



## EUROPEAN IDENTITY AND MULTILINGUALISM

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**Abstract/Povzetek** In the official documents that regulate certain segments of education in Croatia, the terms Europe and European (identity) appear. In this paper the authors analyse the concept of European identity and reach the conclusion that it has not been unambiguously defined. The term European identity is closely connected within the European Union with multilingualism. Through a policy of multilingualism, the European Union strives to preserve language diversity in Europe. The authors of this paper start from the question of whether foreign language learning increases the feeling of being connected to Europe and present the results of a study that was conducted at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb in 2018/19.

### Evropska identiteta in večjezičnost

Uradni dokumenti, ki urejajo nekatere segmente izobraževanja v hrvaških šolah, vključujejo izraza Evropa in evropska, torej sintagmo evropske identitete. V prispevku avtorji analizirajo koncept evropske identitete in sklenejo da kljub številnim poskusom v znanstveni literaturi ni enotno opredeljen. Hkrati je večjezičnost trdno povezana s pojmom evropske identitete znotraj Evropske unije. S politiko večjezičnosti želi Evropska unija ohraniti jezikovno raznolikost v Evropi in spodbuditi učenje tujih jezikov. Avtorji tega prispevka začnejo z vprašanjem, ali učenje tujega jezika krepi tudi občutek povezanosti z Evropo, in predstavljajo rezultate raziskave, opravljene na Učiteljski fakulteti v Zagrebu v letu 2018/19.

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## Introduction

### *European identity in the subject curricula in The Republic of Croatia*

The terms Europe and European, as well as the question of European identity, have found their way into Croatian schools. In the Croatian National Standard for Primary School Education, it is stated that students should be prepared to live according to... “civil morality, general cultural and civilisation values that are a part of national and European tradition” (The Croatian National Standard for Primary School Education, 2008, 10), and in the curriculum for Civic Education, the term European identity is used. According to this curriculum (2012, 11), class and subject teachers have the obligation to promote democratic values using active and cooperative learning and teaching methods; in order to do that, their competences should include general professional knowledge and skills (pedagogical, developmental psychological, sociological, normative legal), vocational knowledge and skills in the area of civic education, learning and teaching processes that lead to developing active and responsible civil behaviour, learning and teaching civic education methods and methods of evaluating and self-evaluating in civic education. During graduate education and their professional development, teachers should acquire a range of competences in these areas, and one of them involving vocational knowledge and skills in the civic education area is acquiring “...knowledge about what is personal, home, homeland, European and global identity, how to develop identity and interculturality, what is intercultural dialogue and how it is applied” (The curriculum for Civic Education 2012, 12). The expression identity is found in the Draft of the National Curriculum for the foreign language subjects, e.g. English and German, in which it is pointed out that by achieving educational goals within the domain of intercultural communication competence, a student becomes capable of “... efficient and contextually appropriate communication with native and non-native English language speakers which leads to mutual satisfaction on the part of communicators of different cultural identities” (National Curriculum for English language – Proposal, 2016, 7), i. e. that a student can “... efficiently and appropriately regarding the context communicate with native and non-native German language speakers, which leads to mutual satisfaction on the part of communicators of different cultural identities” (National Curriculum for German language – Proposal, 2016, 8). Furthermore, “developing communicative language competence as a process of expressing one’s identity and understanding the identity of one’s partner

in communication, both the socialisation process and student's personal development on the whole is encouraged” (ibid.).

However, nowhere in these documents is the term European identity precisely defined. It will, therefore, be the aim of this paper to terminologically determine this notion and try to answer the question of what precisely it implies, i. e. if the term can be unambiguously defined. After that, the language policy of the European Union will be analysed, a policy which connects the term European identity closely to language diversity. In the second part of the paper, the results of the study conducted among students from the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb will be presented and analysed. Among other things, the research is about the connection between learning, i. e. studying foreign languages as part of getting a degree, and the self-perception of the examinees as Europeans, i. e. their sense of being connected to Europe.

