



CULTURAL STORYTELLERS PROJECT

ARE YOU



BIASED?

BASED ON THE MOBILITY ORGANISED IN SCHAIJK,
THE NETHERLANDS ON MARCH 4-13, 2025



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INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of a survey on cultural stereotypes, conducted as part of the Erasmus+ project "Cultural Storytelling Canvas: Crafting Narratives for Inclusion, Democracy, and the Environment!". The project brought together young participants from five countries—Greece, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain, and Türkiye—with the aim of promoting intercultural understanding, challenging prejudice, and encouraging active citizenship.

One of the key goals of this youth exchange was to help participants reflect on and deconstruct cultural stereotypes through personal storytelling, dialogue, and shared experiences. The survey was designed and implemented together by project participants as an interactive tool for starting the discussions around cultural bias and social perception.

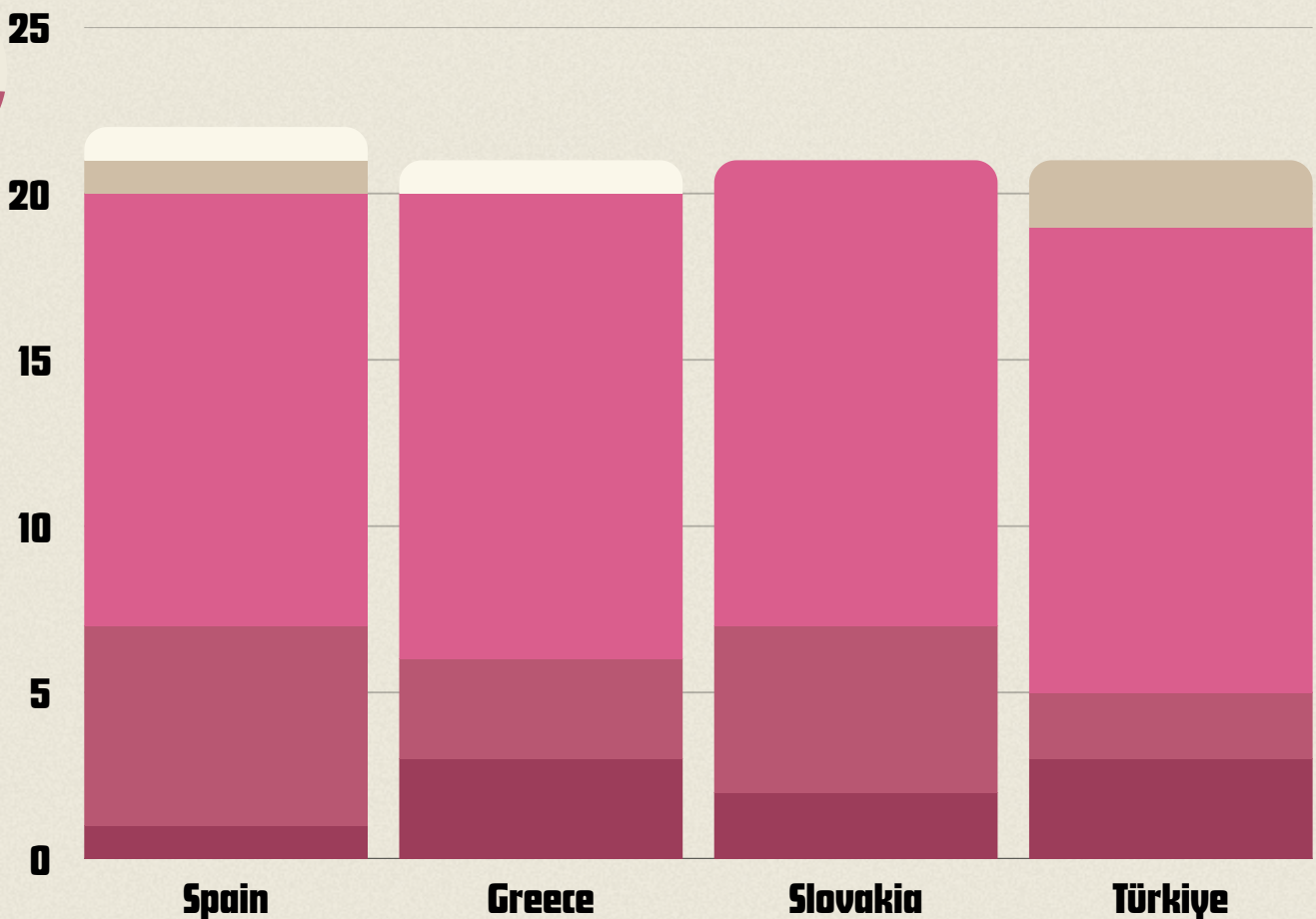
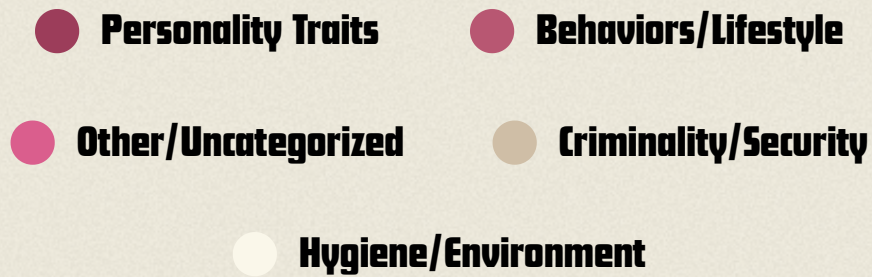
The survey was published online and invited young people to anonymously share the stereotypes they associate with Spain, Greece, Slovakia, and Türkiye. Also, during the mobility, the participants asked people on the streets of Dutch cities (Uden and Schaijk) the same questions. These open-ended responses were then analyzed by the group to uncover patterns, classify the stereotypes by type (e.g., personality, behavior, security, etc.), and explore whether the attitudes expressed were positive, negative, or neutral.

