

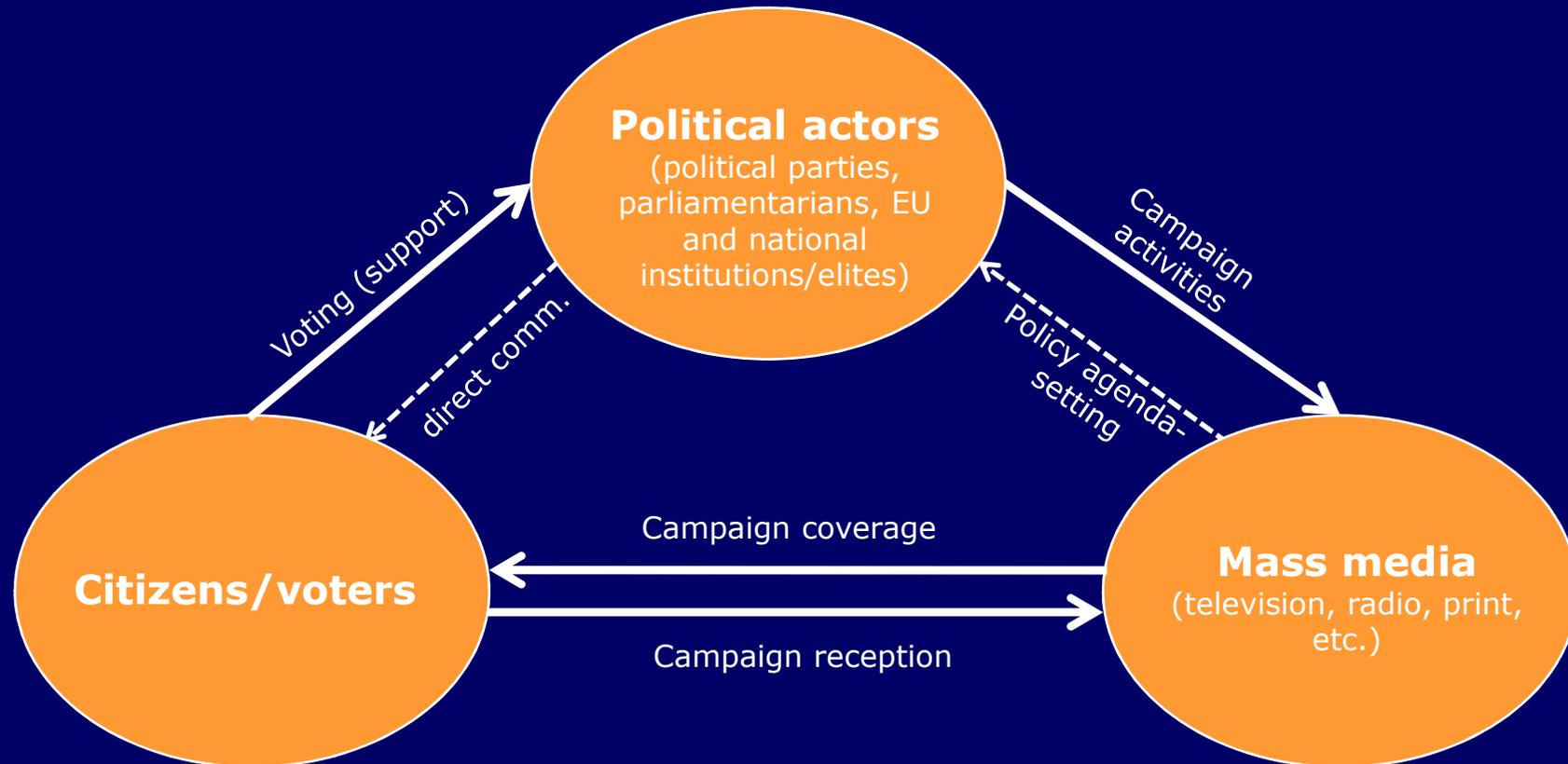


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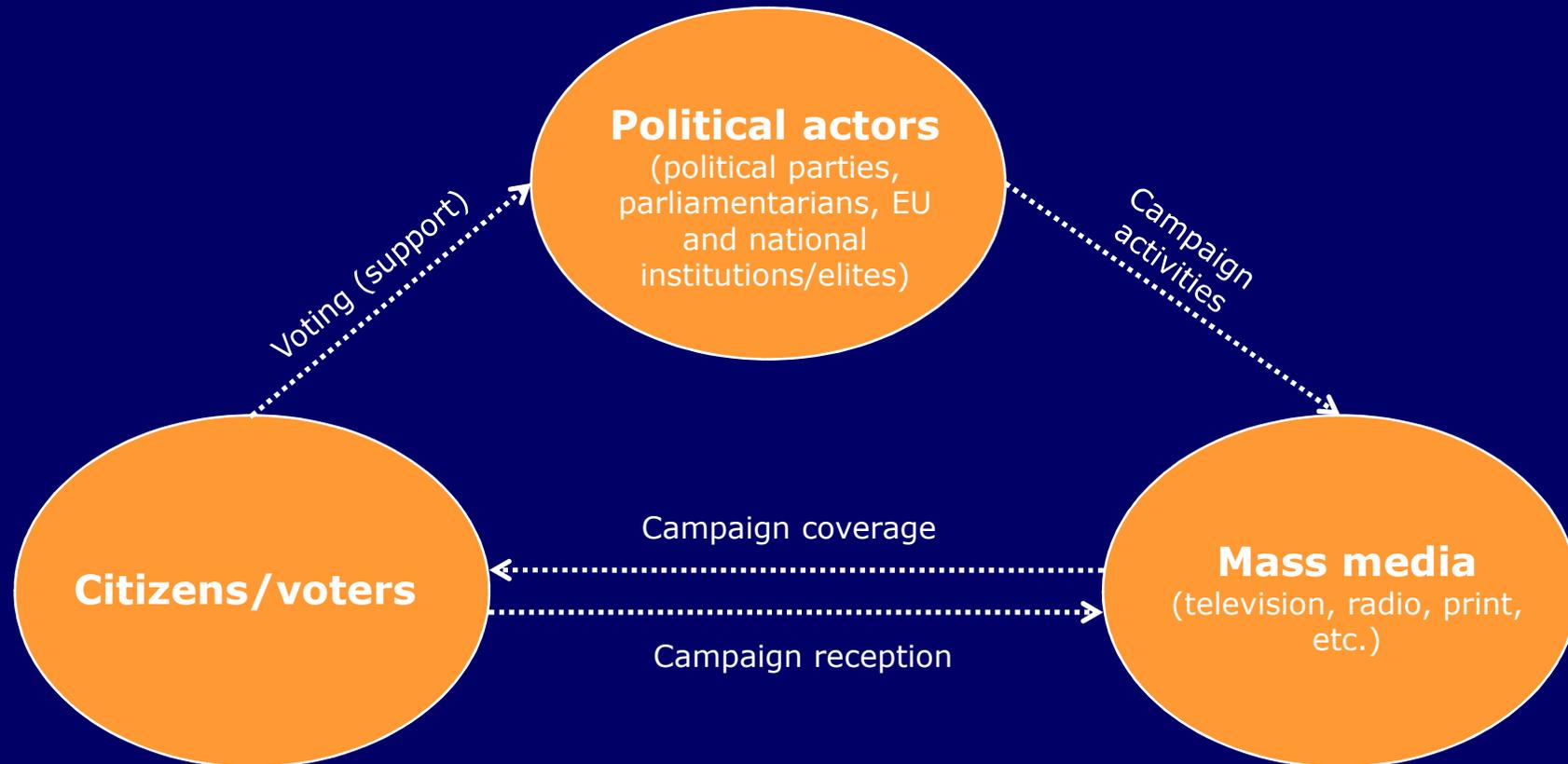
European Parliamentary Campaigns

Political Parties, Mass Media and Voters

Political communications triangle



Political communications triangle



Hypotheses

1. Fragile linkages between political parties, mass media, and voters during EP campaigns due to low commitment
2. National framing of European campaigns on all three sides
3. EP campaigns pass by relatively unnoticed as second-order national events

Background

