

Voting Procedure in the European Parliament 2001

An empirical analysis

This report is based on observations made in the European Parliament, primarily during 2001. We have also used a number of examples of voting results from 1999, 2000 and 2002 in order to analyse the political consequences of a voting system which we believe leaves too much to chance.

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Names of party groups in the European Parliament

PPE-DE	Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats
PSE	Group of the Party of European Socialists
ELDR	Group of the European Liberal, Democrat and Reform Party
Verts/ALE	Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
GUE/NGL	Confederal Group of the European United Left/Nordic Green Left
UEN	Union for Europe of the Nations Group
TDI	Technical Group of Independent Members
EDD	Group for a Europe of Democracies and Diversities
NI	Non-Attached Members

Other abbreviations

EV	Electronic Vote
RCV	Roll Call Vote

Summary

The European Parliament gets increased power in decision making within the European Union with every new Treaty. But have the Rules of Procedure in the European Parliament on voting been tailored to reflect this? Is it so that the results of the voting are random because the voting procedures are too muddled?

With this report, we want to illustrate the unsatisfactory state of affairs with voting procedures in the European Parliament. This situation must be remedied - it is the duty of the legislative assembly to eliminate all random elements in its voting procedure. The votes must reflect the political representation elected to this Parliament.

A similar survey was carried out concerning the European Parliament's voting in 1997 by Sören Wibe, who was a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) at the time. In general, participation in voting has increased since 1997. A new European Parliament was elected in June 1999 and the members of the new parliament have been more active than the previous members.

	2001	1997
Number of elected MEPs	626	626
Average participation per session day	527	480
Average participation in voting per session day	452	337
Lowest recorded number of votes, average per session day	403	280

Comments see footnote¹

Our figures show:

1. That the number of MEPs who actually go to the European Parliament for its sessions is less than the number elected. There has however been an improvement in attendance.
2. That the number voting fluctuates considerably during a particular voting session. Particularly long voting sessions lasting more than an hour can vary between 562 and 445 (example from Wednesday 3 October 2001 in Strasbourg from a voting session which lasted for about one hour and twenty minutes). In the case of even longer voting sessions, the fluctuation is even greater (at the sitting in Brussels on Thursday 31 May 2001, the voting lasted for approximately two and a quarter hours with voting numbers varying between 495 and 176).
3. That the number of votes almost always fails to equal the number of MEPs who have signed in as present for the session. There have been occasions when the number of voters

¹ Comments:

* The average participation per session day was calculated from Monday to Thursday at the Strasbourg sessions and from Wednesday to Thursday at the Brussels sessions. However, the additional meetings in Brussels on 12 September and 17 December 2001 are not included.

* The average participation in voting per session day and the lowest recorded number of votes, average per session day, only concern Roll Call Votes (RCVs).

The average participation in voting per session day in all RCVs and EVs (electronic votes) in 2001 is slightly less - 449.

* The lowest recorded number of votes on average per session day would be 403 if only RCVs are considered. The average for both RCVs and EVs is 395.

* If the Thursday morning and afternoon votes are split into two for 2001 and considered as two different session days, the participation in voting per session day falls to 395 (RCVs only). A corresponding subdivision of Thursdays into two separate session days when calculating the average for the lowest recorded number of votes per session day in all RCVs gives 354 and an equivalent average for all RCVs and EVs gives the result 347.

almost equals the number signed in, but these are rare and of extremely short duration during a voting session.

4. That, as the number of those voting fluctuates so much during a voting session, the random factor has a significant effect on the result. Co-decision matters are dealt with first during the voting session. Not all MEPs who are present will have been able to reach the chamber in order to vote by this time. This has meant that in at least one case there is considerable doubt as to whether the voting result (which resulted in a proposed Directive being rejected) actually represented the views of the majority in the European Parliament.

This report analyses the voting procedure in the European Parliament in detail. We also discuss the extent to which this procedure represents a problem. There are essentially three problems associated with the voting procedure of the European Parliament.

Legal:

Some of the decisions that are taken (4-5%) are not legal in accordance with the European Parliament's own rules, as the number of participants is less than one third of the number of those elected, the minimum according to Rule 126(2) of the rules of procedure on quorum (14th Edition, June 1999). These illegal decisions are taken on Thursday evenings at the Strasbourg sessions when most members have left the chamber.

Democratic:

Democracy is based on the assumption that the will of the people is expressed through their democratically elected representatives. One of the democratic problems is that participation in voting at the European Parliament is only approximately 49%, and for a number of countries less than 30%. This report demonstrates that the democratic deficit is reinforced by the fact that, in general during 2001, 27,8% of those elected to the European Parliament did not vote at all in an RCV (or, on the contrary, 72.2 % of the members participated in these votes). Both these factors seriously undermine the democratic foundations of the European Parliament.

Political:

The considerable fluctuation in the number of voters and the random attendance pattern mean that the political majority at plenary meetings can change in a couple of minutes. For example, a majority consisting of the Social Democrats, Liberals, Green/regionalists and the left can reach 314 votes in the second reading of a co-decision matter one moment, while in the next the Christian Democrat/Conservative minority can block the result. This can be caused by two or three members changing sides in the voting. In other cases where political statements are made outside the legislative procedure, the centre-left groups can win a vote in a few minutes, while shortly after the centre-right groups win, usually because members come and go during the voting session. This often occurs during the last vote of a long session. This means that the actual result of a special vote can be more or less random and not determined by the relative strengths of the political groups.

To uphold the European Parliament as an Institution in the decision-making process of the whole European Union, a broad political unity is required. The Social Democrats and Christian Democrats/Conservatives cannot try to outmanoeuvre each other all the time. They must co-operate more strategically on amendments, for example, to proposed texts from the Council, to be able to have an influence. To make it possible to agree with each other, the Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats/Conservatives must work out amendments

where ideological differences have been erased. However, this will make it hard for the public to see any difference between the two large parties in the European Parliament.

Proposed solutions

1. Introduce a pairing system.
2. Amend the rules of procedure so that, wherever possible, voting takes place concerning alternative overall proposals from the various main bodies of opinion.
3. Permit leave of absence for MEPs, for example parental leave, when deputies attend in their place.
4. Reduce the speed of voting in the European Parliament when there are RCVs. For each RCV, members should have at least 30 seconds to vote. Each RCV must be clearly announced and more time must be allowed before the next RCV is called.
5. Members of the European Parliament should be discouraged from having a dual mandate in both the European and national parliaments. It is difficult to see how two such demanding functions could effectively be fulfilled at the same time. For this reason, certain Member States, although not all, have made it a rule that one parliamentarian cannot serve two Parliaments.

However, more measures than these are needed. Internally, the European Parliament must find a solution and create a voting system that, wherever possible, eliminates random effects in the ballot result.

1. Data and general information

There are three ways of casting a vote during voting at the European Parliament: a show of hands (members raise their hands when they vote “yes” or “no”), Electronic Voting, EV (members press the ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘abstain’ button and the result of the vote is announced by the president – however, it is not possible to read out how the individual members voted) and Roll Call Votes, RCVs (for which the same button-pressing takes place as with EVs, but with RCVs the way in which each member voted is published in the record).

During 2001, there were a total of 1296 RCVs and 910 EVs. The number of votes with a show of hands is not known, but it is likely that there were approximately three times as many votes in total as there were electronic votes, i.e. about 6500. This can also be estimated using a different method. If it is assumed that during 2001 voting was held over a total of approximately 60 hours at a rate of 1.5 votes per minutes (both these figures are reasonable assumptions), there would be approximately 5400 votes per year.

The data used in this report consists of:

- The number of MEPs who signed in as present for the session days during 2001.
- All RCVs during the session days (number of votes together with time information during the voting) in 2001.
- All electronic votes during the Brussels sessions and all electronic votes at the Strasbourg sessions during 2001.

Some data and examples have also been taken from 1999, 2000 and 2002, which likewise fell within the current parliamentary term.

For the Brussels sessions (which begin on Wednesdays at 15.00 and continue until Thursday at approximately 13.00), voting takes place on the Thursdays from 11.00 until approximately 12.00-13.00. For the Strasbourg sessions (which begin on Mondays at 17.00 and continue until approximately 18.30 on Thursdays), the voting generally takes place on Tuesdays at 12.00, Wednesdays at 12.00 and on Thursdays at 12.00 and 17.30. Voting sometimes takes place in connection with the adoption of the agenda at 17.00 on Mondays. The voting times can also be altered on occasions, such as when voting is to be held concerning the budget at first reading or when a new president is to be elected for the European Parliament.

The Friday sessions were removed from the meeting calendar from January 2001. Prior to this, voting was held on Fridays at unspecified times after each debate on the agenda had been concluded.

2. The general picture of attendance and voting

There are fewer MEPs present during each session day than the number signed in, as not all are present at the same time. The record attendance during the fifth European Parliament (1999-2004) so far is 610, which occurred immediately after the European Parliament was newly elected on 21 July 1999². There are of course also more MEPs signed in than the maximum (and average) number of MEPs voting on each day (possibly because less than 100% of the MEPs signed in attend the voting session or because not all of the MEPs present manage to press the voting buttons at the same time). In 1997, there was a considerable

² The number signed in on 14 November 2000 was given as 625. However, we believe this was an error. The maximum number of voters on this day totalled just 552.

difference between the three categories: elected, present and voting. This difference has fallen in 2001.

2.1. Numbers of MEPs signed in and numbers not voting

The number of MEPs signed-in during the sessions is shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Number present (signed-in) in the European Parliament during the Strasbourg sessions in 2001

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Average
Jan	466	572	584	527	537
Feb	456	562	562	499	520
Mar	460	544	532	470	502
Apr	442	546	551	492	508
May	423	557	558	494	508
Jun	455	551	568	514	522
Jul	428	581	596	535	535
Sep	496	585	588	533	551
Oct I	453	576	579	526	534
Oct II	476	575	580	526	539
Nov	491	574	571	522	540
Dec	494	583	576	502	539
Average	462	567	570	512	528

Figure 1. Number present (signed-in) in the European Parliament during the Strasbourg sessions on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in 2001

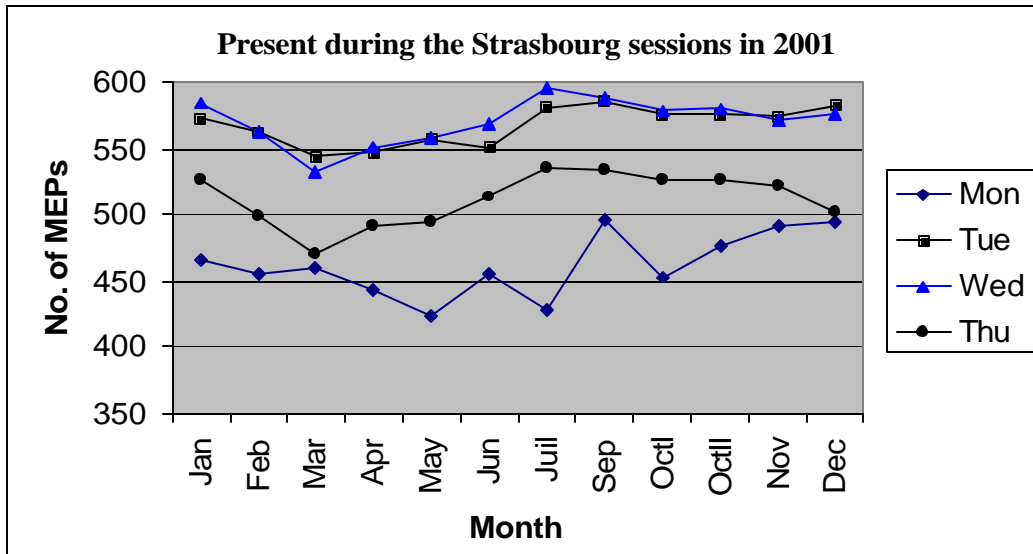


Table 2. Number present (signed-in) in the European Parliament during the Brussels sessions 2001

	Wed	Thu	Wed Ex	Mon Ex
Jan	536			
Feb	497	550		
Mar		505		
Apr				
May I	529	515	529	515
May II	503	498		
Jun				
Jul				
Sep	537	534	266	
Oct				
Nov	548	542		
Dec				427
Average	525	524		

Comments:

The additional sessions that are shown on the right are short one-day meetings that took place in Brussels. No RCVs or EVs took place during these additional meetings.

