



Special Briefing May 2014

2014 European Parliament elections

On 22-25 May, all citizens of the European Union were invited to elect the 751 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) who will represent them at EU level and influence EU political course for the next 5 years.



The recent new powers conveyed to the European Parliament by the Lisbon Treaty, coupled with the economic crisis and the austerity measures introduced as a consequence, made those elections a particularly important milestone in the shaping of future EU policy direction.

Increased influence of the European Parliament

Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the European Parliament has a stronger influence in the EU decision making process. It can now, jointly with the Council, reject, approve or amend the proposals made by the European Commission in many areas affecting the everyday life of EU citizens, as well as decide on the annual EU budget.

The outcome of the 2014 EP elections will also influence the choice of the President of the European Commission. The other Commissioner candidates for remaining portfolios will have to be appraised by the Parliament.

Winning EP parties

The Members of the European Parliament sit in [political groups](#). There are currently seven groups in the European Parliament representing over 160 national parties. Those parties are not organised by nationality, but by political affiliation.

At EU level, the two main winning political groups of the elections are the European People's Party (EPP - Christian Democrats) which has 212 seats out of 751 (compared to 265 in 2009), followed by the Socialists and Democrats (S&D) who collects 186 seats (compared to 184 in 2009). A clear progression of populist and far-right parties has been observed in several countries. However, even if we do not have the final picture regarding the number of political groups and their exact composition, the overall balance of power between the different EP parties appears to remain stable.

A comprehensive overview of the elections results is available on the EP website:

- At EU level: www.results-elections2014.eu/en/election-results-2014.html
- At national level: www.results-elections2014.eu/en/country-introduction-2014.html

Next steps

By 23 June, the Parliament's political groups should be formed and, on 2 July, the coordinators of the Committees will be elected. [Parliamentary Committees](#) bring together smaller groups of MEPs who specialise in particular areas of EU policy and prepare for the debates and votes that will be carried out in plenary sessions.

Mid-July, MEPs will vote on the President of the new European Commission which is to enter into office on 1st November.

AGE campaign 'Towards an Age-Friendly European Parliament' and further action

Since last year, AGE has been working actively to mobilise its members and senior citizens across the EU around the EP elections. We have in particular aimed at raising political awareness on the need to take effective overarching measures in favour of an age-friendly European Union to be more inclusive, fairer and more sustainable for all generations.

Now that the new MEPs have been elected and the European Parliament will restart its work, AGE will pursue the campaign for an age-friendly European Parliament. Some of the newly elected MEPs already [endorsed our Manifesto](#) during the elections. The others will be contacted now in order to support our policy work during the EP mandate 2014-2019 and re-establish the Intergroup on Ageing and Solidarity between generations.



AGE Manifesto presents key priorities and recommendations to MEPs:

- Promote equal opportunities and the realisation of human rights for all
- Guarantee the adequacy, fairness and sustainability of Europe's social and health protection systems
- Ensure universal access to goods and services, in particular to the built environment, ICT, mobility and public services
- Support the right to grow and age in good mental and physical health
- Create age-friendly labour markets and economy
- Involve older persons in all policy and research processes that concern them
- Protect the right for all to live and die in dignity

"We will all be old one day", said Claude Moraes during the launching event of AGE Manifesto in November 2013. Today, AGE together with its members will work together both at EU and national with the new MEPs on how to implement these recommendations and, eventually, to make progress in the implementation of age-friendly environments across the EU.

To achieve this ambitious objective we will also need political commitment from the new European Commission. The Lisbon Treaty provides the European Parliament with a greater role in choosing the Commission's President. She/he will be elected by the EP on the basis of a nomination from EU Member States (European Council), a nomination which should take into account the results of the EP elections. This does not explicitly require that the successful candidate must represent the political family that first won the European elections, but it could be taken this way.

Whoever will be designed as the candidate for President of the European Commission (followed by the candidates for the positions of new Commissioners), AGE together with other civil society organisations has now a unique opportunity to influence this process. We will be working closely with the new MEPs and help them prepare the hearings which will soon take place in the European Parliament with all the new candidates. For this purpose, AGE has drafted key draft questions for the candidate President of the European Commission. We also contacted other social NGOs at EU level, proposing them to support one or several questions, and we have already received a positive echo from the European Disability Forum (EDF), ready to table some common questions. AGE will also support the questions prepared by the social NGOs for the same hearings if they correspond to our policy objectives. In addition to this AGE will contact secretariats of the political groups which will be established by the end of June to present our recommendations, and establish contacts with the EP Committees.

To guarantee that our recommendations will remain high on the next EP agenda, AGE will finally work to support the re-establishment of the [EP Intergroup on Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity](#). This Intergroup gained the support of 44 MEPs in 2009. It was first established in 1982 and has since been working to provide more visibility to ageing issues within the European Parliament and encourage MEPs to take appropriate action on behalf of older citizens. It is an important vehicle for raising awareness on issue of direct concern to older people, that is why AGE was actively engaged in the coordination of the activities of the Intergroup in the past and will now do its utmost to reestablish a new Intergroup.

As part of the campaign for the EP elections, we also developed a blog (<http://towardsanagefriendlyep.com>) which served as an interface to discuss older people's needs and

concerns with citizens and candidate MEPs. Now, we will continue to use the blog as an additional communication tool to gather commitments from and activities of MEPs, training material on EU citizenship, news from all over Europe, but it will also serve as a communication platform for the Intergroup. Our objective is to bring the voice of older people up to the EU debate and, eventually, help older people better understand the EU, its role and objectives. With the historically high abstention in the recent EP elections, it is more than even crucial to convince EU citizens about the positive impact the European integration has had so far and can have in upcoming years on people's daily lives.

*For more information on AGE work with the European Parliament, you may visit [AGE website](#) or contact **Ophélie Durand**, AGE EP Liaison Officer (ophelie.durand@age-platform.eu)*
