

**ELECTIONS
TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT:**

**Women
and voting**



An analysis by Faits et Opinions (Paris),
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July 1985

AN OVERVIEW

In June 1984 two hundred million Europeans, men and women, were called on to vote for those who were to represent them in the European Parliament. What were their attitudes to those elections? Did women's attitudes differ from men's? Did the pattern differ depending on age, education, political-mindedness and sympathy with the European ideal? Which of the variables are most revealing of the attitudes specifically adopted by women?

These are the questions to which an answer has been sought through a systematic analysis of the views of European women, based on the findings of the Euro-Barometer opinion poll conducted in October 1984 as well as previous Euro-Barometer surveys.

In June 1970 (and in October 1981 in the case of Greece), Members of the European Parliament were elected by 64.4% of registered voters. In June 1984, the percentage of the electorate who voted was slightly lower, a total of 59.1% for all European countries, including Greece.

In every country the importance attached to the elections - or, more precisely, the importance that Europeans say was attached to those elections - declined to a greater or less degree between 1979 and 1984. The trend could be observed among women as well as men, although in 1984 women saw the elections as rather more important than did men.

In general, the findings of the many detailed analyses based on the series of Euro-Barometer opinion polls over a period of years show that women and men adopt very much the same attitude to the European Parliament, which enjoys no less credibility (views of the present importance of its role and desire to see it play a more important role in the future) among women.

than among men. It might even be said that when women express an opinion it tends to be slightly more favourable than men's. Fewer women than men, however, express opinions. Why should this be? The main difference of note to be found between the sexes lies in how well informed they are about on the subject. In the course of all the surveys conducted since 1977, in other words over a period of seven years, whether in the run-up to an election, in its aftermath or midway between elections, the European Parliament as an institution has made less impression on women's minds than on men's. Nevertheless, this calls for two important qualifications: the gap between men and women has narrowed considerably over the past seven years (from about twenty points in 1977 to about nine in 1984); and this gap is narrower at the time of elections than between elections.

Another very important factor is that the percentage of women voters who in fact voted in the recent elections in the European Community countries as a whole was almost the same as that of men voters.

In other words, what is happening is that - except in election periods - information on the existence and the work of the European Parliament is not reaching women as effectively as it does men. Of interest here is that an earlier poll (1) highlighted the fact that women are less exposed to political news carried in the press and on radio and television.

If, therefore, women are to be better informed about the European Parliament, it may well be that they should be reached through media that are not specifically political. The best time to make up for the shortfall in the information received by women is outside election periods.

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(1) European Women and Men in 1983, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, 1984. Supplement n° 16 to Women of Europe is a summary of this report.

III

Looking at the factors influencing the level of men's and women's participation in the 1984 elections, it seems that political attitudes, particularly towards the European Community, were more significant among men, whereas a more important factor for women was the degree to which they were informed.

Women, moreover, cite "lack of information" as the main reason for people not voting. The better informed women are, then, the higher the percentage likely to vote in future European elections. Given that women tend to be just as positive in their attitude to the European Parliament as men, they are very likely to be receptive to a sustained effort to inform, provided that the information is presented in a way that catches their interest.

Age, education and political awareness have all been factors affecting the percentage of the European electorate voting in 1984. Young people and the elderly were less likely to go to the polls than other voters, and there were more voters in groups with a higher level of education and among the more politically minded. These variables had similar effects on both men and women; the slight differences which did exist are discussed in the body of the report.

The fact remains that just as high a proportion of women voted as men, even though they were on the whole less well informed and less interested in politics - a demonstration of how important it is for women to avail themselves of their civic rights.

Finally, in all cases the variable affecting attitudes to the European Parliament and involvement in the June 1984 elections seems to have been nationality rather than being a man or a woman. The implication is that, to be effective, an information campaign should be tailor-made to each individual country.

WOMEN AND ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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The source for the analyses in this report is a series of questions put to the public in the ten countries of the European Community in the course of a European public opinion poll conducted in the autumn of 1984.

A tentative summary was given in Euro-Barometer 22. This report concentrates more on the attitudes of women compared with men's.

I. PERCEPTIONS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1. Awareness of the European Parliament

1977 to 1984: the changing pattern

Between 1977, well before the first election of the European Parliament by universal suffrage, and October 1984, after the second election, public opinion on the European Parliament was polled nine times. The following question was asked:

"Have you recently seen or heard in the papers or on the radio or TV anything about the European Parliament. That is, the parliamentary assembly of the EEC or Common Market? If so, can you remember what it was that you heard then?"

The replies to this question revealed whether, and to what extent, the general public had heard of the European Parliament and helped to gauge the accuracy of its recall. A breakdown of the replies by sex points to three interesting observations.

Firstly, no matter when or where public awareness is monitored, women are found to be less well informed than men. The gap was very wide in 1977 (20 points), although it has narrowed considerably since then (9 points in 1984 - see graph 1).

Secondly, during the few months before and after an election there is greater awareness of the European Parliament, which is hardly surprising, while at the same time the gap between the level of awareness of women and men narrows.

Thirdly, when people with more than an elementary awareness of the European Parliament (i.e. those who have heard it mentioned recently) are questioned further to determine the nature of their awareness (what do people recall?), it would appear that even fewer women than men can remember anything specific; this tendency is more marked outside election periods (see graph 2).

In other words, the lack of information among women is qualitative as well as quantitative. Outside the period of elections and the events surrounding them, women pay little heed to information on the European Parliament.

It should be pointed out that a survey conducted in 1983* showed how little the European public knew about the European Parliament as an institution, with women having an even poorer record than men.

	<u>In 1983</u>	
	Men	Women
Know that the European Parliament is drawn from the ten European Community countries	64%	48%
Know that members of the European Parliament are elected by popular vote	52%	37%
Give correct replies to both questions	37%	22%

