

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA
SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
SEC

EUROPEAN STUDIES

May 2007

EXAMINERS' REPORT

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS BOARD

**SEC EUROPEAN STUDIES
MAY 2007 SESSION
EXAMINERS' REPORT**

A numerical overview of the result:

GRADING OF CANDIDATES

Grade	Papers 1& 2A	Papers 1 & 2B	total	Percentages
1	17	-	17	8.1
2	35	-	35	16.7
3	31	-	31	14.8
4	33	9	42	20.1
5	15	22	37	17.7
6	-	18	18	8.6
7	-	12	12	5.7
U	6	7	13	6.2
absent	0	4	4	1.9
totals	137	72	209	100

Project Work Moderation Report

As directed by the Matsec Board, the examiners' board moderated 42 projects representing a cross-section of a maximum of 209 who submitted their application for this examination. Four candidates were absent for all sessions. A number of candidates did not submit their projects. Two candidates presented theirs as private candidates.

Project works in six schools were moderated. Judging on this rather limited assessment, the main conclusion reached is that the focus of attention and energy is on the descriptive side, even with candidates who opted for Paper 2A... Although some good evidence of data gathering through questionnaires and interview methods were shown, candidates still need to be encouraged more in interpretive and analytic skills when discussing their findings. One should mention that, in one of the schools, all the projects moderated consisted of power-point presentation in a CD Rom format. Although, even in this case, the material was mainly of a descriptive nature, the moderators appreciated this further effort and the ICT skills as inducted by the teachers. Such educational openings should be encouraged.

The criteria proposed by MATSEC in the Feedback Sheet were generally satisfied by the way candidates have proceeded with their Project, except, as already mentioned, in the analysis and recommendation requirements of which insufficient evidence was given.

General Comments on the Examination Papers

- Questions set in the five sections reflected the topics in the respective modules in the 2007 SEC syllabus.
- While Questions in Paper 1 were meant mainly to assess students' knowledge and understanding of basic concepts and processes contained in the syllabus, those in Papers 2A and 2B were more focused on the higher-order skills of discussion, interpretation and analysis.
- Difference in the level of difficulty in Papers 2A and 2B was ensured in two ways: (a) the structure of the Paper, with the former based on extended argumentative writing through the essay writing type question and (b) the demands and expectations of the skill-based questions.

Specific Comments

Paper 1

Section 1 Power and People

Q.1 Re: Solidarity and subsidiarity as fundamental principles of European Integration

Candidates were able to explain the principle of 'solidarity', oftentimes with examples from experiences encountered locally or internationally through the media. On the other hand, only few responses showed that they were understanding the concept of 'subsidiarity', and, in these few cases, the example of the Local Councils was frequently cited to illustrate their explanation.

Q.2 Re: The social rights of workers as part of the European Social Charter

In the majority of cases this question was answered correctly. Sporadic cases mixed up 'social' rights with 'human' rights.

Q.3 Political rights in the Europe and European institutions which safeguard them

While candidates could give the meaning of political rights correctly, there was a significant number of them who were not sure about the institutions in the European Union, to the extent that examples like the United Nations and the Council of Europe were mentioned.

Q.4 The meaning of OSCE

The question was answered correctly by the majority of respondents, some of them giving a very good description of the structure and functions of OSCE

Q.5 The meaning of Welfare Services in Europe

This question was also answered correctly by the majority of respondents, some of them giving very good examples of welfare services for citizens in Europe.

Section II Economic Changes and Development in Europe

Q.6 The three main sectors of production and its interdependence

Almost all candidates answered this question correctly. Some failed, however, to explain the connection and interdependence with one another, for which reason one or two marks were lost.

Q.7 The definitions of certain recent elements of economic development and changes in Europe

Candidates failed badly in this question, mixing definitions or giving irrelevant answers such as EFTA, OSCE, WTO, CAP, free movement, single market, besides others.

Q.8 The feasibility of particular modes of transport from one part to another in Europe

Most candidates answered this question correctly, showing understanding of the geographical features, time, distance, expense and environmental impact involved in the use of the various types of transport systems in Europe. When candidates gave short, obvious or repetitive answers they were given one instead of two marks allocated to each part of the question.

Q. 9 EU's relation with OPEC; EU aid to Africa; Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

Candidates answered questions (a) and (b) successfully and obtained full marks. It was in question (c) that most candidates lost marks because they failed to demonstrate relevant and correct information about the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Some candidates attributed the setting up of this institution in the 1950s, mixing it up with the ECSC or with the EEC. Others gave vague answers referring to cooperation between Mediterranean countries without mentioning the important fact that it included Magreb and Middle Eastern countries.

