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EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2024



Metaversing

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1.UNDERSTANDING EUROPEAN ELECTIONS

1.1 Brief overview of what European elections are

The European elections can be described as unique in today's electoral landscape for their fundamental characteristic, they represent the only transnational assembly directly elected by citizens. Every **five years** in these elections, European citizens elect the members who will be part of the European Parliament. Each country has a number of seats proportional to its demographic weight; at present, Germany, France and Italy are the countries with the highest number of elected members. At the next elections to be held between **6 and 9 June 2024, 720 MEPs** will be elected, 15 more than at the last elections, the number of MEPs may never exceed 750.

These elections allow citizens of EU member states to directly vote for representatives who will shape legislation and policies at the European level.

1.2 Importance of these elections in shaping the future of Europe

In an increasingly globalized world, the influence a single country can have on particularly important issues is relative; it is very difficult for a single country alone to change the fate of the world.

If we focus on a crucial issue like sustainability, implementing environmentally sustainable strategies in just one country wouldn't create significant changes for the overall health of the planet. Conversely, the adoption of international plans, such as the Farm to Fork plan, would likely lead to more significant changes. Particularly at this stage, when crucial decisions need to be made in light of the significant changes and crises we are facing, from the climate and energy crisis to wars, the European Union will wield considerable influence in determining the future for all. Furthermore, it is important to maintain historical memory and recall that until 1945, in many European countries, the exercise of a free vote was not possible. Democracy was attained through the sacrifices of individuals who gave everything, including their lives.

Thus, it falls upon us to defend democracy, and defending it necessitates, first and foremost, its exercise. The term ‘*Democracy*’ originates from the Greek δῆμος, *démos*, meaning ‘*people*’, and κράτος, *krátos*, meaning ‘*power*’.

What power of the people would exist if individuals did not participate in elections?

1.3 Historical context and evolution of European elections

The elections in June 2024 will be the **twelfth elections** to the European Parliament. The first direct elections to the European Parliament took place in **1979**, marking a significant milestone in the democratic governance of the EU. However, since 1979, the European context has changed considerably, at least in terms of its membership structure. At the time of the first elections, there were nine voting countries: Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland.

Later in 1981, Greece also joined the Union and participated in the 1984 elections.

It was then the turn of Spain and Portugal in 1986, reaching 12 countries in the 1989 and 1994 elections. Austria, Sweden and Finland also joined in the 1999 elections. Then in 2004 there was the final opening towards the Eastern European countries, 10 more countries participated in the elections: Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Cyprus and Malta, plus Bulgaria and Romania from 2007. Finally, following the exit of Great Britain and the accession of Croatia in 2013 we now have **27 countries** voting in the European elections. As for voter turnout rates, we see that they experienced a slight and gradual decline from 1979 to 1994, dropping from 61.99% to 56.66%. However, the first big drop came with the 1999 elections in which we note the turnout of 49.51% of those eligible to vote, 7.16% less than only 5 years earlier. With the entry of the Eastern countries, the negative trend continued, going from 45.47% in 2004 to a stable 43% in 2009 and 2014.

Fortunately, in the 2019 elections, the number of voters increased significantly to 50.66%, thanks mainly to the contribution of young people who are increasingly learning to believe in the European project. A final important fact to be analysed at this stage is the heterogeneity with which countries have always presented themselves at the elections, Belgium and Luxembourg for example have always maintained a stable rate of 85/90%, recording the highest numbers, while some countries such as Slovenia and the United Kingdom have had lower rates from 25% to around 35% since their accession. Italy, on the other hand, experienced a drastic drop from around 85% at the first election to 54% at the last one; a similar fate was shared by Greece, which went from around 81% to 58% of citizens voting. In contrast, positive trends were recorded by Poland and Romania, which recorded a rate of 21% and 29% respectively at the time of their first elections, then rising to 45% in Poland and 51% in Romania.

The introduction of direct elections empowered European citizens to directly elect their representatives, enhancing the democratic accountability of the European project.

Despite efforts to promote civic engagement and raise awareness of EU issues, **voter turnout in European elections has often been lower than in national elections**. This phenomenon reflects broader issues of democratic deficit and the perceived distance between EU institutions and ordinary citizens.

In recent years, European elections have been marked by the rise of Eurosceptic and populist parties, challenging the traditional political landscape and raising questions about the future direction of European integration.

