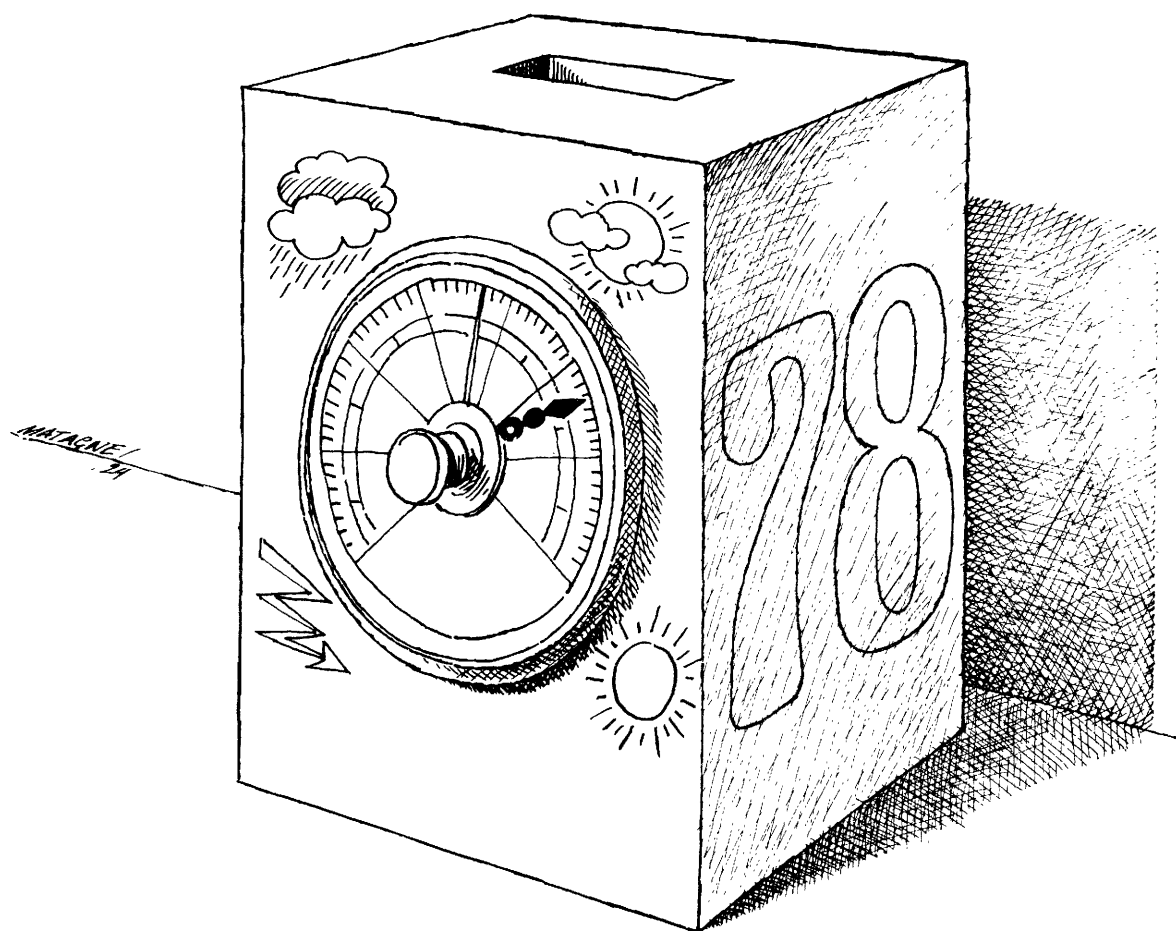


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European Parliament : the pessimists will be thwarted (see page 3)

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++ EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT : THE FIRST POLL

The spring 1977 Eurobarometer opinion poll shows that 47 out of every hundred Europeans are certain that they will vote in the direct elections to the European Assembly. Twenty seven out of every hundred will 'probably vote'. These figures should be reassuring to those who feared that the European consultative body would be ridiculed through mass abstention.

Some of the other interesting facts to come out of this latest opinion poll are presented in Annex 1.

++ FROM TRIPARTITE TO SUMMIT

The economic crisis and unemployment were high on the agenda both at Luxembourg - where representatives of workers, employers and governments assembled for the Tripartite Conference - and at the summit of the Community's leaders in London.

