

The European Parliament Elections – a challenge for election management

Election-Watch.EU 2019 Election Assessment Mission Findings and Recommendations

**Electoral Integrity Project
Virtual Conference**
5-9 July 2021



ELECTION-WATCH.EU

Background

- **Network** of European election observers
- **Memorandum of Understanding** with EP “This Time I’m Voting”
- **Needs Assessment & Election Assessment Mission 2020**
 - 28 National Chapter Focal Points
 - 65 Election observers and experts
 - 8 like-minded organisations accross Europe
 - 1 Coordination Team in Brussels

Some Facts

- May 2019: 426 mio citizens eligible to elect 751 MEPs
- Transnational campaigns yet rare, but campaigns decidedly more European
- BREXIT impact on the electoral process
- Increased turnout: 50.62%
- **Overall legal framework - no central EMB**
- Essentially, 28 different EMBs regulate the elections to one representative body



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

-> presented under the principles of

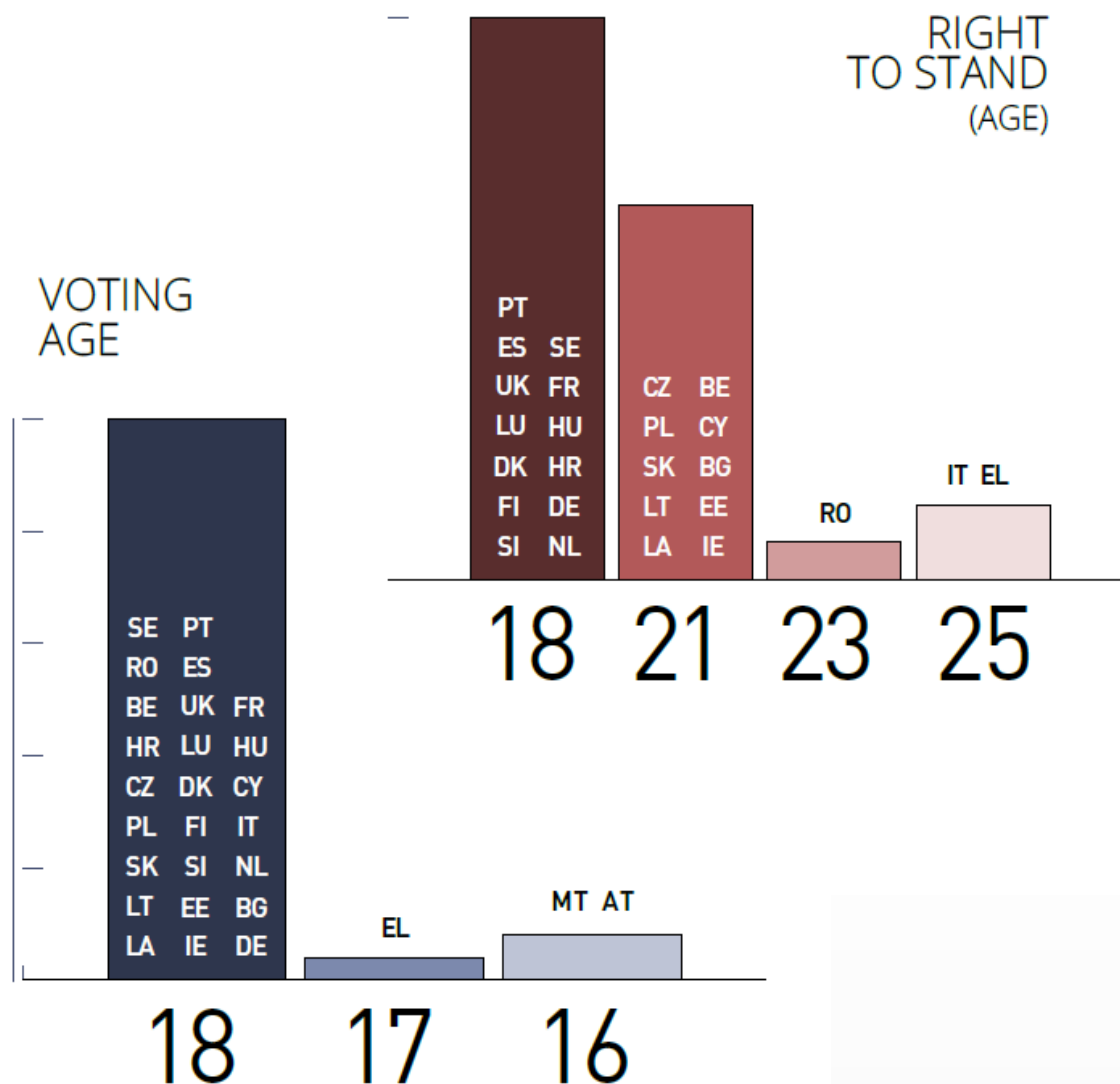
Equality, Inclusion, Accountability & Transparency

