



What makes you a European citizen?

*This is a question we asked to everyone who registered for the Berlin Conference 2010.
Find some of the most interesting answers below!*

“I am a European citizen because I believe in a joint European identity. The problems we face in the EU today are no longer local or national but rather regional and even global.”
(Jesper Hansen, Aabyhoej)

“I am indeed not (yet) a European citizen. But I believe that the place one calls “home” is not merely something you are born with, and that a sense of belonging to a particular place (regardless of citizenship) can be chosen and cultivated, and therefore there is a desire to enrich and defend the chosen homeland. Europe is my home, if not the stamp on my passport, and so I want to care for it.”
(Brina Stinehelfer, Berlin)

“Since the European Union decides over more and more things, we cannot longer ignore the fact that we are - besides belonging to a certain member state - also belonging to Europe (EU) as a whole. I identify myself more and more with Europe than with my home country (Belgium) - which is also struggling with identity issues. I think it is important to know what is going on above the national level. I don't think that there are many citizens of EU-member states are aware of the strength that the EU has today and how it will further grow in the future. How this ‘feeling’ will develop is very interesting.”
(Pieter-Jan Cluyse, Berlin)

“First of all, I am lucky to be born in a generation where such a constellation was made possible: In my passport I am Czech. Raised and educated in Germany, my German is better than my Czech, though French is my preferred language.”
(Vojta Drapal, Berlin)

„Being Northern Irish, I find similar reasons to be European than my fellow German friends. A broken history and sense of distain to the cycle of violence at home has made me more European than British/Irish.”
(Jonathan Fitzsimons, Berlin)

“What makes me a European citizen? Personally, because national citizenship matters less and less and both local and European layers of identity have become more meaningful, philosophically as much as practically.”
(Andreas Karsten, Berlin)



„I simply like being, living and working in Europe a lot. This continent, into whatever form it might be put by definition or shaped, has an unparalleled history, legacy, and is full of self-responsible citizens, languages, opinions and ideas. Europe is not an easy background, but a wonderful idea for all who are interested in developing it for the better. An European citizenship should be a promise and opportunity to fulfil one's ideals.”

(Axel Halling, Berlin)

“To fight for the freedom of each citizen, for the justice to each citizen and for the unity in diversity of European cultures on the basis of the common European history.”

(Robert Henkel, Berlin)

“My mother's nationality makes me a German citizen, however my active identity and my active citizenship is formed through my actions, my words and the ideals/ideas that I subscribe to and support. I identify as European citizen in particular when I am outside of the European Union.”

(Garrettson M. Lena, Berlin)

“As former Canadian Ambassador to Germany and now resident of Berlin, I am always interested in the efforts deployed to keep the European dream alive. It is a dream that is suffering a lot these days for a variety of reasons and as such deserves a multi-faceted approach to bring it together - closer to the citizens and also to develop a real European citizenship that crosses over the old national boundaries.”

(Dubois Paul, Berlin)

“As an American, I cannot become an EU citizen without first receiving Member State citizenship. But I consider myself a European citizen through my political engagement on European issues and interest in Europe's future.”

(Lisa Pettibone, Berlin)

“For me, it is especially important to raise awareness of the fact that being a European citizen means taking responsibilities for further development of the community. It is up to the citizens to make Europe more social and especially to sign out our cultural diversity as a distinctive feature. Only by the engagement of civil society, Europe will live.”

(Haase Sarah, Berlin)

“Born in Germany, and more than 20 years abroad, I realized at some stage during a long-time overseas assignment that the `feeling of belonging` had shifted and now encircled Europe, not just Germany. It was no longer a country and its borders which `defined` but a region on the global map that captured cultural identity `markers` relevant for the defining of `me`.”

