

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

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Government and Politics 6GP04 4A
EU Political Issues

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General Comments:

The entry for this paper was very small, and the range of responses seen was quite limited. There were few responses at the higher level, presumably reflecting the short space of time candidates have had to prepare for Unit 3 as well as Unit 4.

This paper has been marked by a lack of evidence to back up points- as with previous series, those examples that were seen were often very historical examples and policies.

Comments on individual questions:

Question 1

The most common error on this question was examining benefits of EU membership overall rather than focusing on the issue of social rights e.g. the Common Agricultural Policy has benefited farmers.

Candidates tended to generally accept that yes, social rights have benefited all EU citizens, often in quite general terms on human rights. Such responses would typically remain in level 2 for the lack of specific knowledge- an example from the European Court of Justice would have helped candidates progress to level 3. However, the examples needed to move responses in to level 3 were missing from the majority of responses. A significant minority of candidates used the word 'social' in the question to turn this into a personal diatribe against immigration.

Question 2

This question saw a range of quite general answers on the impact of enlargement rather than focusing on "since 2004".- this limited candidates' marks to the bottom of level 2, as did the common error of reading the question as impact of enlargement on UK, or has it been beneficial for UK.

This is only one creditable factor for discussion, and **only** if it was explicitly related to the impact of enlargement **since 2004** on the UK.

Another common mistake that kept candidates in level 2 was listing reasons with little explanation e.g. that enlargement has caused sovereignty problems, made integration more difficult, two-speed Europe, poorer workers moving to richer countries. Candidates who failed to develop such a list could not progress beyond the middle of level 2.

Level 3 responses saw candidates explain at least 3 reasons well e.g. impact on decision-making, impact on subsidies as joiners are less developed, Schengen allowing more migration and possible impact, etc.

There were some interesting points raised by candidates on the impact of enlargement on foreign policy or on the Common Agricultural Policy. Such responses argued that the development of CFSP may be affected, as many of the new members favour US foreign policy as a result of their Cold war history, or that because the new members have more agricultural-based economies, enlargement has forced reform of the CAP.

Question 3

This was the least popular short-answer question, and responses often lacked specific detail on the coalition's attitudes and policies.

Some candidates made very general points on economy being more important for coalition rather than the EU, or made a general point about Clegg opposing Cameron's recent visit to EU with no context of how or why offered.

A number of candidates did, however, display some good knowledge of the coalition's division over the UK's involvement last month in financial regulations- this combined with at least 2 other points would progress responses into level 3. Some candidates also cited the example of conflict over prisoners' votes as an example of division.

This question was marked overall by a lack of recent knowledge on the coalition partners' positions on the EU, and also factual errors such as assuming the Minister for Europe is a Liberal Democrat because that party tends to be more pro-EU than the Conservatives.

Question 4

This question saw candidates tend to focus on the European Parliament versus the European Commission in terms of democratic features- such responses could access the top of level 2 if explained well and if there was at least an acknowledgement of recent changes like co-decision.

A significant number of responses were quite often rambling about democracy in general, demonstrating a lack of knowledge of the work of the EU. This was only a creditable point if it was explicitly related to institutions rather than just generalities, and would be limited to a low level 2 without specific examples or evidence.

A number of candidates made an interesting point on the new citizens' initiative adding to democracy.

Level 3 responses would explain a range of points on different institutions, and address the "To what extent" part of the question.

Question 5

Many responses to this question were very generic on what has happened during the global financial crisis rather than focusing on the consequences- limiting the marks awarded to a low level 2. Other low level 2 responses tended to focus on only one area such as the weakening of France and Germany's economies, or that the crisis showed the inefficiency of ECB.

Most candidates relied on very general points on making the UK less likely to want to join, other countries may be less likely to want to trade with the EU, members losing faith and wanting to leave the Euro. Arguments such as

these that were tied to actual facts/views were creditable e.g. One faction within Greek Parliament wants to leave the Euro and could reach the top of level 2.

Level 3 responses would typically demonstrate an awareness of both the general impact of the crisis on the EU overall and also specific examples of actions that have been taken or criticisms made e.g. that the emergency fund proposed may not be big enough, that the bailouts have not worked as intended and led to further bailouts etc.

Question 6

This was the least popular essay question, and saw quite broad responses on the European Parliament in general and so candidates were limited to level 2. Candidates needed to address the 'still' aspect of the question to progress beyond this- in other words, **has** the European Parliament changed and become more/less of a talking shop?

Level 3 responses would attempt a balanced answer and show a clear awareness of how the power of the European Parliament is affected by the power of and relationships between other EU institutions, most probably the Commission.

Question 7

This was the most popular essay question, but was dominated by historical responses that mainly focused on Maastricht, Brown's economic tests, and the UK and USA special relationship. Such responses would remain in the middle of level 2 for their lack of up-to-date knowledge.

Many responses were also unbalanced, and concentrated on the Euro-sceptic Conservatives and the issue of the euro and 5 tests- again remaining in mid level 2 for a lack of range, balance and recent knowledge.

There was surprisingly little knowledge of recent events, attitudes and policies, such as the coalitions "referendum lock" or the proposed referendum in October 2011.

However, a mixture of historical points with some references to divisions within the coalition and general attitudes within the UK to the EU and UK involvement **could** access level 3 on AO1, but points on the coalition were required to enter level 3.

Question 8

Again, many responses to this question were quite historic, relying on points about the Maastricht opt-out as evidence of a loss of sovereignty. Most responses focused on subsidiary and vetoes- if these were the only factors included, candidates would be limited to a mid level 2 for a lack of range. A wider range of points was needed for level 3 and a number of specific examples to progress within that level.

This question, more than the others, was marked by simplistic yes/no responses with brief conclusion, limiting synoptic marks to the bottom of mid level 2.

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