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In varietate concordia - United in diversity: An analyze of the EU environment according to its motto

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In varietate concordia – United in diversity; An
Analyze of the EU environment according to its motto

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In varietate concordia – United in diversity; An Analyze of the EU environment according to its motto

Roland Brandtjen

ABSTRACT:

In Varietate Concordia - United in diversity, the motto of the European Union is often mentioned by some politicians and in EU-related literature. However, one wonders what this motto actually means for the EU and how it is implemented in reality. To this end, the terminology of the motto is first examined due to the multilingualism of the EU. Differences between diversity and variety as well as between united and harmonized are examined in more detail.

This paper attempts to examine and fill a scientific gap on this topic by means of an adapted SPELIT analysis, the PLISE method. For the most part, the specialist literature is consulted. On the topic of the social environment, quantitative results of a survey in German Länder, Spanish Autonomous Communities, French and Italian regions, and the countries of the United Kingdom plus Cornwall are displayed.

Finally, after the concluding section and the bibliography, the official translation of the motto into 73 official, co-official, recognised and minority languages is listed in the appendix.

KEYWORDS:

United in diversity, European Union, SPELIT / PLISE, Blue Banana, Harmonization

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Prof. Dr Roland Brandtjen is professor at IU international University GmbH. As a European Studies scholar, his expertise lies in collective identities and their influence on politics. His focus is on the European integration process of regions of Germany, Spain, France, Italy and the UK, as well as all recognised micronations of Europe in relation to the concept of independence. He has studied and worked in Europe at home and abroad. He completed his doctorate at the RWTH in Aachen.

Introduction

The Motto of the EU, “In Varietate Concordia” in Latin, is mentioned a lot in the relations inside and outside of the EU. In English it means “United in diversity”. It is questionable whether this motto has any real influence on the organisational level of the EU and what it means. Currently, there is little literature on this topic. This paper attempts to fill this scientific gap. For this purpose, various aspects of the PLISE analysis, a variant of the SPELIT analysis, are analysed. It starts with a conceptual explanation of the term. Then, the PLISE method and the scientific procedure of this work are explained. The individual aspects are followed by a concluding section. The appendix contains a bibliography and a breakdown of the EU motto into official, co-official, minority and recognised languages.

In Varietate Concordia

As one of the symbols for European identity and unity, even across European Organisation, the Motto of the EU should have been legal part of the Art. I-8 of the European Constitution Contract. After the negative results of the referendums in some states, the treaty is discarded. Nevertheless, this motto is used and lived by the parts of the European Union just like other symbols. (Schrötter, 2016, p. 196; Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l’Europe (CVCE) by University of Luxembourg, 2016; Council of Europe / Conseil de l’Europe, 2023) It seems to be important to understand, what this motto means. Due to the different translations of all the official, co-official, minority and / or recognized languages, the wording might differ very slightly. In some languages, it is translated to the corresponding word of diversity (i.e., in Cornish, Fala or Ladinian), in other it changed to the corresponding word of variety (i.e. Guernesiaise or Mòcheno), in some it corresponds to the word “difference” (i.e. Piemontese or Venetian) and in other languages it is represented by the corresponding word, that could mean in English both, diversity and variety (i.e. Alsatian, Frisian or German). But what is the difference between “variety” and “diversity”? What means “united” in the mindset of a supranational organisation like the EU? First, it will be clarified what means diversity. Secondly, the definition of “united” in this sense will be highlighted.

DIVERSITY VERSUS VARIETY

Diversity is an interdisciplinary notion, with some differences in its definitions. In the context of management and business psychology it is defined as “[...] differences among people that are likely to affect their acceptance, work performance, satisfaction, or progress in an organization”. (Stockdale & Crosby, 2004) The Oxford dictionary, however, defines diversity as “[t]he quality, condition, or fact of being diverse or different.” It also could be understood as “difference, dissimilarity; divergence”. (Oxford University Press, 2023) Other state that it is defined as “the practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.”. (Servaes, Choudhury, & Parikh, 2022). Finally, the Federal Anti-Discrimination Agency of Germany defines "diversity" as “more than a mere description of the state of social diversity¹”. It includes “a human rights-based understanding of diversity that aims at equal rights and

¹ In German: „Vielfalt“, which could be translated as diversity or variety.

takes into account the diversity and complexity of people and their life situations; a change of perspective from a problem-centred to a resource-oriented understanding of target groups; an organisational and human resource development tool that leads to higher efficiency and creativity in work processes, better customer orientation and more social justice”. (Antidiskriminierungsstelle des Bundes, 2015)

According to the Oxford English dictionary, variety however means “[t]he fact, quality, or condition of being varied; diversity of nature or character” It also means the “[...] absence of monotony, sameness, or uniformity”. (Oxford University Press, 2023) Different to that in organizational sciences, variety can be understood as a subset of the big whole called diversity. According to this, variety would be represented as a difference in quality between, for example, the labour of individual team members or departments. This does not mean that someone is less valuable, but that they have different qualities in different areas. In organisational terms, it means that different people are better suited for different tasks. (Harrison & Klein, 2007)

It seems that diversity is more about the characteristics of an individual in a group and their inclusion, whereas variety refers to the different abilities of the members of a group. Both refer strongly to difference without a simultaneous valuation. These concepts aim to point out the benefits of the diversity of the members or individuals of a group.

Both diversity and variety may have slightly different definitions in different languages. Therefore, the key word seems to be different or differences, which unfortunately does have a slight negative nuance. With 24 official languages and many more co-official, national, regional, minority and recognised languages, it is difficult to find a positive notion for differences. Diversity in English, but variety in other languages, seems to be the right term for distinction, or being a lot of different individuals, without a negative undertone.

UNITED VERSUS HARMONISED

United considered as an adjective means according to the Oxford English Dictionary to be “[j]oined together by a common interest, feeling, or cause” or “characterized by unity, harmony, or agreement”. (Oxford University Press, 2023) According to the EU, the bases of its unity are the European common values, the basics of representative democracy, the rule of law, social justice as a goal of economic progress and the respect of human rights. (Schneider, 2016)

Harmonisation is a term of the EU law and stands for the alignment of different national legal and administrative regulations of the individual member states. The primary goal of harmonisation is to avoid competitive disadvantages within the EU. (Schrötter, 2016, pp. 319, 339-440) The result of this legal harmonisation is the EU Acquis Communautaire², which is also mandatory for possible new member states. (Grotz, 2015) The aim of harmonisation is to prevent distortions of competition in the common European market. It seems to be primarily an economic policy objective, but it is much more the realisation of the bases of EU unity. (Höing & Wessels, 2016)

² The common EU law

It seems that the harmonisation of the European Union is its instrument to become united and to foster the EU bases. (Kowalski, 2019) Therefore, “United” and “Harmonised”, in the sense of the motto of the EU, are very closely related.

