



# Toolkit for the European Elections 2019

**A few tools and tips to get engaged!**

**This toolkit for the European Parliament elections 2019 is intended to AGE member organisations and whoever is willing to contribute to the debate around ageing issues during the campaign.**

We hope you will find it useful!

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## WHY THIS CAMPAIGN

The European Parliament is the only European institution that directly represents the voice of the 513 million citizens of the European Union (446 million without the United Kingdom). Since 1979, the European Parliament Members (hereafter: MEPs) have been elected through direct universal suffrage every five years. To know more about the European Parliament, see ANNEX 1.

Given the impact of European legislations and policies at national level, it is important that citizens - including older people - are actively involved in the debates on the EU action. **AGE encourages its member organisations to engage with candidates to ensure that newly elected MEPs will take up challenges related to ageing demographics and address pervasive ageism in partnership with older persons' organisations in the next parliamentary term 2019-2024.**

## KEY MESSAGES

**"The Europe we want is for all ages".**

Building on this main message, AGE Platform Europe manifesto develops 7 ideas that will help preserve the rights of Europeans at any age:

- 1. Enhance older persons' rights** through combating ageism and age-discrimination
- 2. Ensure a life-course perspective on work** and create inclusive labour markets
- 3. Ensure adequate pension** and old-age income for both women and men
- 4. Protect the right to live and age in dignity** through adequate person-centred health and long-term care accessible to all
- 5. Ensure healthy lives** and promote well-being for all ages
- 6. Enable universal access to goods and services** in today's digitalised society including for older persons
- 7. Empower older citizens to fully participate** in the social and democratic life

## CAMPAIGN TIMELINE

Feb.

- **Newsflash** to AGE Members about tools available for campaigning
- **Special briefing** in CoverAge about AGE campaign starting
- **20/02**: Inter-party kick-off event at the European Parliament

Mar.

- **05/03**: First webinar for AGE members to get involved
- **26/03**: Second webinar for AGE members to get involved

April

- **29/04**: 10th European Day for the Solidarity Between Generations

May

- **07/05**: (tentative) Third webinar to discuss progress
- **23-26**: Elections Day

June

- **Newsflash** to AGE members about campaign results and next steps
- **Special briefing** in CoverAge about the campaign results

Sept.

- (date tbc) Fourth webinar for AGE members to map the way forward

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

### A. Be informed about the European and national parties' manifestos and the candidates standing for elections

Each European political party will issue or has already issued its manifesto explaining their priorities and objectives at the European level. European and national parties' manifestos and contact points can be found in annex.

#### More concretely

- \* **Look through the different manifestos** (if published yet) and compare them with the visions and values of your own organisation;
- \* **Check the profiles and backgrounds of the candidates** standing for the European Parliament elections, as it is easier to address those who already support your concerns (in some countries, there are databases or case files of all potential MEPs with their contact details);
- \* **Identify national candidates within the Intergroup on Ageing** who are standing for re-election. The Intergroup on Ageing consists of some 40 MEPs who are particularly concerned about older people's issues: <https://www.age-platform.eu/intergroup-active-ageing-intergenerational-solidarity-and-family-issues>
- \* **Send the political parties an invitation to meet with you** and to exchange on your main issues (see our template letter below);
- \* **Keep yourself informed and up-to-date** with European Parliament activities for instance through the European Parliament's own TV channel "EuroparITV" available in 25 languages: [www.europarltv.europa.eu](http://www.europarltv.europa.eu).

### B. Share AGE Manifesto and/or set up your own!

AGE Manifesto summarises our key policy priorities for the next parliamentary term 2019-2024. This manifesto can be used to lobby the European political parties and candidates to include AGE priorities in their own manifestos. You can use and adapt AGE Manifesto to lobby national

parties and candidates. The manifesto is available online and in PDF for download here: <http://bit.ly/AGE-Manifesto19>

### More concretely

- \* **Adapt AGE Manifesto to your context or publicize AGE Manifesto** through your channels stressing that your organisation supports it;
- \* **Contact candidates and engage in a dialogue** referring to your national priorities, as well as to AGE Manifesto (see template letter below);
- \* **Follow up your lobbying letters and establish personal contacts with prospective candidates**, especially influential national candidates or those that share common values to AGE and your organisation.

## C. Meet with national candidates standing for elections

Meeting with candidates to present your concerns and issues related to European policy making will be decisive to convey your knowledge, expertise and demands. It will also be the occasion to collect their reactions to your demands and establish useful contacts with them for future collaborations.

### More concretely

- \* **Prepare the key messages you would like to discuss and practice in advance.** These key messages can include:
  1. observations taken from your work at local level;
  2. recommendations and priorities listed in AGE Manifesto;
  3. suggestions of European Parliament committees you would like the candidates to work in if elected (e.g. employment and social affairs, women's rights and gender equality, environment, public health and food safety, etc. - to name just a few);
  4. proposals of how your organisation and AGE could support their future work in the European Parliament.
- \* **Take notes and write down any commitments** made by candidates. Then you can publicize them and remind them of their promises;

- \* **Be clear, concise and to the point** about your concerns and priorities;
- \* **Advertise the outcome of your meeting** by writing a little summary for your website, internal magazine, newsletter, etc. Candidates will appreciate media coverage; do not hesitate to send them a copy! Please do not forget to inform AGE secretariat too so that we can promote your work in our dedicated European Parliament elections blog.