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



EQUALITY

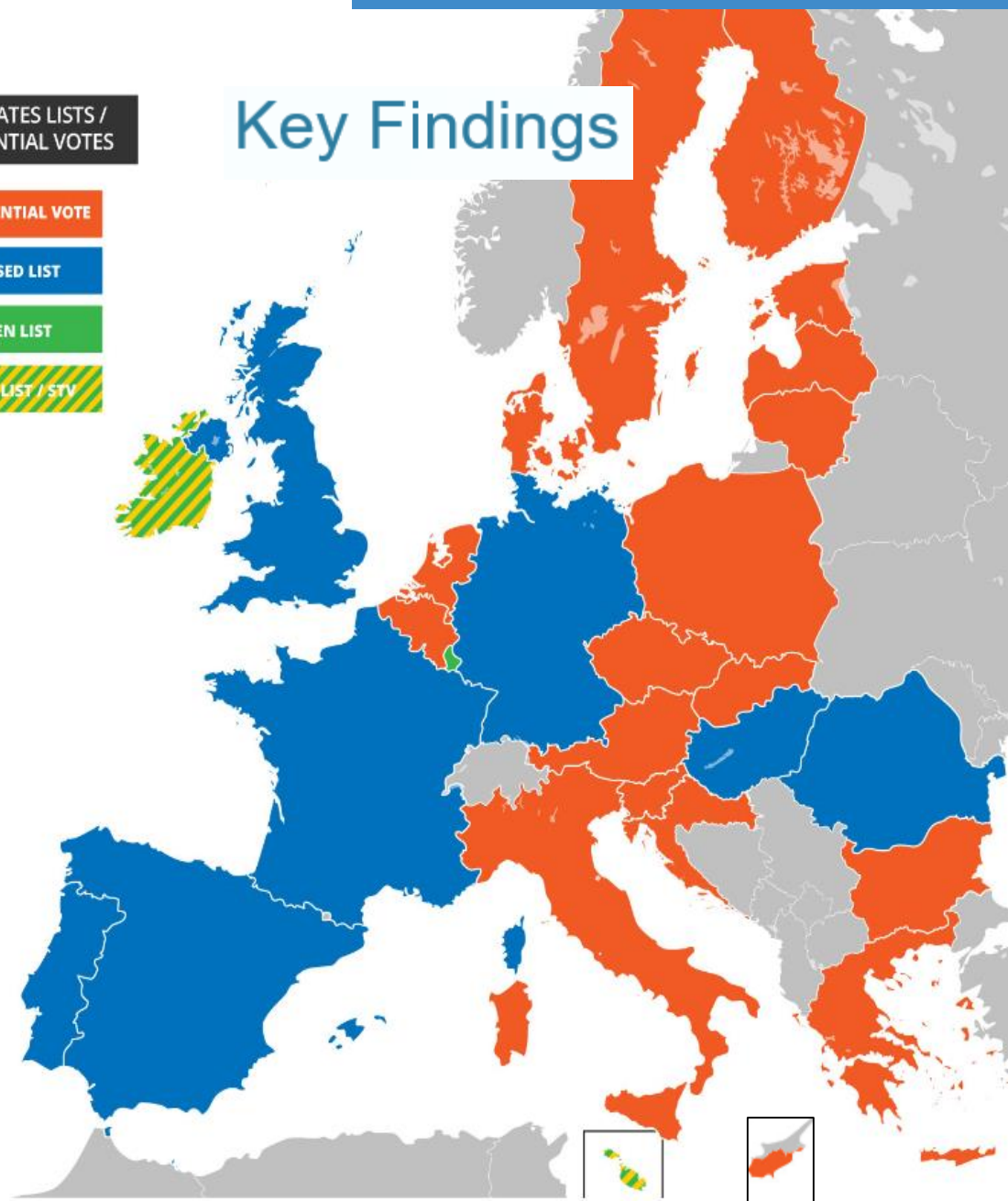
ELECTORAL THRESHOLD, SEAT ALLOCATION AND LISTS/PREFERENTIAL VOTES



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Key Findings

ELECTORAL THRESHOLD	EU MEMBER STATE	SEAT ALLOCATION METHOD	CANDIDATES LISTS / PREFERENTIAL VOTES
1,80%	CYPRUS	Droop / largest remainder	<div>PREFERENTIAL VOTE</div> <div>CLOSED LIST</div> <div>OPEN LIST</div> <div>OPEN LIST / STV</div>
3%	GREECE	Droop / largest remainder	
4%	AUSTRIA	d'Hondt	
	ITALY	Hare & largest remainder	
	SWEDEN	modified Sainte-Laguë	
5%	HUNGARY	d'Hondt	
	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	
	FRANCE	Hare / d'Hondt	
5 % (in Con.)	PORTUGAL	d'Hondt	
NONE	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	



EQUALITY

Key Findings



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CLOSING DATE OF VOTER REGISTRATION

