



**European Parties Elections
and Referendums Network**

**ELECTION BRIEFING NO 50
EUROPE AND THE SERBIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION OF MAY
2008**

**Marko Stojic
Sussex European Institute
M.Stojic@sussex.ac.uk**

Key Points:

- The Serbian parliamentary election was held at a time of extremely high political tensions, following the proclamation of the independence of Kosovo that led to the collapse of the coalition government.
- The election gave a landslide victory to the coalition For a European Serbia based around the Democratic party and G17 Plus against the grain of opinion polls that had predicted a victory for the far right-wing Serbian Radical Party.
- The government was formed by the coalition For a European Serbia, the coalition of Socialist Party of Serbia, Party of United Pensioners of Serbia and United Serbia, and minority parties.
- The issue of Europe was the single most important issue during the election campaign as the election was widely perceived as a referendum on Serbian EU membership.
- The election proved to be a 'political earthquake' that reshaped the party scene- the Democratic Party of Serbia shifted towards an anti-European position, the Socialist Party of Serbia became a legitimate left-wing party within a ruling pro European coalition, while the new Serbian Progressive Party was formed, following the split within the Serbian Radical Party

Background/Context

The previous parliamentary election in Serbia was held in January 2007. The election results were as widely expected and they confirmed the leading position of the right-wing, nationalist

Serbian Radical Party that received the majority of votes, although not enough to form a government. The pro-European, centre-left Democratic Party of the Serbian president Boris Tadic came second. A coalition of conservative Democratic Party of Serbia and New Serbia led by the then Serbian prime minister Vojislav Kostunica was third, while the liberal G17 Plus emerged as fourth. The Socialist Party of Serbia of the former Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic, Liberal Democratic Party and five minority parties also managed to cross an election threshold of 5% and obtain the seats in the Assembly but they failed to become a significant factor in forming a government.

Following very long and difficult negotiations, the government was formed on 15 May 2007, just a few minutes before midnight, when the constitutional deadline would have passed. A key role of the Democratic Party of Serbia was again evident, since the party was comfortably placed between the two blocks- anti-European Serbian Radical Party and pro-European Democratic Party and G17 Plus- with capacity to form a coalition government with either of them. After temporary cooperation with the Serbian Radical Party in electing the speaker of the parliament, the Democratic Party of Serbia turned to the pro-European parties and formed a government with the Democratic Party and G17 Plus, while its president Vojislav Kostunica became again the prime minister.

The three main principles agreed by the coalition partners were: to preserve Kosovo within internationally recognized borders of Serbia, to continue negotiations on Serbia's EU accession, to continue cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), to improve the social and economic status of citizens and to strengthen the fight against corruption and organized crime. At the beginning, it seemed the new government managed to preserve its fragile internal unity, which was primarily reflected in a common attitude towards the steps taken by the government regarding the Kosovo status and European integration. However, as the negotiations on the status of Kosovo progressed in a direction unfavourable to Serbia, conflicts within the ruling coalition became more frequent and visible. All ruling parties believed that Kosovo must remain an integral part of Serbia, but a key difference on the measures to be taken as a reaction to the expected declaration of independence and EU involvement in the process of establishing Kosovo's independence emerged. In that way, the two interrelated issues- the status of Kosovo and European integration of Serbia became by far the most important political and social issues and a reason for continuous political instability.

In November 2007, the coalition government successfully concluded the negotiations with the EU and initialled the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA). That act was supported by all the ruling parties and it was seen as the most important step towards Serbian EU membership. However, the situation drastically changed by the end of 2007, when it became clear that Kosovo would unilaterally declare independence, given that there had been no agreement on this issue in the UN Security Council. Furthermore, the EU made a decision to send its rule of law mission EULEX to Kosovo in order to replace the UN mission, without the UN Security Council approval, while a large majority of EU member states expressed readiness to recognize Kosovo as an independent state. As a result of these developments, prime minister Kostunica, backed by the Democratic Party of Serbia, New Serbia and the opposition Serbian Radical Party took a new stance towards the EU, arguing that under new circumstances Serbia must refuse the signing of

the SAA, while other coalition partners argued that the SAA was neutral on the issue of Kosovo status and that the Serbian government should continue with their effects towards EU accession.