#### **D. Organise debates, hearings, conferences with candidates**

Due to the low voter turnout in the last elections in 2014, candidates will be eager to take part in public debates, meet possible voters and present their priorities. It is also an excellent opportunity for you to express concerns, ask questions, and check whether candidates are really committed to defend equal rights and dignity in older age. It could be especially interesting to invite candidates of different parties to have them presenting their views on ageing policies at a public event.

#### **More concretely**

- \* **Check our European Parliament elections blog to see examples of events organised by AGE members:** <https://towardsanagefriendlyep.com/>
- \* **An idea could be to link your event to the 10th anniversary of the European Day on Intergenerational Solidarity<sup>1</sup> on April 29, 2019.**

#### **E. Team up with fellow NGOs**

A number of civil society campaigns will probably go public in the next months, including by groups such as the [European Women's Lobby](#), the [European Anti-Poverty Network](#), the [European Citizen Action Centre](#), the [European Youth Forum](#), [COFACE-Families Europe](#) or the [European Disability Forum](#). AGE is regularly working with these organisations at European level, so do not hesitate to contact their member organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.age-platform.eu/campaign/solidarity-between-generations>

The European Parliament itself will run an institutional campaign called 'This Time, I'm Voting' to encourage citizens to vote; many resources will be relevant for your own work.

### More concretely

- \* **Contact other civil society organisations** to seek whether you can have a joint activity with them – for example, an intergenerational workshop with representatives of younger people.

## F. Join the institutional 'This Time, I'm Voting' campaign

The European Parliament itself will run an institutional campaign called 'This Time, I'm Voting' to encourage citizens to vote; many resources will be relevant for your own work. AGE will join this campaign as an official partner, to help you in spreading the word about it.

By becoming a formal supporter of the campaign, you can organise events (such as public debates with candidates, as suggested above) and be promoted on the website <https://www.thistimeimvoting.eu/>.

### More concretely

- \* **Subscribe to the 'This Time, I'm Voting' campaign** via AGE's recruiter link, create your profile and advertise your commitment to encourage others to vote: [https://www.thistimeimvoting.eu/?recruiter\\_id=83414](https://www.thistimeimvoting.eu/?recruiter_id=83414)
- \* **Check the European parliament thematic information fiches** to feed your narrative about what the European Union is doing for its older citizens; the most relevant information fiches are referred to in annex.

## G. Be visible, be vocal!

The growing influence of social media is changing the shape of political campaigns. Also, a growing number of older people are themselves on social networks and use them for discussing public affairs.



Social media allows not only to push forward specific demands and advertise your manifestoes, actions and meetings, but also to frame how the concerns of older people are seen in the public debate.

### More concretely

\* **Follow and share content on social media:**

Mentions of other social media users' accounts are useful in spreading the word about your news. You may include AGE (see below), but also institutional accounts, such as @Europarl\_EN (European Parliament - other accounts exist for tweets in national languages), @EU\_Social (European Commission, DG Employment and Social Affairs) or @EU\_Justice (European Commission, DG Justice and Consumer's Rights) as well as the social media handles of the candidates.

To follow AGE Platform Europe on social media, see:

Twitter: [https://twitter.com/AGE\\_PlatformEU](https://twitter.com/AGE_PlatformEU)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ageplatformeurope/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/age-platform-europe/>

\* **Use hashtags when you share content** in particular the ones that will be most viral by other social media users during the campaign such as #EP2019 #EUElections #EUElections2019; you can also use generic hashtags like #ageing or #ageism or #AgeingEqual – the hashtag of our 2018 awareness-raising campaign for human rights in older age.

\* **Use the social media material shared in the online Trello** in particular the banners that will be available for free: <https://trello.com/b/5EPa9Yjf>

# TOOLBOX AND TEMPLATES

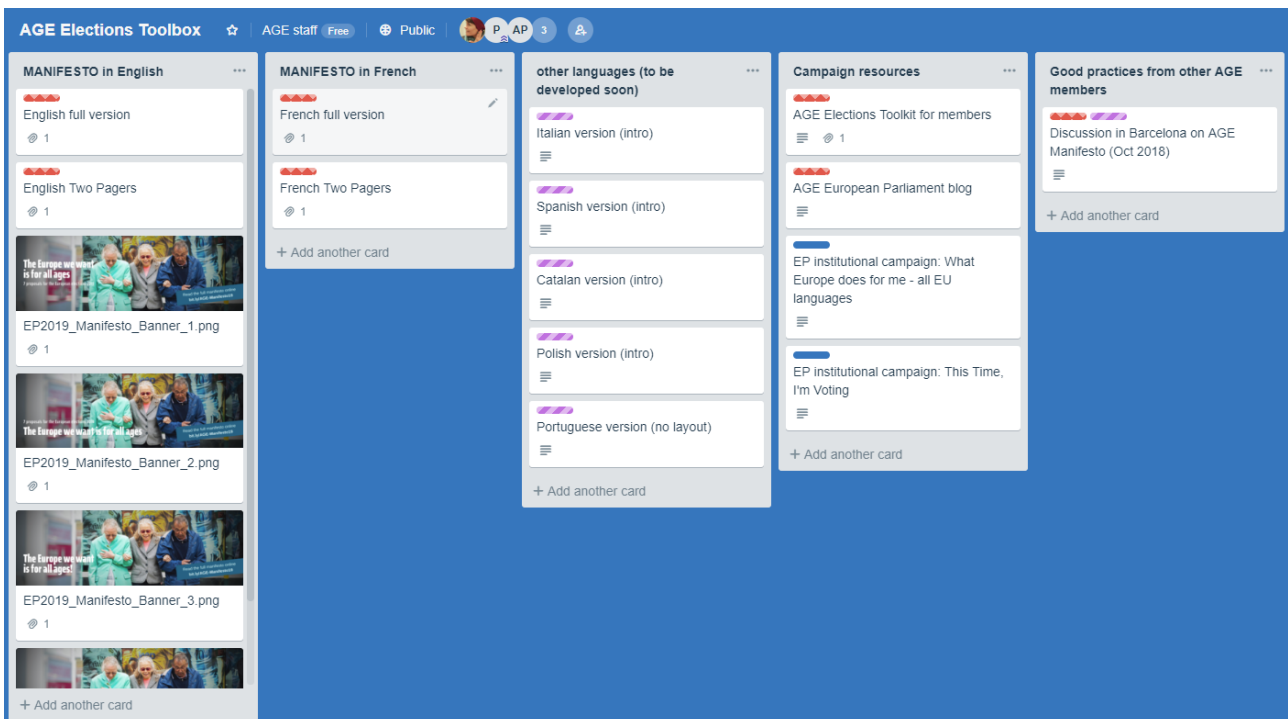
## AGE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT BLOG