MARCH

APRIL

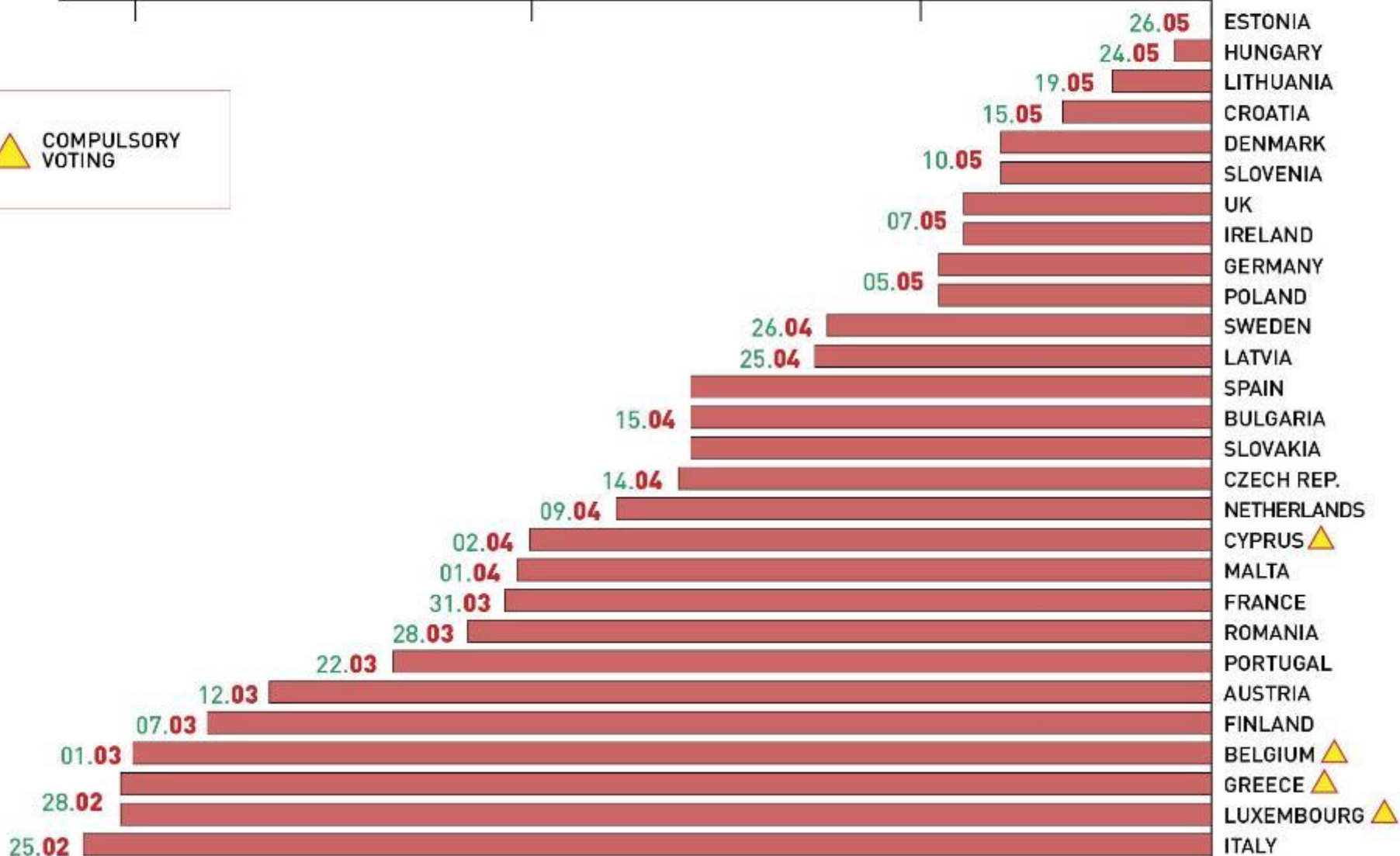
MAY

**ELECTION
DAY**

23-26
MAY 2019



COMPULSORY
VOTING



VOTING METHODS



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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	✓	✓	✓		✗

Harmonise voting methods

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



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	✓	—

Participation of Persons with Disabilities

- EU acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- MS prioritise physical accessibility & participation through alternative voting techniques
- 14 MS guarantee the right to vote for all PWD without restrictions
- 14 MS with limited suffrage rights (based on mental disability or lack of legal capacity)
- **Need to adhere to int. Standards in the EU**

ACCOUNTABILITY (CAMPAIGN FINANCE)

PUBLIC FUNDING, FOREIGN FUNDING,
SPENDING LIMITS, REPORTING,
AND DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS



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EU MEMBER STATE	PUBLIC FUNDING	PRIVATE FUNDING*	FOREIGN FUNDING**	SPENDING LIMITS	REPORTING & DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS	REASONABLE SANCTIONS
HUNGARY	no	with limitations	no	no	no data	no data
ITALY	no	with limitations	no	yes	yes	yes
MALTA	no	with limitations	no	yes	no data	no data
BELGIUM	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	yes***	yes	yes	yes
BULGARIA	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	no	yes	yes	yes
CYPRUS	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	no	no data	yes	no
DENMARK	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	yes, without limits	yes	no	limited	no data
ESTONIA	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	no	no	yes	yes
FINLAND	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	with limitations	no	yes	no
GERMANY	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	yes	no	no	yes
