

(De)constructing European Identity

Is it the same to be European and an EU Citizen?

Although sometimes used interchangeably, **it is not the same to be European**—from a country geographically located in Europe—**as an EU Citizen**—from one of the 27 EU Member States.

European vs. EU Citizen

In practice, **the difference is not always clear cut**: many institutions we associate with the EU either don't include all EU countries (like the Eurozone), include both EU and non-EU countries (like the EEA) or include non-EU countries while excluding some EU countries (like the Schengen Area). Also, all European countries can potentially apply to join the EU—this means that **the construction of the EU identity is closely linked to the general European identity**.

Two main (coexisting) understandings of European identity

Cultural

Europe as a community of **shared values**
Identitarian nationalism
 Origins in common **cultural legacies and historical experiences**

Political

Europe as a community of **shared democratic practices**
Civic nationalism
 Gained momentum in the **21st century**

A coexisting identity

Constructing a European identity is challenging because it coexists with other identities.



From the answers to "In general, how much do you identify yourself with each of the following". Source: Eurostat (2020).



Problematising EU identity

How does the EU define its identity in relation to the rest of the world? How do its values relate with Europe's past and the EU's policies nowadays?