

## Citizenship, direct elections and the European Parliament

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It is commonly argued that the European Parliament is a « parliament » in name only and that its powers are so circumscribed as to limit its ability to perform a number of functions traditionally associated with parliamentary bodies (1). The Parliament itself claims that it performs three main tasks : the first of these is « To tell the Council of Ministers what it thinks of the Commission's legislative proposals », i.e. a legislative function ; the second is « With the Council to hammer out the Community budget », i.e. a financial function ; and the third is « To exert some political control over the Council and the Commission », i.e. a control, or oversight, function (2). When comparison are made concerning these functions with the powers of the national Parliaments and their relationships to the national governments of the member states of the European Communities, the relative weakness of the European Parliament vis-a-vis the Council of Ministers and the Commission becomes evident (3).

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(1) See Valentine HERMAN and Juliet LODGE, « Is the European Parliament a Parliament ? » (forthcoming *European Journal of Political Research*, 1978).

(2) Directorate-General for Information and Public Relations, *The European Parliament* (European Parliament, 1976), pp. 15-19.

(3) See Valentine HERMAN, *Parliaments of the World : A Reference Compendium* (London, Macmillan, 1976), *passim*.

With regard to the performance of the legislative function the European Parliament lacks two powers which are possessed by the national Parliaments: the first of these involves the power to initiate legislation, the second the power to amend legislation (4). Because these powers are absent, the European Parliament does not share the legislative function of the Community in any meaningful sense. As is widely quoted, « the Commission proposes, the Council disposes », and the European Parliament plays only a consultative role in legislative matters.

Concerning the financial powers of the Parliament, it is important to note that it lacks three types of control that the national Parliaments enjoy: the first of these is that in some way Parliament's prior approval should be requested for all expenditure and all revenue proposed by the Government; the second is that Parliament's prior approval should also be requested for the allocation of expenditure among different items; and the third that Parliament should have the right to approve the accounts of expenditures in order to verify that the Government's expenditures conformed to what was originally approved (5). Even though the financial powers of the European Parliament were increased following the adoption of new budgetary procedures in 1975 (6), they still fall a long way short of the powers of the national Parliaments over financial matters (7).

The control or oversight powers of the European Parliament do not compare favourably with those of the national Parliaments of the member states (8). The Parliament plays no role whatsoever in the appointment of the executive institutions of the Community, the Council of Ministers or the Commission whose members are, respectively, drawn from and appointed by the national governments; nor can the Parliament exercise collective responsibility over the Council, even though it may, through a motion of censure, dismiss the Commission in its entirety; nor can the Parliament exercise individual responsibility over particular Commissioners or Councillors; nor is it required to authorise the ratification of international treaties and agreements; nor does it have the power to establish

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(4) *Ibid.*, part 3, for a general overview of the legislative functions of Parliaments.

(5) See David COOMBES, *The Power of the Purse: The Role of European Parliaments in Budgetary Decisions* (London, PEP, George Allen and Unwin, 1976), pp. 17-18.

(6) Danielle STRASSE, « La Nouvelle Procédure Budgétaire des Communautés Européennes et son Application à l'établissement du Budget pour l'exercice 1975 », *Revue du Marché Commun*, no. 182, February 1975, pp. 79-87, and C.D. EHLERMANN, « Applying the New Budgetary Procedure for the First Time (Article 203 of the EEC Treaty) », *Common Market Law Review*, vol. 12, 1975, pp. 325-343. For the position before 1975 see P.J.G. KAPLEYN, « The European Parliament, the Budget, and Legislation in the Community », *Common Market Law Review*, vol. 9, 1972, pp. 386-410.

(7) See HERMAN, *Parliaments of the World*, Part 4, for details of Parliament's financial control functions.

(8) *Ibid.*, Part 5, for a summary of Parliament's power of control over the executive.

committees of enquiry into specific matters ; and so on. Although the Treaties of Rome give the European Parliament the power to censure the Commission (9) and to discuss its annual general report (10), they grant it no formal powers over the Council of Ministers. Notwithstanding the gradual and essentially pragmatic way in which the bicephalous executive has consented to allow the European Parliament to exercise some control over its activities (11), the performance by the Parliament of its oversight function is much weaker than that of the national Parliaments.

### The European Parliament and the Process of Integration.

Over a decade ago, Gerda Zellentin wrote ;

« If one were to base an analysis of the European Parliament on a somewhat simplified form of Bagehot's classic definition of the functions of a parliament, one would find the following similarities and differences. The *elective* function (with regard to the executive) is lacking : the European Parliament is not an electoral chamber. The *expressive* function (« to express the mind of the... people on all matters which come before it ») would be more effective if there were direct elections. This is also true of the *teaching* function (« a great and open council of considerable men cannot be placed in the middle of a society without altering that society »). The *informing* function is zealously carried on by the European Parliament in order to familiarize the public with the administrative discussions and measures on integration. But it takes part in the *legislative* function only consultatively. As regards Bagehot's sixth function, namely the *financial* one, the European Parliament must be consulted during the preparation of the budget, but it is the Council, which is composed of the ministers of the six countries, which has the last word in this matter. Finally, a seventh function should be added, *pace* Bagehot, which is most important for all developing parliaments of the continental type, namely the control of the executive. For this particular purpose, the motion of censure is in theory the strongest instrument in the European Parliament (12) ».

(9) Article 144 reads, *inter alia*, « ...if a motion of censure on the activities of the Commission is tabled before it, the Assembly shall not vote thereon until at least three days after the motion has been tabled and only by open vote. If the motion of censure is carried by a two-thirds majority of the members of the Assembly, the members of the Commission shall resign as a body ».

(10) Article 143 reads, « The Assembly shall discuss in open session the annual general report submitted to it by the Commission ».

(11) See Valentine HERMAN and Juliet LODGE, « The European Parliament and the « Decline of Legislatures » Thesis » (forthcoming *Politics*, 1978).

(12) Gerda ZELLENTIN, « Form and Function of the Opposition in the European Communities », *Government and Opposition*, vol. 2, 1967, pp. 416-435, at p. 418.

How relevant is this analysis to the European Parliament today? We have already discussed in some detail above [and elsewhere (13)] the legislative, financial, and control powers of the European Parliament and compared them to those of the national Parliaments. The decision taken by the member states of the Community to hold direct elections to the European Parliament in May/June 1978 makes it necessary to examine the way that the Parliament and its Members may perform functions other than these (14). Our argument in the remainder of this paper is that the European Parliament could perform some traditional parliamentary functions in respect of the public, namely those of communication (the « expressive » function), education (the « teaching » function), and information (15). The prospect of direct election heightens the significance of these functions and of the European Parliament's capacity to fulfill them. Moreover, if they are effectively executed, changes to the institutional balance of the Community, the constitutional powers of the European Parliament, and the intensification of European integration will all be advanced (16).