« May 1st 2004 – EU's enlargement to 25

« „Europe celebrates itself“

- High media attention / coverage
- EU-attentiveness above average
- EUphoria towards „founding elections“
- Expected backup for (strengthened) European Parliament
- Symbolic support for „European idea“

Commentaries after EP elections

„European self-punishment“

(La Repubblica, Italy)

„Europe's Anti-Elections“
(europa-digital)

„Losing governments“
(Die Welt, Germany)

„Echoes of protest“

(Die Presse, Austria)

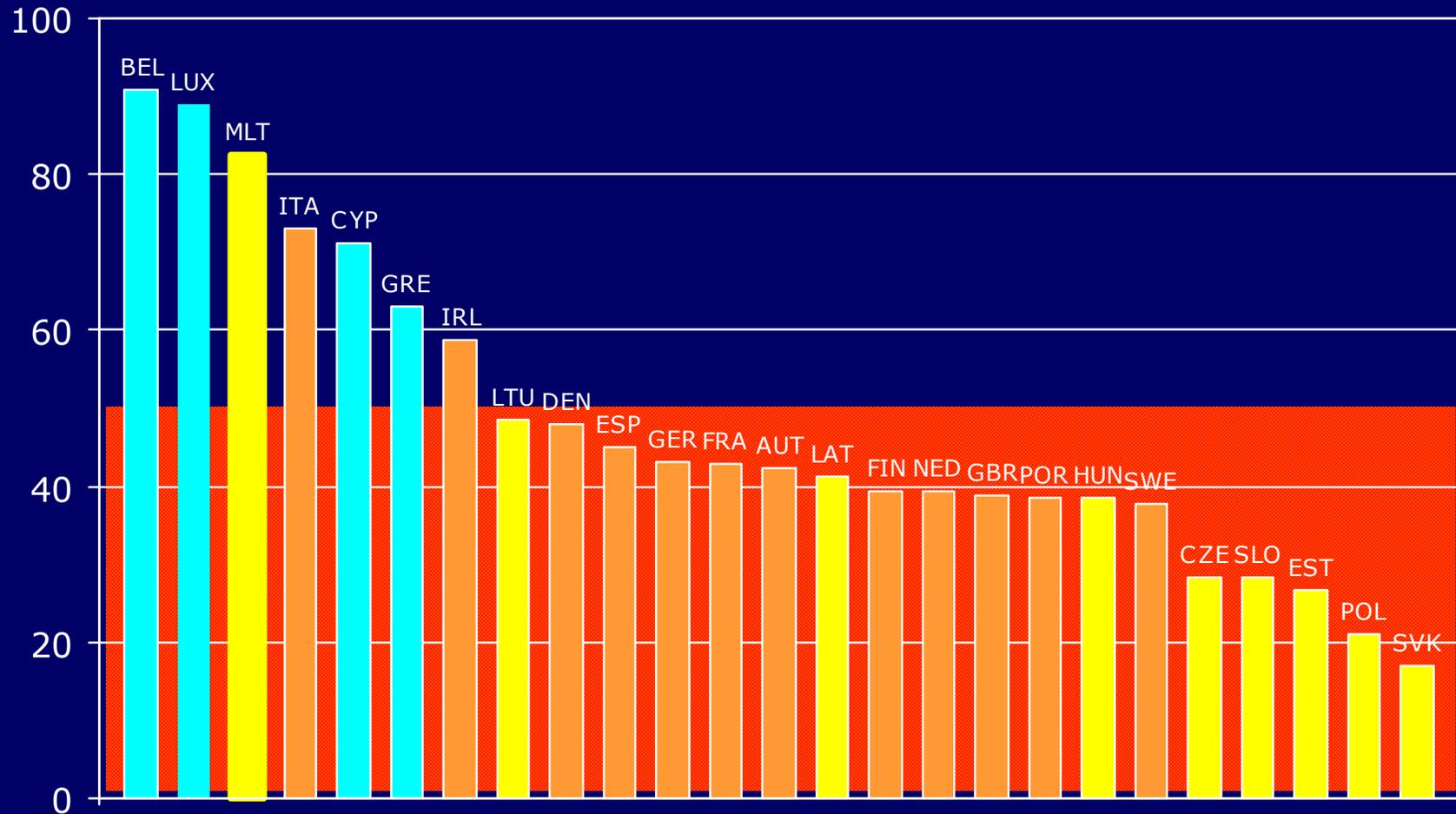
„Unbelievable“
(Tagesspiegel)

