

# Effect Of Culture and Identity On The Eu Enlargement Process

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## Introduction

Identity is one of the fundamental components that forms a society. In Europe, it is noteworthy that the definition of identity is not structured on a single basis within the framework of periods and thoughts but is shaped according to the necessity of the period. In this framework, identity, which also affects European integration, played an important role in the formation and deepening of the European Union. The European Union, a supranational structure formed by 27 countries, most of which have historical ties, with common values, tries to realize the idea of a single society by carrying out policies in the context of "Europeanness". Within the framework of multicultural values, European identity affects EU policies and it is the subject to many studies.

Culture, an element related to identity, plays an important role in the construction process of identity. Cultural elements determine the identity built by societies. The EU draws attention to its multicultural structure. With 27 countries coming together to form a supranational structure, many different cultures and identities have also come together under the umbrella of the EU. Today, the EU, which adopts the approach of balancing the common interests of the member countries, respecting national differences, and strengthening different identities, aims to increase the familiarity of the member countries' citizens to each other's cultures and histories, thereby creating a multicultural environment. This study aims to examine the effects of culture and identity on EU enlargement.

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The aim of this study is to examine the effects of culture and identity on EU enlargement. In this context, first of all, the concepts of identity, culture and European identity will be explained to the reader and the historical transformation of the European identity will be discussed, then, due to the multicultural structure of the EU, the culture and the identities of these countries from 6 member states to 27, will be taken into consideration. The effects of the culture and identities of the candidate countries experienced during the enlargement processes examined in periods will be analyzed.

In the last part, within the framework of the member countries of the community, which reached 27 countries by considering EU citizenship, an answer to the effect of culture and identity on coexistence will be sought by addressing EU loyalty. In this context, the literature review method will be used in the study, and evaluations will be made in light of the data in the survey studies.

## **1. Identity, Culture, and European Identity**

### ***a. Identity***

Identity can be defined as one's self-attributed characteristics and adaptation to social roles (Hesapçıoğlu and Topsakal, 2007:85). In the dictionary, identity "is the continuous and principal attribute that makes up a person's or a group's individuality, makes them distinguishable and self-aware" (Grand Larousse,

1992:6780). National identity, on the other hand, came about after the French Revolution. With the appearance of nation-states, religious and ethnic identities lost their former functions, and national identity gained importance. The instruments for gathering under national identity have come from national language and culture (Şimşek and Ilgaz, 2007:193-194).

One's political identity can be defined as their willingness to belong to political groups or structures. (Bruter, 2005:1). The primary function of identity is to differentiate an individual or a group from another. For this reason, identity is made up of two different concepts; I/us and others. These concepts make up identity by completing each other. When individuals describe themselves, they also list the features that separate them from others. Thus identity, while defining "us" positively with the features and values it consists of, also defines "us" negatively as "not other". Both concepts can be found in defining Europe and European identity (Şen, 2004:13). The concept of the other underlying the concept of identity is an important factor since it reflects both similarities and differences. The EU's identity reflects not only the relations between the member states, but also the relations with the "others".

According to Stuart Hall, identity is examined in three categories. Individual, relational and social. The unique identity that distinguishes a

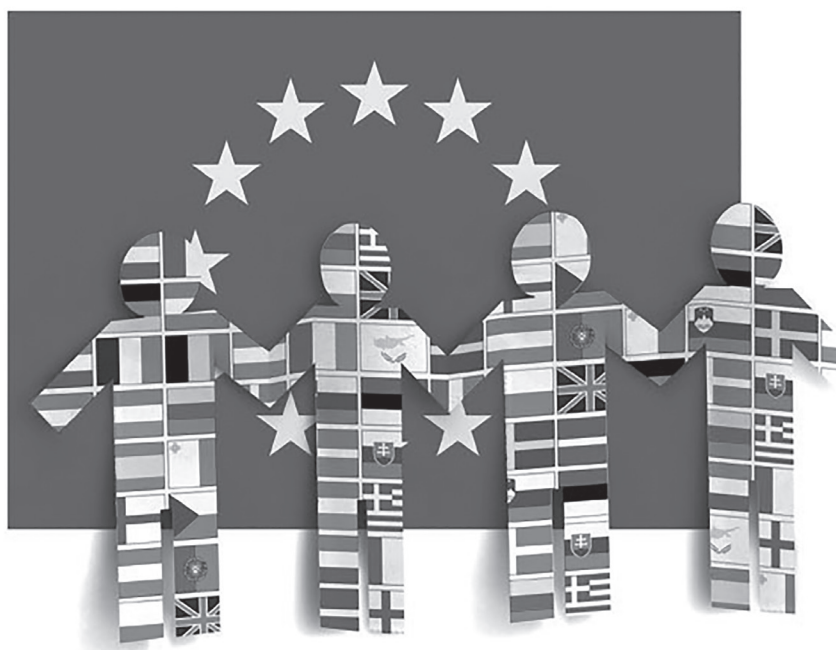
person from others is called individual, the identity obtained by positions, roles are relational, and the identity associated with large communities is called social (collective) identity (Eren, 2020: 113).