In Luxembourg, it became apparent that progress towards achieving the objectives set one year previously was disappointing. According to Denis Healey, UK Chancellor of the Exchequer, who presided over the session, the lack of progress is principally due to the fact that we are confronted simultaneously by an unprecedented rate of inflation and level of unemployment. Rightly or wrongly the fear of inflation is one of the principal elements holding back expansion.

What do we do in such a situation? Delegates at the Tripartite Conference in Luxembourg broadly agreed that it was up to the Community to resolve some of the structural problems that had been identified, particularly through the use of the European Social Fund and the European Regional Fund. According to Mr. Healey there had been disagreement - predictably - about the use by national governments of similar instruments. Community intervention is necessary, it was generally agreed, to resolve certain of these problems such as in the textile and the shipbuilding industries.

One of the key discussion points was what measures to take to help the job market. Three types of action were generally approved in the course of debate. In the first place, there are the sort of measures which have already been adopted by numerous countries to ease short term cyclical unemployment. People felt however that more permanent measures needed to be introduced, measures which would complement a policy of adapting employment conditions to structural change. With this in mind, the trade unions suggested a reduction in working hours rather than early retirement.

In between the cyclical and structural measures are certain types of measures which can be introduced to improve the distribution of the work force. Labour immobility can have a sharp braking effect on economic growth, even when things seem to be booming.

To reduce unemployment it is necessary to increase demand, according to the delegates in Luxembourg and the leaders in London. The question is, how? Some delegates in Luxembourg thought it necessary to increase wages in order to increase demand. Others thought it better to reduce taxation. Still others thought it necessary to increase private investment or public expenditure.

Such divergent views are prevalent throughout our economic and political system. It was not surprising that traces of the same disagreements were to be found at the meeting of the Nine's heads of state and government in London. The European Council (the official title for the summit) once more stressed the necessity for industrialised countries to cooperate with each other in order to create a sustained expansion of world economic activity which would, at the same time, be compatible with a lowering of the rate of inflation and would also reduce unemployment. The Council declared its determination to allow the Community and individual Member States to embark on establishing this cooperation at the world level.

Nevertheless, an expanding world economy implies active competition which itself can make life hard for European industries. To cope with this, industry has to change. The Council discussed the employment situation in those sectors most seriously affected by structural change. It consequently invited the European Commission to continue studying the basic elements, structural and otherwise, regarding these problem areas, and to transmit the conclusion it draws to the Council.

The European Commission for its part had already made it known that the financing of major industrial projects could be made a lot easier by loans from the capital market of the order of a billion units of account (1 u.a. = 1.12 US dollars approx.). The European Council did not give the go ahead to the procedure suggested by the Commission. Instead it took note of the Commission's views and left it to the economic and finance ministers to examine the proposals as soon as possible.

++ CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The latest consumer price index compiled by the Community's statistical office (for May 1977) is presented below.
(1970 = 100).

	<u>March 1977</u>	<u>Variation April/May 1977</u>	<u>Variation May 1976/ May 1977</u>
Germany	146.5	+0.4%	+ 3.8%
France	181.1	+0.9%	+ 9.8%
Italy	234.2	+1.3%	+18.5%
Netherlands	176.6	+0.5%	+ 7.0%
Belgium	173.9	+1.0%	+ 7.2%
Luxembourg	165.8	+0.4%	+ 7.2%
UK	248.5	+0.8%	.17.1%
Ireland	249.7	+3.8%	+14.0%
Denmark	186.0	+1.5%	+ 9.9%

++ MEDICAL RESEARCH IN EUROPE

For the first time since the European Community was set up there is the possibility of a joint medical research programme.

A proposal the European Commission has just sent to the Council of Ministers, has identified three priority areas which, on account of their social and economic importance, could be of use to the whole Community. These areas are ones where it would be beneficial to combine the research to be undertaken, and also where results can be expected in a reasonable amount of time.

When the Council of Ministers has approved the proposals, European laboratories will combine their resources to study congenital anomalies, cellular ageing and reduction in the functional capacity of organs and, finally, extracorporeal oxygenation.

According to initial estimates, these three areas of research would require a total sum of 8.95 million units of account (1 u.a. = 1.12 US dollars approx.) over the next four years.

++ 1976 ENERGY BURN

In 1976, the Community's domestic consumption of energy amounted to 1,306 million t.c.e. (tonne coal equivalents) - an increase of 70 million on 1975. Accompanied by a 5.7% increase in consumption, the Community returned to a rise in energy consumption similar to the rate observed over the last ten years.

