

# When the numbers sang... Eurovision 1968

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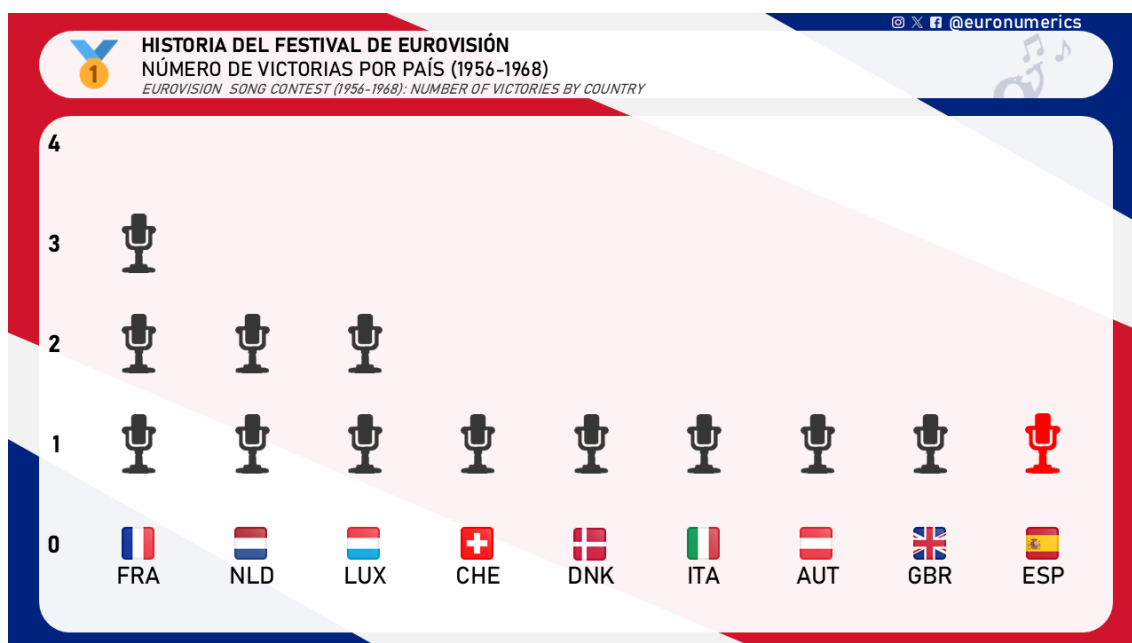
Spain has won the 1968 Eurovision Song Contest! We are starting the season and a new section on the blog, narrating what we would have said about Spain's first victory. At what stage was the festival? How were the jury's votes? What were the keys to Massiel's triumph? A look at our most glorious history.

## WE HAVE WON!

First of all, I have felt that there is a historical debt in this blog. We always focus so much on the current events that it is difficult to make room for the past and the rich history of Eurovision. That is why I wanted to start a new section on this blog to dedicate some time to those numbers from the past that have marked the future of the contest. It will be a blog similar to the one we do when an edition is held with different analyses to find out the most important data.

That said, it is April 6, 1968, we have won Eurovision! Massiel with her *La, la la*, sneaks into the Eurovision Olympus, giving Spain the first victory in the contest. The eighth attempt was the charm. The victory was achieved by just one point ahead of the United Kingdom, represented by Cliff Richard and his *Congratulations*. Third place on the podium is occupied by Isabelle Aubret with *La source*, the voice of France.

Our country becomes the ninth to take home the prize. The ranking is led by France with 3 victories. They are followed by the Netherlands and Luxembourg with two more triumphs.

