



European
Movement
International

EP Elections Report 1979 – 2014



About this Report

The 2014 European Parliament (EP) elections were highly anticipated as the first elections since the Lisbon Treaty was ratified. Starting in December 2013, the five main European parties nominated candidates for the President of the European Commission. Often referred to as the 'Spitzenkandidaten' system, the personalisation of the European elections raised many questions and was the subject of much writing. Yet, very few studies took the time to analyse both the 2014 EP elections and the European elections as a whole.

As such, this report seeks to deliver an analysis of the EP elections from 1979 to 2014. By using data from Eurobarometer surveys as well as research conducted by scholars from various backgrounds, this study looks for solutions towards a stronger, more democratic and efficient Union.

The first chapter of this report will examine the evolution of voter turnout in the European Union (EU). It suggests that EU turnout is a 'moving target' that needs to be carefully analysed. It also draws attention to the importance of civil society organisations working as a bridge between the EP and the citizens it represents, thereby helping to reduce the 'democracy deficit'.

The second chapter reflects on the 'Europeanisation' of the elections. Concerns once levied at the EP elections process have led to the (first noticeable) transnational campaign activities and, consequently, we shall evaluate the role played by the media in the Spitzenkandidaten process.

The last element of this report will deal specifically with anti-European sentiments and the so-called 'rise of Euroscepticism'. As such, after analysing the new distribution of seats in the European Parliament and the balance of power between pro-Europeans and Eurosceptic MEPs, we will take a closer look at the case of the UK and France where 'hard' Eurosceptic parties performed strongly before offering some final thoughts about the European elections.

Table of Contents

About this Report.....	2
List of Figures.....	4
List of Tables.....	5
List of Abbreviations (Including List of Political Parties).....	6
Introduction.....	7
1. What Happened: The Electorate, Voter Turnout & Parliamentary Elections.....	10
1. From 185 Million Voters to 387 Million: the EP Turnout, Always in Decline?.....	10
<i>a. Turnout Drop and Structural Factors</i>	14
<i>b. Turnout Decrease and Contextual Factors</i>	20
2. Moving Forward the Creation of the European Public Sphere.....	23
2. What Could Have Been & What Has Been: The 2014 EP Elections, the personalisation, the media & the US.....	25
1. Having a Candidate Acting as the ‘Face of the Election’?.....	25
2. The 2014 EP Elections: The Success of the First Transnational Campaign?.....	28
3. Euroscepticism, Rising ‘Anti-European’ Feelings & EU exits?.....	39
1. The Rise of Eurosceptic Parties? The 2014 EP Elections Results.....	39
2. The UK, Its People and Their So-Called Rejection of Europe.....	43
3. France and Its New-Found Euroscepticism?.....	48
Conclusion.....	55

List of Figures

Figure 1: EU Voter Turnout [1979 - 2014].....	11
Figure 2: EU Voter Turnout – From 9 to 27 Member States.....	13
Figure 3: Voter Turnout – First-time boost? [EU9 – EU15]	15
Figure 4: Number of compulsory voting Member States that took part in any EP elections	17
Figure 6: Voter Turnout – First-time boost? [EU 25 - EU 28]	19
Figure 7: EU Voter Turnout (NP / EP)	20
Figure 8: Trust in national & European political institutions.....	21
Figure 9: Air time on televised news during electoral campaigns in France.....	22
Figure 10: Visibility of EU matters and European elections on French TV news [2004]	22
Figure 11: Do you feel like you are a citizen of the EU?	24
Figure 12: Voter Turnout (EU / US).....	27
Figure 13: Voter Turnout (EU / Presidential elections)	29
Figure 14: What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?	34
Figure 15: What percentage of people across Europe could name one or more of the Spitzenkandidaten?.....	34
Figure 16: “Traditional” Press Coverage of the Spitzenkandidaten Process (UK / Germany)	35
Figure 17: Online and “Traditional” Press Coverage of the Spitzenkandidaten (UK / Germany)	36
Figure 18: Broadcasters Eurovision Presidential Debate.....	37
Figure 19: Support Comparison 2009 – 2014 (Pro-European / Eurosceptic and Far-Right).....	40
Figure 20: 2014-2019 European Parliament	41
Figure 21: 2009-2014 European Parliament.....	42
Figure 22: What percentage of people thought their country's membership of the European Union was a good thing? EU / UK average	44
Figure 23: Do you feel like you are a citizen of the EU? (EU / UK average)	44
Figure 24: Actual knowledge about the European Union (UK / EU).....	45
Figure 25: European Union membership – trends: Percentage of British people wanting to stay in the EU	47
Figure 26: French MEPs and Euroscepticism.....	48
Figure 27: Poll Results: Leading Parties at National Level - France [2013-2014]	50
Figure 28: Public Support for France's Membership in the EU (1973 - 2010).....	52

List of Tables

Table 1: In the last 45 years, what do Member States vote for?	11
Table 2: The ‘faces’ of the 2014 EP elections.....	26
Table 3: The Spitzenkandidaten system and the European Parliament	32
Table 4: Overview of relative Euroscepticism (in the UK)	46
Table 5: Overview of relative Euroscepticism (in France).....	53

List of Abbreviations (Including List of Political Parties)

ALDE	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
DF	Danish People's Party
EC	European Commission
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists Group
EEC	European Economic Community
EFD	Europe of Freedom and Democracy Group
EGP	European Green Party
EL	Party of European Left
EP	European Parliament
EMI	European Movement International
EPP	European People's Party
EU	European Union
FN	France's Front National
FPÖ	Austria's Freedom Party
GD	Greece's Golden Dawn
Greens/EFA	Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
GUE-NGL	Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left
MEP(s)	Member(s) of the European Parliament
NFSB	Natzionalen Front za Spasenie na Bulgaria
NI	Non-attached Members
NP	National Parliament
PRM	Partidul România Mare
PVV	Netherlands' Party for Freedom
S&D	Socialists and Democrats
SNS	Slovenská národná strana
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
UMP	France's Union pour un Mouvement Populaire

Introduction

The European Parliament (EP) is the only institution in the European Union (EU) whose members are elected directly by the citizens.¹ Granted, it was not always like that: back in 1957 when Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany came together and created the European Economic Community (EEC), the EP was composed of delegates from National Parliaments (NP). So, it was not until the early 1970s that the governments of the EU Member States decided that the EP would be elected directly by the citizens. At the time, the decision-makers thought it would help them renew the process of European integration;² they might also have seen it as a way to address the rising criticism about “the lack of *representative* democracy in the law-making institutions of the Union.”³⁴ Concurrently, by letting citizens choose their own Members of the European Parliament, not only would the legitimacy of one of the EU’s main law-making institutions increase but this increased legitimacy would also become “the source of power the European Parliament needed to enforce the development of a truly democratic European policy.”⁵ That way, the ‘democratic deficit’ would be plugged.

However, the debate on the “democratic deficit is [nowadays] as vivid as ever.”⁶ From election to election, political analysts point out the low participation rate, the rising anti-European Union sentiment and so on and so forth⁷. They tend to call attention to the fact that even though the power of the Parliament grew as “the treaty changes of the 1990s and 2000s brought about further decisive steps for the EP,”⁸ the voter turnout did not. Yet, in the lead up to May 2014, political commentators were waiting with bated breath to see what affect the now ratified Lisbon Treaty would have on election outcomes. The biggest innovation that held analysts’ interest was undoubtedly the nomination of candidates⁹ for the succession of the President of the European Commission, (EC) José Manuel Barroso. Strictly speaking, even though “the innovation of [personalisation] [was] just one more step in a long history of strengthening ties between the Commission and the European Parliament”,¹⁰ there was still a lot of discussion surrounding these elections as scholars and policy analysts wondered whether this was a ‘historic’ marker.¹¹ Consequently, after the May 22-25 elections were held, attention shifted towards the nomination of the Commission President by the Council. And in the end, the leader of the winning party,¹² Jean-Claude Juncker, jumped through all the hoops on his way to the European Commission Presidency and wended up scoring 422 of the 729 votes cast.¹³ As such, these elections showed that citizens could have a say in who will become President of the EC: in this regard, it appeared that, in 2014, the Lisbon Treaty had prevailed and the democratic choice that European citizens made was respected.

¹ Demertzis, Vaia. « Élire le Parlement européen ». In: *Courrier hebdomadaire du CRISP*. June 2014. No. 2211-2212. Pages 5-100. Page 5.

² Hix, Simon; Noury, Abdul G. and Roland, Gérard. *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007. Page 13.

³ The (supposedly) lack of democratic character of European institutions is generally referred to by the term ‘democratic deficit’. Grigorescu, Alexandru. “International organizations and their bureaucratic oversight mechanisms: the democratic deficit, accountability, and transparency”, in: Reinalda, Bob (ed.). *Routledge Handbook of International Organization*. Abingdon, Routledge, 2013. Pages 176-188. Page 177.

⁴ Chalmers, Damian; Hadjiemmanuil, Christos; Monti, Giorgio and Tomkins, Adam. *European Union Law*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006. Page 65.

⁵ Thomassen, Jacques. “Parties and Voters: The Feasibility of a European System of Political Representation”, in: Steunenbergh, Bernard and Thomassen, Jacques (eds.). *The European Parliament. Moving Toward Democracy in the EU*. Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield, 2002. Pages 15-35. Page 15.

⁶ Thomassen, Jacques. *Op. cit.* Page 15.

⁷ Bouillaud, Christophe. « L’eurosepticisme partisan lors des élections européennes de juin 2004. Un premier essai d’estimation et d’explication. », in: Delwit, Pascal and Poirier, Philippe (eds.). *Parlement puissant, électeur absent ? Les élections européennes de juin 2004*. Pages 219-249. Page 219.

⁸ Wiesner, Claudia. “From Safeguarding Peace in Europe to Financial Crisis”. In: Wiesner, Claudia and Schmidt-Gleim, Mieke (eds.). *The Meanings of Europe. Changes and Exchanges of a Contested Concept*. New York, Routledge, 2014. Pages 91-106. Page 98.

⁹ By European political parties.

¹⁰ Gostyńska, Agata. “The European Parliament and European Commission after the May Elections: An Indispensable Partnership”. In: *The Polish Quarterly of International Affairs*. 2014, no. 1. Pages 83-95. Page 87.

¹¹ Emmanouilidis, Janis A. and Stratulat, Corina. “Post-European Parliament Elections Analysis.” *European Policy Centre*. May 27, 2014. Page 1.

¹² And as it turned out, in 2014, the European People’s Party (EPP) won the European Parliament elections.

¹³ Spanneut, Ophélie. “Juncker elected Commission president with 422 votes.” *Europolitics*. July 16, 2014.

Available on: http://europolitics.info/sites/default/files/pdf/eure4909_16072014_horncpmshe.pdf

Nevertheless, according to various sources, the 2014 EP elections “were less historic and more ‘business as usual’”.¹⁴ So despite the fact that an important step was taken towards the development of a deeper European democracy,¹⁵ most comments on the elections focus on the fact that the turnout had not increased,¹⁶ that there was ever growing anti-EU feeling¹⁷ or that the “core focus of the European elections remain national issues”.¹⁸

But is this really the case? Can the eight EP elections cycles carried out since the 1970s really be reduced to these three aspects? Do citizens really not care about the European Union and its institutions? Are they really that opposed to the idea of turning up to the polls to elect their 751 representatives?¹⁹ And if so, then why is that? Is there any (easy) way that would make citizens more interested in the European elections? Were the 2014 EP elections marked by transnational activities from political parties? Did the media take an interest, communicating the developments of the Spitzenkandidaten process? What about the rising anti-European Union sentiment mentioned above: is it really that bad? Are European citizens wishing for more nationalistic structures? Did Eurosceptics²⁰ win a landslide victory at the 2014 EP elections or have pro-European political parties maintained a majority in the Parliament? Should we be worried about the EU's future? Are certain EU Member States about to leave the EU?

In order to understand what happened in 2014, it is important to pay attention to what happened in previous EP elections and that is why in the first section of this report, voter turnout in European elections will be analysed between 1979 and 2009. This way, we will see that the EU turnout has not been as low as some people made it out to be. Thus, after looking at structural and contextual factors impacting voter turnout, a comparison between the EP elections and National Parliamentary elections will be made. In consequence, we will make a few comments on the so-called “Euro-Gap”²¹ which will lead us to examine the evolution of the level of trust in parliamentary institutions as well as the media coverage for each type of election. To conclude this section, we will explain why it is important for the EU to find (effective) ways to engage with its citizens.

Subsequently, we will go on to discuss the Spitzenkandidaten process and the risk attached to the personalisation of elections. Close attention will be paid to American voter turnout in comparison to EU turnout. Comparisons will also be drawn between turnouts in presidential elections across Europe, before we focus on the media coverage of the ‘top candidates’. That way, we will see that, in many countries, the media did not pay much attention to the Spitzenkandidaten process.²² And as the media is often the main (if not the only) source of political information for European citizens,²³ we will then see that a lot of citizens never came to know about the changes introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon.²⁴

Last but not least, in the third section, the concept of ‘Euroscepticism’ will be looked at in detail, leading us to pay closer attention to the different types of Euroscepticism,²⁵ as well as the various forms it can take.²⁶ Through the

¹⁴ Emmanouilidis, Janis A. and Stratulat, Corina. “Post-European Parliament Elections Analysis.” *Op. cit.* Page 1.

¹⁵ For further details on this, see:

“European Commission President - Let's make the next 5 years count.” EMI Press Release. July 16, 2014.

[http://europeanmovement.eu/index.php?id=6811&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=34466&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=5154&cHash=6f566dec82c3820808fdf50cbdd385](http://europeanmovement.eu/index.php?id=6811&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=34466&tx_ttnews[backPid]=5154&cHash=6f566dec82c3820808fdf50cbdd385)

¹⁶ “It's official: Last EU election had lowest-ever turnout.” *EurActiv.com*. July 7, 2014 (updated on: July 11, 2014).

<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-elections-2014/its-official-last-eu-election-had-lowest-ever-turnout-307773>

¹⁷ Mahony, Honor. “The rise of anti-EU parties and the crisis of confidence”. *EU Observer*. July 1, 2014.

<http://euobserver.com/political/122156>

¹⁸ Transparency International EU Office. “Observations on the transnational elements of the 2014 European Parliament Election campaign.” June 2014. Pages 1-13. Page 2.

www.transparencyinternational.eu/european-parliament-integrity-watch-eu-elections-2014/

¹⁹ Nowadays, there can only be 750 MEPs, plus the President of the Parliament.

²⁰ We will give a definition of this term later.

For further details, go to page 40.

²¹ We will give a definition of this term later.

For further details, go to page 19.

²² Hix, Simon and Wilks-Heeg, Stuart. *Op. cit.*

²³ Silva, Ana Catarina. *Op. cit.* Page 1.

²⁴ Fox, Benjamin. “The Spitzenkandidaten – this time was it different?” *Op. cit.*

²⁵ Taggart, Paul and Szczerbiak, Aleks. “The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate States.” *SEI Working Paper*. 2002, No. 51. Pages 1-45. Page 7.

<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=epern-working-paper-6.pdf&site=266>

examples of France and the UK – two countries whose largest party in the EP is composed of Eurosceptics – we will consider the probability of the UK leaving the EU and discuss France’s influence in the European Parliament.

In conclusion, this report offers some commentary on the 2014 EP elections and the European elections as a whole.

²⁶ Sorensen, Catharina. “To Love or Not to Love... Notes on Public Euroscepticism”, in: Arató, Krisztina and Kaniok, Petr (eds.). *Euroscepticism and European Integration*. Zagreb, Political Science Research Centre, 2009. Pages 77-96.

1. What Happened: The Electorate, Voter Turnout & Parliamentary Elections

“Turning out to vote is the most common and important act citizens take in a democracy and, therefore, is one of the most important [behaviours] for scholars of democratic politics to understand. And yet, it is not well understood.”²⁷

1. From 185 Million Voters to 387 Million: the EP Turnout, Always in Decline?

When it comes to the EP elections, people have often stated that:

- the “elections turned out to be a disappointment”;²⁸
- “participation in the EU elections has been constantly decreasing”;²⁹
- “the electorate did not attach much importance to [the elections]”;³⁰
- And furthermore that the people that did not show up to the polling station were “disenchanted and disengaged with the European Union”.³¹

But are these comments justified?

Looking at the EU voter turnout below, it could indeed be pointed out that abstention rose from 37.97% in 1979 to 58.04% in 2009. It could also be added that, although the European Parliament had initially announced that the 2014 European Parliament elections turnout was 43.09%, once the official national figures were confirmed with the national authorities in late July, the initial turnout figure was corrected to 42.54%.³²

²⁷ Aldrich, J., H. “Rational Choice and Turnout”. In: *American Journal of Political Science*. 1993, Vol. 37, No.1. Pages 246-278. Page 246.

²⁸ Mattila, Mikko. “Why bother? Determinants of turnout in the European elections”. In: *Electoral Studies*. 2003, No.22. Pages 449-468. Page 449.

²⁹ Malkopoulou, Anthoula. “Lost Voters: Participation in EU elections and the case for compulsory voting.” CEPS Working Document. July 2009, No.317. Pages 1-13. Page 1.

³⁰ Mény, Yves. “Foreword”. In: Gagatsek, Wojciech (ed.). *The 2009 Elections to the European Parliament. Country Reports*. San Domenico di Fiesole, European University Institute, 2010. Pages IX-X. Page IX.

³¹ Norris, Pippa. “Blaming the Messenger? Political Communications and Turnout in EU Elections.” Paper prepared for the Conference on Citizen Participation in European Politics. Stockholm, October 28-29, 1999. Page 2.

<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/ Acrobat/Stockholm%20Turnout%20&%20Media.pdf>

³² “It’s official: Last EU election had lowest-ever turnout.” *Op. cit.*

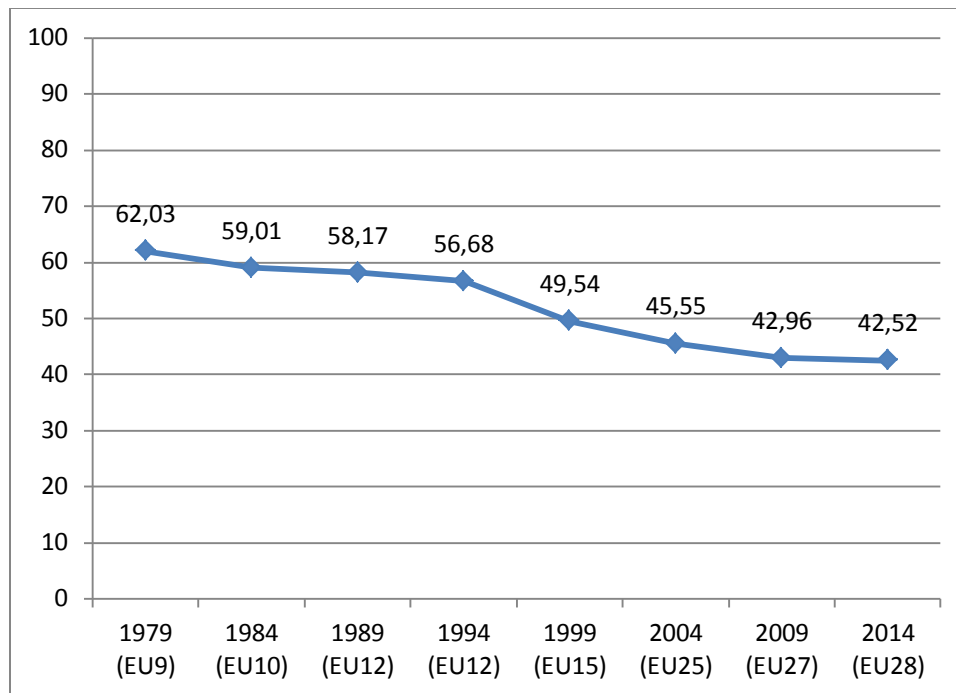


Figure 1: EU Voter Turnout [1979 - 2014]

At the same time as overall voter turnout has fallen between 1979 and 2014, as indicated by the above chart, the number of EU member states grew from 9 to 28. This means that “strictly speaking, EU-wide turnout is a moving target of uncertain comparative value since the number of Member States participating has been the same in only two elections (12 Member States in 1989 and 1994).”³³

Table 1: In the last 45 years, what do Member States vote for?		
▪ The	1979	EP
<p><i>Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and West Germany (the six founding member states known as “the Inner Six” or “The Six”,) as well as the UK, Ireland and Denmark elected their representatives in the EP. (EU9)</i></p>		
▪ The	1984	EP
<p><i>Greece joined the EU in 1981. (EU10)</i></p>		

³³ Jones, Clifford A. “The Legal and Institutional Framework of the 2009 European Parliament Elections in the Shadow of the Lisbon Treaty”, in: Maier, Michaela; Strömbäck, Jesper and Kaid, Lynda Lee (eds.). *Political Communication in European Parliamentary Elections*. Surrey, Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2011. Pages 17-42. Page 38.

<p>▪ The 1989 EP</p>	<p><i>Portugal and Spain joined the EU in 1987. (EU12)</i></p>
<p>▪ The 1999 EP</p>	<p><i>Sweden, Finland and Austria joined the EU in 1995. (EU15)</i></p>
<p>▪ The 2004 EP</p>	<p><i>Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia joined the EU in 2004. (EU25)</i></p>
<p>▪ The 2009 EP</p>	<p><i>Bulgaria and Romania joined the EU in 2007. (EU27)</i></p>
<p>▪ The 2014 EP</p>	<p><i>Croatia joined the EU in 2013. (EU28)</i></p>

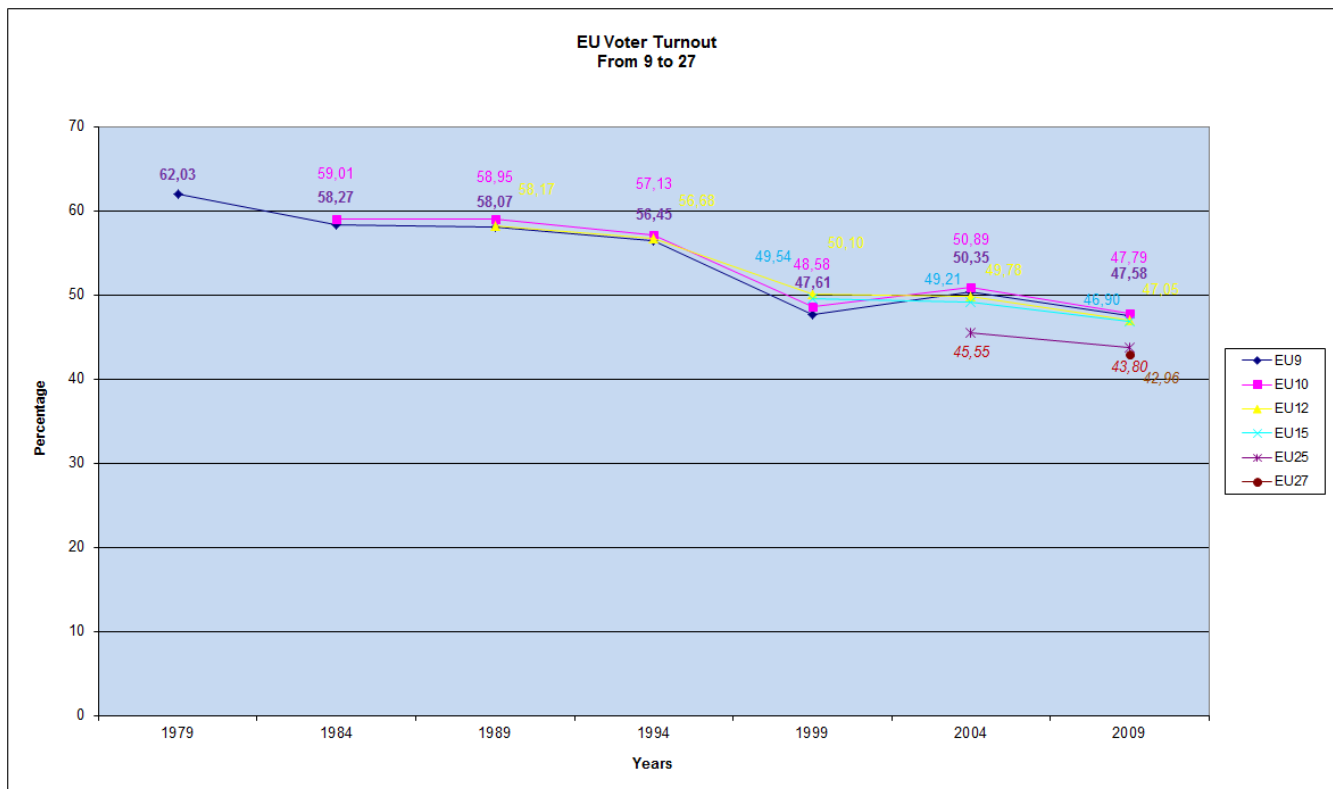


Figure 2: EU Voter Turnout – From 9 to 27 Member States

With that in mind, if we take a look at the above figure, it appears quite clear that for the first four elections (in 1979, 1984, 1989 and 1994), while the participation rate was falling, the addition of new EU member states did not make much difference in terms of voter turnout. The only time there was a noticeable difference in participation rates amongst the original Member States and new Member States was in 1984 after Greece became a member of the EU. On the other hand, when Portugal and Spain joined the EU in 1987, the difference between the EU12 voter turnout and the EU9 voter turnout was almost unnoticeable (about 0.10% difference in voting). In 1999 however, after Sweden, Austria and Finland joined the EU, the difference between the EU15 turnout (49.54%) and the EU9 turnout (47.61%) was quite noticeable as there was a difference of 2.23%. As for 2004, when ten new countries became members of the Union, while participation somewhat recovered in the EU9, with 50.35% voters going to the polling station, the recorded turnout in the EU25 was only 45.55%. So the gap between turnout in ‘the Nine’ and in the current EU member states increased by 2.57% for these EP elections alone, and was 4.8% overall. Yet in 2009, the variation between the EU27 voter turnout and the EU9 voter turnout was a bit lower, at 4.62%.