(Hans Willmann, Geneva)



“To my mind, a collective European identity that is complementing our national identities and that is based upon our common European heritage and culture is prerequisite for the lasting well-being of the European Union as a political and economical entity.”
(Anne-Cathrin Saure, Berlin)

“Technically and historically, as someone born and raised in the Philippines, a country that has been colonised by the Spaniards for more than 400 years; with a family believed to have Spanish roots, does that qualify me as European? Or is it my investment on getting to know Europe in the past 7 years, working in cultural and diplomatic exchanges? Or is it my European education that would count me in?”
(Vanini Belarmino, Berlin)

“Cherishing and promoting European culture and dialogue as well as European integration, including not only EU states but also the Balkans, Russia etc. as well as engaging in European issues and strengthening European civil society.”
(Daniela Deuber, Berlin)

“I’m a European citizen because my country is at hearth of Europe. I speak different European languages (French, German, Italian and English), eat European food and have friends in whole Europe.”
(Bastien Brodard, Broc)

“Sharing a common set of values that help us to organise society in a way that is fair; and achieving more together than we achieve alone.”
(Jonathan Hill, Brussels)

“To explore our varied interests and cultures intelligently rather than blindly competing against each other.”
(Georgina Turner, Fivizzano, MS)

“I’ve been playing theatre in Holland and France, I worked and studied for four years in Portugal, and I can always come home to Belgium, where contemporary politics keep reassuring me that I’m more European than just Flemish or Belgian. Not only my but our identity is at stake in assessing European citizenship.”
(Charlotte De Kock, Gent)

“My passport”
(Daan Hovens, Göttingen)



“The simple fact of living in Europe, and to have all kinds of non-exclusive ways of belonging here.”

(Ine Pisters, Gent)

“My time abroad made me realize that I am not just a German citizen, but a citizen of Europe. May it be because of my European passport, the fact that I can travel or even move throughout Europe with almost no limitations, or due to the fact that, for the most part, I can pay with the Euro. The reasons for why I see myself as a European are as manifold as Europe itself.”

(Sebastian Kramer, Göttingen)

“I am not sure in which respects something like a European citizenship really exists. But studying in Southeast Asia, I experienced how people there perceived me as being European in the first place, German only in the second.”

(Jannika Kühn, Göttingen)

“I share the same roots.
I share the same culture.
I share the same values.
I share the same ground.
I share the same vision.
I share the same hopes.
I share the same will.

Europe is home.” (Abreu Francisca, Guimarães)

“Born in Madrid, I thought I was Spanish until we moved to the US. There, I found I was German, while others called me European. Returning to Europe, I realized I had the freedom to be a mix... which is why I am a European citizen.”

(Mayte Peters, Hamburg)

„I live in Europe, I speak some European languages, I studied European history, I spent European money :-)”

(Manuela Jäger, Leipzig)

“I think that the most “stable” part of what I can call a “European citizen” is the foundation of our common culture. The future for Europe is sharing all the cultural differences and their local varieties for a better understanding of each other. It's the only way to make it real and “touchable” for people. I think that the national integrity has to be kept and that the European actions should contribute to sharing experiences and offer a richer life.”

(Hanna Zaleski, Brussels)



“Being a citizen of Ukraine which is an integral part of Europe.”
(Kyrylo Bulkin, Kyiv)

“I am a Turkish citizen so the question is what doesn't make me EU citizen?”
(Duygu Aksoy, London)

“Europe is not an idea standing against something else, but the project of gathering all surrounding ideas together to give them free space to grow.”
(Grzegorz Reske, Lublin)

“A shared history, culture, experience: I am nothing if I am not part of something bigger than the nation into which I was accidentally born. That bigger thing can only be Europe.”
(Judith Vidal-Hall, Melton Mowbray)

“My feeling of being a European citizen comes - among others - from the fact that even when I was living in North Africa (15 years) and in North America (17 years) I had a strong sense of my links to Europe – and even if at that time it was not very clear why. I have always been working in activities related to Europe.”
(Infante Claude Olga, Paris)

“Being an European citizen gives unprecedented possibilities of travelling, of living and of working in the country of the Union of our choice to benefit from a harmony even if it is not always perceptible yet and still in construction!”
(Riber Dominique, Paris)

“I can cry when I visit the bronze doors in Hildesheim and when I listen to one of Vivaldi's or Haendel's Cantatas. This has nothing to do about nationalities: this is Europe - we are Europeans.”
(Marie Koefoed-Gouy, Paris)

