

**Findings and Recommendations**  
**Election Assessment Mission**  
**European Parliament Elections 2019**

**European Parliament**  
**Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO)**

Brussels, 28 January 2020

# Introduction



- Who are we?
- Why and how we engage in European elections?
- Presentation of key findings
- Key recommendations
- Next steps

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# Background



- **Network** of European election observers
- **Declaration of Principles** for Election Observers
- Member of **Global Network of Domestic Election Monitors**
- **Memorandum of Understanding** “This Time I’m Voting”
- **Social Media Monitoring** during Austrian Snap Elections

# Background



- **Needs Assessment Mission**
- **Election Assessment Mission**
  - 28 National Chapter Focal Points
  - 65 Election experts
  - 1 Coordination Team
  - 8 Organisations accross Europe

# Objectives



- European integration & democratic resilience
- Enhanced citizen participation
- Promoting election observation
- **Recommendations &** electoral reform advocacy

# Focus Areas



- Adaptation of EU regulations and international standards
  1. Differences of electoral calendars (voter registration)
  2. Campaign finance regulations
  3. Social media regulations
  4. Electoral participation of persons with disabilities

# EQUALITY

## Key Findings

### CLOSING DATE OF VOTER REGISTRATION

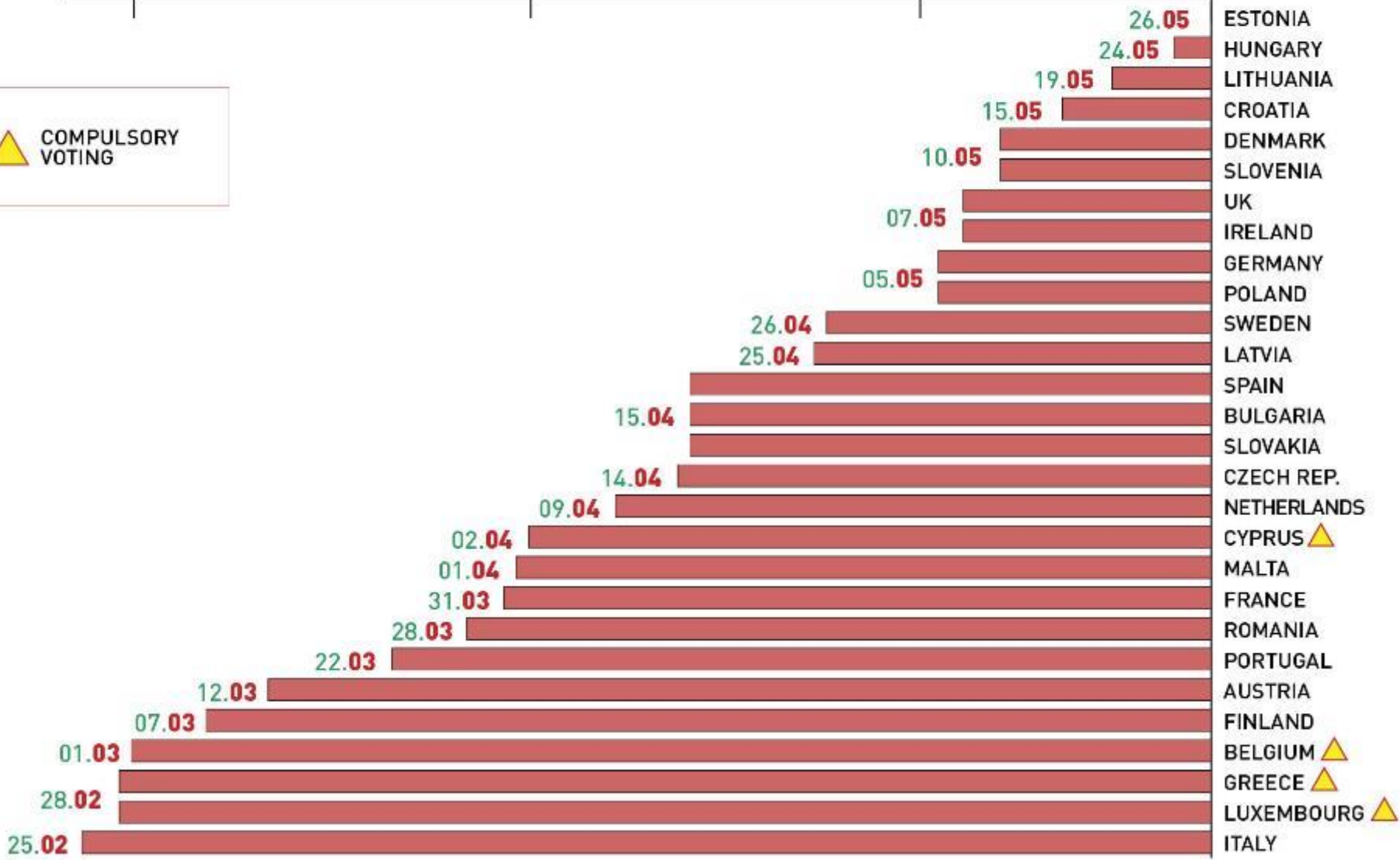
MARCH

APRIL

MAY

**ELECTION DAY**  
23-26  
MAY 2019

 COMPULSORY VOTING



# EQUALITY

## ELECTORAL THRESHOLD, SEAT ALLOCATION AND LISTS/PREFERENTIAL VOTES

### Key Findings

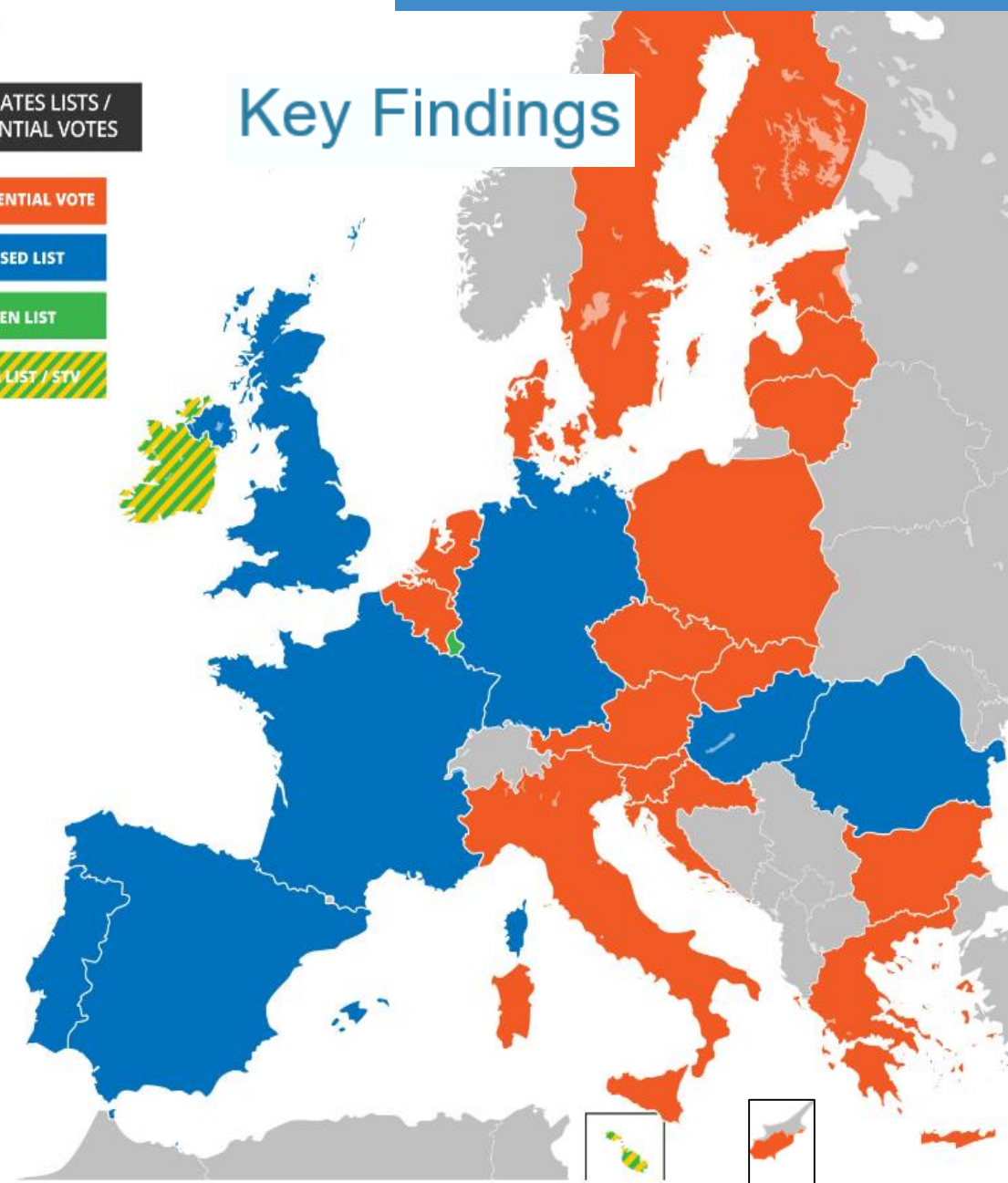
