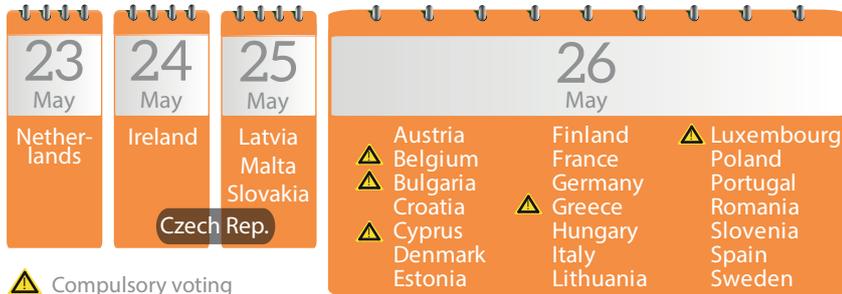


2019 European elections: National rules

Expected election day

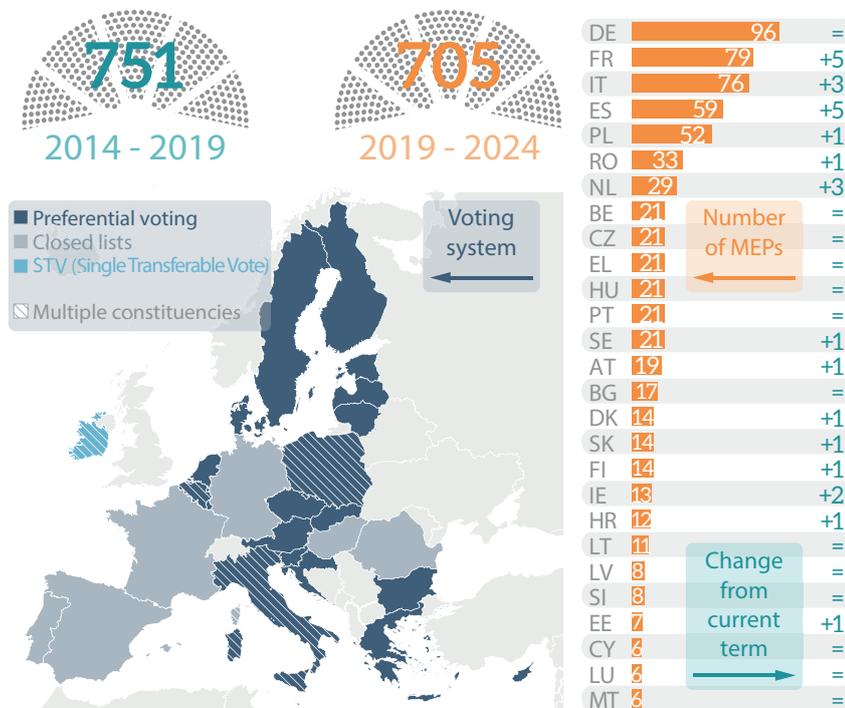


▲ Compulsory voting

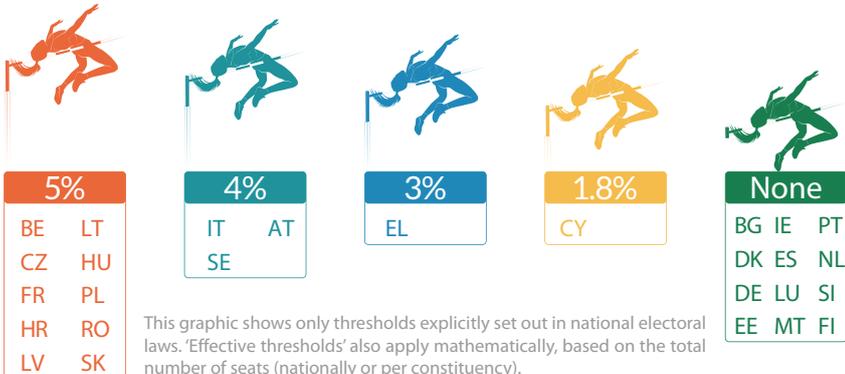
Election day following national custom.

NB In a number of countries the day will only be formally confirmed closer to the election.

Number of MEPs and voting system

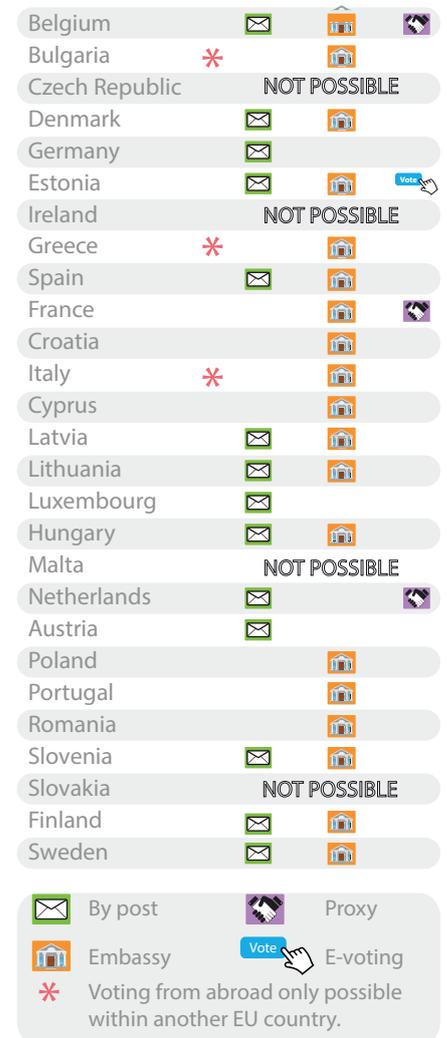


Electoral threshold



This graphic shows only thresholds explicitly set out in national electoral laws. 'Effective thresholds' also apply mathematically, based on the total number of seats (nationally or per constituency).

