

# Solidarity or Solo (Atlases)

Niels Schrader, Lauren Alexander

Essay – July 20, 2014

***Solidarity or Solo* is a research and design project executed by third-year Graphic Design students at the Royal Academy of Art (KABK) in The Hague, initiated by the tutors Niels Schrader (Graphic Design), Lauren Alexander (Interactive Media) and Maarten Cornel (Philosophy). The project encouraged students to investigate their own relation to, and opinions about, the European Union by using mapping, archiving and referencing methods to formulate a refreshing and articulated view of what the EU means to a younger generation.**

## The Atlas of #Europe

Alyar Aynetchi, Sara Risvaag, Marinus Schepen & Sepus Noordmans

*The Atlas of #Europe* is an extensive collection of Instagram photos with EU-related hashtags that presents the new visual gestalt of digital Europe. Based on a radar chart, the authors developed a data visualization that combines 20 image characteristics to redraw the borders of the 28 current member states. By choosing Instagram with its self-curated user content as a source for visual research, this project's aim was to present a collective "autoportrait" – or selfie – of the European Union.



## FINDING THE DIGITAL EUROPE

The project took off with an interest in the cultivation of contemporary European culture by participation in social media services like Instagram. An accommodating platform for millions of people who frame moments of their lives, culture and personalities in square format images. Which are accompanied by a palette of filters that emphasize specific characteristics in the users chosen context.

Considering the aim of a service like Instagram, and it's success at paralleling and blending our culture in such a way that there is no longer a

division between online and offline. Likewise follows an interest in measuring polyphony, and how to measure the differences that coincide within Europe and the fragmentation of public spheres that keep the continent from becoming completely unified. There are multiple platforms and factors that can function as public spheres like: Governments, Newspapers, Demonstrations, Municipalities, Literature, but also the presence of the Internet. By looking at Instagram with it's wide reach around Europe, and a potential of self-curating, it is not always a platform for social discourse, but rather a platform where what is truly regarded as fragments of current culture, will be exhibited and reflected by users and the European populous.

The twenty-eight countries in the European Union are presented with individual profiles attached to each country regarding general geograph-

6

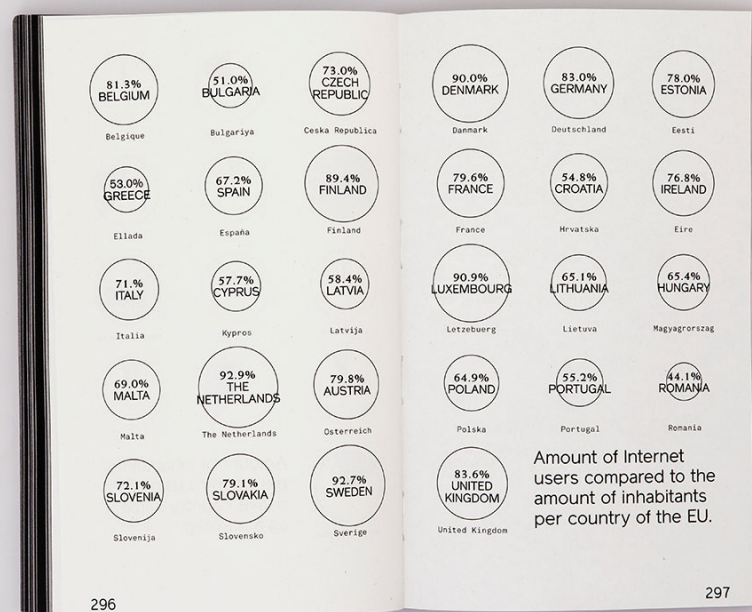
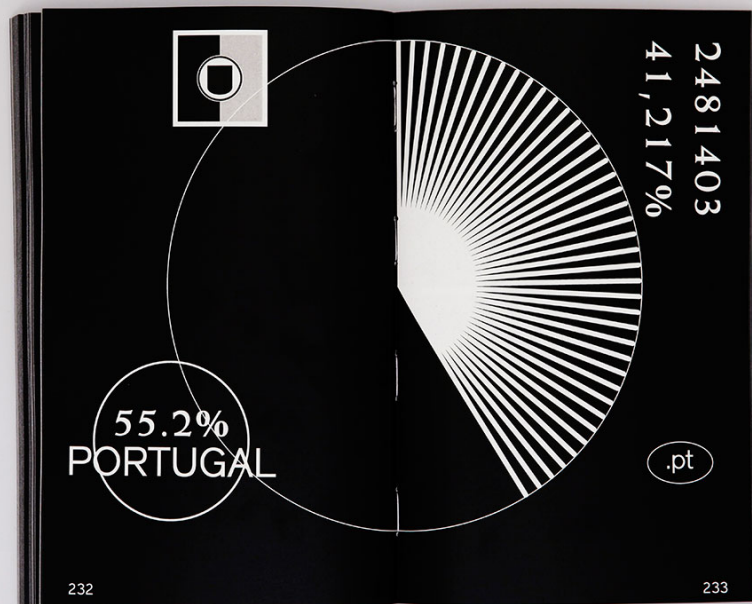
7

International Name	BELGIUM
Native Name	BELGIQUE
Shortname	(BE)
Language	FRENCH, DUTCH, GERMAN
Capital	BRUSSELS
Date member of EU	1952
Political System	(DEMOCRATIC)
Coordinates	51°13' N, 04°24' E
Surface	30.528 KM²
Internet Users	6.559.35
% of Internet Users	79.8 %
% of EU Users	2.3 %
Internetcode	(.BE)









## The Dissociative European Atlas

Sanne Groenendaal & Max Lennarts

The *Dissociative European Atlas* is a collection of psychological tests that, similar to the Rorschach test, examine the distinctiveness of EU country shapes. Groenendaal and Lennarts asked randomly selected people to draw the EU's borders as well as those of individual member states from memory. Naturally, this resulted in many unique and imprecise versions of the geographical space and disclosed the personal relation that interviewees have with the European Union. The authors then playfully re-analysed the drawings and were able to capture imaginative and striking revelations about the way the EU is perceived.











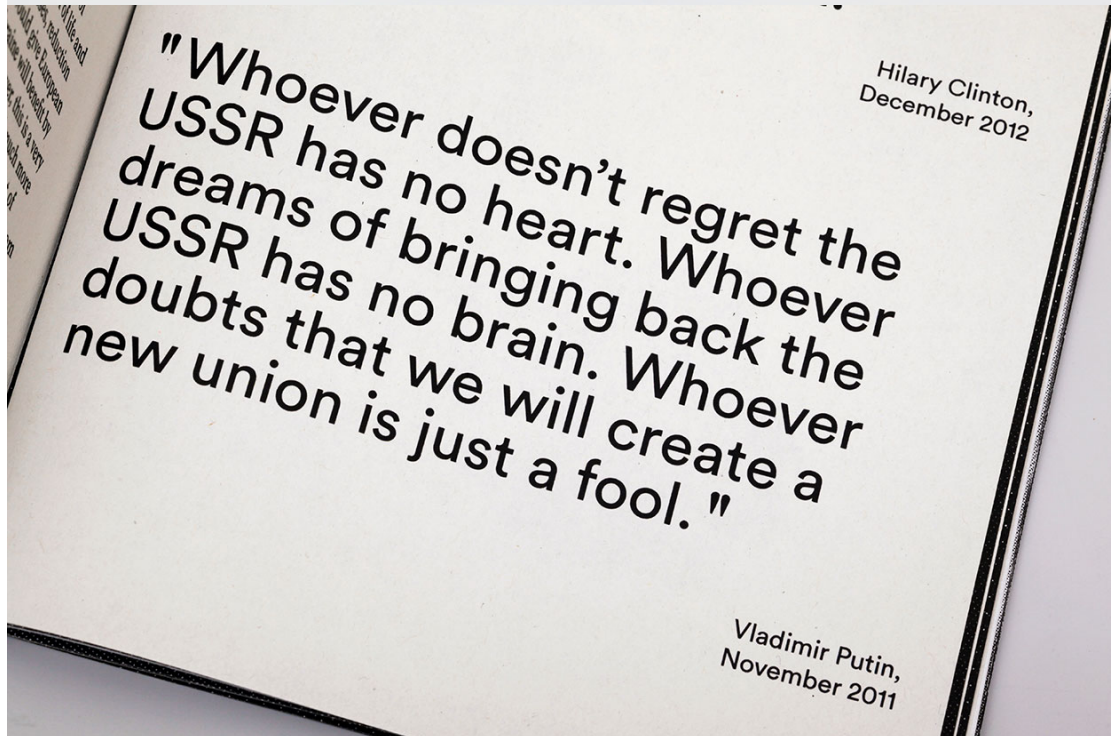


## What if Ukraine Would Join the EU?

Nina Couvert

*What if Ukraine Would Join the EU?* is a thought-provoking atlas that evaluates the hypothetical scenarios of Ukraine either joining the European Union or the recently created Eurasian Economic Union. Couvert investigated the current political crisis in Ukraine by interviewing a fellow Ukrainian student and then juxtaposing her personal observations with what the Western public generally reads in the news. The question arises: Which viewpoint comes closer to the actual truth that of the individual testimony of a witness or the statistical data published by the media.