The decision of the Serbian parliament speaker Oliver Dulic, a member of the Democratic Party, to call a presidential election according to the Constitutional provisions, despite strong opposition from the Democratic Party of Serbia and the prime minister who claimed that it would jeopardize Serbia's position on Kosovo, further fuelled the conflict within the government. The presidential election was still held in January/February 2008 and Boris Tadic of the Democratic Party secured a second five-year mandate, without support of his coalition partners. He defeated the Serbian Radical Party candidate Tomislav Nikolic in the second round, with a margin of about 100,000 votes, after a very tight election race. After this election, it became clear that cohabitation between president and prime minister from the two rival parties was close to an end.

The unilateral declaration of independence was proclaimed by the Kosovo Assembly on 17 February 2008. The Serbian government immediately rejected this act as illegal, and declared it null and void. However, the reactions of the president and prime minister were somewhat different. Prime minister Kostunica argued that "Kosovo's unilateral declaration of a false state is the final act of a policy that started with the NATO aggression against Serbia in 1999," calling for harsh measures against countries that would recognize Kosovo, while president Tadic said that "Serbia will never recognize Kosovo and Metohija's independence," but added that the state "must not now undertake hasty moves."¹

Kosovo's independence was recognized by majority of Western countries, including 22 out of 27 EU member states. The decision on independence led to the major protests against the USA and the EU on the streets of Serbian cities. An attempt of the prime minister and opposition to hold a peaceful rally ended in violent clashes with the police and destruction of the centre of Belgrade. Some western embassies were demolished and one protester was killed in the American embassy, which had been previously set on fire. The country was in serious political turmoil. Both government and parliament were blocked and could not be convened due to opposite opinions of ruling parties on how to resolve the situation, while president and prime minister were sending different and contradictory messages to the confused and disturbed population. In that situation, the irreconcilable views of president and prime minister on the Serbian EU future and how to react to Kosovan independence were apparent more than ever before. As a result, the government handed the president a proposal to dissolve the parliament, after concluding that it no longer has a united and common policy and could not continue to function. President Tadić dissolved the parliament and called an early parliamentary election on 13. March 2008.

The campaign

The election held in May 2008 should be viewed in the context of the January 2008 presidential election, because Serbia was in a permanent political campaign of almost an entire six months, during the first half of 2008. The election campaign was very 'dirty', full of harsh words, offensive posters and even death threats, which was not a surprise given the nature of political

¹ See: http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=02&dd=17&nav_id=47781

culture, level of polarization of public opinion and particularly extraordinary circumstances in which the election was held. However, calling the election largely calmed down the increased tensions in the society after the declaration of Kosovan independence and political parties managed to channel public dissatisfaction after the violent demonstrations in the Serbian cities. The two major and by far the most dominant topics during the campaign were the issue of Kosovo and the EU. All other issues were in the background, except to some extent socio-economic issues, which were also observed in the light of Kosovo- EU relations.

The coalition For a European Serbia, made up of the Democratic Party, G17 Plus and a group of minor and regional parties, strongly promoted the idea of Europe and pleaded for the EU accession of Serbia during the campaign, despite the fact that major EU countries had recognized Kosovo's independence and sent the rule of law mission to Kosovo. The coalition's election campaign was very dynamic and fully relied on the Serbian president Tadic, while all other party leaders remained in the shadows. The campaign was aimed at population that was deeply affected by the US and EU policy towards Kosovo, in order to persuade them that self-imposed isolation would not bring anything good and that only active policy could defend the Serbian position on Kosovo. It was also pointed out that better lives for citizens could be achieved only by integrating into the EU. In that way, this coalition successfully linked socio-economic issues that were not in the foreground with the issue of EU membership, calling on citizens to vote rationally and not emotionally. It was particularly stressed that the SAA needed to be signed, that the issue of Kosovo and the EU were two separate issues and that Serbia must not return to the 1990s.