In 1975, however, energy consumption was particularly low and, under the impact of the energy crisis, had not climbed back to even the 1973 level which stood at 1,337 million tce.

Gross domestic consumption of primary energy sources and equivalents:

	<u>millions tce.</u>		
	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1976/75</u>
			<u>%</u>
EUR-9	1236.0	1306.1	+ 5.7
Germany	345.3	373.0	+ 8.0
France	234.9	248.7	+ 5.9
Italy	181.9	192.2	+ 5.7
Netherlands	84.2	93.9	+11.4
Belgium	59.4	62.4	+ 5.0
Luxembourg	6.4	6.5	+ 2.3
UK	289.4	293.5	+ 1.4
Ireland	9.3	9.3	+ 0.4
Denmark	25.3	26.6	+ 4.9

++ MIGRANT WORKER SOCIAL SECURITY

Community regulations dealing with social security for migrant workers and their families are detailed and complex. In practice, however, it is quite easy for injustices to take place depending on how Community regulations are interpreted or neglected at the national level. To try and eliminate these injustices and inequalities, the European Commission has proposed various modifications to the texts in force.

These basically cover health and maternity insurance, pension rights and payments for invalids. In these three areas at least, migrant workers will be better protected from now on.

.. AND SCHOOLS FOR THE CHILDREN

About one and a half million migrant children attend pre-primary, primary and secondary schools in the Member States.

More than two-thirds of these migrant children come from non-Community countries. Given the growing concern over the high educational failure rates of migrant children and their particularly high degree of vulnerability in the present period of severe youth unemployment, the Community's Council of Ministers has just adopted a directive designed to ensure the adaptation of school structures and curricula to meet the specific educational needs of migrant children.

The directive provides that Member States will take appropriate steps to facilitate the initial reception of young migrants into the new host country and promote the teaching of the mother tongue and culture of the migrant children.

The directive only applies in principle to children coming from other Community countries but, in a joint declaration, the Council of Ministers confirmed its desire to extend the benefits of these measures to children from the rest of the world whose problems, naturally enough, are very similar.

++ CONSUMER EDUCATION CENTRE

Mr. Bregegere of the European Parliament has put forward the idea in a report on the Community's consumer policy of a European education centre for the benefit of consumers. Such a centre would have the job of designing and developing educational material, helping to train teachers and helping to bring about the introduction of pilot schools to educate young people on consumer affairs.

In the same report, Mr. Bregegere envisages setting up a European technical documentation centre to be put at the disposal of consumer organisations and all those interested in consumer problems.

++ SAVING FUEL

The press has announced that a new lubricant is being marketed which, whilst maintaining the intrinsic qualities of synthesis oil, can lead to savings of as much as 5% in fuel consumption. Mr. Pintat of the European Parliament asked the European Commission to give its views on fuel saving systems in general and this one in particular.

The Commission pointed out that reducing fuel consumption is one of the principal objectives of its 'rational use of energy' programme. Among ways of saving fuel, the use of new lubricants will also be fully considered. However, given the present state of research and experimentation in this field, it would be premature for the Commission to pass judgement on this new product.

++ CAR SAFETY

The Council of Ministers has just adopted a series of measures designed to improve the safety of motorised vehicles. These measures cover systems to prevent forestry and agricultural tractors toppling over, rear fog lights for cars and trailers, rear lights and stop lights on cars as well as safety belts and car braking systems. The quality of the environment has not been forgotten : one of the directives concerns pollution emitted by diesel engines in agricultural and forestry tractors.

++ RAW MATERIALS : BASEMENT STOCKS

All Community countries are in the same predicament over raw materials. They have insufficient knowledge of present and future supplies; they are worried about the possibility of complete or relative shortages in the medium and long term for various products; and they are concerned about the over-riding need to improve self-sufficiency.

In the face of this triple problem, the European Commission has proposed a multi-annual research and development programme covering raw materials. Its aims are to increase the potential for self-sufficiency within the Community and to promote new techniques for the Community's mining industry in extracting supplies under Europe and elsewhere in the world.

From 1978 to 1981, the accent will be put on finding new supplies and exploiting resources deep in the earth through the use of classical geochemical and geophysical techniques, as well as up to date techniques such as teledetection using aircraft and satellites. In addition, processing techniques will be refined, particularly those for use with copper ore, lead, zinc, aluminium and bauxite since there are large quantities of these metals dispersed across the Community. Finally, mining technology will be perfected, particularly for use in the development of deep and low-quality mines.

