

# NATIONAL ARCHIVES

## IRELAND



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Northern Ireland European Assembly Election Results1. Votes and share of the vote by the Party

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|          | <u>1979</u>          | <u>1981</u>           | <u>1982</u>        | <u>1983</u>             | <u>1984</u>          |
|----------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
|          | <u>Euro Election</u> | <u>Local Election</u> | <u>NI Assembly</u> | <u>General Election</u> | <u>Euro Election</u> |
| DUP      | 179,000 (29.8%)      | 176,816 (26.6%)       | 145,528 (23%)      | 152,749 (20%)           | 230,251 (33.6%)      |
| OUP      | 128,000 (21.9%)      | 176,342 (26.5%)       | 188,277 (29.7%)    | 259,952 (34%)           | 147,169 (21.5%)      |
| SDLP     | 140,500 (24.6%)      | 116,487 (17.5%)       | 118,891 (18.8%)    | 137,012 (17.9%)         | 151,399 (22.1%)      |
| SF.      |                      |                       | 64,191 (10.1%)     | 102,701 (13.4%)         | 91,476 (13.3%)       |
| Ind. Un. | 38,000 (6.6%)        |                       |                    |                         | 20,092 (2.9%)        |
| WP       | 7,000 (1.2%)         | 12,237 (1.8%)         | 17,216 (2.7%)      | 14,650 (1.9%)           | 8,712 (1.3%)         |
| All.     | 39,000 (6.8%)        | 59,219 (8.9%)         | 58,851 (9.3%)      | 61,275 (8%)             | 34,046 (4.9%)        |
| Turnout  | 57%                  | 64.1%                 | 60.4%              | 72.8%                   | 64.3%                |

2. Dr. Paisley's performance restored his party to electoral supremacy over the Official Unionists which it hasn't attained since the 1981 local elections. The personality factor in an election of this kind is obviously important. The improved performance of the DUP is also due to a minor extent to the fact that they did not contest three seats in the General Election. It will be noted that the DUP followed their impressive showing in the 1979 Euro Election with an equally impressive performance in the 1981 local elections which took place during the hunger strike and in the aftermath of the Anglo-Irish Summit of December 1980. The question arises whether Dr. Paisley's vote last week represents a change of trend in his party's favour which will be felt in the local elections next year or whether it can be attributed to a personality factor. Much will obviously depend on the current issues when the election takes place.

3. The Alliance vote which was 14.4% of the poll in the 1977 local elections and 11.8% in the 1979 General Election collapsed badly on 14 June. It was anticipated before the election that perhaps 10,000-20,000 Alliance voters would switch to Hume in an anti-Sinn Féin move and the result broadly supports this view. This can also be interpreted, though perhaps not validly, as endorsement of SDLP policies including the Forum, by moderate Catholics and corresponding disapproval of the Alliance stance.

4 Sinn Fein maintained their share of the vote as compared with the General Election but got 11,000 fewer votes. On the other hand, the SDLP got 14,000 more votes even with a lower turnout. The nationalist share of the vote increased. This was due to the swing from the Alliance Party to the SDLP and also to the fact that the fall-off in turnout as compared with the General Election was generally greater in unionist constituencies. The ratio of SDLP to Sinn Fein support was 62/38 compared with 57/43 in the General Election and 65/35 in the 1982 Assembly election. The question now is whether the Sinn Fein vote has stabilised or whether they can manage to increase it in the local elections. In favour of the latter view, it can be said that the personality contest on the nationalist side on this occasion was not in Sinn Fein's favour. Secondly, the constituency service they provide locally may boost their performance in the local elections. On the other hand, the upward graph of their support has been interrupted and it will be more difficult for them to convince people that they will inevitably overtake the SDLP. The possibility of stronger anti-personation measures in elections from now on is also relevant.

5 The performance of Sinn Fein in the South, where their strategy was designed to maximise their vote, means that on a 32-County basis they got 8.1% of the valid poll.

6 Mr Kilfedder's intervention in the election was totally unsuccessful. He failed to attain his vote in the General Election.

7 The Workers' Party had their worst outing since the last Euro election. They are likely to have lost votes to the SDLP.

8 There is little information to be got from the pattern of transfers in an election like this since there is only one constituency. In any event, the proportions were as follows:

| From/To         | → OUP | SDLP  | SF    | Ind U | All   | WP   | Ecology |
|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|---------|
| ↓<br>DUP        | 65.4% | 0.5%  | 0.1%  | 30.1% | 1.4%  | 0.2% | 0.1%    |
| W P and Ecology |       | 42%   | 10.1% | 5.1%  | 22.7% |      |         |
| All and Ind U   |       | 35.3% | 0.6%  |       |       |      |         |

Almost all of Dr Paisley's votes transferred. The recipients were as expected but Mr Kilfedder's presence reduced the OUP share.

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