

## 8 From accession to the euro

### The evolution of Greek public attitudes toward European integration, 1981–2001

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#### Introduction

Despite its increasing importance, the study of social support for European integration remains relatively under-researched, at least in comparison to the study of EU institutions and policies (Inglehart 1977; Deheneffe 1986; Handley 1991; Eichenberg and Dalton 1993; Bosch and Newton 1995; Duchesne and Frogner 1995; Martinotti and Stefanizzi 1995; Niedermayer 1995a; Wessels 1995a, 1995b; Anderson and Kalthenthaler 1996; Anderson and Reichert 1996; Deflem and Pampel 1996; Beyers 1998; Carey 1999; Ray 1999; Carey and Lebo 2000). Greek public attitudes *vis-à-vis* the process of integration are even less researched (but see Dimitras 1992; Dobratz 1993; Mavris 1993, 1994), despite significant fluctuations and radical changes in the twenty-year period which started with the country's accession to the EC (1981) and ended with its adoption of the euro in 2001. Judging on the basis of social support, Greece was in the early 1980s among the least pro-EC Member States, although the intensity of this phenomenon did not approach the levels of anti-European feeling in either the United Kingdom or Denmark. However, since 1986, when the ruling party's (PASOK) attitude changed radically, social support for European integration followed suit. Greece gradually became one of the most pro-European Member States although it is conventionally assumed that 1989 was the turning point for that year marked the end of PASOK's first eight years in power.

#### Periodisation

Eurobarometer (EB) surveys, which are conducted by the European Commission twice a year, rely on three key indicators for the analysis of the long-term patterns of social support for the EC/EU:

- attitudes towards each country's participation ('membership' indicator), the most widely known measure of support for the EU;

- subjective assessments of the benefits gained from each country's membership (benefit indicator);
- citizens' attitudes *vis-à-vis* the idea of the EU's dissolution (dissolution indicator).<sup>1</sup>

The first two indicators measure *diffuse* support (Niedermayer 1995a), while the third indicator is a measure of *specific-instrumental* support. With reference to these indicators, one may speak of the 'Europeanisation' of public opinion, when the indicators show an increase over time, and of the 'nationalisation' of public opinion, when the indicators decline (Niedermayer, 1995a: 57). On the basis of these indicators, the fluctuations in attitudes towards European integration, between 1981 and the present day,<sup>2</sup> are presented in Tables 8.1 to 8.4.

#### *The period of distrust: 1981–5*

The first five years of membership (1981–5) coincided with PASOK's first period in government. A substantial proportion of citizens, which never exceeded 47 per cent (Table 8.1), however, maintained a 'positive' view of membership. In 1981, when the EC had ten Member States, the percentage of anti-Community Greeks, i.e. those who considered Greece's membership to be 'negative', exceeded 20 per cent (22 per cent in April 1981, EB 14, 1981). Indeed, in spring 1982, only a few months after PASOK's first electoral victory, support for the EEC fell to the lowest point ever recorded in an EB survey: just 33 per cent (EB 16, 1982). For the first time, the electorate's neutrality and indifference were the prevailing attitude (37 per cent) towards European affairs. The low level of support for European integration in Greece during this period has been noted by both Dobratz (1993: 103), on the basis of the cumulative EB file for the years 1980–4, and Niedermayer (1995a: 64). During the same period, the upward tendency in social support in the Community as a whole, which had begun in the second half of the 1970s (Inglehart 1977; Handley 1981; Inglehart 1991) stabilised, raising the average Community percentage from 50 per cent in 1981, to 60 per cent in 1985 (Table 8.1). According to Niedermayer (1995a: 59), the pattern of 'nationalisation' of European public opinion observed in the late 1970s was to be followed by Europeanisation in the 1980s. Indeed, the first five years of that decade (1981–5) were characterised by almost uniform Europeanisation throughout the EC (Niedermayer 1995a: 62). This trend, as indicated by the European average, which became more apparent in the second half of the decade, is due almost entirely to the Europeanisation of public opinion in the *new* Member States (Niedermayer 1995a: 64), i.e. Greece, Spain and Portugal. Dalton and Eichenberg (1991) attribute the increased support in the 1980s to the improvement of the national economies.

*The great change (1986–91)*

In the second half of the 1980s, the greater part of which corresponds to PASOK's second term (1985–9), and with the (election) year 1985 as a milestone, there was to be a spectacular reversal in the attitudes of Greek public opinion. It should be noted however that the EB survey of autumn 1985 (EB 23, 1985) recorded a decline in all support indicators (Tables 8.1 to 8.4). Indeed, the benefit indicator dropped to the lowest recorded percentage in twenty years (42 per cent, Table 8.2). This decline, possibly the result of the polarised elections of June 1985 – which resulted in PASOK's second electoral victory, marked a turning point and the beginning of a new and constantly upward trend that would last approximately six years.

The year 1985 proved to be not only a turning point with respect to the periodisation of domestic politics, but also the starting point for changes in the international arena and the easing of bipolarisation. This had a direct impact on relations between Greece and the EC. With the adoption of the Single European Act (1986), the implementation of a new economic policy and the new negotiating tactics used by the Greek government on the issue of convergence, Greek policy now appeared more coherently pro-European (Rozakis 1999; also see Kazakos 1992; Kazakos and Ioakimidis 1994; Couloumbis 1993; Verney 1993). Support rose from just under 40 per cent in autumn 1985 to 60 per cent in 1988 – also a turning point and the year of the second Greek Presidency – to draw level with the European average for the first time in eight years. This development also had symbolic significance. From the next year (1989) onwards, Greek support for European integration has remained *above* the European average. This change was, to a great extent, the result of the radical change in the relationship between Greece and the Community, which stemmed from PASOK's adaptation and the abandonment once and for all of its anti-EC rhetoric (Dimitras 1992; Dobratz 1993). Support continued to rise from 1989 until 1992, a period of domestic political turmoil which saw a coalition government (ND and Coalition of the Left and Progress (SYN)), a government of national unity (PASOK, ND and SYN) and the advent to power of the conservative ND. Indeed, for the first time it exceeded three-quarters of the adult population in spring 1991. The figure of 76 per cent that was recorded (EB 35, 1991) may be considered the all-time high for social acceptance of the country's EU membership in the twenty-year period 1981–2001 (Table 8.1). In fact that was twice the average rate (41 per cent) of the first five years (1981–5) (EB 32, 1989: 24). At the same time, during the period 1990–3, the rate of Greek anti-EU feeling never exceeded 6–8 per cent (EB, *Trends* 1974–94: 76). Therefore, a wide majority was emerging gradually towards the end of the 1980s (at about 70–5 per cent of the electorate) which supported and viewed the EU favourably, while the general idea of the 'unification of Western Europe' scored even higher rates: 80–2 per cent in 1989–90 and 85 per cent in autumn 1993 (EB 40, 1993; see Table 8.4).

