

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA

**SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION**

EUROPEAN STUDIES

MAY 2012

EXAMINERS' REPORT

**MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS' BOARD**

**SEC EUROPEAN STUDIES
MAY 2012 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

1.0 Summary of Results

Grade	Paper 1 + 2A		Paper 1 + 2B		Total	
	No. of Candidates	%	No. of Candidates	%	No. of Candidates	%
1	12	13.3	-	-	12	10.1
2	22	24.4	-	-	22	18.5
3	24	26.7	-	-	24	20.2
4	19	21.1	3	10.3	22	18.5
5	7	7.8	7	24.1	14	11.8
6	-	-	6	20.7	6	5.0
7	-	-	4	13.8	4	3.4
U	6	6.7	6	20.7	12	10.1
Absent	-	-	3	10.3	3	2.5
Total	90	100.0	29	100.0	119	100.0

2.0 General Comments

A hundred and nineteen (119) candidates sat for SEC European Studies. Of these, 90 or 75.6 % chose Paper 2A while 29 or 24.4 % chose Paper 2B. The general attainment by candidates was good with 94 or 79% obtaining passes at grades 1-5 and 104 or 87.4% obtaining passes at grades 1-7.

Some candidates who opted for Paper 2B failed to hand in their project and thus valuable marks were lost. Others who sat for this paper demonstrated limited skills in expressing themselves properly in their extended writing. Their work lacked clarity, and sequential logic and ideas expressed were, at times, confusing. Sometimes candidates failed to give enough attention to the number of marks allotted to the different sections of the questions, with the result that sections carrying the highest number of marks were often tackled rather superficially. Some candidates tended to reproduce by heart previously prepared material on a given topic irrespective of what the question actually entailed. Thus their answers were partly out of point and they were awarded low marks. Others wrote very short answers when tackling essay questions, showing a vague and shallow knowledge of the subject. The handwriting of some candidates left much to be desired.

3.0 Paper 1**3.1 Section I - Power and People**

1. Most candidates gave incorrect answers to the first part of the question. The majority referred to state governments as democratic ones, dictatorships, welfare states or social democracies. Only a few answered correctly by mentioning a

monarchy, republic, constitutional monarchy, presidential republic or parliamentary republic.

Most candidates were more successful in answering the second part of the question, referring to and explaining one or two features of democratic governments, such as the right to vote in free elections, government by a representative assembly, and the role of political parties, pressure groups and NGOs in society.

2. In the first part of the question, candidates gave good answers, such as the right of all citizens to have an equal chance to get a job, a promotion, have a career or take part in a training course.

Most candidates also provided good answers for the second part of the question, mentioning the right of all citizens to get a decent job and enjoy a decent wage in order to earn a living.

Again most candidates answered the last part of the question well, mentioning that minority groups based on race, language and religious confession should be given equal rights in society. Some candidates were not given marks since they defined minority rights as being children's rights or the rights of minors.

3. Most candidates answered the first part of the question correctly, explaining the term and giving examples of how it is measured, namely through life style, the type of leisure pursuits enjoyed, income, diet, housing, type of employment and the national GDP. Candidates giving short and vague answers scored only one mark.

In the second part of the question, some candidates showed some awareness of the difference in the standard of living of people living in Northern and Southern Italy. However, when they came to explain the reasons for this difference in some detail, they gave shallow or repetitive answers. Most candidates gave examples that are more related to the north of Italy, such as industrialisation, greater commerce with central Europe, more jobs and better infrastructure, and tended to ignore features that characterise southern Italy, such as organised crime (mafia), widespread corruption, the brain drain towards the north and environmental degradation.

4. Most candidates answered the first part of the question correctly defining xenophobia as the hatred of minorities or foreigners in a given society. Some candidates also gave examples of groups that are usually targeted by xenophobic groups, such as gypsies and non-European immigrants.

The majority of candidates gave reasons why xenophobia should be avoided, such as to establish greater tolerance, more genuine democracy, multiculturalism. Some outlined the negative consequences of xenophobia, namely racism, ethnic violence and discrimination.

