

2004 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTION BRIEFING NO 11 THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTION IN DENMARK JUNE 13 2004

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Key points:

- The pro-EU Liberal-Conservative coalition government saw an overall loss of 9.6% of support compared to the last national parliamentary election in November 2001. While the leading Liberal Party lost 12.8%, the smaller Conservative Party gained 2.2%.
- The election was a massive personal victory for former Prime Minister, Social Democrat Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, who ran a fiercely pro-EU campaign.
- There was a marked loss of support for Eurosceptic candidates, in particular for the June Movement who lost two MEPs, but also for the People's Movement Against the EU which only just managed to get one MEP elected.
- In general, this election saw clear gains for pro-EU candidates, and several previous Hard and Soft Eurosceptic politicians took a turn in a more pro-EU direction in their election campaigns.
- The turnout was relatively low, close to 40% and below the turnout in the last national election, though slightly above the average turnout in EU25.

When asked in February and March 2004, 62% of Danes claimed that they “would definitely vote” in the European Parliament (EP) election, and 72% answered that they were “likely to vote”. This marked the second highest level of interest in the election in EU15¹. In late May 2004, this figure had dropped to 51% according to an EU-wide survey, yet come election day the real turnout was only 47.9%. At first sight, the ‘Euro-gap’ of 39.6% - a figure derived from comparing the turnout in the last national election

¹ See: Eurobarometer 61 (May 2004), Spring 2004: Public Opinion in the EU15.

prior to the EP election (November 2001: 87% turnout) and the turnout in the EP 2004 election (47.9%) – looks dramatic². However, as Table 1 shows, considering the fact that Danish voters have often shown a somewhat lower interest in EP elections than their European counterparts, the EP 2004 figure looks fairly positive. There has always been a large ‘Euro-gap’ in voter turnout in Denmark, with turnout in national elections generally hovering around 90%, yet only about half the eligible voters vote in EP elections, so from this perspective the turnout in this election was quite typical of previous ones.

Table 1: Voter turnout European Parliament elections in Denmark compared to the average turnout in the European Community and European Union:

	% in Denmark	% in the EC/EU
1979	47.8	63
1984	52.4	61
1989	46.2	58.5
1994	52.9	56.8
1999	50.5	49.6
2004	47.9	45.5

Source: www.eu-oplysningen.dk/upload/application/pdf/711baba4/epvalg4pdf (6/22/04)

In terms of political parties running candidates, there were no surprises. All seven parties in parliament contested the election, as did the two Eurosceptic parties whose only purpose it is to run for the EP: the June Movement and the People’s Movement Against the EU. The real novelty of this election is to be found in: a more EU-positive campaign than previously, the election of more pro-EU MEPs than ever before, and a reduction in Eurosceptic representation in the EP, from a member state where the electorate has traditionally been so Eurosceptic that it rejected outright EU-initiatives in the 1992 and 2000 referendums.

The Campaign

In Denmark, the debate on the EU has traditionally been reduced to ‘for’ or ‘against’, as voters have been asked for a straight answer – ‘yes’ or ‘no’ – in no less than seven EU referendums during the three decades of membership. Pro-EU campaigners often saw themselves on the defensive, and the Eurosceptic candidates were on the offensive. The 2004 EP election campaign took important steps away from this tradition, with pro-EU candidates leading a campaign that was trying to engage listeners in a debate about what the EU can do for Danes. The campaign was primarily based on European issues, not domestic issues.

All political parties in the national parliament ran a strongly pro-EU campaign, apart from the right-wing Danish People’s Party. The pro-EU group of candidates appeared larger and stronger than before, and managed to gain the upper hand in the campaign. The traditional Soft Eurosceptic party on the left wing, the Socialist People’s Party, has practically completed its transformation from being initially a Hard Eurosceptic Party,

² On the ‘Euro-Gap’, see: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), ‘Turnout: the growing Euro-Gap’ (www.idea.int/elections/voter_turnout_europe/introduction.htm, 6/22/04).

critical of West European capitalism, to becoming an EU-supporter³. In the wake of the 2000 referendum on eurozone membership, a number of centrist and left wing politicians were clearly uncomfortable about finding themselves in the same winning camp as the nationalistic right-wingers, which seems to have drawn them in a more pro-EU direction. Subsequently, the strongest critics of the EU in the Danish parliament are now found on the right-wing. In principle, the Danish People's Party is Soft-Eurosceptic – against supranationalism, in support of intergovernmental cooperation – but chose to lean in a somewhat more aggressive Eurosceptic direction than ever before, hoping to capture as many Hard Eurosceptic voters as possible. On the other hand, the two cross-party movements contesting only in EP elections, these both tended to run rather aggressive anti-EU campaigns.