Now the question is: how does one explain the evolution of European voter turnout rates in the past 30 years or so?

Over the years, several explanations have been put forward:

- the lack of power of the EP;
- the lack of trust in political institutions;
- the lack of media coverage;
- the ignorance of the Union’s citizens (when it comes to the EP elections);

However, these reasons all have one point in common: they do not explain what happened in specific elections. In fact, these factors could be taken into account for any EP elections.

In order to exercise a closer analysis, this study adopts a ‘transnational’ approach before re-examining the ‘usual explanations’ mentioned above.

a. Turnout Drop and Structural Factors

Between 1979 and 2009, there was close to a 20% drop in turnout. Within this timeframe three EP elections stand out: in 1984 (3.02% decrease in turnout), in 1999 (7.14% decrease) and in 2004 (3.99% decrease). So what happened? Are these different election cycles even comparable or do other factors play a larger part?

To compare these different periods we have used a general comparative approach to turnout, linking individual and institutional approaches in order to create 'instrumental' explanations. That is to say, highlighting "two particular structural factors, which have led to turnout declining [across Europe] over time".³⁴

³⁴ Studlar, Donley; Flickinger, Richard S. and Bennett, Stephen. "Turnout in European Parliament Elections: Towards a European-Centred Model". In: *British Elections & Parties Review*. 2003, Volume 13, No. 1. Pages 150-161. Page 152.

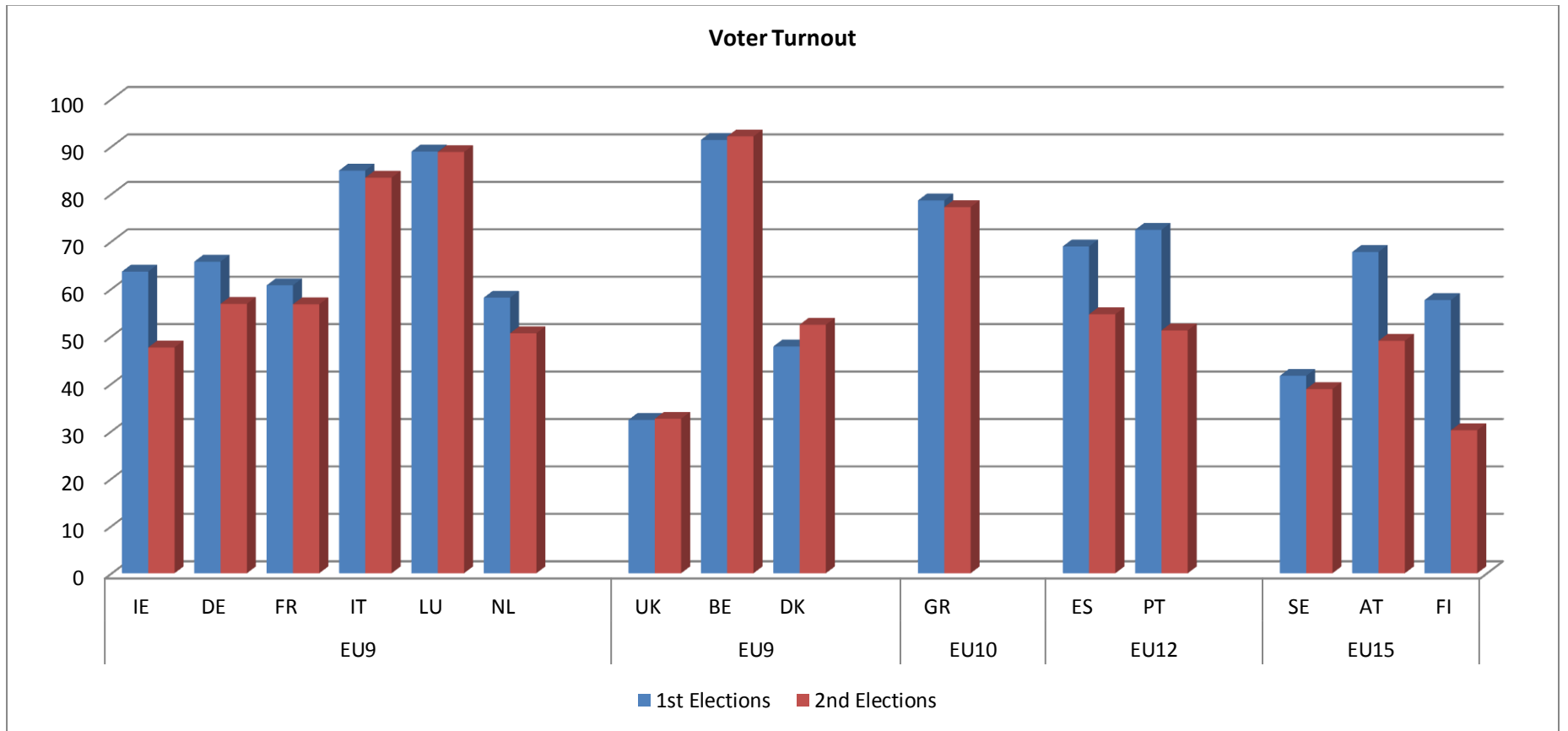


Figure 3: Voter Turnout – First-time boost? [EU9 – EU15]

One factor to consider is that two thirds of 'the Nine' recorded a drop in turnout following the first EP elections in 1979. The "first-time boost" hypothesis suggests that the novelty of electing MEPs for the first time can create a false confidence in voter turnout, that is no longer present once the novelty has worn off (in second elections).

However, this would suggest that anytime a new Member State joins the EU (as voters would be invited to elect their MEPs for the first time) there would be a consequent "boost" in turnout from that Member State.

Looking at the figures above and below, we can see that in most (19) EU member states, there *was* a higher participation rate the first time citizens in new member states were invited to elect their MEPs. What this theory does not help explain though is the significant decline in participation in 1999 when 50.46% of voters failed to show up at the polls. For this, we need to look at a second structural factor.

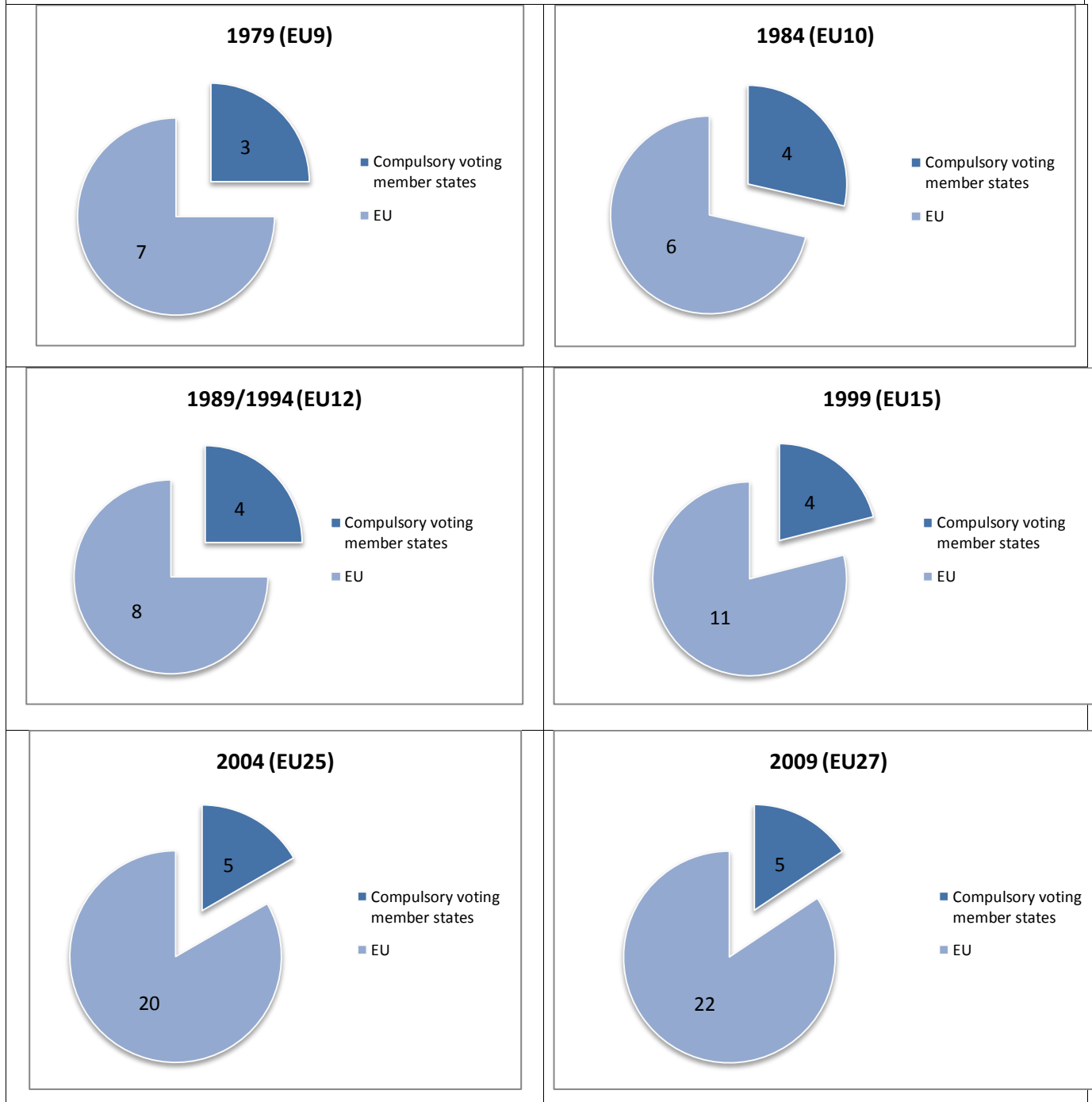
Looking back at the 1999 EP elections, it is important to point out that Swedish, Austrian and Finnish voters were not invited to elect their MEPs for the first time. In fact, unlike the 'Nine' whose (expected) decrease of participation was recorded in the 1984 EP elections, the first-time boost in these three new EU members occurred during 'special' European Parliamentary elections in 1995 and 1996. Thus, when a part of the electorate failed to show up at the polls after these first European elections (2.79% decrease in Sweden, 18.72% decrease in Austria and 27.46% decrease in Finland), considering the fact that it was these countries' first time voting at the same time as other European countries, the drop in participation should not have been as noticeable as there was no previous 'EU15' turnout.

One reason that can partly explain this drop in turnout could be the voting system of the different EU members. If we take a look at the figures below, we can see that there are a few EU members that have decided to oblige their citizens to vote in elections.³⁵ And by doing so, the participation rate in these countries tend to be significantly higher than in other EU states. But over the years, while the number of members in the EU increased, the number of countries that reinforced voting did not. So, as the EU opened up to several new non-compulsory voting countries, the turnout was bound to decrease and that is exactly what happened in 1999.

³⁵ In Greece, for example, voting is compulsory so if citizens do not vote (and therefore cannot show proof of having voted) it can be very difficult for them to get a passport or a driver's license...

Dautrich, Kenneth and Yalof, David A. *The Enduring Democracy*. Boston, Wadsworth, 2014, third edition. Page 376.

Figure 4: Number of compulsory voting Member States that took part in any EP elections



From 1989 to 1994 on the contrary, there was an even share of EU members with compulsory voting. Interestingly, the EU average turnout did not experience a similar decrease. Moreover, as the figure below indicates, turnout in the election following the one with the first-time boost tends to “become the norm for subsequent ones.”³⁶ And even

³⁶ Studlar, Donley; Flickinger, Richard S. and Bennett, Stephen. *Op. cit.* Page 152.

though we can see that, once again, it is not true for every EU country,³⁷ nevertheless, the share of compulsory voting countries in the EU does seem to have a stabilising effect on turnout, after a few elections.

Therefore, in 2004, when the EU25 was left with only 5 compulsory voting member states, one might anticipate a lower turnout. On the other hand, considering the fact that it was the first time vote in Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, political commentators were expecting these countries to become subject to the first-time boost.³⁸ But as it turned out, there was not much of a first-time boost as only six countries (out of the ten new EU members) recorded a higher turnout in 2004 than in 2009.

But that is not all: if one compares the turnout recorded in Eastern European Countries to the participation rates in the other EU state members, the former are extremely low compared to the latter.³⁹ The average EP turnout in these countries was only 31.2%.⁴⁰ Therefore in 2004, apart from Lithuania (that had one of the “biggest drops”⁴¹ following these elections) and Latvia, no ‘Third Wave Countries’⁴² had a turnout higher than 40%. One explanation that may partly explain this figure is the relatively recent democratization processes experienced by many Eastern European countries.⁴³ As such, the sense of civic duty that took decades to grow in Western European countries and brought generations to the polls may be lower in these new Member States.

³⁷ In Portugal, for example, the participation rate in the European elections only becomes the norm after the 1994 elections, that is, after the third EP elections Portuguese citizens participated in.

³⁸ Studlar, Donley; Flickinger, Richard S. and Bennett, Stephen. *Op. cit.* Pages 152-153.

³⁹ Apart from the turnout registered in the UK, that is...

⁴⁰ Wessels, Bernhard and Franklin, Mark N. “Turning Out or Turning Off: Do Mobilization and Attitudes Account for turnout Differences between New and Established Member States at the 2004 EP Elections?”, in: Schmitt, Hermann (ed.). *European Parliament Elections After Eastern Enlargement*. Oxon, Routledge, 2010. Pages 82-98. Page 85.

⁴¹ The participation rate went down by 27.40% between 2004 and 2009.

⁴² For further information on this topic, see:

Huntington, Samuel P. “Democracy’s Third Wave”. In: *Journal of Democracy*. Spring 1991, Vol.2, No.2.

<http://www.ou.edu/uschina/gries/articles/IntPol/Huntington.91.Demo.3rd.pdf>

⁴³ Huntington, Samuel. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991. Pages 13-26.

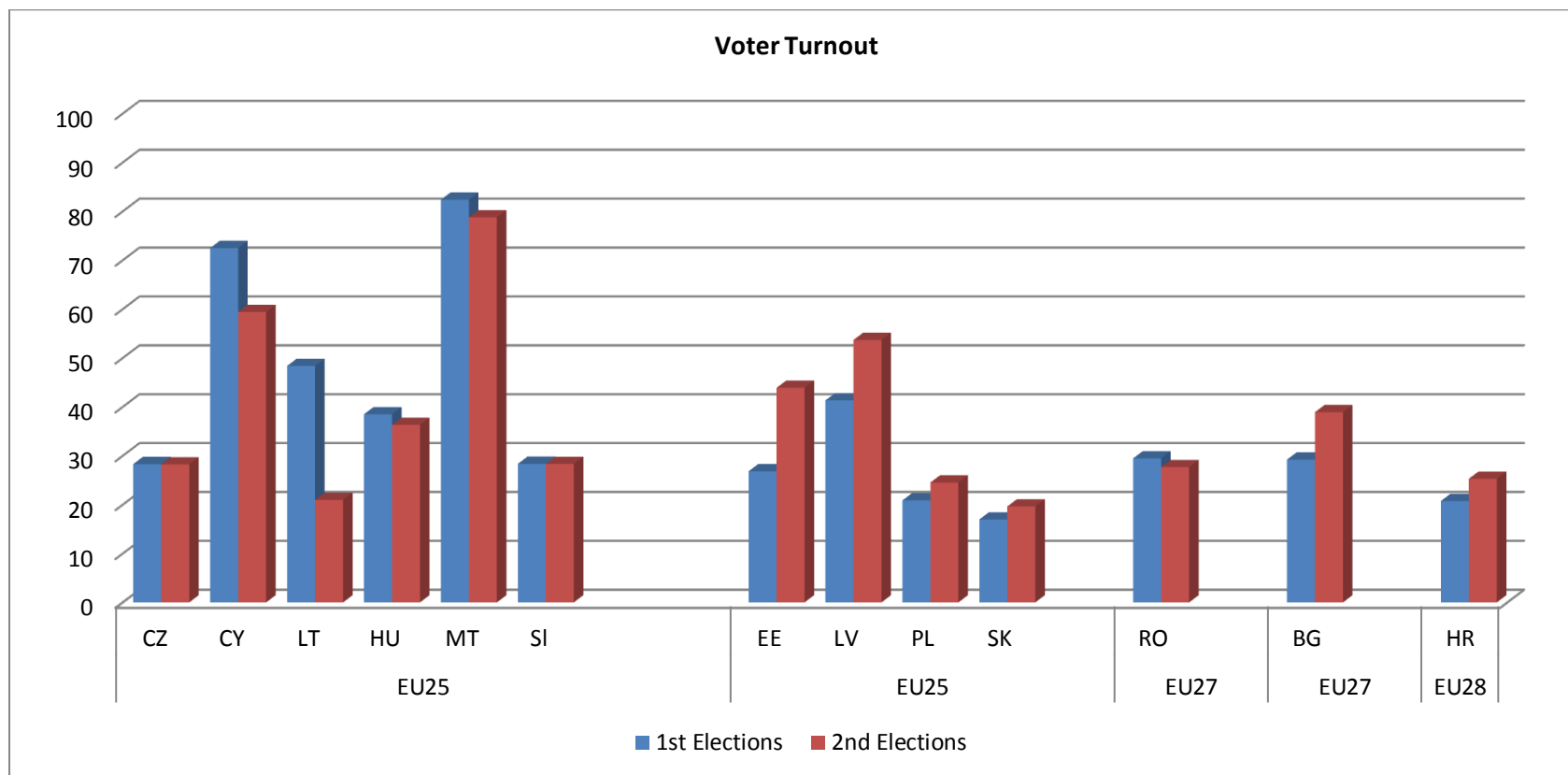


Figure 5: Voter Turnout - First-time boost? [EU 25 - EU 28]

b. Turnout Decrease and Contextual Factors

As already seen, there is clearly an overall decrease in voting in EP elections. However between 1979 and 2014, turnout also declined by 15.45% in National Parliamentary elections in the Union's Member States which is comparable to the 19.07% decrease in turnout for EP elections.

Therefore, the Euro-gap (as it is often referred to)⁴⁴ did not change as significantly over the last thirty years or so as it increased from 20.67% in 1979 to 24.29% in 2009. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that a multi-national average is more likely to conceal substantial differences between EU countries.⁴⁵ Indeed in most Member States the decline in turnout was not as linear as this figure would suggest.

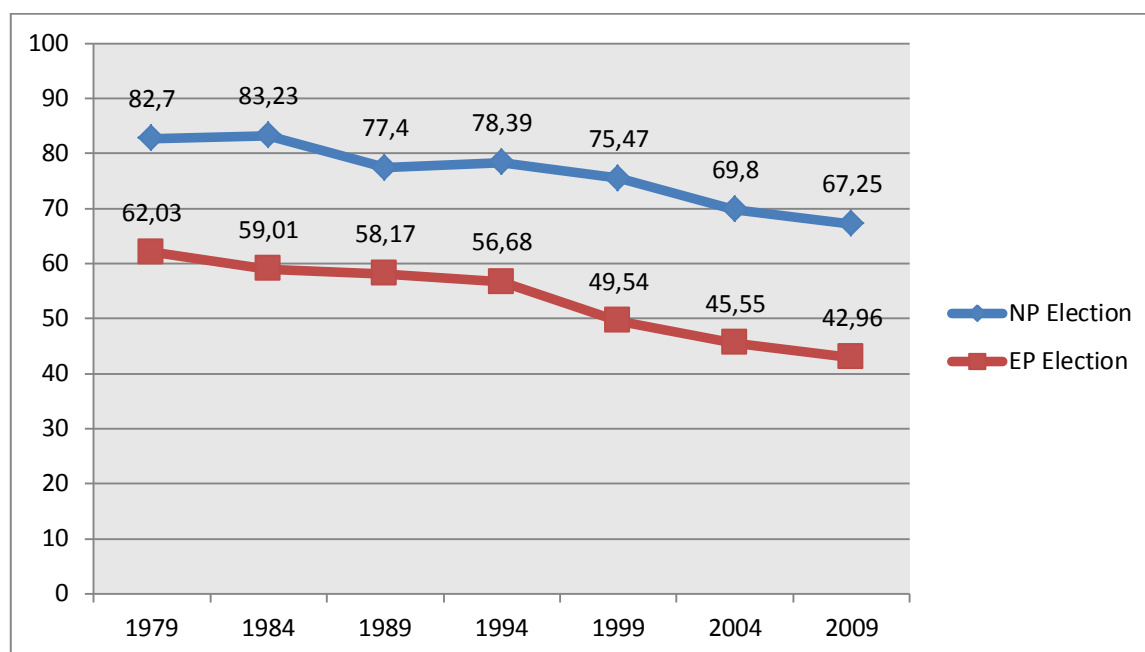


Figure 6: EU Voter Turnout (NP / EP)

Despite this, the trend in most European countries is of declining electoral turnout.⁴⁶ Scholars and others have suggested that this highlights a decreasing sense of civic duty, especially amongst younger voters,⁴⁷ and, more generally, a lack of trust in political institutions. To address this, following the 2004 elections, the European Parliament requested post-electoral surveys to be carried out in all EU Member States in order to find out – among other things – the ‘reasons for abstention’.⁴⁸ In response, “‘lack of trust or dissatisfaction with politics’ was [indeed], by some way, the answer most often given by abstainers”.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ The UK Electoral Commission. “Elections in the European Union – A Comparative Overview”. European Parliamentary Elections Seminar. Cardiff, July 2004.

Available on: <http://www.idea.int/news/newsletters/upload/Handout%20Cardiff.pdf>

⁴⁵ Rose, Richard. “Voter Turnout in the European Union Member Countries”, in: *Voter Turnout in Western Europe*. Stockholm, Publications Office - International IDEA, 2004. Pages 17-24. Page 18.

⁴⁶ Coyle, Diane. *The Economics of Enough: How to Run the Economy as If the Future Matters*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2011. Page 175.

⁴⁷ Rotolo, Thomas and Wilson, John. *Op. cit.* Pages 1091-1092.

⁴⁸ For further details on this, see:

EOS Gallup Europe. “Flash Eurobarometre 162. Post European elections 2004 survey.” July 2004. Page 2.

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/FL162en.pdf

TNS Political & Social. “Special Eurobarometer 320/ Wave 71.3. Post-electoral survey 2009.” November 2009. Page 2.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/28_07/EB71.3_post-electoral_final_report_EN.pdf

⁴⁹ TNS Political & Social. “Special Eurobarometer 320/ Wave 71.3.” *Op. cit.* Page 27.

Moreover, those voicing 'dissatisfaction' as a reason for abstention increased from 22% in 2004⁵⁰ to 28% in 2009.⁵¹ In the meantime, the level of trust in the European Parliament decreased by almost 10% falling from 57% in 2004 to 48% in 2009. Yet unlike the ever-declining trust in national parliaments, the European Parliament gained significant support at the beginning of the 2000s. Nevertheless, the 2004 EP elections turnout did not experience a matching increase in participation rates. Therefore, while trust might be a significant predictor of turnout,⁵² it does not appear to be a stand-alone variable and needs to be considered in regard to previously mentioned factors.

Interestingly, while most European citizens claim to trust their MEPs more than their MPs, they are still more likely to go to the polls to elect the latter.