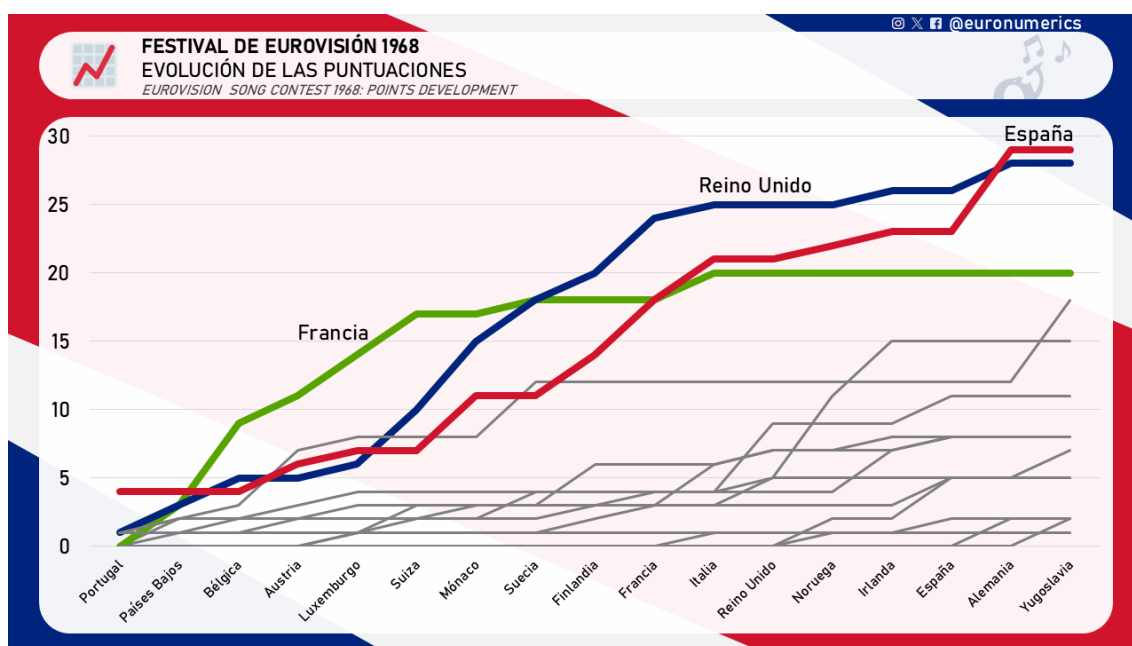


It is also the third consecutive time that a new country has won Eurovision, after Austria and the United Kingdom. This had only happened before in its first three editions with Switzerland, the Netherlands and France.

## THE TURNING POINT: THE *SORPASSO IN EXTREMIS*

In 1968, a voting system was used whereby each country distributed 10 points, as it wished, among all the other countries. Because so few points were awarded, generally very evenly distributed, the results were often very close, leading to multiple ties. Any drastic score by consensus of the juries of a country would easily be noticed in the scoreboard.

The following graph aims to reflect the evolution of the scores during the voting of the 17 countries. In this case we have only highlighted the results of the top 3: Spain (red), the United Kingdom (blue) and France (green).

