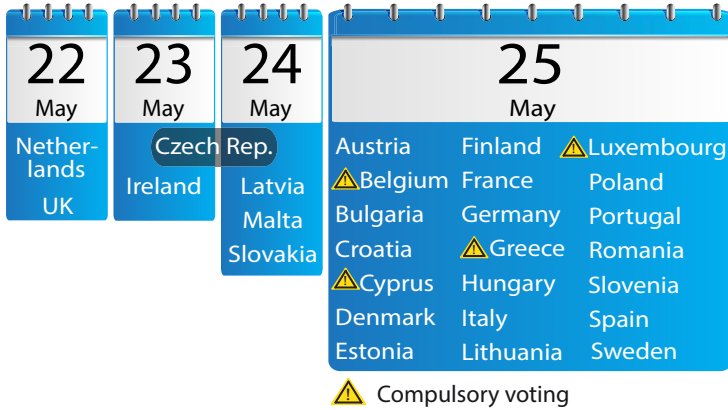


# 2014 European elections: national rules

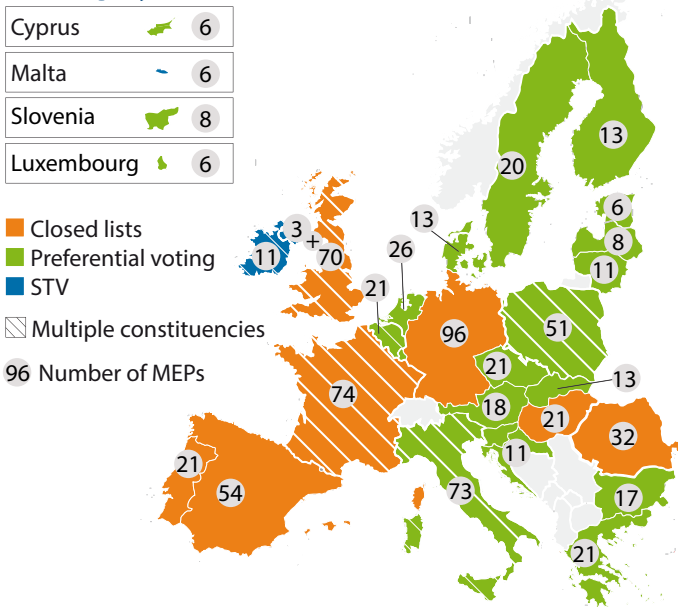
## Election day



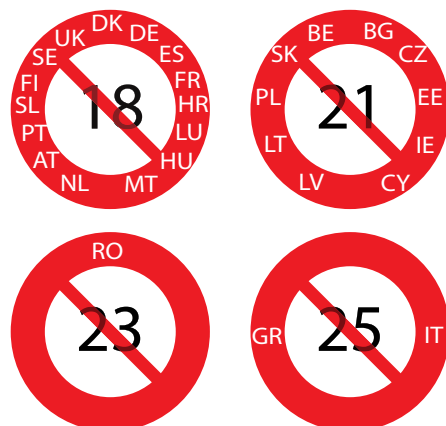
## Voting from abroad



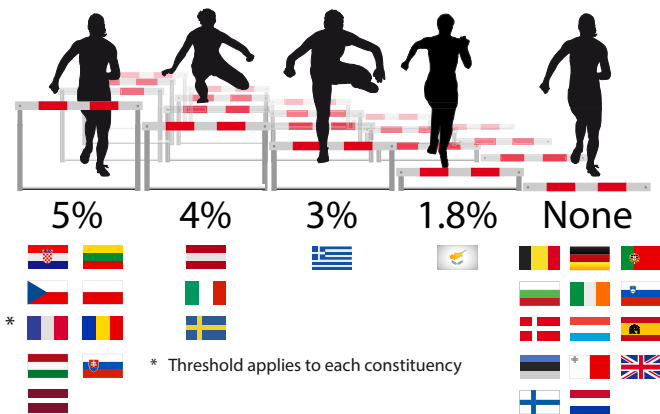
## Voting system and number of MEPs



## Minimum age of candidates



## Electoral threshold



## Sources

Item	Data source
Election day	The elections to the European Parliament (EP) will be held in all EU Member States (MS) between 22 and 25 May 2014. Following <a href="#">Parliament's initiative</a> , the electoral period was <a href="#">brought forward</a> from June, in particular to provide additional time for the newly elected Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) to prepare for the election of the new Commission President. The precise day of elections is set by MS; in some cases this has yet to be done formally for 2014. The official election results can be published only after the poll closes in the MS whose electors are the last to vote on Sunday 25 May 2014.
Compulsory voting	Voting is compulsory in only four MS - BE, LU, CY and GR, where the legal obligation to vote applies to nationals and registered non-national EU citizens.
Number of MEPs	The EP currently has 766 MEPs (754 + 12 for Croatia which joined in 2013). After the 2014 elections, this will be reduced to 751 MEPs ( <a href="#">Article 14(2) TEU</a> ). <a href="#">Resolution of 13 March 2013 on the composition of the European Parliament with a view to the 2014 elections</a> / European Parliament.
Voting system	MEPs are elected according to national electoral systems, but these have to observe certain <a href="#">common provisions</a> 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 MS, voters can only vote for a list, without the possibility to change the order of candidates on the list (closed list), in other MS voters can express their preference for one or more of the candidates (preferential voting). Depending on the degree of liberty voters enjoy when casting their preferential vote, we can distinguish between semi-open lists, where voters can change the position of one or all candidates on one chosen list, and open lists, where voters can vote for candidates from different lists. Instead of a list system some MS 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. <a href="#">Electoral systems: the link between governance, elected members and voters</a> / European Parliament, Office for Promotion of Parliamentary Democracy, 2011.
