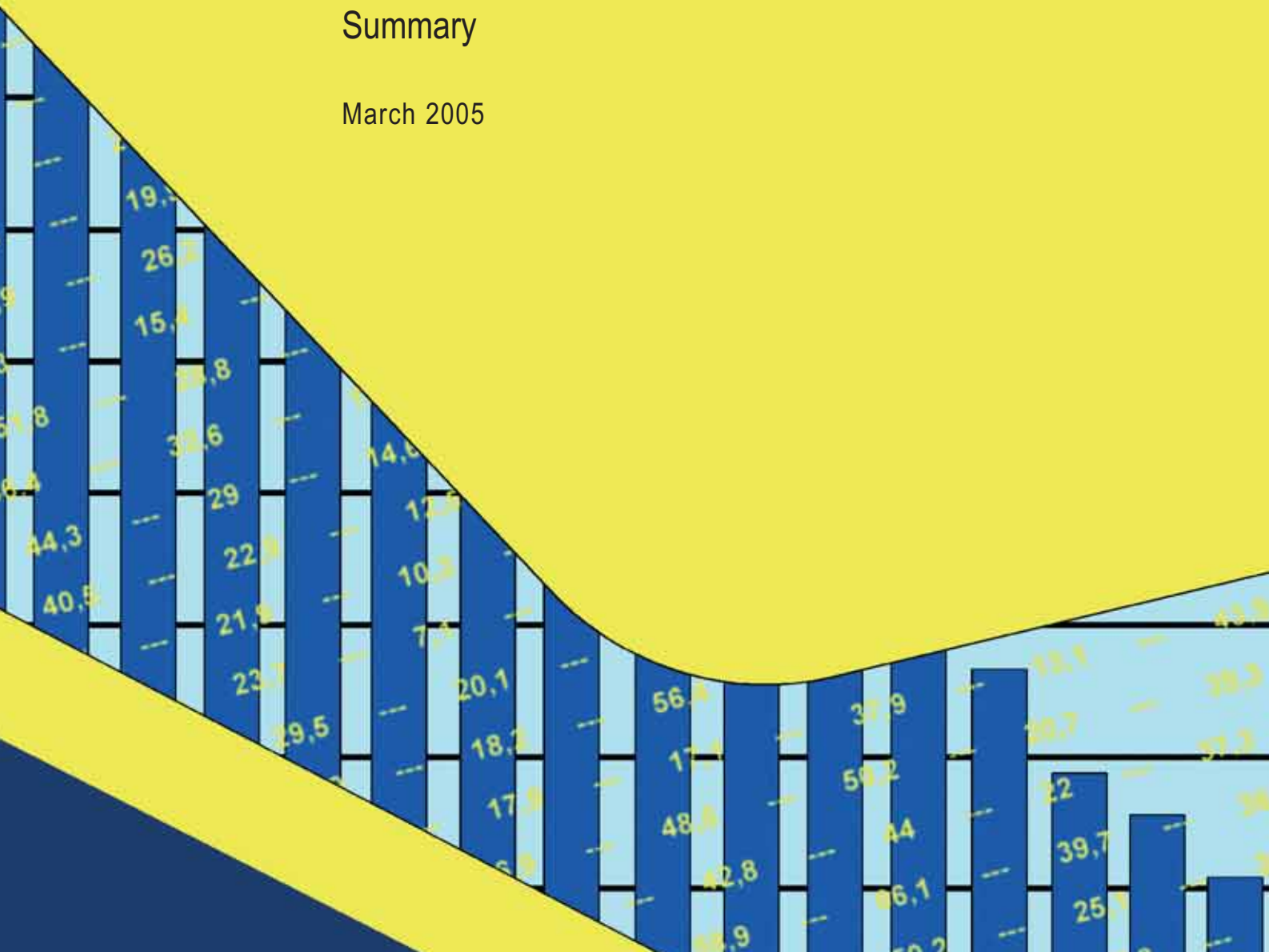


# Majorities' Attitudes Towards Minorities:

## Key Findings from the Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey

Summary

March 2005



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# **Majorities' Attitudes Towards Minorities:**

Key Findings from the Eurobarometer  
and the European Social Survey

## **SUMMARY**



## Foreword

Majority populations' attitudes towards minorities, such as ethnic minorities, immigrants and asylum seekers, are key indicators of levels of intolerance in society. In its capacity to monitor manifestations of racism and xenophobia in Europe, the EUMC commissioned a major analysis of results from the 2003 Eurobarometer survey and 2003 European Social Survey on majorities' attitudes towards minorities. In turn, the results of the 2003 surveys were compared with those of earlier surveys.

This summary provides a brief overview and interpretation of important results from the analysis of these surveys. Detailed research findings can be found in the four reports stemming from the research, which can be downloaded from the EUMC's website at <http://eumc.eu.int>.

From an analysis of majority populations' attitudes towards minorities according to regional, personal and national characteristics, this summary offers an insight into some of the important characteristics that are associated with negative attitudes towards minorities. One thing that emerges from these surveys is that socially disadvantaged majority populations – such as people who finish their education earlier or who are on low incomes – are more likely to display negative attitudes towards minorities than socially advantaged majority populations. To some extent these differences are reflected in the national characteristics of individual countries, where relatively poor economic conditions and high unemployment are sometimes reflected in higher levels of support for dimensions of 'ethnic exclusionism'. Striking differences can also be found with respect to individual countries and regions, with some showing consistent support for dimensions of 'ethnic exclusionism'.

The results also have implications for how politicians and the media refer to minorities in Europe. Media and political support for dimensions of ethnic exclusionism are both influenced by and in turn influence majority populations' attitudes towards minorities. Given that Europe is engaged in a process of enlargement, public attitudes towards Europe's minority populations need to be carefully monitored and appropriate policies introduced in an effort to avoid hostilities and the potential for conflict.

In conclusion, this summary should be looked at not only for the negative picture it paints of majority populations' support for ethnic exclusionism in Europe, but also for its positive findings concerning people's disassociation from dimensions of ethnic exclusionism. In this regard the findings can be read by policy makers, practitioners and researchers and can be followed up accordingly.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The Eurobarometer surveys and the European Social Survey are two key research instruments that allow for comprehensive and comparative data collection across European countries. In 2000 and 2003 the EUMC, in its capacity as the EU's Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, participated in Eurobarometer survey exercises measuring majorities' attitudes towards minorities. In 2003 the EUMC commissioned a research team (NISCO) from the University of Nijmegen<sup>1</sup> to conduct a major analysis of data from these surveys alongside an analysis of data from the Spring 2003 European Social Survey. In summary, the survey data reported here came from three main sources:

- An analysis of data from the 1997, 2000 and 2003 Eurobarometer surveys in the 'old' EU 15 Member States, which measured the attitudes of the majority population towards minorities.
- An analysis of the majority population's attitudes towards minorities in the Candidate Countries<sup>2</sup> of the EU, taken from the Eurobarometer in Candidate Countries in one year, 2003.
- An analysis of the 2003 European Social Survey, which included a number of questions on xenophobic and discriminatory attitudes in European societies.<sup>3</sup>

The resulting reports provide a detailed statistical analysis of the majority European population's attitudes towards minorities in different countries according to personal, national and regional characteristics. The combined analysis of the Eurobarometer and European Social Survey instruments has been made available as four reports, published on the EUMC website and available for downloading at [www.eumc.eu.int](http://www.eumc.eu.int).

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<sup>1</sup> The research team commissioned to carry out this work are from the Nijmegen Instituut voor Sociaal en Cultureel Onderzoek (Nijmegen Institute for Social and Cultural Science Research) (NISCO) at the Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen in the Netherlands.

<sup>2</sup> Research for both survey instruments was undertaken prior to the accession of Candidate Countries to the European Union in May 2004. Therefore, the Candidate Countries referred to here include: Bulgaria; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Estonia; Hungary; Latvia; Lithuania; Malta; Poland; Romania; Slovakia; Slovenia; and Turkey. Since May 2004, with the exception of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, these countries are now in the EU.

<sup>3</sup> This covered the EU 15 countries, plus the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia.

## 1.1. BACKGROUND TO THE SURVEYS

The Eurobarometer surveys were initiated in the early 1970s and have since conducted biannual research with samples of the European public on a range of economic, social and political issues.<sup>4</sup> In comparison, the European Social Survey is a relatively new survey instrument, initiated in 2001, with the remit to 'chart and explain the interaction between Europe's changing institutions and the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour patterns of its diverse populations'.<sup>5</sup>

The sampling and methodology adopted by each of the surveys is as follows:

- For the Eurobarometer surveys, in most of the countries a sample of 1,000 people were interviewed. For the European Social Survey the number of interviews in most of the countries ranged between 1,500 – 2,500. The surveys interviewed a representative sample of the population in each country.
- The findings come from an analysis of responses to a series of questions in each of the surveys, which were grouped by the NISCO research team under headings, such as 'limits to multicultural society' or 'opposition to civil rights for legal migrants'<sup>6</sup>, for statistical analysis.
- The questions reveal the majority population's attitudes towards minorities, or, more specifically, the degree to which their attitudes can be categorised as intolerant or tolerant towards minorities - which the NISCO research team broadly interpret as indicative of aspects of 'ethnic exclusionism'<sup>7</sup>.
- Only those questions and items that are shown to be valid, reliable and equivalent across countries and over the different survey periods are considered for analysis in the four main research reports.

The results of the NISCO team's analysis of the Eurobarometer and European Social Survey instruments have been written up as four reports. Each report can be read alone or in conjunction with the other reports.

Details about the content of each report can be found in **Annex 11** at the end of this summary.

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<sup>4</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index_en.htm) (as of 20/8/04)

<sup>5</sup> <http://naticent02.uuhost.uk.uu.net/> (as of 20/8/04)

<sup>6</sup> These headings were devised by the NISCO research team, and are not indicative of value judgements made by survey respondents.

<sup>7</sup> 'Ethnic exclusionism' is a broad term that is used by the NISCO research team to refer to the theoretical underpinnings of the research findings (see report 1, [www.eumc.eu.int](http://www.eumc.eu.int)).



## 2. WHAT THE RESEARCH EXAMINES

The following research questions are asked with respect to both the Eurobarometer surveys and the European Social Survey:

### GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To what extent does the general public in different countries vary in its support for different dimensions of **ethnic exclusionism**?

Which personal characteristics, such as education level and employment status, are indicative of support for different dimensions of **ethnic exclusionism**?

To what extent do particular national circumstances, such as high levels of unemployment or a high Gross Domestic Product (GDP), affect support for different dimensions of **ethnic exclusionism**?

Answers to these general questions are arrived at through analysis of the responses to specific questions asked in the Eurobarometer surveys and the European Social Survey. These questions are set out below.

### 2.1. THE DIMENSIONS OF ETHNIC EXCLUSIONISM

#### 2.1.1. EUROBAROMETER

In the case of the Eurobarometer surveys, the attitudes of majorities' towards minorities are assessed according to the extent to which they agree or disagree with certain statements, listed below as bullet points.

The NISCO researchers grouped selected statements under separate headings – such as 'resistance to multicultural society' – in order to statistically test different dimensions of 'ethnic exclusionism'.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The headings and reference to 'ethnic exclusionism' are terms employed by the NISCO researchers for analysis of results, and do not refer to statements addressed to survey respondents.

The statements asked in the Eurobarometer were:

**1. Resistance to multicultural society**

- It is a good thing for any society to be made up of people from different races, religions or cultures.
- (COUNTRY X'S) diversity in terms of race, religion or culture adds to its strengths.

