

Reflection of National and European Identity in the New Millennium

FACTSHEET NO. 1

Structural Note



The first factsheet begins with an introduction of the project idea and the participating universities. Secondly a historical access about the national and European identity in the participating countries will be presented. This is followed by a presentation of the result of an EU-wide survey on European citizenship. Finally, current challenges will be discussed. The information is addressed to the interested public. Also, it is open for use by schools and education.

Reflection of National and European Identity in the New Millennium. Concept of EU-Citizenship and National Identity – Project Idea

The project brings together four partners from Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia and United Kingdom to compare their experience with learning the above named topics to learn about the state-of-art development which can be used by university teachers and teachers at secondary schools. The long-term aim of the project is to raise educational achievement and participation of young people in active EU citizenship. The particular aim of this project is to teach the above named topics at university level in a highly innovative way with the use of information and communication technology (ICT) which enables instant communication of project members and shared teaching in real time in the 3D virtual classroom, regardless of where users are located. This will also significantly raise the awareness of university teachers about using ICT in the blended learning form at university level.

The Participating Universities

Palacký University Olomouc/Czech Republic (<https://www.upol.cz/en/>)



Palacký University Olomouc (PU) is one of the oldest universities in Central Europe. Drawing on the 446-year tradition of higher education, it is a renowned centre for teaching and research. With more than 24,000 undergraduate and graduate students at eight faculties, it provides quality education and excellent background for research in a wide range of academic disciplines. The eight faculties of Palacký University offer 274 Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral study programmes. Applicants may choose from a broad variety of programmes, ranging from theology, education, physical culture and sports, through the humanities, social sciences and arts, to natural, medical, and health sciences. The credit system at UP is fully compatible with ECTS – The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. The prestigious status of the University in Olomouc is confirmed each year by the vast numbers of young applicants, as well as mature students such as seniors and other interested persons. The quality of provided study programmes, education, and scientific output has been confirmed by international rankings, such as the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, the Centre for World University Rankings, and the U. S. News and World Report Best Global Universities Ranking, according to which Palacký University is one of the top universities in the country, achieving significant placement even on the international level. PU belongs to the top Czech research universities and hosts several internationally recognized research centres. PU achieved the 488th position in the latest edition of the prestigious U.S. News & World Report Best Global Universities Rankings. PU has developed comprehensive international student and staff services.

Heidelberg University of Education/Germany (<https://www.ph-heidelberg.de>)



Heidelberg University of Education is an institution for educational sciences that primarily offers bachelor's and master's degree courses in teacher training and other courses with a pedagogical profile. It has full academic rights (right to award doctorates and habilitations). The university has around 4000 students and 66 professorships. Research focuses on school and teaching development as well as teacher professionalism, education for diversity and inclusion, science education, linguistic-literary education and media education. The Heidelberg School of Education (HSE) was founded in June 2015 as a joint cross-university institution of the Heidelberg University of Education and the Ruprecht-Karls-University Heidelberg. It represents the institutional, strategic and ideal centre of cooperative teacher training at the Heidelberg location.

Matej-Bel-Universität Banská Bystrica/Slovakia (<https://www.umb.sk/>)



Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (UMB) belongs to the network of Slovak public universities. It was established in 1992 by merging the University of Economics of Services and Tourism in Banská Bystrica and the Faculty of Education in Banská Bystrica. The UMB University sustained the university status in 2010. University is a member of the European Association of Universities. UMB provides quality higher education responding to the needs of practice and the current state of scientific research. The university consists of six faculties, which offer 392 accredited study programs in all levels and forms of study, including programs conducted in cooperation with foreign universities. Pedagogical, scientific and artistic activities are effectively complemented by basic and applied research, which is carried out in cooperation with Slovak and foreign institutions. In addition, UMB creates conditions for students' active leisure time through art ensembles, sports clubs and other student organizations. In the academic year 2020/2021, almost 7,000 students study at the university.

Northumbria University Newcastle/Great Britain (<https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/>)



The University of Northumbria at Newcastle (UNN) is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. It is based in the heart of Newcastle upon Tyne, which is regularly voted the best place in the UK for students. UNN has over 27,000 students from over 100 countries enrolled at undergraduate and post-graduate level including over 500 PhD students. The University of Newcastle upon Tyne is international in its operations and in its reach, with programs offered around the world. UNN has a strong profile in Asia, with regional offices in China, India, Malaysia and Thailand. UNN works with major employers, including Nike, IBM, Nissan, Caterpillar, Cummins, Proctor & Gamble, the BBC, and the NHS, while more than 560 employers and 60 professional bodies sponsor or accredit the University's programmes.

