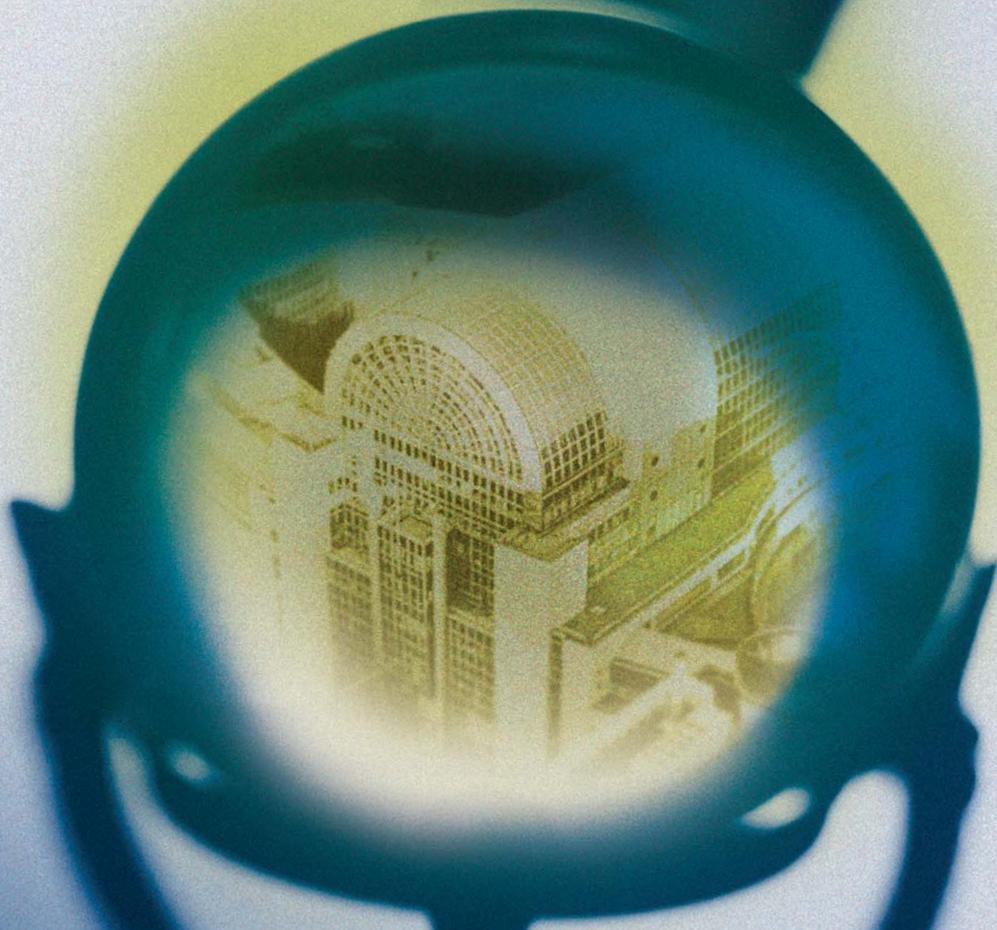


PREDICTING THE FUTURE

The next European Parliament

BY SIMON HIX, LONDON SCHOOL OF
ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE
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FOR BURSON-MARSTELLER



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Foreword

Dear Reader,

The 2004 European Parliament elections - the Parliament's sixth elections - will be more important than any before. They will also be unique. These elections are unprecedented in their size and scope. 348,824,000 people in the 25 member states will be entitled to vote on 10 to 13 June. They will be the first-ever continental-scale elections in Europe's history. Moreover, these elections are taking place in a year of redefinition and renewal for our Union, and against a unique background of circumstances: the first European elections held after enlargement, the tantalizing prospect of agreement on Europe's long-awaited Constitutional Treaty, the appointment later this year of a new Commission.

Europe's Institutions could do with a blast of fresh air, and the oxygen of real democracy. What better opportunity could there be than these European elections, in this very special year, to ensure a genuinely European dimension to the campaign over the coming months? Of course, domestic political considerations, and issues of personality, will always play a part in the European elections. But if the people are ever going to be able to properly relate to the EU's activities, we need a wide-ranging, open, and public debate on European issues.

During the European election campaigns our parties need to address key issues and articulate a Europe of values, and demonstrate where Europe makes a difference. European election campaigns are now more and more about the real issues that have an impact on citizens – issues such as job creation and economic growth, protecting our citizens from the scourge of international terrorism, deciding through the new Treaty who does what in the EU on our citizens' behalf, and strengthening Europe's role in the world - the old distinction of "European" issues versus "national" issues is less and less relevant.

Above all, the debate should not end in Brussels. I would appeal to all political parties, over the coming weeks and months, to campaign actively on all these issues and for our common cause - for long-term peace, prosperity and stability throughout our continent. The time has come, as we move towards these unique European elections, for Europe's political leaders to honour the European part of the bargain with Europe's electors.

Professor Simon Hix's predictions for the outcome of the June elections give us some indication of where the next Parliament is headed. But for me they also tell another story: they show that the European Parliament is becoming recognised for the role it plays in the European Union and its policy development today.

I would like to thank Professor Simon Hix, Dr. Michael Marsh, and Burson-Marsteller Brussels for carrying out this useful and interesting study which I hope will bring some additional life and vigour to this election campaign. Let that campaign begin.



Pat Cox
President
European Parliament



Introduction

The model used by Professor Simon Hix and Dr Michael Marsh to predict the results of this year's European elections has proved to be 92% accurate in all previous elections - and far more accurate than opinion poll data alone. While some special circumstances in a few of the 25 member states mean that this time round it is more difficult to predict the results in those countries we are confident that when you review our predictions on 14 June you will see how accurate we were overall.

The sixth direct elections of the European Parliament will be held between Thursday 10 and Sunday 13 June 2004: in the UK and the Netherlands on Thursday, in Ireland on Friday, in the Czech Republic on Friday and Saturday, in Malta and Latvia on Saturday, and in all other countries on Sunday. These elections will be unique. For the first time, electors in all twenty-five EU member states will vote together to elect the European Parliament. This will be the largest transnational democratic election held in history. With 732 members to be elected from twenty-five countries, the new Parliament will have 108 more MEPs than the European Parliament elected in June 1999.

In other respects, however, these elections will be quite similar to previous European Parliament elections. First, as Table 1 shows, different electoral systems will continue to be used in each member state. All member states now use some form of 'proportional representation' (PR), where parties win seats in proportion to the number of votes they receive. But, with the variety of methods used for translating votes into seats, there remains little uniformity across the member states. In many member states, for instance, voters will only be able to choose between party lists, while in several states people will be able to choose their preferred candidates from the same party. Constituency size also plays a role. Most states have one single national constituency, where there is one list per party per country. In the United Kingdom, France, Poland, Belgium and Ireland, however, there will be several regional constituencies. Lastly, while some states have no formal electoral threshold, in several others parties must secure a minimum percentage of votes to win a seat. These differences can affect the outcome of the election as they influence how parties behave in the election campaign and ultimately which parties or candidates voters choose to support.