#### *European identity – terminological determination*

In discussing European identity, one encounters the necessity of defining the term. In the process, the phrase *European identity* needs to be broken into its components, and the starting point would be the term *European*, i. e. *Europe*. The answer to the question of what Europe is, cannot be unambiguous. From the point of view of geography, it is debatable how far to the East, i. e. Southeast Europe, it stretches. There is also the historical point of view, and so the phrase “returning to Europe” was used in a number of post-socialist countries towards the end of the eighties, which would imply that all those countries, having undergone a change in their political system, became once again part of Europe after having been seen as outsiders for some time. Is the term Europe today identical to the term European Union? Are Turkey and Russia, for example, European countries, partially so, or not European at all? On the other hand, what is the meaning of identity? Kalanj explains that, if we understand identity /.../ as an empty word or conceptual construct which can hold different concrete content that gives it its meaning, then its systematic policy is not really needed. ...If we understand identity in another typical way, as essential and determining form or the quintessence of individual and collective existence, as the beginning and destiny, then the identity policy becomes the most important policy, a policy so communitarian that it can coexist with others, if it acknowledges them, only as with different communities (Kalanj, 2010, 130).

According to Lepsius, a collective identity is formed when “a group of individuals identifies itself with the same objects and is at the same time aware of their collectiveness” (Lepsius, 1997, 994). If we consider that not even geographical borders are indisputable, and that Europe abounds with various languages, cultures, religions and political systems, then it is clear why the term *collective* is so complex. Sylke Nissen (2004) concludes, based on her estimates of yearly Eurobarometer surveys that are carried out for the European Commission, that European identity facilitates a cognitive and affective approach. The feeling of collectiveness is based on empathy, undergoes changes and cannot be a strong foundation for a reliable European policy. A much stronger adherence to Europe is the result of favourable materialistic circumstances, to the extent that it becomes more difficult to create European solidarity. Laffan (2001) distinguishes two dimensions in European identity policy in his deliberations about the formal dimension of the European Union policy, about its regulatory, normative and cognitive support. The first is normative political, and the second cognitive culturological (Laffan, 2001). Both dimensions allow citizens of the European Union to keep their national identity and feel European at the same time. The political character of the European identity arises from the provisions of the Treaty on European Union (2016), i. e. the values that are defined therein. The signatory countries confirm in the Preamble “their attachment to the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and of the rule of law”. These central aspects of the political identity of the Union are complemented by the values stated in Article 2:

The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.

Respecting these values is, according to Article 49, a precondition for applying for membership in the European Union. These values are closely connected to the cultural aspect, since they are, as stated in the Preamble, inspired by the “cultural, religious and humanistic heritage of Europe, which is the source of universal values of the human race that are inviolable and unalienable, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law.” The second dimension refers to the symbols, the best known of which are the flag, the national anthem and the common currency, the euro, which

are intended to clearly and concretely represent European values. This dimension addresses the emotional side of European citizens and aims at strengthening their feeling of belonging to the same community. Däuble (2004) warns that values like freedom, democracy and tolerance, are too universal to be clearly defining of European identity, and Zimmermann (2010) points out that the concept of European identity in the European Union appears as a “meta-identity” which encompasses different ideas of the Member States about identity, and at the same time avoids competition with national ideas about identity. Both European and national identities can be considered collective identities, and thus inclusive of all forms of social identity that refer to larger social groups. Collective identities are changeable; their intensity varies depending on the age, experience and social context, but also on the situation. Social context significantly affects the formation of collective identity (McGuire, McGuire & Cheever, 1986). Identities are not static; they depend on context and accordingly can be shaped to a certain extent. Even though there are, to be sure, sensitive stages in the process of an individual’s socialisation in which certain aspects of identity are formed, identity formation is never completed (Grundmann, 1999). It must be stated, at the same time, that there are stable segments within variable social identities (Jamieson, 2002). Research regarding the identity of the Croatian society has been conducted (Cifrić and Nikodem, 2007; Cifrić, 2008). Besides these authors, many others in Croatia and beyond have dealt with the concept of European identity (Vrcan, 2005; Pavić, 2009; Cerutti, 2001; Tibbi, 2002; Dahrendorf, 2003; Meyer, 2004 et al.), but they still do not offer the same answers to the question of what constitutes Europe and European identity. Some authors claim that the term identity is too broad in the social sciences because it is used too often (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, 9); thus, they point out that it has “as many different meanings as there are authors that are using it” (Pollak, 1998, 33). We should remember the words of the famous Swiss philologist Karl Schmid that “it is quite deceptive to believe that the term Europe and European has the same or at least similar meaning everywhere; every nation understands the term Europe in the way that suits it best” (Schmid, 1990, 18).

