

ENGLISH



Check Politik

Easy-to-read

# European elections in Luxembourg



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# Introduction

## Who is this booklet for?

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The booklet is for everyone who wants to find out more about the European elections.

It is written in a way that can be read easily.

Information which is easy to read reaches more people.

Everyone has the right to information.

This also says the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Luxembourg has signed the convention.

These rights must also be respected in Luxembourg.

Information which is easy to read has to comply with certain rules.

The rules can be found on the websites **www.klaro.lu** and **www.easy-to-read.eu**.

## Check Politik

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The booklet European elections in Luxembourg is part of the Check Politik series.

Future booklets will deal with other subjects.

You can download the booklets free of charge here:

**www.zpb.lu**

The words voter, citizen, inhabitant, MEP, candidate ...

all refer to women, men, all sexes.

This makes the text easier to read.

The **pink** words are **explained in the dictionary**.

The figures in this booklet describe the situation as it will be after the United Kingdom leaves the European Union.

You can find more information on page 5.

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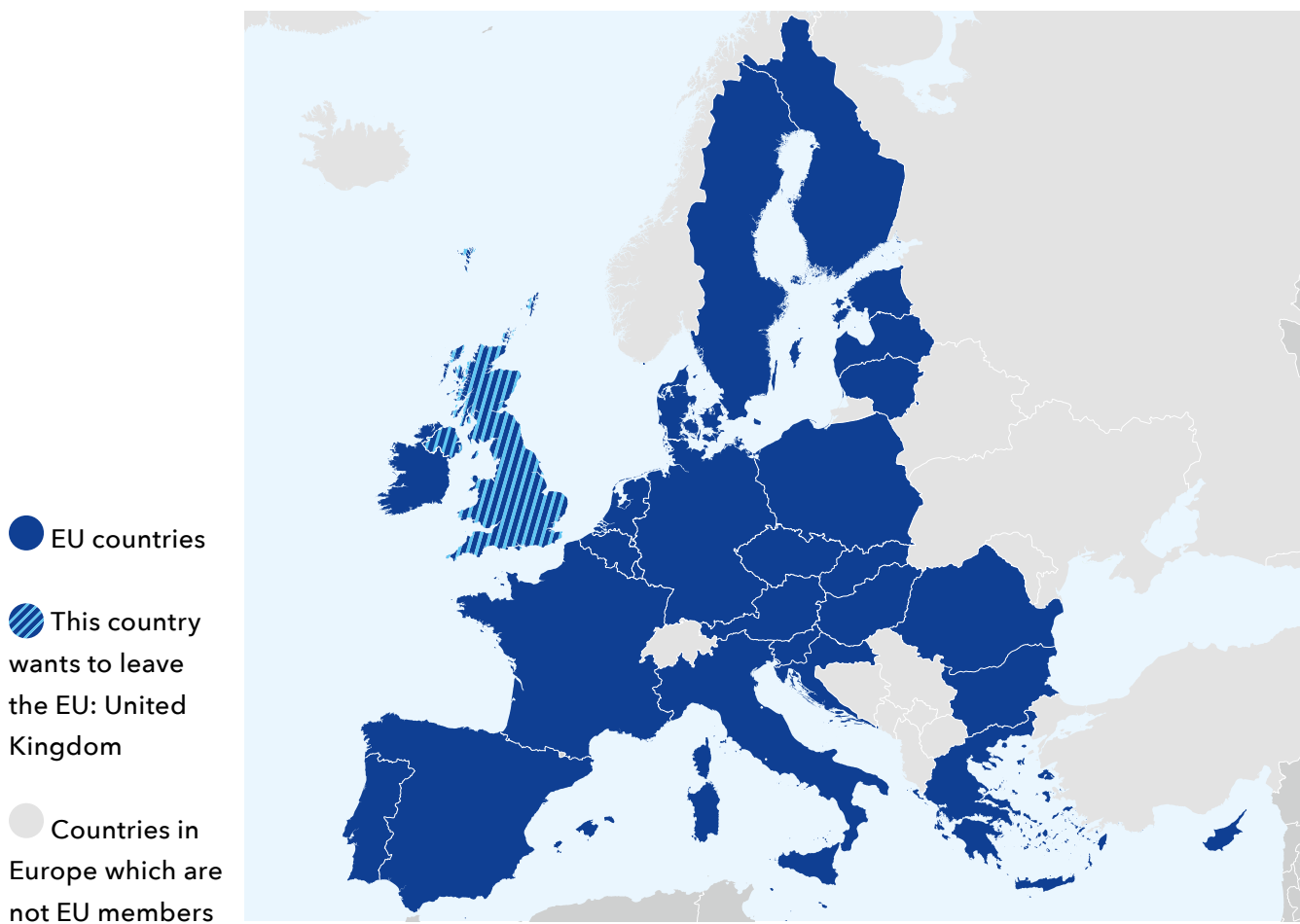
# 1. EU - the European Union

## What is the European Union?

The **European Union** is an association of **27 countries** on the continent of **Europe**. The abbreviation is: EU. The countries in the EU work closely together. But **not all the countries** in **Europe** are in the EU.

The United Kingdom wants to leave the EU in March 2019. The process of the United Kingdom leaving the EU is called: **Brexit**. Before the United Kingdom leaves the EU, there are many discussions. The discussions are about this question: How will the EU and the United Kingdom work together after Brexit?

### Map: EU countries in Europe



## What does the European Union do?

The EU wants to prevent war in Europe.

The EU wants to make trade between countries easier.

For example: trade in food or cars.

The EU also wants to protect **democracy**.

### **The EU affects our daily lives.**

For example, the EU deals with the following things:

- **Protecting buyers**

You can buy things from other countries.