National Identity – A Historical Outline



After the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989/90, the German reunification and the great interest of many Eastern and Central European countries in becoming part of the European Union, the success-story of European integration seemed to continue unabated at the beginning of the new millennium. At the end of the last century a common currency was created within the framework of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), which was initially used in eleven countries for cashless payments and, from 2002, was also introduced into the everyday lives of citizens as coin and note money. EMU, the euro and the single market are regarded as central elements of European integration.

With the accession of ten more countries in 2004, the European Union has grown from 15 to 25 member states at a stroke. The majority of the new member states were 'young democracies' from Central and Eastern Europe. This resulted in manifold new opportunities for encounter for all citizens. At the institutional level, however, it also became apparent that the different national histories prior to 1989/90 also led to different perspectives on the EU and the process of European unification. A few years after this enlargement, the global financial crisis of 2008, as well as the possible national bankruptcy of one of the member states - Greece - shook the European monetary system and the integration process as a whole. It is perhaps not surprising that, as a result of these crises, amidst multiple new applications for the first time a country will leave the EU. In 2016, the citizens of Great Britain decided to leave the EU by a narrow majority, which was carried out on 31/01/2020.

In the Project 'NAETINEM', scientists from four different countries examine the understanding of national and European identity in the respective states. The composition of the countries reflects the historical stages of the EU. The Federal Republic of Germany as one of the founding states of European integration (1952), Great Britain, which had joined the European community in 1972 but will leave this community, which was sealed with the signature on 24/01/2020 (Official Journal of the European Union 2020). Another perspective is brought in by the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which together formed a state in different contours for most of the 20th century. In the aftermath of World War II, the Czechoslovak Republic was founded in 1948, which was also a founding member of the Warsaw Pact in 1955 and was therefore clearly seen as the satellite state of the Soviet Union. This was documented by a renaming to the 'Czechoslovak Socialist Republic' in 1960. The peaceful separation in 1992 was viewed by both sides as an act of popular sovereignty. The Czech Republic and Slovak Republic have been independent states since 1993.

Unification and Separation of Political Relationships

The Fall of the Berlin Wall was a historical opportunity for the new united **Germany** which was separated into the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and German Democratic Republic (GDR) between 1949 and 1989. The unit was formed as the GDR's accession to the FRG, which in 1989 was viewed as the fastest and most unproblematic way of unification, especially by many East Germans. 30 years later this unity and the associated transformation process are often seen as a "takeover" by East German citizens. Newspaper headlines like „Die Wunden der ostdeutschen Seele“ (engl. "The Wounds of the East German Soul") (Schanetzky 2019), "Das ostdeutsche Identitätsgefühl" (engl. "The East German Identity") (Köcher 2019a) or „Fremd im eigenen Haus“ (engl. "Stranger in One's Own House") (Köcher 2019b) refer to the feeling of not having had an equal chance with all the comforts now taken for granted and still being left behind. The new upcoming dispatch between 'East' and 'West' is fuelled by the rise of right-wing parties, not least because of the 'refugee crisis' which has challenged Europe since 2015. Because of the great increase of immigrants and refugees, right-wing parties gathered new strength, but not only in Germany. Considering this background, it is difficult to talk about 'national' identity in Germany because it brings with it the danger in the current political and social debate of abusing the concept in terms of identity politics. Right-wing populists and radical right-wing parties use this as a basis for their nationalist slogans. Thus, there is a controversial debate about 'national' identity, not at least because of Germany's historical past.

Talking about 'European' identity, (however) seems to have a much more positive connotation. For example: The political endeavour of some parts of German politics provides an example of this. For instance, in 2017 the former president of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, talked about a "United States of Europe" (ZEIT ONLINE 2017).

Germany's commitment to the unification of nation state and supranational structures is made particularly dear by the term "*motor of Europe*" or rather "*Franco-German motor*". This term is used to describe the decisive role that Germany and France have played together since the 1960s in the progress of European integration (Große-Hüttmann and Wehling 2020).

