

EUROPE EXPANDS, TURNOUT FALLS:
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE 2004
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTION

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Europe Expands, Turnout Falls: The Significance of the 2004 European Parliament Election

Richard Rose*

The biggest free election in European history appeared to be Europe's biggest democratic flop when a majority of European electors preferred to stay at home rather than go out to vote in June 2004 for members of the European Parliament. Of an electorate of more than 340 million persons, more than 186 million did not vote—a higher proportion of abstentions than in parliamentary elections in India, notwithstanding its higher rates of illiteracy and poverty. However, the behaviour of citizens varied greatly between the 25 member countries. In Slovakia, only 17 per cent of electors bothered to vote, while in Malta turnout was 82 per cent. Such great differences cry out for explanation: why should turnout in one European country be almost five times that in another?

Basic Facts

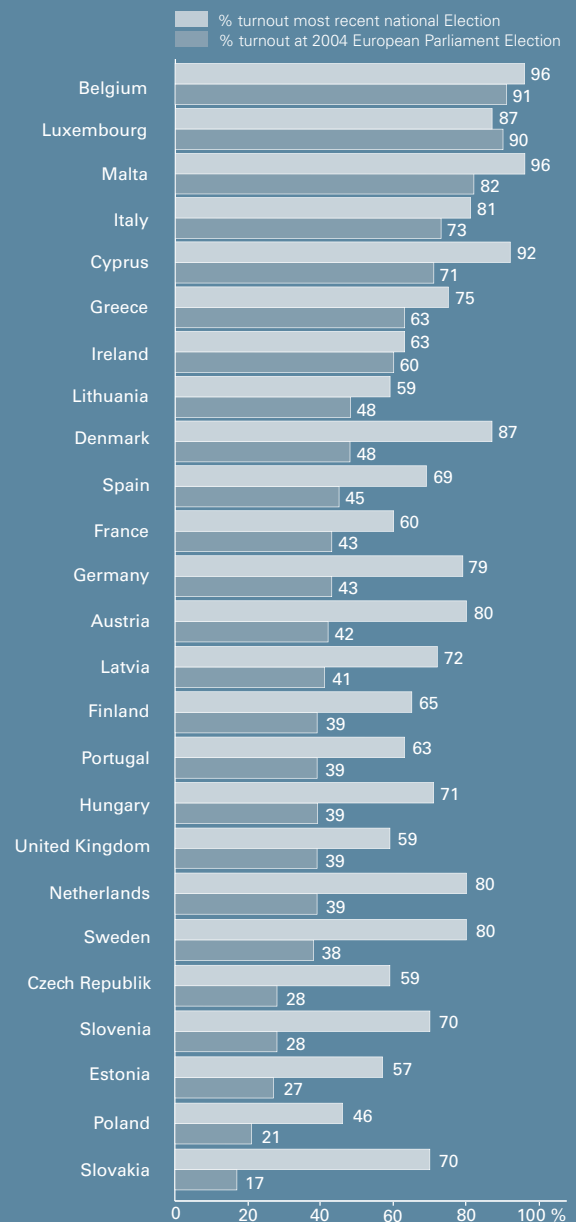
The body which has become the European Union (EU) was created in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome. Like all international treaties, this was a document binding national governments. Just as there is no popularly elected parliament in the United Nations, so there was no provision for a popularly elected parliament. The Parliament was initially an assembly of appointed members.

With the expansion of the powers of the European Union, the first direct election of members of the European Parliament (MEPs) was held in 1979. However, the powers of the European Parliament (EP) are still limited. Key decisions are made by a multinational team of non-elected officials in the European Commission in Brussels and through consultations between representatives of national governments, sitting as the Council of Ministers, and the Commission. The resignation of the

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Figure 1: National Differences in the Euro-Gap, 2004

EURO-GAP: Difference in turnout at latest national election and 2004 European Parliament election.



Source: <<http://www.elections2004.eu.int/ep-election/sites>>. Official returns as of 9 July 2004 plus provisional returns for Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and the UK. National election results: Rose, Richard and Munro, Neil, *Elections and Parties in New European Democracies* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2003); and update from authors' files.

president and the entire Commission in 1999 due to mismanagement and corruption led to an expansion of the EP's powers to hold the Commission accountable. Nonetheless, the influence of MEPs falls far short of the influence of national parliaments.

The most striking feature at the 2004 European Parliament election is that turnout varied greatly between European countries (figure 1). Nine-tenths of electors went to the polls in Belgium and Luxembourg and more than two-thirds voted in three more countries. In seven countries turnout was higher than the average in elections for the president of the United States since World War II. However, less than one-third of the electorate bothered to vote in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia.

