

European electoral laws for European elections : A short summary

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European electoral laws for European elections : A short summary

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1. Acts, treaties and articles related to European Elections

The Act of 20 September 1976, concerning the election of the representatives of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage, included the following essential provisions:

- Elections must be held on a date falling within the same period starting on a Thursday morning and ending on the following Sunday
 - Members of the European Parliament are elected for a term of 5 years
 - **The European Parliament shall draw up a proposal for a uniform electoral procedure to serve as a basis for deliberations by the Council with a view to the adoption of this proposal by the Member States.**
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1. Acts, treaties and articles related to European Elections

Following the adoption on 10 March 1992 of a draft act on a uniform electoral procedure for the election of its Members - which was not adopted by the Member States - the European Parliament reconsidered the matter and in March 1993 came out in favour of a uniform electoral procedure based on proportional representation with a 5% minimum threshold. Again, the proposal was not adopted by the Council.

Subsequently, the Treaty of Amsterdam modified the former Article 138 (3) of the EC Treaty (now Article 190 (4)). In addition to the aim of a uniform electoral procedure in all Member States, it also provided for elections by direct universal suffrage "in accordance with principles common to all Member States". This amendment was intended to remove the main obstacle to a European electoral procedure, namely the need for uniformity. In view of this amendment the European Parliament adopted a draft act on an electoral procedure incorporating common principles for the election of its Members on 15 July 1998 (Doc. A4-0212/98)

1. Acts, treaties and articles related to European Elections

After long and difficult debates between the Parliament and the Council this was followed up by a **Council decision which amended the original 1976 Act**. The Parliament gave its assent in May 2002. The Council decision contains a number of important new provisions:

- Members of the European Parliament are to be elected on the basis of **proportional representation**, using either a list system or single transferable vote.
 - **Member States became free to establish constituencies or subdivide their electoral areas as they wished**, provided this did not generally affect the proportional nature of the voting system.
 - Member states were permitted to establish a **minimum threshold** for the allocation of seats, **provided this did not exceed five per cent of votes cast**.
 - **The office of Member of the European Parliament became incompatible with that of member of a national parliament.**
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1. Acts, treaties and articles related to European Elections

The decision introduced a certain degree of uniformity into European electoral procedure in key areas.

Nonetheless it was also clearly stated that outside the provisions of the Act, electoral procedure should be governed by Member States' national legislation, provided this does not affect the 'essentially proportional nature' of the voting system.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.1 Distribution of seats

2.1.1 Constituencies

1 single national constituency (The majority of EU countries + France in 2019)

Belgium : Regional constituencies

Germany : The current 99 Members are elected from either Land (16) or Federal lists.

Ireland : 4 regional constituencies

Italy : 5 regional constituencies

Poland : The national territory is divided into 13 constituencies (electoral districts)

Sweden : Due to the relatively low number of seats, the constituency system used in national elections cannot be employed in elections to the European Parliament since it would not satisfy fairness and predictability requirements. As a result, the whole country forms one single constituency.

UK : These were divided among 12 regional constituencies, 11 + Northern Ireland

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.1 Distribution of seats

2.1.2 Counting methods

15 Member states have adopted varieties of the D'Hondt system for counting votes and allocating seats (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Romania, Spain, Finland, France, the Netherlands (Hare/D'Hondt), the UK, Estonia, Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Portugal.

Germany allocates at the national level using the divisor method with standard truncation Sainte-Lague/Schepers, Luxembourg uses a variant of the D'Hondt system, the 'Hagenbach-Bischoff' system (similar to Droop/D'Hondt). In Italy seats are allocated using the method of whole quotients and highest remainders, in Ireland and in Malta by the system of the single transferable vote (STV-Droop).

In Greece the system of pure proportional representation known as 'Enishimeni Analogiki' is applied.

In Sweden, as in Latvia, the modified St. Lague method (odd-numbers method in which the highest common factor is 1.4) applies. In Slovakia and Cyprus a system based on the Droop method and the highest remainder, in Lithuania the Hare system combined with the highest remainder are used.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.1 Distribution of seats

2.1.3 Threshold or not

No threshold in Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and UK.