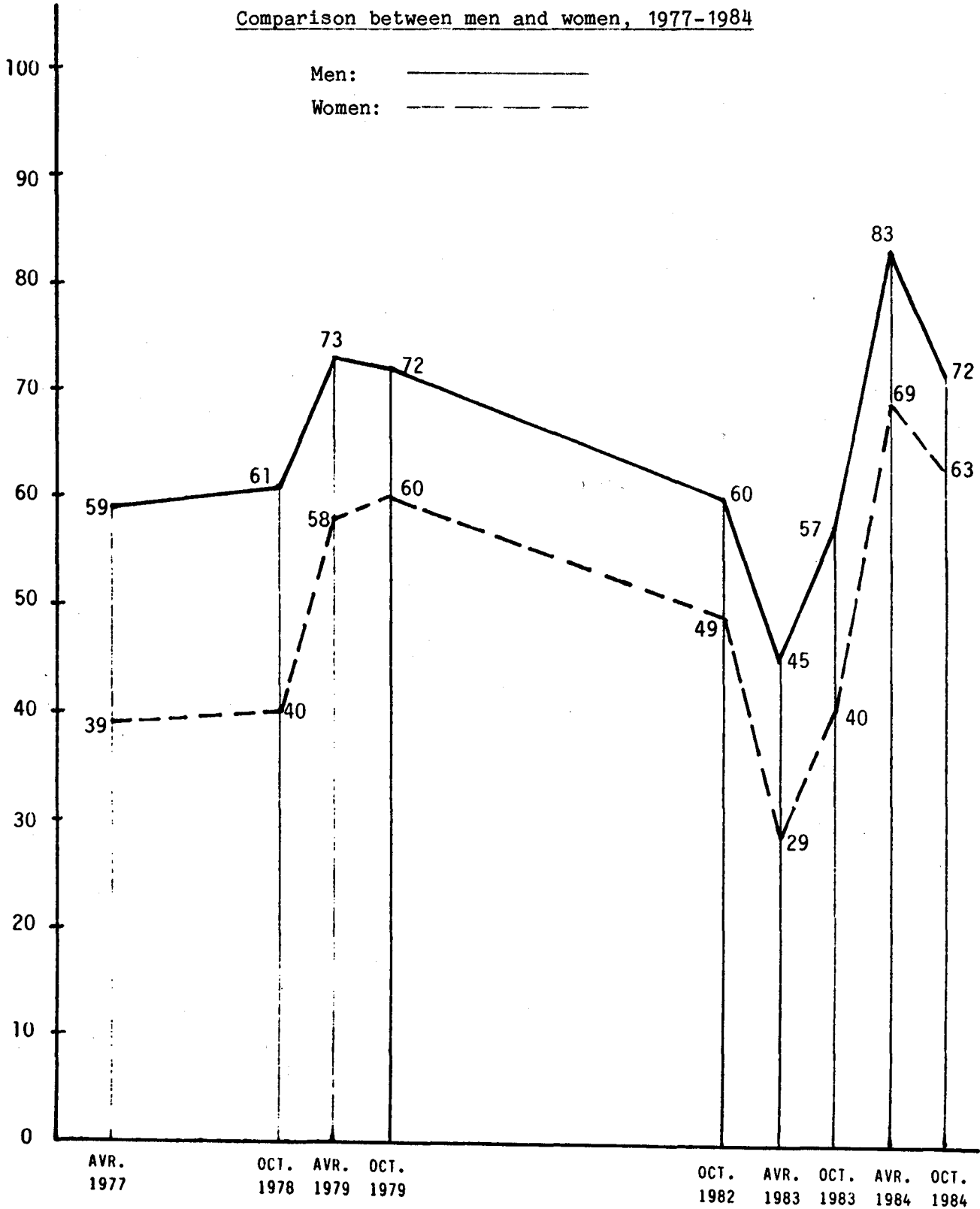
* Source: European Women and Men in 1983, Commission of the European Communities, Brussels 1984, pp. 170-171.

AWARENESS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

G R A P H 1

People saying they have "recently seen or heard something about the European Parliament in the newspapers or on radio or TV

Comparison between men and women, 1977-1984

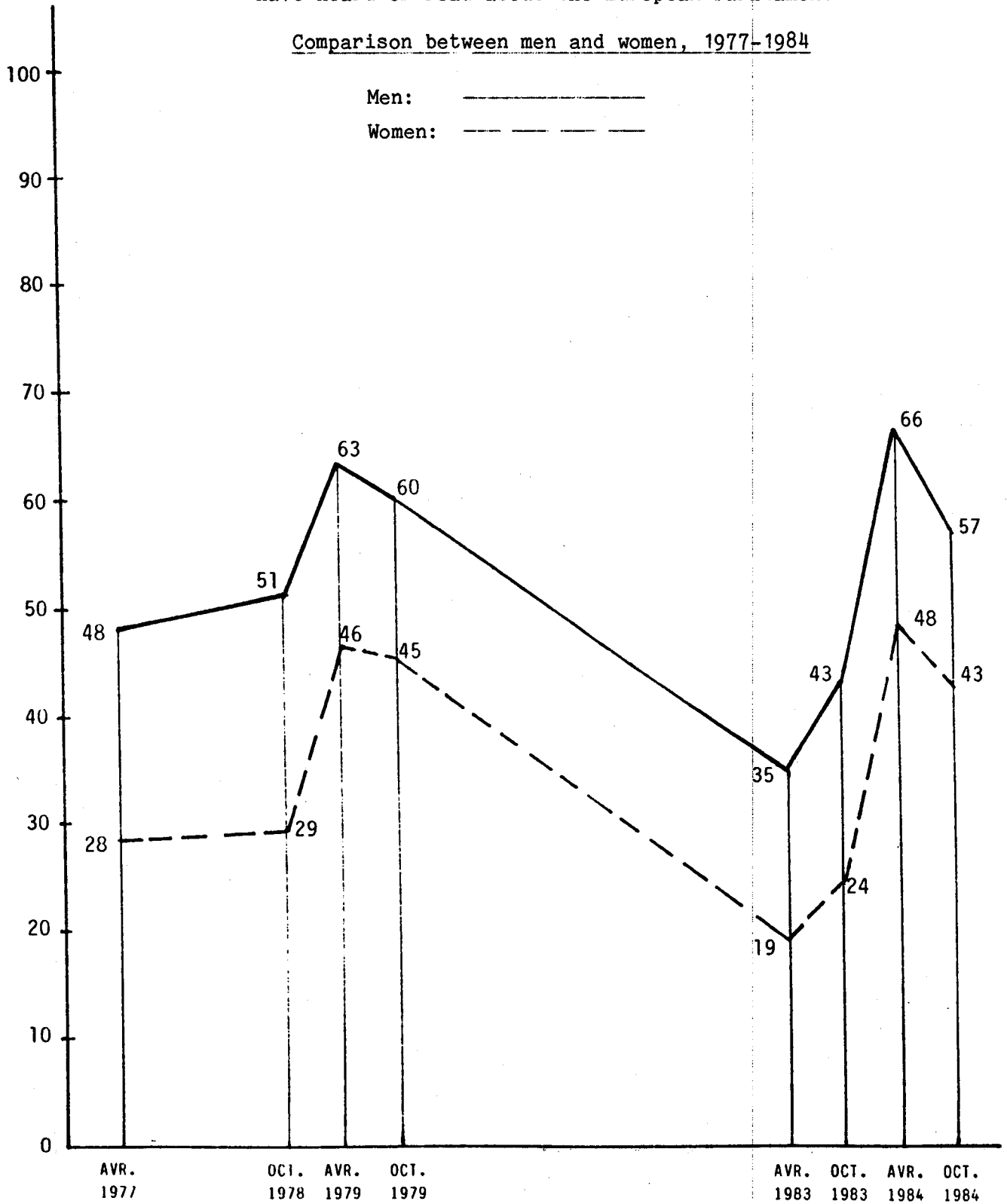


AWARENESS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

G R A P H 2

Percentage of people who could state the event (elections or other) in connection with which they have heard or read about the European Parliament

Comparison between men and women, 1977-1984



The situation in October 1984

A few months after the European elections in October 1984, nearly three quarters of men (71%) and two thirds of women (63%) said they had recently read or heard something about European Parliament.

Awareness of Parliament varies little with the individual's age, although people in mid-life are the best informed. Awareness does vary considerably according to education, leadership (1) and degree of closeness to a political party. This is true of both men and women, although women in all categories are less well informed (see Table 1).

The gap between women and men varies from group to group: there is only a small gap between men and women in certain groups such as the young, people with a low leadership rating and those who are not close to a political party. Amongst the more politically-minded, i.e. people close to a political party and those with a high leadership rating, men are more likely to have heard about the European Parliament than women. In other words, greater political awareness leads, in both sexes, to a better knowledge of the European Parliament, although this effect is less marked among women.

The gaps between men and women are roughly the same irrespective of country, with one exception: Greece. In October 1984, the average level of awareness of the European Parliament was the lowest in Europe, with women being particularly poorly informed. Only 33% of Greek women had heard the European Parliament mentioned recently, compared with the average of 63% for European women as a whole and 55% for Greek men.

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(1) Leadership is measured by people's propensity to influence opinions in their social surroundings and the frequency with which they discuss politics.