Method

This paper tries to analyse the environment of the EU-motto through a mix method of quantitative and qualitative nature. The so-called SPELIT analysis method is a variant of the PEST-Method. (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2007; Aguilar, 1967) It includes the social, political, economics, legal, intercultural and technological environments and is an acronym of those environments. It helps to analyse systematically the current environment that define the way things are right now. An advantage of this method is the ability to delete existing or to add new environments. (Saldaña & Mallette, 2017) For instance, the technological environment includes apart from the obvious tools to become more efficient such like computer and cell phones, also the physical infrastructure such as the internet, highways, facilities, and food distribution channels. (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2007) Here, the SPELIT analysis is modified and renamed PLISE. This variant contains all aspects of the SPELIT analysis except the Technological Environment. In this paper, PLISE will be used to analyse the environments of the EU-Motto “United in diversity”.

The political aspects can address organizational structure and sources of power. In other words, it is more connected to the politics which represent the process of making decisions within groups and it is closely tied to the concepts of power and influence. (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2007) In this area, the principle of a Europe of the regions, the principle of subsidiarity, the creation of Euroregions and the multi-speed Europe are reflected based on literature.

The legal environment includes official laws or accepted rules. For this analysis, topics such as the foundations of the Lisbon Treaty, citizenship of the Union and the concept of the harmonisation process through the *Acquis Communautaire*. (Craig & De Búrca, 2008)

The intercultural environment addresses culture and differences between cultures that would be a driver for an organization. (Schmieder-Ramirez & Mallette, 2007) Issues such as the promotion of culture, the protection of different religions and the protection of minorities through decision-making processes and the official languages in the EU are regularities.

The social aspects are based on data which were conducted in all regions (administrative regions such as federal states) in the states of France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom. For this purpose, quantitative research was offered in the form of individualised quantitative online-based surveys in the respective languages of the regions. By means of virtual snowball sampling, these surveys were promoted via social media of Facebook and Twitter and given to the population of the target group. For this purpose, relevant hashtags of the respective regions were set, regional media (e.g., TV Melilla in the Autonomous City of Melilla) were contacted and disseminated in region-related interest groups (e.g., FALE in Normandy or OSCEC in Extremadura). This type of sampling serves to find participants in e.g., hard-to-reach groups of people. A person in such a group who participates in the survey gives the questionnaires to other people in their network or arranges participation in the survey. It can increase the representativeness of the results by the diffusion of the survey into the

corresponding group of participants. (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004; Atkinson & Flint, 2001) Challenges of a virtual snowball sampling might be the community bias, the lack of definite knowledge as to whether or not the sample is an accurate reading of the target population and that the target population might not always have access to the Internet. (Baltar & Brunet, 2012; Häder, 2006) The surveys in 2022 in the UK took place annually from March to April, in Germany from May to June, in France from June to July, in Italy from July to August and in Spain from August to September. They are totally anonymous and fulfil the requirements of the DSGVO.

Finally, economic aspects deal with the production of goods, their distribution, and the use of resources. (Baldwin & Wyplosz, 2009) For the EU motto, the economic geographic concepts, like the Blue Banana, the GDP per capita on the NUTS2 level and the EU funds as tool for wealth distribution will be analysed. Here, too, the literature is consulted.

PLISE Analyse Method

In this section, each aspect or environment of the PLISE Analyse will be highlighted. It starts with the political aspects, the legal aspects, the intercultural aspects, the social aspects and finally the economic aspects.

POLITICAL ASPECT

As a basis for the "united diversity", the regions (mostly NUTS 2 level) are in the foreground. This is why there is the concept of the Europe of the regions. IT is the term for a political concept that is intended to promote the regions in the member states of the EU and support them in their regional autonomy. Within the framework of this concept, there is a multitude of European activities and programmes which, on the one hand, support the (economic, cultural, etc.) networking between the European regions and, on the other hand, especially the formation of cross-border regions (Euroregions). The concept is promoted above all by those advocates of European integration who are in favour of a federalist structure of the EU and want to mitigate democratic deficits through a citizen-oriented and efficient decentralised political structure. However, only a few EU countries have (more or less) independent regions below the level of the nation state and equipped with their own political-democratic organs. Political resistance arises from the fact that an increase in competences of the regions comes at the expense of the tasks of the nation state. In the Treaty on European Union (TEU) of 1992 (Art. 198 a TEU), it was agreed to set up a consultative committee of the regions (of the EU) alongside the Economic and Social Committee (of the EU). (Stuchlik, 2011; Stöver, 2015; Grotz, 2015) This creates the opportunity to exert joint influence at the EU level while still taking account of the heterogeneous realities.

To support this, there is the possibility of establishing so-called Euroregions (Euroregions). Figure 1 shows the regions and countries that have established and continue to implement Euroregions. It is important to note that it is not an enumerative listing. The concept of Euroregions is a Council of Europe concept that has been adopted and strongly promoted by the EU. Cross-border regions join with the aim of promoting regional development and achieving regional goals. These can be of various kinds;

from cultural and / or language cooperation, cooperation to promote regional tourism, general economic promotion, educational cooperation, and the like. (Schöne, 2006)