In the last part of the question, most candidates gave generic examples of xenophobia, such as intolerance to immigrants, social exclusion, low paid jobs or sporadic acts of violence. Only few candidates linked instances of xenophobia with specific minority groups or countries in Europe, such as cultural prejudice towards gypsy communities in Eastern Europe, extreme nationalist groups against extra-European immigrants in France, and anti-Islamic or anti-Semitic sentiments prevalent in some European countries.

5. Most candidates explained the role of the OSCE as the agency that brings about more security and cooperation in Europe but did not give specific examples to substantiate their answer, namely that it detects, prevents and responds to conflicts in Europe and combats organized crime and terrorism.

The majority of candidates gave a correct answer to the second part of the question and obtained full marks.

Most candidates failed to understand the last part of the question and repeated answers already given in the first part of the question. They failed to mention that the OSCE owes its origins to the time of the Cold War when Europe was divided between two rival ideological camps and the need for security and cooperation was necessary to reduce the fear of an armed conflict between them. Candidates failed to mention that the EU and the OSCE have common aims and it is thus natural that all EU members should become members of the OSCE since it is a pan-European Organization.

3.2 Section II - Economic Development and Changes in Europe

6. Most candidates provided relatively correct answers to this question. However, some were apparently unaware of OPEC and its role in coordinating petroleum policies and ensuring an efficient and regular supply. Consequently, they failed to give a valid answer.
7. This question was answered correctly by most candidates. They provided good examples of primary industries in Europe, such as forestry, farming, fishing, mining and salt harvesting, and good examples of secondary industries in Europe, such as manufacturing industries.
8. In the first part of the question, answers were correct, with some, however, being convinced that the Paris Metro` links coastal cities, even London, through the channel tunnel.

As regards plans for Malta's underground, some candidates mistakenly commented on the plans for the Gozo Tunnel while others thought that the underground network is mainly meant for imports and exports.

9. Sound explanations were given by most candidates. Some even provided more information than requested.
10. Very good answers were generally provided, but only a very small number referred to the legislative measures which have been enacted to improve efficiency and security in this field.

3.3 Section III - Demography and Social Realities

11. The great majority of candidates answered the first part of the question correctly and obtained two or three marks, depending on the extent of elaboration in their answer. Some candidates, however, mistook the term for average life expectancy.

Most candidates answered the second part of the question correctly, mentioning better health care services and residential homes for the elderly, effective medical treatment for diseases connected with elderly people such as Parkinson's and dementia, and more opportunities to continue an active life after retirement from work.

12. Most candidates failed to obtain full marks for this question. They were not prepared to discuss this issue at enough length to deserve the six marks allocated to it. Most answers were short or, at times, out of point. The most common points made were: the high cost of investment and research in high-tech industries, the training of employees, the high level of competition with rival industries and the strain these industries may cause to the environment.
13. Nearly all candidates managed to answer this question correctly, giving at least two valid points. In some cases, candidates gave an answer that was vague or partially repetitive, such as noise pollution and air pollution. Since such an answer reflects two aspects of the same issue (*i.e.* pollution), candidates who answered in this manner were only given one mark for both answers. A handful of candidates lost all the marks since they confused urban life with rural life.
14. Most candidates did quite well in the first part of the question. However, they seem to have misunderstood the second part of the question. Particular sites, such as the River Rhine, the Camargue Wetland, Lapland and the Ruhr Region were not mentioned. In most cases, candidates gave generic examples of environmental degradation, such as oil spills in the Mediterranean, dumping sites, and contaminated rivers and lakes.
15. Most candidates understood that a multicultural society is a society that is made up of different cultural groups.

The majority of candidates also gave a correct answer to the second part of the question. However, there were some instances where candidates confused xenophobia with homophobia or gender inequality.

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Most of the candidates who attempted the last part of the question obtained one mark due to short or vague answers.

3.4 Section IV - Europeans and their Environment

16. Many candidates were unaware of the perched aquifer above the Blue clay layer in Malta. Some even mentioned Reverse Osmosis plants as being aquifers. The majority made good references to the constant risk of polluting the aquifers but few mentioned the problem of over-extraction, the consequent lowering of the water table and the rising salinity of the natural fresh water reserves.
17. Practically all candidates showed that they were aware of the controversy about the installation of these railway lines in Northern Italy. They also provided valid answers to explain the opposite arguments on the issue.
18. Many gained the full six marks for this question but some candidates mixed up the ports linking the names provided to the wrong country.
19. Practically no answers were incorrect but many of them consisted of very superficial answers: one-word answers, short phrases such as 'hot' (high temperatures), 'no rain' (the summer drought), 'much rain' (the rainy season starting October/November).