There are common rules which apply to those things.

That means: the rules are the same for all countries.

The rules apply when things are made and when things are sold.

The rules protect customers.

Example: sometimes your mobile phone stops working.

For two years after you bought it, the shop must repair the phone.

Or give you a new phone.



- **Opening borders**

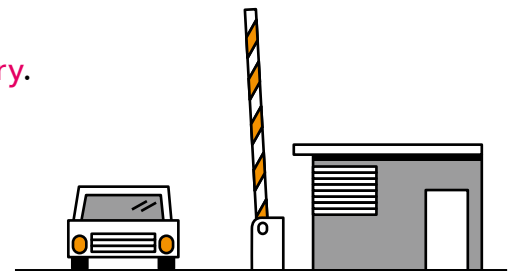
In the EU there are 'open' borders for people and goods.

That means: there are almost no border checks between EU countries any more.

EU citizens can travel more easily from one country to another.

They do not need to show an ID card.

It is easier for them to work in another **EU country**.



- **Protecting the environment**

The EU looks after nature and the environment. That is why there are now special light bulbs. These LED or energy-saving light bulbs consume less electricity.



- **Helping young people**

Citizens can study anywhere in the EU. Their degrees are recognised in the other EU countries. A programme helps students who want to spend a year studying in another country. The programme is called Erasmus: it provides students with money.



## Europe does not take every decision

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Countries and municipalities are responsible for many things themselves.

In Luxembourg this means: the Parliament (the Chambre des députés) and the municipalities.

Therefore, Luxembourg also holds these elections:

- For **Parliament**: general elections.  
Only Luxembourgers can vote in these elections.
- For the **municipalities**: local elections.  
Luxembourgers and foreigners can vote in these elections.

The EU does not deal with schools in Luxembourg.

The **Parliament** takes decisions on schools in Luxembourg.

Because schools are a **national matter**: a matter for the country itself.

The Parliament knows best what the situation in Luxembourg is.

Example: what languages people learn at school.

The EU does not deal with permits to build new houses in a municipality.

**Local councils** decide on this.

Because this is a **local matter**.

**The EU only takes decisions on things which are supposed to be the same everywhere in Europe.**

Example: if you travel from Luxembourg to another country, your Luxembourgish mobile phone should continue to work.

It should not be too expensive to use your mobile phone abroad.

So, decisions are taken by: municipalities, countries and the EU.

That is why there are local elections, national elections and **European elections**.

Luxembourg is a small country.

Luxembourg cannot do everything itself.

Luxembourg needs other countries.

**In the EU, Luxembourg can talk with politicians from other countries** and take decisions on common rules together.



## 2. Who decides in the European Union?

There are different institutions in the European Union.  
A lot of people work in those institutions.  
They decide what happens in the EU.

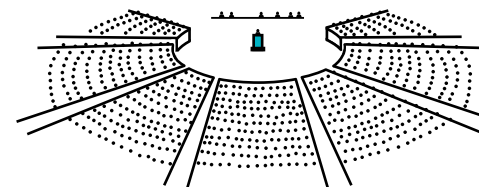
Decisions often take a long time in the EU.  
Because there are a lot of countries in the EU which participate in decision-making.  
Every country wants to achieve its objectives.  
For that reason, countries discuss during a long time.

Now you get to know what the tasks of these institutions are:

1. the European Parliament
2. the Council of Ministers
3. the European Commission
4. the European Council

You can also read about who you can vote for.

### The European Parliament



The European Parliament represents people in the EU.

**Citizens** from every country in the EU elect a new European Parliament every five years.

In the 2019 elections, **705 people** will be elected.

They are **Members of the European Parliament**, or MEPs.

They are women and men.

They are from all the EU countries.

Large countries with lots of people have more MEPs than small countries.

A small country like **Luxembourg has 6 MEPs.**

A large country like Germany has 96 MEPs.

The meetings take place in **Brussels** (Belgium) and in **Strasbourg** (France).  
The administration is in Luxembourg.



Meeting of all MEPs in Brussels



Meeting of all MEPs in Strasbourg

MEPs have **3 main tasks**:

- They **keep an eye on** the EU government.  
This **government** is called: the European Commission.
- They discuss ideas for new laws in **Europe**.  
They **adopt the laws** together with the Council of Ministers.  
That means: they vote on new laws.  
The laws then apply throughout Europe.
- MEPs **adopt the budget**  
together with the Council of the European Union.  
The budget is a document.  
It shows how much money the EU receives  
and how much money the EU spends.

## The Council of the European Union or Council of Ministers

The EU has a **Council of Ministers**.

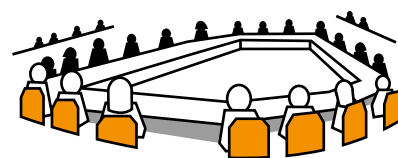
It is also called: Council of the European Union.

**Ministers from the EU countries** meet in the Council.

Also ministers from Luxembourg.

Not all the ministers are there every time.

It depends on the topic.



The ministers have for example the following tasks:

- They **adopt EU laws** together with the European Parliament.
- They discuss decisions in their own countries.

For example, the decisions concern the job market, youth or refugees.

They try to make those decisions more consistent.

Every six months a different country takes over the leadership of the Council of Ministers.

We say: the country has the **presidency**.

That country organises the meetings of ministers.

Luxembourg had the presidency in 2015.

## The European Commission

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The **European Commission** works like a government.

The European Commission has these tasks:

- It proposes **new laws** for the EU.
- It **makes sure that all the EU countries apply the laws**.

The European Commission has a **President**.

The president is elected by the **Members of the European Parliament**.

Each European party proposes a person to be elected.