Constituencies	Whilst in the majority of MS the national territory forms a single electoral constituency for the European elections, six MS have divided their territories into multiple constituencies: BE, FR, IE, IT, PL, UK. Study on possible developments of EU legislation in the field of electoral matters including possible modification of Directive 93/109/EC / Instituto Europeo de Derecho (IED), 2010.
Voting from abroad	Almost all MS allow the possibility to vote from abroad in EP elections. Some MS require voters to pre-register with their national electoral authorities to be eligible to vote from abroad by post or at an embassy/consulate. Several MS confer the right to vote only to those citizens living abroad in another EU MS. In addition, most MS make special arrangements for diplomats and military personnel serving abroad. In some MS (e.g. Denmark), voting at embassies takes place prior to election day. <a href="#">Franchise and Electoral Participation of Third Country Citizens Residing in the European Union and of EU Citizens Residing in Third Countries</a> / EP Policy Department C, PE 474.441, 2013. Study on possible developments of EU legislation in the field of electoral matters / IED, 2010.
Electoral threshold	<a href="#">EU law</a> authorises MS to establish thresholds of up to 5% for the allocation of seats in the European elections. 14 MS have formal (established by law) thresholds. In its resolution of November 2012, the EP <a href="#">called</a> on MS to introduce in their electoral laws appropriate and proportionate minimum thresholds for the European elections, in order to "safeguard the functionality of Parliament" by avoiding further fragmentation. Even in those MS without a formally established threshold there is an 'effective' threshold, which can exceed 5%, particularly in MS with a small number of seats in Parliament. <a href="#">Electoral thresholds in European elections: Developments in Germany</a> / European Parliamentary Research Service Briefing, E M Poptcheva, 2014. <a href="#">The European elections: EU legislation, national provisions and civic participation</a> / W Lehmann, EP Policy Department C, PE 493.047, 2014.
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 necessary to be eligible to vote is 18 years in all MS, except Austria where voting age is 16, the minimum age necessary to stand as a candidate in the European elections varies considerably. <a href="#">Electoral systems: the link between governance, elected members and voters</a> / European Parliament, 2011.

**Note:** country codes and flags

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

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*Revised version presenting the legal situation in the 28 MS as known to us on 10 April 2014.*

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