ELECTORAL THRESHOLD	EU MEMBER STATE	SEAT ALLOCATION METHOD	CANDIDATES LISTS / PREFERENTIAL VOTES	
1,80%	CYPRUS	Droop / largest remainder	PREFERENTIAL VOTE	
3%	GREECE	Droop / largest remainder	CLOSED LIST	
4%	AUSTRIA	d'Hondt	OPEN LIST	
	ITALY	Hare & largest remainder		
	SWEDEN	modified Sainte-Laguë		
5%	HUNGARY	d'Hondt	OPEN LIST / STV	
	ROMANIA	d'Hondt		
	BELGIUM	d'Hondt		
	CROATIA	d'Hondt		
	CZECH REP.	d'Hondt		
	POLAND	d'Hondt & Hare / Niemeyer		
	SLOVAKIA	Droop		
	LITHUANIA	Hare / Niemeyer		
	LATVIA	Sainte-Laguë		
	5% (in Con.)	FRANCE		Hare / d'Hondt
	NONE	PORTUGAL		d'Hondt
SPAIN		d'Hondt		
UK		d'Hondt		
LUXEMBOURG		d'Hondt		
DENMARK		d'Hondt		
FINLAND		d'Hondt		
SLOVENIA		d'Hondt		
ESTONIA		d'Hondt		
IRELAND		Droop / STV		
MALTA		Droop / STV		
NETHERLANDS		Hare / d'Hondt		
BULGARIA		Hare / Niemeyer		
GERMANY		Sainte-Laguë / Schepers		