The ultimate goal of this exercise was to use descriptive storytelling and data analysis as tools for personal reflection and social transformation. The findings presented here are a stepping stone for deeper conversations and educational activities that will be carried out during the youth exchange program. They also contribute to the broader mission of the project: fostering a more inclusive, respectful, and culturally aware generation of young Europeans.



Report on Stereotypes from Project Participants Survey

The survey collected open-text responses on stereotypes associated with four countries: Spain, Greece, Slovakia, and Türkiye. EU citizens online and people interviewed on the streets of The Netherlands responded to each country-specific question. Responses were analyzed and categorized into six stereotype types: Personality Traits, Behaviors/Lifestyle, Criminality/Security, Hygiene/Environment, and Other/Uncategorized.



THE CULTURAL STORYTELLERS PROJECT



Spain

The majority of stereotypes (65%) were categorized as Other/Uncategorized, indicating a wide range of specific and diverse perceptions not easily grouped. Behaviors/Lifestyle stereotypes (30%) were the second most common, often referencing a partying culture, music, or relaxed attitudes. Personality Traits and Criminality/Security stereotypes each represented 5%, with descriptors such as "loud" and "close-minded" appearing. A small portion (5%) also referred to hygiene and environmental aspects, such as being a "warm country" or "filthy."

Greece

As with Spain, most responses (70%) were Other/Uncategorized, again reflecting a broad spectrum of ungrouped perceptions. Personality Traits (15%) and Behaviors/Lifestyle (15%) stereotypes were the next most frequent. Common themes included being "late," "relaxed," or "disorganized." Hygiene/Environment and Cultural/Social Norms each accounted for 5%, while no explicit Criminality/Security stereotypes were observed.

Slovakia

Responses about Slovakia also showed a high percentage (70%) in the Other/Uncategorized group. However, Behaviors/Lifestyle stereotypes (25%) were noticeably centered on alcohol consumption, with references such as "everyone drinks" and "big alcohol culture." Personality Traits represented 10%, with mentions of being "stubborn" or "small-minded." No notable mentions were made under Criminality/Security, Hygiene/Environment, or Cultural/Social Norms categories.

