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## **The Election of Donald Trump as the 45th US President Strengthened the Public Support of the European Union Among Europeans**



Result of a Study Coauthored by the Sociologist Lara Minkus of SOCIUM together with to Colleagues from Florence and Magdeburg.

The study asks if and how the public support of the European Union among Europeans has been changed by the election of Donald Trump. The result: The Europeans have a more positive opinion on the EU - and interestingly enough mostly people who consider themselves on the political right. In order to be able to tackle this attitudinal dynamic the authors of the study used the fact that by chance the US presidential elections took place right in the middle of a polling for the Eurobarometer. Eurobarometer is the instrument with which the European Commission regularly polls the public opinion of the EU citizens. This happened also in November 2016. Approximately half of the interviews were conducted prior to the US elections, the other half afterwards. "Because the election of Trump was such a surprise and the date of the interviews prior or after the elections was randomly assigned to the persons and did not correspond to any political opinions of the people interviewed the situation in 2016 approximated a so called natural experiment" says author Lara Minkus. Together with the sociologist Emanuel Deutschmann (European University Institute, Florence) and Jan Delhey, Professor of Macrosociology at the University of Magdeburg Ms Minkus concluded that and change in support for the EU after the US Election must be a "Trump effect".

### **More support for the EU on the political right**

After the election of Trump the EU gets more support from its citizens. But this increase in support shows an unequal distribution if one correlates it with political orientation. It becomes obvious that this Trump effect is especially measurable on the right side of the political spectrum. The political support for the EU also increase in the center and the left side of the political spectrum. But this

increase is still in the margin of statistical error. The question of what motivates especially people on the political right to increase their support is open to speculation. The most plausible answer might be the idea that the US elections arouse the hopes that the EU could finally be transferred into some kind of "Europe of the Nations" which would isolate itself against the outside and follow a more protectionist power perspective, says Lara Minkus. "Whether this 'Trump effect' on the right wing was only a short term issue or leads to long term change will be seen after the elections of the European Parliament in May of next year."

**More information:**

Minkus, Lara; Deutschmann, Emanuel; Delhey, Jan, 2019: [A Trump Effect on the EU's Popularity? The U.S. Presidential Election as a Natural Experiment](#), in: Perspectives on Politics, online-first, S. 1 - 18, [doi:10.1017/S1537592718003262](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592718003262)

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