

# Study reveals the EU is part of most Europeans' everyday life

August 21 2014, by David Garner

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The EU is becoming part of most Europeans' everyday life irrespective of social class, according to a study in six countries.

Data collected by researchers in six EU member states—Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain, and the UK – challenged the suggestion that the community benefits the upper classes, while the bulk of citizens consider it remote and alien.

The EUCROSS project revealed that more than 50 per cent of EU citizens overall 'communicate regularly by phone, internet, mail or email with family and/or friends abroad', 'have visited at least another EU member state in the last two years, are used to 'watching TV in a non-native language' and feel 'familiar with at least another EU country'.

Researchers on the EUCROSS project, who included Dr Laurie Hanquinet, of the Department of Sociology at the University of York, explored the cross-border practices of EU citizens and of Turkish migrants in Europe and their links with local, national and transnational identities.

Cross-border practices include both the physical and the virtual, from work abroad and travel to communications, shopping and friendship networks. Between 2011 and 2014, the project collected extensive quantitative and qualitative sociological data in Denmark, Germany, Italy, Romania, Spain, and the UK.

Dr Hanquinet said: "Europe should not only be seen as an abstract political project but also as something emerging from Europeans' everyday interactions and practices. Through a bottom-up approach the EUCROSS project offers new insights about what living in Europe actually means in people's [everyday life](#)."

The study found that while the more educated and the more affluent engaged in a wider palette of cross-border practices, less educated and less privileged individuals were also involved in transnational activities as part of their everyday lives.

In fact, travelling, having acquaintances, communicating and shopping across EU borders has particularly marked effects in fostering cosmopolitanism among people with lower-level educational qualifications.

National differences are dramatically important across the board. A stronger and more 'comprehensive' transnationalism can be found in Northern Europe (especially Denmark), while a 'consumption-oriented' form is typical of Central Europe, 'project' transnationalism is more common in Eastern Europe, and localism in Southern Europe (especially Italy, whose citizens are the least transnational).

Europeans are open to foreign everyday and cultural products, especially foreign cuisine—no more than 12 per cent confine themselves to national dishes. But again, strong national differences exist – the study revealed 'cuisine nationalists' make up less than two per cent of the Germans compared with 30 per cent of Italians.

The [project](#) found that, in all samples, knowledge of foreign languages affects significantly the likelihood of 'feeling European' in all samples, whereas more short-lived forms of cross-border practices had a less pronounced impact.

Other findings included:

- Having friends in two or more different EU member states made people more likely to support EU-wide redistributive policies
- Travelling and migration did not hamper political participation (especially voting)
- The experience of migration in the EU is associated strongly with European identification among Romanians, but this weakens among Romanian migrants who report suffering discrimination in the host country
- Turkish migrants with more extensive mobility and transnational background 'feel European' more than their settled peers

**More information:** For more data and analysis, visit the deliverables section of [www.eucross.eu](http://www.eucross.eu)

Provided by University of York

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