



L-Università
ta' Malta

MATSEC
Examinations Board



Examiners' Report
SEC European Studies

Main Session 2024

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A. STATISTICAL INFORMATION

The total number of candidates who registered to sit for SEC European Studies was **101**, which is **10** candidates less than in 2023. Of these registrations, **66** opted for Paper IIA and **35** opted for Paper IIB.

Table 1 shows the distribution of grades of the examination for the May 2024.

GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	U	ABS	TOTAL
PAPER A	9	10	20	8	9	-	-	4	6	66
PAPER B	-	-	-	3	10	3	3	10	6	35
TOTAL	9	10	20	11	19	3	3	14	12	101
% OF TOTAL	8.9	9.9	19.8	10.9	18.8	3.0	3.0	13.9	11.9	100.0

Table 1: Distribution of grades for SEC European Studies, Main Session 2024

B. COMMENTS ON PAPER I AND PAPER II

PAPER I

SECTION I – POWER AND PEOPLE

Question 1a

Most candidates gave a correct answer when defining pluralism in a democracy. There were however a small number of candidates who wrongly associated the term with the right to vote.

Question 1b

The great majority of candidates gave a correct response when defining freedom of expression.

Question 2

Most candidates gave good examples of active participation by the citizens in a democracy. However, responses that were too brief were given half the marks allocated.

Question 3a

Most candidates had difficulty in explaining the principle of subsidiarity and how this can be exercised in the governing of a country.

Question 3b

Very few candidates managed to answer this question satisfactorily. Most responses, such as 'local elections', 'local representatives', 'consult with the citizens' were too brief, vague and thus lacked an adequate explanation to deserve the full marks allocated.

Question 4a

Most candidates connected the origins of the Council of Europe with the desire of Europeans to establish an institution to strive for peace and human rights after the catastrophic experience of the two world wars.

Question 4b

The answer concerning the role of the Council of Europe was noted to be quite shallow and lacked any reference to education and multicultural awareness. Most candidates focused on human rights and democratic principles in their answer.

Question 5a

Most candidates gave 'European Parliament' as a correct answer.

Question 5b

Most candidates answered correctly by mentioning the movement of capital, goods, services and people in their answer.

SECTION II – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGES

Question 6a

Most candidates answered this question correctly, giving examples to further illustrate their point. Meanwhile, some candidates only gave examples without first defining the term 'tertiary sector'.

Question 6b

A significant number of candidates failed to give a clear definition of the term 'cartel'. Those candidates who, more or less, managed to define this term mostly made reference to the fact that it is unlawful and that the intention behind it is to maximise profits.

Question 6c

Most candidates appeared to have adequate knowledge of the term 'custom barrier'. While most of these candidates made reference to tariffs as an example of a custom barrier, others mentioned border taxes and quotas.

Question 6d

Most candidates are familiar to the term 'e-commerce' and encountered no difficulty in defining this term.

Question 7

A good number of candidates were able to describe two characteristics of the secondary sector in the Ruhr region, mostly referring to the construction industries and manufacturing. Meanwhile, the other candidates did not adequately answer this question and obtain full marks.

Question 8

A significant number of candidates found difficulty in answering these questions, demonstrating inadequate knowledge of the term 'economic blocs'. Only a few candidates managed to answer these questions correctly and obtain good marks.

Question 9

While a good number of candidates demonstrated adequate knowledge of the role of OPEC in the global oil market, some of the candidates failed to outline the relations between OPEC and the EU and, thus, failed to achieve full marks to this question.

Question 10

Almost all candidates were able to answer this question correctly, mostly referring to choice of products and convenience.

Question 11

The answers given to this question show that, although they may be familiar to the term 'globalisation', a considerable number of candidates failed to mention two effects of globalisation on the European economy.

SECTION III – DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL REALITIES

Question 12a

The vast majority of candidates were able to define the term 'population density' and, thus, achieve full marks to this question.

Question 12b

Several candidates were unable to name two European countries with a low population density and two countries with a high population density, confusing the two and, at times, making reference to cities rather than countries.

Question 12c

Most candidates could outline the difference between a low and a high population density .

Question 13

A significant number of candidates gave an adequate explanation of the economic, social and cultural impacts brought about by tourism in Chamonix in France, most of whom mentioned the demand for goods and services, the increase in pollution and the fact that the local culture may be threatened.

Question 14

While a significant number of candidates answered this question correctly, some of the answers lacked an adequate description of the impacts of intensive urbanisation.

