



## Homosexual marriage, child adoption by homosexual couples: is the public ready?

Within the context of a large survey conducted in **30 European countries**, EOS Gallup Europe decided to look into two important issues, which are increasingly discussed among the general public:

- Marriage of homosexual couples
- Child adoption by homosexual couples

In recent years, several European countries have taken measures dealing with these issues. The necessity to legislate goes hand in hand with the evolution of everyday customs and widespread practices of homosexual couples in Europe. The recognition of homosexual families, as is true for the many single-parent families in Europe, represents an important step. One of the major claims is the formal and legal recognition of the union between two persons of the same sex. The opportunity of marriage for couples of the same sex lies on a newly conceived definition of marriage itself. Indeed, traditionally perceived as the union of a man and a woman likely to build a family, marriage is now more or less developing towards the commitment of two human beings.

"Homoparentality" (parents of the same sex) also raises questions relating to children, namely procreation, filiation but also adoption. A multitude of discussions and projects have emerged in order to enable child adoption for couples of the same sex. New legislative measures could legalise already existing cases. As a matter of fact, a number of single homosexuals who have adopted children or who raise their own children stemming from a former heterosexual union live as a couple. However, their partner does not have a legal status as "parent".

To this effect, EOS Gallup Europe conducted 15,074 interviews from the 21<sup>st</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> of January 2003 among citizens of 30 European countries through its network of local institutes. Sample sizes amount to 500 respondents in each country, and each national sample is representative of the population aged 15 years and above. Furthermore, four distinctive weightings have been applied: at national level, at levels of the sub-totals of the 15 Member States of the EU, the 13 candidate countries and the 25 countries of the enlarged European Union in 2004.

The following pages are aimed at analysing public opinion concerning these issues at 3 distinct levels:

- at the global level of the three subgroups (EU, Candidate countries, EU 2004)
- at the national level
- at the level of socio-demographic characteristics



Pour chacune des propositions suivantes, dites-moi si vous êtes tout à fait d'accord, plutôt d'accord, plutôt pas d'accord ou pas d'accord du tout ? : **L'autorisation du mariage des couples homosexuels partout en Europe**

For each of the following propositions, tell me if you absolutely agree, rather agree, rather disagree or absolutely disagree ?  
**The authorisation of homosexual marriages throughout Europe**

	Tout à fait d'accord	Plutôt d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Pas d'accord du tout	(nsp/sr)	(+++) D'ACCORD	(--/-) PAS D'ACCORD
	Absolutely agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Absolutely disagree	(dk/na)	(+++) AGREE	(--/-) DISAGREE
BELGI QUE	37%	30%	9%	22%	2%	67%	31%
DANMARK	66%	16%	5%	12%	2%	82%	17%
DEUTSCHLAND	36%	29%	13%	20%	2%	65%	34%
ELLAS	5%	11%	10%	71%	3%	16%	80%
ESPANA	28%	40%	10%	14%	8%	68%	24%
IRELAND	16%	30%	16%	32%	6%	46%	48%
ITALIA	17%	30%	15%	37%	1%	47%	52%
LUXEMBOURG	35%	36%	9%	15%	4%	71%	24%
NEDERLAND	62%	18%	6%	12%	2%	80%	18%
OSTERREICH	24%	24%	13%	28%	11%	48%	41%
PORTU GAL	9%	34%	25%	28%	5%	43%	53%
FINLAND	33%	23%	11%	29%	4%	56%	39%
FRANCE	25%	33%	14%	26%	2%	58%	40%
SWEDEN	51%	18%	5%	21%	5%	70%	26%
UNITED KINGDOM	17%	30%	15%	30%	7%	47%	45%
<b>EU 15</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>39%</b>
BULGA RIA	6%	13%	14%	55%	12%	20%	69%
CYPRIOUS	4%	5%	4%	76%	10%	9%	81%
CZECH REPUBLIC	17%	33%	20%	28%	3%	50%	48%
ESTO NIA	13%	22%	14%	42%	9%	35%	56%
HUN GARY	14%	23%	12%	43%	8%	37%	55%
LATVIA	4%	15%	9%	65%	7%	19%	74%
LITHUA NIA	6%	20%	20%	42%	12%	26%	62%
MALTA	6%	17%	16%	54%	7%	23%	69%
POLAND	7%	11%	14%	56%	11%	19%	70%
ROMA NIA	7%	10%	9%	69%	5%	17%	77%
SLOVA KIA	4%	26%	29%	41%	1%	30%	70%
SLOVE NIA	19%	21%	5%	50%	5%	40%	55%
TURKEY	1%	15%	26%	53%	6%	16%	79%
<b>CC 13</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>EU 2004</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>43%</b>
SWISS	37%	28%	11%	20%	4%	65%	31%
NORWAY	40%	26%	14%	17%	3%	66%	31%