The Community's contribution to this programme is estimated to be about 23 million units of account (1 u.a. = 1.12 US dollars approx.) over four years.

++ FREE COMPETITION IN INSURANCE

The European insurance market should be rapidly opened up to free competition stated Christopher Tugendhat, European Commissioner responsible for financial institutions, to the European Parliament's economic and monetary committee.

We can only start talking about a true common market for insurance when companies can, from their own national base, freely offer their services anywhere in the Community, Mr. Tugendhat stressed.

Up until now, the Community's insurance market has been limited to simply free establishment.

The proposal for a directive, which the Parliament is currently examining, aims to harmonise national legislations in the Community with a view to encouraging greater liberalisation of the market. In doing this, it proposes that insurance for transport and large industrial risks be exempted, during the first stage, from strict supervision, in the country where the insured party is resident. Certain national provisions (regarded as essential for the protection of the insured) have, naturally enough, been kept in the directive, though, at the same time, it is recognised that the large commercial concerns do not require the same degree of legal protection as smaller insured parties.

++ EIB IN 76 AND 77

New loans given by the European Investment Bank in 1976 amounted to 1,273.3 million units of account (1 u.a. - 1.12 U.S. dollars approx.) compared to 1,006.5 million in 1975, and 996.4 million in 1974.

Most of the loans (1,086 million) went to Community countries. Overall the EIB's loans contributed to investments close to 7 billion u.a.

EIB's money is not only lent to Community countries. A financial protocol signed with Portugal in September 1976, for instance, makes provision for granting loans up to 200 million u.a. over five years from when the agreement comes into force which will be January 1st 1978 at the latest. During the first quarter of 1977, financial protocols were also signed between the European Community and Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Israel. These agreements are in addition to the ones already signed with Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Malta and even Yugoslavia. Discussions are currently underway with Lebanon.

The signatories of the Lome Convention have also not been forgotten. Priority has been given to projects in the industrial, mining and tourist sectors. For all of these countries, loans are granted by the EIB against security of their own resources up to a maximum of 400 million u.a. at an average interest rate of 3 points. The loans are also granted as risk capital (100 million) and taken from the resources of the European Development Fund.

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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT - THE FIRST POLL

If everything goes according to plan, "Europeans" will go to the polls in less than twelve months. The results of the Eurobarometer opinion poll of spring 1977 show that out of every one hundred Europeans, 47 know for certain that they will vote and 27 think they will 'probably vote'. These figures should reassure those who fear massive abstention which would be derisory to the idea of European democracy.

Intention to participate

The question asked was as follows : 'There are going to be elections to the European Parliament in the spring of 1978. How likely is it that you will go and vote? Certainly, probably not or certainly not?'

	B	DK	D	F	IRL	I	L	N	UK	EEC
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	(1) %
a)	37	42	28	51	52	64	44	60	47	47
b)	21	18	36	26	26	20	35	22	26	27
c)	11	7	11	5	7	5	8	5	11	8
d)	19	12	7	5	8	5	3	5	10	7
e)	6	9	4	6	3	3	7	5	3	4
f)	6	12	14	7	4	3	3	3	3	7
	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(1) Weighted average

- a) Will certainly vote
- b) Will probably vote
- c) Will probably not vote
- d) Will certainly not vote
- e) That depends
- f) No reply

This opinion poll shows that in the Community as a whole, just under half the persons interviewed know that they will certainly vote. This proportion can be taken as the minimum and will probably increase in the course of the electoral campaign. This indicator should be looked at closely. As far as political participation is concerned, the young people of both sexes, the older women and the less politically motivated people are already displaying a distinct tendency to abstain in the European elections. This is where the biggest information effort has to be made.

Satisfied and unsatisfied

With the election of the European Assembly in the offing, what do Europeans actually think about the Europe they live in? A comparison between what they thought in autumn 73 and what they think in spring 77 is presented below:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Good thing</u>	<u>Bad thing</u>	<u>Neither good nor bad</u>	<u>No reply</u>
<u>Luxembourg</u>				
autumn 73	67%	3%	22%	8%
spring 77	84%	2%	11%	3%
<u>Netherlands</u>				
autumn 73	63%	4%	20%	13%
spring 77	80%	3%	13%	4%
<u>Italy</u>				
autumn 73	69%	2%	15%	14%
spring 77	71%	5%	18%	6%
<u>Belgium</u>				
autumn 73	57%	5%	19%	19%
spring 77	69%	4%	17%	10%
<u>France</u>				
autumn 73	61%	5%	22%	12%
spring 77	64%	6%	24%	6%