That the communication, education, and information functions needed to be more effectively performed and promoted by Community institutions than they had been previously was emphasized by Commission President Roy Jenkins in his first speech to the European Parliament on 11 January, 1977. In attaching the highest political importance to direct elections and to making the Community more of a reality to the inhabitants of the member states he said, « We must graft the idea of Europe onto the lives of its people » (17). To accomplish this task, efforts must be made to combat public disillusionment with or indifference towards the Community, to increase citizens' awareness and comprehension of it, and to help them internalize Community values and norms.

The Community's increasing concern with the degree of mass public support it commands is but one manifestation of an underlying malaise

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(13) See HERMAN and LODGE, « Is the European Parliament a Parliament? », *op. cit.*

(14) This is discussed in detail in Valentine HERMAN and Juliet LODGE, « Democratic Legitimacy and Direct Elections to the European Parliament » (forthcoming, *Western European Politics*, 1978).

(15) On the functions of Parliaments, see Klaus von BEYME, « Basic Trends in the Developments of the Functions of Parliament in Western Europe », in Directorate-General for Research and Documentation, ed., *Symposium on European Integration and the Future of Parliaments in Europe* (European Parliament, 1975), pp. 11-22, and K. Helveg PETERSEN, « On the Improvement of the Functions of Parliaments », *ibid.*, pp. 355-363.

(16) See, for example, Michael STEED, « The European Parliament : The Significance of Direct Elections », *Government and Opposition*, vol. 6, 1971, pp. 462-476, and Michael STEWART, « Direct Elections to the European Parliament », *Common Market Law Review*, vol. 13, 1976, pp. 283-301.

(17) *Debates of the European Parliament* (hereinafter *DEP*), January, 1977.

over the promotion of a transnational socio-psychological grass-roots community, and the creation of public loyalty towards the EEC (18). While individuals are deemed capable of holding multifarious criss-crossing and segmented loyalties, what remains unclear is the process by which loyalties are generated among individuals, and more importantly how loyalties are transferred from one setting to another (19).

The traditional literature on integration processes assumes a causal link between the fulfillment by specific authorities of citizens' utilitarian needs and the owing of allegiance to those authorities. Writings on integration further assume that the owing of allegiance by individuals to the EEC is desirable and necessary to maintaining and promoting integration. This assumption is embodied in the notion of « horizontal integration » which is seen as an important consolidatory phase in the process of community-building. The significance of the concept of horizontal integration (defined as the process of creating a new sense of community and common identity among diffuse groups) lies in the fact that it is a process through which individuals' loyalties to national repositories of power — the nation states — are expected to be confirmed. In the case of horizontal integration in the EEC, the process must be seen as one through which the inhabitants of the member states come to view the EC as the highest repository of power and as such come to owe their highest loyalties to it rather than the individual member states. EC-level horizontal integration is thus conceived of as a process culminating in the erosion of citizens' affective-identitive links with the nation state and, at the same time, the development of a Community citizenship.

Raymond Aron has expressed the problem of citizenship in the Community as follows :

« For the moment the (European Community) actually weakens people's sense of their citizenship. The ordinary citizen is less and less sure of the locus of decision-making. He has no easy way of knowing if a particular decision was made in Brussels or in the capital of his home country. All the faults of the national governments — the anonymity of power, the reign of the technocrats, etc. — are now imputed to the Brussels administration and denounced with special vehemence because the Community is subject to absolutely no parliamentary checks — even on paper » (20).

(18) See Juliet LODGE, « Loyalty and the EEC : The Limitations of the Functionalist Approach » (forthcoming, *Political Studies*, 1978).

(19) See Ernest B. HAAS, *The Uniting of Europe : Political Social and Economic Forces 1950-1957* (Stanford U.P., 1958), and his « The Study of Regional Integration : Reflections on the Joy and Anguish of Pretheorising », in L.N. LINDBERG and S.A. SCHEINGOLD, *Regional Integration* (London, Oxford U.P., 1971), pp. 3-42.

(20) Raymond ARON, « Is Multinational Citizenship Possible ? », *Social Research*, vol. 41, 1974.

The physical and psychological remoteness of the Community to date, the intangibility of its decisions and actions to the people of Europe, and the lack of intelligibility and visibility of its institutions, have all contributed to the absence of any viable type of European citizenship (21). The need to develop such a citizenship has, however, been accentuated by the prospect of direct elections and by the realisation that their success, and subsequent constitutional developments deemed desirable by Community personnel, depend upon the effectiveness of endeavours to turn the « permissive consent » (22) of EEC publics to the Community into positive and active support for it. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and the Commission regard direct elections as a means of promoting such support and, more especially, as a way of affording the Community direct and democratic legitimacy rather than indirect and derivative legitimacy (23).

A number of assumptions concerning the evolution and functioning of the Community's institutions are dependent on the holding of direct elections. One of these is the assumption that the authority of MEPs will be considerably strengthened if they are directly elected by, and more visible to, the mass public. A second assumption is that an increase in the democratic legitimacy of the European Parliament will increase the legitimacy of other Community institutions, namely the Commission in that the Treaty gives the Parliament the power to dismiss the Commission. And a final set of assumptions posit that increases in the representativeness (24) and effectiveness of the Parliament, and the integration of the member states of the Community, are dependent upon the attainment of democratic legitimacy.

### Direct Elections and Citizenship.

Whereas the Community has a general stake in direct elections and their concomitants, the European Parliament has a particular interest in them not least because its acquisition of legislative and other powers associated with parliamentary bodies in the member states is believed to be contingent

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(21) See Roy PRYCE, « Legitimacy and European Integration : The Role of Information », International Political Science Association paper (Edinburgh, 1976). For a general discussion of legitimacy, see Peter G. STILLMAN, « The Concept of Legitimacy », *Polity*, vol. 8, 1974-1975, pp. 32-56.

(22) See L.N. LINDBERG and S.A. SCHEINGOLD, *Europe's Would-Be Polity* (New Jersey, Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 249.

(23) This is discussed in detail in Valentine HERMAN and Juliet LODGE, « Democratic Legitimacy and Direct Elections to the European Parliament », *op. cit.*

(24) See Juliet LODGE and Valentine HERMAN, « Institutional Reform in the Community : « The Case of Bicameralism » (unpublished manuscript, April, 1977).

on them (25). It can, therefore, be suggested that the Parliament has a particular interest in stimulating public awareness in, and commitment to, the Community. Moreover, by virtue of its composition and the fact that a parliamentary body traditionally plays the role of the « grand forum » of a political system (26) — the place where the legislative and financial actions of a Government are legitimized by representatives of the people — the European Parliament is especially suited to generating greater public attentiveness to EEC affairs and a greater sense of identity among Community citizens. The implication of this is that the Parliament's import lies not so much in the formal legislative, financial or control powers it already has, nor in any medium- or long-term development of these powers; rather it lies in its short-term potential for playing informative, educative and communicative roles vis-a-vis EEC citizens and, in so doing, in furthering the integration process.