One can therefore conclude that the term identity often has different, in some elements even completely opposite, meanings. Despite its popularity and (or because of) its relevance, and since it is so complex and diverse, there is no single definition of European identity that would contain numerous varieties of its meaning. At the same time, the official position of the European Union is that languages are essential

components of European identity, and so it is necessary to address the language policy of the European Union.

*Language diversity as an element in European identity within the European Union*

Within the European Union, the term European identity is closely connected to language diversity. If we look back at documents that were created in European countries, and in which European identity is explicitly mentioned, we find the *Document on the European Identity Published by the Nine Foreign Ministers* (Bulletin of the European Communities, 1973), which was created in Copenhagen in December 1973. In the *Document on the European Identity*, nine Member States of the European Union explained why it was necessary to make that document, since it would define their relations with other countries. They decided "...to define the European Identity with the dynamic nature of the Community in mind" (ibid.). One other document should be mentioned and that is the *Charter of European Identity*. In March 1994, the Czech president Václav Havel made a speech in the European Parliament in which he supported the idea of creating a *Charter* that would "clearly define the ideas that are the foundation of the European Union, its purpose and the values to which it aspires..." (www.europa-union.de). The initiative was started by *Europa-Union Deutschland*, the German section of the Union of European Federalists, and it was accepted at their 41<sup>st</sup> congress in Lübeck in October 1995. The European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism, Ján Figel, stated in 2005, as he was announcing a new official EU web portal, that "language diversity is the central element of the European identity" (European Commission, Press release Database, 2005). The fact is that the official policy of the European Union insists on multilingualism and encourages foreign language learning. The multilingualism policy of the EU has two dimensions: a tendency to protect great European linguistic diversity and the goal of fostering foreign language learning. Encouraging multilingualism does not mean suppression of mother tongues in countries with smaller populations, but their recognition. However, it also requires clever language policy in the sense of a well-supported and planned introduction of foreign language learning into the education system (Velički, 2007). All the languages in the European Union are formally equal in status, although there is a language hierarchy, and there are working languages that are used to facilitate everyday communication. Unlike most national countries, the European Union does not aspire to language homogenisation and encouraging the use a single language.

However, English is undoubtedly the language that the citizens of the European Union use for communication, and its dominance in the European Union has been growing significantly ever since, in the period from 2004 to 2007, twelve countries from Eastern and Central Europe joined the EU and their languages became official languages of the EU (Swaan, 2007). The fact that these countries entered the EU did not increase the number of people whose mother tongue is English; however, the number of people who, apart from English, not spoke no other language did grow, which is well expressed in the following conclusion: “The more languages, the more English” (Swaan, 2001, 144). English would, as the *Lingua franca* of united Europe, have its advantages, positively affecting geographical mobility and resulting in a better balance in the area of demand and supply of labour, in consequence positively affecting the economy (Limbach & Gerhards, 2012). However, some are against this idea, for reasons we can understand, stating that English would, as *Lingua franca*, diminish the importance of not only other languages but also other cultures, because it would result in the dominance of Anglo-American values, since there is a strong connection between a language and a world view. The idea of interdependence between a language and a world view can be traced back to one of the most important representatives of Weimar Classicism in Germany, Johann Gottfried Herder and his *Treatise on the Origin of Language*, i.e. his deliberations on the interdependence of languages, way of thinking and the world and on opening the world through language. Here, one should consider the words of one of the most important linguists and philosophers of language, Wilhelm von Humboldt’s, that language is an expression of different mind-sets, i.e. that every language is a “worldview” (Humboldt, 1973, 21). Humboldt saw the abundance of languages as a great wealth, and since each language in its own way articulates the experience of the world and represents a certain view of the world, by learning foreign languages we also learn other views of the world. No language has an advantage over others, and each adapts, through long-term historical interaction, to the needs of its users. To summarise, the language policy of the EU is based on respect for language diversity in all the member states, encouraging teaching and learning of foreign languages and mobility for all its citizens. Knowing foreign languages is considered an important factor that significantly increases education and employment opportunities. The question is, however, if learning or studying foreign languages increases the feeling of being a part of Europe, i.e. to what extent speaking foreign languages and spending time abroad affect the formation of a European identity or self-perceptas being European. This question was central to the research that was done among