### ***b. Culture***

Identity is associated with culture by nature. For this reason, what culture is, and its varieties play a role while identifying and categorizing identity. Culture, which is unique to societies, passed down by generations, and reflects its historical system, is analyzed under two titles: rigid and flexible in itself. In Erdenir's words, rigid culture is a fixed, deductive, holistic, non-questionable, and conservative

culture. Rigid culture is adopted by inheritance of social memory and includes elements such as religion, language, ethnicity, and nation. Flexible culture is a kind of culture that is variable, inductive, does not exclude other communities, tolerant, adopts experiential, dynamic, open to change, and supports differences. Flexible culture; includes elements such as political values, justice, and human rights (Erdenir, 2010: 16-22).

When the idea of Europe is analyzed, it can be seen that the process that started with rigid cultural elements has evolved towards a flexible culture. In this context, the EU aims to



create a structure that abandons the rigid culture and represents a flexible culture. However, as can be seen in the next chapters, European societies, which cannot give up on the rigid culture attributed to national identity, have avoided adopting the flexible culture and supranational identity.

### **c. European Identity**

“European identity” is used for referring to a partnership in history, geography and culture, and a union in constitution, institution, and law alike (Mayer and Palmovski, 2004:592). The name of a princess in Greek mythology, “Europe” became a term to refer to the Greek sphere of influence in time (Yurdusev, 1997:31-33). Europa is a mythological character with both Asian and African blood and is considered the symbol of European multicultural and ethnic diversity. At the same time, Europa symbolizes “high culture, intellectual life, education and enlightenment” (Förnas, 2009: 22-23). The term “European” was first used in the 8th century (Delanty, 2014:100).

The formation of European identity is examined in two phases, collective and individual. Common identity has been around since the 16th century. Individual identity, however, did not come into being up until the end of the 18th century (Delanty, 2014:63). Political European identity appeared in the last century; but the structure of European identity cannot be separated from national identity due to the

EU being a supranational/transnational constitution that consists of nation-states (Ortaylı, 2008:204, Altun, 2006:3).

The idea of Europeanism that sprouted in this period beginning from the 7th century developed in response to Islam. Islamic conquests and expansions created a Christian consciousness, and Islam was perceived as the “other” by Christian Europeans. Thus, in this period, the idea of Europeanism mostly shaped around Christianity (Delanty, 2014:57).

At the beginning of 700’s Arabic expansionism moved towards Europe through Spain. In the light of this event, a European coalition army was founded, and those who made up this army were called “Europeans” (europeanses) (Boer, 1995:26). At the beginning of the Middle Ages (700-1000), concepts Europe and Europeanism came into use by means of several external threats.

Middle Ages is a period in which Christianity is impactful in Europe. It is observed that Christianity as a collective identity gained importance among European communities since the crusades. While Christianity and Europeanism are two very close concepts in this period, Christianity is dominant and used much more often as a way of defining the Europeans. Europeanism is more of an element of Christianity. In the 15th century, Europe, and Christianity are

identical concepts. The best indicator of this is the maps of the time. Thought to be drawn by a priest known as Lambert, the map that is considered the oldest map of Europe was made at the beginning of the 12th century. This map is the oldest drawing that depicts Europe geographically, and the first map to specify Europe's political boundaries (Boer, 1995:29-34). A priest's drawing of the European geography is an important situation in the sense of regional identity being compatible with religion.

During the conquest of Constantinople, Pope Pius II used the term "Europeans" (europeus) and included "our Europe, our Christian Europe" in his call (Boer, 1995:35). Thus, European people that fought with each other not long while ago united in "Christian-European" identity.

After the French Revolution, disagreement on the definition of Europe continued. While pro-revolutionaries argued that a libertarian, egalitarian and rational society could be accomplished, anti-revolutionists claimed that the French Revolution destroyed the common values at present (Robertson, 1993:63-64).