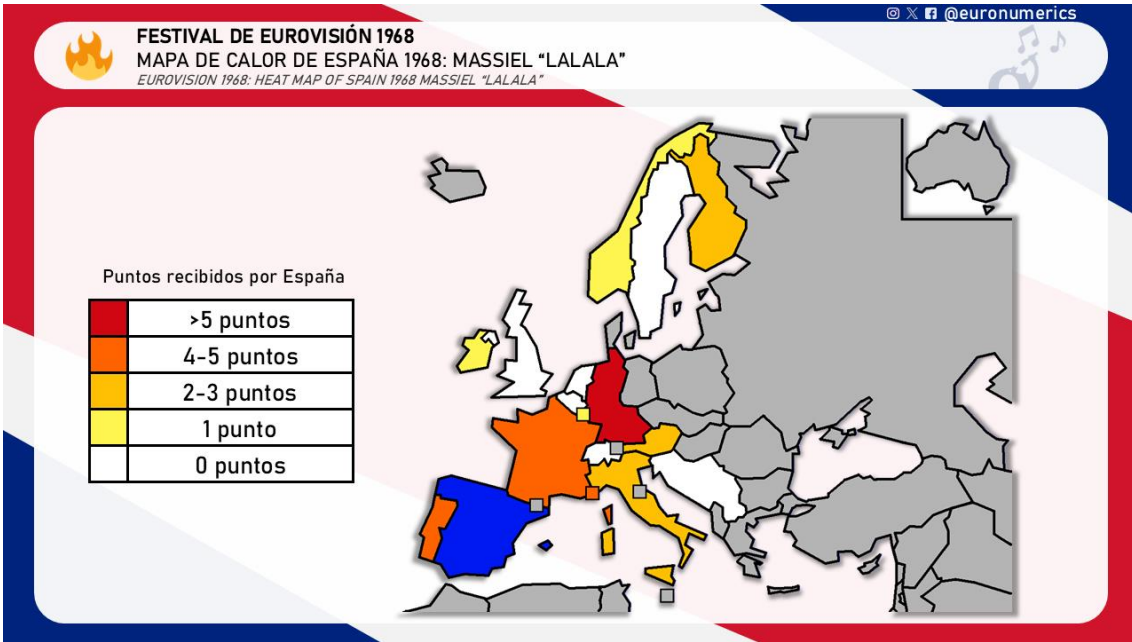


These 3 that we have mentioned were the countries that at some point led the scoreboard. Spain started the lead thanks to Portugal being the first to vote. Soon France overtook us until almost half of the votes, when it was overtaken by Cliff Richard's United Kingdom. At that moment Massiel had fallen to fourth place, but she was adding points until she converged with the British in the last moments.

The crucial moment of the vote was Germany's 6 points towards *La, la, la*, which allowed us to be leaders again until the end. You can see this moment in the video at minute 1:19:00 when the German vote took place, to the ecstasy of Katie Boyle. It could not be more suffered.

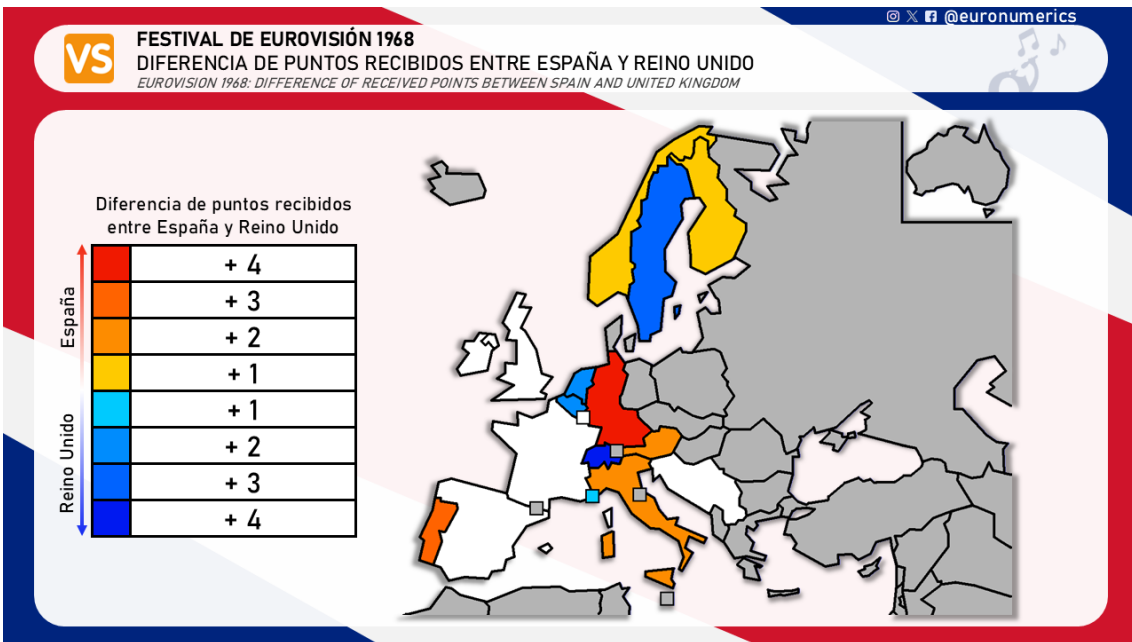
## NEIGHBOURS TO THE RESCUE

The following heat map tries to represent, in a simplified way, which countries voted for Spain and with how many points. Of its other 16 competitors, *La, la, la* got 6 zeros and as the highest score a 6 from Germany. There were only 2 other sets of six points that year.



