



MY VOTE FOR EUROPE

The European Parliament election
on **9 June 2024**



EUROPE DIRECT
Berlin

Berliner Landeszentrale
für politische Bildung

BERLIN



Views on the European Union (EU)*

What Europeans think



71%



80%

believe that the EU's actions have an impact on their everyday life.



89%



93%

want all EU Member States to respect the fundamental values of the EU - fundamental rights, the rule of law and democracy.



71%



81%

think it is good that there is an economic and monetary union with a common currency, the euro.



77%



81%

are in favour of a common security and defence policy for EU Member States.



80%



80%

and more believe it is important for the EU to work against rising prices and support environmental protection and more international cooperation.



53%



42%

are in favour of further countries joining the EU.



72%



77%

feel they are citizens of the European Union.

What do you think?

*Data from the Eurobarometer surveys in January and June 2023

Table of contents

The European elections - What will be voted on in June _____	03
Voting - How it works _____	07
Elected - The Members of the European Parliament _____	14
Decision-making for Europe - The role of the European Parliament _____	21
Have your say - Use your vote _____	34

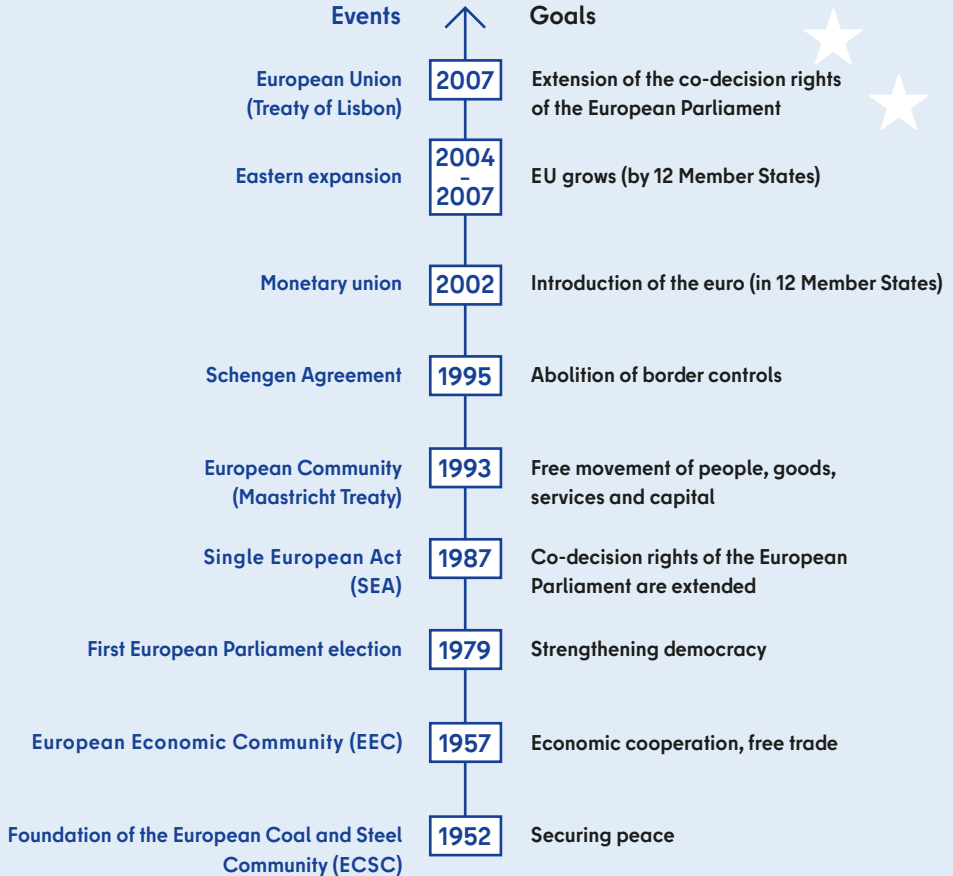
Elect your representatives to the European Parliament.

Help decide who will shape policy in the European Union over the next five years. Help shape the Europe of tomorrow.

On the following pages you can find out how the election works, who can vote for the European Parliament, what is at stake and why your vote is important.

In June 2024, European citizens will elect the European Parliament for the 10th time - cast your vote!

Development of the European idea



THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS - WHAT WILL BE VOTED ON IN JUNE



European Parliament

The European Parliament

The European Parliament represents the people of the European Union. Every five years, the citizens of all Member States elect their representatives to the European Parliament.

Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) make important decisions for all Member States that shape our everyday lives in Berlin, in Germany and in the other EU Member States.

Many issues, such as economic and monetary policy, consumer and data protection, digitalisation, and climate and environmental protection, are now regulated by the European Union. Together, the EU Member States can often achieve more effective solutions than they can individually.

More power to Parliament - more power for citizens

The European Parliament has been directly elected by citizens since 1979. In the beginning, the Parliament had little say in the decision-making process. However, almost all decisions in the EU now require parliamentary approval. This has also given citizens more influence on European policy.

Democratic elections in Europe

Democracy is an important principle of the EU, to which all 27 Member States are committed. For this reason, certain democratic principles also apply to the European Parliament elections in all EU Member States:

Regular → The European Parliament is elected every five years.

Universal → All EU citizens who are eligible to vote may do so.

Direct → Eligible voters directly elect a political party or association that puts itself forward as a candidate.

Free → The choice is free and made without coercion.

Confidential → Voting takes place in a polling booth, nobody should be able to see or trace who you have voted for. Whether you talk to others about it is up to you.