students from the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb 2018/19. At the Faculty of Teacher Education there is an Integrated Undergraduate and Graduate University program in Primary Teacher Education with foreign languages (German or English language), which lasts five years and the completion of which yields 300 ECTS points. The relation between the feeling of being a part of Europe and knowledge of foreign languages was, therefore, the focus of the research, since knowledge of foreign languages constitutes a key resource in the process of identity formation. Languages make possible communication, personal contacts and social identification (Byram and Planet, 2000). The results of this study are described in detail in the following part of the paper.

*The results of the study conducted at the Faculty of Teacher Education in 2018/2019*

*The goal of the research*

The goal of the research was to examine the attitudes of students at the Faculty of Teacher Education concerning their sense of belonging to Europe and to establish the extent to which knowing foreign languages, study and other kinds of travel are connected to the self-perception of the examinees as being European. In view of this research goal, the following tasks were defined:

P1) To establish to what extent students at the Faculty of Teacher Education feel like Europeans and as belonging to Europe;

P2) To establish to what extent the following factors influence students' perceptions: the number of languages they have learned, self-estimate of their language knowledge, linguistic study, the number of foreign countries they have visited, living in a foreign country for longer than one month continuously, and the self-estimate concerning to what extent they feel like Croats.

The following hypotheses were developed in accordance with the research problems:

H1) Students at the Faculty of Teacher Education mostly feel like Europeans but not closely connected to Europe.



H2) Learning more than one language in school influences in a positive way the students' perception of themselves as European citizens.

H3) Living in a foreign country for longer than one month continuously influences students' perception of themselves as European citizens.

H4) Students in the University Study program for Primary Teacher Education with foreign languages (German or English) consider themselves Europeans to a greater extent than other students.

### *Sample*

Several students from the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb participated in the study (N = 288). There were 12 (4.2%) male students and 276 (95.8%) female students. If we consider the type of study, 232 of the examinees (80.6%) were from the Department of Teacher Education Studies and 53 (18.4%) from the Department of Preschool Education Studies. Since classes take place in the Zagreb Central Branch, and in the Čakovec and Petrinja Branches, 158 (54.9%) of the students were from the Central Branch in Zagreb, 76 (26.4%) from the Petrinja and 53 (18.4%) from the Čakovec Branch.

### *Research instrument and procedure*

The data was collected using a paper-and-pencil questionnaire. The first part of the questionnaire referred to the study year, gender, department and place of study. In the second part the examinees were asked the following questions: How connected to Europe do you feel? To what extent do you feel European? (both questions on a Likert scale of five degrees, from 1 = the least to 5 = the most); How many foreign languages have you learned? Which foreign languages have you learned? Evaluate your knowledge of the foreign languages that you have learned, i. e. are still learning (on a scale of five degrees, from 1 = the worst to 5 = the best); How many foreign countries have you visited? (up to 3, 4 – 6, more than 6); Have you spent more than one month continuously in a foreign country? (yes/no). Answering the questionnaire was completely voluntary and anonymous, and participants could at any time refrain from filling it out.

