

YOUNg
— *EU* —



ARE THE GEOPOLITICAL ALLIANCES IN THE EU INFLUENTIAL?

The EU is made up by different countries and various regions which have their own cooperation that have existed for a long time. Usually the states make geopolitical alliances because they have similar interests due to cultural, historical, social and political conditions in the exact area, and together they are stronger to lobby and achieve their goals. Currently we can identify five geopolitical alliances in the EU that are active and have some ongoing issues:

THE BALTIC ASSEMBLY



The Baltic States have strong cooperation due to the similarities in history, culture and political development. However, in the context of EU politics the states do not have common policies and perspectives, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania join only on specific issues, for example, the defence because the main threat them is Russia.

THE VISEGRAD GROUP

Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary make up a the Visegrad Group that aims to improve the cooperation between the states of Central Europe. In the EU politics the Visegrad Group's most visible action was their strong policy during the refugee crisis, however, in daily the states mostly share experiences instead of lobbying common policies.



THE BENELUX

The story of the cooperation of the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg is very long, the states have harmonized their policies and usually have the same perspective towards EU issues. As the main institutions of the EU are located in Brussels and Luxembourg City, the Benelux have an opportunity to influence the agenda of the EU in that way pursuing their common interests.



THE NORTHERN EU COUNTRIES

Sweden, Finland and Denmark are the ones from the Northern Europe countries that belong to the EU, these countries tend to develop similar policies in various issues, for example, economics and social affairs. The countries have strong ties between them, but on the EU level their common actions for impacting the ongoing processes are not very visible.



EUROMED 7



EuroMed group in the EU is made up from 7 Southern European countries: Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal and Spain. EuroMed started its cooperation in 2013 when the southern countries decided that they need coordination of their common interests. The actions of EuroMed are important in context of migration crisis and stability of the EU borders in south.

*Questions for reflection: In what situations have you noticed that countries work as the alliances?
Do you know if and how your country contributes to any alliance?*

Lora Egle, Latvia

THE EU IS GREAT BECAUSE....

In the history of the world, and especially in the history of Europe, there was the time when people were classified as better or worse ones, as those who deserved to be set free or those who should be sentenced to death. It was the worst time because then reason was being defeated by violence, evil was defeating good. It was the worst time because every country was being ruled by hostility, anger and egoism. It was the worst time, the time of the war. And afterwards, there was nothing but poverty, destruction and piercing absence of victims of the war. Complete emptiness and lack of prospects came up among individual countries.

Since it was such a difficult and bad situation, Europe desired the unity of common values, mutual support, and wished to create a strong democratic community. Opportunities for integration, common rights to freedom, integrated approach to work on creation of strong Europe – those were motivations thanks to which the European Union was established in 1950s. A lot of years have passed since that time. We might feel bored after this time, perhaps we might have forgotten what has happened in the past. In my opinion, however, we are obliged to protect the EU, protect our rights and common resources in order to prevent the dark history from ever being repeated.

I believe that the EU is the form of making all our noble ideas: ideas of the good of community, the community of mutual respect, understanding and tolerance; the community that supports those in need. I am also convinced that these ideas are of so much importance and they seem to be so obvious at the same time. That is why, if the EU broke apart, it would mean that the humanity of twenty first century breaks apart, too. Because demonstrating one's power is a sign of weakness, and the feeling of superiority over the others does not serve as way of showing your advantages, but rather it indicates arrogance.

I think that nowadays, when one can fly to the space to step on the moon, and when the artificial intelligence does not cause much trouble to be created, we should rise above selfish businesses and realize that being together as Union gives so much strength. On the other hand, I am also aware of the fact that we as a Union, we might be tired of all the rules which result from belonging to one community, from constantly being in a dialogue.

Nevertheless, we should not let being affected by them because being together and serving each other in difficult time means much more than when everything comes easy. Therefore, we should strive for staying together since the European Union is the union of common ideals, values and pursuits for better future.

Katarzyna Broda, Poland

The Youth unemployment in EU

Lithuania case

Many young people in EU are facing serious threats such as marginalization in the labour market in the labour market, deterioration of living conditions and obstacles to social integration.

There is difficult for many young people to meet their housing costs and consequently, the rate of overcrowding has risen in many EU member states.



As illustration can be the Youth Report of 2012, since the start of the financial and economic crisis in spring 2008 the increase in youth unemployment has been significantly greater than for the older active population. This situation is also confirmed for the period 2011-2014.

Young people have not only had to use face higher unemployment since the onset of the economic crisis, but those who are in unemployment are also now more likely to accept job for which they are overqualified.

So, what can we do about that? How to solve the problem? On of the solutions- career guidance consultations. The career guidance can equip young people with the skills necessary to successfully search for a job.



How to prepare to solve the unemployment problem in Lithuania? Well leading the career guidance as well. In all universities you can get information how to write the CV, prepare the motivation letter and to know about the possibilities to get the job in labour market. Does it help? I really don't know. But we must to try. There is possibility to apply for a job who is for our skills.