Voting methods for citizens resident abroad



Minimum age of candidates



Note: This infographic shows the situation based on information supplied to the authors by national sources up to 1 October 2018. It will be updated periodically, as the rules in individual Member States are confirmed in the run-up to the 2019 elections. For any questions on voting rights in specific individual cases, please refer to the relevant Member State authorities.

Further information

Item	Data source
Election day	The elections to the European Parliament (EP) will be held in all EU Member States between 23 and 26 May 2019. The precise day of elections is set by Member States; in several cases, this has yet to be confirmed formally for 2019. Election results can be published only after the polls close in the Member State whose voters are the last to vote on Sunday 26 May 2019.
Compulsory voting	Voting is compulsory in only five Member States – BE, BG, LU, CY and EL, where the legal obligation to vote applies to both nationals and registered non-national EU citizens.
Number of MEPs	The EP currently has 751 MEPs (the maximum possible under Article 14(2) TEU). Following the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU, some of the seats now held by Members elected in the UK will be redistributed among Member States, and the overall total number of seats reduced to 705.
Voting system	MEPs are elected according to national electoral systems, but these have to observe certain common provisions established by EU law such as proportional representation. As a general rule, voters can choose between political parties, individual candidates or both. While in some Member States, voters can only vote for a list, without the possibility to change the order of candidates on the list (closed list), in other Member States voters can express their preference for one or more of the candidates (preferential voting). Depending on the degree of freedom voters enjoy when casting their preferential vote, one can distinguish between semi-open lists, where voters can change the position of one or all candidates on a single chosen list, and open lists, where voters can vote for candidates from different lists. Instead of a list system, some Member States use the single transferable vote (STV). Under this system, the voter has one vote but can rank the candidates in order of their first, second, third, etc. choice. To be elected, a candidate needs to receive a minimum number of votes.
Constituencies	Whilst in the majority of Member States the national territory forms a single electoral constituency for the European elections, certain Member States have divided their territories into multiple constituencies. These are: BE, IE, IT and PL.
Voting from abroad	Almost all Member States allow the possibility to vote from abroad in EP elections. Some Member States require voters to pre-register with their national electoral authorities to be eligible to vote from abroad by post or at an embassy/consulate. In several Member States, the right to vote abroad applies only to citizens living in another EU Member State (e.g. BG, IT). In addition, most Member States make special arrangements for diplomats and military personnel serving abroad. In some Member States (e.g. Denmark), voting at embassies takes place prior to election day. New amendments to the 1976 Electoral Act , to which Parliament gave its consent in plenary on 4 July 2018, state that Member States may provide for the possibilities of advance voting, postal voting, and electronic and internet voting, in elections to the European Parliament. Where they do so, they shall adopt measures sufficient to ensure in particular the reliability of the result, the secrecy of the vote, and the protection of personal data in accordance with applicable Union law. Member States shall take the necessary measures to ensure that double voting in elections to the European Parliament is subject to effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties. Finally, Member States may take the necessary measures to allow those of their citizens residing in third countries to vote in elections to the European Parliament. Franchise and Electoral Participation of Third Country Citizens Residing in the European Union and of EU Citizens Residing in Third Countries , Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, European Parliament, PE 474.441, 2013.
Electoral threshold	The European Parliament adopted a resolution on 11 November 2015 based on a legislative initiative report on the reform of the electoral law of the EU. Among the changes was a measure on thresholds. Based on Parliament's initiative, Council made a modified proposal for a decision, to which Parliament gave its consent on 4 July 2018. Following the Parliament's consent, the Council adopted the decision on 13 July 2018. The new rules set an obligatory threshold in certain cases for the allocation of seats. At national level, this threshold may not exceed 5 % of valid votes cast. Moreover, Member States in which the list system is used shall set a minimum threshold for the allocation of seats for constituencies which comprise more than 35 seats. This threshold shall not be lower than 2 %, and shall not exceed 5 % of the valid votes cast in the constituency concerned, including a single-constituency Member State. In practice, this provision concerns only the largest Member States. Member States will have to comply with this obligation at the latest in time for the Parliament's election in 2024. NB: There is currently no electoral threshold in Germany . This is due to a 2014 German Federal Constitutional Court decision that declared the 3% electoral threshold unconstitutional. Reform of the Electoral Law of the European Union : European Added Value Assessment accompanying the legislative own-initiative report, EPRS, 2015. Reform of the Electoral Law of the EU , Legislative Train Schedule, European Parliament, 2018.
Minimum age of candidates	The minimum age to be eligible to vote and to stand as a candidate in the European elections is established by national law. While the age to be eligible to vote is 18 years in all Member States (except Greece, where the voting age is 17, and Austria and Malta, where the voting age is 16), the minimum age necessary to stand as a candidate in the European elections varies considerably, ranging from 18 to 25 years old.

Country codes

Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Croatia (HR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI) and Sweden (SE).

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