Türkiye

Like the other countries, a large portion of responses (70%) fell into the Other/Uncategorized category. Personality Traits (15%) included terms such as "proud" and "dangerous." Stereotypes involving Criminality/Security (10%) and Cultural/Social Norms (10%) also appeared, referencing theft, danger, and negotiation habits. Behaviors/Lifestyle represented 10%, while no mentions were made under Hygiene/Environment.



OTHER & UNCATEGORIZED STEREOTYPES

Spain

Responses about Spain often reflected cultural imagery and national branding, but also some vague or humorous opinions. Several participants referenced flamenco, siesta culture, and bullfighting, reflecting long-standing stereotypes shaped by tourism and media. Food and leisure also featured prominently — tapas, sangria, and sunny weather were common mentions. Some viewed Spain positively, calling it a “good” country or associating it with “fun, drink and sun.”

A few entries emphasized national pride or arrogance, such as “They think Spain is the best country in the world,” while another observed that “Spanish people don’t like to speak English,” hinting at perceptions of cultural insularity.

Other responses like “Overrated” and “Too much talking and I can’t understand nothing” show mild irritation or vague disapproval. Interestingly, multiple mentions of football (“Hala Madrid”) appear more playfully than critically.

This category reflects a mix of admiration and cliché, with a blend of romanticized cultural elements and playful exaggerations.

Greece

Stereotypes about Greece in this category reflected a tension between its historical grandeur and contemporary struggles. Some described Greece as a place of “history, warriors” and “beautiful islands and blue seas,” emphasizing ancient legacies and touristic imagery.

However, several comments focused on economic instability — phrases like “the one with no money,” “financial instability,” and “Greeks love to borrow money” suggest lingering perceptions tied to Greece’s recent debt crisis.

Others commented on lifestyle and character — “They are conservative,” “irresponsible,” or “have a quiet simple life” — with some portraying Greeks as laid-back and others as disorganized or morally flawed.

Some respondents wrote “none” or “nothing,” which may reflect an absence of bias or a refusal to generalize. One curious phrase — “Greeks love to borrow money and eat sharks” — blends financial cliché with absurd humor.

These stereotypes oscillate between historic admiration, economic judgment, and social characterizations.

Slovakia

Slovakia attracted a narrower range of stereotypes, mostly centered on alcohol use, religiosity, and cultural confusion. Many respondents referred to the population as “alcoholics” or noted a pervasive drinking culture, while others called Slovaks “conservative,” “low educated,” “easily manipulated,” or “absurdly religious.” These traits suggest a perception of rigid or traditional values, possibly tied to post-socialist cultural expectations.

Interestingly, more than one respondent confused Slovakia with Slovenia, or claimed to have “no idea” or “none,” pointing to a general unfamiliarity or marginalization of the country in broader European consciousness.

Other responses like “good country,” “nice nature,” and “they are committed to their culture like Turkey” suggest a neutral or slightly positive view, but overall, responses reflect a mixture of negative assumptions and limited awareness.

Türkiye

Stereotypes about Türkiye were richer in cultural detail and more emotionally charged, reflecting a broader and more polarized perception. Many responses praised Turkish hospitality, family values, and food culture, with repeated mentions of kebabs, baklava, Turkish tea, and the country’s blended Eastern and Western influences.

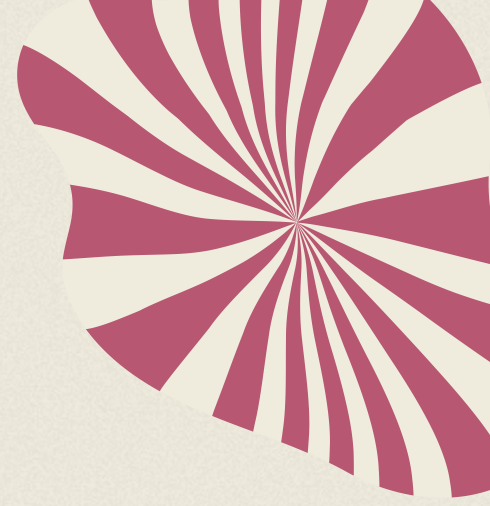
Several detailed entries noted Türkiye’s historical richness and famous locations like Istanbul and Cappadocia, showing admiration for its heritage. Respondents wrote that “Turkish people are very hospitable and generous” and that “family and community are very important in Turkish society.”