During the Strasbourg sessions, the number of MEPs present follows an inverted U-shaped curve over the week. On Monday, the average is 462; it reaches a peak on Tuesday and Wednesday, approximately 567 and 570 respectively, falls on Thursday to around 512 and then falls dramatically during voting on Thursday evening to an average of 111 voters (average for 2001). The Friday sessions have now been discontinued (in 1997, an average of 253 MEPs signed in on Fridays).

The general attendance at the Strasbourg sessions was higher during the autumn sessions than during the spring sessions. This also applies to the Brussels sessions. At the Brussels sessions, the average number of MEPs signed-in was 525 on Wednesdays and 524 on Thursdays. Strangely enough, the number of MEPs signed-in is quite often slightly higher on Wednesdays (when there is no voting) than on Thursdays when the voting takes place. The average difference was however very small in 2001 (525 compared to 524). In 1997, the difference was 514 compared to 504 according to Sören Wibe's survey.

The number of MEPs signed-in is a very good estimate of the number of MEPs that are actually present at the sessions. A random check (comparing the names in the list of Roll Call Votes with the attendance list) shows that approximately 3-10 names on the list of voters are not on the attendance list (at the two Brussels sessions we looked at, there were at least 17 in one case and at least 22 members in the other who voted without being signed-in as present!). (They may have forgotten to sign in or they may have signed themselves in as present on another meeting list at the European Parliament). This means that the number of MEPs who are actually present at the session is probably around 3-10 more than the number signed-in (this may concern 15-25 members at the sessions in Brussels).

As Table 1 shows, the number of absent members (MEPs who do not go to Strasbourg or Brussels on a session day) varies over the course of the week. The average number of absentees during the period July 1999 - February 2002 is 124, but this figure ends up at around 100 absent for 2001 when the Friday sessions were discontinued. Ignoring Mondays in Strasbourg, Wednesdays in Brussels and the additional sessions that were called in Brussels (when there is not normally any voting), the average number of absentees falls to around 83 (or 543 present) during 2001.

However, as an approximate average, there were around 83 MEPs in 2001 who did not attend the European Parliament on a session day when voting took place.

Attendance statistics for members of the European Parliament can be found at www.europarlament.net. According to the statistics from July 1999 up to and including the Brussels session at the end of February 2002, the national delegations had the following attendance rates.

Table 3. Attendance at the European Parliament July 1999 - 28 February 2002 split between the national delegations. This does not consider the number present during voting, only the number signed-in as present.

	Participation %	Number of MEPs	Average number present	Average number absent
Finland	86.93%	16	14	2
Greece	86.83%	25	22	3
Germany	86.21%	99	85	14
Luxembourg	86.10%	6	5	1
Austria	85.20%	21	18	3
Netherlands	84.80%	31	26	5
Sweden	82.36%	22	18	4
Ireland	82.32%	15	12	3
Belgium	81.56%	25	20	5
United Kingdom	81.07%	87	71	16
Spain	80.40%	64	52	12
Portugal	79.58%	25	20	5
Denmark	78.50%	16	13	3
France	78.00%	87	68	19
Italy	66.26%	87	58	29
Total EU 15	80.16%	626	502	124

Comment:

During the parliamentary term in its entirety, the average number present is lower than in 2001. This is because the low level of attendance at the Friday sessions in Strasbourg in 1999 and 2000 reduces the total average number present.

It is interesting to note that, in absolute terms, there is an average of 29 Italian members missing per session day, which is more than the total number of members of the Luxembourg and Swedish delegations combined.

2.2. Number of MEPs present but not voting

The number of MEPs who sign themselves in as present on an individual day is always greater than the maximum number voting during the day (RCVs). For example, on Tuesday 13 March 2001, 544 members signed themselves in as present. However, the maximum number of registered votes on that day (RCVs) occurred at 13.02.26, when 504 MEPs voted at the same time. Assuming that this difference can be interpreted as indicating that some MEPs did not vote at all (in this case $544 - 504 = 40$), we then have the following figures for the average number of non-voting MEPs in the European Parliament.

Table 4. Number of signed-in MEPs who did not vote at the voting session

	Tue	Wed	Thu	Thu even.	Mini-session
Non-voting	40	19	26	399	7

Comment:

Mondays in Strasbourg and Wednesdays in Brussels have been excluded as virtually no voting takes place on these days.

However, it can be assumed that even at the RCVs and EVs with the highest attendance during a voting session, there are a number of members who are actually sitting in the chamber and voting on that particular occasion but fail to press the button for a particular vote. Our estimates also indicate that there may be a number of members who have left before the voting for which the maximum number of participants is recorded or who turn up for the voting slightly later.

If the assumption above is correct, around 20 to 40 of the MEPs present on a session day do not vote at all. However, in 1997, the same estimation method shows that there were around 100 present per session day who did not vote at all. Absence does not mean that the MEPs do not have a valid reason for not attending or voting (they may for example be at other meetings within the parliament during the voting). However, it does show that, in addition to the approximately 100 MEPs who were not present at all in 2001, a further 20-40 were present but did not vote at all.

2.3. MEPs voting for only part of the day

A further special circumstance in the European Parliament is the fact that the number of voting MEPs fluctuates considerably during an individual voting session. For example, on Wednesday 5 September 2001, the maximum number of voters was achieved at 12.24.47 (RCV) when 574 MEPs voted. However, 14 minutes earlier, during the first vote (RCV), 538 voted. In the last vote (RCV) at 13.11.08, there were 560 votes. The lowest number of voters was 521 members at 12.59.40 in an electronic vote concerning an amendment to a resolution. There were a total of 588 MEPs signed in as present on that day.

At almost every session, there is typically a fluctuation with many “slow starters”, who arrive late, and “early leavers”, who leave before voting has ended. As a result of this, the typical voting curve looks roughly like an irregular, inverted “U”. A strange characteristic is that this inverted “U” usually reaches its peak 25-35 minutes after voting has started. If voting has been announced as starting at, for example, 12.00, but is delayed by a few minutes because of a protracted debate or because a number of points of order are being considered, attendance will increase during the first quarter of the voting session. The first few votes of delayed voting sessions have a higher number of voters than voting sessions that start at the announced time. If, for example, the vote starts two minutes after the appointed time, the first voting may have the lowest number of voters for the entire voting session (e.g. Thursday 2 October 2001, when the voting started just two minutes after the appointed time of 13.00). At longer voting sessions, the end of the voting has a lower number of voters than is usually the case. The lowest number of voters is then generally recorded during one of the last RCVs or EVs. In other situations, the lowest number of voters is usually recorded for individual amendments of minor importance, which contain details of little interest to most party groups. Overall, it can be said that in theory the most complete inverted “U” shape is formed during a voting session that starts exactly on time and lasts for more than an hour.

If members are given longer to press the voting buttons, more members manage to vote. The most favourable basis for an individual vote to achieve the highest number of voters during a voting session is for it to be scheduled about half an hour after the time that was announced for the start of the voting session and for the members to be given approximately 30 seconds to vote. For example, during the voting session on 6 September 2001, the highest number of voters was reached at approximately 12.30 during an EV concerning an amendment (number

43 in the Nisticò Report) with 496 voters; an RCV two minutes later concerning another proposal in the same report (which should have been deemed more important) attracted 490 votes.

The general pattern of voting on a typical day is illustrated in Figures 2.1 to 2.4 (overleaf), which shows three randomly selected votes (17/5, 4/7 and 3/10) and a vote (25/10) which we deliberately selected as a typical example of the inverted U-shaped curve for a longer voting session.

The curve in the figure is typical for a normal session day. As stated above, the level of attendance varies between Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursday. However, the patterns in voting participation are roughly the same; it is generally only the level that differs.

During the first half hour, the number of voters increases from perhaps 450 (an approximate level for a Thursday) during the first EV or RCV seven or eight minutes after 12.00 (or from the start of voting) to around 500, 25-30 minutes later. After that, the number of voters remains approximately constant at this level for roughly half an hour until participation begins to fall when the voting has continued for more than an hour after the advertised start. This inverted “U” shape is also typical for the sessions in Brussels, as illustrated in Figure 3.

There are three problems associated with this daily variation. First and foremost, it gives a poor impression to the public when MEPs arrive late or leave early. Despite everything, a normal vote takes one or two hours and it is reasonable to expect an MEP to be present throughout the voting and to arrive in time for the start of the voting (particularly given that co-decision matters are considered first).

The second problem is that this fluctuation in voting means that the outcome of a vote will only partly depend on the relative strengths of the party groups (and indirectly on the will of the people/electors), as the “attendance discipline” of individual MEPs will also have an effect.

Table 5. Attendance (number signed-in) in the European Parliament on 20 July 1999 - 11 April 2002, split according to party groups*

Party group	Number of members	Percentage of EP	Average number of members present	Average number in %	Average percentage of those present
PPE-DE	232	37.06%	188.3	81.17%	37.45%
PSE	181	28.91%	148.4	81.97%	29.51%
ELDR	52	8.31%	42.0	80.77%	8.35%
Verts/ALE	46	7.35%	37.3	81.08%	7.42%
GUE/NGL	42	6.71%	33.5	79.71%	6.66%
UEN/EDD/TDI/NI**	73	11.66%	53.4	73.12%***	10.62%
Total	626	100%	502.9	80.23%	100.01%

Source: www.europarlament.net. The unofficial site 13 April 2002

Comments:

* The size of the party groups has varied slightly since the beginning of the parliamentary term in July 1999. The larger groups have in fact only varied in size by two or three members. However, this means that there is a certain margin of error.

** As the UEN, EDD, TDI and NI groups varied in size during 2001 (TDI was forced to dissolve and become part of NI), we have combined them.

*** EDD differs slightly with an average attendance of 78.50 %.

The two largest groups PPE-DE and PSE will therefore be slightly over-represented as regards attendance in the European Parliament in relation to the election result. The smallest groups have a slightly lower attendance and are therefore slightly under-represented.

As regards attendance at the voting on Thursday evenings during 2001, there are a number of interesting points to note.

Table 6. Comparison of the political groups' percentage share of the European Parliament as a whole and their attendance at RCVs on Thursday evenings in 2001

Party group	Number of members	Percentage of EP	Average number of members present Thursday evenings	Average percentage of those present on Thursday evenings
PPE-DE	232	37.06%	50.15	45.19%
PSE	181	28.91%	26.89	24.23%
ELDR	52	8.31%	8.16	7.35%
Verts/ALE	46	7.35%	10.17	9.16%
GUE/NGL	42	6.71%	8.85	7.97%
UEN/EDD/TDI/NI**	73	11.66%	6.76	6.09%
Total	626		110.98	

Comments:

* As the UEN, EDD, TDI and NI groups varied in size during 2001 (TDI was forced to dissolve and become part of NI), we have combined them.

During 2001, 53 RCVs took place on Thursday evenings. These RCVs concerned six consultation reports, six reports outside the legislative procedure and 15 resolutions concerning everything from religious freedom in China, freedom of the press throughout the world, the situation in Zimbabwe and children's rights to Hurricane Michelle, etc.

PPE-DE therefore strengthens its position on Thursday evenings through having better attendance discipline. The four smallest groups have a low attendance. During its existence during the first half of 2001, TDI usually had 1 (one) member present per Thursday evening.

The third problem is that a large random factor is being introduced into European Parliament voting. Let us assume that a particular vote is fairly even between two blocks, left and right. If the number of votes fluctuates between +/- 10 in each individual vote as a result of MEPs leaving (or entering) the chamber or some members not being observant during the fast voting for one reason or another, then the majority can easily swing several times during the period when members are voting on a particular matter.

In reality, the short-term variation in the number of voters is much higher than the +/-10 that we assume above. It is in fact not unusual for variations of +/-30 or more to occur in just a

couple of minutes. For example (and similar situations occur on a number of occasions during almost every session day) on Wednesday 16 May 2001 520 members voted at 12.51.09. Just 20 seconds later, at 12.51.29, a total of 495 voted (the 'no' side then won by 244 votes to 242). In the next RCV at 12.53.08, 526 voted. The number of participants in one vote is very rarely the same as in the previous vote; this only occurs by chance.

There are four reasons for the variation in the number of voters during a particular session day. Firstly, there is a systematic variation, which explains the inverted "U" shape: some MEPs arrive after the voting has started while some leave before it has finished. Secondly, there is an element of unpredictable randomness when some (present) MEPs abstain from voting for a particular reason (they might leave or enter the chamber for a brief period of time). This explains some of the fluctuation in the large "U" curve. Thirdly, it can be so that MEPs sometimes make a deliberate political choice to abstain from a vote on separate amendments or in a vote on a report as a whole. However, there is probably a fourth explanation, i.e. a systematic short-term variation resulting from the speed of the voting. Because of this speed (which can be up to 3-4 votes per minute), many MEPs are quite simply unable to follow precisely what the voting concerns and therefore abstain from voting. This situation is aggravated by the delay in information as a result of the interpreting. It is in fact not uncommon for the speed of voting to be so high that the president declares a vote as concluded just as an individual member hears the interpretation of what the vote concerns.