**2. Limits to multicultural society**

- There is a limit to how many people of other races, religions or cultures a society can accept.
- *(COUNTRY X) has reached its limits; if there were to be more people belonging to these minority groups we would have problems.*

**3. Opposition to civil rights for legal migrants**

- Legally established immigrants from outside the European Union should have the same social rights as the (NATIONALITY) citizens.
- Legally established immigrants from outside the European Union should have the right to bring members of their immediate family in (COUNTRY X).
- Legally established immigrants from outside the European Union should be able to become naturalised easily.

**4. Favour repatriation policies for legal migrants**

- Legally established immigrants ('from outside the European Union' – inserted in the 15 EU Member States surveys) should be sent back to their country of origin if they are unemployed.
- Legally established immigrants ('from outside the European Union' – inserted in the 15 EU Member States surveys) should all be sent back to their country of origin.

## **2.1.2. EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY**

In the case of the European Social Survey, the attitudes of majorities' towards minorities are assessed according to the extent to which they (a) agree or disagree with certain statements or (b) the degree to which they positively or negatively respond to questions according to a scaled response. The survey questions or statements are listed below as bullet points.

The NISCO researchers grouped selected statements/questions under separate headings – such as ‘resistance to diversity’ – in order to statistically test different dimensions of ‘ethnic exclusionism’.<sup>9</sup>

The questions and statements asked in the Eurobarometer were:

**1. Resistance to diversity**

- It is better for a country if almost everyone shares customs and traditions
- It is better for a country if there is a variety of different religions

**2. Resistance to immigrants**

- Allow many/few immigrants of different race/ethnic group from majority
- Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries in Europe
- Allow many/few immigrants from poorer countries outside Europe

**3. Resistance to asylum seekers**

- Refugee applicants allowed to work while cases considered
- Financial support to refugee applicants while cases considered
- Granted refugees should be entitled to bring close family members

**4. Favour ethnic distance**

- Mind if your boss is an immigrant of the same race/ethnic group as majority
- Mind if a close relative is married to an immigrant of the same race/ethnic group as majority
- Mind if your boss is an immigrant of a different race/ethnic group as majority
- Mind if a close relative is married to an immigrant of a different race/ethnic group as majority

**5. Perceived collective ethnic threat**

- Do immigrants take jobs away in (COUNTRY) or create new jobs
- Taxes and services: do immigrants take out more than they put in
- Is immigration bad or good for (COUNTRY’S) economy
- Is the (COUNTRY’S) cultural life undermined or enriched by immigrants
- Do immigrants make (COUNTRY) worse or better place to live
- Do immigrants make (COUNTRY’S) crime problems worse or better

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<sup>9</sup> The headings and reference to ‘ethnic exclusionism’ are terms employed by the NISCO researchers for analysis of results, and do not refer to statements/questions addressed to survey respondents.

## 6. Favour repatriation policies for criminal migrants

- If immigrants commit serious crime they should be made to leave
- If immigrants commit any crime they should be made to leave

### 2.1.3. THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

In turn, survey respondents' answers, which are grouped in the report according to these dimensions of 'exclusionism', serve to support or challenge the report's hypotheses concerning 'ethnic exclusionism'. The research's hypotheses, which were developed by the NISCO research team, are derived from previously developed theories.

The hypotheses are as follows:

- **Hypothesis 1** is that ethnic exclusionism will be strongly prevalent among social categories of the dominant group in similar social positions as social categories of ethnic 'outgroups', more particularly among: (a) People with a low level of education; (b) Manual workers; (c) Unemployed people; (d) People with a low income; (e) People living in urban areas.
- **Hypothesis 2** is that ethnic exclusionism will be affected by: (a) Perception of collective ethnic threat; (b) Perception of personal threat; (c) Political and social distrust.
- **Hypothesis 3** is that ethnic exclusionism will be stronger in countries where the actual level of ethnic competition is relatively high, particularly in contextual conditions of: (a) A relatively high proportion of resident migrants; (b) A relatively high level of immigrants; (c) A relatively high number of asylum seekers; (d) A high proportion of unemployment.
- **Hypothesis 4** is that ethnic exclusionism will be stronger in countries where: (a) A relatively low level of the GDP is spent on social welfare; (b) The Gross Domestic Product is relatively low.

On the basis of their analysis of the responses according to dimensions of ethnic exclusionism, the NISCO research team were able to provide a number of conclusions:

## 3. KEY RESEARCH RESULTS

What follows is a selective description of key results, from both the Eurobarometer surveys and the European Social Surveys. These can be explored in more detail in the relevant main reports.

### THE TWO SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

The results of the European Social Survey are different from those of the Eurobarometer Survey because respondents were asked different questions in each survey. Therefore, results from the two surveys are not directly comparable.

*For example:* The Eurobarometer presents respondents with statements that relate to repatriation of *legally established* immigrants, while the European Social Survey presents respondents with statements that relate to repatriation of *criminal* migrants. Therefore, it is understandable that overall support for repatriation of *criminal* migrants, as referred to in the European Social Survey, is higher (70 per cent) than the support shown for repatriation of legally established migrants, as referred to in the Eurobarometer survey (22 per cent in the old EU 15, and 19 per cent in the Candidate Countries).

Selected main findings are set out below under three general headings:

### 3.1. SUPPORT FOR ETHNIC EXCLUSIONISM ACCORDING TO REGIONAL EUROPEAN DIFFERENCES:

#### 3.1.1. IMPORTANT FINDINGS (EUROBAROMETER)

*Table 1: Eurobarometer 2003 - Overall majority populations' attitudes towards minorities in the old EU 15 and candidate countries (prior to 1 May 2004) according to different dimensions of ethnic exclusionism (as set out in section 2.1.1).*

Dimensions of ethnic exclusionism Results from 2003 Eurobarometer	Old EU 15 (pre 1 May 2004) % respondents in support	Candidate Countries (pre 1 May 2004) % respondents in support
Resistance to multicultural society	25	28

Limits to multicultural society	60	42
Opposition to civil rights for legal migrants	39	38
Favour repatriation policies for legal migrants	22	19

**Annexes 1 to 4**, at the end of this summary, provide a country by country breakdown of results for each of the above dimensions of ethnic exclusionism.

- ✓ **Resistance to multicultural society**  
For the different survey periods, a stable minority of about one in four Europeans living in the 15 EU Member States, as well as a similar minority of people living in Candidate Countries, indicated their *resistance to multicultural society*. **See Annex 1 for details.**
- ✓ **Limits to multicultural society**  
The view that there are limits to multicultural society was supported, over the survey periods, by a growing majority of nearly two out of three people in the 15 EU Member States. However, this view was less widespread in Candidate Countries. **See Annex 2 for details.**
- ✓ **Opposition to civil rights for legal migrants**  
Four out of ten survey respondents in the 15 EU Member States, and a similar number in Candidate Countries, were opposed to civil rights for legal migrants – with this view remaining stable over the different survey periods. This view was strongest in west and central European countries, and also in the Baltic States, and less widespread in Mediterranean and East European countries. **See Annex 3 for details.**
- ✓ **Favour repatriation policies for legal migrants**  
An increasing minority of respondents from the 15 EU Member States, about one in five, were in favour of repatriation policies for legal migrants over the different survey periods. This view was similarly held in some Candidate Countries. Respondents from Nordic and East European countries were hesitant in their support for this view, whereas respondents from Mediterranean and central European countries showed strong *support for repatriation policies*. **See Annex 4 for details.**

### 3.1.2. IMPORTANT TRENDS OVER TIME (EUROBAROMETER)

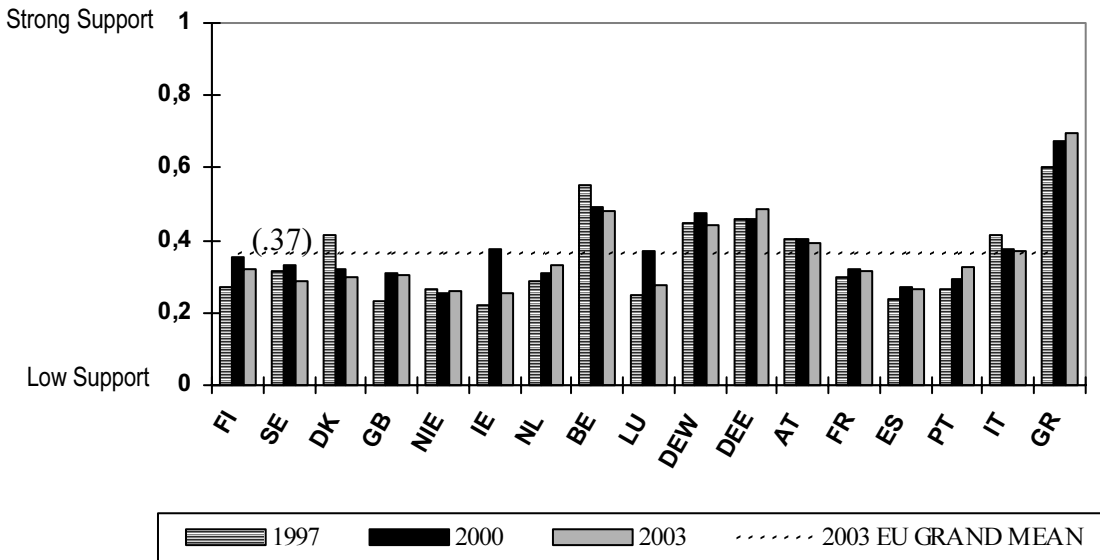
The Eurobarometer surveys in the 15 EU Member States allow some comparison of results over time, as these surveys were carried out in 1997, 2000 and 2003.

- ✓ Overall, the level of *resistance to multicultural society* has remained the same in 2003 as it was in 1997 – a minority of roughly one in four respondents in the EU 15 Member States displayed this attitude. (There was a general increase in this dimension between 1997 – 2000, followed by a general decrease between 2000 and 2003.)

*As an illustration of this trend:*

Figure 1, below, depicts support for ‘resistance to multicultural society’ (as an index score) in different years in the old 15 EU Member States (see main report 2, figure 36).

*Figure 1: 1997, 2000 and 2003 Eurobarometer Old EU 15, ‘resistance to multicultural society’ by Member State*



- ✓ In comparison, there was a significant increase over this period (1997-2003) in those subscribing to the view that *multicultural society has reached its limits*. About two out of three respondents in the EU 15 Member States subscribed to this view.
- ✓ Another significant increase is in those respondents in the EU 15 Member States who were in *favour of repatriation policies for legal migrants*. Although overall this was the policy measure least favoured by respondents

in the EU 15, the minority holding this view - about one in five - grew significantly over the period (1997-2003).

### 3.1.3. IMPORTANT FINDINGS (EUROPEAN SOCIAL SURVEY)

*Table 2: European Social Survey 2003 - Overall majority populations' attitudes towards minorities in 'western' and 'eastern' European societies<sup>10</sup> according to different dimensions of ethnic exclusionism (as set out in section 2.1.2).*

Dimensions of ethnic exclusionism results from Spring 2003 European Social Survey in the old EU 15 and selected Candidate Countries	All countries % respondents in support
Resistance to immigrants	50
Resistance to asylum seekers	29
Resistance to diversity	48
Favour ethnic distance	21
Favour repatriation policies for criminal migrants	70
Perceived collective ethnic threat	58

**Annexes 5 to 10**, at the end of this summary, provide a country by country breakdown of results for each of the above dimensions of ethnic exclusionism.