Yet, this positivity was balanced by more negative or extreme stereotypes: one respondent bluntly labeled Türkiye as “toxic,” another claimed “the men abuse the women,” and one associated Turks with being “scammers.” Comments like “All men have mustaches” or “They love cats” added a whimsical or comic tone.

There is also a perception of religious and ethnic identity — “Turks are Muslims and like kebab” — that simplifies and flattens cultural complexity into a single, dominant image.

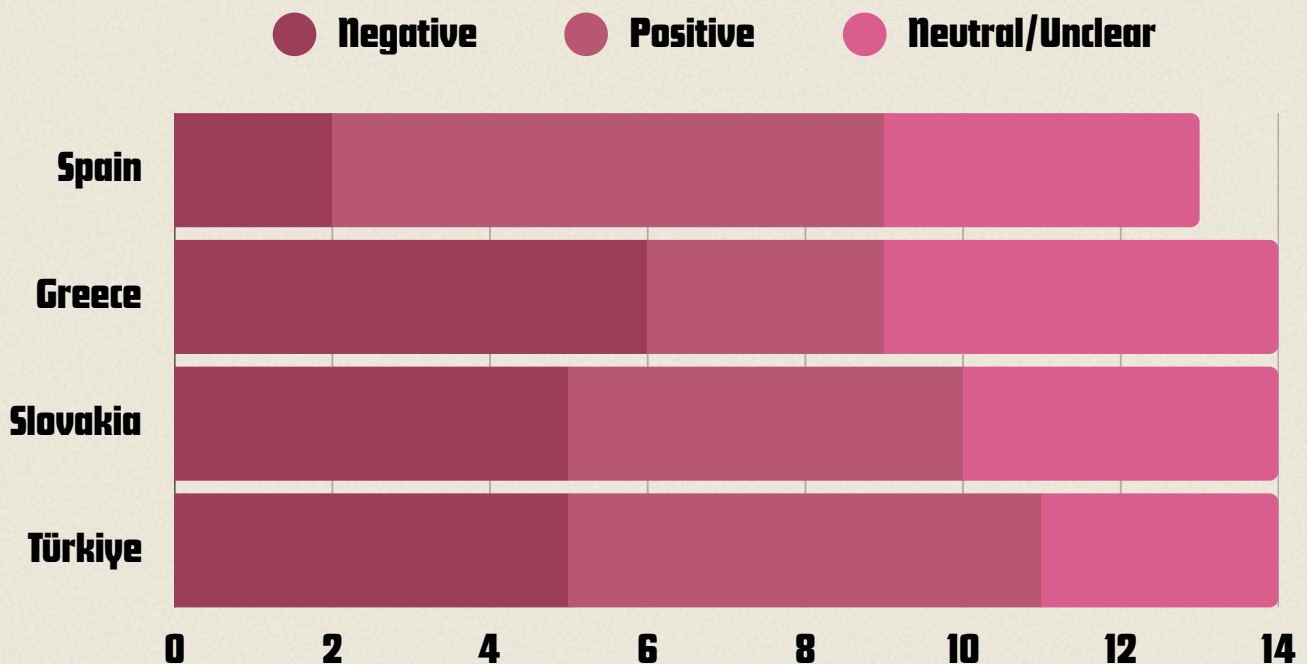
This set of responses illustrates Türkiye’s multifaceted image in the eyes of others — simultaneously admired for its culture and food, yet also targeted with distrust, exoticism, or fear.