Table 8.1 Support for EU membership in Greece and EU-15, 1981–2001 (results in % for ‘membership is a good thing’)

GR	42	38	33	45	42	47	38	45	45	39	44	51	48	58	51	66	67
EU-10/12/15	50	53	52	51	54	55	55	58	57	60	62	62	60	65	58	66	65
EB	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Year	81	81	82	82	83	83	84	84	85	85	86	86	87	87	88	88	89
GR	70	74	75	75	76	73	74	71	68	73	64	65	57	58	51	57	61
EU-10/12/15	63	65	65	69	72	69	65	60	58	60	57	54	54	54	48	48	46
EB	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47
Year	89	89	90	90	91	91	92	92	93	93	94	94	95	95	96	96	97
GR	60	59	67	54	59	61	61	57									
EU-10/12/15	49	51	54	49	51	49	50	48									
EB	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55									
Year	97	98	98	99	99	00	00	01									

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 1981–2001, Report no. 14-55 (author's compilation).

Table 8.2 Benefit from EU membership in Greece and EU-15, 1983–2001 (results in % for ‘benefited’)

GR							44	44	51	49	42	50	58	54	64	55	68
EU-10/12/15							52	46	48	50	53	46	51	53	49	52	55
EB	14	15	16	17	18	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	30
Year	81	81	82	82	83	83	83	84	84	85	85	86	86	87	87	88	89
GR	72	76	79	78	76	73	73	70	72	72	79	69	72	72	72	59	66
EU-10/12/15	52	59	59	59	59	56	53	49	48	45	45	47	48	48	45	42	45
EB	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	40	41	42	43	44	45	47
Year	89	89	90	90	91	91	91	92	92	93	93	94	94	95	95	96	97
GR	70	68	76	67	70	75	72	69									
EU-10/12/15	44	46	49	44	46	47	47	45									
EB	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55									
Year	97	98	98	99	99	00	00	01									

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 1981–2001, Report no. 19-55 (author's compilation).

Table 8.3 Feelings if the EU were to be scrapped in Greece and EU-15, 1981–2001 (results in % for ‘very sorry’)

GR	30	17	22	27	29	35	25	26	32	27	32	32	31	36	33	40	39
EU-10/12/15	37	38	40	38	41	40	38	39	41	42	42	41	42	45	42	43	43
EB	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Year	81	81	82	82	83	83	84	84	85	85	86	86	87	87	88	88	89
GR	42	59	62	58	58	54	59	53	50	62	51	49	na	na	na	na	na
EU-10/12/15	42	47	48	49	50	49	48	45	42	40	43	42	na	na	na	na	na
EB	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47
Year	89	89	90	90	91	91	92	92	93	93	94	94	95	95	96	96	97
GR	na	na	52	na	na	na	na	na	37								
EU-10/12/15	na	na	36	na	na	na	na	na	28								
EB	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55									
Year	97	98	98	99	99	00	00	01									

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 1981–2001, Report no. 14-55 (author’s compilation).

Table 8.4 Support for European unification in Greece and EU-15, 1981–96 (results in % for ‘very much + to some extent’)

GR	60	65	58	63	61	69	57	67	62	53	56	71	64	69	65	78	78
EU-10/12/15	69	74	71	70	74	75	71	77	77	75	77	79	77	77	73	78	80
EB	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Year	81	81	82	82	83	83	84	84	85	85	86	86	87	87	88	88	89
GR	75	82	81	80	79	82	83	82	79	85	na	81	81	75	78		
EU-10/12/15	75	78	80	81	81	79	76	73	71	74	na	83	70	69	69		
EB	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45		
Year	89	89	90	90	91	91	92	92	93	93	94	94	95	95	96		

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 1981–96, Report no. 14-45 (author’s compilation).

Greek public opinion was going through its most pro-European phase.<sup>3</sup> As Niedermayer (1995a: 62–4) observes with regard to Greece, the level of diffuse support for European integration in the late 1980s would approach the support levels of the founding Member States (following a pattern similar to that of Ireland), thus narrowing the gap recorded in the past.

At the same time, the belief had become consolidated among a large portion of Greeks that ‘the country had benefited from being in the Community’. While the specific indicator (benefit indicator), which reflects the subjective assessment of the benefits derived from membership was only 46 per cent for the three-year period 1983–5 (period average), it rose to 57 per cent in 1986–8, to 75 per cent in 1989–90, and in remained stable at around 73 per cent from 1991 until 1995 (Table 8.2). Only Ireland (82 per cent) and Portugal (74 per cent) scored a higher percentage than Greece in the mid-1990s. These countries, along with Greece, were among the poorest Member States. Clearly, the assertion that the country had benefited from membership was the result of the government’s policy from 1985 until 1989. As Rozakis (1999) notes, in November 1985 PASOK reached an agreement on convergence following renegotiation of certain terms pertaining to the specific conditions of the Greek economy. The *favourable* results were manifested in the ‘Delors package’, which doubled the structural funds in 1988, used more advantageous terms for the absorption of European funding and allowed deviations from the strict internal market implementation programme (Rozakis 1999: 13; see also Verney 1993: 145f.). With regard to the benefit indicator, it should be noted that the gap between the Greek and the European average remained constantly greater than the corresponding membership indicator gap. At the same time, a solid social majority was formed (albeit at a slower pace), which tended to ‘identify’ with the EU, that is, to consider its future inextricably linked with the EU (Table 8.3). This *indicator of emotive identification with the EU* (dissolution indicator) directly reflects the significant ideological swing in public opinion. In the first five years of membership (1981–5), this indicator had been confined to only 27 per cent. Indeed, during the entire 1981–9 period it remained below 35 per cent (with just one exception). However, since 1989, identification with ‘Europe’ has grown steadily. As a result of this tendency, in the first half of the 1990s the indicator approached twice (in spring 1990 and in autumn 1993) its highest recorded rate of 62 per cent (Table 8.3) before generally stabilising at approximately 50 per cent of the electorate. After 1989, an absolute majority of citizens stated that it would feel ‘very disappointed’ if Greece left the EU. This score was – in the mid-1990s – rivalled or exceeded only in Ireland, Italy and Luxembourg.

These dynamic patterns are to a great extent in harmony with the corresponding tendencies of other Member States. In spring 1991, average public support for the EU in the twelve Member States peaked, at just below the level recorded in Greece (72 per cent, EB 52, 1999: 25; see also Niedermayer 1995a: 67). Thus, the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht in early 1992, despite the controversies it caused in other Member States (e.g. Denmark, United

Kingdom), happened amidst the most favourable (from the point of view of public acceptance) conjuncture both in the EU and in Greece (Mavris 1993). The collapse of the communist regimes had exercised a catalytic influence on the citizens of the EU.

In Greece, for reasons relating to the domestic political conjuncture, public support for the EU rose after 1989. The change in domestic governance patterns after 1988 and the state of the political parties in the early 1990s, the escalating tension in Greek–Turkish relations (following the crisis of 1987) and instability in the Balkans instilled a feeling of unprecedented insecurity in Greek public opinion. It undermined certainties that had prevailed for decades and had a positive effect on social consensus concerning the EU. It initially led public opinion to place its hopes in and raise its expectations from Europe as a factor which would strengthen the country and ensure its national security. A very strong indication of the link between the rapid deterioration in the political climate in Greece and the increased support for the EU is provided by the ‘satisfaction with national democracy’ index. This is a standard quantitative assessment index that measures social attitudes towards the national political system and is used systematically by Eurobarometer.<sup>4</sup> Table 8.5 shows the levels of satisfaction about the actual operation of democracy in Greece over the entire period 1980–2001. It is clear that satisfaction with democracy is inverse to support for the EU: from 53 per cent in 1989 the level of satisfaction dropped dramatically to 34 per cent in 1990, after which it remained at even lower levels of the order of 30 per cent during the entire period 1991–5.

