The Knesset
Information Division

PUBLIC TRUST IN PARLIAMENT – A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Public Trust in Parliament – A Comparative Study[1]

Summary

The study deals with public trust in parliament, and is based on the responses of the Secretaries General of 21 parliaments to a questionnaire we sent to them, on public opinion surveys prepared in various states around the world and by bodies that engage in comparative international public opinion surveys, and on wide scale professional literature.

We found that there is a worldwide problem of low levels of trust in government institutions in general and in parliaments in particular. In this study we concentrated on the phenomenon in the Western democracies, to which Israel belongs, and most of the information presented relates to them. The study presents and analyzes the data, and then reviews the extensive professional literature on the subject.

The relevant professional literature deals with the term "trust" in various spheres in the Social Sciences; with explanations on the state and international levels of the phenomenon of low levels of trust in government institutions in general and parliaments in particular; with the degree to which the phenomenon threatens democracy; and with reforms that can be introduced in order to bring about a change in the trend.

Many parliaments have introduced reforms that are designed to improve the connection between themselves and the public, and there is an expectation that the reforms – in the sphere of information, education and communications – will have an effect, at least indirectly, on the level of trust in them. In fact, the reforms have had little effect on public trust, because the low level of trust apparently results more from social and cultural developments than from objective reasons, connected with the functioning of the parliaments or their reflection in the media.

Despite the non-complimentary results of the Knesset Index of 2001 regarding public opinion towards the Knesset, it is apparent that compared to the 15 members of the EU before the enlargement, the situation in Israel is not as bad as it might seem.

1. Introduction

In 2001 the Knesset Research and Information Center[2] published a research report regarding the public's perception of the legislative authority (hereinafter: the Knesset Index), which was

[1] I should like to thank the former Director of the Knesset Research and Information Center, Dr. Jacob Warshavsky, and the current Director of the Information and Research Department for their comments and illuminations. I bear full responsibility for everything written in this document.

[2] The RIC has recently changed its name to the Knesset Information and Research Department.

prepared in cooperation with Professor Ephraim Ya'ar-Yuchtman and the "Dahaf" Institute, directed by Dr. Mina Zemah. The study examined public opinion in depth and detail, and several grave conclusions emerged from it concerning public opinion in Israel regarding the Knesset and its Members, and the levels of public trust in them. *Inter alia* it was found that only 14% of those interviewed had much or full trust in the Knesset.[3]

As a result of the findings of the Knesset Index the Secretary General of the Knesset, Mr. Arie Hahn, asked that we check with the Secretaries General of other parliaments whether their parliaments had ordered the preparation of public opinion surveys similar to the Knesset Index, whether they too suffer from low public trust, and if they do – how their respective parliaments contend with the problem. A questionnaire was sent to 30 Secretaries General of Parliaments; 21 replies were received.[4]

After we received the replies we decided to collect independently additional information from the following sources: the websites of parliaments that have introduced, or are planning reforms to improve their image and connection with the public; national and international public opinion surveys that deal, *inter alia*, with public opinion in government institutions; professional literature that deals with various aspects of trust in general and trust in government institutions in particular.

2. The Decline in Public Trust in Government Institutions in General, and in Parliament in Particular.

There are many sources for comparative data regarding the level of public trust in government institutions, including parliament. We found such data in the websites of national public opinion institutes, and of international bodies that conduct comparative opinion polls. Among the latter mention should be made of the Eurbarometer;[5] the surveys conducted in four regions – Africa, East Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe – which are associated in a body called "The Global Barometer Surveys";[6] the World Value Survey of which the

[3] The Knesset Research and Information Center and the "Dahaf" Research Institute, *Madad Haknesset – Tfissot Hatzibur Et Harashut Hamehokeket* (The Knesset Index – How the Public Perceives of the Legislature), Research Report, Jerusalem, February 2001, p. 51.

[4] The countries from which responses were received were: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, New-Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. See details regarding the responses received in the list of sources.

[5] The Eurobarometer was founded in 1973. It publishes regularly opinion surveys performed in the member states of the EU, and in candidates for membership. It is run by the Public Opinion Analysis Section of the European Commission. The surveys deal with various issues that are connected to the essence and activity of the EU, including public opinion regarding government institutions and international organizations. The central publication of the Eurobarometer is the *Standard Eurobarometer*, which is published twice a year.
http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/index_en.htm (15/2/06).

called "The Global Barometer Surveys";[6] the World Value Survey of which the European Value Study is a subdivision;[7] and the European Social Survey.[8]

We found that several international organizations have been dealing in recent years with the decline in public trust in government institutions, and its ramifications. In a report prepared in 2001 for the OECD it was found that many states, which are members of the Organization have started to focus attention on strengthening relations with their citizens as a result of the decline in the rates of participation in the elections, in the rates of membership in political parties, and in the trust that the public expresses in central public institutions, including parliaments.[9]

2.1. Public Trust in Government Institutions

We mention public trust in government institutions in general, and public trust in parliament in a single breath, as if they constitute a single phenomenon. And indeed, in public opinion surveys in which the interviewees are asked about their trust in parliament they are also asked about other government and public institutions. The Eurobarometer surveys ask about a variety of national and international institutions. The survey held in the Spring of 2005

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[6] The bodies operating within the framework of the Global Barometer Surveys are the following: The Afrobarometer, which is run by a group of research institutes in the United States, South Africa and Ghana, and published its first survey in 2001. The Afrobarometer carries out surveys in the following countries: Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. (http://www.afrobarometer.org, 4/4/06) The East Asia Barometer, which started to operate in 2001. It is run by academics from East Asia and the U.S., and is coordinated by Professor Yun-han Chu from the National Taiwan University. The countries covered by the survey are: China, Hong-Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan, and Thailand. (http://www.eastasiabarometer.org 4/4/06) The Latinobarómetro, which engages in public opinion surveys in Latin America. It was initiated by the MORI Institute in 1995. Today it is run in Chile by Ms. Martha Lagos. The countries covered by the survey are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El-Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay. (http://www.latinobarometro.org, 15/2/06). Surveys that are held in Russia (since 1992), the Baltic States (since 1993) and the new states in Eastern Europe (since 1991), which are conducted by the Centre for Studies in Public Policy at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, under Prof. Richard Rose. (http://www.cspp.abdn.ac.uk, 4/4/06).

[7] The World Value Survey Organization is an international academic research body centered in Sweden, which collects statistical data around the world regarding the values and beliefs of the public, including the political sphere, since the early 1980s. (http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org, 15/2/06). The European Value Study is part of the World Value Survey, and concentrates on Europe. http://www.europeanvalues.nl/index3.htm,(15/2/06).

[8] The European Social Survey is an academic body, which receives its funding from the European Commission, the European Fund for Science, and the participating states. Israel participated in the first survey of the ESS that was held in 2002 by means of Prof. Noah Levin-Epstein from the Department of Sociology at Tel Aviv University. http://naticent02.uuhost.uk.uu.net/ (15/2/06).

[9] OECD (2001). The OECD continues to deal with the issue, and on November 28, 2005 a Ministerial Conference was convened under its auspices in Rotterdam in the Netherlands. http://www.oecd.org/document/5/0,2340,en_33873108_33873626_35760965_1_1_1_1,00.html (15/2/06).

presented the following responses regarding the legal system, the government, the parliament and parties.

Table No. 1: The percentage of those expressing trust in the legal system, the government, the parliament and the parties in Europe (2005)

Country	Trust in Legal System	Trust in Government	Trust in Parliament	Trust in Political Parties
15 pre-enlargement EU				
Austria	74	49	52	31
Belgium	48	44	49	30
Denmark	83	55	74	51
Finland	78	68	67	37
France	53	24	33	14
Germany	58	27	35	18
Greece	53	40	47	23
Ireland	52	40	40	24
Italy	43	29	35	19
Luxemburg	65	68	64	46
Netherlands	65	40	53	35
Portugal	41	33	40	19
Spain	47	40	37	24
Sweden	64	33	46	22
United Kingdom	54	34	36	22
10 Members that joined the EU in 2004				
Cyprus (Greek)	64	60	54	21
Czech Republic	32	23	17	11
Estonia	49	44	41	17
Hungary	24	32	29	11
Latvia	37	35	27	10
Lithuania	30	25	15	10
Malta	45	40	38	29
Poland	23	11	8	5
Slovakia	27	22	23	11
Slovenia	34	40	39	23
Potential members				
Bulgaria	20	20	11	11
Croatia	24	22	20	11
Cyprus (Turkish)	60	62	57	40
Romania	35	43	35	22
Turkey	69	76	73	28

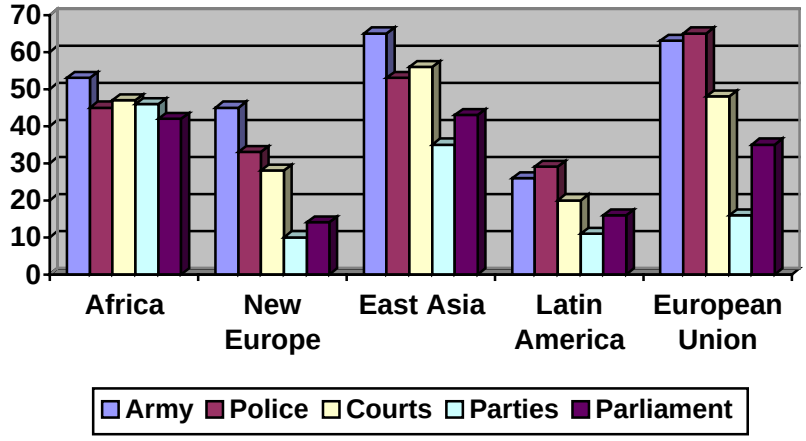
Green indicates the highest level of trust among the four institutions, blue the second place, bordeau the third place, red the fourth place.
Source: *Standard Eurobarometer* No. 63

In most of the European states it was found that trust in the legal system is the highest among the four institutions. In all the states trust in parties in the lowest. As to trust in government versus trust in parliament, in some of the states trust in government is greater, and in some - in parliament. In 12 of the 15 members of the EU before the enlargement trust in parliament was higher than trust in government (the exceptions were Luxemburg, Spain and Finland). In most of the new members or candidates for entry trust in government is higher. In Israel,

according to the Knesset Index, and according to the Peace Index,[10] trust in government is higher than trust in the Knesset.

Within the framework of a project on parliaments and democracy being prepared by Prof. David Beetham for the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the following graph was prepared, that compares the average figures in various regions regarding trust in parliament, in parties (or in some cases in the ruling party), in the legal system, in the police and in the army.[11] Once again it transpires that trust in parties is the lowest in all the regions, except for Africa. In all the regions trust in parliament in lower than trust in the legal system, in the police and in the army.

Figure No. 1: Public trust in national institutions: regional averages



The European Union – the 15 members before the expansion; Latin America – Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Costa-Rica, El-Salvador, Equador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela; East Asia – China, Hong-Kong, Japan, Mongolia, the Philippines, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand; New Europe – Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, ,Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Slovenia; Africa – Botswana, Cape-Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.
Source: David Beetham, *Parliament and Democracy in the Twenty-first Century: a Guide to Good Practice*, to be published by the IPU in the course of 2006.

Is there a correlation between the level of trust that the public expresses in various institutions? When we are speaking of parliament and government the answer is positive: in all the countries for which we found data, public trust in parliament and government increases and decreases in parallel (though not necessarily at the same rate). The explanation is that in

[10] The Peace Index survey has been carried out once a month since June 1994 by Prof. Ephraim Yuchtman-Ya'ar and Prof. Tamar Hermann, on behalf of the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research and the Evens Program in Conflict Resolution and Mediation at Tel-Aviv University. In the survey fixed and changing questions are asked regarding the public's position on the peace process, and from time to time questions are also asked on current political issues, and on public trust in government institutions.

[11] Our thanks to Prof. David Beetham for sending us the graph.

parliamentary democracies the public does not always distinguish between the two, and the distribution of functions between them is not clear.[12] As to the legal system, the correlation is less clear.

2.2. Public Trust in Parliament

From the information we gathered from numerous and varied sources it emerges that a decline has taken place – though not a constant one – in public trust in parliaments in most of the states in the last decade.[13]

From the Eurobarometer data regarding the 15 states that were members of the EU before the enlargement, it emerges that the average rate of those expressing trust in their parliaments declined from 49% in 1996 to 39% in 2005, even though in several states trust increased or remained stable.

Table No. 2: The rate of those expressing trust in parliament in the 15 members of the EU before the enlargement, in percentages (1996-2005).