An indication that this "speed problem" exists is illustrated by Figure 4. This figure shows all RCVs and EVs between 12.24.46 and 12.33.38 on 5 September 2001. During this period of less than 10 minutes, four RCVs and seven EVs took place (plus an unknown number of non-electronic votes). A "saw tooth pattern" can clearly be seen in the number of voters, where a large increase in the number of voters is followed by a large decrease, so creating the saw tooth pattern. This pattern, which can often be seen when the speed of the voting is high, is probably not a random fluctuation. A purely random fluctuation would not give this alternating pattern between increases and decreases, for the same reason that when tossing coins heads is not always followed by tails (if a random process were to act in this predictable way, it would not be random and every casino in the world would have gone bankrupt long ago.)

The conclusion is that there is a regular variation in size of +/-20 votes (sometimes more), which is largely systematic and dependent on the speed of voting. For one reason or another (the delay in interpretation is an important factor), MEPs are quite simply unable to follow what they are voting for and therefore abstain from voting. This is however perhaps not the only explanation, and there may be other reasons.

Figure 2.1. Voting in the European Parliament, Strasbourg session on Thursday 17 May 2001 (morning). Number of voting members, all EVs and RCVs

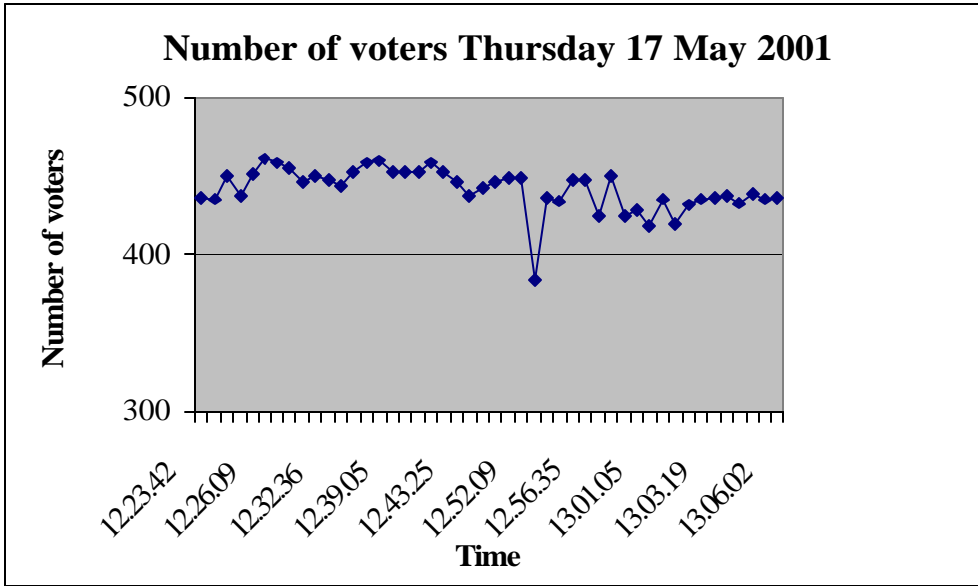


Figure 2.2. Voting in the European Parliament, Strasbourg session on Wednesday 4 July 2001. Number of voting members, all EVs and RCVs

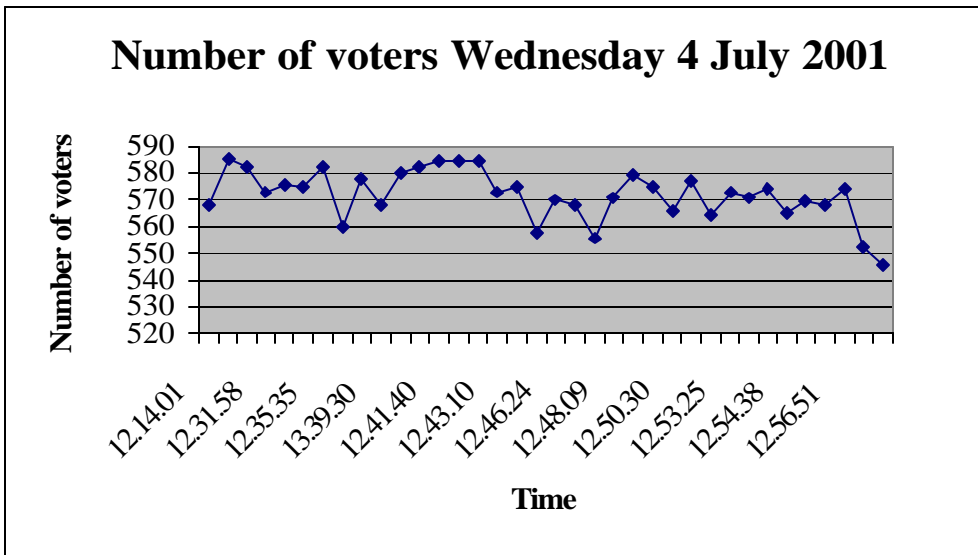


Figure 2.3. Voting in the European Parliament, Strasbourg session on Wednesday 3 October 2001. Number of voting members, all EVs and RCVs

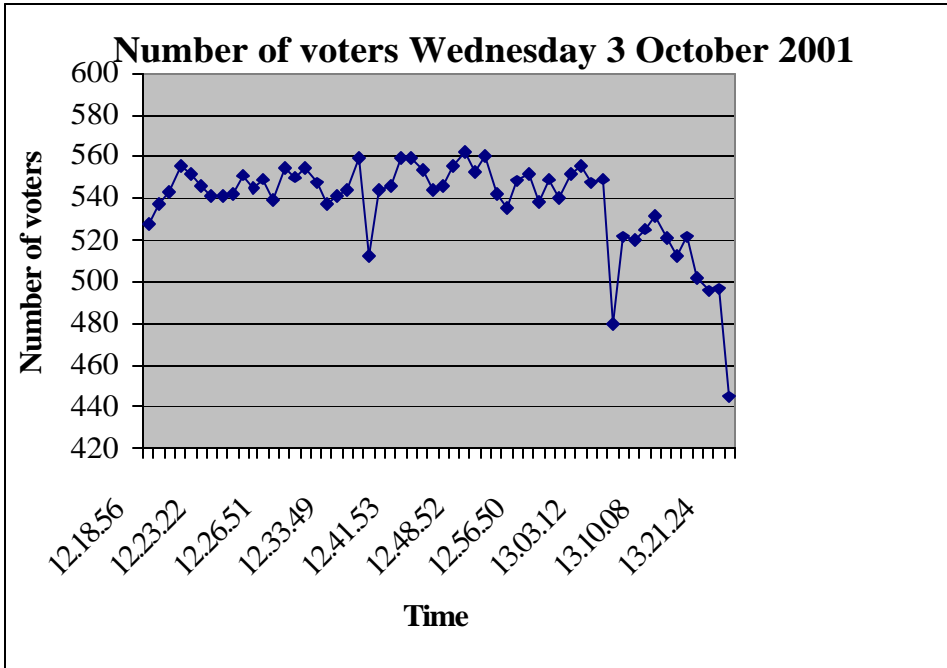


Figure 2.4. Voting in the European Parliament, Strasbourg session on Thursday 25 October 2001 (morning). Number of voting members, all EVs and RCVs

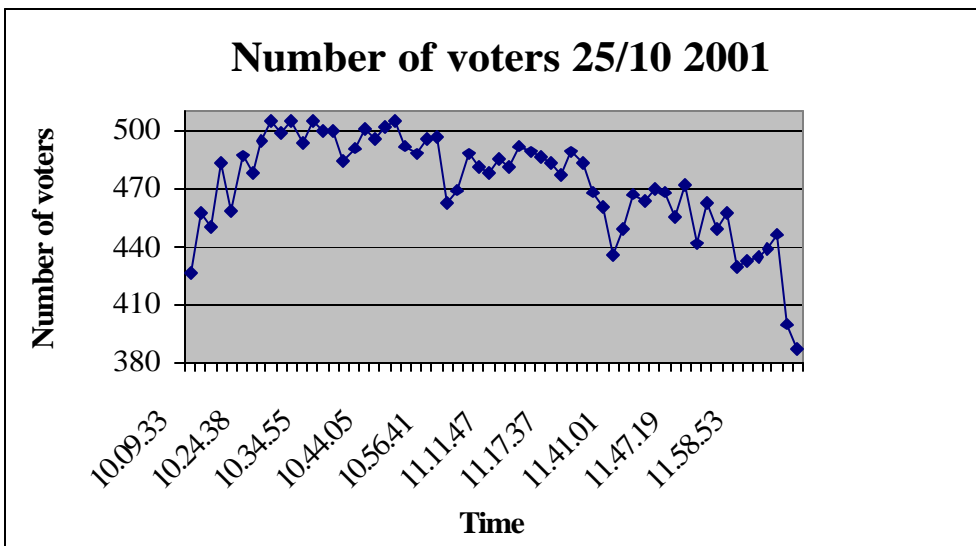


Figure 3.1. Voting in the European Parliament, Brussels session on Thursday 1 February 2001. Number of voting members, all EVs and RCVs

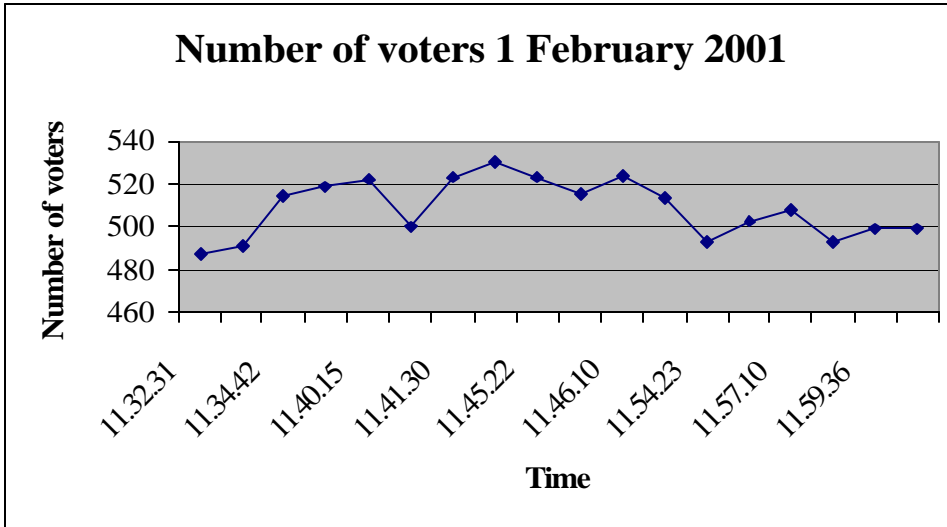


Figure 3.2. Voting in the European Parliament, Brussels Session, Thursday 1 March 2001. Number of voting members, all EVs and RCVs

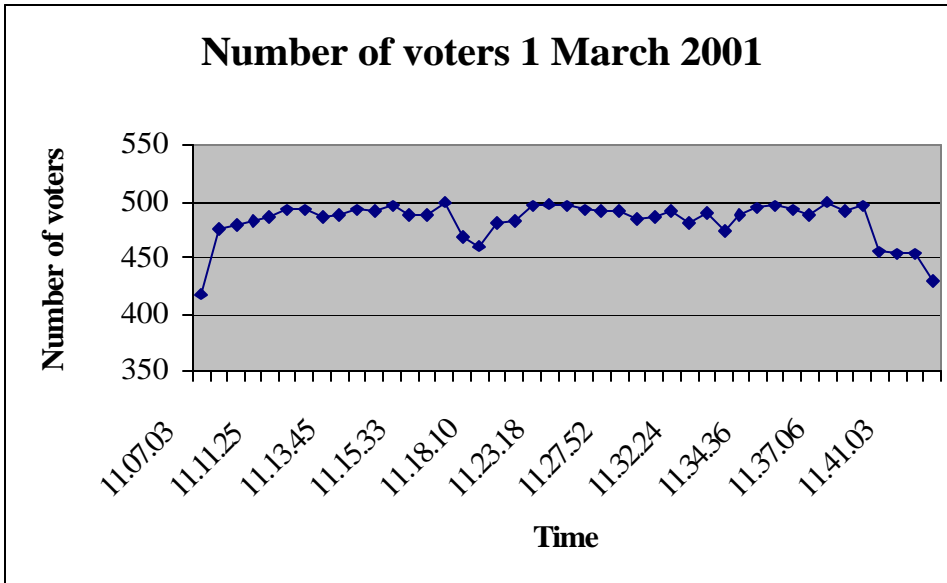


Figure 3.3. Voting in the European Parliament, Brussels Session, Thursday 3 May 2001. Number of voting members, all EVs and RCVs