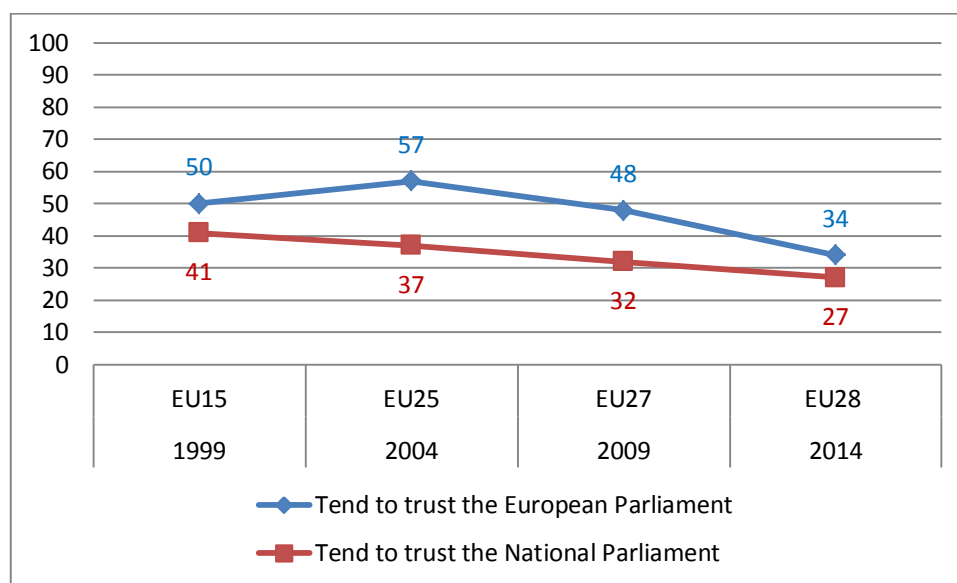


Figure 7: Trust in national & European political institutions

Some commentators have discussed the possibility that trust in national parliaments has “a significant effect on participation, suggesting that parliamentary strength at the national level may mediate the public’s expectations from the EP.”⁵³ However, there is yet to be any study made in this area, and a more interesting hypothesis covers the idea that “the visibility of the EP campaign on [the] news [increases] the probability of voting.”⁵⁴ Indeed, whilst France, in the figures below, seems to buck the trend, EP elections in general tend to receive far less media coverage than NP elections across the different EU Member States. Despite this, even in France there is a tendency for European elections to need to “compete with other political issues and events”.⁵⁵ As such, European elections are often seen as ‘second-order elections’, which are subverted by more domestic (national) concerns, meaning that transnational (European) issues are not debated.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ EOS Gallup Europe. “Flash Eurobarometre 162.” *Op. cit.* Page 17.

⁵¹ TNS Political & Social. “Special Eurobarometer 320/ Wave 71.3.” *Op. cit.* Page 27.

⁵² For further details on this, see:

Uslaner, Eric M. “Democracy and social capital”, in: Warren, Mark E. (ed.). *Democracy and Trust*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pages 121-150. Page 133.

⁵³ Clark, Nick. “Explaining Low Turnout in EP Elections: Voter’s Perceptions of the European Parliament.” Paper prepared for a PIREDEU Conference, Brussels, November 18-19, 2010. Pages 1-40. Page 17.

Available on: http://www.piredeu.eu/Database/Conf_Papers/III1_3-PIREDEU_Clark.pdf

⁵⁴ de Vreese, Claes H.; Banducci, Susan A.; Semetko, Holli A. and Boomgaarden, Hajo G. “The news coverage of the 2004 European Parliamentary Election Campaign in 25 countries.” In: *European Union Politics*. 2006, volume 7, no. 4. Pages 477-504. Page 498.

⁵⁵ Reif, Karlheinz and Schmitt, Hermann. *Op. cit.* Page 14.

⁵⁶ For further information on this topic, see:

Therefore, despite the fact that journalists “can help reach a widespread audience of European citizens and thus foster participation at these elections”⁵⁷ they seem to prefer not to.

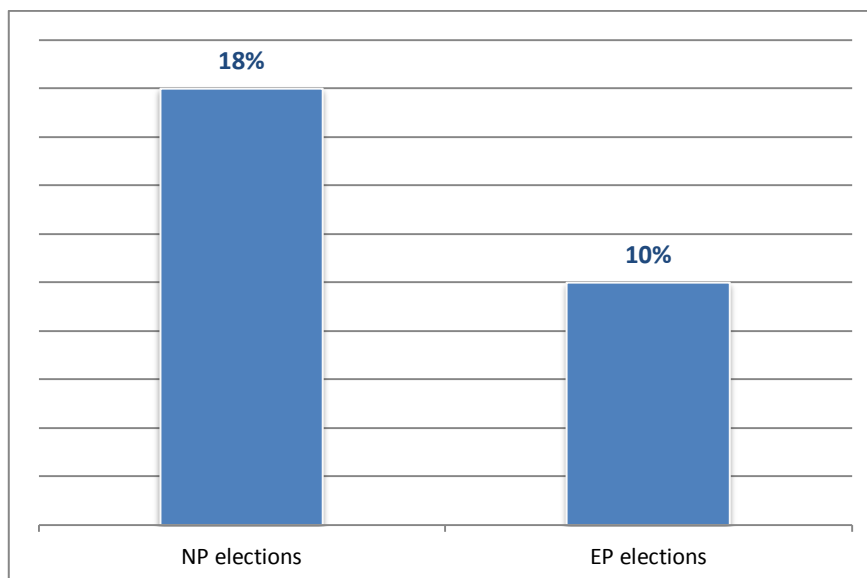


Figure 8: Air time on televised news during electoral campaigns in France⁵⁸

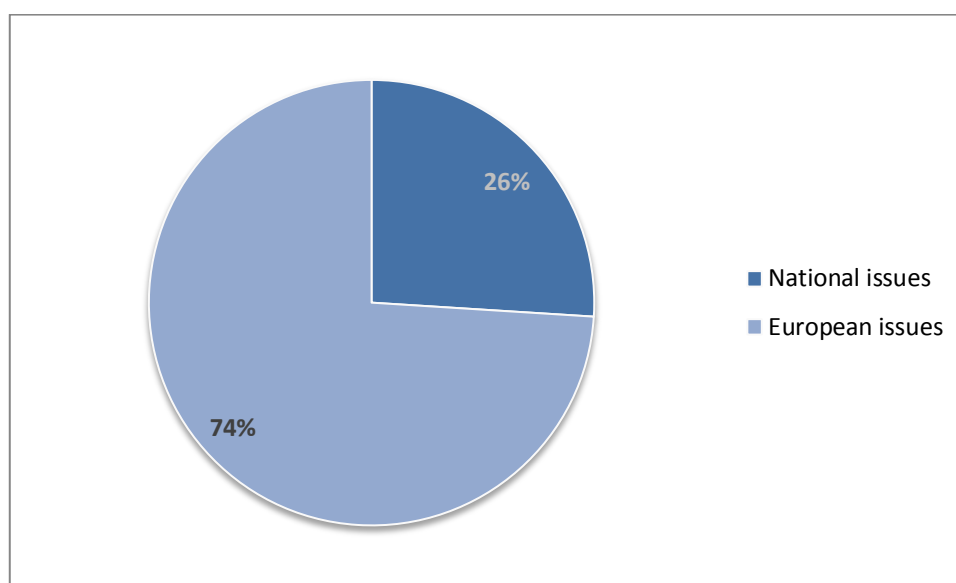


Figure 9: Visibility of EU matters and European elections on French TV news [2004]

Reif, Karlheinz and Schmitt, Hermann. “Nine Second-order National Elections. A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Election Results”. In: *European Journal of Political Research*. March 1980, Volume 8, No. 1. Pages 3–44.

⁵⁷ Silva, Ana Catarina. “European Elections and The Media: Portuguese Coverage Of The 2009 European Elections.” Eurocid. 2014. Page 1.

<https://infoeuropa.eurocid.pt/files/database/000059001-000060000/000059120.pdf>

⁵⁸ Adaptation of the figure produced by:

Piar, Christophe. *Comment se jouent les élections. Télévision et persuasion en campagne électorale*. Paris, INA Editions, 2012. Page 181.

Despite the greater interest associated with national politics, “according to many observers, citizens are not interested in the EU *because* they are not well informed on the major issues that are debated in Brussels.”⁵⁹ Moreover 84% of citizens also agreed that participation rates in the EP elections would be higher if voters received more information.⁶⁰ Considering the fact that “Eurobarometer polls continuously show that most European citizens identify the media as their main source of information about European issues”,⁶¹ it seems all the more important that journalists pay more attention to the EP elections and cover *European* issues. And while it is true that, over the years, there has been an overall increase in terms of news coverage,⁶² “having easier access to information, such as from media, lowers one of the costs associated with voting”,⁶³ and this leaves many people still criticising the (insufficient) role played by the media.⁶⁴

2. Moving Forward the Creation of the European Public Sphere

The efforts to raise the level of knowledge of EU issues and institutions⁶⁵ should not be put solely in the hands of a few journalists; rather it should be a shared task between the media, EU institutions and civil society organisations. And while it is true that the level of knowledge has increased over time, there are still (far too) many citizens that do not know very much about the EU and its institutions. A Eurobarometer poll taken immediately prior to the 2009 EP elections for example showed that only 48% of EU citizens surveyed “even knew that the Members of the EP were *directly elected*, and only 33 percent knew that MEPs sit by political affinities rather than by nationality (44 percent).”⁶⁶ Against this backdrop of misinformed belief, it may actually be deemed impressive that turnout was even over 40% in 2009.⁶⁷

Over the years, the EU has invested “considerable amounts of money in helping to inform citizens”.⁶⁸ Yet, it was only relatively recently that the European institutions “developed a discourse on civil society and civil dialogue”.⁶⁹ Prior to this, “during the first four decades of European integration, civil society participation was informal and [only] took the form of unregulated lobbying”.⁷⁰ Consequently, it should not come as a surprise that many Europeans thought “that they [are] excluded from the decisions of the political elite”⁷¹ and their ‘lobbyist counterpart’.⁷² In this vein, according to a recent Eurobarometer study, “while around 70% of respondents feel that voting in local/regional or national elections is an effective way of influencing political decisions, only around 50% think that voting in EU elections is effective”.⁷³

So, while it seems rather important to contribute to the efforts of raising the level of knowledge of EU issues and institutions in order to elevate EP elections to the first order of electoral business,⁷⁴ the core of

⁵⁹ Lelieveldt, Herman and Princen, Sebastiaan. *The Politics of the European Union*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011. Page 121.

⁶⁰ TNS Political & Social. “Flash Eurobarometer 364. Electoral Rights.” March 2013. Page 26.
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_364_en.pdf

⁶¹ Silva, Ana Catarina. *Op. cit.* Page 1.

⁶² Gerstlé, Jacques. « Enjeux », in : Déloye, Yves (dir.). *Dictionnaire des élections européennes*. Paris, Economica, 2005. Pages 227-233. Page 230.

⁶³ Bilška, Marketa. *Op. cit.* Page 2.

⁶⁴ Robert, Aline. “French politicians criticise media for lack of information about the EU”. *EurActiv France*. May 27, 2014 (updated on: July 9, 2014).

<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-elections-2014/french-politicians-criticise-media-lack-information-about-eu-302412>

⁶⁵ Jones, Clifford A. *Op. cit.* Page 39.

⁶⁶ Jones, Clifford A. *Op. cit.* Page 38.

⁶⁷ Jones, Clifford A. *Op. cit.* Page 38.

⁶⁸ Lelieveldt, Herman and Princen, Sebastiaan. *Op. cit.* Page 121.

⁶⁹ Radišić, Jelena; Radu, Roxana and Suciú Andreea. “Participation, Capability and Voice in the EU Consultation Process”, in: Radu, Roxana and Radišić, Jelena (eds.). *Well-being Reconsidered: Empowering Grassroots Organizations. Cross-country Experiences from the Grassroots Europe for Local Wellbeing Initiative*. Budapest, Open Society Foundations, 2012. Pages 33-50. Page 43.

⁷⁰ Radišić, Jelena; Radu, Roxana and Suciú Andreea. *Op. cit.* Page 43.

⁷¹ Smith, David M. and Wistrich, Enid. “Conclusions: identity, Diversity and Political Engagement - The Search for an Effective Demos”, in: Smith, David M. and Wistrich, Enid (eds.). *Regional Identity and Diversity in Europe. Experience in Wales, Silesia and Flanders*. London, The Federal Trust for Education & Research, 2007. Pages 183-196. Page 193.

⁷² Newman, Michael. “Introduction”, in: Hoskyns, Catherine and Newman, Michael (eds.). *Democratizing the European Union. Issues for the Twenty-first Century*. New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, Second printing, 2009. Pages 1-11. Page 9.

⁷³ TNS Political & Social. “Flash Eurobarometer 373. Europeans’ Engagement in Participatory Democracy.” March 2013. Page 17.

http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_373_en.pdf

⁷⁴ Jones, Clifford A. *Op. cit.* Page 39.

the 'low' turnouts in the EP elections might actually be a sign of "more deep-rooted problems in how citizens connect with the European Union".⁷⁵

It is worth noting that over the years several major EU decisions have been submitted to popular votes. Furthermore, in recent times, European citizens have been asked to become "directly involved in European politics (Articles 10 and 11 of the Lisbon Treaty)".⁷⁶ Despite these advancements, it is not clear how citizens can "be involved and have a say in policy changes and institutional reform".⁷⁷

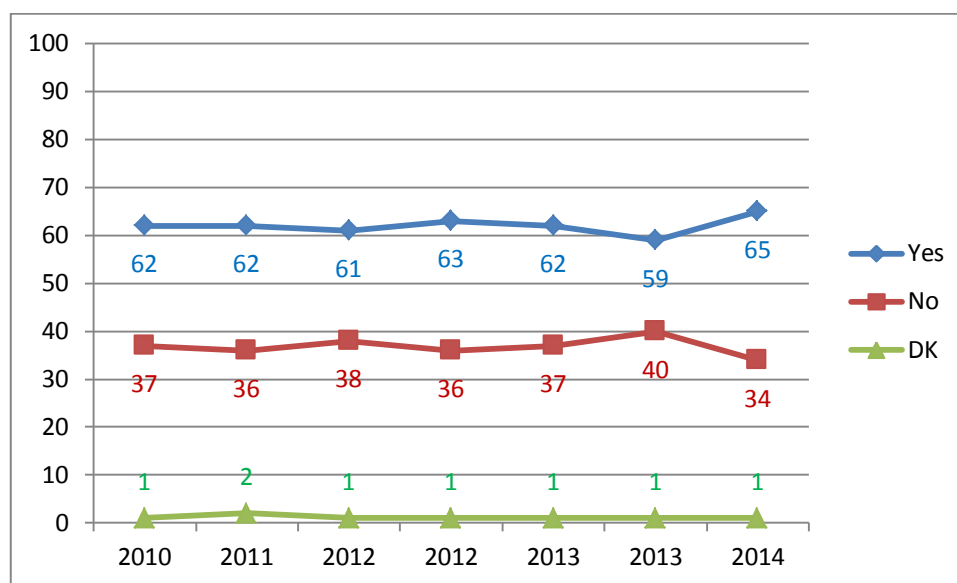


Figure 10: Do you feel like you are a citizen of the EU?

The above figure shows that almost two-thirds of people across the EU declared they felt that they *were* citizens of the European Union. And yet, when it is time for these citizens to elect their MEPs, separate national elections seem to take place.⁷⁸ With this in mind, the next section of this report looks at the possibility of creating a more pan-European or common experience around the European elections.

⁷⁵ Norris, Pippa. *Op. cit.* Page 9.

⁷⁶ Kaufmann, Brunon. "Transnational 'Babystep': the European Citizens' Initiative", in: Setälä, Maija and Schiller, Theo (eds.). *Citizens' Initiatives in Europe. Procedures and Consequences of Agenda-Setting by Citizens*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. Pages 228-242. Page 233.

⁷⁷ Europe+. "Open letter to Members of the European Parliament." July 1, 2014.

Available on: http://www.europeanmovement.eu/fileadmin/files_emi/pdf/Europe_Plus_Open_Letter_final.pdf

⁷⁸ Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. "OSCE/ODIHR Expert Group Report to the Elections to the European Parliament. 4 - 7 June 2009". Warsaw, 22 September 2009. Pages 1-41. Page 1.

Available on: <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/eu/38680?download=true>

2. What Could Have Been & What Has Been: The 2014 EP Elections, the personalisation, the media & the US

“In modern representative democracies, the linkage between political actors and citizens is being increasingly questioned. Over the past ten to fifteen years, this issue has been addressed through new methods targeted at reshaping political participation [such as] changes in the electoral systems.”⁷⁹

1. Having a Candidate Acting as the ‘Face of the Election’?

Throughout the years, emphasis has often been put on the fact that the European elections exhibit:

- an “absence of a common electoral law,
- no common election day,
- [and a] lack of common rules on electoral campaigning”.⁸⁰

One of the original ideas behind directly electing European officials was to have a uniform electoral system. And yet, national pressures at the time were sufficient to force those drafting European electoral law⁸¹ to abandon the pursuit of a common solution and allow each member state to use its own electoral system.⁸² Over time this has led to a plethora of electoral rules as new Member States have joined around what was once seen as a temporary solution.⁸³

Nevertheless, “efforts have been made to increase [‘harmonisation’] of electoral rules for the EP elections.”⁸⁴ As a result, in 2002, “the next piece of important legislation on the European Parliament elections was concluded.”⁸⁵ The 2002/772/EC Euratom⁸⁶ thus established a few common principles such as “the voting system of EP elections [becoming] of an essentially proportional nature⁸⁷ [or setting] an electoral threshold of up to 5% as a requirement for representation in the European Parliament”.⁸⁸ Despite this, “the diverging constitutional and electoral traditions of the Member States have [largely] prevented any further agreement.”⁹⁰ Therefore, overall there have been very few signs of European commonality.

⁷⁹ Kelbel, Camille. “Toward EU-wide primary elections? Political parties at European level and the introduction of candidate selection methods for the Presidency of the European Commission.” Paper prepared for the ECPR General Conference. Bordeaux, 4-7 September 2013. Pages 1-33. Page 2.

<http://www.ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/7d328ee2-faa1-43f8-871e-e47cfaa41461.pdf>

⁸⁰ Warleigh, Alex. *Democracy in the European Union. Theory, Practice and Reform*. London, SAGE Publications, 2003. Page 85.

⁸¹ Smith, Julie. “Legitimacy and Democracy in the EU”, in: Gower, Jackie (ed.). *The European Union Handbook*. New York, Routledge, 2002. Pages 64-72. Page 66.

⁸² Varela, Diego. “The European Parliament”, in: van der Hoek, Peter (ed.). *Handbook of Public Administration and Policy in the European Union*. Florida, CRC Press, 2005. Pages 177-196. Page 191.

⁸³ Varela, Diego. *Op. cit* Page 191.

⁸⁴ Poptcheva, Eva-Maria. *Op. cit*. Page 1.

⁸⁵ Ellis, Andrew and Larserud, Stina. “The European Parliament: Elections to a Supranational Body. ACE Project”, in: *Electoral System Design: the New International IDEA Handbook*. Stockholm, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2005. Pages 140-143. Page 142.

⁸⁶ “2002/772/EC, Euratom: Council Decision of 25 June 2002 and 23 September 2002 amending the Act concerning the election of the representatives of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, annexed to Decision 76/787/ECSC, EEC, Euratom.” In: *Official Journal*. L 283, 21/10/2002 Pages 0001 – 0004.

Available on: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32002D0772&from=EN>

⁸⁷ Article 1. “2002/772/EC, Euratom: Council Decision of 25 June 2002 and 23 September 2002 amending the Act concerning the election of the representatives of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, annexed to Decision 76/787/ECSC, EEC, Euratom.”. *Op. cit*.

⁸⁸ Article 2A. “2002/772/EC, Euratom: Council Decision of 25 June 2002 and 23 September 2002 amending the Act concerning the election of the representatives of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, annexed to Decision 76/787/ECSC, EEC, Euratom.”. *Op. cit*.

⁸⁹ Maier, Michaela and Maier, Jürgen. “News Coverage of EU Parliamentary Elections”, in: Strömbäck, Jesper and Kaid, Lynda Lee (eds.). *The Handbook of Election News Coverage around the World*. New York, Routledge, 2008. Pages 403-420. Pages 403-404.

⁹⁰ Poptcheva, Eva-Maria. *Op. cit*. Page 1.

As such, the Europeanisation of the EP elections has not really been guaranteed in the last forty years or so.⁹¹ But starting in 2010, the personalisation of these elections was being discussed as a way to make European elections more European.⁹² Yet it was not until 2013 that the five main European parties started putting forward candidates.⁹³

The advent of the ‘Spitzenkandidaten’ system – nominating candidates for the European Commission Presidency – saw the five main European parties deciding who will act as their ‘face of the election’.⁹⁴ Within four months, Alexis Tsipras, Ska Keller and José Bové, Guy Verhofstadt, Martin Schulz and Jean-Claude Juncker were selected as the first candidates of this new system. The personalisation of the European election was seen by many in a very positive light that could “effectively narrow the gap between national and European politics, giving citizens a reason to vote.”⁹⁵ In this regard, many considered that the European elections would not be treated as “simultaneous national second-order elections”⁹⁶ any longer.

Table 2: The ‘faces’ of the 2014 EP elections

December 15	Party of European Left names Alexis Tsipras for Commission president at the 4th EL Congress in Madrid.
January 29	Green group names Ska Keller as well as José Bové for Commission president based on primary voting.
February 1	ALDE group names Guy Verhofstadt for Commission president at the ELDR election congress in Brussels.
March 1	S&D group names Martin Schulz for Commission president at the PES election congress in Rome.
March 7	EPP party names Jean-Claude Juncker for Commission president at the EPP election congress in Dublin.

Interestingly enough, the first European elections were not perceived as ‘European’ enough.⁹⁷ At the time, it was argued that each Member State’s political systems decided “most of what there [was] to be decided politically, and everything really important,”⁹⁸ leading these elections to be fought on national issues⁹⁹ (hence the concept of ‘national second-order elections’).¹⁰⁰ Yet, “while the EP was clearly second-order or worse¹⁰¹ for much of its history from a legal and institutional perspective, the ratification and entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty amendment in December 2009 [has] empowered the EP to the greatest extent yet.”¹⁰² Therefore, as the power of the Parliament grew and the Europeanisation of the election campaign’s media coverage develops,¹⁰³ the relevance of the “national second order elections” draws less significance.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, in the same way that American voters feel more compelled to vote on an *Election Day* when the presidential race is on, the increased personalisation of the European system and

⁹¹ Poptcheva, Eva-Maria. *Op. cit.* Page 1.

⁹² Poptcheva, Eva-Maria. *Op. cit.* Page 1.

⁹³ Piedrafita, Sonia and Renman, Vilde. “The ‘Personalisation’ of the European Elections: A half-hearted attempt to increase turnout and democratic legitimacy?” In: *EPIN Paper*. April 2014, No. 37. Pages 1-11. Pages 1-11.

⁹⁴ Piedrafita, Sonia and Renman, Vilde. “The ‘Personalisation’ of the European Elections: A half-hearted attempt to increase turnout and democratic legitimacy?” In: *EPIN Paper*. April 2014, No. 37. Pages 1-11. Pages 1-11.

⁹⁵ Gostyńska, Agata. *Op. cit.* Page 85.

⁹⁶ Reif, Karlheinz and Schmitt, Hermann. *Op. cit.* Page 3.

⁹⁷ Reif, Karlheinz and Schmitt, Hermann. *Op. cit.*

⁹⁸ Reif, Karlheinz and Schmitt, Hermann. *Op. cit.* Page 3.

⁹⁹ Marsh, Michael. *Op. cit.* Page 603.

¹⁰⁰ For further details on this, see:

Reif, Karlheinz and Schmitt, Hermann. *Op. cit.*

¹⁰¹ Reif, Karlheinz. *Op. cit.* Page 121.

¹⁰² Jones, Clifford A. *Op. cit.* Page 39.

¹⁰³ For further details on this, see:

Gerstlé, Jacques. *Op. cit.* Page 230.

