

Fianna Fail, Votes for Europe

Caption: Alcee L. Hastings (United States), elected President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly in July 2004 during the 13th Annual Session in Edinburgh.

Source: Fianna Fail. Votes for Europe. Dublin: Referendum Campaign Director Fianna Fail, 1972.

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Votes for Europe

Introduction

An overwhelming majority of political opinion favours Irish membership of the European Economic Community. It is the job of the Fianna Fail Organisation to translate this into a sweeping victory in the Referendum on May 10.

Two things are crucial:

1. Making sure that every potential Yes voter realises the importance of Irish entry to the EEC.
2. Making sure that every potential Yes voter gets to the correct polling booth on Referendum Day.

It is up to every Constituency Campaign Director to see that these two jobs are done. The first will be achieved by canvassers explaining what joining Europe means and dealing with any questions that raise doubts in voters' minds. The second will depend on accurate canvass reports giving details of transport requirements and on an effective Referendum Day organisation.

This guide spells out the minimum each constituency organisation must do. Every constituency can do more.

Getting the Vote out

The Campaign

Planning and preparation should be in hand already. The full traditional election machinery should be used. As people have already heard a lot about EEC entry, the Fianna Fail strategy is a short and sharp campaign opening on Sunday 23 April. There will be seventeen days leading up to Polling Day, Wednesday 10 May. As this only gives three Sundays for chapel gate meetings and fourteen days for the canvass, some Constituency Campaign Directors may wish to start earlier and are free to do so. The shortness of the campaign demands that every member of the Organisation should be involved and required to put in the maximum effort.

Meetings

Meetings provide the best opportunity to identify the Party with the Yes vote. While care should be taken not to antagonise any person or group who is likely to favour EEC entry, no platform should be shared with speakers from other Parties. Each meeting is an opportunity for elected representatives, particularly Deputies, Senators, and Councillors, to demonstrate their support for the campaign. Speeches should be short and should stick to the issues dealt with in **At the Door to Europe**, the Referendum Canvassers' Guide which is being published separately.

Canvass

The importance of the canvass is to identify potential Yes voters. An overwhelming majority of those on the Register may be expected to vote Yes. In general, traditional Fianna Fail and Fine Gael voters should be regarded as favourable. All potential Yes voters must be marked on the Register and asked whether or not they will require a lift to the Poll on Referendum Day.

Questions

It will be important to try to answer any question which is worrying a potential Yes voter. As a result of the Into Europe Conventions already held in every county, the sort of questions canvassers can expect is already known. A range of typical questions and answers is given in **At the Door to Europe**.

There will be no time for canvassers to give long detailed answers to factual questions or to waste their

breath refuting the wilder claims the sort of irresponsible groups opposing EEC entry are likely to make. Each answer has been made as short as possible and is intended to remind the canvasser of the information made available by the Government in the summary White Paper **Into Europe**, which may be obtained free from Post Offices or in bulk supplies from the EEC Information Service, Department of Foreign Affairs, 80 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2. (Tel. 780822)

If a canvasser is asked a question to which he or she does not know the answer, the question and the name and address of the person who asked it should be noted and sent to Constituency Campaign Headquarters for answering. National Headquarters will be providing an answering service for Constituency Campaign Directors.

Voters should be advised to watch or listen to the Fianna Fail Party political broadcasts on radio or television and to read the speeches of the Taoiseach and Government Ministers in the local and national Press and also the Referendum literature which will be sent to them.

Publicity

Headquarters will issue the following publicity material: —

1. An "election address" for use in canvassing and for delivery to every voter on the Register. (No envelopes will be required).
2. Cards for use in canvassing and for handing out at every polling station on Referendum Day.
3. Car stickers and badges for use throughout the campaign.
4. Standard size posters for use during the campaign and on the eve of polling.

Additional material may be supplied as the need arises. Every constituency director of elections should feel free to use his own resources to produce publicity material he feels will be effective in his own area. Leaflets dealing with local issues and based on the material in *At the Door to Europe* or *Into Europe* can be produced as handouts for use at chapel gate meetings, shopping centres, etc.

Finance

As adequate publicity material will be issued to each constituency, no finance will be forthcoming from Headquarters for any constituency campaign expenses unless the costs involved have been approved in writing by the Referendum Campaign Director.

Transport

Transport may well prove the most important item in this Referendum campaign. More cars must be available than usual as the aim must be to get every potential Yes voter to the Polls, not just Fianna Fail supporters. If possible all transport requests noted during the canvass should be dealt with in the morning of polling day so that as many cars as possible will be available for the rush during the last hours of voting. Every effort should be made to make arrangements to bring to the Polls all individuals or groups who would otherwise be away from home on Referendum Day.

POLLING DAY

On this occasion the aim must be to get out every possible vote. At the same time steps should be taken to make sure that no voter is pressurised by Party workers. EEC entry is an important national issue and should be treated responsibly as such.