the youth. In the case of a good economic functioning, the attachment to the European Union is higher than in opposite circumstances (Appendix J). Figure 12 reiterates these findings: feeling “very attached” to the EU is highly linked with valuing “very good” the national economy, while it is negatively associated with stating that the economic context of the own country is bad. On the contrary, poorly considering the economy is related with feeling “not very attached” to the EU. Once again, there is a statistically significant association between the two variables (Appendix K).

In this case, the differences between the ten member states (Appendix L) suggest three types of national economic – and thus, EU - perceptions: (1) an optimal economic context, as perceived in Germany, Ireland and Poland, where there’s a great share of respondents that consider the functioning of the economy as “very” or “rather good”; (2) a second-rate economic context, in Cyprus, where the mode is “rather good”, but the percentage of “rather bad” answers is notable; and (3) a sub-optimal economic context, in Spain, France, United Kingdom, Greece and Portugal, where the largest number of answers consider the economic situation as “rather bad”.

In the first case, youngsters most frequently respond "fairly attached" when they are asked about the European Union, while for the second typology, the proportion of "not very attached" competes with the previous mode. For the third group, the "not very attached" feelings are more relevant.

**Figure 12:** Correspondence analysis between *Attachment to the EU* and *Economy*



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

## 4.2 Multivariate analysis

To better illustrate the research, we ran Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Regressions<sup>11</sup> on the European identity question. All the models take as the response variable the *Attachment to the EU*, from the Eurobarometer original variable data, except for Model 9, which draws upon the created variable *Difer*. Remember that EU attachment-levels are associated with the following numbers: 1-Very Attached, 2-Fairly Attached, 3-Not very attached, 4-Not at all attached.

In the first place, the independent factors which have been previously analysed will be introduced in models that consider, one at a time, the dependent variable and an explanatory factor. In this report, we control for the following determinants affecting European identity: sex, social class (citizens' self-assessment), area of residence (operationalized via the size of the locality) and region (or NUTS II, which are the basic regions defined by the Eurostat nomenclature of territorial units for statistics).

<sup>11</sup> In most cases, if we developed Ordinal Logistic Regressions, we would obtain the same results.



Afterwards, we will combine the different independent variables in multivariate models. The result will be a final table with several models that will allow us to see the effect of European identity on young versus older cohorts on one side (table 1), and the other variables on the other (one by hypothesis), to understand what factors lie behind the EU identity (table 2).

### Age and Attachment to the EU

Consider, for instance, the cohort of the respondent. Table 1 includes two similar models (one that incorporates the previously mentioned controls and another one who does not<sup>12</sup>), with *Attachment to the EU* as the response variable and Cohort (*Age*) as the independent variable. Results show that the constant term (the category of reference is 15-24 years) is 2.27 and 2.39, which indicates that, on average, youngsters feel “fairly attached” to the EU. Indeed, they suggest that an increase in age enhances stronger Euro-sceptic attitudes (i.e. 0.14 more detached from the EU if the respondent is 55+ years old). At the 99,9% level of significance, *Age* is statistically significant, showing a clear association between cohorts and European identity. The goodness of fit of the model, via the R-squared measure, indicates that a 0.2 and 1 percent of the variance in the dependent variable, respectively, are explained by the independent variable.

**Table 1.** The effect of Age on European identity.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>	
	<i>Attachment to the EU</i>	
	(1)	(2)
25-39 years	0.07*** (0.02)	0.06*** (0.02)
40-54 years	0.12*** (0.02)	0.10*** (0.02)
55+ years	0.14*** (0.02)	0.11*** (0.02)
Sex		0.005 (0.01)
Social Class		-0.04*** (0.004)
Size locality		-0.02*** (0.01)
Region		0.01*** (0.001)
Constant: 15-24 years	2.27*** (0.02)	2.39*** (0.03)
Observations	31,338	29,869
R <sup>2</sup>	0.002	0.01
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.002	0.01
Residual Std. Error	0.91 (df = 31334)	0.90 (df = 29861)
F Statistic	22.80*** (df = 3; 31334)	33.70*** (df = 7; 29861)
Note:	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01	

Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

<sup>12</sup> From now on, only the results of the models which include the four control variables will be considered. The results of the regressions which do not incorporate the controls are available in the Appendix M, which presents similar outcomes (and thus is not of relevance to include both in the research body).



## **Regression models combining different independent variables**

The main aim of the work, however, is to study which factors significantly condition youngsters' European Identity when directly confronted with the *Attachment to the EU*. In the following models – all of which are controlled for *Sex*, *Social class*, *Size of the locality* and *Region* – *Age* will not be considered, as the previous model already exhibited the significance of cohorts in determining the level of EU attachment. Now it is the turn to focus on the youth and the relevance of the variables which are set to lie behind their EU attitudes.