#### *The period of decline: 1991–6*

Nevertheless, the optimism born out of the 1980s was not sustained. Rather, in the 1990s, confidence in the EU, both in Greece and in other Member States, declined considerably. As Niedermayer (1995a: 58, 67) observes, the Europeanisation of public opinion observed in the 1980s would be followed – again – by nationalisation in 1991–2. This process had started in the autumn of 1991. However, while the downward trend was curbed in Greece after 1996, the same does not apply to the rest of Europe. Consensus on the EU declined constantly from 1991 until 1997. Indeed, in the period 1996–7 it dropped to below 50 per cent for the first time in a decade, to reach its lowest recorded level of 46 per cent in spring 1997 (EB 47, 1997: 5). It should be noted that the other indicators too showed a similar decline (Tables 8.2 to 8.4).

Numerous and well-known reasons account for this phenomenon, which first appeared early on in the decade: economic recession, high unemployment and a greater degree of social marginalisation and fragmentation, the Gulf War, the economic collapse of East European countries and the deferral of reforms, the massive wave of immigrants, initial fears following the unification of Germany, the ‘democratic deficit’ and the crisis of representative democracy, concerns about the loss of national independence generated by globalisation,

Table 8.5 Satisfaction with national democracy in Greece and EU-15, 1980–2001 (results in % for ‘very satisfied + fairly satisfied’)

GR	47	52	60	58	59	61	60	57	59	51	56	57	61	49	51	52	52
EU-10/12/15	47	50	49	49	49	52	50	51	50	49	53	52	54	51	53	49	56
EB	13	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Year	80	81	82	82	83	83	84	84	85	85	86	86	87	87	88	88	89
GR	53	48	34	44	37	34	36	36	34	39	32	31	30	na	na	na	na
EU-10/12/15	56	57	56	52	58	48	49	45	42	43	44	49	48	na	na	na	na
EB	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47
Year	89	89	90	90	91	91	92	92	93	93	94	94	95	95	96	96	97
GR	38	33	na	62	53	53	48	na									
EU-10/12/15	48	47	na	60	56	57	59	na									
EB	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55									
Year	97	98	98	99	99	00	00	01									

Source: Eurobarometer, 1980–2001, Report no. 13-55 (author’s compilation).



the rise of the extreme right, the re-emergence of nationalism, racism and xenophobia. To these reasons one may also add the controversy caused by the Treaty of Maastricht, the inability to define and implement a common European policy on Yugoslavia, the accession in 1995 of three relatively Eurosceptic nations (Austria, Finland, Sweden), the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) crisis and the war in Kosovo (1999). In short, the main world events in the last decade of the twentieth century served to undermine rather than strengthen the European vision.

The aforementioned factors had a stronger impact in Greece due to the country's particular circumstances. In the 1990s, Greece repeatedly found itself in confrontation with its European partners. The political and diplomatic motives for these tensions include the divergence of geopolitical priorities in the Balkans and the attempt to undertake individual political and diplomatic initiatives in the region, the efforts of Greek government to secure fresh support from Washington, had simply displeased the Franco-German axis. The sources of tension also included the Cyprus issue (and the development of the new Greek defence doctrine) and the relationship between the EU and Turkey. During the third Greek Presidency (first semester of 1994) Greece imposed an economic embargo on FYROM (February 1994). This was followed by a rally in Thessaloniki as a public protest against the allies' policy on the 'Skopje issue' (15 February 1994), while in April the country was referred to the European Court of Justice because the embargo allegedly violated EU law. At the same time, dissatisfaction with the operation of the Greek political system continued to grow (Table 8.5).

A feeling of growing isolation on the part of Greek public opinion permeated the particularly negative climate in the relations between Greece and the Union. Its impact was twofold: first, on the Greek public opinion's attitude towards Europe, and second, on the attitudes of European public opinion towards Greece. It is characteristic that in spring 1993, 51 per cent of Greek citizens were convinced – not without reason – that 'Europeans view Greece in a negative way', 24 per cent in a neutral way, and only 25 per cent in a positive way (EB 39, 1993).<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the increasingly negative attitude in Greece enhanced the (pre-existing) anti-Greek inclination in the public opinion of the European partners, which in turn led to the further isolation of Greek public opinion and a decline in the level of trust in it. In late 1992, 13 per cent of EU citizens (or one in eight) wished, if such a thing were legally possible, Greece's expulsion from the EU (EB 38, 1992: A.46). This degree of rejection was higher than that of any other Member State, although patterns varied significantly from country to country. Even more indicative of the hostile climate throughout Europe was the so-called 'national trust' indicator. The percentage of trust of the other Europeans towards the Greeks was the lowest in the EU, bordering on 'national dislike'.<sup>6</sup>

In the three-year period 1993–6, the decline in social acceptance of membership in Greece was rapid, and indeed much more pronounced than the corresponding European decline. However, even in this period it remained

higher than the European average, although the difference was drastically reduced from ten percentage points in 1993 to only three percentage points in 1996 (EB 45, 1996; see Table 8.1). The only exception to this downward trend was the conjunctural recovery of the indicator following the October 1993 elections, a development which can be attributed to the usual post-electoral euphoria, caused this time by PASOK's return to power. In the EB survey prior to the European elections of June 1994, the membership indicator had fallen to 64 per cent (EB 41, 1994; see Table 8.1), while the following year (1995) it dropped below 60 per cent for the first time since 1988. But an even more significant deterioration of the situation was to follow. In the spring of 1996, after the 'Imia crisis' between Greece and Turkey, support again reverted to its 1988 levels, i.e. only slightly above the absolute majority (51 per cent, the lowest percentage in the 1990s), and only three percentage points above the European average (48 per cent – Table 8.1). The negative climate also dragged down not only the EU 'benefit' indicator (59 per cent – Table 8.2) – although the percentage of those who continued to believe that the country had benefited remained higher than for the corresponding membership indicator – but also the 'emotive stance' indicator. The latter plunged to close to the average European level, without however dropping below it.<sup>7</sup> Although the frustration of expectations among Greek public opinion on account of the foreign policy of the country's EU partners, in conjunction with its national isolation in Europe, had to some extent had a negative impact, it was not the only determinant of Greek public attitudes towards Europe.

The fluctuations in Greek public opinion cannot be understood only with reference to the conjuncture in relations between Greece and the Community. As has already been stressed, account must also be taken of factors relating to domestic politics, which were again closely intertwined with events taking place in Europe and elsewhere, but now negatively affected public support for the EU. Indeed, during this period there were tendencies for 'rolling and pitching' and even deconstruction of the Greek party system, with the establishment of two entirely new parties (POLAN in June 1993, and DIKKI in December 1995). These tendencies were clearly seen for the first time in the second order elections of 1994 (European elections, municipal and prefectural elections). Another factor that should be taken into consideration is the general pessimism about the course of affairs, and in particular the climate of widespread social discontent with the country's governance, which began to intensify in summer 1995, against the background of Premier A. Papandreou's serious illness and negative phenomena prevailing in the country's political scene. It is characteristic that satisfaction with the political system – as recorded by EB – in that year sank to its lowest recorded percentage (30 per cent – Table 8.5). Moreover, it is no coincidence that the nadir of social consensus towards the EU in the 1990s (51 per cent – spring 1996) was recorded during the crucial and transitional period that culminated in Papandreou's withdrawal from politics and the rise of Constantinos Simitis to PASOK's leadership and the post of the country's Prime Minister,<sup>8</sup> and

particularly after the crisis in Greek–Turkish relations over Imia (28 January to 1 February 1996) which compounded the sense of national insecurity and to some extent, reinforced pre-existing anti-European feelings, thereby intensifying the sense of isolation that was already evident.