1.4 Introduction to the European Parliament and its role in representing EU citizens

The European Parliament is the main organ of the functioning of the European Union, because it is the **only organ that directly represents the citizens**. The European Parliament is the world's only directly elected transnational assembly. The Members of the European Parliament represent the interests of EU citizens at the European level.

As pointed out above, each country has a number of MEPs proportional to its demographic weight, however, there can be no fewer than 6 MEPs and no more than 96 per member country. The functioning of the parliament is articulated through modalities, committees and plenary sessions.

There are 20 committees plus three subcommittees, subdivided according to competences, they consist of a minimum of 25 and a maximum of 88 Members of Parliament, each of them has a presidency, a bureau and a secretariat. The committees have the function of amending and voting on legislative proposals and own-initiative reports. They also examine Commission and Council proposals.

Plenary sessions are presided over by a **president**, assisted by 14 vice-presidents. The President's role is decisive in this it is he who manages the votes and gives the floor to the Members. In addition to the deputies, the Commission and the Council of the Union also participate in the sessions. The work of the assembly essentially consists of discussing a bill with possible changes or amendments, and then voting on the bill.

The functions of the Parliament can be divided into **three** main branches.

Legislative activity:

- 1- Adopt legislation
- 2- Decide on international agreements
- 3- Review the Commission's work programme

Supervision:

- 1- Democratic control over all EU institutions
- 2- Elect and approve the President of the Commission
- 3- Examines citizens' petitions
- 4- Discusses monetary policy with the European Central Bank
- 5- Carries out electoral monitoring
- 6- Addresses questions to the Commission and the Council

Budget:

- 1- Draws up the budget of the European Union, together with the Council
- 2- Approves the EU's long-term budget, the "multiannual financial framework"

2. THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

2.1 Explanation of how European elections are conducted

From June 6 to 9, 2024, the 27 member states of the European Union will be called upon to elect a new Parliament at the European Elections, which are conducted every **five years**. This time, compared to the 2019 election round, there will be a small change: the members of the new Parliament will not be 705, but 720, in order to respect demographic variations between countries.

On election day, EU citizens go to the polls to vote for their representatives in the European Parliament. Voting arrangements may vary slightly from country to country, but usually involve the use of ballot papers or electronic voting. Later after the polls close, there will be the counting of votes.

Once the votes have been counted, seats in the European Parliament are allocated to political parties based on the election results. This is done through a proportional system that takes into account the number of votes received by each political parties.

After the seats have been allocated, the official election results are announced. The political parties and candidates elected to the European Parliament are then announced to the public.

Elected members of the European Parliament begin their term of office and begin working on European issues and questions during the legislature.

2.1 Explanation of how European elections are conducted

Under European electoral law, all member countries must use a proportional electoral system. This means that seats are allocated in such a way as to ensure that the different lists have a number of seats proportional to the votes received. Each State belonging to the European Union has the right to elect some of its representatives to the European Parliament.

The number of MEPs, meaning the number of seats each state is entitled to in the Parliament, is determined according to the principle of degressive proportionality: countries with larger populations have more seats than smaller countries, but the latter get more seats than they would under purely proportionality.

Although the member states of the Union have different electoral systems, there are elements common to all of them: each political group gets a number of seats in proportion to the number of votes it gets.

Each country has the freedom to decide on some important aspects of the voting procedure. For example, some countries divide their territory into regional constituencies, while others consist of a single constituency.

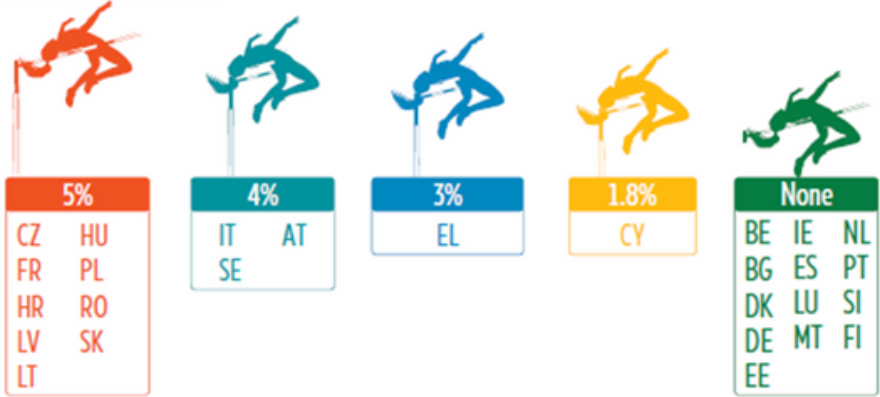
For example, in France (as in Belgium, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Croatia, Latvia, and Hungary) a political party must obtain a 5% vote share to have deputies in Strasbourg. In Italy the threshold is 4 percent.

