The roots of the European identity are historical, cultural, artistic and finally legally and political, not purely geographical. It has been said that barbarism and brutality during the first half of the twentieth century have been the main factors to produce and detonate the definitive construction of the European identity.

The European identity is shaped throughout the ages of wars among European territories and States, it comes from the political philosophy and mythology of the Ancient Greek towards the Enlightenment and it is until the moment the most approximate realization of the Kantian ideal of perpetual peace.

The EU has adopted symbols in order to involucrate citizens not only economically or politically but also in an emotive and affective way: its flag, a circle with 12 golden yellow stars on a blue background (which is shared with the Council of Europe), the European anthem (“The Ode to Joy”, 4th movement Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9) and

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1 In the eighth century, the name of the Greek mythological character Europa was ecclesiastically used for Charlemagne’s Carolingian Empire. The name was used as a geographical term also by Ancient Greek cartographers such as Strabo, but it was the eighth century usages which ultimately lead to it being adopted as the geographical name of the entire continent, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbols_of_Europe
the Europe Day (9 May in honor to the date of the “Schuman Declaration” adopted on 9 May 1950).

The EU Common Passport, the Euro (currency) or the common driving license contribute to the ordinary life familiarity with Europe. The European identity is not incompatible or antagonist with national identities or popular cultures despite the fact it is perceived by populist, especially with the widespread effects of the financial crisis since 2008, as an artificial result of the bourgeois elite developments. This perception is far from the undeniable reality that demos even national demos and peoples in Europe emerged in the political sphere as subjects in the late nineteenth and twentieth as a result of democratic reformers and class struggles which lead to marginalized minorities to be respected.

A shared political culture of democracy, rule of law and prosecution of social justice is precisely one of the most fundamental pillars of European identity in a broad sense\(^2\). No doubt that the extraordinary literary wealth the European continent has forged along centuries has been possible thanks to what has been called a “remarkable network of transfrontier cultural admiration and influence”: Virgil, Homer, Dante Alighieri, Petrarch, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Goethe, Proust, Kafka…\(^3\).

The most tangible and significant pillar of European identity nowadays is the Citizenship of the EU. It was introduced with the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, with the purpose to involucrate with a political status in the European construction every single national of the Member States.

\(^2\) See David Held and Kyle McNally, Europe, the EU and European identity, available in: [http://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/david-held-kyle-mcnally/europe-eu-and-european-identity](http://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/david-held-kyle-mcnally/europe-eu-and-european-identity) The results of the Eurobarometer in 2009 showed that: “When asked to define the two most important elements that make up a ‘European’ identity, respondents select ‘democratic values’ (41%) above all other options. Europeans rate ‘geography’ as the next most defining feature of a European identity (25%) Two other features tie for third place; ‘common history’ and ‘a high level of social protection’ (both 24%), followed by a ‘common culture’ (23%). ‘Entrepreneurship’ is rated among the least important elements listed (11%). The last of the options rated is a ‘common religious heritage’ (8%). Just 5% of respondents spontaneously state that ‘there is no European identity’. A further 8% gave no answer”. Results available in: [http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb71/eb713_future_europe.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb71/eb713_future_europe.pdf)

\(^3\) [http://www.bis.org/review/r090317a.pdf](http://www.bis.org/review/r090317a.pdf)
A political status automatically conceded to every national of a Member State by the single fact of being national, a condition that today around 500 million people enjoy and which is aimed at complementing and in any case substituting the national citizenships.

It is a way to give political rights enjoyable not only by the entrepreneurs or workers. This status confers important individual rights: a) the right of freedom of movement and residence (Directive 2004/38/CE⁴), generously developed by the EU Court of Justice, but now under debate.

Some Member States (United Kingdom, Germany) are exploring ways in which to extend the possibilities of expelling unemployed EU citizens⁵; b) the right to vote in the Member State of residence in the European Parliament elections, and the right to vote and to be eligible in the host Member State municipal elections; c) the right to address the EU’s Ombudsman and the right to petition before the European Parliament; d) the right to consular and diplomatic protection in a third country in the other Member States’ diplomatic missions when the country from which the EU citizen has no representation.

In 2009 the Eurobarometer showed that a great majority of respondents of the 27 Member States felt Europeans (74%)⁶. In the 2012 spring, only a 60% of respondents felt...

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⁴ “Union citizens who have resided legally for a continuous period of five years in the host Member State shall have the right of permanent residence there”.

⁵ “EU citizens cannot be expelled due to unemployment if they: (a) are permanent residents; (b) are workers or self-employed persons; (c) have ‘sufficient resources’; (d) have worked for more than one year and registered as a job-seeker; (e) have worked for less than one year and registered as a job-seeker, for at least a six-month grace period; (f) entered as a work-seeker, and can prove that they are still seeking employment and have a genuine chance of getting a job; (g) are family members of an EU citizen who has the right of residence or permanent residence; or (h) are the parent carers of an EU citizen’s child as described above”. See: [http://eulawanalysis.blogspot.com.es/2014/03/can-unemployed-eu-citizens-be-expelled.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+EuLawAnalysis+%28EU+Law+Analysis%29](http://eulawanalysis.blogspot.com.es/2014/03/can-unemployed-eu-citizens-be-expelled.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+EuLawAnalysis+%28EU+Law+Analysis%29)

⁶ A majority of European respondents feel they are European (74%), which is an increase of 3 percentage points since Spring 2008. A third (32%) feels European ‘to a great extent’. Similarly, the percentage of those who ‘do not feel European’ has decreased slightly. In Spring 2009, just one quarter (25%, -2 points) of the respondents said that they do...
as European citizens⁷. In 2013 autumn the sense of belonging to the EU citizenship had decreased, four of every ten respondents did not feel themselves as EU citizens⁸.

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not feel European. A country-by-country analysis shows that the highest proportion of respondents who 'feel European' are found in Slovakia (90%), but there are also high levels in Luxembourg (89%), Sweden (88%), Hungary (87%), Denmark (86%), Germany (85%), Finland (85%) and Belgium (83%). At the other end of the scale, respondents from the UK (48%) and Greece (53%) are the least likely to say they 'feel European'. See: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb71/eb713_future_europe.pdf

⁸ Luxembourg, Malta, Germany and Finland most europeist countries, and on the opposite side Greece and United Kingdom, see results in http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb80/eb80_first_en.pdf

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