### **a. Model 2: Attachment to own country.**

In the case of *Attachment to the country* as an independent variable, the coefficients associated with each category of the factor are statistically significant. The results indicate that a stronger national identity is connected to a greater attachment to the EU<sup>13</sup>. Contrarily, for individuals that feel “not at all attached” to the own country, the European identity is 1.28 lower than before. In this case, the R-squared indicates that a 13 percent of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the *Attachment to the country index*.

### **b. Model 3: Erasmus.**

As expected, the third model, with *Erasmus* as the explanatory variable, indicates that the EU identity of individuals that participated in an Erasmus programme is 0.16 higher than those that did not participate in an Erasmus programme. The factor is statistically significant, denoting a clear association between Erasmus participation and European identity. In this instance, the goodness of fit is smaller than the previous model.

### **c. Model 4: Free mobility.**

The results are quite similar if we consider the case of benefiting from free mobility. When such a situation occurs, the EU identity of youngsters' who have benefited from free mobility is 0.27 higher than those who have not had the use of less European border controls. The independent variable is statistically significant, and the goodness of fit of the model is similar to the R-squared value of model 3.

---

<sup>13</sup> Remember that country attachment-levels are associated with the numbers: 1-Very Attached, 2-Fairly Attached, 3-Not very attached, 4-Not at all attached. Thus, higher coefficients of the explanatory categories indicate an increase in Euroscepticism.

**Table 2.** Regression models of national identity, Erasmus, mobility and economy effects on the European identity of the young cohort.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
	Attachment to the EU							Difference Attach EU-Co
	Model2 (National identity)	Model3 (Erasmus)	Model4 (Mobility)	Model5 (Economy)	Model6 (All variables)	Model7 (Country variables)	Model8 (EU variables)	Model9 (All variables)
Fairly.Attco	0.38*** (0.06)				0.38*** (0.05)	0.38*** (0.05)		
Not very.Attco	0.74*** (0.10)				0.72*** (0.09)	0.71*** (0.09)		
Not at all.Attco	1.28*** (0.17)				1.26*** (0.17)	1.24*** (0.17)		
No Erasmus		0.16*** (0.06)			0.13** (0.06)		0.10 (0.06)	0.21*** (0.07)
No Mobility			0.27*** (0.06)		0.21*** (0.05)		0.25*** (0.06)	0.19*** (0.06)
Rather good (economy)				0.23* (0.12)	0.23** (0.11)	0.25** (0.11)		0.24* (0.13)
Rather bad (economy)				0.48*** (0.12)	0.42*** (0.11)	0.47*** (0.11)		0.38*** (0.13)
Very bad (economy)				0.54*** (0.14)	0.44*** (0.13)	0.52*** (0.13)		0.41*** (0.16)
Sex	-0.09* (0.05)	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.10* (0.05)	-0.09* (0.05)	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.12** (0.06)
Social class	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.03* (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)
Size locality	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.06* (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.05 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.03 (0.04)
Region	-0.01 (0.01)	0.0001 (0.01)	-0.001 (0.01)	-0.001 (0.01)	-0.01* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.001 (0.01)	-0.02*** (0.01)
Constant	2.26*** (0.12)	2.32*** (0.13)	2.35*** (0.13)	2.11*** (0.16)	1.77*** (0.16)	1.92*** (0.16)	2.27*** (0.13)	0.43** (0.18)
Observations	892	892	892	892	892	892	892	892
R <sup>2</sup>	0.13	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.18	0.16	0.04	0.06
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.12	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.17	0.15	0.03	0.05
Residual Std. Error	0.77 (df = 884)	0.82 (df = 886)	0.81 (df = 886)	0.81 (df = 884)	0.75 (df = 879)	0.76 (df = 881)	0.81 (df = 885)	0.87 (df = 882)
F Statistic	18.50*** (df = 7; 884)	2.71** (df = 5; 886)	5.93*** (df = 5; 886)	5.49*** (df = 7; 884)	16.10*** (df = 12; 879)	16.40*** (df = 10; 881)	5.39*** (df = 6; 885)	6.47*** (df = 9; 882)
Note:	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01							

Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

#### **d. Model 5: National economy.**

Model 5, which is the last regression with a unique independent factor, points at the significance of the variable *Economy* on youngsters' EU identity. Positively valuing the national economy is associated with a 0.54 higher support for the EU than for those who assess as sub-optimal the economic national context. All the coefficients associated with the factor categories are statistically significant at the 99,9% level, except for “rather good”, which is significant at the 95% level. The regression presents a goodness of fit similar to model 2 and 3.

#### **e. Model 6: All variables.**

In Model 6 we tested the European identity of youngsters considering the variables *Attachment to the own country*, *Erasmus*, *Free mobility* and *Economy*. As shown in Table 2, when young people feel very attached to their country, have participated in an Erasmus, have benefited from free mobility and value the national economy as very good, their EU attachment is 2.03 higher than when we refer to youngsters who are not at all attached to their country, have not participated in an Erasmus nor benefited from free mobility, and value the national economy as very bad.