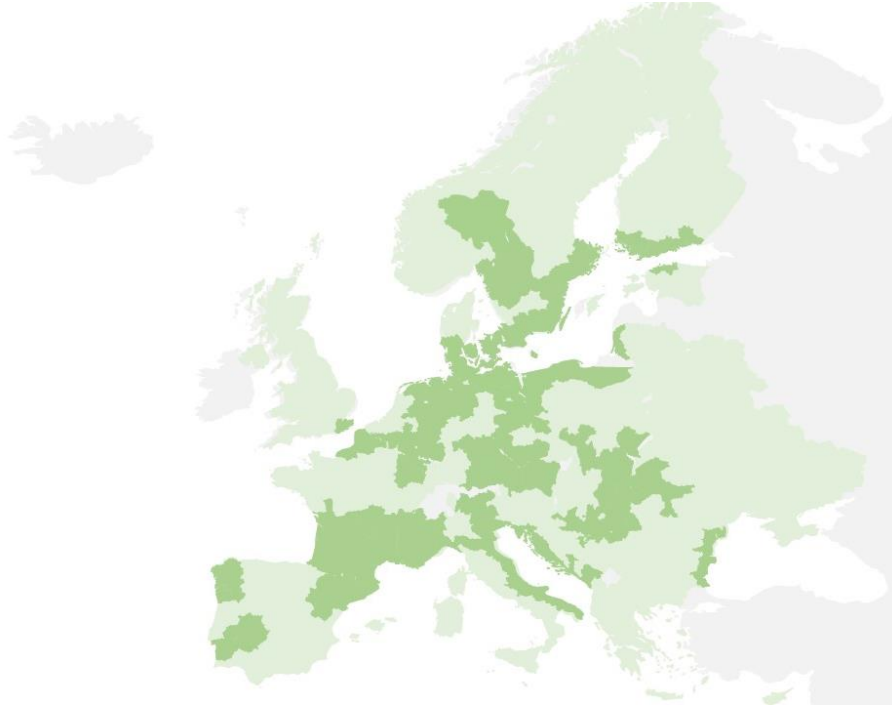


Figure 1: Some Euroregions (own interpretation)

Regions in the UK, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine are involved in Euroregions, as are regions within the EU. It seems that cross-border regions have a greater desire and need for cooperation. "United in diversity" thus seems to have a strong expression at the regional level.

Another concept with the aim of regional empowerment in a larger system is the principle of subsidiarity. It is strongly based in theology and has been addressed by several classical scholars, from Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas to Althusius and Immanuel Kant. Today it is anchored as a political principle in the EU. From a political and legal point of view, some understand the principle of subsidiarity as a maxim of 'share of duty' to endorse integration into a system by harmonizing the natural discrepancy of autonomy and solidarity or liberty and hierarchical order. It refers to the maxim of responsibility to assist due to its concept of real support and assistance given to a high-level unit by a lower-level subunit to ensure the antecedence of responsibility of this subunit. Thus, the overall concept is that the smallest level should act because it provides the best results, and not merely because it is able to do so. (Möller, 2009; Estella, 2002; Gamper, 2006) The idea is to obtain optimal means of action on an essential issue by including all levels of a system through the principle of subsidiarity. (Alesina & Spolaore, 2003)

This turns the principle of subsidiarity not just into the maxim of 'allocation of tasks' but also into a precept of system organization, solving organizational problems in a larger system by integrating and strengthening subunits. (Möller, 2009) National, and especially subnational, governments gain most responsibilities in the EU by the principle of subsidiarity. (Dudek, 2005) Problems may only appear for state-centric organized EU members by applying the principle of subsidiarity because of joining the EU.

First, they lose competences by transferring them to the supranational level, which then confers these back onto regions that did not have those competences before. (Craig & De Búrca, 2008)

Subsidiarity also represents an adjustment aspect for regional development by promoting regional autonomous policymaking, by securing efficiency and protecting subunits from any encroachment on their competences by higher-level actors – national or supranational. (Dudek, 2005; Möller, 2009) Good examples are the regional subunits of EU member states tasked with borderless or cross-border cooperation. Projects like the Euregio or Euro-regions have allowed subunits – municipalities, cities, or regions – to negotiate on specific issues and have helped them create agreements. Therefore, subunits erode the central role of the state and create certain degrees of self-government by cross-border, trans-border, or borderless cooperation. (Colomer, 2007)

Finally, to accelerate the process of European integration, but also to take into account the different levels of integration capacity and willingness, the concept of a multi-speed Europe emerged. is the idea that different parts of the European Union should integrate at different levels and pace depending on the political situation in each individual country. Indeed, multi-speed Europe is currently a reality, with only a subset of EU countries being members of the eurozone and of the Schengen area. Like other forms of differentiated integration such as *à la carte* and variable geometry, "multi-speed Europe" arguably aims to salvage the "widening and deepening of the European Union" in the face of political opposition. (Lang, 2006; Andréani, 2002; Schrötter, 2016) If you look at the participation of EU members in different policies, you will see that Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and Slovenia participate in all EU provisions, whereas Denmark, Ireland, Sweden, and Poland have chosen some opt-outs. For example, Denmark and Ireland do not participate in the policy concept of common cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs, the area of freedom, security, and justice.

It seems that not only in the cooperation of regional goals or in the influence on the overall EU level, but also in the actual European integration process, the possibility of unity in diversity can be achieved. The EU motto seems to be present and implemented in the political environment.

LEGAL ASPECT

The legal environment for the EU motto is considered to be its legal character, the harmonisation process and the common citizenship of the Union.

According to the Lisbon treaty, 16 Member States of the EU declared that the flag, the anthem, the motto "United in diversity, the single common currency and the Europe day "[...] express the sense of community of the people in the European Union and their allegiance to it" (European Union, 2012). This, however, can only be seen as an interpretative declaration, which states the meaning of the states who declared it. It therefore does not have any binding legal effect. (Schweitzer, 2010)

What is binding for all states is the adoption of the *Acquis Communautaire* and new regulations, the so-called harmonisation of the EU. This includes the adoption of the current legal status of the EU of all member states and includes various forms of legal norms, of which the most important are the regulations and directives. According to Art. 288 TFEU, EU regulations are directly valid in all member states, while directives are only binding with regard to their objective and must be converted into national law within a certain period of time. (Haltern, *Europarecht*, 2015) The overriding aim of such legislation is to harmonise (not equate) the different national laws and regulations of the individual

member states in order to avoid competitive disadvantages within the Union. (Schrötter, 2016; Giumelli, Geelhoed, de Vries, & Molesini, 2022) Therefore, directives still have some room for manoeuvre in their implementation. Depending on the circumstances of national law, members are free to choose which type of legal norm (e.g., law or national regulation), by which national organisation (e.g., region or state) and how this objective is at least achieved. An improvement of the (minimum) objective of the directive is also possible. From a legal point of view, harmonisation, especially of directives, can thus be seen as "united in diversity".