CROSS-COUNTRY OBSERVATIONS



- The dominance of Other/Uncategorized stereotypes across all four countries (65–70%) shows the complexity and specificity of individual perceptions.
- Behaviors/Lifestyle stereotypes were notably frequent for Spain (30%) and Slovakia (25%), often related to partying and alcohol.
- Personality Traits were more common in Greece and Türkiye (15% each), suggesting more emphasis on individual character in perceptions.
- Criminality/Security concerns were more pronounced in stereotypes about Türkiye (10%) and Spain (5%).
- Cultural/Social Norms and Hygiene/Environment were minor but present in stereotypes about Greece and Türkiye, hinting at social practices and cleanliness-related perceptions.

The data reveals that stereotypes remain deeply nuanced and often diverge widely in focus. While some common threads exist—such as frequent mentions of partying in Spain or alcohol culture in Slovakia—many responses are highly individual and do not fall into easily classifiable categories.



STEREOTYPE TONE BY COUNTRY

Spain

Spain received the highest number of positive-toned stereotypes among all four countries in this category. These responses often praised cultural aspects such as flamenco, siesta culture, and the country's overall ambiance: "fun, drink and sun," "beautiful summer nights," and a love for football. Such responses suggest that Spain is seen as a lively, enjoyable, and culturally rich country.

Only a few responses were clearly negative, including terms like "overrated" and criticism about communication or arrogance ("too much talking," "Spain is the best country in the world" implying boastfulness). This suggests that while Spain is mostly viewed favorably, a few respondents hold more skeptical or dismissive views.

The neutral entries were either ambiguous or lacking in discernible sentiment. For example, "none," "good," or factual statements like "they don't like to speak English" do not necessarily carry a clear emotional tone.

Interpretation: Spain is generally perceived positively, with strong cultural branding contributing to favorable stereotypes. Negative responses are minimal, and most neutral ones are simply nondescript or factual.

Greece

A small portion of responses reflect admiration for Greece's history, natural beauty, and friendliness. Comments like "Greeks are friendly," "always sunny," and references to "beautiful islands" contribute to a warm but modestly represented positive image.

Greece shows a notably higher number of negative stereotypes. These often relate to financial instability ("the one with no money," "financial crisis") and character traits ("irresponsible," "conservative," "borrow money"). One bizarre stereotype — "they eat sharks" — may be meant humorously but reflects misinformation or absurd exaggeration.

Several entries provided no opinion or stated "nothing," "none," or made factual statements that lacked sentiment. These responses suggest that some participants either lacked knowledge or chose not to express a bias.

Interpretation: Greece is portrayed with a mixed tone, but leans more negative, driven largely by economic stereotypes and generalizations about behavior. Positive cultural imagery exists but is underrepresented.

Slovakia

Half of the categorized responses for Slovakia were positive. These include praise for natural beauty (“nice nature”) and cultural preservation (“committed to their culture”), reflecting respect for the country’s environment and traditions.

The other half of the responses were overtly negative, focusing on stereotypes such as “alcoholics,” “low educated,” “brainwashed,” and “absurdly religious.” These comments suggest perceptions of backwardness or rigidity, possibly influenced by post-Soviet clichés.

Neutral responses include confusion (“Did you mean Slovenia?”), a lack of opinion (“No idea”), or vague descriptors like “good country” that don’t offer strong sentiment.

Interpretation: Slovakia’s stereotypes are evenly split between positive and negative. Many responses show a lack of familiarity, which may explain the presence of both extremes and several neutral or confused comments.

Türkiye

Türkiye received a substantial number of positive stereotypes, mostly celebrating hospitality, cuisine, and cultural richness. Respondents admired Turkish food (“very delicious,” “kebabs, baklava”), kindness (“very hospitable”), and diversity (“mixing European and Middle Eastern influences”).

Despite these positives, Türkiye also attracted strong negative stereotypes, some of which were culturally or socially loaded. Comments included “toxic,” “scammers,” “abuse,” and other generalizations that reflect political or social fears. These types of stereotypes suggest polarized perceptions of the country.