The coefficients associated with the variables are highly significant for all categories at the 99.9% significance level, except for Erasmus and the category “rather good” (relative to the economic assessment), which are significant at the 99% level. The model explains a 18% of the EU attitudes, being in fact the OLS regression with the best goodness of fit.

#### **f. Model 7: Variables related to own country.**

We also estimated two separate models considering the different typology of the explanatory variables: Model 7, which only includes factors related to the country – *Attachment to the country* and *Economy* – indicates that, together, the variables explain a 16% of the variation of the EU attitudes, 2 percent lower than the previous regression. All the variables are significant above the 99.9% confidence level, except for the category “rather good”, which is significant at the 99% level.

In this case, the EU identity of individuals who are very attached to the own country and positively value the national economy is 1.76 higher than for those youngsters who are detached from their nation and negatively assess its economic functioning.

**g. Model 8: Variables related to the European Union.**

In the second place, a model which covers the variables related to the possibilities provided by the European Union – namely, taking part in an Erasmus exchange and less border controls – explains a 4% of the variation of the EU attitudes, comparatively lower than the previous regression. The intercept and *Mobility* are statistically significant at the 99,9% level, while *Erasmus* is not.

The coefficients indicate that young people who have benefited from less border controls and have participated in an Erasmus, will feel 0.35 more attached to the EU than if those conditions have not taken place.

**h. Model 9: *Difer* as dependent variable.**

Finally, Model 9 is the only OLS regression which employs a different response variable: *Difer*, which captures the difference between Attachment to the EU and to the Country. The model includes the same independent factors as Model 6, except for *Attachment to the own country*, whose information has been already sized by the new dependent variable. As shown in Table 2 – taking into account that the interpretation of this model is different – when young Europeans have benefited from less border controls and have participated in an Erasmus and, at the same time, value the national economy as very good, they are likely to feel equally attached to both the EU and their country (the variation is 0.43). This change in identity is on average lower than when we consider the contrary circumstances (no benefit from Erasmus nor free mobility and a bad economic context). In this case, we find a variation of 1.24, which indicates an increase in national identity from the base level of European affection.

The model explains a 6% of the identity variation between the two territorial levels. All the variables are significant above the 99.9% confidence level, except for the category “rather good” and the intercept, which are significant at the 95% and 99% level.

## **5. Conclusion and discussion**

Hitherto, the scholarly research on European identity has presented a divergence of assumptions regarding the relation between age and EU attitudes and concerning the study of pro-European and EU-sceptic inclinations of the young cohorts. In this work, it has been argued that the clarification of the concept of European identity, to begin with, and an up-to-date empirical analysis, were indispensable to elucidate the debate.

Generally, the results sustain Down and Wilson's – among other authors – explanation: the cohort appears to be a valid predictor of the level of European identity (2011; 2013). The older the respondent, the greater is the Euroscepticism. Not only there is a strong association between being young and very attached to the EU, but the level of EU attachment is lower every time we pass from a younger to an older cohort. Thus, we can confirm the first hypothesis: *The younger the cohort, the stronger the European identity (compared to older cohorts)*. This result would suggest future increases in EU identity, with the young pro-European cohorts replacing older Eurosceptic generations.

Narrowing the study to the young people, the effect of national identity in the empirical models highlights the similarity of the European and National identity levels in countries such as Spain and Poland, and a moderate increase in the national affection in other countries, such as Portugal, Italy and France. Results show that there is a positive significant association between feeling very attached to both the EU and the country, while low identity national levels are negatively associated with pro-European attitudes, thus confirming the second hypothesis: *As national identity increases in the young cohort, young individual's European sense of belonging rises*.

The study generates another essential finding: the level of exposure to other EU countries and their cultures – via the variable *Erasmus* and *Mobility* – has a significant effect on European identity. The analysis of the first variable - except for Model 8, in which the factor was not considered significant - signals that exchange beneficiaries present a stronger European identity than non-beneficiaries, since there is a high positive association between Erasmus participation and feeling very attached to the EU, and a negative association between the same category and Eurosceptic attitudes. The differences between states do not deserve any special consideration.

The paper also indicates that there is significant correlation between *EU identity* and *Mobility*. Youngsters who have benefited from less border controls present higher levels of European

attachment than the ones who have not, since, once again, there is a positive strong association between the category “has benefited” and pro-European answers, and a negative association between the first category and low EU attachment-levels. Repeatedly, the differences between member states are not of great relevance. Therefore, following these results, the third hypothesis is confirmed: *As exposure to other European countries and their cultures increases, the European identity of youngsters strengthens*<sup>14</sup>.

Finally, the last main finding of the research reveals that the economic situation of a country influences the European identity of the youth: the better is the valuation of the economy, the stronger is the EU affection, and vice versa. The analysis of member states denotes that youngsters living in good-functioning economies are more attached to the EU than those living in countries under economic slowdown. As a result, we can accept the fourth hypothesis: *A suboptimal economic context of a member state, yields a decrease in young people’s EU identification.*

Future research should explore additional tracks. In the first place, similar examinations should be conducted for all the cohorts – at present and at different time periods – as well as an analysis of possible life cycle effects and contextual scenarios affecting their EU attitudes. Secondly, additional factors which have not been examined in this project should also be included, such as the impact of language learning and the exposure to official European symbols, which different authors have already theorized about in relation with the EU identity. By including new variables, researchers should be able to identify new relationships and dynamics of the factors against the EU identity. Finally, prospective studies should extend to all European member states.