*The 'Simitis era' (1996–2001): recovery of support for European integration*

With PASOK's victory in the general election of September 1996 and the formation of Simitis' first government, the pattern of decline of support for the EU began to be reversed, contrary to what was happening in the rest of Europe. Support for the EU recovered at a faster pace in Greece (Table 8.1). Again, it was the domestic conjuncture that determined – this time in a positive manner – public attitudes towards Europe. At a time when the indicator had dropped to a record low in the Member States (46 per cent), in Greece it rebounded to 61 per cent (EB 47, 1997). This time, the relative recovery should not be attributed only to the general effects of post-election euphoria frequently observed on account of the election cycle. In the new era marked by Simitis' rise to the leadership of PASOK and the post of Prime Minister, the country's accession to EMU was set, from the outset, as a major strategic priority, while the European perspective was identified to a great extent with the government itself, and the dominant ideological-political faction within the ruling PASOK: modernisation and Europeanisation soon became synonyms. The increase in support for the EU went hand in hand with the deterioration in the country's foreign affairs, in the same ratio as the 1989–90 conjuncture. The period 1996–8 was characterised by increasing discontent with the government and the deterioration of the domestic political climate (labour unrest among farmers and teachers, occupation of schools by students, etc.). Despite all this, in autumn 1998 (EB 50, 1998), support surged to 67 per cent (the highest percentage in the five-year period 1995–9), as compared to the European average of 54 per cent, which in the mean time (1997–8) had also recovered (Table 8.1). Again, the European perspective appeared to be the only hope in the face of the government's chronic shortcomings, which by then had become quite evident. The country's modernisation was closely associated with accession to EMU (see Radaelli 2000).

Public support for EU membership experienced another sharp fluctuation in 1999. In early 1999, the country was rocked following the arrest of Kurdish leader Ocalan (February 1999), which shattered the government's popularity and at the same time provided the spark for the manifestation of the public's discontent with the government, which was rekindled (Table 8.5). In March 1999, an institutional crisis broke out inside the EU. The European Commission resigned amid accusations of nepotism and financial mismanagement (15 March 1999), while a few days later NATO's attack on Yugoslavia began (24 March 1999). These events, and particularly the war in Yugoslavia and the EU's stance on the issue, negatively affected European public opinion, but the impact on Greek public opinion was particularly significant. Support in

Greece dropped dramatically (EB spring 1999 Survey), by thirteen percentage points from 67 per cent to 54 per cent, while the overall drop in the EU was only five percentage points, from 54 per cent to 49 per cent (EB 51, 1999; see Table 8.1). On 1 May 1999 the Treaty of Amsterdam came into effect, while in June the same year the fifth direct European elections were held. For the first time the level of abstention in the EU as a whole marginally exceeded 50 per cent (50.2 per cent). The 1999 decline would prove to be conjunctural. In autumn 1999, according to the regular Eurobarometer survey (EB 52, 1999: 25, 32; see Table 8.1) a relative recovery of support was seen both in Greece and in EU-15: 59 per cent of Greeks and 51 per cent of Europeans now supported their country's membership to the European Union. These rates were higher than the corresponding rates of spring 1999 (54 per cent and 49 per cent respectively), but still lower than the autumn 1998 figures when 67 per cent of Greek citizens and 54 per cent of European citizens considered their country's membership of the EU to be a 'good thing'. In the (election) year 2000, the increase in the levels of support continued in Greece (61 per cent), but not in Europe, where it stabilised at 49–50 per cent (Table 8.1). In 2001, twenty years after the country's accession to the EEC, the percentage of 'anti-EU' Greeks has decreased from 22 per cent in 1981 to only 10 per cent (i.e. by one half), while the level of indifference remains largely unchanged, 28 per cent compared to 26 per cent in 1981 (EB 55, 2001: B.10). As to the assessment of the country's 'benefit' (agreement with the opinion that 'the country benefited from its membership'), the relevant indicator for Greece reverted to 70 per cent in 1999, and in 2000, possibly also due to the impending Third Community Support Framework, it rose to 75 per cent (Table 8.2). In contrast, the 'emotive stance' towards the EU, while reverting to 52 per cent in 1998, according to the latest Eurobarometer survey (2001) dropped to 37 per cent, which can be compared only to the corresponding levels of the late 1980s (Table 8.3). This percentage, which is higher than the EU-15 average (28 per cent), is lower only than that of Luxembourg (51 per cent), Ireland and Portugal (43 per cent) (EB 55, 2001: 33).<sup>9</sup>

### **Current Greek public attitudes towards Europe**

Despite the relative decline recorded during the 1990s, which in any case was a pan-European phenomenon, it may be considered that public support for the process of European integration in Greece is now stable. The present consistency of the pro-European trend in Greece is also confirmed by the analysis of citizens' attitudes with regard to a series of current issues, which have been systematically investigated within the framework of the Eurobarometer.

#### *Attitudes towards EU institutions*

In 2000, an absolute majority of Greeks (55 per cent) declared their trust in the Union, a tendency which does not appear to apply to European public opinion

as a whole, with the exception of Luxembourg (58 per cent) and the countries of the European South (Portugal 63 per cent, Spain 54 per cent, Italy 53 per cent, EB 55, 2001: B.20). Indeed, European citizens today appear to be extremely divided. Only 41 per cent of the entire EU-15 state that they trust the EU, while the figure (40 per cent) for lack of trust is almost the same (Table 8.6). Some 76 per cent of Greeks are in favour of a European constitution, a rate that exceeds the European average (62 per cent – Table 8.7) by fourteen percentage points. The European Parliament's backing for the President of the European Commission, as an antidote to his weak legitimacy, is widely supported (80 per cent compared to 70 per cent for EU-15 – Table 8.8). The existing political and economic institutions of the European Union clearly enjoy stronger support in Greece compared to EU-15 as a whole (Table 8.9). Finally, participation in European elections (which is compulsory in Greece) remains one of the highest among Member States.<sup>10</sup>

#### *Attitudes towards EU priorities*

On all key issues that currently constitute the nucleus of considerations about Europe, namely the *introduction of a single currency, common foreign policy and defence policy*, as well as *enlargement of the EU*, Greek public opinion scores one of the highest percentages of acceptance. Specifically on the matter of *common defence*, Greece has the highest percentage of support among all fifteen Member States (87 per cent), followed by France (82 per cent) while

Table 8.6 Trust in the EU in Greece and EU-15, 2001 (results in %)

<i>'Do you tend to trust or tend not to trust the European Union?'</i>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>EU-15</i>	<i>GR – EU-15</i>
Tend to trust	55	41	+14
Tend not to trust	36	40	–4
Don't know	8	20	–12
Total	100	100	

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 2001, Report no. 55, Table 2.6a, p. B.20 (author's compilation).

Table 8.7 Trust in the EU constitution in Greece and EU-15, 2001 (results in %)

<i>'Do you think that the European Union should or should not have a constitution?'</i>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>EU-15</i>	<i>GR – EU-15</i>
Should	76	62	+14
Should not	11	10	+1
Don't know	13	29	–16
Total	100	100	

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 2001, Report no. 55, Table 2.8a, p. B.23 (author's compilation).