There was not much substantial difference between the campaigns of the pro-EU parties. Most parties and candidates chose to run enlightened campaigns, explaining how the EU in general and the EP in particular, can play an active role in improving the daily lives of Danes and citizens in Europe. The predominant issues were food safety, consumer rights, and the protection of what are believed to be high Danish welfare standards, as well as combating international organised crime and terrorism. Opinion polls taken early in the campaign also showed that large parts of the Danish electorate believed that such issues were of overall importance⁴. Veteran MEPs running for re-election would often attempt to highlight their personal role in such affairs in the EP, although it could be suggested that examples of years of work by individual MEPs on, for instance, one food additives directive may seem like a relatively small achievement to some voters. In addition, the EU's active role in spreading stability to the whole of the European continent through enlargement and neighbourhood policies figured prominently in the campaign.

In terms of the substance of the Eurosceptic campaigns, a prominent issue was the European constitutional treaty, which both the June Movement and the Danish People's Party warned strongly against on the grounds that it will undermine the Danish national constitution, if it is adopted. In addition, especially right-wing politicians and the candidates from the People's Movement Against the EU repeatedly argued that Denmark is the most appropriate venue for countering international organized crime and terrorism, not the EU. This latter issue was often placed alongside anti-immigration rhetoric by the Danish People's Party. Probably the best example of the use of these issues in the campaign is by the controversial politician and MEP for the Danish People's Party in the 1999-2004 EP assembly, and also this party's top candidate this time, Mogens Camre. Camre sought to appeal to voters by drumming up resentment against future Turkish accession to the EU because, or so he argued, Turkey is essentially an underdeveloped Muslim country not fit for EU membership⁵. In the same vein, he insisted that the best way to protect Danes against increased international, organized crime and immigration

³ The terms Soft and Hard Euroscepticism are used throughout this briefing follow the definition by Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak (2002) 'Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate States', *Sussex European Institute (SEI) Working Paper*, No. 51, June 2002, 10.

⁴ See the EU-wide Gallup poll:

<http://www.cosgallupeurope.com/flash%20eb%20161%20wave%203/dk.pdf>.

⁵ See, for instance: www.danskfolkeparti.dk, Pressemeldelse, 12/06/2004.

was by closing Danish borders to immigrants of all racial-religious backgrounds, and leaving it to Danish police to assure the safety of Danish citizens. For this reason, Camre and the Danish People's Party also recommend a rejection of the constitutional treaty, arguing that Danish law should be sovereign on Danish soil to protect Danish citizens. A consequence of this rhetoric is subsequently that the Danish People's Party places itself more than ever in opposition to more recent high-profile areas of EU collaboration. However, whereas the anti-immigration rhetoric played a central role in the 2001 national election campaign, engaging most centrist politicians as well, the pro-EU candidates in 2004 all chose to steer their campaigns away from such nationalistic debates, and thus it was not allowed to gain momentum in the campaign.

Results and analysis

For the purpose of the EP elections, Denmark is one single constituency. Candidates thus cover the whole country, and need to have national appeal. In this election, Danish candidates were competing for 14 positions in the EP, which is two less than before. The result of the 2004 EP election in Denmark is shown in Table 2 below, and compared to the 1999 EP election, and the 2001 national parliament election⁶:

Table 2: Results of the June 2004 EP election in Denmark

	Total votes EP 2004	No of MEPs won, 2004	% of total votes in EP 2004	Change % EP 2004 – EP 1999	% of total in 2001 national election	% change EP 2004 – national 2001
Social Democratic Party	618,412	5	32.6	+16.1	29.1	+ 3.5
Social-Liberal Party	120,473	1	6.4	-2.7	5.2	+ 1.2
Conservative People's Party	214,972	1	11.3	+2.8	9.1	+ 2.2
Socialist People's Party	150,766	1	7.9	+0.8	6.4	+ 1.5
June Movement	171,927	1	9.1	-7.0	n/a	n/a
People's Movement	97,986	1	5.2	-2.1	n/a	n/a
Danish People's Party	128,789	1	6.8	+1.0	12.0	- 5.2
Liberal Party	366,735	3	19.4	-4.0	31.2	- 11.8