**PREFERENTIAL VOTE**

**CLOSED LIST**

**OPEN LIST**

**OPEN LIST / STV**



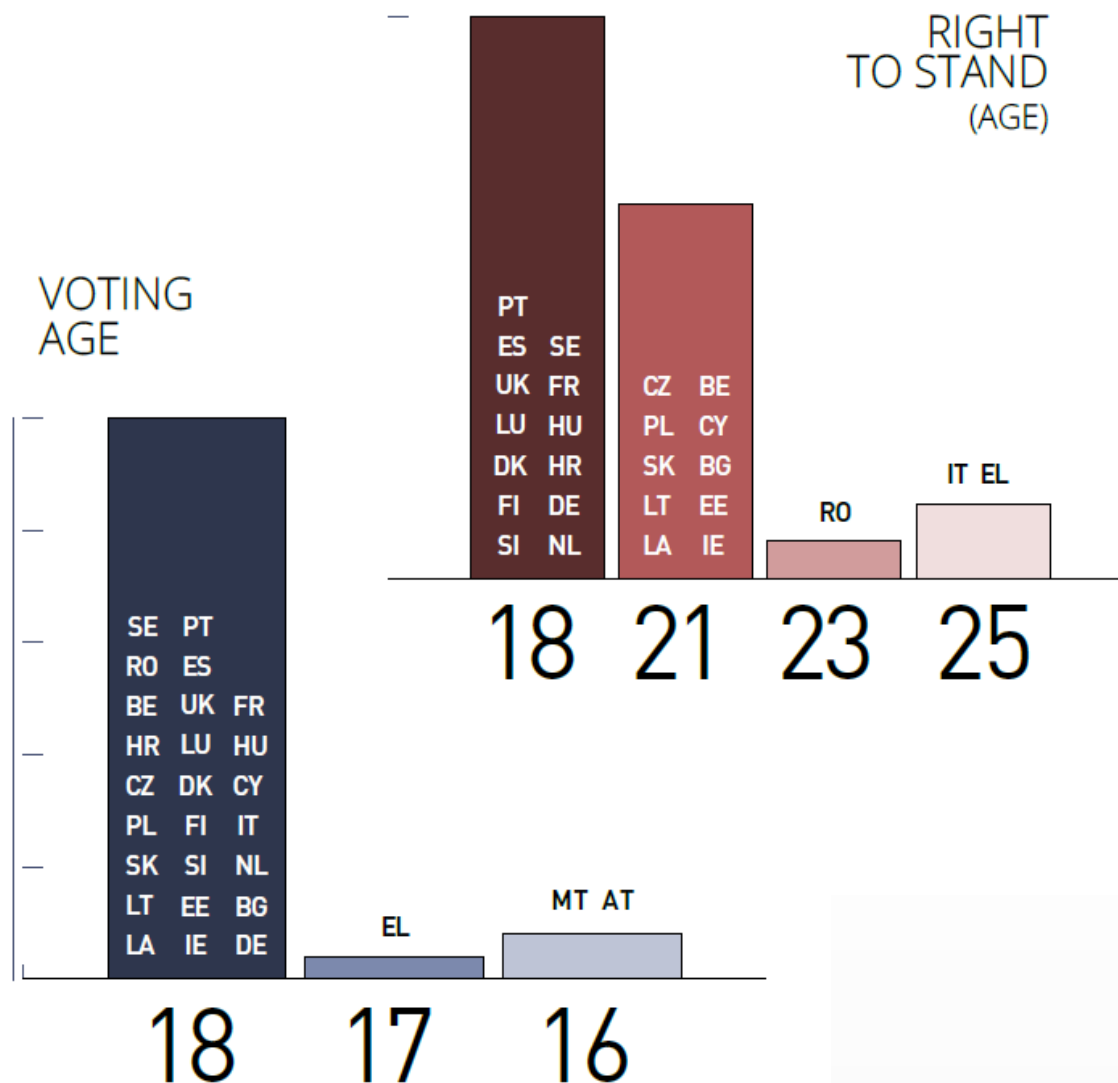


# INCLUSION

VOTING AGE, RIGHT TO STAND,  
AND VOTING METHODS

## Key Findings

- Restrictions for independent candidates
- Voting with 16 years supported by EP
- Varying levels of women representation
- #thistimeImvoting campaign for young voters



# VOTING METHODS

## Key Findings

- No equal access to vote
- 15 EU MS offer postal voting
- 4 EU MS still have proxy voting
- No out of country voting in 6 EU MS
- Internet voting in Estonia
- Advance voting in 10 EU MS
- 4 EU MS with compulsory voting



EU MEMBER STATE	POSTAL VOTING	PROXY VOTING	OUT OF COUNTRY VOTING	INTERNET / ELECTRONIC VOTING	ADVANCED VOTING
AUSTRIA	✓	✗	✓		✗
BELGIUM	✓	✓	✓	VOTING MACHINES	✗
BULGARIA	✗	✗	✓	PILOT	✗
CROATIA	✗	✗	✓		✗
CYPRUS	✗	✗	✓		✗
CZECH REP.	✗	✗	✗		✗
DENMARK	✓	✗	✓		✓
ESTONIA	✓	✗	✓	INTERNET VOTING	✓
FINLAND	✓	✗	✓		✓
FRANCE	✗	✓	✓		✗
GERMANY	✓	✗	✓		✗
GREECE	✗	✗	✗		✗
HUNGARY	✓	✗	✓		✗
IRELAND	✓	✗	✗		✗
ITALY	✗	✗	✓ EU MS only		✗
LATVIA	✓	✗	✓		✓
LITHUANIA	✗	✗	✓		✓
LUXEMBOURG	✓	✗	✗		✗
MALTA	✗	✗	✗	PILOT	✓
NETHERLANDS	✓	✓	✓		✗
POLAND	✓ PWD only	✓	✓		✗
PORTUGAL	✗	✗	✓	PILOT	✓
ROMANIA	✗	✗	✓		✗
SLOVAKIA	✗	✗	✗		✓
SLOVENIA	✓	✗	✓		✓
SPAIN	✓	✗	✓		✗
SWEDEN	✓	✓	✓		✓
UK	✓	✓	✓		✗