“Substantially - my soul, formally - my ID”
(Javor Gardev, Sofia)

“That fact that I am. The fact that I breathe, live, and move in Europe. The fact that I say my mind, the fact that I stay silent, the fact that I work here, the fact that I don't. Everything I do or don't do makes me a citizen of Europe, the humanist continent.”
(Balasz Szász, Pécs)



“Roots, culture, education, religion, tradition, laws and rules, history... - life in this part of the world. But do I really feel like a European citizen? What does a European citizenship actually mean? Isn't it just an empty word?”
(Katerina Krausova, Prague)

“Being a citizen of Kosovo, one of the regions physically belonging to Europe since antiquity, but actually striving to become formally part of the European family is quite a challenge to be regarded as an European citizen.”
(Besa Luzha, Prishtina)

“It's not only the geographical situation of my country. It is my culture and my lifestyle that makes my a European citizen, as well as aspirations of my country to become a member of EU.”
(Pranvera Munishi-Morina, Prishtina)

“Formally the fact that I am a citizen of one of the EU's member states. Ideologically my feeling of belonging to an entity that is bigger than my nation state. Having lived for long periods in different European countries, speaking several languages and meeting constantly people from other European countries, makes me feel like a European citizen.”
(Aline Sierp, Siena)

“My understanding for and acceptance of the people who are different from us or have some form of disability makes me a European citizen. I think that accepting the different, trying to integrate them into our local community and being helpful to foreigners, immigrants and asylum seekers makes everybody a respectable EU citizen.”
(Toni Stoykova, Sofia)

“That I take actions which aims at contributing to the future of Europe.”
(Mahir Namur, Istanbul)

“Values, Culture, History and vision of the future”
(Levan Khetaguri, Tbilisi)

“My passport makes it quite clear: I'm citizen of the „European Union“ and the „Republic of Austria“! Any more questions? Of course I love Beethoven, Brahms, Bruckner, Haydn, Mahler, Mozart, Schubert and even Schönberg, but I don't want to miss Andersen, Bach, Canetti, Chopin, Dvorak, Joyce, Liszt, Picasso, Rembrandt, Rubens, Sartre, Shakespeare, Sibelius, Verdi etc. as well!”
(Benedict Weingartner, Wien)



“Born and lived in Geneva, Switzerland until the age of 13 when I moved to southern Spain, I have been raised by a Spanish father and an English mother. I therefore embody three European countries that have historically and still currently shape the European continent. Moreover I feel attached to the European culture, so diverse, rich and distinct to other places in the world.”
(Tomas Navarro Blakemore, Sotogrande)

“What does Europe mean to me? The image of a necklace made by a child in pre-school comes to my mind, little tiny beads of different colors are put together in a never-ending combination to form a necklace. Now let each color represent a nation and the necklace becomes an image of transnational collaboration and perhaps a European project.”
(Ulrika Nilsson, Stockholm)

“An accident of birth. An English father, an Irish mother, living in Holland and sometimes Turkey.”
(Robinson Bernard, Veendam)

“The fact that people in Western Europe still question that.”
(Igor Chilimonczyk, Wroclaw)

“As Croatian, I am still not a European citizen formally, however, by education and cultural background I feel more European than, for example, Balkan. On the other hand, what I really miss in the European concept is a true understanding and love for the European Mediterranean.”
(Sonja Lebos, Zagreb)

„I Am Europe“ by Chilly Gonzales

I'm a dog shaped ashtray
I'm a shrugging moustache wearing a speedo tuxedo
I'm a movie with no plot, written in the back seat of a piss powered taxi
I'm an imperial armpit, sweating Chianti
I'm a toilet with no seat, flushing tradition down
I'm socialist lingerie
I'm diplomatic techno
I'm gay pastry and racist cappuccino
I'm an army on holiday in a guillotine museum
I'm a painting made of hair, on a nudist beach, eating McDonald's
I'm a novel far too long
I'm a sentimental song
I'm a yellow tooth waltzing with wrap around shades on
Who am I?
I am Europe