## **Homosexual marriage is accepted by a majority of the general public**

Approximately 6 out of 10 EU citizens agree with the general authorisation of marriage among homosexual couples throughout Europe. However, citizens in the candidate countries appear more reluctant to accept the authorisation of homosexual marriage, since only 23% of respondents agree with this proposition while 70% are opposed.

Turkish (79%) and Romanian opposition (77%) weighs considerably on this average. As a matter of fact, if we were to project ourselves to the future European Union of May 2004 (that means without Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria) we find similar agreement rates to those observed for the current European Union: 53% in average.

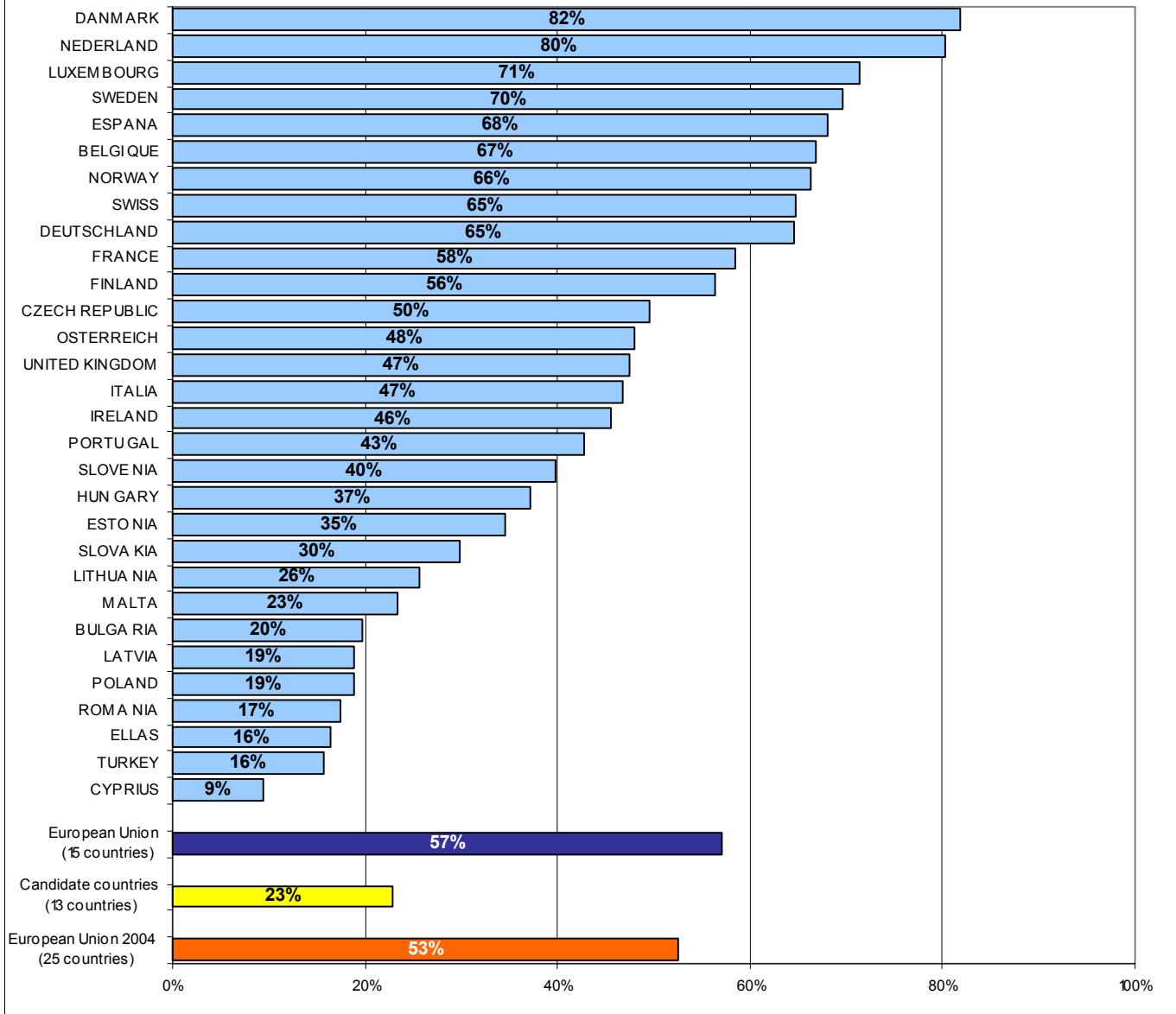
To date, marriage of homosexual couples is only legal in two countries – the Netherlands and Belgium. A slight majority of the general public seems nevertheless prepared to authorise this union.