On the other side, the coalition of the Democratic Party of Serbia and New Serbia led by primeminister Kostunica underwent a fundamental transformation from a conservative, moderate pro EU party group to the main promoter of anti-EU attitudes in the Serbian society. The coalition argued for stopping the further integration into the EU, until the EU explicitly recognized the international borders of Serbia, which in reality meant the abandonment of the EU membership. The coalition also pledged stronger measures against the countries that had recognized Kosovo, the preservation of military neutrality, as well as strengthening cooperation with countries in favour of the Serbian position on Kosovo, primarily the Russian Federation. The Democratic Party of Serbia and New Serbia opposed the signing of the SAA with the EU during the campaign, arguing that Serbia would have implicitly recognized the independence of its southern province, by signing it. They also accused the Democratic Party of committing treason and breaching the Serbian Constitution, after a deputy prime minister, a member of the Democratic Party, had signed the SAA.

Similar views were represented by the Serbian Radical Party, which harshly disagreed with the signing of the SAA and EU accession of Serbia and especially cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.² Its campaign was aimed at numerous 'looser of the transition', arguing for a stronger fight against organized crime and corruption that the party claimed had flourished in Serbia after 2000. However, its campaign was still more moderate and modern than in previous elections, and led by the party moderate deputy president Tomislav Nikolic.

² The Serbian Radical Party leader Vojislav Seselj has been indicted for war crimes by the ICTY. The ICTY (the Hague Tribunal) is often perceived in Serbia as a symbol of anti Serbian policy of the Western countries

The coalition of Socialist[??] Party of Serbia, United Serbia and Party of United Pensioners of Serbia conducted a somewhat different campaign, more oriented towards socio-economic issues such as social justice, economic development and protection of pensioners and workers. It criticized the results of economic transition and very poor results of privatization, while arguing that Kosovo must remain, at all costs, an integral part of Serbia. The coalition attitude towards the EU was rather vague and occasionally negative, given the support of main EU countries for Kosovo's independence, but it did not openly declare its position regarding the signing of the SAA. On the other side, the Liberal Democratic Party was the only party that did not share the views of other parties towards Kosovo, advocating a new policy towards Kosovo and Albanians during the campaign and arguing that there was no alternative to EU membership. The political parties' attitudes on these crucial questions were evident in the slogans used during the election campaign, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Slogans of political parties during election campaign

Coalition For a European Serbia (Democratic Party, G17 Plus, Serbian Renewal Movement, League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, Sandzak Democratic Party)	<i>For a European Serbia Europe means more modern education Europe means a more certain future Europe means new working places - work can't wait</i>
Serbian Radical Party	<i>Go Serbia! Kosovo and Metohija - the heart of Serbia!</i>
Democratic Party of Serbia- New Serbia	<i>Support Serbia!</i>
Socialist Party of Serbia - Party of United Pensioners of Serbia - United Serbia	<i>Rise up Serbia!</i>
Liberal Democratic Party	<i>Spread the word! Serbia without borders</i>

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbian_parliamentary_election,_2008

Results

There were 22 electoral lists with 3,137 candidates competing for 250 seats in the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia. The turnout at 61.35% was relatively high, taking into consideration that the election campaign was very dynamic and the election was perceived as a referendum on EU membership. The number of parties that participated in the election was very high given that many electoral list were party coalitions, which indicates a high degree of fragmentation of the Serbian political scene.³

However, only a few lists had a real chance to cross the threshold of 5% (a natural threshold for minority parties) to get into the Assembly. The biggest coalition was gathered around the Democratic Party of the Serbian president Boris Tadic. The aim of the coalition For a European Serbia was to bring together all pro-European forces, so it was consisted of parties with different ideological orientations, but a common view that Serbia had to continue the process of European

³ The new law on political parties adopted in May 2009 significantly reduced the number of political parties. It is expected that only 70 out of 560 political parties will be reregistered.

integration. The coalition was formed by the centre-left Democratic Party, liberal G17 Plus, monarchist and conservative Serbian Renewal Movement, and two regional parties the League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina and the Sandzak Democratic Party. Other relevant parties that took part in the election were the right-wing, anti European, nationalist Serbian Radical Party, the conservative coalition of the Democratic Party and New Serbia, the liberal and pro European Liberal Democratic Party, the coalition of the Socialist Party of Serbia, United Serbia and the Party of United Pensioners of Serbia and a number of minority parties.

