

# Facts & Figures

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**European borders exist in all shapes and sizes. One can draw lines across cultural, political, economic and religious divides. So what do these borders look like? How clear-cut are they?**

## Crossing economic borders

The EU's *Eastern Partnership* (EaP) was inaugurated on 7 May 2009, with the aim to strengthen the ties between the enlarged EU and its neighbours to the East. The EaP offers Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine a privileged economic and political relationship that builds upon a mutual commitment to common values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, good governance, sustainable development and market economy principles).

As part of this policy, the EU promotes economic reforms aimed at opening the EaP economies to

the outside world. The European Commission's Directorate-General for Statistics, Eurostat, monitors progress on these reforms in yearly reports. A key indicator of the openness of the economy is the amount of trade taking place. This is measured through the average of exports and imports, relative to GDP (%). Prior to the EaP's inauguration we see a decline of this average in all EaP countries. After 2009 there is a clear upward trend. This could indicate that the efforts in the EaP have led to more trade with the EU.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Belarus	62.97	65.28	65.85	57.30	60.77	83.22	78.78
Moldova	68.60	71.40	67.20	55.20	58.90	65.40	64.10
Ukraine	48.05	47.90	50.92	47.21	52.20	57.48	55.10
Armenia	31.35	29.20	27.90	29.25	33.07	35.56	36.99
Azerbaijan	52.60	48.30	44.60	37.37	37.49	40.26	39.65
Georgia	44.94	44.58	43.51	39.34	43.86	45.51	48.11

Table 1 Average of exports and imports, relative to GDP Source Eurostat

## Crossing cultural borders

'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' The New Testament leaves little room for discussion. But not all neighbours are universally loved, particularly not when they are 'different', adhere to different values or come from different cultures. Because of the proximity of the relation people tend to have strong emotions when it comes down to the people living next door. Over 2005-2008 the *World Values Survey* carried out a study asking who people would rather not have as their neighbour. Using these data we can, amongst others, see what stereotypes are common in Europe's neighbouring countries.

Among the most unpopular neighbours we can, unsurprisingly, distinguish drug addicts and heavy drinkers. They are closely followed by homosexuals and people who have AIDS. After that, opinions start to differ. Turks would rather not have an unmarried couple living next to them, Russians tend to avoid immigrants and foreign workers, while Moldovans are not very keen on gypsies. Contrarily, there seems to be a high degree of racial and religious tolerance in these countries, as these factors end up at the bottom of the list.

	Total	Turkey	Ukraine	Russian Fed.	Moldova
Drug addicts	<b>94.2%</b>	24.2%	16.9%	35.9%	17.2%
People of a different race	<b>20.8%</b>	7.6%	2.2%	6.4%	4.7%
People who have AIDS	<b>65.2%</b>	19.8%	9.5%	22.3%	13.6%
Immigrants/foreign workers	<b>27.1%</b>	7.8%	3.5%	12.2%	3.7%
Homosexuals	<b>72.2%</b>	22.3%	10.9%	25.2%	13.8%
People of a different religion	<b>21.8%</b>	8.5%	2.4%	6.0%	5.0%
Heavy drinkers	<b>86.6%</b>	21.5%	15.3%	33.9%	15.9%
Unmarried couples living together	<b>23.0%</b>	16.5%	1.7%	1.6%	3.3%
People who speak a different language	<b>17.1%</b>	6.4%	2.3%	5.2%	3.1%
Gypsies	<b>11.6%</b>	–	–	–	11.6%

Table 2 People that respondent would not like to have as neighbour Source Values Surveys Databank

## Crossing geographical borders

The EU's geographical borders are probably the most tangible form of a 'European border'. EU citizens will rarely experience this as an obstacle. They are free to leave and enter whenever they like; particularly as of 1995 (Schengen agreement). Amongst other groups this border is experienced differently. One of these groups is migrants. Immigration policies and border controls have made it increasingly difficult for this group to enter 'Fortress Europe'.

