

European Union: a view from Italy...or Sardinia?

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When did your country join the Common Market/EU?

- Italy among first 6 founding members
- 1957 MEC (Mercato Comune Europeo)



Why did Italy join?

- *(Previous presentations)*
- Mostly market: to abolish taxes and tariffs between countries
- CECA (Comunita' Europea Carbone e Acciaio): Coal & Steel trade in 1952
- CEE (Comunita' Economica Europea) in 1957

Benefits to Italy from being in the EU -1

- Free circulation of people
- Free circulation of competence & skills
- Free circulation of goods & commodities
- Funding for education and culture
- Exchange programs between students and universities of different EU countries
- Funding for development of disadvantaged areas

Benefits to Italy from being in the EU -2

- Inflation & economy are stable
- Italy was saved from economic collapse due to Euro-related stability
 - Cirio
 - Parmalat
 - Argentina crack
 - over 500,000 Italians lost their investments

Losses to Italy from EU policies -1

- Agriculture: widespread opinion that Italy was damaged
- Milk producers in the north
- Policy in Southern Italy and Sardinia inconsistent



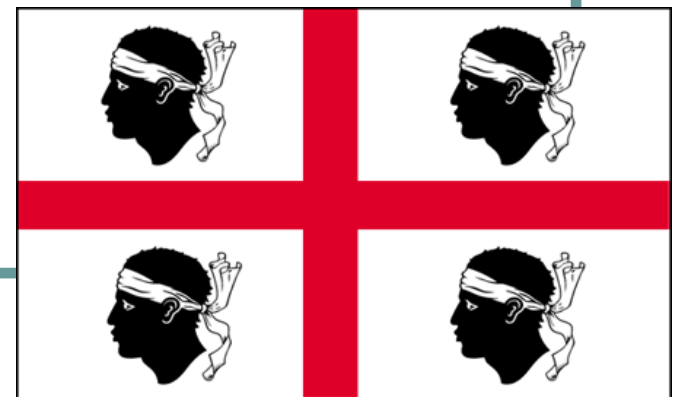
Losses to Italy from EU policies -2

- Sharp increase in prices: €1=Lit. 1,000, whereas at conversion, €1=Lit.~1,936
- Job mobility and precarious employment



Attitudes toward the EU -1

- *“I feel very Europeist”*
- *“I am proud of being European”*
- *“I feel strongly European, possibly even more than Italian citizen, although my link with region where I live is even stronger”*

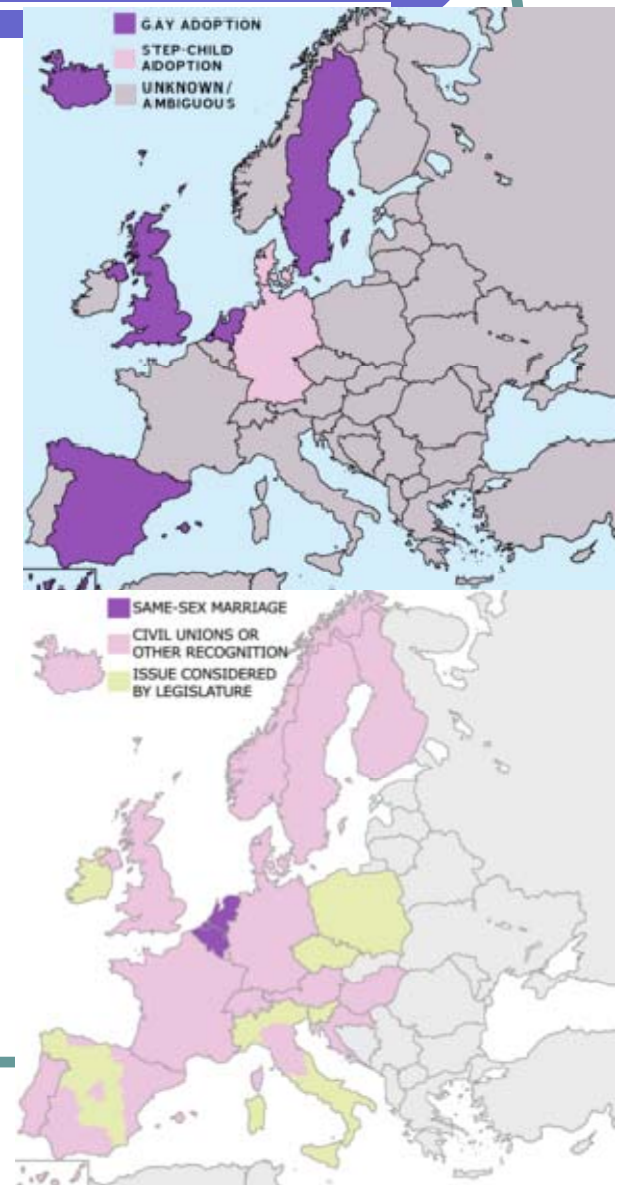


Attitudes toward the EU -2

- Politics is not perceived as different because of the EU
- *“In a factual, professional sense, the EU does not change much to us”*
 - Opinion of a lawyer regarding the impact of European Union on everyday practice of law