TABLE 1

AWARENESS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT IN OCTOBER 1984

**Comparison between men and women
according to socio-demographic variables and country**

	MEN	WOMEN	RATIO OF WOMEN TO MEN
TOTAL	72	63	.88
AGE GROUP			
15 - 24	63	62	.98
25 - 39	76	65	.86
40 - 54	76	65	.86
55 and over	70	60	.86
LEVEL OF EDUCATION			
Low	66	57	.86
Medium	74	66	.89
High	85	79	.93
LEADERSHIP RATING			
Leader + +	88	79	.90
+	79	71	.90
-	67	63	.94
Non-Leader - -	53	52	.98
CLOSENESS TO A POLITICAL PARTY			
Very close	81	65	.80
Fairly close	76	71	.93
Merely a sympathizer	77	66	.86
Not close to any party	61	56	.92
COUNTRY			
Belgium	75	68	.91
Denmark	63	55	.87
France	70	63	.90
Germany	78	73	.94
Greece	55	33	.60
Ireland	67	54	.81
Italy	77	67	.87
Luxembourg	90	77	.86
Netherlands	73	62	.86
United Kingdom	64	53	.83

In an attempt to gain a clearer view of the importance attached to the role of the European Parliament, let us look at the trend in replies given by those people who in fact expressed an opinion on the subject.

	APRIL 1977		APRIL 1983		APRIL 1984		OCT. 1984	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Out of 100 people having an opinion on the subject, the number who feel that the present role of the European Parliament is:								
- very important	13	15	15	12	11	11	13	11
- important	31	40	44	54	39	45	40	46
	---	--	---	--	---	--	---	--
Total positive views	44	55	59	66	50	56	53	57
- not very important	41	36	36	29	41	36	39	41
- not at all important	15	10	5	5	9	8	8	7
	--	--	---	---	--	--	--	--
Total negative views	56	46	41	34	50	44	47	48

Within the group of people expressing views, it seems that women are always slightly more positive than men. Although they do not go so far as to say Parliament plays a "very important" role, many feel that it does have an "important" role. Over the years the distribution of replies has varied little (it reached a minor peak in April 1983, but then subsided again).

This confirms that the essential change since 1977 has been the rise in the number of women who have an opinion to express on Parliament's role. The nature of those opinions, however, has changed little.

The situation in October 1984

A few months after the second European elections, as we have seen, opinion was divided as to the importance of Parliament's role, although there was a small upward trend. Are there slight differences of opinion in individual sections of the population?

The main personal variables are closeness to a political party and leadership: the higher the score in either respect, the more likely it is that Parliament will be seen as playing an important or even very important role. This is just as true of women as of men (see Table 2).

Nationality is also a very significant variable. Table 2 gives the detailed figures, but there are conclusions to be drawn merely from the dichotomy of replies between those who see the role of Parliament as important or very important and those who see its role as not very important or not important at all.

Four countries stand out in that a substantial majority there thinks that the European Parliament has an important role: Greece, Ireland, Italy and Luxembourg. The pattern of women's replies there is very much the same as men's, except that in Greece many women are "don't know".

Two countries, on the other hand, stand out in that the majority sees the role of Parliament as being not very important or not at all important: Germany and above all the Netherlands. In Germany, men and women express the same views, but Dutch women are slightly less critical than their male counterparts.

In other countries, where opinions as to the role of Parliament are more balanced, at least as many women express positive views and considerably fewer express negative views.

TABLE 2

IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO THE PRESENT ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
IN THE LIFE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (IN OCTOBER 1984)

**Comparison between men and women
according to socio-demographic variables and country**

	VERY IMPORTANT		IMPORTANT		NOT VERY IMPORTANT		NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT		NO REPLY	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
TOTAL	12	10	38	41	37	32	8	6	5	11
AGE GROUP										
15 - 24	9	9	43	41	34	33	7	6	7	12
25 - 39	11	9	37	44	40	32	8	5	3	10
40 - 54	12	11	37	43	39	30	8	6	4	9
55 and over	14	10	36	36	34	33	9	7	7	14
LEVEL OF EDUCATION										
Low	13	10	37	40	33	29	9	7	8	14
Medium	10	8	39	40	40	35	7	7	4	9
High	13	12	35	45	44	37	8	3	1	3
LEADERSHIP RATING										
Leaders + +	16	16	38	43	38	33	6	4	2	4
+	12	12	44	42	35	37	7	5	3	5
-	11	8	36	41	39	34	9	7	5	10
Non-Leaders - -	10	8	32	38	35	26	11	8	12	21
CLOSENESS TO A POLITICAL PARTY										
Very close	24	19	35	50	29	19	9	4	4	8
Fairly close	12	11	46	45	33	33	5	5	4	6
Merely a sympathizer	10	10	38	43	40	33	8	5	4	9
Close to no party	9	7	34	34	39	34	11	9	8	16
WORKING STATUS										
In employment	12	10	38	42	38	32	8	6	10	5
Not in paid employment	12	10	38	40	35	33	9	6	12	7
COUNTRY										
Belgium	10	11	36	34	36	36	13	10	5	9
Denmark	14	11	33	36	30	21	11	6	12	26
France	7	7	38	44	40	32	5	3	10	14
Germany	4	5	37	35	45	43	11	11	3	6
Greece	19	14	47	42	21	15	6	5	7	24
Ireland	20	13	44	48	22	21	9	8	5	10
Italy	19	15	44	47	27	24	5	3	5	11
Luxembourg	14	13	48	45	24	30	11	4	3	8
Netherlands	5	8	28	32	52	44	9	5	6	11
United Kingdom	18	12	33	42	36	27	10	8	3	11

The situation in October 1984

It should be stressed that a substantial majority of both women and men emerged in favour of a greater role for the European Parliament. In the European population as a whole, however, there seems to have been a slight reduction in this majority among women, although at the same time the gap between men and women has been tending to disappear. In the youngest age group and among the people closest to a political party and those with the highest leadership rating, there seems to have even been a reversal between men and women.

A comparison between the gap between men and women in these population groups and the gap in respect of the other points already discussed leads to an interesting observation.

As we have already seen when discussing awareness of the European Parliament, i.e. the fact of having heard Parliament mentioned recently, the gap was widest between men and women in the most politically-minded group. When it comes to assessing the importance of Parliament's role now and in the future, the gap between men and women in those groups tends to disappear, or the tendency even to be reversed with women expressing opinions as favourable as men's, or even more favourable.

	Among leaders ++			Among people close to a party		
	M	F	F/M	M	F	F/M
Have recently heard the European Parliament mentioned:	88	79	.90	81	65	.80
Consider that Parliament's role is important or very important	54	59	1.09	59	69	1.16
Would like Parliament to have a more important role in the future	76	73	.96	71	67	.94

It seems then, that the groups in the female population who display more leadership qualities and are more politically active look on the European Parliament at least as favourably as their male counterparts; if they are under-informed, it is not due to any lack of interest.