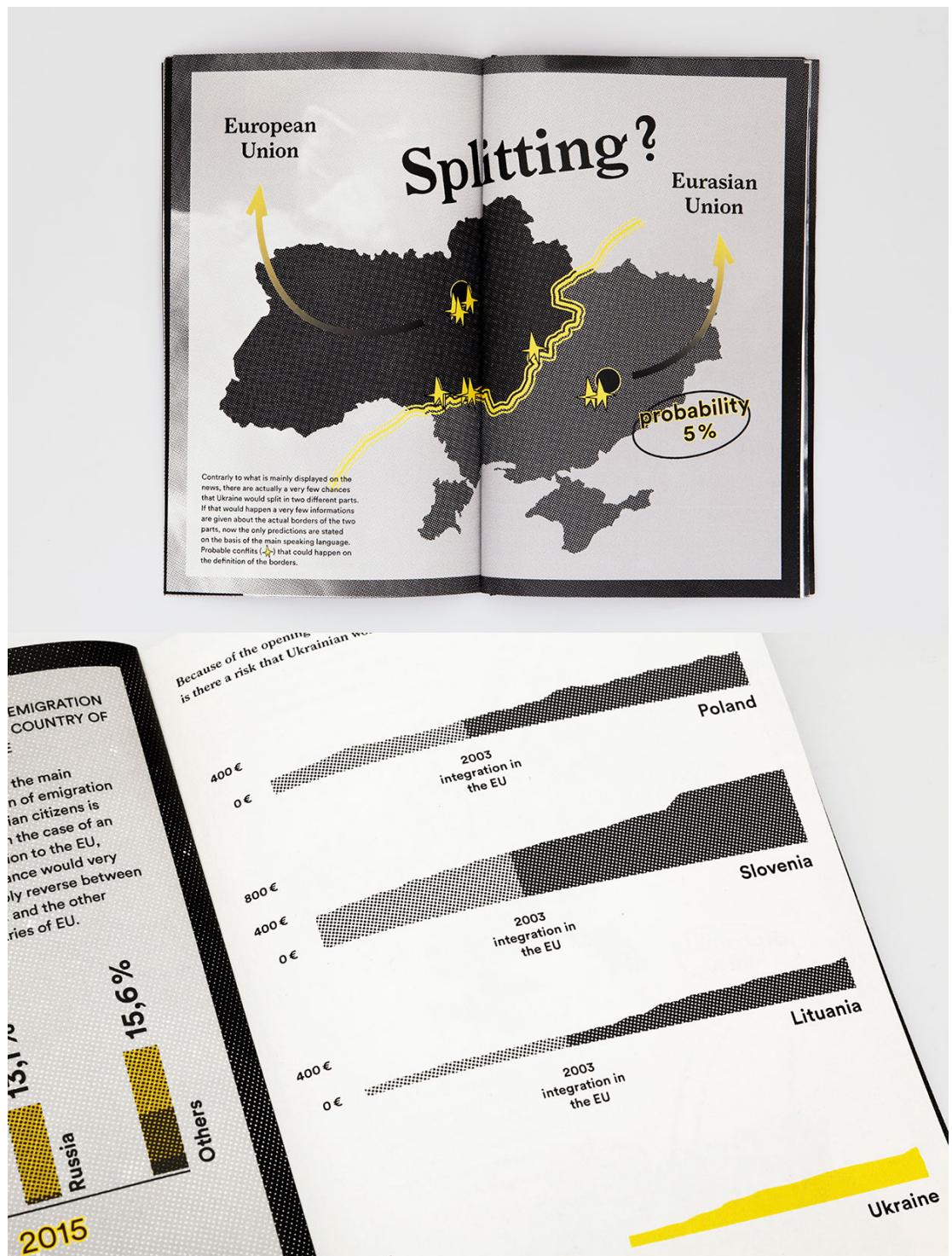












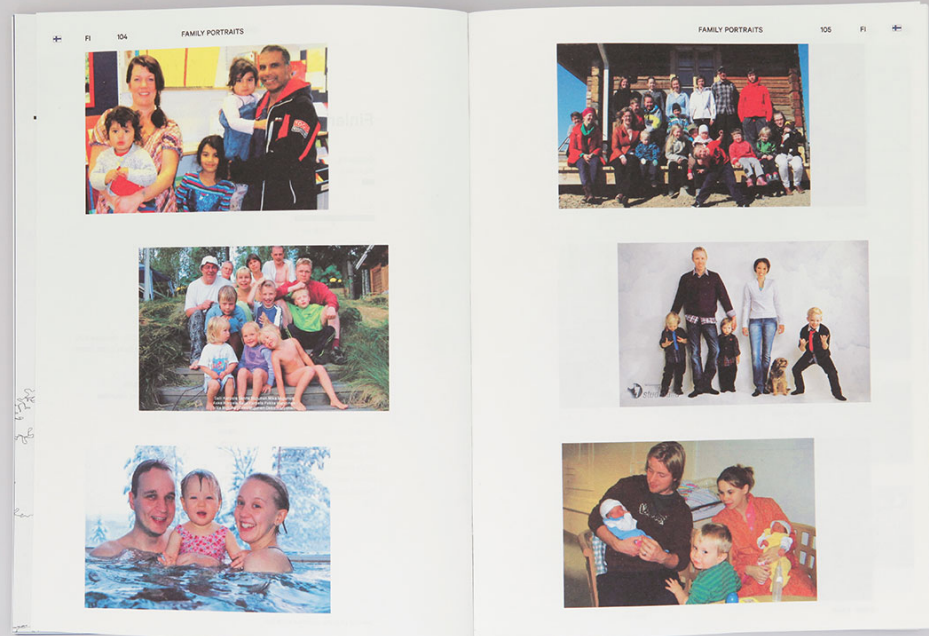
## We All Live in Europe

Janine Terlouw & Eline van der Ploeg

Terlouw and van der Ploeg's compendium *We All Live in Europe* investigates the cultural similarities and differences between European Union member states. Their extensive research was conducted entirely online to focus on the virtual presence of the EU. This Internet-specific data from image-based platforms like Flickr, Tumblr and Instagram then allowed the duo to compare factors such as the wealth, ethnicity, age and income of the EU member states. Family portraits, photographs of interior furnishings, food images and street views served as reliable indicators for such characteristics as e.g. social status and lifestyle choices.