Overall, the research constitutes an initial approach in the reconnaissance of the fact that the legitimacy and continuity of the European Union deeply depends on the strength of the European identity and the role of young generations. This project demonstrates that European identity is stronger for younger cohorts and reveals that the pro-European attitudes of the youth are influenced by the national identity, the exposure to European transnational experiences and the economic national context. This evidence will hopefully encourage further research about the still scarcely explored *European identity*.

---

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that there was a third variable, *Language*, which was firstly included to test the third hypothesis. However, since the 2019 Eurobarometer 91 did not provide any data capturing the number of learnt foreign languages – another way of being exposed to other EU cultures – the final decision was to exclude it from the analysis.

## **6. References**

- Alwin, D. F. and Krosnick, J. A. (1991) 'Aging, Cohorts, and the Stability of Sociopolitical Orientations Over the Life Span', *American Journal of Sociology*, 97(1), pp. 169–195. doi: 10.1086/229744.
- Carey, S. and Lebo, M. (2000) 'In Europe, but not Europeans: The Impact of National Identity on Public Support for the European Union', *Joint Sessions of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR)*, (April), pp. 6–11. Available at: <https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/0aa7c24c-6d4d-45e0-8f24-c416445627d6.pdf> (Accessed: 28 December 2020).
- Català Oltra, L. and Nieto Ferràndez, M. (2018) 'Identidad Supranacional Europea en un contexto de crisis', *OBETS. Revista de Ciencias Sociales*, 13(1), pp. 15–43. doi: 10.14198/OBETS2018.13.1.01.
- Ciaglia, S., Fuest, C. and Heinemann, F. (2018) *What a feeling?! How to promote 'European Identity'*, *EconPol Europe*. Munich, Germany. Available at: [www.econpol.eu](http://www.econpol.eu) (Accessed: 30 October 2020).
- Council of the European Communities; and Commission of the European Communities (1992) *Treaty on European Union*. Available at: [https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europaeu/files/docs/body/treaty\\_on\\_european\\_union\\_en.pdf](https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europaeu/files/docs/body/treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf) (Accessed: 27 October 2020).
- Daniele, G. and Geys, B. (2015) 'Public support for European fiscal integration in times of crisis', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22(5), pp. 650–670. doi: 10.1080/13501763.2014.988639.
- Delgado-Moreira, J. M. (1997) 'Cultural Citizenship and the Creation of European Identity', *Electronic Journal of Sociology*. Available at: <http://www.sociology.org/content/vol002.003/delgado.html?PHPSESSID> (Accessed: 26 November 2020).
- Down, I. and Wilson, C. J. (2011) 'Age and Attitudes : Where's the Action? Life-Cycle and Cohort Effects on Support for "Europe"', in *Meeting of the European Union Studies Association*. Boston, March 3-5.
- Down, I. and Wilson, C. J. (2013) 'A rising generation of Europeans? Life-cycle and cohort effects on support for "Europe"', *European Journal of Political Research*, 52(4), pp. 431–456. doi: 10.1111/1475-6765.12001.

European Commission (2005) *Orientations of Young Men and Women to Citizenship and European Identity*. Brussels. Available at: [https://cordis.europa.eu/docs/projects/files/HPSE/HPSE-CT-2001-00077/100123871-6\\_en.pdf](https://cordis.europa.eu/docs/projects/files/HPSE/HPSE-CT-2001-00077/100123871-6_en.pdf) (Accessed: 24 October 2020).

European Commission (2012) *The Development of European Identity/Identities: Unfinished Business*.

European Commission (2019) *Standard Eurobarometer 91 Report: 'European Citizenship'*.

Guidi, R. (2014) 'Youth Policies in Europe: big changes after the big crisis? An explorative analysis', *Società Mutamento Politica: Rivista Italiana di Sociologia*, 5(10), pp. 241–264. doi: 10.13128/SMP-15414.

Hooghe, L. and Marks, G. (2005) 'Calculation, community and cues: Public opinion on European integration', *European Union Politics*, 6(419), pp. 419–443. doi: 10.1177/1465116505057816.

Huyst, P. (2009) *The Europeans of tomorrow: Researching European identity among young Europeans*. Ghent, Belgium. Available at: [http://aei.pitt.edu/33069/1/huyst.\\_petra.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/33069/1/huyst._petra.pdf) (Accessed: 22 October 2020).

Krzyżanowski, M. (2010) *The Discursive Construction of European Identities*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. Available at: [https://books.google.es/books?id=Ch4L1HgbwI0C&printsec=frontcover&hl=ca&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.es/books?id=Ch4L1HgbwI0C&printsec=frontcover&hl=ca&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false) (Accessed: 26 November 2020).