TABLE 3

THE ROLE IT IS HOPED THAT THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
WILL PLAY IN THE FUTURE (OCTOBER 1984)

Comparison between men and women
according to socio-demographic variables and country

	VERY IMPORTANT ROLE		SAME ROLE		LESS IMPORTANT ROLE		NO REPLY	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
TOTAL	65	55	15	16	10	11	10	18
AGE GROUP								
15 - 24	59	57	16	16	12	9	14	19
25 - 39	65	57	15	16	11	11	10	16
40 - 54	71	60	12	15	9	9	8	16
55 and over	63	49	17	17	8	14	12	20
LEVEL OF EDUCATION								
Low	60	52	16	17	10	11	13	20
Medium	63	55	16	16	11	12	9	17
High	76	68	10	14	9	8	5	9
LEADERSHIP RATING								
Leaders + +	76	73	7	7	12	13	4	7
+	70	64	15	15	8	11	7	10
-	61	55	17	17	11	11	11	16
Non-Leaders - -	51	44	19	18	10	10	21	28
CLOSENESS TO A POLITICAL PARTY								
Very close	71	67	14	69	10	16	5	7
Fairly close	72	65	15	15	8	10	5	11
Merely a sympathizer	66	61	15	16	8	8	10	15
Close to no party	55	42	16	19	13	14	17	25
COUNTRY								
Belgium	64	50	18	25	10	12	8	13
Denmark	20	13	38	31	24	17	18	39
France	71	59	13	16	4	4	11	21
Germany	56	55	21	18	11	12	13	15
Greece	69	54	10	12	9	7	12	28
Ireland	51	42	25	24	9	11	16	23
Italy	84	76	7	9	3	2	7	13
Luxembourg	77	59	11	28	8	2	5	12
Netherlands	71	58	11	18	8	6	10	18
United Kingdom	51	37	18	19	22	26	9	18

Nationality is an important variable, one that reveals more or less broad gaps between opinions expressed by men and women on European Parliament's future role.

The nationals who are easily the most likely to look for a more important role for this institution in the future are Italians, both men and women. The Danes, again both men and women, are the only nationals to be in the majority in not expressing this hope.

	THOSE HOPING THAT PARLIAMENT WILL PLAY A MORE IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE FUTURE		
	Men	Women	Ratio W:M
In decreasing order of positive replies:			
Italy	84	76	.90
Luxembourg	77	59	.77
France	71	59	.83
Netherlands	71	58	.82
Greece	69	54	.78
Belgium	64	50	.78
Germany	56	55	.98
Ireland	51	42	.82
United Kingdom	51	37	.73
Denmark	20	13	.65

In all countries except Germany, women lag somewhat behind men.

II. **ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE JUNE 1984 ELECTIONS**

1. **Importance attached to the election**

"Last June, the citizens of countries belonging to the European Community, including your own, voted to elect members of the European Parliament. Did people around you think of this election as something very important, important, not very important or not important at all?"

This question (of the projected type) was asked in the autumn following the 1979 elections and once again in the autumn after the 1984 elections. In both cases, a majority of all Europeans felt that the elections to the European Parliament were not an important event, a feeling that was even stronger in 1984 than in 1979, with men and women in agreement on this point.

	October 1979		October 1984	
	MEN	WOMEN	MEN	WOMEN
The elections were considered:				
- very important	10	10	7	7
- important	31	31	25	28
- not very important	40	35	48	41
- not important at all	12	12	15	15
- no reply	7	12	5	9
	---	---	---	---
TOTAL	100	100	100	100

Greece was the only country in which European elections were seen as an important event.

In all population groups, women held very much the same opinions as did men, although there was a slight tendency for women to think of the event as marginally more important (see Table 4).

TABLE 4
IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
IN THE INTERVIEWEE'S SOCIAL GROUP

Comparison between men and women
according to socio-demographic variables and country

	IMPORTANT OR VERY IMPORTANT		NOT VERY IMPORTANT OR UNIMPORTANT		NO REPLY	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
TOTAL	32	35	63	56	5	9
AGE GROUP						
18 - 24	32	38	60	54	8	8
25 - 39	29	31	68	63	3	6
40 - 54	31	36	64	66	5	8
55 and over	34	36	61	51	5	13
LEVEL OF EDUCATION						
Low	31	35	63	53	6	12
Medium	31	33	65	61	4	6
High	31	38	66	59	3	3
LEADERSHIP RATING						
Leaders + +	37	46	62	51	1	3
+	35	39	62	58	3	3
-	28	33	65	59	7	8
Non-Leaders - -	25	31	65	52	10	7
CLOSENESS TO A POLITICAL PARTY						
Very close	43	49	55	47	2	4
Fairly close	38	37	59	56	3	7
Merely a sympathizer	31	40	64	53	5	7
Close to no party	23	27	70	61	7	12
COUNTRY						
Belgium	30	28	65	64	5	8
Denmark	28	31	61	47	11	22
France	26	32	66	57	8	11
Germany	31	34	66	58	3	8
Greece	70	67	24	20	6	13
Ireland	37	34	59	56	4	10
Italy	39	39	57	52	4	9
Luxembourg	38	43	54	46	8	11
Netherlands	26	28	67	64	7	8
United Kingdom	23	32	73	60	4	8

2. Reasons advanced for the low turnout in the European elections

"In this election, a lot of people in some countries did not vote. Which of these possible reasons, in your opinion, explain why lots of people did not vote?"

(This was followed by a list of possible replies)

This indirect question encouraged the public to state its views on the attitude of those who abstained. It helps to understand the various ways in which the public perceives these elections and the views it holds on the event.

In the Community as a whole, the main reason cited for not voting was lack of information: "many people did not really know what it was about". More women than men held this opinion, perhaps because they felt more keenly that they were themselves inadequately informed.

The second reason mentioned by a substantial percentage of interviewees was that European Parliament has little power; this time, it was cited as a possible cause by more men than women. The choice may have been linked with a keener interest in politics, as manifested by a critical assessment of Parliament's role, less concern with "second-rate elections" or even anti-Europeanism.

In the Netherlands and France more women than men mentioned lack of information as possible grounds for not voting. The second factor - Parliament's lack of power - was mentioned by more men than women in the Netherlands and Denmark (the reason why this was the factor most often mentioned in Denmark was undoubtedly the anti-European groups there). The same pattern of replies, although less marked, occurred in Italy, Luxembourg and Belgium.

TABLE 5

THE FACTORS MENTIONED AS REASONS FOR THE LOW PERCENTAGE OF VOTERS

REASONS MENTIONED (in decreasing order of frequency)	MEN	WOMEN
Many people did not really know what it was about	50	55
With the European Parliament having so little power, many people thought it was not worthwhile taking the trouble to vote	31	26
The issues talked about most during the election campaign were not the ones which really interested people	21	20
The parties and the candidates spoke too much about problems in their own countries and not enough about Europe	22	19
As far as unification of Europe is concerned, it was not clear who was for and who was against	12	12
The European Community will never work whatever they do	11	9
Other reasons	3	3
No reply	6	8
TOTAL (1)	--	--

(1) The total is over 100% because more than one reason could be cited (the average number cited by men was 1.5, by women 1.4)

From this first section relating to the context for the June 1984 elections, a few lessons can be learned.

In general, nationality and political-mindedness (leadership ability and closeness to a political party) seem to be the factors most likely to lead to the differences of opinion expressed by European men and women.

Women, who are less well informed about European Parliament than men, had a hazier image of the institution at the time of the elections. This "weakness", which they saw as a possible reason for non-voters' behaviour, seems to have been offset by a positive awareness of the challenge of the elections. This awareness can be detected both in the opinions of women on the role of European Parliament and in the light of the importance they attached to those elections.

III. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

The outcome of European Parliamentary elections is now well known, but it offers no information on the comparative voting behaviour of men and women. As a reminder, the following was the overall election turnout by country in 1979 and in 1984.