EU MEMBER STATE	INCAPACITY RIGHT TO VOTE RESTRICTION	INCAPACITY RIGHT TO STAND RESTRICTION
Croatia	✗	✗
Italy	✗	✗
Sweden	✗	✗
Austria	✗	✗
Cyprus	✗	✓
Finland	✗	✓
France	✗	✓
Ireland	✗	✓
Slovakia	✗	✓
Latvia	✗	✓
Netherlands	✗	–
Spain	✗	–
UK	✗	–
Denmark	✗	–
Belgium	✓	✓
Czech Rep.	✓	✓
Estonia	✓	✓
Germany	✓	✓
Lithuania	✓	✓
Luxembourg	✓	✓
Malta	✓	✓
Poland	✓	✓
Portugal	✓	✓
Bulgaria	✓	✓
Greece	✓	✓
Hungary	✓	✓
Romania	✓	–
Slovenia	✓	–

## Key Findings

### Participation of Persons with Disabilities

- Prioritise physical accessibility
- Participation through alternative voting options
- 13 MS guarantee the right to vote for all PWD without restrictions
- 15 MS with limited suffrage rights (based on mental disability or lack of legal capacity)
- EU acceded to Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

# Key Findings

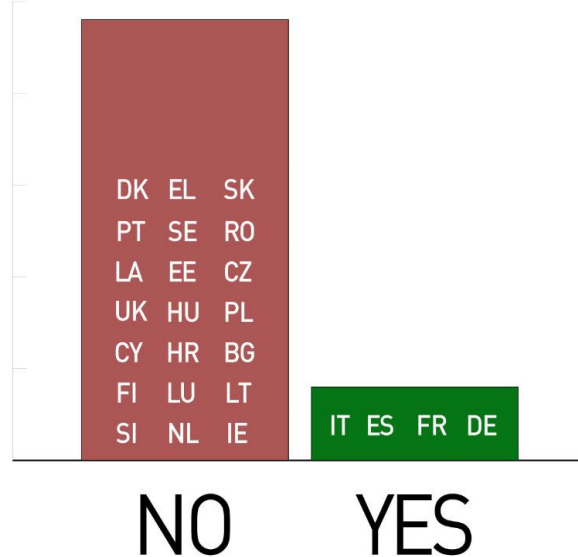
- New regulatory framework and authority (APPF)
- Unequal conditions for parties and candidates
- Foreign funding forbidden in half of the EU Member States
- Public funding is available in all but 3 Member States

## ACCOUNTABILITY (CAMPAIGN FINANCE) PUBLIC FUNDING, FOREIGN FUNDING, SPENDING LIMITS, REPORTING, AND DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS

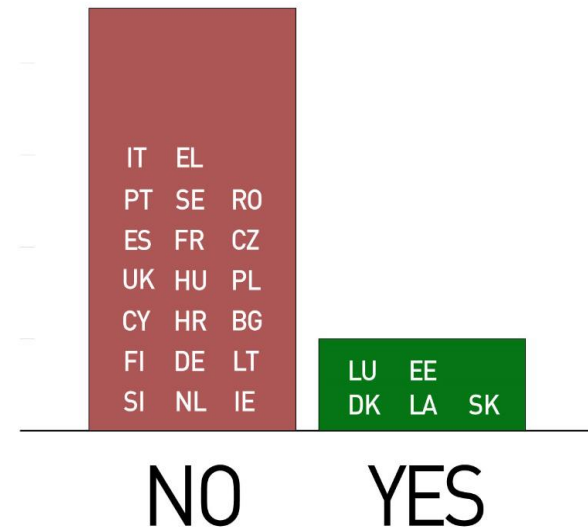
EU MEMBER STATE	PUBLIC FUNDING	PRIVATE FUNDING*	FOREIGN FUNDING**	SPENDING LIMITS	REPORTING & DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS	REASONABLE SANCTIONS
<b>HUNGARY</b>	no	with limitations	no	no	no data	no data
<b>ITALY</b>	no	with limitations	no	yes	yes	yes
<b>MALTA</b>	no	with limitations	no	yes	no data	no data
<b>BELGIUM</b>	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	yes***	yes	yes	yes
<b>BULGARIA</b>	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	no	yes	yes	yes
<b>CYPRUS</b>	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	no	no data	yes	no
<b>DENMARK</b>	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	yes, without limits	yes	no	limited	no data