The threshold required to win a seat is 5% in France, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Germany and Romania

Italy : A nation-wide 4% threshold was introduced in February 2009

Any list, which has not obtained at least 4% of the total votes, is excluded from the allocation of seats in Austria, Italy, Slovenia and Sweden.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.2 Preferential voting

In nine Member States (Germany, Spain, France, Greece, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Estonia, Poland and Hungary) the voters cannot alter the order in which candidates appear on a list (closed list).

In fourteen Member States such as Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Czech Republic and Cyprus, casting preferential votes may change the order of names on the list (semi-open list).

In three countries (Ireland, Luxembourg and Malta) and in one region (Northern Ireland) the lists are open.

In Luxembourg voters may cross-vote, i.e. they can vote for candidates from different lists and they have got as many votes as there are mandates to allocate.

In Malta, Ireland and Northern Ireland the electors vote for individual candidates, i.e. every voter lists the candidates in order of preference (single transferable vote).

In Sweden voters may also add or delete names from the list.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.3 Franchise

2.3.1 Entitled to vote

Every citizen of a European country is entitled to vote in one of the country of the EU where he is resident if he is older than 18 years old or 16 years old in Austria.

Every citizen of the Union residing in a Member State of which he is not a national now has the right to vote in the elections to the European Parliament on the same conditions as the nationals of that State. However, the concept of residence varies considerably from one Member State to another and may require a person to have his domicile or usual residence in the electoral territory (Finland, France, Romania, Poland, Estonia and Slovenia), or to be ordinarily resident there (Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, Cyprus, Slovakia and Sweden) or to be entered on the population register (Belgium, the Czech Republic). To be eligible to vote in Luxembourg, Cyprus and in the Czech Republic, EU citizens must also satisfy a minimum period of residence.

2.3.2 Vote compulsory or not

Vote is not compulsory in the large majority of EU countries, except in Belgium and Luxembourg (with penalties) and Cyprus (no penalties).

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.4 Candidature

2.4.1 Age of eligibility for elections

The minimum age to stand for election is non-uniform in the Member States - it varies between 18 and 25 years. The age requirement is 18 years in Austria, Denmark, Spain, Finland, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Hungary, Luxembourg, Portugal, Malta and Slovenia; 21 years in Belgium, Estonia, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, 23 years in France and Romania and 25 years in Greece, Italy and Cyprus.

2.4.2 Conditions of residence

To be eligible to stand for election in Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg, Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Slovakia and France it is necessary to satisfy the residence requirements laid down in the electoral law of the Member State concerned.

All Member States require candidates to be a national of one of the Member States of the European Union. In Luxembourg, EU nationals' right to stand as a candidate in the European elections is subject to a two-year residence requirement and no list may be composed of a majority of non-Luxembourg candidates.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.5 Nominations of candidates

2.5.1 Requested signatures

Luxembourg : Lists may be submitted with the endorsement of 250 registered voters, or of one Member of either the European Parliament or the Luxembourg Chamber of Deputies.

Hungary : In order to put forward a list, a party needs to collect at least 20.000 voter endorsements.

Netherlands : Lists submitted must be accompanied by the signatures of at least 30 voters. Lists represented in the outgoing European Parliament with more than 15 seats may contain twice the number of their seats; others may contain no more than 30.

Austria : voter having reached the age of 18 at the latest on the day of the European elections may stand for elections if supported by: three Members of the national Parliament; an Austrian Member of the European Parliament; or 2600 registered voters.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.5 Nominations of candidates

2.5.1 Requested signatures

Poland : Each list has to be supported by at least 10.000 signatures of electors living in that constituency. If the electoral committee registers its lists in more than half of the constituencies, it is permitted to register further lists in remaining constituencies without obligation of collecting 10.000 signatures. An elector can give his/her signature to more than one list.