Table 2: May 2008 Serbian Parliamentary Election Results

Coalition/Party	Votes	%	Seats	Change ±
For a European Serbia (Democratic Party, G17 Plus, Serbian Renewal Movement, League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina, Sandzak Democratic Party)	1,590,200	38.42	102	+19
Serbian Radical Party	1,219,436	29.46	78*	-3
Democratic Party of Serbia- New Serbia	480,987	11.62	30	-17
Socialist Party of Serbia - Party of United Pensioners of Serbia - United Serbia	313,896	7.58	20	+4
Liberal Democratic Party	216,902	5.24	13	-2
Hungarian Coalition	74,874	1.81	4	+1
Bosniac List for a European Sandzak	38,148	0.92	2	±0
Albanian Coalition from Preševo Valley	16,801	0.41	1	±0

* 21 MP's broke away from Serbian Radical Party in September 2008 and formed a separate parliamentary group and a new party- Serbian Progressive Party

Source- Republic of Serbia, Republic Electoral Commission, (<http://www.rik.parlament.sr.gov.yu/>)

As Table 2 shows, the coalition For a European Serbia won a victory with 38.42% of the total votes and 102 parliamentary seats. The Serbian Radical party came second with 29.46% of the votes and 78 seats, despite the fact that it received more votes than in the January 2007 election. The election results were very surprising given that all public opinion surveys indicated that the Serbian Radical Party was to achieve a victory as in previous elections and probably form a coalition government with Democratic Party of Serbia and New Serbia.

The coalition of the Democratic Party of Serbia and New Serbia suffered a severe drop with 11.62% of the votes and 30 seats in the parliament, 17 seats less than in previous election, and lost the position of a coalition that could form the government with either of the two blocks. On the other hand, the coalition around the Socialist Party of Serbia emerged as the fourth party group in the parliament, which was seen as a big success and it largely took over the role of the Democratic Party of Serbia as a possible coalition partner, due to a moderate campaign focusing on economic and social issues. The Liberal Democratic Party kept the same number of votes, but because of a greater turnout, it lost two seats and the possibility to form a government with the coalition For a European Serbia, while the minority parties mainly achieved the same results as in the previous election.

When analyzing the distribution of votes across regions, the coalition For a European Serbia won in all regions except in Kosovo, where the election was organized only in areas inhabited by the Serbs, and where the Serbian Radical Party emerged as a winner. It was also clear that none of the parties was in a position to form a government alone. Furthermore, neither of the two blocks was able to form a government without the coalition around Socialist Party of Serbia, which became a key political factor. After long negotiations, the new pro-European government, led by the new prime minister Mirko Cvetković of the Democratic Party, was formed on 7 July 2008. The government was supported by 128 out of 250 parliamentary votes, i.e. 11 parties from the coalition For a European Serbia, the coalition of Socialist Party of Serbia, Party of United Pensioners of Serbia and United Serbia, and minority representatives. The most important role in the formation of a new government was played by the coalition around the Socialist Party of Serbia that surprisingly turned to the Democratic Party, despite the fact that their voters were ideologically much closer to the Serbian Radical Party and the Democratic Party of Serbia.

The impact of Europe

The EU is rarely the most important issue in election campaigns, even in the EU member states, and the impact of EU institutions, if there is any, is usually mild and indirect. However, the election campaign in Serbia, the state that was not even a candidate for EU membership, was almost entirely devoted to the issues of EU and Kosovo, with European issues having absolute priority. Furthermore, the EU itself was very interested in the election and took actions that directly affected the election results. Immediately after scheduling the new election, the EU High Representative Javier Solana expressed his hope that "the people of Serbia will choose a deep and solid link with the EU" in the coming elections, so the messages that arrived from Brussels were very clear.⁴

The main lines of division into the two opposed blocs were based on the questions about whether Serbia should continue EU integration in a situation where most EU member states did not recognize its borders. The pro-European camp, consisted of the coalition For a European Serbia, the Liberal Democratic Party and the minority parties, was arguing for European integration in spite of the EU's position towards Kosovo. The second camp, consisted of the Serbian Radical Party, the Democratic Party of Serbia, New Serbia and to some extent the Socialist Party of Serbia, opposed further EU integration of Serbia, until the EU explicitly recognized Serbian sovereignty over Kosovo.