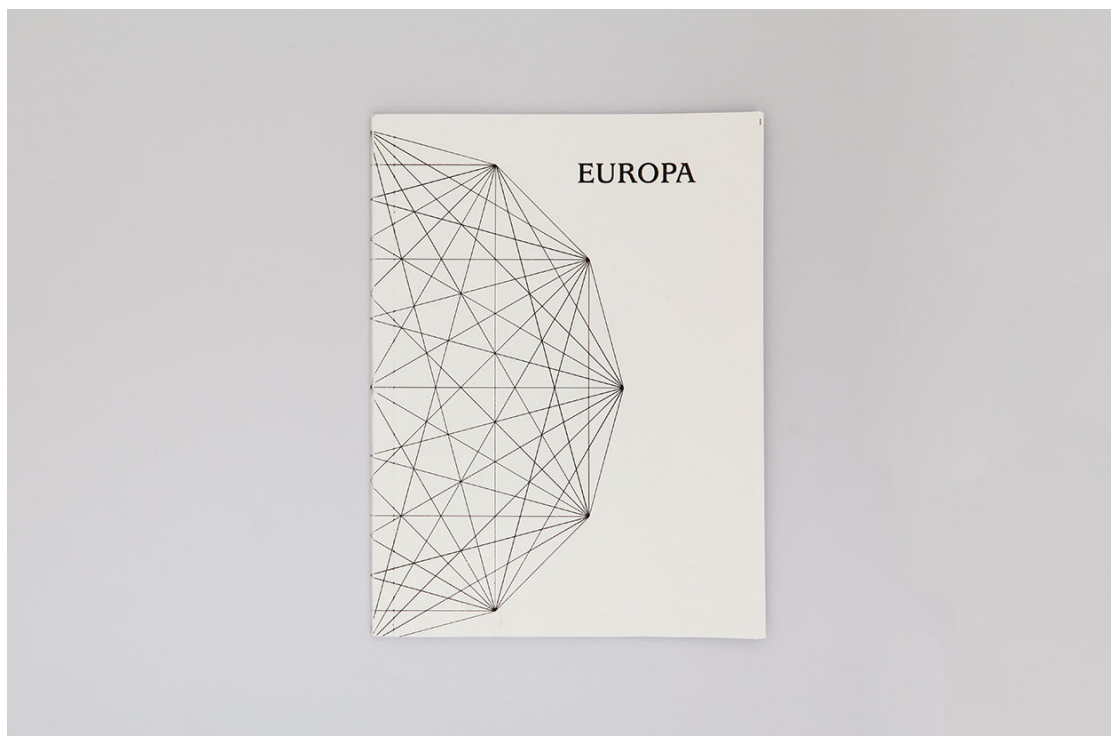




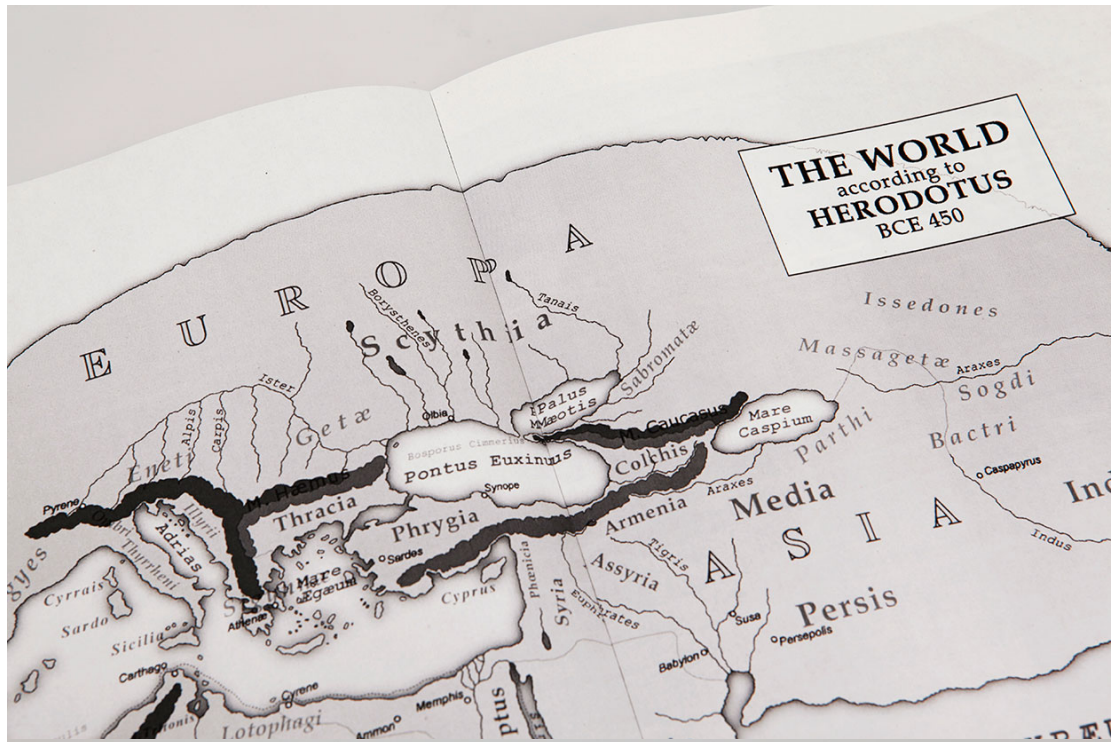
## Europa

### Wilco Monen

Wilco Monen's *Europa* documents the semantic evolution of the word "Europe". He collected references to the word in images and texts over time, and then presented them in form of a logo gallery. The word originates from the Greek myth of Europa, the lover of Zeus and has since turned into a fashionable buzzword. Its positive and pristine connotations have, in recent times, led to its overuse in company slogans, mission statements, marketing communications and corporate branding. As a result words like "Euro", "Europe" and "Europa" have become empty placeholders that have exacerbated Euroscepticism and have served as a backdrop for the projections of ultra-nationalists.