From the 1840s to World War I a process that constructed, and at the same time destroyed Europeanness can be observed. With the improvement of industrialization and growing education and communication methods, more people became knowledgeable

about Europe (Bugge, 1995:84-85). The industrialization process also advanced correlative with the nations' founding process. The rise of nationalist ideas instead of integrated Europe damaged the ideal of European society (Bugge, 1995:85).

In the preface to the Treaty of Rome, the foundations of European identity are reflected. According to this; Freedom, democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law have been desired to deepen solidarity among peoples by respecting history, culture and traditions.

While as a concept "Europe" and "unification of Europe" theme is old, the participation of European identity in political and academical agenda started from the 1970s. The first official attempt to form a European identity was the "Declaration on European Identity" at Copenhagen Summit (1973) Declaration, which frames the values of European identity (Altun, 2006:67, Aksoy, 2007:7). These principles are considered as the core elements of European identity.

With the "Solemn Declaration on European Identity" in 1983, it was expressed that among the matters of cooperation between members, culture should be included, and "shared cultural heritage" was mentioned. Thus, it is seen that the rigid culture is included in the Union documents. In the Single Act (1986), the role of the cooperation on European security on creating a



“European defense identity” was highlighted. Thus, the creation of the European identity on the security axis was also included in the Union’s agenda. In the Maastricht Treaty, under Europe’s Security and Defence Policy, European identity is only used in the nation-state context. “The Union should respect the national identities of the member states that have government systems based on the principles of democracy.” (Article F). As it can be concluded from letters of agreement, efforts to generate common symbols, youth and education programs, even a joint media initiative (Bakir, 1996), there is an attempt to develop a “European identity” in the context of EU (Boxhoorn, 1996: 139- 139). The Union, which introduced the Copenhagen Criteria in 1993, emphasized the basic principles of European identity by stating that under the title of political criteria, the conditions of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and the

protection of minorities will be sought in EU candidate countries. In the Amsterdam Treaty signed in 1997, the concepts of freedom, justice and equality of European identity were confirmed.

In the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights (2000), human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity are specified as universal values of European identity. In Treaty of Nice, one of the goals of the Union described as “putting forward its own identity by way of common foreign policy and security policy which may develop into common defence.” (Article 2).

The Constitutional Treaty, which was signed in 2004 but not accepted, has included rigid cultural elements in a political document, attributing European identity to symbols and a supranational quality. A European Citizen Initiative was created in 2007, and ci-

tizens are aimed to participate in the development of EU policies directly. While trying to adapt citizenship and identity to the supranational mechanism, the EU established the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 but did not include elements such as the symbols reacted in the Constitutional Treaty, which was previously rejected. In this context, it is seen that national sovereignty concerns about identity continue and these concerns are reflected in Union policies.

## **2. Identity and Cultural Effect in EU Enlargements**

### ***a. First Enlargement (Britain, Ireland, Denmark - 1973)***

Britain's membership was a turning point in the first enlargement period. The membership application, which France vetoed twice, resulted positively in 1973, thus the United Kingdom became a member of the European Communities (EC). Britain established a bond by acting as a bridge between the Commonwealth and the EC but also enabled close relations with the United States. Although EU membership exists, Britain has separated itself from the community in terms of identity and culture. The effect of this separation is seen in the Eurozone and Schengen memberships on the political and economic levels.

The traditional cultural, religious, and military ties of Ireland that already exist with the land Europe have

made Ireland eager to join the EC. In his article, Dinan evaluated "EC membership afforded Ireland the economic as well as the political and cultural opportunity to do so" about Irish membership (Dinan, 2004). Denmark and Ireland also allowed the EC to establish close relations with the Scandinavian countries.

### ***b. Second Enlargement (Greece - 1981 Spain, Portugal - 1986)***

Although Greece cannot fully meet the political and economic criteria, the acceptance of its membership strengthened the belief that Greece has an important place in the building of European identity and history. There are also opinions that the EC aims to enrich European culture with Greek culture by including Greece in the community. During the voting in the British Parliament in the direction of the membership of the Greece to EC in 1980, an authorized foreign official said that "Europe owes its current cultural and political structure to a 3,000-year-old Greek heritage and they will accept Greece as a member and pay this debt." (Oltheten, 2003: 780). Thus, in 1981, Greece was accepted to the Community and an opportunity was provided to solve its problems within the Community.

With the membership of Spain and Portugal in 1986, the concept of "diversity" was included in the integration literature. This period, called the Mediterranean enlargement, is a sign that the integration of the EC will not

proceed within a narrow framework and that different cultural elements will also be involved in this process. At the same time, the idea of “unity in diversity” was raised for the first time during this period. The Commission started to take steps on issues such as justice, human rights, and equality by acting with a holistic approach.