Second, there is a big 'Euro-Gap'. Turnout in the EP election of 2004 was in most countries much lower than turnout at the latest election for the national Parliament. The Euro-Gap in 2004 averaged 25 percentage points across the member states of the European Union. In Austria, the Netherlands and Sweden, half or more of those who voted at the latest national election did not participate in the election of MEPs, and the same was true in five of the EU's new member states. The biggest Euro-Gap was registered in Slovakia, where 70 per cent had turned out to vote in a bitterly contested national parliamentary election in 2002, but only 17 per cent voted in 2004 to elect Slovakia's MEPs.

Third, turnout has been falling at each successive European Parliament election. When the first popular election was held in 1979, turnout was 63 per cent. By 1999 it had fallen to below half of the European electorate, and in 2004 it was down by more than 17 percentage points from the level of 1979 (figure 2). In the nine countries that participated in the first direct election to

Figure 2: Turnout at European Parliament Elections, 1979–2004

Mean for nine countries in 1979, 10 in 1984, 12 in 1989 and 1994, 15 in 1999, and 25 in 2004.

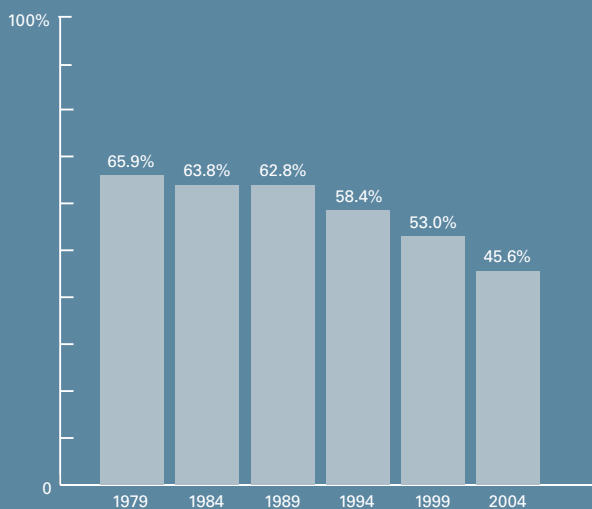
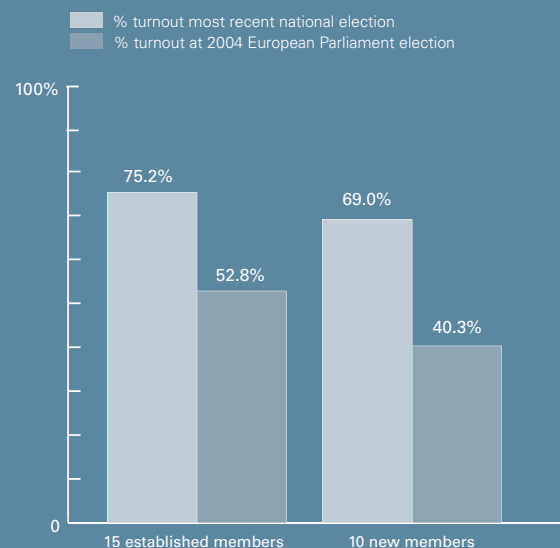


Figure 3: The Euro-Gap in the Established and New EU Member States, 2004



Source: <<http://www.elections2004.eu.int/ep-election/sites>>. Official returns as of 9 July 2004 plus provisional returns for Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and the UK. National election results: Rose, Richard and Munro, Neil, *Elections and Parties in New European Democracies* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 2003); and update from authors' files.

the EP, turnout in 2004 was on average 9 percentage points lower than in 1979.

As membership in the European Union has expanded, turnout has fallen. This was made very evident in the 2004 election: turnout averaged almost 53 per cent in the 15 established member states, whereas in the ten new member states it averaged only 40 per cent (see figure 3). There were, however, big differences between the enlargement countries. Turnout was as high as 82 per cent in Malta but was 65 percentage points lower in Slovakia (figure 1). (For the dates of accession to the EU, see International IDEA, 2004, Part II, pp. 55–74.)

The new member states are not indifferent or averse to politics, for in their most recent national elections turnout has averaged only 6 percentage points less than in national elections in the established EU members, but the Euro-Gap is bigger in the new member states—a difference of 29 percentage points as against 22 points in established member states—because of much lower turnout for the EP election. Moreover, in the enlargement countries turnout for the EP elections was 23 percentage points lower than in the national referendums held months before to endorse entry to the EU.

Alternative Explanations

The European Parliament operates as a unitary assembly and its 732 MEPs are organized in transnational parties rather than along national lines. However, MEPs are elected in 25 different national contests. Each is conducted according to the particular country's own election

laws, distinctive national political circumstances, and distinctive position in the European Union, for example, as an established or new member country. Because there are differences in national context, it is possible to undertake statistical analysis to identify which differences between countries—electoral institutions, national politics or EU-relevant circumstances—had a statistically significant influence on turnout at the 2004 EP election.¹

Electoral System and Practice

Compulsory voting has consistently had a significant influence on turnout at national elections (see the annex). Even where it is not fully enforced, it nonetheless establishes a social norm that many electors respect. In the latest European Parliament election, where there was compulsory voting, turnout was higher (correlation r : .68; figure 4). However, the overall impact of compulsory voting was reduced because it is conspicuously absent from the election laws in all the new EU member states. This is a response to the communist practice of securing 100 per cent endorsement for a one-party regime through intimidation and vote fraud, which produced turnout figures that were literally too good to be true.