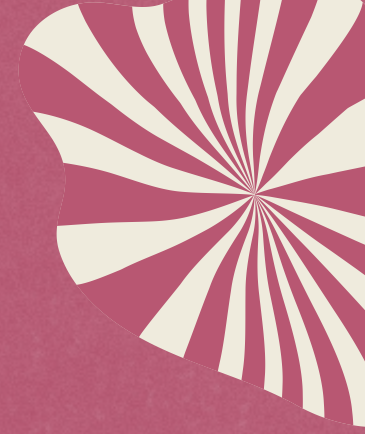
The neutral entries were either factual (“they love cats,” “all men have mustache”) or lacked an emotional charge. Some reflect exoticism without clear praise or criticism.

Interpretation: Türkiye evokes a dual image — a place admired for its warmth and culture but also criticized harshly by others. This polarization is the most pronounced among all four countries.

Overall Trends and Insights

- Spain stands out as the most positively perceived country in this data set, reflecting cultural admiration and few negative associations.
- Greece and Türkiye both show polarized views, but for different reasons — economic critique for Greece, and socio-political tensions for Türkiye.
- Slovakia’s stereotypes reflect a lack of awareness, combined with persistent and potentially harmful generalizations about drinking or traditionalism.
- The Neutral/Unclear category helps reveal when respondents either did not hold stereotypes or were unsure, adding nuance to the data and avoiding forced classification.

NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES BY COUNTRY AND TYPE



Spain.

- Behaviors/Lifestyle (50%)

Half of the negative stereotypes toward Spain focused on lifestyle behaviors. These included perceptions of excessive partying, being overly talkative, or appearing unserious. The stereotype of "always partying" or "too much talking" suggests a judgment of superficiality or lack of seriousness.

- Other/Uncategorized (25%)

One-fourth of the negative responses were too vague or broad to classify clearly. These included labels like "overrated" or general expressions of disdain.

- Criminality/Security (12.5%)

Some responses (e.g., "lots of stealing") implied concerns about personal safety or dishonesty, introducing a minority but sharp perception of criminal behavior.

- Hygiene/Environment (12.5%)

Stereotypes such as "filthy" represent a small portion, indicating a judgment on cleanliness or public hygiene.

- Personality Traits (0%)

Notably, no negative stereotypes for Spain were classified under personality traits, suggesting critiques focus more on external behavior than on character.

Interpretation: Negative views of Spain are primarily behavioral, portraying the country as overly social or careless. Criticism is light on character judgment but includes small concerns about crime and cleanliness.

Greece

- Other/Uncategorized (75%)

A large majority of negative views were vague or complex enough to defy standard categories. These included statements about economic irresponsibility, such as "they love to borrow money," or broader societal critiques like "the Greeks are irresponsible." These responses likely stem from financial crises and EU-related narratives.

- Behaviors/Lifestyle (25%)

A smaller group of responses criticized Greek people's organization, punctuality, or relaxed nature. This implies a stereotype of being unstructured or unreliable in daily life.

- All other categories (0%)

There were no significant mentions related to criminality, hygiene, or personality traits.

Interpretation: Negative stereotypes about Greece overwhelmingly focus on economic mismanagement and social behavior, with little concern for safety or individual traits. These are likely influenced by recent historical and financial contexts.

Slovakia

- Other/Uncategorized (83.3%)

The dominant portion included broad and often harsh generalizations such as “alcoholics,” “brainwashed,” or “easily manipulated.” Some were culturally dismissive, such as confusing Slovakia with Slovenia, reflecting low awareness or disrespect.