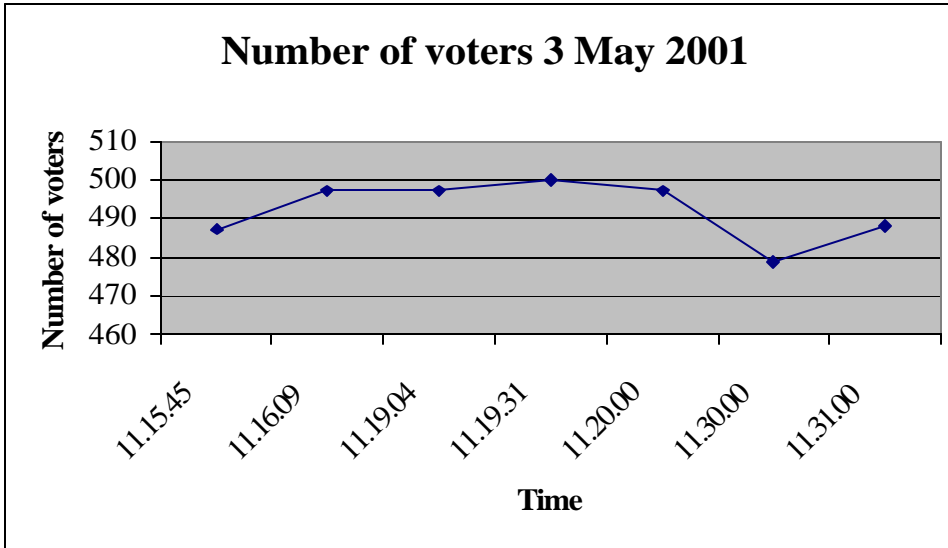


Figure 3.4. Voting in the European Parliament, Brussels Session, Thursday 31 May 2001. Number of voting members, all EVs and RCVs

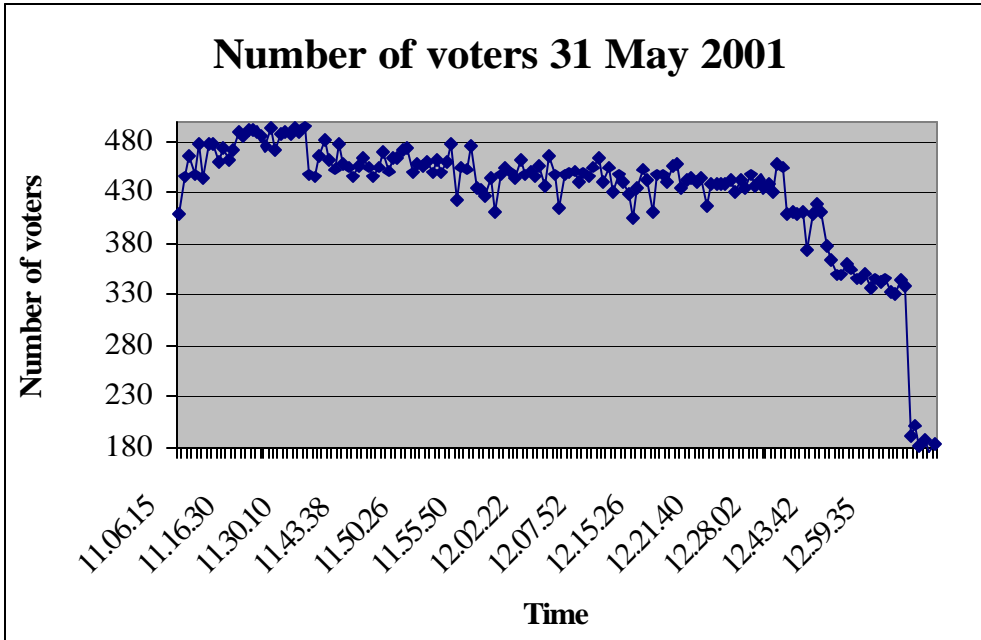


Figure 3.5. Voting in the European Parliament, Brussels Session, Thursday 20 September 2001. Number of voting members, all EVs and RCVs

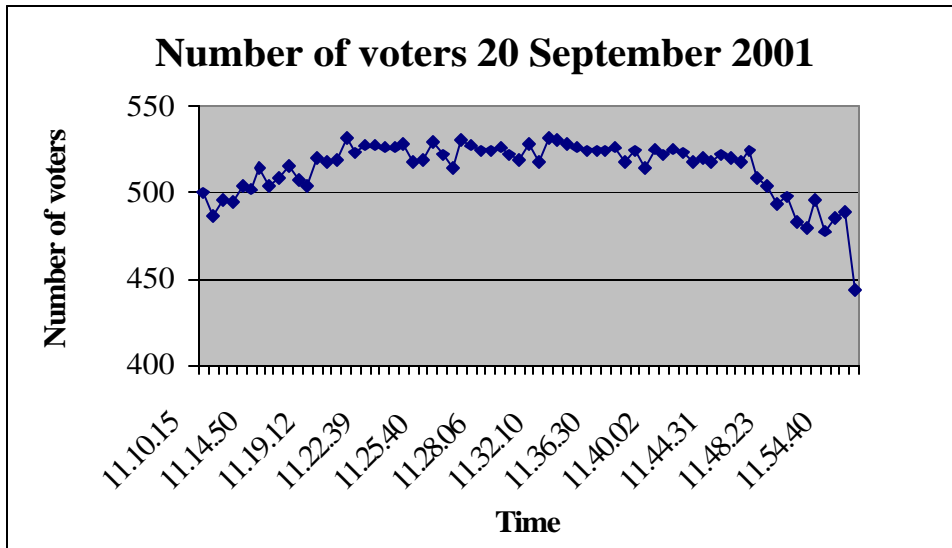


Figure 3.6. Voting in the European Parliament, Brussels Session, Thursday 29 November 2001. Number of voting members, all EVs and RCVs

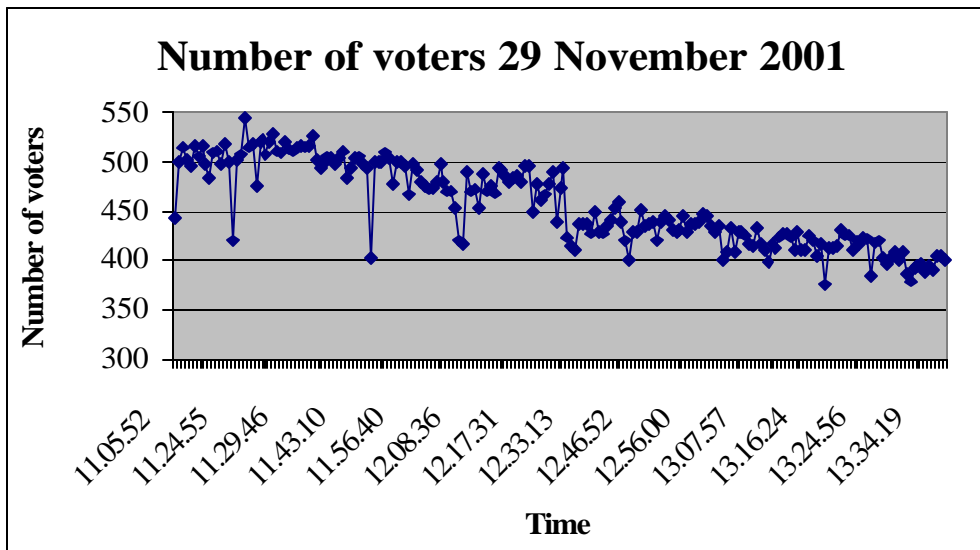
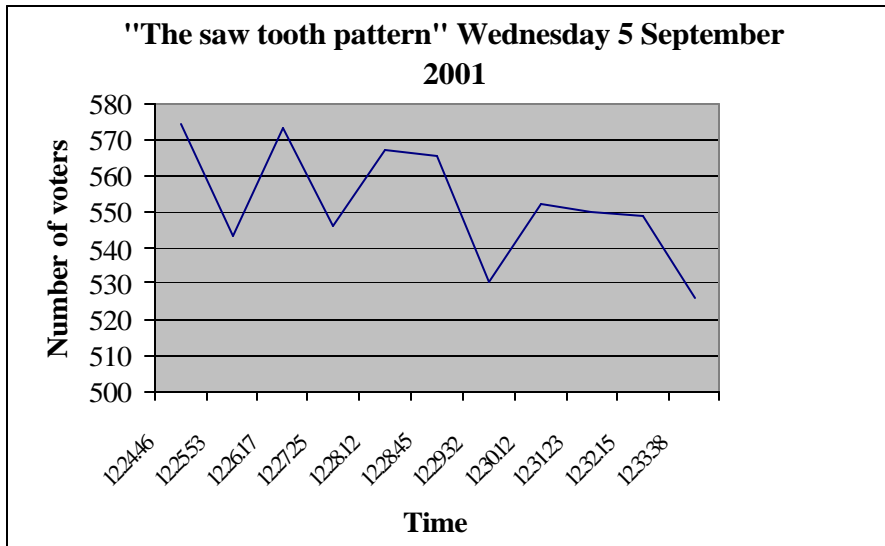


Figure 4. “The saw tooth pattern” in the voting, both EVs and RCVs, in the European Parliament, Wednesday 5 September 2001



Comments:

The votes concerned:

- 1/ The Swoboda Report (co-decision procedure, first reading) concerning transit traffic by heavy lorries through Austria
- 2/ A resolution (outside the legislative procedure) concerning the EU’s enlargement process.

2.4. Thursday evening - Illegal voting

According to Rule 126(2) (the European Parliament’s Rules of Procedure 14th Edition, June 1999), the European Parliament constitutes a quorum when one third of all MEPs are present in the plenary chamber. This means that at least 209 members must vote (or formally, be present in the chamber) in order for the European Parliament to be quorate. However, this is very rarely the case during the voting on Thursday evenings (or previously on the Fridays) in Strasbourg.

During the period July 1999 up to and including December 2000, on just four of the 13 occasions when voting took place on Thursday evenings was there a quorum in the European Parliament. The average number of voters present during each of these Thursday evenings divided by 13 is 195 present members.

When the Friday sessions were discontinued in 2001, attendance on Thursday evenings fell even further. During the 12 Thursday evening sessions in 2001, the average attendance at the 53 RCVs was 111 members. There was no quorum at any of these 53 RCVs.

A new debate concerning the Friday sessions in Strasbourg began when a new generation of MEPs was elected. According to the critics, there was not normally any substance to the matters considered on the Fridays. They believed that either the Friday sessions should be abolished or efforts should be made to ensure that the Friday sessions had a meaningful agenda as well.

Many of the critics of the Friday sessions met on Friday 14 April 2000. On four separate occasions on this Friday, the issue of the quorum was raised. On each of these four occasions,

the speaker counted those present and found that there were fewer than 209 members present (78 members participated in the first RCV). As a result of this, the voting concerning four separate matters was deferred until 3 May. What happened on this Friday later formed the basis for the consideration of whether the Friday sessions at Strasbourg should be retained in the forthcoming calendar for Parliament's meetings in 2001.

3. Summarising discussion

This is an empirical analysis of the voting at the European Parliament. We have identified a number of serious problems.

First and foremost, there is a problem with the attendance of elected MEPs. An average of approximately 100 MEPs did not attend a normal session day (during the whole of the parliamentary term so far, July 1999 – February 2002, this figure was 124). Attendance is also inconsistent between the various national delegations.

Secondly, there is a problem with the fluctuation during the voting. In particular, the number of MEPs participating in the longer voting sessions lasting more than an hour can vary between 562 and 445 (Wednesday 3 October 2001), and the variation is on occasions higher than this. Some MEPs are only "part-time voters", i.e. some MEPs arrive late for the voting and some leave before the voting has finished.

Thirdly, there is a problem with the rapid, large and random variation in the number of voters over a period of just a few minutes. Even where there is a specific number of MEPs at the vote, the number voting can vary by up to +/-50 in just a couple of minutes, as the MEPs are not alert or are unable to keep up with the speed at which the voting is conducted.