That person is the European party's most important candidate.

This candidate is also called leading candidate.

The European Commission has 27 **Commissioners**.

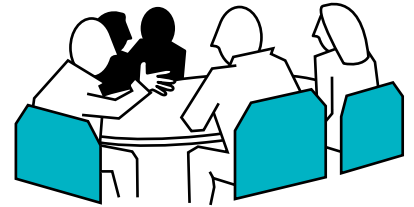
The Commissioners are the EU's **ministers**.

Each Commissioner comes from a different country and is responsible for a different area.

For example, there is a Commissioner for agriculture and a Commissioner for the environment.



## The European Council



The **heads of state** or **heads of government** from the 27 EU countries meet in the **European Council**. Luxembourg's head of government (Prime Minister) goes to these meetings. In France, it is the head of state (President).

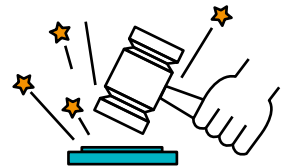
The members of the European Council normally meet four times a year.

The European Council has these tasks:

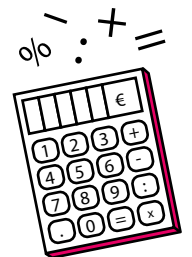
- It decides on the **topics to be worked on** in the EU.
- It sets the **overall objectives** for the EU, for example objectives for security in the EU.

## Other EU institutions

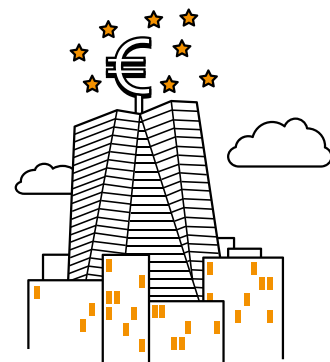
The **European Court of Justice** is in Luxembourg-Kirchberg. Its task is to make sure that all countries obey EU laws. And uphold the fundamental rights of **citizens**.



The **European Court of Auditors** is in Luxembourg-Kirchberg. It keeps an eye on money in the EU institutions: how much money is received and how much is spent. It makes sure that the money is spent as planned.



The **European Central Bank** is in Frankfurt (Germany). It is responsible for the European currency, the euro.



# 3. Electing the European Parliament

## Who can be a candidate?

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Being a **candidate** means: standing for election.

People standing as a candidate in the **European elections** must:

- be an **adult** (be at least 18 years old).
- have the nationality of an EU country.
- enjoy their **civic rights**.

That means: a judge has not banned them from voting.  
and they do not have a legal guardian.

- be **resident** in Luxembourg.

That means: be registered in Luxembourg on the day  
the list of candidates is submitted.

To be elected means that the candidate can be an **MEP**.

Being an **MEP** in the **European Parliament** is a profession.

That means that MEPs must temporarily leave the job they already have.

MEPs receive their pay from the EU.

## Who can vote?

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People voting in the **European elections** must:

- be an **adult** (be at least 18 years old).
- enjoy their **civic rights**.  
That means: a judge has not banned them from voting and they do not have a legal guardian.
- have the **nationality of an EU country**.
- **Non-Luxembourgers must be registered in Luxembourg**.  
This is necessary on the day you register on the electoral roll.

All voters are on the **electoral roll**.

Every municipality has such a list.

People on the electoral roll **can and must vote**.

It does not matter what nationality they have.

Foreigners can have their name removed from the electoral roll.

Luxembourgers cannot do this.

**Luxembourgers** are **automatically** on the electoral roll.

They must vote.

**Foreigners** must have the nationality of an EU country.

They are not automatically on the electoral roll.

They must **apply** at the latest 87 days before the elections.

They must make an **application to the municipality** in which they live.

They must write a letter.

Or they can go on the Internet.

There is a special website.

It is called: **www.guichet.lu**.

This website is written in normal language.

It is in German, French and English.



Foreigners can only elect **MEPs of one country**:

either MEPs in Luxembourg

or MEPs in their home country.

## The poll card

Before the elections you will get an envelope through the post.  
In the envelope you will find:

### The poll card:

You will be invited to take part in the elections.

The letter will also tell you:

when and where you can vote.

The opening hours of the **polling station**.

How many MEPs can be elected.

N° bureau de vote : 01  
N° électeur : 123

**Einberufungsschreiben / Lettre de convocation**  
Europawahlen vom Sonntag, den 26. Mai 2019  
Elections européennes du dimanche, 26 mai 2019

26.05.2019

26.05.2019

6 Europaabgeordnete

6 Députés européens

|              |             |                      |
|--------------|-------------|----------------------|
| Ihr Wahlbüro | Nr/No<br>01 | Votre bureau de vote |
|--------------|-------------|----------------------|

The **date of the elections** is written here.