In **Czechoslovakia** after 1989, the opposite process became apparent in comparison to GDR and FRG: Czechoslovakia split into **Czech Republic** and **Slovak Republic** in 1993. This was connected to the dissolution of the former Soviet Union. The separation was carried out - as in Germany unification - without a referendum. National - Czech and Slovak - identity-related needs played a role, Czechoslovakia, founded in 1918, is today regarded in the press as an entity that "never reached the hearts of the people" (Heinlein 2014). However, in connection with the development after 1989, it should be added that the efforts of the national political elites, which came to power after the elections in 1992, led to the division of the federation. According to the results of sociological surveys at that time, the belief in the benefits of a common state for Czechs and Slovaks dominated public opinion (Mesežnikov 2010).

While communism had frozen the divergent development of two societies, national prejudices and stereotypes broke out after 1989 and increased in particular the Slovak's dissatisfaction with the state, which was centrally governed from Prague. Thus, Vaclav Klaus and ultra-nationalist Vladimír Mečiar negotiated the founding of two nation states. However, similar tendencies (alternating stages of mutual convergence), especially the efforts of Slovaks to gain autonomy and mutual reluctance to understand the needs of the neighboring nation, influenced the development of Czech-Slovak relations even before the onset of communism, for example in the division of the first Czechoslovak Republic in 1938 (Svatuška 2003).

However, the politically motivated division of the two nations into separate state units in 1993 did not significantly undermine the level of mutual relations. Czechs and Slovaks continue to consider themselves the two closest nations to maintain intensive relations in the fields of culture, art, science, sports, higher education, television broadcasting and public life (Mesežnikov 2010).

After the split up, the Czech Republic was able to push ahead with its program of rapprochement to a market-liberal economic system, while Slovakia, as an agrarian state and with its one-sided heavy industry, slowed down the transformation process. The Czech Republic remains the big brother with lower unemployment, but Slovakia has caught up and is prospering in the form of large construction projects.

As for territorial identity, according to statistical data since 2003, we observe a similar situation in both countries, assuming from the long existence of Czechs and Slovaks in a common state from the period of two nations in national and supranational structures after 2000. Local and national awareness dominated, which had a slight advantage over regional awareness. Compared to local and national identity, European identity is much less important (Nikischer 2013).

After 1945 in the course of decolonization processes, **Great Britain** lost its empire and could no longer exert as much authority internationally as before. Nevertheless, it has stayed the centre of the Commonwealth, forming commonality through a shared language and head of government. Great Britain is a complex entity of states with national as well as regional shares of identity of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland playing a role. It joined the European Union only reluctantly, with advances and setbacks and negotiation of national special rights. Euroscepticism has always remained relatively high. At the 'Brexit' -voting in 2016, older residents' distrust towards the supranational EU institutions prevailed. After a process spanning several years and being shaped by discussions and differing ideas of how Brexit could be carried out, on 31/01/2020 the United Kingdom officially left the EU, with a transition phase until the end of 2020. Withdrawal from the EU does not seem to be surprising, considering the history of the relationship between European Union and Great Britain. For example, Great Britain was not among the founding states of the European Economic Community because at that time the kingdom was in conflict with France (Kaczorowska 2008: 293). In 1972 Great Britain signed the treaty on its membership, which came into force with the beginning of the year 1973. This was recorded in the 'European Communities Act 1972'. Despite the lengthy process leading to the membership, in 1975 – three years after the signing of the treaty – a referendum on the remain of the kingdom in the European Union was held (Millner 2015). However, unlike the referendum in 2016, at that time a majority voted to stay. Nevertheless, this shows the discrepancy between the national and supranational structures.

A study from 2015 concludes that there is a particularly low level of European identity in Great Britain (NatCen 2015). Various pictures of Europe were presented in Great Britain surrounding the Brexit-referendum (Andreouli 2018: 241-43). All in all, the topic of national or European affiliation attracted more widespread attention because of Brexit (Ranta 2018).