Slovenia : Candidates may be nominated by political parties (according to their rules) or by voters. A political party can submit a list of candidates if it is supported by signatures of at least 4 members of the National Assembly or at least 1000 voters. If nominated by voters, the list of candidates must be supported by signatures of at least 300 voters.

Sweden : No conditions for a party to stand for elections. In order to register a party 1.500 signatures are required. Nominations (i.e. lists of candidates) must be submitted to the Central Election Authority or, depending on specific circumstances, to the county administrative board.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.5 Nominations of candidates

2.5.2 Requested number of candidates

Denmark : A list may contain a maximum of 20 candidates and the political parties have the right to decide the order in which names appear on their list (party list). Moreover, lists may be linked.

Greece : Each list can include a maximum of 24 candidates.

France : Lists of candidates are to be lodged with the Interior Ministry. They must have twice as many candidates as there are seats to be filled, in each constituency. In order to implement equality rules, lists must consist of an equal number of candidates per gender (Law of 6 June 2000).

Latvia : Candidates must not exceed the number of members to be elected to the Parliament by more than twice.

Luxembourg : No list may include more than 6 candidates or be composed of a majority of candidates who are not of Luxembourg nationality.

Poland : Each list (in each constituency) has to contain from 5 to 10 names.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.5 Nominations of candidates

2.5.2 Requested number of candidates

Portugal : Lists of candidates are submitted to the Constitutional Court. Lists must contain a number of candidates equal to the number of members to be elected and between three and eight substitutes. The Parity Law (Organic Law s No 3/2006, 21 August) establishes that a minimum of 33,3% of women should be represented on every list of candidates, otherwise subventions granted by the state will be reduced and non-conformity with the law will be publicised.

Finland : The list of candidates of a party or a voters' association may not contain more than 20 persons.

2.5.3 Registration deadlines

From 2 weeks to about 2 months before the election days depending on the EU country.

2.5.4 Organisations allowed to present candidates

From individual to voters' associations and political parties are allowed to present candidates depending on Member states. Signatures and / number of voters to be required.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.5 Nominations of candidates

2.5.5 Fees and deposits to election expenses

Czech Republic : The contribution to election expenses is 15.000 Czech Crowns (about 600 Euros) for each.

Germany : No deposit is required

Estonia : A deposit to the Account of the National Electoral Committee is required for each candidate. The amount of the deposit is five times the minimum monthly wage established by the government. Based on the current minimum monthly wage the deposit would amount to 21,750 Estonian Kroons (about 1390 Euros).

Greece : A deposit of 2934,70 EUR is required when submitting a list. This amount will be reimbursed if the list obtains 3% of the votes.

Latvia The Central Election Commission shall register only those lists of candidates whose submitters have made a security deposit of LVL 1,000 (about 1,300 €) in the bank account of the Central Election Commission. This deposit is refunded if at least one MEP is elected.

Malta : Deposit: 40 Maltese pounds (90 Euros) per candidate (to be returned if obtaining 10% of the votes).(Mt)

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.5 Nominations of candidates

2.5.5 Fees and deposits to election expenses

Netherlands : A deposit of € 11 250 is required for parties not represented in the outgoing European Parliament. The deposit is refunded by the State only if the party obtains at least three quarters of the "electoral divisor" (the minimum number of votes required to win one seat).

Austria : No deposit is required. Every list must pay € 3.600 to the State for the cost of printing ballot papers.

Slovakia : A deposit of 1.200 € has to be deposited by the political party before it submits the list of candidates to the Central Election Committee. The Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic shall return the sum back to the party within one month after the promulgation of the results of the elections where the political party has gained at least 2% of all valid votes.

UK : A deposit of £ 5.000 (appr. € 5.700, February 2009) must be paid.

France : No deposit required but costs of advertising letters and ballots estimated at 1 million € at the charge of parties for a political party presenting candidates in all the country. This amount is reimbursed if the party has reached 3% of votes.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.6 Regulation concerning the electoral campaign

2.6.1 Medias

Media preference is generally given to parties who are already represented in national or inside the European Parliament.

