

The harmonisation of the electoral procedure features in article 138 of the Rome Treaty 1957 but it has never been accepted by the European Council (a majority vote by Parliament and a unanimous vote on the part of the Council are vital for the adoption of a uniform mode of election). There is only one common element to the European elections: since 1999 they all take place according to a proportional list system.

However, the day of the vote, the number of constituencies, and the access threshold to list representation, the vote distribution system and the attribution of seats differ from one Member State to another.

The table and notes below summarize the main electoral rules in application amongst the 27 during the elections on 4th and 7th June next.

Summary table of electoral rules in each Member State

Member State	Deadline for deposit of lists	Deadline for registration on electoral rolls	Campaign start date	N° of constituencies	Voting method	Means of attributing seats	Minimum age for eligibility	Election Dates
Germany	66 days before the election	17 May	No official date	1	Proportional representation (closed lists)	Sainte Lagüe/Schepers Method (5 % minimum of votes cast)	18 years	7 June
Austria	37 days before the election	31 March	No official date	1	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	D'Hondt Method (4% minimum of votes cast)	18 years	7 June

Belgium	Before 11 April	1 April	3 months before the election	4 constituencies & 3 electoral colleges (Dutch, French & German speaking)	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	D'Hondt Method	21 years	7 June
Bulgaria	35 days before the election	35 days before the election	7 May	1	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	Hare Niemeyer Method	21 years	7 June
Cyprus	30 days before the election	2 April	7 May	1	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	Hare Niemeyer Method	25 years	6 June
Denmark	7 May	4 May	No official date	1 (the national territory except for the Faroe Isles and Greenland)	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	D'Hondt Method	18 years	7 June
Spain	Between 15 and 20 days after the notification of the election	27 April	25 May	1	Proportional representation (closed lists)	D'Hondt Method	18 years	7 June
Estonia	45 days before the election	8 May	45 days before the election	1	Proportional representation (closed lists)	D'Hondt Method	21 years	7 June
Finland	5 May	19 March	No official date	1	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	D'Hondt Method	18 years	7 June

France	From 11 to 22 May	31 December 2008	25 May	8	Proportional representation (closed lists)	D'Hondt Method (5% minimum of votes cast in the constituency)	23 years	6 and 7 June
Greece	13 days before the election	28 February	7 May	1	Proportional representation (closed lists)	de Droop Method (3% minimum of votes cast)	25 years	7 June
Hungary	30 days before the election	30 April	On the day of notification of the election	1	Proportional representation (closed lists)	D'Hondt Method (5% minimum of votes cast in the constituency)	18 years	7 June
Ireland	From 4 to 10 May	18 May	No official date	4	Proportional representation (single transferable vote)	The voter ranks candidates by order of preference in the list. A candidate is elected as soon as he/she reaches the required quota -, any additional votes won are redistributed proportionally amongst the remaining candidates	21 years	5 June
Italy	39 days before the election	9 March	6 May	5	Proportional representation (preferential vote and possibility of the transfer of votes from one constituency to another)	Complete quota Method and the highest remainder which are added on at a national level	25 years	6 and 7 June

Latvia	Between 80 and 65 days before the election	7 May	No official date	1	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	Sainte Lagüe Method (5% minimum of votes cast)	21 years	6 June
Lithuania	Between 65 and 34 days before the election	34 days before the election	7 May	1	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	Hagenbach-Bischoff Method (5% minimum of votes cast)	21 years	7 June
Luxembourg	60 days before the election	13 March	4 May	1	Proportional representation (open lists – mixing possible)	Hagenbach-Bischoff Method	18 years	7 June
Malta	35 days before the election	31 March	No official date	1	Proportional representation (single transferable vote)	The voter ranks the candidates by order of preference. A candidate is elected as soon as he/she achieves the required quota – any additional votes he/she wins are redistributed proportionally amongst the remaining candidates.	18 years	6 June

The Netherlands	2 April	22 April	No official date	1	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	D'Hondt Method	18 years	4 June
Poland	40 days before the election	40 days before the election	On the day of the notification of the election	13	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	Mandates are distributed per constituency nationally according to the d'D'Hondt Method (5% minimum of votes cast), more seats are attributed to the lists according to the Hare Niemeyer Method	21 years	7 June
Portugal	41 days before the election	8 April	14 days before the election	1	Proportional representation (closed lists)	D'Hondt Method	18 years	7 June
Czech Republic	60 days before the election	26 April	16 days before the election	1	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	D'Hondt Method (5% minimum of votes cast)	21 years	5 (pm) and 6 (am) June
Romania	60 days before the election	60 days before the election	7 May	1	Proportional representation (closed lists)	D'Hondt Method	23 years	7 June
United Kingdom		19 April	No official date	12	Proportional representation (closed lists)	D'Hondt Method	21 years	4 June