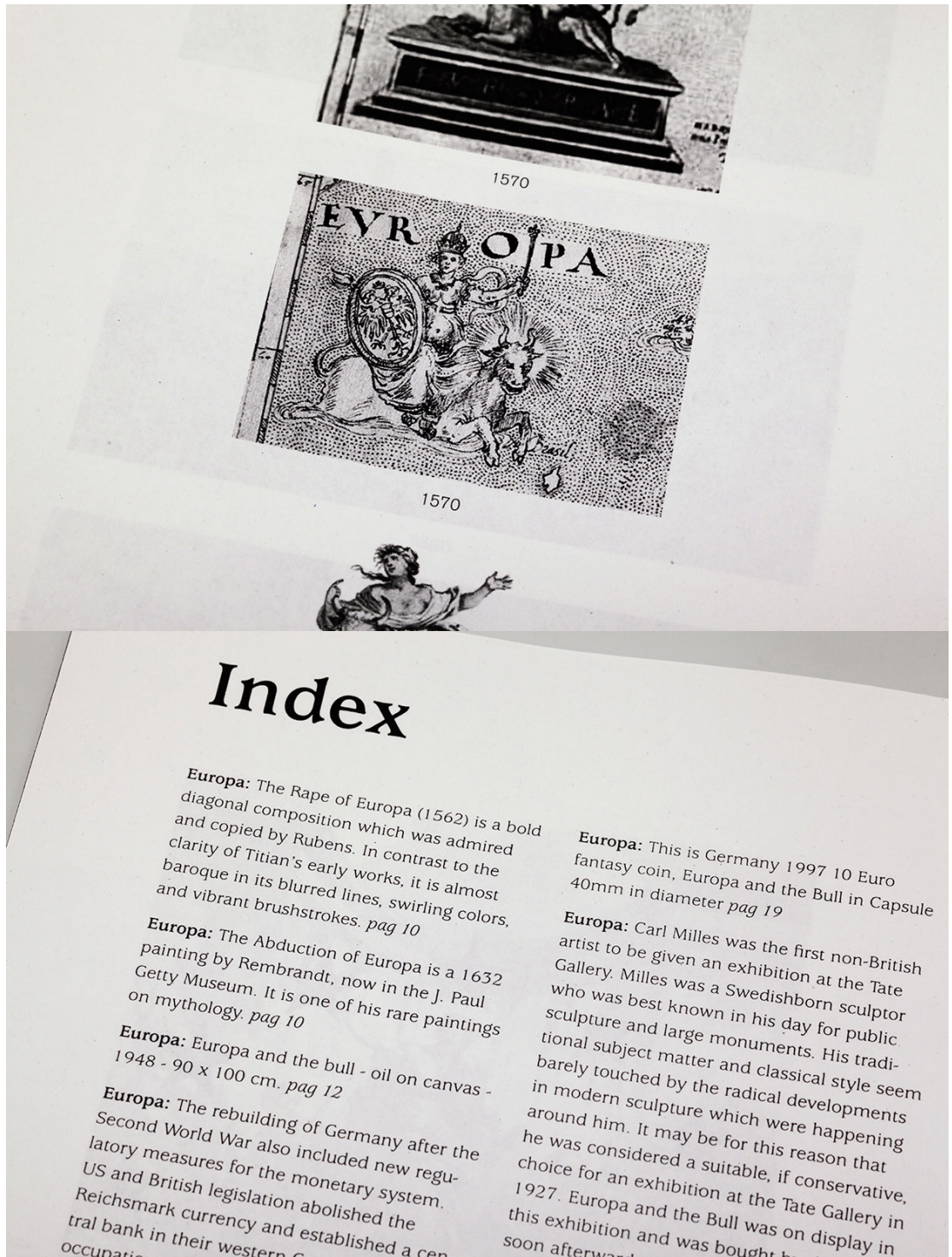










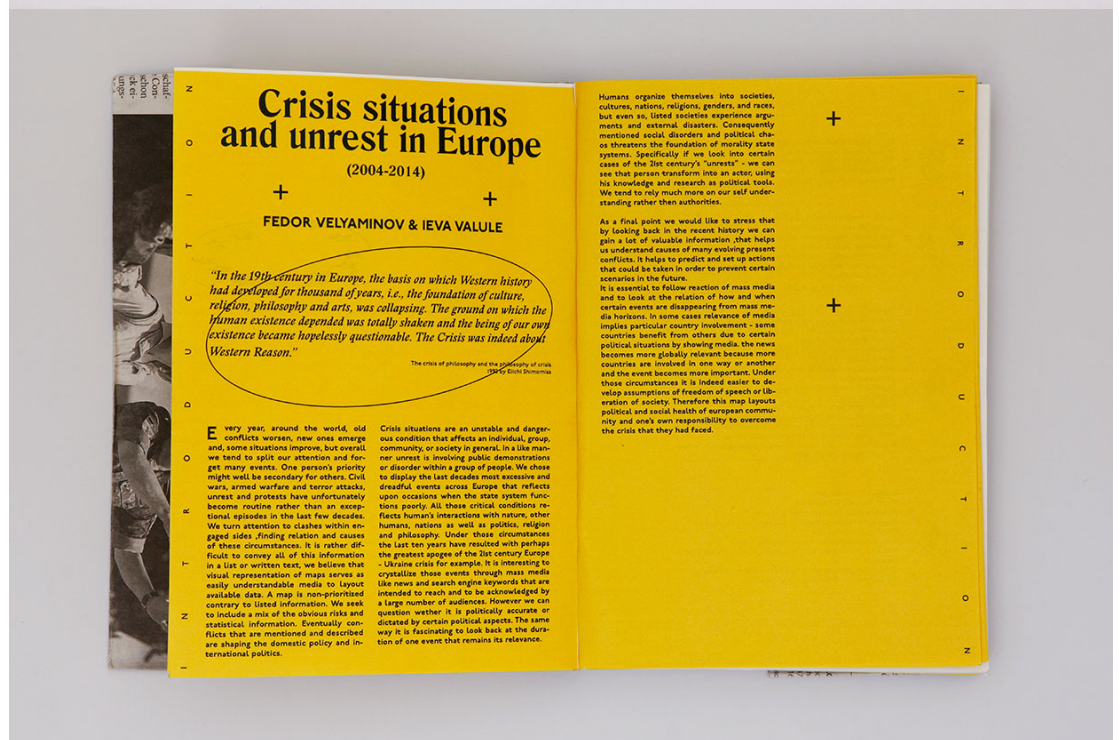


## Crisis Situations and Unrest in Europe

Ieva Valule & Fedor Velyaminov

*Crisis Situations and Unrest in Europe* maps European conflicts over the past decade. Not only does it shed light on Europe's current political flashpoints of a more global nature, but also offers insights into regional European disputes. Valule and Velyaminov compiled a total of 45 conflicts and documented them with the help of timelines, newspaper articles and encyclopaedic information.

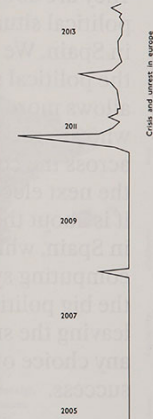




Location: Spain  
Date: 15 May 2011 —  
ongoing

The 2011-present Spanish protests, also referred to as the -5M Movement (Spanish: Movimiento -5M), the Indignants Movement, and Take the Square #spanishrevolution, are a series of ongoing demonstrations in Spain whose origin can be traced to social networks such as Real Democracy NOW (Spanish: Democracia Real YA) or Youth Without a Future (Spanish: Juventud Sin Futuro) among other civilian digital platforms and 200 other small associations. The protests started on May 2011, 15 with an initial call in 58 Spanish cities.

The 2011-present Spanish protests, also referred to as the *-15M Movement* (Spanish: *Movimiento -15M*), the *Indignants Movement*, and *Take the Square* *#spanishrevolution*, are a series of ongoing demonstrations in Spain whose origin can be traced to social networks such as *Real Democracy NOW* (Spanish: *Democracia Real YA*) or *Youth Without a Future* (Spanish: *Juventud Sin Futuro*) among other civilian digital platforms and 200 other small associations. The protests started on May 2011 *-15* with an initial call in 58 Spanish cities.



"Spanish protests"

These protests are not only about unemployment. They are about the unfair political situation that exists in Spain. We protest against the political situation that allows more than 100 people who are accused of corruption across the country to stand in the next elections. Moreover, it is about the electoral law in Spain, which has a vote computing system that benefits the big political parties, leaving the small ones without any choice of achieving any success.

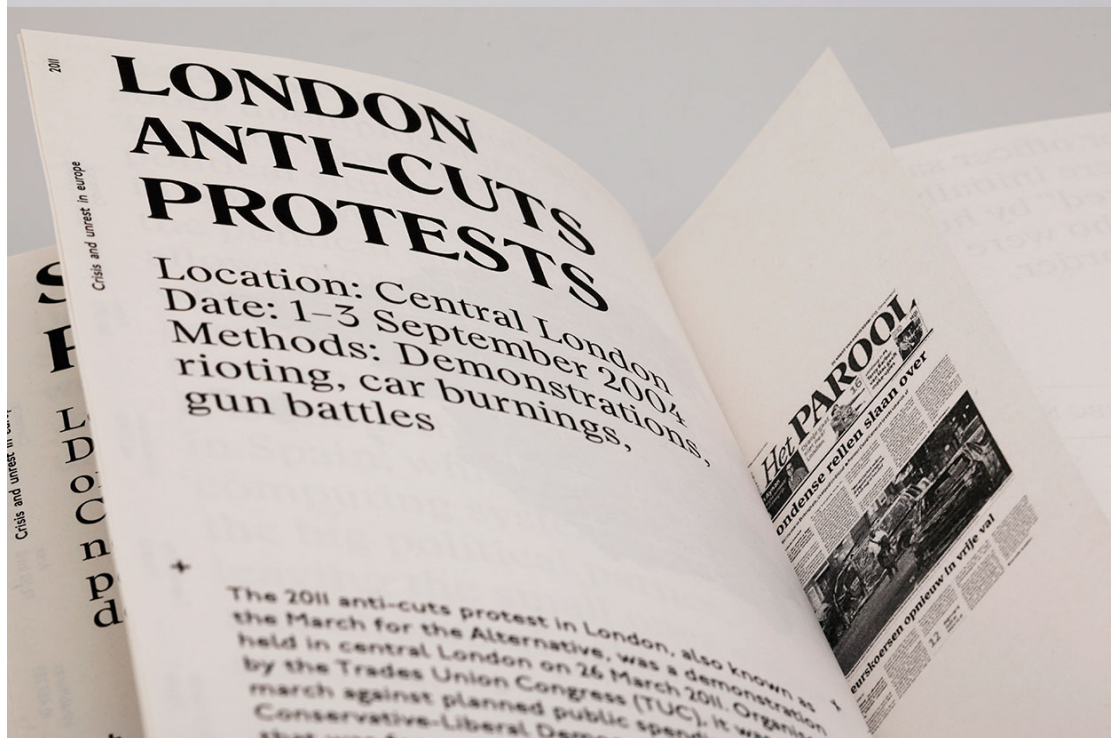
Milena Almagro Garcia  
Protestor



Spain's European Union membership represents an important part of its foreign policy. Even on many international issues beyond western Europe, Spain prefers to coordinate its efforts with its EU partners through the European political cooperation mechanisms. Is a member of EU since 1986.



place	2011	2011	place
	Northern Ireland riots	E.coli O104:H4 outbreak	
took	Portuguese protests	London anti-cuts protest	that
	Domodedovo Airport bombing	Russian protests	
that	North Kosovo crisis	Spanish protests	took
	Greek protests	North Kosovo crisis	
Events		Norway attacks	place
	  	  	

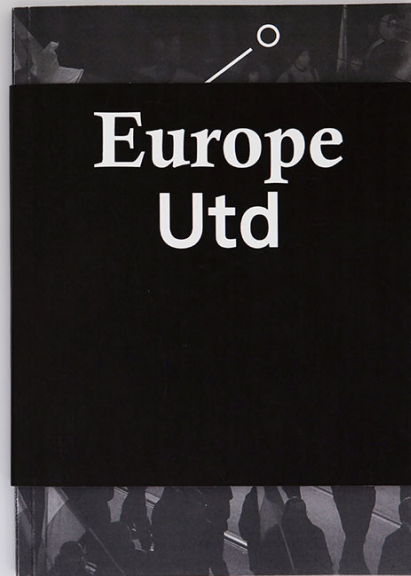




## Europe Utd.

Menno de Bruijn & Kasper Pyndt

*Europe Utd.* is an album of soccer-related imagery that deals with socio-economic issues such as nationalism, xenophobia, hooliganism, corruption and religion. According to De Bruijn and Pyndt, soccer creates a common ground of understanding that allows for a comparison of the highly diverse cultures of the European member states. In their atlas, the authors illustrate the overlapping values of sports-related communities and lay bare the interconnections between soccer teams, executives and supporters around the world. These connections were then added to the selected imagery in the form of page links, which create a dense network of thematically related topics.