Q.10 E-commerce and globalization: how it works and the advantages to transnational companies

Almost all candidates answered parts (b) and (c) correctly. However, some candidates lost marks when attempting part (a) when failing to emphasize the fact that e-commerce had turned the world into one open and single market.

Section III Demography and Social Realities

Q.11 The on-going trend to move to the European cities

A good number of candidates answered this question correctly.

Q.12 The social and economic influences of mobility of people in Europe

This question was answered correctly by only a relative minority of respondents. The reason is that, rather than discussing the influences of mobility, they mentioned the reasons for its occurrence, but this was not what the question was asking for.

Q.13 Cultural tourism in Europe and its promotion

The great majority of the answers to this question was correct, even though some simplistic cliché answers such as those about the sun and sea could have been replaced by more attention to Malta's history and heritage as real elements of cultural tourism.

Q.14 Boundaries in Europe are becoming less defined

A good number of correct responses was given for this question, with students commenting on the importance of globalisation and the Schengen Agreement.

Q.15 The change from an industrial society to one of information technology in Europe

Only an insignificant number of responses was irrelevant.

Section IV Europeans and their environment

16. Levels of sea pollution in the Mediterranean Sea having gone beyond sustainability.

There were a number of superficial points presented but also quite a number of very good answers especially with reference to negative impacts on life both on the open sea and also on the coasts. However, some candidates evidently did know the meaning of 'sustainability'

17. Positive and negative effects of the Mediterranean climate on farming activities.

Most answers were mainly concentrated on effects which are felt directly by farmers, hence the great summer heat and drought and the winter cold winds and heavy showers of rain and sometimes hail. Many candidates did not link these effects directly to farming in the Mediterranean. There were, however, some very good answers with reference to the cultivation of early crops due to the mild winters, the destruction caused by storm waters and others which focus directly on Mediterranean agriculture, with its positive and negative aspects.

18. Causes and effects of obesity are the result of modern lifestyles of the European consuming society.

Most of the candidates provided detailed information which reflect a high level of awareness of this particular problem related with developed countries. The correct details of various nature seem to show that the topic is covered from different aspects in a number of curricular subjects, for example Home Economics, PSD, Geography and Science, besides, of course, European Studies.

19. A matrix to be filled in by writing the mentioned economic and infrastructural features in the correct cell:

This question tested the recall ability of candidates in three sectors in four different European countries. Paper 2B candidates fared very badly, with many trying to guess the right cell but even some Paper 2A candidates mixed up some of the activities, especially The Rhone Wine roads, The Maremma, the Barcelona Zona Franca and the Huertas of Murcia.

20. The reasons why some European countries has developed nuclear power and arguments in favour and against.

Many of the candidates gave good responses about nuclear energy, showing that the topic was covered to some extent but then few candidates were able to provide reasons which 'forced' certain European countries to pass over or concentrate their energy provision on the nuclear. Many of the arguments against, according to some candidates, went round the wrong perception that nuclear plants emanate automatically radio-active rays. The arguments in favour were better but there were also many inexact answers, such as that nuclear energy is supposedly renewable or that in all its aspects it is cheap.

Section V The Cultural Heritage

Q.21 Symbols representing a common European citizenship and identity

A considerable minority of candidates seem to have misunderstood the question and gave wrong answers, such as national language, national flag, passport, ID, the practice of democracy or human rights, besides other aspects.

Q. 22 Problems of identity in the Basque Provinces and in Cyprus

Most candidates answered this question successfully and showed clear understanding of the issues involved.

Q.23 Shared historical experiences in Europe and their impact

Most candidates gave correct answers for the first part of the question. Some lost marks when their answer to the second part was too short and rudimentary.

Q.24 The rise and fall of European colonialism

Here a considerable number of candidates misunderstood the question and gave the names of colonised countries (e.g. Cyprus, Malta, South Africa etc.) instead of the correct colonizing states (e.g. France, Britain, Spain etc.). With regards to the other components of the question, candidates fared better in part (c) than in (b). Most candidates seemed to lack basic historical background that led to the setting up of the early colonial empires in the 16th and later centuries. Almost the totality of candidates answered question (b) correctly, giving the end of the Second World War, the Cold War and the process of decolonisation, and the forces of nationalism and movements of independence as the reasons for the end of European colonial empires.

Q.25 The invention of gunpowder, the printing press and steam power in Europe

Most candidates answered this question fairly well, but some did not get the full marks when the reasons given were too short or vague.

Q.26 The meaning in Europe of pluralism of the media and the multiparty system

A substantial minority of candidates failed to distinguish between pluralism in the media (i.e. methods of mass communication) and pluralism in politics. Thus they linked the concept with freedom of expression, liberty of the press and human rights, with the result that their answer was out of point. Most candidates answered part (b) fairly well, although at times they confused multiparty with bi-party.