State	1996	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Austria	46	41	47	46	45	50	42	41	52
Belgium	47	20	26	42	41	43	44	38	49
Denmark	64	61	54	58	58	63	69	63	74
Finland	52	48	55	57	52	53	62	58	67
France	53	38	37	40	35	32	44	35	33
Germany	33	35	45	41	42	42	35	29	35
Greece	65	51	51	44	49	57	56	63	47
Ireland	55	38	36	38	41	45	35	40	40
Italy	47	29	28	35	32	38	41	32	35
Luxemburg	64	57	61	64	64	65	64	56	64
Netherlands	57	64	62	58	62	58	51	43	53
Portugal	67	43	56	41	50	50	54	37	40
Spain	57	45	45	58	46	46	38	42	37
Sweden	51	48	42	49	50	59	59	58	46
United Kingdom	51	46	36	34	34	37	37	25	36
EU (15) average	**49**	**44**	**45**	**47**	**47**	**49**	**42**	**35**	**39**

Green – above the average; Red – below the averate.
Source: *Europinion No. 9 - Tableau 11: Confiance dans les institutions de l'Union et institutions nationals, and* Eurobarometers Nos. 48, 51, 54.1, 55.1, 57.1, 59, 61, 63.

Table No. 3 presents data regarding the average annual change in public trust in national parliaments on the basis of various public opinion surveys. The table points to a decline in public trust in parliaments in most of the states surveyed.

[12] Eurobarometer and Harris Poll data.

[13] See for example Inglehart (1999b).

Table No. 3: Trends in trust in parliament over time[14]

38 *Changing Citizen Orientations*

TABLE 2.4 *Trends in confidence in Parliament*

Nation	Per annum change	Period	Source (N)
Australia			
Parliament	−1.667	1981–96	WVS (2)
Belgium			
Parliament	0.055	1981–99	WVS (3)
Britain			
Parliament	−2.399*	1981–96	Gallup (8)
Parliament	−0.222	1981–99	WVS (3)
Canada			
Parliament	−1.152*	1979–96	CIPO (8)
Parliament	−0.385	1981–96	WVS (3)
Denmark			
Parliament	0.722*	1981–99	WVS(3)
Finland			
Parliament	−1.476	1981–99	WVS (4)
France			
Parliament	−0.833*	1981–99	WVS (3)
Germany			
Parliament	−0.896*	1984–99	IPOS (12)
Parliament	−1.206	1981–99	WVS (4)
Iceland			
Parliament	1.026	1984–99	WVS (3)
Ireland			
Parliament	−1.056	1981–99	WVS (3)
Italy			
Parliament	0.222	1981–99	WVS (3)
Japan			
Parliament	−1.422	1976–2001	JES (6)
Parliament	−0.302	1981–2000	WVS (4)
Netherlands			
Parliament	0.500	1981–99	WVS (3)
New Zealand			
Parliament	−1.386*	1975–93	Heylen Polls (11)
Norway			
Parliament	−0.533	1982–96	WVS (3)
Sweden			
Parliament	−2.242*	1986–96	SOM (10)
Parliament	0.111	1981–99	WVS (4)
United States			
Congress	−0.507*	1966–2000	Harris/GSS (22)
Congress	−0.917*	1973–97	Gallup (19)
Congress	−0.942	1981–2000	WVS (4)
Congress	−0.499*	1966–98	Harris (27)

Note: Table entries are the per annum change in the % expressing a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in each institution. The per annum change is the unstandardized regression coefficient.
*Per annum changes significant at the 0.05 level.

Sources: The WVS data are from the 1981–3, 1990–4, 1995–8, and 1999–2001 World Values Survey. Other data are from individual national survey series: CIPO, Canadian Institution of Public Opinion. IPOS, Institut für praxisorientierte Sozialforschung. JES, Japanese Election Studies. SOM, SOM Institut.

[14] Dalton (2004) p. 38.

These data present averages, and it is possible that there was a sharp decline in a certain period, and after that the situation stabilized, or an increase took place, which is not reflected in the data.

We checked this in the Survey of the Harris Polls in the U.S. (see the bottom of table No. 3). The question asked in this survey since 1966 has been: "As far as people in charge of running Congress are concerned, would you say you have a great deal of confidence, only some confidence, or hardly any confidence at all in them?" Below are the data that the Harris Poll publishes on its website regarding the category of "a great deal of confidence":

Table No. 4: The rate of those expressing much confidence in the leaders of Congress and of the White House in the U.S., in percentages (1966-2006)

1966	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
42	19	21	n.a.	18	13	9	17	10	18	18	16	13
n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	18	28	n.a.	11	31	14	15	18	28	20
1983	**1984**	**1985**	**1986**	**1987**	**1988**	**1989**	**1990**	**1991**	**1992**	**1993**	**1994**	**1995**
20	28	16	21	20	15	16	14	n.a.	16	12	8	10
23	42	30	19	23	17	20	14	15	25	23	18	13
1996	**1997**	**1998**	**1999**	**2000**	**2001**	**2002**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**		
10	11	12	12	15	18	22	20	13	16	10		
15	15	20	22	21	21	50	40	31	31	25		

Blue – data on Congress; Green – Data on the White House; n.a. – not available
Source: The website of the Harris Poll (this particular survey is held every year in January or February) http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp (6/6/06)

According to this table between 1966 and 1971 a sharp decline occurred in public opinion, and since then the fluctuations have not been significant. This also manifests itself in the index for public trust in the leaders of all the government and public institutions in the U.S.

Table No. 5: Index for public trust in the leaders of various government and public institution in the U.S. (1966=100)

1966	Average for 1970s	Average for 1980s	Average for 1990s	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
100	57	51	48	59	55	65	57	55	53	52

Figure No. 2 presents the level of trust, which the public expressed towards the Federal Government; As mentioned above, there is a high level of correlation between trust in Government and trust in Congress.

Figure No. 2: The level of trust in the Federal Government in the U.S. (1958-2000)

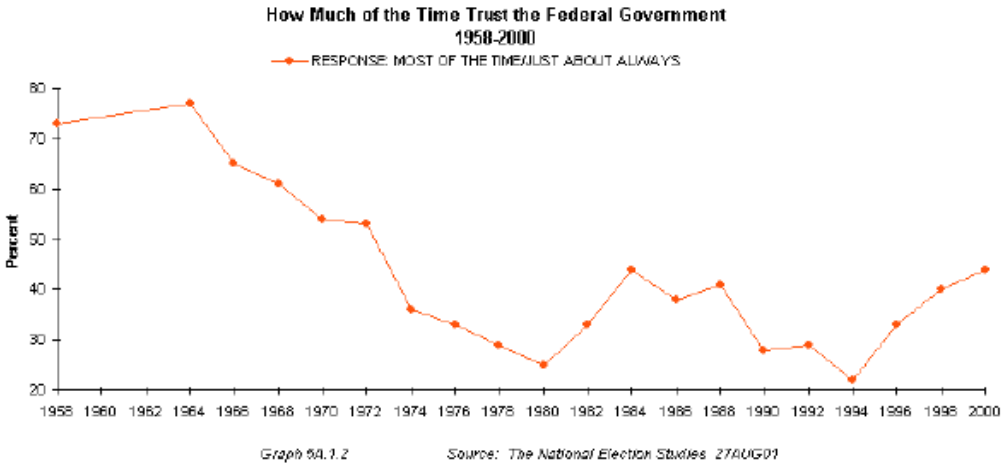


Figure 1 -- Trust-in-government through 2000

Source: Cook & Gronke (2002); Based on data from the National Election Studies.

2.3. Public Trust in Members of Parliament

From the data it transpires that the level of trust which the public has in parliament, does not necessarily correspond to that in members of the parliament. There are states in which the members of parliament enjoy greater trust than does the parliament – especially in countries in which the members are elected in direct elections. The main reason for the difference is that the expectations from them as individuals are different than the expectations from the parliament as a body. In several countries it is the parliament which enjoys greater trust.[15]

Surprisingly enough the Knesset Index found that in Israel trust in Members of the Knesset is greater than trust in the Knesset itself, even though Israel has a system of proportional representation. The explanation given to the phenomenon by those who performed the survey was that: "The public is aware of the fact that there are Members of the Knesset who perform their job loyally, and measure up to the test of the result. However, the prominence that the media gives negatives behavior by other Members of the Knesset reflects on the functioning of the Knesset as a whole, and its negative contribution is more significant".[16] It is possible that had the Knesset Index been prepared in the course of the Sixteenth Knesset (2003-6) the results would have been different.

[15] Pippa Norris (1999).

[16] The Knesset Index (2001), p. 91.

In the U.S., where many studies have been done on the fact that Members of the Congress are better liked than Congress itself, it transpires that the situation is much more complicated: citizens usually like their own Representatives and Senators, and not Members of the Congress in general.[17] In New Zealand as well, it was found that the public has more respect and more trust in the local Member of Parliament, than in Members of Parliament in general.[18]

2.4. The Trust of the Israeli Public in the Knesset

From an initial comparison between the findings of the Knesset Index and the data from other parliaments in the world one might conclude that the situation in Israel is worse than that in the Western democracies, and that the level of trust in the Knesset is as low as that in Latin America (See table No. 6) and in the states of Eastern Europe that were part of the Soviet bloc in the past (See table No. 7).[19]

Table No. 6: The percentage of those expressing trust in parliament in 17 states in Latin America (2001)

State	% of those expressing trust	**State**	% of those expressing trust
Argentina	17	Honduras	23
Bolivia	16	Mexico	25
Brazil	23	Nicaragua	24
Chile	33	Panama	25
Colombia	14	Paraguay	18
Costa Rica	29	Peru	23
El Salvador	24	Uruguay	46
Ecuador	9	Venezuela	37
Guatemala	13	**Average**	**24**

Source: Latinobarometro 2001 at http://www.latinobaromeetro.org/sobrepno2.htm. The document was opened in January 2004, but no longer appears on the web. We should like to thank Daniel Rachmistriuc from the Knesset archive for bringing this data to our attention.

[17] Roger H. Davidson (1979)

[18] Harrison (1998).

[19] Torcal & Montero (2006) deals with democracy in the Latin American States. Regarding Eastern and Central Europe see: Linde & Ekman (2005). See also figure 1 on p. X

Table No. 7: The percentage of those expressing trust in parliament in the East and Central European states which joined the EU. or are candidates to join (2003-5)

State	Spring 2003*	Spring 2004*	Spring 2005
Bulgaria	14	13	11
Croatia	n.a.	n.a.	20
Czech Republic	25	18	17
Estonia	43	35	41
Hungary	48	29	29
Latvia	39	20	27
Lithuania	19	19	15
Poland	18	8	8
Romania	27	30	35
Slovakia	27	19	23
Slovenia	26	25	39

*Before the enlargement of the EU

Source: Standard Eurobarometer 2003.4, *Public Opinion in the Candidate Countries,* p. 17, and 2004 Spring p. T16, *Standard Eurobarometer* No. 63

However, according to the only international survey we found in which Israel participated side by side with European states, Israel's situation compared to the other states is not as bad as originally thought. According to figure No. 3, based on the European Social Survey (ESS) survey for 2002, on a scale of 0-10 trust of the Israeli public (IL) in the Knesset was 4.7 – a little under the average for the states that participated in the survey, which stood at 4.9. A possible explanation for the apparent contradiction is the different methods used in the surveys (For a methodological discussion see Appendix No. 2 on p. X).

Figure No. 3: The level of trust in parliament in 22 states (2002)

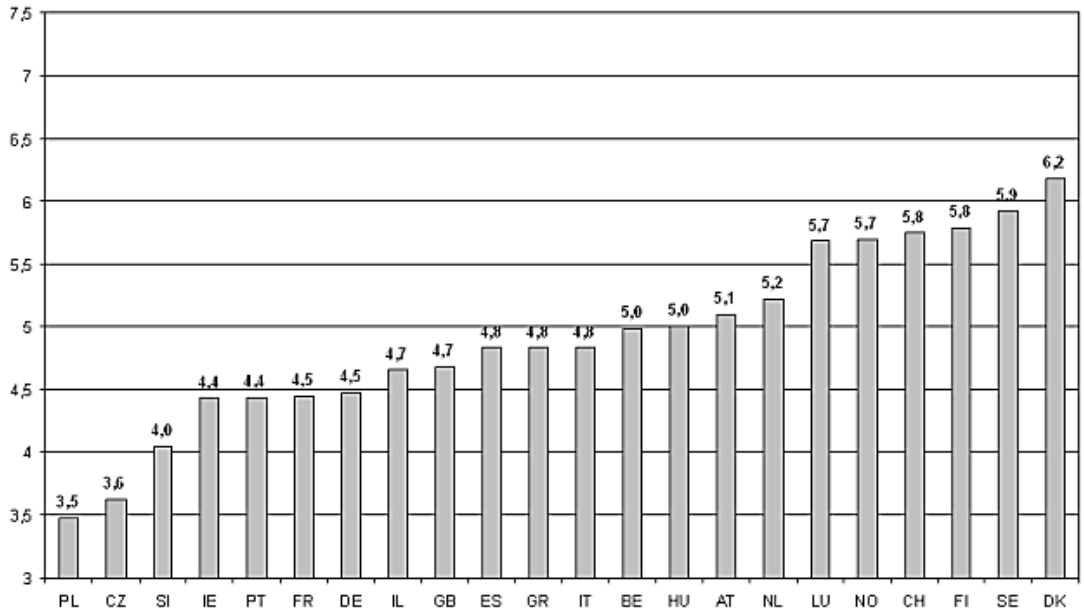


Chart 2. Trust in Parliament in 22 different countries. Country-specific averages (range of scale 0-10).

