Stereotypes across Europe and within the EU

I. Stereotype(s) and stereotyping

1. Definitions:
   a) Stereotypes (in social sciences, humanities and journalism): Simplifying generalizations which people use when they think about and/or act toward other individuals or groups. They help people systematize their thinking about other groups or individuals by providing them with ready-made images or list of attributes that purportedly reflect “the true essence” of other groups. Stereotypes do not take into account the many differences that exist among the individual members of the group. Since stereotypes are such handy and useful mental “short-cuts” they are pervasive in all cultures. They are found in myths, legends, everyday stories, painting, jokes, cartoons, even music. However, even if they are intended as harmless and joking cataloguing devices (as they often are), they usually have pernicious social effects. Those who use them hamper their own ability to develop more accurate, concrete, and empathetic understanding of other groups or individuals. Those who are targets of stereotyping are often also victims of prejudice and discrimination. In extreme situations, stereotypes are used to incite and justify violence; they can be turned into deadly weapons.

   Prejudice is a negative or hostile attitude toward a person or group formed without just grounds or sufficient knowledge and based on negative stereotypes. Prejudice is based on hasty, unconsidered judgement and can lead to discrimination.

   Discrimination occurs when a person is subjected to restrictions or receives unfair treatment on the basis of ascription to a group (or social category) without consideration for the individual merit. Moreover, the attributes of that group is said to have come from prejudiced stereotyping (see prejudice and stereotype).

   Jan Kubik, Rutgers University

   b) The term stereotype (στερεότυπος) derives from the Greek words στερεός (stereos), “firm, solid” and τύπος (typos), “impression,” hence “solid impression”.

   c) Explanation or Dynamics of stereotypes: Social psychologists believe that mental categorizing (or labelling) is necessary and inescapable. One perspective on the stereotyping process are the concepts of ingroups and outgroups. Ingroups are viewed as normal and superior, and are generally the group that one associates with or aspires to join. An outgroup is simply all the other groups. They are seen as lesser than or inferior to the in-groups.

   For more on the same topic: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stereotype

   d) Stereotypes are classified as:
      ➢ auto stereotypes = stereotypes that ingroup members hold about themselves;
      ➢ heterostereotypes = stereotypes that an ingroup holds about outgroups
      ➢ positive and negative – featuring appearance, habits, manners, behaviour patterns, etc. in a positive or a negative way

2. Opinions on stereotypes:

   “Stereotypes exist for a reason: They help us form opinions about people without all the hassle of getting to know them. Why waste time talking to, say, [...] Canadians? They are like Americans, but polite. There! We just saved you years of pointless interaction with foreigners.

   ...or did we?”

   Read more: http://www.cracked.com/article_18409_the-5-most-statistically-full-shit-national-stereotypes.html#ixzz1EsD Hobku
National identity and national stereotype

“We know most foreign cultures, and much of our own culture, by reputation only. We have an “image” of the Scottish, Belgian or Spanish national character even though we personally may know at most only a handful of people from those countries, and have no way of assessing how “typical” these persons are as representatives of their nation. Even so, we have no problem in recognizing certain temperamental attributes as being “typical” for certain nations: the Scottish reputation for singleness; the Belgian reputation for stupidit, the Spanish reputation for pride, are sufficiently well known for us to enjoy jokes or stories which invoke, and rely on a knowledge of, those attributes.”

Joep Leerssen

http://cf.hum.uva.nl/images/info/leers.html

“Generalizations about cultures or nationalities can be a source of pride, anger or simply bad jokes. Some people say that in all stereotype there is some basis in reality, as they don’t develop in vacuum.

To give a more serious definition: “National Stereotype is a system of culture-specific beliefs connected with the nationality of a person. This system includes beliefs concerning those properties of human beings that may vary across nations, such as appearance, language, food, habits, psychological traits, attitudes, values etc.”

True cold-blooded scientists warn, that “National character stereotypes are not even exaggerations of real differences: They are fictions.”