When dealing with the habitat of the olive tree, few correctly referred to the Mediterranean soil and the slopy terrain of many Mediterranean areas.

3.5 Section V - The Cultural Heritage

20. Candidates generally mentioned two countries which had colonies. However, in the second part of the question, few of them dwelt on the mineral resources they could get from the colonies, the human resources they could utilise and the increased markets they provided.
21. Candidates answered this question well, explaining how the Internet enables increased interaction through the use of chat rooms and email and hosts a good data base with a variety of sources that can be tapped into. They were also able to identify three types of media.
22. Most candidates did not define nationalism and socialism well. The major difficulties were encountered in defining the term nationalism with some candidates showing that they had not understood the term at all.
23. Though most candidates did well and mentioned the cultural, architectural, religious and linguistic influences of Islam, there were a few individuals who scored very low marks in this question.

24. Candidates dealt with the impact of the French Revolution very well. However, they fared less well when discussing the impact of the Enlightenment. The way these influences resulted in the development and practice of modern democracy was explained quite well.

4.0 Paper 2A

4.1 Section I - Power and People

1. A total of forty-six candidates attempted this question and obtained an average mark of 14 out of 20. Most candidates were successful in identifying between four and eight human rights clauses included in the European Convention of 1959. Some briefly mentioned the historical background which brought about the signing of this Convention. A smaller number of candidates even grouped human rights into political, civic and social rights and provided some correct examples of each group. Most candidates gave a partially correct answer to the last part of the question or were not adequately clear when describing at least one instance when cases from national law courts were referred to the European Court of Human Rights.
2. A total of sixty-six candidates attempted this question obtaining an average mark of 10 out of 20. The majority of the candidates showed a clear understanding of the concept of the welfare state and its underlying principles and gave a number of concrete examples of welfare state provisions.

Most candidates answered the second part of the question correctly, showing a clear understanding of the strains on the welfare state. Candidates identified causes of this strain, namely the economic recession, the rise of unemployment, the rise in the cost of living due to the rising cost of energy sources, the expanding welfare gap, the fall in the birth rate, tax evasion and abuse of welfare provisions. A minority of students suggested ways in which governments could address this crisis, namely by minimizing tax evasion, introducing more rigid means testing, reducing the national deficit and introducing secured private pension schemes.

4.2 Section II - Economic Development and Changes in Europe

3. Eighteen candidates attempted this question. Some very good answers were given but some candidates tended to go out-of-point by referring to local investors in this sector. These answers were considered positively since some local companies depend on shares supported by foreign companies and investors. However, answers which referred to multinationals such as ST were not considered correct since these are not related to the leisure industry. Few candidates showed that they are knowledgeable about the phrase 'leisure industry'.
4. This was a very popular question with sixty-four candidates choosing it. Most candidates showed that they were well prepared; some, however, commented broadly on all the continents, ignoring almost completely any reference to the European

economy as requested by the question. Most candidates, however, dealt with globalisation and the merits of the European Union in introducing many standard directives for all its members in all life sectors.

4.3 Section III - Demography and Social Realities

5. A total of forty-four candidates attempted this question. The average mark was only 8 out of 20 marks. The greater part of the candidates managed to identify most of the components included in the marks scheme. Nearly all candidates recognised the close relationship between education and employability in contemporary Europe. Most candidates even made reference to the need for lifelong education and training and discussed the various educational and vocational training programmes sponsored by the EU (*Erasmus* and *Leonardo da Vinci*). Only a few candidates, however, showed a clear understanding of the term 'sustainable development' and managed to discuss its implications on the need to foster further economic development with the least possible harm to the ecological environment.
6. A total of fifty-nine candidates attempted this question and obtained an average mark of 12 out of 20 marks. Most candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of the term 'minorities' and their relationship with the dominant race in a given society or state. However, a considerable minority failed to distinguish between ethnic and religious minorities, stating that 'Muslims' in Malta or in France are an 'ethnic' minority. Candidates were more successful when giving reasons for the presence of ethnic minorities in Europe, with some even referring to the post-World War II economic boom in Europe and the demand for non-European immigrants to make up for a shortage in the labour force. Others mentioned causes such as civil strife, the infringement of human rights and economic stagnation as push factors for the existence of ethnic minorities in contemporary Europe.