Key: AT – Austria, BE – Belgium, CH – Switzerland, CZ – Czech Republic, DE – Germany, DK – Denmark, ES – Spain, FI – Finland, FR – France, GB – Great Britain, GR – Greece, HU – Hungary, IE – Ireland, IL – Israel, IT – Italy, LU – Luxemburg, NL – Netherlands, NO – Norway, PL – Poland, PT – Portugal, SE – Sweden, SI – Slovenia. Source: Kouvo (2005)

3. The Professional Literature

The professional literature that deals with public trust in parliaments, focuses on the following issues: the theoretical term "trust", especially within the context of studies about "social capital"; the reasons for the decline in public trust in parliaments in specific states, focusing on the specific conditions in those states; the reasons and explanations for the decline trend in public trust in government institutions in general, and in parliaments in particular in all the Western democratic states (Western Europe, Northern America, Australia and New Zealand). The foundations for this literature were laid at the end of the 1960s by American academics, and European academics working in the United States.

3.1. The Term "Trust"

The term trust is associated in many studies with another term from the sphere of sociology – "social capital". The term social capital first appeared in the professional literature in the 1960s, and its usage became widespread following studies by the sociologists James Coleman,[20] and Robert Putman.[21] Social capital is made up of social phenomena, the presence of which ensures cooperation in the society and, *inter alia*, enables the existence of democracy, economic prosperity and social development.[22] One of the components of social capital is trust in individuals, and trust in social and government institutions.[23]

Many sociologists deal with the definition of the term "trust", and the analysis of the origins of trust. When one speaks of general trust there is a distinction among three hypotheses in analyzing its sources. Two of the hypotheses are socio-psychological that see in the inclination to trust an integral of a person's personality and condition: the first of the two focuses on his childhood experiences, and the second focuses on general personal characteristics such as social status, level of income, education, gender, ethnic origin and age. The third hypothesis does not deal with the individual but with collective characteristics of the society.[24] When we are speaking of trust in government institutions the analysis is more complex, and will be dealt with below.

One of the questions asked by the researchers concerns the correlation between trust in human beings and trust in institutions. Eric Uslaner examined 42 states and found that the

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[20] See for example: Coleman (1988).

[21] See for example: Putman (1993).

[22] A good summary on social capital may be found in Christoforou (2004).

[23] Putnam (1993).

[24] Delhay & Newton (2004).

correlation between trust in human beings and trust in parliament in low (r=0.154). [25] The data from the European Social Survey (ESS) suggest that this is not so, and that there is a high level of correlation between the two, since the order of the states in the tables that compare trust in parliament and trust in human beings is similar:

Table No. 8: Trust in parliament and trust in human beings (2002)

The State	Trust in parliament (0-10)	The State	Rust in human beings (0-10)
Denmark	6.2	Denmark	7.0
Sweden	5.9	Norway	6.6
Finland	5.8	Finland	6.5
Switzerland	5.8	Sweden	6.1
Norway	5.7	Netherlands	5.7
Luxemburg	5.7	Switzerland	5.6
Netherlands	5.2	Ireland	5.5
Austria	5.1	Luxemburg	5.2
Hungary	5.0	Austria	5.1
Belgium	5.0	Great Britain	5.1
Italy	4.8	Israel	4.9
Greece	4.8	Spain	4.9
Spain	4.8	Belgium	4.8
Great Britain	4.7	Germany	4.7
Israel	4.7	Italy	4.5
Germany	4.5	France	4.5
France	4.5	Czech Republic	4.3
Portugal	4.4	Portugal	4.2
Ireland	4.4	Hungary	4.1
Slovenia	4.0	Slovenia	4.0
Czech Republic	3.6	Poland	3.7
Poland	3.5	Greece	3.6

Source: European Social Surveys, and Kouvo (2005)

The States in which the correlation between trust in parliament and trust in human beings is especially low are Ireland – in favor of trust in human beings, and Hungary and Greece – in favor of parliament.

According to the data of the World Value Survey, only in Australia, Iceland and Belgium is the level of the public's trust in parliament greater than the level of its trust in human beings in all the years examined, and only in Denmark is the trust in human beings greater than in parliament (see table No. 9).[26]

[25] Uslaner (1999).

[26] See: Delhay & Newton (2004).

Table No. 9 Trust in parliament and in human beings in 19 states, in percentages (1981,1990, 1999)

State	Trust in Parliaments*			Trust in People**		
	1981	1990	1999	1981	1990	1999
Austria	n.a.	40.3	38.6	n.a.	28.4	31.1
Belgium	33.7	41.4	37.3	25.5	30.9	27.9
Czech Republic	n.a.	37.3	12.6	n.a.	25.4	24.1
Denmark	35.8	41.3	46.8	47.2	55.5	64.1
Finland	64.5	33.2	41.5	56.0	59.5	56.2
France	47.1	43.4	38.6	23.1	21.4	20.6
Germany	51.0 (West)	50.2 (West) 40.7 (East)	35.3 (United)	26.8 (West)	31.1 (West) 22.4 (East)	35.7 (United)
Iceland	55.5	52.7	70.8	39.1	41.7	41.7
Ireland	51.4	49.9	32.1	39.5	46.8	35.3
Italy	30.0	30.5	33.1	25.9	33.8	31.8
Netherlands	43.1	52.6	53.9	39.3	50.7	59.7
Norway	77.4 (192)	58.7	n.a.	55.5 (1982)	60.7	n.a.
Portugal	n.a.	37.2	45.3	n.a.	21.0	12.0
Spain	46.7	41.0	43.3	32.9	33.9	36.3
Sweden	44.1 (1982)	45.4	49.5	52.1 (1982)	59.6	63.6
United Kingdom	39.4	43.5	34.6	41.6	42.4	27.7
Australia	55.3	n.a.	40.5 (1995)	48.2	n.a.	40.0 (1995)
Canada	43.1	37.3	39.6 (2000)	48.5	53.1	37.0 (2000)
United States	51.5 (1982)	41.7	37.1	39.4 (1982)	49.5	35.9

Green – the highest rate of trust; n.a. – not available
Source: European and World Value Surveys
* 'A great deal' and 'quite a lot'
** 'People can be trusted'

There are scholars who perceive an in-built paradox in the relationship between democracy and trust. The classical liberal political theory was based on the lack of trust in government.[27] Som Christensen and Per Lægreid point out that, on the one hand, the legitimacy of political and administrative institutions, and of significant players in the political process is based, to a large extent, on trust, and on the other hand, an essential element in democracy is "a healthy lack of confidence", or at least skepticism regarding the interests of others, especially those who have power.[28] In a study prepared for the OECD it was noted that a certain level of lack of confidence in the Government is healthy, and may be functional since it serves as a guarantee for accountability.[29]

Finally, it should be noted that not all academics are impressed by the mere occupation of their colleagues with the subject of public trust in institutions of government. The British philosopher Onora O'Neill's stated in a series of lectures she gave in 2002, within the

[27] Hardin (2002).

[28] Christensen & Lægreid (2003). See also Warren (1999), and Warren (2004).

[29] Pollitt & Bouckært (2000).

framework of the BBC on the subject of trust, that there is no proof that there has been a deterioration in the degree of trust that the public has in government institutions, but there is the fact that the public says that there has been a decline in the degree of trust it has: "Growing mistrust would be a reasonable response to growing untrustworthiness; but the evidence that people or institutions are less trustworthy is elusive. In fact I think there isn't even good evidence that we trust less. "We say we trust less: we tell the pollsters, they tell the media, and the news that we say we do not trust is then put into circulation…"[30]

The Israeli philosopher Edna Ullmann-Margalit objects to concept of trust or lack of trust in institutions, since these institutions as such have no intentions, and consequently the term "trust" is not relevant in so far as they are concerned.[31] Gabriela Montinola adds that citizens are unable to trust government institutions, since they do not have the objective knowledge about those institutions, on the basis of which is it possible to define trust. On the other hand, they do have the basis for expressing lack of confidence, especially when one is speaking of corruption.[32]

3.2. Public Trust in Government Institutions in General, and in Parliament in Particular in Specific States.

The studies that focus on the situation in specific states usually attempt to explain the level of trust in them on the basis of the unique characteristics and conditions in each of them. Frequently the researchers make use of analytical frameworks developed in the U.S., with the intentions of checking whether the findings in the U.S .correspond with those in the states being examined, and whether the conclusions from these findings are applicable to them.[33]

In Belgium, for example, it has been claimed that the reasons for the distance between citizens and government institutions in general, and parliament in particular include, *inter alia*, dissatisfaction from the performance of Members of Parliament, and the on-going budgetary crisis in the country - especially the vast dimensions of the national debt, which results in around 40% of the budget being devoted to debt service.[34]

In Ireland it has been claimed that the lack of confidence in the Oireachtas (the lower house of the Parliament) results, to a large extent, from the large number of Members, who

[30] O'Neill (2002), p. 44.

[31] Ullmann-Margalit (2004).

[32] Montinola (2004).

[33] See for example the study by Elim Papadakis about Australia: Papadakis (1999), and the attempt to explain the low level of trust in government institutions in general and in parliament in particular in New Zealand: State Services Commission of New Zealand (2000).

[34] De Winter (2002).

serve simultaneously in local and municipal authorities (in the 1997 elections the rate was 70%), and consequently do not devote sufficient time to dealing with national issues.[35]

As to Italy, it has been claimed that the background to the low level of trust in parliament is that even though the Parliament filled an important role in the establishment of a liberal democracy in Italy after the Second World War, it never turned into an arena in which "the citizens connects with the state". Vincent Della Sala referred to the phenomenon as a breach between the *palazzo* (the palace) and the *piazza* (the square). He argued that in the first 30 years of the Republic much of the parliamentary work was performed in secret, and that the public was not aware of what exactly was going on in it, believing that what had been will continue to be. At the end of the 1980s amendments started to be introduced into the Rules of Procedure of the House of Representatives in order to make its work more transparent, but in the beginning of the 1990s an unending row of corruption affairs began (in the course of the term of the 11th House of Representatives [1992-1994] around one third of the Members of the House were under investigation or in trial on various criminal charges), and therefore it was impossible to examine what influence the reforms had had on public trust.[36]

Christina Leston-Bandeira claimed that in Portugal, even though public trust in parliament is not especially low, there is nevertheless a problem, which is not that the public has a negative opinion on parliament, but that it has no opinion at all. Most of the citizens do not distinguish between the legislature and the executive. The reason for this phenomenon is , according to Leson-Bandeira, historical, and she believes that reforms in the work of parliament and its relations with the public, in addition to the reforms that were already implemented after Portugal returned to being a democracy in 1976, could change the situation.[37]

In Germany it was found that the reasons for the negative public opinion towards the Bundestag in the last decade are, *inter alia*, weariness with politics (known in German as *politikverdrossenheit*),[38] and the superficial coverage by the media of the Parliament, despite the existence of a parliamentary television channel – Phœnix.[39] Public trust in government institutions in general and in the Bundestag in particular has declined since the reunification

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[35] O'Halpin (2003).

[36] Della Sala (1997), and Della Sala (2002).

[37] Leson-Bandeira (2002a), and Leston-Bandeira (2002b).

[38] Kepplinger (1996).

[39] Marschall (1998).

of Germany, due to the difficult economic and social situation in what used to be East Germany.[40] The following table presents the problem.

Table No. 10: the rate of those expressing trust in parties, the Government and the Bundestag in Germany, in percentages (2003)

	Parties	Federal Government	Bundestag
United Germany	11	24	31
West Germany	12	25	33
East Germany	8	21	25

Source: *Standard Eurobarometer 60, Public Opinion in the European Union, First Results,* Autumn 2003.

In Sweden several causes were found to the decline in public trust in parliament from the end of the 1960s to the end of the 1990s: the deterioration in the Swedish economy, which began in the early 1970s and accelerated in the course of the 1990s; the introduction of television into the homes in the 1960s; the inclination of the media to adopt a much more critical and negative position than in the past towards the parties and the politicians; the development of a credibility crisis in the two main parties, but especially in the ruling Social Democratic Party, which resulted in ever growing gaps between citizens' expectations and the performance of the parties.[41]

In Finland it was claimed that since the traditional tasks, which used to be performed by the Parliament in the sphere of protection of the citizen in his daily life, and the tools that were placed in its hands to perform these tasks have diminished, the citizen lost his trust in the legislature.[42]

Russel Dalton proposes specific explanations for the situation in several countries:[43] in Great Britain the decline in trust is connected with the economic struggle within the nation; in Canada it is connected with the struggle among the English speaking Provinces and the French speaking Provinces;[44] and in Austria – with the collapse of the social-liberal consensus. Nevertheless, Dalton's conclusion is that the specific explanations are insufficient, since the phenomenon exists in most states.

