

Procedure file

Basic information		
INL - Legislative initiative procedure	2013/2102(INL)	Procedure completed
Improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014 See also 2012/2829(RSP)		
Subject 1 European citizenship 1.20.01 Political rights, right to vote and to stand in elections 2.80 Cooperation between administrations 8.40.01.01 Elections, direct universal suffrage 8.40.01.02 President, members, mandates, political groups 8.40.03 European Commission		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	AFCO Constitutional Affairs	ALDE DUFF Andrew Shadow rapporteur PPE SCHÖPFLIN György S&D MOREIRA Víтал Verts/ALE BÉLIER Sandrine EFD MESSERSCHMIDT Morten	19/03/2013
European Commission	Commission DG Justice and Consumers	Commissioner REDING Viviane	

Key events			
12/03/2013	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2013)0126	Summary
28/05/2013	Vote in committee		
10/06/2013	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
12/06/2013	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0219/2013	Summary
03/07/2013	Debate in Parliament		
04/07/2013	Results of vote in Parliament		
04/07/2013	Decision by Parliament	T7-0323/2013	Summary
04/07/2013	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
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Procedure subtype	Legislative initiative
	See also 2012/2829(RSP)
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Committee dossier	AFCO/7/12372

Documentation gateway					
Non-legislative basic document		COM(2013)0126	12/03/2013	EC	Summary
Supplementary non-legislative basic document		C(2013)1303	12/03/2013	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE508.212	08/04/2013	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE510.728	08/05/2013	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE510.775	14/05/2013	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0219/2013	12/06/2013	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0323/2013	04/07/2013	EP	Summary
Follow-up document		COM(2014)0196	27/03/2014	EC	Summary

Improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014

This recommendation from the Commission on enhancing the democratic and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament accompanies the Commission Communication entitled Preparing for the 2014 European elections: further enhancing their democratic and efficient conduct (please see the summary of the same date).

In order to strengthen the democratic conduct of the European elections of 2014, the Commission recommends :

- encouraging and facilitating information for voters on the affiliation between national parties and European political parties, inter alia by allowing the indication of such an affiliation on the ballots used in those elections;
- informing voters about the affiliation between national parties and European political parties: national political parties should make publicly known ahead of those elections their affiliation with European political parties in all campaign materials, communications and political broadcasts ;
- ensuring European and national political parties make known, ahead of the elections to the European Parliament, the candidate for the function of the President of the European Commission they support and the candidate's programme;
- Member States agree on a common day for elections to the European Parliament with polling stations closing at the same time.

On the efficient conduct of the elections, it is recalled that citizens of the Union have the right to vote and to stand as candidates in elections to the European Parliament in the Member State where they choose to live under the same conditions as the citizens of their Member States of residence. Directive 93/109/EC establishes an information exchange mechanism aimed at ensuring that citizens cannot vote or stand as candidates in more than one Member State in the same elections.

The [Commission report on the evaluation of the 2009 European elections](#) has revealed deficiencies in the functioning of the mechanism to prevent multiple voting and candidacies. As indicated in the [2010 EU Citizenship report](#), these procedures can often result in an excessive burden for national administrations, disproportionate to the actual extent of the problem of multiple voting and multiple candidacies.

Drawing on consultations with electoral experts from Member States, the Commission prepared recommendations to the national electoral authorities on different aspects of the mechanism to prevent multiple voting. The recommendations simplify the mechanism and make it more effective in preventing abuses.

The Commission recommendation advises Member States to :

- set up a single contact authority in charge of the exchange of data on voters;
- take account, as far as possible, of each other's electoral arrangements to ensure data on voters in time for the respective home

- Member State to take the necessary measures ;
- transmit all relevant personal data, which may be necessary for the identification of voters by the authorities of their home Member State.

Improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014

PURPOSE: outline initiatives with a view to enhancing the democratic and efficient conduct of the next European elections in 2014.