- ✓ Half the survey respondents in western and eastern European societies expressed *resistance to immigrants*. **See Annex 5 for details.**
- ✓ *Resistance to asylum seekers* was supported by less than a third of respondents in western and eastern European societies. **See Annex 6 for details.**
- ✓ In general, *resistance to immigrants and asylum seekers* was widely shared by respondents from Mediterranean countries – in particular Greece showed marked resistance to immigrants. These stances were also strongly supported by people living in east European countries. In comparison, people from Nordic countries tended to dissociate themselves from these stances.
- ✓ Nearly half of respondents in western and eastern European societies indicated their *resistance to diversity*. **See Annex 7 for details.**

<sup>10</sup> In report 4, the NISCO researchers refer to 'western and eastern European societies' as a generic term that captures Europe's geo-political divisions prior to 1989/1990.



- ✓ In western and eastern European societies, a minority of one in five respondents avoid social interaction with migrants and minorities – *ethnic distance*. Support for *ethnic distance* was particularly strong in some Mediterranean countries and some east European countries. **See Annex 8 for details.**
- ✓ In the different countries/regions surveyed, *support for repatriation of criminal migrants* was widespread. **See Annex 9 for details.**
- ✓ *Perceived collective ethnic threat*, in consideration of minorities, was expressed by the majority of respondents in western and eastern European societies. This attitude was particularly strong in Greece, and to a lesser extent in some of the eastern European countries. Perceived collective ethnic threat is somewhat less prevalent in western European and Nordic countries. **See Annex 10 for details.**

### **3.2. SUPPORT FOR ETHNIC EXCLUSIONISM ACCORDING TO PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

In general, there were no significant differences in support for ethnic exclusionism between men and women. Differences according to religious practice and attendance at religious services were often found to be spurious.

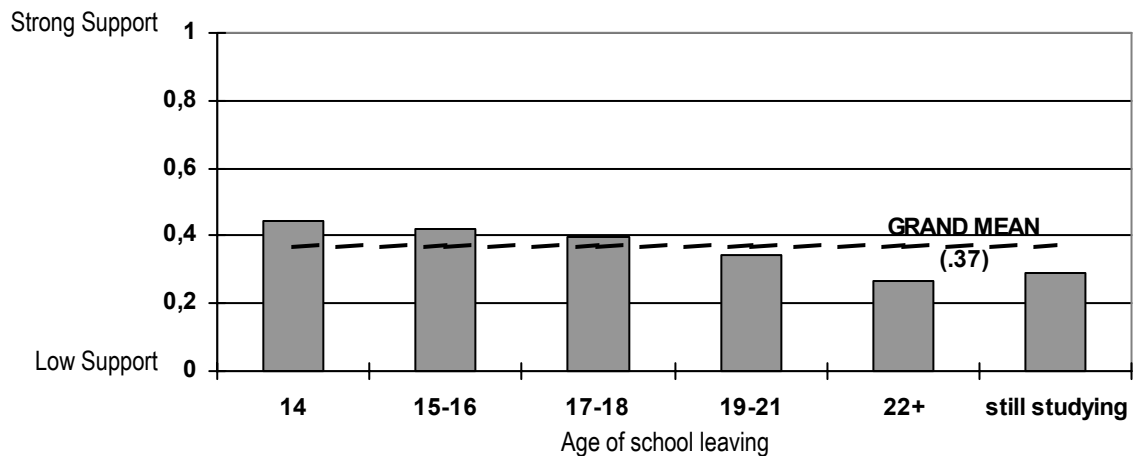
On the basis of data collected in the course of each survey, the following general conclusions can be drawn:

- ✓ **Education**  
People who have prolonged their education tend to dissociate themselves from most exclusionist stances. Correspondingly, support for different forms of exclusionism is generally more prevalent amongst people who have attained lower education levels. This pattern tends to hold for respondents from the 15 EU Member States, but less so for those from Candidate Countries.

*As an illustration in relation to education:*

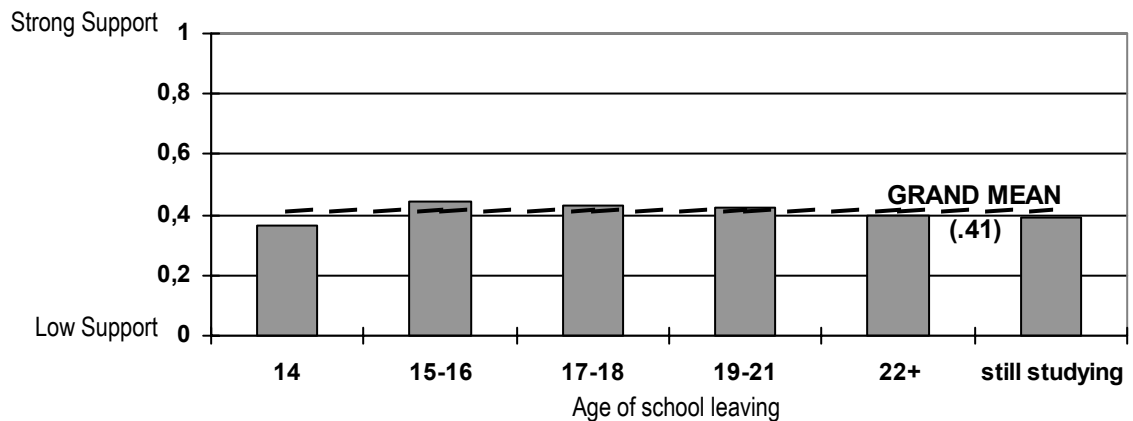
The 2003 Eurobarometer results for 'resistance to multicultural society by education', for the old EU15, show a high resistance to multicultural society by people who complete school before or at the age of 14, while those who extend their education after 22 show the least resistance - see Figure 2 below (based on index score of results (Report II, figure 6)).

*Figure 2: 2003 Eurobarometer  
Old EU 15, 'resistance to multicultural society by education'*



In comparison, in the Candidate Countries surveyed, people who complete school before or at the age of 14 are *least* likely to show resistance to multicultural society - see Figure 3 below (based on index score of results (Report III, figure 6)).

*Figure 3: Eurobarometer 2003  
Candidate Countries (pre 1 May 2005), 'resistance to multicultural society by education'*



✓ **Occupation**

People with professional careers show, in general, weak support for most exclusionist stances. In comparison, many dimensions of exclusionism are supported by people performing manual labour or the self-employed, and also by those depending on social security or running a household. In the 15 EU Member States, people performing routine non-manual work rarely support exclusionist stances, but their counterparts in Candidate Countries are sometimes in favour of exclusionist stances.

✓ **Income**

People in the lowest income quartile tend to more strongly adhere to exclusionist stances than those on higher incomes. This pattern holds for people both in the 15 EU Member States and Candidate Countries.

✓ **Age**

In general, young people exhibit less support for ethnic exclusionism than older people. However, there are minor variations within this pattern. For example, according to the ESS, people below the age of 40 show slightly more resistance to asylum seekers than people in their forties and fifties.

✓ **Geography**

People living in urban areas tend to show less support for exclusionism than people living in rural areas.

✓ **Politics**

People on the right-wing of the political spectrum show more support for all aspects of exclusionism.

### **3.3. SUPPORT FOR ETHNIC EXCLUSIONISM ACCORDING TO NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES:**

On the basis of statistical analysis of data for each country – as collected from sources such as Eurostat, the United Nations and national sources - the following general conclusions can be drawn:

✓ **Gross domestic product (GDP)**

In general, the higher the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in a country, the lower the level of support for dimensions of ethnic exclusionism.

✓ **Unemployment**

High unemployment rates produced inconsistent results with respect to different aspects of ethnic exclusionism. However, *resistance to multicultural society* corresponded to high unemployment rates.

✓ **Non-nationals, migrants and asylum seekers**

Generally, the more non-nationals present in a country the higher the level of support for aspects of ethnic exclusionism. However, recent net influxes of migrants and asylum seekers did not result in support for all aspects of ethnic exclusionism.

In general, support for ethnic exclusionism according to national circumstances provided less clear cut patterns – with the exception of GDP – than support for ethnic exclusionism according to national and regional differences and personal characteristics.

## **4. GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS**

### **4.1. FINDINGS ACCORDING TO REGIONAL EUROPEAN DIFFERENCES, PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS, AND NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

#### REGIONAL EUROPEAN DIFFERENCES

With respect to variations in responses between the 15 EU Member States and the Candidate Countries, and between regions and individual countries, the following examples can be highlighted. These both confirm and challenge support for 'ethnic exclusionism'. For example:

- While the report concludes that 'resistance to immigrants' was shared by half of the population living in western and eastern European societies, 'resistance to asylum seekers' was supported by less than a third of the public in western and eastern European societies.
- In the same vein, while the view that there are 'limits to multicultural society' was supported, over time, by a growing majority of nearly two out of three people in the 15 EU Member States, this attitude was supported less in Candidate Countries.

In general, dimensions of ethnic exclusionism were widely supported in Mediterranean countries, in particular Greece, and to some extent in east European countries and some west European countries, but less so in Nordic countries. However, within these broad patterns differences appear that challenge regional and country-specific responses concerning ethnic exclusionism. For example:

Amongst Candidate Countries, prior to May 2004, support for exclusionist stances was found to be strongest in the Baltic States, in particular in Estonia and Latvia, but weaker in Bulgaria, Poland and Romania.

In addition, some similar trends can be noted with respect to changes in support for different dimensions of ethnic exclusionism over time. For example:

- In the old 15 EU Member States, support generally increased in the period 1997 to 2000 for ‘resistance to multicultural society’ and ‘opposition to civil rights for legal migrants’.
- However, in the period 2000 to 2003, support for these two stances decreased.
- Therefore, as a result of these fluctuations, support for these dimensions of ethnic exclusionism has remained relatively stable over the period 1997-2003.

Accordingly, these two aspects of ethnic exclusionism were most closely related; that is, as people indicated their resistance to multicultural society, so they were also opposed to civil rights for legal migrants.

## PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The clearest patterns which came out of the research were those which related to personal characteristics. For example manual and self-employed people tended to support many dimensions of ethnic exclusionism (consistent with research hypothesis 1[b] – see section 2.1.3), while people in professional occupations and middle management tended not to. Striking differences according to other social characteristics were also found - such as people on lower incomes (consistent with research hypothesis 1[d]) and old people tending to support dimensions of ethnic exclusionism. Yet here, anomalies were found that challenged general patterns - such as the fact that older people in Candidate Countries tended to be less resistant to asylum seekers.

## NATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

With respect to national circumstances a number of patterns emerged, although these patterns were not as strong as in the case of personal characteristics. For example, in general, the higher the General Domestic Product per capita, the lower the level of support for aspects of ethnic exclusionism. In other words, as

might be assumed under the terms of 'competition theory' (and consistent with research hypothesis 4[b]), economic prosperity appears to lessen the perceived threat posed by incoming minorities.

In turn, the higher the level of unemployment in a country the stronger the resistance to 'multicultural society', and the stronger the support for 'repatriation' policies (consistent with hypothesis 3[d]). Yet high levels of unemployment, which, in line with the above results, might be expected to have a negative impact on attitudes towards minorities, are not always matched by high levels of support for other dimensions of ethnic exclusionism.

A relationship was established between support for aspects of ethnic exclusionism and the proportion of migrants in a country/net migration. That is – consistent with research hypotheses 3(a) and (b) - the higher the numbers of migrants in a country, and the higher the net migration, the stronger the support for aspects of ethnic exclusionism.

## 4.2. FINDINGS ACCORDING TO 'INTERMEDIATE CHARACTERISTICS'

Report IV, which analysed results from the European Social Survey, specifically looked at majorities' attitudes towards minorities according to so-called 'intermediate characteristics'. These refer to a range of factors potentially affecting individual respondents' attitudes towards minorities, such as: 'left-right political placement', 'perceived insecurity', 'social distrust', and 'political distrust'.