Since the 2014 European elections campaign, AGE runs a blog dedicated to European Parliament affairs: <https://towardsanagefriendlyep.com/>. It is used all year long to complement AGE website with more EP specific news; it was used in 2014 to follow campaign-related activities and it will be the case again in 2019! There you will be able to find:

- [Recommendations pages](#) of each recommendations of the Manifesto;
- [A 'Campaigner' section](#) for supporters of AGE to know how to take action;
- [A 'Commitment' section](#) for MEP candidates to sign our Manifesto;
- [A 'News' section](#) to discuss campaign activities (including yours if you want a bit of advertisement!), the European Parliament work, etc.;

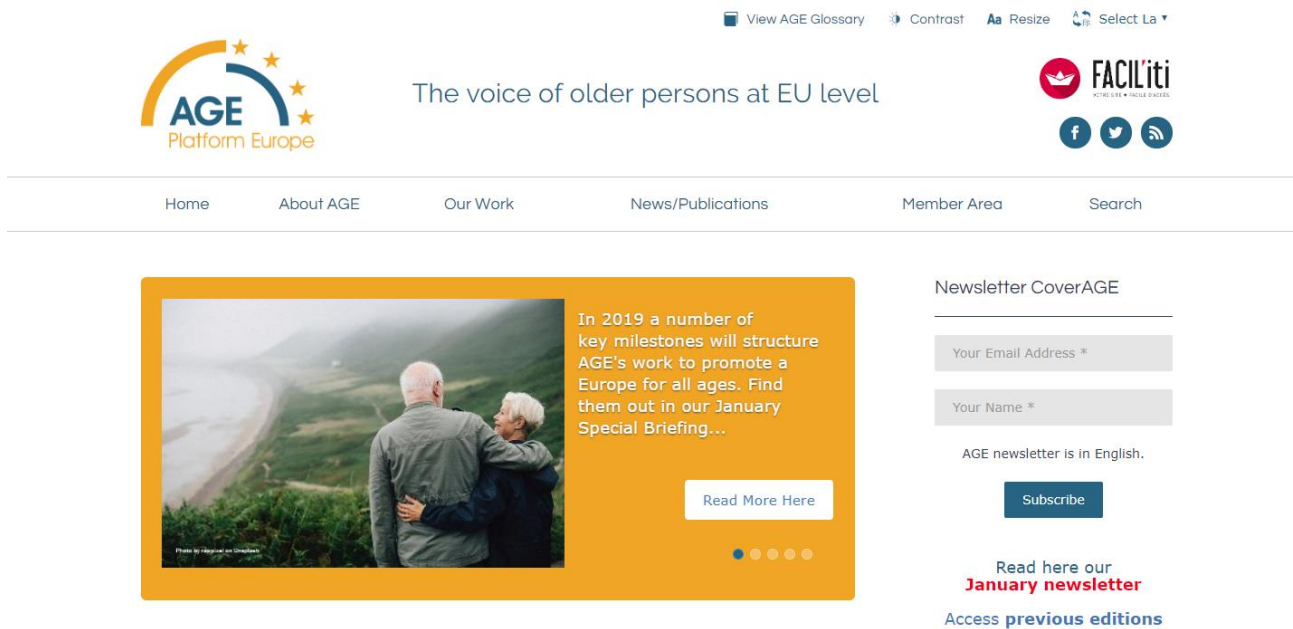
## ONLINE TOOLBOX

All resources mentioned in this document as well as additional ones will be made available in an online toolbox on Trello: <https://trello.com/b/5EPa9Yjf>