Christian Skoda

http://www.nomad4ever.com/2007/11/26/55-nations-stereotypes-that-will-ruin-or-make-your-day/

Vocabulary:

provide someone with something, — v. = give something useful or necessary to s.o.
ready-made — adj. = 1. Already made, prepared, or available: ready-made clothes; 2. unoriginal or conventional ready-made phrases
purportedly — adv. = believed or reputed to be the case; supposedly -> Spanish: supuestamente
take into account, = to take into consideration; allow for;
exist, - v. = To have actual being; be real
since — conj. =; because, inasmuch as — Since you’re not interested, I won’t tell you about it.
handy — adj. = (here) easy to use or handle: a handy reference book
pervasive — adj. - spreading or spread throughout; widespread, common
harmless — adj. = not dangerous, not intended to harm or offend; ineffective
pernicious — adj. = 1. causing death, deadly; 2. causing great harm; destructive: pernicious rumors
hamper — v. = prevent the free movement or progress of; restrict; hold on; — Spanish: obstaculizar, impedir
incite — v. = to stir up or provoke to action — Spanish: incitar, instigar
justify — v. = show to be reasonable or provide adequate ground for, “The end justifies the means"
turn into — phr. v. = to produce: turns in a consistent performance every day
deadly — adj. = likely cause death
hostile — adj. = Of, relating to, or characteristic of an enemy: hostile forces; hostile acts.; 2. Feeling or showing enmity or ill will; antagonistic: a hostile remark.
just — adj. = fair or impartial in action or judgment
hasty — adj. = characterized by speed; rapid; fast
unconsidered — adj. = without proper consideration or reflection; irreflexivo, precipitado
lead to (led = led) — v. = To guide or direct in a course
occur — v. = To take place; come about; happen: ocurrir, suceder, tener lugar
restriction — n. = 1. a. The act of restricting; b. The state of being restricted; 2. Something that restricts; a regulation or limitation
subject to — v. = .to cause to experience subjected to extreme weather.
unfair - adj. = characterized by inequality or injustice; 2. dishonest or unethical
treatment — n. = (here) The act, manner, or method of handling or dealing with someone or something: “the right to equal treatment in the criminal and juvenile justice system” (Susan C. Ross).
ascrion — n. = assigning some quality or character to a person or thing; “the attribution of language to birds”; “the ascription to me of honors I had not earned”
ascibe — v. = To assign as a quality or characteristic: was quick to ascribe jealousy to her critics.
merit — n. = An aspect of character or behavior deserving approval or disapproval. Often used in the plural: judging people according to their merits.
be said to have done = [passive structure + perfect infinitive] = people say (believe) that something has been done (in the indefinite past) which still has some influence or impact
II. "stEurotype(s)"

The term was suggested by Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the former French president, and was meant at the creation of a single European stereotype rejecting the old ethnic stereotypes. http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/personal-view/3593683/There-was-a-European-a-European-and-a-European-....html

Activity 1:
Task 1: What do you think? Looking at the three quite popular across Europe and in Brussels postcards below, can you imagine that a single European stereotype will ever replace the various national/ethnic stereotypes?

Task 2: Agree or disagree with the cliches/stereotypes enlisted below, using the set phrases/pointers' from the previous lesson (Sports and the kids, Why Is PE Important?, Section III. Make you point)

Task 3: (optional): The postcards use irony to describe the 15 nations, comprising the ECommunity/EU before 2004. What are the 'real' characteristics (the hidden criticism) wrapped up in the ironic images?

The Perfect European

The picture above shows cartoons drawn by J.N. Hughes-Wilson.
The ‘perfect’ European should be:

- cooking like a Brit,
- talkative as a Finn,
- driving like the French,
- generous as a Dutchman,
- sober as the Irish,
- flexible as a Swede,
- discreet as a Dane,
- technical as a Portuguese,
- organized as a Greek,
- available as a Belgian,
- humble as a Spaniard,
- famous as a Luxemburger,
- patient as an Austrian
- controlled as an Italian and
- humorous as a German
Activity 2

Task 1: Using the nationalities and the patterns - **as [adjective].as [nationality], ….like [nationality]** as well as the information for the 27 countries-members of EU below, try to make your own portrait of the ‘perfect European’ – positive or negative. (Supposedly, preparing it as pre-homework: ‘pre-’, because it is before our ‘speaking session’ on Tuesday, 1 March 2011)