Consistent effects were found with respect to some 'intermediate characteristics' and dimensions of ethnic exclusionism. According to Report IV:

*'the more people perceive decreases in their personal safety, or the more they distrust other people or distrust political leaders, or the more they consider themselves to be politically right-wing, or the more they perceive ethnic minorities to pose a collective threat, the more they favour ethnic exclusionism.'*<sup>11</sup>

In this regard, while from the Eurobarometer surveys we can interpret people's resistance to asylum seekers and migrants according to personal characteristics (such as education, occupation, income and age) and national characteristics (such as unemployment rate and Gross Domestic Product), in the case of the European Social Survey the addition of intermediate characteristics (such as trust/distrust and concern about crime) adds a new level of understanding which is not available for the Eurobarometer data.

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<sup>11</sup> Report IV, paragraph 4.0

## 5. INTERPRETING THE RESULTS

### 5.1. GENERAL FINDINGS: 'COMPETITION THEORY' AND 'ETHNIC EXCLUSIONISM'

One theory which is sometimes used to explain support for 'ethnic exclusionism' is that of 'competition' or, more broadly, 'conflict theory' - the basic idea being that competition for scarce resources between people produces conflict and the drive to exclude others. In other words, as the individual or the group experience either real or perceived competition – for work, for housing, and so on – so they identify with their peers to the exclusion of others. In the case of majority populations this can mean that they react to real and perceived competition from non-national 'outsiders' by constructing obstacles against minorities' incorporation into society.

The results of the European Social Survey (ESS) are particularly interesting in this regard as they introduce questions about perceived competition for resources – relating to jobs, services and the state of the economy – that are frequently omitted from surveys. The ESS also asks respondents to comment on the impact that immigrants have on their country's culture and crime rate, and ask the generic question 'do immigrants make (country) worse or better place to live'. To this end, the ESS asks questions that can be related to 'perceived collective ethnic threat'.

In reading the results, consideration needs to be given to how people's attitudes towards minorities can reflect their concerns about localised 'threats' centring on issues such as crime and job insecurity. In turn, these 'threats' can be attributed to 'outsiders', such as migrants and asylum seekers.

According to results from Report II , in consideration of the 15 EU Member States:

*'resistance to multicultural society is stronger in countries with a high level of ethnic competition, as indicated by a relatively high level of unemployment, a relatively low GDP per capita, and a relatively high proportion of non-western non-nationals.'*<sup>8</sup>

In other words, the researchers' underlying theory – that ethnic exclusionism is based on competition for resources between social groups – is supported by the results found in Report II. However, Report III found that:

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<sup>8</sup> Report II, paragraph 2.3.6.

*'the evidence corroborating hypotheses on individual conditions derived from Ethnic Competition Theory is less consistent in Candidate Countries than in Member States.'*<sup>9</sup>

When compared with the 15 EU Member States, Candidate Countries' unemployment rate and GDP were found to have rather inconsistent and often statistically non-significant results on different dimensions of ethnic exclusionism. Yet other national characteristics that can be related to ethnic competition theory were found to be statistically significant, such as the proportion of migrants in a country and the level of net migration.

Turning to results from the European Social Survey, another slightly different set of findings emerged, namely that the presence of non-western non-nationals and net migration is associated with dimensions of ethnic exclusionism. However, these results do not reach statistical significance when measuring most aspects of ethnic exclusionism.

In other words, the presence of 'outsiders', in the form of non-western non-nationals, seems to have some influence on aspects of ethnic exclusionism but cannot, in itself, explain the levels of support for ethnic exclusionism.

## **5.2. INTERPRETING POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE RESULTS**

Interestingly, some findings concerning support for dimensions of ethnic exclusionism are contradicted or negated when read alongside other measures of ethnic exclusionism. Indications of ethnic exclusionism do not all follow the same pattern. While some research findings are in the expected direction that the researchers' predicted, there are many examples from the research that are inconsistent with expected outcomes.

### **For example:**

#### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN URBANISATION AND ETHNIC EXCLUSIONISM**

The researchers proposed that ethnic exclusionism will be strongly prevalent amongst 'people living in urban areas'. However, the report's analysis of data found the opposite to be true. The research results consistently found that people living in rural areas expressed higher levels of support for nearly all dimensions of ethnic exclusionism. Contrary to 'competition theory', people who have little contact with minority groups appear to display more support for ethnic exclusionism. While this result clearly reflects people's negative attitudes

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<sup>9</sup> Report III, paragraph 3.3.6



in rural areas, it can also be understood to suggest that closer contact between majority and minority populations lessens attitudes of ethnic exclusionism.

What we have here, with respect to rural people's attitudes towards minorities, is probably a measurement of 'perceived' threat. Therefore, the research results have to be read cautiously, in that they may be reflecting people's generic fears and insecurities rather than their actual experiences.

#### MEASURING 'PERCEIVED ETHNIC THREAT'

The ESS asked respondents questions such as: 'is immigration bad or good for (country's) economy?' or 'do immigrants make (country's) crime problems worse or better?'. These questions require answers that are beyond the scope of most people's actual knowledge, and therefore require careful interpretation, as the results might not reflect the reality of people's experiences or the extent of their actual knowledge. Negative answers to these questions might more accurately be indicators of a range of insecurities, of which concern about migrants and asylum seekers is just one.

## **6. THE CONTEXT FOR THE FORMATION OF MAJORITIES' ATTITUDES TOWARDS MINORITIES**

The research's findings on majorities' attitudes towards minorities need to be interpreted with regard to key influences, at a European and global level, which help us to understand and interpret people's attitudes. Many of these possibly relevant national contexts, however, could not be taken into account due to a lack of valid cross-national indicators to compare the national contexts as related to ethnic exclusionism.

As Europe's population is becoming increasingly diverse and mobile, many people now live and work in different places to those they were born in, and those who remain 'at home' experience other cultures in their local environment. These developments reflect changes on a European and global stage with regard to movements of people within and between countries as migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, workers and tourists.

Some of the key political, social and economic influences on majorities' attitudes towards minorities include:

- *Immigration*: the actual and perceived numbers of asylum seekers, refugees, legal and illegal migrants; immigration control and border policing; free movement of EU citizens between Member States.
- *EU expansion*: the role of new Member States and their citizens in the EU; future accession of other countries to the EU.
- *Global conflicts*: the impact of on-going and recent global conflicts on relationships between populations within the EU – such as the attacks of 11 September 2001, the Israel/Palestine conflict, Iraq and Afghanistan.
- *New policies of diversity and multiculturalism*: the increasing recognition and promotion of diversity in different aspects of social/public life; public information about immigration, citizenship and cultural diversity.

Taken together, the above form part of a range of influences that can affect majorities' attitudes towards minorities, both negatively and positively. In turn, other factors, such as each country's level of economic growth and stability, its provision of welfare benefits, and the character of its political climate on migration and integration can also affect majorities' attitudes towards minorities.

The media in particular can have a significant influence on public attitudes. Global communications technology, from satellite television to the Internet, brings world events and diverse cultures into our living rooms in ways that have an impact on how we perceive 'others'. National and local media reports about ethnic minorities, migrants and asylum seekers also shape majorities' attitudes towards minorities, with overt or covert racist bias in reporting both reflecting and influencing negative attitudes.

Consideration needs to be given to political and policy standpoints, and in turn media reporting of these standpoints, with respect to immigration and diversity - in particular with regard to the anti-immigration and racist sentiments of some nationalist and populist politicians in the EU. When strident anti-immigrant or anti-multiculturalism messages are coupled with reports about minorities and crime, and latterly minorities and terrorism, then public insecurity and negative attitudes are further enhanced. As the EUMC's report on 'Racism and cultural diversity in the mass media' comments, these negative stances are increasingly reflected across the political spectrum and can serve to enhance the majority public's sense of insecurity about immigration and minority populations.<sup>10</sup>

Too often, media reporting neglects to advance positive messages about diverse communities living in relative peace alongside each other. Whereas reports

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<sup>10</sup> See EUMC report 'Racism and cultural diversity in the mass media', at <http://eumc.eu.int>, pp.36-47.

about radical Islam and the threat it poses to Europe are regarded as 'newsworthy', reports about cultural diversity and co-existing communities are comparatively rare. In addition, reference to majority and minority populations with respect to shared human rights is absent from most media reporting. In sum, reference to majority and minority populations' rights and responsibilities towards each other, with respect to human rights and associated legislation relating to 'race' and ethnicity, is sidelined by media *and* political parties that focus on negative images of minorities in Europe.

## 7. OBSERVATIONS

While some of the response patterns regarding attitudes of ethnic exclusionism can be discerned with a reasonable degree of certainty - such as the patterns according to age, education, income, rural/urban location, and so on - other results demand more careful interpretation. When looking at sometimes contradictory results within and between different sample groups and survey sites, it is often difficult to express meaningful generalisations. This is particularly so with regard to attempts at *cross-national* comparisons.

Attempts at comparative cross-national research in the social sciences are replete with problems. This is because, at a basic level, 'like' is not compared with 'like'. In other words, researchers are often 'comparing apples with pears'. As a result, there can be major problems regarding the application of common survey tools, and the interpretation of results, because of the multifarious differences of national context. Existing official data on issues of social concern are rarely comparable because of national differences in identifying and collecting data.

One way to sidestep this problem of lack of comparability of existing data between national contexts is to use research projects with comparability built in to them from the beginning. Here, a common methodology is applied in different countries in order to produce data of an intrinsically comparable nature.

The Eurobarometer and European Social Survey instruments fall into this category. Comparability is enhanced because the Eurobarometer surveys share a common base as survey instruments, with common questions which are applied in different countries. The European Social Survey has gone some way towards meeting the challenges of cross-national research by carefully constructing linguistically comparative questions. Furthermore, the results reported were statistically tested to make sure they are valid, reliable and 'equivalent' measures of ethnic exclusionism between the different survey sites and, where appropriate, over time.

Reflecting on the wealth of data supplied in the four main reports that were commissioned for this research (see: <http://eumc.eu.int>), the following general observations can be made:

- Social surveys, such as the Eurobarometer survey and the European Social Survey, are useful tools for informing policy makers about majority populations' attitudes towards minorities at the level of individual countries in Europe, and in comparison with other countries. Useful comparisons can be drawn from other countries' results that allow policy makers to reflect on where their country stands in relation to sensitive issues concerning minorities and immigration. In turn, regional patterns in responses could inform the development of appropriate policies at both national and EU level.
- Surveys can provide an overview of respondents' replies according to broad meta differences between countries – such as unemployment rate, GDP and net migration – and according to micro differences between individual respondents – such as level of education, occupational status and geographical location.
- Both positive and negative survey findings can be used to inform policy intervention in specific areas.

*As an illustration:*

The surveys' findings that people in the lowest income quartile tend to adhere more strongly to exclusionist stances than those on higher incomes, would seem to support competition theory's assertion that different groups in similar social situations can experience real and perceived competition for scarce resources. In response to this finding, targeted intervention is needed with people on low incomes.

The surveys' findings that people in rural areas tend to adhere more strongly to exclusionist stances than people in urban areas, appear to invert aspects of competition theory, as rural populations are less likely to come into contact with minority ethnic groups and immigrants. In response to this finding, targeted intervention is needed with people in rural areas to foster positive attitudes towards minorities, while at the same time reinforcing positive attitudes towards minorities in urban areas.