In Germany, on the other hand, there is no restrictive clause preventing parties from gaining access to the distribution of parliamentary seats.

Even in Spain, there is no minimum electoral threshold for European elections.

The organization of constituencies also varies from one member state to another. There may be a single nationwide constituency, as has been the case in most countries since the 2019 elections, including Spain, or, as in the case of some member states, such as Belgium, Italy, Poland, and (with some peculiarities) Germany, the vote is divided into several regional constituencies.

Electoral threshold



EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/754620/EPRS_ATA\(2023\)754620_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/754620/EPRS_ATA(2023)754620_EN.pdf)

2.3 Eligibility criteria for voting in European elections

2.3.1 Age required to vote

The minimum voting age varies from country to country; one can vote from the age of 16 in four nations: Austria, Belgium, Germany, and Malta, with Austria being the first country to lower the minimum age back in 2007. In Greece, on the other hand, people can vote from the age of 17. In the other 22 states of the Union from age 18 and up.

2.3.2 Where can I vote from?

If you live in your home country

You can only vote for candidates who stand in your country. If you are registered and live in another EU country, you can:

- Vote for candidates from your home country, or
- Vote for candidates from your host country

Can I vote from abroad?

As a general rule: yes, you can, but the situation varies from country to country. All member states except the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria and Slovakia allow their citizens to vote at embassies and consulates abroad, a procedure that often requires prior registration. (Bulgaria and Italy allow this option only within another EU country).

At the same time, Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Slovenia, Finland, and Sweden allow voters to send their ballots by mail. In some cases, postage may be reimbursed.

In addition, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands allow the 'use of proxies: a person who cannot go to the polls may appoint another person to vote on his or her behalf. To date, Estonia is the only EU country offering electronic voting.

On the other hand, there is a minority of member states that have no possibility to vote from abroad: Czech Republic, Ireland, Malta and Slovakia.

Voting from a non-EU country

If you reside outside the EU, you generally have the option of voting at the embassy or consulate in your home country. However, some countries do not allow you to vote outside your home country.

Belgium			
Bulgaria	*		
Czechia	NOT POSSIBLE		
Denmark			
Germany			
Estonia			
Ireland	NOT POSSIBLE		
Greece			
Spain			
France			
Croatia			
Italy	*		
Cyprus			
Latvia			
Lithuania			
Luxembourg			
Hungary			
Malta	NOT POSSIBLE		
Netherlands			
Austria			
Poland			
Portugal			
Romania			
Slovenia			
Slovakia	NOT POSSIBLE		
Finland			
Sweden			

	By post		Proxy
	Embassy/consulate		E-voting
*	Voting from abroad only possible within another EU country.		

2.3.3 How to vote?

There are a few principles that apply universally, but beyond that, individuals are left to fend for themselves. When it comes to electing their representatives to the European Parliament, each member state has significant autonomy. What is decisive is that the electoral system utilized is proportional and that any threshold set (if it is decided to set one), does not exceed 5 percent. Instead, governments decide on all other aspects. AOnce more, some states allow voters the freedom to express preferences not only for the party list but also for individual candidates, while the choices regarding barrier thresholds vary significantly.

To see how to vote in your country, follow the link provided here.

<https://elections.europa.eu/it/how-to-vote/>

3.POLITICAL PARTIES AND REPRESENTATION

3.1 Introduction to the major political parties and groups within the European

Members of the European Parliament sit in political groups-not organized by nationality, but by political affiliation. There are currently **7 political groups** in the European Parliament.

Twenty-three MEPs are needed to form a political group, and at least a quarter of the member states must be represented within the group. Members cannot belong to more than one political group. Each political group maintains its own internal organization by appointing a chair (or two co-chairs in the case of some groups), a bureau, and a secretariat.

The seats assigned to Members in the House are decided according to political affiliation, from left to right, in agreement with the group chairmen. Before each plenary vote, the political groups examine the reports prepared by the parliamentary committees and submit amendments.

The position adopted by the political group is obtained through discussion within the group. No member can be forced to vote in a particular way.

- Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)
- Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
- Renew Europe Group
- Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance
- European Conservatives and Reformists Group
- Identity and Democracy Group
- The Left group in the European Parliament - GUE/NGL

1) Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats)



The European People's Party Group (EPP Group) is a centre-right political group of the European Parliament consisting of deputies (MEPs) from the member parties of the European People's Party (EPP). Sometimes it also includes independent MEPs and/or deputies from unaffiliated national parties.

The EPP Group comprises politicians of Christian-democratic, conservative and liberal-conservative orientation.

The following are the party's priorities:

- 1. Security:** A European Security Pact
- 2. Energy, jobs and competitiveness:** A Europe that shapes the future
- 3. Quality:** A Europe that matters to people
- 4. Solidarity:** A Europe that brings people together

More information can be found at the following link:
<https://www.eppgroup.eu/what-we-stand-for/our-priorities>

2) Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

The logo for the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) in the European Parliament. It consists of a red square with the white text 'S&D' inside.

The Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) is the political group in the European Parliament of the center-left Party of European Socialists (PES).

The following are the party's priorities:

1. On the side of Ukraine!
2. Gender equality and women's rights
3. Affordable and decent housing for all
4. The Green Deal
5. Social and labor rights for all EU citizens
6. Our inclusive digital Europe
7. Towards a health union for all citizens
8. Open strategic autonomy: making Europe a stronger global player
9. Duty of care: Putting people and the planet first with responsible business conduct
10. Fighting fascism and the far right

More information can be found at the following link:
<https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/it/what-we-stand-for/our-priorities>



3) Renew Europe Group

**renew
europe.**

Renew Europe (Renew) is a liberal, pro-European political group of the European Parliament founded for the ninth European Parliament term. Political position Centre (with centre-left and centre-right factions).

The following are the party's priorities:

1. Prosperity & digital future
2. Consumers & businesses
3. Social & health priorities
4. Sustainability
5. Agriculture & fishery
6. Democracy & freedom
7. Europe in the world

More information can be found at the following link
<https://www.reneweuropengroup.eu/our-achievements#topic-1>

4) Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance



The Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA) is a political group of the European Parliament composed primarily of green and regionalist political parties. Political position is centre-left to left-wing.

The following are the party's priorities:

1. Fight climate change and protect biodiversity
2. Make our society fair and equal
3. Protect democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights and freedoms
4. Make Europe an open and inclusive society
5. Putting the digital revolution at the service of the people
6. Making the EU a changemaker in the world
7. A feminist EU

More information can be found at the following link <https://www.greens-efa.eu/en/what-we-stand-for/our-vision>

5) European Conservatives and Reformists Group



EUROPEAN
CONSERVATIVES
AND REFORMISTS

The European Conservatives and Reformists Group was created in 2009 to articulate a Eurorealist agenda for the European Union. Ideologically, the group is broadly Euroskeptic, anti-federalist and right-wing, with center-right and far-right factions. The group advocates environmental protection, equal opportunity, social justice and an open Europe.

The following are the party's priorities:

1. Creating jobs and prosperity-recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic
2. Safeguarding citizens and borders
3. Respecting the rights and sovereignty of Member States
4. Protecting the global environment at a cost we can afford
5. Improving the Union's efficiency and effectiveness
6. Cooperating with Global Partners

More information can be found at the following link
<https://ecrgroup.eu/>

6) Identity and Democracy Group



Identity and Democracy (French: Identité et démocratie, ID) is a right-wing and far-right political group in the European Parliament, launched on June 13, 2019 for the Ninth Legislature of the European Parliament. It is composed of national nationalist, right-wing populist and Eurosceptic parties from ten European states.

The following are the party's priorities:

1. Democracy
2. Identity
3. Sovereignty
4. Budget
5. Borders

More information can be found at the following link <https://www.idgroup.eu/priorities>

7) The Left group in the European Parliament - GUE/NGL



The Left in the European Parliament - The GUE/NGL is a left-wing political group in the European Parliament founded in 1995. Occupying a left to extreme left ideological position.

The following are the party's priorities:

- 1. Economic Justice**
- 2. Environment**
- 3. Feminism**
- 4. Rights & Liberties**
- 5. Peace & Solidarity**
- 6. Democracy & Ethics**

More information can be found at the following link <https://left.eu/>

3.2 Explanation of how MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) are elected

Members of the European Parliament are elected in different ways chosen by the voting country; the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 had stipulated that elections should take place according to a common procedure established by the Council. However, the European states could not agree, so it was decided to follow common principles but to differentiate electoral systems according to the needs of the states. The Electoral Act of 1976 with its subsequent amendments therefore set the criteria that each European state must follow.