A distinctive feature of the European Parliament election is that national governments could, if they chose, hold national and EP elections on the same day so that people could vote twice, making just one trip to a polling station. Luxembourg has regularly held elections to its national Parliament on the same day as it elects its MEPs. In Lithuania, the impeachment of the president resulted in the first-round vote to choose a new president being held on the same day as the EP election. In Belgium, Ireland and parts of the United Kingdom (England and Wales) regional or local government elections were held simultaneously with the vote for MEPs. With control of important offices at stake, national parties had an incentive to get out the voters out and voters had stronger incentives to go to the polls. Once there, they almost invariably cast a vote for their MEP as well; thus, holding national and EP elections on the same day had a positive influence on turnout for the European Parliament election (r : .45).

The effect of synchronizing, or yoking, elections, reduced to insignificance the impact of holding elections on a rest day. In both Britain and Ireland, the EP and regional/local elections were held on a normal working day and turnout went up in comparison with the EP election of 1999.

Following the EU Council decision of May 2002, all members of the European Parliament must be elected on the basis of proportional representation, using the List-PR system or the Single Transferable Vote (STV). In practice, 23 member states used the List-PR system but two, Ireland and Malta, used STV. The type of electoral system thus cannot account for differences in national turnout in 2004.

Figure 4: Influences on Turnout at the 2004 Election to the European Parliament

	Correlation
<i>Electoral system/practice</i>	
Compulsory voting	.68**
Holding national and EP elections on the same day	.45*
Rest day	not significant
Proportional representation	not significant
<i>National politics</i>	
Trust in parties	.62**
Trust in government	.54**
Post-communist country	.58**
Perception of corruption	not significant
Vote for biggest governing party	-.44*
<i>European Union position</i>	
Over-representation in the European Parliament	.57**
Duration of EU membership	.46*
Benefits of EU membership	not significant

** Pearson r correlation significant at $<.01$; * significant at $<.05$.

Source: Calculations by the author.

National Politics

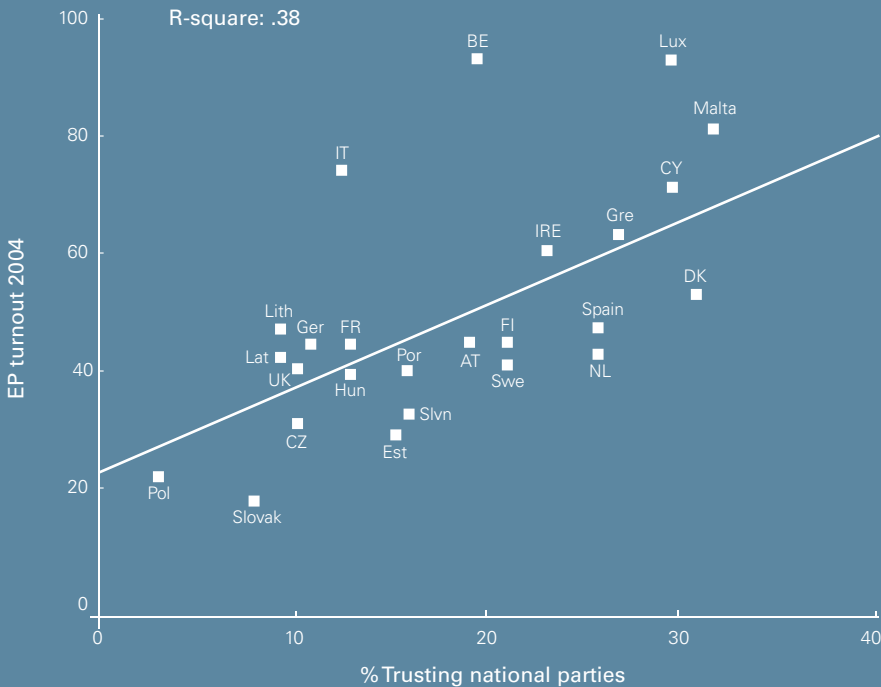
While in theory the European Parliament is a supra-national assembly, its members are elected in national contests, are nominated by national parties and make national appeals to national electorates in their respective national languages. Thus, the decision of electors about whether to vote and how to vote invariably reflects national influences such as trust or distrust in parties and in government.

In the run-up to the EP election, the Eurobarometer poll of the European Commission asked electors about trust in many political institutions. At the time of the European election, there was widespread distrust of political institutions. The average level of trust in national political parties was 21 per cent, and only 37 per cent trusted their national government.