Fourthly, the number of voters very rarely reaches the number of MEPs signed in as present. There is always a small proportion of non-voters at the sessions.

Fifthly, there is a problem which arises from the quorum rule: the number of voters on Thursday evenings during 2001 is in every single case below what the European Parliament's Rules of Procedure require for a quorum. A voting participation figure of 91 has been recorded (Thursday evening 15 November 2001), i.e. approximately 15% of the MEPs elected. Even this is a considerably higher figure than the lows previously recorded during a number of votes when Friday sessions were held.

The overall effect of all this is that, on average during 2001, approximately 72.2% (average 452 voting out of 626 elected MEPs) of all elected MEPs participated in roll call votes on a single session day.

The most important voting takes place before lunch on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays in Strasbourg. Similarly, the voting on the most important issues (i.e. the co-decision matters) is held first during the voting sessions. In this way, the European Parliament has organised its voting so that there is a higher level of participation for the most important voting sessions.

It is also difficult to determine whether there is a higher level of participation in (and therefore greater interest in) voting where the European Parliament has more influence than in matters where MEPs are only voting on resolutions. As regards the EU's budget, the European Parliament has a direct influence on non-compulsory expenditure. However, in the first

reading of the budget for 2001 on Thursday 26 October 2000 for example, an average of 502 MEPs took part in the 27 RCVs and EVs that took place concerning the budget itself. In the first reading of the budget for 2002 on Thursday 25 October 2001, an average of 489 MEPs took part in the 19 RCVs held on that day.

“Less” important votes such as those held on Thursday evening concerning resolutions relating to urgent matters (generally concerning human rights in different parts of the world, natural catastrophes where humanitarian action is necessary, etc.) generally attract 100-120 voting MEPs (since the Friday sessions were abolished).

The biggest problem is the democratic representation. Democracy is based on those elected representing the political will of the people. The European Parliament has an unparalleled problem here, as the average voter turnout for European Parliamentary elections is just 49.7% (which is considerably lower than the equivalent turnout for the national parliamentary elections), i.e. just half of the voters are represented in the European Parliament. Turnout for the Parliament's voting adds a further problem relating to political representation, as an average of 72.2% of MEPs participate in an individual vote. Given this and the random variation in the number of voters, the foundation of democratic representation is seriously undermined. This is the most important aspect of the issue that is analysed in this report.

4. Does it matter?

With each new treaty within the EU, the European Parliament has gained in terms of political influence and power-sharing with the Council of the European Union. As the European Parliament is increasingly becoming a co-determinant in the political process, it is vital, not least for the institution's own sake, that something is done about the random voting results in the Parliament. Political decisions can be brought into question and become the subject of suspicion if they can be dismissed as purely random results in a voting procedure where a number of external practical factors (irregular attendance between party groups and Member States, late arrival of MEPs, the fast pace of voting which do not give MEPs time to press the buttons, etc., etc.) affect the result.

The fact that the co-decision matters are considered first during voting sessions is actually a major problem. For various reasons some members arrive late for voting, often because the lifts are overcrowded immediately before voting. A good turnout is essential to get the 314 votes to carry an amendment in the second reading of a co-decision procedure. This means that the random factor plays an extremely important role in matters where the European Parliament actually has an influence within the European Union.

There are a number of examples from the voting in the European Parliament where small margins have played an important role for the outcome of extremely important political issues:

4.1. The Lehne Report – Directive on takeover bids of 4 July 2001

On Wednesday 4 July 2001 in Strasbourg, voting began slightly behind schedule at 12.09. Three matters were first considered using Simplified Procedure. One of them was a co-decision matter on its second reading, which concerned action against anti-personnel mines. Two reports were also pushed through without debate. This took approximately four and a

half minutes. A point of order was then considered where an MEP complained that there was insufficient hotel accommodation in Strasbourg, which meant that visiting groups had to be billeted far from the city.

It then became very interesting. A report under the co-decision procedure on its third reading concerning a Directive in the field of company law relating to takeover bids was to be voted on. The matter concerned the institutional rules applying to big business in Europe regarding the acquisition and take-over of large companies. The Directive would have led to common rules for takeover bids within the EU. It was considered to be an important reform in order to facilitate the cross-border restructuring of companies.

Work on the Directive had been going on for twelve years. In early June, a settlement was reached on the matter between the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament's conciliation committee for the matter. However, in the Council, Germany was against the proposal. In the middle of May, the German Federal Chancellor Schröder had dined with the chairman of Volkswagen. After the meal, Germany changed its position. They claimed that it would be far too easy for foreign companies to submit hostile bids for German companies. Amongst the demands put forward by Germany was that a company's board of directors should be able to implement countermeasures to prevent unwelcome acquisitions, without first allowing the shareholders to decide on a particular bid at a general meeting. In the proposed Directive, the ultimate decision-making right concerning an acquisition would rest with the general shareholders' meeting. A company's board of directors would have very little opportunity to prevent a hostile acquisition itself. The proposed Directive would also give employees the right to full information prior to a company acquisition, including that relating to planned closures and cut-backs.

It also became apparent that voting in the European Parliament set national traditions against each other. On the one side, an established Anglo-Saxon tradition as typified by *laissez faire* and open market principles, whilst on the other was a corporative and protectionist continental tradition. The first-mentioned tradition was advocated in the European Parliament's debate by the English MEPs in particular. They were for the Directive as it had been submitted. The other tradition was represented by the German MEPs and, in particular, by the German MEP Lehne from the German CDU. He was the European Parliament's rapporteur for the matter and was unhappy about the conciliation with the Council. During the European Parliament's second reading in December 2000, 15 amendments were adopted. After the conciliation result, a minority of six members out of 14 believed that it was too far removed from the amendments that the European Parliament had presented.

The two major groups, the Christian Democrats/Conservatives (PPE-DE) and the Social Democrats (PSE) were split almost equally for and against the conciliation result.

Before the vote was due to take place, the rapporteur Lehne (CDU-PPE-DE) explained that those who agreed with the opinion of the rapporteur should vote 'no' to the report.

At 12.15.07 according to the European Parliament's clock, the voting on the Lehne Report was concluded. The result of the vote was 273 for and 273 against the report, with 22 MEPs abstaining. A total of 568 MEPs took part in this vote. The speaker initially announced that the report had been adopted, but then read out an extract from the Rules of Procedure. According to Rule 83, a simple majority for a proposal is required in order for a proposal to be adopted and Rule 128(3) states that the proposal must be deemed as having been rejected if the numbers of votes for and against are equal. The report was therefore declared rejected.

The British Conservative MEP McMillan-Scott asked the president, Mrs Fontaine (UDF-PPE-DE), how she had voted on the matter. She replied that she had not voted at all, and that she

believed that it was a matter of principle that the president only voted when the issue being considered was something very, very special (something very special must mean something like the occasion on 16.05.2001 when she voted to retain Friday sessions in Strasbourg in 2002). McMillan-Scott said that the conciliation committee which negotiated the proposed Directive believed that the president should have voted, and then the Directive would have been adopted. We do not know if this is the case – Fontaine’s party, UDF, was split on the issue.

However, the president’s vote did not prove decisive. Many other random factors decided the vote. Four members had it recorded in the minutes after the voting that they had intended to vote ‘yes’. For some reason, they had failed to vote.

After having debated how the voting on the Lehne Report had gone for more than ten minutes, a vote was taken on the next report. It became apparent in the next RCV at 12.28 that more MEPs had arrived. A total of 585 MEPs took part! For various reasons, 17 MEPs had quite simply not managed to get to the chamber in time to vote at 12.15! For example, the Danish MEP Anne Jensen from the liberal left was delayed by an interview and did not manage to vote. She would have voted for the Directive. It is extremely likely that at least one MEP voted wrongly but failed to correct it in the minutes. A correction in the minutes still does not alter the result. On this occasion, nobody complained that their voting machine was not working, which happens occasionally.

A total of 597 MEPs signed in on this day, plus an additional three MEPs who voted at 12.28 who never signed themselves in on the session's attendance list. Excluding the president, not all MEPs managed to press the voting buttons in a single vote, another factor that can be decisive when the numbers of votes are equal in a co-decision matter.

After the voting, there was also some confusion as the provisional record for the vote showed the result 273 for and 272 against. An error had occurred because of a new Italian MEP who had joined the European Parliament as a replacement member two days previously. He had not been properly signed-in in the electronic register.

Many random factors can therefore decide a vote in the event of a close result. Introducing a system of pairing members as used in the Swedish Parliament is also impossible in this situation, as a number of party groups were split. The British and Scandinavians generally voted ‘yes’ to the proposed Directive. The Germans who participated in the vote almost all voted ‘no’. Should those present be offset against absent MEPs on the basis of national affiliation? This would undoubtedly be unacceptable, as after all “national interests” definitely do not exist in this “home of the true Europeans”.

EU Commissioner Fritz Bolkestein, who is responsible for competition issues, said later that this was a serious blow to the EU’s ambitions of becoming the world’s strongest economy. Sweden’s Minister for Trade Pagrotsky said in the Swedish newspaper, DN, on the day after the vote that there had been a belief that we were home and dry and that the basis for a modernised industry in Europe was about to improve. Pagrotsky also said that the goal was to in ten years, we (i.e. the EU countries, our comment) would have caught up with the USA. The ‘no’ from the European Parliament therefore had serious consequences for the EU itself. All this was decided by a vote in the European Parliament that was significantly affected by random factors.

This was the second time in history that the European Parliament rejected a proposed Directive on which agreement had been reached in a conciliation committee. The last time this happened was in March 1995, when the proposed Directive on the right to patent human

genes was rejected. This matter later returned in a revised form to the European Parliament for consideration in July 1997 and again in May 1998.

The day before the vote, Göran Persson encouraged MEPs to approve the result of the negotiations and warned that a ‘no’ could have important consequences for the work of the European Parliament.

Table 7. The distribution of votes in the European Parliament on the basis of the national delegations, in the vote on the Lehne Report on 4 July 2001

Country	Yes	No	Abstained	Absent	Total
Sweden	19	0	3	0	22
Austria	4	14	1	2	21
Belgium	5	16	0	4	25
Germany	1	95	0	3	99
Denmark	13	0	1	2	16
Spain	26	31	1	6	64
France	45	26	10	6	87
Finland	11	2	1	2	16
Greece	2	21	0	2	25
Italy	32	36	3	16	87
Ireland	10	2	0	3	15
Luxembourg	5	1	0	0	6
Netherlands	9	22	0	0	31
Portugal	19	1	2	3	25
United Kingdom	72	6	0	9	87
EU 15	273	273	22	58	626

The Spanish, French and Italian delegations had a relatively even distribution between ‘yes’ and ‘no’ voters. In other countries, MEPs voted very much according to their national affiliation.

The three Scandinavian countries, Denmark, Finland and Sweden, and the United Kingdom, Ireland, Luxembourg and Portugal primarily took an opposing position to Germany, Austria, Greece and Belgium. Each Member State’s national government and the MEPs’ national parent parties undoubtedly pressed MEPs to vote in a particular way on this occasion. We know for example that the British and Swedish governments put considerable pressure on their respective national delegations to vote as they did.

Table 8. The distribution of votes in the European Parliament on the basis of the political groups in the vote on the Lehne Report 4 July 2001

Political group	Yes	No	Abstains	Absent/Did not vote
PPE-DE	98	119	4	11
PSE	80	84	0	17
ELDR	45	0	0	7
Verts/ALE	8	31	2	5
GUE/NGL	1	30	7	4
UEN	16	0	0	5
TDI	7	4	5	3
EDD	9	5	3	1
NI	9	0	1	5
Total	273	273	22	58

Not only did the parliamentary groups split along national lines: MEPs also voted differently within the various national party delegations. For example, both the Greek PASOK and New Democracy delegations (PSE and PPE-DE respectively) had an MEP who deviated from the party line and voted ‘yes’ while the rest voted ‘no’. The Dutch PvdA delegation (PSE) also had one MEP who voted ‘yes’ while the other five voted ‘no’. From Germany, all MEPs voted ‘no’, except for one “CDU’er” who voted ‘yes’. There were therefore a number of deviations from the national party lines and it is difficult to know whether it was deliberate in every case or whether it was the result of a fast vote when people were still entering the chamber, so making it difficult for individual MEPs to know what the party line actually was – the European Parliament group’s or the national party delegation’s. Without interviewing each and every one of the 626 MEPs about their position on this issue, we will never be able to assess the random factor of how many MEPs deliberately deviated from the party line and how many made a simple mistake because they could not follow the issue at the party group meetings.