[40] See for example: Fuchs (1999).

[41] Sören Holmberg (1999).

[42] Tiihonen (1998).

[43] Dalton (2004).

[44] In another study about Canada it was found that that the phenomenon of constant deterioration in public trust in government institutions has economic, social and political causes, as well as the reporting by the media. As to Parliament, it was argued that the absence of a code of conduct for Members of the Federal Parliament affects public opinion (Szekula & Averill, 2001).

In a survey prepared by the Scottish Office in Great Britain regarding the involvement of the civil society in the work of the Parliament in several European countries, the ability of the citizens to influence the legislative process was examined. The basic assumption was that the more the citizens feel that they can influence legislation, so their satisfaction with the functioning of the Parliament, and their trust in it grows. The authors of the survey reached the conclusion that in Austria the involvement of citizens, and consultations with workers and employers representatives in the legislative process are the most developed. According to them, the explanation of the Austrians themselves to this phenomenon is that since for many years Austria maintained a neutral foreign policy that isolated the state to a certain degree, its leaders tried to preserve the internal social consensus, in an attempt to fulfill the wishes of the largest number of citizens, including national minorities. For a certain period after Austria entered the EU, the involvement of the non-governmental bodies in the legislative process weakened, and public trust in the Parliament declined, but in the years after the survey of the Scottish Office was written, this trend reversed itself.[45]

In the mid-1990s Joseph Nye and Philip Zelikow presented the following table, which offers various hypotheses regarding the decline in public trust in the Administration in the United States, and the degree to which each of the hypotheses offer a satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon:[46]

Table No. 11: Hypotheses regarding the reasons for the decline in public trust in the U.S. Administration

Hypothesis		**Rating**	**Comment**
1.	Scope grown too fast (as measured by GDP).	Low	Scope increased from 3% to 20% but largest growth is in programs that are popular (Social Security, Medicare). Does not explain other institutions.
2.	Scope grown too intrusive (measured by new subjects).	Low/Mixed	Divided views on cultural issues. Popularity of environment and safety regulation. 40% say "interfering too much". Does not explain other institutions.
3.	Performance has weakened.	Low/Mixed	81% say "wasteful and inefficient", but Bok[47] disputes net change; also does not explain decline in other institutions.
4.	End of Cold War.	Low	Largest decline is 1964-74.
5.	Vietnam and Watergate.	Mixed	Fits with onset, but needs auxiliary hypothesis to explain persistence. May affect all institutions.
6.	World War II effect.	High	1950s seems abnormally high. May affect all institutions.

[45] See: Scottish Office (1998), Part C, 2.2. Austria.

[46] Nye Jr. & Zelikow (1997), pp. 269-70.

[47] Bok (1997).

7.	Political realignment and polarization of elites.	High	Fits timing of onset. Explains growth of conservative coalition. Does not explain other institutions.
8.	TV effects on politics (party decline, negative marketing).	High	Fits timing and persistence. Distancing of elites.
9.	Changed role of media.	High	Fits timing of onset and persistence. Fits other institutions.
10.	Increased corruption/dishonesty.	Mixed/Low	Little evidence of increase, but perception grows and Vietnam, Watergate, and aftermath had effects.
11.	General economic slowdown.	Mixed	Some variation with unemployment and inflation, but does not fit timing of onset.
12.	Rising economic inequality.	Low	Does not show variation by winners and losers.
13.	Globalization and loss of control.	Mixed	Affects general mood, but effects indirect and timing unclear.
14.	Third Industrial Revolution.	High	Explains changes in the economy and communication, but direct causal links unclear. Fits other institutions and transnational.
15.	Decline of social capital (measured by voluntary groups).	Low	Evidence in dispute; causal links to government unclear.
16.	Decline of social capital (measured by family cohesion).	Mixed	Timing about right regarding onset and persistence, but causal link is somewhat indirect. Unclear relation to other institutions and countries.
17.	Authority patterns and postmaterialist values, particularly since 1960s.	High	Fits all institutions and countries. Does not explain all variations.

Several scholars have argued that the problem of the low level of trust in Congress in the U.S. might be a false problem, because from the end of the Second World War until the mid 1960s the level of public trust in Congress, as well as in the other government institutions, was exceptionally high, and the norm is the lower levels of trust that appeared later on.[48]

The generations theory of Strauss and Howe, according to which there is in the U.S. a cycle made up of a succession of four types of generations, each of which has its own unique characteristics,[49] corroborates this argument. After the end of the Second World War a generation, which Strauss and Howe call the "silent generation", came of age; this generation was characterized as conformist, calm and conservative, and was inclined to trust its leaders and government institutions. The next generation was the generation of the baby-boomers, born between the years 1943-60, identified with the culture of the Sixties, the counter-culture and the consciousness revolution, and is characterized as idealistic and revolutionary. This

[48] This argument is presented in articles and books published by the sociologist Pippa Norris in the years 1990-2000, in which she presents data from the National Election Studies. See also Table No. 11.

[49] Stauss & Howe (1991).

generation came of age in the years in which a sharp decline in public trust in government institutions was first observed.[50]

3.3. The Reasons for the Decline in Trust, and for the Low Level of Trust in Government Institutions and Parliament

Various scholars have suggested different ways of dividing schools of thought and hypotheses to explain the phenomenon of the decline in trust, and the low level of trust in government institutions. So, for example, William Mishler and Richard Rose divided the hypotheses into two schools (or "theoretical traditions"): the cultural school and the institutional school. According to them these do not necessarily contradict each other. The theories in each of these schools may be divided, according to them, into theories on the macro level and theories on the micro level.[51]

According to the cultural school the level of trust in government institutions emanates from sources that are exogenous to the political system. The theories on the macro level in this school, emphasize the homogeneous trends of national traditions as the source for the level of trust, and do not leave much room for differences among human beings as individuals in each society. The theories on the micro level focus on differences in the socialization experiences of the individual as the source of the level of trust.

The institutional school, on the other hand, argues that the level of trust emanates from endogenous sources in the political system. The theories on the macro level in this school, emphasize the functioning of government institutions on issues such as encouraging growth, effectiveness of the administration, and avoidance of corruption. The theories on the micro level emphasize that individual evaluations concerning the functioning of the institutions, are conditioned by the preferences and experience of the individual, such as his position on the question what is more important – political integrity or economic growth – and if the person personally experienced the consequences of corruption, or the advantages of economic growth.

We decided to divide the explanations into three levels: (1) explanations according to which government institutions have lost public trust because there is an objective problem in the way they function, and they deserve the low level of trust in them; (2) explanations that deal with the individual, in other words, in the reasons for why each citizen feels as he does towards the government institutions, such as his personality, status in society, and personal

[50] We approached Strauss and Howe with the question whether in their opinion this hypothesis is correct, and both agreed that it is (Howe, e-mail from November 2, 2005; Struass, e-mail from November 4, 2005.

[51] Mishler & Richard Rose (2001).

experience; (3) explanations that deal with influences that might be defied as systemic, environmental and/or social.

3.3.1 Explanations Connected with the Functioning of the Institutions

On the first level are the explanations according to which human beings have lost their trust in parliaments because the parliaments and their members are objectively not worthy of trust, for whatever reasons. Numerous studies deal with the decline in parliamentarism in the democratic world as an apparently objective phenomenon that could explain, at least partially, the decline in the trust that the public expresses in parliament, apart from the trust that it expresses in other government institutions.

Already in 1921 John Bryce wrote about a phenomenon which he called "the decline of parliaments". In his opinion the 19th Century was the golden age of liberal parliamentarism. Its decline in the 20th Century manifested itself in the rise in the power of the parties that limit the ability of Members of the Parliament to express their opinions freely, in the decline in the quality of candidates for seats in Parliament, and in the excessive institutionalization of the work of Parliament that causes the investment of time in procedure at the expense of social responsibility.[52]

Another academic who dealt with this issue from the end of the 1920s was the German Philosopher Carl Schmitt. Schmitt argued that party politics do not enable Parliament to connect the civil society with the State, and that liberal parliamentarism is unable to fulfill its task in the democratic state properly, and carry on a real debate on the issues on the public agenda.[53]

In the 1950s Schmitt developed the concept of "Motorized Legislation". This concept is based on the argument that in the modern world, because of the growing scope of legislation, and the accelerated speed in which it must be passed, the parliament is unable to deal seriously with the job of legislation, which is its main task.[54] If there is dissatisfaction with the legislative process in general, in the case of the approval of the state budget the dissatisfaction is even greater, given that the volume of the budget laws, and the speed in which they must be approved are constantly growing.[55]

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[52] Bryce (1921).

[53] See for example: Schmitt (1962).

[54] Scheuerman (2004).

[55] For a discussion of the issue see for example: Schick (2002), Stepenhutst, and Savirsky (2002).

There are those who argue that the manner in which parliaments run their affairs is archaic and irrelevant.[56] Others remind us that the bottom line is that public trust depends on the degree to which public institutions, including parliaments "supply the goods", in other words, fulfill their functions and tasks in a satisfactory manner; if the level of public trust is declining, then apparently they are not doing so.[57] Unethical or even corrupt conduct by civil servants and members of parliament, also leads to a decline in public trust in public institutions and in parliament.[58]

Table No. 12: A comparison between the level of trust, and the evaluation of the level of corruption in Parliament (2005)

State	Public trust in parliament in percentages*	The evaluation of the level of corruption in parliament on a scale of 1-5**
Denmark	75	2.5
Finland	67	2.7
Switzerland	n.a.	2.7
Luxemburg	64	2.8
The Netherlands	53	2.8
Austria	52	3.1
Belgium	49	n.a.
Greece	47	3.5
Sweden	46	n.a.
Ireland	40	3.1
Portugal	40	3.3
Spain	37	3.2
Great Britain	36	3.2
Germany	35	3.2
Italy	35	3.6
France	33	3.4
United States	n.a.	3.5
Israel	n.a.	4.2

* Source: *Standard Eurobarometer* No. 63

** Source: Report on the Transparency International Global Corruption barometer 2005

The correlation between public perceptions regarding the level of corruption in government bodies, and the level of public trust in them may be shown by comparing the data of the Eurobarometer for 2005 regarding public trust in government institutions in the 15 Members of the EU before the enlargement, to the data of Transparency International[59] for the

[56] See for example Hansard Society (2005).

[57] See for example: Norton (2000), and Bromley, Curtis & Seyd (2001) pp. 199-225.

[58] Rose-Ackerman (2001). For a fascinating study that analyses the mutual relations between corruption and trust see: Fieschi & Heywood (2004).

[59] Transparency International is a non-partisan body centered in Berlin, with branches in more than 80 states. It was established in 1993 to fight corruption in international dealings. *Inter alia* the organization publishes comparative public opinion surveys regarding corruption.

same year, on public perceptions regarding the level of corruption in them. In table No. 12 we focused on the data relating to parliaments. The Eurobarometer brings data regarding the rate of those interviewed who answered that they are inclined to trust parliament, while Transparency International asked those interviewed to choose a reply from 1 - an evaluation that there is no corruption in parliament - to 5 - an evaluation that there is much corruption. We found a high correlation between the two groups of data in all the countries, except Greece.

3.3.2. Explanations based on personal variables

On the second level the focus is on the human beings, who express their level of trust in government institutions. An analysis of the responses is based on gender, social background, level of education, economic condition etc. The researchers who conduct studies at this level frequently use correlations. Thus, Pedro Magalhães found that the correlation between the level of education and degree of trust in parliament in positive on a low level in 13 of 15 states that were members of the EU before the enlargement (the exceptions were Greece and Portugal). In all the states the correlation between being unemployed and trust in parliament is negative at a high level. As to other variables, the study did not come up with significant findings.[60]

Russel Dalton found that at the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s educated Americans had more trust in the Administration, but over time the level of trust of those with a higher education declined more sharply than among those with less education. In addition, the erosion in political trust and trust in politicians among wealthy Americans was greater than among the poor.[61]

Kenneth Newton and Pippa Norris found that gender, social status and age usually have little influence on trust in institutions. Nevertheless, women, members of the middle class and older persons have more trust.[62] In a study about Japan it was found that trust in various aspects of political life is lower in urban areas, and among youngsters and the educated.[63]

3.3.3. Systemic, Environmental and Social Explanations

On the third level the researchers seek systemic, environmental and social factors that influence the level of trust. *Inter alia* researchers examined how the electoral system

[60] Magalhães (2004).