Question 15

A significant number of candidates found no difficulty in explaining the causes for the migratory route from North Africa into France after World War II, mostly referring to the demand for workers. Meanwhile, others failed to adequately answer this question and obtain full marks.

Question 16

Most candidates found no difficulty in completing this matching exercise and obtain full marks to this question.

SECTION IV – EUROPEANS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Question 17a

Most candidates gave a correct answer, such as 'River Thames' or the 'Danube'.

Question 17b

Most candidates mentioned correctly the Mediterranean Sea or the Black Sea but few were successful when mentioning a lake found in Europe.

Question 17c

The most common correct response was 'Cyprus', but there were some incorrect responses, namely 'Sicily' and 'Sardinia' which, unlike Cyprus are not island-states.

Question 18a

A few candidates could not correctly identify two climates found in Europe. 'Mediterranean Climate' was the most correct response given.

Question 18b

Candidates who gave 'Mediterranean Climate' in 18a managed to give one or two features of this type of climate. When the second climate example in 18a was incorrect, so also was the description of the features given.

Question 19a

Most candidates gave correct answers, such as lack of rain; long dry summer; absence of rivers and lakes; over population; mass tourism.

Question 19b

Most correct response mentioned reverse osmosis plants; saving rainwater; water saving measures adopted in the home.

Question 20a

Most candidates showed an understanding of what land pollution is by mentioning industrial waste; plastics; pesticides; illegal dumping; landfills generated by human activity that contaminated the land.

Question 20b

Candidates mentioned correct effects of land pollution on the environment, such as animal extinction; destruction of the natural habitat; environmental degradation; illegal landfills; illegal waste dumping sites. There were however some wrong responses such as acid rain and greenhouse gases that are air and not land pollutants.

Question 20c

Most candidates gave correct answers to this question, such as: reduce use of fossil fuel; waste separation; protect natural habitats.

Question 21

Most candidates managed to at least mention two out of three problems of inner cities in Europe, such as air pollution in the form of smog; noise pollution from traffic and construction sites; frequent road accidents; delinquency and crime; areas with sub-standard housing; lack of green spaces; high population density; high price of property; unemployment and tension between the locals and migrant ethnic minorities.

SECTION V – THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Question 22a

The most common aspects of Maltese culture given were the village feast; religion; the Maltese language and *pastizzi*.

Question 22b

The most common examples of European identity given were democratic principles; human rights; the rule of law and European citizenship.

Question 23a

Most candidates defined the Reformation as a movement directed against the corrupt practices of the Catholic Church.

Question 23b

The most common effects of the Reformation mentioned were the division between Catholic and Protestant Europe; the wars of religion; the decline in the power and influence of the Catholic Church.

Question 24

Most candidates mentioned Dante's *Divine Comedy* as the first literary work written in Italian instead of Latin and his influence on the development of the Italian language and literature.

Question 25a

Most candidates demonstrated a rudimentary idea of what fascism is, mentioning features such as strict discipline and regimentation of society; an aggressive nationalist foreign policy; dictatorial government and lack of individual freedom.

Question 25b

Most candidates answered by giving the name of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. A few candidates mentioned only one dictator.

Question 25c

Most candidates defined communism by mentioning one or two of its ideological features such as an egalitarian society; a controlled economy; control of the means of production; a stateless society; an ideology of the far left in the political spectrum.

Question 25d

There was some confusion in identifying Vladimir Lenin as the main Communist political leader of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Most candidates mistakenly mentioned Karl Marx and Stalin.

Question 26

Most candidates mentioned the following points when explaining the effects of the French Revolution on the development of modern democracy: separation between Church and State; individual and human rights; the end of feudal society; the end of royal absolutism; constitutional government; people power in the form of the right to vote in free elections.

PAPER IIA

SECTION I – POWER AND PEOPLE

Question 1

Most candidates who attempted this question were able to identify and explain the causes and effects of the conflict in the Basque region. Most of these candidates mentioned the characteristics of the Basque region, such as its language, and most mentioned the role of nationalism and the attacks carried out by ETA.

Question 2

While a considerable number of candidates were able to adequately discuss the characteristics of a democratic society and obtain good marks to this question, the arguments presented by several others were vague and lacked a clear understanding of such characteristics.

SECTION II – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGES

Question 3

Only approximately one third of the candidates attempted this question and, from these candidates, only a few managed to attain full or almost full marks. Most of these candidates found difficulty in discussing the effects of globalisation on Europe despite the EU being a powerful trading bloc.