Where distrust of parties and of government is lower, turnout at the European Parliament election was significantly higher; the cross-national correlation between trust in parties and turnout was .62 and for trust in government and turnout .54. Where trust in parties is very low—as in Poland, 3 per cent, and Slovakia, 8 per cent—turnout was very low. Where voting is voluntary and trust in parties is relatively high, as in Ireland and Denmark, turnout was above average. In statistical terms,

¹ Conventional correlation analysis is used (Pearson's r) because there are insufficient cases to undertake reliable multiple regression analysis. See figures in the Annex.

Figure 5: The Influence of Trust in National Parties on Turnout in Elections to the European Parliament



Source: Eurobarometer survey, March 2004

for each 1 per cent higher the national level of trust in political parties, turnout was up by 1.4 percentage points (figure 5). The influence of trust in government was also substantial, but not so high, boosting turnout by 0.7 percentage points for each additional 1 per cent increase in trust in the government.

Given a legacy of repressive and corrupt communist rule, distrust is higher in post-communist countries. (The apparent association between very recent membership of the EU and lower turnout is actually a reflection of the fact that eight of the ten new member states were dominated by Moscow before the Berlin Wall fell.) In the eight new member states of Central and Eastern Europe, only 11 per cent trust political parties and 26 per cent express trust in national government. By contrast, in the new member states of Cyprus and Malta trust in parties and government is actually above the average for established EU member countries, and so was turnout, reaching 82 per cent in Malta, where voting was not compulsory.

Distrust of government does not reflect a belief that those in government are corrupt. There was no significant correlation between turnout and Transparency International's Perception of Corruption Index, which shows wide variations in perceived corruption between European countries. Nor does distrust reflect concern with government's taxing and spending powers. There is no significant correlation between public expenditure and turnout at the European Parliament election. Instead, evidence from the European Social Survey

(see Rose 2004) indicates that distrust in political institutions is boosted by electors feeling that politicians do not care what people like themselves think.

Dissatisfaction with the government of the day is linked to distrust in national government. In 22 of the 25 EU member countries, the share of the vote for the largest party in government fell in the European Parliament contest by an average of more than 10 percentage points. The parties which had been the largest party in government emerged from the EP election with an average of only 23 per cent of the national vote. In Poland the Socialist government was already leaving national office before the EP election, so it was not surprising that its share of the vote was down from 41 to 9 per cent. In the Czech Republic, the Social Democratic prime minister resigned after his party's vote dropped from 30 to 9 per cent. In Italy, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's governing party lost more than one-quarter of its vote, leading to the dismissal of the minister of finance and the resignation of the leader of one partner party in the government coalition. In Germany the Social Democratic Party suffered its worst result in generations, as its share of the vote fell to 21.5 per cent. While Chancellor Gerhard Schröder survived, his political prestige was badly affected.

The fall in votes for the governing party was not so much due to a rise in support for the opposition as it was to differences between the supporters of different parties in the retreat into abstention. The more the gov-

erning party's vote was down, the more turnout was down ($r = -.44$). This pattern reflects the fact that electors regard a European election as a mid-term election. Those who normally expect to support the government in a national election use the mid-term ballot to send a warning to the party they favour by abstaining. The loss in popularity need not be long-term. Governments suffering from mid-term unpopularity can respond by changing cabinet ministers or by changing party leaders and prime ministers.

From the perspective of European federalists, indifference to the European project is worrisome. From the perspective of elected governments, however, it is better to lose support through differential abstention than to see voters stirred up to vote for the official opposition—or, as happened in Britain in 2004, to see a strong performance by a radical 'outsider' party, the anti-EU United Kingdom Independence Party.

The European Dimension

From the perspective of advocates of strengthening the European Union, the European dimension is seen as the most important in elections to the European Parliament. However, the European dimension is only one of three major sources of influence on turnout. Moreover, by comparison with national election laws and practices and national political influences, it is the least important influence.

The European Parliament is not a federal assembly with a lower house representing electors on the basis of one vote, one value, and an upper house containing territorial representatives with little or no regard for population (as in the German Bundesrat or the US Senate). Instead, the EP has only a single chamber in which the number of MEPs assigned to each country is only approximately related to population. It varies from five MEPs for Malta and six for Cyprus, Estonia and Luxembourg to 99 for Germany.

The distribution of seats in the European Parliament results in the countries with the smallest populations being over-represented. There is one MEP for every 36,000 electors in Luxembourg and for every 58,000 electors in Malta, while in Germany, Italy and Spain there are more than 600,000 electors for each MEP. At the national level, this means that MEPs in countries with smaller populations may be closer to the electorate. However, inequality at the level of the individual elector is counterbalanced by inequality in the total number of seats in Parliament. There are 16 times more German MEPs than representatives from Luxembourg and 13 times more Italian MEPs than MEPs from Malta. At the European level, the votes of MEPs from countries such as Luxembourg and Malta are usually 'wasted', for only if the 732 MEPs are divided almost evenly can their votes be decisive—even if they all vote together.