Table 8.8 Support for key issues in Greece and EU-15, 2001 (results in %)

	<i>Greece</i>	<i>EU-15</i>	<i>GR – EU-15</i>
Single currency	72	59	+13
Common foreign policy	83	65	+18
Common defence policy	87	73	+14
Enlargement	70	43	+27
Subsidiarity	67	58	+9
European Commission support of European Parliament	80	70	+10
EU taught at school	89	82	+7
Average % support for seven key issues	78	64	+14

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 2001, Report no. 55, Table 3.2, p. B.28 (author's compilation).

Table 8.9 Trust in EU institutions and bodies in Greece and EU-15, 2001 (results in %)

	<i>Greece</i>	<i>EU-15</i>	<i>GR – EU-15</i>
European Parliament	60	52	+8
European Commission	51	45	+6
Council of Ministers of the EU	45	37	+8
Court of Justice of the European Communities	51	46	+5
European Ombudsman	33	26	+7
European Central Bank	41	42	-1
European Court of Auditors	33	34	-1
Committee of the Regions of the EU	31	24	+7
Social and Economic Committee of the EU	36	27	+9

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 2001, Report no. 55, Table 2.7, p. B.22 (author's compilation).

the European average is 73 per cent. On the issue of a *common foreign policy*, Greece again has the highest percentage of support among all fifteen Member States (83 per cent) by far exceeding the second country, which is France (75 per cent), and the European average of 65 per cent. Finally, Greece scores the highest percentage of acceptance on the issue of EU *enlargement* (70 per cent), followed by Ireland (59 per cent), with a European average of 43 per cent (Table 8.8 and EB 55, 2001: B.28).

On the basis of the cumulative public support average scored on *seven key issues* concerning the future of the EU,<sup>11</sup> Greece is currently ranked first (EB 55, 2001: 45). Support in Greece (78 per cent) is even higher than support in Luxembourg (73 per cent), while the EU-15 average is 64 per cent (Table 8.8). Indeed, on the three key issues of the single currency, common defence and enlargement, Greece scored the highest rates of support among the fifteen Member States (EB 55, 2001: B.28).

*Attitudes towards decision-making in areas of public policy*

The support of European public opinion for decision-making at the European as opposed to the national level is regularly and extensively investigated in the EB framework. Analysis focuses on twenty-five areas of public policy.<sup>12</sup> In Greece, in the last two-year period 2000–1 there has been a rise in support for decision-making at the level of the EU. In 2000, the average support rate in Greece for decision-making at the European level (43 per cent) was significantly lower than the corresponding EU-15 average rate (52 per cent). Of the total twenty-five areas of public policy, decision-making at the European level secured higher public support in Greece in only eleven areas. A year later, average total support (51 per cent) had increased, becoming almost equal to the average European rate (52 per cent), and the number of areas of public policy had risen to fifteen (Table 8.10). However, the analytical order of area classification (Table 8.11) reveals certain interesting differences.

*Attitudes towards the euro*

On the matter of the single currency, Greece scores one of the highest support rates (72 per cent), which is not only above the average of the fifteen Member States (59 per cent), but also above the average of the twelve members of the euro area (66 per cent). Since 1993, when EB began recording the attitudes of European citizens *vis-à-vis* the euro, support for the single currency as a rule remained at levels above 60 per cent (Table 8.12) only with one exception (1995). In the countries of the euro area, social support for the single currency rose spectacularly, just before it was introduced in the eleven Member States (1 January 1999). According to the EB autumn 1998 survey, support for the single currency approached 64 per cent in EU-15, and 70 per cent in the

*Table 8.10* Policies: national or EU level decision-making in Greece and EU-15, 2000–1

	2001		2000		2001 – 2000	
	GR	EU-15	GR	EU-15	GR	EU-15
Average level of support for EU decision-making (for 25 areas, in %)	51%	52%	43%	52%	+8%	–
Number of areas where EU decision-making is more popular than national decision-making (25 areas maximum)	15	15	11	14	+4	+1

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 2000, Report no. 53, p. 40; Table 3.1, pp. B.32–B.34; Standard Eurobarometer, 2001, Report no. 54, p. 65; Table 5.1, pp. B.56–B.58 (author's compilation).

*Table 8.11* Policies: national or EU level decision-making in Greece and EU-15, 2001 (%)

	<i>Greece</i>		<i>EU-15</i>	
	<i>National</i>	<i>EU</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>EU</i>
Defence	75	22	46	49
Environment	44	53	38	58
Currency	40	56	36	59
Humanitarian aid	36	60	28	67
Health and social welfare	58	39	62	33
Media	66	29	58	35
Poverty/social exclusion	43	55	33	63
Unemployment	46	52	42	54
Agriculture and fishing	57	38	47	46
Regional aid	41	55	35	59
Education	69	28	62	33
Research	37	58	29	65
Information EU	41	54	23	70
Foreign policy	42	51	23	69
Cultural policy	69	27	56	37
Immigration	58	37	49	46
Political asylum	56	40	48	47
Organised crime	49	48	31	65
Police	75	22	64	32
Justice	73	25	60	36
Accepting refugees	59	36	47	48
Juvenile crime	52	46	53	43
Urban crime	54	44	58	38
Drugs	47	51	30	66
Exploiting human beings	39	57	22	73

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 2000, Report no. 54, Table 5.12a, p. B.78 (author's compilation).

euro area countries. Although Greece joined the euro area in January 2001, support for the euro in Greece followed the same upward trend as that in the euro area countries, also reaching its highest recorded level in autumn 1998 (75 per cent – Table 8.12). Another interesting point is the variation of support in Greece following the introduction of the single currency. The weakening of the euro against the dollar and sterling, which followed its introduction, dampened to some extent the expectations that had been created by the government. Support for the euro in all fifteen Member States of the EU, including the eleven euro area countries, was to dwindle, returning to the pre-introduction levels of the second half of 2000. In Greece however, the depreciation of the euro against foreign currencies did not substantially affect its positive acceptance by public opinion. Indeed, since 1998, support for the euro in Greece has remained undiminished, stabilising at about 70 per cent, always above the EU-15 and euro area averages. Given that the national effort for the



Table 8.12 Support for the single currency in Greece and EU-15, 2001 (results in %)

Euro-zone	61	60	60	61	57	56	54	56	52	55	66	70	68	68	65	62	66
EU-15	52	51	53	52	52	53	51	51	47	51	60	64	61	60	58	55	59
GR	71	71	65	69	na	52	64	63	65	59	67	75	65	70	69	70	72
EB	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
Year	93	93	94	94	95	95	96	96	97	97	98	98	99	99	00	00	01

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 1993–2001, Report no. 39-55 (author's compilation).

delayed introduction was still in progress (Table 8.12), a significant drop (of ten percentage points) observed in the first half of 1999 eventually proved to be conjunctural. The high support of public opinion in Greece for the euro also explains its prompt acceptance and ready assimilation observed after 1 January 2002.<sup>13</sup> According to a tracking survey conducted by the Ministry of National Economy, from the very first week of introduction of the new currency, 79 per cent of Greek citizens had been supplied with the new currency and more than 53 per cent had made transactions using the new currency. The acceptance percentage for the euro rose from 70 per cent in the first week to stabilise two weeks later at 75 per cent (*Imerissia*, 16–17 February 2002).