[61] Dalton (2005).

[62] Newton & Norris (2000).

[63] Pharr (1997),

prevalent in each country affects the level of its citizens' trust in its government institutions. It was found that in states in which the level of proportionality in the election results is higher, and the system of government is consensual, the level of trust is higher than in states in which the system of elections is majoritarian.[64]

There are those who conclude from the fact that in most states the level of trust in the local and regional government institutions is higher than the level of trust in national institutions (see for example the data on Italy and the Czech Republic below), that the smaller the size of government authorities, the greater the trust in them.[65]

Table No. 13: The rate of those expressing trust in institutions in Italy in the course of 2003, in percentages

	28.1.03	25.3.03	22.4.03	20.5.03	14.7.03	30.9.03	29.10.03	2.12.03	30.12.03
Local authorities	62	61	62	63	62	60	59	57	56
Regional authorities	61	61	60	63	61	61	57	60	61
Central government	46	44	47	51	47	41	40	42	42
Senate	48	49	50	50	50	46	47	44	45
House of Representatives	42	42	46	45	43	38	39	41	39
The parties	24	24	24	22	22	22	21	23	23

Source: *Il Messaggero*; this data was sent to us by the Secretary General of the Italian House of Representatives

Table No. 14: The rate of those expressing trust in government institutions in the Czech Republic between September 2002 and September 2003, in percentages

	9.02	10.02	11.02	1.03	2.03	3.03	4.03	5.03	6.03	9.03
The President	45	55	58	58	n.a.	n.a.	64	69	63	61
The Government	48	48	51	49	39	47	40	36	35	29
House of Representatives	32	34	36	34	28	40	32	28	30	22
Senate	22	23	22	23	24	27	24	22	26	21
Regional authorities	37	39	42	37	37	38	40	41	41	36
Local authorities	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	61	65	63	65	65	57

Source: The data was sent to us by the Secretary General of the House of Representatives of the Czech Republic

Laurence Rose and Per Arnt Pettersen presented three hypotheses regarding the macro level: they call the first the overload hypothesis, according to which the over expansion of the public sector caused a rise in the public's expectations, which the government institutions are unable to fulfill.[66] They call the second the new politics hypothesis, according to which citizens in the post-materialist era are interested in new issues and spheres that do not

[64] See for example: Anderson & Guillory (1997), and Magalhães (2002).

[65] See for example: Denters (2002).

[66] See also the document ordered by the Audit Commission, an independent British public body whose job is to ensure that public money is spent efficiently in the sphere of local government: Duffy, Downing & Skinner (2003).

manifest themselves in the traditional politics.[67] They call the third the negative media hypothesis,[68] Many argue that the modern media is responsible for the low level of trust, for it focuses on divergent and negative phenomenon in its reporting, and is inclined to be critical, which results in the public not receiving a balanced and accurate picture.[69]

Neil Nevitte and Mebs Kanji divide the explanations regarding levels of public satisfaction and levels of public trust, a little differently. They present four explanations, each of which belongs to the social-cultural sphere:[70] The first focuses on changes that have taken place in the society's values, and is based on the argument that post-materialistic values cause people to be more critical towards traditional hierarchical institutions. The second focuses on structural changes in the society that result from the rise in the level of education, and the scope of the means at the disposal of the citizens. These changes do, in fact, lead to greater interest and involvement in government and democracy, but also to a more critical approach towards the government. The third explanation focuses on the erosion that has taken place in the social capital (see above), as a result of which the citizens' satisfaction with the government and their trust in it have eroded. The fourth is based on theories, which Harry Eckstein developed in the 1960s. These theories focus on changes that took place in various societies regarding the acceptance of authority within the family, in the work place and on the political level. These changes have undermined the satisfaction with the Administration, and had a negative effect on the trust in it, and loyalty to it.

3.4. Public Trust in Democracy and Parliament

The greatest concern of those who deal with the decline in the public's trust in government institutions in general, and parliament in particular, is that this will affect the public's trust in and support of democracy. Already in the 1970s two approaches to the problem were presented. In 1974 Arthur Miller argued that the whole democratic system is in danger.[71] In 1975 Michel Crozier, Samuel Huntington and Jōji Watanuki also expressed concern regarding the steadfastness of democracy.[72] Jack Citrin presented the opposite approach, without

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[67] See an expansion of this issue in Inglehart (1997), and Dalton (2000).

[68] Laurence E. Rose & Pettersen (1999).

[69] See for example: Neustadt (1997), and Dalton (2004) pp. 71-74.

[70] Nevitte & Kanji (2002).

[71] Miller (1974a), and Miller (1974b).

[72] Crozier, Huntington & Watanuki (1975).

ignoring the symptoms.[73] In the 1980s, the years in which Reaganism flourished in the U.S. and Thatcherism in Great Britain, it seemed as though the public in the democratic countries became a little less critical. After the collapse of the Soviet Bloc everyone concentrated on the victory of democracy, and the question whether indeed "the end of history" had arrived.[74] However, in the 1990s once again public trust in the institutions of democratic government was undermined, and questions started being asked about the steadfastness of democracy.

Table No. 15: Trust in Parliament and satisfaction with democracy in the member states of the EU and candidates for entry in 2005, in percentages

The State	(a) Trust in Parliament	(b) Satisfaction with democracy	Difference between (b) and (a)
15 member states before the expansion in 2004			
Austria	52	68	16
Belgium	49	65	16
Denmark	74	92	18
Finland	67	77	10
France	33	52	19
Germany	35	53	18
Great Britain	36	61	25
Greece	47	53	6
Ireland	40	71	31
Italy	35	43	8
Luxemburg	64	82	18
Netherlands	53	71	18
Portugal	40	41	1
Spain	37	67	30
Sweden	46	71	25
10 new members			
Cyprus (Greek)	54	68	14
Czech Republic	17	48	31
Estonia	41	44	3
Hungary	29	27	-2
Latvia	27	43	16
Lithuania	15	23	8
Malta	38	48	10
Poland	8	29	21
Slovakia	23	26	3
Slovenia	39	56	17
Candidate states			
Bulgaria	11	20	9
Croatia	20	21	1
Cyprus (Turkish)	57	55	-2
Romania	35	29	-6
Turkey	73	56	-17
Average for 15	39	56	17
Average for new members	29	41	12
Average for candidates	39	34	-5

Source: *Standard Eurobarometer* No. 63.

[73] Ctrin (1974).

[74] Fukuyama (1992).

Today most of the scholars argue that the lack of trust in government institutions does not necessarily prove that the status of democracy has been undermined. Empirical data corroborate this argument. According to table 15 above it appears that at least in Europe there is no reason to worry: in all the states except Hungary, Romania, Turkey and Turkish Cyprus, satisfaction with democracy is greater than trust in parliament. Only in a few states is the difference between the two smaller than 10%: Italy, Greece, Portugal, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Croatia.

The Sociologist Ronald Inglehart, who wrote extensively on the phenomenon of the decline of public trust in government institutions, also reached the conclusion that it does not endanger the steadfastness of democracy.[75]

3.5. Proposals for Reforms

Part of the scholars who deal with the analysis of the phenomenon of low trust in government institutions in general, and parliaments in particular, also propose ways of dealing with the problem . In addition, in recent years an extensive literature has developed on reforms in public administration in general, and specific institutions in particular, and one of the goals of the reforms is to bring the public closer to them.[76]

In a study prepared by the London *Economist* in the year 2000on the crisis that has befallen the democratic countries in the sphere of public trust, the following solutions were offered: limiting the scope of activity of the government establishment, which had over extended (in the opinion of the *Economist*) in recent decades, so that the balance between what was promised the voters, and what can be implemented, is returned; the development of new forms of citizen participation in the democratic process; reforms in the system of elections as proposed in states like Italy, Great Britain, Japan, and New Zealand; changes in the laws for financing politicians and parties; limitations on the power of parliaments by means of judicial review.[77]

In 2001, after analyzing hypotheses regarding the phenomenon of declining public trust in government and other public institutions, the German Sociologist Helmut Klages stated in a document that he presented at a conference of the European Group of Public Administration, that one should act in the direction of developing a civil society, in which active civic participation is prevalent in the public decision making process. This can be attained by enabling and empowering citizens for such activity. The more involved the citizens in the

[75] Inglehart (1999a).

[76] See for example: Pollitt & Bouckært (2000).

[77] *Economist* (2000).

decision making processes, so the delving on the question of trust in government and public institutions will decline, even though it will not disappear completely. Klages points out that such a development largely depends on the conduct of the elites, and in their ability to prove that the general good is at the top of the concerns and that they are willing to use their full ability and power to realize the goal. Klages adds that the conditions for realizing the goal are, *inter alia*, improving the processes for selecting position holders, laying down rules of ethics for their conduct, and improving the way the mass media operates, so that it will be less populist in its approach.[78] Another German scholar, Stephan Marschall, proposed that an effective public relations system be developed, to introduce parliamentary reforms, especially reforms that are photogenic, and improve communications with the public by means of the Internet.[79]

As to the U.S., John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse proposed in 1995 several ways of contending with the problem of negative public opinion towards Congress. Among the solutions that they discussed: a change in the work procedures in Congress, and the condition of service in it; a change in the policy of Congress; the spreading of knowledge on the subject of the work of Congress; the spreading of knowledge on the essence of democracy. At the same time they warned against procedural changes that will not enable Congress to operate professionally.[80]

4. Measures Taken in Parliaments to Deal with the Problem of Trust

4.1. Public Opinion Polls

Of the 21 responses we received on the questionnaire we sent to the Secretaries General of various parliaments it transpires that only the parliaments of Austria and Sweden initiated public opinion surveys concerning their public image in the last decade, but not on the scale of the Knesset Index. We also found that the American Congress prepared such a survey in 1977 for the purpose of preparing a report on reforms in its work.[81] The only country in which a deep and detailed study regarding public opinion towards parliament that is similar to the Knesset Index, was also the U.S. We are referring to the study by scholars John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse of 1992, mentioned above, which like the Knesset Index is based on a

[78] Klages (2001).

[79] Marschall (1998).

[80] Hibbing & Theiss-Morse (1995).

[81] See: Davidson (1979).

quantitative and in-depth study, but unlike the Knesset Index it dealt non only with the legislature, but with the executive and the judiciary as well.[82]

In most of the responses we received it was pointed out that surveys are conducted by private institutions, and some even sent us the results of such surveys. None of the responses mentioned that there are several bodies that conduct comparative surveys on an international level, which deal, *inter alia*, with public trust in government institutions, including parliament.

4.2. Measures to Improve the Image

All the parliaments are concerned with their image. According to the evidence of the Secretaries General, each of the parliaments engages in extensive information and education activities: the operation of a website, which, *inter alia*, enables the public, to contact the parliament; the distribution of printed publications; the organization of visits and tours for the general public in the parliament buildings; educational activities among pupils and citizens, and efforts to improve the relations with the media.

None of the Secretaries General connected these activities directly to the findings of public opinion surveys, even though the impression that emerged from the responses to the questionnaires was that most of the Secretaries General are aware of the fact that the public does not express much trust in parliament and other government institutions, and is usually dissatisfied with its representatives.

In France the decline in the level of public trust in the National Assembly does not especially concern the parliament itself or scholars.[83] Despite this, the French National Assembly involved its Members in laying down a new media strategy. The Secretary General of the House of Representatives in New Zealand sent us data that show that the level of trust of the public in Parliament is extremely low – 17% in 2001 and 22% in 2002, but argued that parliament was not doing anything to address the problem.[84]

Only a few of the Secretaries General mentioned plans for instituting reforms in the work of parliament. Thus, for example, the Secretary General of the Belgian House of Representatives wrote that measures had been taken on the subject of the ethics of Members

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[82] Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (1995).

[83] Prof. Pierre Bréchon of Grenoble University agreed with this statement in an e-mail message sent on august 3, 2005. Prof. Bréchon is one of the few academics in France, who has dealt in any way with this subject in his research.

[84] In 1998 a committee, made up of former Speakers of the New Zealand House of Representatives, published a report on "Restoring Public confidence in Parliament", but we do not know what came of it. See: Harrison (1998).

of Parliament: the positions that a Member may hold and the salary that he may earn outside the parliament.[85]

From information that we gathered independently we found that in many parliaments reforms in various spheres of their work are being discussed, and such reforms are being implemented. In these deliberations the need to improve the connection between parliament and the public are occasionally mentioned, but there is never any specific mention of the results of public opinion surveys. It should be noted that in Great Britain, where in the last five years numerous committees have dealt with proposals for reforms,[86] especially low levels of trust in parliament have been registered in the last decade.[87]

The Secretaries General of the Australian House of Representatives and of the Czech Chamber of Deputies mentioned that they do not consider themselves responsible for the image of Members of the Parliament and of the Parliamentary Groups, even though the image of the Parliament may be influenced by the image of the Members and their Parties. The Clerk of the Australian House of Representatives, for example, sent us surveys that show that in the sphere of ethics and integrity Members of the Parliament are in a low place in public opinion compared to other position holders and professionals.

