



# Info

## Professor Farrell: "The EP is now one of the most powerful legislatures in the world"

**Commenting on the outcome of an extensive on-line survey of MEPs' views Professor Farrell, Head of the School of Social Sciences at The University of Manchester, said: "For much of its life, the European Parliament could have been justly labelled a 'multi-lingual talking shop'. "But this is no longer the case: the EP is now one of the most powerful legislatures in the world both in terms of its legislative and executive oversight powers.**

The views of MEPs as shown in this survey may very well have a direct impact on policy and therefore on all citizens in the EU. So the public should sit up and take notice of what their representatives are saying."

The UK National Centre for Social Research designed a web-site on which the survey was hosted. Each MEP was contacted personally by letter (translated into their mother tongue), and invited to participate in the survey online. The team from The Universities of Manchester, Aberystwyth and the London School of Economics also revealed controversial attitudes to abortion, crime, defence and immigration among members. Professors David Farrell from The University of Manchester, Simon Hix from the London school of Economics and Roger Scully from the University of Aberystwyth, contacted all 732 MEPs of whom 272 responded.

Professor Simon Hix said: "Our work also shows that politics in the European Parliament is becoming increasingly based around party and ideology. Voting is increasingly split along left-right lines, and the cohesion of the party groups has risen dramatically, particularly in the fourth and fifth parliaments. So there are likely to be policy implications here too."

The wide-ranging survey of Members of the European Parliament - including Britain's representatives - revealed half of the MEPs (51%) think there should be more harmonisation of national immigration policies. The British figure, however, is less than one-third at 32%.

Just short of three-quarters of MEPs (70%) think that women should be free to decide on abortion, though only 20% of Irish MEPs agree. Three-quarters (73%) of MEPs think there should be EU-wide arrest warrants for serious crimes. 54% of British MEPs agree.

40% of MEPs think that the EU rather than NATO should be responsible for European defence, though only 29 % of British MEPs agree. 40% of MEPs think that EU foreign policy should be a counterweight to the US. In the case of French MEPs, the figure rises to 64%. 68% of MEPs think the EU should no longer meet in Strasbourg, though only 7 per cent of French MEPs agree.

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