Second, how people vote in these elections will follow a pattern familiar to us from previous European elections. In almost all member states, European Parliament elections are mid-term contests and viewed by voters, parties and the media as considerably less important than national general elections. They are what are frequently referred to as 'second-order national elections'. This means that behaviour will be similar to that in general national elections but with some systematic differences because the elections are 'second-order': voters behave differently in European elections than they would if they were voting in national elections held at the same time. Governing party supporters will be less likely to vote at all, as they feel comfortable with

their party in power. Among those who do vote, some people will switch to the main opposition party, to punish the government, or to smaller parties (such as green, extremist, or regionalist parties), to highlight the issues that concern them. While they might not vote for these parties normally, some voters see European elections as an opportunity to voice their concerns on national issues. So, as in all previous European elections, large governing parties will probably lose some support in June 2004, while smaller opposition parties and protest parties will probably do relatively well. The situation may be slightly different in the ten new member states because these are the first European elections people will experience.

The novelty of the elections may produce higher voter turnouts than in the existing member states, and people may vote on European issues rather than on the popularity of the government. Nevertheless, on all previous occasions when European elections were held for the first time in a member state, the usual mid-term/anti-government effects swamped any novelty effect. Hence, for most of the new member states we can make the same assumptions about how parties will perform as in the fifteen current member states.

TABLE 1. ELECTORAL SYSTEMS FOR THE JUNE 2004 EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

Member States	Number of MEPs	Electoral System	Can people choose between MEPs in the same party?	Number of constituencies	Electoral threshold (%)
Austria	18	List-PR	✓	1	4
Belgium	24	List-PR	✓	3	-
Cyprus ²	6	List-PR	✓	1	-
Czech Republic ²	24	List-PR	✓	1	5
Denmark	14	List-PR	✓	1	-
Estonia	6	List-PR	✓	1	-
Finland	14	List-PR	✓	1	-
France	78	List-PR	✗	8	5 (in each region)
Germany	99	List-PR	✗	1	5
Greece	24	List-PR	✗	1	3
Hungary ²	24	List-PR	✗	1	5
Ireland	13	STV	✓	4	-
Italy ¹	78	List-PR	✓	1	-
Latvia	9	List-PR	✓	1	-
Lithuania ²	13	List-PR	✗	1	5
Luxembourg	6	List-PR	✓	1	-
Malta	5	STV	✓	1	-
Netherlands	27	List-PR	✓	1	-
Poland ²	54	List-PR	✗	13	5
Portugal	24	List-PR	✗	1	-
Slovakia	14	List-PR	✓	1	5
Slovenia	7	List-PR	✓	1	-
Spain	54	List-PR	✗	1	-
Sweden	19	List-PR	✓	1	4
UK-Britain	75	List-PR	✗	11	-
UK-Northern Ireland	3	STV	✓	1	-

Notes:

¹ Although candidates are presented in five regions in Italy, for the purpose of allocating seats to parties the votes from the regions are pooled in one national constituency.

² These new member states have not yet finalised all the details of the electoral systems that will be used in June 2004. The information in the table is either the latest information available from these states or assumes that the electoral system for European elections will be the same as the electoral system used for national general elections in these states.

✓ Yes

✗ No



Executive Summary

- We predict that the 2004-2009 Parliament will be dominated by the centre-right, with the European People's Party-European Democrats (EPP-ED) the largest party, with about 285 of the 732 seats in the new parliament, and the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party (ELDR) in the centre with about 73 seats.
- The Party of European Socialists (PES) will be the second largest group, with about 217 seats. However, the combined forces of the three left-wing parties – the PES, Greens, and European United Left – should be approximately 296 seats, making the left a realistic challenger to the dominance of the centre right should it act cohesively.
- With a centre-right majority in the Council as well as in the Parliament, an EPP-ED backed politician is likely to face little difficulty winning approval as the next Commission President. It would not, however, be impossible for a non-Christian Democrat also to win Parliamentary approval as Commission President, with the support of the centre and left.
- In the day-to-day legislative business of the EU, the ELDR will probably be in a powerful position, able to choose to form coalitions with either the left or the right.
- The national balance inside the party groups will shift in the new European Parliament. While the German CDU/CSU delegation should again dominate the EPP-ED, the French or Italian conservatives may replace the British Conservatives as the second largest national delegation in the EPP-ED. Inside the PES, the French, British, German and Spanish delegations will be evenly balanced.
- Parties from the new member states are likely to have more influence in the EPP-ED and ELDR than the PES.



Methodology

The stability of the factors that influence how people vote in European elections allows us to predict the outcome in June 2004 with some accuracy. For each national party that will present candidates in these elections we have gathered three pieces of information:

- vote shares in previous European elections;
- vote shares in national elections immediately prior to these elections;
- and whether the party was in government at the time of a previous European election and will be in government in June 2004.

From this information, we developed a series of statistical models to predict how many votes each national party should win in June 2004. The model we chose predicted the results of all earlier European elections with 92 percent accuracy, and with an average error per party of less than two percent. This degree of accuracy exceeds that available from opinion poll data alone. Indeed, for several member states our predictions contrast markedly with current opinion polls. For example, in the United Kingdom, Labour is ahead of the Conservatives in the latest opinion polls, as they were before the 1999 European elections, but our model predicts that the Conservatives will beat Labour in the European elections in June, as they did in 1999.

The statistical predictions provide two pieces of information: the likely average ('mean') percentage vote share that a party will receive in June 2004; and a margin of error around this mean. This margin of error allows us to calculate the likely maximum and minimum vote shares for each party.

We used the statistical predictions to calculate how many seats each party is likely to win under the electoral rules that will be used in June 2004. For twenty-one countries we also compared the predictions of the statistical model with the latest available opinion poll data, which confirmed our predictions.

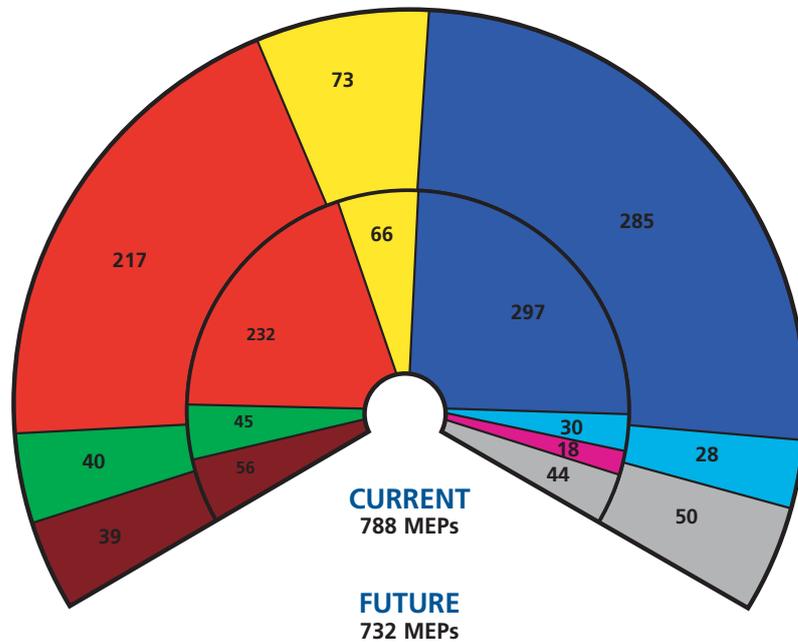
However, for Germany, Poland and Slovakia, we decided to use the latest opinion poll data as the basis for our seat-share forecasts instead of the predictions from our model. Our predictions assume a degree of stability in party support over time and thus does not allow for the dramatic and unpredictable changes in the popularity of the parties that have occurred in these countries since the last general elections.