## Results

The first goal of the research was to establish the extent to which students from the Faculty of Teacher Education feel European and how strongly connected to Europe they feel. Through descriptive analysis, it was established that from the total number of examinees, 75 (26%) of them feel little or no connection to Europe, whereas almost the same number (74 participants i. e. 25.7%) feel strongly or very strongly connected to Europe. Most participants, 139 (48.3%) circled the medium value (see Table 1). Most students feel neither connected nor unconnected to Europe, which is supported by the arithmetic average value ( $M = 3$ ) and median ( $M = 3$ ).

Table 1: How connected to Europe do you feel?

	Frequency	Percentage
1 I don't feel at all connected	13	4.5
2 I don't feel connected	62	21.5
3 I feel neither connected nor unconnected	139	48.3
4 I feel strongly connected	61	21.2
5 I feel very strongly connected	13	4.5
Total	288	100.0

Asked how European they feel, 71 examinees (24.7%) say they do not feel European at all or only to a very small extent, whereas 108 examinees (64.9%) feel strongly or very strongly European. As in the previous question, most students (109 i. e. 37.8%) circled the medium value (see Table 2). The medium value in this question is 3.18 ( $M = 3.18$ ), and the median ( $M = 3$ ), which means that most students feel neither European nor non-European.

Table 2: To what extent do you feel European?

	Frequency	Percent
1 I don't feel at all European	14	4.9
2 I don't feel European	57	19.8
3 I feel neither European nor non - European	109	37.8
4 I feel strongly European	78	27.1
5 I feel very strongly European	30	10.4
Total	288	100.0

These results partly confirm the first hypothesis because most students at the Faculty of Teacher Education neither feel nor do not feel European, and most of them feel neither connected nor unconnected to Europe.

Through descriptive data analysis, it was established that most students ( $N = 135$ ) have studied three languages, 133 of them have studied two languages and only 13 examinees one foreign language. Almost all examinees (285 i.e. 99%) studied English, followed by German, which 236 participants studied (81.9%). A significantly smaller number of students reported having studied other languages: 86 (29.9%) Italian, 25 (8.7%) French, and 20 (6.9%) Spanish. Significant differences were found when self-evaluating knowledge of languages that the participants studied, and we singled out the results concerning the two languages that most examinees had studied: English and German. When asked to evaluate their foreign language knowledge, 89 participants evaluated their knowledge of English as very good, whereas only 11 participants of the 236 that had studied German (see Tables 3 and 4) evaluate their knowledge of German the same way. Participants evaluate their knowledge of English on average using a mark of 4 ( $M = 4$ ), i. e. very good, and their knowledge of German using 2.71 ( $M = 2.71$ ), i.e. neither good nor bad, with a tendency towards insufficient knowledge. The Pearson's correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive correlation in the perception of oneself as European ( $r = 0.048$ ,  $p > 0,01$ ) and being connected to Europe ( $r = 0.000$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ) and the self-evaluation of knowledge of English; i.e., students who evaluate themselves as more competent in their knowledge of English also feel more European and more connected to Europe, but this correlation is not statistically significant. Interestingly, there is a positive correlation in the self-evaluation of the knowledge of German and the assessment of the extent to which one feels European ( $r = 0.074$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ), and a negative correlation between self-evaluation of knowledge of German and feeling connected to Europe ( $r = -0.059$ ,  $p > 0.01$ ), but these differences are not statistically significant.

Table 3: Evaluate your knowledge of a foreign language – English

	Frequency	Percentage
1 very poor	2	0.7
2 poor	7	2.4
3 neither good nor bad	68	23.6
4 very good	119	41.3
5 excellent	89	30.9
Total	285	99.0
Missing	3	1.0
Total	288	100.0

Table 4: Evaluate your knowledge of a foreign language – German

	Frequency	Percent
1 very poor	23	8.0
2 poor	79	27.4
3 neither good nor bad	88	30.6
4 very good	35	12.2
5 excellent	11	3.8
Total	236	81.9
Missing	52	18.1
Total	288	100.0

Another goal of the research was to establish whether there was a correlation between the number of languages that students have studied and their self-perception as European citizens and their sense of being connected to Europe. The results show a positive correlation, i. e. that students who have learned more languages feel more European ( $r = 0.038$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) and more connected to Europe ( $r = 0.103$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), but this correlation is not statistically significant (see Table 5).