PERCENTAGE OF ELECTORATE VOTING IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN 1979 AND 1984 (1)

(TOTAL ELECTORATE, BOTH MEN AND WOMEN - ACTUAL TURNOUT)

	1979 %	1984 %	RATIO 1984:1979
Countries in which voting is compulsory (or considered as such) (2)			
Belgium	91.4	92.1	1.01
Luxembourg	88.9	88.8	1.00
Italy	89.9	83.4	0.98
Greece	78.6(3)	77.2	0.98
Countries in which voting is not compulsory			
Germany	65.7	56.8	0.86
Ireland	63.6	47.6	0.75
France	60.7	56.7	0.93
Netherlands	57.8	50.6	0.88
Denmark	47.8	52.4	1.10
United Kingdom	32.3	32.6	1.01
i.e.			
Great Britain	31.8	31.8	1.00
Northern Ireland	55.6	63.5	1.14
EUROPEAN Community	62.4	59.1	0.95

(1) Source : European Parliament

(2) Voting is compulsory by law in Belgium and Luxembourg and, at least in theory, it is an offence not to vote. It is also compulsory in Greece, although there are very broad exceptions. Under the Italian Constitution, voting is a "civic duty" and Italians in fact appear to view it as an obligation.

(3) In Greece, the first European Parliamentary elections were held in October 1981.

Through the Euro-Barometer biannual programme of polls, a set of data is available which reveals trends in Europeans' voting intentions in the year leading up to the elections and provides an indication of the proportion of people voting.

	POPULATION AGED 18 AND OVER		
	Men	Women	Total
In November 1983, intended to go and vote:			
certainly	51	45	48
probably	22	25	23
	--	--	--
	73	70	71
In April 1984, intended to go and vote:			
certainly	56	48	52
probably	19	23	21
	--	--	--
	75	71	73
In October 1984, said that they had voted (1)	65	64	64
Actual turnout in 1984	-	-	59.1

 (1) These figures reflected what was said by people interviewed in October 1984 - see important comments on the following page.

This set of figures calls for the following comments:

1. The percentage of interviewees of voting age who said they had voted in June 1984 was higher than the actual turnout. The same finding had emerged at the time of the 1979 elections and was common to every country. Apart from the fact that the structure of the voting population is not precisely the same as that of the population above the minimum voting age, some people "imagine" they have voted when they have not in fact done so. The figures are not, however, a gross exaggeration.

2. The actual turnout was slightly higher than the proportion of people who said a few months before the elections that they would certainly be voting, but it was lower than the total proportion of voters who said they would "probably" vote. In other words, the spirit was willing but the flesh was weak.

3. Finally - and this is the most significant figure for our purpose - there were almost as many women in the Community as a whole who said they had voted, although their earlier voting intentions had been less clear-cut. The campaign to persuade people to vote seems to have had relatively little effect on the electorate as a whole, but to have made rather more impact on women than on men.

1. Estimate of turnout

The breakdowns that follow are based on the replies given by interviewees (of voting age and on the register of voters) regarding their voting (or non-voting). For the reader's convenience, however, the estimated percentages of any given category of voters who voted, or estimates of any given variable, are calculated on the basis of average actual turnout reported in each country. In other words, the margin of exaggeration regarding the turnout as it affects the poll findings is assumed to be evenly spread over the whole electorate of each country.

	Actual turnout	Estimated turnout		
	(all)	Men	Women	Ratio: women:men
In decreasing order:				
Countries in which voting is compulsory (or considered as such)				
Belgium	92.1	93	91	.98
Luxembourg	88.8	89	89	1.00
Italy	83.4	84	82	.98
Grece	77.2	78	76	.97
Countries in which voting is not compulsory				
Germany	56.8	63	51	.81
France	56.7	56	57	1.02
Denmark	52.4	56	49	.88
Netherlands	50.6	51	50	.98
Ireland	47.6	49	47	.96
United Kingdom	32.6	31	34	1.10
European Community	59.1	60	58	.97

In general, these figures show that almost as high a percentage of women as of men voted, with some minor differences: in Germany and Denmark, women were somewhat less inclined to vote; in the United Kingdom and France, on the other hand, the same or even a slightly higher proportion of women went to the polls. Could it be due to the personalities of Margaret Thatcher or Simone Veil, one might wonder?

The effects of the election campaign - breakdown by country

We can now try to evaluate the effects of the European election campaign on male and female turnout in the countries where voting is not compulsory. To do this, we can compare estimates of the turnout during the June election with the voting intentions expressed in April, before the election.

		"Certainly" intend to vote in April (a)	Estimate of turnout in June (b)	ratio: $\frac{(b)}{(a)}$
Denmark	M	58	56	.97
	F	58	49	1.02
France	M	70	56	.80
	F	63	57	.90
Ireland	M	52	49	.94
	F	48	47	.98
Netherlands	M	62	51	.82
	F	55	50	.91
United Kingdom	M	38	31	.82
	F	38	34	1.10
		"Certainly" or probably intend to vote (1)		
Germany (1)	M	67	63	.94
	F	61	51	.84

These figures confirm that in five of the six countries where voting was not compulsory (the exception being Germany) more women than men carried out their intention to vote. It may be assumed, therefore, that the campaign to persuade people to vote was more successful with women than with men.

 (1) In Germany, unlike other countries, experience with the 1979 polls, confirmed in 1984, was that the best way to predict voting turnout there was to add together the number of people saying they were "certain" to vote and those saying they would "probably" vote.

The effect of socio-demographic variables on election turnout

As we have seen, the general average for women voting in the June 1984 elections was almost as high as for men. Let us now look at what has been happening in individual segments of the electorate, in other words the effect of the main socio-demographic variables on turnout.

Age: younger voters (under 40), both men and women, were less likely to vote than older voters. The voting pattern for women in the youngest and the middle two age groups was more or less the same as for men in the same groups, whereas women in the oldest group were a little less likely to vote than their male counterparts.

Education: this does not seem to have been an important factor in determining voting patterns, although women who had gone on to the higher levels of education were just as likely to have voted than men, if not more so.

Leadership, like closeness to a political party, whatever its complexion, contributed a good deal to the likelihood of voting. Women in groups with a high leadership rating and closer affiliation to a party were only slightly less likely than men to vote. Among those without any political affiliations or who did not regard themselves as leaders at all, women were slightly more likely to vote.

TABLE 6

ESTIMATED TURNOUT AT THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS
Comparison between men and women
according to socio-demographic variables and country

	MEN	WOMEN	RATIO OF WOMEN TO MEN
TOTAL	60	58	.97
AGE GROUP			
18 - 24	52	52	1.00
25 - 39	56	53	.95
40 - 54	62	64	1.03
55 and over	67	59	.88
LEVEL OF EDUCATION			
Low	62	60	.97
Medium	58	53	.91
High	61	62	1.02
LEADERSHIP RATING			
Leader + +	68	66	.97
+	62	60	.97
-	59	55	.93
Non-Leader - -	54	58	1.07
CLOSENESS TO A POLITICAL PARTY			
Very close	74	72	.97
Fairly close	68	61	.90
Merely a sympathizer	63	57	.90
Close to no party	45	47	1.04
COUNTRY			
Belgium	93	91	.98
Denmark	56	49	.88
France	56	57	1.02
Germany	63	51	.81
Greece	78	76	.97
Ireland	49	47	.96
Italy	84	82	.98
Luxembourg	89	89	1.00
Netherlands	51	50	.98
United Kingdom	31	34	1.10

3. The attitude of women who voted and those who abstained

Importance attached to the efforts of certain parties to put up more women candidates

In the June 1984 elections, 563 of the total 3,076 candidates in the Community as a whole were women (an average of 18.3%). Of the 434 candidates elected to the European Parliament, 75 were women (an average of 17.3%). In other words, the percentage of women successfully elected was very close to the percentage of women candidates.