Our model also assumes that the same parties compete in general and European elections. This is not the case in Denmark, the only member state where the party system is different in European elections than in national elections. Opinion poll data specific to the European elections is not yet available in Denmark, so we use the vote shares in the 1999 European elections as the basis for our seat-share forecasts in June 2004.



Forecast for the Parliament as a whole

BALANCE BETWEEN THE GROUPS



- EUL/NGL
- G/EFA
- PES
- ELDR
- EPP-ED
- UEN
- EDD
- NA

Notes: Throughout we compare our election predictions with the outgoing Parliament as constituted immediately before the European election. The current Parliament has 626 MEPs, and 162 MEPs will be added from the new member states on 1 May 2004, making a total of 788 MEPs immediately before the June 2004 elections. The new Parliament, which will come together for the first time in July 2004, will have 732 MEPs.

As the above figure shows, the average forecast of our model would lead to a slight shift to the right from the outgoing Parliament in May to the incoming Parliament in July. Centre-right parties are in government in a majority of EU member states, which would normally suggest that parties on the left should do well in the mid-term European elections. However, centre-right losses in several of the smaller countries should easily be outweighed by gains in three of the big member states – Germany, Britain, and Poland – where centre-left governments are expected to do badly in June.

As a result, the EPP-ED is likely to remain the largest group in the Parliament, with almost 40 percent of the seats in the new Parliament. The PES should lose about 15 seats, but remain at about 30 percent of all MEPs. In the middle, if the FDP secures more than five percent of the votes in Germany, the ELDR would secure about 10 percent of the seats in the new Parliament. Among the other groups, the two groups to the left of the PES (G/EFA and EUL/NGL) are likely to lose about 25 seats between them, the main group to the right of the EPP-ED (the UEN) should remain stable at about 30 seats, the anti-European EDD is unlikely to secure enough MEPs to form a group, and there may be as many as 50 non-attached MEPs.

POLITICAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

For the first time, a coalition between the EPP-ED and ELDR would almost certainly secure a simple majority in the new Parliament. But, the two biggest groups – the EPP-ED and PES – will be even more dominant, as they are likely to control almost 70 percent of the seats between them, compared to 65 percent at the beginning of the 1999-04 Parliament.

With a centre-right majority in the Council as well as in the Parliament, an EPP-ED backed politician is likely to face little difficulty winning approval as the next Commission President. It would not, however, be impossible for a non-Christian Democrat also to win Parliamentary approval as Commission President, with the support of the centre and left.

It is difficult to overstate the determining role of the ELDR. It will be able to extract significant concessions from the EPP-ED – such as a certain number of Liberal Commissioners or the post of President of the Parliament for a second term of office in succession – as a price for supporting an EPP-ED candidate for the Commission Presidency.

However, coalitions on individual items of EU legislation may be more unpredictable. For example, on environmental protection the ELDR would probably continue to vote with the PES, G/EFA and EUL/NGL, and so form a centre-left majority. While on labour market reform or market liberalisation measures, the ELDR could join the EPP-ED and UEN to form a centre-right majority. Meanwhile, on social policies or working conditions, the EPP-ED will probably be split, with the more traditional Christian Democrats continuing to vote with the left on these issues.

NATIONAL BALANCE WITHIN THE GROUPS

The national balance inside the party groups will shift in the new European Parliament. While the German CDU/CSU delegation should again dominate the EPP-ED, the French or Italian conservatives may replace the British Conservatives as the second largest national delegation in the EPP-ED. In the PES, the four largest national delegations – the German, British, Spanish, and French – should be evenly balanced, with the French or British MEPs most likely to emerge as the largest national delegation. In the ELDR, the British Liberal Democrats should again be the largest national delegation.

Parties from the new member states are likely to have more influence in the EPP-ED and ELDR than the PES. Polish MEPs will probably be the sixth largest national delegation in the EPP-ED, with the Hungarians seventh, and the Czechs eight. In contrast, Hungarian MEPs are likely to be either the sixth or seventh largest delegation in the PES, with the Czechs ninth or tenth and the Poles in thirteenth or fourteenth place. Lithuanian MEPs are likely to be the fourth or fifth largest delegation in the ELDR.

ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS

These predictions assume that each national party's delegation of MEPs will sit in the same party group in which they sat in the 1999-2004 Parliament. However, in all previous Parliaments there have been some changes to the make up of the party groups, and some switching between the party groups is inevitable in the new Parliament. This is difficult to predict in advance. But, two possible changes might occur.

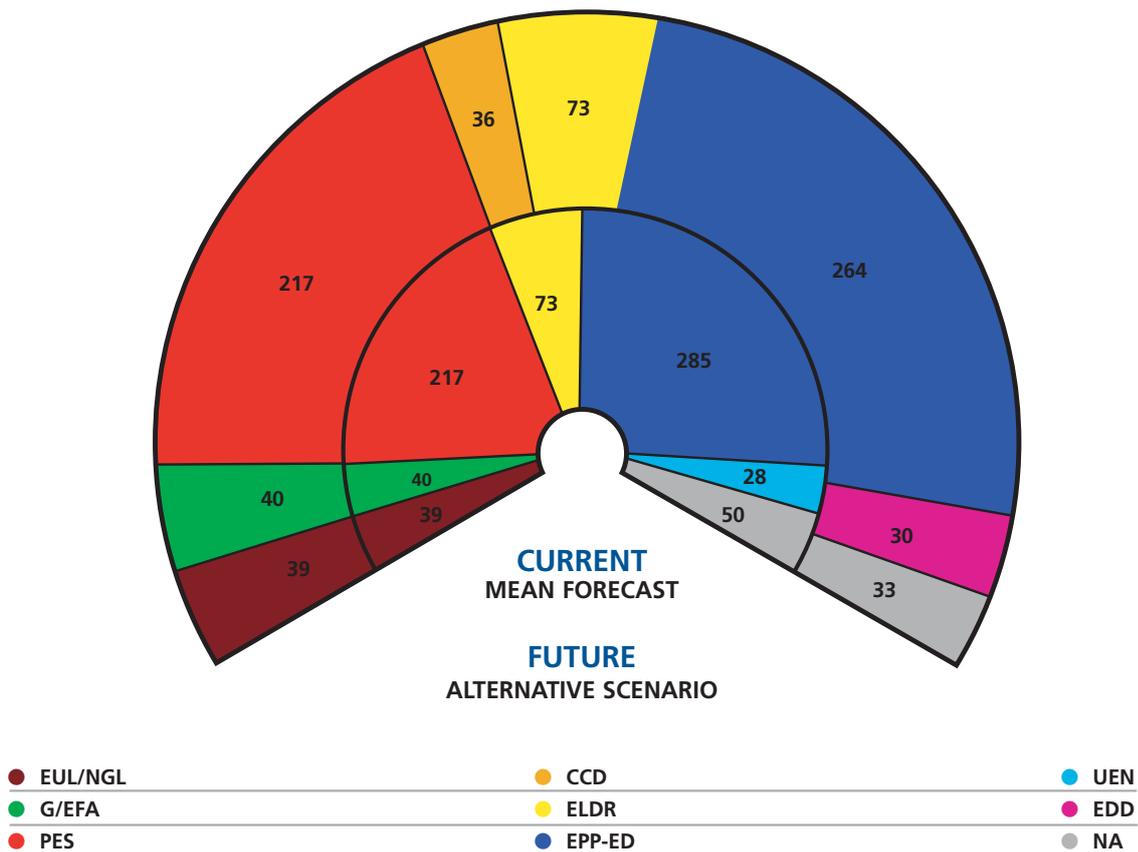
A Realignment on the Centre-Right?

