

# immigration and pro-immigrant attitudes in 34 EU and non-EU countries between 2002-2012\*

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## Abstract

This paper examines trends in public opinion about immigration and immigrants in 34 European Union (EU) and non-EU countries using data from the European Social Survey (2002-2012). Attitudinal developments across countries are examined against the background of member states' resistance to increasing EU harmonization of immigration and immigrant policies. The study shows that EU membership has had a positive effect on support for immigration and on pro-immigrant attitudes in this time period. This positive effect of the EU even appears to be increasing for support for immigration, though not for pro-immigrant attitudes. The results also show that while support for immigration is diverging significantly less in EU countries than in non-EU countries, there is no evidence of convergence of attitudes. There is also no evidence for convergence of pro-immigrant attitudes in EU countries, although these attitudes are not diverging, as they are in non-EU countries. The paper provides support for the positive influence of the EU on immigration/immigrant attitudes. The findings of an absence of convergence of both attitudes and the divergence of immigration support, however, suggest that full harmonization of immigration policies may be met with even greater resistance in the future than it is now.

**Word Count:** 197

**Keywords:** support for immigration, pro-immigrant attitudes, EU harmonization, divergence of public opinion

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