Eligibility:

The TFEU (Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union) in Article 22 expressly mentions “Every citizen of the Union residing in a Member State of which he is not a national shall have the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament in the Member State in which he resides, under the same conditions as nationals of that State”.

This article thus enshrines the possibility for any citizen of the Union to nominate themselves in parliamentary elections, however, if the person is disqualified from running for election in their own country or in the country in which they reside, the same disqualification will also apply to the European Parliament. The provision is therefore a full application of one of the founding principles of the Union, the principle of non-discrimination. However, it must be emphasised that there are also criteria for eligibility that may vary from country to country, such as age, party membership or the collection of a minimum number of signatures.

Electoral system:

As outlined above, the 1976 Act lays down electoral criteria, firstly to guarantee the democratic principle voting is by universal, free and secret suffrage. In addition, members of the European Parliament are elected by list or uninominal preferential ballot with proportional representation.

Certain choices are then left to the discretion of the Member States:

- The way in which preference voting is permitted
- The constitution of constituencies
- The fixing of a minimum threshold for the allocation of seats, not exceeding 5%.
- The possibility of setting a ceiling for candidates' campaign expenses

In addition, national criteria apply to all cases not covered by the 1976 Act.

Incompatibilities:

Article 7 of the 1976 text then establishes certain situations of incompatibility, the inability to hold the office of member of the European Parliament with another, the most important of which include:

- Member of the government of a Member State
- Member of the Commission of the European Communities
- Judge, advocate general or registrar of the Court of Justice of the European Communities or the Court of First Instance
- Member of the Executive Board of the European Central Bank

- Member of the Court of Auditors of the European Communities
- Ombudsman of the European Communities
- Member of the Consultative Committee of the European Coal and Steel Community or member of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Community and the European Atomic Energy Community
- Member of the Committee of the Regions

Finally, it is important to reiterate that the role of an MEP is extremely delicate, as this is the only body directly elected by the citizens of the member states. Although there is no mandatory mandate, which essentially obliges MEPs to follow a specific programme once elected, it is important that MEPs act in good faith, consistently representing the interests of the citizens who voted for them.

4.MAIN POINTS

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



It is the only EU body directly elected by the people



Voters choose over 700 members - or MEPs to represent nearly 450 million Europeans



MEPs work on your behalf debating, shaping and passing laws or issues central to our daily lives

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT



Defends freedom, equality and the rule of law across the EU



Promotes democracy



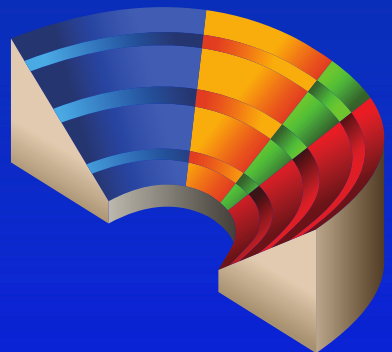
Promotes human rights around the world



Elects the president of the European Commission



Makes sure EU institutions are doing their job properly



MEPs



Decide how the EU's money is spent



Sign off on the EU budget



They are elected every 5 years



How many MEPs are elected?



A total of 720 MEPs will be elected in June 2024, 15 more compared to the previous elections.



As a general rule, the number of MEPs is decided before each election. The total cannot exceed 750 plus the president.



Do we vote for national parties or European parties?



Elections are contested by national political parties but once MEPs are elected, most opt to become part of transnational political groups. Most national parties are affiliated to a European-wide political party.



What happens immediately after the election?



The elected MEPs work to form political groups. At its first plenary session where all MEPs meet, the new Parliament elects a President.



In a subsequent session, Parliament will elect the new President of the European Commission and later will examine and approve the entire College of Commissioners.

Why voting matters



Shaping the future of European democracy



Deciding on the future of the European Union



Use your vote to help change the world you live in



Use your vote to tackle the global challenges that surround us



Use your vote to stand for democracy

The more people vote, the stronger democracy becomes.

When are the next European elections?

The next European elections will be held on **6-9 June 2024**.



European
Elections
2024
6-9 June



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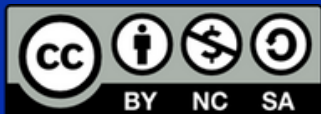


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