Basic information

2015/2035(INL) INL - Legislative initiative procedure	Procedure completed Commission response to text adopted in plenary (see p. 11)
Reform of the electoral law of the European Union See also 2015/0907(APP) **Subject** 8.40.01.01 Elections, direct universal suffrage	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
AFCO Constitutional Affairs	HÜBNER Danuta Maria (PPE) LEINEN Jo (S&D)	26/02/2015 26/02/2015
	Shadow rapporteur UJAZDOWSKI Kazimierz Michał (ECR) GOULARD Sylvie (ALDE) SCHOLZ Helmut (GUE/NGL) TERRICABRAS Josep-Maria (Verts/ALE) ANNEMANS Gerolf (ENF)	

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Secretariat-General	TIMMERMANS Frans

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
12/02/2015	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
28/09/2015	Vote in committee		
02/10/2015	Committee report tabled for plenary	A8-0286/2015	Summary
27/10/2015	Debate in Parliament		
11/11/2015	Decision by Parliament	T8-0395/2015	
11/11/2015	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2015/2035(INL)
Procedure type	INL - Legislative initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Legislative initiative
Amendments and repeals	See also 2015/0907(APP)
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 46
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AFCO/8/02745

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE560.824	30/06/2015	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE565.204	01/09/2015	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE564.992	02/09/2015	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE567.650	10/09/2015	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A8-0286/2015	02/10/2015	Summary
For information		T8-0395/2015	11/11/2015	Summary

Additional information

Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Reform of the electoral law of the European Union

2015/2035(INL) - 11/11/2015

The European Parliament adopted by 315 votes to 234 with 55 abstentions, a resolution on the reform of the electoral law of the European Union.

Article 223 of the TFEU gives the European Parliament the right to initiate a reform of European electoral law by formulating proposals, which the Council decides upon by unanimity.

In view of the steadily decreasing turnout in European elections, in particular among the youngest voters, and voters' lack of interest in European issues, Members felt there was a need for ideas that would help to revive European democracy.

Accordingly, Parliament **proposed to reform its electoral procedure** in good time before the 2019 elections, with the aim of:

- enhancing the democratic and transnational dimension of the European elections and the democratic legitimacy of the EU decision-making process,
- reinforcing the concept of citizenship of the Union and electoral equality,
- promoting the principle of representative democracy and the direct representation of Union citizens in the European Parliament;
- improving the functioning of the European Parliament and the governance of the Union;
- making the work of the European Parliament more legitimate and efficient;

- enhancing the effectiveness of the system for conducting European elections;
- fostering common ownership among citizens from all Member States;
- enhancing the balanced composition of the European Parliament, and providing for the greatest possible degree of electoral equality and participation for citizens of the Union.

Parliament recommended the following **changes to the Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage** ("the Electoral Act") annexed to the Council decision of 20 September 1976:

1. obligation of political parties participating in elections to the European Parliament to **observe democratic procedures and transparency** in selecting their candidates for those elections; national parties should hold a democratic vote to select their candidates for European elections;
2. the list of candidates for election to the European Parliament shall **ensure gender equality**;
3. enhancement of the **visibility of European political parties** by placing their names and logos on the ballot papers, and where possible on posters used in European elections campaigns;
4. introduction of a **common deadline of twelve weeks before election day** for the establishment of lists at national level and for the nomination of candidates for the post of President of the commission by European political parties so as to enable their electoral programmes to be presented, political debates between the candidates to be organised and EU-wide electoral campaigns to be mounted.
5. introduction of an obligatory threshold for the allocation of seats in single-constituency Member States and constituencies which comprise more than 26 seats ranging **between 3% and 5%** for Member States using the list system;
6. close of polling in all Member States **by 21:00 hours CET** on the Sunday of elections;
7. a **common deadline of eight weeks** for finalisation of the electoral roll and **six weeks** for information concerning Union citizens with dual nationality and Union citizens living in another Member State to be exchanged with the national single authority in charge of the electoral roll;
8. introduction of the **right to vote** in the European elections for all Union citizens living outside the EU;
9. introduction of **electronic and internet voting possibilities** as well as voting by post mail;
10. the office of Member of the European Parliament to be deemed **incompatible** with that of member of a regional parliament or assembly vested with legislative powers.

Parliament recommended to Member States that:

- they should consider ways to harmonise the minimum age of **voters at 16**, in order to further enhance electoral equality among Union citizens.
- they adopt adequate legal frameworks that ensure the **highest standards of informative**, **fair and objective media coverage** during the election campaigns, particularly from public service broadcasters;
- they take measures to promote adequate representation of ethnic, linguistic and other minorities in European elections.

Lastly, Parliament determines to **have the right to fix the electoral period** for elections to the European Parliament after consulting the Council.

Reform of the electoral law of the European Union

2015/2035(INL) - 02/10/2015 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs adopted a report presented by co-rapporteurs Danuta Maria HÜBNER (EPP, PL) and Jo LEINEN (S&D, DE) on the reform of the electoral law of the European Union.

Article 223 of the TFEU gives the European Parliament the right to initiate a reform of European electoral law by formulating proposals, which the Council decides upon by unanimity.

With this report, the Committee on Constitutional Affairs **proposed that the European Parliament should decide to reform its electoral procedure** in good time before the 2019 elections, with the aim of :

- enhancing the democratic and transnational dimension of the European elections and the democratic legitimacy of the EU decision-making process,
- reinforcing the concept of citizenship of the Union and electoral equality,
- promoting the principle of representative democracy and the direct representation of Union citizens in the European Parliament;
- improving the functioning of the European Parliament and the governance of the Union;
- making the work of the European Parliament more legitimate and efficient;
- enhancing the effectiveness of the system for conducting European elections;
- fostering common ownership among citizens from all Member States;
- enhancing the balanced composition of the European Parliament, and providing for the greatest possible degree of electoral equality and participation for citizens of the Union.

The Rapporteurs decided to propose the following changes to the **Act concerning the election of the members of the European Parliament by direct universal suffrage** ("the Electoral Act") annexed to the Council decision of 20 September 1976:

1. obligation of political parties participating in elections to the European Parliament to observe democratic procedures and transparency in selecting their candidates for those elections;
2. the list of candidates for election to the European Parliament shall ensure **gender equality**;
3. enhancement of the **visibility of European political parties** by placing their names and logos on the ballot papers, and where possible on posters used in European elections campaigns;
4. introduction of a **common deadline of twelve weeks** before election day for the establishment of lists at national level;

5. introduction of an obligatory threshold for the allocation of seats in single-constituency Member States and constituencies which comprise more than 26 seats ranging between **3% and 5%** for Member States using the list system;
6. close of polling in all Member States by **21:00 hours CET** on the Sunday of elections;
7. introduction of a **common deadline of 12 weeks for the nomination of lead candidates** by the European political parties;
8. introduction of a deadline for the establishment and finalisation of the electoral roll shall be eight weeks before the first election day;
9. introduction of the right to vote in the European elections for all Union citizens living outside the EU;
10. introduction of electronic and internet voting possibilities as well as voting by post mail.

As a future step, it is recommended to Member States that they should consider ways to harmonise the minimum age of voters at **16**, in order to further enhance electoral equality among Union citizens.

Lastly, Parliament should have the right to fix the electoral period for elections to the European Parliament after consulting the Council.