These are the figures at overall Community level, but the pattern differed widely from country to country. First of all, the proportion of women candidates was as high as 20% to 25% in some countries (France, Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Luxembourg) but as low as 12% in others (Ireland, Greece and Italy). Secondly, in countries where parties present a list of candidates, the likelihood of being elected depends to a great extent on a candidate's position in that list.

The following were the proportions of women by comparison with all candidates standing and elected in each country.

	CANDIDATES			ELECTED		
	Total	Of whom: Women	Women as % of total	Total	Of whom: Women	Women as % of Total
Belgium	215	53	24.6	24	4	16.6
Denmark	165	40	24.2	16	6	37.5
France	882	223	25.2	81	47	20.9
Germany	234	50	21.3	81	16	19.7
Greece	378	42	11.1	24	2	8.3
Ireland	34	4	11.7	15	2	13.3
Italy	702	67	9.5	81	8	9.8
Luxembourg	84	18	21.4	6	1	16.6
Netherlands	111	18	16.2	25	7	28.0
United Kingdom	<u>271</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>17.7</u>	<u>81</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>14.8</u>
Community	3,076	563	18.3	434	75	17.3

In two countries, Denmark and the Netherlands, a far higher percentage of women was elected than the percentage of women candidates. In Ireland and Italy, that proportion was slightly higher. Elsewhere the proportion of women elected was lower.

Did men and women voters appreciate the efforts by some of the parties to put up more women candidates?

" In these European elections, did you attach great importance, some importance or no importance to the fact that some of the parties were putting up more women candidates than others?"

The findings show that most Europeans (69% of women and 72% of men) said they attached "no importance" to the efforts of some of the parties to present more women candidates. A small minority of about 20% attached importance to those factor, but very few - about 8% - thought this was "very important".

Very much the same opinions were expressed by both sexes and in all countries. Voters in Luxembourg, Ireland and the Netherlands said that they attached some importance to the factor (and, more specifically, women rather more frequently than men in those countries). The British, French and German, both men and women, on the other hand, attached less importance to this.

How should these replies be interpreted?

It may be recalled that a Europe-wide poll in April 1983 (1) showed that public opinion was very broadly in favour of movements and associations concerned with the situation of women taking it as their aim to "persuade political parties to give women the same chances as men of reaching responsible positions in the parties and of becoming candidates for elections". As the same time, the majority declared that they saw no difference between a woman or a man representative in Parliament; in other words, they would be equally confident in their elected representative regardless of whether the member is a man or woman.

(1) European Women and Men in 1983, Commission of the European Communities, pp. 48-49 and 121.

In view of these previous findings, the fact that a great majority of the electorate stated that it attached no importance to certain parties putting up more women should not be taken as indifference. It could be assumed that public opinion is so strongly imbued with egalitarianism that it would be inappropriate to see any problem still existing. Most people now look on this (rightly or wrongly) as no longer an issue.

TABLE 7 *

IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO THE EFFORTS OF SOME OF THE PARTIES
TO PUT UP MORE WOMEN CANDIDATES

		GREAT IMPORT- ANCE	SOME IMPORT- ANCE	NO IMPORT- ANCE	NO REPLY	TOTAL	INDEX (1)
ALL VOTERS	Men	7	20	70	3	100	1.35
	Women	7	19	72	2	100	1.34
BELGIUM	Men & Women	9	26	65	5	100	1.46
	Men	9	23	63	5	100	1.43
	Women	9	30	57	4	100	1.49
DENMARK	Men & Women	11	22	63	4	100	1.45
	Men	8	20	67	5	100	1.37
	Women	14	24	58	4	100	1.55
FRANCE	Men & Women	3	20	75	2	100	1.27
	Men	5	23	70	2	100	1.33
	Women	2	18	78	2	100	1.22
GERMANY	Men & Women	4	20	74	2	100	1.28
	Men	3	19	76	2	100	1.25
	Women	4	22	72	2	100	1.31
GREECE	Men & Women	13	15	67	5	100	1.44
	Men	13	16	68	3	100	1.43
	Women	14	13	66	7	100	1.45
IRELAND	Men & Women	9	34	55	2	100	1.53
	Men	7	29	63	1	100	1.45
	Women	11	38	47	4	100	1.63
ITALY	Men & Women	12	18	67	3	100	1.42
	Men	11	17	69	3	100	1.40
	Women	12	19	66	3	100	1.45
LUXEMBOURG	Men & Women	17	23	57	3	100	1.39
	Men	11	23	62	4	100	1.47
	Women	25	23	51	1	100	1.73
NETHERLANDS	Men & Women	11	26	60	3	100	1.59
	Men	8	23	66	3	100	1.41
	Women	14	29	54	3	100	1.59
UNITED KINGDOM	Men & Women	5	17	75	3	100	1.29
	Men	4	15	79	2	100	1.24
	Women	7	18	71	4	100	1.33

* This and the following tables relate to people aged 18 and over.

Clearly the fact that a candidate is a man or a woman is seen as less important than his or her political views, which is hardly surprising.

"Would you say that, in your choice, the fact that candidates were men or women was as important as their political views, not very important or less important?"

The reply "less important" was given by 54% of interviews. A good third of the electorate (34%) felt that a candidate's sex was just as important as the party to which he or she belonged. Men's and women's replies were very close irrespective of country, but there were marked differences between countries. Italy stood out as having a high proportion of voters declaring that a candidate's sex is at least as important as political affiliation (72% of women and 65% of men); this was followed by Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Belgium, with between 40% and 48%. In other countries, particularly Germany, Denmark and the United Kingdom, the candidate's sex was seen as far less important.

TABLE 8

IS A CANDIDATE'S SEX AS IMPORTANT AS, OR MORE OR LESS IMPORTANT THAN, HIS OR HER POLITICAL AFFILIATION?

		MORE IMPORT- ANT	AS IMPORT- ANT	LESS IMPORT- ANT	NO REPLY	TOTAL
ALL VOTERS	Men & Women	4	34	54	8	100
	Men	4	33	56	7	100
	Women	5	35	52	8	100
BELGIUM	Men & Women	11	32	48	9	100
	Men	11	32	49	8	100
	Women	12	31	47	10	100
DENMARK	Men & Women	7	15	71	7	100
	Men	6	14	71	9	100
	Women	8	15	72	5	100
FRANCE	Men & Women	3	33	52	12	100
	Men	3	31	52	14	100
	Women	4	35	52	9	100
GERMANY	Men & Women	3	8	84	5	100
	Men	3	9	84	4	100
	Women	3	6	85	6	100
GREECE	Men & Women	4	26	58	12	100
	Men	3	28	62	7	100
	Women	4	24	54	8	100
IRELAND	Men & Women	7	26	57	10	100
	Men	5	24	62	9	100
	Women	9	28	52	11	100
ITALY	Men & Women	4	64	25	7	100
	Men	3	62	28	7	100
	Women	5	67	22	6	100
LUXEMBOURG	Men & Women	10	38	45	7	100
	Men	8	35	51	6	100
	Women	12	41	38	9	100
NETHERLANDS	Men & Women	5	40	49	6	100
	Men	3	40	51	6	100
	Women	7	40	47	6	100
UNITED KINGDOM	Men & Women	4	22	67	7	100
	Men	4	18	71	7	100
	Women	4	24	64	8	100

Voting strategy

"Did you vote for the party candidate you liked most, or did you decide to vote for the second best because they had a better chance of being elected?"

This question helps to reveal whether women voted for the candidate whose beliefs matched their own most closely or if they voted "usefully", i.e. for the candidate most likely to win.

A very large majority of Europeans voted for their preferred list or candidate (see table below), although it seems that women were slightly more inclined to vote "usefully" than men except in Germany and Ireland.