BACKGROUND: the 2014 European elections will be the first since the Lisbon Treaty entered into force. The European Commission is committed to fully exploiting existing Lisbon provisions to further enhance transparency and the European dimension of the European elections, thereby reinforcing the democratic legitimacy of the EU decision-making process and bringing the system closer to Union citizens.

The Lisbon Treaty has strengthened the democratic foundations of the Union:

- the citizens perspective is further affirmed in the new definition of members of the European Parliament as representatives of the Unions citizens;
- the role of the European Parliament as the representative democratic assembly of the Union has been underscored by the Lisbon Treaty. It also grants enhanced powers to the European Parliament, consolidating its role as full co-legislator alongside the Council;
- it introduces the citizens initiative to enable EU citizens to participate more directly and fully in the democratic life of the Union.

In view of the reinforced role and powers of the European Parliament, it is essential to enhance and to give more prominence to the process for electing its Members. This is particularly relevant in view of the actions required at EU level to address the financial and sovereign debt crisis. The elections will be all the more important as the European Union is taking major steps towards genuine Economic and Monetary Union, of which democratic legitimacy is a cornerstone.

The Commission considers that integration and legitimacy have to advance in parallel. More democracy is the corollary of the greater institutional integration needed to enable the European Union to rise to current global challenges. In this respect, there is a pressing need to strengthen links between EU citizens and the democratic process of the Union.

CONTENT: this Communication outlines the Commissions initiatives to facilitate citizens participation in the 2014 European elections and to safeguard the respect of the democratic principles of these elections. It is accompanied by a Recommendation intended to enhance the democratic and efficient conduct of the European elections.

In view of the European elections of 2014, the Commission believes that:

- voters should be informed of the affiliation between national parties and European political parties before and during elections to the European Parliament;
- Member States should agree on a common day for the elections of the European Parliament, with polling stations closing at the same time;
- each European political party should nominate its candidate for President of the European Commission, as requested for by the European Parliament in its [resolution](#) of 22 November 2012;
- national parties should ensure that their political broadcasts in view of European Parliament elections inform citizens about the candidate they support for President of the European Commission and the candidate's programme.

In addition, as a follow-up to the [2010 EU Citizenship report](#), the Commission highlights the following:

- enforcing the electoral rights of EU citizens residing in a Member State other than their own: the Commission contacted Member States to ensure that the voting rights of EU citizens residing in a Member State other than their own are fully enforced across the EU;
- ensuring respect for the common principles of the European elections: these principles set out in EU law prohibit inter alia the publication of results in one Member State before the polls close in all Member States;
- enhancing participation of non-national EU candidates in the European elections: following a relaunching of negotiations by the Commission, the Council adopted Directive 2013/1/EU, amending Directive 93/109/EC, which provides inter alia that candidates no longer have to provide proof that they have not been deprived of their electoral rights in their home Member State. Instead, they will have to make a formal declaration to that effect, to be verified by the electoral authorities in the Member State in which they reside. This simplified procedure will apply in the 2014 European elections.

The Commission believes that these practical recommendations, evolutionary but not revolutionary, can be implemented in time for the European Parliament elections of 2014.

The European Year of Citizens is an opportunity for citizens of the Union to make their voices heard. The prime occasion for this purpose are the European Parliament elections.

Improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs adopted the own-initiative report by Andrew DUFF (ADLE, UK) on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014.

Members recall that the 2014 elections will be the first to take place after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty which widens significantly the powers of the European Parliament, including its role in the election of the President of the Commission. They consider that turnout at the elections is likely to be enhanced by a lively political campaign in which political parties and their candidates compete for votes and seats on the basis of alternative programmes that address the European dimension of politics. They also stress that the resolution of the current crisis of governance in the EU requires a fuller democratic legitimation of the integration process.