Understanding European Citizenship



The history of the European Union began after World War II with the founding of the 'European Coal and Steel Community' (ECSC) in 1951 and the formation of the 'European Economic Community' (EEC) in 1957. These were alliances meant for the political and primarily economic cooperation of the six founding states – Belgium, France, Germany (FRG), Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. Already at this early stage first steps towards a European citizenship were taken: In the treaty establishing the EEC the ground was prepared for workers to move freely across the borders of the member states and to settle – the so called "Free movement of workers" (Kraatz 2020) which is, in extended form, still part of European citizenship.

Building on this, in the 1960s plans for the implementation of an 'European citizenship' were introduced (Bux 2020b; European Union 2020; Kraatz 2020; Marzocchi 2020).

Since the 1970s there has been further preparator work paving the way for this European citizenship. For example, mention can be made of the beginning of the development of a European Single Market in the 1980s, through which issues occurring in trade between member states of the European communities should be solved and free trade should be made possible. Eventually, these developments contributed to the free passability of internal frontiers without identity checks, thus, an extension of the 'Free movement of workers' to all residents (European Council 2020; European Union 2020; Marzocchi 2020). The European Single Market meanwhile includes "the 'four freedoms' of: movement of goods, services, people and money" (European Union 2020).

After the Cold War, on 07/02/1992 the first 'Treaty on European Union', 'Maastricht Treaty', was signed, which entered into force on 01/11/1993. Its main purpose was to strengthen the role of the European communities existing at that time – consisting of aforementioned ECSC and EEC as well as 'European Atomic Energy Community' (EURATOM) – and to ensure close cooperation in various areas including economy, foreign and security policy as well as judiciary. Therefore, the 'Maastricht Treaty', set the foundations for the European Union in its current form, amongst others its name and three-pillar structure. Furthermore, with this treaty 'European Union Citizenship' was introduced eventually (European Council 2020; European Union 2020; Zandonella 2009). In short, it can be defined as follows:

"Under Article 9 of the TEU and Article 20 of the TFEU, every person holding the nationality of a Member State is a citizen of the Union. Nationality is defined according to the national laws of that State. Citizenship of the Union is complementary to, but does not replace, national citizenship. EU citizenship comprises a number of rights and duties in addition to those stemming from citizenship of a Member State" (Bux 2020b).

These mentioned rights include

"[t]he right to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States [...]; [t]he right to vote and to stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament and in municipal elections [...] in the Member State in which they reside [...]; [t]he right to diplomatic protection in the territory of a third (non-EU state) by the diplomatic or consular authorities of another Member State [...]; [t]he right to petition the European Parliament and the right to apply to the Ombudsman [...]; [t]he right to write to any institution or body in one of the languages of the Member States and to receive a response in the same language [...]; [t]he right to access European Parliament, Council and Commission documents, subject to certain conditions [...]" (Bux 2020b).

Hereby, European Union Citizenship mainly comprises rights which citizens of member states already had before its introduction – except for the right to vote, which was introduced with the 'Maastricht Treaty' – particularly with respect to the right to petition, to reside and freedom of movement. Due to the introduction of the European Union Citizenship, however, these rights were subject to systematisation. One aim of the introduction of European Union Citizenship was, among other things, to better include EU-citizens into the democratic processes of the EU. Citizens were affected by those before, but barely had an influence themselves (Bux 2020b). One new aspect of European Union Citizenship, which can be made use of from 2011 onwards, is the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI). Although in the official definition of European Union Citizenship (Article 20(2) of the TFEU) 'duties' of EU citizens are mentioned, currently there are no such duties, distinguishing it from national citizenships of the member states (Bux 2020a).

European and National Identity in the Light of Opinion Research

One central question concerning sense of belonging and identity is regularly captured as part of the Eurobarometer survey: Do people within the EU identify with their own nation, their nationality, or do they see themselves as European citizens? And, have such attitudes changed during the last few years? 'Standard

Eurobarometer' is carried out and made available biannually: „The survey includes topics such as the European political situation and the economy (...). It analyses how Europeans perceive their political institutions, (...) the

EU and its institutions as well as their main concerns. It also examines people's attitudes on European citizenship and on issues linked to the priorities of the European Commission, notably free movement and the euro“ (Eurobarometer 2016).

One fixed component of this survey is, amongst others, the question „Do you see yourself as...“, which captures whether respondents rather identify with their nationality or with the term 'European'. Subsequently, the participating countries of this project are compared to each other as well as to EU average values regarding this question.