Different countries, different elections, yet one European Parliament

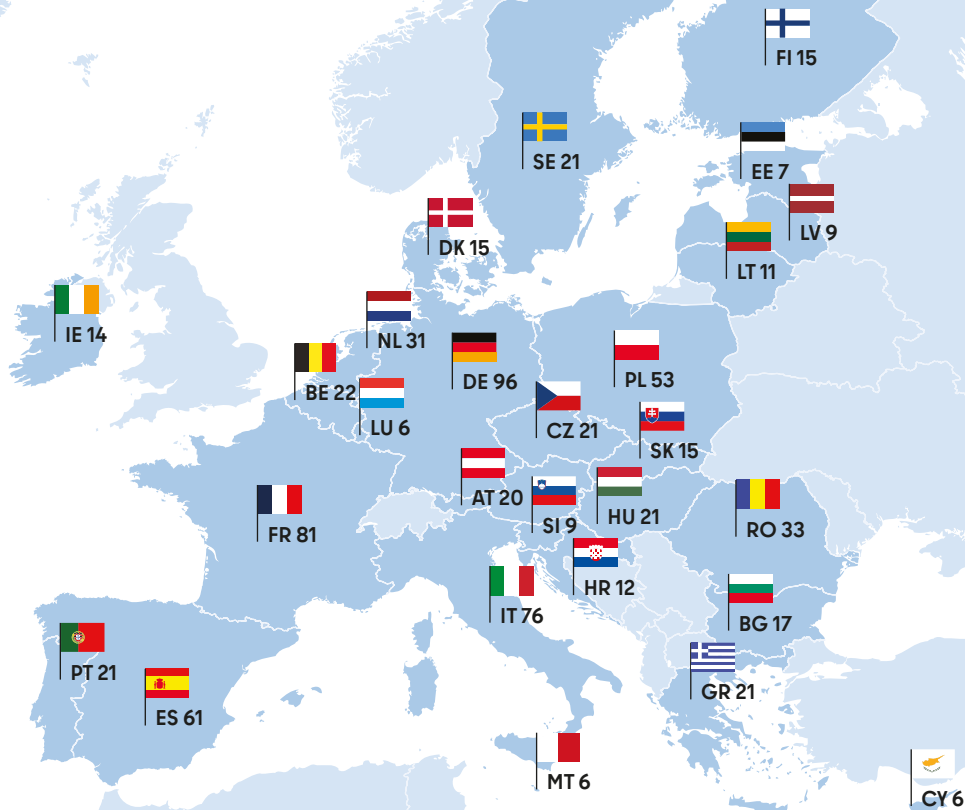
In June 2024, the 27 EU Member States will elect a total of 720 representatives to the European Parliament. The number of MEPs varies depending on the size of the population of the Member State and is determined in advance of the election.

As the most populous country in the EU, Germany has the most seats – 96.

The EU determines the period in which the elections must take place. The Member States themselves decide exactly how and on which day the elections are held. This allows the States to maintain their customs and traditions and still achieve a common result: a Parliament with 720 members (from 2024).

Number of MEPs to be elected per Member State to the European Parliament 2024

A total of 720 MEPs






Use your vote – The people who vote on 9 June will help determine who makes decisions for all of us in the EU over the next five years.

Elections on a Sunday? Not everywhere

The European Parliament elections will take place from 6–9 June 2024. In most EU countries, including Germany, elections will be held on Sunday. Other countries traditionally vote on a different day of the week: in the Netherlands, voting will take place on Thursday, in Ireland on Friday, in Latvia, Malta and Slovakia on Saturday and in Czechia across two days (Friday and Saturday).

Eligible voters in the EU

-  **EU: Around 350 million eligible voters**
-  **Germany: 64.9 million eligible voters**
-  **Berlin: 2.74 million eligible voters**
of whom 2.49 million are German citizens, 250,000 are citizens of another EU Member State, and 37,000 will be allowed to vote for the first time.

Your fundamental rights in the European Union

Democratic principles are set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. It also contains other important citizens' rights, including the right to vote, human and civil rights, and employment and social rights. This is intended to guarantee freedom, democracy and the rule of law for everyone in the EU.

VOTING - HOW IT WORKS

Who can vote

In Germany, you have the right to vote in European Parliament elections if you:

- have German citizenship or citizenship of another EU Member State **and**
- are at least 16 years old on election day **and**
- are entered in the electoral roll at your place of residence **and**
- live in Germany and have been resident in the EU for at least 3 months (exception: German citizens may also vote if they live in a country outside the EU).

Anyone who is allowed to vote in Germany and is at least 18 years old on election day can also stand as a candidate for the European Parliament.

NEW: Vote at 16!

For the first time, EU citizens who are just 16 or 17 years old will also be able to vote in Germany. In 2022, the Bundestag decided to lower the voting age for the European elections from 18 to 16 years old. The reasons for this included the fact that many of the issues discussed in the European Parliament particularly affect younger people (e.g. tackling climate change, inter-generational justice). Another factor is that the country's age distribution has shifted over the last 50 years to the detriment of younger people due to demographic change.

Voting - when, how and where?

A few weeks before the election – by 19 May 2024 at the latest – you will receive a letter with your poll card.

The poll card tells you the election date and the address and opening hours of your polling station. It also contains information on how you can vote by post before 9 June.

You must always bring your identity card, passport or another official form of photo identification with you to vote.

Wahlbenachrichtigung
für die Wahl zum 8. Europäischen Parlament

Wahltag: Sonntag, der 26.05.2024
Wahlkreis: 119 bis 121 BV

Wahlkreis
Stanzelmannsdorf von Berlin
Ritterstr. 54
10557 Berlin
Telefon: 9021-2000
Telefax: 030-9021-6075
E-Mail: wahlkreis@wahlen-berlin.de

Sprechzeiten:
Montag 8 Uhr bis 12 Uhr
Dienstag 8 Uhr bis 12 Uhr
Mittwoch 8 Uhr bis 12 Uhr
Donnerstag 8 Uhr bis 12 Uhr
Freitag 8 Uhr bis 12 Uhr

Wahllokal
Stanzelmannsdorf/Gaundelstraße
131
10557 Berlin
Telefon: 9021-2000
Telefax: 030-9021-6075
E-Mail: wahlkreis@wahlen-berlin.de

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E-Mail: wahlkreis@wahlen-berlin.de

Are you registered to vote?

If you are a citizen of another EU Member State living in Germany, it is especially important that you check soon whether you are entered on the electoral roll where you live. You have until 19 May 2024 to apply to be included on the electoral roll (you must declare that you are not voting in another EU Member State).

You can find out how to do this at your district electoral office or online here:



[www.berlin.de/wahlen/wahlen/europawahl-2024/
unionsbuerger/article.1338864.php](http://www.berlin.de/wahlen/wahlen/europawahl-2024/unionsbuerger/article.1338864.php)

There's no excuse - Use your vote!

**I'll be on holiday on
9 June...**

Vote by post. Your poll card will tell you exactly how to do this.

**I always have lunch with my family
on Sundays...**

Polling stations will be open on 9 June from 8 am to 6 pm. Bring the whole family along!

**I accidentally put my poll card out
with the recycling...**

No problem! You just need to show your valid identity card or passport at the polling station.

I have no idea who to vote for...

Find out more at election events or via the websites of the parties and associations, and in the media. From the beginning of May, you can also use the Wahl-O-Mat to find out which parties are running and what they stand for:



www.wahl-o-mat.de

My polling station? Where's that?

