



# THE VOICE OF EUROPE

*#Travel*

*#Pride*

*#Equality*

*#Vote*



WHAT DO YOU HAVE  
TO SAY ABOUT IT?

FEBRUARY 2018

# THE CONTENT



- **Travel to learn and learn to travel**

We learn by doing - in our everyday lives and by exploring the world. Take a moment and think about your next aspirational journey within the EU.

- **My country in the eyes of the others**

Italians have been known to have characteristics that separate them from the rest of the Europe, they stick to their tradition and with a bittersweet smile talk about the functional differences between Italy and other European countries.

- **To vote or not to vote - that is the choice**

What's the value of every single vote? How much power do we have?

- **The beauty within my country**

Sincere, simple and honest - what do you love the most about your country?





## TRAVEL TO LEARN AND LEARN TO TRAVEL

### **If you could do anything in the world - what would it be?**

One of the most common regrets mentioned by the people who have reached the age of retirement is "I wish I would have traveled more". With freedom of movement and cancellation of a physical border in most EU countries it has become easier for Europeans to travel, to explore the world, to build an international network, to learn first hand about unknown cultures, foreign customs and traditions and to practice foreign languages with locals. Traveling means many different things to many people - it could be an escape, a business opportunity, a way to connect or even a way to bring passion into their lives, but we could all agree that it is an opportunity for us to learn. To learn from experience.

Whether you are new to the world of travel or a lone wolf who has been on the road for years, here are some tips for your next aspirational journey within the EU.

### **Stay connected**

The European Union has been working towards building and maintaining connection between Europeans and their beloved ones... no matter where you decide to search for beauty and inspiration - no matter which country within the EU you decide to call your "base". That is why from July 2017 a new roaming system has been implemented, canceling extra roaming charges (according to your cell phone carrier). A word of wisdom - with extra phone time comes faster battery consumption, so do not forget to have a power bank.

### **People you meet create the paradise you find**

While traveling with familiar people and visiting the touristic areas could be the safest and easiest way, accept new challenges! Be bold and travel alone, meet the locals, seek the unusual. Use ancient techniques of approaching people in bars or cafes, attend local events, or use new media. Sites like Couchsurfing, SideTour, EatWith or Colunching are just a few of the options the web provides. It is a way to do mundane things with local people. It is a chance of integration. No matter what you chose - be brave and open-minded.





## TRAVEL TO LEARN AND LEARN TO TRAVEL

### **A journey with added value**

An alternative way of traveling for young people is taking part in different projects. From Erasmus+ for students, youth workers and entrepreneurs to European Voluntary Service or European Solidarity Corps for youngsters who are willing to contribute to the society. These projects, created by the EU, focuses on youth mobility and non-formal education that helps to build many competences in a relatively short period of time. It is a chance to work together with different nationalities and see the hosting country while doing it.

### **Seek the simple**

Even the smallest experiences might shape the image you obtain about the country, the people or the customs of the locals. What matters the most is recognizing the fact that wherever we are is where we're suppose to be and our actions impact the outcome of every situation. So bring a positive mind with you on the journey and seek the simple - take a breath and enjoy that cup of coffee, dedicate a day for hiking in the mountains, go to that concert, speak to that person, and get lost at least twice.

In 2017 Cassie De Pecol traveled to 196 countries, breaking two Guinness World Records. One of the most valuable lessons she learned from this journey was that you gain insight and learn through various situations - nerve wrecking or pleasant, challenging or easy, extreme or mundane.

Each situation provides a series of possible outcomes and each decision you make influences the result.

We learn by doing - in our everyday lives and by traveling. ■





## MY COUNTRY IN THE EYES OF THE OTHERS

Europe as a continent has a rich history, every century has shaped a certain belief, a specific custom or planted the roots for a tradition we are so used to seeing in our everyday lives. Each European feels deeply for a culture or two - no matter if it's their native roots that ties them to certain behaviorism, or a culture that has become "the love of their lives", shaping a future of a changed identity. Italians have been known to have characteristics that separate them from the rest of the Europe, they stick to their tradition and with a bittersweet smile talk about the functional differences between Italy and other European countries. Here is what the Europeans say about the main differences between Italy and the rest of Europe.