Countries / Categories	UK ø	GER ø	CZ ø	SK ø	EU ø
1) „national only“	54,7%	26,6%	40,3%	34,5%	36,5%
2) „national & European“	35,9%	57,5%	52,3%	56,4%	53,1%
3) „European & national“	6,1%	10,8%	5,3%	6,3%	6,6%
4) „European only“	1,2%	2,2%	1,3%	1,3%	1,9%

*Table 1: Average values for individual countries.
Sources: Eurobarometer (2015a; 2015b; 2016a; 2016b; 2017a; 2017b; 2018a; 2018b; 2019a; 2019b); own figure*

Table 1 shows the average values of the last ten Eurobarometer surveys (numbers 82-91), carried out between 2014 and 2019, for United Kingdom (UK), Germany (GER), Czech Republic (CZ) and Slovakia (SK) as well as for the entire European Union (EU) regarding the answers to the question “Do you see yourself as...”, depicted in the first column. Considering the first category, “national only”, it becomes clear that UK with 54,7% lies far above the EU average of 36,4%, while GER with 26,6% lies far below. The other two countries are closer to EU average (36,5%). In CZ 40,3% identify as “national only”, which is slightly above EU average, while in SK 34,5%, slightly below average, do so.

It is furthermore striking that only 35,9% of the respondents from UK identify as „national & European“, thus, with their national identity in the first place, but with the European one in the second. On the one hand, this is far below EU average, in which 53,1% identify with their national identity as well as with their European one, and on the other hand, it is also far below the average of the other three countries, which, with 57,5% (GER), 52,3% (CZ) and 56,4% (SK), differ only slightly from EU average. Apart from UK, in which the majority of respondents identifies only with their nationality, the majority of respondents in the other three countries as well as in the EU in general identifies with both their nationality and Europe.

In the category „European & national“ – primary identification as European and second as national – the respondents from GER with 10,8% are furthest above EU average of 6,6%. UK, CZ and SK only differ slightly from EU average in this category. The identification as „European & national“ is, with 5,3%, lowest in CZ.

Identification as „European only“ is generally very low, regarding the EU average of 1,9% as well as the averages of the individual countries. This form of identification is strongest in Germany with an average of 2,2%. In CZ and SK only 1,3% identify as “European only“ and in UK only 1,2% do so.

Thus, a vast majority of the respondents from each of the countries considered as well as from the EU altogether – between 84% and 93% – identifies as „more national than European“, a category composed of the sum of the

categories „national only“ and „national & European“. With the exception of Germany, which is in the low double-digit range, only one-digit percentages of the respondents from each country identify as „more European

than national“, a category made up of the sum of the categories „European & national“ and „European only“. Nevertheless, about half of the respondents state to identify as *“European”* – the sum of the categories „national & European“, „European & national“ and „European only“ – in some form. Here, the UK average of 43,5% appears to be comparatively low, while the average in Germany is 71,7%. EU average of 61,6%, CZ with 59,2% and SK with 63,1% all are positioned in between.

All in all, in UK the majority of respondents identifies with their national identity only, while in each of the other countries a majority identifies as national in the first place but in the second as European. In each of the countries, however, only a small minority refers to themselves as European only. In DE, the discrepancy between identification with national and with European identity is by far smaller than in the Eastern European countries and in UK. Particularly UK and CZ depict a noticeable preference concerning national identity. Furthermore, in the *“European”* statistics UK is almost 20 percentage points below EU average – more than any other country considered here.

Current Challenges of the Individual Countries and the EU as a Whole



With regard to the relation between national and European identity, the four countries involved in this project face different challenges. In Great Britain the focus lays on Brexit and the associated negotiations with the EU. In Czech Republic as well as in Slovakia, there were extensive changes in government in recent years, having an impact on the attitudes towards EU. In Germany we are confronted with ambivalent development: On the one hand, there is a high level of identification with Europe – firstly, because of the historical context and, secondly, because of the central positions Germans have had within the EU for

some time, e.g. through the current commission president Ursula von der Leyen. On the other hand, there have been right-wing populist parties for several years, which have gained more support because of their specifically nationally aimed demands, thus, representing a challenge for the entire spectrum of established parties in favour of the EU.

The extent to which the developments that challenge Europe as a whole (refugee migration and pandemic) will lead to a strengthening of national or European identities cannot yet be assessed.

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