In addition to the harmonised legal status, in states people are united under a common citizenship. The EU is not a state, but it has the institution of European Union citizenship. This is not a citizenship in the true sense, but a kind of add-on to the national citizenship of an EU member state. As an EU citizen, you do not get another passport, but "only" the rights set out in primary and secondary EU law. The most important of these are the 4 freedoms. One example is the freedom of movement of persons, which citizens of the United Kingdom and Gibraltar have lost with the Brexit. The aim of this European citizenship is to create a Europe of citizens and not of states. Thus, there is also the basis of non-discrimination of Union citizens, which means that those who are in the same situation as citizens of the respective Member State are allowed to enjoy the same legal (in the material scope of the EU Treaties) treatment regardless of their nationality. (Gimbal, 2016; Haltern, Europäische Verfassung, 2015; Brandtjen, 2021) In short, all EU citizens remain legally Hungarians, Estonians, Croats, Maltese, and so on. The actual citizenship is neither replaced nor abolished, but at best supplemented. A citizen of the Union is a person who has the nationality of a member state of the EU. (Schrötter, 2016) In this way, civic diversity is preserved and yet united.

INTERCULTURAL ASPECT

Interculturalism is a political movement that supports cross-cultural dialogue and challenging self-segregation tendencies within cultures. It is also an instrument for diversity management in different fields being the existence of interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural experiences through dialogue and mutual respect. (Zapata-Barrero & Mansouri, 2021) The question of how cultures might interact within the EU, it must be defined what is considered "a culture". Culture is an umbrella term which encompasses the social behaviour, institutions, and norms found in human societies, as well as the knowledge, beliefs, arts, laws, customs, capabilities, and habits of the individuals in these groups. This includes areas like religion, education, sciences, art, sport, media, and libraries. (Odendahl, 2015; Dziedzic, 2022)

Religion is often portrayed in the media as an expression of culture. Figure 2 shows our own simplified interpretation of the predominant religions in European countries. Yellow reflects the Catholic, purple the Protestant, red the Orthodox and green the Sunni faith. In this representation, all other religious communities in the countries are not listed. It does not show the number of believers or the distribution to other religions. Only in Germany and Bosnia-Herzegovina are several religions shown, as there are strong regional differences. In Switzerland, there is a predominantly Protestant majority in the north and a Catholic majority in the south, but the ratio is relatively balanced and is therefore shown hatched.

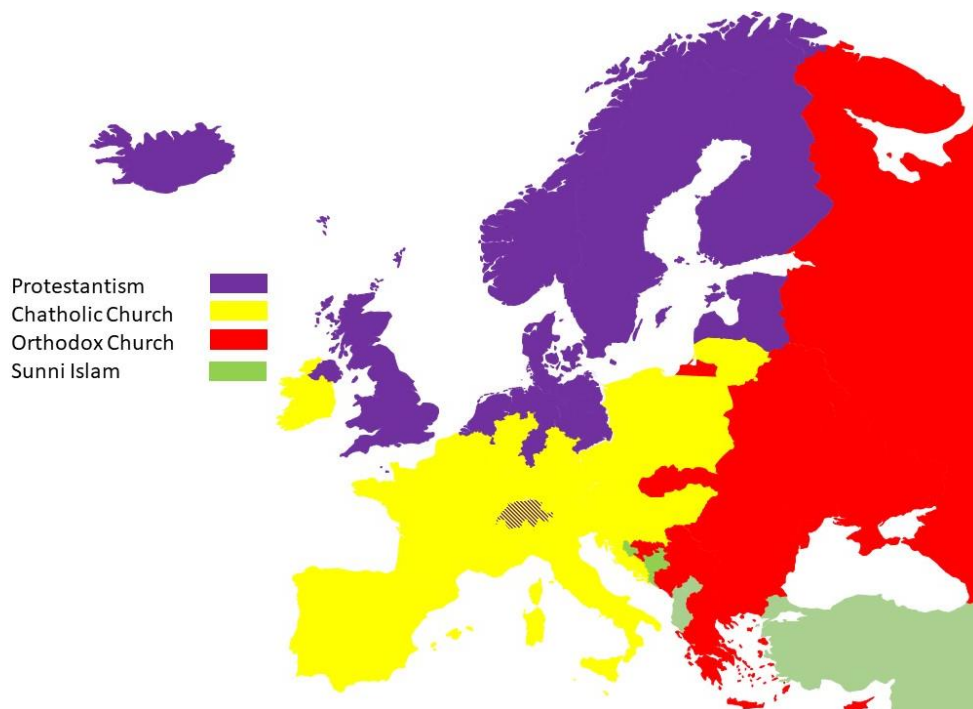


Figure 2: Predominant religions in European countries, own interpretation according to (Liedhegener & Odermatt, 2019)

Christianity is the predominant religious and historical basis in European countries, stretching from Iceland to the Caucasus. Nevertheless, there is a clear North-South-East division of the individual Christian denominations. The recognition and protection of all religions and beliefs is also seen as a further basis of the European population. Art. 10 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union states that everyone has the right to freedom of religion, which includes worship, teaching, practice, and observance. It is therefore important to mention that all faith communities are fully protected and welcome. (Schwenke, 2010; Teachout, 2008)

Despite the common protection of religions, there are still often strong conflicts due to religious differences. Apart from Bosnia-Herzegovina with its Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox societies, there is also the conflict in Northern Ireland between Catholic and Protestant believers or conflicts of faith between e.g. different Orthodox faiths. (Wright, 2018; Clark, 2010; Thorbjørnsrud, 2015)

Well religion as such is not a competence of the EU. Nevertheless, it is listed separately next to culture in the Lisbon Treaties. Article 22 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights obliges the EU to respect the diversity of cultures, religions, and languages. Article 3 of the TEU sets the objective of the European Union to preserve the richness of its cultural and linguistic diversity and to ensure the protection and development of Europe's cultural heritage. This shows that sometime religion and languages are part of culture and sometimes they are separated. Finally, Article 167 TFEU states that the EU shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of its members, while respecting national and regional diversity, and at the same time preserve the common cultural heritage. (Singer, 2016)

According to the subsidiarity principle, cultural aspects should first be implemented at the regional level. However, the EU's cultural policy neither can nor wants to replace national cultural policy, but only give it an additional European dimension. Cultural sovereignty lies with the member states. Nevertheless, it promotes cultural and linguistic diversity through programmes such as the European

Capitals of Culture, the Cultural Education and Training, and the European Cultural Forum. (Schrötter, 2016)

Linguistic aspects of cultural funding can be seen in the 24 official languages of the EU. Thus, Maltese and Irish are just as official languages as French or German. It seems to be obvious that the promotion of a multilingual society and promotion of regional and minority languages became an important aim of the EU. Therefore, every EU citizen can address any European institution in its recognized regional and minority language and has the right to receive the answer in that language. (European Commission, 2006; Nistor-Gâz & Pop-Flanja, 2020)

It seems that the EU works a lot interculturally to promote a common ground and the regional and local diversity. Religion, language, and other cultural aspects are promoted and competence of its members and its regions. A regional diversity in a European united protection and solidarity seems to be the outcome.