# Key Findings

SOCIAL MEDIA SPECIAL LEGISLATION



SOCIAL MEDIA OVERSIGHT MECHANISM



## Social Media Regulation

- Fears about large-scale disinformation campaigns and foreign interference
- Code of Practice for social media and online platforms
- Important to provide guidance, greater transparency, and independent oversight

# Key Findings



## Regulations for Election Observation (international – national)

- Regulations vary across EU MS – partly restrictive
- 8 EU MS have full legislation and accreditation systems in place
- 5 EU MS open voting and counting to the public
- Election-Watch.EU was accredited by 12 EU MS



# 16 Recommendations

## ➤ Equality, Inclusion, Transparency, Accountability

- Electoral reform process
- Electoral system
- Suffrage rights
- Persons with disabilities
- Voter registration
- Civic education
- Alternative voting methods
- Campaign finance
- Social media regulation
- Election observation

### Elections to the European Parliament 23-26 May 2019

ELECTION-WATCH.EU  
Election Assessment Mission

Final Report



Brussels  
16 September 2019

# Recommendations



*3. The ‘**Spitzenkandidaten principle**’ should be reviewed to ensure greater cohesion among European institutions and Member States regarding its purpose and expected impact, and to enhance clarity for the electorate.*



# Recommendations



***5. Ensure the equality of the right to vote and to stand as a candidate across the EU - harmonize the requirements related to the minimum voting age, residency requirements, independent candidacy, permissible restrictions on suffrage rights, and measures to support the equal participation of women.***

# Recommendations



*6. Remaining barriers to effective **electoral participation of persons with disabilities** should be removed, including those related to restrictions on suffrage rights based on mental/intellectual disability.*

*Measures aimed at **supporting independent and informed voting and decision-making** by persons with disabilities should be prioritized.*

# Recommendations

7. *To effectively elicit and **prevent possible multiple registration and voting**, the coordination and voter data exchange mechanisms between EU Member States require considerable improvement.*

*Further guidelines could be developed to ensure the **uniformity of format** and the scope of data to be exchanged.*

*Solutions need to be identified for the issue of different **voter registration cut-off dates** to facilitate data exchange within common timeframes and in a timely manner.*

# Recommendations



*16. All EU Member States should **explicitly allow for access and accreditation of international and national election observation** according to international principles throughout the electoral process.*

# Conclusions

- **Great diversity in democratic practice**
  - **Good practice examples – learning from each other**
  - Clear indications where **improvements** could be made
  - **Greater cohesion** – complexity/diversity of electoral regulation
- 
- Greater efforts to **protect European election integrity**
  - Electoral **reforms to be taken up again** – participatory process

# New EU Policy



- Agenda of new Commission – beginning of electoral cycle
- *Mission Letter* to Commissioner Vera Jourová:
- **Conference on the Future of Europe**
- Amendment of the **electoral law** (EP and Commission)
- **Building resilience** of the democratic system
- Discussions to improve the **lead candidate system** & of **transnational lists**

# Next Steps



- Report as **reference** for upcoming electoral reform debates
- **Electoral reform advocacy** at European and national level
- Participate in EU **participatory electoral reform process** (Conference on the Future of Europe?)
- Deepen and broaden **European network of observers**
- Preparation of **Election Assessment Mission 2024**



Thank You

Questions & Exchange of Views

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