HELPING CITIZENS DECIDE IN REFERENDUMS
THE MODERATING EFFECT OF POLITICAL
SOPHISTICATION ON THE USE OF THE INFORMATION
AND CHOICE QUESTIONNAIRE AS A DECISION AID

PETER NEIJENS
CLAES DE VREESE

Abstract Voters often lack sufficient knowledge to make educated decisions. We investigated how a decision aid—the Information and Choice Questionnaire (ICQ)—helped them make more consistent decisions. The ICQ is designed for large-scale use and provides voters with information about a specific problem before asking them for their opinions. It provides citizens with information summarizing a full range of viable policy options and the probable consequences of each, as provided by experts. We investigated the ICQ in the context of the Dutch 2005 referendum on the European Constitutional Treaty. Respondents (N = 340) constituted a random sample of the Dutch population. We studied the effects of the ICQ on vote preferences and the consistency of voters’ preferences shortly before the referendum. We were especially interested in the moderating role of political sophistication on the uses and effects of the ICQ. Our study confirmed that many voters had little knowledge about the European Constitution and had inconsistent preferences. The ICQ made their vote preferences more consistent, especially for those participants with lower levels of political sophistication. This suggests that this decision aid can narrow the gap between the politically sophisticated and the politically less sophisticated.

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Introduction

In democratic theory, it has long been suggested that for representative democracy to function properly citizens need to be interested in, knowledgeable about, and actively participating in politics (Price 1992). However, Lippmann (1922) already a century ago questioned whether voters are inherently competent to direct public affairs. Later, empirical studies confirmed the gloomy picture of citizens’ political knowledge. These studies found that citizens’ judgments are “impulsive, oversimplified, intemperate, ill-considered, and ill-informed” (Sniderman and Theriault 2004, p. 134). In recent years, deliberative polls and various forms of focus group discussions have been advanced as supplements or alternatives to conventional mass opinion surveys. These methods attempt to gather measures of (public) opinion that is of higher quality (i.e., better informed or more deliberative) than that recorded in typical mass opinion surveys (Price and Neijens 1998). These techniques include information questionnaires (Neijens 1987) and deliberative polls (Fishkin 1995). An important question is whether these techniques improve the quality of the vote choice and if so, who benefits most: the politically sophisticated voters or the politically less sophisticated voters? In this contribution, we focus on the Information and Choice Questionnaire (ICQ) and study whether this aid can help voters in a referendum and how political sophistication moderates its effects.

The Information and Choice Questionnaire

The ICQ provides respondents with written information about a specific problem before asking them for their opinions (Saris, Neijens, and De Ridder 1984). The information summarizes a full range of viable policy options and the probable consequences of each, provided by experts. Respondents are asked to evaluate the attractiveness of the consequences of each option before making a choice. The ICQ thus tries to aid respondents by providing them with both information about a decision-making problem and a (evaluation) procedure to process this information. Previous studies provided (experimental) evidence that the preferences of the ICQ respondents are affected by the information provided. Results showed that the instrument gathers measures of opinions that are of higher quality (i.e., more consistent with respondent’s judgments of the various consequences mentioned in the information) than those recorded in typical mass opinion surveys (Neijens, De Ridder, and Saris 1992; Van der Salm, Van Knippenberg, and Daamen 1997; Bütschi 2004).

A question that remains largely unstudied is whether certain individuals are more affected by information such as that provided by the ICQ. In general terms, we know that new information, if received, is likely to affect individuals with lower or medium levels of political sophistication more than individuals with higher levels of sophistication (e.g., Zaller 1992; De Vreese and Boomgaarden 2006). These citizens hold less strong attitudes and preferences and are more
likely to alter the attitude and vote choice in response to new information, conditional upon receiving it (Zaller 1992; Baum 2003). Well-informed people with strong attitudes are less easy to influence (Petty and Cacioppo 1986; Zaller 1992; Eagly and Chaiken 1993; Saris and Sniderman 2004).

The literature also shows that the processing of information is influenced by an individual’s motivation and ability (e.g., Petty and Cacioppo 1981, 1986; Eagly and Chaiken 1993). Eagly and Warren (1976) found that more intelligent people are more likely to comprehend a message. In relation to our decision aid, it can be expected that more motivated and more able respondents tend to engage in more elaborate processing of the information presented in the ICQ.