Lauterbach, F. and De Vries, C. E. (2020) 'Europe belongs to the young? Generational differences in public opinion towards the European Union during the Eurozone crisis', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(2), pp. 168–187. doi: 10.1080/13501763.2019.1701533.

Lehning, P. B. (2001) 'European citizenship: towards a european identity?', *Law and Philosophy*, 20(December 2000), pp. 239–282. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1010681009751>.

Merler, S., Tagliapietra, S. and Terzia, A. (2018) 'Improving the efficiency and legitimacy of the EU: A bottom-up approach', *Bruegel*, October 8th. Available at: <https://www.bruegel.org/2018/10/improving-the-effi>.

Mihalcea, A., Săvulescu, R. and Vitelar, A. (2013) 'Generation Y: between a civic and a cultural European identity', *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations*, 15(30), pp. 61–75. Available at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263086854\\_Generation\\_Y\\_between\\_a\\_civic\\_and\\_a\\_cul](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263086854_Generation_Y_between_a_civic_and_a_cul)



tural\_European\_identity.

Mitchell, K. (2015) 'Rethinking the "Erasmus Effect" on European Identity', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 53(2), pp. 330–348. doi: 10.1111/jcms.12152.

Petithomme, M. (2008) 'Is there a European identity? National attitudes and social identification toward the European Union', *Journal of Identity and Migration Studies*, 2(1), pp. 15–36. Available at: [http://www.e-migration.ro/jims/Vol2\\_no1\\_2008/JIMS\\_vol2\\_no1\\_2008.pdf#page=17](http://www.e-migration.ro/jims/Vol2_no1_2008/JIMS_vol2_no1_2008.pdf#page=17).

Pickard, S. (2019) *Politics, Protest and Young People: Political Participation and Dissent in 21st century Britain*, Palgrave Macmillan.

Royuela, V. and López-Bazo, E. (2020) 'Understanding the process of creation of European identity-the role of Cohesion Policy', *Investigaciones Regionales-Journal of Regional Research*, 46(1), pp. 51–70. Available at: [www.aecr.org](http://www.aecr.org) (Accessed: 22 October 2020).

Ruiz Jiménez, A. M. *et al.* (2004) 'European and National Identities in EU's Old and New Member States: Ethnic, Civic, Instrumental and Symbolic Components', *European Integration online Papers (EIoP)*, 8(11), pp. 1–37. Available at: <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2004-011a.htm>  
<http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2004-011a.htm> (Accessed: 30 October 2020).

Spannring, R., Wallace, C. and Datler, G. (2008) 'What leads young people to identify with Europe? An exploration of the impact of exposure to Europe and political engagement on European identity among Young Europeans', *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 9(4), pp. 480–498. doi: 10.1080/15705850802416929.

Striessnig, E. and Lutz, W. (2016) 'Demographic Strengthening of European Identity', *Population and Development Review*, 42(2), pp. 305–311. doi: 10.1111/j.1728-4457.2016.00133.x.

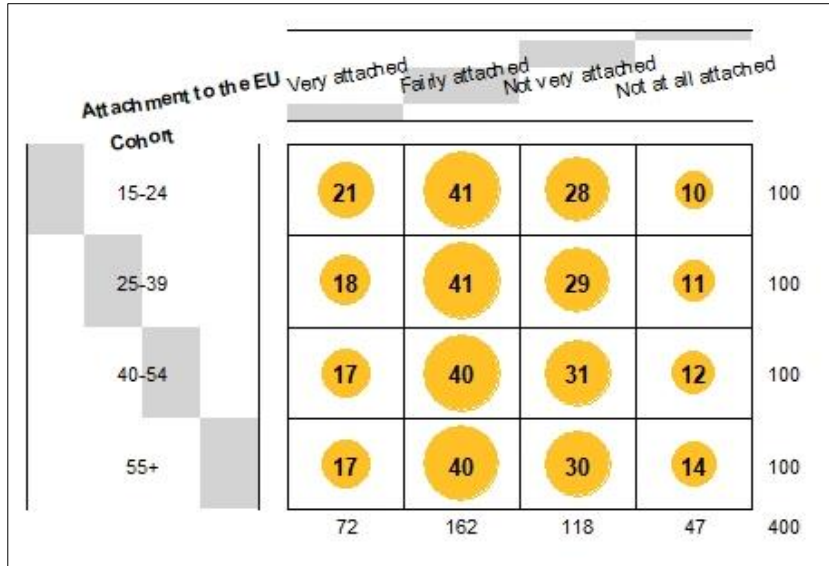
Thiel, M. (2005) 'European Identity and the Challenge of Enlargement', *Jean Monnet / Robert Schuman Paper Series*, 5(31), pp. 1–9. Available at: [www.miami.edu/eucenter](http://www.miami.edu/eucenter) (Accessed: 22 October 2020).