This can be found on your poll card or here:



[polling station search](#)

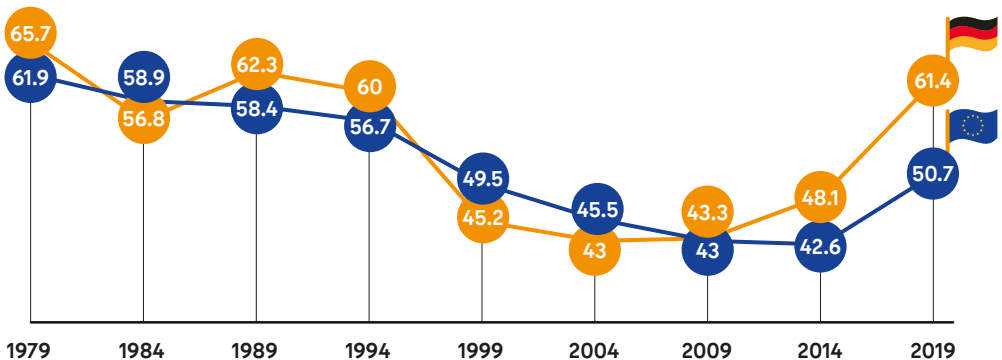
Interest in elections

56% of Europeans, and as many as 65% of people in Germany, are interested in the 2024 European Parliament elections. How about you?

Voter turnout

In the last European elections in 2019, voter turnout rose slightly for the first time in many years. Previously, turnout had declined from election to election, although the European Parliament has steadily gained more decision-making and participation rights since 1979.

Turnout in the 1979–2019 European Parliament elections in Germany and the European Union



How to vote

Every voter in Germany has one vote in the European Parliament elections. You make your vote by choosing the candidate list proposed by a political association or party.

This is a list of the people who are standing as candidates for the political association or party. You cannot vote for specific candidates directly in the European Parliament elections in Germany.

Use your vote - Vote on 9 June so that citizens in the EU are represented with a strong voice. Every vote counts - including yours!

Stimmzettel

für die Wahl der Abgeordneten des Europäischen Parlaments am 26. Mai 2019
im Land Berlin

Sie haben 1 Stimme



Bitte hier
ankreuzen

1	SPD Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands 1. Dr. Katrina Barley , MdB, Juristin, Schweich (RP) 2. Udo Bullmann , Politikwissenschaftler, Gießen (HE) 3. Maria Noche , Fachlehrer, Hauswirtschaftslehre, Rosenheim (BY) 4. Jens Geier , MdEP, Essen (NW) 5. Detara Burkhardt , Soziologin, Angestellte, Sietke (SH)	6. Bernd Lange , MdEP, Burgdorf (NI) 7. Birgit Seppelt , MdEP, Arnberg (NW) 8. Dr. Doinar Koster , Professor für Soziologie, Wetter (Ruhr) (NW) 9. Gabriela Bischoff , Politikwissenschaftlerin, Gewerkschaftssekretärin, Berlin (BE) 10. Jamali Ertug , MdEP, Krankenkassen-Betrieblwrt, Kümmersbruck (BY)	- Gemeinsame Liste für alle Länder -	○
	CDU Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands 1. Hildegard Benítez , MdB, BE, Diplomatin, Berlin 2. Carsten Spilleck , Bürokaufmann, Berlin 3. Susanne Zelle , Projektmanagerin, Doktorandin, Berlin 4. Christin Galfi , MdB, BE, Kaufmann, Berlin 5. Jörg Günter Schumacher , Rechtsanwalt, Mediator, Berlin	6. Beate Roll , Betriebswirtin des Handwerks, Berlin 7. Katharina Theresa Trump , Dipl.-Juristin, Referendarin am Kammergericht, Berlin 8. Steffen Heibing , Bürokaufmann, Berlin 9. Sebastian Thomas Steiner , Student, Berlin	- Liste für das Land Berlin -	○
3	GRÜNE BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN 1. Franziska Keller , MdEP, Berlin (BE) 2. Sven Giegold , Wirtschaftswissenschaftler, Düsseldorf (NW) 3. Theresa Reintke , Dipl.-Pöliologin, Marl (NW) 4. Reinhard Birkhofer , MdEP, Berlin (BE) 5. Dr. Hannah Neumann , freiberl., Beraterin, Berlin (BE)	6. Martin Häusling , Biobauer, Bad Zwesten (HE) 7. Anna Cavazzini , Menschenrechtlerentän, Berlin (BE) 8. Enik Margardt , Fotografin, Berlin (BE) 9. Karin Langenloper , Friedensnachwachsenin, Hannover (NI) 10. Roméo Franz , Geschäftsführer, Altlußheim (BW)	- Gemeinsame Liste für alle Länder -	○
	DIE LINKE DIE LINKE 1. Dr. Martin Schröder , Politikwissenschaftler, Berlin (BE) 2. Özlem Demirel , Gewerkschaftssekretärin, Düsseldorf (NW) 3. Cornelia Ernst , MdEP, Dresden (SN) 4. Helmut Schneider , MdEP, Dipl.-Politikwissenschaftler, Zeuthen (BB) 5. Martina Michels , MdEP, Berlin (BE)	6. Ai Al-Dallami , Restaurantfachmann, Gießen (HE) 7. Claudia Heyll , Friedensforscherin, Tübingen (BW) 8. Malte Frieder , Ökonom, Berlin (BE) 9. Marianne Koltter , Soziologin, Pirmberg (SH) 10. Murat Yilmaz , SAP-Konsultant, Köln (NW)	- Gemeinsame Liste für alle Länder -	○
5	AFD Alternative für Deutschland 1. Prof. Dr. Jörg Meuthen , Hochschulreformer, Politiker, Achem (BW) 2. Guido Reil , Steiger, Essen (NW) 3. Dr. Maximilian Krah , Rechtsanwalt, Dresden (SN) 4. Lars Berg , MdL, BW, Heidelberg (BW) 5. Bernhard Zmizko , Oberstenleutnant a. D., München (BY)	6. Dr. Constantin Feet , Publizist, Berlin (BE) 7. Markus Buchheit , Angestellter, Pollenfeld (BY) 8. Christine Anderson , Hausfrau, Limburg a.d. Lahn (HE) 9. Dr. Sylvia Lämmer , Dipl.-Biologin, Tauritzin, Pressack (BY) 10. Prof. Dr. Gurnar Beck , Hochschuldozent, Barnter-at-Law für EU-Recht, Neuss (NW)	- Gemeinsame Liste für alle Länder -	○
	PIRATEN Piratenpartei Deutschland 1. Dr. Patrick Breyer , Jurist, Kiel (SH)	6. Alexander Spies , Softwareentwickler, Berlin (BE)	- Gemeinsame Liste für alle Länder -	○

Who becomes a Member of the European Parliament

The number of votes a party or association receives determines how many seats it is entitled to in the European Parliament. For example, if a party wins five seats, the first five people on the list become Members of the European Parliament.