The electoral system does not seem to have had any special effect on women's voting strategies. The fact that voters were from a country allowing preferential voting (1), i.e. that has some arrangement for showing preference for one candidate on a party's list over other candidates on the same list, or from a country with a different polling system where this method is not used, seemed to make no difference in this respect.

VOTING STRATEGY

	Voted according to preference			Voted for best placed candidate		
	Men	Women	Ratio: Women:Men	Men	Women	Ratio Women:Men
European Community	86	84	.98	9	11	1.22
Belgium	75	71	.95	11	15	1.36
Denmark	72	75	1.04	7	9	1.30
France	80	74	.93	14	19	1.36
Germany	91	90	.99	7	7	1.00
Greece	89	87	.98	4	5	1.25
Ireland	80	78	.98	15	15	1.00
Italy	88	88	1.00	7	8	1.14
Luxembourg	83	74	.89	11	17	1.54
Netherlands	95	88	.93	4	6	1.50
United Kingdom	87	83	.95	8	12	1.50

(1) Preference votes are allowed in Denmark, Italy, Ireland, Luxembourg, Greece and Belgium.

The attitude of women who did not vote

Two questions were asked of people saying that they did not vote at the European elections. One was on the main reason for not voting, and the other on whether they regretted not having voted.

"Which would you say was the main reason that you do not vote?"

"Now the election is over and the results are known, are you sorry you did not vote?"

In the Community as a whole, the main reason advanced for not voting differed a little depending on sex. Women were more likely to mention personal reasons and lack of interest in politics and a little less likely to mention lack of interest in Europe.

In every country, a large majority of those who did not vote did not regret it, although there was a slight tendency for more women than men to be sorry that they had not voted.

This tendency was relatively significant in Italy and Greece, although the data may not be altogether reliable because of the smallness of the sub-samples of non-voters in these countries, where voting is compulsory.

4. Summary analysis of participation

For a tentative analysis of voting in European elections, the main variables affecting the attitudes of voters and non-voters should all be taken into account.

Two types of methodological tools have been used: a typology which leads to a descriptive analysis of attitudes to participation; and modelling, which helps to produce an explanatory analysis.

Typological analysis

The replies to the many questions put in the sample survey (including those discussed above) are not unrelated, and a typological analysis helps us to go further in reconstructing the links between replies to the questions. This in turn will lead to a better understanding of the structure of voters' and non-voters' attitudes.

The aim of typological analysis is to group individuals according to how close their replies to a number of questions are. For an analysis to be truly explanatory, the groups or types must be as different from each other as possible. Our analysis will be based on the two typologies presented in the Euro-Barometer poll (1). One includes people who said that they voted and the other people who said they abstained. They supplement the questions we have already discussed as well as others which are directed more towards opinions on Europe.

We shall not give a detailed analysis here of the types of voters and non-voters but shall briefly describe the main types identified, so that we can direct our attention more specifically to the types in which women predominate.

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(1) Euro-Barometer 22: "Public opinion in the European Community at the end of 1984". Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, December 1984.

The questions introduced with a view to analysing voters, known as "active variables", include those on the following subjects:

- awareness of the European Parliament;
- importance of the European Parliament's present role;
- importance of the European Parliament's future role;
- importance of the elections in the respondent's social group;
- the reasons given for not voting;
- views as to whether membership of the Community is a good or bad thing;
- the benefits of belonging to the Community by comparison with other countries;
- positive or negative views on European unification;
- opinions as to speeding up or slowing down the movement towards European unification;
- voting strategy;
- importance attached to the proportion of women candidates;
- relative importance attached to the sex of candidates by comparison with their political views, when deciding on vote.

The questions introduced for the purpose of analysing non-voters do not include the latter three questions on attitudes to voting, but include, in addition to the other questions mentioned, the questions on the main reason for not voting and whether the interviewee regrets not having voted.

Four types of voters

"Good Europeans": this type includes almost six voters out of ten on an average (59%). The difference between them and their fellow citizens is that they are better informed and more in favour of the European Community and the unification of Europe.

This group is considerably larger than the average in Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Italy. In every country except Germany, it includes slightly more men than women, a pattern not found in the electorate as a whole.

"Voters out of a sense of duty" are far less numerous, i.e. 10% of those who voted. They are less in favour of Europe than the first type, although they attach importance to the present and future role of the European Parliament. They were also fairly conscious of efforts on the part of some of the political parties to put forward more women candidates. This type is over-represented in France, where it includes more women than men. The same applies, although to a lesser degree, to Belgium.

The third type of voter, "the semi-indifferent", consists of one person out of five. It is over-represented in Greece and, to a lesser degree, France and Belgium. In all countries (except Germany), this type includes more women than men. For this reason, we shall analyse it in greater detail below.

The fourth and last type of voter includes 12% of the people who voted in the elections: "opponents of the European Community". Their vote seems to imply opposition to the Community if not to European unification. It is over-represented in Denmark (the only country where there is an organized political movement actively campaigning against Community membership) and, to a lesser extent, the United Kingdom. In Denmark it includes as many women as men, whereas in the United Kingdom more of its members are women.

TABLE 9
TYPES OF VOTERS

	GOOD EUROPEANS	VOTERS OUT OF A SENSE OF DUTY	SEMI- INDIFFERENT	OPPONENTS OF THE EEC	ALL VOTERS
EEC AS A WHOLE	59 %	10 %	19 %	12 %	100 %
Men	52	44	41	48	
Women	<u>48</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>52</u>	
	100	100	100	100	
COUNTRIES IN WHICH VOTING IS COMPULSORY OR ALMOST COMPULSORY					
BELGIUM					
Total	51 %	14 %	22 %	13 %	100 %
Men	54	45	45	36	
Women	<u>46</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>64</u>	
	100	100	100	100	
GREECE					
Total	53 %	6 %	26 %	15 %	100 %
Men	53	*	34	55	
Women	<u>47</u>	*	<u>66</u>	<u>45</u>	
	100	100	100	100	
ITALY					
Total	69 %	8 %	19 %	4 %	100 %
Men	51	51	41	*	
Women	<u>49</u>	<u>49*</u>	<u>59</u>	*	
	100	100	100	100	
LUXEMBOURG					
Total	71 %	13 %	9 %	7 %	100 %
Men	57	*	*	*	
Women	<u>43</u>	*	*	*	
	100	100	100	100	

Note: In each country, the "Total" line shows how the electorate breaks down into individual types. The other figures show the proportion of men and women in each type. The symbol * means that the sample is too small (less than 50) for an analysis.

TABLE 9
TYPES OF VOTERS (continued)

	GOOD EUROPEANS	VOTERS OUT OF A SENSE OF DUTY	SEMI- INDIFFERENT	OPPONENTS OF THE EEC	ALL VOTERS
DENMARK					
Total	36 %	10 %	15 %	39 %	100 %
Men	56	*	*	51	
Women	44	*	*	49	
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	
FRANCE					
Total	51 %	18 %	23 %	8 %	100 %
Men	54	40	39	*	
Women	45	60	61	*	
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	
GERMANY					
Total	64 %	6 %	17 %	13 %	100 %
Men	49	*	52	64	
Women	51	*	48	36*	
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	
IRELAND					
Total	58 %	13 %	16 %	13 %	100 %
Men	55	51	32*	55	
Women	45	49	68	45*	
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	
NETHERLANDS					
Total	74 %	6 %	13 %	7%	100 %
Men	56	*	21*	*	
Women	44	*	69	*	
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	
UNITED KINGDOM					
Total	48 %	8 %	16 %	28 %	100 %
Men	56	*	34*	38	
Women	44	*	66	62	
	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	

Note: same method of presentation as on the preceding page.

