

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

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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 legitimisation 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.