Task 2: After reading the text below, divided in 7 ‘batches’ according to the date of the establishment or the accession to the EU, decide **which of the stereotypes you like best and why**. Most of the stereotypes are quoted (copy-pasted) from 55 Nations – Stereotypes that will Ruin or Make your Day by Christian Skoda, a blogger, Nomad4ever, Life is what you make it! http://www.nomad4ever.com/2007/11/26/55-nations-stereotypes-that-will-ruin-or-make-your-day/

Before reading, please consider his words:

“Please take everything below with a grain of salt; as I only summed up what others wrote on the internet. We all know that there are black and white sheep in every herd. I tried to strike a balance between positive and negative national or personality traits – but sometimes it was very difficult, due to lack of positive stereotypes. :-(

There are plenty of scientific studies about this subject on the net as well. I tried to spice up my findings a bit and take out the seriousness of some of those dry papers:

So without further ado – let’s steal each others sunshine (just a bit) and start here with some general, sometimes contradicting, often nasty, but also some positive stereotypes”

As well as:

The EU Timeline – the establishment of the European Communities (EU since 1992/93) and the accession process

The timetable is somehow also suggestive about particular negative stereotypes, coded and decoded in such political (Eurocratic) acronyms as:  **P.I.G.S. = Portugal + Italy + Greece + Spain or the clause ‘Bulgaria’**
18 April, the Six (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands) sign the Treaty of Paris establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

1957
25 March, the Treaties establishing the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) are signed by the Six (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands) in Rome as of today they will be referred to as the “Treaties of Rome”.

1973
1 January, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom join the European Communities.

1981
1 January, Greece becomes the 10th member of the European Community.

1986
1 January, Spain and Portugal join the European Communities.

1992
7 February, The Treaty on the European Union is signed in Maastricht by the Foreign and Finance Ministers of the Member States

1993
1 November, The Treaty on the European Union enters into force.

1995
1 January, Austria, Finland and Sweden join the Union, bringing membership up to 15.

2004
1 May, European Union’s biggest enlargement ever in terms of scope and diversity becomes a reality with 10 new countries - Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic, and Slovenia - representing all together more than 100 million citizens, joining the European Union.

2007
1 January, Bulgaria and Romania join the European Union bringing membership up to 27.

Stereotypes of the 27 nationalities, comprising the EU

The first batch of EU countries and the national stereotypes held for their people

1. **Belgium → the Belgian/Belgians** – make good beer; poor personal hygiene; good at mathematics; dishonest in money matters; make bad lovers; hermetically private food-lovers; penchant for building houses and garden sheds; fake ornament decorations; distrust of authority; tax evaders; often run shady side businesses; introverted; modest; impostors for other nationalities; but sometimes overly patriotic; everyone is a neighbor – but more stupid than oneself; eat only french & fries, except chocolate and other sweet stuff; multi-lingual; everyone owns diamonds; “pee where they go”

2. **France → the French/Frenchmen and Frenchwomen** – good lovers; best cuisine in the world; chaotic; irresponsible; introverted; selfish; cultured; social “players”; do not like to work – prefer to strike; always surrender in war; don’t speak English; rude to tourists; anti-American; ungrateful; live in a bureaucratic Socialist system, totally dependent on the state; don’t use soap; arrogant and conceited; distant and difficult to meet; don’t respect religious freedom; snobs; God who?

3. **Germany → the German/Germans** - mechanical; organized; boring; no sense of humor; conscientious; drink beer all day – beer-bellied; always shake hands; born with a monkey wrench in their hands, eating vast quantities of sausage and sauerkraut; men have dodgy facial hair, women are icy Teutonic beauties with blond hair and blue eyes; legendary bureaucracy; both sexes loathe inefficiency, love the Fatherland,
have never been late for anything in their lives, and would secretly like to invade Europe, even if they have to do it via the EU; eat about five huge meals a day; follow blindly rules and regulations like “don’t walk on public lawn” and “before crossing the road, wait for the little green man to show even if there is no car in sight”; pedophilic

4. **Italy → the Italian/Italians** - Gigolos; live with their Mamas; even more chaotic than the French; possessive; passionate; pizza/pasta freaks; creative accountants; smooth-talking; manipulative; dishonest; women have mustaches; fashion-addicted; Casanovas; mafia or gang members

5. **Luxemburg → the Luxemburgian/ Luxemburgers** are famous for... not being famous; all rich bankers; shady characters with black hats; manipulative; secretive; introverted; live from money laundering and fund managing; hard-working, intelligent; good in mathematics and monetary transactions