The European Parliament's interest in promoting citizen awareness of the Community derives largely from a belief that only if there is a high turnout on the occasions of direct elections will it be able to claim that it is either the only legitimate source of authority in the Community or the only body representative of Community opinion and politics (27). While it is possible to do no more than speculate on what the turnout in direct elections will be, certain patterns are revealed from an examination of the data in table I. The average level of turnout (28) in general elections in the nine member states is 85 %, and it is important to note that turnout in the original six members of the Community is 9 % higher than in the three new countries (88 % vs. 79 %). At the level of local elections, average turnout for the Nine is 72 %, and a 20 % difference is revealed between the original and the new member states (77 % vs. 57 %). On the basis of this evidence we would predict that throughout the Community, turnout in direct elections would be approximately 80 %, that is mid-way between the turnout for general and local elections.

It is obvious that a number of factors such as the role played by the Information Services of the Commission (29), the development of transnational parties (to be discussed below), the conduct of the electoral

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(25) See Juliet LODGE, « Reform of the European Parliament », *Political Science* (Wellington), vol. 26, 1973, pp. 58-78.

(26) The idea of the « grand forum » is discussed in detail in Philip ALLOT, « The Democratic Basis of the European Communities: The European Parliament and the Westminster Parliament », *Common Market Law Review*, vol. 11, 1974, pp. 298-326.

(27) See Michael STEWART, « Direct Elections to the European Parliament », *op. cit.*  
 (28) Voting is compulsory in Belgium and Italy. See HERMAN, *Parliaments of the World*, *op. cit.*, chap. 11.

(29) The amount of money available for such services is currently under discussion in the Community, as is the financial assistance that parties and/or candidates may receive.

TABLE I  
Turnout at general and local elections and at referenda

	General Election (Lower or - only - House)		Local Election			Referendum		
	Year	Per cent	Level	Year	Per cent	Issue	Year	Per cent
Belgium	1974	90.4	Municipal	1976	90.0	—	—	—
Denmark	1977	88.7	Municipal	1974	62.9	Entry into EEC	1972	90.1
France	1973 1st round	80.9	Departmental 1st round	1976	65.3	Enlargement of EEC	1972	60.5
Germany	1976	90.7	Länder	1973-6	81.8	—	—	—
Ireland	1973	75.0	Borough, County & District Councils	1974	62.0	Entry into EEC	1972	71.0
Italy	1976	97.0	Provincial & Municipal	1975	91.8	Abrogation of divorce legislation	1974	88.1
Luxembourg	1974	85.2	Commune	1975	70.0	—	—	—
Netherlands	1977	87.0	Provincial	1974	74.3	—	—	—
UK	1974 (Oct.)	72.8	Metropolitan & Non-metropolitan District Councils	1975-6	40.0	Continued EEC Membership	1975	64.0

Source : Data supplied by Embassies.

TABLE II  
The European Community. A good thing or a bad thing?\*

« Generally speaking, do you think that (your country's) membership of the Common Market is a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad? »

	Per cent			
	Good	Bad	Neither	Don't Know
Luxembourg . . . . .	77	2	17	4
Netherlands . . . . .	74	4	14	8
Italy . . . . .	68	5	16	11
Belgium . . . . .	66	3	19	12
Germany . . . . .	57	5	31	7
France . . . . .	52	7	35	6
Ireland . . . . .	50	22	22	6
United Kingdom . . . . .	39	34	21	6
Denmark . . . . .	29	34	28	9
Community** . . . . .	55	13	25	7

\* November, 1976. The countries are listed in descending order according to the number of favorable replies (« good thing »).

\*\* Weighted average.

Source : Euro-barometer, No. 6, January, 1977.



campaign, even the novelty value of the elections, etc., will affect the level of turnout. However, high turnout will mainly depend on public awareness of the EEC and voters' motivation to cast their ballots. The way in which the public evaluate the Community is also likely to influence their propensity to vote (see tables II and III) (30). Throughout the Community as a whole, 53 % of the public think that the Common

TABLE III

**The importance attached to direct elections to the European Parliament\***

Which of these opinions comes closest to your own views on the future elections to the European Parliament :

- it is an event of important consequences which is certain to make Europe more politically unified?
- it is an insignificant event because the heads of State will not be bound by votes in the European Parliament?

	Per cent		
	Important Consequences	Insignificant Event	Don't Know
Italy . . . . .	56	19	25
Belgium . . . . .	53	19	28
Luxembourg . . . . .	53	25	22
Netherlands . . . . .	48	29	23
Germany . . . . .	47	35	18
France . . . . .	46	28	26
United Kingdom . . . . .	41	31	28
Ireland . . . . .	38	27	35
Denmark . . . . .	35	33	32
Community** . . . . .	47	28	24

\* November, 1976. The countries are listed in descending order according to the number of positive replies (« Important consequence »).

\*\* Weighted average.

Source : Euro-barometer, No. 6, Januari, 1977.

Market is a « good thing », while only 14 % think that it is a « bad thing », and we must note that the three most negative evaluations of the Community come from the three new member states. A similar pattern is revealed when we consider the public's views of these elections ; almost twice as many of the Community's citizens think the elections are of great importance as those who attach low value to them ; and, again, the most negative reactions to direct elections come from the new member

(30) At six-monthly intervals « Euro-Barometer » reports « on public opinion concerning the Community, its institutions, their performance and general questions of interest to the public at large. The surveys are made by specialised institutions using strictly harmonised methods and interviewing about 9 000 people (throughout the Community) aged 15 or over ». J.J. RABIER, « European Surveys and Social Research », *European Journal of Political Science*, vol. 5, 1977, pp. 103-114, at p. 113.

states. A low turnout which is likely in Ireland and the United Kingdom — and/or for a sizeable percentage of votes cast for anti-European parties or candidates — which is likely in Denmark, and the United Kingdom — may well undermine the European Parliament's claims to representativeness and legitimacy. (The Parliament's claim for greater decision making powers is based on these claims). However, on the basis of the quantitative evidence already considered there is little to support MEPs fears that a low turnout would furnish EEC member Governments with an excuse for decelerating the European Parliament's development as the Community's legislature. Other reasons — including the member Government's prevarication on the issue in the past, problems concerning amendment of the Treaty, fears of loss of sovereignty, etc. — may prevent such a development.