First, there could be a re-alignment on the centre-right, with a breakaway from the EPP-ED by the Christian Democratic parties that regard themselves as centrists or even centre-left, and often govern in coalition with Socialists. Such a breakaway group, which for convenience we call the 'Centre Christian Democrats' (CCD in the figure, below), might comprise the Belgian CD&V, CDH and CVP-EVP, Dutch CDA, Luxembourg CSV, French UDF, Irish Fine Gael, Italian PPI and SVP, Catalan UDC, Czech KDU-US, Lithuanian LKD, Slovak KDH, and Slovenian NSi. This would free-up the remaining members of the EPP-ED to take in some of the less anti-European members of UEN – the Irish Fianna Fáil, Italian National Alliance, and the Portuguese People's Party.

Antics on the Far Right?

Second, there will be enough MEPs from far right parties to re-establish the old 'European Right' group (ER in the figure, below). This group might comprise the Austrian FPÖ, Belgian VB and FN, French FN, Italian MSFT, Slovak HZDS, and the Polish SO and LPR, if some of these parties can overcome their previous disagreements.

As the figure below shows, with these changes the EPP-ED would remain the largest group in the Parliament. But, the chamber would be less clearly tilted to the right, and an EPP-ED alliance with the ELDR would no-longer command a majority. Also, the extreme right would have a new voice at European level and perhaps even gain the chair of one of the Parliament's committees.



THE NEXT EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Party	1999-2004 EP				2004-2009 EP			
	before enlargement		after enlargement		mean forecast		max/min for each group	
	MEPs	%	MEPs	%	MEPs	%	max	min
European People's Party	232	37.1	297	37.7	285	38.9	327	255
Party of European Socialists	175	28.0	232	29.4	217	29.6	244	197
European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party	53	8.5	66	8.4	73	10.0	91	53
European United Left/Nordic Green Left	49	7.8	56	7.1	39	5.3	52	23
Greens/European Free Alliance	44	7.0	45	5.7	40	5.5	57	22
Union for Europe of the Nations	23	3.7	30	3.8	28	3.8	33	20
Europe of Democracies and Diversities	18	2.9	18	2.3				
Non-attached MEPs	32	5.1	44	5.6	50	6.8	62	35
Total	626		788		732			

ABBREVIATIONS

EPP-ED	European People's Party
PES	Party of European Socialists
ELDR	European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party
EUL/NGL	European United Left/Nordic Green Left
G/EFA	Greens/European Free Alliance
UEN	Union for Europe of the Nations
EDD	Europe of Democracies and Diversities



Forecast for each Member State

The following tables compare our mean, maximum and minimum predictions with the votes won in the last European and national elections and the number of MEPs the parties currently have in March 2004.

For the new member states, the number of current MEPs reported is the number of Observers from each party, who become full MEPs on 1 May 2004.

The mean predictions are highlighted in green. The parties that are currently in government are marked with an asterisk.

Note that the maximum and minimum seat predictions are party specific, so add up to more/less than the number of seats available in each member state.

AUSTRIA

Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Social Democratic Party (SPÖ)	PES	31.7	36.5	38.8	7	8	8	7
Austrian People's Party (ÖVP)*	EPP-ED	30.6	42.3	36.4	7	7	8	7
Greens (GRÜNEN)	G/EFA	9.2	9.5	11.4	2	2	2	1
Freedom Party (FPÖ)*	NA	23.5	10.0	8.6	5	1	2	1
Liberal Forum (LF)	ELDR	2.6	1.0	2.5	0	0	0	0



The opposition Social Democrats are likely to win one seat more than the governing Austrian People's Party, as some of the People's Party's supporters will stay home in the European election. Our model also predicts that the People's Party's coalition partner – Haider's Freedom Party – should do badly in June, as it suffers a loss of support after several years in government. The Austrian Greens, however, should maintain their two seats.

BELGIUM



Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Flemish community								
Flemish Liberals & Democrats (VLD)*	ELDR	13.6	15.4	14.2	3	3	4	3
Socialist Party (SP.A)*	PES	9.6	14.9	13.7	2	3	4	3
Christian Democrats & Flemish (CD&V)	EPP-ED	13.5	13.2	13.3	3	3	3	3
Vlaams Blok (VB)	NA	9.4	11.6	11.5	2	3	3	2
Greens (AGALEV)	G/EFA	7.5	2.5	5.5	2	1	2	0
New Flemish Alliance (NVA)	G/EFA	7.6	2.5	3.3	2	0	1	0
French community								
Socialist Party (PS)*	PES	8.8	13.0	11.6	3	3	5	3
Reformist Movement (MR)*	ELDR+EPP-ED	10.0	11.4	10.0	3	3	3	2
Ecologists (ECOLO)	G/EFA	8.4	3.1	5.9	3	2	3	1
Humanist Democratic Centre (CDH)	EPP	4.9	5.5	5.5	1	1	2	1
National Front (FN)	NA	1.5	2.0	3.0	0	1	1	0
German community								
Christian Social Party (CSP-EVP)	EPP-ED	-	-	-	1	1	1	1

The governing parties in Belgium – the Liberals and Socialists – should lose some support to the Christian Democrats. Our predictions also pick up the fact that the two Belgian Green parties usually do better in European elections than national elections. However, they would have to recover a lot of ground to hold on to the five seats they won in 1999. The extremist Vlaams Blok looks likely to gain one seat, raising its total to three.