6. **The Netherlands → the Dutch/Dutchmen and Dutchwomen** – polite; open-minded; well-traveled; no commitments; boring, but provoking; organized and efficient; harmless; “a nation of rosy-cheeked farmers who live in windmills, wear clogs, have a garden full of tulips and sit on piles of yellow cheese”; opinionated; can be stubborn and incurably mean; downright devious in business affairs; formidable merchants; “Where a Dutchman has passed, not even the grass grows anymore” a Japanese saying goes; an English pamphlet raged: “A Dutchman is a Lusty. Fat, Two-legged Cheese worm. A Creature that is so addicted to eating butter, drinking fat, and sliding (skating) that all the world knows him for a slippery fellow” – at this time the English language gained a whole array of new insults such as “Dutch courage” (booze-induced bravery), “Dutch comfort” (“Things could be worse”) and “Dutch gold” (alloy resembling gold). Others include: “Double Dutch” (gibberish), “Dutch cap” (contraceptive diaphragm), “Dutch wife”/”Dutch widow” (prostitute; sex doll), “Dutch uncle” (harsh admonisher)

The second batch of EU nationals with their national stereotypes

7. **Denmark → the Danish/ Danes** – open-minded; somber; introverted; prudish; cold-resistant; decadent hedonists; urban; jovial; untrustworthy; beer-drinking; happy-go-lucky; vaguely unhygienic; profoundly disorganized; sociable and relaxed; easy-going

8. **Ireland → the Irish/Irishmen and Irishwomen** – loud; no sense of cuisine; impulsive; glass of whiskey or beer in his/her hand; Celtic music fanatics; have red hair and “white-white” skin; live and sleep with their sheep; religious fanatics and protesters

9. **The UK → the British/ Brits** – drinkers; lousy food; stiff upper-lips; ultra-traditional; steady-on, old chaps; bulldog spirit; bad teeth and hygiene; rude; thin; smoke cigar or pipe; scruffy hair; “fitted” clothing; heavy binge drinkers; swear all day long; artistic; “fashionable”; deep thinkers; intelligent and articulate; boastful; anti-American; ride bikes; God save the Queen!

The third batch – Greece only

10. **Greece → the Greek/Greeks** – are big and overweight; lazy; eat souvlaki and olives and drink Ouzo or red wine all day; always break their plates after meals; can’t drive – especially when its dark; disorganized; heavy meat eaters; own all oil-tankers in the world; live the easy life; corrupt; impossible planners; cultured, inefficient; live in “unkempt” buildings with “raggedy curtains”, empty beer cans, kegs or rusted automobiles
clutter their yards; have beautiful women, as long they are young — men are mainly homosexual or sexual predators.

The fourth batch – more Southerners

11. Spain → the Spanish/ Spaniards - lazy; party animals; womanizers; food lovers (Paella); extroverted; untidy; conscientious; impulsive; megalomaniac; bull fighters; always late; “know how to live”; wine-drinking and ham-eating; temperamental; affectionate; look like Antonio Banderas; emotional cry-babies; sophisticated; everybody smokes and talks all the same time; proud and patriotic; fashionable, love to dance; relaxed; nationalists; cultured; respect their rights and duties; history and ancestry are important; leisure culture; open-minded and warm people;

12. Portugal → the Portuguese – ignorant; violent; love buffoonery; kind; rural people with ‘Singer’ sewing machines; bull fighters; meat eaters; drink port wine; love celebrations; well traveled hundreds of years ago – now more introverted; always longing for something, but don’t know what; feel lonely; nostalgic; “the past old days were the best”; waiting for the next hero to come; prefer to live a simple life and mock the powerful

The fifth batch – the Northerners

13. Austria → the Austrian/Austrians – anxious; traditional; wearing ‘Lederhosen’; yodel the whole day to ‘Volksmusik’; polite; efficient service people, but bureaucratic; modest; not superior-minded; old-fashioned; somewhat cosmopolitan; honest; love the little treats in life like ‘Sachertorte’, beer and good wine