### ITALY vs ROMANIA

**TIPPING** "The Italians don't usually leave a tip at the restaurant, but they should when they go to Romania. It is a conventional behaviourism."

**GOOD MANNERS** "The Romanians apologize if they do you harm. Always. Even if it's not their fault. Italians might think differently."

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT** "The new subway trains in Romania are really clean. In Italian trains you can find numerous chewing gums under the seats."

**TEACHING** "Italian teachers are not famous for being in time. It would not happen in Romania. If you come 15 minutes late, it is considered rude."





## MY COUNTRY IN THE EYES OF THE OTHERS

### ITALY vs SPAIN

**LABOUR** "Both Italy and Spain have sclerotic labour markets: not enough new companies, not enough growth (though Spain has done a bit better lately). Both countries have high unemployment rate and too many family businesses."

**UNITY** "Italy is more divided than Spain. Yes, there are strong regional differences in Spain (and independence movements) but Spain has been a unified country."

**POLITICS** "Communism has a big political influence in Italy,, but it is almost non-existent in Spain. Probably the most significant is "La Bella Figura"."

**APPEARANCES** "Italians put a huge emphasis on looking good. This is not only in terms of being well dressed, but is far more powerful: on avoiding embarrassment, on fitting in. The Spanish are less concerned about it."

### ITALY vs BULGARIA

**WRITING** "Italy and Bulgaria use different alphabets. In Italy they use the Latin one, and in Bulgaria – the Cyrillic. This creates a bigger gap between the languages."

**RELIGION** "Although both countries are Christian, in Italy the majority of the population is Catholic, while the dominant religion in Bulgaria is Orthodox."





## MY COUNTRYN THE EYES OF THE OTHERS

**INCOME** "Perhaps one of the most evident differences between Italy and Bulgaria is the quality of life and income. This can be felt when traveling from one country to the other."

### ITALY vs GREECE

**RELIGION** "The main difference is definitely religion. It was the most important reason for the latinisation of South Italy. Moreover religion especially from 1204 created inextinguishable hate, that officially lasted till 21st century, after Pope apology for the 4th Crusade "May the Lord grant us the forgiveness we beg of him"."

**NEIGHBOURS** "Greeks have common elements with South Italians, maybe because of their common ancestry. Scientists discovered common Haplogroup between south Italians and Greeks, especially Maniot -Peloponesian. However a comparison with Northern Italians, who have German elements bring out serious difference not only in culture but also in appearance."

**CULTURE** "One more key issue is that during the Enlightenment, Greece was under Ottoman Occupation, so Greek culture didn't experience this cultural boom."

" Turkish occupation and religion are the main reasons of the Cultural differences between Italian and Greeks."





## MY COUNTRY IN THE EYES OF THE OTHERS

### ITALY vs THE BALTICS (Latvia & Lithuania)

**BEHAVIOUR** "Compared to the Italians, the Baltic are more distant and closed towards people they don't know. Italians are in general more open and friendly, and louder."

**RELIGION** "Even though Italy and the Baltic States share a common religion - Catholicism, paganism is still rooted in our culture and traditions. I mean - we use ancient symbols in our everyday lives and have folk traditions that are not seen in the South of Europe."

**NATURE** "From the color of the sea to the height (or non-existence) of mountains - nature is extremely diverse."

### ITALY vs POLAND

**RELIGION:** "Very Roman Catholic too although I wouldn't say that Polish families are as close as the Italians."

**VOLUME** "Italians are triple times louder than Polish, but still Polish are twice as loud as the Brits."

**BODY LANGUAGE** "Italians gesture to get many things whereas Poles don't. With an Italian you can lose your teeth, if you're not careful, during a conversation. You're safe with Polish." ■





## TO VOTE OR NOT TO VOTE - THAT IS THE CHOICE

What's the value of every single vote? How much power do we have?

### **A brief history**

The word democracy comes from the Greek words "demos", meaning people, and "kratos" meaning power; so democracy is the "power of people". In the 5th century BC Athens started direct democracy in the opposition to the representative democracy of modern societies. It was copied by Greek allies and colonies then, but it has rarely been attempted anywhere else since (Switzerland in the 13th century is one example).