***c. Third Enlargement (Austria, Finland, Sweden- 1995)***

The third enlargement movement includes memberships of developed countries, originally culturally similar and also integrated into the union economy. Therefore, the membership of these three countries was completed in 13 months. One reason this process was short is that Austria, Finland, and Sweden have adopted common values with the EU. Thus, the EU has prepared a transition for the next enlargement process and has made economic gains by incorporated these rich states into the community.

***d. Fourth Enlargement (Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Malta, Cyprus - 2004)***

With the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), the eastern European countries that gained their independence in 1991 made efforts to determine EU membership as the most important foreign policy target. In some countries, although there are critical reactions to leave Moscow under the auspices of

Brussels, the EU’s political, economic, and sociocultural appeal has directed these countries to the EU (Vachudova, 2005: 1).

The EU, on the other hand, has evaluated this group culturally and strategically rather than the burden that the Central and Eastern European countries will impose on the Union, and defended the thesis of bringing these countries with the same culture from the influence of communism into the European family. While the Central and Eastern European countries try to motivate EU membership by “returning to Europe” by throwing their “eastern” identity, the European Union emerges with the argument “one of us” for the Central and Eastern European countries.

While the difference during the cold war is between the EU and the Soviet Union & Eastern European countries, after the cold war, minimization of cultural differences between these countries, meeting on a common European identity, and the embracement of liberal democratic norms and values led to the facilitation of enlargements (Karacasulu, 2007: 95). According to Schimmelfennig, enlargement of east can’t be explained by efforts made in rationalist frames or countries’ choices (Schimmelfennig, 2001:49). Behaviors of these countries largely shaped around EU norms and were accepted as a part of European identity (Fierke and Wiener, 1999:1).



Central and Eastern European countries were concerned about the impact of EU membership on national identity and culture in the candidacy process. After membership, this concern proved to be unfounded. In the study of Dinan says "The Central and Eastern European candidates could take comfort from Ireland's experience of EU membership. The Irish language is making a comeback as a more prosperous and self-assured people, secure in their new-found European-ness, unabashedly emphasize their Irishness" (Dinan, 2004). Central and Eastern European countries are still one of the biggest supporters of EU membership.

The same concern has also been found in EU member states, and opinions that cultural differences will harm the functioning of the EU have resonated with the public. A research on the results of the 2004 enlargement reveals that there are shared concerns under the fields; the functioning of the EU (65%), employment (56%), cultural differences (54%) and security (50%). (Eurobarometer, 2009: 30).

#### ***e. Fifth Enlargement (Romania, Bulgaria - 2007)***

The Balkans, which were accepted as the "other" during the Cold War, were taken into the "Europeanization" process with the aim of adopting European identity and ensuring their participation in the Union. Thus, the Union decided to start accession negotiations with firstly Bulgaria and

Romania to ensure stability in the region after the Kosovo War.

Negotiations with Bulgaria and Romania continued until the end of 2004. The fact that Romania failed to make adequate progress in the areas such as corruption, independence of the judiciary, human rights and freedom of the press, hindered the membership process. In the fifth enlargement period, the EU granted full membership status to Bulgaria and Romania, which completed the reform processes in 2007 (Dimitrova, 2002: 183). As a result of this 35-year enlargement process, the population of the EU reached 500 million. The last two subjects about enlargement are important in terms of cultural destruction by the EU of the domination of Western European countries' cultural values, and the embracement of different social norms by the EU.

#### ***f. Sixth Enlargement: (Croatia-2013)***

While demanding the realization of political conditionality decisions from the candidate country, the European Union mainly aims to reduce the gap between the candidate country and its member states, and the candidate country to pursue a close course with the member countries, primarily in terms of human rights and democracy. However, the interests, principles, values, and culture of the Union should not be damaged by new participants, and the new participant should adapt to the cultural and political structure of the Union.

The membership of Croatia, which gained its independence in 1991, is considered as a result of the political, economic and identity transformations in the country. With the implementation of democratic elections in 2000, Croatia has adapted to EU values over time and started to apply values such as democracy, the rule of law, and human rights.

### 3. European Union Citizenship and Belonging Problem

#### *EU citizenship*

European Citizenship is defined in the Maastricht Treaty by having citizenship of member states. With the Maastricht Treaty, the right of free movement and residence in EU member countries (Art. 18), the right to choose and be elected in the European Union Parliament elections

(Art. 19), the right to benefit from any member country's diplomatic representation if the citizens living outside the EU do not have a diplomatic representation of their country in the country where they live (Art. 20) and the right to apply to the European Parliament Ombudsman on matters concerning the Community are given to the EU citizens (Tatoğlu, 2006: 34). At the same time, EU citizenship includes the rules of not acting as desired when traveling to another member country, following the rules, and not extorting the right of others (Ökten, 2016: 67).