¹⁰⁴ Dompnier, Nathalie. *Les élections en Europe*. Grenoble, Presse Universitaire de Grenoble, 2011. Pages 165-179.

the indirect election of one of the most powerful offices in Europe, were hoped to reignite interest in the European elections.¹⁰⁵

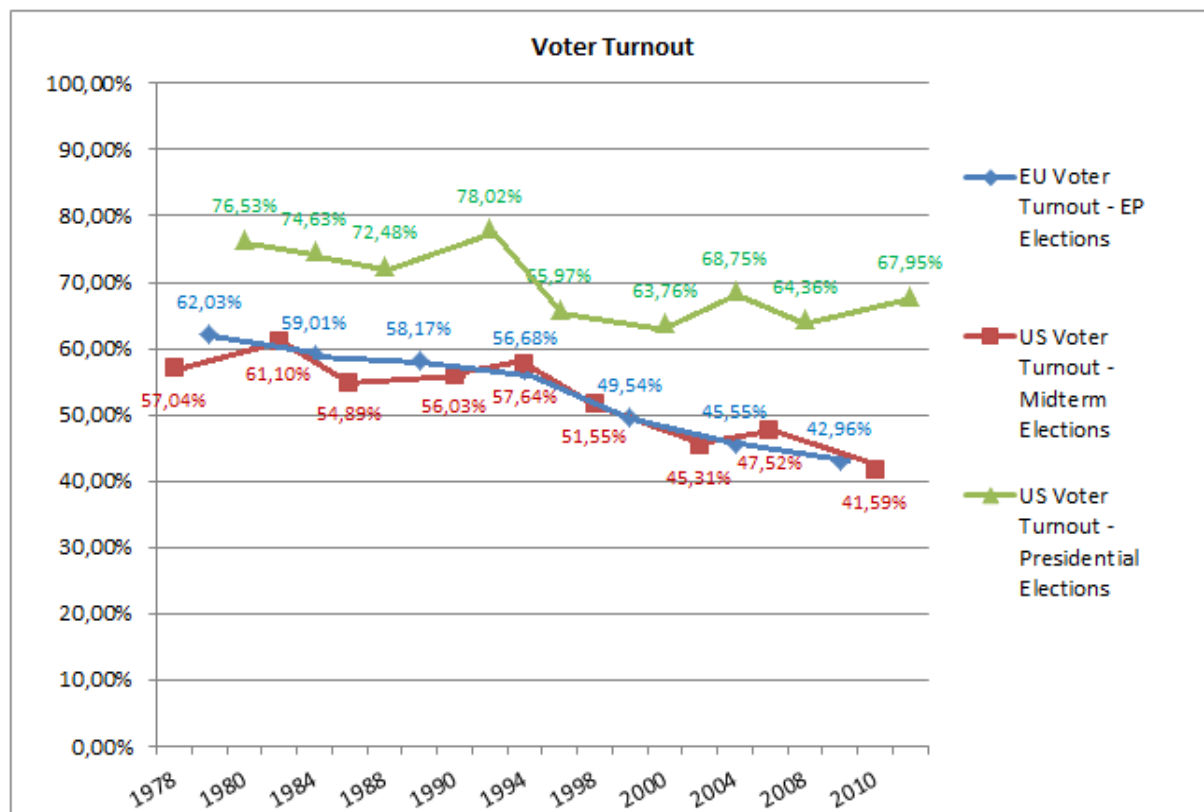


Figure 11: Voter Turnout (EU / US)

Whilst European elections turnout is often compared to US elections, the above figures show that EP turnout tends to be more in line with the participation rates in the US midterm elections.¹⁰⁶ This is particularly interesting as, while “the turnout for the Congress decreases from election to election, the [US] Congress [has never been] perceived as illegitimate”.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, the European Parliament’s legitimacy has often (if not always) been questioned.¹⁰⁸ As such, the reforms envisaged in the Lisbon Treaty appear all the more important as they partly aimed to “strengthen the role of the European Parliament and the national parliaments with the purpose of increasing the democratic legitimacy of the EU.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ Jones, Clifford A. *Op. cit.* Page 39.

¹⁰⁶ Magnette, Paul. *Op. cit.* Page 308.

¹⁰⁷ Adamson, Paul; Livardjani, Mana and Schmitz, Gregor Peter. “What Was Really Different this Time? The European Elections 2014 – Retrospection and Perspective.” Event Report of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung Lunch Debate. June 4, 2014. Page 3. http://www.boell.eu/sites/default/files/event_report_ep_election.pdf

¹⁰⁸ For further details on this, see:

Dann, Philipp. “The Political Institutions”, in: von Bogdandy, Armin and Bast, Jürgen (eds.). *Principles of European Constitutional Law*. Oxford, Hart Publishing, 2nd edition, 2009. Pages 237-274.

¹⁰⁹ Mayoral, Juan. “Democratic improvements in the European Union under the Lisbon Treaty. Institutional changes regarding democratic government in the EU.” *European Union Democracy Observatory (EUDO) – Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute*. February 2011. Pages 1-10. Page 1.

Available on: <http://www.eui.eu/Projects/EUDO-Institutions/Documents/EUDOREport922011.pdf>

2. The 2014 EP Elections: The Success of the First Transnational Campaign?

The reforms introduced by the Lisbon Treaty – namely, the introduction of the Spitzenkandidaten process – were introduced to increase legitimacy and participation.¹¹⁰ For many, the personalisation of the campaign held the promise of increasing turnout to levels more in line with US Presidential, rather than mid-term, elections.

Politics in the US is “often described as ‘personalised’ [...] as emphasis in elections tends to be on concrete individuals rather than abstract entities such as parties¹¹¹ or programmes”.¹¹² However, this is true of all US elections, and, therefore, it is not the personalisation of the presidential elections *in itself* that brings US voters to the polls. One answer to explain lower voter turnout at mid-term elections is that “midterm elections receive significantly less [media] attention compared to presidential elections”.¹¹³ Thus by focusing on the presidential race, the media plays an important role in boosting voters’ interest¹¹⁴ and might help attract some of them to the polls.¹¹⁵

Putting aside the issue of the media the US Presidency is understood by most – if not all – Americans as “the most significant office in the U.S. political system.”¹¹⁶ On the other hand, the same cannot be said about a Congressman.¹¹⁷ This probably explains why voters tend to “believe that presidential elections have a greater impact on the country’s future”¹¹⁸ and, as such, are more likely to vote on the *Election Day* when the presidential race is on.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁰ Poptcheva, Eva-Maria. *Op. cit.* Page 1.

¹¹¹ Interestingly enough, considering the fact that candidates and voters alike tend to “focus overwhelmingly (though not necessarily exclusively) on individual performance”, a lot of candidates running for Congress do not “even mention which party they belong to in campaign literature and advertisements” relying solely on their individual performance in the service of the constituency.

For further details on this, see:

Singh, Robert. *American Government and Politics. A Concise Introduction*. London, Sage Publications Ltd, 2003. Page 85.

¹¹² Singh, Robert. *Op. cit.* Page 85.

¹¹³ Hate, Vibhuti Ashe and Grose, Christian R. *Op. cit.* Page 133.

¹¹⁴ Dautrich, Kenneth; Yalof, David; Newell, Charldean; Prindle, David and Shomaker, Mark. *American Government: Historical, Popular, and Global Perspectives*. Boston, Wadsworth, 2010. Page 430.

¹¹⁵ Cann, Damon. “Midterm congressional elections and the theory of ‘surge and decline’”, in: Sabato, Larry J. and Ernst, Howard R. (eds.). *Encyclopedia of American Political Parties and Elections*. New York, Infobase Publishing, 2007. Pages 225-226. Page 225.

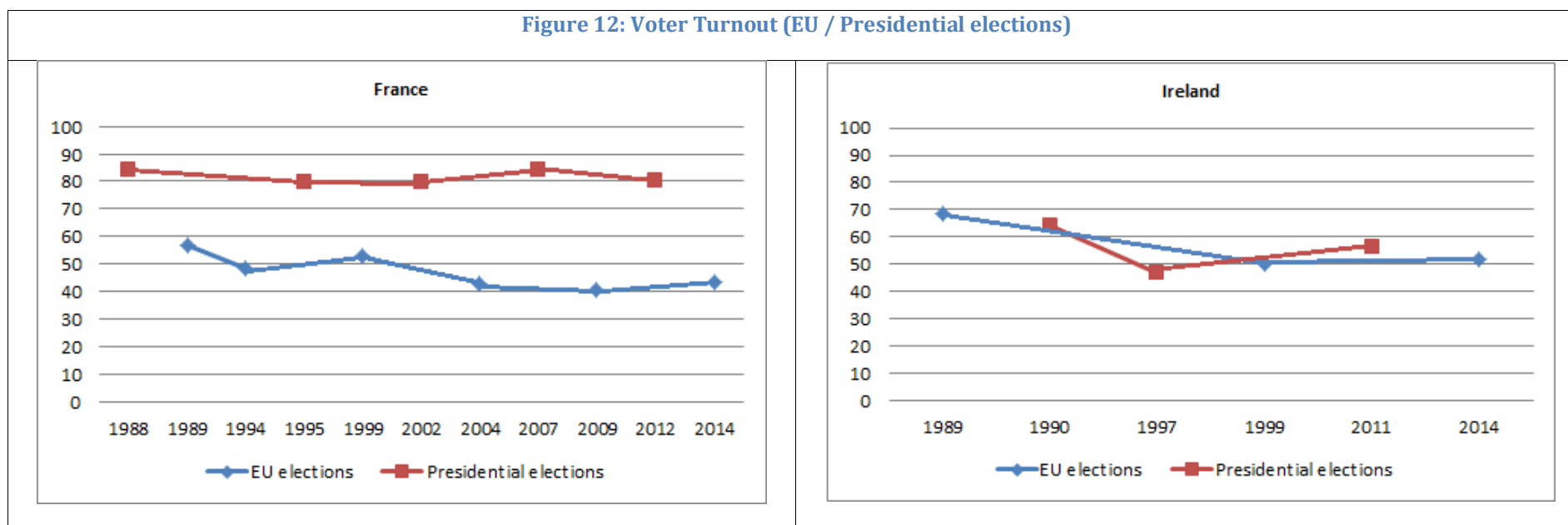
¹¹⁶ Dautrich, Yalof et al. *Op. cit.* Page 430.

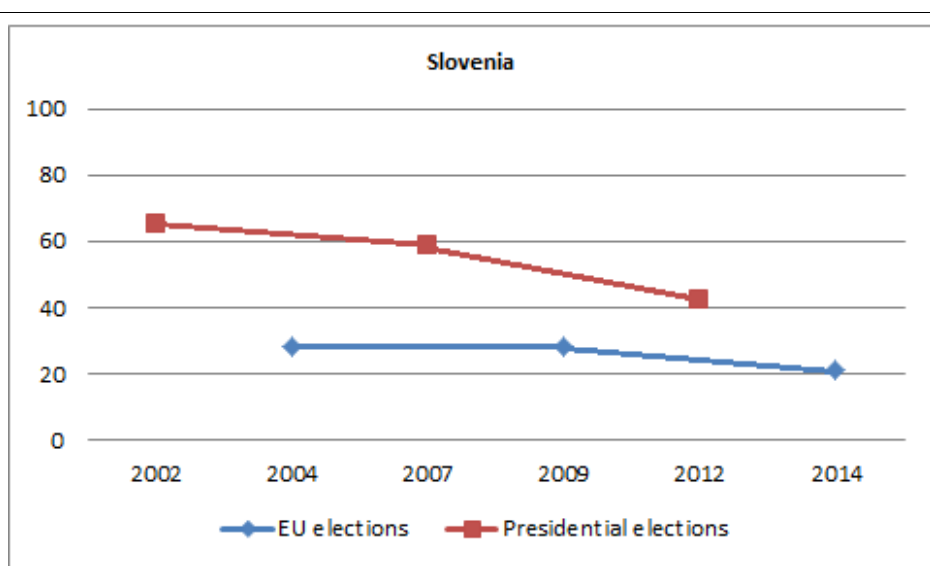
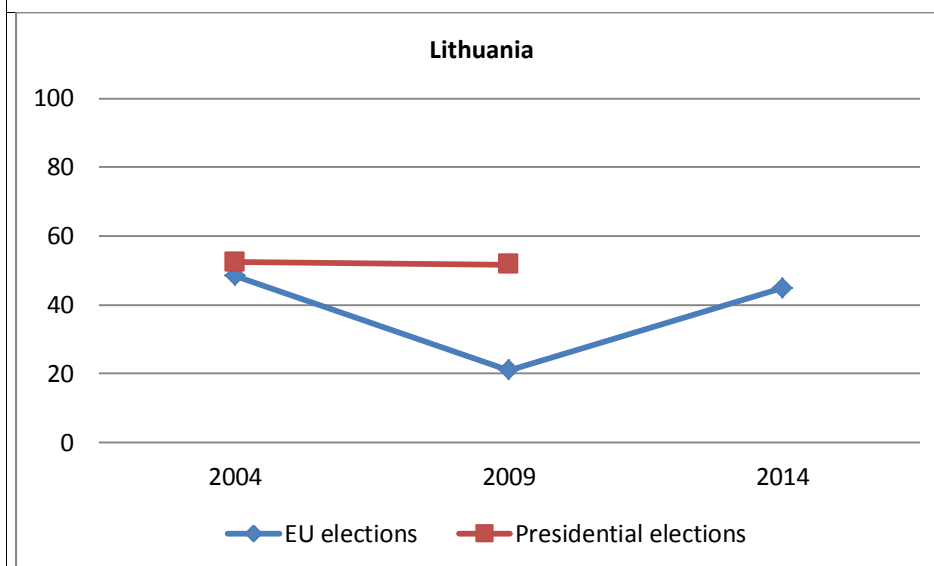
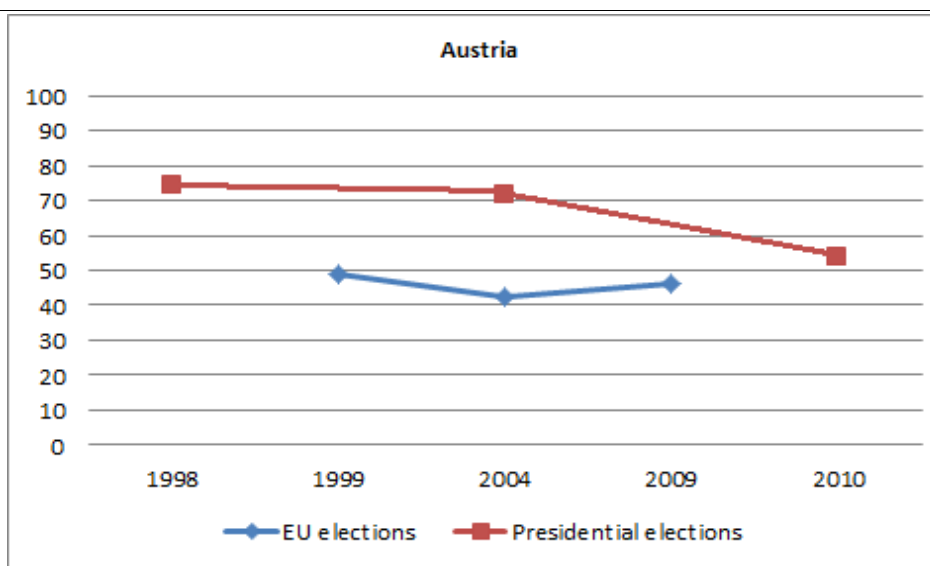
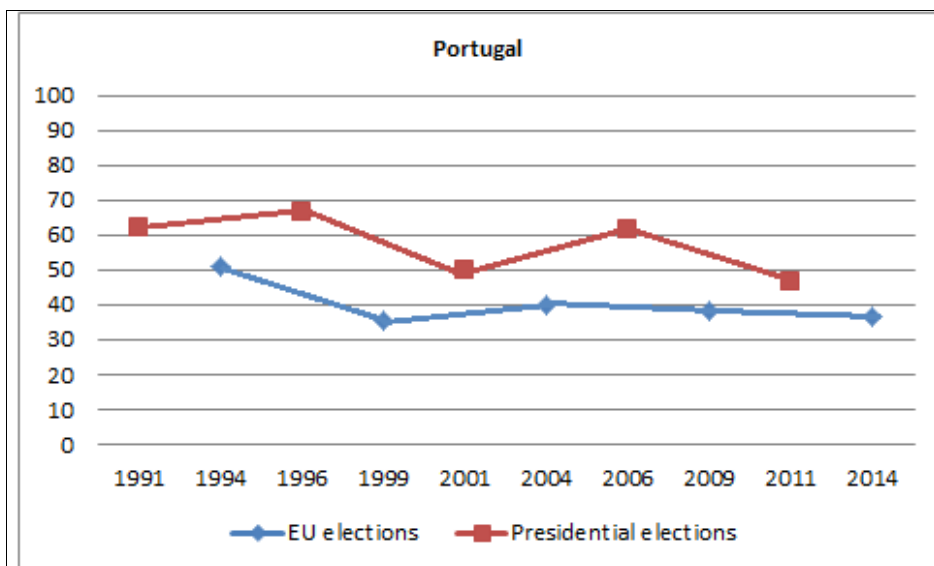
¹¹⁷ Lipsitz, Keena. *Competitive Elections and the American Voter*. Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011. Page 116.

¹¹⁸ Lader, Curt. *U.S. Government and Politics*. New York, Barron's Educational Series, 7th edition, 2012. Page 509.

¹¹⁹ Hate, Vibhuti Ashe and Grose, Christian R. *Op. cit.* Page 133.

Figure 12: Voter Turnout (EU / Presidential elections)





As can be seen from the above graphs, Presidential elections in European countries also tend to bring higher voter turnout than European elections (except for Ireland where the Presidency is more ceremonial).^{120 121} The sample above includes two countries from the 'Nine' (France and Ireland), one from the Third Enlargement (Portugal), one from the Fourth (Austria) and two from the Fifth (Lithuania and Slovenia). There are therefore no countries from the 2007 or the 2013 EU enlargements, which would anyway have participated in fewer election cycles.

Whilst France and Portugal obviously show stronger turnout for Presidential elections, the case for Austria is harder to verify, given low turnout at the last Presidential elections. However, most interesting may be the case of the two 'Third wave' countries – Lithuania and Slovenia. In Lithuania, the 2009 EP elections recorded a significant drop in participation (27.4% decrease in voter turnout) following the 'first-time boost' hypothesis. Yet, when it comes to presidential elections, voter turnout stayed relatively stable (0.7% decrease in voter turnout). In Slovenia however, the EP elections turnout appeared stable *until* 2014, when there was a sudden decrease in participation (6.79%). It is hard to predict precisely what this means, but perhaps, like Portugal before it,¹²² the participation rate in the European elections will become the norm only *after* the third elections. In the meantime, it is worth noting that the Slovenian presidential elections recorded a 22.83% drop in participation in 2012, which came against a background of growing public dissatisfaction with the administration: in a recent survey, 60% to 70% of respondents said they distrusted the Slovenian institutions and 30% distrusted the President of the Republic.¹²³

In line with the above suggestion that a personalisation of the political process can help increase voter turnout, one should keep in mind that unlike the President in the federal US – who acts as the sole head of the executive branch – “executive power in the EU is divided between the European Commission and Council Presidents”.¹²⁴ But even more notably, in 2014, the European Council was playing an important role in the appointment of the EC president as the heads of state and government were required to propose a candidate, once they had taken “into account the elections to the European Parliament”.¹²⁵

Yet the distrust expressed by many people arguing that it was “impossible [...] for the European Council to override such choice 'by the people(s)' [as they would be too tempted] to impose one of their back-room, non-transparent, rabbit-out-of-the-hat choices on Europe”¹²⁶ might have had an impact on the media coverage of Spitzenkandidaten. With this in mind, it is important for this study to also offer a comparative analysis of the attention Spitzenkandidaten received in different parts of Europe.

However, prior to focussing solely on the Spitzenkandidaten, it is worth considering how citizens' level of trust in their potential leaders might impact the system.

In new democracies such as Slovenia, “political institutions and leaders lack popular support [at a general level]”¹²⁷ which can only be further emphasised following a corruption scandal and the fall of the government in 2013.¹²⁸

¹²⁰ Abramson, Paul R. ; Aldrich, John H. ; Gomez, Brad T. and Rohde, David W. *Change and Continuity in the 2012 Elections*. London, Sage Publications Ltd, 2014. Page 82.

¹²¹ Gyarmasova, Olga. “Nationalists 'Selling' EU. The 2009 European Parliament Elections in Slovakia and Beyond.”, in: Gyarmasova, Olga and Liebhart, Karin. *Constructing and Communicating Europe*. Zürich, Lit Verlag, 2014. Pages 99-19. Page 102.

¹²² Supra page 17.

¹²³ “Slovenian Presidential Election.” In: *Burson - Marsteller Insight*. December 2012. Page 1.

¹²⁴ Ginsberg, Roy H. *Demystifying the European Union. The Enduring Logic of Regional Integration*. Plymouth, Rowman & Littlefield, 2010. Page 189.

¹²⁵ Article 7(7). “2012/C 326/01, Consolidated versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.” In: *Official Journal*. C 326, October 26, 2012. Pages 1-390. Page 26.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:12012M/TXT&from=EN>

¹²⁶ Weiler, Joseph H.H. “European Parliament Elections 2014: Europe's Fateful Choices.” In: *The European Journal of International Law*. 2013, Vol. 24, No. 3. Pages 747-753. Page 750.

¹²⁷ Marien, Sofie. “Measuring Political Trust Across Time and Space”, in: Zmerli, Sonja and Hooghe, Marc. *Political Trust. Why Context Matters*. Colchester, ECPR Press, 2011. Pages 13-45. Pages 36-37.

¹²⁸ For further details on this, see:

“The CPC found a number of violations of financial disclosures obligations by the prime minister and the head of the opposition.” Commission for the Prevention of Corruption Press Release. January 2013

<https://www.kpk-rs.si/en/the-commission/news/-/01/2013/the-cpc-found-a-number-of-violations-of-financial-disclosures-obligations-by-the-prime-minister-and-the-head-of-the-opposition>

Following the democratisation processes of countries in Central and Eastern Europe,¹²⁹ it has been suggested that “given the high levels of corruption in several of these newer democracies, [...] low levels of trust in political institutions [might] reflect an accurate assessment of the trustworthiness of these institutions.”¹³⁰ Consequently, because citizens have had growing concerns over their political representatives, they might have been less inclined to turn out to the polls¹³¹.

Despite this, distrust in governments is not based solely on corruption: in the EU-15 countries, “trust in the European Commission and European Parliament seems strongly associated with the situation in the real economy (growth of GDP per capita).”¹³² On the other hand, in Central and Eastern Europe – where citizens tend to think that corruption is widespread (in their country) and, as such, appear rather distrustful of (political) institutions – there is also a growing sentiment of distrust that has been engendered by the Eurozone crisis.^{133 134}

With this in mind, one option for the Spitzenkandidaten would have been to directly address the “serious questions concerning both the role that [European institutions had] played in the crisis and the role that [they] could and should play in the future.”¹³⁵ This might have made a “huge contribution to the much vaunted and much absent European public space”¹³⁶ and thus reverse the trend of electoral apathy.¹³⁷

European political parties	Spitzenkandidaten	Member of the European Parliament Before 2014?
Party of European Left (EL)	Alexis Tsipras	Never been an MEP.
European Green Party (EGP)	Ska Keller	[2009 – 2014]
	José Bové	[2009 – 2014]
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)	Guy Verhofstadt	[2009 – 2014]
Socialists and Democrats (S&D)	Martin Schulz	[1994 – 2014] [2012 – 2014] President of the EP
European People’s Party (EPP)	Jean-Claude Juncker	Never been an MEP.

Whilst some commentators could argue that the personalisation of the European elections could subtract from the core issues, as voters focussed more on personality, others feared that electing individuals that were largely unknown to the wider European public would not encourage higher voter turnout.¹³⁸ As the above table shows most of the nominees had made their recent careers in the EU institutions – and, as

¹²⁹ For further information on this topic, see:

Huntington, Samuel P. “Democracy’s Third Wave”. *Op. cit.*

¹³⁰ Marien, Sofie. “Measuring Political Trust Across Time and Space”, in: Zmerli, Sonja and Hooghe, Marc. *Political Trust. Why Context Matters*. Colchester, ECPR Press, 2011. Pages 13-45. Page 37.

¹³¹ For further details on this, see:

Uslaner, Eric M. “Democracy and social capital”, in: Warren, Mark E. (ed.). *Democracy and Trust*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pages 121-150. Page 133.

¹³² Roth, Felix ; Nowak-Lehmann, Felicitas D. and Otter, Thomas. “Has the financial crisis shattered citizens’ trust in national and European governmental institutions?” In: *CEPS Working Document*. February 2011, No. 343. Pages 1-22. Front-page.

¹³³ Roth, Felix ; Nowak-Lehmann, Felicitas D. and Otter, Thomas. *Op. cit.* Page 15.

¹³⁴ For further details on this, see:

European Commission. “EU Anti-Corruption Report.” February 2014. Pages 1-41. Pages 6-7.

¹³⁵ Francis Jacobs. “European Parliament Elections 2014.” In: *Intereconomics*. January/February 2014, Vol. 49, No. 1. Pages 4-8. Page 5.

¹³⁶ Weiler, Joseph H. H. “Challenges to electoral participation in the European elections of 2014. Restoring Electoral Faith: Prospects and Risks”, in: European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies. *Strengthening European Democracy: Citizens’ Participation. Which challenges do we face at the European Elections of 2014?* Pages 3-10. Page 7.