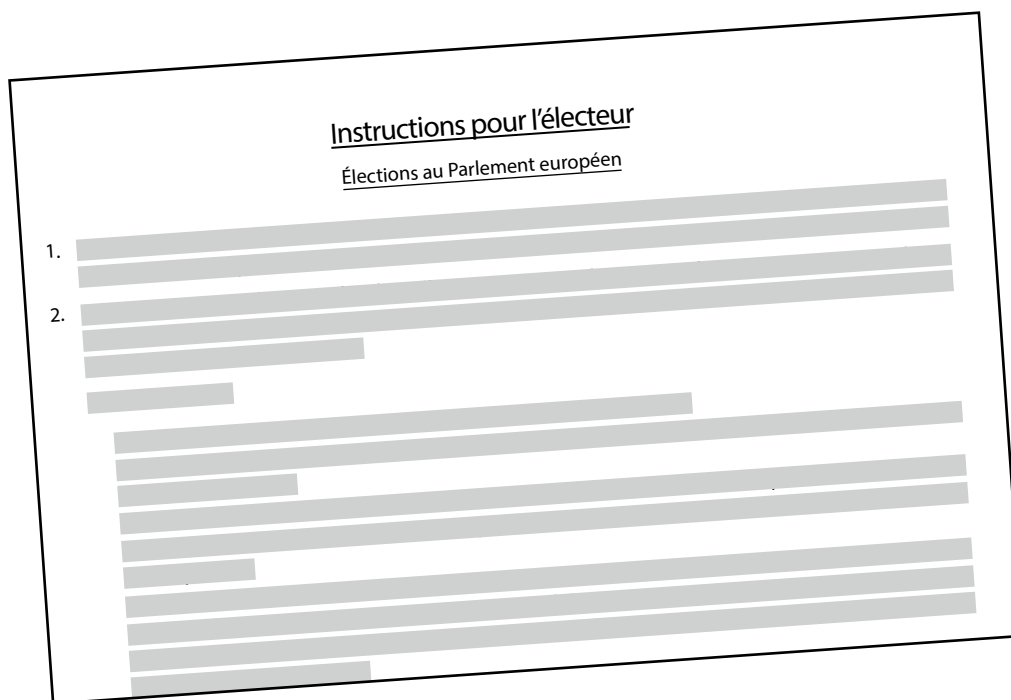
The **opening hours** of the polling station are written here.

The **place to vote** at is written here.

The people who **do not have to vote** are written here.

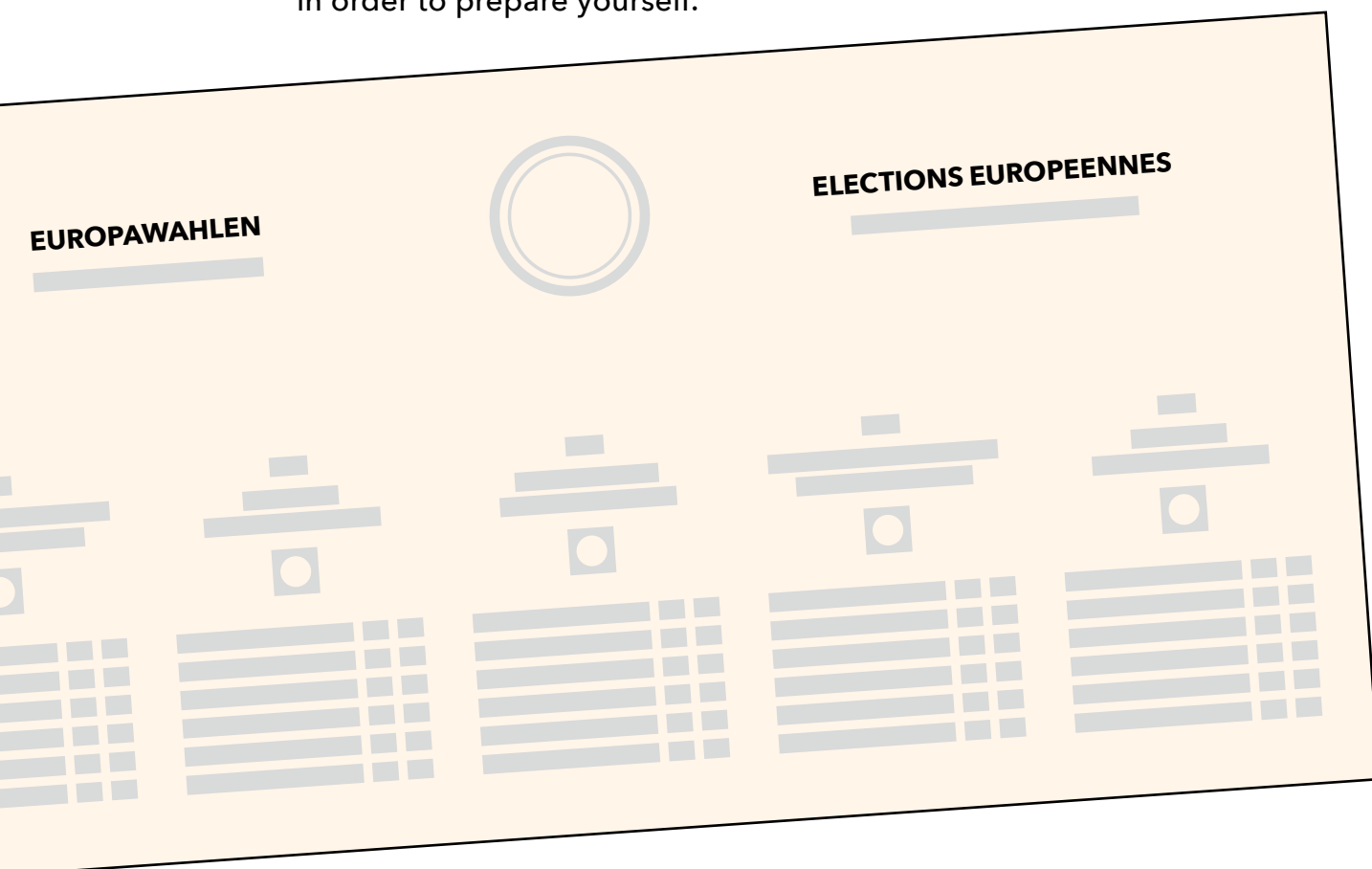
**The instructions:**

These are the rules for voters.



**The specimen ballot paper:**

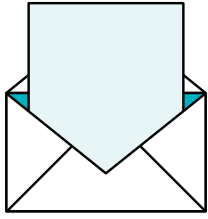
You can practise on that ballot paper in order to prepare yourself.





