



EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 8.5.2015
COM(2015) 206 final

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

Report on the 2014 European Parliament elections

EN

EN

1. INTRODUCTION

The 2014 European Parliament elections were the first to take place since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and were fundamentally different from those which preceded them. For the first time, a direct link was established between the outcome of the elections and the appointment of the European Commission President. The European political families nominated candidates for President of the European Commission for the first time, and the candidate who was able to command a majority in the newly formed European Parliament became President of the European Commission. The European Council nominated the candidate of the party with most seats in the European Parliament, who was subsequently elected as European Commission President by the European Parliament.

This report reviews the 2014 elections, including measures taken to enhance their transparency, democratic conduct and the European dimension. It assesses citizens' awareness of the elections and the associated rights, action taken by Member States and EU institutions in this respect, and actual turnout. It also looks at the enforcement of EU citizens' electoral rights.

The report is based on recent Eurobarometer and other surveys, information provided by Member States in reply to Commission questionnaires and a Commission-authorised study¹ which collected and analysed qualitative and quantitative data, including through interviews with European political parties, national authorities, media and other stakeholders.

The 2014 elections stemmed the steady fall in overall turnout since the first direct European elections in 1979. These elections have laid the ground for future European elections and established a clear link between the results of the European Parliament elections and the choice of European Commission President. An important precedent has been set for 2019 and beyond, and a European-level forum for political debate has been established.

2. A TRANSPARENT ELECTION PROCESS

2.1. A direct link between the citizens' vote and the election of the Commission President

The Lisbon Treaty established a new constitutional order for the European Union, with the European Parliament being empowered to elect the candidate for President of the European Commission proposed by the European Council, taking into account the results of the European elections. In light of this new situation, on 12 March 2013, the Commission issued a Recommendation on enhancing the democratic and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament.² It called on European political parties to nominate candidates for the position of Commission President, against the background of the Lisbon Treaty, which strengthened the role of the Parliament in relation to the Commission³.

¹ *Study on the Conduct of the 2014 Elections to the European Parliament*, Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services (CSES), March 2015.

² Recommendation 2013/142/EU on enhancing the democratic and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament of 12 March 2013 (OJ L 79, 21.3.2013, p. 29). On 27 March 2014, the Commission issued a preliminary report (COM(2014) 196 final) on initiatives taken by stakeholders to implement this Recommendation.

³ Article 17(7) TEU provides for the Parliament to elect the Commission President on the basis of a proposal by the European Council, which must take into account the results of the European elections.

This recommendation aimed at making the link between EU citizens' votes for prospective Members of the European Parliament and their party's candidate for Commission President visible. Furthermore, the Commission encouraged national political parties to use their political broadcasts to promote their lead candidates and their programmes. The Parliament also adopted resolutions on the 2014 elections to this effect.⁴

Five European political parties proposed candidates for the Commission Presidency:

- ✓ the European People's Party (EPP) nominated Jean-Claude Juncker;
- ✓ the Party of European Socialists (PES) nominated Martin Schulz;
- ✓ the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe Party (ALDE) nominated Guy Verhofstadt;
- ✓ the European Green Party nominated José Bové and Franziska Keller; and
- ✓ the Party of the European Left nominated Alexis Tsipras.

These parties launched EU-wide election campaigns and held public events across Europe to raise awareness of their candidates and their political programmes for Europe.⁵ The candidates visited 246 cities across the Member States. The following table shows the Member States visited:⁶

Member State	PES	EPP	ALDE	GUE / NGL	Green / EFA
Belgium	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bulgaria	✓	✓			
Czech Republic	✓		✓	✓	✓
Denmark	✓				✓
Germany	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Estonia		✓			
Ireland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Greece	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Spain	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
France	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Croatia	✓	✓			✓
Italy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cyprus		✓		✓	
Latvia		✓			
Lithuania					
Luxembourg	✓	✓	✓		
Hungary					✓
Malta	✓	✓			
Netherlands	✓	✓	✓		✓
Austria	✓	✓	✓		✓
Poland	✓	✓	✓		✓
Portugal	✓	✓		✓	
Romania	✓		✓		
Slovenia	✓		✓	✓	
Slovakia	✓	✓			
Finland	✓	✓			✓
Sweden	✓		✓		✓
UK	✓		✓		✓
Total	23	18	15	11	16

⁴ Resolution of 22 November 2012 on the elections to the European Parliament in 2014 (2012/2829(RSP)); Resolution of 4 July 2013 on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014 (2013/2102(INI)).

⁵ Jean-Claude Juncker: <http://juncker.epp.eu/my-priorities>;
 Martin Schulz: http://www.pes.eu/martin_schulz_programme_launch_and_campaign_tour;
 Guy Verhofstadt: <http://www.guyverhofstadt.eu/uploads/pdf/Plan%20for%20Europe.pdf>;
 Franziska Keller and José Bové: <http://europeangreens.eu/news/proposals-green-commission-european-alternative-we-greens-fight>;
 Alexis Tsipras: http://alexistsipras.eu/PROGRAMMATIC_DECLARATION_OF_ALEXIS_TSIPRAS.pdf.

⁶ CSES study (see footnote 1), Section 3, Table 3.2.