SOCIAL ASPECT

The social aspect in this paper addresses the social character of the EU-Motto. This includes the opinion of the people in and outside of the EU. Participants, in all regions and Länder of Germany, Italy, Spain, France and the UK, have been surveyed in 2022 about their agreement if the EU-Motto symbolizes the EU. The response options were scaled between 1 and 4; 1 meant “I do not agree”, 2 meant “I rather not agree”, 3 meant “I rather agree” and finally 4 meant “I agree”.

The lowest number of participants in 2022 is the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen with 31 participants, followed by the Spanish autonomous cities of Melilla with 37 and Ceuta with 38 participants, as in previous years. The highest number of participants are in Catalunya with 942, in Galicia with 820 and Scotland with 691 participants. The latter could be since the entire survey also asks about the desired degree of autonomy for the respective region and thus in the latter areas the issue seems very attractive.

Figure 3 shows the average results for the approval of the EU motto. there are no averages below 2.2 or above 3.21 in any region. the highest value is in Trentino-Alto Adige/South Tyrol with 3.18 in Italy. In Germany, the average approval rating is 3.16 in the Free and Hanseatic City of Bremen. The autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla, with average ratings of 3.16 and 3.14 respectively, are those with the highest approval ratings in Spain. Scotland, with 3.01, has the highest agreement with the motto as an EU symbol. In France, these values are much lower and thus the region Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur with 2.9 as an average value is the one with the highest approval.

The lowest average approval rate is in Martinique in France with 2.27 and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in Germany with 2.36. Northern Ireland has the lowest value with 2.58 in the United Kingdom. In Spain, Extremadura is the region with the lowest average of 2.66. Finally, Sardinia is the Italian region with the lowest score of 2.85.

With a possible mean average of 2.5, out of 78 regions surveyed, only 7 are below this: Saxony (2.49), Guadeloupe (2.47), Centre-Val de Loire (2.44), Corsica (2.39), Île-de-France (2.38), Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Martinique. It is interesting to note that these regions are only in eastern Germany and France.

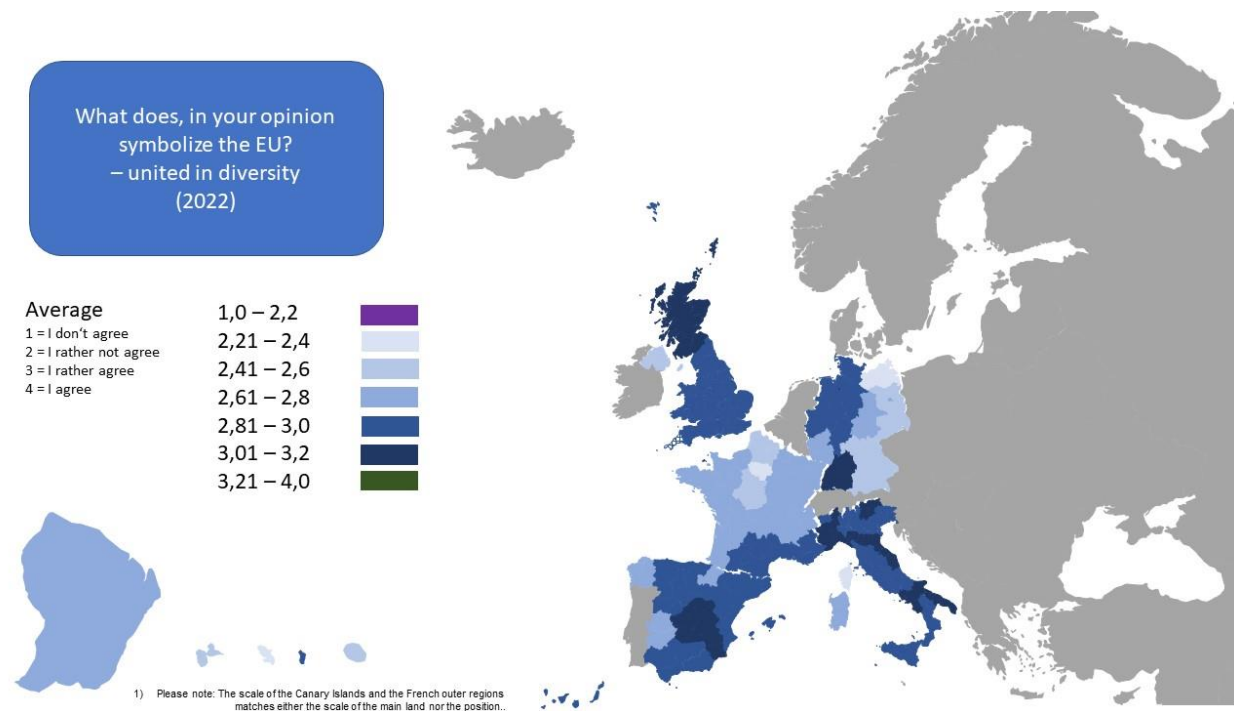


Figure 3: What does, in your opinion, symbolize the EU? – United in diversity (2022), own interpretation

It is striking that the values even in the regions in the United Kingdom are higher than in many regions in France and East Germany. Equally high are the values in the Mediterranean regions of Italy, Spain, and France, with the exception of Corsica.