Straight into the European Parliament

In contrast to Bundestag or state parliament elections, there has been no threshold clause for European Parliament elections in Germany since 2014. That means a party only needs to receive the number of votes required to win one seat for them to enter Parliament. This is why significantly more parties from Germany, including some very small ones, have been represented in the European Parliament since the last elections in 2014 and 2019.

National parties, yet European elections

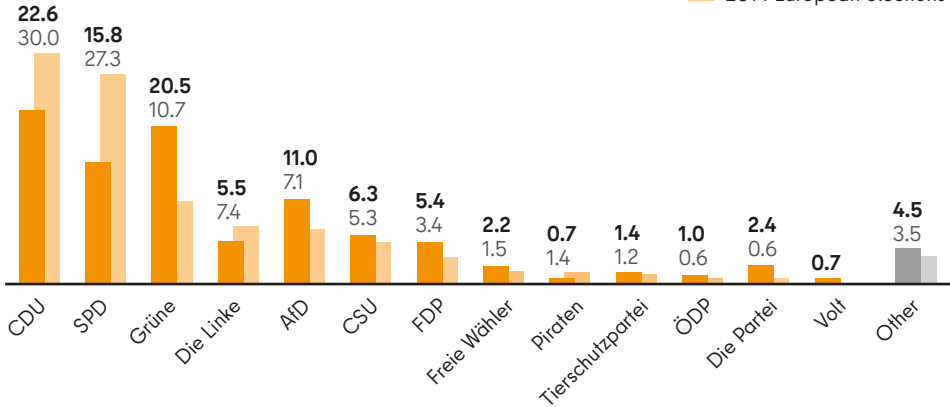
Up to now, parties and associations have stood in the European elections with lists from the individual Member States. There are no transnational lists of candidates that stand for election throughout the EU. However, there are Europe-wide parties in which politically aligned parties or associations from the individual EU Member States have joined forces. These parties usually campaign with joint programmes and work together in Parliament in transnational political groups.





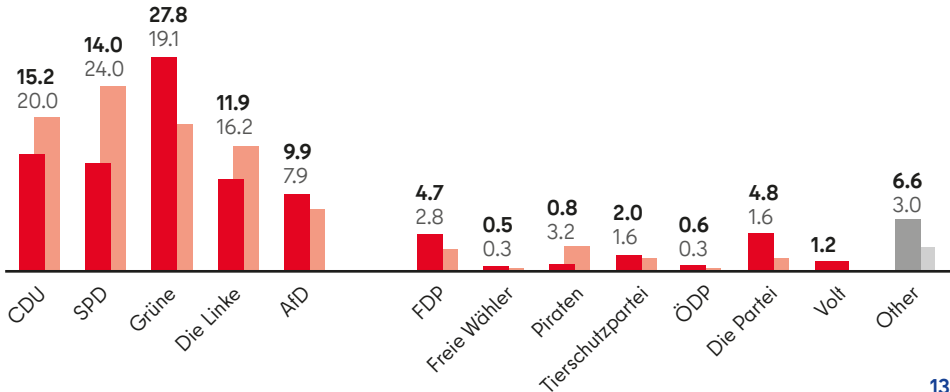
Election results in Germany in 2014 and 2019 in per cent

■ 2019 European elections
■ 2014 European elections



Election results in Berlin in 2014 and 2019 in per cent

■ 2019 European elections
■ 2014 European elections



ELECTED - THE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

The role of the elected members

The elected representatives are known as Members of the European Parliament – MEPs for short. The most important duty MEPs have is to represent the interests of citizens in the EU to the Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Council.

The day-to-day work: A lot of discussion, a lot of reading and even more travelling

MEPs only spend part of their working time, one week a month, in **Strasbourg**, where the European Parliament is based.

The monthly political group and committee meetings usually take place in **Brussels**.

MEPs travel to **other countries**, including those outside the EU, to exchange ideas and build networks.

At home, MEPs are expected to maintain contact with their voters and get involved in their party – often the only time left for this is at the weekend.

To prepare for these duties, MEPs have to do a lot of reading. The motions and reports on a legislative proposal often run to several hundred pages. In between, MEPs hold numerous discussions with employees, other MEPs, journalists and experts.

Would you like to watch your MEP at work?

All plenary sessions are open to the public. You can follow the debates via the livestream: www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/home.html

Plenary – Political groups – Committees

MEPs carry out their work in various committees. During the 40 or so weeks of meetings a year – in Strasbourg and Brussels – the programme includes plenary, committee and political group meetings.

The plenary session

Every month – except August – all MEPs meet for four days of plenary sessions. Here they discuss problems in society, in the EU and across the world, and consider possible solutions. MEPs vote on proposals from the Commission or compromises with the Council of Ministers. They can also adopt a resolution requesting the Commission draws up a proposal for a solution to a specific problem.

Division of labour

As so many MEPs cannot all talk to each other and do everything at the same time, they divide up the work. In the political groups and committees, they prepare what is voted on in the plenary sessions.

Three locations for one Parliament?

The official seat of the European Parliament is in Strasbourg. There is another ‘hemicycle’ with a plenary chamber in Brussels, where the European Commission has its headquarters. Luxembourg, where the first ‘hemicycle’ was located, is now home to the Secretariat.

There are numerous opportunities to visit the European Parliament at all three locations or virtually:



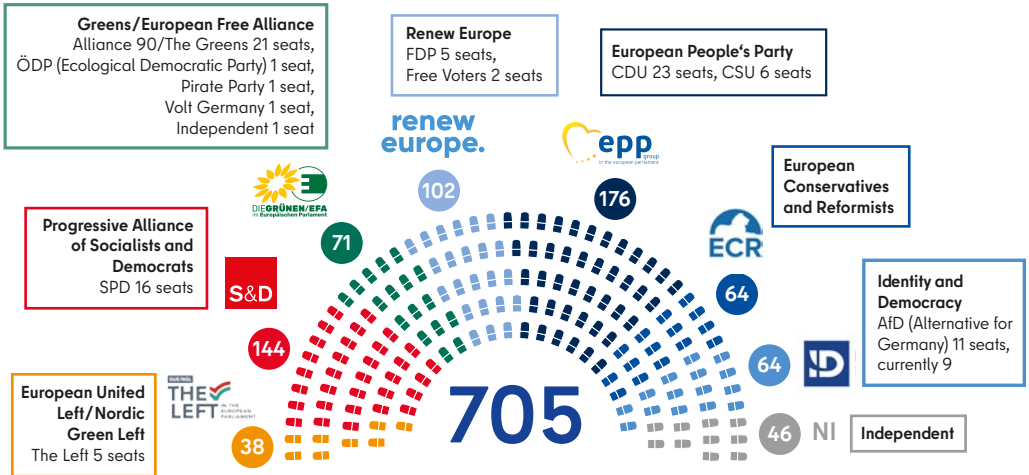
<https://visiting.europarl.europa.eu/en>

The political groups

The political groups bring together closely-aligned parties from the various EU Member States. In their political group, MEPs can discuss current issues and ideas for solutions. Here they agree on common political goals, which they represent as a political group in the European Parliament.