Question 4

Less than one third of the candidates attempted this question. While some of the candidates managed to satisfactorily discuss the importance of TENs to the development and modernisation of European infrastructure, the others did not manage to obtain good marks to this question since they failed to present good arguments in this respect.

SECTION III – DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL REALITIES

Question 5

This question was attempted by a good number of candidates. While a few of these candidates managed to obtain good marks by adequately discussing the challenges of a multicultural society, the answers given by several others lacked good examples which demonstrate such challenges.

Question 6

More than half of the candidates attempted this question. Only a few of these candidates managed to attain good marks by discussing the various measures taken by European countries in their attempt to reduce unemployment.

SECTION IV – EUROPEANS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Question 7

Quiet a popular choice amongst candidates. Most produced some very good points in their attempt to answer this essay question. No particular difficulties were observed.

Question 8

Most candidates produced some very good points in their attempt to answer this essay question. It must be noted that in certain occasions, answers were very repetitive, and a number of students failed to explain the various facets of the Mediterranean Diet.

SECTION V – THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Question 9

This was not a very popular choice amongst candidates. Answers were of average level and that might explain why few candidates actually chose to answer this essay. Most mentioned the Parthenon and the Colosseum as examples, but actually explained their historical importance.

Question 10

This also, was not a very popular choice. Most answers were not up to standard as it was clear that candidates had difficulty in expressing their understanding of national identity.

PAPER IIB

SECTION I – POWER AND PEOPLE

Question 1a and 1b

Only three candidates attempted this set of questions. Two of these candidates lacked adequate knowledge on the conflict in the Basque region in general and its causes and effects in particular.

Question 1c

The answers given to this question demonstrated an unclear understanding of the term 'deadlock'.

Question 1d

Only one of the candidates appears to have adequate knowledge on non-violent peace-making processes and attain good marks to this question.

Question 2a

Around one third of the candidates attempted this set of questions and from these candidates only a few could present a clear definition of the term 'universal suffrage'.

Question 2b

A considerable number of candidates were able to somewhat explain this principle.

Question 2c

While most of the candidates showed some familiarity with the terms in this set of questions, a clear definition is largely lacking.

Question 2d

While the majority of candidates seem to be familiar with the concept of democracy, most lacked to adequately discuss the responsibilities associated with living in a democratic society.

SECTION II – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGES

Question 3a

Only six candidates attempted this set of questions. The majority of these candidates demonstrated a vague idea of the terms listed in this set of questions but did not manage to attain good marks.

Question 3b

The majority of candidates failed to satisfactorily discuss the effects of globalisation on the European economy.

Question 3c

The answers given to this question show that the candidates are not familiar with the role of the Union for the Mediterranean.

Question 4a

Approximately one fourth of the candidates attempted this set of questions. The majority of these candidates could identify a number of transport routes commonly used in Europe.

Question 4b

The answers given to this question show a somewhat adequate understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of using water transport for freight.

Question 4c

The majority of candidates struggled to adequately describe the role carried out by rail transport in encouraging commercial activity in Europe and did not manage to attain full marks to this question.

Question 4d

The majority of candidates were unable to satisfactorily answer this question on the advantages of the TENs.

SECTION III – DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL REALITIES

Question 5a

This set of questions was attempted by a good number of candidates. While a considerable number of these candidates were able to name four characteristics of multiculturalism, the others failed to satisfactorily answer this question and attain full marks.

Question 5b

A significant number of candidates were able to adequately discuss the challenges associated with a multicultural society.

Question 5c

This question was satisfactorily answered by a considerable number of candidates.

Question 5d

The vast majority of candidates failed to mention the reasons why Europe experienced a population decline in the twentieth century.

Question 5e

This question was unsatisfactorily answered by most of the candidates who failed to demonstrate a good understanding of migration patterns and to give examples in this regard.

Question 6a

This set of questions was attempted by a good number of candidates. A considerable number of these candidates managed to correctly answer this question.

Question 6b

Some of the answers given to this question show uncertainty in the role of trade unions in collective bargaining.

Question 6c

The answers given by most of the candidates show that a difficulty in adequately explaining the measures taken by European countries in reducing unemployment prevails.

Question 6d

The majority of candidates were unable to satisfactorily answer this question.