CYPRUS



Party	EP Group	Votes		MEPs			
		National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Democratic Coalition (DISI)	EPP-ED	34.0	35.2	2	2	2	2
Progressive Workers' Party (AKEL)*	EUL/NGL	34.7	32.1	2	2	2	2
Democratic Party (DIKO)*	ELDR	14.8	12.9	1	1	1	1
Social Democrats (KISOS)*	PES	6.5	5.3	1	1	1	0
Ecologists (KOP)	G/EFA	2.0	4.9	0	0	1	0
New Horizons (NEO)		3.0	3.4	0	0	0	0
United Democrats (EDI)		2.6	3.2	0	0	0	0
Fighting Democratic Movement (ADIK)		2.2	3.0	0	0	0	0

The main opposition party in Cyprus, the Democratic Coalition, should gain votes since the May 2001 elections. However, as Cyprus only has six seats, there is unlikely to be any change in the number of MEPs each Cypriot party has compared to its MEPs in May 2004.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Party	EP Group	Votes		MEPs			
		National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Social Democratic Party (_SSD)*	PES	30.2	29.8	7	8	9	7
Civic Democratic Party (ODS)	EPP-ED	24.5	26.8	9	7	8	8
Communist Party (KS_M)	EUL/NGL	18.5	19.5	3	5	5	5
Christian Democratic Union (KDU-US)*	EPP-ED	14.3	12.8	5	3	4	3
Green Party (SZ)	G/EFA	2.4	5.3	0	1	2	0
Association of Independents (SNK)		2.8	3.4	0	0	0	0
Republicans (RMS)		1.0	2.4	0	0	0	0



We expect vote-shares in the Czech Republic in June 2004 to be similar to those in the national election in June 2002, but with a slight decline in support for the governing Social Democratic Party. But, the Czech Green Party may win a seat – one of only two potential seats for the Greens in the new member states. A lot will depend on the electoral turnout. If the turnout is lower than expected, the Civic Democratic Party will do better at the expense of the Social Democrats.

DENMARK

Party	EP Group	Votes		MEPs			
		EP 99	National election	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Liberal Party (V)*	ELDR	23.4	31.3	5	4	5	4
Social Democrats (S)	PES	16.5	29.1	3	3	4	3
June Movement (JB)	EUL/NGL	16.1	-	3	3	3	2
Radical Liberal Party (RV)	ELDR	9.1	5.3	1	1	1	1
Conservative People's Party (KF)*	EPP-ED	8.5	9.1	1	1	2	1
Anti-EU Movement (FmEF)	EUL/NGL	7.3	-	1	1	1	1
Socialist People's Party (SF)	EUL/NGL	7.1	6.4	1	1	1	1
Danish People's Party (DF)	UEN	5.8	12.0	1	0	1	0
Centre Democrats (CD)	ELDR	3.5	1.8	0	0	0	0
Christian Democrats (KD)	EPP-ED	2.0	2.3	0	0	0	0
Freedom Party (FrP)	NA	0.7	0.6	0	0	0	0



Denmark has a different party system for national and European elections. Two anti-European parties (JB and FmEF), which do not stand in national elections, secure more than 20 percent of the votes in European elections. These two parties pick up support from especially anti-European voters on the left, who normally vote for the Social Democrats. Consequently, party support in the 1999 European elections is a better indicator of how parties will do in June 2004 than party support in the November 2001 national elections. One caveat, though, is that the Danish People's Party may do better in 2004 than in 1999, as their general level of support has risen. Finally, if the EDD group does not secure enough MEPs to form a party group, the two Danish anti-European parties are likely to join the EUL/NGL group.

ESTONIA



Party	EP Group	Votes		MEPs			
		National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Centre Party (KESK)	ELDR	25.4	28.1	1	2	2	2
Res Publica (ResP)*	EPP-ED	24.6	24.4	1	2	2	1
Estonian Reform Party (ER)*	ELDR	17.7	16.7	1	1	2	1
Estonian People's Union (Rahvaliid)*	UEN	13.0	11.5	1	1	1	1
Fatherland Union (Isamaa)	EPP-ED	7.3	7.0	1	0	0	0
Social Democratic Party (Möödukad)	PES	7.0	6.7	1	0	0	0
United People's Party (EÜRP)		2.2	3.1	0	0	0	0
Christian People's Party (EKRP)		1.1	2.5	0	0	0	0

The opposition Centre Party is likely to beat the main governing party, Res Publica, by a bigger margin than in the March 2003 general election. With only six seats from Estonia, these two parties should each win two MEPs. Also, because Estonia will use a seat allocation method (d'Hondt) that favours the big parties, the Social Democrats and the Fatherland Union are likely to lose their seats. If this happens, the Party of European Socialists will have MEPs from all member states except Estonia.

FINLAND



Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Centre Party (KESK)*	ELDR	21.3	24.7	24.5	4	4	5	4
Social Democratic Party (SDP)*	PES	17.8	22.9	22.5	3	4	5	3
National Rally (KOK)	EPP-ED	25.3	18.5	19.6	4	3	4	3
Green League (VIHR)	G/EFA	13.4	8.0	9.8	2	1	2	1
Left League (VAS)	EUL/NGL	9.1	9.9	9.5	1	1	2	1
Christian Democrats (SKD)	EPP-ED	2.4	5.3	5.3	1	1	1	0
Swedish People's Party (SFP)*	ELDR	6.8	4.6	4.2	1	0	1	0

Party support over time is quite stable in Finland, and parties should do broadly as they did in 1999. However, the Social Democrats are likely to improve on their showing in the last European elections, at the expense of the Greens. The Swedish People's Party may also lose a seat. But, with an electoral system that encourages citizens to vote for individual politicians rather than parties, popular Green and Swedish People's Party candidates might just attract enough votes to hold onto their seats.

FRANCE

Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
People's Movement (UMP)*	EPP-ED	12.8	33.7	27.8	17	29	37	26
Socialist Party (PS)	PES	22.0	24.1	22.5	21	25	28	22
National Front (FN)	NA	5.7	11.3	9.4	5	10	12	7
French Democracy (UDF)*	EPP-ED+ELDR	9.3	4.8	6.8	7	7	9	4
Greens (V)	G/EFA	9.7	4.5	5.8	9	4	7	1
Communist Party (PCF)	EUL/NGL	6.8	4.8	4.1	6	3	5	0
Ecologists	G/EFA	0.0	1.2	4.0	0	0	0	0
Republican Pole (PR)	EUL/NGL	0.0	1.2	2.8	0	0	0	0
Workers' Struggle (LO-LCR)	EUL/NGL	5.2	2.5	2.4	5	0	0	0
Hunting, Fishing, Nature, Tradition (CPNT)	EDD	6.8	1.7	2.4	6	0	0	0
Left Radical Party (PRG)	PES	0.0	1.5	2.3	1	0	0	0
National Republican Movement (MNR)	NA	3.3	1.1	2.1	0	0	0	0
Movement for France (MPF)	EDD+UEN	13.1	1.2	2.0	10	0	0	0



With the fusion of several parties on the centre-right into the UMP the party system is currently in a state of flux. France is therefore a difficult case to predict. For example, the UMP did badly in the regional elections in March 2004. Also, it is unclear whether the anti-European Movement for France, which did well in the 1999 European elections, will present a list in the 2004 elections. Hence, our statistical model may not be able to forecast the outcome in France accurately.

