



MINUTES

Joint meeting of the European cooperation network on elections and the expert group on electoral matters 10 June 2021

1. Presentation on the current state of play

Head of Unit Marie-Helene Boulanger welcomed the participants on behalf of the European Commission (COM) at the second joint meeting of the European cooperation network on elections and the expert group on electoral matters.

COM presented the current state of play and the timeline of the planned revision of the Directives 93/109/EC and 94/80/EC governing rights of mobile EU citizens to vote and stand in European and municipal elections, as set out in the Commission Work Programme 2021.

2. Open discussion on supporting broad and inclusive participation of mobile EU citizens in European Parliament elections and in municipal elections

In preparation of the initiative to update Directives 93/109/EC and 94/80/EC, a wide range of stakeholder consultations were conducted, including with Member States in this format. At the meeting of 10 June, views were exchanged specifically on the issues regarding communication of electoral rights, the registration process and the prevention of double-voting, as well as on evaluation.

On communication of electoral rights, it was noted by several Member States that EU mobile citizens/voters would benefit from a shared resource combining all existing material and information. It would be important to link this shared resource to the relevant national websites.

One Member State specifically mentioned the necessity to consider the Regulation on the EU Single Gateway to provide access to information on such matters and to use the Your Europe Portal to provide information to EU mobile citizens on their electoral rights. It was noted that it is necessary to make a distinction between the two Directives, as municipal and European elections do not share the exact same characteristics.

Regarding the registration process and the prevention of double voting, it was pointed out that harmonizing the timeframe for registration would help in avoiding double voting in elections to the European Parliament. Several Member States supported the harmonization of the deadlines and timeframe for registration. An example was shared from the last EP elections in 2019 where the data was received too late for removing mobile EU citizens from the electoral roll as the lists in that country were already closed.

One Member State supported the idea of a centralized European database of voters to prevent double-voting. Another also suggested to make mandatory for the citizens to declare to the electoral authorities if they have multiple citizenships, noting that only a central European database could give the full picture of the situation of dual nationals.

A better exchange of information is required in order to identify those registered to vote in both their country of nationality and of residence, and in particular exchange of specific data, but those data are not listed in the relevant Directive. It was therefore suggested to consider harmonizing the dataset as well.

Several Member States shared this view, by reiterating the variety of data at the disposal of the Member States and expressing support to the harmonization of the data set. It was also noted that correct spelling of names needs to be ensured, as well as the sharing of the last municipality of residence, especially for those Member States which do not have a central electoral register on the national level.

On evaluation and future developments, Member States welcomed the joint exchanges between the European cooperation network on elections and the Expert group on electoral matters and are supportive of having them either on ad hoc basis or on a more regular basis.

With regard to collection of data, one Member State pointed out that it does not collect the data such as (i) the registration, (ii) identification on electoral rolls, and (iii) turnout of mobile EU citizens for European and municipal elections, as well as the number of mobile EU citizens who (iv) stand as candidates and (v) who are elected in European and municipal elections.

3. Closing

In closing, Member States were once again invited to provide further feedback on the preparation of this initiative, including by responding to the dedicate open public consultation.