<u>Country</u>	<u>Good thing</u>	<u>Bad thing</u>	<u>Neither good nor bad</u>	<u>No reply</u>
<u>Ireland</u>				
autumn 73	56%	15%	21%	8%
spring 77	57%	17%	22%	4%
<u>Germany</u>				
autumn 73	63%	4%	22%	11%
spring 77	54%	8%	23%	15%
<u>U.K.</u>				
autumn 73	31%	34%	22%	13%
spring 77	35%	40%	22%	3%
<u>Denmark</u>				
autumn 73	42%	30%	19%	9%
spring 77	30%	30%	30%	10%
<u>Community</u>				
autumn 73	56%	11%	20%	13%
spring 77	57%	14%	21%	8%

A favourable attitude to the European Community is slightly less prevalent among women under 55 years (54%) than men (61%) and older women aged 55 and over (45%). Villagers are also slightly less in favour than those living in small or large cities (61% against 55%).

The movement towards European unification should be speeded up, according to the majority of Italians and Luxembourggeois, supported by the majority of French and Germans. In other countries the majority favours continuing things as they are now (particularly in the UK and Denmark). Two or three people out of ten in these latter two countries would prefer to see this movement slowed down. In all countries, opinion leaders were more in favour of speeding up the movement than the general public.

The Eurobarometer opinion poll is undertaken every six months by the European Commission under the guidance of Mr. J.-R. Rabier. In total, 9,044 people aged fifteen years and over were questioned by interviewers from eight specialised institutes. Some of the opinion polls are used for a deeper look at certain strata of society or certain aspects of everyday life, e.g. young people, women, consumers, environment etc. (see Euroforum N° 1/77, 17/77, 19/77).

Attitudes to national parliaments

In all nine countries, the public believes that the national parliament plays an important role and would like to see this role expanded. The only difference is one of degree. Three countries (Denmark, UK and Ireland) attach major importance to their parliaments. Even in France and Italy which came bottom of the list, nearly six in ten considered it either 'very important' or 'important'. Strangely enough it was the Italians and the Irish who were most in favour of their national parliament playing an even more important role than they do now.

Views as to what the national parliament's most important function is varied slightly from country to country:

- to control the spending of public money (Ireland, UK and Denmark)
- to propose, discuss and pass laws (France, Luxembourg)
- to debate important issues (Italy)
- to watch over and support or oppose the government (Germany)
- to investigate scandals and abuses (Italy)

It would appear that two images of Parliament as an institution exist side by side in the public mind : one 'popular' (to control the spending of public money, to investigate scandals and abuses), the other more 'intellectual' (to pass laws, to keep an eye on the government).

Similarly the general public sees the role of a member of Parliament in terms of solving the problems of individual citizens, while opinion leaders see it in terms of playing an active part on the political scene.

And the European Assembly?

The facts speak for themselves : more than half of those interviewed were unable to say whether they had recently seen or heard any item of news about the European Parliament. Worse still, only 50% of those who gave a positive answer were able to recall without being prompted that the issue discussed was direct election of this Parliament. The general level of awareness is clearly very low.

On average, just under four in every ten interviewed felt that the role played by the European Parliament was 'very important' or 'important'. Strangely enough, although the importance attached to national parliaments increased with leadership rating, the exact opposite applied in the case of the European Parliament, opinion leaders being relatively more cynical than the general public.

Despite the fact that the public is poorly informed and that the institution has had little impact, the idea of an elected European Parliament is becoming increasingly popular as election day approaches and the debate livens up. The countries most in favour are Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Italy. Denmark comes bottom of the table but even here, 44% accept the principle and only 27% are still "against". In a referendum, this would give a 62% majority.

Since 1973 support for direct elections has grown most in the United Kingdom, Ireland, France and the Netherlands. The only exception to the trend is Germany, but even here 69% are "for".

Two positive arguments and two negative arguments were tried out on interviewees. Replies revealed that those who attach most importance to voting in the European elections are more influenced by the potential impact on the future of the "European venture" than by the prospect of increased control over "officials in Brussels". Conversely, those who attach little importance to voting are motivated by the feeling that the whole business is futile rather than the fear that an elected European Parliament would encroach on the national parliament's powers.

