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Monday 16 April, 2023

To whom it may concern,

The following is a formal request for collaboration in my request to share a questionnaire (online) with your students.

### ***Abstract***

This investigation aims to understand—in detail—the relationship between the length of time spent abroad and the strength of European identity, while including other factors that might be important, such as the quality of the time abroad. By quality, I mean the degree to which the processes of identity formation that are expected to take place while abroad actually take place. The population of focus are mobile students. Student mobility has been found to foster European identity amid its participants. However, the relationship between the length of time abroad and the strength of the subsequently developed European identity has not been researched. The underlying objective is to better understand what factors prompt European identity formation in order to better tailor and design exchange programmes.

### ***Population of interest***

These are mobile students—including undergraduate, master's, and PhD students—that is students that have studied or are studying in another EU country which is not their own (i.e., where they have not been born or hold citizenship). They are not identified directly by the researcher but rather by the teachers and administrative staff in universities that share the questionnaire. There are exclusion criteria: the respondent must be (or have been) a university student; the student must be mobile or have been in the past; the respondent, if graduated already, must not have graduated over 3 years ago.

Nonetheless, the questionnaire is designed to be shared with all students to avoid having to pre-select respondents. Given that it may be very difficult to pre-differentiate mobile students from non-mobile students before sending out the questionnaire, the questionnaire is set up to finish right away if the respondent is not, or has not been, mobile (to save their time).

### ***Privacy concerns***

The questionnaire is online, anonymous, and accessible in both English and the language of origin of the country being surveyed. Participation is voluntary. There are no negative consequences for respondents if they decide not to take part in this study. They can withdraw from the survey at any time by closing the browser. However, as the survey is anonymous, once they have submitted an answer, it will not be possible to withdraw it from the study. The investigator will act as the data controller for this investigation. This means that the investigator is responsible for looking after the information and using it properly. No identifiable personal information will be collected, so study participation will be anonymous. All information will be safeguarded (users are asked to sign a generic, end-user license agreement in order to access data) in a Harvard Dataverse repository.

### ***Data analysis***

The study is quantitative and qualitative, combining survey responses with interviews and therefore, the research design entails a mixed-methods approach based on Lieberman's 'nested analysis.'

The data collected through the questionnaire will be used in modelled quantitative analysis with the objective of corroborating or discarding the proposed hypotheses. The results will first be presented as an MSc thesis project at the European Institute, LSE, and later be sent to academic journals for publication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Marcos Echevarria**

**MSc student at the EI, LSE**

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