It is stated in the Lisbon Treaty that EU citizenship will not replace national citizenship (Ökten, 2016: 70). At the same time, the issue of citizenship is included in the Charter of



Fundamental Rights and Freedoms in Lisbon; However, some countries have agreed to the treaty by putting annotation on this condition. Britain, Poland, and the Czech Republic have not signed the Charter (Altınbaş, 2009: 105).

European citizenship is a supranational identity (Pamuk, 2007: 2). It surrounds individuals who are citizens of different states with borders larger than their national borders within the EU public sphere; however, no matter how much it is tried to be brought to the fore, it has been overshadowed by national citizenship (Canefe, 1998).

European citizenship could not be completed culturally and institutionally as it was not separated from the nation-state completely. The absence of a common institution that grants European citizenship, granting citizenship depends on being a citizen of one of the member states, and national citizenship is the basis of EU citizenship; however, EU citizenship is based on multilingualism, multi-nationality, multi-ethnicity, and religious diversity.

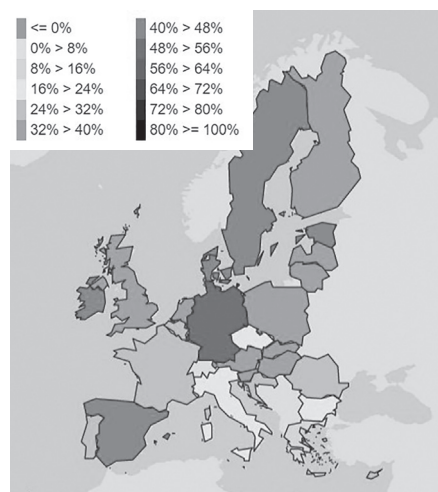
In the year of 2013, which was accepted as the European Union Citizenship Year, it was aimed to instill the awareness of EU citizenship and to monitor citizenship rights and related policies even in the daily lives of the Union citizens. EU approaches are aimed at embodying European citizenship with its national anthem and

flag (Kaya, 2017: 414, Şemşit, 2010: 105) and as of January 1, 2020, 446 million people live in the EU (Eurostat, 2020).

### **European Union Citizenship and Belonging Problem**

In the Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2019, citizens asked from EU member states “In your opinion, among the following subjects, which are those that most create a feeling of community among EU citizens?” 23% of the participants answered the question with culture (Eurobarometer, 2019a: 143). Cyprus and Greece were the countries with the highest percentage to answer as “culture” with 36%, while Romania had the lowest rate with 15%.

*Figure 1. Map of answers; “yes, definitely”*

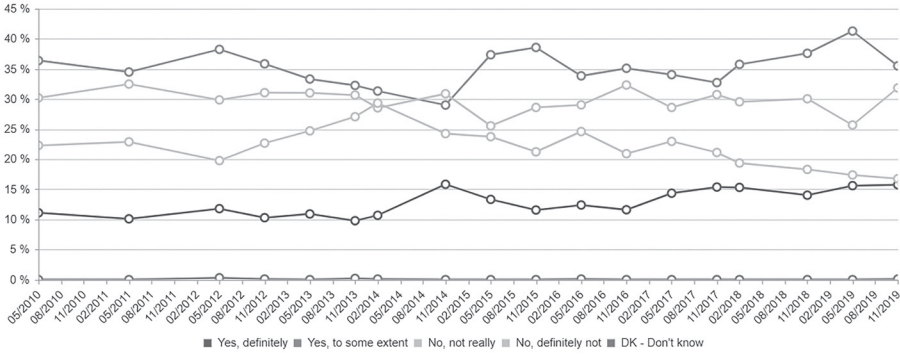


*Source: Eurobarometer online.*

In the same research, EU citizenship of the participants was questioned. According to this; 57% of Luxembourg citizens answered, “yes definitely” to the question “you are a ci-

ghts, individual freedom and democracy (Eurobarometer, 2019a: 150).

