

YEE's Beginner's Guide

**to the 2024
European
Parliament
Elections**

Let's go vote!!



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This guide has been prepared by the European Affairs team of Youth and Environment network. We aim to introduce young Europeans to the European Union and raise awareness about the upcoming EU elections in June 2024. We spur every citizen to vote and play a part in shaping how Europe will look like for the coming 5 years.

What is the European Union?

The **European Union (EU)** is a political and economic community of 27 countries, or also called Member States. As a citizen of a country inside the EU, you are also a **European citizen!** This means you have the right and **freedom to live, move, work and study** anywhere on the continent, as well as vote and candidate yourself for the European elections.

Between the **6th and 9th of June 2024**, European citizens are called to vote for the only European Union institution directly elected by the people: the **European Parliament**. These **elections** are going to affect the lives of 450 million people on the continent for the next 5 years. This is your chance to make your voice heard and shape European policies! **Check out how to vote in your country [here](#).**

Did you know that around **70% of all laws in your home country are actually decided by the EU?**

The **EU legislates on almost everything in our lives** such as the environment, Artificial Intelligence, education through the Erasmus project, economic policy and much more! Three key institutions drive the EU and these are the **Commission**, the **European Parliament** and the **Council**.



The Commission might be the equivalent of your national government and it's made up of **27 Commissioners**, one for each State, who each work on one specific area and are tasked with proposing laws. Each Commissioner can be seen as the “minister” at the EU level in a specific sector such as environment, education, economics and more. The Commission also holds the **executive power** and makes sure EU laws are implemented correctly.

The **Council of the European Union** is where all ministers of the Member States meet to discuss and approve EU laws. The Council is headed every 6 months by a new EU country. Their focus is on **shaping the EU's future** by coordinating policy at a continental level. Together with the Parliament (which you can read about in the next page), they are tasked with **amending and approving the EU laws that will ultimately affect all of us.**

What is the EU Parliament?

The **European Parliament** represents 450 million citizens and its main task is to **vote and improve EU laws**, manage the EU's budget and keep checks on the Union's work. **Members of Parliament (MEPs) elect both the Commission President and the Parliament President.** This means that the political orientation of MEP representatives also plays a role in defining the priorities of the Commission and the laws that the EU is going to work on for the future 5 years. The Parliament President elected by the MEPs holds several key powers, such as the power of signing off EU budgets.

During the elections, **you are going to vote for your national party** and usually they are also going to be affiliated with a broader European party with representatives from different countries. The Parliament is located both in **Brussels**, Belgium, where they work in smaller committees and **Strasbourg**, France where they meet as a plenary.



[Check our EU Parliament tracker here!](#)

How do EU elections work?

Remind me to vote!
A free email service by the EU on the voting day

This year we are electing 720 MEPs from all EU countries. Each country has at least 6 members (like Malta) or a maximum of 96 members (like Germany) based on their population size. Check your country [here](#).

The **27 EU Members have various electoral systems**, which means that every country has a slightly different way of choosing. In general, most Parliamentarians are elected based on how many votes a party received within a specific country. The seats available for each Member State will then be filled by national party representatives.

Here's some good news: **all EU citizens can vote, even if you're living in another EU country!** Every European has the right to vote and run for Parliament either in their home country or in the EU country they are living in. You can also be living somewhere else and vote in your home elections. You can't vote more than once though!

Why vote?

This is the moment to **make your voice count!** Your opinion matters a lot and in June you will have the possibility to voice it by electing the candidate that most represents your views. The upcoming **elections will impact the EU for the coming 5 years.**

In most EU countries, you are going to vote directly for a candidate or a specific party. **On our website, we have created a Parliament Tracker** with a list of all current parties seated in the EU Parliament and their views on the environment. Take a minute to check who represents your views the best and, if you have some more time, go and check the parties' websites where you will find all their programmes.

This is your prime opportunity to influence EU politics since the EU Parliament is the sole institution elected directly by citizens. Your vote truly matters, shaping the future of Europe and your own country. Remember, the outcomes affect not only distant places like Brussels, but also impact our everyday lives, work, and future. Check the next page for examples of laws enacted by the EU Parliament for a more sustainable future.



Nature restoration law

This law is aimed at increasing biodiversity and reducing the decline in quality of Europe's vast natural areas. Ecosystems, flora and fauna are going to be restored in the upcoming years.

30% of EU expenditure to climate projects

90€ Billion of EU funds are going to be used for climate interventions, the green transition and climate projects all around Europe.

What has the EU Parliament done?

Fit for 55

The EU aims to reduce its emissions by 55% by 2030 and become a carbon neutral continent by 2050. This is a broad package of rules affecting several sectors of the economy with a plan to achieve this goals in all Member States.

Zero pollution action plan

Around 300,000 people have died in Europe in 2021 from air pollution. The aim of this plan is to reduce pollution around Europe for both environmental and health reasons, reducing related deaths by 55%.

Do you want to know more? Here are some great resources you can check out before the elections in June! See you at the polling stations!

More about the functioning of the European Union:

- *A short guide to the European Union*
- *Easy-to-read EU*
- *More on the various EU institutions*

Info about the upcoming EU elections:

- *Knowing about the EU elections*
- *Remind me to vote, a free email service by the EU on the voting day*
- *Find out how to vote in your country here*



What is the EU Parliament:

- *Facts and figures about the EU Parliament*
- *Who are the current members of Parliament*





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