LATVIA	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	no	yes	yes	yes
NETHERLANDS	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	yes	no	limited	yes
SLOVAKIA	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	no	yes	yes	yes
SWEDEN	no specific public funds - but regular public allotment	with limitations	no	no	limited	no data

Level campaign playing field

- New regulatory framework (APPF) at EU level, but **different** national frameworks
- **Unequal** conditions for parties and candidates in the MS
- European political parties can receive **funding from the EU**
- **Foreign funding** is forbidden in half of MS (in 10 also funding by European parties)
- Public funding available in all but 3 MS
- Lack of reporting requirements for campaign expenditure in some MS

Regulations for Election Observation

- Regulations vary across EU Member States
- 8 EU MS have full legislation and accreditation
- 5 EU MS voting and counting open to the public
- Election-Watch.EU was accredited by 12 EU MS
- **Need to fully acknowledge role of observers**



Electoral Reform Advocacy

- **16 Recommendations**
- Findings presented to EC and EP
- Together with 42 other organisations advocacy for the **European Democracy Action Plan**
- Greater efforts to **protect European election integrity** needed
- Window of legislative opportunity until 2023
- **New legislation** regulating party finance & social media a priority in the EU



Election-Watch.EU – wahlbeobachtung.org

Elections to the European Parliament

23-26 May 2019

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Election Assessment Mission

Final Report



Brussels
16 September 2019

The views expressed in this report are solely the views of
Election-Watch.EU and the authors of this report



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Questions
&
Discussion