14. Finland → the Finnish/Finns - vodka-lovers; modest; polite; somber; introverted; reserved; honest; curvy straight-talkers; trustworthy; quiet; serious; diligent and humble; tough negotiators and demanding businessmen; nit pickers; melancholic; very tall and blond; they love nature; frugal; calm; sturdy; sauna fans; have attractive women

15. Sweden → the Swedish/Swedes – conscientious; blond-haired, blue-eyed; wealthy; enlightened; rational and bored; boring; dependent on their welfare state; lax rules of sexual morality; institutionalized yearning for nature and simplicity; heavy drinkers; modest; introverted; sophisticated and modern

The sixth batch – the largest expansion – a motley crew*

16. Cyprus → the Cypriots – a blend of various ancestries – Greek, Turkish and British; problematic; heavy nationalists, separatists, a financial haven. not good at languages; modern traditionalists, what else ???

17. The Czech Republic → the Czech/Czechs - agreeable; heavy beer drinkers; bohemian lifestyle; live and let live attitude; tolerant; “He’s a Czech, he never smiles at people he doesn’t know”; easy-to-get women; introverted; frightened and defensive attitude toward other cultures and the outside world

18. Estonia → the Estonian/Estonians - use the word ‘normal’ if something is ok; attend a song festival at least once either as a performer or as a spectator; going to the sauna is 80% about networking and 20% about washing; nationalistic about Skype (it is actually an Estonian company); declare taxes on the internet like all modern people; actually believed for a while that Latvians had 6 toes per foot; convinced that Estonia is very strategically located; spit three times around your left shoulder for good luck; say ‘Noh’ (sounds like NO) even when you speak English, just to confuse people; any beverage below 20% is non-alcoholic;
cheated on their wife/husband at least ten times but still think they're in a good marriage; Where is Estonia?
- in Northern Europe close to Finland...; Sour cream tastes good with everything; continually ignoring the
gender in other languages; the best national sport is running to the shop at 19.50 on Friday evening to buy
some **booze**; believe that a **language should have at least 14 cases**; a mention of a town with a population
of a million or more causes them to panic **slightly**; no paper or cash money – payment should be electronic;
people who type slowly and carefully using only their **index fingers** are **subconsciously** considered to be
foreigners; potato to Estonians is the same as rice to a Japanese; wait for a green light at a **pedestrian
crossing** even when there is no traffic to be seen...


19. **Hungary** → the Hungarian/Hungarians - good drivers; **salami addicts**; hot cuisine full of pepper and
paprika; use oversized pencils; "a small nation struggling and surviving against the odds"; **oppressors**
turned **troublemakers**; indigenous; often desperate and hopeless; calm and objective way of thinking;
courage; **audacity** and **insistence on ideas**;

20. **Latvia** → the Latvian/Latvians - "a small, **thievish** people who mostly live in trees and woods and eat
(live on) mushroom"; cowards and **cringers** (ladies) – an illustration by a 19th-century German traveller:
“You cannot trust a Latvian because they **flatter** and compliment in a very **crude** manner. They are cowards
and **traitors**, and **thus** you can always find the guilty person, just pay the traitor and you will **find out** names
of all **accomplices** in stealing and **crooked deals.**” (source: [http://www.yorku.ca/soi/_Vol_3_12/_HTML/jurika.html](http://www.yorku.ca/soi/_Vol_3_12/_HTML/jurika.html)) They are believed to have **6 toes** – a belief held by
the Estonians, etc. ; love to work and sing (entertain) [http://www.erm.ee/pdf/pro15/boldane.pdf](http://www.erm.ee/pdf/pro15/boldane.pdf)

21. **Lithuania** → the Lithuanian/Lithuanians – emotional, sometimes **hot-headed** people, at least
compared to their neighbors to the north; warmer and more talkative than the average Estonian; easily get
openly irritable if you rub them the wrong way; courageous and **bold** – the only one from the former Soviet
republics **consistently unwilling to bend her principles in the face of blood-curdling Russian threats**


22. **Malta** – the Maltese - Maltese men are arrogant assholes, Maltese women look like men, Maltese
women are hairy; Maltese people are angry at everything, Maltese people are happy because they get to
sleep in the afternoon (sharing about stereotypes by a person with a Maltese ancestry -
affairs; want to stay traditional and intact - [http://robertcallus.wordpress.com/2010/10/07/divorce-and-
maltese-culture/](http://robertcallus.wordpress.com/2010/10/07/divorce-and-maltese-culture/); good at selling language courses as a tourist attraction – offer summer language camps
and courses all the year round;