## The postal vote

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You can vote at the **polling station**.

You can also have a **postal vote**.

The **request for a postal vote** must be made a set time before the elections:  
between 12 weeks and 25 days before the elections.

**Voters** abroad must send the request earlier:  
between 12 weeks and 40 days before the elections.

You must request a postal vote at your municipality  
or on the website [www.guichet.lu](http://www.guichet.lu).

That means: you must fill in a **form** on paper  
or on the website.

You must give an address.

Voters living abroad must send a copy of their identity card or passport.

You must send the form to the municipality  
or submit it on [www.guichet.lu](http://www.guichet.lu).

You will then receive a **ballot paper through the post**.

The letter will be sent to the address given on the form.

The letter will contain:

- the **poll card**,
- the instructions for voters,
- a specimen **ballot paper**,
- the real ballot paper, which you send back,
- 2 empty envelopes.

You vote and send the real ballot paper  
through the post to the municipality.

## How you can make your mind up

---

Voting means choosing, taking a decision.

You cannot vote for all the **candidates**.

When voting you must **choose candidates**.

### Find out:

- What **parties** are there?
- What do the parties want to change?
- What are each party's ideas?
- Who are the candidates?

That means: who can you vote for?

Each party writes an **election manifesto**.

The manifesto tells you what the party wants to do if it wins the European elections.

A party says, for example:

If our party wins, we will try to create more jobs in the EU countries.

This is called an election promise.

The parties inform people about their manifestos:

- The parties put copies of their manifestos in your **letter box**.
- The parties inform on their **websites** and on **social media** (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- The parties set up **information stands**.  
You can ask the candidates questions.
- The parties hold **election meetings**.  
Anyone can attend.  
It is a good opportunity to meet the candidates.
- The parties put **posters** up in public spaces.

There are reports about the parties on television, the radio and the Internet.

Television and radio discussions are organised with the candidates.



On the Internet you sometimes find false information.

Always ask yourself this question:

'Is what I am reading true or not?'

And 'Where does this information come from?'

Election promises are sometimes difficult to keep.

Some parties promise more than is possible.

For that reason, you should ask the party exactly how it wants to keep its promises.

## The ballot paper: How to vote

On the **ballot paper**, you vote for **candidates** or a party.

In Luxembourg, 6 MEPs can be elected.

= 6 votes

On each list there are 6 candidates.

### Option 1:

#### You vote for a party.

That means: You give all your votes to one party.

You make a mark in the circle above the list you have chosen.

That means: You fill in the circle,

or you put a cross in the circle: + or x.

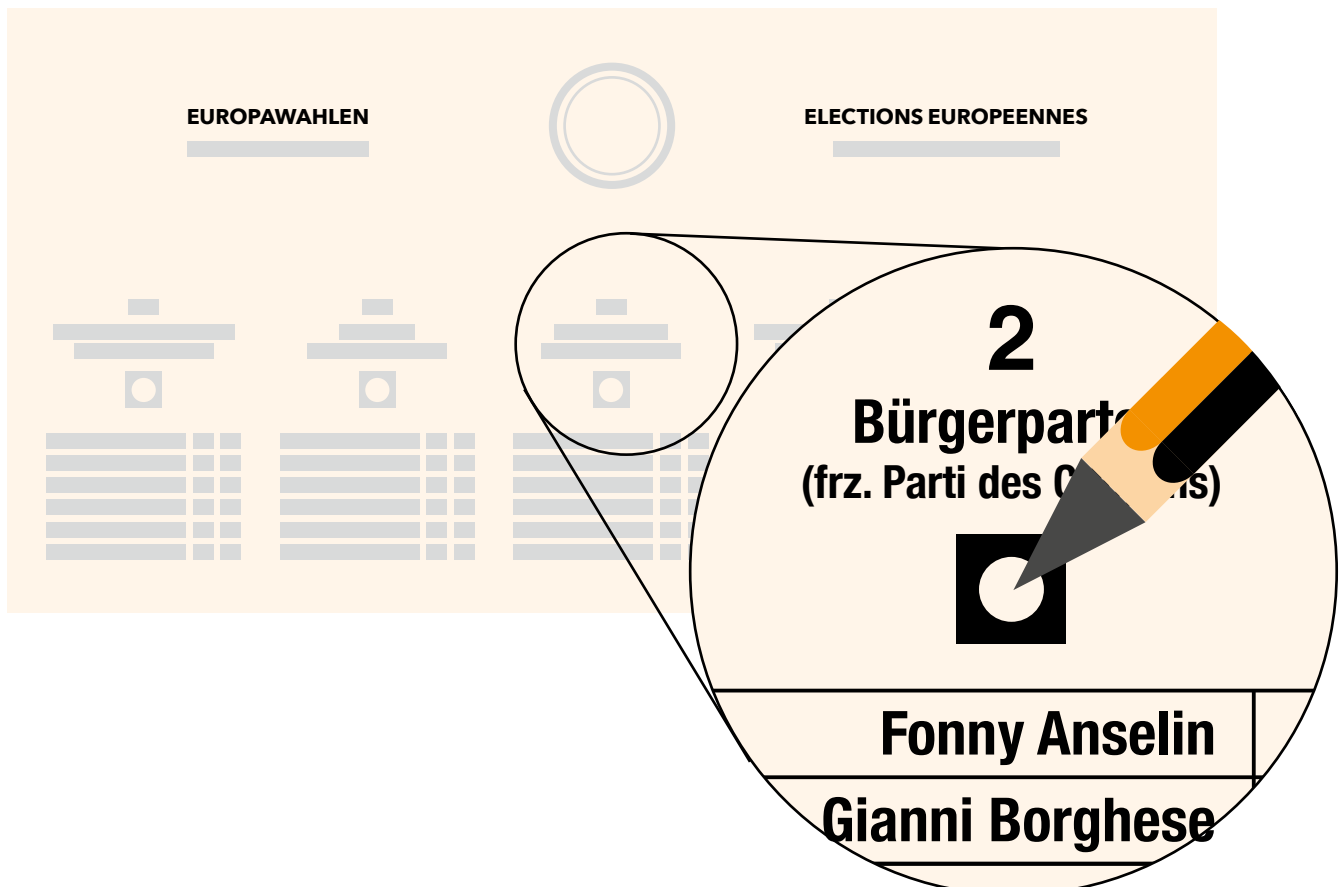
This way each candidate on the list gets 1 vote.