„A long way to reach the hearts“
(Les Echos, France)

„European sceptics on their march!“
(Spiegel)

„Un débâcle européen“
(Le Monde, France)

Comparing voter turnout

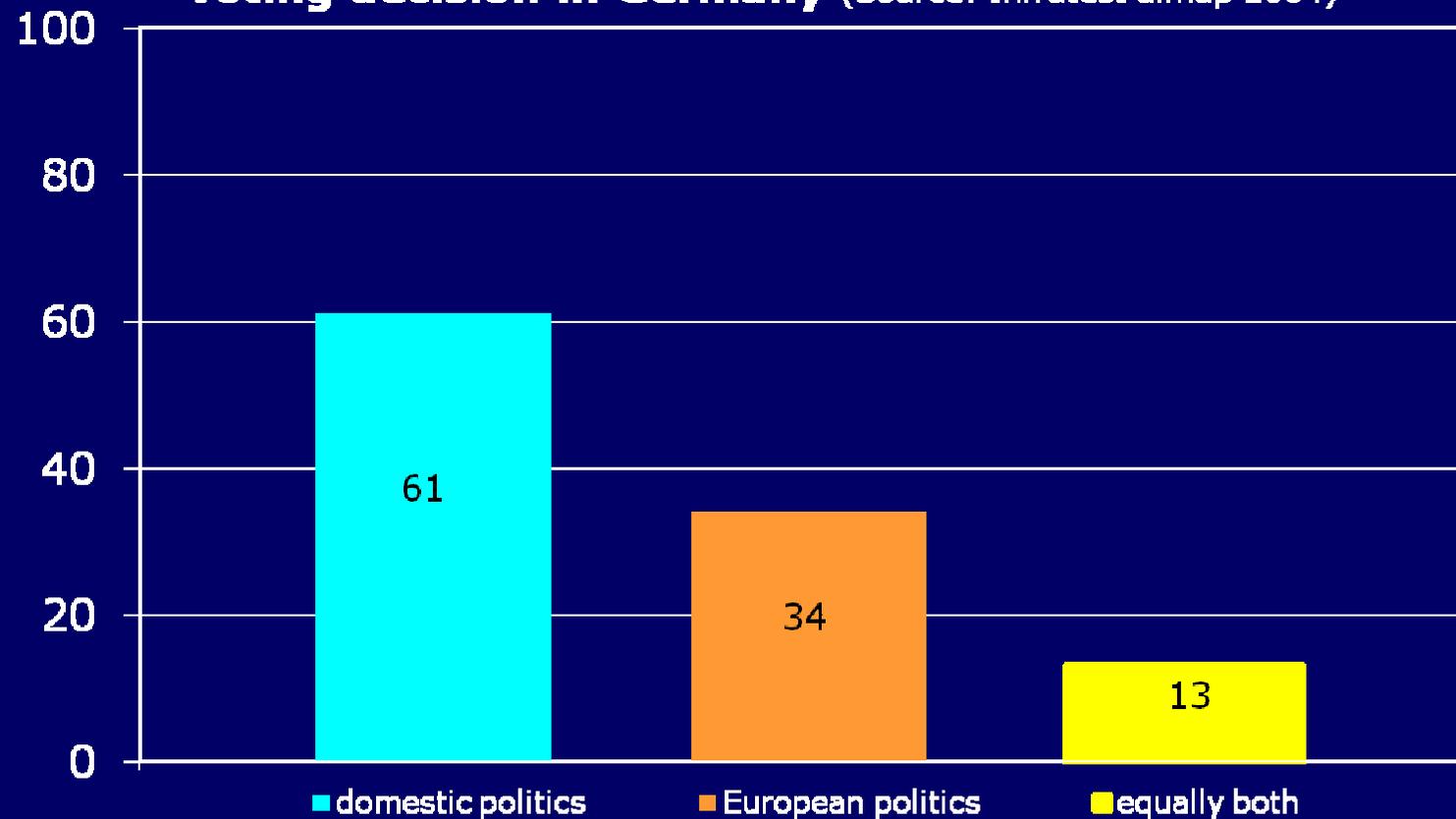


EP elections as second-order events

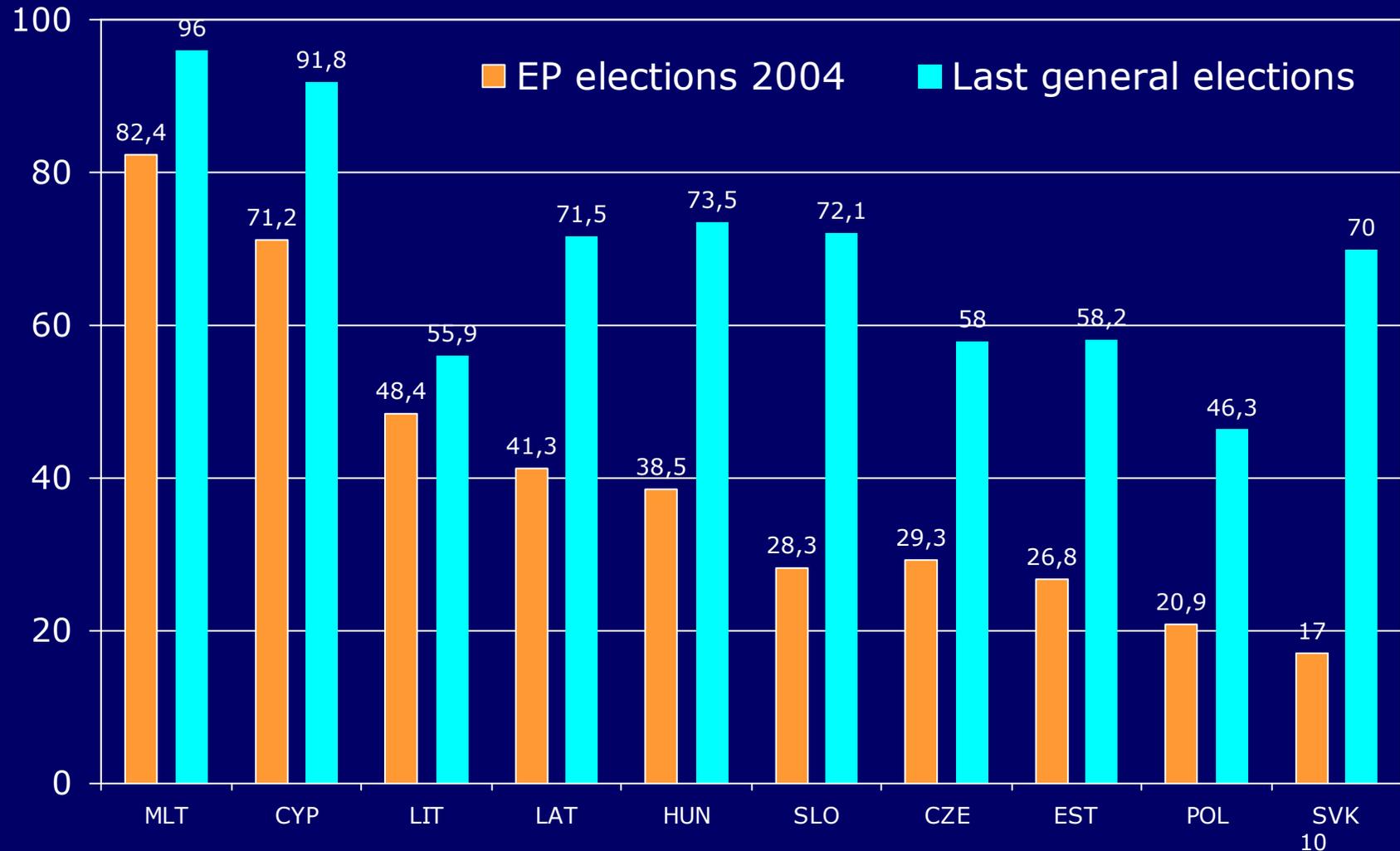
- « First- and second-order elections hierarchy of relevance and national reframing