These observations lead to the conclusion that individuals with higher levels of political sophistication are more likely to process the information better, but are less likely to change their attitudes in relation to a message. Persons with less interest in and less knowledge of an issue are more in need of extra information, such as that provided by the media or in this case by the ICQ, and we can expect that in particular, these persons change their opinions on the basis of the new information but only if the information “reaches” them, for example, because it is offered in a accessible way.

Hypotheses

Based on the literature and previous research, we formulate the following hypotheses for our study:

H1: The ICQ has an effect on vote intentions (probability of voting, vote preference, and opinion strength).

H2: The ICQ improves the consistency of vote preferences.

H3: The effects of the ICQ on the improvement of the consistency of vote preferences are moderated by political sophistication. In particular, the effects are greater for individuals with less education, less political interest, and less political knowledge.

H4: The ICQ has less effect on the vote preferences of voters with a strong prior vote preference.

H5: The ICQ has more effect on the vote preferences of voters with an inconsistent prior vote preference.

Study Design and Data

We studied the applicability of the ICQ in the Dutch 2005 referendum on the European Constitutional Treaty (see also Aarts and Van der Kolk 2005). In the referendum, the issue at stake involved a set of regulations that specify the competences and mutual dependencies of the institutions of the European Union. The constitution introduced a common foreign policy and one Minister
of Foreign Affairs for the European Union as a whole. The constitution also contained a list of Fundamental Rights and specified a stronger position for the European Court of Justice. In various European countries, referendums on the new constitution were held. In the Netherlands, an independent "referendum committee" consisting of experts from different sides had the task to set a date for the referendum election, to summarize and distribute the information on the constitution among the electorate, and to give grants to groups that wanted to stimulate the debate. The committee summarized the 500 pages of the European Constitution and provided this information to the public in the form of a website and brochures that were circulated door-to-door. The information on the consequences of the new constitution that was included in the ICQ was taken from a pamphlet issued by this independent referendum committee. Because the referendum question was a yes/no question (options: new constitution situation versus status quo situation) we provided respondents—as the committee did—with information on how the situation would change under the new constitution. This information was summarized in nine statements (see Appendix 1). In our study, one group of respondents was provided with this information in the form of an ICQ. These respondents were asked to read and evaluate the attractiveness of each consequence. For each consequence, they were asked to indicate if they saw the consequence as an advantage or disadvantage and how big they considered the (dis)advantage. The evaluation scale ranged from 0 to 100 for both disadvantages and advantages. After reading and evaluating the various consequences, respondents were asked for their vote intentions. For this group of respondents, it is possible to study vote intentions, opinions on the consequences of the European Constitution, and the interrelations between these factors.

The second group of respondents was asked the same vote intention questions. But only after answering these questions were they asked to read and evaluate the consequences of the constitution, and to indicate their vote intentions for the second time. This design makes it possible to compare the vote intentions of voters without information provided to them with the vote intentions of voters who had received information in the form of an ICQ; within-subjects (the two vote intentions in group 2), as well as between-subjects [vote intentions in group 1 and (first) vote intentions in group 2].

SAMPLE

The ICQ study was part of a larger study on the opinion of the Dutch electorate on the EU Constitution. The data were collected in May 2005 by CentERdata at the University of Tilburg in the Netherlands. The response rate was 68 percent (AAPOR RR1). The online CentERpanel is representative of the Dutch adult population on key social demographics.1 The two versions of the questionnaire

1. Our sample consists of 52.3 percent males; average age is 49.4 years (SD = 15.25). Most respondents are household heads (62.7 percent), people in employment (49.4 percent), work in
were submitted to two random subsamples of this random sample of the Dutch population. Analysis showed that the two groups \((N_1 = 160; N_2 = 180)\) did not differ with respect to political knowledge, political interest, attitude toward Europe, and sociodemographic variables such as sex, age, and education.