You cannot then put more crosses after the names

of individual candidates.

### Example:

The **voter** can fill in or put a cross in the circle above a list.



## Option 2:

### You vote for candidates.

That means: you put a cross next to the names of the candidates who best represent your ideas.

You put a cross in 1 or 2 boxes after the names.

You put a cross in as many boxes as you have votes.

You put a cross next to the names of the candidates **on one list**.

Or you put a cross next to the names of the candidates **on several lists**.



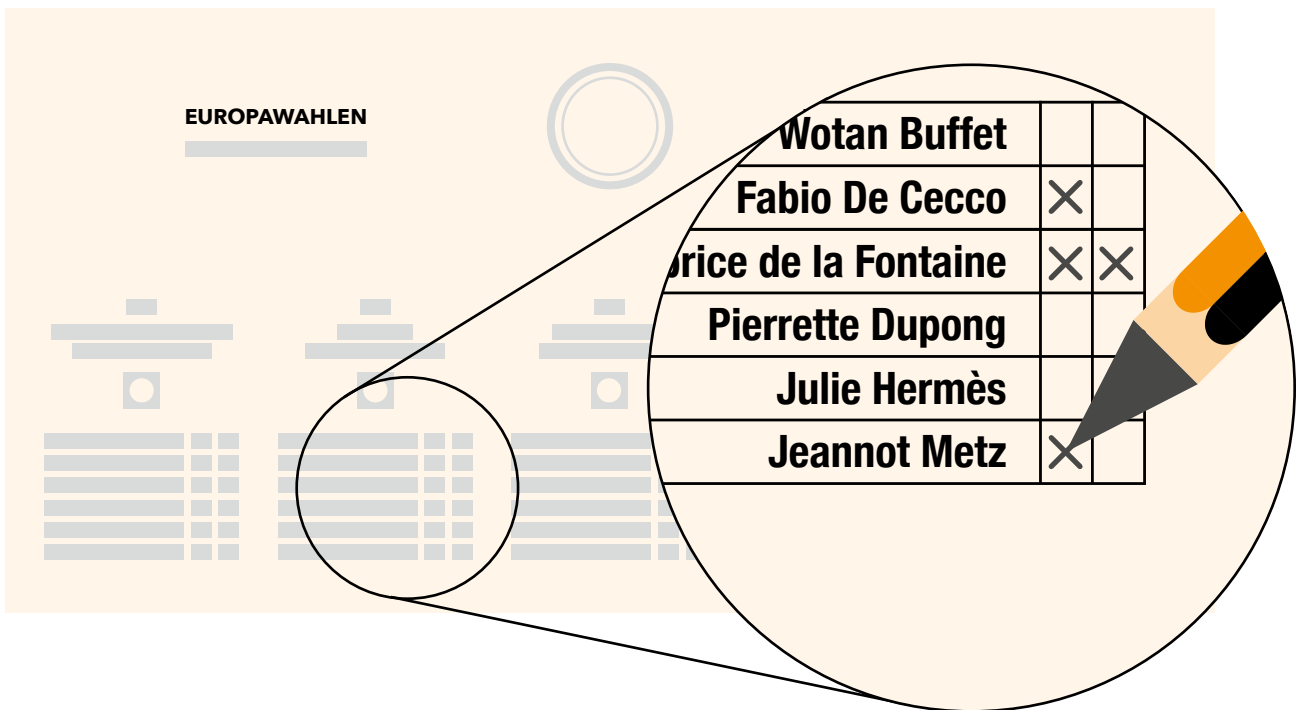
You have **6 crosses in total**.

You can put fewer than 6 crosses.

But you cannot put more than 6 crosses.

### Example:

The **voter** can put a cross against individual candidates' names.



### The rules to respect for a valid **ballot paper**:

- The voter may only put crosses in as many boxes as there are MEPs to be elected.
- He may only put a cross in the boxes or in the circle.
- He may not cross anything out or write or draw on the ballot paper.
- He may not make any marks which make it possible to recognise him.
- The ballot paper must not be accompanied by any other piece of paper or any other object.
- The voter may only hand in the real ballot paper and no other piece of paper.

### Other rules:

- You can only **vote once**.
- You **cannot vote on behalf of another person**.  
If you break these rules,  
you may face a fine or imprisonment.
- You will receive a **specimen ballot paper** at home.  
You can practise on that ballot paper in order to prepare yourself.  
You can take that specimen ballot paper  
into the voting booth as a reminder.  
However, you may not hand in that specimen ballot paper.  
You may only hand in the real ballot paper  
that you are given at the **polling station**.



If you make a mistake, you can get a **new ballot paper** from a **member of the polling station staff**.  
The member will destroy the old ballot paper immediately.