The electorates in smaller member states of the European Union are readier to participate in electing their MEPs. The greater the degree of over-representation, the higher the turnout ($r = .57$). A greater readiness to vote does not appear to be in expectation of getting greater benefits.

While 54 per cent of the citizens of Europe see their country as benefiting from EU membership, there is no significant correlation between a belief that EU membership is beneficial and voter turnout.

Is There a Trend Down in Turnout?

Integrationist theories of the European Union assume that the longer countries are members of the EU, the more they, and their national electorates, will actively participate in it. Prior to the latest round of EU enlargement, there have been three previous waves of enlargement, starting with the entry of the UK, Denmark and Ireland in 1973.

There is a positive correlation between the duration of a country's EU membership and turnout ($r = .46$). This encourages the hope that the low turnout in enlargement countries in 2004 may rise at future elections. However, the rise is likely to be slight, since, statistically speaking, the effect of EU membership for almost half a century boosts turnout by less than 3 per cent compared to the newest members.

Among the long-standing members of the EU, there is no common trend in turnout. At the 2004 European Parliament election, three countries that had participated in every EP election had a higher turnout than their average for the five elections from 1979 to 1999 (see figure 1 and annex, figure A.2). In the UK turnout was up by 6.6 percentage points from that average, in Ireland it was up by 4.9 points, and in Luxembourg it was up by 2.1 points. In four countries the fall in turnout was less than 6 percentage points. In only two long-standing member countries was turnout well below their past average: it was down by 10.3 percentage points in France and by 15.0 points in Germany.

The downward trend in aggregate turnout depicted in figure 2 is due only in part to the enlargement of the European Union by the introduction of Central and East European countries. Influences which depress turnout operate in Western Europe too. For example, turnout in Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania was higher or virtually the same as in four of the established member states, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the UK.

Implications

Constitutional analysis and the Euro-Gap both point to the same conclusion: the institutions of the European Union differ greatly from those of the 25 states that constitute its membership and are distant from citizens' political priorities. Thus, any prescription to boost turnout at elections to the European Parliament must take into the account the fact that the political process for conducting EP elections is in the hands of 25 different national parliaments, 25 different party systems and 25 different sets of electors. Thus, even if common rules or electoral formulae were applied throughout Europe, the responses of electors would differ.

Changes Within the Existing Framework

The first and fundamental obstacle to high turnout at EP

elections, or simply a turnout as high as at a country's national elections, is that they are regarded by voters as secondary elections, less important than the national elections held in each member state. Lower turnout at secondary elections is normal. It is demonstrated in the much lower turnout for local elections than for national elections in many European countries. In the United States, turnout drops from around 50 per cent in a presidential election to 33 per cent in the years when only seats in Congress are at stake. As long as the European Union is of secondary importance to citizens across the continent, a Euro-Gap will remain, just as there is a 'Local Gap' within countries that hold local and national elections at different times and a 'Congress Gap' in the United States.

Elections will continue to reflect national influences as long as they are fought by national parties rather than pan-European parties. In theory, there is nothing to stop national leaders from forming such parties without any legislation or direction from Brussels. In practice, such a party requires a degree of agreement on programmes and principles. It would also require a belief among national politicians that running on a pan-European ticket would win them more national votes than running as candidates only of a familiar national party.

To consider this proposition, it is worth noting that, in order to organize the business of the European Parliament, it is already necessary for MEPs to form party groups. This amplifies the voice of individuals and every party group receives money and administrative resources from the EP budget. To form a group requires a minimum of 19 members drawn from at least five different member states. There is no requirement that members of a parliamentary group agree with each other. While the largest parliamentary group, the European People's Party, has MEPs from all 25 member states, the extent of the ideological divergence within it is shown by the fact that it includes free-market British Conservatives, social market German Christian Democrats and supporters of French President Jacques Chirac. The second-largest parliamentary group, the European Socialists, has members drawn from 23 different states. It too is full of parties that differ not only in their interpretation of the word socialism but also, like French socialists and the British Labour Party, over the Iraq war and much else.

Given that turnout at national elections is higher, holding European elections on the same day as national elections would be likely to raise turnout significantly. This occurred in five countries in 2004. However, only in Luxembourg is this a matter of standard practice. Elsewhere it was an ad hoc response to events, for example, following the impeachment of the president of Lithuania. In England and Wales it was a matter of administrative convenience to hold both local government and European elections at the same time rather than having to hold one election in May and another a month later. However, the practical obstacles are immense. It would require 25 member states to agree to fixed-term parliaments and to make that term five

Figure 6: Variations in Turnout in the EU and in the United Kingdom, European Parliament Elections, 2004

Figures are percentages.