#### *Attitudes towards enlargement*

The direct link between the pro-European stance of the Greek public and the country's national security problem is manifested most clearly in the public attitude towards the issue of *EU enlargement*. This is because enlargement is directly connected not only with Cyprus's accession to the EU and the settlement of the Cyprus problem, but also with improvement in the relations between Greece and Turkey and stability in the Balkans. According to the EB survey, Greece – despite the wide information deficit ascertained (see EB 55, 2001: B.31) – still shows the strongest support for enlargement (70 per cent) among all fifteen Member States (Table 8.13; EB 55, 2001: 54). This percentage is markedly above the second highest level of support, which is in Ireland (59 per cent), and considerably higher than the European average (43 per cent).<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Greece has the highest percentage of *positive attitudes* towards enlargement. On the basis of a cumulative attitude indicator comprising twenty issues related to enlargement, Greece had the highest score, with an average positive attitude of 56 per cent, against 48 per cent in Spain and 47 per cent in Italy, while the EU-15 average was 41 per cent (EB 55, 2001: 59, B.42–B.45).

However, the order of reasons why Greeks are in favour of enlargement is radically different from that recorded in EU-15 (Table 8.14). Furthermore, the preferences of public opinion in Greece regarding enlargement do not

**Table 8.13** Support for enlargement of the EU in Greece and EU-15, 2001  
(results in %)

	<i>Greece</i>	<i>EU-15</i>	<i>GR – EU-15</i>
For	70	43	+27
Against	18	35	–17
Don't know	13	23	–10
Total	100	100	

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 2001, Report no. 55, Figure 3.7a, p. 53 and Table 3.6a, p. B.36 (author's compilation).

**Table 8.14** Selected attitudes towards enlargement of the EU in Greece and EU-15, 2001 (results in %)

<i>Enlargement . . .</i>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>EU-15</i>	<i>GR – EU-15</i>
Unites our continent	85	64	+21
Secures peace in our part of the world	82	59	+23
Eliminates armed conflicts	79	59	+20
Will guarantee peace and security in Europe	75	50	+25
Will favour economic growth	73	53	+20

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 2001, Report no. 55, Tables 3.9a–3.9b, p. B.43–B.45 (author's compilation).

apply to all candidate countries. Rather, Greek preferences are *selective* and focus on *certain of these countries*. According to the latest available data, 59 per cent of Greek citizens are in favour of a limited and 'selective' enlargement (compared to 44 per cent in EU-15 as a whole), while only 20 per cent believe that the EU should be open to all countries wishing to join. Nevertheless, the anti-enlargement percentage is just 7 per cent, less than half the European average (16 per cent – Table 8.15). The particular preferences of public opinion in Greece are presented in Table 8.16. The priority of Cyprus, the accession of the neighbouring Balkan states, and the rejection of Turkey's accession prospect, are the points, which differ from trends prevailing in the EU as a whole.

There is, however, another issue on which public opinion in Greece is markedly different from the rest of Europe, namely the decision-making system of the enlarged Union. On this issue, 60 per cent of Greeks feel that decisions, after EU enlargement, should be adopted unanimously and only 34 per cent are in favour of decisions being made by majority vote (Table 8.17). This predominant belief in Greece contrasts with trends prevailing in the EU-15 as a whole where, conversely, 48 per cent are in favour of decision-making by a majority of the Member States, and it therefore constitutes a point of national isolation.

Table 8.15 Options for enlargement in Greece and EU-15, 2001 (results in %)

	<i>Greece</i>	<i>EU-15</i>	<i>GR – EU-15</i>
The EU should be enlarged to include all the countries wishing to join	20	21	+1
The EU should be enlarged to include only some of the countries wishing to join	59	44	+15
The EU should not be enlarged to any additional countries	7	16	–9
None of these	2	5	–3
Don't know	11	15	–4
Total	100	100	

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 2001, Report no. 55, Figure 3.8, p. 55 and Table 3.7a, p. B.38 (author's compilation).

Table 8.16 Enlargement: which countries should join, Greece and EU-15, 2001 (%)

	<i>Greece</i>		<i>EU-15</i>	
	+	–	+	–
Cyprus	84	8	42	35
Bulgaria	58	29	35	42
Romania	56	30	33	45
Turkey	26	67	30	48

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 2000, Report no. 54, Table 5.12a, p. B.78 (author's compilation).

Table 8.17 EU decision-making after enlargement, Greece and EU-15, 2001 (%) (change from autumn 2000: EB54.1)

	<i>Greece</i>		<i>EU-15</i>	
Unanimously by all Member States	60	(+9)	35	(0)
By a majority of the Member States	34	(–7)	48	(–2)
Don't know	6	(–2)	17	(+2)

Source: Standard Eurobarometer, 2001, Report no. 55, Table 3.11a, p. B.48 (author's compilation).

### Conclusion: the determinants of the Greek pro-European attitude

This last section will examine the factors which determine the Greek 'pro-European' attitude and its fluctuations. The theoretical discussion of public support for European integration has highlighted a number of factors (Inglehart 1977; Deheneffe 1986; Handley 1991; Eichenberg and Dalton 1993; Bosch and Newton 1995; Duchesne and Frogner 1995; Martinotti and

Stefanizzi 1995; Niedermayer 1995a; Wessels 1995a, 1995b; Anderson and Kalthenthaler 1996; Anderson and Reichert 1996; Deflem and Pampel 1996; Beyers 1998; Carey 1999; Ray 1999; Carey and Lebo 2000).<sup>15</sup> A number of studies stress the particular interpretative importance that national identity continues to have, and point to it as the basic determinant of attitudes towards Europe. This conclusion is confirmed in the case of Greece also. The attitudes of Greek (and other European) citizens are basically 'national', which means that they are determined on the basis of particular national (political and economic) interests rather than on the basis of an abstract supranational or post-national European identity, which does not appear to exist (Deflem and Pampel 1996). The priority of national identity (national idiosyncrasies) *vis-à-vis* support for European integration is not a Greek peculiarity; it applies to the whole of Europe. This is a fundamental issue both for the legitimation and the future of the process of integration: it means that the high rates of public support for European integration are not based on the convergent and unified post-national (European) identity of European citizens, but on a multiplicity of national, antagonistic and frequently contrasting identities. National identification explains both pro-European and anti-European attitudes (Deflem and Pampel 1996). Both the pro-European stance of, for instance, the Irish, Spanish, Portuguese, Greeks or Italians, and the anti-European stance of, for instance, the British, Swedes or Danes, should not be attributed principally to social or political/ideological differences between the countries, but to national differentiation, i.e. national idiosyncrasies and particularities. These are, on the whole, 'national' attitudes, resulting from the different political, cultural and historical characteristics of each nation (Niedermayer 1995a: 65–6). This assertion means that the differences between countries would appear to be more important than the individual socio-demographic, or even political/ ideological characteristics of public opinion.

Some authors tend to downplay the significance of other variables, such as certain demographic variables (age, gender), traditional political and ideological divisions (Left/Right), or new (materialist/post-materialist) values, as well as the significance of social cleavages (working class/middle class), which according to the same authors are – generally – of lesser importance (Deflem and Pampel 1996; see also Wessels 1995a). With regard to Greece in particular, Dobratz's (1993: 108) study showed both the low interpretative significance of the demographic variables of gender, age and residence, as well as the fact that post-materialist values are not positively associated with the indicators of social support for the European Community. In contrast, according to Wessels (1995a: 120–4), the available empirical data from the Eurobarometer surveys demonstrate the positive correlation between support and education and employment ('enlightenment' model).

