

## **I. Profile of the EP**

### **1. Influence of the EP in the EU:**

The role which Europeans see the EP as playing within the EU indirectly points to the major influence they think it has on the decision-making process at European level.

*Perception:* A majority of respondents (**43%**) take the view that **the EP is currently the institution which has the greatest degree of decision-making power** in the EU, compared with figures of 14% for the Commission and 10% for the Council.

*Wish:* A majority of respondents (**47%**) take the view that **the EP is the institution which should have the greatest degree of decision-making power** in the EU, compared with figures of 9% for the Commission and 8% for the Council.

### **2. Information about the EP:**

Conversely, **almost three Europeans out of four (73%) state that they are, in general terms, badly or very badly informed** about the EP's activities. This proportion is no lower in the founding Member States of the Union.

However, **42% of people questioned stated that they had recently read, seen or heard something about the EP.**

## **II. Role of the EP**

### **1. Role of the EP in decision-making:**

#### **(a) The EP as legislator**

Questioned about the EP's role in various areas, **43%** of respondents take the view that the EP played a **decisive role** in the **banning of phthalates** in toys and childcare equipment (and 29% state that if not decisive, its role was at least important).

In addition, more than one person interviewed out of two takes the view that the EP played an **important role** in connection with the following measures:

- |                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| - <b>roaming</b>                | 55% |
| - <b>black list</b> of airlines | 65% |
| - <b>REACH</b>                  | 70% |
| - <b>bathing water quality</b>  | 58% |

#### **(b) Other areas**

*Enlargement:* **68%** of those questioned know that no enlargement can take place without the prior agreement of the EP. Of those interviewed, 8% reply that this statement is false and **24% don't know if it is true or false.**

**EU budget:** 60% of those questioned know that the budget is established jointly by the EP and the Member States. Of those interviewed, 10% think this statement is false and 30% **don't know if it is true or false.**

**2. Method of decision-making in the EP:**

EP decisions are taken on the basis of MEPs' national interests	<b>41%</b>
EP decisions are taken on the basis of MEPs' political allegiances	<b>25%</b>
National interests and political allegiances are equally important	<b>15%</b>
Don't know	<b>19%</b>

- **A majority of Europeans (41%) believe that decisions in the EP are primarily taken on the basis of Members' national interests** (in particular EL 59%, CZ 57%, CY 51%, PL 51% and NL 50%).

- Those who think that **decisions in the EP are taken on the basis of political allegiances** are most numerous in Belgium, Denmark and Slovenia (all three 37%), Luxembourg (36%), Finland (35%), Sweden (34%), United Kingdom and Austria (both 33%).

- Those who think that national interests and political allegiances have **an equal bearing on decisions taken in the EP** are most numerous in Bulgaria, Hungary and Portugal (all three 27%). The figure for Germany and Austria is 26%.

**III. Composition and functioning of the EP**

**1. Number of Members per country:** (open question)

On average, **64% of Europeans say that they do not know how many Members from their country sit in the EP.** This figure is 83% for the Spanish, 80% for the British and 79% for the Portuguese.

Of the 36% of people who answered the question, those in the least populous Member States came up with very accurate answers. In the other Member States, the difference between the figure given and the actual figure is roughly 10 seats.

However, in five cases the disparity is greater: **the Poles think that they have 37 MEPs, the Spanish 33, the French 45, the Italians 122 and the British 29.**

**2. Seating of Members in the Chamber:**

Members sit together on the basis of their nationality	<b>44%</b>
Members sit together on the basis of their political allegiances	<b>33%</b>
Don't know	<b>23%</b>

Throughout the EU, **a majority of respondents think that Members sit together on the basis of their nationality.** The figures are 64% in Greece, 58% in the Czech Republic and 52% in Italy and Latvia.

Respondents who think that Members sit together on the basis of their political allegiances make up a majority in Slovenia (54%), Sweden (50%) and Belgium (50%).

### 3. Date of the European elections: (open question)

Three-quarters of European citizens (75%) say that they do not know when the next European elections will be held (98% in PT, 94% in the UK and 89% in Finland). No more than 10% answered 2009, and only 2% said 'June 2009'.

### 4. Method of electing Members:

Almost one European in two (48%) states that MEPs are elected directly. One in three (31%) states the opposite and one European in five (21%) does not know how MEPs are elected.

There are substantial differences from country to country: 50% of respondents in the Netherlands think that MEPs are not directly elected, where as 76% of respondents in Malta know that they are.

### 5. 50 years of the EP:

Only one-third of respondents state that the EP was established 50 years ago. There would seem to be no clear link between the level of correct answers and the fact of being a national of a founding Member State of the EU (e.g. in Italy 31% of respondents answer that the statement is true, 31% that it is false, and 38% don't know).

## IV. Citizens' expectations

### 1. Policies to be implemented:

Each respondent was asked to choose a number of policies which, in his or her view, should be priorities for the EP. The following are the answers most frequently given:

- the fight against **terrorism** using measures consistent with individual freedoms 44%
- the fight against **climate change** 40%
- **consumer protection** and **protection of public health** 39%

### 2. Values to be defended:

Each respondent was invited to choose three values which, in his or her view, should be defended as a matter of priority by the EP. The following are the answers most frequently given:

- protection of **human rights** in the world 58%
- **equality between men and women** 41%
- **solidarity among EU Member States** 36%

## V. Image of the EP

### 1. Globally positive image:

Although the answers did not reveal very strong views (41% of those questioned say their image of Parliament is neither positive or negative), 39% say that in their eyes it has a positive image. The EP has a more positive image in Romania (63%), Slovenia (62%), Ireland (57%), Lithuania (56%) and Bulgaria (55%), and the most negative image in the United Kingdom (35%), Austria (31%), Sweden (24%), Finland (23%) and the Netherlands (19%).

## 2. Qualities/shortcomings:

The persons interviewed describe the EP as a **democratic** institution (69%), but deplore its **low profile** (55%). They welcome its **unifying role**, but criticise it for being **too bureaucratic** and **insufficiently transparent** (certainly as regards its failure to provide information about its working methods).