## Accessibility

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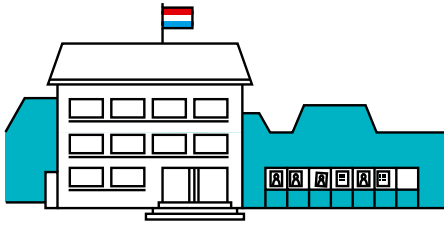
Anyone with a disability can take a helper into the voting booth with them.  
It is the law.



The **voter** alone decides who he wants to vote for.  
The helper must keep the vote secret.

A blind or visually impaired person can use a **tactile ballot paper** as a help to vote.

## On election day



You can go to the polling station **between 8am and 2pm.**



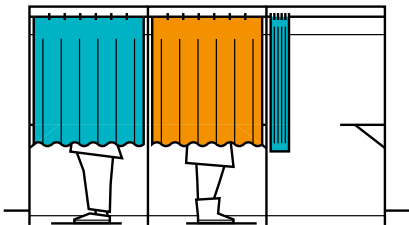
You show your **identity card** or your **passport.**



You receive the ballot paper with the names of the candidates.

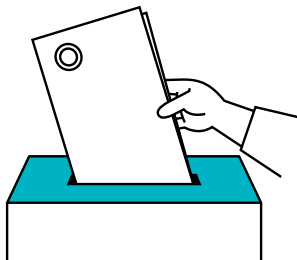
**Voting is secret.**

That is why you go into the voting booth. You should not show anyone who you are voting for.



In the voting booth you will find a pencil. You can also take your own pen or pencil. You use it to put a cross against the candidates' names or above the list you have chosen.

Don't make any other marks on the ballot paper.



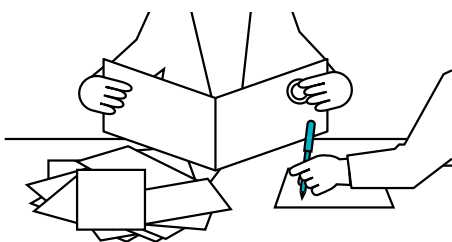
Go to the polling station team.

A member of staff will show you a box.

That is the **ballot box.**

You show the stamp on the ballot paper.

You put the ballot paper in the box.



The polling stations close at 2pm.

The polling station team starts counting the votes.

## 4. After the election

The polling stations close at 2pm.

The **polling station team** takes the ballot papers out of the **ballot box** and **count the votes**.

There are reports on the elections on television, radio and the Internet.

The first results will be announced in the evening.

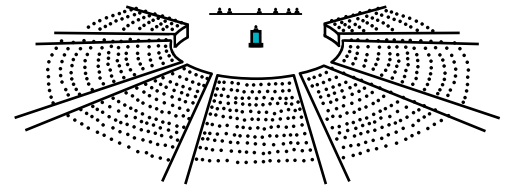
On the day after the elections, the full results for Luxembourg are known.

The result is shown in the newspapers, on television and on the Internet.

For example, on the official website **www.elections.public.lu**

### Who gets into the European Parliament?

---



6 **MEPs** from Luxembourg sit in the **European Parliament**.

The party with the most votes gets the most MEPs.

The parties from the various EU countries form groups.

That means: a party from Luxembourg works with parties from other EU countries.

These are parties with similar aims.

The individual parties become **European parties**.

In the European Parliament, these groups are called **European parliamentary groups**.

The MEPs represent the people of Luxembourg and, at the same time, all people in the EU.

That is the case until the next **European elections** in five years.



Until then, every **citizen** can watch what's happening:  
**Are the MEPs really doing what they promised to do before the elections?**

If you are not happy with what they are doing,  
at the next European elections  
you can vote for another party or another politician.

## Who becomes member of the European Commission?

---

### **The President of the European Commission:**

The **European Parliament** elects the President of the European Commission.

Normally, the leading **candidate** from the party with the most MEPs becomes the President of the European Commission. It can be a man or a woman.

The President of the European Commission proposes **new Commissioners**.

He does that together with the leaders of the EU countries. The Commissioners help the President of the Commission. Each has an area of responsibility.

The new Commissioners must present themselves to the **European Parliament**.

The European Parliament must approve the new Commissioners.

Then the new Commission can start working.

It says what will be important for the years to come and what it wants to do.



# 5. Dictionary

Voter, minister, Member of the European Parliament, etc. are all words used to refer to women and men.

**Pink words:**

English

**Blue words:**

Luxemburgish

**Black words:**

French

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|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Ballot box</b><br><b>Wahl-Urn</b><br><b>Urne électorale</b>        | You put the ballot paper in the ballot box.   |
| <b>Ballot paper</b><br><b>Stëmm-Ziedel</b><br><b>Bulletin de vote</b> | Paper with the names of the people or parties you can vote for.   |
| <b>Budget</b><br><b>Budget</b><br><b>Budget</b>                       | The budget is a plan or document.<br>It shows how much money the EU can spend.<br>And where the money comes from.                                       |
| <b>Candidates</b><br><b>Kandidaten</b><br><b>Candidats</b>            | People who want to be elected.<br>Their names are on the ballot paper.  |
| <b>Citizens</b><br><b>Bierger</b><br><b>Citoyens</b>                  | The inhabitants of a village, a municipality or a country in Europe.<br>If you are at least 18 years old, you can or must vote.                         |
| <b>Commissioner</b><br><b>Kommissär</b><br><b>Commissaire</b>         | EU ministers.<br>Commissioners propose new EU laws.<br>They ensure that EU laws are applied.<br>Their boss is the President of the European Commission. |

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**Compulsory vote**  
**Wahl-Pflicht**  
**Vote obligatoire**

The requirement to vote.  
This means: the requirement to hand in  
a ballot paper.