GERMANY



Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Christian Democratic Union (CDU)	EPP-ED	39.3	29.5	37.0	43	38	41	36
Social Democratic Party (SPD)*	PES	30.7	38.5	25.0	35	26	28	24
The Greens (GRÜNEN)*	G/EFA	6.4	8.6	11.0	4	11	12	8
Christian Social Union (CSU)	EPP-ED	9.4	9.0	10.0	10	10	11	9
Free Democratic Party (FDP)	ELDR	3.0	7.4	9.0	0	9	11	0
Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS)	EUL/NGL	5.8	4.3	5.0	7	5	6	0

We use the latest opinion poll data as the basis for calculating the likely seat shares in the June European elections as SPD support has collapsed so dramatically since the September 2002 general election. A key question for the make-up of the Parliament as a whole is whether the FDP will reach the five percent threshold, which they did not achieve in 1994 and 1999. If FDP support in the latest polls holds up in June, and we think it will, the FDP will win seats in the Parliament for the first time since 1989 and would become the second largest delegation in the ELDR group.

GREECE



Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK)	PES	32.9	40.6	44.2	9	11	12	10
New Democracy (ND)*	EPP-ED	36.0	45.5	38.9	9	9	10	9
Communist Party (KKE)	EUL/NGL	8.7	5.9	6.2	3	1	2	1
Coalition of the Left (SYN)	EUL/NGL	5.2	3.3	4.1	2	1	1	0
Populist Orthodox Rally (LAOS)	UEN	-	2.2	3.4	0	1	1	0
Democratic Socialist Movement (DIKKI)	EUL/NGL	6.8	1.8	3.1	2	1	1	0

We expect the Greek Socialists to recover some support as some New Democracy supporters stay home in the European elections having just won the national election on 7 March 2004. We also expect the new Populist Orthodox Party to win a seat and to sit with the other conservative/nationalist parties in the UEN group.

HUNGARY

Party	EP Group	Votes		MEPs			
		National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Citizens' Party-Democratic Forum (Fidesz-MDF)	EPP-ED	41.1	42.2	12	12	13	11
Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP)*	PES	42.1	37.6	10	11	12	9
Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz)*	ELDR	5.5	5.0	2	1	2	1
Justice and Life Party (MIEP)	NA	4.4	4.8	0	0	2	0
Centre Party (CP)		3.9	4.4	0	0	0	0
Workers' Party (MP)		2.8	3.6	0	0	0	0
Smallholders' Party (FKgP)		0.8	2.4	0	0	0	0



In Hungary, the main opposition party, Fidesz, should beat the governing Socialist Party in the June elections. However, the Socialists may gain one MEP, while the Alliance of Free Democrats should lose one of their two seats. There is a reasonable chance that only Fidesz and the Socialists will reach the five percent threshold, in which case these two parties will share all the Hungarian MEPs between them.

IRELAND

Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Fianna Fáil (FF)*	UEN	38.7	41.5	36.7	6	5	6	5
Fine Gael (FG)	EPP-ED	24.6	22.5	25.0	5	3	4	3
Independents (Pat Cox)	ELDR +EPP-ED	15.0	11.0	10.9	1	2	2	1
Labour Party (Lab)	PES	8.8	10.8	10.7	1	1	1	1
Green Party (GP)	G/EFA	6.7	3.8	6.4	2	2	2	0
Sinn Fein (SF)	EUL/NGL	6.3	6.5	6.4	0	0	1	0
Progressive Democrats (PD)*	ELDR	0.0	4.0	3.9	0	0	0	0



Fianna Fáil should again dominate the elections. It has no realistic chance of winning two seats in all four of the Irish constituencies, but will do so in one or two of them. Fine Gael will probably drop a seat, and the Greens could also lose at least one seat. But, Labour should keep its seat in Dublin and Pat Cox should keep his seat in the South. Our model does not pick up the growing support for Sinn Fein since the May 2002 general election, which might enable that party to win a seat in at least one of the constituencies, perhaps in Dublin at the expense of the Greens. Ireland uses the Single-Transferable-Vote system, which allows voters to choose individual politicians rather than parties, and a second popular Independent candidate may again be elected in the North-West.

ITALY



Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Olive Tree Coalition (Ulivo)	PES	33.7	32.6	31.1				
◆ Democrats of the Left (DS)	PES				15	14	16	14
◆ Italian People's Party (PPI)	EPP-ED				4	4	4	4
◆ Italian Democratic Socialists (SDI)	PES				2	1	1	1
◆ Democrats (Dem)	ELDR				5	4	4	3
◆ Republican Party (PRI)	ELDR				1	1	1	1
◆ South-Tyrol People's Party (SVP)	EPP-ED				1	1	1	1
Forza Italia + Allies (FI)*	EPP-ED	25.2	29.4	29.4	24	21	25	18
National Alliance + Allies (AN)*	UEN	10.3	12.0	10.7	10	8	10	6
Green Federation (FV)	G/EFA	1.8	2.2	4.9	2	4	7	2
Communist Refoundation (RC)	EUL/NGL	4.3	5.0	4.5	4	4	5	3
Italy of Values (IdV)	ELDR	0.0	3.9	3.8	2	3	4	2
Union of Centre Democrats (UDC)*	EPP-ED	2.7	4.6	3.7	4	3	4	2
Northern League (LN)*	NA	4.5	3.9	3.1	3	3	4	2
Bonino List/Radicals (Rad)	NA	8.5	2.3	2.9	7	2	3	1
Party of Italian Communists (PDCI)	EUL/NGL	2.0	1.7	2.6	2	2	3	1
Social Movement (MSFT)	NA	1.6	0.4	2.1	0	2	4	1
Pensioners Party (Pens)	EPP-ED	0.7	0.0	1.1	1	1	1	0

Italy is another difficult case because of the instability of the various electoral alliances. Nevertheless, the centre-left alliance should gain more votes than Forza Italia – who may do worse than our predictions if large sections of their electorate stay home in June. However, the MEPs on the joint Ulivo list will sit in three different party groups: the PES, ELDR and EPP-ED. As a result, Forza Italia should continue to be the largest single Italian delegation of MEPs. The National Alliance is likely to lose a couple of seats, and our model predicts that the Italian Radicals should lose more than half their MEPs, as they did badly in the last general election. But, the popularity of Emma Bonino at the head of the list may enable them to minimise their losses.