To turn from the European Parliament to elected European MPs, interviewees were more or less evenly divided as to whether members should support Community interests, even when these happen to clash with national interests, or national interests exclusively. Community interests just about made it in the six founder Member States, but national interests came out way ahead in the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland. Only the Dutch voted overwhelmingly in favour of Community interests.

Electoral campaign : priorities and strategy

Interviewees were asked to express relative interest in two lists of possible electoral issues. On the first list, the current economic situation, nature conservation and strengthening the Community in the face of the superpowers came out ahead of the control of multinationals and the stepping up of Europe's defence capacity. On the second list, a fairer sharing of costs and benefits among member countries, preservation of national traditions and identity and protection of the interests of the less powerful countries triumphed over the accession of new member countries and the establishment of more independent relations with the United States.

The really remarkable thing here was the uniformity of European public opinion : the order of priority given was more or less the same throughout the Community. As far as election strategy is concerned, interviewees in the six founder Member States were in favour of parties of the same colour fighting a joint campaign, whereas those interviewed in the three new member countries tended to feel that each political party should campaign for itself. Generally speaking, opinion leaders were more in favour of joining European campaigns than the general public.

Who to vote for

As an experiment, each interviewee was asked to give his preference for one of the political groups currently represented in the European Parliament.

	B	DK	D	F	IRL	I	L	N	UK	EEC (1)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
a)	3	10	2	12	1	26	(1)	2	1	9
b)	31	43	33	41	14	24	(34)	38	32	33
c)	12	23	14	18	7	5	(23)	19	17	14
d)	45	2	41	8	32	32	(32)	32	4	23
e)	5	7	4	12	30	3	(2)	4	2	5
f)	1	8	2	3	4	2	(3)	1	38	10
g)	3	7	4	6	12	8	(5)	4	6	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Base	723	787	830	1024	818	892	243	950	1197	7597

(1) Weighted average

- a) Communists and similar
 - b) Socialists
 - c) Liberals and Democrats
 - d) Christian Democrats
 - e) Progressive European Democrats
 - f) European Conservatives
 - g) None of these groups
-

It would be unwise to attach too much importance to what was merely an initial sounding out of public opinion. However, for the record, the Socialists came top of the list (33%) followed by the Christian Democrats (23%) and the Liberals (14%). Tying for fourth place were the Conservatives (10%) and the Communists (9%). There was no obvious link between the choice of group and support for direct elections.

Interviewee's second choice (i.e. in the event of the party selected as first choice not contesting the election) went mainly to the Liberals, in other words, the party of the centre.

Information

Information is a basic necessity for a good democracy. And it seems that more than half of the public regards itself as being insufficiently informed by newspapers, radio and T.V. about the European Parliament and the forthcoming election of its members.

Feeling informed about the election of the European Parliament:

	B	DK	D	F	IRL	I	L	N	UK	EEC (1)
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
a)	44	33	34	37	48	22	54	41	29	32
b)	41	51	47	52	44	65	38	49	64	55
c)	1	2	1	3	3	2	2	2	2	2
d)	14	14	18	8	5	11	6	8	5	11
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

(1) Weighted average

- a) Yes, sufficiently informed
- b) No, not sufficiently informed
- c) Too uninformed
- d) No reply

Lifestyle

The citizens of the smaller countries were more positively satisfied with life in general, a reaction which has remained fairly stable since the first of these surveys was conducted in 1973.

In France and Italy, a higher proportion of the interviewees were dissatisfied with their lot. The gap is widest where questions relate specifically to the 'kind of society in which we live' or 'the way democracy works'.

Given the choice of three deliberately provocative options - revolutionary action, gradual reform, or courageous defence against the forces of subversion - the replies showed that a small but growing revolutionary minority is emerging in France and Italy. Defenders of the existing order are gaining ground in Germany, the Netherlands and Italy. The reformists, caught midway between the two camps are gradually losing their comfortable majority. This 'consensus indicator' should be examined in greater detail, not only in relation to opinions expressed but also to underlying motivations and values.

Event without precedent

The first European election is by its nature an event without precedent which provides a unique opportunity of gaining an insight into the opinion and attitudes of the citizens of the nine countries which form the Community. This opinion poll will provoke comment and criticism, though the results will be further refined in the months ahead. It should, however, be of great interest to the research officers of all political parties as well as the universities and similar organisations, and be of interest to the European citizens who will eventually be going to the polls.

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