## AGE PLATFORM EUROPE WEBSITE

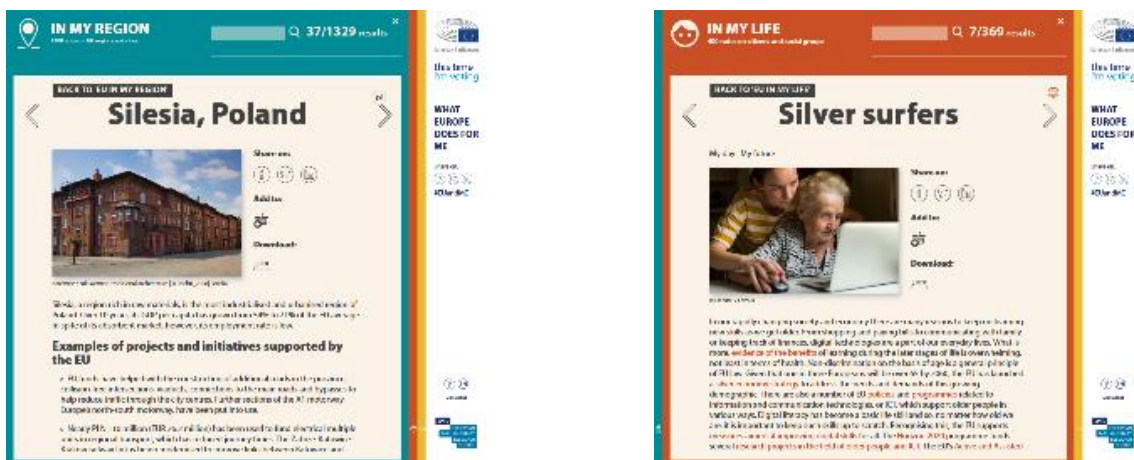
AGE website highlights the news relevant to older people and AGE's work including through our monthly newsletter CoverAGE: [www.age-platform.eu](http://www.age-platform.eu)



## THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT WEBSITE

### What Europe does for me?

The European Parliament is running an institutional campaign for the upcoming EP elections 2019, including a website entitled 'What Europe does for me?': <https://www.what-europe-does-for-me.eu/>.



The website collects information about European funding and initiatives in regions, as well as thematic papers on the EU actions that have an impact in our everyday lives. The Parliament has created a downloadable version with only a few policy areas for its open days in 2018, available in four languages:

- [What is Europe doing for its citizens?](#)
- [Que fait l'Europe pour ses citoyens ?](#)
- [Was tut Europe für seine Bürger ?](#)
- [Wat doet Europe voor zijn burgers ?](#)

## **OTHER RESOURCEFUL WEBSITES**

- The European Parliament website: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/> where it is possible to retrieve information is available in all languages
- EURONEWS: <http://www.euronews.net/> where information is available in English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, Greek, Hungarian
- EurActiv: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/HomePage> where information is available in English, German, French, Czech, Spanish, Greek, Croatian, Italian, Polish, Romanian, Serbian, Slovenian
- POLITICO: <http://www.politico.eu/> where information is in English only

## LETTER TO NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTIES

Dear Sir or Madam,

We are XXX an organisation of/for older people in [Country Name]. [Description of what your organisation is doing]. On European level, we are represented by AGE Platform Europe, the largest network of older people's organisations in the EU. We would like to inform you that we are actively engaged in the process of the EU elections because we believe that these are very important for older people.

Throughout the last legislature, we have been advocating for policies that take into account the needs and rights of older persons in all EU policies and the imperative of intergenerational solidarity. Together with our European partners, we were setting up the Intergroup subgroup on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. We have been vocal in advocating for a European Pillar of Social Rights and its follow-up, in the taking into account of the needs of older people in the European Semester, on important draft directives such as the horizontal non-discrimination directive, the European Accessibility Act or the directive on work-life balance for parents and carers.

The European Parliament has been the champion in advocating for social justice and equality. The 2019 EP elections come at a turning point for the European Union which urgently needs to reconnect with its citizens and represent their interest. It is our wish and ambition that the next European Parliament will continue to be also a champion in addressing the needs of older people and improving their daily lives, one of the largest and fastest-growing population groups.

We know that the issues of older people are also important to your party. As the run-up to the European election involves drafting national and European manifestoes, we would like to highlight the key issues of importance to older people, which could be reflected in your own manifesto.

Therefore, we enclose our demands and the manifesto of AGE Platform Europe, adopted by its General Assembly in June 2018. We hope that this will provide you with material to concretely address the expectations of the group of older citizens.

Also, we would be happy to set up a meeting with you to present our demands and to hear about how they are taken on board in your party's programme. Also, if we could know about the candidates that your party will present to the elections, we could try to organise a meeting or a public event with them, to debate on these issues.

We hope that this will not only encourage older citizens to vote, but promote the values of civic engagement and citizenship.

Yours sincerely,

YOUR SIGNATURE

Attachments:

- Your own manifesto
- AGE manifesto

## LETTER TO CANDIDATE MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Dear [Candidate name],

We would like to congratulate you for being designated as a candidate to the European Elections 2019. We are XXX, an organisation of/for older people in [Country Name]. [Description of what your organisation is doing]. On European level, we are represented by AGE Platform Europe, the largest network of older people's organisations in the EU. We would like to inform you that we are actively engaged in the process of the EU elections because we believe that these are very important for older people.

Throughout the last legislature, we have been advocating for policies that take into account the needs and rights of older persons in all EU policies and the imperative of intergenerational solidarity. Together with our European partners, we were setting up the Intergroup subgroup on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. We have been vocal in advocating for a European Pillar of Social Rights and its follow-up, in the taking into account of the needs of older people in the European Semester, on important draft directives such as the horizontal non-discrimination directive, the European Accessibility Act or the directive on work-life balance for parents and carers.

The European Parliament has been the champion in advocating for social justice and equality. The 2019 EP elections come at a turning point for the European Union which urgently needs to reconnect with its citizens and represent their interest. It is our wish and ambition that the next European Parliament will continue to be also a champion in addressing the needs of older people and improving their daily lives, one of the largest and fastest-growing population groups.

We know that the issues of older people are also important to the success of your campaign. Therefore, we would like to highlight the key issues of importance to older people, which could be reflected in your own election platform.

Therefore, we enclose our demands and the manifesto of AGE Platform Europe, adopted by its General Assembly in June 2018. We hope that this will provide you with material to concretely address the expectations of the group of older citizens.