A large number of countries currently dispose of laws regarding this matter, going from traditional marriage to the legal recognition of domestic partners, registered partnerships and civil unions.

This issue is currently debated at the European Parliament. Indeed, all citizens of the EU benefit from the “freedom of movement” within the European Union, yet when actually moving to another Member State with their family or their partner, citizens’ rights often remain unclear because legislation varies from country to country. One of the goals of the European Parliament is to harmonise these rights. Homosexual marriage appears therefore as a sensitive issue due to the fact that in the countries where it is not legalised, governments may be obliged to recognise homosexual marriage of “visitors” even if their national legislation does not acknowledge it.



**Do you agree with ...**  
**"The authorisation of homosexual marriages throughout Europe"**  
**Answers : Absolutely agree / Rather agree**



A **country analysis** reveals important disparities.

**Denmark** (82%) and **the Netherlands** (80%) are the two countries most open to the general authorisation of homosexual marriage. Denmark currently only recognises the “registered union” of homosexual couples, which grants them most of the advantages and obligations applicable to married couples. As for the Netherlands, it is the first country in the world to have legalised homosexual marriage, namely in March 2001.

Other countries also show rather strong support for such a union: **Luxembourg** (71%), **Sweden** (70%), **Spain** (68%), **Belgium** (67%), **Norway** (66%), **Switzerland** and **Germany** (65%).

On the contrary, **Cyprus** appears to be the country most opposed to homosexual marriage, since only 9% of the population indicates being in favour of its authorisation, while 81% disagrees (of which 76% absolutely disagrees). In **Greece** (80% opposed) and in **Turkey** (79%), opinions also appear to be very clear-cut.

We can also note that the agreement rate appears to be hardly any higher in **Romania** (17%), **Poland** (19%), **Lithuania** (19%) and **Bulgaria** (20%).



Pour chacune des propositions suivantes, dites-moi si vous êtes tout à fait d'accord, plutôt d'accord, plutôt pas d'accord ou pas d'accord du tout ? : **L'autorisation du mariage des couples homosexuels partout en Europe**

For each of the following propositions, tell me if you absolutely agree, rather agree, rather disagree or absolutely disagree ?  
**The authorisation of homosexual marriages throughout Europe**

	AGREE			DISAGREE			(DK&NA)		
	European Union (15 cics)	Candidate countries (13 cics)	European Union 2004 (25 cics)	European Union (15 cics)	Candidate countries (13 cics)	European Union 2004 (25 cics)	European Union (15 cics)	Candidate countries (13 cics)	European Union 2004 (25 cics)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>SEX</b>									
Men	53%	22%	48%	44%	71%	47%	3%	6%	4%
Women	61%	23%	57%	35%	70%	39%	4%	7%	4%
<b>AGE</b>									
15-24	71%	37%	69%	27%	59%	29%	2%	4%	2%
25-39	70%	27%	63%	28%	66%	34%	2%	7%	3%
40-54	63%	15%	56%	34%	77%	39%	4%	7%	5%
55 & +	37%	13%	34%	58%	79%	60%	5%	8%	6%
<b>EDUCATION</b>									
15 & -	39%	15%	36%	56%	79%	59%	5%	6%	6%
16-20	59%	25%	53%	38%	68%	43%	3%	7%	5%
21 & +	64%	26%	61%	32%	67%	36%	3%	6%	3%
<b>OCCUPATION</b>									
Self-employed	56%	22%	51%	39%	73%	45%	5%	5%	4%
Employee	68%	29%	63%	29%	65%	34%	2%	7%	3%
Manual worker	58%	20%	52%	39%	73%	43%	4%	7%	6%
Without pr.act.	50%	22%	46%	46%	72%	49%	4%	7%	5%
<b>RELIGION</b>									
Christ.	53%	24%	48%	44%	68%	47%	4%	8%	5%
Muslim	54%	15%	44%	45%	80%	53%	0%	5%	3%
Other	59%	29%	58%	39%	67%	39%	2%	4%	3%
Non believer	74%	49%	69%	23%	47%	27%	3%	4%	3%
<b>POLITICAL PROXIMITY</b>									
Left	67%	28%	65%	30%	66%	33%	2%	6%	2%
Right	48%	21%	45%	49%	73%	51%	3%	5%	4%
Centre	56%	23%	52%	40%	72%	44%	4%	5%	4%
Neither left nor right	50%	22%	41%	45%	70%	51%	6%	8%	8%



