Observing the 2024 European Elections

Election-Watch.EU Election Assessment Mission
→ appraisal of the 2024 elections to the European Parliament across all 27 EU Member States.

Findings of 77 election experts and observers and 10 like-minded citizen election observer organisations
→ following established election observation methodology
→ using international and regional human rights standards and commitments as references

Showcasing best practices

Highlighted 19 good practice examples
→ inspiration for positive change
→ enhance electoral processes within the EU.

FACTS

>>> **largest multi-national elections**

355 million registered voters

>>> **27 separate elections**

No central election management body / commission
27 Member States conducting independent elections

>>> **staggered electoral reforms**

2018 electoral reforms pending ES approval
2022 EP reform proposal far reaching & nowhere
Passed TTPA, DSA, AI Act, EMFA with strong impact

REFORMS

>>> Electoral Act 1976

Provision for the first directly elected EP

>>> Amendment 2002

Generalisation of proportional representation
Abolishing dual mandate

>>> Treaty of Lisbon 2007

→MEP as representatives of the Union's citizens
→Strengthening of EP role and in appointing EC President
→European electoral framework built incrementally and pragmatically. → Drawing on Claude Lévi-Strauss and Vincent Pouliot´s work, it can be understood as a "bricolage."

Table 1: The ten European Parliament elections (1979 – 2024)

#	Election dates	MS	MS changes	Reg. voters	voters	turnout	seats
1	7-10 June 1979	9		184,414,900	114,340,366	62.0%	410
2	14-17 June 1984	10	plus Greece	200,505,752	122,300,000	61.0%	434
3	15-18 June 1989	12	plus ES, PT	244,951,379	143,300,000	58.5%	518
4	9-12 June 1994	12	plus new BL of DE	269,261,000	153,000,000	56.8%	567
5	10-13 June 1999	15	plus AT, FI, SE	288,000,000	143,400,000	49.8%	626
6	10-13 June 2004	25	plus 10 new MS	353,460,958	154,317,718	45.5%	732
7	4-7 June 2009	27	plus BG & RO	386,711,169	160,687,462	43.2%	736
8	22-25 May 2014	28	plus HR	396,104,240	163,551,013	42.5%	751
9	23-26 May 2019	28	prior Brexit	394,000,000	198,352,638	50.7%	751
10	6-9 June 2024	27	minus UK	355,202,244	180,275,334	50.74%	720

ADVANCES

⟫⟫ Supranational integration

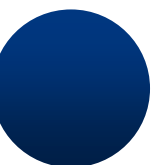Example: European cooperation network on elections

⟫⟫ Staggered approach

MS learning from each other – slow adopters
Example: voting with 16 years (Belgium & Germany)

⟫⟫ Quick legislative actions with political will

→EU institutions capable of responding and agreeing on emerging challenges
→Example: Established legal framework covering the digital space (DSA, TTPA, AI-Act,…)

CONSTRAINTS

>>> Agreement by all EU countries

Blockage and compromises difficult
Example: Reform of party/campaign finance

>>> Reforms too big/ambitious

EP proposals covering all aspects of elections
Example: 2022 proposal (including EU EMB)

>>> Sovereignty versus Integration

Often status quo better for actors than reforms
Example: smaller MS fear that transnational lists