- « Indicators of second-order elections (depending on election cycles):
 - Low voter turnout
 - Losses for national government parties (national test elections)
 - Gains for smaller parties

German case: Political relevance

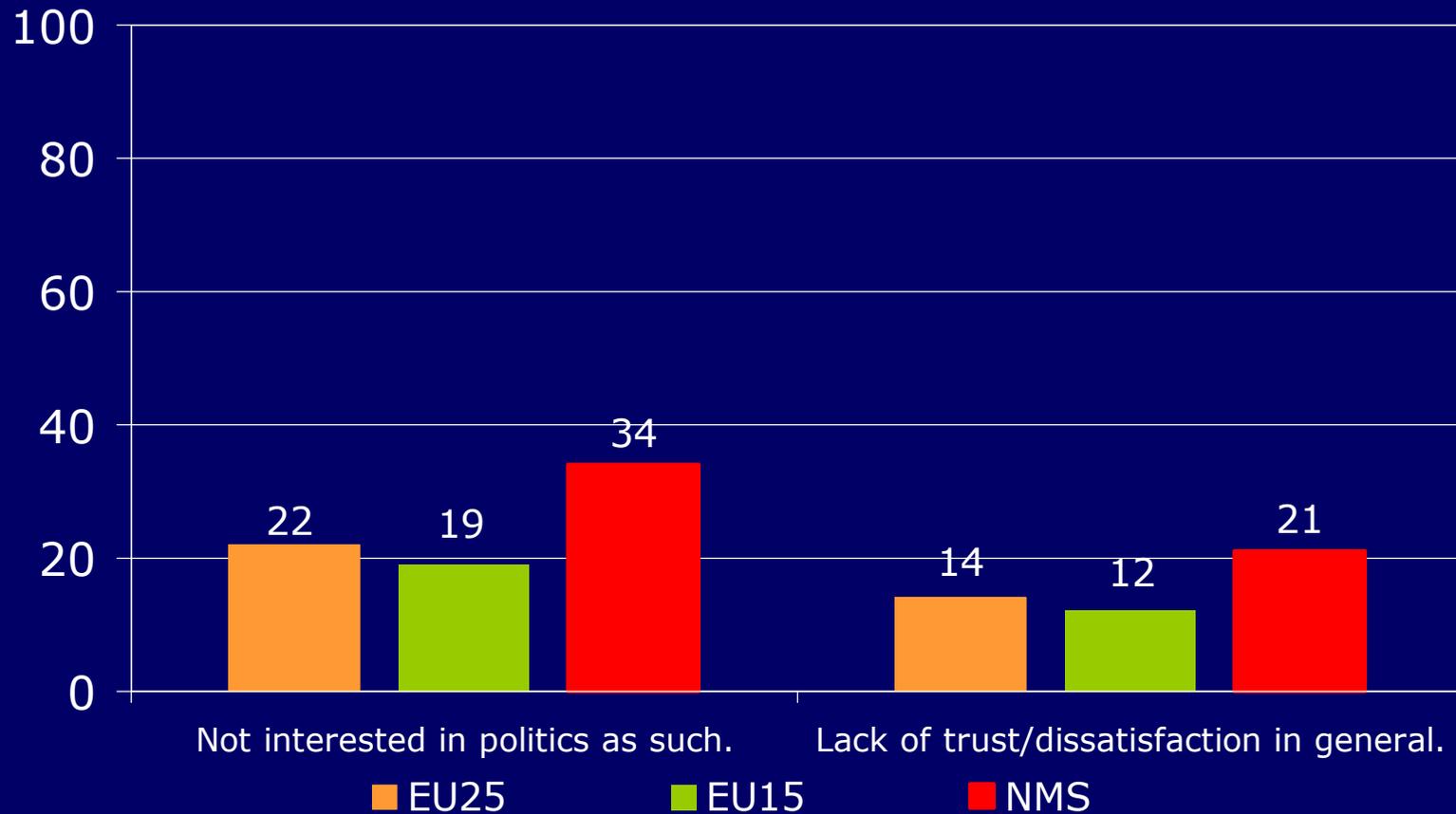
Relevance of domestic and European politics for voting decision in Germany (Source: Infratest dimap 2004)