MEPs decide for themselves whether to join a political group and if so, which one they join. Unlike in the German Bundestag, the members of a political group in the European Parliament do not all vote the same way. This makes the outcome of votes exciting.

The seven political groups in the European Parliament 2019–2024



Committees

In the committees, the MEPs meet as experts on specific areas. Each political group appoints its own members to a committee. How many members a political group has on a committee depends on its strength in Parliament. Parliamentary decisions are prepared in the committees. This is where proposals from the Commission and the Council of Ministers are examined and amendments are discussed. All MEPs then vote on this in plenary.

Special committees for urgent issues

MEPs can set up special committees for a limited period of time to deal with particularly pressing current issues and problems. In 2023, these committees intensively discussed artificial intelligence as well as measures to combat cancer and disinformation, for example.

Each committee is responsible for a specific subject area:

Foreign Affairs • Development • International Trade • Budgets • Budgetary Control • Economic and Monetary Affairs • Employment and Social Affairs • Environment, Public Health and Food Safety • Industry, Research and Energy • Internal Market and Consumer Protection • Transport and Tourism • Regional Development • Agriculture and Rural Development • Fisheries • Culture and Education • Legal Affairs • Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs • Constitutional Affairs • Women's Rights and Gender Equality • Petitions.

Are you particularly interested in a certain topic?

Most of the European Parliament's committee meetings are also held in public. Here you can follow live discussions on finding concrete solutions to problems:



www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/home

Everything you always wanted to know about your MEP...

Why do MEPs have a 'blue card'?

MEPs can use a blue card to indicate that they have a question during a speech in plenary. If the question is authorised by the Bureau of the EP, the MEP only has 30 seconds to ask it - and the answer must also be given in this short time.

Can MEPs also be members of the Bundestag?

No. In all EU Member States, an MEP may not be a member of the national parliament at the same time. Similarly, an MEP cannot be a member of a government or the Commission at the same time.

What does an MEP earn?

Being a Member of the European Parliament is a full-time job. To ensure that all MEPs can fulfil their mandate without carrying out another profession or requiring private assets, an MEP receives €9,975 per month from the European Parliament.

This is roughly comparable to a member of the German Bundestag. After deducting EU tax and social security contributions, €7,776 remains to be taxed in the country of origin. In addition, MEPs receive a daily allowance (€338) for board and accommodation for meeting days that they can prove they spent in Strasbourg or Brussels.

Do MEPs pay their own travel and telephone bills?

As MEPs have to travel a lot and over long distances, they are reimbursed for all proven travel expenses incurred while performing their duties. MEPs receive a flat-rate allowance of €4,778 per month for office management costs and material expenses, such as computers and telephone bills.

Does an MEP have to speak multiple languages?

No. Every MEP has the right to speak one of the 24 official languages of the EU, to follow plenary sessions in that language and to write parliamentary speeches and documents in that language. However, MEPs who speak several languages find it easier to communicate with their colleagues directly - without using a translation or interpreting service.

Can an MEP get away with anything?

No. Members who violate parliamentary rules of conduct, e.g. through insults, bullying or discriminatory behaviour, are punished by being called to order, expelled from the Chamber or excluded from parliamentary activities. If MEPs are frequently absent from meetings or roll call votes, their allowances are significantly reduced.

720

Members of Parliament (from 2024)

40.4%

women*

59.6%

men*

27

EU countries

3

locations

21 years

youngest MEP*

82 years

oldest MEP*

*As of July 2019

Discussions in 24 languages

24 languages from the EU Member States are recognised as official languages. To make sure that the MEPs can still understand each other, the European Parliament has an official interpreting and translation service. All parliamentary speeches and documents are translated.

You can also benefit from this, since the information and publications released by the EU are available in all of these languages.

24

languages

Bulgarian • Croatian • Czech • Danish • Dutch • English • Estonian • Finnish • French • German • Greek • Hungarian • Irish • Italian • Latvian • Lithuanian • Maltese • Polish • Portuguese • Romanian • Slovak • Slovenian • Spanish • Swedish

DECISION-MAKING FOR EUROPE - THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Elected representatives of the people, including the European Parliament and its MEPs, have four main duties they perform as part of a democracy:

1 Electing the Commission

MEPs elect a President of the European Commission (on a proposal from the European Council).

2 Making political decisions

The European Parliament discusses and adopts rules, directives and regulations. Together with the Council of Ministers, it makes political decisions for the entire EU that affect us all.

3 Setting a joint budget

Parliament has a say in how money is spent in the EU and how much. These are particularly important decisions, as money is also needed to realise political projects.

4 Overseeing the Commission and other EU institutions

The European Parliament scrutinises whether the Commission and other EU institutions are working properly and complying with the decisions of Parliament and the Council of Ministers.

1 Electing the Commission

Parliament votes on forming the new European Commission. It works like this:

- The European Council proposes a person for the office of President of the Commission. As a rule, this is someone from the largest political group in the European Parliament.
- A majority of MEPs must vote in favour of this proposal.
- The President of the Commission then proposes the other members of the European Commission. Parliament and the European Council must agree on the composition of the entire Commission. To this end, Parliament thoroughly scrutinises the future Commissioners to ensure that they are qualified. They must be well-qualified and suitable for office.

The threat of dismissal

If the European Parliament is no longer satisfied with the work of the European Commission, it can adopt a vote of no confidence to dismiss the entire Commission. It cannot vote out individual Commissioners.

Want to know what the European Commission is currently working on?

You can find up-to-date information here:

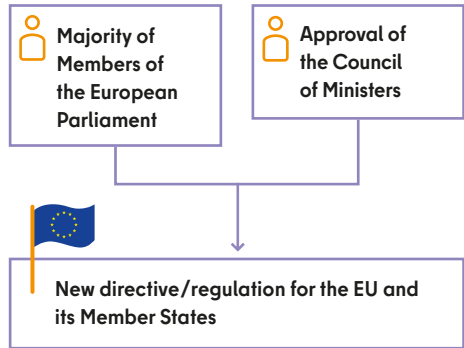


https://commission.europa.eu/index_en

2 Making political decisions

The European Parliament makes decisions on various issues: the single market, environment, transport, employment, social affairs, education, health, agriculture and fisheries, consumer protection, support for poorer regions, security, justice, trade and cooperation with third countries.