LATVIA

Party	EP Group	Votes		MEPs			
		National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
New Era (JL)	EPP-ED	23.9	23.3	2	2	3	2
People's Harmony-Socialist Party (TSP-LS)	PES	18.9	19.8	1	2	2	2
People's Party (TP)*	EPP-ED	16.7	17.1	2	2	2	2
Green and Farmer's Union (ZZS)*	G/EFA	9.5	10.1	1	1	1	1
Latvia First Party (LPP)*	EPP-ED	9.6	8.0	1	1	1	1
Alliance Fatherland & Freedom (TB/LNNK)	UEN	5.4	4.9	1	1	1	0
Latvia's Way (LC)	ELDR	4.9	4.7	0	0	1	0
Social-Democratic Workers' Party (LSDSP)	EUL/NGL	4.0	4.2	1	0	0	0
Life of Latgale (LG)		1.6	2.7	0	0	0	0
Social Democratic Union (SDS)		1.5	2.7	0	0	0	0
Social Democratic Welfare Party (SDLP)		1.4	2.6	0	0	0	0



If the Latvian party system remains stable – which is uncertain – the vote-shares in 2004 should be broadly similar to the national election results in October 2002. If so, the EPP-ED should secure five MEPs from Latvia, the PES should secure two, and the Greens and UEN should manage one each.

LITHUANIA



Party	EP Group	Votes		MEPs			
		National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Social Democratic Coalition (ABSK)*	PES	31.1	31.0	5	5	5	4
New Union (NS)*	ELDR	19.6	19.0	2	3	3	3
People's Party-Democratic Party (LLS-LDP)	ELDR	17.3	18.3	1	3	3	2
Homeland Union-Conservatives (TS-LK)	EPP-ED	8.6	8.3	1	1	1	1
Lithuanian Christian Democrats (LKD)	EPP-ED	7.3	7.0	1	1	1	1
Lithuanian Peasant Party (LVP)	EPP-ED	4.1	4.4	1	0	0	0
Liberal and Centre Union (LCS)	ELDR+EPP-ED	2.9	3.6	2	0	0	0
Moderate Conservative Union (NKS)		2.0	3.0	0	0	0	0
Election Action of Lithuania's Poles (LLRA)		1.9	2.9	0	0	0	0
Young Latvia-New Nationalists (JL-PKS)		1.2	2.6	0	0	0	0

The big three alliances in Lithuania – the Social Democratic Coalition, the New Union, and the Lithuanian People's Party/Democratic Party – should win eleven of the thirteen seats in June. However, our model may not take account of the potential for splits and new alliances in the Lithuanian party system.

LUXEMBOURG



Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Christian Social People's Party (CSV)*	EPP-ED	31.9	30.2	29.3	2	2	2	2
Socialist Workers' Party (LSAP)	PES	23.3	24.2	23.7	2	1	2	1
Democratic Party (DP)*	ELDR	20.8	22.0	21.5	1	1	2	1
The Greens (DG)	G/EFA	10.7	7.5	11.2	1	1	1	0
Pensioner's Justice (ADR)	UEN or EPP-ED	9.0	10.5	9.8	0	1	1	0
The Left (DL)		2.6	3.8	4.5	0	0	0	0

Despite the general stability of vote-shares in Luxembourg in the past few elections, the seat allocation method (Hagenbach-Bischoff) means that a small increase in votes since the last European elections for the Action Committee for Democracy and Pensioner's Justice (ADR) could result in this party gaining a seat at the expense of the Socialists. We assume that this party will choose to sit in the UEN group. But, they may also sit with the EPP-ED.

MALTA

Party	EP Group	Votes		MEPs			
		National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Nationalist Party (PN)*	EPP-ED	51.8	52.9	3	3	3	2
Malta Labour Party (MLP)	PES	47.5	41.2	2	2	3	2
Democratic Alliance (AD)		0.7	5.9	0	0	0	0

With only five seats at stake in Malta, only a large vote swing in June would prevent the Nationalist Party winning three seats and the Labour Party winning two.



NETHERLANDS

Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Labour Party (PvdA)	PES	20.1	27.3	29.5	6	8	9	8
Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA)*	EPP-ED	26.9	28.6	27.5	9	8	9	7
People's Party for Fr.& Dem (VVD)*	ELDR	19.7	17.9	16.5	6	5	5	4
Green Left (GL)	G/EFA	11.9	5.1	7.1	4	2	2	1
Socialist Party (SP)	EUL/NGL	5.0	6.3	5.9	1	1	2	1
List Pim Fortuyn (LPF)	NA	0.0	5.7	5.4	0	1	2	1
Christian Union (CU)	UEN	8.7	3.7	4.0	3	1	1	0
Democrats 66 (D66)*	ELDR	5.8	4.1	3.8	2	1	1	0

Our model predicts a moderate swing back to the Dutch Labour Party since the May 2003 general election, which would mean the PvdA gaining a couple of seats at the expense of the Greens and either the VVD or CDA. One uncertainty, which is not picked up in our model, is how well the Christian Union will do in June, since this alliance has been able to mobilise its potential support better in European elections than in general elections. If the EDD group does not secure enough MEPs to form a group, the Christian Union is likely to sit in the UEN group. List Pim Fortuyn may also win a seat for the first time.



POLAND



Party	EP Group	Votes		MEPs			
		National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Democratic Left Alliance-Union of Labour (SLD-UP)*	PES	41.0	10.5	27	6	7	5
Civic Platform (PO)	EPP-ED	12.7	27.4	5	17	18	14
Self Defence of the Polish Republic (SO)	NA	10.2	25.3	4	16	17	13
Law and Justice (PiS)	UEN	9.5	13.7	4	8	9	7
Polish People's Party (PSL)	EPP-ED	9.0	4.2	5	0	3	0
League of Polish Families (LPR)	NA	7.9	10.5	3	7	7	5
Alliance of Polish Christian Democrats (AWSP)	EPP-ED	5.6	0.0	3	0	0	0
Freedom Union (UW)		3.1	0.0	0	0	0	0
German Minority (MN)		0.4	0.0	0	0	0	0
Others (RKN, PBL, PLD)	NA			3	0	0	0

We use the latest opinion poll data as the basis for our predictions in June as our model cannot capture the dramatic collapse in support for the left-wing governing party in Poland since the September 2001 general election. If the levels of support in the opinion poll are mirrored in June, the PES would lose almost twenty Polish MEPs, while the EPP would gain more than ten. Also, there will be a large delegation of non-attached Polish MEPs – from the Self Defence of the Polish Republic (Samoobrona) and the League of Polish Families – who may look for other partners on the radical right to form a new party group in the Parliament.

PORTUGAL



Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Socialist Party (PS)	PES	43.1	37.9	42.4	12	11	11	10
Social Democrat Party (PSD)*	EPP-ED	31.1	40.1	38.6	9	10	11	9
People's Party (PP)*	UEN	8.2	8.8	8.0	2	2	2	1
Unitarian Democratic Coalition (CDU)	EUL/NGL	10.3	7.0	7.2	2	1	2	1
Left Block (BE)		1.8	2.8	3.7	0	0	1	0

We expect the Portuguese Socialists to win the elections in June, on the back of an anti-government swing since the March 2002 national election. However, they are unlikely to recover fully the level of support they gained in 1999, and so could lose one seat, while the governing Social Democrats could gain one. The conservative People's Party should hold on to its two MEPs, while the left-wing Unitarian Democratic Coalition is likely to lose a seat.