## 8. CONCLUDING REMARKS

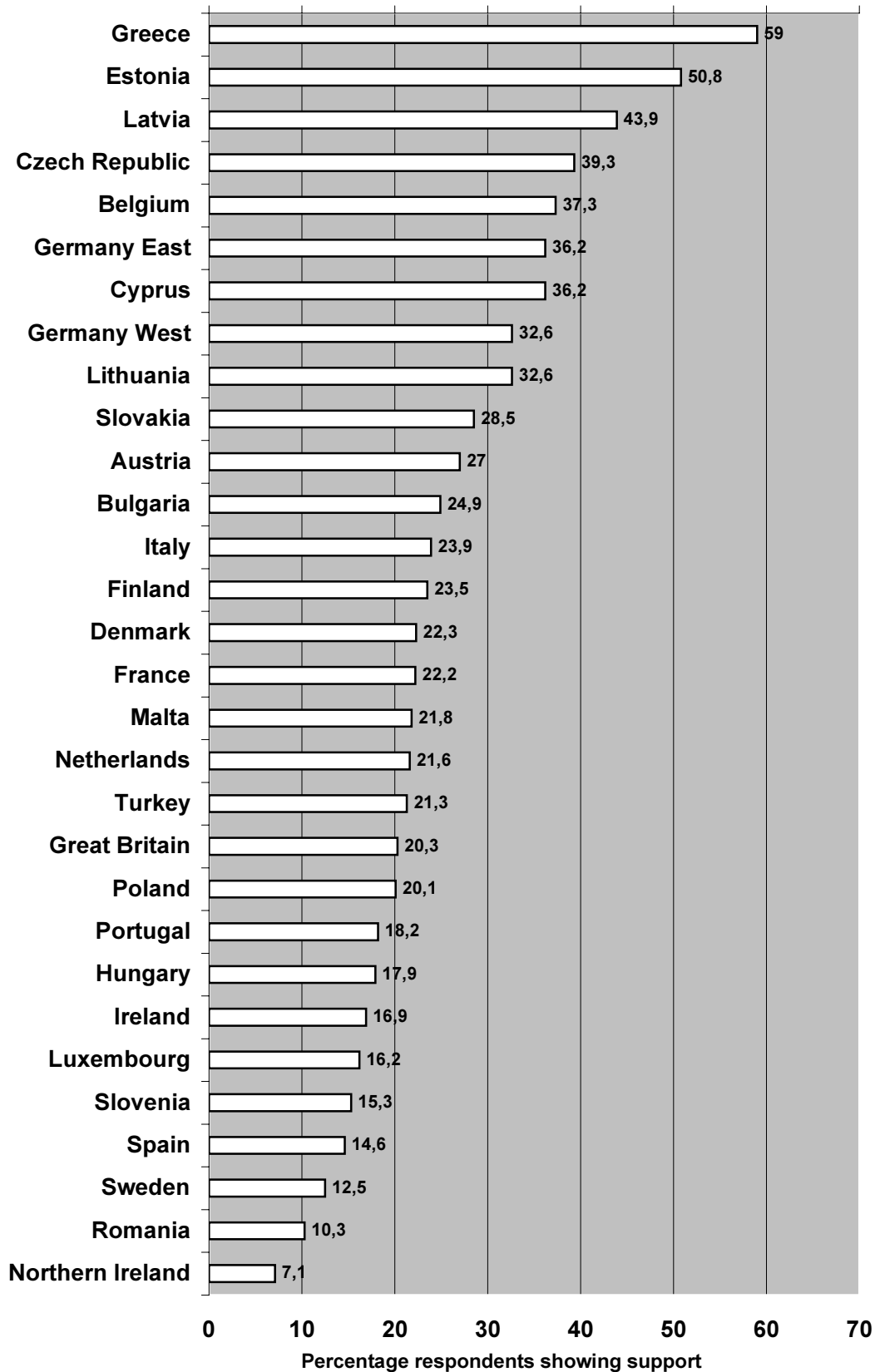
This Summary has been able to do only limited justice to the range of findings generated by this research, and can present only a flavour of the wealth of statistics which can be found in the main reports. The final reports on the Eurobarometer and European Social Survey research describe a complex range of patterns concerning the majority population's attitudes to minorities and ethnic diversity. The findings tell us as much about non-support for ethnic exclusionism as they do about support for ethnic exclusionism. Some of the research hypotheses were confirmed in the course of the research, and others were overturned. Some of the findings were consistent with theoretical ideas of 'ethnic exclusionism', and others were not.

Alternative explanations are waiting to be found for many of the patterns which have been revealed. The statistical detail of the research is available on the EUMC's website for other researchers to access, and for them to apply new theories and propose their own explanations based on their own reading of the results (see: <http://eumc.eu.int>). The current and future deliberations on this body of evidence will be of particular interest to those working in the fields of racism and race relations, immigration, human rights, law and multiculturalism – including policy makers, practitioners and researchers.

## 9. ANNEXES

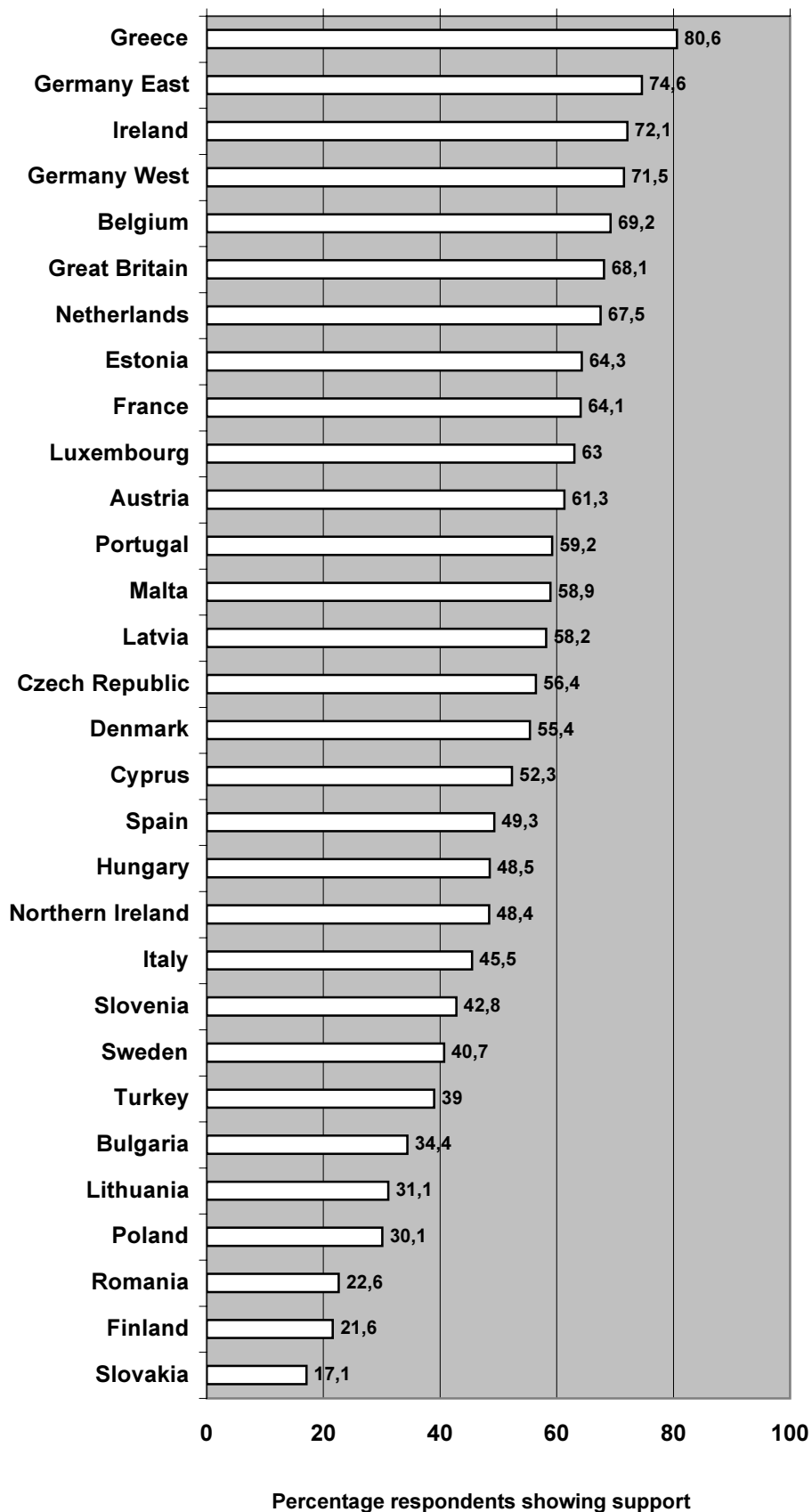
Annex 1:	'Resistance to Multicultural Society'
Annex 2:	'Limits to Multicultural Society'
Annex 3:	'Opposition to Civil Rights for Legal Migrants'
Annex 4:	'Favour Repatriation Policies for Legal Migrants'
Annex 5:	'Resistance to Immigrants'
Annex 6:	'Resistance to asylum seekers'
Annex 7:	'Resistance to diversity'
Annex 8:	'Favour ethnic distance'
Annex 9:	'Favour repatriation policies for criminal migrants'
Annex 10:	'Perceived collective ethnic threat'
Annex 11:	The four Reports

**ANNEX 1: 'Resistance to Multicultural Society\*\*  
Eurobarometer 2003**



\*See section 2.1.1 in this summary for full list of questions asked to determine 'resistance to multicultural society'

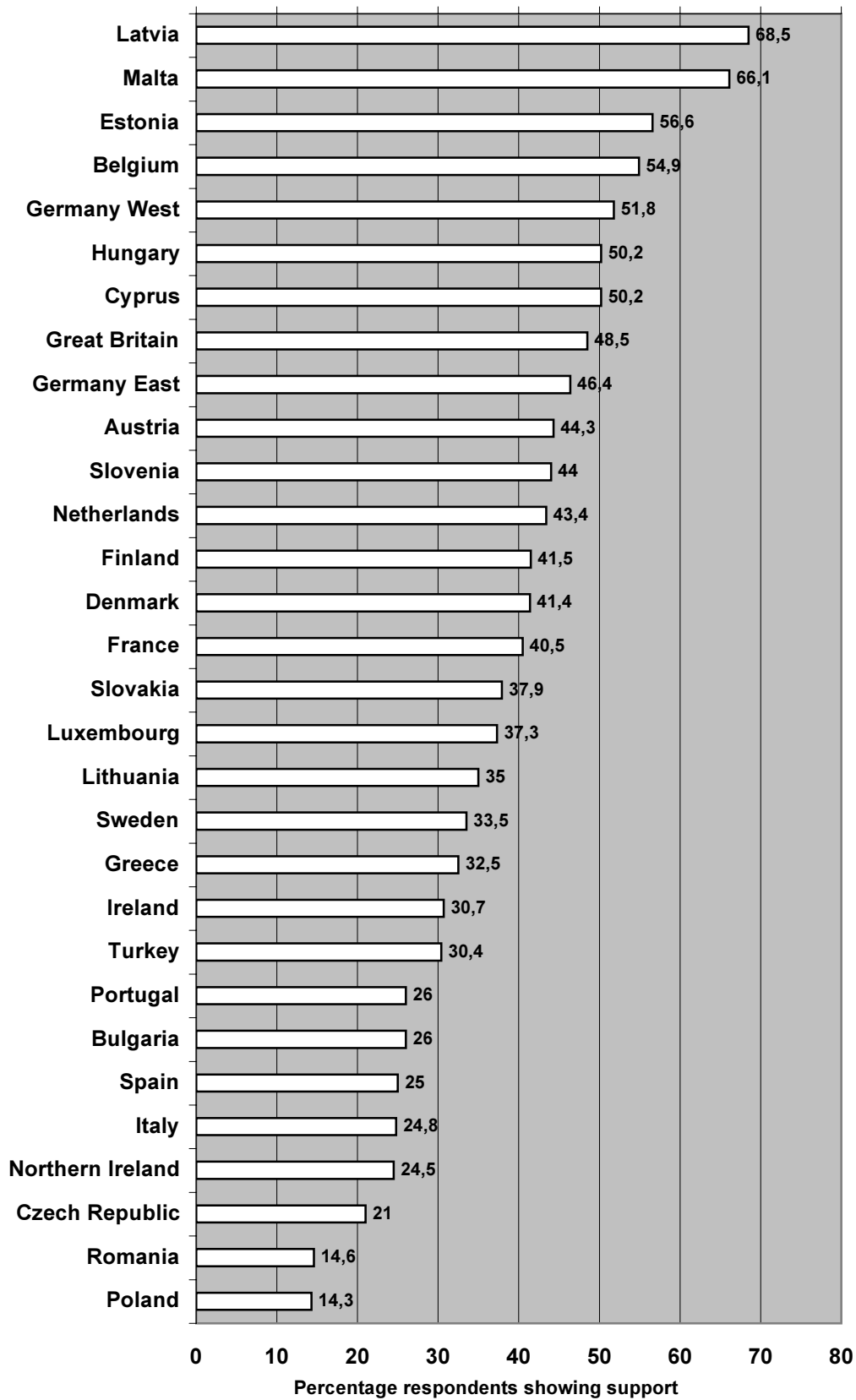
**ANNEX 2: 'Limits to Multicultural Society'\*  
Eurobarometer 2003**



