

Euroscepticism: how to build strategies to counter it?

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Since the phrase 'an ever closer union' has come to use the European project has changed, and will continue to change. I believe that therefore the core of the criticism has changed. For example we now see how the EU, at least tries, to agree on a common foreign policy. With the focused changed, from economic topics towards a wider political vision, the focus of the critics has changed as well. This could indicate that even those opposed to the EU more or less agree with the common market, and therefore focus on other topics to stir up anger against the EU. Or could it be that people have, generally speaking, accepted the economic benefits of the EU so that populist are taking another approach to criticise the EU? In recent years, with the Eurozone crisis, the economic issues have been criticised again. The austerity politics has also caused much distress. However, I think, that most Eurosceptics approve of the European Economic Community as is used to be, but don't want any further integration.

Does this mean that it is the direction in which the EU is developing that is reflected in the public debate? Has the pro-European side, in large, 'won' the debate about the economic benefits of the EU, and that Eurosceptics have therefore moved on to other topics? In Sweden I have heard Eurosceptics who argues that the Norwegian solution would be good for Sweden; we could have the benefits of the common market but without the downsides of being a member. Someone who would present this argument has accepted the economic benefits of the EU. Are there similar arguments from other countries?

The current status of some of Europe's economies is a part of the reason people are choosing populist solutions to complex problems. When employment rates go down it means that there is a growing number of dissatisfied citizens. Is the solution to this economic growth?

Some politicians have argued that European problems need European solutions, and for me it is clear that the refugee crisis is a European problem. I believe that most people agree that it is a European problem; still many argue that every nation should deal with this itself. It could be that they reason that, yes, this is a European problem, however I am, or my country is, not *primarily* European (we are a nation first). Therefore, we should not be asked to be a part of a common solution. The assumption above leads me to the question of identity. Does the average EU-citizen feel European? Both, yes and no I think, even though most do not feel primarily European, what about secondary? I think most of my friends would describe themselves as primarily Swedish, and secondarily European. Does the average voter, or citizen need to feel European to agree with the European project? I am not sure it is necessary, but it probably helps. Is one way to deal with Euroscepticism to build a common European identity that most people can recognise themselves in? Is that even possible, and how should it be done and by whom?

People as young as me have not lived in a world without the EU. We have not experienced the horrors of the last century or the political fights that built and shaped the EU. I cannot remember the eastern enlargement in 2004. The four freedoms feel natural to most of us, and I can remember when I was little and travelled Europe as a child by car. We did not show our passports a single time, just as it should be, I think. I believe that many youths take the EU and the freedoms we have been given by it for granted. Do you agree? Should this be seen as a problem, or is it not actually a good thing to have a generation which has grown up with only knowledge of this system of freedom? Does this mean that young people in a higher degree than older generations have double identities, national and a European?