Chart 1. Greece, “are you citizen of EU” (2010-2019)



tizen of the EU”. Germany followed Luxembourg with 47% and Sweden with 43%. Only 16% of the Greek citizens gave this answer. The highest rate among those who answered the question as “no, definitely not” is Bulgaria with 20%, France 18% and Greece with 17%. The average of 27 EU countries is 30% “yes definitely”, 40% “yes, to some extent”, 20% “no, not really”, and 9% “no, definitely not” (Eurobarometer, 2019a: 132). According to this, about three out of ten Europeans said that they did not share this sense of EU citizenship. Comparing these statistics made since 2010, it is seen that the number of people who feel EU citizens is increasing, while those who do not, decrease. EU citizens who participated in the study stated that the values that the EU represents best are the rule of law, respect of human life, human ri-

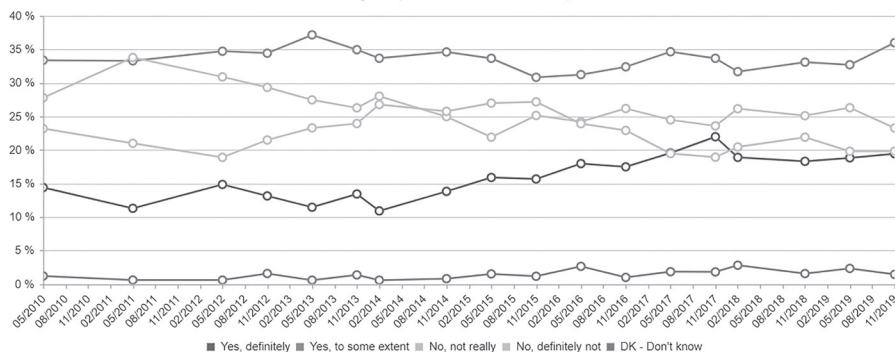
Source: Eurobarometer online.

Various researches draw attention in that Greek citizens do not feel that they are EU citizens. Accordingly, 25% of Greek citizens answer yes to the question “my voice counts in EU” (EU28- 49%). The proportion of respondents who say that the European Parliament viewpoint is positive is 28% (EU28- 33%). While 47% of the respondents say that the EU membership of Greece is a positive thing (EU28- 59%), 60% think that Greece benefits from the EU (EU28- 68%). The majority of the participants think that the EU is beneficial for their countries in terms of peace and security. When this issue is evaluated, it is seen that Greece supports below the EU average in many issues. Considering the data obtained from 2007, it has been observed that this average has incre-

used from time to time but has remained below the EU average in general (European Parliament, 2019).

Chart 2. Bulgaria “are you citizen of EU” (2010-2019)

positive is 46% (EU28- 33%). 53% of respondents say that the EU membership of Bulgaria is positive (EU28- 59%), and 57% think Bulgaria benefits from the EU (EU28- 68%). The vast majority of participants think that



Source: Eurobarometer online.

Bulgaria which the highest answer of “no, definitely not” with a rate of 20% to the question “Are you feeling EU citizen”; when the data about not feeling EU citizens are examined, 44% of Bulgarian citizens answer yes to the question “my voice counts in EU” (EU28- 49%). The proportion of respondents who say that their perspective to the European Parliament is

the EU is beneficial in creating new job opportunities. When this situation is evaluated, it can be said that Bulgaria’s EU membership mostly finds support in coordination and economic utilization with other member countries (European Parliament, 2019).

Table 1. Attachment to Europe (06/2019)

Countries	Very Attached	Fairly Attached	Not Very Attached	Not at all Attached	Total Attached	Total Not Attached
EU28	21	46	23	8	67	31
Belgium	18	51	25	6	69	31
Bulgaria	22	36	26	12	58	38
Czechia	15	45	27	11	60	38
Denmark	31	50	16	2	81	18
Germany	28	51	16	3	79	19
Estonia	13	44	31	9	57	40
Ireland	25	48	19	6	73	25
Greece	8	33	41	18	41	59
Spain	24	46	22	7	70	29
France	21	41	25	11	62	36
Croatia	16	32	34	17	48	51
Italy	12	45	30	12	57	42
Cyprus	13	41	38	8	54	46
Latvia	38	39	14	6	77	20
Lithuania	22	45	23	8	67	31
Luxemburg	36	50	9	2	86	11
Hungary	30	49	17	3	79	20
Malta	23	43	24	5	66	29
Netherlands	18	49	27	5	67	32
Austria	24	50	20	5	74	25
Poland	25	52	17	3	77	20
Portugal	8	52	35	5	60	40
Romania	21	45	24	9	66	33
Slovenia	22	46	24	7	68	31
Slovakia	22	50	19	5	72	24
Finland	22	52	18	4	76	22
Sweden	26	54	16	3	80	19

Source: Eurobarometer, 2019b: 122.