Is glad to say, that the highest percentage of respondents willing to become entrepreneurs is registered in Lithuania (32 prec.). So, the youngster in Lithuania prepare to create their own business. So the situation is quite positive. While the young people want to create

individual job position, there is chance that they don't leave the country, because the emigration is one of the biggest problems in Lithuania.

The youth unemployment problem exists in all EU countries, so we as a country, must be prepared for these kinds of challenges. We must find a solution as a society and help to find a proper job position for everybody.

Literature:

ES Youth report of 2015.

The photos are used from the official Instagram account of European Parliament.

Jovita Žėkaitė, Lithuania

We anonymously asked 3 young EU citizens, each from a different country, about their perspective of racism and discrimination of nationality in their country.

1st interviewed

Do you think you have ever had a racist attitude towards others?

I don't think so, if someone is bad towards me, I will probably be bad towards them, but completely disregarding any features like race, religion, gender, sexual orientations... If you are nice to me I will be nice to you.

Have you ever felt discriminated against regarding your nationality?

I feel that in general there is discrimination towards my country. Even though we are in Europe, we are the poorest country in Europe. That means that when we go, for example, to Germany, people think that we are going to steal them. There are a lot of prejudices. Unfortunately, the stereotypical image of my country is that we are poor, thieves and prostitutes. If you meet a Spanish person and the first thing that you will think is that they are lazy, but I have met Spanish people that are very hard workers and I know people from Germany that I would set foot in an office with them.

Are there refugees in Bulgaria?

There are refugees in Bulgaria because we are directly in the path, at least to western Europe. The problem is that these people can't prove that they are refugees and there are a lot of people that abuse the system. They have economic problems in their countries who try to pass as a refugee to get in the country with more money. It is very difficult to prove that someone is actually a refugee and is in danger in their country.

They are integrating very well, they feel welcome because we are closer to them than western Europe and the culture is somehow similar, especially with the Turkish people that live there. Also, they are willing to work for cheap labor which is welcomed by the businesses, for example in fast food chains. But most of the refugees, they don't want to stay. They want to get to Germany, France, UK, etc. We are keeping our borders safe, because if we break, there are a million refugees that will come.

Do the refugees get monetary help from the government?

Yes, and that has become a problem. We give more money to a Syrian refugee than to our own grandparents. And that has caused civil unrest. But the people that have proven that they are refugees and get the money are very few. We have to supply shelter, food, water... but many of them they don't want to stay.

2nd interviewed

Do you think that you have ever had a racist attitude in your life?

Yes, I feel like I have, especially xenophobic. Where I live, sometimes we are afraid of gypsies when walking alone in the street, for example. Me personally, I have had some racist attitudes, but never actions.

Are there many immigrants in your country?

Not a lot of them. There are some immigrants from Turkey. They have been living there for a long time and even though they speak our language and try to integrate, they still live in their own communities, speaking their language, having their traditions, etc.

Do they get monetary help from the government?

Yes, they receive a small amount of money for food and basic needs. It is the minimum to survive, and actually I think they could receive a little more, when they need it.

And are there refugees?

Yes, there are some. They don't really want to stay in my country and they just stop there a later go to western countries, like Germany, Austria or the UK, etc. But after some time, they found that it was quiet there and found jobs and decided to remain there. But it is not always easy, they are facing a lot of racist attitudes against their cultural differences.

3rd interviewed

In your opinion, have you ever had a racist attitude of any kind?

No, never.

What is the situation of your country regarding immigration?

In my county, there is a very big percentage of immigrants. They come from Middle East because their countries are in war, so they are refugees. The problem is that my country is suffering an economic crisis so there aren't enough jobs for everyone. There isn't enough food, jobs, residence... If the situation was different, there would be a problem, we would all get jobs, but that is not the reality. It is not fair for the people in my country.

So, you don't think you have a racist attitude.

No.

For example, if you are coming back home in an empty street in the middle of the night and you find a group of people, would you feel safer if the group was from your nationality or Middle Eastern?

I would feel safer if they were from my country, but that's not racism, that's just logic.

And have you ever felt discriminated because of your nationality?

No, never, fortunately.

Loreto González, Spain

TEST

Are you stereotypical?

**Answer honestly with true or false.*

1. Estonians are slow.
2. Germans are well organized and punctual.
3. Spaniards are lazy.
4. Italians are dirty.
5. French people are rude.
6. Romanians tend to steal.
7. Polish people drink and swear a lot.
8. All Latvians can speak Russian.
9. Greeks are always late.
10. Turkish people are very religious.

Results:

0 – 2	3 – 5	6 – 9	10
<i>Congratulations! You are not very stereotypical. When you meet someone new, you are open to how different they may be.</i>	<i>Not bad, but you could work on it! Try to open your mind to the new things, and we recommend you travel and read more.</i>	<i>You are very stereotypical. Please, educate yourself. ;)</i>	<i>GO HOME. YOU ARE DRUNK.</i>