Role of the European Union in Today's World -1

- Internal policy inconsistent
 - Drug use rights
 - Homosexual couples' rights
 - Abortion
 - Euthanasia
 - Immigration policies
 - Health care



Role of the European Union in Today's World -2

- Foreign policy very inconsistent
 - See Bosnia-Herzegovina 1990s
 - See Israelo-Palestinian permanent crisis
 - See Iraq War
 - See Darfur
 - Current crisis on missile defense in Eastern Europe
 - [...all you can think of!]

EU: the role people would like -1

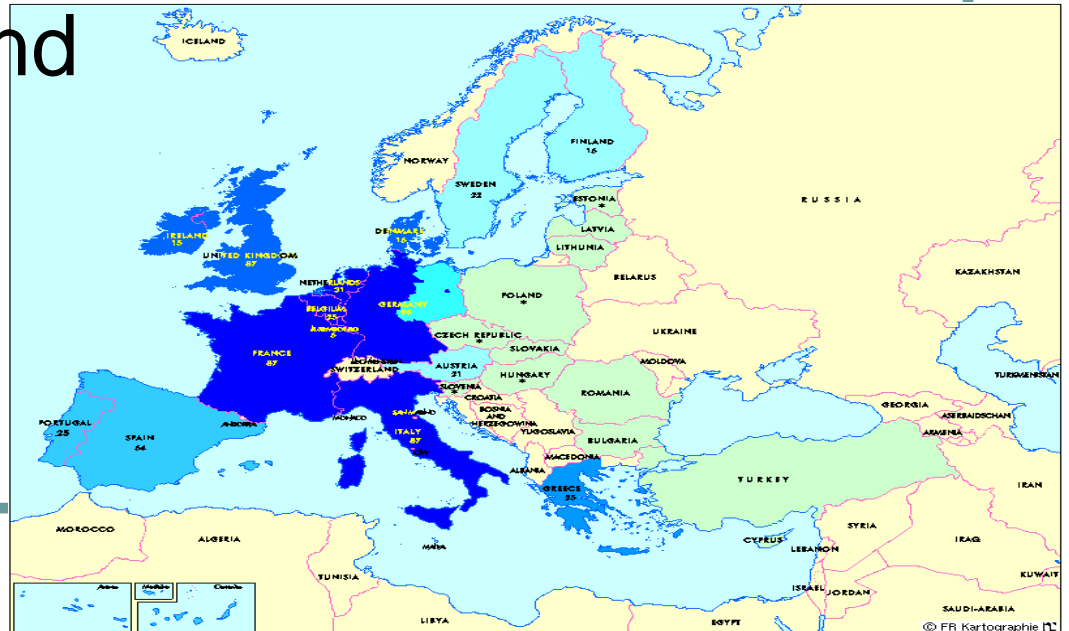
- Saying many “no” nobody dares to say
 - Dictatorships
 - Civil rights violated and ignored
 - Freedom of press mortified
 - Oppression of ethnic minorities

EU: the role people would like -2

- Leader in several areas:
 - Environmental protection
 - Abolition of death penalty (special role Italian representative Massimo d'Alema)
 - Defending human rights
 - Dialogue with Islamic countries

Future of the European Union

- Hopes for political union & moral role
- General disillusionment
- Question of enlargement of EU to the East and Mediterranean



What is the real nature of EU?

- Idealist opinions prevalent in the average citizen
- Are we really understanding the process of formation of the EU?
- Britain: G. Brown, Labour leader, and D. Cameron, Conservative leader: both skeptic towards the EU, criticizing its failure to push through market deregulation

Just a free market area?

- Barcelona Treaty on Mediterranean trade relations in mid-1990s
- Attitude towards developing countries, with financial help under conditions of privatization and open borders to trade
- Southern Italy, Mediterranean, Sardinia at the margins: who's going to take advantage of deregulation?

What about civil rights? Minorities? Welfare?

- Nation-states still guiding the political process
- Ethnic minorities still considered problems, not diversity to value and promote (Basques, Corsicans, Sardinians...)
- [European policies] as *“an attack to the dignity of work, to the rights of workers and to welfare, public services, education, public healthcare”*

Conclusions?

- ***“Union as such is not something for me, but the sum of many things that make a union”***