4.2. The Breyer Report – the Directive on benzene and carbon monoxide limits in the atmosphere, 6 July 2000

Thursday 6 July 2000 was a day with two long voting sessions. The first of these took place from around 12.20 until 13.26. The second took place from around 17.35 until 19.30.

A total of 535 MEPs voted at the same time at 12.34. However, when the Breyer Report concerning the Council’s common position on limits for benzene and carbon monoxide (Co-decision Procedure, second reading) came up for voting around 13.12, there were fewer voters. This probably led to the rejection of most of the European Parliament’s amendments, as they were right on the borderline of achieving 314 votes.

When the vote on the Breyer Report, second amendment, took place at 13.12, just 506 MEPs participated. A total of 310 votes for were cast (i.e. four fewer than were needed for adoption) against 192 ‘no’ votes and 4 who abstained.

Poor attendance discipline undoubtedly caused the rejection of the amendment. All those present from the Social Democrats (PSE), Liberals (ELDR), Green/regionalists (Verts/ALE) and the United Left (GUE/NGL) voted for the amendment.

However, 154 Social Democrats took part in the vote, compared with their 158 voting MEPs present at 12.34. At the time, the Liberals (ELDR) had 42 present, compared with 44 about 30-40 minutes' earlier. Only about six votes had been lost for these groups in 28 minutes. However, they were decisive votes.

Table 9. Votes cast, the Breyer Report (co-decision procedure, second reading), 6 July 2000

Time	Matter	'Yes' votes	'No' votes	Abstained	Participants
13.12.11	Amend. 1	314	192	6	512
13.12.34	Amend. 2	310	192	4	506
13.13.01	Amend. 3, 1st part	307	200	5	512
13.13.23	Amend. 3, 2nd part	297	207	6	510
13.13.47	Amend. 4	192	210	114	516

As regards the voting on amendment 1, Ford (PSE) later reported that he had intended to vote 'yes'. For some reason, he didn't push the 'yes' button. If any other MEP who had intended to vote 'yes' had not cast his or her vote, the proposal would have been rejected.

Table 10. Votes cast, Breyer Report (co-decision procedure, second reading), 6 July 2000, broken down according to party groups

	13.12.11	13.12.34	13.13.01	13.13.23
PPE-DE	192	191	194	191
PSE	152	151	152	151
ELDR	42	41	39	40
Verts/ALE	38	39	38	39
GUE/NGL	37	36	37	37
UEN	21	20	21	21
TDI	13	11	13	13
EDD	10	12	12	12
NI	7	3	6	6

The relatively consistent figures for voters in the various party groups are slightly misleading. In the PSE group, for example, a handful of people failed to press their voting button on several occasions. A total of 152 took part in the first Breyer vote. In the second vote, three members were missing who had voted the first time but failed to vote the second time, while two members who failed to vote the first time managed to vote on the second occasion. A total of 154 PSE members participated at some time during the voting on the Breyer Report. In the PPE-DE group, a total of 194 MEPs voted during at least one RCV during the reading of the Breyer Report. All PPE-DE members who participated in the voting on the Breyer Report voted at 13.13.01. However, PPE-DE experienced the same phenomenon as PSE. In the first vote, 191 voted, while in the second vote three votes disappeared, but there were two additional votes, and in the third vote all 194 pressed their voting buttons.

Four members from PPE-DE voted for amendment 1, which was undeniably one of the important factors for that amendment attracting 314 votes. During the five RCVs on the Breyer Report, the PPE-DE group's 'yes' votes were distributed as follows: 4-3-1-1-2. The

fact that only four PPE-DE members broke the party line during the first vote was a decisive reason why the amendment was passed.

However, the 'yes' voters of the small groups were just as decisive. The four small groups UEN, TDI, EDD and NI delivered the voting figures 41-40-40-29-27 to the 'yes' side during the five votes on the Breyer Report. These figures can be deemed relatively stable. However, for the four groups individually, they were not. UEN delivered the votes 20-20-14-3-0 to the 'yes' side, TDI delivered 13-11-13-13-13, EDD delivered 3-7-7-8-8 and NI 5-2-6-5-6.

An unbelievable number of factors therefore played a role in determining the five voting results. However, the major factor was the fact that members who intended to vote 'yes' in PSE, ELDR and GUE/NGL failed to do so. With a better voting procedure for the session, not only amendment 1 would have got through, but also number 2 and perhaps even number 3, first part.

4.3. The Katiforis Report – the Commission's report on the EU economy (1999 review)

On Wednesday and Thursday 1-2 March 2000, a "mini-session" was held in Brussels. A total of 510 of the 626 MEPs signed in as present on the voting day on 2 March. Almost all probably participated in the voting, although there were at the most only 508 voters on each occasion.

The first vote concerned a co-decision matter relating to the first reading of a proposal concerning satellite services for personal communication. However, this matter was so uncontroversial that not even one report was written by the European Parliament on the issue. The proposal from the Commission was voted through by a show of hands. Report numbers two and three related to consultation procedures, which, amongst other things, concerned the Council Regulation on the collection of information on fish resources relevant to the common fisheries policy. The Fisheries Committee had prepared 13 amendments to the Commission's proposal. These were so uncontroversial that they were voted through by a show of hands in two blocks. The fourth report which was voted on also related to a consultation procedure and concerned the measures to combat certain fish diseases. In addition to the amendments submitted by the Fisheries Committee, there were also six amendments by the Verts/ALE. Roll Call Voting had also been requested by the Verts/ALE. The first button-pushing took place at 11.08 as the members were still in the process of sitting down, and only 459 took part, whilst a minute later the number of voters rose to 485. The Verts/ALE attracted up to 85 votes for their proposals.

Report number five concerned the protection of young marine organisms, also a consultation procedure. Here, the European Parliament approved the Commission's proposal. The sixth matter was a consultation procedure and concerned insolvency procedures. The report had been prepared by the committee for legal affairs and within the committee there had been disagreement concerning the opportunities to permit a secondary procedure alongside a main procedure. An amendment concerning this as adopted by the committee was rejected during the session voting with 245 votes being cast for rejection, 228 for the proposal and 22 abstentions.

Next came the European Parliament's own initiative reports and resolutions. These concerned more politically interesting subject areas. However, they only involved the European Parliament expressing an opinion, as it had no influence on these matters. The first resolution concerned the participation of women in the decision-making process. A total of 21

amendments were tabled concerning the resolution by various party groups, but none was particularly controversial.

The most controversial political issue then came up for consideration. For once, passions ran higher in the political debate when the introduction of the Tobin tax was mentioned. This was a report outside the legislative procedures (i.e. it was only an opinion from the European Parliament), which concerned the Commission's report on the EU economy – 1999 review. Here, the European Parliament expressed many views that were controversial between Right and Left. The rapporteur was Giorgos Katiforis (Greek Social Party, PASOK) and in the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs, his and the Social Democrats' amendment had lost out to that of the non-Socialist parties.

The vote was largely split between the Social Democrats (PSE), Verts/ALE and the United Left (GUE/NGL) on one side and the Christian Democrats/Conservatives (PPE-DE) and Liberals (ELDR) on the other. The results were very close. One Social Democratic amendment (No 10) failed by 242-242 and another (No 5) by 231-231. The Left essentially lost every time except when they managed to get the smaller non-Socialist parties and a few individuals from the PPE-DE group on their side.

One amendment (No 26), which mentioned as an example the introduction of a Tobin tax in order to counter speculation, failed by 281-175 votes with 28 abstaining. The defeat became resounding when no fewer than 33 PSE members voted with the non-Socialists and nine PSE members abstained. An even stronger proposal concerning a Tobin tax (amendment 33) was rejected shortly afterwards by 314-147 votes.

A total of 493 members took part in the voting on the resolution in its entirety at 11.45. The result was 233 for and 232 against, with 28 abstaining. The Liberals and the Christian Democrats/Conservatives were for the resolution, as they mostly won during the voting on the content of the report. The Left in the GUE/NGL group, the Social Democratic group and the Green/regionalists voted against the report. One Danish Social Democratic member voted for the resolution. Was it an incorrect vote? Probably not, no incorrect voting was reported, nor is any incorrect voting recorded in the minutes on the points where the numbers of votes were even.

If we compare the first RCV on the Katiforis Report at 11.30 with the last one at 11.46, we find that the number of voting PPE-DE members increased by six. On the Left, the number of voting GUE/NGL members fell by five and the number of PSE members fell by two. The number of voters amongst the Verts/ALE/NGL increased by three, but this was not enough to win. It was therefore decisive for the final voting which members left before the voting had been concluded.

However, what would the result have been if all 510 of those signed in had voted? And what would the result have been if just three or four of those who left before the end of the voting had stayed behind and voted? Chance had an enormous influence on the results of the voting. Admittedly, the Katiforis Report was only a resolution in which the European Parliament gave its views regarding the Commission's report on the economy. However, a legislative assembly cannot make its decisions on such a random basis. When the assembly begins with 459 voters at 11.08, reaches its peak at 11.32 with 508 voters and then finishes with 439 present at 11.47, chance becomes an excessively important factor and affects the outcome, particularly as the European Parliament is split into Left and Right between Christian

Democrats/Conservatives and Liberals on one side and the Social Democrats, Left and the Green/regionalists on the other.

Then followed a report on the integration of fishing and environmental issues and a report on fisheries management and nature conservation in the marine environment. Even more members left when the voting on these reports took place, and when the final electronic voting was held on amendment 3, just 439 members took part. The last matter to be considered was a resolution on the consequences of the loss of the oil tanker Erika. The voting was then concluded.

By the time the voting started, 459 members had managed to arrive, sit down and participate at 12.08. The number of voters then rose and the peak was reached at 11.34 when 508 voted (not bad given that 510 members had signed themselves in as present on the day). The level of participation then fell very slowly. When the voting on the Katiforis Report in its entirety took place at 11.45, 493 members were present. This was decisive, given that it won by 233-232. In the last vote at 11.47 on an amendment which proposed that professional fishermen and their organisations should be able to participate in the decision-making process concerning the common fisheries policy, just 439 took part. The voting had a classic attendance curve with a rise followed by a fall. In this case, the Left lost the vote on the report on the economy because more of their members left before the end. On this occasion, the European Parliament's view on this annual report was however only an opinion.

4.4. The Boselli Report – copyright and related rights in the information society (co-decision procedure, second reading)

On Wednesday 14 February 2001, the European Parliament voted on, amongst other things, copyright and related rights in the information society. The burning issue here concerned copyright on the Internet. Here, the European Parliament had co-decision powers, but at second reading, 314 votes were required for the proposal to be accepted and submitted for conciliation with the Council. A total of 562 of the 626 MEPs signed themselves in as present on this day. This meant that if all members took part in the voting, a majority of approximately 56% of those present would be needed for a proposal to be adopted.

The voting began with a point of order at 12.03. Decisions were then made on eight different matters in two minutes. The first was a co-decision matter on its first reading, which was not very controversial. This was a simplified procedure and concerned the return of cultural objects that have been illegally removed from a Member State's territory. There were then seven consultation procedure decisions. Five of these were purely formalities, so they were considered in the European Parliament using a simplified procedure. One matter concerned an initiative from Sweden prior to the adoption of the Council's Decision on the adjustment of basic salaries and allowances for Europol staff.

At 12.07, the first RCV was held. The president unusually took his time and the members had 45 seconds to press their voting buttons. A total of 475 voted, a marked contrast to the situation ten minutes later when the voting really got under way. A total of 543 members voted this time.

The first button-pressing at 12.07 concerned the approval of the proposal at third reading under the co-decision procedure on the intentional release of genetically modified organisms into the environment, a matter that had been quite controversial at previous readings. A total

of 335 voted for, 52 against and 85 abstained. After having voted on another uncontroversial third reading proposal, attention turned to a controversial report.

The Boselli Report on copyright and related rights in the information society was a co-decision procedure that was up for its second reading. The matter had been preceded by intensive lobbying of the European Parliament from, on the one hand, the music industry and others and, on the other, library and consumer interest organisations. Sweden believed that the common position that had been negotiated within the Council was the best that could be achieved. If the European Parliament should adopt an amendment that went against the Council's position, the negotiations concerning a final Directive would be complicated.

Prior to the voting on the Boselli Report, eight members announced that they would abstain from voting because they had financial interests within affected sectors. The record shows that a total of 13 members refrained from voting in the Boselli vote. The British MEP McMillan-Scott then became concerned and pointed out that if all affected members abstained from participating in the voting, the necessary qualified majority (i.e. 314 votes) would not be achieved.