**MEASURES**

Three questions were asked with respect to vote intention (respondents could answer on five-point scales): probability of voting (1) definitely yes . . . (5) definitely no \((M = 1.86; \text{SD} = 1.03)\); vote preference (1) definitely favor the EU Constitution . . . (5) definitely against \((M = 2.96; \text{SD} = 1.23)\), and opinion strength measured by certainty of preference (1) very uncertain . . . (5) very certain \((M = 3.56; \text{SD} = 1.16)\). (Specific wording for all measures can be found in Appendix 2.) Evaluation of the consequences: the scale for the evaluation of the consequences ranged from 0 to 100 for both disadvantages and advantages. Disadvantages were given a minus sign so that the evaluations for the consequences could be indicated with a scale ranging from \(-100\) to \(+100\). Consistency of vote preferences: we look at the consistency of opinions (Converse 1964; Nie, Verba, and Petrocik 1976; Schuman and Presser 1981). This refers to the organization of opinions—the extent to which people’s opinions are logically or ideologically consistent with other views they hold and with their general values and attitudes. The vote preference of a respondent is considered consistent if it is consistent with his or her overall evaluations of the consequences mentioned in the information. We therefore take the explained variance of vote preferences by the evaluation scores as an indication of the degree to which respondents take the information on the consequences into account in their vote preference. Explained variance was assessed by a multiple regression analysis, allowing for different weights for the various consequences. This criterion fits the so-called compensatory decision rule that can be used to summarize the attribute-specific appreciations of consequences into industrial companies (17.3 percent), and have a net income of more than €2,600 per month (34.7 percent). Compared to Statistics Netherlands census data with regard to gender, age, and education, we report the following slight under- or overrepresentations. There is a slight overrepresentation of men (52 percent versus 49.5 percent). Regarding age groups, 15–24 year olds are slightly underrepresented (8 percent versus 11.9 percent), 45–54 year olds are slightly overrepresented (17 percent versus 14 percent), and 65+ year olds are slightly underrepresented (11.4 percent versus 13.7 percent). And finally with regard to education, there is a slight overrepresentation of people with a high school degree (11 percent versus 6 percent), an underrepresentation of people with upper secondary vocational education (MBO) (20 percent versus 32 percent), and an overrepresentation of people with higher professional education (HBO) (24 percent versus 16 percent). Given the high quality of the sample and because it was unclear on what theoretical expectations a weight could be composed and because we were mainly interested in testing relationships between variables, we analyze the unweighted data. Using a sociodemographic weight does not substantially alter the results.
Table 1. Effect of Information on Vote Intentions (within Subjects)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vote intention</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probability of voting</td>
<td>−0.011</td>
<td>−0.282</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote preference</td>
<td>0.165</td>
<td>4.164</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion strength</td>
<td>−0.068</td>
<td>−1.328</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE.—$N = 180$; paired samples $t$-test.

$**p < .01.$

an overall appreciation. This rule is applied in decision analysis (Keeney and Raiffa 1976; Neijens 1987; Neijens, De Ridder, and Saris 1992; Edwards and Fasolo 2001). Sociodemographics were measured using standard questions. Political knowledge was measured with three items which could be answered correct or false, one about national politics, and two about EU politics [one factor, explained variance: 51.2 percent, Cronbach’s alpha: .52 (low but acceptable for subgroup discrimination); $M = 1.66$; SD = 1.06; range 0–3]. Political interest was measured with four items that tapped interest in national politics, interest in European politics, engaging in interpersonal communication about national and EU politics on five-point scales (one factor, explained variance: 51.5 percent, Cronbach’s alpha: .84, $M = 2.73$; SD = 0.71; range 1–5).

Results

Forty-eight percent of the respondents said that they were convinced that they were going to vote in the referendum; 27 percent said that they probably would vote, and 25 percent did not know. Almost 30 percent of the respondents did not know how to vote; 28 percent intended to vote yes (definitely or probably) and 42 percent no (definitely or probably). Almost 60 percent of the respondents said that they were (very) certain about their opinion on the European Constitution; more than 20 percent of the respondents were (very) uncertain and 20 percent did not know. People who did not know which way to vote were particularly uncertain; proponents and opponents were equally convinced of their vote.

EFFECT OF INFORMATION ON VOTE INTENTIONS AND OPINION STRENGTH

We studied the effects of the ICQ on three vote intention variables: probability of voting, vote preference, and opinion strength. These effects were studied “within subjects” and “between subjects.” We start with the results for the within-subjects comparison (see table 1).

The table shows that the ICQ did not affect probability to vote or opinion strength, but did have an effect on vote preferences. After filling out the ICQ, 27 percent of the respondents indicated a different vote preference; the general
Table 2. Effect of Information on Vote Intentions (between Subjects)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vote intention</th>
<th>Chi²</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Cramer’s V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Probability of voting</td>
<td>2.999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote preference</td>
<td>15.513</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opinion strength</td>
<td>1.375</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>.064</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE.—N = 160.  
**p < .01.

picture shows that respondents were more in favor of the constitution [36.9 percent indicated to vote (probably) yes] than before [28.1 percent indicated to vote (probably) yes].