Our approach will be to focus on countries in which voting is not compulsory, since the samples are not significantly representative in countries where it is compulsory, especially as the breakdown between men and women reduces the size of sub-samples of non-voters even further.

Among non-voters, the largest group is that of "under-informed Europeans without regrets" (37%). They are in fact pro-European but their Europeanism was not enough to motivate them to vote or even to regret not having voted. They are fairly young and relatively well educated citizens, but without a high leadership score or a special interest in politics. It is a type that is over-represented in the Netherlands and France. In the Netherlands, more of its members are women than men. In France, on the other hand, it includes slightly more men.

A majority of those in the second type, "non-voters with a guilty conscience" (11% of non-voters), say that they are sorry they did not go and vote.

The third type is also found in every country and contains a high proportion of women. We shall be analysing this type - "soft opponents" - in greater detail. Here again, many more of its members are women than men. The group is larger than that of "non-voters with a guilty conscience", since it accounts for 31% of non-voters. It is a little larger than the average in Germany and Ireland.

Finally, "hardline opponents" account for 21% of non-voters. Their negative attitude to Europe is expressed by their abstention, the reason for which seems to be opposition to the European Parliament becoming more important than it is at present. This type is relatively common in Denmark, the United Kingdom and Germany. In Denmark, it consists of rather more women than men. In the United Kingdom and above all in Germany, on the other hand, there are more men members.

TABLE 20

TYPES OF NON-VOTERS IN COUNTRIES WHERE VOTING IS NOT COMPULSORY*

	UNDER- INFORMED	GUILTY CONSCIENCE	SOFT OPPONENTS	HARDLINE OPPONENTS	ALL NON-VOTERS
EEC AS A WHOLE	37 %	11 %	31 %	21 %	100 %
Men	48	35	40	51	
Women	<u>52</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>49</u>	
	100	100	100	100	
DENMARK					
Total	25 %	10 %	30 %	35 %	100 %
Men	57	*	32*	48	
Women	<u>43*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>52</u>	
	100	100	100	100	
FRANCE					
Total	54 %	8 %	30 %	8 %	100 %
Men	54	40*	39	*	
Women	<u>46</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>*</u>	
	100	100	100	100	
GERMANY					
Total	33 %	9 %	35 %	23 %	100 %
Men	36*	*	34*	40*	
Women	<u>64</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>60</u>	
	100	100	100	100	
IRELAND					
Total	34 %	13 %	35 %	18 %	100 %
Men	54*	*	40*	*	
Women	<u>46*</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>*</u>	
	100	100	100	100	
NETHERLANDS					
Total	59 %	6 %	25 %	10 %	100 %
Men	44	*	55*	*	
Women	<u>56</u>	<u>*</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>*</u>	
	100	100	100	100	
UNITED KINGDOM					
Total	24 %	12 %	32 %	32 %	100 %
Men	58	43*	40	57	
Women	<u>42</u>	<u>57*</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>43</u>	
	100	100	100	100	

* In countries where voting is compulsory, the number of non-voters was too small (fewer than 50) and the figures are not significant.

Note: same method of presentation as on page 39.

Among voters, then, the "semi-indifferent", and among non-voters the "soft opponents" and "non-voters with a guilty conscience" are the three types in which, according to the analysis, women are in the majority. We shall take the first two groups first, as their indifference to Europe seems to be a point in common. The third group, on the other hand, seem to be more favourable to the European ideal.

"The semi-indifferent" group (19% of voters) is made up of 41% men and 59% women. Its salient feature is that its members are very poorly informed.

Two thirds were unable to say whether they had seen or heard anything specific about the European Parliament, and many of them found it difficult to express any opinion on questions relating to Europe, as testified by the high rate of "don't knows".

Their views of Europe, the Community and the European Parliament tended to be unfavourable. This arose no doubt from their reluctance to reply on subjects of which they knew little and of which they were suspicious. The group consists of older, less politically-minded people with a lower level of education, who seem to have voted out of a sense of civil duty or habit or because voting was compulsory.

"Soft opponents" (31% of non-voters) consisted of 40% men and 60% women. Characteristically the members of this group were even less well informed than the previous group: most had not read or heard anything specific about the European Parliament and replied to very few of the questions relating to Europe.

Their relative suspicion of a subject about which they knew little seems to have been expressed in the fairly unfavourable replies they gave regarding membership of the Community and their indifference to the unification of Europe and the role of the European Parliament. When asked why they had not voted, they cited lack of interest in politics and Europe and, although far more rarely, hostility towards Europe.

This group consisted of people in the middle age groups, with a fairly low level of education, a low leadership rating and above all very little interest in politics. They did not regret failing to vote, the main reason for which appears to have been lack of interest in politics and perhaps an automatic distrust of Europe, although this was not put in so many words.

"Non-voters with a guilty conscience" (11% of non-voters): the prevalence of women in this type is significant, since the group consisted of 66% women and 34% men.

The majority regretted not having gone to vote. When questioned why they had not voted they cited personal reasons or, as if they were embarrassed by the question, refused to reply. Although they were poorly informed about the European Parliament and elections, they were generally favourable to the European ideal. Rather more than half considered that the European Parliament plays an important part in the life of the Community and would even like to see it playing a more important role in the future.

Why was it that the women in this group - who tended to be young, well educated and with a fairly high leadership rating as well as politically-minded and interested in Europe - fail to vote?

It would seem that they "nearly" voted and just lacked a little more motivation, later regretting that they had not done so. The image of Europe through its institutions, principally the institution of Parliament and its activities, was perhaps not clear-cut enough in the minds of these women to make them aware of the value of their involvement. Nevertheless, they felt a little guilty.

THE FACTORS DETERMINING PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTIONS

In the final analysis, did European men and women participate in the elections for the European Parliament in the same spirit? This general question leads to two separate types of question:

Does being a man or a women affect one's participation?

Did men and and women have similar or differing motivations for participating in these elections?

The influence of gender on participation

The main factors determining participation in the European elections are fairly well known: closeness to a political party, support for the European Community and attaching importance to the present and future role of the European Parliament, apart from a simple sense of civic duty, seem to be the essential reasons for voting in the June 1984 elections. Other variables such as age, level of education, leadership rating or knowledge of the European Parliament had some effect, direct or indirect, on participation.

Allowing for these factors, i.e. other things being equal, the effect of gender is virtually nil. In other words, the reason why Europeans did or did not vote in June 1984 was not thate they were men and women but that they were more or less close to a political party, more or less in favour of the Community, more or less well educated, etc. The narrow divergences between men and women in their voting patterns is significant but should be attributed not to the sex of interviewees but to the fact that women are less likely to be opinion leaders and are also less well informed on the European Parliament than are men.

The reasons for participation

Although gender does not seem to be a factor determining participation in the elections for the European Parliament, one might wonder whether the other factors - those that really did have an effect - exerted the same influence over men and women.

If the relationships among these factors and between those factors and participation in the June 1984 elections are analysed separately for men and for women, we find that the differences between the two sexes were fairly small. Two essential points, however, emerge.

The first difference is in the role of attitudes towards the European Community. This factor exercised a not inconsiderable direct influence over men's involvement in the elections, whereas its effect on women was very marginal. On the other hand, the level of information about the European Parliament seems to have been a fairly important factor for women, far more than for men. In other words, whether or not men voted in the elections tended to be linked with their attitudes towards Europe, whereas women's voting or non-voting depended on how interested they were in European problems and how well informed they were on the subject.

Information was all the more important in mobilizing women who were originally less well informed than men but just as well disposed to Parliament.

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