Source Indenrigs- or Sundhedsministeriet, 'Meddelelse: Endelig opgørelse af Europa-Parlamentsvalget den 13. juni 2004; Folketingets EU-Oplysning (www.eu-oplysningen.dk/fakta/institutioner/parlamentet/valg2004/resultat/?print=1)

The outcome of the election was a significant loss for the government, the two parties losing a combined 9.6% of the vote compared to the 2001 national election. Seen in detail, however, the 2004 election resulted in a significant loss for the leading party of the coalition, the Liberal Party (11.8% down from 2001, and 4% down compared to 1999),

⁶ Two political parties represented in the national election do not appear in this table: The Christian People's Party, won 24,284 votes, which is 1.3% of the total vote cast, and thus not enough to pass the 5% threshold. The Christian People's Party did not hold MEPs in the previous EP assembly either, although it did compete for the 1999 election too. The 2004 election resulted in a 0.7% loss of votes for this party, and is also significantly lower than its performance in the 2001 national election, where it won 2.3% of the vote. It formed a list-coalition with the Social-Liberal Party. The Hard Eurosceptic left-wing Unity Party, which is a coalition formed by several small left-wing parties, did not present candidates for the EP election. It received 2.4% of the vote in the 2001 national election.

and a decent gain for the Conservatives (gaining 2.2% compared to 2001, and 2.8% compared to 1999).

Obviously, the election result may be seen as a criticism of the government. The Liberal party has been strongly dominant in Danish politics since the last national election, especially Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Issues such as his open support by of the United States invasion of Iraq, and rising unemployment may have been factors in the electorate's decisions. But as national political issues were not primary to the EP election debate, anti-government sentiments are not the full explanation of why the Liberal Party fared so poorly in 2004 that it lost 2 MEPs. Part of the explanation has to do with the personalities of the candidates promoted by the parties. In spite of the fact that top candidate for the Liberal Party, Karen Riis-Jørgensen, has already been an MEP for 10 years, she has not had a national political career previously, and is not well known nationally. She did gain over 91,000 personal votes in this election, making her the third-most personally popular candidate in Denmark, but it is also clear that she faced problems similar to those faced by the typical MEP, namely that their daily work in the EP is practically invisible to the national constituencies, and does not in itself merit popularity nationally. Subsequently, it has been suggested that an important reason for the failure of the Liberal Party in this election was also that all its most popular politicians were placed in safe positions in the national government.

The Conservative Party's gain in the election was largely linked to the fact that it managed to produce a popular top candidate: 43-year old Gitte Seeberg, member of the national parliament. Seeberg won over 125,000 personal votes, thus making her the second-most popular candidate in the election. Seeberg seems to have won the votes of both many women and younger voters, whereas two former top Conservative candidates – Poul Schlüter and Christian Rovsing, both elderly greying men – were not likely to have appealed strongly to such groups. The result was the best election result for this party in a decade, though it was not enough to secure a second mandate for the Conservatives, and so the long-serving candidate, the more quiet businessman Christian Rovsing, had to resign his post. With only miniscule differences between the Liberals and Conservatives on European issues, their candidates may have appeared inter-changeable to many voters, and Seeberg could have drawn a number of traditional liberal voters, as well as many voters who would not have voted for either of the two parties in national elections. The press repeatedly talked about the "Seeberg effect" in describing her wide appeal with different electoral groups.

