

# Deeper or Wider? Future of the Ever Closer Union



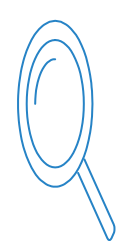
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## ABSTRACT



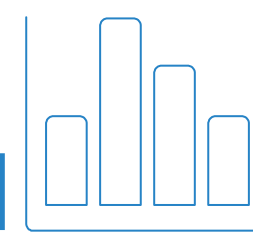
Over time the European Union has progressively evolved into what aspires to be an "ever closer union", among the peoples of Europe. In 50 years, the European Union has managed to grow from six members to twenty-seven and two leading schools of thought have often been mentioned when speaking about the future development of the European Union; either deepening or widening. However, since the European sovereign debt crisis in 2009, and the European migrant crisis beginning in 2015, public opinion surrounding the two schools of thought has shifted. Through the use of Eurobarometer data this project analyses citizens opinions and support for deepening or widening.

## RESEARCH QUESTION



This project explores whether a member states' time of joining, GDP per capita, and citizens education levels throughout the country have an effect on citizens opinions and support for further deepening and/or widening of the European Union.

## APPROACH



This project used available data provided by Eurobarometer and Eurostat.

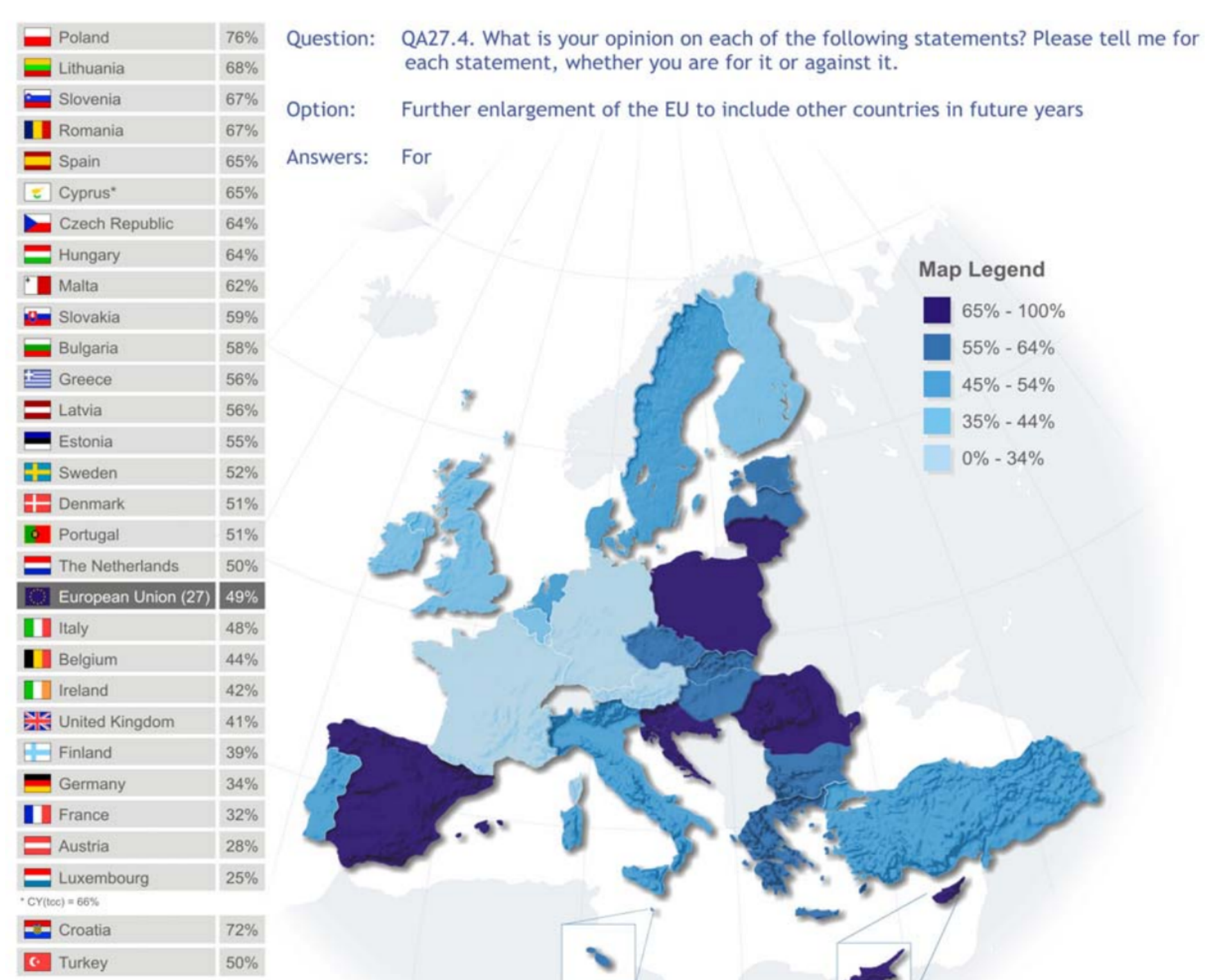
Eurobarometer is a series of multi-topic, pan-European surveys undertaken for the European Commission since 1970, covering attitudes towards European integration, policies, institutions, social conditions, health, culture, the economy, citizenship, security, information technology, the environment and other topics.