¹³⁷ Weiler, Joseph H. H. “Challenges to electoral participation in the European elections of 2014. Restoring Electoral Faith: Prospects and Risks.” *Op. cit.* Page 8.

¹³⁸ Emmanouilidis, Janis A. and Stratulat, Corina. “The EP Electoral Reform: Another “Brick” in the Union’s Democratic Construction?” *Op. cit.* Page 369.

such, were chosen for their experience, competence, and political substance.¹³⁹ In addition, “following their nomination (and in some cases even before), all EU-level candidates [organised] a wide range of campaign travels, reaching almost all EU member states, although not all candidates travelled to the same amount of countries. [For example, as candidates from the two largest European political parties] Martin Schulz and Jean-Claude Juncker travelled to the largest amount of countries (Juncker: [at least 18]; Schulz: [at least 19]; Verhofstadt: [at least 15]; Tsipras: [at least 11], Keller: [at least 13]).”¹⁴⁰ In this regard, the 8th parliamentary elections do appear different as they were “the first European elections with noticeable transnational campaign activities of most major European political parties.”¹⁴¹ Furthermore, the Spitzenkandidaten also took the time to debate with one another, on television and radio stations.¹⁴² On May 15th for example, all the contenders running for the office of president of the EC¹⁴³ took part in the first transnational TV debate.¹⁴⁴ For 90 minutes, Alexis Tsipras, Ska Keller, Guy Verhofstadt, Martin Schulz and Jean-Claude Juncker agreed to present their views on various topics such as the economy, regulation of the banks, withdrawal from the EU and immigration.¹⁴⁵ Interestingly, the last Eurobarometer poll suggests that the lead candidates tried to address a variety of subjects that European citizens perceive as “the most important issues facing the EU”. Moreover, at the end of the debate, after “the candidates traded blows over Europe’s economic past and future, as well as unemployment, energy and foreign policy”,¹⁴⁶ they each took the time to explain why they thought they were best suited for the job of European Commission President.

¹³⁹ Emmanouilidis, Janis A. and Stratulat, Corina. “The EP Electoral Reform: Another “Brick” in the Union’s Democratic Construction?” *Op. cit.* Page 369.

¹⁴⁰ Transparency International EU Office. *Op. cit.* Page 6.
www.transparencyinternational.eu/european-parliament-integrity-watch-eu-elections-2014/

¹⁴¹ Transparency International EU Office. *Op. cit.* Page 2.
www.transparencyinternational.eu/european-parliament-integrity-watch-eu-elections-2014/

¹⁴² Transparency International EU Office. *Op. cit.* Page 2.
www.transparencyinternational.eu/european-parliament-integrity-watch-eu-elections-2014/

¹⁴³ Minus José Bové.

¹⁴⁴ This debate is usually referred to as the ‘Eurovision’ debate.

¹⁴⁵ A transcription of this debate has been made available by:
 Watson, Rory. “Main responses from the five candidates in the Eurovision European parliamentary elections debate on 15 May 20 14, Brussels.” *Europolitics*. May 16, 2014.

<http://europolitics.info/eu-governance/eurovision-presidential-debate-fails-sparkle>

¹⁴⁶ Fox, Benjamin. “The Spitzenkandidaten – this time was it different?” *EU Observer*. May 26, 2014.
<http://euobserver.com/news/124235>

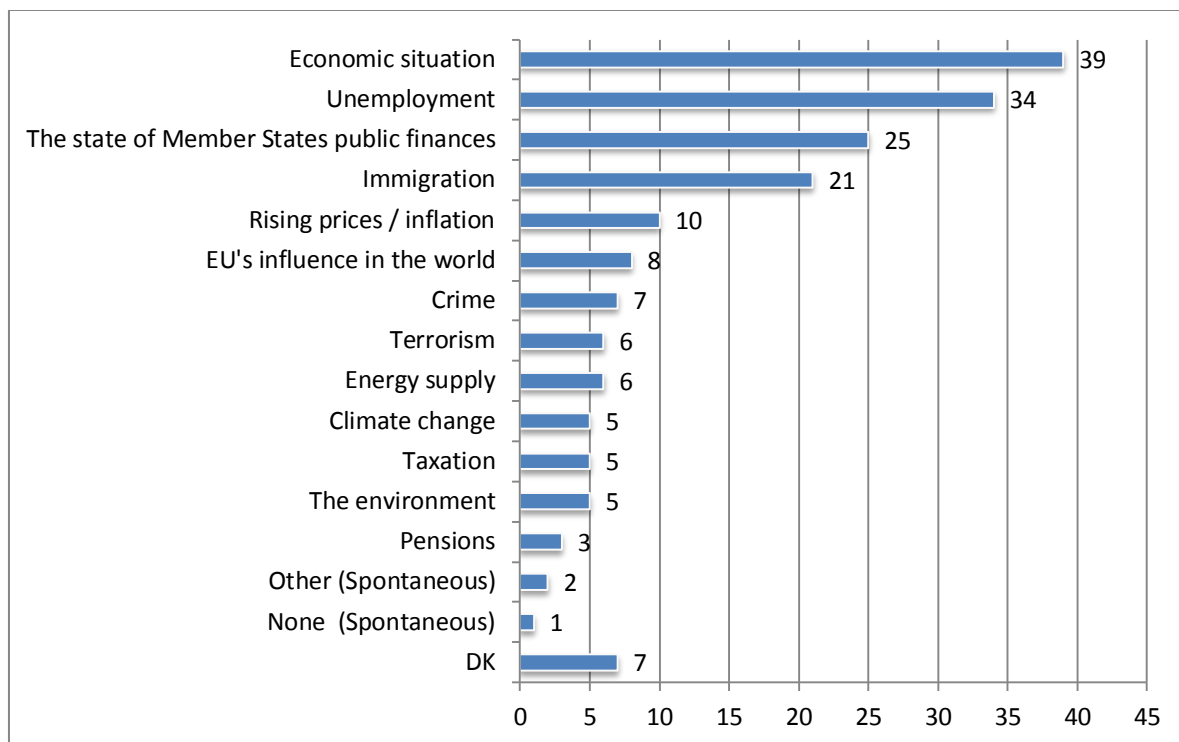


Figure 13: What do you think are the two most important issues facing the EU at the moment?¹⁴⁷

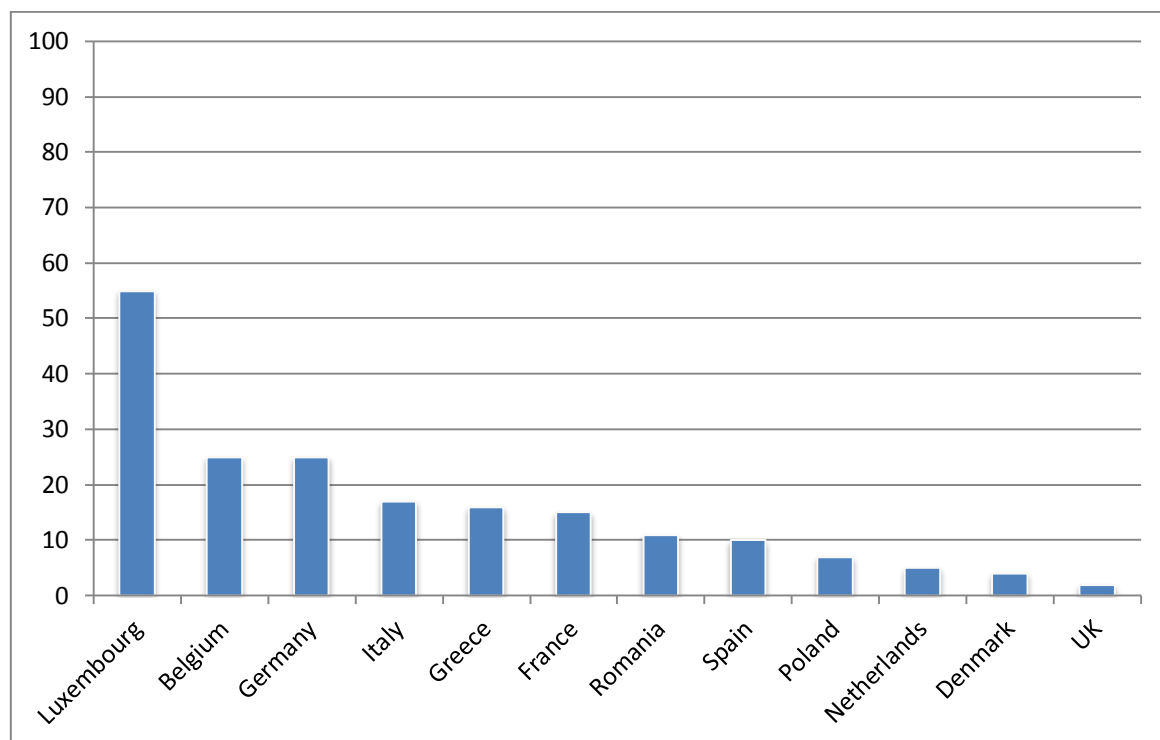


Figure 14: What percentage of people across Europe could name one or more of the Spitzenkandidaten?¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ TNS opinion & social. "Standard Eurobarometer 81." July 2014. Page 12.
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb81/eb81_first_en.pdf

Despite these efforts, many voters across Europe did not know the name of any of the Spitzenkandidaten by the end of the campaign, let alone that there *were* candidates as a lot were unaware of the changes brought forth by the Lisbon treaty.¹⁴⁹

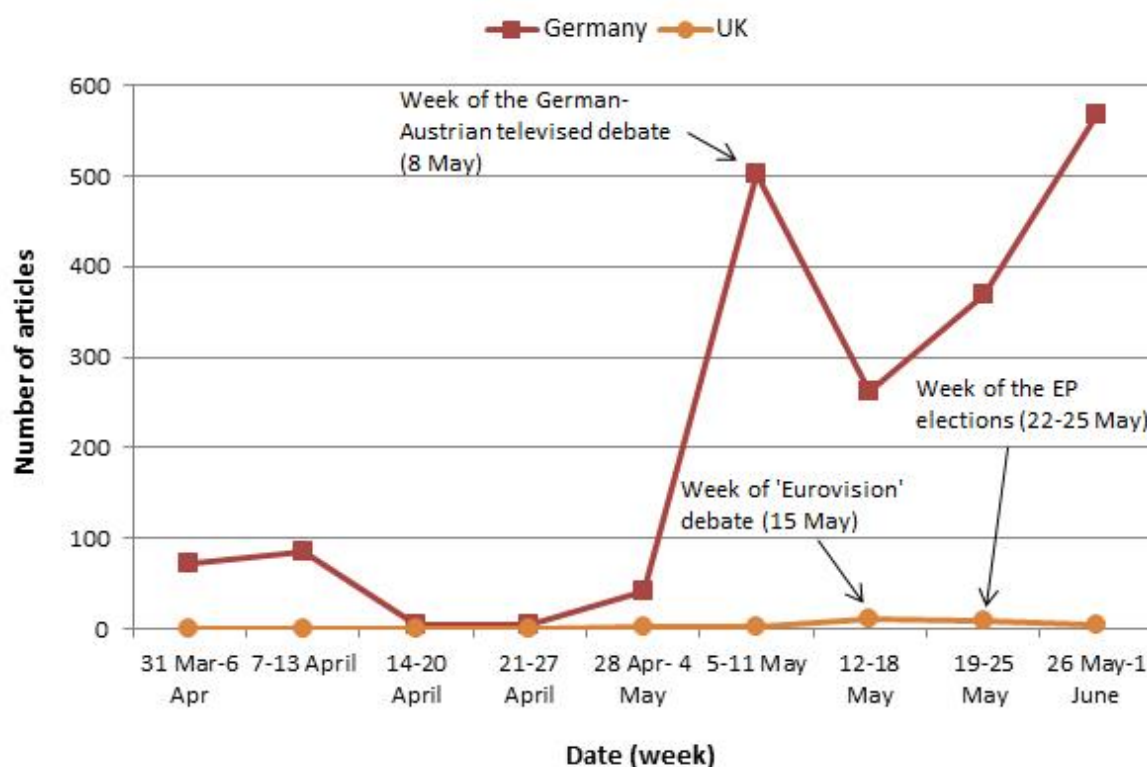


Figure 15: “Traditional” Press Coverage of the Spitzenkandidaten Process (UK / Germany)¹⁵⁰

This can be somewhat explained by discrepancies in media coverage which “started off with different speeds across Europe.”¹⁵¹ In the UK for example, the media began to cover the campaign in early 2014. In countries like France, Hungary or Slovakia, however, the current political debate “was still dominated by national or municipal elections [so, until March or even April 2014, there appeared to be] little room for European campaigning in those countries.”¹⁵² And yet, it is highly possible that, by the end of the campaign, the citizens in these EU member states had access to more information regarding the Spitzenkandidaten than the ones in the UK. It appears quite obvious that the British media did not pay much attention to the two most likely candidates to take the job of EU Commission president: Jean-Claude Juncker and Martin Schulz. In fact, in the eight weeks prior to the 2014 EP elections and in the week after these elections, while both candidates were mentioned in almost 1,100 articles in the German press, the British press barely spoke about them, only releasing 27 articles that mentioned either in this three month period.

¹⁴⁸ This figure was adapted from:

Hix, Simon and Wilks-Heeg, Stuart. “Media coverage in Germany and the UK shows why both countries have radically different views over who should be the next Commission President.” *The London School of Economics and Political Science*. June 9th, 2014.

¹⁴⁹ Fox, Benjamin. “The Spitzenkandidaten – this time was it different?” *Op. cit.*

¹⁵⁰ This figure was done and published by :

Hix, Simon and Wilks-Heeg, Stuart. *Op. cit.*

¹⁵¹ Transparency International EU Office. *Op. cit.* Page 4.

www.transparencyinternational.eu/european-parliament-integrity-watch-eu-elections-2014/

¹⁵² Transparency International EU Office. *Op. cit.* Page 4.

www.transparencyinternational.eu/european-parliament-integrity-watch-eu-elections-2014/

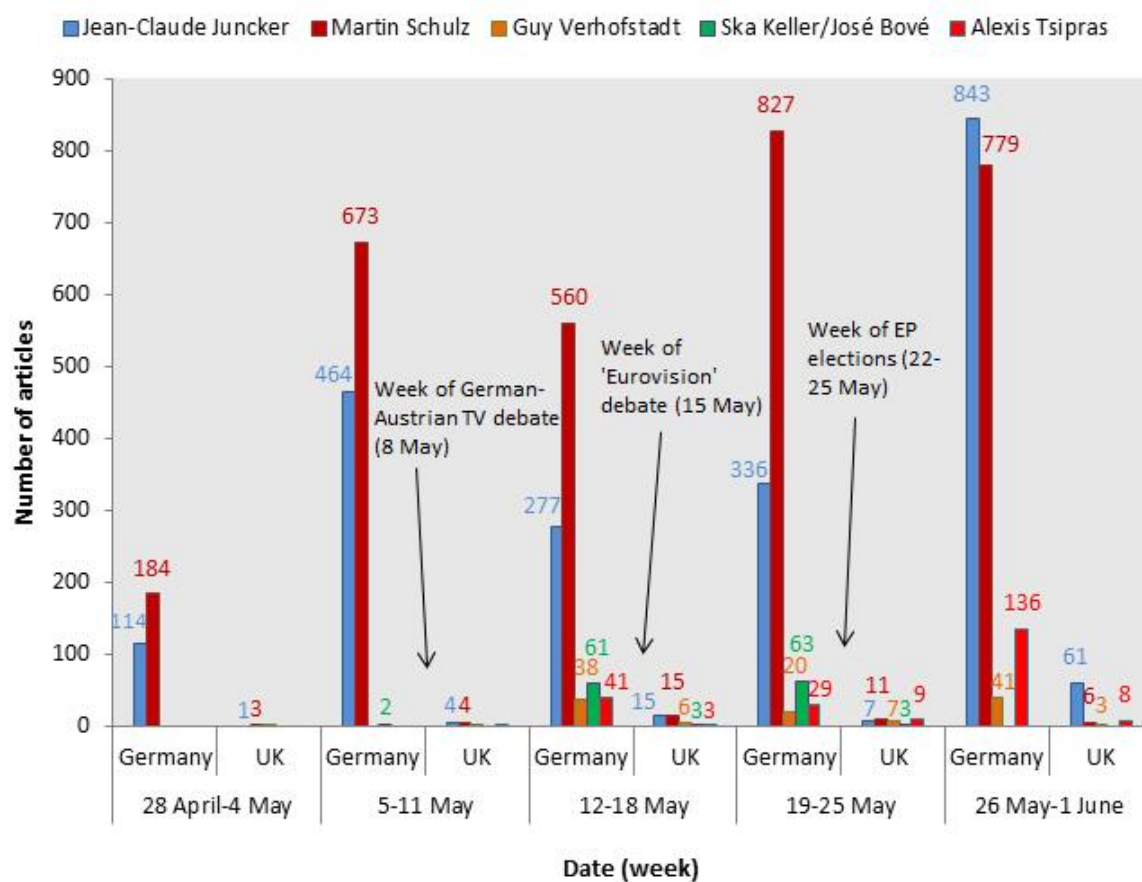


Figure 16: Online and “Traditional” Press Coverage of the Spitzenkandidaten (UK / Germany)¹⁵³

In fact, if we look a bit closer at the German and British coverage of the Spitzenkandidaten¹⁵⁴, we cannot help but notice that the German press concentrated most – if not all – of its attention on the top two European candidates. In the thousands of articles that were published about the Spitzenkandidaten, Martin Schulz and Jean-Claude Juncker were mentioned in 91% of them, and, more often than not, Martin Schulz – as 83% of these articles were dedicated to him. But as it turned out, only in Germany were the two of them really *visible* in the campaign,¹⁵⁵ “mainly because Martin Schulz [was] also the lead candidate of the German Social Democrat Party (SPD) and [preferred] Juncker as a contender to Merkel or the CDU’s lead candidate, McAllister.”¹⁵⁶ Therefore, despite the fact that Ska Keller is German and that Guy Verhofstadt can speak the language, the German media did not give them a lot of coverage. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that, compared to the 2009 EP elections, the German turnout went up by 4.83% in the 8th European parliamentary elections.¹⁵⁷ With that being said, considering that the German media *were the only one* in the EU to take such an interest in the ‘main Spitzenkandidaten’,¹⁵⁸ it seems to be too early to evaluate the full impact of the endorsement of candidates for the role of Commission President on

¹⁵³ Hix, Simon and Wilks-Heeg, Stuart. *Op. cit.*

¹⁵⁴ Let’s just mention here that the results presented in the first figure came “[...] from the Library Press Display database which provide comprehensive coverage of the print versions of national and regional titles published in both countries)” while the results provided on the second figure were from “[...] the Lexis Library database, [which happened to include] all web-published content. Consequently, the number of name citations for each candidate is slightly higher than in the previous chart.”

Hix, Simon and Wilks-Heeg, Stuart. *Op. cit.*

¹⁵⁵ Piedrafita, Sonia and Lauenroth, Anne. *Op. cit.* Page 5.

¹⁵⁶ Piedrafita, Sonia and Lauenroth, Anne. *Op. cit.* Page 5.

¹⁵⁷ It went from 43.27% in 2009 to 48.10% in 2014.

<http://www.results-elections2014.eu/en/turnout.html>

¹⁵⁸ Piedrafita, Sonia and Lauenroth, Anne. *Op. cit.* Page 5.

EU elections turnout. As far as we can tell, “only a tiny minority of the 170 million or so Europeans who voted watched any of the debates [as] the viewer ratings for the ‘Spitzenkandidat’ debates were [apart from the debate between Juncker and Schulz on German TV] fewer than 500,000 combined.”¹⁵⁹ Nonetheless, considering the fact that, in most EU countries, the debates were only broadcast on ‘special interest’ channels,¹⁶⁰ it is rather doubtful that the information became public knowledge.¹⁶¹ And that is why it might take at least “two more election cycles before the battle for the Commission presidency seeps into public consciousness outside [of] Brussels.”¹⁶²

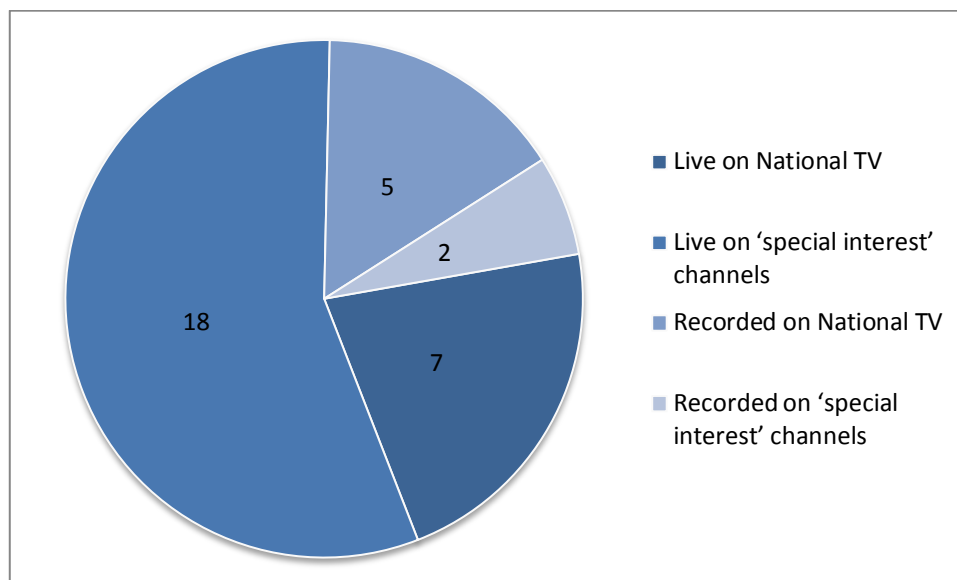


Figure 17: Broadcasters Eurovision Presidential Debate

As for the British press, it is rather interesting to note that they gave a lot more attention to the Spitzenkandidaten (or more like the Spitzenkandidat, in this case) *once the European elections were over* – thus reflecting “David Cameron’s efforts to prevent Juncker from becoming Commission President.”¹⁶³ And as British and German citizens were exposed to very different coverage of the European elections, when their governments started to battle over the interpretation of the Lisbon Treaty, it is not very surprising that they had a “completely different understanding of how European Parliament elections work”¹⁶⁴ and what was at stake in Juncker’s nomination. Interestingly enough, prior to the 2014 EP elections, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte both let their distaste for the *Spitzenkandidaten* system be known, as they believed heads of government should keep control of the selection process.¹⁶⁵ However, as time passed by, they – along with most other heads of EU member states – rallied behind the former Luxembourg Prime Minister.¹⁶⁶ So, in the course of time, the UK – that kept on opposing Juncker’s nomination – grew increasingly isolated.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, contrary to what some political

¹⁵⁹ Fox, Benjamin. “The Spitzenkandidaten – this time was it different?” *Op. cit.*

¹⁶⁰ 17 EU countries chose to broadcast the debate on a ‘special interest’ channel.

¹⁶¹ Considering the fact that, in some EU countries, the media engaged in virtually no discussion of the Spitzenkandidaten...

For further details on this, see:

Hix, Simon and Wilks-Heeg, Stuart. *Op. cit.*

¹⁶² Fox, Benjamin. “The Spitzenkandidaten – this time was it different?” *Op. cit.*

¹⁶³ Hix, Simon and Wilks-Heeg, Stuart. *Op. cit.*

¹⁶⁴ Hix, Simon and Wilks-Heeg, Stuart. *Op. cit.*

¹⁶⁵ Sutton, Kara. “Keep Calm and Carry On With the Spitzenkandidaten”. In: *Bertelsmann Foundation. Brief*. July 2014.

<http://www.bfna.org/sites/default/files/publications/BBrief%20Keep%20Calm%20and%20Carry%20On%20with%20the%20Spitzenkandidaten%20%283July2014%29.pdf>

¹⁶⁶ “EU leaders give thumbs up to Juncker, Britain isolated”. *EurActiv.com*. June 27, 2014.

<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-elections-2014/eu-leaders-give-thumbs-juncker-britain-isolated-303138>

¹⁶⁷ “EU leaders give thumbs up to Juncker, Britain isolated”. *Op. cit.*

commentators had feared,¹⁶⁸ the European Council did “endorse the candidate selected by the European political party that [won] most seats in the elections”.¹⁶⁹ At the end of June 2014, Jean-Claude Juncker was nominated by the Council. And in mid-July, 422 MEPs extended their support to the Luxembourgish politician, who then became the 12th EC President.¹⁷⁰

Despite the UK’s continued opposition, the selection of Jean-Claude Juncker meant that “European democracy prevailed over diplomacy.”¹⁷¹ European leaders not only took an important step in the development of a deeper European democracy, but they also showed that the Lisbon Treaty would be upheld. In this strengthened European democracy, future candidates for the Commission Presidency will need to secure both the support of European citizens *during the elections* and the votes of the two largest pro-European groups in Parliament in order to reach the absolute majority of MEPs (at least 376 votes were needed in 2014),¹⁷² which implies that “the political groups of the next EP will have to form a coalition”.¹⁷³ So, little by little, “the shift from a politically neutral European Commission to a Commission whose President is nominated by the political party that wins most seats in the elections to the European Parliament”¹⁷⁴ might also help strengthen the coalitions in the Parliament.