This ensures that the EU only takes decisions that are supported by a majority of the European Parliament and most Member States.



The incomplete Parliament

Unlike the Bundestag, the European Parliament has no right of initiative. Although the European Parliament can suggest that the European Commission draw up a proposal, it cannot make specific legislative proposals itself. It is currently being discussed whether Parliament should also be given the right to make specific proposals for decisions.

Who decides what?

The EU regulates many things, but by no means everything that affects our daily lives. Many political decisions are still made in Germany. However, EU rules are increasingly defining the scope for political decisions in Germany. The division of duties between the EU and the Member States varies.

European solutions

The European Parliament is always involved in decisions, especially in areas where the Member States have decided to work more closely together. This applies in particular to the common market – the single market – and the common currency – the euro. That is why the European Parliament decides on rules that apply to trade, food, other products and services.

European goals and national approaches

In other areas, responsibility is shared between the EU and the Member States. The EU sets targets or defines objectives, and the European Parliament also votes on these. However, the Member States themselves decide how they want to achieve these targets and objectives. This applies in particular to environmental protection, transport and energy policy, and social policy.

National decisions with European support

Finally, there are areas, such as cultural and education policy, in which the Member States continue to make independent decisions. However, the European Parliament can arrange for the EU to support the Member States in certain tasks and, for example, call for student and employee exchange programmes or programmes to combat youth unemployment.

3 Setting the EU budget together

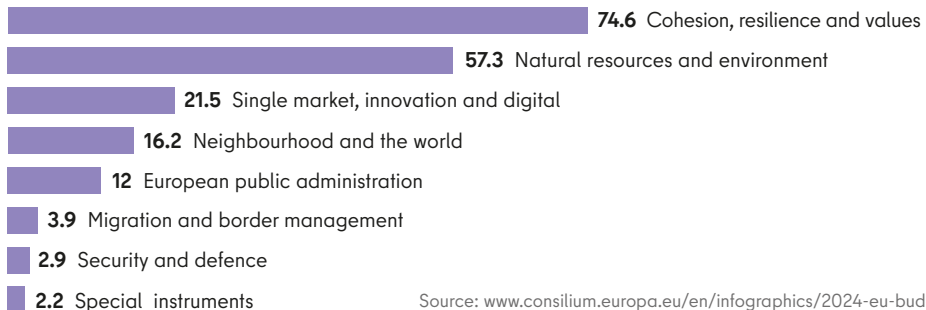
The European Parliament has a say in how much money the EU spends and which plans and projects it supports financially. This gives Parliament a very effective control instrument and opportunities to shape EU policy.

Together with the Council of Ministers, Parliament defines a multiannual financial framework for investments and expenditure. Parliament and the Council of Ministers must also approve the annual budget that the Commission draws up.

'Germany - net contributor'

In addition to Germany, in 2022 France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Austria, Finland, Denmark, Italy and Ireland were among the Member States that paid more into the EU budget than they received back. Nevertheless, countries like Germany gain many advantages from the EU. Exports and orders awarded to German companies generate considerable income for Germany. In return for the additional money they receive, other Member States often provide services from which the others benefit.

2024 budget in billions of euros



Source: www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/2024-eu-budget

190.6 Total

4 **Overseeing the Commission and Secretariat**

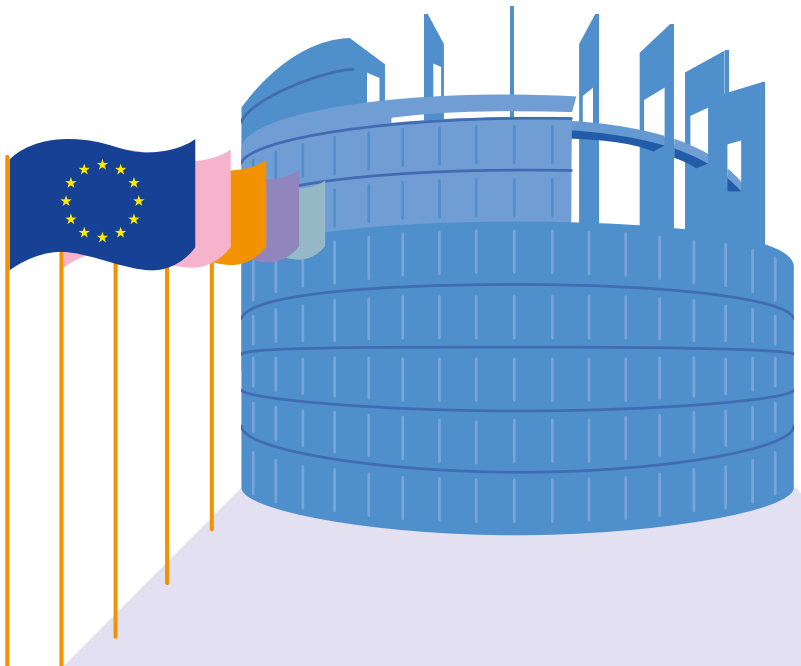
Members of the European Parliament oversee what is done in the EU:

- If the Commission wishes to amend an EU regulation or adopt a new one, it generally requires the consent of the European Parliament.
- The European Parliament must also approve international agreements or the accession of another state to the EU.
- MEPs scrutinise whether the Commission, other EU institutions and the Member States implement Parliament's decisions correctly. They can also put written or oral questions to members of the Commission or the Council of Ministers.
- If MEPs believe that serious errors have been made in a matter or that EU rules have been violated, they can set up a committee of inquiry. The approval of a quarter of the MEPs is sufficient for this. The investigation may concern EU or Member State institutions.

In 2023, there were parliamentary committees of inquiry into compliance with animal welfare standards during transport and the use of Pegasus and other monitoring software and spyware. Both committees criticised inadequate provisions in EU law and the disregard of applicable EU law by Member States.

Adopting new laws

New laws – directives or regulations – for the EU can only be passed jointly by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union (Council of Ministers). The European Commission proposes the laws. Parliament and the Council of Ministers can then approve the proposal, request amendments or reject it.



The European Commission



The European Commission is something like the government of the EU. It determines the direction of EU policy and makes proposals for new laws (right of initiative). It implements the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers and ensures that the Member States comply with EU rules and treaties. Each Commissioner is responsible for a certain specialist area. The Commission's official seat is in Brussels.