Possible explanations why the EU motto has a stronger symbolic power in some regions than in others could be the individual image of the EU, the feeling of belonging to the EU and / or current conflicts of the region with the European level. In Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland conflict seems to be decisive for the result. In France and eastern Germany, where the right-wing populist nationalist and Eurosceptic parties such as AfD and Rassemblement National are very present, these parties could have an influence on the results. (Nesti & Graziano, 2022) In the case of the French overseas territories, the geographical position certainly also plays a role. Finally, in the case of Corsica, the cultural conflict with France and the perceived lack of support from the European level could be decisive. So far, however, this is relatively speculative and cannot be conclusively confirmed here.

What is certain is that there is a relatively high degree of agreement on the symbolic power of the motto “United in diversity” for the EU and its members.

ECONOMIC ASPECT

The economic environment of the EU motto, united in diversity, implies an economic difference in the regions of Europe. Understanding the principal of subsidiarity in economic terms, this means that policies should be dealt with by the smallest unit which can use economies of scale and assimilate the externalities of it. (Alesina & Spolaore, 2003; Gischer, Ilchmann, & Richter, 2017)

One of the general concepts to show these differences is the economic geographic model of the "blue banana". This was developed in 1989 and reflects a space of concentration of population, economy, knowledge and culture, capital, media, transport, settlement, and infrastructure as well as global

interdependence. This space has developed through settlement in the course of long-term historical and market processes and was not created through political planning. It stretches from the Irish Sea to the Mediterranean Sea. There is also economic, social and cultural development outside this space, but it is not as dense. Furthermore, many of the institutions of the EU and the Council of Europe as well as other European and international organisations are located in this area. (Faludi, 2015; Leibenath, Hahn, & Knippschild, 2007; Netrdová & Nosek, 2016) Figure 4 shows a simple geographical representation of the so-called “Blue Banana” as well as the “Golden Banana”, or Sun belt, the "Green banana" and the Gulf of Finland. the last 3 regions have been identified as emerging regions with strong economic potential under the EU's Europe 2020 programme. (European Commission, 2010)

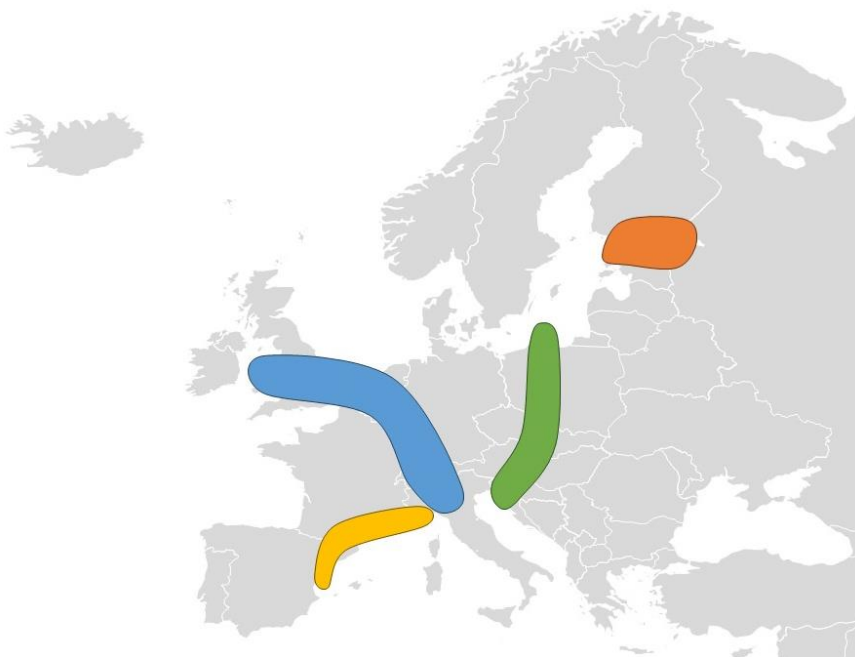


Figure 4: Blue, Golden and Green Banana and the Gulf of Finland, own interpretation according to (Faludi, 2015; Leibenath, Hahn, & Knippschild, 2007; Netrdová & Nosek, 2016; European Commission, 2010)

These concepts alone show economic differences in the EU. it becomes even clearer when you look at the GDP per capita of the NUTS2 regions. Following the principles of the core-periphery pattern, it reinforces the importance of the "blue banana". This shows that within the EU, Western Germany, Northern Italy, Benelux, Austria, and South-Eastern France as the European centre generally have a higher GDP per capita than the peripheral regions. Exceptions are some capital regions like Warsaw, Prague or Bucharest, parts of Sweden and Finland as well as Southern Ireland. (Gräbner & Hafele, 2020; Eurostat, 2023)

Figure 5 shows the different GDP per inhabitant in PPS as a percentage of the EU27 average by NUTS 2 regions in 2021. Some regions are wealthier than others, which impinges on European social policy because the EU's national objectives are, among others, to harmonize the wealth of European people and to foster their solidarity. Especially, the centre of the EU and the capitals of the member states are wealthier than the periphery of the EU. Therefore, the EU's Structural Funds are intended to reduce economic and social imbalances and to foster economic and social cohesion. (Eurostat, 2023; Bovis, 2011; McGowan & Phinnemore, 2006)