Belgium	90.8
EU mean: 15 established members	52.8
Northern Ireland	51.7
EU mean: 25 member states	47.8
Wales: local elections, no postal ballot	41.4
English: local, all-postal regions	40.0
UNITED KINGDOM overall	38.9
England: local elections but no postal vote	38.3
Scotland: no local elections, no postal ballot	30.9

Source: UK Electoral Commission; European Parliament.

years—well above the European average—or shorten the term of MEPs. This would be undesirable in countries where coalition governments can collapse during the life of a four-year parliament. Nor is it politically realistic to expect a British or Irish prime minister to abandon the prerogative of choosing an election date.

National politicians can object to holding the elections on the same day on the grounds that voting for MEPs would introduce a confusing element into an important national vote. Promoters of European integration also have grounds to object, for the effect would almost certainly be to increase the importance of national influence on the choice of each country's MEPs.

In 2004 the British government experimented with holding the EP election and local elections on the same day in England and Wales, and with all-postal voting in four English EP constituencies. In the United Kingdom as a whole, turnout increased from 24.0 per cent in 1999 to 38.9 per cent in 2004. A portion of this increase was due to the emergence of the anti-EU UK Independence Party, which encouraged opponents of the EU to vote rather than abstain; a part was due to the local and EP contests being held on the same day; and a part was due to the use of postal voting. The EP constituency with the highest turnout in the UK was once again Northern Ireland, where almost 52 per cent of the electorate voted (figure 6) in a situation in which elections can be seen as a continuation of civil war by other means. Second in turnout was Wales, where there were local elections but no postal voting. In the four English regions which held ballots exclusively by post, turnout was up by an average of almost 21 percentage points, compared to an increase of 15 per cent in the five English regions where there was no postal ballot but local elections were also held. Turnout in Scotland, where there was neither a local election nor a postal ballot, was 8 percentage points below the overall UK figure.

While all-postal voting appeared to boost turnout by

up to 6 percentage points in the electoral districts involved, the turnouts in Wales and Northern Ireland show that postal voting was not a necessary condition for achieving above-average turnout. In addition, three-fifths of British electors who received a postal ballot at their home threw it away or left the envelope unopened rather than vote for an MEP, and in every constituency that had all-postal voting the number of invalid ballot papers increased. In London, where the EP election was held on the same day as two other sets of elections held under two further different sets of rules, upwards of one-quarter of ballots were rejected as improperly marked in one or another contest. (See International IDEA, 2004, chapter 6.)

One prescription for increasing turnout does not require any legislative or institutional change: politicians should act in ways that create public trust rather than distrust. Electors who think that politicians do not care what they think and are only interested in looking after themselves rather than their constituents' or the national interest are less likely to vote. Such causes of political distrust go far beyond the powers of the EU to deal with. Yet they are within the capacity of national politicians to act upon.

More and Different Elections?

Since the secondary nature of the European Parliament creates a Euro-Gap that discourages turnout, there are voices calling for European elections to be made more important to the electorate in order to attract a bigger turnout and make the EU more democratic. The fact that Brussels officials are accountable to 25 national elected governments is regarded as unsatisfactory. A 'democratic deficit' is presumed to exist as long as the European Commission is not primarily accountable to 340 million electors and their MEPs.

Proponents of strengthening the European Union assume that making the EU more important ought to increase participation in European elections. However, the evidence of the 2004 election calls this assumption into question. Even in smaller European democracies, such as Portugal, Sweden and Slovenia, where the European Commission's pre-election Eurobarometer surveys found that the national population tended to see the European Union as more important than its national government, turnout was not significantly higher than in countries such as France and Italy, where the national government was regarded as more important.

Proposals for the president of the European Union to be directly elected may be justified on grounds of increasing the EU's accountability and because it is assumed that the legitimacy provided by popular election would give the EU president the political 'clout' to enable him to resolve disputes and to promote the integration of Europe and its global role. Such proposals typically ignore nuts-and-bolts issues about how an EU president would be elected. If the EU elected a president by popular vote, the combined electorates of five member states would constitute an absolute majority, and the electors of 20 member states that benefit from disproportional representation in

the European Parliament would be left with little or no influence. If election were by a plurality, then the president of Europe could be elected with one-third or less of the vote—and, if turnout were the same as turnout for elections to the EP, with the support of only one-sixth of Europe's electorates. If a second-round run-off election were required to ensure an absolute majority, the eventual winner could be the first-round choice of less than one-fifth of voters and less than one-tenth of the electorate.

The problems associated with referendums in European countries on the draft EU Constitution are greater still. Whatever the aggregate vote total, a referendum is likely to show some electoral districts (in the case of the European Union, some countries) producing a majority Yes vote while in others most vote No. To require approval by three-quarters of the member states—the margin for amendments to the US Constitution—would need approval by 19 countries. The anxieties of national leaders over the thought of holding referendums on the endorsement of the draft EU Constitution is an indicator of the difficulties, when many national elections are held, of securing a majority view that is the same everywhere. Moreover, when turnout is so low, then the real majority in a European vote is not those who favour a party or a referendum issue but those who cannot be bothered to vote.