The **different socio-demographic categories** analysed for this question appear to be discriminating factors:

- **Women** are more favourable to the authorisation of homosexual marriage. 61% of female citizens in the EU are in favour of authorising this alliance all over Europe. In the future European Union of 2004, 57% are of the same opinion. Among the candidate countries however, this cleavage is less noticeable.
- Furthermore, opinions appear to strongly diverge according to the **age of respondents**. The younger one is, the more favourable one is to homosexual marriage, being true for all European countries. Among the 15 Member States, 71% of young people aged 15 to 24 and 70% of those aged 25 to 39 tend to agree, while only 37% of the older populations aged 55 and over are of the same opinion. The situation is similar for the future European Union of 2004. Results observed in the candidate countries also appear to be very distinctive, since 37% of populations aged 15 to 24 indicate being in favour of the authorisation of homosexual marriage while among populations aged 55 and over, only 13% express the same opinion.
- The **level of education** is also discriminating in this dimension. As a matter of fact, we can note a positive correlation between the fact of benefiting from a high level of education and the fact of agreeing with this authorisation.
- **Religion** is another discriminating factor towards homosexual marriage. Throughout Europe, non-believers appear to be the most tolerant towards this sort of matrimonial alliance: those in agreement represent 74% in the EU Member States, 69% in the future EU of 2004 and 49% in the candidate countries. The agreement rate of non-believers is well above the average of each of the three geographical subgroups.

In the current EU, Christians (53%) and Muslims (54%) tend to be slightly less favourable than other religious groups (59%). As for the candidate countries, 80% of Muslims do not agree with the authorisation of homosexual marriage.

- Concerning **political stance**, persons close to left-wing parties tend to be more in favour of the union of homosexual couples, a result that can be observed throughout Europe.



Pour chacune des propositions suivantes, dites-moi si vous êtes tout à fait d'accord, plutôt d'accord, plutôt pas d'accord ou pas d'accord du tout ? : **L'autorisation de l'adoption d'enfants par des couples homosexuels partout en Europe**

For each of the following propositions, tell me if you absolutely agree, rather agree, rather disagree or absolutely disagree ? **The authorisation of child adoption by homosexual couples throughout Europe**

	Tout à fait d'accord	Plutôt d'accord	Plutôt pas d'accord	Pas d'accord du tout	(nsp/sr)	(+++) D'ACCORD	(--/) PAS D'ACCORD
	Absolutely agree	Rather agree	Rather disagree	Absolutely disagree	(dk/na)	(+++) AGREE	(--/) DISAGREE
BELGI QUE	19%	28%	16%	34%	3%	47%	50%
DANMARK	31%	23%	14%	31%	1%	54%	45%
DEUTSCHLAND	26%	31%	19%	22%	2%	57%	41%
ELLAS	4%	6%	10%	77%	2%	11%	87%
ESPANA	24%	33%	17%	20%	6%	57%	37%
IRELAND	10%	24%	23%	38%	5%	34%	61%
ITALIA	9%	16%	24%	50%	2%	25%	74%
LUXEMBOURG	19%	30%	19%	31%	1%	49%	50%
NEDERLAND	39%	25%	17%	18%	2%	64%	35%
OSTERREICH	14%	18%	20%	38%	9%	33%	58%
PORTU GAL	5%	20%	33%	37%	6%	25%	69%
FINLAND	13%	18%	19%	46%	5%	30%	65%
FRANCE	12%	27%	22%	38%	1%	39%	60%
SWEDEN	27%	16%	12%	38%	8%	42%	50%
UNITED KINGDOM	12%	23%	22%	38%	5%	35%	60%
<b>EU 15</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>55%</b>
BULGA RIA	5%	9%	12%	64%	10%	14%	76%
CYPRIOUS	3%	3%	4%	80%	10%	6%	84%
CZECH REPUBLIC	9%	26%	23%	41%	2%	35%	63%
ESTO NIA	9%	18%	14%	52%	8%	27%	65%
HUN GARY	13%	21%	14%	47%	6%	34%	60%
LATVIA	2%	9%	9%	72%	8%	11%	81%
LITHUA NIA	3%	10%	20%	55%	13%	13%	75%
MALTA	3%	7%	12%	74%	4%	10%	86%
POLAND	3%	7%	12%	63%	16%	10%	75%
ROMA NIA	5%	6%	8%	77%	4%	11%	85%
SLOVA KIA	3%	14%	32%	51%	1%	17%	82%
SLOVE NIA	12%	18%	7%	60%	4%	30%	66%
TURKEY	1%	15%	30%	48%	6%	16%	78%
<b>CC 13</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>76%</b>
<b>EU 2004</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>57%</b>
SWISS	18%	29%	20%	31%	3%	47%	51%
NORWAY	12%	25%	26%	33%	5%	37%	59%