Table 5: The correlation between feeling connected to Europe and feeling European and the number of languages learned

Questions (N = 288)	Pearson Correlation (r)
How connected to Europe do you feel?	0.103
To what extent do you feel European?	0.080
	0.038
	0.520

From the total number of participants 35 (12.2%) have lived in a foreign country for longer than one month continuously, mostly in German speaking countries (in

Germany 13, and in Austria 5). With regard to the countries they have visited, more than 40% of participants have visited at least four countries (see Table 6). The Pearson's correlation coefficient shows that there is a positive correlation between feeling connected to Europe and feeling European if a student has lived abroad continuously, and if he/she has visited several foreign countries ( $p > 0.01$ ).

Table 6: The number of countries you have visited

The number of countries	Frequency	Percentage
to 3	55	19.1
4 - 6	118	41.0
> 6	114	39.6
Total	287	99.7
Missing	1	.3
Total	288	100.0

The question to what extent students from the Faculty of Teacher Education feel like Croats, was also addressed in the research, and the results show that 84.4% of students feel or strongly feel like Croats. However, 15.6% of study participants belonged to other national minorities: Serbian (1%), Hungarian (1.6%) and Czech (13%). Since this constitutes a very small proportion, the difference regarding the minorities to which students belong was not tested. However, the Pearson's correlation coefficient shows a positive and statistically relevant correlation between feeling like a Croat and the feeling of being connected to Europe ( $p > 0.01$ ) and the self-perception of students as Europeans ( $p < 0.01$ ), which means that the more the students feel like Croats, the more they feel like Europeans, i.e. the more connected to Europe they feel.

The results show that the second hypothesis can be accepted to a certain degree because all students have studied English, followed by German, whereas only a small number studied other languages as well. On the other hand, even though it was expected that students would estimate their knowledge as average, there is a significant difference in their evaluation of their knowledge of English and German, since they use noticeably lower marks to describe their knowledge of German. There is no statistically significant difference between perceiving themselves as Europeans and feeling connected to Europe if we consider students who have lived abroad for some time, even though they feel more connected to Europe and feel more like European citizens. Because of that, the third hypothesis was not corroborated. A positive correlation can also be established between the number of languages that

the examinees have studied and their feeling of being connected to Europe, i.e. perceiving themselves as Europeans, but this correlation is not statistically significant.

Since at the Faculty of Teacher Education there is an Integrated Undergraduate and Graduate University Study program for Primary Teacher Education with foreign languages (German or English language), which lasts five years and the completion of which yields 300 ECTS points, the question arose to what extent students of English and German felt European, i.e. how strongly connected to Europe they felt or, in other words, if there was a statistically significant difference depending on whether the students had studied a foreign language or not. The t-test shows that there is no significant difference (see Table 7) when it comes to students' answers to the question about the extent to which they feel European and how strongly connected to Europe they feel between students who study English and German and other students ( $p > 0.01$ ,  $df = 231$ ).

Table 7: The results of the t-test – the difference in self-perception of students as Europeans and their sense of being connected to Europe regarding the type of study

	Study field	N	t	df	Sig
How connected to Europe do you feel?	English and German	62	0.802	231	0.971
	other types of study	171	0.855		
To what extent do you feel European?	English and German	62	1.100	231	0.514
	other types of study	171	1.174		

Moreover, even though there are differences in the perception of themselves as Europeans and the feeling of being connected to Europe regarding students of Primary Teacher Education with modules and Primary Teacher Education with English or German, that difference is not significant. The fourth hypothesis has not therefore been corroborated.