23. **Poland** → the Polish/Poles - neurotic; never smile but complain a lot; **hard bargainers**; babysitters;
intolerant; heavy alcohol users; your car will be stolen, once you cross the border; easy-going; conservative;
intellectual; attractive women, aggressive men – **always up to pick a fight**; excellent drivers; hard-working;
helpful; listen to folk music; sit in church all day if nothing else to do; very religious; the European plumbers
(popular image of the Polish immigrants)
24. **The Slovak republic** → **the Slovakian/Slovaks** - pale skin people; men are great hockey players, women – great cooks of potato pancakes; they wish they were Czechs; they speak Czech (they don’t actually) (source: [http://www.answerbag.com/q_view/772619](http://www.answerbag.com/q_view/772619); the Czechs’ little brother’ [http://springtimefordubcek.wordpress.com/2009/07/03/on-czech-slovak-rivalry](http://springtimefordubcek.wordpress.com/2009/07/03/on-czech-slovak-rivalry) hardworking, very friendly, hospitable, although not very rich; dress up even when they go shopping; unfriendly or hateful of the Hungarians (former oppressors under the Austro-Hungarian Empire) and the Gypsies [http://referaty.atlas.sk/cudzie-jazyky/anglictina/16491/?page=2](http://referaty.atlas.sk/cudzie-jazyky/anglictina/16491/?page=2); a Hungarian salami (according to Czerny’s art installation *Entropa*)

25. **Slovenia** → **the Slovenian/Slovenes** - industrious, honest, a bit jealous, good singers who enjoy a good glass of wine, perhaps a bit on the melancholic side and with a slight propensity for extremism; introverted; individualistic, disciplined; among the most dangerous drivers in Europe; suicidal (ninth in the world by suicide incidence); aggressive and auto-aggressive; very open to foreigners, kind and hospitable; skiers and mountaineers (a selection from [http://www.15years.gov.si/background-information/typical-slovene](http://www.15years.gov.si/background-information/typical-slovene))

**The 7th batch – the South-east expansion**

26. **Bulgaria** → **the Bulgarian/Bulgarians** – survive on tomato, cucumber and goat cheese only; colorful traditions; natural; open-minded; skiers or sun-worshipers; open, warm and kind people; traditional; let bears dance on fire; skilled craftsmen, farmers and artisans; nationalists; “catastrophic” social consciousness; tolerant; feeble religiousness; lack of fanaticism; condescending attitude; curiosity and openness to the “otherness”; anxious; fearful; efficient; accurate; precise; hardworking; disciplined; clever; highly qualified; drama kings and queens; overly suspicious

27. **Rumania** → **the Rumanian/Romanians** – directly related to Dracula; everyone owns a mystic castle in the Carpate mountains in Transylvania, backwards-oriented; primitive; refuse to work; have too many children; slow; ingenious; trying hard – but never succeed; mistrust police and government; love to celebrate; “women are mothers and wives, trafficking of women, prostitution, domestic violence and sexual harassment is their own fault”; manipulative; nationalists; stable and value-oriented

**Activity 3:**

**Task 1:** Label these stereotypical pictures with the respective nationalities. They are so popular that you will recognize them by all means! 😊

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**Topic:** stEurotypes, B1 English class, CEP Tomelloso, svoboda.gagarova@gmail.com
Task 2: Match a national stereotype with the respective nationality from the box:

Brits, the Dutch, Frenchmen, Poles, Romanians, Russians, the Swiss

- a bunch of baguette-gobbling, beret-wearing cowards
- furious bear-fighting drunkards
- a nation of burn-out potheads
- a dumb nation that cannot change a light bulb and is often in underwater transport disasters
- being confronted by a toothbrush, puzzle at first, then lapse into mindless panic, while at last go into murderous rage

adapted after: http://www.cracked.com/article_18409_the-5-most-statistically-full-shit-national-stereotypes_p2.html

- they love clocks and everything that is clockwork
- a nation of vampires
A laughter corner:

Heaven is where the cooks are French, the police are British, the mechanics are German, the lovers are Italian and everything is organized by the Swiss.