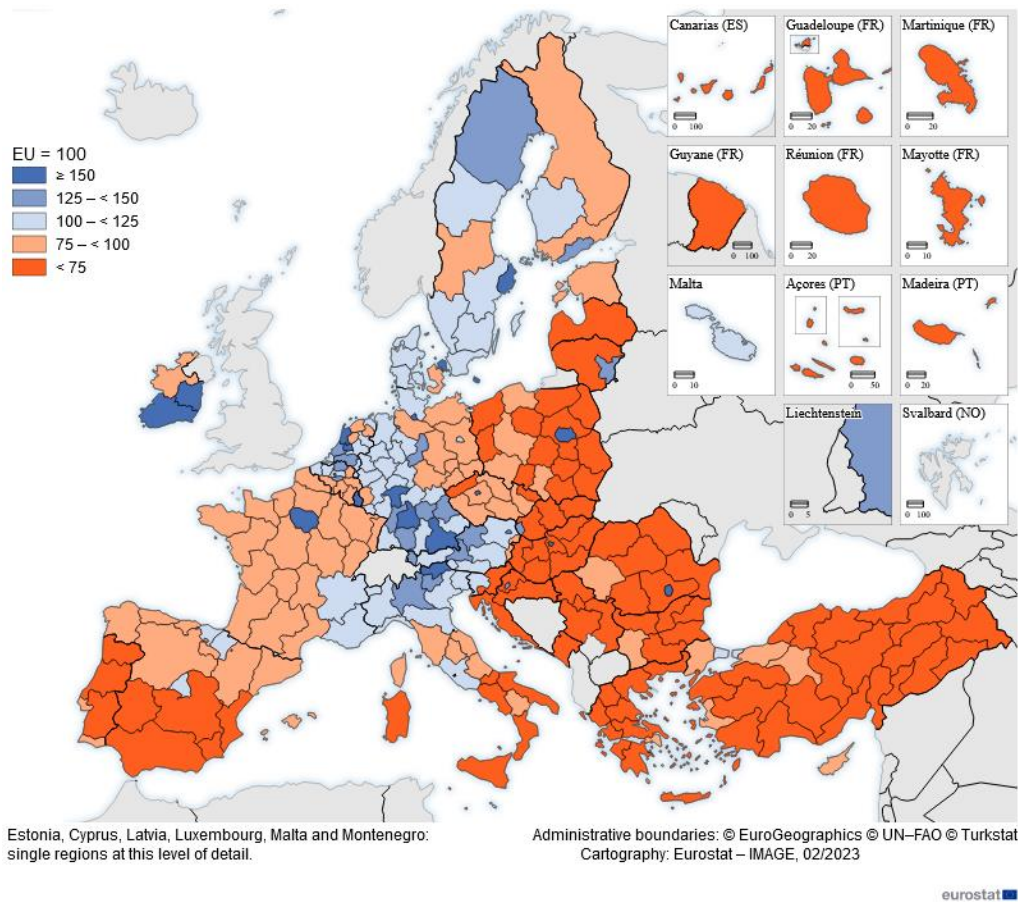


Figure 5: GDP per capita in the EU regions (NUTS 2) in purchasing power standards, 2021 (Eurostat, 2023)

The main funds of the EU are the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Just Transition Fund and the Cohesion Fund. Funds from the ERDF and ESF+ are allocated in three categories of regions (less developed, more developed, in transition), some countries benefit from the Cohesion Fund, some regions with specific needs receive dedicated funding (outermost regions and sparsely populated), and all countries benefit from the Just Transition Fund. (European Commission, 2023; Somers, 1998; Bovis, 2011; Hartwig, 2016)

Figure 6 shows an example of the programmed distribution of the various funds for programs to generate jobs and economic growth among the individual member states until 2027. Overall, Poland would be able to receive the most funds with approx. 75 billion. Luxembourg would receive the least with about 38 billion euros. Poland is the country with the largest share of the ERDF and ESF+ Funds with 57 billion euros, the Cohesion Fund with approx. 9 billion euros and the Just for Transition Fund with around 4 billion euros. Spain with approx. 11 billion euros, the country with the largest share of the Funds for transition. Italy receives the largest share of the funds as more developed regions with approx. 9.5 billion. Funds for outermost and sparsely populated regions are just given to Spain, France, Portugal, Finland, and Sweden.

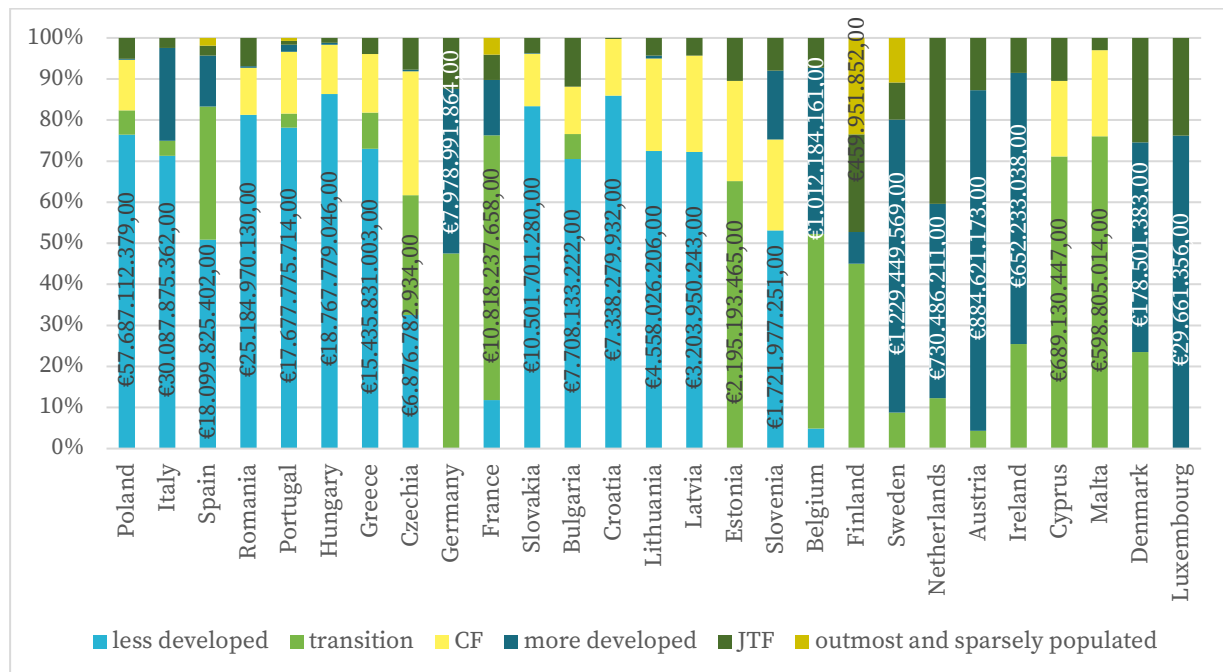


Figure 6: Investment in Jobs and Growth - Initial EU allocation by MS for programming (European Commission , 2023)

Economic differences due to historical and geographical factors seems to be obvious. Thanks to the economic sense of solidarity, funds promote to reallocate the economic wealth throughout the EU regions. The Motto of the EU, United in Diversity, seems to be reflected economically in the concept of the Blue Banana and the redistribution of wealth.