While the European Parliament can take certain steps to avoid the presumed deleterious consequences of a low turnout, it has but a limited ability to combat some of the unwanted consequences of the member Governments' decision to postpone until after the first elections the application of a uniform electoral system for MEPs throughout the Community. The Parliament will not, therefore, be able to counteract the effects of differing electoral procedures on the representation of political opinion in the chamber. Two such effects warrant discussion, one concerning possible distortions of public opinion, the other the community- and identity-building processes that the elections may achieve. There is concern that distortions in the distribution of political opinion may not only undermine the European Parliament's claims to representativeness but may also be seen by member governments as justifying deferment of the extension of Parliament's powers (31). As Rose has written, « If European elections are to be successful, then they must reflect, rather than grossly distort, existing realities. If there is a multiplicity of parties within European nations, the same must be found in Strasbourg. If there is no dominant party — or dominant ideology around which a pan-European party may be formed — then no tendency should approach a majority in a European Parliament... » (32).

Whereas the adoption of a common electoral system might establish the uniqueness of direct elections in the minds of EEC citizens, the retention of national procedures and the holding of direct elections simultaneously with national, regional, or local elections might hamper the very process of community- and identity-building among EEC citizens

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(31) See Michael STEWART's speech in *DEP*, September, 1976, p. 85.

(32) Richard ROSE, « Electing a European Parliament », in *Symposium on European Integration and the Future of Parliaments in Europe*, op. cit., pp. 225-235, at p. 234.

that the European Parliament and its members should otherwise be capable of accomplishing. A brief comment on problems relating to different electoral practices within the Community is therefore warranted.

Of the five main electoral systems at present used in the Community for national elections (33), the British simple majority system in single-member constituencies (« first-past-the-post ») is the most problematical as Lord Gladwyn has pointed out. In September, 1976, he argued that if the United Kingdom adopted this system it would inevitably lead to an imbalanced representation of British parties in the European Parliament (34). It has also been suggested that under this system no Liberal MEPs would be elected, that Scottish Nationalist MEPs would be over-represented, that the national unpopularity of the current Labour Government would lead to it being underrepresented, and that no Catholics from Northern Ireland would gain election to the European Parliament (35). Even if the United Kingdom adopts a form of proportional representation on a regional list basis as set out in the recent White Paper (36), it does not necessarily follow that all of these problems will be eliminated, nor that a more balanced representation of British MEPs will be guaranteed (37).

Had it been decided to elect candidates on the basis of their membership of genuine European transnational parties, rather than on the basis of their membership of major national parties within the member states, it might have been possible to obviate extreme deviations from the existing representation of national parties in the European Parliament. Another difficulty lies in the member states' differing provisions regarding a

(33) See HERMAN, *Parliaments of the World*, op. cit., chap. 9.

(34) STEWART, *DEP*, op. cit., p. 99.

(35) See *The Sunday Times*, 28 November, 1976.

(36) « Direct Elections to the European Assembly » (HMSO, Cmnd 6768), April, 1977. The White Paper sets out (p. 22) the following proposed regions, « The United Kingdom would be divided into a number of electoral areas: Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland would each constitute a separate area; England could be divided on the basis of existing economic planning regions, but the GLC area might be separated from the South East planning region, and East Anglia combined with the East Midlands. The number of seats for each region would be allocated on the basis of the electorate. As an example, seats might be allocated under this system as follows:

Electoral Area	Seats
Scotland . . . . .	8
Wales . . . . .	4
Northern Ireland . . . . .	3
South East England (excl. GLC) . . . . .	14
Greater London . . . . .	10
South-West England . . . . .	6
East Anglia and East Midlands . . . . .	8
West Midlands . . . . .	7
North-West England . . . . .	9
Yorkshire and Humberside . . . . .	7
Northern England . . . . .	5"

(37) John COLE, « The Next Vote on Europe », *The Observer*, 3 April, 1977.

person's eligibility to vote (see table IV). Although the residence qualifications that the electorate must meet are fairly similar throughout the member states, the age of majority differs quite significantly: although the vote is granted to eighteen year olds in six of the nine countries, the

TABLE IV  
Electorate's qualifications and disqualifications\*

	Qualifications		Disqualification
	Age	Residence	
Belgium	21	In constituency for minimum of 6 months	Persons convicted of criminal and electoral offences, not complying with military laws, under restrictive detention, undischarged bankrupts, vagabonds and prostitutes, parents who have lost their rights over their children, and the mentally deficient.
Denmark	20	In country	Persons deemed incapable of managing their own affairs.
France	18	In constituency for minimum of 6 months	Persons convicted of criminal or other offences, undischarged bankrupts, and the mentally deficient.
Germany	18	In country for minimum of 3 months	Prisoners and the mentally deficient.
Ireland	18	In constituency	None.
Italy	21	In country	Persons convicted of criminal offences, and offenders against various morality codes.
Luxembourg	18	In country	Persons convicted of criminal or other offences, discharged bankrupts etc.
Netherlands	18	In country	Persons sentenced to more than 12 months imprisonment, persistent vagrants and public drunkards, parents who have lost their rights over their children, and the mentally deficient.
United Kingdom	18	In constituency on the qualifying date for the compilation of electoral register	Persons convicted of criminal and electoral offences, the mentally deficient, and Peers.

\* For the Lower (or only) Chamber.

Source: Adapted from Valentine Herman, *Parliaments of the World: A Reference Compendium* (Macmillan, London, 1976), Ch. 3.

minimum voting age is twenty in Denmark and twenty-one in Italy and Belgium (38). The adoption of a uniform electoral procedure in the period

(38) In the last decade the minimum voting age has been reduced to 18 in France, Germany, and the Netherlands; see HERMAN, *Parliaments of the World*, chap. 3. Debate on reducing the age to 18 is at present taking place in Denmark.

between the holding of the first and second set of direct elections will eliminate or reduce these differences, as it also will those concerning the electorate's disqualifications (39).

TABLE V  
Proxy and postal voting provisions

	Proxy Voting Provisions	Postal Voting Provisions
Belgium	Permitted for those abroad on professional business, such as diplomatic and consular staff, members of the armed forces, etc.	Constituency and country absentees, the hospitalised and public service officials may vote by post
Denmark	None	Advanced voting is permitted by post in national register offices, hospitals, prisons, isolated small islands, diplomatic missions, ships and lighthouses
France	Permitted for sailors, certain members of the armed forces, civil servants and country absentees	Certain members of the armed forces, civil servants, sailors, pregnant women, the sick, and some professional people (e.g. journalists and commercial agents) may vote by post
Germany	None	Permitted for constituency and country absentees
Ireland	None	Members of the defence forces and the police must vote by post
Italy	None	None
Luxembourg	None	None
Netherlands	Permitted within strict limits	None
United Kingdom	Permitted for members of the armed forces, civil servants employed abroad, British Council staff abroad, and electors who are outside the country on polling day because of their employment	Permitted for those prevented from voting in person because of physical disability, religious observance, removal to another constituency, inability to reach a polling station without making an air or sea journey, or absent because of employment

Source: Adapted from Valentine Herman, *Parliaments of the World: A Reference Compendium* (Macmillan, London, 1976), Ch. 10.