◦ Identity 06-17	◦ Politics 18-27	◦ Economy 28-37	◦ Ideology 38-45
◦ Violence 92-101			◦ Migration 46-53
◦ Sexuality 84-91	◦ Self-expression 74-83	◦ Race 64-73	◦ Religion 54-63





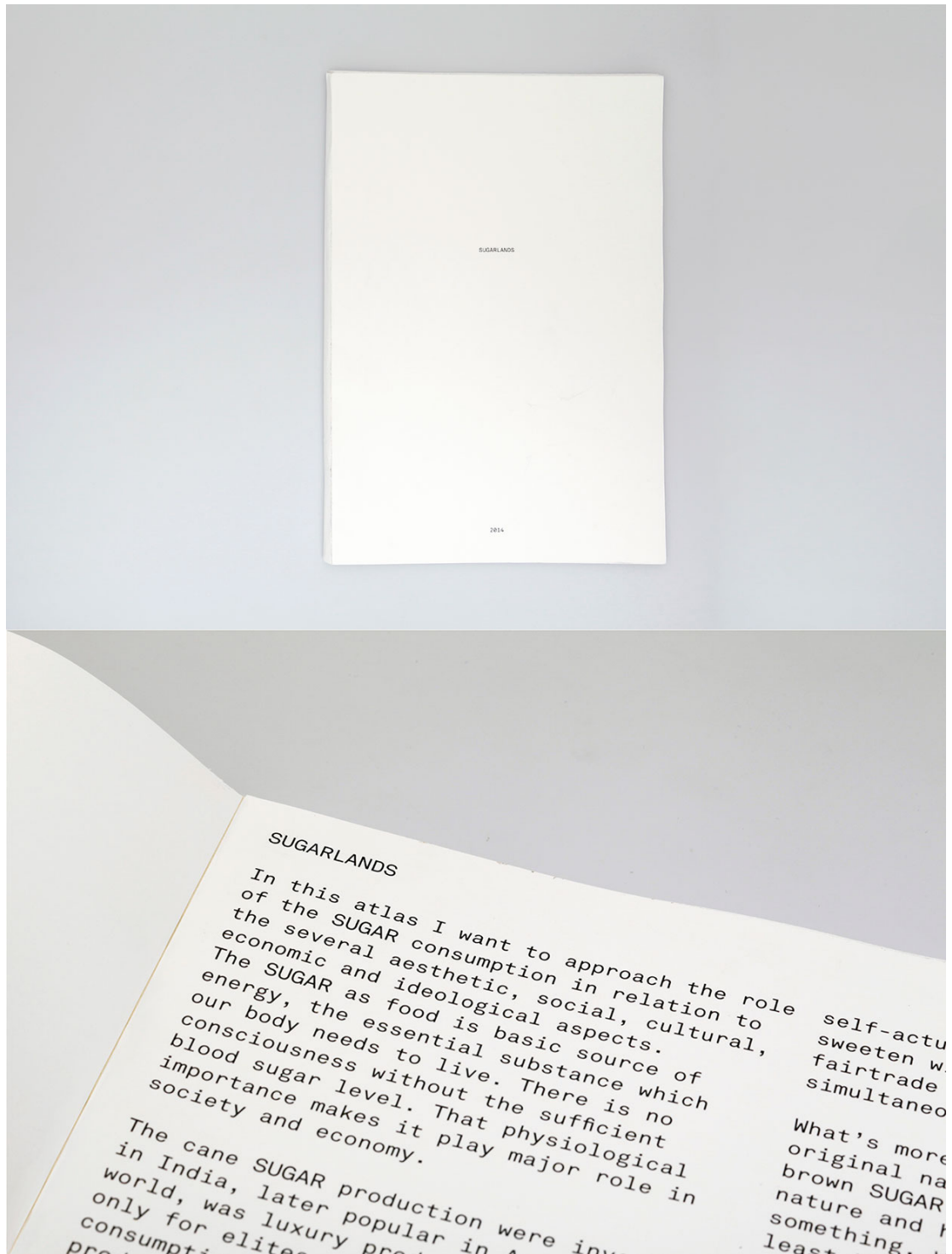


## Sugarlands

Tereza Rullerová

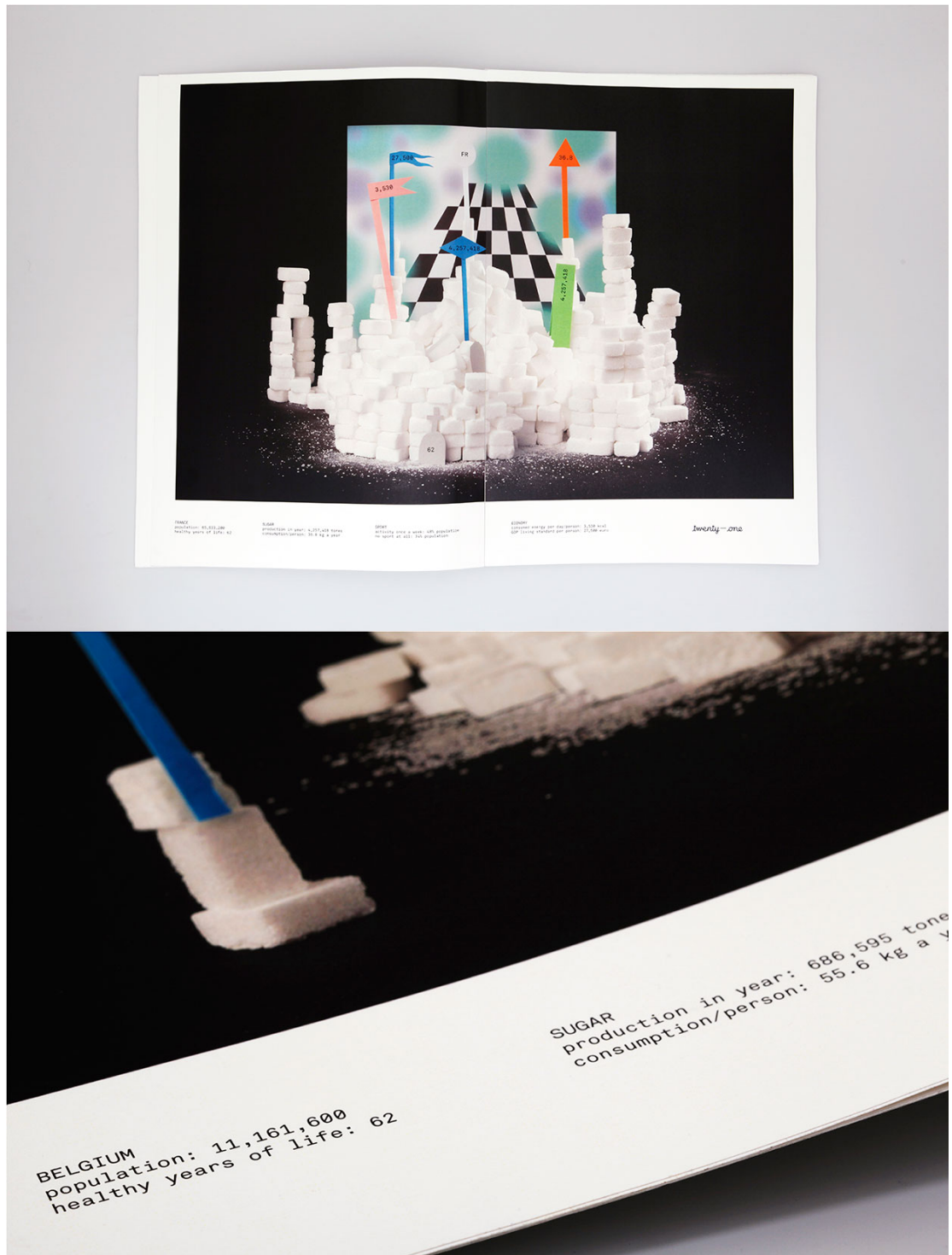
Tereza Rullerová's *Sugarlands* not only portrays the amount of sugar consumed in each European country, but also reveals the economic importance of sugar as a luxury item. The atlas gathers statistics on sugar-related topics such as health, nutrition and food habits. Moreover, the book also discusses the historical impact of sugar on the political landscape and its role as a "soma". Rullerová coined the term *Sugarlands* and presents her findings in the form of 28 photographic sugar landscapes that refer to the individual countries using the visual appearances that are characteristic for each country.