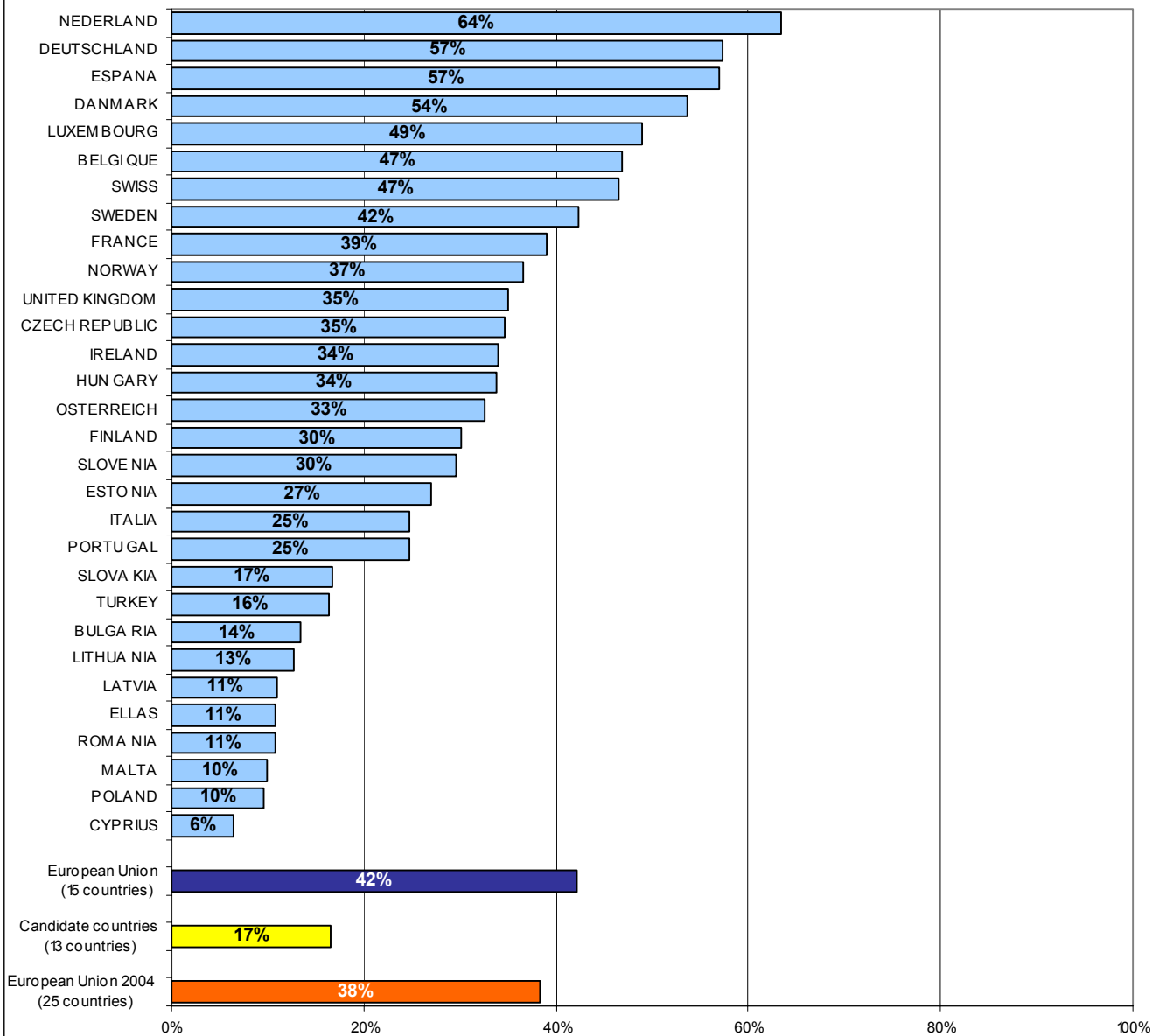
### **Europeans reluctant towards child adoption by homosexual couples**