In drawing attention to the different electoral practices existing in the member states, M. Bertrand (Belgium, Christian Democrat) advocated the national Parliaments taking action to facilitate the introduction of a

(39) See STEWART, «Direct Elections to the European Parliament», *op. cit.* The importance of the second set of direct elections is emphasized by J.D.B. MITCHELL, «The Tindemans Report - Retrospect and Prospect», *Common Market Law Review*, vol. 13, 1976, pp. 455-484.

European provision into national electoral laws so that EEC citizens, no matter the member state they happened to be in at the time of direct elections would not be deprived of the right to vote (40). The various proxy and postal provisions for voters absent from either their constituency or their country on the day of a national election are shown in table V. While only four of the member states have provisions concerning proxy voting in their electoral laws, six of them allow various categories of electors to vote by post. A Select Committee of the British House of Commons has considered the possibility of permitting United Kingdom citizens resident in other EEC countries to vote by proxy in the constituency in which they last resided (41). Again, we may note that the adoption of this or a similar provision will ultimately be necessary in the Community's uniform electoral procedure.

### Citizenship, Political Parties, and Politicians.

Technical differences stemming from the logistics of direct elections, differences in electoral systems, and various suffrage requirements are, however, secondary to the problems of stimulating a high electoral turnout. Referring to these during a debate in the European Parliament in 1976, M. Boano (Italy, Christian Democrat) noted that the Chamber's first task should be to educate the public in order to inform them of the EEC's dimensions and of their opportunities for participating in its political life (42). What attributes, then, does the European Parliament possess that would enable it to perform such an educative task, and what conditions must be met to ensure that its efforts are successful?

That political parties play specific educative and informative roles in promoting political awareness and knowledge, and in establishing new bases of legitimacy, has been well documented (43). Parties can be regarded as both *foci* of political attention and as *loci* of political loyalty. Within their confines other divisions might be transcended so that a sense of identity, cohesion, and common purpose is installed among groups of people. Byars has suggested that parties « function in the affective-inte-

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(40) *DEP*, September, 1976, p. 86.

(41) See the *Third Report of the House of Common Select Committee* (HMSO, Cmnd 6623). The United Kingdom appears to have the most liberal attitudes towards eligibility of the Member States of the EC.

(42) *DEP*, September 1976, p. 89.

(43) See Norman H. NIE and Sydney VERBA, « Political Participation », in Fred I. GREENSTEIN and Nelson W. POLSBY, eds., *Handbook of Political Science* (Mass., Addison-Wesley, 1975), vol. 4, and Allan KORNBERG et al., « Legislatures and the Modernisation of Societies », *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 5, 1973, pp. 471-491.

grative sphere, while formal government structures perform in the instrumental-adaptive areas ». Furthermore, he notes that they are « ... one type of institutional device for performing the socio-emotional and integrative functions of affective leadership on the level of society, and for mediating the symbolic, normative or instrumental involvement of citizens » in a given society (44). This is to suggest that providing citizens are aware of parties, the latter will be able to contribute to citizens' internalization of a society's norms, their identification with that society, and their awareness of opportunities for participating in it. By and large these conditions are met at the national level. At the European level, Patijn has speculated, « Not until the parties succeed, within the Community framework, in establishing close links between themselves, developing joint programmes and creating supranational party structures, can direct elections to the European Parliament become a key factor in the process of political integration » (45). The European Parliament's existing party groups might be expected, if appropriately organized, to perform similar functions to those of the national parties in acclimatising EEC citizens to the Community dimension of their lives, in heightening their awareness of the Community, in acting as a link between the government and the governed, and in stimulating participation in the Community's political activities.

The participatory aspect is of particular importance in view of direct elections, and given the interest in ensuring a high turnout the European Parliament's party groups might be expected to develop their educative, informative and communicative roles. Whatever communicative links they establish between themselves and EEC citizens during the preparations for direct elections will be useful and will need to be cultivated thereafter, since the parties' simultaneous accessibility to government and to citizens means that they can encourage a two-way communication process in the transmission of information and demands. In the interim, however, the party groups' educative and informative functions will be decisive since there is considerable evidence to suggest that the level of citizens' participation in a given political process depends upon their knowledge of it, their sense of personal political efficacy, their ability to effectively articulate their interests, and their awareness of and access to means affording participation (46).

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(44) Robert S. BYARS, « Small Group Theory and Shifting Styles of Political Leadership », *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 5, 1973, pp. 443-469, at p. 451.

(45) Report of the Political Affairs Committee on the adoption of a Draft Convention introducing direct elections to the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage (The « Patijn » report) (PE.37.881/fin), p. 22.

(46) B. HEDGES and R. JOWELL, *Britain and the EEC ; Report on a Survey of Attitudes Towards the European Economic Community* (Social and Community

Drawing on some recent psephological findings, we can state that the more knowledgeable, more highly educated, and more politically aware people tend to have a higher level of participation in politics, feel more efficacious, and exhibit higher degrees of sensitivity to ideological and/or political facets of questions than do the less knowledgeable, educated, and aware (47). However, participation in politics is one way for the latter to acquire political awareness and a sense of efficacy. Although in the member states, the European Parliament's party group lack a distinct identity and separate party organizations, and given the fact that they can only involve citizens indirectly in European level politics via the medium of their national constituent parties, this need not mean that their ability to perform educative, informative, and communicative roles is thereby severely curtailed. Neither need the polyglot nature of

TABLE VI  
Political groups in the European Parliament (at 1 February, 1977)

Political Group	Number Seats	Number of Parties In Group	Number of Member States In Group
Socialists . . . . .	64	13	9
Christian Democrats . . . . .	52	13	7
Liberals . . . . .	26	13	8
European Progressive Democrats . . . . .	17	4	3
Communists . . . . .	17	4	3
European Conservatives . . . . .	17	2	2
Independents . . . . .	5	3	3

Source: Adapted from material supplied by the European Parliament.

the EEC be seen as precluding effective communication between EEC citizens, parties (48), or supranational elites providing that the parties and their members in the European Parliament have clear self-images, programmes and objectives which they are able to project.

Cognizant of this, the three largest party groups in the European Parliament (see table VI) — the Confederation of Socialist Parties of the European Community, the European People's Party, and the Federation of Liberal and Democratic Parties — have begun preparing their electoral programmes and in so doing have increased their cohesion and European identity. In addition to these three parties, the European Conservatives

Planning Research, 1971), and J.J. RABIER, *L'Europe vue par Les Européens* (Brussels, 1974).

(47) NIE and VERBA, *op. cit.*

(48) On linguistic diversity, see Gordon SMITH, *Politics in Western Europe* (London, Heinemann, 1972), chap. 1.



and other centreright parties (both inside and outside the Community) have established contacts with the aim of forming a « European Democratic Union » (49). As table VII reveals there is at present some uncertainty, even amongst elites, about the best way to conduct the election. It is likely that in most countries the major parties will adopt a « mixed strategy » mixing elements of a common electoral campaign with those of a national one ; the minor parties, by necessity, will fight a more nationally oriented campaign.