In this context, the report calls upon the political parties to:

- ensure that the names of the candidates selected to stand for election to the European Parliament are made public at least six weeks

before the start of polling;

- press for a higher proportion of women on the lists of candidates;
- see to it that the names and , where appropriate, the emblems of the European political parties appear on the ballot paper;
- inform citizens, before and during the electoral campaign, about their affiliation with a European political party and their support for its candidate for the Commission presidency and for his or her political programme;
- the European political parties are asked to nominate their candidates for the Commission presidency sufficiently well in advance of the election for them to be able to mount a significant, European-wide campaign that concentrates on European issues that are based on the party platform and on the programme of their candidate for the Commission presidency.

For their part, Member States are asked to:

- organise a public campaign to encourage citizens to turn out to vote, with the aim of halting falling participation rates;
- permit political broadcasts by the European political parties;
- take all necessary steps to give effective implementation to the measures agreed on to assist citizens who wish to vote or stand as candidates in states other than their own;
- ensure that no official results are published until after the close of poll in the Member State whose electors are the last to vote on Sunday 25 May 2014.

Lastly, the report recalls that the President of the European Commission is elected by Parliament on the proposal of the European Council, which must take into account the results of the elections and must consult the new Parliament before making its nomination(s). Members expect that, in this process, the candidate for Commission President put forward by the European political party that wins the most seats in the Parliament will be the first to be considered, with a view to ascertaining his or her ability to secure the support of the necessary absolute majority in Parliament.

Improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014

The European Parliament adopted by 507 to 120, with 18 abstentions, a resolution on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014.

Members recall that the 2014 elections will be the first to take place after the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty which widens significantly the powers of the European Parliament, including its role in the election of the President of the Commission.

Recalling that it has been agreed that the polling days of the election are to be brought forward to 22-25 May 2014, Parliament consider that turnout at the elections is likely to be enhanced by a lively political campaign in which political parties and their candidates compete for votes and seats on the basis of alternative programmes that address the European dimension of politics. It also stresses that the resolution of the current crisis of governance in the EU requires a fuller democratic legitimisation of the integration process.

In this context, Parliament expects the candidates to commit themselves, if elected, to taking up their mandates to serve as Members of the European Parliament.

It calls upon the political parties to:

- ensure that the names of the candidates selected to stand for election to the European Parliament are made public at least six weeks before the start of polling;
- press for a higher proportion of women on the lists of candidates;
- see to it that the names and , where appropriate, the emblems of the European political parties appear on the ballot paper;
- adopt democratic and transparent procedures for the selection of candidates for election to the European Parliament and for the Presidency of the Commission.

The national political parties are called upon to:

- inform citizens, before and during the electoral campaign, about their affiliation with a European political party and their support for its candidate for the Commission presidency and for his or her political programme;
- include on their lists of candidates EU citizens residing in Member States other than their own.

The European political parties are invited to:

- nominate their candidates for the Commission presidency sufficiently well in advance of the election for them to be able to mount a significant, European-wide campaign that concentrates on European issues that are based on the party platform and on the programme of their candidate for the Commission presidency;
- hold a series of public debates between the candidates nominated for the Commission presidency.

For their part, Member States are asked to:

- organise a public campaign to encourage citizens to turn out to vote, with the aim of halting falling participation rates;
- permit political broadcasts by the European political parties;
- take all necessary steps to give effective implementation to the measures agreed on to assist citizens who wish to vote or stand as candidates in states other than their own;
- ensure that no official results are published until after the close of poll in the Member State whose electors are the last to vote on Sunday 25 May 2014.

Members recall that the President of the European Commission is elected by Parliament on the proposal of the European Council, which must take into account the results of the elections and must consult the new Parliament before making its nomination(s).

In this context, Members propose that detailed arrangements for the consultations between Parliament and the European Council on the election of the new Commission President should be agreed by common accord in good time before the elections. According to them, the candidate for Commission President put forward by the European political party that wins the most seats in the Parliament will be the first to be considered, with a view to ascertaining his or her ability to secure the support of the necessary absolute majority in Parliament.

Improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the European elections in 2014

The Commission presented a report on the implementation of the Commission's recommendations on enhancing the democratic and efficient conduct of the elections to the European Parliament, which was addressed to the Member States and to the European and national political parties. The European Parliament has also adopted resolutions to this effect.

The Commission's Recommendation on enhancing the democratic and efficient conduct of European elections was generally well received. This is a preliminary report on initiatives that Member States and national and European political parties are developing, to increase transparency, raise citizens awareness and promote pan-European campaigns around candidates and their programmes. This report aims to stimulate exchanges of best practice and to encourage new initiatives to enhance the democratic life of the EU in light of the upcoming 2014 European elections.

[Recommendation 2013/142/EC](#) was divided into two main strands: (i) strengthen the transparency of the elections and the democratic legitimacy of the decision-making process in the EU; (ii) increase the efficiency of the elections by streamlining procedures for the implementation of the right of EU citizens to vote and stand as candidates in their Member State of residence.

(1) Democratic conduct of the elections:

Information for voters on the affiliation between national and European political parties: Member States generally welcomed this recommendation.

- The vast majority of Member States who responded reported that they had told national political parties about the need to increase transparency and improve information for voters to enhance the democratic conduct of the European elections.
- However, it appeared that electoral legislation in several Member States does not allow ballot papers to display the names or logos of European political parties. Amongst these Member States three are considering amending their legislation to allow this information to be displayed.
- Certain Member States believe that national political parties are best placed to inform their electorate on their party's affiliation.
- European political parties told the Commission that they would encourage and support political campaign messages which emphasise national parties affiliation.

Support for a candidate for President of the European Commission:

- The European political parties have followed up on the recommendation to make known their candidates for President of the European Commission. At the end of March 2014, six European political
- parties have nominated their candidate(s): Mr Jean-Claude Juncker for the European People's Party (EPP), Mr Martin Schulz for the Party of European Socialists (PES), Mr Guy Verhofstadt for the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) and for the European Democratic Party (EDP) Mr José Bové and Ms Ska Keller for the European Green Party and Mr Alexis Tsipras for the European Left.
- European political parties are also planning to raise awareness about their candidates and their programmes.
- Member States told the Commission about wider communication measures they were taking to increase voter participation such as information campaigns for first-time voters, webpages on the elections, media briefings, and roundtable discussions and seminars.

The common voting day: While some Member States have agreed to hold polls on Sunday 25 May 2014, others have rejected the idea explaining that voting on week days or Saturdays would increase turnout. National traditions were also put forward to explain rejection of a common voting day.

(2) Efficient conduct of the elections: to ensure the legitimacy of European elections, Directive 93/109/EC requires procedures to make sure that EU citizens do not vote or stand as candidates in both their Member State of origin and in their country of residence in the same elections.

- Drawing on discussions with experts from Member States, the Commission set out in Recommendation 2013/142/EU a list of measures to simplify the data exchange mechanism in place for this purpose.
- The Commission recommended in particular that Member States set up a single contact authority in each Member State to facilitate a smoother exchange of voters data with other Member States.
- For the 2014 European elections, all Member States have agreed to put in place a single contact authority for sending and receiving notifications through the information exchange mechanism, except the United Kingdom, which plans to send notifications about EU voters via local electoral authorities.
- The Commission ensured that all Member States were fully informed of the type of data required by Member States to efficiently verify the identity of their nationals who have registered to vote in the Member State where they reside.
- Almost all Member States improved the security of the data exchange taking place in the run up to the elections, by implementing a common electronic format and using an encryption tool recommended by the Commission.

In conclusion, the Commission considers that its Recommendation on enhancing the democratic and efficient conduct of European elections was generally well received.

The Commission will produce a full report after the European elections, assessing the implementation of relevant EU law, including the implementation of the Recommendation. It will highlight further initiatives that were taken in the run-up to the European elections and look at

the role of civil society organisations. This should help identify possible new avenues for the future, towards ever more democratic European elections.