Comparing voter turnout



Reasons for abstaining

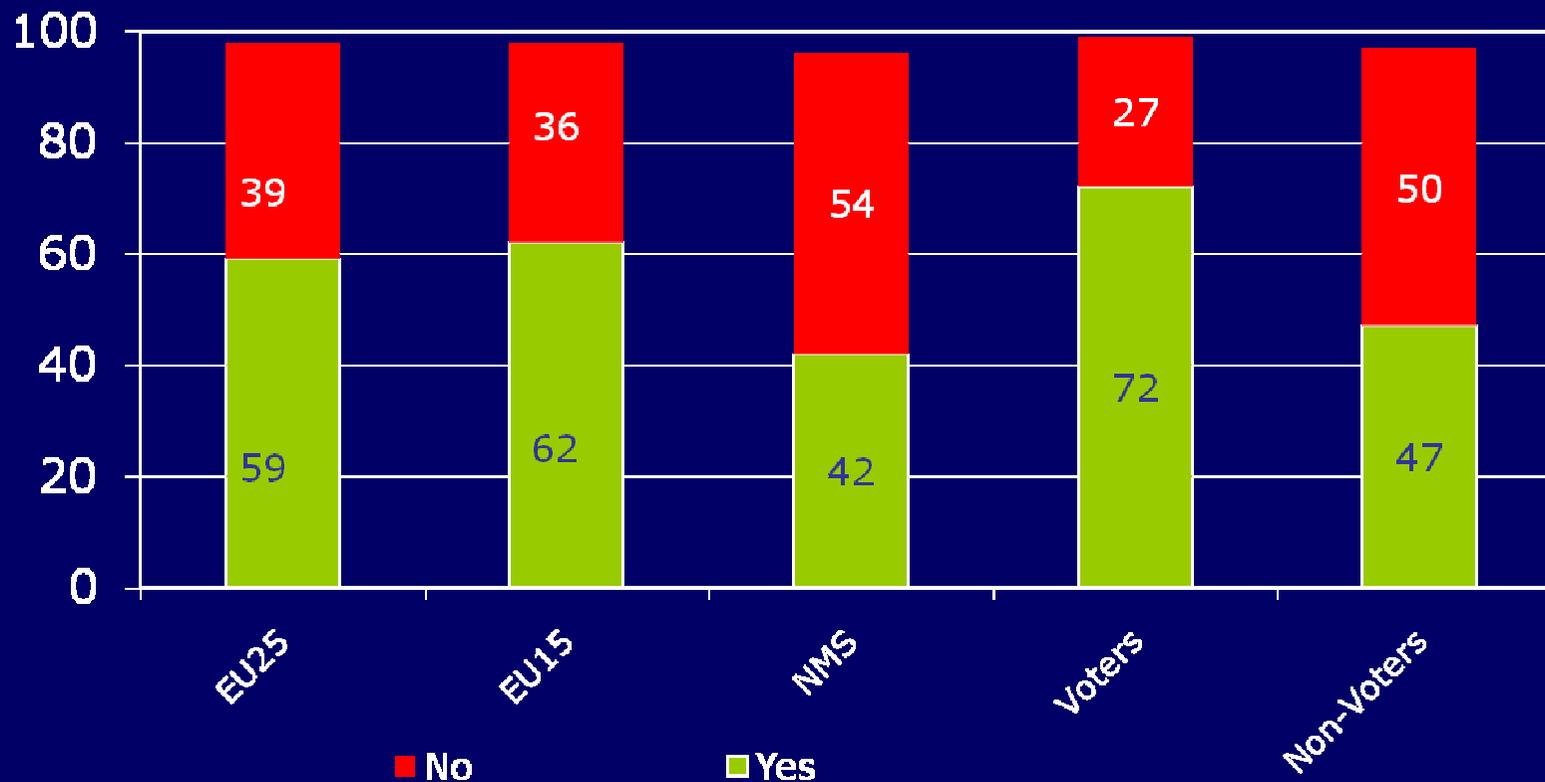


Source: Eurobarometer FB 162, Post European Elections Survey, July 23rd-30th 2004

Level of information to go to vote

**"You had all the necessary information
in order to choose for whom you were going to
vote?"**

(Source: Eurobarometer FB 162, Post European Elections Survey, July 23rd-30th 2004)