Table 2 shows the effect of the ICQ by comparing the two groups of respondents (without and with information). The table reveals the same trend as the within-subjects comparison: after reading and evaluating the information, respondents indicated a different opinion on the EU Constitution. The group that had gone through the information was less undecided and more in favor of the EU [45.0 percent indicated to vote (probably) yes versus 28.1 percent of the respondents who were not confronted with the ICQ]. These differences were even more pronounced than in the within-subjects comparison, probably because in that situation, respondents were more inclined to stick to their first opinion that they had explicitly indicated in the questionnaire.

We conclude that H1 received strong support: the ICQ has an effect on vote preferences with respect to the EU Constitution.

EFFECT OF INFORMATION ON CONSISTENCY OF VOTE PREFERENCE

Results show that vote preferences after reading and evaluating the information were largely consistent: the explained variance of vote preference by the evaluation of the consequences was 55 percent (N = 340). The question arises if this consistency was an effect of the information provided. It could be that respondents would be consistent even without the ICQ. Therefore, we compared the explained variance of the first vote preferences (without information) with the explained variance of the second vote preferences (with information). We did so for the group of respondents who were asked for their vote twice, before and after reading and evaluating the information (N = 180). The results showed that the consistency of the vote preferences rose from 52 percent to 57 percent. The consistency of the vote preferences of those respondents who expressed a different opinion on the EU Constitution after reading the information (N = 48) increased from 34 percent (without information) to 45 percent (after reading and evaluating the information). We conclude that the different vote preferences made after filling out the ICQ were not only “other” vote
Table 3. Consistency of Vote Preferences for Different Groups under Different Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group of respondents</th>
<th>First vote preference (without information) (%)</th>
<th>Second vote preference (after reading and evaluating the information) (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (N = 86)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (N = 94)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (N = 66)</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (N = 114)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (N = 80)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (N = 100)</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

preferences, but also better (in terms of consistency). Therefore, H2 received strong support: the ICQ improved the consistency of the vote preferences.2

EFFECTS OF POLITICAL SOPHISTICATION

Political interest and political knowledge did not affect vote change, while there was an effect of education ($r = -.12^{**}$): the higher educated voters changed their vote less than other respondents after the ICQ. Table 3 shows how the motivation and ability variables affected the consistency of the vote preferences, before and after filling out the ICQ (N = 180). First we look at the consistency of the first vote preferences (without information). We note that the vote preferences of the more interested respondents were more consistent than the vote preferences of the less interested respondents (61 percent versus 53 percent). The same pattern was found for education (66 percent versus 42 percent) and knowledge (58 percent versus 49 percent). Comparing the consistency of the first and second vote preferences for the various subgroups of respondents, we note that the ICQ especially improved the consistency of the vote preferences of the less interested and less able respondents. The first row in the table shows that in the low-interest group, the consistency of the first vote preferences was 53 percent and became 62 percent after the ICQ. The table

2. We additionally tested (following Hotelling 1940) the significance of the difference of the correlations between the sum of the evaluations of the various consequences and the vote preference under the two conditions (with and without information). The pattern of correlation coefficients was similar to the explained variance patterns mentioned in the article, reaching statistical significance (at the .10 level) in the expected direction for the whole group of respondents (N = 180) ($r = .58$ and $r = .62$ for the no-information and the information condition respectively), and the subgroup of respondents who expressed a different opinion (N = 48) ($r = .22$ and $r = .37$ for the no-information and the information condition respectively).
Helping Citizens Decide in Referendums

shows that the high-interest group profited from the ICQ as well, but to a lesser extent (from 61 percent to 66 percent). For education, the same pattern can be noted: a difference of 10 percentage points for low-educated respondents versus a difference of 1 percentage point for higher educated respondents. The table also shows that both knowledge groups took equal advantage of the ICQ.3

We conclude that for interest and education, the pattern of results in table 3 are in line with H3: the effect of the ICQ on the improvement of the consistency of the vote preferences is greater for voters with less interest in the EU and voters with less education. Only knowledge had no substantially differential effect on the improvement of the vote preferences.

EFFECTS OF PRIOR OPINION

We did not find an effect of prior opinion strength. Voters who were undecided about how to vote did not change their vote preference more often than others. The same accounts for voters who were uncertain about their vote. We conclude that H4 is rejected: prior opinion strength did not affect the impact of the ICQ.

