

## News from the Parliament

[Elections have started: follow the results on the EP's webpage.](#) The first voting booths opened in the UK and the Netherlands yesterday morning. In the next days 400 million Europeans will have the right to choose who will be in charge in Europe. Go and vote, and then follow all the results on the European Parliament's official webpage where they will be published as soon as they are available. For all the reactions and live coverage, turn to their special [Elections Night Tumblr account](#) with infographics, videos, pictures, quotes and links. *European Parliament, 22 May 2014.*

[How your vote for the EP will help to decide the new Commission.](#) When voters elect the new European Parliament on 22-25 May, they also help to determine who the new president of the European Commission will be. Because of new rules, voters have more power than ever before. *European Parliament, 22 May 2014.*

[Looking back: European elections over the past 35 years.](#) The first European elections were held in 1979, with only nine member states. There have been seven election campaigns so far, each with their own unique style. Much has changed since 1979 and this week 400 million Europeans will cast their vote and choose who will be in charge for the next five years. *European Parliament, 22 May 2014.*

[What the Parliament has done for you over the past five years.](#) As Parliament gets ready to embark on a new legislative term, this press release takes a look back on what has been achieved in the current one. In its seventh term, from 2009 until June this year, the EP has enjoyed greater power than ever before. For the first time it could decide on the full EU budget, as well as on big international trade agreements and nearly all EU legislation, on an equal footing with national governments represented in the EU Council. *European Parliament, 19 May 2014.*

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[UK and Dutch Voters kick off European elections.](#) Voters in the Netherlands and Britain on Thursday kick-started the European election, which is expected to produce a surge in support for populist parties and pose a serious challenge to mainstream politicians in the European Parliament. In the biggest exercise in democracy outside India, up to 350m are eligible to vote over the next days in 28 countries. The results will be announced on Sunday evening once all the polls are closed. *The Financial Times, 22 May 2014.*

[Merkel: Voters elect next commission chief 'in principle'](#) German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Thursday (22 May) made conciliatory gestures towards the European Parliament on the choice of the next commission president after Sunday's EU elections. In an interview with Passauer Neue Presse, Merkel said that voters in the EU elections can bring their contribution to furthering the European project. "A clear qualitative improvement is that, in principle, the Commission president gets elected," she said. *EUobserver, 22 May 2014.*

[Europhiles take the lead in Dutch EU elections, exit polls show.](#) Geert Wilders' populist Freedom Party (PVV) has suffered an electoral blow in The Netherlands' EU elections, while the pro-European liberal party D66 is expected to claim the largest number of seats, according to an exit poll released on Thursday (22 May). The real winner may be abstention however. *EurActiv, 23 May 2014.*

[Turnout crucial for credibility of EU.](#) As voting in the European Parliament elections begins today, the question of how many of the 400 million voters will turn out to vote is shaping up to be critical to the future of the European Union. *European Voice, 22 May 2014.*

[Far-Right Fever for a Europe Tied to Russia.](#) At a rally last week near the Palace of Versailles, France's largest far-right party, the National Front, deployed all the familiar theatrics and populist themes of nationalist movements across Europe. But the event, part of an energetic push for votes by France's surging far right ahead of elections this week for the European Parliament, also promoted an agenda distant from the customary concerns of conservative voters: why Europe needs to break its "submission" to the United States and look to Russia as a force for peace and a bulwark against moral decay. *The New York Times, 20 May 2014.*

[Final Forecasts predict victory for EPP.](#) A flurry of final forecasts for the make-up of the next European Parliament show a clear consensus that the centre-right European People's Party (EPP) will emerge as the largest pan-European party in this week's elections. *European Voice, 20 May 2014.*

## Local Flavours

[Alexis Tsipras uses EU campaign to connect with voters in Greece.](#) Alexis Tsipras, the leftwing Greek political leader, may be a long-shot to become the next president of the European Commission, but he's using his position as the candidate for a pan-European group of leftist political parties to boost his electoral fortunes at home. *The Financial Times, 16 May 2014.*

[European elections to test Renzi's chances to reform Italy.](#) European parliamentary elections have turned into a showdown between Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and the anti-establishment movement of comic Beppe Grillo that could decide the future of the government. *EurActiv, 19 May 2014.*