## A Look Into the Politics Behind the Tobacco Industry

Ines da Costa

What happens to the tax revenues that governments collect from the tobacco industry? *A Look Into the Politics Behind the Tobacco Industry* offers a peek into European smoking ban regulations, tobacco taxation, health-related spendings and hidden political agendas. Da Costa's documentation is an eye-opening example of how the EU's primary ambition of providing first-class health care for its citizens can turn into an over-regulated, bureaucratic dilemma.

# The European Union:

a look into

the  
politics

behind

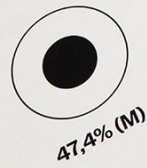
the  
tobacco  
industry.

Comparing the percentage of  
male / female smokers per country  
with percentage of male / female  
smoke-related deaths.

Smoking Population (%)

AUSTRIA

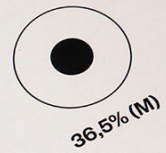
Smoke-Related Deaths (%)



BELGIUM



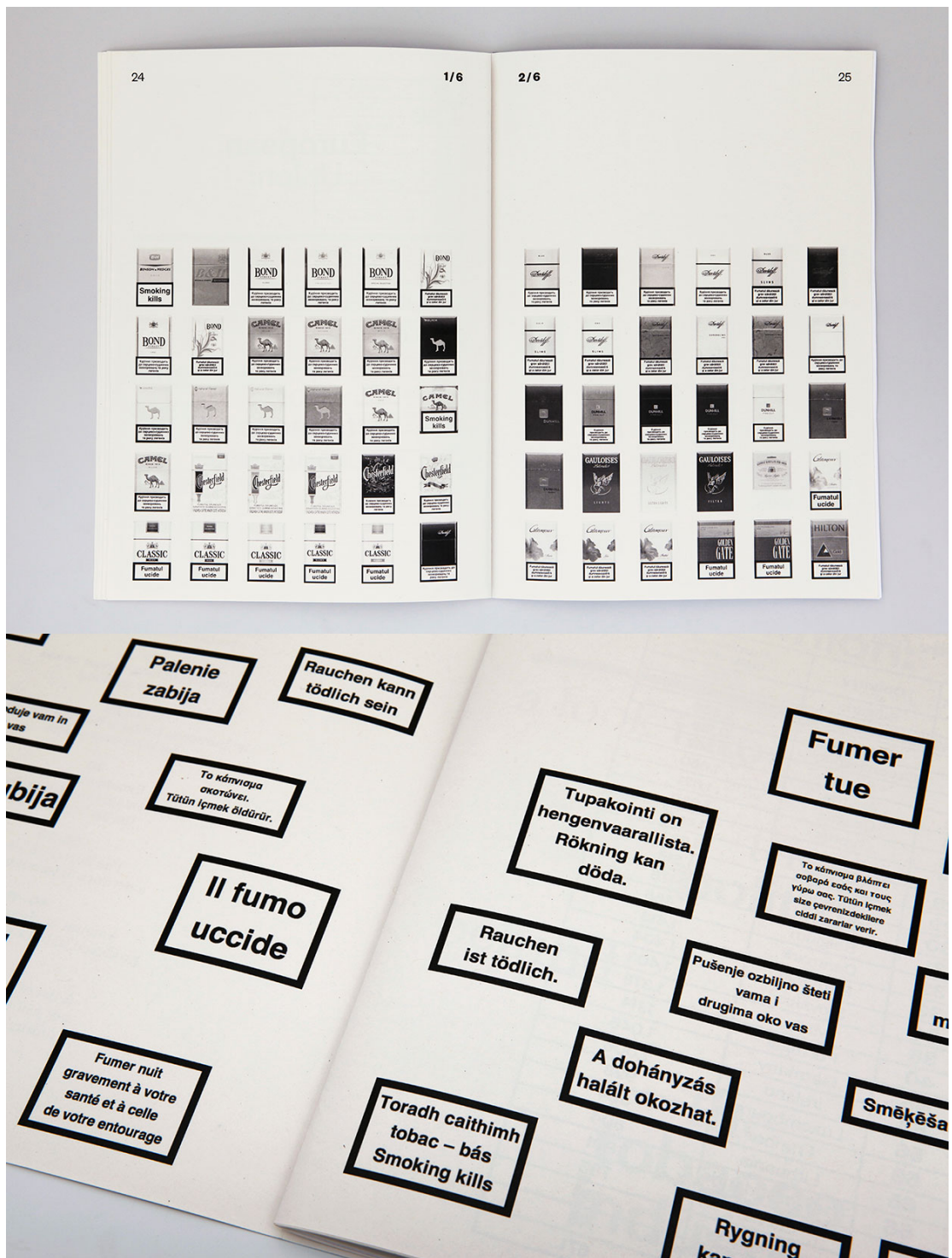
Smoking Popu



29.6%

?% (M)



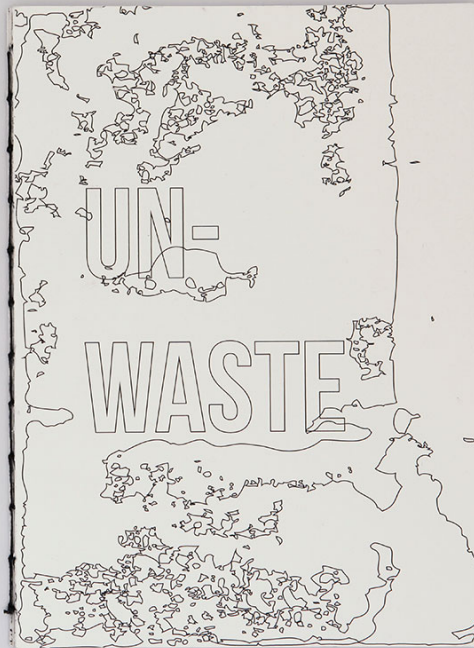




### Unwaste

Martyna Wyrzykowska

*Unwaste* presents a thorough investigation of waste generation in the EU, including what waste consists of and what happens to the waste we produce. Wyrzykowska compares recent statistics to discover that the financial crisis has actually led to an increase in waste production in the European Union. However, what is even more shocking is to discover that many EU member states continue to use landfill to dispose of their waste. The author documents waste treatment throughout Europe, in various industries and offers an overview of the environmentally friendly plans that are currently being implemented to combat the production of new waste.