Wilson, I. (2011) 'What should we expect of "Erasmus generations"?', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49(5), pp. 1113–1140. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-5965.2010.02158.x.

## Appendix

### Appendix A. Levels of Attachment to the EU distributed among each cohort.

Each cohort, which accounts for a 100%, presents the proportional distribution of their respondents based on the question “Tell me how attached you feel to the European Union”.



### Appendix B. Chi-squared test between Age and Attachment to the EU.

The chi-squared test is computed to analyse a possible correlation (by assessing the score of the p-value) between Age and Attachment to the EU.

```
##
## Pearson's Chi-squared test
##
## data: novabd$age and novabd$qd1a_3
## X-squared = 78.568, df = 9, p-value = 3.11e-13
```

Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

### Appendix C. Chi-squared test between Attachment to Country and Attachment to the EU.

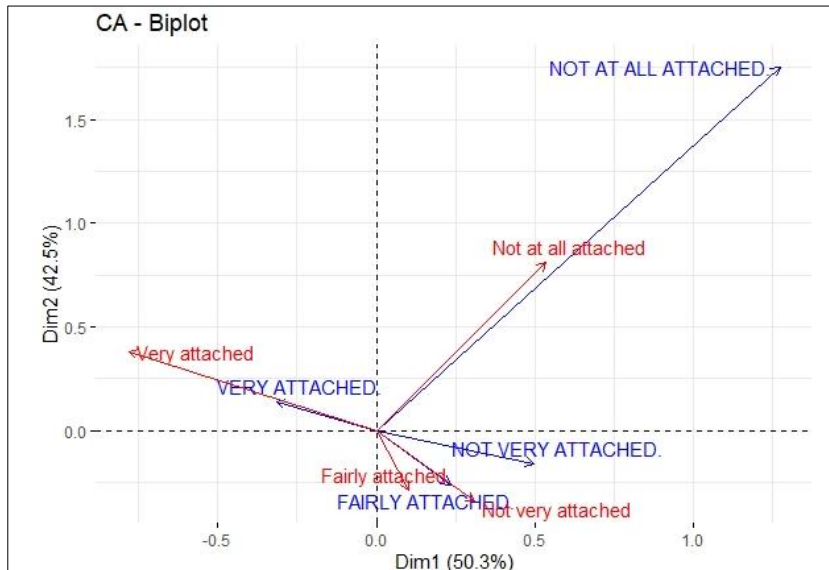
The chi-squared test verifies whether Attachment to Country and Attachment to the EU are correlated or independent variables.

```
##
## Pearson's Chi-squared test
##
## data: selcountry$attachco and selcountry$qd1a_3
## X-squared = 231.81, df = 9, p-value < 2.2e-16
```

Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

#### Appendix D. Correspondence analysis between *Attachment to Country* and to the EU.

The biplot graphically represents the Correspondence analysis between *Attachment to Country* and to the EU, which analyses possible associations between the row-column pairs of the two variables.



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

#### Appendix E. Chi-squared test between *Erasmus* and *Attachment to the EU*.

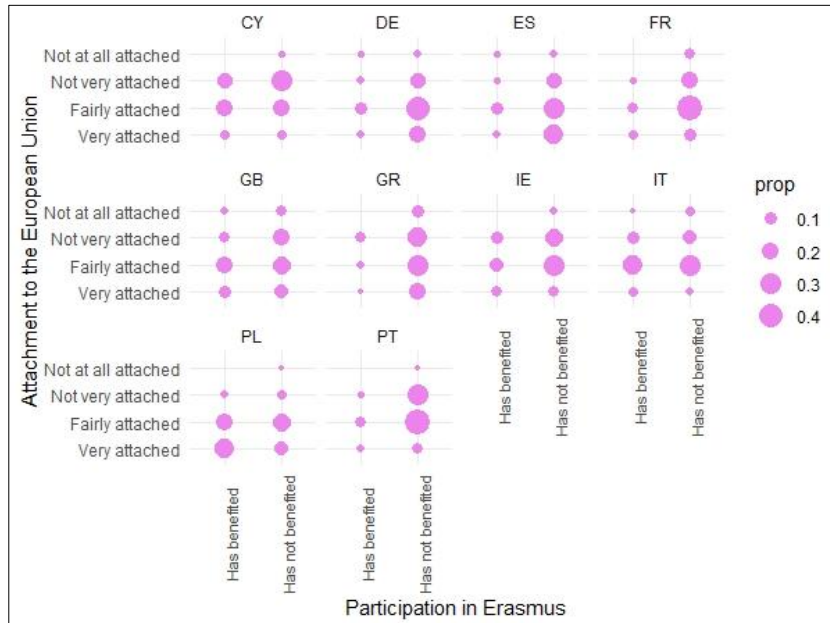
The chi-squared test analyses the possible correlation between *Erasmus* and *Attachment to the EU*.

```
##  
## Pearson's Chi-squared test  
##  
## data: selcountry$erasmus and selcountry$attacheu  
## X-squared = 8, df = 3, p-value = 0.04
```

Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

## Appendix F. Distribution of *Erasmus* and *Attachment to EU* by countries.

The plot represents how the feeling of EU identity, depending on the participation on an exchange program, is distributed for each of the ten selected European member states.