TABLE VII

**One or several election campaigns ?\***

For these elections, do you think that parties of the same colour in different countries ought to join together so as to fight a joint campaign in different countries, or do you think that each political party should campaign for itself in its own country ?\*\*

	Common Campaign	Campaign In each Country	No Reply
Italy . . . . .	65	25	10
Germany . . . . .	63	28	9
France . . . . .	59	29	12
Netherlands . . . . .	56	40	4
Belgium . . . . .	55	36	9
Luxembourg . . . . .	46	42	12
Ireland . . . . .	31	59	10
United Kingdom . . . . .	31	60	9
Denmark . . . . .	19	51	30
Community*** . . . . .	55	35	10

\* November, 1976. The countries are listed in descending order according to the number of replies for a « common campaign ».

\*\* Question put to « opinion-leaders ».

\*\*\* Weighted average.

Source : *Euro-barometer*, No. 6, January, 1977.

Perhaps the major problem that the European parties will face in the election is the way in which they will conduct their campaigns. The parties will not be able to encourage voters to vote on the basis of policy-oriented undertakings and appeals to traditional aspects of voter self-interest given the European Parliament's limited legislative power, and the EEC's limited authority, resources and power to commit funds to expenditure on traditional vote-catching issues such as employment, health, housing and social welfare. Thus, of necessity, the parties will have to direct their attention more towards awareness-building than policy-oriented activities.

(49) The British Conservative Party is already well-advanced with preparations for the selection of its candidates and advantages should accrue to it as a result. Its MEPs have, to date, been members of the European Conservative Group whose members are drawn only from Britain and Denmark.

If the political parties are to generate public interest in the direct election, and if they are to assist the citizens in distinguishing these European elections from other elections held within the member states, it will be crucial that MEPs possess and project clear images of themselves as European, not national politicians, even though they may also be members of, and have strong identification with, familiar national parties (50). In the past, MEP's perceptions of themselves have been, in Lord O'Hagan's terms, ambassadors of their national political parties first, and MEP's second, coupled with their inability — for a variety of reasons — to constitute genuine transnational parties with distinct European profiles, has limited the Chamber's ability to both offer the public a European focus of political interest and to play an effective role in promoting integration. In addition, the European Parliament's retiring profile and the low saliency of its activities resulted in little media coverage of its affairs. The absence of a government-opposition schism between the parties in the Chamber, and MEP's underlying commitment to integration as evinced by broad support for the Commission, also meant that the Parliament's image was that of a forum oriented towards consensus politics, of one uncritical of the Commission (51), and of one generally devoid of public interest for want of highly visible political considerations. Moreover, the quintessential European character of the chamber was obfuscated by the intrusion of national political considerations themselves magnified by the obligatory nature of the dual mandate. That a clearer European image can, however, be projected by simply resorting more frequently to roll-calls, was demonstrated on 13 December, 1976 when the European Parliament rejected the proposed tax on vegetable oils (52), and again on 23 March, 1977 when a censure motion criticising the Commission for its recent handling of butter sales to Eastern Europe was heavily defeated (53).

While the dual mandate will eventually cease to be obligatory, and while this will free the majority of MEP's to concentrate their parliamentary efforts exclusively on Community affairs, this provision cannot *per se* be expected to attenuate an MEP's self-identification with either his member states or his domestic party's priorities and fortunes. His attentiveness to EEC parliamentary business and his readiness to attend debates (especially

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(50) The lack of visible personalities in the Community is discussed in HERMAN and LODGE, «Democratic Legitimacy and Direct Elections to the European Parliament», *op. cit.*

(51) See Stanley HENIG, «New Institutions for European Integration», *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 12, 1973-1974, p. 130, and HENIG, «The Institutional Structure of the European Communities», *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 12, 1973-1974, pp. 373-409.

(52) *DEP*, December, 1976.

(53) *DEP*, March, 1977.

budgetary debates) will certainly increase, but his self-image and that projected to the public by MEPs as a group, will inevitably have a national bias as long as certain practices are retained. This image problem will persist as long as the party groups remain essentially a coalition of national party groups — instead of transnational parties — sharing a number of vague ideals and impressive goals but lacking clear images and programmes to present to voters. While this may not prove problematical for MEPs, there may be confusion among voters if they associate candidates standing for direct election to the European Parliament with specific national parties to which they owe allegiance rather than with European parties.

A number of difficulties stem from this, and while they are not insurmountable they may complicate the process of impressing MEP's identities and roles on electors. For example, although after direct elections the party system will undoubtedly be a useful medium for maintaining links between MEPs and members of national parliaments and parties, parochial party disputers originating in the national contexts may continue, be transferred, or spill over into the EEC context. Thus, a member of the Council of Ministers when answering questions before the Parliament, may continue any predilection to disregard the comments of a fellow national MEP as these may be perceived by the former as merely representing the views of the Opposition at home rather than those of one or more European party groups. Similarly, MEPs may be pressured by their home parties to voice arguments reinforcing these of compatriots in the Council of Ministers, as to abandon the pursuit of objectives or interests deemed contrary to, or contrasting with, those of the home party. Cohesive European party groups will therefore be necessary to counteract any such tendencies which, if they became common, would undermine the endeavour of the European Parliament and MEPs to both establish their distinct European character in the minds of EEC citizens, and to act as an autonomous channel of communication between them and EEC decision-makers.

The performance by the European Parliament of its educative informative and communicative functions will undoubtedly be linked to the visibility of MEPs, and in this context the importance of the emergence of distinctive political figures at the European level cannot be overemphasised. We have already noted that at times of elections, parties can provide some link between the institutional workings of the political system and the mass public, and, especially, simplify the former and its policy alternatives for the latter. However, at other times the public needs other points of reference, and this is the role that individual figures — especially MEPs — can and must play if the European level of govern-

ment is to exist on a continuous basis in the minds of the public and not be an ephemeral phenomenon that only comes into existence in some vague and undefined way when direct elections to the Parliament are held. The main cue-givers, in this context, will undoubtedly be the leaders of the European parties who will need to seek, or receive, the attention of the media.