Resume and conclusion

The present paper deals with the analysis of the EU environment according to the motto: in varietate concordia - united in diversity. For this purpose, a variant of the SPELIT analysis method was used, the PLISE method. It covers all aspects of the SPELIT analysis except the technical environment. First, due to the multilingual nature of the EU, the meaning of the motto was explained. It became clear that there is no difference between the terms “diversity” and “variety”. The basic meaning refers to being different, which has a slightly negative undertone. Therefore, some languages use the translation of the term diversity and others use the term variety. The difference between the terms "United" and "Harmonised" is not contradictory. The EU harmonisation process seems to be the instrument to unite and strengthen community foundations.

Under the political aspects, the concepts of subsidiarity, Euroregions and two-speed Europe were explained. It seems that not only in the cooperation of regional goals or in the influence on the whole EU level, but also in the actual European integration process, the possibility of unity in diversity can be achieved. The motto of the EU is present in the political environment and is being implemented.

The legal character, the harmonisation process and the citizenship of the Union were presented in the literature as fundamental legal aspects. It quickly became clear that the EU motto is "only" a non-binding declaration of interpretation by some EU member states. However, in the harmonisation process, e.g. through the instrument of directives, this is clearly visible. The EU citizenship, too, is rather

an add-on to one's own nationalities, which seems to unite the diversity under a unified goal. Thus, the EU motto is also recognisable in the legal environment.

The currently much-discussed topic of culture and interculturality is presented in the context of the EU motto through the protection of religious freedom, EU cultural policy and the protection of multilingualism. It seems that the EU does a lot of intercultural work to promote common ground and regional and local diversity. Religion, language, and other cultural aspects are promoted and fall within the competence of its members and their regions. The result seems to be regional diversity in a united European protection and solidarity.

In a social setting, the opinion of the population was sought in the regions of Germany, Spain, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom. The results showed relatively high agreement among all participants that the EU motto is appropriate as a symbol for the EU. However, the results vary, and it can be said that Western Germany, the Mediterranean region and especially the UK regions show high levels of agreement, the latter despite Brexit. Explanations why the results vary so much could be the strengthening of right-wing populist parties, the respective feeling of EU support for regional issues and the respective regional conflicts with the European level. What is certain is that there is a relatively high level of agreement on the symbolic power of the motto "United in Diversity" for the EU and its members.

Finally, the economic differences in the metropolitan area concepts can be seen in the Blue Banana. This is clearly supported when looking at the GDP per capita in the NUTS2 regions. In order to achieve economic solidarity and thus unification, the EU uses the instruction of the NUTS2 concept.

The diversity in Europe and especially in the EU can be clearly seen. However, this is not recognized as negative but as enriching. The unification is therefore to be understood more as a goal for a common historical, cultural, and economic connection on the basis of solidarity than as an equation of the different areas. Differences thus seem to unite and not separate. The EU motto, in varietate concordia, is present in all areas and tries to celebrate differences and create solidarity. The EU level thus becomes a common umbrella under which nations and regions can work together in an integrative manner.

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Annex

“IN VARIETATE CONCORDIA” IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES

Albanian	Të bashkuar në diversitet
Alsatian	Ën Vielfält vereint
Aragonese	Unidat en a diversidat
Aranese	Unificat en diversitat
Arpetan (Franco-Provençal)	Uni dens la divèrsitàt
Asturleonese	Xuníos na diversidá
Basque (Euskara)	Aniztasunean bat eginik
Breton	Unanet el liesseurted
Balearic Catalan	Unificat en sa diversitat
Bulgarian	ЕДИНСТВО В МНОГООБРАЗИЕТО
Cantabrian	Auníos ena diversidà
Catalan	Units en la diversitat
Cornish	Unys yn diversita
Corsican	Uniti in a diversità
Croatian	Ujedinjeni u različitosti
Czech	Jednotná v rozmanitosti
Danish	Forenet i mangfoldighed
Dutch	In verscheidenheid verenigd
English	United in Diversity
Eonavian (Galician of Asturias)	Xuntanza na diversidá
Estonian	Ühinenud mitmekesisuses
Extremadurian	Ajuntá ena diversidá
Fala	Unida na diversidai
Faroese	Sameind í ymiskleika
Finnish	Moninaisuudessaan yhtenäinen
French	Unie dans la diversité
Friulian	Unitât inte diversitàt
Galician	Unidos na diversidade
Gallo	Come de yun den la gârierie
German	In Vielfalt geeint

Greek	Ενωμένοι στην πολυμορφία (Enoméni stin polymorfía)
Greenlandic	Assigiinngisimaartumik kattussineq
Guernesiate	Euni dans la varietai
Hungarian	Egység a sokféleségben
Irish	Aontaithe san éagsúlacht
Italian	Unità nella diversità
Ladinian	Ester unis tla diversité
Latvian	Vienota dažādībā
Ligurian	Unia inta diverscitæ
Lithuanian	Suvienijusi įvairovę
Lombardian	L'unitaa ind la diversitaa
Lorraine Franconian	Én Villfalt geeinicht
Low Saxony (Low German)	In Völfalt eent
Lower Sorbian	Wjelerakosc jo jedno wótglědane
Luxembourgish	A Villfalt gëeent
Maltese	Magħquda fid-diversità
Manx	Unnaneysst ayns neu-chaslys
Mòcheno Language (Bernstolerisch)	Zòmm en de varietet
Molise Slavic	Skupa, ma sfak za njega
Neapolitan	Aunità 'int' â diverzità
Norman French	Unnie dens la diversitaé
Northern Frisian	Ferianigt uun manigfualghaid
Occitan	Unit dins la diversitat
Piemontese	Unìa ant le diferense
Polish	Zjednoczona w różnorodności
Portuguese	Unida na diversidade
Romanian	Uniți în diversitate
Sardinian	Umpare in sa diversidade
Sassarese	Uniddi in la dibessiddai
Saterfrisian	In Fuulfoold fereent
Scots	Unitit in diversitie
Scottish Gaelic	Aonachd ann an eugsamhlachd
Sicilian	Unità mmezzu a diversità

Slovak

Slovene

Spanish

Swedish

Tabarchino

Ulster-Scots

Upper Sorbian

Valencian

Venetian

Welsh

Zjednotení v rozmanitosti

Združena v raznolikosti

Unida en la diversidad

Förenade i mångfalden

Ünitè inta diversità

Unitit in diversitie

W mnohotnosći zjednoća

Unificada en la diversitat

Unità inte ła difarensa

Yng nglym mewn gwahaniaeth