While 42% of EU citizens agree with the authorisation of child adoption by homosexual couples throughout Europe, 55% are nevertheless opposed. This rate of agreement tends to diminish when observing the average result for citizens of the future European Union in 2004 (the rate goes from 42% to 38%). This proposition gathers very little support among citizens of the candidate countries where only 17% of the population are in favour and 76% opposed.

Although society and mentalities are constantly evolving, it seems as though the possibility for homosexuals to raise children continues to bother some. Despite all, certain countries have already begun to reform their legislation in order to legalise this situation. Several projects are aiming at opening up child adoption to unmarried couples, which could potentially be extended to couples of the same sex. Others aim to open child adoption more explicitly to homosexual couples.



**Do you agree with ...**  
**"The authorisation of child adoption by homosexual couples throughout Europe"**  
**Answers : Absolutely agree / Rather agree**



Strong discrepancies appear when **analysing this issue country by country.**

**The Netherlands** is the country where citizens are most in favour of child adoption by homosexual couples throughout Europe (64%). This result confirms the policy undertaken by the Netherlands, which was the first country to explicitly legalise child adoption by homosexual couples.

**Germany** and **Spain** follow with 57% of citizens favourable to this proposition. Over half of the citizens also agree in **Denmark** (54%): representing a majority yet not massive public agreement in a country where child adoption by homosexual couples is already authorised.

**Sweden** and the **United Kingdom** have also adopted legislation in this matter last year, authorising the adoption of children by homosexual couples. In Sweden we note that 42% of citizens agree while in the United Kingdom 35% of citizens agree, placing these countries respectively in 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> position of European countries most in favour of this issue.

On the other hand, only 6% of **Cypriots** agree with this idea while 84% are opposed. A similar result and a marked opposition to adoption by homosexual couples is also observed in **Greece** where 87% of the population disagrees, the same phenomenon being observed in **Malta** (86%) as well as in **Romania** (85%).



Pour chacune des propositions suivantes, dites-moi si vous êtes tout à fait d'accord, plutôt d'accord, plutôt pas d'accord ou pas d'accord du tout ? : **L'autorisation de l'adoption d'enfants par des couples homosexuels partout en Europe**

For each of the following propositions, tell me if you absolutely agree, rather agree, rather disagree or absolutely disagree ?  
**The authorisation of child adoption by homosexual couples throughout Europe**

	AGREE			DISAGREE			(DK&NA)		
	European Union (15 cics)	Candidate countries (13 cics)	European Union 2004 (25 cics)	European Union (15 cics)	Candidate countries (13 cics)	European Union 2004 (25 cics)	European Union (15 cics)	Candidate countries (13 cics)	European Union 2004 (25 cics)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>SEX</b>									
Men	36%	16%	33%	60%	77%	62%	3%	7%	4%
Women	48%	18%	43%	50%	75%	53%	3%	8%	4%
<b>AGE</b>									
15-24	54%	25%	50%	44%	69%	47%	1%	6%	3%
25-39	49%	17%	45%	50%	75%	52%	2%	8%	3%
40-54	47%	14%	42%	49%	79%	53%	4%	7%	5%
55 & +	28%	11%	25%	68%	80%	69%	4%	9%	5%
<b>EDUCATION</b>									
15 & -	28%	14%	25%	69%	78%	70%	3%	8%	5%
16-20	46%	16%	39%	52%	76%	56%	3%	8%	5%
21 & +	46%	17%	45%	51%	77%	52%	3%	6%	3%
<b>OCCUPATION</b>									
Self-employed	46%	19%	40%	51%	77%	56%	3%	5%	4%
Employee	51%	19%	47%	46%	73%	50%	3%	8%	4%
Manual worker	40%	14%	36%	57%	77%	58%	3%	9%	6%
Without pr.act.	37%	16%	33%	60%	77%	62%	3%	8%	5%
<b>RELIGION</b>									
Christ.	38%	14%	34%	59%	76%	62%	2%	9%	4%
Muslim	32%	16%	35%	67%	79%	65%	0%	5%	1%
Other	46%	19%	46%	49%	77%	49%	5%	4%	5%
Non believer	58%	32%	54%	38%	63%	42%	4%	6%	4%
<b>POLITICAL PROXIMITY</b>									
Left	52%	21%	48%	46%	72%	48%	2%	7%	3%
Right	33%	16%	31%	64%	78%	65%	3%	6%	4%
Centre	39%	17%	37%	57%	79%	59%	4%	4%	4%
Neither left nor right	36%	14%	29%	60%	77%	64%	3%	9%	7%



