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Creationist Beliefs in Europe

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Teachers' creationist beliefs in Europe

A recent News of the Week story ("Creationist beliefs persist in Europe," A. Curry, 27 February, p. 1159) referred to a lack of regionwide studies on creationist beliefs in Europe, while ignoring most of the European research project BIOHEAD-Citizen (Biology, Health and Environmental Education for Better Citizenship, 2004–2008). This project involved data collection in 19 countries, 13 of which were in Europe (*1*).

In each country, the sample was a balanced set of primary and secondary school teachers who taught biology or the national language. This study differentiated between antievolutionist creationist teachers, teachers who are creationist and evolutionist, and teachers who are evolutionists. There was a large contrast across countries: from 2% antievolutionist creationists in Estonia or France to more than 80% in Morocco or Algeria. In Europe, results revealed 47% antievolutionist creationists in Romania, 30% in Poland, and more than 25% in Cyprus and Malta. Creationist beliefs were more likely in those with greater belief in God or greater religious observance, regardless of religion. Biology teachers were more evolutionist than their colleagues in only half of the countries surveyed. The longer a teacher trained at a university, the greater the acceptance of evolutionist ideas.

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