In the 1600s, people started to fight for democracy again. In England, Cromwell seized power for Parliament. In America, the Revolutionary War brought the Constitution in 1789. A few years later, the French Revolution happened which started a short period of democracy to France. And in the early 1900s for a little while democracy came to Spain. Nevertheless none of these let women vote. According to the Oxfords dictionary democracy is "a system of government in which the citizens exercise power directly or elect representatives from among themselves to form a governing body, such as a parliament".

### **Democracy**

Amartya Sen, a Nobel Prize-winning economist from India, explains what the democracy really is:

We must not identify democracy with majority rule. Democracy has complex demands, which certainly include voting and respect for election results.





## TO VOTE OR NOT TO VOTE - THAT IS THE CHOICE

But it also requires the protection of liberties and freedoms, respect for legal entitlements and the guaranteeing of free and uncensored distribution of news and fair comment. Even elections can be deeply defective if they occur without the different sides getting an adequate opportunity to present their respective cases, or without the electorate enjoying the freedom to obtain news and to consider the views of competing protagonists. (Sen, 1999, pp.9-10)

### **How often do people vote?**

Analysing the frequency of voting in different European countries, we can notice some similarities and differences between countries from the Northern and Southern European countries. We have examples of Poland and Latvia for the Northern European countries and Spain for the Southern.

Starting with Poland, we will look at the frequency of parliamentary election in 1989. It was the first election in Poland after the end of communist system and the frequency reached 62,70%. It's a record frequency of Polish elections. We can easily see that people in that election actually wanted to make a change. When the communism ended, people put much hope in democracy system. They believed that they finally will have the right to vote and to change things. After the 1989 election, we can see the decline of frequency in frequency of voting in Poland. In 1991's parliamentary election only 43,2% of population voted, then in 2005 that number fell to 40,6%.





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The reason of that decline may be the fact that due to the communist system Poland still doesn't have the 'culture of democracy'. Fortunately, we can see that things are changing and the frequency of voting increases, giving for example 2015's election with the frequency of 50,9%.

Very similar things has happened in Latvia. In 1993's election almost 90% of Latvian people voted. That huge number is impressive, but the situation is similar to polish 1989's election case - it was the first election after the fall of the Soviet Union and people had the right to vote first time since many years. Unfortunately, because of lack of democracy culture the number is gradually declining, reaching 58,8% in 2014's election.

In comparison we would like to present the Spanish voting frequency. Spain is an example of country with higher democracy culture and democracy history and that's why the frequency in Spanish election is since 1996 till 2016 is almost at the same high level - in 1996 it was 69,7% and in 2016 it was 69,8%.

### All the right reasons

If you don't vote, you quite literally don't count.

You may think you are rebelling by not voting. You aren't.

People died for you to have the right to vote

People still risk their lives in some countries for the right to vote

You say that you don't actually want any of them to win. Are you sure? Being registered to vote improves your credit rating. Immediately.





## TO VOTE OR NOT TO VOTE - THAT IS THE CHOICE

### You think you know better?

There is a simple way to overthrow all of the reasons not to Vote:

1. You dont like the candidates - actually if you dont vote for anyone you can let the worst option win
2. You dont believe you can Change things - it is understandable, but think that there is No other better way to Change things.
3. You are not interested in politics - actually is not a thing to be interested in politics or not. Its not about politics - its about Ur life and tour future. Dont think that only people who are actually interested in politics should Vote - Its much more than Just that. The government decides about all of your Rights and your level od life.

“Only slaves and madmen are not interested in politics, they do not care how they live.”

- Jacek Dukaj -

■





## THE BEAUTY WITHIN MY COUNTRY

The perception of beauty is subjective and individual. One sees beauty in the rising sun, others feel it through snowflakes falling from the winter sky, some say the beauty couldn't be explained, others feel it in the simple act of embracing each other.

We asked nine people from nine countries to answer a seemingly simple question: What is the most beautiful thing about your country?

Milda and early summer mornings in the countryside. / Latvia



Nature that doesn't cost anything. / Romania

The ceremony of raising the flag. / Lithuania



The people, their openness and warmth towards each other. / Spain

The color of the sea and the sun. / Italy





## THE BEAUTY WITHIN MY COUNTRY



Istanbul, because many religions live there freely. /  
Turkey

The reflection in the lakes. / Poland



The blue sea. / Greece

The nature and the freedom.  
/ Bulgaria



Each country is a masterpiece. ■