Q.27 Examples of a Slavonic and a Teutonic language

Some candidates lost half the marks when instead of an example of a Slavonic language (e.g. Slovene, Russian), gave the name of the country (Slovenia, Russia), when the question clearly stated to give the language and not the country.

Paper 2A

Section 1 Power and People

Q.1 The Promotion of democracy and human rights issues in Europe

The fact that only 10 candidates out of 137 opted for this question in this paper shows the difficulty which candidates find in this sort of discussions. However, concepts like 'democracy' and 'human rights' seem to have become very familiar discourse with some students and those taking European Studies in particular. Candidates were, therefore, able to answer this question correctly and with good examples.

Q.2 Europe's concern to promote and maintain for peace rather than conflict

51 candidates opted for this question. Seemingly a corollary to question 1, this question was also answered in a satisfactory manner, with candidates naming peace-making measures like negotiation, mediation, and compromise, and also explaining them correctly.

Section II Economic Changes and Development in Europe

Q.3 Forms of transport in Europe and their effects on lifestyles

A very popular question with 92 candidates attempting it. Candidates showed extensive knowledge of the advantages, disadvantages and workings of the different types of land, sea and air transport systems in Europe. However, some candidates lost marks for leaving out examples of transports such as city trams and underground rail. Some candidates lost marks for not linking transport systems with the effect that these have on the daily life of Europeans and the impact they have on the environment.

Q.4 The workings of a multinational company

Only 26 out of 137 chose this question. However, the few candidates who did so, fared well in it. Although most candidates did show some relevant knowledge of multinational companies in Europe, knowledge about their workings and their economic advantages and disadvantages. However, when it came to discussing the workings of such companies, few candidates mentioned relevant issues, namely research and innovation, health and safety, marketing and advertising, sales and distribution of products etc. The candidates may have felt the question too difficult, probably they were not prepared for this type of question, even though the syllabus mentions a case study on the workings of a local multinational company.

Section III Demography and Social Realities

Q.5. The need of multilateral cooperation to deal with the problem of immigration in Europe

The issue of immigration has become very topical in Malta, as in neighbouring Mediterranean countries, and candidates seem to be well informed about it, most probably through the media and public debates. In fact, 70 candidates attempted this question. Responses to the question were, as expected, of a good standard, with some referring to the EU Frontex organisation and Malta's contribution to it.

Q.6. Female participation in Europe

This was the most popular question with 94 candidates out of 137 opting for it. Responses were, generally, correct, encompassing issues related to the world of work and life in the family. However, candidates' answers lacked discussion on the need of balance between family life and work for married female workers, which is topical at the European level and even in Malta.

Section IV - Europeans and their environment

Q. 7. The origins of air pollution and measures taken in Europe to control and limit negative developments in the lower part of the atmosphere.

Over 90 candidates out of 137 candidates opted for this question. There were many similar answers with references to car, factory and power stations emissions but a number were strictly terse and simply descriptive. There were, however, some very good answers with a discussion on the theme as requested by the question. Candidates should read the question well and try to do as requested.

Q. 8. Four different life sectors of a Sustainable City in Central and Eastern Europe and the most important issues dominating life in such cities.

Only 35 candidates out of 137 attempted this question. Some candidates seem to think that market economy is simply the number of large shopping outlets in a country not a particular economic system; for the sectors, the candidates scored better marks. However, also for this question, many candidates do not

provide a discussion but simply a description, in many cases good ones. Then the majority of the candidates for this question ignored any reference to a city in Central and Eastern Europe as requested by the question.

Section V The Cultural Heritage

Q.9 Important changes brought about in Europe by the French Revolution

Most of the candidates did not opt for questions of a historical aspect: in fact only 30 candidates attempted this question. And even those who did so, in most cases, failed to discuss the French Revolution in such a way as to focus upon the causes, the main changes it brought in France and its effect in other parts of Europe. Most candidates focused on one or two of the above aspects of the questions, for which reason they lost some of the allocated marks. Few candidates mentioned negative changes in France, such as the Reign of Terror, mob violence, intolerance, civil strife and another minority of candidates linked the movements of nationalism and liberalism in 19th century Europe as one of the long-term effects of the French Revolution.

Q.10. The effects of European citizenship on the spheres of education, training, environmental issues and multiculturalism

This multi-faceted question was not popular at all with candidates: only 32 out of 137 opted for it. However, most of the few candidates who did so, managed to discuss all the four components of the question. Some others, however, answered the question in a generic way. Others who mentioned more concrete EU programmes relevant to the question, such as Comenius, Socrates, the Eco label, the blue flag, bring-in sites, waste separation and campaigns to combat racism and xenophobia fared a better mark.