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

## Appendix G. Chi-squared test between *Mobility* and *Attachment to the EU*.

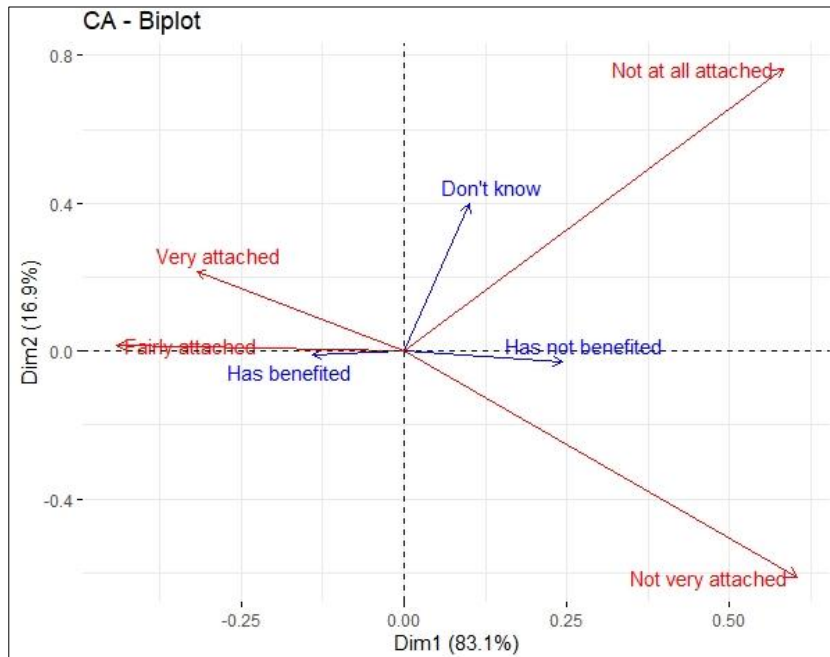
The chi-squared test verifies whether *Mobility* and *Attachment to the EU* are correlated or independent variables.

```
##
## Pearson's Chi-squared test
##
## data: selcountry$mobility and selcountry$attacheu
## X-squared = 30, df = 3, p-value = 2e-06
```

Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

## Appendix H. Correspondence analysis between *Mobility* and *Attachment to the EU*.

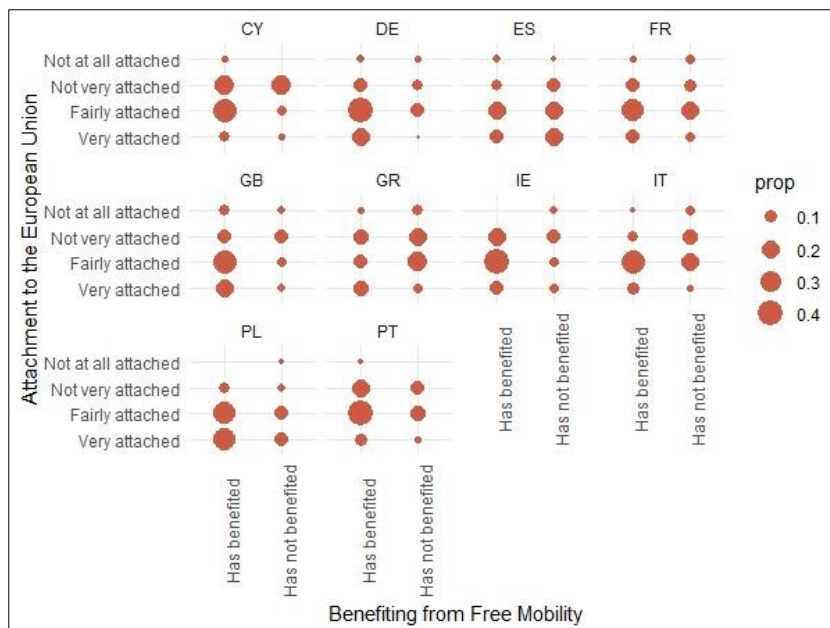
The biplot represents the Correspondence analysis between *Mobility* and *Attachment to the EU*, to analyse possible associations between the row-column pairs of the two variables.



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

## Appendix I. Distribution of *Mobility* and *Attachment to EU* by countries.

The plot displays how the feeling of European identity, depending on having benefited or not from free mobility within the EU, is distributed for each of the ten selected member states.



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

## Appendix J. Attachment to the EU among different national economic contexts.

Each valuation level of the national economy, which accounts for a 100%, presents the proportional distribution of their respondents based on the question of EU identity.