Hell is where the cooks are British, the police are German, the mechanics are French, the lovers are Swiss, and everything is organized by the Italians.


A prize was to be awarded for the first person to discover a horse with black and white stripes like a zebra. A German, a Frenchman, an Englishman and a Spaniard participated hoping to win the prize of 1,000,000 euros. The German decided to spend weeks in the National library researching into horses with black and white stripes. The Englishman went straight to a shop in Piccadilly which
specialises in hunting gear, bought all the equipment necessary and set off for Africa in his quest for this strange creature. The Frenchman bought himself a horse and painted it black and white. The Spaniard went to the best restaurant he knew in Madrid, ordered an expensive meal for himself with a fine bottle of wine; after the meal he ordered an expensive Havana cigar and a Napoleon brandy, sat in a luxurious arm-chair in the hotel and began to consider what he would do with the 1,000,000 euros once he had found this remarkable horse with black and white stripes. Robert Fromow, Beaconsfield UK

http://fistfulofeuros.net/afoe/european-stereotypes-and-jokes/

The Entropa Project (2009)

Entropa is a sculpture created by Czech artist David Černý under commission for the Czech Republic to mark the occasion of its presidency of the Council of the European Union. The sculpture was supposed to have been created jointly by 27 artists and artist groups from all member countries of the EU; but in a hoax, Černý and his three assistants created the satirical and controversial work depicting pointed stereotypes of European nations and fake artist profiles complete with invented descriptions of their supposed contributions.

The piece was unveiled on 12 January 2009. Moving and multimedia components were activated on the formal “launch date” of 15 January 2009. It was on display in the Justus Lipsius building in Brussels until 14 May 2009. It had been planned that a copy of it might appear on the wall of the New Scene of the National Theatre in Prague. Regardless of the plans and everything that developed consequently, since September 6th 2010 the Entropa has been a part of the Pilsner science center Techmania.

Germany: a network of motorways somewhat resembling a swastika

Poland: a group of Catholic monks erecting the rainbow flag of the gay community
France: a nation on strike.

Romania as a theme-park-styled Dracula's castle

Luxembourg: a small lump of gold (a gold nugget) for sale

Italy: a massive football pitch, suggesting a nation with a fetish for football

Bulgaria: a series of squat toilets
The Netherlands: a series of minarets submerged by a flood - a possible reference to the nation's simmering religious tensions

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_pictures/7827747.stm

Nations shown in Entropa as:

With no clear indication, made by the artist, nor by the official presentation, various interpretations of a single country can be drawn, and this list is by no means definite. Some of the physical pieces differ slightly from the form presented in the official booklet;

- **Austria**, a known opponent of atomic energy, is a green field dominated by nuclear power plant cooling towers; vapour comes out of them at intervals
- **Belgium** is presented as a half-full box of half-eaten Praline chocolates
- **Bulgaria** is depicted by a series of connected "Turkish" squat toilets; neon-like lights connect and illuminate them (later hidden with fabric)
- **Cyprus** is jigsawed (cut) in half
- The **Czech Republic**'s own piece is an LED display, which flashes controversial quotations by Czech President Václav Klaus
- **Denmark** is built of Lego bricks, and some claim to see in the depiction a face reminiscent of the cartoon controversy, though any resemblance has been denied by the artist
- **Estonia** is presented with a hammer and sickle-styled power tools, the country has considered a ban on Communist symbols
- **Finland** is depicted as a wooden floor and a male with a rifle lying down, imagining an elephant and a hippo.
- **France** is draped in a "GRÈVE!" ("STRIKE!") banner
- **Germany** is a series of interlocking autobahns, described as "somewhat resembling a swastika", though that is not universally accepted; some Czech military historians also suggest that the autobahns resemble the number "18", which some Neo-Nazi groups use as code for A.H. initials. Cars move along the roads.
- **Greece** is depicted as a forest that is entirely burned, possibly representing the 2007 Greek forest fires and the 2008 civil unrest in Greece.
- **Hungary** features an Atomium made of its common agricultural products watermelons and Hungarian sausages, based on a floor of peppers
- **Ireland** is depicted as a brown bog with bagpipes protruding from Northern Ireland; the bagpipes play music every five minutes
- **Italy** is depicted as a football pitch with several players who appear to be masturbating with the footballs they each hold.
- **Latvia** is shown as covered with mountains, in contrast to its actual flat landscape
- **Lithuania** a series of dressed *Manneken Pis*-style figures urinating; the streams of urine are presented by a yellow lighting glass fibers
- **Luxembourg** is displayed as a gold nugget with "For Sale" tag
- **Malta** is a tiny island with its prehistoric dwarf elephant as its only decoration; there's a magnifying glass in front of the elephant
- The **Netherlands** has disappeared under the sea with only several minarets still visible; the piece is supposed to emit the singing of muezzins
- **Poland** has a piece with priests erecting the rainbow flag of the Gay rights movement on a field of potatoes (Poland's main agricultural product), in the style of the U.S. Marines raising the Stars and Stripes at Iwo Jima.
- Portugal is shown as a wooden cutting board with three pieces of meat in the shape of its former colonies of Brazil, Angola, and Mozambique.
- Romania is a Dracula-style theme park, which is set up to blink and emit ghostly sounds at intervals.
- Slovakia is depicted as a Hungarian sausage (or a human body wrapped in Hungarian tricolor).
- Slovenia is shown as a rock engraved with the words first tourists came here 1213.
- Spain is covered entirely in concrete, with a concrete mixer situated in the northeast.
- Sweden does not have an outline, but is represented as a large Ikea-style self-assembly furniture box, containing Gripen fighter planes (as supplied to the Czech Air Force).
- The United Kingdom, known for its Euroscepticism and relative isolation from the Continent, is "included" as a missing piece (an empty space) at the top-left of the work.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entropa