The most remarkable victor in the 2004 EP election in Denmark was the Chairman of the Social Democratic Party, former Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen. He received more than 407,000 personal votes, securing five MEPs for this party, two more than in the 1999 election. Nearly one in three votes in Denmark were cast for Nyrup Rasmussen personally. The previous personal votes-record was held by another former prime minister, Conservative Poul Schlüter, who received around 250,000 personal votes when he ran in the 1994 EP election. Nyrup Rasmussen's personal victory is also underlined by the fact that he received more personal votes than the whole Liberal Party list (around 366,000), and all the other 13 elected Danish MEPs received a total of just over 727,000

votes⁷. The overall result for the Social Democratic Party is a doubling of its representation compared to the EP 1999 election result, which is the most radical change for any party in this election. Although the Social Democratic party also ran well-known candidates in 1999, none were in a position to appeal to Social Democratic voters like Nyrup Rasmussen. Whereas Nyrup Rasmussen has had a rather high political profile in Europe – largely because in April 2004 he was elected President of the European Socialist Group (PES) in the EP – he ran a relatively low-profile national campaign. Nyrup Rasmussen’s electoral meetings were often co-ordinated by leading trade unions, as is the tradition for this party. In his campaign, Nyrup Rasmussen skillfully maneuvered himself out of conflicts, leaving it to the second on the list, former government minister Henrik Dam Kristensen, to answer the ‘real’ political questions. Nonetheless, there was never any doubt during the campaign that Nyrup Rasmussen was a “super-European”, as the media dubbed him. His campaigning style was highly personalized, often featuring himself leading the meetings by singing traditional songs, something which had an appeal especially with middle-aged and older voter, even Eurosceptical ones (traditionally nearly one-in-three Social Democratic voter are Eurosceptic, at odds with the main party line). Subsequently, the votes were cast more for the man than for his policies. The extraordinary EP 2004 election result for the Social Democratic party is not a real indicator of the party’s national popularity, nor is it likely to be repeated in the next national election.

The Social-Liberal Party saw a loss of votes compared to 1999 of 2.7%, but a slight increase of 1.2% compared to the national 2001 election. During the campaign this party appeared as possibly the most pro-EU party, yet its performance in the election is largely explained by personalities. The party’s top candidate, Anders Samuelsen, is a young, active and popular member of the national parliament, who won more than 60,000 personal votes, and securely managed to hold on to the party’s previous seat in the EP. In 1999, the party’s top candidate was a veteran in national politics, a former minister and popular parliamentarian, Lone Dybkjær, also well-known for being married to Nyrup Rasmussen, is also vividly pro-EU, and is seen to have attracted a large number of young women’s votes in 1999 (Danish women tend to be more Eurosceptic than men). Yet, in spite of her popularity, Dybkjær decided to leave the arena of European politics in 2004.

The Socialist People’s Party saw a slight increase in votes compared to both the 1999 EP election (+ 0.8%), and the last national election (+ 1.5%). The striking change, however, is that the Soft Eurosceptic Margrete Auken won over the Eurosceptic Pernille Frahm who represented this party in the 1999-2004 EP assembly. The political and personal profiles of these two women candidates are very different, and are likely to have appealed to different groups of voters. Whereas Frahm is known for being more of a hard line doctrinarian socialist, often seen as rejecting new developments and initiatives, Auken is known for her softer personal values and approach to other people, not least through her background as a minister of an inner-Copenhagen parish, and also as a skilled and dedicated politician⁸.

⁷ See: www.euobserver.dk (6/22/04).

⁸ Margrethe Auken is the sister of former chairman of the Social Democratic Party and long-standing member of the Danish Parliament, Svend Auken.

The right-wing Danish People's Party had a disappointing election, losing 5.2% of the vote compared to the last national election, although gaining 1% compared to the EP 1999 election. The party ran two nationally well-known top candidates during the campaign: veteran politician and MEP during 1999-2004, Mogens Camre, and the well-known author and gender activist, Ulla Dahlerup. Camre was clearly the most outspoken during the debate, his campaign is discussed above. Yet Camre is a highly controversial figure, with a past record of weapons violations, and allegations of repeated aggressive behavior and illicit economic transactions, and is not likely to have appealed to the wide group of house-owning voters that the party has attracted in past national elections.

The real set-back for the Eurosceptics in Denmark is reflected in the election results for the June Movement and the People's Movement Against the EU, who together have previously won about a quarter of the Danish vote. The People's Movement lost 2.1% compared to 1999, and with 5.2% of the votes only just made it past the threshold. The margin with which the People's Movement passed the threshold was so fine that on election night it was unclear whether this party would be able to make it. It was the worst election result for this Hard Eurosceptic party, formed at the time of Danish entry into the European Community. As this party does not contest national elections, the loss of its MEP would most likely have been fatal.