Economic conditions and parameters have also been the subject of systematic investigation, from the point of view of their impact on public support for European integration (Dalton and Eichenberg 1991; Anderson and Kalthenthaler 1996; Anderson and Reichert 1996). However, some

interpretative approaches tend to attach rather limited significance to economic factors. According to these approaches, public support for the Union, or for European integration, is equally or even primarily due to non-economic reasons. According to Bosch and Newton (1995: 101–3), support appears to be more associated with social variables, or non-economic attitude variables, such as relationship with politics, or interest in politics, degree of political participation, etc. According to the so-called mainstream model public attitudes towards European integration reflect public involvement in politics: the more people become involved with politics, the more they tend to support European integration (Wessels, 1995a: 126f.). The significance of this assertion for a country with the political culture of Greece cannot be overestimated. Apart from the role of political elites in shaping public opinion towards Europe,<sup>16</sup> political scientists have relatively recently examined the influence of political parties on public attitudes towards integration (Wessels 1995a; Carey 1999; Ray 1999). The views of party followers are closely connected with and reflect the views of political parties on European integration (Wessels 1995a: 130–5), and it is the parties' policy positions that shape the attitudes of their supporters towards European integration.

Nevertheless these general assertions do not negate the fact that, on the one hand, there is still a significant degree of differentiation among the countries, while on the other, factors of secondary importance in the EU as a whole, for example the Left/Right division, may exercise a more decisive influence on individual countries, or over certain periods of time (Bosch and Newton 1995: 94). Indeed, something of the sort appears to be confirmed with regard to ideological division in the case of Greece.

How then can one interpret the pro-European attitude which emerged and became consolidated in Greek public opinion during the 1980s and which, despite fluctuations, appears to have stabilised. How did the strategic choice of the country's dominant social powers, namely Greece's participation in the process of European integration, secure such a level of public support? The favourable attitudes of public opinion in Greece may be attributed to four factors:

- The *convergence of political parties' attitudes* and the homogenisation of the country's political elite, which took place over time and resulted in the depoliticisation of the issue and the elimination of party competition, which had – on the contrary – marked both the pre-accession stage and the first five years of membership.
- The *economic benefits* resulting from membership. However, this is not some singular form of Greek economic utilitarianism. It should be noted that the tendency to attribute the Greek pro-European attitude exclusively to this factor (utilitarianism) is something of an exaggeration and tends to oversimplify the issue.
- The increased *sense of political security* provided by membership, with the ensuing strengthening of the country's position and role, following the

restoration of democracy, which operates as an antidote to both the insecurity experienced by Greek society in the 1990s due to the country's problems with its neighbours and the negative developments relating to domestic patterns of governance in the late 1980s and the first half of the 1990s.

- Since 1996, a fourth factor has been added, namely the identification of the European perspective with the country's modernisation and the reform of domestic governance.

The convergence of political parties' attitudes could not, initially, be taken for granted. In the 1970s, of all the mainstream political parties, only ND had – since its establishment – been pro-Europe and pro-West. The country's accession to the EEC constituted, after the restoration of democracy, the new 'Great Idea' of Konstantinos Karamanlis and the conservative camp in Greece. Accession to the EC – as in the cases of Spain and Portugal – was considered by significant portions of public opinion to be an essential factor towards the democratisation, stabilisation and legitimisation of the new political system formed after the change of regime. As Niedermayer (1995a: 66) notes, EC membership symbolises the incorporation of these countries in the community of Western democracies. Moreover, there had never been an appreciable, well organised and, above all, distinct conservative anti-European tendency (a phenomenon of the extreme Right). A limited anti-European tendency among the Greek Right has become more evident in recent years, perhaps as a domestic opposition stance against Simitis' government, which has closely identified itself with EMU. It should be construed as a reaction, not so much against Europe, but mainly against modernisation, i.e. against the dominant political and ideological tendency in the ruling PASOK party, as expressed by the current Prime Minister.

During the early 1980s, the European issue had to a large extent become politicised, i.e. it was the main bone of contention between political parties. As Dobratz (1993: 107–8) showed, on the basis of EB data for the period 1980–4 and 1988, at least in the 1980s, support for EC membership in Greece was indeed an issue that distinguished the political Right from the Left. Also according to Wessels (1995a: 125, 133), in Greece (as in Denmark) in the 1980s, the significance of the Left/Right cleavage for the public's stance on the issue of membership was strong. In other words, the ideological division was, at least initially, a determinant of support for Europe and the EU. On the basis of self-placement on the Left/Right scale used by EB, right-wingers were more favourably inclined, since membership was the declared strategic choice of ND and Konstantinos Karamanlis after 1974, while both PASOK and the Left clearly stated their opposition. According to Dobratz (1993), the influence of the division was stronger in Greece and in the three new states that became members in the 1970s (Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom), and weaker in Spain and Portugal, which joined in 1986. Conversely, in 1988, among the six founding Member States, self-placement on the Left/Right

scale did not show a statistically significant correlation with public support for the EC (Dobratz 1993: 122).

PASOK's new stance proved to be of enormous significance and marked the beginning of the ideological shift in public opinion. It acted as a catalyst which increased public support, for since then the issue of Europe has been dissociated from the political confrontation of the two main political groups in Greece, and as a result the importance of the ideological division has abated. After 1986, the country's successful membership was a common national goal: it is neither disputed nor an issue on the public agenda. Regarding this priority, the convergence of the country's political elite and party system,<sup>17</sup> with the exception of the Greek Communist Party (KKE), is a given. As a result, the national consensus on membership has strengthened the pro-European trend. As noted previously, the importance of the partisan in the shaping of public opinion is major.

The favourable attitudes of Greeks towards Europe can be only partly explained with reference to the country's (real) economic benefit from membership. The public's acknowledgement of this benefit does not in itself suffice to interpret the high levels of support in Greece, nor should it be exclusively attributed to Greek economic utilitarianism. Such an interpretation may underestimate the political dimension of the European identity in Greece. Notwithstanding the doubts expressed about the concept of 'benefit', as previously mentioned (Table 8.3) the belief that the country has benefited financially from membership is widespread. This tendency has also been observed, apart from Greece, in Spain and Portugal, whose accession resulted in the improvement of their economies (Sidjanski 1991). With respect to this factor, the case of Greece appears to confirm the position maintained in the past by Inglehart and Rabier (1978): on the one hand the increased economic benefits from a country's membership may increase support, and on the other, the duration of a country's membership may influence support positively. It is a fact that the benefit indicator scores higher in Greece than the membership indicator. In the latest EB survey (EB 55 2001: B.10–B.12), the benefit indicator for Greece is estimated at 69 per cent, while the membership indicator at 57 per cent. With regard to this indicator, Greece has the second highest score (69 per cent) after Ireland (83 per cent) and before Portugal (68 per cent), compared to the EU-15 average of 45 per cent (EB 55, 2001: B.12). Therefore, the specific-instrumental support is higher than the diffuse, while in the EU as a whole the opposite is true (Bosch and Newton 1995: 79). However, this is not a Greek peculiarity. The same can be seen today in seven other Member States, where the benefit indicator is higher than the membership indicator, such as Ireland (83 per cent versus 72 per cent), Portugal (68 per cent versus 57 per cent), Denmark (61 per cent versus 48 per cent), and to a lesser extent Belgium (55 per cent versus 54 per cent), Austria (38 per cent versus 34 per cent) and Finland (38 per cent versus 36 per cent). Bosch and Newton's (1995: 100) analysis of Spain and Portugal, two nations where, as in Greece, the economic perception of the EU appears to be