SECTION IV – EUROPEANS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Question 7a

A very small number of candidates chose this question on sustainable development. There were some extremely poor attempts and some good ones. Candidates who had shallow knowledge on the subject made brief references to environment friendly development which does not harm the ecosystem of the planet.

Question 7b

The examples of ecological damage mentioned by most candidates were: cutting down trees; draining water from rivers and lakes; uncontrolled urbanisation; destruction of natural habitats resulting in species extinction; illegal dumping hazard waste in landfills, rivers and lakes; release of drainage into rivers, lakes and seas.

Question 7c

Candidates gave the following examples of action taken by the EU to achieve sustainable development: education campaigns targeting students, youths and the general public in favour of separation and recycling of waste; substitute fossil fuel with renewal energy resources; introduce electric public transport vehicles; purchase eco-friendly and energy saving appliances in the home; impose fines on who pollutes irresponsibly.

Question 7d

The few candidates who answered this question correctly gave the Camargue region in France as an example, mentioning its importance for salt harvesting and an eco-tourist resort centre. Other candidates mentioned the Mediterranean Sea which is facing multiple ecological threats from over-fishing; accidental oil spills; dumping of drainage and industrial waste from regions that are not regulated by standards set by the EU.

Question 8a

Candidates gave the following reasons for having a healthy lifestyle fundamental for personal wellbeing: protects from chronic diseases; increase life expectation; safeguards mental health; increase awareness towards a balanced and healthy diet.

Question 8b

Candidates gave the following factors that are detrimental to one's good health: unbalanced diet; frequent consumption of junk food; lack of physical fitness; a sedentary lifestyle; inadequate sleep; excessive stress; chain smoking and excessive alcohol.

Question 8c

Candidates gave the following positive factors that contribute to one's good health: a balanced diet; regular fitness exercises; mental wellbeing strategies; reduce stress; balance between work and leisure; stable social relationships; routine exposure to nature.

Question 8d

Many candidates had difficulty describing the characteristics of the Mediterranean diet. There were some fair good responses who stated some food items that when taken together make this type of diet a health one: vegetables and legumes; fruits; fish and seafood and pasta. These food items are rich in vitamins and proteins and reduces the risk of chronic diseases caused by overweight or obesity.

SECTION V – THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Question 9a

The most frequent correct responses were the Roman Colosseum and the Greek Acropolis or Parthenon.

Question 9b

Candidates who gave Colosseum as their answer for 9a described its use as a place for entertainment, executions, gladiator fights and animal hunts. Candidates who gave Acropolis or Parthenon as their answer described their use as a place of worship and for holding festivals in honour of the gods of Greek mythology.

Question 9c

Some extremely poor answers. Candidates had little idea of the Renaissance period. The most common characteristics mentioned were portrait art; scientific research; the origin of modern anatomy and 3D paintings. Some seem to have confused the Renaissance with the Enlightenment with comments such as 'individual rights' and 'Age of Reason'.

Question 9d

When discussing the influence of Classical architecture on the Renaissance, some correct responses stated that Renaissance architectures copied and blended features of Ancient Greek and Roman architecture, namely columns, arches, domes porticos and cornices and created original masterpieces.

Question 9e

Most candidates explained the significance of cultural heritage in today's world by the following points: it reminds us of past cultures and civilizations; contributes to the mass tourism industry; a source of national

identity; connects peoples with the past; a source of employment; a testimony of the great achievements of past generations.

Question 10a

Candidates who chose to answer this question defined national identity mentioning the following points: culture and traditions adopted by a country; unique features which determines one's country; symbols belonging to one's country; historic or cultural events pertaining to one's country.

Question 10b

The most frequent correct examples of national identify given were religion; history' traditions' costume; currency; food (*e.g.* Maltese *qubbajt*); literature; architecture; language; type of entertainment (*e.g.* Spanish flamigo).

Question 10c

Most answers were reasonably good, but few could satisfactorily explain the issues in Northern Ireland as part of their answer. Reasons for the conflict in Northern Ireland given were: British colonial domination; British military occupation; religious strife between Catholics and Protestants; ethnic violence; terrorism by the IRA; an ultra-nationalist desire to join the Irish Republic.

Question 10d

Candidates mentioned the following points when answering why national identity is important in the life of every citizen: it gives citizens a sense of belonging to a community; citizens feel protected and secure by their own government, especially when travelling abroad; guarantees that citizens enjoy the rights and services provided by their country.

Chairperson
Examination Panel 2024