

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001155/19**  
**to the Commission**  
**Manolis Kefalogiannis (PPE)**  
(4 March 2019)

*Subject:* The Greek Government's decision to exclude Greeks residing in the UK from the European elections is highly undemocratic.

The Greek Government, under the pretext of the UK's impending withdrawal from the EU, has announced that its citizens living, working or studying in the UK will not be able to vote there.

The Greek Embassy in London is calling on the 70 000 Greeks in the UK to go to neighbouring countries in order to vote.

This decision by the Government to deny its citizens their constitutionally guaranteed right to vote in the European elections is highly undemocratic. Furthermore, if the UK has not left the EU before the European elections, then depriving Greeks of their right to vote in their place of residence is surely illegal under EC law. Moreover, the fact that the Greek Government is illegally denying its citizens the right to vote might even cast doubt on the legitimacy of the European elections in Greece, possibly even requiring a rerun.

1. Is the Commission aware that the Greek Government has taken this decision?
2. What action does the Commission intend to take to give Greeks residing in the United Kingdom the opportunity to vote in the upcoming European elections?

**Answer given by Ms Jourová on behalf of the European Commission**  
(25 June 2019)

Since the submission of the questions by the Honourable Member, the United Kingdom participated in the 2019 elections to the European Parliament, rendering the questions no longer pertinent for these elections.

With regards to the substance of the questions asked, the Commission would like to inform the Honourable Member that the Commission does not have a general power to intervene in electoral matters. As regards to European elections, while Member States must respect EC law, it falls within their own competence to regulate aspects of electoral procedures not harmonised at EU level, such as the conditions for voting from another EU Member State or from a third country. The Commission is aware that Member States' conditions for granting their citizens the right to vote in the European elections from outside their home country differ. In that regard, the Commission would like to refer the Honourable Member to the information publicly available on the right to vote from abroad in European elections. <sup>(1)</sup>

In 2018, the Council of the European Union adopted a revision of the 1976 electoral law act <sup>(2)</sup>, which now includes a new Article 4a stating 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'.

The revised electoral act is currently under ratification by the Member States.

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<sup>(1)</sup> <https://www.european-elections.eu/how-to-vote/from-abroad>

<sup>(2)</sup> Council Decision (EU, Euratom) 2018/994 of 13 July 2018 amending the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, annexed to Council Decision 76/787/ECSC, EEC, Euratom of 20 September 1976, OJ L 178, 16.7.2018, p. 1-3.