## Discussion and conclusion

The terms *Europe* and *European*, as well as *European identity* are found in the official documents that regulate certain segments of education in Croatian schools, among which one should emphasise those referring to foreign language learning and civic education. At the same time, the term *European identity*, despite numerous attempts

in the academic literature, has not been clearly defined. Primary and secondary school teachers should, in the course of their education, acquire a wide array of competences in and knowledge about what is, among other things, European identity, so the question remains, whether this is a realistic goal, especially if we consider the complexity of the term. The term *European identity* is, within the European Union, closely connected to language diversity and multilingualism; therefore, it was the aim of this study conducted at the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb to examine to what extent future teachers feel European, i.e. how connected they feel to Europe in relation to their knowledge of foreign languages. It has been shown that most participants neither feel nor do not feel connected to Europe; i.e. they feel neither European, nor non-European. One possible reason for such indecisiveness could be ignorance, i.e. being inadequately informed about the European Union, the European integration process and about established benefits that are the foundation of the European Union, basic principles for democratic collaboration based on the rule of law, cohesive policy of the European Union and various EU institutions and their legal power. An important segment of point of view is the cognitive component, and these participants, unless they have objective knowledge, do not have a defined attitude towards it. Previous research, for instance about democratic competences of future teachers and preschool teachers (Velički and Šenjug, 2010), i. e. about their knowledge of European institutions (Velički, 2018), showed that they are insufficiently informed when it comes to the questions that formed the focus of the research. The results of the study show that most students from the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb have studied three foreign languages, and only thirteen just one foreign language. Almost all of them have studied English, followed by German in second place. Since the participants come from the north-western part of Croatia and not from, e.g., Istria or Dalmatia, it is not surprising that German is in second position and that Italian is studied only rarely. Most participants have not only learned English but also evaluate their knowledge of it as very good, much better than their knowledge of German is evaluated. Moreover, it is interesting that in the research about self-evaluation of the mother tongue knowledge, i.e., of Croatian, which was conducted in 2016, the participants were also students from the Faculty of Teacher Education, who estimated their knowledge of Croatian with a mark of 3.5 (Aladrović Slovaček and Čosić, 2017). A positive correlation has been observed, even though not a statistically significant one, between feeling European and the sense of belonging to Europe and knowledge of English, so that the better their knowledge of English,

the more the participants feel connected to Europe. There is also a positive correlation between self-evaluation of the knowledge of German and feeling European. The results also show a positive correlation, i.e. that participants who have studied more languages feel more European and more connected to Europe, but this correlation is also not statistically significant. Feeling connected to Europe and self-perception of oneself as European, when we consider students from the Faculty of Teacher Education, is positively correlated with having lived abroad continuously and having visited several foreign countries. If we consider the examinees who study English and German, whereby the study includes not just intensive linguistic study but also learning about the cultural factors of English, and those pertaining to German speaking countries, the t-test shows that there is no statistically significant difference in answers to the questions to what extent the participants feel European and how connected they feel to Europe between them and other students ( $p > 0.01$ ,  $df = 231$ ). Nevertheless, although for most questions there were no statistically significant differences, it can be concluded that learning foreign languages and continuous living in foreign countries does exert a positive influence on participants' feeling of being European and being connected to Europe. It could be pointed out in this context that the number of students from the Faculty of Teacher Education in Zagreb that do an Erasmus exchange to study abroad has multiplied in the last five years. Therefore, one should embrace EU programmes like Erasmus, the goal of which is to promote foreign language learning and language diversity, since these are crucial factors that can increase students' feeling of belonging to Europe. Apart from that, obligatory learning of two foreign languages in Croatian schools, which still has not been implemented in Croatia despite the recommendations of the European Commission, would also positively influence feelings of connection to Europe. We would extend the obligation to learn two foreign languages to teacher education faculties at least, since we strongly support the statement that "the way teachers understand Europe directly influences students' understanding of Europe" (Eberstadt and Kuznetsov, 2008, 165). For this reason, we should be increasingly attentive to foreign languages when it comes to educating future teachers.



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