All the Secretaries General are aware of the importance of the media in connection with the image of their parliament, but none of them described what they do in order to improve the connection between parliament and the media. The relations between parliament and the media were dealt with in great detail by the British Commonwealth of Nations at a special session that took place in Australia in February 2003. One of the conclusions was that one should introduce legislation that obliges the media to report parliamentary activities fairly and accurately, even though it was argued that inaccurate reporting should not be regarded as contempt of parliament, and one must distinguish between such reporting, and reporting that damages the ability of parliament o fulfill its functions.[88]

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[85] The possibility of establishing a code of ethics in the Belgian House of Representatives, on the basis of a code of ethics adopted in the Flemish national parliament, but so far no decision was taken (information sent by the Legal Advisor of the Belgian House of Representatives, Mr. Marc Van Der Hulst, on December 7, 2004). It should be noted that the only parliaments which currently have codes of ethics or codes of conduct, as opposed to rules of conduct or rules of ethics, are the British Parliament and the American Congress. The topic of ethics was discussed in connection with trust in Government within the framework of the OECD. See OECD (2000).

[86] Among the reports prepared by committees in the British House of Commons and outside of it the following are worthy of special mention:
House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee on Public Participation (2001);
House of Commons Information Select Committee (2002);
House of Commons Modernisation Select Committee (2004) (see conclusions in Appendix No 1);
Hansard Society Commission on the Communication of Parliamentary Democracy (2005).

[87] See the document of the Strategic Unit in the British Prime Minister's Office: Strategic Unit (2002).

[88] Bouchet (2002).

Some parliaments have decided to deal with the phenomenon of "hostile media" by means of parliamentary television channels, in which an attempt is made to deal in a serious, non-sensational and balanced manner with all the issues that emerge in a democratic country in general, and in parliamentary life in particular.[89] However, this solution is not without problems. One of them is the low viewing rates of the parliamentary channels. In France and Germany the viewing rates are indeed extremely low.[90] Nevertheless, in Israel public opinion surveys prepared by the "Dahaf" Institute, found respectable viewing rates: on April 17, 2005 it was found that 5.9% of the public watch the Knesset Channel frequently, and another 9.7% watch it occasionally, and on January 25, 2006 it was found that 6.7% watch it frequently and another 13.2 occasionally.[91]

It appears that most of the initiatives for improving the image of parliament, or improving the relations between the parliament and the public come from Members of Parliament, and not from the administrative apparatus of the parliaments. The Speakers of the Houses of Representative of Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden are actively involved in formulating their images. The Speaker of the Second Chamber of the States General of the Netherlands, for example, writes a weekly column on the website of the House. In the British House of Commons, discussions on reform take place in bodies in which Members of Parliament are members – parliamentary committees and extra-parliamentary commissions, such as those set up by the Hansard Society (an independent, non-partisan educational charity, whose goal is to promote effective parliamentary democracy, and assists parliament in a practical way in such areas as the development of e-democracy).[92]

Since the year 2000 several resolutions were adopted by the Third Committee of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) regarding the participation of the civil society in the work of parliaments. The Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (ASGP), within the framework of the IPU also raised the issue for discussion.[93] Professor David Beetham is currently preparing a wide scale research project on parliaments and democracy for the IPU,

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[89] For a review of television channels in several parliaments see: Tabibian-Mizrahi (2003).

[90] Regarding France see: *Chaine Parlementaire: 10,000 Euros par Telespectateur*, http://www.libres.org/francais/actualite/archives/actualite_0303/chaine_parlementaire_a8_1003.htm. Regarding Germany see Marschall (2003).

[91] We should like to thank the management of the Knesset Channel, and Attorney Dan Landau, Chief of the Speaker's Staff, for providing us with the results of three surveys held since the Channel was inaugurated in May 2004.

[92] See: Parry (2004) and Pearce (2001).

[93] See Forsberg (2004).

which is dealing, *inter alia*, with trust in parliaments.[94] None of the Secretaries General mentioned such activities in their response.

We found that in several parliaments there are apparatuses designed to encourage the participation of the civil society in the parliamentary work. We are speaking of the participation of citizens, as individuals and as groups, in the legislation process, the involvement of citizens in the deliberations of parliamentary Committees by means of the Internet (such participation took place in the 16th Knesset (2003-6) in the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, and occurs in Great Britain[95], and in Germany[96]), and in citizens' conferences on concrete issues on the parliamentary agenda.[97] The origin of the institution known as "citizens' conferences" is in Denmark. In 1986 the Danish Folketinget established a body called the Danish Board of Technology, the tasks of which are to encourage informed debates by the public, and to serve as an independent advisor to the Folketinget on technological issues, with the goal of attaining the involvement of the public in the decision making process. The Board approaches experts in the issues with which it is dealing, but in its own decision making process it involves people from the general public, by means such as Consensus Conferences. The connection between the Board and the Folketinget is close. It responds to questions posed by Members of the Folketinget and occasionally initiates approaches to them, participates in meetings of parliamentary Committees, and reports to the Folketinget on the course of its work. Not always does the Board have a direct impact, and not all the Members of the Folketinget are enthusiastic about its activity. [98]

The Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives was the only Secretary General who mentioned the existence of an extensive academic literature dealing with the issues of the low level of trust in government institutions, including parliaments, in the democratic states, and the decline in the level of trust in the last decade. This fact does not necessarily prove that the parliaments are not ware of the existence of this literature, which they can use when they

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[94] Inter-Parliamentary Union (2005). We have contributed information on the subject of public trust in parliament to this study.

[95] See: http://www.democracyforum.org.uk/edemocracy.asp.

[96] Marschall (2003).

[97] A comprehensive study on the issue of the participation of the civil society in the work of parliaments was prepared in the Scottish Office in Great Britain towards the establishment of the Scottish Parliament. See Scottish Office (1998). A similar document was prepared in the Australian Parliament, Verspaadonk (2001).

עבודה ממצה בנושא שיתוף החברה האזרחית בעבודת פרלמנטים הוכנה במשרד הסקוטי בבריטניה לקראת הקמת הפרלמנט של סקוטלנד. ראו Scottish Office (1998), מסמך דומה הוכן גם בספרייה של הפרלמנט של אוסטרליה. Verspaadonk (2001).

[98] Heierbacher (2002).

come to deal with the problem, but it is possible that greater awareness would enable them to deal with it more effectively. Only the Secretary General of the Portuguese Assembly of the Republic pointed out that members of academia play a role in the effort to improve the functioning and image of the Parliament. This is done within the framework of an ad-hoc committee for reform of the political system. In Great Britain we found that members of academia have appeared before committees that have dealt with reforms, but these have usually been experts on technical issues such as communications and the Internet, and not researchers who deal with the causes of the phenomenon of the low level of trust - in other words, Social Scientists.

4.3. Do Reforms in the Work of the Government and the Parliament Affect the Level of Trust in Them?

In studies written in Great Britain, in which numerous reforms have been introduced in the last decade on the constitutional, governmental and parliamentary levels, it was found that the effect of such reforms on public opinion has been, at best, temporary. Therefore one might conclude that the low level of trust does not result only from poor performance, or performance that does not measure us to expectations. A study by Catherine Bromley, John Curtis, and Ben Seyd, which dealt with the constitutional reforms introduced by the Labor Government at the end of the 1990s, points out that even though the reforms were popular, their effect on the level of public trust in Government was short lived.[99] According to a study by Caroline Tolbert and Karen Mossberger, which dealt with improving the quality of the service provided by the Government by means of on-line services, the development of these services did not influence the level of trust felt by the public towards the Government either, despite the rise in the level of satisfaction with the approachability of the Government.[100]

In New Zealand it was found that reforms, which were introduced in the 1990s, and were designed to increase accessibility of government institutions to the public, did not manage to change the trend of decline in trust. [101] In Portugal it was found that over 25 years of reforms in the work of the parliament (in the years 1976-2002) did not lead to any change in the trust of the public in parliament. Christine Leston-Bandeira wondered whether the reason for this might be the fact that those who introduced the reforms did not bother to check what the public thought before acting.[102]

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[99] Bromley, Curtis & Seyd (2001).

[100] Tolbert & Mossberger (2003). Trust in a particular institutions and satisfaction with the way it operates is not one and the same thing, though satisfaction is a condition for trust.

[101] State Services Commission of New Zealand (2000).

[102] Leston-Bandeira (2002b).

Tom Christensen and Per Lægreid, who examined the situation in Norway - where, according to them the public is inclined to be conservative with regards to reforms - wondered whether the satisfaction with the functioning of the Government and the opinions regarding reforms in public institutions are what influences trust in them, or the other way around: the inclination to trust leads to satisfaction with the way democracy functions and creates traditional (or alternatively, modernistic) approaches towards the public sector. Their conclusion was that we are dealing with processes, which are interdependent in a vicious circle. In other word, the answer to the question whether there is any chance that reforms will affect the level of public trust in government institutions is not unequivocal. [103]

The three researchers who prepared background material on the issue of strengthening trust in governments for the OECD towards the ministerial meeting that took place in Rotterdam in the Netherlands on the issue (see above, p.X), reached the conclusion that even though reforms in public administration may lead to a rise in public trust, there is an equal chance that they will harm trust if it transpires that they were not planned properly, or that they undermine the citizens' feeling of security. [104]

5. Conclusions

Several general conclusions emerge from our study.

The first is that Israel is not unique in the low level of public trust in its national parliament, since a similar phenomenon exists in most of the Western democratic states, and even more so in the new democracies. Clearly this does not mitigate the gravity of the negative phenomena that were uncovered in the Knesset Index, but it does place things in the proper proportion.

The second is that there is no one explanation for the phenomenon of the decline of public trust in government institutions in general, and parliaments in particular in the democratic states, and therefore there is no one simply solution to the problem. This fact also affects the prospect that reforms, introduced with the goal of improving the functioning of parliaments and their image, will not necessarily bring a positive change in public trust in them. But even though the reforms do not necessarily lead to an improvement in the level of trust, one should not conclude that the introduction of reforms is a waste of time, but rather that one should not develop exaggerated expectations from reforms, in so far as the level of trust is concerned.

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[103] Christensen & Lægreid (2003).

[104] Van de Walle, Van Roosbrœk & Bouckært (2005). As to the operative conclusions of the writers, see appendix 3.

The third, which is based on the responses that we received from the Secretaries General of 21 parliaments, is that parliamentary administrations perceive of the low trust in parliaments primarily as a problem of information, of education, and of relations with the media. They do not usually have a broader and deeper perception of the phenomenon, and they are not aware of the vast quantity of information that has been gathered, and the deep research that has been done in academic circles around the world.

The fourth is that it is might be useful to gather all the findings of studies that have examined the issue of public trust in government institutions in general, and parliaments in particular, and have proposed ways of dealing with the problem. We bring the conclusions of two bodies that examined the issue: the Committee on Modernisation in the British House of Commons (See Appendix No. 1), and a group of experts that prepared a report on the issue for the OECD (See Appendix No. 3).

The fifth is that even if democracy might be endangered in several countries, lack of trust or low trust in government institutions in general, and parliament in particular, do not necessarily point to a general danger to democracy. On the contrary, it could very well be that doubts and lack of trust are a positive phenomena, which express the essence and immunity of liberal democracy.