This division was primarily reflected in the parties' positions towards the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU (SAA). The SAA is a document that regulates the economic relations between Serbia and the EU, by establishing a free trade zone after a transitional period of up to six years, and provides an obligation on Serbia to harmonize its legal system with the EU legislation- *acquis communautaire*. The SAA became a key political document of the highest national importance during the election campaign. The document was thoroughly analyzed by

⁴ See: http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=03&dd=10&nav_id=48319

the Serbian media, particularly the meaning of the Article 135, while confused citizens were in doubt about who was right and how to assess opposing views of political parties.⁵

The coalition For a European Serbia insisted that the SAA was neutral regarding the status of Kosovo and that it was primarily an economic agreement that opened up the possibility for a better life for the citizens of Serbia, and that the EU as such had no authority to recognize Kosovo's independence and that five EU member states had not recognized Kosovo. On the other hand, the Serbian Radical Party, the Democratic Party of Serbia and New Serbia argued that, before signing the SAA, the EU stance towards Serbian internationally recognized borders had to be resolved and that the issue of Serbian recognition of Kosovo would certainly be set as a precondition for EU accession, in the future.

EU policy towards Serbia made the complex political situation in Serbia more difficult. Specifically the SAA was initialled in November 2007, but a full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia had remained the condition for the SAA to be ultimately signed. Thus, by far the most important issue in the campaign was an agreement that Serbia was not even able to sign. However, in order to support the pro-EU forces in Serbia, the Council of the EU, less than two weeks before the election date, decided to allow Serbia to sign the SAA. It proved to be an important event that decisively contributed to the victory of the coalition For a European Serbia that was lagging behind the SRS, according to all public opinion surveys. With this decision, EU membership prospects became tangible for ordinary citizens and the fact that 66 percent of citizens supported the signing of the SAA showed the importance of this event.⁶

The Stabilization and Association Agreement was signed on 29. April 2008, by the EU representatives and the Serbian caretaker government deputy prime minister Bozidar Djelic, a member of the Democratic Party who had been authorized to sign the SAA by the government, long before it collapsed. Prime minister Kostunica reacted to this event by saying that "president Tadić, with his signature to Solana's agreement, will not bring shame on Serbia, but only on himself", and added that the new cabinet and parliament would swiftly annul the deal signed in Luxembourg. The spokesman of the Democratic Party of Serbia Andreja Mladenovic further said: "We are sending a message to Boris Tadić that his signature is not the signature of Serbia. He is in fact putting a seal of Judas of his party coalition to the Solana Agreement. Kosovo has no price, while the EU, by sending its mission there, is indirectly trying to create a new state on Serbian territory."⁷ Strong criticism was also heard from the Serbian Radical Party, whose officials warned that the new parliament would initiate proceedings for president Tadić's recall, because, they claimed, he had violated the constitution and betrayed Serbia.

On the other side, the Democratic Party officials argued that the signing of the SAA represented a historic act and a diplomatic victory, pointing out at the same time that the document's

⁵Article 135 of the SAA: The Agreement shall not apply in Kosovo which is at present under international administration pursuant to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 of 10 June 1999. This is without prejudice to the current status of Kosovo or the determination of its final status under the same Resolution.

⁶ See: http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=04&dd=30&nav_id=49871

⁷ Javier Solana was the NATO Secretary General during the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 and is perceived by many in Serbia as a symbol of Western policy that wants to destroy Serbia

implementation was closely linked to the elections, since the people of Serbia would decide whether they would want the SAA to be fully implemented. Similarly, the Liberal Democratic Party welcomed the signing of the SAA, claiming that it made Serbia a normal country, while Koštunica and the Radicals had policies that had been destroying the country. The pro-European camp was also backed by some key EU officials. The EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn criticized prime minister Koštunica for allegedly manipulating untruths and added that "some politicians in Serbia are using Kosovo to turn towards Moscow, instead of toward Brussels" and that the people of Serbia were facing a concrete choice between two models: a European future or the nationalist past. "The Serb people could choose greater freedom, better standard of living, peaceful neighbourly relations, or risk self-isolation if they choose nationalist authoritarianism that is offered by those who reject the European Union and the European way of living," Rehn also added.⁸

Another very important event that influenced the election results, indirectly connected to the EU, was the signing of a Memorandum on understanding and strategic cooperation between the Serbian government and Italian carmaker Fiat on 30. April 2008. The Memorandum, which envisaged a joint investment in car production with the Serbian car manufacturer 'Zastava', was presented as the "contract of the decade" by the pro European coalition during the last days of election campaign. Its leaders also argued that the SAA signing had been the signal that the Italian company had been waiting for before putting pen to paper.