A total of 15 amendments had been submitted by the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market. Some of these had been adopted by a majority of just a few votes. All the amendments that had been adopted by a small majority within the committee were rejected in the plenary vote. Nine of the 15 amendments from the committee now achieved more than 314 votes and were approved. However, the proposals were so uncontroversial that they attracted almost 500 votes. There were for example a number of amendments which proposed the replacement of the phrase "whenever possible" with "unless this proves impossible". Amendments that were rejected by the committee and taken up by various party groups or individual members did not have a chance of being adopted. Of the remaining amendments by groups and individuals, one amendment by the PSE group, i.e. the Social Democratic group, managed to attract 252 'yes' votes. However, this result still meant that it was a long way from being adopted. Incorrect voting occurred for almost every amendment, but generally only two or three members voted incorrectly each time, in addition to some members of the British Conservative group who made a mistake in two votes.

During the 26 RCVs on the Boselli report, the number of voters varied between 528 and 548. In the voting on amendments 42 at 12.26, a total of 547 voted. Half a minute later on amendment proposal 31, just 528 voted, and another half a minute later, 546 voted. The margins were now so great that if a few members were unable to keep up with the fast pace of voting it did not have a decisive effect on the issue.

A total of 562 members had signed themselves in on this day, but no more than 548 members pressed their voting buttons simultaneously at 12.28. During the final ten minutes of the voting, about 10-20 members disappeared. In the last RCV at 12.51, 528 members took part.

Overall, it can be said from this voting that the European Parliament devotes a lot of time to technical issues in its reports under the co-decision procedure. However, during the second reading of a co-decision proposal, mostly proposals that are uncontroversial have a chance of being adopted. In more important political issues such as aid measures relating to employment and Turkey's membership of the EU, members sweep through subjects at a faster pace and reach agreement across party boundaries on the proposals put forward by the European Parliament.

4.5. Random outcome

Close voting results occur occasionally. The biggest problem is however the fact that attendance during the early stages of voting sessions is the major reason for random outcomes in the result.

Two examples are presented below of votes where, in one case, chance was a vital factor in determining the outcome of the voting in the RCVs and EVs, which were held early in the voting session. In the second case, we give an example of a voting session with fluctuating voter participation and close voting results.

4.5.1. Wednesday 4 April 2001 – example of the early stages in a voting session

The vote was announced as starting at 11.30. The voting would then be interrupted at 12.00 for a speech by Dr Rau, the President of Germany, and would then resume at 12.30. At about 11.35, the voting was ready to start, but proceedings started with a point of order, which took about a minute. The election of a Vice-President was held at about 11.36. The chamber elected her by acclamation and a vote was then held with a show of hands on the common organisation of the market for cereals and rice in Portugal (a consultation procedure where the Commission's proposal was approved by the European Parliament). At about 11.39, proceedings turned to the first report for which an RCV was to be held.

The Trakatellis Report on the programme for Community measures relating to public health (2001-2006) concerned a proposal under co-decision at first reading. A total of 106 amendments had been submitted by the Environment Committee, and a further seven amendments by various party groups and individual members. Here only a majority of the given votes in the vote is required.

The first RCV took place at 11.39.46. The voting concerned the second part of amendment 14 and concerned the insertion of the text "the new challenges in medicine and therapy". A total of 349 members participated and this part of the amendment won by 175 votes to 165, with 9 members abstaining. PPE-DE and ELDR in particular, together with much of the GUE/NGL group, voted for the amendment.

At 10.40.18, the RCV on the third part of amendment proposal 14 was concluded. This vote concerned the text "network of competence centres within different sectors, e.g. gene treatment, genetic diagnostics, tissue cultivation and organ transplantation, food safety and environmental toxicology, which can be found at regional and/or national level, and is linked to an electronic means of achieving synergy in collaboration at Community level". By now, more members had managed to make it into the chamber and 379 members took part. This time, the 'no' side won (which was almost identical to the 'no' side in the previous vote) by 186 votes to 184, with 9 members abstaining. An EV was then held immediately afterwards at 11.41, with 382 participants (amendment 41 was adopted by 210 votes to 167, with 5 abstaining). At approximately 11.42.20, the next EV took place on the second part of amendment 49, during which 442 members took part. The next EV took place at approximately 11.44.30, when 473 members participated (the second part of amendment 57 was rejected with 206 'yes' votes, 260 'no' votes and 7 abstaining).

The number of participants in the voting then rose gradually to 502-504-506-509-515, ending up at 517 for an RCV on the resolution in its entirety at 11.54.01.

Three members also had it recorded in the minutes that they had been present but had not participated in the voting on the Trakatellis Report. One member had been present but had not participated in the vote on amendment 14 on the Trakatellis Report and another member had it

recorded in the minutes that she intended to vote 'yes' to amendment 14 (she did not vote on the amendment for some reason).

It is of course difficult to know exactly. However, all the evidence indicates that the majority in the chamber swung from amendment 14/2 to amendment 14/3 quite randomly as a result of the influx of members. From 11.39 to 11.54, the number of participants in the voting increased by 168 members, from 349 to 517. The assembly therefore increased in size by a third in a quarter of an hour. This is naturally of considerable importance in connection with close voting results.

The Trakatellis Report concerned a proposal under co-decision at first reading. Amendments that are rejected then cannot be included at subsequent readings. It is therefore regrettable if some parts are rejected purely by chance, as the decision cannot be corrected at a later date.

4.5.2. Thursday 5 April 2001 – example of close voting results

The votes on this day are interesting as there were small margins in many voting results and it is interesting to study them in more detail. The voting started at approximately 12.05 with a number of points of order. Votes were then held on two matters with a show of hands. One concerned an amendment to the budget regulation, while the other was a co-decision proposal at third reading relating to coastal ports, inland ports and intermodal terminals.

Then, at about 12.17, the voting on the Lehne Report on money laundering started. This was a co-decision matter at second reading, so each amendment needed the support of 314 members in order to be adopted. A total of 18 RCVs and EVs were held on amendment relating to this report. Three amendment (or parts thereof) were passed by a relatively small margin with 321, 322 and 331 votes. Seven amendment (or parts thereof) were rejected by a relatively small margin, as they attracted between 303 and 309 votes. An average of 454 members took part in the 18 RCVs and EVs relating to this matter between approximately 12.17 and 12.26.

A few minutes later, the proceedings turned to the Camison Asensio Report concerning aid for the co-ordination of transport by rail, road and inland waterway. This was a first reading under co-decision. There were eight RCVs and EVs relating to this report between 12.31 and 12.40 with an average participation of approximately 460. Here, there were two very close results. Amendment 49 was rejected by 225 votes to 225! Twelve members abstained from the vote. A further point of interest is that 462 members took part in this particular voting, while 465 members participated in the voting immediately prior to this one, exactly the same as participated in the following RCV. Amendment 39, second part, was adopted by 223 'yes' votes to 220 'no' votes, with 17 abstaining. A total of 460 members took part here. These close votes were however held by EV, so it is not as easy to determine whether the majority fluctuated or not.

Immediately after, at 12.51, there was another close vote. Amendment 3 concerning the resolution relating to foot and mouth disease was rejected with 212 votes for, 219 against and 13 abstaining, out of 444 voters. The party groups were however almost all split on this issue. At 12.57, there was another close vote. One RCV resulted in the rejection of the motion for a resolution concerning the situation in the Middle East (which was related to the result from the European Council's meeting in Stockholm on 23-24 March 2001), which had been submitted by the PSE, Green/EFA and GUE/NGL. It was rejected with 216 voting for, 217 against and 23 members abstaining. A total of 456 members took part in this vote.

The number of ‘yes’ votes should actually have been two fewer, as two members who voted ‘yes’ should actually have abstained, and the number of ‘no’ votes should have been two higher, as two members who abstained should actually have voted ‘no’.

However, the fact that the votes were close did not prevent a number of members from leaving the chamber. In the first RCV at 12.18, 451 members took part. The number of participants reached a peak of 466 in an RCV at 12.33. However, in the last RCV at 13.11, the number of participants had shrunk to 369.

Table 11. Attendance during the RCVs at 12.18 and 13.11 Thursday 5 April 2001 according to party group

Political Group	Number voting 12.18	Number voting 12.18 as %	Number voting 13.11	Number voting 13.11 as %
PPE-DE	165	36.26%	132	35.77%
PSE	147	32.31%	128	34.69%
ELDR	34	7.47%	30	8.13%
Verts/ALE	39	8.57%	30	8.13%
GUE/NGL	29	6.37%	22	5.96%
UEN	13	2.86%	8	2.17%
TDI	6	1.32%	4	1.08%
EDD	13	2.86%	9	2.44%
NI	9	1.98%	6	1.63%
Total	455	100%	369	100%

The interesting point to note about this table is that PSE strengthens its position at the end of the voting as a smaller proportion of their members leave the chamber. The proportion that leaves the voting is however fairly consistent across the party groups. However, if PPE-DE or PSE for example were to succeed, contrary to all expectation, in increasing the discipline amongst their members and ensure that all remained behind until the voting had finished, they would have a good chance of winning all the votes scheduled for the end of the session.

5. Need for a pairing system – but how?

Most national parliaments have various forms of pairing system where members of parliament from the government and the opposition agree to abstain from voting during ballots in order to retain the balance in the parliament determined by the election result. Only in exceptional circumstances will the parties announce that the pairing system will not apply and that the mobilisation of all members for a vote is all important.

However, how should a pairing system be organised in an European Parliament where there is of course no government majority or opposition? It is even more complicated, as there are at least four different political alignments of opinion within the European Parliament. The principal political alignments are as follows:

- 1/ The traditional Right-Left alignments.
- 2/ The development of the EU in a supranational or international direction. However, the Federalists have a large majority with respect to the Confederalists in the European Parliament.

3/ North-south division based on different views on how much of the EU's budget should be allocated to regional policy, agricultural subsidies, fishing agreements with third parties, and Mediterranean programmes.

4/ Whether MEPs represent net-paying or net-receiving countries within the EU has an effect.

To this can be added other contrasts such as how “green” or environmentally friendly each parent party is and how far the environmental debate has progressed in the various Member States. There are also other contrasts based on differing political traditions within the various Member States with regard, for example, to deregulation or zero tolerance in narcotics policies.

An interesting example of how difficult it is to organise a pairing system is the voting every year concerning the European Parliament's meeting calendar for the following year, as described below.

As amendment for the reports arrive relatively late prior to a session and there is frequently insufficient time to even consider the items within the various national party groups before the session week begins, political positions are determined very late, in many cases immediately prior to the voting. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to organise pairing in the various votes that will take place during a session.

5.1. The meeting calendar for the European Parliament for 2001

Votes on the following year's meeting calendar for the European Parliament are normally highly charged affairs. One contentious issue in the past was whether the number of part-sessions should be reduced from twelve to eleven every year. In recent years, the biggest issue has been whether part-sessions should be shortened to Monday-Thursday, abandoning sittings on Fridays. In the meeting calendar for both 2001 and 2002, those who wanted to abolish sittings on Fridays in Strasbourg won.

The first time the European Parliament decided to abolish sittings on Fridays was when the meeting calendar for 2001 was considered on 14 June 2000.

The meeting calendar was the first matter to be voted on during the voting session.

The voting started at 12.08.43. A total of 474 MEPs took part in the first RCV, while 510 took part in the second RCV at 12.09.35. In the third RCV, members voted ‘yes’ or ‘no’ to the proposal to abolish Friday sittings in Strasbourg. Here, President Nicole Fontaine allowed additional time for button-pressing and she asked three times whether everyone had voted. At 12.10.44, the result was clear - 537 members took part in the vote, 277 voted ‘yes’, 232 voted ‘no’, and 28 abstained.

However, not all members had managed to reach the chamber in time. The highest number of votes at the same time occurred at 12.29 on this day.

Table 12. Distribution of votes within the European Parliament based on the national delegations concerning the proposal to abolish the Friday sessions in Strasbourg during 2001

Country	Yes	No	Abstained	Absent/Did not vote	Total
Sweden	18	2	0	3	22
Austria	3	15	0	3	21
Belgium	14	5	2	4	25
Germany	22	64	3	10	99
Denmark	7	4	2	3	16
Spain	46	11	0	7	64
France	5	68	7	7	87
Finland	10	3	2	1	16
Greece	4	16	2	3	25
Italy	36	19	4	28	87
Ireland	6	7	1	1*	15
Luxembourg	1	5	0	0	6
Netherlands	25	2	1	3	31
Portugal	13	4	2	6	25
United Kingdom	67	7	2	11	87
EU 15	277	232	28	89	626

Comment:

* The absent/non-voting member from Ireland reported afterwards that he had intended to vote 'no'.