The authorisation of child adoption by homosexual couples raises noticeable cleavages among the **different socio-demographic categories**:

- First of all, as observed for homosexual marriages, 48% of **women** in the EU are in favour of this authorisation, as opposed to 36% of **men**. The average for women diminishes to 43% for the average of the EU in 2004 (as opposed to 33% of men). In the candidate countries on the other hand, women and men have practically identical opinions with an agreement rate reaching respectively 18% and 16%.
- We can also note that **age** definitely appears to be a discriminating factor in this dimension. The youngest populations are the most open to child adoption by homosexual couples: 54% of respondents in the EU aged 15 to 24 are of this opinion, as opposed to 28% of respondents aged 55 and over. This scenario is observed throughout Europe. It is important to note that in the candidate countries the rate of persons in favour of this idea evolves only from 11% of people aged 55 and over to 25% of younger populations aged 15 to 24.
- As for **religion**, in the current EU as well as in the future EU of 2004, non-believers seem to be the most tolerant (respectively 58% and 55% agree) while Muslims are the most opposed (67% and 65% disagree). Other religious groups seem undecided, while Christians remain more reluctant to accept the authorisation of child adoption by homosexual couples (38% and 34% agree).
- **Political stance** also brings about discrepancies of opinion, except perhaps in the candidate countries where the observed percentages among the different political categories remain quite similar.  
In the current European Union, a slight majority of left-wing supporters (52%) express agreement to the authorisation of child adoption by homosexual couples throughout Europe. Among right-wing supporters, only 33% agree.
- Finally, **higher educated populations** also seem to be more in favour of this issue.





## CONCLUSION

The authorisation of homosexual marriage raises the issue of modifying the core definition of marriage, its primary essence being the complementary dimension of the masculine and feminine sex, as well as the potential dimension of procreation. However, as we've observed, certain countries are already reviewing their legislation in order to adapt to an evolving society. This has of course generated discussions at European and national levels. These debates are all the more heated when raising the issue of children which inevitably leads to fundamental questions.

When associating questions relating to the authorisation of marriage and child adoption, several constant observations can be noted among the general public.

First of all, while Europeans indicate that they are ready to accept widespread authorisation of homosexual marriages, they nevertheless express reluctance concerning child adoption by homosexual couples. Furthermore, in the current European Union, one third of persons in favour of homosexual marriage indicate their opposition to child adoption by a homosexual couple. This tends to further confirm the hesitations expressed by Europeans on this issue.

At the level of each analysed subgroup, today's European Union appears to be more favourable than tomorrow's European Union, and even more favourable still than the candidate countries concerning these two issues. We can also note that citizens in countries having already adapted their legislation show a rate of agreement superior to countries having yet to pass any new measures.

Added to this, several socio-demographic characteristics clearly determine the differences of opinion among Europeans. In fact, women, the younger populations, and highly educated persons are the categories that are most in favour of both the authorisation of homosexual marriage and child adoption by homosexual couples throughout Europe. Furthermore, non-believers as well as left-wing followers tend to also indicate the same opinion.

Debate is currently underway at the European Parliament, but reaching a compromise will not be easy. We can presume that the years to come will be crucial for these issues. Moreover, looking at the differences of opinion observed in the European countries, we could also presume that national measures will be implemented over a very scattered timeline.