Principally responsible for the coordination of the EU's border security efforts is the EU agency Frontex. Frontex coordinates the EU's border controls along 42.673 km of sea borders and

7.721 km of land borders. But despite its efforts there are still people who manage to enter without permission. In Frontex' Annual Risk Analysis we can see where most illegal border crossings took place.

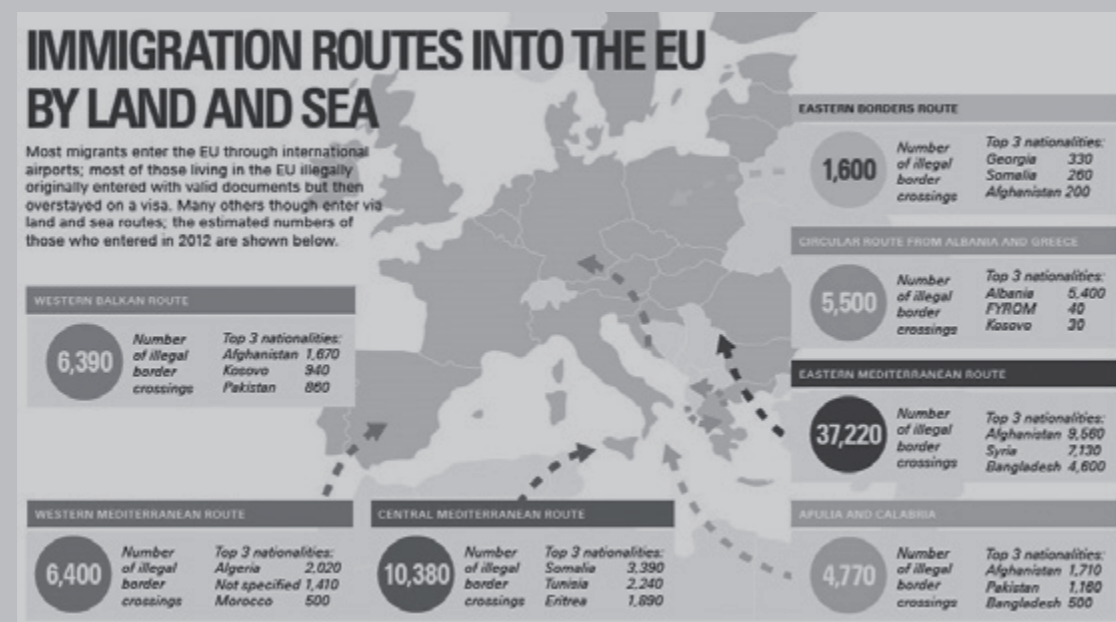


Figure 1 Immigration routes into the EU by land and sea

Source [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Annual\\_Risk\\_Analysis\\_2013.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annual_Risk_Analysis_2013.pdf) (p.65)

## Crossing religious borders

The reluctance of various European citizens and politicians to allow Turkey to join the EU often has (implicitly and explicitly) to do with the non-Christian heritage of that predominantly Muslim country. In this view, the European Union is based on a common identity and history determined by its descent from a Western Christian (protestant/catholic) tradition. The European border is drawn where the influence of this tradition is no longer dominant. This results in two axes: 1) a divide between the Western Christian and Eastern Orthodox tradition and 2) a divide between Christianity and Islam. The following map shows, however, that it is difficult to distinguish

clean-cut border lines based on religion.

In Greece, the cradle of Europe's democratic lineage, 98% of the population adheres to Eastern Orthodox Christianity. In other 'European' countries like Bosnia (Muslim 40%, Orthodox 31%, Roman Catholic 15%) and Albania (Muslim 70%, Albanian Orthodox 20%, Roman Catholic 10%) we can see that Islam is the dominant religion. When we compare Albania to Lebanon (Muslim 59.7%, combined Christian 39%) we can see that Lebanon has relatively more Christians and fewer Muslims. Would this make Lebanon more 'European' than Albania?



Figure 2 Dominant religious traditions across Europe Source CIA World Factbook