\* See section 2.1.1 in this summary for full list of questions asked to determine 'Limits to multicultural society'

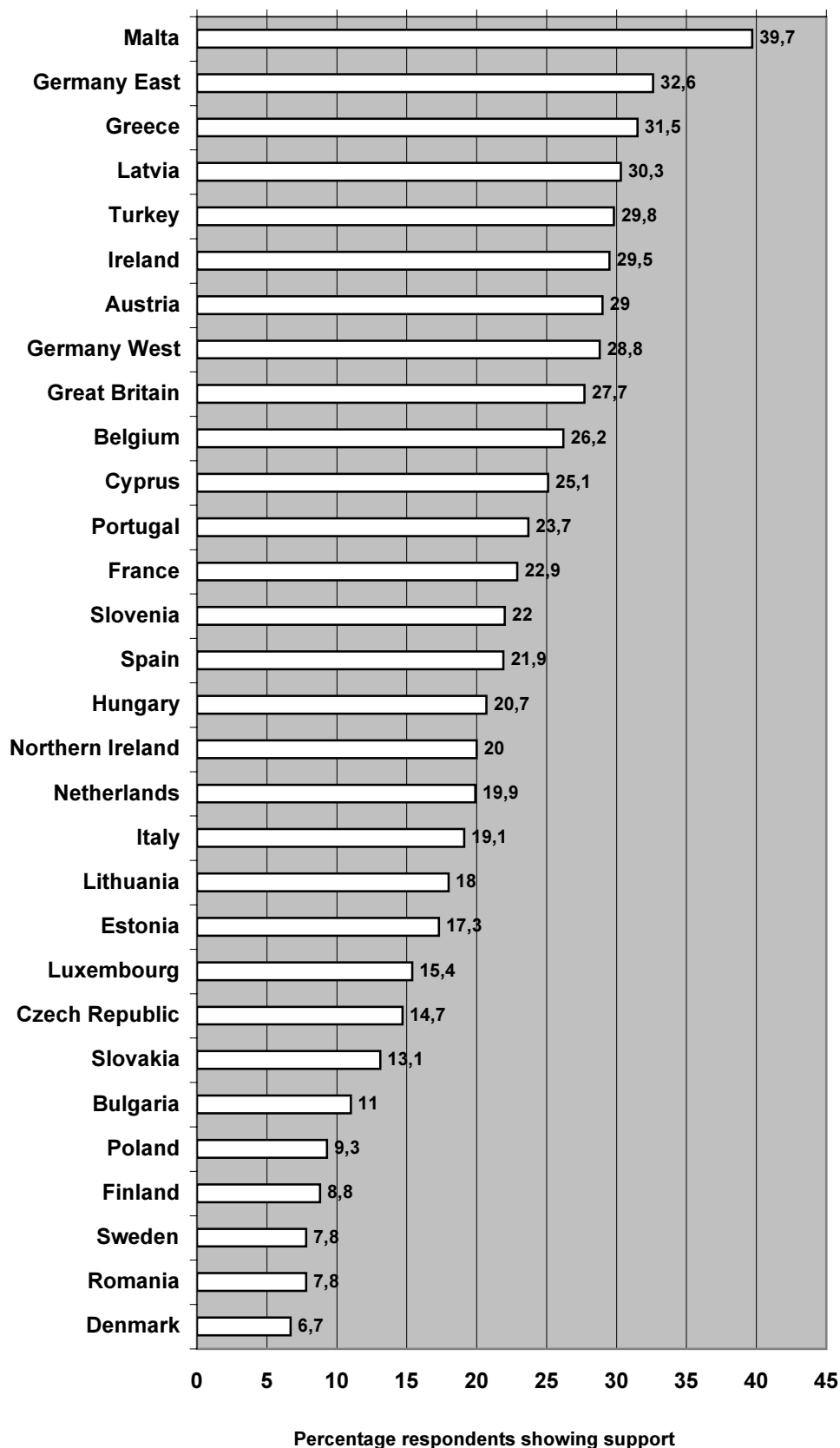


**ANNEX 3: 'Opposition to Civil Rights for  
Legal Migrants'  
Eurobarometer 2003\***



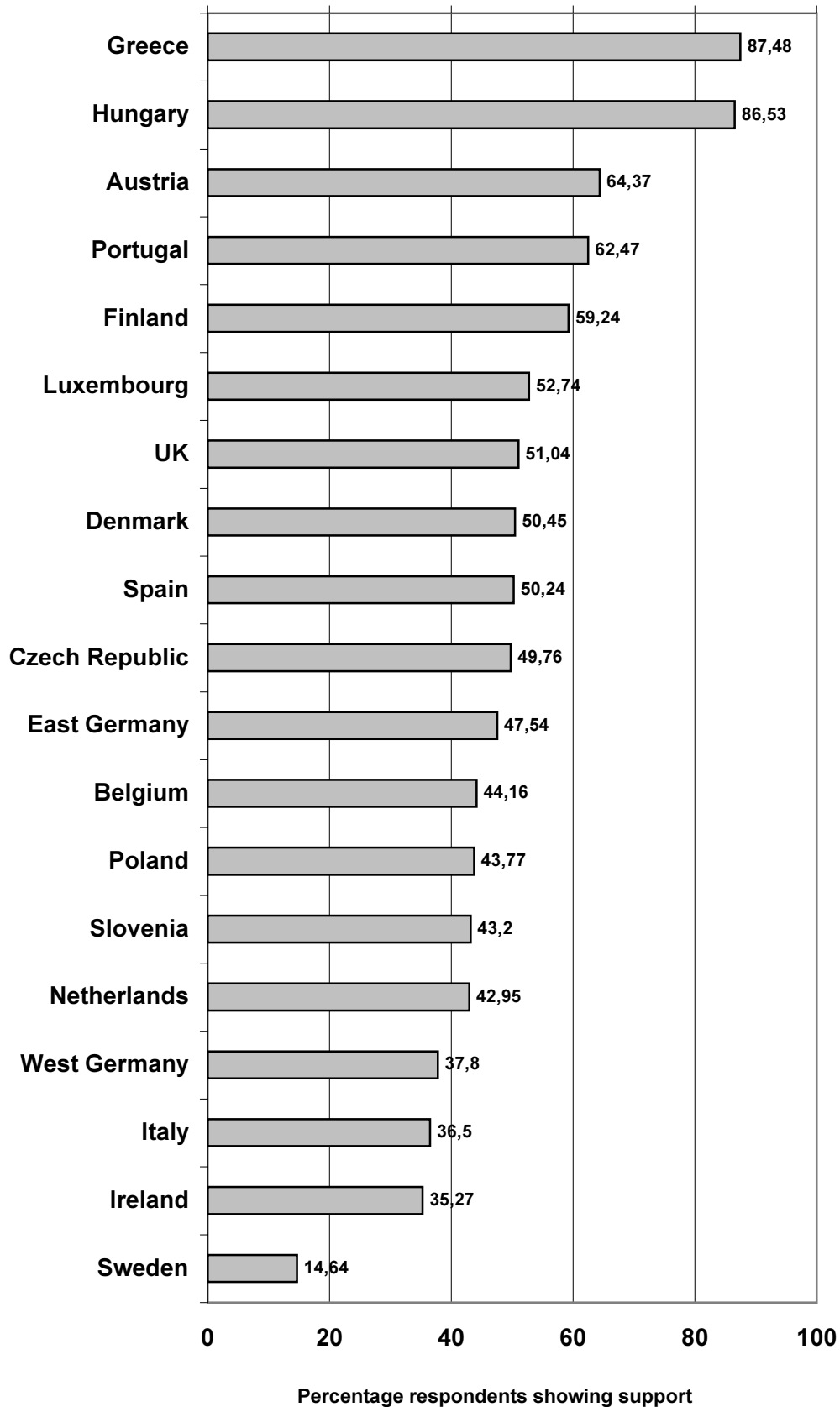
\* See section 2.1.1 in this summary for full list of questions asked to determine 'opposition to civil rights for legal migrants'

