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EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS TO TAKE PLACE JUNE 14-17

FACT SHEET

Voters in the 10 member states of the European Community will go to the polls this month to elect 434 representatives to the European Parliament, the Community's democratic assembly.

The winning candidates will serve in the Parliament's second five-year term as a popularly elected body. Although the Parliament has existed since 1952, its members were appointed from national parliaments until the first direct elections in 1979. Seats are distributed among the member states according to population, with each member of Parliament representing about 500,000 people.

Polling Days

Polling day will be June 14 in Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom; and June 17 in Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Italy and Luxembourg.

National Distribution of European Parliament Seats

BELGIUM	24
DENMARK	16
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	81
GREECE	24
FRANCE	81
IRELAND	15
ITALY	81
LUXEMBOURG	6
THE NETHERLANDS	25
UNITED KINGDOM	81
TOTAL	434

Voting Methods

Nine member states and Northern Ireland will elect their representatives by proportional representation. Under this voting system, seats are distributed to political parties according to their share of the vote. The rest of the United Kingdom (England, Scotland and Wales) will use the "first past the post" system -- the system that is also used in United States Congressional elections.

Political Parties

When the representatives take office, they are grouped by political party, not country. At present, the Parliament is divided into seven political groups, with membership as follows:

Socialists	125
European Peoples' Party (Christian Democrats)	117
European Democrats (Conservatives)	63
Communists and Allies	48
Liberals and Democrats	38
European Progressive Democrats	22
Group for the Technical Coordination and Defense of Independent Groups and Members	11
Non-attached	10

Powers of the Parliament

The new European Parliament is expected to focus on proposals to expand its powers. Although the Parliament's authority has been extended over the years, particularly in the area of budgetary review, the Community's chief legislative powers remain with the Commission, its executive body, and the Council of Ministers, its highest decision-making body. At present, the Parliament's powers are these:

--It adopts, amends or rejects the draft Community budget prepared by the Council. In the most dramatic use of this power, the Parliament threw out the draft 1980 budget, which it felt gave too much to farmers and was biased against consumers. The budgetary procedure began again from scratch, while the Community for the first half of 1980 worked each month with one-twelfth of the total resources that had been allocated in the previous year's budget.

--It can force the Commission to resign, an option it has not yet used.

--It must be consulted on proposed legislation. The Parliament offers opinions on Commission proposals before they are adopted by the Council and can block legislation by refusing its opinion.

--It monitors the activities of the Commission and Council through written and oral questions.

--It adopts resolutions on its own initiative on various aspects of Community policy -- a practice that has been gradually extended, particularly since the 1979 elections.

The Parliament has also been involved in the Community's efforts to promote joint action by the member states in foreign policy. Most visibly, it has adopted resolutions on many significant international issues, including apartheid in South Africa, Soviet involvement in Afghanistan, the war in Lebanon and U.S. intervention in Grenada.

Presidents

The new European Parliament will elect a President to succeed Pieter Dankert, a Dutch Socialist who has headed the assembly since 1982. He succeeded the first President of the directly elected Parliament, Simone Veil of France.

Public Opinion

Voter turnout for the Parliamentary elections will probably be about 64 percent, according to a survey conducted by the E.C. Commission in March and April. The first "Euro-elections" five years ago attracted about 62 percent of the Community electorate, with participation ranging from 33 percent in the United Kingdom to 92 percent in Belgium, where voting is mandatory.

Location

Parliamentary business takes place in three locations. The assembly usually meets in plenary sessions for one week each month at the Palais de l'Europe in Strasbourg. Parliamentary committees generally meet two or three days each month in Brussels. The secretariat is in the European Centre in Luxembourg.