Nevertheless, following the 2014 EP elections, while there was some commentary on the pro-European coalitions that could be built in the EP, all eyes seemed to be on the Eurosceptics and their so-called ‘victory’.¹⁷⁵ If Eurosceptic parties made big gains across Europe, does that mean that “Euroscepticism [will take] over the political orientation of the EP”¹⁷⁶ and stop the European integration process? Will pro-Europeans be able to keep on working on the European project?

¹⁶⁸ For further details on this, see:

Piedrafita, Sonia and Renman, Vilde. “The ‘Personalisation’ of the European Elections: A half-hearted attempt to increase turnout and democratic legitimacy?” *Op. cit.* Pages 8-11.

¹⁶⁹ Piedrafita, Sonia and Renman, Vilde. “The ‘Personalisation’ of the European Elections: A half-hearted attempt to increase turnout and democratic legitimacy?” *Op. cit.* Page 11.

¹⁷⁰ Spanneut, Ophélie. *Op. cit.*

¹⁷¹ “European Commission President - Let’s make the next 5 years count.” *Op. cit.*

¹⁷² Bertoncini, Yves and Kreiling, Valentin. “What Political Balance of Power in the Next European Parliament?” In: *Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute. Policy Paper.* November 14, 2013, No. 102. Pages 1-24. Page 21.

<http://www.notre-europe.eu/media/balanceofpowerep2014bertonciniKreilingerne-jdinov2013.pdf?pdf=ok>

¹⁷³ Bertoncini, Yves and Kreiling, Valentin. “What Political Balance of Power in the Next European Parliament?” In: *Notre Europe – Jacques Delors Institute. Policy Paper.* November 14, 2013, No. 102. Pages 1-24. Page 21.

<http://www.notre-europe.eu/media/balanceofpowerep2014bertonciniKreilingerne-jdinov2013.pdf?pdf=ok>

¹⁷⁴ Kocharov, Anna. “This Time It’s Different? Constitutional Complexities of the Spitzenkandidaten Arrangement.” In: *Berliner Online-Beiträge zum Europarecht - Berlin e-Working Papers on European Law.* June 12, 2014, No. 95. Pages 1-14. Page 1.

Available on: <http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/31653/Paper95AnnaKocharov.pdf?sequence=3>

¹⁷⁵ On this topic, see:

Shoichet, Catherine E. and Boulden, Jim. “That ‘earthquake’ in Europe? It’s far-right gains in Parliament elections”. *CNN.* May 26, 2014.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2014/05/25/world/europe/eu-elections/>

¹⁷⁶ Renman, Vilde. “Elections to the European Parliament in the United Kingdom: A pro versus anti-EU campaign.” In: *EPIN. Working Paper.* May 2014, No. 39. Pages 108-116. Page 116.

3. Euroscepticism, Rising 'Anti-European' Feelings & EU exits?

Back in 1979, "virtually all MEPs were pro-integrationist, since sceptics in national parliaments were generally unwilling to allow their names to be considered for nomination."¹⁷⁷

1. The Rise of Eurosceptic Parties? The 2014 EP Elections Results

During the last two decades or so, many people have stated that there was:

- "a certain degree of disenchantment on the part of the voters";¹⁷⁸
- "growing anti-EU sentiment across member states";¹⁷⁹
- and overall, "a very likely surge of populist parties with anti-European leaning";¹⁸⁰

Since at least the early 2000s, the 'rise of Euroscepticism' has been labelled 'one of the biggest threats to European integration', next to the 'ever-rising abstention'.¹⁸¹ Before going further, however, it is worth defining what is meant here by 'Euroscepticism'.

The term 'Euroscepticism' was coined by a British journalist in the mid-1980s: since then, it has been widely used in the media, as well as by many individuals and organisations around Europe. As such, the concept of 'Euroscepticism' is used differently in different situations.

Nevertheless, Euroscepticism should not always be understood as a desire for the dissolution of the Union, but rather as an expression of dissatisfaction in the day-to-day functioning of the EU institutions.¹⁸² We can, therefore, distinguish between two types of Euroscepticism. On the one hand, there is 'hard' Euroscepticism "where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration [that] can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived."¹⁸³ And on the other hand, 'soft' Euroscepticism "is where there is *not* a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory."¹⁸⁴

So, in 2014, while there were many comments about the elections being marked by the 'rise of Euroscepticism', it is important to keep in mind that citizens who cast a Eurosceptic vote might have voted for a far-right party¹⁸⁵ or a left-wing party,¹⁸⁶ each defending a very different form of Euroscepticism.¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, if we take a closer look at the below figure, it is clear that, while pro-European political parties maintained a majority in the Parliament, they received far less support this time around. In fact, in France, Greece and the UK, the Front National (FN), Golden Dawn (GD) and the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) respectively gained significant support while political parties such as Austria's

¹⁷⁷ Nugent, Neill. *The Government and Politics of the European Union*. Durham, Duke University Press, 2006, Sixth edition. Page 257.

¹⁷⁸ Balme, Richard and Chabanet, Didier. *European Governance and Democracy. Power and Protest in the EU*. Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2008. Page 124.

¹⁷⁹ Piedrafita, Sonia and Renman, Vilde. "Euroscepticism in the Next European Parliament: A Reason to Worry?" In: *Intereconomics*. January/February 2014, Vol. 49, No. 1. Pages 24-29. Page 24.

¹⁸⁰ Piedrafita, Sonia and Renman, Vilde. "Euroscepticism in the Next European Parliament: A Reason to Worry?" *Op. cit.* Page 24.

¹⁸¹ Bouillaud, Christophe. *Op. cit.* Page 219.

¹⁸² Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Page 79.

¹⁸³ Taggart, Paul and Szczerbiak, Aleks. *Op. cit.* Page 7.

¹⁸⁴ Taggart, Paul and Szczerbiak, Aleks. *Op. cit.* Page 7.

¹⁸⁵ Like the British National Party or Jobbik from Hungary.

¹⁸⁶ Such as France's Left Front.

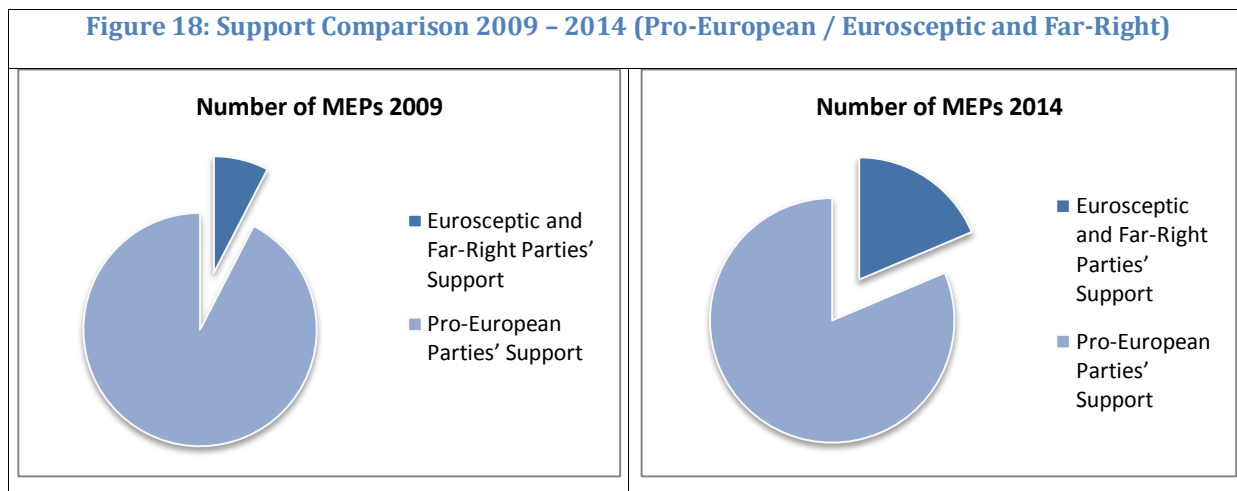
¹⁸⁷ Even though in many European countries, "'Euroscepticism' has become a phenomenon of the Right rather than the Left."

For further details on this, see:

Newman, Michael. "Reconceptualising democracy in the European Union", in: Anderson, James (ed.). *Transnational Democracy. Political Spaces and Border Crossings*. London, Routledge, 2002. Pages 73-92. Page 81.

Freedom Party (FPÖ) or the Danish People's Party (DF) managed to double the number of their seats in the European Parliament.

Figure 18: Support Comparison 2009 – 2014 (Pro-European / Eurosceptic and Far-Right)



While UKIP and France's FN can be described as 'hard' Eurosceptic parties, FPÖ from Austria or Greece's GD do not qualify as such. The first two parties not only question their country's membership in the EU but they also share "obvious similarities" in policies such as 'refusal of massive immigration' and 'peoples' freedom to decide for themselves'.¹⁸⁸ With this in mind, one might have expected UKIP and Front National to bond over their 'hard' Eurosceptic views. After all, following the 2009 EP elections, a 'hard' Eurosceptic political group called the Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) was created in the Parliament and Nigel Farage, head of the UK Independence Party, co-chaired the group with a member of another European party: Francesco Speroni of the Lega Nord (LN). However, in 2014, when Front National leader Marine Le Pen offered UKIP "to join together in a common project to fight the European Union",¹⁸⁹ Nigel Farage declined the proposal explaining his party "would not join any alliance with the [French one] because of 'prejudice and anti-Semitism' in the Front National."¹⁹⁰ In the end, in order to be able to form the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) Group, UKIP did include an MEP who had defected from France's Front National, but the fact remains that standing close together on the 'Eurosceptic scale' was not enough to lead them into creating a political coalition. And that is why, on the functioning level, Eurosceptic parties tend to have (too) many ideological and programmatic differences that prevent them from forming large coalitions or Parliamentary groupings. Greece's Golden Dawn for example is often regarded as a pariah amongst Eurosceptic and far-right parties because of its neo-Nazi ideological narrative while other political parties such as the Freedom Party from Austria have tried to let go of their Nazi legacy a long time ago.¹⁹¹ Therefore, even though they were mentioned earlier, the FPÖ and Golden Dawn from Greece were not considered as 'hard' Eurosceptic parties, nor would they be more likely to work together.

¹⁸⁸ "France's Front National party leader 'opens arms' to UKIP" *BBC*. April 17, 2014.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27071002>

¹⁸⁹ Kissanem, Karen. "Le Pen's National Front fail to woo Britain's Eurosceptics". *France24*. April 19, 2014 (updated on: May 5, 2014).

<http://www.france24.com/en/20140419-le-pen-fails-woo-britains-euro-sceptics-national-front-eu-elections/>

¹⁹⁰ Mason, Rowena. "Nigel Farage rejects offer of Ukip tie to French far-right Front National." *The Guardian*. April 18, 2014.

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/apr/18/nigel-farage-rejects-ukip-tie-french-front-national>

¹⁹¹ Kritzinger, Sylvia and Michalowitz, Irina. "Party Position Changes through EU Membership? The (Non-)Europeanisation of Austrian, Finnish and Swedish Political Parties." In: *Reihe Politikwissenschaft. Political Science Series*. April 2005, No. 103. Pages 1-33. Page 25.

https://www.ihs.ac.at/publications/pol/pw_103.pdf

The question that then presents itself is whether the 140 Eurosceptic MEPs will be able to exert enough influence to “put the European project into reverse”?¹⁹²

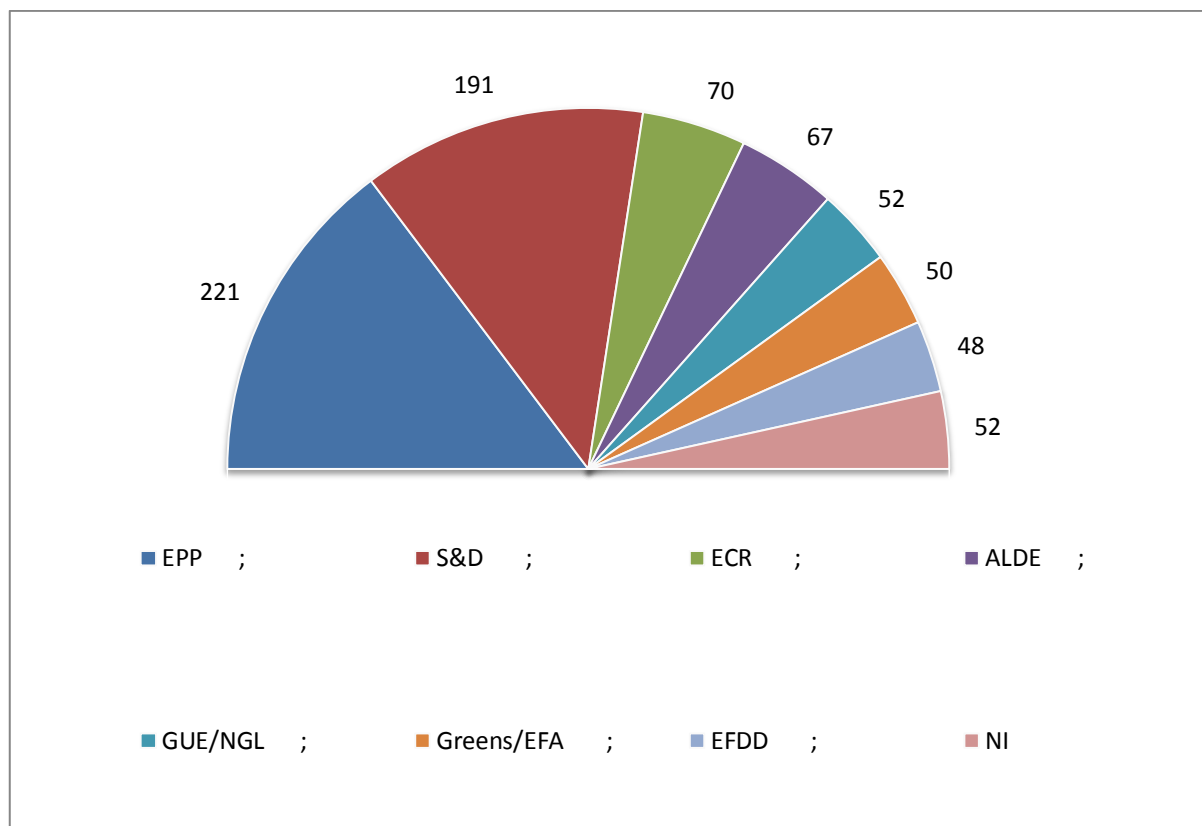


Figure 19: 2014-2019 European Parliament

If we take a look at the above figure, we can see there are two Eurosceptic groups in the Parliament: the ‘soft’ Eurosceptic European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) and the ‘hard’ Eurosceptic EFDD. And while there were growing concerns that the rising share of votes for Eurosceptic parties would result in the formation of an 8th parliamentary group, Marine Le Pen and leader of the Netherlands’ Party for Freedom (PVV) Geert Wilders failed to form their ‘European Alliance for Freedom’.¹⁹³ So, compared to the 2009-2014 Parliament, there are a lot more Non-Attached MEPs due to the fact that many Eurosceptic MEPs failed to create or join a coalition.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Leonard, Mark and Torreblanca, José Ignacio. “The Eurosceptic Surge and How to Respond to It.” In: *European Council on Foreign Relations. Policy Brief*. April 2014. Pages 1-11. Page 9.

Available: http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR98_EUROSCEPTIC_BRIEF_AW_%284%29.pdf

¹⁹³ Seymat, Thomas. “Le Pen, Wilders fail to put together far-right group in European parliament.” *Euronews*. June 24, 2014.

<http://www.euronews.com/2014/06/24/le-pen-wilders-fail-to-put-together-far-right-group-in-european-parliament/>

¹⁹⁴ Barbière, Cécile. “Eurosceptics make controversial return to EU Parliament.” *EurActiv.fr*. July 2, 2014 (updated on: July 9, 2014). <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-elections-2014/eurosceptics-make-controversial-return-eu-parliament-303242>

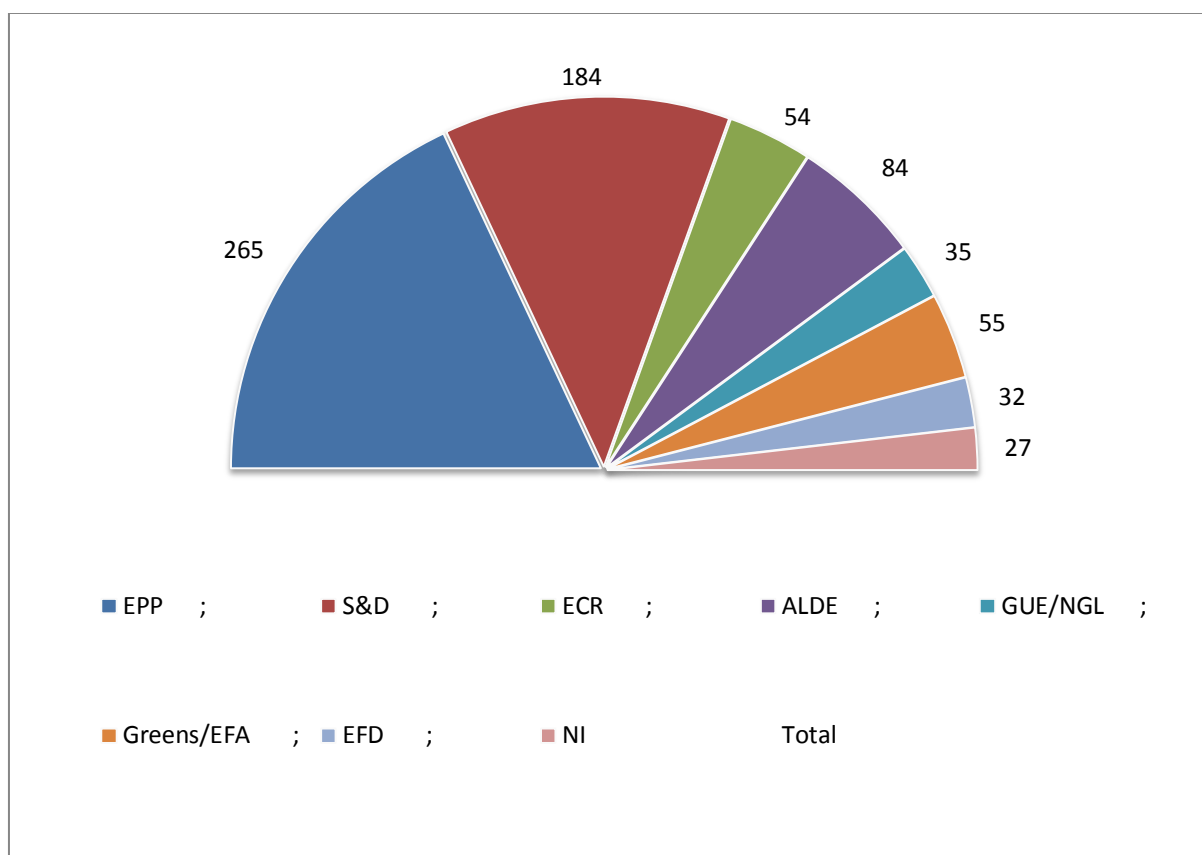


Figure 20: 2009-2014 European Parliament

Meanwhile, the European People’s Party (EPP) and the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) remained the two biggest political groups in the EP and not only did they choose to work together but they also decided to form a ‘super grand coalition’ with the fourth largest parliamentary group (the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)). That way, they were able to secure a comfortable majority in the Parliament.

As for the existing Eurosceptic coalitions, while the ECR managed to become the third largest group, the ‘hard’ Eurosceptic EFDD remained the smallest group in the Parliament. So unless Eurosceptic MEPs “developed a significant level of coordination [and decided to] all come together to block the formation of [the] working majority in the Parliament”,¹⁹⁵ their overall decision-making power will be mostly limited to times when the Parliament needs a two-thirds majority to pass legislation. As a result, “legislation in the EP [is] unlikely to be significantly derailed.”¹⁹⁶ And that is why, in all probability, Eurosceptics will resort to blocking legislative initiatives or obstructing parliamentary work when asked to vote on migration and refugee policies¹⁹⁷, EU immigration and EU harmonisation,¹⁹⁸ austerity measures,¹⁹⁹ the sovereign debt crisis resolution,²⁰⁰ the EU Budget,²⁰¹ market reform policies, constitutional and institutional areas, EU

¹⁹⁵ Nathan, Adam. “The rise of the Eurosceptics and the 2014 EP elections”. *Policy Review*. November 2013. <http://www.policyreview.eu/the-rise-of-the-eurosceptics-and-the-2014-ep-elections/>

¹⁹⁶ Nathan, Adam. *Op. cit.*

¹⁹⁷ Bosen, Ralf. “Shutdown for the EU?” *Deutsche Welle*. March 24, 2014. <http://www.dw.de/shutdown-for-the-eu/a-17194984>

¹⁹⁸ Henley, Jon. “The enemy invasion: Brussels braced for influx of Eurosceptics in EU polls.” *The Guardian*. April 28, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/apr/28/brussels-braced-influx-eurosceptics-parties-european-union-polls>

¹⁹⁹ Piedrafita, Sonia and Renman, Vilde. “Euroscepticism in the Next European Parliament: A Reason to Worry?” *Op. cit.* Page 29.

²⁰⁰ Thomas, Kelly. “Eurosceptics will gain national influence, study says.” *EurActiv France*. April 25, 2014. <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-elections-2014/eurosceptics-will-gain-national-influence-study-says-301768>

²⁰¹ Heinen, Nicolaus and Hartleb, Florian. “Euroscepticism gaining currency? Implications of the EU elections for economic policy.” In: *Deutsche Bank Research*. March 2014.

integration, crime and safety²⁰² and civil liberties. Yet, considering the fact that there is currently a ‘super grand coalition’ in the EP, pro-Europeans should remain at the core of most decisions on constitutional affairs, foreign policy, agriculture and fisheries.²⁰³ Therefore, in all likelihood, MEPs will be able to enact a pro-European agenda in the current legislature.

Nevertheless, it is worth taking a closer look at some countries where ‘hard’ Eurosceptic parties performed strongly. Naturally, France and its 24 MEPs from the Front National, the UK and its 23 UKIP representatives and Denmark with its four members of the Danish People’s Party stand out.

We could have thus made the choice to compare these three member states in order to discover if “Euroscepticism varies from country to country.”²⁰⁴ However, considering that this research was already conducted in 2009,²⁰⁵ and as the former two are big states in which around 40% of the electorate voted for Eurosceptics, we will look at the cases of France and the UK in more detail.

Before discussing the influence France might have in the current legislature, we would like to consider the UK’s part in the EU. With David Cameron planning a referendum on UK membership of the Union and considering the fact that the UK has recently been seen as ‘isolated’ on the European scene,²⁰⁶ could this be the end of the UK’s EU membership?²⁰⁷ Are the British really willing to put an end to more than 40 years of cooperation with other EU member states?

2. The UK, Its People and Their So-Called Rejection of Europe

According to many, the UK is “a case of Euroscepticism par excellence.”²⁰⁸ As was mentioned previously, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has both ‘soft’ Eurosceptic parties (such as the Conservative Party) and ‘hard’ Eurosceptic parties (i.e. the United Kingdom Independence Party). And it so happens that this year, the ‘soft’ and the ‘hard’ Eurosceptic group in the European Parliament are both dominated by British MEPs. Nevertheless, before the word ‘Euroscepticism’ was even invented, the UK was already seen as a “reluctant EU member”²⁰⁹ whose voters were “generally [sceptical] of the EU even at the best of times”.²¹⁰ Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that over time, as can be seen below, the number of British citizens not supporting the EU exceed the EU average by far.

http://www.dbresearch.com/PROD/DBR_INTERNET_EN-PROD/PROD000000000332443/Euroscepticism+gaining+currency%3F+Implications+of+the+EU+elections+for+economic+policy.PDF

²⁰² Baker, Luke. “Europe’s Eurosceptics more united than many think: poll.” *Reuters*. April 14, 2014.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2014/04/14/us-eu-election-parliament-idUSBREA3D0YL20140414>

²⁰³ VoteWatch. “Voting in the 2009-2014 European Parliament: How do MEPs Vote after Lisbon?” January 2011. Page 16.

http://www.votewatch.eu/blog/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/votewatch_report_voting_behavior_26_january_beta.pdf

²⁰⁴ Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Page 82.