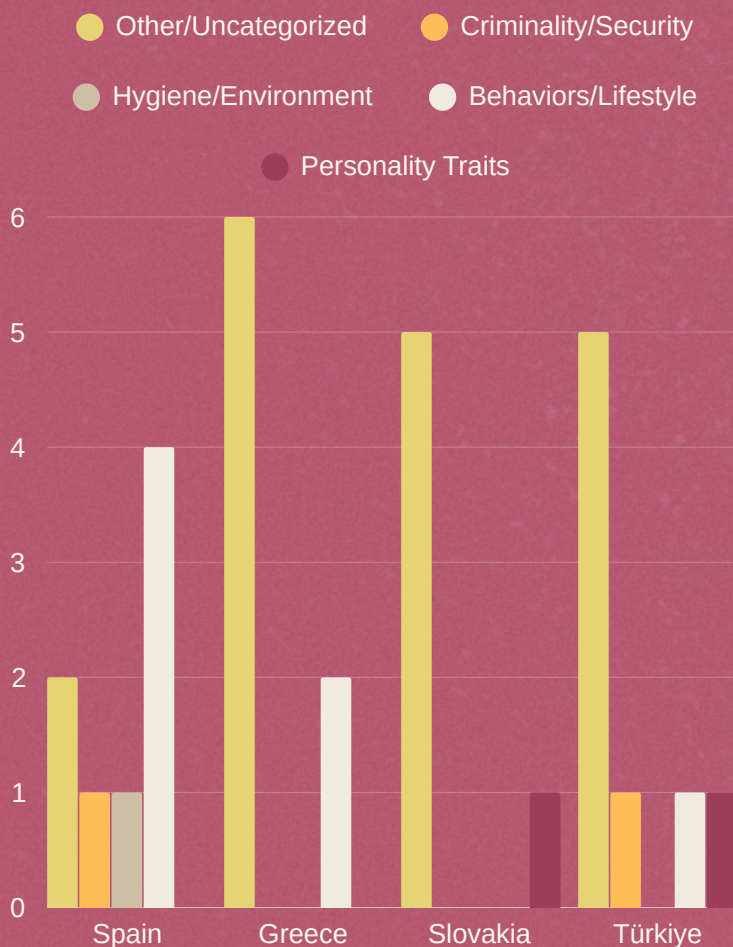
- Personality Traits (16.7%)

Only one response was clearly tied to traits like “stubborn” or “small-minded,” indicating a small portion of character-based judgment.

- All other categories (0%)

No responses were focused on behaviors, crime, or hygiene.

Interpretation: Slovakia's negative stereotypes are largely undefined or abstract, often echoing post-socialist clichés. They are cultural dismissals rather than targeted criticisms of specific aspects like safety or cleanliness.



Türkiye

- Other/Uncategorized (62.5%)

These included wide-ranging or emotionally charged perceptions such as “toxic,” “scammers,” or “abuse,” which are often expressions of fear or mistrust, sometimes linked to gender or religion.

- Criminology/Security (12.5%)

Stereotypes like “lots of stealing” fall into this category, suggesting a perceived lack of safety or honesty.

- Behaviors/Lifestyle (12.5%)

Comments under this type reflected discomfort with aspects of daily interaction or traditions, possibly relating to negotiation culture or social conduct.

- Personality Traits (12.5%)

Negative character judgments included being “too proud” or “dangerous,” reflecting a stereotype of aggressiveness or dominance.

- Hygiene/Environment (0%)

No hygiene-related stereotypes were noted.

Interpretation: Türkiye's negative stereotypes are highly charged and diverse, including character judgment, cultural anxiety, and security concerns. The variety indicates polarized and emotionally loaded perceptions.



FURTHER INFORMATION



ABOUT THIS REPORT

**What do we really think of one another across borders?
How are cultural identities shaped by assumptions, bias, or
inherited ideas?**

This report is the outcome of a youth-led survey carried out under the Erasmus+ project “Cultural Storytelling Canvas: Crafting Narratives for Inclusion, Democracy, and the Environment!” Participants from five countries—Greece, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain, and Türkiye—came together to ask an honest and sometimes uncomfortable question:

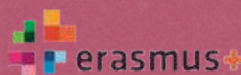
What stereotypes do you have about each other’s countries?

With this project, young people examined how stereotypes arise, how they differ between cultures, and how they can be broken down through open dialogue and critical reflection. The answers were collected anonymously through an online form and then analyzed collaboratively to understand tone, themes, and patterns.

The result is a powerful, youth-driven look into the assumptions we carry and how they shape our intercultural relationships. This report is more than a collection of responses—it’s a call for empathy, self-awareness, and active participation in building a more inclusive Europe.



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