An MEP's simultaneous membership of a national party and a European party group will be advantageous during the election campaign to the extent that voters are able to select the candidate of their choice by simply isolating familiar party, or **tendence**, preferences. Contrariwise, were a voter to select his normally preferred party (54) in some automatic and reflex manner without first investing time in the perusal of European party programmes presented by candidates, he may fail to clearly associate the elections with EEC activities. Moreover, if a voter having little knowledge or awareness of EEC affairs were to be faced by a selection of programmes distributed by both the European party groups and national parties, confusion might again follow if he (or she) regarded European elections as merely a form of, or inchoate variant on, national elections. To minimize this, national and especially European parties will, on the one hand, have to use political broadcasts prior to direct elections to inform electors of their programmes and candidates for election to the European Parliament; and, on the other hand, they will also need to educate and advise voters of the separate nature of the Community and of elections to the European Parliament, and also of the possibility of, in the future, making representations to MEPs in addition to any made to national MPs. National parties, European party groups, and candidates for election to the European Parliament will therefore have to capitalise on the Commission's information programme and launch wider educative campaigns to explain basic points about the Community, to portray the European Parliament as an alternative body to which representations can usefully be made, and to convince voters of the advantages to them of voting.

Unless citizens are made aware of the EEC's activities and opportunities for communicating with its decision-makers, disaffection from politics at the national level may spill over to the European level (55). Thus, those with a low sense of personal political efficacy and/or those who feel that their vote does not affect outcomes in national elections, may see no point or value in participating in direct elections and abstain. Feeling among disaffected citizens that by voting they cannot influence policy

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(54) « Floating » voters pose different problems.

(55) See Juliet LODGE, « Towards a Human Union : EEC Social Policy and European Integration », *British Journal of International Studies* forthcoming.

outcomes (partly because they lack clear images of the different parties and regard their policies as alike, or as likely to be so irrespective of which major party gains election) may not only dissuade them from considering the European Parliament as an alternative body to which representations can be made, but deter them from paying much attention to EEC affairs.

By contrast, voters with a higher sense of personal political efficacy may exhibit greater readiness to vote in European elections, but may, nevertheless, select candidates on the basis of national considerations, traditional party loyalties, or habit. Attitudes towards European integration have been found to be affected by existing party loyalties and class (56). Therefore, an individual's commitment to a given national party may determine both the attitude adopted towards the Community and the selection of particular candidates, and his readiness to participate in the Community's political life by voting in direct elections. It might be hypothesized that if an individual's commitment to a national party unfavourable to the EEC is high, and if this party commanded relatively little support nationally, then the voter may choose to abstain by way of protest against EEC policies, or to ruin his ballot paper. However, this possibility must not be over-stated since Commission surveys have shown (through multi-variate analyses) that significant connections do not exist between preferences for specific national parties and attitudes towards direct elections. Instead, regions and more particularly nationality are the most reliable predictors of attitudes and favourability towards direct elections (57). An implication of the nationality variable is that countries whose publics are on average less favourably disposed towards the EEC may have either lower than average turnouts (as we have already discussed) or greater propensities to elect parties believed on balance to be committed to protecting national interests rather than advancing Europeanism. From table VIII, it can be seen that in all but one of the member states of the Community (the exception is Denmark) a majority of the population favour the holding of direct elections.

However, if a sense of belonging, efficacy and community is to be imbued in EEC citizens, parties and candidates seeking direct election to the European Parliament must encourage citizens to transcend regional, ethnic, and nationally based prejudices and preferences by convincing them of the extent to which European solutions can benefit them and

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(56) Robert J. SHEPHERD, *Public Opinion and European Integration* (Hants, Saxon House, 1975), chap. 9.

(57) See Ronald INGLEHART, 'Changing Value Priorities and European Integration', *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 10, 1971, and Inglehart, 'Public Opinion and Regional Integration', *International Organisation*, vol. 24, 1970.

serve their interests. This presupposes that such candidates both possess that conviction and are able to discern interests and problems amenable to European solutions within constituencies they contest and represent. Yet, there are obstacles to MEPs accomplishing such tasks not least because they are presently unable to undertake the kind of tasks normally associated with a constituency's parliamentary representative. While a member of a national Parliament may perform « errand » functions for a constituent (58) (for example, intervening with a central or local autho-

TABLE VIII

**Election to the European Parliament by popular vote\***

« One of the proposals (of a European political union) is to elect a European Parliament in May, 1978 — in other words within 2 years — by a direct vote of all citizens in the member countries of the European Community (Common Market). Are you, yourself, for or against this proposal? How strongly do you feel about it? »

	Per cent				
	Completely favour	Favour on the whole	Disagree to some extent	Disagree completely	Don't know
Luxembourg . . . . .	44	33	8	1	14
Italy . . . . .	40	37	5	3	15
Germany . . . . .	27	49	7	3	14
Netherlands . . . . .	38	36	6	5	15
Belgium . . . . .	37	32	5	4	22
France . . . . .	27	42	9	4	18
Ireland . . . . .	29	34	9	5	23
United Kingdom . . . . .	30	27	8	14	21
Denmark . . . . .	22	20	16	21	21
Community** . . . . .	31	38	8	6	17

\* November, 1976. The countries are listed in descending order according to the number of favourable replies (« completely favour » and « favour on the whole »).

\*\* Weighted average.

Source : *Euro-Barometer*, No. 6, January, 1977.

rity on behalf of that constituent), an MEP is unable to perform similar functions with anything like the same amount of efficaciousness at the European level. Even if some citizens of his county or constituency do make requests to him to do things for them in the European arena, it is unlikely that he will be able to « deliver » the same amount or type of « goods » to them as he would be able to do if he was operating in the national arena. The European Parliament does not provide on institutional base comparative to that of the national Parliament for this, his status

(58) See, for example, John C. WAHLKE *et al.*, *The Legislative System : Explorations in Legislative Behaviour* (New York, Wiley, 1962), chap. 13.

vis-a-vis the Commission and the Council of Ministers is much lower than a national MP's status vis-a-vis his national government and administration, and the MEP cannot put much pressure on, or exert effective sanctions over, European authorities to further the interests of his constituents.

If national and European parties and MEPs are to act as links between voters and decision-makers, as channels through which voter and interest group demands can be presented and articulated, as *foci* of citizen attention and identity, and as means of stimulating and facilitating citizen participation in politics, to be effective they must possess some knowledge about the aspirations and interests of those whom they seek to represent. This may pose an acute problem for candidates standing for election in newly drafted European constituencies (of the British type) since they may face a lack of precise information about the electoral composition of the constituency they contest. To conduct an effective campaign candidates require information about voters' preferences, certain crucial characteristics of the seat they contest, the distribution of support for rival parties in nationally based elections, the impact of given EEC policies on different social groups and, assuming the latter's awareness of them, their evaluation of and attitudes towards such policies. Candidates must also possess an appreciation of which and how many voters can be mobilised, how, when and to what purpose.

Retention of normal national electoral practices and machines for the direct election of MEPs might make it slightly easier for parties and candidates to organise campaigns and predict outcomes in some newly drafted European constituencies. In such cases candidates might, therefore, be expected to have a better and more accurate view of the spread of electoral opinion and preferences, and of the voters' responsiveness to certain kinds of appeals for support. While this might tempt candidates for election to the European Parliament to campaign on local issues thereby reinforcing parochial identifications, *foci* and preoccupations, appeals to strictly parochial concerns may, during the first direct elections, be one of the better ways of mobilising support and a reasonable turnout. This is because such issues, which are more easily recognised and comprehended by electors, will have a higher degree of saliency to them than will vague, remote, and intangible European appeals (59).