Conclusion/Future prospects

This election brought to a climax traditional social division in Serbia between the traditionalists with mostly conservative, nationalist and anti- European attitudes, and the modernists with liberal, reform and pro-European stances. It is a deep rift that has been present since the restoration of Serbian state in the early 19 century and was only intensified after the democratic changes in 2000. In this election, this division was reflected through the two central questions- the issue of EU membership of Serbia and the issue of status of Kosovo.

This election was of a great importance to the political scene and the future of Serbia. First, the election successfully channelled strong public dissatisfaction after Kosovo's declaration of independence and prevented a possibility that Serbia would move to self-imposed isolation and halt Serbia's European integration. In this context, the election was considered as a referendum on a European future for the country and the victory of the coalition For a European Serbia seems to confirm the country's European future. However, it is less clear that majority of the voters supported pro-European political parties. Although the coalition around the Socialist Party of Serbia formed a government with a pro- European coalition, it conducted a campaign on a neutral and often anti-European platform, and the vast majority of its voters were anti-European-oriented and loyal to politics of their former leader Slobodan Milosevic. Nevertheless, the coalition leaders, argued that their socio-economic programme could be achieved only with foreign investment from the EU, made a final decision to form a government with pro-European parties and ultimately determined Serbia's European path for the next four years.

⁸ See: http://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=05&dd=03&nav_id=49929

Second, these elections led to a far-reaching repositioning of the political parties. The Democratic Party of Serbia underwent a serious transformation, triggered by the EU attitude to Kosovo, and became a strong opponent of Serbian EU membership and ceased to be a political party able to form a government with either of the two blocks. On the other hand, the Socialist Party of Serbia had been an unreformed, anti European and nationalist party on the verge of disappearing from the political scene of Serbia after 2000. However, after this election it became a legitimate left-wing party, willing to overcome its authoritarian past and more surprisingly, following the signing of a declaration of political reconciliation and joint responsibility with the Democratic Party, its closest political ally.

One of the key indirect outcomes of the election occurred in September 2008, when the Serbian Radical Party, individually the strongest party in the Serbian parliament, split. Even though the party achieved excellent results in all recent elections, it failed many times to form a government and this election only accelerated the split between the two party factions. After being expelled from the party, due to a disagreement with its president Vojislav Seselj over the party's position on ratifying the Stabilization and Association Agreement, former vice president Tomislav Nikolic formed a new conservative party- the Serbian Progressive Party. The new party managed, in just a few months, to take over more than two-thirds of the Radical voters and according to public polls become one of the two major political parties in Serbia. The Serbian Progressive Party took a more moderate and pragmatic attitude towards the EU and supported the ratification of the SAA with the EU. What is more important, the new growing party can potentially contribute to creating the conditions for creating a national consensus on the EU membership as an ultimate goal, which has never existed before.

Finally, this election showed a strong influence exerted by EU institutions and importance of the SAA, as a tool used to influence the election results. However, two years after the election, the agreement that was signed at the height of the election campaign and consequently deeply divided the country, has not yet entered into force, due to the opposition of the Dutch government that claims that Serbia is not fully cooperating with the ICTY. The Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-related issues, which is a party of the SAA, has been implementing by the both sides since February 2010.

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This is the latest in a series of election and referendum briefings produced by the European Parties Elections and Referendums Network (EPERN). Based in the Sussex European Institute, EPERN is an international network of scholars that was originally established as the Opposing Europe Research Network (OERN) in June 2000 to chart the divisions over Europe that exist within party systems. In August 2003 it was re-launched as EPERN to reflect a widening of its objectives to consider the broader impact of the European issue on the domestic politics of EU member and candidate states. The Network retains an independent stance on the issues under consideration. For more information and copies of all our publications visit our website at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/1-4-2.html>.