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Figure 7:

Country	Turnout EP04	Turnout National	Turnout EP99	Referendum on accessn	Euro-gap (4)	Vote Change for Govt Party	Compulsory voting	No. of Electors per MEP	Yoked election
ESTABLISHED MEMBER STATES									
Austria	42,4	84,3	49,0	na	-41,9	-9,6	No	322 222	No
Belgium	90,8	91,6	91,0	na	-,8	-1,8	Yes	312 500	Yes
Denmark	47,9	87,1	50,4	na	-39,2	-11,8	No	285 714	No
Finland	39,4	69,7	30,1	na	-30,3	-1,3	No	300 000	No
France	42,8	60,3	46,8	na	-17,6	-3,3	No	471 795	No
Germany	43,0	79,1	45,2	na	-36,1	-17,0	No	620 202	No
Greece	63,4	75,0	75,3	na	-11,6	-2,4	Yes	391 667	No
Ireland	59,7	62,6	50,7	na	-2,9	-12,0	No	230 769	Yes
Italy	73,1	81,4	70,8	na	-8,3	-8,4	No	633 333	No
Luxembourg	90,0	86,5	85,8	na	3,5	7,7	Yes	36 167	Yes
Netherlands	39,3	80,0	29,9	na	-40,7	-4,2	No	448 148	No
Portugal	38,6	62,8	40,4	na	-24,2	-4,5	No	370 833	No
Spain	45,1	68,7	64,4	na	-23,6	0,2	No	629 630	No
Sweden	37,8	80,1	38,8	na	-42,3	-15,3	No	352 632	No
United Kingdom	38,9	59,4	24,0	na	-20,5	-18,4	No	569 231	Yes
Mean for establ. Members	52,8	75,2	52,8	na	-22,4	-6,8	na	398 323	na
NEW MEMBER STATES									
Cyprus	71,2	91,8	na	na	-20,6	-6,8	Yes	83 333	No
Czech Republic	28,3	57,9	na	55,2	-29,6	-21,4	No	345 833	No
Estonia	26,8	58,2	na	64,1	-31,4	-17,9	No	150 000	No
Hungary	38,5	70,5	na	45,6	-32,0	-7,8	No	250 000	No
Latvia	41,3	71,2	na	72,8	-29,9	-10,1	No	155 556	No
Lithuania	48,4	58,6	na	63,4	-10,2	-14,8	No	200 000	Yes
Malta	82,4	95,7	na	90,9	-13,3	-12,0	No	58 800	No
Poland	20,9	46,2	na	58,9	-25,3	-31,7	No	544 444	No
Slovakia	17,0	70,1	na	52,2	-53,1	2,0	No	300 000	No
Slovenia	28,3	70,1	na	61,1	-41,8	-14,3	No	228 571	No
Mean for new members	40,3	69,0	na	62,7	-28,7	-13,5	na	231 654	na
EU MEAN	47,8	72,8	na		-24,9	-9,5	na	331 655	na

Notes

- (1) % MEPs divided by % European electorate
- (2) 100 divided by district size or legal threshold whichever is higher. RR to supply note
- (3) 75 divided by square root of total number of districts multiplied by average district magnitude plus one. Taagepera index. RR to supply note
- (4) Difference between turnout at EP04 and latest national vote
- (6) 0=5th wave; 1=4th wave; 2=3rd wave; 3=2nd wave; 4=founder member.
- (7) Spain and Portugal definite; rest are maybes.