The June Movement lost 7% of votes compared to 1999, and two MEPs. Veteran MEP Jens-Peter Bonde is now the only representative of the June Movement. The result is partly the outcome of the pro-EU tendency in this election, but the June Movement's difficulties during the campaign were clearly enhanced when Bonde was attacked by a highly critical front page story run by a leading Danish tabloid, *Extrabladet*. The newspaper argued that Bonde's 25 years as an MEP – always based on a strongly Eurosceptic stance, though he shifted from being a Hard Eurosceptic to a Soft Eurosceptic in the 1990s – has cost Danish tax payers around 75 million DKR in support of his activities alone. Commentators have estimated that this story, and the subsequent negative and embarrassing press coverage, may well have cost the June Movement as much as one mandate. Significantly, the result means that Ulla Sandbæk, MEP since 1989, was not re-elected, while the party's third 1999-2004 MEP, actor Jens Okking, had decided to quit politics already prior to the election campaign.

Conclusion

The election campaign was rather quiet, and not particularly eventful, but the outcome nevertheless suggests a new move towards the consensual pro-EU centre of Danish politics. Considering that the right-wing Danish People's Party gained 12% of the vote in the last national election, the current 6.8% in the 2004 EP election is much less of a scare to mainstream parties. Moreover, outright Eurosceptic parties – the Danish People's Party, the June Movement, and the People's Movement Against the EU – lost significant ground. These three parties received 21.1% in the EP 2004 election, whereas in 1999

Eurosceptic parties received a total of 37%⁹. Looking at the 2004 election campaign, there was a tendency for a more blurred distinction between the Soft and Hard Eurosceptics than before. The only Hard Eurosceptic party, the People's Movement Against the EU, only just gained representation in this election, and they therefore tended tag along with the campaigns of the two Soft Eurosceptic parties. The Danish People's Party and the June Movement, however, have become more aggressive in their tone, with a strong emphasis on their rejection of the latest EU projects such as the Constitutional Treaty, common foreign and security policy initiatives, and the prospects of further EU enlargements. The attempts by the Danish People's Party to mix domestic and European issues did not really pay off in the same way that a strong nationalistic, anti-foreign attitude did at the last national election in 2001.

One reason for the strengthening of the pro-EU parties is that the Socialist People's Party has gone from 'Soft' to 'pro'. Indeed, with the election of Margrete Auken as MEP, and the exit of Pernille Frahm, the party at the moment does not really appear Eurosceptic at all. Immediately after the election it became clear that the Liberals, Conservatives, Social Democrats and Social-Liberals were appealing to the Socialist People's Party to sign up for a 'civil peace' and a common campaign in favour of the constitutional treaty in a future referendum, not dissimilar to the agreement between these parties reached between the two Maastricht Treaty referendums in Denmark in 1992 and 1993, and thus to lock it into the pro-EU group of parties. The major difference now compared to the early 1990s is that most of the Euroscepticism among the Socialist People's Party leadership seems to have vanished.

Another reason for the strengthening of the pro-EU parties is the massive electoral result in favour of Nyrup Rasmussen. His campaign managed to capture most Social Democratic voters, and also many ex-Social Democratic voters who for a while had migrated to the Danish People's Party. Indeed, little was heard in this campaign from the Eurosceptic Social Democrats (or Social Liberals) that had formed networks in the 2000 Euro referendum against the official party programmes. Nyrup Rasmussen's victory may have counted for part of the loss for the governing Liberal Party. Whereas most Social Democratic voters supported the party's top two candidates in this European election – something that they did not necessarily do in earlier elections – only about one-in-four voters who would traditionally support the Liberal Party remained loyal in this election¹⁰. As mentioned above, this has partly to do with the enormous charisma that the former Prime Minister managed to project during the campaign, and the somewhat less charismatic top candidate of the Liberal Party. In the spring of 2004, Eurobarometer demonstrated that there was a drop in trust the government in particular, but also in the national parliament¹¹. This may be linked to issues such as the government's support of the United States' invasion of Iraq, because a spring 2002 Eurobarometer poll showed

⁹ See: A.-C. L. Knudsen, 'Euroscepticism in Denmark', in P. Taggart and A. Szczerbiak (eds.), *Opposing Europe: The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism in Contemporary Europe*, Oxford University Press, forthcoming, 2004.