²⁰⁵ Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.*

²⁰⁶ Due to David Cameron’s strong opposition to Juncker’s nomination as the EC President...

²⁰⁷ “EU leaders give thumbs up to Juncker, Britain isolated”. *Op. cit.*

²⁰⁸ de Wilde, Pieter; Michailidou, Asimina and Trenz, Hans-Jörg. “The UK: A Case of Extraordinary Euroscepticism”, in: de Wilde, Pieter; Michailidou, Asimina and Trenz, Hans-Jörg. *Contesting Europe. Exploring Euroscepticism in Online Media Coverage*. Colchester, ECPR Press, 2013. Pages 173-194. Page 173.

²⁰⁹ de Wilde, Pieter; Michailidou, Asimina and Trenz, Hans-Jörg. *Op. cit.* Page 173.

²¹⁰ Buhr, Renee L. *Supranationalism Vs. the Nation: Effects of European Union Integration on Radical Right Party Fortunes*. ProQuest, 2008. Page 212.

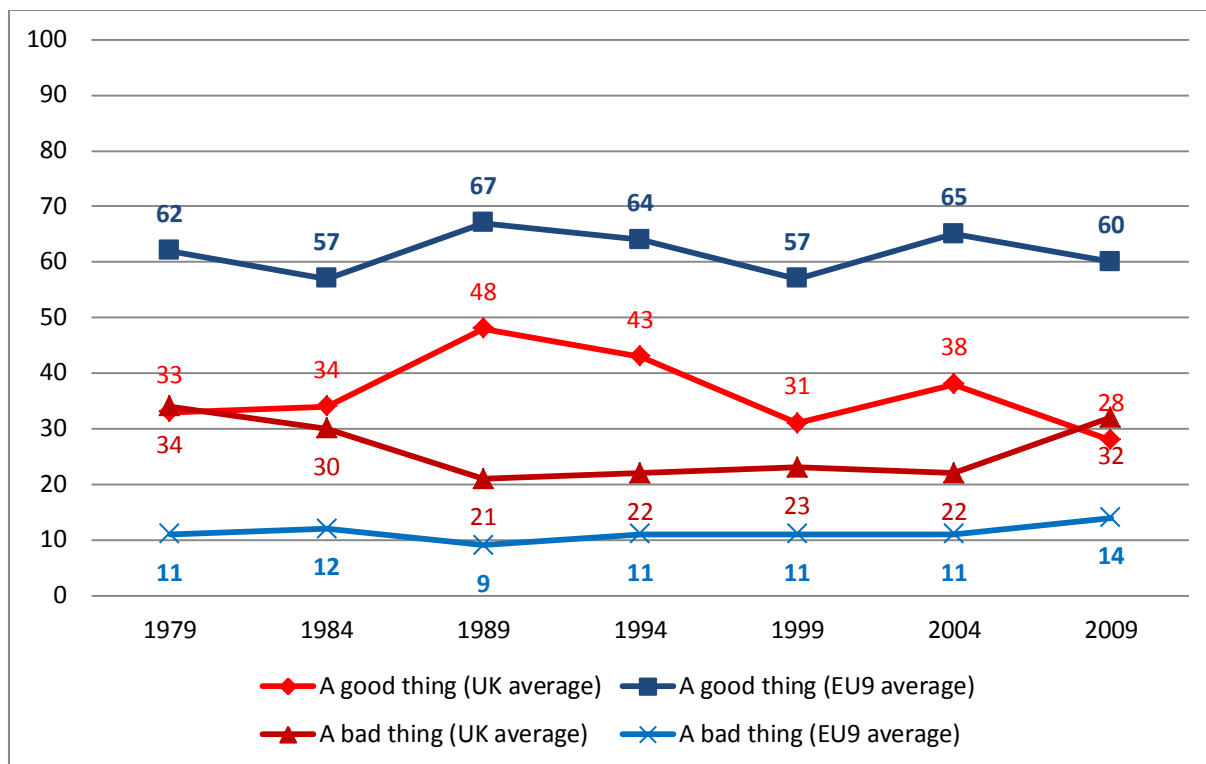


Figure 21: What percentage of people thought their country's membership of the European Union was a good thing? EU / UK average

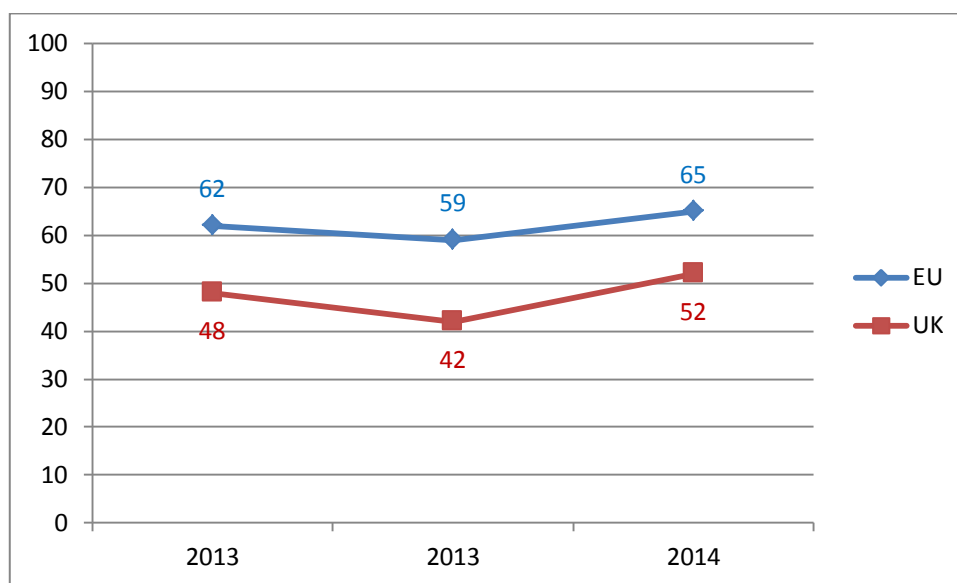


Figure 22: Do you feel like you are a citizen of the EU? (EU / UK average)

According to several Eurobarometer surveys, “not many British people feel European”.²¹¹ In fact, it was not until Spring 2014 that “the United Kingdom (52%, +10) joined the group of countries where the feeling of being an EU citizen is held by a majority of the population.”²¹² Therefore, even though the UK is geographically close to the European mainland and European countries have a shared history over the

²¹¹ Geddes, Andrew P. *Op. cit.* Page 162.

²¹² TNS opinion & social. “Standard Eurobarometer 81.” *Op. cit.* Page 29.

course of time, British citizens effectively live in “geographical seclusion”, considering Europe as some sort of ‘faraway land’, different from their own land which used to be “orientated [toward] other continents [rather than other] continental powers”.²¹³ Perhaps as a result of this isolationist position, UK citizens tend to be rather clueless when it comes to the European Union. And while they are “by no means alone in their lack of knowledge”²¹⁴ as we can see from the below figure, “historically, Standard Eurobarometer surveys have shown that the British public’s awareness levels of the EU have been low.”²¹⁵

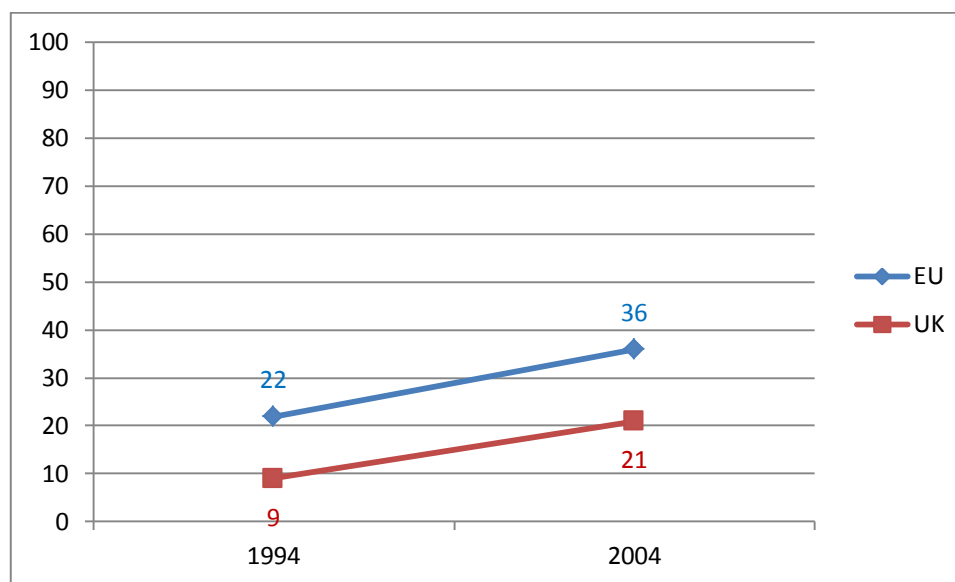


Figure 23: Actual knowledge about the European Union (UK / EU)

In fact, if one takes into consideration that “recent empirical analyses have confirmed that citizens who are better educated, who are more interested in politics, who are better politically informed, and who are more knowledgeable about the EU are *more positive* towards European integration”,²¹⁶ it could be considered that the roots of British Euroscepticism is related to British citizens’ lack of understanding of the way the EU works.²¹⁷ This can explain why, in the UK, those who finished their formal education by the time they were 16 or less are a lot more Eurosceptic than those who have been educated to the age of 20 and beyond as well as those still studying.²¹⁸

Nevertheless, if we take a look at the “four indicators of each expectation of Euroscepticism”,²¹⁹ we can see that while the UK is certainly characterised by some forms of Euroscepticism, it does not mean that the British *always* have a Eurosceptic position. When it comes to the democratic Euroscepticism for example, the UK is actually “the only case to have differed from the average *in a less sceptical direction*.”²²⁰ As for the social Euroscepticism, as we can see on the table below, there does not seem to be any in the UK.²²¹

²¹³ Grant, Charles. *Op. cit.* Page 2.

²¹⁴ de Wilde, Pieter; Michailidou, Asimina and Trenz, Hans-Jörg. *Op. cit.* Pages 179-180.

²¹⁵ The Gallup Organisation. “Flash Eurobarometer 274. Attitudes towards the EU in the United Kingdom.” July 2009. Page 6. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_274_en.pdf

²¹⁶ Olsson, Anna. “Euroscepticism Revisited - Regional Interest Representation in Brussels and the Link to Citizen Attitudes towards European Integration” Prepared for delivery at the 11th Biennial International Conference of the European Union. Studies Association, Los Angeles, California, April 23-25, 2009. Pages 2-44. Page 7.

²¹⁷ Duchesne, Sophie; Frazer, Elizabeth; Haegel, Florence and Van Ingelgom, Virginie. *Op. cit.* Page 14.

²¹⁸ de Wilde, Pieter; Michailidou, Asimina and Trenz, Hans-Jörg. *Op. cit.* Page 180.

²¹⁹ Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Pages 80-81.

²²⁰ Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Page 87.

²²¹ For further details on this, see:

Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Page 88.

Table 4: Overview of relative Euroscepticism (in the UK)²²²

<i>Relative Euroscepticism?</i>	Economic	Sovereignty	Democracy	Social	Intensity level (hard)
United Kingdom	Mixed	Yes	No	No	High

Regarding economic Euroscepticism though, while the opposition is not quite as strong as it once was, there are still several EU policies that concerned British citizens, namely the Common Agricultural Policy that is seen as far too accommodating to French needs.²²³ Last but not least, “a key feature of British scepticism toward European integration is the focus on sovereignty and national identity.”²²⁴ Over the years, UK citizens have been known to express a strong opposition to a supranational EU. Admittedly, their fear that “the transfer of powers from the UK government to ‘Brussels’ [would lead to] a gradual surrender of national sovereignty”²²⁵ is not new: before the UK ever joined the Union, sovereignty was already perceived as a source of concern.²²⁶ But since then, it has been the subject of many recurring discussions in the UK. In 2005 for example, the European constitution became the source of many comments and criticisms, being seen as “a vehicle for continental socialism and federalism”.²²⁷ And so, by repeatedly opposing “the idea of political and economic integration [and objecting] to the current form of integration in the EU, British Euroscepticism has traditionally been of a ‘hard’ type.”²²⁸

And yet, when it comes to “implementing EU directives and respecting the decisions of the European Court of Justice [unlike many EU member states] the British have a good record: at the level of EU policy-making, influence has been considerable and often positive”.²²⁹ By contrast, if the EU was to be scrapped tomorrow, UK citizens would reportedly not miss it as much as other EU member states’ populations. However, British “intentions measured by the polls [have never been] translated into actions.”²³⁰ Therefore, while the British have clearly displayed some forms of Euroscepticism over the years, it appears to be a more *passive* kind of Euroscepticism.²³¹ And that is why, even though British Prime Minister David Cameron announced he was going to hold a referendum on Britain’s EU membership by the end of 2017,²³² one cannot help but wonder: are British citizens really more likely to take an *active* stand against their nation’s membership in the European Union *now*? Is the UK’s EU future as ‘precarious’²³³ as it is so often made out to be?

In seeking to answer these questions, it is important to first point out that no Member State has ever gone down that road: even when the UK decided to go through a referendum on continuing British membership only two years after they joined the European Economic Community (EEC), a large majority of British voters stated that they wished to continue being part of the EEC. And while there have been talks about the UK seeking withdrawal from the EU throughout the years, the data collected over a 40-year period clearly indicates otherwise. In fact, as we can see below, over the past 30 years or so, British citizens have largely supported the idea of staying in the EU.

²²² Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Page 82.

²²³ Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Page 84.

²²⁴ de Wilde, Pieter; Michailidou, Asimina and Trenz, Hans-Jörg. *Op. cit.* Page 173.

²²⁵ de Wilde, Pieter; Michailidou, Asimina and Trenz, Hans-Jörg. *Op. cit.* Pages 173-174.

²²⁶ Forster, Anthony. *Op. cit.* Page 39.

²²⁷ Grant, Charles. *Op. cit.* Page 6.

²²⁸ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *The Observer*. June 1, 2014.

Available on: <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jun/01/ukip-euroscepticism-france-farage-uk-europe-front-national>

²²⁹ Grant, Charles. *Op. cit.* Page 1.

²³⁰ Spiering, Menno. *Op. cit.* Page 134.

²³¹ Spiering, Menno. *Op. cit.* Page 134.

²³² Cameron, David. “EU Speech at Bloomberg”. January 23, 2013.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-speech-at-bloomberg>

²³³ Hug, Adam. “Britain’s precarious EU future”, in: Hug, Adam (eds.). *Renegotiation, Reform And Referendum: Does Britain Have an EU Future?* London, The Foreign Policy Centre, 2014. Pages 6-16. Page 6.

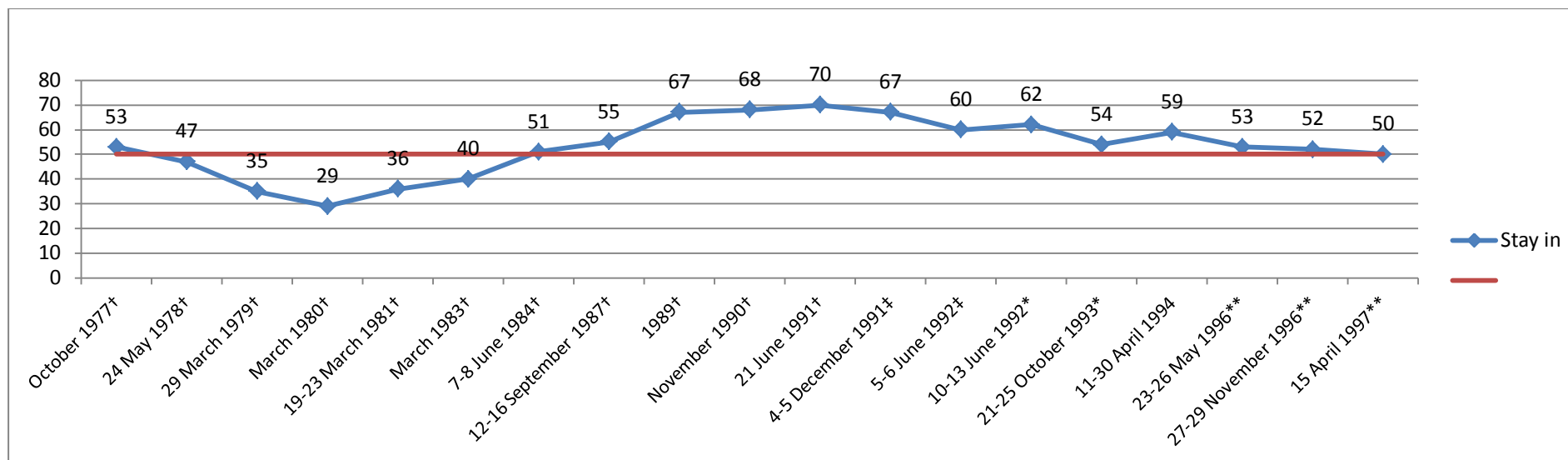
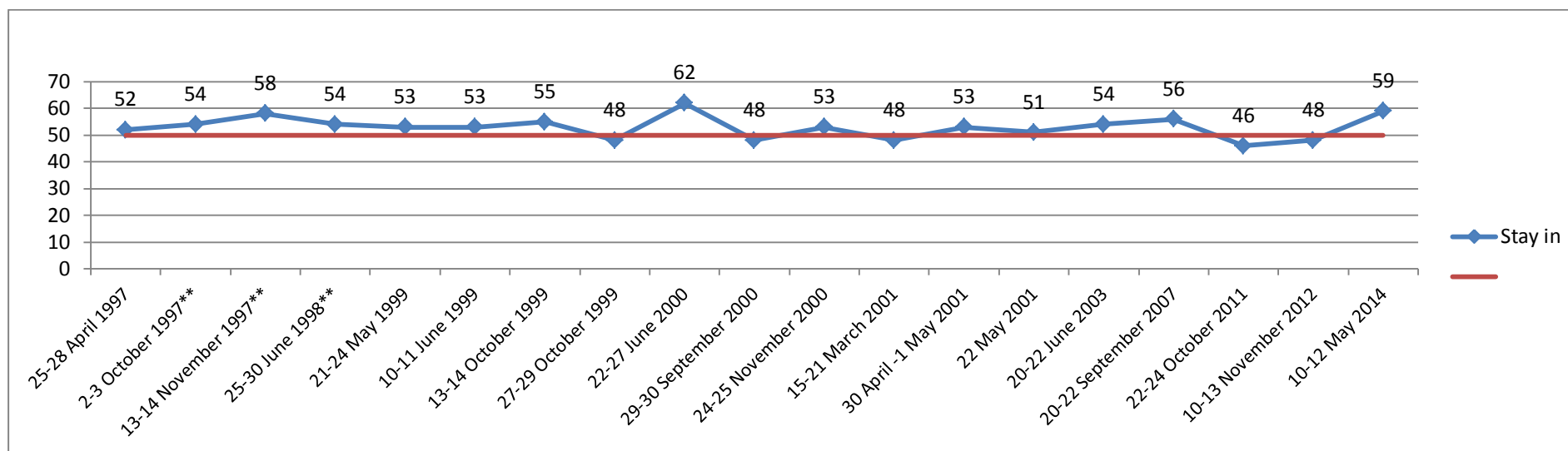


Figure 24: European Union membership – trends: Percentage of British people wanting to stay in the EU



So is France ‘the new bastion’ of Euroscepticism as some people have claimed?²³⁴

3. France and Its New-Found Euroscepticism?

Unlike the UK, France has always been viewed as “a traditionally pro-European country”²³⁵ on the European scene, advocating European integration²³⁶ and the like as one of the EEC’s founding members. In fact, in 2009, a researcher ranked France as “one of the most pro-European countries”²³⁷ of all time, “a proud architect of European integration”.²³⁸ And yet, lately, France has been presented as “the arch-Eurosceptic member of the Union”,²³⁹ With its 24 members of the Eurosceptic FN sitting in the European Parliament, France happens to be the first country “since the end of the Second World War, [where] an extreme right-wing party topped a national poll.”²⁴⁰ But does that mean that, Euroscepticism has taken over France, turning the pro-European nation into a ‘hard’ Eurosceptic one? Do most French citizens find themselves in sync with the Front National’s Eurosceptic views? Are the French no longer interested in the European Union and what it has to offer them? And what does the electoral success of Marine Le Pen’s party mean for France and the position the ‘Hexagon’ holds in the European Union? Is France no longer going to be one of the leaders of the European nations?

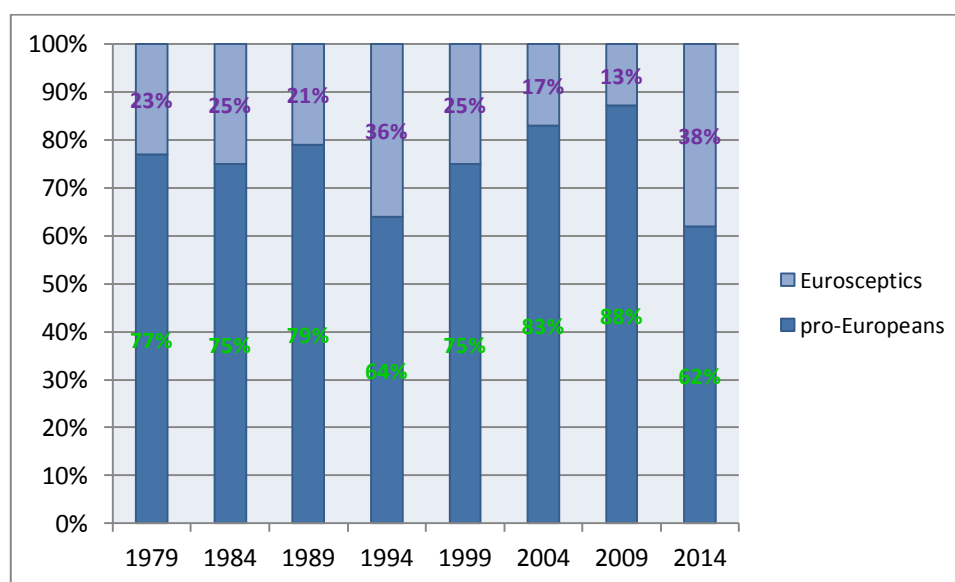


Figure 25: French MEPs and Euroscepticism

On the evening of May 25, 2014, the French Prime Minister Manuel Valls described his country’s results in the EP elections as “a political earthquake” for France and Europe.²⁴¹ A few hours later, words like “big

²³⁴ Marlière, Philippe. “A Soft Earthquake? France, the New Bastion of Euroscepticism.” *Counterpunch*. June 3, 2014. <http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/06/03/france-the-new-bastion-of-euroscepticism/>

²³⁵ Tekin, Beyza Ç. *Representations and Othering in Discourse. The Construction of Turkey in the EU Context*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins Publishing, 2010. Page 89.

²³⁶ Staham, Paul. “Political Communication, European Integration and the Transformation of National Public Spheres: a Comparison of Britain and France”, in: Fossum, John Erik and Schlesinger, Philip (eds.). *The European Union and the Public Sphere. A Communicative Space in the Making?* Oxon, Routledge, 2007. Pages 110-134. Page 126.

²³⁷ In 2009, France appears as one of the most pro-European countries in the EU.

For further details on this, see:

Rouban, Luc. “France in Europe”, in: Perrineau, Pascal and Rouban, Luc (eds.). *Politics in France and Europe*. Gordonsville, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Pages 247-255. Page 249.

²³⁸ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²³⁹ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²⁴⁰ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²⁴¹ Baker, Luke and Taylor, Paul. *Op. cit.*

bang”, “shockwave” or “earthquake” dominated the headlines of French newspapers, while journalists reported “the personal victory of Marine Le Pen, whose party won an unprecedented 24.9% of the national vote in the European election.”²⁴² Interestingly enough, these comments could actually mirror some of the observations made around the time of the 4th parliamentary elections. At the time, “anti-Maastricht lists [had] gained almost 40% of the vote”²⁴³ in the Hexagon and while the distribution of Eurosceptic votes was quite different back then – the FN scored just 11 seats, Philippe de Villiers' Majorité pour l'Autre Europe won 13 seats, the Parti Communiste Français secured 7 seats and some of the 13 members of Bernard Tapie's list (Énergie Radicale) got elected thanks to their Eurosceptic views²⁴⁴ – the fact remained that about 36% of the French MEPs were Eurosceptic. Twenty years later, there are about 38% Eurosceptic MEPs in the French Parliamentary delegation and while it is clearly not a matter to be taken lightly – as the results of the recent European Parliament elections should serve as a wake-up call to supporters of European integration – it demands a closer study of this 20-year period.