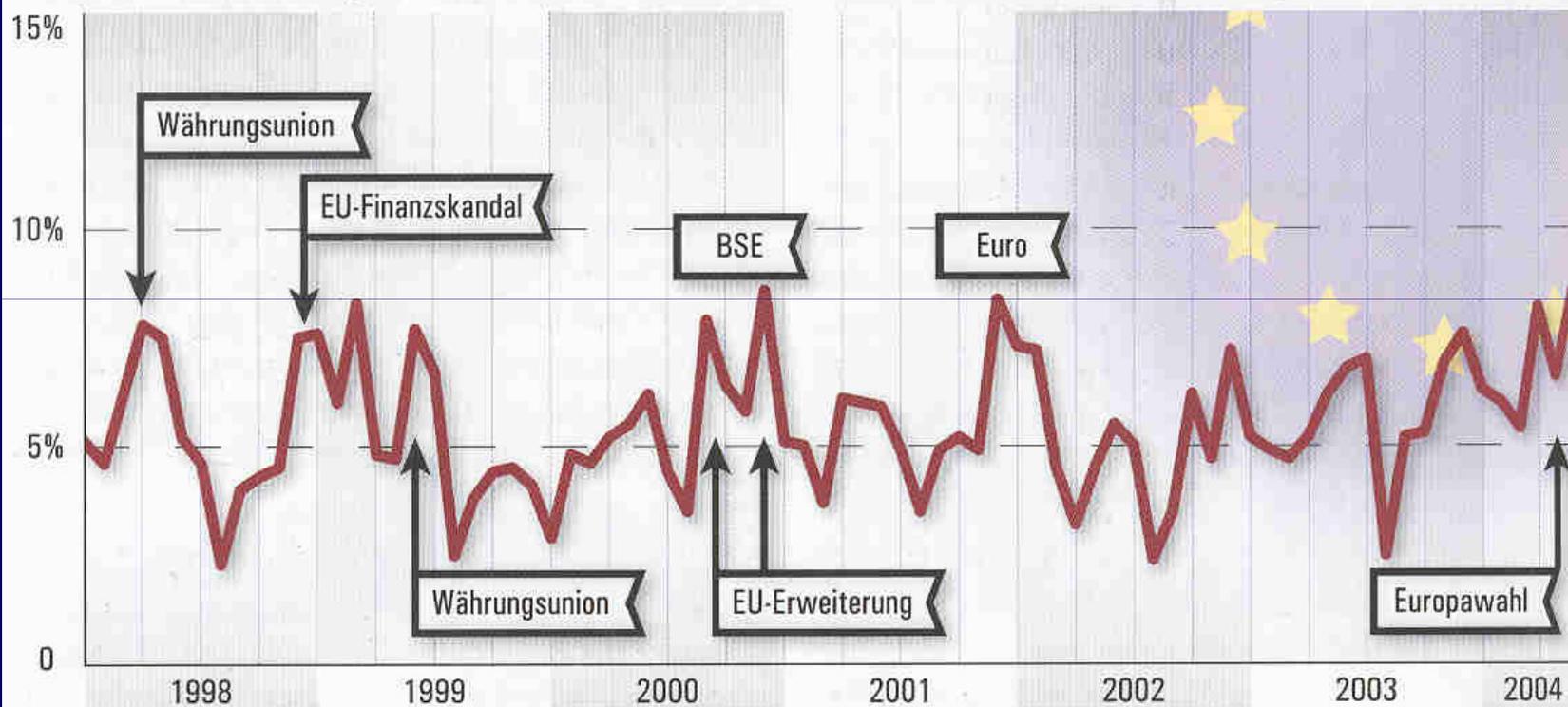


Campaign environment

- « Feelings of being badly informed and voters' national re-contextualization of EP elections as an effect (and cause) of mass media's and political parties' commitment?
- « Mass Media as primary „bridges to the world of politics“ (W. Lippmann, 1922) – especially with regards to distant political arenas