Paper 2 B

Section 1 Power and People

Q.1 The meaning of European citizens Agenda, issues important for European citizens and ways to address them

Candidates sitting for Paper 2 B found this question rather difficult: in fact only 9 candidates out of 72 chose this question. In part (a) Respondents found the phrase 'European Citizens' Agenda' difficult to explain. Many candidates are not prepared to tackle inferred topics within the Syllabus but attempt only those which are explicitly prescribed. In parts b and c, answers to the question were given in general and broad terms, but relevant material was included.

Q.2 In supporting the integration process and the risks of marginalisation and xenophobia

Again candidates surely judged this question difficult, since only 6 candidates opted for it.

a) Both the terms of 'marginalisation' and 'xenophobia' were explained correctly. This is very likely the result of current discussions and debates on immigration taking place in Malta, at present.

(b) Measures towards European integration mentioned by candidates generally reflected suggestions in Mark Scheme.

Section II Economic Changes and Development in Europe

Q.3 Effects which different modes of transport have on lifestyles and environment in Europe

In this case, a very popular question, with 59 candidates opting for it. Most of the candidates did so successfully, showing extensive knowledge of the advantages, disadvantages and workings of different types of land, sea and air transport systems. However, some candidates lost marks for leaving out examples of well-known transport systems such as city trams, underground rail. Some candidates did not gain all marks for not giving enough examples of links between the use of these transport systems with the daily life of Europeans and their effect on the environment.

Q.4 The workings of a multinational company in relation to a number of mentioned issues and factors

The 22 candidates who attempted this question obtained a rather low mark. Most candidates simply gave a definition of the aspects chosen (e.g. health and safety precautions, research and innovation, etc.) but then failed to mention concrete examples how these aspects are managed. The reason for this shortcoming is probably because candidates did not cover the topic extensively enough as to cover the aspects of the question, even though a case study of the workings of a multinational company is part of the syllabus.

Section III Demography and Social Realities

Q.5. The creation of a European multicultural society and how to sustain it

35 candidates chose this question. At least these candidates have shown that growing awareness of the notion of multiculturalism accompanying the reality of a European multicultural society. This has been demonstrated by the wide range of good answers to this question.

Q.6. Four particular components of the Employment policy in Europe

37 candidates opted for this. Of the four concepts proposed in the question, nearly all choices fell on the first two, namely, 'competitiveness' and 'vocational education'. However, even here, the term 'competitiveness' was not explained in accordance with the meanings given in the Mark Scheme, with candidates even interchanging 'competitiveness' with 'competition'.

Section IV Europeans and their environment

Q.7. The high level of air pollution in the lower part of the atmosphere in European cities and industrial areas: description causes and remedies.

45 candidates out of 72 chose this question. Generally these candidates did quite well in answering this question. There were, however, a number of recurring mistakes: e.g. wrong references to the depletion of the ozone layer (out of point in this context) and the supposed impact of light gases on the troposphere. Causes and remedies were described quite correctly, in many cases suggesting very drastic measures, not applicable very easily. It is important to add that the attitude of certain candidates to answer too briefly could be observed even for this question.

Q. 8. Problems of sustainable living in certain Central and Eastern European cities: examples, and issues connected with the economy, land-use and society in such cities.

Evidently this was not a popular: only 18 candidates opted for it. Many of them scored rather low marks and did not show the ability to understand the question entirely. Some candidates even found it difficult to indicate the location of some cities and some countries in Central and Eastern Europe. For the description of different issues in connection with living in these countries, many of the candidates did know the actual meaning of the key word 'sustainability'; and hence were unable to answer correctly.

Section V The Cultural Heritage

Q.9 Lifestyles before and after the French Revolution and the spread of the new ideas

Only 13 candidates attempted this question. Some of these did not answer the questions distinctly with the result that ideas and arguments were mixed up in one whole chunk of data. Part (c) of the question had the weakest answers. When attempting part (b) most candidates mentioned positive changes of the French Revolution and left out negative ones (e.g. the Reign of Terror, mob violence, intolerance and others).

Q.10 Rights and duties in Europe in relation to education, environment, traveling and multiculturalism

When discussing the aspects mentioned in the question, most of the 32 candidates, who chose this question, showed some knowledge of what these issues involved within a European Union context. Unfortunately, a considerable number of candidates focused upon 'rights' obtained as EU citizens and gave less weight to the underlying duties that accompanied such rights.

Chairman,
Board of Examiners

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