Also, we would be happy to set up a meeting with you to present our demands and to hear about how they are taken on board in your party's programme. Maybe, we could even organise a public event with you and other candidates to discuss how older citizens' issues are integrated into EU policies.

We hope that this will not only encourage older citizens to vote, but promote the values of civic engagement and citizenship.

Yours sincerely,

**YOUR SIGNATURE**

Attachments:

- Your own manifesto
- AGE manifesto

## ANNEX 1 - About the European Parliament and these 2019 elections

Each EU Member State decides how the European elections are organised in its own country (either on a regional or national basis), and under its own electoral laws and procedures. Yet, all Member States follow the same system of proportional representation (by contrast to the first-past-the-post system in some national elections). Decisions on the composition of the candidate lists for the European Parliament elections are made at national level within each political party, and the public can only vote for national (or regional) candidates.

### Powers of the European Parliament

The European Parliament has increased its influence over the years, being transformed from a consultative assembly into a real parliament with legislative powers. The European Parliament has three fundamental powers:

#### 1. Legislative power

Thanks to the co-decision procedure, the Parliament shares legislative competence with the Council (national governments). This means it can accept, amend or reject the content of European law (directives, decisions, regulations). The Parliament also provides impetus for new legislation by examining the Commission's annual work programme, considering what new laws would be appropriate and asking the Commission to put forward proposals. The Parliament's power has been instrumental in shaping legislation at the favour of citizens, such as the recently enforced General Data Protection Regulation, the introduction of a Youth Guarantee or the setting of ambitious CO2 reduction targets.

#### 2. Budgetary Power

The EU's annual budget is decided jointly by the Parliament and the Council of the European Union. The Parliament can propose the modification of budget lines and has the power to overrule the Council. Importantly, the Parliament has the power to accept or reject the budget as a whole. In this way the Parliament has an important influence on EU spending. In 2019, the decision on the next so-called Multiannual Financial Framework – meaning the budget from 2021 until 2028 is pending, giving the Parliament an important role in defining the actions that the EU can fund.

The Parliament's Committee on Budgetary Control (CONT) monitors how the budget is spent and investigates cases of alleged misuse. Each year the Parliament decides whether to approve the Commission's handling of the budget for the previous financial year.

#### 3. Supervisory Power

The Parliament exercises democratic supervision over all EU institutions and in particular over the Commission. It has the power to approve or reject the nomination of Commissioners, including the Commission President after a proposal from the Council, and it has the right to make the Commission

as a whole resign through a 'motion of censure'. In 2014, for the first time, most major EU parties nominated lead candidates, and it was the lead candidate of the party with the largest number of votes, the EPP's Jean-Claude Juncker, who was proposed by the Council and confirmed by the Parliament. This was thought to create more transparency, but this process is contested among some heads of government, yet the EPP, S&D, Greens, ECR, GUE/NGL and possibly ALDE have already or are expected to choose a lead candidate.

More generally, the Parliament exercises control by regularly examining reports sent to it by the Commission and by working closely with the Council in certain areas, including input into every EU Summit. MEPs regularly ask the Commission and the Council written and oral questions, and the Commission President and Commissioners take part in plenary debates, including the annual 'State of the Union' address. Parliament also examines petitions from citizens and has the power to set up temporary committees of enquiry (such as in the cases of the Panama papers on tax evasion or on the 'Dieselgate' scandals). It also has an appointed Ombudsman who deals with complaints by citizens against the EU institutions.

#### **4. 'Discursive' power**

The European Parliament can draft own-initiative resolutions, in which it expresses its desire for certain legislative and non-legislative changes, or takes a position on issues on which it has no 'hard' power. For example, the Parliament regularly adopts resolutions on the European Semester process of socio-economic policy coordination, in which it does not have a formal say. The resolutions have no legal value but are instrumental in showing that there would be majorities in the Parliament for certain proposals. For example, a resolution on the reconciliation of work and family life preceded a Commission initiative in this sense and contained strong calls for example for the protection of informal carers, which might have been forgotten otherwise.



## Composition of the current European Parliament

The seats in the European Parliament are distributed along the principle of ‘degressive proportionality’ among member states, meaning that member states have a number of seats relative to their size, but smaller member states are over-represented. Member states have between 6 and 96 seats to fill; all member states apply a proportional system in the elections of the MEPs to fill the national delegations. The 2019-2024 Parliament will be smaller than the one of the 2014-2019 period, as the seats lost due to the departure of the United Kingdom will not all be replaced.

**MEPs by Member State and political group**  
8th parliamentary term

										TOTAL
	4	4	4	6	2			1		21
	7	4	2	4						17
	7	4	2	4		3	1			21
	1	3	3	3	1	1			1	13
	33	27	6	4	13	8	1	1	2	95
	1	1		3	1					6
	4	1	1	1		4				11
	5	4	1			6			5	21
	17	14		8	5	10				54
	20	13		7	6	4	6	16	2	74
	5	2	1	2	1					11
	15	31	2		1	3	14	6	1	73
	1	2	1			2				6
	4	1	1	1	1					8
	3	2	1	3	1		1			11
	3	1		1	1					6
	12	4			2				3	21
	3	3								6
	5	3	2	7	2	3		4		26
	5	5		1	3			4		18
	22	5	18				1	2	3	51
	8	8		1		4				21
	13	14	2	3						32
	5	1		1	1					8
	6	4	3							13
	3	2	2	4	1	1				13
	4	6	2	3	4	1				20
	2	20	19	1	6	1	19	1	4	73
<b>TOTAL</b>										<b>TOTAL</b>
	218	189	73	68	52	51	43	35	21	750