Northern Ireland					Proportional representation (single transferable vote)	The voter ranks the candidates by order of preference on the list. A candidate is elected when he achieves the required quota – any additional votes he/she wins are redistributed proportionally amongst the remaining candidates.		
Slovakia	65 days before the election	27 April	21 days before the election	1	Proportional representation (preferential vote for 2 candidates)	Hagenbach-Bischoff Method (5% minimum of the votes cast)	21 years	6 June
Slovenia	30 days before the election	24 March	7 May	1	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	D'Hondt Method	18 years	7 June
Sweden	13 March	8 May	No official date	1	Proportional representation (preferential vote)	Modified Sainte Lagüe Method (4% minimum of votes cast)	18 years	7 June

Source: Adapted from C. Deloy, D. Reynié, Les élections européennes de juin 2004, PUF, 2004 and the Website of the European Parliament
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2009/countries/default.htm?language=EN>
<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/elections2009/countries/default.htm;jsessionid=F898BDE873FDE521F30F59321F614C6E.node1?language=EN>

Countries where it is obligatory to vote

Belgium, Cyprus (no sanction), Greece (no sanction), Luxembourg (except for the 75's and over).

Candidates

In *France*, the lists must include twice the number of candidates as there are seats available. In *Romania* each list must include 10 candidates more than the number of seats available.

Voters

In *Austria*, the right to vote starts when someone turns 16.

In the *UK*, Commonwealth citizens are allowed to vote.

Other elections

Six Member States will be voting for other purpose on the same day as the European Elections.

Germany: Regional and local by-elections

Denmark: Referendum on the order of succession to the throne

Ireland: Local elections

Italy: Provincial and local by-elections

Belgium: Regional elections

Latvia: Local elections

Luxembourg: General elections

Lithuania: (possibly) 2nd round of the presidential election

Malta: Local by-elections

UK: Local by-elections

Specific electoral measures

Belgium: Male/female parity on the lists. In addition to this the two leading candidates on each list cannot be of the same sex.

Spain: The lists cannot include more than 60% of the same sex.

France: Male/female parity (lists must comprise alternately a candidate of each sex).

Italy: The lists must include at least one third of the least represented sex.

Portugal: Each list must include at least one third of women.

Slovenia: The lists cannot include more than 60% of candidates of the same sex. Each list must include a representative of each sex in an eligible position.

Distribution of seats

Germany and *Italy* have systems whereby the national and regional administrative constituencies are mixed (candidates lists can be put together either on a regional or national level).

Political incompatibility of being an MEP

Germany

None.

Austria

Yes, with the mandate of national Senator or MP.

Belgium

Yes, with the mandate of national Senator or MP, member of a council (of a community, a region or a province) or the mandate of mayor of a town with over 50,000 inhabitants.

Bulgaria

None.

Cyprus

Yes, with the mandate of mayor and town councillor.

Denmark

Yes, with the mandate of national MP and town councillor.

Spain

Yes, with the mandate of national MP and town councillor.

Estonia

Yes, with the mandate of national MP.

Finland

None.

France

Yes, with the mandate of Regional Councillor, Councillor in the Corsican Assembly, General Councillor, Paris Councillor or town councillor in a community with at least 3,500 inhabitants.

Greece

Yes, with the mandate of national MP.

Hungary

Yes, with the mandate of national MP.

Ireland

Yes, with the mandate of national Senator or MP.

Italy

Yes, with the mandate of national Senator or MP, president of a region or province, regional council or mayor of a town with over 15,000 inhabitants.

Latvia

Yes, with the mandate of national MP and town councillor.

Lithuania

Yes, with the mandate of national MP.

Luxembourg

None.

Malta

Yes, with the mandate of national MP and town councillor.

The Netherlands

None.

Poland

Yes, with the mandate of national Senator or MP.

Portugal

Yes, with the mandate of national MP.

Czech Republic

Yes, with the mandate of national Senator or MP.

Romania

Yes, with the mandate of national Senator or MP.

UK

None.

Slovakia

Yes, with the mandate of national MP.

Slovenia

Yes, with the mandate of national MP.

Sweden

None.