The sculpture of Bulgaria

On 13 January 2009—the day after the exhibit was informally unveiled—Bulgaria's ambassador to the EU registered the country's protest with the EC and sent a formal protest note to the Czech government. Bulgaria's depiction in the sculpture, as a series of squat toilets, is one of the most provocative, and after the informal unveiling of Entropa the Bulgarian government demanded that the sculpture be taken down before its official launching. This has not been done, but after continuing complaints, the Bulgarian depiction was covered with black fabric on 20 January 2009.

A number of non-government organisations, e.g. Polish Indeks 73, opposed to covering of the part of the work by initiating on-line petitions.

Jan Vytopil, the man in charge of cultural events during the Czech EU Presidency, has defended the exhibit, arguing the presence of a "squat toilet Bulgaria" in the presence of the other patently absurd depictions made it clear that the piece seeks to demolish stereotypes. Czech Deputy Prime Minister Alexandr Vondra also frequently stressed that the government committee which authorized the piece wanted to avoid censorship.

On 14 January 2009, the Slovak National Party called on Foreign Affairs Minister Ján Kubiš to demand the removal of the sculpture, calling it an offence to the Slovak nation. On 15 January 2009, Kubiš complied and lodged a formal protest, but did not demand the removal of the sculpture.

Strangely as it may seem, the public in Poland appeared to be largely in favour of Poland's portrayal, with 64% considering it "spot on" and only 13% thinking it "an insult to Polish people", according to an online poll by news portal TVN24.
Ole Molesby, the Danish Ambassador to the Czech Republic, stated he did not expect the Mohammed caricature protests to begin anew, and that Denmark did not intend to complain. Černý denied that the similarity is intentional.

With some abbreviations from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entropa

Another hit provocation – The Geography of prejudice

Yanko Tsvetkov (33) an expat Bulgarian, a designer and illustrator living in London, has produced a series of maps in which countries and regions are labelled according to the stereotypes of their inhabitants held by the people of other nationalities. Mr. Tsvetkov’s website has been inundated with around half a billion visitors since he published the series, called Mapping Stereotypes. The first map was created in 2009 at the time of the energy crisis in Europe (the gas was between Russia and Ukraine).

“I just created it to amuse my friends but when I put it up on my website so many people liked it that I decided to really focus on the project of mapping the stereotypes based on different places in Europe. I was surprised by the reaction because I never really expected it to take off like this.” said Mr Tsvetkov.

Where I Live (2009)

Europe According to Berlusconi
Europe According to Italy

Europe According to the Vatican
Europe According to Poland

Europe according to Germany
Europe according to France

Europe According to Bulgaria
One to Bind Them All!

http://alphadesigner.com/project-mapping-stereotypes.html