It can be stated that, in this vote, the French had an attendance of 92% (compared with an average French signing-in rate for the sessions July 1999 – February 2002 of 78%).

The Strasbourg sessions have strong support amongst MEPs from France, Greece, Luxembourg, Germany and Austria, while MEPs from Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom and Sweden mostly prefer shorter Strasbourg sessions.

Table 13. The distribution of votes in the European Parliament based on political groups concerning the proposal to abolish the Friday sessions in Strasbourg during 2001

	Yes	No	Abstain	Absent/Did not vote
PPE-DE	87	100	8	38
PSE	97	60	2	21
ELDR	40	3	0	8
Verts/ALE	30	13	1	4
GUE/NGL	7	18	11	6
UEN	3	20	1	6
TDI	8	7	0	3
EDD	4	7	4	1
NI	1	4	1	2
Total	277	232	28	89

6. Possible changes

1. Pairing system. A pairing system is very difficult to agree between the party groups. It is feasible, but with considerable scope for opt-out for individual members and national parties. The pairing system would then not apply in these situations. The problem is that, in many votes, a number of parties would undoubtedly give notice that they were opting out and we are then back where we started.
2. The Rules of Procedure could be altered so that in future the party groups submit entire alternative proposals for a single vote per report. This would avoid all the votes about details in the text of a report.
3. The right to leave of absence from the European Parliament with replacement by deputies must be regulated, for example for taking care of children.. An MEP must be given the opportunity to request leave of absence from the European Parliament for a period of 30 days or more, with a deputy taking his or her place. This would eliminate many of the problems arising from absences.
4. Reduce the speed of the voting in the European Parliament on the occasions when there are RCVs. For each RCV, MEPs should have at least 30 seconds to vote. Each RCV must be clearly announced and a longer interval must be allowed before the next RCV is called. With the current arrangement, three RCVs sometimes take place in about a minute, which means that not all members keep up with the voting due to the time needed for interpretation and other external circumstances in the chamber.
5. Members of the European Parliament should be discouraged from having a dual mandate in both the European and national parliaments. It is difficult to see how two such demanding functions could effectively be fulfilled at the same time. For this reason, certain Member States, although not all, have made it a rule that one parliamentarian cannot serve two Parliaments.

More measures than these are however required. The European Parliament must find a solution internally and create a voting system which wherever possible eliminates random voting results.

Annexes

B.1. Determination of the average number of members voting

In this report, we have used the average of Roll Call Votes (RCVs) (we also performed an alternative calculation of the average for EVs) per session day as a basis for calculating the average number of voters in an individual vote. This means that we first calculated the average number on a daily basis and then added the figures together and divided the result by the number of days.

It could be argued that this method produces a misleading average, as it does not take into account the fact that the number of voting sessions per day varies. If, for example, we assume that ten voting sessions take place on a day with an average vote participation of 550 and that one vote takes place on a day with 450 participants, the method would give the average total of 500 per day, while the true average number of participants per vote is $(10 \times 550 + 1 \times 450) / 11 = 541$.

We arrive at an average of 452 (as we have only calculated RCV by RCV). If we calculate both RCV by RCV and EV by EV, the figure drops to 449, i.e. from 72.2% to 71.7% of the MEPs. This is of course because more RCVs take place during the voting immediately before lunch on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays where there are more MEPs present than on Thursday evenings.

This is however balanced by the fact that RCVs tend to attract more voters than voting without a roll call (as RCVs normally concern issues of greater importance). The counting of all votes would therefore very probably give a result with a lower average voter participation than a calculation based solely on RCVs. If we take into account both of these effects, we use the simpler "average of session days" and stress that we are only referring to this specific average.

B.2. Using the maximum number of RCVs when calculating the number of non-voting members

In the report, we have used the difference between the number signed-in as present during the sessions and the maximum number of RCVs as the basis for calculating the number of MEPs who did not vote at all. There are a number of possible sources of error with this approach.

First and foremost, we do not know whether the MEPs who vote are the same ones on every occasion. All MEPs who are present may vote several times during the day, but not all at the same time on any one occasion (e.g. positions 1 to 500 can vote at 12.00 and positions 127 to 626 can vote at 13.00), which gives the impression that some MEPs may not vote at all.

We have assessed this possibility by checking name lists for RCVs on several random dates. This confirmed that many MEPs completely abstained from voting. We have also observed the votes in the chamber during the voting and this also indicates that there is no large-scale replacement of MEPs during a voting session. The variation in voting participation is entirely due to three factors:

- 1) some members arrive up to 20 minutes late for the voting,
- 2) some members start to leave the voting about 40-50 minutes after it has started,
- 3) individual members fail to vote or abstain from voting in individual RCVs or EVs.

Another source of error is the fact that the maximum number of RCVs is not a reliable basis for measuring the general maximum number of voters. However, this possibility can be eliminated for the days on which we have registered both the electronic votes (EVs) and all roll call votes (RCVs). The results are shown in the tables below:

Table B1. Maximum vote participation in RCVs and all EVs on session days during 2001

Date	16/1	14/2	15/3	5/4 evening	15/5	13/6	5/7	6/9 evening	2/10	24/10	15/11	13/12 evening
Maximum RCVs	528	547	452	120	509	555	518	120	538	564	490	102
Maximum EVs	532	524	437	118	509	539	507	124	531	562	487	96

The table shows clearly that, although there are chance exceptions, the maximum number of registered votes in RCVs provides a very good basis for calculating the maximum number of voters on a particular day. It is also logical, as RCVs are normally the most important votes.

It should also be noted that one or more MEPs almost always take part in the votes, but forget to sign in as present (or sign in as present for another meeting at the European Parliament and not in the actual chamber). We randomly selected and investigated the sittings on 16 May, 4 July, 5 July and 6 September 2001 in Strasbourg. For the RCVs with the highest participation, we found that on 16 May and 6 September there were four voters who had not signed in on the session's attendance list. At the sitting on 4 July, there were three members who took part in the vote who had not signed themselves in as present on the session list and on 5 July there were seven members who did the same. At the sessions in Brussels, it is even more common for members to sign themselves in as present somewhere else in the parliament. A review of the two RCVs with the highest participation on 1 March 2001 showed that there were 17 members who took part in the voting who were not signed in on the session's attendance list. During another sitting in Brussels (29 November 2001), 22 MEPs took part in the RCV with the highest participation who were not signed in on the attendance list!

This means that the correct number of MEPs present is possibly 3-10 higher than we stated here (probably 15-25 at the Brussels sessions) and that the number of (what we have interpreted as) non-voting MEPs is on average 3-10 higher than the figures reported in the text above.

In this report, we have included the voting sessions that are sometimes held when the European Parliament resumes its proceedings on Mondays at 17.00 in Strasbourg and on Wednesdays at 15.00 in Brussels. This reduces the average. However, the opening of the sessions concerns matters announced where decisions have to be made on the adoption of the timetable and there is sometimes political sparring between the party groups over the organisation of the timetables for the sessions. We have excluded three EVs from the average voting attendance. Three votes were held outside the normal voting sessions during 2001. The first occurred on Tuesday 13 February and concerned the rejection of an item (31 members took part in this EV), while the second took place on Wednesday 28 November at the Brussels session where the issue was whether the reading of one report should be deferred (55 members took part in this EV). The third vote took place on Thursday 13 December and concerned a decision relating to an urgent procedure (368 members took part in this vote).

Finally, the actual core of the problem that we raise in this report is not that some MEPs (who sign themselves in) do not take part in the voting, but that the average number of voters fluctuates considerably.

Table B2. Average number of voters in RCVs, Strasbourg sessions 2001

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Thu even.	Average
Jan		524	557	492	117	422
Feb	281	454	538	446	123	390
Mar	264	490	504	450	108	388
Apr	250	494	489	448	117	387
May		500	516	445	108	392
Jun		513	533	482	116	411
Jul		540	573	479	119	428
Sep		530	562	473	120	421
Oct I		507	539	489	114	412
Oct II		524	553	473	100	413
Nov		528	524	449	91	398
Dec		532	526	457	100	404
Average	265	511	535	465	111	377

Table B3. Average number of voters in EVs, Strasbourg sessions 2001

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Thu even.	Average
Jan		515	535	480	124	413
Feb		511	523	446	120	400
Mar		475	495	424	106	375
Apr		489	495	439	114	384
May		494	470	433	97	373
Jun		499	505	450	114	392
Jul			569	475	123	389
Sep	303	526	547	467	120	415
Oct I	257	524	537	457	111	407
Oct II		518	528	471	100	404
Nov	277	522	518	428	89	389
Dec	276	513	512	436	91	388
Average	278	508	519	450	109	373

Table B4. Average number of members voting in RCVs, Brussels sessions 2001

	Mini session
Jan	
Feb	515
Mar	490
Apr	
May I	495
May II	424
Jun	
Jul	
Sep	516
Oct	
Nov	463
Dec	
Average	484

Table B5. Average number of voters in EVs, Brussels sessions 2001

	Mini session
Jan	
Feb	502
Mar	470
Apr	
May I	488
May II	432
Jun	
Jul	
Sep	511
Oct	
Nov	444
Dec	
Average	475

Table B6. Highest number of recorded votes in RCVs, Strasbourg sessions 2001

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Thu even.	Average
Jan		528	567	503	117	429
Feb	281	502	547	477	126	413
Mar	271	504	512	452	108	394
Apr	250	515	529	466	120	408
May		509	529	459	110	402
Jun		522	555	490	118	421
Jul		542	585	518	125	443
Sep		554	574	490	120	435
Oct I		538	562	503	116	430
Oct II		538	564	505	101	427
Nov		537	552	490	91	418
Dec		533	541	474	102	413
Average	267	527	551	486	113	389

Table B7. Highest number of recorded votes in RCVs, Brussels sessions 2001

	Mini session
Jan	
Feb	530
Mar	499
Apr	
May I	500
May II	495
Jun	
Jul	
Sep	532
Oct	
Nov	528
Dec	
Average	517

Table B8. Lowest number of recorded votes in RCVs, Strasbourg sessions 2001

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Thu even.	Average
Jan		515	554	460	117	409
Feb	281	416	475	372	119	346
Mar	256	430	481	395	108	354
Apr	250	331	349	369	113	291
May		483	494	419	104	375
Jun		493	470	460	115	385
Jul		538	546	401	101	397
Sep		446	538	440	120	386
Oct I		446	445	449	110	363
Oct II		504	543	387	98	383
Nov		514	331	340	91	319
Dec		531	513	431	99	394
Average	262	471	478	410	108	346

Table B9. Lowest number of recorded votes in RCVs, Brussels sessions 2001

	Mini session
Jan	
Feb	499
Mar	469
Apr	
May I	487
May II	184
Jun	
Jul	
Sep	443
Oct	
Nov	386
Dec	
Average	396

Table B10. Highest number of recorded votes in EVs, Strasbourg sessions 2001

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Thu even.	Average
Jan		532	555	498	125	428
Feb		511	524	472	120	407
Mar		500	508	437	109	389
Apr		509	523	462	118	403
May		509	524	453	97	396
Jun		516	539	488	116	415
Jul			578	507	125	403
Sep	306	549	560	496	124	432
Oct I	257	531	559	487	111	422
Oct II		535	562	495	101	423
Nov	290	539	550	487	90	417
Dec	276	523	524	468	96	403
Average	282	523	542	479	111	388

Table B11. Highest number of recorded votes in EVs, Brussels sessions 2001

	Mini session
Jan	
Feb	522
Mar	493
Apr	
May I	497
May II	485
Jun	
Jul	
Sep	528
Oct	
Nov	527
Dec	
Average	511

Table B12. Lowest number of recorded votes in EVs, Strasbourg sessions 2001

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Thu even.	Average
Jan		480	451	436	122	372
Feb		511	521	388	120	385
Mar		386	467	400	103	339
Apr		375	382	382	107	312
May		437	403	384	97	330
Jun		476	413	403	111	351
Jul			556	428	119	368
Sep	299	432	521	448	115	379
Oct I	257	510	512	405	111	385
Oct II		475	501	433	100	377
Nov	271	495	444	254	88	320
Dec	276	503	487	368	81	360
Average	276	462	472	394	106	342

Table B13. Lowest number of recorded votes in EVs, Brussels sessions 2001

	Mini session
Jan	
Feb	488
Mar	417
Apr	
May I	479
May II	176
Jun	
Jul	
Sep	480
Oct	
Nov	389
Dec	
Average	325