H5 was confirmed: the ICQ had more effect on voters with inconsistent prior vote preferences. In other words, respondents who had a vote preference that was not consistent with their evaluation of the consequences changed their vote preference more often than others. This emerges from a comparison of the consistency of the (first) votes of those respondents who did change their vote preference (34 percent) with the consistency of the (first) vote preferences of the respondents who did not change their vote preference (64 percent).4

3. We additionally tested (following Hotelling 1940) the significance of the difference of the correlations between the sum of the evaluations of the various consequences and the vote preference for the various subgroups under the two conditions (with and without information). The pattern of correlation coefficients in the different groups was similar to the explained variance patterns in table 3, reaching statistical significance (at the .10 level) in the expected direction for the low-interest group (r = .62 and r = .67 for the no-information and the information condition respectively), and the low-education group (r = .37 and r = .46 respectively). The differences for the high-interest and the high-education groups were not significant. All these results are in line with the argument. The difference for the low-knowledge group (r = .56 and r = .58 for the no-information and the information condition respectively) was not significant, and the difference for the high-knowledge group was significant (higher scores under the ICQ). That implies, as was concluded, that H3 received support except for knowledge groups. Please note that the operationalization of political knowledge was not ideal (Cronbach’s alpha = .52). This might have contributed to the unexpected results.

4. The correlations between the sum of the evaluations of the various consequences of the EU and the vote preference for the two subgroups (the group that changed their vote preference and the group that did not change their vote preference) was r = .25 and r = .69, respectively (difference significant at the .01 level).
Conclusions and Discussion

Our study extended extant knowledge about the role of political sophistication on the use of a decision aid in referendums. In our study a moderating effect of political sophistication was found: the positive influence of the ICQ on the consistency of the vote preferences was stronger for voters with less interest and less education. These voters had less consistent vote preferences than voters with higher levels of political sophistication, and profited more from the information in the ICQ. This shows that the ICQ is not too complicated and not too taxing on respondents’ ability. These results are in line with conclusions with respect to argument-based, systematic voting in direct-democratic Swiss votes (Kriesi 2006).

Although dual processing models of information processing—for example the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo 1981, 1986)—assume that variables related to political sophistication, such as motivation and ability, advance the systematic processing of the information provided, under the ICQ voters with lower levels of political sophistication profited more. It seems that the information provided by the ICQ is in a format (condense, balanced) that is particularly useful to this group of voters. The ICQ is an instrument that not only offers people (new) information, but also helps them to organize their own thoughts and allows them to arrive at a structured evaluation of the different issues at stake. According to the ELM, two conditions (high ability and high motivation) should both be met in order to get systematic processing of information. In the ICQ, all respondents (whatever their ability and/or motivation) are invited to systematic information processing. Less sophisticated respondents profit more from this pressure to process information systematically in the ICQ than highly sophisticated respondents. The same goes for less able respondents (lower education): they profit more from the pressure on systematic processing in the ICQ. In other words, this decision aid did not widen the gap between the politically sophisticated and the less politically sophisticated, as is often the case with providing information to subjects, but instead narrows this gap, which is attractive from a democratic point of view. It is a modest tool to overcome some of the fundamental problems of the “ill-informed” citizen as signaled by Converse (1964), Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996), Lippmann (1922), and others.

Our results corroborate Van Knippenberg and Daamen (1996) who found that consistency of vote preferences was higher for more able and more motivated ICQ respondents. That can be seen in table 3 (right column) by comparing the consistency of vote preferences for the various subgroups in the ICQ. But our study adds to this that the ICQ was able to improve the consistency of vote preferences for the lower educated and less interested groups more than for the higher educated and higher interest groups (compare the left and right column of table 3).

The results show that a substantial percentage of the respondents indicated a different vote preference on the EU Constitution after reading and evaluating
the information. We have to take into account that the problem facing the respondents was a binary (yes/no) decision. It can be expected that the effect of the ICQ is even greater in decision-making problems with more options. It can also be noted that not all respondents based their vote preference regarding the EU Constitution on a linear combination of their evaluations of the consequences mentioned in the ICQ: the explained variance of the vote preference by the evaluations was not 100 percent. That may imply that (some) respondents applied a different decision rule (nonlinear combination) or that they took other considerations into account. Further research might reveal to what extent respondents use the information provided vis-à-vis other information.