### Numbers of EP Members per member state 2019-2024

Belgium	21
Bulgaria	17
Czech Republic	21
Denmark	14
Germany	96
Estonia	7
Ireland	13
Greece	21
Spain	59
France	79
Croatia	12
Italy	76
Cyprus	6
Latvia	8
Lithuania	11
Luxembourg	6
Hungary	21
Malta	6
Netherlands	29
Austria	19
Poland	52
Portugal	21
Romania	33
Slovenia	8
Slovakia	14
Finland	14
Sweden	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>705</b>

## Organisation of the European Parliament

Members are sitting in political groups rather than by nationality. There are currently 8 political groups in the European Parliament, as well as some non-affiliated members:



Group of the European People's Party (Christian Democrats) and European Democrats (EPP)



Group of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D)



Group of the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)



Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)



Group of the Greens / European Free Alliance (Greens)



Confederal Group of the European United Left – Nordic Green Left (GUE)



Group of Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD)



Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF)

NI

'Non-inscrits', MEPs without affiliation

## Meetings of the European Parliament

The Parliament meets officially in plenary sessions and parliamentary committees.

### Plenary sessions

Plenary sessions are attended by all MEPs and are normally held for one week each month in Strasbourg (sometimes also for two days in Brussels). The Parliament examines proposed legislation and votes on amendments, as prepared by the Committees before the plenary, before coming to a decision on the text as a whole.

### Parliamentary Committees

Parliamentary Committees bring together smaller groups of MEPs that specialise in particular areas of EU policy. They do much of the preparatory work for the debates and votes carried out later in plenary. There are 24 parliamentary committees dealing with issues such as employment and social affairs, environment and health, human rights, internal market etc.

For a detailed list of committees, please visit: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/about-parliament/en/organisation-and-rules/organisation/committees>

## Intergroup on Active Ageing, Intergenerational Solidarity and Family issues

MEPs also meet in unofficial, voluntary, cross-party groups known as 'Intergroups' or 'Interest Groups'. Intergroups bring together MEPs to discuss issues of common interest that transcend political divisions. These groups can be an important means to raise awareness about issues of particular concern (both within and outside the Parliament). Intergroups can also be a means for interest groups such as AGE to establish good contacts with a group of MEPs who share many of their concerns.

Established in 1982, the Intergroup on Ageing is the longest running Intergroup in the Parliament. The Intergroup on Ageing has since worked to make ageing issues visible and to take appropriate actions on behalf of older people. Since it is an unofficial body of the Parliament, it does not have access to Parliament funds or administration to carry out its work.

Currently, the Intergroup brings together MEPs interested in discussing ageing- and family- related issues and works in two sub-groups: one on active ageing (in which AGE is involved) and the other one on family. The issue of intergenerational solidarity is mainstreamed in all of the Intergroup's activities. The Intergroup on Ageing is co-chaired, among others, by Lambert Van Nistelrooij (EPP, NL), Heinz K. Becker (EPP, AT), Josef Weidenholzer (S&D, AT) Brando Benifei (S&D, IT), Ivo Vajgl (ALDE, SI), Marian Harkin (ALDE, IE), Jean Lambert (UK, Green), Eduard Kukan (SK, EPP).

For a full list of members, please look here: <https://age-platform.eu/intergroup-active-ageing-intergenerational-solidarity-and-family-issues>

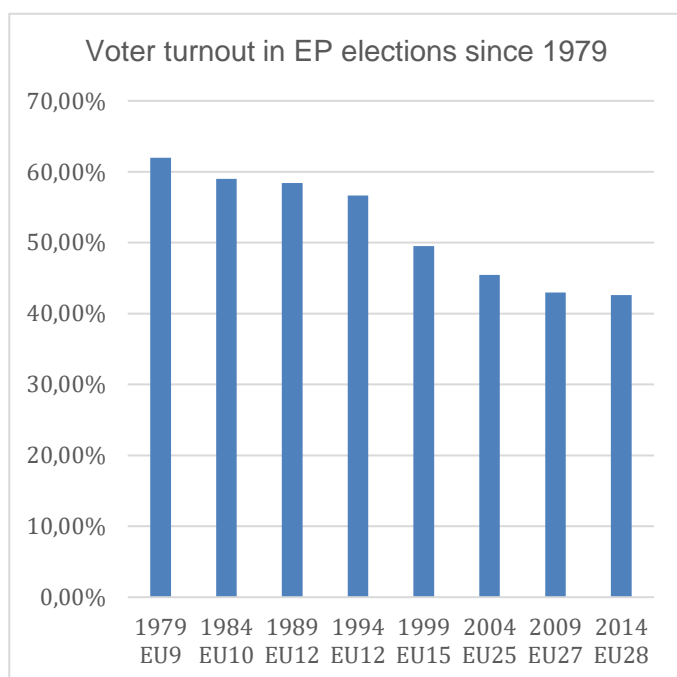
For more information about the Intergroup, please visit: <https://towardsanagefriendlyep.com/>

## The decline in voters' turnout

The European Parliament's political powers have gradually increased since 1979 and the Parliament has gained more recognition and power. The co-decision procedure (in which the European Parliament is on an equal footing with the EU Council of Ministers) is concerns now most areas in EU policy making. In fact, most laws on the national level are translating European legislation (around 60% to 80% of national legislation comes from European legislation). In the past legislature, the Parliament also has obtained more recognition by heads of state and government by the regular debates with them in the 'Future of Europe' series.