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**Council of the  
European Union**  
**Rot vun der  
Europäischer Unioun**  
**Conseil de l'Union  
européen**

Another word is: Council of Ministers.  
Ministers from the EU countries meet in the  
Council of Ministers.  
They adopt EU laws together with the European  
Parliament.

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**Democracy**  
**Demokratie**  
**Democratie**

Democracy means: the people decide.  
Citizens elect representatives.  
They are politicians who take decisions for the  
country.  
These representatives are called Members of  
Parliament.

- Elections are free.  
You can decide which party and which  
candidates you vote for.
- Elections are secret.  
You decide who you vote for.
- All votes are equal.  
No matter how old the voters are, where they  
come from or how much money they have.

Democracy also means for example that:

- Judges must be independent.  
That means: nobody can tell a judge what  
decisions to take.
- Human rights must be upheld.  
By everyone.

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| <b>EU country</b><br><b>EU-Land</b><br><b>Pays de l'UE</b>                                  | A country that is a member of the European Union.  |
| <b>Europe</b><br><b>Europa</b><br><b>Europe</b>   | The continent on which we live.<br>There are 47 states, this means countries.<br>27 of those countries are members of the European Union (EU).               |
| <b>European Commission</b><br><b>Europäesch Kommissioun</b><br><b>Commission européenne</b> | Another word is: Commission.<br>The government of the European Union (EU).   |
| <b>European Council</b><br><b>Europäesche Rot</b><br><b>Conseil européen</b>                | Its members are the heads of government or the heads of state of the EU countries.<br>They set the agenda and the general objectives for the work of the EU. |
| <b>European elections</b><br><b>Europa - Wahlen</b><br><b>Élections européennes</b>         | The elections to the European Parliament.<br>They take place every 5 years.<br>They are held in all 27 countries of the European Union (EU).                 |
| <b>European Parliament</b><br><b>Europa-Parlament</b><br><b>Parlement européen</b>          | It represents the citizens of Europe.<br>There are 705 MEPs from 27 countries.<br>The European Parliament is elected in the European elections.              |
| <b>European party</b><br><b>Europäesch Partei</b><br><b>Parti européen</b>                  | A European party is a grouping of several parties.<br>All the parties come from EU countries.<br>They have similar aims.                                     |

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| <p><b>European Union (EU)</b><br/> <b>Europäesch Unioun (EU)</b><br/> <b>Union européenne (UE)</b></p>              | <p>It is an association of 27 countries in Europe.<br/> We also say: it is a community.<br/> The countries in the EU work closely together.<br/> They include: Luxembourg, Germany, France and Belgium.</p> |
| <p><b>Government</b><br/> <b>Regierung</b><br/> <b>Gouvernement</b></p>   | <p>The government runs the country.<br/> The government consists of ministers.<br/> And state secretaries.<br/> The ministers have different areas of responsibility.</p>                                   |
| <p><b>Members of the European Parliament (MEPs)</b><br/> <b>Europa-Deputéiert</b><br/> <b>Députés européens</b></p> | <p>The people elected to the European Parliament.<br/> They represent the citizens of the EU countries.</p>   |
| <p><b>Minister</b><br/> <b>Minister</b><br/> <b>Ministre</b></p>  | <p>A member of the government of a country.<br/> The government runs the country.</p>   |
| <p><b>Party</b><br/> <b>Partei</b><br/> <b>Parti</b></p>  | <p>A group of people with similar political ideas and aims.<br/> They form a joint list for the elections.</p>  |
| <p><b>Poll card</b><br/> <b>Convocatioun</b><br/> <b>Convocation</b></p>  | <p>Another word: notification of an election.<br/> The letter invites you to vote.<br/> You will receive the letter at home.<br/> Through the post.</p>   |
| <p><b>Polling station</b><br/> <b>Wahl-Büro</b><br/> <b>Bureau de vote</b></p>                                      | <p>The place in the municipality where you go to vote.<br/> It is often a school, a sports hall or another building.</p>  |

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| <p><b>Polling station team</b><br/> <b>Membere vum</b><br/> <b>Wahl-Büro</b><br/> <b>Agents électoraux</b></p> | <p>People who work in polling stations on election day.<br/> They were chosen to carry out this task.<br/> They receive a payment.<br/> They hand out the ballot papers.<br/> They count the votes after the election.</p>  |
| <p><b>Postal vote</b><br/> <b>Bréif-Wahl</b><br/> <b>Vote par</b><br/> <b>correspondance</b></p>               | <p>A postal vote must be requested at the municipality or on <a href="http://www.guichet.lu">www.guichet.lu</a>.<br/> Voters get their ballot paper through the post.<br/> They vote and send the ballot paper through the post to the municipality.</p>                      |
| <p><b>Tactile ballot paper</b><br/> <b>Wahl-Schabloun</b><br/> <b>Modèle de vote tactile</b></p>               | <p>A tactile aid for blind and visually impaired people.<br/> It can be ordered here: <a href="http://www.idv.lu">www.idv.lu</a><br/> (Centre pour le développement des compétences relatives à la vue)<br/> There is also a tactile ballot paper at the polling station.</p> |
| <p><b>Voter</b><br/> <b>Wieler</b><br/> <b>Électeur</b></p>  | <p>Inhabitants who are on the electoral roll.<br/> This means Luxembourgers and citizens of other EU countries.</p>   |

## 6. More information

### Websites:

- [www.guichet.lu](http://www.guichet.lu)
- [www.elections.public.lu](http://www.elections.public.lu)
- [www.zpb.lu](http://www.zpb.lu)

## 7. Who made this booklet?

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The Zentrum fir politesch Bildung wants everyone to know about politics and democracy.

And it wants many children and adults to take part in public life.

The Zentrum fir politesch Bildung helps people do this.

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