It is known by the juries that it is not so easy to extract geographical behaviours, but in the map it can be seen how we got points from our closest neighbours. Leaving aside the German case, Portugal, France and Monaco were our highest voters. And as we move away from the peninsula, the level of score falls. Therefore, we can slightly observe a certain cultural component in our victory: it was not a transversal victory, there were several zeros, but it was boosted by our like-minded people.

The following graph is a little more complex. In the following map we have represented the difference in points received by Spain, first classified; and the United Kingdom, second. Warm colours represent countries that voted more for Spain than for the United Kingdom, and cool colours the opposite. For example, Norway gave 1 point to Spain and none to the United Kingdom, hence the yellowish tone.



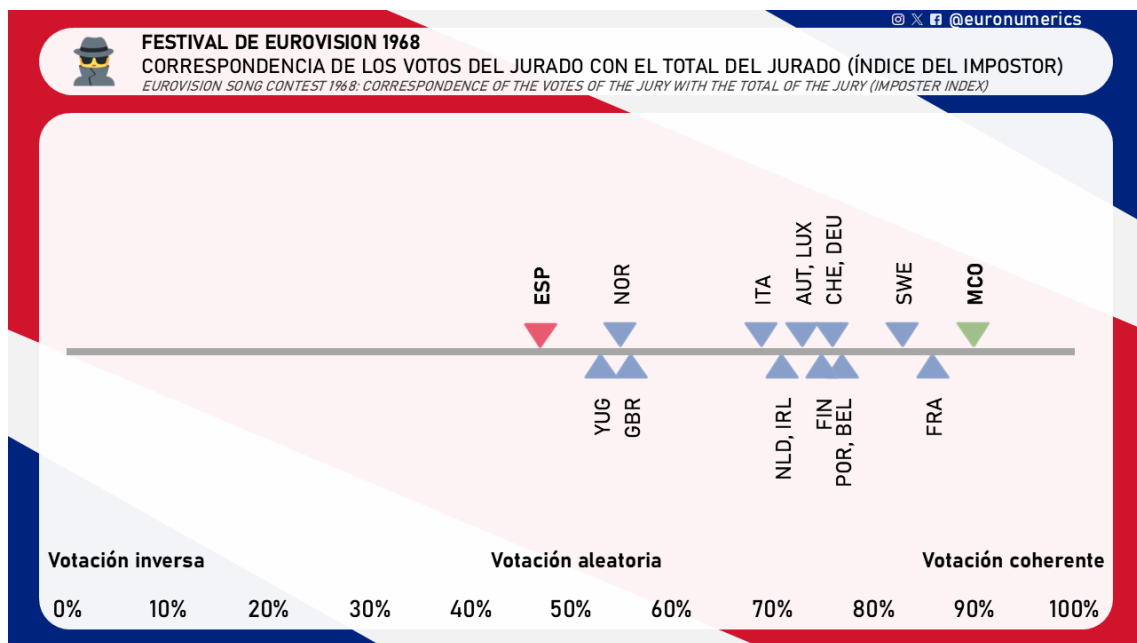
One of the first things to note is that Spain and the United Kingdom did not vote for each other, hence the white tone. Only Yugoslavia, which was the last to vote, did not give a single point to either nation. As if we didn't have enough suspense.

As for the rest of the colours, it is not easy to draw conclusions, it is quite random. Perhaps the most notable thing is that the United Kingdom did not take full advantage of the North, both in Ireland and in the Nordic countries. Massiel was voted more in 6 countries compared to 5 for Cliff Richard.

### THE SPANISH VOTE, A MORE THAN SUSPICIOUS VOTE

As we mentioned in the previous section, the two countries that led the ranking did not vote for each other, something that makes us suspicious. Because of this and many other suspicious votes, in this blog we created the impostor index to try to assess the coherence of the votes. To do this, we compare the vote of each country with the rest and we obtain a value that goes from 100%, maximum coherence with the rest; to 0%, total incoherence or reverse vote; passing through 50% which means a random vote.

The following graph represents the percentages of each country. The further to the left (0%) the closer to the suspicious reverse vote, the further to the right (100%) the closer to having voted in a coherent way with the final result.