The greater majority of candidates gave some positive and negative consequences of ethnic minorities in European societies. Positive consequences mentioned included the multicultural factor that is enriching Europe, greater dialogue among different cultures and religious groups, wider interest in foreign languages and a greater diversity in costume, food and leisure pursuits. With respect to negative consequences, most candidates pinpointed issues such as the existence of xenophobia, low paid jobs, the rise in unemployment among the unskilled category of workers, the strain on the country's welfare system, an increase in delinquency and crime, and the development of ghettos or substandard housing complexes.

4.4 Section IV - Europeans and their Environment

7. Fifteen candidates attempted this question and showed that they were well read about the topic. Correct and detailed answers were provided. A couple of candidates, however, thought that the regeneration of the area was accomplished merely to improve the environment which the same inhabitants and workers moved back to as soon as the project was completed.

- Eighteen candidates attempted this question. Answers were generally correct when dealing with what the Mediterranean diet consists of. The positive aspects of this diet were highlighted correctly, naming vegetables, fruit, milk, olive oil and fish as the items which contribute to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. However, some candidates did not seem to consider bread, pasta and pizza/pies as forming part of the typical Mediterranean diet. Most candidates were not aware that excessive eating of these items causes diabetes. Many thought that the main cause of diabetes was the consumption of confectionary items, a fact which is only partially correct.

4.5 Section V - The Cultural Heritage

9. Most candidates did well when tackling the Renaissance movement and dealt with the great progress made in various areas of art and architecture, the various inventions discovered, the opening of the New World, the arising nationalism and the advent of printed books. They were, however, hardly aware of the impact of the Reformation and just mentioned religious divergences.

10. Most candidates gave some factors which help to shape national identity, such as the sea or mountains as natural frontiers, a common language, a common religion, historic territory, common myths and historic memories. They explained how a national identity may emphasise the differences between the people of one country and another. When giving an example, most of the candidates chose the Nazi oppression of the Jews. They were, however, generally very superficial in dealing with how this influenced the course of history.

5.0 - Paper 2B

5.1 Section I - Power and People

- Six candidates attempted this question, obtaining an average of 7 out of 20 marks. Candidates gave short answers to the first part of the question, mentioning the determination of European states to work for peace and cooperation and to avoid future wars among them. Reference was made to the ECSC Treaty of Paris and the EEC Treaty of Rome. Only a few candidates included other spheres of cooperation, namely agriculture, culture, education and training, taxation, custom duties, civil rights, etc.

Most candidates failed to mention four clear landmarks in the history of the EU. Landmarks mentioned included the Treaty of Rome of 1957, the Schengen Agreement, the Treaty of Maastricht and the introduction of the euro.

In the last part of the question, the majority of the candidates mentioned the ECSE Treaty and explained why it was brought about and what its economic implications were.

2. Ten candidates attempted this question obtaining an average mark of 8 out of 20 marks. Candidates managed to answer the first part of this question successfully. However, when it came to expanding upon the mentioned examples, most candidates were not so clear and convincing in their explanation.

In the second part of the question, most candidates identified some of the historic, social and economic reasons for the setting up of the welfare state in Europe. Some candidates went even further, explaining the benefits of the welfare state to the national economy and lower income wage earners.

Candidates were less successful when tackling the last part of the question because they repeated some of the answers already given. Few candidates mentioned the recent recession, the rise in unemployment and the welfare gap as possible strains on the welfare state.

5.2 Section II - Economic Development and Changes in Europe

3. Eight candidates opted to answer this question. Answers were generally correct though there were some who evidently did not know the meaning of 'leisure industry' and consequently did not gain any marks.
4. This question was attempted by eight candidates. Overall attainment by candidates was good and some even attempted to compare the advantages and/or disadvantages of one type of freight, such as sea transport, with another, such as rail transport. Some did well in this comparison but others gave rather confusing answers.

