

Expansion has led to increasing incidences of cultural contact, through concepts such as the Schengen agreement, (an agreement which has created open borders throughout the EU member states,) and European citizenship. Both concepts mean that citizens of any EU member states can travel, work and live in any EU member state whilst enjoying the same rights as they can enjoy at home. This has had differing effects across the EU, in some cases making countries more multi-cultural, in others re-invigorating nationalist feelings. Thereby explaining why we want to explore how Europeans feel about the level of multi-culturalism in the EU.

In addition to this changing in size the EU has attempted to streamline the working of its political machinery by introducing a European Constitution. However, this process is presently 'on ice' after having failed referendums in France and the Netherlands. Thus it is pertinent to explore the faith Europeans have in the present institutional structure and process, to explain why the constitution failed and what Europeans want changed or instead. Therefore our research asks people their opinion of the institutions and the kind of Europe they would like to be living in.

These physical changes in the EU are thought to be accompanied by a decreasing level of trust in the European Institutions, for example trust in the Commission has dropped from 52% in 2004 to 47% in 2006, according to the Eurobarometer statistics. But perhaps we, personally, have embarked on this project because trust in the European Institutions is particularly low in Britain, with no Institution gaining more than 31% of the people's vote with concern to feelings of confidence.

It appears that people are losing faith in the European Union, or that they are just not interested, failing to see the connection between politicians in Brussels and Strasbourg and their everyday life. This research aims to try and get people to think about the contemporary trends in Europe, the possible links that exist between what the EU does and their everyday life, and get people to think about what they want from the EU. This we hope to achieve through finding out about current levels of faith in the EU and what effects these levels, whether it be age, nationality, religious affiliation and so forth.

The Eurobarometer has already conducted research into the levels of trust, confidence and faith the people of Europe have in the EU and its institutions, so how is our research different?

Firstly we are concerned with disaggregating our information via several indicators, for example age, sex, and religious affiliation, where the Eurobarometer results concentrate only on national variations. To clarify, our statistical data will allow us to observe whether women are more likely to have faith in the EU than men, whether the youth are more in favour than the middle-aged, or the Atheists more anti than those of religious affiliation.

Secondly we will use this information to inspire people, especially young people, to think about the role of Europe in people's lives and raise awareness about the issue of Europe. This will culminate in a continent wide 'Faith in Europe' day in which events, debates and other activities will be organised by young people to raise awareness about 'Faith in Europe'

Thirdly to expand on what was said earlier, our research also aims to look at a 'new' trend in European society, that of the place of 'Faith' in the EU. Precisely with recent events such as the terrorist attacks in Spain and United Kingdom, the killing of script writer Von Gogh in the Netherlands, and the

publication of the Muhammed Cartoon people have begun to become more aware of the varying religious faiths, that contribute to the EU, and make it what it is. The expansion of the EU is also said to have brought this issue to the fore, as the new states bring their more devout views, for example many believe that the Eastern European states will bring back Christianity to the EU, or have reservations about the inclusion of Turkey because of its religious affiliation. The issue of how religious faith impacts upon one's confidence in Europe is thus at present a very interesting avenue to explore.

The EU has always maintained the position that the individual has the right to choose their faith, what we want to know is does this choice effect how they feel about the EU?

To summarise this project is about re-engaging people, especially young people, with the idea of the European Union and its role in their life. Secondly it is about engaging in an inter-religious, inter-ethnic, and inter-generational dialogue to discuss the idea of Europe, what it means and what it is. Finally it is about these different groups coming together to make plans for the future, deciding what form of Union they want to live in.

Therefore the 'Faith' in 'Faith in Europe' can mainly be understood as 'Confidence in Europe', meaning in the work of its institutions and representatives, with an added element of exploring the impact of religious faith, amongst other factors, on these levels of confidence.

Project Objectives

- To get at least a 1000 questionnaire responses from each member state country, in order to provide sample data concerning people's 'Faith' in Europe
- Through asking the questionnaire to stimulate discussion about the EU's place in people's lives.
- For the questionnaire to stimulate discussion about the role of religion in contemporary EU, whether it impinges on people's feelings towards the EU or not.
- To promote through the stimulation an inter-generational, inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue amongst Europeans, (and potential Europeans) about the confidence we have or do not have in our continent and its institutions.
- To promote active discussion about young people as to the future form of EU they want to be living in
- To create a book that will inform other people about the discussions undertaken and the desires held for the future of the EU
- To draft a Youth Constitution that summarises the youth's vision for the EU's future.
- To give young and other disenchanted people the chance to voice their views about current trends affecting the EU.

How to achieve these objectives:

- Gather data from every EU member state through the conducting street and online questionnaires. This will be achieved by securing key partners in every member state to help gather and analyse the data.

- Holding an editorial meeting including individuals from every member state, to compare results, contribute ideas and opinions and jointly write the final publication
- Consult with experts in the field to help understand the results from the data and provide insights into the conclusions drawn and possible future trends
- Encourage the holding of a European Sabbath for Faith communities to discuss their faith in Europe's values, in addition to debates and meetings for non-religious and religious individuals to discuss the impact of religion on the EU.
- Hold a 'Faith in Europe' Day in every member state to help raise awareness about the issues raised by the data and writing the book.
- Use an online forum/ blog to allow people to continue discussing their ideas and opinions
- Encourage young people to contribute their opinions in creative formats, to stimulate interest in the subject.

Anticipated Impact

- People start to think and engage with the idea of Europe
- Young people feel like they are given a voice in European Issues, and a chance to share their visions of the future
- To create a single European family with no 2nd division Europeans demonstrating tolerance and respect for diverse abilities, economic backgrounds, ethnicities, nationalities and religious faiths.