predominant, shows that economic expectations seem to play an important role in rallying support for the EU, but not necessarily more important than political and social factors. The EU is quite removed from the day-to-day life of the average European (and Greek) citizen, and this is clearly reflected in the subjective perceptions of public opinion. As the same authors note, the consequences of the economic conjuncture and the economic positions, which traditionally affect the national vote and citizens' political perceptions, may have a looser association with the stances towards the EU. Citizens are more likely to applaud or blame their national governments rather than the EU for the gains or losses of their economies (Bosch and Newton 1995: 100). Under no circumstances is the economic benefit–support relationship a straightforward one. In 1984, in the two countries which had benefited the most in terms of net inflow of capital from the EC (Ireland, Greece), the membership indicator stood at an average of 40.5 per cent, while in the countries which contributed the most (Belgium/Luxembourg and Germany), the corresponding level approached 61 per cent (Bosch and Newton 1995: 81). In reality, the exact opposite occurred: the countries that had benefited most (Greece, Ireland) scored the lowest support rates.

The analysis of Greek public opinion, particularly with respect to current EU priority issues, such as enlargement, highlights the significance of national insecurity – generated in the 1990s – in shaping the Greek pro-European stance. The issue of the country's national security, as this arose following the realignments resulting from the destabilisation of the Balkans (Albania, FYROM, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia), the deterioration of Greek–Turkish relations and the prospect of Cyprus's accession to the European Union, have shaped attitudes towards the EU and to some extent explains the respective fluctuations. The shortcomings in the domestic political landscape, which were openly manifested in the late 1980s and the first half of the 1990s (Table 8.5), have also contributed to this trend, and the political result of these processes was increased discontent with the government and a crisis of confidence in the country's political system.

Since 1996, an additional factor has boosted support. The pro-European inclinations of public opinion in Greece are being reinforced, as the government's key strategic target, namely the country's accession to EMU, takes on an additional ideological dimension. The European perspective is inextricably connected with the issue of the country's reform and (political, economic and social) modernisation.<sup>18</sup> Participation in European integration is considered (not unjustifiably) to be a springboard that provides a way out of the domestic political situation – a remedy for the chronic weaknesses of the state.

## Notes

- 1 The first indicator ('membership' indicator) is constructed on the basis of the question: 'Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the European Community (Common Market) is a good thing, a bad thing, or



neither good nor bad?' The second indicator ('benefit' indicator) is constructed on the basis of the question: 'Taking everything into consideration, would you say that (your country) has on balance benefited or not from being a member of the European Community (Common Market)?', and the third ('dissolution' indicator) on the basis of the question: 'If you were to be told tomorrow that the European Community (Common Market) had been scrapped, would you be very sorry, indifferent, or relieved?'. For a theoretical discussion of the indicators and their use, see Reif and Inglehart (1991a); Niedermayer (1995a). With regard to the benefit indicator and its limitations, see also Bosch and Newton (1995). A fourth indicator ('unification' indicator), constructed on the basis of the question: 'In general, are you for or against efforts being made to unify Western Europe?', which registers the general tendency regarding the efforts made towards the unification of Western Europe, has not been used since 1996. The figures of the latter indicator pertaining to Greece appear in Table 8.4.

- 2 The act of accession was signed in Athens on 28 May 1979 and Greece became a full member on 1 January 1981.
- 3 The significant increase in support for European integration observed in Greece during the decade following the country's accession is also noted by Deflem and Pampel (1996). Their analysis, based on EB data for 1982, 1986, 1989 and 1992, ranks Greece among the most anti-European countries, after Denmark, the United Kingdom and Ireland in 1982 and 1986, first among the most pro-European countries in 1989 and second in 1992. According to the same study, during the decade 1982–92, public support for the EU increased – apart from in Greece – also in Denmark, the United Kingdom, Ireland and Northern Ireland, while, conversely, it appears to have decreased in West Germany, France and Luxembourg (Deflem and Pampel 1996; Niedermayer 1995a: 59).
- 4 This indicator is determined by the question: 'On the whole, are you very satisfied, fairly satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied with the way democracy works (in your country)?'
- 5 Additional question posed by EB in Greece (Mavris 1994: 12, Figure 1).
- 6 In EU-12 as a whole, 'trust' in Greeks, on the basis of a four-grade trust scale, was calculated in June 1993 at 2.55, placing Greeks last among the twelve nations (EB 39, 1993: A.50). For a detailed analysis see Mavris (1994). On the structural factors influencing national sympathies/antipathies, see Inglehart (1991) and Niedermayer (1995b).
- 7 In the official editions of the Eurobarometer, this indicator's values have not been fully published: see Table 8.3.
- 8 Andreas Papandreu resigned on 15 January 1996 and was succeeded by Constantinos Simitis.
- 9 In spring 2001 51 per cent of Greeks (change of + 15 percentage points compared to autumn 1998) stated they would be indifferent if the EU were to be scrapped and only 6 per cent that they would be relieved. The same percentage was recorded in Portugal, while a lower percentage (3 per cent) appeared only in Luxembourg and Ireland (EB 55, 2001: B.18).
- 10 Due to compulsory voting, and as a result of the country's political culture, participation in elections remains one of the highest in Europe (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) 1997). In the last European election (1999) the participation rate in Greece was 75.3 per cent. Only Belgium (91 per cent) and Luxembourg (87.3 per cent) had higher rates.
- 11 The agenda of the issues measured empirically by the Eurobarometer survey also includes the principle of subsidiarity, EC support of EP, and EU taught at school (EB 55, 2001: B.28; see also Table 8.8).
- 12 The corresponding is 'For each of the following areas, do you think that decisions should be made by the (NATIONALITY) government, or made jointly within the

European Union?' The respondents are invited to answer with regard to twenty-five areas of public policy.

- 13 See Wim Duisenberg's statements in this respect.
- 14 It should be noted that Greece also had the highest score with regard to the public's acceptance of enlargement in the previous Eurobarometer survey (autumn 2000).
- 15 A very systematic investigation of the major determinant can be found in Niedermayer and Sinnott (1995), part 2: 'Support for European Integration', pp. 52–189. For a concise literature review see Wessels (1995a); Deflem and Pampel (1996); Carey (1999).
- 16 On the role of the elite in shaping public attitudes towards Europe, see Wessels (1995b) and Beyers (1998).
- 17 According to a political elite survey held in 2000 by the VPRC Opinion Poll Institute, among forty-nine officials of the two main parties (PASOK, ND), 88 per cent expressed positive opinions about the EU, while 96 per cent were in favour of the introduction of the euro. The benefit indicator (the questions were expressed in the same manner as in the EB surveys) was estimated at 98 per cent.
- 18 This phenomenon has also been observed elsewhere, particularly in Italy (Martinotti and Stefanizzi 1995; Radaelli 2000).