#### WASTE GENERATION

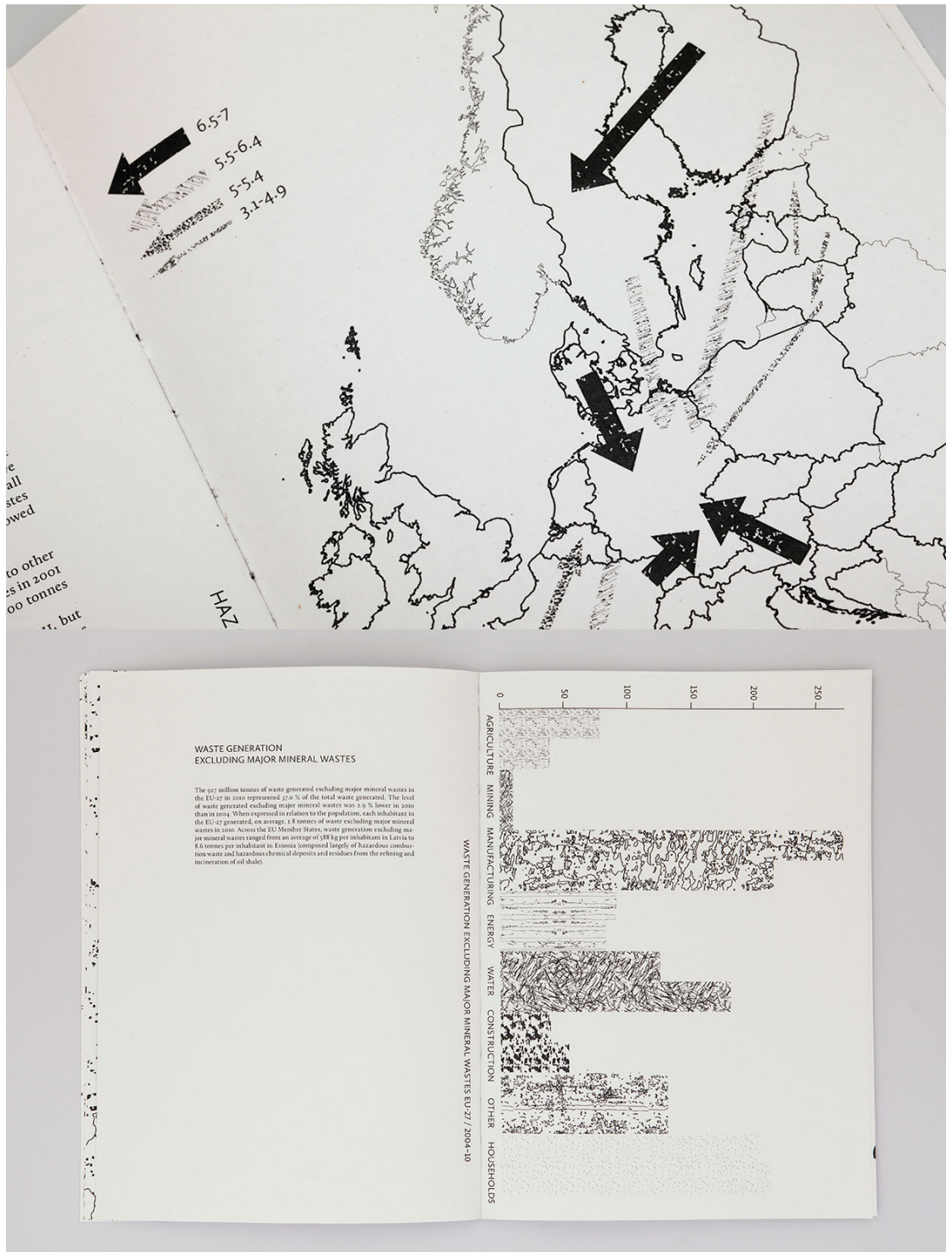
Waste, defined by Directive 2008/98/EC Article 3(1) as 'any substance or object which the holder discards or intends or is required to discard', potentially represents an enormous loss of resources in the form of both materials and energy; in addition, the management and disposal of waste can have serious environmental impacts. Landfills, for example, take up land space and may cause air, water and soil pollution, while incineration may result in emissions of dangerous air pollutants, unless properly regulated. EU waste management policies therefore aim to reduce the environmental and health impacts of waste and improve the EU's resource efficiency. The long-term aim of these policies is to reduce the amount of waste generated and when waste generation is unavoidable to promote it as a resource and achieve higher levels of recycling and the safe disposal of waste.

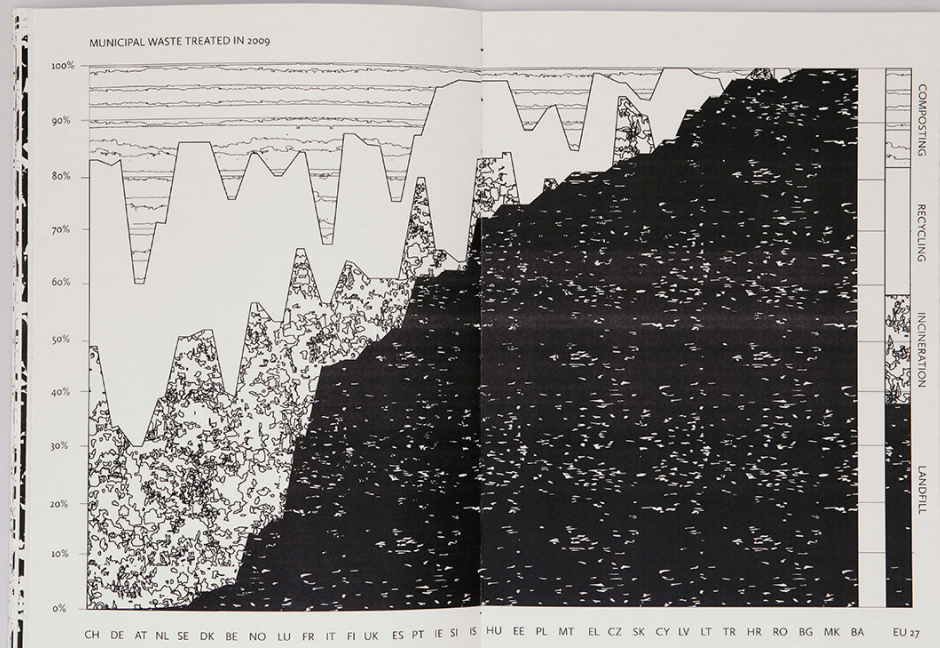
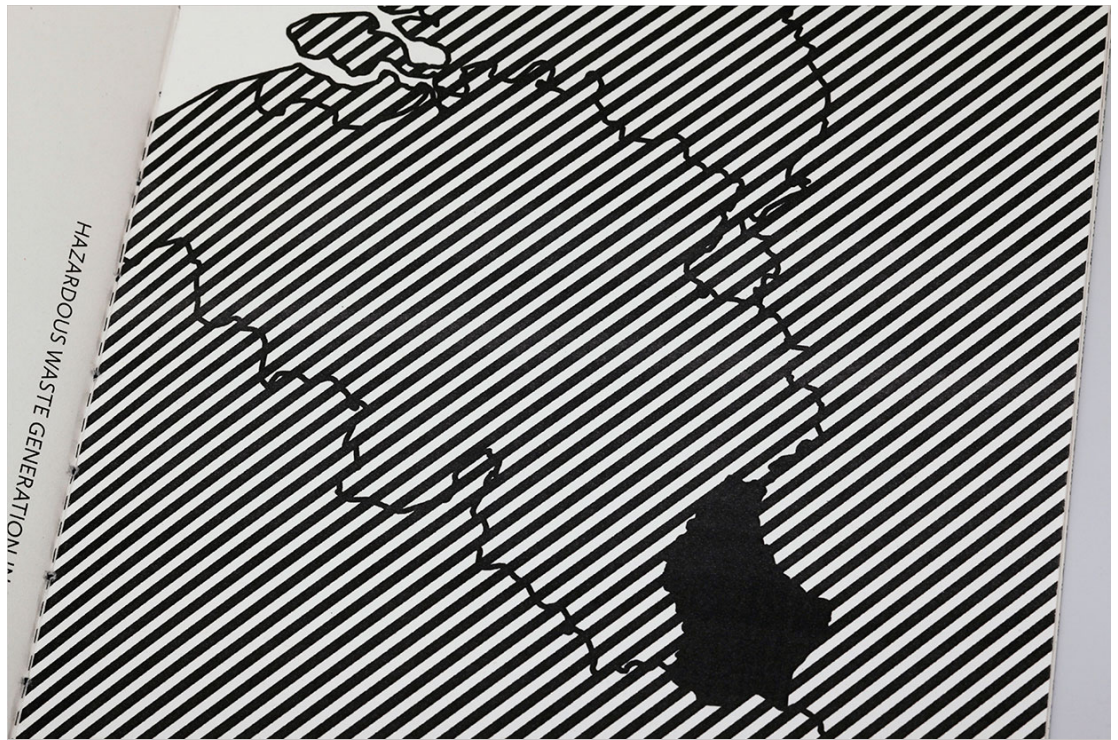
In 2010, the total generation of waste from economic activities and households in the EU-27 amounted to 2 300 million tonnes; this was slightly higher than in 2008 but lower than in 2004 and 2006; the relatively low figures for 2008 and 2009 may, at least in part, reflect the downturn in economic activity as a result of the financial and economic crisis. Among the waste generated in the EU-27 in 2010, some 400 million tonnes (17% of the total) were classified as hazardous waste. This was equivalent to an average of about 5.6 tonnes of waste for each inhabitant in the EU-27, of which 100 kg were hazardous waste.