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7. Appendices

Appendix No. 1

Conclusions and Recommendations of the Modernisation Select Committee in the House of Commons regarding connecting parliament with the public (published June 2004)[105]

Introduction

1. The House of Commons is the representative institution of the British people. It is here that our laws are made and it is from its Members that governments are formed. The sovereignty of Parliament is the fundamental expression of the sovereignty of the people. It is the apex of our democratic system. As such, it is very much a working place and at any time there are many thousands of passholders, in addition to 659 MPs and around 700 Peers. It is the purpose of this Report to make recommendations which will better reconcile the necessary purpose of Parliament with the reasonable expectation of the people to have access to the processes by which we govern ourselves (Paragraph 2)

2. It serves no-one if we make it difficult for voters to understand what their elected representatives are doing. Too often the impression is given that the House of Commons is a private club, run for the benefit of its Members, where members of the public are tolerated only on sufferance. It is beyond the influence of the House of Commons, let alone this Committee, to arrest international trends of declining participation and trust. However, the Commons can make itself more accessible to those outside, both as interested visitors and as citizens wishing to be more involved in proceedings, it can do more to make it easier for people to understand the work of Parliament, and it can do more to communicate its activity to the world outside (Paragraph 9)

The Citizenship Curriculum

3. We recommend that Ministers in the Department for Education and Skills reexamine the balance of the citizenship curriculum because, while we recognise that the other matters covered by the curriculum such as the balance of rights and responsibilities and community involvement are crucial aspects of citizenship education, an understanding of the country's democratic institutions is also of fundamental importance to today's young people, and to the engaged voters of tomorrow (Paragraph 20)

Educational resources at Westminster

4. We recommend that the House consider the provision of dedicated educational facilities for the use of the Education Unit, including a teaching area, as the National Assembly for Wales does (Paragraph 21)

5. We recommend that the Education Unit be given precedence in the Macmillan Room when the House is sitting in September (Paragraph 22)

6. We also think it would be desirable for the Central Tours Office to offer, in addition to its current tours, a Parliament-in-action Tour which would help visitors to understand how Parliament works and give them a brief taste of select committees, standing committees, adjournment debates and Westminster Hall as well as the Chamber (Paragraph 23)

Outreach work with schools and colleges

7. Outreach work is the core of the Education Unit's work, and rightly so. The vast majority of young people will not have the opportunity to participate in a school visit to Parliament, and Parliament's educational activities must therefore be tailored to those who wish to learn about Parliament in the

[105] House of Commons, Modernisation Select Committee (2004).

classroom. To supplement existing resources such as the website, outreach facilities such as a Parliamentary roadshow could have the potential to reach many more young people than currently are able to visit Parliament. We recommend that before any further consideration is given to establishing an educational roadshow, the House should examine the scope for a Parliamentary partnering scheme with, for example, local authorities. Parliament's contribution to the teaching of political literacy could be delivered to people in their own communities (in schools, libraries and council premises) by way of joint enterprise (Paragraph 27)

8. The Education Unit already does a great deal of work building links with individual teachers, schools and colleges. We recommend that it should do more to publicise its work to Members, and to build links with local education authorities (Paragraph 28)

Use of the Chamber

9. We believe there is a case for reconsideration of the long-standing convention that only elected Members of Parliament may ever sit in the Chamber, which is in contrast to the practice of many other legislatures (Paragraph 29)

New Voters

10. We recommend that the House devise a new voter's guide to be sent to all young people around the time of their eighteenth birthday (Paragraph 32)

The Internet

11. We are convinced of the need for a radical upgrading of the website at an early opportunity, which will require significant investment in systems and staff. The financial implications of this are for the Finance and Services Committee and the House of Commons Commission to consider (Paragraph 50)

12. We recommend that the Broadcasting Committee keep under review the possibilities offered by the digital broadcasting of Parliament (Paragraph 52)

On-line consultations

13. We believe that the greater use of on-line consultation is a good way for Parliament to take account of the views of the wider public (Paragraph 53)

14. There have now been several experiments with on-line consultation on an ad hoc basis, both by select committees and by all-party groups. They have generally been successful and have proved effective as a way of engaging members of the public in the work that we do and of giving a voice to those who would otherwise be excluded. We urge select committees and joint committees considering draft legislation to make on-line consultation a more regular aspect of their work (Paragraph 59)

A Commons newsletter

15. We recommend that the House make available to those interested in receiving the information (by post, e-mail or other convenient method of communication) a weekly newsletter. Aimed at the general, non-specialist reader, it should summarise the business of the previous week and set out forthcoming business for the following week. In due course, it may be possible to extend this service to allow for communication of other information by e-mail (such as the daily list of papers available in the Vote Office) and regular, subject-based updates for which users could subscribe. A printed form of the newsletter should be made available to visitors at various points around the Parliamentary Estate, including the bookshop. Electronically, it should occupy a prominent position on or near the front page of the Parliamentary website (Paragraph 63)

Information for young people

16. We recommend that, as development of the website progresses, the House authorities, in consultation with young people, develop the website in a form which is more accessible to them (Paragraph 65)

Visitors to the Parliamentary Estate

17. To the extent that there is conflict between the needs of different groups of visitors, we believe that the House should, as a matter of principle, give priority to the needs of those who come to see and participate in the work of Parliament over those whose primary interest is the Palace of Westminster as a historical building (Paragraph 66)

A visitor centre

18. We welcome the work of the Administration and Accommodation and Works Committees and the House's endorsement of the proposals for the construction of the reception and security building. (Paragraph 80)

19. We recognise the several unique difficulties involved in establishing new visitor facilities near the Palace of Westminster, but urge that all possible options are explored (Paragraph 81)

20. Our starting point is that any Visitor Centre project should have four main objectives:

a) it must provide a welcome to visitors;

b) it must provide an interesting and friendly environment;

c) it should make Parliament more accessible, allowing visitors to see at least something of what Parliament is and does without necessarily having to visit the galleries, committees or take a tour; and

d) it must improve public understanding and knowledge of the work and role of Parliament.

The new reception and security building will help to meet the first of these objectives; it will use visitor staff so that visitors' first contact with staff of the House will come from someone whose primary concern is to greet them and make them feel welcome. A major review of signage, currently underway, should also help to make the environment more welcoming. There may also be scope to improve the current facilities designed to meet the other three objectives but in our view the need for a dedicated Visitor Centre remains. Once the overdue improvement to Parliament's welcome and access has been addressed, attention can focus on meeting the other three main objectives of the Visitor Centre Project through planning for a dedicated Visitor Centre (Paragraph 82)

21. Participants in the Hansard Society's Connecting Communities with Parliament programme suggested a number of ways in which visitors' experience of the Parliamentary Estate could be improved for a very modest cost. The main proposals were:

a) More staff on-hand specifically to welcome visitors, tell them what they could see and point them in the right direction, handing them a written guide, perhaps including a plan and an indication of what visitors were able to do.

b) A sign at the entrance saying 'Welcome to the Houses of Parliament'.

c) Better signage in general, indicating such things as toilets, the Jubilee Caf', the Grand Committee Room, Committee Corridor, etc.

d) Improved queuing systems for the Gallery.

e) The possibility of a 'viewing gallery' which would allow visitors to pass along the corridor at the back of the Gallery, seeing the House while it is sitting but not stopping to listen to the debate.

We welcome these practical suggestions and we commend them to the House authorities (Paragraph 85)

'Strangers'

22. We recommend that the term 'Strangers' be no longer used in referring to visitors to the House of Commons (Paragraph 86)

Access to the Gallery when the House is sitting

23. We recommend that further consideration be given to ways in which groups of visitors touring the building might be able to pass through the gallery as part of a tour so that they are able to witness aspects of Parliament in action (Paragraph 89)

Saturday opening

24. We recommend that the Administration Committee consider Saturday opening of the Line of Route – for Members' parties as well as paying groups – to assess its feasibility (Paragraph 91)

25. We further recommend that the Administration Committee consider the feasibility of allowing Members to book guided tours of the Line of Route throughout the Summer opening on a similar basis to that on which they can book tours on sitting days (Paragraph 91)

Standing committees

26. We recommend that the Procedure Committee consider how better to present the information from the bill, explanatory notes, amendment paper and selection list, either on paper or electronically, so that when an amendment is being debated Members and visitors can see the original clause, the clause as amended, and an explanatory note on both, so that the issue under debate is clear to all (Paragraph 94)

27. We recommend that a guide for visitors to standing committees on bills should also be produced (Paragraph 95)

Public petitions

28. We believe that there is a case for the House to do more with public petitions which, if handled correctly, represent a potentially significant avenue for communication between the public and Parliament (Paragraph 99)

29. We recommend that the Liaison Committee and Procedure Committee consider a process whereby public petitions should automatically stand referred to the relevant select committee. It would then be for the committee to decide whether or not to conduct an inquiry into the issues raised, or to take them into account in the context of a current or forthcoming inquiry (Paragraph 100)

Rules governing the submission of petitions

30. We recommend that the House accept petitions in both typescript and manuscript, although the present restriction against interlineations, deletions and insertions should be retained so that it is clear that the wording of the petition has not been changed without the petitioner's knowledge. The top sheet – the authoritative copy of the petition – should continue to be distinguished from sheets of additional signatures by the Member presenting it signing in the top right-hand corner, as is the current practice (Paragraph 104)

The House of Commons and the media

31. We welcome the progress that has been made in recent years to improve the House's communications strategy, in particular the establishment of the posts of Communications Adviser and Media Adviser and the Select Committee Media Officers. The Group on Information for the Public has likewise played a vital role. But we believe that there is scope for greater co-ordination of the House's media and communications resources. We therefore recommend the establishment of a central press office for the House of Commons, to take a more pro-active role in promoting the House and its work (Paragraph 121)

32. We recommend that the Board of Management and the House of Commons Commission urgently consider whether there is scope for further improving the coordination of the House's media, educational and communications resources and planning, with effective Member oversight and close liaison with appropriate officials and Members of the House of Lords (Paragraph 122)

Promoting Hansard

33. We recommend that the Department of the Official Report aim to produce a simple index to the daily part of Hansard once the necessary technological changes have been seen through (Paragraph 123)

34. We recommend that the Hansard report of a debate should be posted on the Internet at the same time as it is sent to the printer, to be replaced with the published version the following day (Paragraph 125)

The Press Gallery

35. Consideration should be given to allowing journalists to bring laptop computers into the Press Gallery (Paragraph 126)

Response of the House of Commons Commission to the First Report of the Select Committee on Modernisation of the House of Commons, *Connecting Parliament With the Public*. First Special Report of Session 2004-05. Published on 2 December 2004. HC 69

A. Outreach

Work with schools etc. (Recommendations 5, 7 and 8)

The Commission has agreed to fund an additional staff post within the Education Unit, to focus on outreach to young people, as sought by the Committee. It is intended that a principal focus of the new post will be on building links with local education authorities. The Commission considers that the views of the House should be sought before any further consideration of an education roadshow, noting the estimate of the Board of Management that it might cost as much as £500,000 in capital costs, with full annual costs of over £300,000.

A new voters' guide (Recommendation 10)

The Commission has authorised more detailed exploration of the Committee's proposal for a new voters' guide to be sent to all young people around the time of their eighteenth birthday, so that a fully coasted proposal can be worked up. The Commission would not however authorise the production and distribution of such a guide without the prior approval of the House.

A Commons newsletter (Recommendation 15)

The commission has agreed in principle to the production and distribution electronically and, in limited numbers, in hard copy of a short newsletter summarising current House of Commons business in a readily accessible format, as recommended by the Committee, with a view to the first newsletter being available early in 2005.

Media and communications (Recommendations 31 and 32)

The Commission has agreed to fund modest additional staffing within the media and communications team, to enable the Communications Adviser to expand significantly the support provided for the Group on Information for the Public (GIP), and so to provide for the improved co-ordination of the House's resources in this area recommended by the Committee.

The Commission acknowledges the Committee's welcome of the steps it has taken in recent years to improve and expand media and communications services, primarily but not exclusively focussed on

promoting the work of select committees. Since the Committee reported, two further select committee media officers have begun work, so that all committees now have a call on this shared resource. The media and communications team is now co-located in 7 Millbank.

The Commission believes that the House should be asked to express a view on the proposal for a 'central press office' set out in the Committee's Report.

B. Visitors

Reception and security building (Recommendations 18, 21(a) & 21 (d)

The recommendations in relation to reception staff and queuing arrangements will be dealt with in planning for the new reception and security building, in conjunction with the appropriate domestic committees.

Visitor Centre &c (Recommendations 4, 5, 19 & 20)

The recommendations will be addressed in the development of plans for a Visitor Centre, in conjunction with the appropriate domestic committees. A number of options are being explored, and the four specific objectives identified by the Committee will be borne in mind by all those responsible. Given the pressures on space in the Estate, the best opportunity to provide dedicated educational facilities for the use of the Education Unit, as recommended by the Committee, would seem to lie in the proposed Visitor Centre. The Education Unit has priority booking over the Macmillan Room throughout the year, as recommended by the Committee (Recommendation 5).

Visitors (Recommendations 21(b) & (c))

The major study of signage referred to in the Committee's Report has now been completed. There is already a welcome sign on the plasma screens at St. Stephen's Entrance and in Central Lobby.

'Strangers' (Recommendation 22)

The Committee will be aware that the House decided on 26 October to remove the term 'strangers' from Standing orders. Advice has been sought from the appropriate domestic committees on the use of the term in other contexts, as referred to by the Committee in paragraph 86 of its Report.

Parliament-in-action (Recommendations 6, 21(e) & 23)

The Commission has noted the Committee's linked suggestions of a 'Parliament-in-action Tour' to help visitors understand how Parliament works and give them a brief taste of select and standing committees, Westminster Hall and the Camber: of a viewing gallery in the Chamber to enable visitors to see the House while sitting but not stop to listen to the debate: and for further study of ways to enable tours to pass through the gallery to witness the House in action.

The proposed Visitor Centre will, as the Committee recommended, have as one of its primary objectives 'allowing visitors to see at least something of what Parliament is and does without necessarily having to visit the galleries, committees or take a tour' (paragraph 82). It will of course also continue to be possible for visitors to attend Westminster Hall debates, standing committees and public meetings of select committees, as well as the chamber itself. The Commission does not consider it feasible in the current security climate to contemplate tours passing through the gallery in the Chamber. Educational tours embracing brief visits to committees or Westminster Hall may be feasible.