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

## Appendix K. Chi-squared test between *Economy* and *Attachment to the EU*.

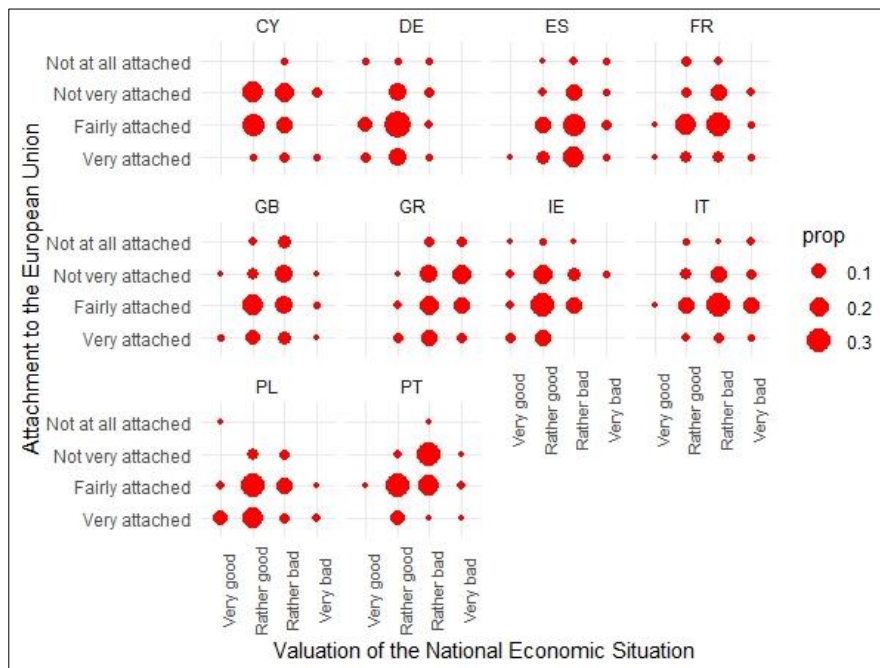
The chi-squared test analyses the possible correlation between the economic context of member states and *Attachment to the EU*.

```
##
## Pearson's Chi-squared test
##
## data: selcountry$attacheu and selcountry$economy
## X-squared = 45, df = 9, p-value = 8e-07
```

Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

## Appendix L. Distribution of the *Attachment to EU* and *Economy* by member states.

The diagram displays how the feeling of European identity, depending on the valuation of the national economy, is distributed for each of the ten selected member states.



Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.

**Appendix M.** Regression models of national identity, Erasmus, mobility and economy effects on the European identity of the young cohort, without control variables.

The table comprises the conducted OLS regressions, with *Attachment to the EU* as the dependent variable (except for the last model, which explains the variable *Difer*). The models, contrary to Table 2, do not include any control variable.

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>							
	Model2 (National identity)	Model3 (Erasmus)	Model4 (Mobility)	Attachment to the EU		Model7 (Country variables)	Model8 (EU variables)	Difference Attach EU-Co Model9 (All variables)
				Model5 (Economy)	Model6 (All variables)			
Fairly.Attco	0.37*** (0.06)				0.38*** (0.05)	0.37*** (0.05)		
Not very.Attco	0.72*** (0.10)				0.70*** (0.09)	0.69*** (0.09)		
Not at all.Attco	1.26*** (0.17)				1.23*** (0.17)	1.22*** (0.17)		
No Erasmus		0.17*** (0.06)			0.13** (0.06)		0.11* (0.06)	0.21*** (0.07)
No Mobility			0.28*** (0.06)		0.20*** (0.05)		0.25*** (0.06)	0.18*** (0.06)
Rather good (economy)				0.24** (0.12)	0.23** (0.11)	0.26** (0.11)		0.25* (0.13)
Rather bad (economy)				0.48*** (0.12)	0.42*** (0.11)	0.47*** (0.11)		0.37*** (0.13)
Very bad (economy)				0.54*** (0.14)	0.44*** (0.13)	0.53*** (0.13)		0.40*** (0.16)
Constant	1.93*** (0.04)	2.04*** (0.05)	2.06*** (0.03)	1.81*** (0.11)	1.45*** (0.11)	1.58*** (0.11)	2.00*** (0.05)	0.03 (0.13)
Observations	892	892	892	892	892	892	892	892
R <sup>2</sup>	0.12	0.01	0.03	0.03	0.17	0.15	0.03	0.04
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.12	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.16	0.14	0.03	0.04
Residual Std. Error	0.77 (df = 888)	0.82 (df = 890)	0.81 (df = 890)	0.81 (df = 888)	0.75 (df = 883)	0.76 (df = 885)	0.81 (df = 889)	0.88 (df = 886)
F Statistic	39.80*** (df = 3; 888)	7.86*** (df = 1; 890)	23.70*** (df = 1; 890)	10.70*** (df = 3; 888)	22.60*** (df = 8; 883)	25.50*** (df = 6; 885)	13.40*** (df = 2; 889)	7.73*** (df = 5; 886)
Note:	* p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01							

Source: own elaboration from Eurobarometer 91.