5.3 Section III - Demography and Social Realities

5. Ten candidates attempted this question, obtaining an average mark of 5 out of 20 marks. Most candidates partially answered this part of the question, in some instances confusing migration with emigration.

Candidates mentioned three examples of mass migration towards Europe but then failed to explain clearly their cause or to draw contrasts between one example and another. Shallow knowledge and understanding of the issue was demonstrated since the three examples were dealt with as having the same cause and the same effect on the receiving country.

In the last part of the question, most candidates mentioned less than the requested five EU measures. Some candidates confused the measures adopted by the EU to meet this phenomenon with the negative consequences of mass migration towards Europe, such as a rise in unemployment, xenophobia and ethnic conflicts. Thus these answers were partially out of point.

6. Thirteen candidates attempted this question, obtaining an average mark of 7 out of 20 marks. Most candidates seem to have misunderstood the first part of the question.

Instead of defining competitiveness in relation to the macro-economy of a country, they saw it as an ever increasing situation where many citizens have to compete among themselves when seeking employment. They failed to point out the need for good quality goods and services with the least price in order to remain competitive in the global market.

In the second part of the question, most candidates mentioned the need to create more jobs, control the cost of living, increase exports and reduce the national debt.

Most candidates answered the last part of the question poorly showing a lack of clarity. Examples mentioned were not supported with convincing and precise evidence and data. Some candidates even repeated the same examples, demonstrating shallow knowledge of the issue in question.

5.4 Section IV - Europeans and their Environment

7. Six candidates opted for this question. Most of these did not recognise the Norwegian Current (an extension of the North Atlantic Drift) and merely referred to it as the Atlantic. Most candidates knew the location of some of the European countries and could explain why the west coast has a milder climate than the internal east.
8. Twelve candidates attempted this question. Answers provided were very focused on what is included in the Mediterranean diet. The positive aspects of this diet were highlighted correctly, naming vegetables, fruit, milk, olive oil and fish as the items which enhance a healthy lifestyle. The majority could also indicate why this diet is so healthy. However, some candidates emphasized that the consumption of confectionary items is a major cause for diabetes, something which is only partially correct.

5.5 Section V - The Cultural Heritage

9. Nine candidates attempted this question. Candidates generally managed to explain how the industrial revolution involved a series of changes by which hand craftsmanship in the home gave way to machine-work in factories. Most of the candidates supplied good reasons why the industrial revolution started in Britain, mentioning its good commerce, well-developed systems of banking and insurance, merchant marine, powerful navy, rich mineral resources and stable government. Candidates also dealt quite well with the main results of industrialization, pointing out the increase in population, urbanisation, worse social conditions, first trade unions, socialist movements, new industries and drive to colonialism.
10. Fourteen candidates attempted this question. The themes generally chosen were national identity, the invention of the printing press, progress in communications, globalization and the Internet service. The candidates' performance in this question was rather poor.

6.0 Project

Projects were assessed for originality, appropriate presentation, relevance, fieldwork research and appropriate conclusions. The overall level of the projects presented was good. Some projects, however, were too general in nature and should have had a more focused theme. Some candidates failed to integrate the chosen theme within a European Studies dimension.

Topics chosen were mainly of a historical nature. These were mainly descriptive and lacked personal conclusions and suggestions. Copying of whole chunks from secondary sources was sometimes evident. The methodology adopted was very limited, based mainly on the collection of information taken from original library sources or the Internet. Only small-scale interviews were used as research tools, often with no analytical insights into the data. Some candidates gave the impression of leaning too much on adult support to complete their work. Though there were many projects which were excellent in presentation, there were others which were done rather haphazardly, e.g. lacking a Table of Contents, captions to pictures, etc.

Projects should preferably be based on primary sources, with candidates expressing their own ideas and feelings about the topic investigated. Research skills, such as the use of questionnaires, interviews and analysis should be more developed. Candidates' work should be more integrated in approach and should include practical solutions and recommendations based on findings.

Chairperson
Board of Examiners

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