¹⁰ See: www.alttinget.dk: 'EP-kandidaterne klarer sig bedst på hjemmebane' (6/22/04); and "Kom på tal med valget?" www.europarl.dk/sub_div/valg2004/Rammeside.htm

¹¹ There was a decrease of 9% trust in the Danish government since the last poll, and a decrease of 5% in the national parliament. See: Eurobarometer 61 (May 2004), Spring 2004: Public Opinion in the EU15.

that 88% were satisfied with their democracy, which was a level of satisfaction well above the EU15 average of about 50%. Answers to Eurobarometers, however, should be seen merely as pointers.

A third point to be made in explaining the pro-EU move by the Danish electorate is that it is possible that after the referendum rejecting Danish participation in the Euro, and no attempts by parliament to schedule another referendum, many voters see the EU as a more complex mechanism that is there to stay, and want candidates in the EP who can negotiate constructively.

The recognition, personal popularity and authority displayed by the individual candidates seem to have played a larger role in the election result than the detail of the candidate's policy, and in fact there was little substantial debate between most of the political parties. Of the 14 Danish MEPs elected, six are veteran MEPs¹², and five are veteran MPs¹³. Only the last three Social Democratic candidates who won seats in the EP due to the overwhelming number of personal votes for Nyrup Rasmussen are thus to some extent more of a surprise¹⁴, and they had little or practically no political experience at the time of the election. In terms of gender and age distribution, there were no significant changes.

In spite of the pro-EU tendency in the election, however, it will take a long time before the Danish electorate becomes as 'super-European' as their most popular MEP. For instance, recent opinion polls suggest that only 37% of Danes are likely to support the Constitutional Treaty, which thus is among the lowest levels of supports in the EU¹⁵. A slight majority of Danes are still reluctant to embrace common EU foreign, defense and security policies, and the electorate is still divided into two approximately equal groups when asked about participation in the Euro. The relatively poor turnout to the EP election is of course still a problem, and stands in contrast to turnout in both national and local elections, and EU referendums. It is difficult to pinpoint exactly why Danes did not turn up to vote, and comparisons of Eurobarometer surveys suggest contrasting trends. In opinion polls taken shortly before the EP 2004 election, Danes would quote as the major reasons for not voting that they were not specifically interested in the European election (63%), and that they do not have sufficient knowledge of the EP to vote (64%)¹⁶. This somewhat apathetic answer is contrasted by other surveys that show that Danes tend to be better informed about the EU than citizens in most other EU member states, and thus the level of information is perhaps not the correct answer¹⁷. EU approval ratings surveyed in the spring 2004 showed a tendency to more Euroscepticism, as 20% of Danes claimed

¹² Jens-Peter Bonde (June Movement), Ole Krarup (People's Movement Against the EU), Mogens Camre (Danish People's Party), and Karen Riis-Jørgensen, Anne E. Jensen and Niels Busk (all three Liberal Party).

¹³ Margrete Auken (Socialist People's Party), Anders Samuelsen (Social-Liberals), Gitte Seeberg (Conservatives), Poul Nyrup Rasmussen and Henrik Dam Kristensen (both Social Democrats).

¹⁴ Ole Kristensen, Britta Thomsen and Dan Jørgensen.

¹⁵ In early 2004, only 37% of Danes claimed that they would support the Constitutional Treaty in a referendum. See: Eurobarometer 61 (May 2004), Spring 2004: Public Opinion in the EU15.

¹⁶ Danes have higher responses on those issues than generally in the EU25, see: <http://www.eosgallupeurope.com/flash%20eb%20161%20wave%203/dk.pdf>

¹⁷ See: <http://www.eosgallupeurope.com/flash%20eb%20161%20wave%203/dk.pdf>

that membership of the EU was outright ‘a bad thing’, which is an increase compared to 2002 when 16% opted for this answer. A last point that should be made in the discussion of the low turnout is that throughout the 1990s there has been a general dis-interest among the Danish population in party politics more generally.

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>