Hot topic Spitzenkandidat (lead candidate)
→fear by national leaders to "loose" control over
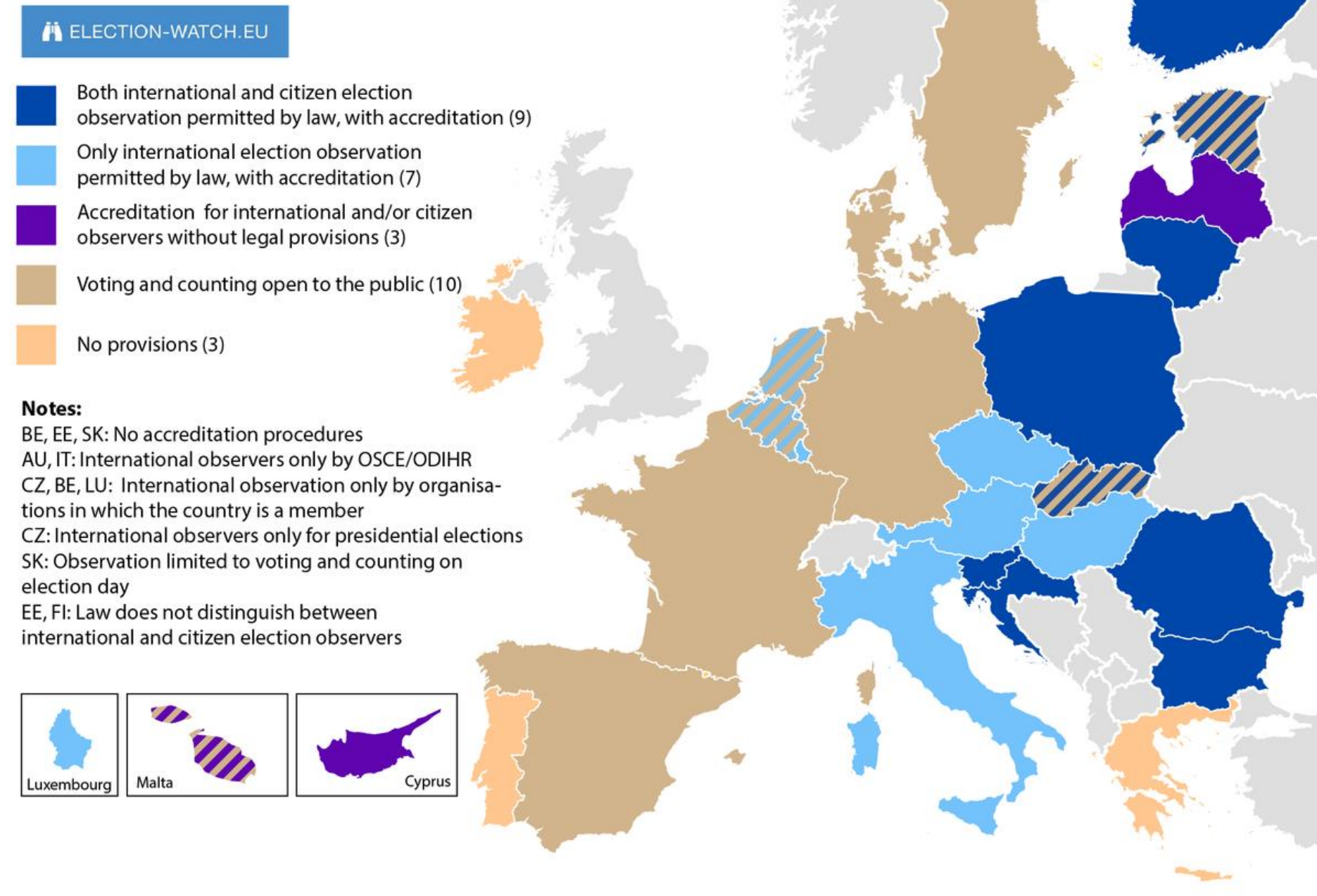EU's top jobs

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

	Good Practice	Impact	Where?
1	implementation of a consolidated electoral code	enhance coherence and accessibility, closing gaps	Lithuania
2	inclusion of European political party names and symbols on ballot papers.	enhance the visibility of European politics	Lithuania
3	transition from compulsory to voluntary voting	shifting the electoral dynamic	Cyprus
4	introduction of postal voting for citizens both inside and outside the country.	make the elections more inclusive and accessible	Greece
5	reduction of the voting age to 16 and related voter information	ensuring equal participation conditions	Belgium
6	legal requirements for media to include subtitles and sign language interpretation	promoting accessibility for people with disabilities	France, Greece, and Spain
7	public funding of political parties contingent on gender equality in candidate lists.	enhancing women participation and representation	Luxembourg
8	EMB website is available in multiple languages, including Romani and Sami	enhancing inclusivity	Sweden
9	multi-pronged approach to civic education for youth, including election simulations in schools.	fostering civic and political education	Germany
10	online voter registration system for mobile EU citizens, accessible in all EU languages.	better inclusion of EU citizens	Belgium
11	establishment of an Electoral Commission	enhance election administration / oversight	Ireland
12	introduction of an electronic voter register, enabling voters to cast ballots at any polling station.	making the electoral process more accesible	Latvia
13	public disclosure of political parties' campaign finances in real-time.	enhancing transparency in campaign financing	Czech Republic
14	creating an effective oversight body	ensuring transparency and accountability in political party financing.	Estonia
15	media system reliant on self-regulation, media authority allocating free airtime.	fostering the independence of media	Netherlands
16	reforms guaranteeing scrutiny and judicial review of election results	strengthening the separation of powers	Netherlands
17	online publication of polling station results	promoting transparency	Austria
18	accreditation procedures for international and domestic election observers coupled with observer briefings.	fostering participation, accountability, and international norms (DoP)	Finland
19	effective cooperation in countering and detecting disinformation.	responding to external and internal interference in the electoral process	European Networks

CHALLENGE

Election observation permitted by law with accreditation in only 9 EU countries

Regulations for election observation in the EU

ELECTION-WATCH.EU

- Both international and citizen election observation permitted by law, with accreditation (9)
- Only international election observation permitted by law, with accreditation (7)
- Accreditation for international and/or citizen observers without legal provisions (3)
- Voting and counting open to the public (10)
- No provisions (3)

Notes:
BE, EE, SK: No accreditation procedures
AU, IT: International observers only by OSCE/ODIHR
CZ, BE, LU: International observation only by organisations in which the country is a member
CZ: International observers only for presidential elections
SK: Observation limited to voting and counting on election day
EE, FI: Law does not distinguish between international and citizen election observers

Luxembourg   Malta   Cyprus

Good practice

Finland – recognises observers on the basis of adherence to principles of impartial and professional observation (like DoP)

Recommendations

All countries to include legal provision for international and citizen election observers

CHALLENGE

Electable and political appointment positions in EU countries remain the area with the widest gender gap.