German case: European media coverage

Präsenz der Europäischen Union in der Medienberichterstattung, 1998 – 2004

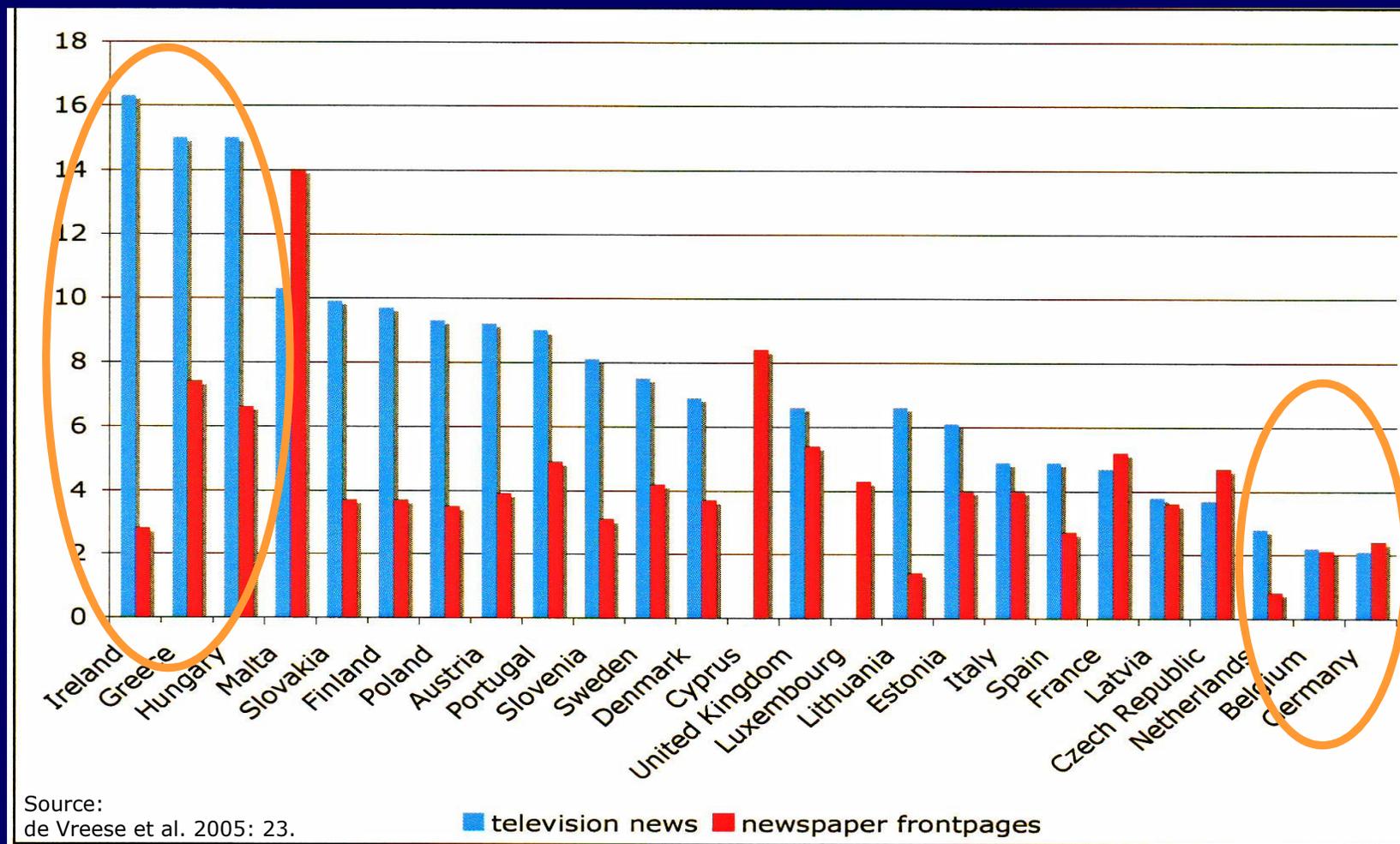


Anteil der Beiträge, in denen die Themen EU/Europapolitik dominieren, an sämtlichen Beiträgen

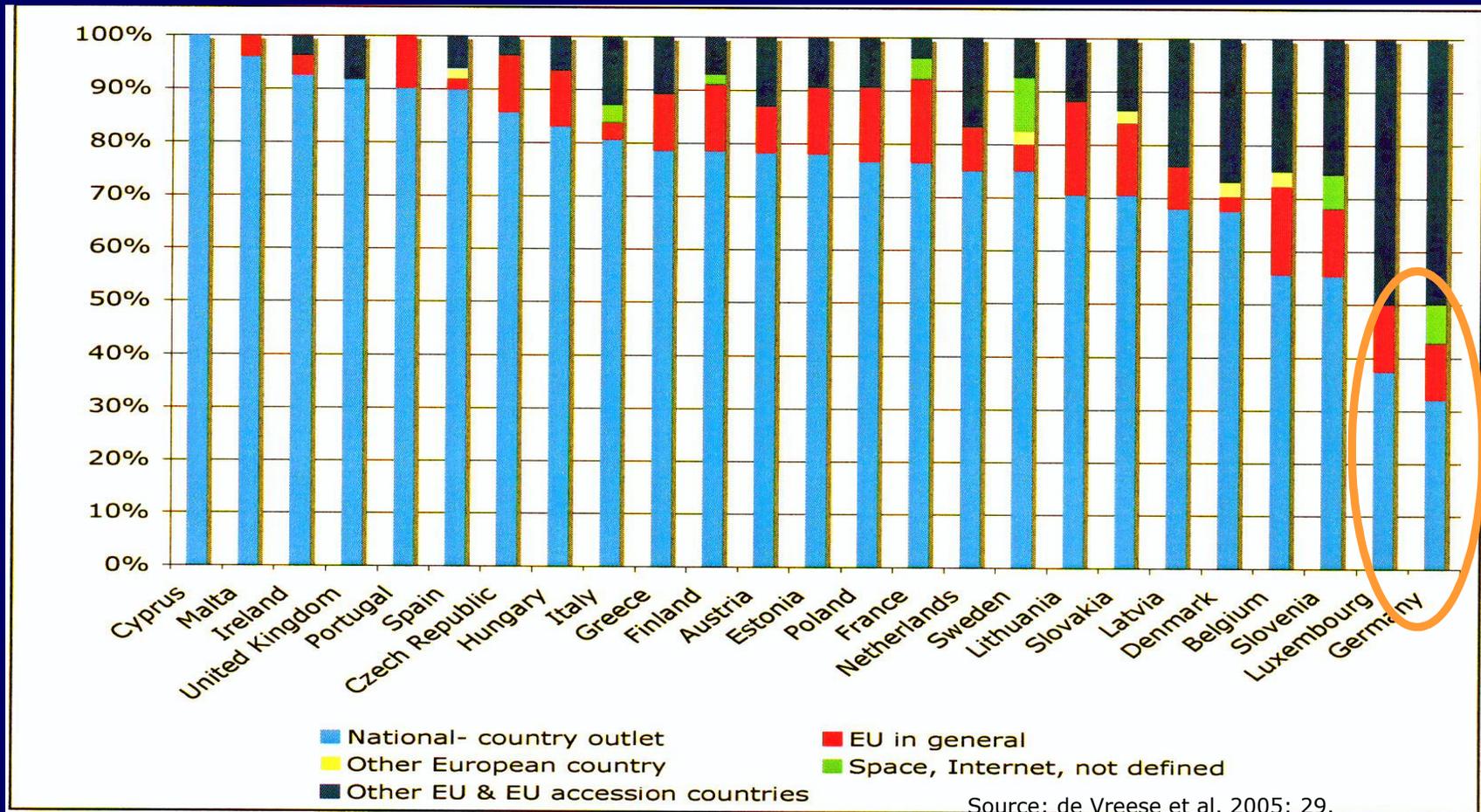
Quelle: Medien Tenor
01.01.1998 – 31.12.2004