**ANNEX 4: 'Favour Repatriation Policies  
for Legal Migrants'\*  
Eurobarometer 2003**



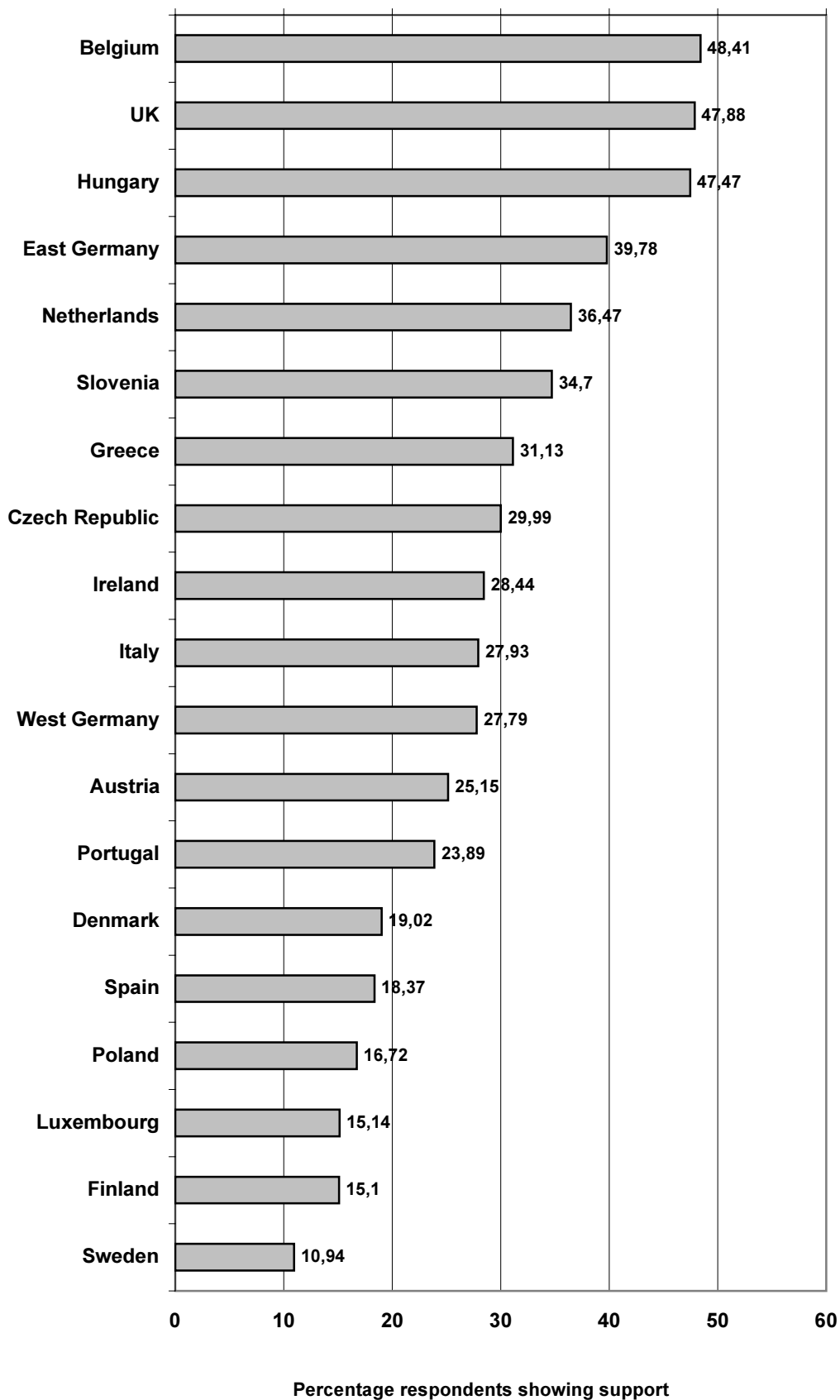
\*See section 2.1.1 in this summary for full list of questions asked to determine 'favour repatriation policies for legal migrants'

**ANNEX 5: 'Resistance to Immigrants'\***  
**European Social Survey 2003**



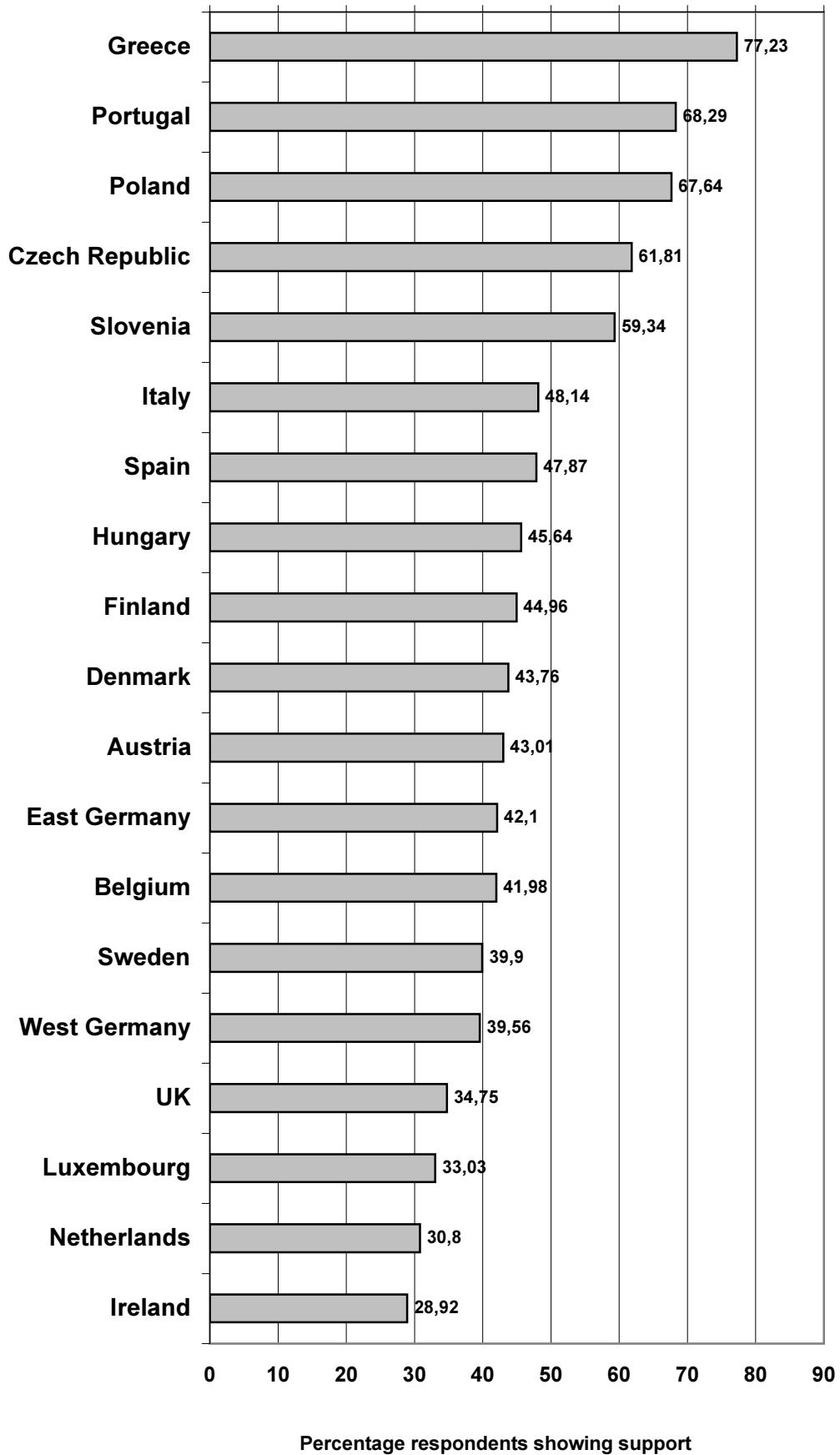
\*See section 2.1.2 in this summary for full list of questions asked to determine 'resistance to immigrants'

**ANNEX 6: 'Resistance to  
asylum seekers'<sup>\*</sup>  
European Social Survey 2003**



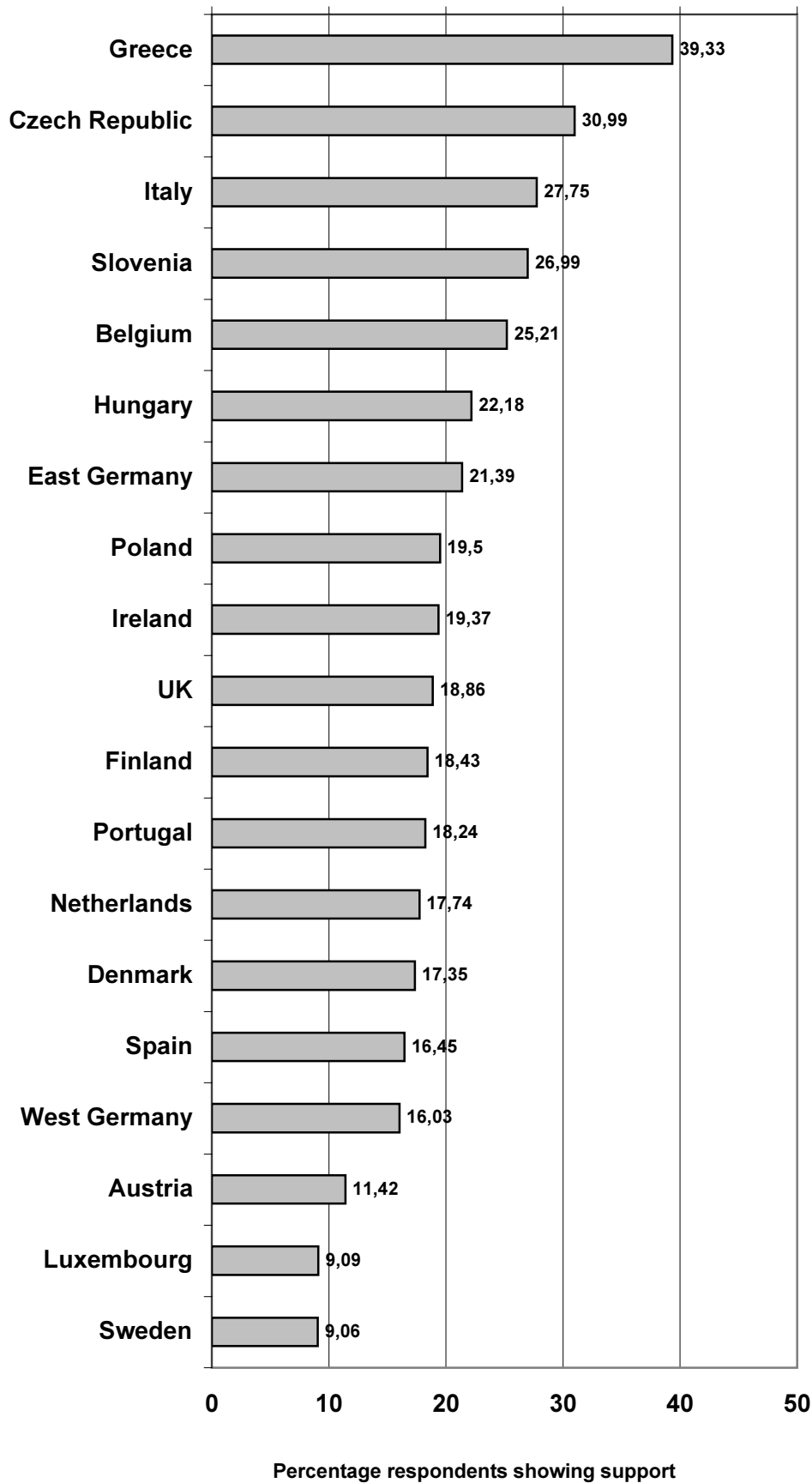
<sup>\*</sup>See section 2.1.2 in this summary for full list of questions asked to determine 'resistance to asylum seekers'