WASTE GENERATION 2010 (KG PER CAPITA)

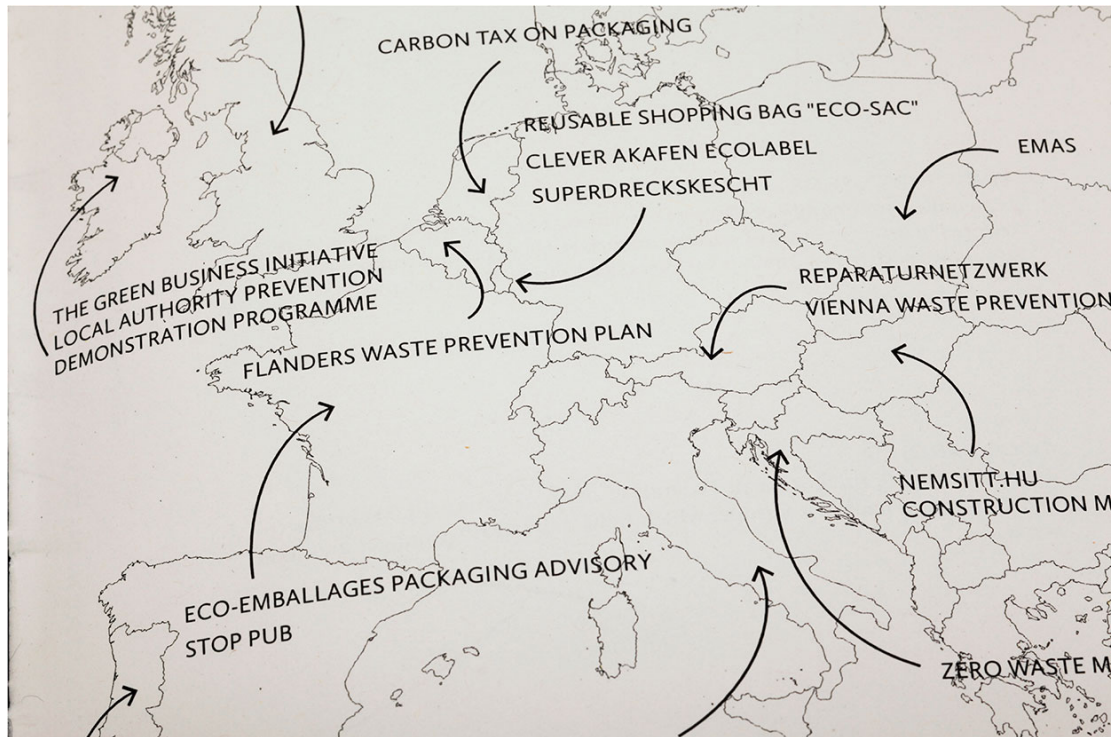












### In Varietate Concordia

Ilse Modder

This passport-sized atlas discusses the true meaning of the EU's official motto "United in Diversity". By using heraldic symbols, the atlas reveals both the importance of integration for peace and prosperity, and the necessity of autonomous, national decision-making to conserve distinctive cultural identities. Modder's book reminds us that the European Union operates on the premise of any healthy democracy, that of maintaining a balance between giving and receiving. Freedom for the one implies commitment to the other, while privilege for the one implies responsibility to the other.





## UNITED IN DIVERSITY

Europe is at a crossroad. It is not just a matter of which road we'll choose to come out the euro crisis. The euro crisis above all sets the debate about the future direction of the European Union on edge. Most European leaders formulate a vista or final destination, but they are now planning a clear path forward to a "genuine economic and monetary union". Participants in this debate often take extreme positions: super state or nation state, Europhilia or Europhobia. In a Christian-political vision of the EU, we do not need to cling to the nation state, but neither to euro-centralism. There is indeed an alternative. This vision combines the importance of integration with a commitment to cultural diversity amongst Member States. It is about finding the right balance between unity







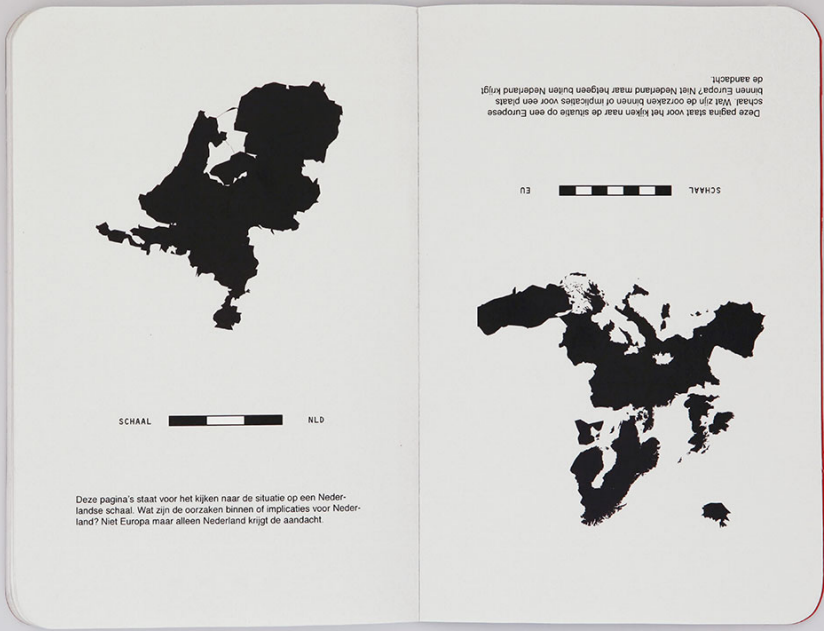
## Een eenheid van verscheidenheid

Mike Kokken

*Een eenheid van verscheidenheid* (A unity of diversity) is a flip-over atlas that can be read from both front to back and vice versa. In one direction it displays news events related to the Netherlands while in the opposite direction it displays current affairs that affect the European continent as a whole. Kokken's layout emphasises the interconnections between micro and macro levels, how incidents such as the eruption of Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano can lead to a total paralysis of European air traffic and how the increasing popularity of low-cost airlines affects cannabis consumption in Amsterdam.













**Niels Schrader** (1977, Caracas, VE) is a concept-driven information designer with a fascination for numbers and data. He is founder of the Amsterdam-based design studio Mind Design and member of the AGI – Alliance Graphique Internationale. Next to his design practice Schrader has been lecturing at the Delft University of Technology, ArtEZ – Academy of Art & Design in Arnhem and Willem de Kooning Academie in Rotterdam. Since January 2013 he is co-head of the Graphic Design department at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. In his work, Schrader plays the role of both a mediator and a designer. He considers communication to be an interactive process that requires participation through questioning. See further: [www.minddesign.info](http://www.minddesign.info).

**Lauren Alexander** (1983, ZA) is a designer and artist. She teaches in BA and MA Graphic Design at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague (KABK) and in 2019 she was a member of the KABK Research Group chaired by Alice Twemlow. Her collaboration with designer Ghalia Elsrakbi (1978, SY) initiated in 2009 has informed her practice and teaching. As Foundland Collective Lauren and Ghalia explore under-represented political and historical narratives by working with archives via art, design, writing, educational formats, video making and storytelling. The duo critically reflects upon what it means to produce politically engaged work from their position as non-Western artists working between Europe and the Middle East. Foundland Collective was awarded the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship for research in the largest Arab American archive in 2015, the outcome of which was presented as a video installation at Centre Pompidou in Paris (2017) and their short video, 'The New World, Episode One' premiered at the Rotterdam Film Festival (2018). The duo have lectured and exhibited internationally including at ISPC, New York, Ars Electronica, Linz, Fikra Biennial, Sharjah and Tashweesh Feminist Festival, Cairo and Brussels. Their work has been shortlisted for the Dutch Prix de Rome in 2015 and Dutch Design Awards in 2016.

Photography: Roel Backaert

## Tags

This text was downloaded on August 22, 2025 from  
*Open! Platform for Art, Culture & the Public Domain*  
[www.onlineopen.org/solidarity-or-solo-atlases](http://www.onlineopen.org/solidarity-or-solo-atlases)