Good practice

Luxembourg – public funding is conditional to equal gender nominations. Non-compliance results in the reduction of funding by a quarter for each missing candidate of the other gender.

Recommendations

Countries should continue efforts to increase the participation and representation of women through legislative and voluntary measures.
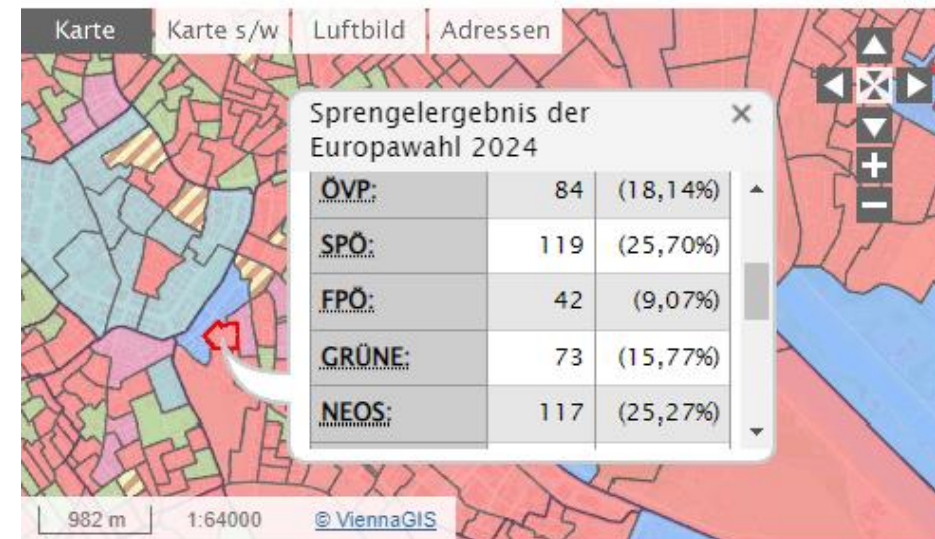
CHALLENGE

Some EU countries still do not provide detailed disaggregated election results per polling station at odds with international good practice.

Sprengelergebnisse der Europawahl 2024

))) Seite vorlesen

Einzelne Sprengelergebnisse können auch im wien.at–Stadtplan eingesehen werden. Per Klick auf den Sprengel werden die gültigen Stimmen je Partei angezeigt.
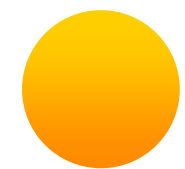
| Karte | Karte s/w | Luftbild | Adressen |

Sprengelergebnis der Europawahl 2024

ÖVP:	84	(18,14%)
SPÖ:	119	(25,70%)
FPÖ:	42	(9,07%)
GRÜNE:	73	(15,77%)
NEOS:	117	(25,27%)

982 m   1:64000   © ViennaGIS

✕ Vollversion anzeigen

Legende

ÖVP – absolut/relativ
SPÖ – absolut/relativ
FPÖ – absolut/relativ
GRÜNE – absolut/relativ
NEOS – absolut/relativ
DNA – absolut/relativ
KPÖ – absolut/relativ
Stimmengleichstand

Good practice

Austria – introduced in 2023 publicly available polling station results. Example city of Vienna.

Recommendations

Election Management Bodies should consistently publish detailed election results, including polling station data and other data like number of invalid votes.

BENEFITS

>>> **For the observed state**
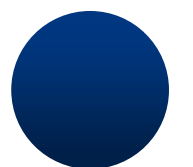
Receive positive feedback in a very visible way.

>>> **For other states**
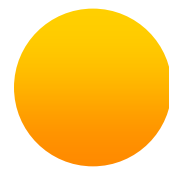
A source of inspiration from already implemented, proven and workable solutions.
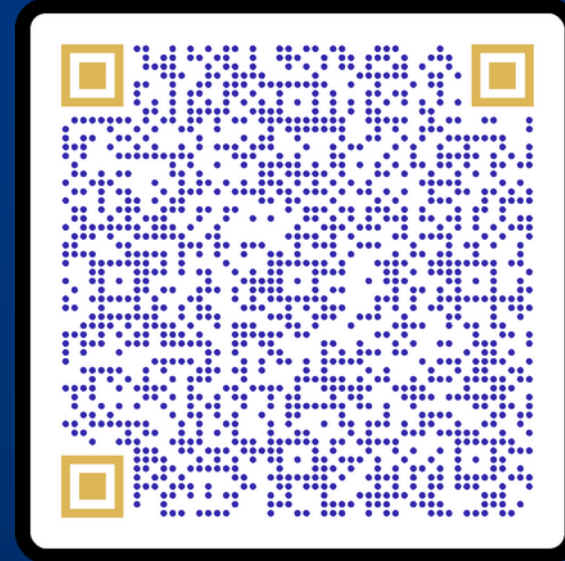
>>> **For the observers**

→Communicate that observers are not just critics but also partners in progress
→Reinforcing their role as catalysts for positive change in electoral systems.

Thank you

Contact Us:

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ELECTION ASSESSMENT MISSION

FINAL REPORT

European Parliament Elections
6 - 9 June 2024

SEPTEMBER 2024