²⁴² Penketh, Anne. “Manuel Valls vows no change to roadmap after Front National election win”. *Theguardian.com*. May 26, 2014. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/may/26/manel-valls-front-national-european-elections>

²⁴³ Harlow, Carol. “Citizen Access to Political Power in the European Union”, in: Academy of European Law. *Collected courses of the Academy of European Law. Vol. 8, book 1*. The Hague, Kluwer Law International, 2001. Pages 1-56. Page 36.

²⁴⁴ Crapez, Marc. « Européennes : et si les "populismes" avaient perdu ? » *LeFigaro.fr*. May 26, 2014. <http://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/politique/2014/05/26/31001-20140526ARTFIG00157-europeennes-et-si-les-populismes-avaient-perdu.php>

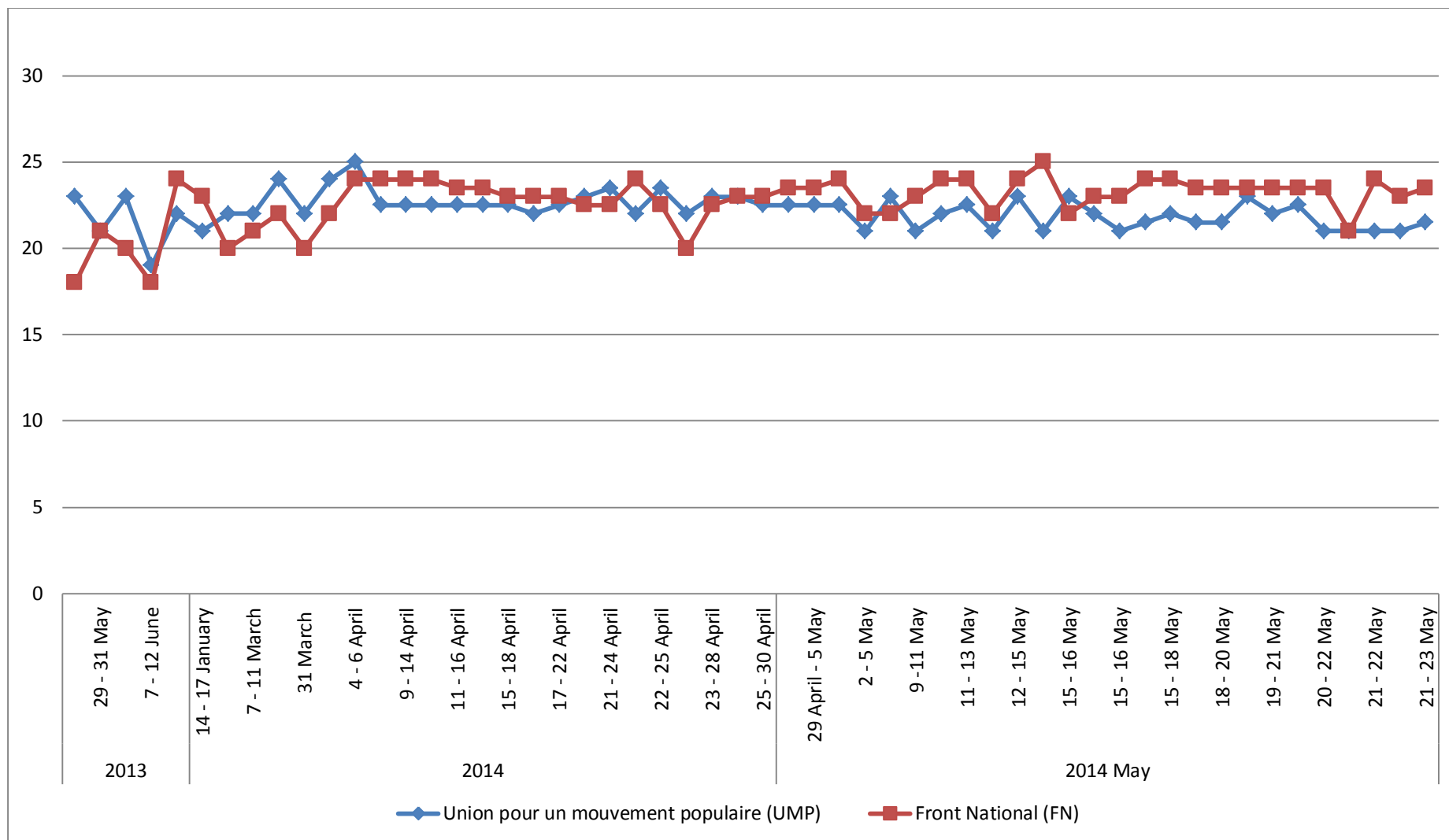


Figure 26: Poll Results: Leading Parties at National Level - France [2013-2014]

According to many political analysts, “the FN's victory [in France, in the 8th European parliamentary elections] was anything but a surprise.”²⁴⁵ If we take a look at the above figure, one sees that, starting in April 2014, most French poll results indicated that the Front National would top the polls with more than 20% of the vote. Nevertheless, as surveys “provide a ‘snap-shot’ of the situation at a particular point in time”,²⁴⁶ it is important to keep in mind that they are “not consistently accurate, especially when seeking to predict the outcome of an election contest.”²⁴⁷ In the 1995 Italian regional elections, in the 2002 French presidential election or in the 2010 UK general elections for example, opinion polls quite clearly over-represented support for right-wing parties and candidates, predicting their ‘major victories’, which did not occur in the end.²⁴⁸ On the other hand, in 2014, the French polls produced quite accurate results. But then, does that mean that the French have “an increasingly negative perception of the EU”?²⁴⁹

Looking at the figure below, it is tempting to say that there has been increasing opposition to the French Republic’s EU membership over the past 40 years.²⁵⁰ However, these figures also show that French public opinion has not become Eurosceptic, as “the support for France's membership [has dominated] despite long-term erosion.”²⁵¹

²⁴⁵ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²⁴⁶ Denscombe, Martyn. *Ground Rules For Social Research. Guidelines for Good Practice*. Berkshire, Open University Press, 2009, Second Edition. Page 101.

²⁴⁷ Joyce, Peter. *Understand Politics. Teach Yourself*. London, Hachette UK Company, 2010, Fifth Edition. Page 35.

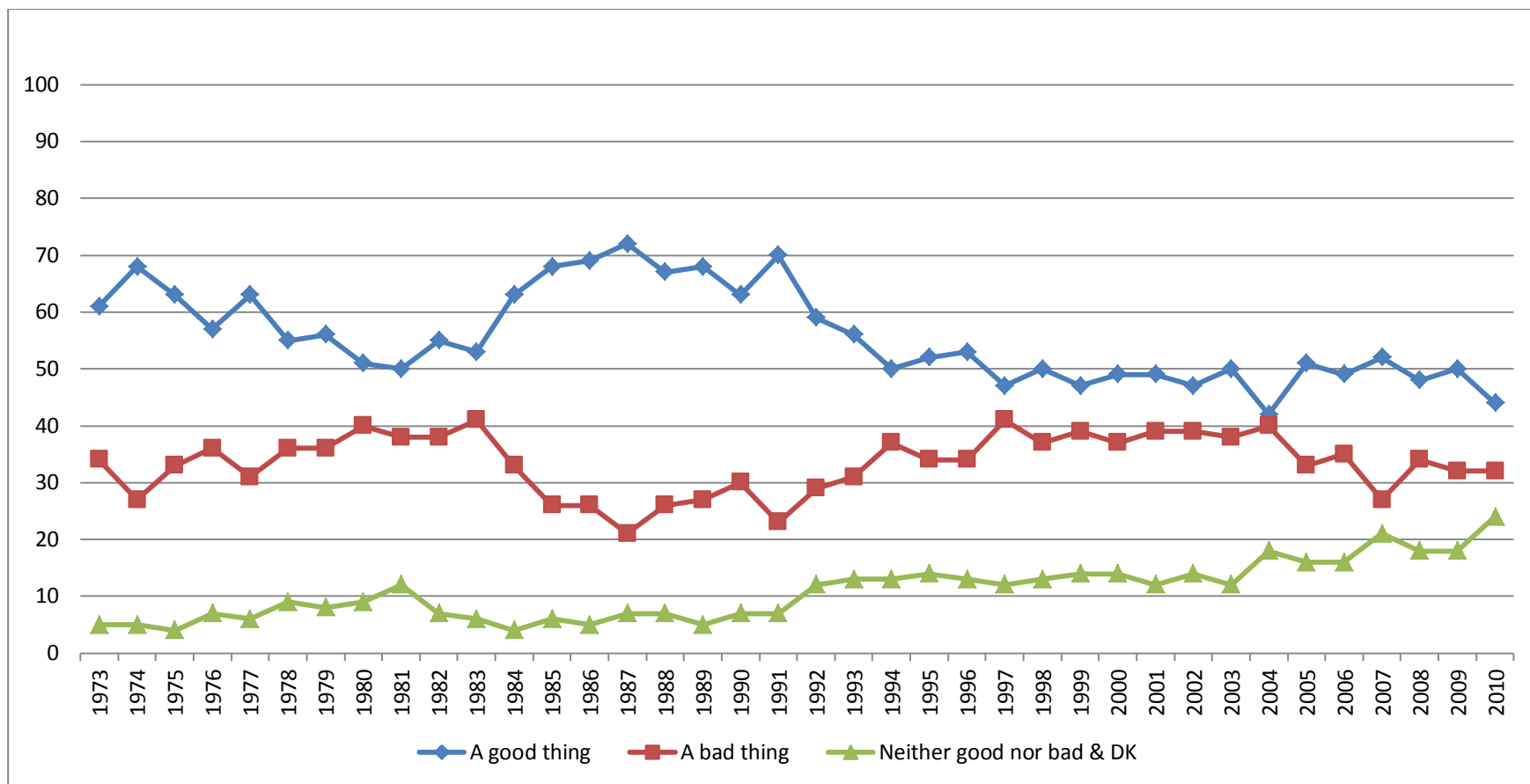
²⁴⁸ For further details on this, see:

Joyce, Peter. *Op. cit.* Page 35.

²⁴⁹ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²⁵⁰ There is a 20% increase in a 40-years period.

²⁵¹ Rozenberg, Olivier. “France: Genuine Europeanization or Monnet for Nothing?”, in: Bulmer, Simon and Lequesne, Christian (eds.). *The Member States of the European Union*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013. Pages 57-84. Page 63.



252

Figure 27: Public Support for France's Membership in the EU (1973 - 2010)

²⁵² Rozenberg, Olivier. *Op. cit.* Page 64.

If we turn to the “four indicators of each expectation of Euroscepticism”,²⁵³ we can see that the level of hard Euroscepticism in France is almost non-existent.²⁵⁴ There is no sovereignty-based Euroscepticism to speak of.²⁵⁵ As for the economic or the democratic Euroscepticism, while a portion of the French population has had some issues regarding the EU’s impact on these indicators from time to time, it is usually limited to very specific matters such as agriculture.²⁵⁶ By contrast, when it comes to social welfare, the French have often felt out of sync with their European counterparts, as they regularly perceived the EU as an entity that promotes “an aggressive brand of free-market economics”,²⁵⁷ close to the Anglo-Saxon model^{258 259} and far-away from their own.²⁶⁰ In other words, social Euroscepticism is the only form of Euroscepticism one can find in France. It appeared in the early 1990s, back when the French President François Mitterrand and the President of the European Commission Jacques Delors were tirelessly promoting “the cause of a ‘social Europe.’”²⁶¹ Back in 1992, when the Maastricht Treaty was finalised, François Mitterrand “urged the public to back a more ‘market-friendly’ Europe, promising that France’s partners would in turn concede elements of political and social integration to create a Europe of the people.”²⁶² And at the time, French voters “obliged, although reluctantly: the Maastricht Treaty was [thus] approved, by a narrow majority of votes, in 1992.”²⁶³ But when the 1994 EP elections came around, the ‘Maastricht cleavages’ persisted²⁶⁴ and about 40% of French voters chose to express their concern over the lack of a ‘social Europe’ by backing Eurosceptic and anti-Maastricht lists.²⁶⁵ A few years later, in 2005, right before France rejected the EU constitution, social Euroscepticism rose again. At the time, almost half of French citizens declared they would vote ‘no’ because they thought the Treaty was not ‘social enough’ and / or was ‘too liberal’.²⁶⁶

Table 5: Overview of relative Euroscepticism (in France)²⁶⁷

<i>Relative Euroscepticism?</i>	Economic	Sovereignty	Democracy	Social	Intensity level (hard)
France	Mixed	No	Mixed	Yes	Low (Not significant with regard to social Euroscepticism)

Therefore, it appears that from time to time, the French objected – or have been tempted to object – to the form “of integration in the EU on the grounds that it [offended] deeply held values²⁶⁸”.²⁶⁹ Yet, unlike the ‘hard’ Euroscepticism

²⁵³ Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Pages 80-81.

²⁵⁴ Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Page 83.

²⁵⁵ Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Page 86.

²⁵⁶ Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Page 84.

²⁵⁷ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²⁵⁸ Grant, Charles. *Op. cit.* Page 6.

²⁵⁹ Even though, according to some scholars, “[...] Europe is converging on a new socio-economic model, which is neither the classic Anglo-Saxon model nor the classic continental European model...”

Hix, Simon. *What’s Wrong with the Europe Union and How to Fix It.* Cambridge, Polity Press, 2008. Page 21.

²⁶⁰ Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Page 88.

²⁶¹ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²⁶² Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²⁶³ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²⁶⁴ Szukala, Andrea and Wessels, Wolfgang. “The Franco-German Tandem”, in: Edwards, Geoffrey and Pijpers, Alfred (eds.). *The Politics of European Treaty Reform. The 1996 Intergovernmental Conference and Beyond.* London, Pinter, 1997. Pages 74-99. Page 87.

²⁶⁵ Andeweg, Rudy. The Reshaping of National Party System, in: Hayward, Jack. *The Crisis of Representation in Europe.* Oxon, Frank Cass & co, 1995. Pages 58-78. Page 70.

²⁶⁶ Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Pages 87-88.

²⁶⁷ Sorensen, Catharina. *Op. cit.* Page 82.

²⁶⁸ That has mostly had to do with social matters, involving “[...] the French concept of what should be a European “good life”” (which involves: “solidarity, economic equality and a pro-active welfare state.”)

For further details on this, see:

Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²⁶⁹ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

that one finds in the UK,²⁷⁰ French Euroscepticism “belongs to the ‘soft’ category”.²⁷¹ Consequently, there are very few “self-professed Eurosceptic parties in the French political landscape.”²⁷² In fact, apart from the FN and Debout la République (a neo-Gaullist micro-party), the main political parties are all “officially dedicated to European integration”.²⁷³ But while the economic crisis seems to be “more of a challenge in France than in other EU countries”²⁷⁴ and “as [French] President [François] Hollande’s popularity plummets in recent polls and the defiance towards traditional parties continues to grow,”²⁷⁵ French voters appeared to have seen the 2014 EU elections in France as some sort of ‘referendum’ on the government’s popularity. So, by taking into account “the lingering debt crisis, now in its fifth year, and the ongoing austerity measures and fears over the economy”,²⁷⁶ the FN was able to gather voters “from disappointed former supporters of the PS and UMP parties.”²⁷⁷

However, France was not representative of a trend across Europe.²⁷⁸ In Ireland for example, “Fine Gael, the majority party in the current government, and the party of the Prime Minister Enda Kenny, saw their support remain relatively stable. [So,] despite being responsible for the implementation of austerity measures since 2012, [Fine Gael was able to retain its four seats while] Fianna Fáil’s representation dropped from three seats to one (though partly as a result of a reduction in the number of constituencies).”²⁷⁹ Furthermore the Eurosceptic Slovenská národná strana (SNS), Partidul România Mare (PRM), Natzionalen Front za Spasenie na Bulgaria (NFSB) or Bulgaria’s Attack all lost their seats in the 2014 EP elections. As a result, Marine Le Pen was unable to create a new Eurosceptic parliamentary group with the leader of the Netherlands’ Party for Freedom (PVV) Geert Wilders as they were missing MEPs from two countries in order to fulfil the required representation from seven nations.²⁸⁰ And so, “despite a rise in anti-European parties, political balances remained broadly unchanged in the European Parliament following the [8th parliamentary] elections.”²⁸¹

²⁷⁰ For further details on this, see:

Supra page 42 to page 47.

²⁷¹ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²⁷² Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²⁷³ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

²⁷⁴ “Rise of National Front tarnishes France’s image”. *EurActiv France*. May 21, 2014 (updated on: July 9, 2014).

<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-elections-2014/rise-national-front-tarnishes-frances-image-302280>

²⁷⁵ Lemonnier, Tristan. “French Nationalism and Euroscepticism Sign of Greater Discontent in EU Elections.” *DiplomatiCourier*. November 15, 2013.

<http://www.diplomaticourier.com/channels/ballot-box/1911-french-nationalism-and-euroscepticism-sign-of-greater-discontent-in-eu-elections>

²⁷⁶ Bonnici, Tony. “Sharp rise in Euroscepticism in Germany, France, Italy and Spain”. *The Times*. September 17, 2013.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/europe/article3871247.ece>

²⁷⁷ Lemonnier, Tristan. *Op. cit.*

²⁷⁸ “Countries affected by real austerity have not turned to Euroscepticism”. *RTBF*. June 1, 2014.

<http://euranetplus-inside.eu/countries-affected-by-real-austerity-cures-have-not-turned-to-euroscepticism/>

²⁷⁹ Nulty, Paul. “Punishment of mainstream national parties, not Euroscepticism, is behind Irish results.” *The London School of Economics and Political Science*. June 30, 2014.

<http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/eurocrisispress/2014/06/30/punishment-of-mainstream-national-parties-not-euroscepticism-is-behind-irish-results/>

²⁸⁰ Seymat, Thomas. *Op. cit.*

²⁸¹ “Europe on course for ‘grand coalition’ after election”. *EurActiv.com*. May 26, 2014.

<http://www.euractiv.com/sections/eu-elections-2014/europe-course-grand-coalition-after-election-302386>

Conclusion

In 2014, the personalisation of the elections led to the first appearance of transnational campaign activities by the five main European parties taking part in the Spitzenkandidaten process.²⁸² And not only did the top candidates travel to several countries across Europe, they also debated with one another on TV.²⁸³ Yet, very few channels were willing to broadcast these debates.²⁸⁴ As a result, very few European voters saw any of the debates – or were even aware that such debates took place.²⁸⁵ And while most mass media across Europe chose not to draw attention to the Spitzenkandidaten process – and, accordingly, to the ‘top candidates’ nominated by the EL, EGP, ALDE, S&D and EPP²⁸⁶ – when journalists did talk about the European elections, they chose to focus on national issues instead of European ones.²⁸⁷ Consequently most voters could only make an informed choice if they actively sought the relevant information by themselves.

Therefore, it does not seem to be a fair extrapolation to say that in 2014 “turnout *struggled* to reach 42.54%”.²⁸⁸ This year, the EU turnout did fall for a 7th consecutive election but “strictly speaking, EU-wide turnout is a moving target of uncertain comparative value since the number of Member States participating has been the same in only two elections (12 Member States in 1989 and 1994).”²⁸⁹ And if we take a look at the only EU country where the mass media took an interest in the Spitzenkandidaten process (Germany),²⁹⁰ it is interesting to note that voter turnout went up by 4.83%.²⁹¹ And while it is too early to conclude on the proficiency of the *Spitzenkandidaten* process as a whole, one should keep that information in mind for the next parliamentary elections because it seems that having a say in the nomination of the EC President has the potential to increase voter interest and, in turn, participation at the polls.²⁹²

Moreover, despite what many feared,²⁹³ most members of the European Council have proved that they are willing to listen to the will of the citizens²⁹⁴ and stand up for democracy.²⁹⁵ At the end of June 2014, Jean-Claude Juncker was nominated by the Council and later on, 422 MEPs extended their support to the Luxembourgish politician, who then became the 12th EC President.²⁹⁶ Therefore, in 2014, an important step was taken towards the development of a more democratic EU.²⁹⁷ Other future developments might include a common experience, such as going to the polls on the same day across the EU. For its part, the European Movement International is part of the Europe+ network,

²⁸² Transparency International EU Office. *Op. cit.* Page 2.

www.transparencyinternational.eu/european-parliament-integrity-watch-eu-elections-2014/

²⁸³ Piedrafita, Sonia and Renman, Vilde. “The ‘Personalisation’ of the European Elections: A half-hearted attempt to increase turnout and democratic legitimacy?” *Op. cit.* Page 7.

²⁸⁴ For further details on this, see:

Supra page 36.

²⁸⁵ Fox, Benjamin. “The Spitzenkandidaten – this time was it different?” *Op. cit.*

²⁸⁶ Hix, Simon and Wilks-Heeg, Stuart. *Op. cit.*

²⁸⁷ Blome, Nikolaus. “Opinion: A Victory for European Democracy.” *Der Spiegel*. May 26, 2014.

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/editorial-on-the-importance-of-the-eu-election-for-european-democracy-a-971766.html>

²⁸⁸ “It’s official: Last EU election had lowest-ever turnout.” *Op. cit.*

²⁸⁹ Jones, Clifford A. *Op. cit.* Page 38.

²⁹⁰ Hix, Simon and Wilks-Heeg, Stuart. *Op. cit.*

²⁹¹ Indeed, in Germany, the turnout went from 43.27% in 2009 to 48.10% in 2014.

<http://www.results-elections2014.eu/en/turnout.html>

²⁹² “It’s official: Last EU election had lowest-ever turnout.” *Op. cit.*

²⁹³ For further details on this, see:

Piedrafita, Sonia and Renman, Vilde. “The ‘Personalisation’ of the European Elections: A half-hearted attempt to increase turnout and democratic legitimacy?” *Op. cit.* Pages 8-11.

²⁹⁴ Piedrafita, Sonia and Renman, Vilde. “The ‘Personalisation’ of the European Elections: A half-hearted attempt to increase turnout and democratic legitimacy?” *Op. cit.* Page 11.

²⁹⁵ “European Council: respect the will of the citizens and appoint Juncker.” EMI Press Release. June 25, 2014

<http://europeanmovement.eu/news/european-council-respect-the-will-of-the-citizens-and-appoint-juncker/>

²⁹⁶ Spanneut, Ophélie. *Op. cit.*

²⁹⁷ For further details on this, see:

“European Commission President - Let’s make the next 5 years count.” *Op. cit.*

which believes that it is time to launch a Treaty revision process, in order to ground the European project in democracy, solidarity and equal access to the fundamental rights for all.²⁹⁸

Over the last two decades, many comments have been made about the ‘rise of Euroscepticism’.²⁹⁹ Yet, while many people take a gloomy view of the EU’s future – assuming that the UK was about to leave the Union³⁰⁰ or that the once pro-European France was about to become “the arch-Eurosceptic member of the Union”³⁰¹ – one cannot help but notice that in a time of deep economic crisis, most EU citizens keep on supporting their country’s EU membership.³⁰² It is therefore of prime importance that pro-European MEPs – that still hold the majority in the Parliament – focus on the European project³⁰³ and keep on pursuing European integration. As Greek politician George Papandreou explained: the European Union is “still a work in progress [and as such, there is still some work to do in order] to become more of a United States of Europe.”³⁰⁴ Fortunately, with the ‘super grand coalition’ in the EP, pro-Europeans should remain at the core of most decisions on constitutional affairs, foreign policy, agriculture and fisheries³⁰⁵ and in all likelihood, will be able to enact a pro-European agenda throughout the new legislature. Therefore, it is now up to MEPs to engage with citizens, through and with civil society organisations such as the European Movement International.

²⁹⁸ For further information on this, see:

Europe+. “Open letter to Members of the European Parliament.” July 1, 2014.

Available on: http://www.europeanmovement.eu/fileadmin/files_emi/pdf/Europe_Plus_Open_Letter_final.pdf

²⁹⁹ Piedrafita, Sonia and Renman, Vilde. “Euroscepticism in the Next European Parliament: A Reason to Worry?” *Op. cit.* Page 24.

³⁰⁰ Back in January 2013, British Prime Minister David Cameron promised a referendum in 2017 if the Conservative Party was to win an outright majority at the 2015 elections.

“Cameron takes gamble with in/out EU referendum pledge.” *Op. cit.*

³⁰¹ Marlière, Philippe. “Forget Ukip - euroscepticism in France would give Farage a run for his money.” *Op. cit.*

³⁰² For further details on this, see:

Supra page 46 to page 47 and supra page 51 to page 52.

³⁰³ Leonard, Mark and Torreblanca, José Ignacio. *Op. cit.* Page 9.

³⁰⁴ Read, Richard. “Q&A with George Papandreou, former Greek premier, who will launch World Affairs Council speaker series in Portland Feb. 26.” *OregonLive*. January 12, 2013.

http://www.oregonlive.com/business/index.ssf/2013/01/qa_with_george_papandreou_form.html

³⁰⁵ VoteWatch. *Op. cit.* Page 16.