The Commission has also asked for further exploration of the possibility of extension of the current autumn visits programme run by the Education Unit to run all year round, and of the feasibility of a 'virtual' tour.

Parliamentary Tour (Recommendations 24 & 25)

Members can book guided tours of the visitor route on specified mornings throughout the period of the Summer Opening: 307 such tours were booked in the 2004 opening out of a possible 390 slots. The

prospect of Saturday opening of the Parliamentary Tour for Members' parties as well as paying groups is being examined in detail, and the matter will come to the Administration Committee soon. There are some serious practical issues to be resolved. The proposal would also require the support of the authorities in the House of Lords.

C. Publications, website, &c

Website (Recommendations 11 & 16)

The Committee's recommendation for a radical upgrading of the website is already receiving attention. In recent months there have been a number of improvements in the site's content and organisation, including the introduction of webcasting. More extensive changes are being planned for, as part of the second phase of the Parliamentary Information Management Services (PIMS) project and the third phase of the Web Centre project. A business case will be prepared for the development of external access to PIMS, which would then become the primary means of providing public access to parliamentary information. The Commission expects to be considering this issue in the first half of 2005. Research will be commissioned shortly on how the website could be better designed to reach out to target audiences, and in particular to be more accessible to young people, as the Committee recommended.

Hansard (Recommendations 33 & 34)

The Commission has authorised the publication on the Internet of the Hansard report of proceedings in the Chamber throughout the day, as and when the final version is sent to the printer, as recommended by the Committee. A simple index to the hansard daily part will be produced by autumn 2005 as part of an existing project to bring the pagination process in-House; such an index is already provided for the internet version.

Appendix No. 2

Divergences in the Results of Public Opinion Surveys

On p. X above we mentioned that there is an enormous gap between the findings of the Knesset Index and the findings of the European Social Survey regarding the level of public trust in the Knesset. The reason for the gap is mainly methodological. The ESS survey enabled those surveyed to chose among 11 possible answers, from total lack of trust (0) to absolute trust (10). The result, regarding Israel (IL) - 4.7 - is, at least on the face of it, much higher than that found by the Knesset Index .

The figure for Israel in the ESS survey was calculated on the basis of the following data:

Table No. 16: Trust of the Israeli public in the Knesset according to the ESS survey of 2002 – rate of those answering in each category, in percentages

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12.2	5.7	7.5	9.7	9.7	17.9	9.9	10.5	8.2	3.9	4.9

Source: Prof. Noah Levin-Epstein, Tel-Aviv University.

For the Knesset Index the "Dahaf" Institute used a questionnaire worded by Prof. Yohanan Peres and Prof. Ephraim Yaar-Yuchtman,[106] which enables the interviewees to choose among five possibilities – "there is full trust", "there is trust", "there is some trust", "there is barely any trust", and "there is no trust". In the final figure regarding trust in the Knesset only the two first categories appeared, totaling 14%.

Table No. 17: Trust of the Israeli public in the Knesset according to the Knesset Index of the end of 2000 – rate of those answering in each category, in percentages

There is no trust	There is barely any trust	There is some trust	There is trust	There is full trust
30	25	30	10	4

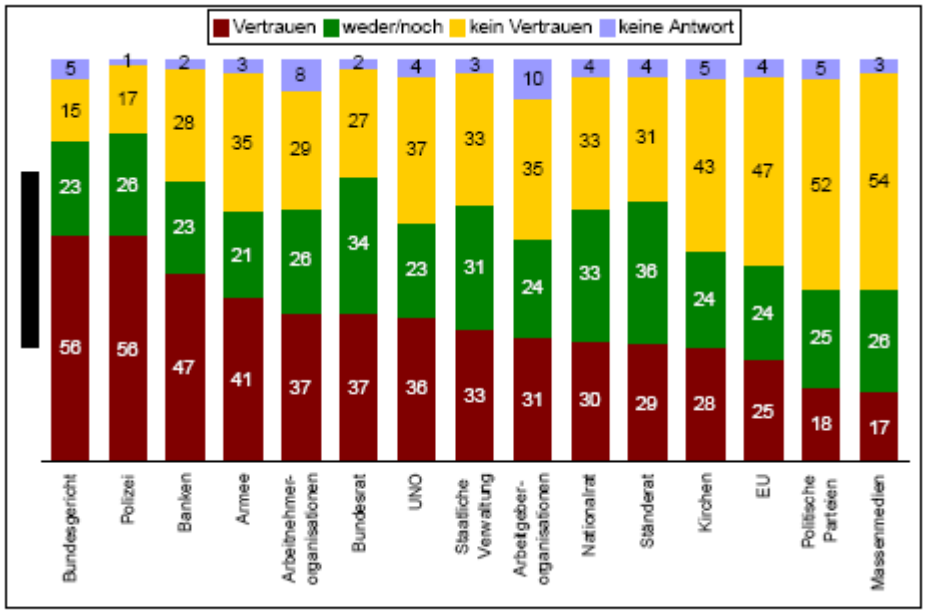
Source: The Knesset Research and Information Center and the "Dahaf" Research Institute (2001) p. 51

A similar discrepancy was found also between the findings of the ESS survey, and the findings of a survey prepared by the Credit Suisse Bank regarding Switzerland. According to the ESS survey trust in the Swiss *Nationalrat* stood at 5.8 – in fourth place after Denmark, Sweden, and Finland (See figure No. 3 on p. X). According to the figures of the Credit Suisse, which were sent to us by the Deputy Secretary General of the *Nationalrat*, in 2003 only 30% of those asked expressed trust in the Lower House and only 29% expressed trust in

[106] Peres & Yaar-Yuchtman (1998), p. 245.

the Upper House. An examination of the full survey that was published by the bank (See figure No. 4) explains the apparent discrepancy between the ESS data and the bank's data. The bank divided possible answers into three: much trust, some trust, and lack of trust. The data sent us included only those that chose the first answer – much trust – but 63% of those who answered expressed much trust or some trust in the Lower House, and 65% expressed much trust or some trust in the Upper House.

Figure No. 4: Public trust in government institutions in Switzerland (2003).



Quelle: Credit Suisse Bulletin 6-03, S. 29

The effect of different methods of dividing up the answers is also apparent when we compare the data of the Eurobarometer regarding public trust in parliaments, to the data of the ESS on the one hand, and of the European Value Survey on the other.

As mentioned above (p. X), in the ESS survey there were 11 possible answers. The Eurobarometer surveys enabled the interviewees to choose between two answers only: "inclined to trust", and "inclined not to trust". There is no room for nuances. Despite the difference in the questionnaires, the results of the two surveys in 2002 are generally similar (See table No. 18). The explanation for this is that in both surveys the division into positive answers and negative answers is clear.

Table No. 18: The rate of those expressing trust in Parliament in the 15 Members of the EU before the enlargement according to the Eurobarometer, in percentages, compared to the data of the ESS (2002)

	Eurobarometer survey*	ESS survey **
Luxemburg	65	5.7
Denmark	63	6.2
Sweden	59	5.9
Netherlands	58	5.2
Greece	57	4.8
Finland	53	5.8
Austria	50	5.1
Portugal	50	4.4
Spain	46	4.8
Ireland	45	4.4
Belgium	43	5.0
Germany	42	4.5
Italy	38	4.8
Great Britain	37	4.7
France	32	4.5
15 EU average	**49**	**5.1**

Green – data above average; Red – data below average.

* Source: *Standard Eurobarometer* No. 57.

** Source: Kouvo (2005).

On the other hand, if one compares the data of the Eurobarometer to those of the World Value Study (both have data for 1999) there is a much greater discrepancy.

Table No. 19: The rate of those expressing trust in Parliament in the 15 Members of the EU before the enlargement according to the Eurobarometer, and according to the EVS, in percentages (1999)

	Eurobarometer survey*	EVS Survey**	EVS survey***
Netherlands	62	53.9	54.2
Luxemburg	61	54.4	61.5
Portugal	56	45.3	50.5
Finland	55	41.5	42.3
Denmark	54	46.8	48.6
Greece	51	23.8	24.4
Austria	47	38.6	40.2
Spain	45	43.3	46.4
Germany	45	35.3	37.2
Sweden	42	49.5	50.6
France	37	38.6	40.4
Great Britain	36	34.6	36.2
Ireland	36	32.2	32.8
Italy	28	33.1	34.1
Belgium	26	37.1	39.1
15 EU average	**45**	**40.5**	**41.5**

Green – data above average; Red – data below average.

* Source: *Standard Eurobarometer* No. 52.

** Source: http://www.europeanvalues.nl/index3.htm including data for those who did not answer or did not know.

*** Source: http://www.europeanvalues.nl/index3.htm not including data for those who did not answer of did not know.

The absence of convergence results from the fact that in the Eurobarometer questionnaire the division into positive and negative answers is clear, while in the WVS survey there are four possible answers – "a great deal of trust", "quite a lot of trust", "not much trust", and "no trust" – and in the data for those who expressed trust were included only those who chose the first two options; among those who chose the "not much trust" option there might be some of those who according to the Eurobarometer questionnaire were included in the category of those inclined to trust.

The professional literature deals with the problem of possible responses. The scholarrs Timothy Cook and Paul Gronke examined the issue of questionnaires and possible answers with regards to two well known public opinion survey institutes in the United States: the National Election Studies and the General Social Survey, both of which publish series of surveys dealing with public trust in Government and in government institutions, starting in the 1950s and 1960s. The data, which the two publish do not corroborate. The scholars argue that the two institutes are inclined to include among the negative answers, answers that are ambivalent, but strengthen the impression regarding lack of trust and lack of satisfaction.[107]

[107] Cook & Gronke (2002) and Cook & Gronke (2005).

Appendix No. 3

Conclusions from background material prepared by Steven Van de Walle, Steven Van Roosbrœk & Gert Bouckært on trust in the Public Sector for the OECD[108]

Executive Summary

This document analyses citizens' trust in the public sector in the OECD countries. It summarizes available opinion data about trust in the civil service, and compares levels of trust between countries and institutions.

Trust in government and in the public sector: assumptions and contingencies

1. Government should not strive for maximal trust, but for an optimal level of trust.

2. This optimal level of citizen trust in government is contingent upon the political and administrative culture of a country, and may thus be different in different countries.

3. A certain level of distrust in government is healthy and may be functional because it serves as a guarantee for accountability. In fact, balance of power and audit are institutionalised expressions of distrust.

4. A certain level of citizen distrust in the civil service may be functional for public sector reforms.

Levels of trust in government and in the public sector

5. Despite assertions that there is a constant decline in citizens' trust in the public sector, there often are no suitable time-series data for supporting these statements.

6. In most countries, there is no solid evidence of a general decline of trust in political and administrative institutions, and there are significant fluctuations.

7. In many countries, the civil service is by no means the least trusted institution.

8. Despite many claims about changes in trust in the public sector or about citizens' preferences, empirical data supporting these claims does often not exist, is unreliable, or even contradicts this popular wisdom.

9. General statements about levels of trust in institutions ignore the wide diversity between countries and institutions.

10. Trust in the public sector is embedded in deeper citizen-state relationships. Changes in trust can therefore only be interpreted taking differences in administrative cultures and in citizens' expectations into account.

Public sector performance and trust

11. There is no evidence of a direct causal link between the performance of government, and citizens' trust in government.

12. The accumulated evidence in OECD countries suggests that trust in a cause, precondition and consequence of reform. A well-functioning public sector is necessary, but in itself insufficient for building trust in the public sector.

[108] Van de Walle, Van Roosbrœk & Bouckært (2005)

13. Trust should be part of public sector reform objectives and strategies.

14. Erosion of public trust may follow from ill-designed public sector reforms.

Executive implications

Trust-building measures

15. Different citizen expectations vis-à-vis government in OECD member countries imply that a uniform strategy for building trust or for reforming the public sector may not exist.

16. Pro-active strategies may be needed towards groups of citizens with extremely low levels of trust.

17. Trust-building measures include strategies at all levels: concrete service delivery, the broad sector policy, and strengthening core state institutions.

18. Improving service delivery quality alone is not sufficient. Specific trust management strategies need to focus on how this quality is perceived by citizens (perception management), and efforts need to be made to bring actual service delivery in line with citizens' expectations and vice-versa (expectation management).

Trust-sustaining measures

19. Trust is a permanent concern. Governments need to be pro-active rather than just react when there is a crisis. Sustained political interest in the functioning and perception of public services is the best strategy.

20. Absence of distrust is no reason to neglect public services. Nurturing the trust capital already present in the public sector is a much more effective and cheaper strategy than attempting to restore trust after years of neglect or after a crisis. Once lost, trust may be hard to restore.