Belgium : The aforementioned law restricts access to the media. The radio and TV stations themselves determine broadcasting time via the national media, although the length of time awarded to a party depends on its importance.

Bulgaria : National Television and the National Radio provide parties and coalitions with television and radio airtime for at least three debates of a total duration of at least 180 minutes. At least half of the time shall be given to parties and coalitions represented in Parliament who have registered candidates. The remainder is for parties and coalitions outside Parliament and initiative committees, based on an agreement between the media and the parties, coalitions and initiative committees concerned.

Czech Republic : Political parties, movements and coalitions may be presented on the *Český rozhlas* radio channel and the *Česká televize* television channel for a total of 14 hours, starting 16 days before polling day and ending 48 hours before. Broadcasting time is shared fairly between parties, political movements and coalitions. During the election period canvassing by political parties, movements and coalitions is prohibited.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.6 Regulation concerning the electoral campaign

2.6.1 Medias

Germany : As laid down in the TV and Radio regulations (*Rundfunkstaatsverträge*) and in the electoral law, state broadcasters must ensure access for all political parties/associations admitted to the elections.

Estonia : The Broadcasting Council establishes the rules of procedure for election campaigns conducted on Estonian Radio and Estonian Television. The Broadcasting Act also states the requirement for political balance as being one of the founding principles of broadcasting activities.

Greece : The Supreme Court determines the broadcasting time for all the legal parties.

Spain : Access to the media: political parties represented in the European Parliament and the national Parliament will be allocated broadcasting time on television and radio in proportion to the number of votes obtained by them in previous elections.

France : Media access: political parties have to submit an application in order to participate in the audiovisual campaign during the elections. A list of parties that have applied to participate in the audio-visual campaign is published on a particular previously fixed day.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.6 Regulation concerning the electoral campaign

2.6.1 Medias

France : TV and radio: two hours of TV and two hours of radio for parties and groupings represented by parliamentary groups in the National Assembly or the Senate; one hour of TV and one hour of radio to be divided between the other parties and groupings joined by lists of candidates in at least 5 electoral regions, which have applied to use public service broadcasts by a certain date before polling day.

Ireland : The state broadcaster (RTE) strictly ensures equitable access for all candidates and parties. Each candidate may send one message by post to all voters in his or her constituency.

Latvia : Media access is regulated by the Law on Pre-election Campaigning before Saeima Elections as well as by special mass media laws. Commercial organizations have to act according to the general radio and television rules. Facts and events have to be presented objectively. Printed media, radio and TV have an obligation to indicate who has financed pre-election campaign ads and to provide accounting.

Funding for publishing each candidate's election programme, as well as for campaign broadcasts on National Radio and TV is provided by the State. Each candidate has the right to one hour of broadcast on National TV and one hour on the National Radio (*Lietuvos Nacionalinis Radijas ir Televizija*).

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.6 Regulation concerning the electoral campaign

2.6.1 Medias

Hungary : The Act on electoral procedure and the Act on radio and television broadcasting regulate media access for political parties during election campaigns. During the campaign period broadcasters may publish political advertisements based on equal conditions for each party.

Netherlands : It is the government that distributes broadcasting time.

Austria : There is no official date for the beginning of the election campaign. Access to the media is unlimited.

Poland : The election committees have the right to present their views and programmes on Polish Public Television and Radio: Poland-wide channels will be accessible for the election committees registered in at least 9 constituencies and regional channels for the election committees registered in at least one constituency. Total time of elections' programs 15 hours in the TVP (Polish public Television) between 5pm and 11pm; 20 hours in the Polish Public Radio; 10 hours in each regional program; 20 hours in each regional radio; Divided equally in the Polish TV and Radio between election committees and proportionally in regional TV and radios.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.6 Regulation concerning the electoral campaign

2.6.1 Medias

Romania : Media access of political parties and non-affiliated candidates shall be established after final decisions concerning the candidatures. The Standing Bureau of the two Parliament chambers will assign media access proportionally to the ratio between the candidates of each party and the total number of candidates.