**ANNEX 7: 'Resistance to diversity'\*  
European Social Survey 2003**



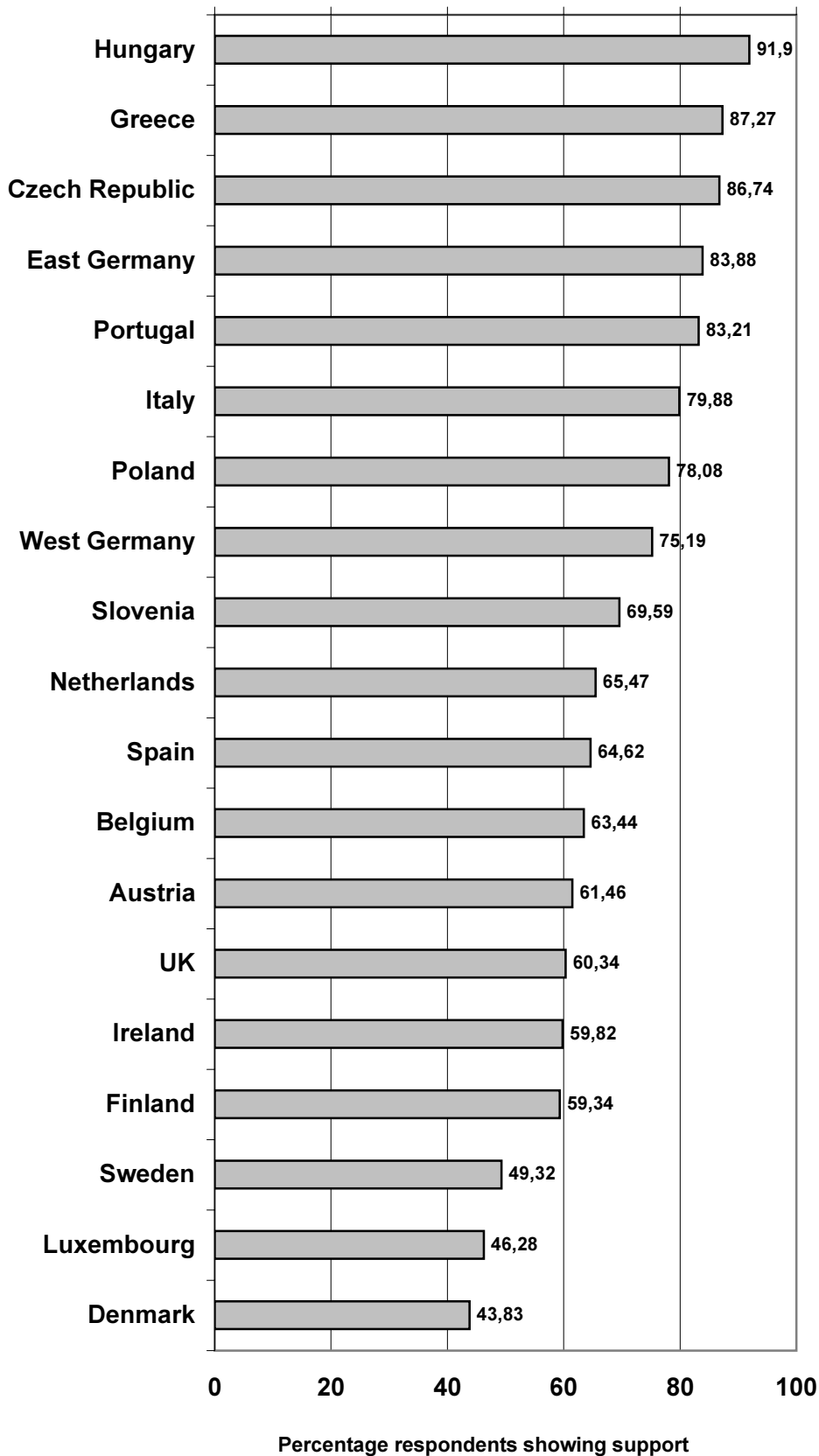
\*See section 2.1.2 in this summary for full list of questions asked to determine 'resistance to diversity'

**ANNEX 8: 'Favour ethnic distance\*\*  
European Social Survey 2003**



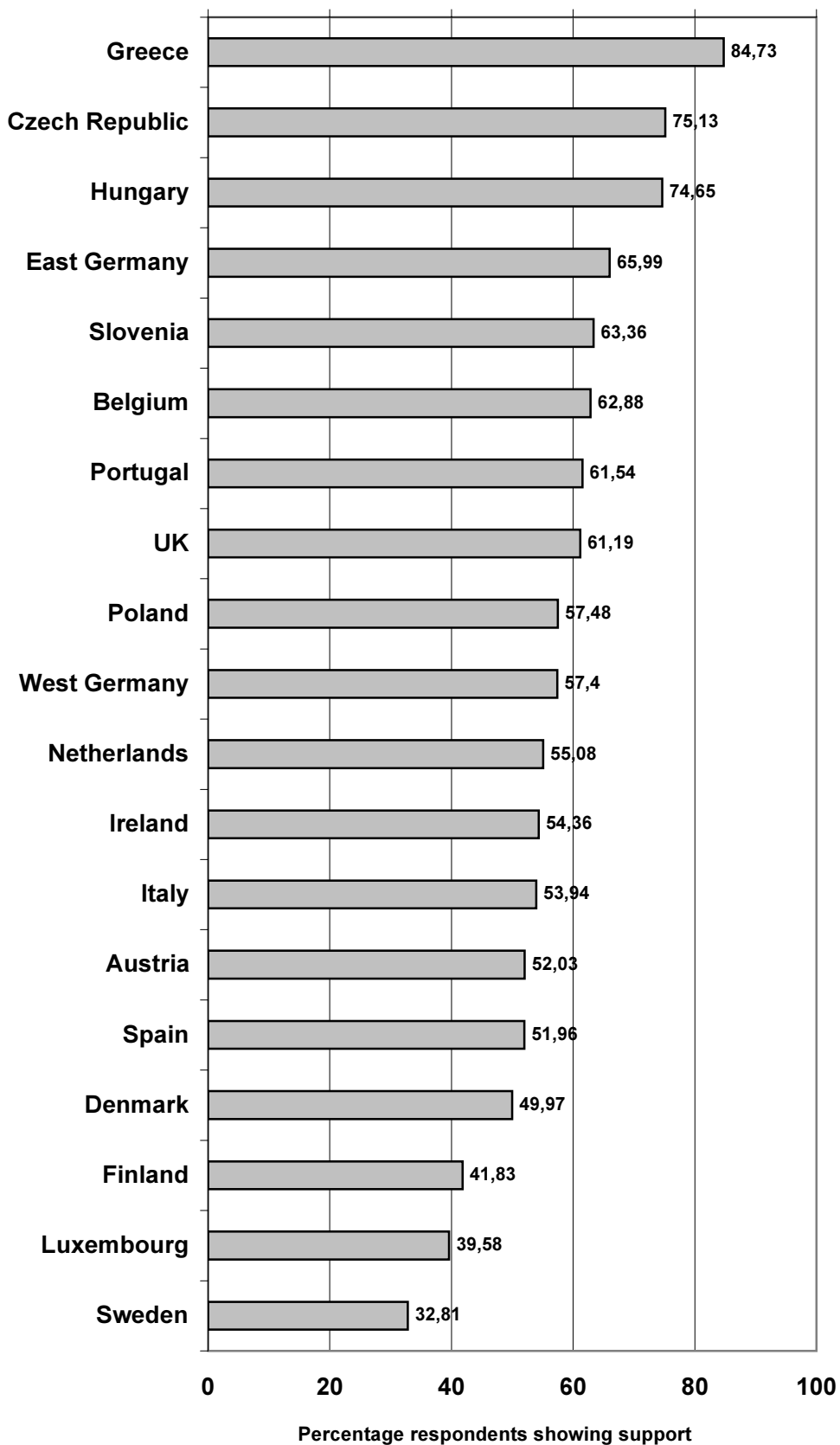
\*\*See section 2.1.2 in this summary for full list of questions asked to determine 'favour ethnic distance'

**ANNEX 9: 'Favour repatriation policies  
for criminal migrants'\*  
European Social Survey 2003**



\*See section 2.1.2 in this summary for full list of questions asked to determine 'favour repatriation policies for criminal migrants'

**ANNEX 10: 'Perceived collective ethnic threat\*\*  
European Social Survey 2003**



\* See section 2.1.2 in this summary for full list of questions asked to determine 'perceived collective ethnic threat'



## **ANNEX 11 THE FOUR REPORTS**

### **Report I: Majority populations' attitudes towards migrants and minorities**

The first report introduces the research questions and hypotheses that the report sets out to answer, and includes a brief summary of the research findings related to these questions and research hypotheses. The key theories on which the questions and hypotheses are built are introduced here, and provide a backdrop for interpreting the research results in Reports II to IV.

### **Report II: Majorities' attitudes towards minorities in the old 15 EU Member States: results from the standard Eurobarometers 1997-2000-2003**

The second report explores majorities' attitudes towards minorities in the 15 EU Member States based on findings from the Standard Eurobarometer survey from 2003, and in comparison with results from the 1997 and 2000 Eurobarometers.

- Resident nationals aged 15 years and over were randomly sampled at different points in each survey site, with a distribution across urban and rural areas.
- Selected nationals were asked to take part in face-to-face interviews in their homes.
- The target samples for each of the countries/sites surveyed was set at 1000, with the exception of Luxembourg and Northern Ireland which were assigned lower thresholds.

This 2003 Standard Eurobarometer survey covered the following EU Member States/sites: Belgium, Denmark, Germany (West and East), Greece, Spain, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Austria, Portugal, Finland, Sweden.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> According to EU conventions Member States are listed alphabetically according to the spelling of their country name in their source language. The separate terms 'Great Britain' and 'Northern Ireland' are used instead of the term 'UK', as these were treated separately in the Standard Eurobarometer survey.

**Report III: Majorities' attitudes towards minorities in Candidate Countries of the EU: results from the Eurobarometer in Candidate Countries 2003**

The third report explores majorities' attitudes towards minorities in EU Candidate Countries based on findings from the 2003 Eurobarometer in Candidate Countries.

The target sample was 1000 interviews per country/site, with the exception of Cyprus and Malta which were assigned lower thresholds.

Resident nationals were randomly sampled and results weighted on the basis of the standard Eurobarometer criteria.

This 2003 Candidate Countries Eurobarometer survey covered 13 EU Candidate Countries: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Turkey.<sup>12</sup>

**Report IV: Majorities' attitudes towards minorities in European societies: results from the European Social Survey 2002-2003**

The fourth report is based on results from the European Social Survey (ESS) in the 15 EU Member States and the Candidate Countries, which collected data between Autumn 2002 and Spring/Summer 2003.

Respondents were interviewed according to random sampling criteria, and results weighted to account for the over or under-representation of certain areas and household types.

As with the Eurobarometer results, only nationals of the selected countries were included in the report's analysis.

The 2003 ESS surveyed respondents in the following countries/sites: Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany (West), Germany (East), Greece, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Hungary, Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Finland, Slovenia, Sweden, United Kingdom.

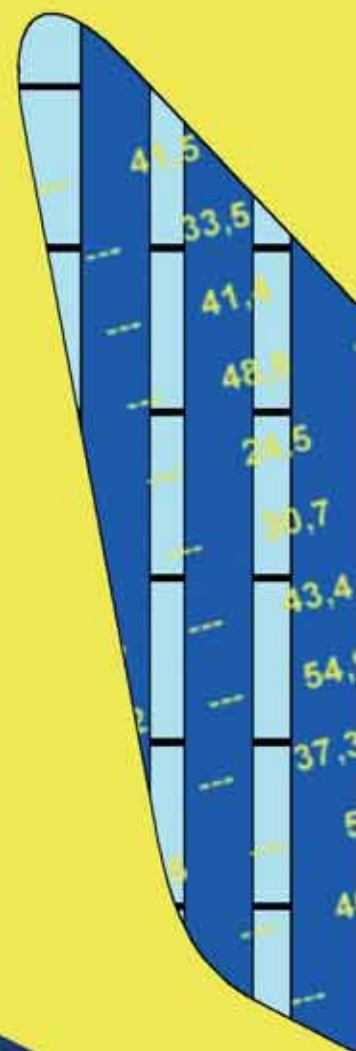
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<sup>12</sup> Since May 2004, with the exception of Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, these countries are now in the EU.

## EUMC Mission Statement

The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) is a thinking, acting and challenging network organisation, working in all sectors of society for equality and diversity, and against racism and xenophobia in the European Union - as a network of knowledge, a bridge-builder and a service organisation.

The EUMC is an Agency of the European Union. Its primary objective is to provide the European Community and its Member States with objective, reliable and comparable data at European level on the phenomena of racism and xenophobia in order to help them take measures or formulate courses of action within their respective spheres of competence. It also studies the extent and development of the phenomena and manifestations of racism and xenophobia, analyses their causes, consequences and effects and highlights examples of good practice in dealing with them.



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European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia

**Majorities' Attitudes Towards Minorities: Key Findings from the Eurobarometer and the European Social Survey**

**Summary**

Wien, Manz Crossmedia GmbH & Co KG

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