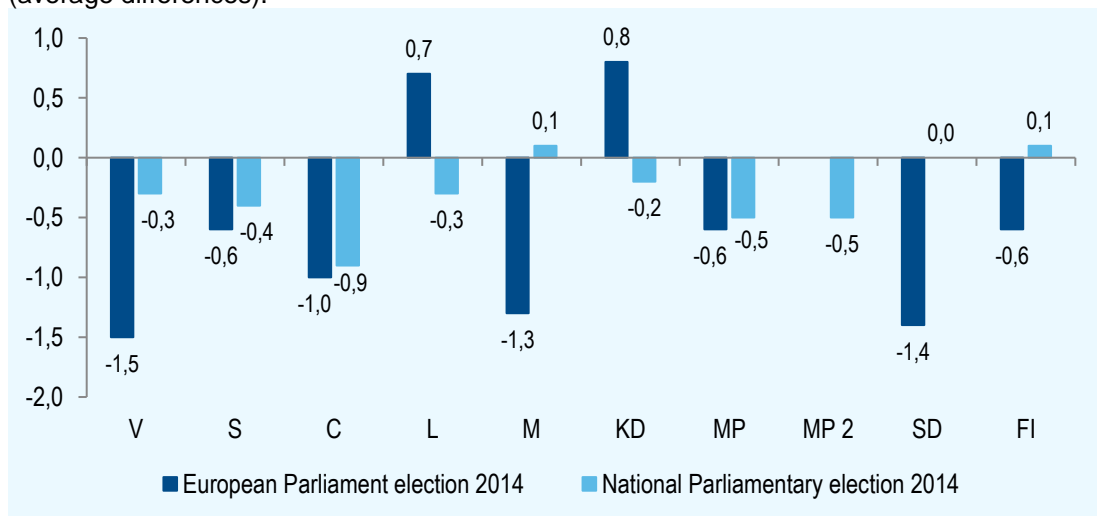


# The importance of top candidates

The importance of party leaders and top candidates separate national parliamentary elections from European Parliament elections. First, the two categories of representatives are not equally known among Swedish voters. In 2014, nine out of ten Swedes knew all party leaders ahead of the parliamentary election. Not as many voters, only six out of ten, knew about top candidates for the European Parliament during the same year, and there was a big difference between different candidates. Second, the representatives' level of influence differs greatly when it comes to party elections. The top candidates have a much greater influence on party elections leading up to European elections than party leaders have before national parliamentary elections (Berg & Oscarsson, 2015). The figure below shows whether this impact had a positive or negative effect on party elections in the two elections in 2014. The results show that only the Liberals and the Christian Democrats' top candidates had a clear positive impact on the European Parliament elections.

Figure 1. Potential vote influence from the parties' main representatives. Differences in sympathy points between the parties' main representatives and the party among the parties' own voters in the European Parliament elections and the parliamentary elections in 2014 (average differences).



Source: [The Swedish National Election Studies](#), Europaparlamentsundersökningen 2014 and Valundersökningen 2014.

**Comments:** The results show the differences in sympathy points on an unlikely-like scale from -5 (strongly dislike) to +5 (likes strong) for the parties' main representatives (top candidates and party leaders) among the parties' own voters at the 2014 European Parliament elections and parliamentary elections. Positive differences mean that the top candidate / party leader was rated higher than the party by the party's own voters, while negative differences mean that the top candidate / party leader was rated lower than the party by the party's own voters. The results of the European Parliament election have been calculated only among people who knew the respective top candidate. The number of respondents varies between 590-1 186 for the European Parliament elections and between 1 420-1504 for the parliamentary election. The assessed representatives are for the European Parliament elections: Malin Björk (V), Marita Ulvskog (S), Kent Johansson (C), Marit Paulsen (L, year 2014 = FP), Gunnar Hökmark (M), Lars Adaktusson (KD), Isabella Lövin (MP), Kristina Winberg (SD) and Soraya Post (FI). The assessed representatives of the parliamentary election are the party leaders: Jonas Sjöstedt (V), Stefan Löfven (S), Annie Lööf (C), Jan Björklund (L, year 2014 = FP), Fredrik Reinfeldt (M), Gustav Fridolin (MP), Åsa Romson (MP2), Jimmie Åkesson (SD) and Gudrun Schyman (FI).

## References

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