Basis: 721.408 Beiträge
in 5 Print- und 7 TV-Medien

European campaign coverage 2004



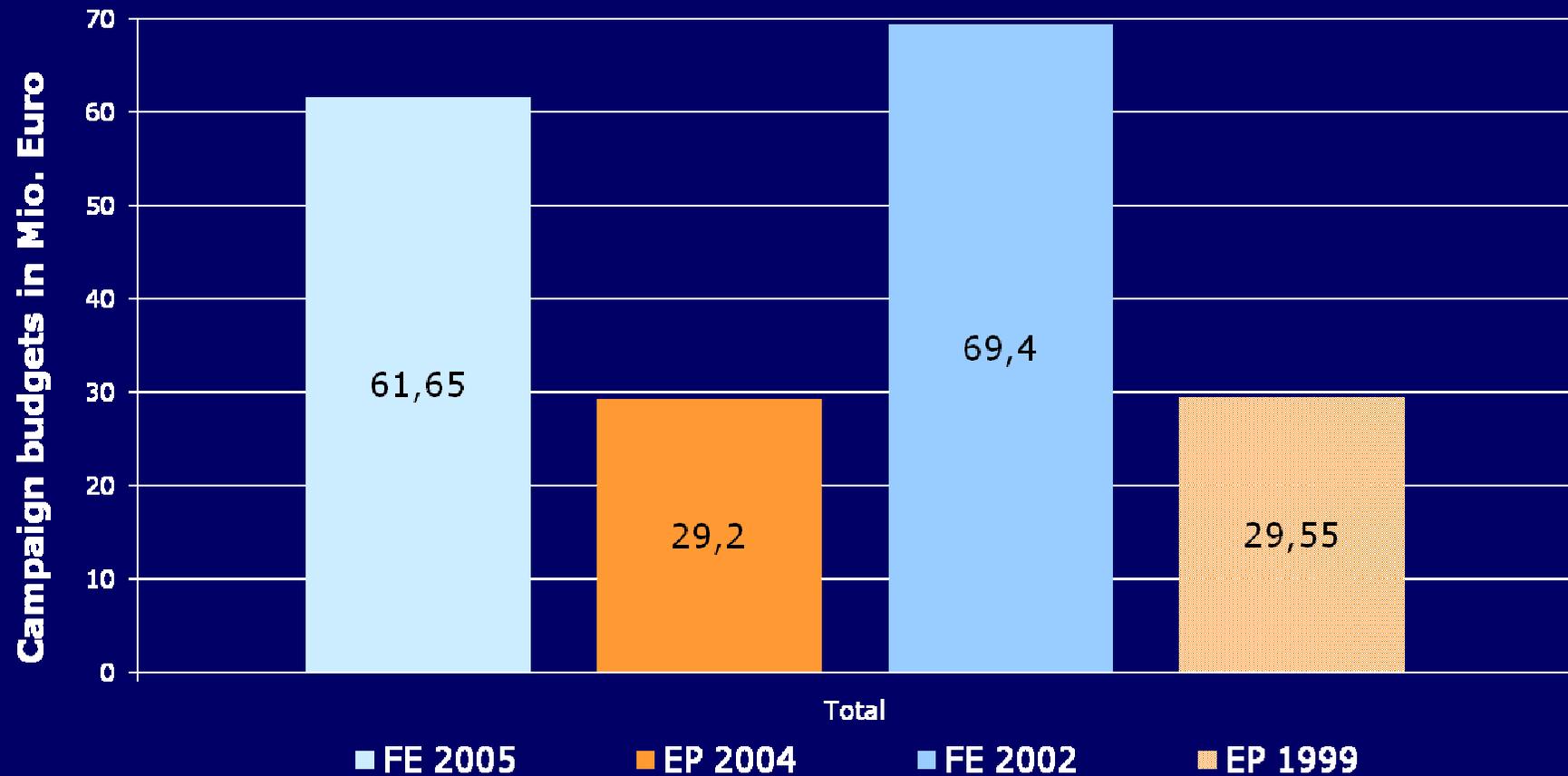
Domestication of European campaign issues



Campaign environment

- « Electoral campaigns as focal points of political communication and input legitimacy
- « Political parties: Activating and mobilization function
- « Empirical results: The more intensive and visible electoral campaigns are conducted, the more it is covered by the media, the more the citizens are involved, interested and active at the ballots.

German case: Limited budgets



Second-order campaigning

« Professionalization low heated:

- Low budgets
- Short campaign periods
- Small campaign teams, rare outsourcing activities
- Focus on „traditional“ paid media, neglect of „free media“ platforms
- Almost no narrow-casting activities
- Low levels of personalisation, entertainisation and negative campaigning
- Domestic campaigns for supra-national political level

« Content: Domestic problems + national frames of European issues

Conclusion

- « *Ménage à trois* of citizens, mass media, and political parties: limited interest, low commitment, half-heated engagement
- « Vicious circle of anticipations and restricted actions
- « Consequence: domestic and „invisible“ campaigns for a trans-national political level
But: *Where's the campaign – where's Europe?*
- « EU's communicative, bottom-up efforts as breakthrough?

References

- « Maier, Michaela/Tenscher, Jens (Eds.) (2006): *Campaigning in Europe – Campaigning for Europe. Political Parties, Campaigns, Mass Media and the European Parliament Elections 2004*. Berlin: Lit.
- « Tenscher, Jens (Ed.) (2005): *Wahl-Kampf um Europa. Analysen aus Anlass der Wahlen zum Europäischen Parlament 2004*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.