This evolution towards a strong and powerful Parliament not only enhances the democratic legitimacy of the European Union but also implies that European citizens, including older people, have more to say in the policy making on the European level.

However, contrary to the increasing powers and relevance of the European Parliament, the voter turnout in European elections has been in constant decline. The first elections in 1979 started with a 63% voter turnout and declined to the lowest voter turnout (around 43%) with the elections in 2014. The lowest turnouts were in Slovakia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Poland, Croatia (turnouts below 30%), the highest in Belgium and Luxembourg where voting is compulsory and Malta (over 60%):



1979: First direct elections: turnout 61.99%

1984: elections EC 10: turnout 58.98%

1989: elections EC 10: turnout 58.41%

1994: elections EU 12: turnout 56.67%

1999: elections EU 15: turnout 49.51%

2004: elections EU 25: turnout 45.47%

2009: elections EU27: turnout 42.97%

2014: elections EU28: turnout 42.61%

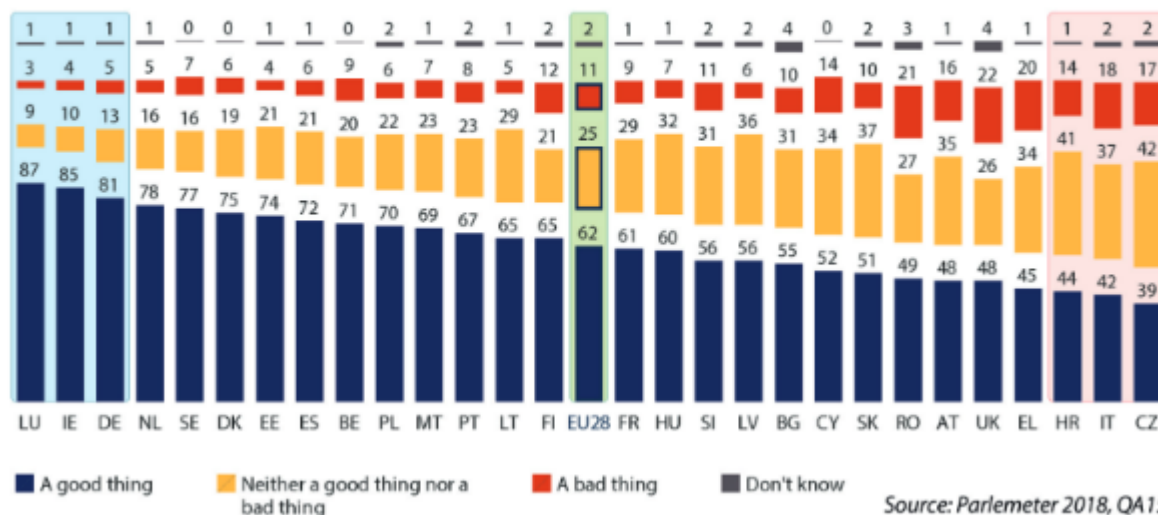
Source: European Parliament

The main reason for the low voter turnout is that political parties consider the European elections as second-order national elections and tend to focus their campaigns on national issues. Consequently, the majority of EU citizens do not know which policy issues are debated on at European level.

Moreover, there was also a growing apathy and indifference of EU citizens towards the European elections, as they have the feeling that their voice will not change anything at EU level. They consider the EU to be too technocratic and this feeling is increased with the lack of media coverage of the

European elections. However, the growing support for Euroscepticism and far-right movements in national elections could trigger higher participation rates, as these parties plan on changing the (often consensual) nature of EU decision-making. Therefore, it is hard to predict the turnout of the next elections. The threat from the far-right could also have the potential to mobilise more Europhile voters at the same time. The recent exchange of threats between Hungarian President Orbán and Italian Interior Minister Salvini against French President Emmanuel Macron exemplifies this different nature of EU-wide debate.