Slovenia : Public media shall determine and make public their rules about their use of programme time or newspaper space for presenting candidates, political parties and electoral programmes at least 45 day prior to the Election Day. These rules shall ensure equal rights to candidates and political parties. Public media shall not publish political propaganda information without giving the name of the client. Access to media is regulated, as well as hanging posters and holding meetings in public places.

Slovakia : National radio and television stations, as well as licensed broadcasters shall assign to each political party and coalition a time of 30 minutes of transmission of a political advertisement with maximum of 5 hours of transmission. Each party or coalition shall have equal terms for the purchase of broadcasting time, including financial and payment terms. Political parties and coalitions are responsible for the content of broadcasts. Broadcasting of political advertisements shall only start 21 days before election day. The placement of electoral billboards and other public information shall only start 21 days before election day.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.6 Regulation concerning the electoral campaign

2.6.1 Medias

Slovakia : These posters shall only be placed on locations determined by the municipality in its local ordinance.

Finland : Under the Act on Political Parties, the Finnish Broadcasting Company (a national public service company) is required to give equal treatment to political parties in its election broadcasts.

UK : Media access is granted according to the size of the party's support.



2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.6 Regulation concerning the electoral campaign

2.6.2 Opinion polls restrictions

Opinion polls are permitted until the polling day in Germany and Ireland.

No restrictions on publishing opinion polls in Estonia and Netherlands.

Restrictions from the day before the elections in France up to 15 days before the elections day in Italy or even 30 days before in Luxembourg.

2.6.3 Last of the official campaign

The official campaigns start from average 90 days in Poland up to 14 days before the election day in Portugal or France.

It mainly lasts from 12 days to one month depending on EU countries.

There is no official last of the campaigns in Denmark, Ireland and Netherlands.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.6 Regulation concerning the electoral campaign

2.6.4 Founding the election and ceiling

In all the EU countries founding for the elections are regulated by national laws except maybe in Sweden... Even in Estonia where there is no ceiling, anonymous loans are not permitted.

Bulgaria : The election campaign shall be funded with resources of the parties, the coalitions and the initiative committees, as well as with donations from individuals and legal entities. - Donations may not exceed the amount of BGN 10,000 (5000€), when coming from individuals, and the amount of BGN 30,000 (15000€), when coming from a legal entity. The sum total of funding for the election campaign per candidate list may not exceed BGN 2,000,000 (1000000€)

Spain : For the elections to the European Parliament, the ceiling for electoral expenses is obtained by multiplying €0,12 by the number of inhabitants legally resident in the electoral areas required to issue ballot papers.

France This ceiling has been set at 1.150.000 € per list. Individual loans are limited to 4600€ / person / year in all elections.

Ireland : The ceiling for parties or individuals were set to 230 000€ in 2004.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.6 Regulation concerning the electoral campaign

2.6.4 Funding the election and ceiling

Lituania : A political party shall cover all other costs of the election campaign from the account opened for this specific purpose. The total cost of the electoral campaign cannot exceed 1000 times the average monthly wage (i.e. approximately 1.175.000 LTL, approximately €340.580 euros in 2004 elections).

Portugal : Electoral campaigns are funded by the following: state subsidies; contributions from political parties; gifts from natural persons, subject to the relevant rules. Campaign expenses: the limit is laid down by the law on the funding of political parties and electoral campaigns at 144 times the minimum national monthly wage per candidate.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.6 Regulation concerning the electoral campaign

2.6.5 Refunding

Czech Republic : Certain election expenses are refunded for parties gaining at least 1% of the total valid votes cast. They receive CZK 30 per vote (about €1).

Denmark : Campaign expenses are not subsidised by the state.

Germany : Any party and/or political association that obtained at least 0.5 % of the valid votes cast is entitled to public funding, which is granted in view of the number of votes obtained, the membership fees and the donations received. It is € 0,85 for the first four million valid votes cast for their list, and € 0,70 for any votes exceeding this number.