The information that was included in the ICQ was taken from the official governmental brochure for which the independent referendum committee was responsible. We acknowledge the potential bias of the structuring and the formulation of the information in the ICQ. A future study would be required to flesh out in more detail how the format (Price and Neijens 1998) and the valenced nature of statements affect the influence of the ICQ as well as consequences of—in this case— not adopting the Constitutional Treaty. This reservation notwithstanding, our study suggested that the ICQ—and potentially other emerging decision aids—can narrow the gap between the politically sophisticated and the politically less sophisticated.

### Appendix 1: The Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantage</th>
<th>Disadvantage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A clear distinction between the competences of the member states and the European Union</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Treaty prescribes clearer than now in which areas the European Union is allowed to act. These are trade, foreign policy, security, and defense policy. The Union is not allowed to act in areas that are not mentioned. The member states have the exclusive rights in these areas</td>
<td>.......... ..........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The member states get the right to withdraw from the European Union</strong></td>
<td>.......... ..........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>More competences of the European Parliament</strong>&lt;br&gt;The European parliament (elected by the inhabitants of the member states) gets more competences vis-à-vis the European Committee (the executive committee)</td>
<td>.......... ..........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantage</td>
<td>Disadvantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permanent president of the European Council</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Treaty introduces a permanent president of the European Council (meeting of the Heads of state or Government of the member states) for a term of two and a half years</td>
<td>...............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minister for Foreign Affairs</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Treaty creates the post of a Minister for Foreign Affairs for the European Union</td>
<td>...............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Less members in the European Commission</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Commission will be reduced in size and consist of a number of members corresponding to two-thirds of the number of member states</td>
<td>...............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>More competences for the Court of Justice</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Treaty strengthens the role of the Court of Justice. The Court may test the decisions made by the European Council against the laws of the European Union. Furthermore, the procedures are simplified so that the Court can decide quicker</td>
<td>...............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fundamental rights</strong>&lt;br&gt;The Treaty specifies a number of fundamental rights. These rights neither limit the fundamental rights of the European Treaty for the Human Rights nor the National Constitutions of the member states</td>
<td>...............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Signal for Europe</strong>&lt;br&gt;An accepted constitution will be an incentive for the further unification of Europe</td>
<td>...............</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Appendix 2: Measures

#### Probability of Voting

Are you going to vote on June 1 for the referendum on the European Constitution?

- I am definitely going to vote
- I am probably going to vote
- I don’t know yet
- I am probably not going to vote
- I am definitely not going to vote
Vote Preference

How would you vote if the referendum on the European Constitution would be held tomorrow?

- Definitely in favor of the constitution
- Probably in favor of the constitution
- I don’t know
- Probably against the constitution
- Definitely against the constitution

Opinion Strength

How certain are you of your vote preference?

1 very uncertain
2
3
4
5 very certain

Evaluation of the Consequences

The introduction of the European Constitution has a number of consequences which we list below. We ask you to evaluate these consequences and then to give your opinion on the Constitution.

How do you fill in these questions? You evaluate each consequence as an advantage or disadvantage. First, you assess if you evaluate the consequence an advantage or a disadvantage. Then you evaluate through means of points how big the advantage (column advantage) or disadvantage (column disadvantage) is. You can give a score between 0 and 100. Zero means that you do not see an advantage or disadvantage, 1 means that you evaluate the advantage or disadvantage minimal and 100 means that you evaluate the advantage or disadvantage maximal.

Political Knowledge

What is the political party of Henk Kamp?

- Socialist party
- Liberal party
- The Green party
- The Christian Democrats

How many countries are member of the European Union at the moment?

- 12
- 15
What is the name of the Dutch member of the European Commission?

- Frits Bolkenstein
- Ben Bot
- Neelie Kroes
- Jaap de Hoop Scheffer

**Political Interest**

How interested are you in Dutch political topics?

1 very much
2 much
3 not much/not little
4 little
5 very little

How interested are you in European political topics?

1 very much
2 much
3 not much/not little
4 little
5 very little

How often do you discuss Dutch political issues with friends, family, or colleagues?

1 often
2 frequently
3 not often
4 almost never

How often do you discuss European political issues with friends, family, or colleagues?

1 often
2 frequently
3 not often
4 almost never
Helping Citizens Decide in Referendums

References


Saris, Willem E., Peter C. Neijens, and Jan A. de Ridder. 1984. Kernenergie: Ja of Nee? (Nuclear Power: Yes or No?) Amsterdam: SSO.