Source: BBC Online 23.6.04

Sunday election	% Vote lgst govt pty lst election	% Vote lgst govt pty EP 2004	Wasted votes %	Year EU entry	PR or STV	No. of MEPs	No. of Districts	National electorate million	EP electorate million	Representation index (1)	Trust EU	Trust natl govt
Yes	42,27	32,7	0,8	1995	List PR	18	1	5,80	343,0	1,45	31	39
Yes	15,40	12,8	7,0	1957	List PR	24	4	7,50	343,0	1,50	49	34
Yes	31,20	19,4	1,4	1973	List PR	14	1	4,00	343,0	1,64	41	44
Yes	24,69	23,3	6,7	1995	List PR	14	1	4,20	343,0	1,56	40	59
Yes	19,90	16,8	11,9	1957	List PR	78	8	36,80	343,0	0,99	42	29
Yes	38,50	21,5	9,9	1957	List PR	99	1	61,40	343,0	0,76	35	23
Yes	45,37	43,1	5,1	1981	List PR	24	1	9,40	343,0	1,20	68	55
No	41,50	29,5	1,2	1973	STV	13	4	3,00	343,0	2,03	56	39
Yes	29,40	21,0	3,8	1957	List PR	78	1	49,40	343,0	0,74	54	26
Yes	30,20	37,1	10,9	1957	List PR	6	1	0,22	343,0	12,78	53	61
No	28,57	24,4	7,0	1957	List PR	27	1	12,10	343,0	1,05	39	39
Yes	40,10	34,0	7,0	1986	List PR	24	1	8,90	343,0	1,26	60	34
Yes	43,33	43,5	3,6	1986	List PR	54	1	34,00	343,0	0,74	58	42
Yes	39,85	24,8	2,1	1995	List PR	19	1	6,70	343,0	1,33	29	48
No	40,67	22,3	5,1	1973	List PR	78	12	44,40	343,0	0,82	19	19
na	34,06	27,1	5,6	1973	List PR	38	3	19,19	343,0	0,93	45	39
Yes	34,71	27,9	16,0	2004	List PR	6	1	0,50	343,0	5,67	57	75
No	30,21	8,8	17,1	2004	List PR	24	1	8,30	343,0	1,35	42	25
Yes	24,60	6,7	23,0	2004	List PR	6	1	0,90	343,0	3,12	39	45
Yes	42,10	34,3	5,3	2004	List PR	24	1	6,00	343,0	1,87	54	31
No	16,68	6,6	26,7	2004	List PR	9	1	1,40	343,0	3,01	39	28
Yes	19,64	4,8	13,2	2004	List PR	13	1	2,60	343,0	2,34	50	31
No	51,79	40,0	11,0	2004	STV	5	1	0,29	343,0	7,87	50	49
Yes	41,04	9,1	8,3	2004	List PR	54	13	29,40	343,0	0,86	33	7
Yes	15,09	17,1	19,5	2004	List PR	14	1	4,20	343,0	1,56	47	17
Yes	36,23	21,9	22,7	2004	List PR	7	1	1,60	343,0	2,05	47	27
na	31,21	17,7	16,3	2004	List PR	16	2	5,52	343,0	1,36	46	34
na	32,92	23,3	9,9	1986	List PR	29	2	13,72	343,0	0,99	45	37

Annex

Figure A.1: Influences on Voter Turnout in the EU Member Countries

Results of a multiple regression analysis explaining 59.1% of the variance in turnout in 233 national elections from 1945 to April 2002

	b ^a	Beta ^a
Length of time over which free elections have been held ^b	4.9	0.44
Proportional representation	8.8	0.43
Compulsory voting	5.3	0.29
Election day a rest day	3.9	0.23
Electors per MP ('000)	0.066	0.22
GDP per capita	not significant	
Government expenditure as a % of GDP	not significant	

^aThe b value is the unstandardized regression coefficient; the Beta value is the standardized regression coefficient.

^bThe lengths of time for which countries have held free elections are divided into three categories: (a) for the lifetime of present-day voters; (b) consistently since 1945; and (c) for about a quarter-century (Greece, Portugal and Spain).

Source: Figures supplied from the International IDEA Voter Turnout database for elections in all EU member countries from 1945 to April 2002.

Figure A.3: Influences on Turnout in Elections to the European Parliament, 1979–99 (UK 1979–1994)

Results of a multiple regression analysis explaining 65.4% of the variance in turnout in 63 national European Parliament elections, 1979–99.

	b	Beta ^a
Compulsory voting	22.6	0.50
Proportional representation	13.0	0.29
Election day a rest day	10.5	0.27
Duration of EU membership (years) ^b	5.0	0.27
Govt. expenditure as % of GDP	– 0.6	– 0.21
Electors per MP ('000)	not significant	
GDP per capita	not significant	

^aThe b value is the unstandardized regression coefficient; the Beta value is the standardized regression coefficient.

^bFour categories of duration of EU membership are used: (a) the six founder countries; (b) three older members, the UK, Ireland and Denmark; (c) three newer members, Spain, Portugal and Greece; and (d) the three newest members, Sweden, Finland and Austria.

Source: Figures supplied from the International IDEA Voter Turnout database.

Figure A.2: Turnout in Elections to the European Parliament, by Country, 1979–99

	No. of European Parliament elections	Turnout in European Parliament elections (%)	Turnout in national elections (%)	Difference
Sweden	2	40.2	80.8	– 40.6
United Kingdom	5	32.3	72.1	– 39.8
Denmark	5	49.4	88.3	– 38.9
Netherlands	5	44.3	81.3	– 37.0
Germany	5	58.0	82.9	– 24.9
Austria	2	58.3	80.4	– 22.1
Finland	2	43.8	65.3	– 21.5
Portugal	4	49.9	66.1	– 16.2
Ireland	5	54.8	70.9	– 16.1
France	5	53.1	68.9	– 15.8
Spain	4	61.7	73.5	– 11.8
Italy	5	79.0	86.6	– 7.6
Greece	4	74.7	81.5	– 6.8
Belgium	5	91.2	92.7	– 1.5
Luxembourg	5	87.9	87.9	0

Note: Turnout is the average for all elections held since the country's first European Parliament election.

Source: Figures supplied from the International IDEA Voter Turnout database.