Estonia : There is no fixed reimbursement for campaign expenses. However, the political parties represented in the *Riigikogu* receive yearly allocations from the state budget. The amount is proportional to the number of seats received in the *Riigikogu* elections.

Spain : The State covers all expenses involved in electoral activities up to a maximum of €18.030,36 per seat obtained in the EP and € 0,60 per vote obtained.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.6 Regulation concerning the electoral campaign

2.6.5 Refunding

France : Lists of candidates having obtained at least 3% of total votes are entitled to have reimbursed the cost of paper, printing of ballots, posters, circulars and bill posting expenditure. Electoral expenditure other than that relating to propaganda incurred by lists obtaining at least 3% of total votes cast is reimbursed on a lump-sum basis by the government. The sum reimbursed is equivalent to a maximum of 50% of the ceiling on authorised election expenditure. This ceiling has been set at 1.150.000 € per list.

Italy : Expenses are refunded within set limits.

Cyprus : Political parties receive an annual grant by the Government, according to the strength in the previous parliamentary elections. There is no provision for how to use the grant to fund European elections campaigns.

Latvia : This deposit (1300€ / list) is refunded if at least one MEP is elected.

Lithuania : This deposit (6800€) is returned to a political party if its list has passed the 5 % threshold and the party has submitted a report on financial expenditure for the elections.

Luxembourg : Campaign expenses, resulting from one written communication to each voter, are reimbursed to parties that gain at least 5% of the total number of votes.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.6 Regulation concerning the electoral campaign

2.6.5 Refunding

Netherlands : The deposit is refunded by the State only if the party obtains at least three quarters of the "electoral divisor" (the minimum number of votes required to win one seat).

Portugal : The right to State subsidy is granted to all parties that have previously stood for election to the European Parliament and obtained seats. The total amount of the subsidy is the equivalent of 10.000 times the national minimum monthly wage (EUR 426 in 2008). These funds are allocated as follows: 20% to parties, which stand for election but do not obtain seats; the remaining 80% is distributed in proportion to the results obtained.

Slovenia : These costs shall not exceed the amount of funds used (0,25€ / voter max). The right to the reimbursement of part of the expenses shall also be held by the organiser whose list gained at least 2% of the total number of votes cast in the state. Revised amounts shall be determined by the National Assembly each time elections are called.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.7 Validation of electoral results

Electoral results are validated by national authorities in all the EU countries.

In Denmark, Luxembourg and Germany, the national Parliament rules on the validity of the election.

In Slovenia the National Assembly confirms the election of MEPs.

In Belgium, Austria, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Estonia and the United Kingdom, the courts rule on this matter and this is also the case in Germany if the parliamentary ruling is challenged.

In France, the Council of State is competent for disputes concerning the elections, but the Minister of the Interior also has the same right if (s)he feels that the legally stipulated forms and conditions have not been respected.

In Spain, the Junta Electoral Central rules on validity, and in the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden this is done by a special validation board.

2. Overview of electoral systems and provisions

2.5 Nominations of candidates

2.5.1 Requested signatures

Belgium : 5 MEPs or 5000 signatures in each speaking constituency

Germany : Parties with less than five representatives in the German Bundestag or in the Parliament of a "Land" must submit 4000 signatures alongside their official registration. For lists at the level of a Land it is just 2000 signatures.

Spain : Rules: parties, coalitions, federations and groups of voters who have obtained the signatures of 15.000 voters or 50 elected representatives (including members of local councils) may submit ordered lists of candidates.

Italy : Political parties and political groups that have at least one seat in the European Parliament, form a parliamentary group in one of the two national Chambers and/or have at least one seat in one of the two Chambers may submit lists of candidates without the need to be endorsed by signatures. Individual nominations may be submitted provided they are endorsed by 30.000 signatures from each constituency. The signatures must represent at least 10 % in each region of the separate constituencies.