Standard and Special Eurobarometer surveys consist of regular face-to-face interviews with approximately 1,000 subjects in the EU member states.

### Specific time frames were selected:

- **2007: following the single largest enlargement in terms of people, and number of countries.**
- **2010: following the sovereign debt crisis.**
- **2016: following the migrant crisis.**

Source: EUROBAROMETER 67 June 2007



## RESULTS



### Time of Joining

- States which joined before 2003 (EU-15) are much less supportive of enlargement
- No correlation between time of joining and support for deepening

### GDP per capita

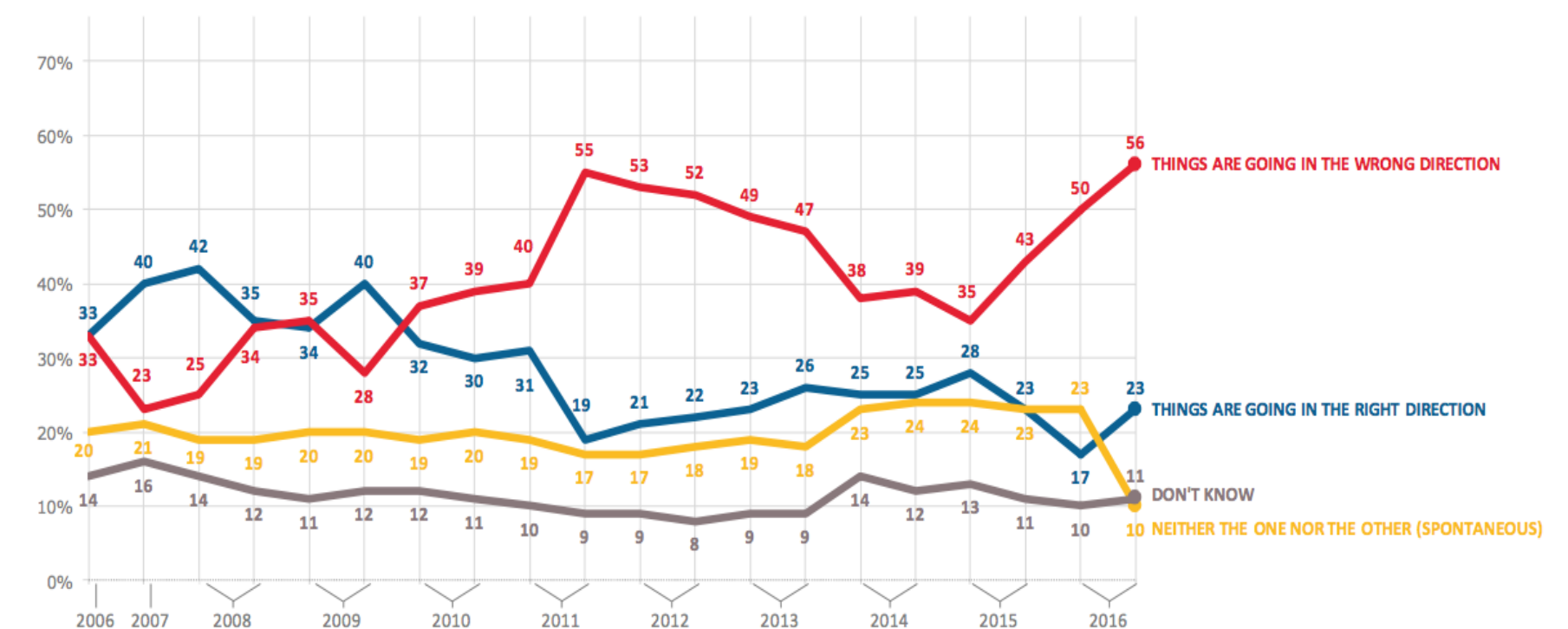
- The EU-15 have the highest GDP per capita
- Higher GDP per capita results in being net contributors to the budget
- The largest contributors to the budget support deepening as opposed to widening

### Education Level

- Those who continue studying past the age of 19 are more supportive of both deepening and widening policies regardless of crises
- Higher Education = Higher Satisfaction

Source: Standard EUROBAROMETER 86 Autumn 2016

D73a.2 At the present time, would you say that, in general, things are going in the right direction or in the wrong direction, in...?  
The European Union (% - EU)



## IMPLICATIONS



- We need to assess why member states who joined the Union before 2003 are reluctant towards further expansion to include other countries.**
  - If it is the case that the cost-benefit analysis is unfavourable towards older member states then it may be advantageous to reframe the criteria for entering the Union or offer incentives to boost support for future enlargements.
  - If it is the case that a common identity and shared values cannot be recognized between older member states and candidate countries then it would be beneficial to address whether this is true or simply a misconception. Find out how we can bridge this gap to ensure that citizens of older member states feel a shared sense of identity with those wanting to become EU citizens.
- Economic position within the Union does impact citizens' preferences.**
  - Further integration policies whether deepening or widening will likely be determined from an economic standpoint rather than a moral standpoint.
- Level of education obtained has a major impact on preferences towards policies as well as overall satisfaction and quality of life within the EU.**
  - Thus, it should be an ongoing goal of the EU to support, promote and develop further education ventures for all EU citizens, regardless of the time of joining the EU, and GDP per capita.