In the report published by Eurobarometer in 2019, the participants were asked how much they are connected to Europe. According to this; the most affiliated member countries to Europe were Latvia with 38% (according to “very attached”), the least affiliated countries were Greece with 18% and Croatia with 17% (according to “not at all attached”). It is remarkable that Croatia, which is a member of the EU with its last enlargement round, still

does not feel fully European. Considering the “very attached” and “fairly attached” criteria, the countries that feel most European are Luxemburg (86%), Denmark (81%) and Sweden (80%). Considering the “not very attached” and “not at all attached” criteria, it turns out that Greece (59%), Croatia (51%) and Cyprus (46%) do not feel European. While 21% of the EU member states feel European, 8% do not (Eurobarometer, 2019b: 122).

Table 2. Attachment to EU (06/2019)

Countries	Very attached	Fairly attached	Not Very Attached	Not at all Attached	Total Attached	Total Not Attached
Luxemburg	33	47	14	3	80	17
Poland	24	51	19	3	75	22
Latvia	33	40	17	7	73	24
Germany	25	46	21	6	71	27
Hungary	24	45	25	5	69	30
Spain	24	45	23	7	69	30
Slovakia	22	46	22	6	68	28
Ireland	24	42	25	6	66	31
Romania	20	43	26	9	63	35
Slovenia	21	41	29	8	62	37
Portugal	7	55	33	5	62	38
Denmark	17	43	29	9	60	38
Malta	19	41	28	8	60	36
Belgium	16	44	32	8	60	40
EU 28	18	42	27	11	60	38
Austria	20	39	31	9	59	40
Lithuania	16	43	27	10	59	37
France	17	40	27	14	57	41
Estonia	13	44	33	8	57	41
Bulgaria	20	34	27	15	54	42
Italy	10	41	34	13	51	47
Sweden	11	39	37	11	50	48
Finland	9	41	35	10	50	45
Netherlands	11	39	39	10	50	49
Cyprus	12	38	41	9	50	50
Croatia	15	30	37	17	45	54
Greece	7	32	42	19	39	61
Czechia	7	29	39	23	36	62

Source: Eurobarometer, 2019b: 121.



In the report published by Eurobarometer in 2019, it was determined that only 18 percent of the 28 EU country citizens feel very attached to the EU, 42 percent are fairly attached and 38 percent in total are not attached. When the table is analyzed, it turns out that the citizens of Luxemburg and Latvia are the most attached to the EU (according to “very attached”) and that the citizens of Greece, Portugal and Czechia feel the least attached (according to “not at all attached”). Considering the total attached criteria, the countries that feel the most connected to the EU are Luxemburg (80%), Poland (75%) and Latvia (73%). Considering the total not attached criteria, it is revealed that Czechia (62%), Greece (61%) and Croatia (54%) are the least attached countries of the EU (Eurobarometer, 2019b: 121).

### **Discussion**

When European Identity’s historical process is examined, the identity definition seems to have consisted based on “the other”. While European identity is being defined within the framework of EU, multiculturalism and diversity have been stressed. Enlargement processes, on the other hand, are accepted as EU’s spreading its own characteristics. In other words, in the process of acceptance to the general membership, adopting Europe’s values and norms is expected from the candidate states.

It has become almost impossible to ignore different cultures in the glo-

balizing world. In this sense, multiculturalism has gained much more importance, especially after the EU expanded to Eastern Europe. While the former communist states were considered Eastern European during the Cold War period, they started to be considered as Central European countries after their membership to the EU. This indicates the place of cultural values and norms in determining the position of countries.

Culture is a concept that deals with the existential system of societies and is related to identity. Accordingly, the concept of culture, which is examined in two categories as rigid and flexible, affects identity formation. When the historical formation of European identity is analyzed, the effects of rigid culture elements can be seen. However, the EU wants to structure its identity according to flexible culture and promotes EU citizenship and identity accordingly. Union countries that are multicultural and multinational show different reactions both culturally and identity, some countries form European identity together with rigid cultural elements, while others form flexible cultural elements. This situation causes a different perception of the European identity in the union and causes divergence. Therefore, the EU shows weakness in achieving the goal of unity among the differences.