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(59) An undertaking to defend parochial/regional interests (however legitimate) against EEC action may win an MEP support or ensure a high turnout if the issue happens, like the Community's fishing policy, to be controversial, but an MEP would be ill-advised to commit himself to so doing given his own and the Parliament's impotence to legislate.



By contrast, assuming that a candidate stresses his European identity and policies, and that he has an intimate knowledge of the constituency he is standing in, he will still have to conduct a skillful campaign to interest voters in turning out. We have already noted that prospective MEPs cannot campaign on the basis of policy-oriented undertakings and appeals to voters' self-interest. They cannot, in other words, offer incentives or tangible rewards to voters in exchange for their support. Voters will not only lack an absence of specific appeals usually associated with national elections, they will also lack tangible or easily recognisable yardsticks by which to measure, compare, and evaluate the performance of existing, or potential, MEPs coming forward to contest seats in direct elections. However, it must be emphasized that MEPs and national MPs do not, and will not, perform strictly analogous roles. Indeed, it may be suggested that apart from acting as representatives of EEC citizens, the most immediate and vital functions of MEPs and candidates contesting direct elections will be in arousing public interest in the Community and in promoting a direct expression of public consent to it through participation in direct elections.

The major tasks of present MEPs, parties and candidates seeking election to the European Parliament differ in crucial respects from those of national members of parliament. Of necessity, they will initially have to be directed more towards awareness-building than to policy-oriented activities. Public participation will have to be engendered without, at the same time, excessive expectations of the performance of MEPs and Community bodies being generated.

### Conclusions.

Related to the present concern with awareness-building and citizen-establishing activities is the belief that electoral turnout will depend on the visibility of the EEC and the European Parliament (60); on the mass public's perceptions of the saliency of EEC activities; on the public's sense of personal political efficacy at the European level; of their awareness of opportunities for direct participation in decision-making and access to decision-makers; and on the role that the media and, especially, national and European parties will play in the election campaign. The Commission's attempts of awareness-building (be it by way, to date, of the Community's information programme, or, in the future by European symbols of common identity such as an EEC passport or common

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(60) Ways in which this may be increased are discussed in HERMAN and LODGE, «Democratic Legitimacy and Direct Elections to the European Parliament», *op. cit.*



currency), and at impressing the EEC's saliency on citizens rests on the assumption that the higher this saliency is perceived to be, the more likely it is that citizens will participate in the political processes of the Community. Preparations for direct elections are themselves seen as a way of increasing citizen awareness of the EEC and as an opportunity for MEPs to underline the Community's saliency and relevance to prospective voters.

The European Parliament's activities need not, however, be limited merely to raising public awareness of the EEC, nor solely to establishing communicative, educative and informative channels between the represented and their representatives. To strengthen both the institutional position of the Parliament, and its and its members' claims to represent the people and their interests, encouragement has to be given to interest groups to increase their links with the European Parliament. Given that the Commission's contacts are with transnational and European-level interest groups, the European Parliament could develop its links both with these and their constituent national bodies whose activities are normally directed towards the national level and towards Ministers taking part in Council meetings. This is already happening but whether or not stronger clientele relationships (61) will develop once the political characteristics and goals of the party groups becomes clearer, and in spite of the Parliament's at present limited powers, remains to be seen. However, such relationships will be important in augmenting MEPs' sources of expertise and information, and in supporting the European Parliament's efforts to prompt a reallocation of available Community resources to the benefit of a wider scope of sector than hitherto.

Although the European Parliament's limited ability and rights to influence legislative proposals and decisions restricts the making of commitments by MEPs to citizens and interest groups in exchange for their support, links with them should be extended in view of Roy Jenkin's undertaking to afford the present European Parliament (and the future directly-elected one) greater scope for influencing EEC decisions. In his words the Commission « ... intended to inject into the consideration of any proposal they put forward to the Council the systematic and serious consideration of whether it was one for which they could reasonably expect the support of a majority in the Parliament » (62). There can be little doubt that were the European Parliament to develop its own expertise, the interest of the Commission and the Council of Ministers in

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(61) See W. AVERYT, « Eurogroups, clientele, and the European Community », *International Organisation*, vol. 29, 1975, pp. 949-972.

(62) *DEP*, January, 1977.

consulting it would increase (63). Similarly it can be expected that irrespective of the Parliament's formal powers, directly elected MEPs accountable to citizens and constituencies will become more active in the Community's decision-making process given their interest, when seeking re-election in being able to demonstrate the success with which they have advanced their electorates' and their constituencies' interests.

Following direct elections the EEC's institutional balance is likely to be modified, not simply because of the changed basis of the Community's legitimacy, but also because MEP's will have more time and more incentive to scrutinise, follow-up, and express their views on the Commission's legislative proposals and the EEC's activities. MEPs can, ultimately, be expected to seek formal endorsement of the extension of their powers through amendments to the Treaties of Rome and a redefinition of the roles of the Community's institutions (64). In the immediate future a high turnout in the direct elections will boost the self-confidence of MEPs and encourage them to emphasize the European Parliament's special role. The Parliament's potential for influence is already greater than its powers, and providing that it, its members and the party groups can effectively perform awareness-building, information, education, and communication, to create a European citizenry, the process of integration will be advanced.

### Summary : Citizenship, direct elections and the European Parliament.

*The decision taken by the Member States of the European Community to hold direct elections to the European Parliament in May/June 1978 makes it necessary to examine the way that the Parliament and its Members perform various functions. In this article it is argued that the Parliament could perform some traditional parliamentary functions in respect of the public, namely those of communication, education, and information. The prospect of direct elections heightens the significance of these functions, and of the Parliament's capacity to perform them and promote citizen awareness. Amongst the features that are examined as contributing to citizenship are the type of electoral system*

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(63) This was emphasized by the late Anthony Crosland in his first speech to the European Parliament, on 14 January, 1977, when he stated «...my crucial aim will be the closest possible co-operation with the Parliament and the Commission in the interests of Community cohesion », *DEP*, January, 1977.

(64) See John FITZMAURICE, *The Party Groups in the European Parliament* (Saxon House, Harts, 1975), chap. 14. Also see Daniel NORRENBURG, « Un modèle institutionnel déficient : la communauté européenne », *Res Publica*, vol. 18, 1976, pp. 203-214.

*and electoral laws of each country, the role of national and transnational political parties and the performance of Members of, and candidates to, an elected European Parliament. The argument of the article is that if the traditional parliamentary functions are effectively executed, changes to the institutional balance of the Community, the powers of the Parliament, and the intensification of the European integration are likely to be advanced.*