**Q** Generally speaking, do you think that (OUR COUNTRY)'s membership of the EU is...? (%)



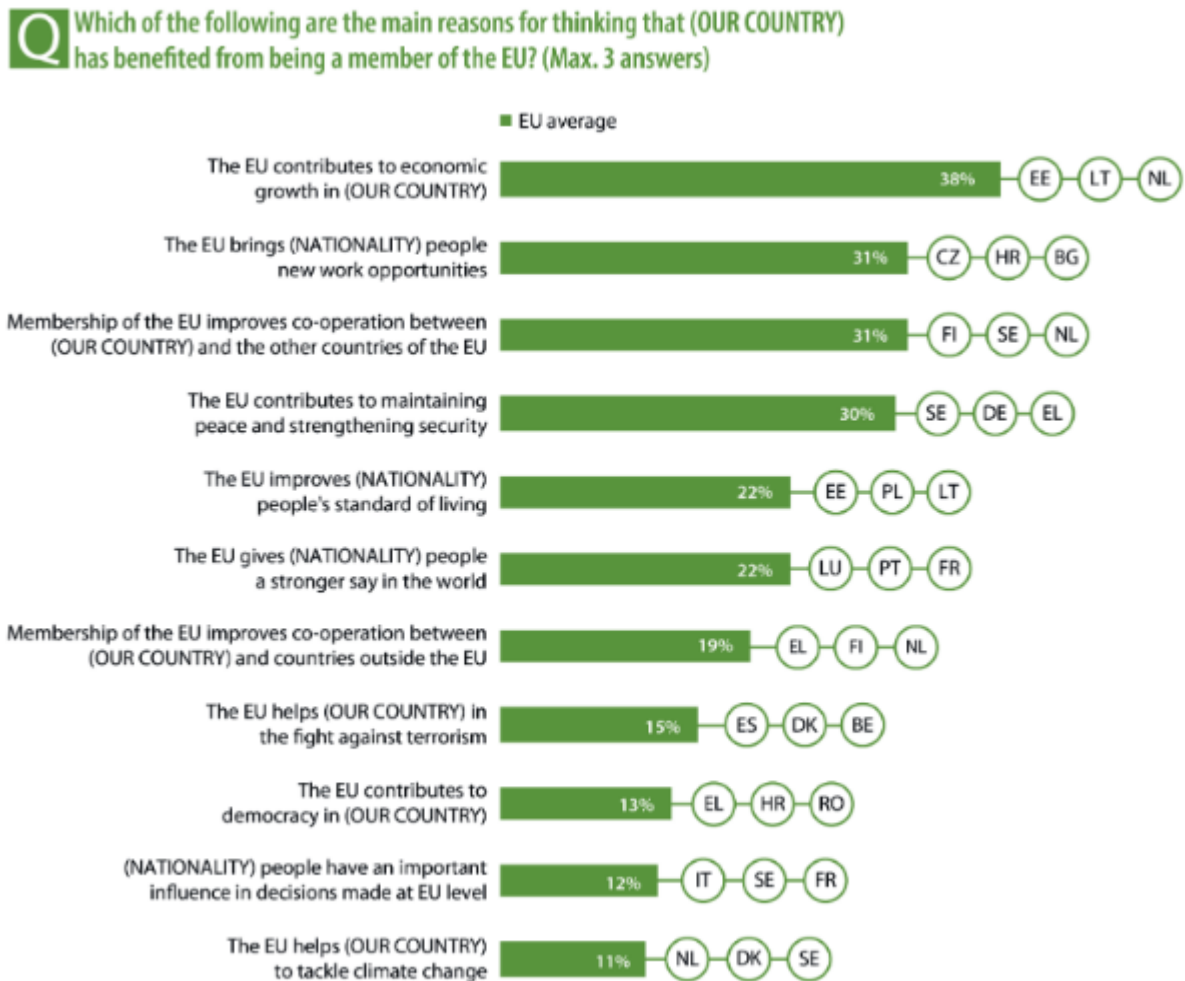
A May 2018 Eurobarometer study<sup>2</sup> highlighted in this context that:

- Over 68% of respondents think that their country benefits from being a member of the EU – one of the highest scores ever measured since 1983;
- Only about 50% think that their voice counts in the EU – still, a higher percentage than ever;
- 63% see the process of lead candidates brings more transparency, 70% would like the election to go with a real debate on EU issues;
- While only about 1 in 3 thinks have a positive view of the European Parliament, 43% have a neutral opinion and only 21% a negative. About 48% would like the European Parliament to play a more important role, 15% would like no change;
- The themes that citizens are most concerned about are:
  - Security issues in the broadest sense (including immigration);
  - Issues related to personal prosperity and well-being;

<sup>2</sup> European Parliament, *Parlemeter 2018. Taking up the challenge from (silent) support to actual vote.* Eurobarometer Survey 90 for the European Parliament. 2018.

- Citizens from large member states tend to be less satisfied with the way EU democracy works, and GDP per capita and unemployment rates have also a high impact on this perception.

The main benefits citizens see for their country deriving from EU membership are as follows:



Source: Parlemeter 2018, QA17

## ANNEX 2 - Manifestos of major European parties

The Manifestos and contact points of the major European political parties are:

1. The European People's Party (EPP)  
<http://www.eppgroup.eu/sites/default/files/download/priorities/en.pdf>  
<http://www.eppgroup.eu/our-delegations>
2. The Party of European Socialists (PES)  
[https://www.pes.eu/export/sites/default/Downloads/PES-Documents/110001306\\_PES\\_Manifesto\\_UK.pdf\\_1095316046.pdf](https://www.pes.eu/export/sites/default/Downloads/PES-Documents/110001306_PES_Manifesto_UK.pdf_1095316046.pdf)  
<https://www.socialistsanddemocrats.eu/national-delegations>
3. The Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists (AECR)  
<http://ecrgroup.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/ECR-BROCHURE-2016.pdf> <http://ecrgroup.eu/about-us/our-member-parties/>
4. The Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)  
[https://www.aldeparty.eu/sites/alde/files/40-Resolutions/2019\\_freedom\\_opportunity\\_prosperity\\_the\\_liberal\\_vision\\_for\\_the\\_future\\_of\\_europe.pdf](https://www.aldeparty.eu/sites/alde/files/40-Resolutions/2019_freedom_opportunity_prosperity_the_liberal_vision_for_the_future_of_europe.pdf)  
<https://www.aldeparty.eu/members/member-parties>  
<http://www.democrats.eu/> (ALDE-affiliated)
5. The European Green Party (EGP)  
<https://europeangreens.eu/sites/europeangreens.eu/files/Adopted%20%20EGP%20Manifesto%202019.pdf>  
<https://europeangreens.eu/map>  
<http://www.e-f-a.org/whos-who/member-parties/> (Greens/EFA-affiliated)
6. The European United Left (GUE) / Nordic Green Left  
<http://www.guengl.eu/group/delegations>
7. The Europe for Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD)  
<http://www.efddgroup.eu/about-us/delegations>
8. The Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF)

AGE Platform Europe  
is the largest network of older people in Europe.  
We work in the interest of the 200 million  
older adults of today – and those of tomorrow.

Read the full manifesto online  
[bit.ly/AGE-Manifesto19](https://bit.ly/AGE-Manifesto19)

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