The European Council



The European Council is where the heads of state and government of the EU Member States meet to define the EU's major objectives. They determine the direction of European foreign and security policy and are responsible for amendments to EU treaties.

Council of the European Union (Council of Ministers)

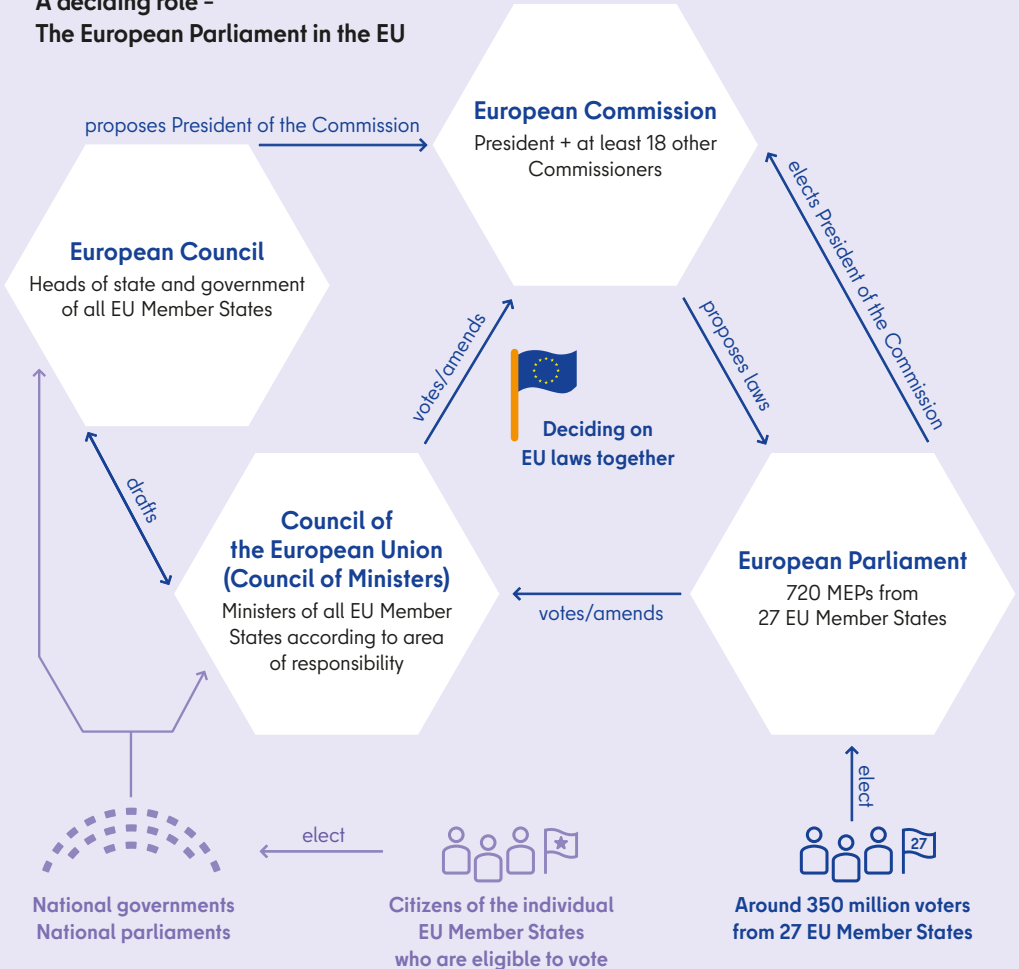


The relevant ministers from all Member States are represented in the Council of Ministers. A different Member State takes over the presidency every six months. As a rule, a decision by the Council of Ministers requires a 'double majority': a majority of the 27 Member States must vote in favour and these States must also represent a majority of the population of the EU (65%). Some decisions (e.g. tax matters) require unanimity in the Council of Ministers.

Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU)

The CJEU resolves any disputes on the interpretation of EU law.

A deciding role - The European Parliament in the EU



How does the EU benefit me?

Peace in our time

There have been no violent conflicts between the Member States for over 70 years. Differences of opinion between the EU Member States are now being settled at the negotiating table. Military conflicts such as the war in Ukraine pose major challenges for the EU.

The European response: The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) enables the EU to act jointly in global affairs and provides development cooperation with third countries. Its aim is to call for peace and human rights outside the EU as well.

Freedom across borders

For a long time, border and passport controls, customs duties and other restrictions hindered the movement of goods and people between European countries.

The European response: The European single market has made trade between EU countries much easier. For consumers, the range of products on offer has become richer and cheaper, as import duties are no longer levied on Spanish oranges, Italian espresso machines or French cheese.

EU citizens can travel freely in large parts of Europe and choose where they want to live. This has made it much easier to study or work in another EU country.

No more tricky maths

Converting the various national currencies used to be a headache not only for holidaymakers but also for companies.

The European response: The euro was introduced in 2002. Today, 20 EU countries belong to the eurozone and share a common currency - the euro. This means that converting currencies when travelling and trading across borders in the eurozone is a thing of the past - as are the fees for exchanging money.

Better value goods and services







The range of European goods and services has become very diverse with the single market, but also somewhat confusing.

