

Examiners' Report/ Principal Examiner Feedback

January 2011

GCE

Government and Politics 6GP04 4A
EU Political Issues

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General Comments:

The entry for this paper was very small, and the range of responses seen was quite limited. There were few responses at the higher level, presumably reflecting the short space of time candidates have had to prepare for Unit 3 as well as Unit 4.

This paper has been marked by a lack of specific knowledge of key concepts and the role of the institutions of the EU. The majority of responses seen also relied on often very historical examples and policies.

Question 1

This is a well-established topic and very similar to last June's question on divisions within the Conservative Party. Unfortunately, many candidates relied on the outdated view that the Conservative Party is wholly anti-Europe and that they are likely to withdraw from the EU entirely. Such responses made no reference to the current leadership of the party or how attitudes towards the EU have changed over time.

Stronger candidates were able to explain how Cameron's leadership has marked a sea-change in the Conservative Party as he tries to at least halt widening divisions over Europe, if not heal them. Some made reference to the 'referendum lock' he has established, and how Cameron's attitude differs from the right-wing of the party, which tends to be very anti-EU. Very few candidates acknowledge that some members of the Conservative Party are pro-EU, or at least understood that not all members are totally anti-EU.

Question 2

Many of the responses to this question were very brief and consisted of defining *intergovernmentalism*. Most candidates tried to turn the question into one about *supranationalism*- without comparing it to *intergovernmentalism*, this was not a valid response to the question.

Surprisingly, no candidates referred to the concept of a 'two-tier' or 'two-speed' Europe as a potential problem caused by *intergovernmentalism*.

Stronger candidates were able to assess why *intergovernmentalism* was less desirable than *supranationalism* in terms of the impact of both on further integration and protecting national interests.

Question 3

Too many candidates did not fully understand the role of the European Central Bank in relation to the Eurozone, and so tried to turn this in to a question on the Eurozone alone.

Those candidates who did try to assess the role of the ECB largely evaluated the 'one size fits all' argument and the role of the ECB in the 2008-09 economic crisis.

Question4

Responses to this question were typically historical accounts of the reform of CAP rather than an evaluation of why reforms have not succeeded. There were also a large number of candidates who turned this into a question on the arguments for and against reform as seen in previous papers- highlighting the need for candidates to read the wording of the question carefully.

Worryingly, a number of candidates wrote wholly anti-French answers, blaming the French desire to maintain their benefits from the CAP for every failure of reform.

There were also significant gaps in candidates' knowledge of the reforms themselves, with few references to actual reforms.

Stronger candidates were able to focus on specific reforms and the difficulties that were posed when they were considered. An alternative approach saw candidates examine the impact of the countries that do/do not benefit from the CAP, and how difficult it is to compromise between them, typically including a discussion of the machinery behind reform and how it limits success.

Question5

The majority of candidates failed to understand the issues surrounding recent enlargement.

Large numbers of candidates included common errors about how new members have integrated fully because they have fully benefited from the CAP (which they have not), and an assumption that they are all full members from the outset- missing the idea of 'transition'.

The few stronger responses seen demonstrated a clear understanding of the benefits of subsidies, joining the Euro and accepting all rules and regulations, although even these offered few counter-points. Those that were offered focused on the impact of changes to QMV and the exemptions from the CAP.

Question 6

This question saw mainly one-sided responses that were lacking the detail and analysis expected at A2. Responses were mostly focused on the negative impact of EU membership on UK sovereignty and contained few points that challenged the premise given in the question. Because of this, there was a distinct lack of synopticity as many candidates offered no alternative viewpoints.

The few stronger responses seen attempted to construct a balanced response to the question, but largely focused on the impact of UK contributions to EU institutions and the idea of 'pooling' sovereignty. Synopticity was again lacking here, with most candidates choosing to only offer various political party views on the Lisbon Treaty.

Question 7

Many candidates failed to understand the role of the ECJ.

Responses to this question were often very general, discussing the powers of judges overall rather than focusing on the ECJ. Most candidates were able to refer to the potential impact of the ECJ on individual countries, mostly citing the *Factortame Case* as an example, and outlined general points on mediation between EU members.

Stronger responses were able to explain how the ECJ has been designed to be as impartial as possible, and that it allows for disputes between individuals and states/member states/states and the EU to be mediated upon. A small minority of candidates were able to offer synopticity by countering these points with arguments concerning the impact of past cases on EU members and that the ECJ is more political than it should be because of the nature of the decisions it has to make.

Question 8

This question saw the weakest responses on the paper.

Most candidates demonstrated little understanding of the European Social Model and largely focused on the Single Market. The few points offered discussed the need for diversity and the fact that the difference between members business 'cultures' may adversely affect the EU. Responses were mainly one-sided, with little analysis and little or no synopticity.

Stronger responses were able to define the European Social Model and at least attempt a balanced response to the question by challenging the premise given. Some candidates addressed synopticity by comparing the European Social Model to other social models such as the Anglo-Saxon model.

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