SLOVAKIA

Party	EP Group	Votes		MEPs			
		National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS)	NA	19.5	14.9	2	2	3	2
Slovak Democratic & Christian Union (SDKU)*	EPP-ED	15.1	5.6	3	2	2	1
Party Direction-Third Way (Smer)	PES	13.5	30.6	2	5	5	4
Party of the Hungarian Coalition (SMK)*	EPP-ED	11.2	10.5	2	1	2	1
Christian Democratic Movement (KDH)*	EPP-ED	8.3	7.8	2	1	1	1
New Civic Alliance (ANO)*	ELDR	8.0	6.5	1	1	1	0
Slovak Communist Party (KSS)	EUL/NGL	6.3	8.8	1	1	2	1
Right Slovak National Party (PSNS)		3.7	-	0	0	0	0
Slovak National Party (SNS)	NA	3.3	6.1	0	1	1	0
Movement for Democracy (HZD)		3.3	2.7	0	0	0	0
Klub Nezávislých Poslancov (KNP)	UEN		-	1	0	0	0



Party support in Slovakia, as in Poland, is very volatile, so again we use the latest opinion poll data as the basis for predicting vote and seat shares in June. If the opinion poll intentions are maintained in June, this would be one of the few states where the PES gains MEPs.

SLOVENIA

Party	EP Group	Votes		MEPs			
		National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS)*	ELDR	36.3	35.0	3	3	3	2
Social Democratic Party of Slovenia (SDS)	EPP-ED	15.8	16.6	1	1	1	1
United List of Social Democrats (ZLSD)*	PES	12.1	10.8	1	1	1	1
New Slovenia Christian People's Party (NSi)	EPP-ED	8.6	8.4	1	1	1	1
Slovenian People's Party (SLS+SKD)*	EPP-ED	9.6	8.3	1	1	1	1
Democratic Party of Retired People (DeSUS)*		5.2	4.7	0	0	0	0
Slovenian National Party (SNS)		4.4	4.6	0	0	0	0
Party of the Slovenian Youth (SMS)		4.3	4.6	0	0	0	0



With relatively stable vote-shares and only seven MEPs, the Slovenian parties are likely to win the same number of MEPs as they currently have.

SPAIN



Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
People's Party (PP)	EPP-ED	39.8	37.6	38.6	27	23	25	22
Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)*	PES	35.3	42.6	35.5	24	22	24	20
United Left (IU)	EUL/NGL	5.8	5.0	4.7	4	3	4	2
Convergence and Union (CiU)	ELDR + EPP-ED	4.4	3.2	4.2	3	2	4	1
Europe Coalition (CE)	ELDR + G/EFA	3.2	2.0	3.6	2	2	3	1
Nat.Coal. for a People's Europe (CNEP)	G/EFA	2.9	4.4	3.2	2	1	1	1
Galician National Block (BNG)	G/EFA	1.7	0.8	2.7	1	1	1	1
Herri Barasuna (HB)	NA	1.5	0.2	-	1	0	0	0

Having just won the Spanish general election on 14 March 2004 with a very high turnout, some Socialist voters may not vote in the European elections in June. As a result, we expect the People's Party to win back some of the support lost in the general election, and obtain more votes than the Socialists. Of the other parties, we expect the United Left to lose a seat. And, at least one of the regionalist parties may lose an MEP – mainly as a result of the reduction of Spanish MEPs from 64 to 54.

SWEDEN



Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Social Democrats (S)*	PES	26.0	39.8	36.1	6	7	8	7
Moderate Party (M)	EPP-ED	20.7	15.2	15.7	5	3	4	4
People's Party Liberals (Fp)	ELDR	13.9	13.3	13.4	3	3	3	4
Christian Democrats (Kd)	EPP-ED	7.6	9.1	8.8	2	2	2	2
Left Party (V)	EUL/NGL	15.8	8.3	8.0	3	2	2	1
Environmental Party (Mp)	G/EFA	9.5	4.6	7.0	2	1	2	1
Centre Party (C)	ELDR	6.0	6.1	6.0	1	1	1	0
Sweden Democrats (Sd)		-	1.4	2.7	0	0	0	0
Pensioners' Interest Party (SPI)		-	0.7	2.3	0	0	0	0

The Social Democrats should comfortably win the election in Sweden. However, they may do worse than our model predicts if some of their more anti-European supporters decide to vote for the Left Party instead, as they did in the 1999 elections, and other supporters stay home. This was a big problem for the party in 1999. The conservative Moderate Party is unlikely to do as well as it did in the last European elections and should lose one or two seats. One uncertainty is the performance of the new anti-European party in Sweden, the June List, which is excluded in our analysis because we do not have any information on its past electoral performance.



Party	EP Group	Votes			MEPs			
		EP99	National election	Forecast Mean	Current	June 04 Mean	June 04 Max	June 04 Min
Great Britain								
Conservative Party (Con)	EPP-ED	35.8	32.7	34.6	36	32	34	28
Labour Party (Lab)*	PES	28.0	42.0	31.2	28	27	32	24
Liberal Democrats (LD)	ELDR	12.7	18.8	19.2	11	12	17	11
Green Party (G)	G/EFA	6.3	0.7	4.4	2	0	2	0
Scottish National Party (SNP)	G/EFA	2.7	1.8	2.9	2	2	3	2
UK Independence Party (UKIP)	EDD	7.0	1.5	2.7	3	0	0	0
Plaid Cymru (PC)	G/EFA	1.9	0.8	2.3	2	2	2	1
Northern Ireland								
Ulster Unionist Party (UUP)	EPP-ED	17.4	26.8	26.7	1	1	1	1
Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)	NA	28.0	22.5	22.5	1	1	1	0
Sinn Fein (SF)	EUL/NGL	17.1	21.7	21.7	0	1	1	0
Social Dem. & Labour Party (SDLP)	PES	27.7	21.0	20.9	1	0	1	0
Alliance Party of N. Ireland (APNI)		2.1	3.6	3.9	0	0	0	0

Despite a healthy lead for Labour in the national polls in 1999, the Conservatives won the election. This turnaround was because Labour voters stayed home. The differential turnout between party supporters was more pronounced in Britain in 1999 than anywhere else in the EU. We expect this to happen again and have made special provision for this in our predictions. We consequently predict that the Conservatives will win the election again, but with Labour recovering some ground since 1999. Together with the reduction in the number of seats from 87 to 78, this means that the Conservatives are likely to lose at least two MEPs and Labour are likely to lose one from their current 28 (Labour won 29 seats in 1999, but Richard Balfe MEP defected to the EPP-ED group). We expect the Liberal Democrats to gain a seat. But, the UK Independence Party should lose all their seats, as support for them appears to have collapsed, and the Greens may lose out too. In Northern Ireland, Sinn Fein is likely to take a seat from the SDLP.



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