The country that can boast the most consistency was Monaco, with 90%. And no wonder: it gave 5 points to the United Kingdom, 4 to Spain and 1 to Luxembourg, which was 11th. France, which was the third ranked country of the night, was also very consistent in giving 8 points to the top2.

On the other side of the coin, we find Spain. With a value of 47%, the winner of the festival was the country with the most suspicious vote. Ours was the only one that did not vote for the other

four members of the top 5: the United Kingdom, France, Ireland and Sweden. Our highest score was 3 points for Portugal, which only collected 2 more that night.

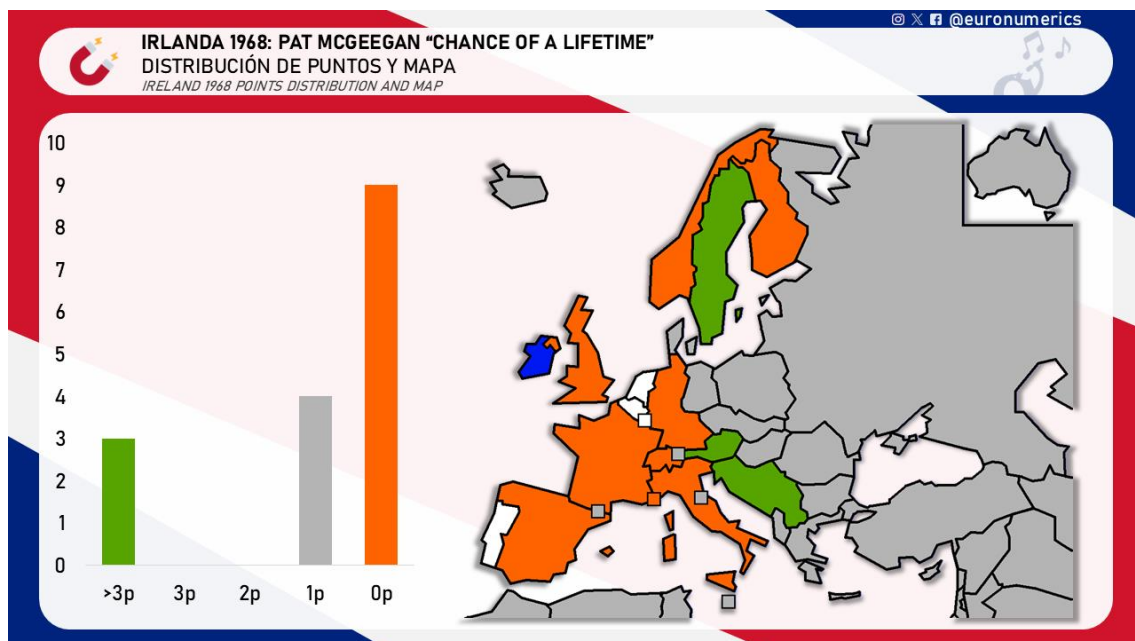
The United Kingdom is not far behind either: it ignored Spain, France, Ireland and gave 2 points to Sweden. Yugoslavia, as we said, was also quite random in being the only one not to vote for the two favourites, as well as France and Sweden.

In short, the data reveal that Spain's vote was very close to random and gives it an element of suspicion that somewhat clouds our triumph. It is nothing new that the favourites do not vote for each other as we have seen even today, but Spain did not escape this behaviour, whether voluntarily or not.

### IRELAND, THE OPPORTUNITY FOR POLARITY

A brief note to highlight the song that most polarised at the festival. We measured polarity by contrasting the number of zeros received with high scores, in this case, when more than three points were received.

Ireland, represented by Pat McGeegan and *Chance of a lifetime*, is the country that most polarised according to this methodology: out of 16 scores, 9 were one zero, 3 were more than 3 points and 4 were one point. The following map reflects this polarity, marking the zeros in orange and the high scores in green.



With just the three high votes, he received 14 of his 18 points, which would have already earned him a spot in the top 5 of the edition. Only Spain had more votes greater than 3, with 4 occasions, one more than Ireland and the United Kingdom.

We end this first blog of the numbers singing past editions. Do you think there is reason to be suspicious about the Spanish vote? What other editions would you like us to analyse in this section? We look forward to your comments!