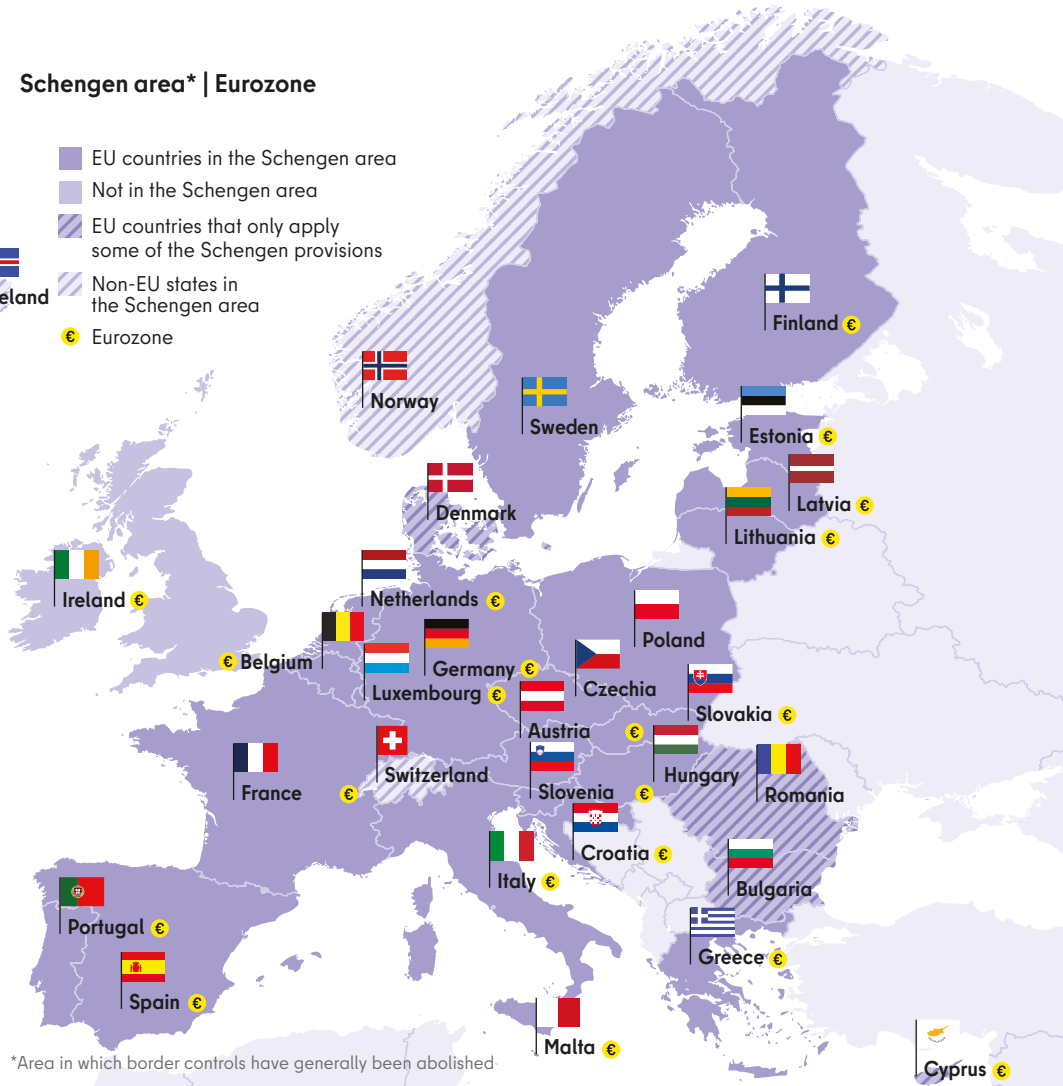
The European response: Consumer protection is high on the European Parliament's agenda. The abolition of roaming charges for mobile phones, the standardisation of charging cables for digital devices and nutritional information on food packaging within the EU are just a few examples of this.

EU enlargement

The story of the EU began with six European states that set themselves the goal of securing peace, cooperation and democracy in Europe. Today there are 27 EU Member States. Croatia was the most recent country to join the EU in 2013. Accession is a lengthy negotiation and adjustment process. Candidate countries must fulfil numerous requirements – economic, social and democratic standards, as well as standards relating to the rule of law – in order to become members. Every accession is also accompanied by EU reforms, for example to adapt the funding structures to the economic and social situations of new Member States. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine are currently preparing to join the EU. Georgia and Kosovo have also applied.

Schengen area* | Eurozone

-  EU countries in the Schengen area
-  Not in the Schengen area
-  EU countries that only apply some of the Schengen provisions
-  Non-EU states in the Schengen area
-  Iceland
-  Eurozone



*Area in which border controls have generally been abolished

What kind of EU do you want?

...an EU that speaks with one voice in favour of peacekeeping in Europe and throughout the world?

...an EU that sets up its own armed forces, or should only the Member States have armies?

...that refugees are turned away at the EU's external borders, or that all EU Member States are equally committed to taking in people seeking protection?

...Europe-wide standards for products such as chargers for digital devices?

...a growing EU that enables other states to join?

...an EU that sets stricter guidelines on how energy is generated, or that each EU Member State decides for itself about the operation of coal or nuclear power plants?

...an EU that closely coordinates economic and social policy issues and sets common standards?

...that the EU Member States continue to work together even more closely to limit price increases?

...that the European Parliament is given even more weight in political decisions in the EU?

HAVE YOUR SAY - USE YOUR VOTE

Make well-informed choices

Not sure who you want to vote for yet? You are not alone - many voters only decide who to vote for a few weeks, days or hours before the election. Their decision depends on the issues and solutions the parties use to promote themselves. An important factor is also whether they trust the candidates to address important issues we will face in the future.

Information on the election

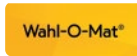
There are many ways to find out about the election and the parties looking for your vote:

- **Use different types of media**
Newspapers, radio stations, television channels and online portals are all reporting on the election campaign.
- **Find out more from the candidates directly:** The parties advertise what they stand for via websites, information stands, events and on social media.
- **Get information from the European Parliament directly:**



<https://elections.europa.eu/en>

- Use the Wahl-O-Mat:
From the beginning of May, you can compare your own opinions on important European issues with those of the parties and also find out who is standing as a candidate:



www.wahl-o-mat.de

- Visit the Federal Agency for Civic Education in person or virtually. Here you can find more information about the European Union and the European elections.



www.bpb.de/die-bpb/ueber-uns/federal-agency-for-civic-education

- Have a look at the Berlin Senate Chancellery's page on the European elections. Among other things, there is a calendar of events in Berlin for the European elections:



www.berlin.de/europawahl

- Visit the Berlin State Agency for Civic Education. Here you can find more information and events relating to the 2024 European elections.



www.berlin.de/politische-bildung

Social Media: Facebook, Instagram, YouTube (BeLapoBi)

- How exactly do I vote? You can find information on the election procedure on the Berlin State Returning Officer's website:



www.berlin.de/wahlen/wahlen/europawahl-2024

Getting to know the European Union

- You can also find the European Parliament in Berlin – Unter den Linden 78:
<https://berlin.europarl.europa.eu/de>
- On the European Affairs page of the Berlin Senate Chancellery, you will find all the information you need about Europe in Berlin:
www.berlin.de/sen/europa/europa-in-berlin
- Europe Direct Berlin (ED) at the Berlin State Agency for Civic Education always offers up-to-date information and discussion events:
www.berlin.de/europedirect

Europe is anytime and anywhere – even in Berlin

Your voice for Europe is also important between elections. If you have questions about the EU and want to help shape its future, there are many ways to do so.

Shaping Europe

- Contact your Members of the European Parliament.
- Help shape European policy in a party of your choice.
- Take part in a European movement or citizens' initiative.
- Contact the European Ombudsman if you are affected by discrimination or injustice:
www.ombudsman.europa.eu/en/home
- Start a European petition if you would like the Parliament to discuss a specific issue or problem. Find out how here:
www.europarl.europa.eu/petitions/en/home

Vote for your Members of the European Parliament on 9 June 2024!

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**The European Parliament
will be elected
on 9 June 2024!**