With the start of the enlargement rounds of the European Union since 1973, the coexistence of different com-

munities within the union has led to discussions of culture and identity in these rounds. The inclusion of millions of people in the union roof during each enlargement round causes the culture and identity discussions to intensify during the enlargement periods. This also affects the Union's approach to candidate countries. As stated in the research, it is seen that common values affect the EU's enlargement periods. In this regard, the enlargement round where Greece joined the EU in 1981 and the impact of common cultural values in the membership process of Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995 are remarkable. Otherwise, it draws attention in the 2004 enlargement round; It is observed that the cultural and identity differences of the Central and Eastern European countries included in the union during this period were questioned and this situation resonated in the union. Therefore, it is noteworthy that in the public opinion surveys conducted after the enlargement round, cultural differences in 2004 enlargement caused concern in the member states' communities. The effect of this situation on the expansion period can be evaluated both on the length of the process and on the stiffness of the conditions.

In order to find answers to the questions asked for the purpose of the research, statistics and arguments were supported by using secondary data. Significant differences emerge when questioning EU citizenship and adhe-

rence to EU member states in public opinion polls. It is noteworthy that in some countries with low adherence to EU and acceptance of EU citizenship, the rate of being "European" is high. For example; While 31% of Danish citizens feel very attached to Europe, this rate is 17% in the EU attachment. These examples can be reproduced. When evaluated in this context, it is remarkable that this section accepts itself as European but cannot meet EU and EU citizenship in common ground. Therefore, an evaluation can be made in the countries that European identity and EU identity are perceived differently.

When we look at the cultural identity of Europe, it is observed that EU member states agree with each other in the rigid cultural elements of Europe, especially against third countries, while it is observed that they differ with each other in terms of the flexible cultural elements of Europe. In this context, it can be questioned whether the cultural elements of Europe are differentiating or integrating for EU member countries. The main dilemma in European identity is that melting of rigid and flexible culture in the same pot has not yet been realized. In this regard, the effects of flexible culture not being adopted by all European countries are evident. Especially in the recent period, with the rise of right-wing populism, the rigid cultural elements that have started to show themselves more and more, are triggered by crises and turning the

differences between the member states into abyss. While the EU has been aiming to adopt flexible cultural elements and build on their policies since its establishment, it is remarkable that the rigid cultural elements have raised their voices in the union with the effect of the conjuncture. This situation has also taken place in the enlargement processes and attitudes about candidate countries. However, as stated in the study, the EU experienced this situation in the 2004 enlargement. While the attitudes of member states during and after enlargement are particularly evident at the level of cultural differences, research conducted after the accession of Central and Eastern European countries shows that the rate of support and attachment to the EU in most of these countries is higher than the EU28 average. In contrast to this situation, Greece points out that it has little ties to Europe and the EU. Here, it is also understood that the cultural element is on a different plane than the union policy. While the cultural elements of Europe tend towards a rigid culture with the crises experienced, it can be said that these divergences within the community will lead to more conditionality and longer processes in future expansions.

## **CONCLUSION**

About the European identity's structural problems, Jean Monnet was asked years later, "What would you do better if you could replan the union?" As a response to the question he said,

"I would start my merger work with culture rather than economy" and pointed out that the identity structure was poorly shaped culturally. This weakness has caused the EU to face the differences of the Union, which wants to create the Union among the differences.

This study examines the definition of culture and identity and examines the enlargement processes in the context of European identity. For this reason, the cultural and identity aspects of enlargements have been handled and examined. Accordingly, this study aimed in order to investigate the impact of the concept of identity and culture affecting EU enlargement processes. In this context, the impact of culture and identity on EU enlargement processes is quite clear. The influence of identity and cultural affinity is evident in Greece's membership. In the memberships of Austria, Finland and Sweden, this effect was demonstrated by the completion of the negotiations in a very short time. On the contrary, the long completion of the process in Eastern European enlargement and the effective presentation of the conditionality mechanism have reflected cultural and identity differences.

Ultimately, in studies conducted with participants from 27 countries, 23% of European citizens say that culture is at the core of seeing themselves as unity. However, about three out of ten Europeans do not feel as EU citizens. At the same time, the number of

people who feel very connected to the EU is very few. The number of those who do not feel connected to the EU is equal to three out of ten Europeans. This indicates that the integration with enlargements has not yet found a place in the identity base.

This study's scope was restricted by the enlargement periods of the European countries and the resulting data. Accordingly, the focus was on the change in the member countries that joined the Union with the enlargement rounds. Examining the European identity and EU citizenship separately from the establishment to the present in the founding countries will contribute to the literature. For example, in the "are you a citizen of the EU" research, one of the highest rates that answered "no, definitely" belongs to France, one of the founding countries. Accordingly, the evaluations to be made by comparing the national identity with the EU identity in the countries will also guide future studies. It also takes place in a new round of EU literature, where enlargement does not occur, and separation occurs. The studies to be carried out considering the connection of this disintegration round with identity will provide new European identity findings.

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